

Pasadena's Playhouse Plaza Enriched by IDS

Photos by
Carin Yates
The Outlook

Pasadena's Playhouse District just received what many observers will feel is a beautiful upgrade by IDS Real Estate Group, which has declared the newly modeled Playhouse Plaza "substantially complete."

"We have transformed a creaky, 1924-built furniture store with a small surface parking lot into a prominent, mixed-use contextual icon," IDS senior executive David Saeta said during the official ribbon-cutting ceremony last week. "It will enhance the vibrancy of the Playhouse District by adding upwards of 700 patrons for the restaurants, retailers and entertainment venues nearby, and a sea of parking to feed the district's commerce and help sustain the beloved Pasadena Playhouse."

Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard tossed perhaps the biggest compliment by saying, "It is the most attractive project that has been done in the modern history of Pasadena."

David Mgrublian, the CEO of IDS, added: "Playhouse Plaza is David Saeta's and IDS Real Estate Group's gift to the Pasadena community. It stands as a testament to vision, perseverance and permanence."

"A project as wonderful as Playhouse Plaza does not happen without tremendous community leadership. Mayor Bogaard galvanized that community input, providing the crucial public leadership that paved the way for this transformational project in this great city and the Playhouse District," Mgrublian added, tongue in cheek, that "several months ago the mayor, without knowing it, made a significant contribution to Playhouse Plaza by giving us a deadline for completion — his retirement as mayor in early May." The comment elicited laughter from many of those in attendance.

"The long and sometimes contentious design approval process has led to a great result and a beautiful building that feels at home in the Playhouse District," said Sheldon Epps, who is in his 18th year as artistic director at the Pasadena Playhouse. "The way they connected the courtyards [across the street] is beautiful. I look forward to the energy and the foot traffic that the new retail spaces will bring to the neighborhood."

Saeta cited the work of IDS senior executive Rob Fuelling as well as his "partners" from CBRE: Todd Doney, Ryan Peterson and Steve Nelson. Saeta also thanked city representatives Bogaard, City Manager Michael Beck, Steve Mermell, Robert Montano and Eric Duyshart. Design team members receiving accolades included Peter Barsuk, Tom Williams, Andy Cohen, Gene Watanabe, Stefanos Polyzoides, Ali Hoevel and Chris Allaire.

"I think it is telling that when the Pasadena community mentions local buildings they admire, they cite structures built 100 or so years ago: City Hall, the Civic Auditorium, the library," Mgrublian said. "Unfortunately, recent decades have not provided many examples of commercial building that enrich our lives. Playhouse Plaza has changed that. We now have a newly built office project that inspires, and provides a touchstone for future office development that we can point to and say, 'This is how we want to feel when your project is added to our community.'"



Mayor Bill Bogaard, David Saeta and David Mgrublian



Eric Duyshart and Robert Montano



Abel Ramirez, Stanislava Overholt and Sheldon Epps



Sue Mossman and David Mgrublian



Michael Beck and Vincent Bertoni



David and Leslie Saeta with Margaret and David Mgrublian



Suleman Mohammed, Steve Methot, Muhammed Adaya, Patrick Foudy, Murad Siam, Salim Adaya, Dave Saeta, Sarah Cha, Rob Fuelling and David Mgrublian



Ashely Calhoun, Dave Hunt and Michelle Isenberg



David and Philip Saeta with Harold and David Mgrublian



Vincent, Ramon and Benny Valasco



Ryan Pettersen, Rob Fuelling and Todd Doney



Rob Salazar and Vicki Knight



Paul Little and Claire Bogaard



Stefanos Polyzoides, Peter Barsuk, Steve Methot, David Mgrublian, Murad Siam, Sarah Cha, Corey Evans, Bill Bogaard, David Saeta, Patrick Foudy, Sheldon Epps, Ramon Velasco and Salim Adaya