

Courant.com

Hartford Needs To Think Big

January 11, 2008

The Courant recommends Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez abandon his idea of a new arena [editorial, Jan. 9, "Mayor Perez: Think Small"]. This is the same tired thinking that helps Hartford maintain its perpetual lapdog status to Boston, New York and even Providence.

The editorial cites studies showing arenas are not good economic engines. So what? Every city, large and small, has more pressing needs than a new arena, yet they are still being built with regularity.

There's something to be said for civic pride, which is significantly lacking in our great New England city. Does The Courant believe Rentschler Field to have been an unsuccessful venture? Hasn't it help put Hartford on the national stage in just a few short years? Honestly, it's a wonder it ever got built.

If we are ever to drag ourselves out of everybody else's shadow, we need the vision to think big. Mayor Perez deserves major kudos for showcasing that vision. For decades, ideas have been put forth only to fall by the wayside. Hartford should be exploiting its rich historical past, and start beginning to tie that past in with some exciting, tangible projects.

Constitution Plaza has been around nearly half a century and serves most notably as a nice place to string Christmas lights. Front Street was proposed a decade ago, and a decade later it moves along at a glacial pace. Incredibly, we almost lost the Old State House. Suburbs such as Manchester now offer many more things to do. There's almost nothing to do in Hartford that you can't do more conveniently somewhere else. The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art? Hartford Stage? OK. But then what does a visitor do the other 363 days of the year?

Thanks to Mayor Perez for having the foresight and desire to see NHL hockey back where it belongs, and also for trying to see what the capital city really can be. Now, if he could only get the Rangers organization out of Hartford.

*Chris Gay
Manchester*

Copyright © 2008, [The Hartford Courant](#)

Reprinted with Permission of The Hartford Courant