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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** APRIL 28, 2010

**TO:** JULIE ELDRIDGE AND JIM DAISA, KIMLEY HORN AND ASSOCIATES

**FROM:** SARAH LOGIUDICE AND GLEN BOLEN, FREGONESE ASSOCIATES

**SUBJECT:** SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP OUTCOMES AND CORRIDOR SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATIVE PLANS AND OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

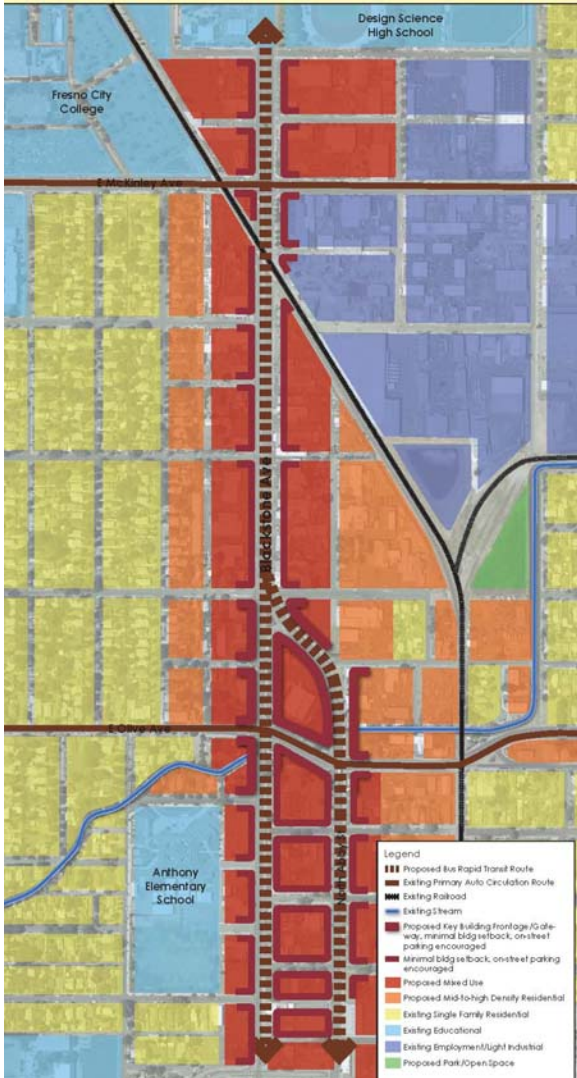
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### **Community workshops**

Five community workshops were held in Fresno in January 2010. The goal of the community workshops was to gather information on how Fresno residents would like to see future transit corridors develop. Each corridor was selected for unique qualities that could be used as a template and replicated in other places in the region. The input from the workshops informed corridor plans to be used as prototypes for planning throughout the county. Following is a summary of each of the five corridor plans.

### **Open House**

The open house was a multi-session event held at the Tower Theatre on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010. In the time since the January workshops Fregonese created concept plans for each of the five workshops areas. The Open House was an opportunity to unveil this work as well as the work Kimley Horn has completed on the PTIS project. In addition to posters illustrating buildings of transit supportive densities that could be built in Fresno, small area concept posters were displayed. Fregonese shared a presentation with a short summary of the progress of the PTIS project and the input gathered at the January workshops. Following the presentation the audience was asked a series of questions with live polling technology. The presentation and questions happened twice, resulting in two groups of answers to the polling. A discussion of the polling results follows.



## Blackstone Corridor Concept

Blackstone Corridor is a six lane automobile oriented corridor. The area in the workshop included the section that is a one way couplet with Abby Street. The workshop area is close to downtown. Creating connections with downtown and transit to Fresno City College were both important to the participants.

This is what people at the workshops said about Blackstone Corridor:

- Add new parks
- Construct buildings that have both retail and residential
- Provide transit for the college and neighborhood
- Make the street more walkable
- Keep and improve existing single family neighborhoods

Recommendations for Corridor Improvement:

- Encourage rapid buses, biking and walking
- Add sidewalks, street trees and bike lanes
- Create new housing choices – including transit supportive mixed use buildings
- Encourage walkable neighborhoods to support transit and retail on Blackstone Avenue
- Infill surrounding neighborhoods with single family homes, townhomes and multifamily homes.
- Bring building fronts to the sidewalk

What Blackstone Avenue can look like with streetscape improvements, new buildings and a bus rapid transit route.





### Cedar Town Center Concept

The intersection of Cedar Avenue and Shields Avenue is characterized by large areas of land covered with older shopping centers. Great swaths of parking lots separate the stores from the four lane streets. Trips to the shopping centers require a car, even from nearby neighborhoods. Stable 1950/1960's era single family neighborhoods surround the shopping area.

The community comments from the workshops were:

- Recreate aging shopping centers into neighborhood centers
- Introduce new shopping, restaurants, jobs and housing
- Reduce parking requirements
- Increased activity will allow for investments in transit
- Bring buildings to the street to create a more pleasant walking environment.
- Fill in parking lots with buildings



Map from the public workshop

### Reenergize the Shopping Center



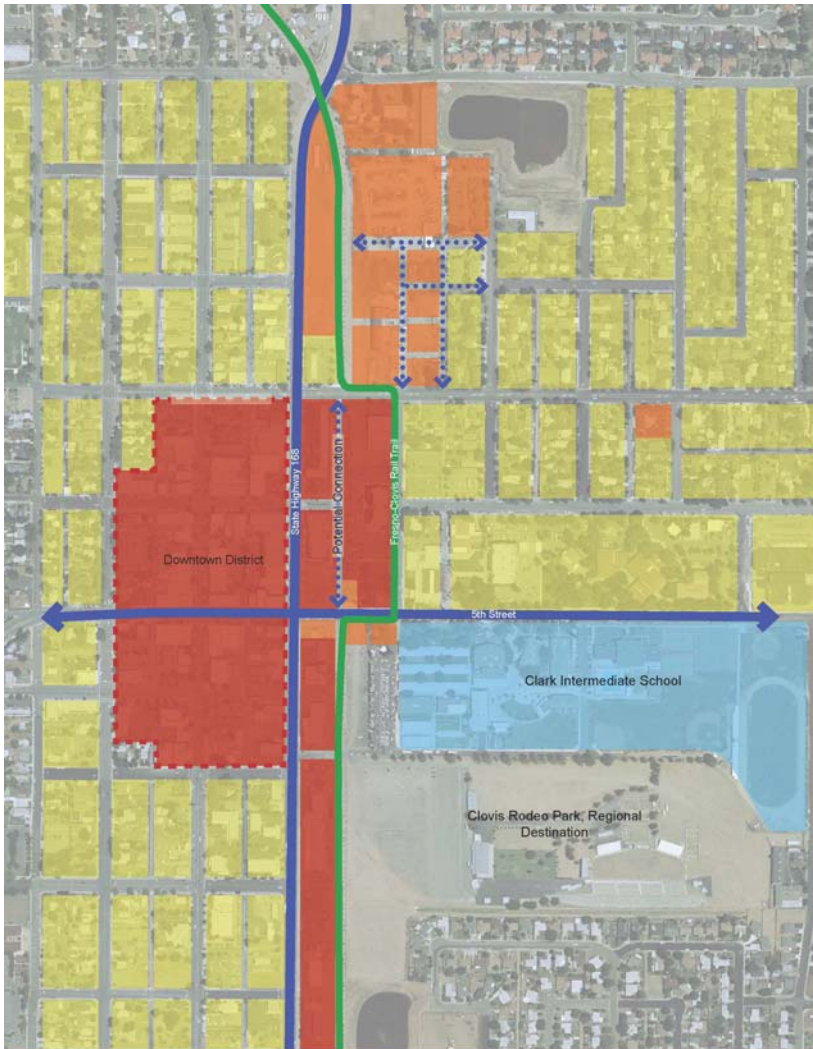
Existing building footprint



New buildings enclose the streets



Additional buildings infill over time,



## Clovis Main Street Concept

Clovis is a historical main street district that has the great bones of a walkable, vibrant center. Clovis residents take pride in their community and the comments regarding the changes they want to see were primarily enhancements.

Small strategic investments make a great main street:

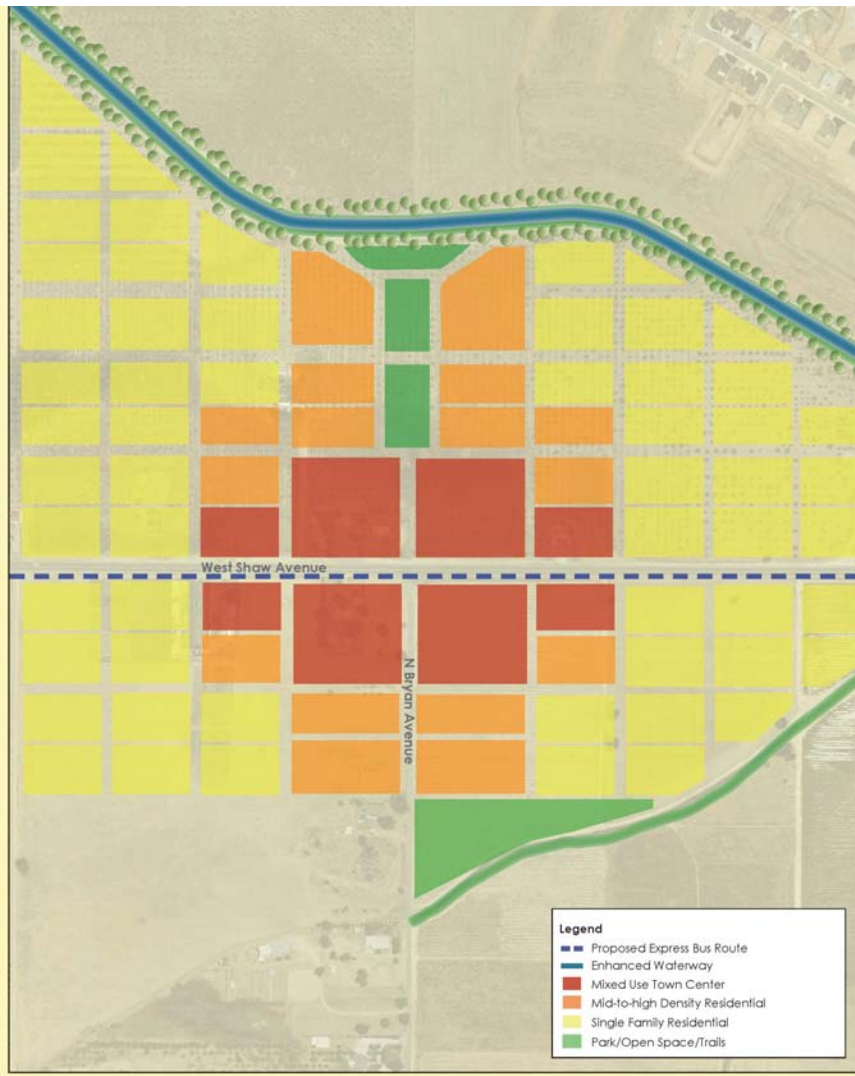
- New mixed-use development
- Preserve central business district
- Add bus rapid transit to connect to downtown Fresno
- Maintain and enhance bike trails
- Infill with new housing choices in surrounding neighborhoods
- Housing on main streets supports businesses and creates more activity
- Ensure adequate parking, build a parking garage
- Encourage a variety of stores and destinations; give people several reasons to go to Downtown Clovis

Creating inviting places for the pedestrian.



New small scale mixed-use development.





## West Shaw New Neighborhood Concept

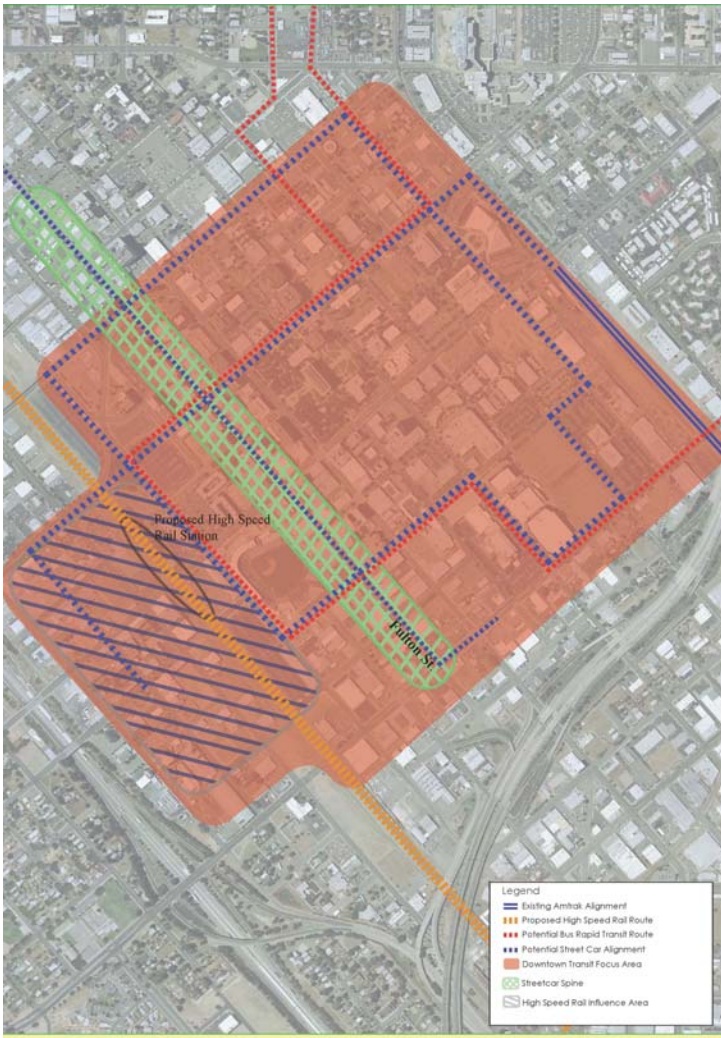
West Shaw is part of the rapidly developing area of Fresno County that is transitioning away from agriculture land. Just northwest of existing neighborhoods, the West Shaw area lies in the region expecting development soon. This workshop gave participants an opportunity to think about what kind of development they'd like to see on basically a blank slate; a town center, compact neighborhood or sprawl.

Deciding how to grow into new areas:

- Neighborhoods that have transit are generally more compact
- Create center of activity to support pedestrians and transit
- Design convenient access to shopping and restaurants
- Build multi-use trails along canals for bikes and walking
- Invest in parks and open space
- Connect compact neighborhoods to jobs downtown with express buses



Incorporate a mix of housing options, from single family to mid to high density residential neighborhoods, creating walkable neighborhoods.



## Downtown Concept Plan

What people said they wanted to see downtown:

- New mixed-use development
- Infill new housing choices in surrounding neighborhoods
- Activate downtown at more hours of the day
- Create more reasons to go downtown – cultural events, restaurants, activities, shopping, and bars.
- Preserve historic buildings
- Connect BRT to High Speed Rail Station
- Beautify the streets and plant trees for shade



Integrate transit downtown and create housing in mixed-use buildings.



## Open House Results

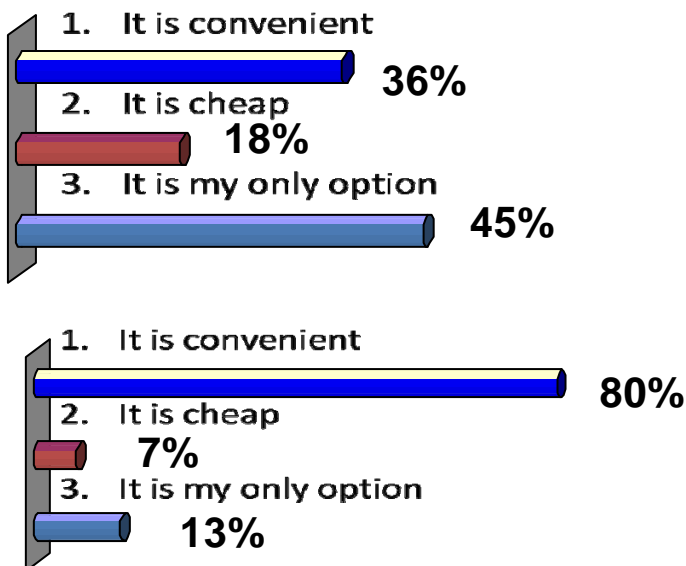
The April Open House at the Tower Theatre provided an opportunity for Fresno citizens to check in on the progress of the PTIS project, see visualizations of what future transit in Fresno could look like and weigh in on survey questions. Following a presentation sharing results from the January workshops and updating on where we are in the process, the group was asked a series of questions. Participants were given live polling devices to answer questions asked about the previous presentation and future growth options. The live polling technology will allow the participants to immediately view their collective responses on the screen.

The presentation and survey question exercise was repeated twice and the results varied between groups of participants. The first group had about 36 participants and represented a diverse mix of ages – with almost half of the group being high school age. The second group had 17 participants, with many of them representing groups and agencies in Fresno involved in these planning issues.

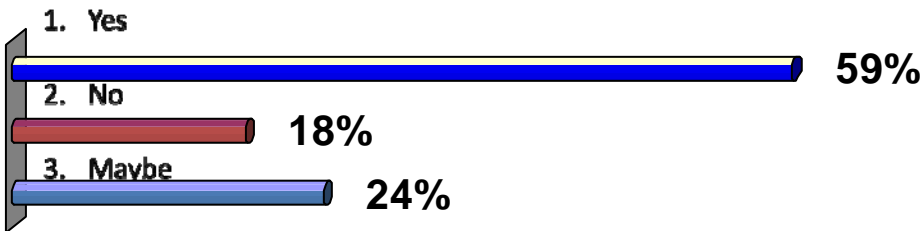
In both groups, over half of the participants answered that they had ridden transit in the past six months, however, their reasons for doing so differed. The high percentage of people that answered that it was their only option in group one was most probably attributed to the fact that they were too young to drive or own cars. A large portion of people overall thought transit was convenient which is hopeful in thinking about future transit ridership. The main reasons why people didn't ride transit were because it didn't serve their destinations or it was too slow. A good transportation network should access important destinations and be competitive in travel time. It is hopeful to see that if a transit network provided those characteristics in Fresno people would be interested in using it. Nearly 60 percent of the first group said they would use bus rapid transit. While only 40 percent of the second group affirmed they would use BRT, over 50 percent said they maybe would use it. In both groups the majority of people thought BRT was an "excellent idea" for corridors in Fresno.

Why do you ride transit?

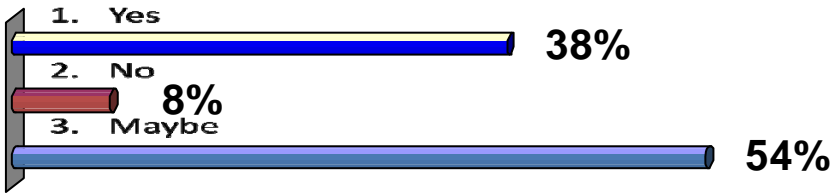
Group 1 and Group 2



Would you use Bus Rapid Transit?



Group 1



Group 2

Between the two groups, when asked to vote on their favorite themes from the workshops (walkable streets, mixed-use buildings, new parks, transit and new housing options) the votes were almost evenly spread throughout. In looking for themes that stood out; “new housing choices” received the lowest number of votes, while “walkable streets” just barely gained the most votes.

When asked if they would rather 1.) drive 15 miles at 60 mph; 2.) drive 5 miles at 20 mph; or 3.) walk ½ mile for running errands or to work, participants overwhelmingly chose number three. Each of these choices represented approximately a 15 minute trip and it appears people would rather be on foot.

Participants were shown images of buildings representing different levels of residential density and asked to identify the buildings they thought were most appropriate for Fresno’s future. Although there was not a clear majority and people voted for images in all categories, both groups showed strong support for the highest density images shown, 4-5 story mixed use. This is an important to note in testing Fresno’s taste for higher density, transit-supportive buildings.

As with any public event, opinions will vary. Overall, however, the survey results showed that people in Fresno want to see something different than the current trend of growth. They want to see the tide turn and bring growth back into the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. To achieve this redevelopment participants revealed that creating higher density development, BRT and other transit and redesigning streets to be more walkable are acceptable, and even desirable, strategies.