



CITY OF MERCED

Merced Civic Center
678 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Meeting Agenda

Citizen Advisory Focus Group

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

6:00 PM

City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Merced Civic
Center, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

WELCOME

At least 72 hours prior to each regular Advisory Focus Group meeting, a complete agenda packet is available for review on the City's website at www.cityofmerced.gov or at the City Clerk's Office, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340. All public records relation to an open session item that are distributed to a majority of the Commission will be available for public inspection at the City Clerk's Office during regular business hours. Assisted hearing devices are available for meetings held in the Council Chamber.

PUBLIC COMMENT: OBTAIN SPEAKER CARD FROM THE CLERK

Members of the audience who wish to address the Focus Group are requested to complete a speaker card available at the podium against the back of the Council Chamber. Please submit the completed card to the Clerk before the item is called, preferably before the meeting begins.

Material may be emailed to cityclerk@cityofmerced.gov no later than 1 PM on the day of the meeting. Please specify which portion of the agenda you are commenting on, for example, Report item # or Public Comment. Your comments will be presented to the Focus Group at the appropriate time. Any correspondence received after 1 PM will be distributed to the Focus Group and retained for the official record.

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. ROLL CALL

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public who wish to speak on any matter not listed on the agenda may speak during this portion of the meeting and will be allotted 3 minutes. State law prohibits the Focus Group from acting at this meeting on any matter raised during the public comment period. Members of the public who wish to speak on a matter that is listed on the agenda will be called upon to speak during discussion of that item.

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

Adoption of the Consent Calendar may be made by one motion of the Focus Group, provided that any Member, individual, or organization may request removal of an item from the Consent Calendar for separate consideration. If a request for removal of an item from the Consent Calendar has been received, the item will be discussed and voted on separately.

F. ACTION ITEMS

G. REPORTS

G.1. 25-792 **SUBJECT:** Report for the First Citizens Advisory Focus Group Meeting

REPORT IN BRIEF

Introduction and report for the first Citizens Advisory Focus Group meeting and discussion

H. BUSINESS

I. ADJOURNMENT



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

File #: 25-792

Meeting Date: 8/27/2025

Report Prepared by: Leah Brown, Management Analyst, Development Services

SUBJECT: Report for the First Citizens Advisory Focus Group Meeting

REPORT IN BRIEF

Introduction and report for the first Citizens Advisory Focus Group meeting and discussion

DISCUSSION

Introduction to the Citizens Advisory Focus Group (CAFG) including the roles and responsibilities of CAFG members will be reviewed. The City project team, consultants, and community participants chosen to be on the CAFG will be introduced. The project organization structure, planned dates, and protocols for the meetings will be presented. An overview of the Merced General Plan Update (MGPU) goals, characteristics, required elements, and timeline will be covered. The presentation will include the community engagement strategy and ways that the community can participate to have their voices heard. The intertie between the Downtown Station Area Plan (DSAP) and the MGPU, with its more concentrated timeline due to grant funding deadlines. Review of the land use, zoning, and neighborhood characteristics of the current area proposed for the DSAP. Overall discussion on goals of the MGPU and DSAP.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Presentation
2. CAFG Procedures
3. DSAP Goals

CITY OF MERCED

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN

ATTACHMENT 1



mintier
harnish
Planning • Consulting • Today



Citizens Advisory Focus Group (CAFG) Meeting #1

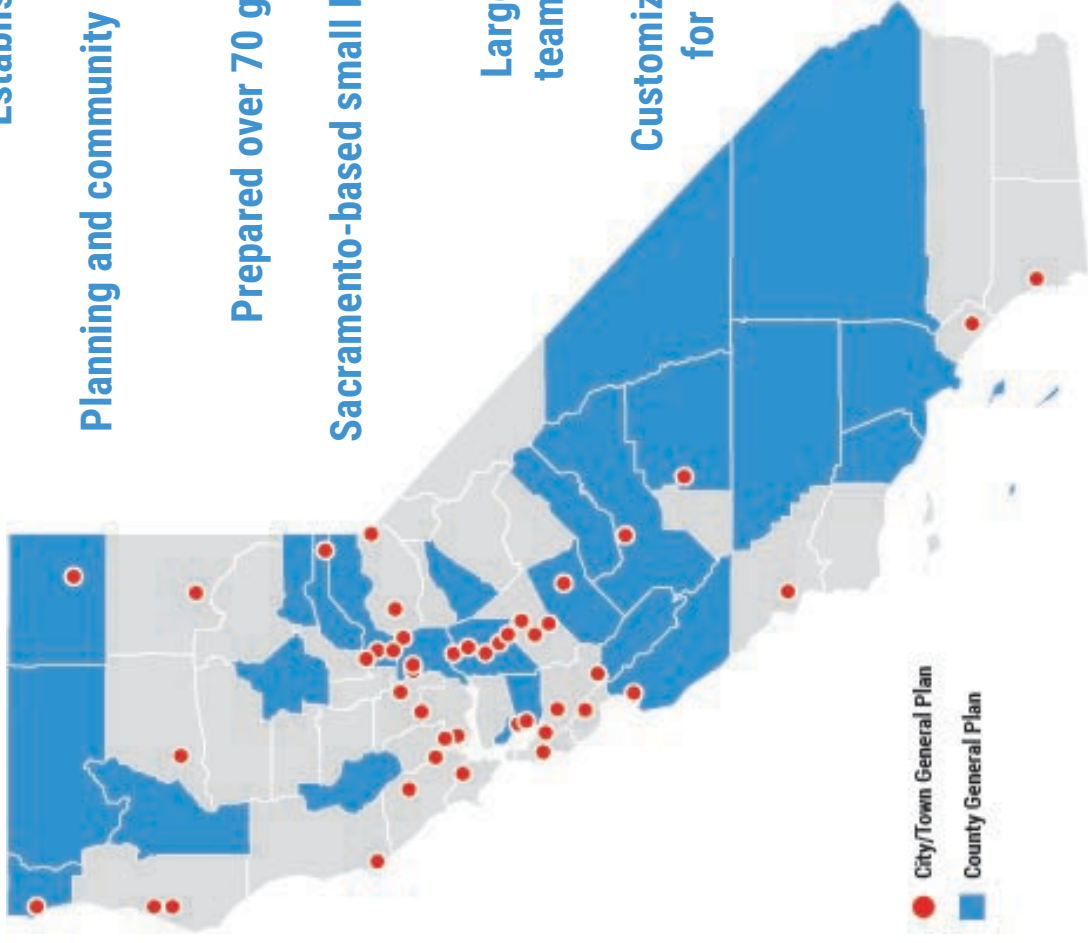
AUGUST 27, 2025

Meeting Objectives

- Introduction to the Citizens Advisory Focus Group (CAFG)
- The Project Team
- Organizational and Meeting Protocols
- General Plan Update Overview
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Downtown Station Area Plan (DSAP) Overview
- Citizen Advisory Focus Group Discussion
- Next Steps

PROJECT TEAM

General Plan Team – MinterHarnish



Established in 1985

Planning and community engagement specialists

Prepared over 70 general plans

Sacramento-based small business (10 employees)

Large network of teaming partners

Customize our teams for each project



Brent Gibbons, AICP
Project Director



Michael Gibbons
Project Manager



Jim Harnish, JD
Project Advisor

General Plan Team – Teaming Partners

Environmental



Paul Stephenson,
AICP

Economic Development



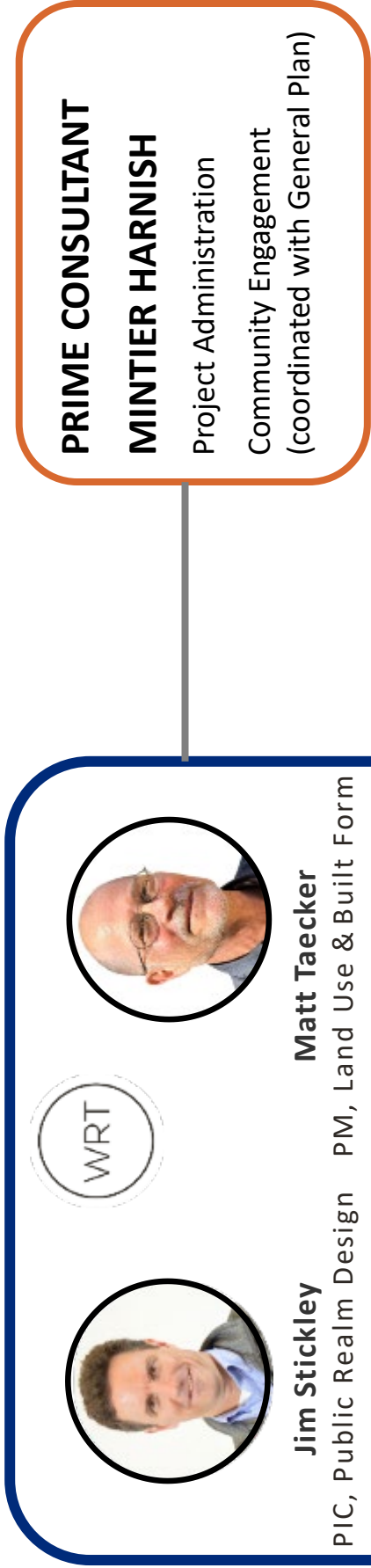
Roger
Dale

Mobility



Jim Damkowitz

Downtown Station Area Plan Team - WRT



SUBCONSULTANTS



- **Frank Quintero**, Deputy City Manager, *DSAP Project Manager*
 - **Jonnie Lan**, Acting Planning Manager
 - **Leah Brown**, Management Analyst
- } *General Plan Project Managers*
- **Francisco Mendoza-Gonzalez**, Acting Principal Planner
 - **Valeria Renteria**, Associate Planner
 - *Other Department Heads will be included in this process including representatives from Public Works, Engineering, Fire, Police, Clerk, City Attorney, Parks and Recreation, Public Information Officer, and GIS Coordinator.*

Citizen Advisory Focus Group Members

Councilmembers:

- Matthew Serratto
- Sarah Boyle

Planning Commission:

- Anthony Gonzalez

Arts and Culture Advisory Commission:

- Colton Dennis

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission:

- Curtis Thomas

Regional Airport Authority:

- Cheryl Hirsch

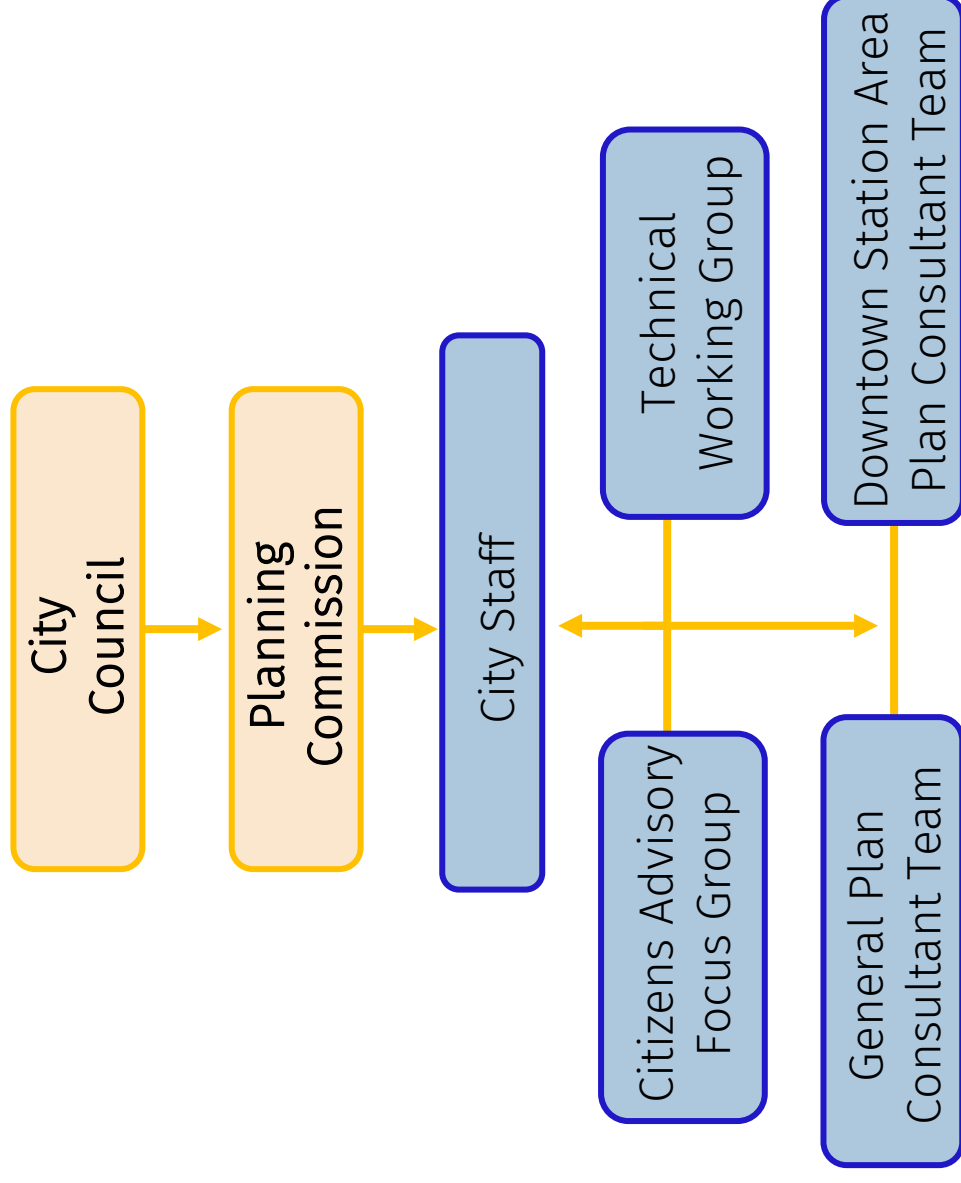
Recreation and Parks Commission:

- Joseph Bauer

Community Members:

- Jeremiah Greggains
- Keith Ensminger
- Cynthia Kelly
- Tammy Johnson
- April Holloway
- Humberto Sandoval Jr
- Steve Maxey

Project Organizational Structure



- The CAFG is comprised of 14 members, appointed by the City Council.
- The CAFG will act in an advisory role to the Planning Commission and City Council
 - Help to understand community needs.
 - Review and comment on General Plan and Downtown Station Area components.
 - Provide feedback and recommendations to project staff and consultants.
 - Provide recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council.



City of Merced Citizen Advisory Focus Group

RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Authority

- The Citizen Advisory Focus Group (CAFG) is established by the City of Merced City Council. The CAFG is formed with the intent to enable the CAFG members to have robust discussions and reach consensus on key planning issues. However, keep in mind that the CAFG is subject to Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Conduct.

2. Membership

- The CAFG shall be comprised of up to fourteen (14) members, appointed by the City Council.
- Members are expected to continue to serve on the CAFG throughout the duration of the process.
- A vacancy created by the resignation of a member of the CAFG may be filled by the City Council, if an interested and eligible person has applied and been appointed by the Council. Refilling the position is not required.

3. Purpose and Functions

- The CAFG has been created by the City Council to advise the Planning Commission and the City Council on issues related to the preparation of a new General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan for the City of Merced. The purpose of the CAFG shall be to:
 - Advise the Planning Commission and City Council on understanding Merced community members' preferences for policies that should be considered in the new General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan.
 - Examine the City's needs for planning in the areas of land use, circulation, housing, public services, open space, conservation, noise, safety, economic development, sustainability, community health, architectural design, and other topics; recognizing that policy changes in these areas may necessitate modifications to the General

Citizen Advisory Focus Group Roles and Responsibilities

- Be an ambassador to the community to publicize and encourage public comment and participation in the process.
- Attend Community Workshops, as available.
- Review meeting materials in advance.
- Follow the Citizen Advisory Focus Group Ground Rules.

- Decision-making by the CAFG should occur through dialog and consensus, whenever possible.
- For decisions which cannot be reached by consensus, the presence of a quorum and the affirmative vote of the quorum is required.

- CAFG discussion on typical day / times for meetings.
- Currently planned for Wednesdays at 6:00 pm. Some meetings may occur on alternate days or times depending on Council Chamber availability.
- CAFG Meeting #2: Wednesday, October 8th
- CAFG Meeting #3: Monday, November 10th
- CAFG Meeting #4: Wednesday, January 28th

A scenic view of a river with a bridge, surrounded by lush greenery and cherry blossom trees in full bloom. The image is split into three vertical panels. The left panel shows a dense canopy of white and pink cherry blossoms against a clear blue sky. The middle panel shows a stone bridge over a river, with green hills in the background. The right panel shows a close-up of a riverbank with green grass and fallen brown leaves.

GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW

What is a General Plan?

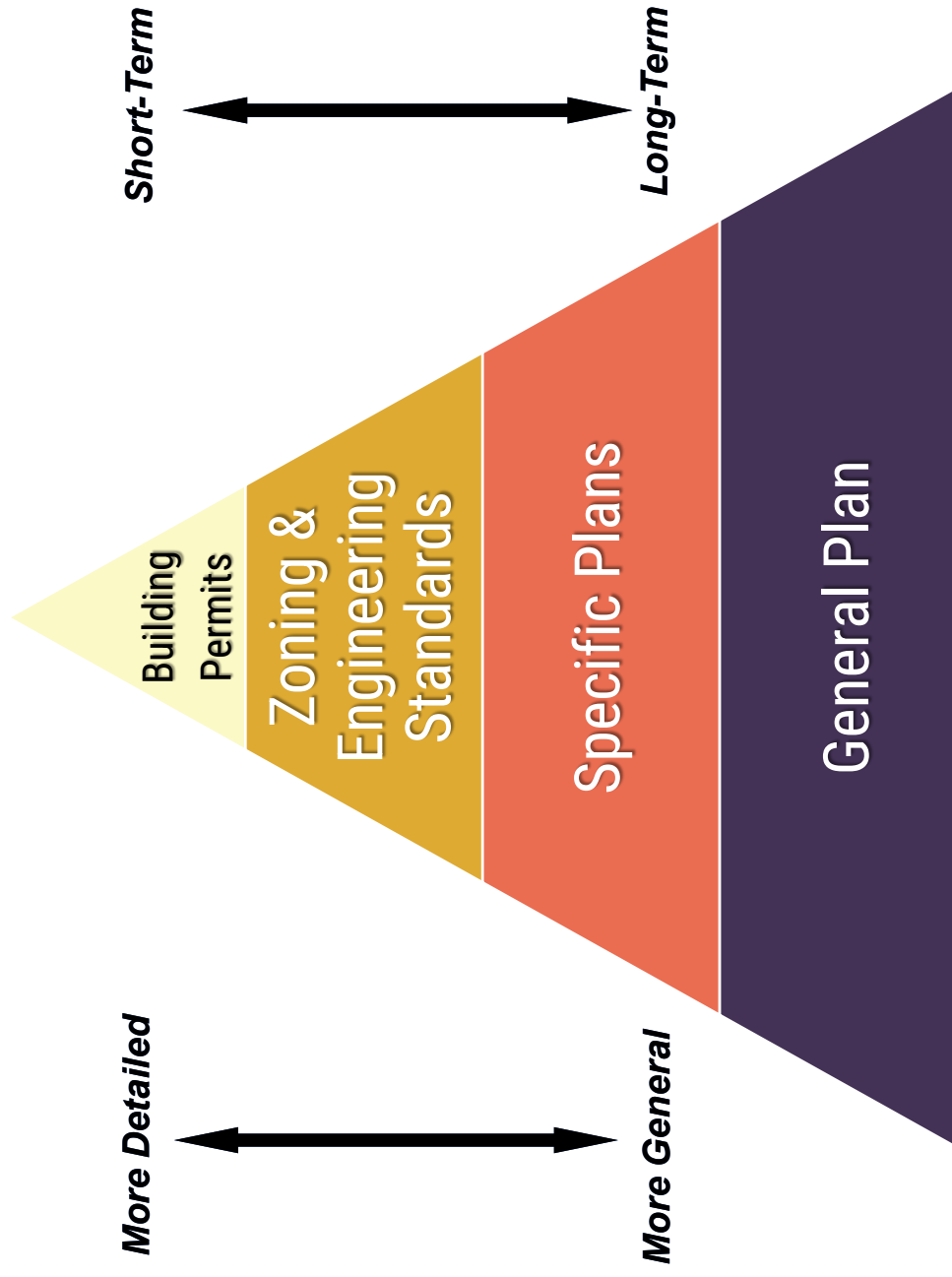
- Required by State law for every jurisdiction
- Represents the community's long-term vision for the future
- Establishes goals and policies on which the City Council bases a variety of decisions (i.e., land use, economic development, equity)



General Plan Characteristics



General Plan Characteristics



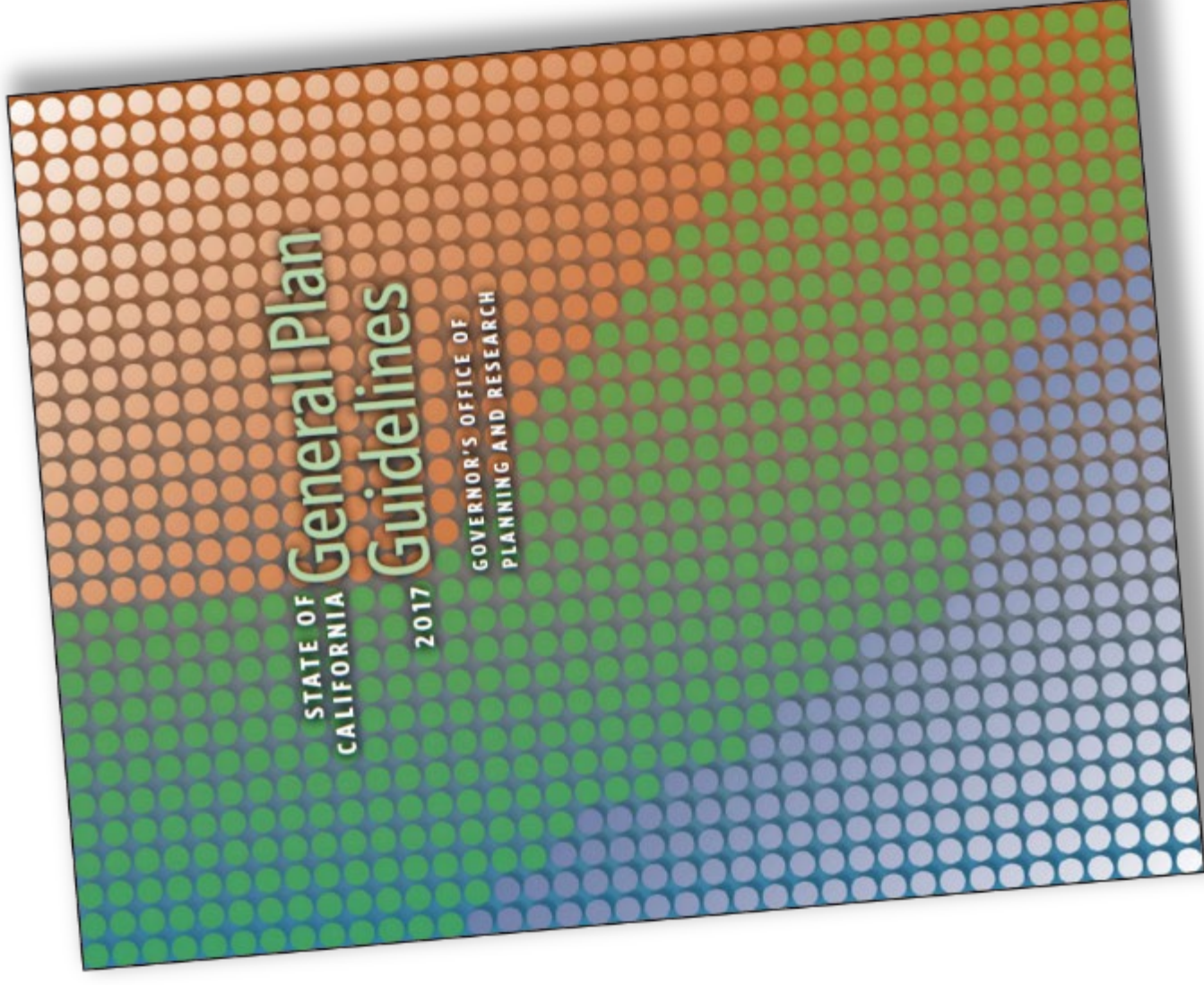
- **Covers an identified planning area**

- **Internal consistency**

- Equal status among elements
- Consistency between elements
- Consistency within elements
- Text and diagram consistency

Required General Plan Elements

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Safety
- Noise
- Environmental Justice
- Air Quality *(applicable to Merced and other Central Valley Communities)*



New State Requirements



Environmental Justice



Tribal Consultation



Complete Streets



Vehicle Miles Traveled



GHG Emissions



Climate Change
Adaptation



Wildfires and Flooding



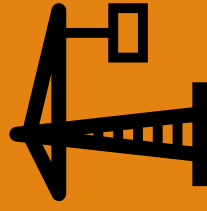
Housing Sites and
Streamlining

Focus of the General Plan Update

Comprehensive update of
the 2030 General Plan
elements

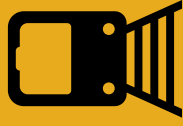


Integrate recent plans and studies
while incorporating previously
approved annexations



Focus of the General Plan Update

Prepare and integrate
the Downtown Station
Area Plan

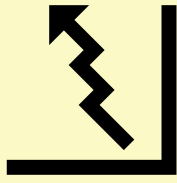


Dedicated to providing
opportunities and access for all,
with a foundation of respect,
belonging, and fairness.

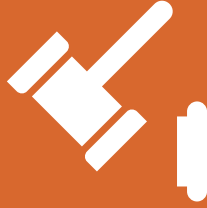


Focus of the General Plan Update

Capture emerging trends and best practices



Ensure compliance with recent State laws and General Plan Guidelines



Focus of the General Plan Update

Updates to the vision, goals, policies, and implementing actions in the General Plan



Robust, collaborative, and participatory community engagement

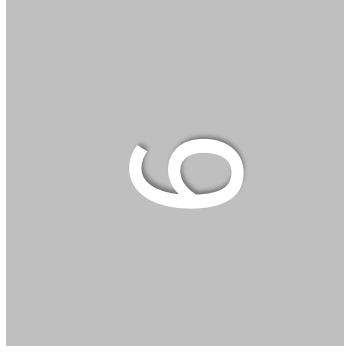
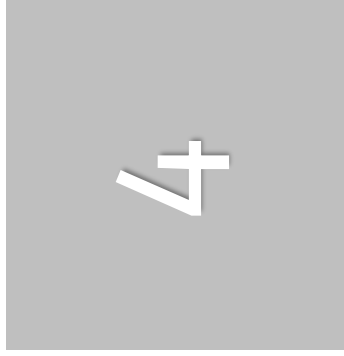


General Plan Project Schedule

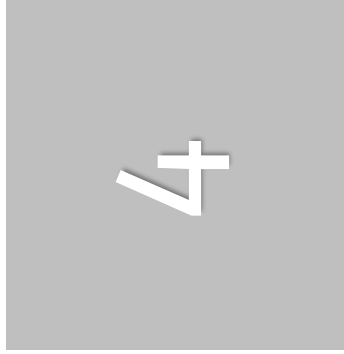
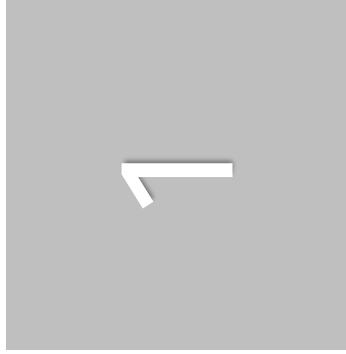
	2025					2026					2027									
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1: Project Initiation	* Kick-off Meeting * Newsletter #1 * All-hands Study Session * Stakeholder Interviews																			
Phase 2: Existing Conditions and Trends					* Existing Conditions & Trends Workbook * CAFG Meeting #2 * Newsletter #2 * CC/PC Joint Study Session #1 * Community Open House #1 * Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Report * CAFG Meeting #1 * CAFG Meeting #3															
Phase 3: Community Vision and Guiding Principles										* Community Open House #2 * CC/PC Joint Study Session #2 * Vision and Guiding Principles										
Phase 4: Prepare the General Plan															* Admin Draft GP * Prelim Public Review Draft GP * CAFG Meetings #5, #6, #7 * Revised Prelim Review GP * PC Study Session * CC Study Session * Public Review Draft General Plan					* Newsletter #4 * Community Open House #3 * Public Hearing Draft General Plan
Phase 5: Prepare Program EIR																		* Administrative Draft PEIR * Public Review Draft PEIR * Final PEIR		
Phase 6: Public hearings and Adoption																			* PC Hearing * CC Hearing Adoption Hearing *	

Project Phases

Project
Initiation

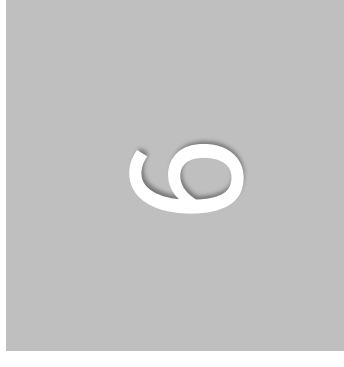
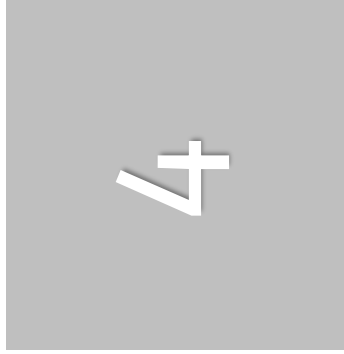
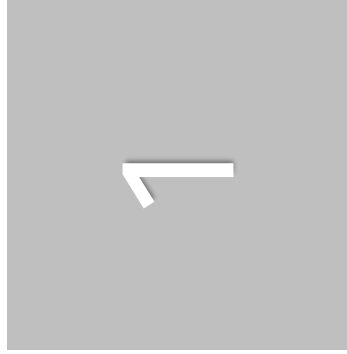


Existing
Conditions
and
Trends

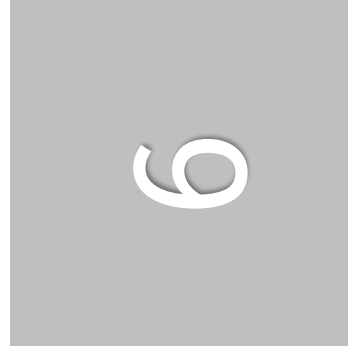
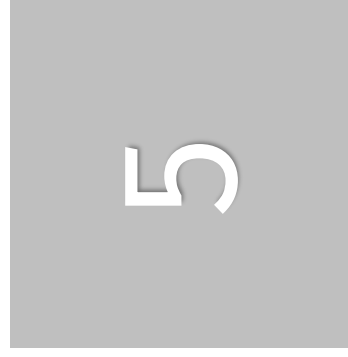
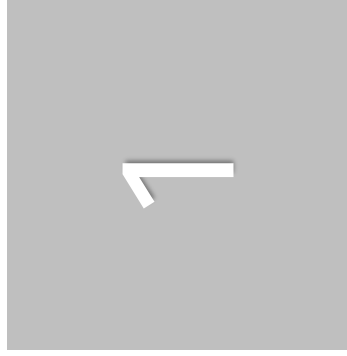


Project Phases

Community
Vision

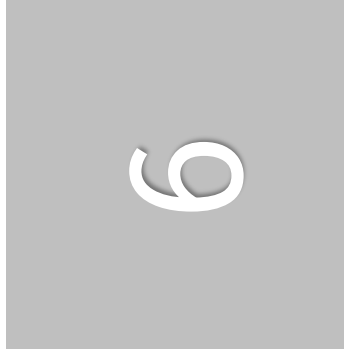
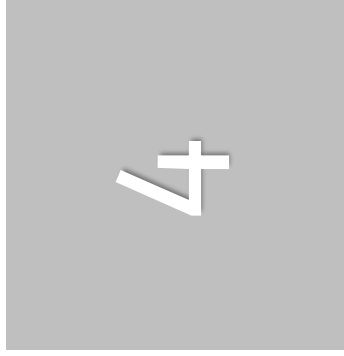
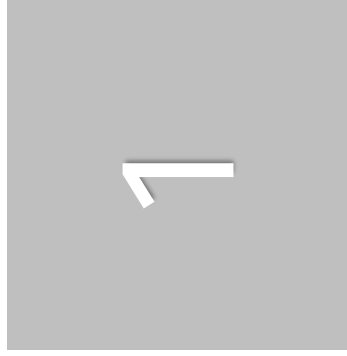


Project Phases



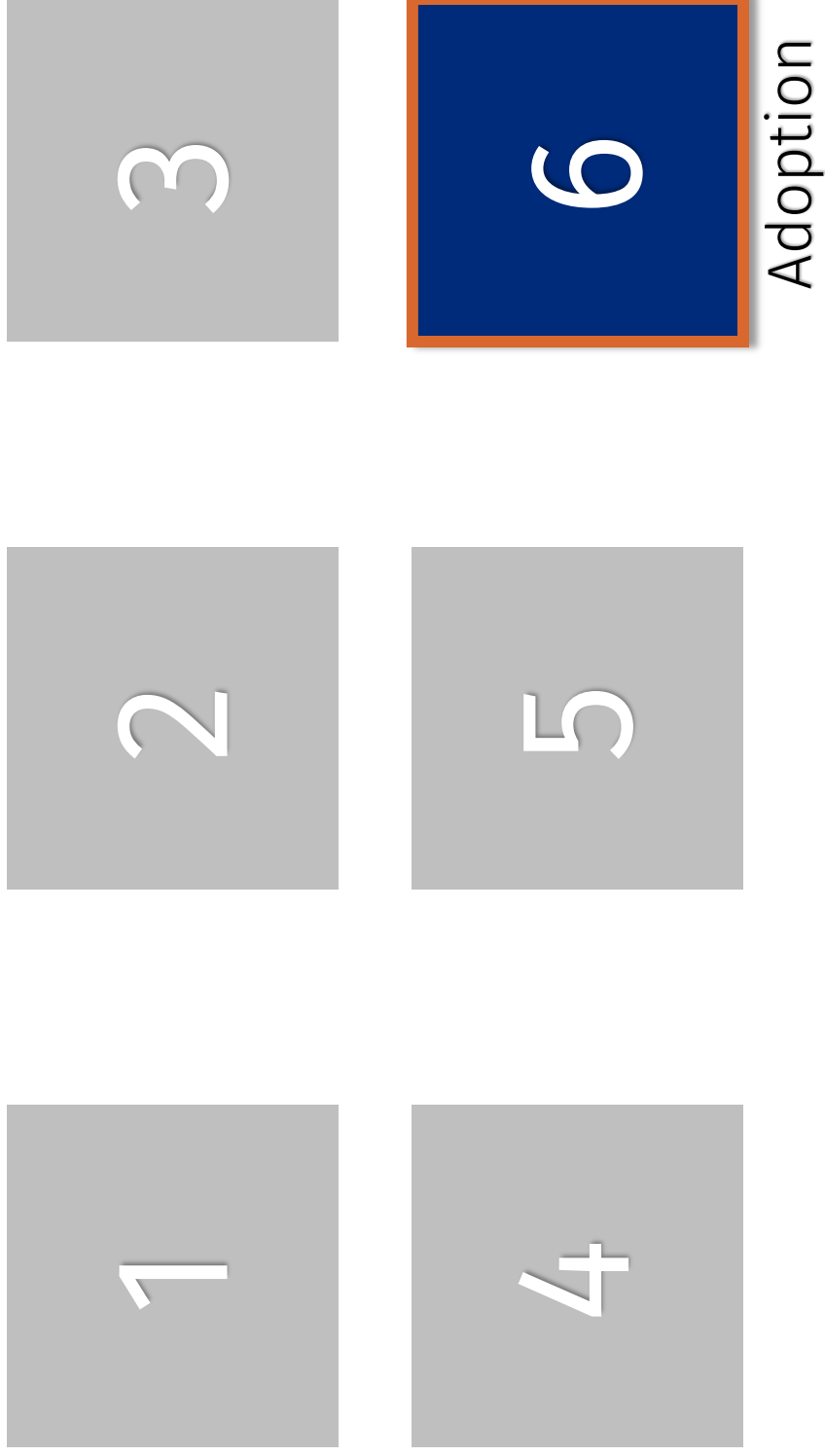
Prepare the
General
Plan

Project Phases



Prepare the
Program EIR

Project Phases





| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



MERCED



Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

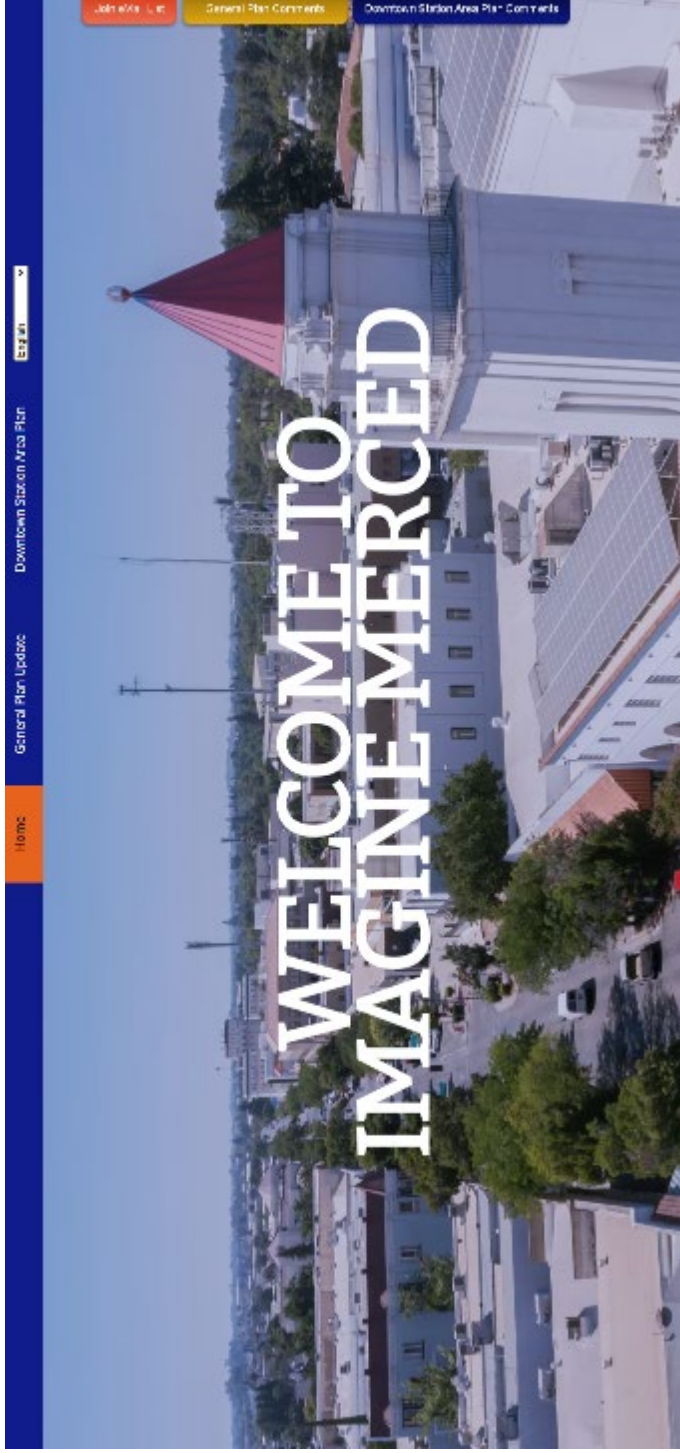
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NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



www.imaginemerced.com

Email List

GP Comments

DSAP Comments

Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

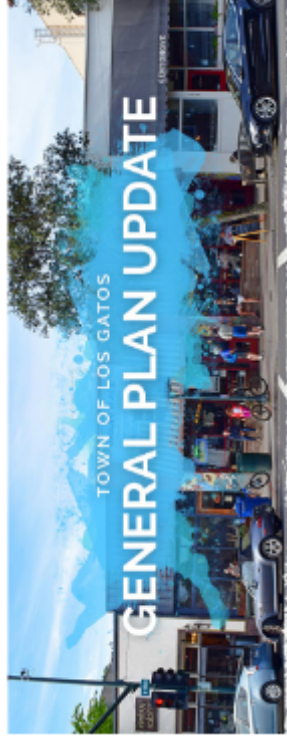
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Welcome!

The General Plan Update is a pivotal opportunity to shape the future of Los Gatos. Through this process, the Town and consulting team will consider many new pertinent topics, including environmental justice and public health, to ensure Los Gatos is positioned to achieve its vision for the future.

As this project progresses, this website will be your primary source for access to all materials related to the General Plan Update, including project documents, meeting dates and times, and information on the basics of a general plan to get you oriented to this process.

What is a General Plan?

Every jurisdiction in California must have a general plan, which is the local government's long-term framework or "constitution" for future growth and development. The general plan represents the community's vision of the future and governs the



Draft Health and Quality of Life Element Released for Review!

The draft Health and Quality of Life Element will be reviewed by the Human Relations Commission, General Plan Advisory Committee, and Planning Commission at the public meetings listed below. The draft element includes policies and programs that promote a healthy lifestyle and improve residents' quality of life. The element also addresses potential environmental justice issues within the community as required by recent state legislation, which was informed by preparation of an environmental justice analysis. Click [here](#) to view or download the draft element and environmental justice analysis from the project website.

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

Human Relations Committee

Meeting starts at 7:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room

34009 Alvarado Niles Road



NEWSLETTER #1:
PROJECT OVERVIEW



Imagine Merced marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the City of Merced. This visionary effort invites the community to help plan what Merced could become over the next 20 years.

What will our city look like two decades from now? What kinds of businesses and industries will thrive here? How will California High-Speed Rail shape the future of Downtown? And what steps is the City taking to improve the lives of all residents?

To answer these questions, and many more, the City of Merced is launching a major planning effort made up of two key components: a **General Plan update**, and the development of a **Downtown Station Area Plan**.

General Plan Update and Downtown Station Area Plan

What is a General Plan?

Every city and county in California must have a general plan, which is a local government's long-term framework or "constitution" for future growth and development. The general plan represents the community's vision for its future and establishes the development needs necessary to support that vision. Once the General Plan is adopted, the City Council and Planning Commission will base their land use decisions on the City's General Plan. Typically, general plans are designed to address issues and opportunities over the following 20 years. A general plan has three defining features:

- > **General.** A general plan provides general policy guidance that will be relied on to guide future land use and resource decisions.
- > **Comprehensive.** A general plan is comprehensive in nature, covering a range of topics, such as land use, housing, economic development, infrastructure, public safety, recreation, natural resources, and much more.
- > **Long range.** A general plan provides guidance on reaching a future envisioned 20 or more years in the future. To achieve the vision, a comprehensive plan includes goals, policies, and actions that address both immediate and long-term needs.

Project Contacts:

Leah Brown brown@cityofmerced.gov	Joanilo Lan lanj@cityofmerced.gov	Frank Quintero quintero@cityofmerced.gov
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area de la estación del centro?

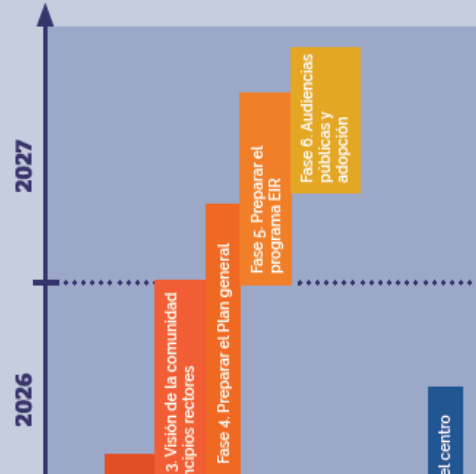
SAP, por sus siglas en inglés) inspirará y regulará el cambio en el Merced y la nueva estación de tren. La futura estación de tren de a el único lugar donde Amtrak San Joaquin, Altamont Corridor SRI se unen, además de nuevas instalaciones para Merced ara el éxito del centro de Merced como un próspero distrito y que se refiere a aprovechar el desarrollo económico y las mejoras

n el Plan general?

el desarrollo económico, el uso de la tierra y la creación de etas a corto y largo plazo de la ciudad. La redacción del DSAP y la npo permitirá a la comunidad decidir cómo será la vida en la ciudad a al futuro del centro de la ciudad.

ecto

n unos tres años y finalizará en 2027. El DSAP se redactará y espera que se adopte a mediados de 2026. Este proyecto ses.



se 3. Visión de la comunidad (principios rectores)

Fase 4. Preparar el Plan general

Fase 5. Preparar el programa EIR

Fase 6. Audiencias públicas y adopción

DSAP

Tarea 1. Participación de la comunidad y las partes interesadas

Tarea 2. Plan del área de la estación del centro

1

2

Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

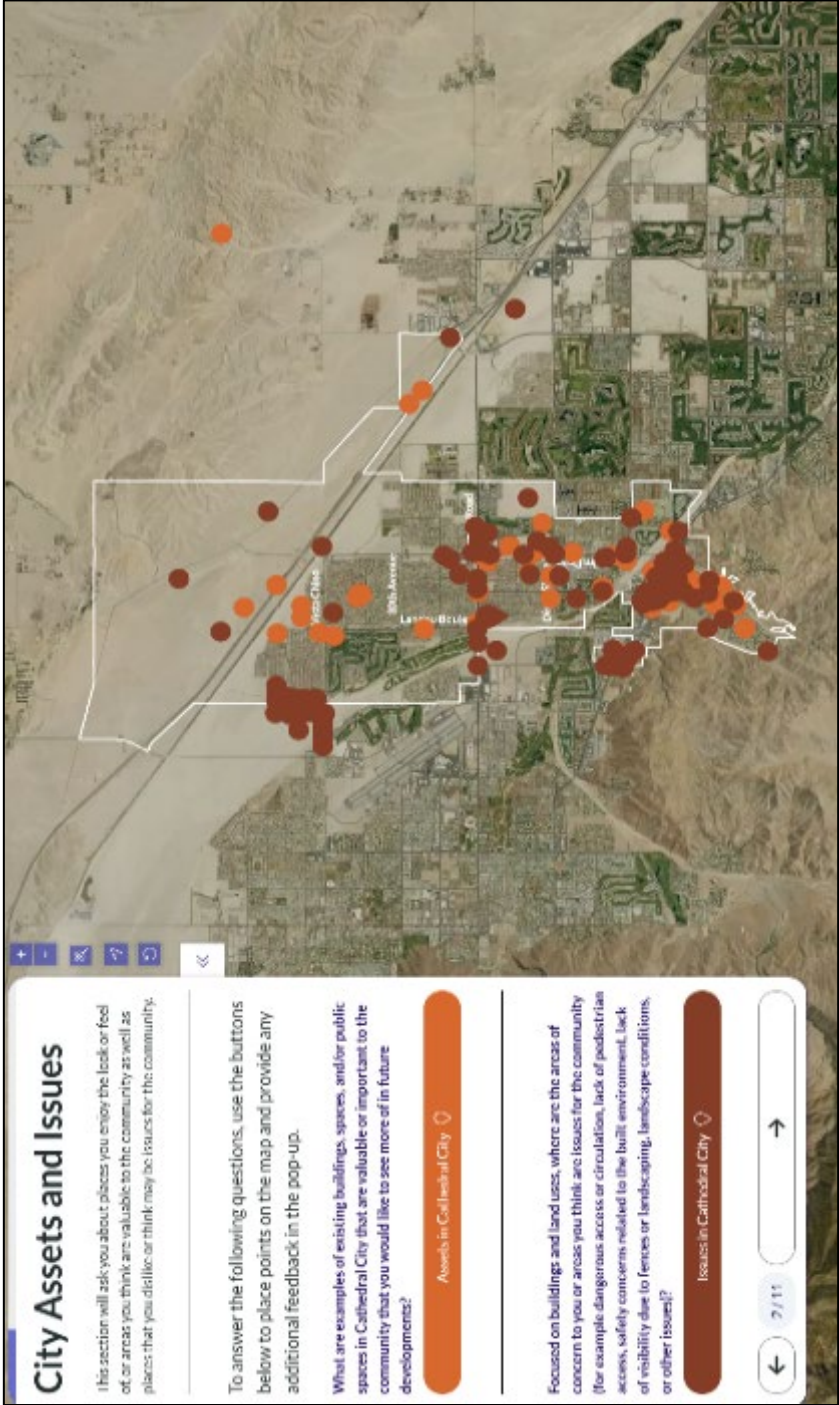
PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



Outreach Program

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| DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN OVERVIEW



Goals for the Downtown Station Area Plan (DSAP)

Goals are desired future outcomes. In planning documents, goals describe a community's vision in general terms. Goals are not policies. Policies describe intended ways to get to a goal, whereas goals are aspirational statements. Clear goals help point policies and future actions in the right direction.

The consulting team is seeking Citizen Advisory Focus Group feedback regarding established goals. Input from Citizen Advisory Focus Group will be incorporated in goals developed for City Council consideration.

Goals for the Downtown Station Area Plan (DSAP)

- **Sources of Established Goals**
 - General Plan 2030
 - 2007 Downtown Strategy
 - Tourism Business Improvement Districts
 - High Speed Rail Authority

Goals for the Downtown Station Area Plan (DSAP)

■ Some Themes

- Vibrant and Attractive
- Diverse Commercial and Cultural Destinations
- A Center of Employment, Education, Government, and Social Services
- Convergence of Exceptional Transportation
- Walkable and Bikable
- Economic Growth
- Local Character and Identity

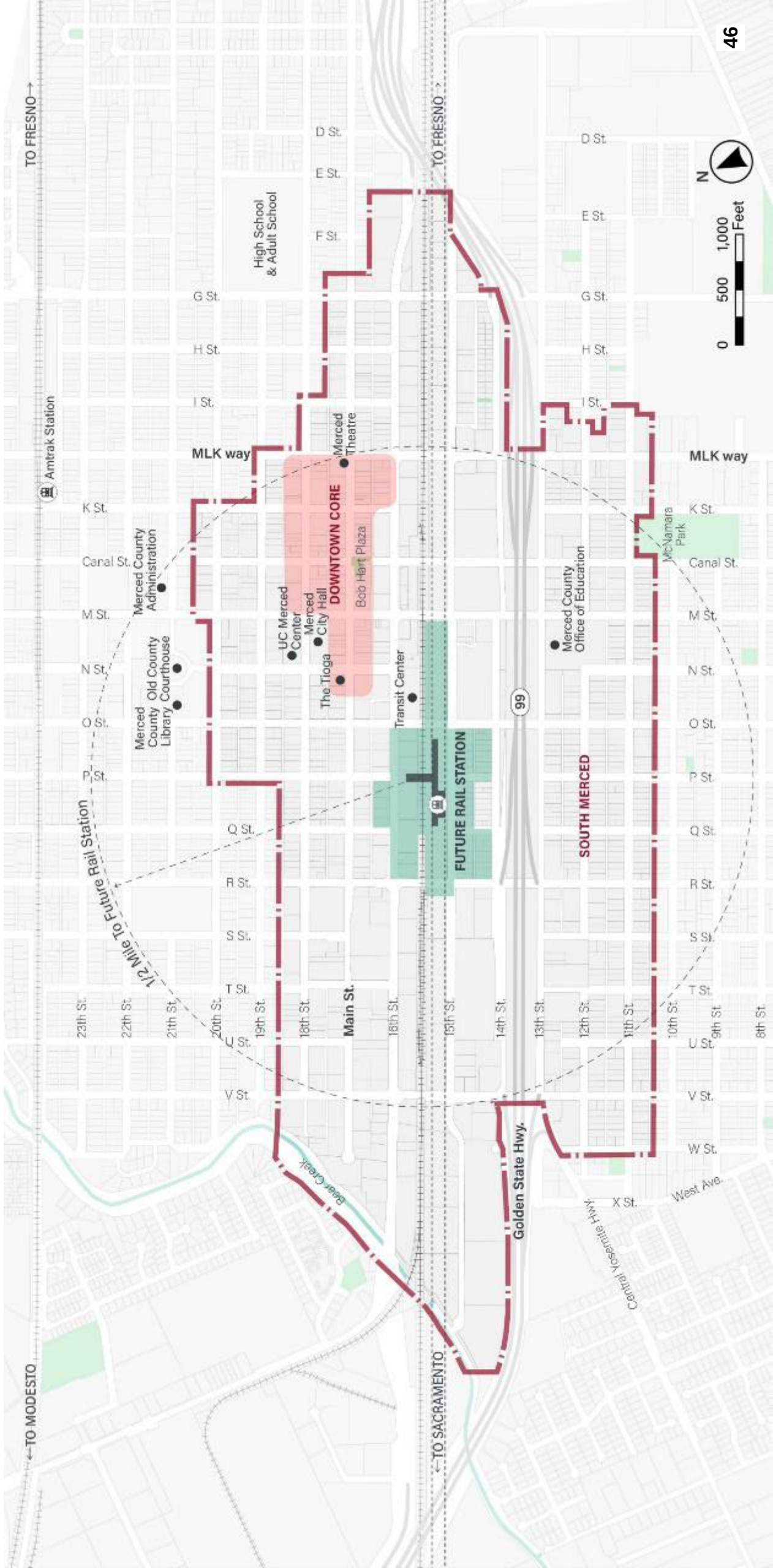
Please refer to handout for more discussion themes.

Downtown Area and Station Area Opportunities and Synergies

- Multimodal Transportation
- Land Use
- Placemaking
 - Public Realm
 - Built Form
- Economic Development
 - Revitalization
 - Redevelopment
 - Workforce Development
- Infrastructure
 - Due Diligence



Plan Area



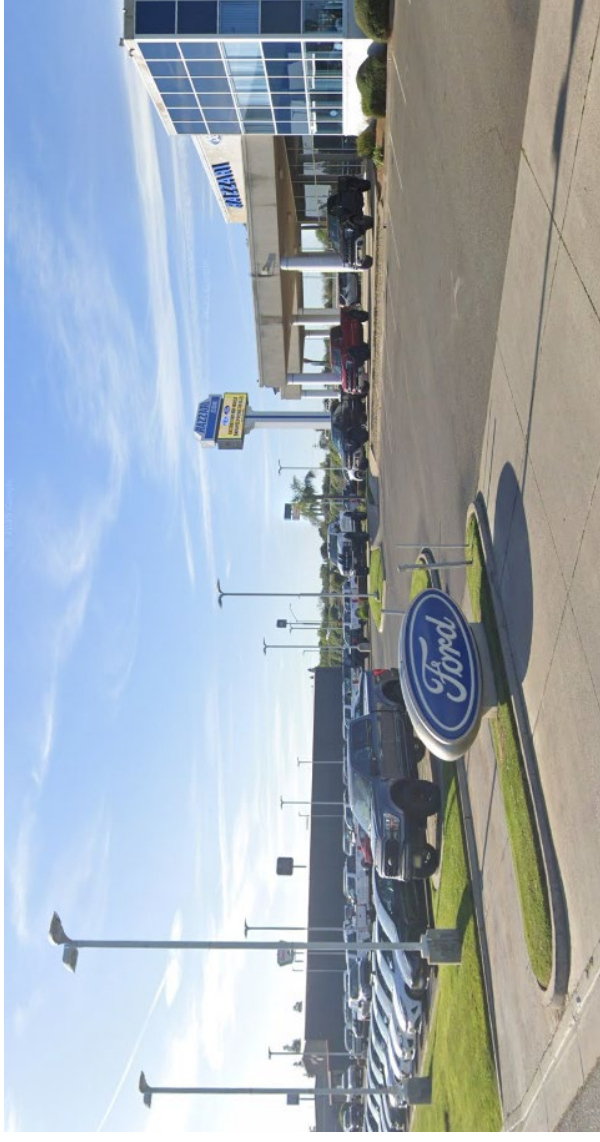
Merced Downtown Core



Courthouse Neighborhood



Vehicle Oriented Commercial Development

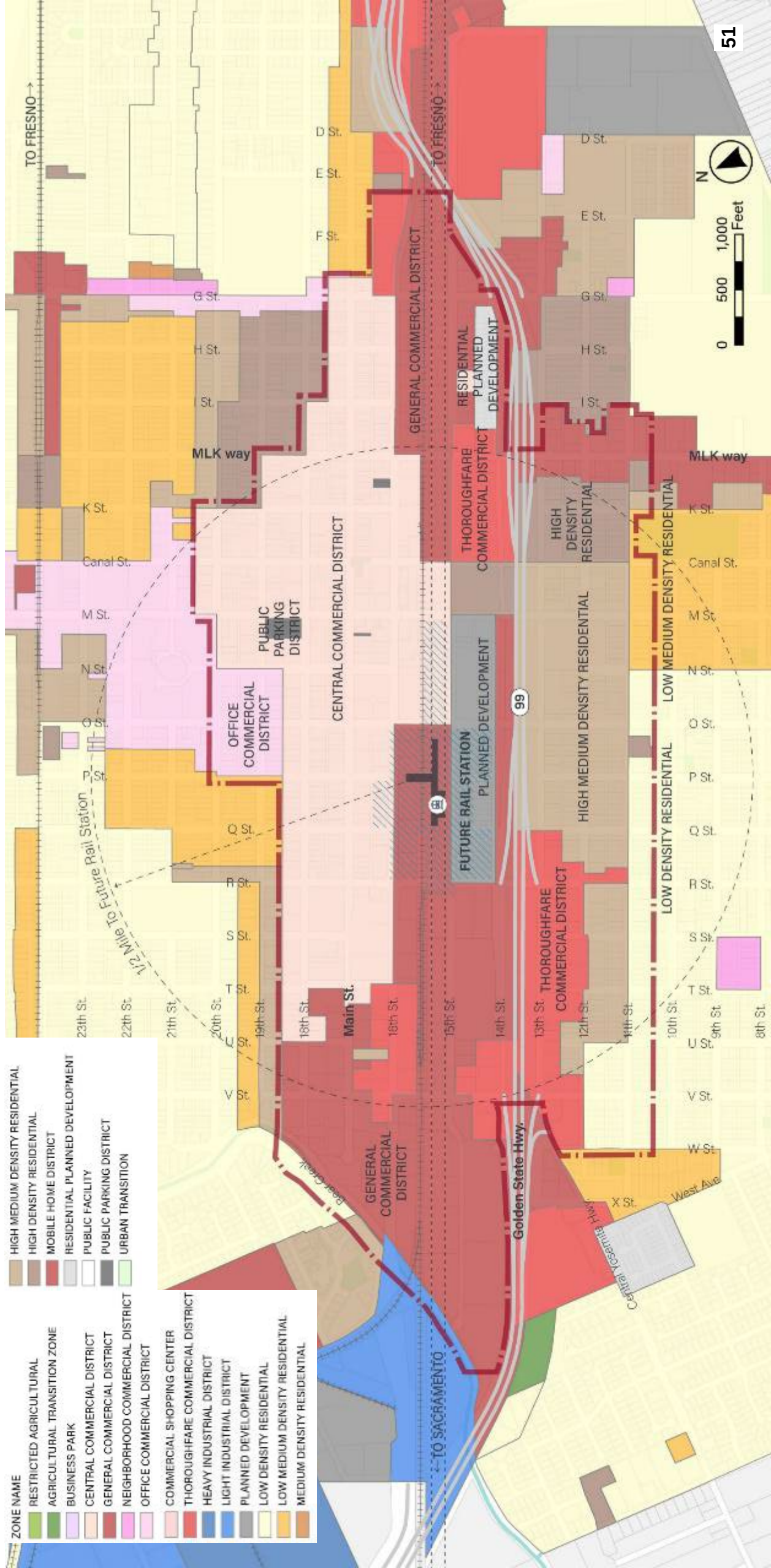


South Merced Neighborhood



ZONE NAME	
RESTRICTED AGRICULTURAL	
AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION ZONE	
BUSINESS PARK	
CENTRAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
OFFICE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER	
THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT	
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
LOW MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	

HIGH MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
MOBILE HOME DISTRICT	
RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT	
PUBLIC FACILITY	
PUBLIC PARKING DISTRICT	
URBAN TRANSITION	



Land Use

	Unknown		Government
	Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial		Quasi-Public
	Small Offices		Multi-Family Residential
	Auto Sales		Single-Family Residential
	Auto-Oriented Commercial		Utility & Railroad
	Industrial & Auto Services		Vacant

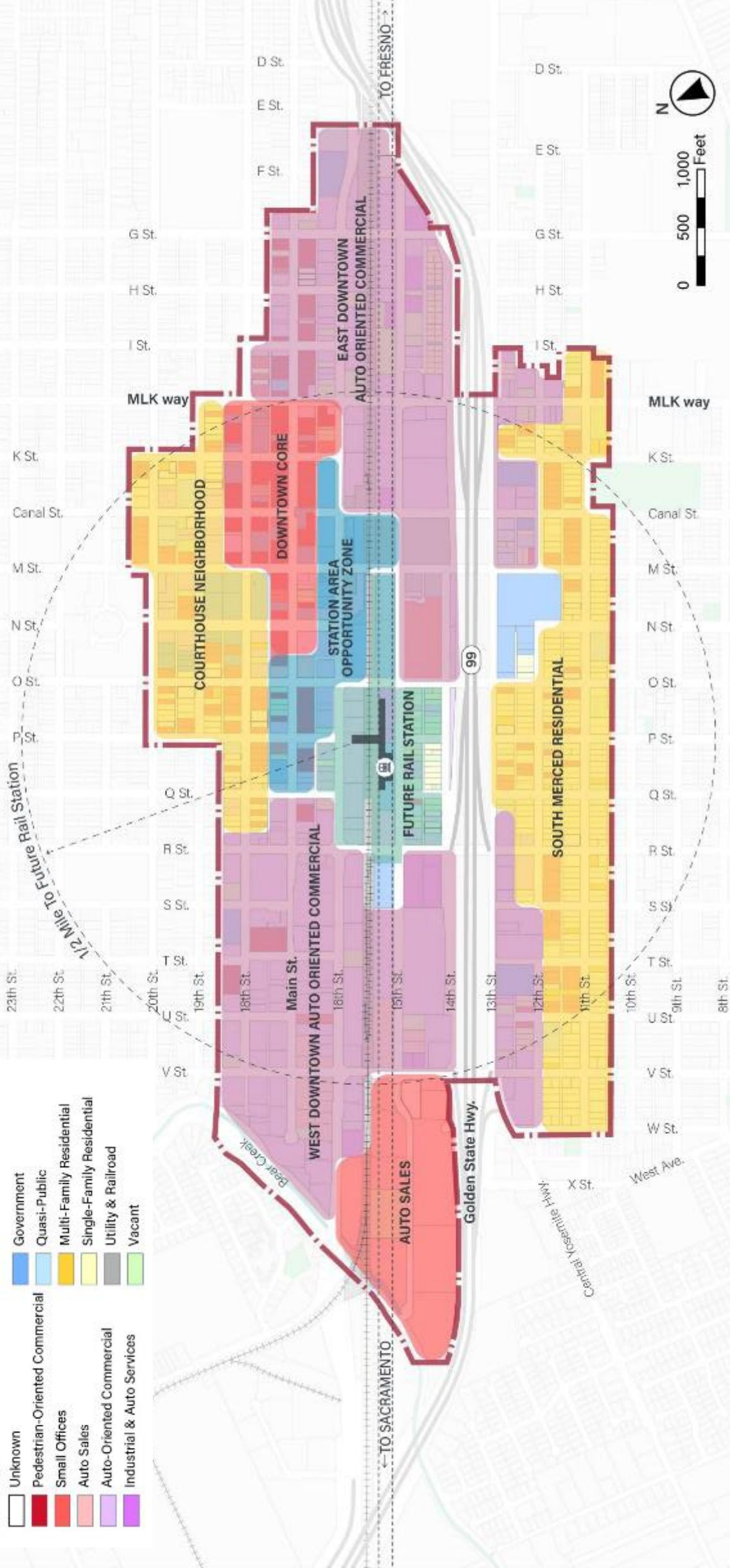
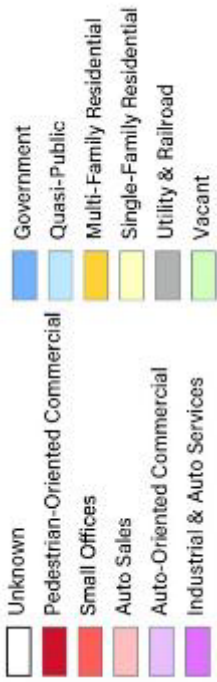


Existing Land Use

← TO MODESTO

TO FRESNO →

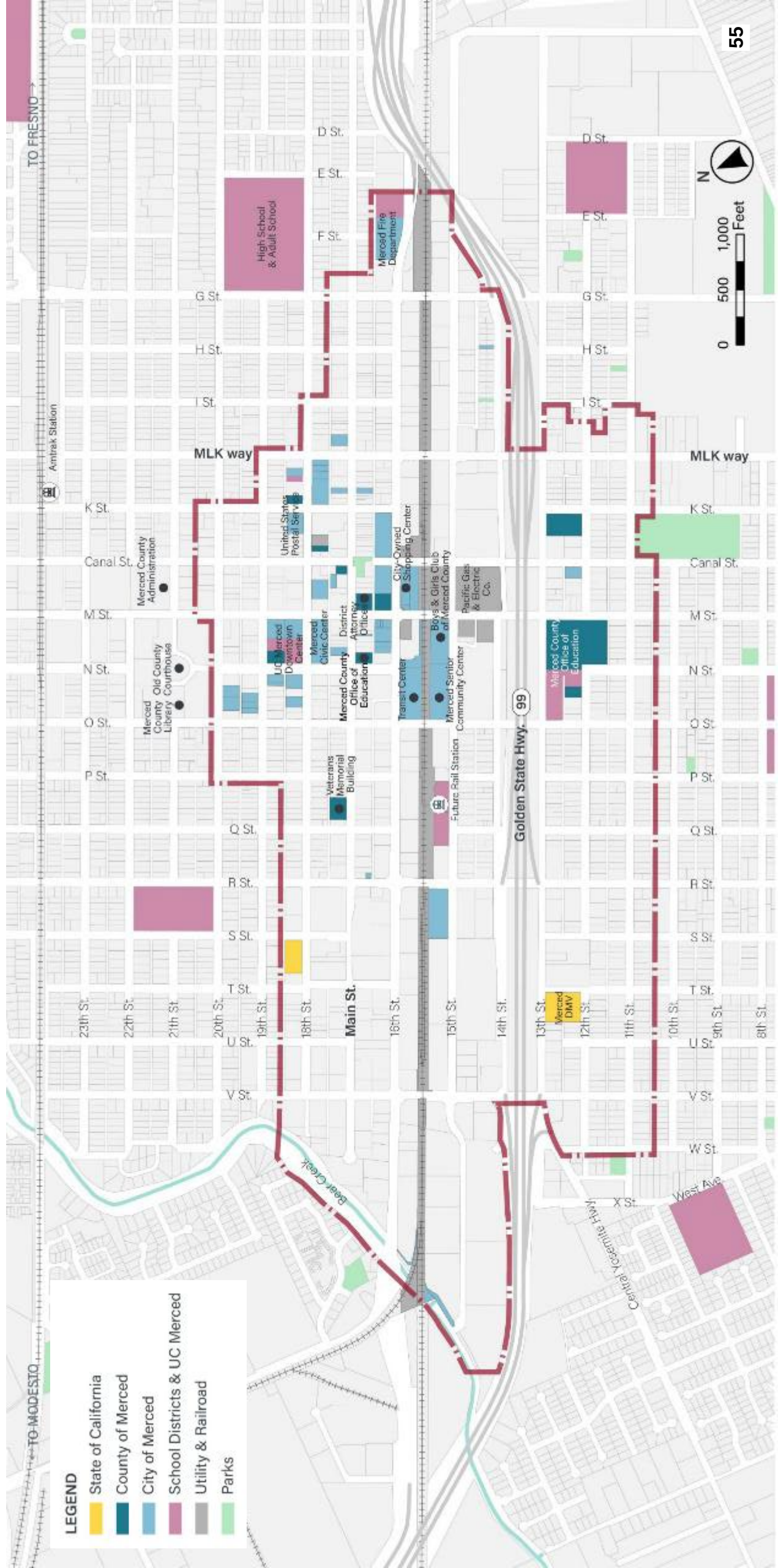
Land Use



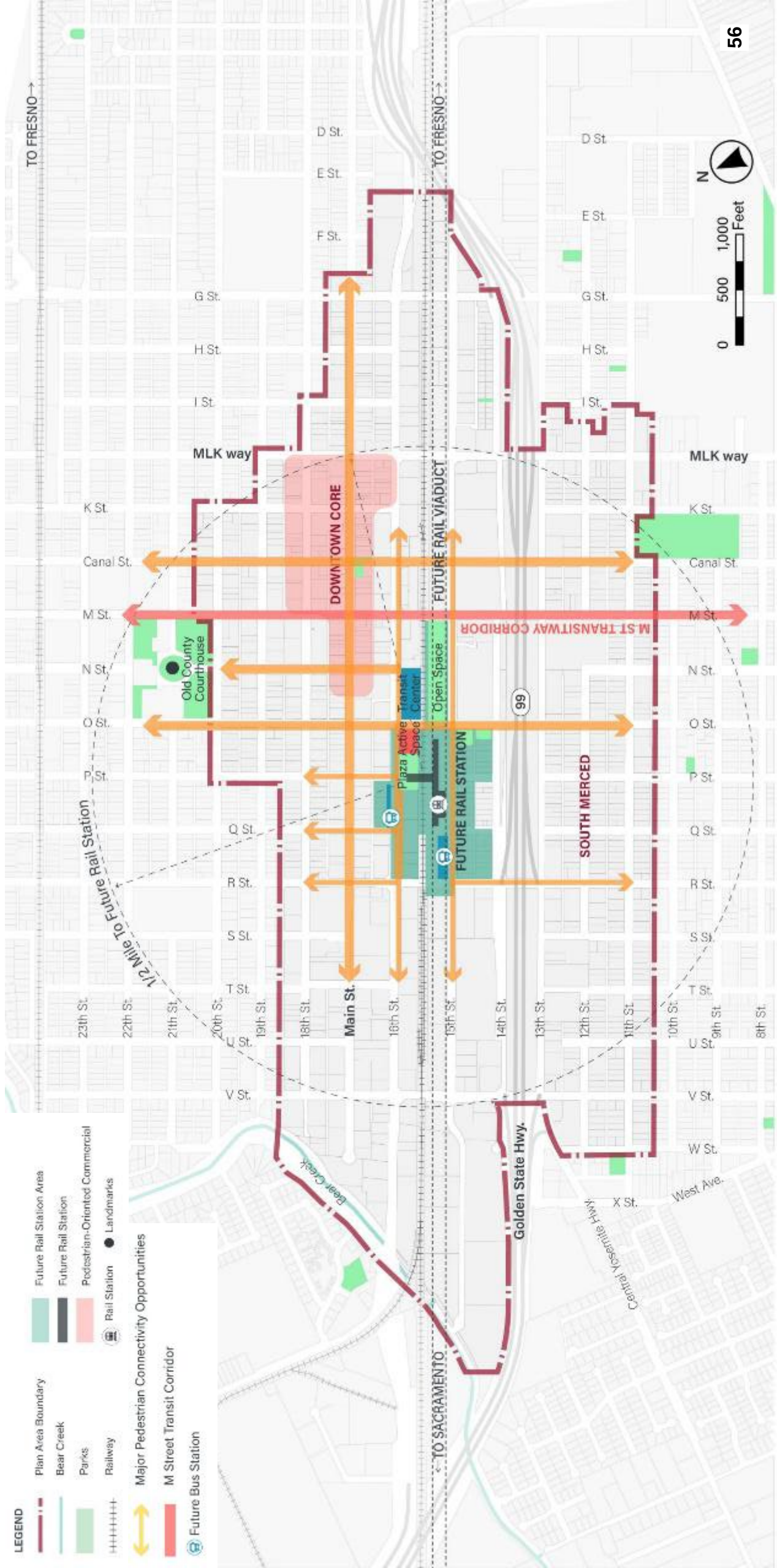
Building Frontage & Pedestrian Activation



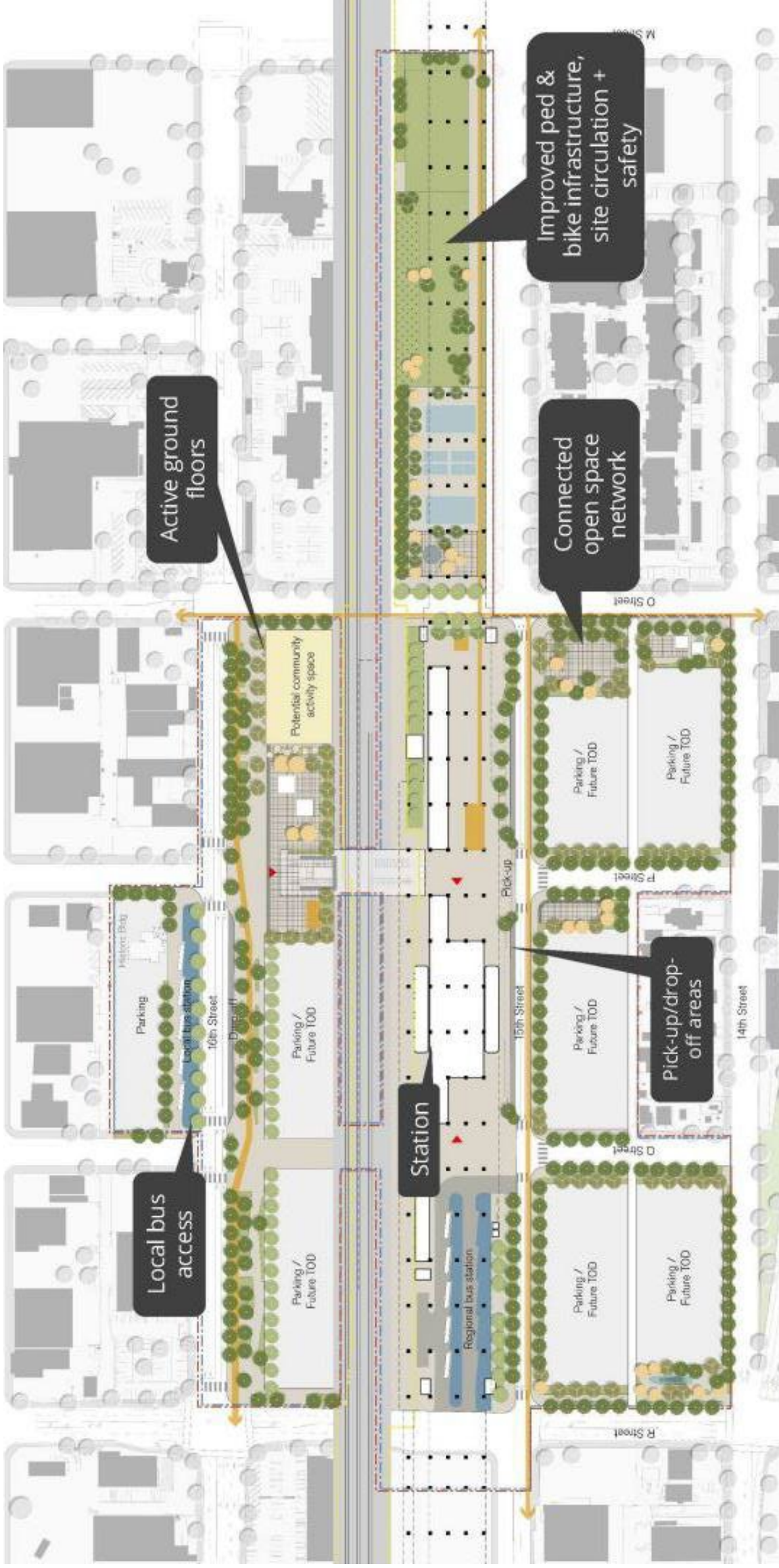
Public Land & Services

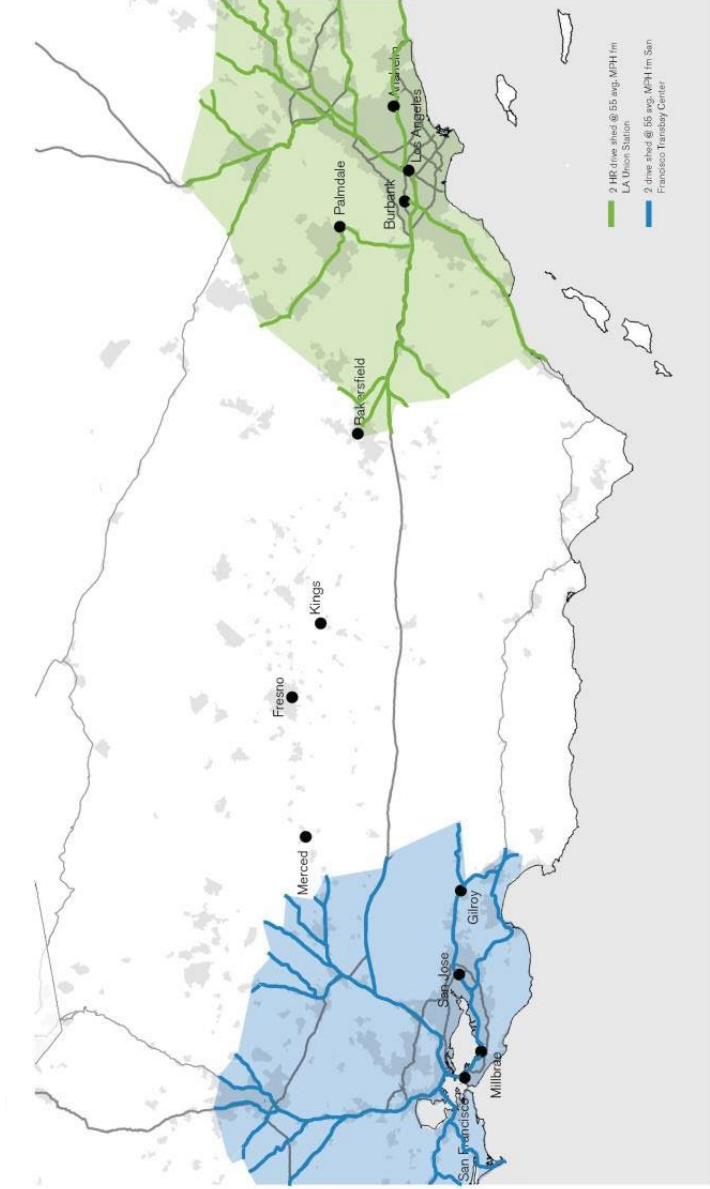


Future Station Area & Its Context

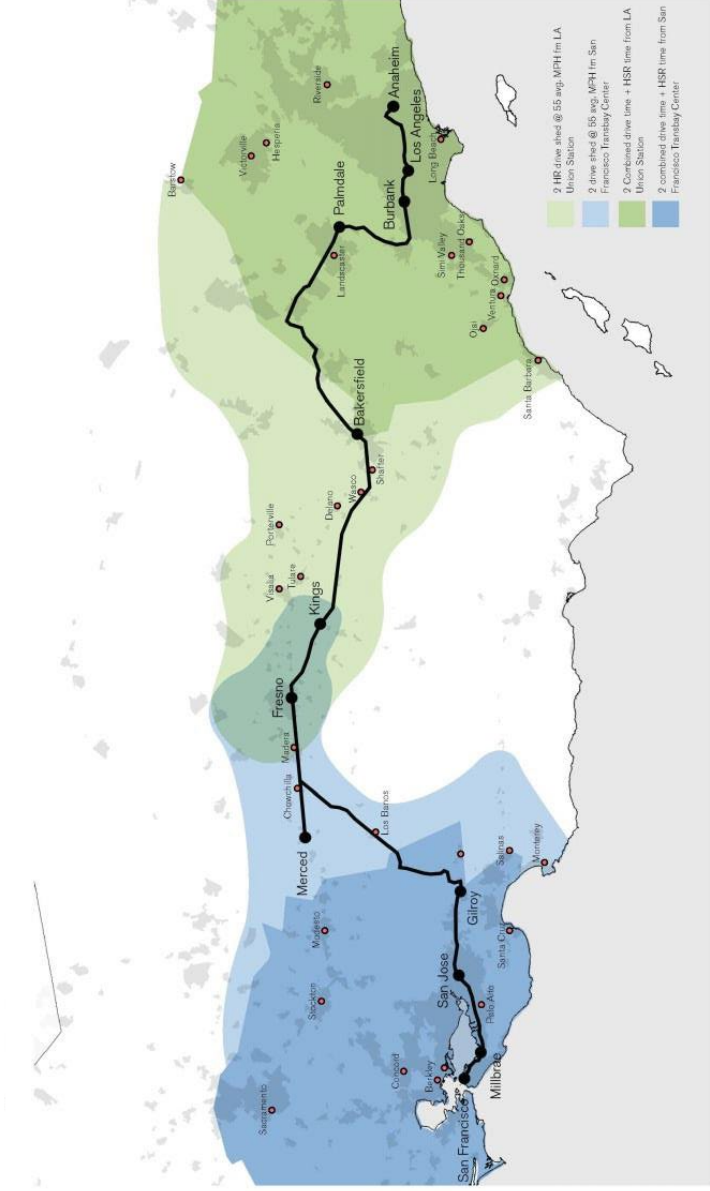


Future Station Area Site Plan



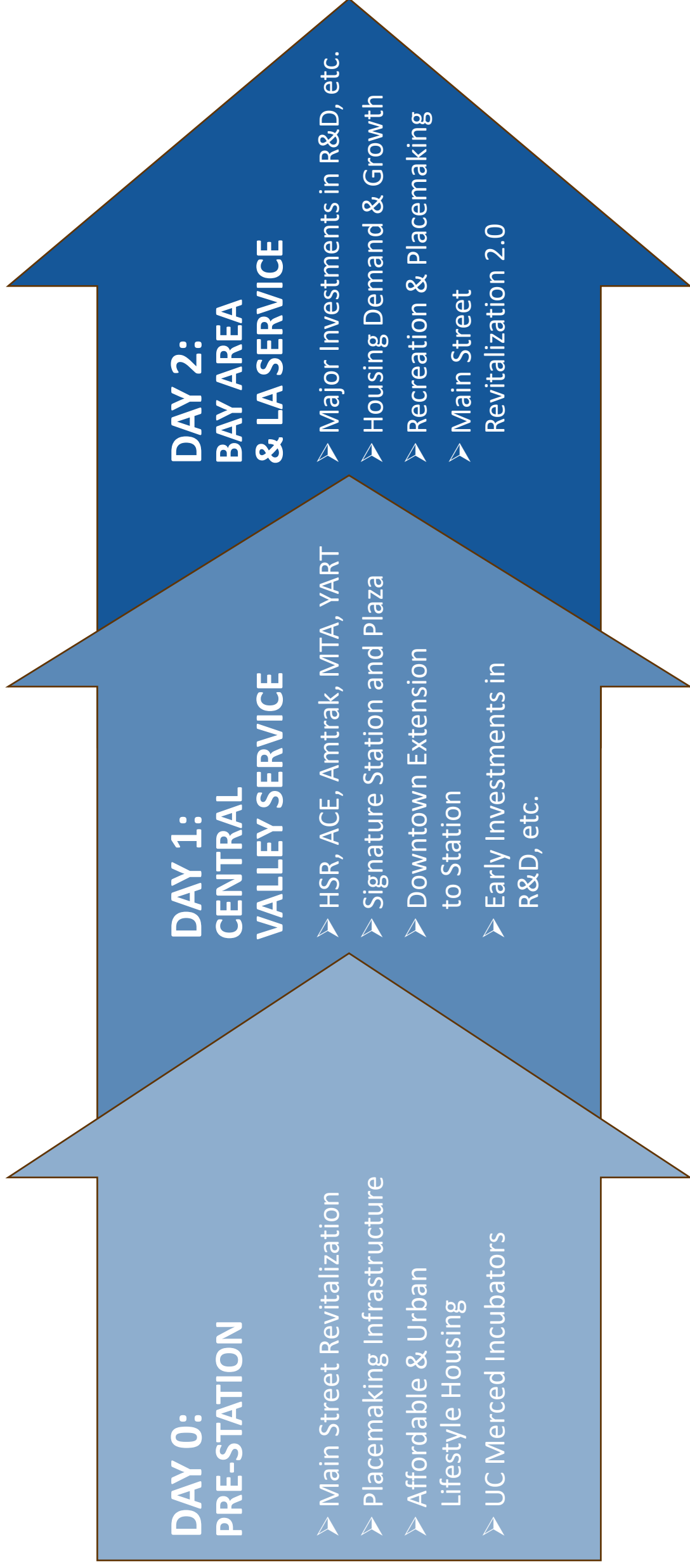


2-Hour Travel by Car from Bay Area and LA Currently
San Joaquin Valley cities are separated from large metro area.

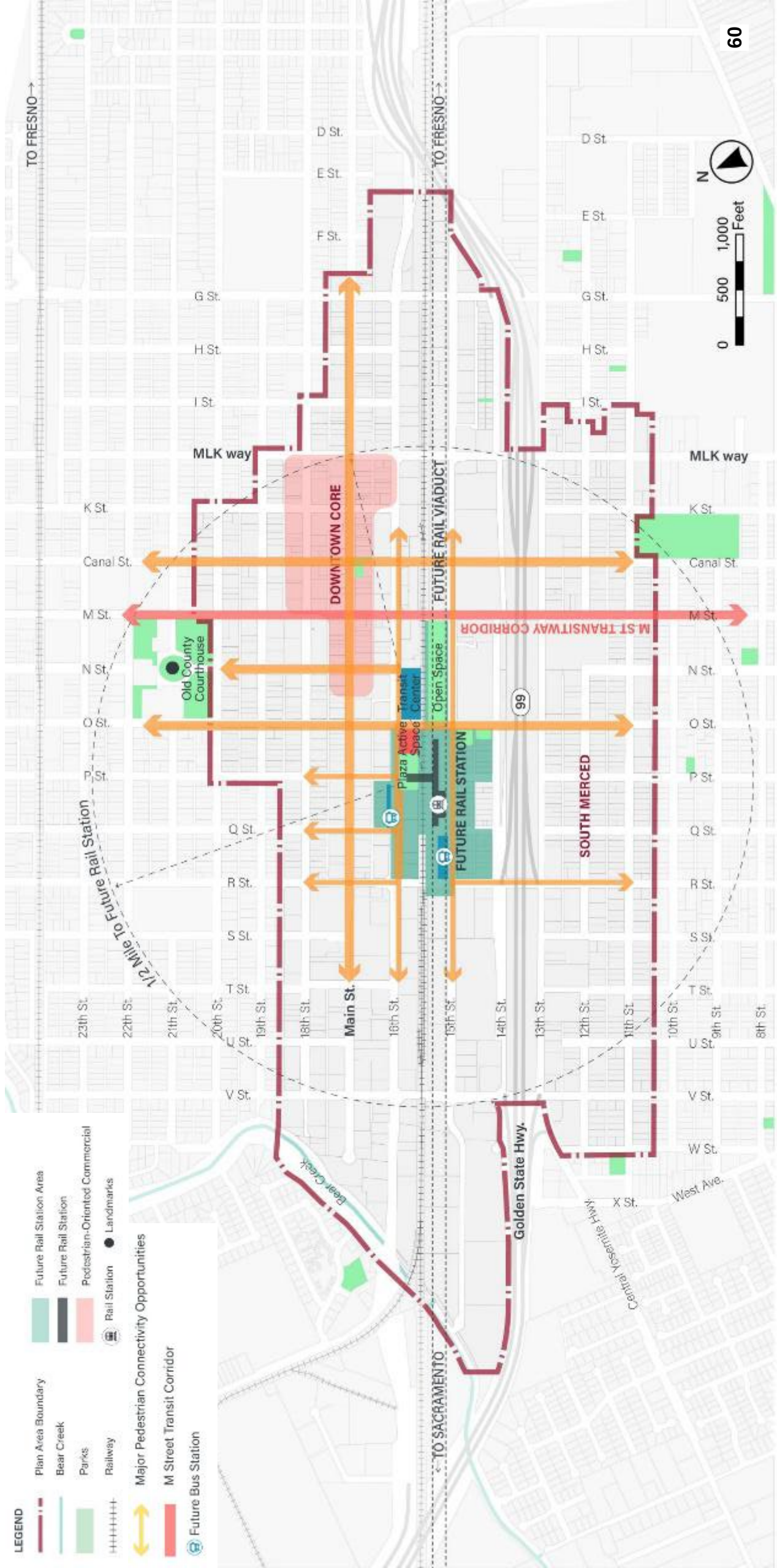


2-Hour Travel Extended with High Speed Rail
San Joaquin cities are integrated with large metro area.

Planning Phases Associated with High Speed Rail



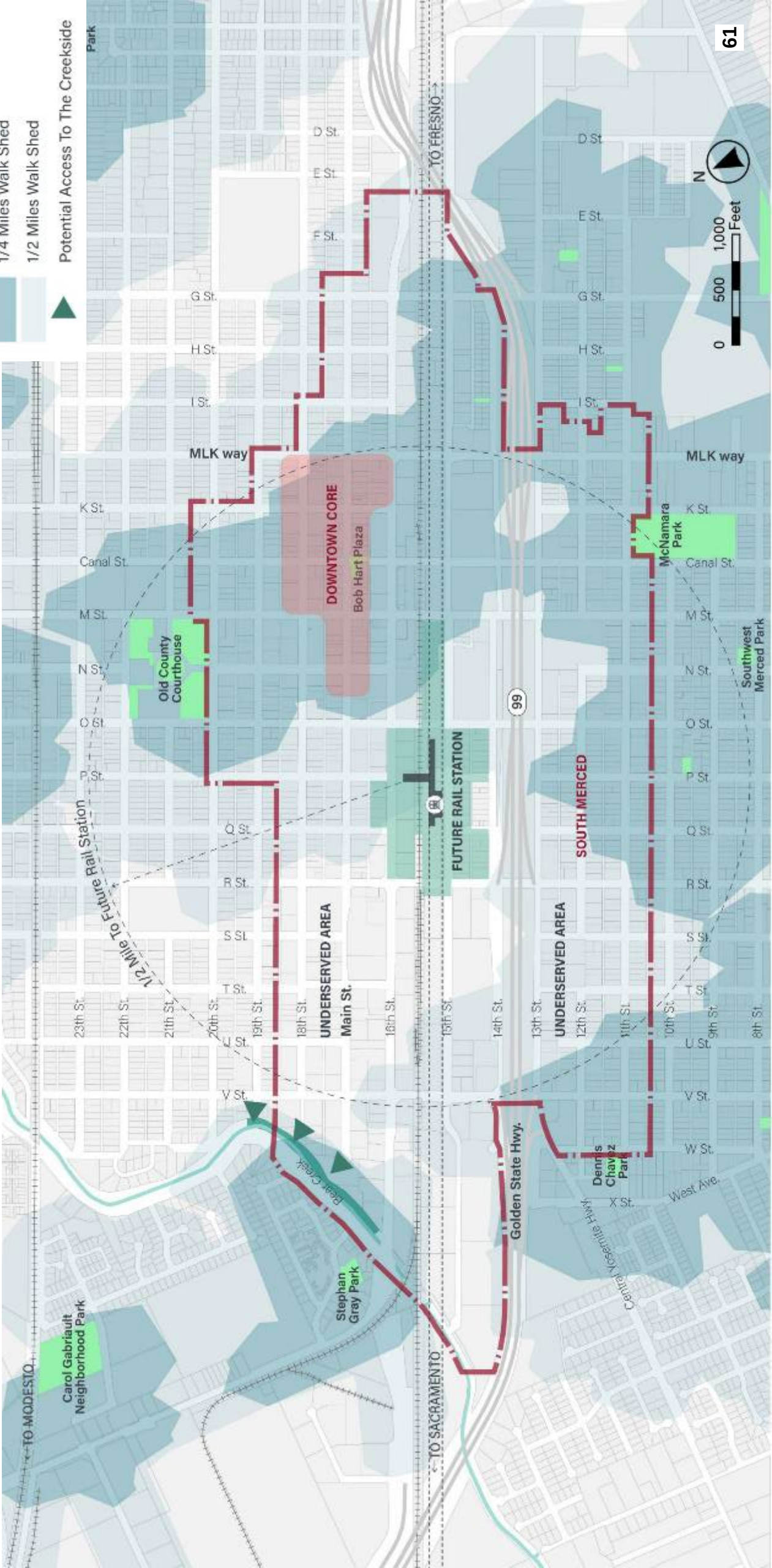
Future Station Area & Its Context



Parks & Open Spaces

LEGEND

- Potential Creekside Open Space
- Parks & Open Spaces
- 1/4 Miles Walk Shed
- 1/2 Miles Walk Shed
- Potential Access To The Creekside



Project Schedule

May 2025	Aug 2025	Nov 2025	Jan 2026	Apr 2026	Jun 2026
ANALYSIS		SCENARIOS	PLAN FRAMEWORK	PLAN DEVELOPMENT	ADOPTION

Stakeholder Interviews

CBO Workshop

Community Workshop

Survey

Community Advisory Focus Group

Alignment with General Plan

City Council and/or Planning Commission



| CITIZEN ADVISORY FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

01. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

When the General Plan update and Downtown Station Area Plan is complete, what would make you feel the process was a successful effort?

02. KEY CHALLENGES

Are there any additional key challenges in Merced that you feel the General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan should address?

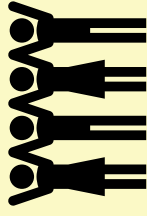
03. KEY OPPORTUNITIES

What are additional key opportunities in Merced that the General Plan and Downtown Station Areas Plan should enhance or protect?

NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

Implement the
engagement strategy
with the City



Finalize stakeholder
interviews



Collaboration with City
staff on the General
Plan Audit



Finalize Preparation of the
Existing Conditions and Trends
Workbook



- **CAFG Meeting #2 | Existing Conditions Overview**
 - City Council Chambers
 - Wednesday October 8, 2025, at 6pm
- **Community Workshop #1**
 - General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan
 - Sam Pipes Room, City Hall
 - Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 6pm
- **CAFG Meeting #3 | Downtown Station Area Plan Alternatives**
 - City Council Chambers
 - Monday, November 10, 2025, at 6pm
- **CAFG Meeting #4 | Assets, Issues, and Opportunities**
 - City Council Chambers
 - Wednesday January 28, 2026, at 6pm
- **CAFG Meeting #5 | Draft Vision and Guiding Principles**
 - February 2026 (date TBD)



City of Merced Citizen Advisory Focus Group

RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Authority

- A. The Citizen Advisory Focus Group (CAFG) is established by the City of Merced City Council. The CAFG is formed with the intent to enable the CAFG members to have robust discussions and reach consensus on key planning issues. However, keep in mind that the CAFG is subject to Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Conduct.

2. Membership

- A. The CAFG shall be comprised of up to fourteen (14) members, appointed by the City Council.
- B. Members are expected to continue to serve on the CAFG throughout the duration of the process.
- C. A vacancy created by the resignation of a member of the CAFG may be filled through an appointment by the City Council, if an interested and eligible person has applied for appointment. Refilling the position is not required.

3. Purpose and Functions

- A. The CAFG has been created by the City Council to advise the Planning Commission and the City Council on issues related to the preparation of a new General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan for the City of Merced. The purpose of the CAFG shall be to:
 - i. Advise the Planning Commission and City Council on understanding Merced community members' preferences for policies that should be considered in the new General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan.
 - ii. Examine the City's needs for planning in the areas of land use, circulation, housing, public services, open space, conservation, noise, safety, economic development, sustainability, community health, architectural design, and other topics, recognizing that policy changes in these areas may necessitate modifications to the General

Plan's regulatory implementation tools, such as the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

- iii. Provide feedback and recommendations to project staff and consultants.
- iv. Make suggestions in the form of recommendations to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

4. Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. Be an ambassador to the community to publicize and encourage public comment and participation in the process.
- B. Attend community workshops, as available.
- C. Review meeting materials in advance.
- D. Follow the CAFG Meeting Participation Guidelines.

5. Officers

- A. The City Council members on the CAFG will serve as Chair and Vice-Chair and will be appointed by the City Council.
- B. Duties of the Chair
 - i. The Chair shall preside and preserve order at all regular and special meetings of the CAFG.
 - ii. The Chair shall state every question coming before the CAFG and announce the recommendations and positions of the CAFG on all subjects. The Chair shall execute all formal documents on behalf of the CAFG.
- C. Chair-Succession

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties and obligations of the Chair. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Planning Manager or his/her designated staff member shall, if necessary, call the CAFG to order, and a temporary Chair shall be elected from among the members present. Upon arrival of the Chair or Vice-Chair, the temporary Chair shall relinquish to the Chair upon conclusion of the item then before the CAFG.
- D. Chair-Rights

The presiding Chair shall be afforded all of the rights or privileges of a CAFG member by reason of their occupying the Chair and may move, second, and debate from the Chair.

6. Meetings

- A. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the CAFG shall be held at a time and place designated by the Chair in coordination with the Project Managers, City Clerk, IT Support, and consultants. The schedule may be subject to revision over the course of the General Plan and Downtown Station Area Plan process and at the request of a majority of the CAFG.
- B. Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called by the Project Managers.

C. Quorum

The presence of the majority of members (50 percent plus 1 member of the CAFG) shall be required for the scheduled meeting to be held and for the transaction of business. Decisions may be made based on the affirmative vote of the majority of those present at the meeting. In the absence of an official CAFG quorum, the members present may discuss matters on the agenda of interest to the Committee, but no decisions or recommendations will be made.

D. Attendance at Meetings

- i. If any CAFG member cannot attend a meeting, they shall notify the staff Project Manager as soon as possible, but in no event later than 12:00 p.m. on the meeting day.
- ii. CAFG members who miss more than three (3) CAFG meetings are subject to removal and replacement by the City Council.

7. Advisement and Voting

- A. Decision-making by the CAFG should occur through dialog and consensus, whenever possible.
- B. For decisions which cannot be reached by consensus, the presence of a quorum and the affirmative vote of the quorum is required.

City of Merced

Citizen Advisory Focus Group

Meeting Participation Guidelines

1. Start and end on time.
2. Everyone participates.
3. Be open.
4. Listen actively.
5. Help the group achieve desired outcomes.
6. Stay focused on the topic.
7. Raise any issues of concern.
8. Meet the schedule contained in the City Council-approved work program.



MERCED DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN DISCUSSION ON DSAP GOALS

August 19, 2025

Goals are desired future outcomes. In planning documents, goals describe a community's vision in general terms. Goals are not policies. Policies describe intended ways to get to a goal, whereas goals are aspirational statements. Clear goals help point policies and future actions in the right direction.

We request that CAFG members provide feedback regarding the following goals, as described in Merced's current General Plan, 2007 Downtown Strategy, Downtown TBID, and High Speed Rail Authority. CAFG members might suggest better ways of saying something, react to statements that don't ring true, or think of a goal that's missing. After receiving CAFG input, a set of goals will be developed for City Council consideration.

Considering goals early in a planning process helps to understand community priorities. That said, DSAP goals will remain a "working draft" that can be refined as issues become better understood and policies are considered.

General Plan 2030

The City of Merced's General Plan, specifically the Vision 2030 General Plan contains a variety of goals and policies relevant to the downtown area's future development and revitalization. Important dimensions include:

A City and Regional Center: The General Plan aims to maintain and strengthen downtown's role as the regional center for commercial and cultural destinations, employment, education, government, and social services.

Vibrancy and Attractiveness: The General Plan seeks to create a thriving and inviting downtown environment that prioritizes pedestrian activity. Residential and office uses are encouraged on upper floors to bring more people downtown and support local businesses.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections: The General Plan prioritizes strengthening pedestrian and bicycle connections within the downtown and surrounding area to enhance accessibility and promote active transportation.

Jobs and Housing Affordability: Goals include increasing job opportunities and improving housing affordability, particularly within the planning area.

Infrastructure and Facilities: General Plan policies call for adequate infrastructure to support planned growth in the planning area.

Sense of Place: Celebrate the human scale and historic charm of central Merced, its diversity of destinations, and its walkability in the downtown core and Courthouse Neighborhood. , local businesses, entertainment options, and proximity to the rail station.

Economic Development: Central Merced is recognized as a prime location for fostering economic growth, creating jobs, and attracting investment, especially in the context of the future rail station with High-Speed Rail (HSR).

2007 Downtown Strategy

The current General Plan cites six fundamental strategies cited by the 2007 Downtown Strategy document. These strategies have been translated into General Plan policies and actions.

1. Create a superior ambiance.
2. Create exceptional Downtown residential neighborhoods.
3. Build a distinguished Downtown.
4. Solidify Downtown's role as the arts, entertainment and dining destination.
5. Adopt and enforce policies to protect and enhance Downtown.
6. Connecting Downtown to the rest of the community.

Downtown Merced TBID¹

Based on the provided search results and general understanding of Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs), the Downtown Merced TBID likely has goals focused on boosting tourism and economic vitality within the designated downtown area. While the exact goals for Merced's downtown TBID are not explicitly detailed, we can infer them from the general purpose of TBIDs and the broader context of downtown revitalization efforts in Merced:

¹

https://www.mercedmainstreet.com/#:~:text=The%20MMSA's%20goals%20include:%20**Creating%20a,district%20with%20interesting%20shops%20and%20exciting%20restaurants.

Promote the destination: TBIDs utilize funds for targeted advertising campaigns, public relations, social media, content creation, and sales programs to raise awareness and attract visitors.

Enhance the visitor experience: This can include supporting events, improving infrastructure like streetscaping and signage, and addressing issues related to safety and ambiance.

Increase revenue for businesses: TBID activities aim to increase sales and profitability of its constituents.

Drive economic development: By attracting tourists and increasing spending, TBIDs contribute to job creation and overall economic growth in the area.

High Speed Rail Authority

The High Speed Rail Authority is proposing to relocate the Merced Station from its current at-grade location between G Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way (approved by the Authority in April 2012), to a new location on an elevated structure between O and R Streets in downtown Merced. This new station location, proposed by the City of Merced in 2016, is supported by the Authority and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

With this new location, the Merced Station is envisioned to be an integrated intermodal station serving high-speed rail, San Joaquin Amtrak through the Merced Intermodal Track Connection (MITC) External Link infrastructure project, and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) External Link. Many aspects of the station's design are still to be determined and will need to be accompanied by environmental analysis.

Here are the key goals the Authority has for its station areas:²

Create Vibrant Station Communities: The Authority refers to its stations as "Station Communities," signifying a vision where the stations serve as focal points for development and activity, fostering community hubs and attracting jobs to the surrounding areas.

Encourage Sustainable and Functional Development: The Authority's plans emphasize sustainability, functionality, and the use of best practices in the design and development of each station and its surrounding area. Station designs prioritize pedestrian access and ensure transit stops are within a short walking distance.

² <https://hsr.ca.gov/high-speed-rail-in-california/station-communities/#:~:text=Vision%20and%20planning:%20both%20playing,Watch%20Conceptual%20Station%20Community>

Integrate with Existing Transportation Networks: Stations are envisioned as multimodal hubs, seamlessly integrating with existing transit, airports, and highways to maximize intermodal transportation opportunities and enhance connectivity within California's overall transportation system.

Drive Economic Development: HSR stations are seen as powerful tools to attract investment, stimulate real estate markets, and generate economic growth, particularly within the station areas and according to ScienceDirect.com possibly increasing land values.

Foster Smart and Sustainable Growth: By anchoring development in city cores and promoting transit-oriented development (TOD), HSR stations aim to reduce sprawl, limit the need for highway expansion, and support more sustainable land use patterns.

Enhance Local Transit Networks: The stations are expected to boost ridership on local transit systems by providing seamless connections to HSR, creating a virtuous cycle of investment in better service and infrastructure.

Reflect Local Character and Identity: The Authority aims to collaborate with local communities and cities to ensure that station designs and development reflect the unique identity, history, and culture of the surrounding neighborhoods.