

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

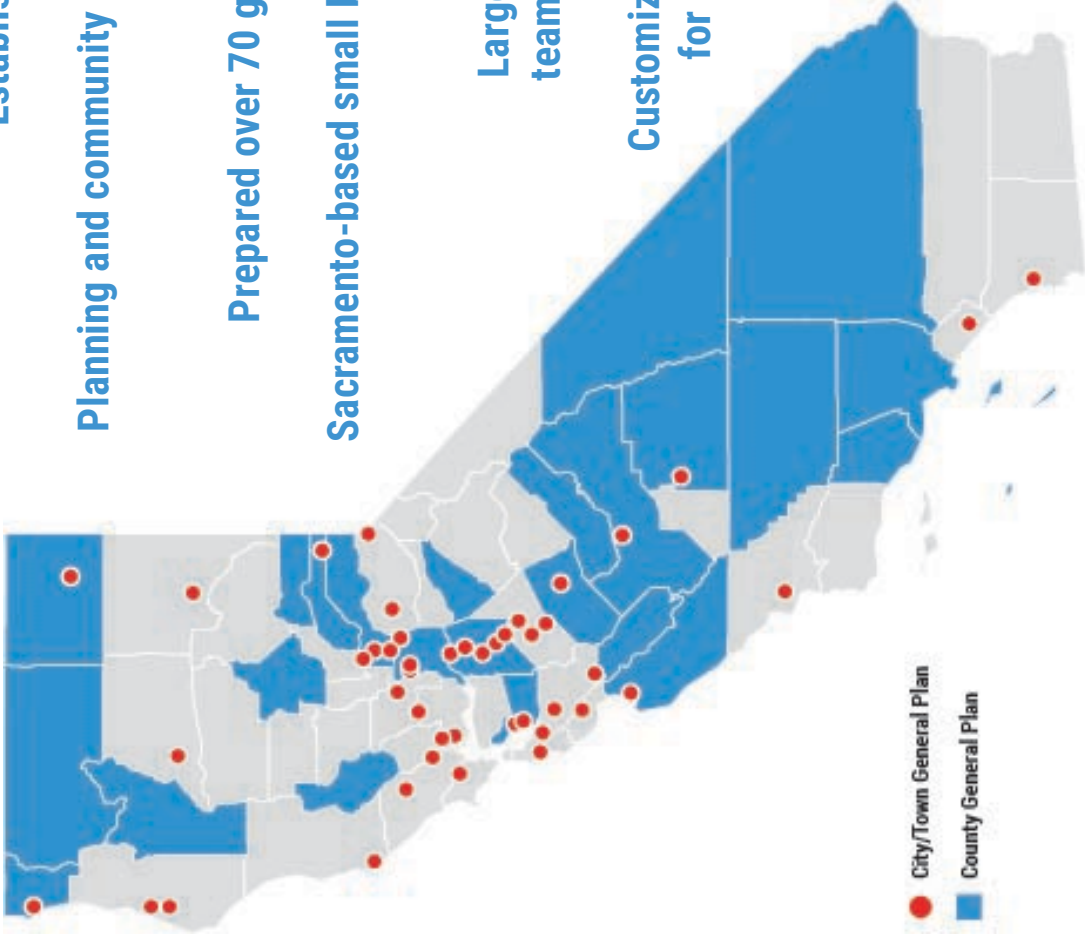
Meeting Objectives

- 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





Jim Stickley
PIC, Public Realm Design



Matt Taecker
PM, Land Use & Built Form



Deeksha Rawat
Sr Planner, Engagement



Zihan Zhao
Jr Designer, GIS Specialist

PRIME CONSULTANT
MINTIER HARNISH
Project Administration
Community Engagement
(coordinated with General Plan)

SUBCONSULTANTS



Jim Damkowitz
DKS Associates



Roger Dale
Natelson Dale Group



Egon Terplan
UC Berkeley & Sr. Advisor
North Valley THRIVE and HSRA



Sara Allinder
Provost & Pritchard



Sheila Hakimipour
URBAN Diversity Design

Multimodal Transportation

Economic Development

Leveraging High Speed Rail

Civil Engineering

Outreach & Engagement

- **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

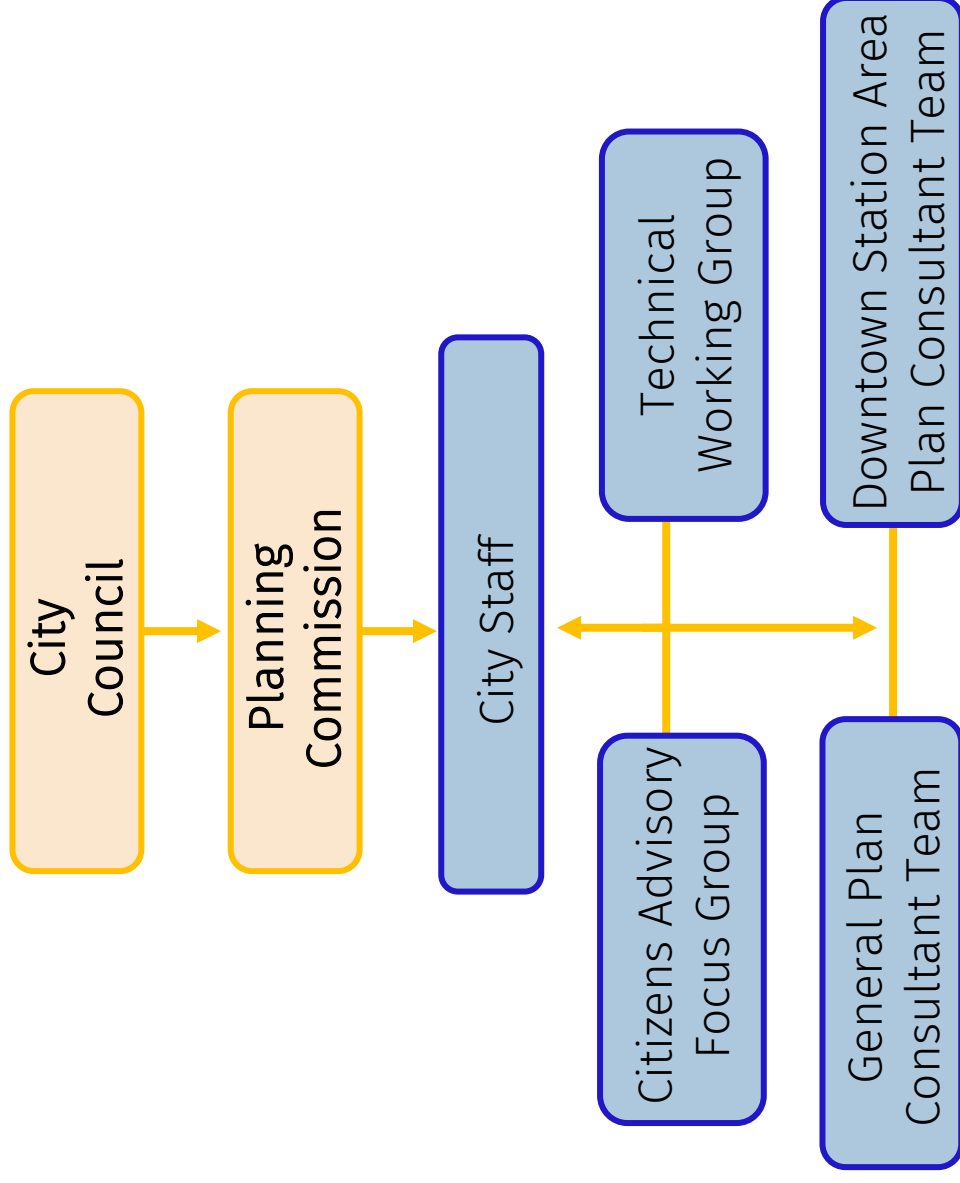
Recreation and Parks Commission:

- 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

- 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 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

- 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

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



| 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

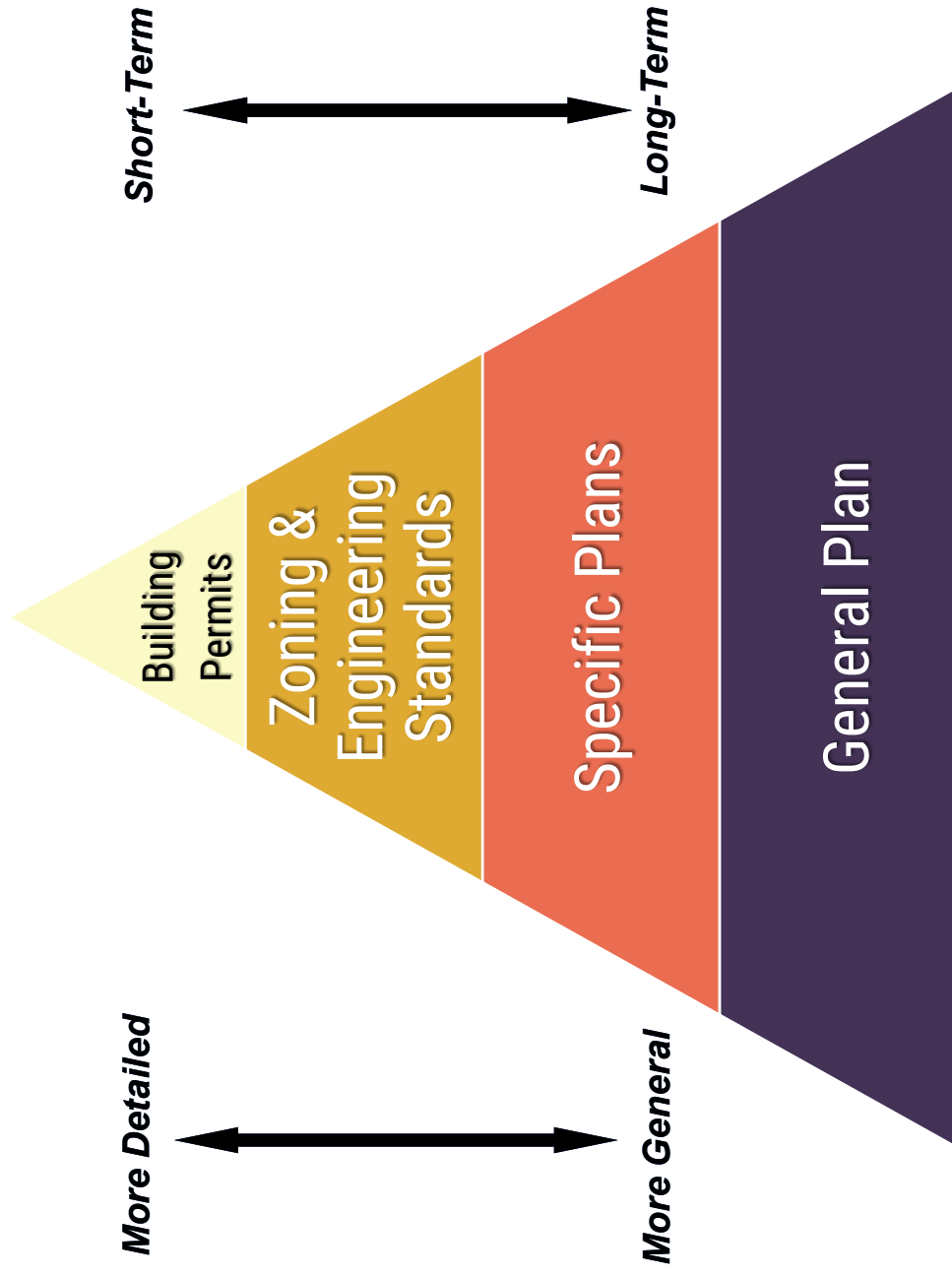


Comprehensive



Long -term

General Plan Characteristics



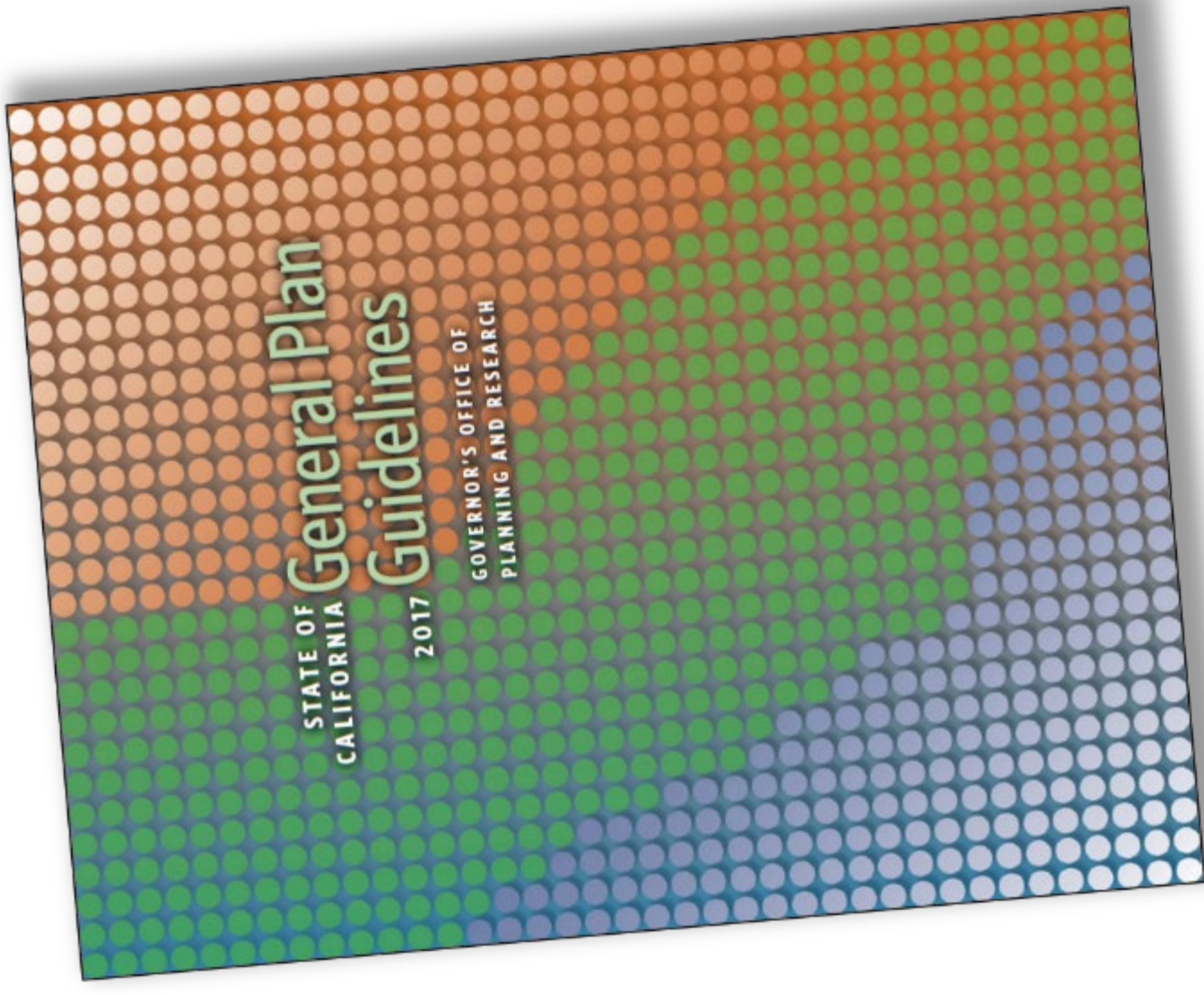
- **Covers an identified planning area**

- **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



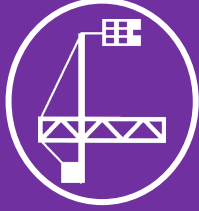
GHG Emissions



Climate Change
Adaptation



Wildfires and Flooding



Housing Sites and
Streamlining

Focus of the General Plan Update

Comprehensive update of
the 2030 General Plan
elements

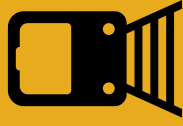


Integrate recent plans and studies
while incorporating previously
approved annexations



Focus of the General Plan Update

Prepare and integrate
the Downtown Station
Area Plan

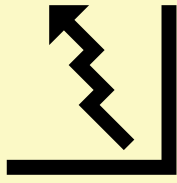


Dedicated to providing
opportunities and access for all,
with a foundation of respect,
belonging, and fairness.

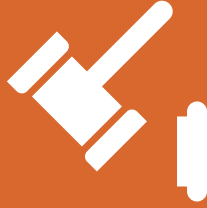


Focus of the General Plan Update

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

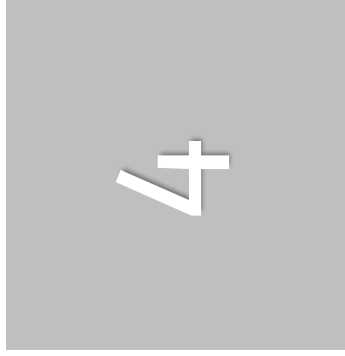


General Plan Project Schedule

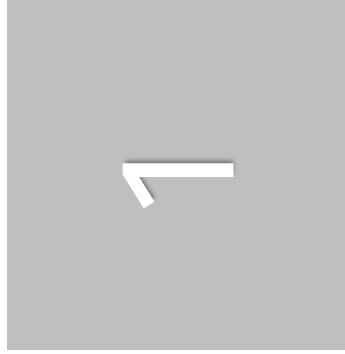
	2025					2026					2027									
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1: Project Initiation	* Kick-off Meeting * Newsletter #1 * All-hands Study Session * Stakeholder Interviews																			
Phase 2: Existing Conditions and Trends					* Existing 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 * Admin 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

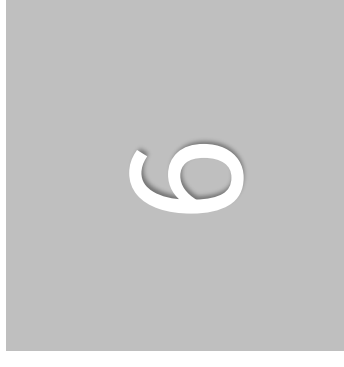
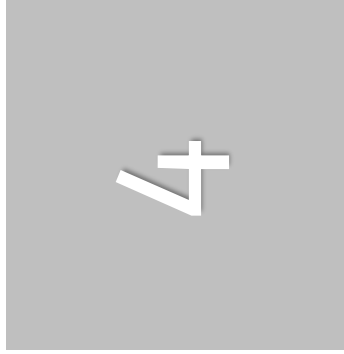
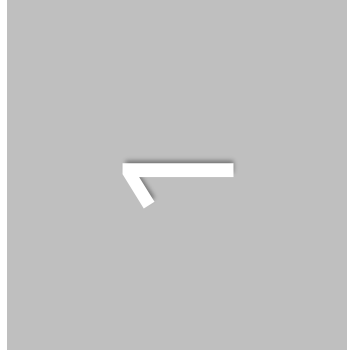


Existing
Conditions
and
Trends

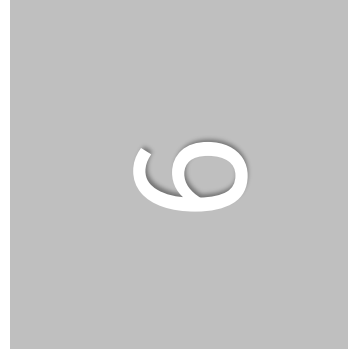
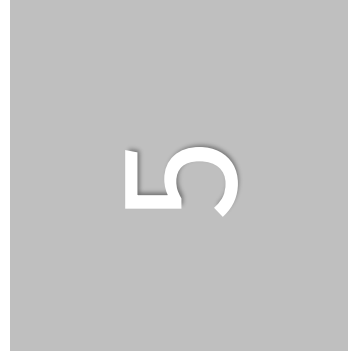
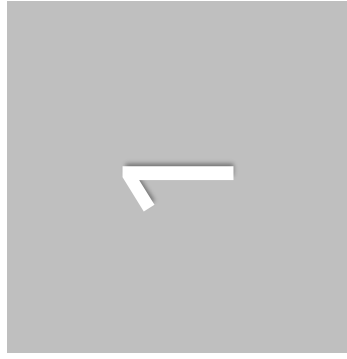


Project Phases

Community
Vision

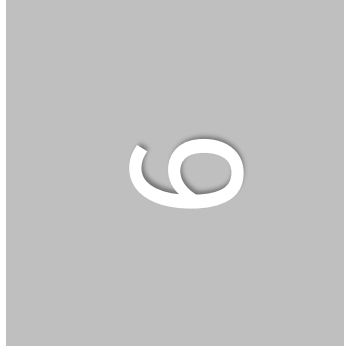
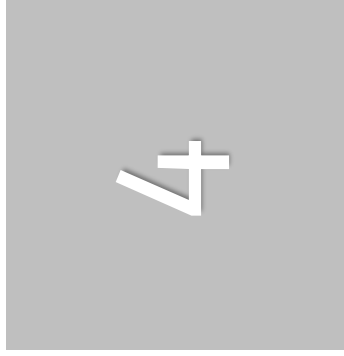
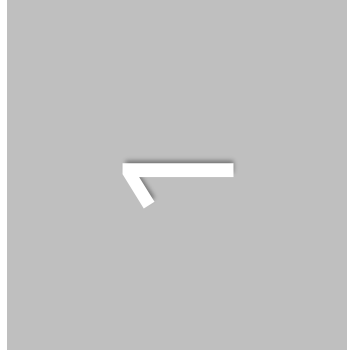


Project Phases



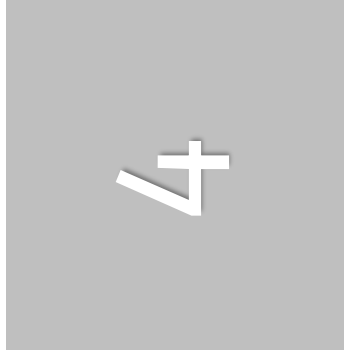
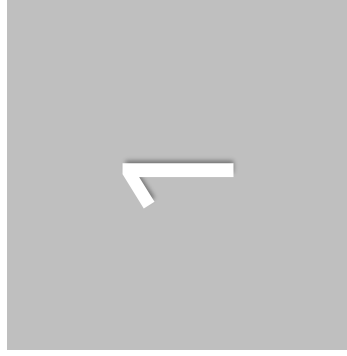
Prepare the
General
Plan

Project Phases



Prepare the
Program EIR

Project Phases



Adoption



| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO



MERCED

PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

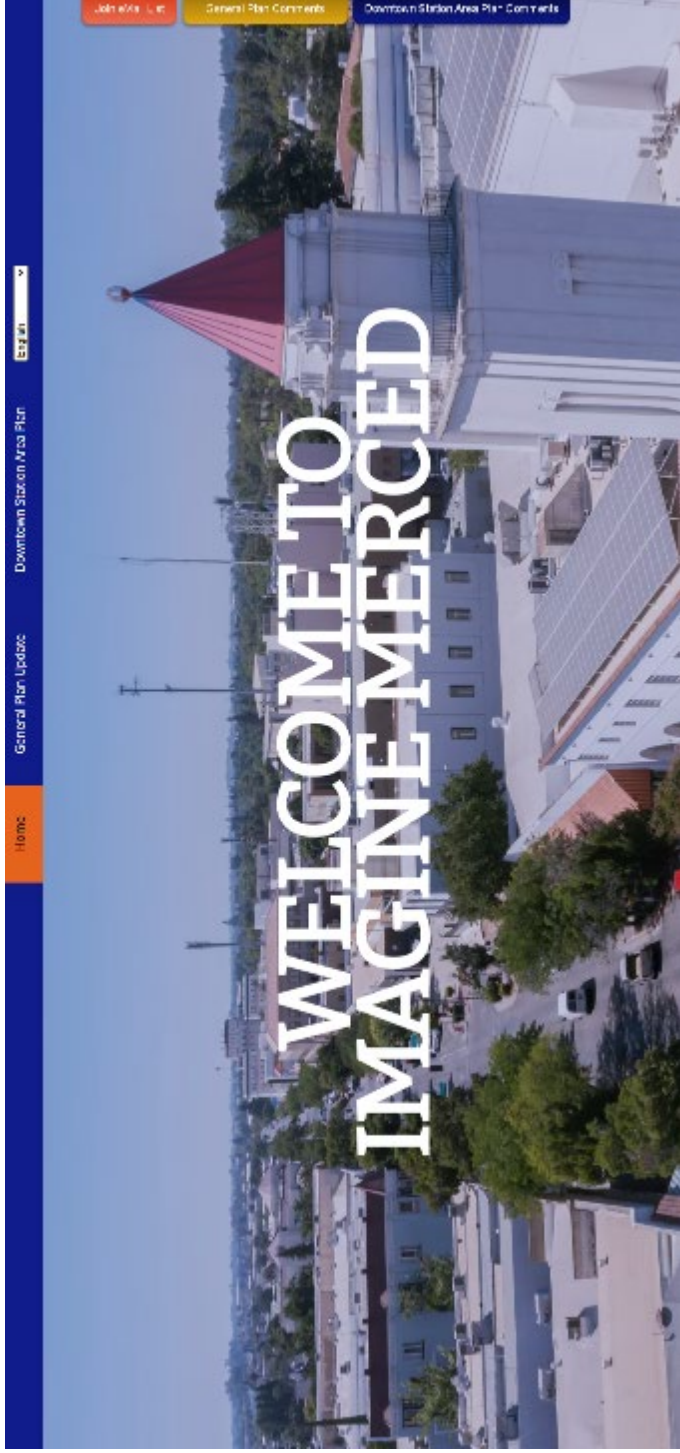
PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



www.imaginemerced.com

Email List

GP Comments

DSAP Comments

Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

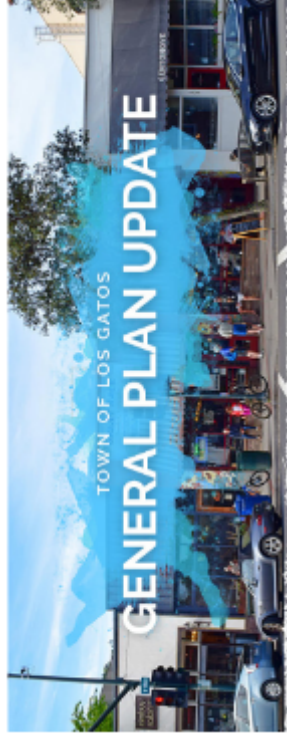
PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



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	Josua Lan lanj@cityofmerced.gov	Frank Quintero quintero@cityofmerced.gov
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area de la estación del centro?

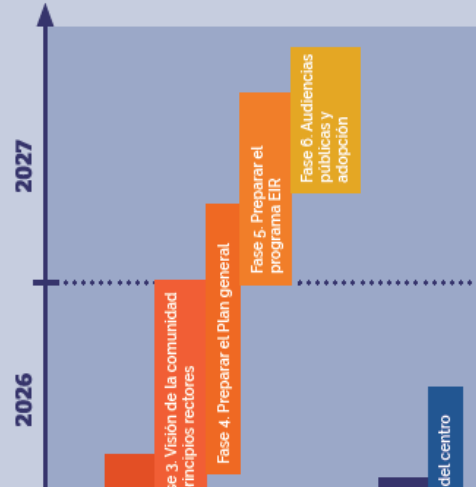
SAP, por sus siglas en inglés) inspirará y regulará el cambio en el Merced y la nueva estación de tren. La futura estación de tren de a el único lugar donde Amtrak San Joaquín, Altamont Corridor SRI se unen, además de nuevas instalaciones para Merced ara el éxito del centro de Merced como un próspero 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 1. Visión de la comunidad (principios rectores)

Fase 4. Preparar el Plan general

Fase 5. Preparar el programa EIR

Fase 6. Audiencias públicas y adopción

Tarea 1. Participación de la comunidad y las partes interesadas

Tarea 2. Plan del área de la estación del centro

DSAP

1

2

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

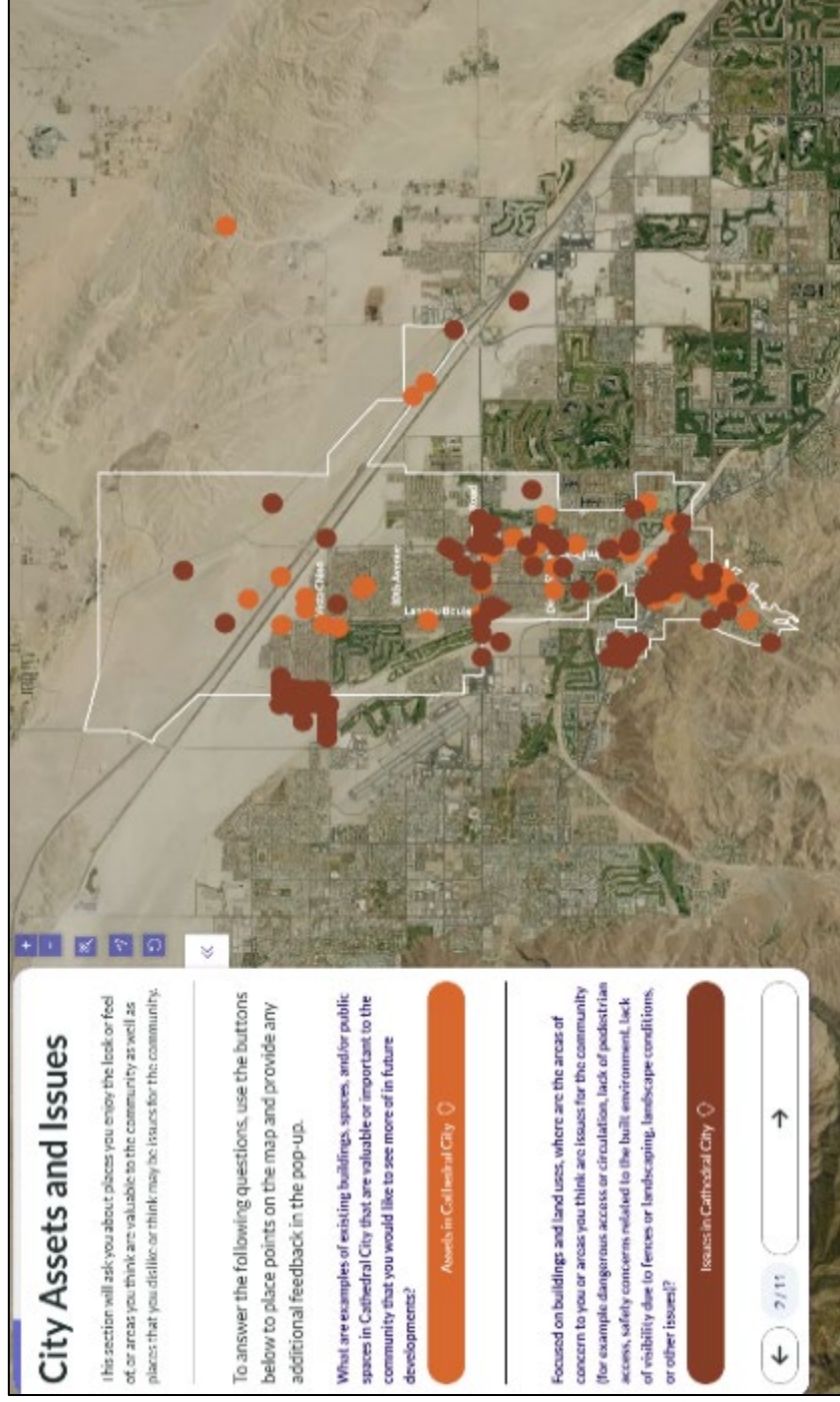
PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

PROJECT WEBSITE

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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

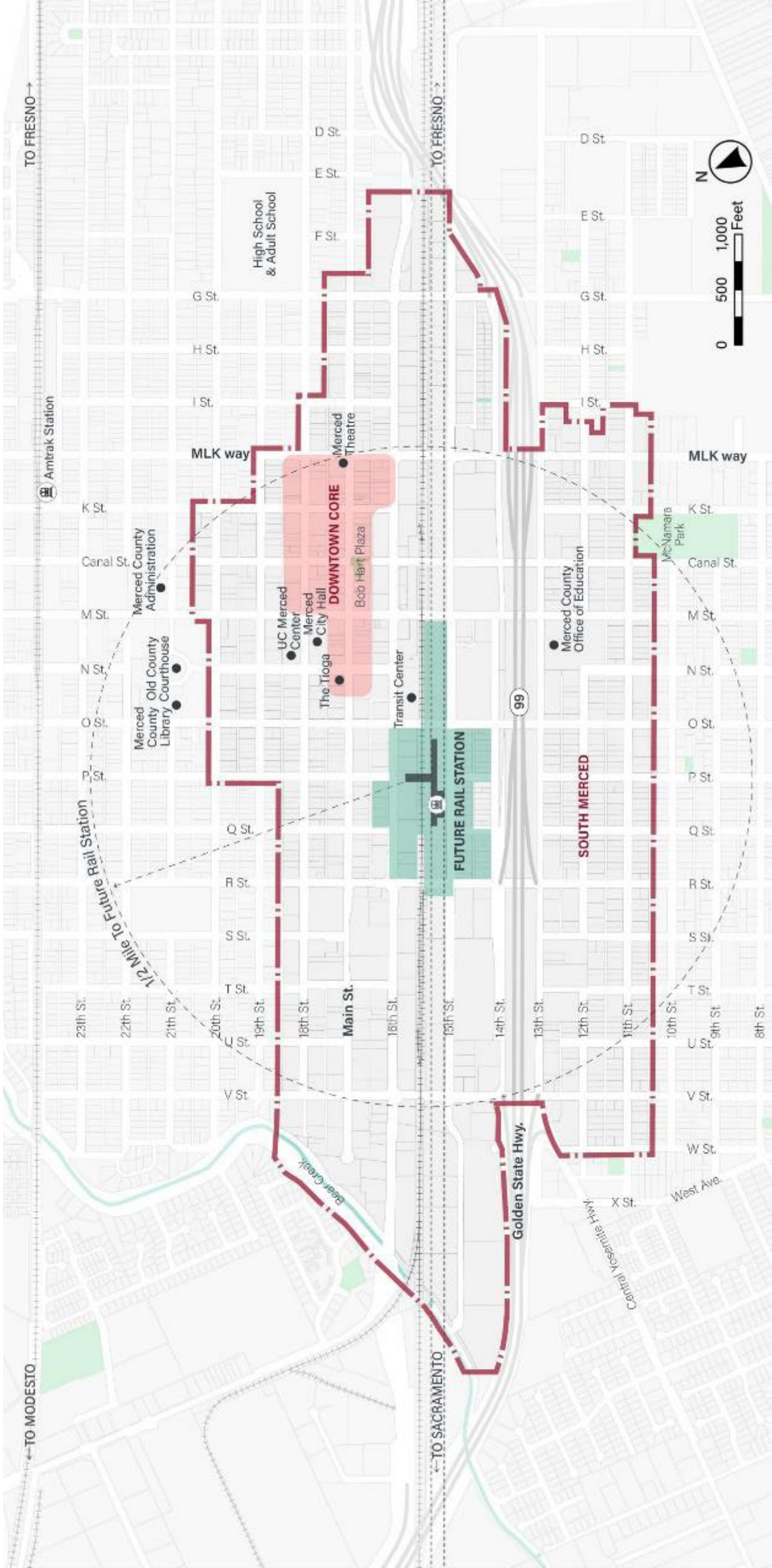
Please refer to handout for more discussion themes.

Downtown Area and Station Area Opportunities and Synergies

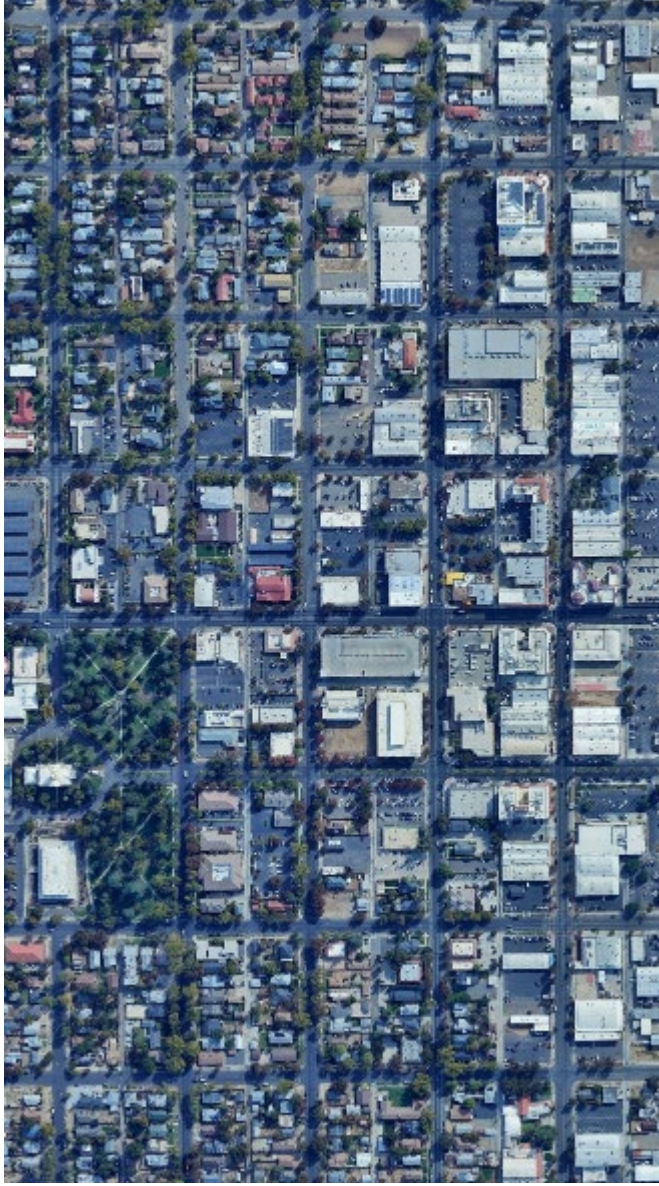
- Multimodal Transportation
- Land Use
- Placemaking
 - Public Realm
 - Built Form
- Economic Development
 - Revitalization
 - Redevelopment
 - Workforce Development
- Infrastructure
 - Due Diligence



Plan Area



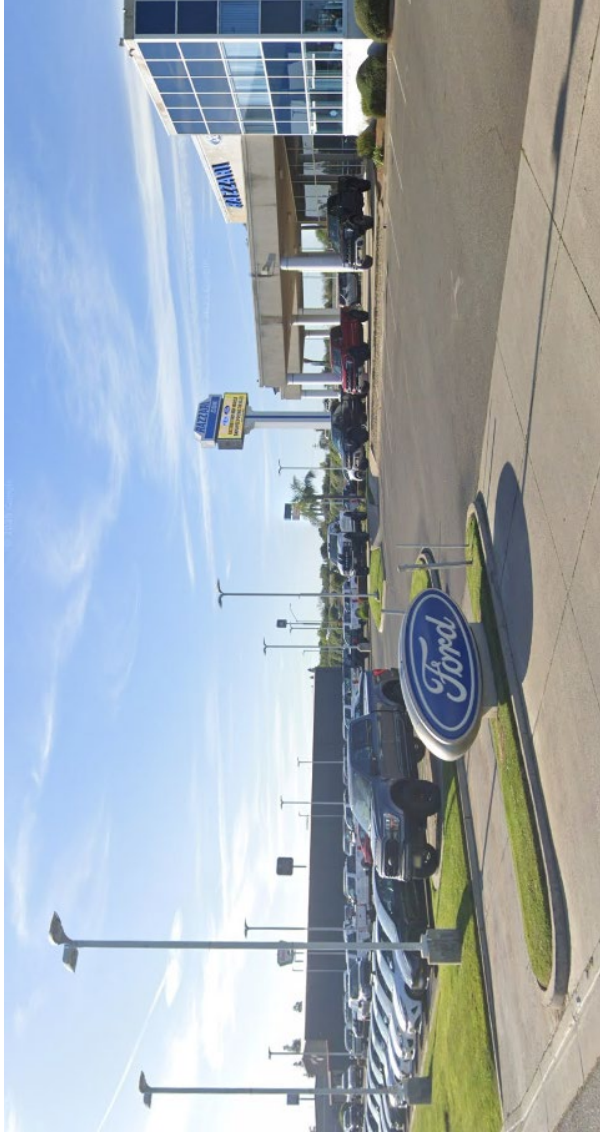
Merced Downtown Core



Courthouse Neighborhood



Vehicle Oriented Commercial Development

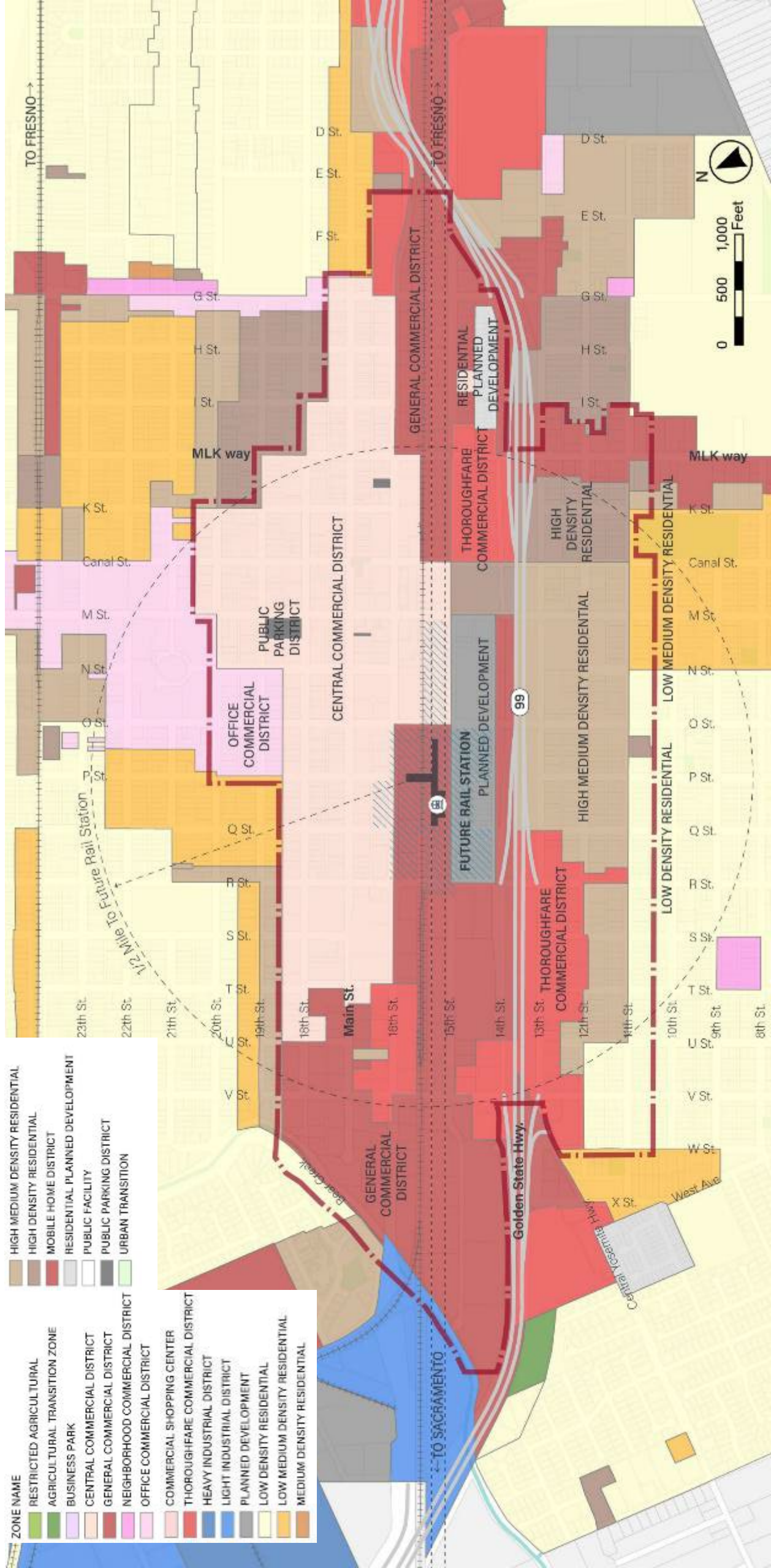


South Merced Neighborhood

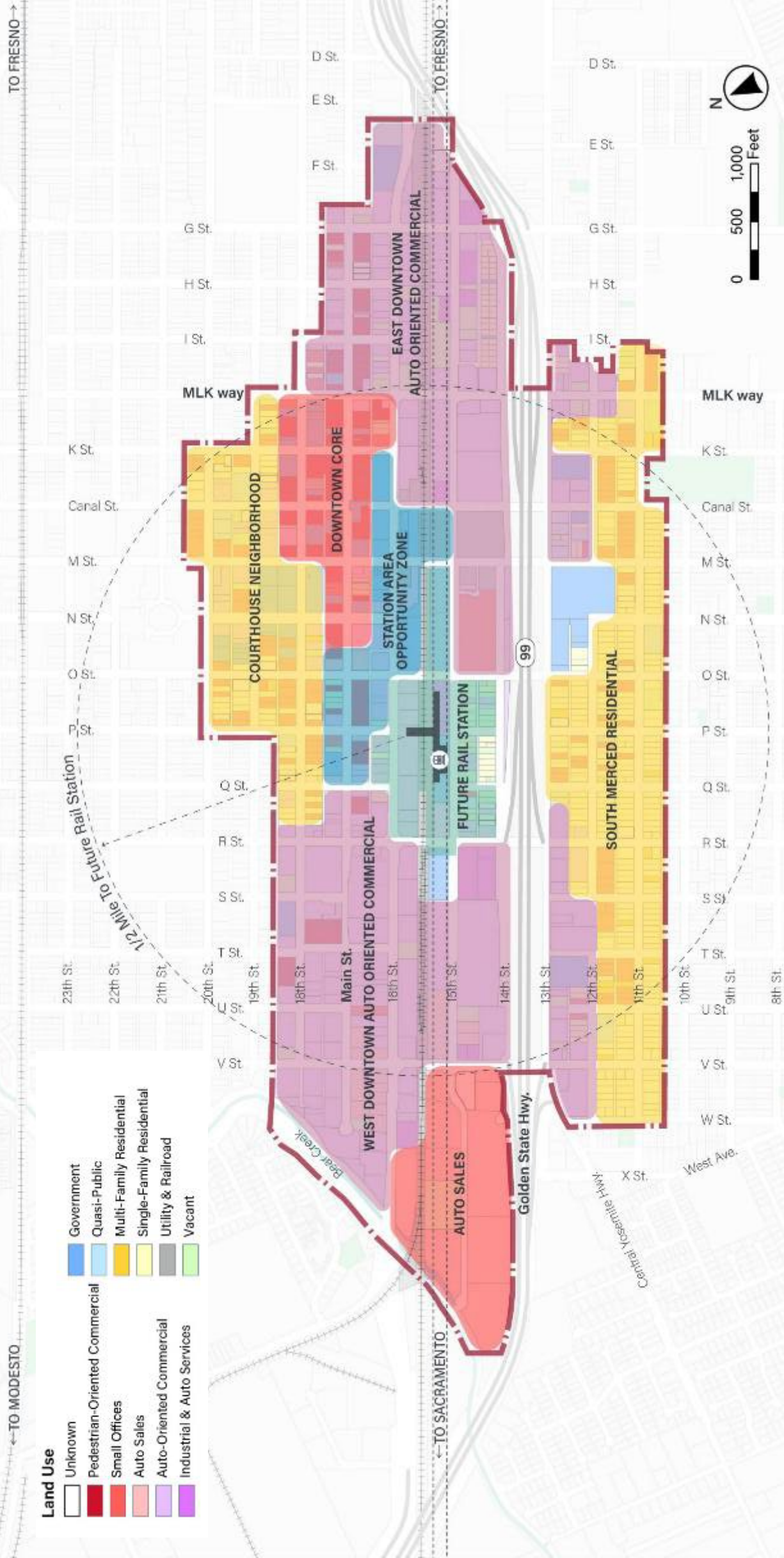


ZONE NAME	
RESTRICTED AGRICULTURAL	
AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION ZONE	
BUSINESS PARK	
CENTRAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
OFFICE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER	
THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL 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	

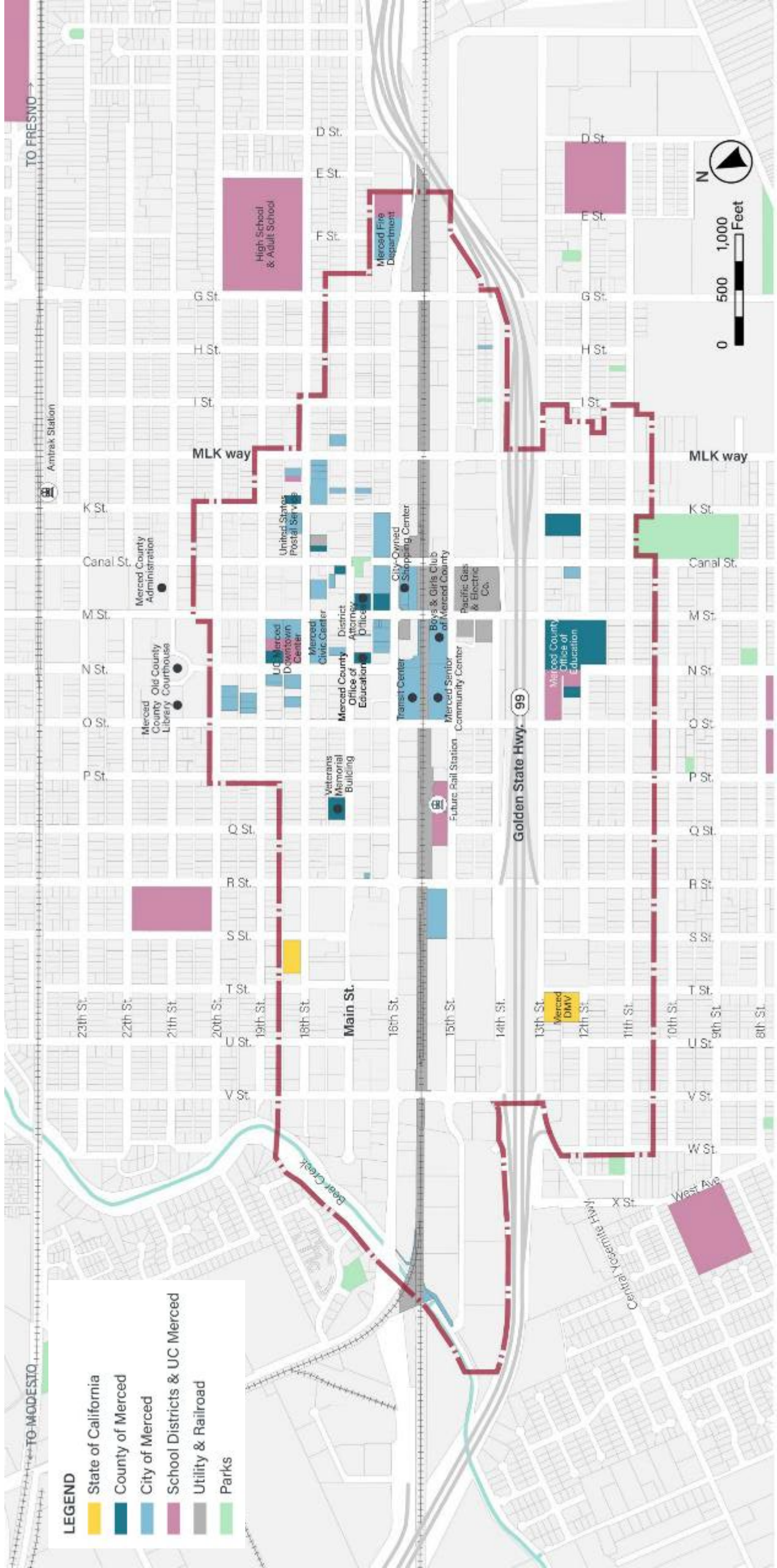


Existing Land Use

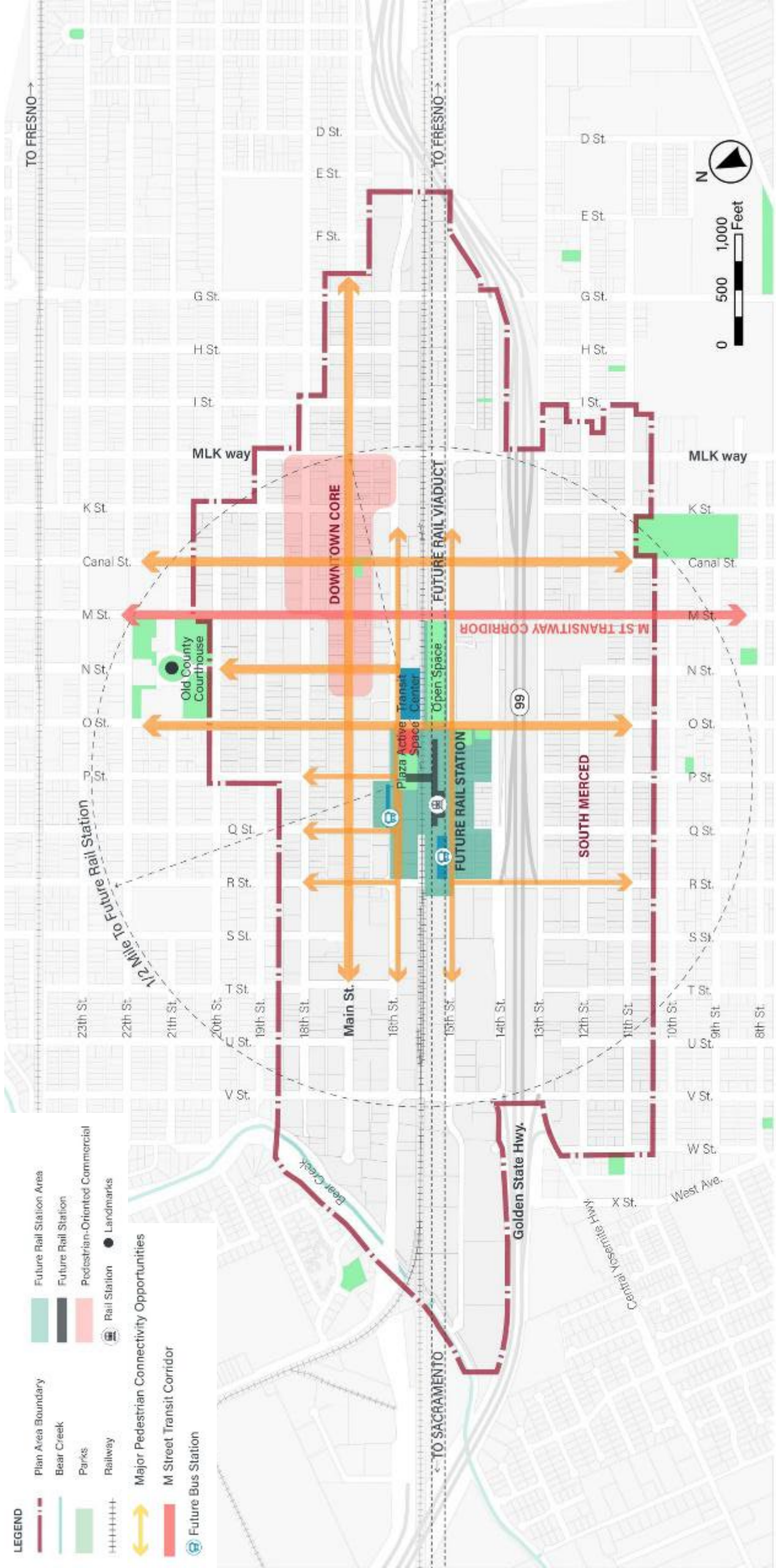


Building Frontage & Pedestrian Activation

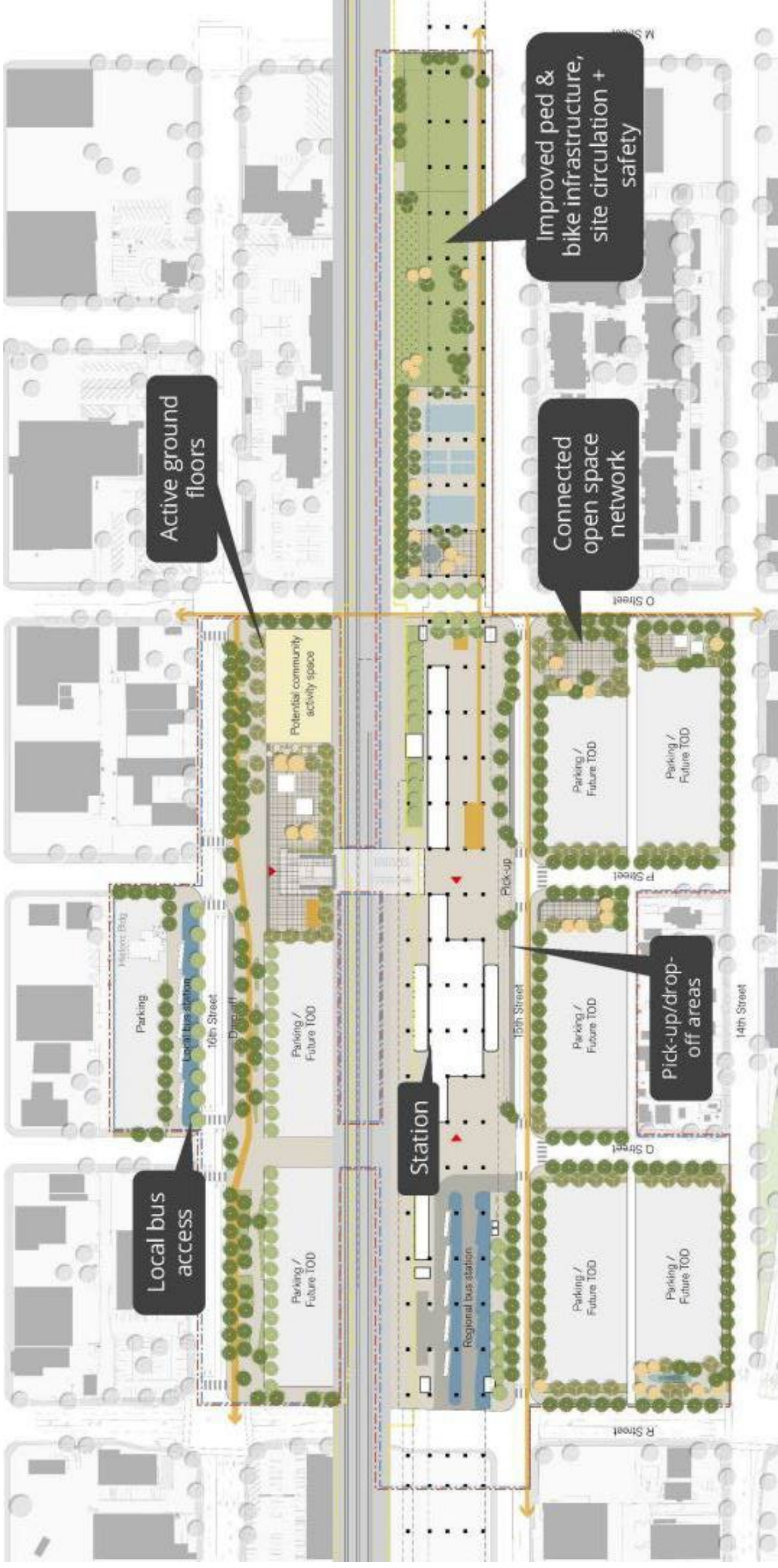


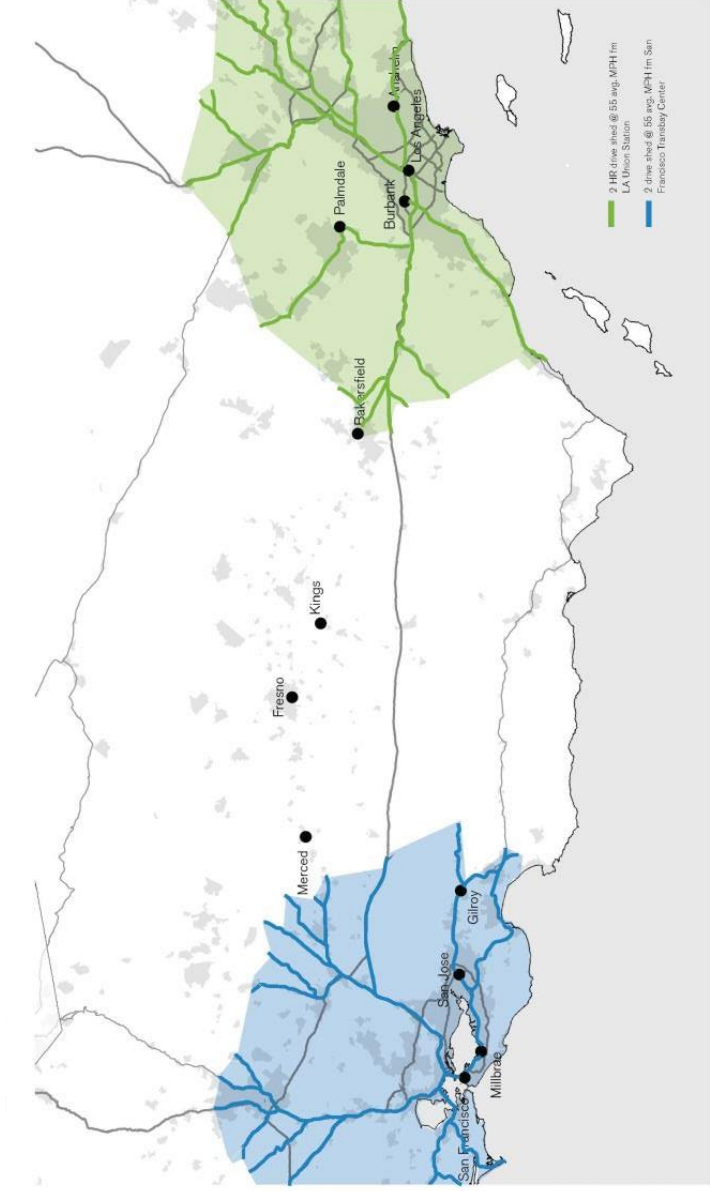
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Future Station Area & Its Context

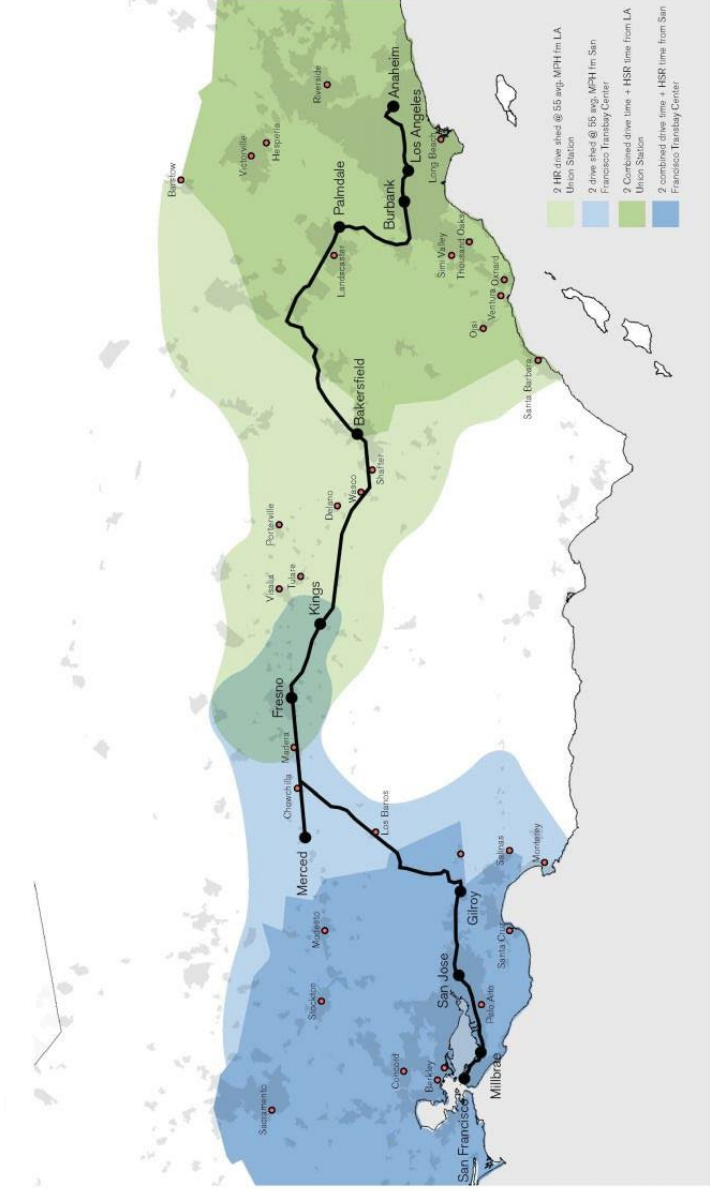


Future Station Area Site Plan



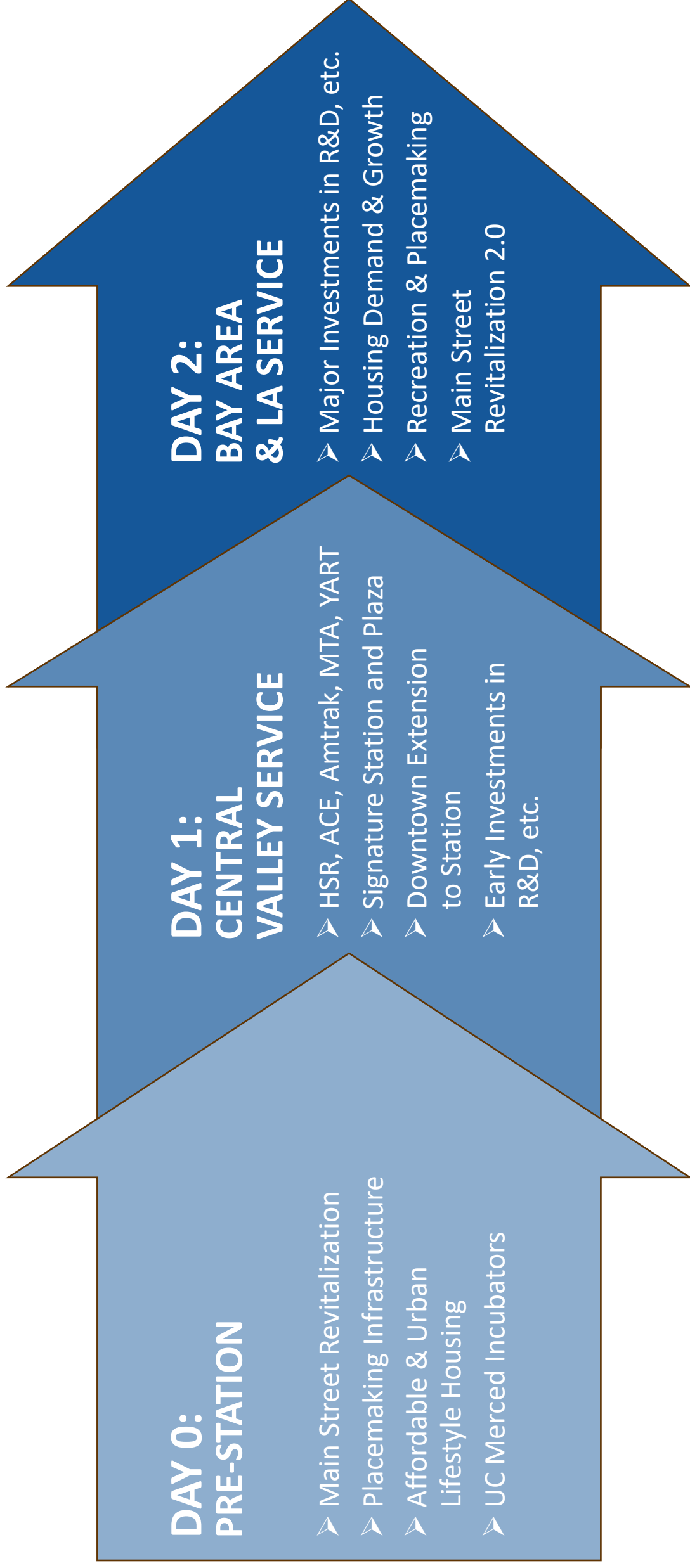


2-Hour Travel by Car from Bay Area and LA Currently
San Joaquin Valley cities are separated from large metro area.

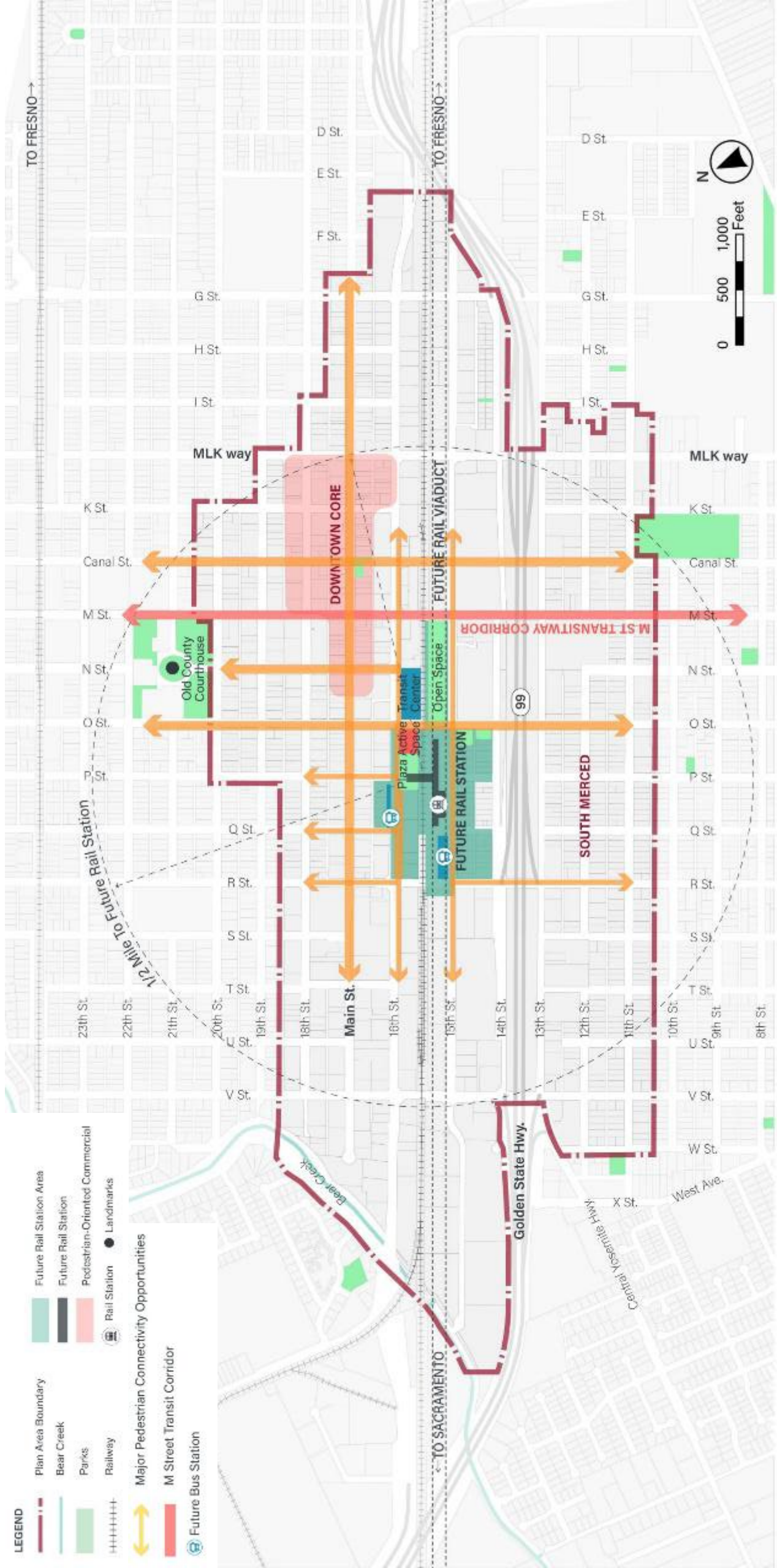


2-Hour Travel Extended with High Speed Rail
San Joaquin cities are integrated with large metro area.

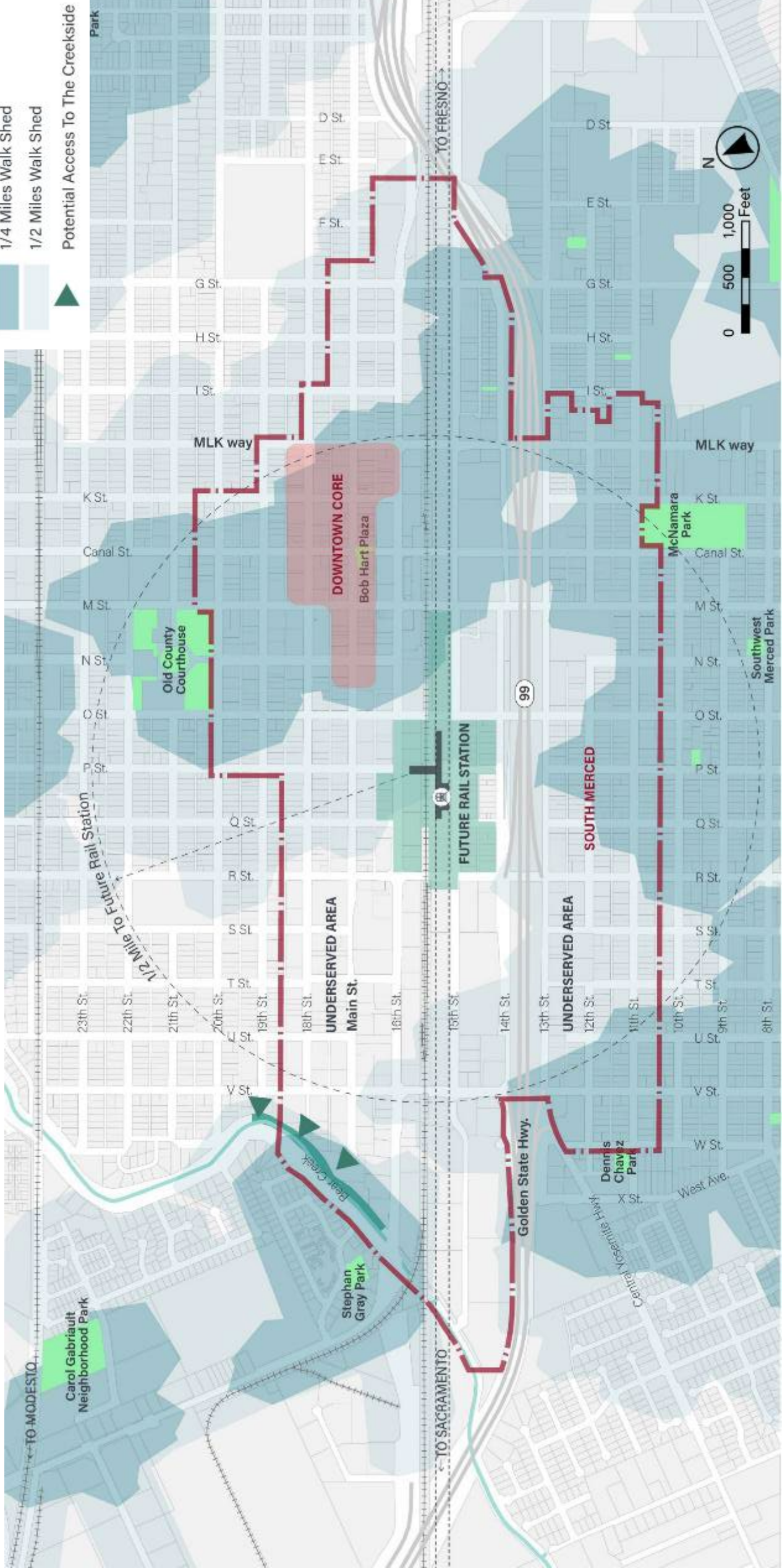
Planning Phases Associated with High Speed Rail



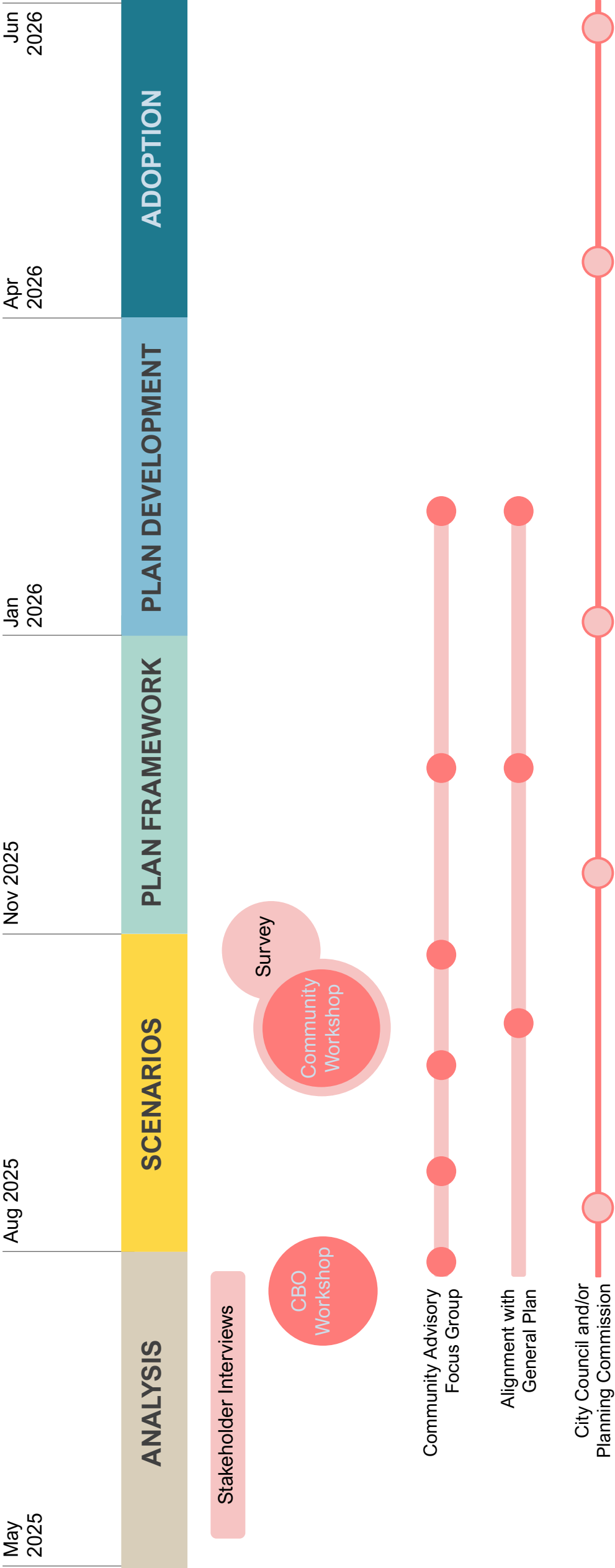
Future Station Area & Its Context



Parks & Open Spaces



Project Schedule





| 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

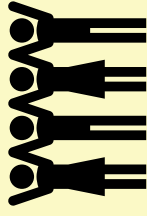
What are additional key opportunities in Merced that the General Plan and Downtown Station Areas Plan should enhance or protect?



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



Critical Upcoming Dates

- **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)