

# CITY OF MERCED

## GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN

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**mintier  
harnish**  
Planning Tomorrow Today®

# ALL HANDS KICK-OFF MEETING

*JUNE 25, 2025*

Attachment 1

# Meeting Objectives

- Introductions
- The Planning Team
- General Plan Update Overview
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Downtown Station Area Plan Overview
- Council and Commission Discussion
- Next Steps



PROJECT TEAM

# General Plan Team – Mintier Harnish



Established in 1985

Planning and community engagement specialists

Prepared over 60 general plans

Sacramento-based small business (10 employees)

Large network of teaming partners

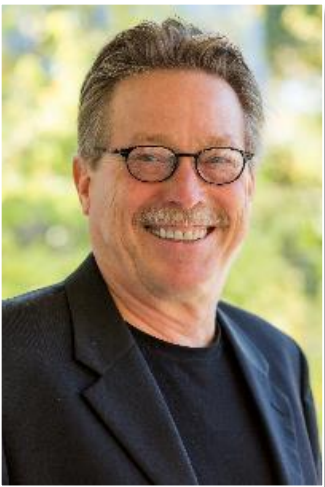
Customize our teams for each project



**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**



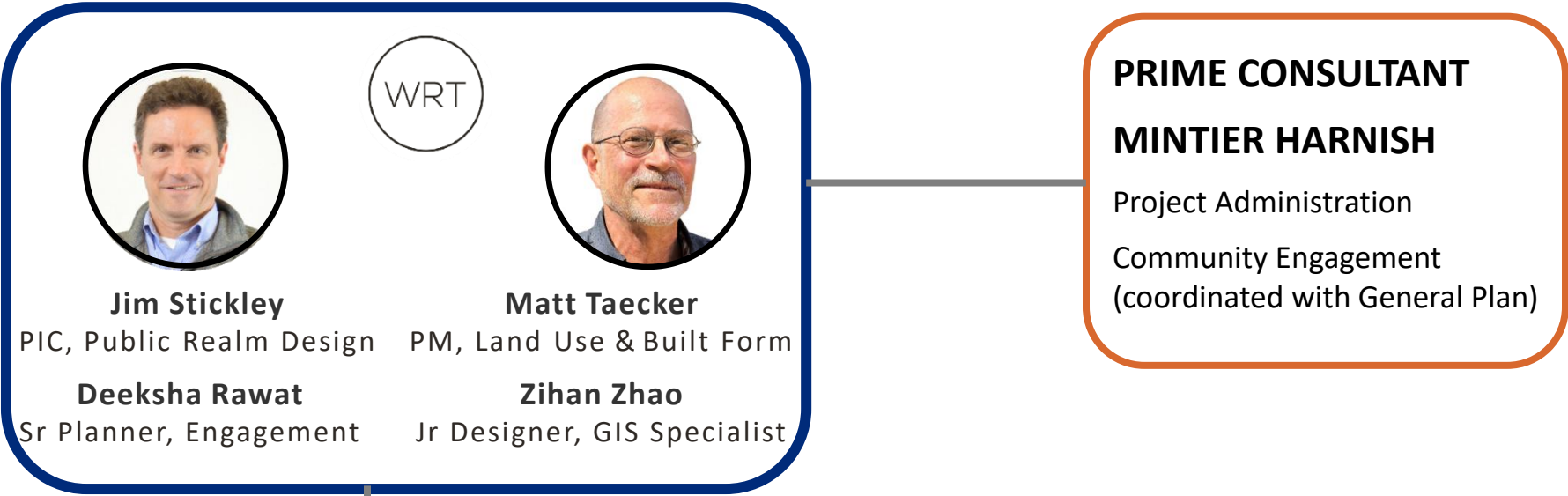
## Mobility



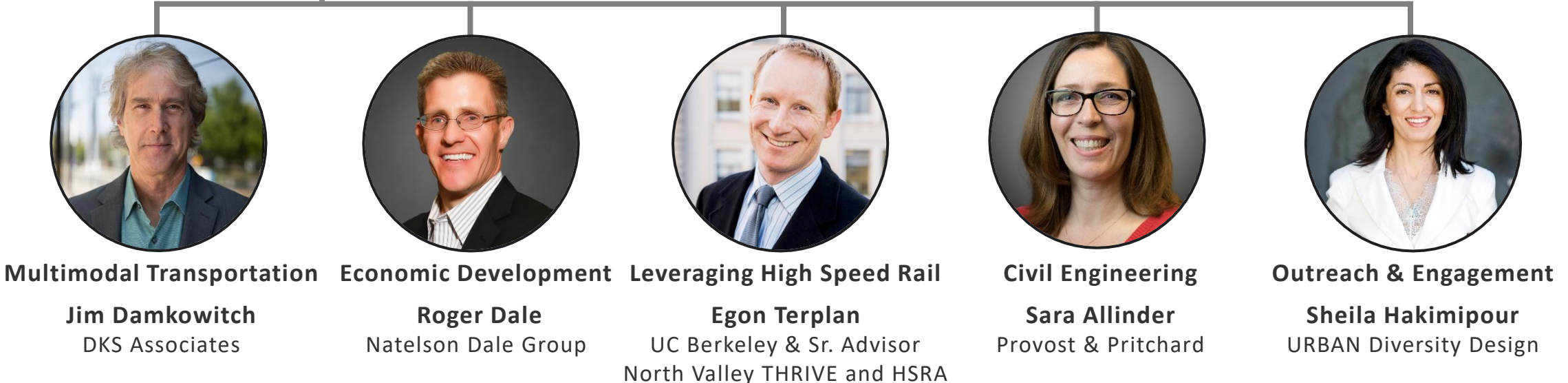
**Jim Damkowitch**



# Downtown Station Area Plan Team -WRT



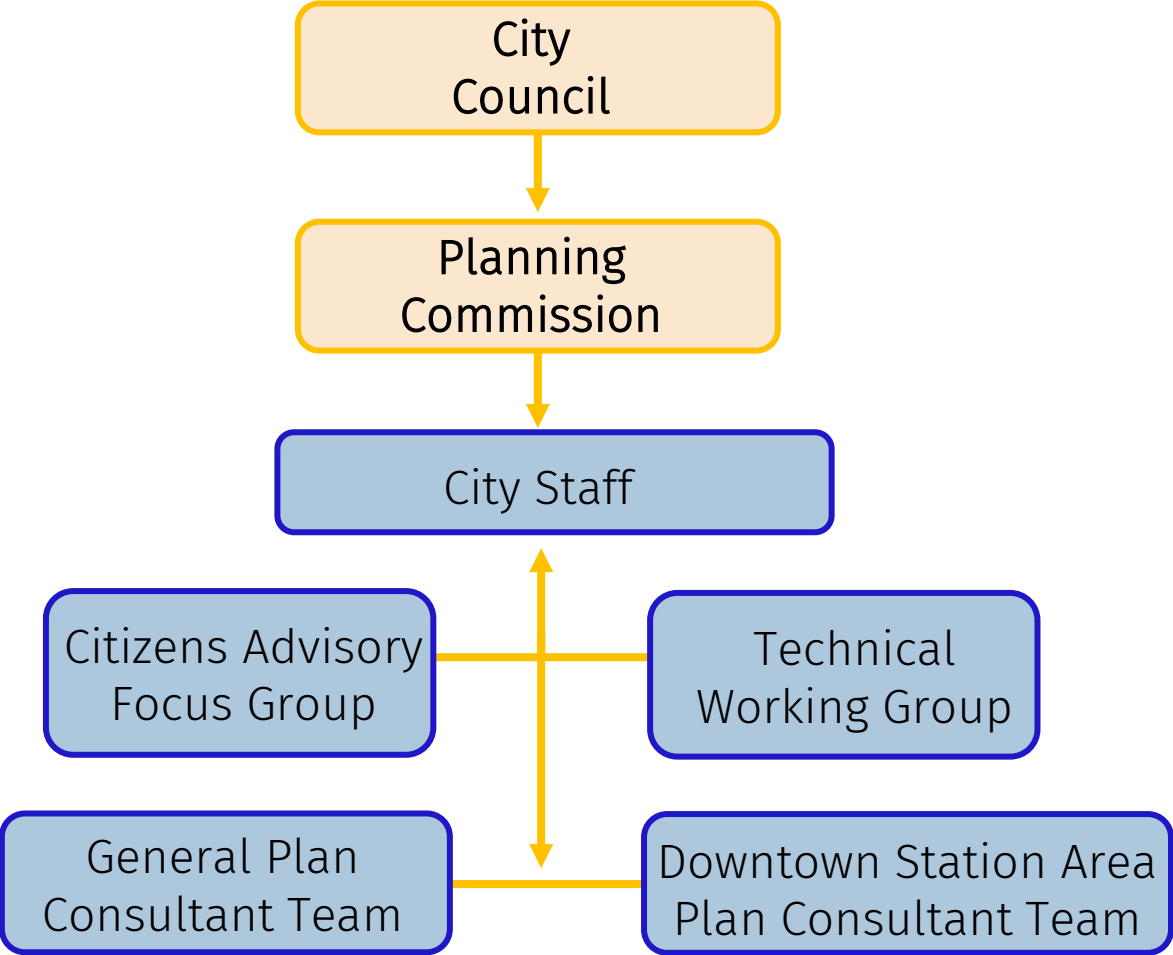
## SUBCONSULTANTS



# City Project Team

- **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.*

# Project Organizational Structure





# 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 that Council bases a variety of decisions based on (i.e., land use, economic development, equity)

# General Plan Characteristics



**General**

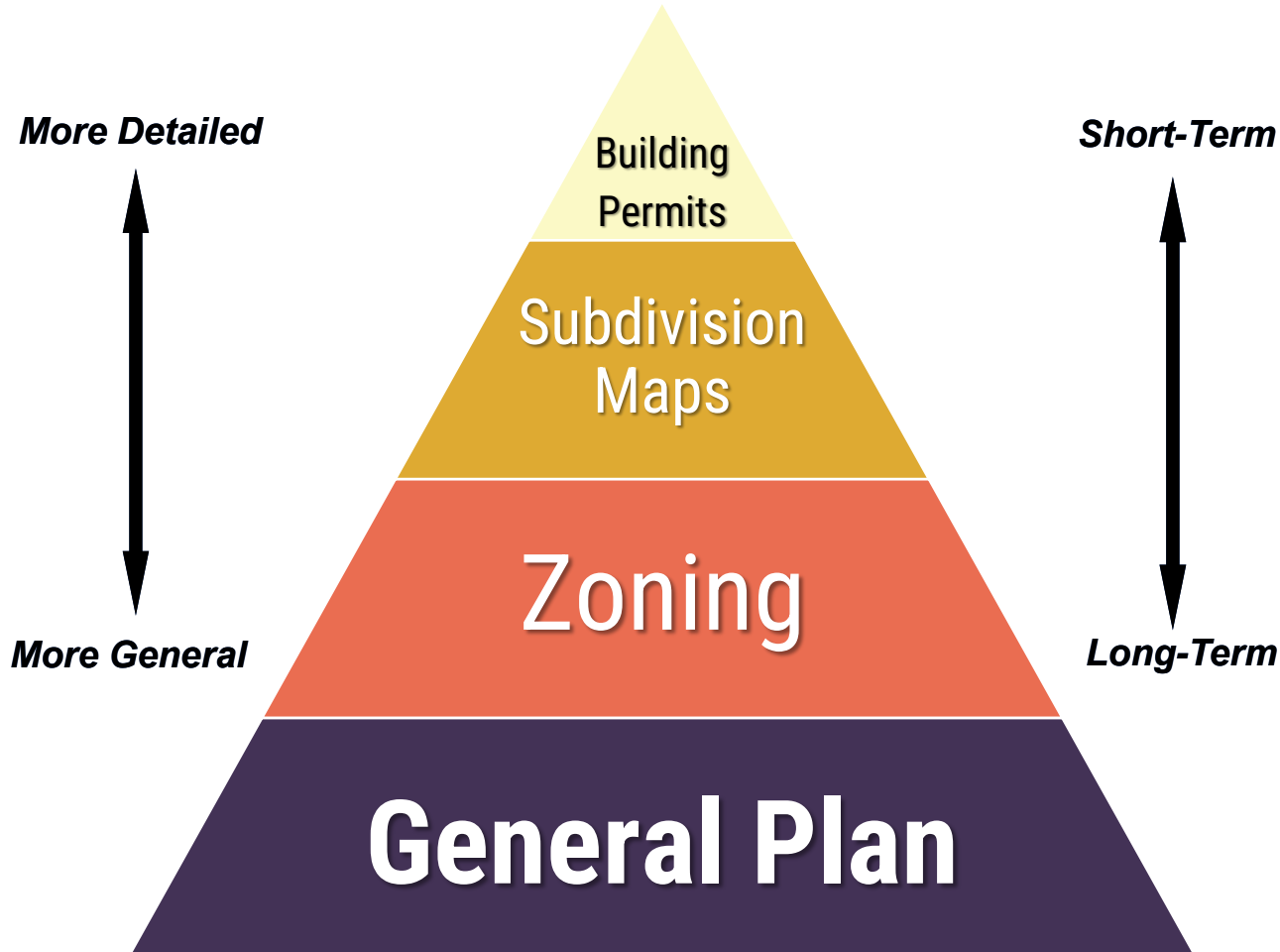


**Comprehensive**



**Long-term**

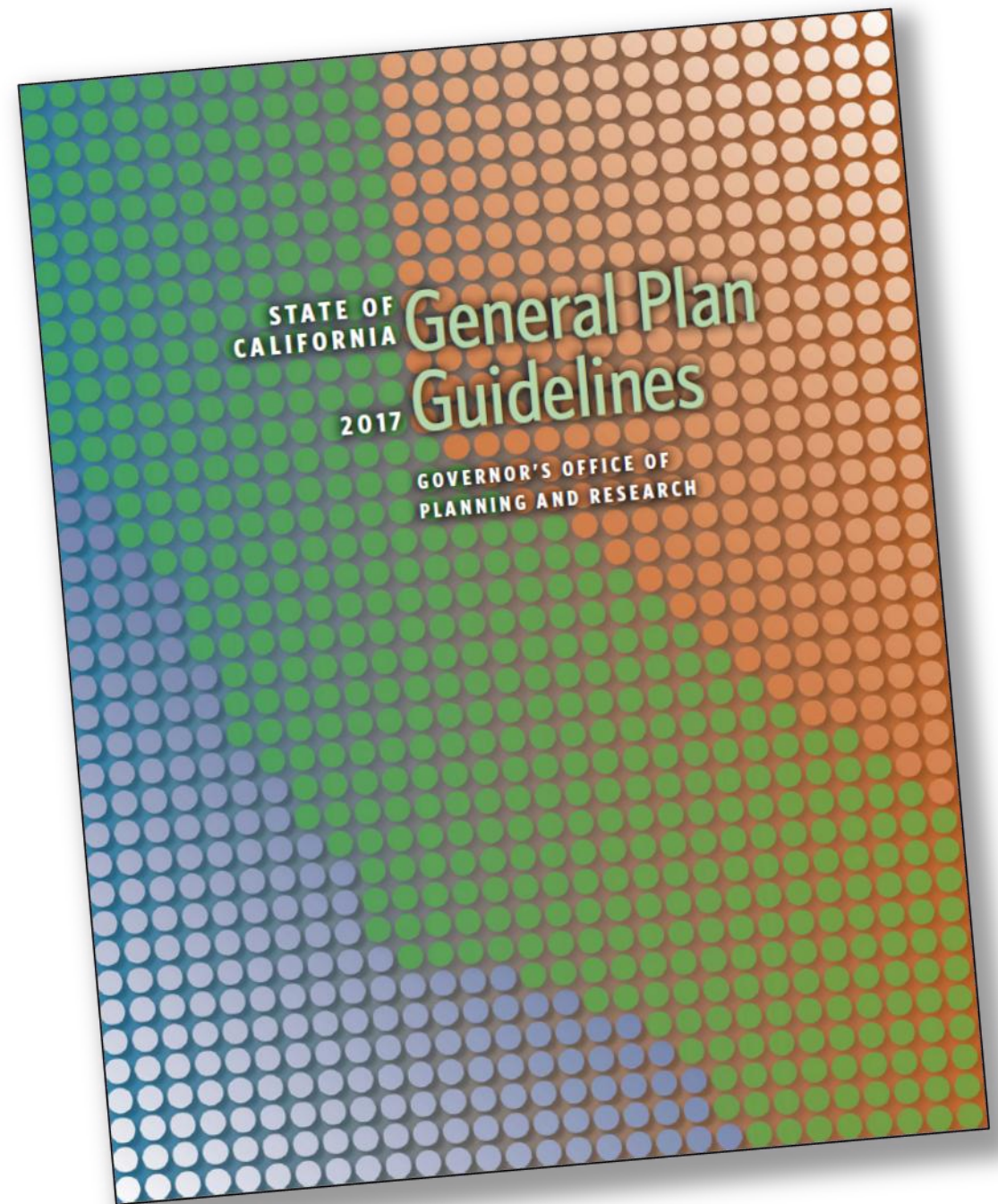
# General Plan Characteristics



- **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  
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



Inclusion of diversity,  
equity, inclusion and  
justice concepts



# 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 implementation in the General Plan



Robust and inclusionary 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	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



# Project Phases

Existing  
Conditions  
and  
Trends



# Project Phases

Community  
Vision



# Project Phases

1

2

3

4

5

6

Prepare the  
General  
Plan

# Project Phases

1

2

3

4

5

6

Prepare the  
Program EIR

# Project Phases

1

2

3

4

5

6

Adoption



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

# Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

MAPTIONNAIRE

WORKSHOPS



## IMAGINE MERCED



# Outreach Program

BRANDING & PROJECT LOGO

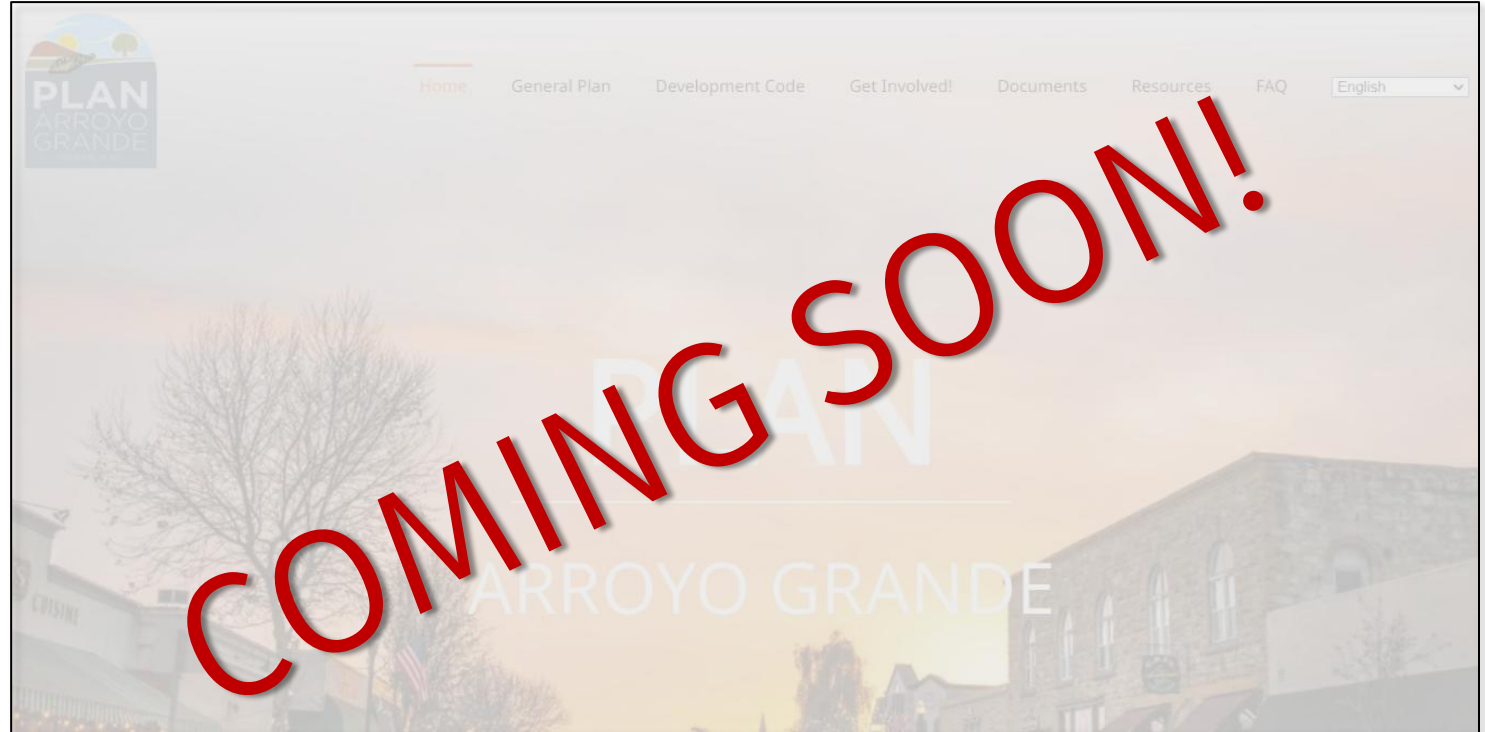
PROJECT WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA/EMAIL BLASTS

NEWSLETTERS

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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 view of its future and expresses 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*



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**PAULA ANCAKE HOUSE**

**BAKERY**

**Olsen & Solvang**

**PlanSOLVANG**  
Embracing our Heritage | Planning our Future  
DANISH CAPITAL OF AMERICA

**Boletín Informativo #1: Descripción General del Plan**

Nos complace anunciar que en diciembre, 2020, la Ciudad de Solvang inició la actualización del Plan General de la Ciudad (PlanSolvang). La actualización está programada para llevarla a cabo en aproximadamente dos años y, a lo largo del proceso, la Ciudad insta a los miembros de la comunidad a brindar información sobre el futuro de la comunidad.

**¿Qué es un Plan General?**

Todas las jurisdicciones de California deben tener un Plan General, que es el esquema a largo plazo o la "constitución" del gobierno local para el futuro. El Plan General representa la visión de la comunidad de su futuro y expresa los objetivos de la comunidad. El Plan General contiene las metas y políticas en las que el Ayuntamiento y la Comisión de Planificación basarán sus decisiones sobre el uso de la tierra y los recursos. La ley del Estado de California requiere que cada Ciudad adopte un Plan General para el desarrollo físico de la jurisdicción y cualquier terreno fuera de sus límites que tenga relación con su planificación (llamada el "Área de Planificación").

Un plan general tiene tres características definitorias:

- General. Un plan general proporciona una orientación de la política general que se utilizará para dirigir las decisiones futuras sobre el uso de la tierra y los recursos.
- Integral. Un plan general es integral y cubre temas como el uso de la tierra, la vivienda, el desarrollo económico, la infraestructura, la seguridad pública, la recreación, los recursos naturales y mucho más.
- A Largo Alcance. Un plan general proporciona orientación para alcanzar un futuro previsto en 20 años o más en el porvenir. Para lograr la visión, un plan integral incluye metas, políticas y acciones que abordan las necesidades inmediatas y a largo plazo.

**Visite el Sitio Web del Plan para:**

- Mantenerse informado;
- Informarse sobre las próximas reuniones;
- Registrarse para recibir actualizaciones por correo electrónico;
- Compartir sus ideas sobre el futuro de la ciudad.

**plansolvang.com**

**¿Preguntas?** (805) 688-5575 | CityHall@cityofsolvang.com

**Letter #2: Existing Conditions Background Report**

County of Siskiyou (the County) began its approximately 10-year process to update the General Plan and Zoning Code. The Existing Conditions Background Report (Background Report) is the first major deliverable of the Public Review Update Process, and provides an overview of the substantive chapters of the General Plan Update Process, and about next steps in the General Plan Update.

**Plan Update Process**

- Phase 1: Project Initiation
- Phase 2: Existing Conditions Background Report
- Phase 3: Community Vision and Guiding Principles
- Phase 4: Zoning Code Revisions
- Plan Preparation
- Impact Report (EIR)
- Final Adoption

**SISKIYOU COUNTY**  
2023 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2050

# Outreach Program

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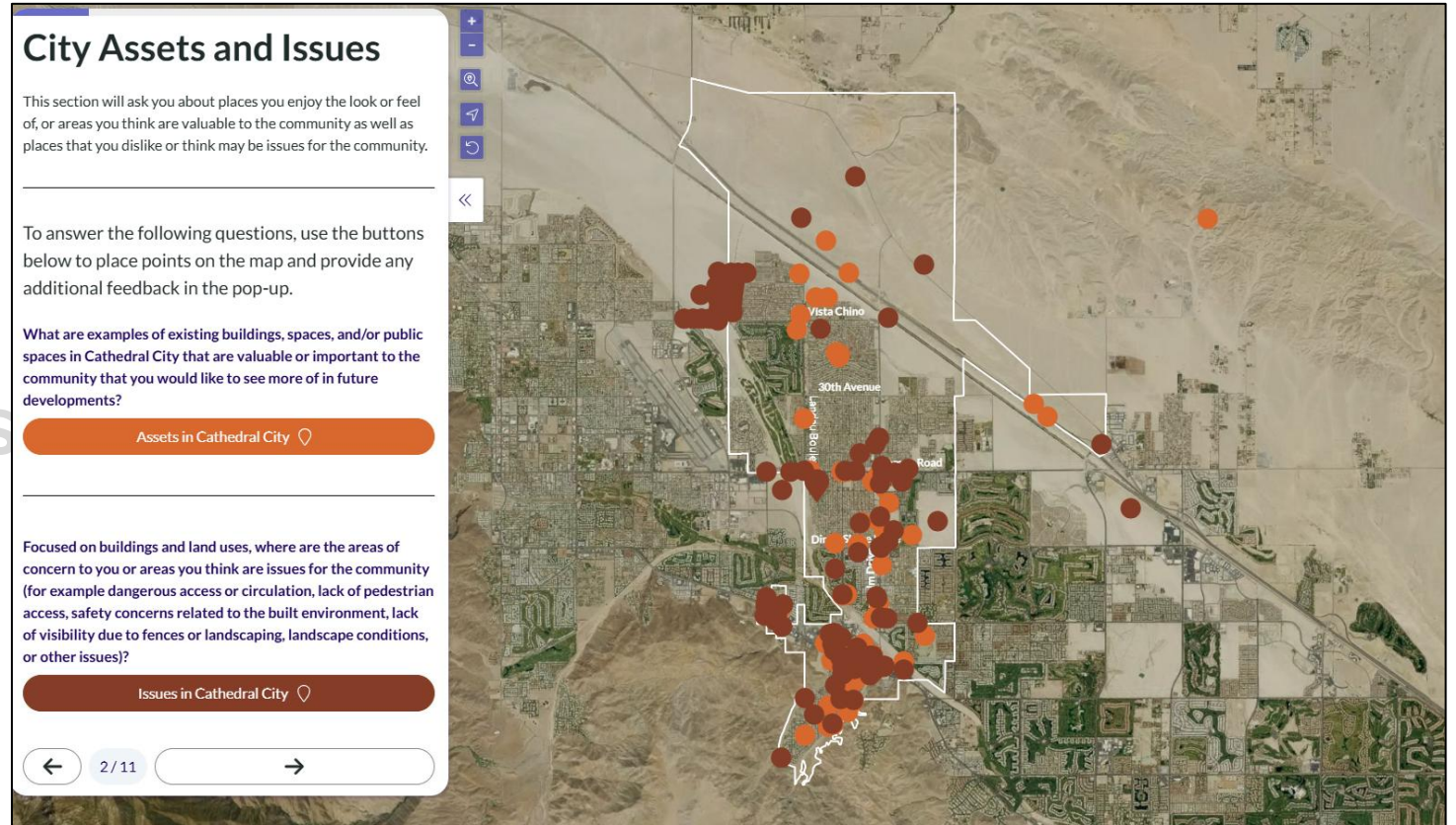
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# Community Advisory Focus Group (CAFG)

- The Community Advisory Focus Group (CAFG) will serve as an advisory body throughout the General Plan Update and Downtown Station Area Plan process.
- The CAFG will consist of 15-17 members. City Council will finalize members at the July 7, 2025, City Council Meeting.
- **GET INVOLVED! WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**





# DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN OVERVIEW



# Downtown Area and Station Area Opportunities and Synergies

- **Multimodal Transportation**
- **Land Use**
- **Placemaking**
  - Public Realm
  - Built Form
- **Economic Development**
  - Revitalization
  - Redevelopment
  - Workforce Development



# Community Assets & Walkability



Photo: Merced Main Street Association



Photo: Trip Advisor



# Analysis and Vision (Phase 1) – Engagement

*Work Led by: WRT and URBAN Diversity Design*

- Engagement Plan – complete, updated as needed
- Technical Working Group – early July
- Focus Group Interviews – early July
  - Merced Main Street, Downtown Fresno Partnership, UC Merced
  - Development Professionals: local developers, Assoc. of Realtors, BIA
  - Transportation Agencies: HSRA, Merced County Transit Joint Powers Authority, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
  - Public Service Providers: City, County, School Districts, Boys & Girls Club
  - Merced School Districts

# Analysis and Vision (Phase 1) – Engagement

*Work Led by: WRT and URBAN Diversity Design*

- Community-Based Organizations (CBO) Workshop – July 31, *subject to change*
- Citizens Advisory Focus Group – late July, draft Vision & Goals
- Existing Conditions Open House – part of General Plan Update
- DSAP Scenarios Community Workshop & Survey – early October

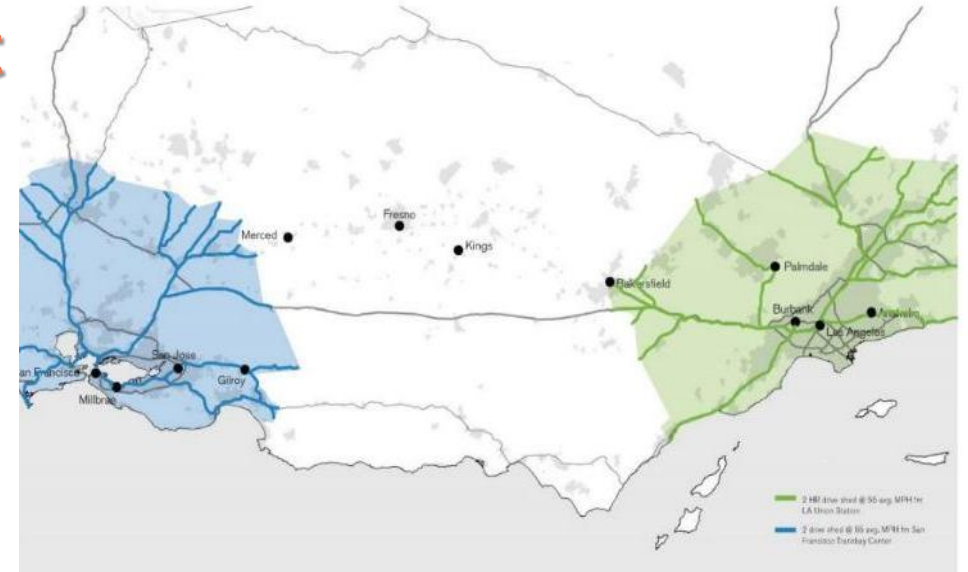
# Market Context & Economic Development

Work Led by: Natelson Dale and Egon Terplan

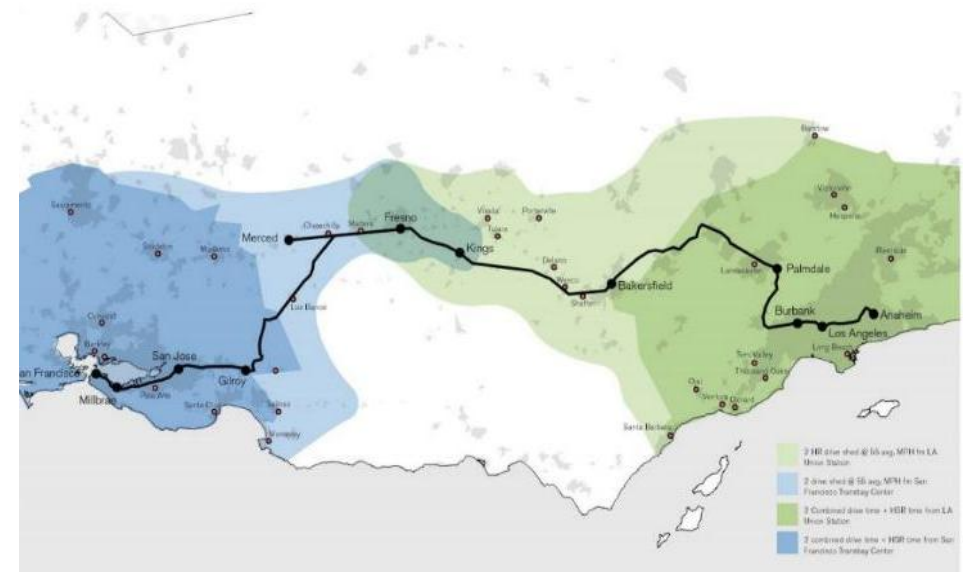
- Main Street Revitalization
- Affordable and Urban Lifestyle Housing
- Employment including UC Merced Incubators
- Bay Area / LA Integration with High Speed Rail



Downtown Vitality



2 Hour Travel Currently from Bay Area and LA



2 Hour Travel Extended with High Speed Rail

# Phases and Issue Areas

## DAY 0: PRE-STATION

- Main Street Revitalization
- Placemaking Infrastructure
- Affordable & Urban Lifestyle Housing
- UC Merced Incubators

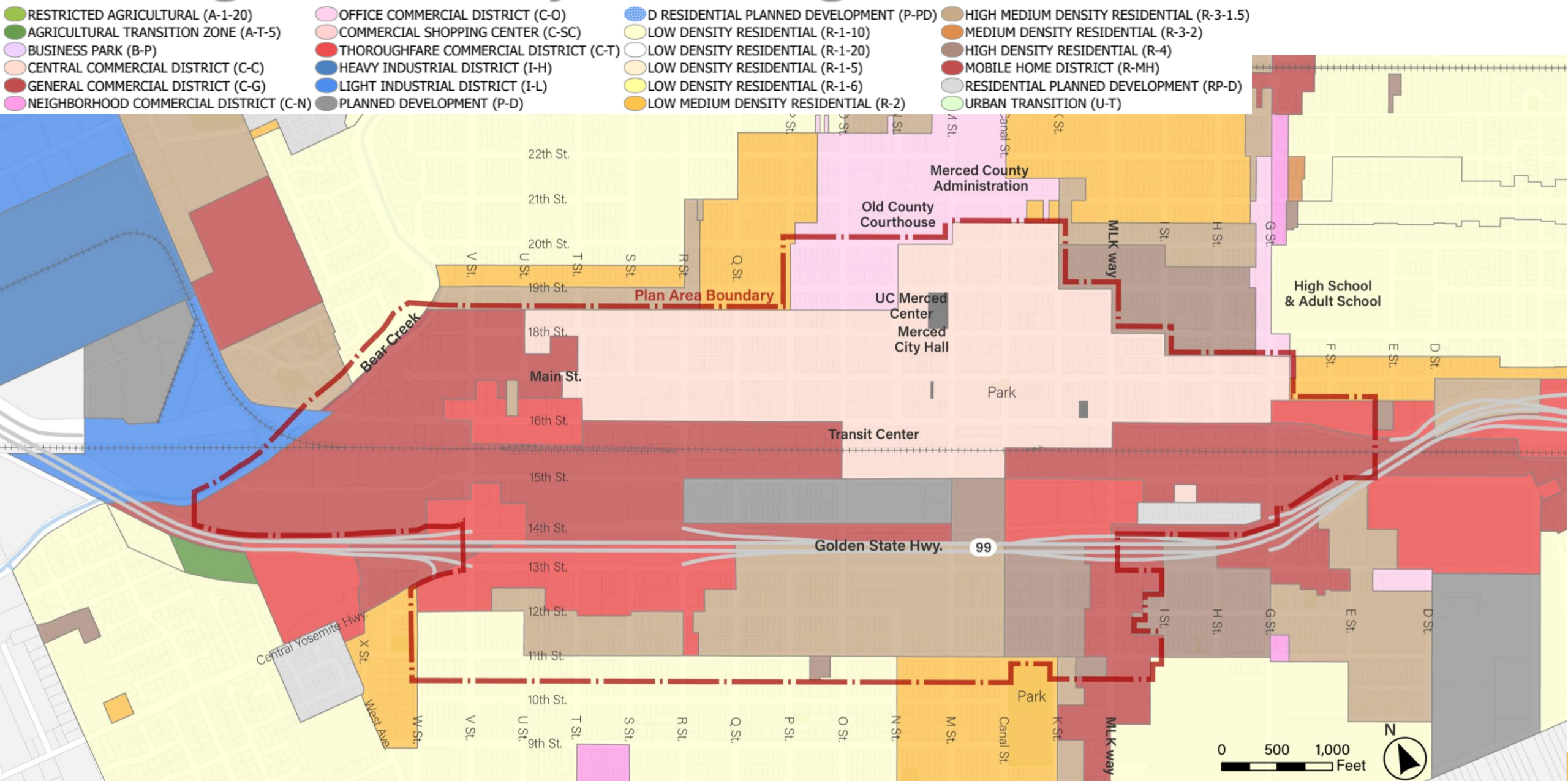
## DAY 1: CENTRAL VALLEY SERVICE

- HSR, ACE, Amtrak, MTA, YART
- Signature Station and Plaza
- Downtown Extension to Station
- Early Investments in R&D, etc.

## DAY 2: BAY AREA & LA SERVICE

- Major Investments in R&D, etc.
- Housing Demand & Growth
- Recreation & Placemaking
- Main Street Revitalization 2.0

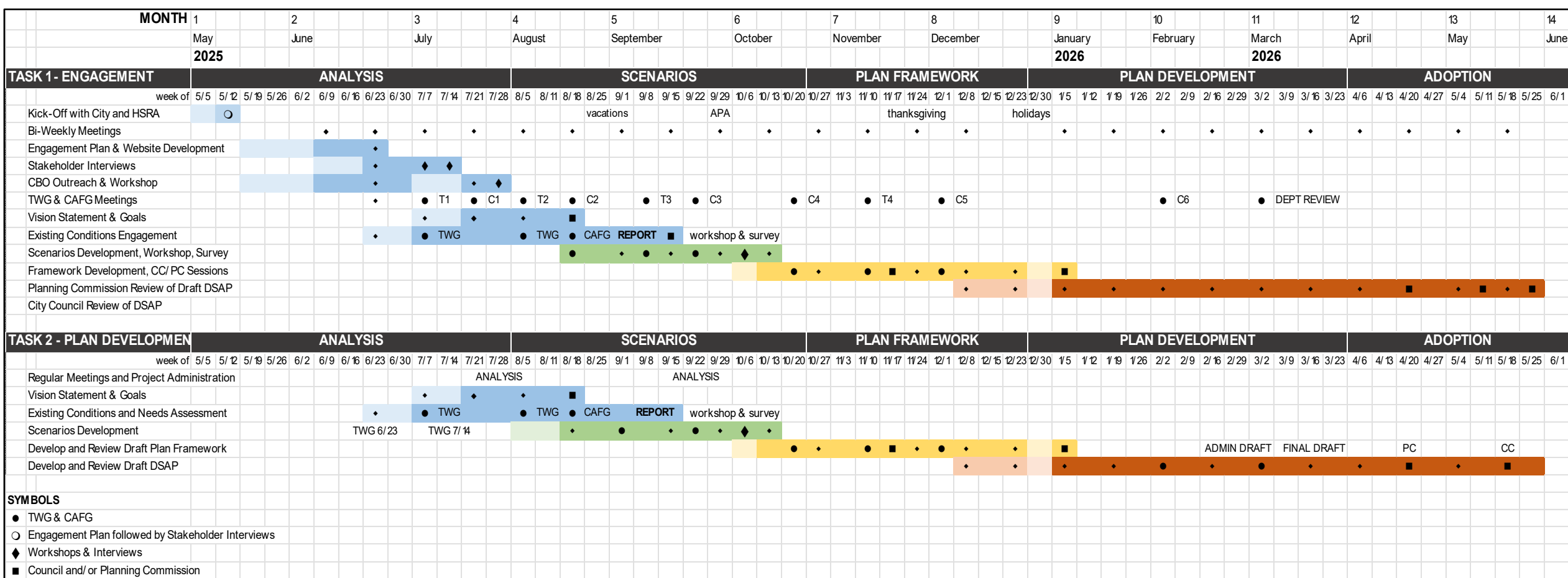
# Planning Area Boundary with Zoning



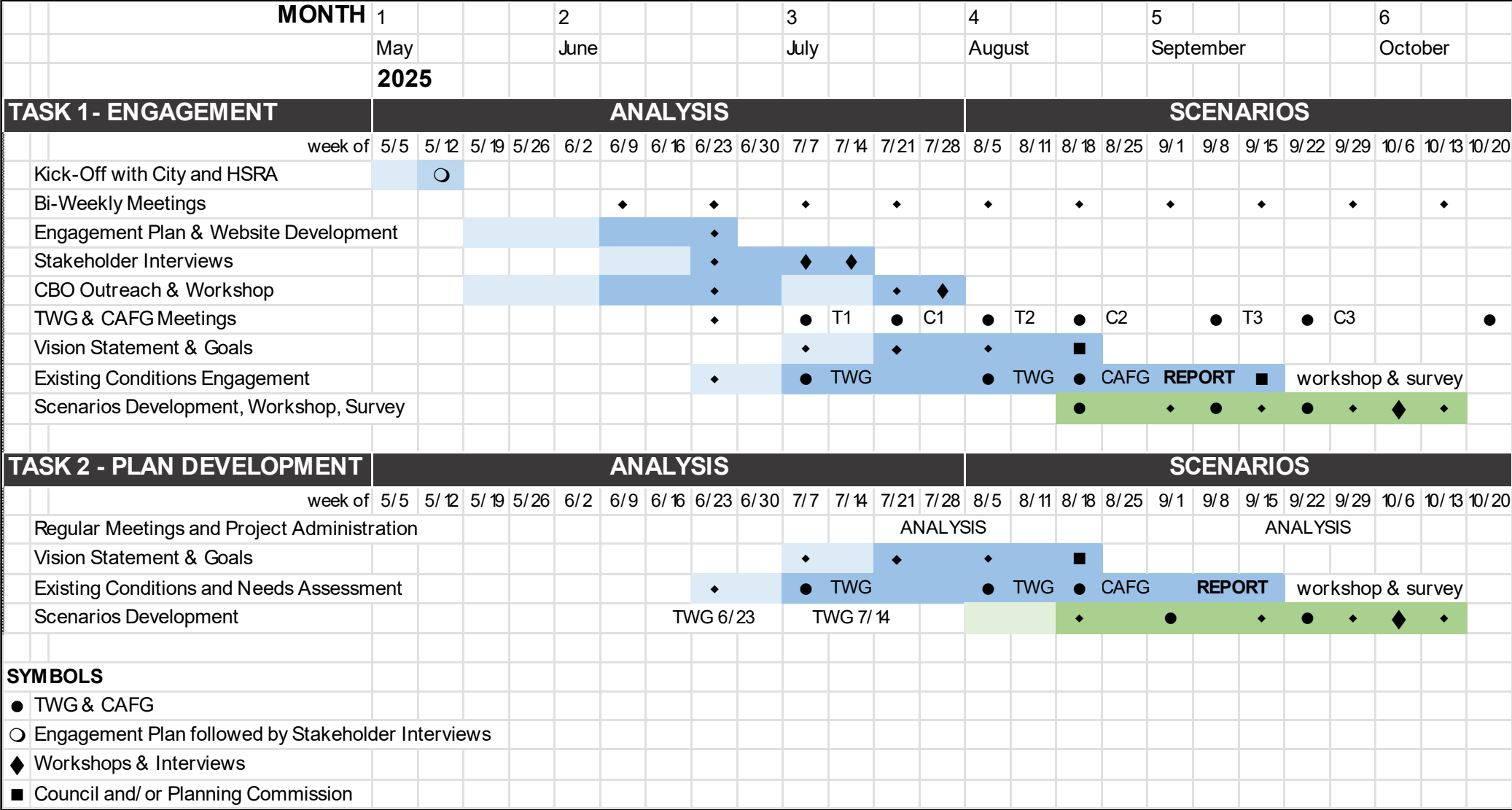
# Planning Area Boundary with Aerial and Station Project Area



# Downtown Station Area Plan Schedule



# Analysis Phase and Scenarios Phase





# COUNCIL AND COMMISSION DISCUSSION

# Discussion Items

## 01. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

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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

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

## 03. KEY OPPORTUNITIES

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

A photograph of the El Capitan Hotel at dusk. The building is a multi-story, light-colored structure with a prominent corner entrance and a vertical sign that reads 'EL CAPITAN'. The building is illuminated from within, and the sky is a deep blue. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the lower half of the image, and the text 'NEXT STEPS' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across it. A vertical white line is positioned to the left of the text. In the background, another building with a sign that reads 'EL CAPITAN HOTEL' is visible. The foreground shows a street intersection with traffic lights and a street sign that reads 'M ST'. Light trails from cars are visible in the bottom right corner.

# NEXT STEPS

# Next Steps

Schedule DSAP and  
General Plan  
Workshops



Facilitate stakeholder  
interviews and finalize  
CAFG



Collaboration with City  
staff on the General  
Plan Audit



Preparation of the Existing  
Conditions and Trends  
Workbook

