

To: Central Business District Citizens Advisory Committee

From: Pam Johns, Community Development Director

Date: June 10, 2024

SUBJECT: CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

The following information is being provided to clarify the intent of the Master Plan, provide relevant background information, outline the project schedule moving forward, and share the Draft Master Plan Table of Contents. It's important at this juncture, as the Master Plan is close to being drafted to make sure we are all on the same page, are clear on the intent and have the tools to provide meaningful input.

Master Plan Overview

A master plan is a long-term planning document that provides a conceptual framework to guide future growth and/or redevelopment over a 20 to 30-year period and must be consistent with the locally adopted general plan. A master plan typically provides more specificity regarding land use and physical development with vision and conceptual plans to bridge the gap between the general plan and other implementing documents such as a zoning code, design guidelines, transportation plans, etc. An adopted master plan establishes a reference point for council and commissions in their decision-making process.

The Central Business District Master Plan (CBDMP) is intended to focus on the following key work efforts:

1. Urban Design/Branding
 - This can include but is not limited to visioning, wayfinding, lighting and landscaping recommendations.
 - Design concepts for future development potential including perspectives and streetscapes.
 - Recommendations for creating an entertainment/cultural/arts district or activities to bring people into the area with the goal of creating an area that is a unique and noteworthy destination in Folsom.
 - Ways to take advantage of the Lembi Park interface, located on the CBD's southern boundary.

2. Economic Development

- The CBDMP should provide innovative solutions for commercial corridor revitalization such as marketing, branding, tourism or other economic development strategies.
- Provide potential financing options for public and private improvements (such as improvement districts, etc.) for funding traffic, utility, landscaping, etc., so that the CBDMP can be implemented.

3. Circulation Planning and Engineering

- The CBDMP should include specific traffic recommendations which could include roundabouts, dedicated bicycle lanes and expansion of sidewalks, trail connections and other pedestrian improvements.

Important things to keep in mind:

- East Bidwell and Riley will continue to be priority roadways that serve through traffic.
- The CBDMP will not change the density or change the General Plan or Zoning designation of property within the district.
- The CBDMP will not mandate how or when individual parcels are developed or redeveloped but will provide a vision for the future and is intended to inspire incremental change over time in keeping with that future vision.

While it is easy to imagine the many important details of each and every idea and concept associated with the CBDMP, it isn't necessary to resolve or even be completely comfortable with all or certain issues. At the master plan level of project development and in order to move forward, an important question committee members should ask themselves is, "Is there anything about this that I cannot live with?" Or, can you say "It's not perfect, but I can live with it."

Master Plan Implementation

To build projects and improvements envisioned in the CBDMP, a substantial, detailed and likely lengthy implementation process will be undertaken for each subsequent improvement, project, or program to realize the transformative vision over the next 20-to-30-year period. A master plan typically looks at short-term priorities/actions (2 to 5 years), medium term priorities/actions (5 to 10 years), and longer-term priorities/actions (10 – 30 years) to implement the vision over time. Over that longer period, the City will also likely revisit the vision, key objectives, and actions periodically to reflect evolving conditions and community priorities.

Subsequent actions to implement the CBDMP may include some or all of the following tasks:

- ✓ Priorities/Funding – identify greatest needs, quick wins, community interests, municipal budgeting.
- ✓ Project Specific Proposals – scope, details, look/feel, connections to community
- ✓ Feasibility Analysis
- ✓ Operations and Maintenance (long-term)
- ✓ Economic/financial impacts
- ✓ Life cycle + renovation
- ✓ Construction Cost
- ✓ Technical Engineering Studies
- ✓ Transportation/Traffic
- ✓ Utilities Capacity and Constraints and improvements– domestic water, sewer, storm drain/water quality
- ✓ Planning Entitlements (Design Review, Zoning, Use Permits – as necessary)
- ✓ Project Development Plans
- ✓ Environmental Review/CEQA
- ✓ Committee, Commission, outside Agency review
- ✓ City Council review/approval of specific projects
- ✓ Building Permits/Inspection/mitigation measures
- ✓ Construction

Budget and Schedule: The Central Business District Master Plan project is funded by federal American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. These funds must be completely expended before the end of the 2024 calendar year.

The project schedule reflects the following important (tentative) milestones:

- **Advisory Committee Meetings July 22, August 12, 2024, September 9, 2024 (tentative dates to be confirmed with the Advisory Committee)**
- Draft Central Business District Master Plan (available late August)
- Community Workshop September 2024
- Planning Commission Meetings/Recommendations- September/October
- City Council Consideration- November/December 2024

Relevant General Plan Policies and Related Studies and Projects

There are several important policies, studies, and projects that have been adopted, completed and/or are underway to direct or inform the CBDMP effort as outlined below.

Folsom 2030 General Plan (adopted August 2018)

The City's General Plan is a long-range plan that includes the following policies that help support revitalization and the City's Master Plan effort.

- In 2018 the General Plan Established East Bidwell Mixed Use (MU) Corridor Overlay for the entire Central Business District boundary to promote infill housing development.
- Policy LU 3.1.5 - Encourage new development along East Bidwell Street by creating a stronger mixed-use development pattern, both horizontal and vertical, with an emphasis on medium- and higher-density housing, while also addressing local and Citywide demand for retail and services.
- Policy LU 3.1.6- Encourage development of mixed-use projects that create a walkable, vibrant district along East Bidwell Street between Coloma Street and Blue Ravine Road.
- Policy LU 7.1.2 Encourage development of underutilized and vacant parcels in commercial zones to improve the aesthetic appearance and enhance the vitality of commercial areas.
- Policy LU 9.1.7 Encourage efforts to establish and promote district identities (e.g., urban centers, East Bidwell Street) using signage, wayfinding signage, streetscape and building design standards, advertising, and site-specific historic themes.

The General Plan's Guiding Principles will also be considered as important building blocks of future development in the district:

- Promote mixed-use, walkable districts that serve as social gathering places for the community.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented infill and redevelopment of Folsom's aging commercial corridors.
- Promote healthy lifestyles by enhancing opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating, and sustainable living.
- Support transportation improvements that allow and encourage more residents, workers, and visitors to walk, bike, or use transit.
- Build a thriving innovation-based economy that creates new jobs and welcomes businesses and entrepreneurship.

- Provide a range of housing choices to ensure Folsom is a community for all generations, where children can grow, raise families, and age in place.
- Signify arrival into Folsom by enhancing the major entryways into the community with context appropriate solutions including landscaping, public art, and design that strengthen Folsom’s unique identity.
- Commit to high-quality design.
- Preserve and enhance Folsom’s small-town charm by ensuring Folsom remains a safe, attractive, family-friendly community with social gathering places where neighbors can meet and interact.

Folsom Zoning Code (adopted as Title 17 of Folsom Municipal Code)

The City of Folsom’s Zoning Code carries out the city’s land use policies and sets land development requirements and established different uses within individual districts. The regulation addresses the physical development of a site, including the density, building height, lot requirements, setbacks, parking requirements.

A majority of the Central Business District is zoned C-2, Central Business Zone. The purpose of the C-2 zone is to provide for a wide range of commercial activities serving the entire community. Only manufacturing, warehousing, and heavier commercial uses are excluded.

The vision for the Master Plan would be developed under the parameters of the allowed uses and development standards of the Zoning Code.

2035 General Plan Amendments (Currently Under Review)

In response to state housing requirements and consistent with City Council direction, the city is currently in the process of making amendments to the City of Folsom 2035 General Plan (General Plan), the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (FPASP), and Zoning Code. The purpose of these amendment is to increase housing capacity for mixed-use, multi-family, and affordable development in three targeted areas of the city. The three targeted areas are the East Bidwell Street corridor, the transit priority areas around the Glenn and Iron Point light rail stations, and the Folsom Plan Area, particularly the Folsom Town Center, south of Highway 50.

This work implements the policies and programs from the General Plan Housing Element adopted in 2021, particularly Program H-2 (Create Additional Lower-Income Housing Capacity). In total this effort proposes to create capacity for up to 6,046 additional residential units in the city to meet the goals for the state’s housing element requirements.

By increasing capacity in targeted areas, the city will be able to maintain an adequate supply of land for multi-family housing without having to rezone land in established residential neighborhoods. As the city's population grows and more people work here, Folsom needs a variety of housing types. The best location for those homes is near jobs, services, and transit. The types of housing that are identified as multi-family housing is any housing with more than two units including apartments, condominiums, and townhomes. Residential mixed-use development is office space or retail with housing located above, adjacent to, or attached to it.

The first part of this effort was a Targeted Mixed-use and Multi-family Housing Study prepared by Opticos Design, Inc. (Opticos) which focused on a market feasibility analysis of and appropriate designs for higher density residential and residential mixed-use development in the identified targeted areas. The study evaluated attractive design, density, development standards and market feasibility for multi-family and residential mixed-use development.

This work was important in helping the Planning Commission, City Council, and the public understand how design and density can work together to achieve attractive development in Folsom that supports transit use and existing commercial development, reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and can provide more affordable housing options. The goal of the study was to reach consensus on increased density, development, and design standard recommendations for the three targeted areas which Opticos outlined in their Recommendations Memo (which can be found on the city's website). Based on these recommendations, community input, and City Council direction, results from the study formed the basis in identifying the development assumptions and determining the appropriate development standards associated with the amendments to the City's 2035 General Plan, FPASP, and Zoning Code.

In April of this year, the City released the draft amendments and the associated Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR). The comment period on the DSEIR was from April 22 to June 6, 2024. The city is now in the process of preparing response to comments and preparing the Final SEIR for Council Consideration this summer including the General Plan Amendment and Zoning Code changes.

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Study (Previous Study 2022)

In 2022 the Central Business District was one of two areas selected in the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) region as part of a week-long ULI grant Advisory Services Panel made up of national experts that provided preliminary recommendations. This included a need to brand the area from a marketing perspective, increase development opportunities, improve safety and walkability, increase lighting and landscaping and recommended forming an advisory committee to get buy in on a shared vision.

Key findings of the report include the following:

- Build consensus to craft a vision for vibrant, walkable, intergenerational communities where residents can live, work and play.
- Prioritize the development of sufficient physical infrastructure, especially utility capacity to support growth and new residential development.
- Initiate pilot placemaking such as public art, street fairs and performances.
- Commit to a transportation vision at the local level; implement “complete streets” policies.
- Identify partners and public private partnerships, real estate funds, grants and other sources to raise capital.
- Produce design guidelines consistent with facilitating a walkable, connected corridor.
- Create more opportunities for mixed-income housing.
- Orient housing toward existing residential areas and amenities, establish strong connections to retail

East Bidwell Streets Complete Streets Corridor Plan (Previous Study 2015)

In 2015, Kimley Horn analyzed four areas of the city along East Bidwell including the Central Business District. That study was met with mixed reviews from landowners and was not adopted or implemented. However, key opportunities identified in the plan specifically for the Central Business District include:

- Improved access and connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)
- Enhanced crosswalks.
- Improved wayfinding and signage
- Focused turning movement and traffic control (including roundabouts) analysis
- Accommodation of the Sutter Middle School’s Master Plan access and circulation improvements

- Signal timing for reduced travel speeds
- Countdown pedestrian signal heads at all intersection crossing
- Leading pedestrian intervals
- Bicycle sensitive loop detectors and
- “Green Street” features
- Internal site circulation, parking lots and pedestrian movement and transit

Specific feedback identified at the start of the process include:

- Opportunity to channelize left turns, potentially with raised medians,
- Verify u-turn availability
- Lack of bike lanes
- Parking lots separation from street and pedestrian facilities
- Sidewalks should be wider and brought up to current design standards
- Consideration should be given to developing for a more fluid transition from East Bidwell onto Riley street, the Historic District and across the American River.
- Need to provide more landscaping

Since 2015, there have been many changes to the retail environment, businesses in the area, some circulation improvements near Sutter Middle School and the introduction of a few multifamily housing projects into the CBD.

- It is anticipated that the Master Plan would be an opportunity to refresh the previous transportation and streetscape plan for review and consideration as part of this Master Plan effort.

Folsom Active Transportation Plan (adopted 2022)

The City adopted the Active Transportation Plan June 14, 2022. The purpose is to guide the planning, development and maintenance of existing and future bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the City, including Safe Routes to School.

- Policy 5.2.1 is pertinent to future development in the Central Business District because it requires all new development to provide a system of sidewalks, paths, and bikeways that link all land uses, provide accessibility to parks and schools, and connect to all existing or planned external street and path facilities.
- The ADP plan specifically calls out East Bidwell Street from Coloma Street to Blue Ravine Road as a pedestrian collision focus area based on past pedestrian involved collisions, so safety considerations should be explored in the Master Plan.

City Council Adopted Roundabout Policy (Directed 2024)

At the May 14th City Council meeting, the City Council directed staff to move forward with a grant from SACOG for a Roundabout Policy and Feasibility Study.

The potential benefits of roundabouts include driver safety, traffic operations and capacity, right of way requirements and maintenance needs versus traditional traffic signal controls at intersections. According to Kimley Horne roadway capacity is constrained by traffic controls at intersections, not necessarily by the number of travel lanes, which leads to delays. Roundabouts provide for less queuing, less traffic delay, and can result in fewer lanes needed to support through traffic.

- This effort will help inform the feasibility of roundabouts with the Central Business District as well as other areas of the city. The work effort includes 13 intersections in the city, five of which are within the Central Business District. These include the intersections at Riley and East Bidwell Streets, East Bidwell and Coloma Streets, East Bidwell and Glenn Streets, Glenn and Riley Streets, and Riley Street at Kohls.

Economic Market Analysis (2024 in progress)

As part of this Master Plan effort, Bay Area Economics (BAE) has provided preliminary analysis of existing market conditions for the CBDMP. As part of the Master Plan effort the analysis will inform solutions for commercial corridor revitalization such as potential uses that support revitalization, financing options for public and private improvements (such as improvement districts, etc.) for funding traffic, utility, landscaping, etc., so that the Master Plan can be implemented.

Traffic recommendations (2024 in progress)

As part of this Master Plan effort, Kimly Horn will provide specific traffic recommendations in the Master Plan which could include roundabouts, dedicated bicycle lanes and expansion of sidewalks, trail connections and other pedestrian improvements and other potential improvements. Landscape and lighting recommendations may also be included to improve the pedestrian experience.

Bidwell Street Storm Drain Replacement (Current/Ongoing Study)

This grant funded project replaces a failing storm drain system along Bidwell Street between Wool Street and Decatur Street benefiting the Historic District Green Zone. Replacement of the failing storm drain system along Bidwell Street will be key in supporting the feasibility and accelerating the development of future multi-family housing development along Bidwell Street.

Public Outreach (2024)

As part of the Master Plan effort robust community outreach has occurred in addition to the Citizen Advisory Committee meetings. This included the following:

Online Survey. Conducted in December 2023, the survey included 14 questions exploring how often and why community members/visitors go to the district, what they would like to see remain, improve, and remove from the District, as well as specific concepts around housing, mobility, and other amenities. There were 821 respondents. A summary of key survey results is included as Appendix A to this Memo.

Pop-up Events. In December 2023, AIM Consulting conducted pop-up events in the community which included interactive boards with questions, and hard copy cards that could be submitted. Approximately 75 people interacted with the Boards, and approximately 50 individuals spoke with AIM staff.

Social Media Posts. AIM released several social media posts which reached 5,228 Facebook users and 712 people commented on the posts.

Business Visits and Outreach. AIM visited 50 businesses in the Central Business District with project background information and survey fliers in order to reach people working in the district, inform them of the process and solicit participation in the online survey.

In addition, Project Management staff contacted businesses directly, and a subcommittee of two Citizen's Advisory Committee members attempted to contact approximately 100 business owners and property owners in March 2024 to solicit additional participation.

Community Newsletters/City Website. Throughout the process the City has posted information to the City's website regarding the Central Business District and opportunities to participate. In addition, information on the status of the Central Business District Master Plan progress has been included in the City's citywide newsletters.

Central Business District Master Plan Draft Table of Contents (Draft)

Introduction

Vision and Guiding Principles

District Revitalization/Economic Development Opportunities

- ✓ Key Opportunities (big ideas to implement vision) and expectations for redevelopment and phasing

Land Use (Concepts) and Design

- ✓ Relying on the General Plan land use and key policies and Zoning to show vision of what could be/future development opportunity in the area

Mobility and Access

- ✓ Mobility and access improvements for all including roundabouts for existing street network – emphasis on safety/beautification for existing network and right-of-way

Lighting and Landscaping

- ✓ Priority/need to improve safety and create a more inviting environment for pedestrians and bicyclists to move around and hang out in the district.

Public Spaces/Attractions

- ✓ Key elements of successful place making in public spaces (public and private property) and key opportunities for attractions – art, events, etc.

Wayfinding/Signage

- ✓ Key concept and opportunities, gateways, and specific recommendations as appropriate

Infrastructure

- ✓ Based on recent studies, summarize infrastructure needs and

Action Plan

- ✓ Implementation Strategies
- ✓ Action Items, Priorities, and Funding

Appendix A

Summary of Key Feedback from Online Survey

Results:

Reasons to visit Central Business District?:

Dining/shopping	84%	Community events	18%
Personal Services	43%	Children’s activities	16%
Public parks	33%	Employment	10%
Entertainment	21%		

What uses amenities would you like to see expanded or created?

Landscaping/green space	55%	Mix of housing and shopping	24%
Additional restaurants	50%	Play areas	20%
Entertainment	40%	Public Art	24%
Public gathering spaces	33%	Variety of Housing	16%

What would you like to see eliminated?

Large parking lots	35%	irregular intersections	56%
Cut through traffic	36%	Drive-thru restaurants	28%

Housing Types?

Townhouses	45%	Senior Housing	33%
Single Family	40%	Apartments	29%
Condos	36%		

What transportation improvements would you like to see?

More bicycle lanes	38%	Better street lighting	38%
Area wide shuttle	25%	Traffic calming/reduced cut through traffic	39%
Sidewalks	55%	Better public transit	23%
Better wayfinding	18%		

What would support the area as a destination?

Create themed urban landscaping	50%	Pop up food courts	38%
Create civic center or “heart” of the area	41%	Public art	35%
More community events	40%	Flea Market	22%
Local artisan/craft establishments	39%	Tournaments	16%