An aerial photograph of a city street grid, showing a dense network of roads and buildings. A teal horizontal bar is positioned at the bottom of the image, containing text.

# BLACKSTONE CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION + HOUSING STUDY

FINAL REPORT | APRIL 2017

FRESNO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITY OF FRESNO

**II A.**

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# PROJECT TEAM

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City of Fresno

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## Special recognition for the following contributing individuals and organizations:

Fresno Housing Authority + Porter Tract Neighborhood - Preston Prince

Metro Ministry / Better Blackstone - Keith Bergthold



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fresno is at the threshold of a major transformation. The City's significant efforts at revitalizing its downtown are coming to fruition which will be further strengthened by large infrastructure investment in the form of High Speed Rail, which not only passes through Fresno, but also has a station in the downtown. With improved connectivity to major economic centers such as San Francisco, Sacramento and Los Angeles; Fresno is poised for significant growth.

In the past few years, the City has taken significant steps in responding to the changing needs of its growing population, shifting regional forces and evolving challenges that come with it. The various planning documents prepared within the last decade lay the framework for a responsible growth strategy that is focused around smart growth principles, multi-modal transportation approach, complete neighborhood concept and development that promotes fiscal stability. The 2035 General Plan, adopted in 2014, recommends strategies for addressing the city's challenges and capitalizing on its opportunities and assets. The Blackstone Corridor Transportation and Housing Study is an important step in realizing the vision and direction set forth in the General Plan.

The City of Fresno partnered with Fresno Council of Governments to initiate the Blackstone Corridor Transportation and Housing Study with the objective of making Blackstone Avenue revitalization as a prototype for the region, responding to the Sustainable Communities Strategy goals of integrated land use and transportation planning. The new policy framework established by the 2035 General Plan emphasizes infill mixed-use development through intensification and reuse of vacant and underutilized land along Blackstone Avenue.

This study ensures that the revitalization on Blackstone Avenue is in alignment with these goals. It not only establishes a long term vision for Blackstone Avenue as a vibrant and active multi-modal corridor by highlighting the potential for revitalization, but also lays a framework for guiding the imminent transformation. The study identifies emerging opportunities and recommends implementation strategies and tools for consideration by the City of Fresno and various stakeholders.

The key opportunities for corridor revitalization are:

1. Leveraging BRT and introducing new high density uses on the corridor to support ridership and street activation.
2. Strengthening residential neighborhood northeast of FCC campus for improving conditions in the neighborhood while maintaining affordability for existing residents, thus resulting in a stable and safe neighbor for Fresno City College.
3. Seeking out opportunities to build new affordable housing in the Study Area to bring new activity to the corridor with access to affordable transportation.
4. Streetscape improvement to encourage pedestrian activity to encourage and support new businesses on the corridor.
5. Improving internal bike and pedestrian connectivity on FCC campus and to Blackstone Avenue for increased BRT ridership.
6. Establishing Strategic Partnerships between various agencies, organizations, institutions, and key stakeholders to leverage financing opportunities and provide on-going leadership for bringing along change.

The fundamental strategy recommended in the study is “Incremental Development” over time to carefully position each strategy as a catalyst for the next increment. This also helps guide public and private investment to maximize returns for collective benefit and attract subsequent new investment along the corridor.

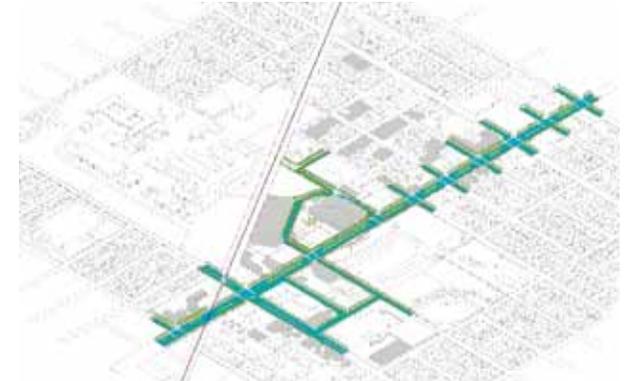
The increments recommended are prioritized based on a logical development sequence and known catalyst opportunities. The sequence does not reflect a specific timeline, rather potential scenarios of development and associated investments that will generate interest and activity on part of future investors. As investments are made, unforeseen opportunities (i.e. private property development projects) and challenges will emerge.



#### **INCREMENT 1: LEVERAGE CATALYTIC SITES**

The first increment includes actions that are already conceived, in planning, and that are necessary as an early phase. These build the foundation of future investment. Highlights of the increment include:

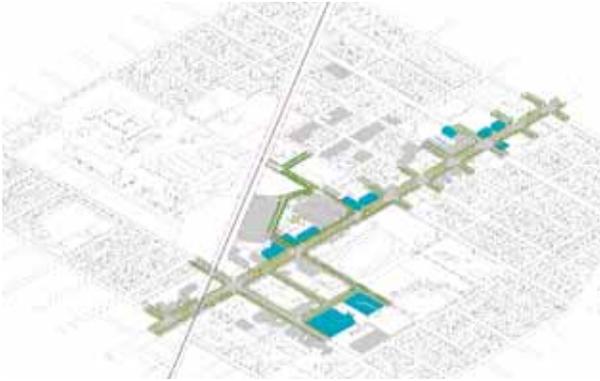
- Support private catalyst housing development projects
- Locate Fresno City College (FCC) academic buildings on Blackstone Avenue and guide other related SCCCD bond funded improvements.
- Implement early activation and tactical urbanism strategies
- Identify specific buildings for repurpose and adaptive reuse
- Foster community organization through the Better Blackstone initiative
- Strengthen the northern neighborhoods through partnerships
- Finish implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) to Blackstone Avenue.



#### **INCREMENT 2: FOCUS ON PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**

The second increment focuses on public realm improvements that further catalyze private development along the corridor. Mobility, safety, and beautification are critical to encourage private investment.

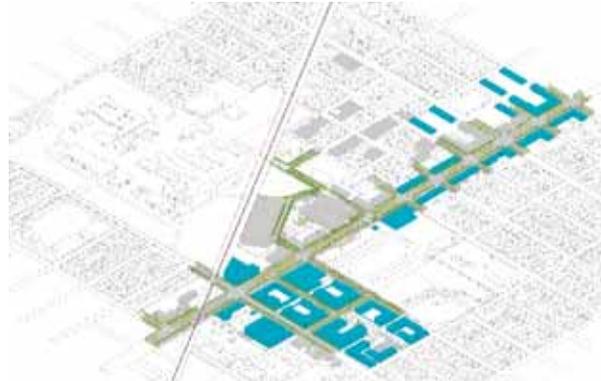
- Improve the public realm on Blackstone and on the FCC campus
- Enhance pedestrian safety and comfort to support transit
- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies at FCC



**INCREMENT 3: PROMOTE LAND ASSEMBLY FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

The third increment shows the most likely private development opportunities after elements of increments one and two are realized. Development catalyst clusters and larger parcels inform opportunities.

- Develop infill projects where existing parcels are suitable
- Promote assembly of parcels for more efficient redevelopment
- Continue adaptive reuse strategies



**INCREMENT 4: ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL OF CORRIDOR**

The fourth increment illustrates the desired outcome of the prior strategies. The corridor is now a well-functioning neighborhood centered on local businesses, the college, and transit.

- Achieve general plan goals for development
- Serve as a model for other corridors in Fresno and California
- Further catalyze off-corridor neighborhood investment through street tree plantings, funding of parks, and strengthening of schools.

*“with careful planning and focused place-making strategies, most of these challenges can be addressed to transform Blackstone Avenue from an auto-oriented corridor to a multi-modal street and a lively place to enjoy”*



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The purpose of the Blackstone Corridor Transportation and Housing Study is to identify opportunities and tools to achieve the goals set forth in the General Plan, for transforming Blackstone Avenue from an auto-oriented corridor to a multi-modal, mixed-use livable street; through focused and strategic interventions. This document, therefore, is not a regulating document, rather a visioning study that makes strategic recommendations within the current regulatory framework.

The study takes into account FCC's campus master planning effort with the General Plan goals for Blackstone Avenue, by providing guidance on locating FCC program to establish an institutional presence along the corridor and become a positive contributor to its character.

The study identifies opportunities for transit supportive infill development within the study area, improved connectivity to Blackstone Avenue and catalytic sites to be prioritized to kick-start the revitalization process. The recommendations in the study will serve as a guide to direct investment in private development and public infrastructure projects during appropriate time-frames. To support the objective described above, this study includes three components;

**Planning and Urban Design Strategy** for focused

interventions along the corridor ranging from near term to long term and requiring low-cost investment to higher level of funding.

**Residential Market Analysis and Development Strategy** for facilitating transit supportive housing that might be attractive to FCC students and reduce commute times.

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy** to reduce automobile dependency on FCC campus by enhancing their full menu of mobility choices and reducing expensive investments in building excessive auto-oriented infrastructure to accommodate current needs and future growth.

## Project Setting

California is the largest growing economy in the country, with an economic output of \$2.31 Trillion in 2014, and 6th largest in the world in 2015, with a consistent 3.1% GDP growth, per figures released by The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2016. Growth in industrial sectors such as technology, agriculture, manufacturing, medicine, motion pictures, and tourism is resulting in state-wide growth in population.



*Planned California High Speed Rail will connect Fresno North and south to other population centers.*

*SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY*

Fresno is the 5th largest metropolitan area in California, and the largest city in central valley with a population of about half a million. It is also the gateway to America's finest national parks such as Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks, making it a transitional tourist center.

FIGURE 1: FRESNO URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY  
SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GIS DATA



Fresno is about 4 hours driving distance from Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It is well serviced by Amtrak San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento and Los Angeles. Fresno also has an international airport connected globally through major US airports. It is the geographical center of California, served by state route 99 and 41.

Once the proposed High Speed Railway (HSR) in California is operational, Fresno will be within 2 hours from the three big metropolitan centers. It is emerging as an important business center, attracting population of a younger demographic with specific lifestyle needs. Growth comes with its own challenges and demands on public infrastructure, need for built space and quality of life to support the new population. It is essential for City governments, private developers and local residents to recognize this growth momentum and prepare for guiding growth and development by embracing appropriate long term sustainable development strategies.

## Focus Area

The project focus area includes the following boundaries: Van Ness/Maroa Avenues to Clark Street and East Harvard Avenue to East Home Avenue. The boundaries encompass a half-mile stretch of Blackstone Avenue between Harvard and Home Avenues. Blackstone Avenue is a major

arterial corridor, 9 miles long, in the north-south direction that passes through the center of the City and terminates in the downtown. It has three lanes in each direction with a 110' wide right-of-way. Currently there are two Fresno Area Express (FAX) bus routes operating along the corridor, one of which operates on rapid transit frequency.

Among the significant uses within the project focus area is the Fresno City College (FCC) campus that flanks Blackstone Avenue on both sides. To the west of the corridor is the main academic campus and to the east is Ratcliffe Stadium along with other recreational uses and limited academic program. The Porter Tract Historic District is to the northwest of the main campus along North Maroa Avenue. Heaton Elementary school is to the south of FCC campus across McKinley Avenue. Most of the uses along Blackstone corridor are fast-food restaurants, convenience stores and a large number of automotive businesses. The rest of the project focus area is made up of residential neighborhoods and light industrial uses concentrated at the intersection of Blackstone and McKinley Avenues.

FIGURE 2: AREA OF STUDY  
SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE



# Planning Context

## GENERAL PLAN

Fresno is going through a rapid urbanization process. The 2035 General Plan has made a commitment to manage its growth in a financially sustainable manner.

The General Plan has embraced smart growth principles by establishing an urban growth boundary that restricts growth beyond the current foot print and increases density within its existing neighborhoods through infill development and focused multimodal transit strategies. The City of Fresno has committed capital investment in public realm improvements such as streetscapes, city-wide parks and open space network, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The City recognizes the need for private investment for sustainable long term equitable economic growth in Fresno, incentivizing infill development, creating strategic partnerships with stakeholders and up-zoning private land along BRT corridors to attract private investment. The broad General Plan goals that frame the premise of this study are;

- **Housing Element:** includes complete neighborhood development and revitalizations of existing neighborhoods true infill development mix of densities building types income opportunities and network of open space

- **Updated Urban Form with Emphasis on Mixed Use:** promotes high density mixed along major corridors and activity centers for feasible infrastructure development and identity creation
- **Complete Street and Multi-modal Connectivity:** encourages safe walking biking, transit and other auto options in the streetscape design and creating a hierarchy of connectivity routes

The 2035 General Plan provides strategic direction for achieving these goals:

- Increased urban development in the form of infill and rehabilitation along with new Activity Centers with mixed-uses and neighborhoods in growth areas connected by multi-use corridors served by BRT and enhanced bus service (2035 General Plan, p. 3-6)
- Fresno's BRT corridors offer great opportunities for future growth over time in the form of mixed-use development on sites that are now underutilized or vacant. Vibrant Activity Centers with public spaces, medium-high and high-density residential, retail, and employment uses will be located on these major street corridors. The Activity Centers will also support surrounding neighborhoods, multi-modal transportation including the BRT system, and Downtown (2035 General Plan, p. 3-14)



## GENERAL PLAN VISION FOR BLACKSTONE AVENUE AS BRT CORRIDOR

Blackstone Avenue is a major street corridor in Fresno connecting the Downtown with the historic Tower District, Fresno City College and major commercial centers and residential neighborhoods in the northern areas of city. The Department of Transportation (FAX) has undertaken the construction of a BRT project that consists of 15.7 mile line connecting the major north-south corridor (Blackstone Avenue), and a major east-west corridor (Ventura Avenue and Kings Canyon Road), to Downtown. This project presents significant opportunities for land use intensification and public realm improvements along the BRT corridors to expand transit ridership. It is expected that this project will not only improve safety and passenger amenities, but also pedestrian amenities such as improved sidewalks, crosswalks, access to transit stops and streetscape along these corridors (Department of Transportation report to City Council, January 2016).

The 2035 General Plan incorporates specific policies to support the BRT project, as described below:

- **Appropriate Mixed-Use:** Facilitate the development of vertical and horizontal mixed-

uses to blend residential, commercial, and public land uses on one or adjacent sites and ensure land use compatibility between mixed-use districts and surrounding neighborhoods (2035 General Plan, p. 3-18)

- **Access to Activity Centers:** Promote adoption and implementation of standards supporting pedestrian activities and bicycle linkages from surrounding land uses and neighborhoods into Activity Centers and transit stops (2035 General Plan, p. 3-18)
- **Parking Standards for Shared Parking:** Explore opportunities to provide shared parking within mixed-use designations to reduce need to construct large parking lots or structures needed for peak use times only (2035 General Plan, p. 3-18)

One of the Activity Centers located on the north-south is Fresno City College, which is part of this study area. The two stops that fall within the study area will be at Weldon Street and Blackstone Avenue, right outside FCC campus, and another at Clinton and Blackstone Avenue. The City has adopted a new Development Code which includes regulations and standards to allow for mixed-uses and shared parking facilities, consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan.

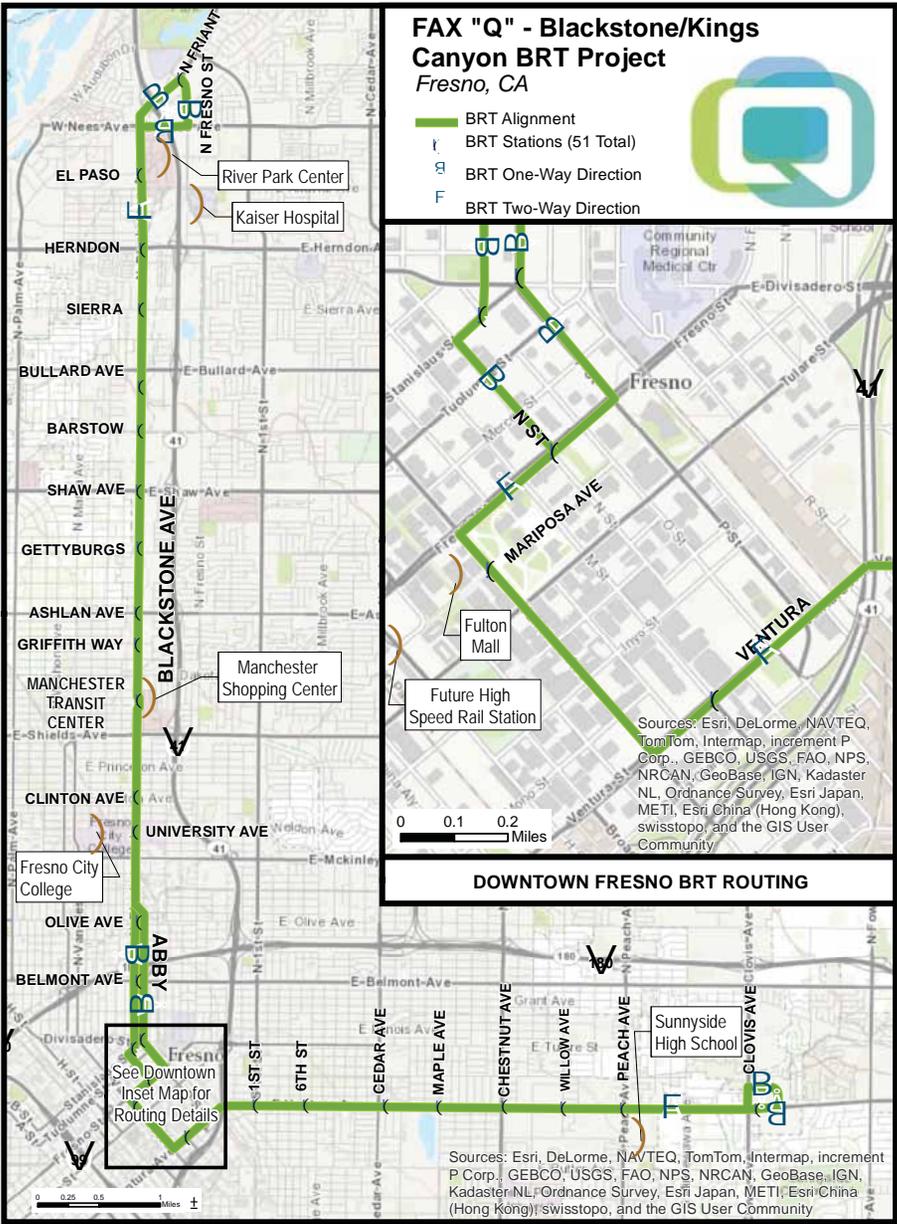
## DEVELOPMENT CODE REGULATIONS FOR BRT CORRIDORS

The Development Code establishes Mixed-Use (MX) District zoning along most of the corridor with development and design standards to allow and encourage a mix of housing, retail, office and active public spaces in a pedestrian-oriented environment. The parcels along Blackstone Avenue are designated as Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMX) in the 2035 General Plan. See figure: 5.

- The NMX district is intended to provide for mixed-use residential districts that include local-serving, pedestrian-oriented commercial development, such as smaller independent retail shops and professional offices in two- to three-story buildings.
- Development is expected to include ground-floor neighborhood retail uses and upper-level housing or offices, with a mix of small lot single-family houses, townhomes, and multi-family dwelling units on side streets, in a horizontal or vertical mixed-use orientation.
- The NMX district provides for a scale and character of development that is pedestrian-oriented, designed to attract and promote a walk-in clientele, with small lots and frequent pedestrian connections permitting convenient access from residences to commercial space (Citywide Development Code, p. 11-31; 2015).

FIGURE 4: PROPOSED BRT CORRIDOR ON BLACKSTONE AVENUE

SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GENERAL PLAN 2035



## Use Limitations

- No new auto oriented uses
- No new large scale retail format
- No new industrial uses
- No new large format recreational uses

## Density, Intensity and Massing Standards

- 12-16 dwelling units per acre
- FAR 1.5 MAX
- Maximum building height of 40 feet
- Maximum of 10 feet front setback
- Minimum frontage coverage of 60%
- Minimum corner frontage of 30 feet measured from property corner
- Minimum on-site open space to be 15% of the lot area

## Site Design Development Standards

- Within 200 feet of an existing or planned BRT station, no less than 60 percent of the building frontage along public streets shall be occupied by active, pedestrian-oriented uses such as retail and entertainment.
- Provide direct entrance to ground floor commercial and residential from street. There should be a minimum of one entrance per 100

linear feet for street frontage.

- Buildings should be located within 5' setback from the property line.
- Provide 12' minimum sidewalk with street trees spaced no less than 20' apart and not more than 40' apart. Aligned no more than 3' from the face of the curb.
- Provide 12' minimum sidewalk with street trees spaced less no less than 20' apart and not more than 40' apart.
- Surface parking should be located behind the building.

## TOD Height and Density Bonus

At its discretion, the Review Authority, when granting a Development Permit, may allow a project to exceed the maximum height and/or the maximum residential density of the Base District if all three of the following criteria are met:

- The project site is located entirely within an MX District.
- The project site is located within 500 feet of an existing or planned Bus Rapid Transit station or a station for a similar enhanced transit service as determined by the Review Authority.
- The project will provide one of the following public benefits:

- A Public Plaza per Section 15-1104-E.1.c; or
- Qualifying public art at the discretion of the Review Authority; or
- Ninety percent or greater frontage coverage along the street which features the Bus Rapid Transit route or other enhanced transit route.

(Article 21: TOD Height and Density Bonus, Citywide Development Code, 2015; Fresno Council of Governments).

## Fresno City College Facilities MasterPlan

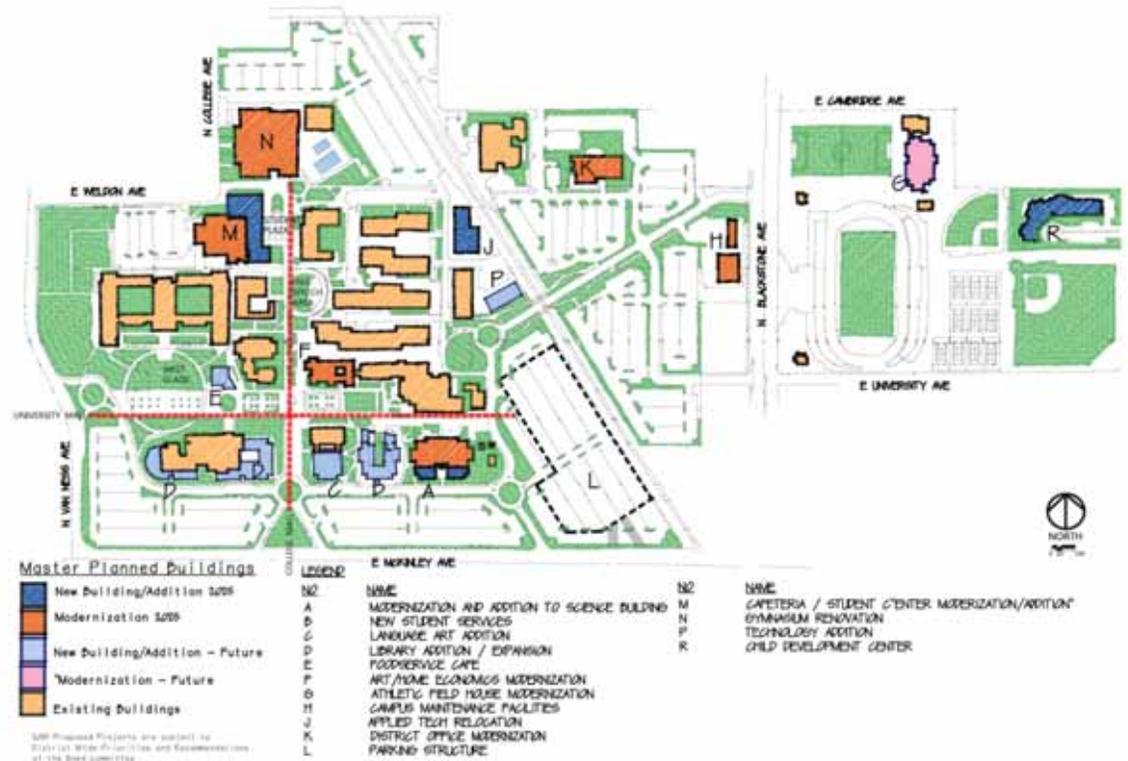
Fresno City College (FCC) is the oldest community college in California established in 1910, and comes under State Center Community College District (SCCCD) regulatory body. FCC is a multidisciplinary academic institute, catering mainly to City of Fresno residents. FCC has seen significant growth in its annual enrollment with 28,000 students in 2016 and projected to reach 33,000 students by 2025, per Educational Masterplan 2010. While the Educational Masterplan lays emphasis on the students and their educational needs. The FCC Facilities Master Plan 2012-2025 acknowledges these issues and provides a framework for future expansion.

FIGURE 5: PROPOSED FCC MASTER PLAN AND EXPANSION  
 SOURCE: FRESNO CITY COLLEGE LONG RANGE MASTER PLAN, 2012-2025

Since the General Plan identifies FCC campus as one of the Activity Centers (nodes of activity with a mix of medium/high density uses and public spaces, connected by multi-use corridors and served by enhanced transit) along Blackstone Avenue, the study explores opportunities to fulfill this goal while taking into account FCC's needs and makes recommendations for TDM strategies on campus and location of future uses supporting campus demographics, in relation to the Blackstone corridor.

**Passage of the State Center Community College District (SCCCD) bond measure:**

In June 2016, voters approved a \$485 million bond measure that will support facilities improvements at FCC and other colleges in the district. Among other projects, the bond measure is expected to provide funding for expanding or improving FCC's Math and Sciences Building, constructing a new Career Technical Facility on the FCC Campus, improving traffic flow, building a new parking structure or improvements to existing parking facility, and improving connectivity and circulation through the campus.



Historic Academic Core



Health Sciences Building



2

**EXISTING  
CONDITIONS**

## Land Use

The predominant land uses in the study area are institutional, medium density residential (12-16 du/ac), high density residential, commercial and light industrial. (Images to show one residential, light industrial, FCC). Most of the commercial uses are concentrated along Blackstone Avenue and is described as General Heavy Commercial. It mainly includes automobile repair shops, smog shops, food chains and neighborhood convenience stores. This commercial zone is only one parcel deep for most of the length of the study area, with the exception of major intersections at Clinton Avenue and McKinley Avenue, where the commercial uses are one block deep. There are some other retail uses on the southwestern corner of the FCC campus. Fresno City College occupies a large part of the study area, and spans both sides of Blackstone Avenue. Ratcliffe Stadium and other FCC Sports Facilities line the east edge of Blackstone Avenue. These facilities exclusively serve FCC students, staff and faculty, except during game days and events. Hence they don't provide a consistently active frontage on Blackstone Avenue.



*Ratcliffe Stadium and sports facilities surrounded by tall chain-link fence do not create an inviting pedestrian environment.*



*Single story liquor stores in cheaply constructed buildings are not a positive contributor to the street life.*



*Even newer retail buildings do not have a street orientation and are surrounded by large surface parking.*



*FCC maintenance facilities at Weldon and Blackstone Avenue do not create an active frontage at an important intersection.*



*Auto-oriented businesses and smog shops with a bland frontage dominate the streetscape.*



*Food services are limited to chain restaurants and primarily fast food joints.*

FIGURE 6: EXISTING LAND USE  
 SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GIS DATA



## Circulation and Connectivity

Blackstone Avenue is a large scale, north south arterial street with three lanes in each direction. Transit service was recently upgraded with improved headway, enhanced branding, and stop reconfiguration. Future full BRT is envisioned. The corridor runs parallel to the 41 freeway, also connecting the downtown core of Fresno to the populous neighborhoods to the north. Concentrations of commercial and retail destinations are sparse along the corridor in the study area. As described elsewhere, the college is the primary source of vehicle trip generation. Traffic flow as measured in level of service is similar to other comparable corridors. Traffic volumes are somewhat lower in the study area compared to segments to the north suggesting the extra capacity may provide flexibility to expanding mobility options for pedestrians, transit, and bicycle.

McKinley Avenue crosses Blackstone Avenue at the south end of the study area. It is also a major arterial street with three lanes in each direction. McKinley Avenue provides access to the 41 freeway east of Blackstone. Other important collector streets within the study are Clinton Avenue (east west) and Maroa Avenue (north south).

The rail track running in a northwest to southeast diagonal is used by Amtrak to operate its San Joaquin route between Bakersfield, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Sacramento. The track creates a physical barrier, separating residential neighborhoods on the west from Blackstone Avenue and neighborhoods to the east. In the study area, only McKinley and Clinton connect. Crossing Blackstone Avenue near McKinley, the tracks further degrade pedestrian and bicycle access at the intersection. The neighborhood to the north of the college contains many dead end streets and fragmented parcels as a result of the diagonal track geometry meeting a rectilinear grid of streets. Access on the Fresno City College campus is impeded by the track which divides the campus. Circulation across the track on the college campus is limited to one underpass. While serviceable for vehicles and pedestrians, it lacks comfort and amenity such as shade and wayfinding. No designated bicycle routes exist. The main campus system of paths and buildings does not highlight the current pedestrian route from the Blackstone and the underpass.



*The FCC under-pass at Weldon Avenue is the only east west connection across railway track within the FCC Campus and is more auto-oriented.*

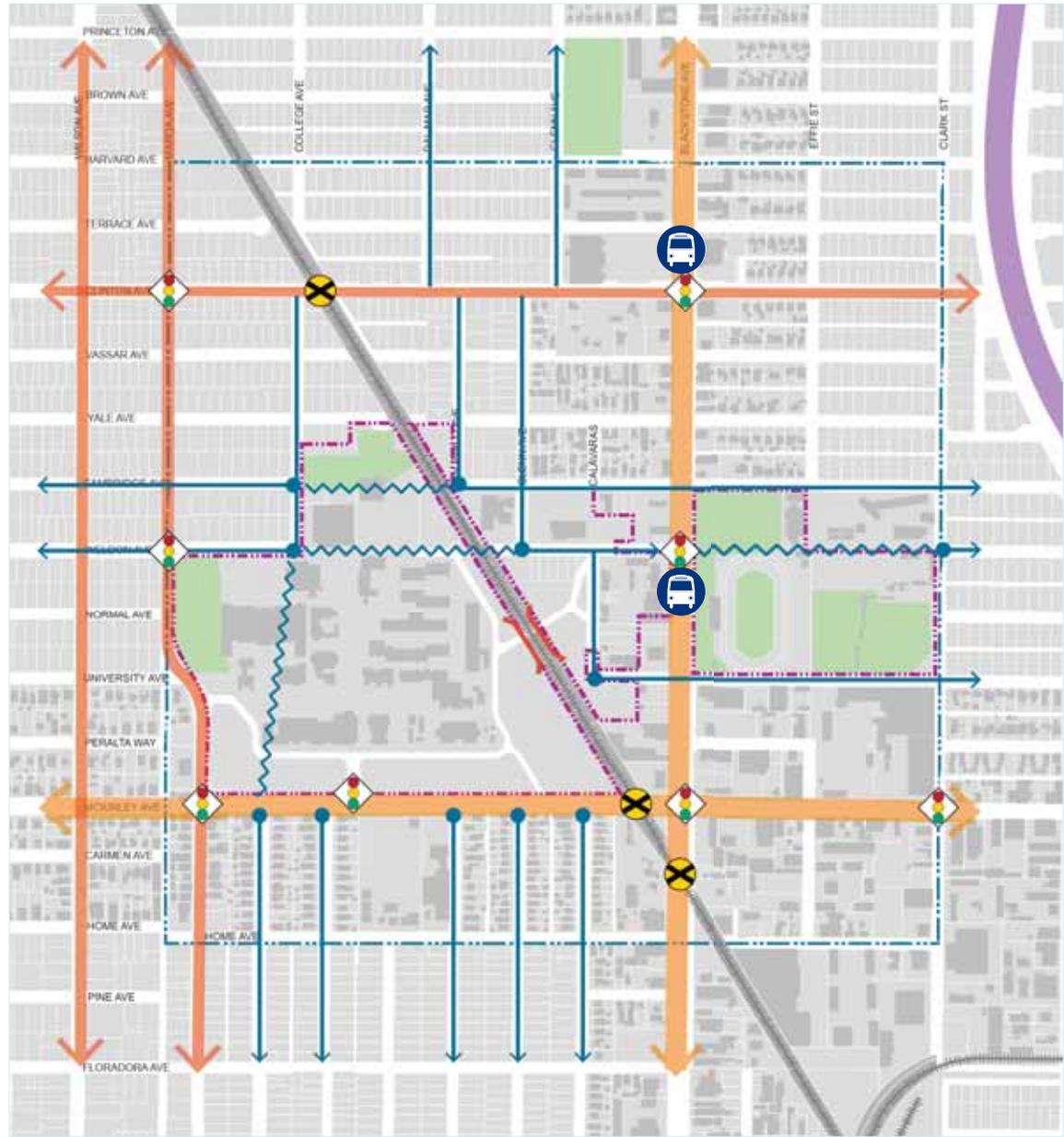


*Amtrak rail tracks divide the neighborhoods and impede access to Blackstone Avenue from western neighborhoods.*



*Fences at eastern edge of Ratcliffe Stadium obstruct access to Blackstone Avenue from the eastern neighborhoods and create non-pedestrian friendly environment.*

FIGURE 7: EXISTING CONNECTIVITY  
 SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GIS DATA



-  PROPOSED BRT STATION
-  EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL
-  CONTROLLED RAIL CROSSING
-  RAILWAY UNDERPASS
-  FREEWAY (MULTI-LANE STATE ROUTE WITH MEDIAN)
-  ARTERIAL STREETS (4 TO 6 LANES WITH MEDIAN)
-  COLLECTOR STREET (2 TO 4 LANES)
-  NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS
-  MISSING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
-  FCC PROPERTY BOUNDARY
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

## Physical Character

The physical character of a place is comprised of buildings, open spaces, public realm, relationship of the built elements to the open spaces and the interface between private and public realm. The quality of each element contributes to the overall experience of the place and hence is an important factor in its success as a vibrant, livable place.

To make Blackstone Avenue a vibrant corridor that supports pedestrian life and subsequently the future BRT service, it is important to study the existing character of the street, the buildings and uses along the street, and public realm, to identify which elements are positive contributors and which are not. This analysis further informs the opportunities and challenges for revitalization of the corridor.

The three major components of the project area with a distinctive physical character are:

- Blackstone Avenue corridor
- FCC campus
- Residential neighborhoods

### BLACKSTONE AVENUE CORRIDOR

Blackstone Avenue is a north-south arterial roadway and commercial corridor connecting downtown, mid-town and north areas of Fresno, with a posted speed limit of 40-45 miles per hour

for most of its length. The segment of Blackstone Avenue, within the study area has six travel lanes with center median and narrow sidewalks on either side. The development pattern along the corridor comprises mostly of outdated auto-oriented retail and service businesses housed in single story tilt-up buildings surrounded by large areas of surface parking. There are a few chain restaurants and convenience retail stores which also have large surface parking lots facing the corridor. Figure 8 illustrates the area disproportionately occupied by surface parking lots resulting in poor street definition along Blackstone Avenue.

Buildings lacking any distinctive architectural character and quality, paired with poor signage create a very banal environment along the corridor. Narrow sidewalks with frequently occurring curbs cuts along, lack of active and attractive building frontage, and inadequate street landscaping and furnishings do not lend to a pedestrian-friendly environment. Issues with pedestrian and bicycle safety make, and lack-luster built environment and public realm, make it difficult to imagine Blackstone Avenue as a vibrant place. But with careful planning and focused place-making strategies, most of these challenges can be addressed to transform Blackstone Avenue from an auto-oriented corridor to a multi-modal street and a lively place to enjoy.



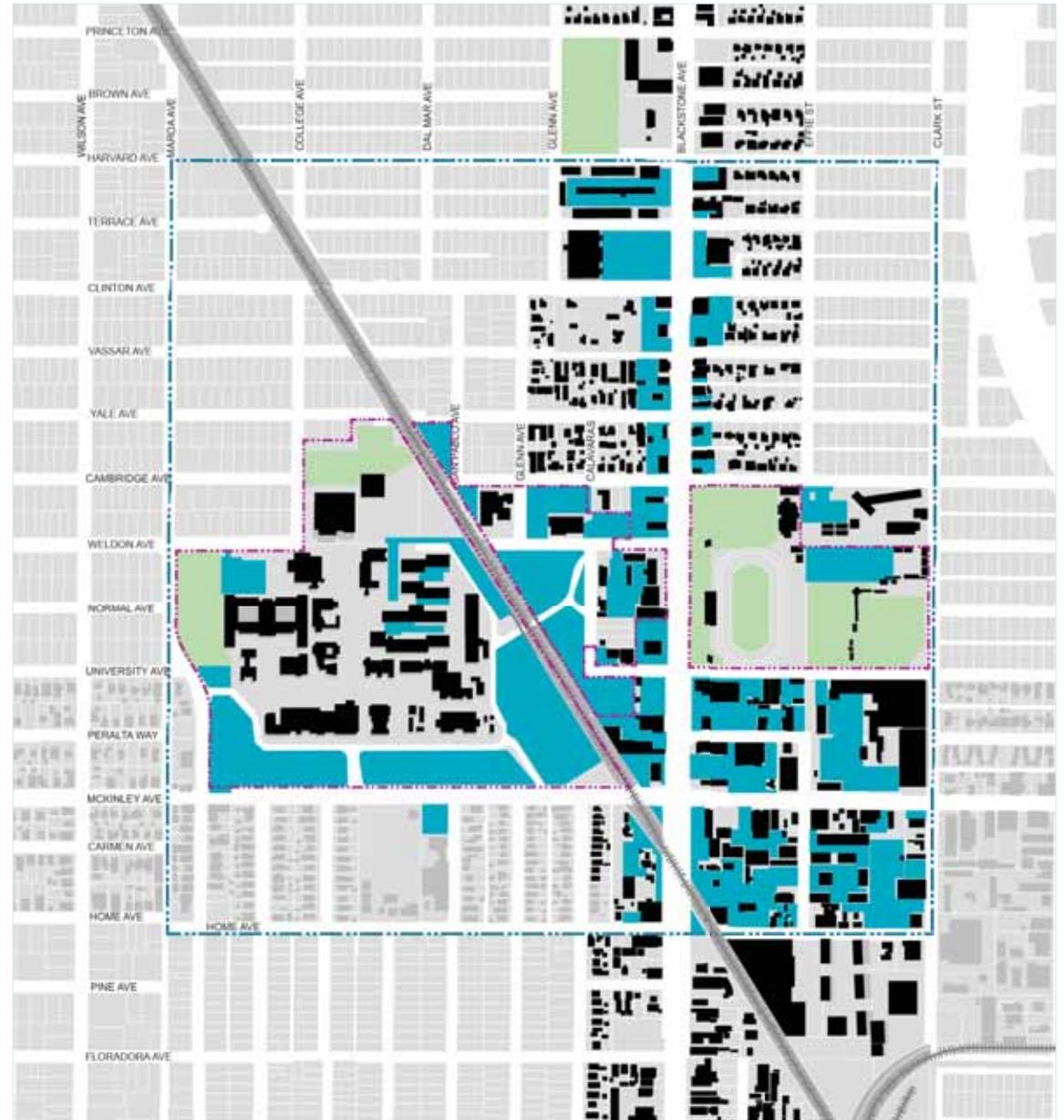
*Very few buildings are directly accessed from sidewalks or have a retail frontage on Blackstone Avenue to encourage pedestrian activity. The buildings are inconsistently designed and do not form a cohesive built environment. The haphazard mix of auto oriented signs also add to the lack of visual identity on the corridor.*

FIGURE 8: EXCESSIVE SURFACE PARKING

SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GIS DATA, GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS



Most of the parcels on Blackstone Avenue within study area have small frontage, and are surrounded by large surface parking. Frequently occurring curbcuts create a conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.



- SURFACE PARKING
- FCC PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

FIGURE 9 : EXISTING BLACKSTONE AVENUE STREET SECTION

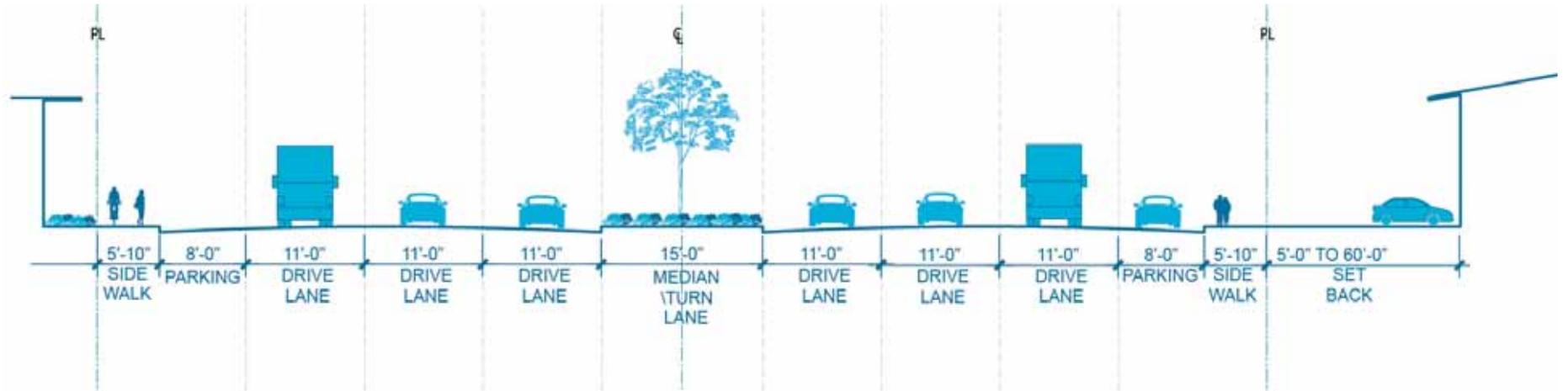
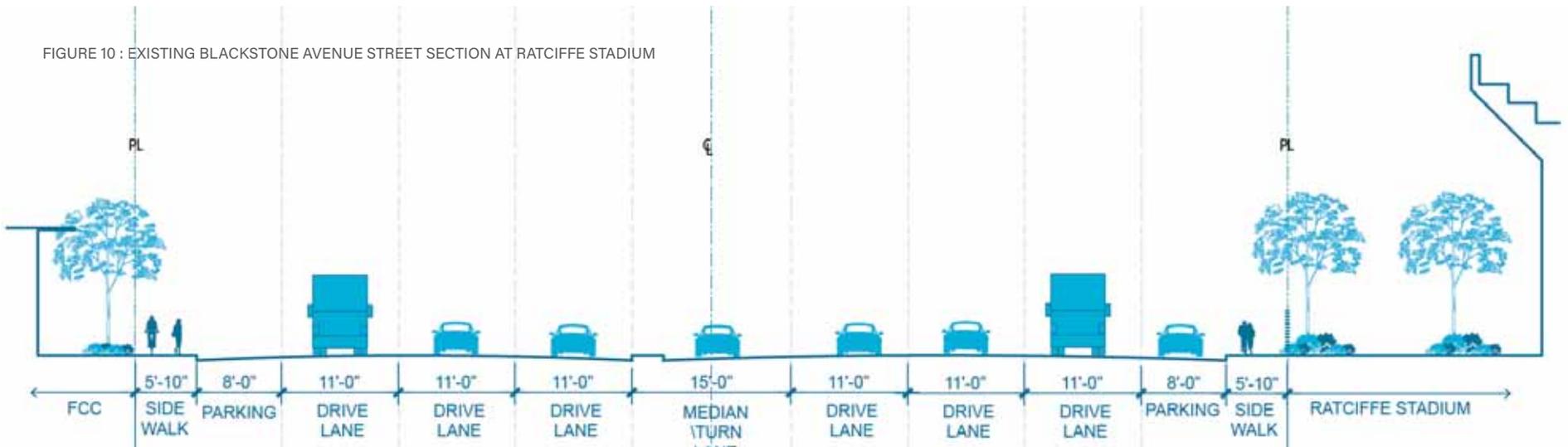


FIGURE 10 : EXISTING BLACKSTONE AVENUE STREET SECTION AT RATCIFFE STADIUM





Most of the buildings on Blackstone Avenue are less than 20' in height with wide setbacks from the property line. The corridor lacks vertical definition, feeling of safety and containment.



Blackstone Avenue is a six-lane wide corridor with a center median, narrow sidewalks, and infrequently occurring pedestrian crosswalks, resulting in pedestrians jaywalking across the wide street.



The sidewalks are narrow and poorly maintained, lacking street landscaping and pedestrian friendly street furnishings. They are also lacking in basic accessibility as required by state and federal code.

## FCC CAMPUS

The Fresno City College Campus is located on 103 acres of land with two historic buildings on its core campus – the restored Old Administration building and the Library. Other buildings on the core campus are of the Late Modern architectural style, which match each other and although were designed to be compatible with the historic buildings create an almost mundane palette across the campus. The campus is divided in three parts - the historic core campus, west of the railway tracks, the new Life Sciences Building with other administrative programs between the railway tracks and Blackstone Avenue and the Ratcliffe Stadium and other recreational uses, east of Blackstone Avenue.

The rail road underpass on Weldon Avenue is the only connection between east and west side of the railway tracks. This has led the core campus to become quite disconnected from Blackstone Avenue, to have almost no significant presence on the future BRT corridor. The part of the campus west of railroad tracks has a number of back-of-the-house uses such as maintenance yards, located along Blackstone Avenue, that don't contribute positively to the character of the corridor. The interface at Ratcliffe Stadium and Blackstone Avenue is also characterized by a very non-descript public realm, with poor landscape treatment and tall fences along the campus property.

FCC is markedly a commuter campus with 81% of students, teachers, and staff driving every day, creating a huge demand for parking. Hence the large swaths of surface parking lots on campus. This has led to a disconnected and underutilized campus with its back turned on Blackstone Avenue.

The FCC Facilities Master Plan has identified needs for expansion of the college program which present a significant opportunity for establishing a strong presence on the Blackstone corridor by locating them on parcels that are currently occupied by the maintenance facilities. It also offers opportunities for densifying the campus by replacing single story structures in the academic core, with multi-story buildings.



*Main building, historic academic core*



*Open space at Van Ness Avenue frontage*



*Underpass at Weldon Avenue*

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The character of the residential neighborhoods in the study area is quite mixed as the buildings vary in their architectural character, materials and their state of upkeep, as well as the public realm varying from streets lined with mature trees and manicured front yards to streets devoid of any street landscaping.

The Porter Tract Historic District, a designated historic district, built around 1914-15, north-west of the FCC campus has a distinctive character with a diverse collection of single-family homes representing a range of architectural styles such as - Prairie, Spanish Revival, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Italian Renaissance and Craftsman. The streets have well maintained sidewalks, mature trees and lush front yards that add to the character of the neighborhood.

The area to the north of FCC is bisected by the railroad tracks. The northwest side of the tracks is home to many historic bungalows, similar to the Old Fresno High neighborhood. The neighborhood to the northeast of the tracks is isolated from the College and surrounding neighborhoods by the railroad tracks. Most of the buildings lack a distinctive character with a number of houses in a state of neglect or abandonment and structurally

unstable. There are also several parcels that are vacant or underutilized. Therefore although there are buildings that are in good or livable conditions, there is a general impression of “blight-like” environment. Concerns about criminal activity have been raised. But the existing fine-grain fabric, small block sizes and walkable streets, present an opportunity to bring positive change in this neighborhood with some initial low-cost improvements to the buildings and public realm.

The neighborhood on the east side of Blackstone Avenue includes a mix of single-family homes as well as some smaller multi-family buildings and streets lined with mature trees, which makes it a very pleasant and livable place. There are some awkward adjacencies that occur along Cambridge Avenue, where FCC and city facilities are located, and along the parcels immediately behind to the auto-oriented businesses along Blackstone Avenue. But with context sensitive design of buildings and public realm, a better transition environment can be created along these edges.



*Porter Tract Historic Neighborhood*



*Neighborhoods north of FCC campus*



*Neighborhoods behind Ratcliffe Stadium*



3

**EMERGING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Analysis of the existing conditions, physical character, and the planning context present some significant opportunities for transformation of Blackstone Avenue from an auto-oriented arterial street to a vibrant and active multi-modal corridor. A vision that relies on a strong and clear planning framework, together with strategic investments in the public and private realm, and strong partnerships with organizations that are in alignment with the City's goals will be critical in bringing the change that the corridor is poised for.

Although the primary focus of this study is revitalization of the Blackstone Corridor, it also identifies opportunities within the larger study area that can contribute to the success of Blackstone Avenue as a multi-modal corridor. In that respect, the relationship between Fresno City College and adjacent neighborhoods, with Blackstone Avenue is an important factor for consideration along with the parcels directly fronting the corridor.

The first step in the analysis was to characterize the parcels according to their potential for redevelopment and groups them in three categories

- **High Redevelopment Potential:** Parcels that are vacant, underutilized or occupied by a use that is not contributing to the goal of creating a walkable and active place, or is occupied by large areas of surface parking. Where there is more than one adjacent parcel with

redevelopment potential they present a good opportunity for parcel assembly to support a larger development that may be more financially feasible and thereby more attractive to a developer.

- **Augmentation Potential:** Parcels that have thriving businesses or supportive uses; but are underutilized and/or occupied by large areas of surface parking and can accommodate additional development within the same parcel or on upper stories to fulfill General Plan goals. These could be good candidates for potentials sites for tactical urbanism in near term.
- **Upgrade/Retrofit Potential:** Parcels where existing development makes a moderately positive contribution to the urban character and is well-maintained, but is in need of cosmetic renovation, street character improvements and/or requires replacing non-contributing uses with contributing ones. These sites require a relatively lower up-front cost and are good candidates for kick-starting the revitalization process.

#### Potential Catalyst Sites:

Based on this analysis, the next step was to identify specific sites with higher likelihood of getting developed in the near term due to available funding and/or projects that are already in entitlement process and respond to the General Plan goals for the BRT corridor, of mixed-use, higher density



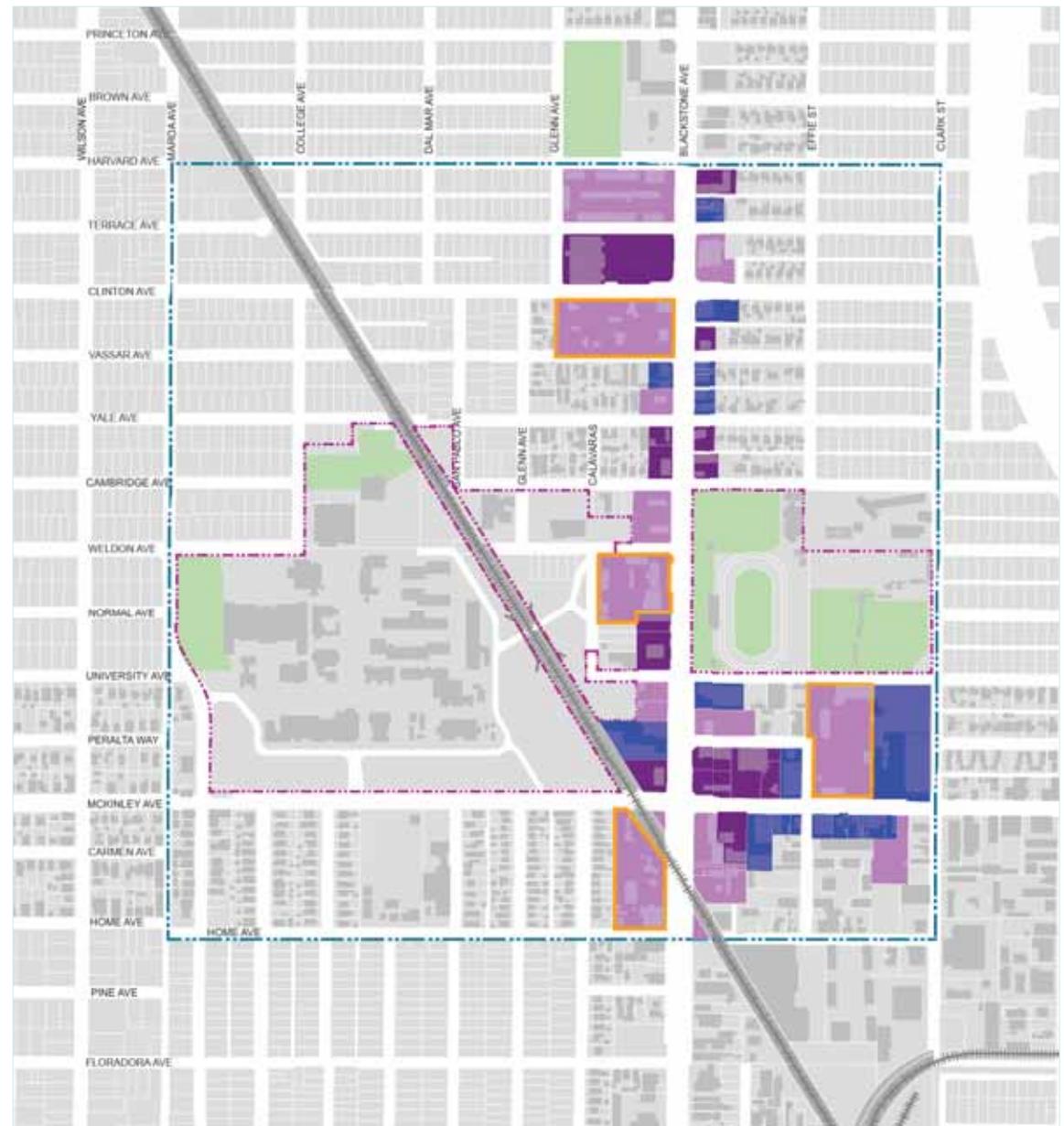
*Digital visualization of proposed mixed use residential development on south west corner of Mckinley Avenue and Blackstone Avenue by Integrated Community Development, on property owned by Lingo family.*

development to encourage transit ridership. These present themselves as "Catalyst Sites" that would kickstart the revitalization process. Below are the catalyst sites identified;

- **Planned multi-family development projects at Clinton and McKinley:** There are currently two new development proposals – one by Granville at Blackstone and Clinton (a mixed-use development with market-rate housing targeted towards students) and the other by Lingo at Blackstone and McKinley (a vertical mixed-use apartment building with affordable housing component). These two projects when implemented will prove to be catalyst projects at two major intersections on Blackstone that will set the stage for emerging "activity nodes"

FIGURE 11: OPPORTUNITY SITES  
SOURCE: VISUAL ANALYSIS

- New Math and Science Building on FCC Campus:** Locating the Math and Sciences Building on FCC's existing property on Blackstone could help improve the cohesiveness of the campus by effectively linking Ratcliffe Stadium with the rest of FCC's facilities, while also encouraging the campus community to take advantage of BRT service and other amenities and services that locate on Blackstone Avenue in the future. This intervention on Blackstone Avenue will not only establish a vibrant institutional presence on Blackstone, but also encourage other student-oriented active uses to come in the future, such as food services, retail or incubation spaces. In order to free up this location for an active, academic use, FCC will need to relocate the existing Campus Maintenance Facility. However, the Facilities Master Plan already calls for consolidating and streamlining maintenance and operations facilities into one building, and reducing parking needs could help free up other land on campus for this use.



- RETROFIT POTENTIAL
- AUGMENTATION POTENTIAL
- REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- CATALYTIC SITES
- FCC PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

The key opportunities for corridor revitalization lie in the following Place Making strategies described below;

### **1. Leveraging BRT and introducing new high density uses on the corridor to support ridership and street activation**

The planned BRT line will connect the study area with jobs-rich areas of North Fresno and Downtown Fresno. The improved connectivity will make the study area more attractive for new, higher intensity development, especially if combined with other public realm improvements. By reducing travel times to these important employment centers, the planned service has the potential to reduce reliance on the automobile for FCC students, faculty, and staff and reducing traffic volumes.

Developing the catalyst sites is a near-term strategy that will create an initial momentum needed for an “activity node”, but in the long term this study envisions the parcels between these “activity node” to be developed with uses ranging from multi-family residential, ground floor retail, small office and commercial spaces, recreational uses and institutional functions. With effective implementation of the General Plan policies and Development code, the new development will result in a vibrant and active corridor.

### **2. Strengthening residential neighborhood northeast of FCC campus**

Develop an acquisition/rehabilitation strategy targeted at improving conditions in the neighborhood northeast of campus, while maintaining affordability for existing residents. A strategy for purchasing, renovating, and converting to permanent affordability some of the most disinvested properties north of the FCC campus could help solve crime and safety concerns, without displacing existing residents. The Better Blackstone Association – a local community development corporation (CDC) that is focused on improving conditions in and around the Study Area – may be in the best position to lead this effort, with the support of public partners. The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, which helped facilitate the purchase and renovation of troubled properties in Fresno’s El Dorado Park and Lowell neighborhoods, could serve as the model for this effort. See Figure 13.

### **3. Seeking out opportunities to build new affordable housing in the Study Area**

Fresno Housing Authority (FHA) is already considering other affordable housing development sites on Blackstone Avenue, located north of the Study Area. Additional affordable housing in the Study Area could help bring new activity to the corridor, and would be consistent with the FHA’s

goal of building affordable housing in transit-served locations where residents will also have access to affordable transportation.

### **4. Streetscape improvement to encourage pedestrian activity**

Wider sidewalks, new street trees, and improved pedestrian crossings along Blackstone Avenue could help create a safer, more attractive pedestrian environment. By targeting initial improvements to emerging activity nodes – such as the intersections of Blackstone with Clinton and McKinley (where new development is planned), or Weldon and University (between Ratcliffe Stadium and FCC’s properties on the western side of Blackstone) – the City can leverage its limited resources to support planned projects, while also serving existing households, students, and other users. In the longer run, pedestrian improvements could be expanded outward from these nodes along the length of the corridor. The Fresno Council of Governments(COG) can help enable these City-led investments by targeting any available transportation dollars to the corridor and supporting grant applications.

FAX’s plans include BRT stations at Clinton Avenue and Weldon Avenue. In addition to working to create a fast, frequent, safe, and reliable transit service, FAX should work to coordinate their station improvements to support the City’s efforts at these nodes.

FIGURE 12 LAND ASSEMBLY POTENTIAL



## **5. Improving internal bike and pedestrian connectivity on FCC campus and to Blackstone Avenue for increased BRT ridership**

Finding strategies to reduce the campus community's dependency on the automobile may help lessen the need for new parking, allowing FCC to use its existing land more efficiently and minimize the amount of campus resources spent on expensive parking facilities.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) consists of strategies to use transportation resources efficiently for all travelers. Few college campuses can afford to allow everyone to drive without sacrificing valuable land for roads and parking. Without offering alternatives that allow people to travel by multiple modes and multiple times during the day— including transit, walking, cycling, ridesharing, and others – campuses tend to experience mobility problems. These mobility problems may include severe traffic congestion, high construction and maintenance costs for parking and roadway infrastructure, and/or long travel delays. If left unchecked, a transportation environment that offers an insufficient range of travel options can diminish the institution's ability to create a productive learning environment as well as attract and retain the best students, faculty, and staff. To avoid the expensive investments and high

potential liabilities of limiting their transportation investments to roads and parking to accommodate future growth, Fresno City College has a unique opportunity to enhance the complete menu of transportation choices.

While many students, faculty, and staff may prefer to get to campus by non-driving modes, today driving tends to be simplest and therefore the default choice.

By providing a wide range of TDM programs and transportation options, each member of the FCC community can find a transportation choice that works for their lifestyle, schedule, and priorities. The goal of TDM programming is not to mandate that anyone not drive; the goal is to provide options so that each can choose to drive if that's their choice or walk, bike, or ride transit if they prefer. Fresno offers an existing and growing network of pedestrian access, bicycle networks, and priority transit services, as well as existing TDM programming through the Fresno Council of Governments.

By supporting these networks and TDM programs, FCC has a valuable opportunity to reduce the number of drive alone trips to campus with accommodating the choices of all of its

populations. Supporting a balanced system that provides those choices will result in lower vehicle volumes and parking demand for everyone, improving everyone's travel experience and increasing the quality of the FCC experience.

## **6. Establishing Strategic Partnerships**

By working together to sponsor the Housing and Transportation Study, the City, COG, and FCC are moving towards a shared vision for the transformation of Blackstone into a more transit supportive corridor, and laying the foundation for an ongoing partnership as the Study moves into the implementation phase. Continued collaboration will be critical to ensure that the City, COG, and FCC are leveraging their respective investments to achieve a common vision, rather than working at cross-purposes. In addition, other partners – such as the Fresno Housing Authority (FHA), the Better Blackstone Association, and Fresno Area Express (FAX) – will also have an important role to play in implementation.

FIGURE 13: PARCEL CHARACTERIZATION IN NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOOD



- GOOD CONDITION
- LIVABLE CONDITION
- NEGLECTED CONDITION
- STRUCTURE IN BAD CONDITION
- VACANT BUILDINGS
- UNDER UTILIZED PROPERTY
- VACANT LAND
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND CONSOLIDATION
- MF MULTI FAMILY APARTMENTS



# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



## Incremental Development Strategies

This study presents strategies to achieve the goals of a revitalized corridor. Strategies draw from the strengths of private as well as public investments. The approach carefully positions each strategy as catalyst for the next increment. In this way, the corridor will see change over time as the benefits of investments are realized. Promoting incremental growth of a corridor or district over time is realistic. The level of investment appropriate on Blackstone is substantial. Actions involve multiple agencies, property owners, and institutions.

The increments recommended are prioritized based on logical development sequencing and known catalyst opportunities such as Fresno City College bond financed construction. No specific timeline is provided in order to emphasize the order of actions and to allow flexibility. As investments are made, unforeseen opportunities (i.e. private property development projects) and challenges will certainly emerge.

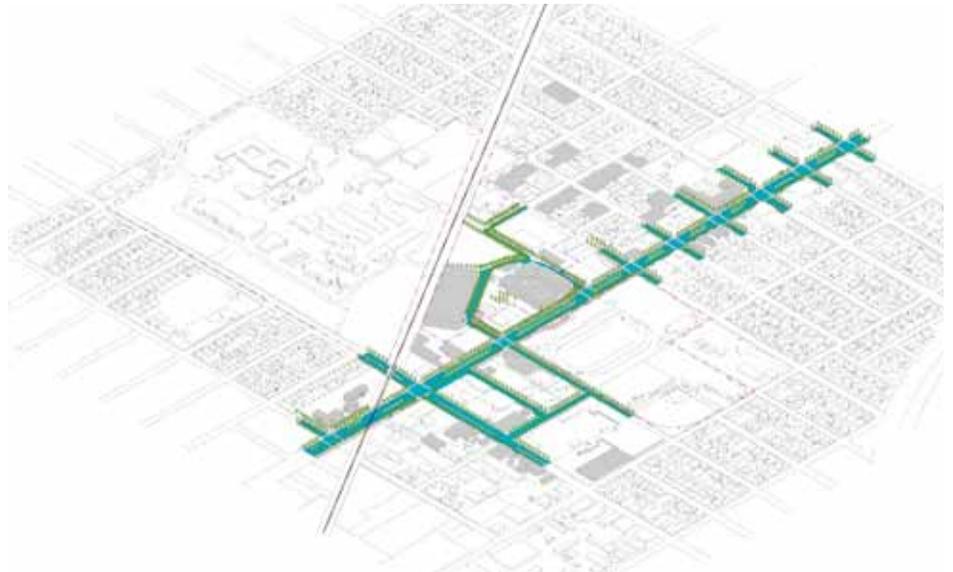
While the strategies contained in the study offer broad guidance and will remain useful regardless of specific changes that undoubtedly will occur, there are several priority strategies necessary to gain the required momentum at the outset. The first and second increments contain critical actions that if not accomplished, would seriously erode the opportunity for the corridor to revitalize.



## INCREMENT 1: LEVERAGE CATALYTIC SITES

The first increment includes actions that are already conceived, in planning, and that are necessary as an early phase. These build the foundation of future investment. Highlights of the increment include:

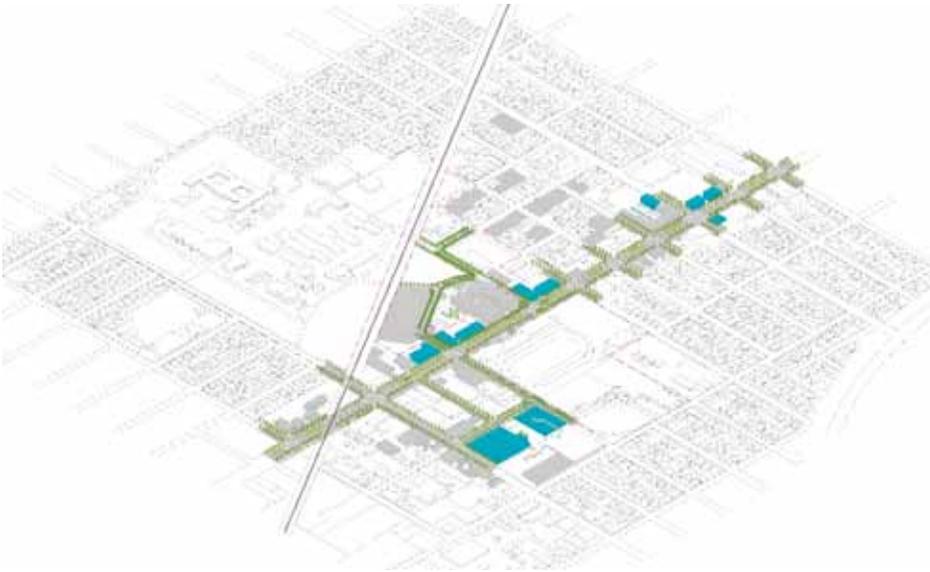
- Support private catalyst housing development projects
- Locate Fresno City College academic buildings on Blackstone
- Guide other related SCCC bond funded improvements
- Implement early activation and tactical urbanism strategies
- Foster community organization through the Better Blackstone initiative
- Strengthen the Northern neighborhoods through partnerships
- Finish implementation of BRT on Blackstone Avenue.



## INCREMENT 2: FOCUS ON PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The second increment focuses on public realm improvements that further catalyze private development along the corridor. Mobility, safety, and beautification are critical to encourage private investment.

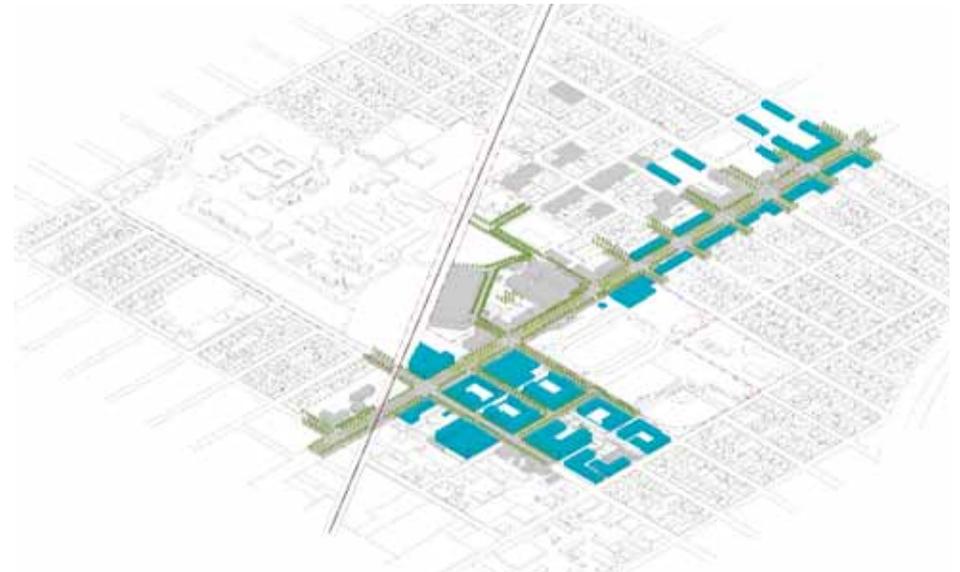
- Improve the public realm on Blackstone and on the FCC campus
- Enhance pedestrian safety and comfort to support transit
- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies at FCC



### **INCREMENT 3: PROMOTE LAND ASSEMBLY FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

The third increment shows the most likely private development opportunities after elements of increments one and two are realized. Development catalyst clusters and larger parcels inform opportunities.

- Develop infill projects where existing parcels are suitable
- Promote assembly of parcels for more efficient redevelopment
- Continue adaptive reuse strategies



### **INCREMENT 4: ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL OF CORRIDOR**

The fourth increment illustrates the desired outcome of the prior strategies. The corridor is now a well-functioning neighborhood centered on local businesses, the college, and transit.

- Achieve general plan goals for development
- Serve as a model for other corridors in Fresno and California
- Further catalyze off-corridor neighborhood investment through street tree plantings, funding of parks, and strengthening of schools.

## Increment 1 : Leverage Catalytic Sites

Strong development opportunities currently exist on Blackstone in the study area. Steps have already been taken by the City and community based organizations to direct future funding towards the General Plan vision. This study is an example of the partnership between the COG, City, and Fresno Community College to collaborate towards the goals of a revitalized corridor. The Better Blackstone initiative represents an exciting community based organization to empower business owners and residents to advocate for positive change. Transit enhancements are already underway through the BRT roll out and related pedestrian enhancements.

The first series of strategies capitalize on three major catalyst sites as the foundation for ongoing Blackstone corridor revitalization. Other near term priorities are included that address current challenges such as underserved communities and vacant parcels and buildings. The actions described in this increment are critical catalysts to gain the necessary momentum.

### CATALYST SITES

Two of the identified catalyst sites are multifamily housing developments. Each has received entitlements however financing is not finalized. In each case, owners have applied for public financing and not received the support needed to proceed. The projects as proposed help strengthen

the corridor through appropriate massing and street presence. Their location at the north and south ends of this segment of Blackstone position them as potential development nodes. The study recognizes the cumulative benefit from the northern site in particular when considered with FCC, transit, and adjacent active parcel uses.

#### **1 Granville Multifamily Housing Development:**

Granville, a prominent and established development group based in Fresno, recently acquired the necessary parcels to create an approximately 3 acre development at the southwest corner of Blackstone and Clinton. The proposal for entitlement includes a moderate density of residential units in multistory buildings. The Granville proposal was not available for review to the authors of this study. The buildings shown illustrate the desired frontage treatment on Blackstone including adequate sidewalk width, ground floor retail, and strict adherence to zero setbacks. Only a partial site development is shown assuming construction is phased over time.

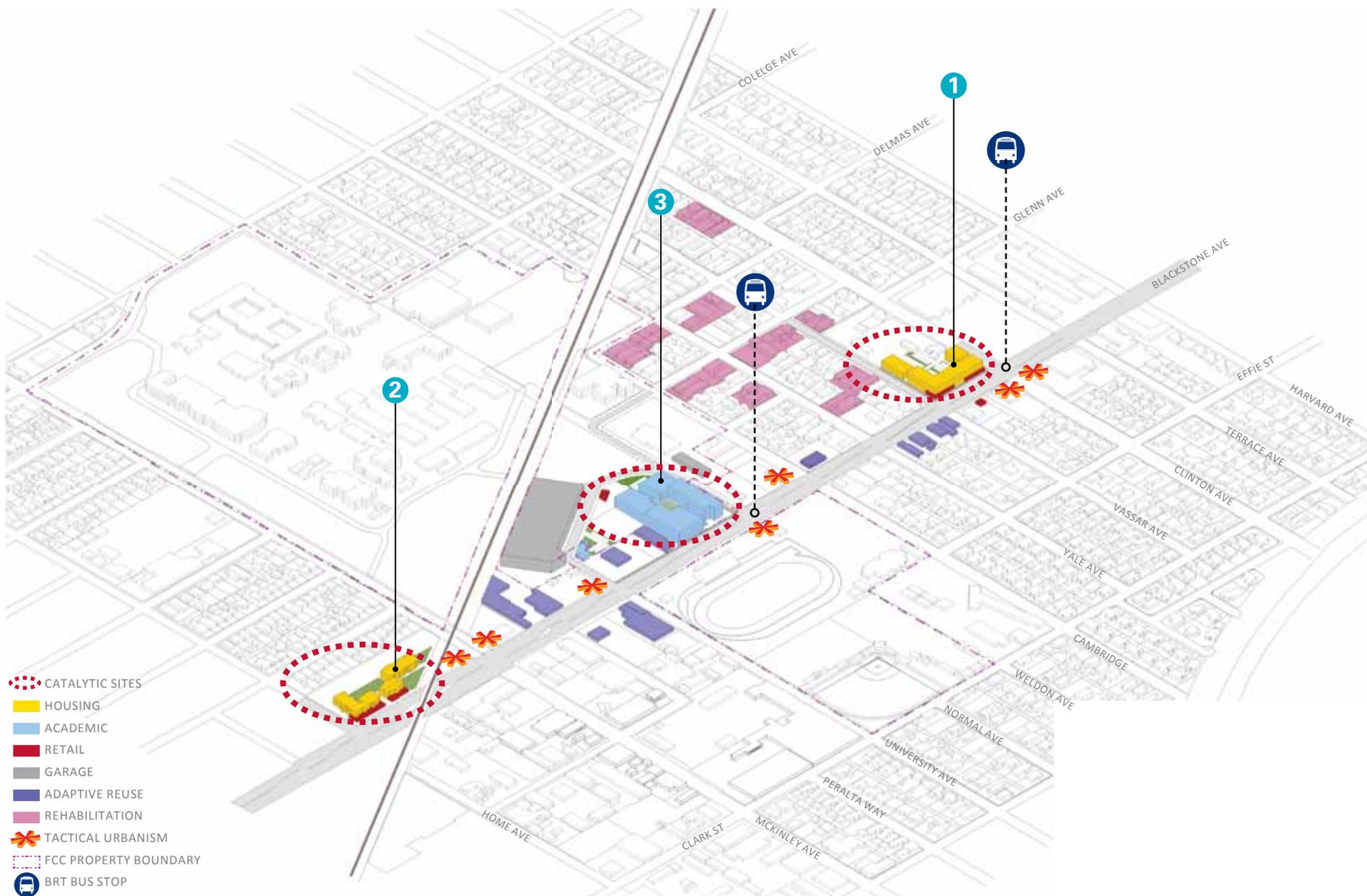
#### **2 Lingo Multifamily Housing Development:**

South of McKinley and the railroad on the west side, the Lingo development is proposed. This planned multi-family residential, mixed income development contains ninety-one units and 8,500 square foot of ground floor retail on a three acre site. A significant portion of the units are designated affordable.

**3 FCC Academic Buildings:** The recent passage of a bond measure allows Fresno Community College (FCC) to replace an existing academic building, build new space to accommodate a public safety training program, and expand student parking resources through a new garage. The projects represent a significant opportunity for both the college and its surrounding community. This increment provides guidance to the college about how these capital projects can be accomplished in a manner that maximizes the public investment. (See figure 14)

Other Increment 1, near term opportunities have been previously described in Chapter 3. Tactical urbanism can bring low cost, high impact activation to the corridor. A pop-up coffee cart for example at Blackstone and Weldon would activate the campus edge. Adaptive reuse strategies—locating new uses in existing buildings—are also included. Finally, strengthening the existing neighborhoods to the north of the college is an important part of Increment 1.

FIGURE 14: INCREMENT 1



## FCC ACADEMIC BUILDINGS

This document is not a regulating document, rather a visioning study that identifies potential opportunities for transformation of the Blackstone corridor into a vibrant multi-modal street. The study makes strategic recommendations that will provide the impetus for this transformation. FCC has a significant presence in the area due to the number of students on campus and FCC owned parcels fronting Blackstone, there is an untapped potential to create an impact on the corridor through physical interventions such as locating a building with active uses, combined with public realm improvements to be undertaken by the City.

The proposed buildings are strategically located on Blackstone, next to transit, promoting a significant public presence to this major boulevard (See Figure 15). The proposed buildings contains upwards of 150,000 square feet of space to accommodate the replacement of the math building and to house the newly proposed public safety training program. The project would also provide for the relocation of maintenance facilities and police, incorporation of campus staff offices, and incorporation of the existing child development center. The new buildings will anchor a major corner and serve as a gateway to the campus. At four stories, it exceeds the development code however four stories is

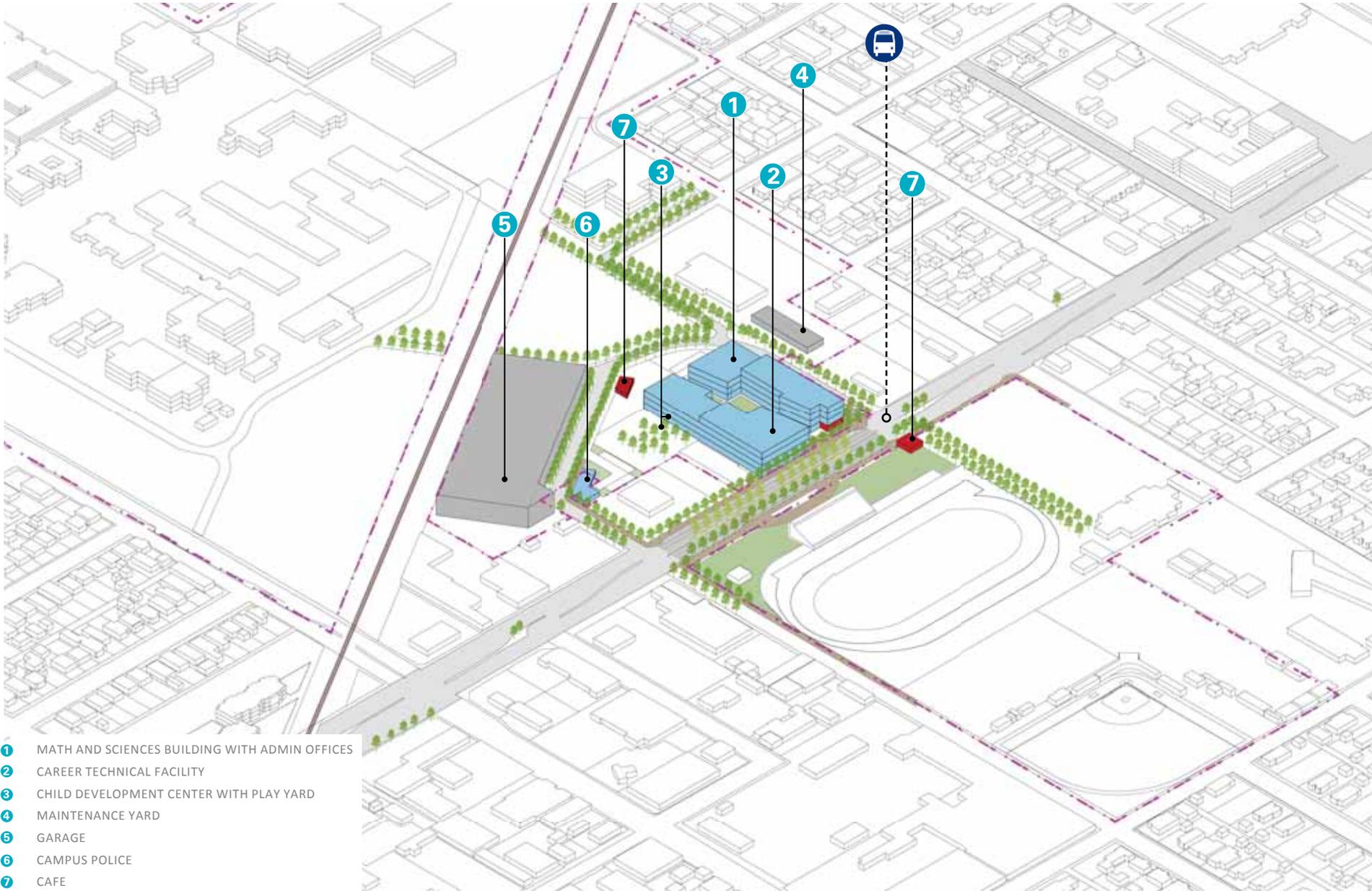
an appropriate height based on the width of the street and required square footage. A series of courtyards and plazas between the buildings provide connectivity between the BRT stop and the existing underpass connection to the main campus. Imagined as a café or bookstore, the ground floor retail space on the corner would serve students and the neighborhood, adding activation to the street.

Addressing the long standing campus goals to add parking capacity on the main campus area, a parking structure is proposed between the railroad and Blackstone. The location is strategic to expand parking resources for the main campus and new buildings east of the tracks. Locations studied west of the railroad would both displace existing parking and less directly support the growth of the eastern district centered on Blackstone. Vehicle access is primarily off Blackstone at Weldon and University. Secondary access is from the main campus via the underpass. The garage provides 1500 stall in a three story structure. Should less parking be required, the structure can be shortened in length. The use of parking ramps internal to the structure allows the façade design to promote a horizontal geometry (as opposed to an awkward slant) and better integrate into a district. A short segment of street is realigned to maximize development area for the parking structure and new academic

buildings. The location next to the railroad creates a buffer from the sound and maximizes the footprint. An alternate scenario that swaps the academic building and parking structure was not preferred due to loss of activation and College academic presence on Blackstone as well as the contradictory placement of parking next to the major College BRT stop on Blackstone.

The parking garage may be considered for photovoltaic panels as part of a campus initiative to reduce operational costs and energy use.

FIGURE 15: SCCCDC BOND MEASURE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FCC CAMPUS

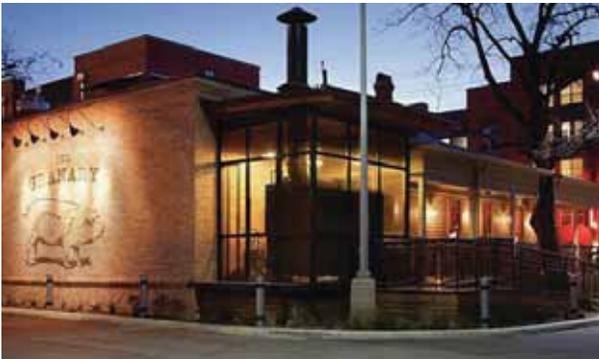




*Tactical urbanism such as parklets and pop-up cafes offer low cost, high impact activation.*



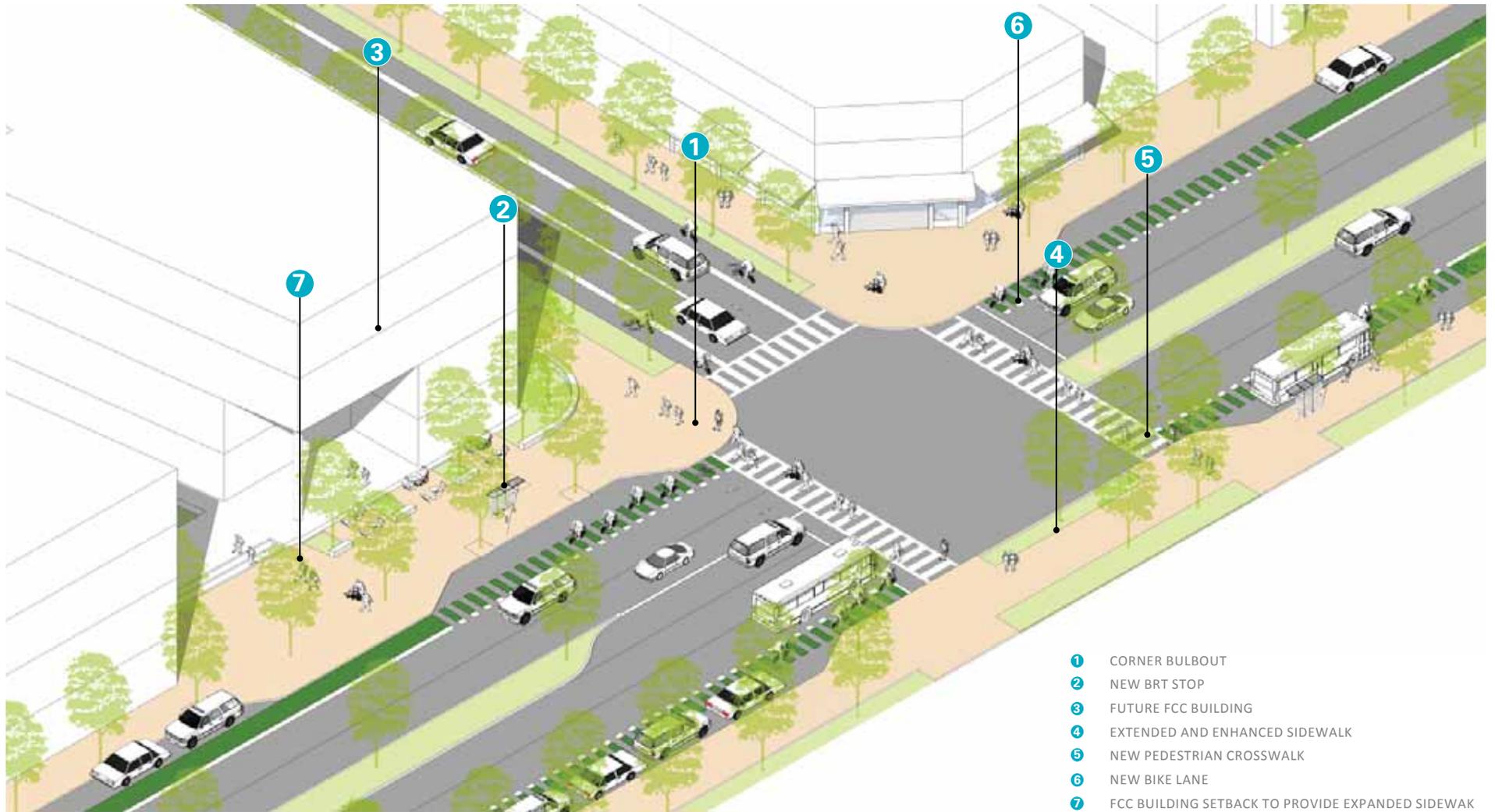
*Activation of empty storefronts can enliven the street.*



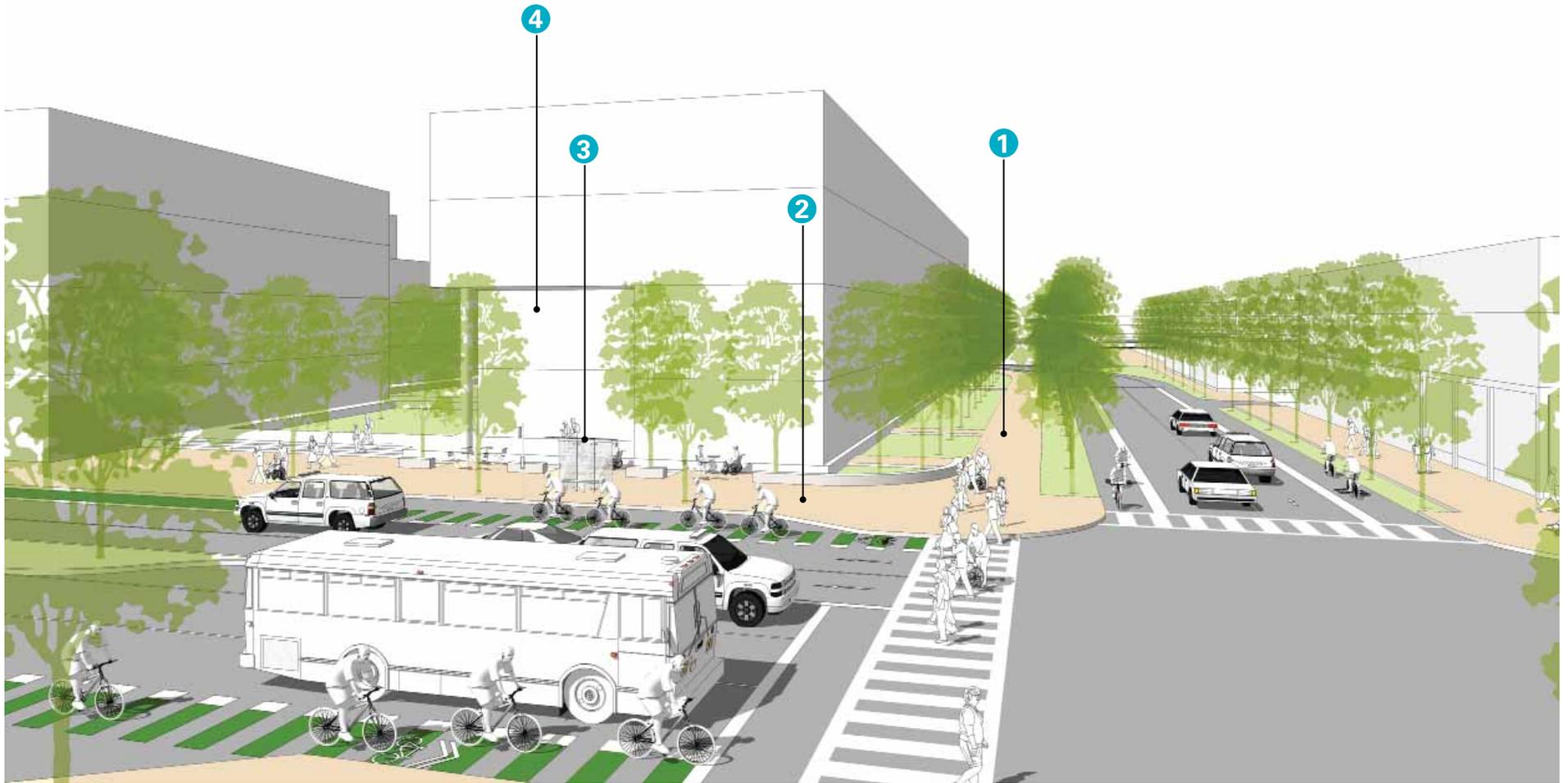
*Existing buildings offer cost effective strategies for redevelopment.*



*A well designed new academic building would serve as a beacon on Blackstone for the college and important catalyst.*

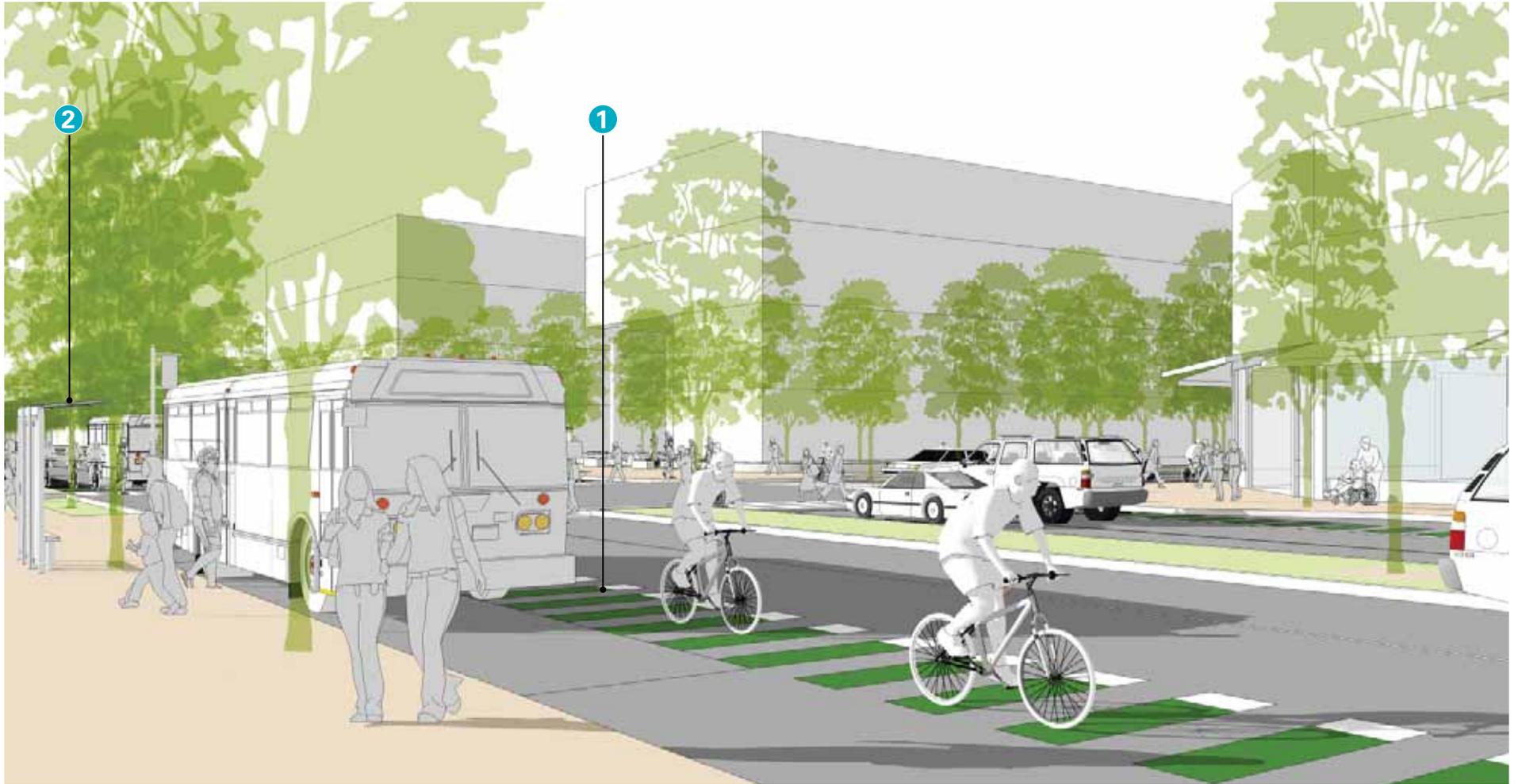


View from Blackstone Avenue looking at the new FCC buildings and public realm improvements to Weldon Avenue



- 1 EXTENDED AND ENHANCED SIDEWALK
- 2 CORNER BULBOUT
- 3 NEW BRT STOP
- 4 FUTURE FCC BUILDING

View looking at new FCC buildings and public realm improvements to Blackstone Avenue



- 1 NEW BIKE LANE
- 2 NEW BRT STOP

## Increment 2 : Focus on Public Realm Improvements

### PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS TO BLACKSTONE

Public realm investments have proven to be successful strategies for revitalization of corridors and districts. The creation of complete streets expands mobility options and addresses safety for a wide range of users. The associated streetscape transforms the identity of the corridor and implements features such as street trees, identity markers, pedestrian lighting, furnishings, and sidewalks that address beautification goals.

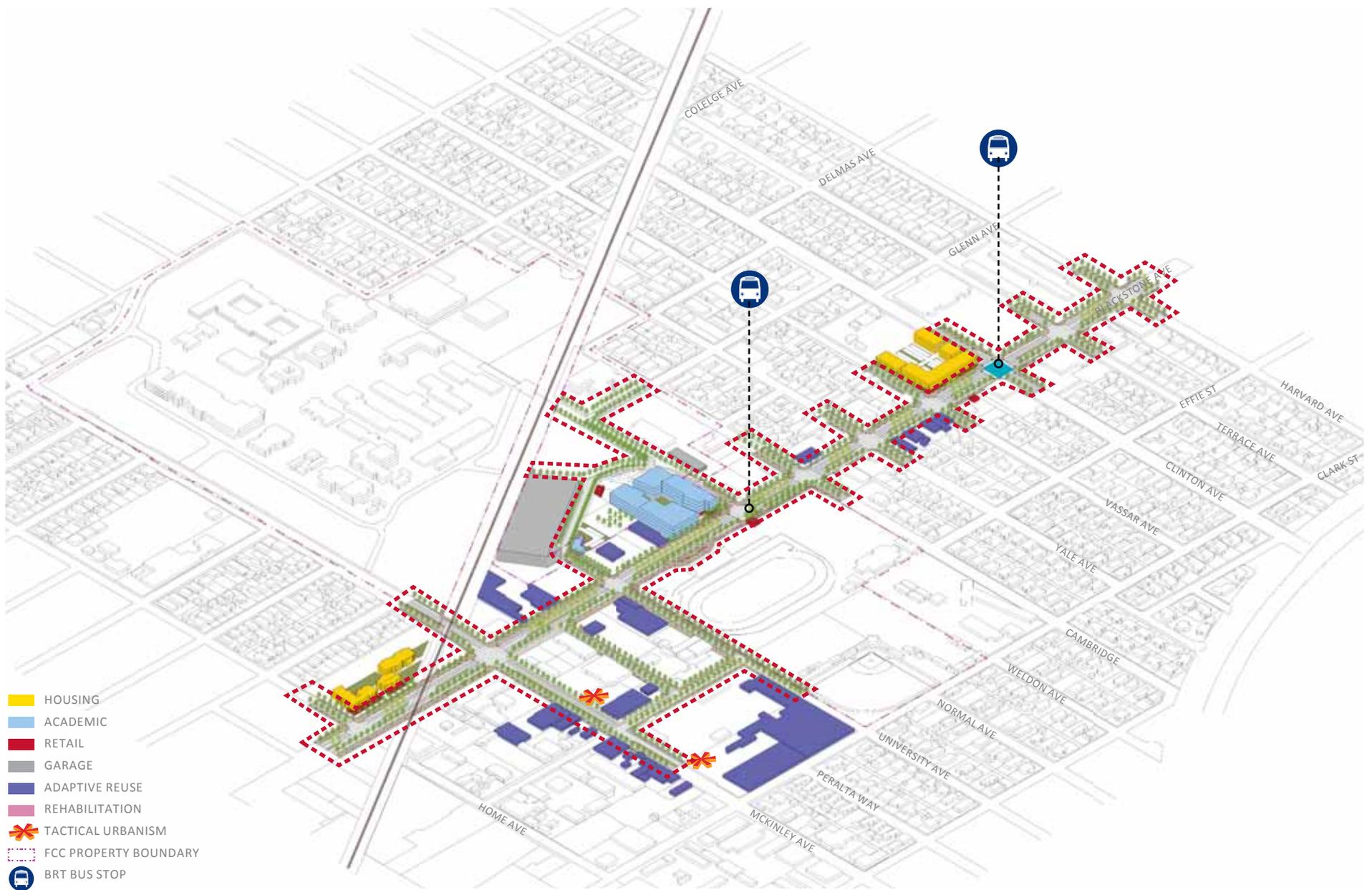
This study promotes the benefit of complete streets to corridor success. By definition, complete streets safely serve the widest possible range of mobility for the widest range of users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles should all be served by Blackstone. Currently, the street conditions are not adequate for pedestrians and facilities are non-existent for cyclists. Improvements such as adding bike lanes and widening sidewalks to plant street trees are not feasible without widening the right of way or adjust the existing travel lanes. There are many relevant examples of similar roads that have been rebalanced to achieve complete street functionality within the existing right of way. To best explore this recommendation, a future study focused on mobility is needed. This corridor and housing study makes the strong case for public realm improvements and offers preliminary alternative approaches to a major complete street rebalancing and associated beautification.

- **Street Character & Pedestrian Safety:** A major transformation of the street character is recommended. The changes would include sidewalk enhancements, street trees, active street frontages, placement of furnishings such as benches and bike racks, high visibility crosswalks, and planted medians. Bulbouts or curb extensions, which widen the sidewalk at corners where crosswalks occur, are recommended to shorten the crossing distance and provide more space for accessible ramps.
- **Street Capacity:** Blackstone is an important regional corridor connecting northern parts of Fresno downtown as well as serving the businesses along it. Once a former state highway, it became a City owned right of way after the 41 Freeway was constructed. The bulk of the regional traffic was shifted to the freeway, leaving Blackstone as a local serving street. The current study area configuration of three lanes in each direction and center turn lane represents excess capacity and offers opportunity to study the incorporation of other mobility features and beautification benefits. Lane widths are adjusted to meet national codes. At 11 feet in width, more space is freed up for other functions.
- **Right of Way:** Working within the existing right of way reduces costs associated with acquisition and avoids impacts to private property. This study recognizes the challenges that already exists to private development and recommends avoiding expanding the right of way into adjacent parcels if possible. The

total space required for all transportation and beautification components require study and potentially, trade-offs in order to fit all needed elements into the right of way. One example is the general plan recommended sidewalk width to accommodate ample access, street trees, and private development frontage. The vision is appropriate and would benefit the corridor. The policy recommends extending public access into the private frontage if required to meet the width recommendations. The alternatives in this study explore potential street design strategies that allow for all sidewalk and public access amenities to be retained within the existing right of way.

- **Bicycle Lanes:** The recently adopted Active Transportation Plan for the City of Fresno recommends bike lanes to be added on Blackstone. Different ways to achieve bicycle connectivity are available and explored in the context of travel lanes, bus stops, and on-street parking. Significantly more study is needed.
- **On-Street Parking:** On street parking can serve local businesses, especially those without large parking lots, and help buffer pedestrians on sidewalks from passing cars. Currently in the study area, parking exists only in select areas and is mostly utilized by FCC students. The study alternatives explore opportunities to provide on street parking as well as the opportunities gained by designation of the space for other uses. Future plans may identify hybrid strategies, placing on street parking only in those locations where it is most valued.

FIGURE 16: INCREMENT 2



## PRECEDENTS FOR PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS TO BLACKSTONE AVENUE



1 Wide Sidewalks



2 Bulb-outs and Pedestrian Crosswalks



3 Retail Frontage and Access



4 Transit Integration



5 On-street Parking



6 Urban Plaza and Activity Nodes



7 Dedicated Bike Lanes



8 Street Trees



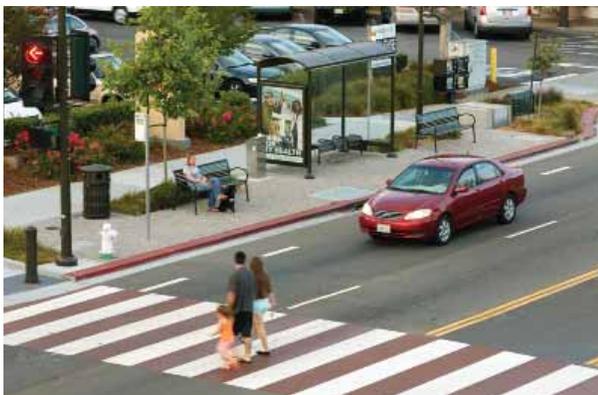
9 Public Art and Identity Markers



## IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT BRT RIDERSHIP

The railroad tracks are a major barrier between western neighborhoods and Blackstone Avenue, for pedestrians and bikes. The FCC campus which has only one pass-through street connecting Maroa Avenue with Blackstone Avenue is another limiting factor. Improved connectivity between western neighborhoods and Blackstone Avenue will be important for boosting transit ridership on Blackstone Avenue. Figure 17 suggests potential bike and pedestrian connections to be considered in future planning.

- 1 Bike Ped Corridor 1:** Improve the quality, clarity and access to the existing underpass at Weldon street for college community as well as the neighborhood for direct connectivity to



Clearly marked pedestrian crosswalk

the BRT stop at Weldon and Blackstone. This will need partnership and initiatives from FCC, discussed later in the chapter.

- 2 Bike Ped Corridor 2:** improve the existing sidewalks and bike lanes with appropriate public realm improvement design on McKinley Avenue, discussed later in the chapter. Provide clear signage and interface strategies at the railways track.
- 3 Bike Ped Corridor 3:** improve the existing sidewalks with appropriate public realm improvement design and add bike lanes on Clinton Avenue, to increase ridership on BRT Stop at Clinton and Blackstone.



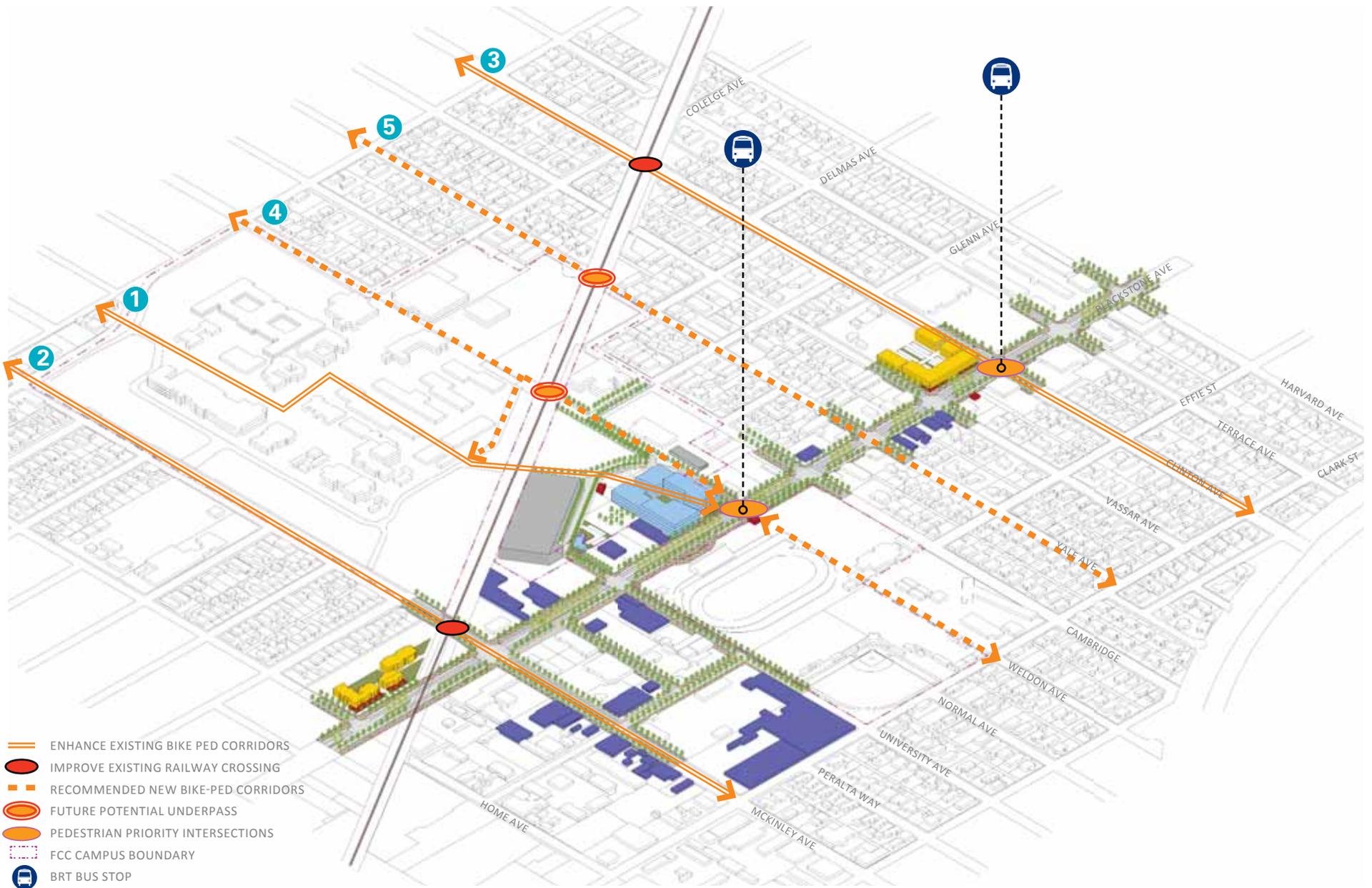
Site amenities with well defined sidewalks encourage pedestrian activity

- 4 Bike Ped Corridor 4:** adding another bike ped route, with clear signage, visibility and access connecting the western neighborhood directly to BRT stop at Weldon and Blackstone. Allow pedestrian friendly direct access from the eastern neighborhoods through the Ratcliffe Stadium. This will need partnership and initiatives from FCC, discussed later in the chapter.
- 5 Bike Ped Corridor 5:** adding a new bike ped only under pass to create more porosity through the northern neighborhood and increasing foot traffic to the retail activity on Blackstone.



Bike and pedestrian only underpass

FIGURE 17: CONCEPTUAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY TO BLACKSTONE AVENUE



## **TRANSPORTION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) RECOMMENDATIONS TO FCC**

The following sections identify TDM recommendations that can be implemented or supported by FCC to reduce drive-alone rates to campus, and reduce the amount of land and funding needed for parking and roadways, while providing transportation choices for all FCC populations.

### **Ridesharing/Carpooling**

Ridesharing can refer to either carpooling or vanpooling and describes a system of rides shared in private vehicles between passengers with similar origin and destination patterns. Ridesharing programs generally include ride-matching services to help travelers find travel partners, as well as programs that give parking priority to carpools and vanpools by reserving for these vehicles discounted or preferential spaces on campus.

One of the greatest impediments to carpool and vanpool formation can be finding suitable partners with similar schedules, origins, and destinations. Facilitated rideshare matching can overcome this obstacle by enabling commuters who are interested in ridesharing to enter their travel preferences into a database and receive a list of potential rideshare partners. The success of these programs is largely determined by the number of participants and, in turn, the number of potential matches that can be

made. Rideshare programs may be administered through an FCC administrator, but may also be coordinated through the Fresno Council of Governments (COG), a transportation management associate (TMA), or other large scale program. The COG implements and oversees a ridesharing program called valleyrides, which includes an online ride-matching database for carpools, vanpools, and bikepools. The valleyrides program also includes a mobile application for carpoolers to track their shared rides to be entered in monthly prize raffles. Valleyrides could be expanded within FCC as an exclusive ridesharing program limited to FCC-affiliated faculty, students, and staff. Potential low-cost TDM tools include:

**Ride matching:** drive-alone trips can be greatly reduced by organizing a ride-matching service within the community to help motorists identify potential carpool companions.

**Discounted rideshare parking:** discounting parking costs for rideshare participants can increase the cost-saving benefits of sharing commute rides.

**Preferential rideshare parking:** reserving the most desirable parking spaces for the most efficient auto-commuters has proven effective in encouraging rideshare commuting.

**Carpooling and vanpooling** can be an appealing alternative to solo driving among commuters lacking viable transit options, as well as those

who simply do not like transit. Many such commuters, however, are unaware of how much easier it currently is to find suitable route and schedule matches. These factors combine to make ridesharing an important opportunity market at many campuses

The FCC travel survey showed that there is significant latent demand for carpooling to campus. Among students, faculty, and staff who currently drive alone to campus, nearly one-fourth (24%) of respondents said that “difficulty finding others to carpool with” was one of the reasons they drove alone. When asked specifically why they did not carpool to campus more often, 13% of those surveyed said, “I want a passenger, but I don’t know how,” while 10% said “I want a ride, but I don’t know how”. These findings indicate that a well-managed, highly visible ridesharing program, limited to FCC-affiliated members, may attract a significant number of FCC commuters who currently drive to campus.

### **Guaranteed Ride Home**

A Guaranteed Ride Home program, also known as “Emergency Ride Home,” consists of either subsidized or free, reimbursable taxi rides home allocated to non-driving commuters in the case of unscheduled emergencies. Guaranteed Ride Home programs are generally managed by a transportation administrator through a partnership with a local taxi or rideshare operator, often with

limits concerning which commuters and trip purposes are eligible and how much commuters can be reimbursed. Concerns about occasionally having to work late or leave campus early – for instance, a bus commuter needing to leave early to pick up a sick child – can be a significant barrier to transit and rideshare commuting. Programs that reimburse non-driving commuters for occasional cab rides in such circumstances have proven effective in overcoming these concerns. At colleges, Guaranteed Ride Home programs are typically managed through campus transportation departments or, in some areas, a Transportation Management Association or government agency. One survey of commuters in Washington, D.C. found that among those who switched to non-driving modes, 45% considered the Guaranteed Ride Home a “somewhat” or “very” important factor in their decision to use a non-driving mode. The Fresno COG administers an Emergency Ride Home program available for registered vanpool participants only, after vanpoolers are pre-approved through a short application. Vanpoolers may use the Emergency Ride Home program for up to five reimbursable taxi rides home per year, with a limit of \$275 in total fares per year. FCC could work with the Fresno COG to expand the program for any member of the campus population who forgoes a parking permit, to encourage alternative travel options.

### **Universal Transit Passes**

The cost of transit passes may deter some commuters from taking transit to campus, especially if they are already paying to own and maintain their own private cars concurrently. In the FCC travel survey, nearly 10% of respondents reported that the cost of transit service is prohibitively high. Nearly one-quarter of respondents (23%) said that because they are on campus only a few days a week, a transit pass would not be a good investment.

Universal transit passes offer a transformational opportunity to reduce vehicular travel demand in campus environments by dramatically reducing the cost of transit commuting. Beyond assisting employees with pre-tax purchases of transit passes, or even directly subsidizing transit purchases, universal transit passes place free transit service directly in the hands of students, faculty, and staff. The principle of these bulk-purchased passes is similar to that of group insurance plans – transit agencies can offer deep bulk discounts when selling passes to a large group with universal enrollment because not all those offered the pass will actually use them regularly. In response to the potential revenue/ridership benefits offered by this TDM strategy, a growing number of transit agencies have teamed with universities, employers, and even entire commercial/mixed-use districts to provide transit pass programs. Studies have linked universal transit passes to reductions in car mode

shares of between 4% and 22%, with an average reduction of 11%. Many of these reductions have occurred in areas with limited transit service.

Especially with the new Blackstone Bus Rapid Transit service currently being implemented, FCC has the opportunity to work with FAX to develop a universal transit pass program that is cost-neutral to the college which provides commuters with an incentive to ride transit.

### **Express Bus Service**

Express bus service (also known as commuter bus service) is a limited stop bus service intended to operate with faster travel times than other, fixed-route bus services would achieve between two communities or destinations. These routes often feature spans of service and frequencies tailored to prevailing commuter work schedules, such as operating only during peak hours or only on weekdays. Students, faculty, and staff at FCC often commute longer distances than can be accommodated by local transit routes – 68% have commutes longer than 5 miles. Long commutes can make taking transit more difficult, as traditional, fixed-route local buses have frequent stops and often operate well below the travel speeds of private cars. Many campus affiliates reported that they avoid taking buses because they viewed them as slower than their current travel mode (54%) or because they perceive that bus routes are not direct enough (22%). For outlying communities

with significant FCC-affiliated populations (such as parts of Clovis), some campus commuters who currently drive may be enticed to switch to transit if an express bus with faster travel times and limited stops were offered. Express bus service would require an operator (often not the college itself), so this recommendation would require coordination with external stakeholders (potentially FAX).

## **IMPROVE FCC OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY**

The existing FCC campus open space is best characterized by the formal lawn with grand trees facing Van Ness to the west. As the campus historically expanded eastward, courtyards and pathway axis were used to give the campus an organizing structure. That clear physical framework breaks down to the east of the historic quad necessitating the exploration of new strategies to provide campus identity, safe connectivity, and comfort for students and staff.

As the new academic district with associated parking garage is developed on Blackstone and as student use of transit grows, campus open space enhancements will become increasingly important. This study recommends a clearly defined pedestrian circulation corridor or link be created, connecting transit stops on Blackstone at Weldon with the existing heart of campus. This study envisions a new “FCC Link” to serve this purpose. Associated amenities and appropriate improvements are described as follows:

**Identity:** Signage, sculptural markers, and a cohesive palette of materials creates a clear route for pedestrian access. Treatments can incorporate campus branding goals such as mascots, colors, and learning themes.

**Activation Nodes:** Small gathering spaces with seating, food service, and contemplative areas offer amenity and can further activate a district of the campus. Simple, low cost additions of coffee carts, Wi-Fi, benches, and signage can be effective.

**Clear Signage and Wayfinding:** A regular and deliberate approach to signage can safely guide campus users through the campus, directing them to various college buildings, athletic facilities, and transit destination.

**Trees and Understory Planting:** Consistent shade and planting along the link is a necessary component of enhancement. Plant matters should be drought tolerant and offer visual interest to the route. The conversion of irrigated lawn to understory may offer additional benefit to this action.

**Paving Treatments:** Paving treatments such as concrete with textures and colors, decorative unit pavers, and painted asphalt are part of a cohesive identity strategy if well-coordinated. Low cost treatments such as painted symbols over existing pavement, also help promote clear linkages.

**Outdoor Lighting/ Security:** Evening and night use by students and faculty require a well-lit, safe, outdoor environment. Path lighting that is placed at a pedestrian height can help illuminate people and vertical surfaces. A series of lights helps to mark the path route.

**Increase Porosity on Eastern Edge:** Existing access is challenged at the intersection of the eastern loop road and the Weldon underpass. A combination of service yards, vehicle conflicts, and narrow passages between non-descript buildings create significant interruption to pedestrian access. Employing the strategies described herein will enhance this transition and encourage more students to walk.

**Bike Lane:** The existing pedestrian underpass can be restriped to accommodate a bike lane in the uphill direction where cyclists move slowly compared with vehicles. See illustrations on page 67.

**Future Connections:** As the campus continues to develop, additional east west connections should be explored. Access from the Porter Tract Neighborhood across the campus towards Blackstone should be a priority. In the distant future, an additional rail crossing would be beneficial.

FIGURE 18: FCC OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS



-  POTENTIAL FUTURE BIKE-PED CROSSING
-  ENHANCE EXISTING FCC LINK
-  ACTIVITY NODES
-  NEW BIKE PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
-  BRT STOPS

after before



before after



## Weldon Avenue Improvement within FCC Campus

Along with the FCC LINK upgrades, the study recommends to reconfigure Weldon Avenue to accommodate dedicated bike lanes in both directions, and remove on-street parking. This will be a critical step to encourage movement between the three campus parcels and also improve ridership to BRT.

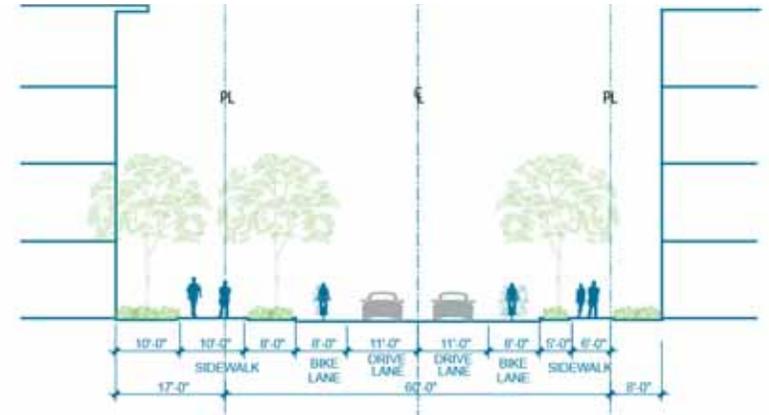


FIGURE 19: WELDON AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENT SECTION



View of Weldon Avenue looking east towards Blackstone Avenue, with streetscape improvements to Weldon Avenue with dedicated bike lanes and shaded sidewalks.

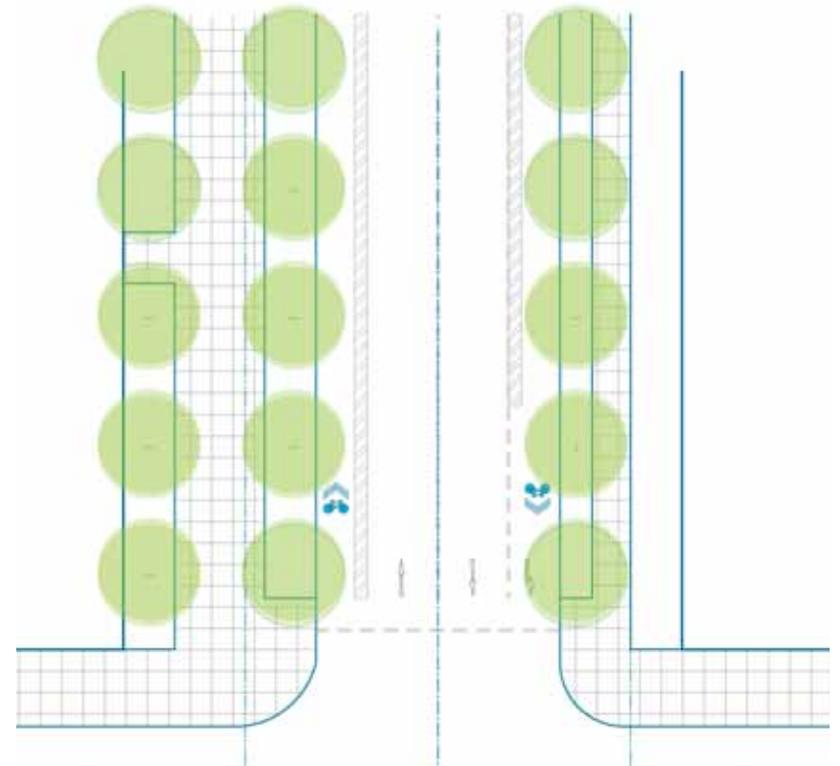


FIGURE 20: WELDON AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENT PLAN



*Integrate biking as part of open space connectivity strategy by providing shaded and safe bike parking facility.*



*Landscape seatwall and planters forming gathering spaces for small group and outdoor teaching. The bright color and form can add identity to spaces.*



*Surface treatment such as painted asphalt can be cost effective material to improve wayfinding for pedestrian.*



*Landscape design features like consistent tree cover, site lighting and other amenities like notice boards, benches, emergency call phones make a clear and comfortable student-oriented pedestrian link.*



*Identity markers, outdoor lighting and consistent planting edge forms a clear pedestrian path*

## Increment 3: Promote Land Assembly for Infill Development

The third increment shows the most likely private development opportunities after elements of increments one and two are realized. Selective criteria are used to identify individual parcels where greater development opportunity exists. As explained in Chapter 3, parcel sizes, proximity to catalyst sites, and patterns of ownership were key attributes to determine initial develop sites. The intensity of development and land uses shown conform to current market conditions and are not necessarily meeting general plan goals for building height and quantity of ground floor retail. The development patterns shown maximize benefit to the corridor through street presence, massing, ground floor activation, and new residents to support local retail and transit. Parking is shown as surface (no structures) in the rear or to the side of the building. Some tuck under parking is included. Adaptive reuse strategies make use of existing buildings that lend themselves to serving new uses.

Highlights of the increment include the following:

- Street edge residential buildings in front of the existing Smart and Final grocery.
- The Granville site is shown an example of potential incremental approach for development on larger sites where the first phase would be to build on Blackstone Avenue and subsequently a full build-out of the parcel can occur as market demand grows.

- Fast food convenience restaurant parcels next to the new FCC academic buildings are redeveloped to a higher, more appropriate FAR configuration.
- Sites to the south of the new FCC buildings are shown to redevelop, largely completing the campus influenced node on the west side of Blackstone between Cambridge and Peralta.
- Underutilized lands south of the FCC athletic zone between McKinley and University become more intensive commercial properties. The large warehouse with a blank façade facing the residential properties on Clark Street is activated with new uses such as a brewery, gym, or incubator office.



*Three story multi-family housing is proposed at the street edge with parking behind.*

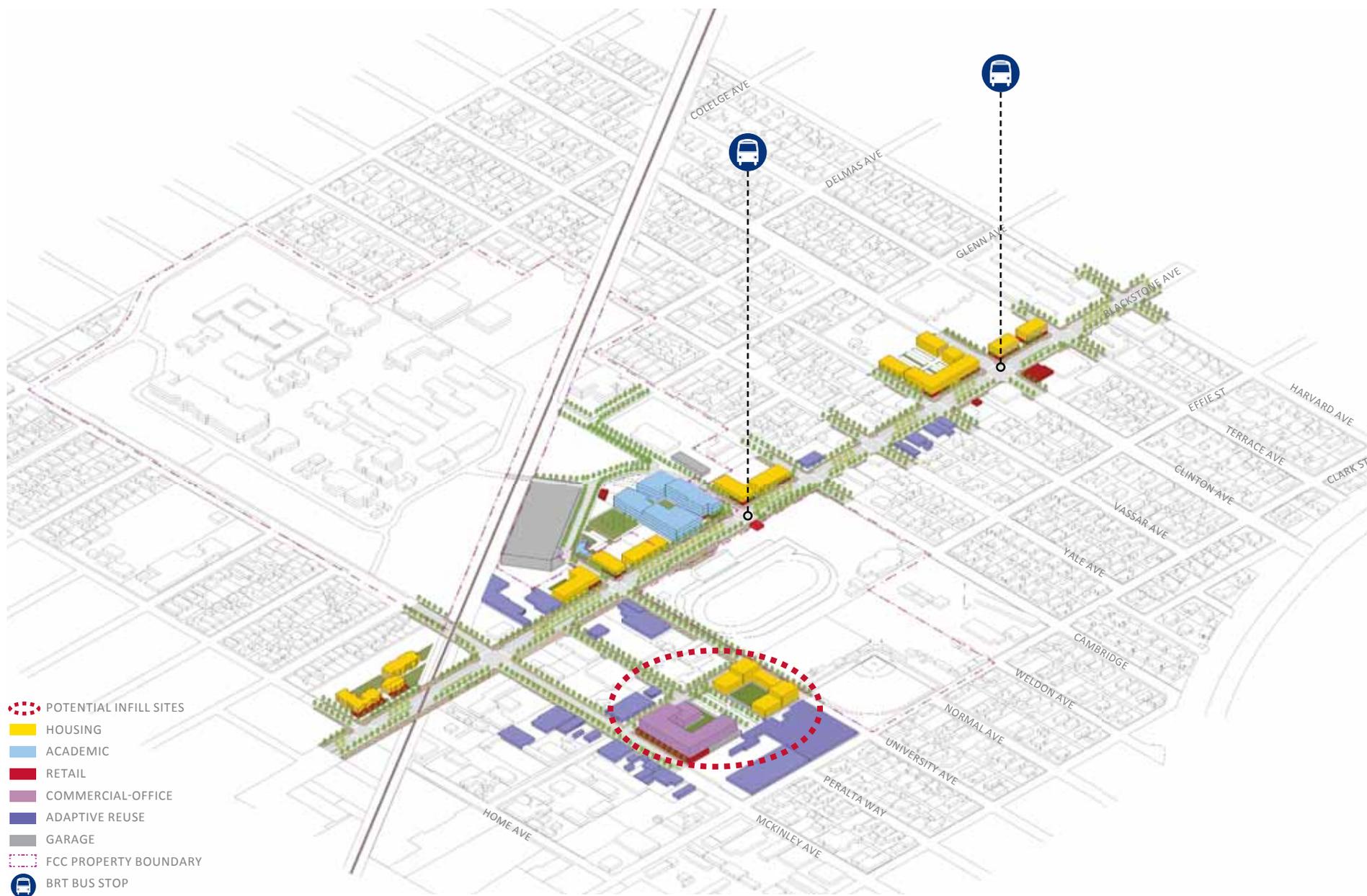


*Active ground floor uses can enliven the sidewalk and provide space for locally owned businesses.*



*Architecture should respond to street corners like this commercial building.*

FIGURE 21: INCREMENT 3



## Increment 4: Achieve Full Potential of Corridor

The fourth increment illustrates the full potential of the corridor, achievement of General Plan goals, and intensity of uses as allowed by the development code. The assembly of smaller parcels and subsequent development of the larger parcels is a key assumption. Highlights of the increment include the following:

- Complete redevelopment of every parcel fronting Blackstone at three and four story heights as is typical for financing these building types.
- The final hypothetical phase of full build-out on some of the catalyst sites that did not achieve it in the first increment.
- Some existing buildings with good value today (Dollar Store for example) are redeveloped to a more intensive, mixed use building.
- Existing alleys are maintained as vehicular access or a pedestrian paseo.
- New pedestrian paths are included within the development patterns of large parcels. These paths encourage connectivity to the surrounding streets of the district.
- A gateway commercial building is shown at the corner of McKinley and Blackstone after assembly of smaller, higher value parcels.
- Infill on the FCC campus is not shown however more intensive use of the eastern campus area is envisioned as a result of increased transit ridership, successful partnerships to strengthen northern neighborhoods, and conversion of surface parking to new academic buildings.

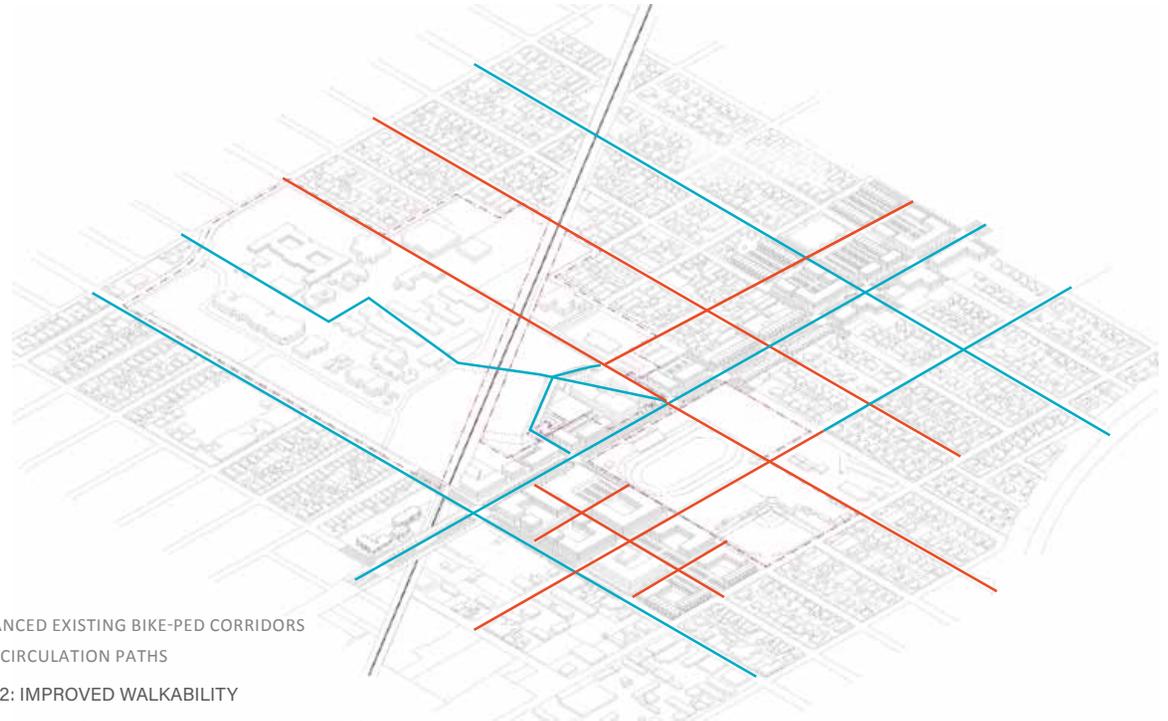


FIGURE 22: IMPROVED WALKABILITY

*Future development can ensure improved walkability by creating new circulation paths and enhancing existing ones.*

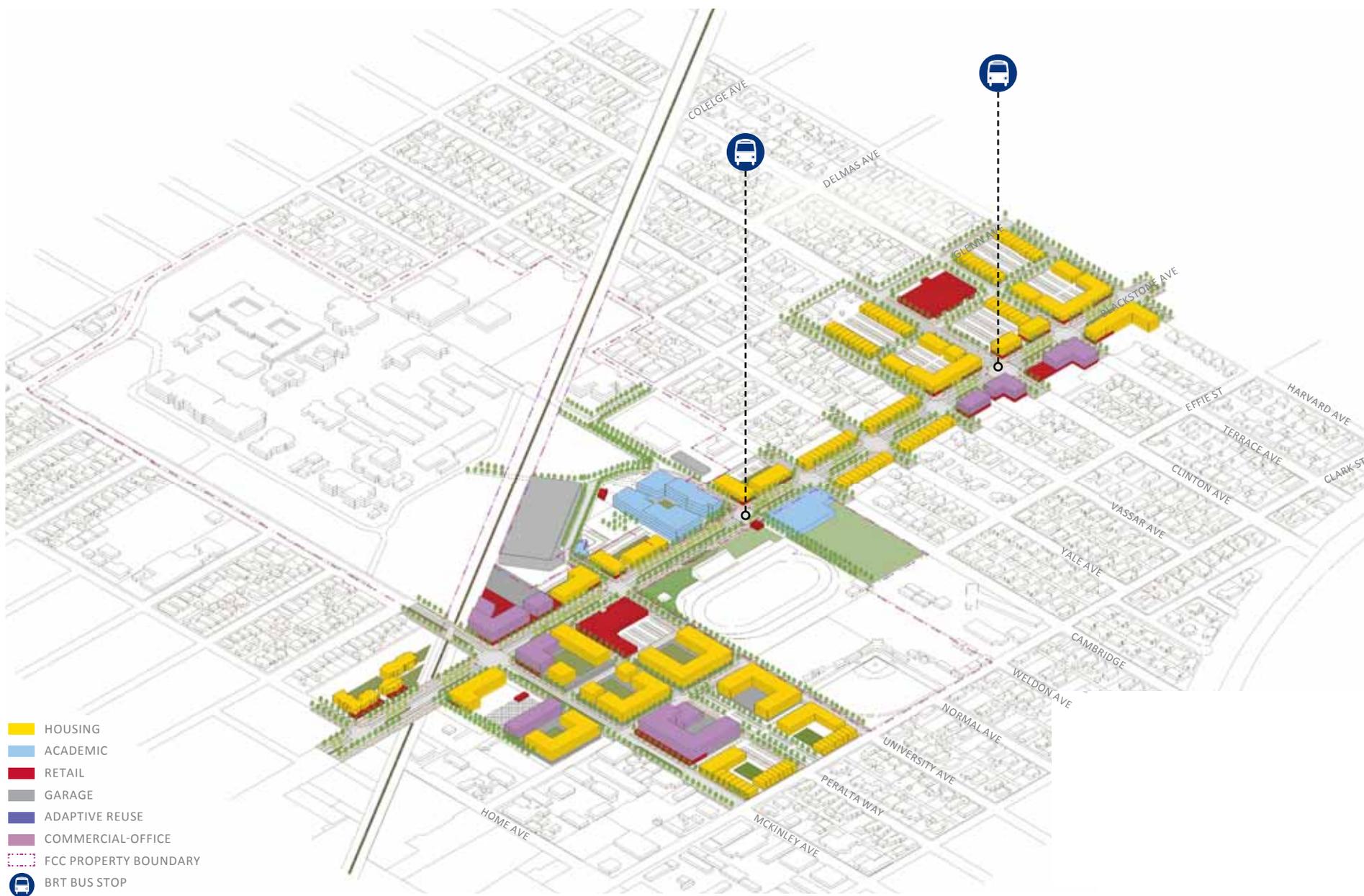


*Active retail front on street with high density housing and office use provide destination of varied users.*



*High density residential with commercial uses on a transit oriented support ridership.*

FIGURE 23: INCREMENT 4





# 5

## CASE STUDIES AND PRECEDENTS

# Castro Valley Boulevard Complete Streets

**Location:** Castro Valley, CA

**Clients:** Alameda County – Community Development Agency

**Completion:** Fall 2012

**Budget:** \$7.1 Million

WRT led a multi-disciplinary team to prepare Castro Valley's Redevelopment Strategic Plan. The Plan aims to revitalize the Central Business District by (1) retrofitting the strip commercial development patterns that were established along the corridor when it was a State Highway, and (2) transforming the 1.7-mile Castro Valley Boulevard – a wide, automobile-dominated thoroughfare – into a safe and attractive retail main street, while still accommodating necessary traffic volumes. The Plan provides development concepts for several key sites that can serve as catalysts for future development and identifies strategic public investments that can be made to the public realm that will promote additional private investment in the area.

The subsequent redesign of the Castro Valley Boulevard was the first step in implementing the Plan and jump-starting parallel initiatives to encourage new commercial uses, centralize public parking, and strengthen the district's "walkability" and "bikeability." WRT's design for Castro Valley Boulevard combines pedestrian enhancements

such as street trees, bulb-outs and pedestrian-scaled lights, with highly-crafted public art elements. Travel and parking lane widths are sized to facilitate the safe flow of cars, while calming travel speeds and respecting other modes of travel. Bicycle lanes are well marked with colored asphalt to further highlight the non-vehicular roadway functions, and permeable paving and rain gardens are incorporated to capture and filter stormwater runoff.

WRT's Complete Streets based design combines pedestrian enhancements such as bulb-outs and pedestrian-scaled lights, with highly crafted elements that convey the community's unique identity. Vehicular serving components are minimally sized to facilitate safe flow of cars and to be in balance with other modes of travel.

Bicycle lanes are well marked with colored asphalt to further highlight the non-vehicular roadway functions. WRT creatively employed sustainable measures such as capturing and filtering storm water to prevent erosion of nearby creeks and pollutants from entering the bay.

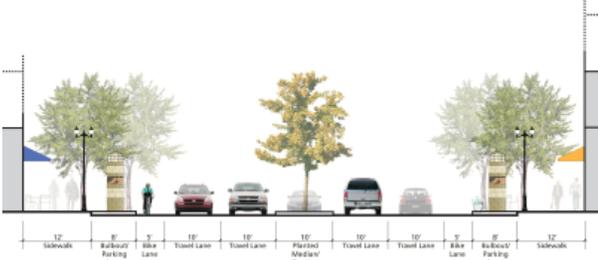
The redesign of Castro Valley Boulevard, a former state highway and large, traffic-dominated thoroughfare, is a catalyst for an exciting new retail "main street" and town center for this established Alameda County community. This design and implementation oriented project follows WRT's Redevelopment Strategic Plan with its parallel initiatives to encourage new commercial uses along the boulevard and centralize public parking.



*Photograph of Castro Valley Boulevard prior to streetscape improvements, shows the banal character of the street lacking a cohesive landscape treatment and basic public realm elements.*



*Public plaza and gathering spaces at retail frontages encourage activity.*



*Illustrative Section: Castro Valley Boulevard illustrating integration of bike lanes and wide sidewalk to create an active retail corridor*



*Trees adding shade and character to the public realm*



*Right of way improvements with reduced traffic lanes, added bike lanes, clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks and wide sidewalk with retail frontages.*

## Fresno Housing Authority Rehabilitation Projects

<b>Project</b>	<b>Ownership Before</b>	<b>Ownership After</b>	<b>Source of Funding</b>	<b>Affiliated Local efforts</b>
<b>SAN RAMON</b> -1328 E. San Ramon, Fresno, CA	Apartment complex – owned privately, out of town landlord	32 rehabbed apartment units – owned directly by the Fresno Housing Authority, managed by a private management firm.	Housing Authority funds of Fresno NSP-3 funds	Partnership with the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program – a program run in two priority neighborhoods and overseen by the mayor’s office
<b>TRAILSIDE TERRACE</b>	Vacant land – owned privately by several local family members	55-unit new apartment complex and commercial space– owned by a single purpose entity in which the Fresno Housing Authority and its affiliates act as the General Partners and a Limited Investment Partner oversees an equity investment in exchange for tax credits.	CTCAC Tax Credit Equity Housing Authority funds County of Fresno HOME funds FLHB Affordable Housing Program Debt	Identification of site assisted by senior city planner.
<b>CITY VIEW</b> Van Ness-802 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno, CA	Out of use dilapidated building – owned by a private owner	45 -unit new apartment complex and commercial space – owned by a single purpose entity in which the Fresno Housing Authority and its affiliates act as the General Partners and a Limited Investment Partner oversees an equity investment in exchange for tax credits.	CTCAC Tax Credit Equity Funds from the Housing Authority and its affiliates *City of Fresno HOME funds Bond debt	Strong mayoral focus on the redevelopment of the downtown area.
<b>FULTONIA WEST</b> 541 N. Fulton Street, Fresno, CA	Abandoned single family homes – owned by private owners	31 -unit new apartment complex – owned by a single purpose entity in which the Fresno Housing Authority and its affiliates act as the General Partners and a Limited Investment Partner oversees an equity investment in exchange for tax credits.	CTCAC Tax Credit Equity Housing Authority funds City of Fresno HOME funds Redevelopment Agency funds	Part of the Redevelopment Agency’s Redevelopment Zone.



San Ramon



Trailside Terrace



City View



Flutonia West

# Fresno Housing Authority Rehabilitation Projects

## San Ramon Apartments

### 32 Residential Units

The development was completely renovated in just six months by the Fresno Housing Authority. The renovations consist of 32 two bedroom units, new landscaping, interior and exterior designs and improved amenities for residents seeking quality, affordable housing.

The improvements to San Ramon Apartments contribute to the transformation of the Eldorado Park neighborhood. The neighborhood has recently seen transformation through neighborhood planning to reduce crime and encourage engagement of residents led by the El Dorado Community Leaders, a group of residents who work to organize residents to work together for positive changes in the neighborhood.



San Ramon

## Trailside Terrace

### 55 Residential units and 3000 sqft Commercial Space

The Fresno Housing Authority broke ground Wednesday on a mixed-use affordable housing community in Reedley. Trailside Terrace, located at 1233 G St. between 12th and 13th streets, will have 55 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and about 3,000 square feet of commercial space.

The development will have a community room with kitchen, space for on-site services, fitness center and computer lab. A pathway, including a play area for residents, pedestrian walkways and landscaping, will connect the front of the complex to the rear and will serve as a major connection to the Reedley Rail-Trail, a three-mile walking and biking trail that runs through town. Construction is expected to be completed by Spring 2017.



Trailside Rendering



*City View*

## **CityView @ Vaness**

### **45 Residential units over Commercial Space**

CityView @ Van Ness consists of a four-story design that includes three stories of workforce housing and 3,000 square feet of commercial space.

The building includes a total of 45 units with a mix of six studios, 30 one-bedrooms, 8 two-bedrooms and one manager unit. Fresno Housing's vision for the development was targeted towards young working professionals. The project has a significant impact on downtown revitalization as it offers quality affordable housing and also replaces the former deteriorated Droge building. The new development is a focal point on Inyo/Van Ness, a major intersection of the downtown area.



*Fultonia*

## **Fultonia**

### **31 Residential Units**

A couple of lots that have sat empty on Fulton Street, just south of the Tower District, since 2011 are finally undergoing a transformation into new live and work spaces. The walls are going up on a 31-unit complex, just north of Belmont Avenue, called Fultonia West. The art-deco-designed project is a joint development between the Fresno Housing Authority and TFS Investments, led by Terance Frazier.

The project connects the Tower District to downtown Fresno and gives people, who want to live in the downtown area, more affordable units to choose from, Frazier said. "We need more affordable units in the downtown if we want massive growth," he said. Designed by Fresno architect Marvin Armstrong, Fultonia West will have one- and two-bedroom units. Seven of the apartments will have commercial space facing Fulton Street. Monthly rental rates will range from \$615 to \$770. Construction is expected to finish by March 2016.

## Clovis Parklets - Tactical Urbanism

The City of Clovis hosted the Taking it To the Streets: Urban Design Festival on May 14-15, 2016 in Old Town Clovis. As a first-of-its-kind festival in the Fresno area, the City of Clovis aimed at creating interactive places by utilizing parking spaces -- known as parklets. A parklet is a sidewalk extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Parklets are usually installed on parking lanes and use several parking spaces. Parklets typically extend out from the sidewalk at the level of the sidewalk to the width of the adjacent parking space. Examples of amenities: seats, tables, bike racks, and landscaping. Nearly 15 parking spaces were turned into parklets for the two-day festival, featuring the City of Clovis, City of Fresno, Clovis High School, CART, and several architectural and engineering firms.

OCED participated in the festival in collaboration with the City of Fresno and Downtown Fresno Partnership, a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing the downtown business district. In the 8 x 20 foot parking space, the group designed a parklet that celebrated the authentic urban environment in Downtown Fresno.

Local examples of tactical urbanism from the cities of Clovis and Fresno.





# 6 APPENDIX

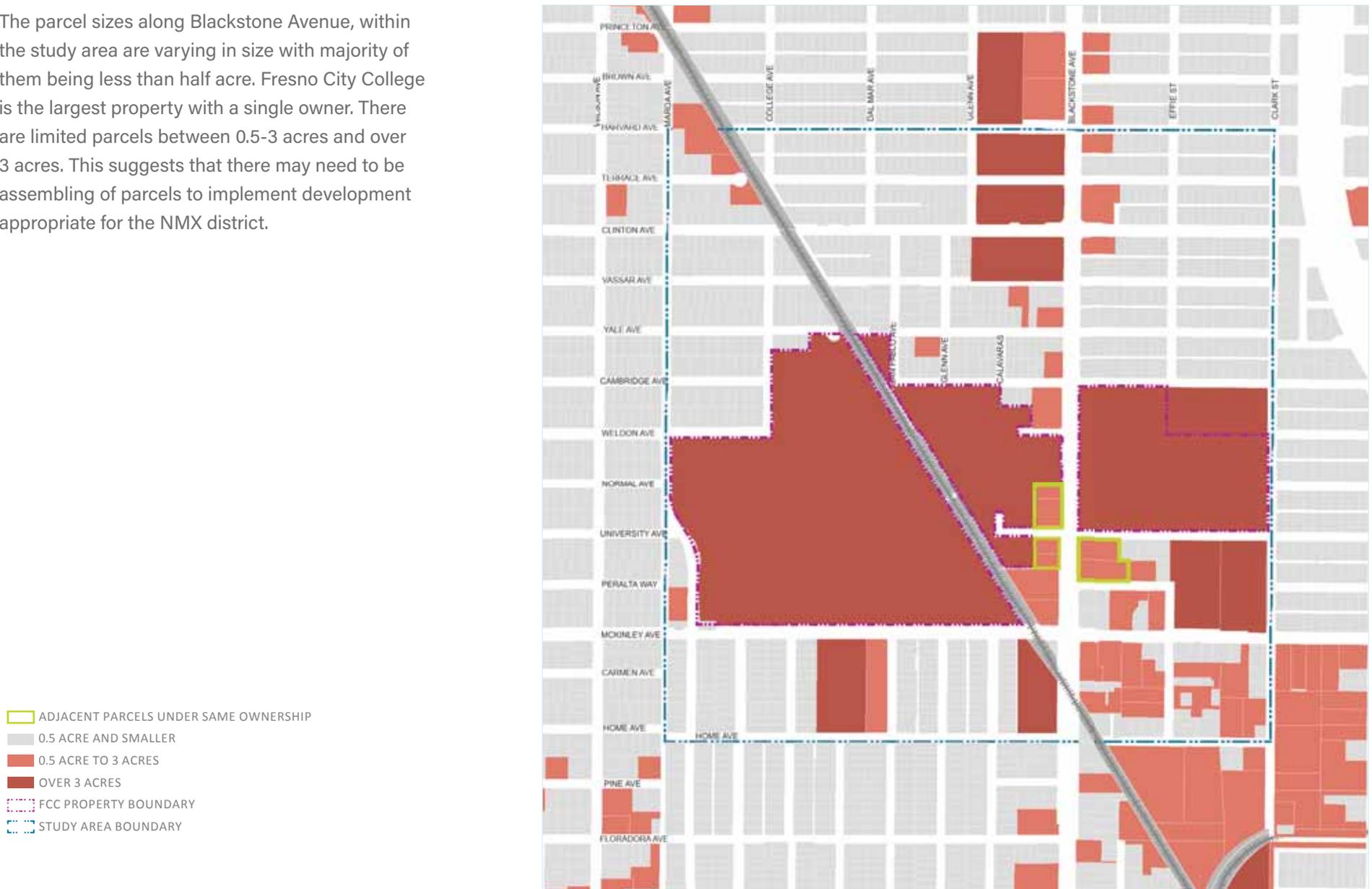


## PARCEL SIZE

The parcel sizes along Blackstone Avenue, within the study area are varying in size with majority of them being less than half acre. Fresno City College is the largest property with a single owner. There are limited parcels between 0.5-3 acres and over 3 acres. This suggests that there may need to be assembling of parcels to implement development appropriate for the NMX district.

FIGURE 24: EXISTING PARCEL SIZES AND OWNERSHIP

SOURCE: CITY OF FRESNO, GIS DATA



## Study Alternative A

### Class I bike lane within existing right-of-way

**Key distinctions: Provides bike lanes that route behind bus stops. The right of way remains at existing. Two lane each way with wide planted median**

- Right of way is same as existing, 110'
- Two lane each way with wide planted media
- Left turn and right turn lane at intersections
- Bus stops in the vehicular lane
- Dedicated and separated Class I bike lanes
- Median refuge for pedestrians
- 16' wide side walks
- No bulbouts
- No street parking

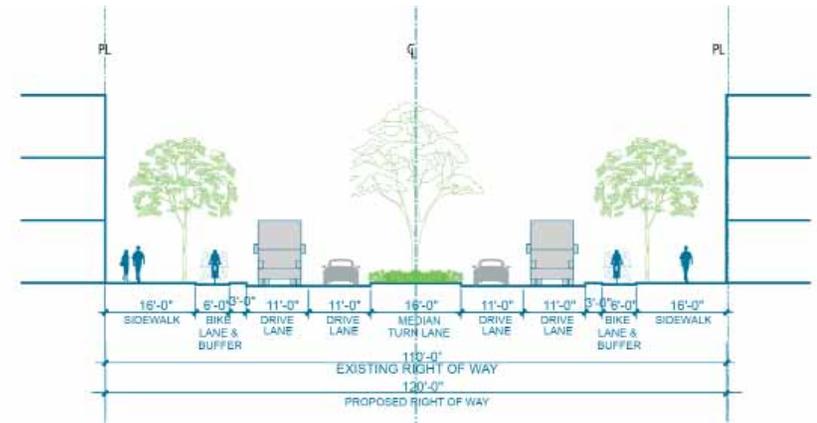


FIGURE 25: ALTERNATIVE A SECTION

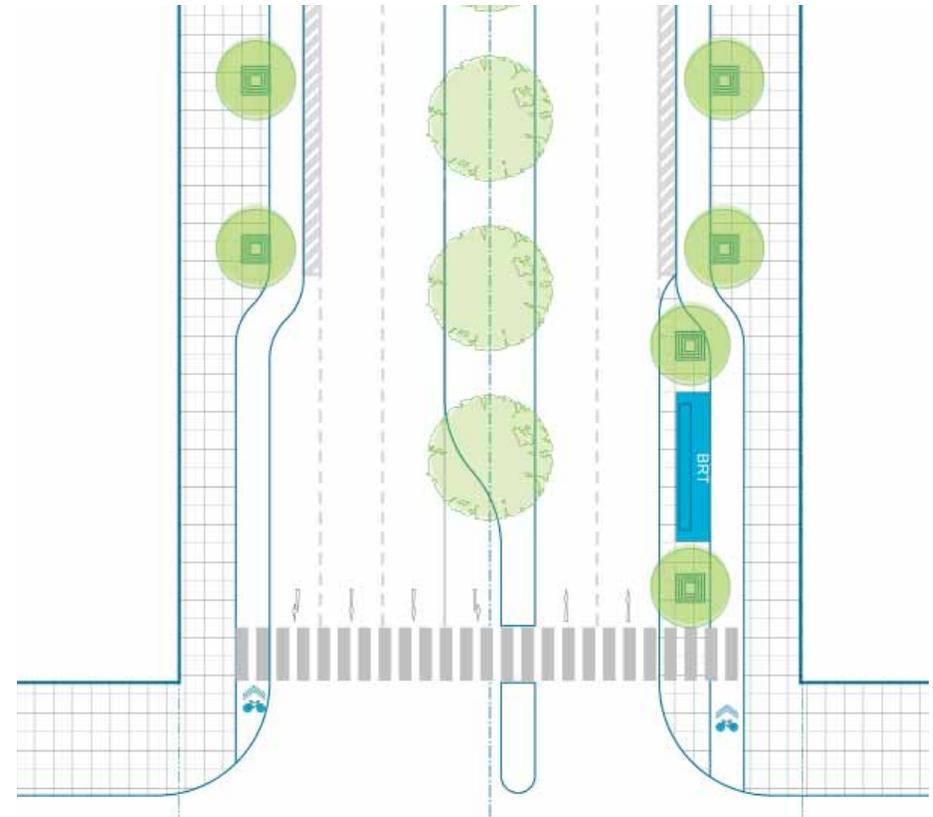


FIGURE 26: ALTERNATIVE A PLAN

## Study Alternative B

### Existing right-of-way with class II bike lane

**Key distinctions: Buses stop in the bike lane. The right of way remains at existing.**

- Right of way is same as existing, 110'
- Two lane each way with wide planted median
- Left turn and right turn lane at intersections
- Bus stops in the vehicular lane
- Dedicated buffered and separated bike lanes
- Median refuge for pedestrians
- 16' wide side walks
- No bulbouts
- No street parking

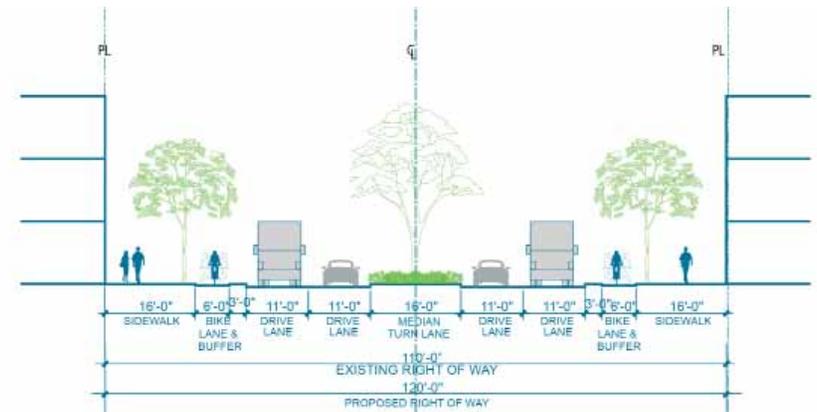


FIGURE 27: ALTERNATIVE B SECTION

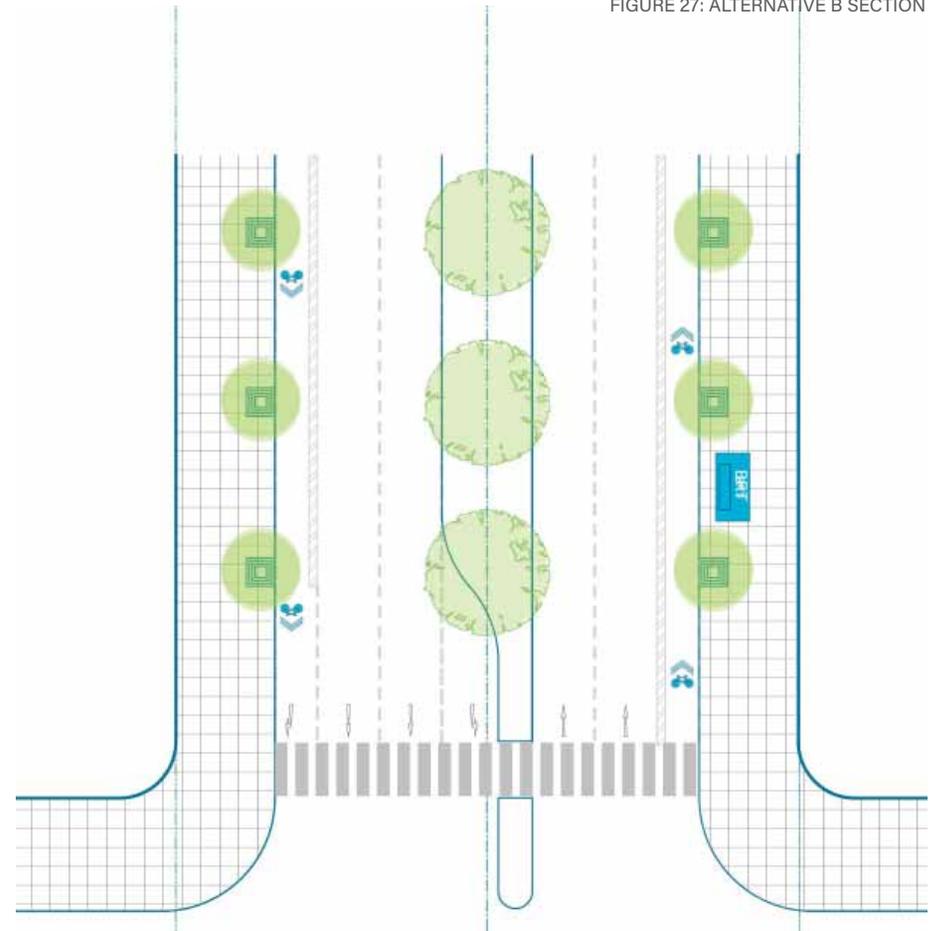


FIGURE 28: ALTERNATIVE B PLAN

## Study Alternative C

### Class II bike lane and street parking within an expanded right-of-way

**Key distinctions: On street parking is added. The right of way is expanded in to the private frontage. The median is reduced.**

- Right of way is same as existing, 110'
- Two lane each way with wide planted median
- Left turn and right turn lane at intersections
- Bus stops in the parking lane
- Dedicated Class II bike lane between parking and drive lanes
- No median refuge for pedestrians
- 16' wide side walks
- No bulbouts
- Parallel street parking

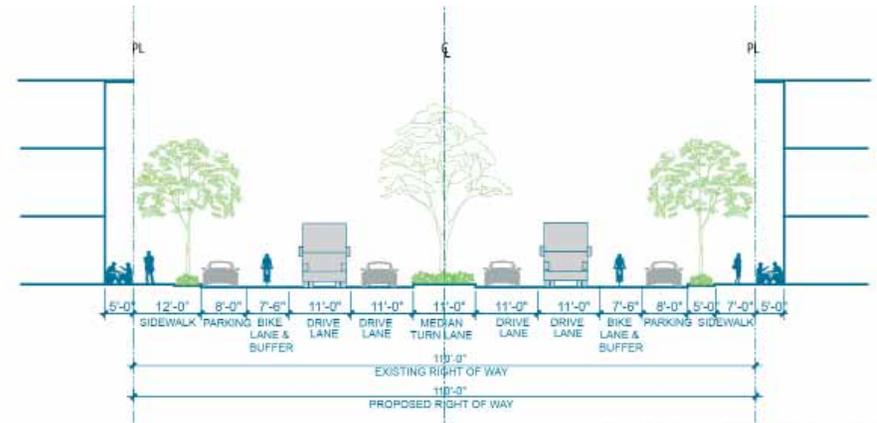


FIGURE 29: ALTERNATIVE C SECTION

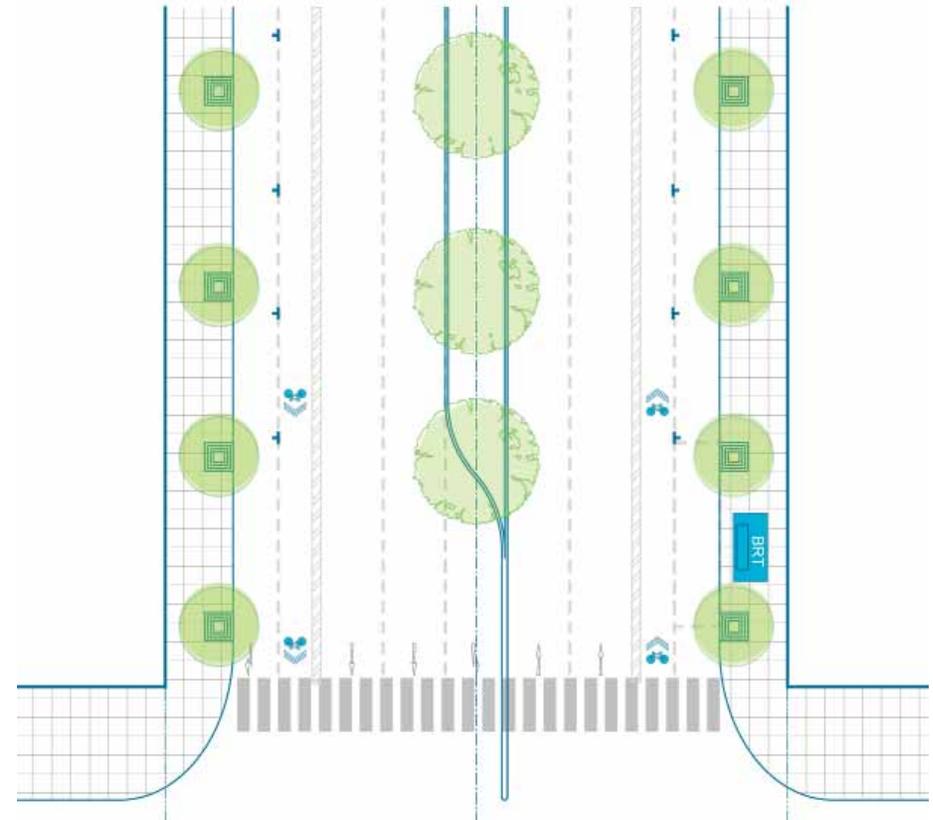


FIGURE 30: ALTERNATIVE C PLAN

## Study Alternative D

### Class I bike lane and street parking within an expanded right-of-way

**Key distinctions: Provides bike lanes that route behind bus stops and parking. On street parking occurs in mid-block areas. The right of way is expanded into the private frontage.**

- Right of way 120' at corner and bus stops.
- Two lane each way with wide planted median
- Left turn and right turn lane at intersections
- Bus stops in dedicated area
- Dedicated Class I bike lane, between parking and sidewalk
- Median refuge for pedestrians
- 16' wide side walks
- Corner bulbouts to reduce pedestrian crossing distance.
- Parallel street parking

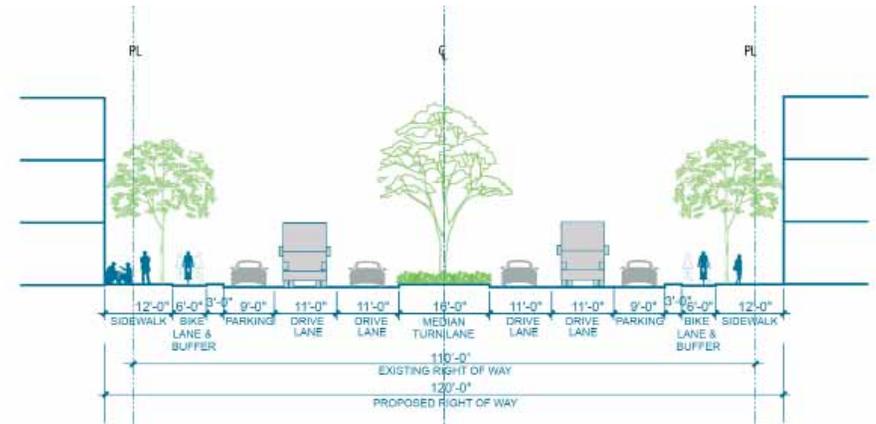


FIGURE 31: ALTERNATIVE B SECTION

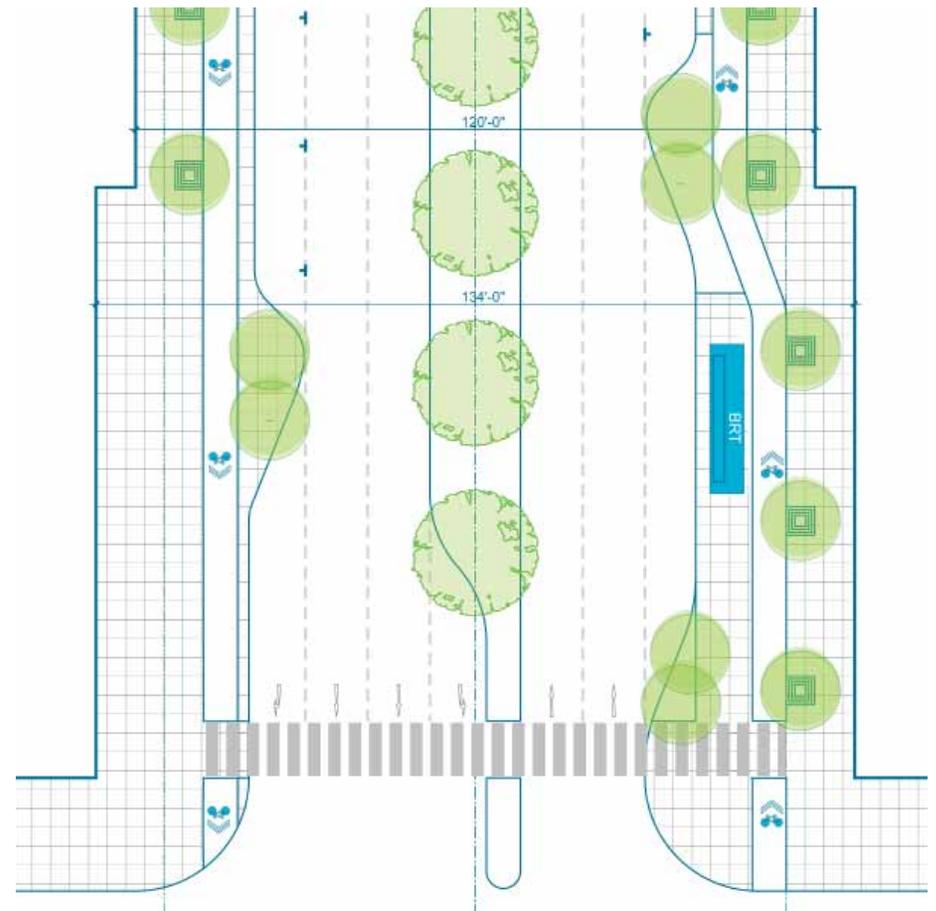


FIGURE 32: ALTERNATIVE B PLAN

