

Tower District Specific Plan Update | DRAFT Objectives and Policies

Land Use

**Asterisks indicate where policies are adapted from current Specific Plan.*

Highlighted items represent policies the subcommittee wanted to discuss further

LU 1: ***Maintain and enhance character-defining elements associated with the Tower District and its various subdistricts and corridors.***

LU 1.1: Require that new housing respects the character of existing housing stock.

Incorporate character-defining elements in development standards such as using similar materials, cadence/modulation, color, fenestration & entry patterns, cornice lines, massing, roof form, building “build-to lines,” or architectural features and motifs.

- Discussion on Tower District Design Guidelines not being objective enough
- Policy should reference ADA compliance
- Revise title of policy to include remodels

LU 1.2*: Implement code enforcement as violations occur, particularly as they relate to public safety and the condition of buildings and landscaping. **KEEP**

- Discussion to identify types of complaints that are not adequately addressed by code enforcement currently and consider changes in regulations to address such complaints.

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 1, Policy 5.]

LU 2: ***Retain and expand the existing inventory of affordable housing in the Tower District and discourage displacement of its residents.***

LU 2.1*: Promote mixed-use development along commercial corridors. **REVISE**

Along the Tower District’s corridors, promote mixed-use development such that ground-level commercial uses front onto (and activate) public streets and sidewalks, while residential uses are located above commercial uses (“vertical mixed-use”) and/or are located behind commercial uses (“horizontal mixed-use”). Emphasize commercial frontage at street intersections, while allowing ground-floor residential in other locations if not adjacent or nearly adjacent to existing commercial frontage.

- Confirm what is meant by “corridors”

Staff Revisions

Along the Tower District’s corridors, promote mixed-use development such that ground-level commercial uses front onto (and activate) public streets and sidewalks, while residential uses are located above commercial uses (“vertical mixed use”) and/or are located behind commercial uses (“horizontal mixed use”). Specifically, enable high-

intensity development along Blackstone Avenue between Clinton and McKinley. Emphasize commercial frontage where commercial frontage now exists and at street intersections, such as to create a major mixed-use node at Shields and Maroa. Allow ground-floor residential in locations that are not adjacent or nearly adjacent to existing commercial frontage.

LU 2.2*: Enable development of well-designed “missing middle” housing within single-family and other areas. KEEP

Allow small multiplex buildings with six or less units on infill sites where their massing can have a positive effect on "density tolerant" sites that include street corners, along collector & arterial streets, adjacent to open space, and on larger properties where building mass can transition in scale to adjacent single-family homes.

- Discussion to consider pre-approved plans for tri-plexes

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 2, Policy 2.]

LU 2.3*: Discourage the redevelopment of existing residential uses for commercial-only development. KEEP

Where residential units are lost to commercial development, require that new units replace not less than the number of units lost.

Staff Revisions

Do not allow auto-oriented uses, such as drive-through restaurants, and develop standards to minimize their disruption to walkability if they are conditionally allowed.

Where residential units are lost to commercial development, require that new units replace not less than the number of units lost.

LU 2.4*: Support reinvestment in older building stock to support affordability and maintain neighborhood character. REVISE

Provide building rehabilitation programs or encourage community land trusts (CLTs) and/or forms of collective ownership.

- Discussion on distinguishing between ownership and rental programs and tie city-based programs that provide these types of offerings into this policy

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 2, Policy 4.]

LU 2.5*: Encourage the application of citywide anti-displacement policies within the Tower District. REVISE

Continue to work with residents to understand displacement as it occurs and how it can be better addressed. Consider strategies to strengthen neighborhood stabilization policies, such as establishing a local resource center to facilitate access to tenant protection and buying assistance programs.

- Discussion to elaborate on displacement in this policy

- Add language about tracking the causes of displacement in the Tower District

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 2, Policy 5.]

LU 2.6*: To be consistent with existing use, consider rezoning of existing legal non-conforming multi-family residential uses to the density-appropriate zoning district. REVISE

Rezone property with legally non-conforming multifamily residential uses to zoning consistent with the existing use and encourage the current number of units and the mitigation of potential impacts on surrounding residential uses. Allow such rezoning to occur using ministerial procedures where the decision of Fresno's Director of Planning and Development is final, while offering requiring a prior opportunity for review and comment by the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee and the Tower District Design Committee.

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 1, Policy 8.]

Staff Revisions

Rezone property with legally non-conforming multifamily residential uses to zoning consistent with the existing use, and encourage the current number of units and the mitigation of potential impacts on surrounding residential uses ~~Allow such rezoning to occur using ministerial procedures where the decision of Fresno's Director of Planning and Development is final, while~~ and offer a prior opportunity for review and comment by the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee and the Tower District Design Committee.

Staff Comments

- An application to rezone a property is a discretionary action. The Director of Planning cannot approve a rezone ministerially.

LU 3: *Encourage appropriate mixed-use and multifamily development by reducing obstacles to **financial** feasibility of potential development projects.*

LU 3.1*: Streamline residential project review through the adoption of objective development standards and environmental clearance as required by California law. KEEP

[Adapted from Goal 2, Objective 1, Policy 4 and Goal 2, Objective 1, Policy 5.]

LU 3.2: Consider regulatory changes to reduce costs and risks associated with mixed-use and multifamily development, such as to reduce parking requirements, allow tandem parking, and provide greater flexibility in addressing private open space requirements.

- Discussion on concern over too much density and not enough open space
- Hesitant to relax open space requirements (balconies shouldn't be considered open space)

LU 3.3: Consider ways to increase potential residential yields, such as by increasing allowable densities and building heights as appropriate. REVISE

Pursue increasing the allowable building height limits in the Commercial Main Street (CMS) and Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMX) Zone to 45 feet to allow three-story mixed-use buildings with sufficient ceiling height for ground-floor retail feasibility. Consider the height of landmark structures (i.e. Tower Theatre) and incorporate transitional height requirements adjacent to those structures.

LU 3.4: Emphasize placemaking in Tower District. KEEP

Emphasize placemaking through development to make the Tower District a desirable place to live and invest in, such as to provide a mix of local commercial and cultural destinations, street-facing architecture, and character-defining elements that emulate the District’s historic character. Also encourage public interventions that result in more pedestrian-friendly streets (see Chapter 5) and easy access to parks (see Chapter 4).

- Discussion to add a new policy: “add more daytime neighborhood community services (i.e. grocery stores, pharmacies, goods and service-based amenities) to draw more patrons to the Tower District.”

LU 3.5: Actively increase the affordable housing inventory in Tower District. KEEP

Pursue potential funding sources for constructing affordable housing, such as government and philanthropic grants, and consider new programs to assist with development project financing, such as a revolving loan fund.

LU 3.6: Proactively identify underutilized parcels for affordable housing and mixed-use development where appropriate. KEEP

Consider a more active City role in identifying and assembling underutilized parcels for the development of workforce and affordable housing, such as to encourage the creation of mixed-use nodes at the Shields/Maroa and Palm/McKinley intersections, and to replace low-intensity uses along Shields (between Fruit and Del Mar) with mixed-use and multifamily development.

- Clarify what underutilized means

Staff Revisions

~~Consider a more active City role in identifying and assembling~~ Evaluate underutilized parcels for the development of workforce and affordable housing, such as to encourage the creation of mixed-use nodes at the Shields/Maroa and Palm/McKinley intersections, and replace low-intensity uses along Shields (between Fruit and Del Mar) with mixed-use and multifamily development.

Staff Comments

- The City does not maintain an active role in the development of individual properties.

LU 4: *Maintain and enhance existing and promote new neighborhood-serving pedestrian-oriented retail service businesses within the Tower District, which is consistent with*

historic patterns of development. Make commercial areas safe, convenient and welcoming focal points for neighborhood activities and public life.

LU 4.1: Support small commercial businesses. KEEP

Provide guidance for more effective marketing and merchandizing and promote festivals/events and heritage tourism.

LU 4.2*: Require commercial projects to place pedestrian-oriented storefronts along public sidewalks and restrict parking along public sidewalks.

Generally, locate surface parking behind street-facing buildings and allow larger stores midblock where they can face off-street parking.

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 3, Policy 3 and Goal 3, Objective 1, Policy 2.]

LU 4.3: Emphasize the creation of active frontage on Palm Avenue between McKinley Avenue and Olive Avenue.

Consider the addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs) frontage requirements along Palm Avenue to create an engaging street frontage. Limit the allowable ACU uses to neighborhood serving uses that do not increase car traffic and parking requirements along the street, such as offices, cafes, bookstores, hair salons, and retail stores. ACU's should have additional regulations as follows:

1. No customer parking requirement
2. Hours of operation: 7 AM to 10 PM
3. No outdoor seating
4. Lighting cutoff requirement
5. Direct pedestrian access

Staff Comments

- City staff does not recommend ACU's in residential neighborhoods as they have the potential to decrease existing residential character.

LU 4.4: Use design standards to promote safety for both daytime and nighttime (after dark) activities. KEEP

Use design standards to require street-facing windows/entrances, wall-mounted lighting, and to avoid obstructions to provide greater visibility between activities for "natural surveillance."

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 2, Policy 2.]

LU 4.5: Encourage restrooms that are available to the public, such as in public buildings and parking garages. KEEP

Require portable toilets at significant events.

- Discussion on feasibility to include a permanent restroom along central core

LU 4.6: Adopt zoning standards to mitigate conflicts and potential noise impacts. KEEP

LU 4.7: ~~Work to Encourage increased maintain~~ nighttime police presence at night and during major events. KEEP

LU 4.8: Permanently implement the Sidewalk Vendors Pilot Program in the Tower District, with adjustments.

LU 4.9: Consider forming a Business Improvement District (BID) or Public Business Improvement District (PBID) to support on-going commercial area marketing, organization of festivals and other events, enhanced landscape maintenance and sidewalk cleaning, graffiti abatement, and other beneficial programs. KEEP

LU 4.10: Encourage grocery stores that offer fresh produce and other healthful foods. Consider incentives for changes in use and new development projects that result in grocery stores that commit to at least one fresh produce aisle.

LU 5: *Ensure compatibility among light industrial and residential uses in the Tower District.*

LU 5.1. Maintain industrial zoning for existing industrial uses, while striving to mitigate their negative effects on residential areas. KEEP

Examples of mitigation can include buffering using landscaping and trees, also see policies in Chapter 4: Circulation.

- Discussion on clarifying public vs. private landscaping

Staff Revisions

- Engage industrial business owners and nearby residents in dialogue regarding needs and impacts.
- Expand the City's noticing system to increase transparency and civic participation.
- Consider ways to reduce and mitigate truck traffic on surrounding residential streets, as described in Chapter 4: Circulation.
- Encourage buffer landscaping with shrubs and trees along street edges.
- Encourage light industrial uses to adopt improved technology.

LU 5.2: Allow light industrial uses to have neighborhood-serving retail. KEEP

Staff Revisions

Allow light industrial uses to have neighborhood-serving retail if the space fronts onto a public street.

LU 5.3: Enforce and monitor regulations around emissions as set by the City of Fresno and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. KEEP

Regularly monitor the data collected by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) under the Community Air Monitoring Plan and Community Emissions Reduction Program for South Central Fresno which includes the South Tower neighborhood.

Staff Revisions

~~Collaborate with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to monitor emissions. Enforce and monitor regulations around emissions as set by the City of Fresno and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.~~

Staff Comments

- Enforcing and monitoring regulations surrounding emissions as noted above is not within the City’s purview. The City will continue to collaborate with CARB and the SJVAPCD, which are the agencies that regulate and monitor these standards.

LU 5.4: Significant improvements to properties should be accompanied by streetscape improvements and neighborhood landscape buffering, also see Chapter 4: Circulation.
KEEP

LU 6: ***Recognize the unique strengths and address the needs of Tower District's subdistricts and corridors.***

LU 6.1*: Reinforce Fulton Street and Van Ness Avenue as major corridors with commercial destinations that serve Tower District's Central Area and adjacent neighborhoods.
REVISE

- Discussion to revise to improve overall synergies of Downtown and Tower on Fulton and Van Ness

[Adapted from Goal 1, Objective 1, Policy 1.]

LU 6.2: Encourage land use intensification that takes advantage of Tower District's unique position within Central Fresno and convenient transit connections to Downtown along Fulton Street and Van Ness Avenue. **KEEP**

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Circulation and Streetscape

C 1: *Improve Tower District streets to enhance access using all modes of transportation and create a better environment.*

C 1.1: Improve the multi-modal functions of key corridors.

Co-create road diet designs with residents and business owners who live along key corridors in order to improve safety and reduce collisions. The co-created designs should elevate pedestrian safety as the highest priority, while also establishing a unique, visual identity for each corridor. The following corridors should be prioritized:

- Olive Avenue. Create a strong pedestrian-oriented environment.
- Clinton Avenue. Slow traffic to address safety issues, make consistent with Collector Street designation.
- McKinley Avenue. Implement traffic calming measures and Class IV bike lanes.
- Palm Avenue. Complete Class IV bike lanes and add safe pedestrian crossings.
- Belmont Avenue. Emphasize a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

- Discussion on the number of bike lanes to expect
- Concern over roads in Tower becoming a thoroughfare for people to drive from north to Downtown

Staff Revisions

~~Evaluate-Co-create~~ road diet designs with residents and business owners who live along key corridors in order to improve safety and reduce collisions. The co-created designs should elevate pedestrian safety as the highest priority, while also establishing a unique, visual identity for each corridor. The following corridors should be prioritized:

C 1.2: Enhance Main Streets.

Along Olive Avenue, establish a traditional commercial “main street” environment that creates a sense of place and prioritizes pedestrian activity. Strengthen Olive Avenue by making the following improvements.

- Limit the number of travel lanes to no more than three, with one lane in each direction. While shared center left-turn lanes may be needed, the preferred arrangement of lanes is to have two travel lanes with one lane in each direction and on-street parking lanes to support street-facing retail land use.
- Limit travel lane widths to no more than 11 feet, except when implementing Class III bike routes on main streets, travel lanes should be no more than 12 feet wide to accommodate vehicle maneuvers around bicyclists.
- Provide bicycle facilities. Recommend Class III Bike Routes for low-speed Main Streets. Consider Class II Bike Lanes on main streets where curb-to-curb widths also allow travel lanes and on-street parking.

- On main streets, encourage pedestrian traffic by widening sidewalks to at least 12 feet with street trees in curb-adjacent tree wells and a minimum 6-foot clear walking zone. Also include high-visibility crosswalks and ADA-accessible curb ramps at intersections, pedestrian-scale lighting, street banners, and landscaping.
- Apply appropriate traffic calming measures: corner extensions / bulb-outs, raised intersections, road diet, mini roundabouts, chokers, chicanes, median refuge islands, street trees, and shared streets.
- Discussion to work with Caltrans to understand how to mitigate anticipated changes to HWY 99
- Do not want center turn lanes to be removed
- Consider developing Class 3 route alternatives off Olive

Staff Revisions

Enhance Streets Serving Commercial Main Street (CMS) zoned properties. Main Streets. Along Olive Avenue, establish a traditional commercial “main street” environment that creates a sense of place and prioritizes pedestrian activity. Strengthen Olive Avenue by making the following improvements.

- Limit the number of travel lanes to no more than three, with one lane in each direction. While shared center left-turn lanes may be needed, the preferred arrangement of lanes is to have two travel lanes with one lane in each direction and on-street parking lanes to support street-facing retail land use.
- Limit travel lane widths to no more than 11 feet, except when implementing Class III bike routes on Commercial Main Street zoned properties, travel lanes should be no more than 12 feet wide to accommodate vehicle maneuvers around bicyclists.
- Provide bicycle facilities. Recommend Class III Bike Routes for low-speed Commercial Main Street zoned properties. Consider Class II Bike Lanes on main streets where curb-to-curb widths also allow travel lanes and on-street parking.

Staff Comments

- This policy applies to streets that serve properties zoned Commercial Main Street (CMS). This would apply to Olive Avenue from Palm Avenue to San Pablo Street and Van Ness Avenue from Floradora Avenue to Home Avenue.

C 1.3: Encourage active transportation modes by improving bicycle access, safety, and comfort for users of all ages and abilities. **KEEP**

Establish a well-connected bicycle network that provides safe, convenient, and comfortable bike routes through and to the Tower District. Expand and enhance Tower District’s Bicycle Network.

Establish Primary Bikeways that provide through routes for bicycles and connect to the larger bicycle network.

- Design bicycle facility type dependent on primary roadway designations to address roadway design speed, while not oversizing facilities which would diminish the quality of abutting pedestrian routes.

- Discourage excessive vehicle speeds and volumes by implementing complete street designs that reduce adjacent vehicle travel lane widths to no more than 11 feet with a 7-foot-wide parking lane.
 - Widen sidewalks to at least 8 feet with a minimum 6-foot clear walking zone and buffer zone of at least 4 feet, where street trees can be planted between the sidewalk and parking lanes, travel lanes, or bike lanes.
 - Where observed travel speeds exceed 25 miles per hour, apply appropriate traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeding and increase safety and access for active modes.
- Concern over safety issues with right hand turn lanes at existing bike lanes
 - Discussion on adding a permanent trail on Wishon or Palm
 - Discussion to add potential policy for permanent versions of quick build infrastructure

Staff Comments

- The City of Fresno is currently in the process of updating the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). To access the current ATP, please visit: https://www.fresno.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/170022FresnoATPFinal2017Amended042022_compressed-1.pdf

- C 1.4*: Provide universal accessibility. **KEEP**
 Ensure full access for mobility impaired persons in all parts of the Tower District, especially in areas which are centers of public and community life.
[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 2, Policy 1.]
- C 1.5*: Increase transit frequency. **KEEP**
 Work with FAX to increase transit access and frequency in the Tower District.
[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 4.]
- C 1.6*: Increase late night transportation options. **KEEP**
 Work with FAX, other providers, and stakeholders to increase late night transportation options (e.g., "The Hop" Trolley) after midnight to serve residents who work late and don't drive a car, and to provide a safe ride home rather than driving while intoxicated. The service should have a user-friendly online interface with real-time location and estimated arrival time information.
[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 4.]
- C 1.7*: Establish mobility hubs. **KEEP**
 Work with the community to determine locations for a network of community mobility hubs in the plan area. Potential locations include the core of Tower or Fresno City College.
[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 4.]
- C 1.8: Improve transit amenities. **KEEP**
 Improve transit waiting areas with better shelters, seating, and live wait times.

C 1.9: Coordinate curbside activities. **KEEP**
Conduct a curbside management study of the commercial core, and define locations for where commercial loading needs to occur and pickup/drop-off such as for ride-sharing vehicles. Consider time-of-day restrictions to make best use of curbside zones.

C 1.10: Encourage “Green Alleys.” **KEEP**
To encourage walking and biking and activate underused alley infrastructure, establish a new green alleys program. Encourage community engagement by creating safe corridors for slower modes of travel that allow residents to interact.

C 2: *Focus circulation improvements on pedestrian safety.*

C 2.1: Add pedestrian safety elements. **KEEP**
Work with Public Works to install street lighting, crosswalk striping and installation of pedestrian safety measures, particularly at frequently used but unmarked pedestrian crossings.

Staff Comments

- The Department of Public Works has a policy to determine if/where uncontrolled crosswalks would be installed. Staff will coordinate with Public Works to understand policy details.

C 2.2: Conduct a Sidewalk Gap Study. **REVISE**
Undertake a detailed sidewalk gap study focused around schools, and seek funding to address gaps. Recommendations should locate and describe needed features, including high-visibility crosswalks at intersections, ADA-accessible curb ramps, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees and raised speed tables at crosswalks.

C 3: *Enhance safety on local interior neighborhood streets.*

C 3.1: Calm vehicular traffic. **KEEP**
Install traffic calming measures within the residential neighborhoods to improve their safety and enjoyment. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, traffic circles, bulb-outs, neck-downs, stop signs, and other effective methods. Methods should be carefully considered for both their potential effectiveness as well as visual aesthetic consistent with the visual character of each neighborhood.

Staff Revisions

Install traffic calming measures within the residential neighborhoods to improve their safety and enjoyment. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, speed humps, traffic circles, bulb-outs, neck-downs, stop signs, and other effective methods. Methods should be carefully considered for both their potential effectiveness as well as visual aesthetic consistent with the visual character of each neighborhood.

Staff Comments

- The installation of speed humps is a viable traffic calming measure currently allowed by the City on residential streets.

C 3.2: Consider mid-block crossings in critical locations. **KEEP**
Provide safe mid-block pedestrian crossings where pedestrian safety would be significantly improved, such as near schools and in the middle of particularly long blocks

in main street areas. Accompany mid-block crossings with high-visibility crosswalks and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs).

Staff Comments

- This policy does not align with Objective C 3 to enhance safety on local interior neighborhood streets, as mid-block crossings would not be installed within a residential street/neighborhood.

C 4: *Initiate projects that help mitigate adverse impacts resulting from regional circulation improvements.*

C 4.1: Complete planned vehicular improvements at McKinley and Blackstone Avenues but modify as needed to emphasize pedestrian safety and the quality of walking environments. **REVISE**

Evaluate the number and width of vehicle travel lanes to reduce vehicle speeds through areas with significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Ensure that planned improvements feature comprehensive pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Implement traffic calming measures in neighborhoods surrounding adjacent development projects.

Staff Revisions

Coordinate with the Department of Public Works to complete the planned vehicular improvements at McKinley and Blackstone Avenues and support the installation of enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities. but modify as needed to emphasize pedestrian safety and the quality of walking environments.

Staff Comments

- The Blackstone/Mckinley project has previously been approved and is currently implementing enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City does not anticipate additional modifications to occur. For more information on the Blackstone/McKinley Grade Separation Project, please visit: <https://www.fresno.gov/capitalprojects/projects/featured-projects/#bnsf-blackstone-mckinley-grade-separation-project>

C 4.2: Initiate pedestrian improvements at the SR 180 Access Ramps. **REVISE**

Implement complete street improvements on Fulton Street, Van Ness Avenue, and Belmont Avenue near the SR 180 access ramps. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street, at least 8 feet wide with a minimum 6-feet of clear walk area, with broader cross-sections preferred, and including street trees, places to sit, pedestrian-scaled street lighting in keeping with the character of historic street lamps in the District, and gateway elements. Work with Caltrans to redesign the off-ramps to Fulton Street and Blackstone Avenue, to remove right-turn slip-lanes that allow high-speed vehicular traffic to continue at high speeds onto city streets.

C 4.3: Address change to local traffic from High-Speed Rail improvements. **KEEP**

Examine and mitigate potential traffic impacts on Olive Avenue due to the High-Speed Rail ramp closure at Belmont Avenue, such as to make streetscape improvements along Olive Ave.

- Create separate policies to address traffic impacts from both High-Speed Rail and Caltrans

Staff Revisions

- ~~Evaluate~~ ~~Examine and mitigate~~ potential traffic impacts on Olive Avenue due to the High-Speed Rail State Route (SR)-99 ramp closure at Belmont Avenue, such as to make streetscape improvements along Olive Ave.

C 4.4: Address motorist needs and potential impacts from vehicles during special events. **KEEP**
 Designate detour routes and provide consistent wayfinding signage to help visitors navigate the Tower District during special events. Protect neighborhoods from cut-through traffic.

C 4.5*: Enhance and maintain landscape buffering. **KEEP**
 Develop landscape improvement programs for streets to beautify Tower District, encourage walking, and address potential adverse impacts on adjacent residential properties and neighborhoods.

[Adapted from Goal 5, Objective 3, Policy 1.]

C 5: *Minimize the impact of truck traffic on the residential neighborhoods of the Tower District.*

C 5.1: Rerouting of truck traffic.
 Evaluate potential impacts from rerouting truck traffic due to High-Speed Rail and closure of SR99 interchanges, particularly health and equity-related concerns. Study potential effects of truck traffic and their mitigation, such as to make multimodal street improvements and designate truck routes away from residential neighborhoods. Specifically, study the potential effects of truck use of Weber Ave following the closure of Golden State Blvd and its potential effects on residential areas, notably South Tower.

- Discussion on further clarification on plans from both High-Speed Rail Authority and Caltrans

Staff Comments

- The City of Fresno is currently preparing the South Central Truck Re-Route Study, which includes areas of the Tower District. If you would like to participate in the process, please visit: <https://www.fresno.gov/publicworks/south-central-truck-re-route-study/>.
- High-Speed Rail impacts have previously been studied through the associated Environmental Impact Report for the project.
- Caltrans’s impact on the closures of Belmont have yet to be studied.

C 6: *Develop and adopt a parking and transportation demand management (TDM) strategy for the Tower District that supports commercial activity and enhances the pedestrian-oriented character of the District.*

C 6.1: On-street parking.
 Maximize on-street parking while providing adequate sidewalk widths and continuous street trees. Preserve existing on-street parking wherever possible. Consider ways to

increase on-street parking, such as by introducing diagonal parking along streets that with curb-to-curb dimensions in excess of what is functionally required.

- Discussion on concerns over payment for on-street parking

Staff Revisions

Maximize on-street parking while providing adequate sidewalk widths and continuous street trees. Preserve existing on-street parking wherever possible. Consider ways to increase on-street parking, such as by introducing diagonal parking along streets that do not include bicycle lanes with curb-to-curb dimensions, in excess of what is functionally required.

Staff Comments

- Diagonal parking along streets is only feasible along streets which do not include bike lanes.

C 6.2 Evaluate demand and location for bicycle parking.

To build on the multi-modal nature of the Tower District, encourage non-motorized modes of transportation.

~~C 6.2 Manage demand for on-street parking.~~

~~Consider charging for on-street parking where demand exceeds supply, and setting the price of parking so that every block face would offer about one parking space. Consider signage and web-based systems to communicate where parking is more available. Adjust parking time limits to support businesses, and discourage drivers from using a parking space for excessive amounts of time.~~

C 6.3*: Surface parking fronting major streets. KEEP

Establish development standards that dramatically limit on-site surface parking where it fronts major streets, such as to require that at least three-quarters of a parcel's street frontage be lined by building or community open space.

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 3, Policy 3.]

C 6.4*: Residential parking permit district. KEEP

Explore the creation of Residential Parking Permit Districts to manage spill over parking from commercial and institutional uses.

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 3, Policy 4.]

C 7: *Enhance the unique identity of the Tower District with placemaking.*

C 7.1: Create unique gateways to signal entry into the Tower District. KEEP

The Tower District has many distinct entryways. Enhancing the sense of place at gateways can create pride among residents and highlight the district as a cultural hub of Fresno. Gateway locations may include:

- Van Ness, Wishon/Maroa, and Palm Avenues on the north
- Van Ness, Fulton, and Broadway on the south
- McKinley, Olive, Belmont (at San Pablo), and Maroa on the east

- McKinley, Olive, Belmont (at HSR crossing), and Shields on the west

Potential treatments include gateway structures, special signage, and public art.

C 7.2: Wayfinding and signage. **KEEP**

Develop wayfinding and signage branding for the Tower District to allow residents and visitors to explore the neighborhood. Help people navigate the district with its historic and cultural sites, public parking, retail areas and Fresno City College. Develop street signs in line with historic Tower elements in coordination with Public Works.

C 7.3: Support public art in the Tower District. **KEEP**

Include public art in the Tower District along sidewalks and in plazas and parks to tell the story of the neighborhood and reflect its culture. Public art should include installations and integrated elements like paving, lighting, and seating.

Require that new development along key corridors integrate public art elements or contribute to a public art fund. Public art will be administered through the Parks, Recreation and Arts Commission.

C 7.4: Create a demonstration program for alley enhancements. **KEEP**

Create the opportunity for property owners within a block to receive support for alley paving and enhancement for walking, biking, and access for garages and to potential accessory dwelling units. Enhance the spaces with landscaping and public art where possible.

Staff Revisions

~~Consider~~ **Create** a demonstration program for alley enhancements.

~~Consider a demonstration program for alley enhancements to support~~ **Create the opportunity for property owners within a block to receive support for** alley paving and enhancement for walking, biking, and access for garages and to potential accessory dwelling units. Enhance the spaces with landscaping and public art where possible.

Staff Comments

- Improvements on private property would be the responsibility of the property owner.

C 7.5: Enable temporary street traffic closures and slow streets. **KEEP**

Today, temporary street traffic closures on Olive Avenue enable the Pride and Mardi Gras festivals to bring life to the community. Additional temporary traffic closures (i.e. Sunday Streets) and/or traffic slowing programs (i.e. Slow Streets) can support neighborhood walking, biking, and quality of life.

C 7.6*: Public events.

Develop a program of public events to take place in Tower District neighborhood shopping areas.

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 2, Policy 4.]

C 8: ***Create Public Realm Improvements in the Tower District.***

C 8.1*: Provide streetscape elements, public plazas, and open space to engender public activities and functions. **KEEP**

[Retained from Goal 3, Objective 2, Policy 3.]

C 8.2 Add features that bring comfort, safety and attractiveness to the public realm. **KEEP**
Develop a palette of high-quality public space furniture like trash cans, benches, bicycle stands, light fixtures, tree grates, planters, etc. to develop a cohesive public realm for the Tower District. Borrow from historic elements where possible to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

C 8.3*: Adequate Seating. **KEEP**

Provide adequate public seating along major corridors. Specifically, add seating in the core commercial area of the Tower District along Olive Avenue.

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 2, Policy 1.]

Staff Revisions

Through a Business Improvement District (BID) or other similar mechanism, provide adequate public seating along major corridors. Specifically, add seating in the core commercial area of the Tower District along Olive Avenue.

C 8.4: Trash Cans.

Add adequate trash cans along commercial streets including Olive, Van Ness, Belmont and Blackstone avenues. Extend the addition of trash cans to one block into the neighborhood around the core of the entertainment area.

Staff Revisions

Through a Business Improvement District (BID) or other similar mechanism, add adequate trash cans along commercial streets including Olive, Van Ness, Belmont and Blackstone avenues. Extend the addition of trash cans to one block into the neighborhood around the core of the entertainment area.

C 8.5*: Plant street trees to enhance tree canopy and maintain uniformity within plan areas.

Trees are essential in providing respite from urban heat, and infusing nature into the urban environment. Specific actions include:

- Examine the tree trimming policies and tree replacement policies to maintain tree health and shade in the Tower District. Add the tree data to the public data portal to allow residents to help report on tree health or surrounding issues.
- Plant street trees along sidewalks where missing, especially along Olive and Belmont avenues and in the South Tower neighborhood, to mitigate the urban heat island effect in these areas.

- Require the planting of trees in plazas and parking lots.
- Choose street trees with large canopies to provide adequate shade where planted. Use drought-tolerant, native species as much as possible to reduce maintenance needs.

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 3.]

Staff Revisions

- Through property owner support, a Business Improvement District (BID) or other similar mechanism, require the planting of trees in plazas and parking lots.

Tower District Specific Plan Update | DRAFT Objectives and Policies

Parks and Public Facilities

* Asterisks indicate where policies are adapted from current Specific Plan

POS 1: *Increase and enhance public open space areas and amenities in the Tower District.*

POS 1.1*: Provide parks in accordance with the Parks Master Plan. **KEEP**
Pursue opportunities for new parks and public spaces in the Tower District according to the policies and standards adopted in the Parks Master Plan. Give priority to improvements in park-deficient areas, consistent with the Measure P implementation process.

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 1.]

- Tower District is underserved with existing park space and greenways
- What does Measure P include for future park expansion in the Tower District?
- Discussion on Dry Creek Canal beautification

POS 1.2*: New park acquisition. **KEEP**
Strategically pursue land for the acquisition and establishment of new parks. Two new parks have been developed or are near completion: Broadway Park and Trolley Park. These projects will be valuable additions for Tower District residents. Future opportunities that should be explored include:

- A public plaza in the central core near the Tower Theatre
- Mini parks and community gardens on vacant land, City-owned land, and unneeded portions of school properties. Explore opportunities in Van Ness Village, adjacent to the Fire Station at Clinton and Arthur and at the corner of Clinton and Palm, at the northeast corner of the Hamilton School site, and
- Privately-owned public spaces (POPS) created as part of new development on large sites, which might be required of larger development projects like the Blackstone Avenue corridor

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 1 and Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 8.]

- Interest in public plaza space in central core area near Tower Theater
- Discussion about preserving existing parking lots/spaces
- Clarification on “unneeded portions of school properties” to expand joint-use agreements with local schools

- POS 1.3: Enhance existing parks for greater recreational value. **KEEP**
 In particular:
- **Ted C. Wills.** Advocate for a park master planning process and redesign that could make better use of the space and provide more amenities. Reuse of the parking lot and the school campus should be considered.
 - **Roeding Park.** Roeding Park lies directly west of the Tower District and has been identified in the Measure P implementation process as a top priority for park improvements. Advocate for a park master planning process and redesign that could make this park a more valuable asset for the City as a whole.
- POS 1.4: Measure P funding. **KEEP**
- Leverage Measure P funding for acquisition and development of new parks and improvements to existing parks. Measure P generates sales tax revenue to fund improvements and maintenance of existing public parks, build and maintain new parks and trails, and support local arts and cultural amenities.
- **Discussion to ensure Tower receives fair share of Measure P allocation**
- POS 1.5*: Pursue joint-use partnerships with schools and basin sites in the Tower District. **REVISE**
 The City has a joint-use partnership for community use of the athletic fields and the aquatic facilities at Fresno High School, which should be expanded to include other sites in the District, thereby helping to implement the “closing the gaps” strategy defined in the Fresno Parks Master Plan. New joint-use partnerships should be designed to improve the capability of utilizing District open space for passive and active recreational and leisure opportunities by adding landscaping, lighting, picnic facilities, and other appropriate amenities, and by extending hours of use. Joint-use agreements should not diminish the need to create new parks in the Tower District.
- [Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 7.]*
- POS 1.6*: Clean Up Dry Creek. **REVISE**
- **Develop and implement a clean-up action program for Dry Creek that engages neighboring residents and businesses.
- **The right-of-way on Dry Creek Canal is maintained by Fresno Irrigation District (FID). The City is working to engage in conversations with FID to understand the feasibility of a clean-up action program along Dry Creek Canal.
- [Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 1, Policy 1.]*
- POS 1.7*: Greenway and trail corridor along Dry Creek **REVISE**
 Study the feasibility of increasing public access to Dry Creek, such as trails between streets, look out points, and strategic access of parcels. Pursue a greenway and trail corridor along Dry Creek to establish public access and amenities. Work with the Fresno Irrigation District to obtain access easements along its right-of-way and require that development on adjacent parcels contribute to trail improvements and/or amenities. Initiate a dialogue between the City of Fresno, the Fresno Irrigation District, and Tower District residents to reach agreement around an effective design and financial framework. This effort should build on recent work to develop the Midtown Trail along

the Mill Canal. Seek to acquire vacant or key parcels along Dry Creek to act as greenway nodes, enhancing the corridor and providing more access. ****Include further planting of trees and vegetation along the Dry Creek Canal in addition to trash cans, pet pick up stations and public benches to ensure ADA compliance is met.**

****The right-of-way on Dry Creek Canal is maintained by Fresno Irrigation District (FID). The City is working to engage in conversations with FID to understand the feasibility of additional landscaping and public amenities along Dry Creek Canal.**

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 6.]

POS 1.8*: Transportation impact mitigation and funding. **KEEP**
Work with Caltrans to ensure that rights-of-way adjacent to major transportation facilities are landscaped to help protect the neighborhood from visual, air quality, and noise impacts from freeways and rail corridor. Seek Federal and State funding to provide transportation mitigation and environmental enhancement along major transportation facilities (i.e., Highway 180, High speed rail).

[Adapted from Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 9 and Goal 6, Objective 3, Policy 4.]

- **Further clarification on future high-speed rail plans from the High-Speed Rail Authority and closures on FWY-99 from Caltrans needed**

POS 2: *Improve access to parks for Tower District residents.*

POS 2.1: Remove barriers to access parks. **KEEP**
Ensure that parks in the Tower District are designed and managed in a way that maintains access and a sense of welcome from the street. Specifically, minimize the use of fences and gates along the street edges of parks, and address safety by improving lighting and visual sight lines.

- **Use fences strategically (shorter, friendly fencing for child safety)**

POS 2.2: Pedestrian and bike overcrossings. **KEEP**
Advocate for high-quality pedestrian and bike access to Roeding Park with Olive and Belmont Avenue overcrossings of the rail corridor at the district's western edge. Explore opportunities for a separate bike and pedestrian overcrossing linking the Tower District with Roeding Park.

POS 3: *Recognize that streets serve as public open space and provide for their improvement in Tower District.*

POS 3.1: Sidewalks as public space. **REVISE**
Plant trees and make other streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian environments, particularly along the Tower District's commercial corridors. See also Circulation policies. Refer to the City's Urban Forestry Management Plan for a list of approved street trees.

POS 4: *Align public facilities and services with community needs to support quality of life in the Tower District.*

POS 4.1: Tower Public Library. KEEP

Work with Fresno County to bring a library back to the Tower District, by relocating an existing branch or creating a new branch. Support this effort through actions that may include, but are not limited to, zoning to allow for a library and allowing for the joint use of City-owned facilities.

- Discussion on Gillis Library: if Gillis gets relocated closer to Tower, then matter is closed. If not, then a new library may be considered. There is a long line for libraries

POS 4.2: Public ~~nighttime~~ safety. REVISE

Recommend maintaining consistent police presence ~~on popular nights~~ through a combination of Patrol Officers, Traffic Officers, and Contract Law Enforcement Services and explore a stand-alone budget to additionally support Entertainment District peak hours and special events.

- Discussion on new police substation in Tower and adding a resource site for unhoused individuals

Tower District Specific Plan Update | DRAFT Objectives and Policies

2 Conservation & Historic Preservation

**Asterisks indicate where policies are adapted from current Specific Plan*

CHP 1: *Recognize and protect the Tower District's historic and cultural identity.*

CHP 1.1: Develop a historic context statement for the Tower District.

A comprehensive historic context statement should be developed by a qualified cultural resource professional, which describes: the district's physical, social, and cultural development; identifies physical patterns associated with those developments; and recommends eligibility criteria and integrity thresholds for the designation of historic resources. The context statement should provide a consistent foundation for decisions about the identification, evaluation, and designation of historic properties in the community. The historic context statement should be developed in accordance with the standards and guidance provided by the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation. The historic context statement should be developed with the input of community members, local historic and cultural organizations, local social and educational institutions, and should consider the large body of previous historic resources studies developed for the City of Fresno, including studies within the Tower District.

Recognize that the historic context statement will be used to evaluate whether a potential historic resource should be designated, and that, by identifying character defining features within subdistricts, the statements can guide the development of context-appropriate development standards and guidelines. Also note that the historic context statement should address contributions by persons and populations that have previously been overlooked or marginalized, such as women, communities of color, and the LGBTQ community.

CHP 1.2: Protect the Tower District's cultural history and resources.

Using historic context statements as a guide, continue to apply standards and procedures that regulate the alteration of designated historic resources, whether buildings and/or site features, and seek to prevent their loss. Encourage the character of infill development to be compatible within its historic context. Consider the adoption of context-appropriate design standards, in recognition that some new housing projects may not be exempt from discretionary review. Note that incompatible new construction could distract from historic buildings, especially when adjacent to historic buildings, and could alter the character within historic districts. Also reinforce the historic character of the Tower District public streets and open spaces, such as by establishing design standards for features like lighting, furnishings, trees, and landscape.

CHP 1.3*: Conduct new historic resources survey(s) of the Tower District.

Update historic resource surveys for the area. An

updated historic resource survey should be used to establish a new baseline for historic preservation within the Tower District.

[Adapted from Goal 4, Objective 1, Policy 1.]

CHP 1.4*: Revive designation efforts for previously proposed historic districts.

The 1991 Tower District Specific Plan proposed several areas as potential historic districts that have not been formally listed or designated in the intervening years. The identified potential historic districts include:

- Adoline-Palm District (proposed)
- Proposed Terrace Gardens District (proposed)
- Wilson's North Fresno Tract District (proposed)
- Lower Fulton-Van Ness (proposed)

Prioritize these areas for historic resource surveys and the evaluation of designated and potential resources, to provide for their potential designation as historic districts.

[Adapted from Goal 4, Objective 2.]

CHP 1.5*: Evaluate designation of potential resources.


Using historic resource survey(s) and community engagement for guidance, identify and evaluate properties that may be eligible for historic designation. These properties should be researched for their historic significance and, if eligible, nominated for designation accordingly. Properties located in the Tower District that have been discussed as potential historic resources include but are not limited to the following:

- Historic hitching posts,
- Van Ness Avenue "pineapple" streetlights,
- Historic signage, and
- Shrine of St. Terese Church and School.

[Adapted from Goal 4, Objective 2.]

CHP 1.6: Highlight assets important to community identity.

Buildings, structures, objects, and sites that are not be eligible for listing or designation as historic resources may still contribute to the character and identity of the community. These can include:

- buildings that house or once housed long-term local businesses or institutions,
- neighborhood-serving commercial nodes such as Weldon and Echo avenues near Fresno High School, the intersection of Van Ness and Floradora (Van Ness Village), and Fulton Street (south of Olive), and
- street features such as streetlights, street signs, street trees, sidewalk parkways, and street medians not distinguished as historically significant. 
- recognize historic businesses and institutions which continue to operate in the district.

Although assets such as these may not be eligible for listing as historic resources, they can be highlighted for special planning consideration of strategies for maintaining these assets or aspects of these assets that contribute to the identity of the Tower District.

CHP 1.7: Elevate the visibility of historic elements in the Tower District.

Actively promote historic resources in the Tower District through walking tours,

brochures, online resources, interpretive signage, plaques and displays. Use the District's rich history as a draw for economic activity, including historic tourism, and community enjoyment.

CHP 1.8: Heritage Trust and Historic Preservation Fund.
Study the creation of a City of Fresno Heritage Trust and Historic Preservation Fund to support acquisition, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historic resources. Evaluate the feasibility of a right-of-first refusal program for the Trust to acquire historic properties.

CHP 1.9: Historic museum.
Consider supporting the establishment of a museum in the Tower District, using an historic building or buildings as an interactive place of learning.

CHP 2: *Maintain and enhance neighborhood character-defining elements.*

CHP 2.1*: Provide historic preservation information, training and accountability.
Provide information and training to help community members better understand the benefits, responsibilities, and potential difficulties of owning and managing historic properties. Work to preserve historic properties that have fallen into disrepair due to the neglect of their owners. Information helpful to community members should include the following:


- basics regarding historic context, significance, integrity, and eligibility for historic listing,
- processes and requirements for nomination and designation of historic resources,
- conformance with existing preservation standards and guidelines,
- available preservation incentives including Mills Act contracts, use of the California Historic Building Code, and technical assistance,
- environmental benefits of reusing existing materials and infrastructure, and
- potential economic benefits of preservation, by creating new opportunities for employment, tourism, education, and cultural activities.

[Adapted from Goal 4, Objective 1, Policy 2.]

CHP 2.2*: Protect and maintain existing character-defining streetscape elements.
Provide protection and maintenance, including replacement, when necessary, of existing character-defining streetscape elements such as streetlights, tree lawns and street trees.

[Retained Goal 2, Objective 1, Policy 3.]

CHP 2.3: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in historic properties.
Work with the Historic Preservation Commission and the Tower Design Review Committee to create ADU design standards to maintain ADU compatibility within historic districts. Consider additional pre-approved ADU construction plans that complement the varied architecture of Tower homes.

CHP 2.4: Affordable housing 
Work with affordable housing developers to consider acquiring historic and/or older vacant buildings for the creation of affordable, multifamily housing through appropriate modernization and adaptive reuse.

CHP 3: *Use zoning and design standards to support conservation of historic neighborhood character.*

CHP 3.1*: Refine design standards.

Work with the Historic Preservation Commission and the Tower Design Review Committee to craft design standards and guidelines as may be used for historic properties and districts that conserve historic character, while minimizing the impact on economically vulnerable homeowners and renters. Recognize that California law has eliminated discretionary authority over the review of qualifying multifamily housing and residential solar projects and that, in such instances, objective standards may be needed to maintain compatibility.

[Adapted from Goal 4, Objective 1, Policy 3.]

CHP 3.2*: Pedestrian-oriented commercial development.

Restrict opportunities for development of suburban-style, strip commercial uses. Establish development standards that support the creation of new and maintenance of existing pedestrian-oriented storefronts, by regulating ground-level use, entry, and window patterns.

[Adapted from Goal 3, Objective 1, Policy 1.]

CHP 3.3: Encourage the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Continue to establish streamlined approval processes, clear standards, guidance, and example plans for the reuse of historic buildings to allow alterations that maintain the building's historic significance and integrity. Standards should address typical reuse strategies such as additions to historic buildings, adaptive reuse of historic buildings for new uses, conversion of historic single-family properties for multi-family use, and the construction of ADUs. These standards can be tailored to specific property types within the Tower District.

See chapter 3 Land Use for more detailed policies.

CHP 4: *Coordinate plans and programs of the Tower District and Downtown Fresno to emphasize the historic connection.*

CHP 4.1*: Connection to Downtown.

In all facets of development including streetscape, land-use and urban form, reinforce the historic relationship between Fulton and Van Ness Corridor and Downtown, through building form, street design, and signage.

[Adapted from Goal 1, Objective 1, Policy 1.]