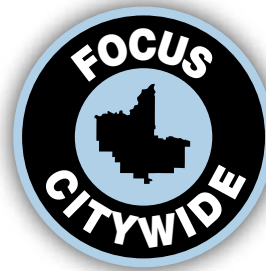
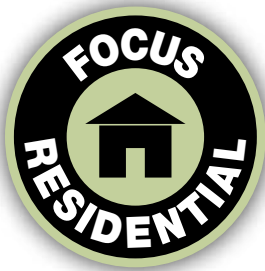


Restore Fresno

FISCAL YEAR 2016 INITIATIVES TO
Restore & Revitalize the City of Fresno



Restore Fresno

FISCAL YEAR 2016 INITIATIVES TO
Restore & Revitalize the City of Fresno

Background

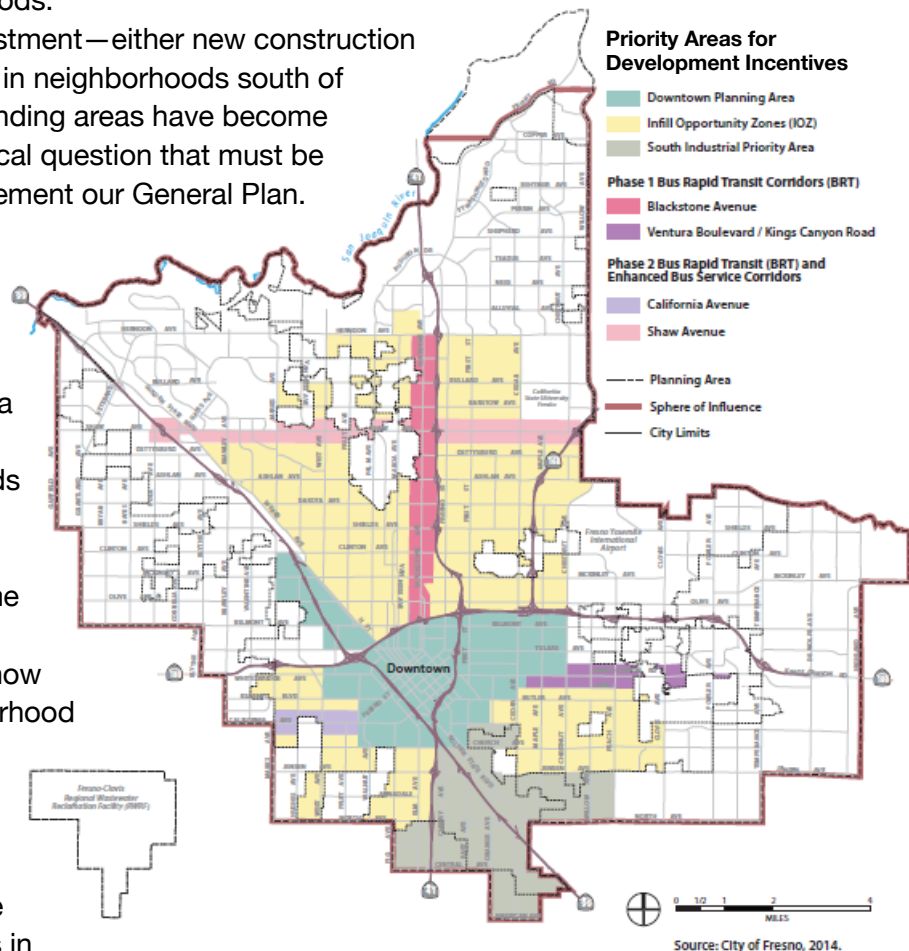
On December 18, 2014, the Fresno City Council adopted the 2035 General Plan Update, which calls for about half of the City's growth and investment over the next 20 years to occur in traditional, new growth areas on the periphery of the community, with the other half occurring in existing neighborhoods within the city limits. While balanced in its approach, this vision represents a departure from the City's historic growth pattern.

Supporters of the 2035 General Plan acknowledge there are many challenges facing the successful implementation of this vision, not the least of which is the current condition of Fresno's older, existing neighborhoods.

How can we expect investment—either new construction or building rehabilitation—in neighborhoods south of Herndon when the surrounding areas have become so deteriorated?

“How can we expect investment—either new construction or building rehabilitation—in neighborhoods south of Herndon when the surrounding areas have become so deteriorated?” is a logical question that must be answered in order to implement our General Plan.

The reality is that our community faces a long and difficult journey back to a healthy City center. In fact, census data reveals that about two-thirds of the neighborhoods south of Herndon Avenue are considered to be “poverty” or “extreme poverty” neighborhoods, which is one indicator of how concentrated our neighborhood problems have become in Fresno. It will not be easy to turn the City's core neighborhoods around, but the alternative is to ignore the challenges in



Fresno's older neighborhoods with the expectation that the problems will fix themselves. If that were a viable path, it would be the best and most efficient option.

Unfortunately, the last several decades have demonstrated that Fresno's core neighborhoods don't improve on their own.

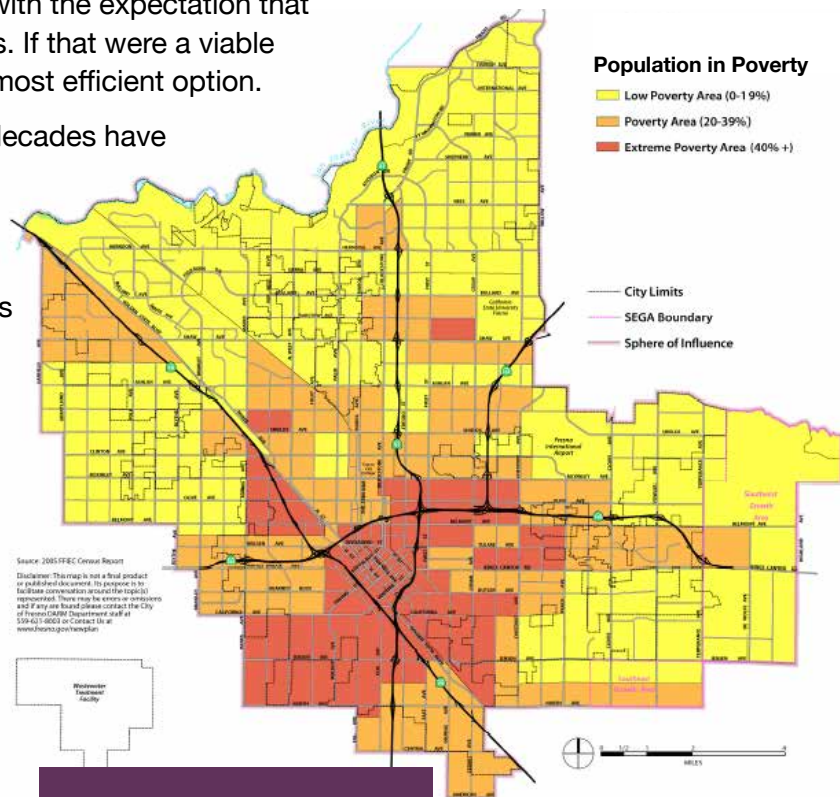
Consider this: in 1984, the City's "blight line" (i.e. the dividing line between deteriorated and stable neighborhoods) was identified as McKinley Avenue in its General Plan.

In the 1990s that line moved north to Ashlan Avenue in City policy.

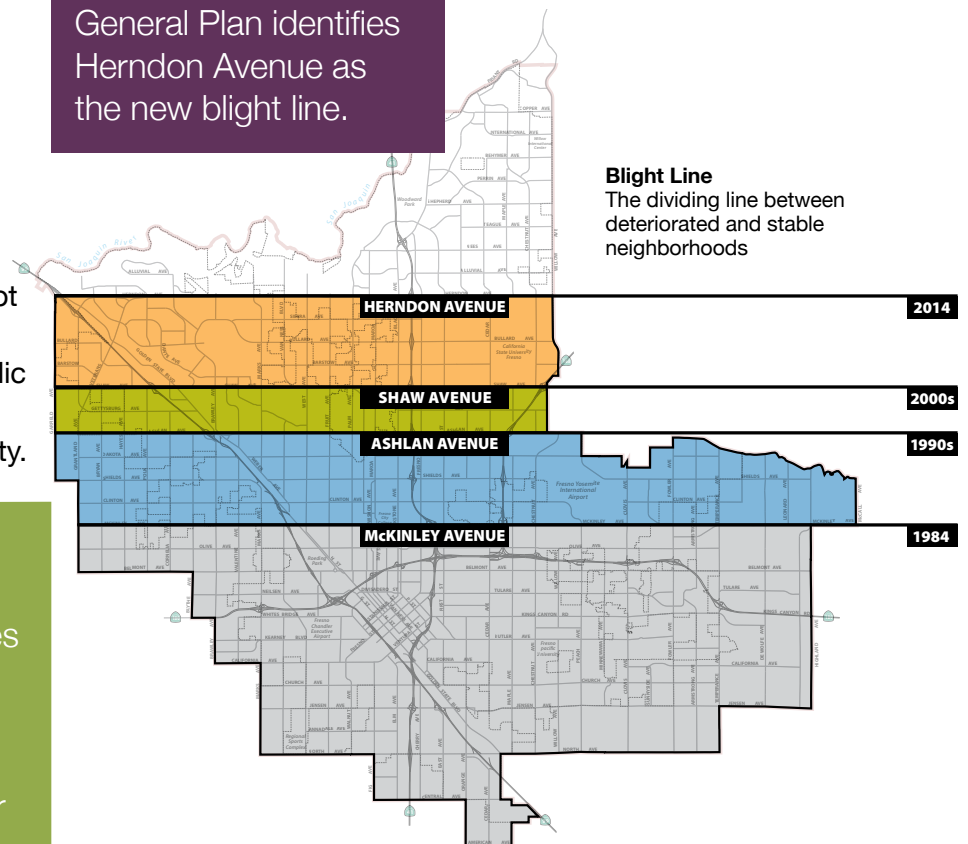
In the next decade, Mayor Autry argued that Shaw Avenue was the dividing line between Fresno's "tale of two cities," and just ten years later, the City's 2035 General Plan identifies Herndon Avenue as the new blight line.

While the City of Fresno must provide leadership to restore our older neighborhoods, we know that the City alone cannot meet this challenge. Rather, a broad base of private and public stakeholders must continue to work together to restore our city.

Restore Fresno is a compilation of the City of Fresno's FY2016 initiatives to improve property values, living conditions, public safety and the overall quality of life in our older neighborhoods.



The City's 2035 General Plan identifies Herndon Avenue as the new blight line.



Laying the Foundation for Successful Revitalization

The Swearengin Administration has been steadily focused on the work needed to reverse the momentum in neighborhoods south of Herndon by attacking the root issues through:

- Pilot projects;
- Grant funded-initiatives;
- Changes in City policy;
- Aligning public infrastructure to support City policy; and
- Working closely with residents, property owners, and private investors to improve distressed neighborhoods.

We have learned many lessons along the way — what works and what doesn't. We have concluded that, while successful revitalization is as much “art” as “science,” there are foundational elements that must be in place for revitalization to take root and develop an unstoppable momentum.

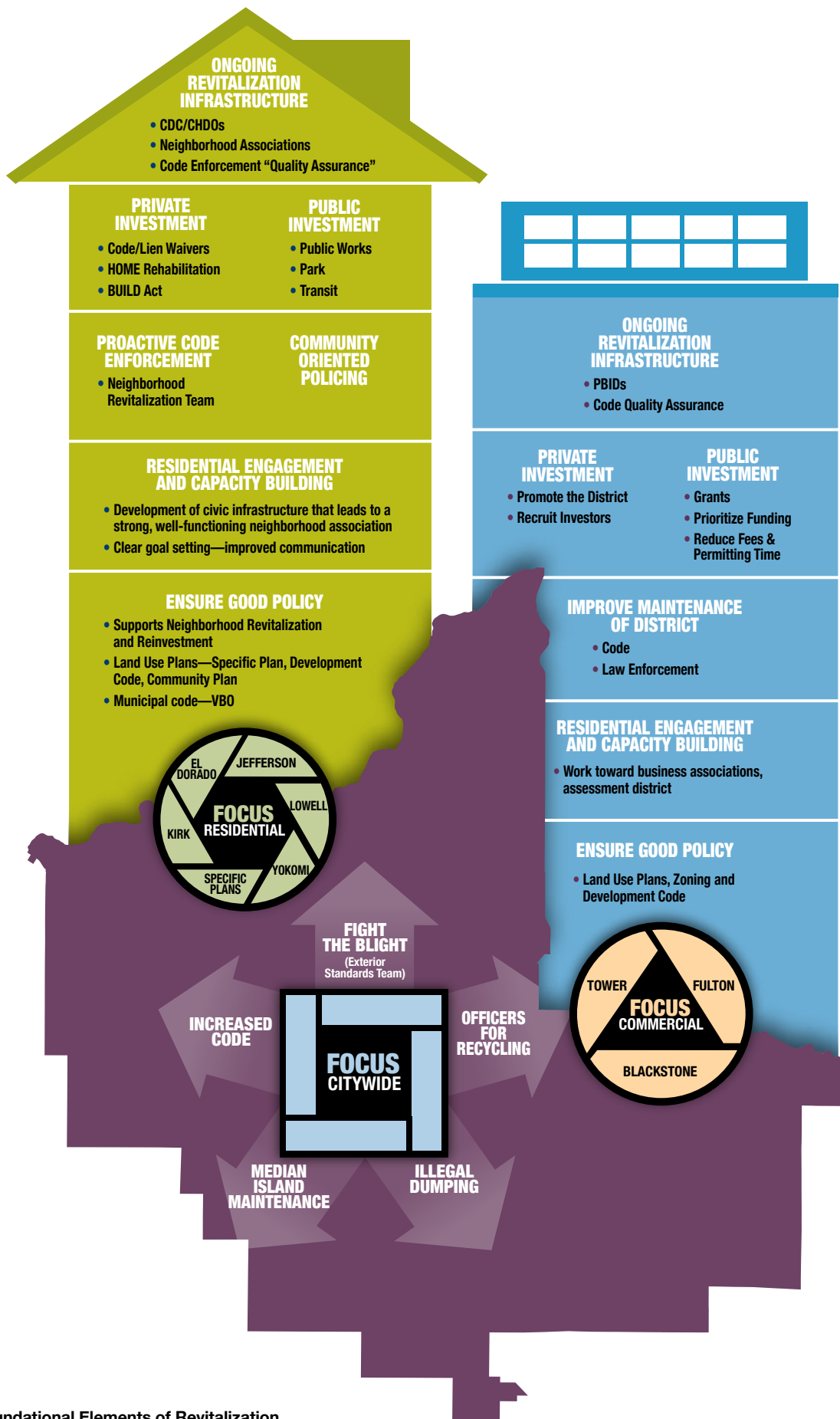
Guiding Principle of Revitalization in the City of Fresno

Encompassing each of these elements is the guiding principle that the City of Fresno must work within its existing financial resources to orchestrate and support revitalization.

If Fresno was a much smaller and wealthier community, City leaders might consider directly investing in and subsidizing development and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods. Fresno is neither small, nor wealthy and cannot “write a check” and renovate the city. *We must work with the tools and financial resources we have to get the revitalization we seek.* As a charter city in California, those tools are:

1. Land use policy
2. Code enforcement
3. Targeted public infrastructure investments
4. Collaboration with public and private partners
5. Targeting state and Federal grants toward the goal of revitalization

We must work with the tools and financial resources we have to get the revitalization we seek.



Foundational Elements of Revitalization

Ensure Good Policy

For the most part, California state law grants authority to local governments to regulate land use. The major policy documents the City uses to provide that direction are:

1. General Plan
2. Community Plans
3. Specific Plans
4. Development Code

Together, these documents serve to either support reinvestment in and rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods, or inadvertently present obstacles to such investment.

Recognizing that good land use policy is the basis for all other revitalization efforts, the City has dedicated significant time and resources to this issue, including:

- Completing the Downtown Plans to be adopted by December 2015 (i.e. Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, Downtown Neighborhood Community Plan and Downtown Development Code);
- Completing and adopting the 2035 General Plan Update; and
- Completing the Citywide Development Code to be adopted by Fall 2015.

FY2016

The Administration's budget proposes to continue laying the foundation with good land use planning in Southwest Fresno (SW Specific Plan), Southeast Fresno (Roosevelt Specific Plan), and in the West Area (West of 99 in "Growth Area 1"). The Southwest Specific Plan was the first of these three to begin. A plan area has been defined, and a citizen committee will be established this year to fully develop the Southwest Specific Plan. Boundaries for both Southeast and the West Area are being developed, and funds are set aside in FY2016 to add staff and consulting capacity to begin these plans.

Engage Residents and Build Leadership Capacity in Neighborhoods

When residents organize their neighborhoods—either through Neighborhood Watch, a formal or informal neighborhood association, a homeowners association, or a community development corporation—it makes it much easier for the City to focus its services to meet the highest priorities that are determined by neighborhood residents (e.g. safety, barking dogs, park clean up, removing blight, etc). This is particularly important in older, distressed neighborhoods where the need for public services is extremely high. The City and its public and private partners have been intentionally developing capacity with resident leaders in three neighborhoods (El Dorado, Kirk and Yokomi) through the grant-funded “Building Neighborhood Capacity Program” (BNCP).

FY2016

Through BNCP, the Administration proposes to continue building resident capacity and engagement through neighborhood enhancement projects; facilitating resident-led neighborhood meetings; and assisting in establishing a neighborhood association or community development corporation in the El Dorado, Kirk and Yokomi neighborhoods. In addition, the Administration proposes to expand work with the Lowell and Jefferson neighborhoods to build the capacity of the Lowell Community Development Corporation.

►For an overview of BNCP, see Appendix A.

Conduct Proactive Code Enforcement

“Neighborhood Revitalization”

Beginning in the Lowell Neighborhood, the City has piloted a form of proactive code enforcement known as “neighborhood revitalization,” which involves targeting specific neighborhoods and completing an approximate six month process to document conditions in the neighborhood on a property-by-property basis and identify all code violations, systematically work through the code cases until they are closed, and develop partnerships in the neighborhood to help residents get access to services that can help improve their properties and overall quality of life. The aim of proactive code enforcement is to improve property values, public safety, and home ownership in targeted neighborhoods. To date, the City has piloted proactive code enforcement/neighborhood revitalization in the Lowell and El Dorado neighborhoods and is partially through its first major effort in the Yokomi neighborhood.

►For additional information on the city’s neighborhood revitalization model, see Appendix B.

FY2016

The Administration’s FY2016 budget proposes to continue the Neighborhood Revitalization work by maintaining a focus on the Lowell and El Dorado neighborhoods, completing the initial phases of work in Yokomi, and expanding this proactive code enforcement work to include the Kirk and Jefferson neighborhoods.

Incentivize Private Investment

Recognizing the City lacks the financial resources to directly invest in revitalization, the City has instead focused its efforts on developing incentive programs (e.g. City's Code Lien Waiver program and the BUILD Act), using grant resources (e.g. HOME funding for housing rehabilitation), and aligning public infrastructure projects (e.g. BRT) to attract private investment.

FY2016

The Administration will develop and implement a marketing plan to promote all available City incentives to investors, including the Code Lien Waiver program, the BUILD Act, and Wells Fargo's Home LIFT program. In addition, the Administration's FY2016 budget proposes to use annual HOME funds for individual home rehabilitation projects.

►For the Code Lien Waiver Program description, see Appendix C.

Establish Ongoing Revitalization “Infrastructure”

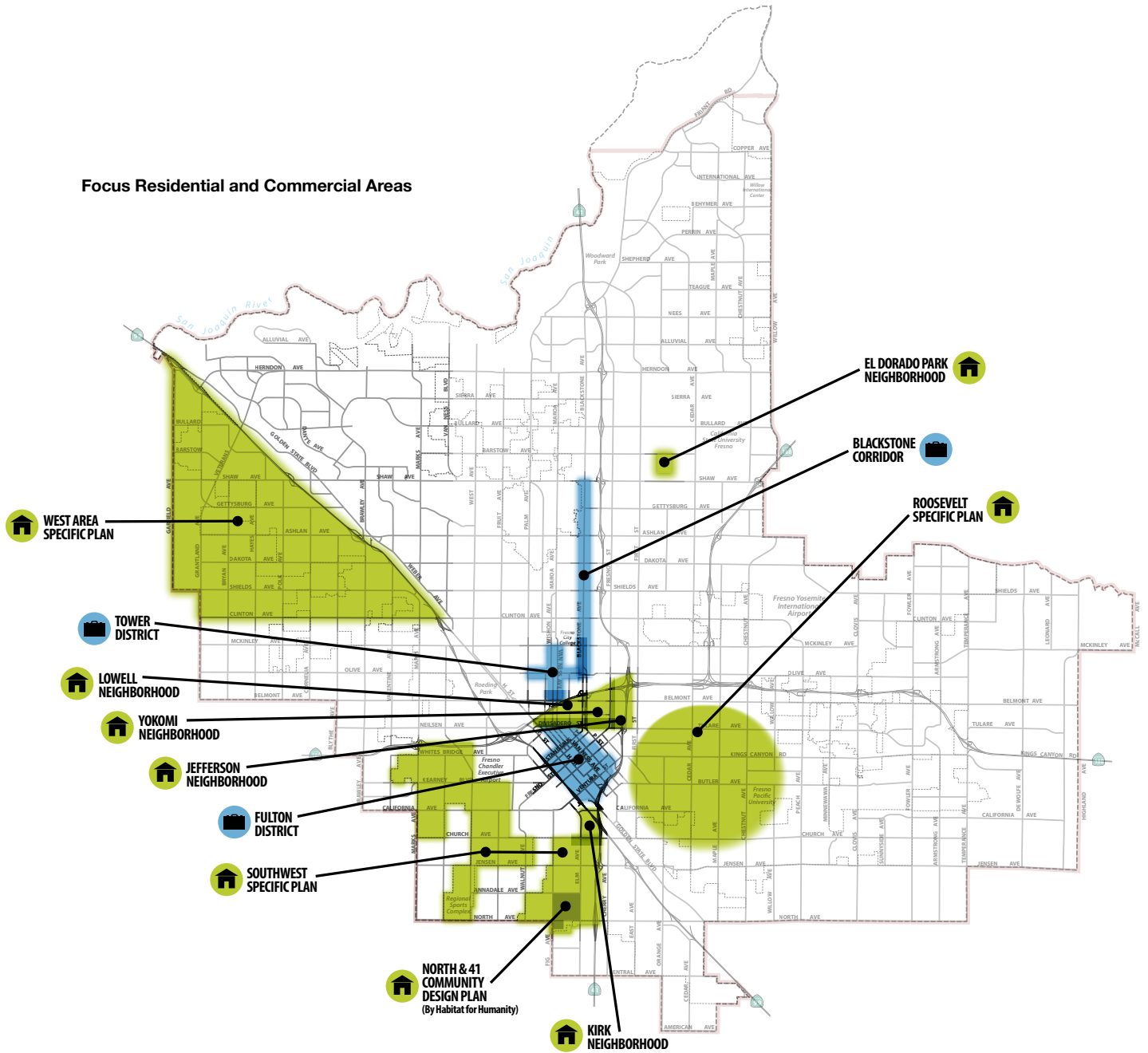
The work of neighborhood revitalization, whether in a residential or mixed use neighborhood, requires ongoing work and constant effort. Because Fresno has been in the early stages of revitalization, much of the effort has been directly supported by City staff. However, successful revitalization requires self-sustaining organizations to be created to continue the work past the “start-up” phases. In residential neighborhoods, those self-sustaining organizations could be Neighborhood Watch organizations, neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, community development corporations or Community Housing Development Organizations. In mixed use neighborhoods, they could be merchant associations (e.g. Tower District) or business assessment districts (e.g. Downtown Partnership). Having this sort of organization in place helps ensure the revitalization work continues past changes in City administrations, grants that expire, etc.

FY2016

In this next fiscal year, the Administration will be working with:

1. BNCP partners to strengthen and expand the Lowell and El Dorado Community Development Corporations
2. Fresno Housing Authority to determine the feasibility of a Southwest Fresno CDC
3. Downtown Partnership to renew its assessment district
4. Tower District Association to determine feasibility of an assessment district in the Tower
5. Fresno Metro and merchants and property owners along the Blackstone corridor to develop a business association

Focus Residential and Commercial Areas



At-A-Glance Initiatives

ELEMENT OF REVITALIZATION	RESTORE INITIATIVE
Ensure good policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southwest Specific Plan• Roosevelt Specific Plan• West of 99 in “Growth Area 1” Specific Plan
Resident engagement and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand resident leadership development in El Dorado, Kirk, Yokomi, Lowell, and Jefferson neighborhoods.
Proactive Code Enforcement/ Neighborhood Revitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain Neighborhood Revitalization Team in Lowell, El Dorado, and Yokomi neighborhoods.• Add Neighborhood Revitalization Team to Kirk and Jefferson neighborhoods.
Public and private investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote incentives to investors.• Target HOME funds toward housing rehabilitation.
Ensure ongoing revitalization “infrastructure”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen and expand the Lowell and El Dorado Community Development Corporations• Determine the feasibility of a Southwest Fresno CDC• Renew Downtown assessment district• Determine feasibility of an assessment district in the Tower District• Work with merchants and property owners on Blackstone Corridor

Citywide Clean Up and Restoration

In addition to the focused revitalization efforts described above, included in the proposed FY2016 are six additional strategies for supporting citywide clean up and restoration.

Blight Team

In October 2014, the Mayor and City Council convened a broad-based Code Enforcement Task Force to help set citywide priorities for improving our neighborhoods. The Task Force concluded that exterior blight should be the City's top priority and worked with the City Attorney's Office to develop a new Vacant Blighted Building Ordinance. City Council approved the introduction of the ordinance and is set to adopt it in May 2015.

In FY2016, the Administration proposes the resources needed to implement the new Vacant Blighted Building Ordinance. The Code Enforcement Division of DARM will assemble a Blight Team to address residential blight utilizing a strategic, metrics based approach. Beginning with a citywide windshield survey using a grid system, the team will create a baseline of data identifying the location of all blighted, vacant residential properties within the City. The team will systematically notify property owners of the basic exterior maintenance standards required in the ordinance and provide an initial grace period for compliance. The team will publish quarterly reports identifying the status of key metrics including the number of vacant, blighted residential properties, the number of properties that came into conformance during the reporting period but remained vacant, the number of properties that came into conformance during the reporting period and were occupied, and the number of residential properties newly identified as vacant and blighted.

Additional Code Enforcement Resources to Respond to Constituent Complaints

In FY2016, the Administration's budget proposes to add resources to the Code Enforcement division to improve service levels for constituent complaints.

The City is currently divided into four geographic districts for code enforcement to align with the Fresno Police Districts. There will be one senior staff member assigned to each district to address the priority Council concerns related to Code Enforcement. The members will be on assignment with the goal of creating base line metrics regarding these priority concerns, creating effective measures to address them, and tracking progress toward reductions in illegal dumping, homelessness, and the negative by-product of recycling convenience centers. The focus will include special emphasis on established neighborhoods to stabilize property values, improve quality of life and increase neighborhood pride.

Improved Enforcement of Recycling Centers

In response to business and resident concerns related to the theft of recyclable materials, the City will provide for dedicated law enforcement surrounding recycling matters. Both real and perceived public safety concerns will be addressed surrounding recycling center and scavenging issues throughout the city. Having dedicated law enforcement focused on these matters will protect the residents and the loss of valuable materials.

Clean Up for Illegal Dumping

Throughout the city, illegal dumping causes blight and is an attractive nuisance. Prioritizing the clean ups of illegal dumping and coordinating with law enforcement are focus areas in the FY2016 budget.

Supporting MAP Point at the Pov

Partly funded through the City's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), the Multi-agency Access Program (MAP) Point at the Poverello House (Pov) opened in February 2015. MAP Point at the Pov is a centralized intake location staffed by multiple service agencies to help individuals in need get the right service, the first time. MAP Point at the Pov connects individuals facing housing, substance abuse, and/or mental illness challenges to supportive services. Navigators coordinate with case managers and an outreach team that goes into the community and meets individuals where they are.

Connect with a Navigator

(559) 512-6777

412 F Street, Fresno

Ventura and G Street

Appendices

Appendix A:

Overview of Building Neighborhood Capacity Program

Appendix B:

City of Fresno Neighborhood Revitalization Model

Appendix C:

Lien Waiver Program Description