

CHAPTER 5: PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Downtown has one of the largest and best collections of urban buildings in the Western part of the United States. Many are designated as historic, including a substantial number that are on the National Historic Register. Unfortunately over the years, many significant and other simply good urban buildings have been demolished and have been replaced with vacant land and parking lots. Vacant parcels are especially prevalent along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and within Chinatown and the Cultural Arts District. Although they present infill opportunities, they also contribute to disinvestment, as they convey the perception that Downtown is in a state of abandonment. In addition, there is an estimated 1.5 million square feet of vacant space within existing buildings within the Plan Area.

The introduction of the freeways has diverted pass-through traffic away from Downtown arterial streets. Consequently, virtually all of these streets carry significantly less vehicular traffic than they are designed to accommodate, encouraging vehicular speeding and discouraging walking. In addition, several one-way streets, designed to move automobile traffic rapidly into and out of Downtown, are present within the FCSP area.

As would be expected, under these conditions, lively destinations in Downtown are few and dispersed.

During the course of the six-day Design Workshop, the project team collaborated with stakeholders, representatives of the City's various departments, and the community to come up with alternatives to capitalize on Downtown's assets to transform it into a vibrant, mixed-use place. During the Workshop, the Community's Vision, the ten Community Values for Revitalization, and the ten Design Principles that are described in **Chapter 2** (Plan Vision) were translated into a series of plans, diagrams, and perceptive views that illustrate how Downtown could transform over the next 25 years. The drawings on the following pages describe a number of projects that will generate the most immediate physical impact, while catalyzing economic regeneration. In short, these projects will kick start the implementation of the Vision. The focus of these projects is to refurbish and adaptively reuse Downtown's many distinguished older buildings, infill vacant parcels and surface parking lots, and make Downtown's streets walkable.



Fresno's climate sets the stage for a vibrant street life, including lively outdoor cafes.



Downtown's historic buildings and mix of uses provide the setting for streets and public spaces that are full of people.



Fresno's agricultural prowess – in the past, present, and future – provides the basis for hosting a world-class public market or a market hall.



This vibrant, multi-use space, capable of hosting frequent live outdoor concerts, exemplifies what Mariposa Plaza could become.
Credit: Justin Kent

5.2 PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The plan on the opposite page shows two types of projects: Priority, and Follow-up Projects (**Figure 5.2A**).

- **Priority Projects** include both private and public partnerships focused in relatively small areas, that target efforts to generate the most immediate physical impact and economic regeneration. First Priority Projects are indicated in **Figure 5.2A** by dashed boundary lines. Second Priority Projects are either individual, existing older buildings that are adaptively reused, or entire Downtown districts.
- **Follow-up Projects** build upon these highly focused Priority Projects, continuing and maximizing the initial impact of redevelopment. Follow-up Projects are shown in **Figure 5.2A** as individual infill buildings within districts and/or in the immediate vicinity of First Priority Projects.

In the case of Priority Projects, the City will direct all relevant resources and departmental actions (in transportation, infrastructure, public realm design, etc.) to support their implementation. This includes investment in infrastructure, including upgraded water and sewer lines to support existing demand and new development, street trees, street lights, street furniture, traffic calming measures, and revitalized alleys. This upgraded infrastructure, as has occurred in cities all across California, will attract private investment in the form of other priority and Follow-up projects. These Follow-Up Projects depend on the intelligent administration of the Form Based Code and the coordinated and prompt application of the policies and standards of this Specific Plan by City Departments.

Figure 5.2A shows the individual Priority Projects and their order of importance. First priority projects, public and private, focus resources towards projects within the Central Business District, including the revitalization of the Fulton Mall and the introduction of the High-Speed Train station. The second priority is largely focused projects outside of the Central Business District.

These priorities are based upon the goal of revitalizing Downtown by revitalizing the Fulton Mall and the area around the Fulton Mall, including the High Speed Train Station, first. This area is the heart of Downtown and the intersection of Fulton and Mariposa Streets is its epicenter. The Fulton Mall is the only part of Downtown, with the exceptions of its frayed northern and southern ends, that is completely built out and not comprised of vacant lots and surface parking lots. If there is going to be an urban revival, it makes sense to begin that revival at its most urban location. In addition, there are many amenities in close proximity to the Fulton Mall that can help activate the Fulton Mall – Chukchansi Park, Club One Casino, Warnors Theater, the Holiday Inn Hotel, the Fresno Convention Center, not to mention all the jobs that are located near and along the Fulton Mall – the IRS building, the County Building, County Courthouse, etc.

While the precise order may vary due to market response and conditions – for instance the southern end of the Mall may develop first – the general direction is to be followed in order to meet the goal of revitalizing Downtown in a timely fashion. In addition, the designation of the above Priority Projects does not preclude the development of projects outside their purview. There are many vacant and underutilized parcels within the Plan Area. Infilling just one of these parcels is one more step towards a more vibrant Downtown.

Another important goal of this plan is to generate significant activity by focusing development, not spreading it out. The Priority Projects are chosen to do just that – catalyze more development, which in turn brings more people. This focus must be balanced, however, without putting too much development in one place. Indeed, the Plan Area’s many vacant lots and parking lots currently hamper vitality and walkability. Putting all the development potential that

Figure 5.2A - Priority Projects

First Priority Projects (0 - 3 Years)

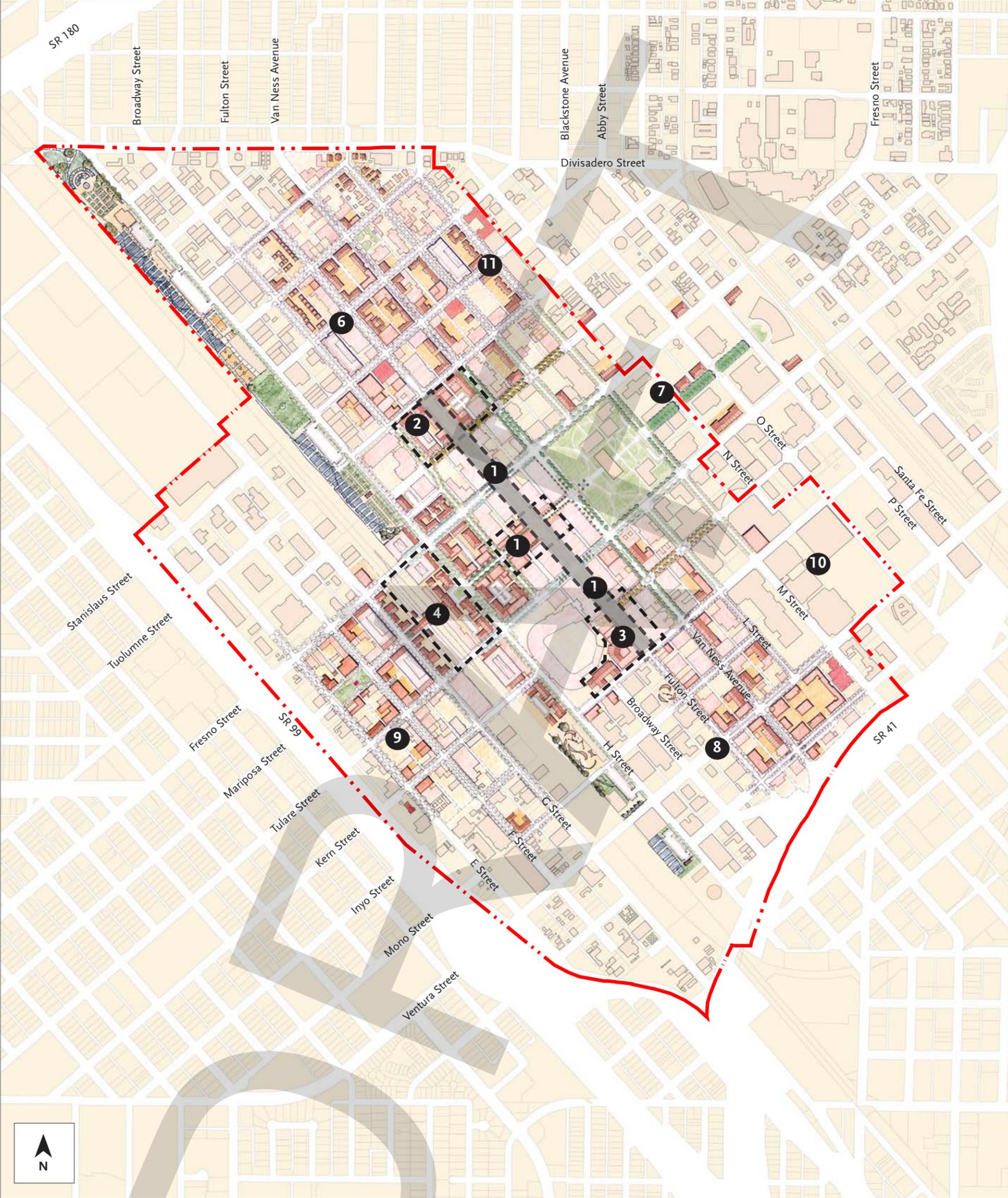
- 1 Decide the preferred option for revitalizing the Fulton Mall, implement it, and develop Mariposa Plaza as Downtown’s center of activity – an urban, restaurant, movie theater, and entertainment destination. **[To be updated once Administration and City Council chooses Fulton Mall option]**
- 2 Develop the northern end of the Fulton Mall between Merced and Tuolumne Streets as an entertainment, theater, and retail opportunity which ties into the two existing historic theaters and event spaces at the The Grand.
- 3 Develop the southern end of the Fulton Mall between Kern and Inyo Streets. Include a public market as part of the development.
- 4 Work with the High-Speed Rail Authority to build the High-Speed Train Station.

Second Priority Projects (4 Years and beyond)

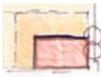
- 5 Revitalize and adaptively reuse older buildings, including those listed on the Local, State, and National register particularly those along the Fulton Mall (not shown in Figure).
- 6 Continue to fill in the Cultural Arts District, capitalizing on the foot traffic generated by the District’s theaters, museums, and recent development projects.
- 7 Improve the axis between City Hall and the County Courthouse by introducing a median and introducing vehicular traffic along its entire length.
- 8 Seed the redevelopment of the South Stadium District on the Van Ness corridor and in coordination with Chukchansi Park and the southern end of the Fulton Mall.
- 9 Seed the redevelopment of Chinatown, in coordination with the proposed High-Speed Train station.
- 10 Transform Armenian Town/Convention Center into a walkable and bikable mixed-use place by infilling vacant parcels with pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use buildings.
- 11 Continue to fill in the Divisadero Triangle into a walkable and bikable mixed-use place by infilling vacant parcels with pedestrian-friendly buildings.

Downtown can support in a handful of tall buildings would mean that many vacant parcels and parking lots would remain vacant or continue to be used for parking.

Finally, Downtown’s transformation will require the incremental introduction of many small projects over several years. One “silver bullet” project alone will not transform Downtown.



KEY

-  First Priority Project
-  Fulton Mall (First Priority Project)
-  Second Priority Project
-  Existing Building
-  Follow-up Project (Individual infill buildings)
-  Specific Plan Boundary

This diagram shows one of many possible ways of developing the Plan Area. See opposite page for description of each proposed project. Ultimately, the actual configuration of new blocks and streets, the location and design of buildings and the uses within, will be guided by the Specific Plan and corresponding development standards adopted to implement the Plan and executed by individual entrepreneurs and their architects.

5.2 PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (continued)

1. THE FULTON MALL

Decide the future of the Fulton Mall and implement it, including reconfiguring Mariposa Plaza. See **Chapter 4** (The Fulton Mall) for more information.

2. NORTH END OF THE FULTON MALL

The north end of the Fulton Mall is currently flanked by two parking lots. In addition, an access road on the south side of Tuolumne Street (the remnant of Victor Gruen's loop road that originally circumnavigated the Fulton Mall), further separates the Fulton Mall from the Cultural Arts District to the north. The northern third of the Mall is also home to newer buildings that, in contrast to the rest of the buildings along the entire length of the Mall, do not engage it in a pedestrian-friendly manner. The pharmacy on the east side is entered from its street-facing parking lot and turns a blank face towards the Mall. The ground floor of the Fresno Housing Authority building is raised above the Mall level and is separated from the Mall by a ramp and hedge. These physical conditions create an impression of disconnection and isolation.

A. Vision. A better connection with the Cultural Arts District is created by extending the Fulton Mall to Tuolumne Street and introducing mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented buildings that provide retail ground floors with offices and or residential units on upper floors. Ground-floor storefronts and upper floor windows face the Fulton Mall, Tuolumne Street, and Merced Street. The north end of the Fulton Corridor becomes a safe and delightful place to visit and to enjoy at all times of the day and night.

B. Plan. Infill buildings that provide retail, housing, office, and/or entertainment uses are introduced on the parking lots and the sites of the pharmacy and, if feasible, the Housing Authority building, placing more fitting neighbors across the street from

the historic Warnor's Theater and The Grand buildings. Parking is located either underground or behind the buildings at the center of the block, or in park-once garages.

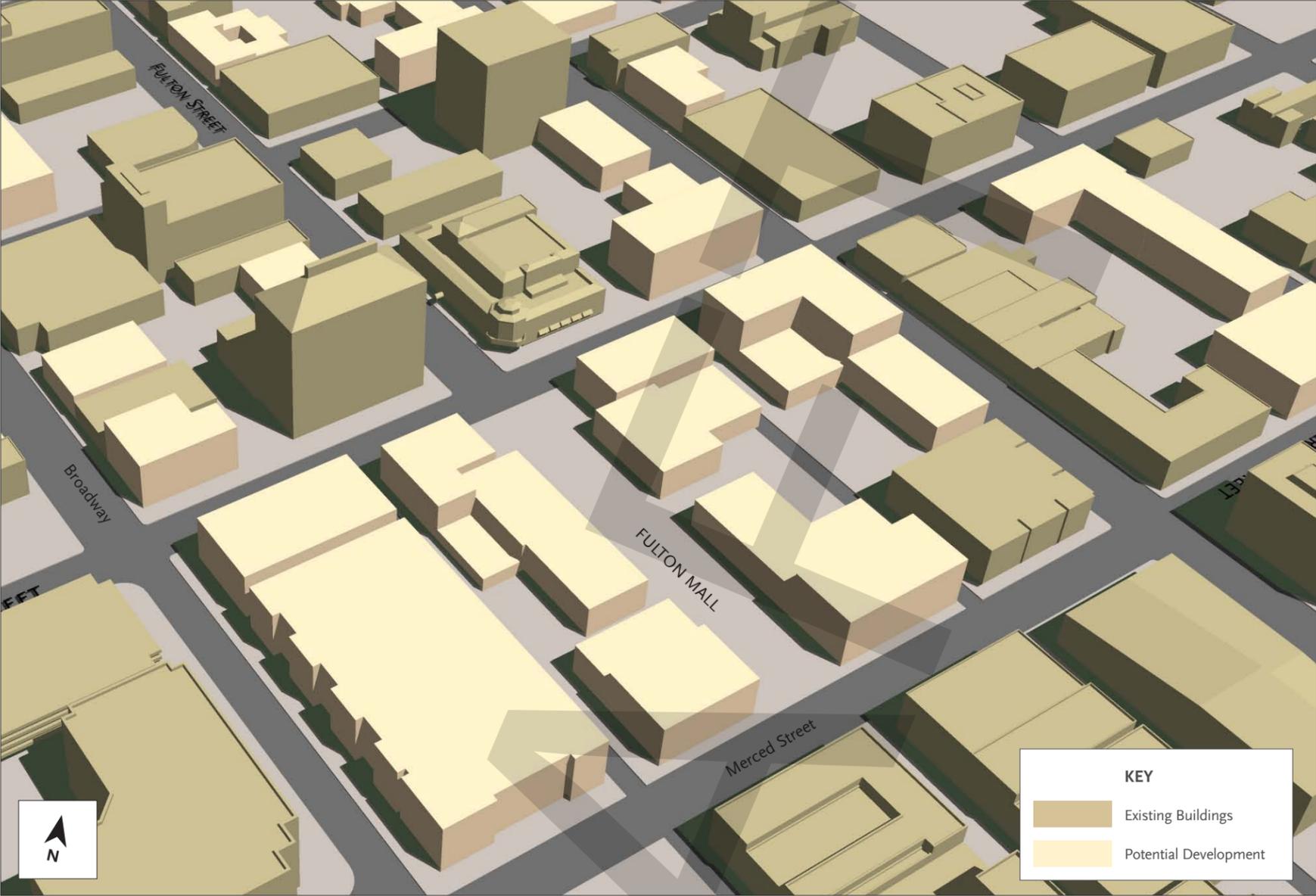
Broadway is reintroduced from Tuolumne Street to Fresno Street, defining a site for the location of a potential park-once garage between the new thoroughfare and the Fulton Mall alley most proximate to it. This improves access to the historic Hotel Fresno and Crest Theater buildings.



View of the north end of the Fulton Mall in its present condition.

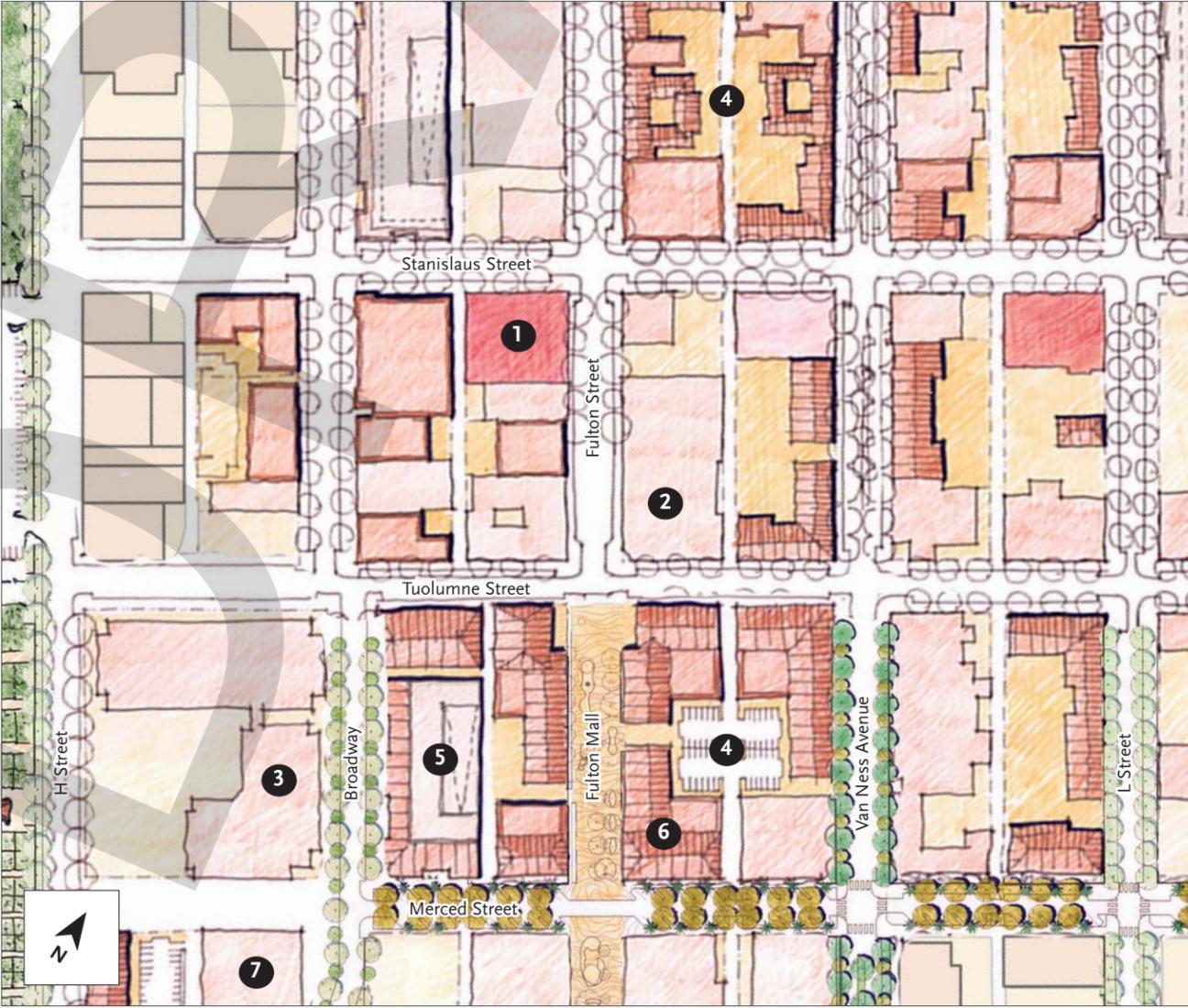


View of the north end of the Fulton Mall transformed. The parking lots that flank the north end of the Fulton Mall are infilled with mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented buildings.



This illustrative site plan shows one of many ways that the north end of the Fulton Mall can develop over time, based on the provisions of the Downtown Development Code. Opportunity sites are infilled in the general locations where development is likely to occur. Most of the property fronting the Fulton Mall north of Merced Street is currently underutilized as surface parking lots.

- KEY**
- 1 Wilson Theater (Cornerstone Church)
 - 2 Warnor's Theater
 - 3 IRS Building
 - 4 Mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail, office, and residential
 - 5 Parking garage lined with office
 - 6 Ground floor CVS Pharmacy
 - 7 Hotel Fresno



Illustrative Plan of the north end of the Fulton Mall.

5.2 PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (continued)

3. SOUTH END OF THE FULTON MALL

The south end of the Fulton Mall, between Kern Street and Inyo Street, is occupied by the potentially historic, and architecturally distinguished, Gottschalk’s department store on its east side and various one- and two-story buildings on its west side. Chukchansi Park, just to the west, is within walking distance and can be accessed from the Kern portion of the Mall.

A. Vision. The south end of the Fulton Mall is revitalized for use not only during the baseball season, but throughout the entire year. Better connections are provided to the South Stadium District, Chukchansi Park, and to the Convention Center. Restored and infilled buildings throughout this part of the Mall generate a great destination place that attracts pedestrians throughout the day and night.

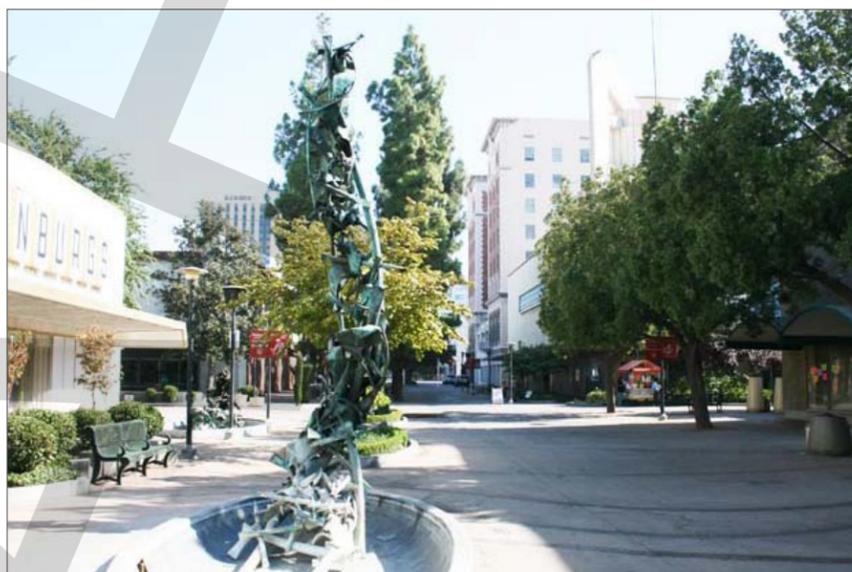
B. Plan. The Gottschalk’s building is adaptively reused as a public market that features the foods of diverse ethnic cultures – artisan cheeses, sausage pie, wine, etc. – and showcases the rich agricultural production of the San Joaquin Valley. New skylights and light wells are introduced to bring natural light into the building’s interior. Retail frontages are introduced along Kern and Inyo Streets, allowing stores at the ground floor to better service the pedestrian traffic on the Fulton Mall.

A new project comprised of several multi-story, mixed-use buildings – all with upper floor views of Chukchansi Park – is introduced on the west side of the Mall between Kern and Inyo Streets. A new building with ground floor retail and restaurant uses and upper floor office, residential units, or hotel rooms is introduced at the northwest corner of Fulton and Inyo Streets, its massing conforming to the shape of Chukchansi’s outfield (see image on opposite page). The existing building located on the southwest corner of Fulton and Kern Streets is transformed into

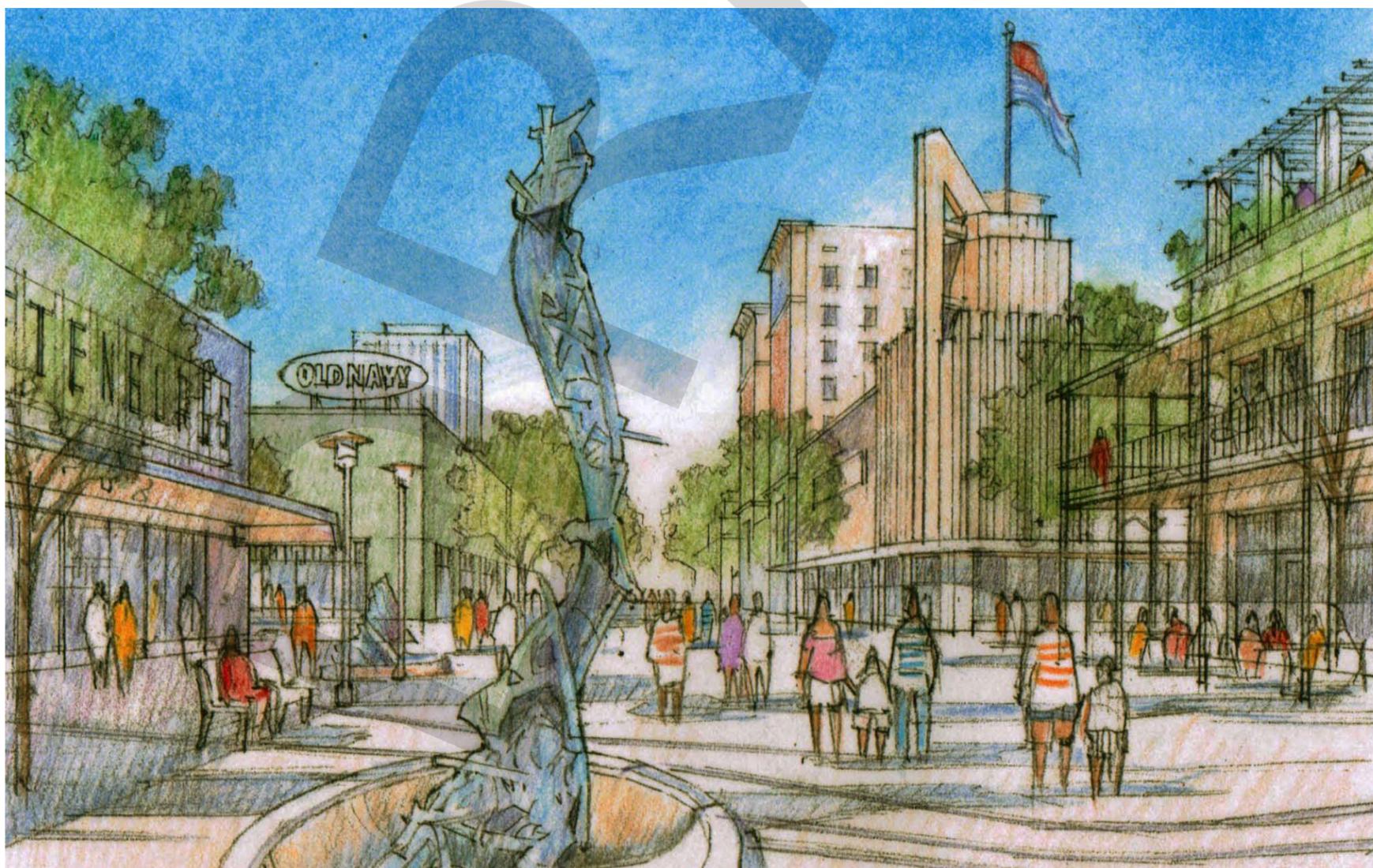
a multistory restaurant and entertainment venue with rooftop bar that overlooks the entrance into the Ball Park.

Luftenberg’s, located on the northwest corner of Kern and Fulton Streets, remains and, because of the increased retail activity, prospers. The one-story building on the northeast corner of Fulton Street and Kern Street is reused or replaced by a taller building.

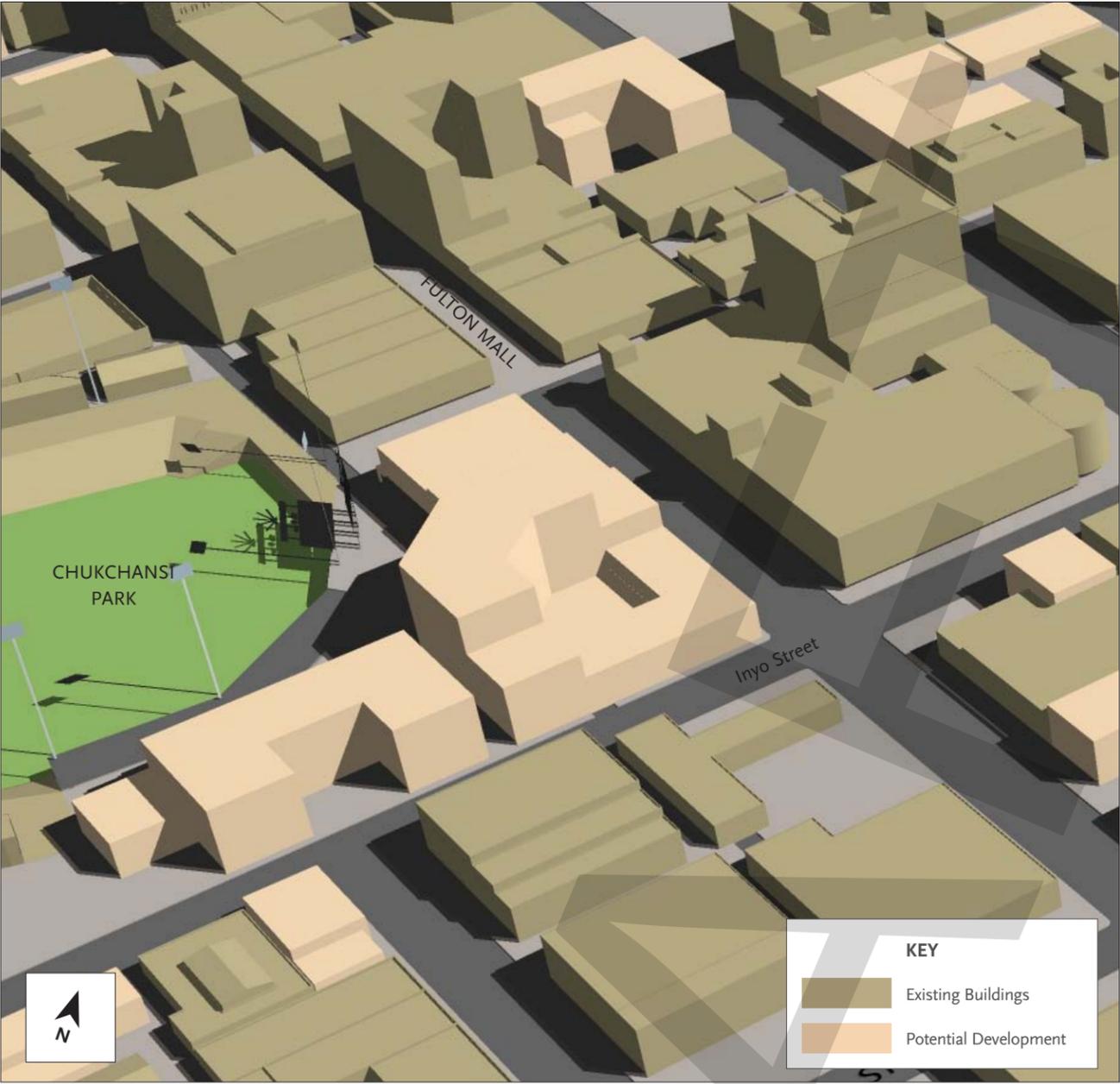
For all projects, parking is located either underground or behind the buildings at the center of the block, or the public garage located along Inyo Street between Van Ness Avenue and Fulton Street (Parking Garage 7).



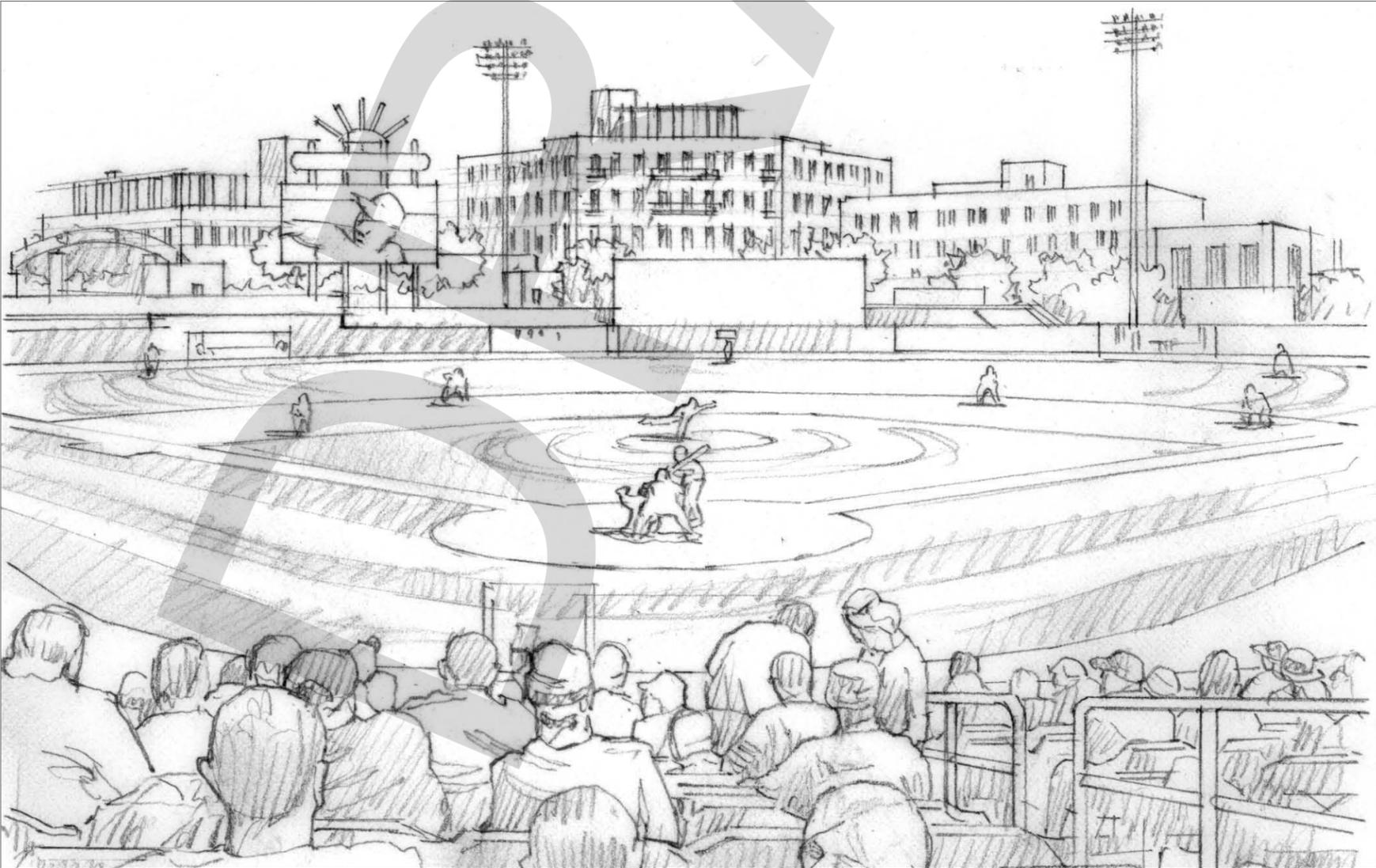
View of the south end of the Mall in its present condition.



View of the south end of Fulton Mall revitalized through the adaptive reuse of older buildings and the refurbishing of the plaza that provides access to the eastern entrance to Chukchansi Park.



Model view showing the general massing and development intensity to occur at the south end of the Fulton Mall. Mixed-use buildings, including a hotel, frame the outfield of Chukchansi Park while anchoring the south end of the Mall.



New mixed-use buildings on the west side of Inyo Street and the Fulton Mall provide ground floor retail with upper level residences and hotel rooms overlooking the sports activities of Chukchansi Park.

5.2 PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (continued)

4. PROPOSED HIGH-SPEED TRAIN (HST) STATION

Since the passage of Proposition 1A in November of 2008, the High-Speed Train in California has made major headway. Fresno and specifically the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan Area is proposed to be the site of one of the system's 26 potential stations, to be constructed in the system's first phase. Based on California High-Speed Rail Authority estimates, the travel time from Fresno to Los Angeles via High-Speed train will be one hour and 24 minutes. To San Francisco, the approximate travel time will be one hour and 20 minutes. Under the most recent estimates, there would be considerable numbers of trains passing through the Fresno Station.

The proposed location of Fresno's HST station is near the heart of Downtown. Based on the High-Speed Rail Authority's Draft EIR released in August 2011, their current proposal for a station lies along the existing Union Pacific right-of-way between Fresno and Tulare Streets.

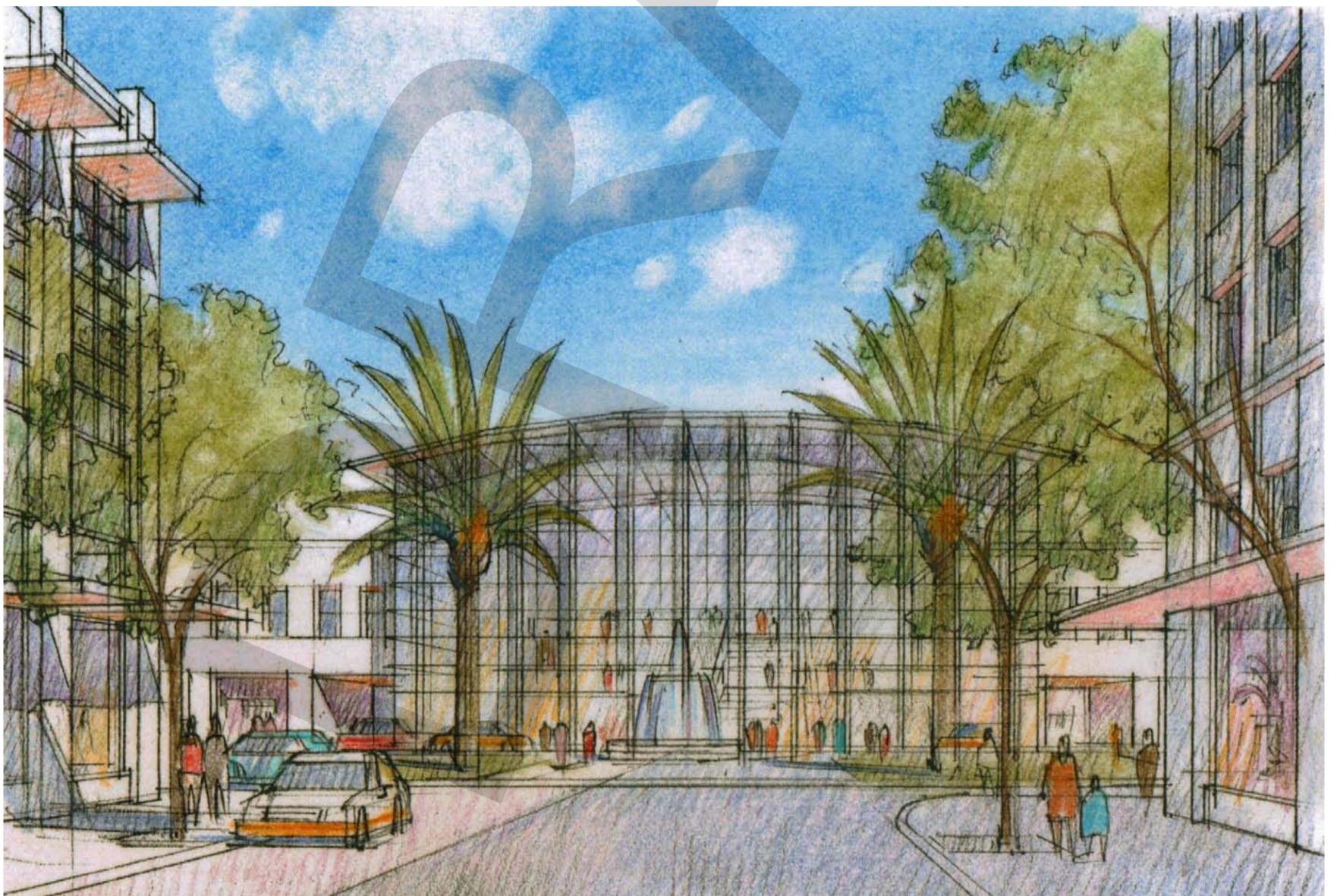
A. Vision. The station is located as close to the intersection of Mariposa Street and Fulton Street as possible, but preferably on the blocks bounded by H Street, Tulare Street, G Street, and Fresno Street with the station centered on Mariposa Street, facing east towards the Fulton Mall. The Station is an urban, pedestrian-oriented station that bridges between Downtown and Chinatown and becomes a "front door" into Fresno. The existing Southern Pacific Railroad Depot and adjacent Pullman shed are preserved, either in their current location, or are moved to a nearby location.

The High-Speed Train station stimulates considerable development in the Downtown. The form of this development is unabashedly urban with buildings framing the public realm, retail and commercial businesses opening to the sidewalks, with office and residential uses above. Parking is both specific to the

station and shared with the Downtown as a whole. This new development creates a link between the HST Station and the Fulton Mall.

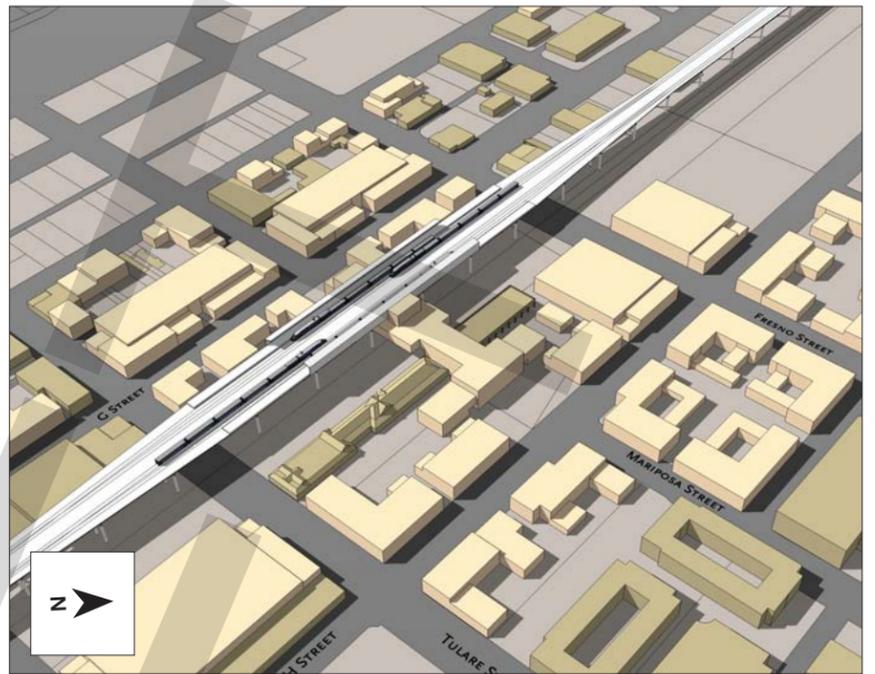
B. Plan. The station design shall conform to the following principles:

1. The HST station will stimulate Downtown's redevelopment and must be located as close to the intersection of Mariposa Street and Fulton Street as possible.
2. The terminal building will function as the western terminus of a City Hall to HST station axis. The station shall terminate Mariposa Street and shall be designed as a "front door" to the Downtown with a facade that can be seen from the County Courthouse.
3. The station will have at least one major entrance and it must face H Street. A second entrance can be provided from G Street with a connection over or under the Union Pacific tracks. Additional access to the station can be provided from the north and the south.
4. Short-term and long-term parking will be distributed throughout Downtown, along the railroad tracks, and/or in Chinatown. Existing parking lots and/or structures should be utilized to help meet the expected short-term parking demand of the High-Speed Train station. Auto rental parking can be located nearby.
5. All parking garages will be lined with continuous ground retail or office space.



The grand entrance to the High-Speed Train station fronts a plaza on H Street, and is located on axis facing the County Courthouse and City Hall. In this image, the station design employs a contemporary style. The station could also be designed according to a more traditional style, such as one in keeping with the historic Southern Pacific depot. Whatever style the station is, what is important is that the Mariposa facade be substantial enough in size to be able to hold the western terminus of the Mariposa Street axis.

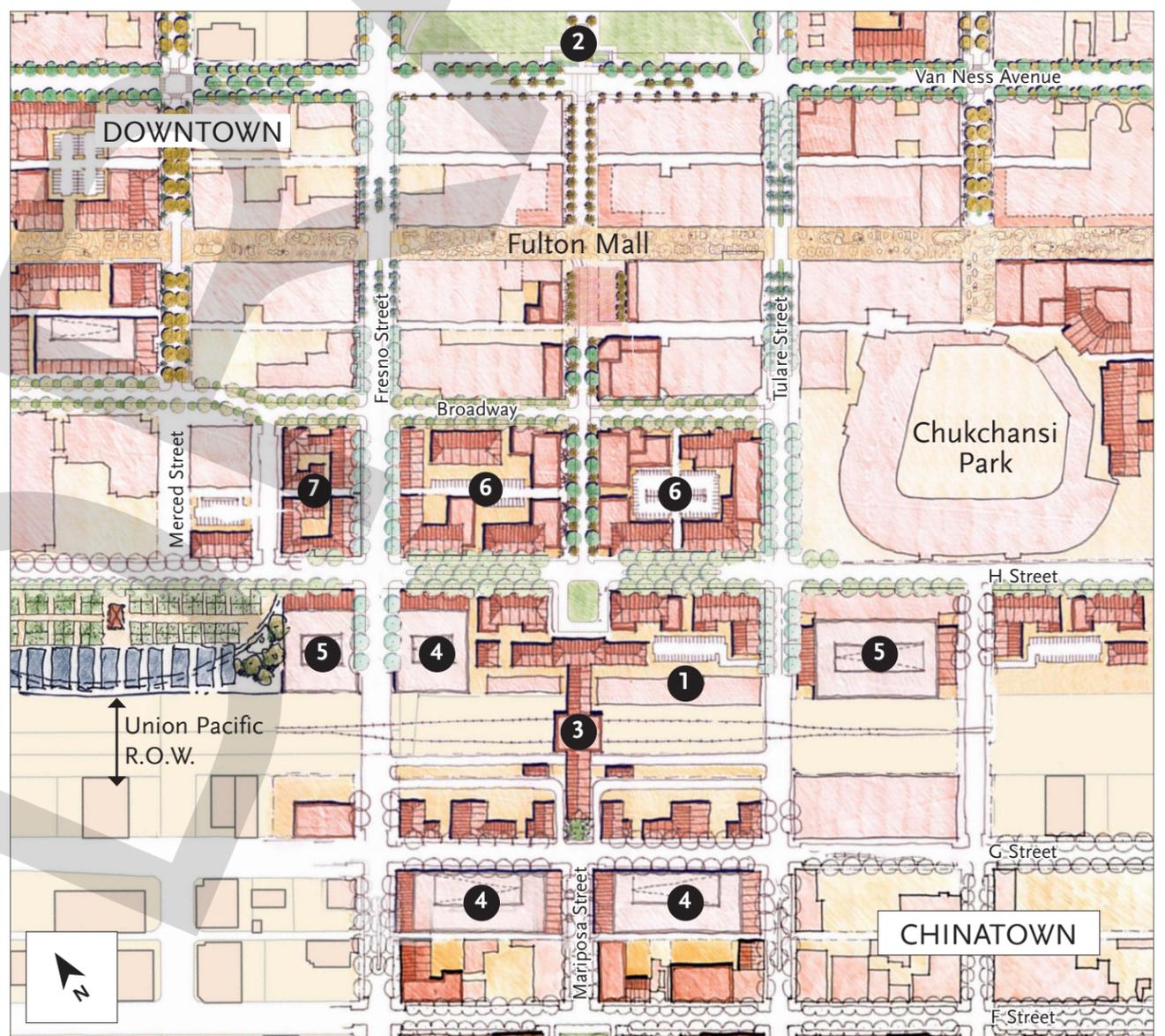
6. The station design will accommodate or provide convenient connections to other forms of transit, including Greyhound, other private bus companies, Amtrak, and, if feasible, the future streetcar lines. Transit layover will occur at the periphery and not in front of the station.
7. The station design will provide a sufficient amount of bus bays to accommodate high frequency local and regional transit, as well as incorporate as much “curb space” (areas on street where buses, cars, and taxis pick-up, drop-off, and wait for passengers) as possible.
8. The historic Southern Pacific depot and adjacent Pullman shed will either be retained in its current location or relocated to a new location – preferably near its current site on the West side of H Street.
9. Transit access between Amtrak and the HST station will be provided.
10. The Fresno Street underpass will be modified so that it slopes up to H Street, instead of Broadway. The slip ramps that currently connect Fresno Street to H Street should be removed and replaced with a standard intersection. This will significantly expand the developable area of the parcels on the four corners of H Street and Fresno Street. The underpass modification could occur at the same time that the expanded H/Fresno parcels are developed, or concurrent with the High-Speed Train construction.
11. A small public plaza will be located in front of the station’s Downtown and Chinatown entrances to provide sufficient room for arriving passengers, as well as to terminate, on the Downtown side, the western end of the Mariposa axis.



Model view of the Central Business District showing the general massing and development intensity anticipated by the Plan at full implementation. The final form of the HST alignments and stations statewide, as well as mitigation of the system’s identified environmental impacts, will be determined by the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

This illustrative site plan shows one of many ways that the High-Speed Train station and its surroundings could develop over time under the provisions of the Form Based Code. Note that the existing Southern Pacific Railroad Depot building is retained, transit parking is distributed on both the east and west sides of the station, and large developable parcels become available on the Central Business District side of the station.

- KEY**
- 1 Existing Southern Pacific Depot
 - 2 Existing Courthouse Park
 - 3 High-Speed Train Station
 - 4 Lined Parking Garage w/ Office above Retail
 - 5 Lined Parking Garage w/ Office
 - 6 Mixed-Use Buildings w/ Office above Retail
 - 7 Mixed-Use Buildings w/ Office or Residential above Retail



Illustrative Plan of the High-Speed Train Station area.

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