

**Appendix 9:**  
**Community Impact Assessment**





# Community Impact Assessment

## Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project

### City of Fresno, California

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

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This Community Impact Assessment is prepared for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction by Caltrans, or an authorized agent, in accordance with Caltrans standards as defined in the Standard Environmental Reference. The information in this document has been prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other substantive environmental laws applicable to the subjects addressed in this document.

Per authority under “NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding”, the environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327.

This Community Impact Assessment addresses land use, growth, community character, and traffic/transportation/pedestrian and bike facilities. This assessment does not include the following topics because they will be addressed as part of focused technical studies.

Air Quality	Noise
Biology	Traffic
Cultural Resources	Visual
Hazardous Materials	Water Quality/Sole-Source Aquifer

## 1.1 What is a Community Impact Assessment

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding social, economic, and land use effects of the project so that final transportation decisions will be made in the public interest. The report is intended to clearly describe the relevant existing conditions and the potential socioeconomic impacts of the project.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires consideration of social and economic impacts of projects in the preparation of the environmental document.

## 1.2 Laws and Regulation

Consideration of federal, state, and local environmental laws, executive orders, and other policies in the planning process is noted below.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).** The project has been evaluated in accordance with the requirements as set forth in Section 102 of NEPA, CEQA Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500 et seq.). Reasonable alternatives have been considered during the planning process. Potential environmental effects have been included in the evaluation for the project alternatives, and all procedural review requirements of the aforementioned rules and regulations will be met as part of the environmental process.

**Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended.** Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act provides for the preservation of significant historical and archaeological data from loss and destruction. A Historic Resources Evaluation Report and a Historic Property Survey Report have been prepared for the project.

**Section 4(f) of The Department of Transportation Act.** This section preserves publicly owned public parklands, waterfowl and wildlife refuges, and significant historic sites. A Section 4(f) evaluation has been prepared for the proposed project.

**Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act.** Act requires that the conversion of lands or facilities acquired with Land and Water Conservation Act funds be coordinated with the Department of Interior. The project site includes two tot lots within Fulton Mall that were improved in 2008 with Land and Water Conservation Act funds. The proposed project includes the relocation of both of these resources into two separate or one combined tot lot within the project area. A Section 6(f) evaluation has been prepared in conjunction with the Section 4(f) evaluation.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The City of Fresno is receiving federal financial assistance for the proposed project. The implementation of the project will increase the economic productivity, access and visibility, quality of life benefits, and improved use of cultural resources that will be provided to all people and will not result in discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. Therefore, the proposed project would comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**Executive Order (EO) 12898 - Environmental Justice.** This Executive Order requires the identification and evaluation, as appropriate, of disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of Federal programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. The evaluation found that the

proposed project would not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations.

**The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, and as amended in 1987.** Compliance with this act ensures that owners of real property to be acquired for Federal or federally-assisted projects are treated fairly and consistently, and to encourage and expedite acquisition. The proposed project will not result in the acquisition of real property because the project is located within existing rights-of-way of Fulton Mall, Kern Mall, Mariposa Mall, and Merced Mall. The project will result in the temporary relocation of five vendors who currently have a business license to use mobile retail carts within the mall area. During construction, these vendors will be required to relocate to portions of the malls that are not under construction.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.** This Act prohibits discrimination based on disability that is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The proposed project includes ADA access at intersections throughout the project. In addition, ADA access will be provided during construction activities. Therefore, the proposed project would comply with this Act.

**CFR 652 Accommodation for Pedestrians and Bicyclists.** This regulation requires that the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists be given full consideration during the development of Federal-aid highway projects, and during the construction of such projects. The special needs for the elderly and the handicapped shall be considered in all Federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. Where current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic present a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort shall be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

**Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) incorporates Sections 109(h).** This Act provides funds for transportation enhancement activities such as landscaping and beautification, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation facilities. The proposed project does not anticipate receiving ISTEA funds therefore, this Act does not apply to the proposed project.

**Section 128 of Title 23 (Highways) of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).** Section 128 states that any state transportation department which submits plans for a Federal-aid highway project involving the by passing of or, going through any city, town, or village, either incorporated or unincorporated, shall certify to the Secretary that it has had public hearings, or has afforded the opportunity for such hearings. The

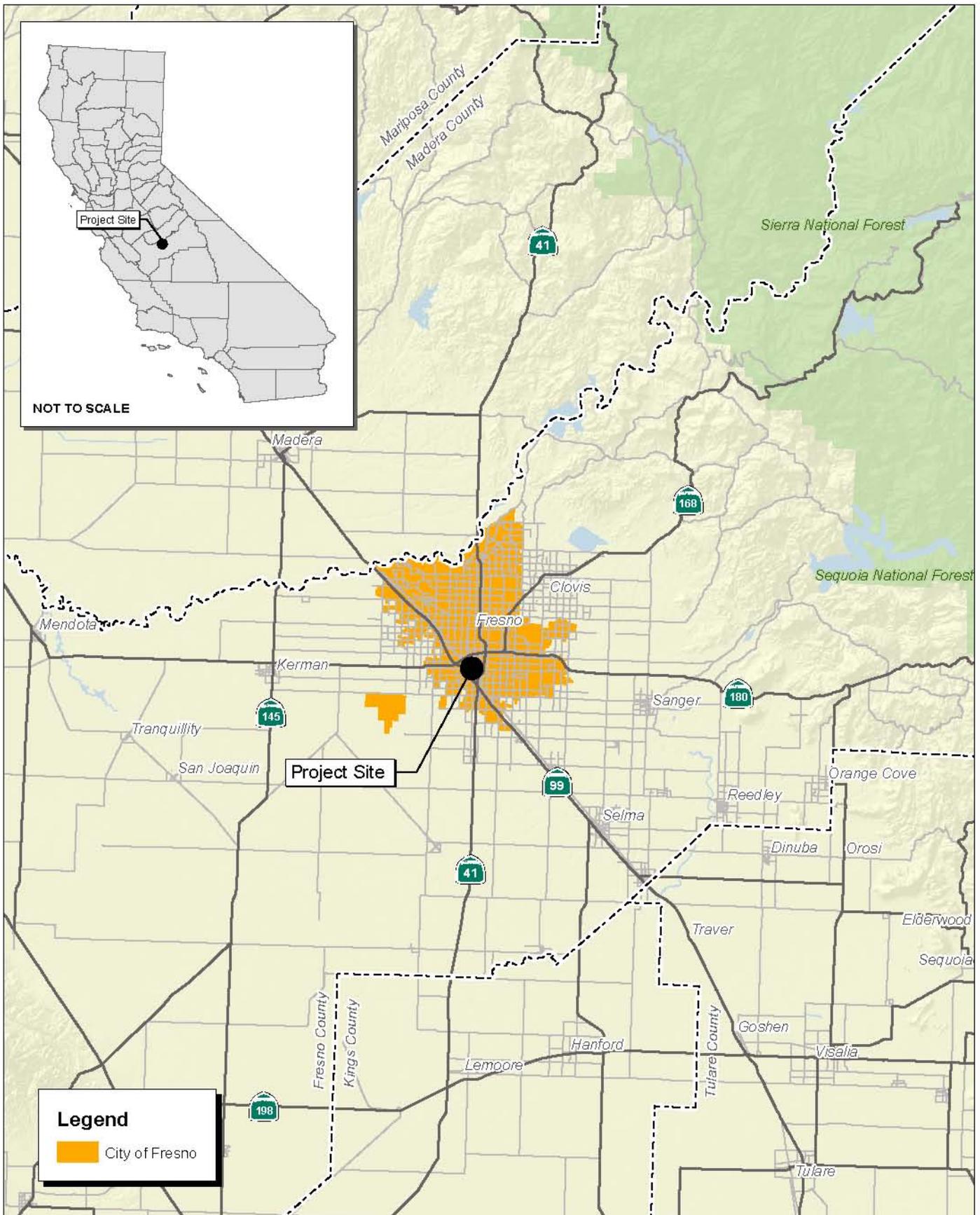
proposed project is not extending through a city, town, or village; and therefore, Section 128 does not apply to the proposed project.

### **1.3 Assessment Process and Methodology Used**

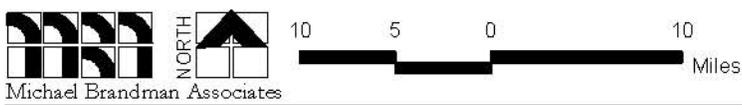
This community impact assessment used various methods to characterize the project area. The identification of land use was described using the existing land use plans, aerial photography, as well as a site visit. Growth information as well as economic information was based on an Urban Decay Study that was prepared for the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan. Community characteristics were based on Census information at the tract level for population and race as well as poverty status. Information regarding the character of the community of the Project Study Area was also based on discussions with City staff and a site visit. Traffic and transportation information was based on a traffic report prepared for Fulton Mall as well as a review of aerial photographs and the Fresno Area Express website information for bus routes.

### **1.4 Proposed Project**

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase mobility and access in the Fulton Mall study area by providing more convenient multi-modal access options on the Mall and its cross streets; to improve visibility of businesses, offices and other amenities in the Fulton Mall study area by improving traffic circulation, thereby encouraging additional economic development in the area; and to increase the Fulton Mall study area's consistency with the requirements and goals of proposed land use plans by making the area more accessible to the public, thereby encouraging greater public use of the area and bolstering future economic development opportunities.



Source: Census 2000 Data, The CaSIL, MBA GIS 2013.

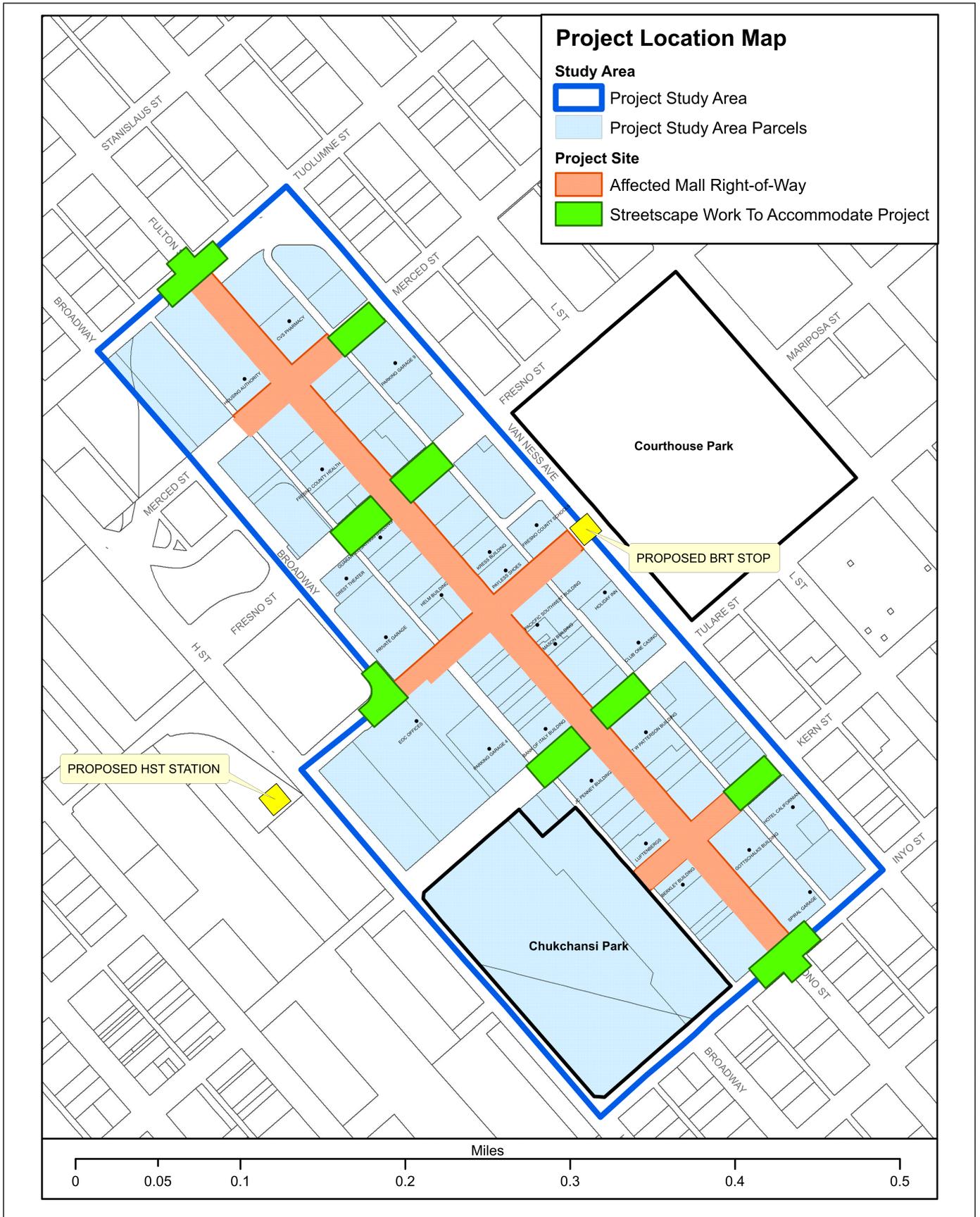


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**Figure 1-1**  
**Regional Vicinity Map**





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Figure 1-2  
Project Study Area



The City of Fresno (City) proposed to reconstruct Fulton Mall as a complete street by reintroducing vehicle traffic lanes to the existing pedestrian mall. The Mall consists of six linear blocks that were open to traffic prior to 1964 but now do not allow public vehicle access. The Mall is bounded by Tuolumne Street to the north and Into Street to the south, and includes portions of three cross streets. The total length of the new roadways would be approximately 0.67 mile; a total of 0.74 mile of existing Fulton Mall right-of-way would be affected.

The “Mall” refers specifically to the pedestrian areas between adjoining buildings located on the former City streets of Fulton, Mariposa, Merced, and Kern, which function as an integrated pedestrian mall. Fresno Street and Tulare Street, which do allow vehicle traffic, run through the Mall and divide it into three roughly equal sections. Mall landscaping elements include fountains, planters, benches, sculptures, electrical systems, irrigation systems, and two “tot lots.” The Mall does not include the adjoining buildings or their facades.

The City of Fresno is proposing two build options for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. These two build options propose to reconstruct the Mall using “complete streets” design concepts. Complete streets are those designed to function as shared public space, or as “living streets” - for pedestrians, cyclists, outdoor businesses, and slow-moving, cautiously driven vehicles. Complete streets may include narrow roadways, corner bulb-outs, winding streets, and other traffic calming measures to lower driving speeds; street trees and other landscape elements; wide pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks; and bicycle accommodations such as dedicated bicycle lanes or wide shoulders. The purpose of incorporating these design concepts into the proposed project is to retain portions of the historic fabric and character of the Mall, maintaining the key elements, feeling and unique experience of a pedestrian mall in downtown Fresno.

The Draft EIR addresses two build options, which are described below.

#### **1.4.1 Project Option 1**

Alternative 1 consists of reopening the Fulton Mall with two-way streets, with one lane of vehicular traffic in each direction alongside bicycle, pedestrian, and potentially other travel modes, along the length of the Fulton Mall and three cross streets: Merced between Congo Alley and Federal Alley, Mariposa between Broadway Plaza and Federal Alley, and Kern between Fulton and Federal Alley.. On-street vehicle parking spaces would be reintroduced along the length of the Fulton Mall (including cross streets), mid-block pedestrian crossings would be provided, and construction of streetscape improvements

would optimize the streets for the new blend of travel modes. One 11-foot-wide vehicle travel lane would run in each direction, with a parallel parking lane of 8 feet included on both sides of the streets. Sidewalks would include a typical 14-foot sidewalk on one side of the street and a 28-foot-wide promenade on the other. This promenade is intended to approximate the mall-like pedestrian experience of the original Eckbo Fulton Mall. Like the existing mall, the Option 1 promenade would feature artworks, water features, seating, and trees and would allow for walking and pedestrian-only seating, landscaping, and lighting. Pedestrians would be separated from vehicles. There are existing street rights-of-way adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would include minor public infrastructure improvements such as new curb locations, traffic signal improvements, and lane striping. These improvements would provide transitional streetscape to accommodate the project. Under Option 1, the two tot lots present, one located near the corner of Merced and Fulton, and the other located near the corner of Kern and Fulton, would be consolidated into one larger tot lot at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley.

#### **1.4.2 Project Option 2**

Option 2 consists of reconnecting the street grid similar to Option 1, but would include rebuilding distinctive elements of the Fulton Mall in five to six specific locations, known as “vignettes,” in their exact current size and configuration. The vignettes are intended to preserve existing shade trees and features of the historic Eckbo design, and would include many of the existing elements (sculptures, fountains, pavement pattern, trees, and so on). To accomplish this, the street would have gentle curves that would allow for greater preservation of historic features including fountains, art and existing shade trees. One 11-foot-wide vehicle travel lane would run in each direction and would curve through the vignettes. Outside the vignette areas, the street would straighten, and the landscape would include, where possible, an 8-foot-wide parallel parking lane, as well as a pedestrian-only walking, seating, vegetation, and public art area that varies between 14 and 44 feet wide on each side of the street. Within the vignettes, there would be no parking lane, and the existing Fulton Mall landscape elements would be kept intact as much as possible. The remaining space on each side of the street would be dedicated to pedestrian travel, seating, vegetation, and artwork. There are existing street rights-of-way adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would include minor public infrastructure improvements such as new curb locations, traffic signal improvements, and lane striping. These improvements would provide transitional streetscape to accommodate the project. Under Option 2, the two tot lots present, one located near the corner of Merced and Fulton, and the other located near the corner of Kern and Fulton,

would be consolidated into one larger tot lot at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley.

### **1.4.3 Alternative 3**

The third Alternative is the no-build Alternative. New streets would not be constructed and the Mall would remain as it now exists. Currently, there are seven of the original 20 fountains within the Mall landscape that are in working order. Three sculptures have been placed in storage due to vandalism and the threat of theft.

## **1.5 Project Area**

The proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction project is located in Downtown Fresno (Exhibit 1). Fulton Mall consists of six blocks bounded by Van Ness Avenue to the east, Inyo Street to the south, Broadway/H Street to the west, and Tuolumne Street to the north (Exhibit 2). Tulare Street and Fresno Street divide the Mall into three equal portions. The project site includes the existing 80-foot rights-of-way within Fulton Mall including Fulton between Inyo Street to Tulare Street, Tulare Street and Fresno Street, and Fresno Street and Tuolumne Street. The project also includes the existing 80-foot rights-of-way along (1) Kern between Van Ness Avenue and Home Run Alley, (2) Mariposa between Van Ness Avenue and Broadway, and (3) Merced between Van Ness Avenue and Congo Alley. In addition to the Mall, there are areas adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would allow transitional streetscape to accommodate the project. Furthermore, the project includes a parcel at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley for the proposed tot lot.

## **1.6 Project Study Area**

The study area for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction includes Fulton Mall, Kern Mall, Mariposa Mall, and Merced Mall and the building and structures adjacent to these malls (Figure 1-2). In addition to land uses within structures adjacent to the malls, the study area was established based on existing circulation. The original vision for the malls was the establishment of a core superblock that encompassed 12 city blocks with a ring road adjacent to the superblock. The creation of a car-free core superblock was not fully implemented because Tulare Street and Fresno Street continued to provide access through the Fresno Mall area. The boundaries of the original superblock form the boundaries of the study area. The study area extends from Inyo Street on the south to Tuolumne Street to the north and from Van Ness Avenue on the east to Broadway Street and H Street on the west.

The Project Study Area, which encompasses approximately 65 acres, is located within the 655-acre Fulton Corridor Specific Plan (FCSP) that provides long-term goals and detailed policies for the future development within the FCSP. The FCSP is located within the 7,290-acre Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan (DNCP), which also provides goals and policies for the future development within the DNCP area. Both the FCSP and DNCP includes implementation plans to foster growth, improve access and parking, and increase sustainable development and economic productivity in downtown Fresno.

## **1.7 Regional Area**

The regional area for this community impact assessment is defined as the City of Fresno city limits that encompass approximately 113 square miles (72,224 acres) and extends from the San Joaquin River on the north to just south of Central Avenue on the south and from Grantland Avenue on the west to approximately Temperance Avenue on the east.

## Chapter 2 Land Use

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### 2.1 Existing and Future Land Use

This section describes the existing and future land uses within the Fulton Mall study area. The study area currently has a mix of land uses and approximately 29 percent of the structures are vacant. The majority of the vacancy within the study area includes office uses, which represent approximately 12 percent of all structures, and retail/restaurant uses, which represent approximately 17 percent of all structures within the study area.

#### 2.1.1 Affected Environment

##### Existing Land Uses

The Fulton Mall study area includes office, retail/restaurant, recreation-clubhouse, other commercial such as a hotel and theater, and residential (Figure 2-1). The structures located along Fulton Mall include multiple stories with storefronts on the ground floor and additional uses within the upper stories. The study area includes structures that range from one story to 16 stories. Based on a review of the Urban Decay Study prepared for the Fulton Mall in 2012, approximately 26 percent of the ground floor storefronts within the Project Study Area are vacant. Table 1 depicts the amount of building square footage for each land use within the study area.

**Table 1: Land Use and Building Square Footage within Fulton Mall Study Area**

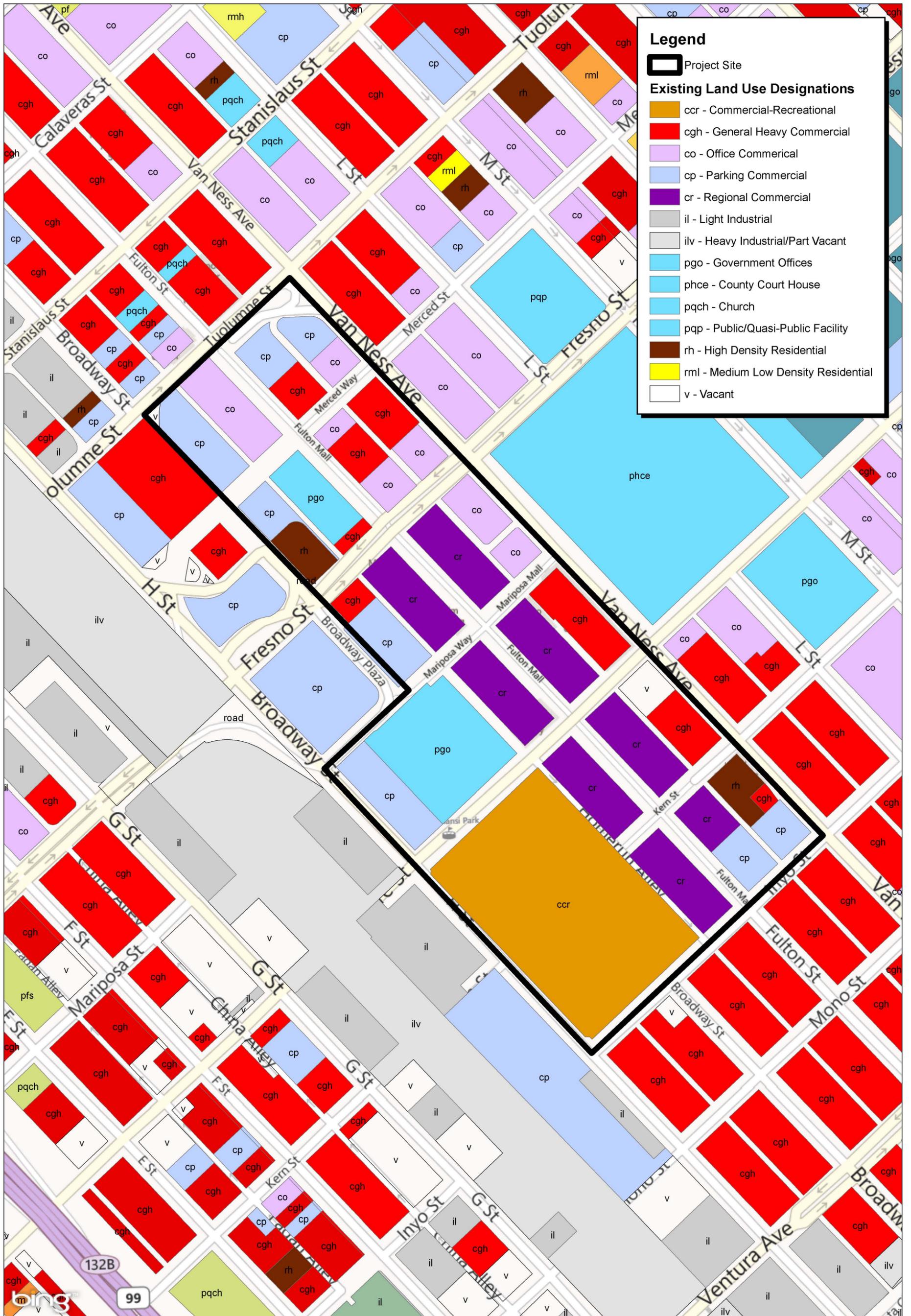
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Total Building Square Footage</b>
Office <sup>1</sup>	648,964
Retail / Restaurant <sup>2</sup>	1,232,504
Rec - Clubhouse <sup>3</sup>	46,007
Other Commercial <sup>4</sup>	164,075
Residential <sup>5</sup>	149,003
Parking	239,184
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,479,737</b>

**Table 1 (cont.): Land Use and Building Square Footage  
within Fulton Mall Study Area**

Land Use	Total Building Square Footage
<sup>1</sup> Office is identified on Figure 2-1 as co and pgo.	
<sup>2</sup> Retail/Restaurant is identified on Figure 2-1 as cgh and cr.	
<sup>3</sup> Recreation Clubhouse is identified on Figure 2-1 as ccr. This includes the clubhouse facilities associated with Chukchansi Park.	
<sup>4</sup> Other Commercial is identified on Figure 2-1 as cgh.	
<sup>5</sup> Residential is identified on Figure 2-1 as rh. There is a co designation that currently includes residential.	
Source: Rosenow Spavacek Group, Inc., 2012.	

The study area also includes surface parking, structured parking, and a vacant lot. The study area includes approximately 2,800 parking spaces. Approximately 75 percent of those spaces are located within structures while 25 percent of the parking spaces are within surface parking lots. There are 14 on-street parking spaces within the study area. There is one vacant lot at the southwest corner of Tulare Street and Van Ness Avenue. The vacant lot encompasses approximately 20,000 square feet (sf).

In addition to land uses within the existing structures along Fulton Mall, there are two recreational areas for children within Fulton Mall. These areas are tot lots with playground equipment and sand areas. One of the tot lots is located within Fulton Mall immediately north of Kern Mall and encompasses 966 sf of active play equipment area. The second tot lot is also within Fulton Mall immediately south of Merced Mall and encompasses 806 sf of active play equipment area. These lots were improved with new play equipment in 2008 using federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and State Proposition 40 grant dollars, and their future use and conversion is governed by Section 6(f) of the LWCF Act. Today most, though not all, of this equipment remains functional for the children to use.



Source: City of Fresno, Bing Street Map.

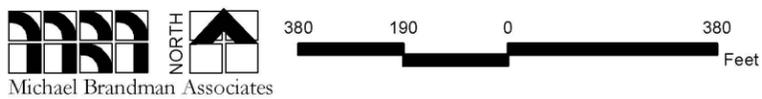


Figure 2-1  
Existing Land Use



## Planned Land Uses

The Fulton Mall study area is currently zoned as Commercial Trading District (C-4) (Figure 2-2). Based on a review of the City of Fresno Zoning Ordinance, this designation allows a variety of retail, commercial, office, and residential uses. The City is currently proposing a specific plan, Fulton Corridor Specific Plan (FCSP) that encompasses the study area. The FCSP encompasses approximately 655 acres within the downtown area and proposes the entire study area to be designated Central Business District 1. This proposed designation would allow land uses that consist of commercial, retail, and office activity to support active streetscapes and walking located on ground levels within buildings. Upper floors and the floor area behind shop fronts are flexible for a wide variety of office, civic, lodging, housing or additional commercial uses. The intent of the FCSP is to encourage investment and growth within the downtown area. The land uses identified in the FCSP are consistent with the General Plan Update land use designations within the Project Study Area (Figure 2-3).

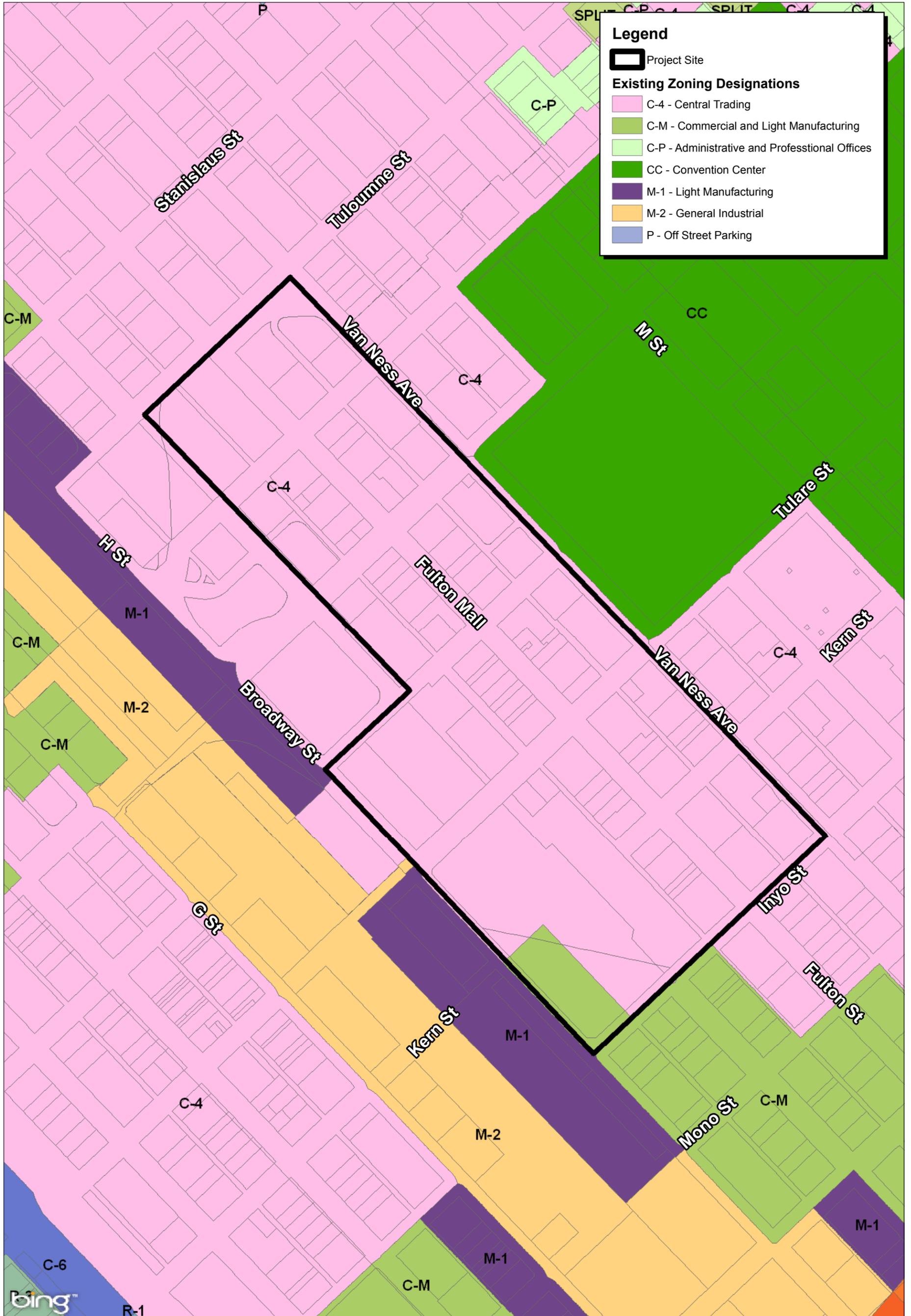
Within the Fulton Mall Project Study Area, there are development applications that have been submitted to the City. These applications include the following:

1. CVS is proposing to relocate from their current location at the northeast corner of Fulton Mall and Merced Mall and construct a new 15,524 sf retail store at the corner of Van Ness Avenue and Tuolumne Street. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2014.
2. 1155 Fulton Mall - Tenant improvements are proposed with minor exterior improvements for new Federal offices. These improvements are anticipated to be completed in 2013.
3. 1101 Fulton Mall - Tenant improvements are proposed for a new restaurant. Timing of these improvements is not known.
4. 959 Fulton Mall (JC Penney Building) - Tenant improvements are proposed for approximately 66 residential units on the second through the fifth floors. According to property owner, timing of these improvements are contingent on the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project.
5. Pacific Southwest Building at the southeast corner of Fulton Mall and Mariposa Mall - Tenant improvements are proposed for a restaurant lounge on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> floors. According to property owner, timing of these improvements are contingent on the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project.

6. Hotel Californian at the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Kern Street - Tenant improvements are proposed along the Kern Street side of the structure to re-introduce storefronts along Kern Street. Timing of these improvements is not known.
7. Storm Drain Replacement - The City is replacing the existing storm drain located in the middle of Fulton Mall between Inyo Street and Tuolumne Street.
8. Water Line Replacement - The City is replacing existing water lines within Kern Mall between Federal Alley and Home Run Alley and Mariposa Mall between Federal Alley to Congo Alley.
9. Sewer Line Replacement - The City is replacing existing sewer lines within Kern Mall between Van Ness Avenue and Home Run Alley and within Merced Mall between Van Ness Avenue and Congo Alley.
10. Mariposa Plaza Activation Project - The Mariposa Plaza is proposed to be redesigned to increase the number of community events.

Within the community at large and outside of the Fulton Mall Project Study Area, there are various development projects proposed. These include the following:

11. Van Ness Avenue Pedestrian Crossing at Mariposa Mall - A new signal is proposed along Van Ness Avenue at Mariposa Mall. This pedestrian signal is being funded by the Federal Transit Authority.
12. Bus Rapid Transit Stop - As part of the Bus Rapid Transit program, a bus stop is proposed along Van Ness Avenue at Mariposa Mall. The bus stop is planned to be on a platform in the middle of Van Ness Avenue. Access to the platform would be provided at street level. Funding for this project is being provided by the Federal Transit Authority.
13. High Speed Rail Station - The proposed station is located along the existing Union Pacific railroad tracks between Fresno Street and Tulare Street.

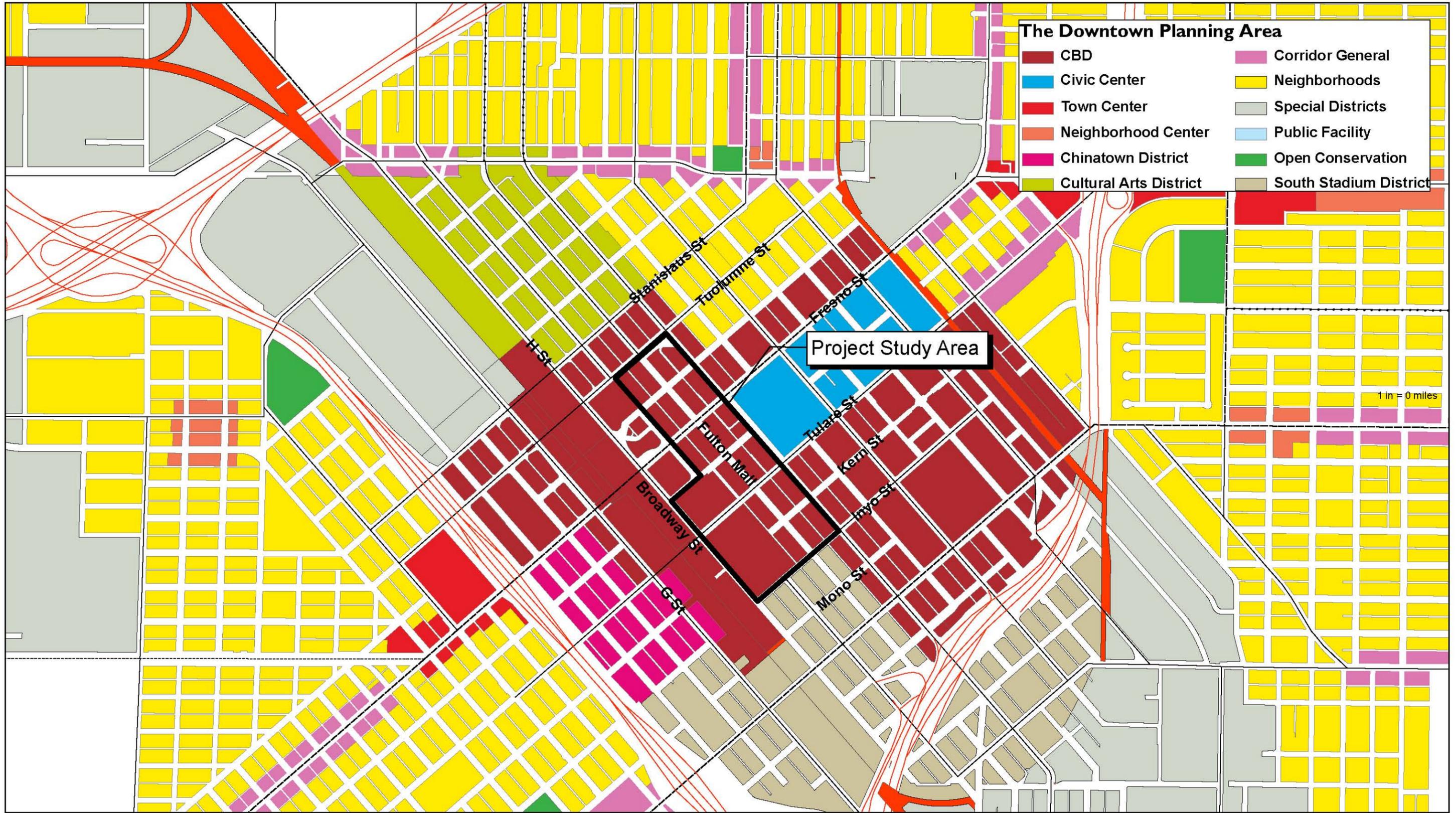


Source: City of Fresno, Bing Street Map.



Figure 2-2  
Existing Zoning





Source: Boundary and circulation information, City of Fresno Development And Resource Management Department, 2010; World Street Map, developed by Esri using DeLorme basemap layers, Automotive Navigation Data, USGS, UNEP-WCMC, Tele Atlas Dynamap, 2009



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Figure 2-3  
General Plan Updated Land Use



14. Residential Projects - There are numerous other projects proposed or under construction within the community at large, i.e. the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan Area and outside the Fulton Mall Project Study Area. These include, but are not limited to, an approximate 350 total new housing units in various locations in the Cultural Arts District (located north of the Project Study Area) and Chinatown located west of the Project Study Area).

In addition to the development project that are proposed within the community at large, the future development of the FCSP and DNCP will result in a substantial amount of additional development. Both plans are expected to be fully built out by the year 2035. The anticipated development in both plans are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Development Potential Within FCSP and DNCP**

Land Use	Development (in dwelling units, square feet, acres)		
	FCSP	DNCP (Excluding FCSP)	FCSP + DNCP
Residential (units)	6,293	3,697	9,990
Office (sf)	3,900,000	2,000,000	5,900,000
Retail (sf)	1,600,000	350,000	1,950,000
Industrial (sf)	150,000	2,900,000	3,050,000
Open Conservation (acres)	31	33	64
Source: Impact Sciences 2012.			

### 2.1.2 Environmental Consequences

The implementation of the build alternatives for the proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction project will result in direct effects to the existing tot lots that are used for public recreation. The two tot lots encompass approximately 1,772 square feet of active play equipment area. Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, this recreational resource must be suitably replaced within three years if the land it occupies is converted to other uses. During the construction period, the removal of this resource would create a temporary adverse effect. The provision of an equal square footage of active play space within the Project Study Area will reduce the long-term effect so that the effect is not adverse. The long-term restoration or replacement of the playground equipment will provide a beneficial recreational effect because all equipment will be functional for the children to use.

No additional existing or planned land uses within the Project Study Area would be directly affected with the implementation of the build alternatives. However, the build alternatives would improve access and parking, resulting in an indirect increase in shoppers and the economic productivity of Fulton Mall. An increase in economic productivity will encourage the reoccupation of the existing vacant ground floor stores and induce the existing businesses and property owners to invest in store upgrades. This indirect growth will result in a beneficial impact on the future land uses within Fulton Mall.

The No Build Alternative would retain the existing land uses including the tot lots and pedestrian mall. Therefore, this alternative would result in no effects on land use.

### **2.1.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

The implementation of the build alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) will result in beneficial land use impacts associated with the proposed tot lot equipment and will not require measures.

The No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) would not affect land use and no avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

## **2.2 Consistency with Federal, State, Regional, and Local Plans**

### **2.2.1 Affected Environment**

Various plans and programs are applicable to the proposed project. These applicable plans and programs are listed below.

#### **Transportation Plans**

Fresno COG is an association of city and county governments created to address regional transportation issues as well as other regional issues. Its members include the County of Fresno and the 15 incorporated cities within the County.

Fresno COG develops long-term solutions for regional challenges such as transportation, air quality, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality. Because these issues cross city and county boundaries, Fresno COG works with cities, counties, and public agencies in the region to develop plans and strategies to address regional issues. The Fresno COG has developed strategies that specifically address the growth and transportation issues facing Southern California as documented in adopted plans including the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP, adopted in 2011), the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP, adopted in 2012 and 2013), and the Federal

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (FSTIP, adopted 2012). Following is a discussion of each of these plans and program.

### **Regional Transportation Plan**

Transportation control measures provided by Fresno COG include those contained in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the most current version of which is the 2011 RTP. The 2011 RTP has control measures to reduce emissions from on-road sources by incorporating strategies such as high occupancy vehicle interventions, transit, and information-based technology interventions. The measures implemented by Air Resources Board and Fresno COG affect the Project indirectly by regulating the vehicles that the residents may use and regulating public transportation.

The project is included in the 2011 RTP through 2011 RTP Amendment #2 as Project ID FRE500768. The FHWA and FTA completed review of the conformity determination for the 2011 RTP and found that the document conforms to the applicable state implementation plan in accordance with the provisions of 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93. The FHWA and FTA issued the determination on December 14, 2010. The FHWA and FTA issued a determination of conformity for the 2011 RTP Amendment #2 on December 14, 2012.

Fresno COG is currently circulating the 2014 RTP for informal and early public review and comment. The 2014 RTP, also called the Regional Transportation Plan 2040, charts a 25-year course to the year 2040. The 2014 RTP addresses greenhouse gas emission reductions and other air emissions with a goal of sustainable planning.

### **Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan**

The Federal Statewide Transportation Improvements Plan (FSTIP) covers a four-year period from 2012/2013 through 2015/2016, which includes the listings of proposed transportation projects in the rural non MPO areas of the state, and incorporates by reference projects listed in the MPO's 2013 FTIPs. Fresno COG submitted their board-approved 2013 FTIP to Caltrans, including 2013 FTIP Amendment #1 made August 2012. The FSTIP was transmitted from Caltrans to FHWA on November 5, 2012. The FHWA and FTA completed review of California's 2013 FSTIP, and approved the document as proposed. The FHWA and FTA determined the 2013 FSTIP conforms to the SIP on December 14, 2012. The 2013 FSTIP incorporated by reference those projects included in the 2012/2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIP) adopted by the MPOs in California. This conformity determination includes Fresno COG 2013 FTIP Amendment #1, which lists the project.

### Federal Transportation Improvement Plan

The FTIP is a compilation of project lists from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), urbanized and non-urbanized areas, and other programs using federal funding. The 2013 FTIP is composed of two parts. The first is a priority list of projects and project segments to be carried out in a four-year period. The second is a financial plan that demonstrates how the TIP can be implemented. The project was included in the 2013 FTIP Appendix F, Regional Transportation Plan Project Listing 2011 through 2035, as RTP ID FRE500768. The project was also included in 2013 FTIP Amendment #1, dated August 2012, as Project ID FRE130069. Since the 2013 FTIP incorporated by reference those projects included in the 2012/2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIP) adopted by the MPOs in California, this conformity determination includes Fresno COG 2013 FTIP Amendment #1, which lists the project.

### City of Fresno 2025 General Plan

The City of Fresno 2025 General Plan was adopted in 2002 and currently serves as a guide to enable government at all levels, private enterprise, community groups, and individual citizens to make decisions and utilize community resources in a manner that will realize progress toward a common vision of a measurably enhanced physical, economic, and social environment.

Following are the applicable goals and policies of the City of Fresno 2025 General Plan, which are included in the Public Facilities Element.

Policy E-1-a: Implement the following classified street system in accordance with adopted engineering design standards and the 2025 Fresno General Plan Land Use and Circulation Map (Exhibit 4) and the Transportation (Streets and Highways) Element Map (Exhibit 7) adopted and incorporated herein depicting the location and general alignment of streets and highways.

Policy E-1-f: Allow a Level of Service “D” (“LOS D”) as the acceptable level of traffic congestion on major streets. LOS “D” according to the Caltrans and COFCG accepted LOS criteria, as developed by the Florida Department of Transportation, means moderate congestion at peak traffic periods; approaching unstable flow with reduced speeds, limited maneuverability, and loss of convenience; average speeds range from 9 to 17 miles per hour on arterials with stopped delays of 40 seconds or less.

Policy E-2-h: Limit the number of driveway access points on all major streets to minimize traffic disruption and protect traffic flows. No development shall be approved if it will adversely affect the flow of traffic on a public street below an acceptable

standard to be determined by the Public Works Director and based upon the policies noted herein.

### **City of Fresno Draft General Plan Update**

The City of Fresno has prepared and made available for public review a comprehensive update to its General Plan, which is anticipated to be adopted in 2014. The update provides a policy direction for the long-term development and maintenance of the City. It provides guidance to decision-makers when making determinations about the allocation of resources and the future physical form and character of development in the City. The land uses and circulation system within the General Plan Update are consistent with the proposed land uses and circulation system proposed in the Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan (DNCP) and Fulton Corridor Specific Plan (FCSP). The General Plan Update proposes that the Downtown planning area would be further refined through specific and community plans, such as the proposed DNCP and FCSP, and further implemented through updates to the Development Code for regulations specific to the Downtown. The goals within the DNCP and FCSP are being proposed as objectives within the General Plan Update to ensure consistency between the General Plan Update and the DNCP and FCSP.

The following proposed policies from the Fresno General Plan Update are applicable to the proposed project.

Goal MT-1 Create and maintain a transportation system that is safe, efficient, provides access in an equitable manner, and optimizes travel by all modes.

Policy MT-1-h “Complete Streets” Concept Implementation. Provide transportation facilities upon a “Complete Streets” concept that facilitates and balanced use of all travel modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users), meeting the transportation needs of all ages and abilities and providing mobility for a variety of trip purposes.

Implementation actions will include:

- Meeting the needs of all users within the street system as a whole; each individual street does not need to provide all modes of travel, but travel by all modes must be accommodated throughout the planning area;
- Continuing to adopt refined street cross-section standards as appropriate in response to needs identified;
- Considering the impact of streets on public health by addressing storm water runoff quality, air quality, and water conservation among other factors; and

- Adhering to the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance for median and streetscape plantings and irrigation methods.

Policy UF-11 Revitalize the Fulton Mall.

### **Central Area Community Plan**

The Central Area Community Plan was approved in 1989 and encompasses approximately 1,500 acres bound by Highway 99, Highway 41 and Highway 180. The Community Plan provides a tool for the future development of the planning area. Following are the goal and policies of the Community Plan that are applicable to the proposed project.

**Fulton Mall District Goal:** Retain the Fulton Mall as a multifunctional, primarily pedestrian environment and improve its physical condition and economic vitality as a District with strong linkages to other Central Area activity centers; and promote the image of this District as a high quality, unique, comfortable and secure area which is accessible and attractive for business, recreation, tourism and a variety of special activities.

Essential to this setting is proximity of significant and attractive housing opportunities within the Central Area, and an environment reflective of the community’s appreciation for its cultural diversity and historic importance.

**Fulton Mall District Policy 1:** Enhance linkage between the Fulton Mall District and other Central Area districts to strengthen interaction between them. Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation around and access within the Fulton Mall District to optimize public convenience and safety, consistent with high standards of aesthetic quality.

**Fulton Mall District Policy 2:** Reinforce the emerging “three-node pattern: of retail, service and office activities with the north node principally as a public/private urban office park; the central node, as a blend of specialty shops, private and government offices; and south node, mainly as a diverse mix of unique retail shopping and services which cater to Central Area employees, residents, tourists and shoppers.

**Fulton Mall District Policy 4:** Improve the appearance of public and private property through measures that result in a high level of maintenance.

Fulton Mall District Policy 5: Encourage the redesign and remodeling of functionally obsolete office and retail business buildings to accommodate new uses that will stimulate activity along Fulton Mall network.

Fulton Mall District Policy 6: Establish and maintain an environment characterized by enhanced security, public convenience, easy access and orientation.

Fulton Mall District Policy 8: Improve and maintain the Fulton Mall as an exciting, physically and visually superior pedestrian environment for the people of Fresno, the San Joaquin Valley and the world.

### **Draft Downtown Neighborhood Communities Plan**

The City of Fresno has prepared and made available for public review the draft Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan (DNCP), which is anticipated to be adopted in early 2014. If adopted, the DNCP would be the community's tool for guiding the successful regeneration of Downtown Fresno and its surrounding neighborhoods. The Plan provides long-term goals for the Plan Area and detailed policies concerning a wide range of topics, including land use and development, transportation, the public realm of streets and parks, infrastructure, historic resources, and health and wellness. The project site is located near the center of the DNCP, which encompasses 7,290 acres.

Following are the applicable goals and policies of the draft DNCP.

Goal 3.3 Create a network of complete streets and multi-modal transportation strategies.

Policy 3.3.1 Create "complete streets" in the Downtown Neighborhoods so that all streets accommodate the needs of all potential users - vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, transits vehicles and freight.

Policy 3.3.6 Prioritize space for pedestrians and bicycles in the design and improvement of public right-of-way. As part of the implementation of this policy, design new roadways or retrofit existing roadways to have wider sidewalks and/or an improved pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Policy 3.3.8 In order to decrease conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians, consolidate existing and minimize new curb cuts and driveways throughout the Plan Area.

Goal 3.4 Physically improve the Downtown Neighborhoods' roadways and manage the transportation system to enhance safety and quality of life.

Policy 3.4.3 Reestablish an interconnected street grid comparable to Fresno's original grid pattern in order to increase walkability and improve connections to parks, open space, schools, and neighborhood centers.

### **Draft Fulton Corridor Specific Plan**

The City of Fresno has prepared and made available for public review the draft Fulton corridor Specific Plan (FCSP), which is anticipated to be adopted in early 2014. If adopted, the FCSP would be the community's tool for guiding the future development of Downtown Fresno. The Plan provides long-term goals for the FCSP area and detailed policies concerning a wide range of topics, including land use and development, historic resources, the public realm, transportation, and infrastructure. The project site is located near the center of the FCSP, which encompasses 655 acres. The FCSP is located within the DNCP.

Following are the applicable goals and policies of the draft FCSP.

Goal 9-1 Provide a comprehensive transportation, circulation, and parking system that improves quality of life in Downtown.

Policy 9-1-2 Design new roadways or retrofit existing roadways to have wider sidewalks and a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Policy 9-1-4 Along Commercial and mixed-use streets, minimize driveways and driveway crossings of the pedestrian right-of-way.

Policy 9-1-6 Install new or retain existing on-street parking (parallel or angles) along all streets, except where precluded by lack of curb-side access or right-of-way. The type of parking shall depend on the adjacent land use and roadway classification.

Policy 9-1-12 Reestablish an interconnected street grid comparable to Fresno's original grid pattern in order to increase walkability and improve connections to parks, open space, schools, and neighborhood centers.

Goal 9-4 Make parking convenient and easy to find.

## **2.2.2 Environmental Consequences Transportation Plans**

### Regional Transportation Plan

The Project was included in the regional emissions analysis conducted by Fresno COG for the conforming 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (2011 RTP), under the RTP ID FRE500768, as identified in the 2011 RTP Amendment #2. The description of RTP ID FRE500768 in the RTP projects list is:

In the City of Fresno, at 4 locations; reintroduce 2-lane undivided complete streets.

- 1) Fulton Mall between Tuolumne and Inyo Streets
- 2) Merced Mall from Congo Alley to Federal Alley
- 3) Mariposa Mall from Broadway Street to Federal Alley
- 4) Kern Mall from Fulton Mall to Federal Alley

FHWA determined the 2011 RTP conforms to the SIP on December 14, 2010. This analysis found that the 2011 RTP and, therefore, the individual projects contained in the 2011 RTP, are conforming projects, and will have air quality impacts consistent with those identified in the state implementation plans for achieving the NAAQS.

The 2011 RTP Amendment #2 was adopted by Fresno COG and the 2011 RTP Amendment #2 conformity was approved by FHWA on December 14, 2012. The Project's design concept and scope have not changed significantly from what was analyzed in the 2011 RTP Amendment #2. Therefore, the Project is consistent with Amendment #2 of the 2011 RTP.

### Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan

The FHWA and FTA completed review of California's 2013 FSTIP, and approved the document as proposed. The FHWA and FTA determined the 2013 FSTIP conforms to the SIP on December 14, 2012. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

### Federal Transportation Improvement Plan

The 2013 FSTIP incorporated by reference those projects included in the 2012/2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIP) adopted by the MPOs in California. This conformity determination includes Fresno COG 2013 FTIP Amendment

#1, which lists the project. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the Federal Transportation Improvement Plan.

### **City of Fresno 2025 General Plan**

The proposed project has been evaluated for its consistency with the 2025 General Plan goals and policies because the 2025 General Plan is the currently adopted plan for the City. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose to reclassify the rights-of-way within Fulton Mall between Tuolumne Street and Inyo Street to a Collector street. This reclassification is not consistent with Policy E-1-a of the Public Facilities Element because this policy makes reference to the 2025 General Plan Circulation Element Map, which does not identify the rights-of-way within Fulton Mall as a major street.

Policy E-1-f discusses the LOS D policy for roadways. The implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in the redistribution of existing traffic. Under the existing plus project scenario, the surrounding intersections would operate at LOS D or better after the redistribution of existing traffic volumes. In the existing plus project plus cumulative scenario, there will be two intersections where the project would contribute to an exceedance of the LOS D policy in the year 2035. Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would not be consistent with Policy E-1-f.

Policy E-2-h includes the limitation of driveway access points on all major streets. The Fulton Mall rights-of-way are not designated as a major street on the City's Circulation Element Map. However, the proposed project would result in the re-classification of the Fulton Mall as a Collector street. Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include the addition of driveway access points on the proposed streets, and therefore, both of these alternatives would be consistent with Policy E-2-h.

### **City of Fresno 2035 draft General Plan Update**

The proposed project has been evaluated for its consistency with the draft General Plan Update goals and policies because this plan is anticipated to be adopted in 2014. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose to reconstruct Fulton Mall using "complete streets" design concepts, which would be consistent with Policy MT-1-h in the General Plan Update. In addition, both alternatives would be consistent with Policy UF-11, which proposes to revitalize the Fulton Mall.

### **Central Area Community Plan**

The Fulton Mall District Goal included in the Central Area Community Plan identifies retention of Fulton Mall as a multifunctional, primarily pedestrian environment. Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would not be consistent with the key premise of maintaining the

mall as a pedestrian-only environment. The Fulton Mall District Goal also includes improvement of its physical condition and economic vitality. The implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 would indirectly increase the economic productivity of Fulton Mall, and therefore, would be consistent with this portion of the Goal. Alternatives 1 and 2 would improve vehicular circulation around and access within the Fulton Mall District, and as a result would be consistent with Fulton Mall District Policy 1. Both alternatives would also result in long-term improvement in the aesthetic appearance by removing the dirty, stained, and cracked pavement, the cracked and stained planters, and the inoperable fountains. The alternatives would include new pavement for the sidewalks, refurbish the sculptures, and provide new lighting systems. The improvements under Alternatives 1 and 2 would improve the appearance of the publicly-owned Fulton Mall and be consistent with Fulton Mall District Policy 4.

Alternatives 1 and 2 would provide streets that would increase access to the area. This increase in access is anticipated to influence growth within the Fulton Mall District. This growth is anticipated to occur through the reoccupation of the ground floors of existing vacant buildings as vehicle access and parking become available. As a result, both alternatives would stimulate activity along the Fulton Mall network and would be consistent with Fulton Mall District Policy 5.

The enhancement of security, public convenience, easy access and orientation that are identified in Fulton Mall District Policy 6 are desired elements in the implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2. The provision of streets under both alternatives would increase access and convenience to shop within Fulton Mall. The streets would also allow motorists improved orientation to specific destinations within Fulton Mall. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 would be consistent with Fulton Mall Policy 6.

Fulton Mall District Policy 8 identifies the retention of Fulton Mall as an exciting, physically, and visually superior pedestrian environment. The introduction of streets under Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in a shared environment between pedestrians and motorists. As a result, Alternatives 1 and 2 would not be consistent with Fulton Mall district Policy 8.

### **Draft Downtown Neighborhood Communities Plan**

The proposed project has been evaluated for its consistency with the draft DNCP goals and policies because the City anticipates adopting the DNCP in 2014. There are various goals and policies of the DNCP that are relevant to the proposed project. The DNCP identifies the creation of “complete streets” in Goal 3.3 and Policy 3.3.1. Alternatives 1

and 2 include the reconstruction of Fulton Mall using “complete streets,” and therefore, these alternatives would be consistent with the goal and policy. In addition, the DNCP includes policies to prioritize space for pedestrians in the improvement of the public right-of-way (Policy 3.3.6) and decrease conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians by minimizing new curb cuts and driveways (Policy 3.3.8), Alternatives 1 and 2 would be consistent with both of these policies because these alternatives will include sidewalks for pedestrians and no new curb cuts or driveways are proposed. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 would be consistent with Policy 3.3.6 and Policy 3.3.8. The DNCP also has a goal and policy related to enhancing safety and quality of life and reestablishing an interconnected street grid comparable to Fresno’s original grid pattern. Both Alternative 1 and 2 would include sidewalks and curbs so vehicular and bicycle traffic is separated from pedestrian traffic. In addition, both alternatives include new streets along Fulton Mall, Kern Mall, Mariposa Mall, and Merced Mall and would reestablish the original street grid. Therefore, both alternatives would be consistent with Goal 3.4 and Policy 3.4.3.

### **Draft Fulton Corridor Specific Plan**

There are also various goals and policies of the draft FCSP that are relevant to the proposed project. The FCSP identifies the provision of a transportation, circulation, and parking system that improves the quality of life in Downtown in Goal 9-1. Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would provide streets within Fulton Mall and increase the number of shoppers within the Mall. The increase in shoppers will increase the number of “eyes” within the Mall and deter crime-related activities, and therefore, improve the quality of life in the Mall. Both alternatives would be consistent with Goal 9-1. The DNCP also includes the provision of pedestrian-oriented streetscapes (Policy 9-1-2), minimization of driveways and driveway crossing (Policy 9-1-4), and installation of on-street parking. Alternatives 1 and 2 are consistent with these policies because both alternatives provide streetscapes that include trees, benches, sculptures and other artwork within the sidewalk areas. In addition, both alternatives do not include any driveways or driveway crossings. Furthermore, both alternatives include on-street parking to allow shoppers to park near their retail store destination. The FCSP also includes a similar policy as the DNCP related to the reestablishment of an interconnected street grid (Policy 9-1-12). Both Alternatives 1 and 2 will be consistent with Policy 9-1-12). Finally, the FCSP includes a goal (Goal 9-4) to make parking more convenient and easy to find. The provision of on-street parking adjacent to the retail stores will make parking easier to find. Therefore, both alternatives would be consistent with Goal 9-4.

The No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) would retain the existing pedestrian mall in its current state. The retention of the pedestrian mall would not conflict with the goals and policies of the City's plans and programs. Alternative 3 would not be consistent with the transportation plans; however, this inconsistency would not result in substantial effects because this alternative would retain the existing pedestrian mall.

### **2.2.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

Alternatives 1 and 2 would be consistent with the various transportation plans, as well as the goals and policies of the City of Fresno draft 2035 General Plan Update, the draft DNCP, and the draft FCSP. Alternatives 1 and 2 would not be consistent with elements of the 2025 General Plan and Central Area Community Plan until amendments to these plans are approved. Narrative changes, as specified below, would be required. Furthermore, the traffic intersection improvements referenced below for the Project Options 1 and 2 to be consistent with Policy E-1-f would be required.

#### **2025 General Plan**

Policy E-1-a: An amendment to the Circulation Element Map would be required to specify to reclassify the rights-of-way within Fulton Mall between Tuolumne Street and Inyo Street to a Collector street.

Policy E-1-f: Mitigation identified in the Supplemental Traffic Impact Report would be implemented to improve the intersections so that the project's contribution to the exceedance of LOS D at two intersections would be reduced.

#### **Central Area Community Plan**

Fulton Mall District Goal: An amendment to the Circulation Element Map of the 2025 General Plan would be required for Alternatives 1 and 2 to reclassify the Fulton Mall from a pedestrian-oriented facility to a collector street.

Fulton Mall District Policy 8: Narrative changes to the Plan would need to be provided to re-classify the Mall from a pedestrian-only environment to a collector street. The No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) would result in no adverse impacts to transportation and land use plans. No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required as part of the No Build Alternative.

## **2.3 Park and Recreation**

### **2.3.1 Affected Environment**

The City of Fresno currently has a mix of regional, community, neighborhood, pocket, and mini parks within the city limits. A limited number of parks are provided in the downtown area. There are two parks, Courthouse Park and Densmore Skate Park that are located within the 655-acre FCSP. No parks are located within the Project Study Area. There are two recreational areas for children within Fulton Mall. These areas are tot lots with playground equipment and sand areas. One of the tot lots is located within Fulton Mall immediately north of Kern Mall and encompasses 966 sf of active play equipment area. The second tot lot is also within Fulton Mall immediately south of Merced Mall and encompasses 806 sf of active play equipment area. Today most, though not all, of this equipment remains functional for the children to use.

### **2.3.2 Environmental Consequences**

The implementation of the build alternatives for the proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction project will result in direct effects to the existing tot lots that are used for public recreation. The two tot lots encompass approximately 1,772 square feet of active play equipment area. Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in the relocation of the tot lots and they will be consolidated into one larger tot lot within the Project Study Area at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley. During the construction period, the removal of this resource would create a temporary adverse effect. The provision of an equal square footage of active play space within the Project Study Area will reduce the long-term effect so that the effect is not adverse. The long-term restoration or replacement of the playground equipment will provide a beneficial recreational effect because all equipment will be functional for the children to use.

The No Build Alternative would retain the existing land uses including the tot lots and pedestrian mall. Therefore, this alternative would result in no effects on parks and recreation.

### **2.3.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in beneficial land use impacts associated with the proposed tot lot equipment and will not require measures.

The No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) would not affect parks and recreational facilities and no avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

# Chapter 3 Growth

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## 3.1 Affected Environment

The Fulton Mall is limited to pedestrian traffic. This limitation has resulted in businesses within the Project Study Area grossly under-performing and storefronts having a high vacancy rate. There is a lack of convenient parking spaces in front of stores, and no visibility for drive-by vehicular traffic. Parking is located around the perimeter of the study area; however, due to the broken street grid, motorists find it confusing to navigate to a parking area and then navigate to the businesses and stores by foot. There is no clear view into the Mall area from its ends, and the landscape largely blocks views of the storefronts.

The underperformance of the Fulton Mall has occurred for many years. Starting around 1970, business in Downtown Fresno began to decline due to increasingly rapid growth in the northern parts of the City and the opening of the major suburban shopping mall, Fashion Fair. This caused department stores within the Project Study Area to leave Downtown Fresno. The opening of additional shopping malls within the City resulted in further declines in economic activity in Downtown.

The Project Study Area became an area of low levels of retail and other economic activity. In fact, urban decay data show that challenges in lease and vacancy rates are several times more severe on the Fulton Mall than in the rest of Downtown, compared with citywide and regional averages. The Project Study Area is devoid of any significant activity on weeknights after 5 pm when workers leave Downtown.

Numerous efforts are underway to address this problem. In 2010, property owners voted to create an assessment district, which is today managed by the Downtown Fresno Partnership. This district, which is centered on Fulton Mall, funds promotions, events, and advocacy on behalf of the area. The City is also undertaking a wholesale rewrite of its land use plans and zoning codes that govern the downtown, in order to encourage investment and development in Downtown and healthy, mixed-income neighborhoods in the surrounding 7,290 acres.

## 3.2 Environmental Consequences

Although the proposed project does not include additional land uses within the Project Study Area, the provision of streets will increase access to the area. This increase in access is anticipated to influence growth within the Project Study Area. This growth is

anticipated to occur through the reoccupation of the ground floors of existing vacant buildings as vehicle access and parking become available. This cause-and-effect relationship is bolstered by letters received from two Fulton Mall property owners and developers who recently acquired major historic buildings in support of a City application for funding related to the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. The owner of the JC Penney building, who is planning the creation of 66 housing units, wrote that “like any development project...access to and around the property is of utmost concern to me in making this kind of investment” (Maghame 2012). The owner of the Pacific Southwest and Helm Buildings, who is planning to develop a mix of housing, office, and entertainment space, wrote that “addressing the access and infrastructure issues surrounding my properties...is my main source of hesitation about investing in housing units there” (Khatchadourian 2012).

This reoccupation is considered a beneficial impact on the existing land uses within the Project Study Area because additional tenants and customers are expected to increase the economic productivity of the Project Study Area. Following is a discussion of the proposed project’s influence of growth under each alternative.

Alternative 1 - Based on the Economic Impact Analysis for the Fulton Mall Alternative Plans prepared in June 2011, the reopening of Fulton Street and adding on-street parking is anticipated to reduce the existing ground floor vacancies from 26 percent to nine percent, close to citywide levels. The reoccupation would represent leasing approximately 79,200 sf of the existing 122,700 sf of vacant ground floor space. Assuming sales only at the present-day rate in the Study Area of \$78.88 per sf per year, the new occupancy would generate \$6.25 million in annual sales. Nearly all of the sales tax which would be \$513,840 per year would accrue to the City of Fresno.

Alternative 2 - Based on the Economic Impact Analysis prepared in June 2011, the reopening of Fulton Street and adding fewer on-street parking spaces compared to Alternative 1 is anticipated to reduce the existing ground floor vacancies from 26 percent to 15 percent. The reoccupation would represent leasing approximately 51,900 sf of retail space of the existing 122,700 sf of vacant ground floor space. Assuming sales only at the present-day rate in the Study Area of \$78.88 per sf per year, the new occupancy would generate \$4.09 million in annual sales. The annual sales tax generated from the annual sales would be \$336,721 per year.

Alternative 3 - Based on the Economic Impact Analysis prepared in June 2011, the retention of the existing pedestrian mall is anticipated to increase existing ground floor

vacancies from 26 percent to 35 percent, which represents an increase of approximately 44,600 sf of vacancies. Assuming sales at the present-day rate in the Study Area of \$78.88 per sf per year, this represents a loss of \$3.52 million in annual sales and a reduction in annual sales tax revenue of \$289,359 per year.

Interest in developing in Downtown Fresno overall has been on the rise for several years. The City's General Plan Update encourages even more infill development to account for an even greater portion of the city's overall growth in coming years. The Fulton Corridor Specific Plan attempts to respond to — and propel — this trend by implementing a new zoning code that is more appropriate to a developed urban area. The Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project fits with this effort, by making the most densely built part of the Downtown more accessible and therefore ripe for development of housing and other uses. Because the density along the Fulton Mall is so much greater than other areas, activity in the Study Area fuels itself, and the increases in economic productivity expected to occur as a result of implementing the build alternatives are therefore substantial.

Construction activities associated with the reoccupation of the vacant buildings is not expected to result in a substantial increase in noise. Furthermore, two of the three locations with existing noise sensitive land uses (i.e., the Masten Towers and Hotel Californian residential complexes) are not located directly adjacent to the portion of the malls proposed for construction of street improvements. A third location, the Pacific Southwest Building is located directly adjacent to the proposed street improvements; however, the existing residences that are located within this building are located in the upper floors (above the tenth floor) of the 16-story building. Therefore, construction activities would not result in adverse noise effects on these residences.

### **3.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

The implementation of the build alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) will influence growth in the Project Study Area, in conjunction with other City plans and projects, and this growth is expected to result in a beneficial effect on the economic activity for the Project Study Area and would not result in adverse environmental effects. No mitigation measure will be required.

The No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) is anticipated to result in negative growth by increasing ground floor vacancies within the Project Study Area. No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are assumed as part of the No Build Alternative.



# Chapter 4 Community Character

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## 4.1 Population and Housing

### 4.1.1 Affected Environment

#### Regional Population Characteristics/Community Character

As of 2010, the City of Fresno had a population of 494,665 persons, as reported by the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau. Since 2000, the City of Fresno added 67,000 new residents, a 15.7 percent increase. Fresno County had a 2010 population of 930,450, growing approximately 16 percent since 2000.

The City's race characteristics are provided in Table 3 in Section 4.1.1.2 below. As shown, whites are the dominant race within the City while people with a Hispanic origin are the dominant ethnicity within the City.

The median household income in the City of Fresno was \$43,440 (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2013) and within the County of Fresno was \$46,903 (U.S. Census Bureau, July 2013). Per capita incomes are \$19,978 (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2013) and \$20,638 (U.S. Census Bureau, July 2013), respectively. These incomes are between 24 percent and 33 percent lower than the California median income of \$61,632 (U.S. Census Bureau, July 2013) and the per capita income of \$29,634 (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2013).

#### Neighborhoods/Communities/Community Character

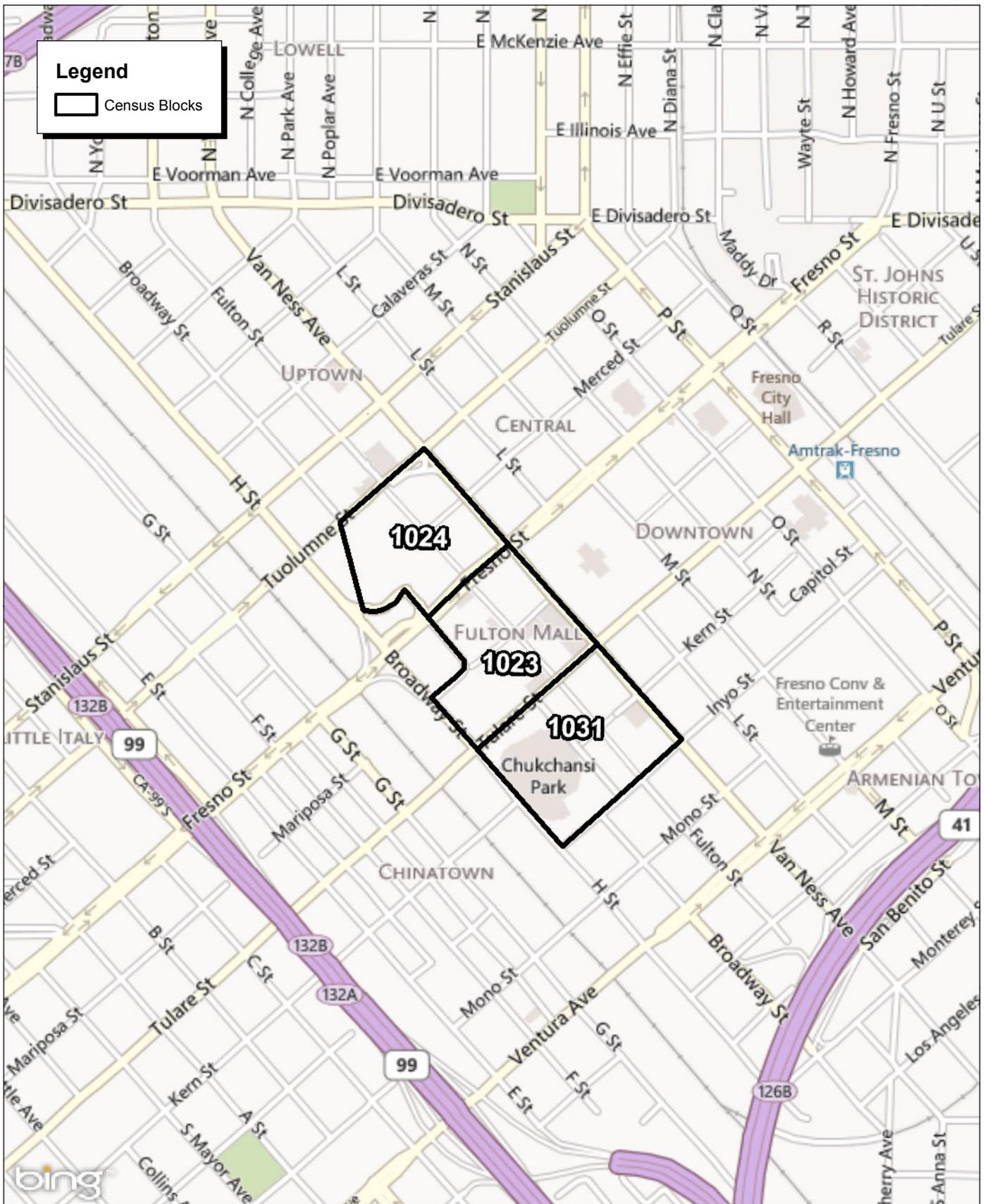
The Project Study Area is made up of three census blocks (1023, 1024, and 1031) within Census Tract 1 (Figures 4-1 and 4-2). Tract 1 contains a total of 22 blocks. These three census blocks are primarily comprised of commercial and office uses, and there are three locations with residential uses within these three blocks. Due to lack of information at the census block level, there may be additional housing within the project area that is unknown at this time.

Population and ethnic census data was only available at the tract level for 2010. Table 3 compares the ethnicity within Tract 1 that encompasses the Project Study Area with five other tracts that surround it as well as with the City of Fresno. Figure 4-2 shows the location of the census tracts. The Hispanic/Non-Hispanic population is also compared. Tract 1 has a much higher percentage of White population at 73.4 percent than for other tracts in the area (26.6 to 44.9 percent) or the City of Fresno at 49.6 percent. This may represent an anomaly because of the smaller population size, or it may reflect the

contributing factors of an “urban pioneer” demographic that is more heavily White, living in the northern part of the tract, combined with a population in the large apartment facilities within the Study Area comprised mostly of seniors which does not reflect the young Hispanic population boom seen in the region as a whole. Tract 1 has a higher percentage of Black population (16.6 percent) than three of the other tracts (Tracts 4, 5.02, and 6 that range from 6.3 to 7.4 percent) and the City of Fresno (8.3 percent). Tracts 2 and 3 have higher percentages of Black population (19.3 and 26.6 percent respectively). While Tract 1 had a similar Asian population to nearby census tracts, it was much lower than for the City of Fresno at 4.5 percent vs. 12.6 percent. For other races, percentages were similar.

Tract 1 has a higher (55.7 percent) percentage of Hispanic residents than the City as a whole (46.9 percent), but this was a lower percent than for the surrounding tracts (62.8 to 78.0 percent).

Table 4 shows the poverty status for the six census tracts and the City of Fresno. Information about non-family households was included because Tract 1 has a very low number of family households and information included can help give a clear picture of the area. Of the 420 households found in Tract 1, 403 are reported as non-family households. As discussed below, most people living in the project area reside in apartments that are for seniors or disabled persons. In this type of housing few, if any, families would be living in these apartments except for some couples. As shown on the table, non-family households have a median income of \$11,243. Overall, there is a per capita income of just \$8,368, less than half of that for the City. The Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines for 2010 was \$10,830 for one person and \$22,050 for a family of four. Both figures have been included here because the majority of the project area and Tract 1 appear to be made up of mostly single persons living alone as indicated on Table 4 and the information given by the apartment complexes. As indicated on the table, most of the tract, and thus the project area, is considered to be low-income. Tract 2 appears to have a worse rate of poverty than Tract 1.



Source: ESRI Bing base map.



Figure 4-1  
 Project Study Area - Census Blocks







Personal interviews with apartment managers provided an estimated population for the three census blocks where the project is located and some information about income. The apartment complexes are:

Pacific Southwest Building: 8 units with about 12 residents. None are low-income.

Hotel Californian: 217 units with about 250 residents who are very low to low-income senior citizens or disabled.

Masten Towers: 200 units with about 204 residents who are very low to low-income (qualify for Section 8 housing). 85 percent are seniors over age 62 and the rest are under 62 with mobility impairments.

The estimated population within the project area is 466. Of these, it is anticipated that 454 are very low to low-income. At Masten Towers, residents must qualify for Section 8 housing meaning that they must be low-income according to Fresno County. This may be a somewhat different standard than the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, but would still be similar. Many residents at the Hotel Californian rely on income from Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or military pensions.

A Fulton Mall Pedestrian Count Project was conducted in 2010. The number of pedestrians in the Mall were surveyed based on the number of pedestrians crossing Mariposa Plaza near the Clock Tower. The total number of pedestrians for each of the three days that were surveyed included 4,673 people on a Tuesday, 5,511 people on a Wednesday, and 5,071 people on a Saturday. The people that were counted each day were categorized as pedestrians, bicyclists, and other. There were various purposes for the trips for each person. These purposes included shopping/doing errands, work commute, recreation, personal business, exercising, and school, and other. It was also found that fewer Caucasians and Asians were present on the Mall as compared to the Fresno County population, and African Americans and Hispanics were present in greater numbers as compared to county population.

A substantial homeless or transient population is currently found on the Fulton Mall, particularly at night, when it can seem to be the only human presence.

**Table 3: Population and Race**

Tract or area	Total Population	Population and (Percentage of Total Population)							
		White	Black	Amer. Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pac. Islander	Some Other Race	Hispanic <sup>1</sup>	Non-Hispanic
1	2,860	2,099 (73.4)	474 (16.6)	36 (1.3)	130 (4.5)	2 (0.1)	91 (3.2)	1,594 (55.7)	1,266 (44.3)
2	3,167	850 (26.8)	612 (19.3)	72 (2.3)	315 (9.9)	1 (0.0)	1,167 (36.8)	2,013 (63.6)	1,154 (36.4)
3	3,609	960 (26.6)	959 (26.6)	78 (2.2)	213 (5.9)	7 (0.2)	1,257 (34.8)	2,266 (62.8)	1,343 (37.2)
4	6,343	2,848 (44.9)	425 (6.7)	175 (2.8)	355 (5.6)	4 (0.1)	2,255 (35.6)	4,948 (78.0)	1,395 (22.0)
5.02	3,606	1,440 (39.9)	227 (6.3)	116 (3.2)	261 (7.2)	3 (0.1)	1,390 (38.5)	2,577 (71.5)	1,029 (28.5)
6	6,161	2,610 (42.4)	455 (7.4)	111 (1.8)	279 (4.5)	12 (0.2)	2,361 (38.3)	4,360 (70.8)	1,801 (29.2)
City of Fresno	494,665	245,306 (49.6)	40,960 (8.3)	8,525 (1.7)	62,528 (12.6)	849 (0.2)	111,984 (22.6)	232,055 (46.9)	262,610 (53.1)

Source: 2010 Census

1. Hispanic may be of any race.

**Table 4: Poverty Status (Income)**

	<b>Tract 1</b>	<b>Tract 2</b>	<b>Tract 3</b>	<b>Tract 4</b>	<b>Tract 5.02</b>	<b>Tract 6</b>	<b>City of Fresno</b>
<b>Total households</b>	420	812	1,006	1,259	964	1,731	156,724
\$14,999 or less	318 (75.7%)	438 (53.9%)	301 (29.9%)	224 (17.8%)	282 (29.2%)	705 (40.8%)	25,772 (16.4%)
\$15,000 to \$24,000	65 (15.5%)	183 (22.5%)	273 (27.1%)	264 (21.0%)	128 (13.3%)	417 (24.1%)	21,885 (14.0%)
\$25,000 to \$150,000	37 (8.8%)	191(23.5%)	423 (42.1%)	734 (58.2%)	509 (52.9%)	609 (35.2%)	99,709 (63.6%)
Median household income	\$11,303	\$13,596	\$22,245	\$31,494	\$33,438	\$20,148	\$43,440
Family House-holds	17	581	756	1,001	613	840	108,221
\$14,999 or less	8 (47.1%)	303 (52.1%) <sup>1</sup>	156 (20.6%)	170 (17.0%)	247 (40.3%)	265 (31.6%)	14,845 (13.7%)
\$15,000 to \$24,000	9 (52.9%)	151(26.0%)	238 (31.5%)	203 (20.3%)	118 (19.2%)	226 (26.9%)	13,805 (12.8%)
\$25,000 to \$150,000	0	127 (21.8%)	353 (46.6%)	608 (60.8%)	248 (40.5%)	344 (41.6%)	72,029 (66.6%)
Median Family Income	\$22, 639	\$14,452	\$24,111	\$32,470	\$21,507	\$21,044	\$49,053
Non-Family Households <sup>2</sup>	403	231	250	258	351	891	48,503
Median Non-Family Household Income	\$11,243	\$8,661	\$13,276	\$21,848	\$47,455	\$14,702	\$29,619
Per capita income	\$8,368	\$5,728	\$9,790	\$9,905	\$14,012	\$9,299	\$19,978

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. May 2013. 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate. Estimated Income DHHS poverty guidelines 2010: 1 person - \$10,830 and Family of four - \$22,050. Numbers for incomes over \$150,000 were not included. 1-228 (39.5%) of these 303 family households had an income of under \$10,000.  
2- See Total Households for estimated income breakdown.

In addition to the population and income characteristics, community character is also identified by community cohesion according to the guidance from the Caltrans CIA Handbook (2011). Community cohesion is the degree to which residents have (1) a “sense of belonging” to their neighborhood, (2) a level of commitment of residents to the community, and (3) a strong attachment to neighbors, groups, and institutions, usually as a result of continued association over time. Cohesive communities have been regularly linked to certain social characteristics such as high ratios of owner-occupied single-family residences, frequent interpersonal contact, ethnic homogeneity, and shared goals. Neighborhoods with residential stability are also indicative of areas with high community cohesion. Given that the three residential areas within the Project Study Area contain apartments for non-family households that are senior or disabled persons, the residential units are not owner occupied, and the residential areas are separated by at least one city block, a high community cohesion is not present. Furthermore, the lack of proper lighting, dirty pavement, overgrown plants, and abandoned plantings suggest an uninviting and unsafe place that is not typical of a cohesive community.

#### **4.1.1.1 Housing**

Based on the 2008 City of Fresno Housing Element, there were 163,704 housing units within the city limits in 2006. By 2010, the housing units increased by 4.6 percent to 171,288 dwelling units according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2006, 63 percent of the housing units were single family and 37 percent were multiple family. Assuming a similar ratio of single-family to multiple-family in 2010 as in 2006, it is estimated that approximately 107,910 single family units and 63,378 multiple family units exist in the City.

The Project Study Area includes three locations with residential uses. These locations include the Masten Towers, Hotel California, and the Pacific Southwest Building.

Masten Towers located at the northeast corner of Fresno Street and Broadway Plaza includes 200 units with one bedroom and studio apartments. Ten percent of the apartments (20 units) accommodate persons with physical disabilities (Masten Towers 2013).

The Hotel California at the southwest corner of Kern Street and Van Ness Avenue has 217 rooms. Currently, the building provides housing for low-income seniors (Balch 2013a).

The Pacific Southwest Building located at the southeast corner of Mariposa Mall and Fulton Mall accommodates approximately 12 people in 8 units. Currently, the housing is provided to above moderate income persons (Balch 2013a).

#### **4.1.2 Environmental Consequences**

##### **Regional Population Characteristics/Community Character**

The proposed reconstruction of Fulton Mall is located within an area of approximately 7.6 acres, which is the project area. The Project Study Area encompasses approximately 65.5 acres. Construction and operational activities would be confined to the project area and would not affect the regional population characteristics or the character of the City of Fresno under build alternatives 1 and 2 and the no build alternative 3.

##### **Neighborhoods/Communities/ Community Character**

The build alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in a change to the population, income, or housing characteristics within the Project Study Area. Although residents live within the Project Study Area, they are located within apartment complexes that are separated by at least one block. Therefore, these apartment complexes do not create a residential neighborhood. The development of the project would not directly affect any of the apartment complexes. Construction and operation activities of the project could result in indirect air quality, noise, and traffic impacts as discussed in Section 4.5.2 below.

These potential construction impacts could also affect the “day” users of Fulton Mall. Areas under construction may be a little more difficult to reach, but access to businesses and offices would be maintained. After the project is completed, access to businesses and offices would be improved and parking would be available closer than the existing parking lots and garages in the area. With better access and parking opportunities, more people may be encouraged to visit the area for shopping, business, and recreational activities

Under the build alternatives, the streetscapes along Fulton Mall would continue to feature wide pedestrian walkways, benches and, particularly in the case of Alternative 2, planters and fountains. Therefore, the Mall project is not expected to substantially alter the presence of this transient population. However, the presence of greater economic and human activity in the Study Area, at more times of the day and night, may have the effect of balancing out the perception of a transient presence.

##### **Housing**

The implementation of the build alternatives 1 and 2 as well as the No Build Alternative (Alternative 3) would not result in the direct effect on housing units. The existing

housing units within the Masten Towers and Hotel Californian are not located directly adjacent to the proposed improvement areas and will not be affected. Although the existing residents located at the Pacific Southwest Building are adjacent to the proposed improvements to Fulton Mall and Mariposa Mall, the residents are located above the tenth floor and will not be affected (Balch 2013b).

In addition to the existing residential units, potential residential units as described in Section 2.1.1 above, are planned to be constructed with tenant improvements within the JC Penney Building at 959 Fulton Mall. There are approximately 66 residential units proposed on the second through the fifth floors (Balch 2013b). According to the property owner, an investment into the proposed residential units cannot occur with Fulton Mall in its present configuration and condition (Maghame 2012). As a result, the proposed tenant improvements for residential units at the JC Penney Building are not expected to occur prior to the reconstruction of Fulton Mall. Therefore, these potential units will not be affected by construction activities with the development of Alternatives 1 or 2.

### **4.1.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required for the build alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, the no build alternative would not require mitigation measures.

## **4.2 Economic Conditions**

### **4.2.1 Affected Environment**

#### **Regional Economy**

Similar to the nation, the Fresno Metropolitan Area has been in a recession with high levels of unemployment. The number of people unemployed in the Fresno area peaked in February 2010 at 81,362 that representing an unemployment rate of approximately 18.6 percent. This unemployment rate was substantially higher than the national unemployment rate of 9.7 percent.

#### **Employment and Income**

The Project Study Area is currently in a state of urban decay due to economic disinvestment; evidenced by high vacancy rates, low lease rates, low retail sales, high crime rates, and deteriorating physical conditions. These economic conditions result in low levels of employment within the Project Study Area.

Based on the Urban Decay Study, the high vacancy rates result in fewer employment opportunities. Currently, there are 299,380 sf of vacant office space and 430,528 sf of vacant retail/restaurant space. As an example, based on a national average employment

density for office uses of 291 sf per employee, the vacancy of the office space within the Fulton Mall Project Study Area has resulted in approximately 1,028 fewer employment opportunities. Although average employment density for retail/restaurant use is not provided in the Urban Decay Study, the Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting for the Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan, Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, and Downtown Development Code identified a retail employment rate of 400 sf per person. Using this employment rate, the vacancy of the retail space within the Fulton Mall Project Study Area has resulted in approximately 1,076 fewer employment opportunities. Therefore, the current office and retail vacancies have reduced potential employment opportunities within the Project Study Area by approximately 2,104 jobs.

### **Business Activity**

Businesses within the Project Study Area, and specifically within Fulton Mall are limited to pedestrian-oriented access. Surface parking and parking structures are located in the perimeter of the Project Study Area; however, visitors and patrons are required to walk to their destination within Fulton Mall.

The Project Study Area suffers from a significantly high vacancy rate. The Project Study Area had a vacancy rate of 46 percent for office uses and 35 percent for large retail spaces in 2010 based land uses as designated in the County Assessor's parcel database. Some of the buildings could actually have mixed uses. For example, a building designated as an "office" use by the County Assessor could have retail uses on the ground floor.

The Project Study Area's vacancy rate is abnormally high compared to the surrounding Downtown and overall City. The Downtown area has an office vacancy rate of 12.7 percent and a retail vacancy rate of 11.2 percent. The City of Fresno has an office vacancy rate of 15.8 percent and a retail vacancy rate of 11 percent. According to the Urban Decay Study (2012), the Downtown area has the second lowest office vacancy rate in the Fresno region which indicates that the Project Study Area's high vacancy rate is not attributable to its location and is due to other conditions.

According to real estate brokers interviewed as part of the Urban Decay Study, the Project Study Area suffers from high vacancies in part due to the exclusively pedestrian-orientation of the Fulton Mall. The lack of through-traffic is undesirable for office and retail businesses that thrive on visibility, and a lack of on-street parking limits access for both tenants and visitors. Real estate brokers who were interviewed for the Urban Decay Study provided several reasons why many clients currently will not be located in the Project

Study Area. These reasons include low visibility, building age, current earthquake and building standards as well as amenities such as customizable spaces, secured covered parking, card-access entry, and high quality infrastructure for high-speed internet. In addition, the property owners of the JC Penney Building and the Pacific Southwest Building have stated that investments in the addition of residential units cannot occur with Fulton Mall in its present configuration and condition.

Several buildings in the Project Study Area are in a state of disrepair, particularly those with long-term vacancies.

Office lease rates are low in the Project Study Area in order to compensate for the issues identified above. The average asking lease rate for Project Study Area office space available in November 2011 was \$1.03 per sf per month. This is 27 percent lower than the average asking lease rate for Class B office buildings Downtown, which was \$1.41 per sf per month in the third quarter of 2011 (Rosenow Spavacek Group, Inc. 2012).

Although a precise comparison of Fulton Mall retail lease rates with Downtown and citywide averages is not available, the Fulton Mall's retail sales per square foot of \$79/year are 61 percent lower than the Downtown average of \$203 and 71 percent lower than the citywide average of \$274 (Rosenow Spavacek Group, Inc. 2012).

## **4.2.2 Environmental Consequences**

### **Regional Economy**

The build alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in any direct impact on the regional (City) economy; however, these alternatives could influence growth through the reoccupation of existing vacant buildings, which on a regional (City) level could reduce the environmental impacts that would otherwise be created by outward suburban growth. The reoccupation of existing building could result in substantial beneficial effect on the regional (City) economy by providing a catalyst for additional development in the downtown area in accordance with the DNCP and FCSP.

The implementation of Alternative 3 would retain the existing pedestrian mall and would not affect the regional economy.

### **Employment and Income**

The implementation of the build alternatives 1 and 2 would result in an induced effect on employment and income by providing better access and visibility to existing businesses and additional businesses that could reoccupy existing vacant buildings. The reoccupation of existing vacant buildings would result in a beneficial impact on

employment opportunities in the Project Study Area because the greater amount of tenancy within the Fulton Mall Project Study Area would result in a greater amount of employment opportunities. The employment opportunities could increase by providing approximately 2,100 new jobs as discussed in Section 4.2.1.2.

### **Business Activity**

The implementation of the build alternatives will result in temporary effects on business activities as construction occurs in the immediate vicinity of the businesses. As each road segment is constructed, the sidewalks adjacent to the road segment will remain open for pedestrians with a barrier located between the sidewalk and the street. Once the street segment is completed, the segment will be available for pedestrian access. Automobile traffic will not be permitted until the proposed project is constructed. After the street segment is constructed, the sidewalk segments will be constructed. The portion of the sidewalks immediately adjacent to the business entrances/exits will be completed during the evening while the businesses are not operating. This will minimize the effect on the businesses as construction occurs.

In the long-term, the build alternatives would provide the parking and vehicle access to the project area that may influence the reoccupation of the existing vacant buildings, contribute to an increase in people shopping and doing business in the Project Study Area, and thus maximize sustainable development and economic productivity. In addition, with a higher occupancy of the Study Area by businesses, and the presence of more people, crime may be potentially reduced and there may be a greater sense of safety. Following are the anticipated retail sales for each alternative as identified in the Economic Impact Analysis.

Alternative 1 - This alternative would result in annual gross revenues increasing from \$32.1 million to \$79.1 million. Average retail sales would increase from \$92 per sf to \$184 per sf.

Alternative 2 - This alternative would result in annual gross revenues increasing from \$32.1 million to \$55.4 million. Average retail sales would increase from \$92 per sf to \$103 per sf.

Alternative 3 - The pedestrian mall under this alternative would remain unchanged. This alternative would continue to result in annual gross revenues of \$32.1 million and average retail sales would remain at \$92 per sf.

The indirect increase in retail sales shown above from the implementation of the build alternatives will result in an induced beneficial effect on the businesses within Fulton Mall.

Under the No Build Alternative, business activity within the Project Study Area is anticipated to remain unchanged and eventually result in a further increase in vacancies due to a decrease in business activity within the Project Study Area.

### **4.2.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required for the build alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, the no build alternative would not require mitigation measures.

## **4.3 Community Facilities and Services**

### **4.3.1 Affected Environment**

#### **Community Facilities**

There are federal and local community facilities that are located within the Project Study Area. These facilities currently provide a variety of services. Following is a listing of these facilities (Balch 2013a).

- U.S. Customs and Immigration Services - 1177 Fulton Mall and moving soon to 1255 Fulton Mall)
- U.S. Army Recruiting - 1171 Fulton Mall
- U.S. Social Security Administration - 865 Fulton Mall
- Internal Revenue Service - 1325 Broadway Plaza
- Fresno Council of Governments - 2035 Tulare Street
- Fresno Housing Authority - 1331 Fulton Mall
- Fresno County Department of Public Health - 1221 Fulton Mall
- Fresno County Office of Education - 1111 Van Ness Avenue
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) - 1252 Fulton Mall
- Chukchansi Park - 1800 Tulare Street
- Parking Lots and Garages - Lot 3 (Fulton and Mariposa Malls), Garage 4 (1919 Tulare Street), Lot 6 (Inyo Street and Fulton Mall), Garage 7 (801 Van Ness Avenue), Garage 8 (1077 Van Ness Avenue), and Garage 9 (2020 Merced Street).
- Mariposa Plaza - There are approximately 93 event days per year.

The hours of operations for the federal and local offices range between 7:30 am and 8 pm Monday through Friday. Chukchansi Park has baseball and soccer events that are

primarily in the evening; however, there are some events in the afternoon (Fresno Grizzlies 2013 and Fresno Fuego Futbol Club 2013).

The hours of operation of the City parking lots and garages are 6 am to 6 pm and Garages 4, 7, and 8 are open until 10 pm during events (Balch 2013a).

The 93 event days associated with Mariposa Plaza includes 73 days associated with the annual Ice Rink and 20 additional official event days. During the 73 days associated with the Ice Rink, there are approximately 31,000 skaters and 30,000 onlookers and guests at the various events related to the rink such as FLYP happy hour, Christmas Tree event, birthday parties, etc. During the 20 days of other events, there are approximately 143,550 attendees. Some of the larger special events include the Fiestas Patrias, or Mexican Independence Day celebration; Cinco de Mayo; and the Catacomb Party music and art festival, each of which draws thousands of visitors (Balch 2013a).

### **Emergency Services**

The emergency services that are provided in the Fulton Mall vicinity include police, fire, ambulance service, and hospital. Following is a brief discussion of each.

The City of Fresno Police Department operates five police stations within the City. The nearest station to Fulton Mall is located at 2323 Mariposa Mall, which is within the Project Study Area.

The City Fire Department has 19 fire stations throughout the City and serves approximately 336 square miles. The nearest fire station (Station #3) to Fulton Mall is located at the southeast corner of Fresno Street and E Street, which is approximately 0.4 mile from Fulton Mall.

Ambulance service is provided by numerous companies within the City of Fresno. The nearest ambulance company to the Fulton Mall is American Ambulance, which is located approximately 1.2 miles from Fulton Mall.

The hospital that serves the Downtown area as well as the Fresno County region is the Community Regional Medical Center located north of the Fresno Street and Divisadero Street intersection. This hospital is located approximately 0.4 mile from Fulton Mall.

### **Utilities**

The utilities in the Fulton Mall vicinity include water, sewer, drainage, natural gas, electricity, and telecommunication systems (i.e., cable and telephone). The water, sewer, and drainage facilities are owned by the City of Fresno while the natural gas and

electricity is owned by Pacific, Gas & Electric, and telecommunication systems in the Fulton Mall Project Study Area are not known.

Water distribution facilities are currently located within Federal Alley east of Fulton Mall and within Home Run Alley and Congo Alley west of Fulton Mall, respectively, between Inyo Street and Tuolumne Street. These facilities range from 6-inch to 15-inches in diameter. Additional water distribution lines also ranging in diameter from 6-inch to 15-inches are located within Inyo Street, Kern Mall and Street, Tulare Street, Mariposa Mall, Fresno Street, and Tuolumne Street. Each of the existing water distribution facilities identified above are currently adequate to serve the existing uses. No water transmission lines or pump stations are located in the Fulton Mall vicinity (Sherwood Design Engineers 2012).

Public and private sewer distribution facilities are located within the Fulton Mall vicinity. Public sewer facilities include up to 30-inch lines within Merced Mall between Van Ness Avenue and H Street, Kern Mall and Street from Van Ness Avenue to Home Run Alley, and Home Run Alley between Kern Mall and Inyo Street. Private sewer lines are located within Federal Alley, Home Run Alley, and Congo Alley except for the portion of Home Run Alley south of Kern Mall. Each of the existing sewer facilities identified above are currently adequate to serve the existing uses. No sewer pump stations are located in the Fulton Mall vicinity (Sherwood Design Engineers 2012). The sewer facilities, while adequately sized to serve existing uses, are of very advanced age and in poor condition. The City of Fresno Department of Public Utilities has plans to rebuild these facilities with local funds. This project is anticipated to occur simultaneous with the implementation of the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project.

Storm drain facilities are located within the Fulton Mall vicinity. A storm drain is located under Fulton Mall between Inyo Street and Tuolumne Street. Additional storm drains are located within Merced Mall between Van Ness Boulevard and H Street, Fresno Street between Van Ness Boulevard and H Street, Mariposa Mall between the Federal Alley and H Street, Tulare Street between Home Run Alley and H Street, Kern Mall between Home Run Alley and Federal Alley, and along Home Run Alley between Kern Mall and Tulare Street. Each of the existing drainage distribution facilities identified above are currently adequate to serve the existing uses (Sherwood Design Engineers 2012).

Natural gas, electricity, and telecommunication systems are located in the Fulton Mall vicinity. The specific location of these facilities are not known at this time; however, it is known that some of these facilities are located within Fulton Mall.

### **4.3.2 Environmental Consequences**

#### **Community Facilities**

Construction activities associated with the build alternatives could impede access during construction activities to the community facilities that are located along Fulton Mall. However, the Fulton Mall Reconstruction would occur in segments along Fulton Mall. As each road segment is constructed, the sidewalks adjacent to the road segment will remain open for pedestrians with a barrier located between the sidewalk and the street. The public will be able to access the federal and local community facilities that are located on the Mall. Once the street segment is completed, the segment will be available for pedestrian access. Automobile traffic will not be permitted until the proposed project is constructed. After the street segment is constructed, the sidewalk segments will be constructed. The portion of the sidewalks immediately adjacent to the entrances/exits of the community facilities will be completed during the evening while the community facilities are closed. This will minimize the effect on the public accessing the community facilities that are located along the Mall. Access to the community facilities that are not located along the Mall will not be directly affected by construction activities.

Construction activities are not expected to affect the public parking at Garages 4, 7 and 8 for events at Chukchansi Park because each of these garages includes accesses from current public streets that will not be affected with project construction.

Separate from the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project, the City of Fresno and various community partners have been awarded funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and other, nonfederal sources for the Mariposa Plaza Activation Project. The purpose of this Plaza project is to make it easier to create community events at Mariposa Plaza, and more pleasant to attend them, as well as encouraging daily use of the space. The Plaza project will involve redesigning the Mariposa Plaza area, particularly the parcel adjacent to the Fulton Mall right-of-way that is currently the site of the oval stage structure and a stand of several trees. Construction to implement this design is also anticipated, but is beyond the scope of the NEA-funded project and has not yet been funded. The NEA-funded Plaza project scope also includes the commission of a new work of interactive public sculpture, which is envisioned to complement the redesign and use of the Plaza. This is anticipated to occur in the stage parcel described above.

During construction of Alternatives 1 or 2, if special events cannot be accommodated in their normal locations on the Mall or at Mariposa Plaza, alternate locations will be arranged by the City and Downtown Fresno Partnership. These could include the use of Courthouse Park or parking lots in and around the Study Area. Upon completion of

construction, these events will be welcomed back to the Project Area and Mariposa Plaza. The reintroduced streets will deliberately be designed to be closed for such occasions.

### **Emergency Services**

Federal Alley and Home Run Alley/Congo Alley currently parallel Fulton Mall that could provide access to police and fire personnel in case of an emergency. The placement of streets along Fulton Mall would provide long-term improvement to police and fire personnel access to the structures along Fulton Mall. This long-term access for police and fire personnel would result in a beneficial impact on these services.

According to Captain Greg Garner, the police captain in charge of the Southwest Policing District which includes the Project Study Area, most criminal acts are committed around the Fulton Mall are crimes of opportunity. While criminal offences range from severe (such as armed robbery) to minor (such as loitering), the most common offences include petty theft, vandalism, and illegal panhandling. Captain Garner believes that opening the Mall to traffic has the potential to have a beneficial impact on reducing crime (Urban Decay Study 2012).

Similar to police and fire services, the build alternatives could impede emergency service during construction activities; however, the build alternatives would occur in segments and thus limiting the area under construction at one time. In addition, Federal Alley and Home Run Alley/Congo Alley currently parallel Fulton Mall that could provide access to emergency personnel. Once constructed, the streets along Fulton Mall would improve access in the Project Study Area. The long-term for emergency personnel would result in a beneficial impact on these services.

Alternative 3, No Build Alternative, would retain the pedestrian mall and would not alter the current police, fire, and emergency services.

### **Utilities**

Construction activities are anticipated to encounter a number of existing utilities located within the construction area of Fulton Mall. During the development of the design plans, these existing utilities will be identified. During construction, they will be located so that the services provided by the utility are not adversely affected. In the event that utility service is required to be disrupted such as water or electricity due to construction activities, temporary impacts to businesses that rely on the services could occur for a short duration.

### **4.3.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

Alternatives 1 and 2 will not require mitigation measures. Alternative 3, No Build Alternative, would retain the pedestrian mall and would not affect utility service.

## **4.4 Relocations**

### **4.4.1 Affected Environment**

Currently there are mobile cart vendors that have business license to operate within the Fulton Mall. Based on information provided by Kate Borders, CEO of the Downtown Fresno Partnership, mobile cart vendors operate daily on Fulton Mall at the corners of Merced Mall, Mariposa Mall, Tulare Street, and Kern Mall (Balch 2013a).

### **4.4.2 Environmental Consequences**

Construction activities associated with Alternatives 1 and 2 will not require the relocation of the businesses within the Study Area. Construction activities would occur in increments so that access to the businesses could be retained as discussed in Section 4.2.2.3, Business Activity.

Since construction activities will occur in increments, construction activities will require the mobile cart vendors to relocate to a portion Fulton Mall that has not been constructed or a portion of Fulton Mall that has been reconstructed with a street. The street within Fulton Mall will not be open for vehicular traffic until the reconstruction of Fulton Mall is completed.

In the long-term under Alternatives 1 and 2, the mobile vendor carts may require a new location for their mobile cart because their current location could be in an area that would be converted into a street. However, during the design phase, locations appropriate for cart vendors will be identified. Long-term impacts to the mobile cart operators are anticipated to be potentially beneficial as business vitality in the area increases.

Alternative 3, No Build Alternative, would retain the pedestrian mall and would not affect the existing vendor cart businesses.

### **4.4.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

Alternatives 1 and 2 will not require mitigation measures. Alternative 3, No Build Alternative, would retain the pedestrian mall and would not affect the existing vendor cart businesses.

## 4.5 Environmental Justice

Due to the presence of low-income and minority populations in the vicinity of Fulton Mall, there is a potential for environmental justice impacts. Environmental justice deals with the inequitable environmental burden borne by groups such as low-income and minority populations.

All projects involving a federal action such as funding, permit, or land must comply with Executive Order (EO) 12898, “Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994. EO 12898 requires that each federal agency, to the greatest extent practical and permitted by law, shall “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high, and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities, on minority possessions...” Thus, Order 12898 is designed to focus attention on environmental and human health conditions in areas of high minority and low-income communities and to prevent discrimination in programs and projects substantially affecting human health and the environment (Federal Register, 1994). The Order requires that the U.S. EPA and all other federal agencies (as well as state agencies receiving federal funds) to develop strategies to address this issue. The agencies are required to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and/or low-income populations.

### 4.5.1 Affected Environment

As discussed in Section 4.1.1.2, Neighborhoods/Communities/Community Character, the Project Study Area is made up of three census blocks (1023, 1024, and 1031) within Census Tract 1. That tract contains a total of 22 blocks. These three census blocks are primarily commercial development, mostly retail stores and offices, but there are three complexes with residential uses within these three blocks. The three complexes contain approximately 425 units with approximately 466 residents. Tract 1 contains approximately 2,860 persons, and therefore, the Project Study Area contains approximately nine percent of the residential population within Tract 1.

As stated previously, due to lack of information at the census block level, the population and ethnic census data presented in Table 3 in Section 4.1.1.2 was only available at the tract level for 2010. Table 3 shows the persons in Tract 1 has the highest percentage of the white race (73.4 percent) compared to each of the five remaining tracts within the downtown area (area between Highway 99, Highway 41, and Highway 180) as well as

compared to the City of Fresno (49.6 percent). Because ethnicity is different than race and Hispanic persons could be of any race, a review of the persons that are of Hispanic origin compared to non-Hispanic was conducted. According to Table 3, the percentage of Hispanic persons within Tract 1 (55.7 percent) is less than the other tracts within the downtown area; however, Tract 1 has a greater percentage compared to the City of Fresno (46.9 percent). Although the Project Study Area is a small fraction of persons within Tract 1, there is a possibility that the Project Study Area could have a disproportionate number of minority populations when compared citywide, although this cannot be determined from the available information.

Also presented in Section 4.1.1.2, Table 4 shows the poverty status for Tract 1, the remaining five census tracts within the downtown area and the City of Fresno. As shown in Table 4, there are 420 households within Tract 1 and the majority of these households are made up of mostly single persons living alone. The per capita income for persons living within Tract 1 is \$8,368, which is lower than the poverty levels of \$10,830 for one person. Within the five remaining tracts of downtown, there is one tract (Tract 2) that has a lower per capita income and the three remaining tracts have a higher per capita income. Comparing Tract 1 with the City of Fresno, the per capita income for all persons living in the City of Fresno is approximately 239 percent higher than Tract 1.

Within the Project Study Area, the estimated residential population is 466. Of these, it is anticipated that the residents at the Masten Towers and Hotel California (about 450 persons) are characterized as very low to low-income persons. At Masten Towers, residents must qualify for Section 8 housing meaning that they must be low-income according to Fresno County. This may be a somewhat different standard than the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, but would still be similar. Many residents at the Hotel Californian rely on income from Social Security Supplemental Security Income or military pensions. The remaining 12 persons residing at the Pacific Southwest Building are not characterized as low-income persons. Based on the above information, the Project Study Area very likely has a disproportionate number of low-income populations.

Based on the types of businesses currently located on the Fulton Mall, many may be minority owned. Several retail businesses appear to serve the Hispanic community. Restaurants are mainly Hispanic or other ethnic foods.

### 4.5.2 Environmental Consequences

Masten Towers is located approximately 225 feet west of the nearest area proposed for reconstruction. The Hotel Californian located at the southwest corner of Kern Street and Van Ness Avenue is located within a few feet of the nearest area of Kern Street proposed for reconstruction. The Pacific Southwest Building located at the southeast corner of Mariposa Mall and Fulton Mall has residents living in the upper floors (above the tenth floor) of the 16-story building.

All businesses, including minority owned businesses, would benefit from increased access and parking provided by Alternative 1 or 2. No businesses would be directly impacted or relocated. Construction activities could result in temporary effects, such as temporary air, noise or visual impacts. During construction, access to the business would be provided.

Construction activities associated with Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in direct impacts to the residents at the three complexes because the project does not include impacts to the buildings within the Study Area. The construction activities could result in temporary effects on the residents and current Mall “day” users as discussed in Section 4.1.2.2. These temporary impacts could include increases in air emissions, noise levels, and construction traffic. These increases could occur during demolition, grading of the right-of-way, construction of the curbs and gutters, placement of the rock and asphalt for the roadbed, and construction of the sidewalk. Following is a discussion of potential impacts to the residences within the Project Study Area and the Mall “day” users.

The nearest residences to the construction activities include those within the Pacific Southwest Building and the Hotel California. Construction activities will occur within street segments that will encompass less than one acre.

**Air Quality** - Construction activities will increase emissions of criteria pollutants including reactive organic gases (ROG), oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>). During grading activities, dust and particulates have a potential to be generated; however, the contractor will be required to comply with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District’s (SJVAPCD) Regulation VIII, which controls fugitive dust. According to the SJVAPCD Guide for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI), the air emissions thresholds within the San Joaquin Air Basin are 10 tons of ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> per year, and there are no thresholds for CO. The emissions associated with the project will occur over an approximately seven-week period within each construction segment. The segments will

overlap; however, the construction activity such as grading will only occur within one segment at a time. The emissions associated with the project are expected to result in less ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions than the 10 tons per year thresholds established by the SJVAPCD.

Long-term air emissions associated with traffic volumes under Alternatives 1 and 2 are not expected to directly increase because these alternatives do not result in the addition of land uses. The current traffic volumes would be redistributed onto the proposed new roadways and air emissions would remain the same.

**Noise** - Construction activities will increase noise levels. These noise levels could range from 95 dB with jackhammers to 82 dB with tractors. Noise levels at the residential complexes will reduce as the construction activity move further away from the complexes. According to the Fresno Municipal Code, construction activities occurring during the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., excluding Sundays, are exempt from the City's noise ordinance standards. Although exempt, a review of currently adopted thresholds to determine if noise levels could result in harm to individuals was conducted. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) noise limits were reviewed. OSHA standards were established for noise exposure of workers; however, they could also be applied to residents. OSHA standards allow a noise exposure level of 90 dB over an eight-hour exposure period, 92 dB over a six-hour exposure period, 95 dB for four hours of exposure, 97 dB for a three-hour period, and 105 dB for one hour of exposure. Typical operation of construction equipment includes cycles that may involve 1 to 2 minutes of full power operation followed by 3 to 4 minutes at lower power settings. As a result, the OSHA noise exposure levels would not be exceeded during the construction activities associated with Alternatives 1 and 2.

Long-term noise levels associated with traffic volumes under Alternatives 1 and 2 will increase along Fulton Street, Kern Street, Mariposa Street, and Merced Street due to the redistribution of existing traffic volumes. The increase in traffic volumes will not exceed the volumes along current streets within the Project Study Area such as Tuolumne Street, Fresno Street, Tulare Street, Inyo Street, and Van Ness Avenue. These streets have residences located directly adjacent to these streets such as Fresno Street and Van Ness Avenue. As a result, noise levels along the new streets will not be substantially different from current noise levels.

**Traffic** - Construction traffic volumes will increase with the hauling of demolition material and export soil as well as delivery of rock, asphalt, concrete, and other materials.

Increases in construction traffic could result in potential safety effects as the construction vehicles enter or exit the construction areas. A traffic safety control plan will be required during construction activities.

Long-term traffic volumes under Alternatives 1 and 2 will increase along Fulton Street, Kern Street, Mariposa Street, and Merced Street due to the redistribution of existing traffic volumes. The increase in traffic volumes will not exceed the volumes along current streets within the Project Study Area such as Tuolumne Street, Fresno Street, Tulare Street, Inyo Street, and Van Ness Avenue. An evaluation of the increases in traffic volumes on the existing street network was conducted. The increase in average daily traffic with Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in an increase of a maximum of 72 trips per day. This increase in daily traffic volumes on the existing street network is considered nominal.

**Economic Effects** - As discussed in Chapter 3, Growth, Alternatives 1 and 2 are expected to influence growth in the Project Study Area resulting in decreases of vacancies. In addition as discussed in Section 4.2.2.2, Employment and Income, Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in increases in gross revenues and average retail sales. These changes that would result from the implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 is expected to improve property values as well as investment in the maintenance of the structures within the Project Study Area. This investment would prevent further deterioration of the Project Study Area and therefore, the low income and minority residents that live in the Project Study Area will experience an improvement in visual quality and increase in safety within Fulton Mall.

Implementation of Alternative 3 would retain the pedestrian mall and would not result in environmental justice impacts associated with air quality, noise, traffic, and the economy.

#### **4.5.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

Based on the above discussion and analysis, the build alternative 1 and 2 would not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations as per Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice.

# Chapter 5 Traffic and Transportation/ Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

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## 5.1 Affected Environment

### 5.1.1 Access, Circulation, and Parking

The existing superblock that contains the Project Study Area is bound by Tuolumne Street on the north, Van Ness Avenue to the east, Inyo Street to the south, and H Street/Broadway Street on the west. Due to the presence of the Fulton Mall, traffic circulation patterns are disrupted due to access restrictions. No vehicular traffic is permitted on Fulton Mall. West of Van Ness Avenue, Kern Street and Merced Street dead end into Fulton Mall. Vehicles using these two streets require use of Federal Alley that parallels Fulton Mall on the east. Federal Alley is a one-way (southbound) street. Federal Alley can also be accessed along Tuolumne Street, Fresno Street, and Tulare Street. Home Run Alley is parallel and west of Fulton Mall between Tulare Street and Inyo Street. Congo Alley is parallel and west of Fulton Mall between Tulare Street and Tuolumne Street. Home Run Alley and Congo Alley are also primarily one-way (southbound) street with the exception of the portion of Congo Alley immediately north of Fresno Street adjacent to the Masten Towers.

Parking is currently provided on the outer parts of the Project Study Area. This parking includes surface parking and structure parking. There are currently approximately 2,255 surface and structure parking spaces, and there are an additional 14 metered parking spaces located along Kern Street and Merced Street west of Van Ness Avenue.

Bicycles are permitted within Fulton Mall; however, Fulton Mall is not a designated bike route by the City of Fresno. Designated bicycle routes are provided along Tuolumne Street, Fresno Street, Tulare Street, and Inyo Street.

Pedestrians currently have access along sidewalks outside of the mall areas and within the Project Study Area. The Fulton Mall is restricted to pedestrian access.

At the eastern edge of the Project Study Area, the pedestrian crossing of Van Ness Avenue along the Mariposa alignment, to and from Courthouse Park, is currently accommodated only by use of an underground tunnel.

### **5.1.2 Public Transportation**

The public transportation provided in the City of Fresno is the Fresno Area Express (FAX). FAX provides many routes and bus stops throughout the City. The downtown transit center is located on the east side of Van Ness Avenue between Fresno Street and Tulare Street (Fresno Area Express 2013). Bus stops and bus routes are located along Van Ness Avenue, Inyo Street, H Street, Tuolumne Street, Fresno Street, and Tulare Street. There are no bus stops or bus routes within Fulton Mall (Fresno Area Express 2013 and Google Earth 2013).

## **5.2 Environmental Consequences**

### **5.2.1 Access, Circulation, and Parking**

The provision of a street along Fulton Mall will largely restore the circulation grid pattern in the Project Study Area, which will provide vehicle circulation in a currently restricted area under Alternatives 1 and 2. Federal Alley, Home Run Alley, and Congo Alley would remain one-way. The implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 would provide a beneficial effect on circulation and access within the Project Study Area. Alternative 3 would retain the pedestrian Mall and therefore, circulation patterns within the Project Study Area would continue to be disrupted due to access restrictions.

The implementation of the street network within Fulton Mall under the build alternatives 1 and 2 will not directly increase traffic volumes because no new land uses are proposed. The existing traffic volumes within the Project Study Area would be redistributed as the street network is provided. Since traffic volumes will be redistributed, there will be locations within the Project Study Area that will experience increases in traffic volumes (such as areas that do not currently experience traffic volumes) and locations that will experience decreases in traffic volumes. The locations that will increase traffic volumes as a direct result of implementing the build alternatives 1 or 2 would result in a maximum increase of 210 average daily trips compared to existing volumes (Fehr & Peers 2013).

The existing surface and structure parking will not be affected under Alternatives 1 and 2 because no structures are proposed to be added or removed as part of the project. As stated above, 14 metered parking spaces are currently provided on Kern Street and Merced Street south of Van Ness Avenue. Under Alternative 1, Fulton Street between Tuolumne Street and Inyo Street would include 162 on-street parking spaces and Kern, Mariposa, and Merced streets would include 28 on-street parking spaces. Under Alternative 2, Fulton Street between Tuolumne Street and Inyo Street would include 52 on-street parking spaces and Kern, Mariposa, and Merced streets would include 30 on-street parking spaces. The provision of parking spaces along Fulton, Kern, Mariposa, and

Merced streets under Alternatives 1 and 2 will include parking meters that will provide convenience for shoppers and visitors. The provision of parking along the streets within the Project Study Area would improve access to local businesses on Fulton Street, increase economic productivity of the retail stores, and provide a catalyst for additional sustainable development within the Project Study Area. The provision of parking would result in a beneficial effect. Alternative 3 would continue to prohibit vehicular traffic within the Mall as well as parking.

The implementation of the build alternatives 1 and 2 would add bicycle routes within the Project Study Area. The additional routes would provide beneficial impacts on alternative transportation. Alternative 3 would continue to allow bicycles within Fulton Mall.

With the implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2, pedestrian access throughout Fulton Mall will be restricted to sidewalks adjacent to the proposed streets as well as crosswalk areas that connect one side of the street to the other side. Although pedestrian access is partially affected under Alternatives 1 and 2, this potential effect is not considered adverse because pedestrian access will be retained.

Under Alternative 3, pedestrian access will remain unchanged and therefore, this alternative would result in no effect on pedestrian access.

Separate from the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project, the City has been awarded funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Bus Livability Program to improve the Van Ness/Mariposa intersection and surrounding area. These improvements will include an at-grade signalized pedestrian crossing of Van Ness at Mariposa, as well as aesthetic and functional improvements to the underground tunnel.

### **5.2.2 Public Transportation**

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would not alter the existing public transportation that is currently provided by the Fresno Area Express because the bus stops and bus routes would not be altered. Therefore, the implementation of these alternatives would result in no effect on public transportation.

Separate from the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project, the City has been awarded funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Very Small Starts Program to construct a 13.8-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along major corridors in the city. The central stop for the BRT system will be at the corner of Van Ness and Mariposa. The FTA has also awarded Bus Livability Program funding, described above, to improve pedestrian

use and access to and around this station in the vicinity of the Van Ness/Mariposa intersection. This includes integrating the BRT station platforms in the middle of the Van Ness Avenue alignment with the signal-controlled pedestrian crossing of Van Ness Avenue at Mariposa.

### **5.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required for the build alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, the no build alternative would not require mitigation measures.

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## Appendix B List of Preparers

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This document was prepared by the following:

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Contribution: Wrote Community Impact Assessment for the project.

