



## The (Broken) Heart of Our City: A Fulton Mall Timeline

*Compiled by Joe Moore and Elliott Balch*

- 1954 — Victor Gruen’s Northland Center in Detroit, the nation’s first regional suburban shopping center opens.
- 1955 — Construction begins on Manchester Center at Shields and Blackstone, Fresno’s first major suburban shopping center, anchored by a Sears and Roebuck department store.
- 1955 — Victor Gruen unveils a “superblock” plan of pedestrian malls for downtown Fort Worth.
- 1956 — Fresno business leaders discuss the possibility of creating a pedestrian mall on Mariposa Street from the courthouse park, west to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.
- 1957 — Downtown Association of Fresno pushes for expansion of the Mariposa Street concept to Fulton Street, stretching six to eight blocks.
- 1958 — Victor Gruen & Associates submit a formal proposal to work on a plan for the Central Business District of Fresno, hired by city.
- 1958 — Fresno State begins to relocate from University Ave. near the Tower District, to a site at Cedar and Shaw in north Fresno.
- 1959 — Kalamazoo Mall, a Victor Gruen project, opens on Burdick Street in Downtown Kalamazoo Michigan, the nation’s first downtown pedestrian mall.
- 1960 — The City of Fresno adopts in principle Victor Gruen’s plan for the Central Business District, including a downtown pedestrian mall, the Central Area Plan.
- 1964 — Construction begins on Fresno’s Fulton Mall, March 30, 1964.
- 1964 — Fresno’s Fulton Mall opens to the public on September 1, 1964.
- 1964 — Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area General Plan incorporates retail emphasis of Downtown Fresno Central Business District.
- 1965 — The American Institute of Architects awards Fresno with its national award for “Excellence in Community Architecture”
- 1966 — The Fresno Convention Center opens.
- 1968 — The Fulton Mall is honored with a “National Design Excellence” award from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- 1970 — Montgomery Ward’s closes their Fulton Mall location, plans to move to north Fresno.
- 1970 — Fashion Fair, an indoor, regional shopping mall opens at Shaw Ave and First Street, near Fresno State College in what was then “North Fresno.”
- 1973 — The city council votes 7-0 to amend the Central Area Plan to permit Fresno and Tulare Streets to remain open through the downtown “superblock” — a major deviation from the original plans of Victor Gruen.
- 1973 — The hi-rise Del Webb Townhouse Hotel closes, later converted to county government offices.
- 1974 — Fresno General Plan calls for “multiple centers” — leading to the decentralization of retail services throughout the community.
- 1986 — J.C. Penney’s closes its downtown location.

- 1988 — Local department store retailer Gottschalks closes their flagship downtown store, and two years later moves their corporate offices to north Fresno.
- 1989 — Central Area Community Plan is adopted as the official planning document for downtown, calls for Fulton Mall to remain primarily a pedestrian space.
- 1992 — The Ratkovich “Plan” calls for a “think smaller” approach, vehicular traffic on the mall, and a downtown stadium, council unanimously endorses it, but is not officially “adopted”.
- 1999 — The Urban Land Institute releases a report on strategies for revitalization of the Fulton Mall, recommendations include “redesign the Fulton Mall by restoring part of the street grid.”
- 1999 — Kalamazoo reopens two blocks of its downtown pedestrian mall to vehicle traffic, two blocks remain “pedestrian only.”
- 2002 — The Redevelopment Agency of Fresno’s “Vision 2010 — Destination Downtown” document calls for revitalization of the Fulton Mall “with possible limited traffic and refurbished pedestrian and landscaped areas.”
- 2002 — Report by ELS Architecture and Urban design recommends returning limited car traffic to the Fulton Mall, no action is taken.
- 2002 — Fresno’s Downtown multi-purpose stadium (now Chukchansi Park) opens on the Fulton Mall at Kern.
- 2006 — City of Fresno holds a series of public meetings about the Fulton Mall, the public supports keeping the mall as a pedestrian space.
- 2007 — Downtown Transportation Infrastructure Study (Wilbur Smith and Associates) examines three scenarios, pedestrian only, partially opened, and completely opened, but does not recommend any one course of action at this time, but suggests that city make immediate upgrades to mall lighting, streetscape, etc, and entertain options in the future to make “changes to the use and configuration of the Mall.”
- 2008 — City of Fresno announces conceptual plans from Calthorpe Associates for a “linear water feature” on the Fulton Mall and other areas downtown.
- 2008 — The Downtown Coalition nominates the Fulton Mall to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 2009 — The Downtown Association, Fresno EOC and City launch the “Market on the Mall” Fulton Mall farmers market.
- 2010 — The State Historical Resources Commission and the National Park Service find the Fulton Mall eligible for the National Register of Historic Resources. The Fresno City Council, Mayor, and a majority of Fulton Mall property owners object to the nomination. Because of the property owner objections, the Mall cannot be listed on the National Register but is instead listed on the California Register of Historical Resources.
- 2010 — Downtown property owners vote to form the Downtown Fresno Property and Business Improvement District (PBID). The new district is centered on the Fulton Mall, dedicating the most resources there while assessing Mall property owners at a significantly higher rate.
- 2011 — The City of Fresno releases a public draft of the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, identifying the restoration of a street and incorporation of artistic elements from the Mall as the City Administration’s preferred vision for the future of Fulton.
- 2011 — The Downtown Fresno Partnership (Partnership), which operates the PBID, rescues the cancelled 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas Parade and moves the parade route onto the Fulton Mall, while moving the ailing farmers market to Kern Street.
- 2012 — The Partnership signs an agreement with the City of Fresno to handle permitting for Fulton Mall events and vendor carts.
- 2012 — The Partnership hires Ambassadors to patrol the Mall and nearby areas of downtown, part of the PBID work plan.
- 2012 — The Partnership opens the first-ever outdoor downtown ice rink. In nine weeks of operation, the rink attracts over 31,000 skaters and thousands of others.