LAND USE, MOBILITY, AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY REPORT
FREMONT CITY CENTER

CITY OF FREMONT, CALIFORNIA
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1. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

FREMONT CITY CENTER

1.1 | WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this report is to propose big-picture policy and design direction for the Fremont City Center and to receive feedback on the work completed to date. Based on feedback from stakeholders, staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, these concepts will be refined into a Precise Plan and Form-Based Code which will guide future improvements and development in the area.

In this report, we focus on strategies for priority improvement areas within the City Center. These are the areas that have the greatest potential to improve the character of the City Center in the short term. Following this, the report identifies a number of policy assumptions that support implementation of the strategies.

The following information is NOT included in this document and will be addressed at a later phase of work:
- Exact land use designations
- Specific building heights and intensities
- Detailed design work for areas less likely to change
- Highly prescriptive phasing plans
- Form-based zoning structure
- Build-out projections, besides the maximums set in the General Plan

1.2 | HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Written feedback on this document can be directed toward City of Fremont staff (contact Scott Ruhland at sruhland@fremont.gov) and Raimi + Associates (contact Aaron Welch at aaron@raimiassociates.com).
II. VISION

FREMONT CITY CENTER

2.1 | VISION

The vision for the Fremont City Center is set in the General Plan, with additional precedents provided by the recently adopted Downtown Community Plan.

“Fremont will serve as a national model of how an auto-oriented suburb can evolve into a sustainable, strategically urban, modern city.”
- Vision Statement for Fremont General Plan 2030

“The area was envisioned as Fremont’s downtown more than 50 years ago. . . . Looking forward, City Center will become more urban in character, with more intense infill development and redevelopment, particularly within ½ mile of BART. Trees, sidewalks, benches, plazas, public art and other amenities [will] make the streets pedestrian-friendly. While the City Center includes local-serving uses, it is envisioned primarily as a regional commercial center, employment center, and entertainment and cultural center. The designation also accommodates mid to high-rise residential projects and mixed use projects incorporating housing above non-residential uses.”
- City Center Land Use Designation, Fremont General Plan 2030

A mixed-use building with a grocery store on the ground floor.

Multi-family housing with stoop entries.
An urban street flanked by intense buildings, street trees, and wide sidewalks.

A multi-family housing building presents a friendly face to the street with large windows and stoop frontages.

An urban street with wide sidewalks fronted by large storefront windows that are shielded from the elements by deep awnings.
III. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

FREMONT CITY CENTER

The goal of the City Center Precise Plan and Form-based Code is to transform the auto-oriented City Center into a multi-modal, mixed-use destination with comfortable, walkable, complete streets, a strong sense of place, and better visual and physical connections to BART (see Figure 3.1). The primary strategies that the Plan and Code will follow to accomplish this are as follows:

1. Continue to support Downtown development efforts. Given the recent adoption of the Downtown Community Plan, and the availability of private- and public-sector parcels for immediate development, the current focus on transforming Downtown should continue. The City Center Precise Plan and Form-Based Code will not alter the adopted Downtown vision, but will support and enhance the current Downtown goals and land use framework.

2. Be catalytic and opportunistic about changes in the City Center area. The majority of parcels in the City Center area (outside of the Downtown Community Plan Area) are in use for buildings or parking. As a result, the City should be opportunistic, flexible, and not overly rigid about how and where new development occurs.

3. Provide flexible implementation options. Because short-term development possibilities are unclear, the Precise Plan will confirm the long-term vision while remaining flexible in the phasing and physical manifestation of that vision.

4. Take advantage of employment and visitor population. The City Center Precise Plan should take advantage of the significant number of medical, public, and service employees in the City Center area many of whom attract visitors and require goods and services such as restaurants, professional services, cafés and other uses. Downtown will attract the greatest concentration of activity, services, and retail, with complementary uses throughout the rest of the City Center.

5. Add housing throughout the City Center. In the near- and medium-term, housing (particularly higher end, multi-family, and affordable housing) is one of the most economically viable opportunities for new development in the City Center. There are few downtowns that have the diversity of retail, services, employment, and transit access anywhere in the Bay Area, and the City Center should capitalize on this strength.

6. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections. Since the existing City Center environment is predominantly automobile-oriented, there will need to be a concerted, committed effort to tame streets, invest in pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improve bicycle and pedestrian connections, and create a vibrant public realm. Some of the most important pedestrian connections will be from BART to Downtown (including through the Gateway Plaza Shopping Center), from the Hub to Downtown, and from BART to major employers like the hospitals.
Figure 3.1 | Illustrative Transformation of the Fremont City Center

Legend
- Plan Boundary
- BART Station
- BART Plaza
- Washington Hospital
- Washington West
- Gateway Plaza Shopping Center
- BART Parking Lot Infill
- The Fremont Hub
- Gateway (see Section 5.7)
- Infill Potential
7. **Improve the streetscape.** Introduce streetscape improvements along BART Way, Civic Center Drive, and the Capitol Avenue extension passing through Washington Hospital West. This could include planting missing street trees, installing pedestrian-oriented street lights, providing street furniture such as benches and trash cans, and introducing bulbouts and crosswalks at intersections.

8. **Work with the hospitals on their “public face.”** Washington Hospital is the City Center’s single largest landowner and employer, and is continuously investing in its own facilities. Kaiser also has a major presence in the City Center. Since hospital campuses tend to be insular and internally-focused, the City and hospitals should work proactively to ensure their improvements benefit the public realm. Several ideas include:
   - Constructing a joint parking garage between BART and Washington Hospital
   - Improving pedestrian connections through hospital properties
   - Constructing new buildings with an urban edge that have transparency
   - Identifying a mix of uses that can serve hospital workers and visitors

9. **Work with BART to improve the station area.** BART is interested in adding transit-oriented housing on their property in the City Center. The City and BART should work collaboratively to achieve this. The City and BART should also work to improve pedestrian access to the BART station, with the potential for an improved BART civic plaza west of the station. Finally, the City should work jointly with BART and Washington hospital to create lined parking garages and habitable buildings facing the BART plaza and station.

10. **Create a comprehensive parking and transportation demand strategy for the City Center area.** Look for opportunities for shared parking, on-street parking, district-wide parking management, reduced parking requirements, and transportation demand management with major employers to reduce overall parking demand. Look at the Downtown Community Plan as a precedent and guide.

11. **Expand plazas and urban open space.** The City Center area is lacking in public open space. Immediate opportunities to improve public open space include:
   - Creating a walking trail around Tule Pond (adjacent to the BART station) to take advantage of this beautiful amenity while providing better connections from the BART station to residential neighborhoods to the east of the City Center.
   - Creating multi-use trail connections from BART to Fremont Central Park, and connecting across Walnut Avenue with the trail behind the Archstone project.
   - Improving the BART plaza
12. Improve key intersections around the Downtown. Improve pedestrian crossings and design linkages such as signage, gateways, streetscape, and harmonious architecture around the edges of Downtown to improve its connection to the rest of the City Center.

13. Work with major retail property owners to plan for transformation. The two major shopping centers (Gateway Plaza and the Hub), present two of the largest opportunities for physical transformation in the City Center area, but neither is currently pursuing redevelopment. Nonetheless, the City should regularly coordinate with these property owners to ensure that future changes benefit the public realm and support the vision for the City Center.

14. Wayfinding and Branding. Signage, marketing, gateways, and an improved look and feel can be a catalytic, low-cost aspect of transforming the City Center and strengthening connections to BART. There should be a coordinated effort to improve the City Center’s public face, in coordination with similar efforts in the Downtown Community Plan area.

15. Accommodate and capitalize on changing station identity. With the southern extension of BART currently underway into South Fremont and eventually Santa Clara County and San Jose, Fremont BART Station will slowly transform from the “end of line” to an active destination from both directions. While this transition will take many years, the City and its partners should begin to prepare for a station that is walkable and increasingly used, providing a positive public face for Fremont.
4.1 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, the City Center area is characterized by large blocks, wide streets, expansive surface parking lots, and many single-use buildings. It is largely disconnected from the Fremont BART Station and the preferred and most practical method for getting around is the automobile.

Blocks are typically longer than 600 feet and as long as 1,850 feet (the Fremont Hub) – distances that are incompatible with comfortable pedestrian circulation. Streets are designed to convey automobile traffic quickly and efficiently with less emphasis on the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists. Most large streets such as Mowry Avenue, Fremont Boulevard, Paseo Padre Parkway, Stevenson Boulevard, and parts of Walnut Avenue do not allow on-street parking, though some smaller streets do.

The City Center is the heart of Fremont and contains many important shopping, office, and institutional destinations (see Figure 4.1). Its development pattern is characterized by low-density, low-rise buildings fronted by surface parking lots. Building heights are primarily 1 - 2 stories, although there are some 4-story buildings, and Washington Hospital is 6 stories tall. Existing parcels vary greatly in size and configuration, with building patterns reflecting these irregularities. Existing land uses are comprised of five primary uses:

- **Retail/Service**, which is concentrated in the Gateway Plaza and Fremont Hub shopping centers, along Mowry Avenue between Hastings Street and Fremont Boulevard, and along Fremont Boulevard.

- **Office**, located primarily along and south of Walnut Avenue, including the underutilized Wells Fargo Bank Operations Center site (located at the southwest corner of Walnut Avenue and Liberty Street). Medical office uses are primarily concentrated on the north side of Mowry Avenue, across the street from Washington Hospital.

- **Medical/Health Care**, including Washington Hospital and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation’s Fremont Center (both located adjacent to and just to the west of the BART Station), the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, and Fremont Hospital.

- **Civic**, including Fremont City Hall and associated buildings, the Development Service Center, the Family Resource Center, the Alameda County Courthouse, and the Chadbourne Carriage House (located just to the north of Beacon Avenue). The Fremont Main Library is just east of the study area.

- **Multi-Family Residential**, located in the southeast corner of the City Center area along Civic Center Drive between Walnut Avenue and Stevenson Boulevard and assisted living along Walnut Avenue near California Street. The City Center area is almost completely surrounded by single-family homes with pockets of multi-family buildings.
Figure 4.1 | City Center Context Map

Legend
- **Plan Boundary**
- **Downtown Community plan Boundary**

City Hall
Family Resource Center
Gateway Shopping Center
Washington Hospital
BART Station
Hayward Fault Line
Mixed-Use Housing
Kaiser Permanente Medical Center
Fremont Main Library
Central Park
Palo Alto Medical Foundation
City Offices
Urban Housing Project
The Hub Shopping Center

Legend:
- **Plan Boundary**
- **Downtown Community plan Boundary**
4.2 MARKET FEASIBILITY

Multi-family urban housing will be the primary future addition to the City Center’s land use mix. Housing development is the most feasible development opportunity under near-term market conditions, and creates the strongest opportunity to introduce a transformative critical mass of activity occurring outside of the hours of existing commercial land uses. Housing will also grow BART ridership, provide homes for workers in local offices/medical facilities, and provide more shoppers at existing retail sites. Small increments of office space may be added as the market improves, but represent a small incremental addition to the existing character and activity in the City Center. Small future additions of retail will consist of local-serving uses within storefronts in mixed-use buildings; the net addition of retail may be low given that smaller, weak shopping centers are likely to redevelop before larger, more stable shopping centers. Improved bike and pedestrian connections between future development and the existing retail activities in the City Center area should also be emphasized. The Hub, Gateway Plaza, and the concentration of grocery stores such as Raley’s, Whole Foods, etc. are an existing anchor, offering a retail concentration that is not available in any other downtown in the East Bay.

4.3 PLANNING AREAS

The planning areas for the City Center Precise Plan (CCPP) are shown in Figure 4.2 and described below. The overall CCPP area is set by the General Plan’s City Center Land Use designation (it also includes a small amount of designated open space land adjacent to the BART Station). The Planning areas within the CCPP are generally set by the General Plan’s Central Community Plan area.

• BART/Civic Center planning area. This planning area of the CCPP includes the area northeast/east of Paseo Padre Parkway, including the BART Station, Washington Hospital campus, Kaiser Permanente campus and Gateway Plaza. The CCPP’s BART/Civic Center planning area also includes 1) the transit loop and parking lots northeast of the BART station and 2) the triangular piece of land south of Walnut Avenue and east of Civic Center Drive.

• Downtown Community Plan area. This planning area is entirely contiguous with the Downtown Community Plan Area and governed by the Downtown Community Plan and Design Guidelines and Downtown zoning district. It’s bounded by Paseo Padre Parkway, Walnut Avenue, Fremont Boulevard, and Mowry Avenue.

• The HUB planning area. This planning area is west of Downtown, bounded by Fremont Boulevard, Walnut, Argonaut Way, and Mowry. It also includes the small rectangle of land on either side of Fremont Boulevard west of Mowry and the shopping center southwest of Fremont Boulevard and Walnut Avenue.

• South Walnut planning area. This planning area is southeast of Walnut Avenue and Paseo Padre Parkway and bounded by Stevenson Boulevard and Sundale Drive.

The intended character and sub-areas of the planning areas are described in further detail on the following pages.
Figure 4.2 | City Center Precise Plan Planning Areas

Legend

- BART Station
- Plan Boundary
4.4 | PLANNING SUB-AREAS: DESIRED CHARACTER AND INTENSITY

Sub-Area 1

Intent: Allow continued use as general commercial shopping center(s). However, if all or a portion of the sub-area is redeveloped, transition to a walkable, mixed use environment compatible with and supportive of Downtown, with improved street frontages along Fremont Boulevard and Walnut.

Potential for Change:
- Short-term change unlikely except for infill at the edges
- Medium- to long-term opportunities for significant transformation and intensification to a more walkable urban pattern

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Mixed use: retail/commercial and multifamily residential (townhouse to stacked flats) along edges
- 1-5 stories

Additional Direction:
- Introduce a Floating Zone, which allows current zoning to continue but introduces zoning for a more urban pattern when significant redevelopment occurs in the future.
- Require a sub-area-wide planning and design process if the Hub re-develops.
- Improve the historic park’s role as an amenity.
- Seek opportunities to introduce liner buildings at the edges
- Provide additional connections within the block
- Encourage a more lively pedestrian environment within the sub-area.
- Improve physical and visual connections to the Downtown.

A street-facing plaza provides ample space for outdoor seating.
Retail buildings with large storefront windows.
Figure 4.2 | City Center Precise Plan Planning Areas

Legend
- BART Station
- Plan Boundary
Sub-Area 2

Intent: Continue existing mix of institutional and office uses and senior assisted living.

Potential for Change: Significant short- or long-term change is unlikely.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
• Institutional, hospital, office, and residential
• 2-5 stories

Additional Direction:
• None

Sub-Area 3

Intent: Continue existing Wells Fargo use, but improve streetscapes and frontages along Liberty and Walnut. If Wells Fargo ever pursues additional development, transform into a more intense residential, office, or mixed use project that reinforces the Downtown.

Potential for Change:
• Significant change unlikely in the short- or long-term
• Liner buildings in current parking lots could occur in the short- to medium-term

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
• Continued commercial/office use
• Compatible residential or mixed-use if property redevelops
• 2-5 stories

Additional Direction:
• Seek opportunities to introduce liner buildings or other improvements to the Liberty and Walnut frontage.
• Accommodate Wells Fargo requirements for security in any development proposals in this area.
• Introduce a Floating Zone, which allows current zoning to continue but introduces zoning for a more urban pattern when significant redevelopment occurs in the future.
Sub-Area 4

Intent: Transition the frontage along Liberty Street from a suburban office park to a walkable urban neighborhood street, acting as a key connection, transition and gateway between Downtown and neighborhoods to the south.

Potential for Change: Likely in the medium-term, particularly at the location of current City offices

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
• Residential, office
• 4-5 stories

Additional Direction:
• New development should create an attractive and pedestrian-oriented street frontage along Liberty.
• Capitalize on the City’s control over current location of City offices, ensuring that any future purchaser or developer actively supports the Downtown and City Center Visions.
• Extend Liberty’s Downtown Street Standard into the City Center, to Stevenson.
• Minimize drive aisles and surface parking lots.

Sub-Area 5

Intent: Continue institutional/Courthouse uses, emphasizing streetscape improvements and better pedestrian connections where possible.

Potential for Change: Unlikely in the short- to long-term

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
• Institutional or Office
• 2-4 stories

Additional Direction:
• Capitalize on the public plaza at the corner of Walnut and Paseo Padre as a public amenity.
• Work with Court to soften its monolithic appearance through streetscape improvements or the addition of liner buildings on surface parking lots along Walnut Avenue.
Sub-Area 6

Intent: Continue to allow for and encourage medical office and allow general commercial uses, including the addition of new buildings along street frontages.

Potential for Change:
- Redevelopment or significant change in use unlikely
- Potential for new infill buildings and improved streetscape along Paseo Padre and Stevenson.
- Expansion of Palo Alto Medical Foundation’s Fremont Center Campus

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Institutional, office, medical office, and commercial
- 2-6 stories

Additional Direction:
- Improve the streetscape to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Seek infill opportunities where there are currently surface parking lots, particularly at the intersection of Paseo Padre and Stevenson.
- Create additional connections.
- Eliminate free right turn from Paseo Padre onto Stevenson.
- Introduce gateway feature at intersection of Paseo Padre Parkway and Stevenson Boulevard.
Sub-Area 7

Intent: Continue use as a regional Kaiser Health Care Facility while improving pedestrian connections across the site, encouraging pedestrian-oriented building frontages along the street, and allowing increased intensity.

Potential for Change:
- Significant change in character unlikely in the near-term
- Potential for new infill buildings

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Hospital/Institutional
- Up to 6 stories

Additional Direction:
- Utilize City’s land use authority to ensure that any future development supports the City Center vision.
- Maintain and improve pedestrian connections through the Kaiser site.
- Front streets with buildings and streetscape, not parking garages and parking lots.
- Pursue high-quality development that supports the City Center Vision on the vacant parcel at Civic Center Drive and Stevenson Boulevard, including a new pedestrian connection from Stevenson to the existing pathway behind Archstone housing.

Intense, pedestrian-oriented multi-family housing with upper floors setback from the street.

Pedestrian-oriented mixed-use building.
Sub-Area 8

Intent: Maintain Archstone mixed-use project.

Potential for Change: Unlikely, given the recent construction of the Archstone project.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
  • Mixed Use residential and retail
  • Discourage or prohibit medical office uses at the ground floor along Civic Center Drive.
  • 4 stories

Additional Direction:
  • None

Sub-Area 9

Intent: Continue office environment while encouraging improved frontage along Walnut and better connections BART.

Potential for Change: Potential for infill development in the medium- to long-term in the surface parking lot.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
  • Medical office or general office
  • 2-6 stories

Additional Direction:
  • Explore opportunities for pedestrian improvements across Walnut Avenue, linking BART with the existing pedestrian path behind the Archstone project.
  • Support new infill building along Walnut Avenue, on surface parking lot.

A 7-story mixed-use housing. A pedestrian passage lined by benches and trees.
Sub-Area 10

Intent: Allow existing shopping uses, but encourage transformation of the Gateway Plaza into a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, transit-oriented area providing multiple connections between BART and Downtown.

Potential for Change: Possibility of mid- to long-term transformation

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Mixed-use, retail, restaurant, and lodging
- 4-6 stories

Additional Direction:
- Strongly support the transformation of Gateway Plaza.
- Improve the existing pedestrian connection (currently an under-utilized pedestrian paseo through the Gateway Plaza) through this sub-area, and improve connections throughout.
- Formalize and improve the key vehicle and pedestrian connection of Capitol Avenue between Paseo Padre and Civic Center Drive.
- Introduce public plazas and areas of outdoor restaurant seating.
- Require a sub-area-wide planning, design, or re-zoning process if Gateway Plaza re-develops.

Sub-Area 11

Intent: Continue this area’s role for office uses while continuing to reinforce and improve the pedestrian environment.

Potential for Change:
- Transformation unlikely in the short- to medium-term.
- Multiple opportunities for infill buildings, as well as frontage and streetscape improvements.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Medical/office, retail aimed at transit users.
- 4-8 stories.

Additional Direction:
- Maintain and support the well-used diagonal pedestrian connection through the existing office buildings.
- Pursue infill development on surface parking lots along BART Way and Civic Center Drive with pedestrian-oriented retail frontages.

Sub-Area 12

Intent: Transform existing parking lots and drive aisles into a vibrant, dense, transit-oriented residential area, capitalizing on proximity to BART, providing beautiful open space at Tule Pond, and creating an attractive and memorable entryway for Fremont.

Potential for Change: Immediate opportunity for transformation

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- Residential east of the BART station.
- Primarily residential west of the BART Station, with transit-oriented retail as feasible.
- Multi-level parking structures.
- Up to 12 stories.

Multi-family housing separated from a creek by a pedestrian path. Intense, pedestrian-oriented housing.
Additional Direction:

- Facilitate parcel consolidation between BART and ACFC (Alameda County Flood Control) to facilitate transit-oriented development.
- When the BART Warm Springs extension is complete and redirects bus service to the south, work with BART and AC Transit to explore transit-oriented development on the site east of the station currently occupied by bus bays.
- Create a more attractive BART Plaza, including public benches, landscaping, and Downtown or City Center wayfinding, at the west entry of the BART Station.
- Encourage building frontage onto both BART Station entries.
- Improve pedestrian access to both BART Station entries in anticipation of increased ridership from the BART extension.

Sub-Area 13

Intent: Washington Hospital will continue to grow and expand according to its Master Plan, providing an important regional medical facility. The City’s primary intent for the Washington Hospital complex is to collaboratively improve its “public face” – particularly for frontage facing the BART Station, along BART Way, and along Civic Center Drive – while capitalizing on the high volume of hospital visitors and employees who have a need for services, retail, transit, and lodging in the City Center.

Potential for Change:

- Change unlikely but intensification of surface parking lots possible over time.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:

- Hospital/institutional
- Up to 8 stories

Additional Direction:

- Work with Washington Hospital and BART to provide a direct pedestrian connection from the BART Plaza to Washington Hospital.
- Accommodate Washington Hospital’s need for security while still encouraging active building frontage and entrances along the street.

Pedestrian-oriented housing facing a pedestrian passage.

Intense, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use housing.
• Continue to facilitate a shared parking structure and other shared parking arrangements between BART and Washington Hospital.
• Support infill and liner buildings on the Washington Campus, particularly along the streets surrounding the hospital.
• Work with Washington Hospital to formalize and improve the key vehicle and pedestrian connection of Capitol Avenue to Civic Center Drive.
• Capitalize on the significant employment and visitor population of Washington Hospital to help transform the City Center into a more urban area.
• Pursue traffic calming and pedestrian improvements to make the streets safer around Washington Hospital, including narrower streets and pedestrian crossings.

Sub-Area 14

Intent: Continue this area’s use as medical office while encouraging higher intensities, better connections, and sensitive transitions to adjacent neighborhoods.

Potential for Change: Significant transformation is unlikely, but limited redevelopment opportunities exist.

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
• Medical office, commercial, and retail
• Up to 8 stories

Additional Direction:
• Improve pedestrian crossings of Mowry Avenue, particularly across Mowry Avenue between Civic Center Drive and the BART tracks.
• Actively encourage consolidation and densification of the area’s many office condominiums.
• Provide redevelopment or frontage repair strategies along Paseo Padre to create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented retail environment.
• Improve pedestrian connections/crossroads at the intersection of Mowry Avenue and Paseo Parkway Boulevard.

High quality, modern medical facilities.  Pedestrian-oriented mixed-use office building.
Sub-Area 15

Intent: Continued use as general commercial with frontage along the street

Potential for Change: Unlikely

Primary Intended Use and Intensity:
- General commercial
- 2-3 stories

A building with a tower that acts as a gateway. A one-story commercial building with street-facing windows.
4.5 | BLOCKS, STREETS, AND PUBLIC REALM

The City Center’s streets will be transformed into complete streets that accommodate a variety of travel modes. They will be flanked by wide sidewalks with ample pedestrian amenities — including streetscape furnishings, outdoor dining areas, pedestrian-scaled street lights, and public art — and fronted by buildings that are entered directly from the adjacent sidewalk. They will have bike lanes and on-street parking and accommodate public transit with frequent bus service and connections to BART.

The City Center’s large, auto-oriented blocks will be reduced in size over time by the introduction of new streets, drives, pedestrian passages, and alleys that encourage and facilitate walking and biking (see Figure 4.3). These new connections represent public or private streets that in most cases could be inserted without wholesale changes to existing development patterns.

A multi-modal street accommodates cars, cyclists, and buses.

A complete streetscape, including wide sidewalks, landscaping and street trees, pedestrian-scaled streetlights and bicycle parking.

A street lined by multi-story mixed-use buildings.

A multi-lane main street with fast-moving traffic is transformed with reduced vehicular lanes and a new street.
Figure 4.3 | Envisioned City Center Street and Block Network

Legend
- Plan Boundary
- BART Station
- Existing Streets
- Existing Pedestrian Connections
- New Connections
- New Pedestrian Connections
- Improved Crosswalks
- New Roundabouts

Downtown Community Plan
While the Precise Plan and form-based code will set regulations and standards for private sector developers, the City also has an opportunity to proactively invest in the City Center’s public realm. This can be a highly visible and catalytic step towards transformation. Recommended initiatives for catalytic public realm transformation are discussed below, as follows:

- BART Station Area Improvements (Section 5.1)
- Link BART with Downtown (Section 5.2)
- Link the Hub with Downtown (Section 5.3)
- Frontage and Streetscape Repair Strategies (Section 5.4)
- Traffic Calming and Complete Streets (Section 5.5)
- Pedestrian Improvements (Section 5.6)
- Gateway Elements (Section 5.7)
5.1 | BART STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS

The area around the BART Station and Washington Hospital should be transformed with the introduction of a plaza in front of the BART Station that could be surrounded by parking garages with active ground floor uses. A roundabout could be added at the intersection of BART Way and Civic Center Drive to facilitate auto and pedestrian traffic. Washington Hospital’s expansion should be completed and a new building would be placed at the southeast corner of BART Way and Civic Center Drive. Finally, the “private” pedestrian passage through the office building complex at the corner of Civic Center Drive and Walnut Avenue should be maintained and improved.

Figure 5.1 | BART WAY AND STATION AREA
5.2 | LINK BART WITH DOWNTOWN

A stronger link between the Fremont BART Station and Downtown could be achieved by enhancing two existing routes (see Figure 5.2):

- BART Way to Civic Center Drive to the vehicular passage that connects Civic Center Drive to Paseo Padre Parkway along the Capitol Avenue alignment.
- BART Way via the pedestrian passage through the Gateway Plaza Shopping Center.

The existing automobile passage that connects Civic Center Drive to Paseo Padre Parkway along the Capitol Avenue alignment could be enhanced to have more of the character of an urban street. This would be accomplished primarily through streetscape and sidewalk improvements. Finally, the pedestrian connection between Washington West’s north entrance and its parking lot should be improved.

Figure 5.2 | Capitol Avenue at Washington West

Improving the pedestrian passage that cuts through the Gateway Plaza Shopping Center would strengthen the connection between the BART Station and Downtown. This could include enhancing the pedestrian pathway to the west of the shopping center and introducing a new pad building along Paseo Padre Parkway just to the south of the existing building.
5.3 | LINK THE HUB WITH DOWNTOWN

In the short term, the main entrance to the Fremont Hub Shopping Center should be enhanced in response to the realigned Capitol Avenue. In addition, the relationship of the historic Chadbourne Carriage House to Downtown could be greatly enhanced. It is now just down the street from the future intersection of Capitol Avenue and Fremont Boulevard.

In the long term, new streets and/or enhanced drive aisles (shown dashed in the below illustrative plan) with new buildings facing these new connections could be introduced within the Hub block.

**Figure 5.3 | Hub Connection/Streets**
5.4 | FRONTAGE AND STREETSCAPE REPAIR STRATEGIES

Strategies for transforming the City Center’s auto-oriented streets into pedestrian-friendly, multi-modal complete streets include:

- Lining “big box” buildings such as parking garages, theaters, and supermarkets with smaller, occupiable uses.
- Introducing pedestrian-friendly frontages in buildings that currently turn their back to the street.
- Screening parking lots with landscape, walls, or other screening devices.
- Developing new streets and buildings in the existing BART Station parking lots.
- Infilling the edges of surface parking lots with street-facing and accessed buildings.
- In the long term, strategically introducing new connections and buildings along the street around the Fremont Hub Shopping Center as retail or commercial demand increases. This should be focused around the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Fremont Boulevard.

Trees planted in this parking lot reduce the heat island effect and introduce urban forest in the center of the city.

A trellis structure screens this parking lot from the street. Permeable pavers formalize the parking lot, while cleansing rain water.

A street-facing parking lot (left) is replaced with a small building that houses a coffee shop (right).
A building lacking street-facing entrances and windows (left) is opened up with street-facing storefront windows, awnings and a corner entry (right).

This parking garage is lined on all street-facing sides with occupied space.

A wall with built-in seating and vine trellises screens the parking lot behind it.
5.5 | TRAFFIC-CALMING AND COMPLETE STREETS

Wide streets that accommodate fast-moving traffic are antithetical to a pedestrian environment. Strategies that may be used throughout the City Center to slow cars and generate a more inviting pedestrian and bicycle environment include:

- Road diets, whereby roads with excess traffic lanes are replaced with bike lanes, curbside parking, center medians, and/or landscaping.
- Narrower travel lanes encourage drivers to slow down and pay closer attention.
- Street Trees and buildings built closer to the street.
- Intersection bulbouts and crosswalks, preferably paved with materials that are a different color or texture from the adjacent asphalt.
- Single-lane modern roundabouts, which can reduce collisions risk and pedestrian safety by slowing vehicle speeds at the approach to intersections, while often allowing a street to carry the same amount of traffic with fewer lanes.
- Tighter turning radii to force vehicles to slow down to safe speeds when turning. Designs should provide the tightest turning radii that accommodates the vehicles that typically use the street.
- Eliminating free-right turns since wide-angle, uncontrolled channelized right turns encourage high-speed turns and hinder pedestrian visibility. A tighter angle or a standard corner is safer for pedestrians.
Bicycle lanes promote sustainable alternative modes of transportation for residents while decreasing air pollution.

Green paint provides a stronger presence to these bike lanes.

A creatively-designed bike locker.

A crosswalk at a roundabout provides a short crossing distance for pedestrians. Signals can be introduced to facilitate crossings, especially for the vision- and audio-impaired.

A parking space is cordoned off for bicycle parking.
5.6 | PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Key to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment is a public streetscape that provides wide tree-lined sidewalks, elegant, and consistently-designed street furnishings and street lights, distinct paving treatments, and easy access from one side of the street to the other. Together these streetscape elements create a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians, while contributing to an identifiable area character.

Example of public art.

Example of a distinct paving pattern.

Example of simple street furnishings and informal, low water use, low maintenance landscaping.

Bulb-outs and crosswalks slow traffic and provide shorter, safer pedestrian street crossings.
Example of a sidewalk with street furnishings and landscape.

Example of pedestrian amenities including wood benches, a drinking fountain, and newspaper vending cabinets.

Street trees, pedestrian-scaled street lights, and planters line a wide sidewalk.

Example of a mid-block pedestrian crossing.
5.7 | GATEWAY ELEMENTS

The best way to establish the presence of the City Center is to build mixed-use, urban buildings that face streets that accommodate all modes of transportation. This presence can be enhanced and even preceded by gateway elements that mark entry into the city Center and announce Downtown’s presence along large corridors such as Mowry Avenue, Paseo Padre Parkway, Walnut Street, and Fremont Boulevard. Potential locations for gateway elements are shown in Figure 5.6. Three categories of gateway elements are shown: Priority and Secondary City Center Gateways located at the entrances to the City Center and Downtown Gateways that mark Downtown’s presence. The photos on this page provide a number of different ways that gateway elements can be introduced.

An over-the-street sign announces entry into Downtown Pleasanton.

A monument announces entry into Irvington in the City of Fremont.

A welcome sign in a center median.

Large monument signs announce locations of streetside businesses.
Figure 5.6 | Potential Locations for Gateway Elements

Legend
- Plan Boundary
- BART Station
- Priority City Center Gateway
- Secondary City Center Gateway
- Downtown Gateway
- Washington Hospital
- Gateway Plaza Shopping Center
- The Fremont Hub

Downtown Community Plan

1. Plan Boundary
2. BART Station
3. Priority City Center Gateway
4. Secondary City Center Gateway
5. Downtown Gateway
6. Washington Hospital
7. Gateway Plaza Shopping Center
8. The Fremont Hub
VI. SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY ASSUMPTIONS

FREMONT CITY CENTER

This section contains additional policy direction for the Precise Plan and Form-based Code that is supplemental to the design and land use information included in the previous sections.

6.1 | TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- Drive-through, auto-oriented, and some other low-intensity or low-employment-intensity uses will be prohibited within the BART PDA area.
- New low-employee intensity uses - including mini-storage, gas stations, or building surrounded by large surface parking lots - will be prohibited (GP Land Use Action 2-1.7.C).
- Of the City’s four PDA’s (Priority Development Area), the City Center and Warm Springs are currently the highest priority for near- and mid-term development. The Downtown area of the City Center will be a civic heart and commercial activity center for the City, with complementary employment, housing, and services. Warm Springs will be a large employment center.
- The Precise Plan will actively encourage jobs to be located near the BART Station, since transit riders are more sensitive to walk distance on the work end of the trip than on the residential end. BART has existing available capacity in the AM Peak to bring people to jobs in Fremont from the north (and eventually from the south).
- BART anticipates developing the BART-owned land to the east of the station as high-density residential TOD.

6.2 | TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Peak hour LOS “E” and “F” are acceptable in particular locations or situations in the City Center (GP Policy 3-4.2)
- All streets in the City Center should be designed as complete streets, accommodating multi-modal transportation (GP Mobility Policy 3-1.1)
- Alterations to streets will not reduce existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle capacity (GP Mobility Policy 3-1.5).
- The City Center street network and circulation plan will seek to reduce vehicle miles traveled in the City Center and apply or require certain transportation demand management measures (GP Mobility Goal 3-2).
- The City Center Precise Plan will consider or identify potential new signalized pedestrian crossings such as across Walnut at the BART Station and across Civic Center Drive (GP Mobility Action 3-2.3.C-D)
- Bus Rapid Transit along Fremont Boulevard is a long-term possibility, but will not be considered as a feasible short- or medium-term possibility (GP Mobility Action 3-2.6.C).
- Walnut, Civic Center, Paseo Padre, Bart Way, and other smaller or new streets are potential locations for reduced vehicle speeds.
- Sidewalks will be assumed to conform with City standards, with five, eleven, fourteen, and eighteen foot wide sidewalks depending on streetscape and adjacent uses.
- Transportation demand management strategies will be based on those included in the Downtown Community Plan, and could include concepts such as a shuttle, bike sharing, or uncoupled parking pricing.
- Pending further study, there may be an opportunity to reduce the number of lanes on Walnut Avenue from four to two, improve sidewalks, extend bike lanes, add on-street parking, improve pedestrian crossings, or implement other strategies to re-fashion Walnut Avenue as a walkable urban street.
• The 2-lane Liberty Street section should be extended from Downtown to its terminus at Stevenson Boulevard.

• Transform Civic Center Drive into a walkable, beautiful 2-lane street that could include a single-lane roundabout with public art or landscaping at the intersection of BART Way and Civic Center Drive.

6.3 | PARKING

• Parking will be located behind or within buildings in the City Center (GP Community Character Element, City Center Place Type).

• Suburban parking ratios, minimums, and layouts are incompatible with the built form desired in the City Center.

• Increase on-street parking at select locations along urban corridors such as Walnut Avenue, Liberty Street, and Civic Center Drive (GP Community Character Element, Urban Corridor Place Type).

• Some sort of district-wide parking management and strategy will be necessary to accommodate the type of development envisioned in the City Center.

• Some locations may have parking maximums.

• There may be additional strategies for regulating parking to encourage transit-orientation and walkability, especially near BART, such as:
  
  o Reduced on-site parking within ½ mile of BART
  
  o Parking maximums
  
  o New development with reduced parking if walkable and near BART
  
  o Shared parking allowed in all locations throughout the City Center
  
  o Credits from on-street parking towards any required parking minimums
  
  o Car-sharing or bike-sharing opportunities

6.4 | PUBLIC FACILITIES

• There will be a new City Hall and civic center along Capitol Avenue in Downtown. In addition to City Hall and basic City offices, this civic center area could include other civic uses such as library branches, community/senior centers, the Family Resource Center, a performing arts center, a police/fire station, or others. Phasing, intended departments tenants, specific site planning or location, or other details about the new City Hall on Capitol are not determined (GP Public Facilities Policy 9-1.1).
6.5 | GREEN BUILDINGS

- All new City buildings over 10,000 square feet will continue to be required to achieve LEED Silver; multi-building City complexes could pursue LEED for Neighborhood Development Silver (GP Public Facilities Action 9-2.2.A)

- LEED or LEED-ND will not be required of any other development besides City projects (per GP Public Facilities Action 9-2.2.A), but could be incentivized, encouraged, or achieved in City Center through coordination with willing partners such as BART, the hospitals, and TMG Partners.

- As of 2011, all new development in the State of California must comply with CalGreen building standards, and City Center buildings will be assumed to comply with CalGreen Tier 1.

- Encourage green, solar-reflective, and solar roofs as per the General Plan and Climate Action Plan.

- All new streets in the City Center should incorporate green streets components such as use of recycled material and lighter aggregates in asphalt.

6.6 | ARTS

- A performing arts center is envisioned along Capitol Avenue in the City Center, as called for in the Downtown Plan (GP Public Facilities Action 9-1.3.B)

- There will be a Downtown Public Art Fund and focus on public art in the Downtown District (Downtown Plan Section 3.5; mapped in Exhibit 3.72)

- The entire City Center is a potential pedestrian-oriented “Arts Zone” (GP Community Character Policy 4-5.9).

- The Downtown Plan’s Public Art Fund could be extended into the City Center, or a similar program could occur in the City Center.

- The Precise Plan will encourage efforts to incorporate public art into wayfinding and public signage.

- Encourage and work with PG&E to incorporate urban art over large transformers and utility cabinets.

6.7 | ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

- The City Center Precise Plan will encourage energy-efficient public infrastructure such as streetlights, traffic signals, and other infrastructure (GP Public Facilities Action 9-2.1).

6.8 | STORMWATER AND WATER QUALITY

- There should be a 150-foot buffer around Tule Pond with specific stormwater and design strategies to protect water quality in Tule Pond (GP Conservation Policy 7-3.2).

- Low Impact Design and stormwater infiltration will likely be accomplished project-by-project, not as part of a district-wide stormwater management system.

- When possible there should be stormwater infiltration in the design of streets and public space, using techniques such as retention, swales, and evapotranspiration through trees and landscaping.

- Stormwater treatments on private land will occur on-site, in coordination with other landowners, or in coordination with public facilities.
6.9 | PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- Drive-through uses such as fast-food restaurants will be an explicitly prohibited use throughout the City Center (GP Land Use Action 2-4.15.A)

- The existing farmers market at Kaiser will continue to operate, or a similar or additional farmer’s market will be encouraged to locate at another civic location such as the BART Station or City Hall. (GP Land Use Action 2-4.15.B)

- Proposed truck routes in the General Plan provide a basic framework for City Center truck routes (GP Conservation Action 7-7.4).

6.10 | CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

- Given the elevation of the City Center above sea level, it is assumed that sea level rise planning is not necessary for any areas of the City Center.

- Encourage solar-reflective or green roofs to minimize heat islands.

- All new streets should include stormwater management or other green infrastructure strategies in their design and construction.

6.11 | UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

The following basic standards for universal accessibility will be followed to accommodate all abilities, particularly given the proximity of the California School of the Deaf and California School of the Blind:

1. Streetscape and Pedestrian Right-of-way

   - Adequate street lighting
   
   - Clear curb delineation between sidewalks and streets, and an avoidance of “blended” curbs
   
   - Avoidance of objects at head height installed on the pedestrian-right-of-way and streetscape
   
   - Avoidance of low-to-the ground objects along the pedestrian right of way, minimizing trip hazards
   
   - Encourage color contrast in landscaping and streetscape where possible
   
   - For perpendicular or angled on-street parking, ensure sufficiently sized parking bays so that car bumpers do not intrude into the pedestrian right-of-way

2. Street Crossings

   - Visible clearance for all crossings, with clear, unobstructed sightlines between drivers and crossing pedestrians
   
   - Truncated domes at wheelchair ramps, ideally facing the cross-street destination instead of the middle of the intersection.

3. Building Design and Access

   - A preference for building frontages at or close to the sidewalk instead of recessed buildings or open space, which make straight-line navigation along sidewalks difficult for the visually impaired.
   
   - Avoidance of objects at head height installed along buildings
   
   - Avoid wide garage entries along sidewalks
• All buildings should provide sidewalk and pathway access to the sidewalk and pedestrian network; avoid forcing pedestrians to cross parking lots to access buildings

4. Transit

• Adequate and accessible shelters and benches at all bus stops, in coordination with AC Transit
• Safe, convenient, and direct pedestrian access to the BART Station