Bakersfield started with a simple purpose in 1863, when founder Thomas Baker offered his “field” as a stopover for travelers trekking across the great State of California. Bakersfield became a transportation hub for entrepreneurs, explorers, and tourists alike, as they passed through the City to reach southern California, the Pacific Coast, the Mojave Desert, the San Francisco bay area and beyond. Bakersfield evolved into a dynamic city with a rich history rooted in agriculture, oil, industry, and connectivity.

Bakersfield’s location in the heart of California has continued to serve the City well. Over the last century, Bakersfield has grown to be the 9th largest city in the State and has become a premier place to lay down roots, raise a family, and establish a “home base” in the center of California. Bakersfield’s future is bright and local business owners, community leaders and residents are invested in continued growth.

In parallel with this local development, California voters also approved legislation to construct a statewide High Speed Rail System (HSR). If done right, HSR has the potential to connect California and provide economic benefits throughout the State. As with any major infrastructure program, the overall HSR system faces challenges and the future of HSR will continue to evolve at the State level.

Nevertheless, the very concept of High Speed Rail offers a unique opportunity for Bakersfield, due to the State’s selection of the community as a future “Station City.” This is important because it puts Bakersfield on the map, together with major cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose and more. It also means that the State intends to build a HSR Station in Downtown Bakersfield, creating a stimulus for growth, revitalization, and new energy.

The Bakersfield HSR Station would also enhance Bakersfield’s presence as a major transportation hub and help make the first phase of the HSR System a success by completing a true “valley-to-valley” connection.

To maximize this potential, the City of Bakersfield kicked off the “Making Downtown Bakersfield” planning effort in 2015. In order to ensure this effort would have independent utility and provide real value to Bakersfield, the primary goal was to engage the community and develop an understanding of who Bakersfield is today, how Bakersfield wants to evolve, and where Bakersfield would like to be in the future.

Over the last two years, the City hosted public workshops and community meetings and developed the “Making Downtown Bakersfield” Vision Plan. This process revealed that Bakersfield residents want to see a Downtown that is vibrant, walkable, connected, safe, and desirable. The research also demonstrated that thoughtful place-making, accessibility, and sustainable planning practices can lead to tangible economic development, all while making Bakersfield “HSR ready.”

The purpose of this Vision Plan is to illustrate the Community’s vision for revitalization of Downtown Bakersfield and provide a blueprint for future decisions. Most importantly, this Vision Plan is intended to spark interest, inspire deeper conversations, and to show the City’s support for progress and investment in Downtown Bakersfield.

Together, we can make the Vision a reality!

Jacqui Kitchen, Community Development Director
City of Bakersfield – Community Development Department
DOWNTOWN BAKERSFIELD
HIGH-SPEED RAIL
STATION AREA PLAN

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THE PLACE
1.1 The City of Bakersfield

With a population of over 380,000, Bakersfield is the 9th largest City in California, and is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. With a median home price of $235,000, Bakersfield is also the most affordable market in the State and the 38th most affordable in the Country.

The City of Bakersfield is also ideally located in the heart of California, placed in the booming Central Valley, which expects a population increase of nearly 3 million people by 2040. This geographical location means that Bakersfield residents are a mere 2 hours from the Pacific Ocean, the Sierra Nevada mountains, and many larger cities like Los Angeles. In fact, Bakersfield is within a four-hour drive of 90% of California’s population and 300 miles of 14% of the U.S. population. Bakersfield is already the ideal home base in an ever-connected world.

1.2 High-Speed Rail

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is a State Agency charged with the planning, designing, building and eventual operation of the first high-speed rail (HSR) system in the nation. By 2029, HSR will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours at speeds over 200 miles per hour; and will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations (Figure 1).

Bakersfield is located at the center of this state-wide system, and has been selected as one of the 24 Station Cities. This provides Bakersfield a serious competitive advantage as HSR connects the Central Valley to Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay region, solidifying Bakersfield’s centrality within the 800-mile system. At full build-out, HSR will transport an estimated 40.7 million people annually and connect all of the State’s major metropolitan areas, which represent the majority of the State’s $2.63 trillion of annual economic activity.

Completion of the California High-Speed Rail system will maximize on Bakersfield’s geographic location and position it to be the new center of California. This massive public investment puts Bakersfield in the middle of the sixth largest economy in the world; and presents a landmark opportunity to leverage Bakersfield’s many assets for an unprecedented amount of growth and economic development.

Construction of the Station will give Downtown Bakersfield an opportunity to redefine itself and build on past revitalization efforts. Bakersfield is already a prime location for conventions, corporate headquarters, entertainment, housing and more. The addition of HSR will further revitalize the urban core, expand economic opportunity and enhance the quality of life for the entire region. This opportunity requires careful
Sacramento
San Francisco
Millbrae SFO
San Jose Diridon
San Jose
Merced
Fresno
Madera
Kings Tulare
Bakersfield
Los Angeles
Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs
Fullerton
Anaheim
San Diego

Center of the System

- Phase 1a (2025)
- Phase 1b (2029)
- Phase 2
- Major Metropolitan Areas

Distance:
- SF-Bk ~1h55min
- Sc-Bk ~1h45min
- Bk-LA ~1h
- Bk-SD ~1h50min

Phase 1a (2025)
Phase 1b (2029)
Phase 2
Major Metropolitan Areas

25 50 100 150 200 Mi
planning coordination and collaboration to optimize and implement sustainable and resilient growth in the historic core and beyond.

1.3 A Vision for the Future

In order to prepare for the future of Bakersfield with HSR, the community engaged in the process of “Making Downtown Bakersfield.” This effort is the result of contributions from the City of Bakersfield, HSR Authority, local stakeholders, many partner agencies, private developers, and the community at large. The purpose of the Vision Plan is to inspire future decisions and offer up best practices that will lay the groundwork for future development in Downtown Bakersfield through the next 10, 20, and 30 years and facilitate a path to achieve several key goals:

- Increase population and economic density in the urban core;
- Support residential and commercial activity;
- Develop under-utilized or vacant properties;
- Connect existing activity and cultural centers;
- Create an efficient, reliable, and effective multi-modal transportation system;
- Enhance sustainability, livability and a sense of place; and,
- Secure funding for identified implementation actions.

When this Vision Process was initiated in 2015, the HSR Authority was considering two track alignments through the City of Bakersfield, one with a station location on Truxtun Avenue (Hybrid Alignment) and one with a station location at F Street (Locally Generated Alternative Alignment). Therefore, two potential HSR station locations were analyzed within the study area.

In May 2016, the HSR Authority Board of Directors identified the Locally Generated Alternative (LGA) as the “Preliminary Preferred Alternative.” Therefore, further development of the Vision focused on the F street location as the City’s preferred location for the HSR station, while accounting for the Truxtun location as the site of the existing Amtrak station with the possibility of future commuter rail service.

The Making Downtown Bakersfield Vision Plan envisions a connected historic core that links its many assets to one another, and eventually, to the HSR Station.

1.4 Existing Conditions & Downtown Infrastructure

To begin this process, an Existing Conditions Report was completed with an analysis of infrastructure, the real estate market, and case studies of peer HSR and Downtown communities. The Existing Conditions Report is based on the best available data collected from the City and other agencies. The report includes a synthesis of the information that formed a foundation for future development scenarios for Downtown,
Project Area

- Multi-modal HSR Station at F Street
- Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuter Rail) Station at Truxtun
- GET Transit Center
including various urban design, transportation, and economic development strategies. The complete Existing Conditions Report can be found in the Appendix section of this Vision Plan document.

The process began with an Urban Design Analysis, which analyzed physical assets within the project area (Figure 2), including:

- Statewide Context - San Joaquin Valley;
- Regional Context - Kern County;
- Project Area - Study Area Definition (Aerial);
- Project Area - Study Area (Building Footprint);
- Downtown Neighborhoods;
- Circulation;
- Transit Routes;
- Alleys;
- Open Space;
- Tree Canopy;
- Figure Ground;
- Community Facilities;
- Underutilized Parcels;
- Significant Buildings;
- Land Use;
- Zoning; and,
- Utilities.

The analysis of the study area’s existing infrastructure is based on the most recent and best available data from a multitude of sources, including the City of Bakersfield, Pacific Gas & Electric, Cal Water, and AT&T and Spectrum.

The purpose of the analysis is to create an inventory of the existing municipal infrastructure which is the first step to understanding the future development capacity of Downtown Bakersfield. As the Vision Plan projects significant growth in the project area (see section 1.5: Market Analysis) the intensity and location of future development will inform where additional capacity may be needed.

The analysis documents the location and type of infrastructure within the project area and provides the foundation for future analysis of each infrastructure’s capacity, and the future creation of an Infrastructure Master Plan. Such a plan will require significant field testing, coordination of public and private utilities and public input, would outline key upgrades and other investments that will facilitate the short-, mid- and long-term implementation of the Vision Plan. As such, an Infrastructure Master Plan is listed as one of the top implementation priorities of this planning document.

The following pages provide a synopsis of each utility in Downtown Bakersfield:
the tax rolls. The availability and size of these vacant and underutilized parcels ("sawtooth"

is spread thin across Downtown's comparatively Bakersfield is a predominately automobile-oriented

H ST

34TH ST

TREE CANOPY

24TH ST

UNIONAVE

K ST

K ST

UNIONAVE

CHESTER
AVE

BERNARD ST

CHESTER AVE

99  FWY

TRUXTUN AVE

Q ST

M ST

CHESTER
AVE

Q ST

K ST

L ST

CHESTER
AVE

24TH ST

TRUXTUN AVE

P ST

21ST ST

BERNARD ST

E 21ST ST

K ST

F ST

M ST

GOLDEN STATE AVE

24TH ST

F ST

99  FWY

K ST

K ST

H ST

GOLDEN STATE AVE

M ST

L ST

M ST

23RD ST

CHESTER
AVE

23RD ST

TRUXTUN AVE

34TH ST

UNION AVE

P ST

H ST

College

E 21ST ST

Q ST

23RD ST

L ST

23RD ST

TRUXTUN AVE

GOLDEN STATE AVE

99  FWY

K ST

L ST

24TH ST

GOLDEN STATE AVE

9

13.6%

>= 22

17 - 21

1472

42

31.  New Federal Courthouse

28. Memorial Hospital

22. Franklin Elementary School

21. Bakersfield High School

17. Kern County Community College District

16. Kern County Community Schools

15. Kern County Parks & Recreation

14. Downtown Bakersfield

13. Downtown "core" at Chester Avenue and 18th and 19th Streets.

Building Intensity

Downtown has a robust network of alleyways, and direction in Downtown.

and gateways to Downtown, strengthening the Central Business District of the entire region and

circulation of large developments. Maintaining

3. Bakersfield Community Development Department

2. Bakersfield Downtown Business Association plus all three Downtown

Identity

area) have good tree canopy coverage, most other

constitutes "Downtown". Growing, augmenting Chester Avenue and 18th Street denotes a "core"

Growing, augmenting Chester Avenue and 18th Street denotes a "core"
Sewer
The City of Bakersfield is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the City’s sewage and wastewater treatment system (see Figure 4). As a part of this planning process, the City has begun to analyze the sewer’s current capacity and performance. The City is currently conducting flow tests for Downtown trunk lines. A final report of the performance of these trunk lines is ongoing and is planned to be completed in the near future. Bakersfield’s Sewage Treatment Plant #2 serves the Downtown Area, as well as a large portion of eastern Bakersfield, and it is currently at half capacity with an average 13.7 million of gallons per day (mgd) processed; Plant #2 has a maximum capacity of 25 mgd. At peak times, Plant #2 processes 20mgd.

Of particular note, the change of use and intensity of development in Downtown will have an impact on sewer capacity. The Vision Plan proposes significant residential development, and this use has a higher burden on the sewer and wastewater system than the current and historic land use patterns Downtown.

Stormwater
The City of Bakersfield maintains the City’s storm water system (see Figure 5), which is separate from the sewer system and predominantly drains into detention basins, canals and the Kern River.

As most of Downtown Bakersfield is already built-out, additional development should have minimal impact on impermeable surfaces and therefore storm water system. Future developments will require a minimum 18-inch pipe into the existing main lines.

Low Impact Development design guidelines and other “green” building techniques that require the retention and infiltration of storm water on-site can further limit infrastructure upgrades to the storm water system. Green streetscape enhancements, coupled with tree plantings would also serve to increase the permeable surfaces, thereby reducing storm water runoff and increasing infiltration, further alleviating the pressure on Downtown’s storm water system.

Gas and Electricity
Pacific Gas and Electric is responsible for both the natural gas and electricity systems in Downtown Bakersfield. The major transmission lines run along the Kern River and its canals, connecting to substations before being transmitted by overhead and underground lines to individual properties. Most of these lines run along major corridors and in the historic core, through the alleyways (see Figure 6 and 7).

Regarding electricity, the California Utilities Commission’s Rule 26 provides $800,000 per year in perpetuity for the under-grounding or burying of overhead electricity lines in the City of Bakersfield. This money could be prioritized along key corridors in Downtown to support various beautification and place-making interventions.
Figure 4:
Sewer

Figure 5:
Stormwater

Figure 6:
Electric Infrastructure - Power Lines
A major natural gas pipeline runs diagonally through Downtown adjacent to both the future HSR station site and the Amtrak station. It has been noted that any construction of the future HSR station will require the realignment of this pipeline.

Pacific Gas and Electric has reviewed the projected development in the project area, as well as the proposed location, intensity and diversity of uses as envisioned in this document (see Chapter 3: The Vision). They believe there is adequate capacity for both gas and electric systems, and that the purposed development could be accommodated with minimal investment. PG&E also stated this would need to be certified by additional and more in depth studies and field testing.

**Water**

Cal Water is responsible for the potable water system in Downtown. This infrastructure includes multiple main lines that run down the center of the public right-of-way, wells, pump stations, manholes, hydrants and several sampling stations (see Figure 8).

CalWater has stated additional comprehensive studies would be required to determine capacity.

**Telecommunications**

Both AT&T and Spectrum provide telecommunications infrastructure in Downtown Bakersfield (see Figure 9). The City owns an existing broadband network in Downtown, the Interconnect, which runs from Chester Avenue to Columbus Street to Beale Avenue to Truxtun Avenue. Originally built to unite the majority of traffic signals in Downtown, the Interconnect currently only uses 2 of its 4 ducts which could be leveraged for additional uses and/or public benefit in the future. AT&T and Spectrum has stated they can and will service for all future development.

**Public Transportation**

Downtown Bakersfield is serviced by the Golden Empire Transit (23,000 daily and 7.3 million annual riders), Kern County Regional Transit (513,000 annual riders), and Amtrak (over 1 million annual passengers on the San Joaquin line).

**Next Steps**

The City of Bakersfield maintains a monthly Utility Meeting, organized by the Department of Public Works, as a working group to coordinate infrastructure across the City. The Committee includes all the utilities mentioned above as well as the County of Kern. This Committee should guide the development of a future Infrastructure Master Plan process, including the investigation of potential means by which to pay for future infrastructure upgrades and expansions.
Figure 7:
Electric Infrastructure - Street Lights

Figure 8:
Water Infrastructure

Figure 9:
Telecommunications
1.5 Market Analysis

A Market Analysis of the region and Downtown sub-market was developed as a part of the Existing Conditions Report (see Appendix III: Market Analysis). This study characterizes Bakersfield’s socio-economic & employment profile and real estate.

Office Market Summary

- Of the 13.3 million square feet (SF) of office in the City of Bakersfield, approximately 30% is located in the study area;
- The Bakersfield office market has higher rents and lower vacancy rates when compared to San Joaquin Valley as a whole;
- The study area, or Greater Downtown, is a large employment hub for Bakersfield, with primarily government and medical workers;
- There has been limited office construction in Downtown Bakersfield since 2000 and, with contractions in public administration employment, little of this new office space has been built within the study area;
- The Bakersfield office market continues to see growth (with more anticipated when HSR is in operation), but the Downtown market has not captured its fair share of that growth in the last two decades; and,
- Citywide development policies, Downtown placemaking initiatives, and HSR could help to attract more development, including additional private office development.

Multi-Family Residential Market Summary

- Over the past two decades, there has been a significant amount of single-family construction in greater Bakersfield, nearly all of which has been in the form of master-planned communities;
- Multi-family apartment development has also gained traction in the City, with 925 such units delivered citywide since 2000;
- New amenities, such as open space and a grocery store, could increase demand for market-rate housing Downtown; and,
- HSR may create an opportunity for further development, as people may choose to locate in Downtown Bakersfield and commute to other cities.

Retail Market Summary

- With dropping vacancies and rising rents, both Bakersfield’s and the study area’s retail markets have improved in the years since the 2008 recession;
- 9% of the City’s retail is located within the study area. The study area’s retail corridors are dispersed through Downtown, making for a fragmented Downtown retail experience.
Prioritize the Core  
(No HSR)  

Connect the Core to HSR  
(HSR without revitalization)  

Expand the Core  
(HSR with revitalization)
While Bakersfield’s retail per capita matches that of peer and aspirational cities, its retail offerings are far more dispersed throughout the City than those of cities such as Pasadena, which has nearly half of its retail square footage in its downtown; Given the current mix of retail and quality of the retail environment, Downtown Bakersfield is currently challenged to compete with the auto-oriented shopping centers and big box retailers located throughout the region; and, To compete with suburban shopping centers and attract visitors, Downtown will have to stimulate growth in a specialized high-quality mix of retail.

Hotel Market Summary

Bakersfield’s hotel market has grown significantly since 2000; approximately 60% of all rooms were built in the past 16 years. This growth is in part due to job growth in Bakersfield and the opening of the Rabobank Arena, the area’s largest events venue, in 1998; The majority of hotels are economy or midscale class and Bakersfield’s primary hotel users are weekday business travelers; Occupancy rates for Downtown upper midscale and upper class hotels are nearly 80%, suggesting demand for more hotels rooms; The success of the Padre Hotel demonstrates the latent demand for differentiated products Downtown; However, modest room rates raise questions of the feasibility of new hotel construction on more expensive Downtown land; and, As Downtown continues to see revitalization, travelers will continue to want to stay near other Downtown amenities, including restaurants and bars. Access to HSR could support further hotel development, as more businesses locate Downtown.

Table 1 on the following page, summarizes projected development within the study area. These projections are broken down categorically by office, residential, retail and hotel and are the foundation for the Phased Development Strategy (see Chapter 4: Phased Development Strategy). The Table provides a range of projections based on three different scenarios in order to better understand the impact of HSR and a coordinated revitalization strategy (See Section 4.6: Economic Development Strategy):

Baseline (No HSR Integration): Downtown without HSR;
Mid (HSR Integration without Downtown revitalization): The existence of the HSR system without any coordinated revitalization efforts; and,
High HSR + Downtown revitalization (Full HSR Integration): The existence of HSR and a coordinated Downtown revitalization effort.
### Table 1: Market Analysis Projections Summary by typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Baseline (No HSR Integration)</th>
<th>Mid (HSR Integration without Downtown revitalization)</th>
<th>High HSR + Downtown revitalization (Full HSR Integration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 years (2025)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office (square feet)</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>365,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (units)</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail (square feet)</td>
<td>100,379</td>
<td>109,993</td>
<td>150,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel (rooms)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 years (2035)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office (square feet)</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>585,000</td>
<td>1,085,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (units)</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>4,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail (square feet)</td>
<td>222,461</td>
<td>346,108</td>
<td>493,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel (rooms)</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1,272</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30 years (2045)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office (square feet)</td>
<td>505,000</td>
<td>1,130,000</td>
<td>2,005,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential (units)</td>
<td>2,160</td>
<td>5,140</td>
<td>8,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail (square feet)</td>
<td>356,015</td>
<td>625,837</td>
<td>905,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel (rooms)</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>1,413</td>
<td>2,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 Downtown Primed for Reinvestment

The Existing Conditions Report illustrates how Downtown Bakersfield is primed for future growth and investment. Making Downtown Bakersfield is the culmination of a variety of efforts, programs, and developments. The Vision Plan highlights the foundation that has already been created by the City and local stakeholders and provides a path forward for others to join in the rebirth of Bakersfield’s historic core (see Figures 14).

Downtown Bakersfield has an existing transportation network that will be enhanced by HSR. The Downtown area is already serviced by the Golden Empire Transit (23,000 daily and 7.3 million annual riders), Kern County Regional Transit (513,000 annual riders), and Amtrak (1.56 million annual passengers on the Capitol Corridor line). Tying these systems together in Downtown and integrating their facilities with the historic street grid can focus growth to rehabilitate existing buildings and redevelop underutilized parcels across the project area.

This Vision is meant to inspire continued reinvestment Downtown by illustrating and bringing together its many assets; physical, historical, institutional and cultural.
1.7 Case Studies

The arrival of HSR service is expected to bring significant opportunities to Bakersfield and its economy and will accelerate the revitalization already underway in Downtown Bakersfield. These opportunities are expected to spur transformative changes to the City as a whole, and specifically within the Downtown Station Area. To better understand the specific impacts of HSR on cities with similar characteristics as Bakersfield, a Case Study Report was prepared. The Report also reviews the public policy interventions and actions these cities took to leverage the significant investment of HSR.

The report reviewed international Cities for a High Speed Rail context, as no true HSR system exists in United States, North America or the Western Hemisphere, and included three national case studies for a US context. The lessons learned from these case studies can help inform the City on the potential impacts HSR may have on Downtown and the ways the City can utilize the station area planning effort and HSR to achieve its long-term community goals. The US case studies also inform potential actions the City can take regardless of HSR to leverage its Downtown assets for continued revitalization. The full report can be found Appendix IV: Case Studies.

**HSR Case Studies**

A review of existing research on the spatial effects of HSR systems was done to better understand opportunities for Bakersfield. The high number of other variables involved in urban development – from the status of the national economy to differences among cities involved – make definitive predictions on the effects of a new HSR system difficult to ascertain. No two regions are identical, and as such general predictions do not always prove true, as many factors determine outcomes. Additionally, the governance and fiscal structures are different in other countries, which adds a layer of complexity to international comparisons. Despite these constraints, a framework was developed for case study analysis that recognizes the limitations in drawing direct comparisons, yet still reveals applicable insights for Bakersfield.

The spatial effects of HSR (See full research citations in Appendix IV: Case Studies) are in principle similar to those around other fixed guideway mass transit (e.g. light rail or streetcar), but the size of the economic catchment area that HSR draws activity from is wider and the effects of the HSR system are very dependent on the host city’s position in the urban hierarchy (i.e. a city’s position relative to other cities in its region). The HSR system’s high capacity, limited stops, reliability, and wide economic catchment area create the potential for much more intense development than is typically associated with a single transit stop, and economic activity attracted to station areas is often regional-serving in nature.

The spatial effects of high-speed rail are generally related to a city’s position in the urban hierarchy, therefore, stations were characterized, and the corresponding effects
the host-cities may experience, into five major categories show and illustrated below and on the following page:

- Stations in the center of a major urban agglomeration (Ex: Los Angeles Union Station);
- Stations in a sub-center of a major urban agglomeration (Ex: Burbank);
- Stations in a city just outside a major urban agglomeration (Ex: Palmdale);
- Stations in a city not near a major urban agglomeration (Ex: Bakersfield); and,
- Stations outside a city (Ex: Kings-Tulare).

Cities were selected that have HSR connectivity and a similar size, position in the urban hierarchy, travel time to a major metropolitan area, and other economic characteristics that provide some comparability with Bakersfield. While no case study is perfectly comparable with Bakersfield, these cases can be used to benchmark possible effects that might occur in Bakersfield. They also provide insight on actions undertaken to leverage their HSR stations successfully.

**Key Lessons for Bakersfield**

A number of common themes and takeaways emerged for successfully leveraging HSR investments across all the case study cities. The case studies illustrate that proactive policies and actions focused on three major themes: station integration, multimodal and pedestrian connectivity, station area planning, and governance.

**Station Integration**

Ensures that Bakersfield will have a HSR station that can be fully leveraged. Stations located outside of city centers generally see less development and are less desirable than those located within or near downtown areas. Both proposed Bakersfield station locations are in Downtown, and stand to see similar benefits as other case study cities, such as Lille and Le Mans, as a result of this centrality.

**Multimodal Connectivity**

Ensures locating a station near the urban core of a city, providing connectivity between the HSR station and the surrounding neighborhoods and city districts helps to amplify the impact of a HSR station, and spur development along connections to the HSR station. Such connectivity policies include multimodal connections that can take people from the HSR station to other intra-city areas, as well as major investments in the public realm. Lille and Le Mans both invested in fixed-rail transit to serve their HSR station and provide seamless connections to the remainder of the urban core and other outlying districts. Every multimodal effort should be made to ensure the station area is first and foremost carefully planned, safe, and well connected for pedestrians, ensuring seamless multi-modal connections, and ensuring access for automobiles that does not hinder the other alternative modes. Such policies include providing wide and shaded sidewalks, removing barriers to pedestrian movement, gaps in the pedestrian network (i.e. sidewalks), roads that are not too wide to cross safely, and an array of other programs and transportation

---

**Figure 13 (above):**

Downtown HSR:
1. Pasadena, CA
2. Visalia, CA
3. Denver, CO
demand management strategies (e.g., the creation of a Transportation Management Association, transit subsidies, on-site bike and car-sharing at adjacent development, and reduced parking requirements in the HSR station area).

The station area should have the highest standards for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure and connectivity to encourage non-automobile transportation and optimize investment.

Station Area Planning, such as zoning controls near station areas, can dramatically boost the impact a new HSR station will have on Bakersfield. Appropriate zoning regulations can ensure a mix of uses in the station area to ensure the station area’s long term vitality, and also prevent it from becoming a single use district such as a “nine to five” employment center. While office development often takes the land nearest the HSR stations, residential development can also be focused around the station areas. A mix of uses is vital to healthy station areas, allowing a variety of activities to take place at all hours, and every effort should be made to ensure that the zoning code supports the creation of multiple uses surrounding the station. Minimum density controls can ensure the station area is not developed too quickly at too low a density, as was the case in Ciudad Real. Both zoning and density controls must acknowledge a long-term development timeframe that spans multiple decades, over 30 years in the case of Le Mans, to ensure decisions made in the station area now do not impede future opportunities in the years to come.

Governance of the station area development is tantamount to ensure it is developed in a way that maximizes its proximity to the HSR station. The case study cities, aside from Ciudad Real, created public development corporations that could acquire, dispose or develop surrounding land under public-private partnerships. These public development corporations generally included local, regional, and national government as well as private stakeholders and railway authority. They ensured the station area was developed with an eye towards the long term, as development around HSR stations takes place over decades, while also ensuring that the public’s vision for the station area is implemented.

Unique Impacts of HSR
HSR has the potential to induce unprecedented development Bakersfield. While HSR’s effect on total population and employment are difficult to predict, case studies indicate that HSR can aid in the revitalization of a city’s economy and provide a catalyst for population and employment growth with the right public interventions. One of the most documented effects of HSR is the increased station area concentration and density of development that coincide with HSR service. The large economic catchment areas, reliable travel times, and extremely high carrying capacity can bring large-scale development to the station area in Bakersfield. HSR presents an opportunity for Bakersfield to concentrate some of its future growth inward, building on the progress
already made in its Downtown, lessen the negative impacts of suburban sprawl such as congestion and air pollution, and preserve agricultural land, uses and heritage.

HSR service can enhance Bakersfield’s brand in the region, the state, and beyond. Development around the HSR station gives Bakersfield the opportunity to create new quality urban places for residents and visitors alike. HSR puts Bakersfield within easy reach of millions of Californians, building potential for more people to come and experience the city’s local attractions. Connectivity with the rest of the state is also attractive to employers and firms in and outside of Bakersfield may relocate to the station area to take advantage of this major asset. Partially coupled with business growth in the station area, business travelers will find Bakersfield in easy reach of major corporate hubs in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Cities such as Zaragoza and Le Mans experienced robust increases in business travelers after HSR service began, and both Zaragoza and Lille saw increases in convention activity as well.

While HSR service brings great opportunities to Bakersfield, these opportunities can only be realized if Bakersfield commits to a compelling vision for the station area to be held over the long-term. HSR should be seen as a catalyst for growth, but not a sole source thereof. Only through a comprehensive set of policy interventions and public realm investments can Bakersfield make the most of its future HSR station.

**Downtown Revitalization Case Studies**

In light of Bakersfield’s ongoing efforts to revitalize its Downtown, which will continue until the arrival of HSR and beyond, three case studies that focused on Downtown revitalization focused on cities where such revitalization occurred before or without mass transit connections.

Pasadena, a metropolitan center approximately ten miles from Downtown Los Angeles, was selected to learn about ways that the City managed to increase the competitiveness of its historic downtown area (Old Pasadena) versus other regional suburban shopping centers.

Visalia, a San Joaquin Valley city approximately 68 miles north of Bakersfield, was selected to represent an example of a revitalized downtown that occurred without any type of mass transit connection and in a development context not too dissimilar from Bakersfield. Denver Union Station was also selected as a case study to learn how multi-modal station investments can be effectively leveraged to catalyze a vibrant mixed use district in its vicinity, especially in the US context.

Key interventions for both Pasadena and Visalia included the creation of a dedicated funding source for maintenance, safety, and improvement of the area. This funding source in both cases stemmed from local businesses, and was construed as an investment in their bottom line as opposed to a series of expensive projects. Strong
cooperation of local businesses allowed them to form assessments on themselves, as improvements to the districts at large improved their foot traffic.

Thus, local businesses had strong incentives to pay for public improvements to the area, and were able to prioritize improvements that would make the largest difference to their patrons. Bakersfield should consider the creation of a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) to coalesce resources and political capital around furthering a long-term vision for the Downtown area. Handling parking was vital in the case of Old Pasadena, and Pasadena managed to create attractive mixed-use parking structures while simultaneously charging for street parking to fund further district improvements. Local merchants often oppose interventions like parking meters out of fear that it will impact their business and drive costumers away to suburban shopping centers, but if parking revenues are dedicated to local area improvements, corresponding investments can more than make up for the increased deterrent of paid parking.

In Denver, a city-led effort to consolidate railyard space created highly desirable development parcels under single-owner control. While this is a challenge in the absence of a Redevelopment Agency, Bakersfield will have to consider other creative mechanisms to incentivize the kind of development it wants to see in the surrounding HSR station area. In Denver, land assembly was one methodology, but ultimately the process was driven through a partnership between the public and private sectors.
2.1 Community Outreach

Public input was a key component in preparation of the Vision Plan. The “Making Downtown Bakersfield” campaign was launched to engage in an extensive community engagement campaign to engage Bakersfield residents, community organizations, non-profits, businesses, government agencies and more. Public input was gathered online and at partner meetings, community events, walking tours, vision workshops, community charrettes. This effort resulted in over 500 people contributing to define the values that drove the planning process and ultimately the Vision for Downtown (See Appendix VIII. Public Engagement Summary).

To launch the process, a Stakeholder Committee was formed and held monthly meetings to create a platform to discuss progress, action plans, methods of improvement, outreach efforts, vision plan concepts and implementation strategies. Regular feedback was also received through an online engagement tool via the project website: www.MakingDowntownBakersfield.us

Next, 11 Workshops and a Community Meeting were held, where over 125 participants worked collaboratively to develop ideas about where to focus growth, public realm enhancements, and other investments in Downtown. This workshop became the foundation for the Vision Plan’s Phased Development Strategy (see Chapter 4: Phased Development Strategy).

The final Open House attracted more than 150 participants, and sought to confirm the final vision for Downtown while collecting input and champions for the implementation strategy (see Chapter 4: Phased Development Strategy and Appendix I: Implementation Matrix).

Through the language of design, these Vision Workshops allowed participants to articulate their aspirations and values, and several common themes began to emerge across the diverse groups represented at the various workshop locations. The common values that were developed for Downtown included:

• Connectivity;
• Vibrancy;
• Compact Development;
• Diversity;
• Open Space;
• Iconic;
• Livability;
• Safety;
• Prosperity;
• Equity;
• Culture; and,
• Convenience.
2.2 Community Values

The public outreach process identified three key values of the Bakersfield community that served as the driving principles of the Vision Plan process:

1. Livability
   Creating a comfortable, safe and engaging Downtown experience.

Activating the public realm requires more people living in Downtown, more businesses succeeding in Downtown, and more events programmed in Downtown. Creating new (Wall Street Pedestrian Paseos) and improving existing public spaces will make Downtown a more vibrant destination. Designing the streetscape to promote walking and biking will encourage people to leave their cars at home or “park once” and truly engage with Downtown. This intimate, personal participation with the City creates the opportunity to interact with fellow citizens, building social capital and expanding the local tax base as more people linger and patronize businesses.

2. Connectivity
   Tying together the many Downtown assets.

Downtown Bakersfield is the region’s cultural capitol, the epicenter of local government, and the region’s largest employment center. The many institutions that make Downtown Bakersfield a destination are located within 2.3 square miles, a relatively large study area. Physically connecting these resources (Golden State Multi-Use Trail) will expand access to opportunities, events and services, while improving the pedestrian experience for residents, customers, workers and visitors alike.

3. Prosperity
   Sharing the benefits of development across Downtown.

Development must strategically take advantage of massive infrastructure investments, create corridors of activity and opportunity and provide targeted support for private investment. This Vision Plan introduces livability (Garces Circle Pedestrian Plaza) as a trigger for the reinvestment of the historic core while encouraging an equitable economic development pattern starting with the core and radiating outward.

2.3 Making Downtown Bakersfield Vision Statement:

“Making Downtown Bakersfield the cultural and economic center of the State means connecting the diverse amenities of the historic core to the broader region, fostering local businesses and empowering the public to engage in the transformation of their city all in an effort to create a truly unique and vibrant sense of community.”
Livability
Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo

Connectivity
Golden State Multi-Use Trail

Prosperity
Garces Circle Pedestrian Plaza
THE VISION
3.1 Development Blueprint

A future HSR station at F Street and Golden State Highway creates an opportunity to strengthen and revive Chester Avenue, the historic “Main Street” of Bakersfield. This connection point between the proposed HSR station and Chester Avenue, Garces Circle, provides an opportunity to develop an iconic “gateway” that acknowledges the history of Bakersfield and its future. With strong pedestrian and transit connections to HSR, Downtown can optimize private investment and encourage inclusive development across the City and region.

To maximize this opportunity, strategic investments in the public realm must accompany each phase of development while simultaneously attracting growth while supporting its use (see Figure 18). A re-imagined Garces Circle with the proposed HSR station as an anchor can guide the development of a new complimentary node to the historic core, resulting in an expansion of the Downtown activity center. This approach will also position Chester Avenue as the primary access corridor of the region, connecting HSR, air (Meadows Field Airport), train (Bakersfield Amtrak Station), transit (Golden Empire Transit Center) and automobile (US 204, US 99, US 178 & 99B) travel into and out of Bakersfield.

Transformation of the Garces Circle area into a pedestrian plaza will define a new iconic regional destination and implement place-making and walkability strategies that support street life and local commerce. The Pedestrian Plaza frames walkable, mixed-use HSR transit-oriented district and leverages the HSR alignment to create a new multimodal trail that draws the Kern River directly into the heart of Downtown. Connecting the Kern River trail to the Mill Creek Linear Park fills a critical gap in the active transportation network uniting and increasing open space around Downtown.
Step 1
Focus reinvestment in the Core, building on existing assets such as underutilized buildings, Mill Creek Linear Park and the Rabobank Arena.

Step 2
Connect transit options Downtown and focus redevelopment at Chester Avenue Historic “Main Street.”

Step 3
Pull Kern River into the City creating a ring of open space that frames future reinvestment.
A night time aerial view of Downtown looking northwest that shows the Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo linking Mill Creek to the historic core and Chester Avenue to the new HSR Station District.
3.2 Creating the Ideal Public Realm - A Green Loop Around Downtown

Pedestrian-friendly streets can encourage a public realm that will increase activity by allowing residents and visitors to enjoy a higher quality of living. When people feel comfortable, they linger, spend more money, and interact with their neighbors. These chance encounters encourage community building, create new lasting bonds, and form partnerships. This Vision Plan encourages the community to think of street right-of-ways as valuable public open spaces. Making Downtown Bakersfield more attractive for walking and biking is itself a transportation demand management strategy for the projected growth in and around the HSR station area.

Streets have historically been designed to maximize the amount of automobile throughput, which does not always facilitate the use of other transportation modes. This Vision Plan proposes to prioritize the pedestrian, in line with the City’s adopted Complete Streets policy. A complete street is a transportation facility that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide access for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, truckers, and motorists, appropriate to the function and context of the facility. Complete streets are the first step to not only improving the walkability and vibrancy of Downtown, but significantly improving safety at some of the City’s most dangerous intersections.

Together these Public Realm investments, which are further described in the next two sections serve to expand the capture area of Downtown, providing greater access to opportunity. This encourages increased density that builds-in transit ridership and thereby lessens Bakersfield’s dependence on automobiles and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Collectively, all of these interventions work towards Making Downtown Bakersfield the economic, cultural and governmental center of the southern Central Valley.

Figure 19 (pages 32 and 33)
Creating and connecting Downtown corridors

Figure 20 (page 35)
Green Loop components: Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo, Bike enhancements, Kern River Trail, Multi-use Trail and Mill Creek Linear Park.
3.3 Three Big Ideas

Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo
The Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo (see Figure 22) currently exists between Eye Street and Chester Avenue. Expansion of this pedestrian alley east to Mill Creek Linear Park and west to the edge of the Westchester neighborhood (D Street) will create vibrant pedestrian experience that connects multiple amenities, and provides what is now Downtown's largest residential population direct access to the historic core. This outdoor mall (see Figure 23) will be activated day and night and create a focal point for the local Downtown retail, restaurant and entertainment scene, by extending an existing asset and harnessing the unique character of Downtown.

Golden State Connector (Multi-Use Trail)
The HSR alignment between the Union Pacific railroad and Golden State Avenue will create a relatively wide swath of land under and adjacent to the viaduct. This provides an opportunity to connect Kern River to Mill Creek. Golden State Connector will be a pedestrian and bicycle path, an active and passive open space, and a transportation corridor for HSR, the freeway and the Union Pacific.

The Golden State Connector can transform the current industrial corridor and bridge north and south Downtown. In the spirit of the High Line in New York City, Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago and Buffalo Bayou in Houston, this is Bakersfield's moment to create a national example of place-making, equity building, and ecological restoration.

Garces Circle Pedestrian Plaza
Future upgrades to Golden State Avenue will be necessary to ensure capacity for the HSR station and this may result in the removal of three of the seven roads that currently flow into Garces Circle. This will cause Garces Circle to transition into an intersection of two streets from its current configuration and function as a traffic circle (see Figure 22).

This transition is an opportunity to reconfigure Garces Circle to provide direct transit and pedestrian access between the HSR station and Chester Avenue (Figure 13) and act as the gateway to Downtown. A more detailed description of the traffic patterns of the new Garces Circle can be found in the HSR Integration section later in this chapter.
An eye-level view of the new Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo looking east towards Mill Creek Linear Park.
3.4 Core Reinvestments

Mass Transit Context

Mass transit is a mechanism to concentrate development and increase population densities. Downtown Bakersfield has multiple mass transit providers that offer local, regional, and interstate travel; including:

- Golden Empire Transit (GET): Provides predominantly local transit from its transit center at 22nd Street and Chester Avenue;
- Kern County Regional Transit: Provides local and regional transit service and leases bays from GET transit center;
- Greyhound Bus: Provides inter-city travel from their station at 24th and H Streets); and,
- Amtrak: Uses the Capitol Corridor service line, which terminates at Bakersfield at the Truxtun Avenue Station. Riders can continue south to Los Angeles Union Station via Amtrak bus service.
Transit Upgrades

- Bus Rapid Transit (Chester Ave and California Ave)
- Autonomous People Mover (Amtrak-HSR connection)
- Complete Street (Chester Ave, F St, and 34th St)
- Improved Intersections
- Multi-modal HSR Station at E Street
- Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuterail) Station at Truxtun
- GET Transit Center

Improved Intersections
- Bus Rapid Transit (Chester Ave and California Ave)
- Autonomous People Mover (Amtrak-HSR connection)
- Complete Street (Chester Ave, F St, and 34th St)
- Multi-modal HSR Station at E Street
- Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuterail) Station at Truxtun
- GET Transit Center

Multi-modal HSR Station at E Street
- Autonomous People Mover (Amtrak-HSR connection)
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Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuterail) Station at Truxtun
- Autonomous People Mover (Amtrak-HSR connection)
- Complete Street (Chester Ave, F St, and 34th St)
- Multi-modal HSR Station at E Street
- Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuterail) Station at Truxtun
- GET Transit Center

GET Transit Center
- Autonomous People Mover (Amtrak-HSR connection)
- Complete Street (Chester Ave, F St, and 34th St)
- Multi-modal HSR Station at E Street
- Multi-modal Amtrak (Future Commuterail) Station at Truxtun
- GET Transit Center
Mass Transit Vision
A further concentration of transit lines supported by multi-modal options will make Downtown Bakersfield the regional mobility hub, which will lead to increased densities around transit, reduced parking demands, and a walkable urban environment. This Vision Plan identifies upgrades and interventions to induce transit-oriented development and prepare Downtown to accommodate projected development through high-quality transit service (see Figure 25):

Mass Transit Implementation Actions:
BRT Upgrades (Chester and California Avenues)
The Vision Plan seeks to coordinate projects identified in the GET long-range transit plan including upgrades to the California and Chester Avenue lines to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix). These lines are currently the highest and second highest ridership transit corridors, respectively, in the GET system. The upgrades could begin with implementation of a BRT-lite strategy within the first 10-years, and upgrading to a full BRT service after HSR service arrives in Bakersfield (see Figure 27). BRT-lite is typically considered a step above express bus service and is defined by increased frequency of service, transit-priority street lights, and pre-paid boarding. BRT-lite can leverage the existing streetscape improvements on Chester Avenue and upgrade transit amenities like route branding, upgraded transit shelters and other amenities. Full BRT is defined by the addition of a dedicated bus lane, and on and off-boarding stations where you pay to enter the “station”, thereby more rapidly on and off-boarding the bus.

BRT does not preclude the use of bike lanes or on-street parking on Chester or California Avenues. It would, however, reduce automobile travel lanes from two lanes to one lane in each direction. Making Chester Avenue a transit corridor would generally slow auto-traffic and make it local serving, which further enhances the pedestrian friendly nature of historic Downtown.

Figure 26 (above)
Transit Best Practices:
HSR Station, Zaragoza, Spain
Bus Rapid Transit, San Bernardino, CA
Mobility Hub, Denver, CO

Figure 27 (page 43)
Example of Transit Graduation, using Chester Avenue streetscape as a pilot study
Downtown Shuttle
A circulator shuttle would help connect the many districts, institutions, amenities and experiences across Downtown (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix). The shuttle is proposed to travel on an upgraded F and 34th Streets (complete streets), down Q Street to the Amtrak station, then on to California Avenue, and over to Chester Avenue before completing the loop back to F Street. The idea of a “trolley on wheels” has been tried in the past and further discussion is needed for how to pay for it (potential funding services include GET, Kern County or potentially the proposed Downtown BID). Regardless, it is imperative for the Downtown shuttle to be bi-directional, connect the Amtrak station to the future HSR station site, and the flexibility to augment its service to coincide with the growth of Downtown.

This shuttle could be an autonomous vehicle pilot, which would provide the ancillary benefit of attracting transportation technology companies to Bakersfield. Such autonomous shuttles are already in service in the United States, but not yet for use by public transit agencies or the general public.

Mobility Hubs
The Vision Plan recommends the creation of two new mobility hubs in Downtown, in addition to an upgraded GET transit center that would function as the third mobility hub. These mobility hubs would be at the future HSR station and the current Amtrak station (the site of the proposed commuter rail station). A mobility hub consists of layering of multiple transit and transportation options either at the origin, destination or transfer point for a significant portion of trips (in this case, all three). The locations would each have their own unique hierarchies, but would generally include passenger rail (either HSR or commuter rail in the future), bus (of various frequencies and lines), bike (bike share, lockers, racks and other amenities) and pedestrian connectivity within a 15 minute walking distance.

More information about mass transit upgrades can be found in both the Implementation Plan in Chapter 4: Phased Development Strategy (see also Appendix I: Implementation Matrix).
An eye-level view of the new Chester Avenue looking north towards the new HSR Station District.
Bike Context
Bike facilities are critical in ensuring rider safety and teaching drivers how to responsibly share the road. An upgrade of certain facilities, expansions of others and the introduction of new typologies are all important steps to creating a comprehensive bicycle network in Downtown. Local bicycle advocacy groups, such as Bike Bakersfield, support bike network expansion efforts. These supporters are a critical component for advocacy, rider education, and events all to grow the number of local bike riders. Downtown Bakersfield has the opportunity to build on its current bike network and with relative ease increase bike use for both work and recreation.

Bike Vision
To complement the upgraded transit facilities and make Downtown more livable, the Vision Plan proposes a continuation of current policy to expand the bike network across Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. This strategy seeks to close existing gaps while creating new opportunities to expand the regional trail system such as the Kern River Trail into other currently under-served parts of Downtown. Such mobility enhancements also came with important public health and safety benefits.

This Vision Plan focuses on the three strategies below (see Figure 30) for expanding the bike network, connecting directly with transit, and overall Making Downtown Bakersfield more bike-friendly.
Bike Implementation Actions
The current bike network in Downtown Bakersfield forms the backbone of future expansion plans. Building on the current facilities, it is important to think of bike facilities in the same way that you can graduate a bus from express to BRT-lite to full BRT. The general progression of bike facilities are from sharrows to bike lanes to protected bike lanes to cycle tracks and/or then bike boulevards. Each step in the hierarchy requires minimal investment that builds on the previous improvements.

21st Street Bike Enhancements
These incremental steps are also easily tested to define what works and does not work for Bakersfield. For instance, 21st Street is categorized as the primary east-west bike corridor in the City’s Bicycle Plan. The current bike lane should not only be extended to connect directly to the Kern River Trail, but also upgraded to a protected bike lane or other facilities over time where it is warranted by safety and traffic concerns (see Figure 33). As the bike facility passes through the more busy streets of Downtown, it should be determined if and where it could be upgraded to a protected bike lane or even a cycle track in the future. It is more important, however, to have a continuous facility than a facility that transitions between typologies.
Existing Bike Lane
21st Street

Existing Edge
- Walk: 11'
- Park: 8'
- Bike: 4'
- Drive: 10.5'
- Center Turn: 9'
- Drive: 10.5'
- Bike: 4'
- Park: 8'
- Walk: 11'

Protected Bike Lane
21st Street

Existing Edge
- Walk: 11'
- Bike: 7'
- Veg: 4'
- Drive: 12'
- Drive: 12'
- Park: 8'
- Veg: 4'
- Bike: 7'
- Walk: 11'

Cycle Track
21st Street

Existing Edge
- Walk: 11'
- Park: 8'
- Drive: 11'
- Drive: 11'
- Park: 8'
- Veg: 4'
- Bike: 7'
- Walk: 11'

Shading Vegetation
- Bike lane protected from traffic by planter

Shading Vegetation
- Bike lane protected from traffic by planter

Shading Vegetation
- Bike lane protected from traffic by planter
K Street Bike Enhancements
The K Street Bike Boulevard is a new type of facility in the region. A bike boulevard uses the deficiencies of an existing street to the benefit of bicycle service. With minimal improvements, K Street, between Garces Circle and 17th Street, could be converted into a comfortable biking corridor and complimentary alternative to the more hectic and busy Chester Avenue bike lane. This new bike boulevard would only exist in the historic core of Downtown, but still connect to a future HSR station and thereby the larger, regional bike network. K Street has bulb outs, angled parking, and a vacated street between 21st and 22nd Streets, before dead-ending at 17th. These existing characteristics reduce automobile traffic.

This Vision Plan recommends painting the street to “announce” that this is not just a street for cars, providing new back-in angled parking to increase visibility of drivers, new signage, and other enhancements (see Figure 34). A bike boulevard would essentially convert all of K Street into a woonerf (see Figure 32) or a road where bikes and pedestrians are prioritized, but still share the roadway with automobiles, and where interventions seek to actively make automobile traffic less convenient.

Regional Bike System
Finally, a unique opportunity to Bakersfield is its vast network of urban canals. These agriculture canals have had a large city grow up around them. When you look at a regional map of these canals, they are literally a direct route to every corner of the Bakersfield metropolitan region. A precedent for this type of shared use that exists today is the Mill Creek Linear Park. While such regional bike facilities do not need to mimic the Mill Creek project, they could very simply allow bikes on their access roads with minimal improvements (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix). Such a regional network would create a confluence of bike routes into and out of Downtown, and serve as a real, convenient alternative to the automobile.
MAINTAIN BULB
CUT THROUGH PLAZA
WAYFINDING SIGNAGE
BIKE BOULEVARD STENCIL
MINI TRAFFIC CIRCLE
INTERSECTION TREATMENTS
CONVERT PARKING TO BACK-IN
**Parking Context**

The HSR Authority estimates that the HSR Station will require approximately 400 parking spaces by 2029, and 890 spaces at full build-out. Additionally, the HSR Station will encourage private development in Downtown Bakersfield, which will also need to accommodate parking either on-site or at a combined off-site facility. Parking needs can be accommodated, in part, by using existing underutilized capacity within walking distance or short transit ride of the station in accordance with the City’s shared parking Municipal Code requirements. HSR will develop a Multimodal Access Plan prior to the design and construction of parking facilities at the future HSR station. This Plan will be done in coordination with the City of Bakersfield and will include a strategy that addresses and informs the final location, amount and phasing of parking.

**Parking Vision**

Future growth in Downtown Bakersfield’s population, visitors, and businesses will make on-street parking a valuable commodity. Therefore, it will be important to develop a strong parking strategy (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix) to facilitate economic development, provide ease of access to Downtown and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Policies should focus on the design of private parking facilities, reducing parking requirements near transit, and promoting alternative modes of transportation.

**Parking Implementation Actions**

The existing City-operated parking structure at 18th and Eye streets will accommodate some of this parking demand increase; however, it is also necessary to consolidate existing surface parking lots throughout Downtown to free up land for infill development. The design of any new parking facility should seek to prevent blank walls and provide ground floor uses to activate the street. The facilities should also be situated in a manner to leverage the coverage of the existing public parking structure, capture drivers at the primary entrances to Downtown, and encourage them to park once as opposed to drive to multiple locations (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix).

Figure 36 identifies four opportunity areas for consolidated parking, including:

- HSR Station;
- Mill Creek Entertainment Area;
- 34th Street Corridor; and,
- M Street and Golden State.
An aerial view of Downtown looking south that shows the new HSR Station connecting to Chester Avenue at Garces Circle and connecting to the historic core via walking, biking and transit.
3.5 HSR Integration

A review of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and HSR station case studies from around the world proves the importance that a strong pedestrian and transit connection from the station to the urban core has on economic development. The integration of HSR into the city fabric is imperative to optimize development potential in the HSR station area and Downtown increment of return on investment.

With a strong baseline of growth in Bakersfield, HSR will serve to both focus and expand future development. The table below shows that improved HSR connectivity and other enhancements (e.g. streetscape improvements, pedestrian safety and accessibility upgrades, expanded bike facilities, etc.) will increase the amount of projected growth in Downtown Bakersfield by an order of magnitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Baseline (No HSR Integration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 years (2045)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office (square feet)</td>
<td>505,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (units)</td>
<td>2,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail (square feet)</td>
<td>356,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel (rooms)</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A critical means to create this integration is to have multiple points of ingress and egress out of the proposed HSR station, and creating a new entry plaza. Specifically, automobile traffic could route around the southern and eastern edge of Garces Circle with two coordinated lights at Chester and 30th to control queuing (see Figure 37). Between 30th and 34th Streets, north and south bound bus lanes will be separated from automobile traffic so both directions of travel can directly access the HSR transit plaza (see Figure 38).

Portions of Garces Circle could be used for a new busway through the HSR plaza. The 30th and 34th Street intersections with Chester Avenue would include a transit-only signal so buses could transition back into mixed-traffic heading south and north. Pedestrians would have routes around or through Garces Circle and into the HSR station site. Bicycle lanes would continue along Chester Avenue and connect with the K Street Bicycle Boulevard, which would use the vacated eastbound on-ramp of Golden State Highway to connect into the new Garces Circle and link up with the multimodal trail within the HSR alignment. Once within the new open space, the multimodal trail will cross into the site via a pedestrian bridge over the sunken portion of Chester Avenue.
Ped/Bike Paths

Bus Rapid Transit

Automobile Traffic
Location of HSR Station Footprint - Eastward vs. Westward

The F Street property provides a large swath of land for the eventual construction of the HSR Station; and the actual footprint of the Station could occur somewhere between the Kern River (west end) and Chester Avenue (east end). The final location of the Station’s entrance pavilion, its relation to the platform, and how the HSR Station addresses the Downtown area impact the viability of HSR (see Figure 40). These factors will also have a direct correlation to the spread of HSR’s induced development and economic prosperity across Downtown Bakersfield and adjacent neighborhoods.

While this Vision Plan does not ‘design’ the HSR station itself, it frames the conversation based on input from the public, City staff, California HSR Authority, and transportation experts. The recommendations of this Vision Plan seek to make Downtown Bakersfield a more connected, livable and prosperous place by integrating the HSR station into the city, prioritizing pedestrian, and removing physical and psychological barriers to the historic core.

This section explores various considerations of how the HSR Station should be positioned at the F Street Station location and accounts for primary automobile access at Golden State Avenue (Highway 204), with a Multi-Modal entrance for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and automobiles along F and 34th Streets; the main pedestrian and bike entrance being Garces Circle Pedestrian Plaza described above. Related infrastructure improvements will serve to provide multiple points of entry into the HSR site and will frame future development within and around the HSR station.
Entrance Pavilion Location Possibilities

A  F St Location A - Closer to Garces Circle and Chester Avenue
B  F St Location B - Further from Garces Circle and Chester Avenue

Development Focus
Option A – Eastward, Proximate to Chester Avenue
Locating the HSR station closer to Chester Avenue provides multiple access points for both local and regional traffic. This configuration provides opportunities for independent access for active transit (bicycles, pedestrians and BRT) from Chester Avenue, and access for private vehicles and multimodal transit (local shuttle, other bus, carpooling, transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft) on F Street via the upgraded Golden State Avenue interchange.

The Station’s proximity to Chester Avenue also separates the local traffic on Chester Avenue from regional trips on F Street, further strengthening Chester as Downtown’s primary commercial corridor.

Locating the HSR station near Chester Avenue maximizes the urban vitality of the Chester Corridor and creates a clear development node at Garces Circle. If Golden State Avenue (Highway 204) is grade separated from F Street, there is an additional potential to create pedestrian access and into and out of the station plaza, beneath the freeway between F Street and Chester Avenue. Furthermore, a buffer is maintained between the residential areas west of the HSR site and new, higher density TOD at Garces Circle.
Option B – Westward, Proximate to F Street
Locating the HSR station closer to F Street creates only one point of access that would be shared by local and regional traffic, de-emphasizing the Chester Avenue commercial corridor. Additionally, the Chester BRT would need to reroute via 34th Street increasing travel times and reducing convenience. The F/34th Street access would also diminish access to the kiss-and-ride and parking facilities as they would be “in” the HSR station site, as opposed to on its edge and adjacent to the existing street grid.

Locating the HSR station closer to F Street draws development away from Chester Avenue. Pedestrian connectivity between areas north and south of the 204 will be compromised by on and off ramps and there will be less separation between existing residential areas and the proposed HSR District.

Recommendation
While this Vision Plan is not intended to design the HSR Station, this analysis highlights the importance of the design of this facility. The Vision Plan assumes Option A to better illustrate the rectified priorities defined by the public.
PHASED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
CHAPTER 4
PHASED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Reinvestment Framework

Efforts are already underway to implement this Vision Plan:

- The City of Bakersfield’s investment in the Mill Creek Linear Park, Q Street improvements, and a variety affordable housing projects throughout the area;
- The City of Bakersfield’s adoption of an Economic Opportunity Area Plan;
- The Downtown Business Association launched the Downtown Business Development Corporation (DBDC), which is now leading an effort to create the first Property-based Business Improvement District (PBID);
- Businesses have moved into the historic core and invested in the Arts District;
- Private investment has led to renovation of the Padre Hotel, construction of new market rate housing, and much more in Downtown Bakersfield; and,
- Downtown Bakersfield is a hub for a variety of important employers; including government agencies, non-profits and private offices.

Building on these initiatives, the Phased Development Strategy is broken into three 10-year segments (2015-2045) that correspond to the market analysis and the build-out of California HSR System:

- The first 10 years (2015-2025) focuses on strengthening the historic core of Downtown and connecting it to the Mill Creek Entertainment District;
- The second 10 years (2025-2035) focuses on preparing Downtown to connect to and develop a new node of activity around the future HSR station; and,
- The third 10 years (2035-2045) focuses on responding to continued growth around the HSR station and spreading its benefits equitably across Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods.

The projected development assumes a sliding scale of adaptive reuse over the 30 year planning horizon. A percentage of each 10 year projection (approximately 25% for first 10 years, 20% for the second 10 years and 15% for the third 10 years) was set aside for filling underutilized space in existing buildings, which decreases over time due to diminishing supply. This set-aside percentage is included in the total projection numbers, but not included as “new” development in any of the renderings.

Additionally, residential units are assumed to be 1,100 square feet (sf) and hotel rooms 350sf in order to provide a physical dimension for representing “new” development in the aforementioned visualizations.

4.2 Implementation Strategy

Development of the Vision Plan has shown that specific implementation actions are needed to support the Phased Development Strategy (see Section 4.6: Economic Development Plan and Appendix 1: Implementation Matrix).
4.3 Phase 1: Strengthen (Now-2025)

Phase I of the Vision Plan (Now-2025) lays the groundwork for continued growth by focusing squarely on strategic investments and incentivizing targeted infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings (see Figure 46). Making Downtown Bakersfield HSR-ready is synonymous with revitalizing Downtown Bakersfield. The goal of Phase 1 is to build on past investments to continue to create a vibrant destination with multiple points of interest, accommodation and unique character.

Downtown Bakersfield has a unique sense of place due to a variety of investments, which are already in place to frame this first decade of projected growth (1,110 residential units, 360 hotel rooms, 365,000sf office and 150,223sf of retail). Vacant parcels and existing buildings, and other underutilized, low-density development in the historic core should be prioritized for redevelopment efforts (see Figure 47).

The proposed extension of the existing Wall Street pedestrian alley between Eye Street and Chester Avenue into a paseo that connects all the way to Mill Creek Linear Park, will create a strong pedestrian connection and unique civic space that unites the Mill Creek Entertainment District with the historic core. This project will attract private redevelopment and commercial activity along the new pathway while the Mill Creek Entertainment District master plan continues its build-out. A new overlay district could set development standards and provide additional incentives in the area between Downtown’s historic core and Mill Creek Linear Park (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix).

The core development zone will be bolstered by the advancement of already planned transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Bus Rapid Transit upgrades along Chester and California Avenues will provide more frequent service and ridership into Downtown. A new bi-directional circulator shuttle will link the many attractions, providing yet another transportation option. New bike facilities and upgrades will begin to close the gap in the bicycle network, directly linking the 21st Street bike lane to the Kern River trail, and developing a new typology, the bike boulevard, to complement and provide a more leisurely alternative to the busy Chester Avenue bike lanes. Enhanced pedestrian crossings along the soon to be upgraded 23rd and 24th Streets will improve north-south connectivity. And both F and 34th Streets will see traffic and streetscape improvements that provide multimodal facilities and safety enhancements as they become gateways into the HSR site.
0-10 Year Map

365,000 Sf Office; 1100 Residential Units; 150,223 Sf Retail; 360 Hotel Rooms

Existing

- Study Area Boundary
- Rail
- Bike Lane
- Bike/Ped Trail
- Open Space (Park)
- School
- Hospital
- HSR Station Zone
- Transit Center
- Amtrak

Proposed

- Development Node/Absorption
- Respond Development Zone
- Complete Street
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Shuttle
- Bike Lane
- Bike Boulevard
- Protected Bike Lane
- Urban Boulevard
- Pedestrian Paseo
- Improved Intersections
Implementation Actions
To implement Phase 1 of the Vision Plan, 26 Policy Strategies and 15 Physical Strategies were identified. These include the following (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix):

Policy Actions
1. Launch a Property-Based Business Improvement District (PBID)
2. Enhance the Economic Development Function within the City
3. Activate Downtown Economic Opportunity Area and Explore Additional Tool
4. Set a Goal of Reaching 10,000 Residents by 2030 and 25,000 Residents in Downtown by 2035
5. Implement an Iconic and Catalytic Housing and Mixed Use Development Project
6. Adopt an Overlay Zone to Support Development along the Wall Street alley area from D Street to the Mill Creek Linear Park
7. Use Vision Plan as a Platform for a Future Downtown Land Use Plan
8. Adopt a Downtown Walkability Plan
9. Adopt a Series of Zoning Updates that Incentivize Downtown Redevelopment
10. Leverage Publicly-Owned Parcels for Economic Development
11. Develop a Downtown Infrastructure Masterplan for Downtown
12. Codify the Vision
13. Downtown Urban Design Guidelines
15. Downtown Wayfinding Strategy
16. Adaptive Reuse Ordinance
17. Develop a Downtown Smart Cities Strategy
18. Incorporate Shared Mobility into Downtown Planning
19. Enhance Downtown Economy and Livability through Mobility Improvements
20. Shared Parking Ordinance
21. Wall Street Overlay Zone
22. Business Support Initiatives
23. Downtown Core - Mills Act
24. Mill Creek Entertainment District P3
25. Downtown Core - PACE Program
26. Downtown Core - Façade Easement

Physical Actions
1. Chester and California Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 1
2. Chester and California Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2
3. Garces Circle Retrofit
4. Downtown Circulator Shuttle
5. F Street Complete Street
6. 34th Street Complete Street
7. 23rd and 24th Street Intersection Improvements
8. Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo Phase 1
9. Wall Street Clock Tower
10. K Street Bike Boulevard
11. 21st Street Bike Improvements
12. Baker Street Bike Lane
13. Franklin Elementary Safe Route to School
14. Q Street Bike Expansion
15. Downtown Parklets Program

Additionally, in order to set a foundation for long term economic growth, the “Top 11 Implementation Actions” were identified (See Section 4.6: Economic Development Plan).
4.4 Phase 2: Prepare (2025-2035)

The projections for the second phase of implementation (2025-2035) coincide with the first few years of HSR operations. The projections for this time period (3,340 residential units, 912 hotel rooms, 720,000 sf of office and 343,286 sf of retail) take a significant bump as HSR service will be in operation north to San Francisco and expand into the Los Angeles basin by 2029. It is important for the City to be patient and hold to the envisioned level of development. The biggest mistake would be to allow for large-scale, automobile-oriented development on a potential redevelopment parcel adjacent to the HSR station that was planned for high-density transit-oriented development. Such ill-conceived projects would deter development that is more in line with the community’s vision of a compact, mixed-use and livable transit-oriented community both adjacent to the site and throughout Downtown.

While the main focus area for development continues to be Downtown at this phase, there is also a focus on connecting the historic core to the HSR station along Chester Avenue (see Figure 48). It is also expected that in the second implementation period, renovations of existing buildings will begin to slow as supply diminishes due to on-going conversion activity. The Mill Creek Entertainment District will continue to see development through its own 30-year build-out of its master plan, as well. New incentives and investment must now begin to grow Downtown along Chester Avenue north to the HSR site as a means to provide supportive land uses that integrate the pedestrian and transit corridor into Downtown. This strategy also has the added benefit of supporting and guiding ongoing development and improvements around the San Joaquin Community Hospital campus (see Figure 49).

This second wave of development will begin to shape a new gateway into Downtown at the historic Garces Circle, transforming an automobile-oriented roundabout into a high-density, mixed-use retail, residential and office district. This new district will be supported by rehabilitating adjacent mixed-use and single-family neighborhoods (see Appendix I, Implementation Matrix) and providing key connectivity and open space investments. The main investment in the second 10 year period is the connection of the Kern River Trail along and through the HSR site to the Mill Creek Linear Park. By pulling the Kern River into the city’s heart and connecting the area’s most recognized open blue space, this new multimodal trail creates a central amenity that expands alternative modes of transportation and recreation and creates an open space experience unique to Bakersfield.

This multimodal trail corridor will be supported by more bicycle facilities and other gap closures that reach into Old Town Kern and the Westchester neighborhood, including a new school-to-school bike facility that provides a secondary east-west bike corridor Downtown on 18th Street (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix). As the HSR station opens, the circulator shuttle route will adjust to take advantage of transit improvements on F and 34th Street connecting all three major transit facilities Downtown (HSR, Amtrak and the GET transit center) and everything in-between.
10-20 Year Map

Δ720,000 Sf Office (∑ 1,085,000 Sf); Δ3,340 Residential Units (∑ 4,440 Units); Δ343,286 Sf Retail (∑ 493,509 Sf); Δ912 Hotel Rooms (∑ 1,272 Rooms)

**Existing**
- Study Area Boundary
- Rail
- Bike Lane
- Bike/Ped Trail
- Open Space (Park)
- School
- Hospital
- HSR Station Zone
- Transit Center

**Proposed**
- Development Node/Absorption
- Respond Development Zone
- Residential Infill
- Rehabilitation
- Shuttle
- Bike Lane
- Pedestrian Paseo
- Bike/Ped Trail
- Improved Intersections
- HSR Mobility Hub
- Amtrak Mobility Hub
- Complete Street
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Bike Boulevard
- Protected Bike Lane
- Urban Boulevard
- Pedestrian Paseo
- 10 Y Development Zone

- 0.25 mile
- 0.50 mile
Implementation Actions
To implement Phase 2 of the Vision Plan, 15 Policy Strategies and 8 Physical Strategies were identified. These include the following (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix):

Policy Actions
1. TOD Implementation
2. Expand PBID
3. PBID Storefront
4. Property Owner Investments
5. Downtown Parking Plan
6. Residential Infill Overlay Zone
7. Residential Rehabilitation Overlay Zone
8. Small-lot Subdivision Ordinance
9. Impact Fee Study
10. Evaluate Downtown FAR
11. Downtown Neon Sign Ordinance
12. Downtown Historical Structure Inventory
13. EOA Update
14. Amtrak District P3
15. Downtown Government Attraction Strategy

Physical Actions
1. HSR Multi-modal Corridor
2. Golden State Pedestrian Improvements
3. Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo Phase 2
4. 17th Street School-to School Bike Lane
5. Extend 30th Street Bike Lane
6. Amtrak Pedestrian Bridge
7. Downtown Shuttle 2.0
8. HSR Site Development
4.5 Phase 3: Respond (2035-2045)

The development projections for the third and final phase (2035-2045) of the Vision Plan coincide with the full build-out of the statewide HSR system from Sacramento to San Diego (2040), which is where the most significant bump in induced development occurs (See Figure 50). The projections for this time period (4130 residential units, 1141 hotel rooms, 920,000 sf of office and 412,479 sf of retail) will retain its primary focus on the historic core, expand the HSR district to further integrate and connect the station into the city’s fabric and bring north and south Downtown together. High-density, mixed-used directly adjacent to the HSR station will, further build the HSR district as an activity center.

Upon re-development of existing buildings Downtown, the focus will progress to new, infill development and commercial corridor redevelopments (see Figure 51). A mixed-use corridor will be incentivized (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix) on 34th Street, further connecting Memorial Hospital to the new HSR District, with additional redevelopment pushing north along Chester toward the Kern River.

North of the HSR site is the Kern County Museum and County-owned recreation fields. These areas provide a unique place-making and fiscal opportunity for both the County and City. Some form of public-private-partnership could redevelop the ball-field property to further reconnect the City to the Kern River, while developing a new ball-park district centered on a new AAA stadium or other major sports and/or entertainment facility.

**Implementation Actions**

To implement Phase 3 of the Vision Plan, 8 Policy Strategies and 2 Physical Strategies were identified. These include the following (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix):

**Policy Actions**

1. 34th Street Medical Overlay District
2. Downtown Institution Attraction Strategy
3. Business Relocation
4. HSR Conference Center
5. Kern River District P3
6. Downtown Incentives

**Physical Actions**

1. Mill Creek Linear Park Extension
2. Union Avenue Bike Lane
20-30 Year Map

Δ920,000 Sf Office (Σ 2,005,000 Sf); Δ4,130 Residential Units (Σ 8,570 Units); Δ412,479 Sf Retail (Σ905,988 Sf); Δ1,141 Hotel Rooms (Σ 2,413 Rooms)

Existing

- Study Area Boundary
- Rail
- Bike Lane
- Bike/Ped Trail
- Open Space (Park)
- School
- Hospital
- HSR Station Zone
- Transit Center
- Complete Street
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Bike Boulevard
- Protected Bike Lane
- Urban Boulevard
- Pedestrian Paseo
- 10 Y-20Y Development Zone
- 20Y Residential Infill
- 20Y Rehabilitation

Proposed

- Development Node/Absorption
- Respond Development Zone
- Bike/Ped Trail
- Shuttle line
- Improved Intersections
- Stadium
- HSR Mobility Hub
- Amtrak Mobility Hub
4.6 Economic Development Plan (Now-2025)

Development of the Vision Plan has shown that the steps needed to continue the existing revitalization efforts in Downtown Bakersfield align with the necessary actions to make Downtown HSR-ready in the next 10 years. Specific implementation actions are needed to support the 3-Phased Development Strategy. Therefore, a comprehensive list of specific physical and policy implementation actions for the 10-, 20- and 30-year phased development strategy was developed (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix).

A Top 11 Implementations list includes multiple champions and collaborators that together encompass City staff, community leadership, non-profit organizations and private businesses working together to Make Downtown Bakersfield Hum:

1. Launch a Property Business Improvement District (PBID);
2. Enhance the Economic Development Function within the City;
3. Activate Downtown Economic Opportunity Area and Explore Additional Tools;
4. Set a Goal of Reaching 10,000 Residents by 2030 and 25,000 Residents in Downtown by 2035;
5. Implement an Iconic and Catalytic Housing and Mixed Use Development Project;
6. Adopt an Overlay Zone to Support Development along the Wall Street Pedestrian Plaza from D Street to the Mill Creek Linear Park;
7. Use Vision Plan as a Platform for a Future Downtown Land Use Plan;
8. Adopt a Downtown Walkability Plan;
9. Adopt a Series of Zoning Updates that Incentivize Downtown Redevelopment;
10. Leverage Publicly-Owned Parcels for Economic Development; and,
11. Develop an Infrastructure Masterplan for Downtown.
1. Launch a Property Business Improvement District (PBID)

A dedicated organization should implement an efficient property-based business improvement district (PBID) in the core area of Downtown. The initial PBID’s boundaries should be large enough to generate meaningful funding through property assessments, but small enough to serve as a pilot initiative with the long-term goal of expanding with the continued success of Downtown. In addition to ‘clean and safe’ neighborhood services and neighborhood marketing, potential enhancement projects include lighting, signage, wayfinding and Downtown events programming. This District could also be the foundation and genesis of a management team for other various Downtown strategies (e.g. infrastructure, parking, stormwater, energy management).

2. Enhance the Economic Development Function within the City

Historically, the City of Bakersfield included a fully staffed “Economic & Community Development Department,” which served to provide the technical expertise needed to implement economic development activities, redevelopment projects and administration of federal HUD programs. However, when the State dissolved Redevelopment Agencies in 2011, the Department was drastically down-sized and eventually added as a unit within the Planning Division of the “Community Development Department.” There is now one part-time staff position dedicated to Economic Development activities for the entire City.

A strong economic development capacity within the City is imperative to deliver a successful, long-term revitalization strategy. Therefore, the City will endeavor to restore this capacity in future budget years and enhance the Economic Development Unit by retaining an experienced “Economic Development Specialist” to assist in the coordination of economic development initiatives in the Downtown area. The enhanced Economic Development Unit will act as the main point of contact and clearinghouse for economic development activities throughout the City, and will collaborate closely with Visit Bakersfield, the Kern Economic Development Corporation, the Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, and others to facilitate future growth.

In order to connect private property owners, businesses, entrepreneurs and developers with potential funding sources, the Economic Development Unit should engage in a variety of education and outreach strategies, including the creation of a one-stop website, public workshops, and philanthropic & developer summits. Potential funding sources are detailed below. These programs will likely continue to evolve over time, and new programs and opportunities may emerge through local, State and Federal legislation.

3. Activate Downtown Economic Opportunity Area and Explore Additional Tools

The City has adopted Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs), which are small-scale tax increment financing districts to help generate a dedicated source of funds for area-specific improvements and business assistance. If the EOA program proves to be successful, it may be beneficial to explore more robust tools that build on the EOA to provide potentially larger yields before property values potentially increase with the introduction of High-Speed Rail. Additional tools to be explored include:

- Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD): Though not yet proven effective due to administrative complexities
and limits, EIFD’s are intended to provide local governments with ways to fund capital projects, including parks and open spaces, affordable housing and infrastructure. While revenues generated by EIFDs cannot be used for operating costs, they can provide support for smaller projects like signage, wayfinding and streetscape improvements, as well as larger potentially catalytic projects.

- Community Revitalization and Investment Authority (CRIA): Applicable to areas that meet various criteria related to income, crime, unemployment and physical deterioration, CRIAs are intended to fund economic development projects related to these issues, with an emphasis on affordable housing.

- Other TIF tools: In the future, the State may adopt new legislation expanding options for the use of TIF, which may be more robust or suitable for Downtown Bakersfield. The Economic Development Unit should track these changes and consider this possibility when weighing opportunities to use TIF programs.

In addition to TIF tools, there are a number of other tools that generally require two-thirds approval by property owners in an area. These include:

- Community Facilities Districts (CFDs)
- Benefit Assessment Districts
- Maintenance Districts
- Mello-Roos Districts

4. Set a Goal of Reaching 10,000 Residents by 2030 and 25,000 Residents in Downtown by 2035

Downtown Bakersfield currently has a daytime population of approximately 25,000, largely made up of government and healthcare employees, but has less than 5,000 residents, mostly in the Westchester neighborhood. A residential population base is key to fostering an economically prosperous and diverse Downtown, providing local businesses with a consistent and reliable source of customers, as well as better leveraging municipal resources like transit, utilities and public services. While Bakersfield and the surrounding region’s population is booming, much of this growth is occurring on the suburban fringe of Bakersfield rather than in Downtown Bakersfield. According to the Bakersfield Housing Element, the City has a housing need of an additional 36,290 units by 2023 and can more easily accommodate that need with denser Downtown development utilizing existing infrastructure.

The City Council has vocalized a goal to reach 10,000 Residents by 2030 and the Kern Council of Governments projects 25,000 residents in Downtown by 2035 in their Sustainable Communities Plan. The residential population goal will serve as a clear benchmark for the success of the City’s policies to attract residents and provide housing opportunities Downtown. It can also serve as a symbol of the City’s commitment to direct growth Downtown and reinvigorate a vital core.

5. Implement an Iconic and Catalytic Housing and Mixed Use Development Project

A new housing development is key to attracting new residents Downtown and can be a pivot point to support further residential, retail and entertainment development. Moreover, Downtown Bakersfield is a prime area to compete for and win funds from multiple agencies as a disadvantaged community such as the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), which administers grants backed by funds generated by the State’s Cap and Trade program that is set aside to fund projects that meet sustainability goals and that leverage other programs
such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and Historic Tax Credits.

The SGC program is of particular interest for Downtown as it provides funding not just for the development of housing, but ties it to much needed infrastructure upgrades in Downtown that are adjacent to the project. Attracting sophisticated affordable housing developers to key sites, such as the revitalization of historic structures or the conversion of motels to veteran’s housing, for example, is critical to optimize the benefit of such a project across Downtown. The SGC funds affordable housing developments, particularly near transit and high-speed rail. Cities can leverage up to $20 million to fund nearby infrastructure, which Bakersfield can potentially use to help finance Phase I of Downtown’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Chester Avenue, a circulator shuttle, and/or the expansion of the Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo.

6. Adopt an Overlay Zone to Support Development along the Wall Street Pedestrian Plaza from D Street to the Mill Creek Linear Park

The Wall Street alley area, including existing improvements along 19th Street and new development activity along 18th Street presents an opportunity to create a unique sense of place that would attract pedestrian activity, future development, and provide a seamless east-west connection through Downtown. In its current condition, Wall Street is an alleyway that, at some parts, is discouraging for pedestrians due to security concerns and cleanliness. Community groups have begun to make improvements by painting murals that celebrate Bakersfield’s history, and has raised some money for lighting and other alley improvements.

This emerging district around the new Pedestrian Paseo could direct future growth via the adoption of an overlay zone that would preserve the alley easements, provide various incentives, and establish design guidelines for development. Land within the overlay district may be subject to requirements such as targeted uses, site layout, facade design, rights-of-way, etc. The overlay zone should explore creating pedestrian connections through new development to the paseo, as well as tie upgrades to the alley to new development proposals.

Throughout the planning process, the idea of re-introducing the historic clock tower where the Wall Street Pedestrian Paseo crosses Chester Avenue has been identified as an opportunity to create an iconic Downtown landmark, gateway and point of orientation.

7. Use Vision Plan as a Platform for a Future Downtown Land Use Plan

A future Downtown Element of the General Plan, or similar plan, provides an opportunity to codify the vision of this HSR Station Area planning effort and establishes the appropriate regulatory framework for which new development can occur through such tools as urban design guidelines, street cross-sections and other design standards.

This is also an opportunity to leverage the consensus developed during this planning process, and continue the public discourse over the past year and a half. This additional level of detail takes the values and strategies outlined in the Vision, and begins the work of building local capacity and creating tools for the City to prepare for future development in Downtown, specifically around the proposed High-Speed Rail station.
8. Adopt a Downtown Walkability Plan

Transportation has always played a dominant role in shaping our urban environment. Historically, cities were built around the basis of everyday activities on foot; consequently, the prominent urban form was dense, compact and mixed-use. As the most walkable district in the City, efforts to preserve and enhance walkability as the City grows will be key to enhancing livability in Downtown Bakersfield. Many challenges exist for planning professionals who want to enhance and balance transportation infrastructure and retrofit the existing public right-of-way to meet the needs of multi-modal transportation. A Downtown Walkability Plan will help the City identify enhancements to the public realm, parking strategies, and the legibility of the City as part of this vision for creating a more livable city.

This presents an opportunity for cars to be directed to park in strategic areas then encourage people to explore Downtown. Part of the Walkability Plan should be a mechanism by which local businesses and other uses share parking lots to reduce the amount of parking required for each new development. A strategic Walkability Plan will help to create greater capacity to accommodate shoppers/tourists/residents in the area. This would also benefit the urban form of Downtown by reducing space that might otherwise be given to parking for new development, and fostering a more welcoming pedestrian environment.

Improvements to the public realm could include the expansion of the bike network, closing gaps and the upgrade of infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, crosswalks, streetscape enhancements) for pedestrians and creating a fluid transition between transportation modes. In general, this process of expanding walkability is providing a comfortable and inviting experience for the pedestrian that encourages them to walk more and drive less around Downtown. Further information about how to improve walkability and create a greater mode shift can be found in the transportation demand management strategy in the Vision Plan’s Environmental Impact Report.

9. Adopt a Series of Zoning Updates that Incentivize Downtown Redevelopment

During the existing conditions analysis, a zoning code review highlighted several opportunities for both slight changes to existing zoning policy and the adoption of other best practices. In order to support continued reinvestment in the historic core and greater Downtown Bakersfield, there are several approaches that the City should consider from a policy perspective to create greater certainty and incentives for future development. Several such opportunities include the following:

- Architectural Overlay Zone: A Downtown Overlay with specific facade and elevation standards.

- Adaptive Reuse Ordinance: An adaptive reuse ordinance can encourage the revitalization and reuse of Downtown’s historic buildings and unlock the potential value of historic buildings. An adaptive reuse ordinance would set standards for the conversion of older structures into housing, creative office and other uses.

- Floor Area Ratio: Downtown Bakersfield currently has no height limits within the historic core, but a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) that effectively caps the developable envelope. The City should explore adjustments, and possibly the complete removal of the FAR limitation.

- Graduated Density: Ordinance to allow higher density on larger sites in the CB and CC Zone Districts, subject to specific
development criteria. Consolidation of smaller parcels can incentive the assembly of smaller properties to create cohesive, connected and well-planned development.

10. Leverage Publicly-Owned Parcels for Economic Development

There are a variety of underutilized and vacant parcels throughout Downtown that are both privately and publicly-owned. These parcels represent an opportunity to enhance existing development, increase density of future development, and maximize the use of future development on vacant parcels.

The City should create an inventory of underutilized and publicly-owned parcels in Downtown and establish a strategy to hold, merge, sell and/or lease parcels to ensure that future development meets established criteria that is consistent with the Vision for Downtown. This strategy should also define a process to expedite qualifying development around the HSR site and more broadly in Downtown.

11. Develop an Infrastructure Masterplan for Downtown

Prioritize Downtown capital improvement projects to facilitate the identified strategic growth areas. While much of Downtown’s existing infrastructure was built for a far denser pattern of development than what currently exists, the age of this existing infrastructure and the intensity of development, specifically adjacent to the HSR Station site and around Garces Circle, will require further study.

12. Develop a Housing Strategy to Address Downtown Housing Needs

The City of Bakersfield’s Housing Element has identified a need for 36,290 housing units Citywide by 2023. Growth and Infill within Downtown Bakersfield can assist in meeting this need, and should include variety of housing options for various income levels and groups such as seniors, disabled, homeless persons, and more. The State has recently authorized a series of housing legislation that provide cities with various tools to address their housing needs; including the use of “Inclusionary Affordable Rental Housing Ordinances” that require that new housing developments include a certain percentage of affordable residential rental units, and development of Workforce Housing Opportunity Zones, which focus workforce and affordable housing in areas close to jobs and public transit options.
4.7 Economic Development Analysis

An “Economic Development Analysis” (see Appendix II: Economic Development Analysis) was developed to understand the net fiscal impact and potential value capture from development for the Vision Plan (the “project”). When realized, the HSR Vision Plan will transform Downtown Bakersfield into a vibrant, mixed-used district that will take advantage of its proximity to the high-speed rail station. The analysis summarizes the Vision Plan’s estimated annual net fiscal impact on the General Fund of the City of Bakersfield over the course of the 30-year phased build out, as well as the potential for value capture in the Vision Plan area to finance station area improvements.

Methodology

The Vision Plan’s net fiscal impact is based on inputs from the market analysis, completed in 2016. This analysis assumes that the Study Area will absorb an average of the low and high market absorption projections for the ‘high-speed rail scenario’ for all land uses (office, retail, residential, and hospitality) over the 30-year build out (see Table 2). It should be noted, however, to achieve the level of projected real estate absorption in this scenario, it was assumed that there are major strategic public realm and infrastructure investments in the area, in addition to high-speed rail service. The Vision Plan’s land uses are assumed to be absorbed at an even pace over each ten-year period with the exception of hospitality, which is absorbed incrementally to represent the opening of individual hotels.

The City’s General Fund budget was reviewed to estimate fiscal revenues and costs. In the City’s FY 2016-2017 Budget, over 85 percent of the General Fund budget of $195,975,000 was generated by property tax (37%), sales tax (34%), charges for services (11%) and other taxes (5%). The majority of fiscal revenues fund public safety (Police, 44%; Fire, 19%), with the remainder supporting Public Works (13%), Recreation and Parks (9%), General Government (7%), Community Development (4%), and other non-departmental (4%).

Overall, the Vision Plan’s fiscal model assumptions are conservative and take into consideration the significant variability that is inherent in projecting fiscal revenues over a 30-year period. It was assumed that annual nominal inflation of 2.5% for all costs and revenues and real value appreciation of 2% for residential and commercial property values. For market rate sales values, it was assumed a residential sale price of $314,000 (in 2017 dollars), the median price of single-family homes built and sold in Bakersfield since 2015, as reported by Redfin. For commercial values, it was assumed an assessed value of $245 per square foot based on the average sales price for commercial properties in Bakersfield, built since 2010 and sold since 2015, according to CoStar. These assumptions drive Property Tax, Motor Vehicle License Fee In-Lieu (“MVLF In-Lieu”) revenues, and Property Transfer Tax estimates. Sales Tax and Transient Occupancy Tax (“TOT”) estimates are based on retail market demand.
projections and average daily rates, respectively, determined by the market demand analysis. All other taxes as well as City service costs are based on a per “resident-equivalent” calculation, which is a factor that combines employees and residents and their respective share of municipal service revenues and costs based on share of time spent in the City. Furthermore, it was assumed that HSR will create a value premium of 10% on base market rate values and hotel average daily rates following the opening of rail service, which is anticipated to occur in 2029.

Findings
As shown in Table 2, the Vision Plan is anticipated to contribute approximately $27.1 million in fiscal revenues to the City of Bakersfield General Fund on an annual basis at Project build out in year 2046 (in 2017 dollars). It should be noted that annual revenues are limited in the first decade. Annual revenues increase significantly in the second and third decade of the Project’s build out, as high-speed rail is anticipated to create additional demand for station-adjacent development after 2029.

On the cost side, the Project is expected to create approximately $16.1 million in additional city service costs to accommodate additional Vision Plan residents and commercial activity. Net of these costs, the City can anticipate an additional $11.0 million in net revenues on an annual recurring basis.

Table 2 (page 91):
Snapshot of Net Fiscal Impact on the General Fund of the City of Bakersfield at Years 10, 20 and 30 of the Phased Project Development
As shown in Table 3, it was estimated that the Vision Plan will generate $309.5 million in revenues for the General Fund (in 2017 dollars) over 30 years of Project build out, with two-thirds of its impact occurring during the third decade when high-speed rail is fully operational. The Project’s components will also generate approximately $191.3 million in municipal service costs, leaving the City with a cumulative net fiscal impact of approximately $118.2 million in net present value ("NPV") terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative Revenues to the City of Bakersfield General Fund (2017$)</th>
<th>Years 0-10</th>
<th>Years 10-20</th>
<th>Years 20-30</th>
<th>Years 0-30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Tax Increment</td>
<td>$4,711,000</td>
<td>$26,384,000</td>
<td>$69,599,857</td>
<td>$100,694,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVLF In Lieu</td>
<td>$3,052,000</td>
<td>$17,091,000</td>
<td>$45,085,000</td>
<td>$65,228,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Transfer Tax</td>
<td>$551,000</td>
<td>$3,541,000</td>
<td>$7,042,000</td>
<td>$14,328,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Tax</td>
<td>$1,339,000</td>
<td>$5,428,200</td>
<td>$9,020,000</td>
<td>$15,987,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient Occupancy Tax</td>
<td>$3,683,000</td>
<td>$25,603,000</td>
<td>$57,496,000</td>
<td>$86,782,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franchise Tax, Licenses and Permits, Charges for Services, Fines, and Misc.</td>
<td>$1,943,000</td>
<td>$9,384,000</td>
<td>$20,927,000</td>
<td>$32,274,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business License Tax</td>
<td>$433,000</td>
<td>$1,784,000</td>
<td>$3,795,000</td>
<td>$5,954,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Annual Recurring Revenues to City’s General Fund by Period</td>
<td>$15,611,000</td>
<td>$86,616,000</td>
<td>$207,315,000</td>
<td>$309,542,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: City Service Costs</td>
<td>($1,431,000)</td>
<td>($8,042,000)</td>
<td>($17,040,000)</td>
<td>($47,406,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumulative Net Fiscal Impact to City’s General Fund by Period</td>
<td>$14,180,000</td>
<td>$78,574,000</td>
<td>$189,275,000</td>
<td>$262,136,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by: HR&A Advisors, Inc.

**Next Steps**

The City of Bakersfield has a unique opportunity to capitalize on the State’s investment in high-speed rail to catalyze Downtown development in downtown by capturing a substantial portion of the anticipated property tax and MVLF in-lieu incremental revenues, which equal $166.9 million in present value terms over the course of the Project build out.

Currently in California, there are limited tax increment finance (“TIF”) tools that the City can use for value capture, though this may change in the future. Value capture mechanisms are intended to capture increased value created by public investment in a property or area. Value capture mechanisms such as tax increment financing (“TIF”) allocate new, incremental property tax revenues due to future increases in property value in a designated area to fund improvement projects that will benefit property values in that area. Future taxes beyond a baseline amount are allocated towards a special purpose entity and can be bonded to fund station area improvements.

The City has been exploring an innovative new tool, Economic Opportunity Areas (“EOAs”), which will help generate a dedicated source of funds for area-specific improvements. The EOAs are a first step. If the EOA program proves to be successful, it may be appropriate to explore more robust tools that will build upon the EOA to provide potentially larger yields.

The State recently adopted two new value capture tools which are intended to fund economic development initiatives: Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (“EIFD”) and Community Revitalization and Investment Authorities (“CRIA”).
described in the Economic Development Plan above (see Appendix I: Implementation Matrix) these two tools have limitations, but the State may consider new tools within the next few years.

**Recommendations**

The City could consider graduating its value-capture strategy to a bondable TIF tool, within the next three years. Though the existing TIF tools have yet to be implemented anywhere in the State, TIF mechanisms have potential to capture significant value for the City.

The Report also shows that Bonds may also be necessary to capture the value for upfront capital investment. Tables 3 and 4 show how the City can potentially capture approximately $75 million in property tax and motor vehicle license fee in-lieu revenues to finance station area improvements in three tranches. In this scenario it was assumed that the City will issue bonds after 5, 10, and 20 years, with the bonding period terminating at the end of the 30-years. However, the City could bond more frequently to capture a greater portion of increment that is being missed in the example. Should the County contribute its share property tax increment (the net present value of which is equal to an additional $94 million over 30 years), another $43 million could also be captured under this same bonding scenario.

In many ways, potential fiscal revenues associated with the Vision Plan could be even greater if the City takes proactive steps in the HSR station area, which may include infrastructure enhancements, a governance approach, branding and marketing. It was assumed an average of the low and high development absorption projections and baseline real appreciation in property values may change if rail service stimulates additional demand. However, should the City achieve strong success in place-making initiatives in the station area to encourage rail-adjacent development, the fiscal impact may be even higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City Share Alone (cumulative $M)</th>
<th>Combined City and County Share (cumulative $M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$7.8</td>
<td>$12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>$20.3</td>
<td>$31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2036</td>
<td>$75.3</td>
<td>$118.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 (page 93)
Illustrative TIF Bonding Capacity for the City and County Shares of Property Tax and MVLF In-Lieu Increment in Three Tranches

Figure 53 (above):
Illustrative Bonding Capacity with City and County Tax Increment
APPENDIX

PLEASE VIEW SEPARATE DOCUMENT
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