



Fresno PTIS

Smart Growth Principles



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Why should Fresno Leaders adopt the PTIS Smart Growth Principles?

With Fresno County's population expected to grow from the current 954,000 to 1.5 million people by 2035, it is now timely and critical to consider the topics of growth management, transit and land development policies if planning measures are to be implemented to alter historic growth and development patterns within Fresno County. The relatively low density and dispersed residential development patterns within the County contribute substantially to present transportation and quality of life conditions. An inordinate reliance upon the private automobile is due to the absence of well connected communities which facilitate walking, bicycling and use of public transportation. Proactive planning is needed to stem the tide of Fresno County's past trends:

- Very little traffic congestion makes driving an automobile very attractive for those who can afford them.
- \$2 billion has been spent on freeways in Fresno county in the past 20 years.
- Low density development is being approved on Fresno's urban fringe where transit services don't exist now and will likely not exist in the future, ensuring automobile dependency.
- Development encroachment on farmland is an ongoing concern due to the high demand for agricultural products from this region.
- The San Joaquin Valley is the 5th most polluted airshed in the US.
- The San Joaquin Valley Air District was fined a \$29 million penalty last year for failing to meet ozone standards.
- Over 90% of Measure "C" funds are committed to paving roads on the fringe, encouraging more urban sprawl.
- Fringe development does not support itself financially — deferred road maintenance costs grow monthly.

After more than two years of extensive analysis to refine the recommendations made by the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Study, the Public Transportation Infrastructure Study makes

specific policy recommendations that are now ready for adoption by locally elected officials. The PTIS policy recommendations encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Smart Growth patterns that, combined with planned investments in Bus Rapid Transit will go a long way toward solving the air quality and greenhouse gas problems that are plaguing the central valley.

Without the support of citizens, businesses and local elected leaders, the significant benefits identified in this study to improve the quality of life in Fresno will not be realized.

However well planned and modeled, achieving more sustainable urban development patterns are land use decisions that are in the hands of local government planners, property owners, developers and elected officials.

Smart Growth means intensifying development where it can be well served by transit. It also means creating complete streets that are walkable and bike-able, where people can choose to walk, bicycle, or take transit. It also means limiting development on the urban fringe to protect our farmlands and better control the sprawl that forces longer and longer commutes by car which has a direct impact on air quality. Reducing vehicle miles traveled is critical to achieving SB 375/AB32 statewide mandated goals and standards.

Fresno County is one of eight counties in the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (Valley Air District), which

What we discovered was that as density and mix of land uses grew (bringing more housing, jobs and shopping in close proximity to each other) the more people tended to take transit, walk or bicycle in the transit corridors.

currently do not meet several of the air quality standards set forth in the Federal Clean Air Act or the California Clean Air Act. The Valley Air District is a designated non-attainment area for ozone ("serious") and particulates (both PM10 ["serious"] and PM2.5) and is a maintenance area for carbon monoxide. The Valley Air District similarly fails to meet California standards for these pollutants. As a result, the County must satisfy Federal requirements calling for consideration of transportation control measures to reduce emissions and demonstrate conformity with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. It follows that whatever transportation projects are implemented must not deteriorate existing problems and must support efforts to bring the County into air quality attainment.

All cities in Fresno County and LAFCo need to be planning for and implementing more transit-supportive development and restricting growth on the urban fringe in order to achieve SB375 and PTIS goals.

Land Use Recommendations

1. Locate a major portion of all new households, office and retail/commercial employment within planned and proposed high capacity transit corridors.
2. Approve general plan and zoning authorization to support high capacity transportation corridors: 15 to 18 du/ac average residential infill density within ½ mile proximity and 8 to 12 du/ac within ½ to 1 mile proximity of planned and proposed transit corridors and downtown of Fresno.
3. Implement general plan and zoning authorization, together with other incentives and creative public-private partnerships to facilitate establishment of transit oriented developments that provide a variety of housing types to serve broad range of household sizes and incomes within BRT and other identified transit corridors and downtowns of Fresno, Clovis and other Fresno County cities.
4. Reduce the parking requirements for new development within planned BRT and other designated transit corridors and downtown Fresno and Clovis to promote a higher return on investment for TOD projects.
5. Reduce the existing over-supply of surface parking within the planned BRT corridors and downtown Fresno, utilizing shared parking agreements, reciprocal access agreements, public parking facilities and the conversion of surface parking to other uses.
6. Limit the extent of fringe development and expansion of the sphere of influence within the County of Fresno and the incorporated cities in conjunction with the other identified strategies to promote infill development and achieve the smart growth objectives.
7. Require that proposed new development located within the fringe areas of the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area and the surrounding Fresno County area bear the full costs of providing public infrastructure improvements together with the long-term maintenance of these public facilities.



Townhomes like these would Support the BRT investment

What are the Benefits of Smart Growth?

"The preponderance of evidence leads us to conclude that smart growth strategies can help communities, businesses and individuals make money, save money and enhance the quality of life."¹



Mixed-Use projects like this are Needed in Fresno

Benefits to Individuals

- Reduced transportation costs compared to driving from the fringe.
- When work and home are located closer together people spend can spend more time with families or enjoying free time instead of commuting from the fringe.
- Improved health and more activity walking and riding bikes to nearby destinations.
- Health care savings.
- A better range of housing options.
- Enhanced and preserved housing values.
- Reduced energy and water use.
- A better sense of community – jobs, restaurants and shopping all exist nearby in walking, bicycle or transit distance.

- A better range of employment options nearby.
- Improved air quality.

Benefits to Business

- Savings on employee health care.
- Quality places attract high quality skilled, educated and creative workers.
- Better return on investment – higher property values.
- Less expensive to build with reduced parking requirement.

Benefits to Government

- Higher public revenues to City of Fresno and the region.
- Attracts private investment.
- Creates thriving public spaces.
- More efficient economy.
- More efficient government services.
- Infrastructure savings on construction and maintenance to the regions roadway system
- Protects precious agricultural land in Fresno County.
- Savings from not expanding public services to new fringe growth to Fresno County.
- Reduced costs from urban decline.
- The PTIS recommendations, if implemented, will help meet the mandated Green House Gas (GHG) reduction targets for the region.

Benefits to the Nation

- More efficient use of transportation investments.
- Creates transit and construction jobs.
- Contributes to energy security, reduces dependence on hostile foreign sources.
- Reduces national health care costs.
- Reduces GHG's to meet international standards

Economic Benefits: Real-world Snapshots from "Smart Growth, Climate Change and Prosperity" the Center for Clean Air Policy, January 2011

Creating a range of housing opportunities in proximity to jobs saves households money — Transportation is the second-largest share of most household budgets, after housing, and the two are connected. Locating homes near job centers can lower the combined housing and transportation costs for families of all income levels. A study of the Washington, DC, region found that households living in the jobs-rich core spent about 30% of their income on housing plus transportation while those in the car-dependent outer suburbs spent over 40%.¹

Improving neighborhood "walkability" tends to enhance property values — The web site WalkScore.com rates locations according to a walkability index from 1 to 100. One study found that, in general, every one-point increase in the Walk Score increased a home's value by \$700 to \$3,000.²

Walkability also enhances health — In Seattle, researchers found that every 5% increase in the overall level of walkability was associated with a 32% increase in minutes of walking or biking and a reduction in Body Mass Index.³

Fostering a sense of place — through pleasing architectural design, public art, tree plantings, etc., creates a "placemaking premium" that encourages business growth and investment. In Washington, DC, the Barracks Row Main Street Program invested about \$8 million to create a pedestrian-friendly and ecologically-smart urban corridor that would blend in with historic Capitol Hill. As a result of this investment since 1999, 44 new businesses have opened and overall economic activity has tripled.⁴

Preserving critical environmental areas — can provide valuable savings through the natural provision of services that would otherwise need to be paid for. In New York, a comprehensive watershed protection plan protects water sources by strategically restricting development, avoiding the need for a filtration system that would cost \$9 billion to construct and \$350 million each year to operate.⁵

Creating a range of transportation options — can increase property values, attract investment and create jobs. A real estate analysis of Denver showed that homes within a half-mile of stations on the Southeast light

rail line have risen in value an average of 17.6% between 2006 and 2008, while homes in the rest of Denver declined by an average 7.5%.⁶

A recent report on the impacts of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — determined that investment in public transportation created almost twice as many jobs as the same investment in highway projects — 16,419 vs. 8,781 job-months.⁷

Directing development towards existing communities — can reduce infrastructure costs. Sacramento calculated the infrastructure price tag of their Blueprint smart-growth scenario to be \$9 billion less than conventional development.⁸

Housing values also seem to be more stable in central communities — during economic downturns. A Standard and Poors study in the greater Boston metropolitan area found homes located further from the central business district (CBD) lost an average of 5-7% percent of their value due to housing market shifts while those near the CBD lost only about 2.5%.⁹

Building within a smaller footprint — can enhance sustainability by reducing water use and improving storm water runoff management. A 2006 EPA report found that in a compact single family housing development in Sacramento, California, water demand was 20-30% less than conventional subdivisions in the same city.¹⁰

Another EPA study — found that development at a density of eight units per acre produced 74% less runoff than development at one unit per acre.¹¹

Reducing the need to drive saves big money — The Vision California project calculated that a "green" compact growth scenario could save California households \$8,600 each year in driving-related costs by the year 2050, or more than \$170 billion per year statewide.¹²

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission — in the San Francisco Bay area calculated that reducing VMT to achieve a 15% reduction in GHGs would also reduce other pollutants enough to generate \$140 million in health care savings by the year 2035.¹³

1. Urban Land Institute, FortWagner Center for Workforce Housing, *Unlabeled Burden: The Combined Cost of Housing and Transportation in the Greater Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area*. (Washington, 2009).

2. Joe Cortright, "Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Home Values in US Cities" CEOs for Cities, 2009.

3. Lawrence D. Frank et al., "Many Pathways from Land Use to Health: Associations between Neighborhood Walkability and Active Transportation, Body Mass Index, and Air Quality," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72, no. 1 (2006): 75-87.

4. Barracks Row Main Street, "2006 Annual Report"

5. New York City Watershed Program.

6. Margaret Jackson, "Light-rail Can Turn into Money Train," *Denver Post*, October 30, 2008.

7. Center for Neighborhood Technology, *Smart Growth America and US Public Research Interest Group: "What we learned from the stimulus,"* January 5, 2010.

8. David Shabazian, "The Cost of Growth: Blueprint Infrastructure Cost Analysis"

9. David Stiff, "Housing Bubbles Collapse Inward," *Standard and Poors*, May 27, 2008.

10. Paula Van Lare and Danielle Arigoni, "Growing towards More Efficient Water Use" EPA, 2006.

11. Richards, Lynn, "Water and the Density Debate: When it comes to protecting water resources, higher density may be the way to go," *Planning Magazine*, June 2006.

12. Calthorpe and Associates (2010) "Vision California — Charting Our Future." Berkeley, CA: Calthorpe and Associates.

13. Metropolitan Transportation Commission staff. (2010). "GHG Target Setting Impacts". Presentation to the Commission, July 28, 2010.

A significant part of the PTIS Study is the assessment of transportation technologies and determining which choices would be right for Fresno. Separate studies were conducted on the following technology options for Fresno:

- A BRT Feasibility Study and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Very Small Starts (VSS) application for funding for BRT on Blackstone Avenue and Ventura/Kings Canyon.

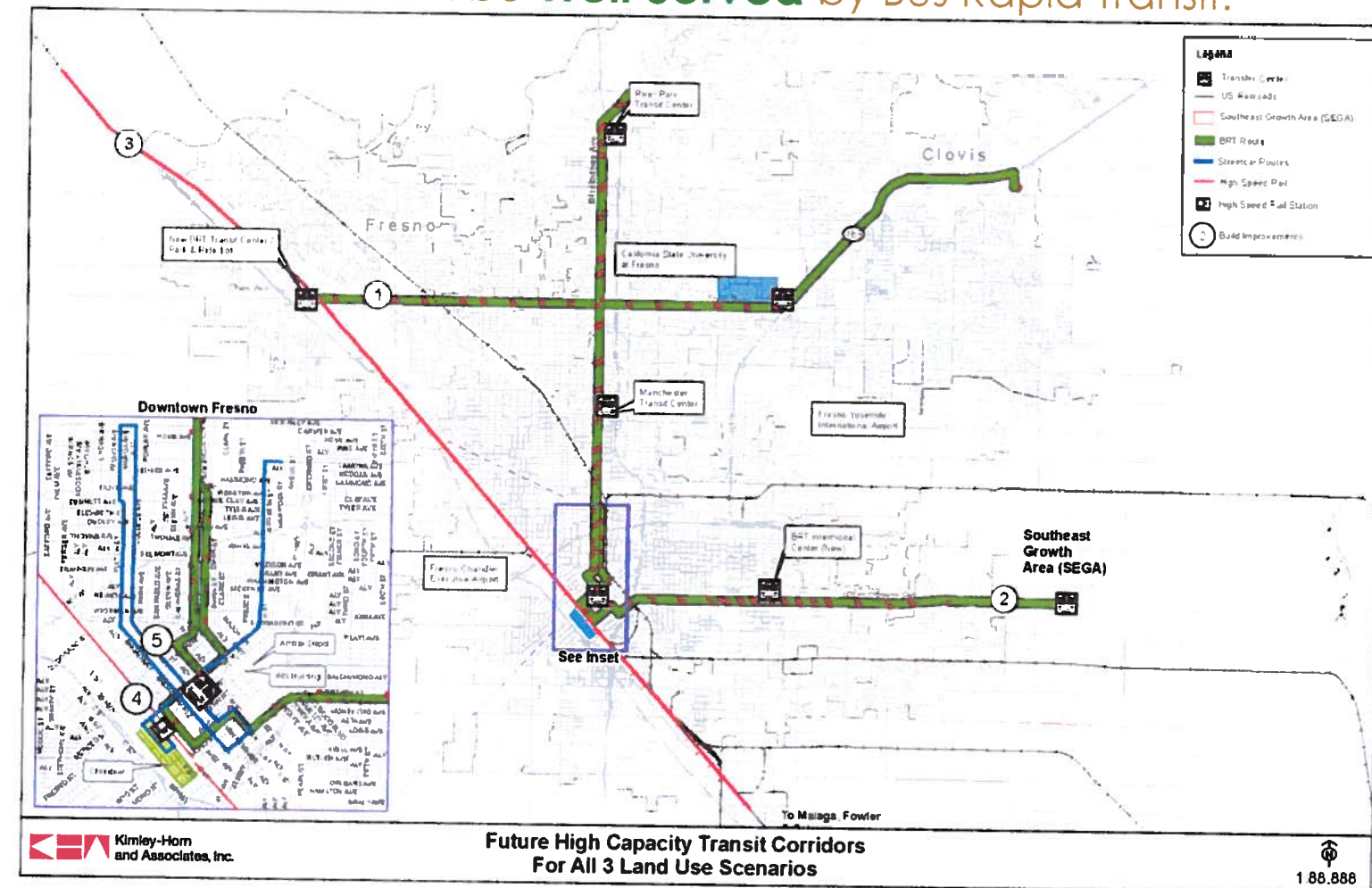


- A Streetcar Feasibility Study for Downtown Fresno, which was coordinated with and integrated into the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan being prepared by the City of Fresno.
- A test case application of Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) operating at the CSU Fresno campus.
- An assessment of an expanded BRT system for the future to include a third BRT corridor operating on Shaw Avenue serving CSU Fresno and connecting to Clovis.
- An assessment of the feasibility of upgrading BRT on Blackstone and Ventura/Kings Canyon to Light Rail Transit (LRT) by the year 2025.

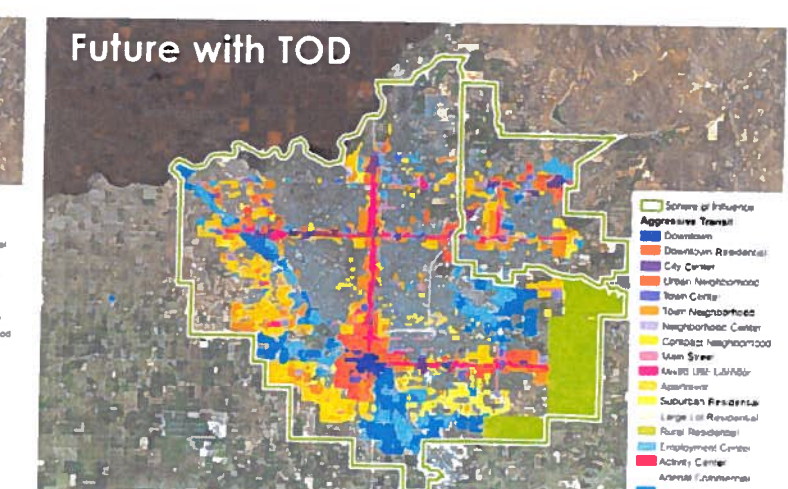
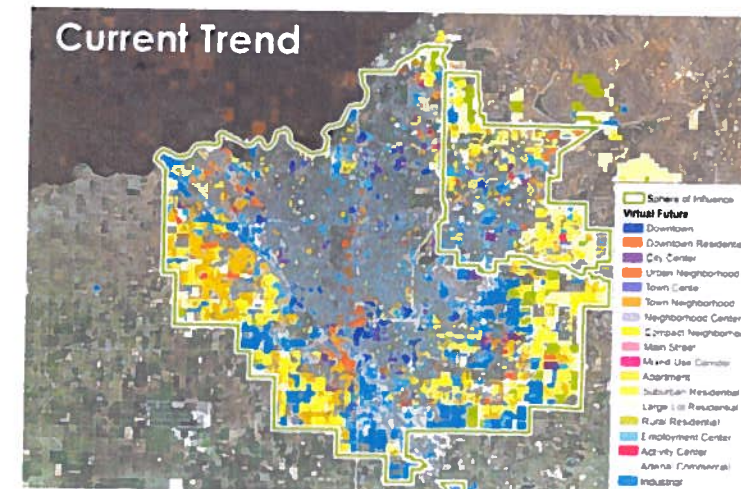
Transit Investment Recommendations:

1. Continue to pursue funding to build BRT on Blackstone and Ventura/Kings Canyon.
2. Consider adding a third BRT corridor on Shaw Avenue from a future Park & Ride lot on Highway 99, connecting to CSU Fresno and east to Clovis.
3. If forecast population and job densities have been reached in the transit corridors and downtown by the year 2025, look at upgrading BRT on Blackstone and Ventura/Kings Canyon to LRT with a fixed guideway and new LRT stations.
4. If or when high speed rail becomes a reality – the project is under construction and new development projects are coming to the downtown area - apply for federal funding for the streetcar project as a complement to the planned development projects.
5. Continue the existing demand-responsive service currently provided in the smaller towns until the demand for transit warrants fixed route service.
6. An expansion of the vanpool program is recommended for other employment destinations due to the success of the existing farm worker vanpools.
7. Expansion of the Valley Rides carpool matching database and promotion campaign is recommended to serve the demand for carpools.
8. At some future date when intra-County commuting to the downtown has grown to the point that express bus service is warranted, begin express commuter service along Highway 99 from Kingsburg, Selma, and Fowler and construct park and ride lots to serve them.

Growth corridors will be **Well Served** by Bus Rapid Transit.



How will **We Grow?**



We have come to the conclusion that “business as usual” in Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley cannot be sustained financially or environmentally.

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For more information see the PTIS project website at www.FastTrackFresnoCounty.com



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