



# Folsom City Council Staff Report

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	1/24/2023
<b>AGENDA SECTION:</b>	New Business
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Introduction and Direction to Staff Regarding the Central Business District Master Plan Planning and Community Engagement Process
<b>FROM:</b>	Community Development Department

## **RECOMMENDATION / CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

Staff recommends the City Council provide input and direction to Community Development Department staff regarding the Central Business District Master Plan planning and community engagement process. Specifically, staff requests direction on the following questions:

1. Does the City Council desire to include an advisory or ad hoc committee in the Central Business District process?
2. If so, what make-up of community stakeholder organizations is desired?
3. If so, does the City Council desire councilmember (up to two) participation on the committee?

## **BACKGROUND / ISSUE**

On April 12, 2022, the City Council approved the use of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$322,500 for project management services (\$62,500) and retention of a planning/environmental consultant (\$260,000) to recreate a Central Business District Master Plan for the purpose of revitalizing this area of the City. Through a competitive qualifications request, Kathy Pease, AICP with Management Advisory Services (MAS) was selected be the project manager.

Revitalization of the Central Business District, roughly located along East Bidwell Street from Riley to Blue Ravine (see Attachment 1, Central Business District Study Area Map), has been a priority of the city for some time. It was an original commercial service area of the city,

which continues to provide vital services to the community. Because it is an existing developed area that is underutilized, constraints may include transportation/circulation, safety, lighting and landscaping, and utilities (stormwater, water, sewer capacity).

In 2015, a transportation study was prepared to analyze circulation and streetscapes in the Central Business District. That study was met with mixed reviews from landowners and was not adopted or implemented at that time. Since that time, there have been many changes to the retail environment, businesses in the area, some circulation improvements near Sutter Middle School and the introduction of a few multifamily housing projects into the district. More recently, the City applied for and received a community design grant from Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) for \$100,00 to complete streetscape analysis of Central Business District. It is anticipated that this would be an opportunity to refresh the previous transportation and streetscape plan for review and consideration as part of this master planning effort.

In 2022, the Central Business District was selected recently as part of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) grant Advisory Services Panel which provided a weeklong workshop in November with national experts that examined the Central Business District. Preliminary information from this effort identified a need to brand the area from a marketing perspective, increase development opportunities, improve safety and walkability, increase lighting and landscaping and recommended forming an advisory committee to get buy in on a shared vision. The full report with recommendations will be available for review and consideration as part of this master planning effort.

Staff has initiated a two-year planning effort in order to prepare a comprehensive revitalization/master plan to identify priorities which could enhance housing opportunities, economic development, mobility, and safety improvements, to help guide development and infrastructure improvements going forward. Landowner, business owner, and general community input and involvement will be critical to developing a master plan focused on desired revitalization of this key area of the City.

## **POLICY / RULE**

The Folsom General Plan 2035 contains specific goals and corresponding policies relevant to the Central Business District as follows:

*Table LU 6-1 Overlay Districts- East Bidwell Corridor (EBC) Overlay. This overlay designation gives property owners along the East Bidwell Corridor the flexibility to develop sites as mixed use. It provides for a mixture of commercial and residential uses that are mutually compatible along East Bidwell Street. This designation balances existing commercial uses with future mixed-use development. This designation allows for multifamily housing as well as shops, restaurants, services, offices, and other compatible uses*

*Goal LU 7.1 Provide for a commercial base of the city to encourage a strong tax base, more jobs within the city, a greater variety of goods and services, and businesses compatible with Folsom's quality of life.*

*Policy LU 3.1.5 - Encourage new development along East Bidwell Street by creating a stronger mixed-use development pattern, both horizontal and vertical, with an emphasis on medium- and higher-density housing, while also addressing local and citywide demand for retail and services.*

*Policy LU 3.1.6- Encourage development of mixed-use projects that create a walkable, vibrant district along East Bidwell Street between Coloma Street and Blue Ravine Road.*

*Policy LU 7.1.2 Encourage development of underutilized and vacant parcels in commercial zones to improve the aesthetic appearance and enhance the vitality of commercial areas.*

*Policy LU 9.1.7 Encourage efforts to establish and promote district identities (e.g., urban centers, East Bidwell Street) through the use of signage, wayfinding signage, streetscape and building design standards, advertising, and site-specific historic themes.*

Additionally, Folsom Charter, section 2.04.G – Duties of the Mayor, indicates the mayor may “Establish and dissolve ad hoc committees, subject to the approval of the Council, but no such committee shall exist for more than one year.”

Folsom Municipal Code, section 2.35.040 – One Seat Limitation, states that “No person may hold more than one appointed commission, board, council or committee seat at a time. This one-seat limitation shall not apply to: (1) commission, board, council or committee members who are appointed to other commissions, boards, councils or committees as a result of, or by virtue of, their status as a member of a particular commission, committee, board or council; or (2) membership on ad hoc committees.

## **ANALYSIS**

The General Plan Guiding Principles emphasize numerous opportunities that may be considered during the Central Business District Master Plan process:

- The need for city gateway enhancements...
- Continue to be a premier recreation destination...
- Commit to high-quality design...
- Integrate the old and new areas of the city...
- Enhance Folsom's heritage...

Master plans can take many forms from relatively broad such as the city-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan, to relatively detailed such as a site-specific, individual park development master plan.

Of key importance to the process and highlighted in the General Plan is “robust community and stakeholder engagement.” While the community engagement plan has not been designed at this time, it is envisioned to be multi-faceted. Engagement will be both broad and focused. Tools with a broad reach such as the city’s website/web page, and the monthly newsletter will be used. The retained planning consultant will also be tasked with bringing recommendations for additional engagement, whether in traditional formats such as public workshops, or digital engagement through online surveys, etc.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) highly recommends the use of advisory committees or ad hoc committees for complex community planning issues. The City Council has recently used this strategy to help inform, guide and make recommendations on challenging subjects like Historic District parking and the disposition of surplus city properties.

There is likely more interest within the community than the recommended capacity or participation in an advisory committee. Industry best practice for the membership size of an ad hoc committee for this purpose is from eight to 14 members. Below is a list of stakeholder organizations (not inclusive) who may have an interest in Central Business District advisory committee representation:

- Landowners – small and large
- Business Owners – small and large
- Chamber of Commerce/Visit Folsom
- Transportation Safety Committee representative
- Affordable Housing representative
- Folsom School District representative
- At-large community members at Council discretion, to seek a range of generational and demographic representation on the committee
- Friends of Folsom Parkways
- Multi-cultural or arts representatives
- Parks Commission

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The general project process is outlined below, indicating approximately a two-year schedule.

River District Master Plan Primary Tasks	2023				2024			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Vision								
Community outreach	X	X	X	X				
Vetting draft vision and key components		X						
City Council review and direction		X	X					
Central Business District Master Plan, Studies, and CEQA Analysis								
Preliminary Draft Master Plan/ Recommendations			X	X				
Environmental studies and CEQA review				X	X			
Community and stakeholder workshops					X	X		
Revised Draft Central Business District Master Plan						X	X	
Commission review and recommendation							X	X
City Council review and adoption								X

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The recommended action of the City Council is not a project as defined by the CEQA and therefore does not require environmental review at this time. As part of the master planning process, the draft Central Business District Master Plan will be evaluated for potential programmatic impacts prior to the City Council considering adoption. Any future site-specific proposals will be analyzed on a project-by-project basis for environmental clearance consistent with the CEQA.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no additional fiscal impact as a result of the proposed action. Funds for both project management and future retained consultants have already been budgeted and appropriated. The source of the funds is from federal allocations from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Central Business District Study Area Map

Submitted,




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PAM JOHNS  
Community Development Director

# Folsom Central Business District Boundary



## Legend

 Central Business District

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 Miles

