

# Folsom and Sacramento County California

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

November 13–18, 2022



 **Urban Land  
Institute**  
Advisory Services

**COVER:** Bidwell Street Studios, converted to 24 studio apartments for low-income residents in the former Folsom Lodge Motel. (*Deborah Myerson*)

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Attainable Housing along Commercial Corridors

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Urban Land Institute  
2001 L Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-4948  
[uli.org](http://uli.org)

# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2022 alone, more than 2,800 events, both virtual and in person, were held in cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at [uli.org](https://uli.org). Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

# About the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing

**ULI'S TERWILLIGER CENTER FOR HOUSING** was established in 2007 with a gift from longtime ULI member and former chair J. Ronald Terwilliger. The goal of the Terwilliger Center for Housing is to advance best practices in residential development and public policy, and to support ULI members and local communities in creating and sustaining a full spectrum of housing opportunities, particularly for low- and moderate-income households.

The ULI's Terwilliger Center for Housing, through its Attainable Housing for All Initiative, is poised to grow and deepen its housing impact through additional housing-focused Advisory Services

and technical assistance panels. This campaign will leverage the breadth of current and future housing-focused work within ULI to inform and advance efforts around the country to enable attainable housing preservation and production. The primary tool of the campaign will be 10 TAPs during the 2022 and 2023 calendar years.

The Terwilliger Center's participation in and support of this ULI Advisory Services panel was made possible by the generous financial contribution of former ULI global chair Thomas Toomey.



# About ULI Advisory Services

**THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM** is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day Advisory Services panel (ASP) is tailored to meet a sponsor's needs. ULI members are briefed by the sponsor, engage with stakeholders through in-depth interviews, deliberate on their recommendations, and make a final presentation of those recommendations. A report is prepared as a final deliverable.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's ASP assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this ASP report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

## ULI Program Staff

### **Mary Beth Corrigan**

Executive Vice President, Global Leadership

### **Thomas W. Eitler**

Senior Vice President, Advisory Services

### **Lauren McKim Callaghan**

Director, Advisory Services

### **Kelsey Steffen**

Senior Director, Advisory Services

### **Georgia Gempler**

Senior Associate, Advisory Services

### **David Zehr**

Senior Associate, Advisory Services

### **Christopher Ptomey**

Executive Director, Terwilliger Center for Housing

### **Rosemarie Hepner**

Senior Director, Terwilliger Center for Housing

### **Fabiola Yurcisin**

Senior Associate, Terwilliger Center for Housing

### **James A. Mulligan**

Senior Editor

### **Sara Proehl, Publications Professionals LLC**

Manuscript Editor

### **Brandon Weil**

Art Director

### **Amy Elfenbaum, Arc Group Ltd**

Graphic Designer

### **Craig Chapman**

Senior Director, Publishing Operations



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# Contents

2

**ULI Panel and Project Staff**

3

**Introduction and Key  
Recommendations**

6

**Vision and Leadership**

11

**Environment, Sustainability,  
and Resilience**

15

**Fifteen-Minute Walkable  
Communities**

19

**Infrastructure: Impediments  
and Opportunities**

22

**Transportation/Regional Context**

25

**Housing Strategy**

31

**Next Steps: Order of Operations**

33

**Conclusion**

35

**About the Panel**

# ULI Panel and Project Staff

## Panel Chair

### **Philip S. Payne**

Chairman  
Lotus Campaign  
Charlotte, North Carolina

## Panel Members

### **Keith A. Baker**

Executive Director  
ReConnect Rondo  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### **Jenna Hornstock**

Deputy Director of Planning for Land Use  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Los Angeles, California

### **Andrew Jakabovics**

Vice President, Policy Development  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Washington, D.C.

### **Lewis Knight**

Urbanist  
SERA  
Oakland, California

### **Rochelle Mills**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Innovative Housing Opportunities Inc.  
Santa Ana, California

### **Yvonne Yeung**

Chief Executive Officer  
SDG Strategies  
Markham, Ontario, Canada

## ULI Project Staff

### **Tom Eitler**

Senior Vice President, Advisory Services

### **Barbra Gustis**

Director, Advisory Services and Key Leaders

### **Deborah L. Myerson**

Myerson Consulting LLC  
Panel Project Manager

### **Kelsey Steffen**

Senior Director, Advisory Services

### **Fabiola A. Yurcisin**

Senior Associate, ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing





ULI STAFF

## Introduction and Key Recommendations

**IN CALIFORNIA**, the smart-growth plans promoted by cities, regional agencies, and other public institutions in major metropolitan areas are not delivering the residential units needed to address the state's housing crisis.

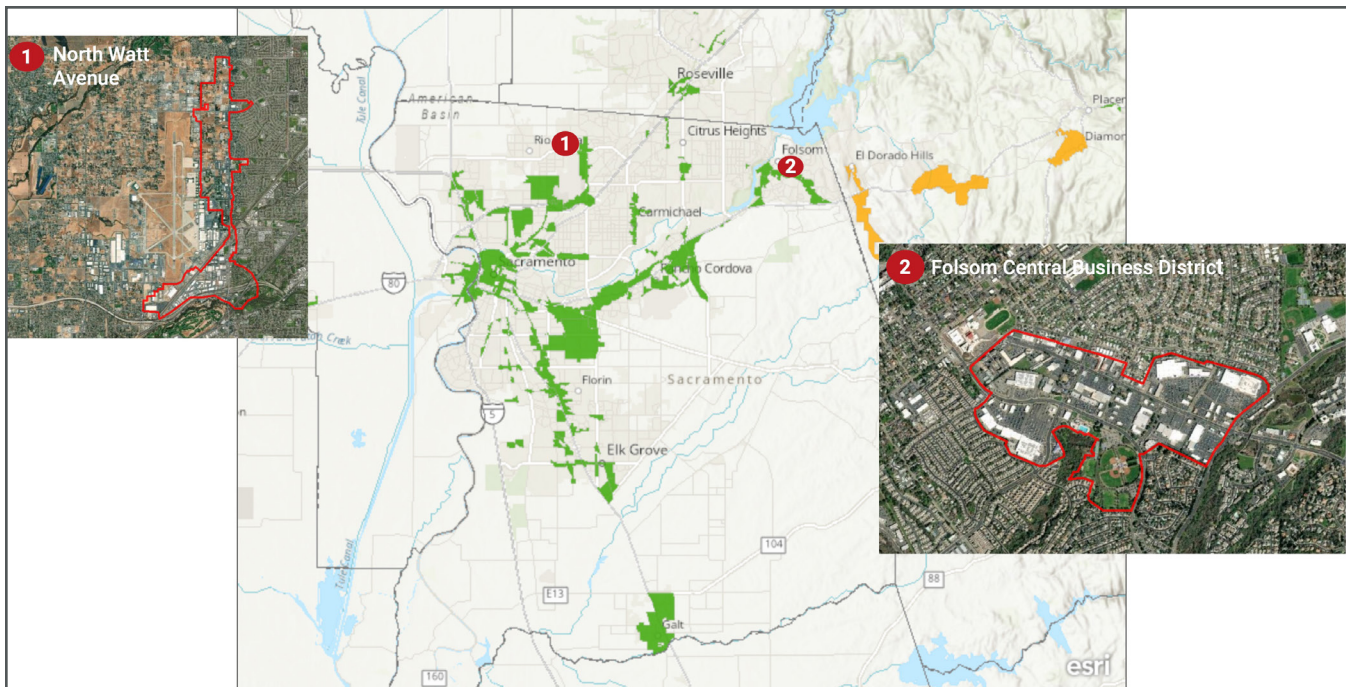
In the Sacramento region, commercial corridors are often oversupplied with retail businesses, underused, unfriendly to pedestrians, and lacking in identity and community character. The development economics in the Sacramento region often are not strong enough to spur the private sector to build the 7,000 infill housing units a year the region needs to accommodate population growth while meeting shared regional objectives for greenhouse gas reduction.

In response, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) developed the Green Means Go program to catalyze development in green zones—locally designated areas that have capacity for infill development and show a reduction in vehicle

miles traveled in the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Green Means Go program is supported by all 28 local jurisdictions in the six-county region.

SACOG invited the ULI Advisory Services panel to study Folsom's central business district (CBD) and Sacramento County's North Watt Avenue corridor, and to offer recommendations that would support the development of mixed-income, infill housing along these corridors with the goal of creating vibrant, walkable, mixed-use communities. Panelists' recommendations will assist SACOG in allocating up to \$40 million in state planning and infrastructure funding to expedite housing production in designated green zones.





ESRI AND SACOG

The ULI Advisory Services panel studied Folsom's central business district and Sacramento County's North Watt Avenue corridor and recommended ways to expedite housing production in designated green zones.

## The Panel's Assignment

SACOG asked the panel to address the following questions:

- What kind of housing is feasible along each corridor with the current zoning standards and market conditions?
- What investments—such as infrastructure, subsidies, or zoning updates—are needed to realize the housing that the city of Folsom and Sacramento County wish to see along the respective corridors?
- What are the challenges to realizing housing that serves moderate-income households, creates pathways to ownership, and does not rely on the traditional affordable housing financing models?
- What policies, strategies, programs, and improvements can each jurisdiction implement to create a sense of place in each corridor, where people want to live, work, visit, and play?
- What would an action plan for each jurisdiction look like that can create a community vision and incentivize development in each of the corridors aligned with that vision?
- How can this action plan address racial equity? How can the jurisdictions ensure that new development does not displace existing residents and businesses?

## Key Recommendations

The ULI Advisory Services panel examined how to expedite housing production in the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors, as those areas are designated green zones that have capacity for infill development and high potential for reducing vehicle travel.

The panel's recommendations start at a high level, with recommendations on vision and leadership. Additional big-picture ideas address environment, sustainability, and resilience for the study areas, as well as the potential to transform automobile-oriented corridors into active, 15-minute walkable community hubs. Later sections in the report on infrastructure, transportation, and housing deliver specific recommendations for the area as a whole, as well as for the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors.

Key recommendations from the panel include the following:

- Build consensus through leadership and social engagement. Craft a vision for vibrant, walkable, intergenerational communities where residents can live, work, and play.
- Prioritize the development of sufficient physical infrastructure, especially utility capacity, to support growth and new residential development.

- Initiate pilot placemaking projects to prove feasibility. Simple engagement activities such as public art, street fairs, and performances can invite placemaking and activate underused parking lots.
- Create walkable hubs with the goal of establishing 15-minute walkable communities.
- Implement public policies targeted to lower the cost of development in exchange for building projects that include more affordable housing.
- Adopt higher-density zoning in Green Means Go corridors.
- Streamline and reform the development review and approval process.
- Shift to form-based codes to create flexibility while maintaining land use goals.
- Commit to a transportation vision at the local level; implement “complete streets” policies to diversify mode share.
- Identify partners and public/private partnerships, real estate funds, grants, and other sources to raise capital.

The panel’s recommendations for the Folsom CBD are as follows:

- Produce design guidelines consistent with facilitating a walkable, connected corridor.
- Create more opportunities for mixed-income housing.
- Orient housing toward existing residential areas and amenities; establish strong connections to retail.

The panel’s recommendations for the North Watt corridor are as follows:

- Improve the urban environment to enhance mobility and economic opportunity for existing residents.
- Shape land acquisition to focus on an affordable housing strategy that can preserve permanent affordability.
- Capitalize on the corridor’s environmental justice community status to leverage funding resources and build community capacity.

The panel also suggests an advised order of operations to implement the specific steps to realize attainable housing along commercial corridors.





## Vision and Leadership

**THE FOLSOM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND NORTH WATT AVENUE** represent two aging and underused commercial corridors in the Greater Sacramento area. Although very distinct in physical conditions and economic factors, the sites share the need for smart, creative, infill development solutions.

The sites can incorporate new housing production that is affordable to low- and moderate-income residents, along with sustainable transit and public realm opportunities that reduce vehicle miles traveled. Each community has its own character and amenities to leverage. The panel's recommendations are designed to be flexible enough to be modified and replicated in other communities with similar sizing and characteristics.

An influx of new residents can bolster reinvestment in local retail and commercial corridors, justify additional public transit opportunities, and diversify neighborhoods with a mix of ages, races, cultures, and incomes. The panel examined existing infrastructure and the zoning and planning process to support new housing. The panel also considered walkability, traffic calming, and greening, plus wayfinding, branding, and community character.

### Community Vision

In both the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors, a primary goal of the public-sector leaders engaged is to create a vision for equitable residential and mixed-use infill development that can support the local economy. Leaders from both corridors expressed a desire for safe, walkable, human-scale environments that are less automobile-oriented. They also recognized the need for a clear and recognizable circulation plan and connectivity to other parts of the community.

However, the panel heard from local leaders and city and county staff that while they have commissioned reports and consultants, they have not pursued a vision directly.

## Folsom Central Business District Corridor

Folsom stakeholders described the city's CBD as used primarily for transactional business—that is, pick up something and leave. Others reported avoiding the area altogether because the traffic headache was not worth the trouble.

In the Folsom CBD, there was a clear community vision to celebrate the district's unique character and to build a brand that residents and visitors can recognize. Stakeholders want the CBD to be a source of local pride that attracts locals and visitors alike because of its special brand and feel.

While there is support for the existing big box stores and grocers, panelists heard that stakeholders ultimately want the area to be known as a funky, eclectic destination for small, specialty, and local businesses. They support housing that fits into this vision for their community. Stakeholders are wary of recommendations that potentially displace existing commercial tenants or reduce parking or traffic flow because they see those as integral to attracting shoppers to their businesses.

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned a desire for connectivity and a CBD that is a great place for locals of all ages, and particularly families, to hang out. One participant described this as a desire for the CBD to be “the glue that binds the community together.”

## North Watt Avenue Corridor

The panel learned there is neither a strong sense of community nor a vision for the North Watt Avenue corridor. Despite numerous efforts to enlist interviewees, fewer stakeholders participated in the conversations about North Watt Avenue. The panel heard descriptions of the community as lacking public funding, as well as having minimal social infrastructure. One highly engaged community organization noted the need for intergenerational housing where extended families can live together and support one another, and the need for a range of housing options that serve households of varying sizes and generations.

Community members interviewed by the panel also expressed a lack of connection, physically and emotionally, to activities and opportunities at nearby McClellan Park. For example, the panel heard that despite the presence of COVID vaccine clinics in McClellan Park, North Highlands community members seeking vaccines did not enter the campus because they assumed the campus is off-limits to those who do not work or live in the community.

Located on the site of the former McClellan Air Force Base, McClellan Park is a successful redevelopment managed by strong leaders. The site is a major job center that is home to larger corporations and a variety of small companies.

McClellan Park also has many decommissioned buildings that could be converted to residential uses with land that could be rehabilitated for green space and pocket parks. Most of McClellan Park's 22,000 workers live outside of the area, adding to already serious traffic concerns in the North Watt corridor. Other than visiting restaurants on Watt Avenue for lunch, the business park's workers and residents have not embraced the Watt Avenue corridor. The park represents a great opportunity not only to bring more residential and community redevelopment but also to consciously embrace and connect with the North Watt Avenue corridor. If McClellan Park's management was a willing partner and community booster, it could help to propel redevelopment efforts throughout the corridor.

## Local Leadership

Leadership from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors, rooted in strong community collaboration, is critical to realizing bold visions for corridor revitalization. Identifying local ambassadors—entities singularly tasked with the care and feeding of the revitalization plans—will be central to lead the redevelopment effort in the two project areas.

Community social connections are critical to realize leadership potential for several reasons, including the following:

- Local boosters can push the jurisdiction to focus investments and deliver.
- Community voices, especially in a low-income, environmental justice community such as the North Watt Avenue corridor, are critical to ensure investments are targeted to benefit the existing community members and to protect against displacement of businesses and residents.
- Community groups can leverage additional resources to support investments, as well as to support and partner with SACOG and local governments to realize the vision.

## Folsom Central Business District Corridor

Folsom stakeholders discussed creating a business improvement district (BID) to champion the connectivity to Folsom's historic core, local community, and amenities. Leadership for BID funding and organization would include the Folsom Chamber of Commerce with support from city council members and local business owners.



## North Watt Avenue Corridor

When talking to stakeholders as well as county staff, the panel observed a notable lack of a clear community and social infrastructure in the Watt Avenue corridor. There were no booster groups or community development corporations or even organized cohesion across the faith-based community. Based on the panel interviews, the primary groups that have shown leadership in the broader community are Sacramento County staff, such as the Planning and Environmental Review staff that applied to be part of the ULI Panel sponsor team, and the Black Child Legacy Project with Liberty Towers Church.

The panel did hear suggestions from several local stakeholders that could be engaged in the visioning and implementation of the vision for the corridor. These prospective participants include representatives from the following:

- McClellan Park
- North Highlands Chamber of Commerce
- Property BID
- American Rivers Community College
- Charter Schools on the McClellan Park campus
- Other faith-based organizations

## Financial Resources

The reality is that no change or revitalization will occur without dedicated resources. Adequate funding is needed to see the project through from inception to completion—including community engagement and input, research and planning, implementation, ongoing maintenance, oversight/compliance, and data and impact capture.

Funding possibilities for the study areas include both federal and state opportunities.

### Federal Resources

**Reconnecting Communities** is a federal program dedicated to reconnecting communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure.

The Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, which is under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and subject to appropriations, authorizes \$200 million annually—for a total of \$1 billion over five years—to connect walking and biking infrastructure into accessible, affordable, and safe active transportation networks that allow people to reach destinations within a community, as well as travel between communities, without needing a car.

## Financial Resources and Opportunities

Public/private partnerships (PPPs)	Collaborate with corporations and businesses in the immediate areas that could benefit from workforce housing.
Real estate fund (debt and/or equity)	Partner with local corporations and businesses in the local area areas to serve as seed funders to support the revitalization of a specific area.
Community land trust	Establish a nonprofit entity to assemble sites and take advantage of philanthropic and Surplus Land Act opportunities.
Impact fees	Reduce or waive fees to incentivize the production of preferred development.
Expedited permit process	Offer streamlined plan review and permitting process for projects that meet the established criteria.
Low-interest loans	Seek low-interest loans from the state's infrastructure bank based on identified infrastructure. Set development impact fees to repay those loans.
Float a bond or implement a local tax	Create funds needed for revitalization, including infrastructure improvements necessary to kickstart revitalization.
Sacramento County documentary transfer tax	Dedicate the current county documentary transfer tax to fund land acquisition, affordable housing, and infrastructure to support housing, as a supplement to funds raised by the state \$75 Affordable Housing Recording fee.

## State Resources

Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2021 (REAP 2.0) is a one-time, \$500 million state program to support metropolitan planning organizations to implement Senate Bill 375, one of California's landmark climate laws, by funding infill housing and other actions that reduce vehicle miles traveled. The SACOG Green Means Go program is funded through REAP 2.0 and it is an opportunity to secure this seed funding to plan for needed infrastructure investments.

The Infill Infrastructure Grant program promotes infill housing development by providing financial assistance for capital improvement projects that are an integral part of, or necessary to facilitate the development of, a qualifying infill project or a qualifying infill area. Grants can fund utility investments to support housing for identified projects.

The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program makes it easier for Californians to drive less by ensuring housing, jobs, and key destinations are accessible by walking, biking, and transit.

## Plans and Prospects: The Folsom Central Business District Corridor

In 2015, the city of Folsom adopted the East Bidwell Street Complete Streets Corridor Plan, which recommended spot sidewalk improvements and new midblock crossings. In 2018, Folsom completed a General Plan update.

A recent study by Opticos Design highlighted four areas for revitalization, including the CBD along Bidwell. The study analyzed opportunities to add housing along the Bidwell corridor and offered design strategies to minimize the look of density.

However, several stakeholders affiliated with the city and Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that the city lacks suitable resources to implement the recommendations from these reports. A valuable proposed resource to consider would be a real estate fund, which could be spearheaded by the Folsom Chamber of Commerce, plus the city's nonprofit economic development corporation, to take advantage of philanthropic and Surplus Lands Act opportunities.

## COMPLETE STREETS: SAFE AND COMPATIBLE TRANSPORTATION FOR ALL USERS

“Complete streets” are designed to meet the needs of all users of all ages and abilities, whether they walk, bike, drive, or use public transit. Each complete street is designed according to a community's unique needs. Complete streets projects work to promote safe, economically vibrant, and active communities through expanded transportation choices and placemaking.

Complete streets promote walking and bicycling by providing safer transportation options for pedestrians and people on bicycles. Complete streets may include features such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, public transportation stops, crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, modified vehicle travel lanes, streetscape, and landscape treatments.

The implementation of complete streets involves planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way to make the transportation network safer and more efficient for all users. Complete streets policies are set at the state, regional, and local levels and they are frequently supported by roadway design guidelines.

Under the [California Complete Streets Act of 2008](#) (Assembly Bill 1358), all cities and counties in the state are required to include complete streets policies as part of any substantial revision to the circulation element of their general plans.

More information about planning and implementation of complete streets is available from SACOG's [Complete Streets Corridor Working Group](#).

## Plans and Prospects: The North Watt Avenue Corridor

Sacramento County adopted the North Watt Avenue Corridor Plan in 2012 to provide guidance for economic redevelopment and revitalization. However, development trends have not aligned with the plan and residential infill development is unfulfilled.

Stakeholders indicated that the prescriptive nature of the plan, including mixed-use requirements, has in some instances directly thwarted housing development. The panel recommends renewing the vision of the plan while identifying the barriers and opportunities to fulfill the vision.

As a designated environmental justice community with a light-rail station and a large employer, the North Watt corridor could be a strong candidate for California's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program. Several studies and plans are already underway in the community.

The TCC program funds community-led development and infrastructure projects that achieve major environmental, health, and economic benefits in California's most disadvantaged communities.

The TCC program empowers the communities most affected by pollution to choose the strategies and projects best suited to achieve their community vision and enact transformational change—all with data-driven milestones and measurable outcomes. The next round of TCC applications will be available in summer 2023. The panel strongly recommends the county seek out this funding to build community capacity, strengthen social infrastructure, and better position the corridor for planning, implementation, and financing opportunities.



## Environment, Sustainability, and Resilience

**THE ARCHITECTURE 2030 PROGRAM** estimates that buildings are responsible for almost 50 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (27 percent building operations, 10 percent building materials and construction, and 10 percent other construction industry including new road construction).

Other studies have estimated that in California, infill development, when compared with greenfield development:

- Uses less water (by 40 percent or more per capita);
- Can reduce vehicle mileage (by 33 percent per capita, which allows more discretionary personal spending on housing and services);
- Can reduce GHG emissions (by as much as 50 percent per capita, with proven impacts on health and well-being); and
- Can aid in the protection and management of agricultural and wild lands, necessary for carbon sequestration and food production.

The SACOG has piloted a six-county [Green Means Go](#) program that aims to lower regional GHG emissions by accelerating infill development and reducing and electrifying vehicle trips.

In addressing emissions standards, the Green Means Go program is intended to stimulate economic activity and improve quality of life or livability across the region. Large portions of the two focus study areas are included in [green zones](#).

In addition, Sacramento County has been working throughout 2022 to craft a countywide [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#). The CAP details specific measures that Sacramento County will use by 2030 to reduce GHG emissions from countywide activities and government operations and it establishes an adaptation plan that recommends actions to reduce community vulnerabilities to anticipated impacts.

Despite these initiatives, sustainability and the environment did not appear to be prominent topics in panelists' interviews with stakeholders in either of the study areas.



## Housing Challenges and Climate Threats

A climate-smart region would stimulate the economy and provide incentives for addressing threats and sustainability equally. In the fourth [Climate Change Assessment](#), prepared by UC Davis in 2018, lead author Benjamin Houlton states, “This is where Sacramento’s homeless and housing challenges intersect with climate threats.” The assessment identified climate threats such as heat, flooding, and wildfire, as well as impacts to realms such as water supply, agriculture, forests, energy, and transportation for the region.

The Sacramento Valley is likely to see increased maximum daily temperatures by as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit and to see more days per year of extreme temperatures. Areas that are devoid of tree cover, such as the East Bidwell corridor in Folsom, will see ambient temperatures at least 7 degrees higher than the temperatures of surrounding areas due to lack of urban forest and tree cover.

## Local Environmental Concerns

County staff are bound by state and local commitments for the reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and GHG emissions. However, the policy benefits have not yet translated to on-the-ground activity within the study corridors.

The panel heard about a variety of environmental concerns from stakeholders, including the following:

- **Drainage/flooding:** Existing aged infrastructure is unable to handle flooding, together with the potential disruption to businesses caused by flood interruptions. There is also a real perception that drainage improvements are passed through to project proponents, contributing to the erosion of project financial viability.
- **Placemaking:** Neither corridor exhibited a clear sense of “there.” In other words, although the corridor had a name, the identity and attractiveness of the place did not promote clear identity in the minds of community members, and as such, did not attract longer stays other than those necessary to complete business.
- **Parks and open spaces:** There was a perception that the parks were regional resources and attractions but that they had fallen into disrepair or were used by the homeless, and as such, are less attractive to the community. This perception remained despite the fact they provide a multigenerational outlet, including a diversity of sports and recreational pursuits. In Folsom, parks and open spaces

also connect to regional trail networks that are a source of community pride.

- **Trees:** Some mention was made of the remnant Live Oak stands south of US-50 in Folsom and that the expansion area of the city had been amended to help protect these stands. The city of Folsom has updated its Tree Preservation Ordinance to provide better protection of urban trees and the urban tree canopy. The core residential area at McClellan Park was well treed and included many healthy canopy and specimen trees.

## Land Use and Transportation Patterns

The Sacramento region exhibits a strong reliance on the automobile, with largely single-family development patterns to the east and to the south of Sacramento almost uninterrupted along the region’s freeways (I-80, US-50, CA-99, and I-5). The resultant urban pattern is almost 20 miles (as the crow flies) of low-density suburbs, from Folsom Lake in the east to downtown Sacramento and south to Elk Grove about 12.5 miles. While the existing major interstates are undergoing repairs and widening, there appears continued decline of ridership of public transit including the regional light rail.

## Recommendations for Environment, Sustainability, and Resilience

The following recommendations for environment, sustainability, and resilience are presented as a menu of items for the Folsom business district and the North Watt Avenue corridor each to consider.

### Clearly Communicate Green Goals

The apparent complexity to undertake green development, often embodied by complicated approvals and permitting processes, is frequently cited as a reason to NOT invest in regeneration. Part of the success of the Green New Deal program in Ithaca has been its clear campaign and messaging. Although not specifically addressing sustainability, the [Auckland \(New Zealand\) Design Manual](#) is another example of a coherent, simplified manual intended to accelerate development and adoption of improved practices.

SACOG and its partners might consider amplifying a plain language goal for the study areas that clearly explains the financial, community, and environmental benefits of infill development. Such an effort could establish simple goals organized by theme and program, such as water, energy efficiency, mobility, environment, and quality of life. Those goals could be supported with a simplified



approval process for green projects, and could create incentives such as bonus or abatement programs for projects that meet and exceed the goals.

### Develop Intentional and Flexible Financing Models

To stimulate better development patterns, it is imperative that financing be simplified, and that it be prioritized toward low-carbon, high quality of life infill locations that support multigenerational lifestyles. To accelerate job creation and to meet the goals of the corridors, SACOG and its partners should consider how to fund new development and retrofitting of existing structures. Examples of intentional and flexible financing models to consider include the following:

- **Extended bond sunset periods**, such as the one established by the city and county of San Francisco for Treasure Island. That initiative extends the 30-year bond sunset to 99 years, and it established an adaptation fund to allow the development to have monies available to raise sea walls and address ongoing maintenance issues of in-ground utilities.
- **Tax abatements and tax increment finance districts** can support green development. Nashville, Tennessee, has supported regeneration in its historic core with a city-based program that created a 20-year tax abatement based on a reset of property values. The program encouraged developers to work with local banks to capitalize projects and make green regeneration financially feasible. In addition, it would be worthwhile to explore the potential of California's enhanced infrastructure financing districts (EIFDs) as a tool to fund economic development projects within a geographic boundary utilizing tax increment financing.
- **Transfer of development rights (TDR) programs**, such as King County's program in Washington state. That program has allowed the county to actively retain valuable habitat and farmland, as well as historic resources, and to focus development growth in urban areas, creating more efficient development patterns that preserve the county's rural and resource lands.
- **Fees and incentives to promote infill development.** The lower cost and maintenance and the operational efficiency of infill development—as opposed to greenfield growth on the margins—have been widely documented. To encourage infill development, Albuquerque, New Mexico, reformed impact fees. And in San Diego, California, the growth boundary imposes a service limit line for new domestic water services.

## GREEN NEW DEAL ITHACA, NEW YORK

An example of vision and partnership for equity-based climate action is Ithaca's [Green New Deal](#), which was adopted in 2019 and was focused on decarbonizing thousands of privately owned commercial and residential buildings across the city by 2030 while prioritizing social equity.

The basis of the Green New Deal for Ithaca included the following:

- Shared recognition of issues that required concise vision and shared action,
- Mapping and analysis to clearly demonstrate need,
- Establishment of a shared financial target for a phase one pilot, and,
- Designing in an ability to scale programs subject to proven success.

The success of the Ithaca program was attracting \$100 million in capital to implement the city's building electrification program. This effort crossed institutional, government, business, community, and philanthropic sectors and offered a clear plan and accountability.

## Folsom Central Business District

The East Bidwell Street corridor in Folsom's CBD is typical of post-World War II development patterns, organically growing out from the old town along regional roads. The land uses reflect the era in which new development was beginning, and they reflect the mobility and shopping habits of that time.

More recently, highway-fronting retail has been created to drive point-of-sale revenues at both interchanges on US-50, in the form of the Folsom Outlets and Palladio centers. The southeastern end of the study area serves as the community service hub, with Lowe's, Walmart, Target, Raley's, and Trader Joe's anchoring retail.

Parking in 1990s-era projects appears to be provided at upwards of four spaces per 1,000 feet, which provides an overparking the majority of the year—except during peak holiday seasons.

According to the Green Means Go website, the area supported 3,673 jobs in 2016, of which about 80 percent were in the retail and food/restaurant services. On the website, the 2040 projection anticipates a modest 10 percent job growth, to 4,042, jobs, and a marginal increase in dwelling units, from 23 to 163. Those projections do not reflect the aspirations of either the 2018 mixed-use overlay district or the Green Means Go program in terms of facilitating more sustainable site and building design and uses.

Many buildings show signs of deferred maintenance and a general lack of desire to maintain structures or to site up to current standards. Sidewalks are inconsistent, as is the public domain.

## North Watt Avenue Corridor

The North Watt Avenue corridor, with large multiacre vacant lots and low-density retail, has struggled economically. Major drainage issues and a lack of sewer capacity make infill development challenging. As a major corridor that crosses the river, North Watt Avenue experiences significant traffic congestion at peak hours. A California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) grant offers an opportunity to study the corridor as a location for bus rapid transit.

The North Watt Avenue development patterns and long-term slow growth reflect its location next to the former McClellan Air Force Base. The 3,000-acre base dominated the North Watt Avenue corridor from its opening in 1935 until its closure in 2001. The base has since been redeveloped as McClellan Park, an 8 million-square-foot business park that is home to hundreds of companies such as aircraft-related industries, a technology incubator, data call centers, and upscale hotel and conference facilities. McClellan Park has already invested in many of the needed utility upgrades.

The area of the former officers' quarters is well maintained, with small-scale road patterns, concrete homes and duplexes, and mature trees—a useful foundation for a livable and walkable community. However, other portions of the site reflect the need to balance maintenance expenditures and development against tenant needs and budgets.

In 2015, the *Sacramento Bee* reported that the airfield had been designated a Superfund site due to contamination of groundwater near the base. Additional investment in utility capacity and site suitability will be required to meet current environmental and sustainability needs and attract additional businesses to the corridor. The redevelopment of the base into a business park has been very successful, but turns its back to the North Watt Avenue corridor.



## Fifteen-Minute Walkable Communities

**THE PANEL RECOMMENDS DIVERSIFYING SINGLE-USE AREAS** into “15-minute communities”: networks of inclusive, mixed-use neighborhoods with nearby places to live, work, learn, and play. A 15-minute neighborhood features access to daily needs through a range of mobility options that can help reduce single-occupant automobile trips.

A 15-minute community has daily destinations such as public spaces, shopping, schools and daycare facilities, health clinics, and social services within walking or biking distance.

This framework offers an opportunity to make cities more inclusive and equitable, with benefits such as shorter commute times, physical and mental health benefits of active travel, cleaner air, and stronger community ties that reduce loneliness.

A 15-minute neighborhood can be realized through incremental neighborhood changes with strategies that focus on establishing anchors with internal neighborhood connections to local places and amenities, as well as external links to larger regional centers, job centers, or other destinations. Anchors create the heart of community-scale outdoor destinations.

Both the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors are gateways located along busy corridors with potential for future rapid transit services. Reducing automobile dependency and making these areas walkable are vital to decarbonize and realize their real estate potential. The key components of a vibrant, 15-minute community with walkable access to daily needs are as follows.

**Leverage transit, infrastructure, and underused assets.**

Replace parking lots with densified mixed-use development. Provide reliable, frequent, and affordable first/last mile shared-mobility services to light rail or bus transit stations. Maximize the capacity of existing infrastructure with uses such as green streets with protected cycling, joint uses for school/library recreation, or 24-hour programmable public space with food vendors and art/music performance. Convert vacant nonresidential buildings into multifamily affordable housing, cultural uses, small grocery stores, or coworking space.



**Lead decisions with decarbonization.** Foster more green space in the city by replacing asphalt with linear urban parks that increase access to existing community/cultural destinations and natural assets such as creeks, rivers, and valleys. Extend high-quality walking and cycling facilities to underserved neighborhoods. Add tree shade, planters, protected cycling, and seating along sidewalks to neighborhoods, with priority upgrade in underserved neighborhoods. Transform rooftops for urban agriculture food production. Add rooftop solar and other photovoltaic technology to foster off-grid options. Encourage electric bikes and scooters as alternative modes of transportation to reduce car dependency.

**Establish a partnership framework.** Create a centralized governance structure with partnerships from the community, public sector, and private sector. Focus on steps to create 15-minute neighborhood anchors as the “community canvas” to up-zone, create real estate value as a resource, and reinvest in public good within the community.

## **FIVE STEPS TO TURN FOLSOM'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CORRIDOR INTO A VIBRANT, WALKABLE COMMUNITY**

Folsom is one of the fastest-growing cities within the SACOG region, with more than 1,700 new residents since 2020. The following five steps illustrate an example of how to revitalize the Folsom central business district corridor.

### **Step 1: Make Walking and Cycling the Top Choice**

Create a public realm plan to develop a new east–west urban greenway to bring nature into the community and connect lakes, creeks, and parks. In Folsom, trails connect the surrounding lakes, creeks, and parks and make healthy living a core part of daily needs. Kid-friendly, family-oriented outdoor amenities and safe neighborhoods have become the key attractions for Folsom. Access to green space has become the key attraction that makes Folsom a top draw for families.

Transform East Bidwell into an attractive, people-place and community destination with a pedestrian promenade. Create new north–south connections to knit together surrounding neighborhoods, existing community centers, and public parks.

Transform arterials into vibrant, family-oriented main streets, with child-friendly, protected cycling facilities to enable the entire family to use cycling as their top choice for getting around the neighborhood. Activate ground-floor design for indoor uses to spill outside to provide valuable “eyes on the street.” Plant a double row of trees and add seating to provide shade and seasonal interests for social functions and include a planting bed for mitigating heat and noise. Install a seamless paving treatment from building face to curb to help provide a common district identity.

### **Step 2: Build Anchors for Global Competence and a Competitive Workforce**

Create a community facility plan that covers education (schools), health care (clinics), and sports (fitness facilities). Establish new anchors at the east end (Blue Ravine Road) and center (Wales Drive) and mix uses within each anchor. Create hubs within each anchor to offer collaborative opportunities (see table on following page).

## Examples of Hubs

### Theme: Digital Solutions of Automation

#### Sample facilities

Lecture hall and event space  
Coworking space  
Startups and accelerators mentoring space  
Creation/technology/maker space

#### Sample programs

Startup weekends  
Angel investor pitch nights  
STEM workshops  
Women-based coworking  
Maker space  
Robotics

### Theme: Diversity and Mosaic of Identities

#### Sample facilities

Performance and exhibition space  
Recording studio  
City building design center with three-dimensional physical and digital model cultural workshop  
Agency showroom  
Dressing rooms

#### Sample programs

Hospitality education  
Arts development  
Design  
City-building talks  
Music performance  
Dance for your health  
Art therapy

### Theme: Global Phenomenon and Community Leadership

#### Sample facilities

Renewable energy  
Low-impact development  
Urban agriculture  
Culinary event space  
Fitness stations  
Green roof

#### Sample programs

Eco-school  
Environmental leaders of tomorrow  
Teachers' network  
Newcomers' environmental program

### Theme: Authentic Learning and Life Skills

#### Sample facilities

Health clinics  
Agency spaces  
Meeting rooms  
Exhibition space  
Community kitchen

#### Sample programs

Oral health  
Healthy eating and nutrition  
Long-term care services  
Senior day camp

### Theme: Walk and Roll to School

#### Sample facilities

Protected, seamless, child-friendly cycling facilities  
Tree shade

#### Sample programs

Air pollution reduction  
Obesity reduction  
Road congestion productivity analysis  
Social and health benefits of walking to school

### Step 3: Plan for a Vibrant Street-Level Environment

Create a streets and blocks plan to produce walkable blocks and interconnected streets with public spaces. Consolidate vehicular access to reduce driveways along East Bidwell. Form a coalition of institutions to activate and animate community space with daily/weekly programs and seasonal large-scale events.

### Step 4: Create a Digital Twin to Envision Change

Create a digital simulation of the Folsom central business district, also known as a “digital twin.” Employing a computer simulation of the real physical location can facilitate development review, help envision potential mixed-use and public realms, implement phasing, and evaluate performance.

### Step 5: Kick-Start an Instant Outdoor Destination

While steps 1–4 are taking shape, activate a “Meanwhile Strategy” to create pop-up outdoor destinations. One example is the addition of containerized urban street trees. Although the panel recommends a mature canopy of street trees as the long-term goal, these “instant” trees can serve as a backdrop for community events and demonstrate the value of public realm improvement.



YVONNE YEUNG

To plan for a vibrant street-level environment, Folsom will benefit from a plan for walkable blocks and streets interconnected with public spaces.





## Infrastructure: Impediments and Opportunities

**ALTHOUGH INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT HOUSING** can take on a broad array of investments and community needs, the panel focused on the utilities that directly support entitling and delivering housing: water, wastewater, stormwater management, electricity, and broadband. (Gas is not addressed in the panel recommendations because most state funding will not support investments in fossil fuel-based infrastructure.)

Through their recently adopted housing elements (housing plans required of every municipality in California) and previous land use planning efforts, both the Folsom CBD and North Watt Avenue corridors have each identified the target number of housing units to be developed in their respective areas.

Yet, the panel heard from stakeholders—including land use planners for the city of Folsom and Sacramento County, developers, and architects—that a key barrier to increased housing development is the lack of suitable infrastructure. However, developers should not bear the cost to bring needed infrastructure to their property line. The city and county should each commit to providing infrastructure up to the boundary of the project.

To achieve this goal, both corridors must invest in forward planning and coordination to develop the utilities needed to support infill housing development. This effort will require close coordination with Regional San (operator of the regional

wastewater conveyance system and the Sacramento regional wastewater treatment plant), Sacramento area sewer district, and Folsom's Environmental and Water Resources Department.

Investing in district-level infrastructure systems, as well as using best practices for stormwater capture, water efficiency, graywater, and recycled water systems can also contribute to realizing the region's climate resilience and adaptation goals.

In partnership with the utility partners identified previously, local governments should plan to jointly apply to SACOG's REAP 2.0-funded Green Means Go program for funding that will identify the specific sewer, drainage, and stormwater infrastructure investments needed to support housing development. Part of the Green Means Go funding round will be for planning awards for technical infrastructure studies. This application should reflect the panel's recommendation for up-zoning to increase the planned number of housing units.



For Watt Avenue, this REAP 2.0 application is supported by Goal HE-2: Implementation Programs in the county's adopted housing element plan, specifically B12: Prioritize Water and Sewer Infrastructure for Affordable Housing.

## Adopt a “Dig Once” Approach

Because utility investments often require digging up and then resurfacing or replacing roadways, sidewalks, or other hardscape, local governments should employ a “dig once” approach and couple the needed infrastructure investments with other investments. The “dig once” tactic has immediate and expansive benefits: lower costs to deliver projects; shortened timelines for construction; and reduced impositions to residents, businesses, and other users of the infrastructure in the community.

## Development Case Management

The Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridor should each create interdepartmental case management units that meet regularly to coordinate across planning efforts, expedite development review, and troubleshoot entitlement and permitting issues. For the North Watt Avenue corridor, a REAP 2.0 grant may be a useful resource to support investment in development case management.

A worthwhile model to consider for coordinated development review is the Development Services Case Management (DSCM) offered by the city of Los Angeles. DSCM provides a single portal for consultation, problem solving, and facilitation for development projects in Los Angeles. These services guide major and complex projects through the various city agency requirements during the design, planning, entitlement, and permitting stages.

In addition, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) recently developed a set of materials focused on entitlement streamlining, funded by a REAP 1.0 grant. Those resources are available [online](#) and summarize statewide CEQA streamlining tools, density bonuses, and other tools that support a faster entitlement process. In early 2023, SCAG will live stream training workshops targeting local jurisdictional staff; the live-streamed workshops will be recorded for future use.

## Needs and Opportunities: Folsom Central Business District Corridor

Infrastructure provision is more concentrated in the incorporated city of Folsom than in the unincorporated area of North Watt Avenue. Per the city of Folsom's housing element plan, the city has adequate water supply to serve the projected demand of new housing. Drainage may be an issue on the northwest segment of the corridor (on Natomas Street and on Bidwell). The city of Folsom has secured a \$100,000 grant from the SACOG Regional Early Action Planning grant to complete the East Bidwell Drainage Study. Overall, there seem to be few backbone infrastructure constraints or other natural barriers to development. However, the panel heard sewer capacity cited as a core barrier to new housing development.

The panel also heard about the need for better lighting and other measures to promote safety in the Folsom CBD. As a signal that the corridor is pedestrian friendly and to set the stage for future investments, the city can encourage temporary lighting voluntarily affixed to the exterior of businesses or other existing city-owned infrastructure. A temporary lighting plan is an excellent way to get immediate results until the city install permanent street lighting fixtures as part of a larger streetscape plan.

The Folsom CBD might also consider an update to its 2015 Complete Streets plan as long as the city can pursue combined funding and a “dig once” approach.

## Needs and Opportunities: North Watt Avenue Corridor

The panel heard about the need to expand sewer capacity and resolve drainage issues in the North Watt Avenue corridor. Frustration with the perceived lack of partnership from the county departments was echoed by developers, property owners, and architects interviewed by the panel. Challenges reported included property owners facing hundreds of thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for drainage studies and installation of necessary utility access (for improvements that benefit multiple properties), the difficulty of navigating the review and approval process between county departments, and the excessive time required for review and comment.

Sacramento County has identified sewer infrastructure as a major barrier to development in the corridor, and it is seeking funding for upgrades. There are also several creek basins that would affect development of individual parcels (that is, sewer is the main corridor-wide limitation, while there are more specific limitations on individual parcels around stormwater retention).

One challenge is unincorporated Sacramento County's split governance of infrastructure. For the North Watt corridor, sewer is provided by one agency (Regional San), water is provided by another agency (Sac Suburban Water District), and drainage is provided by a third (the county's own drainage department). The corridor is also served by two different park and school districts (with Roseville Road as the divider).

The panel heard that while the North Watt Avenue corridor would require an estimated \$10 million in sewer upgrades and investments to support the desired housing, there has not been any engagement with the sewer district on this topic. The county should reach out to Regional San, which provides sewer services, and Sac Suburban Water District (water provider) and the county drainage department to agree on a plan to identify the sewer, stormwater, and drainage needs along the Watt Avenue corridor. Ideally, a memorandum of understanding or other letter of agreement should establish a partnership to identify the investments needed to support housing development along the corridor.

## Sacramento County Staffing and Priorities

The panel heard that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sacramento County's Planning and Environmental Review division was experiencing staffing vacancies, particularly in the Long Range and Master Plans section. At the same time, county work on the North Watt Avenue corridor had to compete with other priority projects that took precedence. The panel recommends that Sacramento County escalate hiring for the Long Range vacant positions, and assign the Watt Avenue corridor as a top priority to one of the senior planners.

## Watt Avenue Complete Streets

One immediate positive opportunity is the planned Watt Avenue Complete Streets Improvements, secured by Sacramento County with \$13 million in state and federal funding. This project will provide separated sidewalks and protected bike lanes and will require right-of-way acquisition on Watt Avenue between Orange Grove and Roseville Road. This project has completed environmental review and is slated to begin construction in April 2023. The county should identify if any needed sewer and/or drainage improvements can be delivered in this segment before construction begins. If so, it should explore the possibility of a state infrastructure bank loan or identify other funding to incorporate those improvements.



## Transportation/Regional Context

**BOTH THE FOLSOM CBD AND NORTH WATT AVENUE CORRIDORS** offer the opportunity to serve as vital hubs for surrounding neighborhoods, making transportation a tool for community building, housing, and business development.

### Current Conditions

Like many corridors across California and nationally, the North Watt Avenue and Folsom CBD corridors present inherent and perceived conflicts between transportation needs and the desired creation of vibrant commercial and mixed-use districts.

Both East Bidwell Street and North Watt Avenue are key connectors within their suburban communities, and the existing condition of the streets and related infrastructure are predominantly car-centric. Narrow sidewalks with no shade are fronted by surface parking lots and retail with large setbacks.

### North Watt Avenue Corridor

North Watt Avenue, with six lanes of traffic plus a dedicated left turn lane, carries 53,000 vehicles daily—some of the highest vehicular volumes in the region on any nonfreeway facility.

It is a difficult environment for pedestrians and cyclists. There are many curb cuts and driveways and no bike lanes. Sidewalks are inconsistent on both sides of the road. Retail along the corridor is set back from the road and large swaths of surface parking face the road.

North Watt Avenue is one of the primary north–south arterials in the Sacramento region, providing access both to Interstate 80 and to Business 80 as well as serving as the main corridor for both the North Highlands community and McClellan Park. The section between Interstate 80 and McClellan Park carries significant volumes of commercial and truck traffic.

The existing undercrossing of the UP Railroad Line, including a culvert parallel to the right-of-way, is a major barrier for active transportation. Pedestrians must use a culvert and cyclists must take a vehicular lane to travel this part of the corridor.



The corridor has a slightly higher transit share than the typical suburban green zone corridor. The southern end of the North Watt corridor has access to the Blue Line light rail. The Watt I/80 station is one of the busiest in the network for bus to light-rail transfers. There have been safety and security challenges, such as poor lighting, around the station.

Sacramento County has had some success in securing funding for desired improvements. The county secured \$13 million in state and federal funding for the Watt Avenue complete streets improvements slated to begin construction in April 2023. To provide the separated sidewalks and protected bike lanes for this project, it will require right-of-way acquisition on Watt Avenue between Orange Grove and Roseville Road.

In addition, the Sacramento County Department of Transportation has secured a \$550,000 grant through the Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program to update the prior corridor transportation study and consider new approaches to encouraging alternate mobility options, including bus rapid transit. The county is currently procuring a consultant to lead this work.

## Folsom Central Business District Corridor

East Bidwell Street in the Folsom CBD, with four lanes of traffic plus a dedicated left turn lane, carries 20,000 vehicles per day. Major intersections are controlled by traffic signals, and the posted speed limits are 35 mph. East Bidwell Street has continuous sidewalks only on the south side of the road.

Bidwell is the main thoroughway in Folsom that connects central Folsom to new retail near the Palladio and ultimately to US 50 and the development south of 50. In general, transit along the corridor and in the area is less frequent than on arterials closer to the region's urban core.

Folsom's CBD has a higher bike and walk share than the typical suburban green zone corridor. Although Folsom has some of the most extensive bike infrastructure in the region, this corridor is underserved compared with the rest of Folsom. Riley Street has on-street bicycle lanes, but East Bidwell Street currently has no bicycle lanes in the study area and there are some sidewalk gaps. There is good potential to increase this share by expanding connections to nearby active transportation infrastructure.

In 2015, the city of Folsom adopted the East Bidwell Street Complete Streets Corridor Plan, which recommended spot sidewalk improvements and new midblock crossings. The city has expressed interest in rethinking the corridor from a circulation perspective.

The panel heard concerns from East Bidwell Street area businesses that the left turn lane is critical for continued access to their shops and that a smooth flow of traffic is critical to the health of the corridor. Business owners also expressed concern about planting street trees that may block their signage and impede views of their storefronts. Businesses did acknowledge there is excess parking for the retail, suggesting that some changes to access and circulation of the parking lots could be accepted with relatively little issue.

## Recommendations

Both corridors present opportunities to support the ultimate vision of more active, people-friendly streets. Political will is the biggest and most critical challenge to realizing street improvements that move streets from a car-centric model to a more complete street model. Change is difficult for any community, and change that may increase vehicle travel times in the short or longer term can generate significant community backlash.

The first and most critical recommendation is for the elected officials for the city of Folsom and Sacramento County, along with their respective planning and transportation staff, to agree on a vision and then an action plan to realize that vision.

The work to get there may present twists and turns. However, it is critical that all parties are along for the multimodal ride and understand that course corrections may occur.

Once the vision is in place, the city and county can take a wide range of actions:

- Consider temporary demonstrations of potential and planned street design treatments to create safer and more inviting public spaces, such as can be found in SCAG's Go Human *Resilient Streets Toolkit* (see sidebar), for targeted parts of the study corridors.
- Identify grant opportunities to support longer-term street and circulation planning and line up resources to apply for that funding.
- Implement a [Safe Routes to Schools](#) program that promotes safe, active transportation pathways to connect the corridors to local schools. Reaching out to the parents of students (the future generation) can in turn generate support for future projects.
- Work with local transportation agencies to scope and kick off bus rapid transit studies and to examine alternative street reconfiguration options.

- Consider directing bike infrastructure from North Watt Avenue to West 34th Street, a less heavily trafficked road.
- Revisit and update the Folsom CBD’s complete streets plan in collaboration with the city council and city departments, landowners, businesses, community members, and other stakeholders.

- Align proposed investments and roadway plans with SACOG’s next Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy work.

Creating connectivity in street and road infrastructure can demonstrate the benefits of active transportation options in daily life to a broad array of people—who are likely to advocate for future complete streets work.

## GO HUMAN: RESILIENT STREETS TOOLKIT

The Southern California Council of Governments [Go Human Campaign](#) is an award-winning and nationally recognized campaign to encourage traffic safety and active transportation. The [Resilient Streets Toolkit](#), part of the Go Human Campaign, is designed to build capacity for any jurisdiction to engage in a community-driven process to identify and implement street-level engagements. The *Resilient Streets Toolkit* demonstrates inclusive opportunities to reconfigure streets with projects that are guided by fundamental community values.

The goals of the Go Human Campaign and the *Resilient Streets Toolkit* include the following:

- Create safer streets.
- Increase active transportation use.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Improve public health.
- Support active transportation investments.
- Change the reputation of the region.

The Go Human Campaign has helped change the way that cities, neighborhoods, and residents engage with their built and social environment. The *Resilient Streets Toolkit* can be used as a guide to demonstrate various types of street treatments and safety measures in the public right-of-way for walkers and bike riders.

Funding for the Go Human Campaign is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

The Resilient Streets Toolkit demonstrates opportunities to reconfigure streets with inclusive projects that are guided by community values.



## Housing Strategy

**INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOMES** in and around identified corridors within the SACOG footprint is a critical component of creating and expanding economic opportunities for current and future residents and was the overall focus of this Advisory Services panel. The most recent regional housing needs assessment numbers, along with the locally adopted housing element plans, provide a road map to the specific sites where this housing is targeted for development.

According to the SACOG [Regional Housing Needs Plan](#), unincorporated Sacramento County must accommodate 21,272 new units of housing by 2030. Roughly one-third of those homes must be affordable to very-low- and low-income households. During the same period, Folsom must accommodate 6,363 homes, and just over 56 percent of those units must be affordable to very-low- and low-income households.

To accommodate these needs, zoning and other land use regulations must allow for more intensive use of land. This intensity may offer opportunities for current and future residents to find affordable housing (defined as costing no more than 30 percent of a household's income) by allowing smaller units versus detached single-family homes, and thus lower prices.

### Offer Incentives, Not Mandates

Both corridors need significant increases in housing for moderate-, low-, and very-low-income households. Too often, municipalities aim to solve the problem of a housing shortage by means of mandatory requirements. However, the real reason for the shortage of housing is economic: it is simply too expensive to develop properties that are economically viable at prices that are affordable to these households.

An important focus will be on how to attract builders through incentives that bring the cost of development down and make new development economically feasible in exchange for building a project with some negotiated amount of attainable housing.



An important goal is to create opportunities to attract new development and create mixed-income communities without the use of public funding. Incentives should not involve the transfer of cash to the developer. Rather, the focus should be on public programs and policies that reduce the cost of development to make the projects economically viable in these specially designated redevelopment zones.

Incentives may include initiatives such as development on publicly owned land, expedited approvals, waiver of impact fees, use of form-based codes, increased allowable density, or reduced parking minimums. These incentives can be used in conjunction with each other to attract the development of new properties.

### Leverage Publicly Owned Land

Residential development costs can be lowered with the availability of publicly owned land for the site, either donated outright, sold at a discount, or provided under a long-term ground lease (typically 75 to 99 years) in exchange for a percentage of below-market-rate homes reserved for moderate- and low-income households. Reducing the upfront cost of land acquisition will vastly improve the economic viability of developing in the corridors. This system also reduces the time and uncertainty related to assembling and purchasing the land for the project.

### Expedite Approvals

Time and uncertainty are the enemies of cost-efficient development. A prolonged development process—from concept to the first shovel in the ground to final completion—significantly increases the cost and risk associated with developing a property. The panel recommends establishing a time limit on how long each step in the review and approval process should take, such as 30, 60, or 90 days. Establishing development case management services (such as described earlier) would expedite the review and approval of projects within these corridors, and it would help shorten the timeline and reduce risk.

### Waive or Eliminate Impact Fees

The panel recommends eliminating or substantially reducing applicable impact fees for development in the designated zones. Although impact fees can have a short-term positive impact on the communities, they impede development and deny the communities of the long-term benefits that result from the redevelopment of these communities.

### Establish Form-Based Codes

The panel recommends establishing a system of form-based codes and/or expanding by-right zoning in the two designated corridors. Either of these reduces the time and risk of development. Form-based codes are a valuable tool that provides early guidance on attractive design consistent with targeted density and projected neighborhood scale.

### Expand Housing Options and Incorporate Attractive Design

The panel recommends facilitating the production of well-designed homes at a range of prices for households at different incomes, consistent with preexisting plans for parcels within the district. It is incumbent on leaders to advance the creation of a continuum of housing options, which includes rental and for-sale homes, connected to jobs and amenities within the larger region.

Based on the stakeholder interviews, a key next step for each corridor is to expand the pool of residential developers interested in developing. This can be done by holding forums and tours and sharing the overall vision and goals for each corridor. Providing data on housing needs and zoning, or on future zoning and improvement plans, can also draw interest from developers. Having a dedicated public-sector partner and, where possible, community support for housing, are key to expanding the pool of interested developers.

Another part of the challenge facing stakeholders seeking to expand the range of housing options in the study areas lies in perceptions about design, massing, and the impact of new development on nearby businesses and residences. The panel heard from stakeholders familiar with a proposal for greater density on a parcel identified in the city's housing element plan who were skeptical of the architectural renderings showing more intensive residential use of an existing commercial parcel. Without good local examples to point to, it is difficult for stakeholders to better conceive of the scale and feel of the buildings that can be built.

To address this challenge, it will be important to provide meaningful design guidance so that the buildings constructed offer an inviting feel for residents of and visitors to the corridors. An attractive built environment can help “soften” the streetscape and improve the pedestrian and driver experience, even in corridors with high traffic volumes.



## Up-zone the Corridors

Both corridors require up-zoning to make housing feasible and create the kinds of places that attract and support community-serving retail. Dramatically increasing density can have a significant impact on the economic viability of moderate- and low-income rental units in a property.

The Folsom Plan Area's planned residential density is less than seven units per acre, while high-density multifamily averages 25.7 units per acre (see tables 4.2 and 5.1 through 5.4 of the [Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan](#)). The panel recommends increasing the overall residential density for the East Bidwell corridor to approximately 60 units per acre—roughly three times the density in the Folsom Plan Area. On North Watt Avenue and other broad corridors, density could approach 100 units per acre.

### POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD: THE COTTAGES ON VAUGHAN

Pocket communities are an innovative form of housing that could work in either corridor. The [Cottages on Vaughan](#) in Clarkston, Georgia, is a pilot project developed by the MicroLife Institute. A block away from community retail and amenities in downtown Clarkston, the residences consist of eight detached 500-square-foot micro-cottage homes clustered around a common green space on a half-acre site. The development has many sustainable features and four of the homes have achieved net zero emissions.

The site is designed to give homes a balance of public and private space, encouraging neighbors' interaction while also preserving privacy. Common areas include a firepit, picnic

tables, gardens, and a pergola. Homes have large front porches facing common areas to encourage outdoor access and community interaction. These homes are perfect for seniors who are looking to downsize or for young people trying to get established in a new community.

The Cottages on Vaughan in 2022 won a [Jack Kemp Excellence in Affordable and Workforce Housing Award](#) from the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing.



*The Cottages at Vaughan consists of eight micro-cottage homes clustered around a common green space.*

At the panel's recommended densities, the new housing could be three-story stick-built construction for apartments or condominiums. Alternatively, small sites may be suited to townhouses or smaller homes with accessory dwelling units, such as those under development by Habitat for Humanity near the East Bidwell corridor.

Larger sites, particularly those with frontage on wider streets, could be developed at significant densities while keeping to a three- or four-story maximum height by building a central parking deck surrounded by the residences. This design typology allows for a fuller use of the site and offers ample parking and presents a more attractive facade and streetscape than either surface parking or an exposed parking deck.

The panel also recommends jurisdictions consider encouraging innovation in housing types and production methods to bring high-quality, lower-cost construction to the region. Expedited timelines and reduced development costs will allow for homes targeting incomes between 80 and 120 percent of area median income to be built sooner, rather than later.

### Reduce Parking Minimums

Reducing or even eliminating minimum parking requirements for properties within the designated corridors will increase the production of residential units and lower the cost, especially for smaller sites. Walkable communities with good access to various transportation modes do not need as much parking.

Even going from two cars to one car per household would reduce residents' parking demand by 50 percent. Insofar as the corridors are deemed to be "overparked" by virtue of existing parcel-level parking requirements, shifting to a corridor-based assessment of parking need would alleviate the burden on any individual property owner to supply already abundant parking at the expense of scarce housing.

### Housing for the Homeless

Beginning with individuals with the most acute shelter needs, jurisdictions must address the unsheltered population. Housing for the homeless and formerly homeless, as well as those who are unstably housed (that is, who may be bouncing from family member to family member, temporarily doubling up with a friend, or at risk of or subject to domestic violence), requires the provision of supportive and transitional housing. Social services are a key component of success for these residents. Given the likely scale of development under consideration in the corridors

we focused on, on-site services may be more difficult to provide on East Bidwell than North Watt, where Sacramento County social service agencies are based. However, even along the North Watt corridor, community stakeholders noted that the city of Sacramento, which is outside the jurisdiction of the corridor, has stronger social services for the unhoused or those facing financial and mental health challenges.

The challenge of providing for the unsheltered population is partly a matter of political will (or lack thereof), as Folsom currently only allows for a 20-bed shelter that rotates among participating churches between January and March. There is a sentiment that being "generous" to unsheltered individuals will serve as a draw, pulling needy individuals up the light rail to its terminus in Folsom. There are perceptions that providing housing for these individuals in proximity to retail corridors will make customers feel unsafe. However, the panel heard that calls to police related to a converted motel serving formerly homeless individuals are at the same rate as for the overall community.

### Advance the Production of Affordable Rental Housing

The panel heard clearly from younger residents of Folsom that they had no expectation of being able to live in the city when they begin to create new households. In the near term, assuming the requisite investments in corridor infrastructure and transportation, facilitating the development of affordable rental homes—subsidized as well as unsubsidized—should be a top housing priority, followed by the production of market-rate housing. Achieving greenhouse gas targets and maintaining economic vibrancy are dependent on ensuring a continuum of housing prices within the region, especially considering Folsom is a highly resourced community.

Conversely, affordable housing development in the North Watt corridor, which has suffered disinvestment, could be a catalyst for a wider range of housing investments. It could also offer opportunity for younger families to enter the North Watt market and take advantage of new and anticipated investments in the corridor.

There is strong evidence that affordable rental housing developed with federal low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) has positive effects on nearby for-sale home values. New construction along the corridors may lead to greater wealth in communities adjacent to the corridors.

For both corridors, use of voluntary inclusionary housing policies and state density bonus laws also can provide for mixed-income housing, realizing the higher densities desired and providing for much needed affordable housing.

However, two cautionary notes to keep in mind regarding subsidized housing and mandatory inclusionary zoning:

1. Subsidized housing is an essential component to supply housing for very-low-income households. However subsidized housing is not the answer to all housing needs. To address the housing shortage more broadly in the two corridors will require incentivizing significant involvement from private, for-profit, market-rate developers—particularly for households that do not qualify for federal affordable housing subsidies.
2. Because mandatory inclusionary zoning increases development costs, it can impede the development of market-rate multifamily properties. Inclusionary zoning works best in markets with very high demand and very high rents and little developable land. It is more difficult in areas with abundant available land or where the cost of construction is so high that it is impossible to produce properties that make economic sense, given the area's market rents. While both Folsom and the North Watt Avenue corridors have ample land, the difficult economics of development in these areas has meant a lack of interest from the development community. Initiatives in the study areas to reduce parking and increase densities (such as those that the city of Folsom seeks in its forthcoming zoning code update) could make inclusionary zoning more viable.

## Prospects for Market-Rate Housing Development

Current housing prices do not allow for the development of purely market-rate housing. The market rents (or sales prices, in the case of condominiums) are simply not high enough to cover project costs and developer returns.

Nonetheless, the region needs land that is zoned to accommodate the evolving market as corridors mature. As discussed previously, the densities the panel recommends for the corridors lend themselves to three-story walkup buildings. On corridors with smaller parcels, developers could build to the same floor/area ratio (FAR) with additional amenities and greater numbers of homes by consolidating parcels and achieving greater economies of scale.

Larger sites also offer the flexibility to orient development toward amenities such as parks and trails to enhance the sense of resident safety, and, where appropriate, to help mitigate noise

and pollution on highly trafficked corridors. In doing so, the new development can be better tied to the surrounding residential community while still offering access to retail, services, and transit on the primary corridor.

Strategies that local governments could employ to make home prices more attainable include density bonuses, voluntary inclusionary zoning, and donation of publicly owned land for private development. Financial modeling of future market-rate development shows it can support 5 to 10 percent of units set aside as below market rate, such as with inclusionary zoning.

It is easier for retail workers to shift commuting patterns rather than move to take advantage of new job opportunities. Increasing housing along better-connected corridors increases the probability that jobs can be accessed without people resorting to using a private vehicle. Sites closest to existing transit infrastructure should be prioritized for development, including light-rail stations (and, in the future, bus rapid transit or shuttle buses).

## Unmet Demand for Attainable Senior Housing

The panel heard about the need for attainable senior housing. The demographics of the region indicate a growing senior population; many are long-time residents of the county who own their homes. The U.S. Census Bureau's [2021 American Community Survey](#) indicates 100,000 homeowners age 65 and older, of whom 53 percent moved to the area before 2000.

A lack of alternative housing options for these homeowners means they are likely to age in place to stay close to friends and family, even as maintaining their homes becomes a challenge. Creating for-sale and rental housing options for seniors along accessible corridors that are connected to local and regional amenities and services such as health care allows older residents to remain in their communities and enables the turnover of existing single-family homes to retain working households in their prime earning years.

For older households moving from single-family homes that have significantly appreciated, walkability and multigenerational buildings are desirable attributes. This underserved population may be a significant source of demand for denser market-rate apartments and condominiums in connected corridors.

Senior housing can be encouraged by allowing for smaller units, partnering with developers who target these populations, and identifying state and federal housing subsidy programs targeting seniors.



## Folsom Central Business District Corridor—Housing Sites

The 220-acre Folsom CBD includes several parcels already identified in the housing element plan as vacant or underused that are prime candidates for catalytic residential infill development. Clustered along the western end of East Bidwell near Sutter Middle School and within a short walk of the Steve Miklos Aquatic Center (albeit across pedestrian-unfriendly parking lots), these sites are near centers of activity that will likely (re)emerge as hubs for connectivity to other parts of the CBD and the historic district.

## North Watt Avenue Corridor—Housing Sites

The North Watt corridor has multiple large vacant parcels and a host of underutilized parcels that could provide housing to support the employment concentration at McClellan Park or with access to the light-rail station at the southern end of the corridor. There is still a need for quality housing to support the workers at McClellan Park that covers a range of incomes from lower income to moderate and market rate.

A critical next step is to revisit the 2012 North Watt Avenue Corridor plan, removing the requirement of mixed-use development in specific areas and instead setting an overall vision for a mixed-use corridor and considering form-based zoning. (This approach is also supported by the county's adopted housing element plan under item HE 2.2.2.)

The panel heard that vacant parcels are available for sale in the area at relatively low prices. If the county can identify resources, acquiring land and procuring developers for affordable housing development could catalyze the desired development. A potential strategy could be to pursue a documentary transfer tax or other special parcel tax to fund land acquisition and related affordable housing financing, though such a strategy is resource intensive and requires a two-thirds majority vote. An enhanced infrastructure financing district (EIFDs) could also be considered, though it is recommended the county first pursue a study to determine if an EIFD would generate sufficient funding to realize the goals. Regardless of the funding mechanism, in the near term, the county should focus on sites at the southern end of North Watt, near the existing light rail as a catalyst for redevelopment.

The panel also suggests the corridor may be well suited to an "innovation district" designation that would be a focus of a commitment to expedited permitting, innovative construction techniques, and other efforts to bring homes on line quickly and affordably. Many sites close to the light-rail station west of North Watt are home to light industry and warehouses. With vacant land available further north, the panel suggests exploring the feasibility of land swaps to allow for new housing construction away from the high traffic volumes on North Watt while still offering convenient light-rail access. As part of that district, and cognizant that sewer infrastructure improvements may not materialize for many years, the panel recommends investment in a district-level blackwater recycling system to support the planned residential needs in the corridor.



## Next Steps: Order of Operations

**IT WILL TAKE A MAJOR COMMITMENT** of funds and energy from both public and private entities to ensure that these visionary plans for the study areas are implemented. Understanding the order of the phases is critical to the success or failure of their implementation. For the greatest chance of success, implementation of the panel recommendations requires identifying responsible parties, establishing strong stakeholder relationships with increased engagement, and securing opportunities to finance the project.

The panel recommends prioritizing an implementation strategy in the following order for optimum success.

### Within the Next Two Years

**Create a singular vision.** Clarity of vision is key to creating actionable plans. Leaders in the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors should bring together various existing plans, ensure they are consistent, and adopt a clear action plan with prioritizations for next steps. The panel recommendations will be helpful in moving forward.

The respective study areas may consider forming and working with community advisory committees to ensure buy-in, and seek formal adoption of an action plan through the city council or board of supervisors.

However, not every detail of the vision needs to be worked out before starting work in the corridors. Although it is important to have a broad general vision, stakeholders must not let figuring out the details delay starting the work, or it will never happen.

#### **Start work on infrastructure improvements immediately.**

No developer is going to start planning, much less start working on, a project along these corridors without absolute certainty that there will be adequate water, sewer, or drainage. It is critically important to start with this immediately. Even starting today, this effort will take at least two years. Buy-in and coordination within local departments and utility districts is critical for infrastructure improvements. Collaboration is essential to apply the “dig once” strategy to all projects. The corridors can target the Green Means Go grant funding to prepare sewer and drainage studies to identify needs, plan for more capacity, and develop a financing strategy.

**Start with a multifamily project** in each of the corridors, preferably a substantial project of 200 or more units. Be generous with the incentives. Consider prioritizing this first project as a market-rate property, with a certain percentage of the units allocated for moderate- and low-income households. A mixed-income market-rate property will provide more of a mixed-income tenant base, which is what both jurisdictions are trying to create. The project needs to be completed rapidly, to be attractive, and to be a success. An attractive multifamily property with excellent design will help allay public concerns.

For local businesses, a multifamily project will bring new customers to the corridors. This new activity will show current commercial tenants that having more potential consumers within walking distance is a good thing.

Real-world examples of developments and corridors built to the recommended densities may be an important component for helping stakeholders envision the possibilities and get excited about the opportunities a transformation could bring to the corridors. A successful initial multifamily project will draw other residential developers to the area, as well as attract new commercial interest in the corridors.

**Appoint ambassadors.** Identify and designate champions to promote the vision and message to build consensus and support from various stakeholder groups. Once the message is clear and unified, it is imperative that ambassadors own the message.

**Start small and scale up.** Creating a “15-minute community” does not happen overnight—it happens in incremental steps. Start small to activate corridors and expand placemaking programs based on success and clear metrics. Develop these efforts to have the capacity to scale over time and adapt to changing market and community forces.

A quick start through early activation activities can earn community buy-in to the future vision. Examples of pop-up placemaking activities to get started include:

- Temporary or seasonal events in surface parking lots, such as community events, or farmers markets;
- Public art through temporary installations or murals; and
- Tactical urbanism to create parklets or street calming measures.

**Raise capital.** It is critical to actively engage partners and solicit financial support from corporations, foundations, taxpayers, elected officials, and local, state, and federal grant sources. Engage consultants and volunteers to make introductions and assist as necessary.

## Prioritize Optimal Success at the Agency Level

Public agencies and officials have many opportunities to support more attainable housing in the study areas. Examples of possible policies and practices include the following:

- Streamline or reform the approval process.
- Adopt form-based code; add by-right development within the commercial corridors.
- Dramatically increase density across project areas to achieve a net increase.
- Create a request for proposals process to attract new developers and design teams.
- Create a dedicated source for housing and improvements in the corridors and adjacent areas (for example, float a bond or create a tax).
- Identify and assemble land for development (and partnerships, as needed).





Vacant Land  
North Watt Ave  
Corridor



A Vision for Folsom

## Conclusion

**THE REVITALIZATION OF THE FOLSOM CBD AND NORTH WATT AVENUE CORRIDORS** is necessary and can be successfully completed. This report has sought to focus on how best to implement the revitalization plans for the corridors.

It is understandable that the panel's recommendations may prompt discomfort and fear. Fundamental change is never easy, nor without substantial anxiety. Yet, continuation of the status quo is unacceptable.

It is essential to address the concerns of existing business owners regarding the impact that a revitalization plan may have on their businesses. But, without revitalization, these corridors are likely to cease being economically viable places to operate a business.

At the same time, there is a serious shortage of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households. This shortage represents a major threat to the economic viability and social vitality of the community. Without immediate action to address

this housing shortage, there will be a continued exodus of younger members of the community who simply cannot afford to live in Folsom or Sacramento County.

Both the Folsom CBD and the North Watt Avenue corridors are ideal locations to locate substantial numbers of new housing units. The ability to provide higher-density multifamily housing along the two high traffic corridors under study not only relieves pressure to increase density in existing single-family neighborhoods, but also allows for the development of housing in 15-minute communities—those that offer ready access to transit and neighborhood services within easy walking distance and that are affordable to a wide range of younger residents and families, as well as to older citizens ready to downsize.

Equally important are the environmental issues that challenge the study area. The lack of sufficient green areas, the absence of an adequate tree canopy, the excessive amount of asphalt parking lots, and the smog produced by automobile traffic are not only a threat to the climate, but also a threat to the health of citizens living in or close to the study areas. Any revitalization plan will give the community the ability to address these issues head on.

The proposed revitalization of the two corridors is a huge undertaking with myriad issues that will require years of effort. It will require political and community leadership, cheerleading champions, commitment, financial resources, patience, understanding, compromise, and most important, resolve and endurance.

It will at times seem impossible, but in the words of Nelson Mandela, "It always seems impossible until it is done." As difficult as it will be, this panel believes it will be worth it in the end.

# About the Panel

## Philip S. Payne

Panel Chair  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Payne is chair of the Lotus Campaign, a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to increasing the availability of housing for those experiencing homelessness. He has more than 30 years of experience in the development, acquisition, rehabilitation, and management of middle market (workforce) multifamily housing.

Before joining Lotus, Payne was a principal of Ginkgo Residential, which provides property management services for multifamily properties throughout the southern United States and is actively involved in the acquisition and substantial rehabilitation of middle market multifamily properties. From 2007 to 2010, Payne served as the chief executive officer of Babcock & Brown Residential. Before joining Babcock & Brown Residential, Payne was chair of BNP Residential Properties Trust, a publicly traded real estate investment trust. Payne is a member of the ULI and of ULI's Responsible Property Investing Council (founding chair). He is a ULI trustee and governor. He is also a past co-chair of ULI's Climate, Land Use and Energy Committee.

Payne received a BS and a JD from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. He has written for various publications and spoken at numerous conferences on a variety of topics including real estate investment trusts, securities regulations, finance, and responsible property investing.

## Keith A. Baker

St. Paul, Minnesota

Baker is executive director for ReConnect Rondo, an umbrella advocacy organization committed to addressing racial disparities in Minnesota. Baker is leading the organization's mission to revitalize the Rondo community of St. Paul with a 21-acre land bridge that reconnects the historic African American community and creates Minnesota's first African American cultural enterprise district. Baker has more than 35 years of experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

His 18 years with the Minnesota Department of Transportation included oversight of federal and state professional technical contract administration and construction compliance monitoring. Baker served as a member of the Ramsey County Blue Ribbon

Commission in 2010, which was in the forefront of elevating Minnesota's ranking as 50th in the nation for racial disparities. Over the years, he has identified and executed strategies supportive of equitable development, entrepreneurship, ownership, business and workforce development, and opportunity access.

As a strategist, connector, and influencer, Baker has a reputation for seeing the big picture, along with the connective links needed for genuine progress. He's known for skillfully navigating within constrained environments, creating outputs that result in equitable outcomes. These characteristics were instrumental in the successful orchestration of a collective impact approach that ensured equitable inclusion of minority- and women-owned engineering and architect firms on the billion-dollar U.S. Bank Stadium project.

## Jenna Hornstock

Los Angeles, California

With more than 20 years leading local government teams in creative redevelopment strategies, Hornstock joined the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in 2020 to lead special initiatives in housing and economic empowerment, as well as the sustainable and resilient development departments. In February 2023, Hornstock began serving as deputy mayor of housing for Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

Before joining SCAG, Hornstock served as LA Metro's executive officer for transit-oriented communities where she oversaw the Joint Development program, station area urban design, first/last mile planning, and activities related to the redevelopment of Union Station. Hornstock also spent nearly seven years at the Community Redevelopment Agency of the city of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), most recently as chief of strategic planning and economic development. She has previously worked for the office of the mayor of Los Angeles as well for a nonprofit that delivered emergency, transitional, and permanent affordable housing.

Hornstock holds a master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a BA in Rhetoric from UC Berkeley.

In her spare time, Hornstock is a planning commissioner for the city of Los Angeles, serves as a board member for the nonprofit Community Health Councils, and serves on the ULI/LA Advisory



Board. Her work has been recognized with awards from the AIA/LA (Honorary AIA), the APA/LA (John Chase Visionary Planner award), and the nonprofit Inclusive Action for the City (Unsung Heroes of Los Angeles). She lives in Silverlake with her teenage son and her partner, and practices yoga and the Lindy Hop whenever possible.

## Andrew Jakobovics

Washington, D.C.

Jakobovics is vice president for policy development at Enterprise Community Partners. Jakobovics oversees the Policy Development and Research team, researching issues related to affordable housing, equitable housing and community development, housing finance, foreclosures and neighborhood stabilization, and broader housing supply and demand concerns. He has most recently been analyzing small multifamily properties' ownership patterns, preservation strategies for unsubsidized and subsidized affordable housing, operating and management strategies to avoid evictions, LIHTC development and neighborhood dynamics, and the relationship between disasters and housing affordability.

Jakobovics' publications include "Why Are Small and Medium Multifamily Properties So Inexpensive?," "Effects of Concentrated LIHTC Development on Surrounding House Prices," "Understanding the Small and Medium Multifamily Housing Stock," "Mixed-Income LIHTC Developments in Chicago: A First Look at their Income Characteristics and Spillover Effects," "Staying in Place to Get Ahead: Creating Renter Stability through Master Leases with Built-in Savings Accounts," the ULI report *Bending the Cost Curve: Solutions to Expand the Supply of Affordable Rentals*, and analyses of housing finance reform.

Before joining Enterprise, Jakobovics served as senior policy adviser to the assistant secretary for policy development and research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). His primary focus was on housing finance reform, with a particular eye toward issues of access and affordability. In addition, he devoted attention to foreclosure prevention through improving opportunities for modifications and to mitigating foreclosure impacts on neighborhoods and communities.

Before joining HUD, Jakobovics was associate director for housing and economics at the Center for American Progress, where he wrote some of the earliest policy responses to the

foreclosure crisis, including proposals for mortgage restructuring, foreclosure mediation, and lender-owned real estate, rental.

Jakobovics has testified before Congress and appears frequently in the media. He currently is on the boards of both the National Community Stabilization Trust and the National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders.

## Lewis Knight

Oakland, California

Knight is an urban strategist and placemaker with global experience and local commitment. He has recently joined SERA Oakland to lead urban design and planning of the public realm. Knight is a full member of the ULI and serves with the Urban Regeneration Council Gold Flight. Knight also is on the Oakland Board of Directors for SPUR, a regional development and policy thinktank and advocacy in northern California.

Before joining SERA, Knight spent six years at Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook) where he led long-term real estate strategy. During his tenure there, Meta grew its Bay Area footprint from 1.5 million gross square feet to 8 million; co-invested in SPUR's regional strategy (on which Knight sat on the steering committee); and was the architect of housing, mobility, and environmental policy and fiscal programs, which included the establishment of the Catalyst fund in Menlo Park, and trial efforts around protection, preservation, and production. Knight led discrete policy efforts in Sacramento, and most recently coordinated support efforts around Assembly Bill 2011 (Wicks), which seeks to accelerate housing production in California. Previously, Knight led the Urban Studio at Gensler in San Francisco, and was operations director for AECOM (formerly EDAW). A 22-year resident of the Bay Area, he remains committed to a bright and vibrant region that embraces growth as an engine of resilience and equity.

## Rochelle Mills

Santa Ana, California

Mills is president and chief executive officer of Innovative Housing Opportunities (IHO), where she is responsible for implementing the nonprofit's vision and expanding its portfolio

of high-quality affordable housing. Since joining IHO, she has helped grow the organization from a single-asset entity to an award-winning developer with projects throughout Southern California. Before IHO, she and her husband founded Mills Studio and Architours. Their high-end designs, tours, and symposia were featured on HGTV, FineLiving, and other media outlets and recognized internationally.

Mills was appointed to the South Los Angeles Area Planning Commission, the Crenshaw Community Design Review Board, and the California Cultural Tourism Advisory Committee. She is past president of the Association of Women in Architecture (now AWA+D) and the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH). She serves on the California Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies, the Black Developers Forum of California, and Arts for LA. Mills was recognized by the California State Senate and city of Anaheim for her leadership in affordable housing and is the recipient of the Commercial Real Estate Women Orange County 2020 SPIRE Award Top Woman in CRE and a Bisnow 2021 SoCal Power Woman.

## Yvonne Yeung

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Yeung is chief executive officer of SDG Strategies, a strategy consulting firm based in Canada with over 20 years of public- and private-sector experience delivering high-quality, award-winning, sustainable transit-oriented communities and vibrant public spaces worldwide. Her work focuses on informing how cities can better position infrastructure investment to deliver healthy, equitable, 15-minute walkable complete communities through synergistic collaboration as a blueprint.

As former head of urban design at the city of Brampton, Yeung led the city of 700,000 people in its shift from an automobile-dependence structure to a “city of transit-oriented communities.” Through a “city by design” culture, Yeung pioneered a living plan collaborative tool as a platform for codesign with developers and communities to integrate public interests and design excellence into walkable precincts and to serve as foundations for decisions and change.

Appointed vice chair of the ULI SDRC Product Council, a member of the ULI Toronto Advisory Board, and a member of the ULI Women’s Leadership Initiative Champions, Yeung founded the

“Getting to Transit-Oriented Communities Initiative,” leading the strategic engagement across the region and North America and promoting progressive city-building practices and collaborations between public and private sectors. She specialized in team building, executive strategy, large-scale transformation, and cross-sector implementation. Yeung is the recipient of the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management MBA Award and the American Society of Landscape Architects Honor Award. She was a founding board member of the OALA Ground Editorial and past member of the city of Toronto Public Art Commission, the Canadian Standards Association Design Standards committee, and the Green Building Certification Institute LEED Review committee.

As an urban designer, planner, and landscape architect, Yeung has developed urban design implementation frameworks for age-friendly and cognitive-friendly communities, urban mixed-use school community hubs, digital smart-city integration, strategic partnerships for community infrastructure integration in high-density neighborhoods, public realm strategy, transit-oriented communities (TOCs), and 20-minute walkable neighborhoods. Her large-scale redevelopment projects include the Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre, Buttonville Airport, Yonge Street Subway Corridor, Queen Street East BRT Corridor Urban Growth Centre, Hurontario-Steeles LRT Corridor, Downtown Brampton Urban Growth Centre, Uptown Brampton TOC, and other TOCs in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Asia. Her participatory-design work has been profiled at the Design Exchange and further evolved into an award-winning interdisciplinary tool to unlock the value of TOCs through cross-commission development of precinct planning.

Her projects have won planning and design excellence awards from the Waterfront Centre in Washington, D.C., the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, the international Grands Prix du Design, the Ontario Professional Planner Institute, and the city of Toronto Urban Design program.

Yeung has served as a speaker at the ULI, UN-Habitat, University of Toronto School of Cities, Smart Cities Expo, Green Roof for Healthy Cities, AMCTO Municipal Leaders Forum, Civic Action, Jane’s Walk, and university design studios at Toronto, Waterloo, Ryerson, Guelph, Oklahoma, and York. Yeung travels regularly and has recently been to Oslo, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmo to document the emerging trends and innovation in sustainability, technology, transit-oriented systems, family-oriented urban living, and land development business models.



Urban Land Institute  
2001 L Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-4948  
[uli.org](http://uli.org)