

Centerville Complete Streets

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GROUP #1: MOBILITY

Date/Time of Meeting:	October 18, 2019, 11-12pm
Location:	Centerville Community Center
Project Team Present:	Jeanne Suyeishi (City); Noe Veloso (City); Bruce Brubaker (PlaceWorks); Janet Chang (PlaceWorks)
Stakeholders Present:	Susie Hufstader (Bike East Bay); Frank Zhang (Resident); Diane Shaw (AC Transit); Owen Goetze (AC Transit); Michael Eschleman (AC Transit); Andreas Kadavanich (Bike Fremont); Catherine Darma (Fremont BPTAC)

After a welcome from Jeanne Suyeishi and an introduction to the project by Bruce Brubaker and Janet Chang, attendees were asked a series of questions. Following are the questions and a summary of answers.

1. *What agency do you represent and tell us one thing you'd like this project to accomplish (e.g., an improvement, action, goal/objective, etc.).*

Andreas Kadavanich from Bike Fremont would like to see complete streets and roadway/pavement improvements because existing traffic conditions along the corridor are unsafe.

Susie Hufstader from Bike East Bay would like this project to provide low stress for bicyclists, improve connections to transit, and include protected bike facilities. She would like safety to be the primary goal for this project.

Frank Zhang, a resident on Fremont Boulevard, indicated that traffic along Fremont Boulevard is too fast and congested. From 10am-3pm, he cannot exit his driveway onto Fremont Boulevard. In addition, there are many collisions and the crossings are unsafe.

Noe Veloso from the City of Fremont indicated that goals for the Centerville Complete Streets project include improving safety at key locations as part of the City's Vision Zero program, adding vibrancy to Centerville's business district, and encouraging walking, biking, and riding transit along the corridor.

Catherine Darma from the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Committee (BPTAC) would like to see bicycle improvements along the corridor.

Owen Goetze, a bus stop planner for AC Transit, would like to make riding transit more attractive for the Centerville community.

Michael Eshleman, with service planning for AC Transit and as part of a planning team at AC Transit working to increase the frequency and quality of AC Transit bus service in Fremont, would like to reduce conflict between vehicles, bicyclists, and buses.

Diane Shaw, an AC Transit board member and a nearby resident, would like Centerville to be a thriving community with businesses that encourage walking and shopping.

2. *What challenges do you or your agency currently experience along this corridor (e.g., traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle access, safety, street crossings, parking, drop-off/pick-up)?*

Bicycle lanes should be continuous through Fremont Boulevard; they currently end to the north of the ACE/Amtrak station. At left turn lanes, bicycles lack protection. Turning movements on side streets for bikes should also be improved.

When AC Transit buses stop at the bus stop by the railway tracks, cars line up behind the buses and onto the railway tracks, which creates a very unsafe condition. AC Transit plans to move this bus stop.

3. *Are there any particularly unsafe intersections for pedestrians/bicyclists or other unsafe or difficult areas along the project site?*

The crossing at Bonde Way is very unsafe.

The City of Fremont is working with developer Silicon Sage to install a new traffic signal at Parish Avenue.

4. *What are existing issues related to the bus stops and transit routes along the corridor?*

The AC Transit bus stop in front of American High School experiences unsafe behavior from students. Often, the bus driver stops before the bus stop to avoid potentially hitting students who push each other off the sidewalk to board the bus first.

Private shuttle buses use AC Transit bus stops, particularly for the U line, which creates conflict with AC Transit buses and creates congestion along corridors. Noe Veloso with the City of Fremont noted that the City created a designated shuttle bus drop-off area at Bonde Way.

5. *Are there opportunities to encourage more people to walk or bike to ride transit?*

New development, such as Silicon Sage, should provide transit passes to all residents to encourage transit use. The City of Fremont should create a more robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program that is required for residential developers. Noe Veloso with the City of Fremont noted that in July 2020, the City will be implementing a robust TDM program/ordinance.

Speeds should be reduced along Fremont Boulevard, especially between Peralta Boulevard and Eggers Drive to increase safety around schools and the churches. This can be done through traffic calming improvements.

6. *Are there any projects we should be aware of and/or coordinate with within the project site vicinity that will provide opportunities or constraints for the Centerville Complete Streets project?*

By Summer 2020, AC Transit plans to increase headways on line 210, which travels through Fremont Boulevard.

ACE may be making changes to its depot, including extending its platform.

Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC)'s E 14th/Mission Blvd. project may create impacts to this project.

The City's Fremont Boulevard Smart and Safe Corridor project is proposing various sensor/signal improvements, including modernized traffic signalization, pedestrian and bicycle detection, and transit priority signals.

7. *What types of street and streetscape improvements would you like to see for the Centerville neighborhood (e.g., widened sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, bikeways, bus shelters, etc.)?*

Bus stop parklets could be incorporated where appropriate along the corridor, but should be designed in such a way that it prevents homeless people from using them to sleep on.

There is opportunity to create a "transit center" for Centerville in this area to accommodate AC Transit, ACE, Amtrak, and private buses.

Bus improvements including center-running Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-only lanes and bus islands would improve transit along this corridor and reduce conflicts with bicyclists.

There should be consideration of removing on-street parking to make room for improved bicycle and transit facilities. Parking lots behind businesses can be better utilized if on-street parking is removed. Even where parking is restricted along Fremont Boulevard, there is little enforcement. Areas where on-street parking is restricted should be designed to physically restrict parking.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GROUP #2: BUSINESSES

Date/Time of Meeting:	October 18, 2019, 1-2pm
Location:	Centerville Community Center
Project Team Present:	Jeanne Suyeishi (City); Connie Wong (City); Noe Veloso (City); Bruce Brubaker (PlaceWorks); Janet Chang (PlaceWorks)
Stakeholders Present:	Steve Coulthard (Centerville BCA)

After a similar welcome from Jeanne Suyeishi and an introduction to the project by Bruce Brubaker and Janet Chang, the attendee from the business community was asked a series of questions. Following are the questions and a summary of answers.

1. *What business do you represent, where is your business located along the relinquished corridor, and tell us one thing you'd like this project to accomplish (e.g., an improvement, action, goal/objective, etc.).*

Steve Coulthard represents the Centerville Business & Community Association (Centerville BCA) and owns Amcoe Sign Company on Centralmont Place in Fremont. His employees frequent the Centerville business district for lunch, but overall, there is not enough draw to this area. For example, the area is lacking in dining options and a grocery store. Many travel to the Whole Foods plaza, Raley's plaza, and Fremont Hub for dining options instead. Fremont's large land mass naturally divides the city into multiple districts, but Centerville does not have its own vibrant downtown within its district. He described the business district to be along Fremont Boulevard from Thornton Avenue to Parish Avenue and on Peralta Boulevard from Fremont Boulevard to The Mojo Lounge. The location of Centerville businesses within the business district are sporadic and the traffic along Fremont Boulevard is too fast-moving.

He would like to see Fremont Boulevard reduced to one lane in both directions and have angled parking, widened sidewalks, outdoor cafés, and areas for loading and unloading for on-demand food delivery services (e.g., DoorDash),

2. *What challenges do you currently experience related to the existing condition/configuration (e.g., traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle access, and parking) of nearby streets?*

Steve described Fremont Boulevard as a smaller scale version of Mission Boulevard in that it is heavily used by commuters. He suggested that commuter traffic along Fremont Boulevard should be rerouted to Paseo Padre Parkway. Steve brought up an example in the City of Los Altos where Main Street was redesigned to be more pedestrian-friendly with outdoor cafés; commuter traffic was rerouted to Foothill Expressway.

3. *Who are the patrons for Centerville businesses? How many are visitors and how many are residents? Where are they coming from?*

Current patrons to Centerville businesses in this area include Centerville residents and students from American High School. Washington High School students travel to the Fremont Hub instead for dining

options. The Centerville community is diverse and constantly changing. The project area should be a place for people of all ethnicities to dine and shop.

4. *How do patrons currently access your business? Do patrons access your business by walking, biking, or riding transit? Are there ways to help improve access by these modes of travel?*

Centerville residents drive to access businesses and do not walk or bike.

5. *What types of street and streetscape improvements would you like to see for the Centerville's business centers and neighborhood (e.g., widened sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, parking, bikeways, etc.)?*

Centerville BCA members would like the Centerville Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area to be truly transit-oriented and walkable. For many years, the Centerville BCA tried to push forward ideas to improve the area, but experienced difficulty because of previous Caltrans control over the street corridor. For example, many businesses would be supportive of outdoor seating for cafés and restaurants. When Fremont's City Council turned the area around the ACE/Amtrak Station into a TOD area, the Centerville BCA rallied together to revitalize blighted properties and fully supported development projects such as for Artist Walk and Silicon Sage.

Centerville businesses would like to retain on-street parking, but would be open to eliminating some for use of outdoor seating (like a parklet). The City should install signs along the corridor to indicate areas for existing public parking at the back of businesses since many people are unaware of this parking.

Steve expressed support of the proposed gateway for Centerville by developer Silicon Sage, which has two options: 1) a monument at Fremont Blvd./Central Ave. or 2) an overhead sign near the ACE/Amtrak Station.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GROUP #3: SCHOOLS AND CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING DEPARTMENTS

Date/Time of Meeting:	October 18, 2019, 2:30-3:30pm
Location:	Centerville Community Center
Project Team Present:	Jeanne Suyeishi (City); Noe Veloso (City); Bruce Brubaker (PlaceWorks); Janet Chang (PlaceWorks)
Stakeholders Present:	Holly Marsh (Holy Spirit School); Derek Velasco (Holy Spirit School); Stan Hicks (Thornton Junior High School); Megan Barrington (American High School); Bob Moran (Washington High School); Tina Kapoor (City-Economic Development); Joel Pullen (City - Planning); Wayland Li (City - Planning)

After a similar welcome from Jeanne Suyeishi and an introduction to the project by Bruce Brubaker and Janet Chang, the attendees were asked a series of questions. Following are the questions and a summary of answers.

1. *What challenges do staff, parents, and students currently experience related to the existing condition/configuration (e.g., traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle access, safety, street crossings, parking, drop-off/pick-up) of nearby streets?*

Thornton Ave and Peralta Boulevard experience heavy congestion because it is used by commuters who use these streets to access I-880. Currently, drivers use Paseo Padre Parkway and Blacow Road to drive through Fremont, while Fremont Boulevard is used more for local access.

For Thornton Junior High School, the signal at Dusterberry Way causes traffic to back up along Thornton Ave between Fremont Boulevard and Dusterberry Way, which makes traffic flow and student drop-off/pick-up very difficult. Additionally, right turns are not allowed onto Thornton Avenue from Dusterberry Way. AC Transit buses stopping at the Dusterberry Way bus stop also causes traffic to back-up along Thornton Avenue.

For American High School, many students take transit, and the sidewalk along Fremont Boulevard gets congested with pedestrians after school lets out, leading to unsafe conditions.

For Washington High School, the school does not experience notable mobility issues, except that the left turn signal into the school should be more frequent.

For Holy Spirit School, parents use Parish Avenue as a shortcut to access Fremont Boulevard and drive at high speeds.

2. *Do many students walk, bike, or ride transit to school? Are you aware of reasons why more students do not walk, bike, or ride transit to school? How about staff?*

At Thornton Junior High School, a recent study showed that most students (85%) arrive by car and some take transit. There has been an increase in biking, but students are not comfortable with biking because they feel it is unsafe. The school offers passes to carpools of cars with five or more people.

At American High School, there has been a large increase in biking such that the school installed new bike racks. Many families also carpool.

3. *Are there any particularly unsafe crossings or other unsafe or difficult areas along the project site?*

For Holy Spirit School, many parents park along Jason Way or at the surface parking lot in front of Round Table for student drop-off/pick-up. A crosswalk across Parish Avenue is needed since the entrance to the school is at Jason Way/Parish Avenue.

At American High School, the crosswalk at Fremont Boulevard/Alder Avenue needs safety improvements as many students cross at this intersection.

As mentioned, the AC Transit bus stop in front of American High School needs better protection for students who are waiting for and boarding the bus. Many students crowd the sidewalk and overflow onto the roadway.

4. *Are there areas that experience high amounts of traffic and congestion due to pick-up and drop-off?*

Holy Spirit School students are comprised of mostly residents from Hayward and Newark. Many families from Newark use Central Avenue to access the school. In addition, parents of students from Centerville Junior High School use the Holy Spirit School site for drop-off/pick-up.

Thornton Junior High School parents use Cabrillo Shopping Center to drop off and pick up students, but the shopping center will be going away in the future. Students cross Thornton Avenue to enter the school. School staff has met with Pathways Church to see if they can use their property as an alternative student drop-off/pick-up location. Parents also park along Thornton Avenue, blocking the bike lane.

For American High School, a new stop sign along Alder Avenue at Dawson Street causes traffic back-up along Alder Avenue to Fremont Boulevard. Additionally, the ingress and egress of the high school parking lot is very difficult so many parents drop off their kids at the Lucky's supermarket parking lot.

5. *Are there upcoming City and/or development in the area that will provide opportunities or constraints for the Centerville Complete Streets project?*

Many school principals expressed concern about the amount of future development along the corridor and in the surrounding area, and its potential impacts on traffic congestion and student drop-off/pick-up. They are not supportive of reducing travel lanes or reconfiguring streets to become narrower. (Note: Noe Veloso of the City explained that narrowing of the roadway will be considered

during this project but that it would only be considered on Fremont Boulevard in a small area from Thornton Avenue to Peralta Boulevard). It was noted that Mowry Avenue and Stevenson Boulevard may become impacted from parents/students trying to avoid increased business district traffic congestion.

Holy Spirit School is in the process of relocating its school building to a site north of the church, previously baseball fields, and potentially turning the existing school building site into a surface parking lot. The construction will occur in four phases.

Fremont's junior high schools (grades 7-8) will transition to a middle school (grades 6-8) in the next three years. As a result, Thornton Junior High School will be absorbing 600 new students. The school is currently in the process of expanding its school facilities over the next three years.

Many principals are also not happy about the recently approved State law to change middle school and high school start times to a later time. They believe that parents will still drop off students at the current earlier time.

Tina Kapoor from the City's Economic Development Department noted that the City is working on a sidewalk café ordinance to streamline the use of sidewalk cafés for businesses.

Joel Pullen from the City's Planning Department noted that the Silicon Sage development along Fremont Boulevard is underway and construction is anticipated in the next 24 months.

6. *What types of street and streetscape improvements would you like to see for the Centerville neighborhood (e.g., widened sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, bikeways, etc.)?*

Off-street pull-outs would be helpful for use at bus stops.

Bike lanes need more protection because many parents drop off students and park in the bike lane, particularly in front of American High School just north of Alder Avenue.