

Part 2: THE PLANNING PROCESS

Chapter 1

Description of the Planning Process for the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Corridor Revitalization Plan

This Chapter provides an overview of the Planning Process for the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy. In a letter dated September 10, 2009, the City of Merced was awarded the FY 2009-10 Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning Grant from the California Department of Transportation in the amount of \$250,000. A Planning Team was created from members of the Planning Department, Redevelopment Agency, and Interns from UC Merced, Stanislaus State University, and San Jose State University. Staff began their research of similar strategies from other cities and counties (sampling Kishwaukee St. Corridor, Santa Rosa, and Mendocino Plans) and favored the Kishwaukee Street Revitalization Plan to use as a guide. Staff prepared objectives, a scope of work, and existing conditions of the focus area. Two staff members attended a workshop on Pedestrian Safety provided by Local Government Commission. A Project “Kick-Off” meeting for the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy was held on May 6, 2010, with representatives from Finance, Redevelopment, Planning Staff and the Public Information Officer in attendance (Caltrans was unable to attend the kick-off meeting).

Staff began engaging the public with outreach opportunities in June 2010, and continued their efforts through December 2010, collecting survey sheets from the public at each outreach event. For additional details of the various public engagement efforts, please refer to Chapter 3. A detailed project timeline and task schedule was prepared to develop a baseline of existing conditions. A meeting with Planning and Redevelopment staff resulted in positive suggestions for future policies and direction for the future advisory committee to create a vision for the area that would be both economically viable and take advantage of its unique characteristics, but also would include a list of action items for future implementation by the Redevelopment Agency. In October, the City Council approved the formation of an Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee

focusing primarily on residents and businesses within the project area and recruitment of Committee members began.

Planning staff and interns walked and photographed the Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor identifying assets, constraints and opportunities for the Revitalization Strategy. Various maps were prepared regarding infrastructure (e.g., missing, damaged, or in good repair), as well as identifying land uses in the focus area. An avid bicyclist from our Planning Team rode her bike through the residential and commercial neighborhoods, including on Martin Luther King Jr. Way that is heavily traveled by semi-trucks and where no bicycle lanes exist. Work continued on the objectives of the plan including multi-modal transportation, infill land uses, highway enhancement projects, and design and safety.

In November and December, Planning staff with the assistance of various volunteers from the City, Interns, and interested citizens (some of whom were later appointed to the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee), collected data and recorded the movements of pedestrians and bicyclists, and the number of trucks traveling along Martin Luther King Jr. Way between Childs Avenue and 13th Street over a 4-day period of time. The data collected has provided significant information in identifying opportunities to install improvements that provide safe crossings for all modes of transportation. For more information on the results of this effort, please refer to Chapter 8.

As part of the Revitalization Strategy, staff attended a Redevelopment Advisory Committee (RDAC) Meeting to request a member be appointed from RDAC to the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee. In addition to that appointment, and as a result of the outreach efforts, a 13-member Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee was appointed by Merced City Council in December 2010.

