

# SHAW AVENUE

C O R R I D O R P L A N

## Summary of Community Outreach

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October 2011 to August 2012

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## Background and Snapshot

In September 2011, the City of Clovis initiated the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan and embarked on a multi-pronged outreach effort to provide meaningful avenues for residents, property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders to influence the plans for Shaw Avenue, creating effective guidance for the final corridor plan.

The effort includes 10 different opportunities and tools for the public to learn about and provide input on the issues, opportunities, and future plans for Shaw Avenue. The components are listed below, along with the current status and additional notes. Following this quick snapshot, a brief discussion of each component is provided.

Status	Outreach Component	Notes
Completed	1. Project Website	www.shawcorridor.org launched in late 2011 and is updated periodically
Completed	2. Fact Sheet	Distributed in December 2011; bilingual in April 2012
Completed	3. Post Card	Distributed in December 2011; advertised January workshops and website
Completed	4. Public Workshops	3 workshops on January 25 and 26, 2012
Completed	5. Outreach Toolbox	Created in April 2012; contains digital graphics, PowerPoint presentations, display boards, and fact sheets
Completed	6. Public Surveys	<i>Businesses:</i> Direct mail survey of 660 businesses in February 2012; limited response <i>Property Owners:</i> Direct mail survey to non-residential property owners in April 2012; majority of response by phone <i>Students:</i> Mobile survey to university students in May 2012; 300 views/120 responses <i>Residents:</i> Direct mail survey (bilingual) sent to 4,538 addresses; 522 responses
Completed	7. Stakeholder Interviews	Series of interviews held with property owners, businesses, brokers, and other stakeholders in August 2012
Completed	8. Community Open House	Open house held in August 2012; 150 to 200 attendees
Ongoing	9. Stakeholder Interviews	Additional interviews conducted as a part of ongoing outreach and subsequent tasks examining development options and land use/mobility concepts
2013	10. Commission Workshops, EIR Public Review, and Public Hearings	Workshops with the Planning Commission on the Draft General Plan and EIR, which includes the land use plan for the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan A 45-day review period for the public to submit comments on the Draft EIR for the General Plan Formal hearings to review and adopt the final General Plan document and EIR; also slated to include adoption of the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan (subject to change)

## Outreach Components

### 1. Project Website

The City designed and launched a website dedicated to the update effort shortly after project kickoff in late 2011: [www.shawcorridor.org](http://www.shawcorridor.org). The website provides 24-hour access to project information such as meeting notices, survey materials, background data, presentations, and draft documents.

### 2. Fact Sheet

A fact sheet introduces the project to the public, provides answers to initial questions on the purpose and scope of the effort, and supplies basic contact information for the City and project website. A fact sheet was prepared and distributed in December 2011, with a bilingual version provided in April 2012.

### 3. Post Card

A post card advertised three public workshops and the project website. The City mailed the post card to businesses and residents, and followed up directly with corridor businesses.

### 4. Public Workshops

The City of Clovis held three workshops on January 25-26, 2012, to help reimagine, revitalize, and recreate Shaw Avenue. A total of 20 residents, employees, business owners, and service providers attended to provide their input and learn more about the corridor project. The following summarizes the input received at the workshops into three categories: advantages, challenges, and potential solutions.

- Workshop One: January 25 | 7:30am-9:00am, Public Safety Community Room
- Workshop Two: January 25 | 6:30pm-7:30pm, Public Safety Community Room
- Workshop Three: January 26 | 7:30am-9:00am, City Council Chambers



### ADVANTAGES

- Good freeway access and visibility from the 168
- Lots of traffic/visibility from those traveling to CSU Fresno and Sierra Vista Mall
- “The Avenue” marketing and branding effort has already started with monument signs and pole flags (though it stopped at those improvements)
- CSU Fresno and Sierra Vista Mall also serve as great anchors – this is something unique to Shaw
- Good stores that serve the neighborhood: Walmart, Home Depot, 99¢ Store, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Fresh & Easy; need marketing not wholesale change
- Lots of services – almost everything a resident needs is found within walking distance along Shaw

## CHALLENGES

### Buying Power

- Limited incomes in surrounding neighborhoods
- Students may lack buying power as well; cannot see attracting them as only solution

### Aesthetics and Image/Identity

- Corridor lacks an identity and aesthetics are not pleasant
- All Walmarts set up the same, but those that are the most successful look the best
- Poor image can discourage many from visiting (even those who would seek social services)
- Some areas such as the freeway areas and some stores are littered with trash
- Clovis is seen as some as their parents city; not hip
- Few nightlife businesses to attract the students
- Vons building is not maintained and has become an eyesore
- Landscaping (e.g., hedges) can be a problem instead of a solution (blocks view of stores)
- Some stores too far back and signage is inconsistent/scrambled; high traffic speeds and turning movements can make it difficult for people to see many of the stores

### Competition along Shaw and with other Retail Corridors

- As new retail is approved and built elsewhere (e.g., Herndon), businesses and shoppers will have fewer reasons to come to Shaw
- How do you convince people to visit Shaw when other places (e.g., Fashion Fair) are often equidistant
- Low lease offers are not sufficient to attract tenants
- Once anchors leave a shopping center it struggles to attract tenants
- Grocery stores have left due to severe competition
- Vons still owns the building space but will not sell and leaves it vacant rather than fill it with a possible grocery competitor; how do you attract a non-grocer anchor

### Pedestrian, Bike, and Bus

- People are walking out of necessity and the bus service stops at 6 pm Mon-Sat and 3 pm on Sundays; also 30 minute headways are difficult
- Pedestrian links along the street and between developments can be difficult; people have to get in their car to go from one place to another and so often don't visit or even see other businesses within the shopping centers
- It is often easier to bike longer distances to other locations than it is to bike to and along Shaw
- Just the 168 offramps area itself is a quarter-mile long (which is often the distance people are willing to walk); people also stop walking once they reach a 200-foot gap (blank wall or vacant)
- Walls from neighborhoods block pedestrian and bicycle access
- 168 overpass is a no man's land and the car dealerships are not going to draw pedestrians or bicyclists from Savemart Center or other parts of CSU Fresno

### Other

- City fees and licensing may have driven some to Fresno
- Expansion of Shaw caused some land to be taken; not open to any more acquisition

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

### Aesthetics and Image/Identity

- Add better lighting fixtures along Shaw; provide the corridor with an identity and enhance its image (especially at night with views off of the freeway)
- Lighting is also relatively inexpensive and would not require any taking of land
- Enhance the public right of way --- the street walls --- so that the corridor's image is improved
- Change the character and image as you transition under the freeway to announce that you have entered Clovis and Shaw Avenue
- Add public events, festivals, markets to attract patrons; but don't try to compete with Old Town
- Stagger events along the corridor and at different times of the day/week
- Emphasize art, taking advantage of students and art school as CSUF and artist/writers group in Old Town; add art hops/hubs and take advantage of low leases (great for artists); leave high end art for Old Town
- Add public art and murals
- Trees make a place; add street trees and trees in a parking lot; studies show people spend 9 percent more in tree-rich areas and people are willing to spend longer times when their car and walking areas are shaded
- Concentrate Retail and add Residential
- Concentrate retail at nodes; help pay for signage for relocated and/or new businesses
- Break up large vacant buildings
- Add student housing, but make sure it is better than current student housing which can be a problem for the neighbors and police
- Add mixed use (Iron Bird Lofts are seen as positive)

### Improvement Districts

- Businesses open to the idea of a business improvement district (BID) like the one that organizes events and marketing in Old Town
- Landscape and lighting district also a popular idea (tier fees based on size of business or chain)
- Divide the BID or LLD or other tool and apply them to quadrants around key nodes; also open to a single corridor-wide district in addition to area-focused
- Singular leasing coordination space for new and existing tenants is a good idea

### Pedestrian, Bike, and Bus

- Improve busing service times in advance of any bus rapid transit; city could opt to pay to expand bus service hours and increase headways to 10 minutes
- Work with Fresno to create bus passes so that residents don't have to have cash on hand
- Add a shuttle service from CSU Fresno
- Make transit more user friendly without adding capacity (e.g., work with businesses so that people can know when the next bus is coming and they stay in the store/business)
- Dedicated bikeway either along the corridor or behind stores

### Other

- Synchronize the lights; they are sensed right now and this may conflict with synchronizing; but can it be programmed to be sensed for on-demand at night and synchronized during commuting hours.

## 5. Outreach Toolbox

The City and its consultant created a toolbox in April 2012 containing digital graphics, PowerPoint presentations, display boards, and fact sheets. This toolbox is available to the City and its partners to conduct targeted outreach with smaller groups without the need for advanced planning or preparation.

## 6. Public Survey

The project team designed surveys for the business owners, property owners, college students, and neighborhood residents.

### BUSINESS OWNER

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) serving Fresno County created a business owner survey and distributed a hard copy directly to the 660 business owner addresses along with a cover letter. Business owners could also take the survey online. Despite follow up from EDC and City staff, the response was limited—although some did participate in subsequent workshops.

### PROPERTY OWNER

The project team generated a property owner information packet and the City distributed this packet to all nonresidential property owners along the corridor. This packet included a cover letter, fact sheet, survey, and preliminary/general design concepts (survey also available online). City staff also followed up the distribution of this packet with phone calls to discuss the project, concerns, and ideas. The City received responses primarily through phone conversations.

### STUDENT

The project team created an online and mobile phone survey for the students, faculty, and staff of Fresno State. The university distributed the survey through its website, Facebook page, Twitter account, and direct email blast. In a quick one-month timeframe, almost 300 students viewed the survey and 120 students filled out the survey. The students provided extensive comments and suggestions through the survey responses.

### RESIDENT

Resident surveys (in English and Spanish) were distributed both in hard copy format and online (also bilingual), with hard copies mailed directly to every residential address in the project area (4,538 addresses). The mailing also included a bilingual fact sheet and the City incentivized residents to complete the surveys by offering a \$50 gift card that could be used any at store along the corridor.

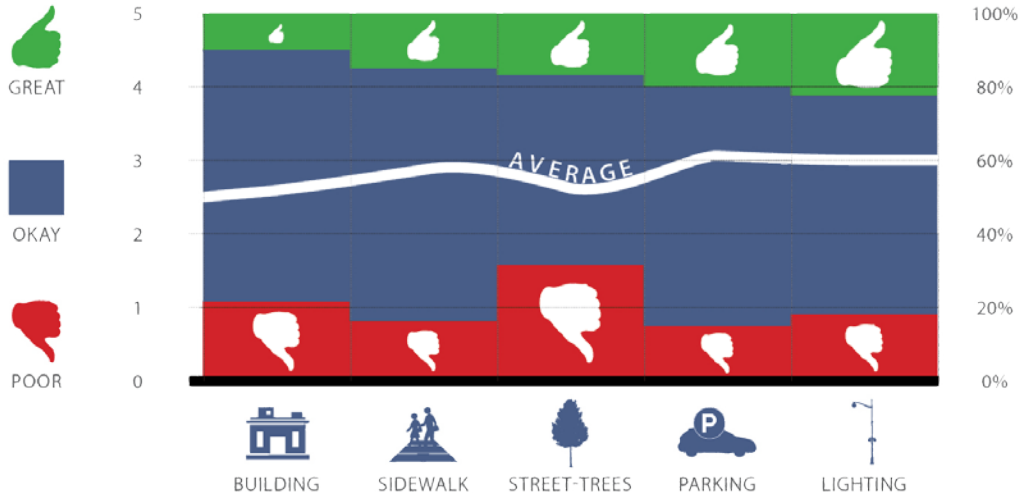
The City received tremendous participation from the residents. A total of 521 residents (11.5% response rate) filled out a survey through the City's website, in person at City Hall, or mailing in a hard copy of the survey. Over three-quarters of the residents hand wrote additional ideas and thoughts about the Shaw Avenue area on the open-ended questions.

The combined results of the student and resident surveys were illustrated and presented at the open house. Highlights of the survey results are shown below.

# 1 How do you rate the current condition of Shaw Avenue?



Shaw Avenue appears to be in decent condition, with the majority of the Clovis residents rating the existing elements (i.e., buildings, trees, lighting) along Shaw Avenue as "okay." The absence of consistent street trees was identified as the least desirable characteristic of the corridor.



# 2 What services do you mainly use along Shaw Avenue?

Both Clovis residents and Fresno State students indicated that they primarily use shops related to food (restaurants and grocery) and general retail. Other services frequently mentioned seem to reflect the presence of Home Depot and numerous auto-related businesses.





### 3 What additional shops/services/restaurants would you like to see along Shaw Avenue?



The majority of Clovis residents want to see another grocery store and more sit-down restaurants.



Students want to see more clothing stores and coffee shops.



GROCERY STORE



RESTAURANTS



CLOTHING STORE



COFFEE SHOP

### 4 When going east of the campus, how easy is it to travel to and along Shaw Avenue?



Overall, students felt it was easiest to travel from campus to the Shaw Avenue area by car. Other modes of travel—especially biking—were considered more difficult.

"Generally easy to get around but traffic can be a pain sometimes"



CAR

"Can be difficult, especially because the bus doesn't run late or often enough"



BUS

"Speeding cars and the lack of a designated bike lane make biking difficult"



BIKE

"Okay in some places, difficult in others—areas where sidewalks are in poor condition or aren't provided at all"



WALK

### 7 What specifically makes you feel safe or unsafe?

The issues most frequently cited as "unsafe" were the lack of lighting, vulnerability to crime when traveling through the corridor at night, and high levels of traffic/speeding. The top three things that would make respondents feel safer are: a larger police presence, wider and better sidewalks (greater separation from traffic), and more activity and businesses (night life).



UNSAFE



POOR/NO LIGHTING



VULNERABILITY TO CRIME



SPEEDING CARS/ HEAVY TRAFFIC



SAFE



POLICE



WIDER/BETTER SIDEWALKS



MORE ACTIVITY/ BUSINESSES



## 8 What are your top three priorities for improving Shaw Avenue?



Residents voted new/different types of shops and services as the number one priority followed by overall appearance and improved bus service.



Students also voted new/different types of shops and services as the number one priority followed by overall appearance. However, their third priority is to improve the pedestrian environment.



## 11 Is there anything else you want to share?

Of the nearly 650 people who took this survey, 506 individuals (78%) shared additional ideas and thoughts about the Shaw Avenue area. Their comments are categorized into three sections and the size of the words reflect the frequency of that particular response. In other words, the more common the statement, the bigger its size.

### GOOD CHARACTERISTICS

repaved streets      police presence  
 lighting in certain areas  
 the corridor provides a nice variety of services  
 sierra vista mall

### BAD CHARACTERISTICS

too many vacant buildings  
 speeding cars  
 heavy traffic      narrow sidewalks  
 feels unsafe at night  
 lots of suspicious activity  
 poorly maintained areas are an eye-sore  
 too much high-density housing      unsafe streets

## IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

A word cloud of ideas for the future, with the most prominent words being 'more grocery stores', 'improve overall appearance', 'fix & enhance median', 'better bus services & bike lanes', 'safer & cleaner streets', 'more parks', and 'more police presence'. Other smaller words include 'enhance gateway/entrance to Fresno State' and 'create community gardens, parks, & trees'.

### 7. Stakeholder Interviews

Outreach conducted with key stakeholders and organizations/agencies is often the most effective and useful part of a project's outreach activities. Such individuals and organizations generally have a vested interest in the community, likely play a role in implementation efforts, are usually well connected, and can assist in spreading the word.

A series of interviews were held with property owners, businesses, brokers, and other stakeholders in August 2012. Meetings took place either at City Hall, over the phone, online in a web conference, or at the stakeholder's office.

The following is a list of the interviewees and their role in the community, many of which played multiple roles in Shaw Avenue and/or the general Clovis area.

- Car dealerships: Brett Hedrick, Hedrick's Chevrolet; Randy Skates, Future Ford/Future Kia
- Sierra Vista Mall: Land Value Management; Greg Newman, General Manager & Jim Huelskamp, Principal
- Vons Center property/business owners such as North India Bar & Grill
- Campus Pointe Developers: Lance-Kashian & Company, Ed Kashian, Executive Director
- Clovis area Brokers, Chamber of Commerce
- Clovis Police Department

The interviews generated a great deal of insight regarding the background, current image, common issues, and future opportunities within the Shaw Avenue project area. The stakeholders generally agreed that the streetscape could be improved, though there were concerns about the availability of sufficient funds for long term maintenance. A number of business and property owners indicated a willingness to be a part of tax-based improvement district. Opinions differed on the level and location of improved landscaping, with some favoring the introduction of a consistent street tree pattern and others preferring shorter landscaping to avoid conflicts with business exposure. A number of stakeholders requested that the City consider different sign standards for businesses along Shaw Avenue due to the high speed of traffic and the need to enhance the image and level of exposure.

The Vons Shopping Center is viewed as the most challenging set of properties along Shaw Avenue. Some mentioned that the right anchor tenant could turn the center around, but others indicated that there is already an overabundance of commercial/retail square footage along Shaw Avenue and that different development options should be considered. Nearby projects in Fresno may indicate a market exists for mixed-use projects on the Vons Shopping Center properties. Crime in the surrounding neighborhoods led

some to believe that improvement will be tough, but all agreed that the current condition of some properties was detrimental to all of Shaw Avenue (and to some extent all of Clovis).

It is not unusual for stakeholders to resist or oppose uses such as multifamily apartments, bars, and entertainment businesses. However, stakeholders, including the Police Department, supported these uses provided they were properly maintained and of high quality. For residential uses, this means on-site property management. Sports bars and establishments that focus on a balance of food and alcohol were welcomed by stakeholders and the Police Department. So-called “dive bars” and establishments that focus on cheap drinks were discouraged.

### 8. Community Open Houses

The City held a community open house to present information and obtain input about how Shaw Avenue is today and how it could be in the future. The open houses provided the public with an opportunity to give their vision for the future of the corridor, including their preferences for certain development types, street and transportation improvements, and new business opportunities. The event took place on August 29, 2012 from 5 to 7 pm at Tarpey Elementary, which is within the project study area.

The open houses were publicly advertised for a month through conventional noticing methods and a direct mail to all residential and non-residential addresses within the study area. Although the open house was not scheduled to begin until 5:30 pm, over 100 people arrived by 5:15 pm. At 5:30, the City and other project team members began the open house with a 15-20 minute presentation on the project background, analysis conducted to date and preliminary findings, and the purpose of the open house. The public was then free to visit seven information stations (listed below). Additional materials included information from the Economic Development Corporation and visual illustration of the public survey results.

- **Health & Safety:** This station presented an aerial of the project study area and was staffed by Clovis Police Officers who were able to address concerns about crime and safety along and around the corridor.
- **Fresno Metro Ministries:** Fresno Metro Ministries advertised information on its activities, including the four programs it manages: Environmental Health, Hunger/Nutrition, the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP), and Health Care Access.
- **Existing Conditions:** This station provided attendees with visual diagrams and maps of the current land use, economic, demographic, and circulation conditions within the Shaw Avenue Corridor study area.
- **Land Use & Design and Opportunity Sites:** These two stations contained numerous maps, illustrations, photographs, and graphics communicating a variety of ideas and concepts that could improve Shaw Avenue, with a specific focus on opportunity areas around Willow Avenue and Villa Avenue. Other issues included: gateways, signage, lighting, building appearance, connectivity, and landscaping.
- **Mobility:** The Mobility station presented information, photographs, and maps on conditions and potential improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. This included bike routes, bus rapid transit (BRT) plans, roadway options, and potential streetscape improvements.
- **Market & Economics:** This station enabled attendees to discuss specific details on economic issues such as vacancy rates, financing and implementation districts, partnerships, and short/long term steps.

In total, approximately 150 to 200 people attended the open house, including families with children, young adults, adult couples, and seniors. The majority of participants were long-time Clovis residents interested in learning more about the project and provide feedback. Of those that attended, roughly half spent 30 minutes visiting the information stations and talking with city or consultant staff.

## Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan

Through the overall comments and feedback received, it was clear that the community feels strongly about improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists; improving key areas such as the Vons Shopping Center, attracting new businesses that would serve the community, and elevating the image and aesthetics of the commercial areas and streetscapes. Residents expressed excitement about possible improvements and development concepts. They were also happy to hear that the City had no plans to change the mobile home parks or other residential properties within the study area. Overall, residents appeared eager for changes to occur and appreciated that the City and its partners were committed to improving Shaw Avenue and their neighborhoods.



### 9. Stakeholder Meetings (additional meetings)

Additional interviews will be conducted as a part of ongoing outreach and subsequent tasks examining development options and land use/mobility concepts.

### 10. Commission Workshops, EIR Public Review, and Public Hearings

The General Plan update and EIR, which includes the land use plan for the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan, is on schedule to be completed in 2013. The City anticipates a series of public Planning Commission workshops to discuss the various General Plan elements and Shaw Avenue. Additionally, a 45-day review period is provided for the public to submit comments on the Draft EIR. Formal hearings will be held to review and adopt the final General Plan document and EIR, which may also include adoption of the planning document for the Shaw Avenue Corridor.