



Downtown Projects

November 4, 2008

Downtown Association of Fresno 2014 Tulare Street #417 Fresno CA 93721 559.490.9966 info@downtownfresno.org

BIA Business Survey

Our Business Improvement Area (BIA) members are retail and restaurant businesses within the Central Business District (Stanislaus to Mono, H Street to M Street). This area was formed in 1972. Members pay an amount equal to their business license, which is forwarded by the City of Fresno to the Downtown Association of Fresno.

Through a short survey of all members, we are establishing a better connection with the business owners and updating our records. We are gathering their opinions on our events and on ways to better promote their activities.

Bicycles on Fulton Mall

When City Council approved bicycle traffic on Fulton Mall, we gathered the Police Dept bicycle unit and PARCS staff to develop initial guidelines. Still ahead are a public input meeting on December 3, a gathering of all interested groups (Downtown Association, Police Department, Fresno Traffic Division, Fresno PARCS, Cal Trans) in January and perhaps another public meeting in February.

Farmers Market

A Farmers Market on Fulton Mall is often mentioned as an important step to revitalizing the Mall. We're working with the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) in the creation of such a market, scheduling an April, 2009 launch. The EOC is working with the farmers, while we assist in permits, entertainment and other arrangements. Expanding to a full-fledged street market is a possibility in the future.

Membership Drive

Voluntary members complement our Business Improvement Area members and are an important constituency. Our membership has slipped over the years, but we're now making a concerted effort to bring all folks interested in Downtown Fresno into our organization as members. Our goal this year is 150 members.

Murals for the JC Penney building

This mural project is a collaboration with Creative Fresno, Fresno Arts Council, Fresno Redevelopment Agency and the Cohens of Fresno Ballpark Lofts (building owner). The murals, using the theme of Urban Dreams, will be painted on the signboard which is applied to the outside of the buildings. Some murals will be photography. The building owners are now declining to be involved so the project is on hold.

PBID

A Property-based Business Improvement District (PBID) is a proven tool for Downtown revitalization that will bring over 3 million dollars into Downtown Fresno over the next five years. During the formation of this public/private partnership, property owners figure out details of the district including a strategic action plan, assessment levels, budget, district boundaries and a governing board. Services, which augment but do not replace City services, typically include a clean and safe program, marketing and advocacy. With an Advisory Panel and an Operating Group in place, we are soon hiring a PBID formation consultant. Our goal is to form the PBID by the end of June, 2009.

Restaurant Brochure

To assist people in finding Downtown restaurants, we are preparing a dining guide, complete with all Downtown restaurants and a map. Brochures will be available for jurors, hotel guests and convention guests. This effort supplements the Downtown dining map on our website.

Students Downtown

We have several efforts to engage college students in Downtown activities, including a group of marketing students who are conducting a survey of students as to their interest in Downtown Fresno from which they will develop an event for students. Another group will review Downtown districts.

We have established a working relationship with Yokomi School to help students become involved in Downtown through school projects and community service activities, while we can offer them sponsorships and advice from our members.

Wayfinding Signage

Long a priority of the Downtown Association, wayfinding signage will have a huge impact on public access to Downtown businesses and events. There are three general levels of wayfinding signage. The first level is intended for vehicular use and would include freeway signs pointing to Downtown Fresno. The next level is street-level directional signs, which can include district or area designations. The final level is for pedestrian use and often assists folks in locating businesses or activity centers.

Winter Wonderland (Dec 20)

Fulton Mall is the place for kids to enjoy holiday fun and games, receive toys and have their picture taken with Santa, while their parents can do last minute Christmas shopping.

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2008 Timeline to date

- January Hired *new Executive Director*, Jan Minami
Began reintroduction of Downtown Association of Fresno for the purpose of focusing awareness on Downtown issues
- February *Board of Directors* expanded and strengthened
- March *New leaders* elected, including President Elliott Balch
- April *Candidates Forums*: well-attended Mayoral and Council candidates forums in collaboration with 7 community organizations
Annual Meeting: gathered community input for future projects
- May *Cinco de Mayo Festival*: 3-day festival for over 100,000 people on Fulton Mall
SUDZ in the City: microbrew and music festival in Chukchansi Park (voted Best Annual Event by readers of Fresno Magazine)
- June *International Downtown Association Advisory Panel*: assessed and advised on formation of PBID (property-based business improvement district)
Storefront Signage Forum: brought together City planners, Redevelopment Agency staff, sign companies and Downtown consumers to explain and simplify the process of putting up a new sign
- July *OUT TO LUNCH: \$5 Fridays*: launched green promotion to encourage Downtown employees to walk to lunch at least once a week and to promote Downtown restaurants - ran through Oct 10.
- August *Downtown Parking Forum*: offered business owners and the public the opportunity to meet with Parking Division Manager Del Estabrooke who presented his financing plans and answered questions.
- September *Fulton Mall Education Forums*: created 3 forums to educate the public in response to an application to place Fulton Mall on the National Historic Register.



HISTORY AND "SENSE OF PLACE" Tour Fulton Mall with an expert guide, exploring the designs, sculptures and buildings. Join a discussion of the history and significance of the Mall, the Mall art and Garrett Eckbo..

WHAT DOES NATIONAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION MEAN? What does it allow? What does it not allow? Prepared questions will be answered by a panel of experts in Historic Preservation and CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) compliance.

SUSTAINABILITY: THE WAY FORWARD Either with designation or without, what is the next step? Imagine a vibrant Fulton Mall district. What does that look like? Can we learn from pedestrian malls in other cities? How do we pay for different alternatives? How do we define success?

Fiestas Patrias and El Grito: 4-day festival in a celebration of Mexican Independence Day with food, drink, music and dancers. El Grito is the final day, which culminates in a live feed

from Mexico City at 9:00 P.M.

Billion Dollar Tour: celebrated Downtown development successes with the Fresno County EDC.

- October *Website launch*: new website offers easy access to online information about Downtown Fresno for anyone who lives, works or enjoys events or activities in Downtown Fresno, whether they live locally or intend to visit

Downtown Art Gala: raise funds for the maintenance and restoration of Fulton Mall sculptures by holding a fine dining evening under the stars on the beautiful Fulton Mall.

Make A Difference Day: Plant and map on Fulton Mall, in conjunction with Hands On Fresno, Americorps and Councilmembers Sterling's office. Successful event planting and planning, including 300 daffodils and a "fix-it" crew making notes on maps for our Fulton Mall walks.

Halloween Happens Downtown: Trick or treating, health fair, spooky music and a costume contest for kids.

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