About Rancho Cordova

Rancho Cordova is a city of 66,000 in the northeastern part of the Sacramento metropolitan area. The beautiful American River forms its northern boundary. It is about fifteen minutes from downtown Sacramento and can be accessed by five light rail stations. Rancho Cordova developed as a suburb under the administration of Sacramento until it incorporated in 2003. About 50,000 people work in Rancho Cordova and more jobs are being attracted to redevelopment sites at the former Mather Field air base. The City’s 2006 General Plan expressed this vision for its future: “Rancho Cordova is not a suburb, not simply an employment center — it is a City, a regional destination place.”

About Folsom Boulevard

Folsom Boulevard is a wide and busy arterial that transects Rancho Cordova. It is bordered by strip commercial development typical of busy suburban corridors across the US; but unlike most American arterials, for part of its length Folsom Boulevard is the route for the Gold Line of Sacramento’s light rail network. The General Plan states: “The Folsom Boulevard Planning Area will serve as the high-intensity development center of the City. Target land uses for this area include a series of Transit-Oriented and Regional Town Centers strategically located at light rail stations and freeway interchanges.” The City has identified a number of “pulse points,” key intersections, and transit stops along Folsom that it believes are the best candidates for redevelopment. The project will focus primarily on redevelopment opportunities at one or more the pulse points at the Butterfield, Mather/Mills, Zinfandel, and Cordova Town Center light rail stations.
Project Scope

Rancho Cordova adopted ambitious redevelopment plans based on New Urbanist principles. The recession and a sense that the type and scale of projects that the plan contemplated are not currently realistic is leading the City to reconsider its strategy for redevelopment. It is interested in finding ways to stage redevelopment along Folsom in incremental steps, combining public and private investments.

Challenges to Overcome

- Changing role of the street and surrounding land from a corridor that primarily served as a traveler’s route for additional traffic generated from Mather Air Force Base and Aerojet facility to a more local street that connects neighborhoods, shopping centers, and freeway entrances.
- Increasing demand to expand traffic capacity, which would make the street a less hospitable place to live, work, and shop.

Project Goals

- Prepare an Urban Infill Strategic Plan that includes realistic strategies and tactics for attracting new investment and development to the Folsom Boulevard corridor and to underutilized light industrial districts within the City of Rancho Cordova.
Project Elements: Folsom Boulevard

Redevelopment

The City has already made investments to make Folsom Boulevard more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists; but it still remains, for most of its length through the city, a high volume and high-speed road that creates a pedestrian-unfriendly environment and a barrier that diminishes the impact of development on either side of the facility. In addition, the combination of the American River, Highway 50, and Folsom Boulevard limits the amount of pedestrian-accessible market for retail uses along Folsom Boulevard. This means that incremental development may need to focus on redevelopment along the side streets intersecting with Folsom Boulevard. The City has a special opportunity near the Butterfield Station to change the perception of Folsom Boulevard with the investment of $39 million in a new facility by Los Ríos Community College. Whether and how this project can be designed and operated in ways that leverage other public and private investment may be a part of the team’s work. There may be opportunity for university students to conduct innovative surveys to determine the size and character of the potential residential market among the people who commute to a job in Rancho Cordova.

Green Design & Infrastructure

Green design and green infrastructure investments will be considered as part of the discussion of how redevelopment might be promoted.

Transportation Choices

One of the goals identified in the General Plan is “improving pedestrian and bicycle connections between light rail stations and local retail uses, especially retail uses along Folsom Boulevard.” The team will consider whether and how these improvements could support and promote redevelopment at the Folsom Boulevard pulse points.

Equity

Many of the light rail system passengers are people of modest means. There is a perception that the Gold Line is not a safe travel option for middle class people. The implementation team may consider the ways in which this project can improve the transit station experience for all riders and make light rail a more attractive alternative for some of the people currently using their cars.
Paul Junker, Planning Director, City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: pjunker@cityofranchocordova.org
Paul Junker, through a contract with Pacific Municipal Consultants (PMC,) has been the City's Planning Director since its incorporation in 2003. He has been responsible for creating the City's General Plan and Zoning Code regulations and is in charge of long-range planning and short-range specifications.

David Sander, City Councilmember, City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: dsander@cityofranchocordova.org
Council Member David Sander was elected to the first City Council when the City incorporated in 2003 and reelected in November 2004, 2008, and 2012. He served as Mayor in 2007 and 2012 and as Vice Mayor in 2006 and in 2011.

Cyrus Abhar, Public Works Director, City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: cabhar@cityofranchocordova.org
Public Works’ mission is to provide residents, workers, and shoppers with safe and efficient transportation systems, quality utility provisions, and modernized environmental services to support the quality of life goals identified by our city leaders.

Micah Runner, Economic Development Director, City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: mrunner@cityofranchocordova.org
Micah Runner has contributed significantly to the region through key economic development projects such as the build-out of Depot Park and is currently leading the effort to build a new entertainment facility and a Los Rios extension campus in Rancho Cordova.

Curt Haven, Director of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services, City of Rancho Cordova
chaven@cityofranchocordova.org
As Director of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services, Curt plans economic strategies, oversees redevelopment, and is the liaison to neighborhood associations. Other major responsibilities are to attract new businesses as well as to retain and expand current companies and commercial venues.

Pam Johns, AICP, Principal, PMC World
Contact: pjohns@pmcworld.com
Ms. Johns is a principal at PMC who manages both Comprehensive Planning and Planning, Design, and Facilitation services for PMC. She has 20 years of progressively responsible experience in planning and project management in both the public and private sectors. For the City of Rancho Cordova, Ms. Johns serves as special project manager and led the City’s efforts for General Plan Update, Zoning Code Update, Design Guidelines, and Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan.

Mike McKeever, CEO, Sacramento Area Council of Governments*
Contact: mmckeever@sacog.org
Mike McKeever has led the Sacramento Area Council of Governments since December 2004. Over his 30-year career specializing in the field of planning, he has owned and managed two private businesses that specialized in working with local governments on innovative multi-jurisdictional projects. He has been instrumental in developing cutting-edge planning techniques to integrate land use and transportation planning.

Kacey Lizon, Senior Planning Director, Sacramento Area Council of Governments*
Contact: klizon@sacog.org
Kacey Lizon is a land use planner and manages SACOG’s long range transportation plan and land use forecasting and analysis program. She received her BS and MRP from Cornell University.

*The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is an association of local governments in the six-county Sacramento region, which includes the Cities of Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova and Sacramento County. SACOG provides transportation planning and funding for the region and serves as a forum for the study and resolution of regional issues. California Senate Bill 375 added a new regional planning requirement called Sustainable Communities Strategy that integrates land use and transportation planning and SACOG has organized the three local governments’ participation in the USA program to help achieve this new requirement.