



Cutler-Orosi Charrette

November, 2001

Cutler-Orosi Charrette Report

December, 2001

Prepared for:

**County of Tulare Redevelopment Agency
and
Local Government Commission**



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We are grateful for the assistance of many people and organizations who helped fund, plan and hold the event, including:

**California Department of Transportation
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Residents of Cutler and Orosi, California
Cutler Orosi Project Area Committee
CSET, Inc.
Catholic Charities
Cutler Orosi Unified School District
Family Health Care Network
Great Valley Center**

This report was prepared for the County of Tulare by Walkable Communities, Inc. and the Local Government Commission through a CalTrans Community Based Transportation Planning grant. For background information on details found in this report contact Dan Burden, Director, 904-454-3304. Walkable Communities, Inc. provides more information at website: www.walkable.org

Disclaimer

The contents of this report represent the knowledge, experience, and expertise of the citizens and authors in providing ideas and concepts to improve safety, access, mobility and livability through streetscaping, transit, walking, bicycling enhancements and other traffic management strategies. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation, and is not intended to be used as a basis for establishing civil liability. The decision to use any particular measure should be made on the basis of engineering studies of the location. This report is not a substitute for sound engineering judgment. Adherence to the principles found in this report can lead to an overall improvement in neighborhood and community livability.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Brief overview of the process and outcomes of the multi-day event	
Background	6
Purpose and background; Charrette events and outcome	
Vision Plan	13
Street network, concept plans, and site specific recommendations	
Implementation	35
Implementation strategies and funding possibilities	
Appendix	45
Minutes - Evening Exercises - Notes - Comment Letter	

Executive Summary

A charrette is a series of meetings, workshops and design sessions between the public and a skilled design team to create a community vision or plan. The Cutler-Orosi Community Design Charrette was conducted from November 1 – 5, 2001. Its goal was to create a conceptual plan for improvements for all roadway users along State Highway 63 and the intersecting main streets of Cutler-Orosi. These land use and transportation objectives are intertwined. The transportation decisions made on Highway 63 will have a profound impact on the type and quality of development in Cutler-Orosi. It was funded through a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant, and grew out of community visioning work initiated through a Great Valley Center Legaci grant. The design team included two transportation planners, a traffic engineer, a landscape architect, and an architect. All events were conducted in both English and Spanish.

Cutler-Orosi is in dire need of assistance. Cutler is now the poorest community in California. The poverty level for the two communities hovers around 75%. New industrial development is hindered by a lack of water and sewer capacity. Highway 63, which intersects and connects the two towns, and Avenue 416 (El Monte Way), the main street of Orosi, are not pedestrian-friendly. Five schools are located on or adjacent to these two roads and many people walk along these roads.

Community participation during the charrette was exceptional. 130 people attended the opening event, and approximately 300 people, including County and Caltrans District 6 staff took part during the five-day event. A multi-phased plan with several low-cost implementation steps to improve safety and help stimulate investment in Cutler-Orosi was developed.

Recommendations that could be implemented immediately include a series of community-based actions that require little cost and deliver a high impact. Their implementation will continue the momentum of the charrette. Recommendations that will require more time include interim safety and beautification measures such as sidewalk completion, curb extensions at critical crossings, the narrowing of SR 63 north of Avenue 416, and street tree plantings.

In the longer term vision, commuter traffic to and from Dinuba and heavy trucks are rerouted off of SR 63 through the construction of a truck bypass on County Road 120. By moving a significant portion of through traffic off of SR 63, it allows for significant enhancements and traffic calming which are appropriate for a pedestrian-friendly town center that the community envisions on the vacant land between the two towns. A median, on-street parking, bicycle lanes, and the removal of two traffic lanes are recommended for nearly the entire corridor in this later phase. Comments on the draft report were solicited and are included in the the appendix.

This report is one of three undertaken by the County for the Cutler-Orosi Project Area. Along with the concurrent water and sewer needs assessment study, the charrette report has informed the recommendations of the Cutler Orosi Commercial Development Plan. The action plan from the Commercial Development Plan is included in the Appendix.

Background



This report describes the results of a charrette conducted from November 1 through November 5, 2001 in the unincorporated communities of Cutler-Orosi in Tulare County, California. The charrette was a series of events in which the public is invited to work together to develop a shared vision for their community. The charrette was funded by a Caltrans Community Based Transportation Planning grant. The idea for the charrette grew out of community visioning workshops conducted in 2000 through a Great Valley Center Legaci grant. The charrette events are described in Section II.



Purpose

The purpose of the charrette was to create a broad, community-based vision for the design of future industrial, commercial and retail development along Highway 63 and its intersecting streets in downtown Cutler-Orosi and to improve pedestrian, bicycle and auto safety and access. Community consensus is a key element in obtaining support for change.



Community Planning

Cutler-Orosi area is the largest unincorporated area of Tulare County. The charrette was one of several efforts underway or planned to revitalize and develop this agricultural area. A Commercial Development Plan is being prepared by Applied Development Economics. This plan will provide a market analysis that will help guide private investment in the community and incorporates the recommendations of this report. There has also been a movement underway to incorporate the area as a city for several years. A citizens' committee has been formed and a consultant retained to evaluate the economic feasibility of incorporation.



Many previous planning efforts have incorporated the needs of the Cutler-Orosi area. A Community Plan was adopted by Tulare County in 1988 and has been revised to address specific issues several times. A Redevelopment Plan was adopted in July, 1989. An updated Implementation Plan for the Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1999. Descriptions in these documents paint a bleak picture of this community of nearly 12,000 people. They describe deficiencies in the sewer and water systems that limit development opportunities, and problematic creek maintenance and storm drainage issues. High unemployment rates and poverty levels are cited. The area has a very high incidence of crime and obvious code violations throughout the two towns.





The Tulare County Redevelopment Agency sponsored a study of Cutler-Orosi Water and Sewer Needs for Economic Development. The study cites DBCP and nitrate contamination of drinking water and the need for a new wastewater treatment facility as key obstacles to development.

Tulare County is also developing a Circulation Element update for the General Plan that includes the Cutler-Orosi area. Circulation plans address all modes of transportation and incorporate issues of land use, noise, air quality, and safety. There is also a Regional Transportation Plan that includes the Cutler-Orosi area, but specific projects are not identified for the unincorporated areas of Tulare County.

Caltrans has a planning process for state highway corridors for highways such as SR 63 (Road 128). The Transportation Concept Report (TCR) describes current and projected operation of a state highway corridor over a 10 to 25 year period. This report establishes the planning concept for the corridor through assessment of the needs for various transportation modes. Participants in focus group sessions explained that Caltrans is in the process of updating all the TCR's for District 6 (Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera and Tulare). A TCR takes about six months to prepare and serves as the first of many steps in developing a project that is funded with Caltrans transportation dollars.

Process

Outreach and Publicity

Public participation is a fundamental ingredient of a charrette. The high level of participation from the community is partially the product of a diverse partnership of organizations conducting outreach with a variety of mediums. Community Services and Employment Training, Inc. (CSET) sent charrette invitation letters to over 500 people. Project Area Committee (PAC) members personally invited community and political leaders to the charrette through phone calls and face to face meetings. The Cutler-Orosi Unified School District agreed to send a charrette flyer home with every student (over 4,000). Catholic Charities gave flyers to many of the area's churches and asked the pastors to announce the charrette at Sunday services. Catholic Charities also sponsored a focus group at the Villa de Guadalupe housing complex for low income families. Caltrans agreed to post two of their message boards for one week on SR-63 promoting the charrette events. The project partners also heeded the recommendations of the PAC and provided music and food at the main charrette events.



Caltrans message signs prompted passersby to attend the public meetings. The message was updated daily to advise of that day's event schedule.



Musicians entertained the audience before the meeting started.

All public events were conducted in both English and Spanish. The Cutler-Orosi charrette provided several opportunities for the people who live, work or govern Cutler-Orosi to share their ideas, hopes and concerns. The schedule of the events was:

Thursday, Nov. 1:

7:00- 9:00 p.m. Town Meeting and charrette kick-off. Cutler School.

Friday, Nov. 2: Focus Groups

9:00 – 10: 10 a.m. Fifth grade class at Cutler School.
 10:15 – 11:45 a.m. Tulare County Resource Management and Caltrans District 6 staff.
 11:45 – 1:00 p.m Cutler-Orosi PAC, Chamber of Commerce, Community Service organizations and other local business people.
 2:00 – 3:30 p.m Church leaders and community service providers.
 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Farm workers and other working families.

Saturday, Nov. 3:

Community Training, Pedestrian Audits and Design Tables

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. Community Design Training
 10:30 a.m - noon. Pedestrian audits
 1:00 – 3:00 p.m Community design tables

Monday, Nov. 5:

Presentation to Government Transportation Staff, and Evening Community Presentation

1: 00 – 3:00 p.m. Design concept presentation to Caltrans, County Roads, Redevelopment and Public Works staff.
 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Presentation of charrette plan to community.



Some of the Thursday evening participants are shown at right.



The events kicked off with a town meeting at Cutler Elementary School on Thursday, November 1, 2001. Through a series of short, fun exercises, this kick-off event provided participants with the opportunity to share their hopes, ideas and concerns for Cutler-Orosi. Approximately 130 people enjoyed the music of a Mariachi band and food at the start of the event. See the appendix for a description of these events.

Envisioning the Future

Sharing a common vision builds community consensus. Cutler-Orosi citizens demonstrated their determination to improve their future when they aggressively pursued grant funding for the charrette event and the Commercial Development Plan. The charrette was an opportunity for everyone in the area to add their voice to that of the core group of grassroots community leaders. For the first charrette exercise on Thursday evening, members of the audience were invited to describe their dream of what they would like Cutler-Orosi to be in twenty years. Many members of the audience then read from their cards. Comments representative of those received include:

- Well-kept businesses and houses, self sufficient, with zoning properly done. Educational, training and recreational centers.
- Safe and healthy streets for our children, and decent playgrounds.

One succinct writer offered: “More jobs, more homes, more stores, more schools.” In general, the dreams of people were for safe and clean streets, civic spaces such as libraries and recreation, a strong economy and more police enforcement. Many mentioned more opportunities for the young, especially those who offered their comments in Spanish.



Establishing Values

Community-based values should drive investment of public funds. By determining what is important to citizens, decision makers are able to set priorities that are compatible with those of the residents. To determine what is most important to participants, they were asked to list five of their top values for their community. These values were later sorted by category and counted:

Family, togetherness, friends	35
Community pride, culture, cooperation	30
Safety and security	26
Education, better schools	26
Jobs, employment	17
Street lights, trees, parks, and flowers	16
Better housing	9
Better Roads and sidewalks	8
Cleanliness	7

A presentation of photos of Cutler-Orosi and of similar places followed these activities. The program emphasized the many opportunities for reducing traffic speeds, providing comfortable and convenient public space.

Needs and Priorities

Cutler-Orosi has many, many needs. Charrette participants described the current environment as bleak, crime-filled, and unsafe. But they understand resources are limited, and that they must take a proactive role that complements the public and private investment in the community. Issues and needs were identified and voted on to determine which were most important. Streets and sidewalks emerged as the top concern. The desire for safety, an emphasis in the first two exercises, was again apparent as citizens identified better lighting, sidewalks, and streets as first priorities. Activity centers, beautification, the commercial environment, and housing were also priority areas. A complete listing of the voting is included in the Appendices.



Speaking Up: Focus Groups

The charrette offered many opportunities for people to provide input in different settings at varying times. Several focus group meetings were conducted at CSET headquarters in Orosi and at Villa de Guadalupe between the two communities on Friday. Focus groups varied in size from a dozen to several dozen attendees. The facilitator, Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, invited all participants to anonymously voice their concerns and tell what they what like the charrette to accomplish. Minutes of the proceedings are provided in the Appendices. Some primary points that emerged during the day were:

- Traffic is too fast. Street crossings are dangerous for people walking.
- Development is hindered by water and sewer issues.
- People must leave town to shop for many of their needs.
- Residents would like more public space for recreation and gatherings.
- There is momentum within the citizenry for improving quality of life.



Fifth grade at Cutler School. One idea is shown below.



During the field tour participants identified problems such as narrow or nonexistent sidewalks and opportunities, such as this potential pocket-park site next to the bank.

Youth

The youth of the community are a primary concern for those who participated in the charrette. Residents repeatedly stated the need for youth facilities such as a YMCA, recreation center, and better playgrounds. Their desire for better pedestrian crossings and sidewalks were often punctuated by remarks about their concerns for the children of the community.

On Friday, November 2, the Consultant team visited Mrs. Lloyd's fifth grade class at Cutler Elementary School on SR 63. The children were eager participants, with suggestions that ranged from completing the sidewalk system to building a shopping mall. A list of their ideas and the number of votes is included in the Appendices.

Field Tour

Over breakfast of Mexican pastries, Dan Burden provided a resident training to demonstrate what types of designs might be used to address many of their concerns. The training introduced people to concepts that address the issues that had been raised. After the training, residents took part in a walking audit of the area. Participants were assigned to analyze SR-63 and downtown Cutler-Orosi through the eyes of children, the elderly, the disabled and themselves. They pointed out issues and discussed possible solutions. There are many walkers of all ages in the community, but sidewalks are discontinuous and speeds are fast. Some of the vehicle traffic patterns, such as those at the grocery store parking lot, create chaotic situations.



Citizen Design Teams

After lunch, participants took the information gathered during the morning and began sketching design ideas for a safer SR-63 and revitalized downtowns in Cutler-Orosi. Participants spent several hours in the afternoon illustrating their ideas on maps. For example, many showed roundabouts on their maps after learning how roundabouts function and improve safety. Landscaped medians, sidewalk table dining and other creative ideas were expressed. A listing of ideas presented is provided in the Appendix.



Bringing it all Together: Preliminary Design Concept Presentations

The consultant design team spent Sunday, November 4th and most of Monday, November 5th analyzing government documents, conducting further observation of the study area, and evaluating the values, needs, and suggestions made during the charrette events. From this process, the design team developed the preliminary design concept. The design team presented this concept during two presentations to obtain feedback from the general public and government agencies.



Government Presentation

In the afternoon, design team traffic engineer Michael Wallwork presented the design concept to Tulare County Resource Management and Caltrans District 6 engineering and planning staff, and Tulare County Supervisor Steve Worthley, who represents Cutler-Orosi. After his presentation, a spirited discussion followed on the plan. District 6 staff voiced concern that they have yet to be provided explicit technical direction on the State Director's policy on Context-Sensitive Design solutions. In addition, this staff noted that any design changes to SR-63 must be consistent with the long-term transportation needs of the community. Specific concerns included the proposed street trees and medians. Caltrans has sponsored a study of street trees within medians of state highways Tulare County should consult. Caltrans also suggested relinquishing SR 63 through Cutler-Orosi to Tulare County. This would facilitate proposed improvements. Wallwork addressed the participant's questions and concerns regarding emergency access vehicles, street trees on SR-63 and medians compromising access. The participants were generally enthusiastic about the design team's plan to reroute commuter traffic through a truck bypass from SR-63 to Road 120. See the appendix for notes from this presentation.

On Monday evening, the design team presented the design concept to over 130 people at the final town meeting. Participants were invited to provide any additional input before the concepts were developed into a final vision. Audience members broke into spontaneous applause at several moments during the design presentation. Some expressed concern about how funding for construction and maintenance would be obtained. The consensus was that the conceptual plan represents the future the citizens envision for the community. At the end of the presentation, Esaul Guerrero, Cutler-Orosi Incorporation Committee chair, said that he was setting out paper for people to sign-up to help implement this vision. Three sheets of paper were filled with names.

Vision Plan

Street improvements, beautification, and civic and commercial development are needed for Cutler-Orosi to achieve their vision of a safe, sustainable, quality place to live and raise families. General principles are discussed first here, followed by site-specific street reconstruction recommendations that show how the principles can be implemented. The site-specific street recommendations are separated into two categories. Phase One recommendations primarily address immediate safety needs, but also include some low-cost beautification efforts. Phase Two recommendations, beginning with completion of the proposed truck bypass, include intermediate- and longer-term projects that can be undertaken in stages.

Streets

The two main streets in the community, State Route 63, also known as Road 128, and Avenue 416, also known as El Monte Drive, a County facility, have a profound impact on the community. A discussion of these streets is required to clarify their role, the perspective and responsibilities of agencies overseeing them, and the possibilities for the future.

Street Types

Engineers have labels for streets that explain their function primarily in terms of their function within a system-wide network. These terms allow engineers to quantify street design considerations such as vehicle speed, capacity, delay, lighting, signing, and others that impact driver safety and the regional movement of vehicles. For purposes of this discussion, streets will be defined as freeways or segments of highways identified by adjacent land use.

Freeways

The nation's freeway system was designed primarily for vehicles traveling through communities or neighborhoods to access surface streets in the vicinity of their destination. Most drivers expect freeways to offer limited access to destinations along the route, and they hope the freeway will provide a fast, continuous travel path to their destination. Freeways are often the safest place to drive. Engineers are careful to provide wide lanes, "clear zones" free of obstacles such as trees and poles in case a vehicle leaves the road, and other roadway features such as medians and barrier rails. Design elements such as these generally remain consistent through both rural and urban areas. These safety design measures have prevented many vehicle crashes and saved many lives over the years.



SR 63 (Road 128) looking toward Orosi at the intersection of Avenue 408 is typical of a suburban highway section that transitions to an urban highway. Even though this is a very short section of road, motorists feel comfortable driving fast here. Note the new sidewalk on the left side of the highway. There is no sidewalk on the right side of the highway, and no marked crosswalk in the vicinity.

Rural Highways

The definition of “rural” varies. In this report we define rural highways as those where few buildings are located adjacent to the street. Rural highways often have many of the features of a freeway. Avenue 416, El Monte Way, between the outskirts of Orosi and Dinuba, is a good example of a four lane rural highway. Lanes are wide and speeds are fast. SR 63 is a good example of a two lane rural highway. Because the land use adjacent to these highways does not require frequent access and crossings, and few people have reason to walk in these areas, rural highways are usually posted at speeds of 55 mph and higher, depending on the design features of the highway. The rural highway network is designed primarily to serve as a thoroughfare between destinations.

Suburban Highway Segments

As a rural highway nears the center of a community, buildings and cross streets occur more frequently. In this transition area between the center of a community and the sparsely inhabited rural area, more access to property is needed. There are more vehicle turning movements and more people walking. This activity is often occurring on streets that were built to serve as rural highways. Drivers usually behave as if they are still in rural areas unless the design features of the roadway have been significantly changed. A change in the posted speed limit is not likely to cause motorists to slow down unless it is accompanied by extensive enforcement.

Urban Highway Segments

Highways often run through the downtown area of rural communities. These rural downtown areas have higher concentrations of buildings, access points, and pedestrians than suburban areas. The purpose of the highway in these segments remains the same: to move traffic through the city and to provide access to the adjacent properties. However, the balance between these activities has changed because more people want access to and from property alongside the street.



These walkers waited at the corner for a gap in traffic, but obviously didn't feel comfortable once they started across the street. It is difficult to judge the gap in traffic when standing at the edge of a long, wide expanse of asphalt.

The Department uses “Context Sensitive Solutions” as an approach to plan, design, construct, maintain and operate its transportation system. These solutions use innovative and inclusive approaches that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic, and environmental values with transportation safety, maintenance and performance goals. Context sensitive solutions will be reached through a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving all stakeholders.

Director’s Policy, Caltrans

Balanced Transportation

It is this balance between uses that is challenging. Streets that cater to through traffic have wide, fast lanes and limited stopping points to maximize driver convenience. This doesn’t work well, however, for school children, shoppers, and others who are walking or bicycling to their destination. Cross traffic and turning vehicles must also be safely accommodated. As more local access traffic is generated, controls are required at intersections. These controls, signals or stop signs, impact the ability of the highway to handle larger volumes of traffic. Engineers must weigh the needs of the through traffic against the needs of the local traffic.

Other considerations, such as the desire of roadside businesses to capture commerce from passing vehicles, or the need to allow large trucks on the street further complicate the balancing process. For example, SR 63 is designated as a Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) Truck route. This designation allows trucks longer than those normally legal in California to travel on the highway. Design features such as wide turning radii that are required by large trucks also impact driver behavior.

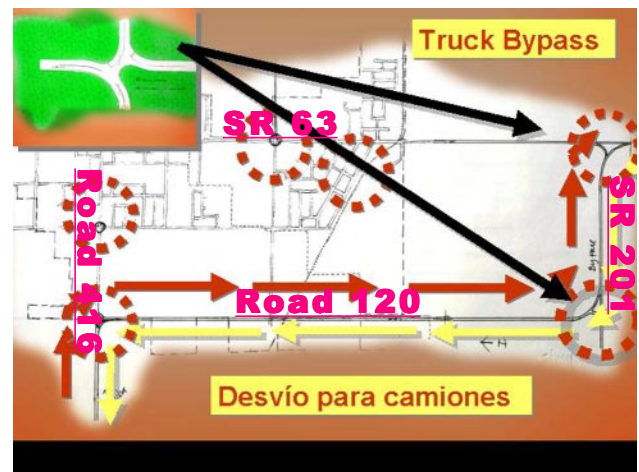
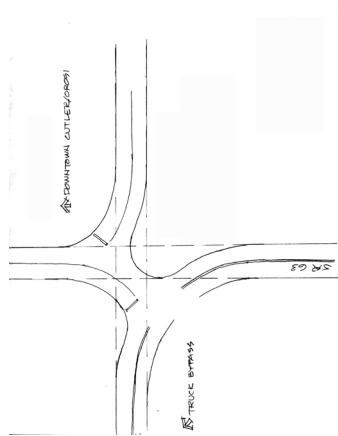
Context Sensitive Design

One approach to achieving the best possible balance between the users of streets is called context sensitive design. This term simply means that street designers evaluate the needs of the community impacted by the street or highway along with the need to provide fast, convenient, regional or statewide travel corridors for vehicles. The role of the community is to identify their priorities for the designers. In the case of Cutler-Orosi, Caltrans provided a Community-Based Transportation Planning (CBTP) grant to the community in order to learn what the community wants. This information will help them approach the planning, maintenance, and operation of SR63 with sensitivity to the needs of the community. The street redesign and development recommendations contained in this report reflect the vision of the charrette participants for an economically sustainable community and a safe, beautiful street system that serves all modes of surface transportation.



Tree wells, like those shown in the photo at left, are an effective way substitute for continuous planter strips to buffer the sidewalk from traffic, narrow the roadway, and to allow for parking. This location has two parking places between each tree, but there could be more or less.

The illustration shows how trucks and commuter traffic could bypass SR 63. Cutler-Orosi is in the upper left corner. Traffic would bypass SR 63 by taking the parallel Road 120. The drawing shows detail of the SR 63/201 intersection. The dotted circles show potential roundabout locations.

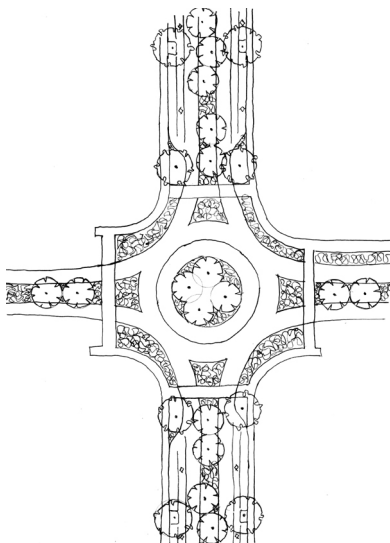


Truck Bypass

The community vision is to adjust the balance between through traffic and local needs to provide a more beautiful, walkable place. This can best be accomplished by reducing through traffic on SR 63.

A review of the 1998 county traffic counts and the projected counts for 2020 reveal that the basic traffic pattern through Cutler-Orosi is as shown in the diagram. People are traveling primarily from the southern area of SR 63 to and from Dinuba. This traffic pattern provides the opportunity to move a significant portion of the through traffic from Cutler-Orosi onto a truck bypass that starts at the intersection of SR 63 and SR 201, travels west along 201, and turns north onto Road 120 (J19).

A roundabout design for the intersection of Road 120 and Avenue 416 is shown in this drawing. This roundabout would serve as an alternate means of directing traffic to the center of Cutler-Orosi.



This bypass will enable vehicles, especially trucks, that want to travel between the southern section of SR 63 and Avenue 416, to avoid Cutler and Orosi. The commuter traffic that travels between SR 63 and Dinuba could also use the truck bypass. It is important that the directional sign for northbound traffic on SR 63 be labeled “Downtown Cutler-Orosi (right arrow)”

A roundabout at the intersection of Road 120 (J19) and Avenue 416 (El Monte) is important as part of the truck bypass to provide a gateway to downtown Cutler-Orosi. This will redirect any tourists who may have missed the first sign to the downtown area. Tourists southbound from Avenue 416 can also be directed through the downtown through this roundabout. Signing to direct tourists and others to the downtown is important at this location. This rerouting will allow the community to take advantage of the economic opportunities that may be provided by tourist or commute traffic without requiring a wide, fast thoroughfare.

Roundabouts have been demonstrated to be generally safer for motor vehicles and pedestrians than other forms of at-grade intersections.

Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, U.S. Department of Transportation

A Santa Barbara, CA roundabout



Roundabouts offer many benefits to the Cutler-Orosi area, including smooth traffic flow at speeds appropriate for the area, landscape and gateway opportunities, and improved pedestrian crossings.

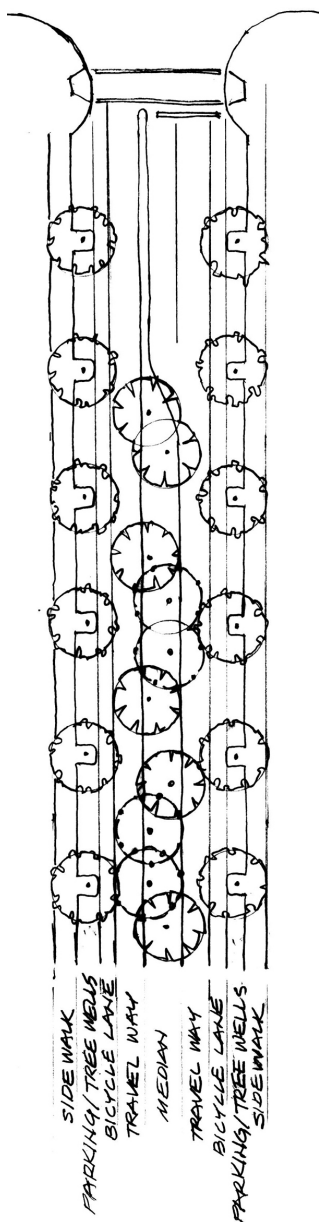
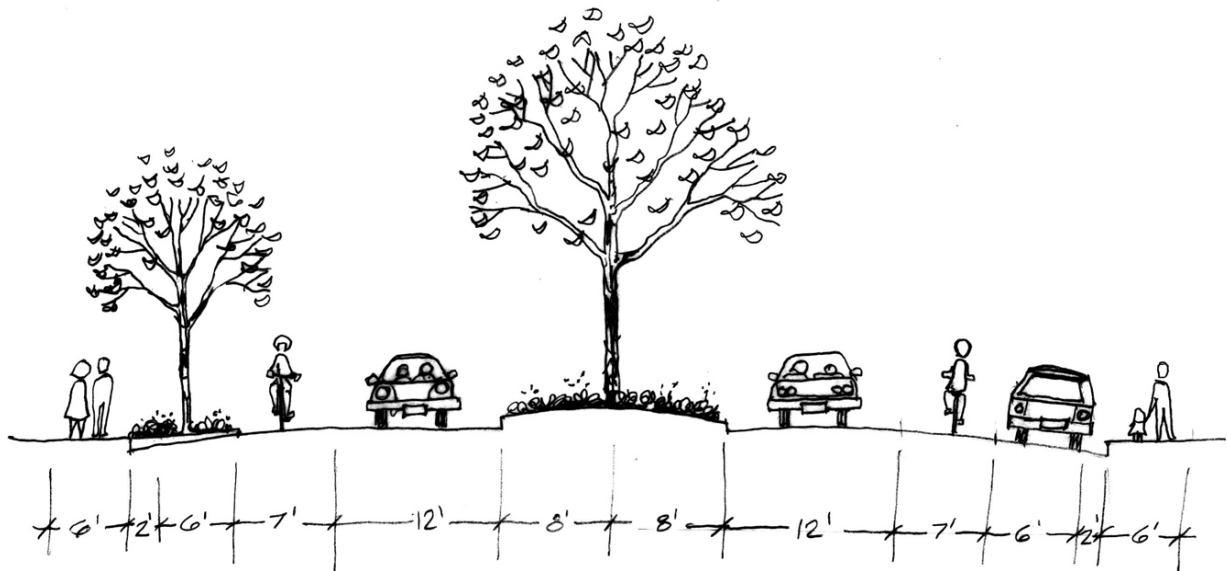
Street Design Elements

The design of each of the elements of the street has an impact on the overall street environment. This section includes a brief discussion of roundabouts and other recommended components of the street.

Roundabouts are designed to allow traffic to travel between 15 and 20 mph through intersections. Drivers circulating in roundabouts have right of way, so entering traffic yields. Drivers enter just as they would turn right from driveways – wait for gaps and enter. Roundabouts offer opportunities to provide attractive entries and focal points. Center islands and splitter islands are often landscaped. Roundabouts terminate long street views, and have an effect on calming all approaching streets. They should be designed to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Pedestrian crossings are placed one car length away from circulating traffic to ensure drivers' attention is focused on pedestrians, not turning movements. This placement also encourages pedestrians to cross behind vehicles entering roundabouts. Splitter islands, triangular islands at entries to roundabouts, often create refuges for pedestrians waiting for crossing gaps. The consultants recommend the use of desert plants to landscape the roundabout because after the first year they will not require any watering. Santa Monica is now successfully using a range of desert plants to landscape their medians as they pedestrianize their main streets. Caltrans is not opposed to the use of roundabouts in general. However, each proposed location will need a detailed engineering study to determine its appropriateness. Caltrans Design Information Bulletin Number 80 (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/opd/dib/dibprg.htm>) contains guidelines and requirements that must be incorporated into roundabout designs.

Often the issue of emergency service vehicles, especially fire trucks, using roundabouts is raised. It is an interesting question considering the significant danger firefighters face using a signalized intersection. Over the years many fire trucks have been hit in intersections by vehicles whose drivers did not see or hear them and hit the fire truck broadside. At a modern roundabout the speeds of all vehicles are kept low and the threat of a broadside, or "t-bone" crash is eliminated. An emergency vehicle must slow down to around 20 mph or so to pass through the roundabout. This is about the same speed at which an emergency vehicle proceeds through a signalized intersection because they must slow down to avert the threat of a broadside crash. Many fire chiefs recognize the increased safety a roundabout brings to their crews.



The illustrations show the street after all reconstruction in Phase II is completed. Sidewalks on both sides of the street are needed to accommodate the many people who walk in Cutler-Orosi. The six-foot width is needed so people can pass each other comfortably. On the left of the cross section is shown a planter strip between the sidewalk and the curb. This is a preferential design because it separates people walking from traffic, which makes the walking experience safer and more comfortable. Planter strips bring streets to life with the beauty of landscaping and space for attractive street furniture, lighting, and other amenities. Planter strips also provide places outside sidewalk space for traffic signs, fire hydrants, utility boxes and other operational elements of streets. In this design, tree wells are shown as an alternate to continuous planter strips. Trees can be planted between every two or three parking spaces.

On the right side of the drawing below is shown a sidewalk with no planter strip or tree well. Although this is less desirable, there may be space limitations that prevent provision of the preferred design.

Parallel parking spaces are set at 6-foot widths when there are bike lanes. This configuration encourages people to park close to the curb to reduce conflicts between people opening their car doors and bicyclists. The bike lanes and parking areas provide additional separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

Raised medians in the center of the streets can be landscaped with trees and low-water, low-maintenance plantings. Desert plants that only require watering in their first year are being used successfully in Santa Monica. Medians provide essential buffers between opposing lanes of traffic and can increase carrying capacity of individual lanes by 30%. They do this by moving left turn traffic out of the through lanes, and reducing the friction of crossover traffic. At major driveways left turn pockets are provided in the median.



A buffer, or planting strip, between the sidewalk and the curb provides separation between traffic and people who are walking. It also provides space for landscaping and street amenities.



Raised, landscaped medians provide a number of benefits. As the photo above shows, they can also help build community identity. The photo below shows the extension of curbs at corners that are often called bulb-outs.



This treatment enables management of access points along the road so that full access is provided at major generators and partial- to no-left turn access is provided at lesser driveways. Medians provide pedestrians with safe refuge as they cross streets. They allow space for gateway treatments and they help eliminate aggressive behaviors such as inappropriate passing.

Bulb-outs are extensions of curbing that reduce lane widths. Bulb-outs shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. Bulb-outs at intersections also slow turning traffic, provide added space for street amenities, protect parked vehicles, and improve sight lines.

In an effort to constrain costs, recommendations for the realignment of curbs and gutters are restricted to specific sites. If new construction occurs or additional funding becomes available, planter strips should be provided between sidewalks and the street by either moving the curbs and gutters or obtaining additional right-of-way from property owners.

Beautification

Trees, benches, flowers, clean alleys, and civic pride were top issues for charrette participants. Many spoke of the slow decline of the community, years of losing their youth and long-time residents to more vibrant places, and a strong desire to change.

Efforts need not be restricted to public spaces. Property owners and tenants will benefit as Cutler-Orosi becomes more attractive. And this will happen more quickly if everyone makes a contribution. Small investments reap a big return— a few flowers here, a donated bench there. The local refuse company has already embarked on a program of providing free trashcans and emptying them on a regular basis. Their efforts could be matched by other commercial enterprises.

The recommendations that follow vary from no cost to moderate cost. Within some of the suggestions are opportunities for entrepreneurial enterprise. The skills, knowledge, and resources of those living in the community must be utilized for the full vision to become reality.



Colorful displays create visual interest and can attract customers.



The computer simulations shown above illustrate how beautification can enhance marketability.



Community Cleanup

The community is sorely in need of a face-lift. While funding is required for many things, resources needed for a cleanup day are minimal. The local refuse company has already been a partner in a cleanup effort and will participate in additional cleanup efforts. The community should take advantage of such a willing partner. The cleanup day could include a ceremonial tree planting, a celebration, and possibly some planting of bulbs that will bloom in early spring.



The freshly painted facade above shows the pride of ownership that seems missing in the photo below.



Trees

Trees beautify a community, provide shade, reduce pollution, provide homes for wildlife, and improve storm drainage. The urban tree forest in San Jose, California, has the capacity to reduce the temperature as much as 11 degrees. One single mature tree provides the cooling equivalent of five average room air conditioners running 12 hours per day. The City of Modesto Public Works Director has found that by protecting the asphalt from the sun's rays, an extensive tree canopy extends the life of a street's use before it needs to be resurfaced by 10-20 years.



Tree wells, like the one shown above, can serve as an effective substitute for continuous planter strips.

Tree wells are recommended for Phase Two of the street redesign. Trees should be planted as soon as possible following the addition of the tree wells. But even before the tree wells are in, planting can begin outside of the public right-of-way. Tree species, planting methods, water needs, and location are very important considerations. Improper species selection or improper planting methods threaten the life of a tree and the community's attempt to improve the community. Many resources are available to help California communities with planting issues. The Urban Tree Foundation in Visalia has worked extensively with the City of Visalia and other Valley and San Francisco Bay Area communities and has been extremely successful at securing grants for community urban forestry projects. The Foundation can be reached at (559) 713-0631. The Community Trees Organization website at www.communitytrees.org contains links to 48 California websites with tree information. Tree Guidelines for San Joaquin Valley Communities, written by the USDA Western Center for Urban Forest Research and Education, can be downloaded from the Local Government Commission's web site at http://www.lgc.org/bookstore/energy/publications/sjv_treeguidelines.html. For a hard copy, contact Dave Defanti at (916) 448-1198. The USDA Western Center for Urban Forest Research and Education can be reached at (530)752-7636.



The simple act of planting and caring for flowers is a way for residents to significantly beautify their community.

In Phase Two, medians can be planted with trees and other landscaping materials. A landscaping theme should be developed as part of the design work for the median. This will ensure that the plantings unify the streets and help identify the communities.

Flowers

Enterprising high school students in tiny Halfway, Oregon, raise funds for school programs by selling local merchants hanging pots of flowers each spring. The price includes seasonal maintenance and watering of the flowers. The effect of dozens of hanging planters filled with pink petunias is dramatic. This type of creative thinking takes advantage of skills, knowledge, and creativity within the community, rather than relying upon outside resources. Cutler Orosi could develop a unique planting program that would contribute to the unity and sense of identity in the community.



Community Gardens

Community gardens of produce, flowers, or other greenery bring people together and provide many opportunities. In fact, Seattle learned that crime is reduced in areas where community gardens are established. There is a bounty of information on community gardening available on websites, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Participants spoke of the desire for a Farmer’s Market. In some areas, communities market their own produce. This is another project that can utilize the skills and knowledge of the residents of the community.



Benches

Benches placed outside of the walking path provide opportunities for gathering and resting. Benches help create a sense of welcome by inviting a person to rest, and contribute to safety by providing watchful “eyes on the street.” Benches could be placed and maintained by local institutions or individuals. It is also possible that skilled craftspeople within the community could build unique benches.



Transit

Transit shelters are needed. Until funding is obtained, however, benches would at least provide minimal comfort to families waiting for the bus. The public transportation options offered to the community could include a Regional Transit Center, and additional routes.



Retention Ponds

Storm water retention ponds in Cutler-Orosi are unsightly areas that gather garbage. Future retention ponds should be designed for dual purposes. Some communities design retention areas so they can be used as practice fields for soccer or other recreational activities during dry periods. This would meet one of the needs defined by the community during the charrette. Public spaces are safest when they watched by neighbors. Orient play fields so that homes face them and provide edge treatments that encourage people to sit and watch.

Public art, like the examples shown below, is a source of community pride and identity.



Public Art

The roundabouts will offer delightful opportunities for public art and creative expression of the unique character of Cutler Orosi. However, these features will not materialize immediately. An assessment of the skills and knowledge of local residents is could reveal local talent willing to contribute. Talent and appropriateness of design can be assessed with a contest or some other method devised by the creative people of Cutler-Orosi. The wall on the grocery store at the southeast corner of the intersection of First Street and Orosi Drive was suggested as a site for a mural. The nearby town of Exeter has undergone a large mural program to beautify the blank walls in their downtown.



Civic and Commercial Development

Public space and activity centers were high on the list of priorities for Cutler-Orosi residents. A recreation center received the highest amount of votes during the wish list exercise at the town meeting on November 1st. This community of 12,000 has few civic areas and few activity centers for children. There is no public swimming pool and only a very limited library. People linger and socialize in public areas, but no benches attractive gathering places are provided. The recent market analysis showed that people must leave the community to purchase many of their needs.



The town of Exeter has transformed eyesores into assets by having local artists paint murals on blank walls in their downtowns.

The vision for a safe, vibrant community for residents to enjoy was very clearly expressed during the charrette. One very necessary component for this is for a sense of place and identity. Redesign of the street provides safety, and other elements help beautify. But a center is needed to bring Cutler-Orosi together and to develop the richness of everyday life in their hometown that is desired by residents.



Wide sidewalks separated from traffic with a planter strip should be provided as development occurs.

Avenue 408 Village

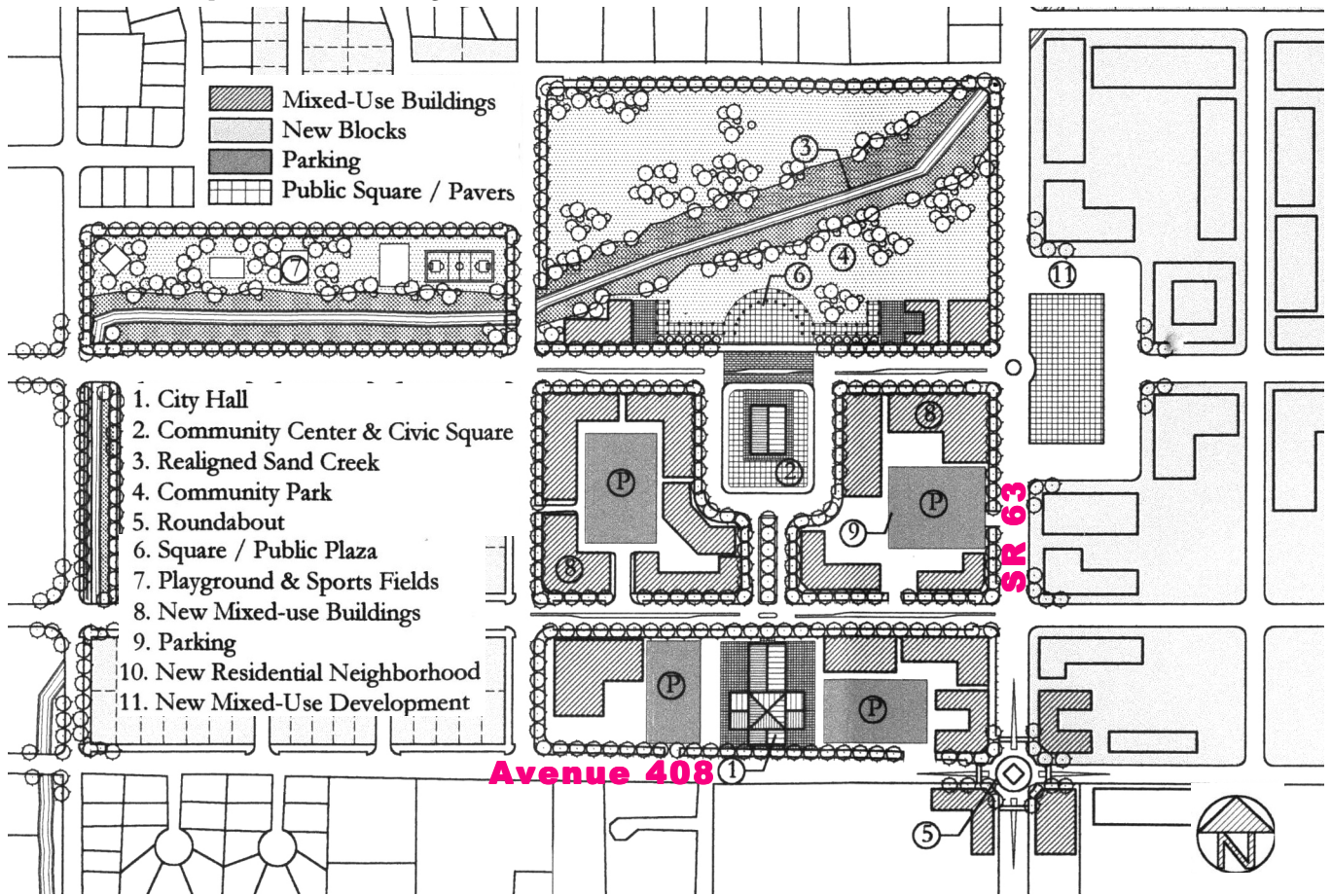
Participants identified several potential sites for civic and commercial development. Many have great potential. The northwest corner of Avenue 408 and SR 63 is recommended for a town center because of its location and size. This location is exceptional because it allows for a close connection with the existing fabric from either side of the vacant land and it is very visible along the two main thoroughfares. In addition, there is an opportunity to create a park or recreation center, the latter which residents selected as the most important asset missing in Cutler Orosi, at the existing drainage canal. Significant public buildings such as a future community center, town hall and transit center can be located here as well.

The proposed street system within the village is a modified grid that links to the existing street layout. The village area will have all the public and commercial uses that are lacking in both towns and will be accessible by foot, bicycle, or vehicle.



Photos of other communities suggest an architectural theme for the proposed Cutler-Orosi town center.

The site map below shows how Cutler-Orosi's town center could be laid out. This would be a potential site for a Regional Transit Center.





Special emphasis should be placed on building at least one, and preferably two, public buildings with their adjoining space such as a plaza or boulevard. Public buildings and public spaces are the most memorable areas of any town and have the potential to enhance the quality of life of the existing residents. A community center linked to the public spaces depicted in the site plan would be a very good first choice for the community to sponsor. The building does not have to be very expensive if placed in a prominent site and designed with some care as depicted in the rendering.



Buildings can be added over time as community and market needs may dictate. The implementation of commercial projects can be phased so the first layout resembles typical small-scale strip development, but with better design and pedestrian orientation. The developers of all parcels should be required to rebuild the sidewalk adjacent to their property as an eight-foot wide facility with a planter strip. As more buildings are constructed, a true town center on a civic plaza and a well-landscaped boulevard can emerge out of the partnership between public and private projects.



These photos suggest how the town center could look.

The planning and design strategies are based on the typical development of the central valley in California. Urban blocks with multi-story buildings along the sidewalks are seen in nearby towns that have successfully redeveloped. This plan depicts multi-story buildings with commercial and office space downstairs and residential or office space on the second floor. In the first phase parking lots may be adjacent to the roads with landscaped edges. As more buildings are added parking will be located at the center of the block behind the buildings.

This rendering depicts a concept for the town





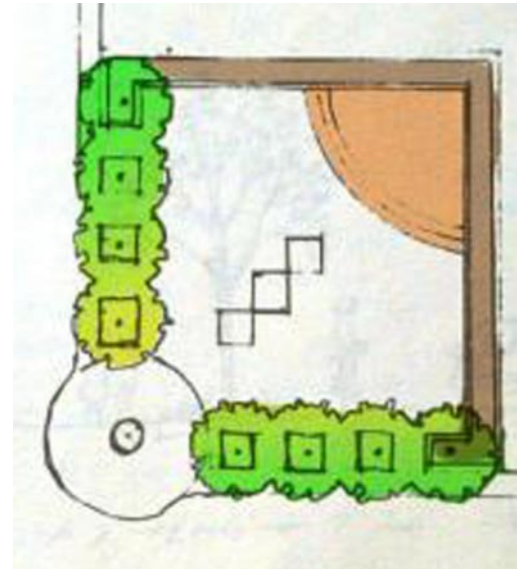
This lovely plaza was converted from a former parking lot.

When the towns incorporate the layout for the village area should be adopted as a Specific Plan or a Precise Plan. A Precise Plan can include the same level of detail as a Specific Plan but does not require a financial analysis be undertaken. The new City should adopt architectural guidelines to encourage appropriate buildings and amenities.

Avenue 416 (El Monte Way) and SR 63

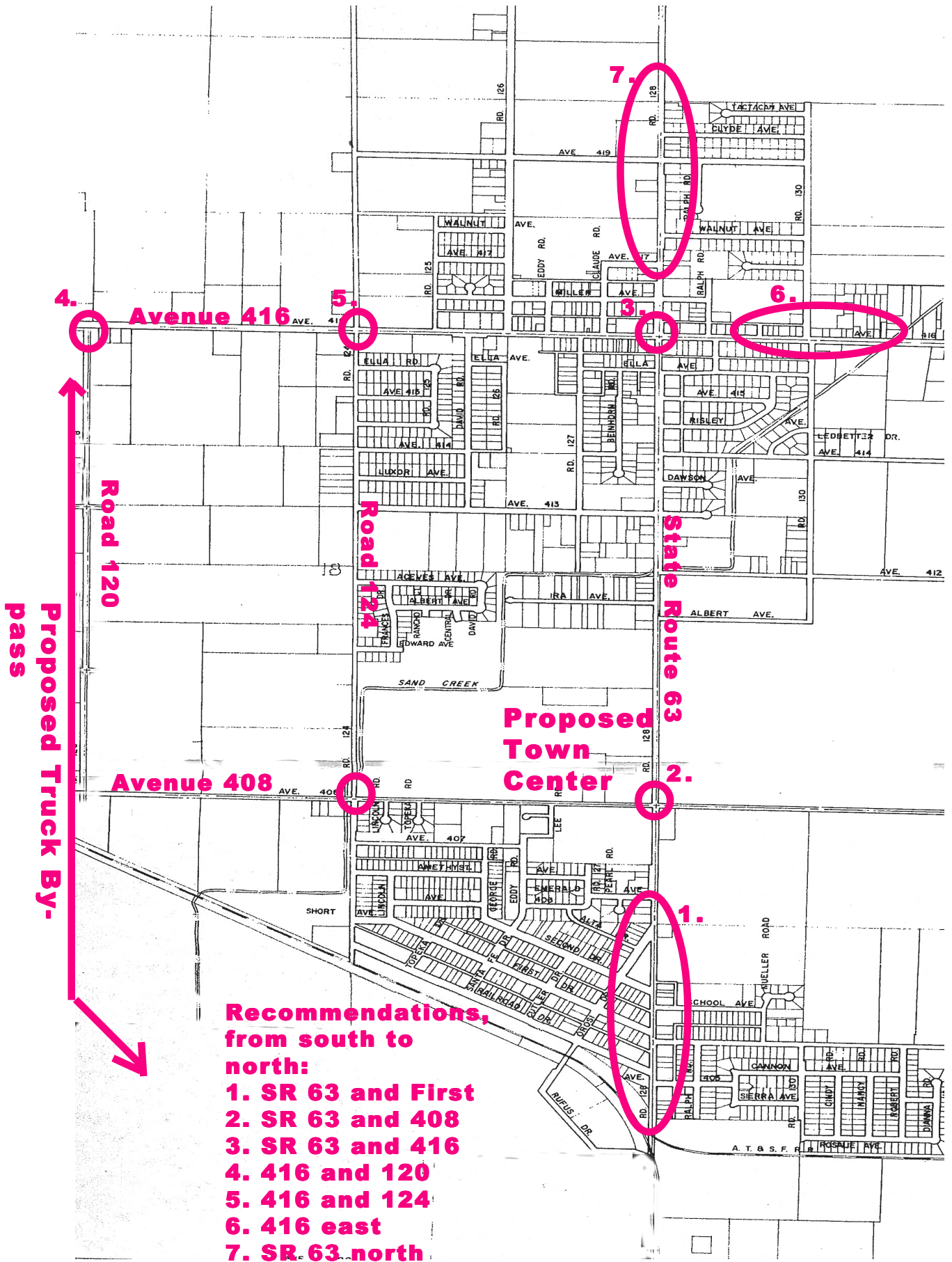
Any recommendation for privately owned property is merely a suggestion of what might be welcomed by the community. With that said, the vacant, fenced lot on the southeast corner has great potential as a small public plaza, as suggested in the drawing below. This site could host public events or a market place. Another potential public space is described below.

Quiet public spaces create a sense of place. This niche between buildings has the potential to become a delightful place for an afternoon snack or rest.



This rendering suggests how an existing vacant corner lot could be transformed into a small public plaza.

The photo at left shows one possibility for the development of a parcel of land between the Union Bank Building and the Mason's Hall into a public plaza. Youth are currently gathering in this area after school. This site was identified by young people as a possible park during the pedestrian audit conducted by Harrison Rue in December 2000.



- Recommendations,
from south to north:**
- 1. SR 63 and First**
 - 2. SR 63 and 408**
 - 3. SR 63 and 416**
 - 4. 416 and 120**
 - 5. 416 and 124**
 - 6. 416 east**
 - 7. SR 63 north**



Street Recommendations

The charrette team developed these recommendations after consulting the 20-year traffic projections of Caltrans and the Tulare Association of Governments for SR 63. Phase One recommendations should be implemented immediately to address serious safety concerns and to make some immediate aesthetic improvements at low cost. Phase Two recommendations begin with the truck bypass. Other Phase Two projects will incrementally enhance the community as resources permit.

SR 63 (Road 128) Corridor Recommendations

The top priority of the community was for changes to SR 63 to address their concerns for the safety, especially that of children walking. A safe, beautiful street will help the community in its efforts to improve commercial appeal and attract development. Irrespective of economic development, the safety issues observed during field tours and described by charrette participants must be addressed. Drivers on SR 63 frequently do not stop for pedestrians waiting to use the crosswalk and often do not yield to a person already in the crosswalk. The principals of Orosi High School and Cutler School, both of which are located on SR 63, are very concerned about students crossing the street. After spending two hours observing morning traffic throughout the study area, traffic engineer Michael Wallwork said improvements to the pedestrian environment are needed immediately.

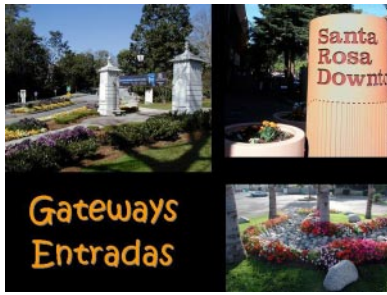
Phase One:

Retain existing cross section with the following modifications:

- Complete sidewalk system on both sides of the street from the railroad crossing to Clyde Avenue north of the high school.
- Install lighting throughout the corridor.
- Install 6 foot square tree wells and trees along the corridor where feasible.
- Narrow the outside lane to 12' by painting an edge line.
- North of 416, narrow the street to two lanes with a median, bike lanes and tree wells. Traffic volumes in this section can be accommodated without any additional changes.
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Cutler School, Avenue 413, and at Walnut as shown under Site Specific Recommendations.
- Provide basic shelter at existing transit stops.
- Implement Phase I treatments listed under each site.
- Complete bypass

Phase Two:

- Add a continuous, landscaped median, bike lanes and additional tree wells per drawings.
- Extend on-street parking by removing two through lanes.
- Add gateway elements in accordance with Caltrans policies.
- Implement site-specific treatments as recommended.



Gateway treatments announce arrival at a unique place and signal drivers that they are entering an urbanized area where slower speeds are appropriate.



SR 63 at Railroad Drive

Phase Two:

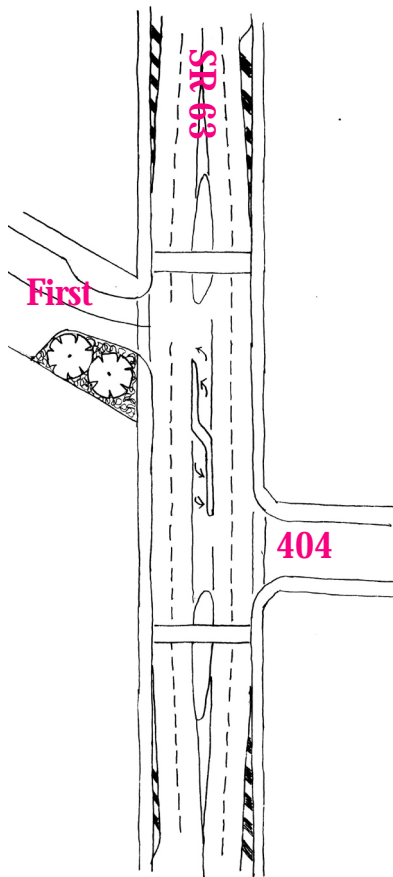
Construction of the median provides a great opportunity to create a gateway treatment in the median. The separation of the lanes creates ample space to put the gateway treatment in the driver's eye. All gateway designs should comply with Caltrans' policy on gateway monuments as it appears in its Traffic Manual and Highway Design Manual.

SR 63 at First Street and Avenue 404

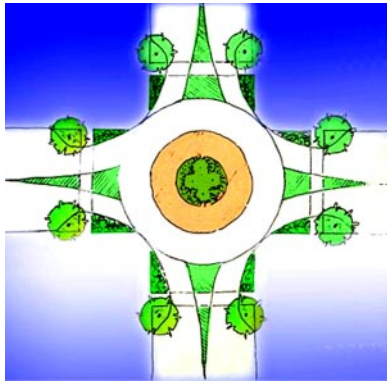
Participants stated many crashes occur at this intersection. Observations revealed high turning movements and vehicle movements from First Street to Avenue 404. The left turns must occur from through lanes because there are no turn pockets. This may be contributing to the high number of crashes. Between the two streets there is angled pedestrian crossing. The crossing area is within the area of the turning movement, creating many possible conflict points between walkers and vehicles. The crosswalk needs to be moved to a site with fewer turning movements.

Phase One:

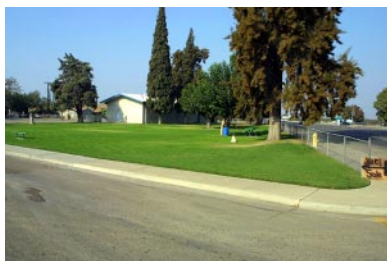
The existing crossing that crosses SR 63 on an angle between First and 404 should be relocated south of Avenue 404 through the median or north of First Street through the median, or both, as shown in the drawing.



Restripe SR 63 in the vicinity to create the two short medians and two short left turn lanes as shown. Construct two landscaped medians. This design provides median refuge areas for the pedestrians in a reduced conflict location and left turn pockets to store four vehicles (two in each direction). Squaring and narrowing First Street as shown increases the distance between the two intersections, provide additional storage. It will also help to decrease the speed of vehicles turning into First Street.



The audience broke into applause when a photo demonstrating the concept of a roundabout at First Street and Orosi Drive was shown.



The public space at the utility office could be used for community events.



Phase Two:

This configuration can be easily integrated into future phases of street reconstruction when the number of lanes on SR 63 is reduced.

SR 63 at First Street and Orosi Drive

Phase Two:

This area is the heart of the Cutler downtown. This intersection is very large because both streets have sixty feet of asphalt. This expanse creates a very wide, stark intersection. Construction of a round center island as part of a roundabout would significantly decrease the amount of asphalt and provide an opportunity for a central feature. Bulb-outs and splitter islands could be added as funds become available to enhance pedestrian crossings.

The bakery on the southwest corner of the intersection has indented parking on Orosi Drive. This parking should be removed and replaced with on-street angled parking consistent with the other legs of the intersection. The space can then be converted to an outdoor eating area.



The marketing analysis shows an unmet demand for additional eating establishments. Sidewalk cafes are a popular addition to any downtown.

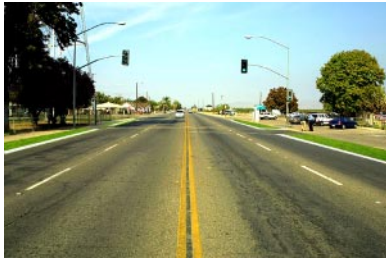
SR 63 at Orosi Drive at Public Utility District Office

Phase One:

This street is sixty feet wide, which is excessive for the environment. It should be narrowed to 24 feet between SR 63 and Second Street. The narrowing should occur adjacent to the Public Utility District Office to allow expansion of the park green space at this site. This space could provide the opportunity to conduct a small farmer's market or other community events. As part of the narrowing, the intersection of Orosi Drive with SR 63 should be squared to facilitate left turns and to slow down right turns from SR 63 onto Orosi Drive. The corner property on SR 63 and Orosi Drive needs to have the driveway realigned as part of this reconstruction.

This man is running across the street after leaving the video store. People afoot or in car seek the most convenient and direct path to and from their destination. A median would provide a safe refuge area for people crossing to access commercial areas or their homes.





The school crossing should have curb extensions as shown above, or a median refuge island as shown below. In both cases, highly visible marking are needed.



SR 63 at Cutler School Crossing

The signalized crossing at the school was provided to assist children accessing the facility. Charrette participants were still concerned about the crossing. Some even recommended a pedestrian overpass at this site. An overpass at this site is not practical because of costs and the fact that people often pick more direct routes to their destinations. There are, however, some simple and cost effective strategies that will improve the visibility of the crossing and shorten the time the pedestrian is exposed to traffic. There are two alternatives for Phase Two:

1. Construct a pedestrian refuge island between the travel lanes
2. Add bulb outs in the travel lanes on both sides of the road

Under either scenario, the crosswalk markings need to be upgraded and enhanced with the provision of a reflective thermal plastic high visibility stop bars forty feet from the signal mast arm. In Phase Two, both a median refuge island and bulb out can be provided.

SR 63 at Avenue 408



Avenue 408 provides access to the Villa de Guadalupe multi-family housing complex and other residential areas at the edge of Cutler. It is the planned site for the addition of a civic and commercial area. It also connects the street system to areas envisioned as recreation centers by the community.

Phase Two:

A roundabout is recommended at this site to provide the adequate capacity while retaining the two through lanes on SR 63. A well-designed roundabout will also help fulfill the vision of the community by slowing traffic, enhancing pedestrian movements, and providing the opportunity for additional community identification.



The photos above show existing conditions and a simulation of the proposed roundabout at Avenue 408.

SR 63 at Avenue 413

This is an unsignalized intersection with a pedestrian crossing on the north side that is substandard and extremely difficult to see. Two young girls lost their lives attempting to cross SR 63 here on Halloween a couple of years ago. The addition of a median would provide a refuge for people crossing the street. The markings should be upgraded to high visibility markings. Advance warning signs and pedestrian crossing signs in the medians should be added.

Phase One:

Restripe the approaches on SR 63 to create a 5' median at this unsignalized intersection.

Phase Two:

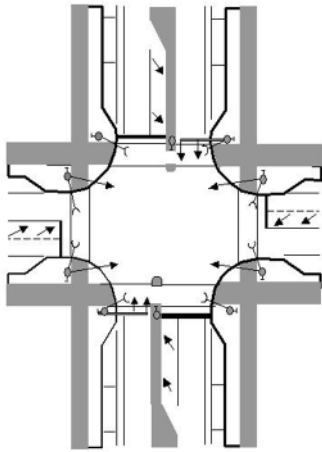
Add bulb outs



Existing conditions at SR 63 and Avenue 416.

SR 63 and Avenue 416 (El Monte Way) Intersection

Limited right-of-way at this intersection eliminated the possibility of using a roundabout. However, a redesign of the intersection will shorten pedestrian crossings and help slow traffic. The redesigned intersection and the redesign of the approaching legs of the roadway are discussed under different headings, but implementation may be done concurrently.



Suggested final intersection design for SR 63 and Avenue 416.

Phase One:

As part of the installation of the median on the north leg, bulb outs can be added to all four corners and landscaping can be added. The two approach lanes on the south leg could be restriped to a left turn only lane and a through lane. The creation of a left turn only lane on the north side, the signal phasing for SR 63 can be changed so that the phasing would be:

Signal Phase 1: concurrent left turns

Signal Phase 2: if needed, a left turn and through phase from the south

Signal Phase 3: north/south through phases

Bulb outs on each corner, to accommodate large turning vehicles.

Phase Two:

Add medians on both legs of Avenue 416 and the south leg of SR 63



Reducing the number of traffic lanes will allow installation of a median for pedestrian refuge.

Avenue 416 west of SR 63

Avenue 416 west of SR 63 is four lanes wide and carries 7,000 to 11,000 vehicles per day. The traffic volume increases the further west the traffic count is taken. The area has significant pedestrian volumes, including children who attend the elementary school. Many people must cross Avenue 416 to shop, to go to school and to meet friends. Therefore, we recommend the redesign of Avenue 416 to two lanes with on-street parking, a narrow median that increases in width as it extends westwards to Road 124. The downtown section of Avenue 416 should have parallel parking on both sides (7'), one lane each way, and a narrow median (4'). The travel lanes need to be wider to allow space for large truck and fire trucks to get through.



Extra landscaping and speed reduction treatments, such as tree wells, are also recommended on both sides of Avenue 416 in between every second or third parking space. Use bulb outs at intersections to protect parked vehicles, to narrow the road and help slow vehicles, to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians, and to provide space for additional landscaping.



The driveway in these two photos are next to each other on Avenue 416. The landscaping in the photo on the right eliminates creates an attractive walking area.



Customers cannot enter the store from this side of the building, which makes this parking area less desirable.

Many people cross the street between their vehicles on the south side of El Monte and the grocery store. This behavior is a result of a lack of parking availability in the lot adjacent to the grocery store on the east side. There is a parking lot for the grocery store on the west side of the building that appears to be under used by customers. It appears that there may have been a west entrance to the store at one time. A doorway on this side of the building, even as an entrance only, would encourage people to utilize the parking on the west side. Another option to increase available parking for the market is to purchase the land adjacent to the market and expand the parking.



The bulb out and median in the photo above depict the type of design recommended on Avenue 416. The median provides a refuge for people crossing, whether at the school or near shopping. Crossing distance is greatly reduced by the median, the reduction in lanes, and the bulb out. Stop lines in advance of the crosswalk should also be used.

There is a signalized crossing at El Monte School, yet it was identified by the Cutler-Orosi Unified School District Transportation Manager as the second most dangerous place for children in Cutler-Orosi because of high levels of auto and pedestrian traffic. Four-lane roads with traffic signals typically reach saturation around 12,000 to 15,000 vehicles per day because of the need for the traffic signals to transfer capacity from the major road to the minor road.

Phase One:

Add bulb outs to both sides of the street at the crossing, move stop bars 40 feet back from the traffic signals, and add highly visibility markings

Phase Two:

Construction of a median on Avenue 416 between Road 120 and SR 63 would help people cross the road within the shopping area. The large number of people crossing at numerous locations in the vicinity of the market can be accommodated by providing gaps level with the street at intervals in the median.



The debris at 416 and 120 indicates this is a site of frequent crashes.



Roundabouts similar to the one depicted above are recommended at the intersections of Road 120 and Road 124 on Avenue 416.

Avenue 416 at Road 120

This is a fully signalized intersection on a four-lane road with a raised median. A single lane roundabout is more than adequate to accommodate traffic and provide for future growth. This roundabout should be constructed in conjunction with the development of the bypass. Later, if needed right, turn lanes could be added to provide increased capacity while retaining the single lane design. A single lane roundabout is safer and more convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists than either a two lane roundabout or traffic signals, although a two-lane roundabout can be made safe for pedestrians through the use of low speed design and special pedestrian crossings.

The roundabout at the truck bypass and Avenue 416 will provide a gateway to people who may be using the truck bypass to help draw them into Orosi. It will also be a gateway for people traveling east on Avenue 416. The only disadvantage of the roundabout, and in many people’s eyes a major impediment is that it will force all drivers to slow down as they approach and enter Orosi. However, the exiting signalized intersection has ample evidence of many crashes occurring at this intersection and its replacement with a roundabout would certainly increase the safety of this intersection especially with increased truck and some vehicle traffic on the truck bypass crossing Avenue 416.

Avenue 416 at Road 124

Phase Two:

Vehicle speeds in this vicinity are relatively high. Debris at the site indicates there have been numerous crashes. A roundabout is recommended at this site to force slower speeds in the vicinity of the school and to reduce the number and severity of crashes. A single lane roundabout is more than adequate to accommodate the 2020 and 2030 projected traffic volumes.

Based on the existing traffic volumes at the intersection of Avenue 416 and Road 124, the proposed truck bypass with a single lane roundabout is adequate at this time and for the foreseeable future. It should operate at only about 60 percent of its capacity. The addition of a median will provide beauty to the street, a safe refuge for pedestrians who are crossing the street, and help slow the traffic.

SR 63 north from Avenue 416 to Clyde



Participants were concerned about safety in this four-lane roadway segment. They told stories of drivers racing to the end of the four-lane segment in a game of “chicken” and a recent fatal crash in the area. Orosi High School and Palm Valley Elementary are both located in this area. A third school is located north of this area on SR 63 where students are not allowed to walk or bike home because of traffic danger. The crossing guard for this area uses a red umbrella to supplement her yellow flag to try to alert the aggressive drivers she daily encounters. SR 63 and Clyde marks the beginning of urban development on the north end of the study area. Unfortunately, many drivers continue into town at unsafe speeds for a populated area.

Traffic volume north of Avenue 416 (El Monte Avenue) is approximately 2,600 vehicles per day. The projected volume in twenty years is 4,500 vehicles per day. This traffic volume is very light and well within the capacity of a two lane street, which can handle up to 12,000 vehicles per day. There are two pedestrian crossings within this area, one at Walnut Avenue and one at Avenue 419.

Phase One:

- Reduce the number of lanes from four to two
- Install a median.
- Install tree wells on both sides of the road.

Avenue 416 east of SR 63

Avenue 416 east of SR 63 carries approximately 3,000 vehicles per day, a very low figure for a four-lane road. East of Sand Creek, Ave 416 is only a two-lane road. It is recommended that between Sand Creek and SR 63 Ave 416 be narrowed to two lanes with parking, a median and bike lanes if possible.

Phase Two:

- Reduce the number of lanes from four to two
- Install a median.
- Install tree wells on both sides of the road.

Implementation

“Communities are never built from the top down, or from the outside in... Outside resources will be much more effectively used if the local community is itself fully mobilized and invested, and if it can define the agendas for which additional resources must be obtained.” Building Communities from the Inside Out.

The following chapter outlines implementation strategies implementing the community’s vision through potential partner organizations and funding opportunities. A more detailed action plan can be found in Chapter 7 of the Cutler-Orosi Commercial Development Plan, included in the Appendix. Planning for the future is of limited value without some strategy for implementation. Cutler-Orosi has limited financial assets for implementation. They do, however, have the most valuable asset of all— the commitment, skills and knowledge of the citizens. These are the people who brought a charrette team to their small community. These are the people who turned out to express their views. And these are the people who have the power within to make their dreams become reality.

Community Vision Implementation Committee

There are several committees and groups currently formed by citizens to pursue specific issues, such as incorporation. These groups are all interested in improving the quality of life in Cutler-Orosi, but also have other issues to address. The consultants recommend that a grassroots citizen’s group be formed with the specific task of seeking implementation of this vision plan. This group should work with county and CSET staff, the Project Area Committee, political leaders, service clubs, and schools, but remain independent of their jurisdiction. A brief overview of the initial function of the group is:

1. Develop a statement of purpose. Write a one-page overview that describes the group, its objectives, and its membership. This becomes a handout for group members.
2. The group should request training from public agencies to become familiar with the processes and procedures that impact decision makers for Cutler-Orosi. Public sector staff generally welcomes thoughtful, well-informed input from citizens, and are eager to acquaint citizens with the system.
3. The group should request written notification of all public meetings that affect Cutler-Orosi. It is best if the notice can be faxed or emailed to one member of the group, who will then advise others. The group may also request an information packet, but not all public sector agencies make these available to the general public in advance of the public meeting.
4. A member of the group should be present at every meeting that affects Cutler-Orosi development and budgeting. They should be prepared to present pertinent facts that could impact funding opportunities or plan implementation. This duty can be divided up so that no member of the group is unduly burdened.

5. They should invite and escort Tulare County and Caltrans engineers on a field tour to allow them to acquaint them with the problems identified during the charrette. The observation period should include children walking to school in the morning.
6. As appropriate, the group should request to be included on public agendas to make a presentation explaining the vision plan to the agency.
7. This group should select activities from the vision plan that they feel they can achieve.

These are only a highlight of the possibilities, but it was clear to the consultants that the level of commitment within the community is more than enough to generate many creative approaches to implementation. This group can position itself as knowledgeable, articulate, and meaningful representation of the many residents in Cutler-Orosi who want a better place. A positive, proactive stance invites a similar response from political leaders.

Civic and Church Groups

The Cutler Latin-American Club has committed to maintaining a gateway on the south entrance to Cutler. They may also be willing to assume responsibility for maintaining landscaping in this vicinity. The Cutler-Orosi Chamber of Commerce has committed to maintaining the northern gateway entrance. In the Cutler downtown area, near Orosi Drive, all four businesses at the intersection of Orosi and First Street have committed to streetscape enhancements and cleanup. This would be done in Phase One. In Phase Two, a roundabout would be constructed here.

Outside Resources

Citizens need to be acquainted with the resources available to them and the role each public agency plays in the future of Cutler-Orosi. The following overview is a starting point, but residents will need to educate themselves fully in order to be effective with their efforts.

Tulare County

Although many in the community would like to incorporate as a city, this may or may not be economically feasible. Waiting for the outcome of the study being conducted to determine feasibility will delay implementation. The County's role in the implementation and funding of the charrette vision should be explored by the citizens and elected leaders. County staff demonstrated their interest and commitment to the community during the charrette. Citizens should request information regarding the allocation of general funds and how those funds could be made available to implement this vision plan.

Approval by the County Road Commissioner is an important step in obtaining approval for any of this report's transportation or street design recommendations. The Commissioner has complete jurisdiction over what improvements are made to any road or street by the County. The current Commissioner has made ongoing maintenance a top priority. When advocating for the adoption of improvements, the community should consider both the cost of installation and that of future ongoing maintenance.

Code enforcement and police patrols are also a county function until such time as the community incorporates. It will be difficult for citizens to maintain a cleaner community until the County supports their efforts through code enforcement. The cost of policing may prevent dramatically increasing patrols, but the Sheriff may be willing to work with residents to develop Neighborhood and/or Park Watch programs.

Tulare County Association of Governments

Whether or not the community becomes a city, their transportation projects will fall under the jurisdiction of this planning agency. The agency prepares and manages a region wide transportation plan that determines how money will be spent, the Regional Transportation Plan for 2001/02. Local Transportation Funds are apportioned to the unincorporated areas, such as Cutler-Orosi. Diverse public use of the public green and road right of way will benefit the entire community.

Funding Opportunities

Funding Sources

What are the possible funding sources for rebuilding the streets? Recent changes in federal and state law have made more transportation funds more available, pushed most decision-making power over those funds from the state highway agencies to the local and regional level, and made funding categories more flexible, so that funds once reserved for highway expansion may now be used for traffic calming, bike lanes and sidewalks. Meanwhile, many jurisdictions are finding creative ways to leverage local funds and thereby finance projects that make streets safer and more beautiful.

The funding sources outlined below include:

- Local County general fund (or possible future city general fund)
- Capital Improvement Programs funded by developer fees
- Redevelopment funds
- Special Districts
- State and federal transportation funds (TEA-21, STIP/RTIP, transit funds, etc.)
- Grants and Loans to Communities
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development Program (USDA –RD)
- Parks bonds and other programs
- Central Valley Empowerment Initiative

LOCAL FUNDS

Traffic Calming and Beautification

Several cities have successfully added traffic calming, sidewalks, curbs and similar elements to other projects which involve digging up or rebuilding portions of a street: storm drain and sewer improvements, utility undergrounding projects, and routine street repaving and reconstruction are all possibilities. The greater the extent of the reconstruction, the greater the possibilities are for adding elements such as bulbouts, medians and roundabouts at little cost. In some cities, combining traffic calming with other street work has allowed them to build traffic calming features for as little as 5% of the cost of a stand-alone project. In addition, communities avoid the disruption, noise and expense of repeatedly digging up a street and detouring traffic. However, such combination projects are not always feasible, and may require extensive coordination between departments and capital improvement projects whose schedules and budgets are normally separate.

Street Resurfacing or Reconstruction

Many cities have incorporated traffic calming into street reconstruction projects. In Venice, Florida, for example, officials brought new life to a dilapidated downtown by adding \$80,000 to a main street resurfacing project: intersection bulb-outs, mid-block bulb-outs and median crossings, and crosswalks of colorful paver stones were all included. Also, county transportation sales tax measures can provide substantial funding for city street maintenance and rehabilitation.



Sewer and Storm Drain Projects

In Fort Pierce, Florida, three blocks of new sidewalks together with a new roundabout were added to a long-planned sewer project. Built as concurrent construction, the sidewalks and roundabout added just \$15,000 to the cost of the project. Similarly, Seattle has added planted medians to several streets at little or no extra cost as part of sewer upgrade projects. Since the storm drain system is largely buried beneath the city's streets, any planned improvements might be combined with the implementation of traffic calming measures. Opportunities may arise on various residential arterial, collector and local streets where traffic calming is desired.

Utility Under-grounding

Utility under-grounding projects often require extensive digging, demolition and replacement. Utility under-grounding typically requires the installation of new conduit, bases and often poles for streetlights (when the lights are on luminaires mounted on the overhead utility poles). Substantial savings may be possible by installing pedestrian-scale lighting (if it is desired for a street) at the same time, rather than digging up the street a second time to provide the extra conduits and bases required for pedestrian-scale lighting.

Development Impact Fees

Some cities have required that developers install traffic calming measures and pedestrian features as part of overall specific development agreements. On a more systematic basis, however, it is feasible for cities to levy impact fees on new developments to fund bicycle, pedestrian and traffic calming infrastructure. Generally, development impact fees are “scheduled charges applied to new development to generate revenue for the construction or expansion of capital facilities located outside the boundaries of new development (i.e. off-site) that benefit the contributing development.” As described in *A Practitioner's Guide to Development Impact Fees* (Nicholas, Nelson & Juergensmeyer, 1991), “Where capital facilities are not adequate, permitting development to occur is contrary to the responsibility of a local government to protect public health, safety and welfare.” In order to protect public health and safety, then, the courts have held that cities may charge impact fees in order to recoup from each new development a proportionate share of the cost of providing adequate capital facilities — including the provision of safe streets.

In the specific case of traffic calming measures, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a city may proceed as follows. As the *Practitioner's Guide* explains, “A properly created impact fee system begins with a good comprehensive plan backed up with an equally good capital improvements program (CIP).” City Comprehensive Plan policies should clearly establish the city's desire to protect public safety and welfare by providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and using traffic calming measures to create safe streets. Next, facilities services standards must be adopted. A city usually establishes measures of adequate roadway capacity for motor vehicles measured as Levels of Service. An example is, that no more than 40 seconds

average rush hour delay (i.e. Level of Service 'D') is acceptable for any intersection. A city may establish Level of Service standards for bicycling and walking. For example, the standards might specify that:

- 5' wide sidewalks are required on both sides of any roadway carrying more than 2500 vehicles per day; or it could require that walks are required on all streets belonging to the City's designated pedestrian network.
- all arterial and collector streets shall provide bicycle lanes;
- the capital facilities specified in the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans must be completed;
- local residential streets shall operate at an 85th percentile speed of 20 m.p.h. or less; and collector and arterial streets shall operate at 30 m.p.h. or less.

Once the standards for a community have been set, the cost of achieving those standards must be determined (for example, the cost per mile of new sidewalks, multiplied by the miles of sidewalks needed). Finally, a proportionate share of that cost may be levied on new developments, in the form of an impact fee. This is likely to be the most difficult step. For roadway expansions, parks, public schools, parks, sewers and various other facilities, the methods of determining fair shares are well established. However, few if any cities have established regular impact fees for bicycle and pedestrian facilities or for traffic calming measures, since until recently many communities have largely overlooked bicycling and walking needs. Nonetheless, the same principles apply: a fee schedule may be developed to raise a proportionate share of the cost of the needed capital facilities from new development. For a sidewalk impact fee, for example, a proportionate fee might be based on the number of pedestrian trips expected to be generated by the new development. Or the fee could be proportionate to the number of automobile trips generated (since reaching a certain level of automobile traffic on a street may require the construction of a sidewalk in order to meet a city's standard for protecting pedestrian safety).

Tulare County Redevelopment Funds

The State of California originally approved the concept of redevelopment in 1945 in order to give cities and counties the authority to create redevelopment agencies and to give these agencies the authority and power necessary to attack and solve problems of urban decay and blight. Redevelopment agencies were (and are) able to apply for grants and loans from the federal government.

The economic base for redevelopment is tax increment financing (TIF). TIF allows the governing body of a city or county to adopt a redevelopment plan that provides for the redevelopment of a designated area and to use tax increment financing to fund the costs of redevelopment projects in the designated area. The method of financing involves the issuance of bonds or other obligations that are secured by a pledge of all or part of the funds raised by the redevelopment agency. The agency raises funds because of the increase in assessed valuation of taxable real property within its designated redevelopment area. The assumption being that the assessed value of real property within a redevelopment area will increase due to redevelopment improvements.

In addition to providing assistance with public improvements to facilitate redevelopment, a redevelopment agency can provide assistance to a variety of private development interests if the specific projects are in conformance with the agency's plan:

- Development of new industrial and commercial uses in the project area.
- Commercial building and property renovation and improvement projects.
- Rehabilitation and expansion of the community's existing private housing stock.

- “Writing Down” the cost of land when it is sold to a developer or owner participant (in accordance with an approved development agreement providing adequate assurances that the project would be completed).
- Provide low-interest loans or tax exempt financing to reduce financing costs through certificates of participation, lease revenue bonds, industrial development bonds or various forms of tax exempt notes.

The economic capability of a redevelopment agency is of utmost importance in deciding whether or not redevelopment is the “lead” or primary tool for accomplishing major physical changes in a local community. If tax increment income projections are lower than the community wants or expectations, redevelopment needs to be considered as one of the fiscal arrows in a community’s financial quiver.

In the case of Tulare County Redevelopment Agency (RDA), the stagnant growth in Cutler-Orosi has resulted in limited growth in assessed valuation, which is important to the success of redevelopment as well as implementation of the recommendations in this report. Nevertheless, the RDA does have some funds to apply as appropriate to the project priorities in the community. The RDA earned about \$226,000 in net tax increment in fiscal year 2001. This revenue must also cover existing and new debt service. The amount of annual tax increment revenue may increase or decrease in future years. The RDA develops an annual Implementation Plan for Cutler Orosi, in which its projects are named and prioritized. The RDA currently funds such projects as cleanup days, the Cutler Youth Center, sidewalk construction, and staff costs. Utility expansions are high on the list of RDA’s priorities for Cutler-Orosi.

It should be noted that much of the land between Cutler-Orosi, including the land along Highway 63 between Albert Avenue and Avenue 408, is not in the redevelopment project area. This includes the proposed location of the new Village at Avenue 408. However, the RMA is allowed by law to participate in projects outside a project area as long as the project will clearly benefit residents and businesses within the project area. A new civic center/village in this area would clearly benefit the residents of both communities.

Special Districts

Special districts can be used by a jurisdiction to obtain up-front and on-going financing for projects benefiting defined areas or development. The County government could choose to develop a “special district” defined by: areas that receive “special benefits” from the development of infrastructure. Special assessment districts generally assess a charge levied upon parcels of real property within the District’s boundaries to pay for “local improvements”, such as infrastructure. In many cases they require a vote of the affected property owners to be created. Sewer districts are examples of special districts which primarily operate by virtue of collecting fees.

Typically, assessment bonds are sold to provide the capital needed to pay for immediate construction of a project and are secured by property liens. Landowners are given the option to pay off the assessment immediately, otherwise, the assessments become liens against the property and landowners pay them off in installments. Special assessment districts can assess annual assessments or one assessment at the transfer of property. Most special assessment acts provide for the issuance of bonds. In effect, bonds provide money that the local government is borrowing to construct the improvements authorized by the assessment district. These bonds are generally secured by the property within the district and the bonded indebtedness is repaid with the money generated by the assessments.

Several types of districts are possible, depending on the specific project goals and a host of legal considerations. Examples include Infrastructure Financing Districts, Community Service Districts, Facilities Benefit Assessments.

STATE AND FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS TEA- 21 and SB 45

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) increased federal funding for transportation by over 40%. In sharp contrast to previous years, TEA-21 and California's recent Senate Bill 45 (SB 45) make traffic calming projects eligible for most federal and state sources of transportation dollars. The specific programs that can fund traffic calming are described in greater detail below. Essentially, these funds are accessed in two ways:

1) A few programs, such as the Hazard Elimination/Safety program or the Transportation for Livable Communities fund are administered at the state level or regional level. Municipalities apply directly to the state (to the California Department of Transportation, or 'Caltrans') or regional transportation planning agency for these competitive funding pots. Those cities which have set clear priorities and have Council-approved plans in hand can often secure a larger share of funds.

2) For most transportation funding, the process begins at the local level, where city and county transportation and public works departments often draw up a list of project priorities. City staff then gathers at the county level to negotiate priorities.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

Funded at \$8.3 billion over the 1999-2005 period, this program represents the lion's share of California's state and federal transportation dollars. Under California Senate Bill 45, 75% of the funds in this program are now controlled by the regional and county transportation agencies. This 75% share, called the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), contains four years of funding worth billions of dollars, and is updated every two years. Senate Bill 45 declares that RTIP funds may be used for, among other things, improving local roads, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and safety: in short, for construction of any of the alternatives suggested for the Cutler-Orosi projects.

In the case of the bypass discussed earlier, the county could negotiate with Caltrans to transfer ownership of the highway to the County in exchange for transferring Road 120 to Caltrans. Many of California's old highways that are now under local control (e.g. old Highway 99), it is important to include enough operations and maintenance funds to ensure "Old 63" does not fall into disrepair.

Transportation Enhancements

This federal program, amounting to \$60 million per year for California, funds a wide variety of smaller community-oriented projects, including renovation of historic transportation facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and Main Street revitalization programs. Seventy-five percent is programmed by local regional transportation planning agencies, and twenty-five percent is programmed by Caltrans at the state level. For Highway 63, these funds could be used to help fund many of the suggested projects, including sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, medians, lighting and intersection safety improvements.

Surface Transportation Program

This federal fund is worth \$500 million per year in California, and is usually programmed once every two to three years by the regional transportation planning agencies. STP funds are highly flexible funds for all sorts of capital projects, and could be used to fund any of the suggested street design projects.

Hazard Elimination and Safety Set-Aside

This federal safety funding provides \$60 million per year for California, and is controlled by Caltrans. One-third of the funding is only available for state highways, one-third is locally-oriented and may be used for traffic calming, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and one-third is currently directed into the Safe Routes to School program.

Safe Routes to School: (Assembly Bill 1475)

This program currently directs \$20 million per year in funding to projects providing safe passage to children walking or bicycling to school, including building bicycle paths and lanes, constructing sidewalks where none exist, and implementing “traffic calming” programs in neighborhoods around schools.

Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA)

This state fund, administered by the Caltrans Bicycle Facilities Unit, can be used for numerous items that aid cyclists, including median crossings, bicycle/pedestrian signals and bike lanes. SB 1772, which took effect July 2001, increased funding for the BTA to \$7.2 million per year for Fiscal Years 2001/02 through 2005/06. After 2005/06, annual BTA funding will be \$5 million. For Fiscal Year 2001/02, the maximum an applicant may receive is \$1.8 million. BTA funds pay a maximum of 90 percent of the cost of an eligible project.

Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation

This state fund is worth \$10 million annually. Applications are accepted yearly, usually in November, by the California State Resources Agency in Sacramento. Two categories could be appropriate for improving Highway 63: the Highway Landscaping and Urban Forestry category is designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide by funding the planting of street trees and other suitable plants. The Roadside Recreation category has been used by cities to fund parks and trailheads along streets.

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality

This federal fund, worth over \$300 million per year for California, is distributed to regional transportation planning agencies in areas with air quality problems for projects that improve air quality and reduce congestion. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are specifically eligible for these funds.

Federal Transit Funds

California receives close to \$1 billion annually in federal transit funds, and these funds may now be used not just for buses and trains, but also for projects which improve transit stops and bicycle/pedestrian access to them.

GRANTS AND LOANS TO COMMUNITIES

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA has a number of grant and loan programs that can be utilized for the purposes of improving the economic and environmental climate of rural communities. USDA funding is open to agencies ranging from local and state government agencies to public and private non-profits, as well as for profit entities.

These programs include Business and Industry Direct and Guaranteed Loans, Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Rural Business Opportunity Grants, Rural Economic Development Loans/Grants, an intermediary lending program, and Community Facilities Loan/Grant Program.

USDA /US Forestry Economic Program provides grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for projects that help communities organize and develop community action plans, and projects that will help diversify local economies and develop or enhance forest and natural resource based industries.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Under the State Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) Program, rural cities and counties may apply for funding for a broad range of activities ranging from establishment and operation of revolving loan funds and construction of infrastructure improvements to construction of new housing and community facilities. Applicants may also apply for funding to conduct planning studies and to write grant applications relating to the above mentioned activities. Funding programs under the CDBG Economic Development Allocation include the Economic Enterprise Fund for small business loans, Over-the-Counter Grants for public infrastructure associated with private-sector job creation, and Planning and Technical Assistance Grants. Applications under the Economic Development Allocation will require a job creation/retention component. Potential projects include street and traffic improvements, water system expansion and improvements, and sewer system expansion and improvements.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Funding is available through the EDA for activities such as infrastructure improvements and planning projects. Programs under the EDA grants include the Public Works and Economic Development Program, Research and National Technical Assistance Program, and the Technical Assistance Program (Local). Potential projects for EDA grants include water system expansion and improvements, and sewer system expansion and improvements, and construction of publicly owned facilities (including demolition and renovation.)

California Department of Parks and Recreation

Through the Park Bond Act of 2000, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as some other State agencies received funding to provide grants to local agencies. Through Parks and Recreation, the grants are being used for activities such as acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of park and open space land, as well as community centers and other facilities. A number of the programs have already stopped accepting applications, however, there a few programs left utilizing Park Bond 2000 funds. These programs are one-time monies, but there is the potential for future programs and re-capitalization of these present programs through future bond funds. Potential projects in this area include community centers and seasonal fields.

Caltrans Planning Grants

Caltrans provides a number of grant opportunities that could be pursued in revitalizing Cutler-Orosi. The deadline for the 2002-03 grant cycle has passed. For a detailed description of these grants, see the Caltrans Transportation Planning web page: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.htm>.

Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

The source of Caltrans grant funding for the Cutler-Orosi Community Design Charrette, the funding program funds transportation/land use planning projects that support livable community concepts.

Projects may address a variety of topics, including long-term sustainable economic growth, mixed-use development, pedestrian, bicycle and transit linages, and restoring a jobs and housing balance.

Caltrans Environmental Justice Grants

This program funds one-time demonstration projects for environmental justice in order to create and highlight the most effective processes and policies. Public outreach efforts, identification of minority and low-income community needs and concerns in transportation are among possible project types.

Caltrans Transit Planning Grants

This grant funds public and intermodal transportation studies in rural transit areas of California (population 50,000 and less.) Eligible potential studies include short-range transit development plans, ridership surveys, and site selection studies.

Inter-Regional Partnership (IRP) Grants for Jobs Housing Balance

The California Department of Housing and Community Development has competitive grants available to Councils of Governments, two or more sub-regions within a Council of Governments (CoG), or to counties working in collaboration with the state and federal governments to address the impact of substantial jobs housing imbalances. For more information: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/ca/>.

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Appendix

Focus Groups

Friday, November 2, 2001

A series of focus groups were conducted on Friday, November 2, 2001. Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc., explained to each group that the Consultants wanted to hear the concerns and issues of the community. Comments of the facilitator are in italics.

10:15 Group 1

Tulare County and Caltrans Staff

What you most wish to get out of the charrette?

- What people have told me is they really want the sidewalk completed and the safety issues with SR63 resolved. It would be ideal to have something feasible that also allows the community to empower themselves.
- Being brutally honest, we maintain the street and storm drainage system. It is difficult to do with limited resources. He would like to see them incorporate so they can band together and use the resources to concentrate efforts. Sand Creek does carry a lot of storm water and the local storm water system ties into it. There is a lot of trash and weeds. We don't have manpower to adequately maintain the facilities. The flood control and storm drain facilities are not comprehensive.

If they were to incorporate do they qualify for funds?

- The priorities in maintenance are based on volume of traffic on roads. The minor roads here don't have a priority in terms of traffic volume. The county maintains very few subdivision roads.

People brought up the lack of lighting. Does the county cover that?

- The county has a policy regarding warrants based on the number of houses. But if the lights are on SR 63 they are paid by Caltrans. Some come out of mitigation. As a rule any added lights would become part of their responsibility.
- LEGACI grant portion of this has done a retail leakage analysis for the area. The road between the two only supports 10 or 11 thousand cars a day and is not a main road. It is too wide and not attractive. Ingress, egress is difficult. Where speed limit is posted 40 one cannot drive that slowly there. The highway between the two communities is one of the most significant to be looked at independently of whether or not the community incorporates.

- < SR 63 is used to get to Kings Canyon National Park, but as you come from the west (Dinuba)

you are directed via signs to turn before you arrive in Cutler. Driving north from Visalia you do come through Cutler Orosi to access the park.

Some numbers are available for regional nature of traffic. (*Note: Follow up on this remark failed to reveal any traffic numbers that define the origin or destination of travelers using SR 63 through Cutler and Orosi.*)

- I would like to see how the visioning project fits into the long term planning concept within the community. We would like to see how the specifics of the design plan in terms of facilities and service fit into that picture.
- The local government association develops projects but it isn't necessarily driven by the community plans. Most community plans are not regional.
- Transportation Concept Reports: The system was formed a year ago to start renovating the reports. The reports now include multi-modal transportation, but there is not one for SR 63 – it may be a year off. It isn't in the pipeline now. Each state route transportation concept reports take into account land use, etc. We talk about the regional significance of things such as traffic calming.
- Clearly identify the project: site specific recommendations.
- Financing possibilities. Would like the land use interaction and how it fits into the vision and what about in between – what is the community thinking about for its future?
- This project is exciting. I would like to see more cohesiveness in the community, which has to do with the socioeconomic conditions but also to change the community to create ownership.
- The vision could serve as the foundation for the Transportation Concept Report. TCR's don't involve financing. They talk about traffic crash data, projected growth and how that facility can be modified to meet the needs in 2010 and 2025 for the facility. It is based on standard transportation models, which is sometimes a best guess.
- I have a store I considered tearing it down and put some other type of project. I know across the street someone purchased property and converted it to commercial zoning. There is interest, but the main problem is the sewer system. That whole area is a flood area and needs to be raised.
- Beautification is great and fine, but for long term development process we need to be able to maintain it. I hope we get some type of commerce thing going. The infrastructure and sewer system is maxed out and preventing development.
- Land use transportation linkage with SR 63 acting as a main street highway connecting these two communities to link the two places.
- Developers are interested in jump starting the community in a public/private partnership.

- I would like to come up with well defined conceptual ideas to provide a basis for the county, Caltrans, the Redevelopment Agency and community to complete a more detailed plan that might be acceptable to all parties. The idea of traffic calming, street unification, etc, is not a very common concept in rural communities in Tulare County, although some of the cities are doing it. Visalia is the only example where it was tried (in a residential area), but they haven't done it since.
- Very concerned that unrealistic expectations will be created. The process next Monday needs to reveal components that we can implement in the short term. We need to start with small things that are steps in the right direction, such as completing the sidewalks. Completing ADA ramps in commercial areas. Maybe doing street trees treatments in Orosi. In Cutler, some of the store owners have talked about streetscape and tables on sidewalks and umbrellas. I don't know how feasible that is in a community where the crime rate is so high. The redevelopment agency might look at cost sharing with low interest to improve store fronts. I think we should look at a twenty year vision and it will take an open mind and a willingness to think out of the box if we are to drastically change the appearance of Cutler Orosi and the function of SR63.
- Some curb and gutter alignments and light standards will have to be relocated to install ADA.

What is the possibility for building curb extensions instead of moving utilities?

- I don't think you can and maintain what you have for traffic. If you are at 413 and 63 in the morning when people are going to school and work you really need all the lanes you currently have. Peak month ADT 14,000. From an engineering perspective I don't understand the concept of reducing the number of lanes. People come to us and want streets widened.

Does the community have concerns about crossing the street?

- Yes.
- There is a TIP project on 416 which will make it 4 lanes from Dinuba to 99. It is partly for truck traffic.

Does that traffic pass through Cutler Orosi?

- Not all of it. Dinuba has a lot of industrial commercial activity.
- TCAG does the modeling.
- 1997 aerial photographic (aerial map displayed by participant). Software reconciles maps to streets. Red line is proposed city boundary.

Is Sand Creek all on the west side of 63?

- It crosses SR 63 just n or s of Avenue 413. Hard to maintain: difficult to get equipment. A lot is hand labor. Non-native growth is a problem. There was a plan in the late 80's early 90's for the soil conservation service to reroute it and install walkways and recreation facilities, but the funding wasn't there.

- Community identity is an issue. They need to establish their own destiny. Community cleanup, structure, important.

One of the ideas is for the community to strengthen its economic base. What is the engine here if the community could work together to make this a place that really works?

- Wes Ervin, Applied Development Economics: In the red area, 10 – 12 thousand people (16 m in Dinuba) There is a lot of buying power, although lower on average (3300 households) there are a lot of food and auto stores. Some clothing and personal services; not enough leakage here to support a K-mart or department store. So people do leave town to shop. There is potential for more of the same. The retailers here offer multiple lines of merchandise. A food store offers toys, sporting goods. What we've found is there is not a lot of potential for additional stores, big furniture stores, for example. But there is potential for small one. To revitalize commerce we recommend concentrating commerce: creating a sense of place where someone can go not just to shop but to pick up kids, go to a movie, do other things; linked activities. Spending is concentrated. That isn't here, especially with two centers. Basic services could be supported. More restaurants could also survive.

What other stores?

- Smaller furniture stores, variety stores, specialty food stores. Small truck farm and farmer's market could be supported by this area.
- There is a flea market held now on Road 124 near the intersection of 412.
- If it became a center I could develop an office complex that could be leased to the city. There was another entity that wanted to rent space but could not because it sold out.

Is mixed use development currently allowed, or do the rules need to be changed?

- The major inhibitor to community development is the condition of the wastewater treatment plant. Unless the attitude of the two public utility district changes I don't see that changing. USDA offered a three year funding program of \$12 million and no one followed up on it three years ago. These offers usually come with strings attached.
- Recently built apartments in Cutler have made the street less safe. Zoning changes prevent businesses from locating there.
- There is a real lack of sense of place when I come here. Pay attention to giving cultural context to the place. If there was some way to combine cultural and natural that would be great.
- Some successful markets combine with swap meets in some places.
- Mercado concept can be designed nicely. In Lindley, California they are doing an acre with a public plaza with housing and commercial.
- If Cutler Orosi were its own city it would have more control over its destiny. They are subject now to county planners, supervisors, and plans. There is a perspective of creating uniqueness

that it creates problems because planning staff members and engineers have to look at different stuff for each and every community, which is not desirable to them. In some respects, in order to achieve its goals the community has to incorporate and do especially long term stuff on their own. You can tell we are in a box here. If we can reach a point where we can at least cooperate on some of the major thoroughfare and funds some things that are not too dramatic we may have success. These are real problems with getting things changed.

Group 2

Chamber of Commerce, Community Service Agencies, Local Businessmen

Share with us what it will take to make Cutler Orosi a better place twenty years from now. What do you want as an outcome for this process?

- Interested in hearing your ideas to take them back to the county. My experience is limited, but we would like a plan that creates many partnerships between Caltrans, the community and the county. Empowerment with the citizens to work with agencies is ideal.
- The economic analysis piece of this: my impression is this is a rural crossroads that got big, but there is no sense of downtown or place to stop. There is no place to walk. It grew up around a factory that is no longer there. Neither place has a downtown or a place where you go for commerce without getting in a car and having to go 2 or 3 places.
- I would like to see an incorporated community with people working together. In Cutler there is Kiwana's Club, Latin-American Club, and Lions Club.
- One of my ideas would be to see us plan a city because we are working hard to achieve that goal.
- I would love to see a central place that reflects the cultural background of the area. A plaza with a fountain, a place to hang out, like in the Latino communities would be great on warm summer nights.
- Facilities that can be used by both the school and community such as gymnasium, swimming pool where the kids can go. We don't have proper walkways. Better walkways on some of the smaller streets, too. High school has a gymnasium. There is no pool except in Dinuba. An area where families can picnic, go to the pool, and share facilities with schools.
- Schools are a focal point in the community now. I would like to see the schools be more inviting and safer to get to, both during and after school. There are issues that need to be addressed. We need to be more of an asset to the community – something that looks nice and where there are activities occurring.
- Schools have adult education and sporting activities. We do have a couple of community centers, but there is no open gym, for example. I would like to see people use it that way. A place where kids can go, be safe and do something off the streets. A little cooler in the summer and warm in the winter.

- Kids can come after school, but the libraries close at 4:30. About 300 students at four sites do an after school program. Small county library here open a few days a week.
- In some communities the school and community go together to build joint facilities so school uses them during hour and the communities use them other times.
- My main concern in the long term picture is the commercial development. We need a viable business base to maintain any beautification. My main concern is the sewer system and the infrastructure for non-seasonal job creation.
- The streets here are not walkable. People coming to church don't have a place to walk. We need a placito. This town has beautiful people who want to better themselves. The street is dangerous for the children. The parents are involved here. The street needs to be improved.
- More flood control drainage and beautification of the entry to Cutler Orosi, sidewalks. Some residents want to put sidewalks in front of their homes, but it can't be done because of the flood control restrictions. They have beautiful homes but their sidewalks (Ralph and Second Streets) are dirt. One person installed a sidewalk and was forced to remove it because the county flood control person said it wasn't compliant.
- Beautify the sidewalk we started. It joined Cuter Orosi and many families walk. Last year you showed us a slide where someone put a bench that said please sit down. We could do that locally. We should also put some lighting there. We could get free trees and plant them. We planted 180 trees in a couple of weekends. We as residents of Cuter Orosi must take on some responsibility. If we start that people who are headed toward the Sequoias will want to stop here to eat. It is a small, inexpensive project. We are willing to do something.
- The roads in this area are terrible for refuse pickup. They fixed roads on 112 and 408 and they had 3 or 4 roads torn up at the same time instead of doing one and then moving on to the next one. Orange Cove is an example of a place where new things are being built. My wife has girl scouts, but there is no facility. We need a gathering place where people can use the facilities.
- In 1959 Orosi was pretty nice. I would to see nice residential areas with sidewalks. Paint alone would help. The only place I feel safe at night is in my neighborhood.
- Single men go to the area near 418 in the evening. Cutler has very high numbers of people in each home –mostly rental. More homes in Orosi are owned.
- Vacant lots and abandoned cars are a problem. Owners just leave them. Another person mentioned the county is helping with this now.
- In 43 years our two town have deteriorated. I want the school children safe. All these areas where we have such terrible traffic should be fixed. I want everything everyone said, but especially for the children.

Why hasn't the community come together until now? Why is now the time? Why has there been this devaluing of property and place? What happened?

- We have had a lot of local people, long term residents, move away instead of jumping in and saying let's do something about it.
- People turn their back on problems when they feel helpless. In fact we all have the power to act. What has brought it together is the belief that we will someday become our own city. There is a chance to be the architect of our future. The county prioritizes its need countywide. It comes back to us. What are WE going to do? We all want to take accountability for our actions. We've watched progress go elsewhere.
- The wastewater and drainage system is the limiting factor on growth in this community. What can we do together to improve the infrastructure? It's been discussed, but there has been no meeting of the minds.
- There are three water boards. Their engineer and their attorney say we need two water boards even though some communities that are ten times bigger than we are only have one. It doubles the spending on everything. Merging the water districts could help. There are 9 hookups (bathrooms) left in Orosi.
- A lot of homes are sold to two families to qualify for the mortgage.[so they use more sewer and water per household]
- In Orosi there are water meters. They are studying that now to get everyone metered. A meter system and being able measure dwelling flow would identify code violations. Otherwise it is very difficult. One reason they can't meter them is it would be too costly to move them.
- The migrant workers come here to work, but we don't want them. We need housing for them, but their illegal status is a problem. People rent rooms to single men. Many people live in home with only one restroom. You don't just find a place for a family of eleven.
- This is a statewide problem. There is money for investors, but the problem is if you don't get the paycheck you can't control the money. Most of them live and ride with the contractor.
- There are a few examples, one in Sonoma County, for single farm workers. The wine growers have put up buildings in the vineyards that are like barracks. This provides a clean, safe place for the men to live in. The farmers did it themselves because they saw a benefit in having the same people come work year after year. There isn't as much cohesion here. The labor camps will only take family units.
- Villa de Guadalupe started as a dream among 8 residents. The medical community is now taking credit.
- One person said the flashing road signs were very effective in getting people involved. Some community message board like that would be great.

- The local businessmen are angry when people set up illegal, unlicensed businesses along the roadside. How can we take those people who are entrepreneurs and make them contribute to the area?

San Louis Obispo used to have a problem with kids drag racing so they closed the streets and held a farmers market. Now it is a regional event that attracts many. Why hasn't Cutler Orosi incorporated before?

- We lacked the commitment. But if the study comes back and says it isn't feasible it won't happen. The Board of Supervisors is giving us 1.6 million dollars to get started. It was tried in the early 60's. Other places have been successful in doing this.
- It will take a great city manager to make it survive. The state has established guidelines. We have to have a city manager, economic development officer, and building inspector.
- A consultant was hired to study it 3 ° months ago. Costs are being tabulated now. Late this year the preliminary results will be received. Phase 1, \$27m will determine if it is feasible. Phase II, \$22 m will provide more detail.
- Sarah Reyes didn't paint a very optimistic picture. The County will apply for \$400,00, from AB 431 grant funding opportunity, but the most immediate benefit would be to assist a business locating in Goshen that is ready to go and will create 200 jobs.
- There is relatively little industrial property in the communities to create the value needed. One of the biggest costs is fire and police.

What haven't we discussed?

- Money. Construction and maintenance.
- Expansion of the sewer system. Freedom Homes does have 39 units of sewer capacity. But that should be the number one priority.
- One engineer is seen as stopping progress toward incorporation and expansion of the sewer and drainage system.
- USDA would love to consider a three year funding program for Cutler – Orosi and would set aside \$12 million to do that. The PUC district has applied for \$1 million to do something. A preliminary proposal needs to be submitted to the USDA office.
- Water Board is elected or appointed [conflicting viewpoints on this].

Focus Group Meeting with community residents
Villa de Guadalupe meeting room
November 2, 2001

36 personas, y seis ninos

- Youth center for children
- Clean up the downtown
- More safety
- Better lighting along highway
- Signal lights on 63
- Senior residence
- Day care center
- Safer crossings of 63 and other roadways
- Very poor drainage today
- School bus is needed when weather is messy
- Garbage and trash is not picked up
- Traffic light 63 and 408
- Better crosswalk markings
- Safety, security, slower traffic speeds
- Many people have been hit on 63
- Highway 63 is too wide, so people drive fast
- Gymnasium
- 25 mph is posted, people are doing much higher speeds
- Not enough police enforcement today
- 35 mph for main highway speed in town
- Improve the sidewalks
- No bicycle lane on the highway
- Beautification and gateway
- Gateway with a roundabout
- Trees
- Similar treatments to Orange Cove
- Wait for the bus for up to two hours
- There is no shade
- Para transit system
- There is on-demand transit for medical, but not for shopping
- No benches
- Red light cameras
- Supermarket — A larger supermarket
- Very clean in Dinuba
- Orange Cove, Selma
- Many events, there is a major, music, place to have a party
- We need somebody who can support us...this area is lost
- We need something that is better for our children
- Somebody in government needs to represent these people

- Farmers market
- Swap market charges to enter just to see what is inside
- No place to play soccer
- Kids need a skate park
- Too many taco stands
- No light in the park. It is so dark that someone could get killed, and no one would know
- Teenage activity center. Basketball and many other activities
- Plaza is needed. Where should it be?
- A large Mercado
- More housing
- Not enough housing that is affordable
- No houses to buy

**Focus Group Meeting with church leaders and community service providers
Villa de Guadalupe meeting room
November 2, 2001**

Roger Neufeld, Open Gate
Tim Rossiter
Jimena Ruiz Castillo
Lupe James, Cutler Orosi School District

Is focus on just physical or also the social, economic.

Many good people don't work here. They drive in. It's not a city, just a country town. LA Club is working on incorporation to get govt. funding and pull themselves out of the pit. County has limited resources and this is the tail of the county so they have to pull hard. Previous supervisor was from this area.

Community has been going downhill for many years, since 1970s. At same time Hispanic population has gotten more affluent, but there are drug and gang problems. About 50% of children aren't going to go far unless they leave. Only opportunities, in farming and farming has gone to the pits.

Very large haven for undocumented workers. About 10k.

Villa de Guadalupe has been biggest spark in last few years. New McDonalds also.

There are unique problems. Wealthy people are moving away, don't want to invest. Most of resources that have come in are from grants. Are becoming dependent on grants. Dangerous. If businesses would come in there is a large workforce. Older population doesn't have many skills but that's changing with younger population. Have some very good people here who want to make it go. Can't do it without outside money.

Local people have to want to make things happen. Work to make things happen. People who came into this area were farmworkers, not very educated. Hispanics who are making things happen are usually

second generation. Need opportunities to come through business. Kids ask what can we do in this community once we get an education.

Not sure what to do to change. People who live here have to want it to change. Undocumented workers don't have vested interest.

Latin American club is trying to make the biggest difference. Older population who were leaders don't want incorporation because they perceive that taxes will go up. If create local govt. then they can go after grants.

Overall property taxes will not change unless they decide to impose sales tax.

Many residents of this complex are below 50% median income for this county. Lot of high school dropouts. High percentage of teenage pregnancy. Kids don't see a lot of opportunity. Key to focus on economic development.

This community depends a lot on grants. Tried to get grant for after school activity. Had to partner with school district which has \$. Catch 22. Create dependency for several years but when grant runs out then what? Need more economic development.

We do housing, not economic development. Tax credit project. Below market housing but no one is paying rent for you. Have to have income to live here. Stepping stone to buy a house because of savings from lower rents.

City needs to incorporate. May not happen soon. Need to open up shops and create more housing. Local shopping. Everyone who wants to shop has to go out of town. No store.

Need recreation for kids. Need YMCA type place where they can go and be in safe place. School is playing that role but are limited to number of students we can take and can only take at-risk children so end up punishing children who do well in school.

Save the Children is coming to town. National organization that saw study in which Cutler was listed as a very poor town and decided to focus on this area. Were here last week.

Feeling of hopelessness. Nothing to keep people here. Have to get interest in doing something.

Whole road between Cutler and Orosi should be 35 mph. People speed on that road, don't wait for pedestrians. Lots of people who don't have transportation. Very dangerous place. Lots of accidents. Lots of DUI and people who don't drive well. People will get aggravated with slowing down but should

Sidewalk should have been built further back from road. No trees. Should have been set back from road.

Older people don't walk much. Some walk across where the park in Cutler is. But many of them get around by car.

Transit. Bus goes to Dinuba and Visalia four times a day. County transit.

But still have to go to Dinuba to get WIC (milk) paperwork so some mothers miss out because they can't get to the office to get their coupons (?). Are trying to get them to locate in the community building that school district leases from County.

Why was road widened.

Not clear. May have been State Senator Rose _____ . But it is an unusual section.

Widening of 416. Best Buys has a large warehouse distribution center in West Dinuba so will widen the section of the road between 99 and Dinuba.

Water District. Scuttlebutt that folks who work there get paid by both so don't want to merge.

Kaweah container is limited in business they can do because access is very limited. Cul de sac built to industrial standards but problem is water. Quantity and quality. In early 90s redevelopment agency developed industrial park but well was contaminated by DBCP. Owners sued makers of DBCP. If well can be fixed then water problem can be cleared up. But also a problem of inadequate water in South side of Cutler. Only capacity for 9 new residential units.

Based on our experience we were able to build this project. Were successful because investors got tax credit. If there were other tax benefits for corporations to invest here that would help bring economic development into this area.

Cutler Orosi is part of Tulare tax increment area; companies in this area are eligible for tax credits. Also part of USDA champion community; no tax credits but does make area more eligible for federal funds.

Problem. Cost of living has increased. To purchase what is needed minimum wage would need to be \$10/hour which would destroy agricultural. Need more types of housing. Labor camps, e.g. A lot of folks live below poverty level. Need houses that could be rented for \$2-300/month. Could be done if built houses for \$20k. But today would cost \$60k to meet all county standards. So either have to build more housing like this or build less expensive types of housing. But could build nice communities with less expensive housing. Need outside money for this area.

This is like a gated community. And there are all kinds of rules for people who live here. People watch who comes and goes.

Streets and Sidewalks	
Better lighting	50
Finish sidewalks	39
Fix existing roads	30
Traffic signal at SR 63 and Avenue 408	28
Overpass in front of Cutler School	28
Enforce Speed limits	20
Stop the “drag races” on SR 63	17
More Sidewalks on J419	15
Truck Bypass	12
Storm drainage curbs and gutters	10
Stop sign on Main Street	9
Narrow the roads	5
Traffic Signal at SR 63 and Avenue 419	5
Slow cars	4
Remove signs from sidewalk	4
Total Streets and Sidewalks	276

Activity Centers	
Recreation Center	72
Park in Orosi	28
Plaza in midtown w/water fountain	24
Soccer Field	23
More youth activities	23
Walking trails	8
Total Activity Centers	178

Beautification	
Trees, benches, lights, flowers	54
Clean Alleys	30
Pride in our community	15
Underground utilities	10
Better use of open space	4
More trash cans through the town	4
Total Beautification	109

Retail / Commercial	
Fix and paint buildings	32
More businesses and employment opportunities	29
Expand Sewer System	14
Total Retail / Commercial	75

Residential	
More affordable housing	22
Build houses in open lots	20
Total Residential	42

More police	6
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MRS. LLOYD’S FIFTH GRADE CLASS:	
Fix the bumpy roads	12
Safety lights in street	3
Wider sidewalks	1
Fix broken sidewalks	1
Streets and Sidewalks	17
Make the walls clean from graffitti	7

Clean Place	0
Move fire hydrants	0
Beautification	7
Build Arcade and Mall	34
New park	18
Community center	8
Closer stores	1
Activity Centers	61
Affordable Housing	7

Public Design Table Presentations

Saturday, November 3, 2001

The citizens at design tables presented their maps at the close of the session. The following bullet points highlight their comments:

Table 1

- Paint
- Clean
- Improve vacant lots as homes
- Commercial center: capacity for many customers
- Incorporate
- Facilitate home ownership
- Create advisory council
- Enforce cleaning ordinance. What is the county responsible for?
- Trash pick up
- Vigilance of residents within the community
- Street lights
- Senior retirement home and recreation center
- Housing and health commitment – they will knock on doors and invite people to a meeting every two weeks
- Sports center behind Villa de Guadelupa
- Sports field; boxing club; karate instruction within community center.
- At the park, additional barbeque tables, grills.
- By water tower, expand area; more benches (across from school)
- Narrow streets: too wide
- School crosswalk improvements

Table 2

- Get rid of truck traffic: roundabout considered on south end of Cutler to encourage drivers to go onto 120 to access 180.
- Divert traffic into 120, then send them north toward Orange Cove, which would be a faster route.
- Roundabout on 416 and 120 is a proposed city boundary for the new city. This is a perfect place for an entrance.
- Cutler Latin American Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and a local church have committed in the past to maintain the gateways.

- 75 kids exit buses near the Cutler Market. They are willing to put the palm trees where they are best. They are going to put 15 tables in this area so the children can sit instead of standing as they wait. Medians and lighting will bring the town to life. In Cutler there are a large number of people who walk, but they are afraid because of the lack of lighting. They envisioned a Farmer's Market at Orosi Drive and First.
- Between 408 and 416 the piece of property will be a major source of commerce once the sewer capacity is improved. Zoned for commercial use.
- There are currently no sidewalks between Orosi High School and Golden Valley Elementary. [Add sidewalks]
- On El Monte, there is a crosswalk where speeds are too fast.
- Roundabout 400, 416, and 120. Slows traffic coming into town.

Table 3

- Property between Cutler and Orosi
- Zoned commercial; entire piece has to be raised a foot because of the flood plain. So when the sidewalks are added this should be considered.
- Corner of Ira currently being considered for commercial.
- Would like to develop something if sewer capacity is increased; no sidewalk on east side of the street; would add them during development.
- Install medians to slow traffic down
- Major problem: crossing street, Traffic too fast.
- Add angled crosswalks
- Add lights
- Add trees
- Underground utilities
- Need a crosswalk at Ira (bakery) Many people run across the street here.

Table 4

- Improve parking in Orosi
- Improve bleak landscape: trees
- Improve pedestrian crossings
- Add roundabouts
- Meandering sidewalk between two towns; very desolate now.
- Increase mix of stores in downtown; low-key thrift store needed.
- Add tree wells.
- Façade improvements: paint
- Parking lot on corner in downtown: widen sidewalk; add tree wells; improve appearance and safety for pedestrians
- Between the bank and next building: add tables, benches
- Across street, improve façade of the restaurant.
- Better lighting
- Better crosswalk signs

Presentation of Design Concept to Tulare County and Caltrans District 6 Staff NOTES 11/5/2001

(The presentation began with Michael Wallwork giving a presentation of the design concept. Comments and responses are recorded)

- Michael Wallwork saw business owners sweeping in front of Orosi.
- Post Office in Orosi is not in operation.
- Steve Worthley: Improvements that have been made include:
 - 63 — 408-416 sidewalk./curb
 - 63 — north of 416 — sidewalks added seven years ago
 - El Monte Way — from El Monte School – sidewalk/curb
- Concern expressed by Caltrans staffperson over irrigation costs with tree irrigation.
 - Michael Wallwork: In Australia, Eucalyptus trees have preformed very well in Australia with regular watering at the onset and then have needed no irrigation
- Caltrans staff person expressed concern over : Emergency Vehicle Access, Especially at interstecction. There is concern that traffic calming will block access.

Michael Wallwork:

- Put optical sensors for fire trucks to change lights for trucks.
- Ambulance, location of hospital. We need to find this out.
- There are many more injuries and deaths from traffic accidents than fires, we need to come up with a road system that balances all of the communities' safety needs.
- Caltrans staff person: This is just a pedestrian design.
- Michael Wallwork Response: Bulbout will improve traffic flows in front of Cutler School.
- Caltrans Traffic Engineer: "I think you're solving one problem and creating another problem." Need more study. Planting trees next to roadways in a highway situation is against guidelines. Fixed roadway objects this is not allowed.
- Michael Wallwork: Those guidelines are for rural highways. This is an urban/suburban area, this is a common error.
 - 20 feet — Michael Wallwork — that study
- Caltrans engineer — "You call this a low cost improvement, but tree root damage can be signified".
 - 40 – 80 years oak trees
 - tree retention – maintenance and operations cost.
 - Must be careful in tree selection and siting.

- Jim Brown Tulare County RMA: — Cutler Orosi residents want an urban street concept.
- Michael Wallwork — We need to make a life-cycle analysis on trees. In this context, trees pay for themselves handsomely..
- Wes Ervin — it’s time for these communities to be given a decent quality of life.
- *(Albert)* Caltrans Engineer — Not adverse to the concepts being presented for the most part:
 - Bulbout — no problem
 - 416 — no problem
 - Medians/trees — concerned at higher speeds.
- Michael Wallwork: You can design the median so that injuries from collisions are very infrequent. If you set back any fixed object (signs, gateway sculptures) 10 (yards/feet?) from the start of the median and put landscaping and a vertical lift you will absorb a large amount of the automobile’s speed. These type of issues can be addressed through good design.

Caltrans Environmental Review Staff person: • “Recognize what you’re doing. I think it’s a good idea.” Caltrans could give up SR-63 in trade for Rd 120. Rd 120 is a good quality road.

- Caltrans make the connection

(There was general agreement that Rd 120 was a very suitable highway option. Wallwork noted that there was one piece near it’s meeting with SR 180 that would have to be fixed).

- TCAG — I don’t believe that you are going to subvert half of the traffic on SR 63 with a bypass.
 - Traffic Calming projections from the County are better those from Caltrans. DOT’s are usually higher.
 - Caution before looking only at ADI numbers
 - SR-180 will absorb more traffic
- Caltrans *(Ed)* — Why are we talking about streets and traffic calming?
 - Why not put in a CHP to enforce speeds?
 - Michael Wallwork It would be much more expensive and unless the CHP is assigned to the area for a large portion of time it will not be effective..
- TCAG — This plan would give Cutler and Orosi and an identity.
- Michael Wallwork — We have heard that the sewer system is at near capacity. Natural grey-water systems that clean the water through bio-filtration are very common in Florida. This water could be used to irrigate the trees and landscaping.
- Caltrans — You should include responsibility of development.
 - Rails-to-Trails at roadway.
 - All costs need to be included.

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February 22, 2002
Cutler-Orosi Charrette Draft Report
Community Based Planning Grant

Mr. Jim Ochs
County of Tulare Resource Management Agency
5961 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277

Dear Mr. Ochs:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Cutler-Orosi Charrette Report. Caltrans understands the Cutler-Orosi Charrette draft report is a community-visioning document, as opposed to an actual program or engineering study/plan for proposed improvement projects. However, it is our intent to identify potential concerns early in the process to help facilitate future discussions and the implementation of proposed improvements within the visioning draft report. Comments are the following:

General Comments:

The vision document needs to lead to work that addresses the long-term (10 and 20 year) needs within the land use and transportation elements of the Cutler-Orosi Community Plan. This work is necessary to evaluate whether the proposed improvements in the vision document can accommodate the land use and transportation requirements of the community. It is important to assure the community that long term needs will be addressed.

Caltrans highly recommends that Tulare County proceeds to develop a master/action plan for implementing the projects identified in the document. A collaborative effort should be comprised of a local, state and federal partnership.

Tulare County should be aware there are traffic design and safety issues to consider and work with Caltrans District Design, Traffic Engineering, Traffic Investigations, Traffic Operations, Project Development, and Traffic Liaison early in the scoping phase to address the related issues.

There is no mention of public transportation and the opportunity of constructing a regional transit center and additional routes within the communities. This should be addressed within the document.

North arrows should be placed on all maps.

Comments Related to the Document:

Page 2, Executive Summary: The use of words such as “unsafe”, “danger”, “dangerous” should be avoided, particularly if data and information is not provided to substantiate wording within the statements.

Page 2, last paragraph: States that “removal of two traffic lanes are recommended for nearly the entire corridor.” A direct impact of this action is reduced capacity of the highway facility. This must be addressed in the report including what studies, local planning policies, and mitigation will be necessary. Removal of travel lanes should only be accomplished in conjunction with identifying and improving bypass route(s) and commensurate land use policy.

Page 4, third paragraph: Caltrans has a planning process for state highway corridors for highways such as SR 63 (Road 128). The Transportation Concept Report (TCR) describes current and ~~planned~~ projected operation of a state highway corridor over a 10 to ~~20~~ 25-year period.

Page 4, Process, Outreach and Publicity:

Ø What is PAC?

Ø The outreach and public participation techniques used for the Cutler-Orosi Charrette are to be commended and can be used statewide as a model for future projects. The use of Caltrans “message boards” or changeable message signs and the “Mariachis” at the opening event were a great way to attract public participation. However, this section should offer more detailed description of the community meetings on Friday and Monday nights for the purpose of future successful public participation efforts (e.g. how the Friday night meeting was broken down into short sessions, so it would not be too long or too technical in nature). Tulare County should consider producing the document or the Executive Summary in Spanish.

Page 9, Government Presentation: This section should include that Caltrans clearly expressed concerns at the focus group meetings of being given direction within the Director’s Policy on Context Sensitive Solutions and flexibility for design, but that technical policy has not been defined by Headquarters. Another important concern identified by Caltrans was that roadway decisions and improvements be addressed and is consistent with the long-term transportation needs of the community.

Page 9, Government Presentation: The participant’s questions and concerns included street trees and medians on SR 63. Caltrans has sponsored a study of street trees within medians of state highways. Tulare County should consider the final results of this study.

Page 13, text box: The final version of the Director’s Policy on Context Sensitive Solutions has been released and differs slightly from the excerpt quoted. In the first sentence, “Context Sensitive Solutions” has replaced “Context Sensitive Design”, and in the last sentence, “are “ is replaced by “will be”.

Page 13, second paragraph: This states that SR 63 was recently designated an STAA truck route. SR 63 has actually been an STAA Terminal Access route for many years.

Page 13 (and other parts of the document that refer to Caltrans grant for this project), third paragraph: Refer specifically to the “Community Based Transportation Planning” (CBTP) grant so other communities can identify what grants to look for in their own activities.

Page 14, Comments related to the proposed truck bypass:

Ø It should be noted that Caltrans recommended the relinquishment of SR 63, through Cutler-Orosi to facilitate proposed improvements, at the focus group meeting.

Ø Tulare County should consider an alternative route for the truck bypass. Consideration should be given to an east/west route further south of SR 201. This would be a way to avoid addressing additional traffic volumes from the proposed truck bypass.

Ø The report should include a discussion on the process of implementing the truck bypass.

- Cost
- Right of way
- Operations and maintenance responsibilities of state and local agencies
- Funding available to implement the truck bypass

Ø The Vision Plan needs to identify what improvements will be required, to accommodate the truck bypass, at the SR 201/SR 63 intersection, SR 201 mainline between SR 63 and Road 120, and at the SR 201/Road 120 intersection.

Ø SR 63 is an STAA truck route and it should be maintained as such. If this cannot be done, an alternative parallel bypass route should be identified and brought up to STAA standards.

Ø Many of the recommendations are more appropriate for a local street rather than a State Highway and should only be considered with the truck bypass, which will be needed to accommodate future interregional traffic volumes.

Ø The references to SR 180 in the third and fourth paragraphs need to be corrected to reflect the correct route (Avenue 416).

Page 15, Street Design Elements:

Ø Caltrans is not opposed to the use of roundabouts in general. However, each proposed location will need a detailed engineering study to determine its appropriateness. Please refer to Design Information Bulletin Number 80 at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/dib/dibprg.htm> and the Caltrans roundabout task force for further details.

Ø An example of a roundabout on a California State Highway is recommended here rather than one in Florida. The illustrations should be labeled.

Ø Roundabouts should be designed to accommodate bicycles.

Ø Roundabouts may be landscaped with groundcover or low shrubs, but trees and other fixed objects are not appropriate. There are drainage and maintenance issues related to tree wells that may make them impractical. For emergency vehicle access, at least 6 m (20') needs to be provided between curbs and raised medians.

Page 17, Trees: Tree planting along SR 63 will improve the appearance of the state facility. However, it increases the maintenance cost. Caltrans recommends that an assessment district be established to fund the maintenance of improvements along SR 63 such as trees and other landscaping plants.

Page 21, Avenue 408 Village, first paragraph, third sentence: Proposed development along SR 63 is “required” to provide sidewalks according to State standards.

Page 22, Avenue 416 (El Monte Way) and SR 63, first paragraph, second sentence: The sentence should specify which corner (SW, SE, NW, NE) is being discussed.

Page 23, Site Specific Recommendations: See previous comments related to improvements for long-term needs (Page 9, Government Presentation). The first and second phase improvements need to consider the long-term transportation needs on the State highway system.

Page 23, SR 63 Corridor Recommendation: See comments on the Executive Summary (p. 2) and the use of appropriate wording.

Page 23, second paragraph:

Ø The placement of tree wells and reduction of the number of lanes north of Avenue 416 will require additional studies to determine their safety and operational impacts. Edgelines are not typically placed where there are curbs and gutters. Its installation may be considered if its purpose is to channelize bicycles. Installing and maintaining street lighting is the responsibility of the local agency

Ø Any shoulder less than 2.4 m, such as at tree well and bulb-out locations, mandates a design exception.

Page 23, Phase One, first bullet: Identify which side (E, W) of SR 63 the sidewalk is to be completed.

Page 23, Phase One, seventh bullet: This bullet should identify the number and locations of transit stops. The identification of facilities will prove helpful for funding purposes.

Page 23, Phase One, ninth bullet: See previous comments related to Truck Bypass (Page 14).

Page 23, Phase Two, first and second bullets: Define the parameters for these improvements (from where to where on SR 63).

Page 23, Phase Two, third bullet: Identify locations of gateway elements. Refer to Caltrans' policy on gateway monuments in the Caltrans Traffic Manual and Highway Design Manual.

Page 23, Phase One, eighth bullet, and Phase Two, fourth bullet: What is meant by "Implement site-specific treatments as recommended?"

Page 24, Railroad Drive: Refer to Caltrans' policy on gateway monuments.

Page 28/29 – There is a detailed discussion of landscaping recommendations and emergency vehicle access for the proposed roundabout at Avenue 416. These details should either be included with the discussion of all five proposed roundabouts or discussed generically for all roundabouts.

Page 32, Implementation: The section on implementation simply offers a listing of potential funding sources. It should contain a funding plan to address cost, feasibility, strategies, etc., to implement the specific recommended improvements. The proposed improvements should be included within the Cutler-Orosi Community Plan Update and regional transportation planning documents and process in general.

Page 32, Implementation: The implementation plan should be developed as a collaboration of partners to find ways of implementing suggested improvements on SR 63.

Page 32-40 – The “Implementation” section should include a bulleted list of tasks and should assign responsibilities. This will increase the probability of implementation.

Page 40 – The “Grants and Loans” section should include information about the following Caltrans grants:

- Community Based Transportation Planning
- Environmental Justice
- Transit Planning
- Public Transportation (including Elderly and Disable Transportation Services and Job Access Reverse Commute grants)

Here’s some California Department of Housing and Community Development grants for inclusion:

- Downtown Rebound
- Interregional Partnership

Caltrans looks forward to working with Tulare County and the Cutler-Orosi communities to find approaches toward implementing proposed improvements on SR 63. If you have any questions, please call me at (559) 445-6027.

Sincerely,

JAMES HEINRICH
Office of Transportation Planning

Opening Evening Exercises Described

Background

The intent of these opening evening exercises is to engage the community in envisioning an improved future for their community while maintaining their attention and interest. This is achieved through a series of quick, fun, relatively simple exercises that nonetheless provide the charrette team with an understanding of the values and priorities of the audience. Children, youth and seniors can all participate.

Values Exercise

-Charrette staff/volunteers hand out five Post-It notes to each member of the audience. Facilitator asks each participant to identify the five most important values that they would like to see embodied in their community in 20 years. Facilitator instructs participants to write down one of these values on each of the five Post-It notes. Charrette staff/volunteers collect notes. On the following day, the charrette staff then records the number of times each value was selected. Similar values are bundled together. For example, “safety, peace, and comfort” may be put together under “safety.” These values are then written on butcher paper and posted at the Saturday and Monday public workshops, and are included in the closing presentation.

Priorities Exercise

Facilitator asks participants to brainstorm actions and changes that they would like to see in their community (e.g., better street lighting, completed sidewalks, a recreation center for kids). Participants raise their hands and tell the group their priority when chosen by the facilitator. Charrette staff/volunteers record each action that is expressed on paper on easels. (Easel paper with adhesive on the top is recommended). This is a fast and fun exercise that gets the audiences creative juices flowing. One staff/volunteer should be assigned to record the comments in each language spoken by participants. (In Cutler-Orosi, one person wrote the responses in English and the other Spanish).

As the easel paper is filled with ideas from the audience, additional staff/volunteers take the filed sheets and tape them to an adjacent blank wall. After the audience has exhausted itself of ideas (~5-10 minutes), volunteers/staff provide participants with five sticker dots to vote on which ideas are the most important to them. Facilitator explains that participants may only place one sticker on each of their five priorities (i.e., they cannot place two or more of their stickers on one item). At the end of the evening or the following day, charrette staff/volunteers count the votes of each idea/priority. The top ten priorities are included in the closing night presentation and inform the charrette design team.

7. A COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN

This Chapter combines the strategies in Chapter 5 with the funding opportunities in Chapter 6 into a stand-alone Action Plan — a series of individual goals destined to become reality. The detailed information presented earlier has been condensed into a workable action agenda.

A successful implementation plan requires:

1. An approved prioritized action agenda
2. A responsible lead organization or set of organizations with complementary responsibilities;
3. A set of incentives or investment priorities; and,
4. Commitment and momentum.

This plan shows how to accomplish all four. It also includes proposed time lines, recommended responsibilities, and expected results. Table 15 assesses the applicability of the funding mechanisms described in Chapter 6 to the recommended projects. Table 16 is a graphic representation of suggested roles and responsibilities for the various organizations interested in economic development in Cutler-Orosi. The following action agenda should be copied, modified, debated, improved, and **used for action** by the community and its supporters. This is a starting point. The reader should feel free to separate this chapter and/or the individual Goals from the rest of the report. The rest of this report, the Charrette Report, the Water and Sewer Needs Report and other documents should become supporting information and referred to as often as needed.

The dedicated and cooperative efforts of each and every participant identified in the plan will be needed if its goals are to be realized. It is important for the community, including groups and individuals, to realize that it will take several years, even decades, to realize all the actions outlined in the following pages.

recommended county actions

Encourage the County and the Tulare County Redevelopment Agency to participate as follows:

- ❑ Continue to support the community as it organizes itself for community development. It is recognized that this will primarily occur through the Redevelopment Agency, but assistance will be needed, in particular, from many agencies within the county government.
- ❑ The TCRA should plan and conduct additional community meetings to refine and to realistically prioritize the recommendations made in the Charrette Report. Agencies and organizations that can take the lead for particular projects can be identified. Once this process is completed, strategies can be addressed that would lead to the financing of selected improvements over a period of several years.
- ❑ Refer the Charrette Report to the Long Range Planning Division of the Resource Management Agency with the request that it consider the inclusion of appropriate projects in the next update of the Cutler-Orosi Community Plan, be they transportation, land use, or infrastructure related.
- ❑ Encourage CalTrans to work with the community, the County, and the Tulare County Association of Governments to incorporate appropriate recommendations from the Charrette Report into a Concept Report(s), which would facilitate the programming of project development and construction funds.
- ❑ In its next review of the Cutler-Orosi AB 1290 Implementation Plan, encourage the Redevelopment Agency to program its participation in priority projects and activities.

Goal 1: ORGANIZE FOR LOCAL SUCCESS

Create the non-profit Cutler-Orosi Vision Implementation Committee (COVIC) as an overall development coordinating committee. The sole purpose of this entity is to promote prosperity in the Cutler-Orosi community.

Strategy: Create a **Statement of Purpose** that ensures the committee will enhance and support the efforts of its member groups,

Projects/Actions: A. Establish a unified vision for Cutler-Orosi that all stakeholders can support and to which all can contribute.

B. Create and maintain a joint prioritized action plan, taking advantage of the strengths and capabilities of each stakeholder group. Form project-specific subcommittees as needed.

C. Coordinate and monitor all projects undertaken by each development group, removing roadblocks, encouraging collaboration, avoiding duplication, and helping find funding to ensure each project is successfully completed.

D. Promote business retention and expansion by working with individual businesses, by encouraging business expansions to optimal sites, by steering resources where they are most needed, and by arranging appropriate training opportunities. Emulate the Main Street Approach.

E. Get written notice of all meetings at the local, county, regional and state level that affect Cutler-Orosi and its future. Ensure a local representative attends. Make presentations and testify as appropriate.

F. Publicize all successes as they occur.

Organizations: The recommended board of COVIC would include 1 representative each from the Planning Area Committee, the Cutler-Orosi Chamber of Commerce, the Incorporation Committee, the Joint Powers Agency, the Cutler-Orosi Unified School District, an Orosi business owner or manager or a land or building owner, a Cutler business owner or manager or land or building owner. However, the community should carefully consider membership issues and needs and include representation from as broad a cross-section of the community as possible while still allowing for effective and efficient operations.

Funding Source(s): Committee at first needs only minimal support, for basic activities and to reimburse its members for their time and travel. Each member organization should provide a share of the initial support. The Committee should, however, seek ongoing funding to support a full-time "Community Coordinator" position, and a budget of \$100-200,000 per year.

Expected Results:

- 1 —Cutler-Orosi should become much better known to the outside world.
- 2 —The pace of completing projects should increase.
- 3 —Scarce resources will be better used, with little or no waste.

Timing: Creating this committee should be the first action of the local leadership

Goal 2: ENSURE SEWER AND WATER SYSTEM EXPANSION

Ensure ongoing expansion to keep ahead of the pace of development. Sewer plant and water system capacity are currently constraining all new development, and are keys to future development. The JWA should understand that the community expects action.

Strategy 2a: Maintain continuous positive interaction with the Cutler-Orosi Joint Wastewater Authority (JWA) to encourage immediate expansion of the sewer treatment plant, as well as periodic expansion of the plant to provide an opportunity for steady economic growth.

Projects/Actions: **A.** The engineer for the two public utility districts has indicated that a preliminary engineering study has been prepared, and that the districts are planning to apply for a USDA grant/loan that would allow them to begin construction in 2004. The Visioning committee should help coordinate community input into this process and aggressively encouraged the District and USDA to keep the proposed expansion on track. This should occur before incorporation, because after incorporation the community will no longer be eligible for USDA infrastructure funding.

B. Publicize each milestone as it is completed.

Organizations: JWA, Visioning Committee, Cutler-Orosi PAC, Incorporation Committee, RMA.

Funding Source(s): USDA combination grant/loan for \$4.6 million, EPA line item for \$1 million. Total project = \$5.6 million.

Expected Results: Although 100,000 gpd of discharge capacity has just been allocated to Cutler and Orosi, the sewer expansion is necessary for housing, commercial and industrial development in Cutler-Orosi.

Timing: The districts are encouraged to submit an application for funding and a completed preliminary engineering report to USDA within the next few months.

Goal 3: IMPROVE HIGHWAY 63, EL MONTE, LOCAL STREETS and COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Complete Phase I and Phase II Street improvements, and pursue truck bypass. Either the Vision Coordinating Committee or a special street improvement subcommittee should oversee this work. See the Charrette Report for details of each project.

Strategy 3a: **Complete Phase I improvements. A-D are critical safety improvements for pedestrians and school children. Publicize each successful project.**

Projects/Actions: **A.** Complete sidewalk project with TCRA funding. In addition, where possible, the TCRA should leverage local funds against state and federal funding sources.

B. Signal, median, reflective markings @ Cutler School (Cutler)

C. Pedestrian Crossing, median refuge @ 63 & Ave. 413 (Orosi)

D. Reduce 63 to 2 lanes w/ medians & tree wells past Orosi High School. Improve pedestrian crossings (El Monte to Clyde) (Orosi)

E. Turn lanes, medians @ First Street & Ave. 404 (Cutler)

F. Street narrowing @ PUD office on Orosi Drive (Cutler)

G. . Left turn lanes, bulbouts @ 63 & El Monte (Orosi)

H. Build transit shelters at bus stops.

Organizations: The TCRA, Cutler-Orosi PAC, Caltrans, the Tulare County Road Commissioner, the Vision Committee and its members.

Organizations:	The TCRA, Cutler-Orosi PAC, Caltrans, the Tulare County Road Commissioner, the Vision Committee and its members.
Funding Source(s):	Pursue all possible and realistic sources of spending including but not limited to CalTrans, the County, TCRA, USDA, the federal Economic Development Administration, and the federal Highway Administration. Some CDBG funds could be available in any given year if these projects involve private sector job creation.
Expected Results:	For each project that is completed, dramatic improvements in public safety, beautification, and economic vitality will occur. However, it should be noted that obtaining transportation funds is a long-term effort requiring years of advance planning and prioritizing competing projects.
Timing: As soon as funding is arranged for each improvement, the project should be undertaken.	

Strategy 3b:	Pursue Truck Bypass of Highway 63 if feasible. (See the Charrette Report for details).
Projects/Actions:	<p>A. Support a bypass study, which could help create a downtown without the need to maintain a wide, fast thoroughfare. There will be economic impacts from this action. Identify the economic impacts of fewer trucks passing through Cutler-Orosi. Also ensure there is enough funding to ensure long-term road maintenance, assuming Caltrans transfers ownership.</p> <p>B. If appropriate to support, arrange for the existing highway to be deeded to the County (or the new city, whichever is applicable).</p>
Organizations:	TCRA, the Resource Management Agency, Cutler-Orosi PAC, County Public Works, Caltrans, Vision Committee and its members.
Funding Source(s):	Ask CalTrans to fund the bypass study, all traffic improvements and signage changes, and ongoing maintenance for the existing Highway once it becomes the property of the County.
Expected Results:	Under County ownership, traffic-calming and beautification road improvements should be easier to approve, but may be difficult to fund, (i.e. a smaller pool of money supporting county roads). A special fund should be established specifically for this road.
Timing:	These actions can be taken immediately, with the expectation that the study and bypass construction process will take 3 years or more to complete from the time that participating agencies are able to begin a concerted effort.

Strategy 3c:	Complete Phase II improvements. Publicize each successful project. See the Charrette Report.
Projects/Actions:	<p>A. Roundabout at First Street & Orosi Drive (Cutler)</p> <p>B. Signal, bulbouts, reflective markings on El Monte @ Palm School (Orosi)</p> <p>C. Gateway median @ 63 & Railroad Drive (Cutler)</p> <p>D. Roundabout for 2 traffic lanes @ 63 & Avenue 408 (Cutler)</p> <p>E. Street narrowing along First Street (Cutler)</p> <p>F. Median @ 63 & El Monte (Orosi)</p> <p>G. Reduce El Monte to 2 lanes w/ medians and trees east of 63 to Sand Creek (Orosi).</p> <p>H. Continuous landscaped median along 63's entire length, bike lanes, tree .</p>

I. Large capacity roundabout @ El Monte & Road 124.

Organizations:

J. Replace signal with large capacity roundabout @ El Monte & Road 120. TCRA, the RMA, Cutler-Orosi PAC, Caltrans, Vision Committee and its members.

Funding Source(s):

Pursue Caltrans and TCRA funds, USDA funds, and other funds for sidewalk and community facilities improvements. Pursue CDBG funds if private-sector jobs will be created.

Expected Results:

For each project that is completed, dramatic improvements in public safety, beautification, and economic vitality will occur.

Timing:

Begin Phase II after Phase I completed.

Strategy 3d:

Specific Community Space Improvements, Business improvements, and Community Facilities. See the Charrette Report.

Projects/Actions:

- A. Improve building entrances to the bank and the R&N Market (assuming a move is not feasible—See Strategy #4a).
- B. Create a small community garden behind the bank building between the bank and Masonic Hall.
- C. Create a controlled weekend farmers market in Cutler in the park across from the PUD.
- D. Create a common design theme for Orosi’s central shopping area. Encourage local businesses to follow the new theme with their future improvements.
- E. Create a new (future) civic center, commercial plaza and sports complex @ 63 & Avenue 408.
- F. Plan and build a community center with swimming pool at new civic center.
- G. Add public restrooms at key locations.
- H. Publicize each success as it occurs.

Organizations:

Vision Committee and its members. RMA, TCRA, private business owners and land and building owners.

Funding Source(s):

Encourage the TCRA to create a Façade Improvement Loan Program. Small business loans from SBA, CDBG. Bank should consider creating the small space behind its facility. USDA funds for community facilities. Approach Gongs, who own the site of the future civic center location. Park funds may apply to the community gardens and community facilities.

Expected Results:

These specific projects will create local beauty, places to sit and gather, and reduce traffic congestion.

Timing: Actions A-C should begin immediately as separate beautification projects.

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Specific Community Space Improvements, Business improvements, and Community Facilities. See the Charrette Report.

Projects/Actions:

- A. Improve building entrances to the bank and the R&N Market (assuming a move is not feasible—See Strategy #4a).
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Expected Results: These specific projects will create local beauty, places to sit and gather, and reduce traffic congestion.

Timing: Actions A-C should begin immediately as separate beautification projects.

Goal 4: RETAIL REVITALIZATION

Capture as much additional retail spending as possible. Beautify the existing retail centers. Currently, over \$21 million in household retail spending is currently spent outside Cutler-Orosi in a number of retail categories. Existing businesses can expand their lines and/or add new lines. Or the community can attract entirely new stores.

Strategy 4a: **Encourage R&N Market to either expand on site or relocate nearby. Use all available incentives and assistance, including possibly swapping land.**

Projects/Actions:

- A. Work with the Market owners and other property owners to jointly investigate expanding to the southeast corner of 63 and El Monte. This is the ideal supermarket location for Cutler-Orosi, because of the proximity of the bank and other shops. 1-1/2 to 2 acres is needed.
- B. If A above is not feasible, support expansion of the existing store and its parking on-site by helping the muffler shop relocate to Highway 63, and/or acquiring land behind the store. This is the second best location.
- C. As a last resort, the R&N could in the future relocate near the corner of 63 and Avenue 408, which is owned by the market, as long as the store complements and does not interfere with the future civic center.
- D. Publicize the outcome of this project.

Organizations: Vision committee, TCRA, landowners and R&N Market.

Funding Source(s): Private. TCRA can provide incentives via its property acquisition powers. CDBG grants may apply for infrastructure and/or loans if new jobs will be created.

Expected Results: While there is not enough retail leakage to support another supermarket, the R&N Market should be enlarged so it can support additional local household spending. Making the store larger will increase the sales tax and property tax increment that can be made available for future projects.

Timing: This action should be supported immediately.

Strategy 4b:	Create a Façade Improvement Loan Program for Cutler-Orosi retailers. Steer other small business loans to the community. Create a single streetscape design theme for all businesses to follow.
Projects/Actions:	<p>A. Design and create the program to match the needs of local retailers.</p> <p>B. Market the program to existing retailers.</p> <p>C. Create a catalog of other available programs and promote the availability to local businesses.</p> <p>D. Create a common design theme for Orosi’s central shopping area. Encourage local businesses to follow the new theme with their future improvements.</p> <p>E. Publicize each success. This will help the business and the community.</p>
Organizations:	TCRA, Visioning Committee, CSET.
Funding Source(s):	TCRA should first create the façade program and provide its initial funding using existing resources, or a CDBG Enterprise Fund grant if the job creation requirements can be met. Accessing other small business assistance programs is a matter of publicizing their availability. The common theme streetscape can be pursued using existing RMA resources.
Expected Results:	Immediate beautification, increased retail patronage and increased local sales tax revenues.
Timing:	These actions can be taken immediately.
Strategy 4c:	Encourage expansion of local retailers to fill retail leakage needs.
Projects/Actions:	<p>A Use the lists (from Chapter 3) of specific retail categories where additional store sales are needed. Compare the need against existing stores and their offerings. Create a comprehensive plan for filling specific needs, including identifying specific stores and their locations. Keep the plan flexible, since the private sector will actually be implementing the plan.</p> <p>B. Approach specific retailers in ‘downtown’ Orosi and ‘downtown’ Cutler. Encourage them to expand their lines, upgrade existing lines, or add new lines. Arrange training in merchandising from the local SBDC. Promote SBA, façade and other forms of assistance to those businesses.</p> <p>C. Jointly promote specialty retailers focused on products from Mexico (e.g. food, crafts, home furnishings, etc.)</p> <p>D. Find and help companies having trouble staying in business. Form a response team for each company. Depending on the problems, the team can include an expert in marketing, accounting, insurance, purchasing, management, etc.</p> <p>E. Publicize each success.</p>
Organizations:	The Visioning Committee and the Chamber of Commerce should lead this activity, pulling in the SBDC, CSET, SCORE, College of the Sequoias, etc.
Funding Source(s):	Potential business assistance sources include the SBDC; the joint micro-enterprise program of the County, CSET and the SBDC; SBA; perhaps a TCRA façade improvement loan program; perhaps a CDBG Enterprise Fund revolving loan program; and the revolving loan program administered by the Tulare County Certified Development Corporation. Approach banks and to identify their local ending policies.
Expected Results:	Incremental –to–dramatic improvement in retail capture locally. This type of <u>local</u> planning will enhance the ability of local retailers to serve their clientele.
Timing:	These actions can be taken immediately.

Strategy 4d: Organize a local Farmers Market.

- Projects/Actions:** A. Organize an official community farmers market. Certification should be considered, but need not be pursued immediately. Insurance and other considerations should be addressed.
B. Set minimum standards for products such as local produce only; local produce, art and crafts only; produce and crafts and antiques only; etc. Discourage 'flea market' products such as used clothing and furniture, music, eyeglasses and other retail products freely available at local stores.
C. Secure an attractive temporary location, perhaps the southeast corner of 63 & El Monte, perhaps the Cutler Park across from Cutler School.
C. Schedule a market day (monthly, weekly during harvest season, etc.), publicize it, sign up vendors, and arrange security and gate staff.
- Organizations:** This should be a locally sponsored event. Chamber, Vision Committee, or the Incorporation committee should take the lead.
- Funding Source(s):** Vendor sign-up fees should subsidize each event. Initial startup subsidies may be needed.
- Expected Results:** Immediate beautification, an outlet for local truck farmers and small farmers, increased retail patronage and increased local sales tax revenues.
- Timing:** This action can be taken immediately. Starting small and building as momentum builds is a good strategy here.

Goal 5: CONTINUE TO PURSUE INCORPORATION

Pursue incorporation. **The community is large enough to incorporate, and incorporation would increase local control over the community's destiny.**

Strategy:

Support movement toward cityhood.

- Projects/Actions:** A. Work with LAFCO, the Board of Supervisors and RMA to complete the incorporation study and release its results. Review it critically.
B. Take additional steps as appropriate that will eventually lead to a successful ballot measure. Seek additional funding for any necessary studies and other actions.
C. Promote the corner of 63 & Ave. 408 as the future civic center of the new city. Work with the owners to acquire and/or dedicate the land for that purpose.
D. Publicize all successful milestones along the way.
- Organizations:** Incorporation committee.
- Funding Source(s):** Various
- Expected Results:** Incorporation takes time, and the local public must believe incorporation and the increased local control and responsibilities are in their best interest.
- Timing:** Ongoing.

Goal 6: DEVELOP AND FILL THE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Designate the South Cutler Industrial Park as described in the Water and Sewer Report. Complete infrastructure to Phase I. Recruit new industries. **The area already includes a number of industrial users, and is close to the sewer plant for cost-effective delivery of infrastructure. The recommended 160-acre site would provide 20 years of land for new industry.**

Strategy:	Designate and Develop the South Cutler Industrial Park.
Projects/Actions:	<p>A. Officially designate the park.</p> <p>B. Ensure the JWA and the Cutler PUD bring the necessary infrastructure to the site, starting with Phase I.</p> <p>C. Encourage existing landowners within the Park boundaries to cancel their Williamson Act contracts, thus allowing the land to come on line in 10 years, when it will be needed.</p> <p>D. Provide the Tulare EDC with data and maps so they can include the park in their marketing inventory.</p> <p>E. Publicize all milestones as they are reached.</p>
Organizations:	RMA, Cutler-Orosi PAC, existing landowners, Tulare EDC. Vision Committee should support this action.
Funding Source(s):	TCRA, RMA, the Cutler PUD and Orosi PUD could jointly provide up-front funding for sewer, water, and roads. Seek EDA or CDBG grant assistance. Connection fees, user fees and property taxes will provide payback.
Expected Results:	A designated park will provide needed jobs for local residents, reducing the out-migration of workers. Additional tax benefits will also accrue to the future city.
Timing:	Official Park designation can occur as soon as the County makes the necessary revisions to the Cutler-Orosi Community Plan. Williamson Act cancellations should occur immediately. Sewer and water are nearby and only need installation of new lines. Roads can be built as needed. Active recruitment by Tulare EDC can continue throughout this process, but recruitment will be easier once the necessary land use designations and infrastructure improvements have been made.

Goal 7: SUPPORT AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Make Cutler-Orosi into an attractive place for current and future agri-business firms.

Strategy:	Enhance employee training and create the facilities to support agri-business as it becomes more technologically dependent.
Projects/Actions:	<p>A. Promote training of local residents at the College of the Sequoias agri-business program, at CSET and at other programs as they become available. Bring COS classes to the community.</p> <p>B.. Encourage the formation of microenterprises and small businesses in the agri-business industry.</p> <p>C. Encourage local developers to create facilities attractive to the industry, including industrial, research and office facilities. The future civic center would make an attractive site for laboratories, a trade center and other facilities.</p> <p>D. Work with Tulare County EDC and the Tulare County BIZ to understand the needs of agri-business firms and recruit them to the community.</p>
Organizations:	CSET, College of the Sequoias, Tulare County EDC, and Tulare County BIZ. The Vision committee should help.
Funding Source(s):	COS, CSET, local businesses.
Expected Results:	The skill level of the local workforce will improve, creating a more attractive environment for technology-oriented agri-business firms.
Timing:	Ongoing.