



1000 FRIENDS OF FRESNO

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December 2010

Meeting the Challenges of the Future with Citizens Involvement

Dear Interested Citizens:

As another year is coming to a close and our thoughts turn to the holidays and those people that are near and dear to us, one of the most rewarding things we can do is give help to the less fortunate among us, whether it be volunteering your time, giving food & gifts or giving money to charities in need.

At 1000 Friends of Fresno we are looking forward to our 3rd annual party which we hold for needy children.

Best wishes for the holidays and New Year.

--Bob Dwyer

MUSIC MENTORING CLUB

--Donald Anderson, Program Director

1000 Friends of Fresno "Music Mentoring Club" was started to provide at risk students with a reward for good to excellent grades and behavior in school. One of our goals is to provide our students with exposure to as much of the positive effects of Mentoring, Music, Arts and Drama as possible. We strive to make possible positive events and experiences that our students would never otherwise have the opportunity to see, to learn about, to experience. Our focus is clear; we want to actually show our young men and women that there's a whole new world of infinite enjoyable events, positive activities and enlightenment opportunities that they too can partake of and in.



To begin this process we were helped by Dr. Jothany Blackwood who is Dean of Students for Music, Art, and Drama instruction at Fresno City College. She made it possible for our Music Mentoring Club to attend our first outing/event on 10-19-10. She provided tickets to a Latin Jazz Concert being put on at Fresno City College Theater. Our students were educated, amazed, thrilled and overjoyed about their experience.

Our second eye opener event/outing was held on 11-13-10. We were blessed with tickets to attend the Philharmonic Orchestra to experience "TOTAL TCHAIKOVSKY", at the William Saroyan Theatre. Now just imagine 25-30 at risk students ages 18-24 at the Philharmonic Orchestra. Truly an experience myself and students never had, and an experience we will never forget. We are all changed for the best because of Mr. Donald Reinhold and Mrs. Susan Adams of the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra.

Our third eye opening event/outing took place on 11-18-10. The Risk Takers Dream Makers Awards Banquet. A group of 20 Music Mentoring Club members were invited to attend by CEO Mr. Keith Kelly. We were allowed to meet and greet many local celebrities as well as treated to a wonderful lunch and many networking opportunities. Mr. Kelly we truly thank and appreciate your willingness to help the less fortunate have a fantastic experience.

The fourth event/outing took place on the 11-19-10, at the William Saroyan Theatre. Our Music Mentoring Club members were provided tickets for themselves, their kids and families to attend a Magical Holiday Play from 7-8pm, and a carnival with rides, face painting, games and fun activities for the kid's from 6-7pm. Again all thanks and appreciation is given to Mr. Donald Reinhold, and Mrs. Susan Adams of the wonderful Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra. Please know that you have made a significant positive difference in the lives of our students and their families. Infinite thanks for your willingness!

Our Music Mentoring Club meets every Thursday from 3:15 - 4:45, at E.O.C Local Conservation Corps located 1805 E. California Ave, Fresno, Ca 93706.

We appreciate all the support we're getting, but we need much more in our efforts to help create positive experiences for at risk young people who simply need help with beginning life as a positive and productive individual.

Please do not hesitate to contact Donald Anderson at 559-408-1416 or Bob Dwyer at 559-291-2264, if you have functions or events which we might further expose our students to positive experiences.

The following statement was prepared by the Downtown Fresno Coalition for distribution to the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan Community Advisory Committee.

A STATEMENT FROM THE DOWNTOWN FRESNO COALITION CONCERNING THE PLACE OF FULTON MALL IN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

On August 20, 2010, the National Park Service made the following announcement: "The Fulton Mall has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state and local levels of significance under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of Landscape Architecture, Community Planning and Development, Recreation/Entertainment, and Social History." This decision automatically places the Mall on the California Register of Historic Places and it ensures that the Fulton Mall must be treated as a historical resource under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act, and Section 4(f) of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act.

The decision clearly dictates that the integrity of the Fulton Mall must be respected. Any effort to revitalize downtown Fresno should focus on preserving the Mall as the centerpiece of a mixed-use neighborhood. Other alternatives being offered for consideration should be rejected. We challenge a basic premise of the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, as found in its name. Fulton Mall/Fulton Street is not a corridor and never was. As it presently exists, Fulton Mall is a place, a destination. An important principle of urban design is to create a sense of place defined by such things as respect for human scale and respect for the past. Fulton Mall satisfies those criteria. It has become an urban park that can be the keystone around which to create residences and venues for commerce and entertainment. The Mall provides a unity which the buildings do not provide because they vary in height, architectural style, and quality.

The determination of eligibility of Fulton Mall for the National Register and its listing on the California Register of Historic Places should send a message to those in our city who choose to denigrate and neglect the Mall: it is time to begin to promote and properly maintain it. Efforts to entice visitors to Fresno should feature the Mall as the centerpiece of a pedestrian-friendly downtown that links it with Courthouse Park, Eaton Plaza, and the mall that reaches to City Hall. A downtown that uses trees, plantings, and water features to improve the air quality and reduce the heat effect of over-paved hard-scapes and that fosters a healthy interaction between people and their environment will be recognized as a place in which to live and work, even if a Nordstrom's or Pottery Barn is never opened there.

While the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan process pursues desirable goals like the adoption of a form-based code, we question the wisdom of ignoring the Gruen Plan and the Central Area Community Plan. In its conception of Fulton Mall and its environs the Gruen plan created the most signifi-

cant example of a city in the United States where all elements were defined within the scope of the project. Much of the Gruen Plan was never realized, especially the establishment of housing in the area, but it provides guidelines and goals for a comprehensive revitalization of downtown.

We also contend that the FCSP process is not giving sufficient attention to the Central Area Community Plan (CACP) as the source of controlling policies and goals regarding the Fulton Mall and the foundation upon which any new initiatives or decisions should proceed. The CACP resulted from a thorough process of public hearings and deliberations by elected officials. It makes good sense to incorporate new policies that emerge from the FCSP process as amendments to the CACP.

The original construction of the Fulton Mall, like the current Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, was financed by federal taxpayer funds. Indeed, much construction of Fresno's downtown circa 1960 was paid for by the taxpayers of the United States. **The taxpayers are the true stakeholders.** On behalf of the Fresno community, the City of Fresno is the steward of the historic resource that is Fresno's Fulton Mall.

FULTON MALL: WHAT HAS HAPPENED, MIGHT HAPPEN, AND SHOULD HAPPEN

--Ray McKnight

From September 25 to October 2 the Downtown and Community Revitalization Department sponsored a series of meetings and workshops focussed on creating a Fulton Corridor Specific Plan (FCSP). Probably the most important of these meetings was held in the evening of September 27, when the consultants offered eight alternative proposals for what to do with the Fulton Mall. The public had the opportunity to respond, mainly in writing.

On October 19 the FCSP Community Advisory Committee met to choose three of the alternatives, presumably after examining the responses from the public, and presumably for later presentation to the City Council. Stefanos Polyzoides, principal of the firm, again gave a brief description of the alternatives, including a couple of new variations based on the earlier public comment. Members of the public were allowed the usual three minutes each for oral comment. The committee members made individual comments, and the vote was taken. Two of the chosen alternatives were slightly different versions of turning the entire Fulton Mall back into Fulton Street. The third chosen alternative was to maintain and restore the Mall as a pedestrian Mall. **(At this point if you have not already read "A Statement from The Downtown Fresno Coalition Concerning the Place of Fulton Mall in Downtown Revitalization," found elsewhere in this newsletter, please do so.** We tried, not very successfully, to have the Advisory Committee consider it before the October 19 meeting.)

Along with others I have talked with, I strongly suspect that despite the elaborate display of garnering public input, the intended outcome of the FSCP process is to have one of the "middle" alternatives chosen, i.e., to return traffic to a portion of Fulton Mall. One bit of evidence for this conclusion is that the *Bee* report on the October 19 meeting mentioned that "city officials" might present more than the three chosen alternatives to the Council. Some supporters of preserving the Mall may think that this would be a reasonable compromise. Here is why it is not. The issue in this drawn-out struggle is *(continued on page 3)*



not whether or not to return vehicular traffic to a street that is currently closed to vehicular traffic. The issue is whether or not to preserve a masterpiece of landscape architecture that is now recognized as an important historical resource. (Again, please refer to "A Statement. . ." for discussion of the significance of the Mall being determined as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.) At the September 27 meeting there were presentations by what I will call subconsultants to the major consultants. One of those presentations was by Charles Birnbaum, the President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, which is based in Washington, D. C. With a very effective power point presentation, Mr. Birnbaum made an eloquent case for the Mall as worthy of preservation. He gave a brief explanation of the importance of the Mall's designer, Garrett Eckbo, in the development of modernist landscape design, and pointed out some of the noteworthy features of Eckbo's design. Birnbaum stated that the Fulton Mall is worthy of listing as a National Historic Landmark, which is a category higher than being listed as a Historic Place. There are about 80,000 National Historic Places, but only about 2,400 National Historic Landmarks. Such a listing would place the Mall in the company of the Ahwahnee Hotel, the Hotel Del Coronado, Manzanar War Relocation Center, the Old United States Mint in San Francisco, the Rose Bowl, Sutter's Fort, the Watts Towers, and the Santa Barbara Mission.

As Birnbaum pointed out, despite its deteriorated condition, the integrity of Garrett Eckbo's design has not been lost. As soon as a sizable portion of the Mall is destroyed, that integrity is lost. The possibility of promoting the Mall as a historical resource worth visiting will then be lost.

Meanwhile, the condition of the Mall is deteriorating because of the shocking neglect by the City. Fountains and water features have been drained. Most free-standing pots have nothing growing in them. The larger planter beds have many dead or dying plants, and in September the soil was rock-solid, suggesting that they are seldom if ever watered. Graffiti has begun to appear. Regular visitors to the Mall say this has never been a problem before. But the City is giving graffiti vandals a message: "This is an abandoned property; do with it as you like." The neglect not only reveals the shortsightedness of the present administration, but also an outrageous disregard for businesses on the Mall and those who frequent them. Volunteers meet at 9 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at the Clock Tower to take part in an effort organized by the Downtown Association to try to make up for the City's deficiencies in maintaining the Mall.

The struggle to save the Fulton Mall is not over. Concerned citizens can communicate with the Mayor and City Council. Facebook participants might also want to join the Save-the-Fulton-Mall Facebook page created by some enterprising allies in our cause.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Fulton-Mall/119947824697844>

THINK HOLIDAY SHOPPING
 Christmas Will Be Here Before You Know It,
Shop The Fulton Mall.

EATON PLAZA WORK STOPPED

-- Ray McKnight, Downtown Fresno Coalition

Several weeks ago, just as some work was to begin to do more to implement the Eaton Plaza Master Plan. Mayor Swearengin ordered the work to stop. Our efforts to understand the reason for this stoppage are continuing. Here is what we know.

In April 2008 a bond issue was authorized to raise the sum of forty million dollars for a variety of parks projects, including \$1.8 million for Phases 2-4 of the Eaton Plaza Master Plan. It was assumed that funds for servicing the bonds would come from a Park Impact Fee from developers. Evidently the funds from this fee have not been sufficient to service the bonds. In recent months a proposal has been made to cease spending money from the bond sale for park projects and to use it solely for servicing the bonds. Disagreement over this proposal led the City Council to request legal advice regarding the legality of using the bond money in this manner.

Our position is to insist that the Mayor and City Council find a way to continue with the implementation of the Master Plan for an Eaton Plaza Park. We think it deserves a higher priority than it has been given. The citizens of Fresno by a large margin voted to purchase land for the park in 1947. At this writing we are awaiting a response to our request pursuant to the California Public Records Act for details about the expenditure of the bond funds.

3rd Annual Holiday Gifts for Kids

Santa Claus needs help from the community to provide toys, fresh fruit and candy to young children in southwest Fresno. Santa welcomes elves to help bring joy to the lives of children ages 1 – 12.

Please call 291-2261 to donate gifts or volunteer your time.

Date: December 23
 Time: 12:00 p.m. (noon)
 Location: Fresno Local Conservation Corps
 1805 E. California Ave
 Fresno, 93706
 (Behind old Rudy's Pharmacy)



May the meaning of the season be deeper, its friendships stronger and its hopes brighter.



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*Happy
Holidays*



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