

Benicia Road Design Workshop



Held March 14th to 16th, 2024

VALLEJO JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Vallejo County Library, 505 Santa Clara St. Vallejo

Acknowledgements

The Benicia Road Workshop held March 14-16th 2024, continues as a collaborative effort between Solano County staff members, representatives from the Homeacres neighborhood, and all the public participants. We would like to give a special thanks to the committed citizens of the Homeacres Neighborhood and the greater Vallejo area who took the time to participate and provide invaluable input into this dynamic and collaborative design workshop.

Residents and community members were very helpful in providing thoughtful suggestions and we are very thankful for their participation in community workshops and meetings. Of special note, thanks to the Solano County Library staff and management team that so graciously accommodated our every ask and provided an outstanding workshop venue.

Funding

Funding for this community planning effort came entirely from the Solano County General Fund and the Workshop was a significant goal identified in the Board of Supervisors approved 2023/24 Planning Division workplan.

Solano County Department of Resource Management Staff

James Bezek, *Director*

Allan Calder, AICP, *Planning Manager and Workshop Director*

Narcisa Untal, *Principal Planner (Integrated Waste Mgmt)*

Travis Kroger, *Associate Planner (Current Planning)*

JT Lee, AICP Candidate, *Assistant Planner (Integrated Waste Mgmt)*

Abigail Pipkin, *Assistant Planner (Current Planning)*

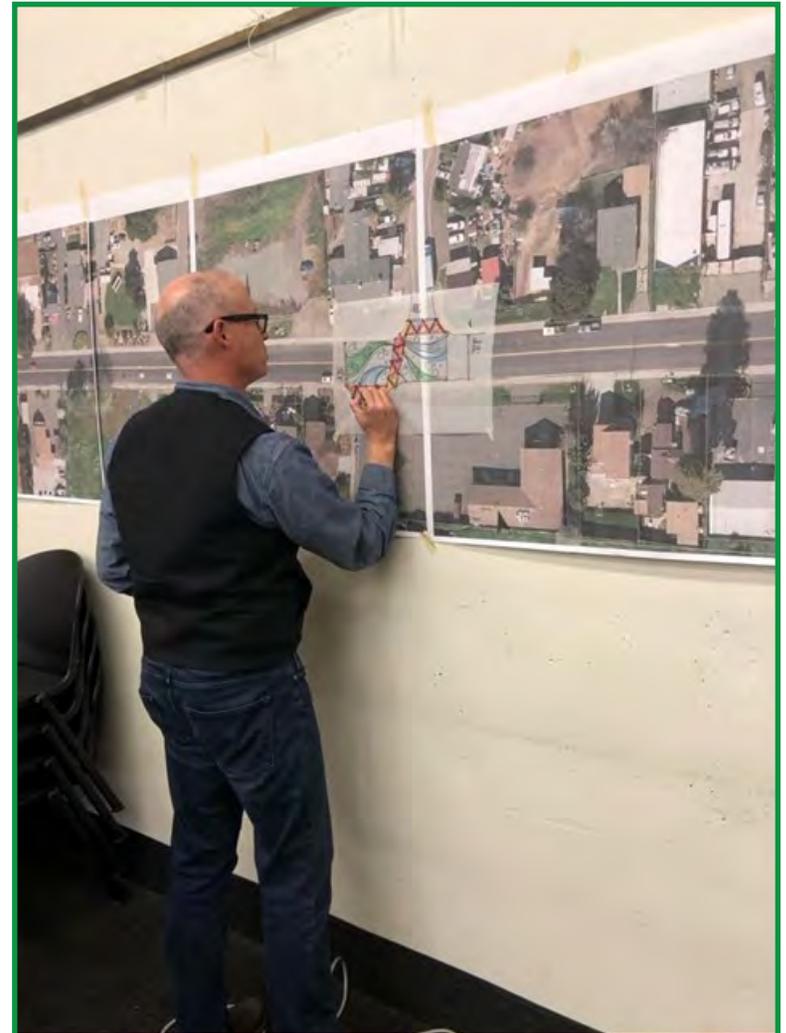
Erik Hagstrom, *CivicSpark Planning Fellow (Integrated Waste Mgmt)*

Elizabeth Whitford, MPH, CPH, REHS, *Environmental Health Specialist*

Matt Tuggle, *Engineering Manager*

Craig Pyle, *Engineering Services Supervisor*

Lor Vue, *Engineering Assistant*



Workshop Participants

Solano County Board of Supervisors

Monica Brown, 2nd Supervisorial District

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Craig Pyle, Engineering Services Supervisor

Lor Vue, Engineering Assistant

County Dept. of General Services, Capital Projects Staff

Timothy Reynolds, Architect

Solano County Sheriff's Office

Sergeant /Sheriff Jason Speakman

Deputy Brandi Aguilar

City of Vallejo Staff

Christina Ratcliff, Planning and Development Services Director

Steve Arnold, Chief Building Official

Tony Chu, Assistant Engineer

Other Traffic Engineering Staff

City of Rio Vista

Robin Borre, Director of Public Works

Project Consultants

Stephen Coyle, AIA, LEED, Principal Town Green

Dave Wollney, Sketch Up Modeling, Paesaggio Landscape Architecture

Steve Price, Urban Advantage – Dynamic Imaging

Vallejo John F. Kennedy Library Staff



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Benicia Road Buildout



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Purpose and Vision: The Benicia Road Design Workshop, held from March 14th to 16th, 2024, at the Vallejo John F. Kennedy Library, was a collaborative initiative aimed at revitalizing and reimagining the Benicia Road corridor in Unincorporated Vallejo, California. The Workshop sought to address the community's needs by discussing and designing a safer, walkable, and attractive neighborhood that supports a diverse range of residents and businesses.

Goals:

- Enhance walkability and safety along Benicia Road.
- Attract neighborhood-supporting businesses and enhance existing ventures.
- Promote sustainable and green urban development.
- Foster a strong sense of community through improved public spaces and amenities.

Collaboration and Engagement: The Workshop resulted from extensive collaboration between Solano County staff, Homeacres neighborhood representatives, and the broader Vallejo community. Significant input was gathered through multiple stakeholder meetings, including local residents, business owners, developers, and County officials. Public presentations and Q&A sessions were integral in presenting potential plans.

Planning and Development: Focused discussions explored potential infill developments, alternative zoning, and building designs to improve housing and commercial opportunities. The Workshop also discussed the use of public spaces like roads, curbs, and sidewalks, aiming to integrate these elements seamlessly into the neighborhood's fabric. Environmental considerations were prioritized, with proposals for green infrastructure and sustainable development practices.

Outcomes and Proposals:

- Proposed narrowing of travel lanes to reduce vehicle speed and enhance pedestrian safety.
- Development of multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and mixed-use buildings to increase residential capacity.
- Enhancement of street aesthetics with tree planting and improved street lighting to foster a safer and more inviting environment.
- Engagement with property owners and developers to explore building and redevelopment potentials, aiming to boost local economic growth and community well-being.

Challenges and Next Steps: The Workshop identified several challenges, such as high construction costs and the need for infrastructure upgrades. Moving forward, efforts around Benicia Road will focus on securing funding sources, refining zoning laws, and continuing community engagement to ensure sustainable development.

Conclusion: The Benicia Road Design Workshop laid a strong foundation for the transformation of the long overlooked commercial corridor into a vibrant, safe, and sustainable part of the County. Ongoing collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders are essential to turn these plans into reality, ensuring long-term benefits for the community.

Why We Held the Workshop

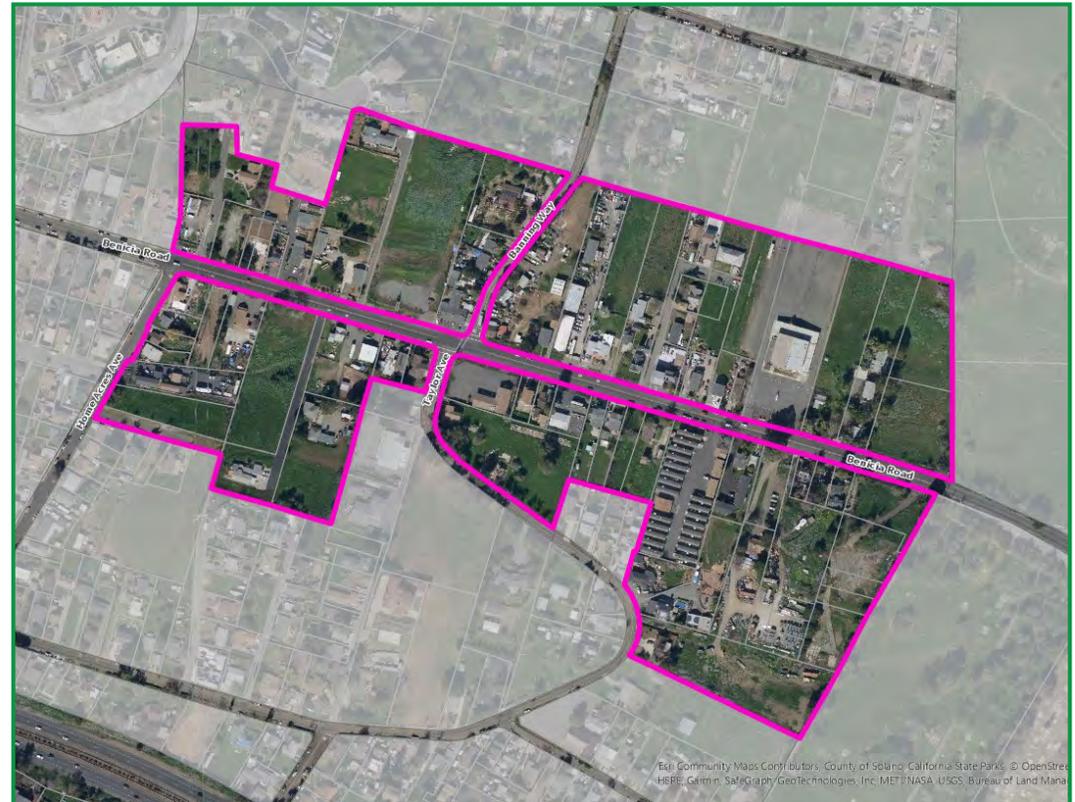


The portion of Benicia Road studied is between Glen Cove Road-Rollingwood Drive and Homeacres Avenue in the Homeacres neighborhood, an unincorporated island surrounded by the City of Vallejo. The community **represents one of the few urban areas under the jurisdictional control of Solano County.**

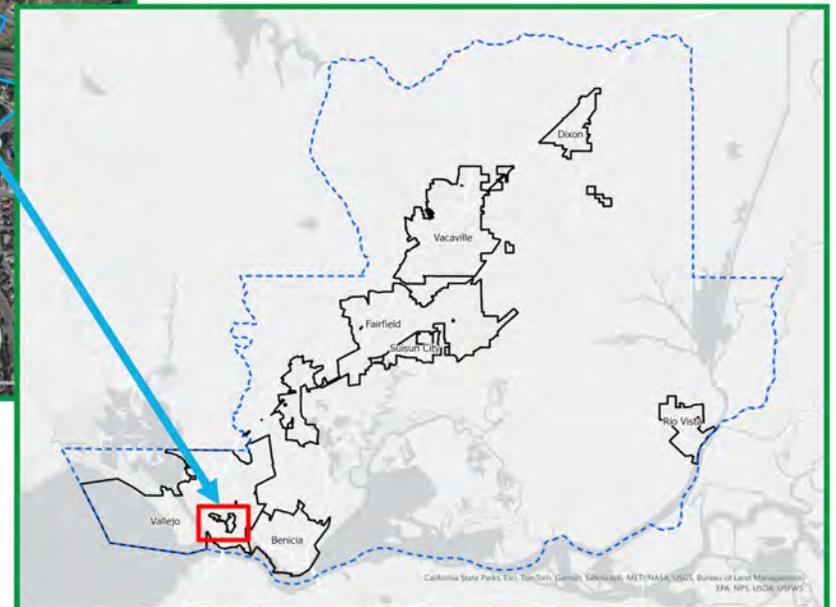
Every community has extraordinary and frequently untapped abundance, even the rural enclaves and less economically advantaged. That abundance is to be found in cultivating connections between people.

The Workshop Team saw the **Workshop as an opportunity to build those relationships** of trust over time. The attendees demonstrated that that an engaged and active citizen can yield good results and reinforce the foundations of trust.

Solano County Planning **held the Workshop to help identify ways to design and build a safer, walkable, and attractive neighborhood** along Benicia Road. Those aspects serve as a nexus to encourage economic activity and encourage infill housing, both goals of the Board of Supervisors.



Study Area Location

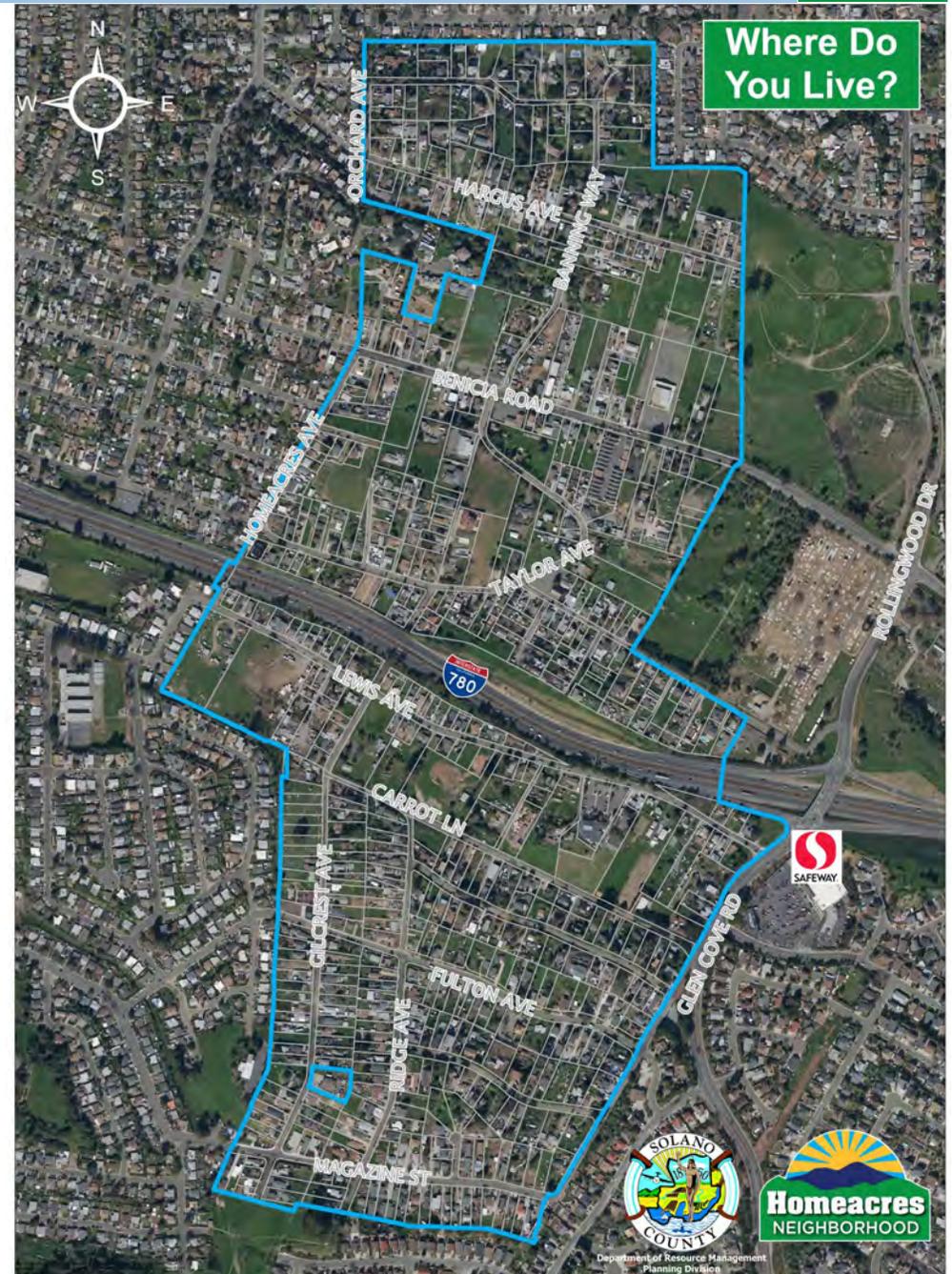


Why We Held the Workshop



The Workshop explored:

- Differing Housing Scales for All Incomes and Ages;
- Improvements Required to Attract New Business and Enhance Existing Enterprises;
- Ways to Make Benicia Road More Green and Sustainable;
- Transit and Street Improvements;
- Alternative Zoning;
- Good Building Designs That Can Add to and Improve Housing and Shops; and
- Improvements to Roads, Curbs and Sidewalks that Border the Private Realm



Prior Work Completed



Research to Understand the Benicia Road Corridor

1. **Investigated existing road conditions** including supporting infrastructure: water, sewer, storm drains, power, street lighting and sidewalks.
2. **Evaluated street improvements** from the completed new striping to the proposed installation of trees in curb extensions with storm water bypass.
3. **Calculated the infrastructure upgrade costs** and installation time required along the corridor to support new development.
4. **Surveyed existing properties and buildings** and consider underdeveloped and un-development sites along the corridor that could be infilled.
5. **Recorded the current land values** based on recent sales, appraisals, etc. for the parcels along the corridor.
6. **Estimated residential and non-residential rent incomes** and sales for new and redevelopment buildings based on “market comps” and from market analysis.
7. **Multiple site visits occurred** to document existing conditions.



Research to Understand the Benicia Road Corridor



8. **Reviewed applicability of SB-9 (2021)**, a law that allows single-family homes lots to be transformed into a property with up to four homes, which could result in much denser neighborhoods.
9. **Reviewed applicability of SB-4 (2023)** that allows religious institutions to build affordable housing on their properties, even if the land isn't zoned for residential use. Corridor properties like the Corinthians Church of God and Second Baptist Church parcels would be eligible to build 20 dwelling units per acre.
10. **Explored developing parcels** through assessing potential costs and regulatory requirements for lot splits, subdivisions, site enhancements, and new construction.
11. **Estimated the increased land values** by parcel for the improvement scenarios such as upzoning.
12. **Recommend funding sources for housing** subsidies and transportation improvements.
13. **Met with property owners prior** to the Workshop to understand local history and interests.



Research to Understand the Benicia Road Corridor



Prior to the Workshop, **the team gathered and recorded ideas and concerns from “stakeholders”** –residents, business owners, developers, law enforcement, and public officials. This would assist staff in developing a general knowledge of the community.

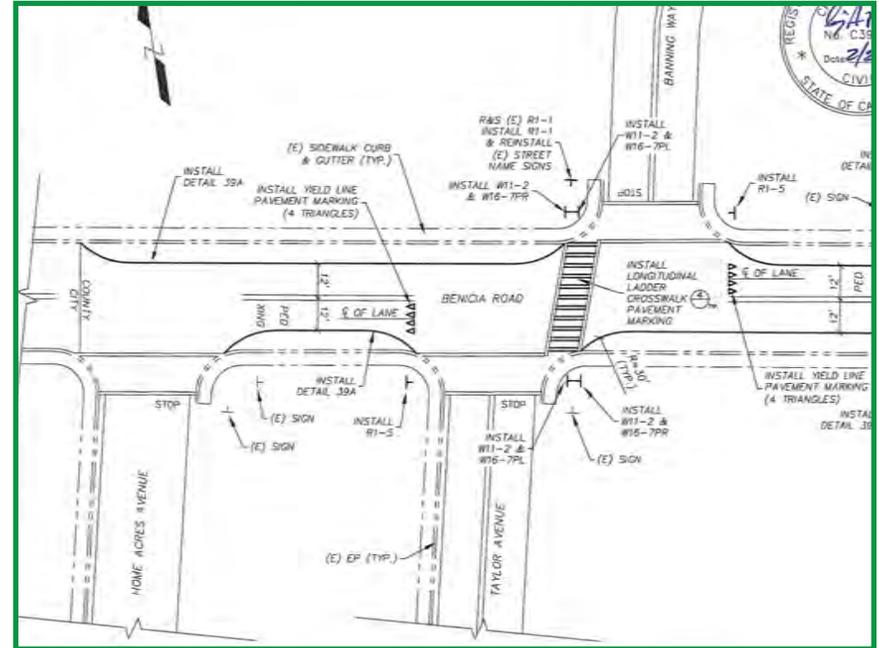
Examined existing properties, buildings, and underdeveloped sites along the corridor for potential infill by property owners. This required staff documenting sizes and values from the assessors office in addition to site inspections.

We spoke with Homeacres residents beyond the corridor study area to gather feedback on potential street improvements, alternative zoning, and building designs that could add and improve housing as well as shops.

Met with willing property owners, explained the County’s mission, and described development possibilities for a range of housing from larger multifamily to accessory dwelling units (ADU) in addition to non-residential/commercial buildings scaled to their parcel and market feasibility.

Interviewed architects, builders, and developers to discuss and design and **reality-test creative, practical, ideas and concepts** like cafes and multifamily housing. This helped staff to scale development to be appropriate to the Community

Connected with community partners, institutions and potential supporters such as the Corinthians Church of God in Christ and the servant leader Pastor Robert D. Collier Sr., an advocate for affordable housing who attended two days of the Workshop.



Materials Developed

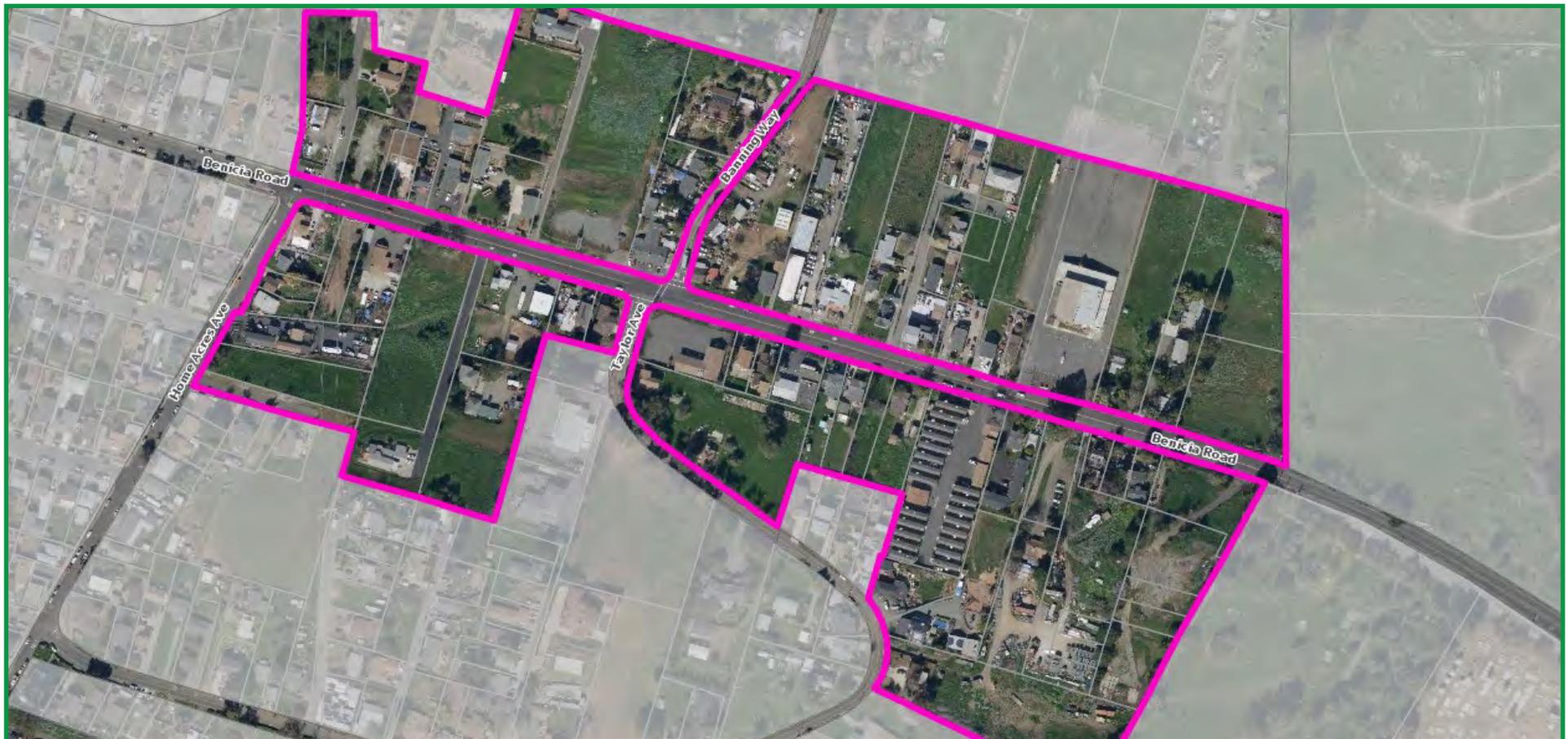


What We Developed: Maps and Supporting Documents



In preparation for the Workshop we **prepared several maps and graphics**. This allowed the workshop team to have visuals and data to point to when working with residents. This prepared the team to have information for developers property owners, residents and business owners. These data produced also represent a chance for public education. Visuals like maps enable residents to understand aspects of their community they may not normally consider and how regulations can shape the built environment.

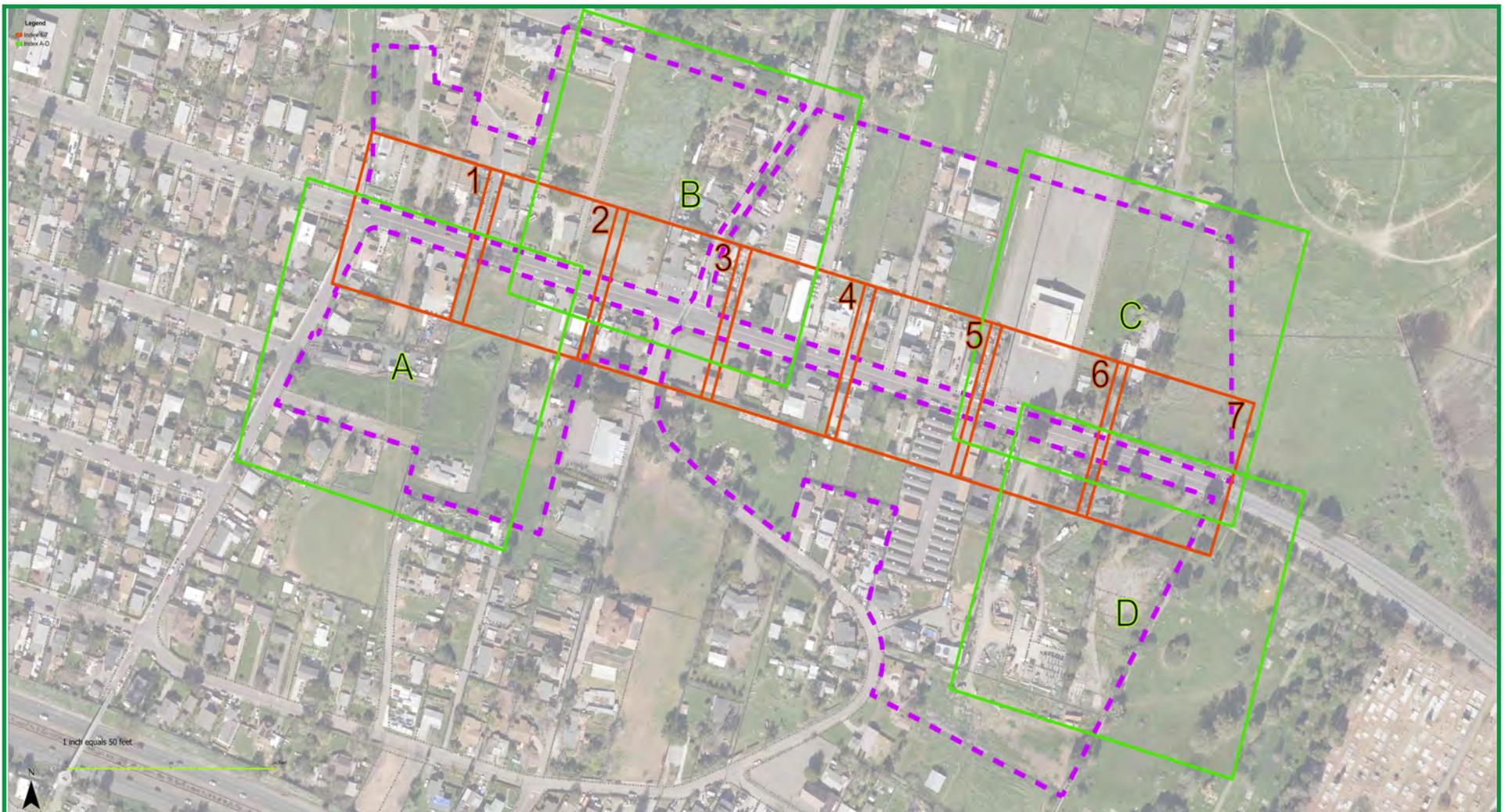
The **team also developed packets** for residents, developers and business owners to review. These packets included business resources, jobs information, zoning information, development information, maps and other forms of data to serve as a takeaway for participants.



What We Developed: Maps and Supporting Documents



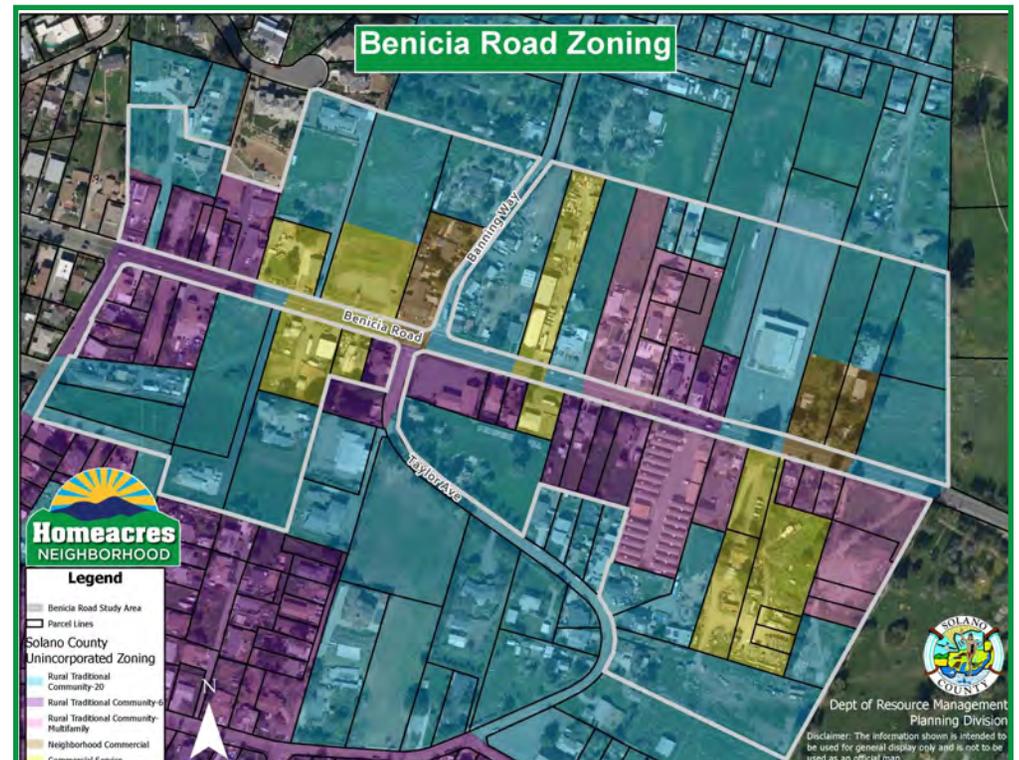
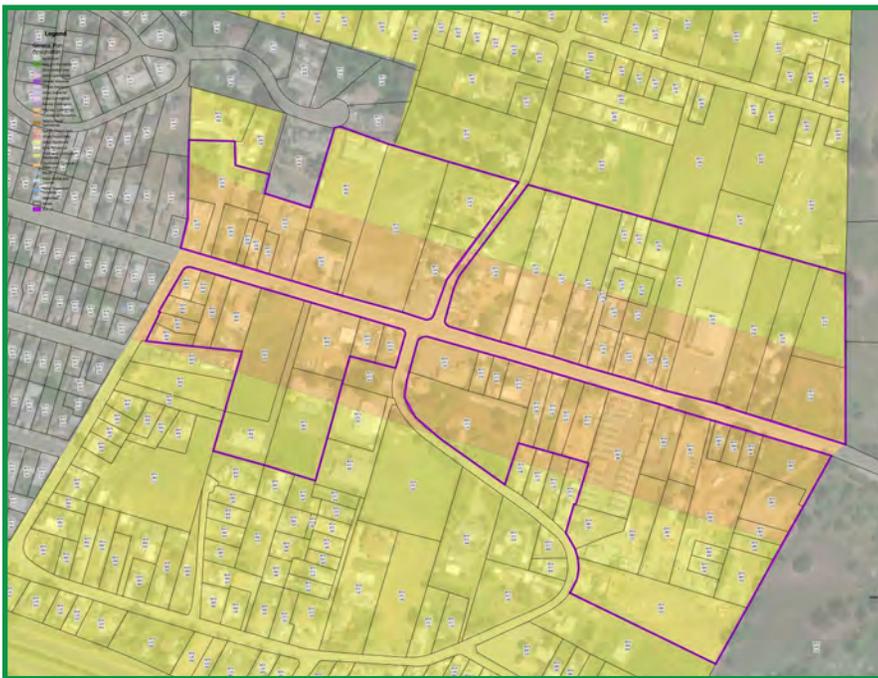
A key aspect of the Workshop engagement were **large print out maps of the corridor**. These enlargements of study areas allowed the workshop team to focus on certain sites and divide labor. The lettered enlargements were at the 20:1 scale (20 feet equals 1 inch) and the seven numbered enlargements of Benicia road were at the 10:1 scale (10 feet equals 1 inch). These large scale print outs allowed **for sketch designs** to occur naturally and allow for easier engagement within the corridor.



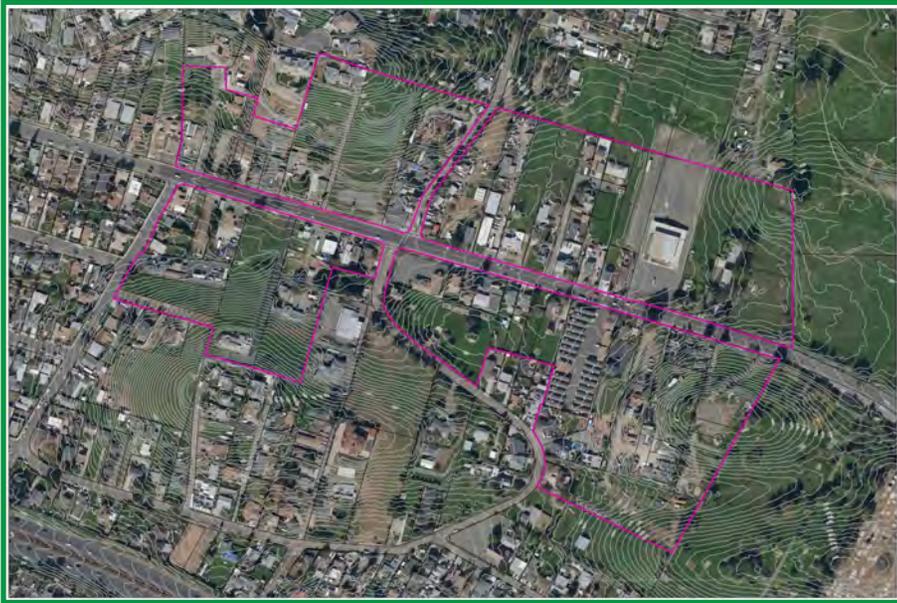
What We Developed: Maps and Supporting Documents



To effectively evaluate potential upzonings and facilitate discussions on neighborhood changes, the team **produced zoning maps of the Benicia Road Corridor and the Homeacres neighborhood**. These maps provide a visual foundation and illustrate existing conditions. The maps served as vital tools during public meetings, enabling residents to see spatially the current zoning and how any potential development could impact them. By offering a clear depiction of the areas under consideration, these maps **encouraged an informed dialogue between staff and community members**.

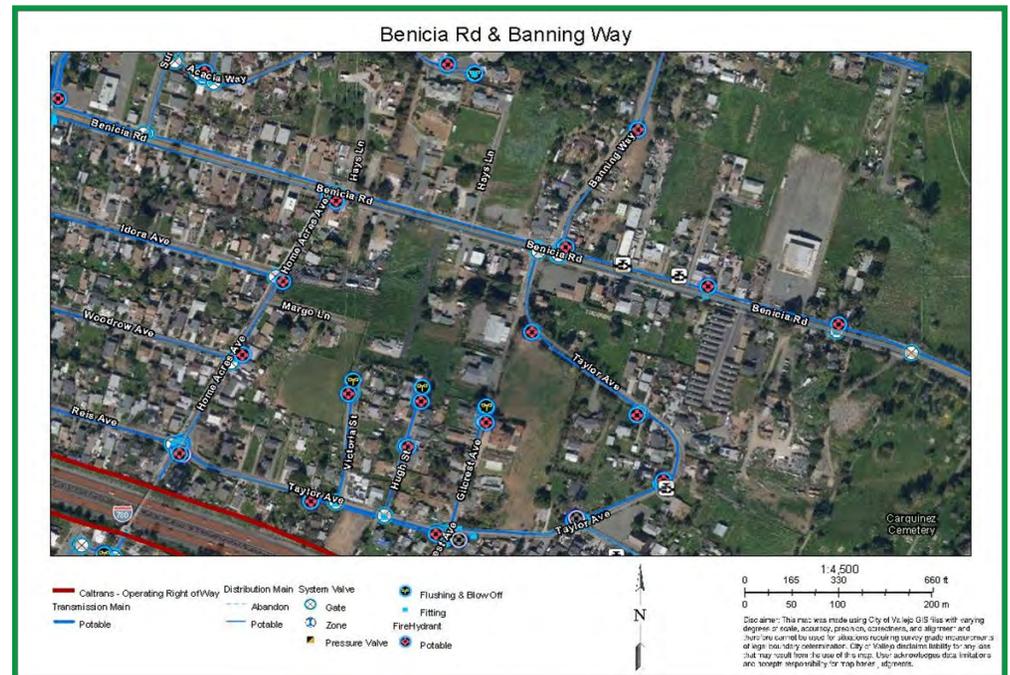


What We Developed: Maps and Supporting Documents



County staff created **topographical maps with two-foot contours to address the varying elevations in the corridor with rising slopes.** These maps help identify key potential challenges for development due to the terrain. The detailed visualization provided by these maps assists in the discussion of planning and decision-making for construction projects.

Staff acquired and developed **detailed infrastructure maps that display the locations of water lines, sanitary sewer lines, and manholes** to assess the infrastructure needs associated with different levels of development. These maps are essential for identifying areas where upgrades might be necessary to support increased residential or commercial growth, ensuring that any potential development can be supported by the existing utilities.



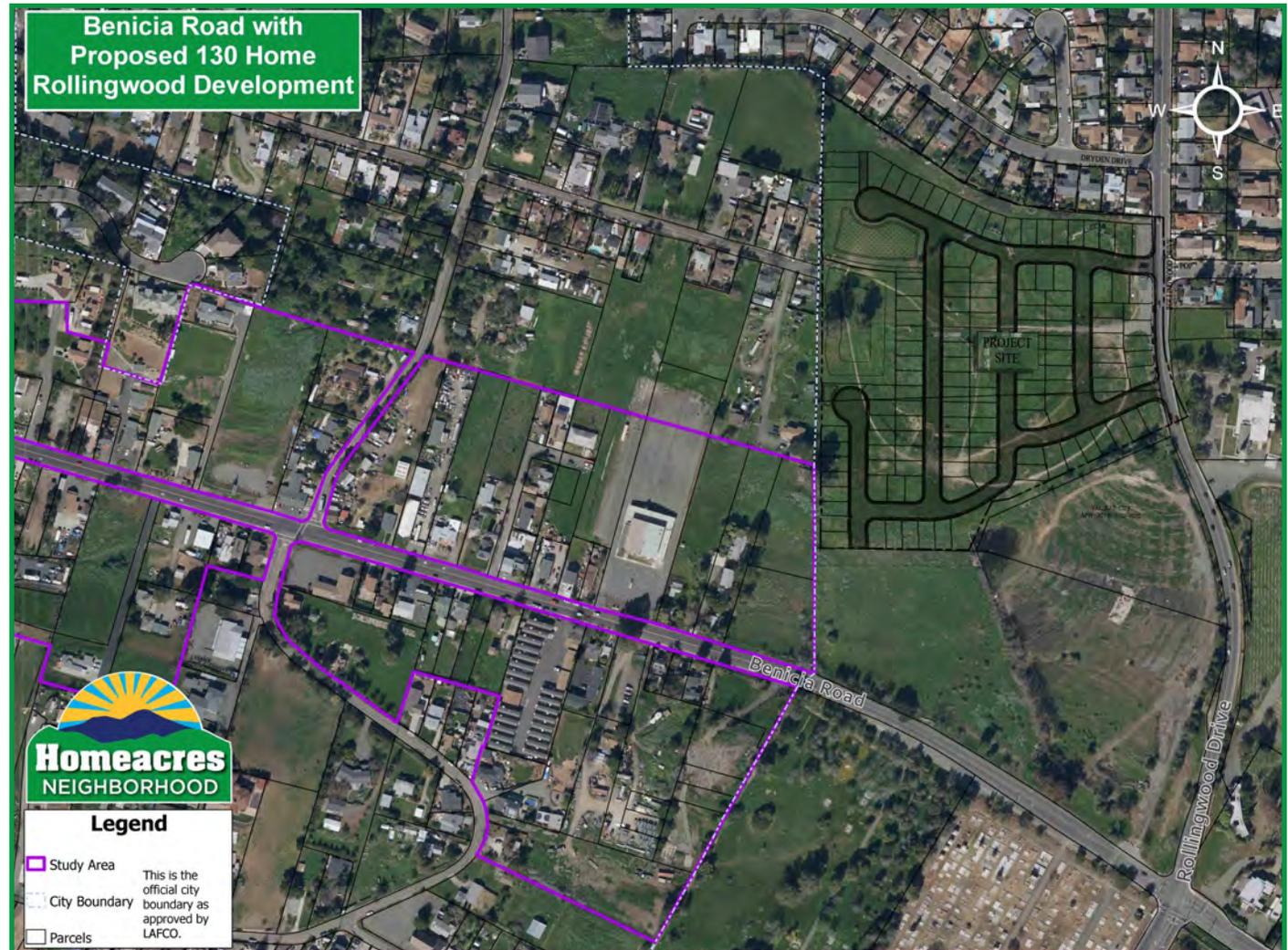
What We Developed: Maps and Supporting Documents



The 130 KB Homes development is a pending housing project off Rollingwood Drive in the city of Vallejo. The development is just east of the Benicia Road Project area and is pending approval with the City.

The engineering analysis, once conducted, will include a geotechnical investigation and report that future developers along Benicia Road **may study to determine the types of subsurface soil and water conditions present.** A geotechnical report provides critical information on the soil and rock properties at a construction site, helping

engineers determine the suitability of the ground for supporting structures. **Solano County generally requires geotechnical investigations for new residential and commercial buildings.**



Workshop



Community Comments



“No annexation! Please keep Homeacres neighborhood and our portion of Benicia Road in the County.”



“There is a lack of rental and for-sale housing.”



“Could more street lighting be included along Benicia Road?”



“Could new bike lanes be included in Corridor Improvements?”



“We definitely notice a lot of speeding, slow vehicle traffic on Benicia Road.”



“I feel there aren't many local gathering spots.”

Community Comments



“I wish there was more public space along the corridor.”



“Can on-street parking be maintained for businesses and visitors?”



“No ‘sense of place’ along the corridor.”



“I enjoy seeing some animals around the neighborhood and the open space of properties.”

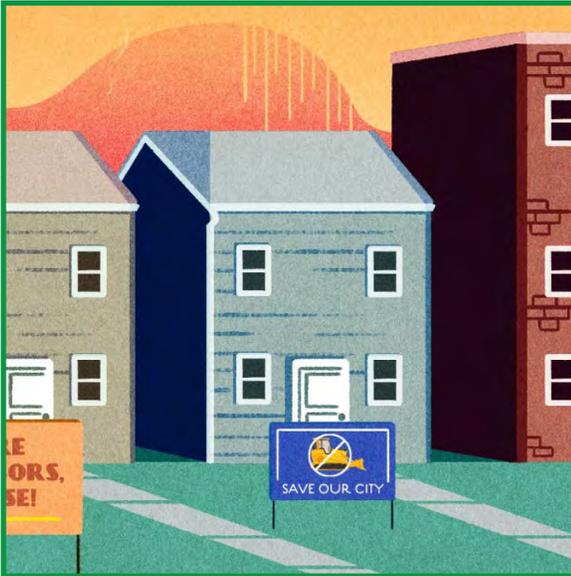


“Can the intersection near the Shop & Save be made to a four way stop?”



“I would like more shade and public green spaces nearby!”

Community Comment: *Lack of Rental and For-Sale Housing*



As in all of California housing, housing prices are a key concern among residents and was expressed to the team throughout the Workshop. Staff was able to address this topic in a few ways.

- The team would educate property owners and individuals about differing types of housing and the process to permit it. The team proposed designs for ADUs, single family homes, duplexes, rowhouses and multifamily housing on several non-and-underdeveloped properties.
- Convened meetings with Architects and interested property owners to explore housing development on the parcels. This would assist property owners in understanding what they could be doing on their land.
- We continued previous pre-workshop meetings with five property owners to refine development possibilities, examine zoning and state density options, help find financing resources, and work to move from design to construction.



Community Comment: *Speeding on Benicia Road*



Residents concurred that speeding remains a serious issue on Benicia Road, despite a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Both staff and residents observed vehicles frequently traveling at speeds up to 50 miles per hour. Deputy Sheriff Jason Speakman stated that speeding enforcement is managed by the California Highway Patrol, and he encouraged residents to report such incidents to them to encourage enforcement. County staff proposed alternative strategies to mitigate speeding through environmental design changes.

- Reduce the width of each travel lane on Benicia Road to eleven feet and enhance pedestrian safety with the addition of safe crosswalks.
- Public Works has already re-striped the outer edges of these lanes earlier this year to secure an eleven-foot width adjacent to the on-street parking.
- The workshop team proposes planting trees in extended curb planters which will enable unobstructed rainwater flow and create zones for rainwater recharge.
- In partnership with Public Works, assess the potential installation of stop signs at the intersection of Banning Way and Taylor Streets on Benicia Road to improve traffic control.
- Implement painted crosswalks to increase driver awareness and pedestrian visibility.

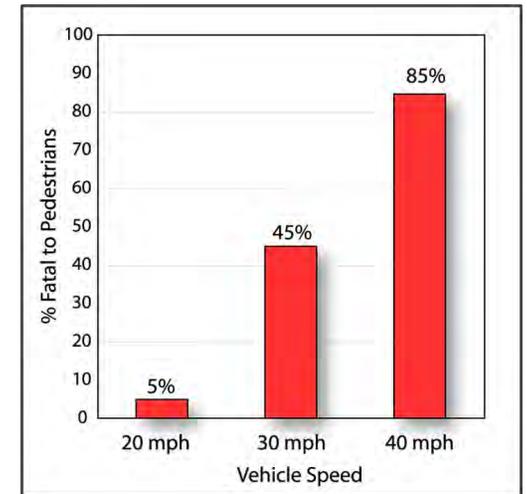


Community Comment: *Lack of Bike Lanes*



During the discussions on the revitalization of Benicia Road, numerous residents raised the possibility of incorporating bike lanes into the design. They noted that Benicia Road is a popular route for groups of cyclists, especially on weekends, yet currently lacks dedicated bike lanes for their use.

- Benicia Road, with its width of 33 feet width between curbs and with on-street parking, contains no space for bike lane striping. This means the County would need to explore other methods to allow for biking.
- By implementing various traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, bicyclists will be able to ride safely in the travel lanes. This would be achieved through street trees, narrower travel lanes and midblock crossings.
- Additionally, the County can explore the feasibility of installing additional streetlights to enhance the illumination of both the street and sidewalk. This would allow bikers to feel safer in dusk hours rather than relying solely on bike lights.



Community Comment: *Insufficient Shade and Green Space*



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Residents noted that there is a lack of green space available for leisure activity. Shade trees were something in favor of in addition to some early interest in a community Garden. Sustainable Solano was able to make early connections to some neighborhood residents which can prove beneficial with further communication.



- The Workshop Team proposed planting trees along the north and south sidewalks to enhance the corridor aesthetic, environmental quality, and slowing traffic.
- The street trees could be situated within extended curb planters strategically placed between properties, which will provide significant shade along sidewalks and parking spaces.
- There is an opportunity for the County to collaborate with Sustainable Solano. This partnership would focus on planting street trees in the yards of interested property owners along both the north and south sidewalks, ensuring these trees are well-maintained.
- The team has also evaluated several sites that could be well-suited for the creation of community gardens. These gardens would not only beautify the area but also promote a community gathering spot.
- Staff could evaluate various funding opportunities to support the establishment of community greening and further enhancing the local environment.

Community Comment: *Sheriff Substation*



A critical infrastructure need identified is the establishment of a compact sheriff's substation on Benicia Road, as recommended by former Sheriff, Deputy Brandi Aguilar. This facility, potentially less than 500 square feet, would provide deputies a stationary office space to perform daily duties, which are currently being conducted from their vehicles. Community members spoken to were receptive of this idea as it could increase security and response times within their neighborhood.

Flock cameras were installed to capture vehicles either entering or exiting the Homeacres neighborhood. During conversations community members were appreciative of this service as a way to deter criminal activity. Flock cameras in the nearby City of Benicia already assisted in the arrest of a violent crime suspect.



Community Comment: Lack of Local Gathering Space & Amenities



The team met with several existing property and business owners. This allowed the team to discuss the potential for the development of neighborhood to create destinations and “third places” for gatherings. These locations would be supported by new housing and other uses that would benefit the community.



The owners of Stop and Save, a liquor store owned and operated by the Sandhu family, may expand their product line.



Sustainable Solano seeks a new location for their offices and considered several properties for their needs, in addition to assisting with design and construction of a community garden.



Cultivate Community Food Cooperative, a cooperative corporation, seeks a site for a cooperatively owned grocery store, open to the public.



We met twice with Mornè van Staden, Founder & CEO of Journey Coffee Co., a regional business who expressed interest several locations for a coffee shop and, potentially, a joint location for his partner who operates a brewery and taproom.



Tri City Fence Co. owner Dennis Hammer, who owns several contiguous parcels and two non-contiguous, discussed approaches to consolidating his business on his properties and potentially selling parts to a housing developer.

Community Comment: *Corridor Needs a “Sense of Place”*



Creating a “sense of place” requires public and private investment. For example, County investment in Right of Way (ROW) improvements (e.g., County maintained public area such as roads or sidewalks) could lead to a more favorable market evaluation. This allows investors to give more favorable conditions to entrepreneurs looking to develop along the corridor. The team was able to take these early steps in tandem with discussions with local businesses.

- On private parcels, add street trees along the sidewalks.
- The team enlisted the assistance of two architects, David Kessler, and Adam Mayberry, Mayberry Workshop LLC, who each met with several property owners to help them consider development options.
- The team began discussion around simple design guidelines to formalize the creation of attractive and functional building designs, particularly the “frontages”, what pedestrians and motorists view as they pass along Benicia Road.



Community Comment: Is This Workshop for Annexation?



The Homeacres neighborhood, where Benicia Road is located, is recognized as a semi-rural enclave within Solano County, situated just east of central Vallejo. Residents voiced concerns that the potential improvements discussed in the Workshop could lead to annexation by the City of Vallejo.

Staff in response **emphasized that workshop was not for the purposes of annexation,** rather to address the priorities set by the Board of Supervisors, including the promotion of infill housing and economic development. The workshop was designed to solicit community input on desired changes and to report these preferences back to the Board of Supervisors, ensuring that developments align with the community's interests.

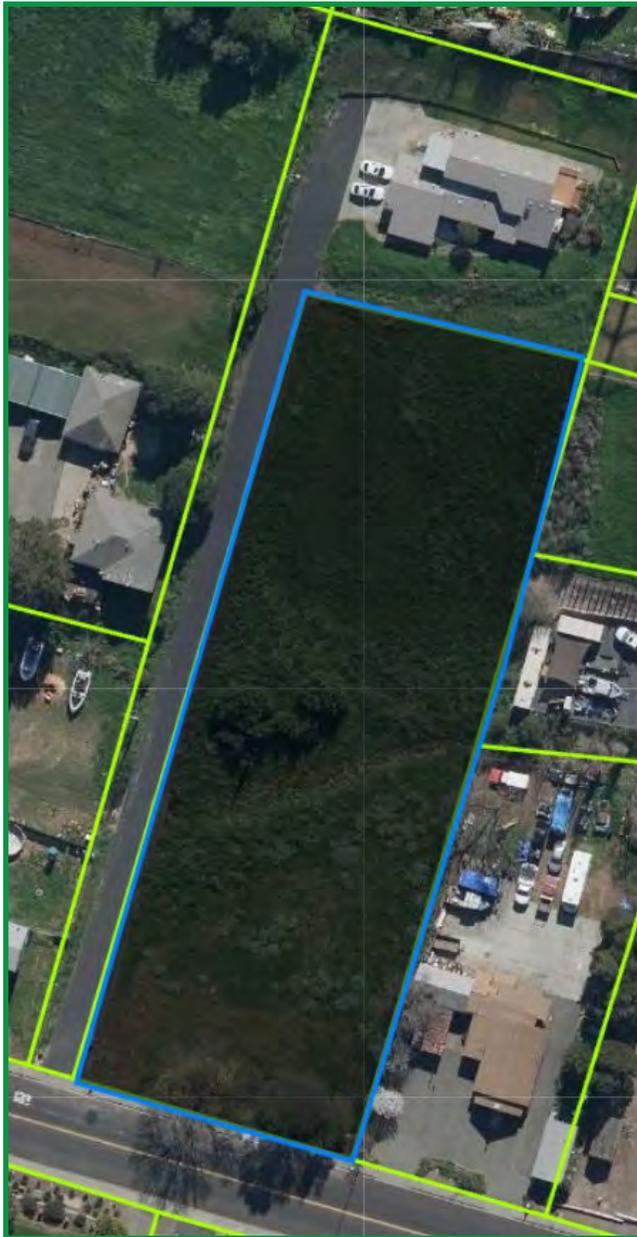
Furthermore, the introduction of 2-3 story infill housing along the corridor would assist in preserving open spaces in other parts of the neighborhood, thereby reducing the need to develop currently vacant lots. This approach helps maintain the open space that residents value. Additionally, new developments along this corridor are expected to stimulate economic activity by supporting the establishment of new small-scale shops, enhancing both local commerce and the overall vibrancy of the community.



Workshop Designs



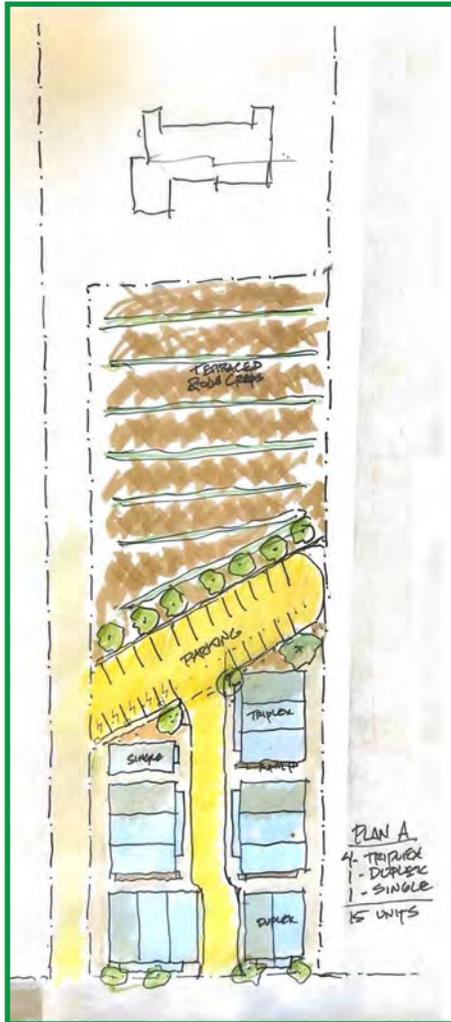
Potential Project Area: *Corinthians Church Vacant Lot*



Staff worked with Pastor Collier to develop different building plans for how the existing lot could develop. Sketches of development are meant to serve as a discussion and demonstration of what could be achieved, not a fixed plan to go forward.

The proposed sketch contains 12 homes along with two 600 sq. feet spaces for retail. The rear of the property is much steeper. To be able to maximize the usage of the space, an urban farming processes was proposed where boutique farm products could be produced. The products grown and developed could be used to support Church activities.

Potential Project Area: *Corinthians Church Vacant Lot*



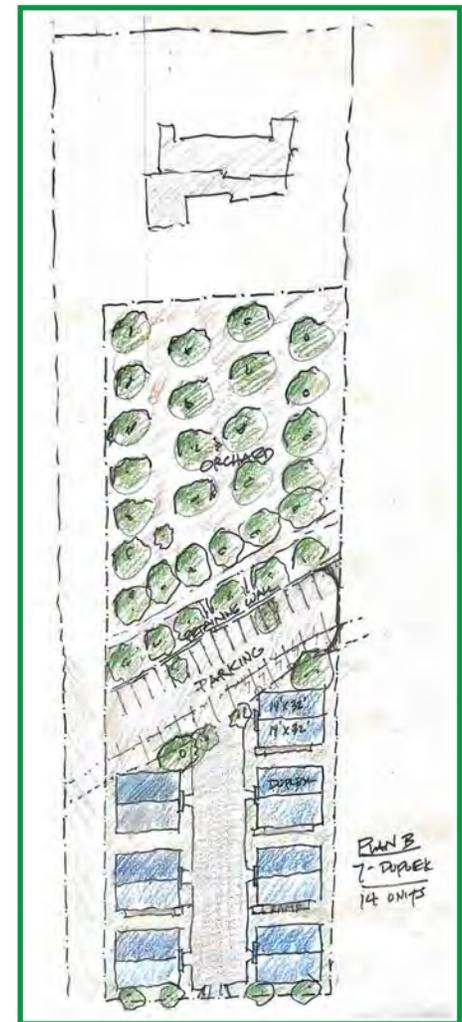
Potential Development:

- 15 Potential Homes
(4 Triplex, 1 Duplex, 1 Single)
- 21 Parking Spots



Potential Development:

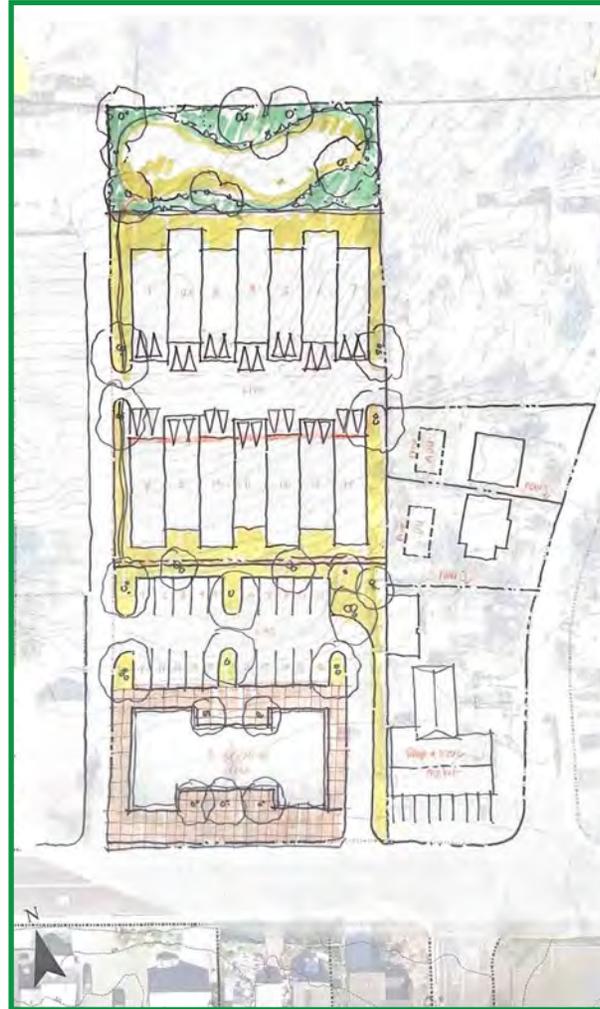
- 20 Potential Homes (Apartment Complex)
- 20 Parking Spots



Potential Development:

- 14 Potential Homes (Seven Duplexes)
- 25 Parking Spots

Potential Project Area: *Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market*

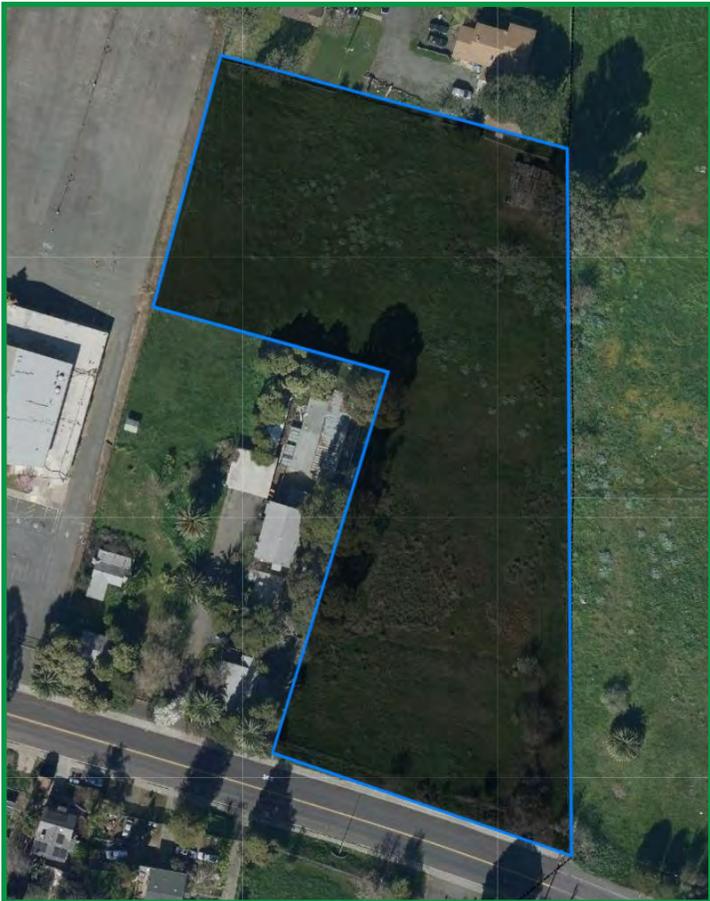


Area of Study Two comprises a large lot adjacent to the Shop N Save Market. The existing site features has a flat base of about 20,000 square feet and the remained of the property is a steep slope where several terraced levels could be cut into the hillside.

The proposed sketch contains a proposed retail space of 6000 sq feet fronting Benicia Road along with 20 parking spaces. On the terraced level above there would be space for 14 townhomes.

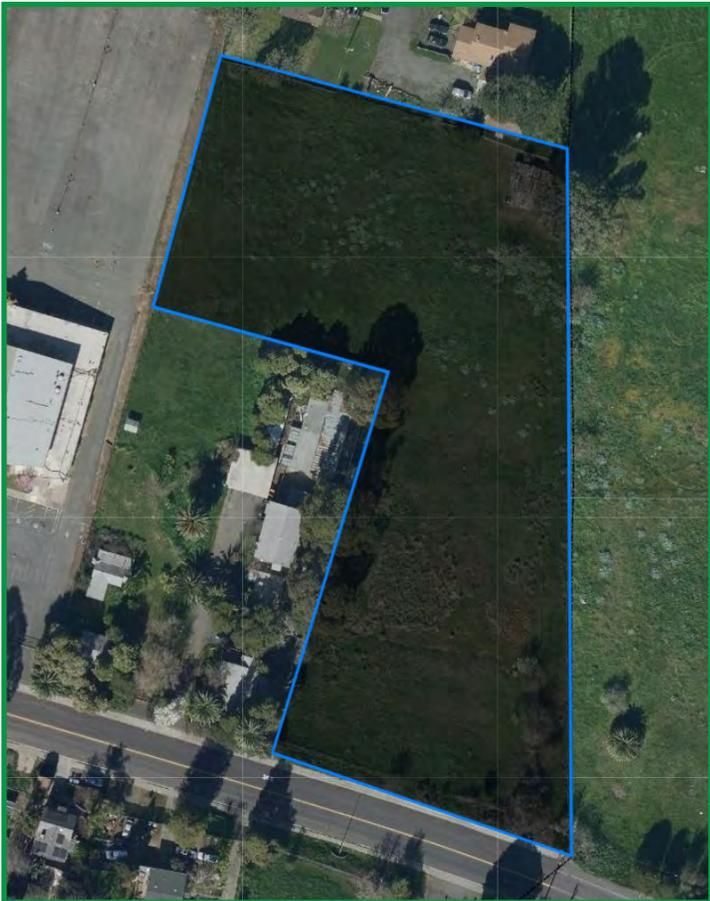
The proposed plan shows a potential subdivision of the Shop n Save Market's parcel. This would enable conformance with current zoning in addition to the construction of two ADU homes.

Potential Project Area: *Panetta Lot Merge Plan A*



The Team developed two housing schemes for Joe Panetta, owner of Joie De Vie Dog Kennels and two parcels on Benicia Road, both shown with retail along the street for future development consideration. Area of Study Two is comprised of four different lots. With this project a lot merger would occur to create a site of approximately 2.8 acres. **Plan A** is considered the more luxurious plan due to the small lots and high amount of commercial space (staff codename: The Lamborghini Plan). The plan would create 20 small lots with association homes. Two lots would include an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). This plan would also include two commercial spaces totaling 11,500 sq ft. The development would serve as a potential commercial corridor to the new development on the old ballfield site and to the residents of Glencove Estates.

Potential Project Area: *Panetta Lot Merge Plan B*



Plan B is considered the more straight forward plan due to the larger lots and simplified parking design (staff codename: the Lexus plan). The plan would create 15 homes with approximately 13,00 square feet of serviced by a parking lot that fronts Benicia Road. A small rose garden would be available for the public as well. This plan would also include two commercial spaces totaling 11,500 square feet.

The development would serve as a gateway to Benicia Road and provide access to the new development on the old ballfield site and to the residents of Glencove Estates.

Potential Project Area: *My First Couch*

This study area came from a connection made at the Workshop to My First Couch.

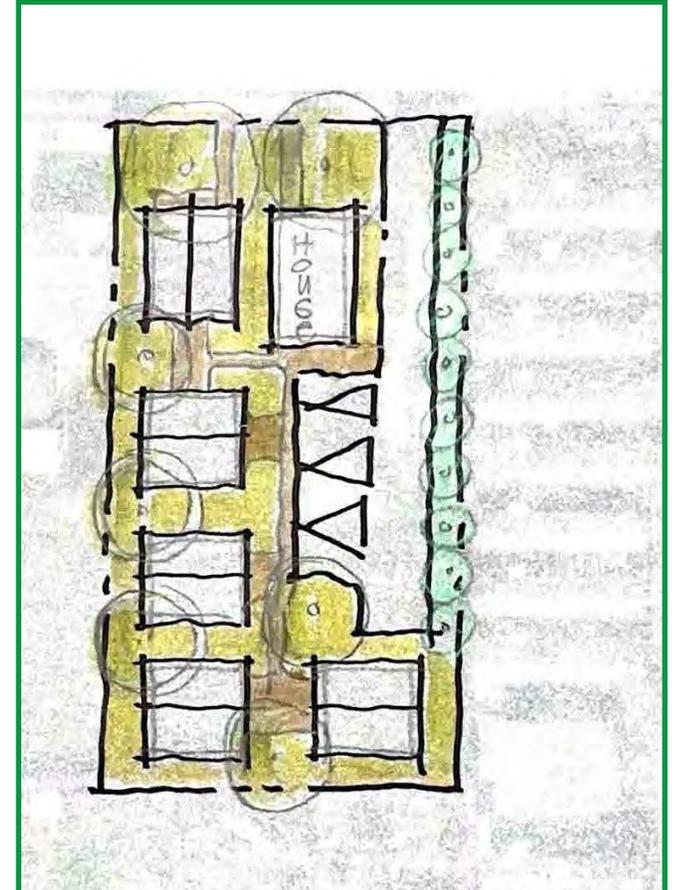
My First Couch resource center is a one-stop-shop for foster youths to learn and grow while being in a safe, nurturing, and friendly environment.

This plan sketch of a private site meets the need of the nonprofit to provide supportive housing to 18 year old foster youths who need a location to stay while adjusting to being an adult.

The proposed site is .7 acres and would be developed by

building 5 new duplexes and repurpose the existing house to provide housing an a space for the residents. A new venture, Worldwide Materials who develop and build flatpack, panelized homes, may offer building assistance.

This site is owned by Tri City Fencing and through the Workshop have connected to discuss a transfer of the property.



Potential Project Area: *Tri-City Fencing*



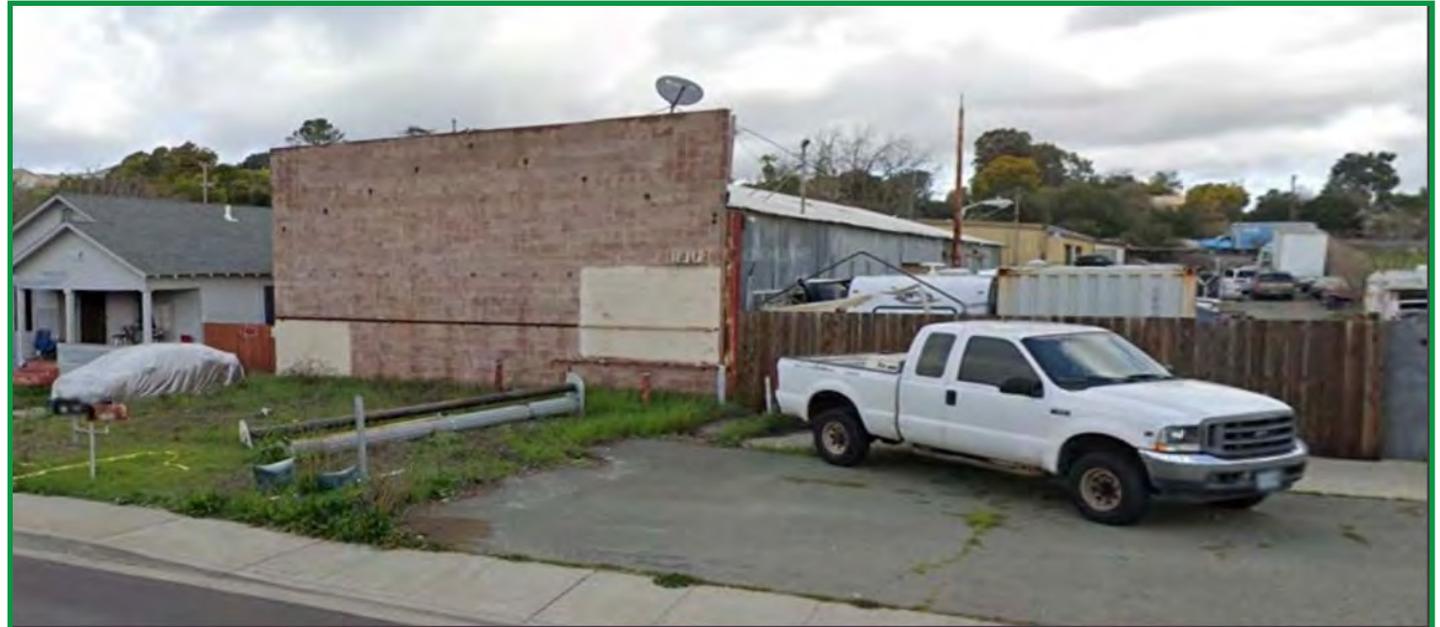
A potential new project area could site on properties currently owned by Tri-City Fence. The land totals about 4.5 acres. The land totals about 4.5 acres. Under scenario two, Tri-City Fence would consolidate it's activities toward the west onto 3 acres of land and sell the remaining 1.47 acres. This could enable further housing development or potentially commercial activity to take place. The main difference between the two plans is how much land is retained by Tri-City in the south. Scenario one allows Tri-City to retain 3.45 acres of land for operations.



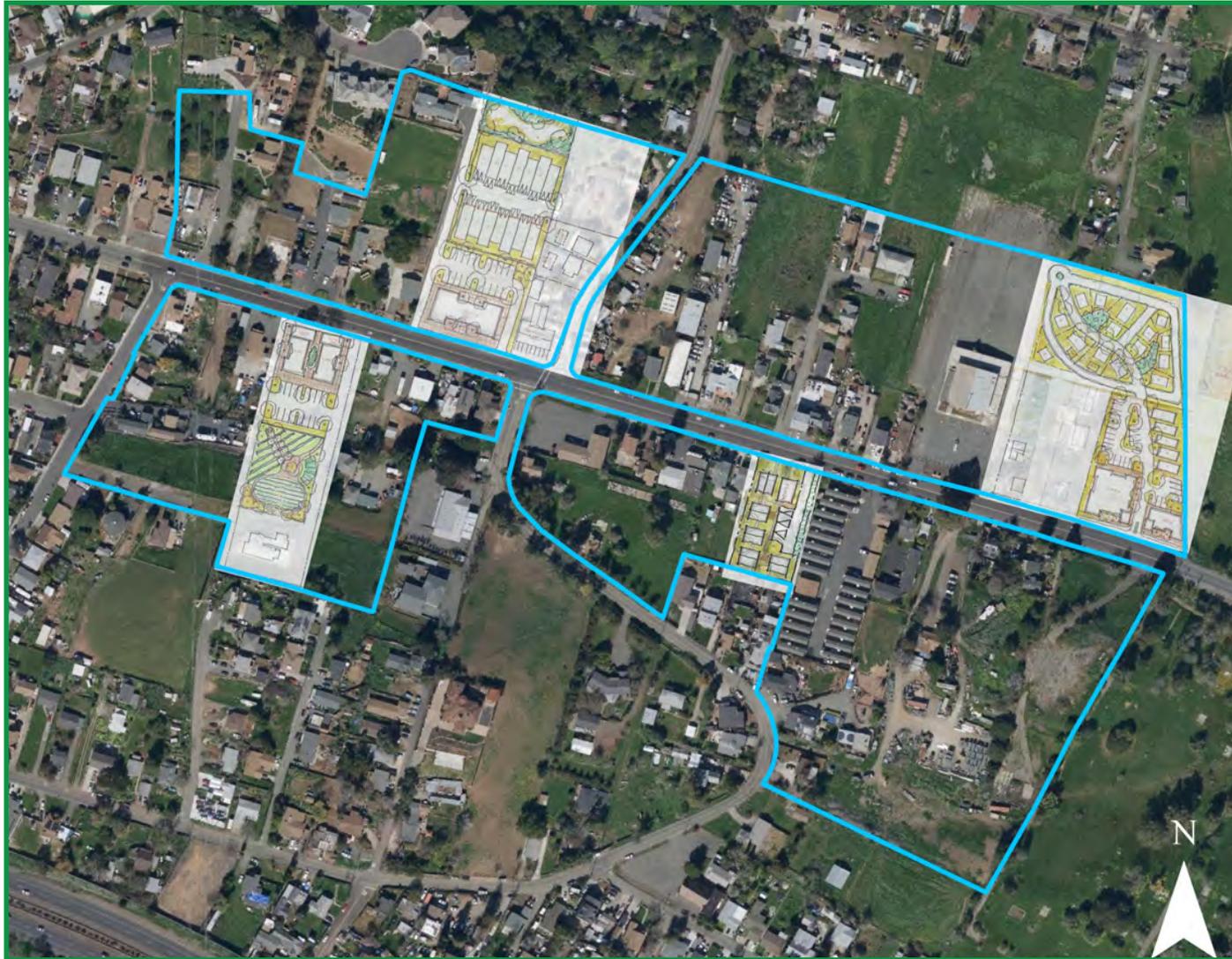
Potential Project Area: *Homeacres Mural*



Mr. LaMonica owns a parcel on Benicia Road occupied by a motor vehicle-oriented and storage businesses. We met with a representative with of Mr. LaMonica about potential blank masonry wall façade improvements incorporating a neighborhood mural, lighting and associated landscaping, with before and after, below. After meeting with a representative of Mr. LaMonica, they stated their interest in supporting neighborhood beautification.



Potential Projects Summary



The image to the left shows a buildout of the corridor assuming several key project areas are constructed. A total buildout would result in:

- 60 Units of Housing
- 4 Accessory Dwelling Units
- 10 Duplexes
- 14 Townhomes
- 20 Single Family Homes
- 12 Apartment Units
- ~19,000 Square Feet of Commercial Development

Although the developments are brainstorming proposals, it all demonstrates how the Benicia Road corridor can support a mix of housing while preserving much of the rural space the community enjoys. A buildout of commercial space would promote new amenities along the corridor for residents to enjoy.

Great Plans to Great Places

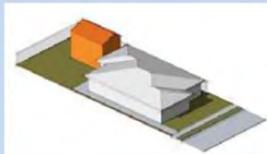
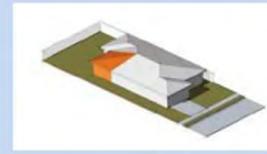


Development Constraints Along Benicia Road



- “Attached housing will not sell in that area, only detached single family”, an opinion of a regional developer.
- The team has found smaller increments of attached housing, such as duplexes, can be financed, sold or rented, and four-plexus can be financed with FHA and VA programs, built at reasonable costs, and rented quickly.
- **Land is relatively inexpensive** along the corridor but building costs and current interest rates constrain new construction.
- Benicia Road’s **developable parcels are small**, rarely larger than two acres. This can pose some development challenges for commercial developers or home builders develop smaller subdivisions.
- Several **parcels slope from the road uphill**, as steep as 18 percent, making necessary **site improvements more expensive**, and unstable soil conditions can require engineering investigations and remediation. This can increase overall costs for developers which is passed on to tenants or homeowners.
- Adding housing and non-residential uses **may require infrastructure** upgrades to potable water, fire suppression systems in new homes and businesses, and increased sanitary sewer capacity and stormwater accommodations.
- The Homeacres neighborhood, and Benicia Road specifically, are **not “target market areas”** like the City of Benicia or Fairfield. Well-financed, risk-adverse developers require incentives to invest in the corridor. Supporting the corridor to become a target market area would include making the road more attractive with street trees, slow traffic, and actualize a key project area with well-designed buildings.
- Recognizing that housing attainable to a range of individual and family incomes may require both subsidies and less expensive buildings that include ADU’s. “capital A” Affordable housing includes multifamily buildings reliant on tax credit funding, senior housing financed through state and federal programs, and non-profit funded transitional housing. Other less expensive housing includes accessory dwelling units and smaller modular homes.



Attached ADU	Detached ADU	Junior ADU ¹
Attached Addition/New Construction.	Stand-alone new construction	Interior conversion of a portion of single-family dwelling
		

Near-Term Ways to Encourage Development Along Benicia Road

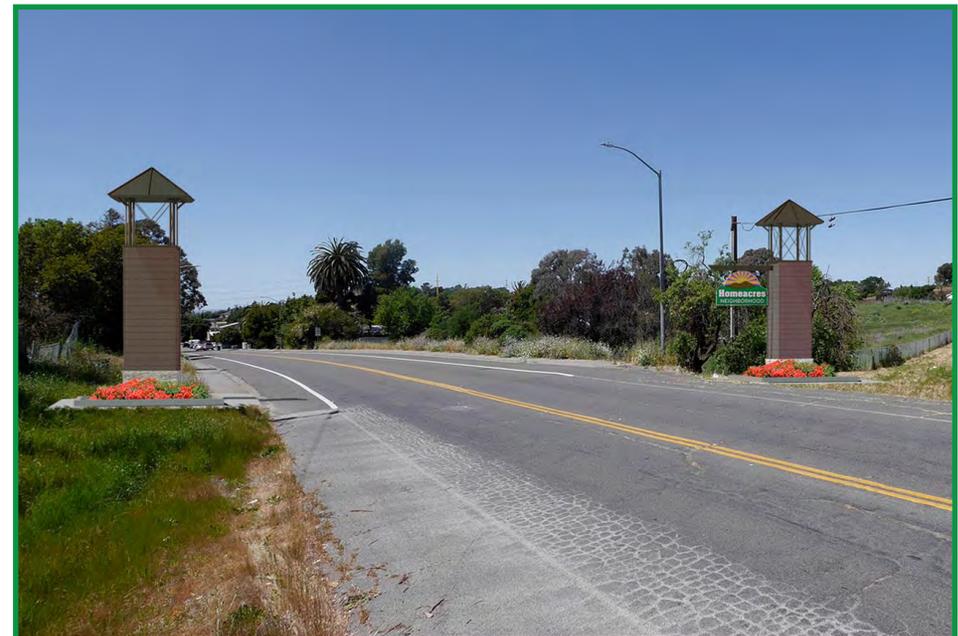


- Helping willing property owners understand the complex process of developing land and buildings, along with the risks and rewards.
- Explaining the ways that a property owner can joint-venture or partner with a developer (an entity that can take a project from inception through design, entitlement, financing, permitting and construction to occupancy) or builder (who can permit and construct the building) or hybrids like design-builders who can do part of each.
- Credit tenant businesses like Journey Coffee help enable a developer or builder to finance, construct and own the premise with the reliable leasee.
- Facilitating meetings with property owners, developers and builders, and inviting the participation of willing Architects to explore the development potentials.
- Identifying opportunity areas for transitional housing, and less expensive housing includes accessory dwelling units and smaller modular homes.



Long-Term Strategies for Development

- Researching federal and state transportation funds for making right-of-way road improvements, from signalized and raised crosswalks to tree planting curb extensions. These improvements will allow this portion of Benicia Road to support pedestrian activities
- Exploring California Housing and Community Development (HCD) programs for missing housing options for veteran and special needs individuals. These funding options can support an increase of housing options along the corridor that can support further market development.
- Considering how to design, fund and build enduring “gateways” or entry points to the east and west ends of the County’s stretch of Benicia Road, whether as well-designed buildings that anchor the entry through landscaping or art that defines the portal. Establishing some aspect of placemaking will start the process of residents being able to determine where the County jurisdiction begins and ends. The placemaking would also help set baseline design standards and the quality of landscaping.
- An update of zoning regulation can help reduce the financial risks to property owners and developers by establishing as-of-right entitlements when the regulations are followed. This would require a strategic rezoning of the corridor to assist in these efforts.



Next Steps



Next Steps for the Benicia Road and Homeacres



Next Step: Explore Innovative Housing Overlay

A housing overlay district for the neighborhood could provide new housing opportunities for Benicia Road (or for greater Homeacres). An increase of zoning regulation flexibility for this district can allow for differing housing types through relaxed standards. This could include reducing off-street parking requirements and minimum dwelling sizes to support a diversity of housing types. These changes would require review of the benefits and any drawbacks that could impact the neighborhood.

Next Step: Strategic Rezoning and General Plan Amendment to the Corridor

A rezoning of the corridor can physically manifest the underlying General Plan designation of Traditional Community—Mixed Use. Application of the Mixed Use zoning district would relax development standards for property owners and potential developers. It would also encourage an increase of commercial opportunities within the neighborhood under the Neighborhood Commercial Use Designation. The Mixed Use zoning type encourages economic growth through job creation and attracts diverse businesses, improving local economies and residents' quality of life by providing of services close to home. Additionally, RTC-MU zones support sustainable development by reducing urban sprawl, and fostering community cohesion through integrated public spaces.

The strategic rezoning would allow some parcels to adopt this designation or transition to Multi-Family zoning designations. The flexibility inherent in the Rural Traditional zoning designation ensures compatibility across districts, allowing single-family homes to transition seamlessly to the Mixed Use designation without becoming non-conforming. Not every parcel will necessarily be upzoned; through continued community outreach, we can identify which properties would benefit from this rezoning process and which would retain their existing zoning, ensuring a tailored approach that meets community needs.

Next Step: Incentivize Commercial Development

Planning staff will continue to look to seek interested, qualified developers and commercial tenants and introduce them to sites and property owners within the corridor. From our experience in developing relationships with Journey Coffee and the Cultivate Community Food Co-Op, we will continue to engage them as well as find other potential tenants and retail developers who might seek locations within the Benicia Road corridor. These conversations have allowed us insight into what a potential business is looking for when choosing a site and how the factor of renting vs owning are considered by an entrepreneur's cost benefit analysis.

Next Steps for the Benicia Road and Homeacres



Next Step: Permit Reforms

When speaking to property owners prior to the Workshop, an identified barrier to development was construction and development permitting. Some property owners expressed interest in further developing their property, however they balked at the upfront costs and risks due to the uncertainties and lack of experience in land and building development. Staff can explore a pilot program for Homeacres that allows a smaller deposit, and applicants would reimburse staff for the difference as a project progresses or after a successful entitlement hearing. To further encourage development in the neighborhood staff can analyze a expedited permitting system for land use permits in the Homeacres Neighborhood. This could delay potential costs for an applicant and demonstrate the Planning Division's support of the neighborhood in tandem with mitigating sprawl development.

Next Step: Street Trees Along Benicia Road

Community members were extremely receptive to the implementation of street trees along the corridor. Planning staff will work with the Public Works Division to look for funding opportunities to implement planting of street trees along the corridor to slow traffic and encourage walkability. Planning Staff have already applied for a grant on May 30, 2024, if awarded, would support the development of street trees along the corridor.

Next Step: Continue to Engage with Community Members

Staff plan to engage with members of the community through various actions in the neighborhood. The Loan-Income Home Loan program provides an opportunity to interface with community members. The Workshop has provided the Planning Division staff community contacts to further assist it's engagement efforts beginning to engage members of the community and have established contacts.

Next Step: Notify the Community of State Law SB-9 (2021) and SB-4 (2023)

Many residents and religious institutions were unaware of the property rights granted under new state legislation. Informing property owners on a wider scale could result in an increase of infill development and engagement with County Staff that can produce more housing units.

Next Steps: Timeline



Timeline Implementation and Funding

Staff have developed a simple timeline categorization of when tasks would be implemented. These tasks are dependent on funding sources becoming available. Staff have been researching for grant opportunities to make tasks possible. However staff have found competitive grants are limited in activities that could be applicable to Homeacres. For these Benicia Road objectives to be achieved as proposed, the Board of Supervisors will need to authorize the use of staff funding to pursue efforts to support Benicia Road commercial and residential efforts. Task implementation is a rough estimate of how long tasks will take upon commencement of task category. Many tasks can be achieved simultaneously in implementation efforts.

Near Term (2 to 4 Months)

- Notify Neighborhood of SB-9 (2021)
- Speak to Religious Facilities about SB-4 (2023)
- Vehicle Shop Beautification

Medium Term (8 to 12 Months)

- Permitting Reform
 - Expedited Permitting Policy
 - Entitlement Fee Payment Plan
- Business Engagement & Recruitment
- Partner Property Owners and Developers

Long Term (Minimum Year and a Half)

- Housing Overlay District
- Rezone of Benicia Road
- General Plan Amendments
- Right of Way Improvements from Public Works



What Can Residents Do?



Attend Homeacres Improvement Association of Solano County

The Homeacres Improvement Association of Solano County, Inc. meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 6 PM to 8 PM. These meetings are held at the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, specifically at the Norman King Center. This presents an opportunity for all residents to meet their neighbors and to get more involved. For further information or inquiries, you can contact Donald Tipton, the Treasurer, at (707) 642-0486.

Sign Up For Email List

The Homeacres email list is composed of interested individuals from our workshop as well as people who have participated in the Homeacres Home Improvement Program and the Benicia Road Workshop. We are collecting contact information on the Homeacres webpage that can be found here (as of 2024): https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/homeacres_neighborhood_revitalization_plan/default.asp

Inform Neighbors of Workshop and County Efforts

Staff need community support to assist in making good plans. Conversations with your neighbors about the project is how you can take a small step to support government and community efforts overall. Without community engagement great plans take much longer to achieve their goals.

Interact with Homeacres Social Media Posts

Staff are beginning to explore engagement digitally around the neighborhood. If community members interact through comments or liking posts this boosts the posts to other community members to see. This interaction pushes posts in others feed which can support growing awareness of the neighborhood.

Appendix A:

Benicia Road Buildout



Benicia Road Buildout

The Benicia Road buildout provides a visualization of new development that can manifest through an illustrated vision for Benicia Road. On the map below we can see what areas of focus were selected to demonstrate one potential vision. These buildout graphics show the potential within Benicia Road's developable lands with the support of new regulations, by continuing to collaborate with community members, attracting new businesses, and finding new funding opportunities.



Potential Area B: *Existing*



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Two



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Four



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Six



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Ten



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Ten+



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area B: Year Ten+ (Painted Alternative)



The first project visualization shown is Project Area: Vacant Lot and Shop & Save Market. The buildout first shows new neighborhood amenities within the County Right of Way. From there commercial space develops along the street with townhomes built in the rear of the property. In this buildout, the Shop & Save Owners can revitalize their existing business due to increased visibility and shopping activity. Finally the intersection warrants a four way stop to slow traffic, allow crossings, and accommodate increased vehicle flow.

Potential Area C: *Existing*



The project visualization shown is Project Area: Panetta Lot Merge. The buildout shows monument towers to indicate someone is entering the Homeacres neighborhood. Commercial space is developed from which street tree planting occurs. Additional commercial space is then built due to the Benicia Road's increased market desirability. The buildout concludes with housing being built in the rear of the property.

Potential Area C: Year Two



The project visualization shown is Project Area: Panetta Lot Merge. The buildout shows monument towers to indicate someone is entering the Homeacres neighborhood. Commercial space is developed from which street tree planting occurs. Additional commercial space is then built due to the Benicia Road's increased market desirability. The buildout concludes with housing being built in the rear of the property.

Potential Area C: Year Four



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Potential Area C: Year Six



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Potential Area C: Year Ten



The project visualization shown is Project Area: Panetta Lot Merge. The buildout shows monument towers to indicate someone is entering the Homeacres neighborhood. Commercial space is developed from which street tree planting occurs. Additional commercial space is then built due to the Benicia Road's increased market desirability. The buildout concludes with housing being built in the rear of the property.

Potential Area C: Year Ten+



The project visualization shown is Project Area: Panetta Lot Merge. The buildout shows monument towers to indicate someone is entering the Homeacres neighborhood. Commercial space is developed from which street tree planting occurs. Additional commercial space is then built due to the Benicia Road's increased market desirability. The buildout concludes with housing being built in the rear of the property.