The Irvington Town Center

A Take on the Redevelopment of the Historic Irvington District of Fremont, California

Anthony Tadina
June 13, 2008
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Irvington District of Fremont, California

A Senior Project/These Presented to the Faculty
of the Landscape Architecture Program of
the University of California, Davis

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Bachelors of Science of Landscape Architecture

Accepted and Approved by:

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Abstract

This project takes a look at the historic Irvington district in Fremont, California and focuses on change that would better utilize public transportation and give the area a new sense of identity. Looking at the current situation, the area was built in the 1960’s and at that time, the gears were shifting towards a more suburban city. This meant many low-density developments that contained several large parking lots that today are underused and frequently empty. That development has led to a non-“sense of place” that plagues the city and leaves residents in the home or in the car.

Now, in a vision set by the City of Fremont, the Irvington district is slated for redevelopment that makes it possible for the ideas presented to be achieved. That, along with a proposed Irvington B.A.R.T. station, has led me to a master plan that puts the focus back on public transportation. On top of this, the prominent utilization of mixed-use buildings and high-density development coupled with the preservation of historic buildings makes this place a vibrant area that is set apart from the rest of Fremont. Ultimately, the project unfolds giving the Irvington district a new identity that brings the community back to the open space and gives Irvington a new town center.
About the Author

Anthony Tadina was born on April 19, 1986 in Hayward, California. Shortly after, he was brought to his hometown of Fremont, California where he resided for 18 years. He originally lived in a small housing development where he knew many of his neighbors, but his parents decided to upgrade to a bigger house in another portion of Fremont. The walled development titled California Blossom and developed by KB Homes, was where he found himself from second grade until his graduation from Irvington High School. The quiet and desolate streets were not an ideal living situation. Come September, he packed his stuff and moved up Interstate 80 to the University of California, Davis.

Anthony entered the university as a mechanical/materials science & engineering major (that’s a mouthful) and soon realized that was not his calling. He turned to landscape architecture and enjoyed it so much that it is what he is doing today.

Along with a love for landscape architecture, Anthony also participates in many events for the Filipino American community. During his senior year of college, he was the coordinator for Filipino Culture Night, a $15,000 production by Mga Kapatid that showcases acting, singing, and dancing into four shows that has been in the works since the last academic school year.

And yes, he did all this while still managing to do this senior project.

Anthony enjoys designing stuff on his MacBook Pro, watching LOST, and eating crispy calamari linguine from Fuzio's.
Dedication

To my parents, my sister, and all of my cousins, aunts, and uncles from Fremont to show that we don’t have to drive from one stop to the next when they will all be accessible at one point.

To my big sibb Ronnie Honrada for always being there for me and listening to all of my landscape architecture shindigs even though you probably have no idea what I’m talking about sometimes.

To Mr. Perfect himself, Alex Castro, for always keeping me on track and making sure I stick to my goal of whatever pages I was set out to do that day (even though I didn’t half the time).

To all of my landscape architecture classmates for surviving these past three years in the program and for spending time with me late at night in Walker Hall.

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To the master of mixed-use buildings Chuck Roe for taking time out of your busy schedule to help me in creating the product that you see today.

And to Naz Pouya, my best bud in landscape architecture, for being my partner in crime in all of the projects we had to undertake. We’re simply amazing sometimes … or should I say ferosh?
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Chapter 1

Hello. This is Fremont.

An introduction to the City of Fremont and the vision set for the Irvington district.
Introduction

Growing up, my hometown of Fremont, California was the place to be. My cousins and I would hang out at various hot spots such as Iceoplex ice skating rink, Century Theatres, Cloverleaf Family Bowl, and the local pocket park across from Irvington High School. There were even annual events such as the haunted house at the Fremont Hub or the duck race at Lake Elizabeth that has made my stay at Fremont a memorable one.

Yet, looking back, I realize that the majority of the places we went to were accessed by car. If we went to one stop, we couldn’t go to another without hopping in the car first (with the exception of Taco Bell since it was situated next to Cloverleaf Bowl). I even remember it being strange when my grandma waited at the bus stop for the next A.C. Transit to take her to B.A.R.T.

As a suburban area, Fremont was never known as a “walkable” city. In addition to the realization of the lack of and infrequent use of current public transportation options, I also learned about the different districts that comprise Fremont. Each district has its own unique identity. Niles, for example, is the “original Hollywood” and, like Irvington, also has a historic character about it. Within the district is a prominent downtown with original
buildings that holds annual events such as the art walk. Another example is Mission San Jose, which is known for its prime location on the hills and its association with the extravagant houses prominent throughout the whole district. On the other hand, Irvington was truly lacking an identity. The only association is the large number of tract housing made popular in the 1960's, but that characteristic is shared with many other districts in Fremont. It's “historic” title comes from a cross street with five intersections and a handful of buildings that have withstood the test of time. This area needs to be emphasized in order to stand out from the rest of the city and to create the identity that Irvington has been missing, especially with the current and upcoming conditions.

Today, in an effort to better the economy, the City of Fremont has been constructing several shopping centers including the new Pacific Commons and the revitalization of the Fremont Hub. Additionally, with the push for the new A's stadium of Cisco Field, the prospect of the new Ballpark Village (retail-residential) will soon be realized. These three major shopping destinations all fall outside of the Irvington historic district leaving potential shoppers to completely bypass the area. The need for a stronger identity is more important than ever, and with the new modes of transportation, that vision is possible.
This project will undergo certain assumptions in the design portion about the future of Fremont with the biggest being the proposed B.A.R.T. station that runs across Washington Boulevard over the newly elevated grade along Osgood road. This is in collaboration with the B.A.R.T. extension to the Warm Springs/South Fremont area. From there, it should also be assumed that there vehicle use will lessen due to increasing gas prices, so any parking areas would not need to conform to fit the municipal codes that are currently in effect. Lastly, the time frame estimates this project 20-30 years into the future, so any project that was in the developmental or conceptual stages will be assumed as implemented in the city.
Why Fremont? Why Now?

As my home for the last couple of decades, I’ve seen how the Irvington district of Fremont has handled incoming development, as well as have seen how once cherished places are now abandoned and in need of redevelopment. This close tie to the city and my love for urban design has allowed me to create a passionate solution to a soon to be overlooked area. This solution will give the Irvington district a new breath of fresh air, and will help get it back on the map as a destination rather than one to simply pass through.

Yet, with being such a suburban city, the question remains whether or not Fremont can handle a mass of mixed-use and high-density buildings. By looking at the current and future developments, it is clear that Fremont can handle it and will fully welcome it with open arms.

Recent Developments
Retail/Commercial

Fremont Hub Improvements

Opening in 1961, the Fremont Hub was the premiere shopping area for the City of Fremont containing Century Theatres, some of the hottest restaurants in town, and the yearly Haunted House. Placed strategically on Fremont Boulevard, the Fremont Hub stands as the city’s official downtown with extensions that go across the street to the local Barnes & Nobles and Jamba Juice. Users could roam through the Hub’s central corridor to access all the stores within it, as well as take a seat outside while grabbing a bite to eat from one of the many cafés and bistros.

From my memories of a young boy in elementary
school, many stores at the Fremont Hub would partner with the Fremont Argus and the Fremont Unified School District to host the annual “Books for Bucks” program. Designed to help students engage themselves in reading, teachers would distribute Argus bucks for various reading assignments, which could be used to cash in at different stores at the Hub. Even though the prizes were small (I got a pencil from Hallmark), they brought about a sense of community through the collaboration with the local schools and newspaper.

This euphoric image of the Fremont Hub cannot be said today. Through the “improvements,” many changes have been made to the Hub that has fostered a greater focus on the car rather than the pedestrian experience. Many big box stores such as Target, Borders, Safeway, and Bed Bath & Beyond now grace the area. Though convenient to the consumer, these big box stores have forced its visitors to drive from store to store rather than allow for an easy stroll through the central. These feelings are not mine alone. According to a recent review on Yelp.com, a review site with ratings submitted by everyday users, Sahar S. of San Francisco stated,

“Major improvements have been made, but it's nowhere near as fun as it used to be when I was young or near as useful. … Where we once had a wonderful water fountain and lively cafes with people is now a ghostly place” (Yelp)

Though more aesthetically pleasing, implementations of big box stores have led to open spaces becoming empty spaces.

The Shops at Washington West
Located to the north of the Fremont Hub on Paseo Padre Parkway is The Shops at Washington West, a new
development that is host to many eateries such as String’s, Chipotle, Robeks Juice, and Peet’s Coffee. The plaza is greeted by a water sculpture titled “Harmony Shape” by Mario Chiodo, a local Bay Area artist. The sculpture represents “the desire to nurture and serve the community,” a dedication from Washington Hospital who neighbors the plaza and for whom the plaza is named (East Bay Business Times).

The touch of elegance emitted by the sculpture helps create an ambiance to the place. Though greatly smaller than the Fremont Hub, the sense of community is much greater here. Restaurants are heavily utilized with many visitors opting to sit on the patio portion of the various restaurants. Walking is highly encouraged as the shops are arranged close together and are within a reasonable walking distance. The shops take on the same aesthetics of all the new developments, which seamlessly pulls the downtown together.

This shopping center, though small, fits perfectly within the context of Fremont as it is heavily utilized by users of all ages, including a large number of businessmen and women and the workers from Washington Hospital during lunch, and many families at night.

Pacific Commons

The newest development is Pacific Commons, a 3.4 million square foot commercial-business park located on Auto Mall Parkway off of Highway 880. The premiere location has proven to be a success to the City of Fremont as this area is home to many retail and dining hotspots. Big chain stores include Circuit City, Costco, Kohl’s, and Lowe’s, which are then surrounded by various restaurants. Sit-down restaurants include higher end dining such as Cariño’s, P.F. Chang’s, and Claim Jumper.
Cafés and bistros like Panera Bread, Rubio’s, and Pick Up Stix, as well as fast food joints like In’N’Out join these restaurants to provide a dining experience for any occasion.

Though convenient to have everything in one location, the problem again lies in the big box implementation. The stores are spread out over three blocks, which causes users to travel by car more than with their feet to travel. The parking lots do not ease the situation as they are large and gracious leaving visitors to not be deterred from traveling via car. Additionally, the lack of a grocery story disqualifies this area from being a one-stop shop for surrounding neighborhoods.

In terms of neighborhoods surrounding Pacific Commons, there are none. The center is placed in the middle of a strictly business area, so people will need to travel to the area regardless. Bus stops have been constructed, but are used only during certain hours of the day and there is no tram to transport people from one shopping destination to the other.

The original intention of Pacific Commons was to be a mixed-use development with buildings reaching three or four stories (Conrad). What stands today are several one-story buildings with two-story façades, along with several office buildings that are underused.

On the upside, Pacific Commons is aesthetically pleasing. Sculptures by artist Aristides Demetrios adorn Pacific Commons along the three blocks. Titled “Acrobatic Figures,” these pieces of art can be observed along the Auto Mall Parkway side and between various restaurants in the plaza. The area is also adorned with medium sized palm trees that are typical of the City of Fremont.
Much more is to come at Pacific Commons. The area is continually growing with construction going on throughout the year and stores opening as they are completed.

**Mixed-Use Development**

**The Benton in Fremont**

The Benton is one of the first mixed-use buildings in Fremont. Situated adjacent to Kaiser Hospital and the Fremont B.A.R.T. station, the Benton of Fremont is a four story building that provides several amenities to its users. The proximity to the B.A.R.T. station and its location next to several business areas would have made it an ideal place to host a variety of cafés and bistros, but what is currently there has hindered it from being as successful as it could be. Starbucks is the only shop that has garnered plenty of business, with salons and spas situated in the retail area, as well. On Yelp.com, a user has reflected on the Benton stating,

“What I realized though was that this complex was trying to be something in the wrong city. It was trying to be this cool, mixed-use building meant for a walkable neighborhood in the auto-sprawl wastes of Fremont… And it sits out there by itself and really, despite sitting right up on the sidewalk and having a few shops beneath (Starbucks of course) it doesn’t really work because it’s in the wrong place for that sort of development” (Yelp).

Though this attempt at a mixed-use building failed, the prospect of creating higher density areas in Fremont can still be realized as the area in which I have proposed my project is ideal for that type of development.

**Residential Developments**
Irvington Terrace

Irvington Terrace is a 100-unit affordable housing development building produced by BRIDGE Housing. Opening this year, it lies on Grimmer Boulevard, which connects to the study area. It utilizes a very contemporary style of architecture complimented with earth tones. Additionally, Irvington Terrace uses sub-level parking to accommodate all of its residents and has on-street parking for visitors. The development is next to several low-density commercial areas, as well as a variety of housing developments.

Park Lane

Park Lane is also located on Grimmer Boulevard adjacent to Irvington Terrace, which is a development in three parts. Built by Regis Homes of Northern California, the planned unit development uses a modern Craftsman style with lighter colors accented by white pillars and arbors. With garage entrances in the back of the unit and a community park and pool within the complex, the development takes on a new urbanism attitude. This complex is neighbored by a multitude of single-family homes that reflect the former styles when Fremont was first built. Both this development and Irvington Terrace are in high demand and are selling well in this slump economy. The realization for higher-density housing is seen in these two complexes have set a new standard for new developments in Fremont.
Future Developments

Cisco Field

Cisco Field is the new baseball stadium for the Oakland A’s that has been proposed in the Pacific Commons area. The new stadium is set to be the one of the smallest, yet most technologically advanced in the world upon opening. A formal proposal has been drawn, as well as an economic impact report, which is waiting to be approved by the City of Fremont (Oakland Athletics). The major drawback of this location is its distance to the B.A.R.T. station. The stadium would not be directly adjacent to it (as it is for the Oakland Coliseum and Stadium), but it has been noted that bus routes and special trams will transport visitors to and from the station.

Ballpark Village

Along with the proposal of Cisco Field is Ballpark Village, a new mixed-use development that will include a variety of high-end retail topped with 3,150 new residences that is similar to Santana Row (Oakland Athletics). The end of the development will lead to Cisco Field. In addition to the utilization of mixed-use buildings, a new elementary school will be added and green building practices will be utilized to help give back to the city (Oakland Athletics).

Irvington & Warm Springs/South Fremont Bart Station

The extension of the existing B.A.R.T. station will extend it from the existing Fremont station all the way to the Warm Springs District in South Fremont. This extension is being done to connect the Bay Area to Santa Clara County, essentially bridging that gap from the Bay
Area to San Jose. This move is a collaboration between B.A.R.T. and the City of Fremont. In addition to the Warm Springs/South Fremont station, the Irvington station is set to be en route to Warm Springs as an additional stop. This move is projected to increase ridership by “5,700 [upon opening] and 9,100 daily trips by 2025. This increase in transit trips indicates a shift in use from automobiles to transit” (BART).

The progression of developments makes it apparent that the City of Fremont is trying to push for smarter growth based around transit-oriented development. The move coincides with my project in that it sets up the way for higher-density buildings and more forms of public transportation that will eventually lead Fremont to being a destination wherever you go, including the Irvington district.
The Study Site

The project area that I will be working on is located along Fremont Boulevard, which connects to Washington Boulevard. This is the main street of Irvington, and is the site of the historic Five Corners intersection, as well as the Irvington Monument, Broadway West Theatre, and Bay Street.

Located on the next pages is an analysis of the area, which proves how much wasted space can be found in the Irvington district. Much of the space is allocated towards parking lots that remain empty throughout the day, as well as low-density housing next to commercial areas. There is no public open space in the area, and those that are there belong to apartment complexes. The site is in dire need of revamping, which is what I intend to do for the historic Five Corners area. That site will be the place where I will do my design in hopes of demonstrating how space should be utilized in order to maximize development. This will trigger more economic activity within the Irvington area, making it a hot spot for visitors and residents alike. Additionally, the construction of the Irvington B.A.R.T. station will funnel more people into the area via A.C. Transit busses and shuttle services that run directly to and from the station.

The site will be a model for any other development that may occur in the Irvington area, including any establishments that may already be set in place.
Figure 1.18: Analysis map of the Irvington District
Irvington Redevelopment Plan

To help realize this project even more, the city has issued a redevelopment plan for three of its districts, with Irvington being one of them. The plan calls for streetscape improvements, as well as the revitalization of the historic buildings. In addition to those projects is the revision of the historic commercial district, which is centered at the “Five Corners” intersection (Fremont Redevelopment Agency).

The plan was first introduced in 1977 and covered an area of 150 acres that focused on the Five Corners site and extended to the surrounding neighborhoods. In 1998, that plan was amended and increased from 150 to 323 acres that can be seen in Figure 1.18. The plan is expected to, “Increase the amount of public revenue received, and will create a more desirable neighborhood with pedestrian retail experience, preserve the historic character of the district, generate higher sales per square foot for commercial businesses, and enhance residential living opportunities” (Fremont Redevelopment Agency). While creating my design, these ideas were kept in mind, as well as the notion that several alternative transportation methods would be introduced into the area to help alleviate the use of cars in the area.

A Plan Unveiled

During a public hearing meeting on February 27, 2003, the Irvington Redevelopment Plan was introduced.
and discussed with the citizens of Fremont. The plan had four sections to it: vision and goals, development concepts, design guidelines, and plan implementation.

**Vision and Goals**

A vision was set in order to gain direction of the redevelopment plan. It states as follows:

“Irvington will be a walkable neighborhood with shopping and dining opportunities available to both local residents and the larger community. The heart of Irvington is the Five Corners. The historic character, commercial opportunities and pedestrian scale of this area will provide the impetus for future development …

“New commercial development in Irvington will include unique shops and restaurants offering a range of choices to residents of the district, the city of Fremont and the region. Stores and offices located on Irvington’s commercial streets will be enhanced by well-designed pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, attractive sidewalks, benches and street lamps. These features will contribute to safe and walkable streets.”

Trying to create a walkable city in an area catered to cars will be a challenge, but doable. With everything in this portion of the Irvington District in such close proximity, and with the desire to rely more on public transportation, this vision can be brought to reality. To help realize this vision, ten goals were listed as follows:

1. Develop an identity for Irvington that reflects Irvington’s history and distinguishes it from other Fremont districts.
2. Improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood and commercial district.
3. Encourage revitalization of underutilized parcels and buildings, including historic buildings and neighborhood features.
4. Attract unique shopping, dining and neighborhood services to Irvington.
5. Provide an integrated, safe and well-designed pedestrian and bicycle network, including access to Laguna Creek, Central Park and other recreational amenities.
6. Minimize the impact of through-traffic to the degree feasible while meeting circulation needs.
7. Improve streetscape design in Irvington.
8. Develop parking facilities that meet commercial and residential needs.
9. Improve bus service and scheduling to meet the needs of Irvington residents.
10. Integrate the potential future BART station and accompanying residential and commercial development into Irvington.

**Development Concepts**

Along with these goals were certain assumptions that were noted in the introduction of this project and reiterated by the council meeting minutes. This includes the Irvington B.A.R.T. station, the redevelopment of Monument Center (located at Five Corners), and the conservation of the current carrying capacity of all major arterial streets. The most prominent assumption is as follows:

“Development and new public infrastructure development should be pedestrian oriented: buildings oriented to the street with ground floor retail uses on key streets, attractive and wide sidewalks with high quality street furniture, minimal interruptions in building frontages (parking impacts minimized), etc.”

All of this has helped me in creating a space for the Irvington District of the City of Fremont that incorporates a landscape architect’s view of a successful space that takes public transportation into account, as well as maintaining an identity to the area.

**Design Guidelines**

The design guidelines listed in the minutes addressed which streets were deemed pedestrian-oriented and which

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**Figure 1.20:** Empty streetscape along Fremont Boulevard
Figure 1.21: Map of the redevelopment area for the Irvington District
streets were vehicle-oriented. One of the pedestrian-oriented streets is Bay Street, which is where the design will take place.

**Plan Implementation**

Zoning codes need to be changed to allow for all of this to occur. Currently the codes state that high-density residential development and mixed-use buildings are not allowed, so these need to be changed in order to make this plan possible. Also listed are the estimated costs for the various projects, which will not be addressed in this senior project.

These outlines with its goals and vision have helped me realize how important public open space and the need to feel connected to the outdoors is to many people. The design will truly reflect that having several opportunities to enjoy the outdoors while still programming the area to have amenities that people will utilize on a regular basis.
Chapter 2

Irvington. It’s more than that.

Finding an identity for a commonly overlooked district.
The Image of the City

In an attempt to get an idea of how the residents of Fremont view the Irvington District, I have done some analysis based on Kevin Lynch’s *The Image of the City*. The study involves choosing certain elements in the city that may or may not be an image that people see when thinking of Fremont. This incorporates several different photos of landmarks, roads, or shopping districts that are placed along the path. From there, viewers choose their favorite locations and reflect about how those images represent the city.

Before these interviews were done, a preliminary analysis was done to define the paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks of the corridor that I am studying. These are the elements that make up the map of Fremont from which the interviewees can see. They are defined as follows:

**Paths**

Paths are defined as passageways from which people move, including roadways, sidewalks, and railroads. The paths that are defined in this analysis include the streets of Washington Boulevard, Fremont Boulevard, Bay Street, and Grimmer Boulevard, as well as the sidewalks along Washington Boulevard and Fremont Boulevard.

**Edges**

Edges are the boundaries that connect or separate two different areas. They differ from paths in that they do not necessary have to be accessible as a mode of...
transportation. In this area, the edge that is the most prominent starts of the Mission hills along Washington Boulevard that separates the Irvington District from the Mission San Jose District. There is also the edge that separates Park Lane from Irvington Terrace.

**Districts**

Districts take edges and paths one step further by being concerned with area rather than a linear value. These districts are known to be recognizable from the inside out by distinct characteristics. For this analysis, the focus is solely on the Irvington District.

**Nodes**

Nodes are defined as entrance points for viewers. These can be intersections in sidewalks, streets, etc., as well as where two paths meet to become one. There are several nodes in the area, which include the entrance into the city from Highway 680 onto Washington Boulevard, the Five Corners intersection, and the intersection of Grimmer Boulevard and Fremont Boulevard.

**Landmarks**

Landmarks are distinct objects, signs, or structures that are easily identifiable in the city. They can include billboards, monuments, and buildings. In this area, there are several landmarks including the Irvington monument, West Theatre, and the Irvington post.

This study asks not only residents of Fremont, but from other cities as well to get a sense of whether or not this area has the potential of having an identity that should be carried along to the next design phase.
Image 1 - Cloverleaf Bowling Alley (Landmark)
Located on Grimmer Boulevard

From Fremont: “Cloverleaf looks ridiculous. the color contrasts are so cheesy.”

From Fremont: “Cloverleaf reminds me of late night bowling with my friends. It had a weird smell.”

From Fremont: “I don’t really recognize or have any memories with the place, but I think the aesthetics are pretty interesting. The roof is asymmetrical and the supports are at odd angles. It kind of gives it a modern art look. There’s also a big contrast between the tannish peach and tan paint of the building and the bright blue paint of the supports and the roof. I feel that as the building is now, there is a little bit of a sense of ‘painted in the dark’ and that the aesthetics weren’t completely thought through. I feel that the aesthetics of the building could be improved if the roof and the supports were painted a color that went with the rest of the building better, perhaps a dark brown or the tan that’s used for the stripes on the building.”

From Irvine, CA: “I think it’s ugly. I like the blue - it stands out, but I think it’s ugly. My first thought was like, I dunno, a diner... it probably isn’t though.”

From Oxnard, CA: “The first thing that stands out is the blue... and then the geometric shape of the blue rails is interesting.”
Image 2 - Bay Street (Path)
Located on Bay Street at the Five Corners Intersection

From Fremont: “I almost feel like the Irvington District should either be more modern or have more buildings like that Bay Street Café building all around. Either be old fashioned or modern. No in-between. I feel that’s why Cloverleaf’s architecture fails. It’s just bella ugly, forreal.”

From Fremont: “I see the Baystreet salon which reminds me of when my prom date’s mom made me go with him to get his haircut before prom because his hair was too long.”

From Fremont: “I recognize this part of Irvington because I drove past it almost every week to go to Chinese school. I always remembered thinking that this area looked a little bit old and dilapidated.”

From Irvine, CA: “I think it’s like some old town or downtown area.”

From Oxnard, CA: “Downtown.. it looks like a downtown... either that or really old buildings still chillin in a renovated area”
**Image 3 - Five Corners Intersection (Node)**

Noted as the center of the Irvington district

From Fremont: “I recognize this as the street that Irvington High School is on, because I had Chinese school at Irvington High School every weekend. I also used to go to the Irvington Community Center located here almost every weekend to play badminton. I don’t know if there’s anything that can really be done to improve the aesthetics of the area, but the palm trees give it a very ‘California’ look.”

From Fremont: “I like the palm trees.”

From Fremont: “Isn’t this that Five Corners thing? It’s supposed to be historic or something. Nothing really special to me”

From Irvine, CA: “It looks like it’s deserted. They need to develop stuff.”

From Oxnard, CA: “Looks like any other awkward 4-way intersection.”
Image 4 - AC Transit Bus (Landmark)
Spotted on Fremont Boulevard

From Fremont: “I don’t really recognize this area, mainly because there’s a bus blocking the recognizable features of the neighborhood, and because I’m not that familiar with the Irvington district. As far as it’s future, maybe more aesthetically pleasing and varied trees beside palm trees could be planted. They seem to be everywhere.”

From Fremont: “This bus reminds me of when I took it in high school and it was the first time I smelled marijuana because somebody was smoking on the bus.”

From Fremont: “I’ve used the bus like twice. It was weird and it was not a pleasant experience.”

From Irvine, CA: “Bus stop, dab. I wouldn’t use it. I don’t like the colors. It’s ugly. But it looks clean, but it’s still ugly.”

From Oxnard, CA: “The first thing I noticed was the message on the side of the bus. I guess that’s kinda the point for the bus to be displaying that message. I guess maybe promoting more use of public transportation and take less cars off the roads, which would help fight global warming. But busses give off more fumes in the air than a regular car so I kind of question whether or not it balances out.”
Image 5 - Park Lane (Edge)
The street that connects and separates Park Lane from Irvington Terrace

From Fremont: “I see how they’re kinda trying to bring back more of an old fashioned flare but yeah man, stick to one thing! Stupid Irvington District.”

From Fremont: “I don’t really recognize or have any memories with this area. As far as aesthetics, I feel that the buildings on the right look more modern and well-designed while the buildings on the left look more old-fashioned and outdated.”

From Fremont: “I have no idea where this is, but it looks pretty nice for Fremont.”

From Irvine, CA: “It’s pretty. I see new development. I would live there.”

From Oxnard, CA: “Two different styles of housing. One more traditional looking, the other more modernized. But they both look nice.”
Image 7 - Monument Plaza (Landmark)

Small park area next to the Irvington Monument

From Fremont: “I don’t recognize or have memories with this area. I feel that the aesthetics of the area could be improved if it was more well-lit.”

From Fremont: “This area looks like a nice place to hang out.”

From Fremont: “It looks pretty nice. Some memorial place ... but I have no idea where it is. Some trash on the ground makes it look like there isn’t frequent maintenance.”

From Irvine, CA: “I think it’s an entry to a park because it also says ‘Park Closed.’”

From Oxnard, CA: “Reminds me of Davis. Yeah, that’s about it. It reminds me of Davis. Haha.”

Figure 2.09: A bare Memorial Plaza on a Thursday afternoon
Conclusion

Based on the responses from the study, it’s clear that there needs to be a major revamp of the historic center of Irvington. Memorial Plaza and the Five Corners intersection were barely recognized by the Fremont responses, but the photos of Bay Street gave off a vibe of the traditional downtown feel - excellent potential for any redevelopment that may occur.

The photo of the A.C. Transit bus showed that many people do not ride the bus as some may have hoped. The feelings toward public transportation are not a welcoming one, and it shows by the responses people put in. Lastly, the image of Park Lane indicated that residents and visitors liked the overall aesthetic of the area, even though the design (higher density housing) is not typical of Fremont. This illustrates that people are open to higher density developments and that it does not come with the stigmas it once had.

These responses and the research through what the City of Fremont would like has helped me to create a site design for the downtown area of Irvington, specifically centered around the Memorial Plaza. It mixes the old with the new in a very colorful atmosphere that will make this a place to visit for years to come.
Chapter 3
You have arrived. Welcome!

A proposed design for the historic Irvington district of Fremont.
The Irvington Town Center

The following pages reflect the new atmosphere created in the Irvington Town Center. Several new buildings complimenting the historic ones come together to create what is now a destination hot spot for Fremont residents and visitors. Several outdoor eating spots combined with retail and commercial spaces help make this place what you see.

The identity is a lot clearer in the Irvington district with this design. The conservation of the historic buildings and the architecture and usage of earth tones give the space a worn in look that is reminiscent of traditional downtowns across the nation. The Irvington monument stands proudly as the anchor as the entrance to the space and lets visitors know they have arrived in the heart of the Irvington district.

In order to accommodate public transportation, bus stops have been modified to stop in front of key areas of the center so that users will take advantage of them more frequently. In addition, the streets have been narrowed to allow for slower traffic and to discourage visitors from using their cars and rely more on alternative methods of transportation.

To provide a safe and welcoming environment, more light fixtures have been added to the area to emphasize the downtown feel. Also, several trees were planted to create a nice walkway and to shade the area during warmer days. Lastly, traffic calming devices such as narrow streets, cobblestone roads, and easy to spot crosswalks make this a place to enjoy shopping and dining carefree.

With that, I welcome you to the Irvington Town Center. Hope you enjoy your stay!
Figure 3.01: The view from the Fremont Boulevard looking down Bay Street

Figure 3.02: A bus stops to release and pick up passengers in front of the Irvington Town Center
Figure 3.04: Plenty of edge seating, tables, and chairs make this a hot spot for dining experiences

Figure 3.05: Irvington Town Center holds the key to combining dining with shopping
Figure 3.06: The original buildings are preserved and are now frequented by more visitors
Conclusion

The new Irvington Town Center serves as a model for any other areas to be developed in the Irvington District. Using a minimal number of parking lots and mixed-use/high-density developments have allowed for this site to be what it is. Taking small elements from the historic buildings such as the use of bricks and arched windows also tie the whole plaza together.

The development includes limited room for passenger vehicles, having them opt for other spaces and for pedestrians to feel safe in the area. However, the lanes are wide enough to allow for emergency vehicles to pass through. There are also bus stops along the development to shuttle people back and forth to whichever B.A.R.T. station they please, or to another part of the city. Also, future plans can include shuttle systems that go to and from the B.A.R.T. station more frequently than A.C. Transit.

The overall aesthetic of the area combined with the use of high-density, mixed-use buildings allow this space to be what it is today - a lively downtown area for the Irvington District that will be cherished for generations to come.
Bibliography


