

Placentia Metrolink Station

Opportunities for Transit and Pedestrian Friendly Design



Compass Blueprint

This project was funded by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Compass Blueprint Demonstration Project Program. Compass Blueprint provides tools to cities to evaluate planning options and stimulate development consistent with the region's goals. SCAG provides cities with support to help with visioning, infill analysis, policy assistance, economic and marketing assistance, and developing communication tools for cities.

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Acknowledgements

Beginning in 2003, the five North Orange County Cities (NOCC) of Brea, Fullerton, La Habra, Placentia and Yorba Linda undertook a cooperative effort to define a vision for transit in North Orange County,. The five cities have received grant funding from the Reduce Orange County Congestion (ROCC) program and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Compass Blueprint Demonstration Program, which together with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Go Local program have provided funding (as well as in-kind City staff support) to explore opportunities for transit-oriented development around an emerging high-capacity transit system.

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Background

In 2001, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) started a regional visioning process that culminated in a strategy for regional growth that would accommodate the coming growth while providing for livability, mobility, prosperity, and sustainability. This strategy, called “Compass Blueprint,” promotes a stronger link between transportation and land use planning at both regional and local scales so that growth is directed toward areas that offer mobility and transportation choices. Compass Blueprint encourages creative, forward-thinking, and sustainable development solutions that fit local needs and support shared regional values. The strategy is broadly based on four key principles, which can be referred to as the “Compass Principles.”

- Improve Mobility
- Foster Livability in All Communities
- Enable Prosperity for All People
- Promote Sustainability for Future Generations

Compass Blueprint is now in the implementation phase and SCAG is partnering with cities and counties in southern California to realize this growth vision. A series of Compass Blueprint Demonstration Projects were conducted that exemplify the goals shared by the Compass Blueprint and unique visions of local communities. The City of Placentia applied for Compass Blueprint services and was selected to be one of these demonstration projects.

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Transit Planning

Beginning in 2003, the five North Orange County Cities (NOCC) of Brea, Fullerton, La Habra, Placentia and Yorba Linda undertook a cooperative effort to define a vision for transit in North Orange County, resulting in the 2004 Transit Feasibility and Alignment Study.

In 2007 the NOCC undertook the next logical steps to develop a future transit system emphasizing connections to Metrolink and reflecting the link between transit system planning and land use planning, specifically addressing the following elements:

- Needs Assessment
- Public Outreach
- Coordinated Transit and Land Use
- Refined Transit Technologies Concept
- Refined Transit Route and Station Planning
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Preferred Strategy & Funding Application

In addition to the specific requirements of each of the participating cities, the global objectives of the NOCC initiative include the need to profile existing transit/transportation services and study existing connections to Metrolink and to subsequently develop alternate service solutions which may range from higher capacity bus or rail solutions to shuttle and feeder services.

The concepts and recommendations contained in this report were developed in conjunction with the efforts undertaken for the NOCC initiative.



Melrose Avenue underpass



Future location of Metrolink station platform

Demonstration Project Summary

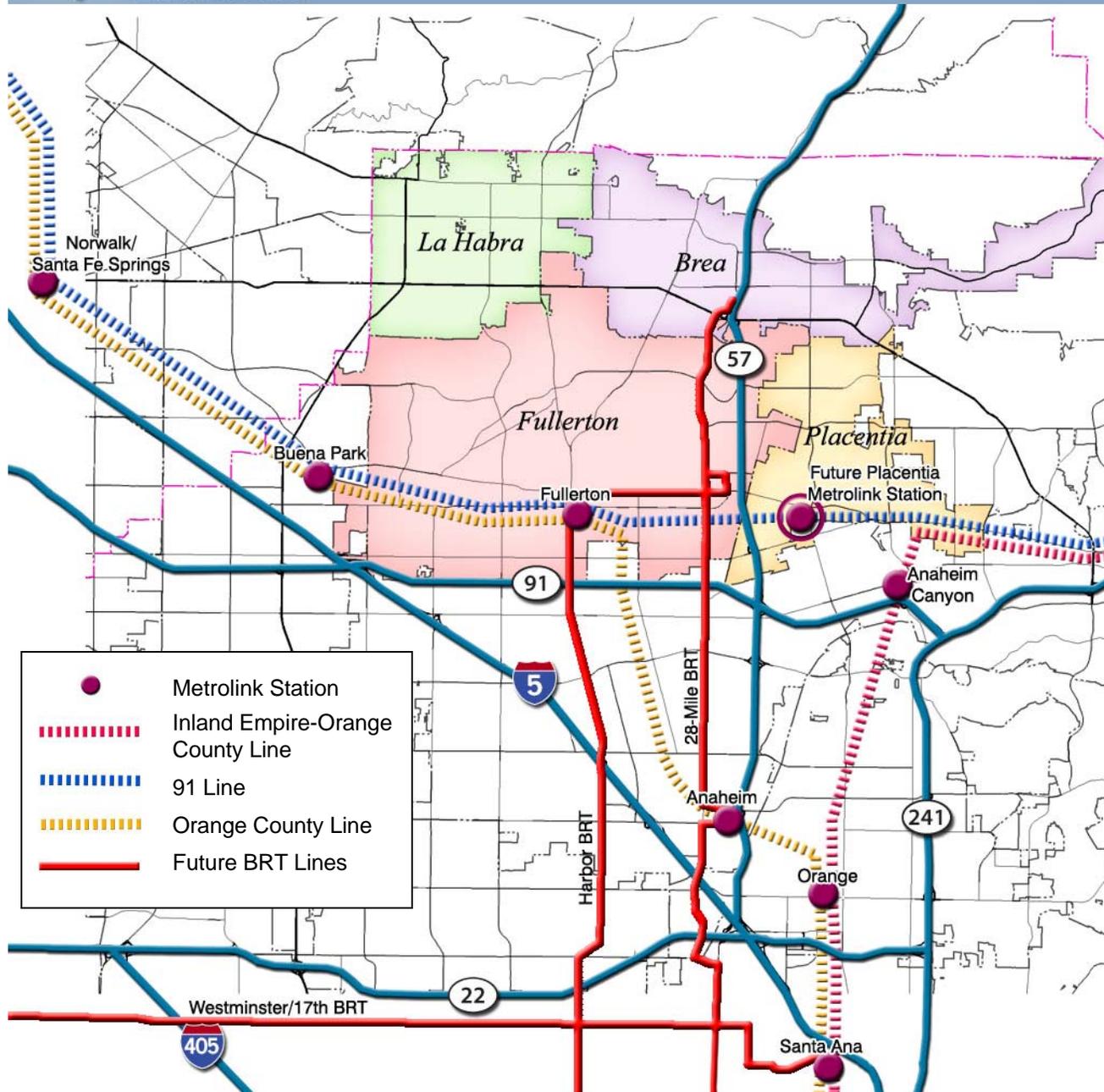
The purpose of this demonstration project is to provide the City of Placentia with urban design concepts and strategies for a proposed Metrolink station to be located in the Placita Santa Fe district. The concepts and strategies address the long-range needs for parking, pedestrian circulations, multi-modal transit access, commercial intensification, and public gathering areas in the station area.

This report summarizes the work completed under the Compass Blueprint project and provides design concepts and policy recommendations for the City to use in future planning efforts related to the Metrolink station. The recommendations report presents:

- Utilize the current alignment of Crowther Avenue and develop concepts for integrating the station with the existing community and the vision set forth in the Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan.
- Develop urban design concepts for pedestrian connectivity, vehicular circulation, and transit access.
- Evaluate the proposed Metrolink parking structure for its joint development potential.

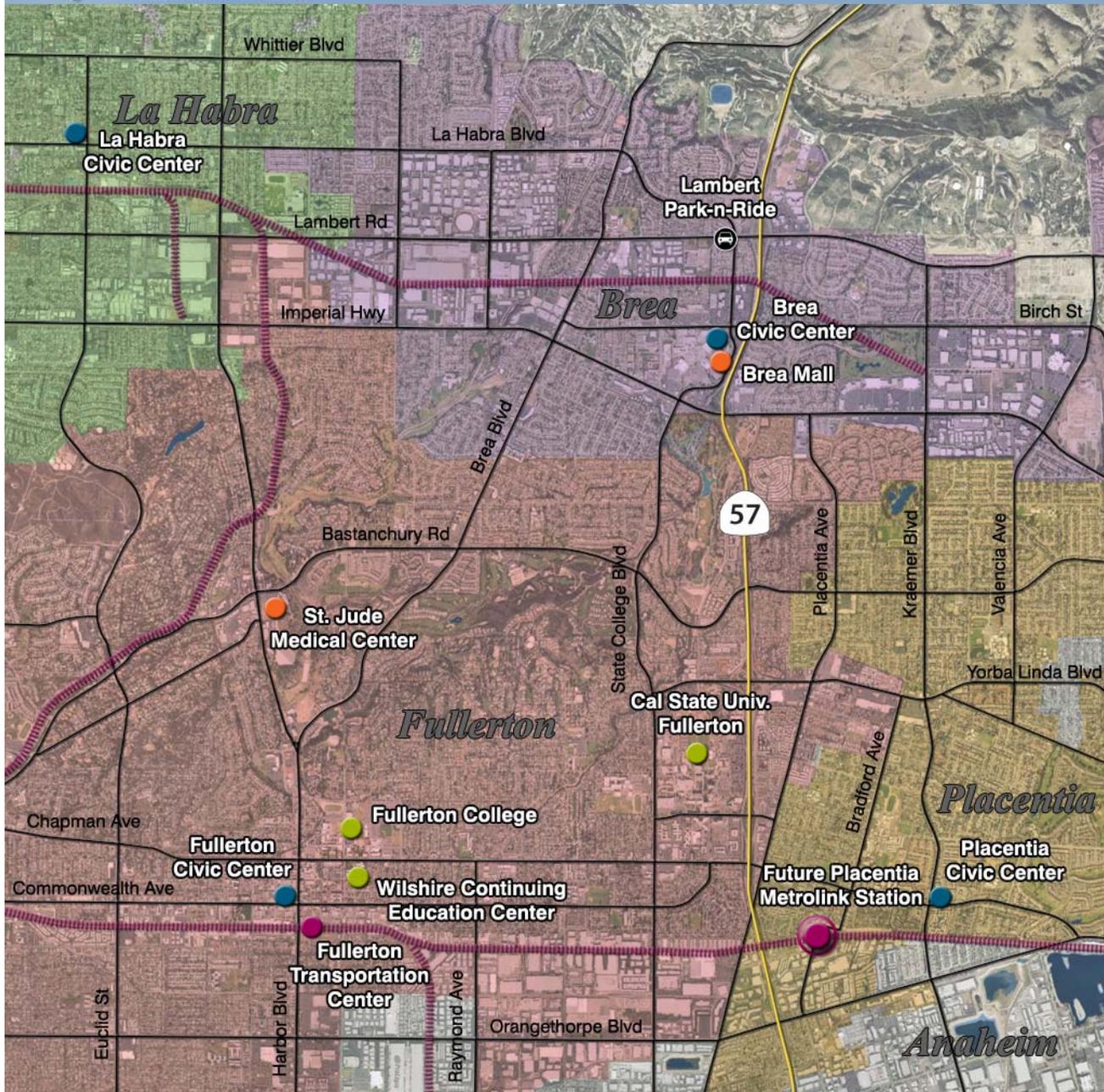


Placita Santa Fe



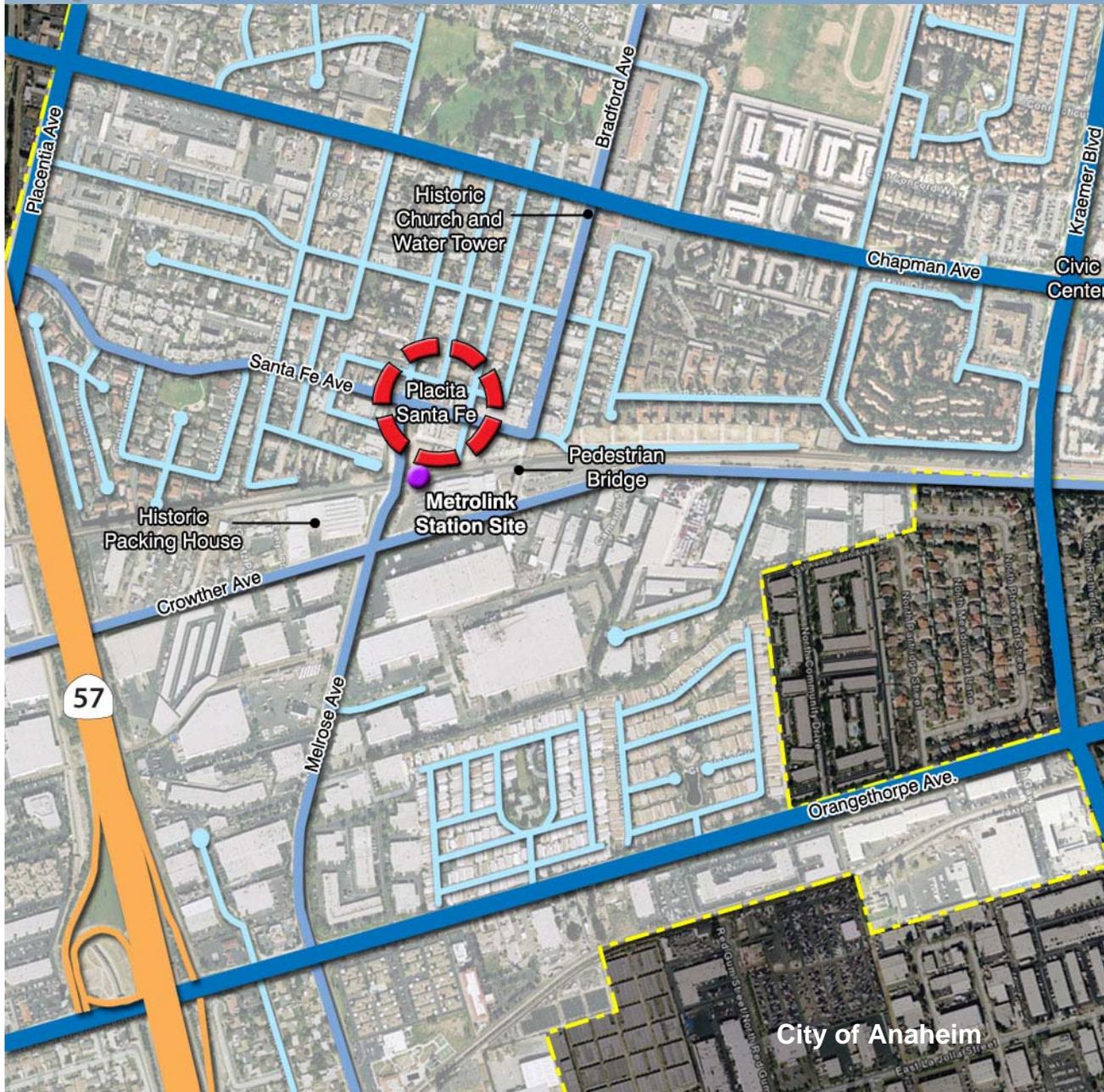
Placentia Metrolink Station

- Scheduled to open in 2010
- The station would serve the Metrolink 91 Line which runs from Los Angeles Union Station to Downtown Riverside
- Adjacent stations would be the Fullerton station and West Corona station
- 530 daily passengers are expected to use the station when it opens
- 440 vehicles estimated to park on-site
- Initially 10 daily trips



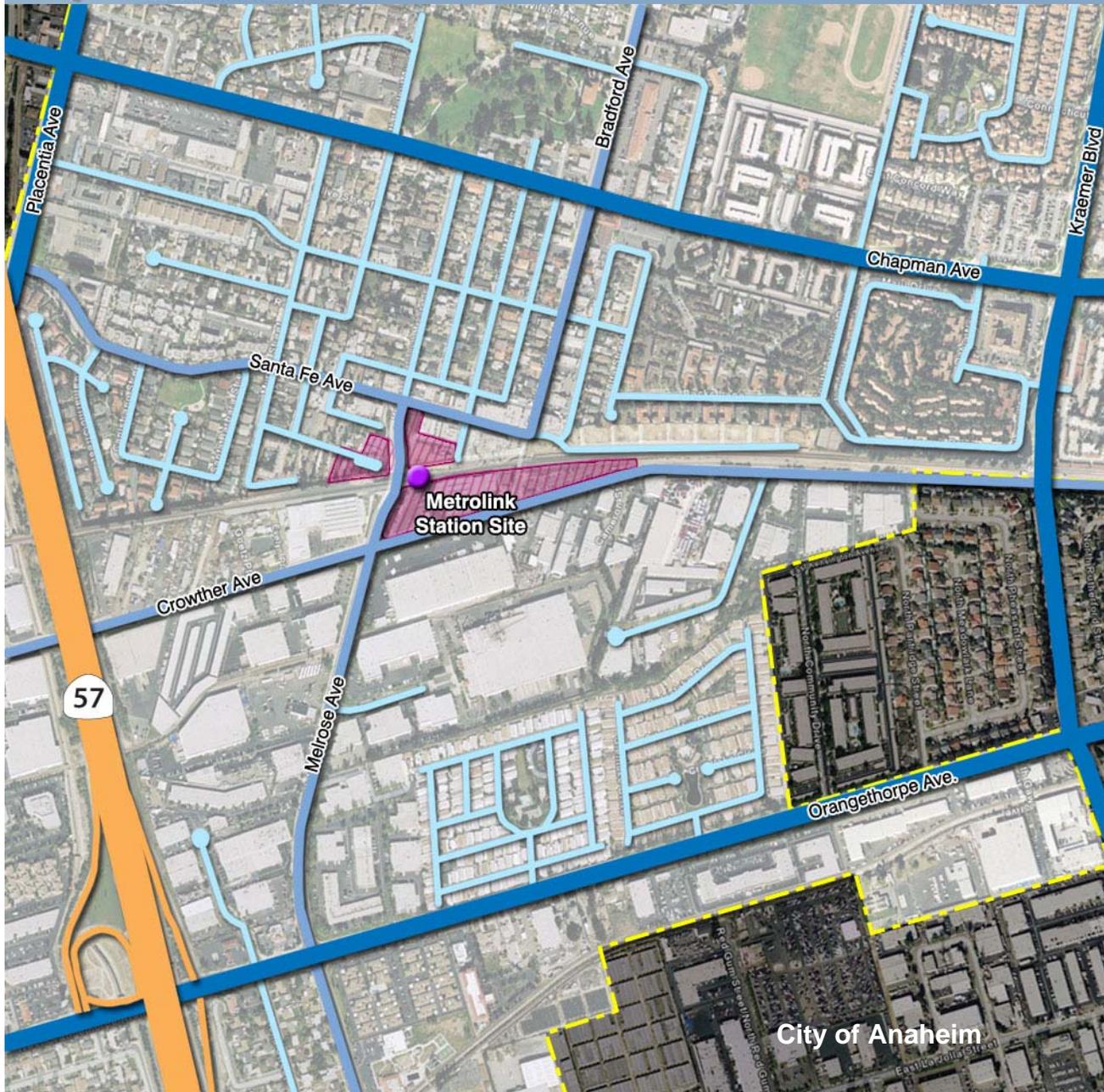
Benefits of Metrolink in Placentia

- Provides an alternative to the Fullerton Metrolink station for passengers using the 91 Line
- Will be closest station to California State University, Fullerton
- Integral part of the City's revitalization efforts for Placita Santa Fe



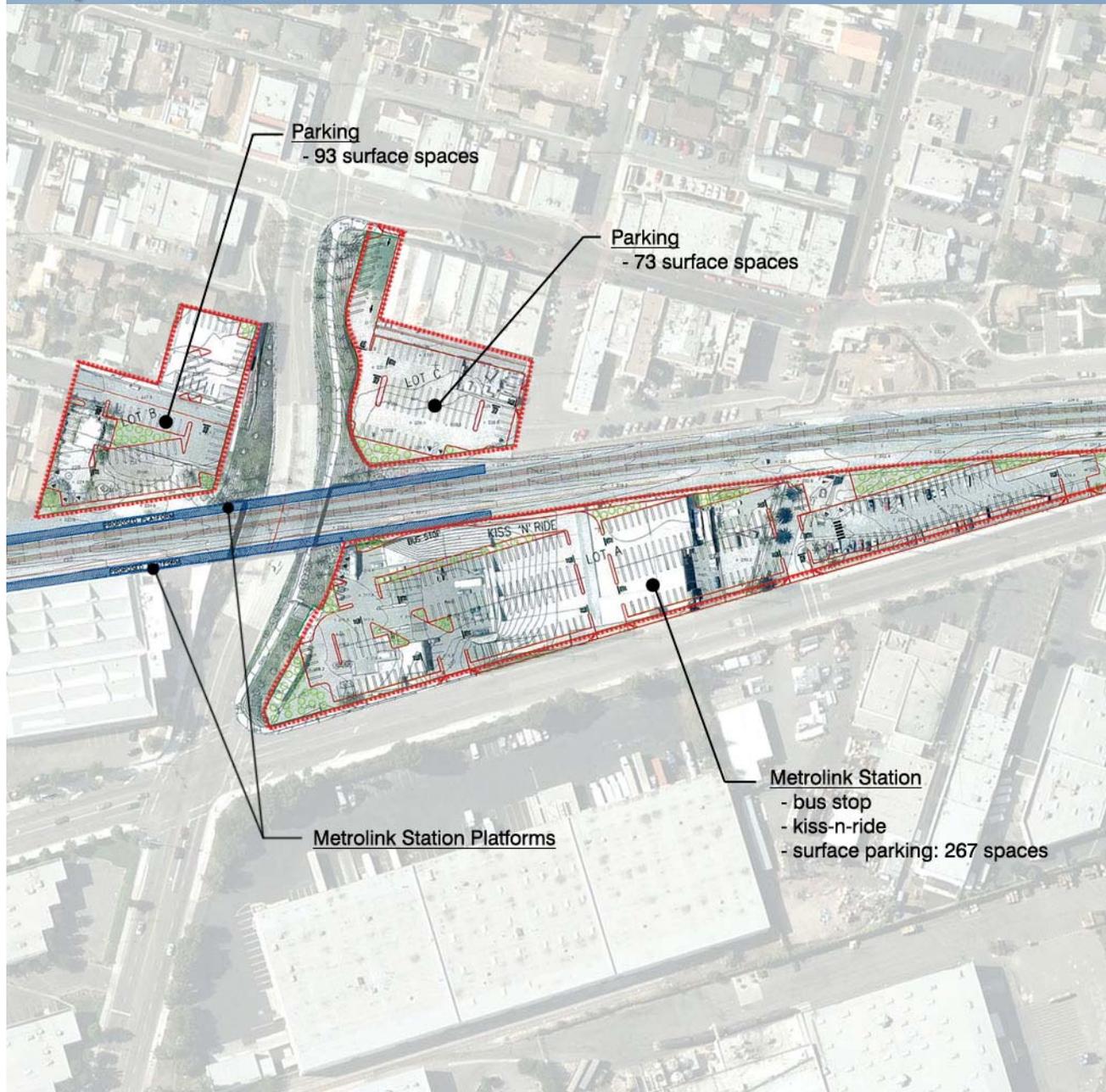
Placentia Metrolink Station

- The station will be located near the intersection of Crowther Avenue and Melrose Avenue
- The site is adjacent to the Santa Fe commercial area, which consists of small retail shops
- Melrose St. underpass, the first rail/street grade separation for the area, was completed in January 2005
- Bradford Ave. was permanently closed at the tracks in August 2005
- A pedestrian bridge for this location is being built
- A historic packing house on Melrose Street will be preserved
- A historic water tower and church are located at the intersection of Bradford Avenue and Chapman Avenue.



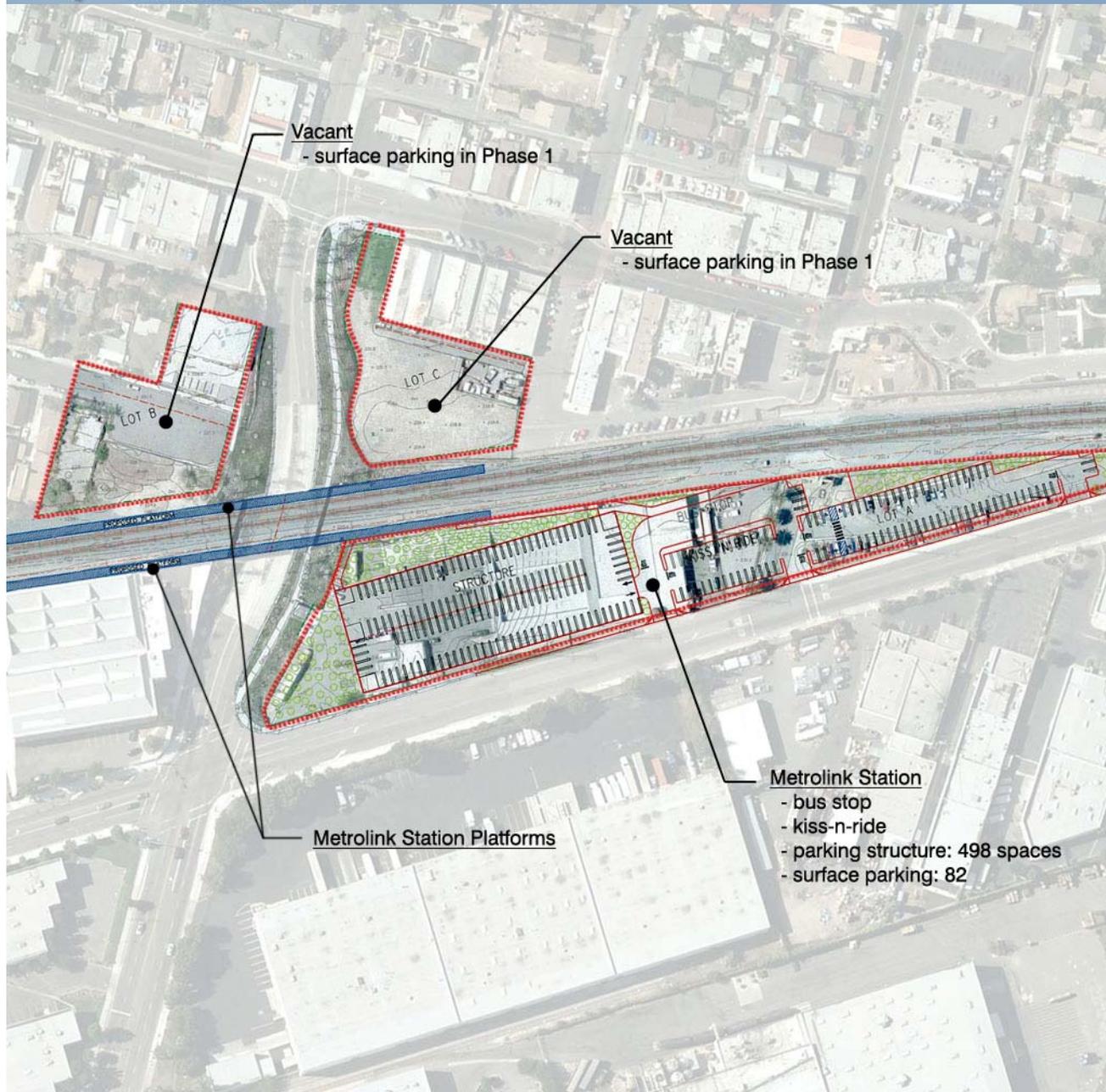
Placentia Metrolink Station

- 3 sites have been identified to provide station parking, a passenger pick-up/drop off area, and a bus stop



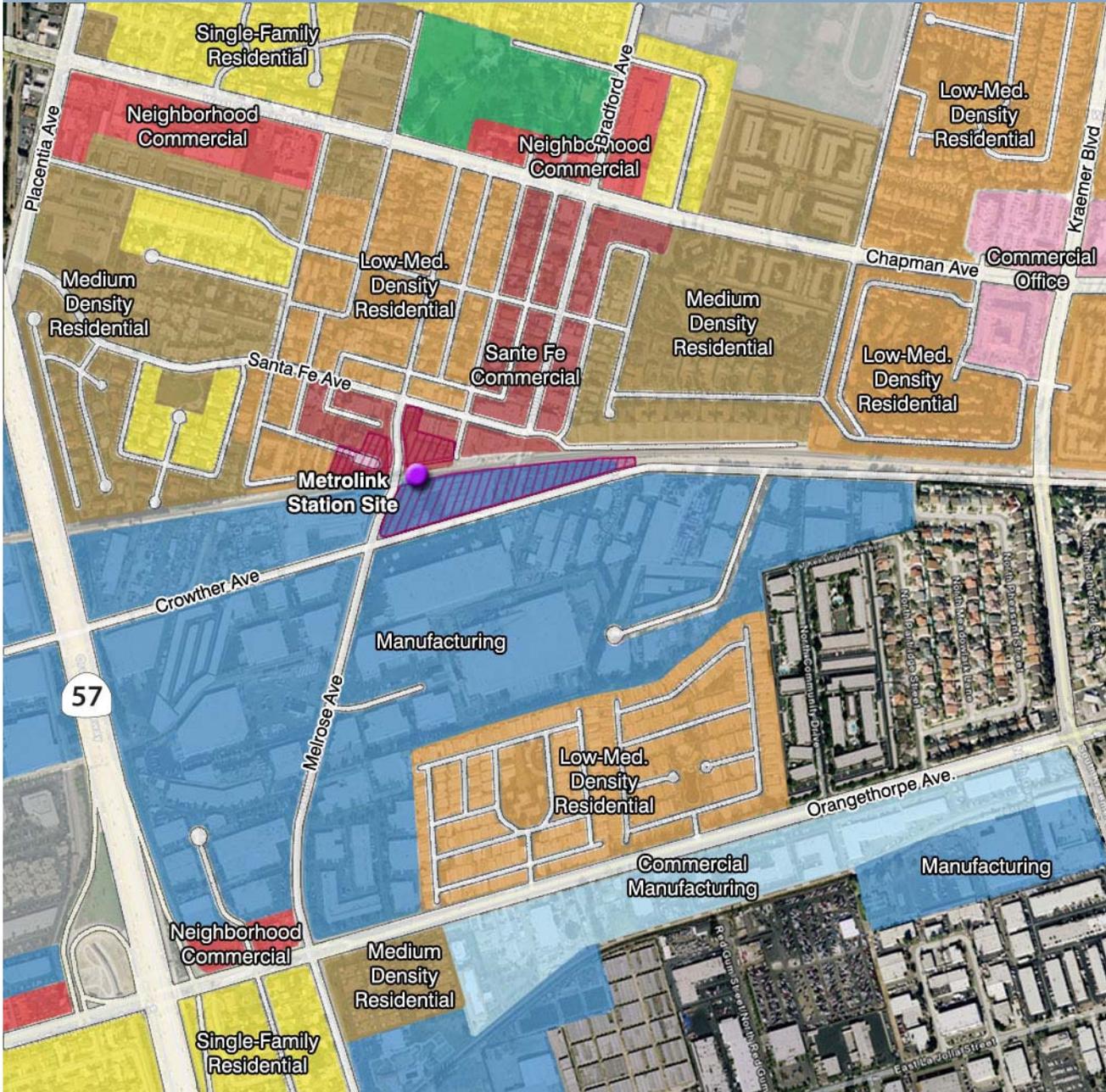
Phase One

- Initially three surface lots will supply 433 parking spaces, passenger pick-up/drop-off, and a bus stop



Phase Two

- Once funding is obtained a three story 498-space parking structure will be built along with an 82-space surface parking lot
- The two lots north of the Metrolink station will no longer be required for Metrolink parking



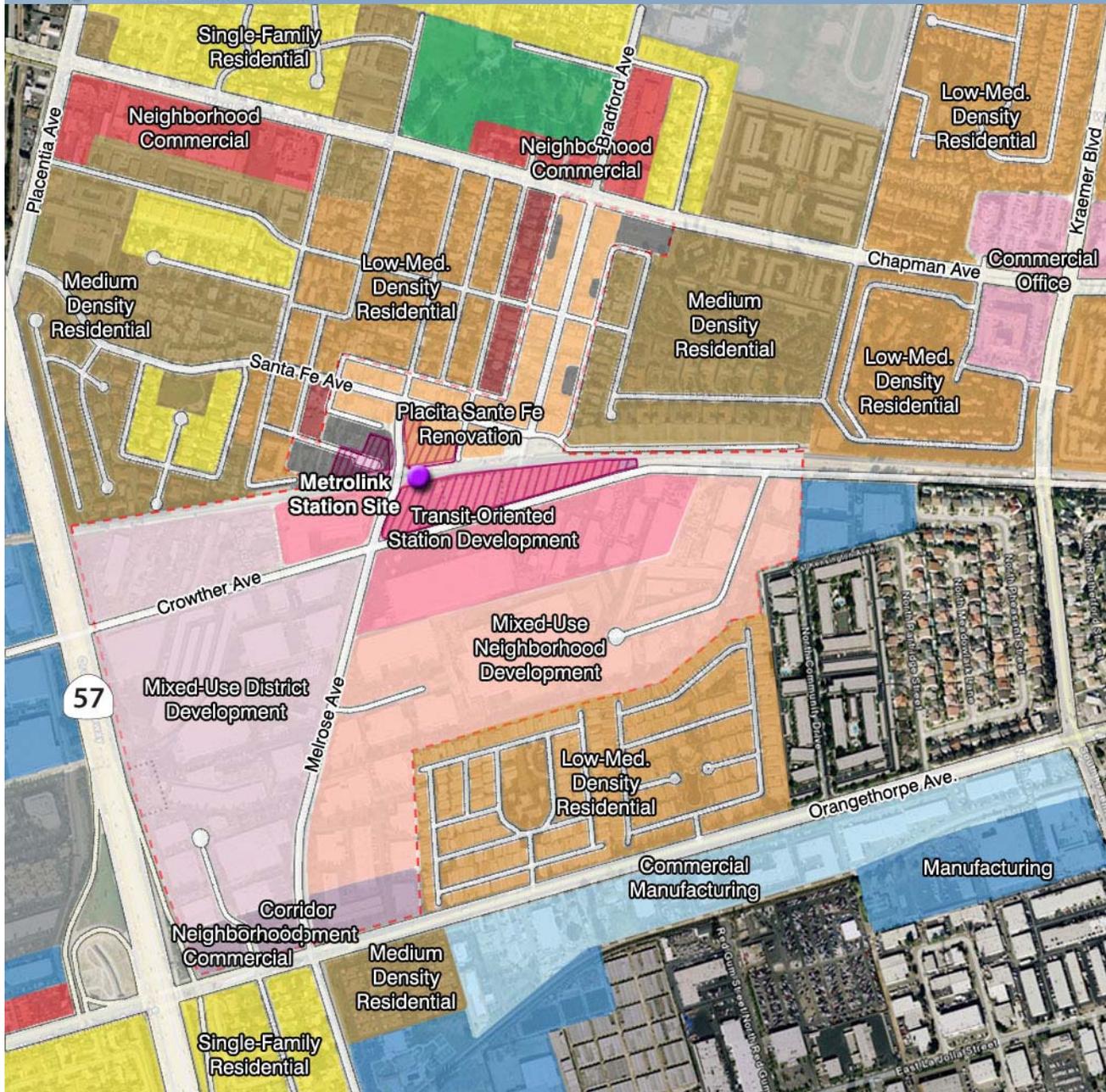
General Plan Existing Land Use



Placentia Mutual Orange Assoc. building



Crowther Avenue looking west



Proposed Specific Plan Land Use

- The specific plan area is within a redevelopment project area



Site of future Metrolink parking structure

Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan

The City of Placentia is in the final stages of completing the Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan. The adoption of this Specific Plan will be accompanied by a General Plan amendment to apply a specific plan designation to the area. The purpose of the Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan is to revitalize Placentia's core and transform it into a vibrant transit-oriented district.

The concepts presented as a part of this demonstration project are aimed to support the following principles of the Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan:

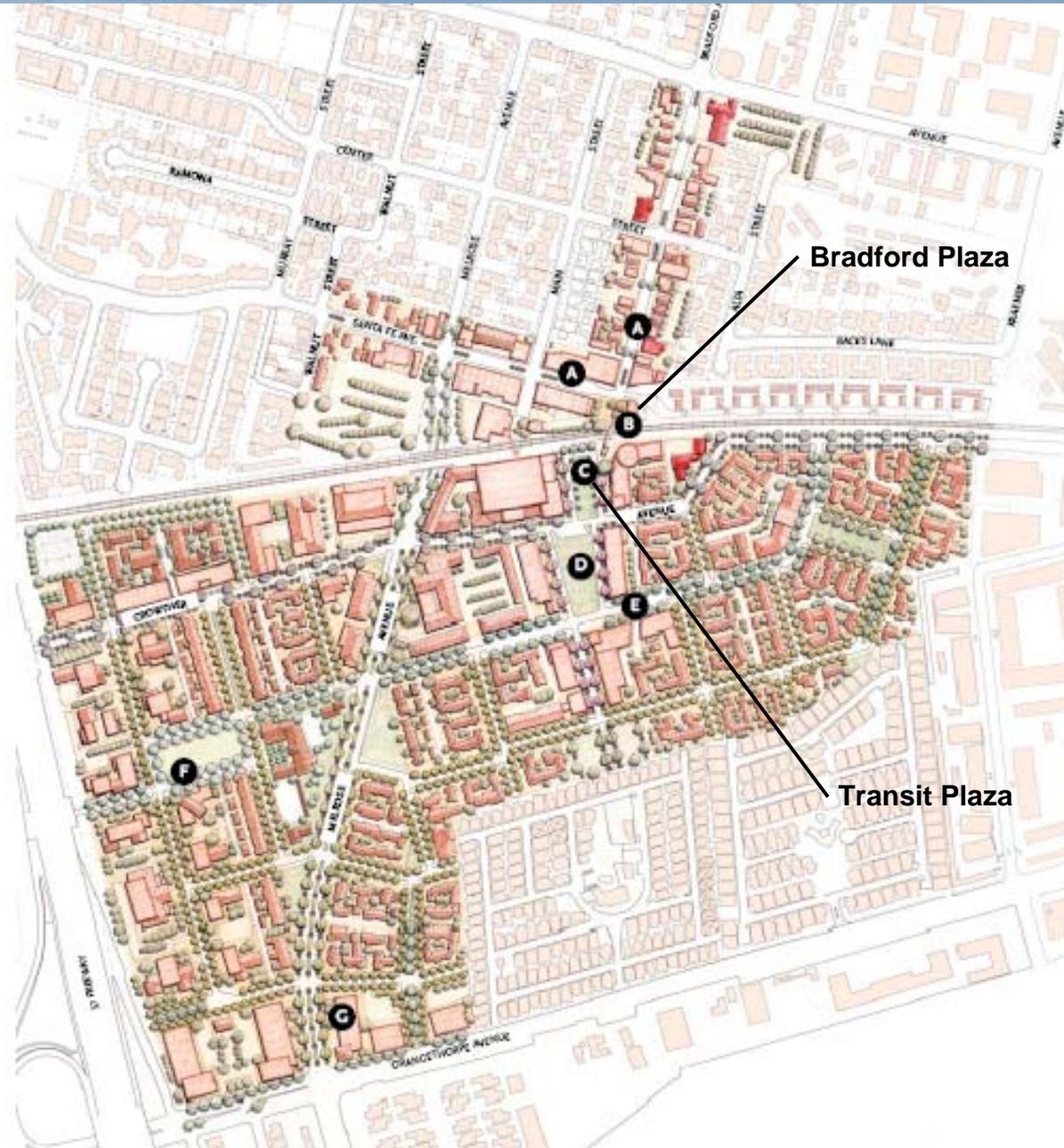
- Make great public spaces
- Make great streets
- Live above stores
- Build a variety of buildings
- Create a variety of housing choices
- Get the retail right
- Get the parking right



Melrose Avenue underpass



Pedestrian bridge



Bradford Plaza

Bradford Plaza should consist of the following:

- Well defined urban space
- Extension of plaza pavement into intersection
- Commercial activity lining three sides to frame plaza
- Integration of pedestrian bridge
- Pedestrian friendly intersections and on-street parking

Transit Plaza

Transit Plaza should consist of the following:

- 2 to 4 story mixed-use buildings frame the plaza
- Mixed-use liner conceals parking garage
- A visual connection to Bradford Plaza and Crowther Square
- Bus stops located south of Crowther Avenue
- Open lawn area with palm grove
- Original water derricks to be resurrected and replace the current pump house

Existing Conditions



Roadways

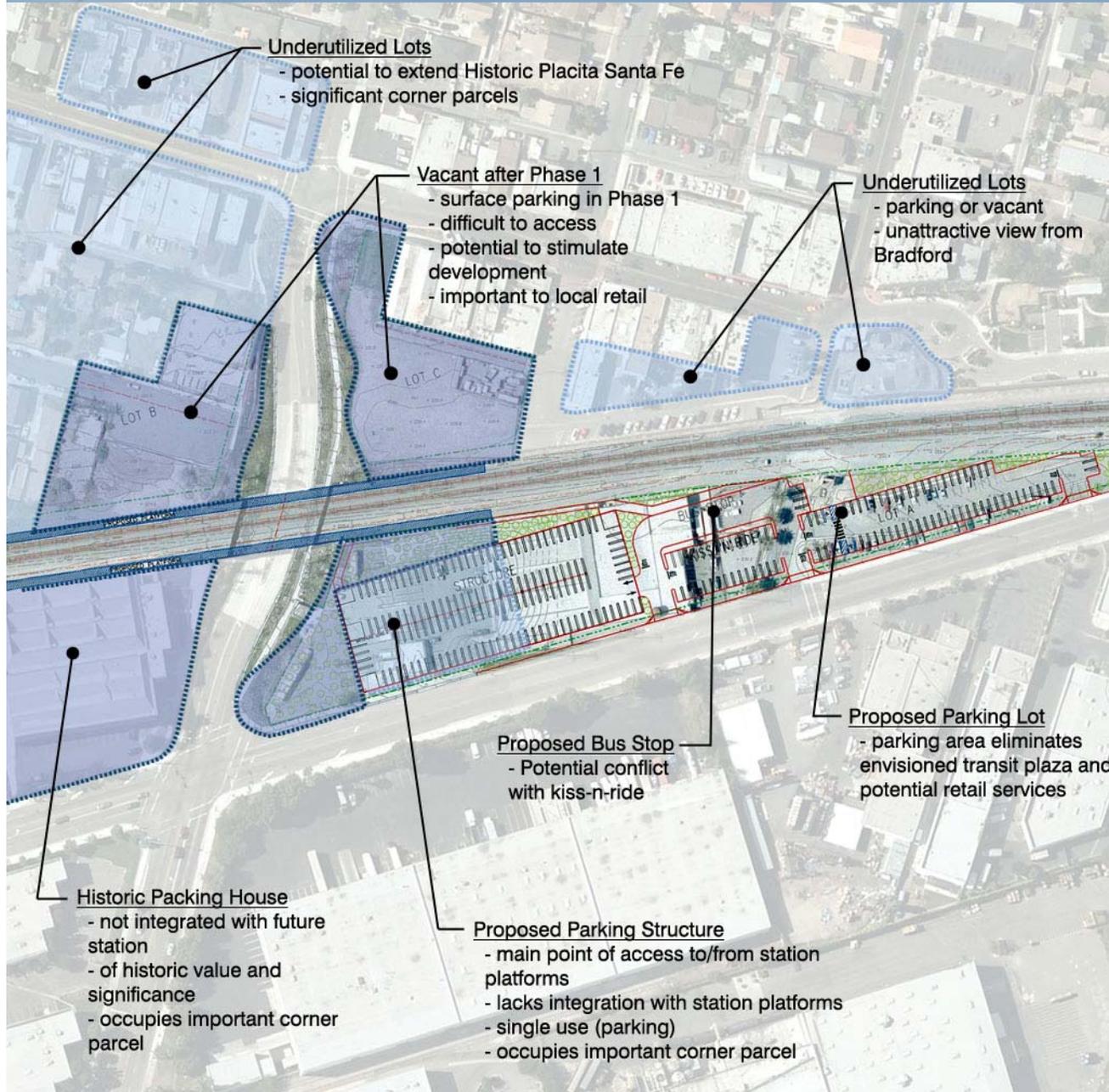
- Melrose Street and Crowther Avenue provide the main north/south and east/west vehicle access points to future Metrolink station
- Crowther Avenue, Melrose Street and Bradford Avenue are all classified as secondary arterial streets with two lanes in each direction.
- Traffic demand is expected to match or exceed the capacity of the roadway in a few areas adjacent to the site by 2030

Existing Conditions

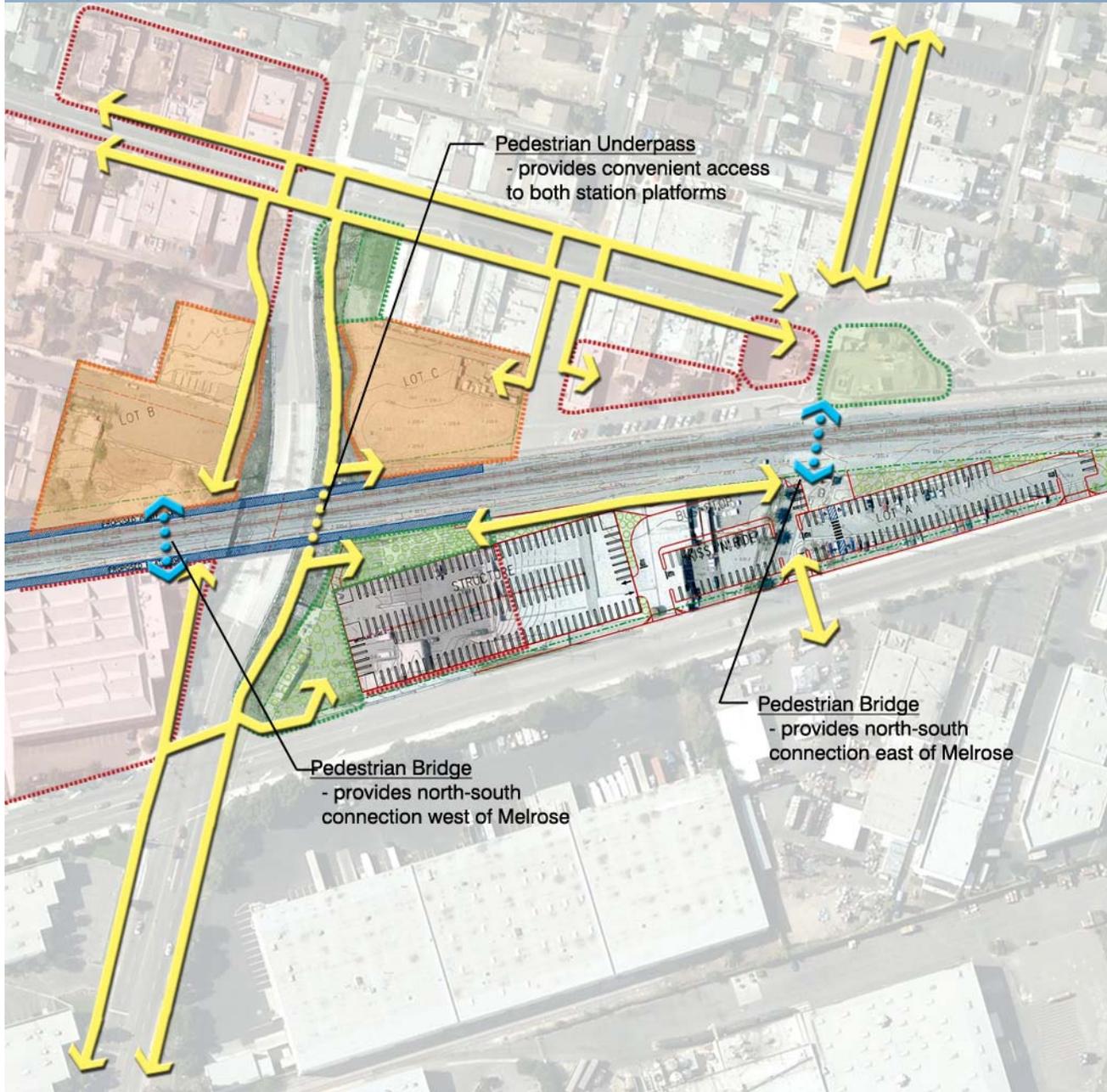
Transit

- Eight OCTA routes are in the vicinity of the Metrolink station area
- Route 53 has been identified as one of the most heavily used routes of the OCTA bus system based on per-mile ridership.





Preliminary Phase Two Metrolink Station Concept



Pedestrian Circulation with Phase Two Metrolink Station

Transit-Supportive Policies

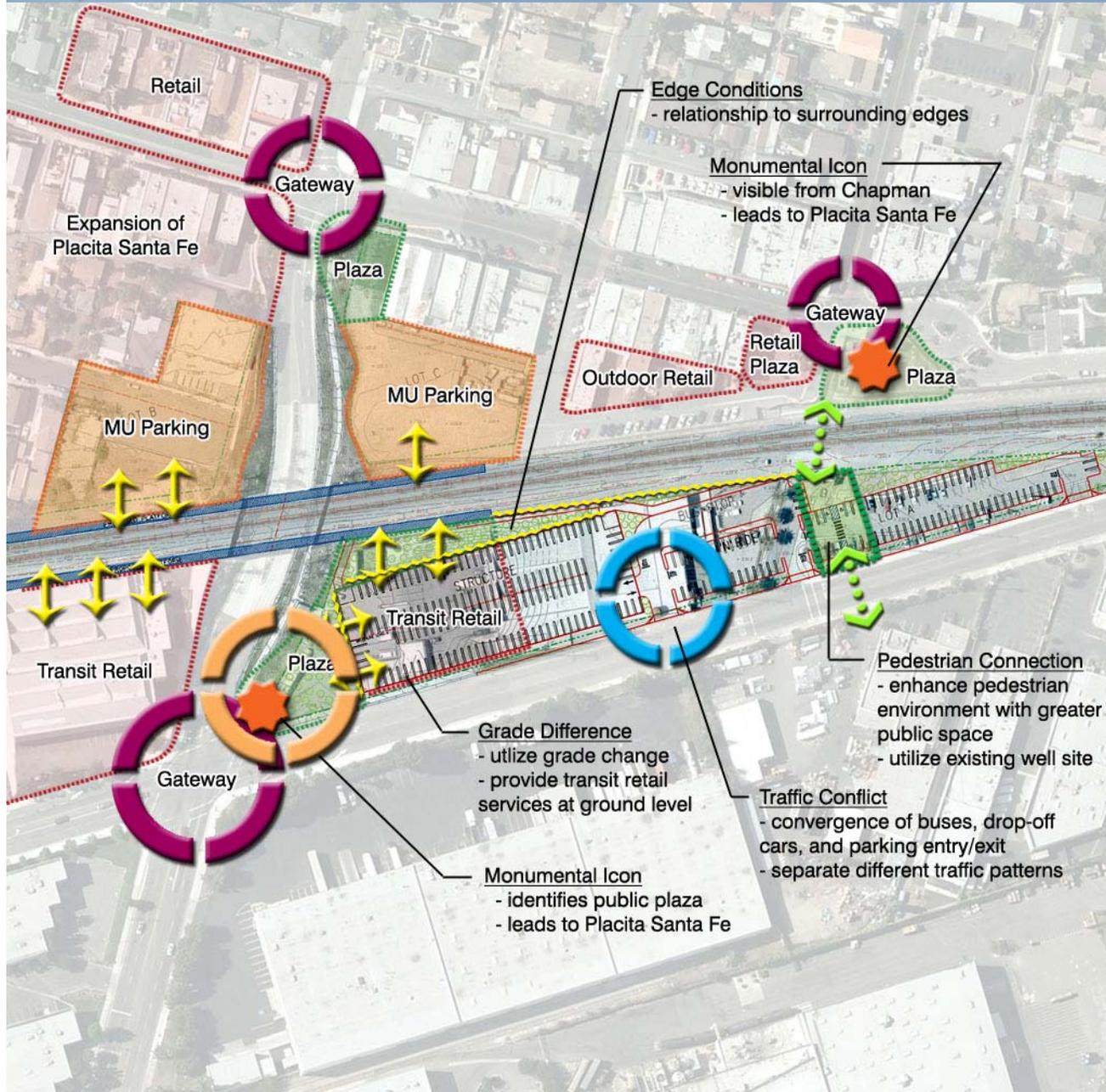
The following matrix provides a checklist of policies that should be addressed in in planning for the Placentia Metrolink station:

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS		
Are goals and policy statements that encourage transit-oriented development incorporated in the city's relevant planning documents covering the transportation center and corridor areas?	Yes	See Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan October 2006. <i>The Specific Plan Adoption will include an accompanying General Plan Amendment to apply Specific Plan designation to the area.</i>
Are incentive mechanisms offered to encourage transit-oriented development?	Yes	See Chapter 3. Strategy to Achieve Revitalization
Are mechanisms such as special districts and overlay districts that might encourage transit-oriented development or redevelopment included in the jurisdiction's land use policies, zoning ordinance, and land use administrative procedures?	Yes	Chapter 3

LAND USE		
Are active pedestrian-generating land uses encouraged to concentrate within walking distance of transit center, and transportation corridors/nodes?		See Chapter 2. Form & Character
Is a mix of land uses, especially residential, commercial, and retail, encouraged within transportation center station area, corridors and nodes and major employment centers?	Yes	
Are large areas of single use zones discouraged?	Yes	See Chapter 4. Allowable Land Uses and Permit Requirements p4.4
Are multiple compatible land uses permitted within buildings?	Yes	
Are convenience retail and service uses encouraged on the lower levels of buildings adjacent or in proximity to employment centers and transportation corridors/nodes?	Yes	

DENSITY and INTENSITY		
Are relatively higher densities/intensities encouraged in targeted infill/refill areas with a gradual decrease in density at greater distances?	Yes	With the exception of the Main Street densities which preserves the city's historic downtown area
Do densities/intensities near targeted employment centers and transportation corridors support mixed use development?	Yes	
SITE PLANNING and DESIGN		
Do regulations require continuous sidewalks that radiate from transit station areas?	Yes	See Chapter 4. The Regulating Plan
Do site design specifications stimulate building clusters near transit facilities?	Yes	
Do site design specifications stimulate a concentration of uses along transit corridors?	Yes	
Are buildings required to locate at or close to the street line, defining and enclosing the primary pedestrian paths?	Yes	
Are larger development or redevelopment projects required to provide multiple access points for pedestrians	Yes	

PARKING		
Are parking requirements reduced, and/or shared parking provided, for targeted mixed use areas?	Yes	See Chapter 2. Parking Plan, P 42
Is structured parking encouraged over surface parking lots in more compact, higher density station areas?	Yes	
Are surface parking lots required to be located to the rear of buildings and separate from main pedestrian oriented streets?	Yes	
Are commercial uses encouraged to provide shuttle service when located beyond walking distance of a high capacity mixed use area?	Yes	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES		
Are key development sites adjacent to targeted mixed use areas designated for transit supportive uses, densities, and designs?	Yes	See Chapter 1. Catalytic Design Actions P9
Are co-development mechanisms in place to facilitate public/private development partnerships where feasible?	Yes	See Chapter 3. Strategy to Achieve Revitalization



Create great public spaces

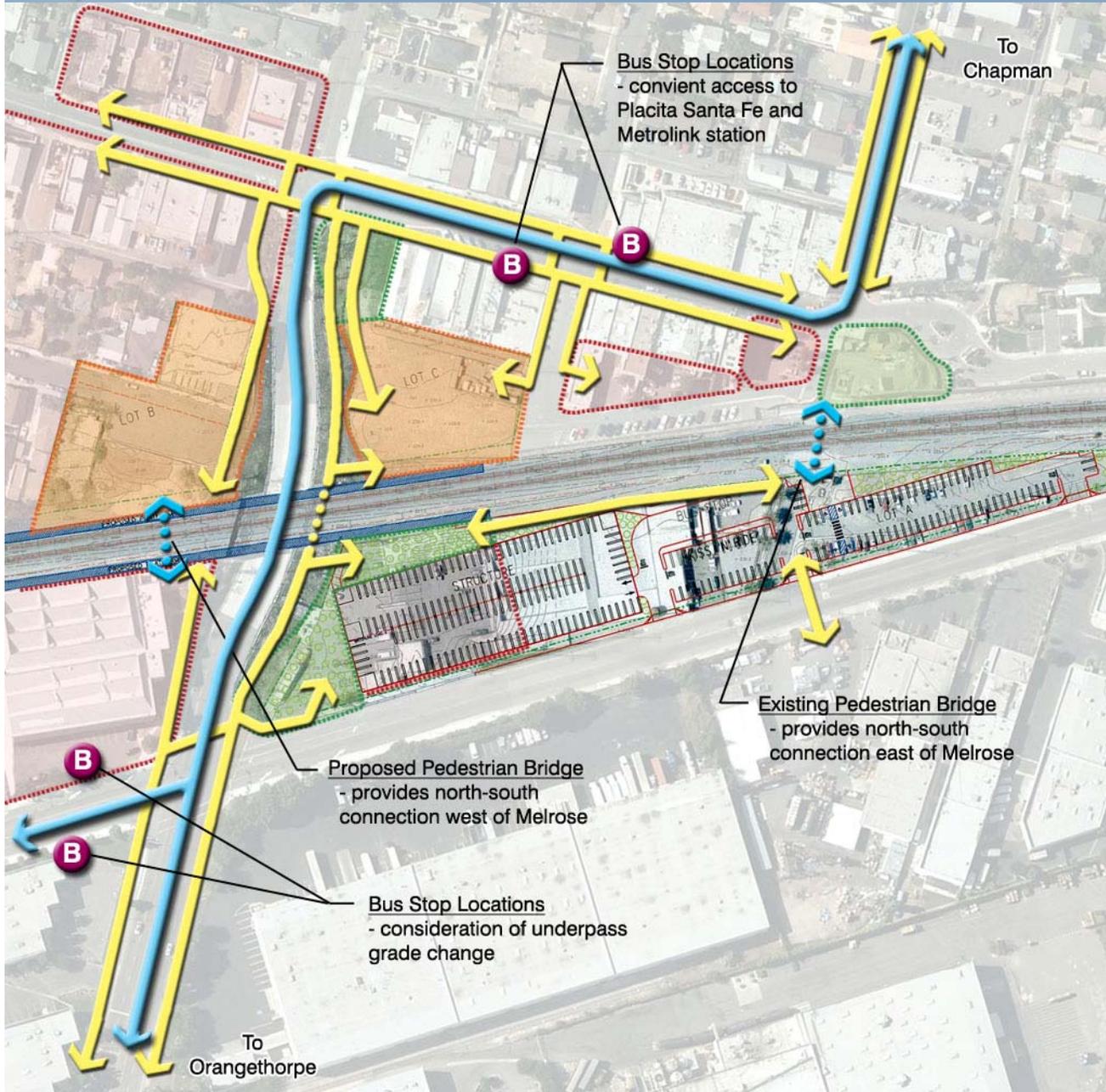
- The design of public spaces and the buildings and parking structures that frame them must be carefully integrated to promote activity

Create an identity for the Metrolink station area

- Create gateways to the transit hub and Placita Santa Fe at the intersections of Melrose Street and Crowther Avenue and Melrose Street and West Santa Fe Avenue

Provide adequate parking for Metrolink and local retail

- Consider joint venturing with private developer to build mixed-use developments with parking for Placita Santa Fe retail on city owned land

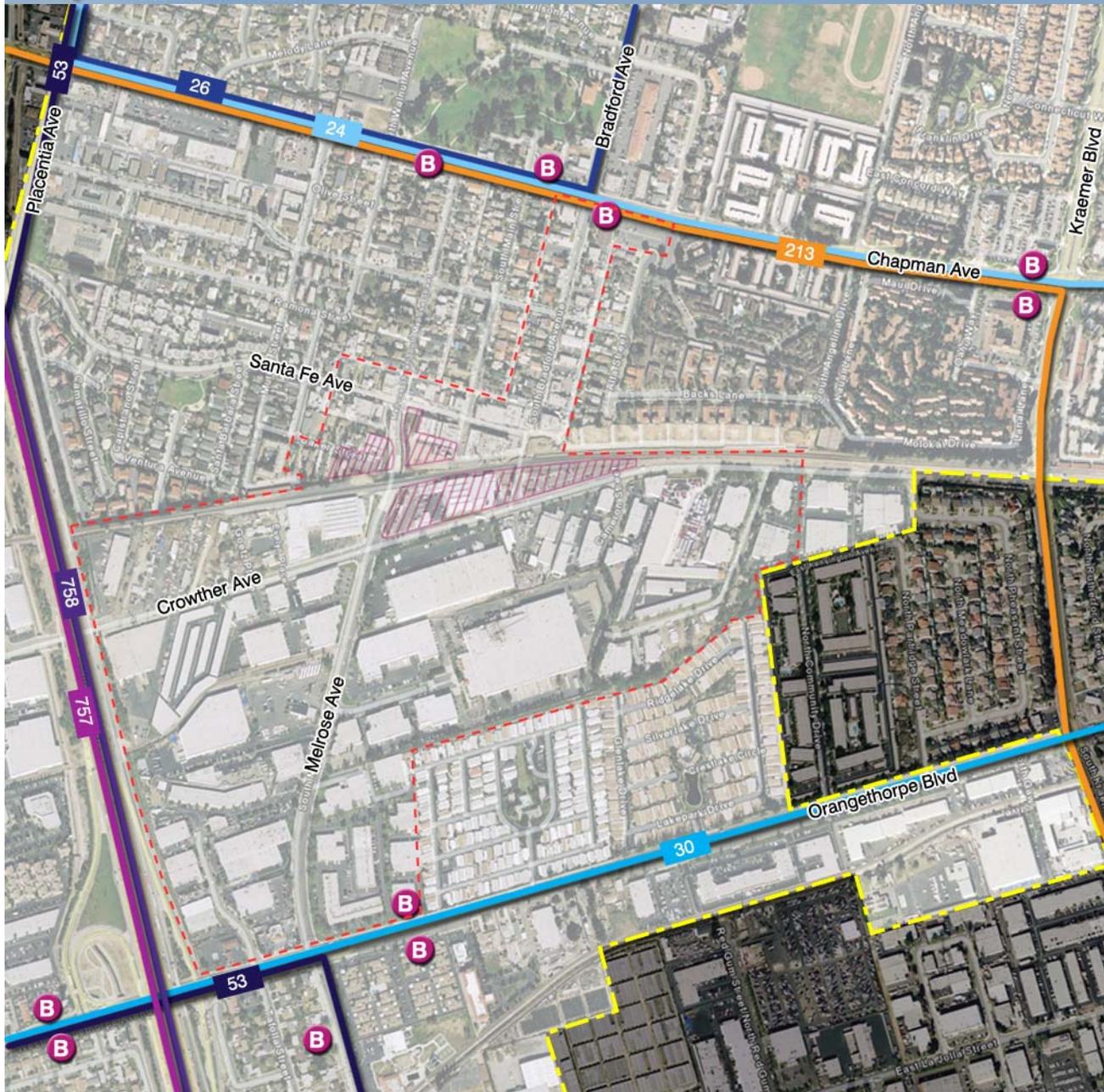


Put the pedestrian first

- Facilitate pedestrian connectivity between the Metrolink station, associated parking lots and structures, and Placita Santa Fe
- Facilitate pedestrian on west side of Melrose Avenue with a pedestrian bridge connected to a parking structure north of the tracks

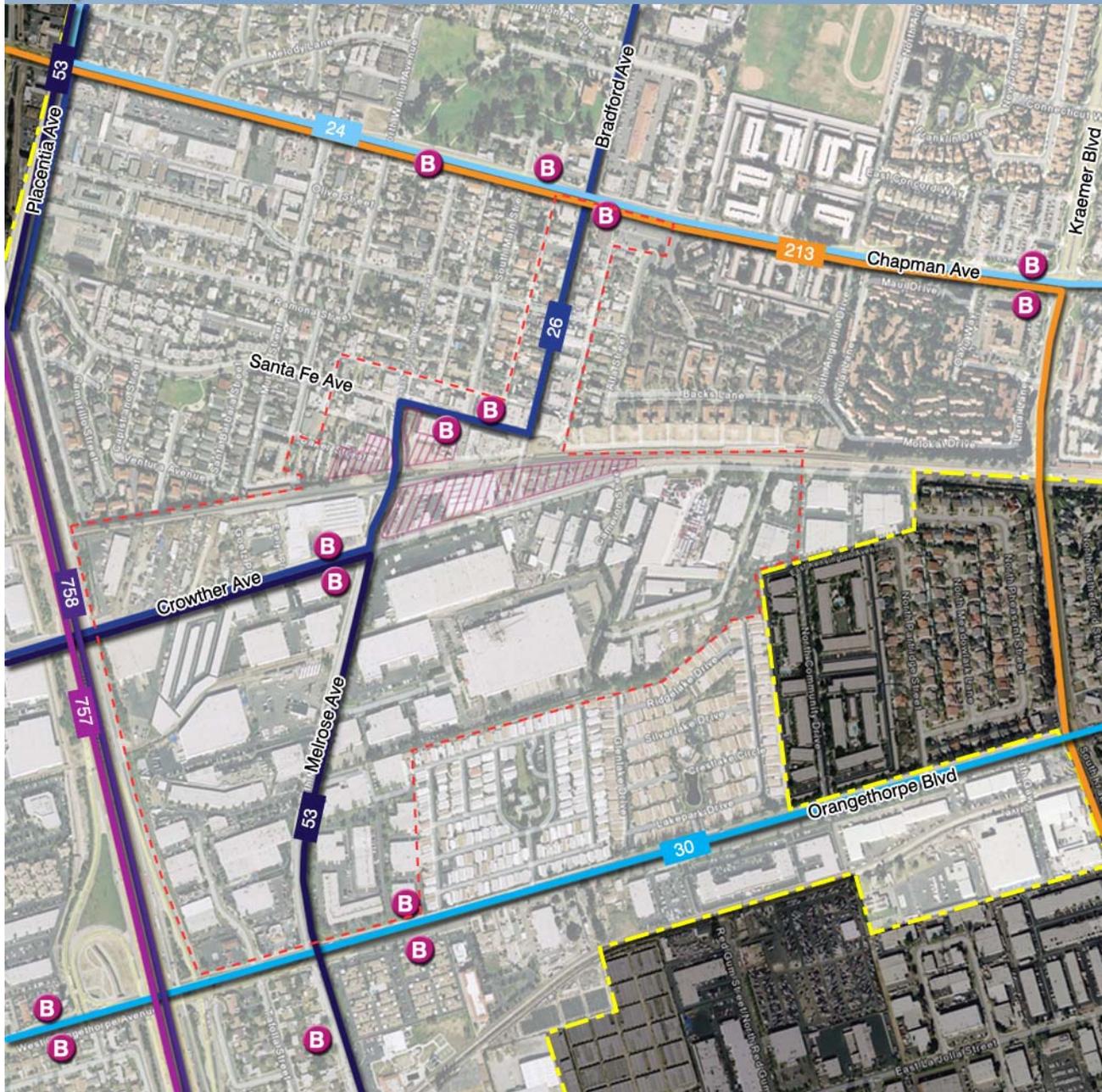
Get people to where they want to go

- Connect Metrolink station to future BRT service, Cal State Fullerton, and other nearby activity areas through new shuttles and bus service



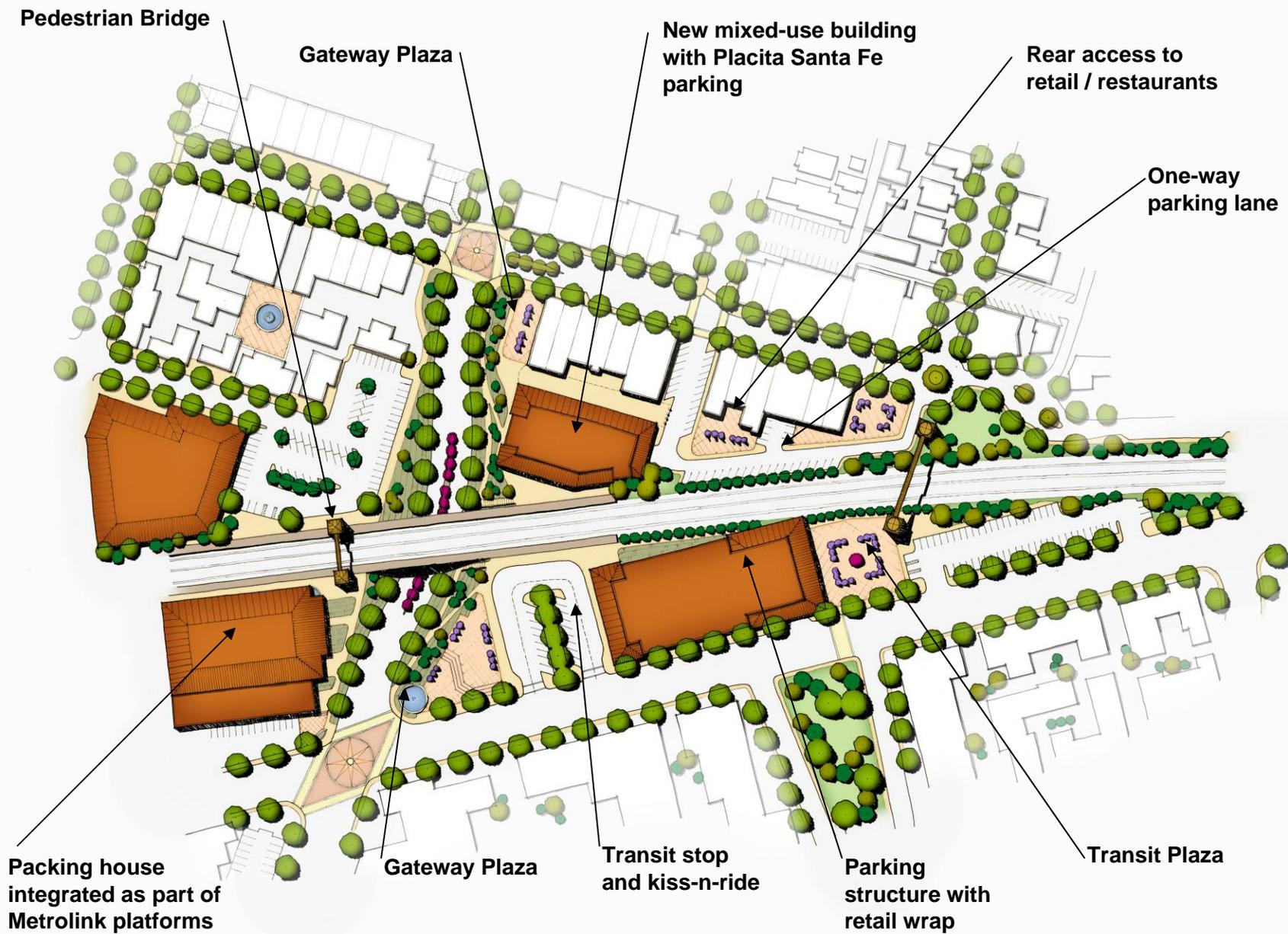
Existing OCTA Bus Routes

- Route 30 begins in Cerritos via Orangethorpe Avenue to Anaheim
- Route 53 runs from Brea to Irvine via Orangethorpe Avenue
- Route 757 is a Pomona to Santa Ana Express bus via Highway 57
- Route 758 is an express route from Chino to the Irvine Spectrum via Highway 57
- Route 213A is an express route from Brea to Irvine via Highway 91



Proposed OCTA Bus Routes

- Reroute 26 line to run along Bradford, Santa Fe Ave., Crowther Ave. and Placentia Ave.
- Reroute 53 line to continue on Melrose Ave., along Crowther Ave. and Placentia Ave.
- Shuttle service to Fullerton Transportation Center and CSUF
- Local shuttle service to surrounding industrial areas (Placentia, Anaheim, and Fullerton)



New mixed-use building with Placita Santa Fe parking

Gateway Plaza

Plaza with retail kiosks

Rear access to retail / restaurants

One-way parking lane

Pedestrian bridge

Packing house integrated as part of Metrolink platforms

Gateway Plaza

Parking structure with retail wrap

Transit stop and kiss-n-ride

Transit Plaza

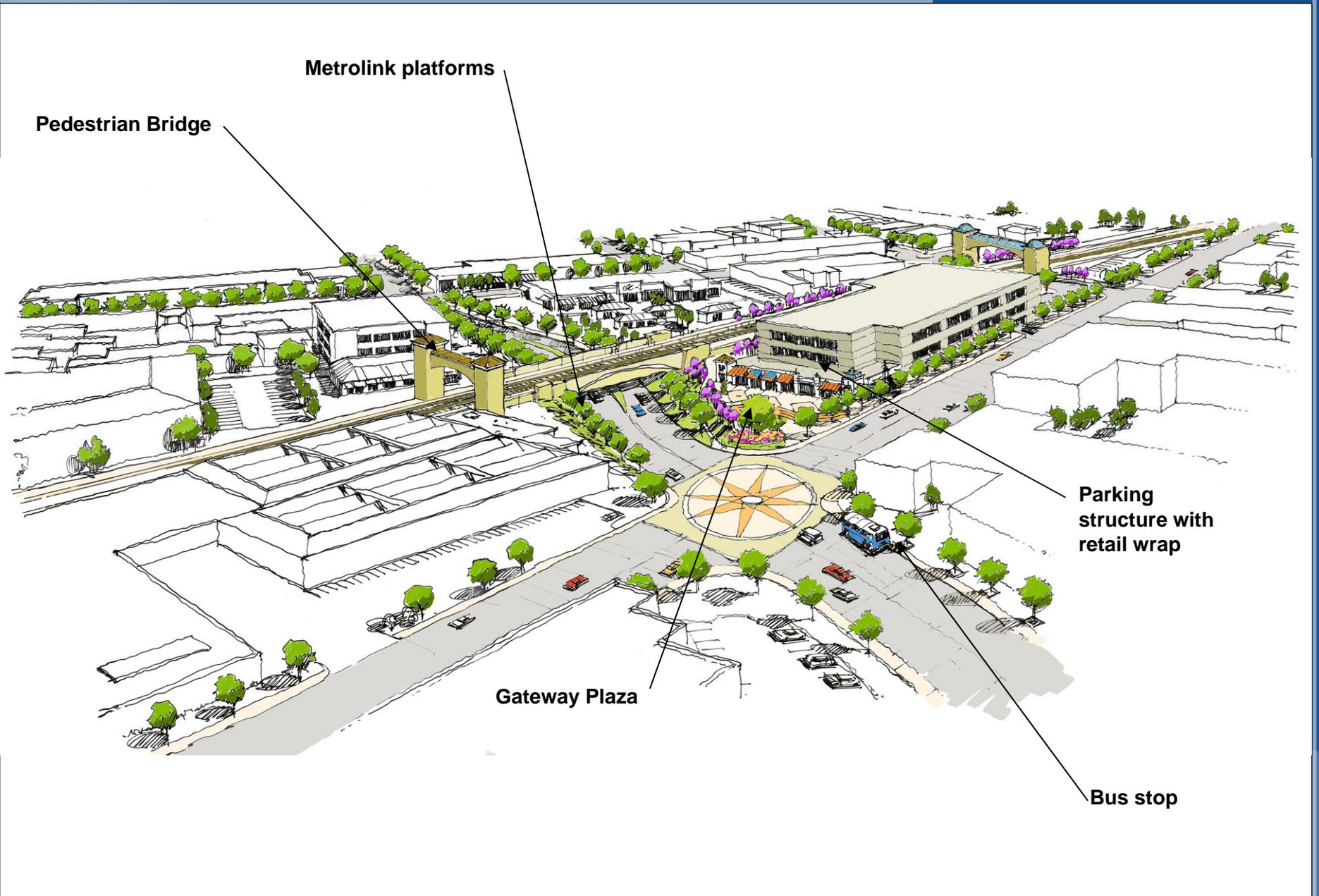




Metrolink Platform and Parking Structure



Metrolink Platform and Historic Packing House



Next Steps

The recommendations presented in this report are not a prescribed plan, but rather are intended to provide the City of Placentia, OCTA, business owners, and residents with ideas and concepts to use in the design of the future Metrolink station. The following next steps have been identified to ensure the Metrolink station addresses the long-range needs for parking, pedestrian circulations, multi-modal transit access, commercial intensification, and public gathering areas in Placita Santa Fe.

- Meet with OCTA to discuss specific needs, shared goals, joint development opportunities, and transit station vision
- Get early input from business owners, residents, and other stakeholders on station concepts
- Review station concepts in relation to the principles and objectives of the Placentia-Westgate Specific Plan
- Speak with developers who have TOD experience and obtain insight into possible barriers to TOD in Placentia

Barriers to Creating a Transit-Oriented Development

Cities that want to create transit-oriented districts around commuter rail and/or bus rapid transit systems must overcome several obstacles in their way. The following list is provided to help cities identify possible barriers to transit-oriented development projects so they can be addressed early in the planning process.

- Higher construction costs associated with multi-story structures
- Costs for site clearance, environmental remediation, and infrastructure upgrading
- Real versus perceived market demand for higher density housing near transit
- Lack of developer interest in creating a TOD project near non fixed-guideway systems (e.g., BRT)
- Lack of developable parcels
- Differing goals among actors and stakeholders
- Conflicting views of the primary role of a transit station - a node in a transportation network versus a place that is a focal point for neighborhood
- Lack of local expertise in planning and implementation
- Lack of collaboration between participating agencies
- Transit agency requirements for parking

Joint Development

Joint development represents active cooperation between the public and private sectors in undertaking real estate ventures which either physically connect to or functionally support a transit facility.

The term 'joint development' is also meant to cover those value capture mechanisms aimed at ensuring that the public shares in the benefit which accrues to the private sector (property owner/developer) because of improved access to a regional transit facility. Joint development at transit stations can include:

- Air-rights development
- Ground-lease arrangements
- Station interface or connection-fee programs
- Other initiatives that promote real-estate development at or near transit stations to the mutual benefit of public and private interests

Focusing growth around transit stations capitalizes on expensive public investments in transit by producing local and regional benefits. Benefit of TOD and joint development may include:

- Increased ridership and the associated revenue gains
- Revitalization of neighborhoods
- Financial gains for joint development opportunities
- Increases in the supply of affordable housing
- Profits to those who own land and businesses near transit stops
- Congestion relief
- Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Joint Development Opportunities in Placentia

The City of Placentia and OCTA have entered into a cooperative agreement for the design and construction of the Metrolink station. The station, excluding a parking structure, is estimated to cost approximately \$19 million and the City will provide the property for the station and associated parking. With the incorporation of the land use and transit recommendations identified in this study, the Metrolink station would be eligible for a joint development improvements under Federal Transportation Administration Joint Development grant guidelines. Station improvements include the following:

- Commercial development;
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to a public transportation facility;
- Construction of the rail station and terminals



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