



My Strategy for Economic Development *Supporting Job Creation and a Thriving Economy In Fresno*

THE CITY OF FRESNO: BECOMING A TOP-TIER CITY IN CALIFORNIA

Within the last two years, Fresno has surpassed Sacramento to become the largest city in the Central Valley and is today the 6th largest in California. We have gotten bigger. Now, it's time for Fresno to get better and to become a top-tier city in California. Fresno, the "city with potential," must become the "city with results."

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY: THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO LOWER CRIME RATES AND REDUCE GANG ACTIVITY

Being a top-tier city in California means having a thriving economy with diverse, good-paying jobs and an abundance of training and educational opportunities. Jobs and education are like dominos: improved education rates lead to lower unemployment and poverty rates. Lower unemployment and poverty rates lead to lower crime rates. *The most effective way to reduce gang activity and lower the City's crime rates and keep them down over the long-run is to improve employment and educational opportunities in Fresno.*

UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS FOR JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I am passionate about growing Fresno's economy. After completing undergraduate and graduate degrees in business at Fresno State and running marketing departments for several local businesses, I left the private sector to pursue my passion: spurring economic expansion and revitalization in Fresno. To do so, I spent the last nine years developing and leading such programs as the Central Valley Business Incubator, Fresno State's Community and Economic Development Office, the Regional Jobs Initiative, and Governor Schwarzenegger's California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. The Governor recognized my expertise in economic development when he appointed me to serve on the California Commission for Economic Development. I am uniquely qualified and experienced to lead the city as Mayor in achieving its economic development goals.

A STRATEGY FOR JOB CREATION AND A THRIVING ECONOMY

I know from first hand experience there are many complicated issues that have to be addressed to improve our local economy. There is no silver bullet. Rather, we've got to make progress on a number of fronts simultaneously if we are to advance our economy. My economic development strategy for Fresno includes the following five priorities.

PRIORITY: GROW FRESNO BUSINESSES

The best way to create jobs in Fresno is to focus on growing the businesses that are already here and to help entrepreneurs start new ones. Attraction of new businesses will follow naturally when we establish an entrepreneurial climate and a reputation for supporting our existing businesses. As Mayor of Fresno, I will:

- **Launch the “Fresno Business Growth Network”** to make it easy for entrepreneurs and business owners to start and expand their businesses. Instead of navigating a labyrinth of non-profits and government offices, one call will connect Fresno businesses to the resource that best meets their needs. I will launch this network within my first 100 days as Mayor.
- **Invest City Economic Development Resources in Entrepreneurship Support and Business Incubators.** We will direct the city's economic development resources toward growing local companies and supporting the needs of new businesses.
- **Remove City Hall Bottlenecks to Business Expansion.** Within my first 100 days as Mayor I will work with large and small businesses to identify bottlenecks and issue an action plan for removing those obstacles. The plan will be implemented in my first year of office.
- **Make Contracting with Small Businesses a Priority.** Within my first 100 days as Mayor I will propose an ordinance for City contracting practices that supports small businesses. To the greatest extent possible, contracts will be released in manageable sizes so that smaller firms will have the opportunity to bid for them.
- **Support the development of the industry “clusters” that offer the highest job generation potential for our community.** In addition to traditional job-generating “clusters”, such as manufacturing, information processing and water technology, there is much promise in non-traditional “clusters”, such as software and clean energy.

PRIORITY: PREPARE AND PRESERVE INDUSTRIAL LAND

We run the risk of losing our most promising businesses to other communities because of the lack of “shovel ready” industrial park space in our community. This is an issue that has evaded us for too long in Fresno. As Mayor of Fresno I will ensure the “heavy lifting” is done to resolve this long-standing roadblock and pave the way for building industrial parks, which not only have space for businesses, but which also include job training facilities for our residents.

PRIORITY: EXPAND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Contrary to popular belief, there are lots of jobs available today in Fresno (about 3,000 according to the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board), but they are going unfilled every day because of the mismatch between the skills required for those jobs and the skills of those who are unemployed. In fact, Fresno’s biggest **economic development** challenge is really **workforce development**. Although the City of Fresno doesn’t have jurisdiction over the education and training providers in our community, there is a lot the City can do to expand vocational training and support workforce development. As Mayor of Fresno, I will:

- **Establish a City-Wide Initiative to Improve Basic Skills and Job Readiness.** There are many organizations that exist to provide basic employment skills for high school students and adults in Fresno, but their efforts are fragmented and under-resourced given the size of Fresno’s workforce

development challenge. As Mayor, I will work with the training and education communities to put a comprehensive system in place to ensure Fresno's workforce is job ready.

- **Improve Public Transportation to Vocational Training Facilities.** A lack of transportation to and from training facilities is a major barrier for improving Fresno's workforce. We will partner with the education and training communities and leverage our public transportation resources to improve access to training facilities.
- **Promote Available Training to Area Businesses and Employees.** Currently, there is no comprehensive directory of vocational training programs in Fresno. If you are an employer looking for sources of talent or if you are an employee looking for training opportunities, you have to search high and low to find out what is offered in Fresno. I will ensure the information is compiled, readily accessible for every audience, and heavily promoted so area businesses and employees can find the training resources they need.

PRIORITY: SPARK DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Fresno's downtown is its calling card. It is impossible to meet our long-term goals in job creation and economic development without a thriving downtown. Fortunately, there has been an increase in downtown investment over the last decade. We must build on those successes to make downtown vibrant for the long term. As Mayor, I will:

- **Develop and promote downtown districts** to create a unified identity, revitalize properties and encourage investment from the private sector. In my first year as Mayor I will make a major push for development of the downtown Cultural Arts District that is in formation.
- **Create signature amenities and attractions** in downtown by working with the private sector.
- **Incentivize infill, increased density and preservation of our historic properties** to give downtown a unique sense of "place."
- **Ensure the infrastructure is in place** to support a vital downtown core.

PRIORITY: SUPPORT THE CULTURAL ARTS AND "CREATIVE COMMUNITY"

The old economic development saying, "The community with the cheapest land and labor wins" is a thing of the past. It has been replaced with the saying, "The community with the smart, creative people wins!" To be competitive in the knowledge-based economy, Fresno must have a thriving cultural arts sector to develop, retain and attract the brightest talent. As Mayor, I will be a champion for Fresno's cultural arts sector. I will:

- **Promote Fresno's cultural arts sector** to audiences within Fresno, as well as those visiting the area.
- **Establish a long-range plan** to expand and strengthen the cultural arts sector.
- **Ensure City departments are working with the cultural arts community** to find ways to bolster their efforts.