



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR  
THE CITY OF FRESNO FULTON MALL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

**Date:** October 15, 2013

**To:** Office of Planning and Research, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies and Other Interested Parties

**From:** Elliott Balch, Downtown Revitalization Manager

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting for the City of Fresno Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project

**Project Title:** City of Fresno Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project

**Project Applicant:** City of Fresno

**Notice of Preparation:** In compliance with Section 15082(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Fresno, as the Lead Agency, has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Fresno Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project, which is generally described below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approvals for the project.

All interested federal, State, and local agencies and the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIR. If you are an agency with jurisdiction by law over natural or other public resources affected by the Project, the City of Fresno needs to know what environmental information germane to your statutory responsibilities should be included in the EIR.

Based on the findings in the Initial Study, the City has determined that a Project EIR in accordance with Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines will be prepared and will focus on the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project. The issues found to result in no impact, less than significant impact, and less than significant after the incorporation of mitigation are considered adequately addressed in the Initial Study. The significant and unavoidable impacts that will be addressed in the Project EIR include historical resources and short-term aesthetics.

This NOP and Initial Study provides information describing the project and the potential environmental effects to enable the Office of Planning and Research and the Responsible and Trustee agencies to make a meaningful response to the City of Fresno regarding the scope and content of the environmental issues that will be evaluated in the Project EIR. The City of Fresno is inviting written comments from the public regarding the scope and content of the environmental issues to be evaluated in the Project EIR.

A complete project description, location, and probable environmental effects are contained in the Initial Study. The Initial Study is available for review at the following website: [www.fresno.gov/fultonmall](http://www.fresno.gov/fultonmall)

Additionally, hardcopies of the Initial Study and NOP are available for public review at the following locations: City of Fresno, **City Clerk's Office**, 2600 Fresno Street, 2nd Floor, Fresno, CA 93721; **Central Library**, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA 93721; and **Downtown Fresno Partnership**, 845 Fulton Mall, Fresno, CA 93721.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, **your response to this NOP must be received by November 15, 2013**. Please send your comments to Elliott Balch, Downtown Revitalization Manager, City of Fresno, City Manager's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Fresno, CA 93721. Telephone: (559) 621-8366; Email: [Elliott.Balch@fresno.gov](mailto:Elliott.Balch@fresno.gov).

**Public Scoping Meeting:** In compliance with Section 15082(c)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Fresno will hold a scoping meeting because the proposed Project requires an amendment to the City's General Plan Circulation Element, and

thus is considered a project of area-wide significance. The purpose of the meeting will be to allow any person or agency that may be concerned with the environmental effects of the Project to express those concerns directly to the City. Information gained at the scoping meeting and from the NOP will be used to identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the forthcoming EIR. **The City of Fresno will host the public scoping meeting on Tuesday, November 5, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.** in the City Hall Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street, 2nd Floor, Fresno California, 93721. The public scoping meeting will provide a brief overview of CEQA and its processes as they pertain to the Project, as well as provide a venue to solicit comments from concerned agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR.

**Project Description:** The City of Fresno (City) is proposing the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project to improve parking and vehicle access to local businesses on Fulton Street in order to maximize sustainable development and economic productivity in conjunction with other downtown redevelopment projects. The proposed project would also be intended to lower crime and improve safety for people walking between parking areas and businesses located on the Fulton Mall and for people who live in, work in, and visit the project area.

The City proposes to reconstruct Fulton Mall as a complete street by reintroducing vehicle traffic lanes to the existing pedestrian mall. The Mall consists of six linear blocks that were open to traffic prior to 1964 but now do not allow public vehicle access. The Mall is bounded by Tuolumne Street to the north and Inyo Street to the south, and includes portions of three cross streets. The total length of the new roadways would be 0.74 mile.

The "Mall" refers specifically to the pedestrian areas between adjoining buildings located on the former City streets of Fulton, Mariposa, Merced, and Kern, which function as an integrated pedestrian mall. Fresno Street and Tulare Street, which do allow vehicle traffic, run through the Mall and divide it into three roughly equal sections. Mall landscaping elements include fountains, planters, benches, sculptures, electrical systems, and irrigation systems. The Project also includes relocation of two tot lots, funded with State and federal grant monies, which are currently located in the Fulton Mall. These tot lots will be relocated near the intersection of Mariposa Street and Congo Alley. The Mall does not include the adjoining buildings or their facades.

The City is proposing two build alternatives for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. These two build alternatives propose to reconstruct the Mall using "complete streets" design concepts. Complete streets are those designed to function as shared public space, or as "living streets" - for pedestrians, cyclists, outdoor businesses, and slow-moving, cautiously driven vehicles. Complete streets may include narrow roadways, corner bulb-outs, winding streets, and other traffic calming measures to lower driving speeds; street trees and other landscape elements; wide pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks; and bicycle accommodations such as dedicated bicycle lanes or wide shoulders. The purpose of incorporating these design concepts into the proposed project is to retain portions of the historic fabric and character of the Mall, maintaining the key elements, feeling and unique experience of a pedestrian mall in downtown Fresno while providing the additional functionality and economic benefits associated with vehicular access to the buildings fronting the mall.

In addition, the project will be used by the City of Fresno as the supporting environmental documentation for the following project approvals (1) General Plan Circulation Element Amendment, (2) Plans and Specifications, (3) Construction Funding, (4) Central Area Community Plan Amendment, (5) Conditional Use Permit, (6) Property Acquisition, and (7) Fresno Municipal Code Amendments.

For a complete description of the proposed project, please review the Notice of Preparation and a copy of the Initial Study at the website or locations referenced above.

Date: October 15, 2013

Signature: 

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