

# Southwest Fresno Specific Plan

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## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

**Date of Meeting:** September 15, 2015

**Location:** Gaston Middle School, Multi-purpose Room

### Meeting Summary:

About 125 people attended this first Community Workshop for the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan at Gaston Middle School. The Southwest Specific Plan will be a two year process to plan for change and improvement in Southwest Fresno. The planning effort is being coordinated by a Steering Committee consisting of local residents, leaders of community groups and property and business owners. Steering Committee members present at this workshop included Ashley Werner; Eric Payne; Debbie Darden; Michaelynn Lewis; Jane Carretero; Tate Hill; Sharon Williams; Leonicio Vasquez Santos; Shaneece Childress; Sylvesta M. Hall; Marta Frausto; Alex Belanger; Jeff Roberts; and Maria Lizaldo.

The City of Fresno is helping develop the Specific Plan, along with a team of consultants. Representatives from the City at the workshop included Sophia Pagoulatos and Talia Kolluri. Consultant team members present included Steve Cancian of Shared Spaces; Bruce Brubaker, Janet Chang, and Kyle Simpson of PlaceWorks; community members Robert Mitchell, Margarita Rocha, and Lucio Avila; and Henry Delcore, Kiel Schmidt, and Marci Lopez of Pop-up Design.

Welcome and Introductions. Project Team member Steve Cancian welcomed workshop attendees and introduced the project team and Steering Committee members. Councilmember Baines gave an introduction and an overview of the project. Councilmember Baines stated that this process will end with a City Council approved Specific Plan as well as an Environmental Impact Report, or EIR, that will create opportunities for both public and private investment in Southwest Fresno.

What Does Southwest Fresno Need? Steve Cancian asked for input from the community on the existing issues and needs of Southwest Fresno. Many members of the community provided comments that touched on a variety of issues, including:

- Local retail of all types
- Street clean-up and beautification, which could include participation from the community
- Accessible employment opportunities and job training, with an emphasis on increasing employment within Southwest Fresno
- Improvement of blighted and/or vacant properties
- Removal of industrial uses, including mitigation of the odor from the Darling Plant
- Entertainment uses
- Increase and preservation of property values
- Increase of parks and open space, especially for children, with adequate amenities

- Support for local police officers
- Hotels
- Signage that reflects and recognizes the community
- Financial institutions such as banks
- Youth centers that promote positive extracurricular activities
- Removal of homelessness off the streets
- Transparency of local government entities
- Development that has completed construction within Southwest Fresno
- Bike lanes
- Street lights
- Respect for the Southwest Fresno community

Introduction to Project. Bruce Brubaker gave a presentation on the overall schedule and steps of the project. Sophia Pagoulatos followed with a presentation on past planning efforts relevant to the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan.

How and Why this Plan Will Avoid the Failures of Past Efforts. Margarita Rocha and Robert Mitchell made a joint presentation on how the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan planning effort will be unlike past planning efforts that did not achieve implementation.

Answering the Key Questions that Will Define the Plan.

Work in Small Groups to Answer Key Questions in Priority Areas. Workshop attendees divided themselves amongst different tables for small group discussions on seven topics: housing, neighborhood serving retail, industrial compatibility, parks and open space, community environmental health, transportation, and jobs and economic development. Members of the Steering Committee facilitated each topic group discussion. Project team members were dispersed among the groups to observe and help with facilitation. For each topic group, participants answered specific key questions related to the topic's issues. At the end of the discussion, topic group members completed a group contact list and decided on a future meeting time to continue their discussion at the Community Office.

Report Back, Compare and Contrast Answers. A representative from each topic group reported back on the group's findings and answers with the larger group of attendees. The seven topic groups all committed to a follow up meeting at the Southwest Specific Plan Field Office, located at the Marcus Center at 858 E California Avenue, Fresno, CA 93706. See the next page for a schedule of follow-up meetings.

Close/Confirming Calendar and Next Steps. The next Community Workshop meeting will be Monday, October 13, 2015 at 6:00pm at Gaston Middle School's Multi-purpose Room. Attendees requested that the workshop's materials and a Steering Committee/project team contact list be provided via email. The meeting's materials can be found online at:  
<http://www.fresno.gov/Government/DepartmentDirectory/DARM/AdvancedPlanning/CurrentPlans.htm> .

<b>Community Office Schedule</b>							
	<b>Tues - 9/22</b>	<b>Tues - 9/29</b>	<b>Weds - 9/30</b>	<b>Thurs 10/1</b>	<b>Sat - 10/3</b>	<b>Tues - 10/6</b>	<b>Thurs - 11/5</b>
<b>Open Hours</b>	3:30-7:30pm	3:30-7:30pm	3:30-7:30pm	3:30-7:30	8:00am-1:00pm	3:30-7:30	4:00-8:00
<b>Topic Group 1</b>	Industrial Compatibility 5-7pm	Parks and Open Space 6-7pm	Community Environmental Health 4-6:30pm	Youth art making workshop	Food Commons produce market	Neighborhood-serving Retail 6-7:30pm	ArtHop
<b>Topic Group 2</b>	Transportation 6-7:30pm	Jobs and Economic Development 6-7:30pm	Housing 5:30-7:30pm				