

City of Fresno
**Notice of Availability of a Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report
for the Proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project
to Solicit Comments on the Environmental Document**

Date: February 7, 2025

To: State Clearinghouse and Interested Public Agencies, Parties, and Organizations

From: Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager, City of Fresno

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse [SCH] No. 2022020486)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Fresno (Lead Agency) has prepared a Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Recirculated Draft PEIR) for the proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project (proposed project), which is now available for public review.

Document Availability

The Recirculated Draft PEIR, including the technical appendices, can be reviewed at the following website: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022020486> and www.fresno.gov/SEDA. A hard copy of the Recirculated Draft PEIR and technical appendices can also be reviewed at these locations during business hours (Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.):

City of Fresno
Planning and Development Department
c/o Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager
2600 Fresno Street
Third Floor, Room 3043
Fresno, California 93721

Fresno County Public Library, Central Branch
2420 Mariposa Street
Fresno, California 93721

Fresno County Public Library, Sunnyside Branch
5566 East Kings Canyon Road
Fresno, California 93727

Reasons for Recirculation

The State CEQA Guidelines indicate that a Lead Agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review before certification. The use of “information” in this guideline can include changes in the project or environmental setting as well as additional data or other information. However, new information is not “significant” unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental impact of the proposed project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect that the project’s proponents have declined to implement. If the revisions to the EIR are limited to a few chapters or portions of the EIR, the Lead Agency need only recirculate the chapters or portions that have been modified (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5).

A Draft PEIR, dated July 14, 2023, (previously circulated Draft PEIR) was prepared for the proposed project, and was circulated for public review between July 14, 2023, and August 28, 2023. During the public review period for the previously circulated Draft PEIR, the City received 38 written comment letters, 60 survey responses, five written comment cards, and 34 verbal comments. Subsequently, a Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR, dated October 3, 2023, which included revisions to the Geology, Soils, and Seismicity and Transportation and Traffic sections of the previously circulated Draft PEIR, was prepared for the proposed project and was circulated for public review between October 3, 2023, and November 17, 2023. During the public review period for the Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR, the City received seven written comment letters. However, a Final PEIR was not finalized or certified for the proposed project.

Prior to the finalization of the previously circulated Draft PEIR and the Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR, the Lead Agency decided to revise the PEIR for the proposed project to remove reliance on the City of Fresno 2021 General Plan PEIR, including both its findings and its mitigation measures that were previously referenced in both documents, as well as the 2021 GHG Reduction Plan. These revisions are considered substantial changes to the environmental setting, and thus constitute “significant new information,” requiring recirculation of the entire Draft PEIR for the proposed project.

This Recirculated Draft PEIR contains a description of the proposed project, a description of the environmental setting, an identification of the proposed project’s direct and indirect impacts on the environment, the Specific Plan objectives and policies that reduce potential impacts, as well as an analysis of project alternatives, identification of significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. Comments received in response to the NOP, previously circulated Draft PEIR, and Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR were considered in preparing the Recirculated Draft PEIR.

45-Day Comment Period on Draft Program EIR

The City of Fresno is soliciting comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, public agencies, organizations, and members of the public regarding the Recirculated Draft PEIR. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the Recirculated Draft PEIR public review period will begin on **February 7, 2025**, and end on **March 24, 2025**. Please provide your written/typed comments (including name, affiliation, telephone number, and contact information) via US mail or email to the address shown below by 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, March 24, 2025**:

City of Fresno
Planning and Development Department
Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager
2600 Fresno Street, Room 3065
Fresno, California 93721
Email: longrangeplanning@fresno.gov

Project Description

The proposed project is a Specific Plan for the Southeast Development Area (SEDA) that would provide for increased density and accelerate housing production throughout the Plan Area. The proposed project would offer flexibility in meeting the evolving needs of households in the region

through a multimodal transportation network and diverse housing types and affordability levels. It has the potential to accommodate approximately 45,000 homes and 37,000 jobs within the nearly 9,000-acre planning area by the year 2050. The proposed project is framed with three interrelated goals: fiscal responsibility, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The proposed project would link a series of complete communities and mixed-use town centers with a multimodal transportation network. Additionally, the proposed project would include diverse residential districts, employment districts, open space, agriculture, and green infrastructure. **Project Location:** the Plan Area is bounded by the Gould Canal on the north, Highland and McCall Avenues on the east, Minnewawa, Temperance, and Locan Avenues on the west, and Jensen and North Avenues on the south.

Mixed-Use Land Uses

The proposed project is based upon a hierarchy of walkable, mixed-use town centers supported by a multimodal transportation network. Town Centers, which would serve as commercial and civic focal points for the Plan Area, are designed to include a mixture of uses with varying intensities. Town Centers are human-scaled and defined by quality design features. They incorporate living and working opportunities with entertainment, cultural activities, and shops serving the daily needs of residents and employees. There are three types of Town Centers, including Regional Town Centers, Community Town Centers, and Neighborhood Town Centers.

Residential Land Uses

The Plan Area includes residential communities that support mixed-use centers and include a variety of housing types and affordability levels. The proposed project would distribute a variety of housing types across the Plan Area to accommodate current and future housing needs. The range of housing types and densities throughout the communities would provide flexibility to meet the evolving needs of households in the region. There are four types of residential land uses, including Mixed Residential, Neighborhood Residential, Rural Residential, and Rural Cluster Residential.

Employment Land Uses

The proposed project would provide opportunities to attract diverse, high-quality employers and job opportunities while meeting the environmental challenges associated with growth in the City and the Central Valley. Many jobs would be located within a short distance to amenities in Regional and Community Town Centers, Office Centers, and in Flexible Research and Development Districts. In these locations, employment opportunities can be closely linked to regional transit service and trail systems. The proposed project would put a significant portion of Plan Area residents within walking distance of major employment areas and high-capacity transit services that link to regional employment centers, including Downtown Fresno. Reducing reliance on automobiles for work trips would significantly reduce GHG emissions, playing a significant role in meeting the proposed project's sustainability goals.

Circulation and Access

The proposed project's multimodal circulation network would include a hierarchy of transportation options, ensuring that residents would have realistic choices for their daily travel needs. The proposed project would be served by high-capacity public transit and safe bicycle and pedestrian

routes. Arterials, collectors, and local streets would provide safe, convenient access for local trips. Non-auto options are integrated throughout the plan, with dedicated bicycle/pedestrian trails and a network of bicycle-priority “Bicycle Boulevards.”

Parks and Open Spaces

The proposed project’s open space system would provide places for active and passive recreation.

Sustainable Infrastructure

Sustainable infrastructure components capture and retain runoff, then treat the runoff by allowing it to move slowly through natural systems, such as constructed wetlands and rock filters. Stormwater management systems help reduce impacts on the environment. Regional infrastructure systems can also be designed as visual and active amenities for residents in the Plan Area.

Community Farming and Agriculture

The proposed project would integrate community-scale farming and agriculture into the urban fabric. Agricultural activities would range from neighborhood gardens to agricultural education and from small farming operations in green belts to those on the Rural Cluster edge.