

SEFCEDA
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January 6, 2026

Fresno City Council
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Honorable Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association (SEFCEDA), I write to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the residents and small businesses of Southeast Fresno and to express our strong support for the City of Fresno's smart growth vision as adopted in the 2014 General Plan.

For fifteen years, SEFCEDA has worked alongside this community to strengthen economic opportunities, support local entrepreneurs, and improve the quality of life for families who have long been underserved. Our work is rooted in the principles of Community Economic Development (CED), a grassroots approach that empowers residents to shape their own economic future by building local assets, supporting small businesses, and ensuring that wealth remains within the community.

The people of Fresno have consistently voiced a clear desire to end suburban sprawl and pursue a more sustainable, equitable, and community-centered growth model. This vision predates the 2014 General Plan and reflects more than three decades of documented concerns about community neglect and the need for urban reinvestment. The 1993 Roosevelt Plan, adopted by the City Council, identified "community neglect" as a driving force behind the challenges faced by Southeast Fresno—yet many of those needs remain unmet today.

It is for these reasons that we are deeply concerned about current efforts to reverse courses by advancing the SEDA Plan, a large-scale suburban development proposal that directly contradicts the intent of the smart growth strategy. Such a shift would undermine years of community advocacy, jeopardize small businesses, and divert already limited public resources away from long-overdue improvements in our urban neighborhoods.

We urge the City Council to remain committed to the 2014 General Plan and to allow the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan—still awaiting adoption—to move forward without interference. Implementing the SEDA Plan before this neighborhood plan is finalized would be premature and harmful to the residents and businesses who have invested their time, energy, and trust in the planning process.

SEFCEDA also supports the recommendations presented by El Concilio de Fresno, which offer important policy mechanisms to ensure that development remains inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the long-term interests of residents. These management policies will help safeguard the community's vision and ensure that economic development benefits the people who live and work here.

We stand ready to work collaboratively with the City Council to implement these policies and to continue building a stronger, more resilient Southeast Fresno. Growth is not something we oppose; rather, we believe growth must be wise, equitable, and embraced by the community. Only then will one mission, one vision and “One Fresno” working together can be fully realized as a true concept.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and for your continued service to our city. SEFCEDA remains committed to preserving and protecting our neighborhoods and to advancing a holistic, community-driven approach to development for years to come.

Respectfully,

Jose Luis Barraza, CEO

Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association (SEFCEDA)

cc Pedro Navarro Cruz, Board Chair of SEFCEDA
 Eddie Vearla, President of El Concilio de Fresno
 Patience Milrod, Attorney, Member of Greenfield Coalition
 Will Oliver, President & CEO, Economic Development Corporation
 Sandra CEO and President, Building Healthy Communities