

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

Concerns Regarding the Repeal of Existing Community Plans

Background

The document outlines significant concerns regarding the proposed repeal of the Roosevelt Community Plan and the Butler/Willow Specific Plan in favor of adopting the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan. Although the Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association (SEFCEDA) has actively supported efforts to revitalize the area, the organization remains apprehensive about the potential elimination of established community plans that were originally developed to address a longstanding history of neglect in the region. SEFCEDA respectfully requests clarification from the City of Fresno regarding whether the new plan may advance without the formal repeal of existing plans, and emphasizes the necessity for well-founded justification and explicit assurances prior to consideration and approval by the Fresno City Council.

The proposed changes entail the repeal of both the Roosevelt Community Plan and the Butler/Willow Specific Plan. These changes aim to facilitate the revitalization of vacant lands and facilities along the Cesar Chavez Corridor, encourage the development of underutilized parking lots near the Maple and Butler Avenue intersection, and promote development of underutilized land near the Cedar and Butler Avenue intersection. Additionally, the Specific Plan would introduce higher intensity mixed-use infill opportunities along priority corridors and at key opportunity sites. Overall, development consistent with the proposed Specific Plan is expected to be less intense than what was previously contemplated by the General Plan.

SEFCEDA's Support and Conditions

SEFCEDA has historically supported the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan since its inception in February 2023, when the document was circulated for community feedback. As the plan now enters its final stages, the recirculation draft study/MND has highlighted several issues that require clarification before SEFCEDA can offer its full support. One major concern is that the recirculation draft study/MND states the city would need to

repeal both the Roosevelt Plan and the Butler/Willow Specific Plan as part of the required discretionary approvals.

Community Roots and Concerns

SEFCEDA's foundation is deeply tied to addressing past community neglect, as identified during its assessment and findings under the Roosevelt Plan. The organization's service boundaries were established using the same boundaries defined in the Roosevelt Plan, with the express purpose of correcting those neglected proposals which never materialized but were greatly needed.

Replacing an existing plan with a new proposal risk would set the community back, potentially leaving residents without tangible results from the new plan. Unless the repeal is clearly justified by a set of laws, SEFCEDA seeks clarification on whether the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan can be adopted without repealing the Roosevelt Plan and Butler/Willow Specific Plan.

Final Concerns

SEFCEDA is concerned that approving the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan, especially in a community that has faced over 60 years of neglect, could mean waiting another 30 years before seeing meaningful results. If these existing plans are repealed, SEFCEDA concludes that further clarification is required before the plan goes before the Fresno City Council for approval. The recirculation draft study/MND indicates these concerning issues must be addressed prior to implementing the proposed project, specifically regarding the necessity to repeal the Roosevelt Plan and Butler/Willow Specific Plan.