



Substantial Amendment 2022-01

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Community Planning and Development Programs
Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)



Planning and Development Department
Housing and Community Development Division
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Public Comments and City Responses

Comments received between November 2, 2022, and the close of the Public Comment period on December 1, 2022 are provided below along with the associated City response. All comments will be incorporated in the final submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All text in *italics* are direct quotes of comments; text in regular font are synopses of comments due to length. Titles are self-reported by each respondent.

Josefa Vega with ACLU Northern California

More amenities and services should be available to the unhoused and others that utilize Fresno's public spaces. 24hour restrooms and showers should be available especially as we battle the climate crisis. Water fill stations that dispense purified water should be available so all that utilize public spaces have access to drinking water. Safe lots and camps should be available to accommodate the unhoused that are in transit and unable to acquire stable shelter or housing. Many public parks throughout the U.S. allow for overnight camping and include showers and restroom access, this is a model a few of our parks can implement. Investment in green spaces that only include native plants as they are best for the environment and equipped to endure dry central valley temperatures, non-native lawns only exacerbate the drought and hoard water without reason. In addition to safe camps and lots the city should provide housing to those experiencing houselessness, our shelter system has proven to be ineffective and so unsafe that many rather stay on the street than be subject to maltreatment in our shelter system. housing can look like renovating and converting old hotels or apartment buildings to provide housing for those struggling on the street. the funding and resources are there. there should be a unit cap on landlords that purchase and hoard aforementioned properties, the city should step in and prevent that from happening. Along with housing available to the unhoused and those with housing that are at risk for eviction, an integral piece in keeping folks off the street by providing basic needs includes rehabilitation and mental health services. There should be an expanded program that targets the unhoused population and provides continued support, our caseworkers are overwhelmed and often have an excess of 50 cases that range when the care should be specialized and tuned to the specific needs of the community. Expanded multiuse parks that feature native trees and landscaping. Fresno has few 3rd places for its residents and it should be addressed as it builds community and ensures our safety through promoting healthy recreation.

[City Response:

- The suggestions provided are worth considering as part of a long-term plan to prevent homelessness in the future. Through the City's conversations with community members and leading organizations, similar sentiments have been expressed. The City is currently evaluating comments for its 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan to derive activity ideas to help meet the goal of providing services and shelter to those experiencing homelessness.
- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Dave Schulze:

If you build in the airspace over the (public) land that Highway 41 through Fresno sits on, there would be no land acquisition costs, and all future rent or lease payments would be made directly into public coffers.

[City Response:

- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Gloria Faye Bans

*PUT A MORATORIUM ON NEW CONSTRUCTION, LAND ACQUISITION AND DEMOLITION!
The weather, water storage rights, level ground etc must be protected and ideal for the agriculture in the Central Valley.*

[City Response:

- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Machael Smith with RH Community Builders

The reprogramming of unspent funds to developing affordable housing is an excellent strategy to further the goals of the Housing Element.

[City Response:

- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Maya Z

I would like Fresno to enact a rent control measure to prevent increases in evictions and homelessness due to unregulated landlords. Also, increasing temp housing for the unhoused, as well as providing water, cooling, and heating stations around town for those suffering in extreme weather outside. I'd also like new parks and community urban gardens for areas that don't have as many parks as north fresno. Urban areas are very population dense, so more parks are needed. Also if the city could fund more job and trade training for people that would ease the rates of increasing unemployment and homelessness. Lastly, mental health needs to be addressed humanely but proactively. Too many refuse treatment when it could help and I would like people to study ways to get non compliant actively mentally ill people to get into treatment while avoiding institutionalization when possible. Mental health employees should have intense and strict oversight in order to combat any abuse and neglect experienced by patients who do enter the system. Those already employed should be re-vetted and observed on a periodic basis to ensure employee ethics. Complaints and summaries of complaints should be investigated by both an oversight commission and fresno law enforcement to prevent abuse from staff and other patients. Thank you!

[City Response:

- The remaining suggestions are reflective of those received during the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan community needs workshops, and the City is exploring their feasibility.
- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Ericka Kruse

water stations, 24hr bathrooms and showers available for the unhoused to use, native green spaces, housing and shelter for the unhoused, safe camps and warming/cooling centers with better advertising and free (bus) transportation to the centers

[City Response:

- The City, through actions taken under Substantial Amendment 2019-06 with ESG-CV funding, is currently working to find a provider of mobile shower and restroom facilities which will provide basic hygiene kits to people experiencing homelessness.
- The remaining suggestions are reflective of those received during the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan community needs workshops, and the City is exploring their feasibility.
- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Ginny Barnes

Protecting and advocating for our unhoused community is a priority for many local organizing groups and should be for the city as well. Supporting them will help everyone in our city. Public spaces such as our parks, sidewalks, bus stops, and libraries can make a strong impact in this work by making small changes. Invest in native plants, desert green spaces, and community gardens. Tree canopies are tremendous for providing shade in extreme heat and are a benefit to our environment and local ecosystems. Extend warming and cooling center hours; make them staffed and accessible for those with mobility issues. Install purified refill water stations ALL throughout the city. Public spaces are some of the few areas where unhoused people can rest without the anxiety of being pushed out. Allow and create space for camping and 24-hour bathroom and shower access. Library branches can be staffed with social services workers to connect and build relationships with houseless populations and be a liaison to rehabilitation and mental health services. Finally, create policies that cap on properties landlords can profit from. Renovated and converted hotels and apartments for use as transitional housing.

[City Response:

- The remaining suggestions are reflective of those received during the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan community needs workshops, and the City is exploring their feasibility.
- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]

Juana

There is a ever growing population of house-less people and there is a large area of abandoned buildings downtown of Fresno. There was supposed to be a big grant given to help rebuild the abandoned area of the black community but instead it was greedily invested into shopping centers. Let's invest in our community and our people to help reduce violence and house less people during this cold winter and permanently.

[City Response:

- The remaining suggestions are reflective of those received during the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan community needs workshops, and the City is exploring their feasibility.
- The public comment has been considered and accepted.]