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Title: HEARING to consider initiation of the Central Southeast Specific Plan (Plan), pertaining to approximately 2,200 acres in the Established Neighborhoods South of Shaw Area of the Fresno General Plan, filed by the City of Fresno Planning and Development Department Director

1. RECOMMEND ADOPTION (to the City Council) of a resolution initiating the Central Southeast Specific Plan Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles and the corresponding amendment of the General Plan, and repeal or amendment of the Specific Plan for the Butler/Willow Area and the Roosevelt Community Plan pertaining to approximately 2,200 acres located in the Established Neighborhoods South of Shaw Area to allow for future adoption of the Central Southeast Specific Plan.

Sponsors: Planning and Development Department

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Exhibit A - Project Location Map, 2. Exhibit B - Steering Committee Roster, 3. Exhibit C - Central Southeast Specific Plan Initiation Report.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/8/2020	1	Planning Commission	approved	Pass

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

January 8, 2020

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SUBJECT

HEARING to consider initiation of the Central Southeast Specific Plan (Plan), pertaining to approximately 2,200 acres in the Established Neighborhoods South of Shaw Area of the Fresno General Plan, filed by the City of Fresno Planning and Development Department Director

1. RECOMMEND ADOPTION (to the City Council) of a resolution initiating the Central Southeast

Specific Plan Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles and the corresponding amendment of the General Plan, and repeal or amendment of the Specific Plan for the Butler/Willow Area and the Roosevelt Community Plan pertaining to approximately 2,200 acres located in the Established Neighborhoods South of Shaw Area to allow for future adoption of the Central Southeast Specific Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the background, process, outreach, and plan concepts related to the Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles of the Central Southeast Specific Plan. The Land Use Map and Guiding Principles recommended by the steering committee are proposed for initiation, which allows for commencement of the Environmental Assessment and full development of the Specific Plan.

BACKGROUND

The need for a Specific Plan for the Central Southeast Area emerged from community members who wanted an actionable plan to address a broad array of neighborhood concerns. The last comprehensive planning effort that had been undertaken in the area prior to the update of the General Plan in 2014 was the Specific Plan for the Butler/Willow Area adopted in 1971, and the Roosevelt Community Plan adopted in 1992. \$550,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding was allocated in 2017 to finance the specific plan and a related environmental assessment. The boundaries of the specific plan area coincide with city limits since CDBG funds must be spent within city limits (see Project Location Map in Exhibit A).

In June of 2017, the City Council approved a contract with Raimi + Associates, Inc. as the primary planning consultant for the project, with subcontractors as described below:

Sargent Town Planning - Urban Design
First Carbon Solutions - Environmental Planning
Stantec - Transportation Analysis
EPS - Economic Analysis

Planning Process Overview

The planning process includes the following steps and was expected to be complete 3 years from the beginning of the process in 2017. The process is now in Step 5. Future opportunities to comment on the Plan will occur in 2020 in Steps 5 - 8 below.

1. Project Kick-off and Existing Conditions Report
2. Initial Community Outreach/ Develop "Big Ideas"
3. Selection of Guiding Principles and Priority Goals and Strategies
4. Recommendation of Proposed Land Use Map
5. Plan Initiation through Planning Commission and City Council
6. Completion of Environmental Assessment and Specific Plan
7. Public Review of Draft Specific Plan and Environmental Assessment
8. Adoption (expected in Spring of 2020)

Outreach

The outreach and participation for the planning process to date has been multifaceted, and extensive. It included numerous stakeholder interviews, three standard community workshops, 20 mobile workshops, three surveys and nine steering committee meetings. All steering committee meetings were noticed according to the Brown Act. Hard copies of key documents were placed in the libraries and community centers in the Plan Area. The various components of the outreach process are described below:

Stakeholder Interviews. The project team held stakeholder interviews on October 10 and 11, 2017 with 16 different groups, which included: resident groups, Fresno Unified School District, Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association, religious leaders, Fresno Pacific University, community benefit organizations, and other representatives of stakeholder groups.

Community Workshops. The initial phase of the planning process included three community workshops, held on June 20, July 17, and October 4, 2018. They were attended by approximately 65, 75 and 20 persons, respectively. The tasks at the first workshop were to identify issues and opportunities in the plan area, as well as community vision and guiding principles; the second workshop invited residents to comment on “Big Ideas” for the Specific Plan, and provide input on the Draft Goals and Strategies of the Plan; and the third workshop invited input on the Draft Goals and Strategies. All of the activities provided guidance to the steering committee on the development of the Guiding Principles and Proposed Land Use Map (See pages 8-10 and page 36 in Exhibit C, Central Southeast Specific Plan Initiation Report).

Mobile Workshops. The project team developed an outreach process designed to overcome common barriers of public participation. Outreach efforts were integrated into established, ongoing community meetings and events. City staff brought mobile workshops to over 20 community group meetings in and near the project area, receiving input from residents.

Surveys. Three surveys have been produced and distributed to residents, business owners, and other interested parties. The first survey was aimed at getting an understanding of the community’s view of the project area as well as identifying key issues and desires of the community; the second survey allowed residents to identify where they would like to see more park space; and the third survey was intended to get an initial ranking of the Plan’s Goals and Strategies. Approximately 255, 175, and 145 individuals responded to the survey respectively. The results of the survey were shared with the community and the steering committee.

Steering Committee Meetings. A 15-member steering committee made up of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other stakeholders was appointed by Councilmember Chavez (see Exhibit B). Represented on the committee are community organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, the Fresno Fair, the Fresno Center, Reading and Beyond, Neighborhood Church, and the Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association. The committee’s task has been to translate community input into the development of the Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles. The steering committee had a series of meetings on several subjects and elements of the Plan, and provided input to the project team. The meetings on Land Use and Goals and Strategies were structured to incorporate community input as decisions were made.

ANALYSIS

Plan Concepts

The overarching goal of the planning process, as articulated by community and steering committee members, is to create a community-based plan that improves the quality of life for all residents (existing and new) and incentivizes new development in Southeast Fresno. The Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles reflect the desires of community members and the committee to create a feasible and implementable plan that improves the quality of life for current and future residents. The three major phases of the planning process are described below:

Phase 1: Issues, Opportunities and Guiding Principles. This initial planning phase included collection of data about existing conditions (Existing Conditions Profile is available on the webpage at www.fresno.gov/centralsoutheastplan) and community input on issues and opportunities. These efforts led to the creation and approval of the Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles provide the foundation for all elements of the Plan.

Phase 2: “Big Ideas”, Goals and Strategies. The project team conducted a four-day charrette that included input from the steering committee and community members. The output was the identification of key opportunity areas and accompanying design concepts that reflect community desires. The areas and concepts, which became the “Big Ideas”, were presented at a steering committee meeting, a community workshop, and several mobile workshops. These in turn became the basis for the Goals and Strategies of the Plan.

Phase 3: Draft Land Use Map. Using the Big Ideas and Goals and Strategies approved by the steering committee as a basis, a land use map was developed. Proposed changes affect less than 10% of the total Plan Area. These changes were considered and voted on by the steering committee at public meetings held on July 30 and August 13, 2019 using a voting rule of a 75% majority. The steering committee’s Proposed Land Use Map is on page 36 of Exhibit C. The most notable land use changes recommended by the steering committee are described below:

Main Street. The committee recognized the need to provide additional housing in a variety of types as well as neighborhood-serving amenities and proposed appropriate land use changes along Orange and Butler Avenues to encourage neighborhood main street development. The two corridors were identified by the community as areas of opportunity due to lack of current amenities. Development concepts were created as part of the “Big Ideas.”

Industrial Land Use. The steering committee discussed the long term goal of establishing a jobs-core in the southern portion of the plan area that would provide a variety of jobs and training opportunities for residents. Many land use options were considered, with the goal that the land uses in southeast Fresno should provide access to quality jobs that are neighborhood-friendly; that is, acceptable as a next-door neighbor. Because Business Park allows some industrial land uses, the committee decided against that option and elected instead to recommend re-designation of all industrially planned land to the lowest intensity employment use: Office. It should be noted that the office land use designation (and corresponding zoning) allows more than simply offices. It allows a full array of public and semi-public land uses such as schools of all types, community and religious assembly, conference facilities, cultural institutions, day care centers, government offices, hospitals and clinics, park and recreational facilities, and social service facilities. It also allows commercial uses such as artist’s studios, automobile related uses, banks and financial institutions, banquet halls, restaurants, markets, hotels and motels, personal services, convenience retail, and general retail. The only industrial uses allowed in the office zone are reverse vending machines and research and

development. Minor utilities are also allowed in the zone. Any existing industrial uses would be grandfathered under the City's legal non-conforming provisions.

Relationship to Other Plans

The Central Southeast Specific Plan relates to other Fresno land use plans as follows:

Specific Plan for the Butler/Willow Area. The Specific Plan for the Butler/Willow (SPBW) Area was adopted June 15, 1971 and was intended primarily to provide a detailed plan for zoning and circulation of the 564 acre area surrounding the Internal Revenue Service Center. This Plan would replace the SPBW, but would carry forward any relevant policies.

Roosevelt Community Plan. The Roosevelt Community Plan (RCP) was adopted on April 7, 1992 and its primary purpose was to address issues and concerns affecting the community as it was experiencing growth. The RCP intended to anticipate the community's needs and to stimulate the development of well-balanced quality neighborhoods. This Plan would repeal the RCP to avoid overlap and confusion with the Central Southeast Specific Plan, but would carry forward any relevant policies.

General Plan. The General Plan, adopted on December 18, 2014, created policies and implementation strategies to achieve a long-term vision which emphasizes infill development, complete neighborhoods, and multi-modal transportation. The Central Southeast Specific Plan utilizes the General Plan as its foundation and will provide a more defined vision for the Central Southeast Area.

Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan. This plan was adopted on October 20, 2016, and abuts the plan area to the northwest, but does not overlap it.

Active Transportation Plan. The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) was adopted on March 2, 2017 and serves as the City's comprehensive guide for active transportation. The ATP envisions a complete, safe, and comfortable network of trails, sidewalks, and bikeways that serve as a means for people to safely get to their destinations while reducing roadway congestion and vehicle miles travelled and improving the air quality. The population of the Central Southeast Specific Plan Area utilizes several modes of transportation and the Plan will look to expand on the ATP's vision of walking and biking in the Central Southeast Area.

Parks Master Plan. The Parks Master Plan (PMP) was adopted on December 14, 2017 and serves as a community-based vision and road map for planning a complete and functional park system. It examined the General Plan's goals for park land and determined the amount of acreage needed for the City's existing and future population. The Plan will build on the PMP by including recommendations on locations for future parks and schools for joint-use agreements.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Initiation of a plan is a request for decision-making bodies to accept the plan for further study and commencement of the environmental review process. If approved by City Council, the Environmental Assessment process will commence and work will continue to complete the Central Southeast Specific Plan based on the Proposed Land Use Map and Guiding Principles. This is not a project for the purposes of CEQA Guidelines 153778.

Council District Project Review Committee

On December 23, 2019, the District 5 Project Review Committee voted to recommend that the City Council initiate the Central Southeast Specific Plan Draft Land Use Map and Guiding Principles as presented.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A: Project Location Map
- Exhibit B: Steering Committee Roster
- Exhibit C: Central Southeast Specific Plan Initiation Report