



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Type:	Action Item	Status:		Agenda Ready	
File created:	7/25/2022	In control:		City Council	
On agenda:	10/13/2022	Final action:			
Title:	<p>Hearing - To consider the adoption of the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2019069117), and related actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. RESOLUTION - Certifying FEIR (SCH No. 2019069117), for the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and related plan amendment, rezones, and text amendment to the Development Code.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. ADOPT Findings of Fact as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091; and,b. ADOPT the Statement of Overriding Considerations as required by Public Resources Code, Section 21081(b) and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093; and c. APPROVE a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15097.2. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01351 which proposes to repeal the West Area Community Plan, pertaining to approximately 12,341 acres located in the Development Area-1 West Development Area, and the portion of the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan that overlaps the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Boundary, approximately 455 acres.3. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01352 which proposes to adopt the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and accompanying Planned Land Use Map.4. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01353 which proposes to update the Planned Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) of the Fresno General Plan to incorporate the land use changes proposed in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan.5. BILL - (For Introduction and Adoption) Approving Rezone Application P22-01353 which proposes to rezone approximately 1,078 acres of property within the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan area to be consistent with the planned land uses proposed in the Plan.6. RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Planning Department Director or her designee to update the text, policies, maps, tables, and figures contained in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan document to reflect the final action taken by City Council, to the extent that such updates are necessary to maintain consistency.7. RESOLUTION - Directing staff to perform needed analysis to initiate a follow-up Plan Amendment to the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan to include staff-recommended land use change requests and an updated dual land use map.				
Sponsors:	Planning and Development Department				
Indexes:					
Code sections:					
Attachments:	<p>1. Exhibit A West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Vicinity Map, 2. Exhibit B Plan Amendment P22-01351 West Area Community Plan Area and Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan Area Maps, 3. Exhibit C Plan Amendment P22-01352 West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Proposed Planned Land Use Map, 4. Exhibit D Plan Amendment P22-01353 Proposed Changes to the General Plan Planned Land Use Map (LU-1), 5. Exhibit E Rezone P22-01353 Proposed Changes to the Zoning Map, 6. Exhibit E.1 Zoning Map Errata to Planning Commission Version, 7. Exhibit F.1 West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Planning Commission Draft (July 2022), 8. Exhibit F.2 West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Revised Public Draft (April 2022), 9. Exhibit F.3 West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Public Draft (April 2021), 10. Exhibit G Appendix C - Comprehensive Redline Summary, 11. Exhibit H Comment Summary Matrix and Comment Letters, 12. Exhibit I EIR - Draft Environmental Impact Report, 13. Exhibit J EIR - Final Environmental Impact Report, 14. Exhibit K EIR - Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, 15. Exhibit L Fresno Municipal</p>				

Code Findings, 16. Exhibit M Housing Element Findings, 17. Exhibit N Land Use Change Requests + Late Requests, 18. Exhibit O Fresno Bee Notice September 30, 2022, 19. Exhibit P Comment Letters Submitted to Planning Commission July 19, 2022, 20. Exhibit Q Planning Commission Resolutions, 21. Exhibit R Resolution Certifying the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan EIR, 22. Exhibit S Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01351 (repeal), 23. Exhibit T Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01352 (adopt), 24. Exhibit U Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01353 (amend), 25. Exhibit V Ordinance Approving Rezone P22-01353, 26. Exhibit W Resolution Authorizing Planning Development Director to Make Updates, 27. Exhibit X Evaluate Land Use Change Requests and the Dual Land Use Designation Map, 28. Exhibit Y Memo - Additional Information Provided Following the September 29, 2022 WANSP Workshop.pdf, 29. Exhibit Z Presentation, 30. MEMO - Additional Information provided following the Sept. 29, 2022 WANSP Workshop 10.7.22, 31. Supplement - 500PM (ID 22-1243) Letter from BIA

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/13/2022	1	City Council	TABLED	

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JENNIFER CLARK, Director
Planning and Development Department

BY: CASEY LAUDERDALE, Planner III
Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT

Hearing - To consider the adoption of the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2019069117), and related actions:

1. RESOLUTION - Certifying FEIR (SCH No. 2019069117), for the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and related plan amendment, rezones, and text amendment to the Development Code.
 - a. ADOPT Findings of Fact as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091; and,
 - b. ADOPT the Statement of Overriding Considerations as required by Public Resources Code, Section 21081(b) and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093; and c. APPROVE a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15097.
2. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01351 which proposes to repeal the West Area Community Plan, pertaining to approximately 12,341 acres located in the Development Area-1 West Development Area, and the portion of the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan that overlaps the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Boundary, approximately 455 acres.
3. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01352 which proposes to adopt the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and accompanying Planned Land Use Map.
4. RESOLUTION - Approving Plan Amendment Application P22-01353 which proposes to update the Planned Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) of the Fresno General Plan to incorporate the land use changes proposed in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan.
5. BILL - (For Introduction and Adoption) Approving Rezone Application P22-01353 which proposes to rezone approximately 1,078 acres of property within the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan area to be consistent with the planned land uses proposed in the

Plan.

6. RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Planning Department Director or her designee to update the text, policies, maps, tables, and figures contained in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan document to reflect the final action taken by City Council, to the extent that such updates are necessary to maintain consistency.
7. RESOLUTION - Directing staff to perform needed analysis to initiate a follow-up Plan Amendment to the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan to include staff-recommended land use change requests and an updated dual land use map.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the findings set forth in the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR SCH No. 2019069117) (see Exhibits I, J, and K).
 - a. RECOMMEND ADOPTION of an appropriate Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15097; and,
 - b. RECOMMEND ADOPTION of findings based upon testimony presented by staff that there are significant, unavoidable, environmental impacts which have not been mitigated to a level below significant. Therefore, the City Council should adopt the findings of fact and consider an appropriate statement of overriding considerations.
2. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Plan Amendment Application P22-01351 which proposes to repeal the West Area Community Plan, pertaining to approximately 12,341 acres located in the Development Area-1 West Development Area, and the portion of the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan that overlaps the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Boundary, approximately 455 acres (see Exhibit S).
3. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Plan Amendment Application P22-01352 which proposes to adopt the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan and accompanying Planned Land Use Map (see Exhibits C and T).
4. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Plan Amendment Application P22-01353 which proposes to update the Planned Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) of the Fresno General Plan to incorporate the land use changes proposed in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan (see Exhibit U).
5. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Rezone Application P22-01353 which proposes to rezone approximately 1,078 acres of property within the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan area to be consistent with the planned land uses proposed in the Plan (see Exhibit V).
6. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of authorizing the Planning Department Director or her designee to update the text, policies, maps, tables, and figures contained in the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan document to reflect the final action taken by City Council, to the extent that such updates are necessary to maintain consistency (See Exhibit W).
7. RECOMMEND APPROVAL of initiating staff-recommended Land Use Change Requests for a follow-up amendment to the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan to include land use change requests and an updated dual land use map (Exhibit X).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed project is the adoption of the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan, which entails the repeal of the West Area Community Plan and the overlapping portion of the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan, amendment of the Fresno General Plan, and the rezoning of approximately 1,078 acres in the Plan Area. This report describes the planning process, key

elements of the Plan, a report on the Planning Commission's action, and responses to questions shared during the September 29, 2022 Council Workshop.

These actions are tied to the May 2019, City Council initiation of the Draft Land Use Map, Guiding Principles, corresponding amendment of the Fresno General Plan, and repeal/amendment of the West Area Community Plan and Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan.

BACKGROUND

Origins: The West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan (the Plan) addresses the anticipation of community-led refinement of the Fresno General Plan with emphasis on implementation and context-driven development. It builds upon key components in the Urban Form Element of the Fresno General Plan: a high-frequency bus route along Shaw Avenue supported by a transit-oriented town center, arrangement of complementing land uses and transportation along major corridors, access to greenspace, and the creation of complete neighborhoods.

Specific Plans: The California Government Code Section 65450 defines Specific Plans and sets out the regulations for their use. Specific Plans systematically implement the Fresno General Plan for all or part of the area under its scope in one of three ways: 1) by acting as statements of planning policy that refine the Fresno General Plan policies applicable to a defined area; 2) by directly regulating land use, or 3) by bringing together detailed policies and regulations into a focused development scheme. The Plan most closely represents 1 and 2, since it includes a new planning policy for the area, and it proposes to regulate land use by amending the planned land use of property in the area and correspondingly rezoning said property for consistency.

Budget: The initial budget for the Plan was \$399,726, which included an environmental impact report and infrastructure financing plan. Two contract amendments were approved during the planning process: the first to pay for additional environmental review for a total of \$29,880, bringing the total contract amount to approximately \$429,606 and the second to extend the contract timeline.

Consultant Team: The consultant for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was De Novo Planning Group (De Novo). De Novo conducted the necessary evaluation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to determine the potential environmental impacts of the Plan. The consultant team is listed on the acknowledgements page in the Plan.

Process: The planning process was kicked off in April 2018 at the first meeting of the Steering Committee and was focused throughout on community input and engagement. This is described in Chapter 2 of the Plan and is summarized below.

Steering Committee. An 11-member steering committee was appointed by Councilmembers representing Districts 1, 2, and 3. The Steering Committee was comprised of stakeholders, residents, and developers in the West Area. The Steering Committee met 17 times during the planning process. All meetings were noticed and open to the public.

Community Involvement. Community input was essential to the development of the Plan. A total of 17 steering committee meetings, 12 community meetings, three surveys, and 13 (other) committee presentations were conducted during the planning process. The purpose of these outreach efforts was to a) inform members of the community about the Plan process and b) inform the Steering Committee and the project team about the ideas and concerns of the

residents and stakeholders. There were two distinct phases of community involvement defined by the release of the Public Review Draft of the Plan.

- Phase 1: Included community involvement that led up to and formed the development of the Public Review Draft. This included workshops and surveys that revealed important information on existing conditions, assets, and needs in the West Area. This input included the community supported vision for future development in the West Area.
 - o 2 Community Conversations
 - o 1 Coffee with the Clergy
 - o 1 Open House
 - o 1 EIR Scoping meeting
 - o 9 Steering Committee meetings
- Phase 2: Included community involvement that followed the release of the Public Review Draft. This included workshops to share key elements of the Plan and to solicit feedback from residents and stakeholders. This input would lead to refinement of the Draft Specific Plan. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic overlapped with this phase, therefore engagement occurred through written communication and online meetings.
 - o 6 topic-based Community Conversations held in partnership with the Central Southeast Area Specific Plan
 - o 10 committee meetings announcing the Public Review Draft to various bodies such as the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Fresno Youth Commission, District Review Committees, etc.
 - o 1 Decoding Density webinar
 - o 3 District Review Committee meetings to receive formal recommendations
 - o 8 Steering Committee meetings

In addition to meetings and workshops, three surveys were conducted over the planning process. The surveys covered existing conditions and vision, goal prioritization, and idea generation for the Catalytic Corridors.

Outreach. Outreach was conducted in multiple ways, including direct mailers, emails, phone calls, radio announcements, and social media posts.

Seven mailers were sent to residents and property owners within the Plan Area between 2018 and 2022, containing information about public workshops and key dates in the planning process:

- 2018
 - o Community Conversations workshops
 - o Release of the draft land use map and guiding principles
- 2021
 - o Topic-based Community Conversations
 - Sent to all Plan Area residents and property owners
 - o Notification of land use changes
 - Sent to residents and property owners whose land use will change under the Plan
- 2022
 - o Announcement of Planning Commission and City Council hearing dates

- Sent to all Plan Area residents and property owners
- Notification of land use changes - reminder
 - Sent to residents and property owners whose land use will change under the Plan
- Land use change requests
 - Sent to residents and property owners whose land use was requested (via the public comment period) to deviate from the Plan

All Steering Committee meetings were noticed in accordance with the Brown Act. Most of the meetings pre-pandemic were held at either Glacier Point Middle School or Central High East Campus for their central locations within the Plan Area, while those held after 2020 were hosted through Zoom, an online meeting platform.

A stakeholder list was created for outreach via phone and email. Workshop attendees, agency partners, and other interested individuals were added to the list and received both emails and phone calls throughout the Plan process.

Social media was used to share updates and announcements throughout the planning process via the City of Fresno Facebook and Twitter accounts. One radio announcement was made on Punjabi Radio USA to share information about the release of the Draft Specific Plan and the topic-based Community Conversations series. Finally, staff provided informational materials at Beautify Fresno and Food Truck events in the West Area.

Plan documents were featured on a special webpage created for the project (www.fresno.gov/westareaplan <<http://www.fresno.gov/westareaplan>>) and hard copies were placed in the Central Branch Fresno Library and the Teague Branch Library in the Plan Area.

A project liaison was dedicated to answer questions about the Plan and communication materials were routinely provided in English, Spanish, Punjabi, and Hmong.

Plan Features:

Plan Area. The geographic area covered by the Plan is approximately 7,077 acres, or roughly 11 square miles, in the West Development Area defined in the Fresno General Plan and is a triangular shape generally bounded by Highway 99 to the east, Garfield Avenue to the west, and Clinton Avenue to the south. It includes both land in the current Fresno City Limits (approximately seven square miles) and the land currently in Fresno County that is considered within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) of the Fresno General Plan (Figure LU-1) (approximately four-square miles).

Relationship to Other Plans.

The Fresno General Plan was adopted on December 18, 2014, and set a forward-looking course for the city focusing on infill development, Complete Neighborhoods, and multimodal transportation to achieve fiscally sustainable and environmentally responsible growth. The Plan builds upon and refines the Fresno General Plan with area-specific goals and policies. It also contains a proposed land use map which contemplates land use changes on approximately 33 percent of the Plan Area. Thus, the adoption of the Plan will require an amendment to the Fresno General Plan Land Use Map to maintain consistency (see Exhibit D).

The Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan, which applies to about five percent of the West Area, was adopted on January 6, 1998, and was prepared to address problems, issues, and

opportunities of the Highway City neighborhood. One of the guiding principles for the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan encouraged development of neighborhoods characterized by a diverse but compatible arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses to be supported by existing single-family residential areas. The Plan will replace the overlapping part of Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan but will carry forward applicable area-specific policies.

The West Area Community Plan was adopted on February 1, 2002, as “Appendix W” of the 2025 Fresno General Plan and covers a larger area than this Specific Plan, encompassing its boundaries plus the area generally between Grantland Avenue, Clinton Avenue, and Belmont Avenue. The core goals of the Community Plan were to develop the West Area as a planned community with a complete range of services, facilities, and public infrastructure development, and to minimize land use conflicts between agriculture and urban uses. Although the Plan will repeal the Community Plan, it updates and incorporates still-relevant policies.

Guiding Principles. The 20 Guiding Principles of the Plan were created by the Steering Committee (see page 42 of the Plan) and are summarized below. These principles reflect the key needs that were identified through community input: improved transportation access across Highway 99; safe and complete multimodal infrastructure; development of local amenities to meet daily needs; more housing variety; additional parks and trails; post-secondary educational opportunities; and development in harmony with agricultural uses.

Land Use Concept. After exploring various land use concepts as well as potential intensity of change, a transect concept that supported moderate change, including lower density in the Plan Area, particularly near the Sphere of Influence, with focused density and commercial along key corridors, was selected to establish the urban form in the Plan Area. The key corridors were identified as Catalytic Corridors and include portions of: Shaw Avenue, Ashlan Avenue, Veterans Boulevard, Shields Avenue, Clinton Avenue, and Brawley Avenue (see Map 3-1 in the Plan).

Land Use. The proposed land use map is a result of combining public input from community meetings and surveys and the selected land use concept described above. Land use changes are proposed on approximately 2,330 acres of land in the 7,077-acre Plan Area. In general, areas near the outer edge of the Plan Area were designated with lower density residential to facilitate the transition from urban to agricultural uses. This coincided with an overall lowering of residential density throughout the Plan Area, however more intense land uses, such as commercial, mixed-use, and higher density residential, were retained or re-located along the Catalytic Corridors.

Regional Park. Through the land use concept selection process, Steering Committee members requested that a regional park be planned for the Plan Area. The Steering Committee voted for three potential locations for a flagship regional park to be studied in the EIR (shown on Map 4-2 in the Plan).

- Option A: on undeveloped land in the northernmost portion of the Plan Area at the southeast corner of Herndon and Garfield Avenues.
- Option B: on farmland in the southerly portion of the Plan Area at the southwest corner of Shields and Bryan Avenues.
- Option C: on undeveloped land that incorporates the northwest corner of Shaw Avenue and Veterans Boulevard to the Bryan Avenue alignment, incorporating the future Class 1 trail along the south side of the Herndon Canal and continuing on the north side of the canal to the undeveloped land south of the Island Waterpark (resulting in a “barbell”

shape).

From a list of 13 criteria (provided below), Option C scored the highest. This site is approximately 74 acres in size, and a portion is already planned for a Community Park. This site would be connected to the extended FAX 15 transit service along Shaw Avenue and would support the planned Class 1 trail along the Herndon Canal. It is also located in an area that is currently lacking park space and would be a supportive amenity to the Mixed-Use land use designations planned along Shaw Avenue.

Because this is proposed to be a Regional Park, rather than designating the Park through the WANSP, the Plan puts forward the highest scoring option, Option C, as a preferred location, but commits to holding citywide community input regarding its ultimate location and what desired features and amenities will be provided within the park.

Regional Park Options Criteria Scoring

Principle/Criteria	Option A	Option B	Option C
Create parks that are within existing and planned neighborhoods that are easily accessed by community members using pedestrian and bicycle pathways, transit services, or motor vehicles, consistent with the City of Fresno's Parks Master Plan.	1	2	2
Provide for the location of a flagship Regional Park in the Plan Area that has components of the Plan Area's agricultural history through the planting of drought-resistant vegetation or trees, and the creation of public art that exhibits the Plan Area's contribution to the agricultural industry.	2	2	2
Park Size Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park that is 40 acres minimum.	1	1	2
Available Land Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park in an area that is currently available for development.	2	2	1
Population Center Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park in a location that would be within ½-mile of the highest number of residents within the Plan Area.	1	1	2
Recreational Amenities Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park that can accommodate the majority of the following recreation activities: baseball, basketball, fishing (fresh water), softball, swimming, volleyball, and walking for exercise.	2	2	2
Community Feedback Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park in a location that is not within a ¼-mile of an existing or future park.	2	2	1
Community Feedback Criteria 2: Provide a Regional Park in a location that is within a ½-mile of any of the desired park locations established during the Stakeholder Workshop or Council District Community Workshops.	0	1	0

Park Accessibility Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park in a location that is within ½-mile of an existing Fresno Area Express bus stop.	0	0	2
Park Accessibility Criteria 2: Provide a Regional Park in a location that currently has adequate bicycle, pedestrian, and roadway facilities in the immediate area.	1	1	2
Environmental Justice Criteria 1: Provide a Regional Park in a Census Tract that has a CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Percentile at or above 90%.	0	0	0
Environmental Justice Criteria 2: Provide a Regional Park in a Census Tract that has a CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Pollution Burden Percentile at or above 70%.	2	0	2
Environmental Justice Criteria 3: Provide a Regional Park in a Census Tract that has a CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Population Characteristics Percentile at or above 70%.	0	0	0
Total	14	14	18

Implementation. Chapter 6 of the Plan includes tools for implementation. There is one Goal for this Chapter: “Pursue measures that implement the Goals of the Specific Plan.” It is accompanied by three implementing policies. Also included in Chapter 6 are Summary Tables that list every Goal and Policy in the Plan with suggested measurement criteria to help community members, planners, and decision makers measure progress over time. It is anticipated that full implementation of the Plan will occur over many years, but that progress will be measured annually.

Public Comment on the Plan

April 2021 Public Draft. The first public draft of the Plan was released on April 30, 2021, for a 90-day public comment period that was extended to 125 days, closing on September 1, 2021. During this time there were two Steering Committee meetings, seven community workshops, and three committee presentations. Shortly preceding the release of the Plan there was also one Steering Committee meeting and four committee presentations that shared an overview of the Plan.

In addition to comments provided during the above-mentioned meetings, staff also received formal comment submissions, primarily through email or letter. Thirty-one comment submissions were received, some technically being submitted prior to and after the public comment period, but each considered as submitted during the comment period. Additionally, one comment letter was received after the Committee was able to provide formal review and was therefore not brought before the Committee.

Staff reviewed each submission, summarized the discrete comments, and provided responses to each comment. These comments and responses are recorded in the Comment Summary Matrix (see Exhibit H). The comments were categorized as follows:

- Category 1: Comments pertaining to the narrative, maps, and/or aesthetics of the Plan
- Category 2: Comments pertaining to the Goals & Policies of the Plan
- Category 3: Comments pertaining to the Land Use Map

- Category 4: All other comments

Sixty-nine of the 76 comments from Categories 1 and 2 led to changes to the Plan (with input from the Steering Committee), while comments in Category 3 (“Land Use Change Requests”) were considered individually by the Steering Committee for consideration to be added to a Plan Amendment that would be initiated following the adoption of the Plan.

April 2022 Revised Public Draft. The Steering Committee considered all plan comments for Categories 1 and 2 at its February 3, 2022 and March 7, 2022 meetings and voted on revisions to the Public Draft. The approved revisions were incorporated into the Revised Public Draft, which was released on April 25, 2022. There was also a minor modification made in response to comments received on the Draft EIR by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, which resulted in replacing the phrase “flood-control/drainage facilities” with “rain garden” in Policy LUH 5.1.

July 2022 Planning Commission Draft. The Revised Public Draft was released on April 25, 2022 and was presented to the Project Review Committees for Districts 1, 2, and 3. The District 3 Project Review Committee suggested to modify Policy LUH 1.4 (related to a future Shaw Avenue Small Area Plan) to incorporate the remainder of the Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan to ensure the area is planned for in a holistic manner. The District 3 Project Review Committee deferred the making of a recommendation to District 1, which met at a later date and concurred with the suggestion, voting to revise the Policy. This revision was incorporated in the Planning Commission Draft.

The Planning Commission Draft also contains two updates made by staff. One pertains to the Herndon Canal Class 1 trail to designate which sides of the canal the trail is to be built on, as it is not currently designated in any known planning documents. The second change was to require a baseline of community engagement whenever Plan policies are proposed to be substantially modified, which would ensure an opportunity for community members to provide input.

The Planning Commission Draft was released on July 7, 2022. There are no changes proposed to the Planning Commission Draft.

Comprehensive Redline Summary. All changes made to the Public Draft, the Revised Public Draft, and the Planning Commission Draft are recorded in the Comprehensive Redline Summary document, which is shared as Appendix C to the Plan (see Exhibit G).

Fresno General Plan Consistency: The Government Code requires consistency between a Fresno General Plan and a Specific Plan. Since the Plan contains proposed land uses that are different than those on the Fresno General Plan Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) for approximately 33 percent of the Plan Area, a Fresno General Plan Amendment is proposed to ensure land use consistency between both plans. In terms of policy, the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan is a refinement of the Fresno General Plan that includes goals and policies that reflect the needs and desires of West Area residents and stakeholders. These goals and policies are found to be consistent with those of the Fresno General Plan. Consistency with key Elements is discussed below.

Economic Development. This Element focuses on a balanced economic strategy for the city. The Plan can be found to be consistent with, and help implement, the following Objectives:

- *Objective ED-1:* Support economic development by maintaining a strong working relationship with the business community and improving the business climate for current and future businesses.
- *Objective ED-2:* Support local business start-ups and encourage innovation by improving access to resources and capital and help overcome obstacles hampering economic development.
- *Objective ED-3:* Attract and recruit businesses and offer incentives for economic development.
- *Objective ED-4:* Cultivate a skilled, educated, and well-trained workforce by increasing educational attainment and the relevant job skill levels in order to appeal to local and non-local businesses.

The Plan seeks to increase the development of local uses that will help residents meet their daily needs. This includes local-serving retail and healthcare options (see LUH Goal 3 and related Policies). The Plan also features land uses where higher education facilities can be located.

Urban Form, Land Use, and Design.

This Element envisions the West Development Area to develop with Complete Neighborhoods that are integrated with the urbanized area to the east via multimodal infrastructure and transit. Complete Neighborhoods are a core value and goal of the Fresno General Plan, and this is carried into the Specific Plan as well.

- *Objective UF-1:* Emphasize the opportunity for a diversity of districts, neighborhoods, and housing types.
- *Objective UF-14:* Create an urban form that facilitates multi-modal connectivity.

Through its land use arrangements and supportive policies, the Plan seeks to provide for a diversity of housing types, locating transit-supportive housing along transit routes, and is paired with infrastructure policies that facilitate enhanced multimodal connectivity (see LUH Goal 6 and Policy LUH 6.1; LUH Goal 4 and associated Policies; Policy LUH 1.4; Policy PF 1.4; and IPR Goal 1 and related Policies).

- *Objective LU-1:* Establish a comprehensive citywide land use planning strategy to meet economic development objectives, achieve efficient and equitable use of resources and infrastructure, and create an attractive living environment.
- *Objective LU-2:* Plan for infill development that includes a range of housing types, building forms, and land uses to meet the needs of both current and future residents.
- *Objective LU-5:* Plan for a diverse housing stock that will support balanced urban growth and make efficient use of resources and public facilities.
- *Objective LU-6:* Retain and enhance existing commercial areas to strengthen Fresno's economic base and site new office, retail, and lodging use districts to serve neighborhoods and regional visitors.
- *Objective LU-8:* Provide for the development of civic and institutional land uses to meet the educational, medical, social, economic, cultural, and religious needs of the community.
- *Objective LU-9:* Plan land uses, design, and development intensities to supplement and support, and not compete with, the Downtown.

The Plan process was intended to be a refinement of Fresno General Plan goals to the specific needs of the West Area, and still serves as part of the comprehensive land use planning strategy

for the city to meet its many goals. This includes planning for a range of housing types and building forms (see LUH Goal 6 and Land Use Map) that would develop over time in an orderly fashion (see LUH Goal 1 and related Policies). It also places emphasis on the creation of new and much-needed neighborhood-serving uses, such as retail and medical facilities (see Land Use Map and LUH Goal 3 and its related Policies). With a focus on neighborhood-serving amenities, the Plan does not compete with the primacy of Downtown.

- *Objective D-1:* Provide and maintain an urban image that creates a “sense of place” throughout Fresno.
- *Objective D-2:* Enhance the visual image of all "gateway" routes entering the Fresno Planning Area.
- *Objective D-5:* Maintain and improve community appearance through programs that prevent and abate blighting influences.
- *Objective D-6:* Encourage design that celebrates and supports the cultural and ethnic diversity of Fresno.

The Plan includes policies to create a desirable urban image that reflects the unique history and traits of the West Area, including through the promotion of scenic gateways to Fresno and proposal to develop landscape and art strategies for neighborhoods within the Plan Area (see IPR Goal 2 and associated policies and discussion on Catalytic Corridors on page 44 of the Plan). The Plan is also supportive of continuing programs that help homeowners with upkeep of their residences (see Policy LUH 6.4).

Mobility and Transportation. This Element envisions a multi-modal transportation system and complete streets that serve all city residents. The Plan maintains this vision for the West Area, where a top priority is roadway improvement (including sidewalk, curb, gutter, and bike lanes).

- *Objective MT-1:* Create and maintain a transportation system that is safe, efficient, provides access in an equitable manner, and optimizes travel by all modes.
- *Objective MT-6:* Establish a network of multi-purpose pedestrian and bicycle paths, as well as limited access trails, to link residential areas to local and regional open spaces and recreation areas and urban Activity Centers in order to enhance Fresno's recreational amenities and alternative transportation options.
- *Objective MT-8:* Provide public transit options that serve existing and future concentrations of residences, employment, recreation, and civic uses and are feasible, efficient, safe, and minimize environmental impacts.

As a primary concern for West Area residents, the Plan contains many policies to support the development of safe, reliable, multimodal, and well-connected transportation infrastructure. This includes supporting the development of priority areas to reduce infrastructure gaps, increasing connectivity to schools, and placing a higher emphasis on the pedestrian experience in a place where many sidewalks are missing (see Goals IPR 1 and IPR 2 and related Policies). The Plan also calls for more support to develop planned trails (see Policies PF 1.7, PF 1.10, and PF 1.13). Finally, the Plan encourages the use of public transit by arranging land uses to support transit ridership (see Land Use Map) and through focused policies to enhance transit stops and working with schools and large employers to provide transit passes to students or employees (see Policies IPR 1.8, IPR 1.10, and IPR 1.11).

Parks, Open Space and Schools. This Element contains standards for acres of parkland per

population and contains policies that support urban greening and walkable access to parks.

- *Objective POSS-1:* Provide an expanded, high quality and diversified park system, allowing for varied recreational opportunities for the entire Fresno community.
- *Objective POSS-2:* Ensure that adequate land, in appropriate locations, is designated and acquired for park and recreation uses in infill and growth areas.
- *Objective POSS-3:* Ensure that park and recreational facilities make the most efficient use of land; that they are designed and managed to provide for the entire Fresno community; and that they represent positive examples of design and energy conservation.
- *Objective POSS-7:* Support the San Joaquin River Conservancy in its collaborative, multiagency efforts to develop the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- *Objective POSS-8:* Work cooperatively with school districts to find appropriate locations for schools to meet the needs of students and neighborhoods.

The Plan analyzes parks in the Plan Area with the same standards as the Fresno General Plan and includes policies upholding Development Code standards for the creation of greenspace in new developments and co-locating in an efficient manner with school sites (see PF Goal 1 and PF Goal 2 and related Policies). The Plan also supports improved access to the San Joaquin River (see Policies PF 1.7, PF 1.12, and PF 1.13).

Public Utilities and Services. This Element provides a policy framework for the City to manage infrastructure and services, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that public utilities and services meet the needs of the community as the city grows.

- *Objective PU-1:* Provide the level of law enforcement and crime prevention services necessary to maintain a safe, secure, and stable urban living environment through a Police Department that is dedicated to providing professional, ethical, efficient, and innovative service with integrity, consistency, and pride.
- *Objective PU-2:* Ensure that the Fire Department's staffing and equipment resources are sufficient to meet all fire and emergency service level objectives and are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- *Objective PU-8:* Manage and develop the City's water facilities on a strategic timeline basis that recognizes the long-life cycle of the assets and the duration of the resources, to ensure a safe, economical, and reliable water supply for existing customers and planned urban development and economic diversification.

The Plan encourages the location of first responder facilities to meet efficiency and community safety goals and discourages new development outside of available service coverage areas (see PF Goal 4 and related Policies). The Plan continues to uphold the need for proper management and preservation of water resources (see IPR Goal 3 and related policies).

Resource Conservation and Resilience. This Element establishes objectives and policies for the conservation of natural resources in Fresno and to develop resiliency to disruption in resources that may impact everyday life.

- *Objective RC-1:* Make efficient use of existing and future public infrastructure.
- *Objective RC-2:* Promote land uses that conserve resources.

The Plan promotes efficient infrastructure by encouraging multimodal uses and co-location of

community-serving uses (see Goals IPR 1, PF 2, PF 3, and PF 4 and related Policies). The Plan also promotes conservation of natural resources such as the San Joaquin River and agricultural resources (see page 84 of the Plan and LUH Goal 2 and related Policies).

Historic and Cultural Resources. The purpose of this Element is to provide policy guidance to protect, preserve, and enhance the city's cultural and historic resources.

- *Objective HCR-2:* Identify and preserve Fresno's historic and cultural resources that reflect important cultural, social, economic, and architectural features so that residents will have a foundation upon which to measure and direct physical change.

Although there is currently only one designated historic resource in the Plan Area (the José Garcia Adobe), The Plan recognizes that there is potential to discover or recognize additional historic resources in the Area and that efforts should be made to protect them (see Policy PF 1.14).

Healthy Communities. This Element focuses on the relationships between the built, natural, and social environments and community health and wellness outcomes, such as death, chronic disease, and the effects of drug abuse and crime.

- *Objective HC-2:* Create complete, well-structured, and healthy neighborhoods and transportation systems.
- *Objective HC-3:* Create healthy, safe, and affordable housing.
- *Objective HC-4:* Improve property maintenance.
- *Objective HC-5:* Promote access to healthy and affordable food.
- *Objective HC-6:* Improve access to schools and their facilities for the community.

A core value of the Plan is to create Complete Neighborhoods, with access to daily needs such as healthy groceries, parks, and efficient and active transportation systems- all within one's own neighborhood (see PF Goal 5, LUH Goal 3, LUH Goal 6, and respective related Policies). The Plan also calls for the development of a wide array of housing types to serve people of all incomes and life-stages, and to provide residents access to resources to help maintain their homes (see LUH Goal 6 and related Policies).

Housing Element. This Element includes objectives, policies, and programs to provide safe and affordable housing for all segments of the community.

- *Objective H-1:* Provide adequate sites for housing development to accommodate a range of housing by type, size, location, price, and tenure.
- *Objective H-3:* Address, and where possible, remove any potential governmental constraints to housing production and affordability.

By applying land use designations and evaluating the environmental impacts at a program level, the Plan can help streamline new housing development within the West Area. The Plan calls for the production of a variety of housing types that can serve people of all incomes and life stages and has a total capacity for approximately 54,630* housing units. *older data shows 54,953 units.

Based on community feedback, the Steering Committee selected a land use map that lowered the density throughout the Plan Area, particularly near the southwestern boundary, to uphold the transect

land use concept in order to provide an improved transition from urban to rural/agricultural uses near and beyond the SOI.

In addition to Fresno General Plan consistency, the Government Code requires that findings be made for any proposed land use changes on housing element sites. Specifically, Section 65863 (b) of the Government Code states that no city shall reduce or permit the reduction of the residential density for any parcel at a lower residential density, unless it can make written findings that both of the following are true:

1. The reduction is consistent with the adopted Fresno General Plan; and
2. The remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need allocation (RHNA).

The proposed changes on housing element sites would be consistent with the Fresno General Plan because the adoption of the Plan also includes a Fresno General Plan Amendment to align planned land uses and make them consistent. In addition, the Plan is consistent with Fresno General Plan and Housing Element goals, policies and objectives as noted above.

Regarding the second point, there are 82 housing element sites in the Plan Area totaling 560 acres. Of those, land use and zoning changes are proposed on 25 sites totaling 545 acres (see Exhibit M). Some of these sites gained housing capacity and others lost housing capacity. The net overall change in housing capacity on these sites results in a capacity loss in the 16-30 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) category of -5,119 units; a net capacity gain in the 12-16 du/ac category of 1,625 units, and a net capacity loss in the 0-12 du/ac category of -53 units.

In the 0-12 du/ac category, the Housing Element Sites Inventory included 5,581 dwelling units of excess capacity beyond the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 10,116 units. The reduction of the 0-12 du/ac category results in a remaining capacity of 5,528 units of surplus capacity.

In this 16-30 du/ac category, the Housing Element Sites Inventory included 3,408 dwelling units of excess capacity beyond the RHNA of 8,834 dwelling units. The reduction of the 16-30 du/ac category results in remaining capacity of 7,123 which is -1,711 units below the RHNA amount, without incorporating the City's rollover capacity. With the rollover capacity (8,516 units in the 16-30 category), the remaining total capacity for 16-30 du/ac becomes 6,805 units.

The remaining capacity in both categories is adequate to meet the requirements of Section 65583.2 of the California Government Code and to accommodate the City's share of the regional housing need pursuant to Section 65584. Therefore, this project is consistent with the Housing Element.

Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (SB 330): Senate Bill ("SB") 330, also known as the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 is a housing-related bill that went into effect on January 1, 2020, and will remain in effect through January 1, 2025. One of the applicable provisions of this legislation, as it relates to Plan Amendments and Rezoning, includes limitations wherein an affected City (which includes the City of Fresno) cannot change land use or zoning designations, nor alter the intensity of existing land use designations or zone districts, in a manner that reduces housing capacity below the capacity that was available on January 1, 2018; unless, there is a concurrent increase of capacity elsewhere within the city (i.e. corresponding up-zone) that ensures there is no net loss of housing capacity.

The land use changes proposed by the Plan would result in the loss of capacity for 12,227* housing

units, therefore is it necessary that a concurrent proposal that would increase housing capacity to an equal or greater level accompany the Plan. *older data shows 12,253 units. In order to satisfy this requirement, staff is proposing the concurrent consideration of P22-02413, a Text Amendment to the Citywide Development Code that would remove maximum density limits for five zoning districts, anticipating this will provide an additional capacity of 21,762 housing units citywide. In the West Area this results in a capacity gain of 7,169 housing units. Should the Text Amendment and the Plan be adopted on the same day, there will not be a net loss of housing capacity and the Plan will comply with SB 330.

Council District Project Review Committees: The Plan Area includes Council Districts 1, 2, and 3. Therefore, the Plan was presented to the Project Review Committees of each District. The Review Committees also provided recommendations for the Land Use Change Requests, which is summarized in the section below.

The Council District 1 Project Review Committee reviewed the Plan on May 3, 2022 and voted (yes: 6 | no: 0 | abstain: 1 | absent: 1) to recommend approval of the project with modified language for Policy LUH 1.4.

The Council District 2 Project Review Committee reviewed the Plan on May 9, 2022 and voted (yes: 2 | no: 0 | abstain: 0 | absent: 1) to recommend approval of the project.

The Council District 3 Project Review Committee reviewed the Plan on April 26, 2022 and voted (yes: 3 | no: 0 | abstain: 0 | absent: 1) to recommend approval of the project.

Planning Commission: At its regular meeting on July 20, 2022, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval to the City Council to adopt the Plan and EIR. The Commission included in their recommendation the addition of one late land use change request to be considered for the follow-up Plan Amendment. See Exhibit Q for the Planning Commission Resolutions.

Proposed Follow-Up Plan Amendment: In order to properly evaluate and update the Dual Land Uses in the Plan Area for public facilities and to also to accommodate received land use change requests, a Plan Amendment is proposed to be initiated following the adoption of the Plan.

Dual Land Use Map

The Dual Land Use Map (Figure LU-2 in the Fresno General Plan) shows the secondary land use that is assigned to properties that are designated as park or other public facilities. This allows properties to develop to the second designation if the City is unable to enable the development of the park or public facility. Staff will incorporate the update of the Dual Land Use Map as part of the proposed Plan Amendment.

Land Use Change Requests

There were 19 requests to change the Planned Land Use Map received from community members and property owners during the public comment period and each were presented to the Steering Committee and applicable District Project Review Committees. There were also requests submitted after these committees met, which are noted as being “late” land use change requests.

Exhibit N contains the list of requests and the recommendations provided by the Steering Committee, District Project Review Committees, Planning Commission and staff, or - for the late requests - applicable recommendations by Planning Commission and/or staff. Approved requests will be

incorporated into the proposed follow-up Plan Amendment, which will allow for additional environmental analysis.

The City Council has the following options for responding to these requests:

1. Approve staff's recommendations to be included in the Plan Amendment; or
2. Approve with modifications, adding to or removing from staff's recommendations; or
3. Deny all requests and eliminating the need for a follow-up Plan Amendment

The Council District 1 Project Review Committee reviewed the land use change requests on June 7, 2022 and voted (yes: 5 | no: 0 | abstain: 1 | absent: 2) to concur with staff's recommendations for the requests located within the boundaries of District 1.

The Council District 2 Project Review Committee reviewed the land use change requests on May 9, 2022 and made recommendations by consensus on each of the land use change requests within the boundaries of District 2.

There were no land use change requests in the boundaries of District 3.

The Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of staff's recommendations with the addition of late land use change request, "L-2."

Zoning Map Errata

An errata is submitted alongside the Zoning Map (See Exhibit E.1) to show minor corrections made to the proposed zoning map. These corrections include showing the dual designations of certain public facilities and switching zones where they were swapped in the area near Ashlan and Blythe.

Notice of City Council Hearing

The City Council hearing was noticed in the Fresno Bee pursuant to Section 15-5007-d of the Fresno Municipal Code (see Exhibit O). The notice was also published to the Clerk's notices page while the hearing date was posted on the Plan's webpage and emailed to the Steering Committee and stakeholder list.

City Council Workshop 09.29.2022

A City Council workshop was held on September 29, 2022 and questions were raised on the following topics.

1. Housing Capacity
2. Regional Park
3. Urban-Rural Interface
4. Veterans/180
5. Noticing of Land Use Changes
6. Agricultural Mitigation and Vehicle Miles Traveled

Responses are summarized below. Additional details are shared in a separate memo (see Exhibit Y) distributed to the Mayor, Councilmembers, and West Area stakeholders via the Plan webpage.

1. What is happening to Housing Capacity in the Specific Plan?

With the co-adoption of the Mixed-Use Text Amendment (MUTA), the WANSP will result in a housing capacity gain of approximately 7,169 units over the existing General Plan. The reason for this gain is

because MUTA adds 19,396 units of capacity, which exceeds the current deficit of 12,227 by 7,169.

General Plan (GP) Max Capacity	Specific Plan (SP) Max Capacity	Difference SP & GP	Specific Plan w/MUTA	Difference SP w/MUTA and GP
66,857	54,630	-12,227	74,026	+7,169

The land use vision for the WANSP incorporates three core principles: 1) follow a transect model to create a physical transition from urban to rural landscapes, 2) focus density and commercial activities along Catalytic Corridors, and 3) create a moderate level of change in between the more intensive General Plan and the less intensive existing rural residential uses.

The resulting land use map had the following impacts:

- Reduction of density along the southwestern edge of the Plan Area to take away pressure from the Sphere of Influence and to facilitate a more fluid transition between the urban and rural landscape.
- Change from RMX and CMX along Shaw Avenue to NMX, to be more in-line with a town center versus a regional center.
- Gain of density in other areas closer to the existing city core to facilitate more orderly development in infill areas.

Because MUTA provides enough capacity to overcome the initial deficit, the co-adoption of the Plan with MUTA allows for compliance with SB 330; however, the City Council may choose to add additional density through land use changes that can be included in the follow-up Plan Amendment. Staff recommends that any modifications made to the land use map undergo a community input process prior to the amendment returning to Council for adoption.

2. Does the Specific Plan include the Regional Park?

During the first phase of engagement community members stated that more park space was needed and that a landmark regional park for the West Area was desired. The Steering Committee choose three general locations for a regional park to evaluate and score according to a set of criteria. The area that scored the highest was a location along Shaw Avenue. Because there was some debate amongst Committee members about the preferred location of the park and because a regional park is to serve residents citywide, the Plan does not designate the park, but acknowledges the highest scoring location as the preferred location and calls for a community input process to vet the site for official designation. See the section on the Regional Park above in this staff report for more information.

The Regional Park designation could be also included per Council direction in the follow-up Plan Amendment. Should this occur, staff recommends additional direction and resources to initiate community engagement activities.

3. Would the proposed urban-rural transition policy reduce housing capacity?

Specific Plan Policy LUH 5.1 carries over and modifies Policy W-1-e from the West Area Community Plan, which speaks to adding a transition space between new urban uses and farmland. Policy LUH 5.1, similar to its predecessor, suggests methods to provide this transition, but also includes existing rural residential uses, in response to feedback heard from Plan Area residents. One of the core

values of the Plan is to see new development that respects agriculture and long existing rural residential development (see page 3 of the Specific Plan).

West Area Community Plan Policy W-1-e:

“When land proposed for urban development abuts actively farmed land that is (1) in an agricultural land conservation contract (including land that is outside the city's sphere of influence boundary); and/or (2) designated in the city's General Plan for continued agricultural use, the development project shall include design features which provide an agricultural/urban buffer as follows:

- building setbacks with fencing.
- designated open space (including, but not limited to, densely landscaped strips, full-width multi-use trails or bikeways, and permanent on-site flood control/drainage facilities).
- boundary streets.”

West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan Policy LUH 5.1:

“Consider updating the Development Code so that when land proposed for urban development abuts active farmland, planned farmland, or rural residential, the new project shall include and provide for the maintenance of one of the following design features to provide a rural/urban buffer:

- Provide landscaping and setbacks to fully obscure the new development's buildings and fences.
- Do not include fencing, or provide only see-through fencing no greater than four feet in height between the new development and the existing property.
- Provide open space such as edible gardens, landscaped walkways, trails or rain gardens to be no less than 30 feet in width.
- Locate boundary streets between the new and existing developments.”

This policy would not create a loss of housing capacity because an already-required local street could be located to serve as the transition space or the new use could provide landscaping or different fencing materials that would not require a change to the layout of the new development. See page 126 of the Specific Plan for an illustration of all proposed transition space alternatives.

For this policy to be implemented, a subsequent update of the Development Code would be required, which would go through the normal community review process.

4. Will Veterans Boulevard extend to Highway 180?

Veterans Boulevard will ultimately end at Gettysburg Avenue. The City has plans to build Grantland Avenue to Shields Avenue as a four-lane arterial with a multipurpose trail. Shields Avenue to Highway 180 is outside the Sphere of Influence and thus under County responsibility.

5. Were property owners notified of proposed land use changes?

Seven direct mailers were sent to property owners and residents (approximately 14,000 addresses) throughout the planning process. Included were two direct notices to property owners and residents whose land use is proposed to change under the Specific Plan. An additional notification was also sent to properties with land use change requests. Notices included maps and were translated into Spanish, Punjabi, and Hmong. Direct staff contact information was also provided for Spanish,

Punjabi, and Hmong speakers.

6. Agricultural Mitigation and Vehicle Miles Traveled

During the workshop, Councilmember Karbassi shared that he had questions related to agricultural mitigation and vehicle miles traveled, but would follow up with staff at a later date to receive feedback. This report is being prepared and submitted (per required deadlines) prior to receipt of these questions, therefore staff cannot provide responses to the questions in this report, but refers the reader to the Memo attached in Exhibit Y that provides general information about these topics.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Environmental Impact Report Process

The City, as the lead agency under the CEQA determined that a program-level EIR was required for the proposed project. The consulting firm, De Novo, prepared the EIR. The review and certification of the EIR involves the following procedural steps: 1. Notice of Preparation, 2. Public Scoping Meeting, 3. Notice of Availability and Public Review Period, 4. Final EIR and Response to Comments, and 5. Certification.

Notice of Preparation (NOP): Upon the City's determination that an EIR was required for this project, a NOP was made available to the general public and responsible trustee agencies to solicit input on issues of concern that should be addressed in the EIR. The NOP was issued on June 28, 2019 and included a project description, project location, and a brief overview of the topics to be covered in the EIR. Thirteen comment letters were received from public agencies and community members and were incorporated into the Draft EIR (DEIR).

Public Scoping Meeting: On July 24, 2019, a project scoping meeting was held, to which the Responsible and Trustee agencies as well as interested members of the public were invited, and which had been duly advertised in advance. The meeting was held at the Glacier Point Middle School Cafeteria. Concerns raised were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR.

Notice of Availability (NOA): The City published a public NOA for the DEIR on February 10, 2022, inviting comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The NOA was filed with the State Clearinghouse (SCH # 2019069117), the County Clerk, and was published in the Fresno Bee pursuant to the public noticing requirements of CEQA. Announcements were also shared during the March 7, 2022 Steering Committee meeting and emailed to the Steering Committee and stakeholder list.

Comments on DEIR: The DEIR was available for public review and comment from February 10, 2022 through March 28, 2022. Nine written comments on the DEIR were submitted to the City of Fresno during the review period. The comments were summarized and addressed in the FEIR. None of these comments contained new information that revealed any potentially new or more significant environmental impacts that could have required recirculation of the DEIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

Final EIR (FEIR): In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088, the Final EIR responds to the written comments received on the Draft EIR. The Final EIR also contains minor edits to the Draft EIR. The FEIR was made available on the Plan webpage on July 7, 2022. Hard copies were also made available at the Central Branch and Teague Libraries.

Certification of the EIR: The City Council will hold a public hearing to consider the adequacy and completeness of the EIR under CEQA and to certify the EIR and adopt the necessary Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP): The City Council will also consider adopting a program to implement the EIR's recommended mitigation measures to mitigate, avoid, or substantially lessen the significant impacts of the project. The final MMRP is included in the FEIR.

Environmental Impact Report Analysis and Conclusions

Project Objectives

Pursuant to Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR must identify the objectives of the project (the "project" means the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan, or "the Plan"). The following Specific Plan Guiding Principles functionally represent project objectives as required:

Transportation

- Accommodate and improve roadway access, connectivity, and mobility among all modes of transportation, and prioritize roadway widening where bottlenecking exists.
- Accommodate planned transit services in the West Area by locating routes near or adjacent to the community centers, schools, parks, and retail centers.
- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained sidewalk network from residential neighborhoods to commercial centers, schools, parks, and community centers.
- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained roadway network that allows for efficient and smooth access from the West Area to other sections of the city and region.

Parks & Trails

- Create parks that are within existing and planned neighborhoods that are easily accessed by community members using pedestrian and bicycle pathways, transit services, or motor vehicles, consistent with the City of Fresno's Parks Master Plan.
- Provide for the location of a flagship regional park in the Plan Area that has components of the Plan Area's agricultural history through the planting of drought-resistant vegetation or trees, and the creation of public art that exhibits the Plan Area's contribution to the agricultural industry.
- Increase the tree canopy to improve air quality and health outcomes for residents while enhancing neighborhood streetscapes.

Agriculture

- Incorporate elements of agriculture in future parks by planting a mixture of native drought tolerant vegetation, shrubs, and trees that can serve to provide shade and enhance the streetscape.

Retail

- Attract desired and needed local retail establishments to serve the needs of the West Area community. Such establishments include grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants (other than fast food), and boutiques.
- Discourage the expansion of undesirable retail establishments such as liquor stores, tobacco and vapor stores, short-term loan and pawn shops, and adult stores.
- Encourage the development of retail establishments along commercial corridors.

Housing

- Encourage a variety of housing types and styles.
- Encourage the development of housing to accommodate an aging population including, multi-generational houses and other elder housing options.
- Reaffirm the City's commitment and obligation to affirmatively furthering access to fair and affordable housing opportunities by strongly encouraging equitable and fair housing opportunities to be located in strategic proximity to employment, recreational facilities, schools, neighborhood commercial areas, and transportation routes.

Catalytic Corridors

- Encourage the orderly and consistent development of civic, parkland, retail and commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family uses along West Shaw Avenue, West Ashlan Avenue, Veterans Boulevard, West Shields Avenue, West Clinton Avenue, and Brawley Avenue.

Education

- Attract much-needed educational opportunities for the residents of the West Area, especially for post-secondary education, and access to programs for life-long learners.

Public Safety

- Provide for safe routes to schools for children, with the City and County working together with residents, to provide sidewalks in neighborhoods that have sporadic access.
- Work to promote Neighborhood Watch in all neighborhoods, and further assess the need for the location of emergency response facilities west of Highway 99.

Impacts Analyzed

The EIR analyzed impacts to the following environmental areas, as these were the areas determined to have potential impacts:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources (Chapter 3.1)
- Agricultural Resources (Chapter 3.2)
- Air Quality (Chapter 3.3)
- Biological Resources (Chapter 3.4)
- Cultural and Tribal Resources (Chapter 3.5)
- Geology, Soils and Seismicity (Chapter 3.6)
- Greenhouse Gases, Climate Change, and Energy (Chapter 3.7)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Chapter 3.8)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Chapter 3.9)
- Land Use (Chapter 3.10)
- Noise (Chapter 3.11)
- Population and Housing (Chapter 3.12)
- Public Services and Recreation (Chapter 3.13)
- Transportation and Circulation (Chapter 3.14)
- Utilities (Chapter 3.15)

The EIR found impacts to the following areas: Aesthetics and Visual Resources, Agricultural Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural and Tribal Resources; Geology, Soils and Seismicity; Greenhouse Gases, Climate Change, and Energy; Hazards and Hazardous Materials;

Noise; Public Services and Recreation; and Utilities. The EIR includes recommended mitigation measures in these areas (see MMRP included in the FEIR). The recommended mitigation measures were found to reduce impacts to less than significant in all but the areas listed below:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Public Services and Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Overriding Considerations

Pursuant to CEQA requirements, findings of fact and a statement of overriding consideration are required to approve the project because the project will result in significant unavoidable impacts. Staff recommends that the following overriding considerations be considered in approving the project despite its unavoidable significant impacts: Consistency with the Fresno General Plan, Consistency with the City's Zoning Ordinance, Consistency with the Fresno General Plan EIR, Supports Fresno General Plan Policies, Consistency with Smart Growth Principles, Create Employment Opportunities for Local Residents, Contribute to and Fund Needed Infrastructure Improvements, Generate Economic Benefits from Taxes, Expansion of the City's Housing Stock.

FRESNO MUNICIPAL CODE FINDINGS

Based upon analysis of the applications, staff concludes that the required findings of Section 15-5812 of the Fresno Municipal Code can be made. These findings are attached as Exhibit L.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

N/A - No purchasing

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A - No expenditures

Attachments:

- Exhibit A - Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B - Maps of the West Area Community Plan Area & Highway City Neighborhood Specific Plan Area (P22-01351)
- Exhibit C - Proposed Planned Land Use Map (P22-01352)
- Exhibit D - Proposed Changes to General Plan Planned Land Use Map (P22-01353)
- Exhibit E - Proposed Changes to the Zoning Map (P22-01353)
- Exhibit F.1 - WANSF Planning Commission Draft [July 2022]
- Exhibit F.2 - WANSF Revised Public Draft [April 2022]
- Exhibit F.3 - WANSF Public Draft [April 2021]
- Exhibit G - Comprehensive Redline Summary (Appendix C)
- Exhibit H - Comment Summary Matrix & Comment Letters [updated 09/27/2022]
- Exhibit I - Draft Program EIR
- Exhibit J - Final Environmental Impact Report
- Exhibit K - EIR - Findings of Fact & Statement of Overriding Considerations
- Exhibit L - Fresno Municipal Code Findings

- Exhibit M - Housing Element Findings
- Exhibit N - Land Use Change Requests + Late Requests [updated 10/06/2022]
- Exhibit O - Fresno Bee Notice [09-30-22]
- Exhibit P - Comment Letters Submitted to Planning Commission 07/19/2022
- Exhibit Q - Planning Commission Resolutions
- Exhibit R - Resolution Certifying the West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan EIR
- Exhibit S - Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01351 (repeal)
- Exhibit T - Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01352 (adopt)
- Exhibit U - Resolution Approving Plan Amendment P22-01353 (update)
- Exhibit V - Ordinance Approving Rezone P22-01353
- Exhibit W - Resolution Authorizing Planning & Development Director to Make Updates
- Exhibit X - Resolution to Evaluate Land Use Change Requests and the Dual Land Use Designation Map
- Exhibit Y - Memo - Additional Information Provided Following the September 29, 2022 WANSP Workshop
- Exhibit Z - Presentation