

## **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A RECIRCULATED DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR CITY OF FRESNO GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. P19-04226**

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21091 and 21092 and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) State Guidelines Section 15105 and 15087(a), notice is hereby given that a Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Recirculated Draft PEIR) (SCH No: 2019050005) for the continued implementation of the approved Fresno General Plan, text changes to the Mobility and Transportation Element related to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis, and an update to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (proposed project) is available for public review during the public comment period (March 26, 2021 through May 10, 2021). The City of Fresno (City) has prepared the Recirculated Draft PEIR to analyze environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project based on new information made available after its original circulation, but before certification, in 2020.

### **PROJECT LOCATION**

The project location is the Planning Area of the City of Fresno. This is the geographic area for which the General Plan establishes policies about future growth, and includes all areas within the City's current city limits, including the Fresno-Clovis Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (RWRf), the areas within the current Sphere of Influence (SOI), and an area north of the city's most northeasterly portion (referred to as the North Area). The Planning Area is generally bounded by the San Joaquin River to the north, American Avenue to the south, Garfield Avenue to the west, and McCall Avenue to the east, with the RWRf generally located with Jensen Avenue to the north, American Avenue to the south, South Chateau Fresno Avenue to the west, and Cornelia Avenue to the east.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In 2014, the City of Fresno adopted the Fresno General Plan and certified the accompanying Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). In order to be in conformance with State law and consistent with recent legislative changes, the City has prepared text changes to the Mobility and Transportation Element related to VMT analysis, an update to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, and is updating the MEIR and converting it to a Program EIR (PEIR). The update, consistent with Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, is intended to streamline implementation of the General Plan's programs and projects by supporting them with updated environmental analysis, regulatory framework, and mitigation measures, pursuant to CEQA. Two major goals of updating the EIR include complying with new legislation as it relates to various resource topic area as defined by CEQA; and updating the technical analyses to reflect the baseline conditions of 2019.

This update will include the following components:

- **Incorporation of New local, State and/or federal regulations.** Since adoption of the Fresno General Plan in 2014, several new regulations have taken effect, including:

- Climate Action Plan Legislation. The City has updated the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan that was prepared for the MEIR (Appendix F-2) taking into account Executive Order S-03-05 (2005), Senate Bill (SB) 32 (2006), and Executive Order B-30-15 (2015);
- VMT Legislation – SB 743 (2013);
- Tribal Consultation, Assembly Bill (AB) 52 (2014);
- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) (2014);
- Cooperative Agreement between the City of Fresno Irrigation District and City of Fresno for Water Utilization and Conveyance (2016); and
- 2017 Housing Package as described by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/lhp.shtml#summary>.
- **Corresponding technical revisions to the Mobility and Transportation Element of the Fresno General Plan. Specific changes include, but are not limited to, the following:**
  - Add VMT policies consistent with the requirements of SB 743; and
  - Revise text relating to Level of Service (LOS) metrics to update applicability.

## RECIRCULATED DRAFT PEIR

A Draft PEIR was previously circulated from March 6, 2020, to May 5, 2020. As per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, a lead agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR, or when recirculation occurs after giving public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review and before certification of the EIR. In June 2020, after circulation of the Draft PEIR, the City adopted VMT guidelines and thresholds to be effective on July 1, 2020. The thresholds and guidelines adopted by the City include standardized screening methods for VMT threshold compliance, and VMT significance thresholds for development projects, transportation projects, and plans. In addition, the VMT guidelines also include feasible mitigation strategies applicable for development projects, transportation projects, and plans. The City has decided that the discussion and determination in the Draft PEIR related to VMT impacts should be updated to account for the City's adopted VMT guidelines and thresholds. In compliance with the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21092.1 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, the City has prepared this Recirculated Draft PEIR to identify a new significant impact related to VMT that was not included in the Draft PEIR.

The Recirculated Draft PEIR also provides updated text refinements to the Introduction and Project Description chapters, as well as the Environmental Analysis Checklist categories of Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Update, included in Appendix G of the Recirculated Draft PEIR, has been updated to account for the City's adopted VMT guidelines and thresholds, the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan,<sup>1</sup> and requirements related to implementation of GHG reduction measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Fresno Council of Governments, Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan, January 2021.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

The City is circulating the Recirculated Draft PEIR for public review and comment for a period of 45 days, which is consistent with Section 15105(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines. As described further in Section 15088.5(f) of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Lead Agency may choose to evaluate and respond to comments in one of two ways: (1) require reviewers to submit new comments when an EIR is substantially revised and the entire document is recirculated (in such cases, a Lead Agency need not respond to comments received during an earlier comment period); or (2) request that reviewers limit their comments to only the revised chapter or portions of the Recirculated EIR. In this case, the revised portions include Chapter 1, Introduction, Chapter 3, Project Description, and Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, Section 4.3, Air Quality, Section 4.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Section 4.16, Transportation. Pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15088.5(f)(2), reviewers of this document are requested to limit their comments to the new material that has been included in the revised chapters or portions of the Recirculated Draft PEIR. Therefore, agencies, organizations, and individuals who wish to comment on this document should limit their comments to the revised chapters or portions of this Recirculated Draft PEIR and the analysis contained herein.

The City of Fresno will receive public comments on the Recirculated Draft PEIR from March 26, 2021, through May 10, 2021. Written comments should be received no later than 5:00 p.m. (PST) on May 10, 2021. Please send your written comments to Ms. Pagoulatos and include your name, address, and phone number and/or email address so that we may contact you for clarification, if necessary. Comments may be made in person, by first class mail, facsimile or email to:

City of Fresno  
Planning and Development Department  
2600 Fresno Street, Room 3065  
Fresno, CA 93721  
Attention: Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager  
Telephone: (559) 621-8062/cell: 907-5221 Fax: (559) 621-2489  
Email: Sophia.Pagoulatos@fresno.gov

A hearing of the Planning Commission will be scheduled to take place subsequent to the end of the comment period, and upon recommendation of the Planning Commission to the City Council, a hearing of the City Council will take place on this matter.

## **DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY**

Due to closures of public facilities related to COVID-19, copies of the documents will not be available at City Hall. Locations where a copy of the Recirculated Draft PEIR is available for review:

### **1. Your Local Fresno Library**

Fresno County Public Library  
2420 Mariposa Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

In addition, copies will be placed in all other public libraries within the City of Fresno where public access is permitted.

## 2. City of Fresno Website

The Recirculated Draft PEIR document is available on the City's website at:

[www.fresno.gov/GeneralplanPEIR](http://www.fresno.gov/GeneralplanPEIR)

## 3. Upon Request

For information on additional viewing methods of the Recirculated Draft PEIR or documents incorporated by reference, please contact Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager, via her contact information above.

## ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Draft PEIR circulated in March 2020 identified potential significant effects in the following areas:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Mitigation measures identified in the Draft PEIR would reduce potentially-significant effects to less-than-significant levels in all areas except Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Noise, Transportation, and Utilities and Service Systems. The impacts and mitigation measures identified for these areas would not change with the analysis included in the Recirculated Draft PEIR. However, as discussed above, the Recirculated Draft PEIR identifies a new significant impact related to VMT that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

As identified in the Draft PEIR, there are currently 17 contaminated sites within the Planning Area that are identified as cleanup sites consistent with Government Code Section 65962.5.