

City of Fresno
Notice of Availability
of a Partial Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report
for the Proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project

Date: October 3, 2023

To: State Clearinghouse and Interested Public Agencies, Parties, and Organizations

From: Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager, City of Fresno

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Partial Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse [SCH] No. 2022020486)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Fresno (Lead Agency) has prepared a Partial Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR) for the proposed Southeast Development Area Specific Plan Project (proposed project), which is now available for public review. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 provides that a limited portion of the Draft PEIR shall be recirculated for public review and comment prior to certification when significant new information is added to the Draft PEIR. “Recirculation” provides the public with an opportunity to comment on the new or revised sections of the Draft PEIR. Recirculation of the entire document is not necessary or required. Recirculation is not required where the new information merely clarifies or amplifies or makes insignificant modifications.

The Draft PEIR has been partially revised to include Section 3.7, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity, and Section 3.17, Transportation and Traffic, of the previously circulated Draft PEIR. The Geology, Soils, and Seismicity section was inadvertently omitted from the previously circulated public review Draft PEIR due to a technological syncing issue that occurred when the document was uploaded to the SCH of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR). However, it should be noted that the mitigation measures included in the Geology, Soils, and Seismicity section were included in the Executive Summary of the previously circulated Draft PEIR. There are no exhibits or appendices associated with this section.

The Transportation and Traffic section was included in the previously circulated Draft PEIR but has been revised to include a ramp queueing analysis, as requested by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). None of the exhibits included in this section of the Draft PEIR have been revised. The Transportation and Traffic section also includes revisions to correct minor errors and provide further clarification regarding topics that were identified during the Draft PEIR public comment period. New information in the Transportation and Traffic section is incorporated using an underline/strikethrough format. No new significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified. The Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR will be limited to the Geology, Soils, and Seismicity and Transportation and Traffic sections; no other sections are being revised or recirculated. This Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR

will be combined with the previously circulated Draft PEIR as part of the Final PEIR. The Final PEIR will include the comments received on the Draft PEIR and Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR, along with written responses to those comments.

Document Availability

The Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR can be reviewed at the following websites: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022020486> and www.fresno.gov/SEDA. A hard copy of the Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR can also be reviewed at these locations during business hours (Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.)

City of Fresno

Planning and Development Department
c/o Adrienne Asadoorian, Planner III
2600 Fresno Street
Third Floor, Room 3065
Fresno, CA 93721

Fresno County Public Library

2420 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

45-Day Comment Period on the Partial Recirculated Draft Program EIR

The City of Fresno is soliciting comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, public agencies, organizations, and members of the public regarding the Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the public review period will begin on **Tuesday, October 3, 2023**, and end on **Friday, November 17, 2023**. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(f)(2) allows lead agencies to elect to limit recirculation to only the revised chapters or portions of an EIR. In that instance, the lead agency will respond to (i) comments received during the initial circulation period that relate to chapters or portions of the document that were not revised and recirculated, and (ii) comments received during the recirculation period that relate to the chapters or portions of the earlier EIR that were revised and recirculated.

Accordingly, the City requests that commenters limit their written comments to the new material presented in this Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR, which consists of the Geology, Soils, and Seismicity and the Transportation and Traffic sections only. Please provide your written/typed comments (including name, affiliation, telephone number, and contact information) via US mail or email to the address shown below by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, November 17, 2023**:

City of Fresno, Planning and Development Department, Adrienne Asadoorian, Planner III, 2600 Fresno Street, Room 3065, Fresno, CA 93721, Email: Adrienne.Asadoorian@Fresno.gov, 559.621.8339

Anticipated Significant Environmental Effects

The Draft PEIR circulated in July 2023 identified potential significant effects in the following areas:

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare, Agricultural Resources and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology, Soils and Seismicity, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation,

Transportation and Traffic, Utilities and Service Systems, Wildfire, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

Mitigation measures identified in the Draft PEIR would reduce potentially significant effects to less-than-significant levels in all areas except Aesthetics, Light, and Glare; Agricultural Resources and Forestry Resources; Air Quality; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and Noise. The impacts and mitigation measures identified for these areas would not change with the analysis included in the Partial Recirculated Draft PEIR. As identified in the Draft PEIR, there are currently 3 contaminated sites within the Plan Area that are identified as cleanup sites consistent with Government Code Section 65962.5 listed on the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor Database, and there are currently 11 contaminated sites within the Plan Area identified as cleanup sites by GeoTracker.

Project Description

The proposed project is a Specific Plan for the SEDA that would provide for increased density and accelerate housing production throughout the Plan Area. The proposed project would offer flexibility in meeting the evolving needs of households in the region through a multimodal transportation network and diverse housing types and affordability levels, with approximately 45,000 homes and 37,000 jobs within the nearly 9,000-acre planning area by the year 2050. The proposed project is framed with three interrelated goals: fiscal responsibility, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

Project Location

The Plan Area is bounded by the Gould Canal on the north, Highland and McCall Avenues on the east, Minnewawa, Temperance, and Locan Avenues on the west, and Jensen and North Avenues on the south.

Land Uses Within the Plan Area

The proposed Specific Plan contemplates using the following land uses to allow flexibility and diversity in the long-term planning of the Southeast Development Area:

Mixed Use (Mixed-use town centers supported by a multimodal transportation network, serving as commercial and civic focal points for the Plan Area); **Residential** (Supports mixed-use centers and distributes a variety of housing types and affordability levels across the Plan Area); **Employment** (Attracts diverse, high-quality employers and job opportunities located within a short distance to amenities in Regional and Community Town Centers, Office Centers, and in Flexible Research and Development Districts).

Additional Plan Features

The proposed project incorporates high-capacity public transit and safe bicycle and pedestrian routes, provisions for an open-space system, sustainable infrastructure, and community-scale farming and agriculture.