

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND SCOPING MEETING FOR THE SOUTH OF THE TULE (“SoTu”) MASTER PLAN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Porterville (City) will prepare a Focused Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed South of the Tule River Master Plan (“Project” or “proposed Project”) located directly southwest of the city limits of the City of Porterville in the jurisdiction of the County of Tulare, California. The Project site is generally bound to the north by the Tule River, to the south by State Route 190, to the east by State Route 65, and to the west by Westwood Street, consisting of 19 parcels that total approximately 447.3 gross acres. The City has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section §15063(c)(3), to evaluate the potential environmental impacts from the proposed project. The City is the Lead Agency for the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15050. The purpose of this notice is:

1. To serve as a Notice of Preparation of an EIR pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section §15063(c)(3);
2. To advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the forthcoming EIR to be prepared for the project; and
3. To serve as a notice of the public scoping meeting. Copies of the Notice of Preparation are available for review at the following locations:

City of Porterville, Community Development Department
291 N Main Street
Porterville, CA 93257

-AND-

Porterville Public Library
50 W Olive Ave Suite B
Porterville, CA 93257

NOTICE OF PREPARATION: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City has prepared a Notice of Preparation to solicit comments related to the scope and content of the EIR. The 30-day public comment period for the Notice of Preparation is from Wednesday, March 20, 2024 to Friday, April 19, 2024. The City, as the Lead Agency, requests that responsible and trustee agencies respond in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. **All environmental related comments to the Notice of Preparation should be submitted in writing or email by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 19, 2024 to:**

Claudia Calderon, Acting Community Development Director
City of Porterville, Community Development Department
291 N. Main St.
Porterville, CA 93257
Email: ccalderon@ci.porterville.ca.us

SCOPING MEETING: The City will conduct a public scoping meeting in conjunction with this Notice of Preparation in order to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the Focused EIR. The meeting will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86787044094>

-OR-

<https://bit.ly/SotuEIR>

PROJECT TITLE:

South of Tule River Master Plan

PROJECT LOCATION:

The Project site is directly southwest of the city limits of the City of Porterville in the jurisdiction of the County of Tulare, California (see Figure 1). The planning area of the SoTu Master Plan is generally bound to the north by the Tule River, to the south by State Route 190, to the east by State Route 65, and to the west by Westwood Street, consisting of 19 parcels that totals approximately 447.30 gross acres (referred herein as “Project site”). The site is identified by the Tulare County Assessor as Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs) 259-150-001, 259-030-031, 259-270-004, 259-030-011, 259-040-041, 259-040-044, 259-040-028, 259-040-027, 259-040-026, 259-040-025, 259-040-043, 259-040-042, 259-040-045, 259-040-046, 259-040-010, 259-040-039, 259-320-001, 259-370-058, and 259-320-002. The site is a portion of Township 21 South, Range 27 East, Section 33 and 34, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION:***Project Setting***

The majority of the SoTu Project Site has historically been used for agricultural crops (orchards and row crops) continuously for at least the last 50 years. The Project site is primarily occupied by agricultural operations with a few single-family residential dwellings. Existing land uses are listed in **Table 1**. Currently, the Project site has little to no existing circulation network. Street frontage includes State Route (SR) 190 adjacent south, SR 65 adjacent east, and South Westwood Street adjacent west to the Project site. The State Routes and the Tule River bounding the north of the site have prevented any major circulation within the site. The General Plan calls for Newcomb Street as a four (4)-lane north-south major arterial that will extend south with a bridge over the Tule River to access the site and a grade separation (overpass) at SR 190. Additionally, the General Plan has a collector planned for the east-west direction that eventually turns north to connect at the Prospect Street alignment with another planned bridge over the Tule River.

Table 1: Existing Land Use on the Project site

APN	Acreage	Address	Existing Land Use
259-030-011	75.84	1260 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	Agriculture (field and seed)
259-030-031	66.62	-	Agriculture (orchard)
259-040-010	0.06	-	Well Site
259-040-025	1.02	2040 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	1,945 sf. single-family dwelling built in 1990, a storage shed, and two (2) metal structures.
259-040-026	1.00	2002 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	1,716 sf. single-family dwelling built in 1995
259-040-027	1.05	1960 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	2,797 sf. single-family dwelling built in 2006
259-040-028	1.00	1918 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	A single-family dwelling and a storage shed.
259-040-039	50.94	512 S Westwood Rd Porterville, CA 93257	Mostly vacant land, 1,008 sf. single-family dwelling, and 2,580 sf. and 625 sf. metal structures.
259-040-041	39.34	-	Agriculture (field and seed)
259-040-042	1.65	2186 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	1,536 sf. single-family dwelling with 6 metal structures
259-040-043	1.65	2176 W Poplar Ave Porterville, CA 93257	one mobile home and one metal structure
259-040-044	103.53	-	Agriculture (orchard)
259-040-045	25.13	730 S Westwood Rd #B Porterville, CA 93257	Agriculture (orchard) with a single-family dwelling and 10 accessory structures
259-040-046	1.25	-	Poplar Ditch (owned by Lower Tule River Irrigation District)
259-150-001	25.03	-	Agriculture (orchard), vacant land north of Tule River
259-270-004	28.67	-	Agriculture (orchard)
259-320-001	3.55	362 S Westwood Rd Porterville, CA 93257	2 single-family dwellings
259-320-002	14.67	362 S Westwood Rd Porterville, CA 93257	3 structures, mostly vacant land
259-370-058	5.31	-	Tule River floodplain (owned by City of Porterville)
Total	447.30	-	-

The existing biotic conditions and resources of the site can be defined as agricultural (orchards and row crops), ruderal/non-native, and riparian habitats. Error! Reference source not found. maps the type of crops within the Project site. ¹ In addition to crop trees, there are existing trees and shrubs on properties with single-family residences and along existing dirt roads. Historically, an agricultural ditch (Poplar Ditch) crossed through the southwest corner of the Project Site. Co-Existing water features include the Tule River, and a 22.11-acre freshwater emergent wetland and 3.47-acre freshwater forested shrub wetland on APN 259-040-044.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Project site is bounded by Tule River to the north, SR 65 to the east, and SR 190 to the south. Existing land uses to the north of the site beyond Tule River and to the east are single-family residential uses. Existing land uses to the south and west include a mix of residential, services, vacant, and agriculture uses. As referenced in **Table 2**, all properties to the north, east, and west are planned and zoned for residential and public uses, and properties to the south are planned and zoned with a mix of industrial, retail, residential, and office uses.

Table 2: Existing Uses, General Plan Designations, and Zone Districts of Surrounding Properties

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Tule River, Single-Family Residential	Parks, Low Density Residential	RS-1 – Very Low Density Residential, RS-2 – Low Density Residential, PD – Planned Development, PK – Parks and Public Recreation Facilities
South	SR 190, Agriculture, Residential, Healthcare center	Industrial Park, Retail Center, Low Density Residential, Professional Office	IP – Industrial Park, CR – Retail Centers, RS-1 – Very Low Density Residential, PO – Professional Office
East	SR 65, Single-Family Residential	Low Density Residential, Public Institution	PK - Parks and Public Recreation Facilities, PD – Planned Development
West	Agriculture, Single-Family Residential	Very Low Density Residential, Parks	RS-1 – Very Low Density Residential

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

South of Tule River (SoTu) Master Plan and the associated entitlements, including a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Pre-zone/Rezone (RZ), is filed by the City of Porterville (Applicant). The Conditional Use Permit facilitates the adoption of the SoTu Master Plan. The General Plan Amendment requests amendment of the existing land use designations to the mix of 10 different land uses proposed in the SoTu Master Plan. The Rezone requests a rezone from the existing zoning districts to zoning districts that are consistent with the proposed land use designation. No physical development is proposed.

Project Assumptions Although no physical development is proposed by the Project, the Initial Study analyzed the potential buildout of the Project site at a programmatic level, using reasonable assumptions so that future development of the site can tier from this Initial Study pursuant to CEQA Guidelines *Section 15168(c)(1)* and *15168(d)* for evaluations of environmental issues associated with later activities/subsequent development. However, depending on the final design of future physical development, additional project specific CEQA review may be required as determined by the City through the entitlement review and approval process.

For the purposes of the analysis contained in the Initial Study, **Table 3** shows the assumption of the Project buildout. As shown in the table, the Project assumes the development of 2,213 dwelling units, 2,873,801 square feet of mixed-use, and 1,821,492 square feet of employment uses.

Table 3: Project Buildout Assumption for Impact Analysis

Land Use Designation	Acreage	Permitted Intensity/Density	Average Density
<i>Residential</i>			
Low Density Residential	51.9	6 dwelling unit maximum	5.35 dwelling units
Medium Density Residential	43.8	12 dwelling unit maximum	6 dwelling units for Single Family 11.3 dwelling units for Multi-Family
High Density Residential	31.2	24 dwelling unit maximum	22.55 dwelling units
<i>Mixed-Use</i>			
Commercial Mixed Use	33.2	24.0 dwelling unit Maximum 2.0 FAR maximum	20 dwelling units 2.0 FAR
<i>Employment</i>			
Retail Centers	24.6	0.35 FAR maximum	0.35 FAR
Neighborhood Commercial	8.5	0.30 FAR maximum	0.30 FAR
Professional Office	32.6	0.5 FAR maximum	0.3 FAR
Industrial Park	59.5	0.4 FAR maximum	0.25 FAR

<i>Public Uses and Open Space</i>			
Education	15.9	N/A	N/A
Parks	112.5	0.10 FAR maximum	0.10 FAR
Right-of-Way (ROW)	33.6	-	-
Total	447.30		

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS:

The Project would require approval by the City of Porterville City Council, including approval of a Conditional Use Permit to adopt the master plan, General Plan Amendment to reflect the mix of uses proposed in the Master Plan, and Rezone/Pre-zone to amend the zoning map from the current zone districts to those consistent with the proposed land use changes, as well as certification of the EIR. No permits would be required from other agencies for approval of the Project. However, future redevelopment of the Project site would require annexation, as well as review, permits, and/or approvals, such as grading, building, encroachment, and sign permits. Other approvals may be required as identified through the entitlement review and approval process. In addition, other agencies may have the authority to issue permits prior to implementation including but not limited to:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Region 4 (CDFW)
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Fresno Region 5 (RWQCB)
- Porterville Unified School District
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
- Army Corp of Engineers

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT:

Pursuant to Section 15063 of CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study was prepared for preliminary review of the project to determine significant effects on the environment. Through the Initial Study, it was determined that the following impact areas would not result in a significant impact with or without mitigation:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Noise

- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Based on the information the City has examined to date, the EIR would likely focus on environmental analysis related to Air Quality. The EIR will also include statutorily required sections identified in Sections 15120 to 15132 of CEQA Guidelines such as discussion of project alternatives and cumulative impacts. The EIR content will be subject to additional input from the scoping meeting.

Figure 1: Project Location Map

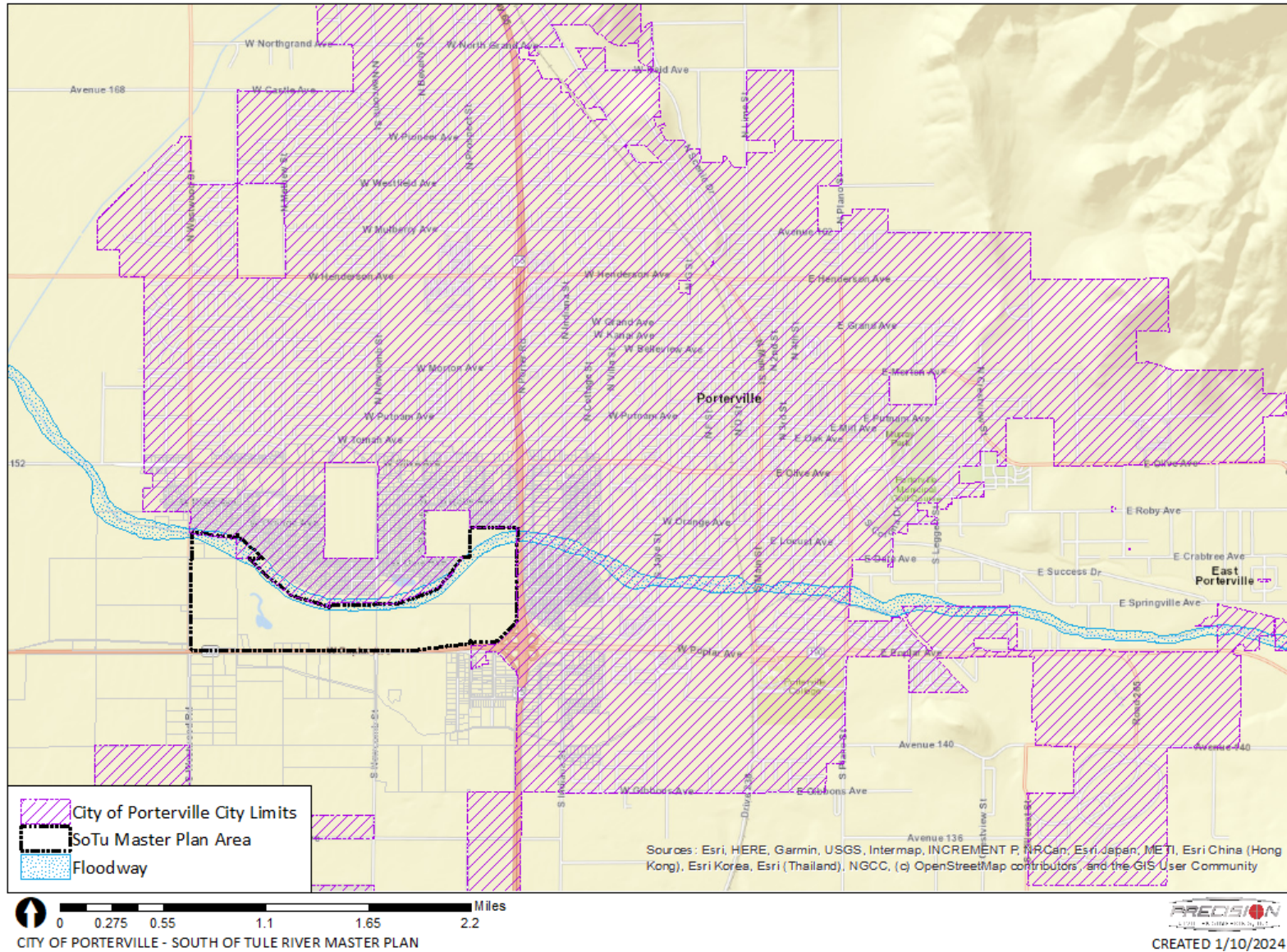


Figure 2: Proposed Land Use Map

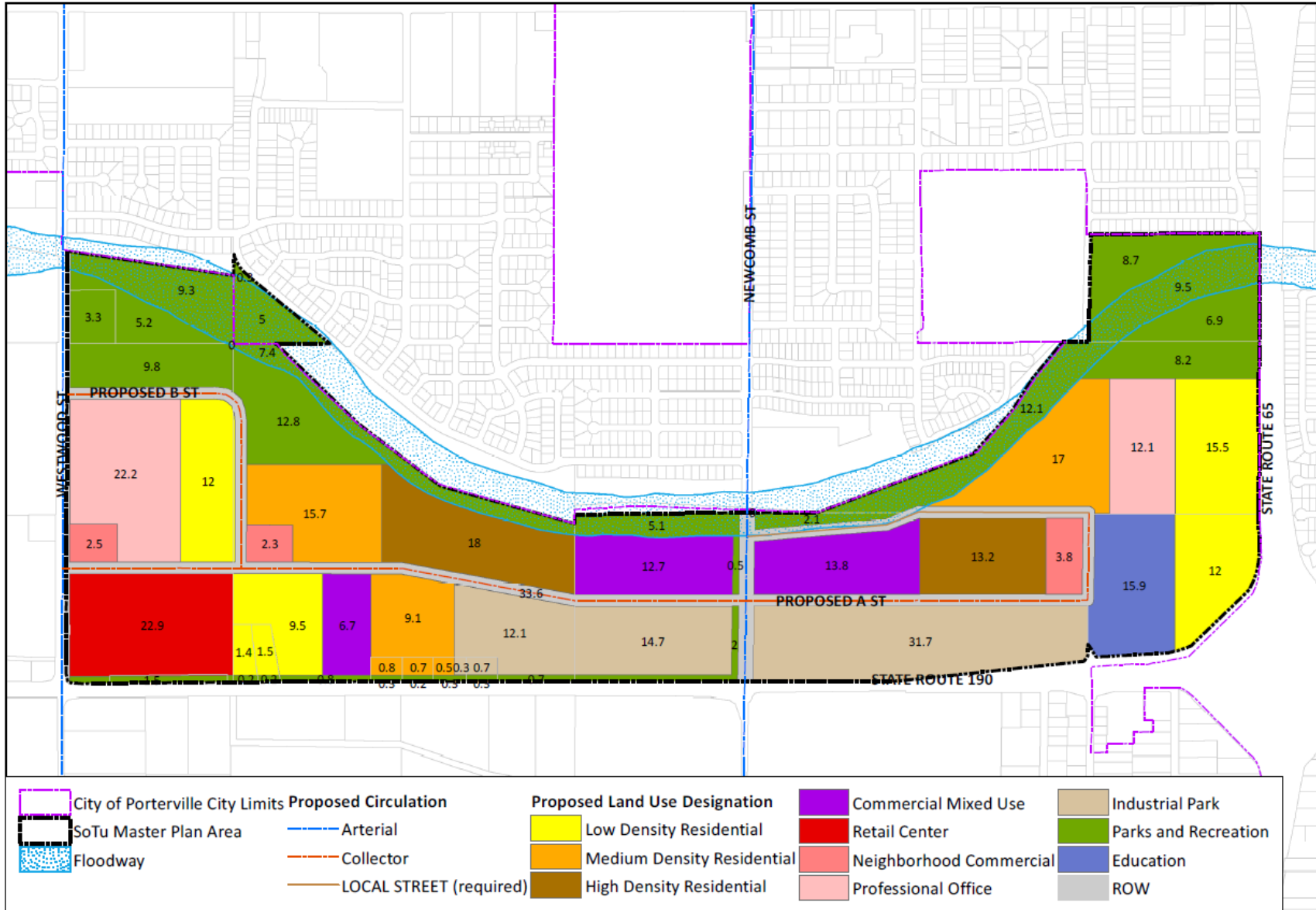


Figure 3: Proposed Circulation Map

