

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

Date: November 20, 2024

To: State Agencies, Responsible Agencies, Local and Public Agencies, and Interested Parties

From/Lead Agency: City of Tulare, Planning Department

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for FNC Farming Subdivision and Annexation Project

The City of Tulare (City), as the Lead Agency, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Public Resources Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the FNC Farming Subdivision and Annexation Project (Project). This Notice of Availability has been issued to notify interested parties that the Draft EIR is publicly available for a 45-day review and comment period. The City is requesting comments on the Draft EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, interested public agencies, organizations, and the general public (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15087). The Draft EIR assesses the potential environmental impacts resulting from construction and operation of the Project, including any required off-site improvements.

Project Location

The approximately 140.32-acre Project site is currently located within the western portion of unincorporated Tulare County (County) but would be annexed to the City of Tulare (City) as part of the Project. The Project site is located on the Southeast corner of Prosperity Avenue and Morrison Street. The site is topographically flat and is bounded by agricultural uses to the South and East, single-family housing to the North, and a single-family subdivision that is currently under construction to the west. The Project site consists of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 172-010-021, 172-010-022, and 184-020-010. Specifically, the Project site is located in Section 6, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, as depicted on the U.S. Geological Survey Tulare, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map.

Project Summary

The Project proposes the construction of 556 single-family residential units and a 5.47-acre central park and pond. The Project proposes annexation of the 140.32-acre site into the City of Tulare. The 140.32-acre Project site is currently under Tulare County jurisdiction but has been included in the City of Tulare Urban Development Boundary according to the 2035 City of Tulare General Plan. The County has zoned the site as Exclusive Agriculture 20-Acre and 40-Acre minimum (AE-20, AE-40), and the City of Tulare has designated the site as Residential Estate (2.1-3 D.U./acre) and Rural Residential (0-2 D.U./acre). The applicant is proposing to change the City of Tulare General Plan Designation to Low Density Residential and Rural Residential. The applicant is also proposing to pre-zone the majority of the subject property to the R-1-5 Single-Family Residential, 5,000 sq. ft. minimum lot area zoning designation with an approximately 7.8-acre remainder to be zoned Rural Residential. The proposed pre-zoning will become effective upon annexation of the Project site into the City of Tulare.

The Project would result in onsite and offsite infrastructure improvements including new and relocated utilities, new residential streets, including the extension of North Oakmore Street. Morrison Street and Prosperity Avenue will be widened to their full planned right-of-way and curb, gutter, and sidewalk will be installed. The Project would not require demolition of any anchored structure, but there are approximately 33.9 acres of agricultural high tunnels that will be removed prior to construction. The construction of the Project will be in three phases.

Discretionary actions for this project would include approval of a tentative subdivision map, zone amendment (pre-zoning for anticipated annexation), general plan amendment, and annexation of the property from the County of Tulare to the City of Tulare.

Project Impacts

Both the Initial Study that accompanied the Notice of Preparation and the Draft EIR found that the Project would result in no impact or a less-than-significant impact for the following environmental topics: aesthetics, energy, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

With the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study that accompanied the Notice of Preparation and the Draft EIR, potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant for the following environmental topics: air quality, biological resources; cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resources; geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards, hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and transportation.

The Draft EIR concluded that the Project would have significant and unavoidable impacts, even with mitigation measures incorporated, for the following environmental topics: agricultural and forestry resources.

The CEQA Guidelines also require this notice to indicate whether or not the Project site is included on any of the lists of sites enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (the Cortese List). As further discussed in the Initial Study that accompanied the Notice of Preparation and the Draft EIR, the Project site is not included on the Cortese List.

Public Comment Period

The public comment period for this Draft EIR will begin on November 20, 2024, and end on January 6, 2025.

Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review online at the following website: <https://www.tulare.ca.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning/environmental-documents>. The document is also available for review at the Tulare City Hall, Planning Department (411 E Kern Avenue, Tulare, California 93274) Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and at the Tulare Public Library (475 N M Street, Tulare, California 93274) Tuesday through Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 7:45 p.m., and Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., and on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

The City requests that comments pertaining to the content of the Draft EIR be made in writing and addressed to Mr. Steven Sopp at the City of Tulare, Planning Department, 411 E Kern Avenue, Tulare, California 93274. Written comments may also be sent by email to Mr. Sopp at ssopp@tulare.ca.gov. Comment letters and emails must be received by 5:00 p.m. on January 6, 2025.

Public Hearing

The Planning Commission of the City of Tulare will hold a public hearing on Monday, January 27, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers, 491 North "M" Street, Tulare, California. All interested parties are invited to attend. For further information, please contact the Planning Division at (559) 684-4217.

The Planning Commission will consider the FNC Farming Subdivision and Annexation Project including the following entitlement applications: Annexation No. 2024-01 (East Tulare No. 38 – FNC Farming), General Plan Amendment No. 2024-02, Zone Amendment No. 754, Tentative Subdivision Map – FNC Farming.
