

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR CITY OF MERCED, “UNIVERSITY VISTA” PROJECT

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act, the City of Merced has prepared a notice which announces the availability of a Notice of Preparation for public review and comment. The City of Merced is the lead agency and Environmental Science Associates, a California Corporation, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on behalf of the City.

The University Vista project area (Assessor’s Parcel Number 170-180-006-000) is located in unincorporated Merced County and is generally bounded by Lake Road to the east, Bellevue Road to the south, and Golf Road to the west. Located within the northeastern portion of the City of Merced’s Sphere of Influence (SOI)/Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) area, the City is proposing to annex the entire 291-acre project area into the city limits subsequent to the City’s annexation of the UC Merced campus pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 3312. Passed in 2020, AB 3312 allows the City of Merced to annex the UC Merced campus via a road strip (Bellevue Road or Lake Road) without annexing properties located between UC Merced and the city limits. The University Vista project would be eligible for annexation because its eastern boundary is contiguous to the university. With its proximity to UC Merced, the proposed project is envisioned as a mixed-use community integrating market rate housing, affordable housing, student housing, retail, entertainment, hospitality, restaurant, office, and research. Buildout of the proposed project is estimated to accommodate the development of approximately 4,176 dwelling units and approximately 472,957 square feet of non-residential uses.

Pursuant to Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study has not been prepared for the plan. The EIR will determine the level of significance of environmental effects, and will analyze these potential effects to the detail necessary to make these determinations on significance. The EIR will address issues related to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise and vibration, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. In addition, the EIR may also consider those environmental issues which are raised by responsible agencies, trustee agencies, members of the public, or related agencies during the NOP process.

Copies of the Notice of Preparation are available by request by emailing planningweb@cityofmerced.org or downloaded from the City’s website at www.cityofmerced.org.

The City will hold two public scoping meetings for this project, one to receive comments from public agencies, and one to receive comments from the public and other interested parties and agencies. **The meetings will be held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at Merced City Hall, City Council Chambers (2nd Floor), 678 West 18th Street, Merced. The meeting for public agencies will be held from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. while the meeting for the public and other interested parties and agencies will be held from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.** However, members of the public or agency representatives may attend either session. Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings may need to be changed to virtual only. Interested parties may also participate remotely by joining the meetings at the following link: <https://cityofmerced.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

For further information, contact the Planning Division at (209) 385-6858. Any person interested in commenting on this proposed project should submit written comments to:

Kim Espinosa, Planning Manager
City of Merced Planning & Permitting
678 West 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340
espinosak@cityofmerced.org

All comments must be received in writing by no later than Monday, March 4, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. to the address above (postmarks are acceptable).

February 3, 2022

/s/ Kim Espinosa

KIM ESPINOSA, Planning Manager