

July 29, 2022

Fresno City Council
Fresno City Hall
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Board of Supervisors
Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Ave. #301
Fresno, CA 93721

To the Council Members and Board of Supervisors:

As property owners involved in the potential Southeast Development Area (SEDA), we are greatly concerned that this development plan would be harmful to Fresno. After having been to the SEDA informational meetings, we respectfully request that this plan not be implemented.

The following are the major concerns of the property owners:

1. Water Availability

Fresno currently has a population of 526,000. The SEDA Plan is designed to implement growth to accommodate 250,000 more people (a growth of 50% added to our current population.) We are currently in a difficult water situation and adding a quarter million extra people would greatly strain an already stressed situation.

a. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

This Act is requiring Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA's) to create a roadmap to sustainability by 2040. There is already a great concern about the water tables without adding to the problem.

b. Limits of 55 gallons of water per day

Governor Newsom (as reported in May 24th Fresno Bee) is considering imposing strict water restrictions for the entire state as most of the state is classified as in severe or extreme drought. Records show us to be in the third year of severe drought. The water situation should be of paramount importance in consideration of any new developments.

c. Wells and Kings River water

At one of the SEDA meetings, the question kept being raised as to the plans of obtaining water to accommodate this phenomenal growth. It seemed like the issue was being evaded until the staff member was pushed into answering. She said that property owners would be annexed into the City and would have five years to switch over to city water. The plan is to take our wells, put in the city's system and use an additional source for water (referencing the Kings River.) We do not want to give up our well water as a trade for city water!

As concerning the Kings River, it is reported that as of the 2021 drought, very little water is in the Kings River in California's San Joaquin Valley. We are in difficult times of sustaining water for current use, let alone for a growth development of this magnitude.

Our assumption is that the SEDA plan is being promoted to generate revenue. After it is in place, the next department would inherit the headache of major water shortages.

2. Permanent Loss of Prime Agriculture Land

- a. Fresno County has been the #1 agriculture producer in the United States for years. Once development occurs on the property, agriculture in this area will become a thing of the past.

b. The soil in the SEDA area is some of the best soil in the world. It is sandy loam soil making it prime soil for agriculture purposes. (It is understandable if growth were to occur in areas of hard pan soil, but not in areas that are so unique and conducive to agriculture.) The Valley has been known for agriculture. We request that our farming heritage is not changed so that we can continue to be a major asset for food production to the nation as well as the world.

3. Importation of crimes, homelessness, gangs, and drugs

Considering the projected density of the area (70 units per acre), the increase of crimes, homelessness and drugs is inevitable. The rural atmosphere will be replaced by Fresno City's problems on a much larger scale without any mention of solutions to offset these problems.

4. Loss of Property Value

With the amount of Affordable Housing that will be built in this area, the property value will decrease. (Why does this plan not include luxurious homes as are built on the North side of town?) With the affordable housing and the high density promoted, the value of this prime agriculture land will be diminished.

5. Loss of personal property

When traffic increases, road construction will also increase which will result in loss of personal property. Current examples are Church Ave expanded to three lanes and Temperance is being expanded to 6 lanes.

6. Loss of County Residency

Homeowners do not want to be annexed into the city.

- a. We do not want to change our water source from well water to city water!
- b. We do not want to be under city ordinances verses county ordinances
- c. Nor do we want to change from the County Sheriff's protection to the City Police protection.

7. Loss of rights

Currently this is an area where homeowners have the right to shoot and hunt. This right would be taken away from them with this development. People moved to the country to get away from city living. We request that you do not take this open space from property owners.

8. The trails present problems

- a. In some cases the trails split a homeowner's property. Property value would be less because of trails.
- b. Who maintains these trails?
- c. Who is liable for the trails (the City or the homeowners)?
- d. Why does the City have the right of eminent domain for trails?
- e. With increased traffic, who is responsible for the extra pollution in the waterways?

9. Pressure would surface to stop all agriculture farming

Even though the City maintains they do not want to ban all farming, the farming would be forced out. If a farmer needs to spray (even with a non harmful spray) or if dust is created, the neighborhood would complain against the farmer's actions. With the encroachment of the City development, eventually all farmers would be forced out.

10. Climate change concerns

The more asphalt, the hotter the temperature in the area. Leaving the land in an agriculture state helps with our extreme summer temperatures.

11. Homeowners have not been properly contacted and kept informed

- a. It is our understanding that a gentleman from Berkley drafted the plan without initial input from property owners and without inspection of the area. We understand that it has not been challenged until it was presented at the SEDA informational meetings.

- b. Even then, a large number of people at the meetings complained that they had not received notice of the meetings but only heard about meetings through word of mouth. Is there an underlying reason for the lack of transparency?

Instead of implementing the SEDA project, we would propose the following:

1. The City of Fresno would complete the infrastructures that have not been completed.
2. Improve the City shopping areas so customers feel equally comfortable shopping in Fresno as they do in Clovis.
3. Work on solutions to keep water from being diverted elsewhere.
4. If expansion is necessary, develop areas with hard pan soil.
5. Direct money to the City of Fresno's current needs.

As concerned property owners, we the undersigned are asking you to reconsider this SEDA proposal. We feel this proposal will have a direct negative effect on the property owners, the City of Fresno, and the production of food for the nation as well as the world. We are requesting that this proposal not be implemented nor have the possibility of being implemented in the future.

Sincerely,

Property Owners located in the SEDA Project