



SOUTHEAST PROPERTY OWNERS

January 3, 2024

Mayor Jerry Dyer
City of Fresno Mayor's Office
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Mayor Dyer,

We want to thank you for taking the time to meet with us on November 29th, and to hear our concerns regarding the Southeast Development Area Specific Plan and its associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). You were gracious with your time and we appreciate that you allowed us to address every point we came prepared to present to you that day.

By way of introduction, we negated claims that the city has made on the SEDA website to be able to execute this expansion while "protecting public health," "paying its own way" and without "negatively affecting existing neighborhoods." We trust that you heard our concerns, but we would like to communicate that they were not eased by your remarks for the following reasons:

- **Water** - We understand that you believe there is enough water in Fresno to support the implementation of SEDA. This poses the question: why is the city of Fresno distributing an "outdoor water use schedule" if water is not limited? The following data contradicts the notion that water isn't a concern. It is stated in the EIR (impact HYD-2) that "The proposed project could substantially decrease groundwater supplies and interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the North Kings Groundwater basin." Secondly as reported on the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District's website, "as our population has grown, the demand on groundwater has increased. Since 1930, the average depth of groundwater has dropped dramatically." In fact the population of Fresno has grown from less than 100,000 in 1930 to over 550,000 in 2021 and the depth of groundwater has gone from 30 feet to 128 feet in depth. Please show us your data supporting your position stating that there is no concern about the water issue with the SEDA plan.
- **Air Pollution/Quality** - The city's claim to protect exiting neighborhoods from negative affects is directly opposed to the numerous and repeated mentions of "significant and unavoidable impacts" in the EIR. It states in section 3.3, for instance, that the proposed project would "conflict with or obstruct implementation of the

applicable air quality plan.” Impact AIR-1 further states that “implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial long-term criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed the Valley Air District regional significance thresholds and would therefore not be considered consistent with the existing Air Quality Plans.” Why even have an air quality plan, if we don’t adhere to it? What measures are you taking to implement an air quality plan?

- **Farmland** - You acknowledged that preserving our farmland is essential. How then do you justify the significant loss of prime agriculture land to this projected plan for development? What efforts are being made to preserve it? The city’s website refers to the Farmland Preservation Program which has yet to be enacted. This is of concern to us. Furthermore, a GV Wire article published on December 8th, reports that the [Fresno Council Votes Down Affordable Housing Project in North Fresno](#). Among the concerns of opposing council members, it was noted that “affordable housing would bring blight to the area.” Is this a risk you are willing to take in Southeast Fresno?
- **SOI** - We understand the city is adamant about keeping Southeast Fresno in the Sphere of Influence. Why are you so insistent on that matter when you have agreed with us that this is the best prime agricultural land in the nation? If that is the case, can you explain why you will not take it out of the sphere of influence and why you think that our property is not devalued by this plan?
- **Population Growth** - During our meeting, you acknowledged a 0.2% growth estimate. According to [county population projections](#) (P-2A) released by the the California Department of Finance, the estimated population for Fresno county in 2024 is 1,019,575. That number is only expected to reach 1,095,205 by 2060—a total of 75,630 more people. The SEDA project *alone* is prepared to accommodate 45,000 *homes* by 2050. That’s nearly one home for every two people we expect to arrive by 2060—an entire decade before the projected estimation. It states in the EIR that this plan “would provide for increased density and accelerate housing production throughout the area.” Please explain why you support the EIR when it starkly contradicts the actual projections for growth in our area.
- **Budget** - We understand this plan will cost in excess of \$1 billion, though we also understand, according to Jennifer Clark, that the *actual* costs won’t be clear until the plan for development is actually set into motion. It is unwise to proceed forward with a project of this financial magnitude when, as growth projections estimate, we likely won’t even have the need for it. How does the city plan to uphold it’s claim that it will “pay its own way” when the costs are unclear to date? What is driving the urgency behind its passage?

We understand that we have to plan for growth in the city of Fresno. It would be foolish and unwise to avoid properly doing so. We do, however, insist that the planning should be appropriate to projected growth, without squandering the valuable and unique qualities and resources of the specific area. We reiterate our concerns that the SEDA specific plan and EIR are based on an erroneous expectation of a wide influx of people and completely disregards the distinct and lasting features Southeast Fresno has to offer our community.

We remain in want of direct answers as our questions continue to go unanswered. We aim to hold our city and county representatives accountable, as they neglect to uphold the rule of law as it pertains to responsible planning for the future of our city.

In closing, we would like to request the opportunity to meet with you once again, so that we may hear your answers to these pointed questions. Until then, we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours,

Leadership Group
Southeast Property Owners