



## **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY: DRAFT MASTER EIR**

The City of Modesto has prepared a draft Master EIR that evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the City's General Plan amendment project. The information below describes project specifics, including details related to public review.

**Project Title.** General Plan Amendment 2040

**Project Location.** Modesto is located in Stanislaus County, in the northern San Joaquin Valley, approximately 95 miles east of San Francisco and 80 miles south of Sacramento. The City of Ceres is located immediately south of the Modesto city limits, the City of Riverbank is located immediately northeast, and the unincorporated town of Salida is located northwest.

The current Modesto city limits include an area of approximately 37 square miles, and the entire general plan area ("planning area") encompasses approximately 67 square miles or 42,600 acres. The planning area is generally bounded by the Stanislaus River on the north, Whitmore Avenue on the south, Morse Road, Toomes Road, and Hammett Road on the west and North Santa Fe Avenue and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad on the east. The City's planning area boundary includes Salida.

**Project Description.** The proposed project is an amendment to Modesto's Urban Area General Plan (UAGP) intended to modernize it, extend its useful life and to update it with regard to new laws enacted since the last significant amendment that was adopted in October 2008. The planning horizon timeframe is 2040.

New and revised UAGP content reflected in the proposed Project documentation is comprised of three major categories: (1) a revised Land Use Element, including a revised land use diagram and policies to guide new development within existing neighborhoods, development to create new neighborhoods, and development of infill sites; (2) a revised Circulation Element, including mode-specific transportation diagrams, major transportation corridor policies, complete streets policies, and location-specific policies to differentiate among the existing developed City in general, new growth areas and Downtown / infill development opportunities; and, (3) revision to text and policies throughout the other portions of the UAGP for purposes of internal consistency and to meet applicable requirements of state law. This third category of content represents a substantial volume of work by the project team; major efforts have been devoted to revising the General Plan cover-to-cover. The following describes the proposed edits and amendments to the UAGP within these categories.

## A. Land Use Element

The proposed project contemplates revisions to the UAGP Land Use Diagram. New and revised land use policies are proposed, in order to allow the UAGP to better reflect the City's long-term vision for growth and development, and to comply with applicable state laws.

- **Land Use Classifications** – Two new General Plan land use designations are reflected in the proposed project, and one land use designation would be eliminated. The new "Business-Commercial-Residential" land use designation would provide opportunity for employment-intensive development in close proximity to housing and services, and the new "Downtown" designation would help define Modesto's vision of its City center.
- **Redevelopment** – As a result of California law dissolving Redevelopment Agencies, the Redevelopment Planning District land use designation would be eliminated and replaced with the most appropriate alternative designation, on a site- / area- specific basis, including the new Downtown land use designation. Certain other designations would be applied with refined boundaries that better correlate with existing development and/or zoning.
- **Policies** – New land use and related policies promote the following: infill development; protecting established neighborhoods; housing at all levels of affordability; enhanced transportation / land use compatibility; intensified development along major transportation corridors; and, economic development / employment.

## B. Circulation Element

The UAGP amendment includes proposed revisions to transportation facility designations, and new / revised policies to provide direction for anticipated issues and to comply with applicable state law.

- **Complete Streets (AB1358)** – Proposed goals and policies would provide guidance toward providing the full range of transportation mode choice options for the traveling public: pedestrian & disabled, bicycle, auto, and transit.
- **Constrained Streets** – For certain streets that are constrained from further widening due to existing development, right-of-way exactions may be limited to those necessary to close a gap in vehicle travel lane(s), bicycle facility, and/or curb-gutter-sidewalk.
- **Reduce VMT** – New goal and policy language regarding gridded street networks, increased intersection density, and non-motorized access is intended to reduce per-capita vehicle miles travelled over time.
- **Corridor Studies** – New policy is proposed that calls for study of certain major transportation corridors for purposes of planning for both transportation and land use related improvements, in the context of future urban design vision.

- **Strategies** – Travel mode-specific strategies are proposed for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, rail and streets. Each strategy includes a goal that is supported by policies.
- **Road system changes**—In addition to traffic policy revisions, the following are known needed changes to the road network.
  - **North County Corridor** – The future North County Corridor is proposed consistent with the most current design alternatives, east of McHenry Avenue / SR108, generally parallel to Claribel Avenue. As a result, the designation for Claribel Avenue would be changed from Expressway to Minor Arterial.
  - **Principal Arterials** – McHenry Avenue / SR108 (south of Granger Avenue), Yosemite Boulevard / SR132 (between “D” Street and El Vista Avenue), El Vista Avenue (between Scenic Drive and Yosemite Boulevard) and Crows Landing Road (south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the plan area boundary), would be changed from Principal Arterial to Minor Arterial due to ROW constraints.
  - **Downtown Collectors** – Downtown streets generally within the borders of Needham Street, Burney Street, Sierra Drive and Washington Street would be re-designated to Downtown Collector streets.
  - **Freeways and Expressways** – Revised locations and designations for freeways, expressways and interchanges are proposed as shown on Exhibit V-2 of the UAGP.
  - **Bicycle Circulation** – A revised bicycle circulation plan is shown on Exhibit V-3 of the UAGP. An enhanced bicycle transportation network would address the need to provide increased opportunities for non-motorized transportation, and would also help the City meet the requirements of State law relative to complete streets.

### C. Other Amendments

The proposed GP amendment would also incorporate changes beyond those associated with land use and circulation as described above. Recently-adopted state legislation (e.g. SB5, SB244) requires certain changes to the UAGP. Similarly, to the extent that the City’s utility master plans have been updated since the prior UAGP amendment was adopted, the proposed project would contain current, relevant and accurate information. Therefore, nearly every Chapter and Section of the UAGP would be affected as a result of the proposed Project.

**Significant Environmental Effects.** The draft Master EIR identifies significant and unavoidable environmental impacts, expected to occur as a result of the proposed General Plan amendment project, under the following analysis topics: Traffic & Circulation; Air Quality & GHG Emissions; Noise; Agricultural Lands; Water Supply / Demand; Biology; and, Historical Resources.

**Document Availability.** The comment period for this document begins on Monday, June 25, 2018, and closes on **Friday, August 10, 2018**. One copy each of the draft General Plan amendment and the draft Master EIR is available for public review at the City of Modesto Community and Economic Development Department (1010 Tenth Street, Suite 3300, Modesto CA), and at the Modesto library (1500 "I" Street, Modesto CA). The documents can also be accessed at <http://modestogov.com/780/General-Plan-Amendment-2040>. Written comments may be submitted via email, or delivery to City Hall, as follows:

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