

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning Commission**

**Resolution #4178**

**WHEREAS**, the Merced City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of December 17, 2025, held a public hearing and considered **Conditional Use Permit #25-0018, Site Plan Review Permit #25-0010, and Minor Use Permit #25-0018**, initiated by Cesar Perez, on behalf of ISEA International, LLC, property owner. The Conditional Use Permit would allow the development of an apartment complex with approximately 160 units. The Site Plan Review Permit would set the development standards for the development within the Planned Development. The Minor Use Permit would allow the development to deviate from the City of Merced Residential Design Standards for multi-family development. The subject site is located south of Cardella Road, between El Redondo Drive (future extension) and Horizon Avenue (future extension). The subject site has a General Plan designation of Commercial Office (CO) and Neighborhood Commercial (CN), and a Zoning classification of Planned Development (P-D) #50; also known as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 206-030-017; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Merced City Planning Commission concurs with Findings/Considerations A through K (Exhibit B) of Staff Report #25-1074 and,

**WHEREAS**, the Merced City Planning Commission concurs with the Findings for Conditional Use and Minor Use Permits in Merced Municipal Code Section 20.68.020 (E), and other Considerations as outlined in Exhibit B; and,

**NOW THEREFORE**, after reviewing the City's Draft Environmental Determination, and discussing all the issues, the Merced City Planning Commission does resolve to hereby adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #24-0040, and approve Conditional Use Permit #25-0018, Site Plan Review Permit #25-0010 and Minor Use Permit #25-0017, subject to the Conditions set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Upon motion by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, and carried by the following vote:

AYES:       Commissioner(s)  
NOES:       Commissioner(s)  
ABSENT:   Commissioner(s)  
ABSTAIN:   Commissioner(s)

**Attachment A**

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #4178

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December 17, 2025

Adopted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025

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Chairperson, Planning Commission of  
the City of Merced, California

ATTEST:

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Secretary

Attachments:

Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval

Exhibit B - Findings

**Conditions of Approval**  
**Planning Commission Resolution #4178**  
**Conditional Use Permit #25-0018**  
**Site Plan Review Permit #25-0010**  
**Minor Use Permit #25-0017**

1. The proposed project shall be constructed/designed in substantial compliance with the Site Plan and Elevations (Attachments C, and D of Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1074), except as modified by the conditions.
2. The proposed project shall comply with all standard Municipal Code and Subdivision Map Act requirements as applied by the City Engineering Department.
3. All other applicable codes, ordinances, policies, etc. adopted by the City of Merced shall apply.
4. The developer/applicant shall indemnify, protect, defend (with counsel selected by the City), and hold harmless the City, and any agency or instrumentality thereof, and any officers, officials, employees, or agents thereof, from any and all claims, actions, suits, proceedings, or judgments against the City, or any agency or instrumentality thereof, and any officers, officials, employees, or agents thereof to attack, set aside, void, or annul, an approval of the City, or any agency or instrumentality thereof, advisory agency, appeal board, or legislative body, including actions approved by the voters of the City, concerning the project and the approvals granted herein. Furthermore, developer/applicant shall indemnify, protect, defend, and hold harmless the City, or any agency or instrumentality thereof, against any and all claims, actions, suits, proceedings, or judgments against any governmental entity in which developer/applicant's project is subject to that other governmental entity's approval and a condition of such approval is that the City indemnify and defend (with counsel selected by the City) such governmental entity. City shall promptly notify the developer/applicant of any claim, action, suits, or proceeding. Developer/applicant shall be responsible to immediately prefund the litigation cost of the City including, but not limited to, City's attorney's fees and costs. If any claim, action, suits, or proceeding is filed challenging this approval, the developer/applicant shall be required to execute a separate and formal defense, indemnification, and deposit agreement that meets the approval

of the City Attorney and to provide all required deposits to fully fund the City's defense immediately but in no event later than five (5) days from that date of a demand to do so from City. In addition, the developer/applicant shall be required to satisfy any monetary obligations imposed on City by any order or judgment.

5. The developer/applicant shall construct and operate the project in strict compliance with the approvals granted herein, City standards, laws, and ordinances, and in compliance with all State and Federal laws, regulations, and standards. In the event of a conflict between City laws and standards and a State or Federal law, regulation, or standard, the stricter or higher standard shall control.
6. Community Facilities District (CFD) annexation is required for annual operating costs for police and fire services as well as storm drainage, public landscaping, street trees, street lights, parks and open space. CFD procedures shall be initiated before building permit approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a request agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the City Engineer to be sufficient to cover procedure costs and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received.
7. All buildings shall be regularly maintained to keep the building finishes in good condition and aesthetically pleasing.
8. The applicant shall install short-term and long-term bike racks equivalent to 10% of required vehicle parking spaces (with a minimum of 2 spaces) as required under MMC Section 20.38.080 – Bicycle Parking.
9. The driving aisles shall be at least 26 feet wide to allow for Fire engine access and spacing for Fire action response. Details to be reviewed and approved by the Fire Department during the Building Permit stage.
10. Fire access shall be provided to the buildings within 150 feet of all portions of the buildings from where a fire engine may be stationed. Details to be finalized with the Fire Department during the Building Permit stage.
11. The applicant shall work with the Fire Department to determine if each building shall have its own independent Fire Department connection and fire control room.

12. The applicant shall work with the City's Refuse Department to determine the proper location for trash enclosure(s) and if a recycling container will be required to comply with AB 341. The container(s) shall be enclosed within refuse enclosure(s) built to City Standards. Use of compactor shall also be considered to reduce the number of pick-up requests.
13. All parking lot and building lighting shall be shielded or oriented in a way that does not allow "spill-over" onto adjacent lots in compliance with the California Energy Code requirements. Any lighting on the building shall be oriented to shine downward and not spill-over onto adjacent parcels.
14. Minor modifications to the site plan or building heights may be reviewed and approved by the Director of Development Services or be referred to the Site Plan Review Committee or Planning Commission for consideration, at the discretion of the Director of Development Services.
15. The landscape plan shall comply with Merced Municipal Code Section 20.36 – Landscaping, which also addresses the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance under Merced Municipal Code Section 17.60. Landscaping shall also comply with all relevant State requirements regarding water efficiency.
16. All landscaping in the public right-of-way shall comply with State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 2015-0032 "To Adopt an Emergency Regulation for Statewide Urban Water Conservation" and the City's Water Conservation Ordinance (Merced Municipal Code Section 15.42). Xeriscape or artificial turf shall be used in place of natural sod or other living ground cover. If turf is proposed to be installed in park-strips or on-site, high quality artificial turf (approved by the City Engineer and Development Services Director) shall be installed. All irrigation provided to street trees, parking lot trees, or other landscaping shall be provided with a drip irrigation or micro-spray system.
17. The parking lot layout shall comply with all applicable City Standards. Parking lot trees shall be provided at a ratio of one tree for every six parking spaces. These trees shall be installed per the City's Parking Lot Landscape Standards, shall be a minimum of 15-gallons, and be of a type that provides a 30-foot minimum canopy at maturity (trees shall be selected from the City's approved tree list).

18. If the property is to be gated, the applicant shall work with the Police and Fire Departments to provide proper gate access equipment such as a Knox box and a click-to-enter system. Vehicle stacking space for at least two vehicles shall be provided between gates and driveways in order to avoid traffic back-up on City streets.
19. The design and color of a perimeter fence shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department during the building permit stage.
20. The proposed should comply with development standards are proposed in Attachment E of Staff Report #25-1074.
21. The developer shall reach out to the Merced Irrigation District to determine if a storm drainage agreement is required for storm drainage discharge to MID facilities.
22. The developer shall be responsible for paying 12.5% of the cost to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Cardella Road and El Redondo Drive. Details and final estimated costs shall be determined by the City Engineer. This would be due before issuance of a building permit, or as otherwise required by the City Engineer. The developer would need to work with a traffic engineer to install traffic control measures at the intersection of Cardella Road and El Redondo Drive (such as top signs) that would be used until the traffic signal is installed.
23. The developer shall be responsible for paying 12.5% of the cost to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Cardella Road and Horizon Avenue. This would be due before issuance of a building permit, or as otherwise required by the City Engineer. If the proposed two acres of future commercial development are subdivided from the apartment development before the issuance of a building permit, the 12.5% shall be due at the time that the future 2-acre commercial lot is developed.
24. Full public improvements shall be installed/repared if the permit value of the project exceeds \$100,000.00. Public improvements may include, but not be limited to, repairing/replacing the sidewalk, curb, gutter, and street corner ramp(s), so that they comply with ADA standards and other relevant City of Merced/State/Federal standards and regulations.
25. The project shall comply with all the Post Construction Standards required to comply with State requirements for the City's Phase II MS-4 Permit (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System).

26. The applicant shall work with the City's Refuse Department to determine the best design, location, and angle for the refuse enclosures and to determine if a recycling container would be required for this use. Use of compactor shall also be considered to reduce the number of pick-up requests.
27. All landscaping within the public right-of-way along Cardella Road and El Redondo Drive shall comply with state and local requirements for water conservation. All irrigation provided to street trees or other landscaping shall be provided with a drip irrigation or micro-spray system and shall comply with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MMC Section 20.36.030). Landscape plans for all public landscaping shall be provided with the Improvement Plans.
28. All undeveloped areas shall be maintained free of weeds and debris.
29. The developer would be responsible for their portion of frontage improvements along El Redondo Drive and Cardella Road. Should this development be initiated before the adjacent/entitled subdivision to the west (Royal Wood Villas/Estates), then the developer shall be responsible for constructing El Redondo Drive from Cardella Drive south to its current terminus. All roads shall be constructed to meet City Standards, or as otherwise required by the City Engineer.
30. The developer would be responsible for their portion of frontage improvements along Horizon Avenue. If the two acres of commercial are subdivided from the apartment complex, the frontage improvements along Horizon Avenue will be the responsibility of the developer of the commercial site. Until that future acre site is developed, this development shall, at a minimum, install compacted road base for emergency access.
31. Water, sewer and storm drainage services shall be provided to the site by a loop system coming from Horizon Avenue, connecting to Cardella Road and down to El Redondo Drive, unless otherwise stated by the City Engineer.

**Findings and Considerations**  
**Planning Commission Resolution #4178**  
**Conditional Use Permit #25-0018**  
**Site Plan Review Permit #25-0010**  
**Minor Use Permit #25-0017**

**FINDINGS/CONSIDERATIONS:**

**General Plan Compliance and Policies Related to This Application**

- A) The proposed project complies with the General Plan designation of Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and Commercial Office (CO) and the Zoning classification of Planned Development (P-D) #50 with approval of a Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan Review Permit, and Minor Use Permit. Multi Family Dwellings requires a conditional use permit per MMC 20.10.020 – Land Use Regulations for Commercial Zoning Districts.

For the Neighborhood Commercial land use designation, the Zoning Ordinance allows a residential density of 12.1 to 24 units per acre. The proposed 160 units on 10.9 acres would have a density of 14.7 units per acre, which is within the allowed range for this site.

*Policy L 1.1.a Promote mixed use development combining compatible employment, service and residential elements.*

The proposed apartment complex is surrounded by low-density residential uses to the south and approved residential projects to the east and west (currently undeveloped). Two acres of the subject site are also reserved for future commercial development which would serve the proposed multi-family development and adjacent residential subdivisions with a walkable environment.

*Policy L-3.2.a Encourage infill of vacant parcels.*

The undeveloped 10.9-acre parcel has remained vacant for many decades. The subject site is surrounded by approved residential development.

**Traffic/Circulation**

- B) It is anticipated that the proposed project would generate approximately 1,064 Average Daily Trips (ADT) based on an average daily rate of 6.65 trips per apartment unit. The proposed apartment complex would consist



of 13 apartment buildings and a community building, some open space areas for its residents such as a dog park, pool, and playground area. The apartment complex would have access from El Redondo Drive (collector road) that connects the project site south to Yosemite Avenue (arterial road), and north to Cardella Road (arterial road). Emergency Vehicle Access for Fire engine access would be available along Cardella Road, along the eastern portion of the project site. The traffic generated by this development should not exceed the current and projected capacity for the surrounding street system as the area was designed to accommodate a higher density of residential units and commercial uses. The proposal has a density of 14.7 dwelling units per acre which is significantly less than the 30 dwelling units per acre allowed within a Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial Office land use designation.

### **Public Improvements/City Services**

#### **C) Road Improvements**

Frontage improvements for the proposed 160-unit apartment complex would be made on Cardella Road from El Redondo Drive to Horizon Avenue. El Redondo Drive and Horizon Avenue would need to be extended from their current terminus, south of the project site, up to Cardella Road (Conditions #29 and #30). The right-of-way segments along Cardella Road, El Redondo Drive and Horizon Avenue would be designed to accommodate the road, park strip, sidewalk and landscaping as shown in the proposed site plan (Attachment C of Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1074).

#### **Traffic Signals**

The developer shall be responsible for contributing towards the future traffic signals at the intersection of Cardella Road and El Redondo Drive and the intersection of Cardella Road and Horizon Avenue (Conditions #22 and #23). This would be due before issuance of a building permit, or as otherwise required by the City Engineer. Until the traffic signals are installed, the applicant shall work with a traffic engineer to install traffic control measures at the intersections of Cardella Road and El Redondo Drive and the intersection of Cardella Road and Horizon Avenue (such as stop signs), as required by the City Engineer.

#### **Community Facility District**

In response to significant growth in Merced without a corresponding increase in the General Fund and other revenues, the City Council adopted public facilities impact fees in 1998 and also established a requirement for Community Facilities Districts (Condition #6) to help fund roadway, police, fire, and park infrastructure to help fund operating costs for police and fire services. Also to cover cost related to streetlights, storm drain, and maintenance of landscaping.

### **Utilities**

- D) City water and sewer lines would need to be extended from the subdivision to the south to serve this development. The City's main water line, sewer line, and storm drain line would go around the project site and be installed within the City's right-of-way along El Redondo Drive and Horizon Avenue and be connected to the water and sewer lines at Cardella Road along the project frontage.

### **Site Plan**

- E) As shown on Attachment C, the subject site consists of an undeveloped rectangular lot of approximately 10.9 acres in size. Vehicle access would be available through El Redondo Drive with emergency vehicle access through Cardella Road located at the northeast corner of the development. Five 3-story apartment buildings composed of 12 units each would be located along the northern portion of the site with parking spaced directly south. One 3-story apartment building composed of 12 units and a 3-story apartment building composed of 24 units would be located towards the eastern portion of the development. The center portion, surrounded by parking spaces would consist of seven buildings: two 2-story apartment building with 16 units each, four 2-story apartment buildings with 8 units each and a single-story community building. The apartment units range from 984 square-feet to 1,218 square feet. Each unit would include 2-3 bedrooms and two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a family/dining area.

### **Minor Use Permit**

The Minor Use Permit allows the applicant to deviate from the General Design Standards for Multi-Family Dwellings (MMC 20.46.030 and MMC 20.46.040). Some of the design standards the proposed development would deviate from include, but are not limited to, are shown below;

- i. Trash Collection Area – The development proposes the location of trash enclosures be located at specific locations requested by the City of Merced Refuse Department for a more efficient pickup and cannot be completely screened as required by subsection E.2.
- ii. Private Outdoor Space – the development proposes a private outdoor space of 19 square feet, 26 square feet, 33 square feet, and 39 square-feet thought the different unit layouts of the development instead of the 40 square-feet required by subsection I.1 and I.2.

#### Site Plan Review Permit

After the Final Planned Development has been approved, individual projects within a Planned Development shall require a Site Plan Review Permit prior to development to address conformance with the Final SUP. Since the proposed development is within Planned Development (P-D) #50, the Site Plan Review Permit addresses the conformance with Planned Development (P-D) #50 and sets specific development standards within said Planned Development (P-D) for the proposed apartment complex (Attachment E of Staff Report #25-1074).

#### Building Elevations

- F) As shown on Attachment D, the proposed apartment complex would have two-story and three-story buildings with the maximum building height being approximately 38 feet. The exterior of the buildings has a modern design with light gray colored exterior. The exterior wall finish with consist of stucco and accent panels on the sides of the structures. The design would need to be consistent with design and colors shown on the proposed elevations at Attachment D.

#### Parking

- G) Pursuant to Section 20.38.030 of the Merced City Municipal Code (MMC), the proposed shall provide 1.75 spaces per unit of two bedrooms for multi-family dwellings of 30 units or less and 1.5 spaces per unit thereafter, plus 0.5 spaces per additional bedroom over 2 in each unit. The proposed 160 units includes 104 2-bedroom units and 56 3-bedroom units. In total, the proposed development requires 276 parking spaces and the development proposes 311 spaces which satisfies the parking requirements.

### **Neighborhood Impact**

- H) The subject site is located in the northwest portion of Merced and is surrounded by mostly vacant land and residential uses. The immediate surroundings of the subject site include a single-family subdivision to the south, vacant land with approved entitlements for residential developments to the east and west and vacant land in the County of Merced limits to the north across Cardella Road.

A Public Hearing Notice was circulated in the Merced County Times and mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject site three weeks prior to the public hearing date. As of the date that this report was prepared, staff has not received any comments or concerns from the public about this request.

### **Conditional Use and Minor Use Permit Findings**

- I) In order for the Planning Commission to approve or deny a conditional use and minor use permit, they must consider the following criteria and make findings to support or deny each criteria per MMC 20.68.020 (E) – Findings for Approval.

1. *The proposed use is consistent with the purpose and standards of zoning district, the general plan, and any adopted area or neighborhood plan, specific plan, or community plan.*

As shown under Finding A, the proposed project complies with the General Plan designation of Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and Neighborhood Commercial and the zoning classification of Planned Development (P-D) #50 with approval of this conditional use permit and minor use permit.

2. *The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use will be compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity of the subject property.*

As shown under Finding E – Site Plan, and Finding F – Building Elevations, staff believes that the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposal would be compatible with existing and future land uses in the vicinity.

3. *The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare of the city.*

Staff does not anticipate that this proposal would be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare of the City. As mentioned above, the project is compatible with adjacent uses and is consistent with development standards for its zone.

4. *The proposed use is properly located within the City and adequately served by existing or planned services and infrastructure.*

The proposed apartment complex is properly located within the City and adequately served by planned services and infrastructure such as street access, sewer connections, water connections, and other utilities.

#### **Site Plan Review Permit Findings**

- J) Per Merced Municipal Code Section 20.68.050 – Site Plan Review Permit may be approved only if all the following findings can be made:

1. *The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and any adopted area, specific, community, or neighborhood plan.*

As shown under Finding A, the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan designation and Zoning classification for this site.

2. *The proposed project complies with all applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance and Municipal Code.*

With approval of the conditions found in Exhibit A of this resolution, the proposal would comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Municipal Code.

3. *The design and layout of the proposed project will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of existing and future neighboring properties and structures.*

The site is surrounded by vacant properties and a residential subdivision to the south. The proposed multi-family residential development is consistent with the surrounding uses. With the approval of the conditions found within this resolution, the proposed project would not interfere with the use and enjoyment of existing and future neighboring properties and structures.

4. *The proposed architectural design makes use of appropriate materials, texture and color, and will remain aesthetically appealing and appropriately maintained.*

The proposed apartment complex would include design and materials, textures and colors, and will remain aesthetically appropriately maintained with the conditions found within this resolution.

5. *Any proposed landscaping design, including color, location, size, texture, type, and coverage of plant materials, as well as provisions for irrigation, maintenance, and protection landscaping elements, will complement structures and provide an attractive environment.*

The applicant did not include a specific landscape plan with this proposal. Landscape locations were provided as part of Attachment C, with park locations, park strips and approximate tree locations through the development. Landscaping must comply with all applicable landscaping standards found under Merced Municipal Code Section 20.36 – Landscaping, and any other Municipal Code or State requirements. Therefore, any proposed landscaping design, including color, location, size, texture, type, and coverage of plant materials, as well as provisions for irrigation, maintenance, and protection landscaping elements, will complement structures and provide an attractive environment.

6. *The proposed design will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or be injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

The proposal meets City standards with approval of this permit and the conditions found within this resolution. The proposed project would not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or be injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity of the proposed project.

### **Environmental Clearance**

- K) Planning staff conducted an environmental review (Environmental Review #25-0040) of the project in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and a Categorical Exemption (no further environmental review is required) is being recommended (Attachment F of Staff Report #25-1074).