



CITY OF MERCED

City Council Chamber
Merced Civic Center
678 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Minutes Planning Commission

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

6:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson GONZALEZ called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

A.1. Moment of Silence

A.2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Commissioner OCHOA led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

B. ROLL CALL

Clerk's Note: The Commission has 1 vacancy at this time. Commissioner SWIGGART was absent, excused.

Present: 5 - Chair Anthony Gonzalez, Member Walter Smith, Member Emanuelle Ochoa, Vice Chair Jeremiah Greggains, and Member Jerry Vue

Absent: 1 - Member Conchita Swiggart

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

D.1

SUBJECT: Planning Commission Minutes of December 17, 2025

ACTION:

Approving and filing the Planning Commission Minutes of December 17, 2025

A motion was made by Member Ochoa, seconded by Vice Chair Greggains and carried by the following vote, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ACTION ITEMS**E.1**

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008 (“Large Lot Map for Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST) Phase 1”) and Environmental Review #25-0029 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant, Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 654 acres into 53 lots, with a Designated Remainder of approximately 285 acres. The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP) and a Zoning classification of Planned Development (P-D) #80; *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify
1) Environmental Review #25-0029 (CEQA Section 15162 and Categorical Exemption)
2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Environmental Review #25-0029 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008 - “Large Lot Map for VST Phase 1” (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A, Standard Tentative Subdivision Map Condition in Exhibit B, and the findings/considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4168 at Attachment A of this report (“Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985”).

Senior Planner MENDOZA-GONZALEZ reviewed the report on this item. For further information, refer to Staff Report #25-985.

Public Testimony was opened at 6:20 PM.

Speaker from the Audience in Favor

STEPHEN PECK, Applicant, Merced, CA

There were no speakers in opposition to the project.

Public Testimony was closed at 6:26 PM.

Staff modified Condition #13 as follows: (Strikethrough deleted language,

underline added language.)

"13. Lot 8 shall be dedicated to the City for Fire/Police Station. The Developer shall increase the lot size dedication to approximately 1 acre. This shall include providing adequate buffering and setbacks between the expanded Police station/fire station and the adjacent residential units. Details to be worked out with the Fire and /or Police Departments during the final map stage for the large lot map and shall be contingent upon a modification to the VST development agreement."

A motion was made by Vice Chair Greggains, seconded by Chairperson Gonzalez and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #25-0029, and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008, subject to the Findings and twenty-three (23) Conditions set forth in Staff Report #25-985, with the modification of Condition #13 as indicated by staff during their presentation.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E.2

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0007 ("Virginia Smith Trust (VST) Phase 1A") and Environmental Review #25-0033 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant. Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 78.1 acres into 167 lots. The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, within Planned Development (P-D) #80, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP); *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify
1) Environmental Review #25-0033 (CEQA 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)
2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0007

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Environmental Review #25-0033 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemptions) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0007 -

"VST Phase 1A " (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibits A, , Standard Tentative Subdivision Map Condition in Exhibit B, and the findings and considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4169 at Attachment A of this report ("Planning Commission Staff Report #25-986").

Senior Planner MENDOZA-GONZALEZ reviewed the report on this item. For further information, refer to Staff Report #25-986.

There was no one present wishing to speak regarding the project; therefore, public testimony was opened and closed at 6:37 PM.

Staff modified Conditions #8, #18, and #38 as follows: (Strikethrough deleted language, underline added language.)

"8. Community Facilities District (CFD) formation 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~~ completed before final map approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a request agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the Development Services Director to be sufficient to cover procedure costs and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received.

"18. No residential driveways shall front on any arterial or collector street, except for multi-family housing developments within R-3 and R-4 land use designations.

"38. Lot 8 shall be dedicated to the City for Fire/Police Station. The Developer shall increase the lot size dedication to approximately 1 acre. This shall include providing adequate buffering and setbacks between the expanded Police station/fire station and the adjacent residential units. Details to be worked out with the Fire and /or Police Departments during the final map stage for the large lot map and shall be contingent upon a modification to the VST development agreement."

A motion was made by Member Ochoa, seconded by Chairperson Gonzalez and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #25-0033, and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0007, subject to the Findings and forty (40) Conditions set forth in Staff Report #25-986, with the modification of Conditions #8, #18, and #38 as indicated by staff during their presentation.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E.3

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0009 ("Virginia Smith Trust (VST) Phase 1B") and Environmental Review #25-0034 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant. Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 78.1 acres into 167 lots. The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, within Planned Development (P-D) 80, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP); *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Environmental Review #25-0034 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)
- 2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0009

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Environmental Review #25-0034 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0009 - "VST Phase 1B" (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A and the Findings and Considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4174 at Attachment A of this report ("Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1016").

Assistant Planner LIVINGSTON reviewed the report on this item. For further information, refer to Staff Report #25-1016.

There was no one present wishing to speak regarding the project; therefore, public Testimony was opened and closed at 6:43 PM.

Staff modified Conditions #8 and #18 as follows: (Strikethrough deleted language, underline added language.)

"8. Community Facilities District (CFD) formation 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~~ completed before final map approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a request agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the Development Services Director to be sufficient to cover procedure costs and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received.

"18. No residential driveways shall front on any arterial or collector street, except for multi-family housing developments within R-3 and R-4 land use designations."

A motion was made by Chairperson Gonzalez, seconded by Vice Chair Greggains and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #25-0034, and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0009, subject to the Findings and thirty-nine (39) Conditions set forth in Staff Report #25-1016, with the modification of Conditions #8 and #18 as indicated by staff during their presentation.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E.4

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0010 ("Virginia Smith Trust (VST) Phase 1C") and Environmental Review #25-0035 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant. Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 75.57 acres into 66 lots. The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, within Planned Development (P-D) #80, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP); *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify
1) Environmental Review #25-0035 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)
2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0010

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve

Environmental Review #25-0035 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0010 - "VST Phase 1C " (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A and the findings and considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4176 at Attachment A of this report ("Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1069").

Senior Planner MENDOZA-GONZALEZ reviewed the report on this item for Associate Planner RENTERIA. For further information, refer to Staff Report #25-1069.

There was no one present wishing to speak regarding the project; therefore, public testimony was opened and closed at 6:49 PM.

Staff modified Conditions #8 and #18 as follows: (Strikethrough deleted language, underline added language.)

"8. Community Facilities District (CFD) formation 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~~ completed before final map approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a request agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the Development Services Director to be sufficient to cover procedure costs and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received.

"18. No residential driveways shall front on any arterial or collector street, except for multi-family housing developments within R-3 and R-4 land use designations."

A motion was made by Vice Chair Greggains, seconded by Member Vue and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #25-0035, and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0010, subject to the Findings and thirty-nine (39) Conditions set forth in Staff Report #25-1016, with the modification of Conditions #8 and #18 as indicated by staff during their presentation.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E.5

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0011 ("Virginia Smith Trust (VST) Phase 1D") and Environmental Review #25-0036 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant. Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 58.17 acres into 197 lots. The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, within Planned Development (P-D) #80, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP); *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Environmental Review #25-0036 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)
- 2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0011

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Environmental Review #25-0036 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0011 - "VST Phase 1D" (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A and the Findings and Considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4177 at Attachment A of this report ("Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1071").

Senior Planner MENDOZA-GONZALEZ advised the Commission that staff is requesting additional time to conduct updates to the project proposal.

A motion was made by Chairperson Gonzalez, seconded by Vice Chair Greggains and carried by the following vote, to continue the public hearing to the Planning Commission meeting of February 4, 2026.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

E.6

SUBJECT: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0012 ("Virginia Smith Trust (VST) Phase 1E") and Environmental Review #25-0037 (Categorical Exemption) initiated by applicant. Board of Education of the County of Merced, Trustee, property owner. This application involves a request to subdivide approximately 89.58 acres into 300 lots.

The subject site is generally located on the east side of Lake Road, approximately 5,000 feet north of E. Yosemite Avenue, within Planned Development (P-D) #80, with a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (VST SP); *PUBLIC HEARING*

ACTION: Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Environmental Review #25-0037 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)
- 2) Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0012

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Environmental Review #25-0037 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption) and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0012 - "VST Phase 1E " (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A and the Findings and Considerations in Exhibit C of Draft Resolution #4175 at Attachment A of this report ("Planning Commission Staff Report #25-1059").

Assistant Planner LIVINGSTON reviewed the report on this item. For further information, refer to Staff Report #25-1059.

Public Testimony was opened at 6:57 PM.

Speaker from the Audience in Favor

STEVE TIETJEN, VST Director, Merced County

There were no speakers in opposition to the project.

Public Testimony was closed at 6:58 PM.

Staff modified Conditions #8 and #18 as follows: (Strikethrough deleted language, underline added language.)

"8. Community Facilities District (CFD) formation 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~~ completed before final map approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a request agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the Development Services Director to be sufficient to cover procedure costs and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received.

"18. No residential driveways shall front on any arterial or collector street, except for multi-family housing developments within R-3 and R-4 land use designations."

A motion was made by Chairperson Gonzalez, seconded by Member Vue and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #25-0036, and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0012, subject to the Findings and forty-one (41) Conditions set forth in Staff Report #25-1059, with the modification of Conditions #8 and #18 as indicated by staff during their presentation.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

F. BUSINESS

F.1 **SUBJECT:** Report by Planning Manager of Upcoming Agenda Items

ACTION

Information only.

Planning Manager RASHE went over the items for the next several Planning Commission meetings.

F.2 **SUBJECT:** Calendar of Meetings/Events

Jan.	20	City Council, 6:00 p.m. (Tuesday)
	21	Planning Commission, 6:00 p.m.
Feb.	2	City Council, 6:00 p.m.
	4	Planning Commission, 6:00 p.m.
	17	City Council, 6:00 p.m.
	18	Planning Commission, 6:00 p.m.
	24	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, 4:00 p.m.
Mar.	2	City Council, 6:00 p.m.
	4	Planning Commission, 6:00 p.m.
	16	City Council, 6:00 p.m.
	18	Planning Commission, 6:00 p.m.

F.3 **SUBJECT:** Planning Commission Comments

REPORT IN BRIEF

Provides an opportunity for Commissioners to make a brief announcement on any activity(ies) she/he has attended on behalf of the City and to make a brief announcement on future community events and/or activities. The Brown Act does not allow discussion or action by the legislative body under this section.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Clerk's Note: The Regular Meeting adjourned at 7 PM.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Greggains, seconded by Member Ochoa and carried by the following vote, to adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Aye: 5 - Chair Gonzalez
Member Smith
Member Ochoa
Vice Chair Greggains
Member Vue

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Swiggart

BY:



SAM RASHE, SECRETARY
MERCED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED:

ANTHONY GONZALEZ, CHAIRPERSON
MERCED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION