

March 12, 2025

Dear Merced Planning Commission,

I am writing to recommend the development of condensed single story senior living homes at 1380 Yosemite Ave, rather than two story condensed homes. This development would be adjacent to the medium-to-upper class low density neighborhood known as Oakmont Estates. I believe this approach would better align with the character of the area and meet the needs of the community, while preserving its unique qualities. The current neighborhood is defined by its low density spacious environment where residents value privacy, tranquility, and aesthetic harmony of single story homes.

Introducing two story condensed homes could dramatically alter the character of the area, leading to a higher population density, increased traffic, and a lose of the open suburban feel that makes this community so desirable. On the other hand, single story senior living homes would provide much needed housing options for other residents while maintaining the neighborhood's quite residential atmosphere. This type of development would have a lower visual impact preserving the overall spaciousness that defines the community.

Additionally, single story homes are more suitable for seniors offering ease of mobility and greater accessibility. Furthermore, this approach respects the existing architectural style and low density nature of the neighborhood. Senior living homes would integrate well with the surrounds, serving as a thoughtful addition to the community without overwhelming its character. I strongly encourage you to consider the benefits of single story senior living homes over two story condensed housing. This would not only preserve the neighborhoods unique charm, but also provide valuable housing for seniors, while minimizing disruption to the areas peaceful environment.

Thank you for you time and consideration,  
Mr. and Mrs. David Miller

City of Merced Planning Commission

General Plan Amendment #24 – 02

March 18, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I want to go on record as saying that I am in support of this project but I believe there are some unanswered questions and some items that need to be addressed before moving forward. The current project as submitted should be in no way be approved by the planning commission. To move forward and adopt this zoning change as it is submitted would be a detriment to the surrounding communities to the south and east.

As a current resident of Oakmont Village #8 the lots in this area range from 8,025 square feet to the largest one being 15,692 square feet. There are only single story homes in this development. This project states that lots 1 thru 17 will be single or two story homes and that lots 18-41 will be 2 story homes. This project should not be allowed to build two story homes on lots 1 thru 17 that back up to existing single story R-1-6 low density residential lots.

As seen on Attachment E the color map dated 4/30/24 they clearly show a greenbelt of landscape with trees around the entire project with the exception of lots 18 and 19 that would be two story homes and back up to Parsons Avenue. Their map clearly shows the fence line backing up to the sidewalk. The rear setback for these two lots would be 5 feet. That means that the continuous greenbelt with trees would not be there and a two story home would be 5 feet from the sidewalk. Currently there is a in ground concrete box for street lighting and one labeled electric. In order to main optimum public standards I believe they should have to conform to what the subdivisions closest to them have done in the past and maintain a continuous green belt. On the color map it shows a green belt all the way around the two projects. The storage units do address in writing the required landscaping that the developer would have to adhere to. The

residential area does not address in writing exactly what they would or would not be providing as far as landscaping and if they are planning to keep the 25 redwood trees between this project and Oakmont Village #8. This creates a very grey area that could be construed as deceptive.

In the description of the project they state they will put in a 12 to 14 foot high block wall between the residential lots and the storage units and also between the resident to the east. No where do they address any possible changes in the rear fence between the homes to the south.

I would love to see the size of these lots be increased and the number of lots decreased to allow for a more harmonious transition between the two developments. This developer needs to work with the surrounding residents and make concessions that will for all parties involved.

Janet L. Wainwright

To whom it may concern,

We would like to express our opposition to the application of the General Plan Amendment #24-02, S Utilization Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20, Minor Use Permit #24-13, Site Plan #551 Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1332 and Environmental Review Checklist @24-25, initiated by Eric Gonsalves, on behalf of Yosemite 1380 LLC, property owner.

We vehemently oppose the General Plan Amendment designation from Commercial Office (CO) to Business Park for 2.72 and from CO to High Medium Density (HMD) residential for the remaining 4.48 acres. We vehemently oppose Site Plan Revision of the land use designation within P-D #20 from Commercial Office to Self-Storage for 2.72 acres and CO to Residential for the remaining 4.48 acres. We vehemently oppose the Minor Use Permit that would be for interface review to allow commercial development adjacent to or across from Low Density Residential (R-1-6) Zone as well as the Site Plan Review Permit that would allow the development of a self-storage facility (approximately 500 storage units). We oppose the vesting of the subdivision map that would divide the lot proposed for the self-storage from the residential lots to create the 41 single-family lots.

We oppose the application that involves the request to establish a self-storage facility and to create a residential subdivision consisting of 41 lots on the two parcels that total approximately 8.05 acres. These parcels are generally located on the southwest corner of East Yosemite Avenue and Parsons Avenue. Specifically, the property is described as Lots A and B, as shown on the map entitled "Oakmont Village Unit No. 5" recorded in Volume 46, Page 38 of Merced County Records, also known as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 006-050-068 and 006-050-072.

When we built our home on Ahwahnee Court in 2017, we chose that area because we loved the location and had an expectation that the vacant lot "Oakmont Village Unit NO.5" was designated exclusively for CO, not an overcrowded 41 unit HMD tract and an unsightly 500 unit self-storage. The development of such projects would cause an otherwise quaint family friendly slice of Merced to be a noise ridden construction zone adding non-stop traffic to streets already at max automobile traveling capacity. This pleasant neighborhood is the place we sought to invest not only our heart and soul into but the bulk of our retirement capital as well. Us, alongside all the neighbors we have spoken to, do not want these projects to ruin the lives we built in this community. We have lived most of our lives in Merced, invested heavily in this community, and paid taxes here for decades. We feel that moving forward with these projects is a betrayal to not only ourselves but our community as well.

Please take our opposition into consideration of this matter and do not capitulate to the greedy interests of Yosemite 1380 LLC. The owners of that business knew the property was zoned for commercial office use when they purchased it, and they should not be given special privileges to

disturb this property because of their connections. We will be contacting our local, state, and federal representation to express our opposition to these projects as well as encouraging our neighbors to do the same.

Regards,

Ladislao and Kelly Rodriguez

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There will be a Planning Commission meeting on Wed., March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> St. in Merced. Yosemite 1380 LLC, property owners, are seeking a General Plan Amendment to two parcels which will have a detrimental/harmful or adverse impact on numerous single-family, low density residential homes in the Oakmont subdivision. The application involves a request to establish a self-storage facility and to create a High Medium Density (HMD) subdivision consisting of 41 single-family residential lots, appr. 2,160 sq. ft. to 5,374 sq. ft. Although the developer has yet to submit building designs for the 41 residential lots, the plan is that 17 of the lots would be single-story homes and the remaining 24 would be two-story homes. (See Site Plan-SP1 The Cirrus Company-24-048 04/30/2024) and (Initial Study #24-25 Page 1 of 48 paragraph 2). The proposed buildings range in height, between 16 and 27 feet. The entire document(s) regarding this case is available at

<https://www.cityofmerced.org/home/showpublisheddocument/22408/6387659821537071>

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**There are many issues of concern which need to be addressed.**

- **SELF-STORAGE UNITS:** The proposed change from Commercial Office (CO) to Business Park (BP) for 2.72 Acres creates many problems. What will the hours of operation be IF this facility is approved? If it is a 24-hour accessible storage building, it will bring traffic and related activity through our neighborhood for all days of the week and night. It also gives “unsavory” people a cover to be in the neighborhood claiming they have a storage unit. This would not happen if the (CO) commercial office zoning remains in place.
- **COMMERCIAL OFFICE TO HIGH MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:** Initial Study #24-25, Page 30, “The existing land use designations for this site does not allow for residential uses such as single-family homes, duplexes or high-density residential uses which include the former and multi-family residential.” The proposed land use amendment would transition the southern 4.48 acres of the proposed site into 41 lots designated (HMD) Residential. The existing planned development standards would be revised to allow the uses and residential density currently allowed under the (HMD) Residential. However, the “Planned Development would allow the developer to create and then propose unique development standards throughout the site, for the 41 separately identified lots located within the southern portion of the subject site.” The concerning issue for the subdivision is that 24 two-story homes on significantly smaller lot sizes are proposed to be plunked adjacent to an area of single-family homes. The developer has yet to submit substantive building designs for the 41 residential lots. However, the objectionable self-storage facility has drawings, elevations, etc. available.

- **ENTRANCE/EXIT:** As proposed (Site Plan 1) there is only one road for entering and exiting via Parsons Avenue which is where the (HMD) high medium density homes are planned. Is that adequate? Is it adequate in the event of an emergency? Can our local fire trucks maneuver easily? Each lot is supposed to have two parking spaces located within a garage. Does that mean visitors will be parking on the street? How will that impact accessibility? The absence of substantive design and the developers' apparent unrestricted capacity to create and then propose "unique" standards creates a strong impression of predatory development.
- **FLOOD ZONE:** Ahwahnee Drive was inundated several times with water during heavy downpours. The homes are built significantly higher than the road so they did not flood. How will flood water be handled? How and where will water be diverted?
- **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:** The Environmental Impact Report [EIR (SCH# 2008071069)] were certified in January 2012. As a resident living in view of these empty lots, I have had the opportunity to view Swainson's hawks. How will they be affected?
- **NEIGHBORING PROPERTY VALUES:** A home is often the largest asset people have. The Oakmont subdivision has attracted many buyers who want privacy, safety and a quiet low-density environment. Oakmont will be negatively impacted. We have great concern for the substantial devaluation of our property should this zoning change be approved. Will the developer compensate property owners for this? Of greatest concern are the people who bought a home on the northern side of Ahwahnee Court. Was this information revealed to them by anyone before they purchased their home? They will have a concentrated development of two story buildings looking right down into their back yards—losing all sense of privacy—in a subdivision that does not have two-story homes.

**CONCLUSION: Based upon these significant and serious issues, I oppose both**

**1) the seven day a week self-storage facility and**

**2) the extreme density (for Merced) two-story homes right next to Oakmont. Please leave the zoning as is: Commercial Office.**

March 9, 2025

Dear Merced Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our strong opposition for the proposal to re-zone the commercial property at 1380 Yosemite Ave Merced, CA from currently low-density office spaces to medium or high-density residential use. This change would significantly disrupt the character of our predominantly retired, upper class community where residents value peace, privacy, and a quiet low-density environment. The introduction of a higher density residential development into our neighborhood would result in increased traffic, noise, and overcrowding. All of which would negatively impact our quality of life. Our community is home to individuals who have invested in this area for its tranquility and exclusivity. The proposed change threatens to undermine the atmosphere we have worked hard to preserve. Furthermore, such a development could lead to a decrease in property values, as a high-density residential area typically does not align with the preferences of potential buyers who are drawn to quiet, more spacious neighborhoods. The loss of our community's character would be detrimental to both residents and the overall appeal of the area. While growth is important, we believe it should be carefully considered and implemented in a way that preserves the integrity of existing neighborhoods. The proposed rezoning is not in the best interest of our community, and would disrupt the peaceful, upscale environment that defines this area. We urge the planning commission to reject this rezoning proposal and preserve the current zoning, which better aligns with the character and values of our neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The residents of Oakmont Estates

Upon short notice of the proposed change to the zoning on 1380 Yosemite Ave from commercial to medium and high density residential, we were unable to contact all residents of the Oakmont Estates. Attached is a list of signatures from the people whom we were able to contact in our neighborhood who strongly oppose the change.



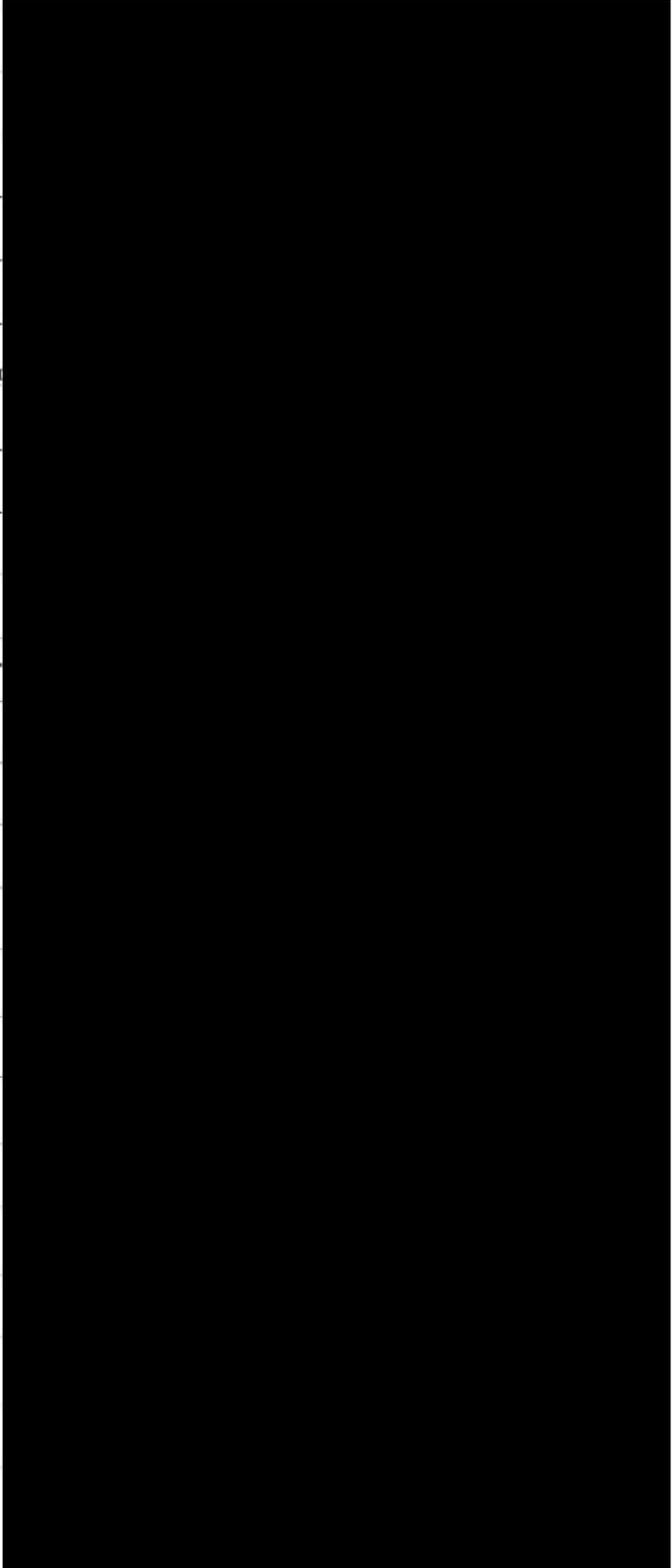
Name

ADDRESS

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Petition to stop rezoning at 1380 F Yosemite Ave

Carol J. Cole  
 Neil Glass  
 Ralph R. Weiss  
 K. S. C.  
 Jacqueline Spier  
 Margaret Frankland  
 John A. Miller  
 Lorraine K. Withers  
 Tyron Pedretti  
 Laena Nasher  
 TREVOR HIRST  
 Linda Hirst  
 Rick & Lari Kamm  
 Ronald White  
 Peter  
 Melissa & Tony  
 Bruce Sam  
 Andrea Sam  
 [Signature]  
 Elend  
 [Signature]  
 Frank Pistorone  
 GLADYS HALL  
 RODNEY HALL



Name

ADDRESS

Page

Petition to stop rezoning at 1380 F Yosemite Ave

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Lalo RODRIGUEZ

Kelly RODRIGUEZ

Monique Drew

Josua Serrano

~~John~~

Russell VADA

DI Kellum

~~Kyle~~  
Esther Kaiser

Kelly Herbert

Robert Mercurio #

Frank AYALA

Nancy Ayala

Sandra NAVA

GEORGE JOVER

ROBERT DINUZZO

Carol Dinuzzo

Linda Dobb

Mike Dobb

Michelle Humphill

Bill

MARTHA MARTINEZ

ROSENDO MARTINEZ

Petition to stop rezoning at 1380 F Yosemite Ave

Name	Address
Arnar Hurtado	[Redacted] [Signature]
William Villanueva	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Wendy	[Redacted]
Milly	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Amy Bales	[Redacted]
Zoe	[Redacted]
Kathleen S. Kuhn	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Rajal	[Redacted]
Carlos Sanchez	[Redacted]
Dany Masengale	[Redacted]
Belicia	[Redacted]
Genevieve & Tim Garcia	[Redacted]
dALVIN DRAKE	[Redacted]
Randy	[Redacted]
Dany C. Villanueva	[Redacted]
Alvin Espinola	[Redacted]
Gore Cowley	[Redacted]
Cheryl Woodward	[Redacted]
Terri Parker	[Redacted]
Mary Haslower	[Redacted]
Amy Burningham	[Redacted]



Robert & Carol Dinuzzo

March 10, 2025

Planning Commission  
City of Merced

Subject: Strong Opposition to Rezoning of Commercial Property to High-Density Residential Use

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of the property at 1380 Yosemite Ave, Merced, CA from commercial to high-density residential use. This decision is not in the best interest of our community, and I urge you to reject this proposal for the following reasons:

1. **Infrastructure Strain:** Our local roads, schools, and utilities are already operating at or near capacity. The influx of new residents will significantly burden these essential services, leading to congestion, overcrowded schools, and potential water and sewer system failures.
2. **Traffic and Safety Concerns:** Increased residential density will undoubtedly lead to more traffic congestion, worsening already problematic conditions. This raises serious safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike.
3. **Loss of Commercial Viability and Economic Impact:** Rezoning this property will remove valuable commercial space that could provide jobs, goods, and services to our community. Converting it into residential use undermines economic development and limits opportunities for local businesses.
4. **Decline in Property Values:** The introduction of high-density housing in an area not suited for such development could negatively impact property values for current homeowners. This is unfair to long-term residents who have invested in their homes and neighborhoods, with the understanding that this property was zoned for something entirely different than what is being proposed.
5. **Community Character and Quality of Life:** The proposed rezoning is incompatible with the surrounding areas and would fundamentally alter the character of our community. High-density developments bring increased noise, parking shortages, and a reduction in green space, all of which degrade our quality of life.

I strongly urge the Planning Commission to consider the long-term consequences of this rezoning and to prioritize responsible, community-focused development. I request that you reject this proposal and explore alternative solutions that balance growth with sustainability and resident interests.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response and to participating in any upcoming hearings regarding this issue.

Sincerely,  
Robert & Carol Dinuzzo

March 12, 2025

Public Hearing General Plan Amendment #24-02, Site Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20, Minor Use Permit #24-13, Site Plan #551, Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #13332 and Environmental Review Checklist #24-25 and Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration

Dear Merced City Planning Commission,

We are in opposition to the approval of the above General Plan Amendment for the following reasons:

1. We received the notice on March 5<sup>th</sup> for the hearing scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>. This was NOT WITHIN the required 20 day notice time period.
2. The proposal wants to change to Business Park (BP) and High Medium Density (HMD) residential. This is NOT consistent with the surrounding R-1-6 lots on all four sides of the site. The residential community immediately to the West and South are all single story in the highly desirable Oakmont Village. 2 story houses should not be allowed on this site. These proposed changes will lower the value of our neighborhood homes.
3. The lot sizes and roads per Site Plan drawing on page 53 are much smaller than the surrounding neighborhoods. Starting with access to the residential area from Parsons Ave. The entrance is too small to allow the Merced City Fire ladder truck easy access to the proposed 2 story houses in the event of a fire. Is this supposed to be a gated community? Looks like gates on the drawing. The main road appears to be only 35' wide and the roads to the 2 story houses appear to be only 20' wide. These narrow roadways will be a disaster just like the Moraga Subdivision on Yosemite Ave. to the East. The proposed lot sizes vary from 2,160 to 5,374 sf. The existing lots to South and West in Oakmont Village are 6,360 to 13,860 sf.
4. According to the city's own report and I quote "This Project is not consistent with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan but generates less than 500 daily trips." The traffic study was conducted on only one day, November 19, 2024. This hardly represents a true study of the existing traffic on Yosemite Ave and Parson Ave.
5. We purchased the property in 2009 as our last home only to see a developer come in and try to rezone and ruin the continuity of our community. They purchased the site in 2022 knowing that it was zoned C-O and now want to change to Business Park and High Medium Residential. These proposed changes will lower the value of our neighborhood homes.

Tom & Debbie Clendenin

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Trevor and Linda Hirst  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Subject: Strong opposition to proposed rezoning,  
high-density housing and commercial development

To: City of Merced Planning Commission

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed rezoning and housing development between the Yosemite Surgery Center and Ahwahnee Ct in our community of Oakmont. As concerned residents of Ahwahnee Ct who will be directly impacted by the proposal, we believe this project would have serious negative impacts on our community's infrastructure, quality of life, and property value.

### **Impact on Community Character and Property Values**

The character of our neighborhood is one of the main reasons we chose to live here. The zoning of the land behind the house as office space was another reason we chose our home. The proposed rezoning and development will fundamentally alter the feel of our home by crowding us in, increasing light and noise pollution and introducing a level of overcrowding that is inconsistent with the existing residential setting. The proposed development squeezes nearly double the number of existing homes along the shared boundary, and features two-story homes, which will tower over the existing single-story residences, resulting in a loss of privacy for current homeowners. Close-packed housing developments have been shown to negatively affect property values, causing financial harm to long-standing homeowners who have invested in this community. Existing homeowners should not bear the financial burden of a decision that benefits developers.

### **Traffic and Infrastructure Concerns**

Our current infrastructure around Yosemite Avenue is already strained, with congestion at the junction of Yosemite and Parsons avenue increasing dramatically at rush hour over the past few years. Yosemite narrows to a single lane road there on the way to the UC and adding this housing complex and commercial facility will only exacerbate these issues, making daily commutes longer, causing problems at the junction and increasing the risk of accidents. Current infrastructure is inadequate for this proposed development. The single lane road at Yosemite is currently in very poor condition and cannot handle more traffic. This is one of only two access routes to the UC campus from town and the route already cannot handle any more traffic in that direction. Regarding the specific proposed

development plan, a single narrow road is planned as the entryway into the housing area. This does not provide adequate parking or space to handle the number of cars that will enter and exit at that point as is currently the case in the Moraga development where parking congestion in similar streets has become extremely problematic.

### **Environmental Concerns**

The proposed site for this development includes mature pine trees (approximately 20 years old) along the shared boundary that block sound from Yosemite Avenue, provide shade and cooling to the yard and – most importantly – privacy. The proposed development appears to include the removal of these trees. This will result in inadequate shade (which negatively impacts power use) and, in concert with two story buildings, will exacerbate loss of privacy in existing homes, dramatically affecting quality of life. Removal of these well-established mature trees will very negatively impact our property in a way that will take at least 15 years to replace.

### **Conclusion**

We strongly urge City Planners to reject this rezoning proposal. The proposed development is highly inappropriate for the current area, and damage the higher value nature of the local area. Squeezing this high-density house development into a relatively small space is clearly not in the best interest of our community where there are several larger more open spaces available for development very close by, including the opposite corner of Yosemite and Gardner where space considerations are less of a problem.

We appreciate your attention to this critical issue and request that our concerns, along with those of our neighbors – a large number of whom have signed a petition opposing this proposal – be taken into serious consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor P. Hirst



Linda S. Hirst

RE: General Plan Amendment #24-02 / Site Utilization Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20 / Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1332 / Site Plan #551/ Minor Use Permit #24-13 – Yosemite Avenue Self Storage and Residential Project

April 8, 2025

Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to formally oppose General Plan Amendment 24-02, which proposes the rezoning and development of dense housing and a storage facility along a primary corridor in Merced.

This proposed amendment stands in direct conflict with the principles and long-term vision laid out in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which seeks to foster a vibrant, connected, and livable city. The plan emphasizes the importance of "Gateway Corridors" and encourages development that enhances the aesthetic and functional character of these key areas. Specifically, the stretch in question should be considered a prime candidate for mixed-use commercial development that reflects the vitality of Merced's future, not reduced to high-density housing and passive-use storage facilities.

Merced Vision 2030 encourages "*smart growth that maximizes economic opportunity and community livability while minimizing environmental impact.*" A storage facility, by nature, generates minimal foot traffic, economic activity, or community interaction. Likewise, dense residential development, without complementary commercial or recreational spaces, risks becoming isolated and underutilized. This location has potential to host commercial enterprises such as cafes, retail shops, recreational facilities, and family entertainment centers that would serve both current residents and the growing population.

This corridor also boasts a unique geographical asset—on clear days, residents and visitors can view the Sierra Nevada. The existing General Plan recognizes the value of Merced's natural surroundings as a foundation for thoughtful, place-based planning. Any development here should be designed to *enhance* public enjoyment of the region's natural beauty—not disregard it.

Additionally, as one of the few major connectors between the city and UC Merced, this area holds immense potential to serve as an economic bridge. Investing in a more thoughtful development plan—one that includes public spaces, sustainable businesses, and welcoming architecture—would help solidify Merced's identity as a growing university town with a strong, integrated community fabric.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reject General Plan Amendment 24-02 and to open further discussion around development alternatives that align more closely with the community-centered and economically vibrant goals outlined in the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan. Thank you for your time and commitment to responsible urban planning.

Jessica Duffy  
Merced Resident

April 7, 2025

City of Merced, Planning Commission  
c/o Valeria Renteria – Associate Planner  
678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

RE: Opposition to General Plan Amendment #24-02, PD-20 Zone Change from Commercial Office to Business Park and Medium High Density Residential

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Zone Change from Commercial Office to Business Park and Medium High Density Residential as proposed in General Plan Amendment #24-02, PD-20.

I am a Merced resident of almost 10 years and serve in a senior executive role at the University of California, Merced. I have witnessed significant growth in the City of Merced through this time and I welcome the many benefits that thoughtful and strategic development can provide to our community. The proposed rezoning of the project site to allow for high density residential development and mini storage is a short-sighted proposal that does not address the development gaps that exist in the site's area, nor does it provide a strong basis for the economic growth that the City is striving for as addressed in the City's General Plan.

The project site is in a highly advantageous location given its proximity to single family homes, schools, churches, and other commercial businesses. It is highly accessible via all modes of transportation and exposure will only increase as development takes place north of Yosemite.

Frankly, a mini storage facility at this site and additional medium density housing less than one mile from two recently built apartment buildings on the same road is a waste, and the result of a lack of planning vision with regard to diversity of development types. This site would bring superior value to the community by being developed for commercial use – as it is currently zoned. Such uses can establish and/or expand services the City is currently underproviding, such as medical offices and day care centers.

It is also important to note that regardless of what may be developed under this "Office Commercial" zoning, future offices in this location could offer a larger increase in new jobs to the community than either an apartment complex or mini storage would generate. Additionally, these businesses can bring marketable amenities to the City which supports the recruitment of employees to the area, and attraction of prospective students to the local colleges.

Finally, with new businesses comes increased tax revenues that directly benefit the City. It can be assumed that an active commercial center that welcomes high foot traffic will provide more funds flowing back to the City through collected taxes than compared to a desolate mini storage.

I recognize that there are needs for housing expansion, and support those efforts. I also recognize that there may be some need for storage unit facilities. This specific site, however, is an inappropriate location for either of these types of uses for the reasons I have highlighted above. I implore the Planning Commission to reject this proposal and maintain the existing zoning for this site so the community can benefit from higher value development in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition of this project and I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelli Maxey, CPA  
Merced Resident

Cc: Mr. Scott McBride, City Manager

RE: General Plan Amendment #24-02 / Site Utilization Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20 / Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1332 / Site Plan #551/ Minor Use Permit #24-13 – Yosemite Avenue Self Storage and Residential Project

April 8, 2025

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for representing the interests and vision for Merced and all who live here through creating spaces that support the life, livelihoods and culture of our community. I have lived here 10 years, returning after college and growing up in Mariposa. I am grateful for your work to expand parks and greenspaces. I am pleased with many of the improvements to our community. However, smart growth requires the courage to say no to developments that only serve individuals and bring minimal benefit to homeowners, local businesses and community members. **I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed General Plan Amendment 24-02, which proposes the rezoning and development of dense housing and storage facility along a primary corridor in Merced.** This is not helpful, beautiful, economically viable, or reasonable to change a clean slate into a hot, dirty, pavement for single use.

Mini-storage is the symptom of overconsumption, but the ill of modern society is not seeking solutions for stuff. The ill is limited space for engagement, community, commerce, creativity. It is not having the green space to choose other ways of being in the world besides consumption. Mini storage facilities, with their large, dark, and often concrete structures, contribute to the urban heat island effect (UHI) by absorbing and retaining heat, particularly during the day, and then releasing it slowly at night, which can lead to higher temperatures. This night time heat source will make it more unpleasant to live near it. It's also a place where no people are—only things. That means that it is a place of minimal and limited commerce. One contract and that is limited value. However, small stores and green spaces can contribute to the economy, employ more people, serve as a place for healthy choices, act as a heat sink instead of a source, increase the beauty and quality of life of Merced community members.

There are already other spaces for storage nearby (R and Yosemite, and on 59 for example). This is an open space, a huge opportunity other cities would wish for. I want to live in a Merced that thinks about the world to come—with more than 60 days over 100 degrees F—and plans for it, mitigates the stress on people, and builds community. I would love to have a north Merced Bob Hart square, or another park, or other uses. The artist Brian Andreas writes, “if we fail this time, it will be a failure of the imagination.” Please join me in imagining a higher, greener, safer, cleaner, healthier, BETTER use of this space. Please open the discussion to other opportunities and reflect the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Regards,

Leigh Bernacchi, PhD

Bellevue Ranch area, Merced, CA Resident since 2015

Robert Dinuzzo, AIA Architect  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

April 6, 2025

City of Merced, Planning Commission c/o Valeria Renteria – Assoc Planner (via e-mail)  
678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

RE:           Agenda Item 25-263, PD-20 Zone Change from Commercial Office to Business Park  
                  and Medium High Density Residential

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I join the many other residents of the Oakmont Village area in strongly opposing the proposed Zone Change in PD-20 from Commercial Office to Business Park and High Medium Density Residential. As a resident and licensed Architect with a long career in the design, planning and construction industry, the proposed zone change is not appropriate for this area of the community, and I wish to bring your attention to the following points:

1. Oakmont Village to the south and west is zoned R-1-6 (generally 6,000 sf lot size minimum) however the actual lot sizes range from 8,000 to 15,000 sf, creating one of the lowest density R-1-6 neighborhoods in the City. Home sizes in Oakmont Village range from 2,000 sf to over 3,200 sf. This is a stark difference to the potential house sizes in the proposed development. Many HOUSES in Oakmont are larger than some of the LOTS in the proposed development. Oakmont Village is without question, one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Merced as evidenced by the premium home values. Having an adjacent high density neighborhood will diminish the investments and cohesiveness of Oakmont residents.
2. Oakmont Village consists of ALL single story homes per the Subdivision CC&Rs. Oakmont homes bordering the new development have liveable backyards with swimming pools and patios. At a MINIMUM, Lots 1-17 in the proposed development should be LIMITED to SINGLE STORY homes, both to insure privacy to Oakmont residents as well as preserve open views to the north and east. The developer mentioned “a mix” of single and two story homes. Does this not mean there is a possibility of 1 single story and 16 two-story homes?
3. Oakmont Village consists of all well designed, high quality, mostly owner occupied homes that have properly maintained yards, landscape and streetscapes. Higher density homes are lesser quality in design and materials. Higher density homes are also primarily marketed to investors/landlords, who are driven by returns on their investment and do not maintain homes as well as homeowners, which draws tenants who lack the ability and/or desire to maintain their rented homes. Generally an out of town investor with a portfolio of

rental homes here do not take pride in ownership of their properties, being complacent with the monthly rental incomes as a priority.

4. All Oakmont residents bought or built their home with the understanding that the parcel north of Oakmont is zoned Commercial Office. Residents in any community all know having an office complex as a neighbor is much more preferred than higher density housing or a mini-storage facility. If this high density development/mini-storage facility existed BEFORE Oakmont Village, most residents would likely not have chosen to buy or build in the area.

Notwithstanding the misguided principle of placing high density homes against low density, there are many concerns and questions of the 41 lot homesites that have not been addressed. The comments and questions below are shown on the attached Site Plan.

1. Moving the Surgery Center driveway to the north will cause dangerous northbound exits from the Surgery Center (and likely the new mini storage since that driveway will be shared). The existing driveway being used was located where it is to be further away from the Yosemite Avenue intersection for safer traffic movements.
2. Oakmont is currently separated from the Surgery Center by a decorative concrete block wall. The new development should have a matching block wall to separate it from the Surgery Center as well but is not mentioned in the Conditions. Wood fencing deteriorates and is hard to maintain.
3. There is existing greenscape between the current Surgery Center driveway and the Oakmont subdivision wall (redwood trees) which was a likely condition of development of the Surgery Center. There is no greenscape shown on the current plans, which means the driveway will be against the subdivision with a fully exposed wall/fence. With no greenspace, this will foster vandalism and tagging.
4. There is a subdivision block wall between Parsons Avenue and Oakmont. The new development should have a matching block wall at Lots 18 and 19 as well as bordering the new Dog Park. This should be addressed in the Conditions.
5. There is extremely little street parking. Space for street parking is shown only on the "main" street in the development. There is NO space for street parking on the side streets. It appears there is only enough space for 16 cars, which is unrealistic for 42 homes.
6. Developer stated that an HOA would be formed that would enforce parking and other rules of the development. That is unrealistic given that a certain percentage of these homes will NOT be owner occupied, and enforcing actions on an absent landlord or negligent tenant would be fruitless. This would also apply to building maintenance, yard care, noise, crime, etc.
7. Developer stated that greenspace would be maintained between the Surgery Center and the housing by having trees inside the housing lots. Placing the responsibility of maintaining trees on to homeowners or tenants is unrealistic. Also the proposed setbacks of 3'-6" does not allow for tree growth.
8. Developer stated that the existing tree line between Oakmont and the Surgery Center would be maintained and even added to towards the west. This is unrealistic in that the trees (if left) would be in the backyards of the new Lots 11-17, which is making the assumption that the new homeowners/tenants will maintain or even want those trees in their yards.

9. City and Developer stated that the Fire Department has reviewed this. How can other subdivisions be required to have a certain radius “end bulb” at dead end streets for required turnaround of emergency vehicles? How will refuse trucks pick up trash in narrow, dead-end streets? Will the streets be required to have a heavy vehicle pavement section? (Thickened pavement to withstand fire and refuse trucks).

To summarize, as a resident and as a design professional, I am not opposed to growth and adding much needed housing to our growing City as long as it is done smartly and without haste. However, as a resident of Oakmont Village, I AM opposed to this inappropriate placement of high density housing against an established low density neighborhood. As you know, there are currently many other General Plan Zone Changes in process to create even more high density neighborhoods from previously designated Commercial, Office and low density zones. If the decision making and approval process allows this developer to continue against the wishes of the surrounding Oakmont community, he will no doubt lose no sleep in walking away with huge profits afterwards while our neighborhood is left with diminished home values and lower quality of life.

Please consider a NO vote for this Zone Change application.

Sincerely,

Robert Dinuzzo, AIA

Architect

Cc: Mr. Scott McBride, City Manager (via e-mail)

Mr. Frank Quintero, Deputy City Manager (via e-mail)

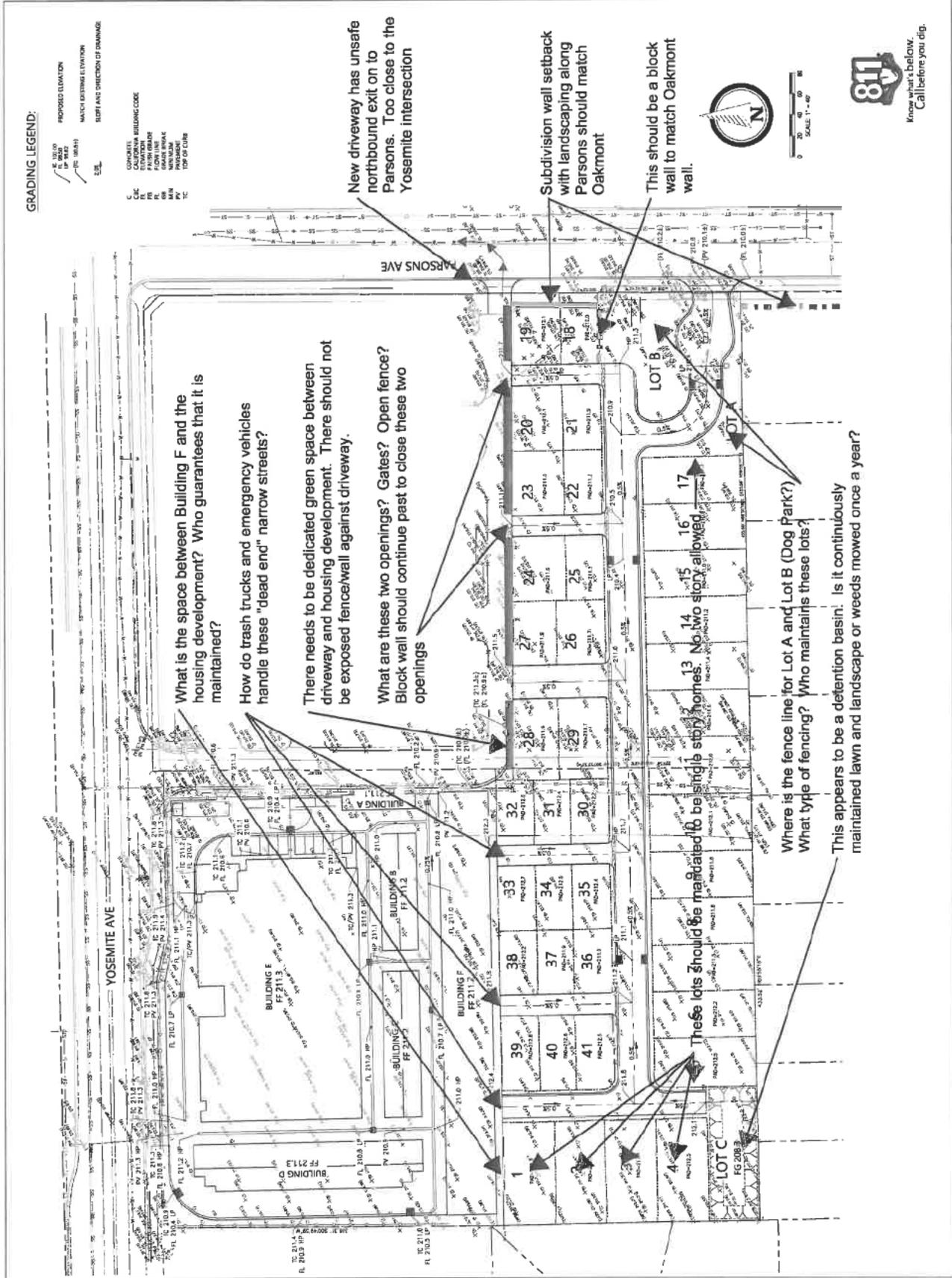
NO.	REVISIONS	DESCRIPTION	DATE

**TENTATIVE MAP**  
**YOSEMITE AVE SUBDIVISION**  
 1380 E YOSEMITE AVE  
 APN: 006-050-068 / 006-050-072  
 MERCED CALIFORNIA

PROFESSIONAL SEAL  
 NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

SHEET TITLE  
**GRADING PLAN**  
 SCALE: 1" = 60'

DRAWN BY: ANVTC  
 CHECKED BY: Y  
 PROJECT #  
**23148**  
 SHEET #  
**C4.0**  
 DATE  
 4/22/2024  
 SHEET X OF XX



City of Merced Planning Commission  
678 West 18<sup>th</sup> St.  
Merced, CA 95340

April 7, 2025

RE: General Plan Amendment #24-02 / Site Utilization Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20 / Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1332 / Site Plan #551/ Minor Use Permit #24-13 – Yosemite Avenue Self Storage and Residential Project

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to urge the Planning Commission to take one of the following actions on the subject project during its April 9, 2025 public hearing:

1. Deny the subject vesting tentative map, site plan review permit, and minor use permit; and withhold recommendation to City Council on the subject General Plan Amendment and Site Utilization Plan Revision; or,
2. Direct staff to return to Planning Commission with the subject applications organized as one project for consideration of recommendation to City Council.

As a Merced resident and former Community Development Director for Merced County, I am acutely aware of the need to balance development interest with long term plans. In this instance, the conversion of a prime development site should be given more thorough review by the community, especially in light of the agenda and process issues described below.

**Legal Issue: Considering Multiple Actions as a Single Project**

The City appears to be inappropriately “splitting” Planning Commission and City Council actions for this project. Such an approach would open the project and the City to challenge under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), alongside the broader legal principle that interrelated actions should be considered collectively to ensure transparency and accountability.

Documents within the Planning Commission agenda packet – most notably, the CEQA Initial Study – describe and depict the mini storage and residential components of the project site as one development. The use permit, tentative map, general plan amendment, and PD/zoning amendments are clearly interdependent as they are designed to achieve a common objective (*Plan for Arcadia, Inc. v. City Council of Arcadia*, 1974 and *County of Ventura v. City of Moorpark*, 2018).

As all aspects of the subject property development are interrelated, the City Council should be the final decision authority with regard to all aspects of the project(s). Furthermore, general plan and zoning amendments are considered legislative acts of the City Council, and all interrelated parts of legislative acts should be considered by City Council during a public hearing.

At a practical level, it would be inefficient to leave one half of the project open to appeal of a Planning Commission decision, only to return to the City Council on appeal with the same set of issues and project-wide considerations.

Finally, the project's placement on the consent calendar seems to be in error, and may give rise to additional legal issues if not heard as a public hearing during the upcoming Planning Commission hearing.

**Good Planning: Consider Long Term Development, and Investments Made**

The subject site is located in a prime location: on one of Merced's major thoroughfares, with multi-modal connection to multiple neighborhoods, near some of the busiest transit stops in the City, and in proximity to major jobs and services (e.g. colleges, hospital, offices).

Planning Commission, and subsequently the City Council, should consider whether redesignation of this land for purposes of a mini storage is in the best long-term interests of the community. Consider the benefits if this were a commercial center with amenities complementary of other centers along Yosemite Avenue. Imagine the potential benefits to nearby businesses and residents, easily accessing the City's commercial centers from Merced College to the UC Campus. The Planning Commission and City Council are empowered with the *discretion* to make these decisions. I urge the commission to exercise that power with the long-term in mind.

The City is currently making a major investment in improving Yosemite Avenue to allow for better pedestrian and bicycle flow – to connect these major uses in North Merced. Planning Commission and City Council should be making decisions that align with this investment rather than conflict with it by modifying its long-term plans for the benefit of an auto-oriented, non-active use. The proposed project would be a break in the planned “chain” of businesses and amenities along Yosemite Avenue.

The residential location, orientation, and design are questionable, at best. Its presence seems to be an afterthought, crammed in to generate some utilization of the site after development of the mini storage. Should we be “hiding” smaller homes on smaller lots? Relegating our neighbors to be tucked away behind a 12-foot masonry wall? Good planning practice and City policies say otherwise.

**Redesignation of Prime Development Space in Advance of General Plan Update**

The City is in the initial stages its Comprehensive General Plan Update. Consideration of prime commercial sites such as the subject property would be a critical component of the General Plan Update. It is within the Planning Commission's purview to suggest that amending land use at this time would be detrimental to good long-term planning efforts that are on the horizon. Those long-term decisions can absolutely be delegated from the Commission to the community through participation in the General Plan Update.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project, thank you for your time, and thank you for your consideration of community input.

Sincerely,

Steve Maxey  
Merced Resident

cc:  
Scott McBride – City Manager

April 8, 2025

Subject: General Plan Amendment #24-02 / Site Utilization Plan Revision #3 to Planned Development #20 / Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1332 / Site Plan #551/ Minor Use Permit #24-13 – Yosemite Avenue Self Storage and Residential Project

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed General Plan Amendment 24-02, which I understand seeks to rezone land along a primary corridor in Merced for the development of dense housing and a mini storage facility. As a resident/stakeholder in Merced, I have significant concerns about the potential negative impacts this amendment would have on our community's character, infrastructure, and overall quality of life. I urge you to carefully consider these concerns and reject this proposed amendment.

The proposed development of dense housing along a primary corridor raises several critical issues. Firstly, it is likely to exacerbate existing traffic congestion on what is already a heavily utilized roadway. Increased residential density will inevitably lead to a higher volume of vehicles, causing further delays, bottlenecks, and potentially impacting emergency response times. Secondly, the introduction of high-density housing in this location may strain existing infrastructure, including water and sewer systems, potentially leading to service disruptions and the need for costly upgrades that could burden existing residents. Furthermore, the character of this primary corridor, often serving as a key visual gateway to our city, risks being negatively altered by the introduction of dense residential blocks, potentially diminishing the aesthetic appeal and overall sense of place.

The inclusion of a mini storage facility in this proposal adds another layer of concern. While such facilities may serve a purpose, locating one along a primary corridor detracts from the visual appeal and potentially limits opportunities for more economically vibrant or community-serving developments. Primary corridors should ideally be reserved for uses that enhance the city's image, attract visitors, and contribute to a dynamic and engaging environment. A mini storage facility, by its nature, is a low-intensity use that does not typically generate significant economic activity or contribute positively to the streetscape. Combining it with dense housing in this location appears to be a less than optimal use of valuable land along a key thoroughfare.

In conclusion, I believe that General Plan Amendment 24-02, with its proposal for dense housing and a mini storage facility along a primary corridor, is not in the best long-term interests of Merced. The potential for increased traffic congestion, strain on infrastructure, and negative impacts on the city's character outweigh any perceived benefits.

I respectfully request that the Planning Commission carefully consider these concerns and vote against the approval of General Plan Amendment 24-02. I encourage you to prioritize land use decisions that promote sustainable growth, preserve the unique character of our city, and enhance the quality of life for all Merced residents.

Thank you for your commitment and service to Merced as members of the Planning Commission at this exciting time of growth and development.

Sincerely,

Tracy Proietti  
Merced resident/Business owner