

CITY OF MERCED
Planning Commission

Resolution #4168

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of January 21, 2026, held a public hearing and considered Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008 (“Large Lot Map Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (“VST SP”) Phase 1”) and Environmental Review #25-0029, initiated by applicant for 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, also known as Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 060-020-049, 060-020-051, 060-020-055, 060-020-056, 060-010-009, and 060-010-010. The subject site has a General Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (“VST SP”) and a Zoning classification of Planned Development (“P-D”) #80; and,

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission concurs with and adopts Planning Staff Report #25-985 Findings as follows: 1) Finding A – General Plan Compliance and Policies Related to this Application; 2) Finding B – Land Use Plan for entire VST Specific Plan; 3) Finding C – Parks and Open Space; 4) Finding D – Building Design and Development Standards; 5) Finding E – Phasing; 6) Finding F – Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map; 7) Finding G – Infrastructure; 8) Finding H – City Impact Fees and Specific Plan Impact Fees; 9) Finding I – Vehicle Miles Traveled; 10) Finding J – Biological Resources; 11) Finding K – Agriculture Resource and Interface; 12) Finding L – Affordable Housing Plan; 13) Finding M – Tentative Subdivision Map Requirements; 14) Finding N – Public Comments Received; 15) Finding O – Environmental Review Plan for entire VST Specific Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission concurs with the Findings for Tentative Subdivision Map Requirements in Merced Municipal Code Section 18.16.80, 18.16.90, and 18.16.100 as outlined in Exhibit B; and,

NOW THEREFORE, after reviewing the City’s Draft Environmental Determination, and fully discussing all the issues, the Merced City Planning Commission does resolve to hereby find that the previous environmental review for the Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) prepared for the University Community Plan Update and VST SP (SCH #2001021056) remains sufficient and no further documentation is required (California Environmental Quality Act Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption), and approve Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008,

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #4168

Page 2

January 21, 2026

subject to the Conditions of Approval set forth in Exhibit A and Exhibit B and Findings and Considerations set forth in Exhibit C, all attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference and adopts Environmental Review #25-0029 (CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption).

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)

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #4168

Page 3

January 21, 2026

Adopted this 21st day of January 2026

Chairperson, Planning Commission of
the City of Merced, California

ATTEST:

Secretary

Attachment:

Exhibit A – Conditions of Approval

Exhibit B – Resolution #1175-Amended (“Standard Tentative Subdivision Map
Conditions)

Exhibit C – Findings

Conditions of Approval
Planning Commission Resolution #4168
Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map # 25-0008

1. The proposed project shall be constructed/designed as shown on Attachment C of Planning Commission Report #25-985 (Virginia Smith Trust (“VST”) Large Lot Map).
2. All conditions contained in Resolution #1175-Amended ("Standard Tentative Subdivision Map Conditions") shall apply.
3. The proposed project shall comply with all standard Municipal Code and Subdivision Map Act requirements as applied by the City Engineering Department.
4. All other applicable codes, ordinances, policies, etc., adopted by the City of Merced shall apply.
5. All previously adopted conditions, mitigation measures, and guiding principles approved with the Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (“VST SP”), VST Development Agreement, the Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the UCP Update and VST Specific Plan (SCH #2001021056), and Virginia Smith Trust Annexation (Annexation #204) for this site and VST SP (City Council Resolution #2024-14) adopted by the Merced City Council, which are applicable to this project, shall apply to this vesting tentative map and all subsequent final maps, improvement plans, building permits, and discretionary approvals.
6. 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.
7. Should any conflicts arise between the tentative map conditions contained herein and those conditions, mitigation measures, and guiding principles contained in the Specific Plan, Development Agreement, or Environmental Impact Report, said conditions, mitigation measures, guiding principles, and sections/appendices shall take precedence.

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, as described in the Specific Plan. CFD procedures shall be completed before Final Map approval of any small lot subdivision. 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.
9. The developer shall use proper dust control procedures during site development in accordance with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District rules.
10. 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).
11. Backbone infrastructure for circulation improvements, water improvements, water improvements, storm drainage improvements, shall be required with the development of Phases 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1E as shown at Attachment H of Planning Commission Report #25-985, approved VST Development Agreement at Exhibit G..
12. The roads shown on the large lot map at Attachment C of Planning Commission Report #25-985 shall be dedicated to the City and not be recorded as lots. These roads include Cardella Road, Virginia Smith Parkway, Meyeres Gate Road, Campus Parkway, University Avenue, Golden Bobcat Avenue, Center Street, Kibby Road, and Brett Avenue.
13. Lot 8 shall be dedicated to the City for Fire/Police station. The developer shall increase the lot size dedication to 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 making a modification to the Development Agreement.
14. Lot 19 shall be dedicated to the City for the development of a sewer lift/pump station.
15. Road dedications shall be provided as required under Table 12 of the VST SP. However, for Campus Parkway, instead of having two 10-foot-

wide easements on both sides of the road, the applicant shall dedicate this space as City right-of-way resulting in a right-of-way dedication of 127 feet wide. Details to be worked out with the City Engineer during the Final Map stage.

16. The applicants of subsequent small lot tentative subdivision maps shall dedicate as parks and open space as required by the VST SP.
17. Street names shall be approved by the City Engineer, and be consistent with street names provided on this map unless otherwise inconsistent with City street naming policies
18. Offer for dedication, by Final Map, all collector and arterial street rights-of-way and all necessary easements and as needed for irrigation, utilities, drainage, landscaping, and open space.
19. The developer shall supply a storm-drainage master plan with calculations and pipe slopes to substantiate the proposed storm-drainage layout prior to Final Map approval.
20. The applicant shall comply with the Mitigation Monitoring Program approved with the Annexation of this site (Annexation #204) through City Council Resolution #2024-13, as shown at Attachment G of Planning Staff Report #25-985.
21. The Large Lot Final Map must be recorded prior to recordation of any small lot maps within the VST SP (including Phases 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1E).
22. A 100-foot buffer shall be maintained between any agricultural activity and habitable structures within the project site, or as otherwise required by the VST SP.
23. The water well originally intended for Phase 1A shall be relocated to Lot 48 of the Large Lot Map (0.52-acre in Phase 1E). This condition shall be contingent upon making a modification to the VST Development Agreement to reflect this update.

**CITY OF MERCED
Planning Commission**

Resolution #1175 - AMENDED

AMENDED Planning
Commission on August 22, 2007

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of November 8, 2000, considered modification to Resolution #1175 (Tentative Subdivision Map Standard Conditions) to reflect recent revisions in procedures and code requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Merced City Planning Commission does approve the following conditions which shall hereafter be referred to and become a part of approval of each Tentative Subdivision Map in the City of Merced:

Amended
and
renumbered
(see page 5)

1. ~~Improvement plans shall be submitted to the City Engineer for approval, prior to approval of the Final Map. Full public improvements shall be constructed. Improvements include, but are not necessarily limited to, streets; street lights; curb and gutter; sidewalks; handicap ramps; driveways; water, sewer and storm drainage systems; traffic signs and markings; survey monuments; utilities; pavement; grading; street trees; and any required landscaping.~~
2. ~~A preliminary soils report prepared by a Civil or Soils Engineer registered in this state shall be submitted to the City Engineer prior to approval of the improvement plans. The soils report shall include recommendations for the structural sections for streets and compaction and moisture controls for native soil beneath curb, gutter, street and sidewalk sections. The report shall also contain recommendations for engineered fill, building pads, footings, and soil bearing values and lateral pressures. A final soils report (or certificate of compliance with the preliminary soils report and its amendments and with City construction standards) shall be submitted to the City Engineer prior to recording a Notice of Completion.~~
3. ~~Developer shall make any and all arrangements for storm drainage directed into any non-City facilities, pay any and all costs incurred, and furnish evidence of same to the City prior to approval of improvement plans.~~
4. ~~The proposed subdivision and its improvements shall comply with all Merced Municipal Code and Subdivision Map Act requirements as well as conform to the appropriate sections of the legally applicable edition of the City of Merced publication entitled "Standard Designs for Common Engineering Structures" including any modifications, as required by the City Engineer.~~

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 2 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

5. ~~Prior to approval of the Final Map, the subdivider shall:~~
 - a. ~~Enter into an agreement with the City to install all improvements in accordance with the improvement plans and conditionally approved tentative map;~~
 - b. ~~Furnish improvement securities in accordance with Section 66499 Et. Seq. of the Government Code (Subdivision Map Act);~~
 - c. ~~Pay all required inspection fees;~~
 - d. ~~Dedicate all street rights-of-way and all necessary easements and dedications as shown on said map or as otherwise required by the City Engineer, public utilities and other agencies, including but not necessarily limited to those needed for irrigation, utilities, drainage, landscaping, open space, and public facilities easements.~~
6. ~~The City Engineer shall have the authority to order any work done which is necessary or convenient for the protection and convenience of the public, during the construction of public improvements.~~
7. ~~All public improvements shall be completed within 12 months of the Final Map approval date by the Merced City Council. In the event that a time extension is requested by a developer, the City reserves the right to review the adequacy of improvement securities, inspection fees and the Subdivision Agreement, and may require additional improvement security, new condition(s), and/or inspection fees.~~
8. ~~Street names shall be as approved by staff prior to Final Map approval.~~
9. ~~Installation of appropriate street name signs, traffic control signs, and markings shall conform to the State Traffic Manual and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Locations, names and types of traffic control devices shall be approved by the City Engineer.~~
10. ~~One temporary on-site subdivision sign (not to exceed 80 square feet) will be allowed for a period not to exceed six (6) months after filing of the Notice~~

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 3 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

~~of Completion on the subdivision improvements, or two (2) years from the time the first building permit is issued, whichever time is less, subject to applicable provisions of Merced Municipal Code Sections 17.36.720 and 17.36.740.~~

- ~~11. The developer shall notify new purchasers of any assessment obligations that are to be re-spread within the subdivision, special districts, fees, or maintenance assessment obligations prior to sale.~~
- ~~12. All utility services shall be provided to each lot. Utility services include, but are not necessarily limited to, sanitary sewer, domestic water, fire protection water, electric power, gas, telephone and cable television. All new utilities are to be underground.~~
- ~~13. Final Map approval may be subject to reasonable requirements that may be received from any utility and/or other agencies~~
- ~~14. For a dwelling on any given lot within the subdivision, all required on and off-site improvements, including streets trees, permanent utilities, public access, and frontage improvements, shall be completed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.~~
- ~~15. Developer shall coordinate and, if necessary, pay for the relocation of existing public utilities as required.~~
- ~~16. Valley gutters shall not cross collector or higher order streets. Valley gutters on local streets may be approved by the Merced City Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis.~~
- ~~17. The proposed subdivision shall annex to an existing Merced City Maintenance District or shall form a new maintenance district, simultaneously with approval of the Final Map. The developer shall pay all costs of formation of, or annexation to, a maintenance district. The developer shall also pay for the first two years of maintenance cost created by any particular phase of development.~~
- ~~18. Notwithstanding the above, all construction and improvements shall be in accordance with zoning, building and all other applicable codes, ordinances, standards, and policies of the City of Merced.~~

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 4 of 8

November 8, 2000 / August 22, 2007

Upon motion by Commissioner LOPEZ, seconded by Commissioner POLLARD, and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioners Lopez, Pollard, Burr, Osorio, Love and
Chairman Eisenhart
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Riordan

Adopted this 8th day of November, 2000


Chairman, Planning Commission of
the City of Merced, California

ATTEST:


Secretary

tl/P.RES.#1175 - Amended

August 22, 2007: At their regularly scheduled meeting of August 22, 2007, the Planning Commission considered amendments to the Standard Conditions for Tentative Subdivision Maps.

M/S SHANKLAND-ACHESON, and carried by the following vote, to adopt a Categorical Exemption regarding Environmental Review #07-29, and approve amendments to the Standard Conditions as follows:

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 5 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

1. Improvement plans shall be submitted to the City Engineer for approval, prior to approval of the Final Map. Full public improvements shall be constructed. Improvements include, but are not necessarily limited to, streets; street lights; curb and gutter; sidewalks; handicap ramps; driveways; water, sewer and storm drainage systems; traffic signs and markings; survey monuments; utilities; pavement; grading; street trees; and any required landscaping.
2. The developer/applicant shall indemnify, protect, defend, 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, or proceedings 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. City shall promptly notify the developer/applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding. City shall further cooperate fully in the defense of the action. Should the City fail to either promptly notify or cooperate fully, the developer/applicant shall not thereafter be responsible to indemnify, defend, protect, or hold harmless the City, any agency or instrumentality thereof, or any of its officers, officials, employees, or agents.
3. 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.
4. A preliminary soils report prepared by a Civil or Soils Engineer registered in this state shall be submitted to the City Engineer prior to approval of the improvement plans. The soils report shall include recommendations for the structural sections for streets and compaction and moisture controls for native soil beneath curb, gutter, street and sidewalk sections. The report shall also contain recommendations for engineered fill, building pads, footings, and soil bearing values and lateral pressures. A final soils report (or certificate of compliance with the preliminary soils report and its amendments and with City construction standards) shall be submitted to the City Engineer prior to recording a Notice of Completion.
5. Developer shall make any and all arrangements for storm drainage directed into any non-City facilities, pay any and all costs incurred, and

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 6 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

- furnish evidence of same to the City prior to approval of improvement plans.
6. The proposed subdivision and its improvements shall comply with all Merced Municipal Code and Subdivision Map Act requirements as well as conform to the appropriate sections of the legally applicable edition of the City of Merced publication entitled “Standard Designs for Common Engineering Structures” including any modifications, as required by the City Engineer.
 7. All other applicable codes, ordinances, policies, etc., adopted by the City of Merced shall apply.
 8. Prior to approval of the Final Map, the sub-divider shall:
 - a. Enter into an agreement with the City to install all improvements in accordance with the improvement plans and conditionally approved tentative map;
 - b. Furnish improvement securities in accordance with Section 66499 Et. Seq. of the Government Code (Subdivision Map Act);
 - c. Pay all required inspection fees;
 - d. Dedicate all street rights-of-way and all necessary easements and dedications as shown on said map or as otherwise required by the City Engineer, public utilities and other agencies, including but not necessarily limited to those needed for irrigation, utilities, drainage, landscaping, open space, and public facilities easements.
 9. The City Engineer shall have the authority to order any work done which is necessary or convenient for the protection and convenience of the public, during the construction of public improvements.
 10. All public improvements shall be completed within 12 months of the Final Map approval date by the Merced City Council. In the event that a time extension is requested by a developer, the City reserves the right to review the adequacy of improvement securities, inspection fees and the Subdivision Agreement, and may require additional improvement security, new condition(s), and/or inspection fees.
 11. Street names shall be approved by the City Engineer.
 12. Installation of appropriate street name signs, traffic control signs, and markings shall conform to the State Traffic Manual and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Locations, names and types of traffic control devices shall be approved by the City Engineer.

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 7 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

13. Storm drainage shall comply with City of Merced storm drainage standards and be compatible with the City's Storm Drainage Master Plan, Phase II Storm Drainage regulations and all other applicable City, State, and Federal requirements. The developer shall demonstrate that the development will function as part of a Regional Drainage System that is efficiently designed to include several properties. Developer shall pay its pro-rata share of regional system items, such as pump station, discharge facilities, and certain conveyance facilities.
14. One temporary on-site subdivision sign (not to exceed 80 square feet) will be allowed for a period not to exceed six (6) months after filing of the Notice of Completion on the subdivision improvements, or two (2) years from the time the first building permit is issued, whichever time is less, subject to applicable provisions of Merced Municipal Code Sections 17.36.720 and 17.36.740.
15. 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 before final map approval. Developer/Owner shall submit a petition and deposit agreement agreeing to such a procedure, waiving right to protest and post deposit as determined by the City Finance Director to be sufficient to cover procedure cost and maintenance costs expected prior to first assessments being received. (Note: Applicant has submitted a petition and deposit for initiation of CFD.) The developer shall notify new purchasers of any assessment obligations that are to be re-spread within the subdivision, special districts, fees, or maintenance assessment obligations prior to sale.
16. All utility services shall be provided to each lot. Utility services include, but are not necessarily limited to, sanitary sewer, domestic water, fire protection water, electric power, gas, telephone and cable television. All new utilities are to be underground.
17. Refuse containers shall be stored out of site of the general public, including those homes located on the private driveways. A concrete pad (3 x 6 foot minimum) shall be installed in the side or back yard of each unit to house refuse containers.
18. Final Map approval may be subject to reasonable requirements that may be received from any utility and/or other agencies
19. For a dwelling on any given lot within the subdivision, all required on and off-site improvements, including streets trees, permanent utilities, public access, and frontage improvements, shall be completed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #1175 – AMENDED

Page 8 of 8

November 8, 2000/August 22, 2007

20. Developer shall coordinate and, if necessary, pay for the relocation of existing public utilities as required.
21. Valley gutters shall not cross collector or higher order streets. Valley gutters on local streets may be approved by the Merced City Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis.
22. The proposed subdivision shall annex to an existing Merced City Maintenance District or shall form a new maintenance district, simultaneously with approval of the Final Map. The developer shall pay all costs of formation of, or annexation to, a maintenance district. The developer shall also pay for the first two years of maintenance cost created by any particular phase of development.
23. Notwithstanding the above, all construction and improvements shall be in accordance with zoning, building and all other applicable codes, ordinances, standards, and policies of the City of Merced.

AYES: Commissioners Shankland, McCoy, Amey, Cervantes, Williams, Acheson, and Chairperson Ward

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Findings and Considerations
Planning Commission Resolution #4168
Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #25-0008

FINDINGS/CONSIDERATIONS:

General Plan Compliance and Policies Related to This Application

- A) The proposed project complies with the General Plan/Specific Plan designation of Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan (“VST SP”) and the Zoning classification of Planned Development (“P-D”) #80. This specific plan consists of approximately 654 acres and includes a variety of residential uses, commercial uses, parks, fire station, police station, and a school. The Large Lot Map would subdivide 654 acres into 53 lots with a Designated Remainder of approximately 258 acres.

The proposed project, with conditions of approval, will help achieve the following General Plan land use policies:

Urban Expansion Policy

UE-1.4 Continue joint planning efforts on the UC Merced and University Community plans

The VST SP is a community plan located just south of University of California Merced (“UC Merced”). The proposal was annexed into the City in 2024 and included approval of the specific plan. The proposed land use plan and architectural design standards for this development are designed to complement UC Merced and the site is located just south of UC Merced.

Housing Policies

L-1.2 Encourage a diversity of building types, ownership, prices, designs, and site plans for residential areas throughout the City.

The VST SP includes a variety of residential housing types. This includes planning for single-family homes, cluster development, and multifamily development. Different neighborhoods include various design standards that create a diversity of building types, and design (see Finding D – Building Design and Development Standards of Resolution #4168 and Staff Report #25-985). The development of single-family homes also encourages ownership.

L-1.3 Encourage a diversity of lot sizes in residential subdivisions.

The VST SP includes a variety of residential subdivision types with various residential lot sizes. The overall specific plan includes lots generally ranging from 12,500 square feet and 3,500 square feet.

L-1.7 Encourage the location of multi-family developments on sites with good access to transportation, shopping, employment centers, and services.

As shown under Finding B of Resolution #4168 and Staff Report #25-985, the VST Land Use Plan includes multi-family land uses that are generally located on the northern and central portions of the specific plan which are in close proximity to the proposed “Town Center” and are in close proximity to a variety of commercial uses offering shopping, employment, and services.

Economic & Business Development Policy

- *L-2.6 Provide neighborhood commercial centers in proportion to residential development in the City.*

As shown under Finding B – Land Uses for Entire VST SP the specific plan includes a variety of land uses, which includes 3,560 residential units (not including density bonus) and 44 acres of commercial. The development creates a commercial center that is intended to serve residents living in the neighborhood and those driving toward UC Merced.

Urban Growth and Design Policy

- *L-3.1 Create land use patterns that will encourage people to walk, bicycle, or use public transit for an increased number of their daily trips.*

The VST SP includes a variety of bicycle lanes and walking trails that will connect various neighborhoods to various parks and commercial development, providing alternative modes of transportation and reducing vehicle trips.

Schools Policy

- *P-7.1 Cooperate with Merced area school districts to provide elementary, intermediate and high school sites that are centrally located to the populations they serve and adequate to serve community growth.*

The VST SP includes a school as part of the development. This will be a K through 8 elementary school that would accommodate residents living in the neighborhood and possibly others living outside the specific plan boundary.

Land Use Plan for Entire VST SP

- B) The proposed land uses for the VST SP are illustrated at Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachments D and E (Building Design and Development Standards and Phasing, respectively). Generally, the land uses are arranged as follows: very low-density residential is located along the western edge of the map; medium to high-density residential located along the northern boundary; commercial and office uses located north-south through the central part of the map; and low to medium-density residential on the southern portion of the specific plan.

The VST SP at Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment F contains a Land Use Plan and Framework section between Pages 23 and 29. This section provides a representation of how the community's design policies and development standards will be implemented. It also contains definitions for the various land use designations within the specific plan. Table 2 (Page 39) contains a breakdown of project buildout by land use type and phase. Below is an outline of land uses included within the plan:

- Residential Uses - 410 acres (approximately 3,560 residential units not including density bonus units)
- Commercial Uses - 44 acres (approximately 856,200 square feet of retail/office space)
- Open Space and Parks - 113 acres for open space and parks, 78 acres specifically for parks
- K-8 Elementary School - 19 acres
- Roads and other Infrastructure - 79 acres

Residential areas—ranging from low to high density—will be built along planned collector and local roadways. Community amenities would include:

- A community recreation center
- 39 mini-parks and pocket parks
- Two community parks (one each for Phase 1 and Phase 2)
- A 36-acre regional sports park

Parks and Open Space

- C) The VST SP includes approximately 113 acres of parks and open space. This includes 39 mini-parks and pocket parks, two community parks (one located in Phase 1 and the other partially in Phase 1 and partially in Phase 2), a community recreation center, and a 36-acre regional sports park. The Specific Plan provides parks at a rate of 8.8 acres per 1,000 residents, which is approximately 75% higher than the City's General Plan requirement of 5 acres per 1,000 residents.

Funding for the parks will be provided through Specific Plan Impact Fees (see Finding H, below, for additional information about these fees) collected during the building permit and inspection stages. The park-related portion of these fees is identified at Attachment H (of Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985) within Exhibit E, which was adopted as part of the Development Agreement. These fees will remain in effect for the duration of the Development Agreement—currently through 2054, with a possible 10-year extension to 2064. Park maintenance will be funded through a Community Facilities District (CFD) established specifically for the VST Specific Plan (Condition #8).

The Specific Plan at Attachment F (of Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985) contains Figure 5 on Page 33, and Figure 6 on Page 34, which illustrate the community parks planned for Phase 1. These plans are conceptual, with specific details refined as they development nears construction. Below is a description of Figures 5 and 6:

- Figure 5 shows a conceptual plan for the first community park, which would include amenities such as a clubhouse, splash pad, swimming pool, basketball courts, pickleball courts, and related facilities.
- Figure 6 depicts the regional sports park, which will be constructed in two stages—partially with Phase 1 and partially with Phase 2—and will include baseball and soccer fields, sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, play areas, a community garden, an amphitheater, and trails along the M.I.D. canal.

Building Design and Development Standards

- D) The Specific Plan includes detailed design and development standards that guide the overall character and built environment within the plan area. These standards address architectural character, scale and massing, façade treatments, materials, and colors. I.e., see Planning Commission Staff Report

#25-985 Attachment F at Pages 59 through 70 (Virginia Smith Trust Specific Plan).

Residential Development

According to the VST SP, the northern portion of the project area will feature a modern and contemporary architectural style, consistent with the design of the adjacent UC Merced campus to the north. In contrast, the eastern portion will incorporate a rural architectural style.

For residential development, the VST SP encourages the use of the following architectural styles: agrarian, bungalow, craftsman, contemporary/mid-century modern, and spanish mission. Diagrams illustrating the defining elements of each architectural style can be found in the VST SP at Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment F on Pages 60–62. Many of these styles were chosen because they already reflect the community’s character.

Commercial Development

Commercial development within the VST SP area is intended to feature a contemporary prairie architectural style, complementing the surrounding design themes.

In addition to design guidelines, the VST SP establishes development standards that define site and building requirements. These standards are outlined in the Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 at Attachment F between pages 41 to 59. Further sections of the plan provide additional standards related to landscaping, signage, public art, fencing, and other design elements.

Phasing

- E) The Phasing Plan for the VST SP, established through the Development Agreement between VST and the City, identifies the following phases: Phase 1A, Phase 1B, Phase 1C, Phase 1D, Phase 1E, and Phase 2. See also Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachments D and E (Phasing Map with Land Use Map and Land Use Plan for each Phase, respectively).

Phase 2 would be designated as a “Designated Remainder” represents approximately 45% of the Specific Plan area and is generally located east of Fairfield Canal. The applicant intends to develop Phases 1A through 1E in sequential (alphabetical) order, evaluating factors such as sewer capacity and product mix before proceeding with Phase 2. A separate Large Lot Subdivision Map will be required for Phase 2.

Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map

- F) The Large Lot Subdivision Map (VTSM #25-0008) establishes the overall framework for future Small Lot Subdivision Maps. The applicant has currently submitted small lot subdivision maps for Phases 1A through 1E.

The Large Lot Map itself does not require any physical improvements—only the dedication of land to ensure that no parcels are landlocked when developed. While the City will accept the dedication of public roads to provide access, it will not assume maintenance responsibilities until those roads are constructed and installed.

The Small Lot Subdivision Final Maps cannot be recorded until the Large Lot Final Map has been recorded (Condition #21). The development of the small lot subdivision maps would trigger the installation of specific backbone infrastructure requirements for traffic improvements, sewer improvements, water improvements, storm drain improvements, and other off-site improvements.

The Vesting Subdivision Maps within the VST SP area will have a lifespan that will go with the duration of the Development Agreement (currently through 2054 with a possibility of a 10-year extension) per the VST Development Agreement. Minor Modifications to these maps may be approved administratively by the Director of Development Services or may be referred to either the Site Plan Review Committee or the Planning Commission for consideration (as allowed by the VST Development Agreement).

Infrastructure

- G) The backbone infrastructure for this large lot map is based on the VST Development Agreement approved by the City Council on January 16, 2024. The required infrastructure improvements are tied to the development of specific phases, as outlined in the VST SP and VST Development Agreement, which includes Phases 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1E. Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachments D and E include the phasing plan for the VST project.

The necessary large-scale infrastructure improvements for phases 1A – 1E have already been determined through the VST Development Agreement. These required improvements are outlined in Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment H (VST Development Agreement at Exhibit G). These improvements pertain to:

EXHIBIT C
OF PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION #4168

- Circulation Improvements
- Sewer Improvements
- Water Improvements
- Storm Drainage Improvements

Oversizing and Reimbursements

Oversizing and reimbursement provisions are addressed in the VST Development Agreement. Specifically, Section 5.04.12 ("Reimbursement") states that the City shall reimburse VST for the full cost of the following items:

- Land and improvements for the sewer lift station and pump station on Lot 19, and the force main from Cardella Road to Bellevue Road
- Oversizing costs for 16-inch, 12-inch, and 10-inch looped water transmission lines from the water well on Lot 35 to Lake Road
- Oversizing cost of the 16-inch transmission line in Lake Road and its connection to Bellevue Road
- The pressure sustaining valve
- Cost of land and improvements for the proposed fire station, well site, police station site, park land, and Campus Parkway right-of-way (as identified in the Specific Plan)
- Costs related to parks, park facilities, linear parks, and open space funded through the Specific Plan Park Fee
- Costs of any facilities that are used by subsequent applicants and developers who benefit from such infrastructure, as provided in Municipal Code Section 15.08.130

City Impact Fees and Specific Plan Impact Fees

- H) In lieu of paying the City's standard impact fees, this project's City Impact Fees and Specific Plan Impact fees are unique and established by and contained in the VST Development Agreement.

The City Impact Fee is charged as a flat rate per residential unit, based on zoning classifications such as R-1, R-2, and R-3. For retail mixed-use, office, retail, and community commercial spaces, the fee is charged per square foot of development. These fees are allocated to support Fire, Police, Public Works, and Information Technology (I.T.) services. The full City Impact Fee

schedule is provided in Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment H (VST Development Agreement at Exhibit D). These fees apply throughout the duration of the Development Agreement, currently through 2054, with the possibility of an extension to 2064.

The applicable Specific Plan Impact Fees, which is also based on land use, are dedicated to traffic and park improvements within the VST SP area. The Specific Plan Impact Fees may be used for the development of parks as well (See Finding C – Parks and Open Space, above). These fees remain in effect for the entire term of the Development Agreement, currently through 2054, with the possibility of an extension to 2064.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

- I) The residential areas of the project are expected to generate 4.9 vehicle miles per person per day, which is lower than the City of Merced's average of 9.9 vehicle miles per person per day. For the non-residential components, the development is projected to generate 12.5 vehicle miles per employee per day, compared to the City's average of 37.9 miles.

Overall, because of its location, design, and land use plan, the project is expected to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled by approximately 25% compared to the baseline levels for the rest of the city.

Biological Resources

- J) All onsite impacts to wetlands and fairy shrimp have been fully mitigated through offsite conservation easements in compliance with the project's approved Permits 401 and 404.

The offsite mitigation area, the Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve, is located adjacent to UC Merced and managed by the university. See Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment I (UC Merced Conservation Easement for Wetlands and Fairy Shrimp). See also, Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment G (VST Mitigation Measures) for a list of mitigation measures addressing other biological resource-related matters.

Agriculture Resources and Interface

- K) As the VST Specific Plan is developed, agricultural use is intended to gradually phase out on the project site. To address potential impacts from

nearby agriculture on the new development, the applicant has established a set of policies and strategies to minimize these effects, including the requirement of a 100-foot buffer between any agricultural activity and habitable structures within the project site. See Resolution #4168 Exhibit A at Condition # 22.

Affordable Housing Plan

- L) Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment H, VST Development Agreement at Exhibit K contains two implementation options for the necessary affordable housing plan.

Option 1

Option 1 proposes a multi-faceted approach that combines several programs and incentives to create affordable housing opportunities for both ownership and rental units including a “UC Workers First” program prioritizing University-related employees and imposing owner-occupancy restrictions with a 10-year deed restriction that resets upon resale of the affordable unit; a downpayment assistance program; affordable homeownership opportunities through the Self-Help Housing Program; and a density bonus request for 42.4 acres designated R-4. The applicant would also dedicate 10.47 acres of land for the development of approximately 300 R-4 units targeted to Extremely Low-, Very Low-, and Low-Income households.

Option 2

Option 2 allows the applicant to deliver on-site affordable housing and/or pay in-lieu fees in accordance with the City’s Affordable Housing In-Lieu Fee Program following the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Unit Production Policy, adopted by City of Merced City Council Resolution No. 2023-83 on November 20, 2023.

Implementation of this option is expected to generate between \$6.68 million and \$8 million in fees, which would support the production of roughly 150 affordable housing units serving Extremely Low-, Very Low-, and Low-Income households.

Tentative Subdivision Map Requirements

- M) All items required for a tentative subdivision map, according to Merced Municipal Code (MMC) Section 18.16.080 – Information Required, are listed in Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment J. The Planning

Commission finds MMC Section 18.16.090 – Required Statement and MMC Section MMC Section 18.16.100 – Public Hearing – have also been satisfied.

Public Comments Received

- N) The Planning Commission finds all notice and hearing requirements in both Merced Municipal Code and the California Environmental Quality Act have been satisfied. Planning Commission Staff Report #25-985 Attachment K contains all comments received at the time this report was prepared.

Environmental Review

- O) Planning staff reviewed the project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and determined that Environmental Review #25-0032 qualifies as a second-tier environmental document. The project has been evaluated using prior environmental studies and remains consistent with the City's current General Plan and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 for the Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the UCP Update and VST Specific Plan (SCH #2001021056). The Planning Commission accepts the City's findings under Section 15162 and approves the associated Categorical Exemption. See Planning Staff Commission Report #25-985 Attachment L (Environmental Review #25-0029 – CEQA Section 15162 Findings and Categorical Exemption)