



Legislation Text

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Planning Commission Staff Report

Report Prepared by: Julie Nelson, Senior Planner, Development Services Department

SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment #22-03, initiated by Eric Pluim on behalf of Gateway Park Development Partners, LLC, property owners. This application involves a request to change the General Plan roadway classification from Divided Arterial to Collector for a portion of Mission Avenue from Coffee Street to the east side of Pluim Drive (extended).**PUBLIC HEARING**

ACTION: PLANNING COMMISSION:

Recommendation to City Council

- 1) Environmental Review #22-25 (*Addendum to General Plan EIR*)
- 2) General Plan Amendment #22-03

CITY COUNCIL:

Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Environmental Review #22-25 (*Addendum to General Plan EIR*)
- 2) General Plan Amendment #22-03

SUMMARY

This is a request to amend the General Plan Circulation Element by changing the roadway classification from Divided Arterial to Collector for a portion of Mission Avenue from Coffee Street to the east side of Pluim Drive (extended). This change is requested to improve the circulation for future development in the area. Staff is recommending approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of Environmental Review #22-25 (*Addendum to the General Plan EIR*) and General Plan Amendment #22-03 (including the adoption of the Draft Resolution at Attachment A) subject to the conditions in Exhibit A and the findings/considerations in Exhibit B of the Draft Resolution.

DISCUSSION

Gateway Park Development Partners is requesting the road classification for a portion of Mission Avenue be changed from Divided Arterial to Collector. The section proposed to be changed would be from Coffee Street, east to the east side of Pluim Drive (extended) (refer to the map at Attachment B). This section is adjacent to the Merced Gateway Marketplace southern boundary.

Project Description

Section 4.3.2 of *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* provides guidance on road classifications and design standards. This section identifies different street types and classifies them by categories that reflect their importance and function.

The proposed change to the roadway classification for this portion of Mission Avenue would reduce the need for right-of-way and the improvements installed. Freeways are the highest level of roadway, with fully controlled access, high operating speeds and volumes, and highest design standards. Local streets and alleys are the lowest functional classification, with low speeds and volumes and direct access to adjacent property. Table 4.2 of the Circulation Element provides the different road classifications, amount of right-of-way needed, number of lanes provided, street intersection spaces, and parking. Below is an excerpt from this table showing the classification, the right-of-way, and the number of lanes. The full table is provided at Attachment C)

Road Classification	Right-of-Way	No. of Lanes
Expressway	150 ft.	4-6
Major Arterial	128 ft.	4-6
Arterial	128 ft.	4-6
Divided Arterial	118 ft.	4-6
Minor Arterial	94 ft.	2-4
Major Collector	68-74 ft.	2-4
Collector	68 ft.	2
Local	51-62 ft.	2
Transitway	Varies	2-6

Mission Avenue is currently designated as a Divided Arterial which would have a 118-foot-right-of-way with 4-6 lanes. The proposal to change the classification to a Collector would reduce the right-of-way to 74 feet which would provide two travel lanes (one in each direction), a bicycle lane, on-street parking, a park strip, and sidewalk on both sides of the street.

The need for this segment of Mission Avenue to be a Divided Arterial was diminished with the construction of Campus Parkway and the extension of Pluim Drive from Gerard Avenue south to Mission Avenue. The construction of the Mission Avenue Interchange as part of the Campus Parkway project eliminated direct access to Hwy 99 from Mission Avenue. The portion of Mission Avenue between Coffee Street and Hwy 99 became a dead-end with the construction of the interchange. That segment of Mission Avenue was vacated by the City in 2019.

The Merced Gateway Marketplace Shopping Center Master Plan shows two driveways on Mission Avenue. There is currently one constructed with the Tractor Supply project, east of the building (Attachment D). The exact location of the second driveway has not been determined but would be located between the first driveway and Pluim Drive (extended). The Merced Marketplace Shopping Center is required to construct Mission Drive along its project frontage [Coffee Street east to Pluim Drive (extended)]. By changing the road classification, the amount of right-of-way needed is reduced. Thus, the number of improvements required is also reduced. The width of the paved area of the road would be reduced from 36 feet to 24 feet. This reduction in paving translates to cost savings for the Merced Marketplace project.

A traffic analysis has been provided to support the change in classification (Attachment E). Therefore, staff is recommending approval.

Surrounding uses as noted in Attachment B.

Surrounding Land	Existing Use of Land	City Zoning Designation	City General Plan Land Use Designation
North	Vacant	P-D #74	Regional / Community Commercial (RC)
South	Vacant	County	Commercial Reserve (COM-R)
East	Vacant/Commercial	P-D #35	Thoroughfare Commercial (CT)
West	Vacant	BP	Business Park (BP)

Background

The project site was annexed into the City as part of the Weaver Annexation No. 1 in 1998, with proposed uses that included multi-family and retail commercial. Historical records indicate the property was used for row crops from 1946 until around 2005-2006.

In 2017, the City approved the Merced Gateway Marketplace Master Development Plan. This plan included over 600,000 square feet of commercial space, 178 multi-family dwelling units, and a site for a future fire station.

In 2018, the first commercial use was approved for the shopping center. This was for the development of the Arco AM/PM at the southeast corner of Campus Parkway and Coffee Street.

In 2019, a parcel map was recorded that created 7 individual parcels on the south side of Campus Parkway.

Since the approval of the Arco, the City has approved McDonald's, Tractor Supply, and Starbucks, all located on the south side of Campus Parkway, east of Coffee. The McDonald's, Tractor Supply, and Starbuck are currently open.

In 2020, the Site Plan Review Committee approved an increase in the number of multi-family units. This approval allowed an increase from 178 to 200 units. The multi-family portion of the project is located at the southeast corner of Gerard Avenue and Coffee Street. A parcel map was recorded to create a separate parcel for the multi-family development. The area dedicated to multi-family has since been sold to a different developer who will construct the multi-family housing. This matter was originally scheduled to be considered by the Planning Commission on September 7, 2022. Prior to the meeting, the applicant requested the matter be continued to allow time to work out some issues with the adjacent property owner to the east. At the Planning Commission meeting of September 7, 2022, Joshua Bailey, with the Law Firm of Wanger, Jones, and Helsley, addressed the Planning Commission explaining that he was representing the adjacent property owner, Merced

Gateway, LLC, and requesting that the Planning Commission not take action on this matter as his client had concerns that needed to be addressed. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to continue this matter to the meeting of October 5, 2022.

Prior to the Planning Commission meeting of October 5, 2022, the applicant notified staff that they are still working with Merced Gateway, LLC, and requested the matter be continued to November 9, 2022, to allow additional time to resolve their concerns. At the October 5, 2022, Planning Commission meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to continue the matter to November 9, 2022.

The matter was also continued on November 9, 2022, to the meeting of December 7, 2022. On December 7, 2022, the matter was continued to January 18, 2023. On January 9, 2023, the applicant notified City staff that the issues had been resolved and they are prepared to move forward.

Findings/Considerations

Please refer to Exhibit B of the Draft Planning Commission Resolution at Attachment A.

ATTACHMENTS

- A) Draft Resolution #4097
- B) Location Map
- C) General Plan Table 4.1
- D) Merced Gateway Marketplace Site Plan (portion)
- E) Traffic Analysis
- F) City Standard ST-2 (Collector Street)
- G) Environmental Review
- H) Draft Presentation