

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