

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