

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING**

DATE June 30, 2011

To: Responsible Agencies, Agencies with Jurisdiction by Law, Trustee Agencies,  
Involved Federal Agencies and Agencies/People Requesting Notice

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and  
Notice of Scoping Meeting for Fig Garden Financial Center Phase IV Project.

**Project Title:** Fig Garden Financial Center Phase IV Project

**Project Applicant:** Gunner & Andros Investments, LLC

**Public Review Period:** NOP response period is from June 30, 2011 to July 30, 2011

Lead Agency Consulting Firm Preparing the Draft EIR

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The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are discussed below.

The City of Fresno (City) will be the lead agency preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Fig Garden Financial Center Phase IV Project. This EIR is being prepared without an initial study pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15060(d) on the basis that the City has determined that an EIR will clearly be required for the Project. CEQA, Guidelines Section 15082, states that once a decision is made to prepare an EIR, the lead agency must prepare a Notice of Preparation (NOP). The purpose of the NOP is to provide responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects to enable them to make a meaningful response as to the scope and content of the information to be included in the EIR.

This NOP requests comments from the public and public agencies on the scope of the EIR. Responses to the NOP will help the City determine the scope of the EIR and ensure an appropriate level of environmental review. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your

response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

The City of Fresno will hold a scoping meeting at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, July 7, 2011 in the Council Chambers of Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, California. All interested agencies, parties, and the general public are invited to attend. For additional information, please call Mike Sanchez, Planning Manager, at (559) 621-8040.

Please send your written responses to Mr. Mike Sanchez, Planning Manager, Fresno Planning & Development Department, at the above address. Please include in your response the name of a contact person in your agency/entity.

Date June 30, 2011

Signature



Mike Sanchez, Planning Manager

**Project Location:** The project is located in the City of Fresno in Fresno County (refer to Regional Map). The project site address is 525 West San Jose Avenue and 569 West San Jose Avenue. The project site is situated near the northeast corner of North Palm Avenue and West Shaw Avenue, and is bounded by North Palm Avenue to the west, West San Ramon Avenue, North Colonial Avenue and West San Jose Avenue to the north, the Fig Garden Village shopping center to the south, and single- and multi-family residential development to the south and east. The attached Vicinity Map shows the site location and existing structures on the property. The project is located on approximately 3.96 acres (comprised of APNs 417-240-37, 417-231-16 and 417-231-17).

**Project Description:** The proposed project includes the development of a four story commercial office building, comprising a total of net useable area 104,593 square feet, with an underground parking structure and at grade parking to provide parking for approximately 445 vehicles. The underground structure will be interconnected with an existing underground parking structure that serves an adjacent four story commercial office building. Development entitlements for this project include a general plan amendment, a rezone application, a conditional use permit, and a vesting tentative parcel map.

The office building structure would be designed to be consistent with the predominant character and scale of the architecture of the adjacent Financial Center. The proposed project would also incorporate landscaping and other site aesthetics. The project is proposed to be constructed and completed in a Single Phase.

Primary access to the site would be off of North Palm Avenue through the Fig Garden Financial Center's driveway, and from Shaw Avenue via private driveways. No public access will be provided from West San Jose Avenue, though emergency fire access and emergency pedestrian gate will be available. No parking will be permitted along West San Jose Avenue.

### **Project's Technical, Economic and Environmental Characteristics:**

The project will be developed through private capital and financing. The project applicant has submitted formal entitlements that depict its environmental characteristics and are on file with Development and Resource management. Illustrations are also available for viewing at <http://www.fresno.gov/Government/DepartmentDirectory/PlanningandDevelopment/Planning/MajorProjectsunderReview.htm>

Currently, there are existing trees on the project site that are part of the existing apartment complex. As currently proposed, all of the onsite trees will be removed on the proposed project site. There are no oak or other indigenous species found on the project site. The proposed project would include a Landscape Plan which would provide for trees, shrubs and other ornamental plants.

In order to construct the underground parking structure and proposed site, the grading for the proposed project would require approximately 35,000 cubic yards (cy) of dirt to be excavated and removed from the site. The project will comply with City of Fresno grading and drainage requirements and detailed Grading and Drainage Plans will be provided for final permits.

Utilities required for the proposed project (e.g., electricity, natural gas, sewer and water) already exists to the site. The project will comply with City of Fresno utility requirements and Utility Plans will be provided for final permits.

**Project Objectives:** Fig Garden Financial Center Phase IV Project is proposed to meet the applicant's following objectives:

- The underlying purpose of the project is to replace an aged former apartment two-story apartment complex structure with a Class A four story office structure developed in a style consistent with the three existing adjacent office facilities which comprise the Fig Garden Financial Center, at a scale that is economic to develop, lease and manage.
- Develop the project site in a fashion that takes advantage of the site's strategic location as a primary location for activity centers within plan areas.
- Assist in the General Plan's goal of developing urban design strategies to improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function.
- Provide an in-fill commercial office use that is strategically located to ensure accessibility and convenience to the population it serves, while minimizing travel requirements, infrastructure demands and adverse impacts.
- Develop the subject site in a manner that provides an effective transition between more intensive commercial uses and sensitive residential areas.

**Intended Uses of EIR:** The EIR will be used in support of the following entitlement considerations by the City of Fresno as the Lead Agency.

- Certification of the EIR.
- A General Plan Amendment, revising the project site planned land use designation from Residential Medium Low Density and Residential Medium High Density to Commercial Office.
- A Rezoning Amendment, revising the project site zoning from R1-AH and R-2 to CP.
- A Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, to combine three existing separate parcels into a single parcel (and adjusting the parcel line between the project site and an adjacent parcel).
- A Conditional Use Permit, to authorize a four-story, 60-foot building height, office development totaling 104,593 square feet with an underground parking structure.
- A Site Plan for the project.
- A minor Site Plan amendment for the existing approved site plan for an adjacent property (5200 North Palm) to conform that parcel's site plan to the Tentative Parcel Map and the improvements proposed for the project's Site Plan.
- Grading and Building Permit Approvals

The following agencies are also presently expected to use the EIR for their decision making for certain entitlements, including those listed below.

- The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control Districts – co-approval with the City of Fresno of final drainage plans.
- The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - permits for demolition and site clearance, and for indirect source review under its Rule 9510.
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region National - Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

**Issues To Be Addressed In The EIR:** The EIR is being prepared to assess and disclose to decision makers and the public potential environmental impacts that may arise in connection with implementation of the proposed project. The Lead Agency has determined that an EIR is clearly required for the project and has therefore elected to skip further initial review of the project and begin work directly on the EIR process pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d). The EIR will address issues related to aesthetics, air quality, agricultural and forest

resources, biology, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and circulation, public utilities and services systems, and greenhouse gas and global climate change. In addition, the EIR will include a discussion of the cumulative impacts of the project when considered together with other closely related future projects.

**ATTACHED FIGURES**

Regional Map  
Vicinity Map



