



CITY OF FOWLER
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

KEY ISSUES REPORT
September 2019



ATTACHMENT **A**

**STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
SUMMARY MEMO**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Fowler has initiated a comprehensive General Plan Update process. The General Plan, once complete, will be an overarching policy document that guides City actions and provides a blueprint for land use and development within the City. The City adopted its first General Plan in 1976 and adopted subsequent updates for land use, circulation, and economic development in 2009. The remainder of the mandatory General Plan elements have not been updated since the original document was adopted in 1976.

Update efforts will look ahead to the year 2040, making adjustments based on current issues and emergent trends, and positioning the City of Fowler for the next 20 years. The update also brings the General Plan into compliance with new laws related to climate adaptation, complete streets, and floodplains.

As part of the update process, the Provost and Pritchard consultant team (consultant team) conducted two distinct tasks to date designed to solicit input from a cross-section of interests and to identify existing conditions that would inform identification of key issues for consideration during the process

- **Stakeholder Interviews**, consisting of 14 focused interviews with stakeholders over a 2-month period. Interviews were conducted with stakeholders representing diverse interests across the community, including City Staff, local business owners, City residents, and City Council members.
- Preparation of a **Community Report**, which summarizes the existing conditions within the City of Fowler as it relates to a number of topics that will be addressed in the General Plan

Together, the stakeholder responses and the community report inform the key issues that will be considered in the drafting of the General Plan update. The Key Issues Summary will in turn provide a basis for the community vision statement and subsequent, goals, policies, and procedures included in the final General Plan document. This summary identifies the key issues that were identified through the stakeholder interviews and preparation of the Fowler Community Report.

Stakeholder Interviews

During the months of April and May of 2019, the consultant team for the City of Fowler's General Plan Update conducted 14 stakeholder interviews. The interviews were intended to solicit an understanding of issues and challenges the community currently faces, what aspects of the community stakeholders found to be beneficial to residents and local businesses, as well as what issues should be addressed as a priority in the General Plan Update.

The consultant team interviewed stakeholders individually or, in some cases, in groups of two. While there was a standard list of questions prepared to ensure that interviewers touched on particular topics, the questions were not shared with the interviewees. This allowed the meetings to be more conversational and provided an opportunity for individual concerns to be expressed based on the interviewees' relevant experience with City processes and challenges rather than be limited to pre-determined questions.

Interviewees were also informed of the intent to keep individual comments confidential to encourage more frank discussions with the consultant team.

See **Attachment A: Stakeholder Interviews Summary Memo** for additional details on the interview process and comments received.

Fowler Community Report

A General Plan update requires a solid knowledge base of existing physical environmental, economic, and social conditions. The Community Report was therefore one of the first major steps in the General Plan update process. It summarizes baseline conditions in Fowler and the surrounding planning area and identifies preliminary planning implications that the update should address going forward. This Report will contribute useful background material for the environmental analysis that occurs later in the process. The information conveyed in the Community Report will also help community members, City staff, and elected officials make informed decisions throughout the rest of the General Plan update.

KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The following key issues include those topics or considerations that were derived from feedback received during the stakeholder interviews as well as those considerations that were identified through the preparation of the Community Report.

Key Issues Identified

The following key issues are listed in no particular order; however, they generally fall in level of importance based on stakeholder input. Many of the key issues are specifically related to community identity, economic development needs, local amenities, and other issues related to planning for future growth.

Economic Development. Increase the amount of business support services offered by the chamber of commerce. Help the chamber become a “one stop shop” for business development for the City and consider pursuing branding efforts to help attract development and increase amenities.

Local Amenities. Increase amenities which help attract and keep residents and businesses in the area.

Growth Coordination. Growth coordination and expansion will be a key focal point of future long-range planning efforts. Concerns include expanding the Sphere of Influence, LAFCO coordination, environmental regulation, and land use planning.

Infrastructure Expansion. Infrastructure and City service expansion were considered both opportunities and constraints to future growth. Road infrastructure as well as police, water, and fire services were all cited as being top concerns in the face of expansion of the planning area.

Circulation. Connection points, road capacity, design principles, pedestrian enhancements and linking the east and west sides of the City are an existing challenge and will be a key issue when considering expansion of the planning area.

Parks and Recreation. Identify opportunities to increase efficiency of current joint use agreements, address maintenance issues, and implement a plan for increased park and recreation facility demands.

Community Character. A small-town character was identified as one of Fowler’s top assets. Preservation of that community character should be a top priority in future planning efforts.