

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN CARLOS
CERTIFYING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF SAN
CARLOS 2045 GENERAL PLAN RESET PROJECT.**

WHEREAS, in July 2023 the City Council of the City of San Carlos approved a professional services agreement with PlaceWorks for consulting services to prepare an update to the 2030 General Plan and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), altogether referred to as the “2045 General Plan Reset Project”, to reset the development projections to the year 2045 for citywide commercial, office, industrial and residential uses in response to the continued development interest in the City’s East Side and two new specific plans underway in the City; and

WHEREAS, the City prepared the revised development projections to the year 2045 to inform the General Plan update and on June 3, 2024 released a Notice of Preparation of EIR and solicited public input from June 3, 2024, to July 3, 2024 on the scope of EIR; and

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2024, the City conducted a Public Hearing at the Planning and Transportation Commission’s regular meeting to present the development projections and solicit input on the scope of the environmental review of the project; and

WHEREAS, the City conducted stakeholder group meetings between September 2024 and October 2024 to solicit input on the project; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to a request from the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe on the scope of environmental review, a meeting was held on September 25, 2024 to receive their input; and

WHEREAS, amendments to the General Plan and Draft EIR were prepared for the proposed 2045 General Plan Reset Project and circulated for a 45-day public review from January 17, 2025, to March 3, 2025 to solicit agency and public input on the analysis of the potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of the project and amendments to the General Plan; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 2025, the City conducted a public hearing at the Planning and Transportation Commission’s regular meeting to present the proposed General Plan amendments and findings of the Draft EIR and solicit input from the public and Planning and Transportation Commission on the project; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2025, the City Council held a study session to review the proposed General Plan amendments and Draft EIR and provided comments to staff; and

WHEREAS, the 2045 General Plan Reset includes amendments to the Introduction, Land Use Element, Circulation and Scenic Highways Element, Environmental Management Element, Parks and Recreation Element, and Noise Element of the General Plan and the Draft EIR (Exhibit A) and Final EIR (Exhibit B) which together constitute the EIR for the project; and

WHEREAS, the Findings of Fact (Findings) and Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC) presented herein address the environmental effects associated with the Project that are described and analyzed within the EIR. These Findings have been made

pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), specifically Public Resources Code Sections 21081 and 21081.6, as well as the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) Sections 15091 and 15093; and

WHEREAS, Further, in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21081 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, whenever significant effects cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance, the City as the decision-making agency is required to balance, as applicable, the benefits of the project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of a project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable,” in which case the lead agency must adopt a formal Statement of Overriding Considerations; and

WHEREAS, the EIR identified potentially significant and unavoidable environmental effects that could result from the implementation of the project. Those effects are related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, and wildfire. Since potentially significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project were identified, a Statement of Overriding Considerations is required; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), on May 5, 2025, the City of San Carlos Planning and Transportation Commission held a duly noticed public hearing and adopted Resolution No. PTC2025-05 recommending that the City Council certify the Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) for the San Carlos 2045 General Plan Reset project; make findings relating to significant impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives, and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations; and adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FOUND, DETERMINED AND RESOLVED BY THE SAN CARLOS CITY COUNCIL THAT:

1. The above recitals and findings are hereby incorporated by this reference and are hereby approved.
2. Having received, reviewed, and considered the information in the EIR for this project, as well as the supporting administrative record, the City hereby makes the findings set forth herein pursuant to, and in accordance with, Sections 21081, 21081.5, and 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code.
3. Environmental Effects Found Not to be Significant

The subject program-level EIR is intended to serve as a public information and disclosure document identifying and analyzing those environmental impacts resulting from the project that are expected to be significant and describing mitigation measures and alternatives that could avoid or reduce significant adverse impacts and increase beneficial effects. Through project scoping and the environmental analysis contained within the EIR, it was determined that the Project would not result in a potential significant effect on the environment with respect to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, parks and recreation, population and housing, public services, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems. Therefore, no further findings are required for these subject areas.

4. Findings for Significant and Unavoidable Effects

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081 and California Environmental Quality Public Resources Code 21081 and 21081.5, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, require that the City balance the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefit of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental effects when determining to approve a project. And if specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effect, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable.”

Potential significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, and wildfire were identified for the project. The Findings of Fact are included in Exhibit C.

5. Statement of Overriding Considerations

The Planning and Transportation Commission recommended that the City Council of the City of San Carlos adopt and make the following Statement of Overriding Considerations regarding the significant, unavoidable impacts of the 2045 General Plan Reset and the anticipated benefits of the proposed project.

CEQA requires decision-makers to balance the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable impacts when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific benefits of a project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, those effects may be considered acceptable, and the agency must state the specific reasons to support the action in a “statement of overriding considerations” supported by substantial evidence in the record (CEQA Guidelines §15093, Statement of Overriding Considerations). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15093, the City Council must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project in connection with approval of the proposed project. The City Council finds that even with mitigation, implementation of the project carries with it significant and unavoidable environmental effects, as identified in the EIR and summarized below.

Adoption of the proposed project would result in the following significant and unavoidable impacts:

Impact AQ-2.1: Construction of development projects within the proposed project's buildout horizon could generate emissions that exceed the Bay Area Air District's (Air District) regional significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin's nonattainment designations.

Impact AQ-2.2: Operation of development projects under the proposed project could generate operational emissions that exceed the Bay Area Air District's (Air District) regional significance thresholds for volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x).

Impact AQ-3: Construction emissions associated with future development projects could expose air quality-sensitive receptors to substantial toxic air contaminant concentrations and exceed the Bay Area Air District's (Air District) project-level and cumulative significance thresholds.

Impact GHG-1: Implementation of the proposed project could exceed the greenhouse (GHG) emissions threshold of no net increase from existing conditions and would therefore not make substantial progress toward the long-term GHG reduction goal under Senate Bill (SB) 32 or the carbon neutrality goal under Assembly Bill (AB) 1279.

Impact TRAN-2: The proposed project could exceed the City's VMT significance criteria by generating VMT per service, per capita, and per employee that exceeds a threshold of 15 percent less than the regional average and by increasing total countywide VMT.

Impact WILD-2: Future development during the buildout horizon of the proposed project could increase population, buildings, and infrastructure in wildfire-prone areas, thereby exacerbating wildfire risks.

Impact WILD-5: Future development during the buildout horizon of the proposed project could, in combination with other surrounding and future projects in the State Responsibility Areas, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), or Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), result in cumulative impacts associated with the exposure of project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors.

Overriding Considerations:

The Planning and Transportation Commission recommended that the City Council carefully consider each significant, unavoidable project impact in reaching its decision to approve the proposed project. Even with mitigation, the City Council should recognize that implementation of the proposed project could carry with it unavoidable adverse environmental effects, as identified in the EIR. The City Council should specifically find that, to the extent that the identified significant adverse impacts for the proposed project have not been reduced to acceptable levels through feasible mitigation or alternatives, there are specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, that outweigh the project's significant unavoidable impacts and support approval of the proposed project. Any one of these benefits, as set forth below, is sufficient to justify approval of the proposed project. The substantial evidence supporting the various benefits is in the record as a whole.

The following statements identify the reasons why, in the City's judgment, specific benefits of the proposed project outweigh the possibility of the significant and unavoidable effects. The City finds that each of the proposed project benefits discussed below is a separate and independent basis for these findings. The reasons set forth below are based on the EIR and other information in the administrative record.

Economic Benefits:

1. The proposed project would support local shops, businesses, and services.
2. The proposed project would support and incentivize property investment and redevelopment, which would increase property values and revenue to support City services. This process would benefit the local shops, businesses, services, employees, and residents.
3. By extending the General Plan horizon to 2045, the proposed project would provide comprehensive environmental review for continued redevelopment and

business development in the city, allowing for more efficient project-level environmental review.

Legal Benefits:

4. The proposed project would ensure that the City's General Plan is legally adequate and addresses topics required by State law.

Social Benefits:

5. The proposed project would plan for adequate housing capacity to accommodate the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) now and into the future.
6. The proposed project would encourage new businesses that residents need and enjoy, while fostering a sense of place within the community where residents and visitors can socialize.
7. The proposed project would promote the creation of guidance for the protection of areas of archeological sensitivity.

Technological Benefits:

8. The proposed project would guide redevelopment in a manner consistent with up-to-date California Building Code Standards, Energy Efficiency Standards, and Cal Green requirements.

Environmental Benefits:

9. The proposed project would promote an update to the Climate Action Plan to meet the GHG reduction targets.
10. The proposed project would protect open spaces and natural habitats, increase the planting and maintenance of street trees, maintain the City's urban forest, invest in natural infrastructure, and expand access to parks and open space.
11. The proposed project would encourage a modal shift to reduce vehicular trip generation from new development.
12. The proposed project would continue to implement the City's adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan adopted on June 9th, 2020 and update the Master Plan as needed.
13. The proposed project would continue to implement the City's adopted East Side Innovation District Vision Plan adopted on October 25, 2021.
14. The proposed project would implement and enforce the Transportation Demand Management Ordinance and support Transportation Demand Management measures in new development to reduce traffic impacts.
15. The proposed project would establish clear actions to protect the community from flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes by reinforcing the City's emergency readiness and response capabilities, increasing power system resilience, maintaining a state-of-the-art emergency notification system, providing community training programs, and planning ahead for disaster recovery.
16. The proposed project would require that major new buildings and taller structures that extend above the existing surrounding urban fabric and height of the tree canopy be designed to minimize the potential risk of bird collisions using input from the latest bird-safe design guidelines and best management practice strategies to reduce bird strikes.
17. The proposed project would continue to support trail connections as identified in the City's Potential Trail Connections Plan.

6. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

- a. As referenced in the Findings (Exhibit C), a MMRP has been prepared for the project and is to be adopted concurrently with these findings and statement of overriding considerations pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081. The MMRP is a separate stand-alone document that will be used by the City to track compliance with the project mitigation measures. The MMRP (Exhibit D). will remain available for public review during the compliance period, which includes pre-construction coordination, construction, and post-construction documentation for future development projects.

7. Adoption

- a. The City Council certifies the Environmental Impact Report for the City of San Carlos's 2045 General Plan Reset project (Exhibit A and B).

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I, City Clerk Crystal Mui, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of San Carlos at a scheduled meeting thereof held on the 27th day of May 2025, by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS:

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS:

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS:

CITY CLERK of the City of San Carlos

APPROVED:

MAYOR of the City of San Carlos

Exhibits:

- A. Draft EIR
- B. Final EIR
- C. Findings of Fact
- D. MMRP