



1415 L Street,
Suite 300
Sacramento, CA
95814

916.321.9000
sacog.org

January 8, 2025

Citrus Heights City Council
6360 Fountain Square Drive
Citrus Heights, CA 95621

Re: Proposed Amendment to Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan

Dear Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan. The currently adopted Specific Plan is a model for infill revitalization for the rest of the region. The proposed changes, which reduce residential capacity and intensities as a means of accommodating multiple quick-service restaurants and drive-through businesses, building and landscape materials sales, light industrial and storage uses, and automotive uses, have the potential to undermine the original vision for the Specific Plan. SACOG would like to express our concern about the proposed changes and that we remain committed to supporting the City with the implementation of the existing Specific Plan.

SACOG's primary responsibility as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the six-county Sacramento region is the development and implementation of the MTP/SCS, a document that proactively links land use, air quality, and transportation needs to establish transportation spending priorities for the region. The MTP/SCS must be based on an estimated land use pattern to be built over the 20+ year planning period, and it must conform with federal and state air quality regulations.

The foundation for the MTP/SCS land use forecast is local government general plans, community plans, specific plans, and other local policies and regulations, and the SACOG Blueprint. The Blueprint vision, based on the principles of smart growth, also contributes to the development of the MTP/SCS by giving general direction on how the region should develop over time to reap the benefits of the Blueprint Preferred Scenario.

The adopted Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan is one of the most significant planning efforts in the region to implement the Blueprint vision and principles. The Blueprint Preferred Scenario and the currently adopted MTP/SCS achieve transportation, air quality, and other quality of life benefits by relying in part on infill and redevelopment projects such as this one. The SACOG region has many aging and underutilized commercial corridors where local governments are looking to make more efficient use of existing public infrastructure. Redeveloping large, underutilized parking lots with housing is critical to the economic revitalization of these corridors and can provide the proximate customer base needed to sustain commercial uses in our changing retail climate.

The currently adopted Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan does exactly this by reimagining the Sunrise Mall into a vibrant mixed use center of attached housing, jobs, and services. The Blueprint, as well as every MTP/SCS update since then, has identified the need for

Auburn
Citrus Heights
Colfax
Davis
El Dorado County
Elk Grove
Folsom
Galt
Isleton
Lincoln
Live Oak
Loomis
Marysville
Placer County
Placerville
Rancho Cordova
Rocklin
Roseville
Sacramento
Sacramento County
Sutter County
West Sacramento
Wheatland
Winters
Woodland
Yolo County
Yuba City
Yuba County

more attached housing in the region to meet the needs of current and future residents. The proposed project supports this by planning for a significant amount of attached housing near existing jobs and services.

The project also supports transportation choice by locating a major transit facility along a high-quality transit corridor. The plan carefully considers the relocation of the existing bus transfer station to Sunrise Blvd. This has been done in consultation with Sacramento Regional Transit. The plan's proposed potential of 2,200 dwelling units within this transit corridor would promote walking and biking and may relieve congestion elsewhere in the city and region. For non-work/school trips, which make up most of all trips in the region, the project's location efficiency would allow for its residents to satisfy the many other needs of daily life in a central location.

SACOG has supported the City's efforts to develop the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan for years through several competitive grants, including \$100,000 of Civic Engagement grants, \$160,000 in the Green Means Go Early Activation Grant Program, \$178,000 in Green Means Go Planning Grants, and, most recently, \$450,000 as part of a larger regional award in the federal Reconnecting Communities Grant. All of these grants were predicated on the vision of transforming the Sunrise Mall into a vibrant mixed use center and not a continuation of the auto-oriented uses that already exist along the corridor. Further, the \$450,000 awarded as part of the Reconnecting Communities Grant is in the process of being obligated, but has yet to be spent. If there is a different vision for the sunrise mall than what was portrayed in the grant application, there is a risk that the new project would no longer align with the federal criteria for the grant.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan. We believe that the vision of the currently adopted plan has potential to be a transformative project and a model for other aging commercial infill properties in the region and appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns. We remain committed to the goals of the plan and look forward to continuing the conversation. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



James Corless
Executive Director