



★ C E R E S ★

GENERAL

PLAN UPDATE



The City has been busy since starting the Ceres General Plan update process last fall and would like to update you on our progress. In this newsletter, we have included some of the common themes from our community engagement, key findings from our research so far, and what is coming next in the General Plan update process.

What is the City of Ceres General Plan Update?

The General Plan is a policy document adopted by the City that serves as the community's primary guide for development, housing, transportation, environmental quality, public safety and services, and parks and open spaces. Last fall, the City of Ceres started an exciting multi-year project to update its General Plan, which was last adopted in 1997. Ceres' new General Plan will cover the period through 2035.

What Progress Has Made Been So Far?

Since last fall, the General Plan Update team has conducted a variety of community outreach and research to identify the most important issues and trends in the city. We appreciate everyone who has participated in the process so far.

- To identify important issues, as well as the community's shared vision for the future, we conducted:
 - 28 stakeholder interviews
 - Two community workshops, one in English with approximately 55 participants and one in Spanish with approximately 44 participants.
 - A community-wide mail-in survey with 502 responses, including 370 in English, 71 in Spanish, and 61 from high schoolers.
- To document the City's current context and trends, we prepared the following two reports:
 - The Demographic, Economic, and Fiscal Conditions Report, which covers socio-economic, employment, housing market, and fiscal trends; and
 - The Existing Conditions Report, which covers land use and urban form, environmental constraints and opportunities, public facilities and services, and mobility.

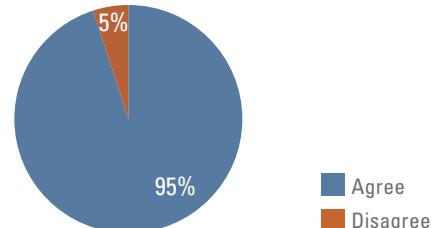
What Have We Heard from the Community?

A number of common themes have emerged from the stakeholder interviews, community workshop, and community-wide mail-in survey, as shown below. Visit the “Library” section of www.CeresGeneralPlanUpdate.com for the full reports.

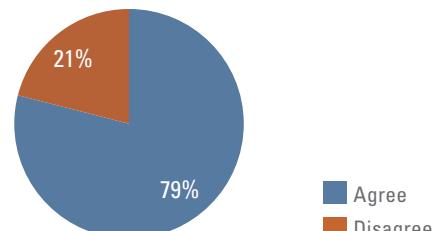
- What are the City’s greatest assets and strengths?
 - Small-town and neighborly character
 - Schools, community activities, and recreation facilities
 - Downtown
 - People
 - Proximity to State Route 99
- What are the greatest challenges that should be addressed?
 - Need for healthier food and more restaurant and retail options
 - Lack of job opportunities and low-incomes
 - Competition with Modesto and Turlock and lack of unique city identity in Ceres
 - Need for city beautification
 - Limited capacity at SR-99 access points
 - Lack of private investment Downtown
 - Traffic around schools and pedestrian safety
- What is the community’s vision for the future?
 - Maintain connection to agricultural industry and heritage
 - Reinvestment in existing areas and businesses
 - Great place to raise a family with safe neighborhoods and good schools
 - Healthy food and safe, active transportation options
 - Green, landscaped streets and public spaces
 - Strong economy with new jobs and tourism

Sample Survey Results

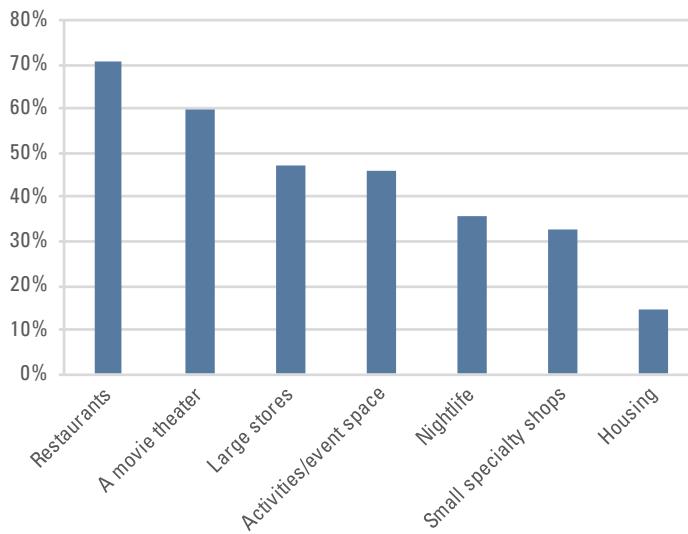
The City should focus new development on vacant or underused properties within the current city limits, near existing neighborhoods and businesses.



The “heart of the City of Ceres” should be focused on Downtown.



What kind of uses and amenities would you like to see in Ceres?



Key Findings from the Existing Conditions Report and the Economic Report

These reports sought to take a snapshot of current conditions in the City as well as emerging trends in a range of topics. Key findings on each of the topics are summarized below. Visit www.CeresGeneralPlanUpdate.com to view the reports.

- Land Use:** According to projections of population and jobs, the City may need to reconsider its development pattern and/or expand city limits to meet demand for residential, industrial, and commercial development through 2035.
- Residential Development:** Ceres has a number of desirable attributes that position the City to capture growing housing demand, including school quality and low violent crime rates. Ceres may want to consider planning for a greater variety of housing options, including “move-up” or “executive” housing on larger lots and multi-family housing.
- Commercial Development:** Current retail options within the City are limited and dated. However, recent real estate market data indicates there is demand for a well-positioned, smaller format retail and office project. If located in the Downtown area, such a project could help enhance Downtown growth.
- Industrial Development:** The City appears well-positioned to attract a higher proportion of County-wide industrial growth going forward. The City may want to consider adding to its inventory of land for industrial growth with larger parcels in close proximity to SR-99.
- Public Facilities:** Ceres has strong public facilities and services, including a well-funded school district and a new Community Center downtown.
- Transportation:** Safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists and reduced truck traffic on residential streets could help relieve traffic congestion and improve public health. Interchange improvements are also planned.
- Utilities:** The City is working to supplement the limited groundwater supply with surface water supply. In addition, the City is developing a Storm Drain Master Plan to address the potential of street flooding. The primary wastewater issue for the City is insufficient future disposal capacity.
- Environment:** Ceres has environmental concerns similar to other cities in the San Joaquin Valley, including air pollution. Climate change threatens the agricultural industry as well as the quality of life in Ceres.
- Fiscal Health:** Although sales tax revenues have increased slightly, the County allocation of property tax revenue to the City is very low. With the resolution of a lawsuit, commercial development will increase in the coming years, which should boost sales and property tax revenues in the City.

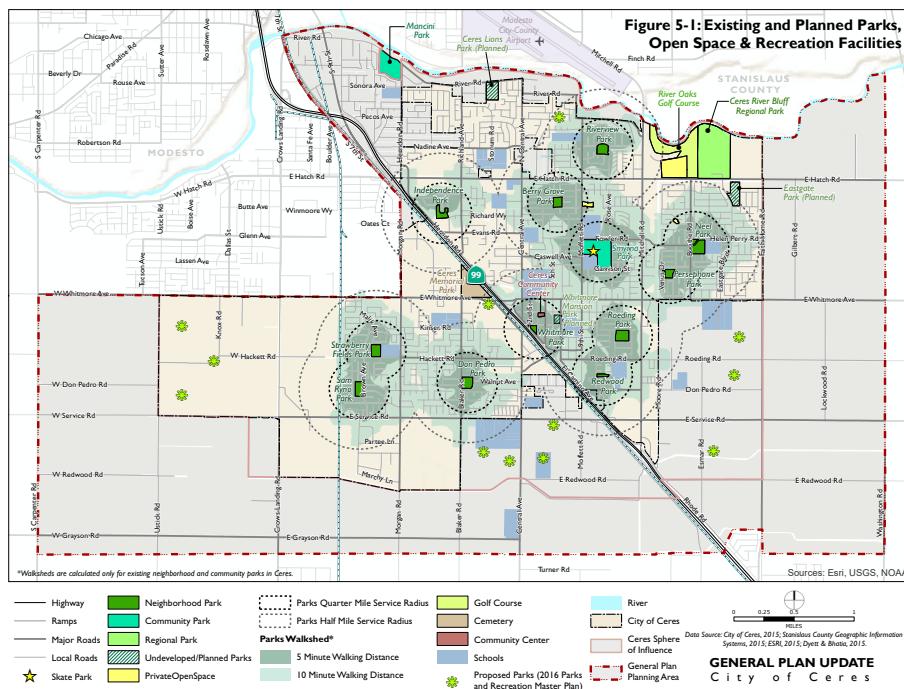


Figure 5-1 from the Existing Conditions Report shows that most residential neighborhoods are within a 10-minute walk from a park.



The first community workshop gave Ceres residents the opportunity to engage with fellow community members about topics important to the future of the city. Thank you to all who attended!



Stay up to date with the planning process!

What's Next?

Based on the findings of the public participation and research thus far, the Planning Commission will review and the City Council will ultimately adopt a Vision Statement for the future of Ceres to guide the rest of the General Plan update process.

In addition, the City and consultant team will be developing three potential land use and transportation alternative plans, which the Planning Commission will review in fall 2016. Analysis and comparison of the relative advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives will inform the development of the updated General Plan.



PLANNING DIVISION 2220 Magnolia St. Ceres, CA 95307

How Can I Get Involved?

We want to hear from you!

Please visit the project website to learn more about the project and read the full reports on the interviews, workshop, and survey, as well as the Existing Conditions Report and Economic Report. You can also always send comments to the City through the website.

In addition, come to the next community workshop in early 2017 (date to be announced) to learn about the alternatives and give feedback. The date, time, and location of the workshop will be announced on the project website.