

City of Hesperia

STAFF REPORT



DATE: October 21, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rachel Molina, City Manager

BY: Ryan Leonard, Principal Planner
Nathan Freeman, Director of Development Services

SUBJECT: 2025 General Plan Update - Circulation Element

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution Nos. 2025-42 and 2025-43 to: 1) Certify the Addendum as complete in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and 2) Adopt the 2025 Circulation Element.

BACKGROUND

The City Council adopted an update to the City's General Plan on September 7, 2010. Since that time, state law has continually evolved, and recent legislation requires the City to make specific revisions to the General Plan to remain in compliance with state law. In 2024, the City engaged PlaceWorks, Inc. to begin the process of updating the Land Use, Circulation, and Safety elements of the General Plan and to prepare an Addendum to the 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The updated Land Use and Health and Safety Elements were adopted by the City Council on July 15, 2025.

The City conducted several public meetings and workshops in preparation for the General Plan update. In 2024, four public meetings and two study sessions were held by the Planning Commission and City Council. At each session, the Commission and Council reviewed and discussed critical components of each element.

On June 12, 2025, the Planning Commission voted 4-0 (with Commissioner Steeno absent) to forward this item to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

ISSUES/ANALYSIS

The General Plan is the City's "constitution" and guide for development, outlining the City's vision for itself and how it will develop over time while maintaining quality of life. All decisions made by the City, from adopting the annual budget and implementing capital improvements to issuing building permits, must be consistent with the General Plan.

Since the last General Plan update in 2010, the City's population has grown steadily from about 90,000 residents to just over 100,000, and employment has increased from 11,000 to 17,000. Continued development interest has sustained the City's economic growth and is anticipated to continue into the foreseeable future. The General Plan update must also address new laws, regulations, and circumstances that did not exist when the original plan was adopted. For

example, the State has enacted several laws addressing non-motorized mobility and roadway safety.

General Plan Goals

As a focused update, the objective for the project team was to incorporate new policies and programs that satisfy state law while maintaining the overall trajectory established by the 2010 General Plan. Throughout the process, feedback from community members, stakeholders, and City staff reaffirmed that the goals outlined in the previous document hold true even today. The focused General Plan update supports the following goal:

- Establish a circulation system of arterial and connector streets to carry traffic efficiently within and across the City.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element describes the City's roadway network and identifies operational standards. The Transportation Plan maps the location and classification of streets within the City and illustrates the right-of-way and curb-to-curb widths, for each classification, including special street sections. Roadway performance is measured in terms of Level of Service (LOS), with the City's acceptable thresholds remaining at LOS D for roadway segments and LOS C for intersections.

The Circulation Element also addresses other modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and transit. The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan shows the location and classification of bicycle facilities throughout the City. Most streets include space for bike lanes to encourage bicyclists, supporting the goal of providing viable alternatives to the automobile.

The Circulation Element further addresses challenges faced by the City, including the need for additional freeway interchanges, more crossings at the railroad and the Mojave River, and the reclassification of select roadways to better serve vehicular demand. Notable changes to the roadway network are as follows:

- Incorporated local truck routes previously identified by the City's Engineering Division.
- Relocated the future I-15 interchange from Muscatel Street to Cedar Street.
- Removed the future Lemon Street Bridge over the Mojave River; reclassified Lemon Street from I Avenue to the Mojave River as a Rural Collector (formerly a Major Arterial).
- Reclassified Sultana Street from Seventh Avenue to I Avenue as a Secondary Arterial (formerly an Arterial).
- Reclassified Sultana Street from I Avenue to Main Street as a Secondary Arterial (formerly a Local Road).
- Modified the alignment of the Mauna Loa Street extension from Third Avenue to Hesperia Road / Lemon Street.
- Reclassified Seventh Avenue as a Special Street section from Bear Valley Road to Ranchero Road.

The goals are intended to guide the City as it continues to build out its roadway network address the following issues:

- Ensuring a safe and efficient roadway network.

- Facilitating the transportation of goods without negatively impacting sensitive areas.
- Providing opportunities for non-motorized alternatives to vehicular travel.
- Supporting safe and convenient regional transit.

Addendum to the 2010 Environmental Impact Report

PlaceWorks prepared an Addendum to the 2010 Certified EIR for Hesperia's General Plan. The Addendum evaluates whether the General Plan Update (proposed project) would modify the existing General Plan in such a way that it would create new environmental impacts or substantially increase the severity of previously identified significant effects, potentially requiring further environmental review. The Addendum, in conjunction with the Certified EIR, serves as the environmental review for the proposed modifications to the existing General Plan, ensuring compliance with CEQA. The proposed project updates the Circulation Element to address state laws and support projected growth over the next 25 years.

Addendum Process: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, an addendum to a previously certified EIR may be prepared under specific circumstances. The addendum process allows for documentation of minor project changes or technical updates that do not result in new or substantially more severe environmental impacts. Specifically, Section 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines states:

- a) The lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.
- b) An addendum to an adopted negative declaration may be prepared if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary or none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred.
- c) An addendum need not be circulated for public review but may be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration.
- d) The decision-making body shall consider the addendum with the final EIR or adopted negative declaration prior to making a decision on the project.
- e) A brief explanation of the decision not to prepare a subsequent EIR pursuant to Section 15162 should be included in an addendum to an EIR, the lead agency's findings on the project, or elsewhere in the record. The explanation must be supported by substantial evidence.

The proposed project qualifies for an addendum under CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, as the proposed changes are consistent with the scope of the previously Certified EIR and do not meet any of the conditions outlined in Sections 15162(a) and 15163(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, that would require preparation of a Subsequent or Supplemental EIR. The environmental impacts remain within the range analyzed in the Certified EIR, and no new significant impacts or substantial increases in the severity of impacts have been identified. Therefore, preparation of a full Subsequent EIR is not warranted, and the addendum process is both appropriate and compliant with CEQA requirements.

Tribal Consultation: In compliance with Senate Bill 18 (Government Code Section 65352.3), the City of Hesperia initiated tribal consultation by contacting California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. Notification letters were sent on May 21, 2024, to the Desert Cahuilla Indians, the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, and the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel. The Yuhaaviatam of the San Manuel tribe responded on May 24, 2024, and requested formal consultation with the City. The City indicated that the proposed project would

not allow for any ground-disturbing activities that would preclude a project from going through the standard CEQA requirements, and the Tribe concluded consultation on October 30, 2024. In addition, since the proposed project is being evaluated through a CEQA addendum and not a new EIR, consultation pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Sections 21073 to 21084.3) does not apply in this instance.

Significant Impacts: CEQA requires that the EIR identify project impacts and propose mitigation measures to reduce those impacts. CEQA also requires disclosure of any impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, even if all feasible mitigations are implemented. The Certified EIR determined that implementation of the existing General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality, noise, and transportation. The Addendum determined that these impacts would continue to be significant and unavoidable as part of the proposed project, as summarized below:

- Air Quality
 - Results in construction emissions that would contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;
 - Results in operational emissions that would contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;
 - Results in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).
- Noise
 - Results in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity;
- Transportation¹
 - Causes an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.
 - Exceeds, either individually or cumulatively, a Level of Service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.

No new significant environmental impacts have been identified beyond those already assessed in the Certified EIR. While the proposed project may result in physical impacts due to future improvements, the analysis and mitigation measures from the Certified EIR will still apply. While the project involves physical impacts, it does not result in new significant environmental effects or substantially increases the severity of previously identified impacts. The analysis and mitigation measures from the previously Certified EIR remain applicable to the proposed project.

CITY GOAL SUPPORTED BY THIS ITEM

Future Development - Facilitate balanced growth to ensure cohesive community development and pursue economic development.

¹ The 2010 Certified EIR found impacts to Level of Service (LOS) to be significant and unavoidable. However, since CEQA no longer uses LOS as a threshold standard, and has replaced it with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), the LOS significance is no longer applicable to CEQA.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of the General Plan Update will bring the City's primary policy document into compliance with new state laws and mandates and ensure continued compliance with CEQA. The update will also address the changes the City has experienced in the 15 years since the General Plan was last updated. The update will provide guidance to the City's decision-makers and staff to carry out the overall vision for the City of Hesperia. The Addendum substantiates that the proposed changes do not induce new significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed by the 2010 General Plan EIR.

ALTERNATIVE(S)

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Resolution No. 2025-42 (Certifying the Addendum in compliance with CEQA)
2. Resolution No. 2025-43 (Adopting the 2025 Circulation Element)
3. Addendum to the 2010 General Plan EIR
4. Transportation Study
5. Circulation Element
6. June 12, 2025 Planning Commission Packet