



July 14, 2020

***Modesto Means
Business***

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**MODESTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STATEMENT ON LAND USE
DEVELOPMENT**

In March 2017, the Board of Directors of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce unanimously adopted and approved a policy platform to guide the advocacy efforts of its Government Relations Council (GRC) and its Economic Development Committee (EDC) on local, state, and federal government issues as they relate to creating a vibrant local business environment. This policy platform emphasized promoting a strong pro-business environment and regulatory reform that supports business growth.

For over 100 years, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce has served to encourage the advancement of public and private policies that encourage local job creation, attracts capital investment, and facilitate the City of Modesto's ability to attract and retain businesses. Over the last decade, the Chamber has intentionally emphasized building coalitions and coordinating community, business, and government support for important economic development issues.

City and County land use strategic policy is of vital importance to preserving agriculture and food processing as a cornerstone to our region and is necessary to attract new businesses and industry to Modesto, which means additional local jobs for our growing population.

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce is staunch in its protection of private property rights and self-determination, two principles our nation is founded on. The Chamber has long been adamant that urban limit lines that impede on the City's ability to grow inherently contradict these principles, and our position has not changed.

Accordingly, this leads the Chamber to once again call on the City of Modesto to complete its long overdue Comprehensive General Plan update. This update, due by State law since 1995, mandates a procedure that safeguards these two guiding principles for landowners both inside and outside city limits. This Comprehensive General Plan update process allows the will of the community to be heard and regarded. This provides a voice for landowners along the boundaries of the current city limits and within the sphere of influence, Modesto citizens, nonprofits, current businesses and developers, real estate professionals, and business and industry advocacy groups in developing the long term plan for Modesto. The point is the City of Modesto should be patient, deliberate and intentional in crafting a strategic vision that will guide its land use policy for decades to come. Time and much contemplation is required to balance the current will of the region with the economic needs of the future.

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce urges the City Council to resolve its land use issues by doing what it said it would do years ago – fund and complete the Comprehensive General Plan update without any more delays. Such a move would be a sign of good will and demonstrates that the City sees the urgency to create a long-term, smart, and strategic land use vision, and is serious about considering all opinions on what it should look like.

Regardless of any ballot measure that would define the City boundary, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce continues to emphasize that the City must update its State mandated General Plan without further delay. The Chamber stands for economic development and creation of jobs through a well-developed, long-term, and thoughtful General Plan process.

The Chamber does not support any measure that limits the City's ability for growth or that is contrary to the long-term needs of the City, its citizens, or landowners. The City should not delegate its responsibility to update the General plan to a ballot measure.

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce represents the business community and is prepared to work with the City and all interested parties on this important work.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pete Zahos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

Pete Zahos,
Chairman of the Board
Modesto Chamber of Commerce