

# Tracy Press



## Public gets a look at revised Pacic Gateway

By Bob Brownne Jan 17, 2025

The community got a closer look at the Pacic Gateway project, a proposed development of 1,577 acres south of Tracy.

It's a reworking of a previous proposal, this one further to the south and mostly away from Durham Ferry Road, which had been the northern boundary of the earlier plan. The new plan covers land between the Delta Mendota Canal and the California Aqueduct with access to Highway 132 and Interstate 580.

Last Thursday's meeting at the Tracy Transit Center drew plenty of neighbors, who, as before when the project was introduced in late 2023, opposed the potential industrial development.

"No matter how you look at it there are so many issues here," said Leanne Staas, who has lived with her family on Durham Ferry Road for 30 years. "My main thing is covering up good farmland, because once you've blacktopped over farmland you're never getting that back."

Farming has long supported her family, Staas said, including her husband, Rick, who is the president/CEO of the San Joaquin Valley Hay Growers Association.

"We moved to the country for a reason. We like the quietness. We like the way of life," she added. "I raised my family out there and now somebody comes along and wants to ruin it."

The project, proposed by Ridgeline Property Group LLC, of Roseville, on behalf of a group of property owners including Pinderjit S. Sandhu, Sukhjot S. Sandhu and Karnail Sandhu, could have nearly 25 million square feet of limited industrial use, 160,000 square feet of commercial uses and a 66.5-acre university campus. The university, as well as a general commercial development and a new VFW Hall, are along Chrisman Road on the north side of the project.

Jennifer Jolley, Director of the San Joaquin County Community Development Department, said that while much work has been done on documents like the specific plan and long list of plan applications, the project is still in early phases of the review process. The scoping meeting is a required step in the creation of a draft environmental impact report.

The Jan. 9 meeting is midway through the scoping process for the EIR, which began with the Dec. 20, issuance of the notice of preparation for the EIR, and concludes on Jan. 21. Thursday's meeting was an opportunity to take public comment and let people know how to comment further.

The county will then prepare the draft EIR, and then announce when that document is available for public comment, with a 45-day comment period to follow once that document is released.

"There will be plenty of opportunities for public participation after that draft environmental impact report is released for the public to see," Jolley said. "There will be a minimum of two public hearings. It has to go to the planning commission and it has to go to the board of supervisors."

"When you involve the public it makes for a better project, ultimately," she added. "The project is still in the relatively early stages of review. Even though it's been under review for quite some time there have been some modifications, so I'm glad there's such a good turnout tonight."

The EIR will spell out issues like loss of farmland and wildlife habitat, traffic impacts and water supplies. Bill Koster, whose family has been farming in the area since 1880, said those studies aren't likely to convince residents that this kind of development is suitable for the area.

"In the evening going down (Highway) 132 it's a nightmare. That's just part of it. You've got mostly commuter traffic going down Chrisman Road. That's going to be their main crossroad right now. People are going to be ying down Chrisman Road trying to beat the traffic on 132 that backs up."

He added that local water supplies are already stressed, so developers would have to come to an agreement with local irrigation district, most likely Byron-Bethany Irrigation District, to bring in the project's water needs. While groundwater wells are proposed, Koster noted that as in most of the San Joaquin Valley those supplies are stressed as well, and could cause subsidence that would cause the land to sink and damage the California Aqueduct and Delta Mendota Canal.

"It's very poor quality and hardly any of it. I know a lot of guys that used to have wells in that area that have gone dry," Koster said.

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