4.0

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

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Introduction

Avenal is a small agricultural community on the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley. Many opportunities exist for expanding the existing commercial and industrial employment base. Avenal wishes to keep that small town charm, but at the same time provide an equal mix of jobs and housing and an increase in industrial opportunities.

Purpose of the Economic Development Element



The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to provide guidance for economic development within the City of Avenal in order to attain an economically viable and self-sustaining community. In this sense, economically viable means providing a range of housing and employment opportunities that meet the needs of both residents and workers, attracting families and businesses to create demand for planned land uses, and establishing and funding public service levels that preserve or enhance Avenal's quality of life.

The Economic Development Element is an optional element of Avenal's General Plan. Authority for the Economic Development Element is found in State Government Code Section 65303, which allows cities and counties to add optional elements beyond the State-mandated elements. Once adopted, an optional element carries the same legal weight as any of the other elements. The City has prepared one in order to consolidate and codify a growing body of policies concerning the economic and fiscal viability of Avenal.

Scope and Content of the Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element establishes goals, objectives and policies and standards to guide City efforts to maintain an economically viable community.

The Economic Development Element is comprised of four sections: the Introduction; Purpose of the Economic Development Element; Scope and Content of the Economic Development Element; and

the Goals, Objectives and Policies. In the Goals, Objectives and Policies section, the City's economic development needs are identified and corresponding policies established. The goals and objectives are comprised of the City's broad statements of purpose and direction. The polices and standards serve as guidelines for providing adequate industrial, commercial and office land, infrastructure improvements, and a commercial, industrial and residential balance.

Goal

Foster and maintain a high quality of life for the City's residents by sustaining and developing a strong and diverse local economy.

Objectives

A. To achieve and maintain a balance of jobs and housing in Avenal.

B. To ensure that there is adequate industrial land located near major transportation routes, and served by infrastructure, to accommodate the needs of new employers.

C. To actively market and recruit new businesses and retain existing ones, which generate local employment opportunities and sales tax revenues while assisting existing businesses in maintaining and enhancing sales, employment and the appearance of their buildings.

D. Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure improvements which promote commercial and industrial development.

E. To encourage a balance of commercial and industrial uses which support a strong and diverse economic base, which provide adequate fiscal revenues, and which are compatible with the needs of the community

4.1 Adequate Industrial, Commercial and Office Land

Policies and Standards

1. Coordinate economic development planning with land use planning. This shall include locating light and heavy industrial uses in locations that are most convenient for the community to serve, and to plan the size of industrial parcels that are most appropriate to meet the needs of the prospective employers.

2. The City should designate property in the industrial areas for an appropriate mix of large and small parcels. Approximately one-fourth of properties should be less than 5 acres, one-fourth should be for mid-sized parcels of between five and ten acres, approximately one-fourth should be for parcels of 10 to 20 acres, and one-fourth for properties larger than 20 acres. Interstate 5 area shall be for larger uses.

3. Encourage economic development activities which provide, either through initial stages or through expansion, the opportunity for career employment of local residents in jobs that will enable them to live in Avenal.

4. Commercial areas are encouraged to cluster in identified areas such as the downtown area to prevent and discourage strip development. Where appropriate, locate commercial uses at focal points along major arterial streets such as Skyline Boulevard.

4.2 Employer Recruitment and Retention

1. Encourage the preservation and expansion of existing industrial uses in areas designated as industrial. Land uses that may conflict with employment-generating uses should be discouraged from locating adjacent to industrial areas.

4.3 Infrastructure Improvements

1. The City shall ensure that there is at least a 10-year supply (80 acres) of zoned and vacant commercial and industrial land inside the City limits at any one time. The City will ensure that infrastructure is installed or programmed in the Capital Improvement Program for a five-year supply of land so that such property is "ready-to-go". The City should develop an Industrial Park Specific Plan for the Avenal Cutoff Road and Interstate 5 area, and the industrial area south of Avenal and east of SR 33, to ensure that such supply is available.

2. Conduct an economic development/redevelopment feasibility study, and implement a plan to finance needed infrastructure improvements, downtown improvements, and to remove substandard building conditions. The project should be used to "front-load" infrastructure improvements for key economic development activities.

4.4 Commercial, Industrial and Residential Balance

1. In the downtown area, retail, office, financial, government and professional services shall be encouraged to expand the current business mix and increase the area's economic viability as a destination point for shopping, work, dining and entertainment. The City should plan for the expansion of the downtown area along Kings and Tulare Streets between Laneva Street and Skyline Boulevard. The above is intended to provide expansion of the downtown and exposure to the community's main traffic arteries.

2. Based on projected population needs in the community, and the existing cross-commuting patterns, the City shall ensure that there is an adequate amount of office and industrial land to serve the needs of the community for the next 20 years. This will mean that at least 70 industrial acres will be needed to provide employment opportunities for those currently leaving the community and 60 to 75 industrial acres to accommodate new residents with this zone.

3. Maintain a balance of Commercial and Industrial uses in Avenal. The growth in Commercial and Industrial employment shall not substantially exceed the rate of growth in local residential population to eliminate the possibility that the community's jobs-housing balance will worsen. The amount of commercial and industrial land shall also be balanced with the amount of residential land so that the overall general plan will be fiscally positive. This will mean that at least four (4) but not more than nine (9) acres of residential land should be developed for each acre of commercial and industrial space in the community.

4. Encourage increased cooperation between the public and private sectors, such as the Chamber of Commerce, non-profit and community groups, service clubs, plant managers and business associations, in formulating economic development plans and programs.

5. Enhance the downtown area and Skyline Boulevard as a focal point for civic and tourist activities.

4.5 Increased Tourism

1. Increase the marketing activity of the Avenal Sand drags to bring more visitors to town.