



# CITY OF VACAVILLE

## OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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July 11, 2024

James Bezek  
Director of Resource Management, Solano County  
675 Texas St. Ste. 6500  
Fairfield, CA 94533-6342

RE: California Forever Impacts to the City of Vacaville

Dear Mr. Bezek,

This letter is in response to the letter dated July 1, 2024, that we received from Bill Emlen, County Administrator requesting information related to any impacts that the proposed California Forever project ("Project") may pose to our city. As part of this request, it was noted that the emphasis of the analysis should focus on the elements identified in the February 14, 2024, California Forever Initiative with a focus on two milestones: 1) a community of 50,000 residents and 15,000 good paying jobs (targeting 2036) and, 2) an ultimate buildout of 400,000 residents (target 40 years out).

Given this direction, City of Vacaville staff have prepared a high-level summary of potential impacts that could be expected upon our city if and when the Project moves forward. I hope you understand that the broad nature of our comments stems from the fact that there are insufficient details provided about the Project at this time.

Typically for us to provide meaningful feedback on the specific issues and impacts that could be expected with a proposed land use development project (especially of this size and magnitude), we would have the benefit of evaluating the multiple technical studies that are prepared for such a project as part of the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. These technical studies would address subjects including: master infrastructure studies such as water and wastewater master plans; drainage master plan; comprehensive local and regional traffic impact analysis report; public transportation analysis; natural resources analysis; air quality impact analysis; public resources analysis; and, a comprehensive fiscal impact analysis. I realize that County staff is working with the same limited data in order to provide your Board with a detailed summary of the Project and its impact upon Solano County.

Despite the absence of necessary information, we have provided the following summary of potential impacts associated with the proposed Project for your review and consideration.

### **Public Safety**

Both Police and Fire will be affected by the drastic increase in population in Solano County. There could be a significant increase in calls for service, depending on what additional resources are placed within the California Forever community. Public safety response times will be increased as emergency responders will likely be forced to deal with additional traffic congestion and will impact our priority 1 and priority 2 response times within our community. Additionally, more ER beds will likely be needed to accommodate the increased population. This impacts Vacaville Police (VVPD) as the departments already struggles to get hospital clearance for homeless, people who are in police custody, and people placed on 5150 holds. With the potential for additional 400,000 people in a new city, VVPD will see an increase in overall crime. It is hard to estimate the percentage change, but the department expects and would prepare for an increase in property crime and some violent crime, because there will be more people visiting Vacaville. Also, with the increased population, there will likely be an increase in traffic collisions due to added congestion. Some indirect impacts to VVPD will be caused by an overwhelmed



District Attorney's Office, resulting in a backlog of un-filed cases, delayed sheriff deputy recruitments, and crammed court calendars.

### **Transportation**

Vacaville will likely see more people exiting I-80 and using Vacaville surface streets to avoid stop-and-go freeway traffic. In addition, California Forever would impact connector roads like Hawkins, Fry, Vandan and roads not yet build as well as the arterials leading to I-80 and 505, like Alamo, Elmira and Leisure Town; the result will be an increase in traffic along these roadways and the corresponding increase in maintenance costs to the City. Even though VMT is only required for CEQA, a LOS evaluation needs to be conducted. The travel demand model used to evaluate level of service and Vehicle Miles Traveled needs to be vetted by the City. The project will likely use the STA's "regional traffic model" for their calculations, however STA's model lacks the full transportation network to address the traffic consequences of a project like this. Additionally, the land use total is controlled by MTC through the Department of Finance. Both the transportation network and the land use have to be updated to represent an accurate picture of existing and future impacts.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding used for both local and regional public transportation services is already extremely tight. The development of a new city within Solano County will only exacerbate the funding situation. The potential impact could be a further reduction in funding to the local City's for their public transit services. Without substantial investment in convenient public transit to facilitate travel between existing cities and the new city, there would be extensive traffic impacts on the existing roadways, negatively affecting Vacaville residents' and visitors' ability to get around and increasing the City's road maintenance costs.

### **Economic Development**

The California Forever development will likely create competition with Vacaville's economic development plans to attract biotech and advanced manufacturing resulting in a reduction in existing and future City General Fund revenues.

### **Development Activity**

Establishing a new community of 50,000 to 400,000 residents will affect development in Vacaville; it is unclear whether it will increase or decrease residential and nonresidential development activity and its effect on rents and home prices.

At present, new development within Vacaville that removes natural habitat is mitigated through the City's collection of a mitigation fee that the Solano Land Trust uses to purchase mitigation land east and south of Vacaville. The California Forever project now controls much of this land that would have been available as permanent off-site mitigation land for development within Vacaville. This may increase the cost and decrease the feasibility of off-site mitigation to allow Vacaville to implement the General Plan and build more housing and jobs within the City's established boundaries.

### **Energy**

PG&E is challenged to provide sufficient energy to support currently existing communities all over California. If the California Forever project becomes part of PG&E's service area, this would negatively affect the available energy to serve existing and future Vacaville residents and businesses.

### **Air Quality**

Solano County has high rates of asthma. Increased traffic on I-80 and 505, and existing and new roads serving the California Forever area may exacerbate this problem. It is unclear how the conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses will positively or negatively affect the air quality and associated asthma rates.



### **Water Supply & Sewer Treatment**

Additional population of up to 400,000 places a huge strain on groundwater. The Solano subbasin is regulated through the Solano FSP and these additional demands could potentially create undesirable results in the region's groundwater supplies. California Forever may create one of the largest "agencies" early on with many miles of pipeline to be considered a special district for additional groundwater rights. Vacaville may have to update our regional agreements which could reduce groundwater supplies and amend our healthy rivers and landscapes proposals. Additionally, more competition in the water trading market may cause water prices to rise. Lastly, Vacaville is a State Water Contractor, and this could impact our future state water supplies. When a community is in need the region will typically step up to assist one another. The size of the proposed development and the possible overestimation of state water project supplies could put the entire region at risk of eliminating the surface water supply.

With regards to sewer treatment, this would again create more competition for biosolids disposal, which could incur more costs for Vacaville's disposal needs. There are also impacts to the City's recycled water permit should California Forever plan to take surface water from the Delta which would limit Vacaville's ability to secure a permit or reduce the supply available.

### **Tax Dollars**

Depending on the amount of retail/commercial development in the California Forever project, Vacaville could be negatively impacted by the competition, reducing sales tax revenue. The addition, a new city could reduce our percentage of the county use tax revenue pool, of which Vacaville and Fairfield currently receive the largest share of about 29%.

Please reach out to Angelina Herron ([Angelina.herron@cityofvacaville.com](mailto:Angelina.herron@cityofvacaville.com)) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Aaron Busch  
City Manager