



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

AGENDA

ITEM: \_\_\_\_\_

MTG \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO:** James G. Marshall, City Manager  
**FROM:** Kim Espinosa, Planning Manager  
**DATE:** May 1, 2006  
**SUBJECT:** Joint Planning Commission/City Council Study Session on  
General Plan Update and Draft Growth Boundary

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Provide staff and the consultants direction with how to proceed with the General Plan Update and draft growth boundary (SUDP), including suggestions for additional community outreach. The Planning Commission and City Council will be asked to officially adopt a draft SUDP after public hearings to be scheduled in the near future.

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

On July 5 and 12, 2005, joint Planning Commission/City Council Study Sessions on the General Plan Update were held. The City Council and Planning Commission directed staff to expand the study area to include other land areas where development interest was evident, thereby providing the City with a more comprehensive city planning effort. There was discussion that the General Plan Update be geared for a typical planning horizon for a growing community as well as a long term view of growth (similar to the report "Merced 2030, How Should We Grow?" completed in 1990). It was emphasized that the expanded Study Area was NOT the City's proposed new Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) boundary nor the City's proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI), and that a decision would be made after the "Growth Study" was complete regarding what should and should not be included in the proposed SUDP and SOI.

On September 7, 2005, the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council approval of an expanded General Plan Update Study Area (Attachment 1), which encompasses approximately 40,000 acres or almost double the size of the City's current SUDP (20,580 acres). On September 19, 2005, the City Council approved the same study area.

On December 5, 2005, the City Council approved a modified scope of work for the General Plan Update. This "Growth Study" task involved the development of alternative SUDP boundaries and the selection of a preferred alternative.

#### Input Received on the Study Area

On March 2, 2006, the City's General Plan consultants, URS Corporation, held a workshop with City department managers to discuss the alternative growth boundaries. A summary of key topics and issues discussed at this workshop can be seen at Attachment 4.

Meetings with various stakeholders and property owners in the Study Area Boundary were held on April 11 and 12, 2006. Approximately 100 property owners and other interested individuals attended these meetings. A summary of the comments received at the meetings along with comments received after the meetings via comment cards distributed at the meetings can be found at Attachment 3.

#### Recommendations from the Consultant (URS) and Staff

URS Corporation has prepared the *Merced Comprehensive Plan Study Area Report* (Attachment 2), which includes their analysis of the Study Area, key assumptions, growth trends, constraints to growth, etc. For their analysis, the consultants (URS) divided the General Plan Update Study Area into 13 Subareas (Attachment 1) and a further division of Subarea 3, which included the University Community and the Rural Residential Centers between the City's current growth boundary and the University Community, into four subareas (3, 3A, 3B, and 3C). An analysis of each of these subareas and why they should or should not be included in the draft SUDP boundary is outlined in Section VI of the report.

Based on this analysis, three options or scenarios for the draft SUDP were developed (Section V of the report at Attachment 2). These three options are as follows:

- **Option #1** is the "*Recommended Limited SUDP Expansion Scenario*" and includes the UC Campus (Subarea 2), the University Community (Subarea 3), the Yosemite Lakes SUDP (Subarea 3A), the existing Rural Residential Centers (Subareas 3B & 3C), the proposed Mission Lakes Specific Plan area (Subarea 8), and the proposed Castle Farms Specific Plan (Subarea 12). Option 1 includes 12,026 acres (in addition to the current SUDP) and has a maximum build-out population of approximately 360,000. The Campus

Parkway Corridor (Subarea 4) is recommended as a Joint City/County Planning Area with future consideration as an urban area.

- **Option #2** is the “*Moderate SUDP Expansion Scenario*,” which includes all the areas in Option #1 and adds the Campus Parkway (Subarea 4), the Thornton Road area (Subarea 11), and the North Merced area (Subarea 13) north of the existing SUDP. Option #2 includes 17,301 acres (in addition to the current SUDP) and has a maximum build-out population of 435,000.
- **Option #3** is the “*Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion Scenario*,” which includes all 13 subareas, encompasses 21,051 acres (in addition to the current SUDP), and has a maximum build-out population of 493,000.

The consultants and City staff are recommending Option #1.

The large carrying capacity of all these options should be viewed in relation to the population projection of 137,000 for the Year 2025. Given the large size of the options and significant restraints described in the attached report, staff is recommending phasing of urban growth (see Section VII in the report at Attachment 2).

#### Purpose of Study Session and Next Steps in the Process

At the joint study session on May 1, the Planning Commission and City Council should review the report submitted by the consultants and the input received from the stakeholders meetings and the City Department Head workshop and provide any comments or suggestions on the analysis and on the three Options. The City Council and Planning Commission members should then provide staff and the consultants with direction on how to proceed with soliciting additional public input on the draft SUDP boundary. At a later date, the Planning Commission and City Council will, at separate public hearings, be asked to adopt a draft growth boundary. The consultants will then prepare a revised scope of work for completing the General Plan Update for City Council review and adoption.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

  
KIM ESPINOSA  
PLANNING MANAGER

APPROVED:

  
JACK D. LESCH  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

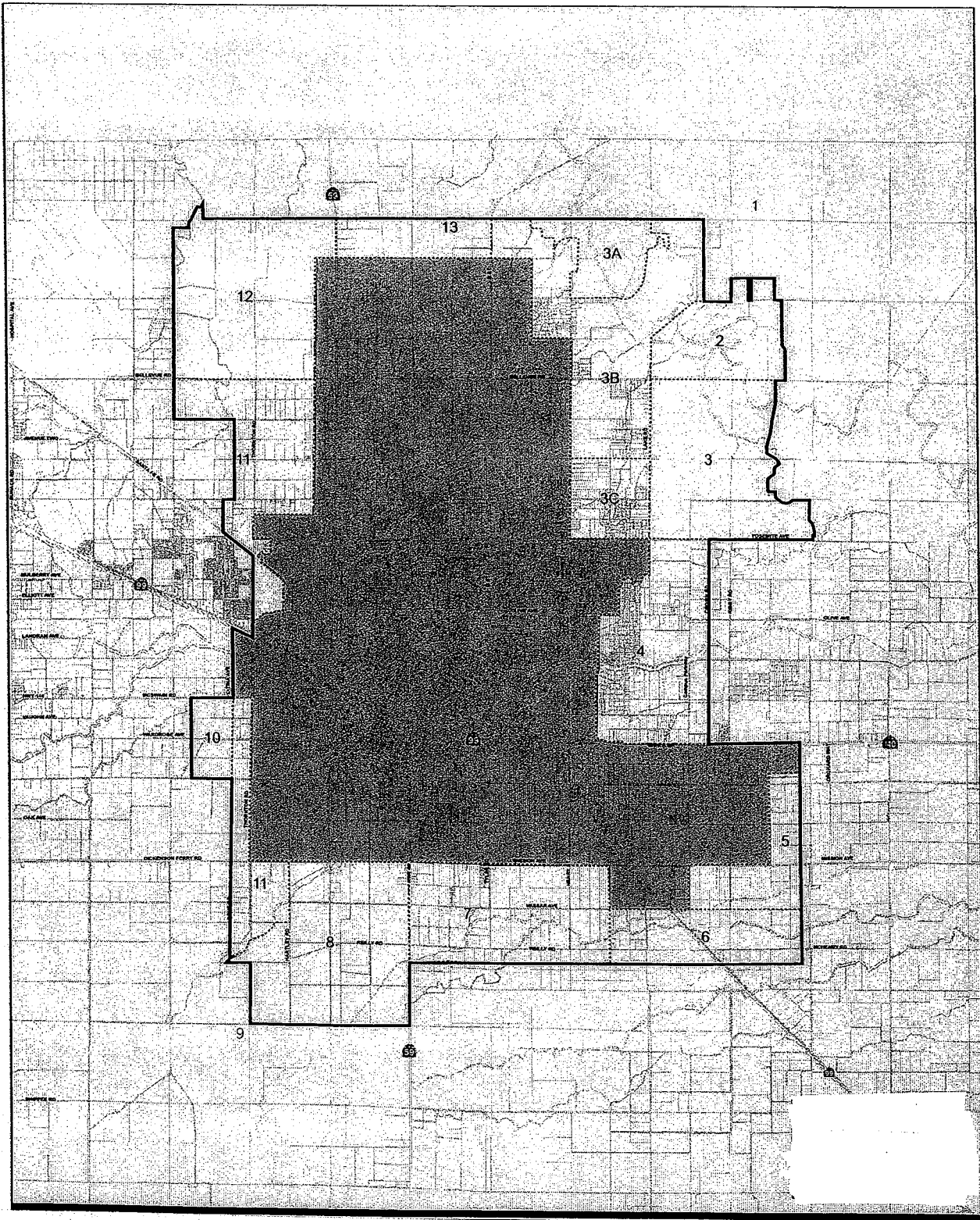
**REVIEWED AND APPROVED:**

**JAMES G. MARSHALL  
CITY MANAGER**

[KE: Projects/2006/GeneralPlanUpdate/PCCCStudySession/May1,2006/PCCCStudySession-AR-May1-06.doc]

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) General Plan Update Study Area Boundary (Divided into Subareas)
- 2) Merced Comprehensive Plan Study Area Report by URS Corporation
- 3) Meeting Notes from Stakeholder Meetings (April 11 & 12, 2006)
- 4) Meeting Notes from City Department Head Workshop (March 2, 2006)



GENERAL PLAN UPDATE STUDY AREA WITH SUBAREAS

MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
STUDY AREA REPORT

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# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/ BACKGROUND

### A. Original Direction for Limited General Plan Revisions

Originally, the thrust of the general plan revision was to address the planning needs of the area between UC Merced and the City of Merced. The General Plan Update would analyze and establish land uses, circulation networks; public facility and service needs, and apply existing Merced Vision 2015 General Plan policies to the expanded growth area. A request for proposals was issued to consultants to assist in this process and on May 16, 2005, the Council approved a contract with URS Corporation to perform this work

### B. Public Meetings Held to Expand SUDP Study Areas

After the contract had been awarded to URS, staff began to receive numerous requests from property owners requesting to be added to the General Plan Update Study Area. In response, joint Planning Commission/City Council Study Sessions were held. On July 12, 2005 the City Council directed staff to expand the study area to include other land areas where development interest was evident, thereby providing the City with a more comprehensive city planning effort. On September 7, 2005, the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council approval of an expanded General Plan Update Study Area, which encompasses approximately 40,000 acres or almost double the size of the City's current SUDP (20,580 acres) and on September 19, 2005, the City Council approved the same study area.

### C. Purpose of this Report

Proposals to expand the SUDP are in areas never contemplated by the City for urbanization and represent a significant departure from the City's fundamental growth policies. The current study boundary includes growth areas predominately to the northwest (Castle Farms) and northeast (UC Merced-University Community-Rural Residential Centers) of the City.

At the direction of the City Council, URS worked with City staff to analyze further revisions of the existing SUDP. The analysis takes into account known development and key infrastructure investment, development interest and sound planning practices. The report provides an overview of growth trends and capacity within current SUDP. The report examines physical, environmental and policy constraints within the expanded study area. The study area is composed of Subareas which relate to various existing or proposed developments, new infrastructure and other planning considerations. Three alternatives are developed and presented. The report then develops a specific recommendation for each SUDP boundary study area and the selection of a preferred alternative.



# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## D. Range of Options Available to the Council

Three Options for Study Area boundaries are presented, as follows (see maps in Section V):

*Option #1: Recommended Limited SUDP Expansion* includes the UC Campus (Subarea 2), the University Community (Subarea 3), the Yosemite Lakes Estates SUDP (Subarea 3A), the existing Rural Residential Center to the south of Yosemite Lakes Estates (Subareas 3B & 3C), the proposed Mission Lakes Specific Plan (Subarea 8), and the proposed Castle Farms Specific Plan (Subarea 12). The Campus Parkway Corridor is proposed as a joint City/County Planning Area with future consideration for urban growth. Option 1's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 360,000, including the present SUDP.

*Option #2: Moderate SUDP Expansion Scenario* adds the Campus Parkway Corridor (Subarea 4), the Thornton Road area (Subarea 11) and the North Merced area north of the current SUDP (Subarea 13) to Option 1. Option 2's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 435,000, including the present SUDP.

*Option 3: Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion Scenario* includes the largest potential area to be studied (including all 13 subareas), and has a maximum theoretical population build out of approximately 493,000, including the present SUDP.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## II. KEY ASSUMPTIONS

URS' recommendations for refinements to the Comprehensive Plan's Study Area boundaries are based on a number of key assumptions we have developed, in discussions with senior City Staff and review of key City planning documents. These key assumptions are as follows:

### A. Land Development and Capital Projects to be Included

1. The entire University of California campus (outlined in the Long Range Development Plan) shall be included within the Comprehensive Plan boundaries.
2. The entire University Community (pursuant to County approved Community Plan) shall be included within the Comprehensive Plan boundaries.
3. The South Merced Specific Plan will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, in a manner developed by a separate planning effort.
4. The proposed Castle Farms project will be included within the Comprehensive Plan boundaries, but the project will be phased.
5. The entire Mission Lakes (Ranchwood) project will be included within the Comprehensive Plan boundary, but the project will be phased.
6. The approved Campus Parkway alignment study and the new Mission Avenue interchange will be included within the Comprehensive Plan boundaries; these major transportation facilities will have substantial, as yet undetermined land use implications.
7. The "Westside Parkway" alignment will not be settled by MCAAG during the Comprehensive Plan update process, although a preferred corridor (No. 1) will likely be selected.
8. The Merced Airport needs to expand, and the area around it needs to be protected from urban encroachment.
9. The ultimate land use of Castle Air Force Base will not be settled during the Comprehensive Plan update process.

### B. Delineation of Boundaries

1. The ultimate Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) boundaries will be the same as the Comprehensive Plan boundaries. In other words, the area covered by the Comprehensive Plan will be designated for urban land uses, although phasing or timing of development will be proposed. Some areas may be designated "reserve" until specific/ public facility plans are completed.
2. Comprehensive Plan boundaries do not need to follow straight lines. Organic boundaries such as stream courses, agricultural lands, etc. may be established.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## C. Growth Policies

1. In general, future growth shall be comprehensively planned through a Specific or Area Plan process.
2. Future growth will pay for itself, i.e., public infrastructure including operation and maintenance shall be funded through project specific development funding mechanisms. Public facility fees need to be adjusted to cover the larger SUDP area.
3. The comprehensive plan will be geared for a typical planning horizon for a growing community as well as a long term view of growth. Therefore, a phasing plan will be necessary so that the City's ability to provide public facilities and services is managed and premature conversion of agricultural land is avoided. See Section VII.
4. The existing SUDP will develop per existing General Plan Land Uses with respect to existing uses, vacant land and the incorporation of the "Village Concept" for future development within the existing SUDP.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## III. GROWTH TRENDS IN MERCED AREA AND CAPACITY OF THE SPECIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SUDP) STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

### A. Projected growth of Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) as adopted by Merced County Association of Governments.

It has been projected that the City of Merced population, including UC Merced and Community, will grow to 128,500 by 2025 from a 2005 population of 73,880 (Merced County Population Forecast 2000-2030). The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) projected the population to grow from 81,647 in 2005 to 137,028 by 2025. The MCAG projection includes the current SUDP boundaries.

### B. Use of Village Prototype to Expand Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) boundaries.

The City of Merced General Plan envisions much of the City's future growth as a series of mixed-use, self-sustaining, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods in what it refers to as the "Village Concept". This "Village Concept" was used to develop the North Merced Conceptual Land Use Plan. This "Village Concept" will be applied to the growth scenario for the proposed expansion of the current SUDP. A "Village" is roughly 640 acres made up of a mix of low density residential (525 acres at 6 du/ac), village core residential (84 acres at 10 du/ac) and neighborhood commercial (25 to 30 acres at .35 FAR). This "Village" yields approximately 10,000 people and 400,000 s.f. of commercial uses.

### C. Build out capacity of the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) study area.

1. Build out capacity of the present SUDP.

In July 2000, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) adopted population projections for the City of Merced. Based on the 2015 General Plan SUDP that analysis yielded capacity within the SUDP for 58,773 dwelling units. Assuming 3 persons per dwelling unit this would equate to a population build out capacity of 176,494 within the 20,540-acre existing SUDP. In examining the potential expansion of the SUDP, calculations showed an SUDP area of 20,952 acres and a potential Study Area Boundary of 21,051 acres (not inclusive of Subarea 1 and Subarea 9 acreages).

2. Build out capacity of expanded Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) boundaries.

In order to estimate the potential build out capacity of the proposed Study Area Boundary, a "Village Prototype" (Attachment A) is used which provides an estimate of commercial square footage and population within a one square mile area. The "Village Prototype" is based on the "Village Concept" in the City of

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

Merced General Plan. The estimated yield for the "Village Prototype" is 400,000 sq.ft. of Commercial Uses and a population of 10,000. This population is allocated as roughly 80% low-density residential (6 du/ac), 15% Village Core Residential (10 du/ac). The balance of the "Village Prototype" acreage (5%) is Neighborhood Commercial (.35 FAR). The "Village Prototype" is not a method of forecasting or projecting population nor is it an indicator of potential future demand. The "Village Prototype" is merely one method of estimating potential development capacity using certain assumptions about the mix and intensity of land uses within the 1-square mile prototype. Additionally, the use of the "Village Prototype" in this analysis does not account for land that is not likely to be developed for residential or commercial uses. In fact, primary intent of this effort is to assist in defining the ultimate Study Area Boundary to be used as the basis for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Once the Study Area Boundary is determined, areas with the best development potential can be identified and the most appropriate land uses applied to those areas.

For the expansion of the SUDP, three Study Area Boundary scenarios were developed. The three options take into account existing developments and known development approvals such as UC Merced and the University Community. Other factors were considered such as demonstrated development interest consistent with existing General Plan development concepts, new or proposed significant infrastructure which may serve as a catalyst or otherwise support new development.

Applying the "Village Prototype" to Option 3 yields a build out capacity of 21,051 acres (in addition to the 20,540 acres in the current SUDP) and roughly 316,000 population (not including the 176,000 potential population in the current SUDP, which would bring the total up to 493,000) and less than 13 million square feet of Neighborhood Commercial. Option 2 would yield a population of almost 260,000 (up to 436,000 with the current SUDP added in) over the 17,000 acre area and 10.6 million sq.ft. of Neighborhood Commercial. Option 1 yields a population of 183,281 (up to 360,000 with the current SUDP) over just over 12,000 acres and 7.4 million sq.ft. of Neighborhood Commercial. The following table displays the results of the analysis for each option utilizing the "Village Prototype

**Table III-I**

	ACRES	POPULATION
<b>OPTION 1:</b>		
Recommended Limited SUDP Expansion Scenario	12,026	183,281
<b>OPTION 2:</b>		
Moderate SUDP Expansion Scenario	17,301	258,109
<b>OPTION 3:</b>		
Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion Scenario	21,051	316,709

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*Option #1: Recommended Limited SUDP Expansion* includes the UC Campus (Subarea 2), the University Community (Subarea 3), the Yosemite Lakes Estates SUDP (Subarea 3A), the existing Rural Residential Center to the south of Yosemite Lakes Estates (Subareas 3B & 3C), the proposed Mission Lakes Specific Plan (Subarea 8), and the proposed Castle Farms Specific Plan (Subarea 12). The Campus Parkway Corridor is proposed as a joint City/County Planning Area with future consideration for urban growth. Option 1's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 360,000, including the present SUDP.

*Option #2: Moderate SUDP Expansion Scenario* adds the Campus Parkway Corridor (Subarea 4), the Thornton Road area (Subarea 11) and the North Merced area north of the current SUDP (Subarea 13) to Option 1. Option 2's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 435,000, including the present SUDP.

*Option 3: Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion Scenario* includes the largest potential area to be studied (including all 13 subareas), and has a maximum theoretical population build out of approximately 493,000, including the present SUDP.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## IV. CONSTRAINTS TO GROWTH IN MERCED AREA.

Various infrastructure, natural resources and policy constraints were reviewed in the analysis of the SUDP Expansion options. All subareas are affected in varying degrees by these constraints and as such will be incorporated into the phasing of development.

### A. Infrastructure Capacity:

#### 1. Long-term Water Supply

By 2030, the City of Merced's water need is projected to increase to 60,000 acre feet annually. The UC Campus is projected to need another 20,000 acre feet. This in addition to the demands placed on water supply by agriculture creates significant demands on the underground aquifer. The groundwater recharge plan contained in the Merced Water Supply Plan establishes a target level of groundwater levels in 1992 for the stabilization of groundwater and the construction of groundwater recharge facilities to help accomplish that goal.

#### 2. Waste Water Treatment and Collection.

One critical constraint is the ability of Subareas to pay for WWTP expansion and trunk lines. The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) located to the southwest of the City has a current design capacity for a population of 77,000 according to the City's General Plan. Capacity is restricted for new SUDP area unless development funds its own improvements. The lack of the ability to collect and treat wastewater could be a constraint to growth. According to the *2005 Initial Study for the City of Merced Wastewater Treatment Plan Improvement Project*, the existing capacity of the City's wastewater treatment plant is 10 mgd. However, according to the *1997 Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR*, the City has plans to double the daily capacity of the treatment facility from 10 million gallons per day (mgd) to 20 mgd in phases commensurate with growth. It is estimated that a capacity of 20 mgd could accommodate a residential population of 150,000 as well as the required number of appurtenant businesses and industries to support that population. The costs of the aforementioned improvements are outlined in the CIP and will be financed through the collection of service connection fees and increased monthly service charges.

As development occurs, upgrades to the collection system will also have to be made. These upgrades will be made conditions of approval for each specific project and be constructed either through direct construction thereof by the project proponent or through the collection of connection fees. The City requires new development to be self-funding.

#### 3. Transportation Planning

The City of Merced General Plan list 21 major street improvement projects (*Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*; Table 4.1, page 4-3). These infrastructure improvements will allow for additional investment and growth for those areas served by the projects. In addition, the Merced County Association of

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Governments (MCAG) 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan allocates significant funding for transportation improvements affecting the City of Merced, including Highway 59 widening, Castle Highway and Campus Parkway (Table 8, pg 23-24). The Merced County Board of Supervisors recently approved the north/south alignment for the Campus Parkway. The Parkway is located within unincorporated County of Merced approximately one mile east of the City of Merced. Phase 1 of the Campus Parkway connects at the Mission Avenue Interchange and connects with Yosemite Avenue at the southern border of the UC Merced Community Plan (see Campus Parkway FEIR). The City is funding the construction of the Parkway from Highway 99 to Childs Avenue, due to be completed by 2007-08 to serve a large industrial user. Funding for the rest of the Parkway is uncertain at this time.

## 4. Maintaining City Standards for Public Facilities

Significant new development will strain existing levels of public service provision. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) gave the City of Merced's Fire Department a Class 2 rating, with 1 being the highest service rating. The City also maintains a ratio of 1.32 per sworn police officers per 1000 population (*Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, page 5-4). The addition population and expanded service will require new facilities and additional staffing to prevent degraded levels of service. New developments would require increases in water supply and wastewater collection and disposal.

## 5. Schools

The City of Merced collects impact fees to help mitigate the impact of new development on schools. The mitigation fee is established by the State legislature. The ability of the school districts to absorb the increase in student population and maintain community educational standards will need to be addressed as any growth planning effort moves forward. With regard to school impact fees the City of Merced complies with requirements of Education Code Section 17620, Government Code Section 65995 and the provisions of Senate Bill 50.

## **B. Natural Resources and Other Constraints:**

### 1. Agricultural Resources

Much of the City of Merced is surrounded by agricultural lands, including farmlands designated as Prime, of Statewide Importance, Unique and Lands of Local Importance (*Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, Figure 8.8). Criteria for expansion of the City Sphere of Influence and criteria for the expansion of the SUDP place a heavy emphasis on the preservation of agricultural lands and desire to limit sprawl-type development patterns (*Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, pages 2-10 and 2-11). A larger SUDP will result in the need for agricultural land conversion mitigation (fees, conservation easements, etc.).



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## 2. Biological Resources and Wetlands

The *Final Environmental Impact Report for the Merced General Plan* noted that throughout the proposed SUDP Subareas, there are wetlands including seasonal ponds and vernal pools. Several stream courses and canals run through the plan area. These canals and streambeds form habitats for local plant species, as well as various birds and mammals (see pages 4.4.2 – 4.4.12).

## 3. Airport Hazards

The City of Merced is affected by Castle Airfield, formerly Castle Air force Base, approximately 4 miles to the northwest and Merced Municipal Airport to its southwest. Both airports are public and general use airports. They place constraints on developments proposed within or proximate to their flight zones. Generally, only agricultural or industrial uses or other low intensity land uses are permitted within Flight zones A- B2 and limited residential (not more than 8 du/acre) in Zone C. Schools and other sensitive uses must be at least 2 miles away from the flight zone (*Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan*, 1999 and *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, 10-14 – 10-16). In addition there has been discussion regarding possible expansion of Merced Municipal Airport, which will likely generate additional constraints on lands adjacent to the airport.

## 4. Air Quality and Rule 9510

The City and County of Merced are located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) which is under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The SJVAB is in state and federal non-attainment for ozone and PM<sub>10</sub>. In response to the need for the Basin to come into compliance with the federal and state ambient air quality standards, the SJVAPCD adopted Rule 9510 in December 2005. This Rule is aimed at reducing ozone (by reducing the ozone precursors ROG and NO<sub>x</sub>) and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions created during project construction and long-term operation. It requires that an Air Impact Assessment be prepared and contain mitigation measures intended to reduce the criteria pollutants listed on the Rule 9510 emission reduction checklist.

While the non-attainment status of the Basin and the regulations in place to bring the Basin back into attainment are cumbersome to the development process, they certainly do not preclude it. Each proposed project will be required to conduct the appropriate level of impact analysis required by SJVAPCD and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

## C. Policy Constraints:

### 1. Merced County LAFCO

Merced County LAFCO has specific criteria used for review of a proposed Sphere Amendment. Many of the criteria used by LAFCO are related to environmental issues, such as the loss of agricultural resources and infrastructure capacity. The constraints related to municipal services are discussed above in IV-A (1-4) and

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

would be analyzed in the service review document required by LAFCO pursuant to Government Code § 56430 prior to approval of a Sphere of Influence (SOI) amendment.

## 2. County Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) Policies

The County General Plan lists 10 criteria to be met for an expansion of the SUDP. These criteria are weighted towards the preservation of agricultural lands, and include provisions health and safety, water uses/supply, use of existing vacant land and overall consistency with the general plan. In order for the County to recognize the City's expanded SUDP, compelling rationale must exist for any SUDP expansion which takes into account the ten criteria for a SUDP expansion. The current City/County Tax Sharing Agreement reflects the County's acceptance of the City's current SUDP.

## 3. Emerging public concerns regarding growth.

Public concern expressed over growth has been related to the impacts of growth. Based on input from various Stakeholder meetings, the concerns have been directed at ensuring the adequate provision of infrastructure, services and amenities to accommodate growth, rather than the magnitude of the growth itself.

## 4. Current General Plan policies geared toward compact development and avoidance of sprawl.

The City of Merced SUDP is a growth boundary that reflects the outermost limits envisioned for the City's urban development. Within the limits of the SUDP, the City employs the 'Village Concept' to guide future development. This "Village Concept" is built around a commercial center surrounded by a 1/4 -mile of higher density housing, and beyond that 1/4-mile ring are single family homes. This City of Merced's 8,000 acre North Merced Conceptual Land Use Plan is a series of self-sustaining, pedestrian-oriented villages. The City General Plan also includes a number of policies that include neighborhood preservation, development through the specific plan process and specific urban growth and design policies that improve connectivity, walk-ability, and use of transit and encourages infill development. (*Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, Chapter 3-Land Use) Significant expansion of the SUDP raises questions regarding possible inconsistency with the City's current General Plan policies regarding compact urban growth in a predominantly north-south growth pattern.

## 5. Revenue split in current tax sharing agreement.

The City and County of Merced entered into a Master Tax-Sharing Agreement in 1997. In mid-2005, the City began to evaluate potential adjustments to that agreement in order to more adequately fund development as it is annexed into the City. As vacant land within the SUDP is developed and annexed into the City, adequate funding streams must be present for the ongoing provision of services and the provision of required infrastructure improvements.

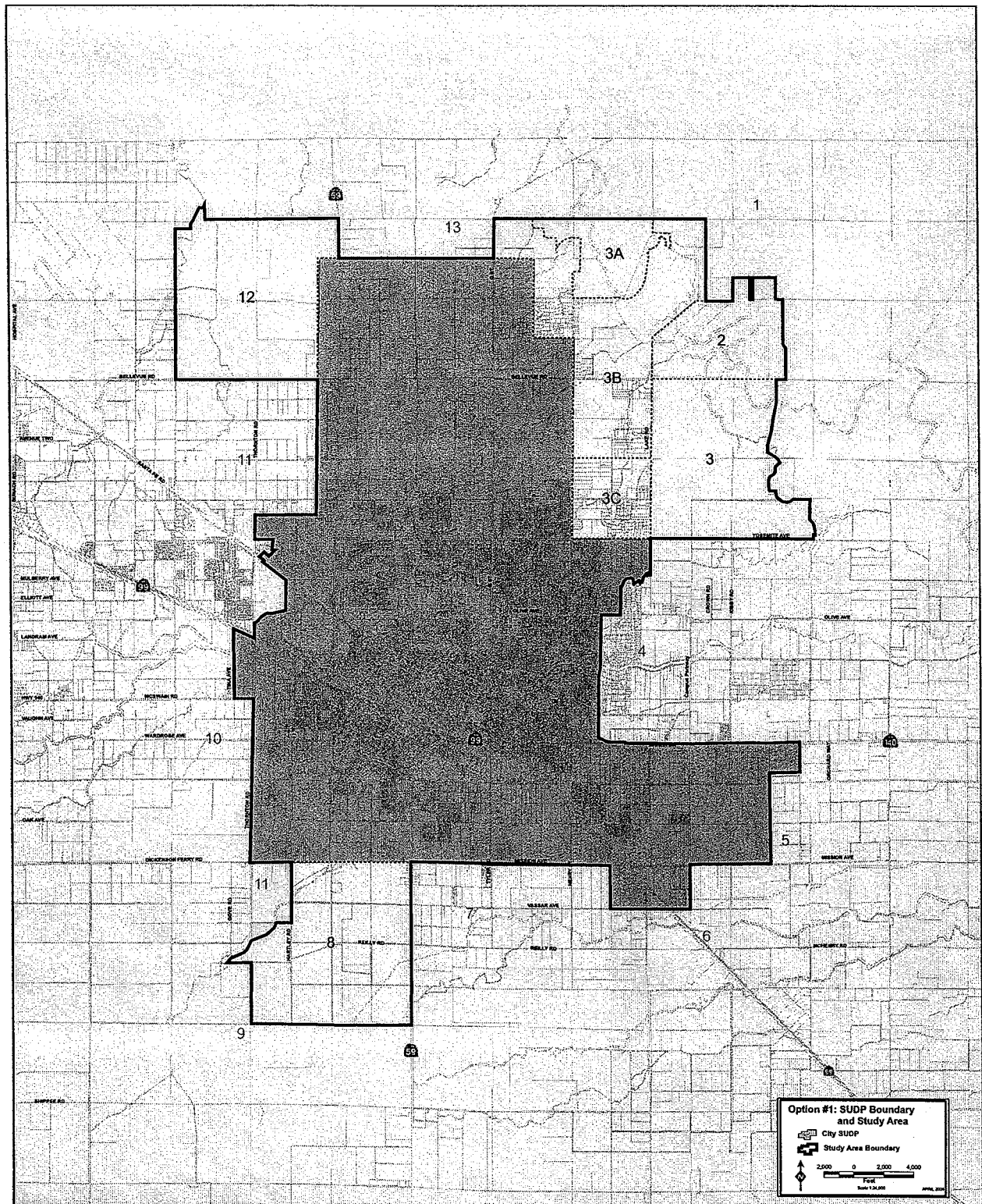
# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## V. STUDY AREA SCENARIOS

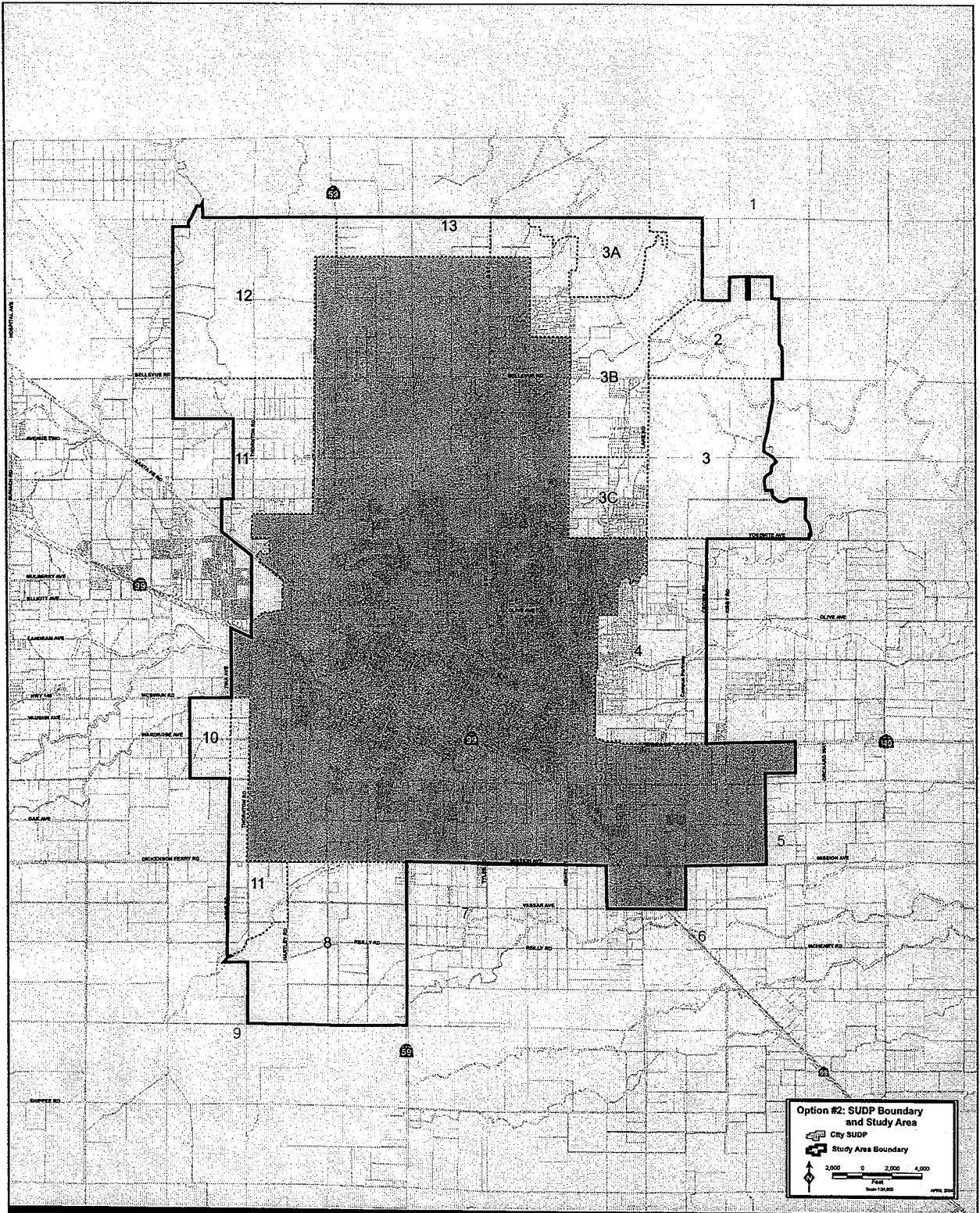
*Option #1: Recommended Limited SUDP Expansion* includes the UC Campus (Subarea 2), the University Community (Subarea 3), the Yosemite Lakes Estates SUDP (Subarea 3A), the existing Rural Residential Center to the south of Yosemite Lakes Estates (Subareas 3B & 3C), the proposed Mission Lakes Specific Plan (Subarea 8), and the proposed Castle Farms Specific Plan (Subarea 12). The Campus Parkway Corridor is proposed as a joint City/County Planning Area with future consideration for urban growth. Option 1's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 360,000, including the present SUDP.

*Option #2: Moderate SUDP Expansion Scenario* adds the Campus Parkway Corridor (Subarea 4), the Thornton Road area (Subarea 11) and the North Merced area north of the current SUDP (Subarea 13) to Option 1. Option 2's maximum theoretical population build out is approximately 435,000, including the present SUDP.

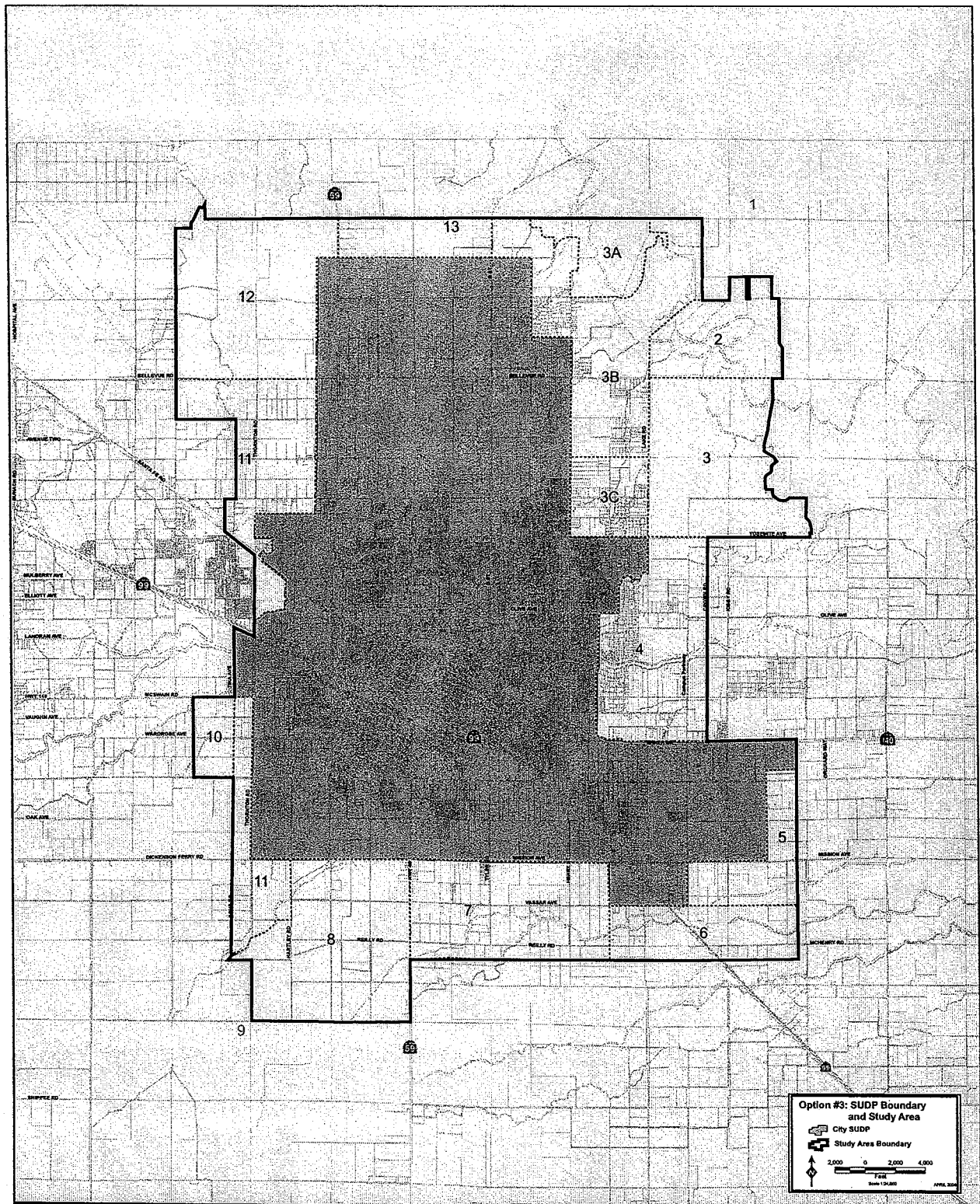
*Option 3: Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion Scenario* includes the largest potential area to be studied (including all 13 subareas), and has a maximum theoretical population build out of approximately 493,000, including the present SUDP.



**OPTION 1: RECOMMENDED LIMITED SUDP EXPANSION**



**OPTION 2: MODERATE SUDP EXPANSION SCENARIO**



**OPTION 3: FULL STUDY AREA/MAXIMUM SUDP EXPANSION SCENARIO**

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## VI. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION FOR EACH SPECIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SUDP) BOUNDARY STUDY AREA.

### A. Study areas included in Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP):

The Subareas listed below are recommended for inclusion in the expanded SUDP study area. The Subareas represent approved projects such as UC Merced or Campus Parkway or in other cases reasonable expectations for future large-scale development

#### **Subarea 2 – The University of California Merced Campus**

The University of California Merced is the 10<sup>th</sup> University of California campus built and the first in almost 40-years. At build out the campus will be 1,250 developed acres and will have a population of approximately 25,000 students, over 1,400 faculty, and almost 5,000 staff. The new campus is and will be an integral part of the larger City of Merced community and will be a significant force for change for the foreseeable future. The campus opened in 2005 in Subarea 2 and sewer and water services have been extended to the campus. It is expected that the campus will develop with urban densities and with a need for services immediately south of the campus.

#### **Subarea 3 - University Community Plan**

The University Community Plan encompasses approximately 2,133 acres. The community plan is generally bounded by Yosemite Avenue to the south, Lake Road to the west, an extension of Bellevue Road to the north and by the Fairfield and Le Grand Canals to the east. The University Community Plan also includes approximately 50 acres north of Bellevue and 60 acres east of the Le Grand Canal. At buildout, the University Community Plan will consist of 11,616 single- and multi-family units, 716,000 square feet of retail, over a million square feet of office/ research and development uses, and as many as 7 public schools. The University Community will develop with urban densities with a need for urban services. Including the area is consistent with City Council previously stated position.

In December 2004, the County of Merced Board of Supervisors approved the University Community Plan as a “new community that results from, supports and nurtures the development of the tenth campus of the University of California” (Merced County, University Community Plan, 2004). The existing and proposed roadways will also spur development activities along those routes. The UC campus will also be a catalyst for significant new development and have a significant growth impact on the City of Merced and areas with development potential in close proximity to the campus.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## **Subarea 3A – Yosemite Lake Estates SUDP**

Subarea 3A includes the County of Merced's Yosemite Lake Estates SUDP. The SUDP area is 655 acres and includes just over 1200 dwelling units and over 65,000 sq.ft. of Commercial uses. SUDPs are intended to develop at urban densities. Furthermore, the Yosemite Lake Estates SUDP is bordered by the City of Merced's current SUDP boundary to the west, Lake Yosemite forms part of its eastern boundary and UC Merced is southeast of Lake Yosemite.

## **Subarea 3B – Existing Rural Residential Center**

This 2,387-acre area is currently designated as a Rural Residential Center (RRC) in the City of Merced General Plan and is generally located between Gardner/Golf Road and Lake Road, north of Cardella Road and north of Bellevue Road (excluding Subarea 3A). Rural Residential Centers provide for urban or suburban development at lower densities along with some accessory agricultural uses. Originally established as buffers this particular RRC is now sandwiched between the current eastern boundary of the SUDP and UC Merced and the University Community Plan. It is recommended to include this Subarea in the study area in order to facilitate orderly growth and adequate provision of public facilities for future development within the existing SUDP and UC Merced and the University Community Plan area.

## **Subarea 3C – Existing Rural Residential Center**

This 640-acre area is currently designated as a Rural Residential Center (RRC) in the City of Merced General Plan and is generally bounded by Gardner Road, Cardella Road, Lake Road, and Yosemite Avenue. Rural Residential Centers provide for urban or suburban development at lower densities along with some accessory agricultural uses. Originally established as buffers this particular RRC is now sandwiched between the current eastern boundary of the SUDP and UC Merced and the University Community Plan. It is recommended to include this Subarea in the study area in order to facilitate orderly growth and adequate provision of public facilities for future development within the existing SUDP and UC Merced and the University Community Plan area.

## **Subarea 8 – Ranchwood “Mission Lakes” project**

Subarea 8 comprises the land for the proposed 2,355-acre Mission Lakes community located in South Merced. This development consists of approximately 7,800 dwelling units, a golf course, commercial, industrial, and office uses, numerous parks and a 218-acre agricultural preserve to buffer the existing City wastewater treatment plant. The proposed development includes over 40 acres of industrial/office uses and over 200 acres of agricultural buffer adjacent to the Merced Municipal Airport. The nearest fire station is at the Merced Municipal Airport. A portion of the northern section of the proposed development is located within the existing SOI.

Inclusion of this Subarea is recommended because it can be integrated into the existing built area of the City north of Mission to Childs, and has eastern frontage along Highway 59. Improvements would be needed to Mission, Highway 59,



# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

Dickenson Ferry, and Thornton as well as a new connection to West Avenue. Additionally, the cost to provide wastewater treatment collection would presumably be low due to the project's proximity to the existing wastewater treatment facility. The proposed large-scale development improves the feasibility of providing infrastructure to the project.

## **Subarea 12 – Castle Farms Land Use Plan**

Castle Farms is a proposed 2,606 acre master planned community with residential, commercial, and professional office uses. The project proponent proposes the construction of 11,775 dwellings units, 81 acres of commercial uses and 129 acres of Business Park use. The Subarea 12 boundary represents roughly 90% of the Castle Farms project. Approximately 10% of the Castle Farms Land Use Plan (251-acres) is within the current SUDP and the balance of 2,355 acres represents the recommended expansion of the current SUDP. The proposed large-scale development improves the feasibility of providing infrastructure to the project as well as facilitating the development of the Merced-Atwater Expressway. Including this area north of Bellevue Road strongly suggests inclusion in the Study Area boundary of all or part of Subarea 11.

The site of the proposed project is located mostly within unincorporated Merced County, although a small portion on its eastern boundary is located within the existing Sphere of Influence. Since the site is not located on prime farmland, (but it may meet the LAFCO definition by being "productive" farmland) the proposed project is not in conflict with LAFCO policies on sphere amendments and annexations.

## **B. Study areas not included in Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP):**

The following Subareas are not recommended for inclusion in the expanded SUDP study area. These Subareas are all have very low potential for development and represent a significant departure from adopted City policies and plans.

### **Subarea 4**

Subarea 4 is roughly 2,000 acres and is an expansion of the existing SUDP area boundary to Crown Road, roughly 1/4-mile east of the approved alignment for Campus Parkway. Unlike Subareas 2 and 3, there has been no City-County discussion regarding future urbanization of this area. Timing of Campus Parkway construction north of Highway 140 is uncertain. However, because of the proposed Parkway, Subarea 4 should be a City-County joint planning area with comprehensive planning to determine the appropriate level (if any) of urban development in the area. This will require extensive property owner involvement. Protection of prime agricultural land will be an important consideration. There are no short or intermediate term utilities able to serve this Subarea. Sewer service is dependent on the University Community as the catalyst of a new trunk line south to Gerard Avenue.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

The recommendation is to include Subarea 4 as a Joint City/County Study Area. The Campus Parkway, which will be the major north/south route, will connect to southern Merced at the Mission Avenue interchange and connect to the University Community Plan area and the UC campus. Subarea 4 includes county lands west of the parkway and to Crown Road east of the Parkway from the Mission Avenue interchange to its intersection at Yosemite Avenue. The Parkway will create growth pressures along its north/south route between the UC Merced Community Plan area and Highway 99 to the south.

## **Subarea 5**

Subarea 5 is 765 acres distinguished by poor accessibility, its distance from services, and the inability to provide infrastructure without large-scale development. There has been limited development interest in this Subarea, which would require the assemblage of various parcels and land owners in order to plan a development of significant size that would warrant the costly extension of public facilities to the area. Creeks and stream courses, such as Miles Creek, run through this area. Previous studies have found the creeks in sloughs to be habitat for several species of plants and mammals (1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*). According to analysis in the 1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, significant portions of this Subarea are designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland. Exclusion of this Subarea also substantially reduces the impact to agricultural lands and makes the ability to satisfy LAFCO Sphere of Influence (SOI) revision criteria less challenging. However, portions of this Subarea might be suitable for future inclusion in the SUDP due to their proximity to the Mission Interchange and developing industrial land if the above constraints can be overcome.

## **Subarea 6**

Subarea 6 is 1,032 acres marked by poor accessibility, its distance from services, and the inability to provide infrastructure without large-scale development. There has been no significant development interest in this Subarea. Creeks and stream courses, such as Miles Creek, run through this area. Previous studies have found the creeks in sloughs to be habitat for several species of plants and mammals (1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*). Also, according to analysis in the 1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, significant portions of this Subarea are designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland. Exclusion of this Subarea also reduces the impact to agricultural lands substantially and makes the ability to satisfy LAFCO Sphere of Influence (SOI) revision criteria less challenging.

## **Subarea 7**

Subarea 7 is 1,953 acres marked by poor accessibility, its distance from services, and the inability to provide infrastructure without large-scale development. There has been no significant development interest in this Subarea. Creeks and stream courses, such as Miles Creek, run through this area. Previous studies have found the creeks in sloughs to be habitat for several species of plants and mammals (1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*). Also, according to

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

analysis in the 1997 *FEIR for the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, significant portions of this Subarea are designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland. Exclusion of this Subarea also reduces the impact to agricultural lands substantially and makes the ability to satisfy LAFCO Sphere of Influence (SOI) revision criteria less challenging. However, portions of this Subarea, especially those areas north of Vassar Road, may be appropriate for future inclusion in the SUDP due to its proximity to the Mission Avenue Corridor if the above constraints can be overcome.

## **Subarea 10**

There has been interest in developing this 325-acre site with industrial uses. However, the land is within the Merced Airport Approach Zone (Zone B1), the Extended Approach Zone (Zone B2), and the Common Traffic Pattern Zone (Zone C) as determined by the Merced County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). These zones allow industrial uses with restrictions such as the maximum number of people allowed per acre, a required amount of open space within each zone, and restriction on the above-ground storage of hazardous materials. The ALUCP (Table 2A) states that the requirement for open space is applicable to the entire zone and is usually regulated through a general plan or specific plan. These restrictions may limit the types of industrial uses allowable on the property and, therefore, limit the ability to sell/lease structures on the site. The land in Subarea 10 is suited best for agricultural uses as it is currently designated by the County of Merced.

## **Subarea 11**

Subarea 11 is a total of 2,352 acres and is represented in two sections on the Study Area map; a northern section and a southern section. It appears that the development of the Castle Farms project (see Subarea 12) will require the construction of a sewer trunk line from the project site to the City's existing sewage treatment facility located to the southwest of the City, likely along the Thornton Road ROW. The construction of said trunk line would be growth-inducing to development on the City's western boundary. Including the northern section of Subarea 11 in the Comprehensive Plan, the City can control the type and quality of development in the area south of Castle Farms and north of SR 99 that could likely be induced by the trunk line. However, much of Area 11 is within the Airport Compatibility Zone B2 for the Castle Airport, which could limit its growth potential depending on the future use of Castle Airport. The southern section of Subarea 11 is recommended for inclusion in Options 2 and 3 because it will allow the City greater streamlining of the construction of the trunk line and allow for more efficient use of the trunk line by placing future land use control with City. However, this area is affected by the Merced Municipal Airport's Land Use Compatibility Zones, which may limit the type and nature of the development. Therefore, it is recommended for inclusion in Options 2 and 3, but not Option #1.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## **Subarea 13**

Subarea 13 is just over 600 acres situated immediately north of the SUDP. Prior to the Stakeholder meetings, there had not been sufficient development interest in this area to warrant its inclusion in the Study Area Boundary. Since that time, there has been expressed interest in this area. Development of Subarea 13 would allow for consistent develop pattern in the City's northern boundary. It could provide additional cohesive development pattern between Subareas 12 and 3A. Subarea 13 is comprised of multiple parcels and may require some effort to assemble parcels and owners. This would be necessary to create a project of a size that could pay for the needed infrastructure, service and facilities improvements. Therefore, it is recommended for inclusion in Options 2 and 3, but not Option #1.

## **C. Special study areas not mapped on the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP):**

The following Subareas are not mapped on the SUDP and their acreage not included in the capacity analysis. Even though they have no development potential, it is important that they be recognized as significant components in this planning effort for the City of Merced and its environs.

### **Subarea 1**

The recommendation is to exclude the 9,363-acre Subarea 1, the original proposed location for the UC Merced campus. The exclusion of this Subarea reflects the existing location of the University campus in Subarea 2. Subarea 1 is part of the UC Merced Land Trust and no urban or suburban development is foreseen for this area.

### **Subarea 9**

This land is 1,336 acres within the Merced City limits; however it is physically disjointed from the rest of the City. The land is used for the City's sewage treatment plant. There is no compelling reason to show this Subarea on the Land Use Diagram. The location of the sewage treatment plant will likely be shown on a diagram in the Comprehensive Plan for informational purposes.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## VII. ADDITION TO GROWTH POLICIES

### A. Use “Urban” and “Urbanizable” classifications for draft expanded SOI and SUDP

- “Urban” for existing SOI, Subareas 2, north ½ of 3, 3A, 3B, and 3C; areas that are expected to be eligible for annexation in the near term.
- “Urbanizable” for Areas south ½ of 3, 8, and 12. (This list could be expanded if Option 2 or 3 is selected.)

The purpose of this classification is to maintain existing land use until a plan for urban services is completed. Areas in this classification: (1) have preliminary plans in process; (2) have no sewer service presently available to the area as a whole, but preliminary planning is underway; and (3) there is inadequate access for urban development of the area as a whole, but planning is underway (Campus Parkway and Atwater-Merced Expressway); and 4) these areas are not adjacent to the existing developed areas of the City.

- (Area 4 – Area of Interest or Joint Planning Area)

### B. Criteria for conversion of “Urbanizable” to “Urban”:

2.1 City boundary is contiguous (or annexation of intervening area is imminent) and future sub-area annexation will not result in “islands,” “peninsulas” or an irregular boundary.

2.2 A specific or area plan has been accepted with land use, circulation, location of public facilities (fire stations, parks, and schools), and an infrastructure plan.

2.3 Public Facilities Financing Plan has been updated to incorporate proposed “Urban”. This includes identification of existing revenue sources including developer, City and regional impact fees, etc.

2.4 The area property owner(s) is/are committed to financing wastewater treatment plant expansion, and there is capacity for an identified phase or phases of sub-area development.

2.5 There is a plan for new trunk line or other City approved sewer service available.

2.6 Revised revenue sharing agreement with the County is in place.

2.7 Developer agrees to install all off-site intervening infrastructure (meeting minimum acceptable City service level standards) between existing City development and the newly developing areas.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## C. “Urban” areas are eligible for annexation when existing General Plan criteria can be satisfied:

*Policy UE-1.3*

*Control the Annexation, Timing, Density, and Location of New Land Uses Within the City's Urban Expansion Boundaries.*

### *Implementing Actions:*

- 1.3.f Evaluate future annexation requests against the following conditions:
- a) Is the area contiguous to the current City limits and within the City's Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP)?
  - b) Is the proposed development consistent with the land use classifications on the General Plan Land Use Diagram (Figure 3.1)?
  - c) Can the proposed development be served by the City water, sewer, storm drainage, fire and police protection, parks, and street systems to meet acceptable standards and service levels without requiring improvements beyond which the developer will consent to provide?
  - d) Will this annexation result in the premature conversion of prime agricultural land as defined on the Important Farmland Map of the State Mapping and Monitoring Program? If so, are there alternative locations where this development could take place without converting prime soils?
  - e) Will a non-agricultural use create conflict with adjacent or nearby agricultural uses? If so, how can these conflicts be mitigated?

Future annexation requests will be evaluated against the above criteria as well as against the Policies and Implementing Actions of the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Urban Expansion Policies--UE-1.1, UE-1.2, UE-1.3, and UE-1.7.
- b) Land Use Policies--L-1.1, L-2.1, L-2.7, L-3.1, and L-3.2.
- c) Transportation and Circulation Policies--T-1.1, T-1.3, T-1.8, T-2.2, and T-2.4.
- d) Public Facilities and Services Policies--P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.3, P-2.1, P-3.1, P-4.1, P-5.1, and P-7.1.
- e) Open Space and Conservation Policies--OS-1.1, OS-1.2, OS-2.1, OS-2.2, OS-3.1, and OS-4.1.

# **MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA**

## **VIII. NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS**

1. Hold public forums and public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council on the draft recommendation for the SUDP expansion
2. Establish Planning Commission as advisory group.
3. Amend Scope of Work with consultant for the larger SUDP to complete General Plan Update.

# MERCED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STUDY AREA

## IX. REFERENCES

*2005 Initial Study for the City of Merced Wastewater Treatment Plan Improvement Project*

*1997 Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR*

City of Merced Municipal Code

<http://municipalcodes.lexisnexis.com/codes/merced/>

Merced Office of Economic Development,

[http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/econdev/retail\\_and\\_office/advantages/infrastructure.asp](http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/econdev/retail_and_office/advantages/infrastructure.asp)

SJVAPCD website *Expanded Initial Study #04-02,* pg 24  
[http://www.valleyair.org/SJV\\_main.asp](http://www.valleyair.org/SJV_main.asp)

Livingston Comment Letter, <http://www.lafcomerced.org/>;

City of Merced Office of Economic Development website  
<http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/econdev/industrial/advantages/infrastructure.asp>

January 10, 2006 Merced County Board of Supervisors, Summary Action Minutes  
<http://web.co.merced.ca.us/bos/pdfs/2006sam/01102006.pdf>

*Brookfield Castle Farms Pre-Application Report, 2004*

*Merced County Year 2000 General Plan, adopted 1990*

Merced County LAFCO *Policies and Procedures*

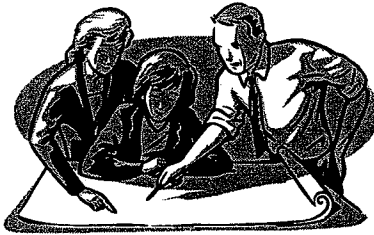
<http://web.co.merced.ca.us/planning/genplan.html>

*Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, 1999*

Merced County LAFCO *Policies and Procedures*



# **CITY OF MERCED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**



## **STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
1 (North of Highway 99, West of G)	Tuesday, April 11, 2006	9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Sam Pipes Room
2 (North of Highway 140, East of G)	Tuesday, April 11, 2006	1:15 to 3:15 p.m.	Sam Pipes Room
3 (South of Hwy 99, West of South Hwy 59)	Wednesday, April 12, 2006	9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	City Council Chambers
4 (South of Mission Ave, East of South Hwy 59)	Wednesday, April 12, 2006	1:15 to 3:15 p.m.	City Council Chambers

### Summary of Comments Received at the Meetings

#### REGION 1 (Sub-Areas 11, 12, & 13)

- Area 12 – should include portion up to Hwy 59 or perhaps on east side as well.
- Area 13 (400 ac) – do have some interest in development and would like to be included in SUDP.
- Area 13 – SE Corner (3 parcels) – would like to be included.  
--NE corner of Belcher and Thornton (40 ac)
- Area 11 – interested in development along with other surrounding owners.
- Area 8 – want to be included.

- Area 10 – Industrial Development
  - interested in being included – feel it can be compatible with Airport.
  - have been encouraged by Economic Development Staff
- Area 1 – in Study Area but will be excluded due to wetlands/vernal pool areas.
  - lots of conservation easements as well
- Area 11 – along Bellevue Road
  - Noise Impact Areas from Castle AFB – will they be reduced?
- Area 11 – 20 acres on N. Thornton Road
  - Concern about sewer line and whether properties can hook up

## REGION 2 (Sub-Areas 1, 2, 3, & 4)

- Yosemite Lakes Project
  - Don't mind being included as long as it doesn't interfere with the processing of their project in the County.
  - Affects infrastructure planning
- West of UC
  - Concern with how these additional areas will affect the original study area
- UC & UC Community
  - UC agrees with including both in SUDP
  - Urge to consider new technologies for infrastructure, etc.
- Yosemite Church (proximity to Yosemite and Gardner)
  - Have developments plans and want City Services
  - Height Limits – look to increase to encourage higher buildings

### REGION 3 (Sub-Areas 8, 9, & 10)

- Area 10 is shown inaccurately on the map (needs to extend further south to match map that was mailed).
- Area 7 – Interest in development, especially business parks with new Mission Interchange
  - Concern with proposed school on Mission
- Area 10 – From Hwy 140 to Wardrobe planning for industrial development (approximately 300 ac)
  - Sewer/other infrastructure available
  - Not all of Area 10 as expanded
- Area 11 – Would like to see expansion west of Thornton, more than ¼ mile as proposed
  - Extend line south from west edge of Area 10
- Area 11 – Concern with how a sewer line could affect their property
- Area 10 – Concern with existing dairy in area and how the change in the city's boundaries will affect their existing operations
- Feels Mission should still be the boundary line to the south
  - Concern with directing growth toward the least productive ag land
  - Wants to extend boundaries north of Area 13
  - May have conservation easements
- Would like to see boundary to south go down to Vassar
- Concern with no alignment settled for the Atwater-Merced Expressway and how that will affect the plan.
- Area 4 – Would like to see Campus Parkway be the farthest east the City grows
  - This area is very productive farmland (perhaps most in the County)
  - Designate area to east of Parkway as a buffer to discourage further growth to the east

- Area 12 – Prime/productive farmland  
--Would not like to see development west of Hwy 59
- Area 10 – Want to be included

## REGION 4 (Sub-Areas 5, 6, & 7)

- Area 5 –
  - 32 acres across Mission from current growth boundary
  - interest in development
  - 6 ac for a church (NW corner)
- With Mission Interchange, development interest in Areas 5, 6, and 7 will increase
  - These areas are also closer to the Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Area 7 – Putting together plans for master-planned community in that area
  - Concern with boundaries dividing properties (along Rahilly Road)
  - Antiquated subdivisions in areas
- Area 5, 6, and 7 – Development pressure on both sides of the Mission corridor vs. it being a boundary.
- Area 7
  - Concern with large numbers of smaller parcels (most around 20 acres)
  - Can be difficult to assemble with different property owners
  - A lot of developers want at least 160 acres (economics of environmental studies, etc.)
  - Concern with development taking place to benefit the community and respecting the desires of property owners
  - With development to the south and Mission Interchange, may use Heilly and other roads to get to Hwy 99
  - Concern with circulation, making sure that people can get around town
  - Areas 5, 6, and 7 have good access to Hwy 99, better than Area 12
- Areas 5, 6, 7, and 8 – Opportunity to put in large roadways to accommodate traffic

- Areas 5, 6, 7, and 8
  - Land not prime farmland like Areas 3 and 4
  - Should grow on less prime soils first

## Comments Received after the Meetings via Comment Cards

- Areas 2 and 3 (UC Merced & University Community)
  - Janet Young, Assistant Chancellor, UC Merced
  - Also serves on governing board of University Community Land Company LLC, which owns the northern 1,240 acres of the University Community, in 50/50 partnership between UC & Virginia Smith Trust
  - UC Merced and the University Community were originally included in the City's Sphere of Influence before the change in location led to only the UC campus remaining in the Sphere
  - UC believes it is appropriate & consistent with the original intent of the City and the County to include both the campus and the University Community within the SUDP
  
- Area 3
  - Believes the proposed Study Area boundaries are well thought out and good
  - The area south of the UC Campus, which has been brought to the east to Fairfield Canal, makes sense. This is a natural boundary and it is difficult to farm in that area due to so many small parcels and traffic on the roads
  - It is only smart to go at least as far as the Eastern Boundary of the University Community. In this fast-growing area, the City needs to be proactive
  
- West of Area 3 (Inside current Sphere of Influence but outside SUDP)
  - Yosemite Church, owns 19 acres north of Yosemite Avenue, east of Gardner Rd, and currently have 4 buildings on site
  - Wants to be included in new growth boundary
  - Long-range plans include building a 2,500-seat sanctuary within the next 4-6 years and want to be annexed and receive City services, especially sewer service
  - Long-range plans call for a softball/sports complex



- Area 4
  - Owns 2 parcels (one 9-acre parcel, south of Black Rascal Creek, east of Leaf Drive and one 24-acre parcel, south of Black Rascal Creek, west of Leeds Road
  - Wants to be included in Draft SUDP and be annexed to the City
  
- Area 4
  - Owns 2 parcels (one 14-acre parcel, north of Olive, east of Leaf Drive and one 4-acre parcel, north of Olive, west of Leeds Rd
  - Wants to see the growth boundary extended east to the Campus Parkway
  - Would like to develop his property with R-1-10 lots
  
- Area 4
  - Owns home on Whitegate Drive
  - Concerned that the timetable for the General Plan is not extended because of the added on areas
  - No objection to including or excluding Area 4 in the Draft SUDP, but feels it is too large of an area to include in the actual General Plan
  
- Area 4
  - Concerned that the Campus Parkway will decrease the value of her property considerably (proposed alignment goes through her property)
  - Feels that the current growth boundary was determined by the path of the proposed Parkway rather than following a more natural boundary down Lake Road between Yosemite and Olive
  - Feels that she has been penalized twice, as the parkway boundary leaves her property just outside the City's current growth boundary, which she hopes to have changed
  
- Area 4
  - Owns property on Crown Road
  - Wants to be included in the growth boundary
  - Wants annexation and residential or commercial development

- Area 6
  - Owns 3 parcels (14 acres and 17 acres south of Vassar, east of Highway 99 and 11 acres at the northwest corner of Vassar and Miles Road)
  - Would like to be included in the growth boundary
  
- Area 7
  - Owned property on Vassar Rd for more than 14 years
  - Would like to see Area 7 included in the new City limits
  - Would like to use some of his property to build a Laotian Temple (currently Laotians must drive to Modesto or Fresno for such a Temple)
  - County Planning has told him that his property cannot be subdivided so he cannot donate part of his land for such a temple
  
- Area 7
  - Currently planning to build a community hall on Vassar Road
  - The property is not currently being farmed
  
- Area 7
  - Own property on Reilly Road
  - Would like to be included in the growth boundary and within the City limits
  - Have interest in developing the property
  - Mission/99 Interchange changes the focus of the area away from agriculture
  
- Area 8
  - Owns 160 acres along Gove Road, north of the City's WWTP
  - Interested in developing his property as industrial uses;
  - Has preliminary plans for a 100-lot industrial park ("Sweetwood Industrial Park")

- Area 8
  - Strongly in favor of recommendation to include Area 8 (the “Mission Lakes” project) in the draft growth boundary
  - Advantages of including “Mission Lakes” (2,400 acres):
    - Minimizes sewer and transportation infrastructure investment and allows for reuse of treated wastewater
    - Creates a balance of job creation, residential, and recreation
    - Help to address existing infrastructure deficiencies such as providing funding for improving Highway 59, both north and south of Mission
    - Fuel the revitalization of South Merced
    - Help create critical transportation linkages—extending Mission portion of the loop and improving Highway 59
    - Provide appropriate land uses in the Airport Approach (compatible with the Airport Land Use Plan) and will not impact Airport operations
  
- Area 10 (300 acres)
  - Would like to see Area 10 included in the Draft SUDP for the following reasons:
    - Submitted a development pre-application in June 2005
    - The property is bounded by the City Limits to south and east.
    - Property to the north is proposed for annexation as part of the Five Bridges Specific Plan
    - City Economic Development staff and MCEDCO have indicated a need for additional acreage of sufficient size to support large scale industrial development
    - Overflight/noise restrictions on the property from the Merced Airport are similar to those at much of existing City Airport Industrial Park and anticipated uses will be similar to those existing uses
    - Continuing City encroachment limits the agricultural viability of the property, which is currently permitted as a dairy
    - As the City grows west, this urban/agricultural incompatibility will increase and the dairy use will eventually need to cease

- Areas 10 & 11
  - Owns property in Area 11 and wants to be included in SUDP
  - Does not believe Area 10 should be left out of the SUDP, but area should be expanded going south along Thornton to Dickenson Ferry
  - The Airport Industrial Park is almost full, the logical expansion is across Thornton
  - The western loop around Merced will likely be Gurr Road or Thornton Road and the City should control that land
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 20 acres east of Thornton, north of Cardella
  - Wants to be included in the Draft SUDP
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 2 parcels (20 acres each), north of Cardella Road and just outside the boundary line ¼ mile west of Thornton Road
  - Would like to have his parcels included in the growth boundary
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 20 acres, north of Tahoe Street, west of Highway 59 (just west of current City SUDP)
  - Would like to be included in the growth boundary and develop mini storage uses there
  
- Area 11
  - Has owned 20 acres at southwest corner of Bailey Avenue & Thornton Road since 1953
  - Concerned that a sewer line and highway will impact their property, reduce their property value (if whole property is needed for a road), and impact their house which is close to the canal
  - Concerned that County A-1 zoning forces them to keep 20 acres and would like smaller parcels
  - Opposes use of “eminent domain”

- Area 11
  - Owns 20 acres south of Cardella, west of Thornton Road
  - Wants to be included in the growth boundary
  - Wants to be kept informed of progress with the Plan
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 38 acres at the northeast corner of Belcher & Thornton
  - Requesting that his property be included in the growth boundary
  - Has spoken to several property owners in Area 11, north of his property who are also in favor of being included
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 20 acres, west of Thornton, north of Cardella
  - Wants to be included in SUDP
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 19-acre parcel at southeast corner of Thornton & Bellevue
  - Wants to be included in SUDP & be annexed, especially if proposed new sewer trunk line is in Thornton Rd
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 254 acres north of Belcher Avenue for over 60 years
  - Want to be included in draft SUDP
  - Believe that given its location, it is a logical area for future annexation to the City of Merced
  
- Area 11
  - Owns 20 acres on Tahoe Street
  - Want to be included in draft SUDP
  - Reasons why the land is not suitable for agriculture—numerous small parcels (20 acres in size), severe hardpan makes it difficult to grow crops, and the area is not included in MID so groundwater only is used (in contrast to many agricultural areas which use surface water)

- Area 11
  - Owns 40 acres at the corner of Bellevue & Thornton Rds
  - Want to be included in draft SUDP
- Need to move forward to maximize growth while available. Hope the new additions (to the study area) won't slow down the process.
- Comments from Merced Irrigation District
  - Majority of Study Area is within MID's Drainage Improvement District No. 1
  - Several irrigation facilities are located throughout the area
  - To use MID facilities for storm drainage will require payment of fees and a "Subdivision Drainage Agreement"
  - Developments that impact MID facilities may be required to underground facilities with possible realignment
  - MID is a provider of electrical services, which can serve the Study Area
- Greed is driving the expansion of the City Limits in all directions but it is the government's role to rise above individual's short-term desires and do what is in the community's best interest
  - Since the City benefits from the agricultural tax base, the wisest policy would be to protect that base
  - Recommends adhering to the "Linear City" plan that has been in place for about 20 years
  - Salinas uses major roadways as a hard boundary where development stops. The City should zone land for agriculture (serving as a "greenbelt") on County side of road to prevent further development
  - Roads that were used to define the Linear City were Highway 59/Thornton Road on the west, Mission/Dickenson Ferry on the south, the Campus Parkway and UC boundary on the east
  - There is quite a lot of land that can be developed to the north before reaching high densities of vernal pool habitat. The City should build right up to it. By then, the majority of voters should realize that sacrificing their food source and economic base is not worth protecting every fairy shrimp.

*Minutes of City of Merced*  
**General Plan Update Department Head Workshop**  
 Sam Pipes Community Room  
 March 2, 2006  
 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

<b>Minutes</b>
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<u>TIME</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
8:30	<u>INTRODUCTION:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greeting and Introductions – <i>Introduction given by Kim Espinosa and Jack Lesch</i></li> <li>2. Ground Rules – <i>Introduction was given by Jeffrey Rice</i></li> <li>3. Purpose of Workshop – <i>Introduction was given by Jeffrey Rice</i></li> <li>4. City Manager – <i>Comments by Jim Marshall, City Manager</i></li> </ol>
8:45	<u>BRIEFINGS:</u> <i>The following staff provided briefings on the topics listed below:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Growth Projections – Brian R. Smith, URS</li> <li>2. Land Use, Urban Form, Design Trends – Jack Lesch</li> <li>3. Economic and Business Development – Jeffrey Rice</li> <li>4. Infrastructure Planning – Cynthia Gabaldon, URS</li> <li>5. Circulation – Richard Lee, Fehr and Peers</li> <li>6. Presentation of Preliminary SUDP Study Area boundaries – Brian Smith</li> </ol>
10:30	<u>SMALL GROUPS:</u> GROUP ONE: Focus on land use, urban form, design standards, and economic development (Policy based discussion) – Discussion led by Jeffrey Rice, URS GROUP TWO: Focus on traffic, circulation, utilities, public facilities, and parks. - Discussion led by Cynthia Gabaldon, URS and Richard Lee, Fehr & Peers <i>The two groups developed the Key Themes and Issues presented in Attachment A.</i>
1:30	<u>DISCUSSION:</u> POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR EXPANDING THE CITY IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION – Discussion led by Brian Smith <i>See Attachment A</i>
2:00	<u>ROUNDTABLE:</u> ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON GROWTH IMPLICATIONS ON THE CITY
3:00	<u>SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP:</u> SUMMARIZE KEY THEMES, ISSUES & NEXT STEPS– Led by Kim Espinosa and Jeffrey Rice <i>See Attachment A</i>

Attachment A to Exhibit 1

City of Merced General Plan Update  
Department Head Workshop  
Key Themes and Issues  
March 2, 2006

THEMES

Economic Development

- Jobs→ 3 Areas & Downtown
- Yosemite Gateway
- Logistics/ Distribution centers

Mobility – N/S & E/W

Neighborhoods/ Districts

React to U.C. Merced

- Land use, activities, mobility

Design & Standards

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Loop Road

- Missing link

Existing capacity facilities not enough

Funding mechanisms

Community facilities

- Comm. Center & Rec. Parks

Protect & enhance airport

Integration of neighborhoods

\*\*

-Recreational paths

- Bikes and pedestrian

-Bear Creek et. al.

-Infrastructure/ utilities & aesthetics

-Decentralized services

-Policies to keep up with GP Policies (Nexus)

- Small lot guidelines

-Hwy 99 – Great Valley Cntr

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Infrastructure Plans

- Water, Sewer, Storm
- 2 New Trunk Lines



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- Oldest area of town
- Diversity
- Divided by transportation
- Churches
- Entry/Gateway
- Indust/Comm. Base of city & Ag sales
- More family owned AG
- Look at broader land use needs

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- Transportation pinch points
- Retail not nearby
- Underdeveloped
- Interest in developing in the community
- Need lighting
  - Light poles but they're not on
- Walking
  - Families/children
- Sense of family
- Traffic light 59/Mission
- Fairground
- High children population

\*\*

- Few schools
- Few sports fields
- Youth facilities (few today)
- Development w/out amenities
- Need to focus on youth
- Need commercial opportunity
- People → Demand for services
- Regional park
- Prop Maint.
- Need for equiv. services/ code enf.

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## GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Policy Based Discussion (Group One)

#### Economic Development

- Ag business
- Food processing
- Logistics
- Shifting to knowledge based industry
- Shift towards office/business parks
- Rethink Hwy 59 Industrial Corridor
- Development along future Campus Parkway
- Growth pays for growth

#### Urban Form/Design

- Preserving Bear Creek
- Ragsdale neighborhood
- Street trees
- 5 national register buildings
- Hwy 140-Gateway to Yosemite Appearance
- Views from Hwy 99 are unfavorable

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### Traffic Discussion (Group Two)

(1)

#### *Beltways*

Highway 99 connection critical  
Highways widened sans Hwy 59 and Parsons

- Why didn't consider Beachwood/ Franklin area square off western boundary  
I-10 yrs realities – exp. SUDP
- Study area to west
- GW wells need to consider restriction regs
- Recycled water good but  
Treatment plant needs many new lines to the north  
Now recycled water to Ag
- Septic tank challenges in NE
- Storm drain system will in future need to go to treatment plant
- When city reaches 100,000 new water regs are triggered. Need to plan for this now.
- Need to resolve basin plan

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(2)

- Should we be updating various plans (e.g. fire) concurrent with GP update
- Need planner for infrastructure activities
- Treatment plant upgrade
- Current fire protection plan (03) not updated with Castle Farms and fee system and moving Station 57
- Keep up great bike system – need in South Merced, use driving areas, etc.
- Need info (update) on outdated Castle Airport plan. Road into and out of airport. More flights being added.
- As we expand parks, roads need to be upgraded - No funds for either
- How to maintain infrastructure facilities during growth

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(3)

- Storm drains – need flood control district established
- Some issues need to be addressed in policies
- Traffic – 3 main arterial streets  
-Was 6 minutes, now 16 minutes  
People taking residential streets for short cuts. Speed increasing. Need traffic calming
- N/S street capacity a problem – Policy?  
Conflict between street capacity and environmental issues.
- RR over/under passings – community issues
- N/S - Double left turn, lanes – problem  
R, G, M, Olive
- PD – As we grow north – traffic issues – create sound walls, etc.
- Substances already being discussed  
North station relocation only need
- 30 yrs. – Need substations SAE
- County jail, no city jail

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(4)

- Need more indoor facilities – only 1 now (Boys & Girls Club)
- N. Merced has more from developers for roads. S. Merced opposite.
- 2 utilities in town: MID and PGAE
- Cell towers – aesthetics  
Police/ fire towers
- Bear Creek (one of national features)  
MID looks at it clear cut  
Bear problem  
Save bear Creek (SBC)

- Policy – Public facilities and transportation  
Legal language for improvements  
County islands
- Resolve missing transportation loop segment SW South Merced\*