

Merced General Plan Update



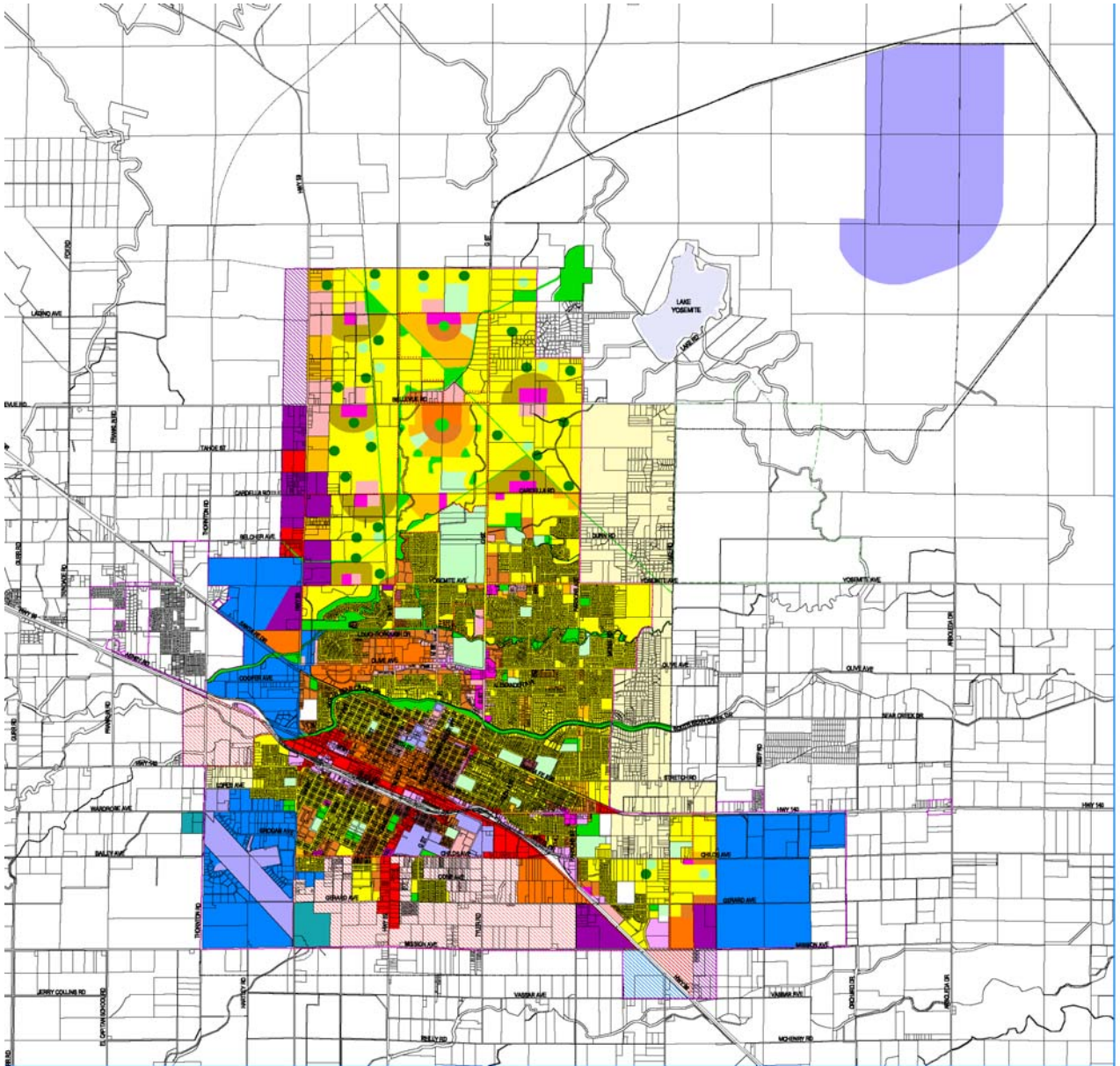
Purpose of Planning Commission Public Hearing

June 21, 2006

- 1) Receive Public Testimony**
- 2) Recommend adoption of a Draft SUDP for use in the General Plan Update & EIR from the 3 options presented**
- 3) Environmental Determination (Statutory Exemption) for Draft SUDP; EIR to be prepared for Update**
- 4) Confirm that Planning Commission will act as General Plan Advisory Committee**

**Specific Urban
Development
Plan (SUDP) and
Sphere of
Influence (SOI)**

Merced Vision 2015 General Plan –20,540 Acres in SUDP



CITY OF MERCED GENERAL PLAN

Legend

What is an SUDP?

- Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP)
- Merced County General Plan Definition
 - “A boundary line which is recognized as the ultimate growth boundary of the community over the life of the General Plan, and all land within the SUDP is planned for eventual development with a mix of urban and urban-related uses”
- Each of the 6 cities in the County has an SUDP along with 18+ unincorporated communities

What is an SOI?

- Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- California Government Code:
 - “A plan for the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area for a local agency as determined by LAFCO”
- Requires notification of & opportunity for comment on any proposed land use changes or developments within the SOI

Land Use Policies in City/County Tax-Sharing Agmt (Feb 1997)

- 1) Within City SUDP, no changes in land use from rural to urban. For current urban zoning, development must meet City standards & be encouraged to annex
- 2) Existing Rural Residential Centers are not to be expanded and should be developed at no more than 1 unit/acre
- 3) Within University SUDP, requires cooperative planning process w/ City
- 4) Within SOI but outside SUDP, no land use changes from non-urban to urban without mutual agreement

LAFCO Policies on Sphere Revisions

- 1) Sphere should be large enough to accommodate 20 years of growth as well as territory that represents special communities of interest to the City
- 2) LAFCO will recognize areas outside the Sphere, such as “Joint City/County Planning Areas” or “Areas of Interest”
- 3) Cities should adopt phasing policies in their General Plans & identify priorities for annexation

LAFCO Criteria for Sphere Revisions

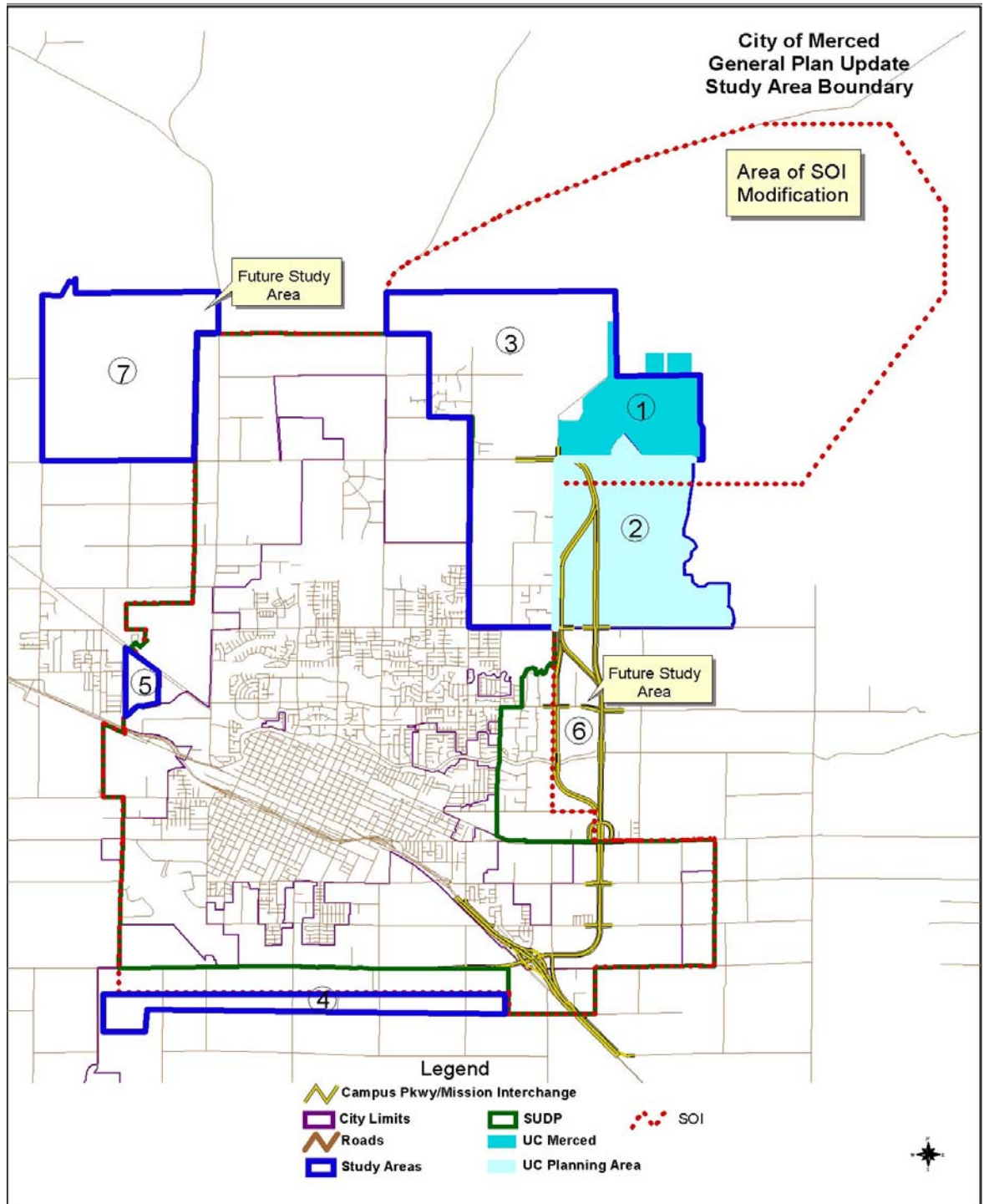
- 1) Does the City's General Plan identify the desired Sphere of Influence and all planned land uses within the Sphere?
- 2) Does the General Plan contain policies regarding phasing of future annexations?
- 3) Are there local policies re: timing of conversion of agricultural and open space lands and the avoidance of conversion of prime soils?

LAFCO Criteria for Sphere Revisions (Cont.)

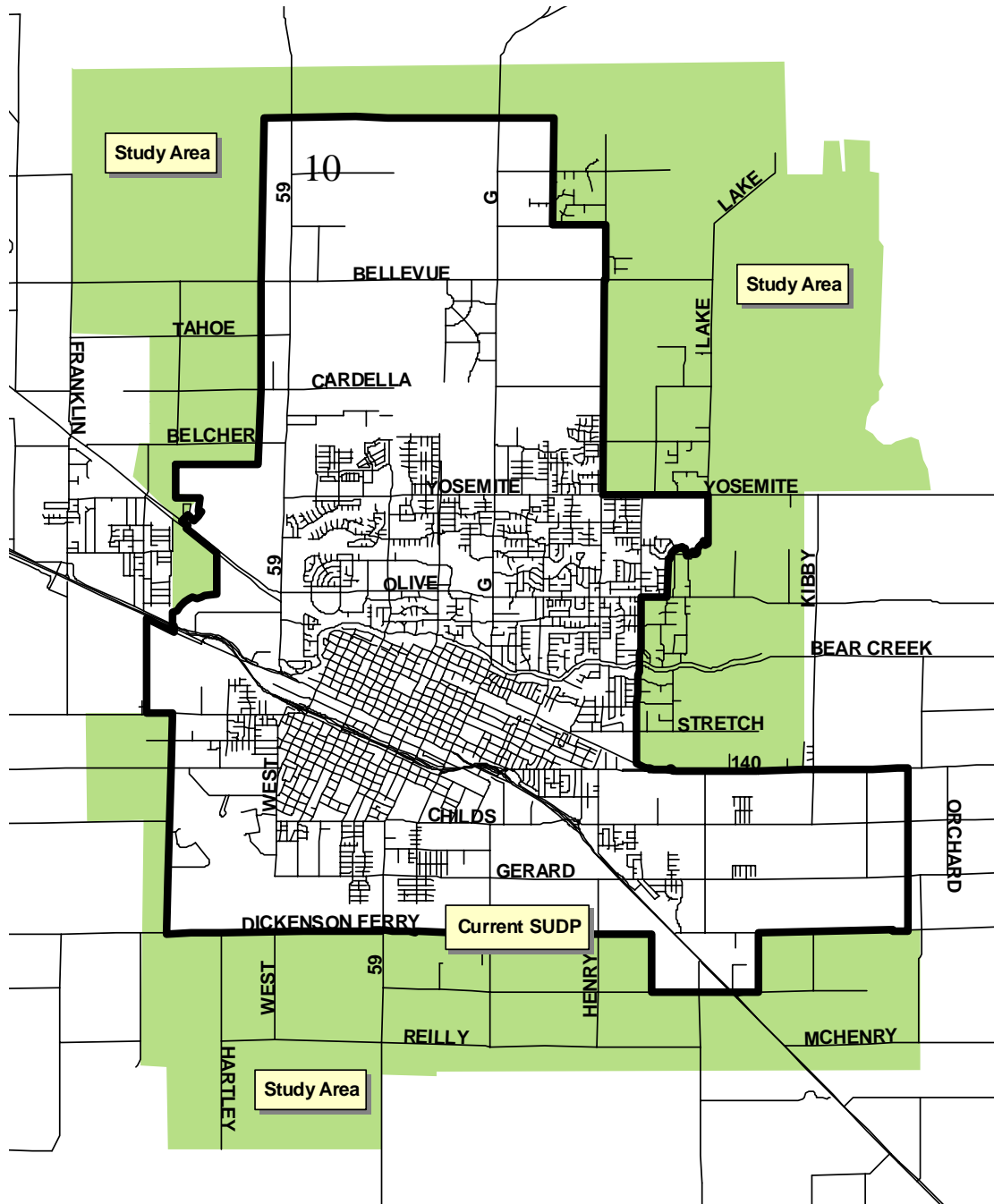
- 4) Does the General Plan demonstrate the present & probable need for public facilities & services (including the sequence, timing, & probable cost) within the Sphere?
- 5) Does the General Plan identify the existence of any social or economic communities of interest (adjacent cities or special districts) within the planning area which may affect the boundaries?

General Plan Boundaries and Sub-Areas

General Plan Update Study Area Boundary --Expansion by 10,815 Acres (May 2005)

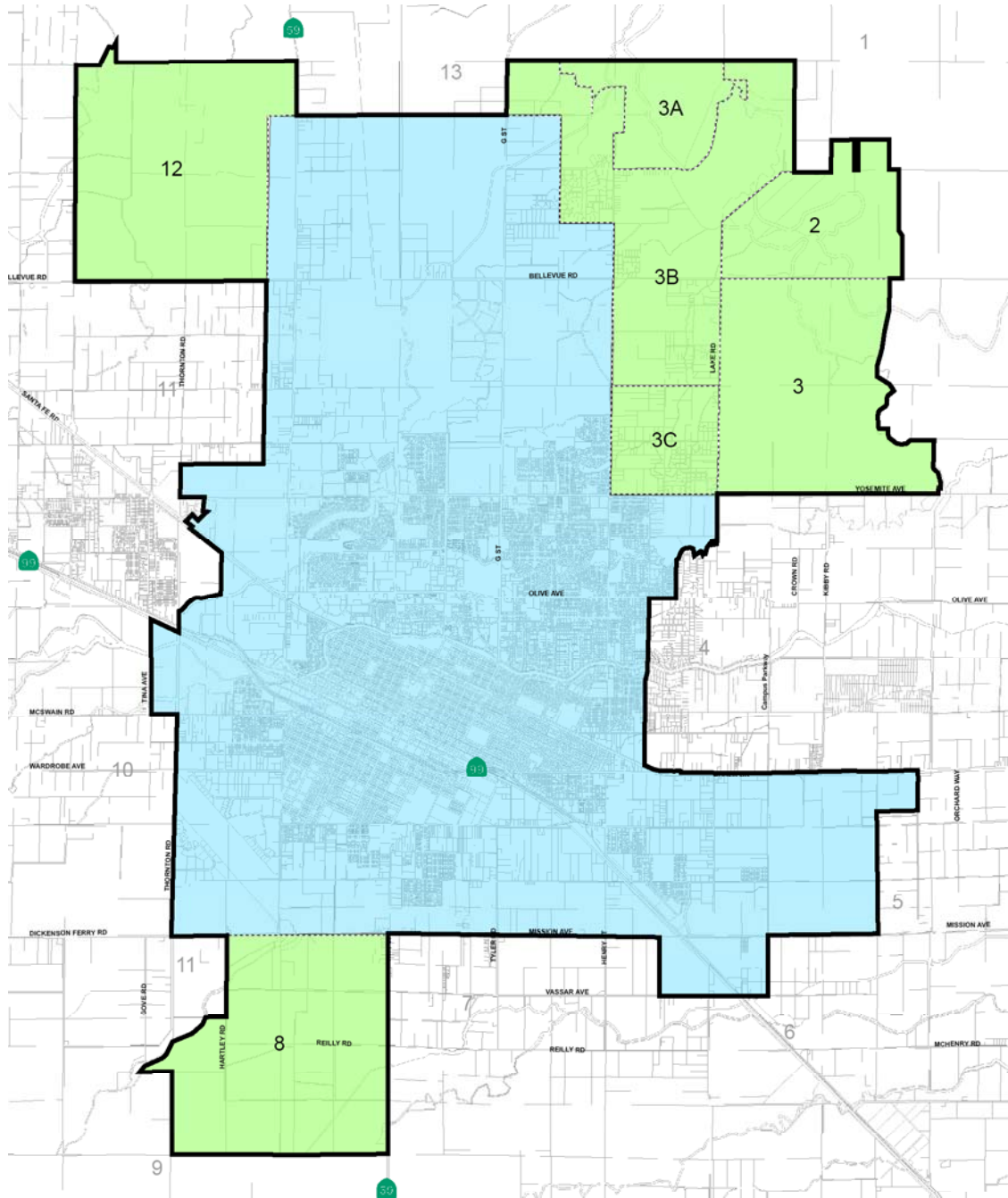


Revised General Plan Study Area (Approx. 40,000 Acres) (Sept 2005)



**Growth
Boundary
(SUDP)
Expansion
Options**

Option 1—Limited SUDP Expansion (360,000 Population Capacity)

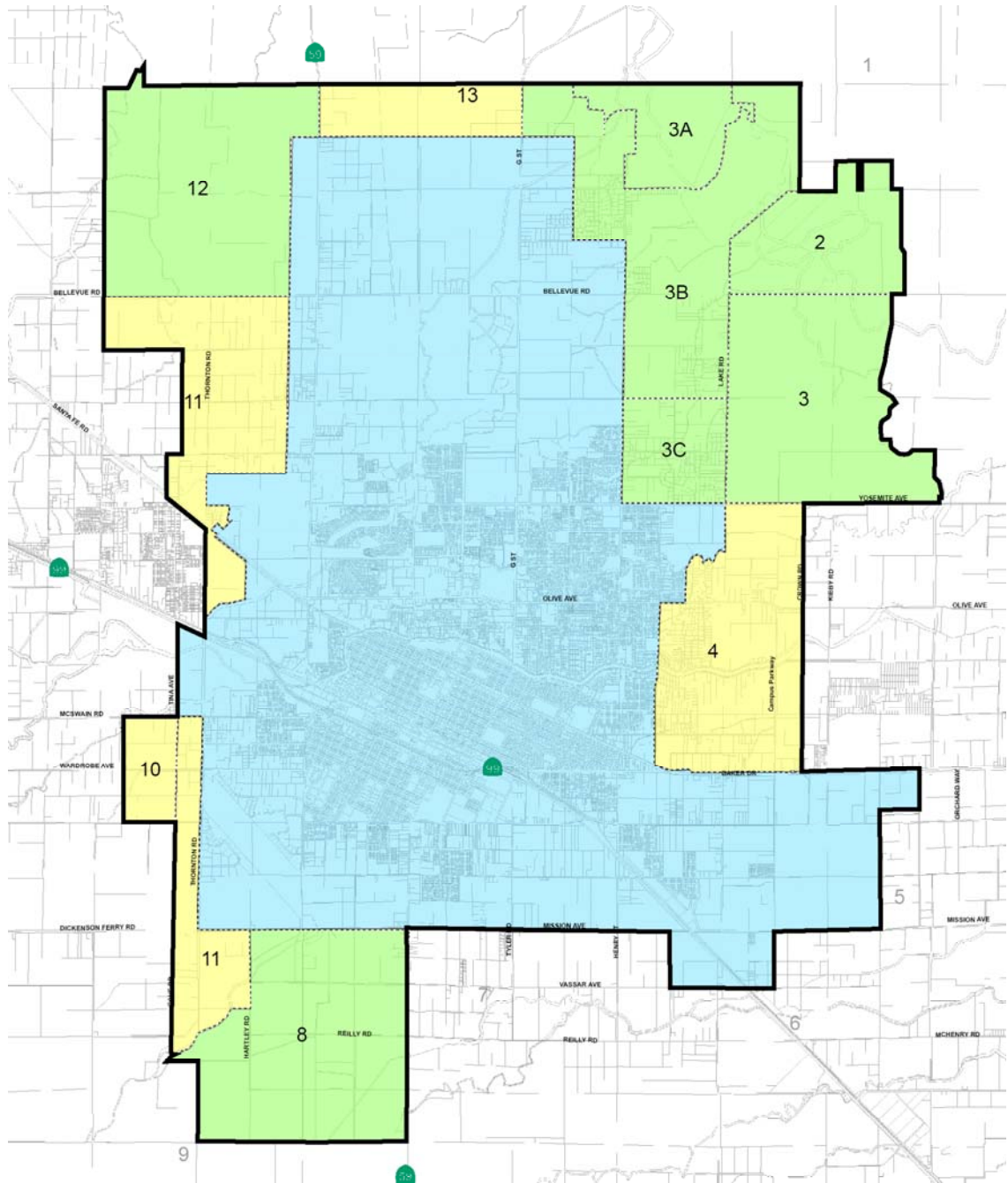


Option 1

Limited SUDP Expansion

- Includes 12,026 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 32,566 acres
- Includes Subareas:
 - Subarea 2 (UC Merced)
 - Subarea 3 (University Community)
 - Subareas 3A, 3B, & 3C (Yosemite Lakes & Rural Residential Centers)
 - Subarea 8 (Ranchwood Mission Lakes)
 - Subarea 12 (Castle Farms)
- Holding Capacity of 360,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 183,281 in new areas)

Option 2—Moderate SUDP Expansion (436,000 Population Capacity)

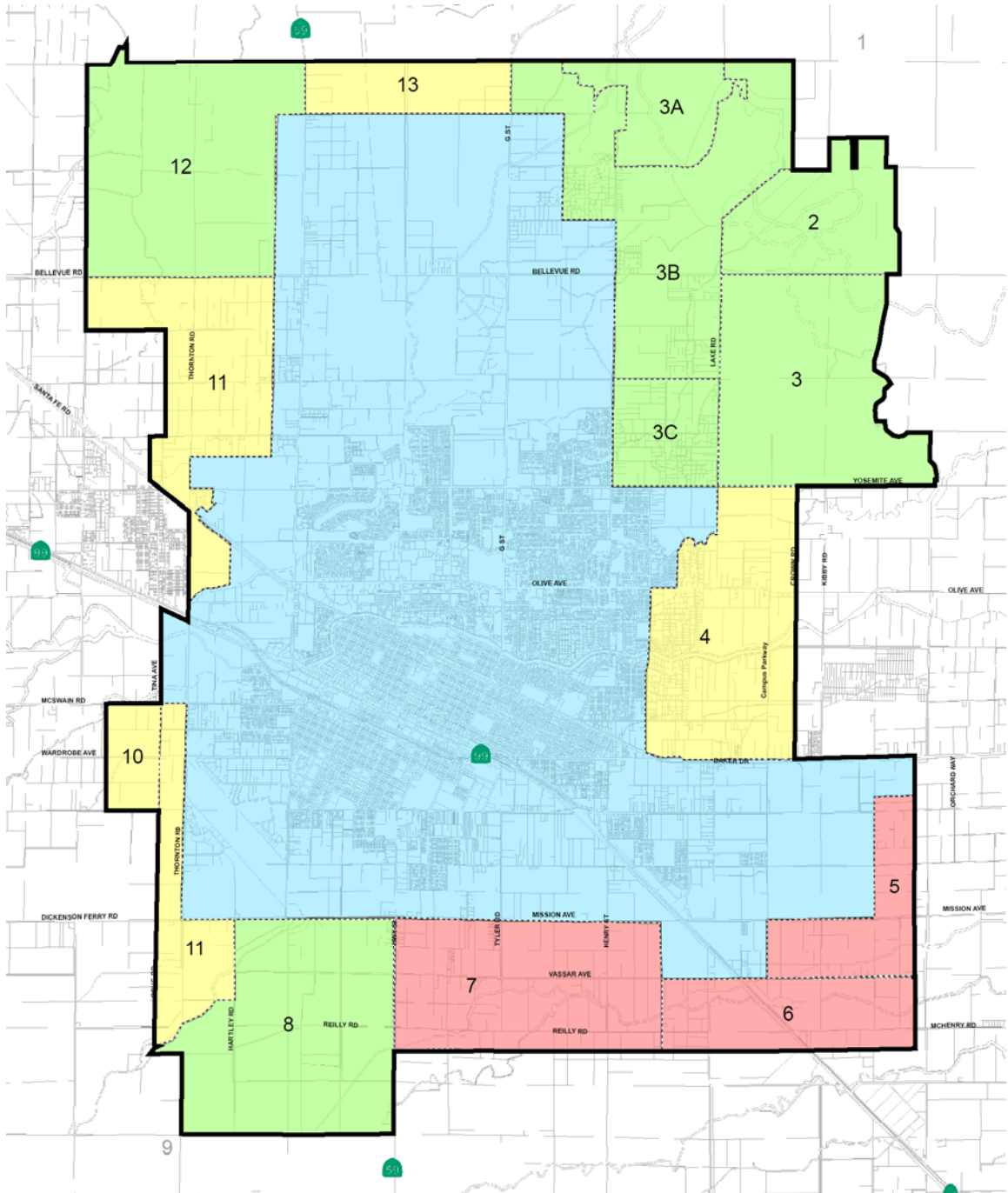


Option 2

Moderate SUDP Expansion

- Includes 17,301 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 37,841 acres
- Includes Subareas:
 - Subareas 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 3C, 8, & 12 from Option 1
 - Subarea 4 (Campus Parkway)
 - Subarea 10 (Thornton Industrial)
 - Subarea 11 (Thornton Road Corridor)
 - Subarea 13 (North Merced)
- Holding Capacity of 435,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 258,109 in new areas)

Option 3—Full Study Area/ Maximum SUDP Expansion (493,000 Population Capacity)

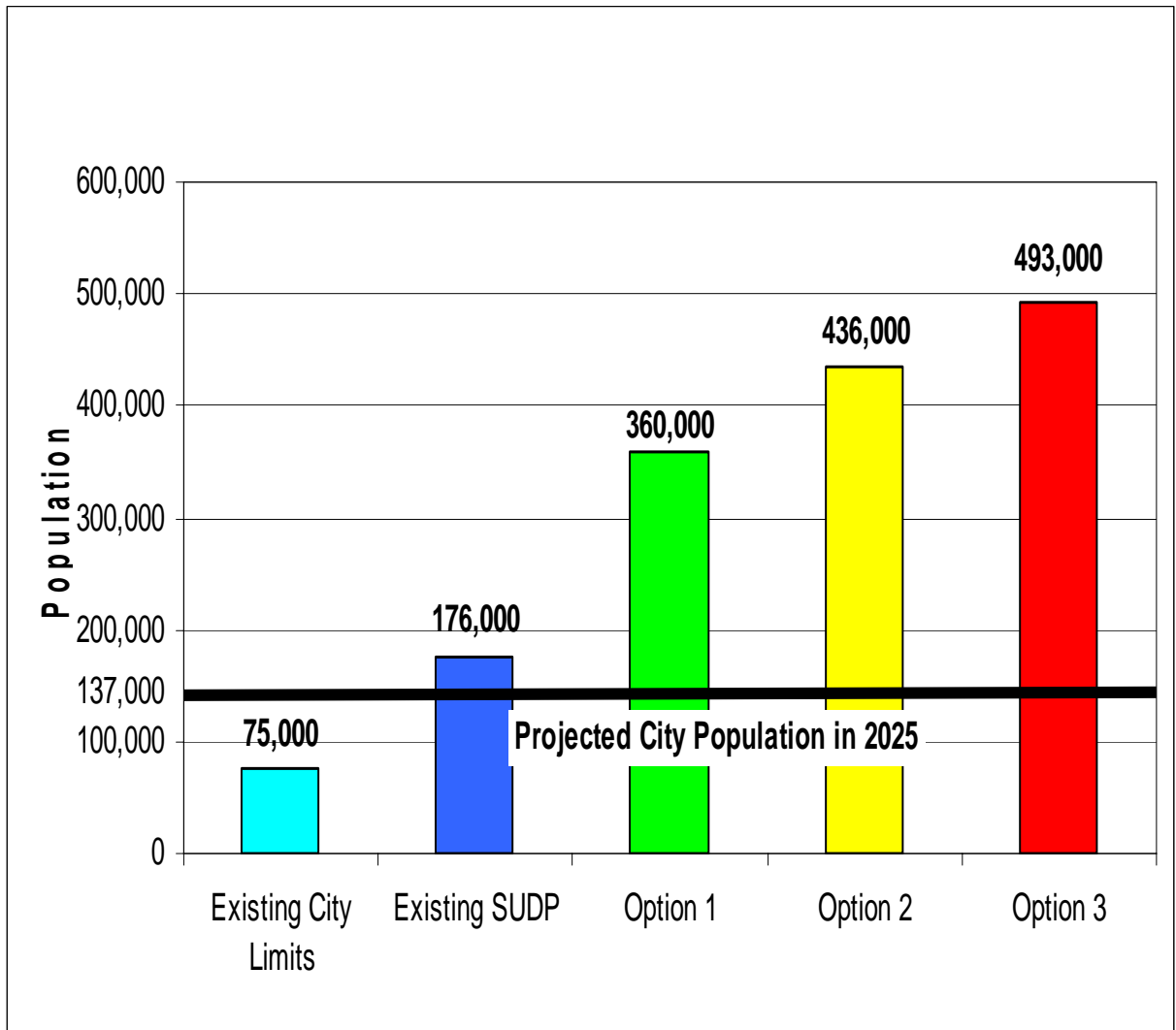


Option 3

Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion

- Includes 21,051 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 41,591 acres
- Includes Subareas:
 - Subareas 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 3C, 8, & 12 from Option 1
 - Subareas 4, 10, 11, & 13 from Option 2
 - Subarea 5 (SE Merced, North of Vassar)
 - Subarea 6 (SE Merced, South of Vassar)
 - Subarea 7 (South Merced)
- Holding Capacity of 493,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 316,709 in new areas)

Holding Capacity vs. Population Projections



Growth Management Strategies

Present Growth Policies

- Policies in Merced Vision 2015 General Plan re: provision of public facilities & services, growth paying for growth, preservation of prime farmland, annexation criteria, etc.
- Master plans for public facilities, including Public Facilities Financing Plan
- LAFCO Sphere of Influence Policies (Reviewed earlier)
- LAFCO Annexation Policies

Facilities Driven Programs

- Infrastructure necessary for development must be funded prior to new development
- Set minimum levels of service and identify timing of infrastructure improvements
- Examples—Carlsbad & Chula Vista.
- Pros
 - Logical method of implementing standards
- Cons
 - City can't control rate or direction of growth
 - Some policies are subjective and difficult to quantify

Location/Time Driven Programs

- Designate specific geographic areas that cannot be developed until a certain future point in time (“urban reserves”)
- Timing of development of reserves depends on dates (until 2010) or characteristics (development of 75% of City)
- Example—San Diego County
- Pros
 - Clear direction on where & when growth occurs
 - Transparent & predictable process
 - City needs to provide infrastructure when needed
- Cons
 - Can be inflexible
 - Projects with merit in reserve areas cannot be processed

Numerical Limits/ Growth Caps

- Set limits on amount of growth to occur over a given time frame, usually a year
- Can be a fixed amount (# of units) or a growth rate (2 % per year)
- Examples—Petaluma & Tracy
- Pros
 - Allocation process is predictable
- Cons
 - Projects with merit can't be processed if limits are already met
 - Cannot predict where or when development will occur, making infrastructure provision difficult
 - Impacts affordable housing goals

Preliminary Recommendation

- Use “Urban” and “Urban Expansion Area (UEA)” Classifications for Draft SUDP/SOI areas
- “Urban” for areas expected to be eligible for annexations in near term
 - Includes existing SOI, Subareas 2, north ½ of 3, 3A, 3B, and 3C
 - Can meet General Plan Criteria for annexation (Policy UE-1.3.f)
- “UEA” for areas that need plans for urban services
 - Have preliminary plans in process
 - No sewer service presently available
 - Inadequate access but planning is underway
 - Areas not adjacent to existing developed areas of the City
 - Includes Subareas South ½ of 3, 8, & 12
- Area 4 (Campus Parkway) is a Joint City/County Planning Area along w/ Yosemite Lakes project

Prelim. Recommendation (Cont.)

- Criteria for converting from “UEA” to “Urban”
 - City Boundary is contiguous (or annexation is imminent) & no “islands” are created
 - A Specific or Area Plan is approved with land use, circulation, public facilities, & infrastructure
 - Public Facilities Financing Plan updated to include area; Revenue sources identified
 - Property owner is committed to finance WWTP & capacity is available
 - New sewer trunk lines planned
 - Revised Revenue Sharing Agmt w/ County in place
 - Developer agrees to install all off-site intervening infrastructure

Public Comment & Next Steps

City Department Head Workshop

(March 2, 2006)

Overriding Themes & Issues Discussed

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure & Services
 - Water, Wastewater, & Storm Drainage
 - Parks & Bikeways
 - Police & Fire
- Traffic & Mobility
 - Beltway/Loop System
 - Railroad Crossings
 - Traffic calming in residential areas
 - Increasing congestion/lack of capacity in existing roadways
- Neighborhoods
- Growth Pays for Growth
- Preservation of Bear Creek & Ag Land
- UC Merced

Stakeholder Meetings

(April 11 & 12, 2006)

- Nearly 100 individuals attended
- Interest expressed in being included within draft SUDP by almost all in attendance and in all Subareas
- Some Subareas that were not part of recommended Option 1 had significant interest in being included
 - Subarea 4
 - Subarea 7
 - Subarea 10
 - Subarea 11
 - Subarea 13
- Some properties outside Study Area also wanted to be included

Planning Commission/City Council Study Sessions (May 1 & 8, 2006)

- 25 citizens provided testimony
- Property owners expressed interest in being included within draft SUDP
- Some properties outside Study Area also wanted to be included
- Concerns expressed re prime farmland preservation, traffic & circulation, water supply, need for job growth, concentric growth pattern vs. linear city, etc.
- PC/CC members expressed strong support for Option #3

Letter from Gallo Farms re Yosemite Lakes Project

- Asked for 654-acre project area NW of Lake Yosemite to be left out of SUDP due to concerns re delays in obtaining State/Federal permits w/ overlapping jurisdictions
- Project proponents agreed in 2004 to be included within the future SUDP and to participate in General Plan Update
- If left outside SUDP, project will not be eligible for future City services
- Staff recommends that the project should be included within SUDP but as “Joint City/County Study Area.”

Next Steps

- 1) Amend Scope of Work with Consultants to complete Update & EIR
- 2) Planning Commission to serve as General Plan Advisory Committee
- 3) Plans for providing Public Facilities & Services
- 4) Future General Plan Recovery Fee

Questions?



Public Hearing



Planning Commission Discussion & Recommendation to City Council

