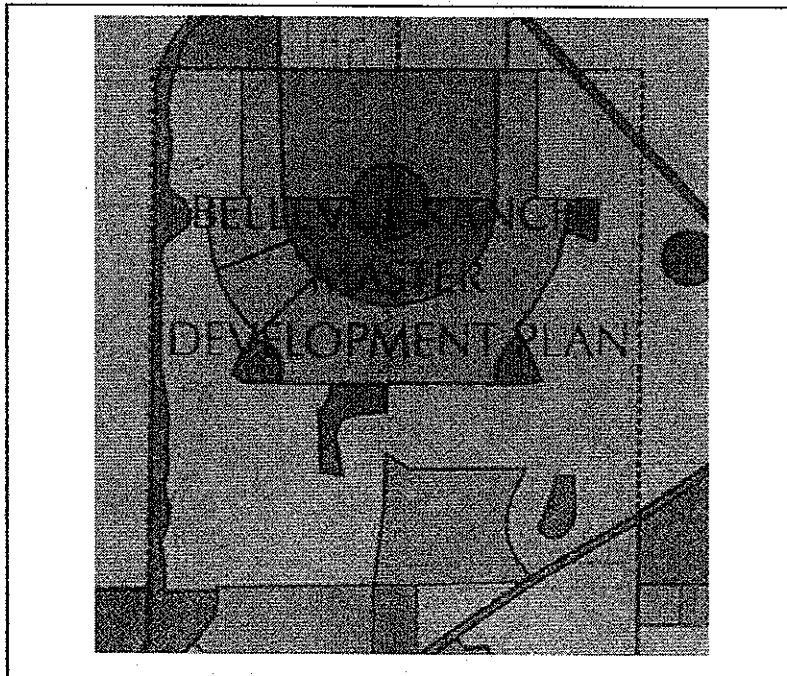


***ADDENDUM TO THE BELLEVUE RANCH EIR  
& SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST  
#04-28***

*in the matter of*

***THE BELLEVUE RANCH HIGH SCHOOL SITE  
REDESIGNATION  
(CITY OF MERCED)***

*General Plan Amendment #04-09  
Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan Amendment  
Site Utilization Plan (SUP) Revision #2 to PD #42*



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## Section I PROJECT BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

### 1. PROJECT APPLICATION INFORMATION

*Project Title:* Bellevue Ranch High School Site Redesignation

*Applicant:* Benchmark Engineering

*Property Owner(s):* Don Gragnani, et al., and Bellevue Ranch-Merced, L.P.

*Lead Agency:* City of Merced

*Responsible Agencies:* None

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*Additional Documents:* All of the documents cited and relied upon in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment Checklist are available at the City of Merced Planning Department and are hereby incorporated into the record for this Environmental Assessment Checklist.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

This Addendum to the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§21000 et seq. and 14 California Code of Regulations §§15000 et seq., hereafter "CEQA") and, in particular, with the requirements of 14 California Code of Regulations §15164 relating to Addenda to environmental impact reports.

Based on substantial evidence, including, but not limited to, evidence contained in the Environmental Assessment Checklist prepared by the City of Merced, the Merced General Plan EIR, and the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan EIR, the City of Merced determines that an Addendum is the appropriate environmental document for evaluating the Bellevue Ranch High School Site Redesignation.

Pursuant to §15164(c) and (d), this Addendum need not be circulated for public review, but shall be considered, along with the Final EIR, by the Merced City Council prior to approving the proposed amendments to the Merced General Plan and the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan. Moreover, pursuant to the requirements of CEQA, including Pub.Res.C. §§ 21003(a) and 21006, consideration and certification of the Addendum will be integrated into the City's land use decision-making process.

### 3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### **Bellevue Ranch Master Plan**

As the EIR explains, the Master Plan involves the development of residential and commercial land uses, and all associated schools, parks, circulation, open space, and office uses (DEIR 2.0-1) on approximately 1,365 acres (DEIR 3.0-1). The subject Project site is a small portion (39.3± acres or 3%) of the approximately 1,365-acre Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan Project (the "Master Plan"), approved by the City of Merced in May 1995. The Master Plan was the first Project that implemented the Merced Villages Concept Plan and Design Guidelines, which provide for the integration of housing, retail commercial uses, public facilities, and office uses in compact neighborhood settings. The subject site is located in the southern portion of the Master Plan in an area planned primarily for residential, park, and neighborhood commercial uses. Figure 4 (page 10) is the adopted Master Plan conceptual land use plan.

Additionally, the EIR explains that the Master Plan consists of a village-oriented residential community featuring a range of 5,971 to 6,894 dwelling units, recreational uses, and supporting commercial uses. This concept is outlined in Figure 3.5-1 of the DEIR. A copy of that diagram, identified as a Conceptual Land Use Plan for the Master Plan, is shown in Figure 4 of this Addendum. The village concept is intended to provide mixed-use development that is accessible to various transit options and is pedestrian oriented.

The EIR Project Description does not designate specific locations for school facilities, and as noted above, Mitigation Measure 4.9.16 authorizes the city, developer, and school district to collectively identify school sites. The EIR's Project Description section regarding land uses for public facilities states:

#### *Land Uses for Public Facilities*

*Proposed public facility land uses will include:*

- *two elementary schools sites (19.9 total acres)*
- *one high school site (40.0 acres)*
- *one fire station (1.6 acres)*

*The sum of the school sites and fire station sites is 61.5 acres, or approximately 4% of the total land area of the Bellevue Ranch Project. (DEIR at 3.0-6).*

#### **General Plan & Master Plan Amendments / Site Utilization Plan Revision.**

The applicant seeks a change in land use (General Plan Amendment and Master Plan Amendment) as to Lot Q (26.34 acres) and Parcel 1 (13.04 acres), which are currently designated for a future high school site (the "Project").

***Surrounding Zones and Land Uses***

<b>Surrounding Land</b>	<b>Existing Use of Land</b>	<b>City Zoning Designations</b>	<b>City General Plan Land Use Designation</b>
North	Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)
South	Under Construction -- Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Medium Density (LMD) and Neighborhood Commercial (CN)
East	Under Construction -- Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)
West	Vacant	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)

***Proposed Land Use Designations and Uses***

The applicant seeks a change in land use designations (General Plan Amendment and Master Plan Amendment) as to Lot Q and Parcel 1, which are currently designated “School” to “Low Density Residential” and “Low Medium Density Residential,” respectively (see figures 2A and 2B). The site will maintain the PC #42 zoning, however a revision to the Site Utilization Plan is proposed (Figure 3). The Merced Union School District has not purchased the site and it appears that the site is no longer desirable for a high school campus. The owners desire to redesignate the site for residential uses so that their development can proceed. A portion of the site is proposed to be developed with affordable housing.

**Proposed Land Use Designations**

<b>Proposed Land Uses</b>	<b>General Plan Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan</b>	<b>Zoning (no change proposed)</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Forecasted Intensity</b>
“Market-Rate” Detached Homes	From School to Low Density (LD)	From High School to Single Family Detached	Planned Development #42	26.34	147 dwellings plus a 3.69-acre park.
“Affordable” Detached Homes	From SCHOOL to Low Medium Density (LMD)	From High School to Single Family Detached	Planned Development #42	13.04	81 dwellings

***Proposed Development Standards:***

The applicant has proposed the following “Development Standards” to apply to the Project. These standards will be enforced at the time of issuance of a building permit for the units within this Project boundary.

Proposed Development Standards

Development Standard	Market-Rate Detached Homes	Affordable Detached Homes
Density	147 dwellings plus a 3.69-acre park. on 26.34 acres 5.6 units / acre	81 dwellings on 13.04 acres 6.2 units / acre
Lot Dimensions	21 units: 60' x 105'; and 126 units: 45' x 105'	45' x 78'
Lot Size	21 units: 6,300; and 126 units: 4,725	3,510
Floor Area Range	2484 – 3281 sq. ft.	1000 – 1400 sq. ft.
Lot Coverage Range	2039- 3134 sq. ft. (31% to 48%)	1240 – 1640 sq. ft. (35% to 46%)
Building Height	21'	21'
Front Setback *	17' – 25'	17' – 25'
Rear Setback *	10' min.	10' min.
Interior Side Setback *	5' min.	5' min.
Street-Side Setback *	15' – 22'	15' – 22'
Patio Covers	In compliance with setbacks noted above	In compliance with setbacks noted above
Fencing	In compliance with Merced Municipal Code	In compliance with Merced Municipal Code
* Setback as measured from property line		

*Figure 1*  
Vicinity Map

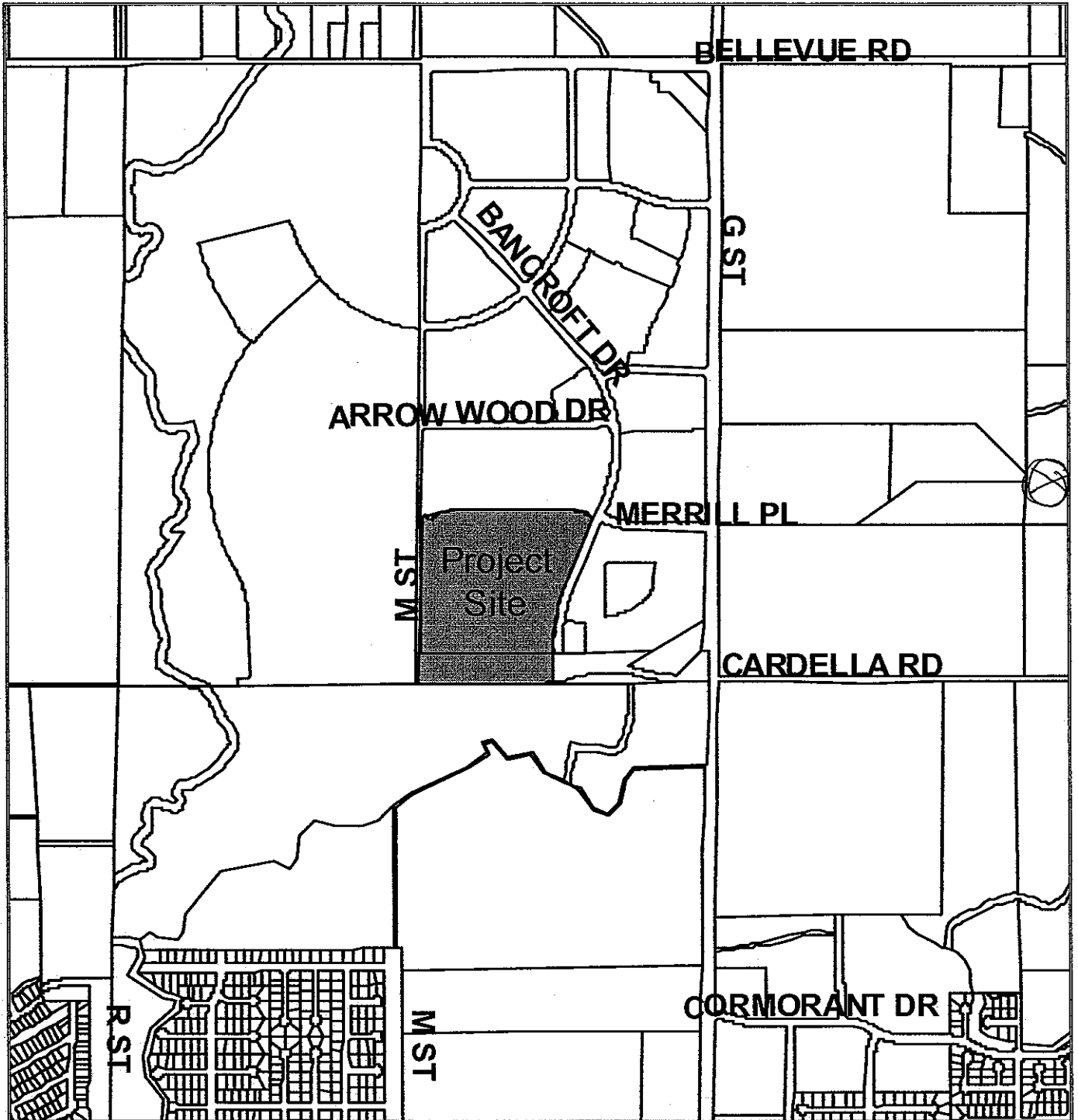


Figure 2A

Proposed General Plan Amendment

Merced Vision 2015 General Plan: School to Low to Medium Density /

Bellevue Ranch Master Plan: High School to Single Family Detached

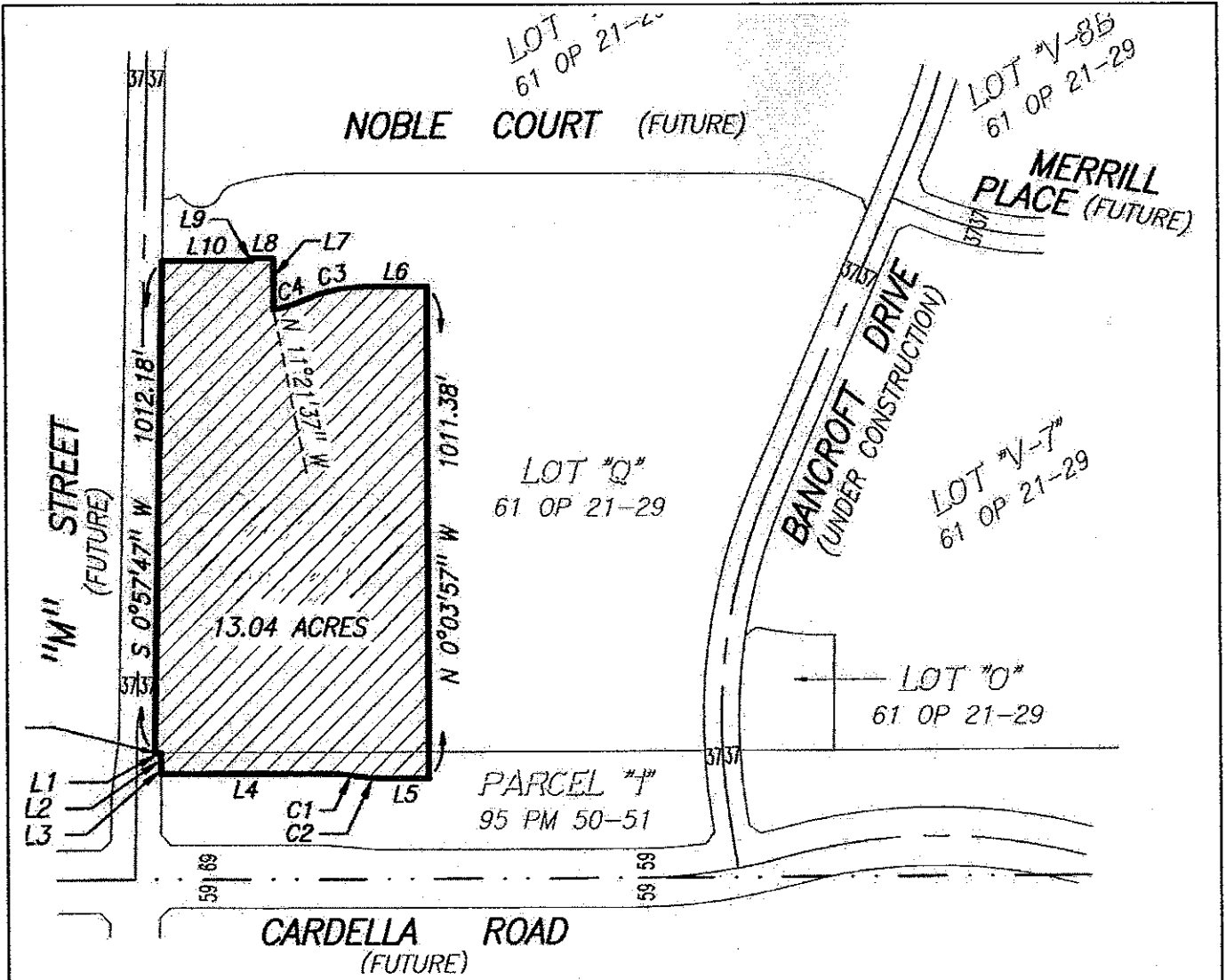


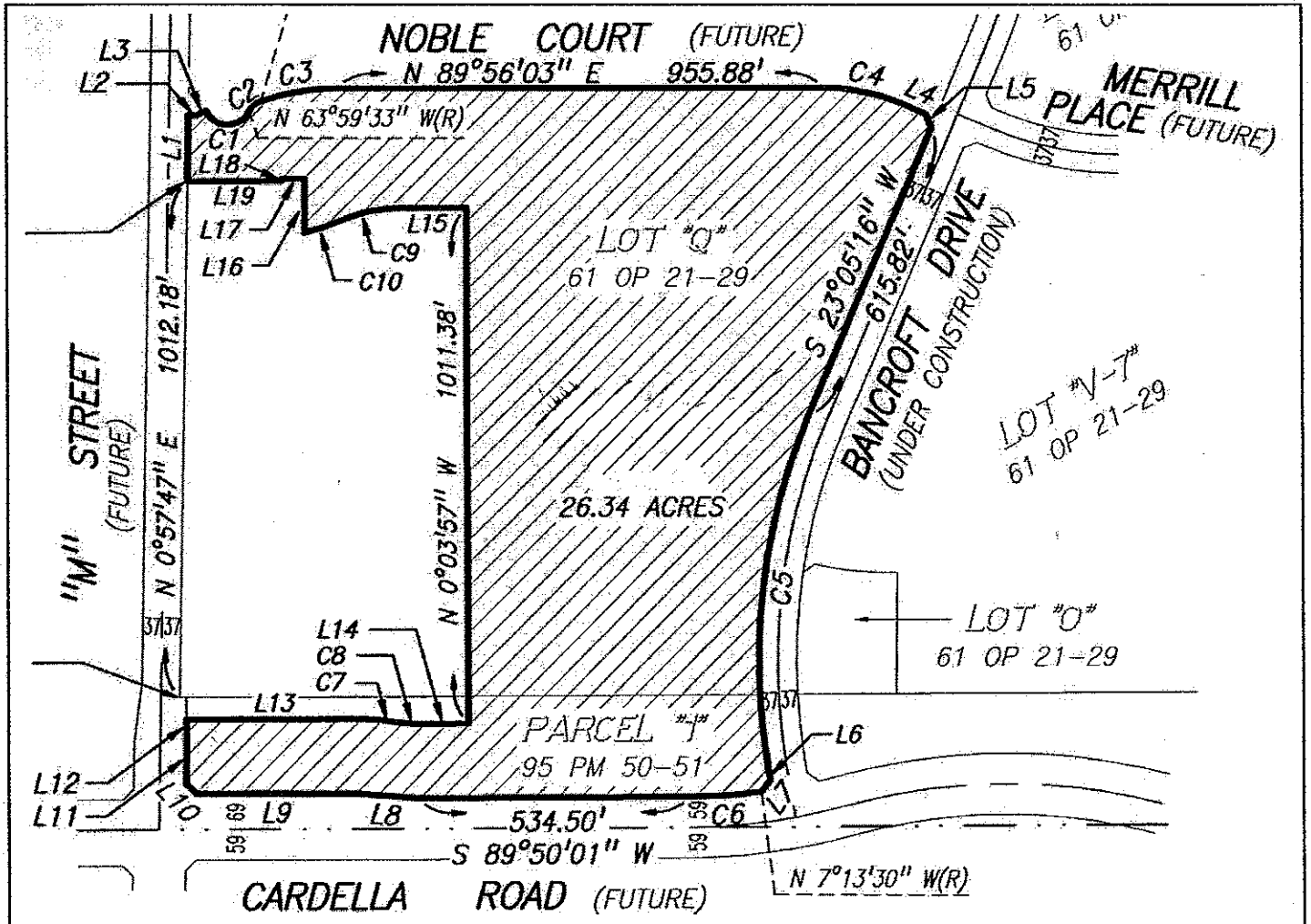


Figure 2B

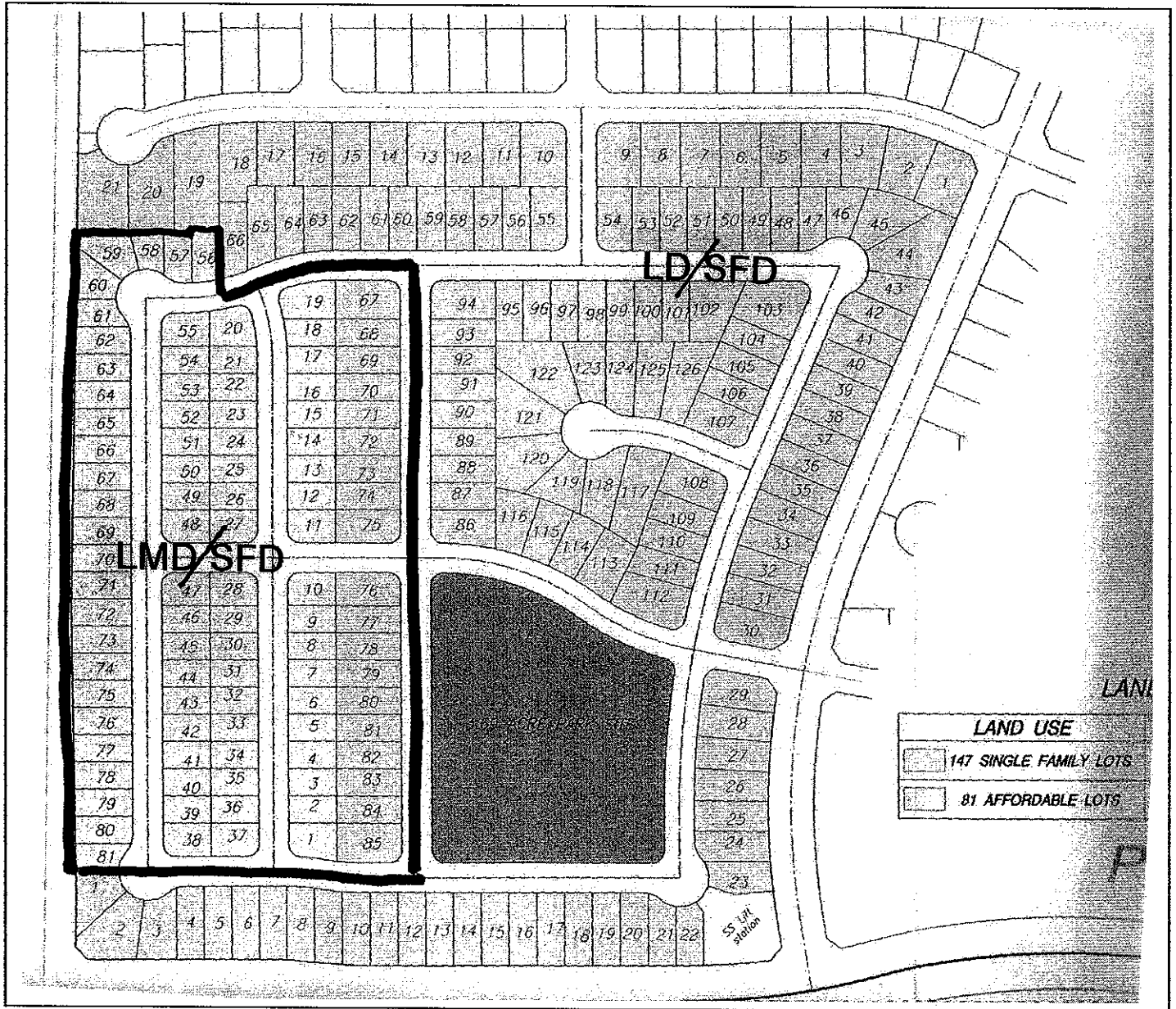
Proposed General Plan Amendment

Merced Vision 2015 General Plan: School to Low Density /

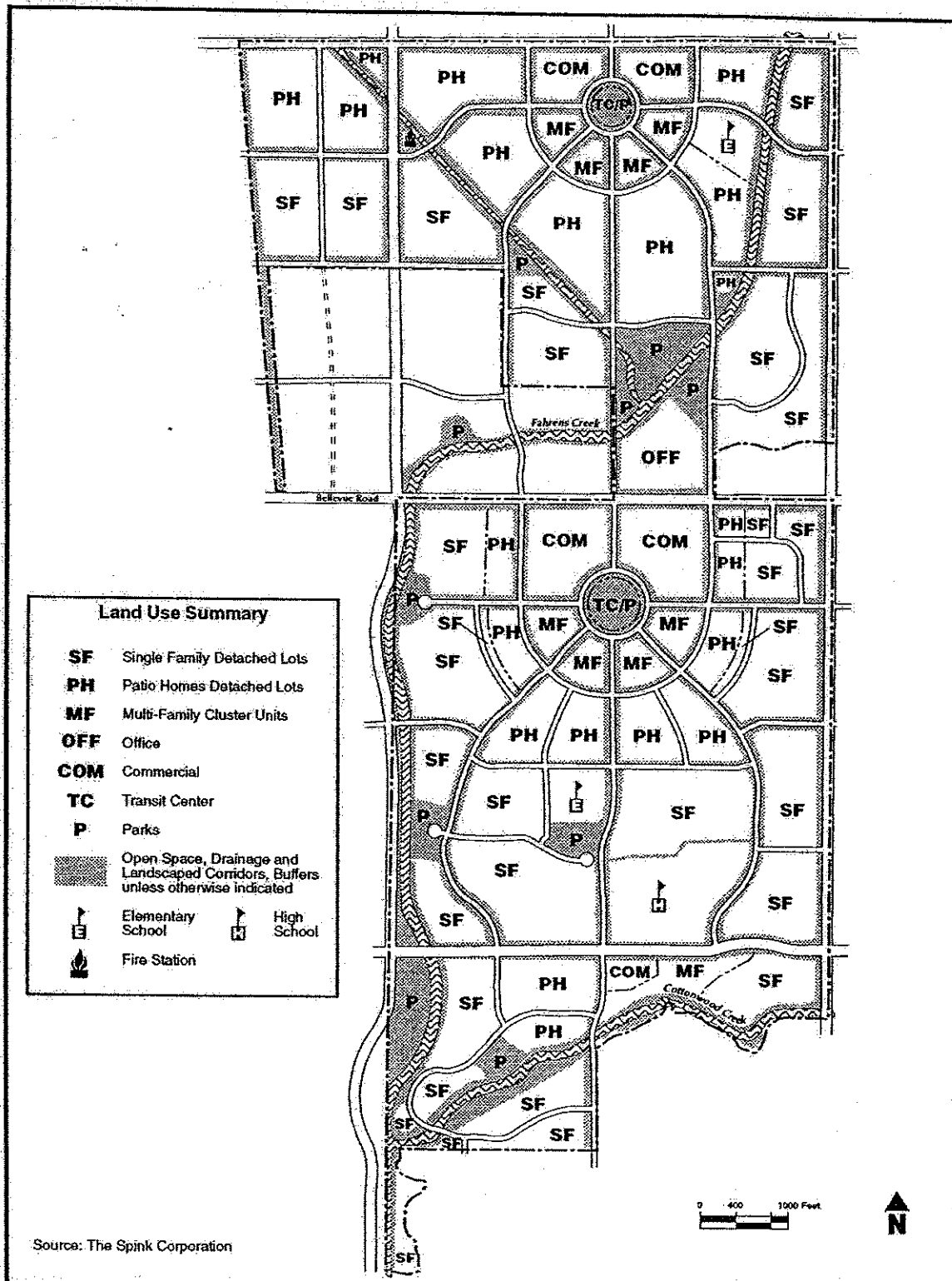
Bellevue Ranch Master Plan: High School to Single Family Detached



**Figure 3**  
**Proposed Site Plan**



*Figure 4*  
**Bellevue Ranch Master Land Use Plan**



#### 4. LEGAL BASIS AND PROCESS FOR THE ADDENDUM

This Addendum has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of 14 California Code of Regulations §15164. The basis for preparing the Addendum is discussed below. The requirement to prepare an addendum is found in 14 California Code of Regulations §15164(a). That provision states:

The lead agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.

This provision is consistent with Pub.Res.C. § 21166 which provides, in short, that once an EIR for a project is certified an agency may not require preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR unless “substantial changes” in the project or its circumstances will require “major revisions” to the EIR, or if new information, not known at the time of certification of the earlier EIR becomes available.

The City of Merced is also familiar with and aware of the 1986 Appellate Court decision of *Bowman v. City of Petaluma*, 185 Cal. App. 3d 1065 (1986), in which the court held that the preparation of an addendum to an EIR, rather than a Supplemental or Subsequent EIR, to assess the reconfiguration of roadways and circulation in an approved residential development project, was appropriate because pursuant to Pub.Res.C. §§ 21166, 21168 and 21168.5, an agency’s decision not to require “another EIR” is appropriate if there is “any substantial evidence in light of the whole record to support the decision.” Accordingly, if there is any “relevant evidence that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion” or “evidence of ‘ponderable legal significance...reasonable in nature, credible, and of solid value,’” an agency’s decision to prepare an Addendum to an EIR will not be overturned.

The City of Merced prepared this Environmental Assessment Checklist to determine whether the proposed General Plan and Master Plan amendments and Site Utilization Plan Revision for the Bellevue Ranch High School Site Redesignation triggered any conditions described in 14 California Code of Regulations §15162. The Environmental Assessment Checklist did not identify the existence of any conditions under section 15162 requiring the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR. Therefore, based on substantial evidence contained in the Environmental Assessment Checklist, the proposed amendments require only minor changes to the EIR. Accordingly, the City of Merced prepared this Addendum pursuant to the requirements of 14 California Code of Regulations §15164.

Pursuant to Section 15164(c), “An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration.” When the Merced City Council considers the Bellevue Ranch High School Site Redesignation it must also consider this Addendum, along with the Final EIR, pursuant to Section 15164(d), which states “[t]he decision-making body shall consider the addendum with the final EIR prior to making a decision on the project.” Thus consideration and certification of the Addendum will be integrated into the City’s land use decision-making process.

## 5. THE BELLEVUE RANCH MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN EIR

In May 1995, the City of Merced certified the EIR for the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan and approved the Master Plan. Copies of the *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan* Environmental Impact Report are available for review at the City of Merced Planning and Permitting Division, 678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, CA 95340, and is incorporated herein by reference.

Applications considered as part of the Master Plan approvals and analyzed in the EIR included, but were not limited to:

- \* General Plan land use designation amendments to provide land use consistency
- \* Rezoning to allow PD (Planned Development) zoning upon annexation; and
- \* Annexation to include Bellevue Ranch within the municipal boundaries of the City of Merced.

The environmental impacts of urban development within the Project Boundary of the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan were analyzed and presented in that EIR. That report specified the various levels of environmental impact for multiple categories of environmental concern. The EIR also noted that many of the design elements of the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan would reduce Project impacts to less than significant. The listing below provides a good indication of the type of impacts that can be expected from site-specific Projects, and on what topics the Environmental Assessment Checklist analysis will be focused.

**Less Than Significant Impacts with Mitigation:** The EIR identified less than significant impacts with mitigation for the following topics: Land Use Plans and Policies; Biological Resources; Public Services and Utilities; Human Health; Aesthetics; Hydrology and Water Quality; Cultural Resources; Noise; Population & Housing; Landform, Topography, and Soils (non agricultural issues); and Parks / Recreation / Open Space.

**Significant and Unavoidable Impacts:** The EIR also identified significant and unavoidable impacts to Air Quality, Agricultural Land Use, and Transportation and Circulation. Therefore, the City of Merced adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations (City Council Resolution #95-31, May 15, 1995) in accordance with CEQA, thereby recognizing these impacts and the greater need to accommodate human population growth in the area. This Environmental Assessment Checklist identifies no new information showing that previously examined effects from Air Quality, Agricultural Land Use, and Transportation and Circulation will be more significant than those for which the City of Merced already adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

### **Evaluation of Impacts to School Facilities in the EIR**

In its Public Facilities and Services Section (Ch. 4.9) the EIR evaluated the Master Plan's impacts to school facilities at full build-out and concluded that the impact to schools would be significant. (DEIR 4.9-18 to 19). As mitigation for this impact, Mitigation Measures 4.9.15 and 4.9.16 of the EIR require the payment of school impact fees and the reservation of an unspecified proposed high school site on at least 40 acres for subsequent acquisition by the Merced Union High School District, as well as two to four elementary school sites of at least 10 acres each for subsequent acquisition by the Merced City Elementary School District (EIR 4-12). The EIR provides that location of the sites to be reserved "shall be mutually agreed to by the developer, the respective school district, and the

City of Merced,” and concludes this mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant (EIR 4-12).

The applicant has already satisfied Mitigation Measure 4.9.16, which states in relevant part: “the developer of the Bellevue Ranch Project shall reserve one high school site of at least 40 acres (net of right of ways), as consistent with state standards, for acquisition by the Merced Union High School District.” EIR at 4-12. In this case, Lot Q and Parcel 1 were reserved for the high school site pursuant to Mitigation Measure 4.9.16. The mitigation measure does not require that a high school be built at the reserved site or that the Merced Union High School District acquire said site for a future high school; it simply required reservation of the site for subsequent purchase by the District. The Project site no longer appears desirable for a high school campus and the district is currently seeking and is engaged in site planning for an alternative high school approximately one-mile north of the subject site.

The “School Facilities Act” of 1998 (“SB 50”) now occupies the area of school facilities mitigation. Gov. Code §65995(e). SB 50 provides that the payment of school fees in the amount authorized by the statute is deemed, as a matter of law, to be “full and complete mitigation” of the impacts of any land-use approval on the need for school facilities. Gov. Code §65995(h). Development of the Project will be conditioned on compliance with SB 50, and therefore, impacts to school facilities are fully mitigated as a matter of law.

## **6 APPLICABILITY OF AN ADDENDUM**

### Summary Conclusion

Based on the analysis and findings of the Environmental Assessment Checklist, the City concludes that an addendum to the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan EIR, rather than a subsequent EIR or supplement to the EIR, is appropriate because only minor changes are involved and the conditions requiring the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR are not present.

The changes in the land use designations would increase the total residential land area by approximately 39.38 ± acres. This increase represents a residential area increase of only approximately 3% of the entire Master Plan project. The designation changes are expected to allow an additional 228 residential units. A portion of these units would be developed as affordable housing. This increase is miniscule when compared to the Master Plan’s anticipated development of nearly 7,000 residential units. Moreover, the School District is actively seeking a replacement site for the high school and the selected site will likely remove land previously planned for residential uses. Regarding the original reservation of the high school site, the impact to school facilities will be fully mitigated. More pointedly, the “School Facilities Act” of 1998 (“SB 50”) now preempts the area of School Facilities mitigation. Gov. Code §65995(e).

SB50 provides that the payment of school fees in the amount authorized by the statute is deemed, as a matter of law, to be “full and complete mitigation” of the impacts of any land-use approval on the need for school facilities. Gov. Code §65995(h). Development of the Project will be conditioned on compliance with SB 50, and therefore, impacts to school facilities are fully mitigated as a matter of law.

The anticipated change is therefore minor and not significant. Additionally, no evidence indicates that this minor change will create or increase any significant effects to the environment. None of the effects determined by the EIR to be significant and unavoidable after mitigation will be increased by the land use designation changes. Accordingly, pursuant to sections 15162(b) and 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines, an Addendum is the appropriate environmental document to assess the Bellevue Ranch High School Site Redesignation.

*Analysis of Conditions Requiring the Preparation of a Subsequent or Supplemental EIR*

This section is the City's explanation, supported by substantial evidence, of its decision not to prepare a subsequent EIR pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21166 and Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines.

After thorough review of the record, City Staff determined that a "Supplemental" Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) would not be the appropriate form of environmental review, because there are no conditions (per the California Environmental Quality Act) that call for the preparation of a SEIR, namely:

- A. The Project is not a substantial change that will require major revisions of the environmental impact report because such change causes either a new significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;

*While the Project represents a change, it is neither substantial nor one that requires a major revision to the EIR. The Project site does not add new land area to the Bellevue Ranch Project site, and it represents only approximately 3% of its land area. Based on the findings in the Environmental Assessment Checklist, no new significant effects were found by replacing the school site with residential units. Impacts of placing residential units in this area of Merced have been adequately addressed and mitigation measures are in place to provide for the development of residential units. There are no environmental features that would either preclude residential development or create impacts greater than what has already been analyzed in the EIR. Likewise, the elimination of the proposed school site is not seen as a new impact or a substantial increase in the previously identified impact to the provision of public school facilities. Alternate sites are actively being pursued and payment of school fees is regarded as complete mitigation of impacts relating to the provision of adequate school facilities.*

- B. No substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the Project is undertaken that will require major revisions of the environmental impact report because such change causes either a new significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; Substantial changes will not occur with respect to the circumstances under which the Project is being undertaken which will require major revisions in the environmental impact report;

*With respect to the school site designation only, circumstances under which the Master Plan is being undertaken have changed. The high school district has shown disinterest in the site as evidenced by its pursuit of a school site*

*approximately one-mile to the north and by initiating a planning study to find other suitable sites in North Merced. For this reason, the applicant is seeking to change the land use designation of the site. For reasons specified under this heading, no new significant environmental effects or substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects have been determined as part of the analysis provided in the Environmental Assessment Checklist.*

C. New information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time the environmental impact report was certified as complete, does not show any of the following:

(1) The Project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR;

*The residential components of the Master Plan were analyzed in-depth and revealed numerous effects. The environmental analysis prepared in this Project's Environmental Assessment Checklist found that the proposed residential units do not create any additional significant effects beyond what has already been determined in the original EIR. There is nothing unique about the site that places the proposed residential units in environmental jeopardy.*

(2) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR; and

*The Project occupies a site comprising approximately 3% of the total area of the Master Plan. Impacts from residential units were fully analyzed in the prior EIR, therefore, the addition of such a small residential Project will not result in substantially more severe significant impacts.*

*Finally, pursuant to Government Code section 65996(a), enacted in 1998, the payment of impact fees is the exclusive method for considering and mitigating impacts on school facilities that occur as a result of any legislative or adjudicative act of a local agency involving the planning, use or development of real property. Moreover, a local agency may not deny or refuse to approve a Project on the basis that school facilities are inadequate. Government Code 65996.*

*In this instance, the EIR already requires the developer to pay the requisite impact fees. Mitigation Measure 4.9.15 states: "the developer of each subdivision within the Bellevue Ranch Project shall pay all City and school district fees in effect on the date of the approval, as permitted by State law, and any increase in those fees, and any new fees which are in effect at the time the building permits are issued." EIR at 4-12. As a result, section 65996 makes clear that Crosswinds has already adequately mitigated any impacts on school facilities by paying the impact fees. Nothing more is required or permitted under State law, and any impacts on school facilities have been fully and completely mitigated by the developer under Mitigation Measures 4.9.15 and 4.9.16, and Government Code 65996.*



- (3) Any mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible are actually feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the Project; and

*The record does not include any discussion of previous non-feasible mitigation measures. [See the 1995 Final Environmental Impact Report, nor have any new feasible mitigation measures been presented.]*

- (4) There are new mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous document that would substantially reduce one or more significant effects.

*The new information presented to the City comes in the form of a request by the property owner to amend the land use designation. As discussed above, this does not result in new significant impacts and associated mitigation measures, and does not change the nature of impacts. No new mitigation measures are necessary. Therefore, there are no new mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous document that would substantially reduce one or more significant effects.*

Therefore, an "Addendum" to the "Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan EIR" is appropriate. This addendum will be considered, along with the Final EIR of the *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan*, by the Merced City Council prior to approval of the General Plan Amendment, Master Plan Amendment and Site Utilization Plan Revision.

**Section II**  
**CEQA DETERMINATION OF IMPACT**

On the basis of this environmental assessment evaluation:

I find that the proposed Project does not cause substantial changes to the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan or substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan will be undertaken that require major revisions to the 1995 Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") for the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan, SCH #92102055, nor is there any new information showing that significant effects examined in the EIR will be substantially more severe than previously identified. An Addendum to the EIR will therefore be prepared.

*By:* Bill King *Date:* May 16, 2005

*Title:* Principal Planner *Representing:* City of Merced

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Approved by:* Jack D. Lesch *Date:* May 16, 2005

*Title:* Director of Development Services/  
Environmental Coordinator *Representing:* City of Merced

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

## Section III ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This environmental checklist evaluates impacts associated with the redesignation of Lot Q and Parcel 1 in the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan development area. The checklist uses the master plan EIR as the environmental baseline for this analysis.

### I. AESTHETICS

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantial damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway or local road, or may impact the improvement of a new scenic corridor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**1a. Scenic Vista**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that has a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista. No greater impacts as identified in the EIR would occur.

**Analysis:** The site does not contribute to nor is it a part of a designated scenic view or vista. The Project site does not obstruct an important "vista." This finding is consistent with the analysis of the EIR for the Master Plan.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**1b. State Scenic Highway or Local Road**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that substantially damages scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state highway or local road, or may impact the improvement of a new scenic corridor. No greater impacts as identified in the EIR would occur.

**Analysis:** Open Space Policy 1.3b seeks to preserve the nine currently-designated Scenic Corridors. The Project neither contains nor is adjacent to a designated scenic corridor.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**APPLICABLE MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN  
 POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

---

*Open Space Policy 1.3:* Promote the protection and Enhancement of Designated Scenic Routes.

*Open Space Action 1.3a:* Identify and where appropriate, designate additional scenic routes within the City's expanded SUDP and Sphere of Influence.

*Open Space Action 1.3c:* Utilize established guidelines for the review of Projects proposed within a designated Scenic Corridor.

**1c. Visual Character**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that substantially degrades the existing visible character or quality of the site and its surroundings. No greater impacts as identified in the EIR would occur.

**Analysis:** Urban development has been approved all around the Project site. The placement of new buildings in the Project area will have two primary effects to the visual character of the landscape: (1) the land will be occupied with buildings and roads, thereby replacing the “agrarian look” with that of a “suburban look;” and (2) views to the horizon will be replaced by views of trees and buildings in the immediate foreground. “Degradation” implies that the existing views (agrarian look) will essentially remain except for some changes that will reduce its quality of character. The proposed change, however, is not considered a “degradation” of the existing visible character of the site because it is a complete replacement of the agrarian view with a wholly different view. The new suburban view (buildings and landscaping) will be designed in accordance to City standards and discretionary reviews in order to achieve a highly aesthetic “built” environment.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**1d. Create Light or Glare**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that substantially degrades the existing visible character or quality of the site and its surroundings. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** The lighting impacts from a residential development are far less than the impacts that could be expected from the operation of a high school facility. The subject Project will not have ball-field lights, parking lot lights or building floodlights. The proposed Project may result in low level, off-site light and glare from residential streetlights, security lights, and reflective materials. However, the impacts from light or glare are expected to result in illumination levels typical of residential communities and urban development. Buildings and dwelling unit light fixtures will be required to meet City standards and the impacts are not expected to be significant.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997.



**2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*
b) Conflict with agricultural zoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with an existing Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*Note: A Statement of Overriding Considerations was previously adopted for these impacts in association with the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Final Program EIR (City Council Resolution #97-22).*

**Environmental Setting:** The Project site occupies land previously permitted for development of a high school facility. The underlying soils types are MrB, RaA, YbA and WnA. Some of these soils are classified as “prime” agricultural soils.

**2a. Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that converts farmland designated as “prime,” “unique” or “farmland of statewide importance” as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural uses. The Project would cause no impact beyond that considered in the EIR. The Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Final Program EIR (City Council Resolution #97-22) previously identified the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses as a potentially significant and unavoidable impact, and the City of Merced adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for this impact. The proposed Project does not have any new impacts which are substantially more severe than those previously identified in the Merced 2015 General Plan Final Program EIR and the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan EIR for which the City of Merced already adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations. Accordingly, the proposed Project will have no impact on the conversion of farmland beyond that considered in the EIR.

**Analysis:** Upon referencing the 2000 Merced County Important Farmlands Map, it was determined that these designations apply to the subject development site.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**2b. Conflicts with Agricultural Zoning**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that conflicts with agricultural zoning. Consistent with the EIR and Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR, the Project would have no impact beyond that considered in the EIR.

*Adjacent Agricultural Uses:* As urbanization moves into agricultural areas, the major effect on farming activities involves complaints from adjacent residences regarding pesticide use, noise, and odor. Defending farming practices can become time consuming and expensive for farmers and often increases the likelihood of additional conversion of agricultural land adjacent to residential development. To assist in agricultural land conservation efforts, the City standard for development adjacent to agricultural land requires developers/applicants or successors of the Project site to record a document notifying future buyer(s) and any subsequent owner(s) within 1,000 feet of an existing agricultural operation of the possible inconvenience or discomfort of farming operations and the priority to which Merced County places on agricultural operations (see Mitigation Monitoring Program, Appendix A).

*Applicable Findings of the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR:* See discussion under Section III-2e below for further analysis.

*Mitigation:* Not Applicable

### **2c. Conflicts with a Williamson Contract**

*Threshold & Conclusion:* A significant impact would be one that conflicts with a Williamson Act contract. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

*Analysis:* Agricultural Preserves are established by the County for those areas devoted to agricultural and open-space uses as per the Williamson Act. Establishment of the agricultural preserve is a prerequisite for landowners to enter into land conservation contracts with the County (see discussion below). According to County records, the property is not within an Agricultural Preserve.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, known as the Williamson Act, (Government Code Section 51200) is intended to assist in the long-term preservation of prime agricultural land in the State. This is accomplished by providing the landowner with a substantial tax break for keeping the land in agricultural use for at least 10 years (the length of the Williamson Act contracts). In 2000, Merced County began participating in the Williamson Act. The Project site is not under a Williamson Act contract.

*Mitigation:* Not Applicable.

### **2d. Potential Conversion of Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use due to Project caused Changes in the Environment**

*Threshold & Conclusion:* A significant impact would occur if the Project involves other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. With regard to this issue, the Project will have no impact beyond that considered in the EIR.

*Analysis:* The placement of urban infrastructure (roads, storm-drain pipes, water and sewer lines, etc.) together with shifting the City Limit boundary adjacent to farmland will enable easier conversion of said land to non-agricultural uses. The Project itself, however, will not result in an immediate or necessary conversion, as there are no inherent design or uses of the Project that would impact the property to such a degree. Although change brought about by the Project will enable adjacent property to be used for non-agricultural purposes in the future, the Project does not force an immediate or necessary conversion in land use, and is therefore not a significant impact. (See discussion under Section III-2e below)

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**2e. Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Findings.**

The *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* established goals promoting compact urban form. For example, Open Space Goal 2.2 is to "Relieve pressures on converting areas containing large concentrations of "prime" agricultural soils to urban uses by providing adequate urban development land within the Merced City SUDP." The General Plan EIR found that the urban growth areas of the City are designated on lands of lesser agricultural potential thereby reducing the loss of agricultural productivity in the region. At the same time, higher density urban development reduces the amount of land necessary to support population growth. Nevertheless, on the basis of the General Plan Program PEIR analysis, it was determined that the conversion of "prime" agricultural soils to non-productive agricultural and urban uses within the SUDP is a "significant" adverse impact under CEQA. In order to achieve the goals of maintaining a compact urban form and other types of land use compatibility issues, mitigation that would eliminate this loss is not possible.

Statement of Overriding Consideration: The Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR previously acknowledged impacts to Agricultural Resources as significant and unavoidable. With the adoption of the General Plan, the City of Merced recognized that this Project is an appropriate use for the site, and that any loss of agricultural land is offset by the benefits that will be realized through the development of residential and commercial uses on the site. At the time of General Plan adoption, the City adopted a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" (City Council Resolution #97-22, April 7, 1997) concerning the loss of agricultural land. This Environmental Assessment Checklist reveals no new information showing that previously identified effects will be more significant than described in the Final PEIR for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997.
2. "Merced County Important Farmland Map of 2000," by the California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.
3. Soil Survey for Merced Area, CA (Series 1950, No.7), U.S. Soil Conservation Service, 1950.
4. Appendix E (Merced Planning Area Soils Inventory) of Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report, April 1997.



**3 AIR QUALITY**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Contribute substantially to the existing "Ozone" air quality non-attainment status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Contribute substantially to the existing "PM-10" air quality non-attainment status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create Excessive Amounts of Carbon Monoxide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emission which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Expose sensitive receptors to pollutant concentration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*\*Note: A Statement of Overriding Considerations was previously adopted for these impacts in association with the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Final Program EIR (City Council Resolution #97-22).*

**3a. Air Quality Plan**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that conflicts with or obstructs implementation of the applicable air quality plan. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** Under the California Clean Air Act of 1988, districts designated as non-attainment for state ambient air quality standards must submit a plan for attaining or maintaining state standards for these pollutants. In compliance with the California Clean Air Act, the District has developed an Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP), which was adopted in 1991 and updated in 1994. Further updates are currently underway and the District is also in the process of developing a PM<sub>10</sub> plan. The Project will be required to comply will all relevant regulations and plans of the District.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**3b. Contribution to "OZONE" Violation**

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that contributes substantially to the existing "Ozone" air quality non-attainment status. No greater impact as identified in the EIR would occur.

**Analysis:** The EIR concluded that the Master Plan would not violate air quality standards and that a **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Master Plan. The proposal to change the General Plan and Master Plan land use designations from "School" to residential designations results in fewer automobile trips. Likewise, ozone precursor emissions would be less



with residential than with the high school. Thus, the proposed Project will have even less of an impact than those previously identified when the Project site was designated "High School."

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **3c. Contribution to "PM-10" Violation \ Construction Related Impacts**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that contributes substantially to the existing "PM-10" air quality non-attainment status. No greater impact as identified in the EIR would occur.

Analysis: Particulate Matter (PM-10) consists of particles small enough (10 microns or less) to remain suspended in the air for long periods. Typical particles include dust, sand, metallic and mineral particles, pollen, smoke, mist and acid fumes. These particles are small enough to be inhaled and lodge in the lungs with resultant health effects.

The entire *Basin* is a serious non-attainment area for PM-10 and any addition to the current PM-10 problem could be considered significant. However, the *District* has established regulations (Fugitive Dust Rules collectively called Regulation VIII) governing various activities that contribute to the overall PM-10 problem. Several components of Regulation VIII specifically address fugitive dust generated by construction-related activities. Therefore, the *District* has determined that any determination of significance with respect to construction emissions should be based on a consideration of the control measures of Regulation VIII that are already required of the Project by state law. From this *District's* perspective, most Projects will not create a significant impact due to state requirements to follow Regulation VIII. Therefore, mitigation is not required. The District will ensure adherence to Regulation VIII.

These actions are consistent with the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* Mitigation Measure 1d, which states: "Development construction activity shall implement appropriate dust (PM-10) suppression techniques as required by the SJVUAPCD."

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **3d. Excessive Amounts of "Carbon Monoxide"**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one where excessive amounts of Carbon Monoxide are generated. No greater impact as identified in the EIR would occur.

Analysis: Carbon Monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is highly toxic that is emitted directly into the atmosphere. At high concentrations, CO can cause heart difficulties in people with chronic diseases, can impair mental abilities and can even cause death. Under most conditions, however, CO does not persist in the atmosphere and is rapidly dispersed. In the urban environment, the main source of CO is motor vehicles.

The Project is expected to generate automobile traffic that will affect air quality along adjacent streets and roadways. Adjacent to such roadways, the most significant pollutant is CO. Carbon monoxide hot spots are a potential problem in areas with high levels of traffic congestion. For this reason, the Program EIR for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* adopted Mitigation Measure 1b that requires appropriate CO (CALINE or equivalent) hot-spot air quality studies to identify appropriate Project level mitigation measures for all development proposals which can be expected to

reduce road segment or intersection levels of service below "D." The traffic analysis provided in Section III –15 determined that roads affected by the Project would operate with LOS "D" or higher. No new impact is anticipated from the proposed Project.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **3e. Cumulative Impacts**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that results in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors). No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: Long-term deterioration of air quality is expected as a result of population growth and increased vehicle traffic. The *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan's* transit-oriented development policies will substantially reduce Project level emissions in the Merced area; however, cumulative region-wide growth patterns will most likely cause future air quality deterioration. This impact has previously been acknowledged in the EIR for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* as a significant and unavoidable impact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (City Council Resolution #97-22) has been adopted. This Environmental Assessment Checklist reveals no new information showing that previously identified effects will be more significant than described in the above referenced EIR. Accordingly, the Project will not have any impact beyond that considered in the EIR.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **3f. Sensitive Receptors to Pollutants**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that exposes sensitive receptors to pollutant concentration. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: Sensitive receptors are defined as members of a population who are most sensitive to the adverse health effects of air pollution and the land uses where these population groups would reside for long periods. These groups include children, elderly, the acutely ill and the chronically ill, and typical land uses include schools, residential care facilities, and hospitals. The exchange of the school with residential uses eliminates the "sensitive receptor" population from this area. Based on the analysis above, the Project site will not create a concentration of pollutants. The Project does not contain a sensitive receptor, and in fact removes a sensitive receptor – the school.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **3g. Objectionable Odors**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that creates objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: The Project's residential development should not create any objectionable odors. According to Table 4-2 of the *District's "Guide for Assessing Air Quality Impacts,"* the types of residential development proposed on the property are not the types of facilities that trigger screening for potential odor sources.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. Jones & Stokes Associates, *Software User's Guide: URBEMIS2002 for Windows with Enhanced Construction Module (Version 7.4)*, May 2003.
2. San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (SJVUAPCD), *Guide for Assessing Air Quality Impacts*, January 2002.
3. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997—Chapter 8, Sustainable Development.



**4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantial with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**4a. Candidate, Sensitive or Special Status Species**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that has a substantial adverse effect on any candidate, sensitive or special status species. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:**

The EIR identified impacts to special status plant and animal species. Mitigation was adopted to address these impacts. The development of the site for residential as compared with a high school are similar in terms of the disturbance of the land. Similar impacts to those already considered are anticipated and the previously adopted mitigation is applicable and appropriate.

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*Open Space Policy 1.1:* Identify and preserve wildlife habitats that support rare, endangered, or threatened species.

*Open Space Action 1.1.b:* Urban development should occur away from identified sensitive species habitats unless specific provisions to ensure adequate protection and monitoring exist.

Mitigation: Refer to Mitigation Monitoring Program, Appendix A.

**4b. Riparian or Other Sensitive Natural Community**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that adversely affects riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

Analysis: See comments under 4c below.

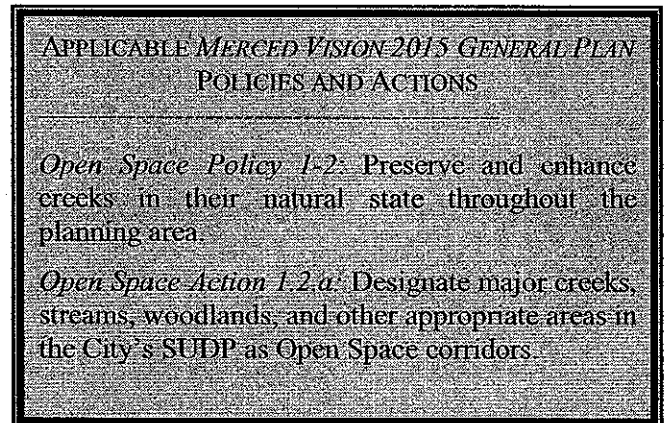
Mitigation: Not Applicable

**4c. Wetlands**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that adversely affects wetlands. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

Analysis: The EIR identified impacts to wetlands. Mitigation was adopted to address these impacts (see the EIR for details). While impacts from the Project are similar to that of the high school, they are not greater; the previously adopted mitigation measures adequately address the impact.

Mitigation: Not Applicable



**4d. Wildlife Nursery Site / Movement-Migration**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that adversely affects riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

Analysis: See comments under 4c above.

Mitigation: Not Applicable

**4e. Ordinances and Policies Protecting Biological Resources**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that conflicts with local ordinances and policies protecting local biological resources. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis and Mitigation: The Project will conform to the City's General Plan policies regarding biological resources and the conservation of riparian and wildlife corridors. The City does not have "ordinances" that protect local biological resources. Refer to Section III, 4a, b, c, d, e and g for a discussion of the Project's consistency with adopted policies.

**4f. Conservation Plans**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that conflicts with any conservation plan. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** The Project site is not part of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other local habitat conservation plan. However, in June 2001, Merced County entered into an agreement with the University of California, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a HCP/NCCP for Eastern Merced County, those unincorporated areas east and north of Highway 99 and those incorporated cities that choose to participate. The Plan was expected to take at least 3 years to develop. The City of Merced is not a signatory to the planning agreement, but was participating in the process. The City would have had an option in the future of adopting the Plan, but no decision on this issue has been made at this time. This HCP planning process has stopped without a plan, and it is uncertain whether or not this planning process will resume.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. Final Environmental Impact Report of the *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan*, May 1995.



**5 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

<i>Would The Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of and archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique a paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**5a, b, c Historic Resources; Archaeological Resources; Paleontological Resource or Geologic Feature**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource, a historic resource, a paleontological resource or geologic feature as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

**Analysis:** The change in development type (school to housing) will not increase the impact on resources in the area. Mitigation measures of the EIR will mitigate those previously identified impacts to less than significant.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable

**Information Sources:**

1. The National Register of Historic Places, the California Historical Landmarks List, and the California Inventory of Historic Resources (2002).



**6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in U.B.C. Standard 18-1 of the Uniform Building Code (1997), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**6a. Faults, Ground Shaking, Ground Failure and Landslides**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to loss, injury or death. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

**Analysis:** The Project area is not located within an area depicted on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist. A geologic study, contained in the City General Plan, concluded that the Project site is located in an area that exhibits a relatively low exposure to seismic risk.

Ground shaking of moderate severity may be experienced on the Project site during a

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*Safety Action 2.1.c:* Continue to require that new development meet the standards of Seismic Zone 3.

*Safety Policy 2.3:* Restrict urban development in all areas with potential ground failure characteristics.

*Open Space Action 1.2.b:* Continue to acquire a minimum 50-foot dedication from the centerline (or 25 feet from the crown, whichever is greater) of all creeks within the planning area in order to maintain these open space areas as natural riparian preserves and recreation areas.



large seismic event. New construction requires adherence to Uniform Building Code Seismic Zone 3 Standards and is addressed at the building permit processing stage. Compliance with the building code will lessen any negative effects from ground shaking in the area. These measures are a routine part of the development review process and are listed as mitigation measures in the EIR and would be applicable to either the construction of a high school or residential dwelling units. The change to residential units from a school use does not create a greater impact.

Landslides generally occur on slopes of 15% or greater. The Project area's topography is generally of slopes between 0 and 3 percent, which are considered insufficient to produce hazards other than minor sliding during seismic activity. Small landslides have occurred, however, along the banks of local creeks as part of the natural erosion of the creeks and also as a result of human activity. The City has a policy restricting structures in these areas.

No liquefaction hazard areas have been identified to date in the Merced area. Potential liquefaction in the future is recognized, however, because in many areas unconsolidated sediments and a high water table do coincide.

Mitigation: Not Applicable

#### **6b. Soil Erosion**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that results in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project

Analysis: Site development has already been evaluated in the EIR. The design, construction and operation of the Project complies with existing codes and regulations that have the effect of reducing any potential impact, and no mitigation is necessary (Refer to Appendix B).

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **6c. Unstable Soil**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one where soil becomes unstable as a result of the Project. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: The proposal is consistent with the *Merced City Vision 2015 General Plan*. The General Plan EIR addressed issues of soils, soil capability and the suitability of the area for urban type development. The Project site is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse as identified in the City General Plan and Environmental Study.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **6d. Expansive Soils**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if the Project is placed on expansive soils and creates substantial risk to life or property. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

Analysis: Most areas in the City of Merced have a history of expansive soils. Expansive soils (which contract when dry and expand when wet) will damage foundations if not properly mitigated.

Therefore, it is necessary to determine the extent of expansive soils present in the Project area prior to issuing building permits. Based upon the results of future soil tests, the site may require some degree of over-excavation and re-compaction of the soil, the removal of some soil, vapor barriers on the foundation, and/or other measures to combat expansive soils. These measures are a routine part of the development review process and are listed as mitigation measures in the EIR and would be applicable to either the construction of a high school or residential dwelling units. The change to residential units from a school use does not create a greater impact.

Mitigation: Not Applicable

**6e. Septic Systems**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if septic tanks or systems are utilized in the Project and the soil is unable to support their use. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: City ordinances do not allow the construction of new septic systems within the City limits. Connection to the City's wastewater collection and treatment system is required of all new development. In newly annexed areas, which may have existing septic systems, the Merced Municipal Code (Section 15.24.040) requires that connection to the City's sewer system be accomplished within 6 years of annexation, unless sewer service is not available for use.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. California Department of Mines & Geology, Special Publication 42: Fault-Rupture Hazard Zones in California, 1997.
2. *Soil Survey for Merced Area, CA* (Series 1950, No.7), U.S. Soil Conservation Service.
3. Uniform Building Code, 1997.
4. City of Merced, *Bellevue Ranch master Development Plan*, May 1995, April 1997.



**7 HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emission or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two mile of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7a. Transport, Use or Disposal of Hazardous Materials**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would be one that produces a substantial risk to the public from routine transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous material, or from reasonably foreseeable accidental release of such material. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** Transport of hazardous materials along Project area roadways and area rail-lines is regulated by both federal and state agencies and do not pose any unique risks to residents and property owners of the site or to future development

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

**7b. Upset and Accident**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would be one that creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** Residential development does not involve the use and storage of significant amounts of hazardous materials. Household chemicals and automobile fuel are present in residential settings, but only for the personal use of neighborhood residents. Therefore, the likelihood that a foreseeable upset or accidental event involving the release of hazardous materials occurring is not likely.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

**7c. School Proximity**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would be one that emits hazardous emission or handles hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** The Project will not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or wastes.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

**7d. Exposure from Existing Contaminated Sites**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would be one that is located on a listed contamination site and exposes the public or the environment to the hazard. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

***Analysis:*** Where surface or subsurface contamination may be a concern, Project applicants are required to prepare an environmental assessment. Such assessment was conducted for the Bellevue Ranch Master Plan. The EIR identified contamination of the "ranch complex" site, which is not within the current Project site.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

**7e. Hazards Near Airports**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would be one that results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of a public airport or private airstrip. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** According to the *Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP)*, April 1999, the Project site is located outside the "Airport Influence Area" of the Merced Municipal Airport / Macready Field, and, is located outside the "Airport Influence Area" of the Castle Airport. The Project is located outside the areas of concern. No further analysis is necessary.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN*  
POLICIES AND ACTIONS

*Safety Policy 7.2:* Ensure that hazardous materials are cleaned up before property is developed or redeveloped

*Safety Action 7.2.a:* Request an assessment of the past use of hazardous materials and soils analysis on proposed development sites.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**7f. Hazards Near Airstrips**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of a private airstrip. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: There are no existing airstrips within a two-mile radius of the Project site.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**7g. Emergency Response Plans**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that impairs the implementation of or interferes with an emergency response or evacuation plan. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: According to standard development review procedures for Project applications, individual Projects within the Project area will be reviewed prior to approval by the Fire and Police Departments.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**7h. Risk of Wildland Fires**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to a significant risk of wildland fires. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: As the City has increasingly annexed large blocks of undeveloped land, the potential for wildland fires (mainly grassland fires) within the City has increased. The City Fire Department responds to approximately 150 fires annually involving vegetation. Of these fires, approximately 3 to 4 percent involve large parcels, classifying these as "wildland" fires. In addition, the City Fire Department typically responds to between 4 and 5 significant grassland fires per year that occur in the County adjacent to the City limits. The City Fire Department is also frequently called to provide mutual aid to the County for grassland fires in the wider Merced County area due to increasingly strained fire fighting resources in the County over the last few years. The City of Merced Fire Department has procedures in place to address the issue of wildland fires and no additional mitigation is proposed for this specific development. These procedures include the annual weed abatement program inside the City limits and provisions for mutual aid.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. Merced County, Merced County Hazardous Waste Management Plan, 1989.

2. City of Merced, *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan, May 1995, 1997.*
3. Merced County Division of Environmental Health database of hazardous waste sites, William Peeler, Supervising Environmental Health Specialist, Merced County.



**8 HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* See Section III-16-c for discussion and analysis.

**8a & 8f Water Quality**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would occur if the Project (1) degraded water quality in the area; (2) created or contributed runoff water that provides substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or (3) would otherwise substantially degrade water quality. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** The Project development will rely on the City's water system for its water supply. The City of Merced currently meets all water quality standards and waste discharge requirements and the addition of this Project to the system will not change that fact. According to the Environmental Impact Report for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, significant impacts to surface water may

occur when site-specific development Projects discharge water directly into the area's surface water system. To lessen this impact to acceptable levels, the City adopted a mitigation measure (Water Resources and Quality 2-a) that requires Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be applied to the Project. Additionally, the Project will comply with all applicable water quality discharge standards of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, specifically, Projects resulting in the grading of 1 or more acres discharging to surface waters are required to comply with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board's General Permit requirements, including provisions for sediment control and monitoring of the characteristics of the water being discharged. Therefore, the Project is unlikely to cause a substantial degradation of water quality.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

*Open Space Action 1.5.a:* Utilize storm water retention basins and other "Best Management Practices" to improve the quality of storm-water discharged into the region's natural surface water system.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **8b. Changes in Groundwater Resources**

See Section III-16-c for discussion and analysis.

#### **8c and 8d. Changes in Course or Direction of Water**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would be one that substantially alters drainage and surface flows in a manner that results in substantial erosion, siltation or flooding. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: There are no natural creeks or drainages either on or adjacent to the subject site. Project storm water runoff will be collected and stored in controlled basins and be designed in accordance with City standards. No erosion, siltation or flooding from altered drainage and surface flows is anticipated.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **8e. Storm Drainage Facilities**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if the Project causes the capacity of storm drainage facilities to be exceeded. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: Consistent with the City of Merced's *Storm Drain Master Plan, April 2002*, water runoff from the Project site's soils, and Project construction of impermeable surfaces will be conveyed into an integrated system of pipe and channel systems and detention facilities designed to reduce peak flow rates to accommodate the City

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

*Public Service and Facility Action 5.1.d:* Continue to require all development to comply with the Merced County Critical Area Flooding and Drainage Plan and any subsequent updates.

*Public Service and Facility Action 5.1.e:* Installation of facilities necessary to provide services to development Projects will be based on the full build-out scenario.



design standard of a 10-year storm event that may occur within SUDP area.

As part of the ordinary development review and construction phase of the Project, compliance with the adopted City of Merced Standard Designs of Common Engineering Structures (set forth by the City Engineering Division) for any required on-site collection, conveyance, storage and disposal of storm water will be met by the applicant.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**8g. Housing in 100-year Flood Hazard Area**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if houses were put in a flood hazard area. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Project site is located in an area inside the 100-year floodplain (FIRM No. 06047C0430 E, effective date August 2, 1995). The site is located outside the floodway, but is located in a special flood hazard area, where slow moving sheet flows may occur. The City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (MMC 17.48) allows construction in floodplains, provided that the floors are elevated to minimize the risk of damage. The City's ordinance has been certified as being compliant with Federal regulations governing the National Flood Insurance Program.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**8h. Impeded or Redirected Flood Flows**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if Project structures impede or redirect floodwaters. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: The site is located outside the floodway (FIRM No. 06047C0430 E effective date August 2, 1995).

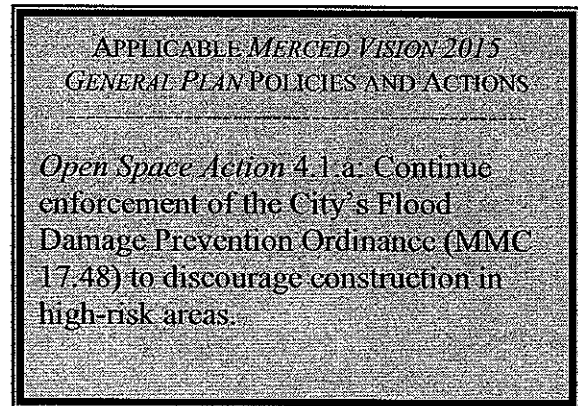
Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**8i. Dam Failure**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if people or structures were exposed to a significant risk of loss, injury or death. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: According to Figure 11.3 of the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, the Project site is inside the inundation area of the Yosemite Lake Dam. In the case of dam failure, the General Plan Safety Element addresses local hazard response procedures.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.



**8j. Seiche, Tsunami and Mud Flow Hazards**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would occur from inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** According to the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, the Project site is not subject to inundation by tsunami or mudflow. "Seiche" is the overtopping of a dam caused by an earthquake. See the discussion on dam failure above.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

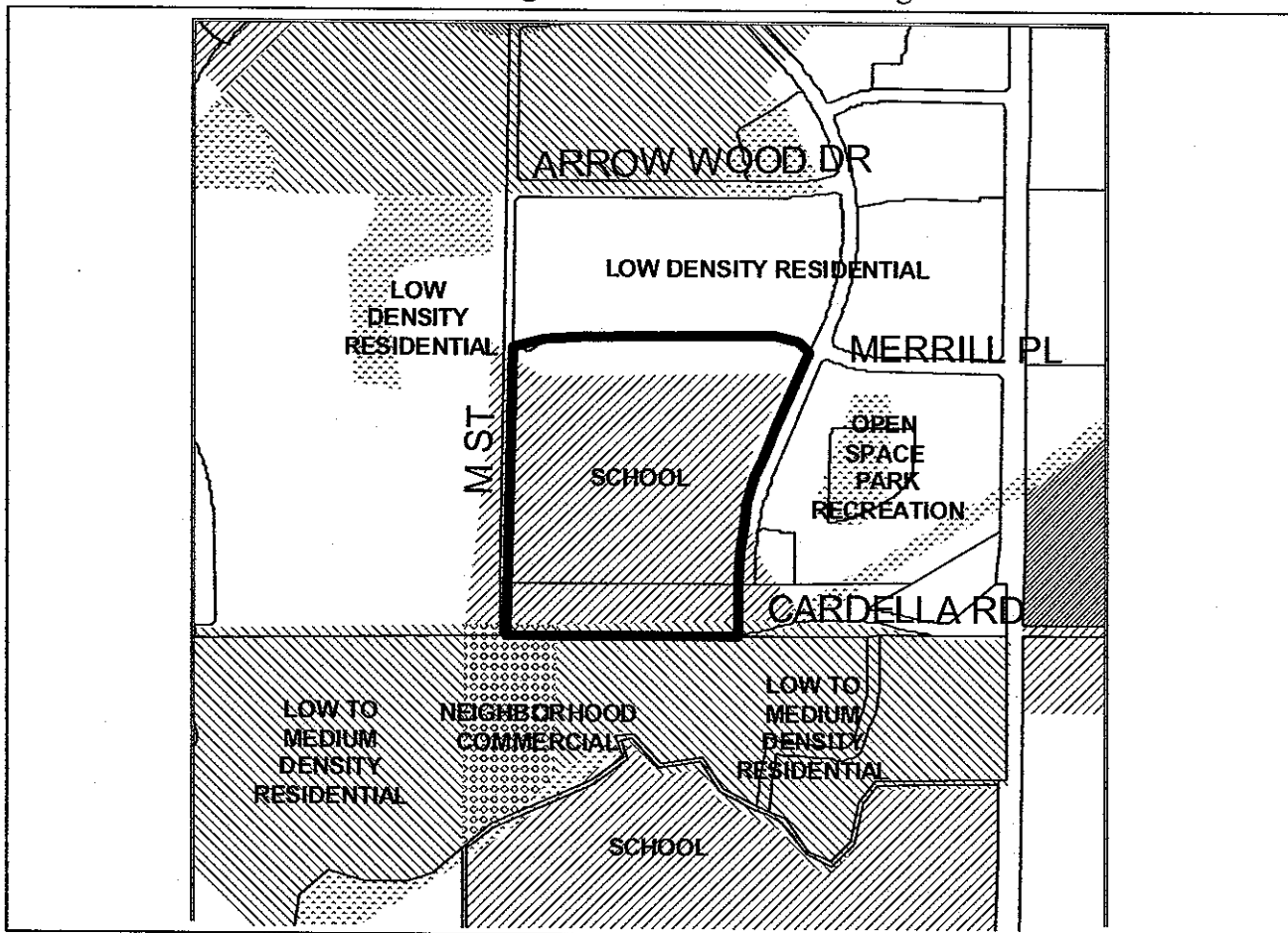
1. (FIRM No. 06047C0430 E, effective date 8/2/95 (Panel 430 of 1225).
2. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, 1997—Safety Element.
3. Stantec Consulting, Inc., *City of Merced Storm Drain Master Plan*, April 2002.
4. Nolte and Associates, *Merced County Critical Area Flooding and Drainage Plan*, February 1983.
5. CH<sub>2</sub>MHill, *Merced Water Supply Plan*, 1995 and 2001.
6. Urban Water Management Plan, for the City of Merced (October 2001), prepared by Brown and Caldwell.

**9 LAND USE & PLANNING**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project (including, but not limited to the General Plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The existing and proposed land uses are presented in the following maps and tables. In summary, the applicant seeks to replace the current "SCHOOL" designation with residential designations, "Low Density" and "Low Medium Density. Figures 2A and 2B (pages 8 and 9 of this Environmental Assessment Checklist) depict the area of these proposed changes.

*Figure 5*  
 Existing General Plan Land Use Diagram



**Table III-9-1**  
 Adjacent Land Uses, Zones and Land Use Designations

<b>Surrounding Zones and Land Uses</b>			
<b>Surrounding Land Uses</b>			
<b>Surrounding Land</b>	<b>Existing Use of Land</b>	<b>City Zoning Designations</b>	<b>City General Plan Land Use Designation</b>
North	Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)
South	Under Construction -- Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Medium Density (LMD) and Neighborhood Commercial (CN)
East	Under Construction -- Single Family Residential	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)
West	Vacant	PD #42	Low Density Residential (LD)

**Table III-9-2**  
 Land Development Potential Under Proposed Rezoning

<b>Proposed Land Use Designations</b>					
<b>Proposed Land Uses</b>	<b>General Plan Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan</b>	<b>Zoning (no change proposed)</b>	<b>Aeres</b>	<b>Forecasted Intensity</b>
"Market-Rate" Detached Homes	From SCHOOL to Low Density (LD)	From High School to Single Family Detached	Planned Development #42	26.34	147 dwellings plus a 3.69-acre park.
"Affordable" Detached Homes	From School to Low Medium Density (LMD)	From High School to Single Family Detached	Planned Development #42	13.04	81 dwellings

**9a. Physically Divide an Existing Community**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would occur if the Project physically divided an established community. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** The Project does not propose any structures, land use designations or other features (for example freeways, railroad tracks) that would physically divide an established community.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**9b. Conformance with General Plan Designation, Zoning and Other Environmental Policies**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if the Project conflicted with an applicable General Plan policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project. NO impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: The City has incorporated the Master Plan into the Land Use Diagram of the City's General Plan. Urban development of the site is planned. The EIR explains the Master Plan "will have a beneficial impact to the City by facilitating development within the" Master Plan area and will "provide safe and adequate housing" and will implement the Merced Village Concept Plan. This Project does the same and provides additional affordable housing for the residents of Merced. Additionally, the PD zoning designation is consistent with the proposed land use changes.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**9c. Conservation Plans**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if the Project conflicted with an applicable conservation plan. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: The Project site is not part of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other local habitat conservation plan (see Section III-4f for details).

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997.
2. City of Merced, *Zoning Ordinance*.
3. City of Merced, *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan EIR*, 1995.



**10 MINERAL RESOURCES**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would occur if the Project resulted in the loss of availability of (1) a mineral resource of value to the region and state; or (2) availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** The state legislature adopted the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) in 1975, which designated Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) for areas possessing minerals which are of statewide or regional significance. As stated in the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, the City of Merced and its SUDP do not contain any mineral resources that require managed production, according to the State Mining and Geology Board. As a result, the General Plan does not need to identify locations of resource sectors, nor are policies for the management of mineral resources required.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

***Information Sources:***

1. *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan--Open Space, Conservation, & Recreation Chapter, p. 7-11.*



## 11 NOISE

<i>Would the Project result in</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
f) For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *

\* See Section III-7e & f for a discussion on exposure to airport noise.

### 11a. Noise Levels Exceeding Adopted Policies, Ordinances and Standards

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would occur if the Project resulted in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

***Analysis:*** Vehicular noise from "M" Street and Cardella Road are the primary existing noise sources at the Project site. The Master Plan included this analysis in its EIR and has applicable mitigation measures that ensure that the residential units placed next to Cardella Road and "M" Street will not be negatively impacted. The elimination of the school site will actually reduce the noise impact of the subject site on the adjacent properties.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable

### 11b. Ground-Borne Noise Impacts

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would result if the Project exposed persons to or generated of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** The Project is not of the type that can reasonably be expected to generate ground born vibration or ground born noise.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**11c. Permanent Increase in Ambient Noise**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project occur. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: The replacement of the high school site with residential development will not contribute to a permanent increase in the ambient noise level of the area. Moreover, the incorporation of the mitigation measures described in the EIR will ensure the noise levels from the Project are substantially below City and State standards and deemed to be below a "level of significance."

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**11d. Temporary or Periodic Increase in Ambient Noise**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project occur. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: The Project will result in temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels from construction activity. Accordingly, permits issued by the City for all construction will need to establish standards for noise emissions including hours of equipment operation and limits to noise emissions.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**11e & f. Exposure to Airport Noise**

See Section III-7e & f (Hazards near airports and airstrips) for a discussion on exposure to airport noise.

**Information Sources:**

1. Tables 10.6 and 10.8 of the Noise Element of the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, 1997.



**12 POPULATION & HOUSING**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**12a. Population Growth Inducement**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project induces substantial population growth in an area. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** The Project will result in the development of approximately 40 acres for residential use; 228 dwelling units are proposed. Using 3.02 persons per household from the General Plan, this could result in the addition of up to 689 new residents on the Project site. This density is consistent with the proposed land uses, but would be in addition to that already shown in the Master Plan and Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Land Use Diagram. While the Project creates new residential units, it does not induce the population growth in the area. Since it will tap in to the market demand for housing, it could actually reduce the demand elsewhere. The Project is replacing a school site, which will need to be located in the community; and it is likely that the site selected for a school will remove land planned for residential uses. Thus, the Project will not induce growth.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**12b & 12c. Displacement of People and Housing**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project displaced substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** The Project will build new housing on a site not occupied with housing. Therefore, the Project will not displace people or homes and will actually increase available housing in the area.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997.



**13 PUBLIC SERVICES**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
1) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* See Section III-14 for the discussion on parks and recreational facilities.

**13a. Fire Protection**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of emergency service public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed Project create a substantial adverse physical impact. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** The Project will result in increased urban uses that will result in additional demands on the City's fire protection staff, equipment, and facilities. Demands of the Project will include the need for fire protection on-site, as well as the need for first-aid and rescue assistance. The nearest fire station to the Project site will be Station #56 at Merced College, generally 1/2 mile away. This station is expected to be constructed no sooner than 2007. In the meantime, the nearest existing station is #53 (Loughborough and the Merced Mall), approximately 3 miles away. Station 55 (Parsons and Silverado – a distance of 2.5 miles) is expected to be open in the Fall of 2005). In accordance with a *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* PEIR mitigation measure, the Project will pay Public Facilities Impact Fees in order to mitigate the Project's impact on new Fire facilities.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

*Public Services and Facility Policy 2.1:* Maintain sufficient public protection facilities, equipment, and personnel to serve the City's needs.

*Public Services and Facility Action 2.1.b:* Determine that new development is adequately served by fire and police services.

*Public Services and Facility Action 2.1.c:* Fire station sites should be selected based on the distribution of land uses and population Projected when the area is fully developed.

*Safety Action 4.1.a:* Provide additional fire station locations as expansion of the City occurs in order to maintain a response objective of 4 to 6 minutes citywide.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **13b. Police Protection**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of emergency service public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed Project create a substantial adverse physical impact. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** Merced is divided into three Police districts, each with its own police facility and officers. The Project site lies within District 1, which serves North Merced from the police station located at Loughborough and "R" Street.

Criminal activity and calls for police service will increase due to population growth. As noted in the Housing and Population section above, the Project is likely to result in a no-net-gain of residents in the long-term, since a high school site will likely displace residentially designated land elsewhere in District 1. Nevertheless, the service standard used for planning future police facilities is approximately

1.32 sworn officers per 1,000 population. The City's Public Facilities Financing Plan identifies the need for 39,200 square feet of new Police facilities, along with 111 additional sworn officers and 96 new vehicles, throughout the City by 2015.

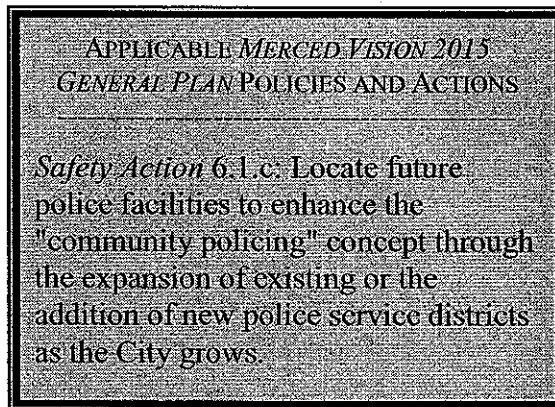
The Project will result in demands on the City's Police Department, including the allocation of police officers to serve the Project and demands on the use of vehicles and facilities. In accordance with a *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* PEIR mitigation measure, the Project will pay Public Facilities Impact Fees in order to mitigate the Project's impact on new police facilities.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

### **13c. Schools**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of public school facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed Project create a substantial adverse physical impact. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project

**Analysis:** State law prohibits a local agency from either denying approval of a land use Project because of inadequate school facilities or imposing school impact mitigation measures other than designated fees. The California Legislature has found and declared that the mitigation of the impacts of land use approvals on the need for school facilities<sup>1</sup> are matters of statewide concern, and for this reason the Legislature has occupied the subject matter of requirements related to school facilities levied or imposed in connection with, or made a condition of, any land use approval, and the



<sup>1</sup> "School facilities" is defined as any school-related consideration relating to a school district's ability to accommodate enrollment. Government Code §65995(e).

mitigation of the impacts of land use approvals on the need for school facilities, to the exclusion of all other measures whether financial or non-financial. Gov. Code §65995(e).

Additionally, the payment or satisfaction of a fee, charge, or other requirement levied or imposed pursuant to Education Code Section 17620 in the amount specified in Government Code Section 65995 and, if applicable, any amounts specified in sections 65995.5 or 65995.7 are deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property on the provision of adequate school facilities.<sup>2</sup> In fact, a state or local agency may not deny or refuse to approve a legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property on the basis of a person's refusal to provide school facilities mitigation that exceeds the amounts authorized pursuant to Government Code section 65995 or pursuant to sections 65995.5 or 65995.7, as applicable.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, mitigation measures for the need for school facilities in land use approvals is limited by the California Legislature to the payment of mitigation fees under Government Code sections 65995, 65995.5, or 65995.7, as applicable, and the payment of such fees is deemed to be *full and complete* mitigation of the impacts of any local agency action involving the planning, use, or development of real property.

The following analysis addresses three components of school planning: (A) existing school resources and Project demands; (B) need for school site designation; and (B) school facility impact fees.

*A. Existing School Resources and Project Demands:* The Project site falls within the jurisdiction of the Merced City School District (elementary and middle schools) and the Merced Union High School District (MUHSD). The nearest elementary school site to the Project site is Peterson Elementary School at Paulson and Donna Drive approximately 2.5 miles away. A new elementary school is also planned to the west of the site approximately ¼ mile away. High school students will attend Merced High School. Depending upon where the new high school is located, the enrollment boundary may change at some point in the future.

Students are generated by new development at the following rates:

**Table III-13-1**  
**Residential Student Yield Factors (Merced City School District and Merced Union H.S. District)**

Residential Category	Elementary (K-8)		High School (9-12)	
	Generation Factor (Students per unit)	Student Yield based on units proposed	Generation Factor (Students per unit)	Student Yield based on units proposed
Single-Family	0.514	118	0.254 (95340) 0.220 (95348)	51

Based on the student generation rates above, the 228-unit Project could generate up to 118 new students for elementary (K-8), and 51 new high school students.

<sup>2</sup> Government Code §65995(h).

<sup>3</sup> Government Code §65995(i).

***B. Need for School Site Designation:*** In accordance with *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* policies, City Staff has facilitated involvement of and cooperated with Merced Area School Districts by public notices and/or meetings to ascertain the need for school sites in the Project area. While this site has been reserved as a high school site since adoption of the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan in 1995, the Merced Union High School District has not purchased the site. In 2004, the District actively sought replacement sites at locations other than the subject location. The District is now in the planning process identifying a site within a 6-square mile area of north Merced to locate a school site; the School Board plans to review the results of the study in Spring 2005. Therefore, the applicant's proposal to redesignate the site is consistent with the actions of the School District.

The primary reason for moving forward with the change in land use, however, is the fact that the applicant has complied with Mitigation Measure 4.9.16 and the accepted standard of payment of school fees to mitigate school impacts. Since payment of fees is considered full and complete mitigation, the need to reserve a site for a school is considered unnecessary mitigation and can be removed without causing an impact.

***C. School Facility Impact Fees:*** SB 50, which became effective on August 27, 1998, imposes limitations on the power of local governments to require mitigation of impacts to school facilities. SB 50 also enabled school districts to levy statutory developer fees at levels higher than previously permitted. In essence, SB 50 completely divests local government of the power to require development fees or other exactions in excess of the statutory maximum amounts to help fund school facilities. Specifically, Government Code section 65995(h) provides that the payment of the statutory development fees is "full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any legislative and adjudicative act ... on the provision of adequate school facilities." SB 50 (Gov. Code section 65995(i)) further prohibits an agency from denying or refusing to approve a legislative or adjudicative act involving development "on the basis of a person's refusal to provide school facilities mitigation that exceeds the amounts authorized [by SB 50]." **Conclusion:** Payment of statutory developer fees is deemed to be full and complete school facilities mitigation, and a local government cannot deny a Project on the basis of inadequate school facilities.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

*Public Facilities and Services Action 7.1.h:*  
Cooperate with the school districts to ensure that school facility impact fees are collected.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable

**13d. Parks**

See Section III-14 for the discussion on parks and recreational facilities.

**13e. Other Public Facilities**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of other public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed Project create a substantial adverse physical impact. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: Impacts on library and other government services are considered to be less than significant. The City contributes funds through the Redevelopment Agency to the County Library system under the terms of the City/County Tax Sharing Agreement.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997—Public Facilities and Services Chapter.
2. Development Fee Justification Study, June 2004, Michael Paoli and Associates (Merced Union High School District), Steve Becker (Weaver Union School District), November, 2004 and Mike Carter (Merced City School District), November 2004.



**14 RECREATION**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14a. Use of Existing Recreational Facilities**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project increased the use of existing recreational facilities or was accelerated due to the Project that causes substantial physical deterioration. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** The Project will generate the need for new park facilities (see discussion below). The Master Plan provided for parks and open space as part of its development and required mitigation to address the impacts of development. Furthermore, the Project site includes a 3.69-acre park. Therefore, the residents from this site will not have a greater impact on use of existing recreational facilities than already considered in the EIR.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**14b. Construction or Expansion of New Recreational Facilities**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project included recreational facilities that might adversely affect the physical environment due to construction or expansion. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** This residential Project will create a demand for recreation/park services. The population of this area will be a maximum of 689 (assuming 3.02 people/unit). The City has adopted a standard of acquiring parkland at a rate of 5 acres per 1,000 persons. Therefore, this Project will generate the need for 3.44 acres of parkland. Two funds exist to acquire and develop parks: (1) *Park Impact Fees* are paid in lieu of land dedications and put in this fund categorized by five different geographic areas of the City. (2) *Public Facility Impact Fees* are used to fund park and bikeway Projects with community wide benefit. The developers may dedicate land or pay an in-lieu fee to address its impacts on neighborhood parks per the City's Park Dedication

APPLICABLE MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL  
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*Open Space Action 3.1.a:* Continue efforts to acquire new park sites within future growth areas in advance of development to meet the recreation open space needs of an expanding population.

*Open Space Action 3.1.e:* Use the City's Park Dedication Ordinance to develop the City's park system.

Ordinance (Merced Municipal Code Section 18.40). The Project is dedicating 6.89-acres of land within the Project boundary, so ample recreational facilities will be provided.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced, *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, April 1997—Open Space, Conservation, & Recreation Element (Chapter 7).
2. City of Merced, *Merced Municipal Code Section 18.40 (Park Dedication)*.





**15. TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio of roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantial increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with bike-related transportation polices, plans or programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Conflict with bus-related transportation polices, plans or programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**15a. Substantial Increase in Traffic Levels**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project caused an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Thresholds of Significance:** Thresholds for determining substantial increases in traffic are established for arterial and collector type roadways. Customarily, traffic studies prepared for the City established a threshold of significance at 5% or more of existing traffic amounts contributed by the Master Plan Project to an "arterial roadway" that is, or will be, operating at an unacceptable LOS "E" or "F". For "collector" level streets, the threshold of significance is an amount that exceeds 20 percent of the current daily traffic volumes on roads carrying more than 3,000 ADT.

**Analysis:** The Project is expected to generate a maximum of 2,182 trips/day. This is a reduction of 1,398 from the amount of traffic that a high school would generate. Since there are no collector roads in the area at this time, the Project cannot exceed the current daily traffic volume. With respect to arterial streets, based on the traffic analysis of the EIR for the Master Plan, there are no arterial streets within or adjacent to the Project site that is or will be operating at an unacceptable LOS "E" or "F."

This residential Project will generate less traffic than the high school. According to the *Trip Generation Manual* from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, "High School (530)" generates 1.79 trips per student, and "Single Family Detached Housing (210)" generates 9.57 trips per weekday per dwelling unit. See Table III-3-1a below.

**Table III-3-1a**  
**Average Daily Trips (ADTs)**

Land Use	Building Type and Size	Trip Generation ADTs (per unit)	TOTAL Project ADTs	TOTAL Project ADTs 4 to 6 pm peak
Detached Homes	228	9.57	2,182	218
High School	2000 students	1.79 trips / student	3,580	358
<b>Difference</b>	NA	NA	-1,398	-140

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**15b. Change in Level of Service (LOS) Rating**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if the Project caused level of service ratings (individually or cumulatively) to be exceeded. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur if mitigation were applied to the Project.

Analysis: The Project will generate less vehicular trips than the high school site. Impacts to county-wide transportation and circulation systems from the entire Master Plan were discussed and mitigated in detail in the EIR for the Master Plan (please refer to that document).

Mitigation: Not Applicable

**15c. Change in Air Traffic Patterns**

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if the Project resulted in substantial safety risks due to changes in air traffic patterns. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

Analysis: The Project is consistent with the *Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP)*, April 1999.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

**15d. Creation of Hazards (by Design or Use)**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project produced hazards to safety from design features or incompatible uses. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** There are no existing or proposed design features, such as a sharp curve or dangerous intersections, adjacent to or within the Project boundaries. Agricultural vehicles do not generally travel off the site and onto the adjacent streets. Well-established but unpaved farm roads exist on the Project site to service the site's agricultural needs so few conflicts with non-farm vehicular traffic on adjacent roadways are anticipated.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

### **15e. Impacts to Emergency Access**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project resulted in inadequate emergency access. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** According to standard development review procedures for subdivisions, the Police and Fire Departments will ultimately review the residential development on the Project site prior to construction. With improvements to adjacent roadways and interior Project roadways, adequate emergency access will be maintained. Of particular importance will be maintaining at least two alternative fire safety routes on and off the Project site during each phase of construction. These details will be addressed by the Fire Department at the tentative subdivision map stage.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

### **15f. Impacts to Parking**

**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project results in inadequate parking. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

**Analysis:** Construction of the Project will create a demand for new parking. The Merced Municipal Code (20.58) requires that new development provide sufficient off-street parking facilities to meet the parking needs of the development. This Project will comply with all applicable Code requirements. As such, the Project will not affect existing parking nor will it create demand for additional parking that it does not provide on-site.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

APPLICABLE MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN  
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*Open Space Action 3.4.c:* Greenways should be designed to connect various park sites, schools and other public places with paths exclusively for pedestrians and bicyclists.

*Open Space Action 3.2.a:* Utilize the urban stream system in the planning and design of bikeways and trails.

*Open Space Action 3.2.b:* Make use of creekside areas, utility line easements, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and canal easements for bikeway purposes.

*Open Space Action 3.2.c:* Provide links between parks, schools, and open space areas via the bikeway system.

*Open Space Action 3.2.f:* Expand the existing bikeway system to all new growth areas as development occurs.

### **15g. Impacts to "Bicycle" Transportation**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would result if the Project conflicted with bike-related transportation polices, plans or programs. With regard to this issue, the Project will have **no impact**.

***Analysis:*** In accordance with City design standards, all collector level roadways and arterial streets have bike lanes. There are no unique features in the Project such as urban stream system, utility line easements, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, or canal easements that would require additional bike facilities.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

#### **15h. Impacts to “Bus” Transportation**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would result if the Project conflicted with bus-related transportation polices, plans or programs. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

***Analysis:*** The City of Merced is a part of the Merced County Transit System (the “Bus”), which provides transit service throughout the City of Merced, Los Banos, and the County. A bus route does not currently serve this area. If sufficient demand is generated in this area in the future, transit service may need to be extended to this area. At this broad “general plan” level of review, it is important to ensure that the City promote land development patterns that support and enhance the use of public transportation. The “Urban Village” concept in the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* establishes the desired land development pattern that will foster greater use of transit. The proposed land use pattern and road network is consistent with the land use diagram and circulation element of the General Plan. Therefore, the Project is consistent with these bus-related policies.

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*Transportation Action 2.2.a:* Promote land development patterns and site design criteria that support and enhance the use of public transit.

*Transportation Action 2.3.a:* Include public transportation access in the review process for major public and private development Projects, as well as all significant land use design proposals considered by the City.

***Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.

#### ***Information Sources:***

1. Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan *Final Program Environmental Impact Report* (SCH# 95082050), April 1997.
2. Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Trip Generation*, 6th edition, 1997.



**16 UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed water treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities, water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, that construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Projects Projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulation related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* See Section III-8-a and III-8-e for discussion of the above.

**16a. Water Treatment Requirements**

See Section III-8-a and III-8-e (Hydrology & Water Quality) for discussion of the above.

**16b. Impacts of Construction of Water, Wastewater and Storm-Drain Facilities**

*Threshold & Conclusion:* A significant impact would result if the Project adversely affected the environment due to construction of existing or new water, wastewater treatment and storm-drain treatment facilities. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

*Analysis:* Water impacts are fully evaluated in the EIR. The City's existing water, sewer and storm-drain collection systems will need to be extended from the sites noted below to the subject site upon development (details will be addressed at the tentative subdivision map stage). The construction of these improvements will be located within existing or future street rights-of-way that are not located in any environmentally sensitive area.

*Expansion Needs of the Sewer Trunk Lines:* Two separate gravity sewer lines, the 42-inch *Main Trunk Sewer* and the 27-inch *Highway 59 Trunk Sewer*, combine into the 48-inch outfall interceptor that conveys flow from the North Merced area to the Merced Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Both sewer trunk lines have potential upstream connection points.

*Mitigation:* Not Applicable.

**16c. Adequacy of Water Supply**

***Threshold & Conclusion:*** A significant impact would result if the Project demands a water supply that is not available from existing entitlements and resources. A significant impact would be one that substantially depletes groundwater quantities or interferes with groundwater recharge. This Project will have no impact beyond that considered in the EIR.

***Groundwater Basin:*** Merced is located within the San Joaquin Valley groundwater basin, the largest groundwater basin in the State of California, occupying approximately 13,500 square miles of the Central Valley. Groundwater is supplied by runoff from the foothills and mountains, by surplus agricultural irrigation, and by percolation from rivers and unlined canals. In Merced, there are three identified sub-aquifers. The shallow or perched aquifer is used by older private wells and agricultural wells. These wells typically have poor quality water. The intermediate aquifer at 200 feet below ground surface and the deep aquifer (Mehrten Formation) below 350 feet are separated by low permeability soils that restrict the movement of water from the shallow aquifer.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN*  
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*Open Space Action 5.1.a:* Continue implementation/enforcement of the City's Water Shortage Regulations (MMC 15.42).

*Open Space Action 5.1.b:* Continue implementation of Water Efficient Landscaping & Irrigation Ordinance (MMC 17.60).

*Public Service and Facilities policy P-3.1:* Ensure that adequate water supply can be provided within the City's service area, concurrent with service expansion and population growth.

The City of Merced's wells have an average depth of 414 feet, and range in depth from 161 feet to 800 feet. The depth of City wells suggests that the City is primarily drawing water from the deep aquifer associated with the Mehrten formation. Groundwater levels in the City of Merced are generally decreasing and have dropped approximately 50 feet since 1971, an average of 1.7 feet per year. The declining groundwater basin is a result of extraction by all groundwater pumpers in the area, including other cities, agriculture, and private wells, as well as the City of Merced

***City of Merced's Water System:*** Groundwater is the only source of water for the City; 18 wells with a combined capacity of 46,500 gallons per minute (gpm) provide the City's total supply. Well Nos. 15, 16, and 17 located in the northern portion of the City will be on-line in the Spring of 2005, which will bring the City's well capacity to 55,500 gpm, or a capacity of approximately 80,000,000 gallons per day. The City's distribution system consists of four elevated storage tanks and the piping system. The storage tanks have a combined capacity of 1,500,000 gallons. The pipeline system consists of pipelines ranging in size from 6 to 16 inches. The entire system consists of approximately 500 miles of pipe.

At full development, it is estimated that uses within the Project would use approximately 188,100 gallons of water per day (based on 825 gpd/unit) with 228 units proposed. This use level is 4.3% of the output of a 3,000 gpm municipal well.

Water Supply: The Urban Water Management Planning Act requires urban water suppliers (in this case, the City of Merced), to evaluate current and Projected water supply reliability. The City's most recent evaluation is provided in the *Urban Water Management Plan, October 2001*, and assesses the water demand for a population within Merced's SUDP growing at a rate of 2.2 percent through the year 2020. Water production in 2000 for the Merced SUDP was 22,212 acre-feet, and is Projected to increase to 41,209 ac-ft/yr by 2020. The Merced Water Supply Plans (1995 and 2001) concluded that the safe annual ground water yield within Merced's area of influence is 30,000 ac-ft/year. The City's water demand is Projected to exceed 30,000 ac-ft/yr sometime after 2005, (*Urban Water Management Plan, October 2001, Table 4.1*). The water supply plans Project that with groundwater recharge, the long-term groundwater supply will be adequate. With groundwater recharge, the Urban Water Management Plan, October 2001, Projects that the current safe annual groundwater yield (sustainable water supply) of 30,000 ac-ft/yr will increase to 45,000 ac-ft/yr by the year 2020, and will provide a surplus of 3,791 ac-ft/yr (45,000 supply – 41,209 demand).

Water Planning Efforts: The City of Merced in partnership with the Merced Irrigation District has been planning for the future water needs of the City of Merced. *The Merced Water Supply Plan* (adopted in 1995 and updated in 2001) evaluated future water needs for eastern Merced County through the Year 2040. Based on a review of historical data (1970 to 1999), the updated plan (pages ES-5-7) shows that groundwater levels have dropped approximately 50 feet since 1971 in the Merced Urban area. This decline is a result of groundwater extraction, notably by agricultural users; in 1999, 86% of the extracted groundwater was used for agricultural purposes. By comparison, the City of Merced used 6% of the total extracted water in that year (page 6-7). The plan concluded that if no action was taken, groundwater levels would continue to decline. However, the Merced Water Supply Plan 2001 update concluded (page ES-5) that implementation of certain actions (Section 5) will meet the regions future water needs and support the water demand associated with the UC Merced Campus and adjacent community development. Three of these actions (recharge basins, water conservation measures, and surface water use for open space areas) are applicable to urban development proposals and are discussed below.

Ground Water Recharge: The *Urban Water Management Plan, October 2001*, states (page 4-3) that in the long term, the groundwater supply is something less than the current annual pumping rate, unless recharge is undertaken. The *Merced Water Supply Plan 2001 Update* concludes that groundwater elevations can be stabilized at the 1999 level (approximately 160 feet above mean sea level) by diverting Merced River surface waters to "recharge basins." As the community grows, including the addition of the UC Merced campus, the City of Merced is supporting a groundwater recharge program to stabilize groundwater levels. The groundwater recharge program will determine the location of groundwater recharge facilities, the agency or agencies that will operate and maintain recharge facilities, and cost sharing.

Urban Water Conservation: The *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* recognized that water conservation would be used as a tool to minimize impacts of water consumption on Merced's water resources. This recognition is evident through the plans' policies and Mitigation Measure 2-b. Finally, the *Merced Water Supply Plan 2001 Update* lists the implementation of the "Aggressive" program for urban water conservation, to help reverse the "overdraft" trend of the City's water supply. Such action is consistent with the recommendation of the *Urban Water Management Plan, October 2001*. Water conservation measures are already applied to the Project through the City's Water Efficient Landscaping & Irrigation Ordinance (MMC 17.60).



Use of Surface Water instead of Groundwater to Irrigate Open Spaces: The Project does not include open space areas that are located close to Merced Irrigation District conveyance facilities. As such, the use of surface water instead of groundwater is not feasible.

Mitigation: Not Applicable

#### **16d. Adequacy of Wastewater Treatment Plant**

Environmental Setting: All development within the City limits is required to be connected to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The WWTP is located in the southwest part of the City about two miles south of the airport. In 1994, the City certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) of "City of Merced Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion," SCH #92112029. This Project allowed plant expansion with an effluent flow of 20 million gallons per day (mgd). The WWTP has been periodically expanded and upgraded to meet the needs of the City's growing population and new industry and currently has a capacity of 10 million gallons per day (mgd).

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would occur if there is inadequate capacity for wastewater. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: The high school site is Projected to generate 6,615 gallons per day (0.007 mgd) of sewage (based on 105 gallons per day per acre). The proposed residential land uses will generate 30,030 gallons per day (0.03 mgd). This is based on a rate of 770 gallons per day per acre. This impact is less than significant because the EIR analyzes sewage capacity from the entire Master Plan single family residential uses as 1,067,220 gallons per day. The Project would only increase wastewater discharge by approximately 2.8 percent over that planned for the area. Such a minimal increase constitutes a less than significant impact and does not pose capacity problems.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **16e. Adequacy of Solid Waste Facilities (Landfill Capacity)**

Environmental Setting: Solid wastes within the County of Merced are disposed of at two landfill sites owned by the Merced County Association of Governments and operated by the Merced County Department of Public Works. The east side (including the City of Merced) is served by the Highway 59 Landfill, just 1 1/2 miles north of Old Lake Road. The County of Merced is the contracting agency for landfill operation and maintenance.

Threshold & Conclusion: A significant impact would result if the Project creates a disposal need that cannot be accommodated by the landfill. No impact beyond that considered in the EIR would occur from development of the Project.

Analysis: The Highway 59 site will soon be expanded, adding 191 acres of landfill area and an additional 30 years capacity. The City of Merced provides services for all refuse pick-up within the City limits and new curbside recycling and green waste programs began in 2002. These new programs should assist the City and the County in continuing to meet diversion goals as defined by the State.

Mitigation: Not Applicable.

#### **16f. Compliance with Solid Waste Regulations**



**Threshold & Conclusion:** A significant impact would result if the Project is unable to comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. A **less than significant impact** would occur from development of the Project.

**Analysis:** According to estimates provided by the City Public Works Refuse Division, residential uses generate approximately 25 to 26 cubic yards of waste per household per year, weighing between 3,750 to 7,500 pounds. (According to the Solid Waste Association of North America and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average weight for household solid waste is between 150 and 300 pounds per cubic yard.) The City of Merced uses 90-gallon containers for residential service, which are equivalent to approximately ½ cubic yard. Approximately 80 percent of Merced's residential customers use a single 90-gallon container per week. This means that this Project could generate up to 27,150 cubic yards of waste per year if the maximum number of units are considered. In 2002, new curbside recycling and green waste programs were established. With these new programs, it is anticipated that the City and County of Merced will continue to meet solid waste diversion goals established by the State of California. Moreover, the elimination of the high school will reduce solid waste that would have been generated by that use.

**Mitigation:** Not Applicable.

**Information Sources:**

1. City of Merced Engineering Division (for estimates of wastewater generation), 2000.
2. Stan Murdock, City of Merced Public Works Department (for solid waste estimates), October 2002.

## Section IV

### MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<i>Finding:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
A) Does the Project have the potential to:				
1) Substantially degrade the quality of the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2) Substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3) Cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4) Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5) Substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened plant or animal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6) Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B) Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively significant? ("Cumulatively significant" means that the incremental effects of a Project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
C) Does the Project have the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D) Does the Project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* Note: A Statement of Overriding Considerations was previously adopted for these impacts in association with the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan Final Program EIR (City Council Resolution #97-22).

**Impact Discussion & Conclusions:**

The EIR and its mitigation measures serve as the baseline for analysis in this Environmental Assessment Checklist.

A1) ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: With mitigation and other considerations, the Project **does not** have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment.

The EIR and Addendum fully address and mitigate the Project's impacts and no substantial degradation of environmental quality will occur.

- A2) **HABITAT REDUCTION:** The Project **does not** have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species.

The EIR and Biological Resources Section (III-4) of this Environmental Assessment Checklist indicates that the Project site is not believed to support a substantial amount of habitat for fish or wildlife species and will not substantially reduce the habitat for fish and wildlife species. Should new evidence be revealed, specific mitigation measures have been identified that will mitigate such impacts to a less than significant level. Nor will this Project affect habitat any more than the high school.

- A3) **FISH/WILDLIFE POPULATION DROP:** The Project **does not** have the potential to cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels.

The subject property does not support substantial amounts of habitat for fish and wildlife species. The Project will not substantially reduce the population of fish and wildlife species below self-sustaining levels. Nor will this Project affect fish and wildlife population any more than the high school.

- A4) **ELIMINATE PLANT/ANIMAL COMMUNITY:** The Project **does not** have the potential to threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community.

As indicated in the Biological Resources Sections of this Environmental Assessment Checklist, the agricultural use of the site reduces its use by significant types of plant or animal communities. Nor will the Project affect biological resources any more than the high school. Development of the site will, therefore, not result in the elimination of such a plant or animal community.

- A5) **SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN RARE/THREATENED/ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The Project **does not** have the potential to reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal.

As indicated in the Biological Resources Section of this Environmental Assessment Checklist, the Project will not impact habitat for various species. Nor will the Project affect species any more than the high school.

- A6) **ELIMINATE HISTORIC EXAMPLES:** The Project **does not** have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory

As noted in the Cultural Resources Section (III-5) of this Environmental Assessment Checklist, the Project site does not contain examples of objects that will be historically or archeologically significant. Nor will the Project affect species any more than the high school. Should new evidence be revealed during the construction of the site, specific mitigation measures have been identified that will mitigate such impacts to a less than significant level.

- B) **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS:** The Project **does not** have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable above those previously identified in the EIR and the Merced Vision 2015 General Plan EIR.

The Program Environmental Impact Report conducted for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* (SCH#95082050) recognized that future development and build-out of the SUDP will result in cumulative and unavoidable impacts in the areas of Air Quality and Loss of Agricultural Soils. In conjunction with this conclusion, the City adopted a Statement of

Overriding Considerations for these impacts (Resolution #97-22) which is incorporated herein by reference.

The certified General Plan EIR addressed and analyzed cumulative impacts resulting from changing agricultural use to urban uses. No new or unaddressed cumulative impacts will result from the Project that have not previously been considered by the certified EIR, the General Plan EIR, or the Statement of Overriding Considerations, or mitigated by this Environmental Assessment Checklist. This Environmental Assessment Checklist does not disclose any new and/or feasible mitigation measures which would lessen the unavoidable and significant cumulative impacts.

- C) **SHORT-TERM GOALS VERSUS LONG-TERM GOALS:** The Project **does not** have the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.

No evidence has been presented that suggests that the Project has the potential to achieve short-term goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals. The Project has been found either as part of the Project Description or mitigation measures, to be consistent with the City's long-range planning document, the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*.

- D) **ADVERSE EFFECTS ON HUMANS:** With mitigation and other considerations, the Project **does not** have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Development anticipated by the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* will have significant adverse effects on human beings. These include the incremental degradation of air quality in the San Joaquin Basin, the loss of prime agricultural soils, the incremental increase in traffic, and the increased demand on natural resources, public services, and facilities. However, consistent with the provisions of CEQA previously identified, the analysis of the Project is limited to those impacts which are peculiar to the Project site or which were not previously identified as significant effects in the prior Master Plan or General Plan EIRs. The previously certified General Plan EIRs and the Statements of Overriding Considerations addressed those cumulative impacts. The Project will not have any additional adverse effects on humans above those previously examined in the Master Plan EIR, the General Plan EIR, and for which the City of Merced adopted Statements of Overriding Considerations.

This previous EIRs have concluded that these significant adverse impacts are accounted for in the mitigation measures incorporated into the General Plan EIR. In addition, a Statement of Overriding Considerations has been adopted by City Council Resolution #97-22 that indicates that the significant impacts associated with development of the Project are offset by the benefits that will be realized in providing necessary housing for residents of the City. The analysis and mitigation of impacts have been detailed in the EIR prepared for the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*, which are incorporated into this document by reference.

While this issue was addressed and resolved with the General Plan EIR, in order to fulfill CEQA's mandate to fully disclose potential environmental consequences of Projects, this analysis is considered herein. However, as a full disclosure document, this issue is repeated in abbreviated form for purposes of disclosure, even though it was resolved as a part of the General Plan.

Potential impacts associated with the Project's development have been described in this Environmental Assessment Checklist. Where appropriate, mitigation measures are incorporated herein from the Master Plan EIR that will reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.



**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

**FOR THE**

**BELLEVUE RANCH  
MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**FEBRUARY, 1995**

**PREPARED FOR  
CITY OF MERCED  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**PREPARED BY**



**WILLDAN ASSOCIATES**  
ENGINEERS & PLANNERS

**ENCLOSURE #1  
(AVAILABLE UPON REUEST)**