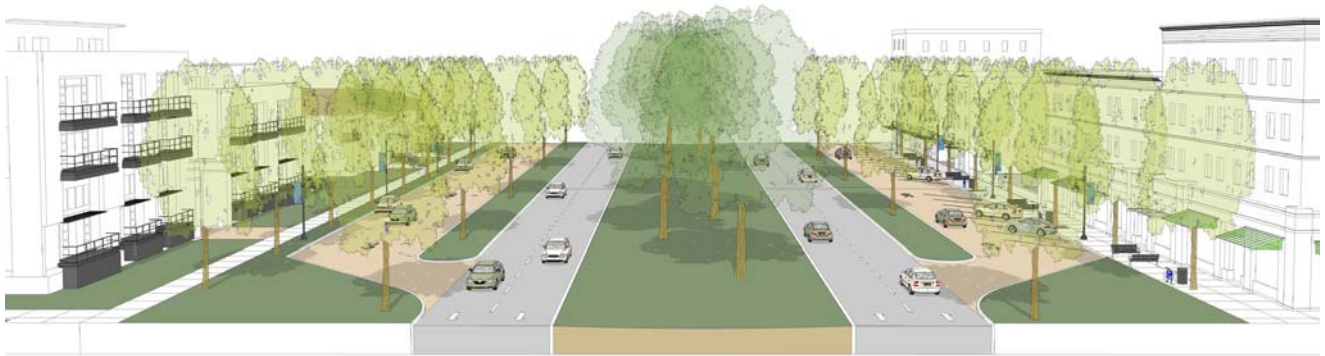


ADDENDUM

TO THE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
(SCH#2008071069) FOR THE *MERCED VISION 2030*
GENERAL PLAN AND SUPPORTIVE EXPANDED INITIAL
STUDY #11-15 FOR

THE BELLEVUE COMMUNITY PLAN & GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT #14-02



October 2, 2014



City of Merced

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Section I

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND LEGAL BASIS FOR THE INITIAL STUDY

1.1.1 OVERVIEW

This Expanded Initial Study analyzes the conditions to allow for the lead agency to make a determination as to the appropriate level of review of the subject project, the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP), in the context of the earlier Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Both the General Plan and the *BCP*, as crafted, are programmatic in nature. The possible environmental review types for the *BCP*, along with the triggers that require their use, are discussed below.

1.1.2 A FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENT – THE *MERCED VISION 2030 GENERAL PLAN*

The City of Merced, as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), prepared the Final Environmental Impact Report (“Final EIR”) for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (State Clearinghouse No. 2008071069). On January 4, 2012, City Council of the City of Merced certified that the Final EIR was completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and adopted Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations in connection with its approval of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the lands that are part of the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP). The Final EIR consists of the August 2010 Draft Environmental Impact Report (“Draft EIR”) and the July 2030 Final Environmental Impact Report (“Final EIR”), collectively called the “*2030 General Plan EIR*” in this Expanded Initial Study. All of the mitigation measures identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are likewise applicable to and adopted as part of the approval of the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP). These mitigation measures are included as Appendix A in this Expanded Initial Study.

1.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TYPES

As a programmatic-level planning document consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the findings of this Expanded Initial Study for the *BCP* were framed to include an assessment of the use of various environmental review types, including: 1) a subsequent EIR; 2) a supplemental EIR; or 3) an addendum, to the *2030 General Plan EIR* that was prepared and certified for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Key to identifying the appropriate environmental review is determining whether or not the *BCP* triggers any of the conditions specified in Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines.

1.1.4 SUBSEQUENT EIR

Per Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, when an EIR has been certified for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:

A. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;

B. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or

C. New information of substantial importance, showing any of the following, has been identified: 1) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration; 2) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR; 3) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or 4) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

1.1.5 SUPPLEMENTAL EIR

Per Section 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Lead or Responsible Agency may choose to prepare a Supplement to an EIR rather than a Subsequent EIR if any of the conditions described in Section 15162 (see item 1.1.4 above) would require the preparation of a subsequent EIR, and ***only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequately*** apply to the project in the changed situation. A Supplemental EIR need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised.

1.1.6 ADDENDUM

Per Section 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency or 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.

1.2. PROJECT APPLICATION INFORMATION

<i>Project Title:</i>	Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) & General Plan Amendment (GPA) #14-02 Expanded Initial Study #11-15
<i>Applicant:</i>	City of Merced
<i>Lead Agency:</i>	City of Merced Planning Division
<i>Interested Agencies:</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Merced Irrigation District (MID)2. Merced County Planning and Community Development3. Merced County Public Works4. California Department of Fish and Wildlife5. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers6. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
<i>Public Availability:</i>	October 2, 2014
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Bill King, Principal Planner City of Merced Planning & Permitting Division 678 West 18 th Street, Merced, CA 95340 <i>Phone:</i> (209) 385-6858 <i>Fax:</i> (209) 725-8775 <i>Email:</i> kingb@cityofmerced.org
<i>Additional Documents:</i>	Documents cited and relied upon in the preparation of this Initial Study, including but not limited to the <i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan</i> and the <i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report</i> (referred in this environmental review as “ <i>2030 General Plan EIR</i> ”) are hereby incorporated into the record for this Expanded Initial Study, and are available at the City of Merced Planning and Permitting Division, 678 West 18 th Street, Merced, CA 95340.

1.3. PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH *MERCED VISION 2030 GENERAL PLAN AND EIR*

Throughout the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan (BCP)*, much effort went into assuring its consistency with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and its objectives as presented in the *2030 General Plan DEIR*. A detailed consistency assessment was performed and is provided in Appendix B of this Expanded Initial Study. While the *BCP* proposes some implementation tools that vary from the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, these changes are clarifications and refinements of general plan direction.

1.3.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the *Bellevue Community Plan* align with the objectives of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as described on page 2-3 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) of the *2030 General Plan EIR*, which reads: "...ensure that future growth and development:

- Are directed away from concentrations of prime agricultural soils,
- Conserve water and do not over-tax or contaminate the region's water resources,
- Preserve and protect important area wildlife habitat,
- Promote development which minimizes adverse growth related impacts on the region's air quality,
- Conserve non-renewable energy resources, and,
- Preserve important area cultural and historic resources."

The *BCP* contains approximately 18-acres of prime agricultural soils (approximately 1% of the *BCP* plan area); supports water conservation approaches and technologies; protects wildlife habitat through an extensive interconnected network of open space corridors; and protects the region's air quality and conserves non-renewable energy resources by integrating transportation and land use plans to maximize the full range of mobility options and reduces the number and length of travel trips needed in a community. These are more fully discussed in Section III of this Initial Study.

The *BCP* also furthers the guiding principles, goals and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (as described on page 2-1 of the General Plan DEIR) in many respects, notably the following:

- Compact and efficient development patterns.
- Connectivity between existing and planned urban areas.
- Mixed-use, transit and pedestrian friendly villages in growth areas with direct access to commercial cores from surrounding neighborhoods.
- Street designs that encourage all modes of transportation.

- High community standards for Merced’s services, infrastructure, and private development as a strategy for attracting business and industry and to benefit the City’s residents.
- Planning for the provision of infrastructure ahead of development.
- A diversity of housing types and opportunities.
- Encouraging Sustainable and “Green” Development.
- Encouraging new research parks and the use of new technologies.
- Encouraging a healthy community through improved parks & recreation opportunities.

1.3.2 PLAN CONSISTENCY ASSESSMENT

The *BCP* is substantially consistent with the City’s *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Technical Appendices B and D of this Expanded Initial Study discuss consistency of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* with the *BCP*, addressing the following topics:

- Consistency with the City’s “Guiding Principles for Community Plans;”
- Consistency with “Key Features and Issues of the Bellevue Community Plan;”
- Consistency with Adopted General Plan Policies; and,
- Consistency with the ten Elements of the City’s General Plan (See Sections 1.4.6 through 1.4.15 of this EIS).

1.3.3 APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN EIR TO THE BCP PROJECT

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* is the planning document used by the City of Merced to guide the development of lands within the City’s Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI), which share the same boundary, to eventually support the projected population within the SUDP/SOI of the General Plan. The area that the *Bellevue Community Plan* contains is within the SUDP/SOI of the City, and as noted above, was included as part of the environmental assessment performed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. The area that the *Bellevue Community Plan* covers was addressed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* through various means including: 1) goals, policies and implementation actions; 2) narrative text; 3) an illustrative land use plan; and 4) as with other areas in the City’s SUDP/SOI, generally addressed in 10 separate Elements including but not limited to circulation, open space and recreation, urban expansion, urban design, and public facilities and services.

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* identified the need for a community plan to be developed in the project area, and framed the development of the community plan through the means described above. The proposed *Bellevue Community Plan* follows the lead of the General Plan, incorporating the broad direction it provided. In refining these concepts, the *BCP* adds detail, clarity, and adjustments in a manner that is consistent with the General Plan’s programmatic description of future growth in the subject area, and include:

1. By reference to the BCP, identify land use designations specific to the BCP area, which are consistent with the type, mix and general locations of land uses envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as expressed in the *Illustrative Plan of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*.
2. Change the name of the plan from *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* to *Bellevue Community Plan*.
3. Amend text in the General Plan to describe the urban design qualities within the BCP plan area.
4. Provide a summary description of the BCP, its relationship to the General Plan, and where it is located.
5. Identify Mandeville Lane, not Bellevue Road, as the City's east-west Transit Corridor to UCM.
6. Include by reference, the street cross-section designs of the BCP.
7. Include a notation in the Circulation Element that the number of through travel lanes for specific roads within the BCP should be determined by subsequent traffic studies, taking into consideration the urban design elements of the BCP.

1.4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.4.1 LOCATION

The *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP) area is located in the northeast growth area of the City of Merced, and is approximately 2.4 square-miles in size, and generally bounded by G Street on the west, Farmland Avenue on the north, Lake Road on the east and Cardella Road on the South (between Lake Road and Gardner Road), and generally ½ mile south of Bellevue Road (between Gardner Road and G Street). Lake Yosemite, UC Merced and the northern part of the UC Community Plan area abuts the eastern edge of the BCP study area. From the project boundary, Downtown Merced is located 3.5 miles to the southwest, and Castle Airport and the City of Atwater are located 6 miles to the west.

The *Bellevue Community Plan* study area is located outside of and adjacent to the Merced City limits, and within the City's planned growth area, otherwise known as the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI). No changes to these boundaries are proposed with the project.

1.4.2 PROJECT TYPE AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Similar to a general plan, a community plan addresses broad planning parameters but for a smaller geographic area of a community's growth area, and also addresses issues specific to that sub-area of the general plan in a programmatic manner. The City's *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* identified the need to develop a community plan in the area between the current City Limits along G Street and the UC Merced campus, and provided general guidance. The *Bellevue Community Plan* was crafted to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and reflects several guiding aspects of the City's General Plan, including the following: 1) key goals, policies and implementation actions; 2) key features and issues of the Bellevue Community Plan including economic development, land use, transportation, public facilities, environment, and community character and design; and 3) the "Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Illustrative Plan." The *BCP* was crafted to be consistent with the framework described in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which is described in greater detail in the General Plan and the Introduction Chapter of the *BCP*. The *BCP* is substantially consistent with the General Plan (see discussion at Appendix A of the *BCP*, also found at Appendix B of this initial study). The project does not propose to annex properties, to develop any properties within the *BCP* planning boundary, nor to install any public utilities or roadways. The *BCP* will guide future projects that may include the above listed actions, and require subsequent environmental review.

1.4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

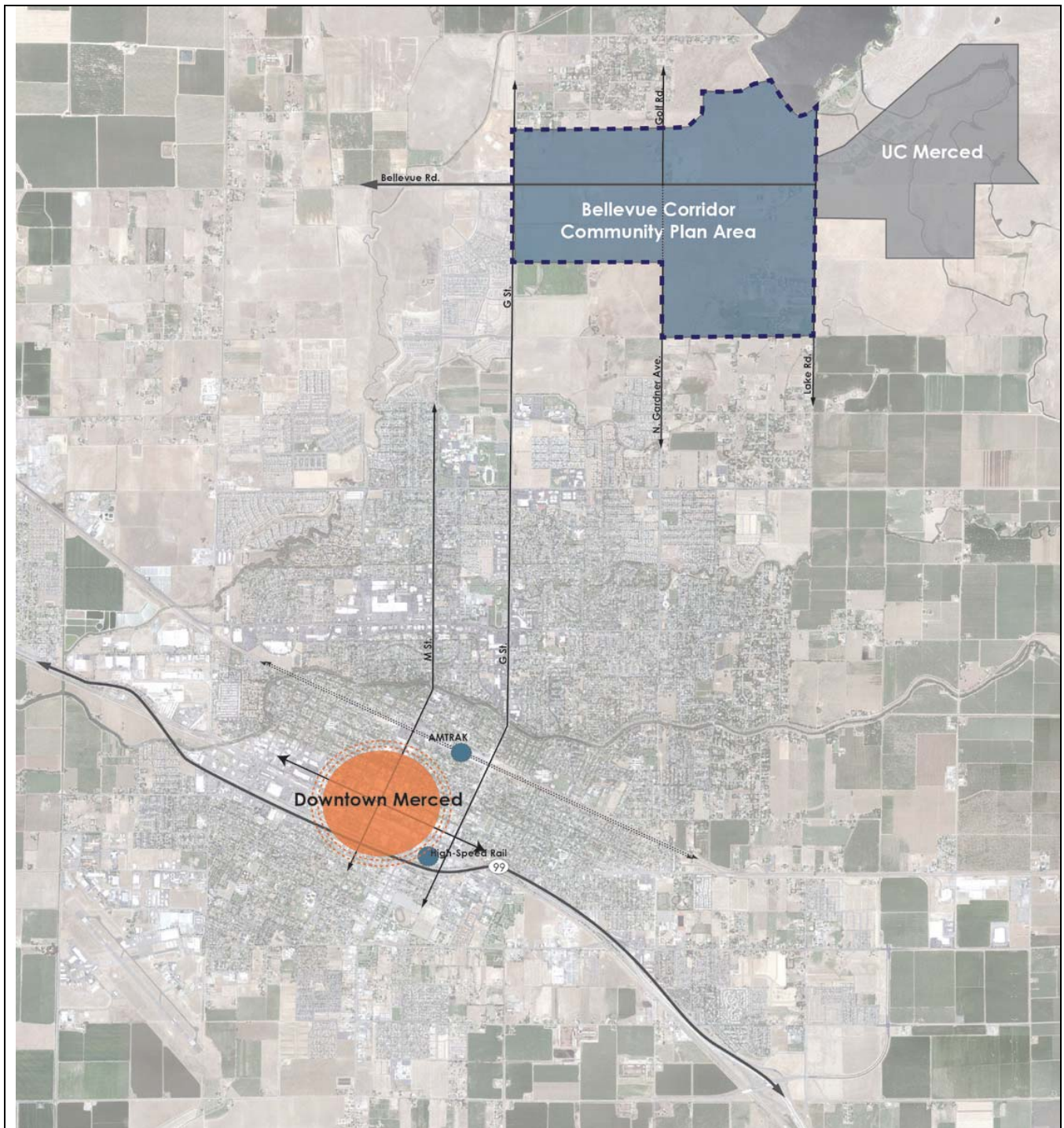
The project area is characterized by gently rolling grassland, croplands, and rural residential housing bounded by urban land uses to the northeast by a growing UC Merced campus, and on the west by the Bellevue Ranch Development. Homes on 1-acre and larger lots are located to the north and south, set amongst larger vacant acreages anticipated to fill-in with similar land uses. While no distinguished creeks traverse the site, there are several irrigation ditches and some naturally occurring drainage

swales. Additional environmental setting information is provided in Section III of this environmental review.

1.4.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION FIGURES

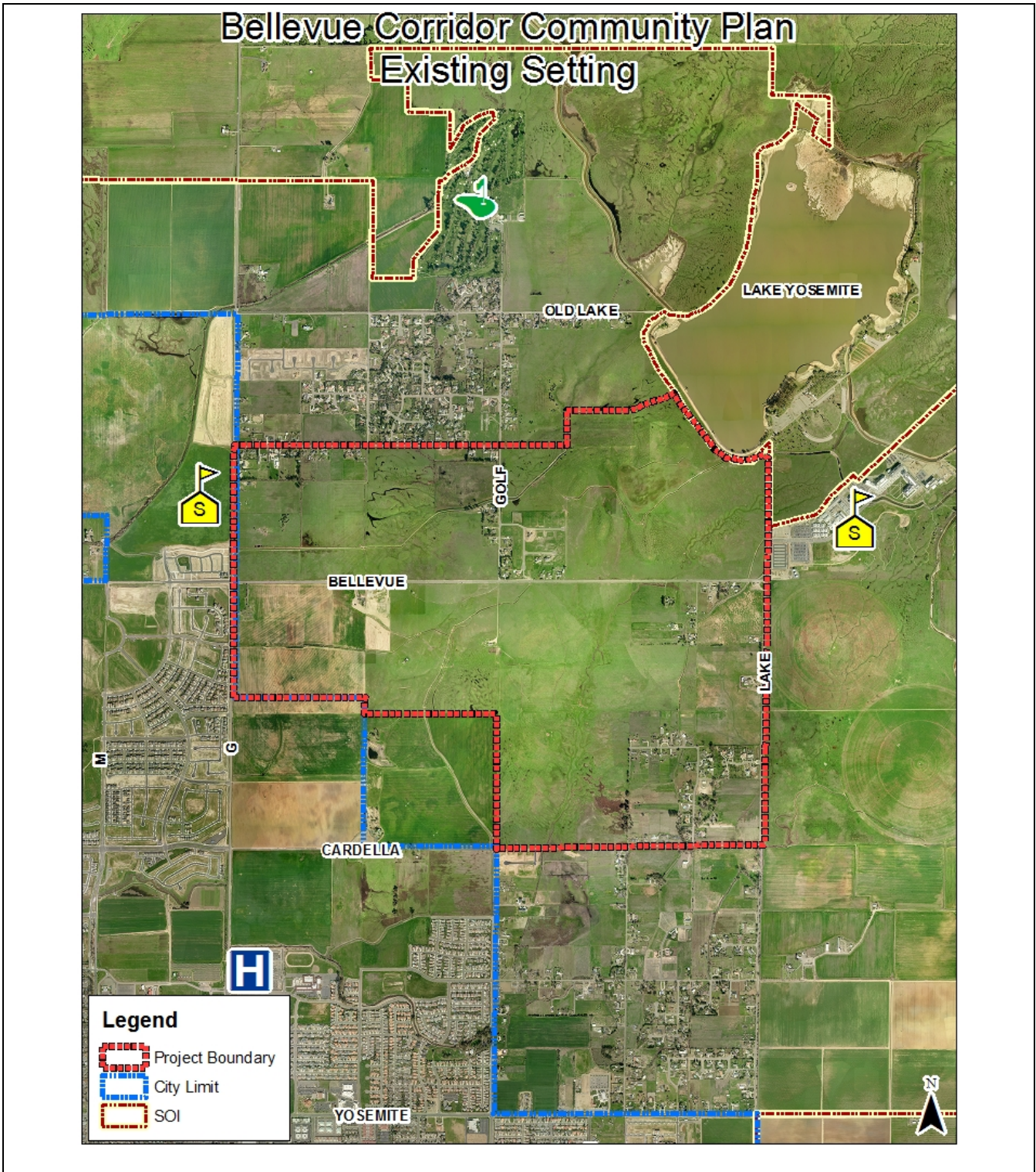
The figures that follow are provided to supplement the written project description narrative provided later in this section.

- Figure 1: Vicinity Map
- Figure 2: Existing Setting
- Figure 3: Adjacent Developments
- Figure 4: Urban Growth Boundaries
- Figure 5: Merced County Zoning
- Figure 6: BCP Land Use Plan
- Figure 7: BCP Open Space Plan
- Figure 8: BCP Circulation Plan
- Figure 9: BCP Bikeway Plan
- Figure 10: Pedestrian Plan



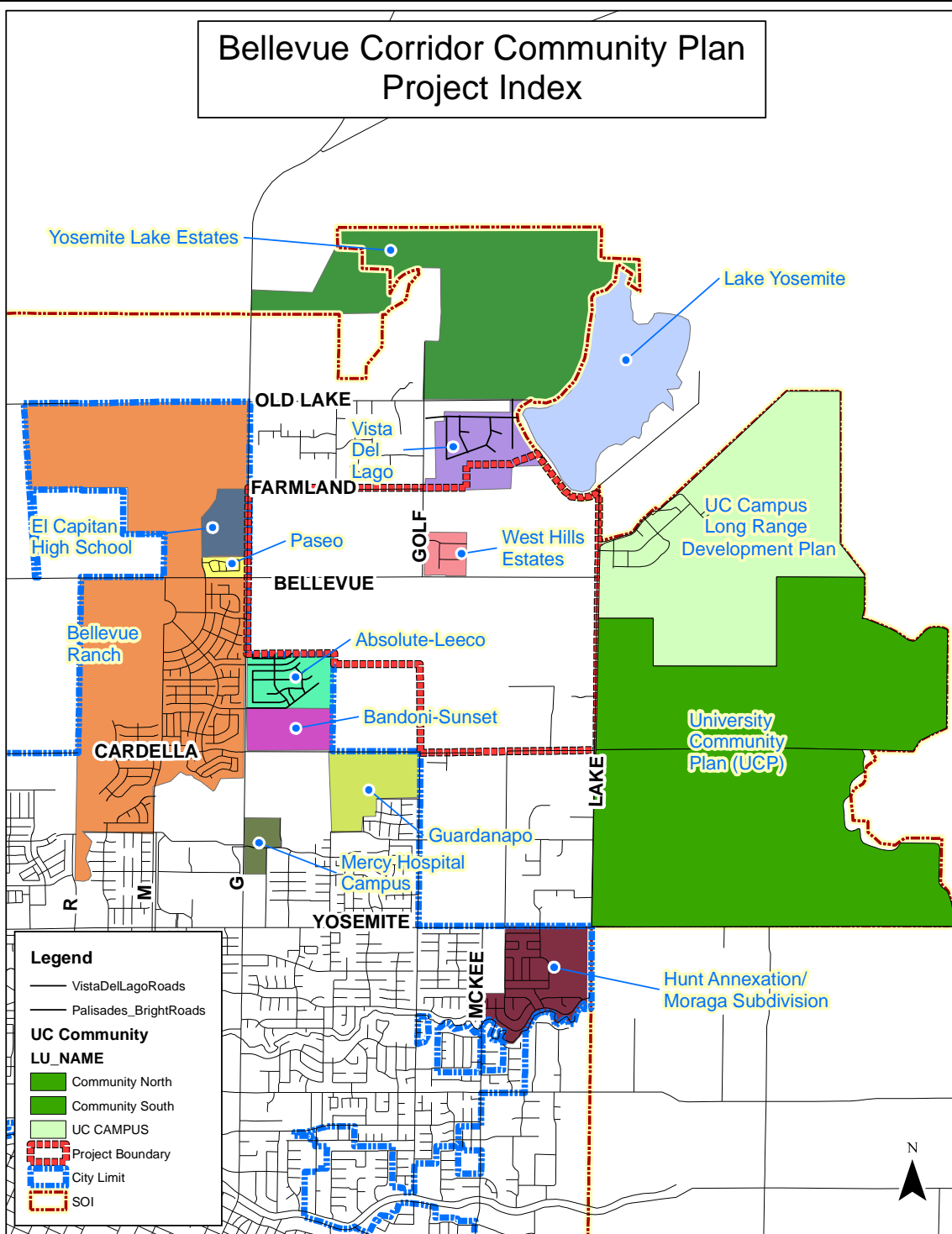
Vicinity Map

Figure 1



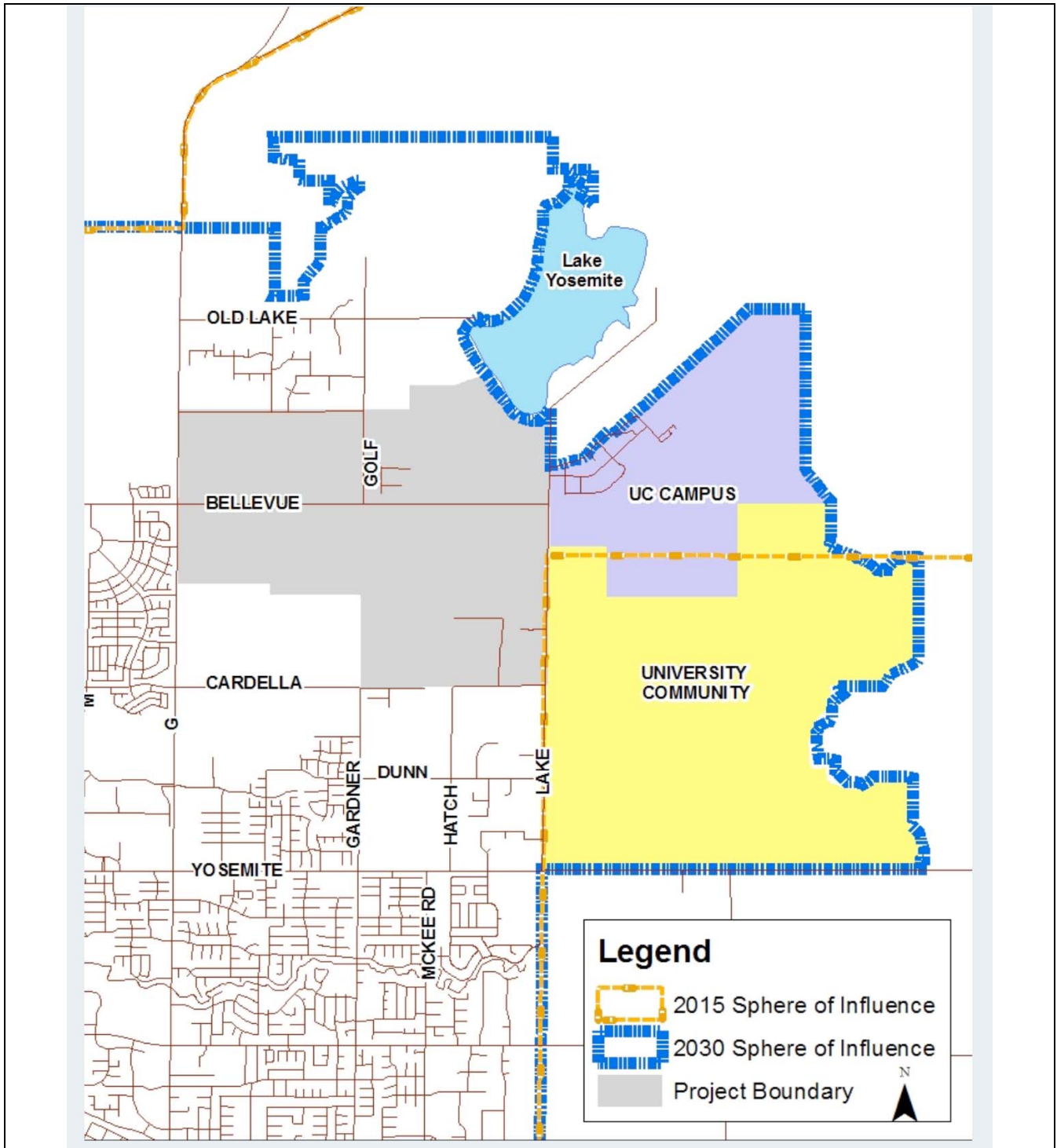
Existing Setting

Figure 2



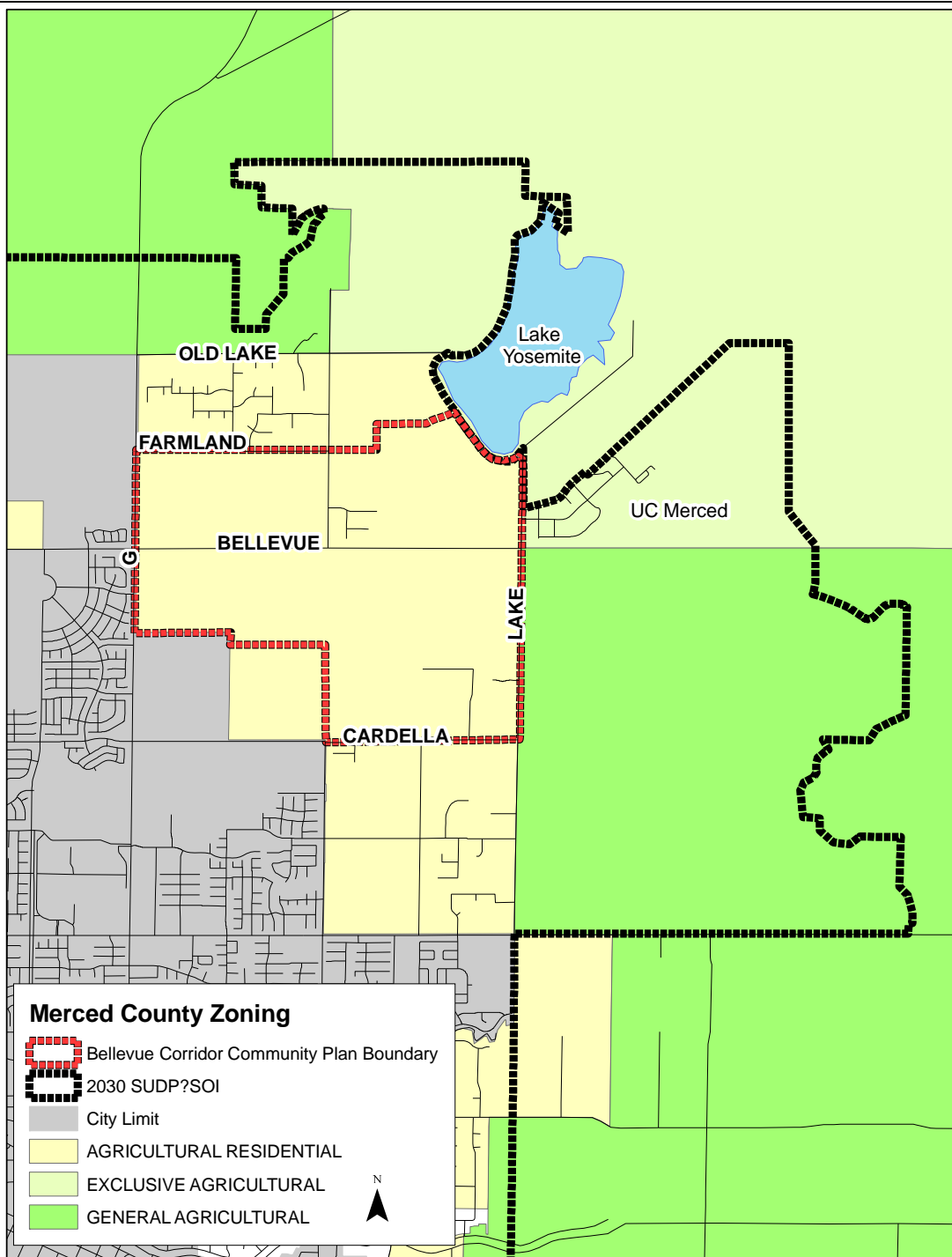
Adjacent Developments

Figure 3



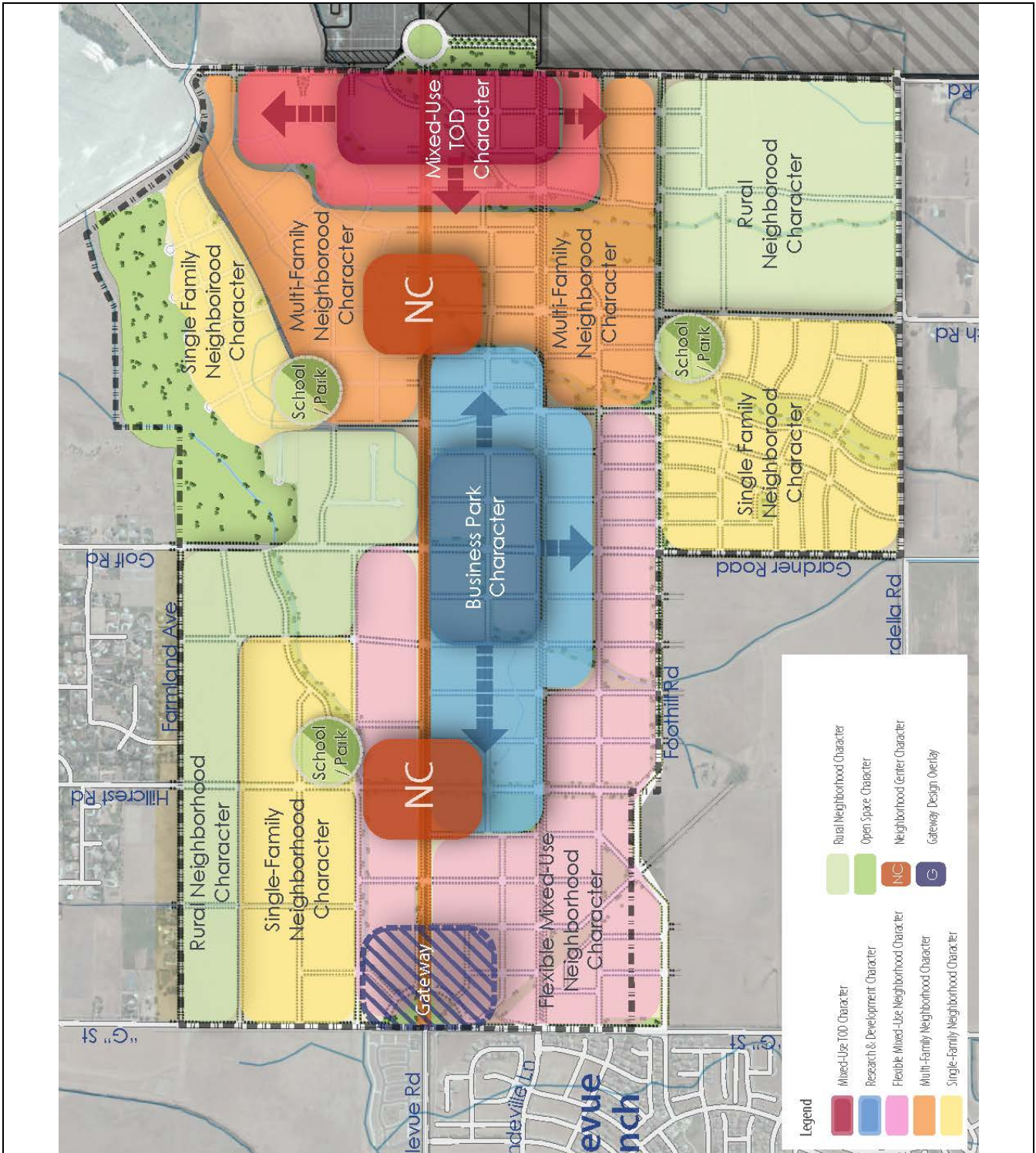
Urban Growth Boundaries

Figure 4



Merced County Zoning

Figure 5



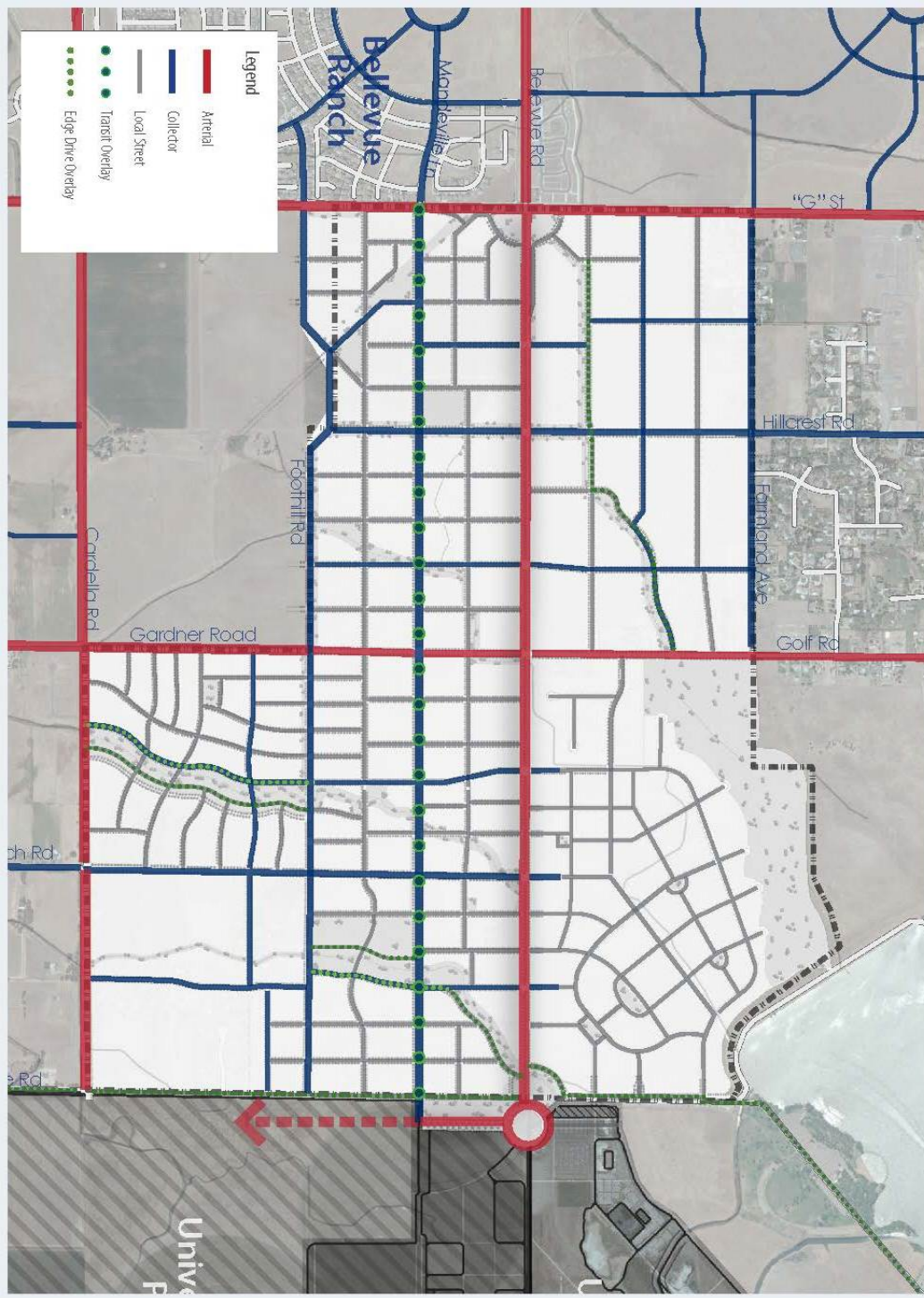
BCP Land Use Plan

Figure 6



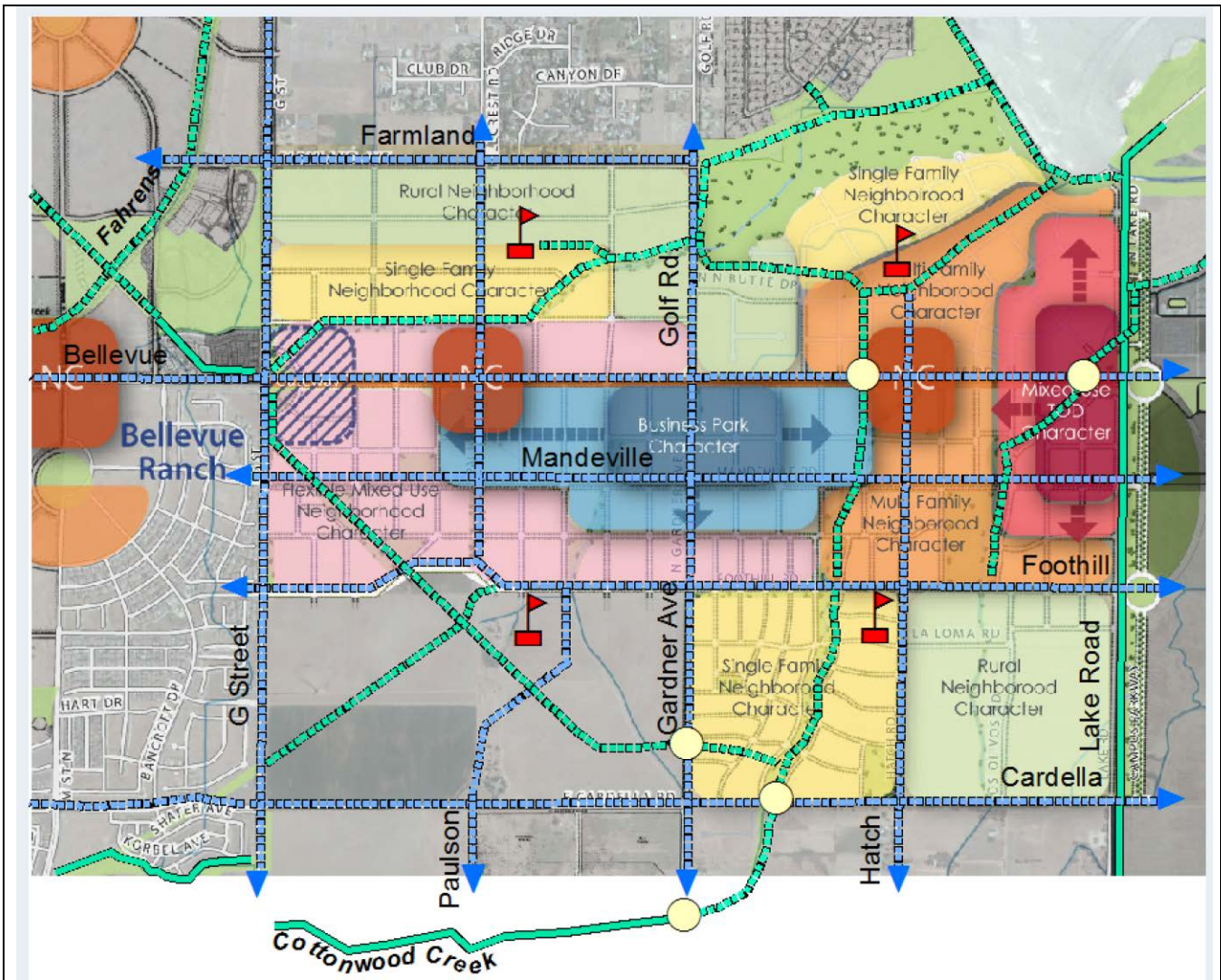
BCP Open Space Plan

Figure 7



BCP Circulation Plan

Figure 8

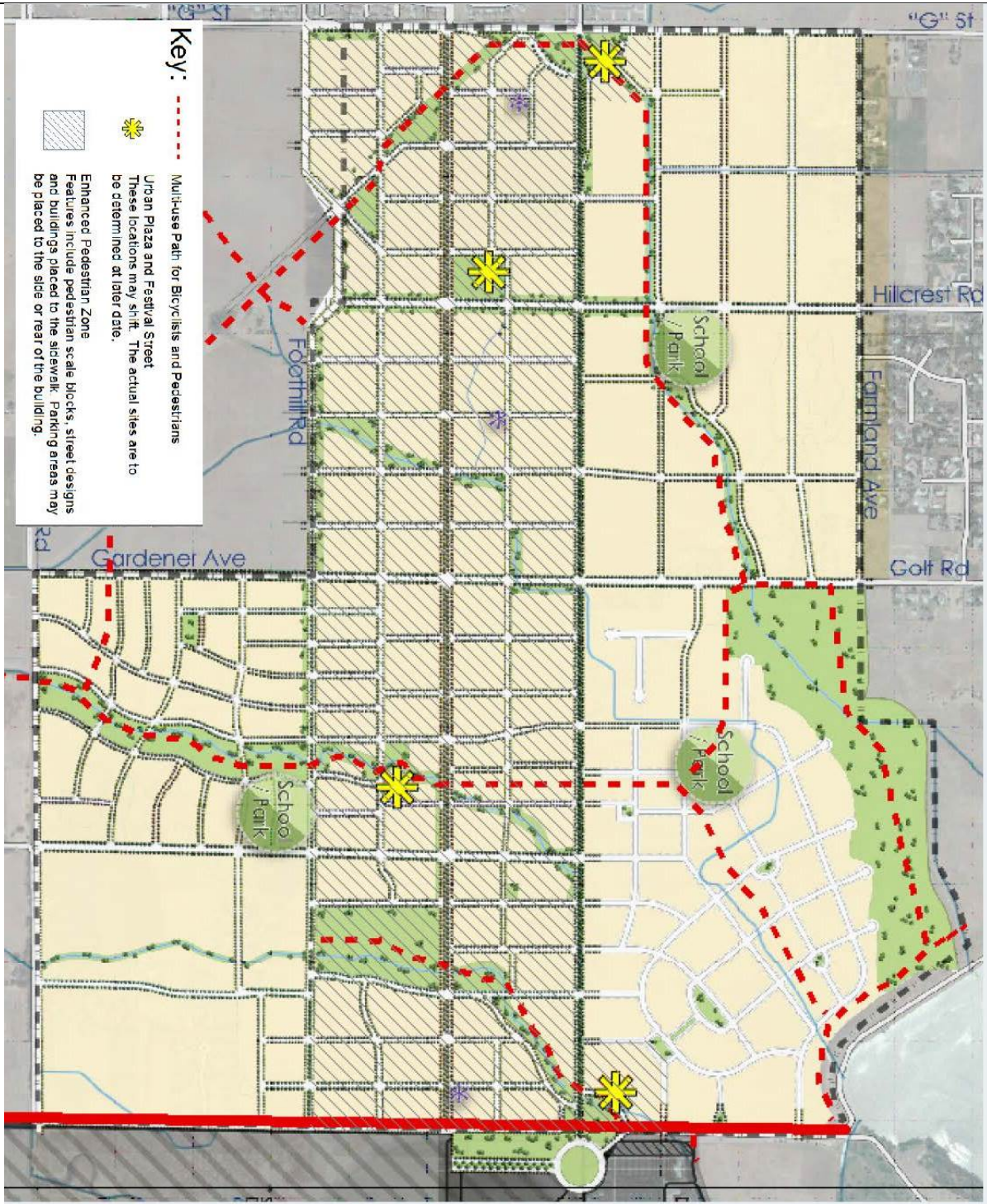


Solid Green Lines represent existing off-street bike paths
 Green Dashed Lines represent proposed off-street bike paths
 Blue Dashed Lines represent proposed bike lanes
 Yellow Circles represent bike path under-crossings of arterial streets
 Red boxes with flags represent approximate locations of future school/park sites



BCP Bikeway Plan

Figure 9



Pedestrian Plan

Figure 10

1.4.5 PROXIMITY OF SUBJECT PROJECT TO EXISTING DEVELOPED OR DEVELOPING AREAS

The Merced community has participated in important planning initiatives over the past several years including but not limited to the City's *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, *UC Merced's Long Range Development Plan*, and Merced County's *University Community Plan*. A detailed description of development plans and projects occurring within and near the Bellevue Community Plan area is provided in Appendix B of the BCP, and depicted in Figure 3 of this environmental review. Appendix B of the BCP identifies and describes recent and anticipated growth patterns.

1.4.6 URBAN EXPANSION

Urban expansion in the BCP planning area was considered within the regulatory framework of several influences including: 1) the regulatory setting of the Merced Local Agency Formation Commission; 2) the City's annexation policies; 3) regional needs such as intrastate rail and roadways, transit and arterial street needs, and future job generating uses near UC Merced; and, 4) key growth factors such as physical constraints, the UCM growth node, forecasted population growth, costs to install and operate public infrastructure and services, and need to coordinate growth among competing interests.

Given the above considerations, and in the context of the City's General Plan goal to grow orderly, that is, compactly while preserving open space and prime agriculture, and in a manner that efficiently extends government facilities and services, the BCP presents four possible growth scenarios, some more probable than others. No recommendation is provided. Rather, the BCP identifies the need for a collaborative effort to create a multi-jurisdictional infrastructure and service plan that can result in decisions that direct growth in a manner that serves the interest of the community as a whole in a fiscally sound manner. The BCP emphasizes that challenging questions pertaining to infrastructure, financing and phasing should be addressed before further growth and development occur in the northeast growth area of Merced.

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning *Urban Expansion* apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. The BCP does not propose any action or plan that is inconsistent with the vision described in the City's General Plan. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with Urban Expansion-related *Goal Area* of the City's General Plan, as discussed above.

1.4.7 LAND USE

The land use design of the BCP was crafted based on four guiding subjects: 1) residential and neighborhood design; 2) economic and business development; 3) urban growth and design; and 4) the illustrative plan of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan (below) as found in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

RESIDENTIAL & NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

The City's General Plan *Guiding Principle #1 for Community Plans* identifies the need to address adverse impacts to existing neighborhoods that may be caused by new development in the community plan area. The BCP minimized potential impacts by 1) identifying and setting logical boundaries for expansion and strengthening of existing rural residential neighborhoods; 2) locating complementary and compatible land uses within and adjacent to them; and 3) focusing the new intensive growth away from these neighborhoods. The BCP also includes permitting strategies to maximize compatibility between new development and existing home sites.

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes numerous policies and narratives concerning the anticipation for significant jobs-based land uses within the BCP. Following the lead of the General Plan, the BCP includes a "Research and Development Park Character Area" that could accommodate approximately 2.8 million square feet of Research and Development floor space. The Plan is flexible, supporting the size of this land use to adjust depending upon market conditions.

URBAN GROWTH AND DESIGN

The City's General Plan *Guiding Principle #5 for Community Plans* emphasizes that the "Urban Villages" concept should be incorporated into the planning of these areas as much as feasible. A discussion on this Goal Area is provided in Section 1.4.10 below.

BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Section 3.7.4 of the General Plan, "Bellevue Corridor Community Plan," is a narrative statement describing the vision of this community plan area. Regarding land use, it describes the need for a variety of housing types, a mix of land uses in a vibrant setting, and for commercial sites to be located in nodes, as opposed to strip-commercial. The land use concepts of this vision were supported in the General Plan through the establishment of an "Illustrative Plan" titled, "Bellevue Corridor Community Plan." While some variation from the "Illustrative Plan" is to be expected, it anchored several key concepts, including: 1) provision of a mixed-use corridor between G Street and Lake Road in the vicinity of Bellevue Road; 2) low density land uses on either side of the mixed use corridor to blend with these existing or planned uses to the north and south; 3) reservation of a large area of land for anticipated jobs-based research and development parks; 4) retention of the *Callister* development plan (northwest corner of Bellevue Road and Lake Road); and 5) connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and UC Merced.



Above: Illustrative Plan of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan

Table A-7: Summary of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan and the Bellevue Community Plan		
<i>Land Use Types</i>	<i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan</i>	<i>Bellevue Community Plan (BCP)</i>
Dwelling Unit Related Uses	Total Dwelling Units	Total Dwelling Units
Single-Family	3,522	3,421
Multifamily	2,909	3,254
Total	6,431	6,675
Employee Related Uses	Total Employees	Total Employees
Retail	2,583	1,292
R&D/Office	6,305	9,765
Total	8,989	10,967
Other Uses	Total Acreage	Total Acreage
Open Space	138	165
Schools	30	48

The “*Character Type Plan*” (Chapter 5, page 89) of the *Bellevue Community Plan* is a refinement of the Illustrative Plan, and contains all the key concepts anchored by it. A comparative assessment of the land uses in these plans is provided for in Tables A-4 through Table A-7 (presented on previous page) of Appendix B of this EIS, and reveals substantial consistency between the total number of dwelling units and employees. The increase in the number of employees from an estimate of 8,989 (Illustrative Plan) to 10,967 (BCP), corresponds to the General Plan policy that seeks to provide opportunities for future jobs-based land uses near UC Merced. Potential expansion areas are denoted in light blue (Research and Development), and light red (Mixed Use). These areas are not represented in the aforementioned tables, and further environmental assessment would be necessary for such growth in these areas.

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning *Land Use* apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. Although BCP includes some changes to the *Land Use* Element of the City’s General Plan, as discussed above, these are more of a clarification and refinement, than inconsistencies. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with *Land Use*-related *Goal Areas* of the City’s General Plan which includes those topics discussed above.

1.4.8 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

STREETS AND ROADS

Consistent with Guiding Principle #3 for Merced’s Community Plans, the BCP includes multiple points and methods of connectivity with existing and planned urban areas. For example, during the development process of the BCP, the Plan Leadership Team considered and assessed the influence that the UCM Campus and University Community land use and circulation plans had on the BCP. Connections to these areas include the extension of the City’s one-mile grid of arterial streets (G Street, Cardella Road, Bellevue Road, and Gardner Road), and the one-quarter mile spaced network of collector roadways. Along and outside the eastern boundary of the BCP, the Plan anticipates the future construction of a limited-access arterial (the extension of the Campus Parkway Extension), which together with Bellevue Road and the Atwater Merced Expressway (AME), will form a future loop road around Merced connecting with State Route 99 to serve regional traffic needs. The BCP includes several design options for Bellevue Road that blend the regional nature of this road while recognizing its importance as a gateway and need to serve anticipated adjacent land uses. Transit linkages are another important element of connectivity and are discussed in greater detail below.

BCP Official Circulation Map

The BCP’s Official Circulation Map includes all the roadway connections described above. Supplementing this map are images and tables that define rights-of-way needs for these roadways, taking into consideration the plan for complete streets, gateways and regional traffic needs. The BCP Circulation Plan was enhanced based on a full integration of General Plan goals, and includes the following distinctions: 1) placement of the transit corridor amongst a variety of land uses and in a pedestrian oriented setting on Mandeville Lane, away from the regional automobile traffic anticipated to occur on Bellevue Road; and 2) side-access roadway options for Bellevue Road to improve

aesthetics; provide increased vehicular accessibility to properties; and to minimize conflicts with faster moving regional traffic. These enhancements have the general effect of reducing development-related impacts.

Arterial Street Travel Lanes

Table 4.2, “Summary of Street and Highway Standards,” of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* describes the characteristics of roadway categories. Arterial roads, depending upon type, can have between 2 to 6 lanes of traffic. The Environmental Study for the General Plan identified the minimum number of lanes needed for certain roads to avoid sub-standard level of service. No assessment of collector road level of service was performed with the City’s General Plan. Table 1 (Appendix B of this EIS, presented below) compares the number of lanes that occur in the City’s General Plan and what is recommended in the BCP, revealing consistency between the two planning documents.

Table 1: Arterial Streets within BCP Planning Area				
Road Segment	General Plan (GP) Data			Bellevue Community Plan Project
	GP Table 4.2	GP Traffic Study	GP Forecast LOS	
G Street Cardella to Bellevue	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
G Street Bellevue to Old Lake	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6	6 lanes	LOS D with 6 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Bellevue Road G to Gardner/Golf	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	6 lanes ¹	LOS E with 6 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP’s finding that 4 lanes may be adequate, and also provides for the use of side streets on either side of Bellevue Road.
Bellevue Road Gardner/Golf to Campus Pkwy	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	6 lanes	LOS D with 6 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP’s finding that 4 lanes may be adequate, and also provides for the use of side streets on either side of Bellevue Road.
Cardella Road	<i>Divided Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Gardner Road Cardella to Foothill	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Gardner Road Foothill to Bellevue	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP’s findings

				that a 4 to 3 lane roadway (one travel lane in each direction and a turn lane) may be adequate.
Golf Road Bellevue to Old Lake	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS F with 2 lanes LOS C+ with 4 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP's findings that a 2 or 3 lane roadway may be adequate.

¹ Per the GP Traffic Study, even with 6 lanes, this segment is forecasted to experience LOS E Conditions. A statement of overriding considerations was adopted by the City as part of the EIR for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

Collector Street Travel Lanes

Consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, all collectors within the BCP will include a total of two travel lanes (one for each direction). The treatment of on-street parking, bikeways, parkstrips, medians and sidewalk width and location may vary, however. These treatments are intended to enhance the complete street nature of the public rights-of-way resulting in an increase in overall travel capacity of the roadway network. On Mandeville Lane, transit use will be emphasized.

BICYCLES, PEDESTRIANS, AND PUBLIC TRANSIT

Consistent with the goal of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to plan for roads that are multi-modal for use by automobiles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, the BCP includes several elements that support its functional implementation, and include: 1) adequate rights-of-way that accommodate these transportation methods; 2) plans that identify the location where these different mobility forms are to be emphasized; 3) a land use plan that allows for a wide variety of land uses to be placed near one another; and 4) design standards to create places that are suited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles alike.

The BCP's Bicycle Master Plan extends the City's off-street and on-street bikeway system through and beyond the BCP, ensuring connectivity to UC Merced, Lake Yosemite Regional Park, and to nearby schools, parks, neighborhoods, and shopping and employment districts. A high percentage of the UCM population will use bicycles for transportation. To provide for this population, and to reduce impacts and costs related to constructing roadway travel lanes, the BCP's Bicycle Master Plan provides several bikeway connection between the campus and the employment, shopping, and residential neighborhoods planned in the BCP.

The BCP emphasizes the formation of a transit-corridor, linking the planned transit stations in Bellevue Ranch and at UC Merced. This corridor is located one-quarter mile south of and parallel to Bellevue Road. This arrangement supports regional automobile trips on Bellevue Road, while creating a pedestrian-oriented corridor along Mandeville Lane. This transit-corridor will be essential to unify neighborhoods rather than separate them. The design of Bellevue Road, while providing for regional traffic, emphasizes aesthetics and access to unify both sides of this road as a distinctive and active place, as compared to a walled expressway.

The BCP Circulation Plan, comprised of several travel components or modes, contains all essential travel functions assumed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, including: 1) the alignments and types of street classifications; 2) connectivity to adjacent properties and planning areas; 3) a transit corridor between UC Merced and the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan transit circle; 4) Bellevue Road designed to accommodate anticipated regional traffic needs as part of Merced's "Loop Road;" 5) Scenic Corridor of "gateway" designs for Bellevue Road and Lake Road; and 6) complete street designs incorporating pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and transit. BCP Technical Appendix D (Appendix C of this EIS) compared the traffic trip generation between the General Plan and the Bellevue Community Plan, and found that daily trip generation would be approximately 17% lower under the BCP conditions.

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning *Transportation and Circulation* apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. Although BCP includes some changes to the *Transportation and Circulation* Element of the City's General Plan, as discussed in Section A3, these are more of a clarification and refinement, than inconsistencies. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with Transportation and Circulation-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan which includes those topics discussed above.

1.4.9 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Though the BCP includes a Public Facilities and Services chapter, the narrative, images, diagrams and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning this general topic provide overall guidance to the BCP. While the BCP includes a discussion about most General Plan Goal Areas related to public facilities and services, the Goal Areas concerning storm-drainage and flood control, schools and wastewater are particularly pertinent to the BCP study area and received greater discussion.

STORM-DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL

The City's General Plan recognizes and encourages the value of addressing storm-drainage, flooding, water resources and open space through the design of an integrated system. The BCP follows this lead by recommending: 1) the continued use of surface water flow in the plan area's irrigation laterals and natural drainages; 2) the use of flood control basins as recreational spaces; and 3) the capture and slowing of storm water runoff within open space features within rights-of-way.

SCHOOLS

Consistent with policies in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, during the process of developing the BCP, the City coordinated with the local school districts to identify potential future school sites central to the proposed neighborhoods. The BCP identifies and plans for the siting of three schools within the plan area boundary, and that neighborhood park sites be combined to form joint-use facilities.

WASTEWATER

The use of the existing sewer collection lines in the BCP planning area along Bellevue Road was assessed to examine the extent of future development potential. The sewer line was constructed at a time when the eastern half of the BCP planning area (east of Gardener Road) was located outside the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP). At the time, while an out-of-boundary service was permitted, future sewer connections in this eastern area were limited to emergency cases only. With adoption of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the SUDP shifted east so that all of the BCP is within the City's near-term development area. Limitations that were based on the former boundary no longer apply. While some collection capacity would remain, use of the line by UC Merced (today and

in the future), and by other already annexed lands in and near the Plan area will utilize most of the capacity in the existing sewer line in G Street and Bellevue Road. Additional sewer collection lines will be needed to serve future development within the northeast portion of Merced's SUDP.

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning public facilities and services apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. The BCP does not propose any action or plan that is inconsistent with the vision described in the City's General Plan. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with Public Facilities and Services-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan including those topics discussed above, as well as the following: public facilities and services, police and fire protection, water, solid waste, cultural and community services and telecommunications.

1.4.10 URBAN DESIGN

TRANSIT-READY DEVELOPMENT/URBAN VILLAGES

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* contains a guiding principle to incorporate the Urban Village concept as a design template for future growth areas in the City, including the BCP. Statements in the General Plan and comments received from the community made it clear that the urban design of the BCP would be unique, however. General Plan Policy UD-1.1h calls for "special *Urban Village* designs to be developed for increased opportunities for job-based land uses attracted by a university climate." The Community expressed concerns about the amount of low-density residential that has traditionally been located in the City's Urban Villages, as well as the location and intensity of commercial uses. Thus, as part of the process to develop the BCP, the Plan Leadership Team worked to create a unique plan for the BCP study area that was both consistent with the General Plan and the interest of the community. As part of this work, Staff grouped similar General Plan policies into the following design principles:

- pedestrian-friendly settings
- mobility/travel options, reduced vehicle road noise, and safer roadways
- Increased access to neighborhood centers and less congested intersections
- Proximity between a variety of housing types and destinations (retail, offices, public spaces)
- Open space networks

Using these design principles as a guiding framework to assure consistency with the General Plan, a unique urban village design was crafted and applied to the BCP, which exhibits the following characteristics:

- 1) A corridor approach, as compared to the half-circle shape, expands the amount of land that can be intensively developed. This allows for the inclusion of job-generating land uses and enhances the vitality of future transit use. This increase in land used for more intense uses reduces the land area formerly sited with low-density housing.

- 2) Inclusion of job-generating type land uses provides for large-scale office sites to be blended with the other land uses, and is not relegated to the opposite side of the major thoroughfare. This improves the use of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes by increasing the proximity of land uses with housing, and add flexibility in the siting of offices.
- 3) Massing a mixture of land uses along a corridor creates numerous destination sites, instead of the singular “commercial core” destination site. The proposed plan creates a series of centers, which will be linked by east-west connections as well as from neighborhoods located to the north and south. This improves the use of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes by increasing the proximity of land uses with housing. This effect will boost the market potential and liveliness of the area.
- 4) The plan places research and development sites along the south side of Bellevue on both sides of Gardner Road, at the terminus of the City’s long-planned north-south arterial street, Parsons Avenue, improving access to an important employment area to the community.
- 5) For purposes of describing a pedestrian-oriented zone, the Village concept describes a ¼ mile radius from the commercial core and fronting thoroughfare. The BCP maximizes the size of that zone by shifting the “urban center” along Mandeville Lane, from which the ¼ mile is measured on both sides of this road for a length of two miles.
- 6) Transit Priority Projects (TPP) may occur throughout the Mandeville Transit Corridor. TPP’s are high-density residential (no less than 20-units per acre) or mixed-use developments service by a major transit stop or corridor. A key driver of the TPP is the success of the transit function of the corridor, which in turn is driven by a vibrant mixed-use pedestrian-oriented corridor.
- 7) Consistent with General Plan policy, the City may consider and permit commercial development to occur at the corner of G Street and Bellevue Road.

OVERALL COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

The City’s General Plan includes policies to enhance the appearance of the community through several means, such as creating gateways, landscaped medians and use of important physical attributes, for example, hilltops. The BCP considered this direction and includes: 1) plans to create gateway roads for both Bellevue Road and Lake Road; 2) a landscaped median in Bellevue Road and residential collectors; and 3) encourages site-designs to emphasize a hilltop focal point in the area near Gardner Road, south of Bellevue Road. The BCP also recommends that the City’s adopted urban design guidelines set the framework for City expectations of site plan designs within the BCP.

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning urban design apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. The BCP does not propose any action or plan that is inconsistent with the

vision described in the City's General Plan. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with Urban Design-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan which includes those topics discussed above.

1.4.11 OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning *open space, recreation and conservation* apply to the BCP planning area. While new BCP policies are recommended, these clarify General Plan policies as to their relevance to the BCP planning area, and are not contradictory to General Plan policies. The BCP does not propose any action or plan that is inconsistent with the vision described in the City's General Plan. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with *Open Space, Recreation and Conservation*-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan including those topics discussed above, as well as the following: "Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources," "Open Space for Public Health and Safety," and "Conservation of Resources."

1.4.12 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development goals, policies and actions are, by necessity, integrated throughout the BCP. For example, foundational aspects of the Plan's Mobility Chapter include effective and efficient transportation infrastructure, and integrated land use and transportation planning. Similarly, the Plan's Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Chapter, emphasizes increased physical activity of residents and urban forestry. The Public Facilities and Services Chapter promotes conservation of resources, resilient natural open space features, and use of solar energy technologies. Supplementing these actions are additional goals, policies and actions that can be found in the Sustainable Development Chapter of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The BCP relies on the *Sustainable Development* narrative, images, diagrams and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to further guide development and operations within the BCP planning area. All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* apply to the BCP planning area. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with sustainable development-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan including air quality and climate change, cultural resources, energy resources and healthy communities.

1.4.13 HOUSING

The BCP relies on the *Housing* narrative, images, diagrams and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to guide planning, provision and development of future housing units in anticipation of Merced's increase in population. The BCP includes a wide variety of housing types ranging from rural residential homes to high-density multi-family homes with densities of at least 20-units per acre, as is discussed in the Community Character Chapter of the Plan. All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* apply to the BCP planning area. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with housing-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan including: new affordable housing construction, housing conservation and rehabilitation, housing affordability, city coordination, quantified objectives, and providing equal opportunity for housing.

1.4.14 NOISE

The BCP relies on the *Noise* narrative, images, diagrams and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to address noise concerns in an expanding City as well as those from operations from established uses. The BCP does not include or expand air and rail services, though as anticipated in the General Plan, the planning area will be served by arterial streets and be populated with sensitive populations. All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* apply to the BCP planning area. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with the *Noise Goal Area* of the City's General Plan.

1.4.15 SAFETY

The BCP relies on the narrative, images, diagrams and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to guide urban growth and safety-related practices and operations. The concern about the Lake Yosemite Inundation Area was adequately discussed in the General Plan and associated Environmental Review documents. All adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* apply to the BCP planning area. Therefore, the BCP is consistent with safety-related *Goal Areas* of the City's General Plan including disaster preparedness, seismic safety, flooding, fire protection, airport safety, crime and hazardous materials.

Section II
CEQA DETERMINATION OF IMPACT

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- 1) I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 2) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 3) I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- 4) I find the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “Less Than Significant With Mitigation” impact on the environment, but at least one effect: 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- 5) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects: (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards; (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project; and (c) no substantial changes to the project are proposed, no substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and no new information of substantial importance has been identified, nothing further is required. The changes described in this EIS (presented in Section III of this EIS) are not substantial as they do not trigger any of the conditions necessitating preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR; therefore, no additional environmental document beyond this Addendum is necessary to evaluate the environmental effects of the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. An ADDENDUM will be prepared.

By: Bill King Date: 10-1-14

Title: Principal Planner Representing: City of Merced

Signature: *Bill King*

Approved by: David Gonzalves Date: 10/1/14

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

Signature: *David Gonzalves*

Section III

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below summarize the potentially significant impacts caused by the *BCP* project. To be checked, at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklists on the following pages would need to be marked.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

Based on this Expanded Initial Study and associated checklists, no factors in the environmental factor list above are checked, signifying that the *BCP* does not create any **new** impacts that were not previously identified and assessed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

The checklists on the following pages differentiate between previously identified and assessed impacts of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and those that may have been created by the *BCP* Project. This differentiation is made evident by use of Footnotes #1 and #2:

Footnote #1/Potentially Significant Impact: Though marked as a potentially significant impact, the checkmark does not refer to a new potentially significant impact, but rather to the previously identified impact found as part of the environmental assessment of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

Footnote #2/Less Than Significant With Mitigation: Though marked as less than significant with mitigation, the migration is not new, but rather refers to one previously established as part of the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. These mitigation measures are applicable to the *BCP* Project and are provided for in Appendix A of this Expanded Initial Study.

The footnotes also appear, where appropriate, in the Findings of Mandatory Significance (Section IV).

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As described in greater detail below and in the Environmental Checklist, the *Bellevue Community Plan*, with the implementation of relevant *2030 General Plan EIR* mitigation measures identified for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, will contribute to the impacts previously identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, but will not result in any new significant impacts, increase the severity of significant impacts previously identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, or cause any environmental effects not previously analyzed and disclosed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. All significant impacts to which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would contribute are identified in the Environmental Checklist, and were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* and listed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* Findings. The *Bellevue Community Plan* does not involve new information of substantial importance which would require mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No additional mitigation measures are feasible to substantially lessen any significant and unavoidable impacts previously identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

While the *Bellevue Community Plan* will contribute to cumulative impacts previously identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR* associated with *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, it will not result in any new significant cumulative impacts, increase the severity of significant cumulative impacts previously identified in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, or cause any environmental effects not previously evaluated in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. All significant cumulative impacts to which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would contribute are discussed in the Environmental Checklist. Each of the impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* is discussed separately below by environmental topic.

3.1 AESTHETICS

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	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) substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.1.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The view shed in the project area is characterized by gently rolling grassland, croplands, and rural residential housing, and bounded by urban land uses to the northeast by a growing UC Merced campus, and on the west by the Bellevue Ranch Master Planned Development. Homes on 1-acre and larger lots are located to the north and south. While no creeks traverse the site, there are several irrigation ditches and some naturally occurring drainage swales. The *Bellevue Community Plan* project area is located between the urbanized lands to the west and southwest and UC Merced to the northeast. Open Space corridors will be extended along PG&E powerline corridors and along natural and manmade watercourses. Urbanization of the plan area will include a variety of land uses with varying heights, with buildings potentially up to five stories.

3.1.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Scenic vistas.

As stated in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the visual character of the proposed SUDP/SOI area will eventually transition to urban development from open agricultural fields and pasture land. The only residents who will experience a change to their views will be those directly adjacent to new development. The General Plan contains a number of policies to reduce the impact of new development on the existing visual character and scenic vistas within the planning area. The majority of the project site does not offer scenic vistas due to lack of notable features and public viewpoints from high elevations. The site does not contribute to nor is it a part of a designated scenic view or vista, although the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP) recognizes that Lake Road and Bellevue Road will become important gateway roads. The view of UC Merced is developing each year as the campus grows. The BCP recognizes this developing view and through its policies supports a design along Lake Road to maintain this view into the future. Potential impacts of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included development of the BCP planning area, on scenic vistas were evaluated in detail

in the *2030 General Plan EIR* and found to be less than significant because policies within the Urban Design Element, the Urban Expansion Element and the Land Use Element contain standards which will reduce any impacts to scenic vistas (2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.1-1, pages 5 & 6). Planned development within the BCP planning area is substantially consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development and types of facilities that would be constructed. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to scenic vistas, or the conclusions in the 2030 General Plan EIR as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: scenic resources (trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) within a state scenic highway.

Potential impacts related to damage to scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state scenic highway were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in no impact as there are no state designated scenic byways or highways. Likewise, the *Bellevue Community Plan* is not located near nor contains any state designated scenic byways or highways. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* does not add or include any greater impact to what was previously analyzed, and would have ***no impact*** on scenic resources. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: visual quality and character of the site and its surroundings.

The potential impacts of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to the visual quality and character of the *BCP* site were evaluated in detail in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that build-out of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact, because policies in the Land Use, Urban Expansion and Urban Design elements of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will assure that development will enhance the visual character of the site and its surroundings, and that General Plan policies and implementing actions will result in urban development that is compact, low profile and architecturally interesting. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will be developed consistent with the urban development patterns envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as described above. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to scenic vistas, or the conclusions in the 2030 General Plan EIR as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: New sources of light and glare.

Potential impacts associated with creating new sources of light and glare as part of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* were evaluated in detail in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that build-out of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* could result in a potentially significant impact as the City does not have any standards for outdoor lighting. With mitigation adopted with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measure for General Plan Impact #3.1-4, pages 7 & 8) this impact would be less than significant, however. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways, land uses, etc.) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the impacts resulting from new sources of light and glare or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and the BCP would also have a ***less than significant impact with General Plan mitigation measures applied***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.1.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative visual impacts of the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that cumulative impacts from implementation of the General Plan and within the proposed SUDP/Sphere of Influence will result from the introduction of new urban development to traditionally rural agricultural areas surrounding the City of Merced. There would be a cumulative visual impact in terms of loss of agricultural land as viewed from the City and public roadways discussed in this section of the EIR. Nighttime illumination and daytime glare would also be increased in the project vicinity as a result of cumulative General Plan build-out over time. Although individual project developments would be responsible for incorporating mitigation to minimize their visual impacts, the net result would still be a general conversion of a large area with a rural character to an urban and developed character. Some may see the loss of the area's rural character as a negative change in visual quality. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that this impact is considered ***significant, cumulatively considerable, and unavoidable***. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed substantially consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in terms of urban form and distribution of houses and lighting thereof, the *Bellevue Community Plan's* cumulative impacts on aesthetics have been adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. As discussed above, the *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in an increase in the severity of the previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.1.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to visual resources have

come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.1.5 Conclusion

As with the findings of the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, implementation of the BCP would not result in any significant “project” impact with mitigation applied, but that “cumulative” impacts are considered ***significant and unavoidable*** nevertheless. The differences between the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the project’s potential impacts to aesthetic resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, however. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.2 AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------

a) directly or indirectly result in conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use.	✓ ¹			
b) conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.			✓	
c) conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined by Public Resources Code section 1220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)).				✓
d) result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.				✓
e) involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.				✓

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.2.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

According to the Department of Conservation's 2010 Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), approximately 60% of the *Bellevue Community Plan (BCP)* area is designated as grazing lands, and another 10% is as farmland of local importance. The remaining 30% is composed of a variety of designations and consist of the following, in descending order of occurrence: rural residential, unique farmland, statewide importance, urban, and prime farmland. The *BCP* contains approximately 18-acres of prime agricultural soils (approximately 1% of the *BCP* plan area); at the time of preparing the *BCP*, this land was not being farmed. Large blocks of rural residential uses are located to the north and south of the *BCP*. The master planned Bellevue Ranch project is partially developed to the west. UC Merced is developing to the northeast. The remaining lands (including an area southwest of the *BCP*) are within the City's SOI/SUDP, but are being farmed. There are no Williamson Act contract lands within the *Bellevue Community Plan* site.

3.2.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use.

Potential impacts related to conversion of important farmland, including prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural uses were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that

implementation of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a potentially significant impact because prime farmland would be converted. Although mitigation measures and General Plan policies and implementing actions would be applied (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.2-1, page 5) the impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The *BCP* contains some prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide importance. The *BCP* does not increase or decrease the extent of planned development than was assessed as part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts previously assessed, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and its impact would also be ***significant and unavoidable***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Potential impacts related to existing agricultural zoning and Williamson Act Lands were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The General Plan analysis, which included the entire SOI planning area, thereby including many acres of prime farmland and/or Williamson contracted lands, concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a potentially significant impact, and that while goals, policies and actions of the General Plan (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.2-2, page 6) will reduce conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use, conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses would still occur resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. The *Bellevue Community Plan* does not contain any Williamson Act contracted lands and is currently zoned Agricultural Residential (AR) in the county which allows a residential density of one unit per acre. The extent and value of any farming that could occur in the AR zone is dramatically different than that on other county zones where farming is the primary use. Due to site-specific characteristics as described above, the *BCP* planning area would have a ***less than significant impact*** to agriculturally zoned property, or Williamson Act contracted lands. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to existing agricultural zoning or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, no further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned *Timberland Production*.

A field analysis of the *Bellevue Community Plan* site indicates that there are no forest lands (as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 12220[g]) on the site. Therefore, as with the environmental assessment of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would ***not result in impacts*** with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land. No additional environmental analysis is required.

Threshold d: Loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

There is no timberland (as defined by PRC Section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]) on any portion of the *BCP* project site. The project site does not contain trees managed for public benefit. Therefore, as with the environmental assessment of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, implementation of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would **not result in impacts** caused by the loss or conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest uses. No additional environmental analysis is required.

Threshold e: Conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

The lands surrounding the *Bellevue Community Plan* site to the north and west are not in agricultural use and would remain in non-agricultural use for the foreseeable future. Some lands to the south and to the east have been used for agricultural uses, but both are located within the City's SUDP/SOI, where conversion to non-agricultural uses is anticipated to occur with urban growth. Therefore, the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not create any new land use conflicts that were not already evaluated in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, and the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the conclusion of **no impact** of the previous environmental analysis of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. No additional environmental analysis is required.

3.2.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative agricultural impacts of the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that with the implementation of the proposed project there would be a loss of existing agricultural lands within the City's planning area. As noted above, the project site does not contain any forestry resources or timberland and there would be no impact on these resources. Although the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes policies to minimize this impact, there would still be a "project" level significant and unavoidable impact. The loss of agricultural land within the City's planning area as a result of urban development is part of an overall trend within Merced County and the County will continue to face development pressure in the foreseeable future. The proposed project includes policies directing the City to work at a regional level to control the conversion of agricultural uses, among others. However, since the County is projected to continue to urbanize at a significant rate, the loss of agricultural lands as a result of the General Plan project would contribute considerably to a **significant and unavoidable cumulative impact** to agricultural resources. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed substantially consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in terms of urban expansion, the *Bellevue Community Plan's* contribution to cumulative impacts on agriculture were adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. As discussed above, the *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.2.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no additional changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken and no new information has become available since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis or change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.2.5 Conclusion

Although the *Bellevue Community Plan* would result in the conversion of important farmland as identified and defined by the State's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, it would not conflict with land under Williamson Act contract, nor conflict with land zoned agricultural, forest or timberland, or convert forest or timberland. As with the implementation of the General Plan, the BCP will contribute to a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact due to loss of prime farmland countywide. As there are no differences in amount of important farmland to be affected between the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to agricultural resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Construction activities that would result in criteria pollutants, ozone precursors, and other pollutants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) result in emissions of criteria pollutants, ozone precursors, and other pollutants caused by mobile source activity, area sources, and stationary sources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) expose sensitive receptors to pollutant concentration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.3.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The BCP emphasizes travel by all forms of transportation. The BCP includes planned arterial street networks to convey regional and community-serving vehicular traffic. The BCP site extends the City's planned transit corridor to UC Merced. High-density residential developments are encouraged to locate along the transit corridor, and significant employment opportunities complement the levels of housing along the transit corridor. Pedestrian travel is encouraged throughout the BCP, particularly in the areas within ¼ mile of the transit corridor. Bikeways are likewise extended from the City to the east to connect with UC Merced, Lake Yosemite Regional Park, and to other urban areas. These features are consistent with the goals, policies and implementation actions of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.3.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Construction-related emissions of criteria pollutants, ozone precursors, and other pollutants.

Potential impacts related to construction activities on air resources were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that construction activities within the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* SUDP/SOI could occur on areas large enough to exceed the threshold of significance for the generation of fugitive dust and other emissions, and thus, the project could have a potentially significant impact. Mitigation measures to reduce PM₁₀ and cumulative emission impacts (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.3-1, pages 20-21), will ensure that impacts are reduced to less than significant with mitigation, however. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the

Bellevue Community Plan would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to construction activities on air resources, or the conclusions in the 2030 General Plan EIR as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant with mitigation*** adopted with the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Emissions of criteria pollutants, ozone precursors, and other pollutants caused by mobile source activity, area sources, and stationary sources.

Potential air pollutant impacts caused by mobile source activity, area sources, and stationary sources were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would constitute a significant “project” and “cumulative” impact, and that mitigation measures follow Best Available Control Technology to include energy-conserving features in projects (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.3-2, pages 22-24), which would reduce “project” air quality impacts, but not below the SJVAPCD thresholds of significance. Therefore, General Plan “project” impacts on air quality would be significant, cumulative, and unavoidable. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Minor changes in the circulation system include shifting the planned transit line to a more functional location along Mandeville Lane. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts previously assessed, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and its impact would also be ***significant and unavoidable***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Sensitive receptors, considered to be places where children, the elderly, and other sensitive people are located, are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than the general population. Nearby toxic air contaminants and carbon monoxide pollution can impact sensitive receptors. Potential impacts related to exposure to sensitive receptors were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementing the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in ***less than significant impacts*** from carbon monoxide or hazardous air pollutants, because projects would be subject to City policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.3-3, pages 15-16), and mitigation measures of other air-quality impacts, as well as requirements of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and is subject to the policies of the General Plan. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to exposure to sensitive receptors, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore,

development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Objectionable odors.

Potential impacts related to objectionable odors were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the City's General Plan includes policies that address odor generation; therefore, with implementation of these policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.3-4, pages 15-16), this impact is considered to be less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to objectionable odors, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.3.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

The *2030 General Plan EIR* also concluded that in conjunction with cumulative development occurring in the San Joaquin Valley, the implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a ***significant, unavoidable and cumulatively considerable*** air quality impact. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude of development as well as associated population, and as a result would make the same or smaller contribution to cumulative impacts as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A smaller contribution by the *Bellevue Community Plan* is possible given its emphasis to provide a setting for increased travel by pedestrians, bicycles and transit. Therefore, the cumulative air quality impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.3.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to air quality have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.3.5 Conclusion

In addition to the "project" analysis above, 'cumulative' air quality impacts of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the *Bellevue Community Plan*, were

addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. While most impacts were less than significant or could be mitigated to a less than significant level, project and cumulative impacts remained from emissions of criteria pollutants, ozone precursors, and other pollutants caused by mobile source activity, area sources, and stationary sources. Because the *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, it too would have significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts. As there are no significant differences in the anticipated circulation systems of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that proposed in the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to air resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.4.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

As part of developing the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, a site visit was performed by Quad Knopf biologists in February 2008. During that visit, 13 land use types and biological communities/habitats were identified in the General Plan area. Within the *Bellevue Community Plan (BCP)* project area, these include: 1) developed lands (rural residential developments); 2) irrigation waters; 3) seasonal wetlands; 4) agriculture; and 5) annual grasslands. Quad Knopf biologists also developed a "review list" and determined the potential for occurrence of 59 special-status plant and animal species that could potentially occur within the SUDP/SOI of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, including the *BCP*. These plant and animal species are listed in Table 3.4-1 and 3.4-2, and mapped in Figures 3.4-2 and 3.4-3 of the *2030 General Plan DEIR*. The *DEIR* also identified several critical habitat areas, some of which occur in the *BCP* area. There are no designated wildlife movement corridors within the borders of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* area. With exception to active parks, many linear open space corridors planned to occur within the *Bellevue Community Plan* align with irrigation waters and/or encompass potential seasonal wetlands. The *BCP* seeks to protect and conserve natural open-space features that may exist along irrigation laterals, and along a

broad drainage area located in the eastern portion of the *BCP* between Bellevue Road and Cardella Road. The *BCP* seeks to maintain surface water flows in these areas. These features would also serve storm-water drainage, groundwater recharge and recreational functions, providing opportunities for public education about their importance to the community.

3.4.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Candidate, special-status, or sensitive species.

Potential impacts related to adverse effect on candidate, special-status, or sensitive species were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that land conversion within the plan area is a potentially significant impact on special-status species, but that implementation of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to vernal pools and vernal pool associates, special-status plants, Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Burrowing Owls, special-status birds, special-status amphibians, special-status reptiles, special-status fish, and special-status mammals (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.4-1, pages 35-39), will ensure that impacts are reduced to less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The proposed open space features of the plan may actually result in less of an impact than identified in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to adverse effect on candidate, special-status, or sensitive species, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant with mitigation*** adopted with the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Riparian habitat.

Potential impacts related to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would affect riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities such as vernal pools, and that this impact is potentially significant. Implementation of the mitigation measure requiring streambed alteration permits (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.4-2, page 40), would reduce this impact to ***less than significant, with mitigation***, however. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision*

2030 General Plan, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant with mitigation*** adopted with the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Wetlands.

Potential impacts related to federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would affect federally protected wetlands and jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. that occur throughout the plan area, and that this is a potentially significant impact. Implementation of the mitigation measure to require delineations of Waters of the U.S. and Wetlands prior to annexation, and to obtain permits (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.4-3, page 41), would reduce this impact to less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant with mitigation*** adopted with the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, wildlife corridors and native wildlife nursery sites.

Potential impacts related to the movement of species, establishment of corridors or native nursery sites were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the General Plan project site is not within a designated wildlife corridor or linkage area for sensitive species. It is not within a local migratory corridor for other species. The entire San Joaquin Valley, including the subject site, is within the regionally significant Pacific Flyway for waterfowl, however. The site is not considered to be a wildlife nursery; however, construction activity on the site may disturb nesting, feeding, rearing, and foraging behaviors of migratory birds if active nests are within or near construction areas. Implementation of the General Plan mitigation measure that requires standardized survey protocol and avoidance measure that has been adopted by the CDFW (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures for General Plan Impact #3.4-4, pages 37-38), would reduce this impact to less than significant with mitigation, however. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to

movement of species, establishment of corridors or native nursery sites, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant with mitigation*** adopted with the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: Local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

Potential impacts related to conflicts with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that there would be no impact because the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. As with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the *Bellevue Community Plan*, designed consistent with the General Plan, would not result in an impact related to conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to biological resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would likewise result in ***no impact*** to local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Potential impacts related to conflicts with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that there would be no impact, because: 1) there are no applicable or pertinent habitat conservation plans or natural community preservation plans affecting the study area; and 2) although there is a Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley (USFWS 1997), and a Draft Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon (USFWS 2005) that address special-status species that may occur within the study area, the policies, goals, and objectives of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* do not conflict with the provisions in these plans. As with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the *Bellevue Community Plan*, designed consistent with the General Plan, ***would not result in an impact*** related to conflicts with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to biological resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.4.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

In addition to the analysis above, cumulative biological impacts of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, concluded that implementation of the City's General Plan, in conjunction with cumulative development, would result in a ***significant, unavoidable and cumulatively considerable impact*** to biological resources. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude of development as well as associated population, and as a result would make the same or smaller contribution to cumulative impacts as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A smaller contribution by the *Bellevue Community Plan* is possible given its emphasis to create open-space corridors containing natural habitat along the planning area's many irrigation laterals and natural drainage features. Therefore, the cumulative biological resource-related impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.4.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to biological resources have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.4.5 Conclusion

Development of the *Bellevue Community Plan* with the mitigation measures identified in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan 2030 EIR* will result in a ***less than significant "project" impact*** to biological resources. As with the General Plan, the *BCP* will result in a ***significant, unavoidable and "cumulatively" considerable impact*** to biological resources. The *BCP* does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, nor with any applicable Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans. As there are no significant differences in the manner in which biological resources are addressed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that proposed in the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to biological resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) result in a new significant impact on the significance of a historic or archaeological resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) result in a new significant impact on human remains or destroy a unique paleontological resource, site, or geologic feature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.5.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The project site has been used for agricultural purposes, grazing, and sparsely developed rural residential homes. No potential historical archaeological remains or features associated with the Spanish or Mexican periods are known to exist within or adjacent to the project site of the *Bellevue Community Plan (BCP)*. As there are no creeks or vegetative communities associated with a riparian environment in the project area, Native American peoples in substantial numbers would not have been attracted to the area. The construction of Lake Yosemite in 1889, on the northeastern boundary of the project site, coincided with an increase in building activity in the downtown Merced area, but no significant development in the plan area. A cultural resources records search was performed as part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. It yielded thirteen historic resources, four of which were located in the northeast sector of the City of Merced SUDP/SOI, most notably the Yosemite Lake water tower (located outside the planning area) is a California point of historical interest. Others included a fence, a cattle trough and the Smith Ranch. The records search revealed that the SUDP/SOI surrounding the City of Merced contains only one recorded Native American archaeological resource listed with the Historical Resources Information System; a prehistoric bowl mortar in the southwest sector of the SUDP. Since there are no significant natural waterways in the planning area, the odds of the presence of unrecorded prehistoric period sites is further reduced.

Early maps (1850s) show no historic features or development. Agricultural development began with the development of the water delivery systems. Many of the canals and laterals that are shown on the older historic maps are still on the modern topographic maps and have been evaluated as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (i.e. the Sells Lateral and the Yosemite Lateral).

3.5.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Historic or archaeological resource.

Potential impacts to historic or archaeological resources within the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* site as well as the *Bellevue Community Plan* site, were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. There is no indication that subsurface prehistoric cultural deposits in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* SUDP/SOI or the *BCP* project area are likely to exist, or to have survived past uses of the land; however, the possibility cannot be totally eliminated based on a records search or surface inspection. There could be impacts to cultural resources resulting from development within these planning areas. New development will be guided by policies in the General Plan. The Sustainable Development Element of the City's General Plan contains policies and implementing actions designed to protect historical and cultural resources. Implementation of these policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.5-1, page 3.5-10) included in the proposed General Plan, and adherence to federal, state and local regulations would ensure that impacts to historical and archaeological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to these cultural resources, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts ***less than significant***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Human remains or destroy a unique paleontological resource, site, or geologic feature.

Potential impacts to human remains, paleontological resources or geologic features within the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* site as well as the *Bellevue Community Plan* site, were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. There is always the possibility that in the normal course of construction and land development, vegetation removal, earth moving, and other alterations could result in the discovery of previously unidentified human remains or unique paleontological resources. Damage or destruction to any human remains or resources encountered on project sites within the City's SUDP/SOI and *BCP* planning areas during future construction is a potentially significant impact. As noted in the impact assessment above, the policies and implementing actions in the General Plan (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.5-2, page 3.5-10), and adherence to federal, state and local regulations will result in a less than significant impact to historic and archaeological resources, however. The same holds true for unique paleontological resources, geologic features or human remains found as a result of construction activities. These impacts are ***less than significant***. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to these cultural resources, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would similarly result in impacts *less than significant*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.5.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative cultural resources impacts of development under the *BCP*, and the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in conjunction with cumulative development, that although individual project impacts can be mitigated, based on the standards of significance, the cumulative impacts of development in accordance with the City's General Plan and other General Plans in the County are significant, and the project's incremental contribution to this impact is itself *cumulatively considerable*. Though General Plan policies and compliance with regulations will occur, the impacts cannot be mitigated to a less than cumulatively considerable level and thus is *significant and unavoidable*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude of development as well as associated population, and as a result would make the same contribution to cumulative impacts as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the cumulative cultural resource impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.5.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis.

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to cultural resources have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.5.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not increase project-level impacts on cultural resources, but would result in a cumulative impact that is significant and unavoidable. As there are no significant differences in the extent of growth envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that proposed in the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to cultural resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a) expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) result in a new significant impact associated with substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) result in a new significant impact associated with development 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) result in a new significant impact associated with expansive soils creating substantial risks to life or property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) result in a new significant impact associated with soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.6.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The topography of the project area consists of gently rolling terrain that rarely reaches 10 percent slopes. The only known fault in Merced County is the Ortigalita fault (also known as the Telsa-Ortigalita fault) located in the western quarter of Merced County, which has not experienced displacement in historic times. The closest fault or fault system to the study area is the northwest-trending Foothills fault system which terminates at its southern extent approximately 16 miles northeast of the project site and is inactive. The closest active fault (besides the Ortigalita) is the San Andreas fault located approximately 50 miles west of the project site. The area is characterized by low seismic activity. A review of the Merced Area Soil Survey (March 1991) shows that the *BCP* project area contains two soil associations. The majority of the area soils are of the high terrace occupied by the "Redding-Pentz-Peters" soil association. These soils are gravelly or cobbly loam, very strongly weathered and infertile. There are almost no trees, and some grass. The poorly drained saline-alkali basin occupied by the "Lewis-Landlow-Burchell" soil association occurs along the western edge of the project area. These soils are used for field crops, irrigated pasture and rice. The areas that are more strongly affected by salts and alkali are used only for range.

3.6.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a. Seismic hazards.

Potential impacts related to seismic hazards were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the proposed General Plan and policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.6-1, pages 3.6-8 & 9), adherence to the Alquist-Priolo Act, and enforcement of the California Building Standards Code would result in a ***less than significant impact*** from seismic hazards. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and would be subject to the same policies and regulations as the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to seismic hazards, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and implementation of the *BCP* would result in a ***less than significant impact*** to the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic hazards. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b. Soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Potential impacts related to substantial soil erosion, or the loss of topsoil were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact, due to adherence to City policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.6-2, page 3.6-9), and to applicable federal, state and local regulations. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c. Landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

Potential impacts related to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the proposed General Plan would result in a less than significant impact due to: 1) adherence to the Alquist-Priolo Act; 2) compliance with General Plan policies designed to address public health and safety issues resulting from an unstable geologic unit (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.6-3, page 3.6-10); and 3) enforcement of the California Building Standards Code. The probability of soil liquefaction actually taking place anywhere in the

City of Merced is considered to be a low hazard. Soil types in the area are not conducive to liquefaction because they are either too coarse or too high in clay content. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d. Expansive soils.

Potential impacts related to expansive soils were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact due to adherence to the Alquist-Priolo Act, and enforcement of the California Building Standards Code and use of General Plan policies (2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.6-4, page 3.6-11). The soils listed are not generally considered to be expansive, have a generally low to moderate erosion potential, and are generally considered suitable for wastewater disposal using conventional septic systems. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to expansive soils, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: Use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems.

Potential impacts related to soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because the soils in the SUDP/SOI are generally considered suitable for wastewater disposal using conventional septic systems. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, including the use of a municipal sewer system. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.6.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts related to geology and soils from the implementation of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, which is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, were previously analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in conjunction with cumulative development, would result in a less than cumulative considerable impact to geology and soils. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude of development, and as a result would make the same contribution to cumulative impacts as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.6.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to seismic activity, local geology, or soils resources have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.6.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not increase project or cumulative substantial adverse effect from seismic activity, local geology, or soils. As there are no significant differences in the extent of growth envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that proposed in the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to geology and soils or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in an increase in the severity of the previously assessed impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.7 HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 mile of a public airport or private airstrip, the project would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.7.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The *Bellevue Community Plan* does not contain nor is near an airport. The nearest airport is located five miles to the east; the BCP is located outside the influence zones of Castle Airport and the Merced Regional Airport. The nearest railroad is approximately 3.5 miles south of the BCP. As urbanization occurs in the BCP, greater risk from wildfires and urban fires will increase. The *City's Emergency Plan* and the *County Hazardous Waste Management Plan* both deal with detailed emergency response procedures.

3.7.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Potential impacts related to routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that due to: 1) compliance with federal, state and county requirements and standards, as well as the policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-1, pages 3.7-8 & 9) contained in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*; and 2) the availability of proper disposal facilities and the commitment of the City to community education and emergency preparedness, that adoption and implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would have a less than significant impact related to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, and anticipated exposure to hazardous materials. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Potential impacts related to upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that by following federally- and state-mandated guidelines and the City's Emergency Plan for the handling of hazardous materials, by following City policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-2, page 3.7-10), and by diverting hazardous materials away from populated areas, the risk associated with the potential for accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment and community would be less than significant when implementing the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, anticipated exposure to hazardous materials, and furthermore does not include any rail-line or highways on or over which sizable amounts of hazardous materials and related accidents would occur. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c. Hazardous emissions or handling hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

Potential impacts related to hazards near an existing or proposed school were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that the combination of federal, state, county and local regulations and implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* policies and implementing actions and land use patterns (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-3, pages 3.7-10 & 11) would ensure that the risk to schools of hazardous materials or emissions would be less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, anticipated exposure to hazardous materials, and expectation and site assessments of various school sites within the project area. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts of hazards near an existing or proposed school, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Hazardous materials sites.

Potential impacts related to locating development near or on known hazardous material sites were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that future development will be in compliance with regulations established by the State Department of Health Services and the Merced County HWMP, and policies and implementing actions found in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. This impact was considered to be less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, anticipated exposure to hazardous materials, and area of development. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to locating development near or on a known hazardous material site, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e. Airport land use plan, public airport or private airstrip.

Potential impacts related to being located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or private airstrip were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that where applicable, adherence to the policies and implementing actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-5, page 3.7-12) contained in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will ensure airport safety is achieved for those living and working in the planning area, as well as those flying in and out of the Merced Regional Airport, and that this impact is less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, and anticipated exposure to airport-related impacts. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not

change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to being located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or private airstrip, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: Emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Potential impacts related to interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that the proposed policies and implementing actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-6, page 3.7-13) of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would reduce the potential emergency preparedness impact to less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, and anticipated exposure to natural or manmade hazards. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold g: Wildland fires.

Potential impacts related to wildland fires were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that the risk for wildland fire in the City of Merced and surrounding Planning Area is minimal, and that the identified policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.7-7, page 3.7-13) under the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are targeted to minimizing loss of life and property from wildland fires, and found that this impact is less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development, types of facilities that would be constructed, and anticipated exposure to wildland fires. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to wildland fires, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.7.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials from the implementation of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, as part of the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that development of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in conjunction with cumulative development in the county, would result in a ***less than significant impact*** related to hazards and hazardous materials due to local,

regional, state and federal regulations. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale and types of facilities that would be constructed and types and quantities of hazardous materials used within the planning area. Therefore, the cumulative impacts are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.7.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to hazards and hazardous materials have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.7.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not increase substantial adverse effects related to hazards and hazardous materials. As there are no differences in the extent of growth envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that proposed in the project area, the *BCP* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts from hazardous materials, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously assessed impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.8 HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade water quality.	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on or offsite flooding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map or place within the 100-year flood hazard area structures which could impede or redirect flood flows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) 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 or inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.8.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

Lake Yosemite is located to the northwest of the project site and is fed by the Main Canal. The water is discharged from Lake Yosemite to the Fairfield Canal and the Le Grand Canal both outside the *BCP* plan area. The inundation area of Lake Yosemite affects the plan area. The City of Merced and adjacent areas slated for expansion through the Specific Urban Development Plan/Sphere of Influence (SUDP/SOI) process are located within the San Joaquin/Merced River drainage basin or "watershed." In the *BCP* area, surface water flows to Fahrens Creek to the west and to Cottonwood Creek to the south. While there are no defined creeks in the plan area, seasonal watercourses are evident and have caused localized flooding. A 100-year floodplain, defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and described in Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Merced County, Panel 427 of 1225 (Dec. 12, 2008) occupies a small area of the *BCP* plan area (bounded by G Street, Farmland Avenue, Tower Lateral and the Lower Golf Lateral). In addition to the natural drainage features, the study area is transected by numerous man-made channels which are part of the Merced Irrigation District's (MID) extensive system of irrigation canals, levees, and ditches; these include: Tower

Lateral, Sells Lateral, and the Yosemite Lateral. Potable water will be supplied by the City of Merced water system, which is supplied by groundwater sources.

3.8.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Water quality.

Potential impacts on water quality from construction activities associated with development of the plan were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that the grading and excavation activities for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would have the potential to cause erosion and sedimentation that could degrade water quality. However, policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-1, pages 3.8-14 & 15) included as part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would minimize this impact to less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would involve the construction of the same types of facilities and would grade the same amount of land as previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not substantially change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to soil erosion and sedimentation or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Groundwater supplies and groundwater recharge.

Regarding groundwater depletion and recharge, Merced is within the Merced Sub-basin which is, according to the California Department of Water Resources, being subject to critical conditions of overdraft. Also, a Groundwater Impacts Analysis prepared by Brown and Caldwell for the City of Merced indicates that there is groundwater overdraft in the City's service area, and that the rate of overdraft will continue to increase with future urban development. Policies and implementation actions included as part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan (2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-2, pages 3.8-15 & 16) would minimize impacts through ongoing protection of groundwater resources. Additionally, although implementation of mitigation measures in Section 3.8 (#3.8-5a through 3.8-5h) will help to reduce this impact within Merced's Planning Area, it will remain a ***significant impact***, however. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would involve the construction of the same types and amounts of land uses as envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would contribute to the same impact on groundwater resources. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to groundwater supply, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and its impact would also be ***significant even with implementation of General Plan policies and actions***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Flooding or erosion of existing drainages.

Potential impacts related to substantial erosion, siltation or runoff in a manner that would result in flooding were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the proposed General Plan would result in a less than significant impact due to: 1) compliance with City's policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-3, pages 3.8-16 &17); 2) compliance with the City's Storm Drain Master Plan; 3) compliance with the rules and regulations of MID, and any future studies/plans; and 4) compliance with all federal and state regulations. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would involve the construction of the same types of facilities and would grade the same amount of land as previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not substantially change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to soil erosion and sedimentation or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Stormwater drainage systems.

Potential impacts on flooding from increased runoff associated with development of the *BCP*, as previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* allows for the development of future projects that could result in stormwater capacity being exceeded or additional sources of pollutants. New developments, including those in the *BCP*, will have to be consistent with numerous regulations, including the City's policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-4, pages 3.8-17 &18), the City's Storm Drain Master Plan and updates thereof, City Design Standards, the rules and regulations of MID, and any future studies/plans after General Plan adoption. In addition, federal and state regulations (such as preparing a SWPPP) regarding runoff and erosion must be followed. Given the above, the *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded this impact is less than significant. As anticipated in the City's General Plan, the development under the *Bellevue Community Plan* will increase the impervious surfaces on the project site which would result in increased storm water runoff. However, consistent with the policies and regulations identified above, detention facilities would be constructed as part of the proposed development and flooding impacts would be avoided. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not substantially change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to storm runoff increasing flooding or the conclusions of the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: 100-year flood hazard areas.

Potential impacts on housing and other structures placed in the 100-year and 200-year floodplains associated with development of the *BCP*, as previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The analysis concluded that build-out of the proposed

project could expose more people and structures to potential flooding if development occurs within or adjacent to these floodplain areas. New developments, including those in the *BCP*, will have to be consistent with numerous regulations, including the City's policies that limit development in hazardous areas and minimize flooding hazards. New development as a result of adoption of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will have to adhere to the City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Municipal Code, General Plan policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-5, pages 3.8-18 &19), MID rules and regulations, and the Merced Storm Water Master Plan where applicable. Thus, with adherence to the City's ordinances, master plans and General Plan policies, the *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that potential flood hazards will be reduced from potentially significant impact to less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* would involve the construction of the same types of facilities and would grade the same amount of land as previously envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Additionally, the *Bellevue Community Plan* maintains and expands the open space designations within areas prone to flooding. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not substantially change the nature or increase the magnitude of these potential impacts, or the conclusions of the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: Failure of a levee or dam, or inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.

Potential impacts related to exposing people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam, or inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that flood inundation resulting from levee or dam failure due to a variety of factors is a potential hazard for future development in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Policies of the General Plan Safety Element direct the City to limit development in hazardous areas and minimize flooding hazards. New development, as a result of adoption of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, will have to adhere to the City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Municipal Code, General Plan policies (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.8-6, pages 3.8-20), MID rules and regulations, and the Merced Storm Drain Master Plan where applicable. For these reasons, the implementation of the proposed General Plan would have a ***less than significant impact*** with respect to flooding. Regarding dam failure, the risk of dam inundation is low since the Department of Water Resources is responsible for completing annual inspections of each dam for the purpose of safeguarding life and destruction of property. Since the risk of dam failure is low, the adoption of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* was determined to ***not result in a significant impact***. Regarding seiches, Lake Yosemite is subject to seiches in the event of an earthquake. If the seiche overtops either of the dams at Lake Yosemite, failure could result. Given the distance from major faults, the risk of seiche is extremely low. The lake has not experienced a seiche since its construction, even though a number of earthquakes have occurred since. This is a ***less than significant impact***. Merced is not at risk from tsunami due to its inland location. Finally, the Merced area is also not at risk of mudflows due to its relatively flat topography and distance from any hillsides. The proposed project will have ***no impact*** to the potential for inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.

The *Bellevue Community Plan* maintains and expands the open space designations within areas prone to flooding. The BCP does not cause inundation areas to expand nor would weaken the Lake Yosemite earthen dam. In this regard, developments allowed by the *Bellevue Community Plan* will have less of an impact from flooding than assumed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not substantially change the nature or increase the magnitude of these potential impacts, or the conclusions of the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have the same or less level of impact as noted above. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.8.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of development in the *Bellevue Community Plan*, including that previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* made two conclusions: 1) Project-level water quality and flooding impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level by proposed General Plan policies. Additionally, state, county and local regulations would reduce the potential for cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts to less than significant. Thus, the proposed General Plan would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact; and, 2) development would have a significant cumulative impact related to groundwater extraction, and that even with implementation of mitigation measures #3.8-5a through 3.8-5h of the *2030 General Plan EIR*, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is similar to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale and type of facilities that would be constructed and the total population that would be accommodated, and is within the scope of development envisioned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As a result, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not result in a demand for groundwater that exceeds the previous estimate. The *Bellevue Community Plan's* cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of this previously identified cumulative impact and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.8.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to hydrology and water quality has come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.8.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not have additional substantial adverse effects on hydrology and water quality. The minor changes in the *Bellevue Community Plan* to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential

impacts related to hydrology and water quality, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.9 LAND USE & PLANNING

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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, Community 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.9.1 Relevant Elements of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan

The *Bellevue Community Plan* is located within the City's SUDP/SOI and situated in an unincorporated area of Merced County between an urbanized area and the growing UC Merced Campus. The BCP was crafted to be consistent with the goals and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Among other features, the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* envisioned: 1) a corridor of mixed uses blending with lower density uses that either exist or is planned to exist to the north and south of the project area; 2) transit and other circulation connections to urbanizing areas to the east of Lake Road; 3) use of the City's Urban Design Guidelines; and 4) formation of a jobs and employment corridor suited to new industries and offices that would want to located next to UC Merced.

3.9.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Physically divide an established community.

Potential impacts related to physically dividing an established community were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because 1) the General Plan is a continuation of the existing urban area of the City and would not result in the physical division of the existing community; 2) new guiding principles have been added to the *2030 General Plan* for preparation of Community Plans which require connectivity with existing and planned urban uses; and 3) of policies and implementing actions listed in the General Plan (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.9-1, pages 3.9-19). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to physically dividing an established community, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue*

Community Plan, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Land use plan, policies, or regulations.

Potential impacts related to conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that implementation of the policies and implementing actions in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan (2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.9-2, pages 3.9-20)*, and the LAFCO process, would result in less than significant land use impacts related to conflicts with other plans, policies and regulations applicable in the Merced area. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans applicable to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, including the *Bellevue Community Plan* site. Therefore, there would be ***no impact*** with a habitat conservation plan or a natural community conservation plan. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.9.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts in 2030 General Plan EIR

Cumulative impacts related to Land Use and Planning from the implementation of *Bellevue Community Plan*, which is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, were previously analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in conjunction with cumulative development, would not result in significant cumulative impact associated with land use and planning. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is within the City's General Plan's Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI), and is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As a result, it would make the same contribution to cumulative impacts as envisioned in the previously examined *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.9.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to land use and planning

have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*. In 2013, although UC Merced modified its Long Range Development Plan, the changes were not significantly different than previously examined (an addendum was prepared for the project environmental review), and information from the updated plan was available and used in the preparation of the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.9.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. The changes to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts from land use and planning or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.10.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

No Mineral Resource Zones or mineral resource recovery sites exist within the City of Merced or in the area designated for future expansion of the City (the SUDP/SOI). As a result the General Plan does not identify location of resource sectors, nor are policies for management of mineral resources identified.

3.10.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Mineral resources.

As analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* and stated above, implementation of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or residents of the state. Therefore the *Bellevue Community Plan* would have **no impact**. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Mineral resource recovery site.

As analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* and stated above, implementation of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not 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. Therefore the *Bellevue Community Plan* would have **no impact**. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.10.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

There would **be no cumulative effects** to mineral resources as analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

3.10.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to mineral resources have

come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.10.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not have a substantial adverse effect on mineral resources. The changes to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to mineral resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.11 NOISE

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) substantially increase traffic noise levels, and exceed the City’s noise standards and result in potential noise impacts to new sensitive receptors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) substantially increase traffic noise levels, and result in a significant increase in overall traffic noise levels at existing sensitive receptors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) result in a substantial increase in construction activities which will contribute to the overall ambient noise environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) result in a substantial increase in construction activities which could contribute to vibration levels at building facades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) result in a new significant impact related to exposing new noise-sensitive receptors to railroad noise levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) result in a substantial increase in noise levels in excess of the City standards, including stationary noise sources such as automotive and truck repair facilities, tire installation centers, car washes, loading docks, corporation yards, parks and play fields.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) result in a new significant impact related to exposing new noise sensitive receptors to aircraft operations noise levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.11.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

Noise sources assessed in this initial study derive from roads, railroads, airports, fixed-sites such as industrial uses and general community noises. The *Bellevue Community Plan* area does not contain either railroads or airports, and these (Castle Airport, Merced Regional Airport, Burlington Northern Santa Fe RR and Union Pacific RR) noise sources are located approximately 3 miles and 5 miles from the plan area, respectively. The Merced Medical Center is located approximately 1 mile south of the southwest boundary of the plan and operates a Bell 407 helicopter for emergency airlift services which is operated as needed 24 hours a day. There are no industrial sites adjacent to the *BCP*, though light manufacturing related to research and development parks are planned to be sited within the area along Bellevue Road, away from existing rural residential homes. The *BCP* planning area is bounded by two arterial roads (G Street and Cardella Road) and contains two arterial streets (Gardner Road and Bellevue Road) that will carry varying amounts of regional traffic through the *BCP* plan area. There are no state highways or routes within or adjacent to the area. Highway 59 is located 2 miles to the west and State Route 99 is located approximately 3.5 miles to the south.

3.11.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Noise impacts to new sensitive receptors.

Potential impacts related to ambient traffic noise levels to new sensitive receptors were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would have a less than significant impact because policies and implementing actions in the General Plan (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-1, pages 3.11-28 & 29) will reduce the noise impacts within and surrounding the planning area. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Additionally, as part of the effort to create neighborhoods that emphasize walking, bicycling and transit use, the BCP supports the slowing of vehicle speeds, which in turn will reduce traffic-related noise without negatively affecting level of service. These efforts will occur throughout the plan area, and most notably on Mandeville lane and Gardner Road, and to a lesser extent along Bellevue Road, along some segments. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to increased ambient traffic noise levels or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Traffic noise.

Potential impacts related to ambient traffic noise levels to existing sensitive receptors were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a significant and unavoidable impact because, in many cases, an increase in roadway noise levels at existing noise sensitive uses is expected to occur despite City policies and implementing actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-2, pages 3.11-29). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to ambient traffic noise levels to existing sensitive receptors, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and its impact would also be ***significant and unavoidable***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Construction activities which will contribute to the overall ambient noise environment.

Potential impacts related to an increase in construction noise were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously

envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because: 1) the noise increase would be of short duration, and would likely occur primarily during daytime hours; and 2) the Merced General Plan Noise Element provides policies and implementing actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-3, pages 3.11-30) for reducing equipment noise levels. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) in the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to an increase in construction noise, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Vibration levels at building facades.

Potential impacts related to an increase in construction-related vibrations were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact if mitigated. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) in the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and subject to the policies and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to an increase in construction-related vibrations, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and the *BCP* would also have a ***less than significant impact with the same General Plan mitigation measures applied***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: Railroad noise levels.

Potential impacts related to railroad noise were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because the City of Merced General Plan Noise Element has developed implementing actions and criteria (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-5, pages 3.11-32) for reducing noise levels at new developments within the City. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and is located out of the range of significant noise impacts from railroads. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to railroad noise or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: City noise level standards.

Potential impacts related to increase in noise levels from stationary noise sources were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because the City of Merced General Plan Noise Element has developed Implementing Actions and criteria (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-6, pages 3.11-33) for reducing stationary noise source levels within the City. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) in the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to increase in noise levels from stationary noise sources, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold g: Aircraft operations noise levels.

Potential impacts related to aircraft operations noise levels were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result ***in a less than significant impact*** because the City of Merced General Plan Noise Element has developed Implementing Actions and criteria (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.11-7, pages 3.11-33) for reducing aircraft operations noise impacts at new development. The *BCP* planning area is outside the “area of influence” of both the Merced Regional Airport and Castle Airport. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the development (population, roadways and land uses) in the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to aircraft operations noise levels, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.11.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative noise impacts from the implementation of *Bellevue Community Plan*, which is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, were previously analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. That *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, in conjunction with cumulative development, would result in a less than significant cumulative impact. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude and distribution of land uses, and would be applicable to the same policies, standards and mitigation measures. As a result, it would make the same or smaller contribution to cumulative impacts previously examined *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A smaller contribution to traffic noise by the *Bellevue Community Plan* is possible given its emphasis to reduce the speeds

and associated noise level of traffic along some plan area roadways. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.11.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to noise have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.11.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified impact from noise, and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. The changes to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts from noise or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.12 POPULATION & HOUSING

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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 housing or people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.12.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

Since incorporation, the City has grown to an estimated population of 81,130 in 2014, according to the Department of Finance. By 2030, the City’s population is projected to be 116,800 persons, according to data from the Merced County Association of Governments. It is worth noting that the projected population within the City of Merced SUDP/SOI, as proposed by the General Plan, would be approximately 155,000 in 2030.

One of the factors that can contribute to an increase in demand for housing and population is expansion of the employment base. The 2000 Census classified 22,567 civilian and non-civilian persons in the City of Merced labor force. According to the City’s General Plan, in the City of Merced, the “Educational, Health and Social Services” industry employed the most people at 25.3 percent. The second largest employment industry was the “Retail Trade” industry, which had 11.1 percent of the total employed persons in the City. According to the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) Draft EIR, the campus (at full development) would result in about 6,000 indirect and induced jobs in the regional economy. The number of indirect and induced jobs was approximately 2,600 in 2005-06, and is projected to be 4,000 in 2025-26. About 32 percent of these jobs would be, as expected, in wholesale and retail trade sectors, about 37 percent in services, about 11 percent in construction, and the balance distributed among other sectors (EPS, 2000).

3.12.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Inducement of substantial population growth in the area.

Potential impacts related to inducement of substantial population growth in the area were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact to inducing substantial population growth in the area, either directly or indirectly, because the

Merced Vision 2030 General Plan includes policies and standards (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.12-1, pages 3.12-8 & 9) designed to regulate future growth that would be allowed under the Plan in an orderly and planned manner. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would develop substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to inducement of substantial population growth in the area, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Displacement of existing housing or people.

Potential impacts related to loss of substantial amounts of housing were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact to the displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units or people because the majority of development permitted by the General Plan would either occur in infill locations, on undeveloped parcels, or on parcels that can be subdivided rather than through large scale redevelopment of already developed land and buildings. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to loss of substantial amounts of housing, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.12.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative population and housing impacts of developing the *Bellevue Community Plan* are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that significant cumulative impacts to population and housing could occur as a result of implementation of the project; however, the proposed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes policies and standards designed to limit leap-frog development and provide for an orderly transition from rural to urban land uses. Therefore, ***no cumulative impact*** to population and housing was anticipated. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the growth in population that it would accommodate, and would be developed consistent with the urban expansion policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, cumulative population and housing impacts have been adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

3.12.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to population and housing have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.12.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not add a substantial adverse effect to population and housing. The changes in the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to population and housing or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously assessed impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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:

a) Police protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Fire protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Other public facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

3.13.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

Annexed portions and the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be served by the City of Merced’s Police and Fire Departments; unincorporated areas would remain under the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff’s and Fire Departments, respectively. While police protection is staged from a central headquarters with mobile units in the field at all times, fire protection services function from several stations placed strategically throughout the community. Additional fire stations are added as urban growth expands. The City uses thresholds to assure adequate police and fire protection services exist as the City grows. New stations, either in or near the BCP planning area, help to meet the fire protection threshold. The Merced City School District and Merced Union High School District, autonomous governmental agencies separate from the City, would serve students within the *BCP* planning area. The City coordinates with the school districts concerning: 1) the locations of future school sites; 2) the collection of developer impact fees; and 3) joint activities and facilities (i.e. school parks), however. Merced College and UC Merced are not located within the *BCP* planning area, though UC Merced abuts its eastern border. Libraries in Merced County are provided by the Merced County Library System, which has one main library in Merced. Libraries at Merced College and UC Merced serve their relative populations. The citizens of Merced enjoy health care facilities provided by Merced’s hospital, surgical and diagnostic centers, urgent care facilities, convalescent facilities, as well as many private physicians. Mercy Medical Center Merced is located approximately one mile south of the *BCP*’s southwestern planning boundary. A wide range of federal, state and local government facilities are located throughout Merced, but generally concentrated in the Downtown area.

3.13.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Law enforcement services.

Potential impacts related to law enforcement services were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because: 1) the City will continue to implement a variety of policies and implementation actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.14-1, pages 3.14-13) designed to ensure that new development projects plan and finance future required protection services; and 2) the City maintains sufficient public protection facilities, equipment, and personnel to serve the City's needs. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed and served substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to law enforcement services, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Fire protection services.

Potential impacts related to fire protection services were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because: 1) the City will continue to implement a variety of policies and implementation actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.14-2, pages 3.14-14) designed to ensure that new development projects plan and finance future required fire protection services and facilities; and 2) new development will also be subject to the Building Code and the Fire Code with regard to building construction and related items such as the care of vacant lots and the storage of flammable liquids. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed and served substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to fire protection services, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: School services.

Potential impacts related to school services were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in ***no impact*** because: 1) the City will continue to implement a

variety of policies and implementation actions (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.14-3, pages 3.14-15) designed facilitate the provision of adequate school facilities, grounds and community-related infrastructure; 2) future school sites have been indicated on the City's General Plan Land Use Diagram, but only reflect a general location based on projected needs; and 3) proposition 1A/SB 50 has resulted in full State preemption of school mitigation. Satisfaction of the statutory requirements by a developer is deemed to be "full and complete mitigation" in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. For example, the *BCP* Character Area Map includes the general location of future school sites. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to school services, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Increase in the demand for other public services and facilities.

Potential impacts related to other public services and facilities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact to other public services and facilities due to implementation of the General Plan policies described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, (General Plan Impact #3.14-4, pages 3.14-16 & 17). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to other public services and facilities or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.13.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative public services impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, designed to be consistent with the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that a significant cumulative impact associated with public service needs would not occur. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially the same as the previously envisioned project in terms of the population growth it would facilitate, the cumulative public services impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be the same as the impacts of the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

3.13.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to public services have

come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.13.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not add a substantial adverse effect to public services. The differences between the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to public services or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously assessed impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.14 RECREATION

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a) increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that it requires the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) result in a new significant impact associated with the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.14.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The proposed park facilities within the *BCP* are consistent with those contemplated in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and include: neighborhood park sites, ranging in size from 3 to 8 acres each, either as part of a local elementary school or as a separate facility; a large Open Space-Recreational land use located west of Lake Yosemite along the Tower Lateral (between Bellevue Road and Old Lake Road); a community park site; and open space corridors, some of which include a recreational path. Existing or planned recreational resources adjacent to the site include: Lake Yosemite; an open space corridor with Class I Bike Paths planned to be constructed beneath large PG&E transmission lines, west of the plan area; a Class I Bike Path along Lake Road; a pathway connection along Lake Yosemite is planned in the southeast corner of the Lake Yosemite Estates project; a bike/pedestrian path is planned adjacent to the UC Merced loop road, providing visual access to natural grassland resources to the north and east of the university; and pedestrian/bike paths and/or emphasized roadways that connect with the university academic core and adjacent university community.

3.14.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Use of recreational facilities.

Potential impacts related to increased use or need for new park facilities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that increased demand associated with an increase in population would not significantly accelerate the deterioration of existing park areas or recreational facilities, and a less than significant impact would occur due to: 1) implementation of the policies proposed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan (2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.13-1, pages 3.13-7 & 8)*; 2) adherence to the guidelines and standards in the *Merced Park and Open Space Master Plan*; and 3) collection of fees for development of new parks. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to increased use or need for new park facilities, or the

conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

Potential impacts related to construction of new recreational facilities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because: 1) the acquisition of additional park land and open space will continue as development occurs through use of the City's Park Dedication Ordinance, the required dedication of creekside open space, the payment of Park In-Lieu fees, and the Public Facilities Financing Plan (impact fee); 2) the expansion, planning, development, and use of joint facilities are additional means to provide recreational opportunities and to offset needs of park and recreational facilities; and 3) the policies set forth in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan (2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.13-2, page 3.18-8)* are designed to ensure that future development within the General Plan planning area would not create a need for construction or expansion of recreational facilities beyond what was anticipated in the General Plan. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to construction of new recreational facilities, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.14.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts to parks and recreational facilities from the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, designed to be consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. This EIR concluded that there are no other projects that, when combined together (within the SUDP/SOI), along with build-out of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would compound or increase environmental effects on park facilities, and would ***not result in a significant cumulative impact***. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially consistent with the previously envisioned project in terms of the population growth it would facilitate, the *Bellevue Community Plan's* cumulative impacts on parks and recreational facilities have been adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*.

3.14.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to recreation and parks have

come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.14.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not add a substantial adverse effect to recreation and parks. The changes to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to recreation and parks or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously assessed impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.15. TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) result in an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system and/or exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.	✓ ¹			
b) 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.				✓
c) substantial increase hazards due to a design feature) e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).			✓	
d) result in inadequate emergency access.			✓	
e) result in inadequate parking capacity.				✓
f) conflict with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation.				✓

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.15.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The current circulation network of the BCP project area is defined by two-lane roads of various classifications (arterial, collector and local) that serve: 1) regional and community destinations within and near the project area, including El Capitan High School, Mercy Medical Center, Merced College and UC Merced, and 2) local rural residential neighborhoods. G Street, Bellevue Road, Golf Road, Farmland Avenue and Lake Road provide access to the regional and community destinations, while all others serve neighborhoods. The following bikeways exist: a bike path along Lake Road; a “shoulder” bikeway along Bellevue Road; and a bike lane along G Street. No sidewalks exist in the BCP project area. Transit service between UC Merced and the City traverses along Lake Road.

The *BCP* Circulation Plan contains all essential elements assumed in and consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, including: 1) the alignments and types of street classifications; 2) connectivity to adjacent properties and planning areas; 3) a transit corridor between UC Merced and the *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan* transit circle; 4) Bellevue Road designed to accommodate anticipated regional traffic needs as part of Merced’s “Loop Road;” 5) Scenic Corridor of “gateway” designs for Bellevue Road and Lake Road; and 6) complete street designs incorporating pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and transit.

3.15.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Increase in Traffic beyond Service Thresholds.

Potential impacts related to roadway level of service were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that while implementation of the mitigation measures (*2030 General Plan EIR*, Mitigation Measures #3.15-1a and #3.15-1b) and the goals, policies, and implementing actions of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will help reduce traffic impacts resulting from implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the traffic analysis prepared for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concludes that a significant number of roadways within the planning area of the General Plan will be operating at LOS of E or F after additional lanes are added. This conclusion, and the absence of guaranteed funding for the majority of the roadway improvement projects identified in the traffic conditions analysis makes the traffic impacts associated with build-out of the proposed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* significant and unavoidable (*2030 General Plan EIR, General Plan Impact #3.15-1, pages 3.15-26-30*). Within the *BCP* project area, only one road segment (Bellevue Road between G Street and Gardner Road) is forecasted to operate at a substandard Level of Service, even with six travel lanes. According to the *2030 General Plan EIR*, all other roadways in the *BCP* meet the City's LOS thresholds with planned road improvements. Arterial Street right-of-ways and associated number of lanes that are proposed as part of the *BCP* are consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the *2030 General Plan EIR*. This is summarized in Table 2 below.

In addition, as described in Appendix D of the *BCP*, the traffic volume generated by anticipated development in the *BCP* is anticipated to be almost 20% lower than traffic volumes projected in the General Plan. This is primarily the result of modifications to the mix of land uses in the *BCP* as compared to the General Plan. However, greater reductions in traffic volumes could be achieved if future traffic studies take into account more dispersed traffic patterns and mobility mode splits that are part of the *BCP*. The overall benefits of the potential reductions in traffic volumes are reflected in the Plan in terms of recommendations for reductions in the number of traffic lanes (and possibly right-of-way), which could result in lower capital costs for future infrastructure and lower ongoing maintenance costs.

Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to roadway level of service, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and could actually reduce impacts. No further environmental evaluation is required. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also result in a **significant and unavoidable impact**, but not to any greater extent than found with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

Table 2: Arterial Streets within BCP Planning Area				
Road Segment	General Plan (GP) Data			Bellevue Community Plan Project
	GP Table 4.2	GP Traffic Study	GP Forecast LOS	
G Street Cardella to Bellevue	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
G Street Bellevue to Old Lake	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6	6 lanes	LOS D with 6 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Bellevue Road G to Gardner/Golf	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	6 lanes ¹	LOS E with 6 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP's finding that 4 lanes may be adequate, and also provides for the use of side streets on either side of Bellevue Road.
Bellevue Road Gardner/Golf to Campus Pkwy	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	6 lanes	LOS D with 6 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP's finding that 4 lanes may be adequate, and also provides for the use of side streets on either side of Bellevue Road.
Cardella Road	<i>Divided Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Gardner Road Cardella to Foothill	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Gardner Road Foothill to Bellevue	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP's findings that a 4 to 3 lane roadway (one travel lane in each direction and a turn lane) may be adequate.
Golf Road Bellevue to Old Lake	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS F with 2 lanes LOS C+ with 4 lanes	Although no changes are proposed, the BCP recommends a traffic study be prepared to confirm the BCP's findings that a 2 or 3 lane roadway may be adequate.

¹ Per the GP Traffic Study, even with 6 lanes, this segment is forecasted to experience LOS E Conditions. A statement of overriding considerations was adopted by the City as part of the EIR for the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan.

Threshold b: Change in Air Traffic Patterns.

Potential impacts related to air traffic patterns were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because adherence to the policies and implementing actions contained in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will ensure safety risks associated with air traffic patterns are minimized in the vicinity of the Merced Regional Airport and the Castle Airport (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.15-2, page 3.15-30). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The BCP project area is not located in the airport influence zones of either the Merced Regional Airport or Castle Airport, nor does the project involve planes or helicopters or include the siting or adjustment to an existing airport. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to air traffic patterns or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Due to site-specific characteristics of the BCP, the project will have **no impact** to air traffic patterns. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Increased Road Hazards.

Potential impacts related to hazards caused by design features or incompatible uses were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because compliance with the policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the City's Roadway Design Standards will ensure that there will not be a significant increase in hazards due to design features or incompatible uses as the City General Plan is implemented (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.15-3, pages 3.15-30 and 31). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to hazards caused by design features or incompatible uses, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. This includes the need for road intersections in hilly terrain to meet minimum sight-distance safety-related design standards. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a **less than significant impact**. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Inadequate Emergency Access.

Potential impacts related to inadequate emergency access were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in a less than significant impact because

compliance with the policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the City's Roadway Design Standards will ensure that adequate emergency vehicle access is provided as the General Plan is implemented (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.15-4, page 3.15-31). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to inadequate emergency access, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: Inadequate Parking Capacity.

Potential impacts related to inadequate parking capacity were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in no impact because compliance with the parking space requirements contained in the City of Merced Zoning Ordinance will ensure that new development provides adequate parking in the plan area of the General Plan (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.15-5, page 3.15-31). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and is subject to the City's parking regulations. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to inadequate parking capacity, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also result in ***no impact*** to parking capacity. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: Alternative Transportation Policies.

Potential impacts related to project conflicts with alternative transportation were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in no impact on alternative transportation policies because the *2030 General Plan* includes transportation policies that provide for future transit stations/transitways and an integrated system of pedestrian and bicycle trails (*2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.15-6, page 3.15-31). The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The BCP includes plans for alternative transportation modes. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to project conflicts with alternative transportation, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also result in ***no impact*** regarding alternative transportation policies. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.15.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

A Statement of Overriding Considerations was made as part of the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the significant, cumulatively considerable and unavoidable transportation/traffic related impact described in “threshold a.” The *Bellevue Community Plan* is consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the magnitude, distribution of land uses and transportation plan, and would adhere to the policies, standards and mitigation measures of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As a result, it would make up to the same contribution to cumulative impacts as envisioned in the previously examined *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A smaller contribution to traffic impacts by the *Bellevue Community Plan* is possible given the BCP’s emphasis on alternate transportation, transit-ready development design, and proximity to UC Merced which contains a large population that will benefit from such features. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan* are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.15.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

Since certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR*, the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist has been amended to remove parking-related impacts, and the checklist question related to traffic impacts now requires a consideration of not just the capacity of street systems but all modes of transportation. These changes do not affect the analysis completed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* because: 1) communities can elect to assess parking-related impacts; and 2) the complete street policies of the City’s General Plan anticipated the importance and need to ensure that roadways planned in the City’s SUDP/SOI are designed for all modes of transportation. The *BCP* reinforces those policies. There are no additional changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken and no new information has become available since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis or change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.15.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not adversely affect public transit plans, bicycle plans, or pedestrian systems. In addition, the *Bellevue Community Plan* is not near a public airport, would not affect the nearby private airport, and would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or result in adequate emergency access. The *Bellevue Community Plan*, as with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would have a significant and unavoidable impact on the segment of Bellevue Road between G Street and Gardner Road (extended). The changes from the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to transportation and traffic or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.16 UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) exceed water treatment requirements of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) require or result in the construction of new 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, that construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) result in a new significant impact associated with new or expanded water supply entitlements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate 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"/>
f) be served by a landfill with insufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) be out of compliance 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"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.16.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

Potable water and landscape irrigation needs of the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be served by the City of Merced through an extensive system of wells, distribution lines and storage tanks. A water line currently exists in G Street and Bellevue Road, connecting to a water tank located on the UC Merced Campus. There are no existing recycled water facilities within or in the vicinity of the project site. The City of Merced owns and operates the City of Merced wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) which has a planned service capacity of 20 million gallons/day (mgd) for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A sewer line currently exists in G Street and Bellevue Road, terminating and serving Phase 1A of the UC Merced Campus. The *City of Merced 2002 Storm Drainage Master Plan* addresses the collection and disposal of surface water runoff in the City’s 1997 SUDP; an update is needed to address the new SUDP/SOI boundary of the General Plan. Nonhazardous municipal waste from the *Bellevue Community Plan* site would be sent to the Merced County Highway 59 Landfill. PG&E and MID provide energy services to the *BCP* planning area.

3.16.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Compliance with Wastewater Treatment Requirements of the CVRWQCB.

Potential impacts related to exceeding wastewater treatment requirements were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that since the City is required to comply with the CVRWQCB when expanding the WWTP to support the General Plan, implementation of the General Plan would not result in exceeding CVRWQCB wastewater treatment requirements, and, the impact is considered less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to exceeding wastewater treatment requirements, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: Impacts from Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

Potential impacts related to construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that, with regard to water facilities, implementation of policies and practices described in the *2030 General Plan EIR* (General Plan Impact #3.16-2, page 3.16-9) will reduce impacts to less than significant. The analysis concluded that, with regard to sewer facilities, the City of Merced has already anticipated the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity to serve the expanded SUDP/SOI (including the planning area of the *BCP*), and, plans for doubling the capacity of the current treatment plant from 10 mgd to 20 mgd have already been completed, and an EIR prepared and certified. This additional capacity will exceed the anticipated waste water generation of the City's proposed 2030 population (including that population in the *BCP* planning area). As this project has already been approved, the impact is less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Impacts from Storm Water Drainage Facilities.

Potential impacts related to construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision*

2030 General Plan, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that with implementation of the policies described in the *2030 General Plan EIR* (General Plan Impact #3.16-3, page 3.16-10), and utilization of Best Management Practices from the *Storm Water Management Plan*, the impact is less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold d: Impacts from Water Supply Improvements.

Potential impacts related to new or expanded water supply entitlements were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that even though groundwater levels will decrease in the region, the proposed General Plan will not require new or expanded water projects that would result in a significant environmental impact, because of the following: 1) implementation of the proposed General Plan policies and implementing actions described in the *2030 General Plan EIR* (General Plan Impact #3.16-4, pages 3.16-12 &13); 2) the continuation of water conservation measures and Best Management Practices; and, 3) adherence to State and local regulations. The impact from build-out of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* was determined to be less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to new or expanded water supply entitlements, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold e: Wastewater Treatment Capacity.

Potential impacts related to inadequate wastewater service capacity were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the impact would be less than significant because the City will continue to implement a variety of policies and implementation actions (described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.16-5, page 3.16-15) designed to ensure that new development projects plan and finance future required wastewater infrastructure consistent with adopted City-wide master and specific plans. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to inadequate wastewater service capacity, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the

previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold f: Solid Waste Disposal Capacity.

Potential impacts related to solid waste disposal services were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the impact would be less than significant because the policies of the proposed General Plan (described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.16-6, page 3.16-16) will help reduce the amount of solid waste generated and increase recycling efforts in the City, and the landfill has available capacity to service the General Plan through build-out. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to solid waste disposal services, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold g: Solid Waste Statutes and Regulations.

Potential impacts related to solid waste disposal were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would have a less than significant impact because: 1) the City complies with all other federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste and will continue to do so in the future; and 2) policies and implementation actions included as part of the proposed General Plan (described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, General Plan Impact #3.16-7, page 3.16-16) address additional solid waste handling services. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to solid waste disposal or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a *less than significant impact*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.16.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, included in the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning utilities and service systems are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would result in cumulatively significant impacts related to water and stormwater, but not to wastewater or solid waste. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially consistent with the

previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development and the population growth it would facilitate, its cumulative impacts on utilities and service systems are adequately addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified significant cumulative impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.16.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available and no new regulations related to utilities and service systems have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

3.16.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would not add a substantial adverse effect to utilities and service systems. The changes to the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of potential impacts to utilities and service systems or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.17 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Thresholds of Significance: The proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on the environment if it will:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) result in a cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact of global climate change.	✓ ¹			
b) conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.			✓	
c) would result in a new significant impact associated with climate change influences on Merced’s water resources.			✓	

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III “Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.”

3.17.1 Relevant Elements of the Bellevue Community Plan

The *Bellevue Community Plan* incorporates the goals and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* that pertain to greenhouse gas emission reductions that are found throughout the General Plan, and concentrated in the following elements: Land Use, Transportation, Sustainable Development, Urban Design and Urban Expansion. Taking a two-pronged approach, the *BCP* incorporates these goals and policies and identifies future actions for subsequent development projects. For example, the *BCP* itself emphasizes a transit-oriented plan, and establishes standards for future projects to manifest such goal. As the City’s *2012 Climate Action Plan (CAP)* is grounded in the goals and policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, so too is the *BCP*.

3.17.2 Analysis of Project

Threshold a: Cumulatively Considerable Incremental Contribution to Global Climate Change.

Potential impacts related to global climate change were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the air quality impact analysis in Sections 3.3 and 3.17 of the *2030 General Plan EIR* include mitigation measures at the local level to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with existing plans and policies to address global climate change, but that the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would still result in a **significant, cumulatively considerable and unavoidable** impact. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the City’s General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to and subject to the policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to global climate change, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold b: GHG Emission Reduction Plan, Policy or Regulation.

Potential impacts related to conflicts with any applicable GHG reduction plan, policy or regulation were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* would have a less than significant impact with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, because implementation of General Plan policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent practicable will ensure City of Merced General Plan consistency with applicable plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts to conflicts with any applicable GHG reduction plan, policy or regulation, or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Threshold c: Climate Change Influences on Merced's Water Resources.

Potential impacts related to climate change influences on water resources were analyzed in the *2030 General Plan EIR* with the associated *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, which included the area planned to be developed as part of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. The analysis concluded that it is reasonably expected that the impacts of global climate change on the City's water supply would be less than significant. The *Bellevue Community Plan* is designed consistent with the General Plan, and would be constructed substantially similar to that planned in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. As such, the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or increase the magnitude of the potential impacts due to climate change influences on water resources or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR* as analyzed for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Therefore, development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, would also have a ***less than significant impact***. No further environmental evaluation is required.

3.17.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, included in the previously analyzed *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* concerning greenhouse gas emissions are addressed in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *2030 General Plan EIR* concluded that policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will reduce global climate change impacts; however, build-out of the General Plan will nonetheless result in a ***significant, unavoidable and cumulatively considerable impact*** to Climate Change. As the *Bellevue Community Plan* is substantially consistent with the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in terms of the scale of development and the population growth it would facilitate, its cumulative impacts on utilities and service systems are adequately addressed in

the *2030 General Plan EIR*. The *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in a substantial increase in the severity of the previously identified significant cumulative impacts and therefore a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not required.

3.17.4 Changes in Circumstances or New Information that could affect the Earlier Environmental Analysis

There are no changes in circumstances in which the *Bellevue Community Plan* would be undertaken. No new information has become available related to greenhouse gas emissions have come into effect since the certification of the *2030 General Plan EIR* that would alter the previous analysis and change its conclusions relative to the *Bellevue Community Plan*. Although the City adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2012, it does not pose any greater requirements on development than the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, or the greenhouse gas reduction targets of the State of California. As evidenced by Appendix F of the City's *CAP*, the recommended greenhouse gas reduction actions of the *CAP* are substantially based on the policies of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

3.17.5 Conclusion

The *Bellevue Community Plan* would have a less than significant effect related to greenhouse gas emissions. The differences between the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and the *Bellevue Community Plan* would not change the nature or magnitude of potential impacts from greenhouse gas emissions or the conclusions in the *2030 General Plan EIR*. No further environmental evaluation is required.

Section IV

4.1 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
<i>Finding:</i>				
A) Does the project have the potential to:				
1) Substantially degrade the quality of the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened plant or animal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For footnotes 1 and 2 (if noted), refer to Section III, "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts."

Note: A Statement of Overriding Considerations was previously adopted for Potentially Significant Impacts in association with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Final Program EIR (City Council Resolution #2030-63).

Impact Discussion & Conclusions:

- A1) ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: With mitigation and other considerations established by the *Merced Vision 203 General Plan*, the *BCP* Project **does not** have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment.

The analysis provided in the initial study for the *BCP* Project has shown that the quality of the environment will not be substantially degraded provided that (a) the Project is implemented as presented; (b) the Project is designed, constructed and operated consistent with all applicable federal, state and local regulations; and (c) mitigation measures as described in Appendix A of this addendum are applied. The *BCP* project has been designed to avoid or minimize significant effects on those aspects of the environment or would mitigate the significant effect to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur.

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

Consistent with the Findings of the previously adopted *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the Biological Resources Section (III-4) of this Expanded Initial Study 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.

- 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 project area is not believed to support substantial amounts of habitat for fish and wildlife species. The Project is not expected to substantially reduce the population of fish and wildlife species below self-sustaining levels.

- 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 Initial Study, surveys and implementation of development-related protocols will assure that plant or animal communities will not be eliminated as a result of the *BCP* project.

- 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 Expanded Initial Study, it is unlikely that the Project may impact habitat for various species. Measures are required to remove individual animals that may occupy the construction sites.

- 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 Expanded Initial Study, the Project site is believed to contain no examples of objects that will be historically or archeologically significant. 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 which are cumulatively considerable.

The Program Environmental Impact Report conducted for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (SCH#2008071069) have recognized that future development and build-out of the SUDP/SOI will result in cumulative and unavoidable impacts to Aesthetics, Agricultural, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, Utilities/Services (with respect to water supply), and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In conjunction with this conclusion, the City has adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for these impacts (Resolution #2030-63) which is herein incorporated 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 already been previously considered by the certified General Plan PEIR and the associated Statements of Overriding Considerations. This Expanded Initial Study 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 would suggest that the project has the potential to achieve short-term goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals. The Project has been found to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, whether through the *BCP* project description, the goals, policies or implementing actions of the General Plan, or mitigation measures thereof.

- 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 2030 General Plan* will have significant adverse effects on human beings. These include among others 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 EIRs. The previously-certified *2030 General Plan EIR* and the associated Statements of Overriding Considerations addressed those cumulative impacts; hence, there is no need to address them again as part of this Project.

The previous EIR has concluded that these significant adverse impacts are accounted for in the mitigation measures incorporated into the *2030 General Plan EIR*. In addition, a Statement of Overriding Considerations have been adopted by City Council Resolution #2030-63 that indicates that the significant impacts associated with development of the Project are offset by the benefits that will be realized by implementing the General Plan. 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 *2030 General Plan EIR* in an abundance of caution, 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 implementation of the *BCP* Project have been described in this Expanded Initial Study. Mitigation measures of the *2030 General Plan EIR* are also applicable to the *BCP* Project, and are provided for in Appendix A of this initial study. As with implementation of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, these measures will reduce impacts as the *BCP* project area is developed.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Chapter 4 of the *2030 General Plan EIR* for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* analyzed a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives for their comparative environmental superiority as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), including 1) the existing General Plan, or “No Project Alternative;” 2) Reduced Project Area and Modified Reduced Project Area; and, 3) Concentrated Growth Alternative. Based on the analyses developed in the EIR, the “Reduced Project Area” Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative because it reduces more potential impacts than other alternatives relative to the proposed General Plan and serves to reduce the severity of three significant cumulative impacts (agriculture, air quality, and transportation/traffic). The “No Project Alternative” (existing *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*) would avoid all significant environmental impacts of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. However, the “No Project Alternative” would not meet any of the project objectives. The analysis presented in this expanded Initial Study demonstrates that the *Bellevue Community Plan* will not result in new or more severe environmental impacts than the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and that the *2030 General Plan EIR* adequately addresses environmental impacts of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. Therefore, the alternative analysis for the previously envisioned *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, as described in the *2030 General Plan EIR*, is adequate for the *Bellevue Community Plan*. No further evaluation of additional alternatives is required.