

CITY OF MERCED

"Gateway to Yosemite"



Committee Members:

Jerry Callister, Carole McCoy, Susan Gerhardt, Melbourne Gwin, Jr., Dan Holmes, Sharon Hunt Dicker, Bill Hvidt, Richard Kirby, Lee Kolligian, Walt Lopes, Kenneth Robbins, Steve Simmons, Justi Smith, Bill Spriggs, Greg Thompson, Steve Tinetti, Jeff Pennington, and Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo

WELCOME TO YOUR BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Thursday, June 12, 2014

Regular Session - 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM

SAM PIPES CONFERENCE ROOM
678 W. 18th STREET
MERCED, CALIFORNIA

(www.cityofmerced.org)

COPIES OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO EACH ITEM OF BUSINESS REFERRED TO ON THE AGENDA ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT. ANY PERSON WHO HAS QUESTIONS CONCERNING ANY AGENDA ITEM MAY CALL THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO MAKE INQUIRY REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE ITEM DESCRIBED ON THE AGENDA. PRIOR TO EACH REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE, EXTRA COPIES OF THE AGENDA PACKET WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE AD-HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SITE AND ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CITYOFMERCED.ORG.

BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN AD-HOC CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JUNE 12, 2014
AGENDA

THE PUBLIC HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS OR COMMENT AT THE TIME SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS ARE CONSIDERED. NORMALLY, EACH AGENDA ITEM WILL HAVE A STAFF PRESENTATION, FOLLOWED BY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS. **IF REQUESTED BY AN AUDIENCE MEMBER**, THE CHAIRPERSON WILL THEN ALLOW THE PUBLIC TO MAKE COMMENTS OR ASK QUESTIONS. AFTER ANY PUBLIC INPUT, THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MAY HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSION BEFORE TAKING ACTION OR MOVING TO THE NEXT AGENDA ITEM.

- A. CALL TO ORDER
- B. ROLL CALL
- C. APPROVE MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2013
- D. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

AT THIS TIME, ANY MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE MAY COMMENT ON ANY MATTER WHICH IS IN THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE, BUT WHICH IS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA. PLEASE LIMIT YOUR COMMENTS TO FIVE (5) MINUTES

- E. PLANNING PROCESS / NEXT STEPS
- F. OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT PLAN
- G. COLLECTION OF FORM 700 FROM COMMITTEE
- H. COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF MERCED
Planning & Permitting Division

STAFF REPORT: #14-01

AGENDA ITEM: F

FROM: Kim Espinosa,
Planning Manager

**BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN
AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

PREPARED BY: Bill King, AICP
Principal Planner

MEETING DATE: June 12, 2014

SUBJECT

Overview and discussion of the initial public review draft Bellevue Community Plan

REQUESTED COMMITTEE ACTION

Provide input on the draft plan at the June 12, 2014, CAC meeting.

DRAFT BCP REVIEW PROCESS

The DRAFT BCP, available since March 31, 2014, has/will been presented at various study sessions to the following standing City Committees and Commissions:

April 2014 Economic Development Advisory Committee

May 2014 Planning Commission

June 2014 Recreation and Parks Commission

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Staff would like to take this time to thank the Bellevue Community Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee for their important contributions to the BCP, which include such topics as:

- Compatibility between new uses and existing rural residential development;
- Mobility connections to UC Merced, surrounding neighborhoods, regional transportation modes, and downtown Merced;
- A flexible land-use plan that can respond to a changing marketplace, population, and needs of an expanding UC campus;
- A high aesthetic standard for buildings and landscaping along important corridors in the plan area;

- A modified urban village model, which includes key urban design principles, but allows for variable land use patterns, such as more flexible commercial locations, smaller amounts of low-density residential, and linear-community centers, as compared to nodes (see discussion under *Urban Design*, in Appendix A for a detailed discussion), or see pages 10 and 11 of Attachment A;
- A plan that supports business growth;
- Infrastructure planning that is coordinated with other planning areas (see detailed discussion in *Urban Expansion* Chapter 6); and,
- Governance topics related to urban growth and development.

The June 12, 2014, meeting of the Bellevue Community Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee concludes the efforts of this Committee. The Committee's comments, together with those from the Economic Development Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, and Recreation and Parks Commission, will be reviewed by staff and the project consultant before compiling the final public review draft for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council later this year. In the Fall of 2014, Staff will bring a final public review draft and recommendation to adopt the BCP, including relevant General Plan Amendments to the Planning Commission and City Council for their consideration.

The Staff Report that was presented to the City's Planning Commission (Attachment A) provides a good overview of this initial public review draft Plan. Additional details can be viewed in the draft plan itself, which can be viewed from the project website at:

http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/bellevue_corridor_community_plan/draft_documents/default.asp

Attachments

- A) May 21, 2014, Planning Commission Staff Report #14-06

CITY OF MERCED
Planning & Permitting Division

STAFF REPORT: #14-06

AGENDA ITEM: 4.1

FROM: Kim Espinosa,
Planning Manager

PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING DATE: May 21, 2014

PREPARED BY: Bill King,
Principal Planner

SUBJECT: **Bellevue Community Plan Study Session** to brief and receive comments from the Planning Commission on the effort by City Staff to draft the Bellevue Community Plan (BCP), applicant City of Merced, for a 2.4 square-mile area in northeast Merced, generally located between G Street, Lake Road, Farmland Avenue, and Cardella Road.

ACTION: Review and Comment / Study Session

OVERVIEW

Under the guidance of the City of Merced Planning Division, the DRAFT Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) was prepared by lead consultant Lisa Wise Consulting and four sub-consultants. Community participation included a Citizens Advisory Committee composed of 18 members with broad backgrounds. Supporting the efforts of the Planning Division, Citizens Advisory Committee, and consultant was a 28 member Technical Advisory Committee.

To provide a foundation for the discussion with the Planning staff, attached for the Commission's review are the BCP Executive Summary and Introduction chapters.

Executive Summary Excerpt: The BCP was developed to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and is highly reflective of its policies, illustrative plans, and guiding features, such as the land use plan and circulation element (discussed below). The BCP establishes a high-level planning framework that strikes a balance between certainty and flexibility by anchoring key land uses while allowing their size to adapt to changing market conditions in response to economic growth and the expansion of UC Merced.

While the BCP provides a broad range of uses and densities that could occur throughout the plan area, it emphasizes the foundational building blocks of street connectivity, functional mobility choices, active and passive recreation open space corridors and bikeways, gateway street designs, and attractive business park settings to create a great sense of place with investment certainty.

PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

This public DRAFT of the BCP, available since March 31, 2014, has and/or will be presented at various study-sessions as follows:

April 2014	Economic Development Advisory Committee
May 2014	Planning Commission
May 2014	Recreation and Parks Commission
June 2014	Bellevue Community Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee
July 2014	City of Merced City Council

City Planning Staff will collect and consider comments from these groups and the public as part of their effort to prepare a final public review draft, which will be routed through the normal public hearing process in the Fall of this year. As part of this process, the Planning Commission will hold a formal public hearing and will take action concerning an application to adopt the plan, which will be forwarded to the City Council.

ACCESSING THE DRAFT PLAN

A full electronic copy of the BCP will be provided to the Planning Commission and distributed at the meeting of May 21, 2014.

A full copy of the BCP is available on the City of Merced website at the following address:

http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/bellevue_corridor_community_plan/draft_documents/default.asp

COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT PLAN

After the DRAFT BCP is presented to the Planning Commission in May 2014, members will be asked to review the document and provide their feedback on the document to the Planning Division. This feedback can be provided at the May 2014, study-session, or an additional study-session can be scheduled for a later date prior to July 2014. Individual Commissioners can also comment by email to Principal Planner Bill King at kingb@cityofmerced.org.

BCP CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

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. As discussed below, 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. It is important to note that all adopted policies and CEQA-based mitigation measures for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* 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.

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 extends government facilities and services in an efficient manner, 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.

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

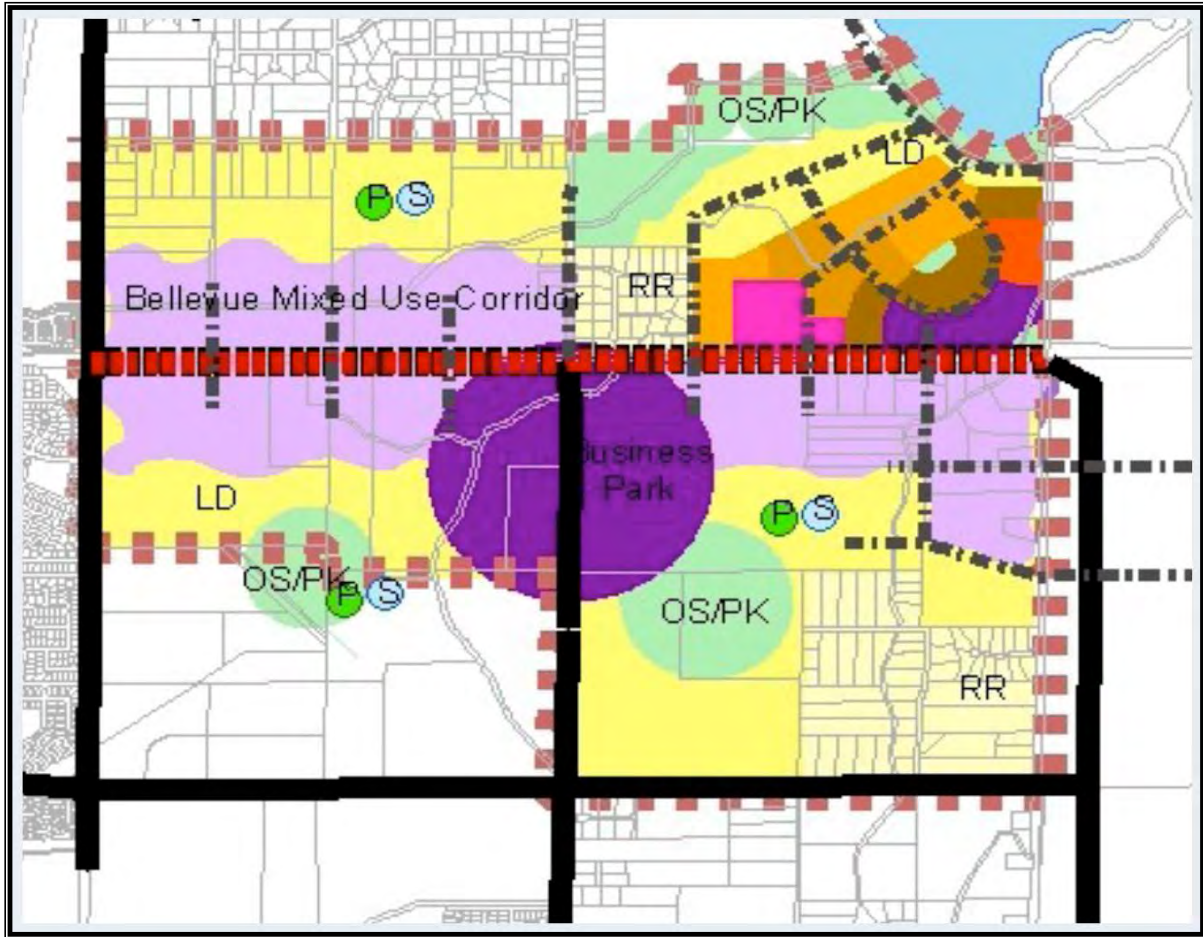
The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes numerous policies and narratives concerning the anticipation for significant jobs-based land uses within the BCP. Following the lead of the General Plan, the BCP includes a "Research and Development Park Character Area" that could accommodate approximately 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 under "Urban Design" on page 10 of this report.

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 91) of the *Draft 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 Table “A-7” above 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 the BCP as 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.

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.

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 (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 Rd. to Bellevue Rd	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
G Street Bellevue Rd to Old Lake Rd	<i>Major Arterial</i> 4-6	6 lanes	LOS D with 6 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Bellevue Road G St. to Gardner/Golf Rd	<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 Rd 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 Rd to Foothill Ave.	<i>Minor Arterial</i> 2-4 lanes	4 lanes	LOS D with 4 lanes	No changes are proposed.
Gardner Road Foothill Ave. to Bellevue Rd	<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 Rd to Old Lake Rd	<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 Avenue, 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, bicycle,s 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 connections 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 Avenue. This transit-corridor will be essential to unify neighborhoods rather than separate them. The design of Bellevue Road, while providing for regional traffic, is planned as a gateway, emphasizing the value aesthetics and access to unify both sides of this road as a distinct place as opposed to a sterile and 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.

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 with the schools 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 Gardner 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.

URBAN DESIGN

TRANSIT-READY DEVELOPMENT/URBAN VILLAGES

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* contains policy direction to utilize the Urban Village 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. Additionally, 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.” Comments received during preparation of the BCP 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 identified and assessed the components of the City’s Urban Village model in order that a unique design for the BCP study area could be crafted in a manner consistent with the General Plan and with the input received from the public. Urban Villages are defined by several policies in the City’s General Plan. As part of the assessment, Staff grouped similar policies into the following design principles for urban villages:

- 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:

- A corridor approach located south of Bellevue Road, as compared to the half-circle shape. This allowed for the inclusion of job-generating land uses and enhanced the vitality of future transit use.
- Placement of the “urban center” along Mandeville Avenue. This effectively doubles potential for all forms of transportation to serve the area, boosting social and economic interactions.

- Massing a mixture of land uses, including job-generating research and office parks, along Mandeville Avenue. This created 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.
- Placement of a large research and development site at the intersection of Bellevue Road and Gardner Road, a long-planned north-south arterial street connecting many areas of Merced with a future employment zone.
- 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 serviced 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 design.
- Consistent with General Plan policy L-2.7.a, 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.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND CONSERVATION

Similar to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, the Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) takes an integrated approach to managing and planning for open-space resources. The goal of the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Chapter of the BCP is to provide an interconnected network of open-space land while still allowing for new development in appropriate areas.

An integrated design with a focus on the connectivity of open space will help further the City’s goals of not only protecting natural and man-made resources, reducing impact on wildlife habitat, and managing water and agricultural resources, but also providing an expanded network of on- and off-street bike paths, preserving Merced’s unique character,

and planning for a sustainable future. Also, by providing a range of open-space types, the BCP allows flexibility for design depending on the surrounding environment and intended role of the open-space land for resource preservation, recreation, health and safety, or conservation. This strategy avoids the potential for ad-hoc and haphazard placement of inaccessible and ultimately, ineffective, open-space land.

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.

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 increased population. The BCP includes a wide variety of housing types ranging from rural residential homes to high-density multifamily homes with densities of at least 20-units per acre, as is discussed in the Community Character Chapter of the Plan.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION: Review, Discuss, and Comment.

Attachments:

- A) BCP Executive Summary and Introduction

Ref: N/shared/planning/grants/Bellevue Corridor Community Plan/Partner and Public Involvement/Planning Commission



CITY OF MERCED

Bellevue Community Plan
Public Review Draft

MARCH 2014



ATTACHMENT A



CITY OF MERCED | Bellevue Community Plan

Lead Consultant

Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc.

Lisa Wise, President
983 Osos Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.595.1345

Sub Consultants

Sargent Town Planning

David Sargent, Principal
448 South Hill Street, Suite 418
Los Angeles, CA 90013
213.599.7680

Tony Perez Associates

Tony Perez, Principal
225 Camino La Madera Avenue
Camarillo CA 93010
805.377.1209

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting, Assoc.

Colin Burgett, Principal
116 New Montgomery Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94105
415.284.1544

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

Jason Moody, Principal
2501 Ninth Street, Suite 200
Berkeley, CA 94710
510.841.9190

MARCH 2014



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the City Council, Citizen Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and City Staff who generously gave their time to help create the Bellevue Community Plan. Special thanks to the UC Merced Resource Center for the Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES program) - "Planning an Innovation Hub," Dr. S.A. Davis, and Geneva Skram for their continued support and assistance.

City Council

Stan Thurston
Noah Lor
Kevin Blake
Tony Dossetti
Mike Murphy
Josh Pedrozo
Michael Belluomini

Citizen Advisory Committee

Jerry Callister
Susan Gerhardt
Melbourne Gwin, Jr.
Dan Holmes
Sharon Hunt-Dicker
Richard Kirby
Lee Kolligian
Walt Lopes
Carol McCoy
Steve Simmons
Justi Smith
Bill Spriggs
Greg Thompson
Steve Tinetti
Jeff Pennington
Diana Westmoreland-Pedrozo
Mary Ward
Janet Young

Technical Advisory Committee

Norm Andrade
Gene Barerra
Michael Conway
Richard Cummings
Ken Elwin
Kim Espinosa
Kraig Magnussen
Matthew Fell
David Gonzalves
Rod Ghearing
Richard Green
Mark Hamilton
Mark Hendrickson
Bill King
Thomas Lollini
Michael McLaughlin
Maria Mendoza
Stan Murdock
Bill Nicholson
Ron Price
Frank Quintero
Steven Rough
Ken Rozell
John Sagin
Julie Sterling
David Spaur
Mike Wegley
Phillip Woods

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
Plan Development and Community Participation	i
Plan Organization and Contents	i
Core Findings and Policy Recommendations	iii
Next Steps	iv
1. Introduction	1
Community Plan Overview	1
Setting	4
General Plan Guidance	7
2. Vision & Urban Design	17
Plan Framework and Flexibility	28
Plan Vision and Strategies	30
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	32
3. Mobility	35
Setting	36
BCP Circulation Plan Components	39
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	61
4. Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation	65
Setting	66
Open-Space Service Standard	72
Park Types	74
Conceptual Open-Space Diagram	77
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	79

The work upon which this publication is based was funded in whole or in part through a grant awarded by the Strategic Growth Council. The statements and conclusions of this report are those of the GRANTEE and/or Subcontractor and not necessarily those of the Strategic Growth Council or of the Department of Conservation, or its employees. The Strategic Growth Council and the Department make no warranties, express or implied, and assume no liability for the information contained in the succeeding text.

5. Community Character	83
Setting	84
General Plan Consistency	85
Core elements for Community Character Areas	87
Place Types/Character Areas:	89
Neighborhood Master Planning	102
BCP Regulatory Framework	104
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	106
6. Urban Expansion	109
Governance and Terminology	111
Growth Factors	116
Community Plan Growth Scenarios	123
Public Facilities Financing and Next Steps	125
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	127
7. Public Services and Facilities	131
Setting and Issues	132
Public Facilities Financing	139
Bellevue Community Plan Goals and Policies	141
8. Plan Maintenance	145
9. Works Cited	149
10. Appendix	151
A. Bellevue Community Plan Consistency with the City's General Plan	A-1
B. Development Projects and Plans	B-1
C. Applicable Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Goals, Policies and Actions	C-1
D. Technical Circulation Memorandum	D-1
E. Foundation Report	E-1
F. Plan Development and Community Participation	F-1
G. Merced's Loop Road	G-1
H. Innovation Hub Elements, Relevance and Suggested Policies	H-1
I. Findings Report with Supporting Background Reports	I-1
J. Relevance of the Urban Land Institute to the BCP	J-1
K. Anticipated Research and Development	K-1
L. University Community Plan Town Center	L-1
M. Plan Assessment Tool	M-1

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Bellevue Community Plan Area in Relation to Downtown Merced	5
Figure 2. Proximate Development Plans and Projects surrounding the Bellevue Community Plan Area	6
Figure 3. Bellevue Community Plan “Illustrative Plan”	10
Figure 4. Urban Design Framework	17
Figure 5. Merced Loop System	18
Figure 6. City of Merced Transit Corridor	19
Figure 7. California High Speed Rail Proposed Alignment	22
Figure 8. Illustration of an Interconnected Block Structure	23
Figure 9. Illustration of Possible Gateway Design Overlay Along Bellevue	25
Figure 10. UCM Triple Zero Commitments	26
Figure 11. Existing Regional Bus Connectivity	37
Figure 12. Complete Street Components in the Bellevue Community Plan	40
Figure 13. BCP Street Classification	42
Figure 14. Bellevue Road with Two-way Side Access Road	44
Figure 15. Example of a Boulevard with One-way Side Access Slip Road and Intersections in Berkeley, CA	44
Figure 16. Example of a Boulevard with One-way Side Access Slip Road in Berkeley, CA	44
Figure 17. Gardner Road in Single Family Character Area	45
Figure 18. Collector Street through a Typical Multi-Family Character Area	46
Figure 19. Collector Street through a Typical Mixed-Use Character Area	47
Figure 20. Collector Street through a Typical Single-Family Character Area	47
Figure 21. Mandeville Road- Transit Avenue - T.O.D. Center	48
Figure 22. Typical Edge Drive with Side Parking	51
Figure 23. Lake Road - Natural Rural Edge Drive	51
Figure 24. Lake Road - Edge Drive with Mixed-Use Character Area	51
Figure 25. BCP Gateway Overlay at Bellevue Road & G Street	52
Figure 26. Five Minute Walk from Proposed Transit Line	54
Figure 27. Bicycle Transportation Map	56
Figure 28. Pedestrian Transportation Map	57
Figure 29. Examples of Street Landscape Features	58
Figure 30. Example of an Urban Plaza and Festival Streets	58

Figure 31. Crosswalks	59
Figure 32. Bulb-outs	59
Figure 33. Pedestrian Realm	60
Figure 34. Sensitive Habitats and Conservation Lands within and near the Plan Area	67
Figure 35. Site Topography and Drainage Features Within and Near the Planning Area	69
Figure 36. Wetland Features with and near the Plan Area	71
Figure 37. Existing and Planned Recreational Facilities Within and Near the Plan Area	73
Figure 38. BCP Open-Space Diagram	78
Figure 39. Community Character Place Type Plan	90
Figure 40. Illustration of a R&D Employment District	94
Figure 41. Illustration of a Typical Neighborhood Center	96
Figure 42. Illustration of Multi-Family Neighborhood Character Area	99
Figure 43. Illustration of Single Family Residential	100
Figure 44. Bellevue Community Plan Area	110
Figure 45. Merced City Limit, Sphere of Influence (SOI), Sphere of Specific Urban Development (SUDP), and Area of Interest (AOI)	112
Figure 46. City of Merced 2015 and 2030 Sphere of Influence (SOI)	114
Figure 47. Key Growth Factors for the Bellevue Community Plan	116
Figure 48. Bellevue Community Plan Project Index	122
Figure 49. Image of Lake Yosemite and Area Storm Water Runoff	135
Figure 50. Site Topography and Water Features within and Near the Plan Area	136
Figure 51. Plan Maintenance Key Characteristics	145

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Land Use Designations from the <i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan</i>	11
Table 2 Citizen Advisory Committee Desired Outcomes of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan	30
Table 3 Vision and Urban Design Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan consistent with the City's <i>General Plan</i>	32
Table 4 Street Classifications within the Bellevue Community Plan	41
Table 5 Pedestrian Way Standards	60
Table 6 Mobility Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Consistent with the City's <i>General Plan</i>	61
Table 7 Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan consistent with the City's <i>General Plan</i>	79
Table 8 Place Type Characteristics	89
Table 9 BCP Character Area Descriptions and Regulatory Framework	104
Table 10 Community Character Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Community Plan consistent with the City's <i>General Plan</i>	106
Table 11 Urban Expansion Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan consistent with the City's General Plan Regarding Urban Expansion	127
Table 12 Public Services and Facilities Goals and Policies Specific to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan consistent with the City's <i>General Plan</i>	141

This page intentionally left blank.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) was developed to be consistent with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, and is highly reflective of its policies, illustrative plans and guiding features, such as providing significant employment generating uses that would benefit from being in close proximity to the UC Merced campus. The BCP establishes a high-level planning framework that strikes a balance between certainty and flexibility by anchoring key land uses while allowing their size to adapt to changing market conditions in response to economic growth and the expansion of UC Merced. While the BCP provides a broad range of uses and densities that could occur throughout the plan area, it emphasizes the foundational building blocks of street connectivity, functional mobility choices, active and passive recreation open space corridors and bikeways, gateway street designs, and attractive business park settings to create a great sense of place with investment certainty.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The development of the Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) was designed to be a dynamic process built on:

- Realistic assessments of past and future conditions;
- Consistency with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan and other guiding documents;
- Professional planning and engineering guidance;
- Stakeholder participation, outreach to underrepresented groups, and public workshops; and,
- Actions of an ad-hoc advisory committee, with input from an engaged community.

Public Workshop Presentation



Technical Memorandum F (Appendix F) includes a detailed description of plan development process and the community participation program that helped shape the BCP.

PLAN ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS

The Bellevue Community Plan is comprised of Plan Chapters, Technical Appendices and Environmental Review Documents. The Plan Chapters, described below, include narratives, images and policy language.

PLAN CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 – Introduction identifies the context which the plan was developed, including descriptions of the community and physical setting, the parameters and relevant issues of the plan area established by the City’s General Plan, and plan area assumptions, opportunities and constraints.

Chapter 2 – Vision and Urban Design provides the long-term vision of the Plan and policy direction about core design principles which broadly influence mobility, open space, land use and public services and facilities in the plan area.

Chapter 3 – Mobility emphasizes the development of a municipal circulation and transportation system, integrated with open spaces and land uses, and accommodates all modes of transit (automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians), including provision for Transit Priority Projects (TPP). Chapter 3 includes rights-of-way templates and graphics depicting future streets, pathways and transit corridors within the Plan Area.

Chapter 4 – Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation elements are designed in a comprehensive multiuse approach addressing recreation, storm-drainage, joint use school facilities, connectivity of uses, and natural resource needs of the planning area and surrounding lands.

Chapter 5 – Community Character anticipates and identifies locations for future land uses, and arranges them in a pattern that is both complementary and compatible with nearby uses including the UC Merced, Rural Residential Neighborhoods, and planned communities.

Chapter 6 – Urban Expansion describes governance challenges, growth factors and several growth scenarios for the plan area. The Urban Expansion Chapter emphasizes a comprehensive and collaborative approach, identifying infrastructure planning and fiscal responsibility as key drivers in future decisions concerning urban expansion.

Chapter 7 – Public Services and Facilities addresses the public service and facility needs of an expanding City population.

Chapter 8 – Plan Maintenance describes how the Bellevue Community Plan may be implemented, monitored, and updated, as needed.

On the topics of sustainable development, housing, noise and safety, the Bellevue Community Plan defers to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

TECHNICAL APPENDICES

Plan Appendices contain detailed background information that is foundational to the discussion and policies of the Bellevue Community Plan, and includes the following topics:

- A. Bellevue Community Plan Consistency with the City’s General Plan.
- B. Development Projects and Plans.
- C. Applicable Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Goals, Policies and Actions.
- D. Technical Circulation Memorandum.
- E. Foundation Report.
- F. Plan Development and Community Participation.
- G. Merced’s Loop Road.
- H. Innovation Hub Elements, Relevance and Suggested Policies.
- I. Findings Report with Supporting Background Reports.
- J. Relevance of the Urban Land Institute to the BCP.
- K. Anticipated Research and Development.
- L. University Community Plan Town Center.
- M. Plan Assessment Tool.

CORE FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DEFINED YET FLEXIBLE

The Bellevue Community Plan is a long-term document with a tremendous amount of uncertainty. To counter this, the plan has a policy framework for future master planning that is comprehensive and is supported by the community. The policy and development framework will deliver an interconnected transit-oriented development pattern, clarity of urban character and flexibility of use to respond to changing markets.

INVESTMENT CERTAINTY

While the Bellevue Community Plan provides a broad range of uses and densities that could occur, it also emphasizes the development of a great sense of place with investment certainty. The BCP is geared to make projects that are connected to their neighbors and to the transit spine with complete, walkable streets. So the City creates a systematic development pattern where the next development is framed by the preceding development site that implements the overall vision, rather than a smattering of projects.

A STRONG DOWNTOWN

Downtowns are sensitive to market forces, particularly to urban growth in other areas. Initially, an identity distinct from Downtown Merced will need to be fostered by the City to develop a separate and non-competing center in the BCP plan area. Over time, as the market expands, greater flexibility in land uses may be achieved.

ATTRACTING JOBS-BASED ECONOMIC 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 up to 2.9 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. The Research and Development employment corridor is infused with innovation hub design elements to attract new firms and industry wishing to locate near the campus.

HOUSING

The Bellevue Community Plan relies on the housing-related 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 increased population. The BCP includes a wide variety of housing types ranging from rural residential estate homes to high-density multifamily dwellings.

A TAILOR-SUITED LAND USE MODEL

The Merced Vision 2030 General Plan contains policy direction to utilize the Urban Village as a design template for future growth areas within the Bellevue Community Plan area. 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 unique “Urban Village” designs to be developed for increased opportunities for job-based land uses attracted by a university climate. The community also expressed concerns about the amount of low-density residential that has traditionally been located in the City’s Urban Villages, and the location and intensity of commercial uses. Thus, a unique design is recommended that is consistent with the General Plan while responding to concerns of the community, and is discussed in greater detail in the land use section of Technical Appendix A.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL LANDS

In that the Bellevue Community Plan contains sensitive species and habitat areas, the Plan considered and recommends several methods to conserve these natural resources. Consistent with adopted mitigation measures of City’s General Plan EIR, property owners are required to prepare delineations of Waters of the U.S. and Wetlands prior to annexation, and to obtain permits from relevant state and federal agencies. Property owners also need to comply with the adopted Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Merced and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, the Open Space Master Plan of the BCP establishes several open space corridors that include identified sensitive habitats. For example, the Plan proposes a large corridor extending from Cardella Road to Lake Road at a point north of Bellevue Road. These may shrink or expand depending upon the findings and actions of the permitting process described above.

OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The Bellevue Community Plan includes several active parks including three neighborhood parks, a community park and several urban plazas. Neighborhood parks are recommended to be combined with future school sites to serve the anticipated population, and urban plazas will add open space opportunities to high-density populations along Mandeville Avenue. Open space corridors featuring pedestrian and bicycle pathways connect to parks and other destinations.

SUPPORT CIRCULATION MODES THROUGH LAND USE DESIGN

Along Bellevue Road the goal is to emphasize smooth traffic flow and provide access to adjacent uses at appropriate intervals and through innovative means, while also creating a distinct gateway appearance through attractive building designs and associated landscaping. Within the Mandeville transit route, which links the planned transit stations in Bellevue Ranch and UC Merced. New development should be organized in the form of complete neighborhoods and districts and be oriented to pedestrians and transit. Higher-intensity development and activities should be concentrated near planned transit stops. This arrangement supports regional automobile trips on Bellevue Road, while creating a pedestrian-oriented corridor along Mandeville Avenue, and enhances the value of the research and development area that is to be located between these roads.

NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLANNING

The Bellevue Community Plan recommends that the City create a dynamic “neighborhood master plan” process to ensure that each new increment of development is well-connected to existing and future adjacent development, while responding to market. The framework for new development would be a clear and interconnected – yet flexible – network of complete streets and community open spaces. This process acts as the fundamental tool to ensure that the overall physical community structure is developed as envisioned in the BCP.

NEXT STEPS

PLAN INTEGRATION

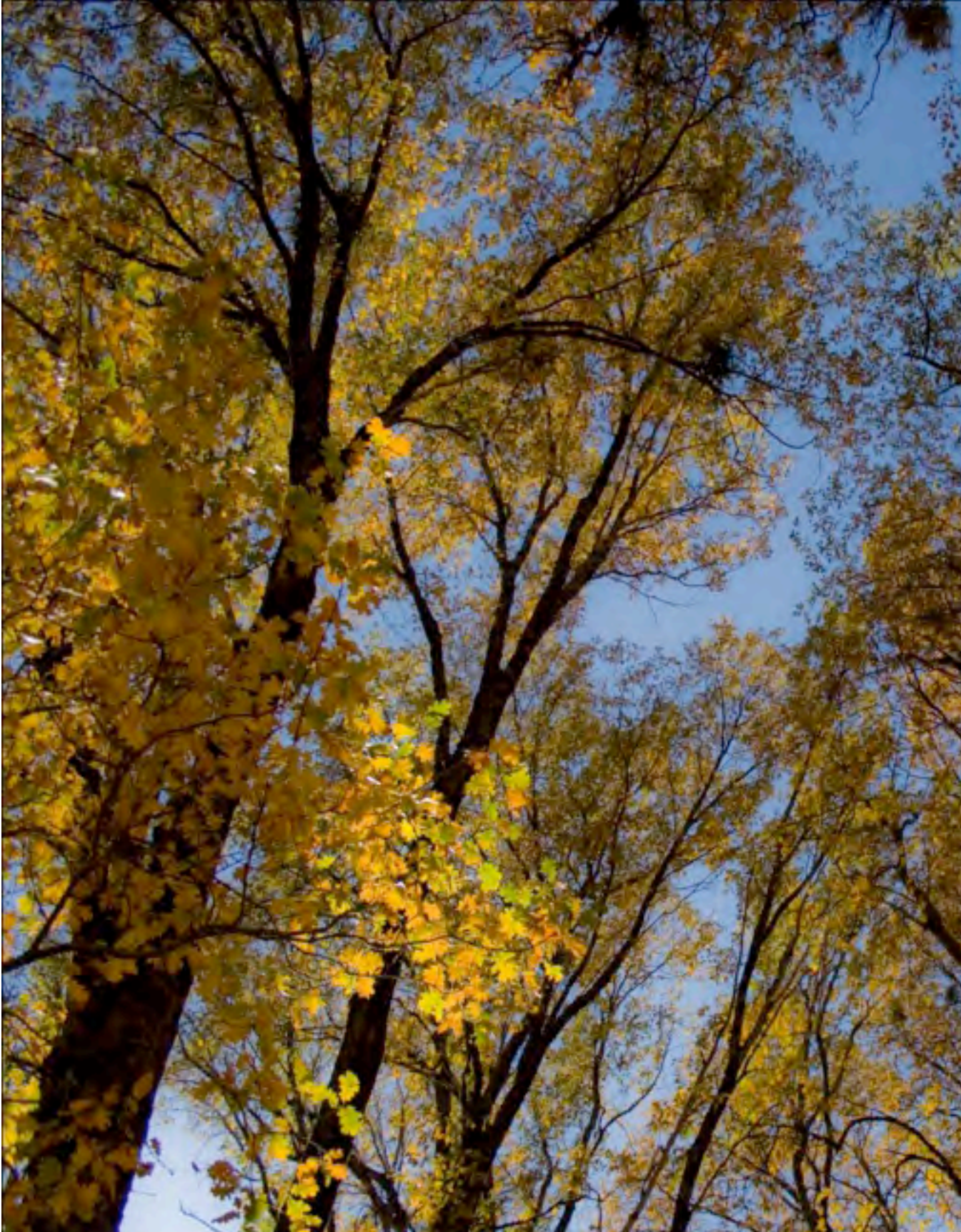
Upon adoption of the Bellevue Community Plan, the City should begin the process to integrate it with existing master plan documents and processes, including but not limited to the following:

- Merced Vision 2030 General Plan.
- City of Merced 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan.
- 2003 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Capital Improvement Planning.
- Public Utility Master Plans.
- Transit Planning Documents.
- Regional Transportation Plans (as appropriate).

COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT

A common vision and approach to urban expansion creates certainty, and certainty attracts investments, and investments create jobs. Yet, as evidenced in the growth scenarios of the BCP (Chapter 6, Urban Expansion), along with concerns raised by the BCP Ad-hoc Advisory Committee, there are numerous unanswered questions and challenges concerning infrastructure, financing and phasing of growth in and adjacent to the BCP planning area. The BCP is a collaborative effort to create a multi-jurisdictional infrastructure and service plan to support growth in a manner that serves the interest of the community as a whole, in a fiscally sound manner. Partners with the City in this effort would include Merced County, the University of California, as well as the Merced Irrigation District, local schools and the Merced County Association of Governments. The UC Merced Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), the University Community Plan (UCP), and the Bellevue Community Plan, among other plans, provide the necessary information and options from which a unified development phasing plan could be crafted. Future outcomes of this collaborative effort could include:

- Select a growth scenario, or combination thereof.
- Develop a strategic phasing plan and plan for services that coordinate expenditure of resources, provides certainty in the marketplace, and leads to an efficient use of public infrastructure and services.
- Update financing and master plans and programs to align with the broad decisions concerning financing, infrastructure, and phasing in the northeast Merced SOI.



1. INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY PLAN OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The Bellevue Community Plan (BCP or Plan) provides policy direction to the decision making process for development within a defined geographic portion of the Planning area of the City's *General Plan*. The plan forms a broad framework for mutual understanding among citizens, public agencies, and the development community. Preparing a community plan serves the following purposes:

- To facilitate the Planning Commission and City Council concurrence on long-range development policies;
- To provide a basis for evaluating the level to which private development proposals and public projects are consistent with these policies;
- To better enable the public and government entities to design projects that are consistent with City policies, or to seek changes in these policies through the *General Plan Amendment* process;
- To record the City's policies and standards for the maintenance and improvement of existing development and the location and characteristics of future development;
- To better inform citizens on land use policy issues and promote opportunities to participate in the local planning and decision-making process;
- To serve as a blueprint for future growth and development within a defined area of the City of Merced's Sphere of Influence (SOI);¹ and,
- Community Plans may, but are not required to, identify components of infrastructure needed to support planned land uses, as well as appropriate financing mechanisms.³

The BCP focuses on providing a vision and framework for coordinating transportation, infrastructure, and open space, with varied land use mixes and intensities.

A "Community Plan" serves as a blueprint for future growth and development within a defined area of the City of Merced's growth boundary.

Aerial View of Merced



THE CITY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY PLANS

General plan's provide a policy framework upon which community plans are constructed and a foundation to build more detailed implementation tools including community plan diagrams, policies, maps and illustrative plans.

The City's Guiding Principles for local community plans (Section 3.7.2, *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*) are:

- Community Plans which include or are adjacent to established neighborhoods will address the needs of these neighborhoods and potential adverse impacts resulting from plan implementation.
- Public participation by area residents and property owners in the planning process will be emphasized.
- Community Plan areas need connectivity with existing and planned urban areas.
- Community Plans will include all elements determined necessary to ensure consistency with the *General Plan*. These elements may include, but not be limited to, Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, and infrastructure phasing. Community Plans will include a land use and infrastructure phasing plan.
- The "Urban Villages" concept should be incorporated into the planning of these areas as much as feasible.
- The Community Planning process should be focused on the planning issues or concerns which need to be resolved for that planning area and, to this degree, provide data, information, or policy clarification necessary to carry out the goals of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

BCP RELATIONSHIP TO FUTURE ANNEXATIONS AND GROWTH

The BCP is not a project that will annex unincorporated properties into the City of Merced. That action occurs through a separate process usually initiated by private property owners with specific development interests, and then only after a formal annexation request is granted by both the City of Merced and the Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). For more information on annexation and implementation of the Plan see Chapter 6 (Urban Expansion).

FRAMEWORK PLAN VS. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The BCP is not a development project. A development project contains specific land-use entitlements with specific standards. As with the City's General Plan, the BCP is a conceptual framework within which future decisions about development projects would be made when more information is in place. The BCP does not include the specificity or rigidity that comes with a development plan as does, for example the *Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan*.

PLANNING VS. ZONING

The Bellevue Community Plan does not rezone property. Upon adoption of the Plan, properties within the planning area will remain in Merced County and will retain their current zoning designations. As there is no City zoning within the plan boundaries, the BCP effort does not affect current property rights. The BCP provides a foundation for future development in a manner that will benefit the property owners and the community.

VISION VS. CONSTRUCTION

The BCP planning process allowed the community to take a comprehensive approach to examining land use, circulation, and other issues. As the City's urban fabric expands with market demand, the BCP offers guidance for growth that is grounded in the community's vision, takes advantage of existing resources, and avoids potential constraints. However, for future urbanization to occur in the Plan Area, additional input will be needed from the community as the scope and scale of development becomes influenced by market conditions, decisions from local landowners, and the availability of public services.

Tour of Bellevue Corridor Project Area and Presentation



The Bellevue Community Plan study area is located outside but 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).

SETTING

COMMUNITY SETTING

The City of Merced is approximately seven miles long from north to south and six miles at its widest point from east to west. In January 2012, the City of Merced covered approximately 23 square miles and had an estimated population of 79,328. The Bellevue Community Plan area is located to the northeast of the City of Merced, and covers an area of approximately 2.4 square-miles. The planning area is 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 3.5 miles to the southwest, and Castle Airport and the City of Atwater are 6 miles to the west.

The Bellevue Community Plan study area is located outside but 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).

PHYSICAL SETTING

The northeastern portion of the City's planned growth area is characterized by gently rolling terrain while the remainder of the City is relatively flat. The northern, western, and eastern portions of the City contain a number of creeks and canals including Bear Creek, Black Rascal Creek, Fahrens Creek, and Cottonwood Creek. These creeks all traverse the City from east to west. With the exception of a few pockets of rural residential homes, the BCP planning area is predominately grasslands.

Figure 1. Bellevue Community Plan Area in Relation to Downtown Merced

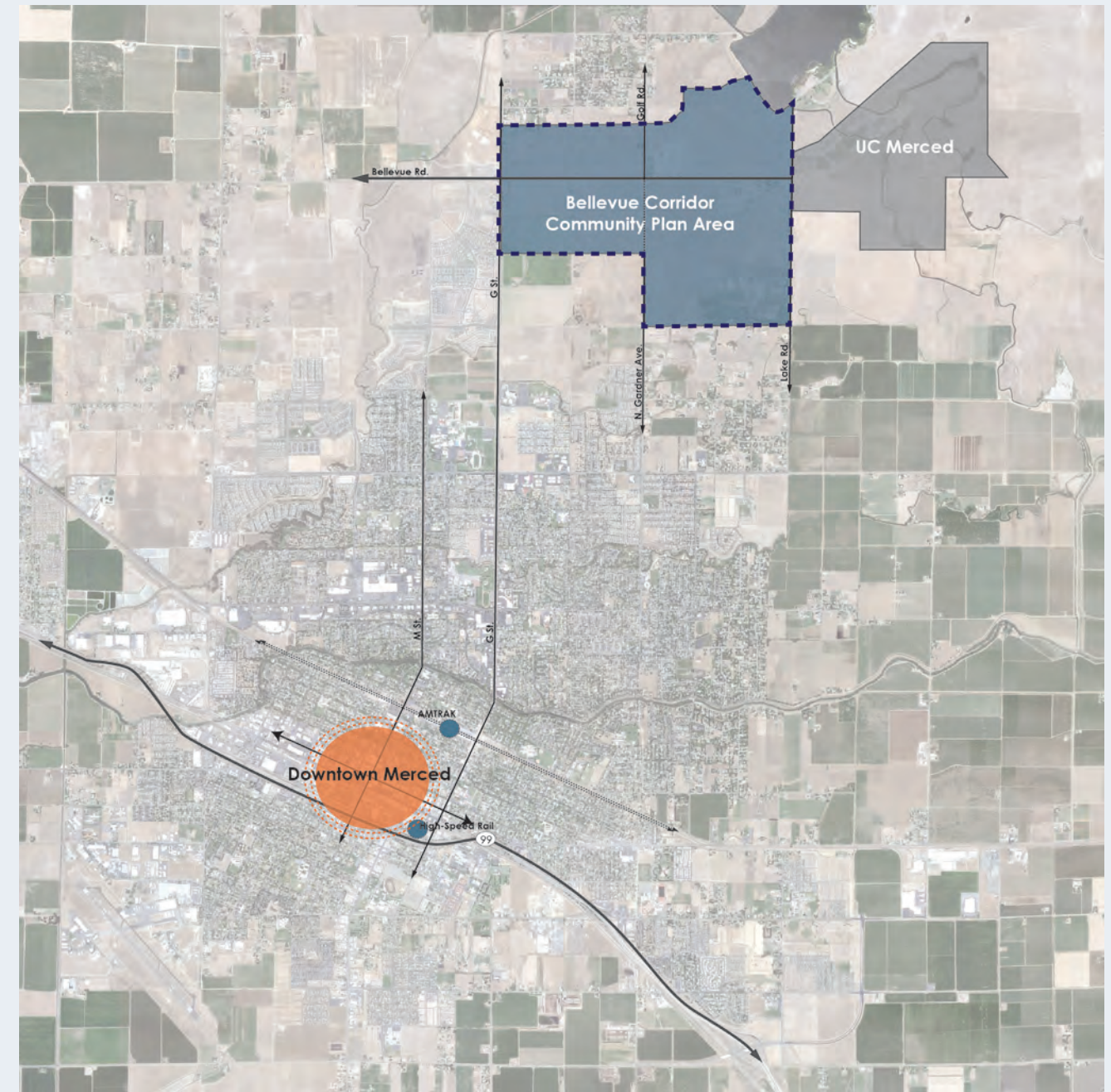
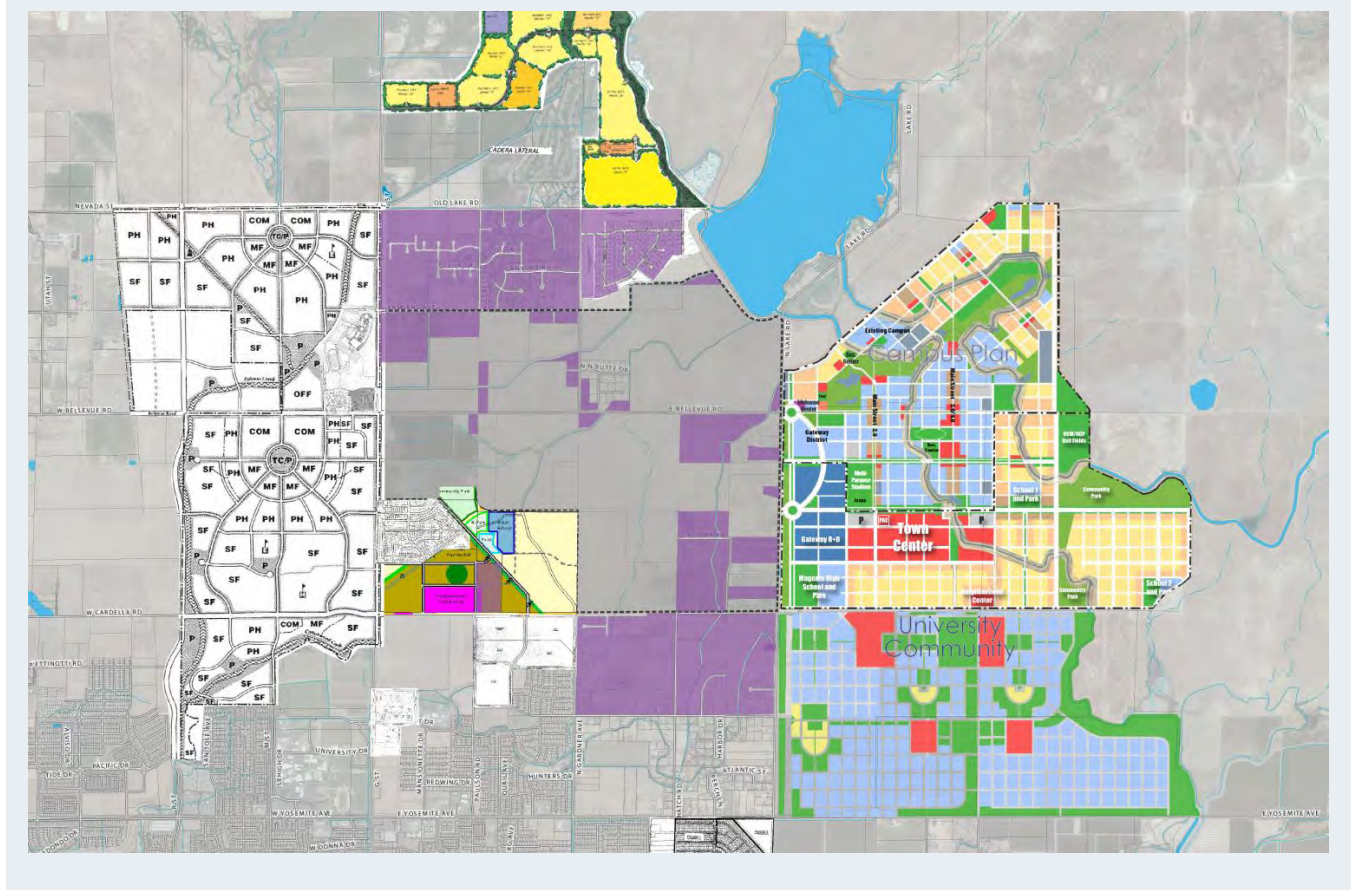


Figure 2. Proximate Development Plans and Projects surrounding the Bellevue Community Plan Area



PROXIMATE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROJECTS

The community of Merced has participated in important planning initiatives over the past several years including the *City’s Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, UC Merced’s Long Range Development Plan, and Merced County’s University Community Plan.

The community of Merced has participated in important planning initiatives over the past several years including the *City’s Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, UC Merced’s Long Range Development Plan, and Merced County’s University Community Plan. The outcomes of these and other planning initiatives serve as an important basis for the BCP. A detailed description of development plans and projects occurring within and near the Bellevue Community Plan area is provided in Technical Memorandum B (Appendix B) of the BCP. The “Projects and Plans” document identifies and describes recent and anticipated growth patterns.

GENERAL PLAN GUIDANCE

CONSISTENCY WITH THE MERCED VISION 2030 GENERAL PLAN

The Bellevue Community Plan was developed to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and reflects key criteria detailed in the *General Plan*. The following sections from the *General Plan* created the foundation of the BCP and established the Core Principles discussed in Chapter 2 (Vision and Urban Design chapter):

- Key Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions
- Key Features and Issues of the Bellevue Community Plan
- The Bellevue Community Plan “Illustrative Plan”

KEY GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

A complete and full listing of *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* goals, objectives, policies, and implementing actions that have notable relevance to the BCP project area and/or plan objectives are listed in Technical Memorandum C (Appendix C) of the BCP. This appendix also includes policies crafted as a part of the BCP, which offer greater detail and refinement of the broader *General Plan* language. The policies in Technical Memorandum C are a key part of the BCP and are intended to guide and inform development-related activities in the project area.

KEY FEATURES AND ISSUES OF THE BELLEVUE COMMUNITY PLAN

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (Section 3.7.4) identified several key features and related direction for the BCP, including: economic development, land use, transportation, public facilities, environment and urban design.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

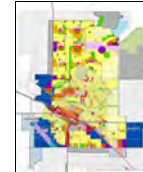
The City’s *General Plan* describes Bellevue Road as a gateway to UC Merced connecting the campus to Castle Airport Aviation and Development Center, other employment centers, and to Downtown Merced via the “G”, “M” and “R” Street corridors, and that (1) their economic development strategies should be compatible and complementary; and (2) they should connect to one another via a network of transportation and communications systems that optimize access between and among them.

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* also describes the Bellevue Corridor as likely to contain significant employment generating uses that would benefit from being in close proximity to the UC Merced campus (Section 3.5.5), and is identified as a Commercial and Industrial Employment Corridor to contain heavy concentrations of commercial and industrial development.

The emphasis on economic development also appears in a *General Plan* discussion to adjust the City’s Urban Village concept near UC Merced. The *General Plan* states, “The composition and pattern of land uses in the Urban Villages near UC Merced along Bellevue Road will have unique designs

Merced Vision 2030 General Plan

Merced Vision 2030 General Plan



January 2012

and functions due to the economic opportunities and connectivity to the university. Each of the “Urban Villages” between Lake Road and “G” Street should contain, in addition to “Neighborhood Commercial,” “Village Residential,” and “Professional Commercial -Office,” the opportunity for an expanded urban core comprised of a jobs-based office, business park or research and development type land use supported or spun-off from UC Merced. This additional land use potential is represented in Figure 38. Community Character Place Type Plan.

LAND USE

The City’s *General Plan* describes the Bellevue Corridor as one that should be designed as a place where services, shops, schools, businesses, public uses, and residences mix in a vibrant setting. The BCP should assess the viability of expanding office, commercial, and research and development land use capacities in the plan area. The City’s Urban Village will be the backbone concept model for creating core commercial nodes along Bellevue Road and a connection to neighborhoods to the south and north. Some of the land uses could connect to research and development activities associated with the campus research programs or professional services associated with the campus’s professional schools. The City’s *General Plan* specifically identifies that the following features should be included in or influence the creation of the BCP:

Urban Village Design

Urban Villages are described in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as mixed-use, mixed-density neighborhood developments incorporated into and planned in conjunction with a network of interconnected, walkable streets. This design allows for a variety of land uses including jobs-based land uses attracted to a university climate to be intermixed within the BCP framework.

- Special “Urban Village” designs suited to the “Bellevue Corridor Planning Principles” and potential expansion thereof to provide for increased opportunities for job-based land uses attracted by a university climate while still maintaining the basic concept of mixed-use, pedestrian, and transit oriented communities. These “Urban Villages” may differ from others in the Community in the mixture of business park, research and development, office, public/cultural uses, and retail uses within the Village Core areas instead of the retail/office/public facilities focus of other Villages which are more residential in nature; and,
- Land Uses should be compatible and complimentary with one another and planned as integrated, coordinated mixed-use neighborhoods and communities; and,
- The influence and effects of the UC Merced and University Community land use and circulation plans on adjacent (western) properties; and,
- Interface issues and infill land use patterns adjacent to and within pre-existing “Rural Residential” properties; and,
- A variety of housing types and densities should be encouraged within the Community Plan area in addition to job-generating uses consistent with the City’s overall economic strategy and the Bellevue Corridor Economic Analysis (see Appendix I).

TRANSPORTATION

Per the City's *General Plan*, it will be essential that adequate rights-of-ways be reserved along all major corridors. The design cross-section of these corridors may vary depending upon the adjacent land uses, but they should have two characteristics in common. They should be designed as multi-modal access corridors that accommodate both automobiles and a public transit system (rubber tire or light rail), as well as bicycles and pedestrians. Further, they should be designed to unify, rather than separate, the elements of the community located on opposite sides of the road. These roads should be designed as landscaped, multimodal boulevards.

Establish "Bellevue Parkway Planning Principles" describing the design [including appropriate right-of-way, function and land use pattern along Bellevue Road] recognizing two key traits: (1) multi-modal access corridor that accommodates both automobiles and public transit systems, as well as bikes and pedestrians; and (2) designed to unify rather than separate the community located on opposite sides of the road.

Establish a system of collector streets and arterials with appropriate rights-of-ways to encourage internal circulation within the Community Plan area. This would include determining the proper alignment and right-of-way for Gardner Road.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

The City's *General Plan* states the BCP should establish adequate public facilities to accommodate growth within the area. The *General Plan* states the BCP provide the, "Location and financing of public facilities including a fire station, schools, roadways, off-street bike and pedestrian paths, and parks/open space."

ENVIRONMENT

The BCP addresses specific environmental issues and vulnerable areas relevant to the plan area which necessitate protection or preservation. The City's *General Plan* states that the BCP should address the following: "Lake Yosemite Inundation Area and Sensitive species and habitat conservation."

CHARACTER/DESIGN

The *General Plan* states the BCP should include design parameters to guide the future development of the plan area. The *General Plan* identifies the following characteristics be included in the BCP:

- Establish, through the Community Plan process, design guidelines for development along the Bellevue Corridor in accordance with the City's Urban Design principles outlined in Chapter 6 of the *General Plan*.
- The natural hill, which occurs on the south side of Bellevue Road between G Street and Gardner Road, should be considered as a focal point for the Corridor.

It will be essential that adequate rights-of-ways be reserved along all major corridors. The design cross-section of these corridors may vary depending upon the adjacent land uses, but they should have two characteristics in common. They should be designed as multi-modal access corridors that accommodate both automobiles and a public transit system (rubber tire or light rail), as well as bicycles and pedestrians. Further, they should be designed to unify, rather than separate, the elements of the community located on opposite sides of the road. These roads should be designed as landscaped, multimodal boulevards.

THE BELLEVUE COMMUNITY PLAN “ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN”

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes “illustrative plans” as an appendix to its Land Use Chapter. Illustrative plans are not adopted plans and are only included in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to inform the public of preliminary land use concepts under consideration in each of the Plan areas. No land use entitlements are granted by including illustrative plans in that appendix. The land uses shown in the northwest corner of Lake Road and Bellevue Road are a part of the formally adopted Land Use Diagram of the City of Merced, and not considered “illustrative.” The “Illustrative Plan” (Figure 3) below from the *General Plan* shows a conceptual land use plan for the BCP area.

Figure 3. Bellevue Community Plan “Illustrative Plan”

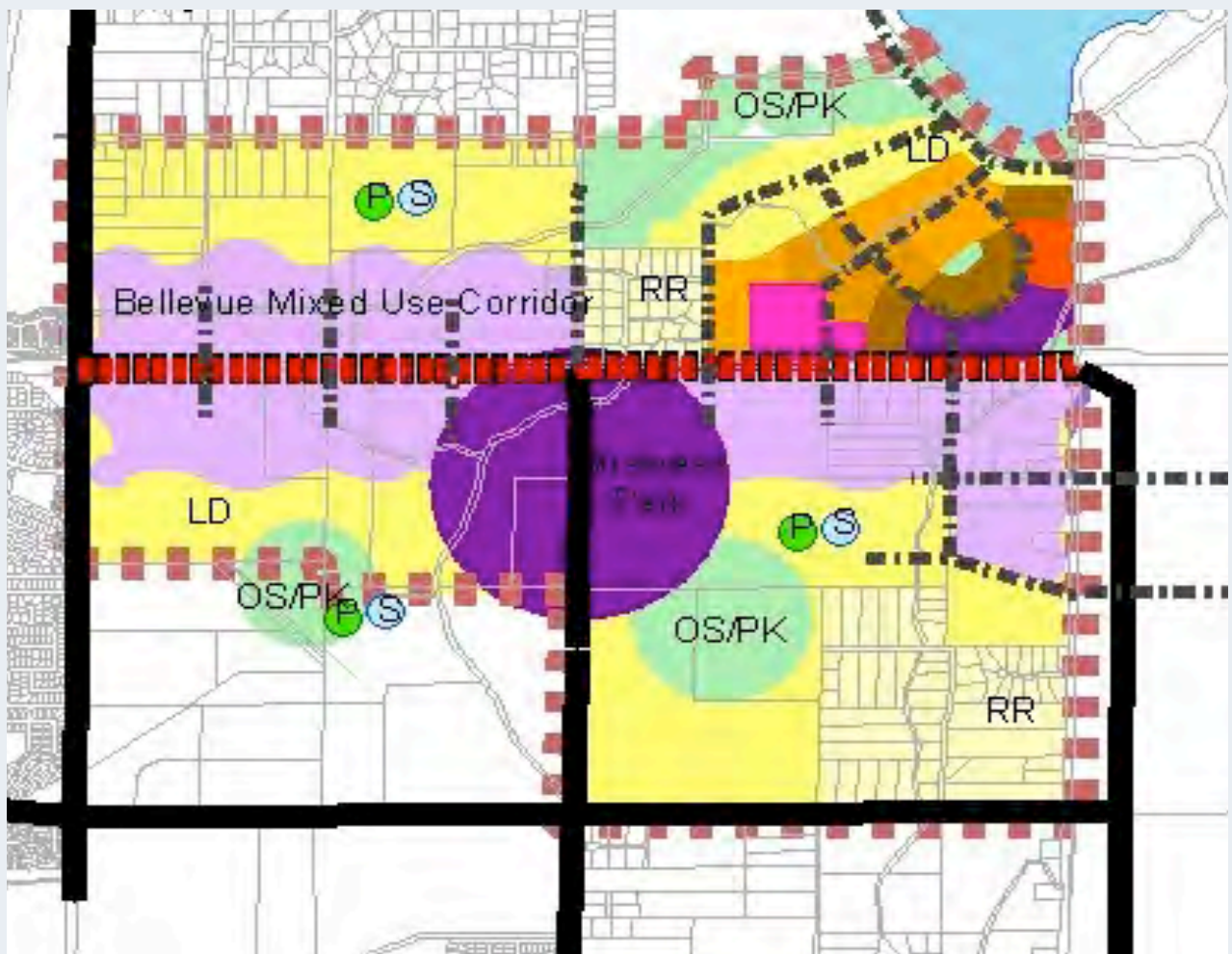


Table 1 Land Use Designations from the <i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan</i>			
Land Use Designations	Key	Intended Uses	Density
Rural Residential (RR)	Light Yellow	Residential: single-family	1 – 3 units per acre
Low Density Residential (LD)	Yellow	Residential: single-family detached, condominium, and zero-lot line	2 – 6 units per acre
Low-Medium Density Residential (LMD)	Tan	Residential: single-family detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex, condominium, zero-lot-line	6.1 – 12 units per acre
High-Medium Density Residential (HMD)	Light Brown	Residential: multifamily, apartment, condominium, triplex, fourplex	12.1 – 24 units per acre
High Density Residential (HD)	Dark Brown	Residential: multifamily	24.1 – 36 units per acre
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)	Pink	Commercial: retail, eating and drinking, commercial recreation, auto services, etc.	Average 0.35 FAR
Bellevue Corridor Mixed Use	Light Purple	A mixture of LMD, HMD, HD, CO and CN.	Varies
Thoroughfare Commercial (CT)	Red	Commercial: auto-oriented commerce, large recreational facilities, some heavy commercial, lodging and hospitality, automobile sales and services	0.35 Floor Area Ratio
Business Park (BP)	Purple	Commercial and industrial: heavy commercial, office, research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, information-based and service-based activities	0.40 Floor Area Ratio
Open Space – Park/Recreation Facility (OS-PK)	Green	Recreation: public parks, golf courses, greens, commons, playgrounds, and other public and private open spaces	0.10 Floor Area Ratio
School	Blue Circles	Public Elementary Schools	N/A

BELLEVUE COMMUNITY PLAN (BCP)

The *General Plan* conceptual land use plan (for illustrative purposes only) for the BCP is shown on the previous page. This illustrative plan also appears on the City’s Official Land Use Diagram. Through the development of the BCP, the *General Plan* “Illustrative Plan” and land use designations (Table 1), described above, were refined in order to develop the community’s vision for the BCP area in the following chapters of this community plan.

ASSUMPTIONS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSTRAINTS

The Bellevue Community Plan was guided by the following assumptions and the assessment of opportunities and constraints regarding anticipated future conditions to the year 2030 listed in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and developed through the community engagement process.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Although essentially vacant today, the BCP is surrounded by existing and proposed urban and suburban land uses. All lands within the City's adopted Sphere of Influence within and near the BCP will be developed.
- Development within the BCP area will be guided by "Urban Expansion" policies in the City's *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as well as Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission's (LAFCO) procedures, codes, and actions.
- Significant amounts of job-generating land uses will be located in close proximity to the UC Merced Campus.
- The University of California Merced (UCM) campus will continue to expand in the vicinity of Lake Yosemite on the northeastern edge of the Merced growth boundary or SUDP/SOI along with a future University Community.
- Urban development (residential, commercial, and industrial) will continue to be focused within the City of Merced's growth area (SUDP/SOI) and not in the unincorporated areas surrounding the City.

From City Council Resolution #2006-89 regarding the University Community:

- The University Community will be incorporated into the City of Merced and will not be a separate city or part of the unincorporated County.
- Annexation along the Bellevue Corridor is encouraged to provide contiguity between UC Merced and the City of Merced. It is realistic to expect development proposals in the BCP planning area in the near-term.
- Though no separate wastewater treatment plant should service the University Community, consideration of innovative methods of wastewater treatment for that area may occur.
- The City will encourage annexation along the Bellevue Corridor to provide contiguity between the University Community and the City of Merced.

OPPORTUNITIES

The BCP presents important opportunities for the City of Merced. The continued growth of UC Merced will provide an influx of people, ideas, and energy. The plan should capitalize on this growth and ensure that new development meets the needs and desires of new and existing residents. Potential opportunities include the following:

Growing University-Oriented Population

At full buildout, UC Merced is expected to grow to approximately 25,000 students and over 6,500 faculty and staff members. As the population grows, there will be an expanding market for housing, goods, and services.

Future Research and Development Park Sites

The plan should anticipate and prepare for the market demands caused by a growing University, including identifying sites for future job generating research and development parks and encouraging multiple interests to collaborate for long-term economic and fiscal benefits.

Home for Entrepreneurs

The plan should help foster a living and working environment to attract a new generation of entrepreneurs, leading to innovations, technologies, and expansion of local investment and job-generators.

Alternative Transportation

The plan should identify and implement circulation and land use standards that encourage multi-modal transportation including walking, biking, transit, and driving. By implementing the complete transportation network and shifting away from auto-centric mobility patterns, it is possible to compliment and build upon the UC Merced investment while moderating the environmental impacts of increased development within the BCP area. It is essential to offer multi-modal access to the student population of UC Merced and to future BCP residents.

Leverage New Investment

The expanding University community has and will continue to spark associated investment in Merced. The plan should identify opportunities to leverage new investments in the University to improve citywide economic vitality.

Low-Impact Development

Well-planned growth in the BCP area can ensure that development minimizes impacts to natural resources, air quality, and water quality. The plan should identify and incorporate concepts for development patterns and solutions that conserve and enhance resources from which a community prospers.

Community Character

There is little existing development within the BCP area, thus the BCP presents an important opportunity to elaborate on *General Plan* vision concepts for developing a unique community character. The plan should encourage memorable livable, human-scale public spaces and distinctive community centers that facilitate positive interaction and idea sharing.

The scale of the Plan area and timing of the UC campus build-out will make phasing an important consideration in Plan implementation. The pattern and timeframe in which the area develops will impact transit opportunities, development feasibility, and interim community character.

Existing Rural Residential Communities

Though primarily located outside the Plan Area, existing “ranchette neighborhoods” provide a semi-rural lifestyle defined by open space and agricultural uses. The BCP provides an opportunity to maintain and strengthen the character of these neighborhoods with appropriate soft transitions to new higher intensity development; these neighborhoods can also provide development themes for some areas of the BCP, such as equestrian-oriented facilities and trails.

CONSTRAINTS

While there are many opportunities for the City to capitalize on, the following constraints and challenges have been taken into account during the development of the Plan.

Development Phasing

The scale of the Plan area and timing of the UC campus build-out will make phasing an important consideration in Plan implementation. The pattern and timeframe in which the area develops will impact transit opportunities, development feasibility, and interim community character.

Natural Resource and Habitat Disruption

Portions of the Plan area are home to sensitive natural resources such as vernal pools that must be considered and which have the potential to enhance unique public open spaces.

Multiple Interests

BCP standards and policies must address the needs and concerns of individual property owners and local jurisdictions, while ensuring each unique development contributes to a unified whole. The project area is within the City’s SOI and SUDP, but is currently under County jurisdiction.

Multiple City Focus Points

The City has important existing resources including the charming downtown and several historic neighborhoods. The BCP must ensure that development within the BCP complements, rather than competes with these and other existing or future community focal points.

Campus Parkway Regional Traffic (Loop Road)

Bellevue Road is part of Merced’s planned loop road to carry regional traffic. While this serves an important regional transportation need, it limits the use of the road for transit, bicycling, and pedestrian-scale development.

View of Bellevue Road



An Uncertain Economy

The current economy is still uncertain and growth forecasts for Merced and the BCP vary widely.

Competition to Serve the UCM Market

The BCP area and the University Community will potentially be competing for valuable economic development and expensive infrastructure capacity for many decades to come.

Affect on Downtown

Downtowns are sensitive to market forces, particularly to urban growth in other areas, including the development of the BCP.

Disparate Visions

The BCP area will be developed by many property owners and developers over the course of several decades. A focused and consistent effort will be needed on the part of decision makers to ensure successful, long-term implementation. This Plan provides an overall vision and general framework for new development, and also provides procedures for the preparation of more detailed neighborhood master plans to help coordinate and connect new development among and between multiple property owners.

A focused and consistent effort will be needed on the part of decision makers so ensure successful, long-term implementation.

**BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN
AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

SAM PIPES CONFERENCE ROOM
678 W. 18TH STREET
MERCED, CALIFORNIA

THURSDAY
AUGUST 15, 2013

(A) CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson SPRIGGS called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

(B) ROLL CALL

Present: Committee Members:

Susan Gerhardt
Dan Holmes
Sharon Hunt Dicker
Bill Hvidt
Lee Kolligian
Walt Lopes
Carole McCoy
Jeff Pennington
Steve Simmons
Justi Smith
Bill Spriggs
Steve Tinetti
Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo (arrived at
2:00 p.m.)

Absent: Committee Members:

Jerry Callister (excused)
Melbourne Gwin, Jr. (excused)
Richard Kirby (excused)
Ken Robbins (excused)
Greg Thompson (excused)

Staff Present:

Bill King, Principal Planner

Consultants Present:

Lisa Wise
David Sargent
Patrick Gilster

(C) APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 2 AND JULY 11, 2013

M/S SIMMONS-HOLMES and carried by unanimous voice vote (five absent, one late), to approve the Minutes of May 2, 2013 and July 11, 2013, as submitted.

(D) ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Rick TELEGAN advised that he would like to discuss infrastructure, specifically sewage issues at some point in the meeting's discussion.

(E) PLANNING PROCESS ACTIVITIES AND CALENDAR

Principal Planner KING spoke about the actions of the Committee at the May 2, 2013, meeting including advisory recommendations about: 1) the transportation and land use functions of Bellevue Road and Mandeville (Bellevue Road to serve regional traffic and Mandeville Avenue to serve local traffic with a significant transit service and associated land use variety and pedestrian-oriented designs); 2) open space network; 3) locations of Business Park and Transit-Oriented Development "character areas;" and, 4) placement of commercial centers (discussion to be concluded at today's meeting).

Principal Planner KING also provided an overview of the plan's draft policies to be reviewed later in the meeting.

Ms. WISE introduced the team present (David Sargent and Patrick Gilster), and provided a broad overview of the planning process to date and future meetings of the Committee, which would involve one final meeting in December 2013 or January 2014 at which time the full draft plan will be presented and discussed.

(F) DISCUSSION ABOUT RETAIL AT G AND BELLEVUE:

This discussion occurred as part of item G, after the break.

(G) DRAFT PLAN CORE ELEMENTS (Land Use, Circulation, Open Space)

Mr. Sargent's powerpoint presentation was arranged as a "visual questionnaire" filled with imagery of ways in which the plan area could be developed, and structured with time for the Committee to ask questions and make comments about, in order to be sure to incorporate the community's ideas into a more definitive level before the plan is fully developed. Mr. Sargent presented several topics:

Complete Streets: A goal of the plan is to create “transit-servable places.” A foundation of this goal is to create a network of complete streets so the population can safely and comfortably walk or ride a bike to and from work and home.

Committee Member KOLLIGIAN asked about the design of Gardner Road. Mr. Sargent described the area south of the intersection of Gardner Road and Bellevue Road as an important business center, and that the typical 5-lane arterial with walls would cut it in half. Rather, provide roadway features to carry the anticipated traffic, but which may have fewer travel lanes, with or without on-street parking, and slow the vehicle speeds. This would be tested in subsequent traffic modeling. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN cautioned against going with a design similar to the funneling of M Street north of Cardella Road. Mr. Sargent stated the M Street design would not be used on Gardner Road.

Committee Member DICKER asked about the map showing the possible future location of Campus Parkway, and asked that the image shown at today’s meeting not be included in the Bellevue Community Plan.

Mr. Sargent continued to describe the functional street layout for the area including arterials, collectors, important local streets, important block pattern to support transit, and the Mandeville transit-corridor. Principal Planner KING noted that the handout (page 13) includes language that describes the illustrative nature of the local street block pattern, as discussed by the Committee in May 2013. Mr. Sargent noted that at some point in time, performance standards should be developed as a tool to identify the minimum level of street connectivity needed in the plan to achieve the goal creating “transit-servable places.”

Bellevue Road Design: Mr. Sargent described the different potential designs for Bellevue Road including: 1) 6-lane arterial with intersections every ½ mile (BAU); 2) 6-lane arterial with intersections every ½ mile, plus side-roads with parking (angled or parallel, single or double-loaded) and driveways to adjacent uses, and allowing a variety of building types and uses to face the side road, this option allows side traffic to operate without affecting the through traffic on the 6-lane arterial; 3) a 4-6 lane arterial that allows signalized street intersections every ¼ mile, and traffic moves at 35 mph, possibly with bike lanes and on-street parking; and 4) option (3) with one-way side road with the features noted above.

Committee Member HOLMES noted that the traffic model will still need to include through traffic that will occur in the planning area. Mr. TELEGAN asked about

driveway access to the side roads. Committee Member HOLMES asked if these different types can occur along the 2 mile stretch and MR. SARGENT said there should be consistency for at least a ¼ mile length. Committee Member WESTMORELAND-PEDROZO asked if the expressway design that exists off of SR 99 will continue all the way to and including Bellevue Road. Mr. Sargent commented that traffic from SR 99 will not travel a loop through Merced, but will function more as an access to local sites, such as UC Merced. Thus, in the plan, Bellevue Road is not being designed as an expressway. The design of Bellevue Road is more about creating and enhancing the adjacent neighborhood, rather than just serving as a through road for regional traffic and adding no value to adjacent properties.

Mandeville Road Design: Mr. Sargent described the transit-corridor with a future bus-rapid transit (BRT) lane, auto lanes, parking and bike lane, as well as the different land uses that would front it within the planning area. Mr. TELEGAN asked how the plan envisions Mandeville Avenue extending west of G Street and into the Bellevue Ranch development, because the plan shows it going to M Street. Mr. Sargent noted there isn't room for a dedicated transit lane, but that the bus service would run along that existing road sharing the road with vehicles. Mr. LAKIREDDY asked about the reasoning behind discouraging Bellevue Road as an expressway, because if there are many commercial corridors, then wouldn't slowing traffic create a mess in the future? Mr. Sargent clarified that slower traffic can actually move more cars than faster traffic. Poorly operating intersections have the potential to degrade capacity. Bellevue Road would need to include synchronized traffic signals, and perhaps the use of traffic roundabouts. Mr. Sargent also clarified that these roads are not commercial corridors, but rather walkable and livable streets that will have a variety of adjacent land uses, including those with high concentrations of employees. Mandeville Avenue could also become mainly residential. Committee Member WESTMORELAND-PEDROZO commented that the M Street transit-corridor needs to be reassessed, especially given the new railroad under-crossing. She also pointed out that having an understanding of regional traffic, truck traffic, and design of Campus Parkway are factors that can be used to help determine the function of Bellevue Road. Committee Member HVIDT commented that an informed decision needs to be based on the cost of the infrastructure that is being proposed in the plan area. Chairperson SPRIGGS commented that first there needs to be foresight to set aside space for a transit line, arterials and expressways to accommodate the needs of a growing community, regardless of the time to pay and construct it. The Committee discussed the role of the market in being able to, or not pay for planned infrastructure, and whether or not the market exists to develop property. Ms. WISE noted that the plan will include options to facilitate the kind of development that could occur, and

not come up with a detailed design, and at this level of planning, financial planning is not necessary. Principal Planner KING informed the Committee of the City's Municipal Services Review and its Public Facilities Financing Plan that address the costs of infrastructure improvements (including roadways, street lights, and transit) that are proposed at the General Plan level. Mr. Sargent commented that the mobility elements of the plan are being devised to maximize developability and to generate value along the roadways edges as opposed to a narrow view of merely creating a buffer from traffic noise and pollution. Continuing the discussion on Mandeville Avenue, Mr. Sargent commented that the BRT may be able to run with traffic and not have a fixed guide-way.

Other Road Design: Mr. Sargent described the designs of Lake Road, collectors, edge-drives and local streets. Committee Member TINETTI commented that it would be ideal to extend a bike path from Golf Road to Lake Yosemite through the planned open space.

Open Space: Mr. Sargent described the extent and types of open space throughout the plan area ranging from public parks to private open spaces in housing complexes. Mr. TELEGAN commented that the area southwest of Lake Yosemite could be used as a regional park. Committee Member PENNINGTON commented that the updated UCM 2020 plan included recreational uses at Lake Yosemite; Committee Member HVIDT commented he would be happy to present the updated UCM 2020 plan to the Committee.

BREAK/APPROXIMATELY 3:00 P.M. TO 3:15 P.M.

Continued discussion of agenda items F and G:

Mr. Sargent presented a series of possible building types that may occur in each of the plan's place-types (Business Park, Transit-Oriented Development, etc.) for the Committee to review and comment on. These images showed possible land uses and building intensity defined by height, setbacks, and lot coverage. Committee Member HOLMES, to help the Committee visualize, commented that the TOD area sits on a hill. Committee Member MCCOY commented that the view of UC Merced is attractive and tall buildings would block that view. Other Committee members commented that the view of UC is itself changing and will include tall buildings. Committee Member DICKER asked how the plan will complement the town center in the University Community Plan. Mr. Sargent commented that the development of either one would affect the growth of the other. The plan is designed to respond to those changes by allowing development of a different type, and in this way, the plan

is flexible by adjusting what is developed around it. Mr. LAKIREDDY asked about the connectivity of the plan area to the areas to the east. Mr. Sargent commented that Mandeville Avenue would go across. Mr. Sargent commented that the plan will emphasize connectivity and open space to enable many possibilities over time and with changes to the market. Committee Member PENNINGTON asked if there would be a “jobs metric” to determine how much research and development should occur. Ms. WISE noted that at this initial planning stage, and absent proximity to actual development, there shouldn’t be this type of assessment, and that this is the first planning step of many. Mr. Sargent commented that the flip side of flexibility is ambiguity, but as development occurs, it is important to more precisely master plan the surrounding street network, removing the ambiguity of the plan.

Mr. Sargent commented about his involvement in the Silicon Valley to “re-make” an existing business park to one that adds more local roads and adding bikeways and pedestrian walkways, to create a lively urban environment where employees from different companies can mingle informally. The old model of driving in from the countryside, parking and then driving home is not the model that will attract and retain a highly educated and smart workforce. Mr. Sargent commented that the plan builds this from scratch, as opposed to the “remake” underway in the Silicon Valley. Mr. NICHOLSON commented whether the pattern of land uses proposed is similar to what is occurring in the Bay Area, and the value of placing more Research and Development next to it or a mix of uses that is proposed in the Transit-Oriented Development area. Ms. WISE commented that this was discussed at the May 2013 meeting. Mr. Sargent commented in the Mountain View area, biking is becoming a significant form of transportation during the day. Committee Member PENNINGTON asked how a variety of land uses can be placed near each other without controversial public hearings. Ms. WISE noted that there are strategies that can be used to minimize these conflicts and to minimize the entitlement process. Mr. TELEGAN asked about the absence of school sites in the plan. Principal Planner KING commented that we are at the stage where general location of schools can be marked on the community plan land use map; these are marked as “floating schools sites.”

Mr. Sargent presented a series of slides depicting the idea for a Western Gateway Design to create an attractive welcoming space at the intersection of G Street and Bellevue Road. The idea is to create an open space with attractive building facades instead of ending up with a parking lot and/or the back of buildings. The uses could be several types, including retail, for example, the Fig-Garden Village model from Fresno. The open space between the buildings and streets would create an attractive space for housing, or mixed-use designs. The Committee offered several ideas that

could work in this gateway area. Mr. TELEGAN asked if there would be any assurance in the plan as to the availability of sewer for initial phases of development. Mr. KING commented that an update to the sewer master plan is to occur soon, and that the plan, without these infrastructure master plans, cannot itself guarantee the availability of service. Mr. TELEGAN offered the suggestion that the plan include a flexible alternative for on-site sewage treatment, noting that such a plant would be sustainable by enabling the use of discharge water. Committee Member HVIDT asked whether or not there are creative solutions to allowing development of lands next to UC Merced with minimal permitting process. Mr. NICHOLSON commented that development does not have to be in a City, so the real question is how do you get sewer and water to a position near the campus? He stated that the use of a reverse-tax sharing agreement could be discussed whereby development occurs in the County and revenues are shared until such time as the site is annexed could be an option worth examining. Mr. TELEGAN commented that development could be “outside-in” instead of “inside-out” with the use of satellite sewer plants, which the County and the UCP support.

Mr. Sargent presented a conceptual shopping center at G Street and Bellevue Road, similar to a design much like Fig-Garden Village, describing circulation and design options. If a center showed up in this area, it could reduce the demand for commercial services in the areas south of Bellevue Road. [The following dialog was shifted from the end of the meeting: Mr. Sargent stated that the design of the center on G Street and Bellevue Road has a strong statement at the street, but has a soft transition with the future neighborhoods to the north. Committee Member HOLMES commented that because of the property owner, he is comfortable with what his vision for the site is, as opposed to an unknown developer. He also likes the gateway concept and that the center would be constructed at an urban scale. What doesn't make sense is a large big-box shopping center.]

Mr. Sargent also described how commercial sites could occur in the areas south of Bellevue Road. Mr. TELEGAN commented that the rural residential area north of Bellevue Road is a significant change from the City's General Plan, and feels the creek should be captured as part of an open-space feature of a commercial development. Committee Member HOLMES noted that the bus route may be located on Gardner/Parsons Road.

(H) DRAFT PLAN POLICIES

Principal Planner KING described a few of the policies to give an example of how policy development for the Bellevue Community Plan can be developed, and asked

AUGUST 15, 2013

the Committee for comments, several of which were discussed. Committee Member WESTMORELAND-PEDROZO asked how much sensitive habitat is in the planning area and whether or not resource agencies are going to require lands to be set aside for protection. Principal Planner Mr. KING explained that the plan's open space plan includes a large area of open space, some of which may or may not be required to be set aside. The amount of open space in the plan may be lessened after proposed development plans go through the permit process with the resource agencies. Committee Member WESTMORELAND-PEDROZO emphasized the importance to use existing information to minimize future surprises that result in modifications to the plan. She encouraged owners to approach planning and habitat protection from a collaborative approach to allow greater flexibility in locating development and conservation lands, emphasizing this to occur as a follow-up step to preparation of the plan.

(I) NEXT STEPS

The next CAC meeting will occur in December 2013 or January 2014.

(J) ADJOURNMENT TO AN UNDETERMINED THURSDAY IN DECEMBER 2013, OR JANUARY 2014, AT 1:30 P.M.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, CHAIRPERSON SPRIGGS ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:35 P.M. TO AN UNDETERMINED BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON A THURSDAY IN DECEMBER 2013, OR JANUARY 2014, AT 1:30 P.M.

BY:



BILL KING
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

APPROVED:

BILL SPRIGGS, CHAIRPERSON
BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN
AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE