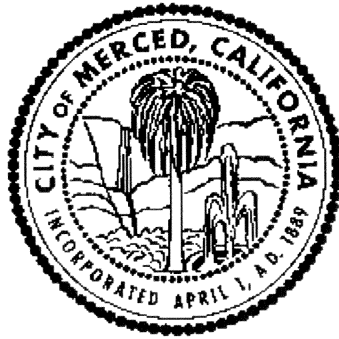



Agenda Item:@.0  
Meeting Date:2/17/2015



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

 Print

TO: City Manager  
FROM: Bill King, Principal Planner  
DATE: 01/16/2015  
SUBJECT: Draft Bellevue Community Plan Study Session

REPORT IN BRIEF

The City Council is presented with an overview of the Draft Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) and the process to develop it.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) study session is intended to provide a broad overview of the plan and issues. No action is necessary.

On March 2, 2015, a formal recommendation on the plan and related changes to the City’s General Plan is scheduled to be presented by Staff for City Council consideration and action.

ALTERNATIVES:

AUTHORITY:

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 405.

DISCUSSION:

**PLAN OVERVIEW**

The *Bellevue Community Plan* study area, consisting of 2.4 square miles, is located outside, but adjacent to the Merced City limits, and within the City’s planned growth area adjacent to UC Merced (Attachment A).

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. To create a great sense of place with investment certainty, the plan emphasizes street connectivity, functional mobility choices, active and passive recreation open space

corridors, gateway street designs, and attractive business park settings.

Please refer to the Planning Commission Staff Report (Attachment 1) for a detailed report. 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](http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/bellevue_corridor_community_plan/draft_documents/default.asp)

#### History and Past Actions:

On July 7, 2014, the City Council held a study session on an earlier version of the draft BCP. Copies of that plan were provided to the Council before that meeting. Since that date, the draft plan has been modified to reflect the comments of the Ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee (see discussion below). The current draft is available for public review in the City Clerk's office and at the Planning Department Counter. It can also be viewed from the project website at:

[http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/bellevue\\_corridor\\_community\\_plan/draft\\_documents/default.asp](http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/bellevue_corridor_community_plan/draft_documents/default.asp)

#### Description:

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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 sub-consultants who examined issues related to transportation, market trends, and creating a sense of place. Community participation included a diverse Citizen's Advisory Committee composed of 18 members, who held 9 public meetings from August 2012 and August 2014. Supporting these efforts was a 28-member Technical Advisory Committee representing many interests such as Merced County, UC Merced, and the Merced Irrigation District. Two public workshops were held during the preparation of the draft plan to inform and solicit comments from area property owners. See Appendix F of the draft plan for more detail.

### **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 land use model that: 1) allows for flexible commercial locations and future jobs-based business (tech) park sites; 2) is responsive to anticipated housing needs of UC Merced; 3) continues the tradition of creating recreational open-space corridors that connect neighborhoods to destinations; 4) respects existing rural-residential neighborhoods; and 5) works in tandem with adjacent circulation systems to maximize their use and to reduce air pollution.
- 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.

### **FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS OF THE DRAFT BCP**

On December 3, 2014, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council adopt the *Bellevue Community Plan* along with an associated General Plan Amendment and environmental review document. Their action followed that of the project's Ad-hoc Citizen's Advisory Committee, who on August 25, 2014, also unanimously recommended that the City approve the July 2014 draft plan, along with some changes to the draft plan. These changes (noted below) are supported by Staff and the Planning Commission and will be added to the final plan pending Council approval.

- Remove Figure 3, the BCCP Illustrative Plan, from page 84, Introduction Chapter.
  
- Throughout the community plan, refer to the urban design of the BCP as "Bellevue Urban Design," distinguishing it from the urban village concept of the City's General Plan.
  
- Implementation Policy: City Staff to evaluate use of collector roads spaced every 1/3 mile along Bellevue Road (instead of 1/4 mile spacing), between G Street and Golf Road and Mandeville Lane and Farmland Avenue, considering issues related to terrain and the function of collector roads.
  
- Remove Appendix C from the BCP (but use it in the Environmental Document to describe plan consistency).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The *Bellevue Community Plan* was developed to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Evidence of this consistency is found in three areas of the planning effort, namely, (a) guidance provided by the General Plan; (b) a plan consistency assessment (Appendix A of the Draft BCP); and, (c) a policy alignment document (Attachment D of the CEQA Addendum, Env. Rev. #11-15).

For the reasons summarized in the bulleted items below, the Planning staff found that no additional environmental document beyond an Addendum is necessary to evaluate the environmental effects of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. Specifically, all potentially significant effects:

- have been analyzed adequately in the General Plan EIR SCH#2008071069;
- have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR; and
- no substantial changes from the General Plan are proposed.

#### Budget/Appropriate Action:

Not applicable.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bill King, Principal Planner

Reviewed,  
David Gonzalves, Director of Development Services

Approved By,  
John Bramble, City Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Planning Commission Staff Report #14-14

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning & Permitting Division**

**STAFF REPORT:** #14-14 - Addendum

**AGENDA ITEM:** 4.1

**FROM:** Kim Espinosa,  
Planning Manager

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING DATE:** Dec. 3, 2014

**PREPARED BY:** Bill King, AICP,  
Principal Planner

**CITY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING DATE:** To be scheduled

---

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan* and certification of Addendum (ERC# 11-15) to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069), and **General Plan Amendment #14-02**, initiated by the City of Merced. The *Bellevue Community Plan* contains several elements including Vision and Urban Design, Mobility, Open Space, Conservation and Recreation, Community Character (Land Use), Urban Expansion, Public Services and Facilities, and Plan Maintenance that will be used by the City to guide future growth within the City's Sphere of Influence for approximately 2.4 square miles 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). \*PUBLIC HEARING\*

**ACTION:** PLANNING COMMISSION:

Recommendation to City Council

- 1) Certification of the Environmental Review #11-15 (Addendum to an Environmental Impact Report, SCH#2008071069);
- 2) General Plan Amendment #14-02; and,
- 3) Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan*

CITY COUNCIL:

Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Certification of the Environmental Review #11-15 (Addendum to an Environmental Impact Report, SCH#2008071069);
- 2) General Plan Amendment #14-02; and,
- 3) Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan*

### **SUMMARY**

At their public meeting of October 22, 2014, the Planning Commission continued its review of the project to the December 3, 2014, meeting, in order to give the Commission more review time before taking an action.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council adopt the *Bellevue Community Plan* including the recommended changes identified by the Bellevue Community Plan Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee, approve General Plan Amendment #14-02, and certify the Addendum (Environmental Review #11-15) to the Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069) of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* in accordance with the Draft Resolution at Attachment B of Attachment A.

### **Attachments:**

- A. Staff Report #14-14 for the October 22, 2014 Planning Commission meeting.

N:/Shared/Planning/grants/Bellevue Community Plan/Partner and Public Involvement/City Boards and Commissions/Planning Commission/December 2014PPlan and GPA Review and Action.

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning & Permitting Division**

**STAFF REPORT:** #14-14

**AGENDA ITEM:** 4.2

**FROM:** Kim Espinosa,  
Planning Manager

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING DATE:** Oct. 22, 2014

**PREPARED BY:** Bill King, AICP,  
Principal Planner

**CITY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING DATE:** To be scheduled

---

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan* and certification of Addendum (ERC# 11-15) to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069), and **General Plan Amendment #14-02**, initiated by the City of Merced. The *Bellevue Community Plan* contains several elements including Vision and Urban Design, Mobility, Open Space, Conservation and Recreation, Community Character (Land Use), Urban Expansion, Public Services and Facilities, and Plan Maintenance that will be used by the City to guide future growth within the City's Sphere of Influence for approximately 2.4 square miles 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). \*PUBLIC HEARING\*

**ACTION:** PLANNING COMMISSION:

Recommendation to City Council

- 1) Certification of the Environmental Review #11-15 (Addendum to an Environmental Impact Report, SCH#2008071069);
- 2) General Plan Amendment #14-02; and,
- 3) Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan*

CITY COUNCIL:

Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1) Certification of the Environmental Review #11-15 (Addendum to an Environmental Impact Report, SCH#2008071069);
- 2) General Plan Amendment #14-02; and,
- 3) Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan*

ATTACHMENT A

## **SUMMARY**

Urban development pressure is growing in the northeast section of the City's growth area. The siting of the UC Merced Campus, combined with the forecasted dramatic population increase in California's Central Valley, and the continued northern growth of the City of Merced, all point to the expectation of future growth. This expectation is reflected in several long-range planning efforts including UC Merced's 2020 Plan, the University Community Plan, planning for Yosemite Lake Estates, as well as recent development interests within the City in response to continued growth at the UC campus. The presence of sewer and water lines in Bellevue Road, and need for expanded roads to service growth of the campus, are concrete signs of financial resources being expended in response to growth.

There is a growing demand to provide shovel-ready projects that will respond to the growing market for housing and services. With these projects is the responsibility for the City to assure adequate public services and facilities in a manner that is sustainable in terms of the capacity of the environment and the fiscal solvency of the community. The Merced City Council recognized these needs, and as part of the adoption of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, identified the need to prepare a community plan in the area west of UC Merced along Bellevue Road prior to review of annexation requests. The *Bellevue Community Plan* can be an important tool for the community to bridge the goal to enable shovel-ready projects with the community values noted above. The need and function of this tool is evident on several levels, including the land use entitlement process, infrastructure services, and quality neighborhoods and jobs.

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* anticipated the development of the *Bellevue Community Plan*, and provided much conceptual direction to help shape it. This foundation enabled the community plan to be strongly consistent with the City's General Plan, which translates to a relatively uncomplicated environmental review and limited amendments to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. This report is comprised of three sections related to the recommended actions to: 1) provide a recommendation on the Community Plan; 2) to review and provide a recommendation on proposed amendments to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*; and, 3) to review and provide a recommendation concerning the environmental assessment of the plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council adopt the *Bellevue Community Plan* (Enclosure 1) including the recommended changes identified by the Bellevue Community Plan Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee, approve General Plan Amendment #14-02 (Attachment A), and certify the Addendum (Environmental Review #11-15) to the Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069) of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (Enclosure 2) per the Draft Resolution at Attachment B.



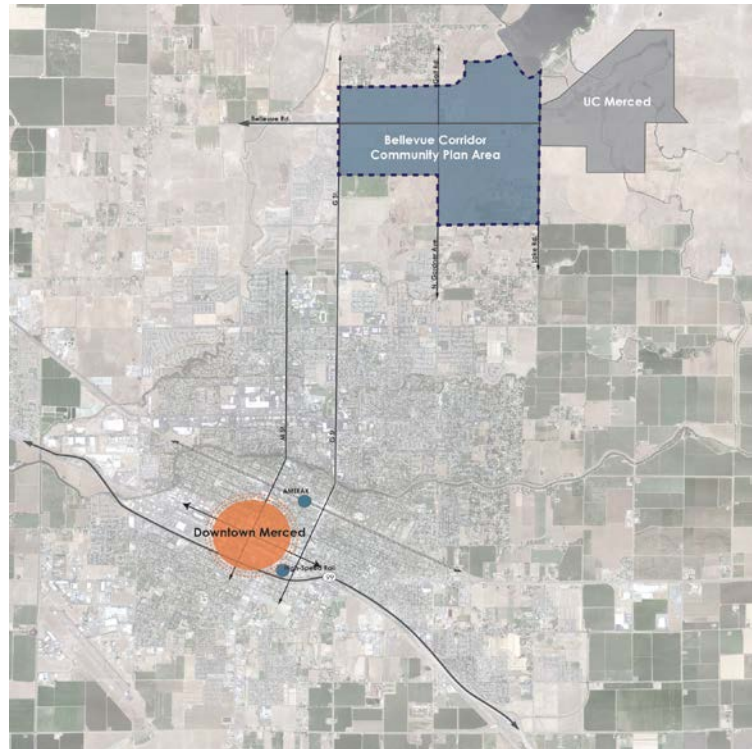
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Bellevue Community Plan* study area, consisting of 2.4 square miles, 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). 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.

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.

The BCP is a framework and a set of principles/strategies to help the City expand in a more fiscally sustainable manner and to manage a number of "critical uncertainties" to increase the chances of building an interconnected set of valuable pedestrian and transit-oriented places over a long time. Through the neighborhood master planning process as described in Chapter 5, 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 where the next development is framed by the preceding development site, and the City is not left with a smattering of projects, but rather the development of a vision. The BCP includes several elements, including:

- "Vision and Urban Design,"
- "Mobility,"
- "Open Space, Conservation and Recreation,"
- "Community Character (Land Use),"



- “Urban Expansion,”
- “Public Services and Facilities,” and,
- “Plan Maintenance.”

NOTE: Appendix A of the BCP (Enclosure 1) summarizes these chapter elements and their consistency with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

The BCP does not rezone or annex property. Upon adoption of the Plan, properties within the planning area will remain in Merced County and will retain their current county 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.

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*.

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).

## **BACKGROUND**

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes an illustrative plan of the study area along with guidelines to help craft a community plan west of UC Merced. A grant award to prepare the plan was made in January 2011, a contract with the State grantor became effective in August 2011, and a project consultant began work in February 2012. Both Mary Ward and then Carol McCoy of the Planning Commission were members of the project’s citizen-based advisory committee, who recommended that the draft plan be adopted along with some amendments (see Finding F), which staff supports. The Planning Commission’s recommendations will be forwarded to the Merced City Council for their consideration and action.

Upon adoption, the BCP will remain a stand-alone policy document that supplements the City’s General Plan. By reference, it will be a part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. The City should begin the process to integrate the BCP with existing master plan documents and processes, including but not limited to, the following:

- 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).
- City of Merced Standard Design Manual.

### **Community Input**

The BCP was crafted by a professional planning consultant with considerable input from City Planning Staff, a technical advisory committee, and other interested government agencies such as UC Merced Physical Planning Design and Construction, Merced County Planning and Community Development, and the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). A significant amount of public outreach occurred during the planning process, which captured community input in ways that guided the drafting of the community plan.

Collaboration among parties whose interests could be affected by future development near and within the plan study area was encouraged through public workshops, stakeholder meetings, and a series of public meetings with an ad-hoc citizen advisory committee. The Merced City Council appointed this Committee, which met 9 times during the planning period. Their involvement resulted in increased public awareness and a reflection of community issues, concerns, and new perspectives on future development opportunities in the plan area.

Appendix F of the *Bellevue Community Plan* includes a detailed description of plan development process and the community participation program that helped shape it.

### **FINDINGS/CONSIDERATIONS:**

#### **Consistency with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan**

- A. 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 providing significant employment generating uses that would benefit from being in close proximity to the UC Merced campus.
- B. 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. As discussed in Appendix A of the BCP, the *Bellevue Community Plan* is crafted consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, and reflects several guiding aspects of the City's General Plan, listed below. Development of the plan was guided by the following inputs (all described in detail in BCP Chapter 1 – Introduction):
  - The City's adopted Guiding Principles for local community plans (Section 3.7.2, *Merced Vision 2030 General 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;

- The Bellevue Corridor Community Plan “Illustrative Plan;” and,
- Several assumptions and the assessment of opportunities and constraints regarding anticipated future conditions.

The BCP also implements the goals of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* and integrates with other planning efforts in the community, specifically:

- The Merced Loop Road,
- Research and Development Sites,
- Preservation of Downtown Cultural Center,
- The City of Merced Transit Corridor ; and,
- UC Merced Gateway District.

- C. *Bellevue Corridor Illustrative Plan:* Section 3.7.4 of the General 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; and, 4) connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and UC Merced.
- D. The “*Character Type Plan*” (Chapter 5, page 91) of the *Draft Bellevue Community Plan* is grounded in the *Bellevue Corridor Illustrative Plan*, containing all key concepts anchored by it. A comparative assessment of the land uses in these plans is provided for in Table “A-7” in Appendix A of the BCP (Enclosure 1), 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 table, and further environmental assessment would be necessary for such growth in these areas.
- E. *BCP Policy Development:* In furtherance of building consistency with the City’s *General Plan*, BCP-specific policies were developed to offer a greater degree of guidance as to the meaning and application of adopted General Plan goals and policies. Technical Appendix D of Environmental Review #11-15 reveals the strong alignment of BCP policies with the goals and policies of the General Plan, and the foundation upon which new policies were written to apply specifically to the BCP.

### **Bellevue Community Plan Ad-hoc Advisory Committee Recommendation**

- F. A draft BCP was crafted after considerable review and input was received from the project's citizen-based advisory committee. At their meeting of August 25, 2014, the Committee unanimously recommended approval of the draft BCP, along with amendments to the July 2014 draft that is included as Enclosure 1 to this report. These amendments are:
1. Remove Figure 3, the BCCP Illustrative Plan, from page 84, Introduction Chapter.
  2. Throughout the community plan, refer to the urban design of the BCP as "Bellevue Urban Design," distinguishing it from the urban village concept of the City's General Plan.
  3. Implementation Policy: City Staff to evaluate use of collector roads spaced every 1/3 mile along Bellevue Road (instead of 1/4 mile spacing), between G Street and Golf Road and Mandeville Lane and Farmland Avenue, considering issues related to terrain and the function of collector roads.
  4. Remove Appendix C from the BCP (but use in the Environmental Document to describe plan consistency).

### **General Plan Amendments**

- G. The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* identified the need for a community plan to be developed in the project area. The proposed *Bellevue Community Plan* followed the lead of the General Plan, described in detail in the Introduction Chapter of the BCP. While following these leads, the BCP also refined them by adding detail, clarity, and adjustments in a manner that is consistent with the General Plan's programmatic description of future growth in the subject area. Recommended amendments to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* are described below, and Attachment A depicts the actual changes and updates to General Plan text and images.

#### ***Land Use***

1. By direct reference to the BCP, identify land use designations specific to the BCP area.
2. Change the name of the plan from *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* to *Bellevue Community Plan*.
3. Amend text in the General Plan to describe the urban design qualities within the BCP plan area.
4. Provide a summary description of the BCP, its relationship to the General Plan, and where it is located.

### ***Circulation***

1. Identify Mandeville Lane, not Bellevue Road, as the City's east-west Transit Corridor to UCM.
  2. Include by reference, the street cross-section designs of the BCP.
  3. Include a notation in the Circulation Element that the number of through travel lanes for specific roads within the BCP should be determined by subsequent traffic studies.
- H. California case law has found that any decision on a General Plan Amendment should be supported by findings of fact. These findings are the rationale for making a decision either to approve or deny an amendment to the City's General Plan.
1. *The proposed amendment is in the public interest and is consistent and compatible with the rest of the General Plan.* See Finding I of the "Environmental Review" section below for details.
  2. *The potential effects of the proposed amendment have been evaluated and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.* The *Bellevue Community Plan* relies on the adopted Safety Element of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, as it does not contain such element. As found above, the remainder of the plan is consistent and compatible with the rest of the General Plan, and its own efforts to provide for the public health, safety and welfare of the community.
  3. The proposed amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the California Government Code. See Finding J of the "Environmental Review" section below for details.

### **Environmental Review**

- I. *Consistency Review:* The *Bellevue Community Plan* was developed to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. Evidence of this consistency is found in three areas of the planning effort, namely, (a) guidance provided by the General Plan, which is described in Chapter 1 (Introduction) of the BCP; (b) a plan consistency assessment is presented as Appendix A of the BCP; and, (c) a policy alignment document presented as Attachment D of Env. Rev. #11-15 (Enclosure 2).
- J. *Environmental Clearance:* The Planning staff conducted an environmental review of the project in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and found that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects: (a) have been analyzed adequately in the General Plan EIR SCH#2008071069 (Enclosure 3) pursuant to

applicable standards; (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR; and, (c) no substantial changes to the project are proposed, no substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and no new information of substantial importance has been identified, no further assessment is required. The changes described in Section III of this project's Expanded Initial Study (Env. Rev #11-15) are not substantial as they do not trigger any of the conditions necessitating preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR; therefore, no additional environmental document beyond this Addendum is necessary to evaluate the environmental effects of the *Bellevue Community Plan*. Thus, an addendum to Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069) and associated findings have been prepared and is being recommended (see Enclosure 2).

- K. 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, and that future project-level development proposals are required to comply with CEQA, including the preparation of appropriate environmental assessments and reviews.

Attachments:

- A. Changes to the General Plan text and images
- B. Draft Planning Commission Resolution

Enclosures:

- 1. *Bellevue Community Plan*
- 2. Env. Rev. #11-15, Addendum
- 3. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071069) available on the City of Merced website at:  
[http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/merced\\_vision\\_2030\\_general\\_plan\\_adoption/default.asp](http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/merced_vision_2030_general_plan_adoption/default.asp)  
(scroll to items 03, 04, 05, and 06)



## Chapter 4--Transportation and Circulation:

The Transportation and Circulation Chapter addresses the City’s major road system, local street patterns, air facilities, bus and rail transit, and bicycle and pedestrianways. The goal is to identify the most effective ways to plan for circulation while enhancing the community and protecting the environment.

The goals and policies presented here are intended to coordinate circulation with land use by concentrating higher residential densities and major trip destinations in the vicinity of major roadways and public transit corridors.



The Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Circulation Plan features:

- a comprehensive system of arterial streets in a one mile grid system;
- a Campus Parkway alignment along the eastern side of the SUDP/SOI and a Merced-Atwater Expressway on the western side of the SUDP/SOI to integrate existing Highway 59, Bellevue Road, and Mission Avenue alignments into a beltway or “ring-road” concept to carry cross-town traffic around established portions of the community
- a major transit corridor (M Street) designated along the central core of the entire City, [on Mandeville Lane](#)

[connecting to UC Merced](#), and another along Bellevue Road [connecting to western destinations](#); and,

- an expanded on-street and off-street bike path system along the City’s creeks linking together open space areas, employment centers, and residential neighborhoods.

Ultimate buildout of the City’s SUDP/SOI will require significant public improvements to the circulation system in order to maintain an acceptable level-of-service, including new highway interchanges and upgrades to existing interchanges, about 60 miles of new or improved major streets, some separated-grade railroad crossings, and numerous new bridges and traffic signals. How to finance this needed infrastructure is one of the critical issues facing the community as it grows.

Goals and policies in this chapter promote major streets, which are designed to maximize efficiency, and local streets designed to provide access for neighborhood destinations, minimize unnecessary travel demands on major streets, and minimize impacts on the environment. “Complete streets” where all modes of transportation (bicycles, transit, walking) are promoted through the provision of adequate facilities and the design of new developments that minimize barriers to their use. Passenger rail and air service are also an important aspect of the City’s circulation system.





- 4) South Merced – Generally the area south of Childs Avenue, west of Highway 99, north of Mission Avenue, and east of Thornton Road. The South Merced Community Plan was adopted for this area in 2007. In addition to substantial residential development, the Community Plan identifies two areas for significant industrial development along Highway 99, and near the Airport, as well as a major commercial corridor along Highway 59 between Childs Avenue and Mission Avenue. Neighborhood Commercial sites are placed near population centers, and a 40-acre Regional Commercial site is positioned near Highway 99 and Mission Avenue.



- 5) Southeast Merced – The area generally bounded by Highway 140 to the north, the Fairfield Canal to the east, Highway 99 to the west, and Mission Avenue to the south. Southeast Merced houses the Santa Fe Industrial Park which extends from Highway 140 to Mission Avenue, east of the Campus Parkway. A

neighborhood commercial center along Childs Avenue is proposed. Significant highway-oriented commercial and business park development has been designated for the areas adjacent to the new Mission Avenue/ Highway 99 Interchange.



- 6) Thornton Road “Industrial Reserves – Several areas within the SOI/SUDP in the vicinity of the Merced Regional Airport and Castle Airport are identified as future development sites for industrial uses. Thornton Road, north and south of Highway 99 will be developed as an arterial road and be the primary transportation route to this area. These areas are a natural extension of the current industrial uses within the Merced Regional Airport Industrial Park.
- 7) The Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Area – This area is generally located on the north and south sides of Bellevue Road between G Street and the UC Merced Campus east of Lake Road. This area has been identified as a “Community Plan” area (see Section 3.7.2) and will likely contains significant amounts of job-generating uses that wish to be located in close proximity to the UC Merced Campus.





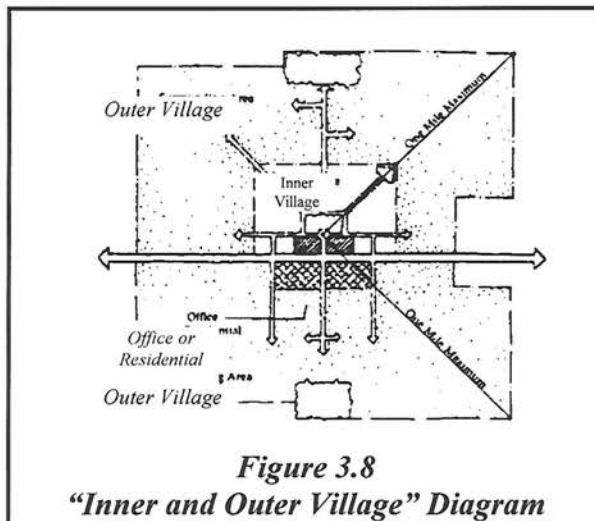
### Outer Villages

Less compact areas surrounding the Inner Villages contain traditional single-family housing, some office uses, schools, and open space. These areas are known as the *Outer Village*. The Outer Villages are tied to the Inner Villages by a local network of connector streets. This convenient network eliminates the need for local trips on area arterials, thereby reducing demand on these roads. The local street system, on the other hand, is designed to be inconvenient for through traffic, providing safe paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.

These Outer Village areas are simply traditional single-family neighborhoods, except that an emphasis is placed on convenient access to the mixed-use areas. The majority of land in the “Villages” on the Land Use Diagram are Outer Village areas.

### Distribution of Villages

Villages should be distributed in a pattern that allows the greatest number of residents access to a variety of shopping opportunities. Villages should also be located to permit residents to walk to retail and public facilities without having to cross an arterial street. Villages need locations that take advantage of main transit lines and existing retail market demand.



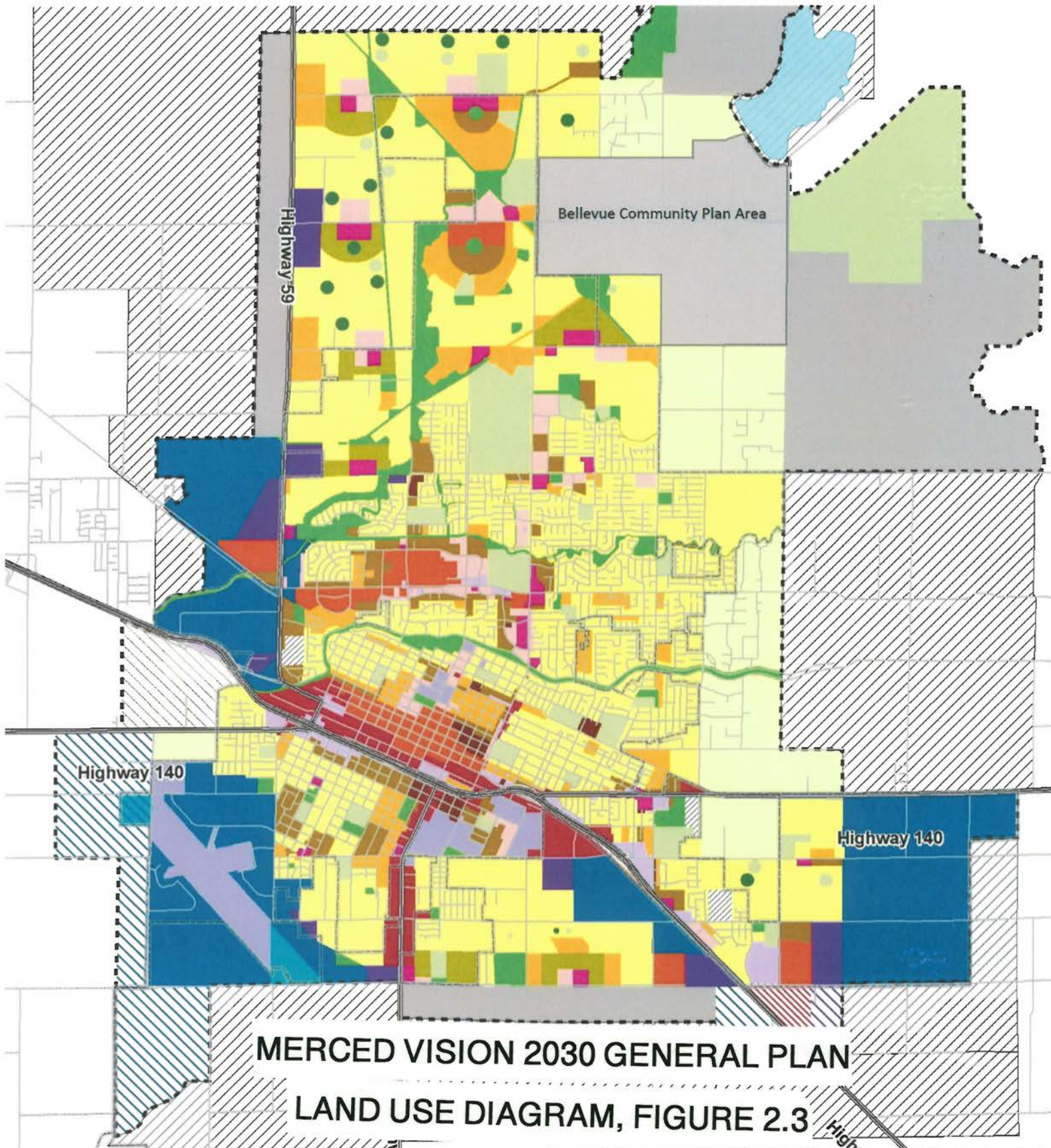
**Figure 3.8**  
**“Inner and Outer Village” Diagram**

Villages should be located to maximize access to their Core Commercial areas from Outer Village Areas without relying on arterial streets. Villages with major retail centers should be spaced at least one mile apart and distributed to serve various growth sub-areas. Generally, there should be one Village for each full square mile bound by arterial streets, except in rural areas.

### Bellevue Corridor Urban Village Design

The composition and pattern of land uses in the Urban Villages near UC Merced along within the Bellevue Community Plan have Road will have unique designs 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 on the Land Use Diagram by the Community Plan. This, along with other components-Components of the “Bellevue Road Corridor Community Plan” isare discussed in greater detail in Section 3.7.





**MERCED VISION 2030 GENERAL PLAN  
LAND USE DIAGRAM, FIGURE 2.3**

Merced City General Plan	
	BUSINESS PARK
	BUSINESS PARK RESERVE
	THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL
	COMMERCIAL RESERVE
	GENERAL COMMERCIAL
	REGIONAL COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
	COMMERCIAL OFFICE
	INDUSTRIAL RESERVE
	AGRICULTURAL
	OPEN SPACE - PARK RECREATION
	FUTURE PARK
	VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL
	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	LOW TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	HIGH TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



discussions with various federal agencies, the University proposed an alternative to reduce the Campus' impacts on wetlands by reducing the size of the developed portion of the Campus from 910 acres to 815 acres and shifting the Campus boundary south into an area that was to be occupied by the University Community and shifting the Community boundary east. This proposed change brought about the need to revise the UC Merced LRDP and the University Community Plan, for which UC Merced officials prepared applications and an associated EIR, adopted by the University of California Board of Regents in 2009. After that adoption, the University Board of Regents had indicated that it intended to submit an application for a University Community Plan Update to Merced County, which has land use jurisdiction over the University Community. Although this application has not yet been submitted to the County, the City of Merced has chosen to acknowledge the revised 2009 external boundaries for the University and the University Community North within the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* since the environmental impacts of those boundaries have been fully analyzed in UC's EIR, which involved the participation of the University, the County of Merced, and the City of Merced.

The Proposed Revised University Community Plan area consists of two areas – Community North and Community South. Community North consists of 833 acres and is owned by the University Community Land Company LLC, a not-for-profit organization composed of the Virginia Smith Trust and the University of California. Community South is 1,118 acres and is owned by LWH Farms, LLC. Conceptual land use plans, prepared by the University and the

Community South property owners, are included in Section 3.10, *Appendix*.

#### **3.7.4 Bellevue Corridor Community Plan**

~~The Bellevue Corridor Community Plan is approximately three square miles in size generally bounded by Cardella Road on the South (except for a ½ mile section between G and Gardner), "G" Street on the west; Farmland on the North; and the Lake Road on the east. A conceptual land use plan for illustrative purposes only is included in Section 3.10, *Appendix*.~~

~~Bellevue Road will be 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. As such, their economic development strategies should be compatible and complementary. They should also connect to one another via a network of transportation and communications systems that optimize access between and among them. Due to the unique nature of this opportunity and the complexity of issues, landowners and agencies involved, the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan is proposed.~~

~~The corridor should be designed as a place where services, shops, schools, businesses, public uses, and residences mix in a vibrant setting. The plan 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 connected 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.

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.

Key features and issues to be addressed in the plan include:

#### Economics/Market

- Economy based/market study in terms of long term sustainability and demand to determine size and location of Research and Development Office Parks, medical/professional offices, retail commercial uses, and housing within the proposed SUDP/SOI area, with detailed assessment of a Lake Road site and/or Gardner Road site for research and development uses within the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*.
- Project specific market studies may be provided by individual landowners in support of development proposals as an adjunct to and in support of the overall Bellevue Corridor market study. Individual landowners providing a "project" level market study showing support for planned land uses/activities may not be required to participate in the

overall Bellevue Corridor market study after an evaluation of the project level study is completed by staff and deemed to be adequate to substitute for the overall Bellevue Corridor market study.

#### Land Use

- 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;
- Land Uses should be compatible and complimentary with one another and planned as integrated, coordinated mixed use neighborhoods and communities;
- The influence and effects of the UC Merced and University Community land use and circulation plans on adjacent (western) properties;
- Interface issues and infill land use patterns adjacent to and within pre-existing "Rural Residential" properties;
- 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 market study.



### Transportation/Circulation

- Establish “Bellevue Parkway Planning Principles” describing the design (including appropriate right-of-way, function and land use pattern along Bellevue Road (to be renamed “Bellevue Parkway”) recognizing two key traits (1) multi-modal access corridor that accommodate both automobiles and public transit systems, as well as bikes and pedestrians; and (b) 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

- Location and financing of public facilities including a fire station; schools; roadways; off-street bike and pedestrian paths; and parks/open space.

### Environment

- Lake Yosemite Inundation Area;
- Sensitive species and habitat conservation.

### Character/Design

- 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 between G and Gardner, should be considered as a focal point for the Corridor.

### Timing

Development projects may proceed in advance of the Bellevue Corridor

Community Plan if all of the following findings can be made, as determined by the City Council upon recommendation by the Planning Commission:

- There is an immediate or near term need for the facilities or uses proposed by the plan; and,
- That the project is supportable by a project specific market study; and,
- That the project is designed consistent with the “Urban Village Policies and Design Guidelines” as defined in Chapter 6 of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*; and,
- That the project is designed to be compatible with adjacent land uses as illustrated in the General Plan; and,
- The owner consents that the development project, at the City’s discretion, may be required to be consistent with the plans and specifications approved as part of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan.

### **3.7.5 South Thornton (or “Five Bridges” Community Plan**

The South Thornton (or “Five Bridges”) Community Plan is approximately 350 acres, bounded by Highway 99 to the north, 1/4 mile west of Thornton Avenue to the west, Highway 140 to the south, and Massasso Road to the east.

Private interest to develop within the Community Plan area began in 2004. During 2004 through 2008, City Staff worked with these interests and the neighborhood to examine various land use, circulation and phasing concepts. The concept land use plan contains the commercial and residential components of a Merced Urban Village, a school site and neighborhood park site. The land use of the

**New language to replace that deleted from Section 3.7.4 on pages 3-71 through 3-73 of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan:**

The Bellevue Corridor Plan (BCP), incorporated into the General Plan by reference, 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).

The BCP 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. Included in the BCP is a dynamic “neighborhood master plan” process that 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 is a clear and interconnected – yet flexible – network of complete streets and community open spaces. The “Neighborhood Master Plan” process acts as the fundamental tool to ensure that the overall physical community structure is developed as envisioned in the BCP.

Key features and issues addressed in the plan include:

*Economics/Market*

*Investment Certainty:* While the BCP 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. The BCP envisions 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.

*Job Attraction:* 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 BCP 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 multi-family dwellings.

### Land Use

The Bellevue Urban Design: Certain features of the planning area have strongly influenced the land use structure of the BCP; and include: 1) proximity to UC Merced and associated compatibility needs; 2) anticipated job-based land uses attracted by a university climate; 3) the regional attributes of Bellevue Road as part of the Merced Loop Road; and 4) the community-wide transit corridor linking UC Merced to downtown and beyond. The influence of these features is revealed in the amounts and location of land uses. For example, 1) the amount of low-density residential has dropped while the amount of land set aside for research and development parks have increased, resulting in a more balanced jobs-to-housing ratio; 2) as specified in the BCP, the placement of retail uses may locate at a corner of two arterial roads, expanding sites beyond just the corner of a collector and arterial road; 3) dense housing and retail may locate within one-quarter mile of the Mandeville Transit Corridor between G Street and Lake Road, and not be confined to a single node surrounded by low-density housing; and, 4) a vertical and horizontal mix of land uses may occur throughout most of the plan area. Thus, a land use design unique to the planning area and distinct yet compatible with the General Plan's Urban Village Concept is presented in the BCP.

Open Space: The BCP 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 Lane. Open space corridors featuring pedestrian and bicycle pathways connect to parks and other destinations.

### Environment

Conservation Lands: The Open Space Master Plan of the BCP establishes several open space corridors that include sensitive habitats. These may shrink or expand depending upon the findings and actions state and federal permitting agencies.

### Transportation/Circulation

Mobility Choices: 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 Lane Transit Corridor, 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 Lane, and enhances the value of the research and development area that is to be located between these roads. Numerous bikeways connect to destination sites, as well as UC Merced to existing and planned communities.



constructed in 2008 at Mission Avenue/Highway 99 that will connect with Campus Parkway. The completion of Campus Parkway depends on the timing of build-out of UC Merced, and will be phased in over the next 10 to 20 years as traffic conditions warrant;

- Bellevue Road and Mandeville Lane ~~has~~ also been designated as a Transit Corridor in the City's Circulation Plan. The area near the intersection of M Street and Bellevue Road, the location of proposed future major commercial and office park sites, would also be the

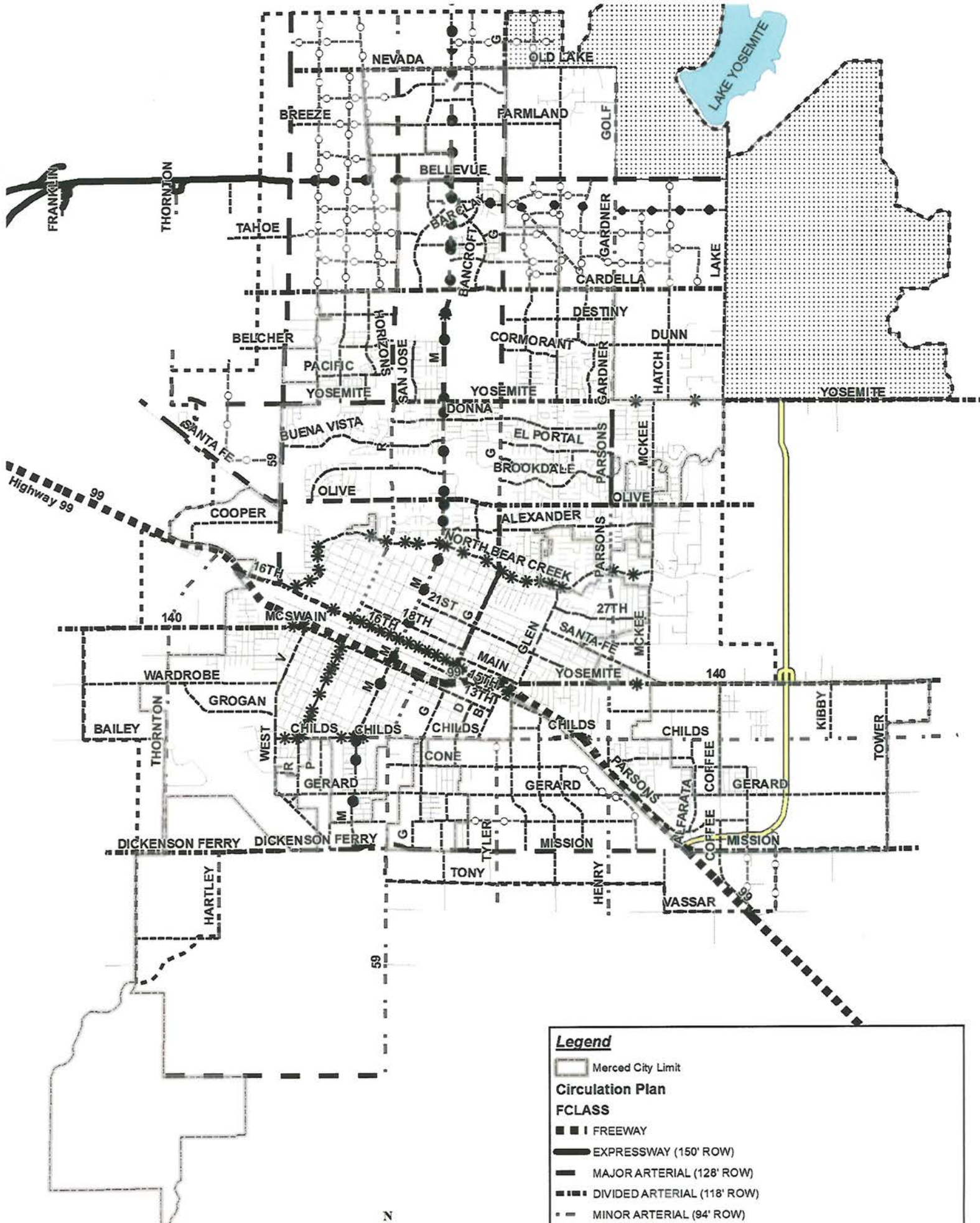
central transfer point between these two transit corridors.

- Ultimately, ~~Bellevue Road~~ Mandeville Lane offers the opportunity for direct public transit access eastward to the UC Merced campus east of Lake Road, ~~whereas Bellevue Road offers it and~~ to the west and south toward Atwater/Castle and Highway 99 via the Atwater-Merced Expressway. The Atwater-Merced Expressway replaces the Highway 59 bypass that was proposed in the *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan*.

**Table 4.1  
Major Street Improvement Projects**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Location/Improvement Summary</b>
1	Upgrade Arterial	Thornton from SR 140 to Mission and Yosemite to Bellevue
2	Upgrade Arterial	North SR 59 from 16th to north end of SUDP/SOI
3	Upgrade Arterial	South SR 59 from Childs to south end of SUDP/SOI
4	Extend/Upgrade Arterial/Collector	R St. from Gerard to Area of Influence Boundary
5	Upgrade Arterial/Extend Transitway	M St. from Yosemite to Old Lake
6	Upgrade Arterial	G St. from Yosemite to north end of SUDP/SOI
7	Upgrade Arterial	Parsons/Gardner from Coffee to Old Lake
8	Extend Expressway	Campus Parkway from Mission to Yosemite Avenue
9	Extend/Upgrade Arterial	Old Lake from SR 59 to Gardner/Golf
10	Upgrade Arterial/Expressway	Bellevue from Campus Parkway to Atwater/ Merced Expressway
11	Extend Arterial	Tyler Road from Childs to Mission
12	Extend Arterial	Cardella from Hwy 59 to Campus Parkway
13	Upgrade Arterial	Yosemite from Hwy 59 to Campus Parkway
14	Upgrade Arterial	SR 140 from Parsons Avenue to Tower Road
15	Upgrade to 6 Lanes, with the potential for auxiliary lanes between major interchanges.	SR 99 through Merced
16	*Modify Ramps & Complete 13th/14th 1-way Couplet	SR 99 @ Martin Luther King Jr. Way, G St., & Childs Avenue
17	Upgrade/Extend Arterial	Childs from SR 59 to Tower Rd
18	Upgrade Arterial	Dickenson Ferry/Mission from Thornton to Tower
19	Extend Expressway	Atwater/Merced Expressway from SR 99 to Bellevue Road
20	Interchange	Atwater/Merced Expressway @ SR 99
21	Interchange	Atwater/Merced Expressway @ Santa Fe Drive
22	Interchange	Atwater/Merced Expressway @ Bellevue Road

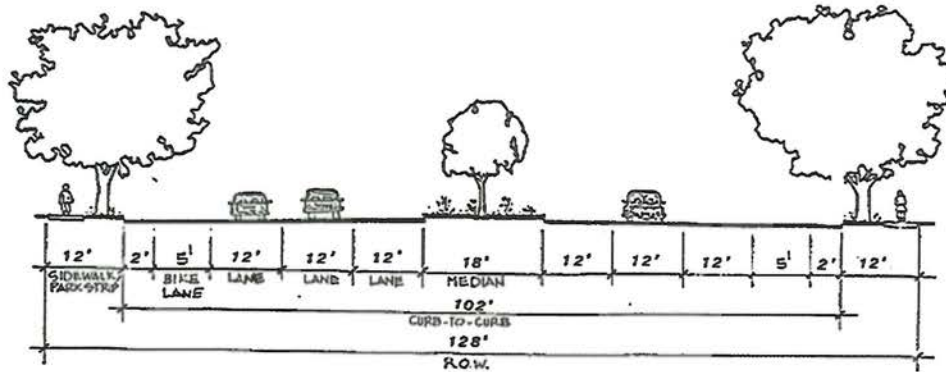
\* This project (which is the responsibility of the State) is currently listed as a Tier I project in the MCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).



**CITY OF MERCED CIRCULATION PLAN, FIGURE 4.1** (TE)



Figure 4.4  
 Major Arterial/Arterial  
 Cross-Section



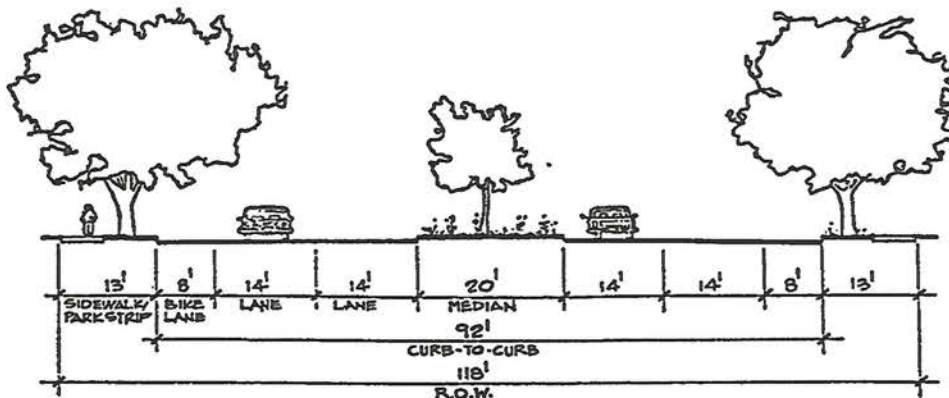
Yosemite Avenue/Bellevue Road and Cardella Road (Arterials)

- Arterials, one mile apart in a parallel (east-west) pattern perpendicular to the major arterials.
- Anticipated to accommodate more, but shorter, vehicle trips, distributing vehicles to major arterials.
- Less stringent access restrictions, to accommodate heavier traffic loads for shorter periods of time – basically, designed to carry traffic to the nearest appropriate major arterial, expressway or collector, for further trip distribution.
- Bellevue Road has a larger right-of-way requirement (128 feet, 150 feet at major intersections) because it is designated as a transit-way (west of G Street) in addition to its designation as an arterial. Cardella Road and Old Lake Road are both designated Divided Arterials (118 feet, 140 feet at intersections) (**Figure 4.5**).

The unique street cross-sections and design features of roads and rights-of-way within the Bellevue Community Plan and described in that plan take precedence over comparable language of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan.

Forma  
 Forma  
 Forma

Figure 4.5  
 Divided Arterial Cross-Section



### Transitways

The City of Merced has maintained a strong north-south growth pattern for many years, consistent with its proposed expansion areas. This pattern has contributed to a relative clustering of major destinations in proximity to “M” Street (*Figure 4.7*).

This M Street “core” has been formally designated a “Transitway” or “Transit Corridor.” This corridor is a logical location for centralized bus service to run along or closely parallel to “M” Street throughout the entire north-south length of the City.



In this location, public transit would be able to provide convenient access to nearly all major Merced destinations. A pattern of intersecting bus routes could tie the entire community into an efficient public transit system.

The pattern of major destinations in proximity to this central transit corridor has been continued through the City’s proposed North Merced growth area. As Bellevue Ranch is built-out, additional major commercial sites will be constructed along the M Street corridor. A special section for the M Street Transitway has been developed from Cardella to Old Lake through the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan.

Bellevue Road and Mandeville Lane have also been designated as a Transitways in the City’s Circulation Plan (*Figure 4.1*). The

area near the intersection of M Street and Bellevue Road, the location of proposed future major commercial and office park sites, would also be the central transfer point between these ~~two~~ three transit corridors.

Ultimately, Bellevue Road/Mandeville Lane offers the opportunity for direct public transit access eastward (from M Street) to UC Merced. The opportunity should also be studied regionally for extending ~~such~~ a transitway westward to provide a tie-in to the regional employment sites at Castle Airport.

### **4.3.5 Private Transportation**

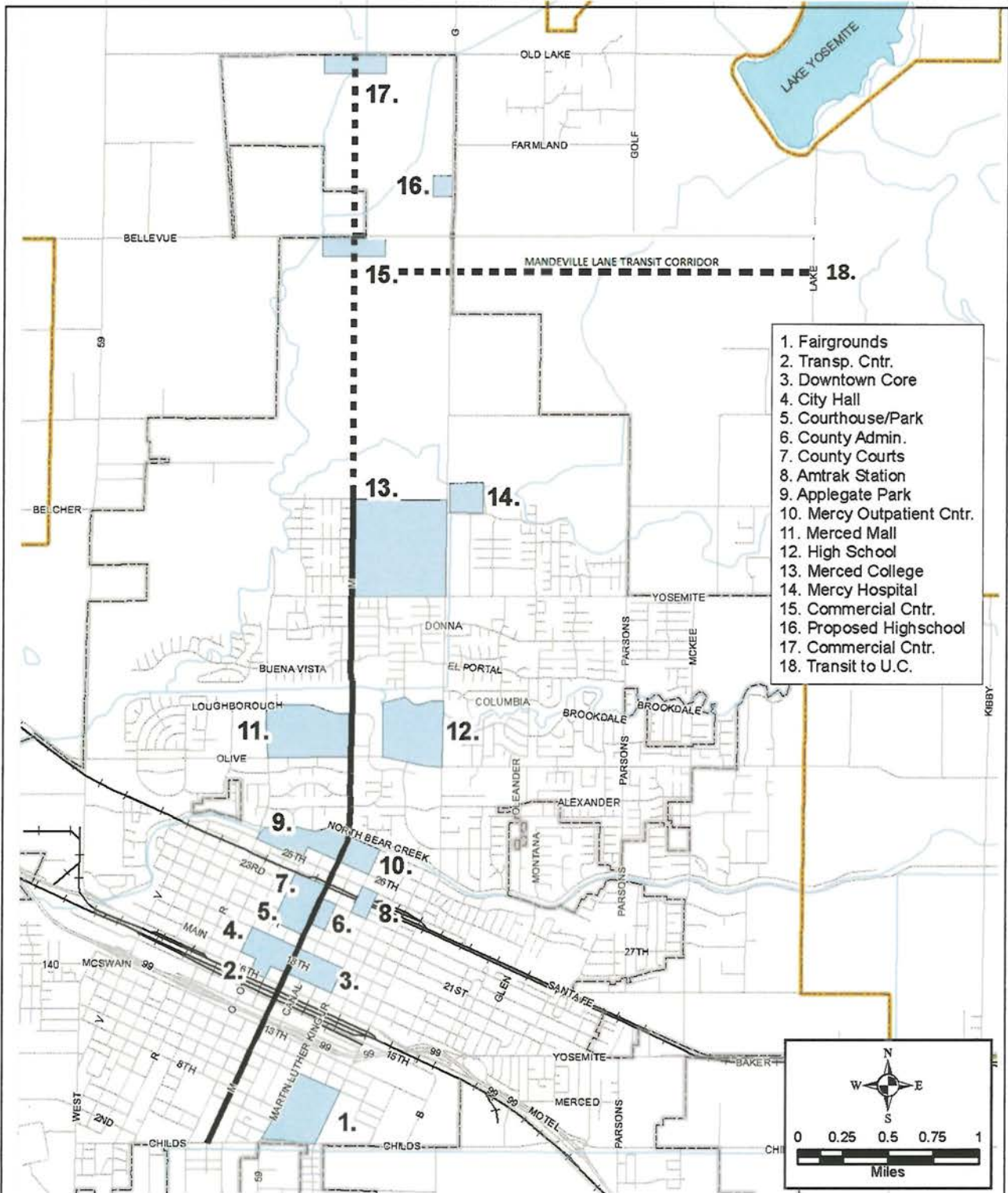
The future of private transit operators (taxis, vanpools, etc.) is difficult to predict because of the volatile nature of the business in recent years. Future service levels of intercity transit will be influenced by changing market forces and state and federal government regulations.

Demand for service to and from the Merced area can be expected to increase. With increasing demands brought about by efforts to improve air quality and congestion, the private intercity operations in Merced County and the San Joaquin Valley could be expanded. It should be noted that if the private sector is unable to respond to this commuter demand, some of the demand could shift to the public sector.

### **4.3.6 Social Service**

The City of Merced partners with several agencies, public and private, to provide social service transportation. Demand response service is available for senior citizens and disabled citizens residing within the community through the Consolidated Transit System of Merced County. Special fare discounts are typically provided for seniors and disabled persons.



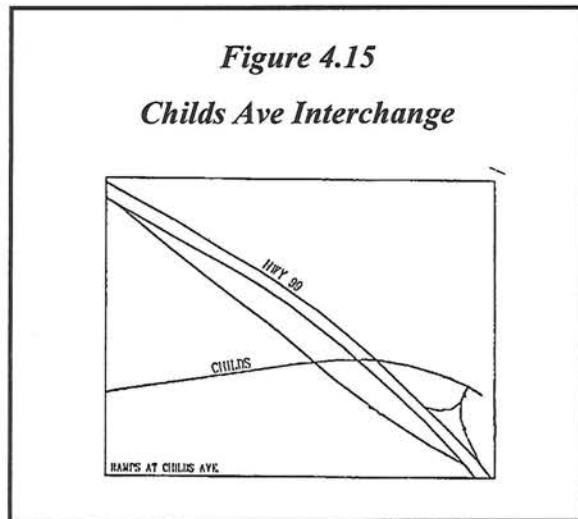


M STREET TRANSITWAY CORRIDORS  
(MAJOR EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE)

Figure  
4.7

### Highway 99/Childs Avenue

Both the City and County of Merced continue to grow in the southeastern portion of the urban area, south of Highway 140 and east of Highway 99. Access to this area is relatively constricted. Upgrading the existing Childs Avenue interchange with Highway 99 (**Figure 4.15**) would provide improved access to and from the area.



A series of frontage roads which connect the G Street Interchange and the Childs Interchange with the new Mission Interchange (see below) was adopted as part of the South Merced Community Plan in 2008. In 2001, the southward expansion of Parsons Avenue as a frontage road and designated “Collector” (Childs Avenue to Coffee Street) was adopted as part of the Mission Interchange project.

As part of the South Merced Community Plan, a new frontage road between 15<sup>th</sup> St. and Brantley Rd. was evaluated and made part of that plan. Similarly, a frontage road between Brantley and Henry is also planned in the area west of Hwy 99.

### New Interchanges

In addition to upgrades to existing interchanges described above, the relatively recently constructed Mission/ Highway 99 Interchange will connect the Mission Avenue circulation corridor and the expanded Santa Fe Industrial Park, and will ultimately connect with Campus Parkway.

#### **4.4.7 Transitways**

Continued successful preservation of identified public transit corridors along M Street, [Mandeville Lane](#) and Bellevue Road will retain as much as possible future flexibility for prospective public transit options. Preservation should include acquisition and retention of larger right-of-ways (ROW's), where already designated, as well as careful evaluation of portions of these corridors that presently do not have extended ROW's, to determine if these areas need expansion.

### M Street

Preservation should also involve careful processing of land uses in proximity to transit corridors, to avoid serious access conflicts between private vehicles and public transit. Finally, preservation needs to include a regional public transit perspective for agencies involved with land use planning in the region. This perspective should result in continuation of current growth patterns that have kept most major transit destinations within reasonable proximity to the two designated transit corridors (or close to other major roadways that radiate directly from these transit corridors and can conveniently serve as secondary transit routes).

Transit corridors that are effectively preserved could become the location of a light rail system. Related future transit



options, such as a light-rail or even alternatives not currently visualized, if they become economically viable, might utilize established corridors.

#### Bellevue Road and Mandeville Lane

Bellevue Road is shown as an east-west arterial on the City's Circulation Plan. It is also shown as one of ~~three~~ transit corridors on that plan. Mandeville Lane is an east-west collector between planned transit hubs on M Street and at UC Merced.



Bellevue Road is a key east-west circulation corridor because it is the most prominent near-term east-west route serving the University of California (UC) campus. As the Bellevue Community Plan develops, Mandeville Lane will provide better Bellevue Road currently provides reasonably direct transit access to the UC campus. Its tie-in to the future M Street Transit Corridor also provides the prospect of a highly convenient public transit route from the City to the UC campus. A possible transit corridor to the west on Bellevue Road could become a tie-in to the City of Atwater and the designated regional job center at Castle Airport.

Bellevue Road has the potential to be a much more significant regional route in the foreseeable future than other east-west arterials shown on the City's Circulation Plan. This makes it imperative that necessary rights-of-way (ROW's) be

obtained throughout its corridor, in order to ensure its future viability. Bellevue Road will also connect to the Merced-Atwater Expressway project west of Highway 59, which will ultimately connect Bellevue to Highway 99.

#### **4.5 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

With ever increasing traffic volumes and limited resources to expand the capacity of some of the existing streets, Transportation System Management (TSM) will play an important role in the future. The goal of transportation system management is to improve the movement of people and goods.

This can be done by expanding the carrying capacity of streets and transit systems, primarily through the implementation of short-run, low cost strategies. The strategies are to be used to prolong or avoid costly expansions of the facility or service.

Traffic signal timing or coordination, additional lanes at intersections, transit service enhancements, parking management and traffic management are all examples of transportation system management strategies which can be expected to be used in the future. Ridesharing programs, preferential treatment for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV's), Park-and-Ride lots, one-way streets, the provision of bicycle facilities, and the promotion of variable work hours and telecommuting are also strategies which will be promoted by the City of Merced.

Coupled with air quality and congestion management, these strategies may result in near-term improvement of the operating characteristics of existing facilities and services.

Forma



### North Bear Creek Drive

North Bear Creek Drive is designated as a “special street” in order to maintain its status as a “Scenic Corridor.” This designation should apply from a point approximately 400 feet east of 16th Street, in the vicinity of Highway 59 (the point at which West North Bear Creek Drive turns northward away from Bear Creek), to McKee Road. North Bear Creek Drive is a roadway immediately adjacent to the Bear Creek open space corridor for the entire length of this designated area and, as such, is party to visual and acoustic opportunities rarely available to urban area dwellers except in special open space areas. This special atmosphere has, historically, been augmented by the proximity of large trees, forming a heavy canopy, and lush natural and maintained growth along North Bear Creek Drive.

This semi-natural state has been possible because a number of typical urban roadside improvements (curb, gutter, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.) were not required along this corridor because nearly all of the development was constructed when this area was outside the City. An irrigation canal is present along with side berms on both sides, which are often heavily planted and in close proximity to the roadway. This would be not likely if traditional roadside infrastructure were constructed. Therefore, this section of North Bear Creek Drive should continue to be exempt from installing such improvements unless they become necessary for safety reasons in the future.

### Other Special Streets

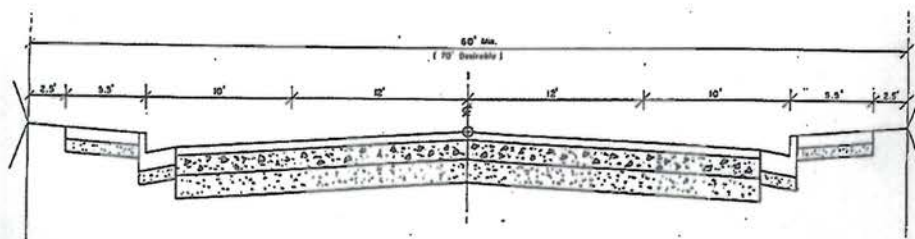
The following streets also require special sections because of non-standard rights-of-way or curb-to-curb widths and other special circumstances:

- Childs Avenue between West Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way (**Figure 4.27b**)
- Highway 140 from V Street to 207 feet west of “X” Street (**Figure 4.27c**)
- Yosemite Park Way from 21st Street to Bradley Overpass (**Figure 4.27d**)
- “R” Street between Highway 99 and Childs Avenue (**Figure 4.27e**)
- Yosemite Avenue, East of Parsons/Gardner (**Figure 4.27f**)
- 

### Bellevue Community Plan

The unique street cross-sections and design features of roads and rights-of-way within the Bellevue Community Plan and described in that plan take precedence over comparable language of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan.

**Figure 4.27b**  
**Childs Avenue Special Section**





<b>Roadway/Segment</b>	<b>Existing Conditions (2010)</b>			<b>General Plan Buildout (2030)</b>		
	<b>Number of Lanes</b>	<b>Traffic Volume<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>LOS<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>Planned Number of Lanes<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>Traffic Volume<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>LOS<sup>(2)</sup></b>
<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Way/ South Highway 59</b>						
Roduner to Mission	2	8,900	C+	4	30,160	D
Mission to Gerard	2	9,800	C+	4	28,970	D
Gerard to Childs	2	15,430	D	4	38,100	F
Childs to SR 99	4	16,300	C+	4	29,260	D
SR 99 to 16th	4	17,200	C+	4	24,740	C+
<b>“G” Street</b>						
Mission to Childs	2	6,500	D	2	12,110	E
Childs to SR 99	2	21,300	F	2	33,890	F
SR 99 to Bear Creek	4	22,060	C+	4	32,520	D
Bear Creek to Olive	4	25,950	C+	4	33,990	E
Olive to Yosemite	4	22,182	C+	4	32,330	D
Yosemite to Cardella	2	6,650	C+	4	26,680	C+
Cardella to Bellevue	2	6,350	C+	4	30,380	D
Bellevue to Old Lake	2	3,020	C+	6	36,750	C+
Old Lake to North SOI	2	3,020	C+	4	26,020	C
<b>Parsons Avenue/ Gardner Road/Golf Road</b>						
Campus Parkway/Coffee to Gerard	2	620	C+	2	14,390	F
Gerard to Childs	2	6,240	D	2	16,760	F
Childs to SR 140	2	9,600	D	4	32,420	D
SR 140 to Bear Creek	2	11,300	E	4	35,320	E
Bear Creek to Olive	2	4,330	C+	4	29,380	D
Olive to Yosemite	2	5,600	D	6	34,590	C+
Yosemite to Cardella	2	1,580	C+	4	33,410	D
Cardella to Bellevue <sup>(4)</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	30,580	D
Bellevue to Old Lake <sup>(4)</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	17,350	C+
Old Lake to Golf Club	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	9,670	D
<b>McKee Road (Collector)</b>						
Hwy 140/Santa Fe to Bear Creek	2	5,700	D	2	13,840	F
Bear Creek to Olive	2	8,250	D	2	16,130	F
Olive to Yosemite	2	5,250	D	2	13,200	E
<b>Campus Parkway</b>						
SR 99/Mission to Childs	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	46,200	D
Childs to SR 140	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	35,110	D
SR 140 to Olive	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	32,060	D
Olive to Yosemite	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	33,950	D
Yosemite to Cardella	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	35,720	D
Cardella to Bellevue	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	34,350	D

*Merced Vision 2030 General Plan  
Chapter 4--Transportation and Circulation*

<i>Roadway/Segment</i>	<i>Existing Conditions (2010)</i>			<i>General Plan Buildout (2030)</i>		
	<i>Number of Lanes</i>	<i>Traffic Volume<sup>(1)</sup></i>	<i>LOS<sup>(2)</sup></i>	<i>Planned Number of Lanes<sup>(3)</sup></i>	<i>Traffic Volume<sup>(1)</sup></i>	<i>LOS<sup>(2)</sup></i>
<b>Tyler Road</b> Childs to Mission	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	9,830	D
<b>EAST/WEST ARTERIALS</b>						
<b>Old Lake Road</b>						
SR 59 to "R" St.	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	20,840	C+
"R" St. to "M" St.	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	17,890	C
"M" St. to "G" St.	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	17,040	C
"G" St. to Parsons/ Gardner	2	1,700	C+	2	8,630	D
Parsons/Gardner to Lake	2	340	C+	2	3,830	C+
<b>Bellevue Road</b>						
Atwater/Merced Expy to Thornton	2	3,800	C+	8	55,380	C+
Thornton to SR 59	2	3,800	C+	8	74,340	D
SR 59 to "R" St.	2	5,630	D	6	58,400	F
"R" St. to "M" St.	2	5,460	D	6	55,310	F
"M" St. to "G" St.	2	5,460	D	6	57,470	F
"G" St. to Parsons/Gardner <sup>(4)</sup>	2	6,620	D	6	52,950	E
Parsons/Gardner to Campus Pkwy <sup>(4)</sup>	2	3,700	C+	6	50,120	D
<b>Cardella Road</b>						
SR 59 to "R" St.	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	31,840	D
"R" St. to "M" St.	2	5,000	C+	6	35,340	C+
"M" St. to "G" St.	2	6,800	C+	4	33,520	D
"G" St. to Parsons/Gardner	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	33,430	D
Parsons/Gardner to Campus Pkwy	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	32,590	D
<b>Yosemite Avenue</b>						
SR 59 to "R" St.	4	12,160	C+	4	26,130	C+
"R" St. to "M" St.	4	15,940	C+	4	38,430	F
"M" St. to "G" St.	4	19,720	C+	4	38,770	F
"G" St. to Parsons/ Gardner	2	15,100	D	4	38,990	F
Parsons/Gardner to Campus Pkwy	2	7,550	D	4	29,600	D
<b>Olive Avenue</b>						
West of Hwy 59 (Santa Fe Ave)	4	22,800	C+	6	33,880	C
SR 59 to "R" St.	6	32,250	C+	6	45,830	D
"R" St. to "M" St.	6	30,560	C+	6	41,060	C+
"M" St. to "G" St.	6	28,210	C+	6	45,030	D
"G" St. to Parsons/Gardner	4	18,500	C+	4	34,970	E
Parsons/Gardner to Lake	2	7,460	C+	2	16,770	E

Roadway/Segment	Existing Conditions (2010)			General Plan Buildout (2030)		
	Number of Lanes	Traffic Volume <sup>(1)</sup>	LOS <sup>(2)</sup>	Planned Number of Lanes <sup>(3)</sup>	Traffic Volume <sup>(1)</sup>	LOS <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Childs Avenue</b>						
West Ave to SR 59	2	6,260	D	2	10,090	D
SR 59 to Tyler	2	4,700	C+	4	27,520	D
Tyler to SR 99	2	6,610	C+	4	46,600	F
SR 99 to Parsons/Gardner	2	11,770	E	4	41,870	F
Parsons/Gardner to Coffee	2	6,600	D	4	24,590	C+
Coffee to Campus Pkwy	2	4,420	D	4	32,120	D
Campus Pkwy to Tower	2	3,300	D	4	19,390	C+
<b>Gerard Avenue</b>						
M to SR 59	2	1,400	C+	2	12,580	E
SR 59 to Tyler	2	1,300	C+	2	8,810	D
Tyler to Henry	2	850	C+	2	4,600	C+
Parsons/Gardner to Coffee	2	2,720	C+	2	18,650	F
Coffee to Campus Pkwy	2	2,480	C+	2	35,230	F
Campus Pkwy to Tower	2	1,000	C+	2	7,640	D
<b>Dickenson Ferry Rd/ Mission Avenue</b>						
Gove to Thornton	2	1,900	C+	2	13,200	D
Thornton to West Ave	2	1,900	C+	4	29,980	D
West Ave to SR 59	2	1,900	C+	6	35,950	C+
SR 59 to Tyler	2	1,800	C+	6	34,870	C+
Tyler to Henry	2	1,250	C+	6	33,800	C+
Henry to SR 99	4	2,020	C+	6	63,350	F
SR 99 to Coffee (Future Campus Parkway)	2	890	C+	6	46,200	D
Coffee to Tower	2	600	C+	4	1,890	C+

NOTES: (1) Traffic Volume is measured in ADT's (Average Daily Trips).

(2) "C+" indicates Level-of-Service (LOS) "C+" or better, including LOS A and B.

(3) The number of lanes shown is the number of lanes planned in the circulation element; additional travel lanes, or provision of additional turn lanes at intersections may be needed to provide acceptable roadway operations with the planned level of development.

(4) [The Traffic Assessment performed as part of the Bellevue Community Plan \(BCP\) concluded that traffic amounts in the BCP area are 20% lower than the General Plan conclusions, and, therefore, recommends that further traffic studies occur to determine whether fewer travel lanes could be supported.](#)

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning Commission**

**Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, the Merced City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of October 22, 2014, held a public hearing and considered Adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan* and certification of Addendum (ERC# 11-15) to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (SCH#2008071069), and **General Plan Amendment #14-02**, initiated by the City of Merced. The *Bellevue Community Plan* contains several elements including Vision and Urban Design, Mobility, Open Space, Conservation and Recreation, Community Character (Land Use), Urban Expansion, Public Services and Facilities, and Plan Maintenance that will be used by the City to guide future growth within the City's Sphere of Influence for approximately 2.4 square miles 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); and,

**WHEREAS**, the Merced City Planning Commission concurs with Findings A through K of Staff Report #14-14; and,

**NOW THEREFORE**, after reviewing the City's EIR and Supportive Expanded Initial Study and Draft Environmental Determination, and fully discussing all the issues, the Merced City Planning Commission does resolve to hereby recommend to City Council certification of an Addendum to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (SCH#2008071069) and Supportive Expanded Initial Study #11-15, approval of General Plan Amendment #14-02, and adoption of the *Bellevue Community Plan*.

Upon motion by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, and carried by the following vote:

AYES:       Commissioner(s)

NOES:       Commissioner(s)

ABSENT:     Commissioner(s)

ABSTAIN:    Commissioner(s)

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION # \_\_\_\_\_

Page 2

October 22, 2014

Adopted this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2014

---

Chairperson, Planning Commission of  
the City of Merced, California

ATTEST:

---

Secretary