

**INITIAL STUDY #11-28**

***FOR***

***THE CITY OF MERCED CLIMATE  
ACTION PLAN***



Prepared By:

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# Section I

## PROJECT BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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### 1. PROJECT APPLICATION INFORMATION

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<i>Project Title:</i>	<b>City of Merced Climate Action Plan</b>
<i>Applicant:</i>	City of Merced
<i>Property Owner(s)</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Lead Agency:</i>	City of Merced
<i>Comments Due By:</i>	November 7, 2011
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Bill King, AICP, Principal Planner City of Merced Planning & Permitting Division 678 West 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, CA 95340 <i>Phone:</i> (209) 385-6858 <i>Fax:</i> (209) 725-8775 <i>Email:</i> <a href="mailto:kingb@cityofmerced.org">kingb@cityofmerced.org</a>
<i>Additional Documents:</i>	All of the documents cited and relied upon in the preparation of this Initial Study are available at the City of Merced Planning Department and are hereby incorporated into the record for this Initial Study.

### 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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#### A. PURPOSE

In 2010, the City of Merced began preparing a Climate Action Plan (CAP). Over the course of the past 2 years, the City has gathered input from residents and businesses through the Climate Action Plan Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee, and has prepared a Draft CAP for public review and comment. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City has also prepared this Initial Study (IS) to assess the environmental effects of implementing the CAP. This IS consists of a project description, followed by a description of various environmental effects that may result from implementation of the Draft CAP.

## **B. REGIONAL SETTING**

The City of Merced has an area of 23.07 square miles, and is located near the geographic center of the County of Merced, which is located in California's San Joaquin Valley along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Merced is located approximately 100 miles southeast of Sacramento, and is one of a chain of cities located along State Highway 99.

## **C. CITY CHARACTERISTICS**

The CAP area consists of all land area located within the incorporated limits of the City of Merced (see Exhibit 2). The City is approximately seven miles long from north to south and six miles at its widest point from east to west. The northern portion of the City is characterized by gently rolling terrain, while the southerly portion 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. Lake Yosemite and the University of California Merced campus are located approximately two miles north and east of the City.

The City of Merced is home to approximately 80,985 residents according to the California Department of Finance 2010 estimates. Merced is comprised of 23.07 acres of land. From 1980 to 2000, the City population increased from 36,499 to 63,893, a 75 percent increase over 20 years. Projections from the City's *Draft Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* indicate that by the year 2015, the population will have grown to 99,463 and by 2030 it will have grown to 154,951.

## **D. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

California has adopted a wide variety of regulations aimed at reducing the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While State actions alone cannot stop global warming, the adoption and implementation of this legislation demonstrates California's leadership in addressing this critical challenge. Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, requires California to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 directs the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop and implement regulations that reduce statewide GHG emissions. The *Climate Change Scoping Plan* (Scoping Plan) was approved by ARB in December 2008 and outlines the State's plan to achieve the GHG reductions required in AB 32. The Scoping Plan contains the primary strategies California will implement to achieve a reduction of 169 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e), or approximately 28% from the State's projected 2020 emission levels.

In the Scoping Plan, ARB encourages local governments to adopt a reduction goal for municipal operations emissions and move toward establishing similar goals for community emissions that parallel the State commitment to reduce GHGs. Though the specific role local governments will play in meeting the State's AB 32 goals is still being defined, they will nonetheless be a key player in implementing GHG reduction strategies.

Merced's Draft CAP articulates the City's intentions with respect to reducing community-wide GHG emissions in a manner consistent with AB 32. Throughout the Draft CAP, the City outlines strategies, objectives, measures and actions to create an interconnected transportation system and land use pattern; minimize energy consumption and waste; conserve water and enhance natural assets that improve the community's quality of life. An action, program, or project would be considered consistent with the Draft CAP if, considering all of its aspects, it would further the strategies, objectives, measures, and actions set forth within the Draft CAP and not obstruct their attainment.

## **E. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

Merced's Climate Action Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and increased energy-efficiency. On February 22, 2011, the Merced City Council adopted a greenhouse gas reduction target of 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 for Government-based facilities and the Community as a whole. Based on the 2008 baseline emission and the business-as-usual emission projection, 217,911 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e will need to be removed from the community. Future adjustments to this amount may result due to differences between growth forecasts and actual population. The Merced CAP was developed following the City Council objectives:

- Current City policies will form the foundation upon which specific strategies will be crafted;
- The Climate Action Plan will include a set of recommended strategies and implementation plan;
- Among other topics, the recommended strategies will address state-mandated programs, such as Water Conservation (SB x7-7 2009), Commercial Recycling (AB32), Building Efficiency (CalGreen Code), and other "Co-Benefit" categories and items;
- Strategies will be financially feasible;
- The plan's focus will be qualitative, in the sense of identifying and crafting feasible strategies that can be implemented in Merced;
- The Plan will seek to create linkages between it and established City plans such as the City's general, specific, and master plans so that they can work together to achieve the reduction target;
- The strategies will complement and be consistent with the Merced County Association of Government's (MCAG) charge to craft a Sustainable Communities Strategy as part of Merced County's Regional Transportation Plan, which has implications for future transportation funding and review of development projects; and,
- Strategies will be implemented in an incremental manner, based on the needs and ability of the Community.

Based on these objectives, the Draft CAP defines community strategies and GHG reduction measures through text and maps. The recommended actions serve as the basis for future programming decisions subject to the availability of staff and funding.

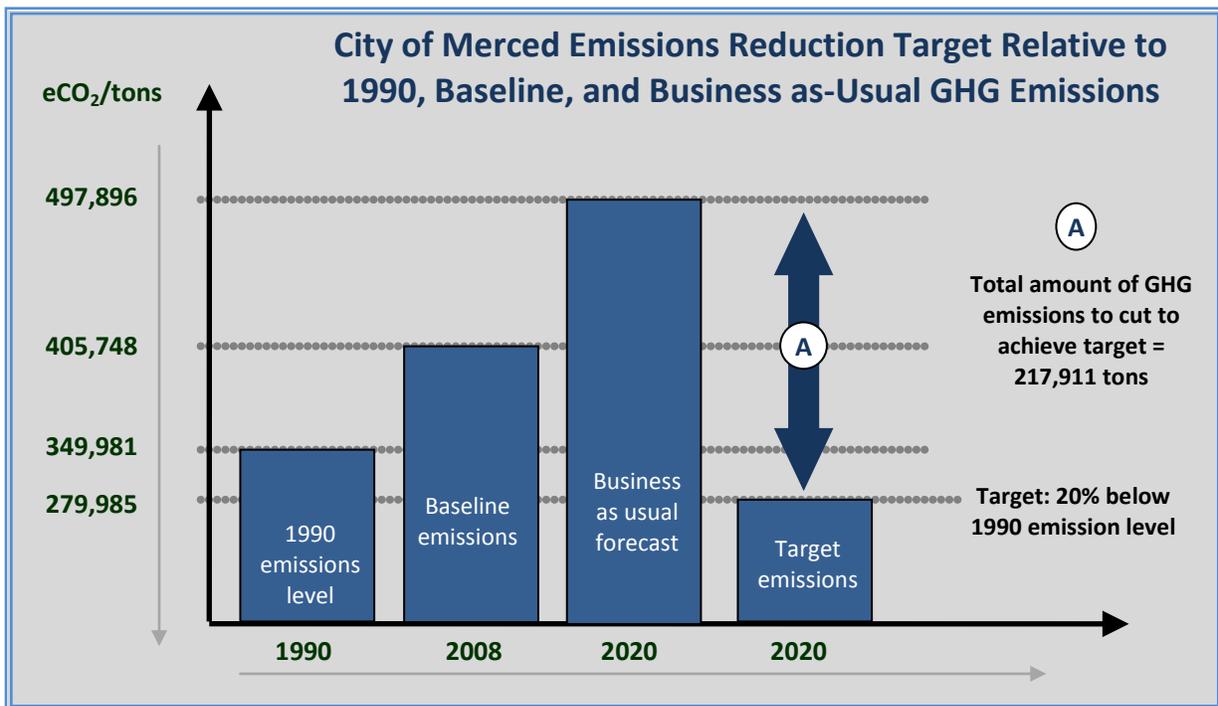
## **F. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is the adoption of the CAP, a document that provides policies and actions intended to reduce GHG emissions within the City and assist in the fight against climate change. Overall, the goal of the CAP is to reduce Merced's community-wide GHG emissions by 25 percent below 2004 emission levels by the year 2020. The Draft CAP provides general information about climate change and how GHG emissions within the City contribute to it, as well as an analysis of the potential effects of climate change on the City. In addition, the Draft CAP describes the baseline GHG emissions produced in Merced, and projects GHG emissions that could be expected if the Draft CAP is not implemented. The strategies, measures, and actions proposed in the Draft CAP are described in more detail under "Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategies," below.

The Draft CAP is the result of extensive community outreach and public participation. The City established a Sustainability Committee, composed of seven appointed members, to provide leadership, technical assistance, education, and outreach to the public, schools, local businesses, and city agencies on innovative programs and the promotion of environmental sustainability through energy and water conservation, solid waste reduction and recycling, pollution prevention, transportation efficiency, as well as other means. In addition to reviewing the Draft CAP with the Sustainability Committee, the City used several other methods to reach out to the community and receive feedback on the Draft CAP. The City asked residents to participate in both an online climate action survey to gather data about residents' habits that contribute to GHG emissions, and a mail survey used to establish a general sense of how many residents would support various measures proposed within the Draft CAP. The City also conducted two community workshops at Green Merced Day to present preliminary CAP strategies and measures and receive public comment.

### EMISSIONS INVENTORY, BASELINE, AND PROJECTIONS

The emissions inventory was developed by the City. GHG emissions were calculated for both community-wide and government-related sources for 2008 based on activity data (i.e., energy consumption, vehicle miles traveled [VMT]) for California, Merced County, and the City of Merced for each emission sector. The complete emission inventory is presented in the *City of Merced Climate Action Plan Background Report*.



Merced's GHG emissions levels were also projected for the year 2020 to determine the emission reductions needed to achieve the City's goal. Projections were calculated for a trend scenario, which assumes that historical emission trends would continue. Under this scenario, Merced's GHG emissions are expected to increase to approximately 497,896 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. Based on the 2020 projection, Merced will need to reduce its GHG emissions to 279,985 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e, a reduction of 217,911 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e, from the 2020 business as usual forecast.

## **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION Values**

The Draft CAP identifies four GHG emission reduction values. Combined, these values seek to decrease emissions by approximately 217,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. Each proposed strategy is made up of goals, strategies, and actions.

### **Outline of the Plan's Values, Goals, and Strategies**

#### VALUE 1: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

##### ***Goal 1: Enhance Mobility of all Transportation Modes (EM)***

###### Strategy Topics

- Site Design Planning
- Transit Planning
- Bicycle Planning & Projects
- Pedestrian Planning & Projects
- Mobility Development Review Policies

##### ***Goal 2: Sustainable Community Design (SC)***

###### Strategy Topics

- Compact Urban Form / Infill
- Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development
- Growth Management Planning
- Community Appearance
- Community Design Development Review Policies

#### VALUE 2: QUALITY NATURAL RESOURCES

##### ***Goal 3: Water Conservation and Technology (WC)***

###### Strategy Topics

- Water Conservation and Technology
- Reduce Groundwater Pumping
- Water Efficient Landscapes
- Water Conservation Development Review Policies

##### ***Goal 4: Protect Air Resources (AR)***

###### Strategy Topics

- Reduced Vehicle Trips
- Clean Trips – Clean Vehicles
- Reduce Non-Vehicular Emissions
- Air Resource Development Review Policies

##### ***Goal 5: Waste Reduction (WR)***

###### Strategy Topics

- Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
- Waste Reduction Development Review Policies

### VALUE 3: CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCES

#### ***Goal 6: Increase the Use of Renewable Energy Sources (RE)***

##### Strategy Topics

- Renewable Energy Systems
- Renewable Energy Development Review Policies

#### ***Goal 7: Building Energy Conservation (BE)***

##### Strategy Topics

- Green City Facilities and Infrastructure
- Energy Efficiency in New Development
- Residential Energy Efficiency
- Commercial and Industrial Performance
- Urban Forestry / Heat Island Effect
- Building Energy Conservation Development Review Policies

### VALUE 4: LEADERS AND PARTNERS

#### ***Goal 8: Public Outreach and Involvement (PO)***

##### Strategy Topics

- Community Resources
- Support a Green Economy
- Support Sustainable Neighborhoods

\* Although the CAP establishes specific strategies and actions that the City and community can implement over time, it is not binding on the City Council or the community.

\* Incorporated by reference is the City's Draft CAP, which includes all the proposed actions.

### **RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of the Draft CAP would result in annual community-wide GHG emissions reductions of approximately 217,911 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. The table below identifies the MT CO<sub>2</sub>e reductions and percentages that would be expected from implementation of each proposed goal.

#### **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

1. 21% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through enhanced mobility programs and projects.

2. 10% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through sustainable land use designs and urban growth management.

#### **QUALITY NATURAL RESOURCES**

3. 5% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through water management practices.
4. 10% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through programs and actions that protect the quality of Merced's air resources.
5. 1% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through waste reduction programs.

#### **CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCES**

6. 23% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through utilization of renewable resources.
7. 30% of the GHG Emissions targeted for reduction will be accomplished through energy conservation habits and equipment.

#### **LEADERS AND PARTNERS**

8. The Public Outreach goal facilitates achievement of all targets and is not accounted separately.

#### **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

Although the overall purpose of the Draft CAP is to reduce the impact that the community will have on global climate change and therefore, benefit the environment, implementation of the Draft CAP could potentially result in adverse impacts on the physical environment as a result of construction activity, such as degrading visual resources, biological resources, or cultural resources. An analysis of each potential impact is included in the environmental checklist.

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

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- 1) I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 2) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 3) I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- 4) I find the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “Less Than Significant With Mitigation” impact on the environment, but at least one effect: 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- 5) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects: (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

By: Bill King Date: October 6, 2011

Title: Principal Planner Representing: City of Merced

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

Approved by: David Gonzalves Date: October 6, 2011

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

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

**Distributed for Public Review: October 6, 2011**

## Section III

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

#### EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

#### PROJECT IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

<u>L</u> Aesthetics	<u>N</u> Agriculture Resources	<u>L</u> Air Quality
<u>L</u> Biological Resources	<u>L</u> Cultural Resources	<u>L</u> Geology/Soils
<u>L</u> Hazards & Hazardous Mat.	<u>L</u> Hydrology/Water Quality	<u>L</u> Land Use/Planning
<u>N</u> Mineral Resources	<u>L</u> Noise	<u>L</u> Population/Housing
<u>L</u> Public Services	<u>L</u> Recreation	<u>L</u> Transportation
<u>L</u> Utilities/Service Systems	<u>N</u> Climate Change	

- Key:
- L: Less than Significant Impact
  - M: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation
  - PS: Potentially Significant
  - N: No Impact

Detailed descriptions of the environmental setting for the Climate Action Plan is provided in the Program EIR of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

### 1. AESTHETICS

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

#### 1a. Scenic Vista

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that has a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista.

**Environmental Setting and Analysis:** The Draft CAP proposes strategies and measures that would aid in reducing the City's emission of GHGs, and, thus, would not directly lead to development that

would affect scenic vistas. However, the proposed measures encourage the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels and other distributed renewable energy technologies on homes, businesses and City facilities to provide alternative sources of energy. PV panels could be placed on rooftops, which could potentially alter scenic views that exist in some portions of the City. However, the placement of PV panels for residential or civic use would likely not be large enough to significantly affect views from other residences. In any case, installation of these panels would require Planning and Building review and approval. This approval process would ensure that PV panels do not adversely affect scenic vistas.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have a **less than significant impact** from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that substantially damages scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state highway or local road, or may impact the improvement of a new scenic corridor.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Open Space Policy 1.3c limits aesthetic impacts to certain corridors, such as: putting utility lines underground, regulating signs, restricting land uses, screening mechanical and utility structures, designing attractive landscapes, limiting building heights and placement, preserving existing stands of trees and maintaining property in good condition.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN*  
POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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

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

### **1c. Visual Character**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that substantially degrades the existing visible character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP recommends rehabilitation and renovation of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and the development of infill projects to maximize land use potential in the City. The installation of PV panels on rooftops could result in slight changes to existing visual character. However, renovations and new development would be designed to be compatible with existing development. PV panels would be associated with existing structures and installation of PV panels would be subject to Planning and Building review and approval, ensuring that they do not result in substantial changes to the visual character of the city.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan

### **1d. Create Light or Glare**

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that substantially degrades the existing visible character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

**Environmental Setting and Analysis:** Implementation of the Draft CAP would not result in the development of major light sources, although distributed installation of PV panels on homes, businesses, and City facilities is encouraged to reduce Merced’s dependence on energy sources that produce GHGs. PV panels are specifically designed to absorb, not reflect, sunlight. Thus, their placement and orientation on individual properties would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan; no mitigation is required.



**2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

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

**Environmental Setting:** The City of Merced is an urbanized area, though surrounded by agricultural lands.

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

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that converts farmland designated as “prime,” “unique,” or “farmland of statewide importance” as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural uses.

**Analysis:** The recommended actions of the Climate Action Plan apply to the urbanized areas of the City, and emphasizes *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Policies to develop a compact urban form.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.

**2b. Conflicts with Existing Zoning for Agricultural Use or a Williamson Contract**

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that conflicts with existing agricultural zoning or with a Williamson Act contract.

**Analysis:** There are no lands within the City limits under a Williamson Contract. The recommended actions of the Climate Action Plan apply to the urbanized areas of the City, and emphasizes *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Policies to develop a compact urban form.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.

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

**Threshold:** A significant impact would occur if the project involves other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

**Analysis:** The general nature of the CAP is to conserve resources, for example through increased energy efficiency and development of a compact urban form. Generally speaking, these actions will tend to reduce the rate of conversion of lands for urban use. The CAP actions apply to modifying structures or habits from existing land uses, and do not change the underlying land use or operational character of the use.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.



**3 AIR QUALITY**

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

**3a. Air Quality Plan**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would be one that conflicts with or obstructs implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

***Analysis:*** The purpose of the Draft CAP is to reduce GHG emissions within the City to help contribute to global efforts to reduce the effects of climate change. Recommendations within the Draft CAP include reducing vehicle use, developing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, enhancing public transit, using renewable energy, improving energy efficiency in buildings, improving energy management, increasing water conservation, and promoting green infrastructure and urban agriculture. In addition to reducing GHGs, each of these elements would help to reduce criteria air pollutants and would not conflict with or obstruct the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Air Quality Plan.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **3b. Cumulatively Considerable Increase in Criteria Pollutant**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would be one that contribute substantially to the existing criteria pollutants.

***Analysis:*** See Item (a). Implementation of the Draft CAP would result in a **less-than-significant impact**.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **3c. Cumulative Impacts**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would be one that results in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emission which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).

***Analysis:*** See Item (a). ***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would be one that exposes sensitive receptors to pollutant concentration.

***Analysis:*** See Item (a).

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **3e. Objectionable Odors**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would be one that creates objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

**Analysis:** The Draft CAP does not proposed strategies or measures that would directly or indirectly result in the creation of objectionable odors.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.



**4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

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

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

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that has a substantial adverse effect on any candidate, sensitive or special status species.

**Analysis:** For the most part, future projects that may occur as a result of implementing the Draft CAP measures would be located within the more urbanized portions of the City that do not support habitat for the important wildlife species. These activities would not result in adverse effects on candidate, sensitive, or special-status species or their habitat.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that adversely affects riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community.

*Analysis:* No Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Communities Conservation Plan applies to the City of Merced.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**4c. Wetlands**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that adversely affects wetlands.

*Analysis:* Wetlands in the City of Merced are very limited and would not be likely to be affected by future projects that may occur as a result of implementing the Draft CAP. In the event that wetlands could potentially be affected by future actions, project-specific wetland studies and mitigation, if necessary, would be required pursuant to existing Clean Water Act requirements.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN*  
POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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*Open Space Policy 1-2:* Preserve and enhance creeks in their natural state throughout the planning area.

*Open Space Action 1.2.a:* Designate major creeks, streams, woodlands, and other appropriate areas in the City's SUDP as Open Space corridors.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that impedes the use of a native wildlife nursery site or interferes substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors.

*Analysis:* The *Merced Vision 2015 General Plan* contains policies (Open Space Policies 1.1d and f) that establish and direct City staff to design open space corridors along creeks, waterways and between potential habitat areas that facilitate wildlife movement in the region. Parkways, trails and other open space areas also contribute to the inventory of areas that can be used for wildlife movement within the City's SUDP.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN*  
POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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*Open Space Policy 1-2:* Preserve and enhance creeks in their natural state throughout the planning area.

*Open Space Action 1.2.a:* Designate major creeks, streams, woodlands, and other appropriate areas in the City's SUDP as Open Space corridors.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

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

Threshold: A significant impact would be one that conflicts with local ordinances and policies protecting local biological resources.

Analysis: The Draft CAP does not contain any components that would directly or indirectly conflict with local policies that protect biological resources.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

**4f. Conservation Plans**

Threshold: A significant impact would be one that conflicts with any conservation plan.

Analysis: No Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, or other habitat conservation plan applies to the project site.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.



**5 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

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

Environmental Setting: The City of Merced contains many buildings and structures of important historical value. Additionally, areas along stream and creeks may have served as occupation sites and contain archaeological data that would be important to the scientific community in their efforts to gain knowledge and understanding of the early inhabitants of this region.

**5a. Historic Resources**

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Analysis:** The Draft CAP does not propose any strategy or measure that would directly result in an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. However, the Draft CAP does recommend retrofitting and renovation of older buildings to be more energy efficient and thus reduce GHGs associated with energy consumption. Much of the housing stock in the city is more than 50 years old, thus some of the structures which may be retrofitted could be eligible for classification as historic resources.

Since it is possible that more structures could be eligible to be designated as historical resources, it is also possible that recommended retrofit and renovation activities could affect one or more of these structures, especially since the older a home is, the less energy efficient it tends to be. However, all major alterations to historic structures within the City are reviewed through the City’s established Design Review process.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**5b Archaeological Resources**

**Threshold:** A significant impact would be one that would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Analysis:** Archaeological sites are defined as locations containing significant levels of resources that identify human activity. Very little archaeological survey work has been conducted within the City or its surrounding areas. Creeks, drainage and sloughs exist in the northern expansion area of the City, and Bear Creek passes through the developed area. Archaeological sites in the Central Valley are commonly located adjacent to waterways and represent potential for significant archaeological resources.

There are few known archaeological resources in Merced. There is a remote possibility that ground-disturbing activities that occur as a result of redevelopment, infrastructure development, or building pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure pursuant to the Draft CAP could uncover previously unknown archaeological resources. In the event that this occurs, compliance with State regulations pertaining to discovery of archaeological resources would ensure that this impact is **less than significant**.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Sustainable Development Action 2.1.a:</i> Utilize the inventory of known archeological sites maintained by the Central California Information Center for the review of development proposals.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Development Action 2.1.b:</i> Utilize standard practices for preserving archeological materials that are unearthed during construction, as prescribed by the State Office of Historic Preservation.</p>
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**5c Paleontological Resource or Geologic Feature**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that would destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or a unique geologic feature as defined by Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

*Analysis:* Paleontological sites are those that show evidence of pre-human existence. Quite frequently, they are small outcroppings visible on the earth's surface. While the surface outcroppings are important indications of paleontologic resources, it is the geologic formations that are the most important.

The Draft CAP is intended to reduce community-wide GHG emissions and does not include any elements that would directly destroy a unique paleontological resource or geologic feature. Indirect impacts that could result from implementing the Draft CAP may include development of bike and pedestrian trails, building retrofits, redevelopment projects, changes in transit services, and installation of alternative energy infrastructure. These indirect impacts would be very unlikely to result in adverse impacts. There is a remote possibility that ground disturbing activities that occur as a result of mixed-use or transit-oriented development projects, infrastructure development, or building pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure pursuant to the Draft CAP could unearth a previously unknown paleontological resource. However, compliance with State regulations pertaining to discovery of paleontological resources would ensure that this impact is **less than significant**.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**5d. Human Remains**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that disturbs human remains.

*Analysis:* There is a remote possibility that ground-disturbing activities that occur as a result of mixed-use or transit-oriented development projects, infrastructure development, or building pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure pursuant to the Draft CAP could uncover previously unknown human remains. In the unlikely event that this occurs, compliance with State regulations pertaining to discovery of human remains would ensure that this impact is **less than significant**.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.



**6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to loss, injury, or death.

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

Ground shaking of moderate severity

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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

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

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

may be experienced on the Project Site during a large seismic event. New construction requires adherence to Uniform Building Code Seismic Zone 3 Standards and is addressed at the building permit processing stage. It is expected that compliance with the building code will lessen any negative effects from ground shaking in the area. The Draft CAP would implement measures intended to reduce community-wide GHGs, none of which would directly affect the potential to expose the people or structures to strong seismic ground-shaking.

Some components of the Draft CAP would include the development of an expanded network of bike and pedestrian facilities, new mixed-use and transit-oriented development projects, and retrofitting existing residential and commercial structures to be more energy efficient, and thus reduce GHG emissions associated with energy consumption. These bike and pedestrian facilities, new structures, and building retrofits could be adversely affected by strong seismic ground-shaking if not developed in compliance with building codes for structural integrity. However, all future projects associated with implementation of the Draft CAP would be required to meet engineering and structural requirements and comply with all applicable building codes and seismic requirements, which would ensure that these project components do not expose people or structures to the risks associated with strong seismic ground shaking. All future projects associated with implementation of the Draft CAP would be required to meet applicable engineering and structural requirements, as well as applicable building code requirements. Such compliance would ensure safety to the structures and plan components.

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

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

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

## **6b. Soil Erosion**

*Threshold & Conclusion:* A significant impact would be one that results in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* No future project resulting from implementation of the Draft CAP would directly involve major movement of topsoil or directly result in substantial soil erosion. In the event that proposed residential or commercial retrofits or renovations, construction of bike paths and pedestrian improvements, new mixed-use or transit-oriented development projects, pursuant to the Draft CAP require construction activity that may result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, such activities would be subject to the City's Grading Ordinance to reduce erosion impacts.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have a **less than significant impact** from implementation of the Plan.

**6c. Unstable Soil**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one where soil becomes unstable as a result of the project.

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

However, future projects associated with the implementation of the Draft CAP would not cause the ground on which they are located to become unstable and result in landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**6d. Expansive Soils**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if the project is placed on expansive soils and creates substantial risk to life or property.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Most areas in the City of Merced have a history of expansive soils. Expansive soils (which contract when dry and expand when wet) will damage foundations if not properly mitigated. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the extent of expansive soils present in the project area prior to issuing building permits. Based upon the results of future soil tests, the site may require some degree of over-excavation and re-compaction of the soil, the removal of some soil, vapor barriers on the foundation, and/or other measures to combat expansive soils. All projects that may possibly be developed as a result of implementation of the Draft CAP would be subject to applicable engineering and City building code requirements, which would ensure that they are developed in a way that minimizes the possible effects of expansive soil.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**6e. Septic Systems**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if septic tanks or systems are utilized in the project and the soil is unable to support their use.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* City ordinances do not allow the construction of new septic systems within the City limits. Connection to the City's wastewater collection and treatment system is required of all new development.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.



**7 HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that produces a substantial risk to the public from routine transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous material, or from reasonably foreseeable accidental release of such material.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Transport of hazardous materials along project area roadways and area rail-lines is regulated by both federal and state agencies and do not pose any unique risks to residents and property owners of the site or to future development. The Draft CAP and the future projects that could potentially result from implementation of the Draft CAP would not result in the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. It is possible that construction activities associated with new mixed-use or transit-oriented development projects or residential and commercial retrofit and renovation projects recommended by the Draft CAP would require use of construction materials, such as paints and solvents, but not in large enough quantities to cause adverse effects.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**7b. Upset and Accident**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP would likely result in rehabilitation and renovation of older residential and commercial structures within the City. Structures built prior to 1978 may contain asbestos-containing building materials (ACBMs) and lead paint. If not properly handled and released into the environment in large enough quantities, these materials could pose a threat to construction workers and public safety.

However, these renovations would primarily be small-scale and no single renovation would likely result in releases large enough to pose a health hazard to the general public. Construction workers working in close proximity to these materials may have a higher chance of exposure to these materials. However, demolition and construction activities involving hazardous materials removal are heavily regulated, and construction workers must comply with applicable federal and state safety regulations.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**7c. School Proximity**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that emits hazardous emission or handles hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* See Item (b). The Draft CAP would not result in the development or construction of new sources of hazardous emissions or uses that would handle hazardous materials, wastes, or substances within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Safety Policy 7.2:</i> Ensure that hazardous materials are cleaned up before property is developed or redeveloped</p> <p><i>Safety Action 7.2.a:</i> Request an assessment of the past use of hazardous materials and soils analysis on proposed development sites.</p>
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*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that is located on a listed contamination site and exposes the public or the environment to the hazard.

Environmental Setting and Analysis: Where surface or subsurface contamination may be a concern, project applicants are required to prepare an environmental assessment. The assessment would include, but not be limited to: (a) Identification of potential sources of contamination caused by past or current land uses; and (b) evaluation of non-point sources of hazardous materials, including agricultural chemical residues, fuel storage tanks, septic systems, or chemical storage areas. An assessment by the Merced County Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health at the time of project implementation will occur, along with a description of the hazard and remedies to avoid or minimize any impacts to acceptable levels.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**7e. Hazards Near Airports**

Threshold: A significant impact would be one that results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of a public airport or private airstrip.

Environmental Setting and Analysis: There are no projects in the CAP that would negatively affect operation of an airport, caused by height, light interference or land use incompatibility.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

**7f. Hazards Near Airstrips**

Threshold: A significant impact would be one that results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

Environmental Setting and Analysis: The CAP does not propose to place people, whether living or in permanent job-sites, near an airport.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

**7g. Emergency Response Plans**

Threshold: A significant impact would be one that impairs the implementation of or interferes with an emergency response or evacuation plan.

Environmental Setting and Analysis: According to standard development review procedures for project applications, individual projects within the Project area will be reviewed prior to approval by the Fire and Police Departments. The Draft CAP recommends strategies and measures to reduce GHG emissions. It does not include any recommendations that would physically interfere with the City's Emergency Operations Plan or any established emergency evacuation plan.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Safety Policy 7.2:</i> Ensure that hazardous materials are cleaned up before property is developed or redeveloped</p> <p><i>Safety Action 7.2.a:</i> Request an assessment of the past use of hazardous materials and soils analysis on proposed development sites.</p>
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*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

**7h. Risk of Wildland Fires**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to a significant risk of wildland fires.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Distributed energy generation sites may occur in areas on the fringe of the City where an interface with the wildland fire conditions may exist; however, through permitting and inspection requirements of the City, instances of wildland fires should be eliminated.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.



**8 HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY**

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

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

**8a. & f. Water Quality**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if the project: (1) degraded water quality in the area; (2) created or contributed runoff water that provides substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or would otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The City of Merced currently meets all water quality standards and waste discharge requirements and the addition of CAP-related projects to the system will not change that fact. The Draft CAP recommends new mixed-use and transit-oriented development and energy efficiency renovations for existing residential and commercial structures. Construction associated with these projects could increase erosion and adversely affect urban runoff. However, the City enforces erosion control ordinances for new construction to prevent sediment from entering creeks and storm drain. These ordinances have proven very effective, so water quality is not likely to be greatly affected by construction activities associated with projects resulting from implementation of the Draft CAP.

Most of the pollutants entering Merced waterways are carried by urban runoff. As the population increases, pollutants in runoff generally increase proportionately. Although the Draft CAP may result in some new development projects, the resulting increases in population are not anticipated to be great enough to substantially increase the amount of runoff or the amounts of pollutants that would be carried in urban runoff, especially when combined with continued participation in and enforcement of the City’s Clean Water/Urban runoff program, and compliance with both National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and the City’s erosion control ordinance.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**8b. Changes in Groundwater Resources**

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP recommends numerous water conservation measures, which may result in reduced demand for water supplies, including potential groundwater supplies. The Draft CAP does not recommend any strategy or measure that would require additional water supply that would be attained from groundwater supplies and would not result in any future projects that would substantially interfere with groundwater recharge.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that substantially alters drainage and surface flows in a manner that results in substantial erosion, siltation or flooding.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP does not recommend any strategy or measure that would directly alter drainage patterns. No streams or rivers are anticipated to be altered. The Draft CAP does recommend construction of additional pedestrian and bicycle paths, which may indirectly result in slight alterations to drainage patterns. However, the changes would not be substantial, and any changes that would occur would be subject to existing federal and state regulations.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**8e. Storm Drainage Facilities**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the capacity of storm drainage facilities are caused to be exceeded.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* See Item (a).

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if houses were put in a flood hazard area.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* All action so the CAP Plan are subject to the City’s flood-control regulations.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if project structures impede or redirect floodwaters.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* See Item (g).

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Public Service and Facility Action 5.1.d:</i> Continue to require all development to comply with the Merced County Critical Area Flooding and Drainage Plan and any subsequent updates.</p> <p><i>Public Service and Facility Action 5.1.e:</i> Installation of facilities necessary to provide services to development projects will be based on the full build-out scenario.</p>
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**8i. Dam Failure**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if people or structures were exposed to a significant risk of loss, injury or death.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The probability of a dam failure at the Lake Yosemite site is unlikely. No strategy or measure proposed within the Draft CAP would expose people or structures to these relatively low-risk hazards.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur from inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP does not recommend any strategy or measure that would result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.



**9 LAND USE & PLANNING**

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if the project physically divided an established community.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The project does not propose any structures, land use designations or other features (for example freeways, railroad tracks) that would physically divide an established community. The Draft CAP includes strategies and measures to improve connectivity within Merced and to promote alternative transportation methods. The Draft CAP does not

recommend any strategy or measure that would physically divide the community.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if the project conflicted with an applicable General Plan policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP proposes strategies and measures to reduce GHG emissions. Implementing the Draft CAP would require some modification of existing City policies, including the general plan, building code, zoning ordinance, and specific plans. However, the strategies and measures recommended by the CAP would not consistently conflict with existing policies, and where conflicts do occur, the proposed CAP strategies and measures would generally result in greater avoidance or mitigation of environmental effects, as the Draft CAP is designed to mitigate adverse environmental impacts associated with global climate change. For these reasons, although some changes to existing City policies and plans would result from adoption of the Draft CAP, the intent is beneficial.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION</i> 2015 <i>GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Urban Expansion Policy 1.3:</i> Control the timing, density, and location of new land uses within the City’s urban expansion boundaries.</p>
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*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**9c. Conservation Plans**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would occur if the project conflicted with an applicable conservation plan.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Merced is not located within a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other habitat conservation plan.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementation of the Plan will have **no impact**.



## 10 MINERAL RESOURCES

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

**Threshold:** A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in the loss of availability of: (1) a mineral resource of value to the region and state; or (2) availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

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

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.



## 11 NOISE

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

airport or a public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

- f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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\* See Section III-7e & f for a discussion on exposure to airport noise.

Environmental Setting:

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

Threshold: A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.

Analysis: While the Draft CAP does not recommend any strategy or measure that would generate excessive amounts of noise, construction activity associated with recommended energy efficiency retrofits in residential or commercial buildings, new mixed-use or transit-oriented development projects, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and installation of distributed renewable energy systems could possibly result in temporary increases in noise levels.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION</i> 2015 <i>GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Noise Policy N-1.6:</i> Mitigate all significant noise impacts as a condition of project approval for sensitive land uses.</p>
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Noise in the City is regulated by the City’s noise ordinance, which declares that construction and demolition activities are prohibited between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. on weekdays and Saturdays, and between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. on Sundays and holidays. The ordinance further requires that construction equipment be equipped with sound muffling equipment.

Construction activity noise levels for projects resulting from the Draft CAP would not be excessive when compared to those associated with similar construction projects not associated with the Draft CAP. However, the exact nature of future construction that could occur pursuant to the Draft CAP is not known at this time, thus construction noise levels cannot be estimated. All construction activities must comply with the City’s noise ordinance. Such compliance would reduce noise levels associated with construction activities.

Findings/Mitigation: Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**11b. Ground-Borne Noise Impacts**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would result if the project exposed persons to or generated excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.

***Analysis:*** Similar to the evaluation within Item (a), temporary construction activities resulting from implementation of the Draft CAP could potentially result in excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels for a temporary period of time associated with recommended redevelopment, energy efficiency retrofits in residential or commercial buildings, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and installation of distributed renewable energy systems. Construction activity vibration levels for projects resulting from the Draft CAP would not be excessive when compared to those associated with similar construction projects not associated with the Draft CAP.

All construction activities must comply with the City’s noise ordinance, which prohibits construction noise between 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. on Sundays and holidays. Such compliance would reduce groundborne vibration levels associated with construction activities.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that **a less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would result if a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels without the project occur.

***Analysis:*** No increase in local traffic volumes is anticipated as a result of implementing the Draft CAP. Thus, no increase in ambient noise levels related to travel activity is expected. Conversely, the Draft CAP includes numerous recommendations designed to reduce the number and length of vehicle trips in Merced, which could lead to a decrease in ambient noise levels.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds **a less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would result if a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels without the project occur.

***Analysis:*** One source of temporary ambient noise in Merced would be construction activity, as described in Item (a). Since the Draft CAP encourages continued investment in Merced homes, there would continue to be construction-related noise in the City.

See Item (a). Compliance with the City’s noise ordinance would reduce ambient noise levels associated with construction activities.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that **a less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

<p>APPLICABLE <i>MERCED VISION</i> 2015 <i>GENERAL PLAN</i> POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Noise Action 1.3.a:</i> Limit operating hours for noisy construction equipment used in the City of Merced.</p>
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**11e & f. Exposure to Airport Noise**

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



**12 POPULATION & HOUSING**

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

*Environmental Setting:*

**12a. Population Growth Inducement**

***Threshold:*** A significant impact would result if the project induces substantial population growth in an area.

***Analysis:*** The Draft CAP includes strategies and measures that seek to reduce GHG emissions. Proposed measures include encouraging transit- and pedestrian-oriented development and retrofitting existing residential and commercial buildings to make them more energy efficient. These activities could affect Merced’s housing stock, either by resulting in new development projects that provide additional housing, by adding residential uses to commercial areas to support transit- and pedestrian-oriented development, or by retrofitting existing homes. Commercial and residential energy efficiency retrofits that may occur as a result of the Draft CAP would update homes already located in Merced to make them more energy efficient and would not be likely to include additions that make homes larger and accommodate more people. Although new mixed-use and transit-oriented development projects in targeted locations that may occur pursuant to the Draft CAP would add additional housing units to Merced’s housing stock, these units will occur with or without implementing the CAP.

***Findings/Mitigation:*** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

**Threshold:** A significant impact would result if the project displaced substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

**Analysis:** Although Draft CAP strategies and measures encourage energy efficient retrofits for existing homes and encourage new mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development projects in targeted locations, substantial numbers of homes would not be displaced. Possible future development activities would likely lead to a greater mix of uses within the City’s commercial corridors and would result in more homes. Replacement housing would not be necessary.

**Findings/Mitigation:** Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.



**13 PUBLIC SERVICES**

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

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

**Overview of the Public Facilities Financing Plan relative to CEQA:**

The underlying principles and assumptions recognize projected needs for new and expanded public facilities based on specific service standards, generally referred to as Level of Service (LOS) standards. Standards for the level of service for each category of public facilities determine the quantity of public improvements that will be needed to accommodate new growth.

**13a. Fire Protection**

*Threshold:* The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of emergency service public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed project create a substantial adverse physical impact.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* As discussed under “Population and Housing,” although implementation of the Draft CAP could result in construction of new mixed-use and transit-oriented projects, these units will be constructed regardless, and the majority of CAP-related actions affect existing structures. No new service demands from CAP-related actions are anticipated.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**13b. Police Protection**

*Threshold:* The proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of emergency service public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed project create a substantial adverse physical impact.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Similar to the evaluation under “Fire Protection,” the possible increase in population that may occur as a result of implementation of the Draft CAP would not increase the demand for police protection service to the extent that new police protection facilities would be required.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015* GENERAL  
PLAN POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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*Public Services and Facility Policy 2.1:* Maintain sufficient public protection facilities, equipment, and personnel to serve the City’s needs {which can be accommodated within the resource constraints of the City.}

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

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

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

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015*  
GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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*Safety Action 6.1.c:* Locate future police facilities to enhance the "community policing" concept through the expansion of existing or the addition of new police service districts as the City grows.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **13c. Schools**

*Threshold:* The proposed Project could have a significant environmental impact if additional public school facilities are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed Project, and these facilities create a substantial adverse physical impact.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Similar to the evaluations above, the possible increase in population that may occur as a result of implementation of the Draft CAP would not increase the demand for school-related service to the extent that new school facilities would be required.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **13d. Parks**

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

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* As with the public services above, it is unlikely that the need for additional park facilities would be triggered by CAP-related projects. In addition, strategies and actions within the Draft CAP recommend development of an expanded bicycle and pedestrian trail network, which would help to reduce the demand for additional recreational facilities.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **13e. Other Public Facilities**

*Threshold:* The proposed project would have a significant environmental impact if construction of other public facilities that are needed to maintain adequate service levels for the proposed project create a substantial adverse physical impact.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Similar to the evaluations for fire, police, schools, and parks, the possible increase in population that may occur as a result of implementation of the Draft CAP would not be expected to increase the demand for libraries or other governmental services to the extent that new facilities would be required.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.



**14 RECREATION**

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project increased the use of existing recreational facilities or was accelerated due to the project that causes substantial physical deterioration.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP is not expected to result in substantial population growth, and thus would not result in increased physical deterioration of parks and recreational facilities. Conversely, the Draft CAP promotes the expansion of the current network of bicycle and pedestrian trails, which could provide additional recreational facilities within Merced, and possibly lessen wear on existing facilities.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project included recreational facilities that might adversely affect the physical environment due to construction or expansion.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP specifically recommends that the City implement the bike infrastructure improvements contained in the City’s current Bicycle Master Plan and key improvements to be developed to provide for complete streets throughout Merced.

Construction of these facilities could potentially result in adverse impacts on the environment. However, environmental impacts associated with such facilities would likely be minimal, due to the built-out urban nature of the City and the likelihood that such facilities would be constructed within existing rights-of-way. This would reduce the potential of adverse physical effects on the environment.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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

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

contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.



**15 TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC**

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project caused an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.

*Analysis:* Implementation of Draft CAP strategies and measures would increase the availability of transit service for Merced residents, add additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and discourage single-occupancy vehicle use. Achieving each of these goals would result in a reduction in traffic loads, which would reduce the number of vehicle trips, volume to capacity ratio, and intersection congestion within the City. New mixed-use and transit-oriented development projects recommended for targeted locations within the Draft CAP would be designed specifically to reduce vehicle trips and place more people within walking distance of commercial uses and public transit. Furthermore, no proposed strategy or measure would directly increase traffic in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project caused level of service ratings (individually or cumulatively) to be exceeded.

*Analysis:* See Item (a).

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project resulted in substantial safety risks due to changes in air traffic patterns.

*Analysis:* The Draft CAP does not include any strategy or measure that would directly or indirectly affect air traffic patterns.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project produced hazards to safety from design features or incompatible uses.

*Analysis:* The Draft CAP does not include any strategy or measure that would promote the development of hazardous design features or incompatible uses. Rather, the Draft CAP promotes the development of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities built to current standards, which would provide greater safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**15e. Impacts to Emergency Access**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project resulted in inadequate emergency access.

*Analysis:* The Draft CAP recommends strategies and measures that would increase safety for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists and seeks to reduce the number of automobiles on Merced streets, both of which may actually make access for emergency vehicles easier and more efficient. No strategy or measure proposed in the Draft CAP would result in the development of uses or facilities that would degrade emergency access.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**15f. Impacts to Parking**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project results in inadequate parking.

*Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP would potentially reduce both parking demand and

supply within the City. The Draft CAP discourages single-occupancy vehicle use and includes measures that would reduce the demand for automobile parking in favor of walking, biking, carpooling, and public transit. New mixed-use and transit-oriented development projects that could occur pursuant to the Draft CAP would be designed to support use of transit, de-emphasizing the prevalence and use of automobiles, and potentially reducing parking requirements and supply both collectively and within individual projects. Thus, as the Draft CAP addresses reductions in both supply and demand for parking, it is unlikely that future projects pursuant to the Draft CAP would contribute to inadequate parking capacity within the City.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

**15g. Impacts to Alternative Transportation**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project conflicted with bus-related transportation policies, plans or programs.

*Analysis:* Supporting and increasing access to alternative transportation is a major focus of the Draft CAP. The Draft CAP would enhance adopted policies, plans, and programs supporting alternative transportation.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementing the Plan will have **no impact**.

APPLICABLE *MERCED VISION 2015 GENERAL PLAN* POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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

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



**16 UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS**

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

**16a. Water Treatment Requirements**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project adversely affected the environment due to construction of existing or new water, wastewater treatment and storm-drain treatment facilities.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP could possibly result in a small increase in population. However, the population increase would not be substantial enough to create large enough increases in demand for wastewater treatment that would exceed treatment requirements.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Environmental Setting:*

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project adversely affected the environment due to construction of existing or new water, wastewater treatment, and storm-drain treatment facilities.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP would not result in a significant increase in population. Thus, resulting needs for water, storm-water, and wastewater treatment would not increase substantially. No expanded or new treatment facilities would be required.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

### **16c. Adequacy of Water Supply**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project demands a water supply that is not available from existing entitlements and resources. A significant impact would be one that substantially depletes groundwater quantities or interferes with groundwater recharge.

*Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP would not result in a significant increase in population. Thus, no new water supplies would be required. In addition, the Draft CAP recommends numerous water conservation measures, which could actually reduce Merced's water demand and leave more water available for other users.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

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

*Threshold & Conclusion:* A significant impact would occur if the project results in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that it has inadequate capacity.

*Analysis:* See Item (b).

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

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

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project creates a disposal need that cannot be accommodated by the landfill.

*Analysis:* Implementation of the Draft CAP could possibly result in a small amount of population growth, but the increase would not be great enough to cause a substantial increase in Merced's waste stream or cause a need for additional solid waste collection services or landfill capacity. In addition, the Draft CAP includes strategies and measures designed to promote recycling, which would decrease Merced's overall waste stream and lengthen the lifespan of the landfill.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that a **less than significant impact** would occur from implementation of the Plan.

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

*Environmental Setting:*

*Threshold:* A significant impact would result if the project is unable to comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* The Draft CAP does not recommend any strategy or measure that does not comply with applicable solid waste regulations. Conversely, the Draft CAP promotes recycling and includes actions to achieve Merced County-wide waste reduction goals.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that implementing the Plan will have **no impact**.

**17 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

<i>Would the Project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

The “Context” Chapter of the Draft CAP presents a community-wide GHG emissions inventory for Merced, establishes an emissions baseline, provides projections of emissions in 2020, and describes the City’s 20% below 1990 baseline emissions target. An emissions inventory was developed by the City. The emissions inventory identifies the sources, distribution, and amount of GHG emissions by emission sector, including energy consumption, transportation, solid waste, and water consumption. GHG emissions were calculated for both community-wide and government-related sources for 2008 based on activity data (i.e., energy consumption, vehicle miles traveled [VMT]) for California, Merced County, and the City of Merced for each emission sector. Merced’s GHG emissions levels were also projected for the years 2020 to determine the emission reductions needed to achieve the City’s goal.

**17a. Greenhouse Gas Generation**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that generates greenhouse gases in a manner that may have a significant impact on the environment.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* Implementation of strategies and actions proposed within the Draft CAP would result in GHG emission reductions of approximately 217,911 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. Implementation of the Draft CAP would therefore directly and indirectly *reduce* community-wide GHGs.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.

### **17b. Conflict with Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan**

*Threshold:* A significant impact would be one that conflicts with any applicable greenhouse gas reduction plan.

*Environmental Setting and Analysis:* California has adopted a wide variety of regulations aimed at reducing the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, requires California to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 directs ARB to develop and implement regulations that reduce statewide GHG emissions. The *Climate Change Scoping Plan* (Scoping Plan) was approved by ARB in December 2008 and outlines the State's plan to achieve the GHG reductions required in AB 32. The Scoping Plan contains the primary strategies California will implement to achieve a reduction of 169 MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e, or approximately 28% from the State's projected 2020 emission levels. In the Scoping Plan, ARB encourages local governments to adopt a reduction goal for municipal operations emissions and move toward establishing similar goals for community emissions that parallel the State commitment to reduce GHGs. The Scoping Plan recommends that local governments consider adopting a goal of 15% below current emissions levels to assist the State in implementing AB 32.

Merced's Draft CAP articulates the City's intentions with respect to reducing community-wide GHG emissions in a manner consistent with AB 32. Implementation of strategies and measures proposed within the Draft CAP would result in annual community-wide GHG emission reductions. As of this writing, there are no adopted regional or local plans, policies or regulations other than the Scoping Plan and the City's Draft CAP which are designed to reduce emissions of GHGs.

*Findings/Mitigation:* Based on the analysis contained in the Project Initial Study (IS), the City finds that the project will have **no impact**.



## Section IV

### MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

**Impact Discussion & Conclusions:**

- A) **Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

The purpose of the Draft CAP is to reduce community-wide GHG emissions in Merced with the intention of reducing environmental impacts associated with global climate change. The Draft CAP proposes strategies and measures to lessen numerous environmental impacts and

does not contain any strategy or measure that would either directly substantially reduce habitat, reduce wildlife populations, threaten animal or plant communities, restrict the range of species, or eliminate examples of history or prehistory. This would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

Although, the Draft CAP recommends energy efficiency retrofits and rehabilitation of potentially historic residential structures throughout Merced, as well as potential for PV panels or other distributed renewable energy devices to be installed, such activities are subject to the City's established Design Review process and are subject to design policy guidelines and the municipal code. Continued compliance with these tools would ensure a **less-than-significant impact**.

- B) **Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)**

The Draft CAP would not result in any adverse environmental impacts that are cumulatively considerable. The project is intended to contribute to a cumulative reduction in GHG emissions and to reduce adaptation impacts associated with global climate change, both of which would have beneficial cumulative environmental effects. Strategies and measures within the Draft CAP that may result in indirect adverse environmental impacts are evaluated throughout this initial study. However, as all impacts are considered to be less-than-significant, it is unlikely that any impact would contribute to a significant cumulative impact. This would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

- C) **Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?**

The Draft CAP is a policy document intended to reduce Merced's community-wide GHG emissions to help cumulatively address the adverse environmental impacts associated with global climate change, while also protecting and enhancing the quality of life in Merced. Its strategies and measures strive to protect the environment, enhance human health and safety, and conserve natural resources, both within and beyond Merced. Adoption and implementation of the Draft CAP would result in beneficial environmental effects, and would not cause substantial adverse direct or indirect effects on human beings resulting from a change in the physical environment. There would be **no impact**.

