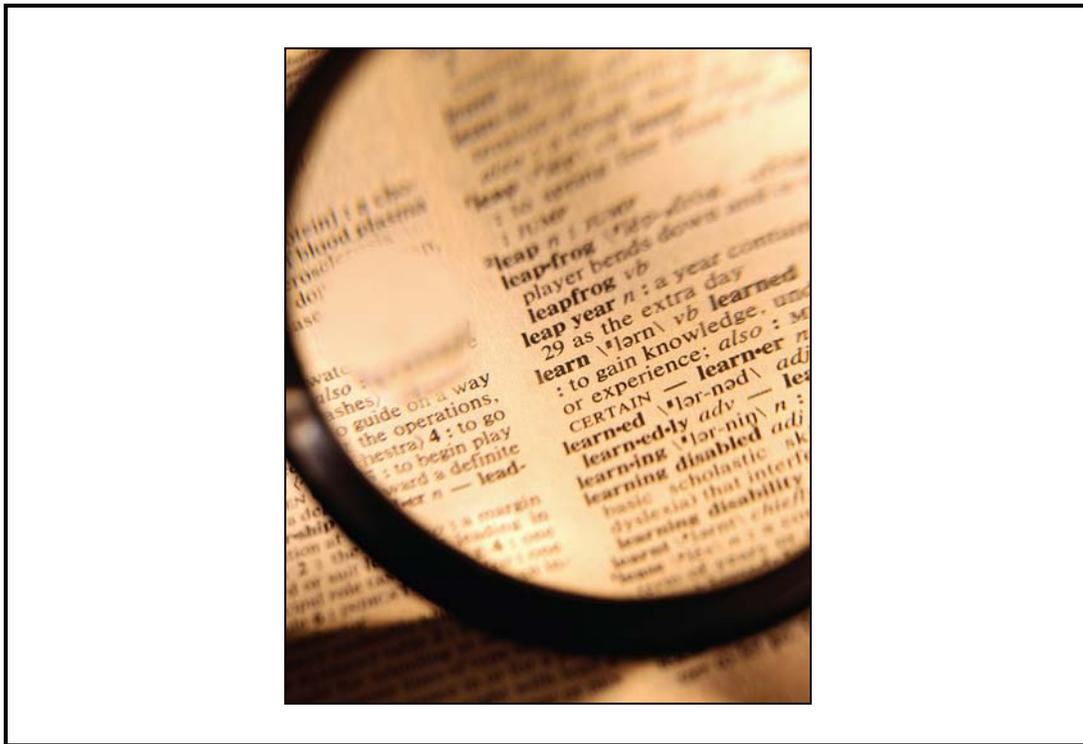
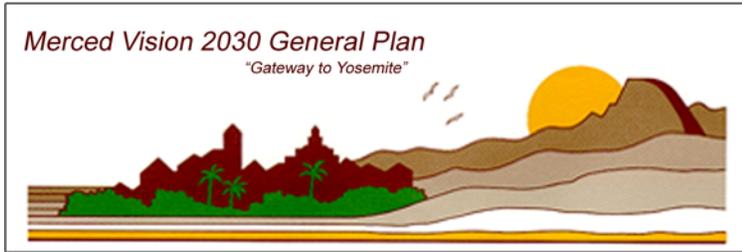


Chapter 12 -- Glossary of Terms

Chapter 12 -- Glossary of Terms





Chapter 12

Glossary of Terms

ACTIONS (IMPLEMENTING)see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.

AIRPORT CLEAR ZONE

An area, traditionally beyond the end of an airport runway or elsewhere within the take-off or landing patterns of aircraft associated with the airport, that have land use and/or activity restrictions intended to reduce or eliminate conflict between aircraft flight patterns and human activities. As an example, the Merced Regional Airport has areas at both ends of its runway that are owned by the City with zoning that is limited to agricultural-related activities.

AREA OF INTEREST (AOI)

Under the heading “Fringe Area Development,” the *Merced County Vision 2000 General Plan* discusses the concept of a city designating an “Area of Interest.” These are areas designated by some cities in the county to identify unincorporated areas which are of particular concern for long-term city interests. The County General Plan states:

“The ‘Area of Interest’ designates land which is outside the SUDP and is not currently planned for annexation or city service delivery, but which is proximate to city territory. Development in these areas may impact city planning and development efforts. Land use activities in these Areas of Interest are generally limited to agricultural and open space uses, except for areas where substantial urban development exists.”

In addition to the County’s definition above, the City of Merced has expanded the definition of the AOI as follows:

Some of the original *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Study Areas were found to have constraints which limited their development potential within the plan timeline. In the interest of flexibility, and to provide interested property owners with some options, certain Study Areas have been designated as being within the Area of Interest (AOI) (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3). These are areas of interest to the City, as it is likely going to be the location of City expansion in the next general plan update, 20-40 years hence. Should it be found that some property within the AOI can be developed sooner, criteria have been developed which would allow land to be incorporated within the SUDP/SOI when appropriate, and ultimately annexed.

In addition, including these areas in the AOI would allow the City to comment on any development proposals which might occur in these areas and impact current and future City development patterns, public service provision, and circulation routes. The City is interested in a joint planning effort with the County. However, these areas are not considered for urban development within the 20-year planning horizon, but represent areas that may see growth in the next 20 to 40 years. However, that may change over time so the criteria provided in Implementing Action 1.6.a of Policy UE-1.6 of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* was developed.

ARTERIALsee **CIRCULATION**.

“BACK” OFFICE..... see Explanatory Note under **BUSINESS PARK**.

BUFFER

A “buffer” is a mechanism to separate and protect one type of land use from the possibility of undesirable characteristics of another. It may be a piece of land, with a particular zoning/land use of its own (i.e., a buffer of professional offices may be used to separate more intensive commercial land uses from lower density residential). A buffer may also be a physical screen, such as planting or fencing. The purpose remains to shield or screen out any potential objectionable features, including physical impacts (noise or smoke), visual impacts, or human activities, associated with a more intensive or unattractive land use (e.g. junkyard or industrial area).

BUSINESS PARK

A business park is a land use designation that allows a mix of heavy commercial type uses, “back” office*, research & development, and industrial land uses with shared access and parking facilities.

Most retail uses that would normally be found in a shopping center would not be appropriate in these areas, however. Retail sales of large products (such as building supplies, appliances, and furniture) and most heavy commercial uses would be appropriate; but department stores and grocery stores would not. These parks would not likely be attractive for most professional offices like medical offices or clinics but they could be allowed on a very limited basis. Most commercial offices, research & development and information-based office uses, and all regional (“back”) offices would be encouraged. Light industry would be appropriate, but heavy industry would not.

Business Parks would require good access, in proximity to major roadways, and should be close to residential population centers and urban service centers to minimize vehicle traffic generation and trip length.

* **“Back Offices”**--Office uses with a large number of employees--consist of two types:

- 1) Traditional regional or “back” offices, such as a regional insurance company claims office, having a large number of employees working in a central location with little or no public contact (processing applications, orders, loans, etc.). Such a use would

have few locational restrictions, as long as there is enough land and the site has good access.

- 2) Government and public utility regional offices (such as the Merced Civic Center, the Merced County Courts and Administrative Complex, and PG&E's M Street headquarters) also house large numbers of employees in one location, but also have major interaction with the public that means heavier access demands on more extended basis. If there is significant public contact and customers coming to the facility associated with these uses, some of these government offices may not be appropriate in a Business Park.

CALTRANSsee Chapter 1, Section 1.8.2.

CEQA (CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT)

Enacted by the California Legislature in 1970, CEQA was conceived primarily as a means to require public agency decision-makers to document and consider the environmental implications of their actions. CEQA applies to governmental agencies at all levels throughout California. It effectively requires agencies to seek feasible means to reduce or avoid significant environmental damage that otherwise could result from their actions. Public agencies must prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) whenever a proposed "project" may cause "significant (adverse) effects (or impacts)" on the environment. The EIR process is designed to inform the public and decision-makers of both positive and negative aspects of a project, as well as possible ways to reduce or eliminate these negative aspects. Even though a project may be identified as having major environmental impacts, an agency may still allow it by adopting "overriding considerations" that are intended to identify positive aspects that "override" the project's negative impacts.

CIRCULATION

The movement of people and goods through and around the City of Merced and its surrounding region. This term is often used interchangeably with "Transportation," although "Transportation" can be more precisely defined as "the means by which the circulation of people and goods are made."

Arterial.....see Circulation Chapter, Section 4.8.1.

Collector.....see Circulation Chapter, Section 4.8.1.

Transitwaysee **TRANSITWAY**.

DENSITY.....see **LAND USE INTENSITY**.

"DIAGRAM".....see **LAND USE DIAGRAM**.

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the lot area. For example, a building 100 feet x 100 feet on a 100' x 100' lot would result in a FAR of 1.0 (10,000 square feet of building floor area divided by 10,000 square feet of total lot area). It is a more refined and adaptable

measurement of development intensity than simple building coverage, which can be adapted for different types of zones and incorporated in zoning ordinances. In the above example, a building 50' x 100' but two stories in height would have the same FAR of 1.0.

GENERAL PLAN

A General Plan for a city functions much as a constitution for a nation. It is a guiding framework for decisions. The General Plan is a statement of the community's vision of its long-term or ultimate physical form. (See Chapter 1, Section 1.2)

GOALS.....see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.

HIERARCHY OF STREETS

The classification of streets and highways by their diverse functions and design:

Street classifications range from the "residential cul-de-sac" with the lowest traffic levels to the "freeway" with the highest traffic levels, with "collectors" and "arterials" in between. Residential cul-de-sacs are designed to provide access to abutting property for local traffic only, with a strong focus of safety over speed since they are often used by pedestrians or children at play. Freeways are multi-lane roads with full grade separation, total control of access through the use of interchanges only, median strips, and fencing/landscaping along the sides, with a strong focus on high speed efficiency. (See Chapter 4, Section 4.8.1.)

HOV

High Occupancy Vehicle--typically defined as a vehicle carrying two or more people (such as carpools, vanpools, and buses).

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS.....see **ACTIONS**.

LAFCO (LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION)

A State-required commission in each county in California which regulates boundary changes proposed by public agencies. The Commission consists of five members in Merced County (two County supervisors, two representatives from the incorporated cities, and one public member). A primary goal of LAFCO is to eliminate the overlapping of governmental services and service-providing entities. This can involve determining whether or not a community or service district has the capability to provide adequate public services to a proposed annexation area. LAFCO then approves (or denies) such an annexation through a public hearing process.

LAFCO is also responsible for developing and determining the **Sphere of Influence** of each local governmental agency within the county. In addition, based upon adopted regulations, LAFCO considers applications for formation or amendment of special districts (an example might be a district created to provide water to a particular area).

LAND USE

The way in which land is being used is the "land use." Examples of "land use" include residential, industrial, and commercial.

LAND USE DEFINITIONSsee Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.3 and 3.9.

LAND USE DENSITY AND LAND USE INTENSITY (LUI)

“Land use **density**” refers to the number of dwelling units or people per acre of land. It can be measured in terms of “gross” or “net” density. “Gross Density” is the number of dwelling units per acre of developable residential land designated on the Land Use Diagram, including public streets and open space. “Net Density” is the number of dwelling units per acre of developable land, excluding public streets and open space.

“Land use **intensity**” measures the concentration of use or the amount of physical development allowed on a piece of property. Building intensity is measured in this General Plan by the amount of building floor area allowed in relationship to the size of the property (see **Floor Area Ratio**).

LAND USE DIAGRAM

An alternative to the General Plan “Land Use Map.” The term “diagram” is used in place of the term “map,” since “map” indicates a level of specificity that a general plan “diagram” is not expected to contain. The diagram depicts the general location of permitted land use classifications (example: regional commercial), as well as a density/intensity range for each land use classification within Merced’s SUDP/SOI. The General Plan Land Use Chapter promotes the achievement of community goals by establishing clear direction for future land use, through narrative text, quantifying tables, and the land use diagram. (See Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1.)

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

Service (LOS) quantitatively describes the operating conditions encountered on streets. LOS ranks street operations based on the amount of traffic and the quality of traffic movement on a scale of A through F. Level A represents free-flow conditions and Level F represents heavy traffic congestion or streets with more cars than they have room for. Level of Service is influenced by a number of factors, including: number of lanes, frequency and spacing of traffic signals, frequency and spacing of intersecting side streets and curb cuts, pedestrian activity, and existence of left- and right-turn pockets. (For more details see Chapter 4; Section 4.4.1 and Figures 4.10a and 4.10b.)

MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT (MCAG)

MCAG is the regional planning agency for the Merced County area, including designation as its Regional Transportation Planning Agency. Since 1986, when the City of Merced was declared a “Metropolitan Statistical Area” by the Census Bureau, MCAG has also been designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the County.

Its governing board contains representatives from the County of Merced and each of the six incorporated cities within the County. MCAG assesses regional planning needs and establishes related priorities, administers regional programs, and coordinates cities/county planning with the State. See also Chapter 1, Section 1.8.2.

MERCED IRRIGATION DISTRICT (MID)See Chapter 1, Section 1.8.2.

NEIGHBORHOOD

The smallest subarea in City Planning, defined as a residential area whose residents have public facilities and social institutions in common, generally within walking distance of their homes. A **Village** is an extended neighborhood area that continues to share basic facilities (such as local schools, parks, commercial facilities and, potentially, decentralized governmental services) and which can be defined by significant physical barriers such a major roadways.

POLICIESsee Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Streets, water and sewer lines, and other public facilities necessary to the functioning of an urban area.

RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW)

Typically as used in this report, reference is to land acquired by a public agency, most often for a street and adjacent public area (location of park strips, sidewalks, fire hydrants, mail boxes, streetlights, etc.). Cross-sections illustrating what is included in street rights-of-ways appear in Section 4.8.1 of the Transportation and Circulation Chapter. ROW's may also be for a railroad, transmission lines, oil or gas pipelines, water lines, sanitary storm sewer and other similar uses.

ROW (RIGHT-OF-WAY)see **RIGHT-OF-WAY**.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT (SJVAPCD) see Chapter 1, Section 1.8.2.

SOI (SPHERE OF INFLUENCE).....see **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**.

SPECIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SUDP)

A “specific urban development plan” boundary is a land use planning standard established in the Merced County General Plan. According to the *Merced County Year 2000 General Plan*, the SUDP area “is the broadest General Plan boundary designation intended to accommodate all classifications of land use.”

The County General Plan goes on to state:

“An SUDP has a boundary line which is recognized as the ultimate growth boundary of the community over the life of the Plan. All land within the SUDP is planned for eventual development in a mixture of urban and urban-related uses, as designated on the SUDP diagram (map) for each community. Whenever land is added to an SUDP, the decision is made that it will ultimately be converted to an urban use.” (Page I-7)

The SUDP proposed in the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan is the same boundary as the Sphere of Influence (below).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE (SOI)

Established by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Established in accordance with state law, these code provisions indicate that an SOI “means a plan for the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area” of a local jurisdiction, as determined by LAFCO. In order for an annexation to be approved by LAFCO, the territory must be within the Sphere of Influence. The City’s proposed SOI, which is also the SUDP, is shown at Figure 2.3 of the Urban Expansion Chapter.

LAFCO uses the SOI as a means of regulating local government (cities and special districts) service areas. State law also indicates that LAFCO, in determining an SOI for a local agency, shall consider each of the following: 1) the present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands; 2) the present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area; 3) the present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides or is authorized to provide; and, 4) the existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency. (See also Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2.)

SUDPsee SPECIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

TRANSITWAY

Through most of the City, “M” Street is designated a “Transitway” on the City’s Circulation Plan (Figure 4.1 of the Circulation Chapter). This roadway is a major north-south corridor which offers direct or nearly direct bus service to most significant destinations in the urban area. “M” Street transitions from an arterial south of Black Rascal Creek to a major divided arterial (special cross-section) northward to Cardella Road. North from Cardella Road to Old Lake Road, plans call for “transit only” segments for portions of the route, that will allow only public buses and emergency and public service vehicles. These will alternate with traditional full-service street segments. This pattern is intended to enhance the use of public transit along this corridor, by eliminating through traffic although still allowing private vehicles to access local neighborhoods and commercial centers. (See also Chapter 4, Section 4.4.7, and Figure 4.23.)

Bellevue Road is also designated as a “Transitway” from the City’s western SUDP/SOI boundary (west of Highway 59) to the eastern SUDP/SOI boundary (the UC Merced campus), but will maintain the same cross-section as a “Major Arterial.”

URBAN DESIGN

The attempt to give form, in terms of both beauty and function, to entire areas or to whole cities. The term implies a more fundamental approach than “beautification” and is concerned with the location, mass, and design of the various urban components. It combines the concerns of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture.

URBAN FRINGE

An area at the edge of the urban area usually made up of mixed agricultural and urban land uses.

URBAN VILLAGES.....see VILLAGE (URBAN VILLAGES) LAND USE CONCEPT.

VILLAGEsee **VILLAGE (URBAN VILLAGES) LAND USE CONCEPT.**

VILLAGE (URBAN VILLAGES) LAND USE CONCEPT

The Merced Village Concept is a land use concept planned for Merced’s new growth areas. It is anticipated that the City’s future growth will take place through the development of a series of “urban villages.” The Village Concept is an effort to take the typical elements of urban growth - retail centers, single and multi-family housing, roads, and public services -- and reorganize them to form a more efficient and development pattern. This “Village Concept” foresees these Villages as a series of diverse and livable, extended neighborhoods, each located within one approximate square mile bounded by major roadways (arterials). These Villages offer the opportunity to retain compact urban development patterns while more evenly distributing public and private services, maintaining a strong sense of community, and accommodating all types of housing and methods of transportation.

Each Village contains a central commercial core area of varying sizes (containing various types of commercial services, government facilities/services, and a public transit center), surrounded by a medium-density residential area within walking distance of the core, with a lower-density residential area surrounding the medium-density area and extending outward to encompass approximately one square mile. There are three distinct areas within the Village:

- Village Center:** Variously referred to as the village core, village commercial center, or *Core Commercial Area*.

- Inner Village:** Also referred to as “the Village” in previous studies, the *Inner Village* contains the *Village Center/Core Commercial Area* and the *Village Core Residential areas* surrounding the Village Center. The Village Core Residential areas contain medium-density residential uses within easy walking distance (approximately 1/4 mile) of transit and the Village Center.

- Outer Village:** The surrounding or outer residential area containing relatively low residential densities. These lower density areas would be tied to the core area by a convenient network of local and collector streets.

[For more details, see the Land Use Chapter, Section 3.6, and the Urban Design Chapter (6).]

ZONING

State-authorized regulations that establish permitted land uses for an area designated as a particular zone district. Permitted uses vary from zone district to district. Zoning regulations also control the placement, height, bulk, and coverage of structures within each zone district shown on a jurisdiction’s zoning map. The City of Merced’s official zoning map is part of the Zoning Ordinance, Title 20 of the Merced Municipal Code.

ZONE DISTRICT

A section of a city or county designated in a jurisdiction's zoning regulations (ordinance) and (usually) delineated on the zoning map, in which requirements for the use of land and buildings, and development standards, are prescribed. Within each district, all requirements must be uniform. The number of districts within a jurisdiction may vary widely, depending upon circumstances and needs.