

# ***Draft Bellevue Corridor Community Plan, August 2012***

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## **Chapter 1 -- Introduction**

What is a Community Plan? How does the City's *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* influence the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*? What is the purpose of the Community Plan? How will the community plan be crafted, and who are the participants? This chapter answers these and related questions.

## 1.1 -- Community Plan Overview

### 1.1.1 *The Purpose of a Community Plan*

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

- To enable the Planning Commission and City Council to reach agreement on long-range development policies;
- To provide a basis for judging whether specific private development proposals and public projects are consistent with these policies;
- To allow the public and government entities to design projects that are consistent with City policies, or to seek changes in these policies through the General Plan Amendment process;
- To record the City's policies and standards for the maintenance and improvement of existing development and the location and characteristics of future development;
- To provide citizens with information about their community and with opportunities to participate in the local planning and decision-making process;
- A "Community Plan" serves as a blueprint for future growth and development within a defined area of the City of Merced's growth boundary of its general plan;<sup>1</sup> and,
- Community plans may, but are not required, to identify proposed major components of infrastructure needed to support planned land uses, as well as financing mechanisms.<sup>3</sup> While the BCCP discusses major infrastructure needs, it does not address financing mechanisms.

### 1.1.2 *Community Plan Relationship to the "Merced Vision 2030 General Plan"*

A community plan is to be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. To facilitate consistency with its master-planned areas, the General Plan provides a policy framework upon which the community plan addresses detailed issues. The General Plan goals and policies are not repeated in the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* and the user is referred to the General Plan for broad policy guidance. Rather, the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* (BCCP) provides supplemental goals, policies, and implementation measures that tier from and refine the General Plan, focusing on issues and opportunities specific to the Bellevue Corridor Plan Area.

A community plan is adopted by resolution as an amendment to a local jurisdiction's General Plan, in the manner set out in Section 65350, et seq. It is implemented by ordinances and other discretionary actions, such as annexation, zoning, and land division.

### ***1.1.3 Merced's Adopted and Proposed Master Plans***

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes several adopted and proposed master-planned areas including:

#### Adopted Plans

- Fahrens Park Specific Plan
- Fahrens Creek Specific Plan
- Campus North Specific Plan
- Northeast Yosemite Specific Plan
- Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan
- South Merced Community Plan
- UC Merced Long Range Development Plan
- UC Community Plan

#### Proposed Plans

- Bellevue Corridor Community Plan
- Yosemite Lakes Community Plan
- Five Bridges Community Plan
- South Mission Community Plan

Additional information about these plans is presented in Section 1.3 “Existing Setting” of this Introduction Chapter.

### ***1.1.4 Plan Assumptions***

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* will be guided by assumptions regarding existing and anticipated future conditions to the year 2030, including those of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, as well as those stated below:

#### Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Project Specific Assumptions:

The project specific assumptions of the planning area for the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* are:

- 1) All lands within the City’s adopted Sphere of Influence within and near the BCCP project will be developed.
- 2) Development within the BCCP area will be guided by “Urban Expansion” policies in the City’s *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* as well as Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission’s (LAFCO) procedures, codes, and actions.
- 3) Significant amounts of job-generating land uses will be located in close proximity to the UC Merced Campus.

- 4) The University of California Merced (UCM) campus will continue to expand in the vicinity of Lake Yosemite on the northeastern edge of the Merced growth boundary or SUDP/SOI along with a future University Community.
- 5) Urban development (residential, commercial, and industrial) will continue to be focused within the City of Merced's growth area (SUDP/SOI) and not in the unincorporated areas surrounding the City.

From City Council Resolution #2006-89 (Technical Appendix D) regarding the University Community

- 1) The University Community will be incorporated into the City of Merced and will not be a separate city or part of the unincorporated County.
- 2) Interim City of Merced sewer and water services may be provided, under specific terms, for the University Community only.
- 3) Annexation along the Bellevue Corridor is encouraged to provide contiguity between UC Merced and the City of Merced. It is realistic to expect development proposals in the BCCP planning area in the near-term.
- 4) The BCCP will be drafted to accommodate the incorporation of the University Community into the City of Merced.
- 5) Though no separate wastewater treatment plan should service the University Community, consideration of innovative methods of wastewater treatment for that area may occur.

If some of these events do not occur within the next 20 years, the Community Plan goals and policies will need to be re-evaluated in light of changing conditions.

***1.1.5 Format of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan***

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* and the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* will share a uniform format for land use categories, plan terminology, and plan design, including diagrams, fonts, and page layout.

## 1.2 Organization of the Plan

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* will consist of three documents: 1) *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*, 2) *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Environmental Review Documents*, and 3) Technical Appendices.

### 1.2.1 Plan Contents

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* will be organized into two Sections: I) *Executive Summary*; and II) *Plan Elements*, consisting of topical chapters, such as land use and transportation. Each chapter contains its own bibliography.

#### Section I / Executive Summary

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Executive Summary* provides a description of the BCCP project along with a summary of goals, policies, and implementing actions for each element.

#### Section II / Plan Elements

Each chapter will consist of text, diagrams, and other illustrations relating to an aspect of the Plan area's growth and development. The text explains the issues and discusses them, then states their goals, policies, and implementing actions. The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* will not include the following chapters, but defer to the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* regarding the following topics: 1) Sustainable Development, 2) Housing, 3) Noise, and 4) Safety.

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction** provides the context within which the Plan will be developed.
- **Chapter 2 – Urban Expansion** contains the policies and actions that will guide future urban growth, such as annexations, in the plan area.
- **Chapter 3 – Land Use** contains the basic land use policies and diagram that will be used to guide residential, commercial, and open space in the Plan area, including key features such as mixed-use development patterns.
- **Chapter 4 – Transportation and Circulation** includes policies and rights-of-way templates and graphics for development of an integrated municipal circulation and transportation system that accommodates all modes of transit (automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians), including provision for *Transit Priority Projects* (TPP). This Chapter will also include rights-of-way templates and graphics depicting future streets, pathways and transit corridors within the Plan area.
- **Chapter 5 – Public Services and Facilities** will address the public service and facility needs of an expanding city population.
- **Chapter 6 – Urban Design** will provide policy direction about how site and building design concepts in the Plan area should be codified as a Plan implementation tool.

- **Chapter 7 – Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation** will provide policy direction for the development and maintenance of open space and park features in the Plan area.
- **Chapter 8 – Plan Maintenance** describes how the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* may be implemented, monitored, and updated, as needed.
- **Chapter 9 – Glossary** defines terms and acronyms used in the Community Plan.

### **1.2.2 Plan Appendices**

Plan Appendices contain detailed background information that is foundational to the discussion and policies of the community plan.

- A. Physical Setting of the Community Plan Area
- B. Development Projects and Plans
- C. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* Goals
- D. City Council Resolution #2006-89 (University Community)
- E. Consultant Technical Memorandums/Findings Report

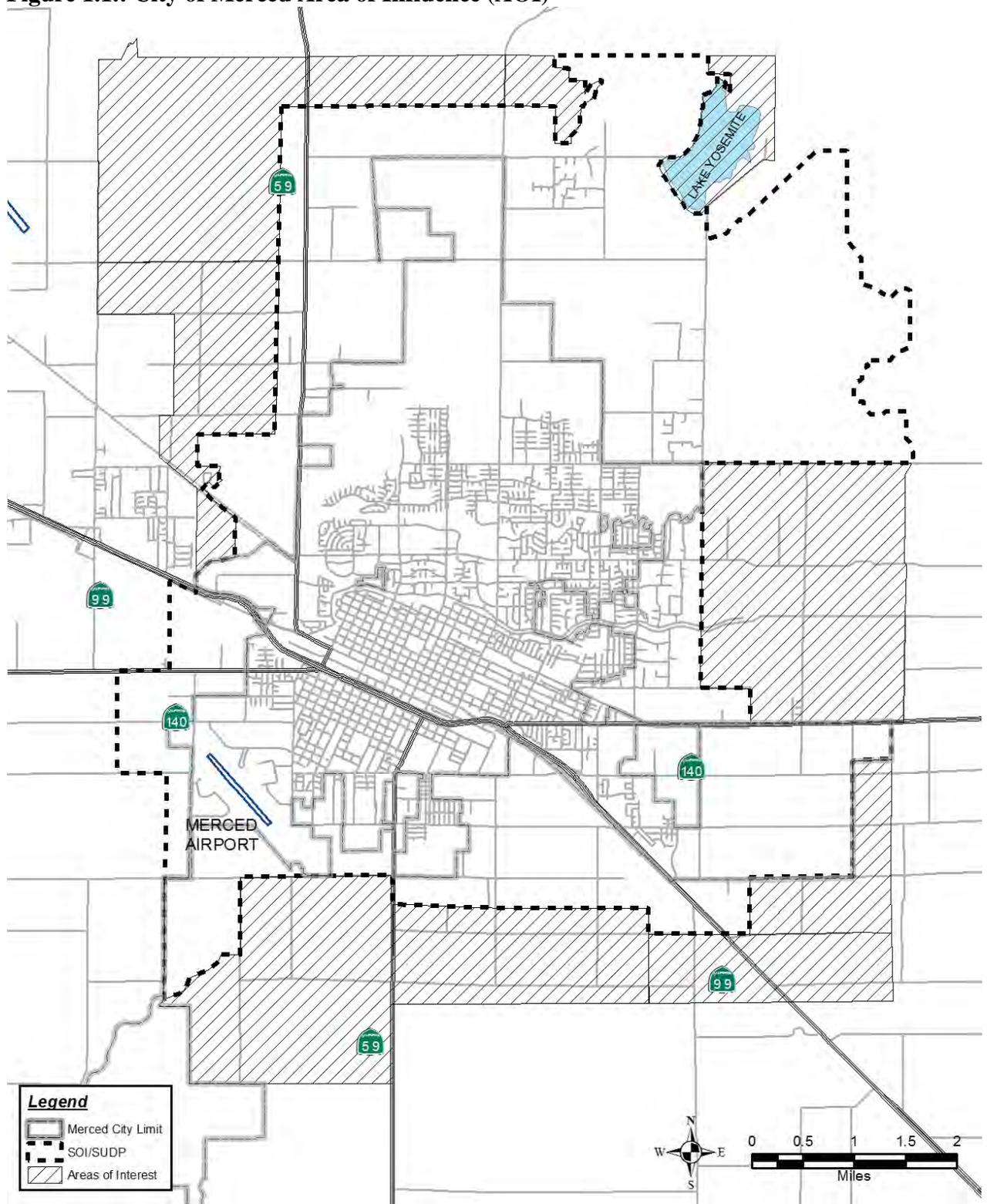
## 1.3 -- Existing Setting

### 1.3.1 Community Setting

The City of Merced is approximately seven miles long from north to south and six miles at its widest point from east to west. In January 2012, the City of Merced covered approximately 23.17 square miles and had an estimated population of approximately 79,328.<sup>4</sup> The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* area is located to the northeast of the City of Merced, and is approximately 2.4 square-miles in size generally bounded by “G” Street on the west; Farmland Avenue on the north; Lake Road on the east and Cardella Road on the South (between Lake Road and Gardner Road), and generally ½ mile south of Bellevue Road (between Gardner Road and “G” Street). Lake Yosemite, UC Merced and the northern part of the UC Community Plan area abuts the eastern edge of the BCCP study area. From the project boundary, Downtown Merced is located 3.5 miles to the southwest, and Castle Airport and the City of Atwater are located 6 miles to the west.

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* study area is located outside but adjacent to the Merced City limits, and within the City’s planned growth area, otherwise known as the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI). Figure 1.1 depicts the community setting of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Area.

**Figure 1.1.: City of Merced Area of Influence (AOI)**



### ***1.3.2 Physical Setting***

The northeastern portion of the City’s planned growth area is characterized by gently rolling terrain, while the remainder is relatively flat. The northern, western, and eastern portions of the City contain a number of creeks and canals including Bear Creek, Black Rascal Creek, Fahrens Creek, and Cottonwood Creek. These creeks all traverse the City from east to west. With the exception of a few pockets of rural residential homes, the planning area is predominately used for rangeland. The terrain is generally level, though a low-profile hilltop is situated just south of Bellevue Road in the mid-section of the planning area.

A detailed description of existing physical features within and immediately adjacent to the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Area is provided in “Technical Appendix A” of the BCCP. The “Planning Area Physical Features” document establishes baseline conditions upon which the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* will be developed, and was drafted to provide a comprehensive description of the physical setting of the plan area for benefit and use by the project consultant, technical advisory committee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee. Through text, illustrations, diagrams and maps, it describes such topics as biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology, mineral resources, and natural hazards, and as such, could also be used to describe the existing physical setting for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### ***1.3.3 Proximate Development Plans and Projects***

A detailed description of development plans and projects occurring within and near the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Area* is provided in “Technical Appendix B” of the BCCP. The “Development Plans and Projects” document identifies and describes recent and anticipated growth patterns and is provided herein for benefit and use by the project consultant, Technical Advisory Committee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee.

## **1.4 – Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Guidance**

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

The *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* must be consistent with the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. A Community Plan addresses a particular region within the overall planning area of the general plan, and refines the policies of the general plan as they apply to such smaller geographic areas. The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* goals, objectives, policies, and implementing actions that apply to the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan* project area are listed in “Technical Appendix C” of the BCCP.

### ***1.4.2 Guiding Principles for the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan***

Section 3.7.2 (page 3-69) of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* lists several guiding principles to follow in developing community plans for the City of Merced, and include:

- Community Plans which include or are adjacent to established neighborhoods will address the needs of these neighborhoods and potential adverse impacts resulting from plan implementation.
- Public participation by area residents and property owners in the planning process will be emphasized.
- Community Plan areas need connectivity with existing and planned urban areas.
- Community Plans will include all elements determined necessary to ensure consistency with the General Plan. These elements may include, but not be limited to, Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, and infrastructure phasing. Community Plans will include a land use and infrastructure phasing plan.
- The “Urban Villages” concept should be incorporated into the planning of these areas as much as feasible.
- The Community Planning process should be focused on the planning issues or concerns which need to be resolved for that planning area (see Section 1.4.4) and, to this degree, provide data, information, or policy clarification necessary to carry out the goals of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

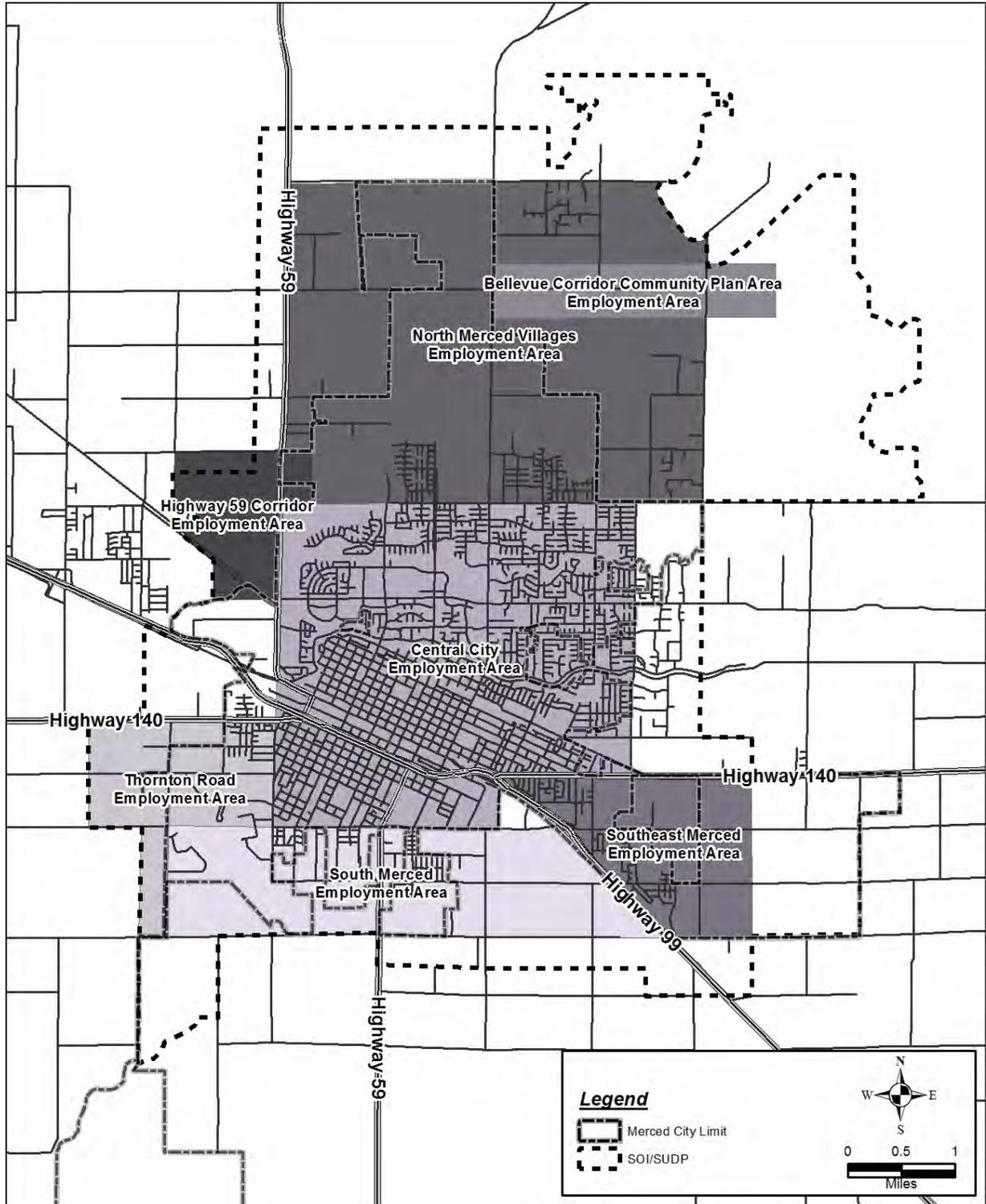
### ***1.4.3 Bellevue Road – Urban Villages and an Employment Corridor***

Section 3.5.5 of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* (pgs. 3-37 to 3-41) describes seven “Commercial and Industrial Employment Corridors” with heavy concentrations of commercial and industrial development. On page 3-40, this section describes the BCCP area specifically as “likely containing significant amounts of job generating uses that wish to be located in close proximity to the UC Merced campus.” See Figure 1.2. Additionally, under the heading “Urban Growth and Design,” the BCCP is described (page 3-56) in the context of urban villages.

*“The composition and pattern of land uses in the Urban Villages near UC Merced along Bellevue Road will have unique designs and functions due*

*to the economic opportunities and connectivity to the university. Each of the “Urban Villages” between Lake Road and “G” Street should contain in addition to “Neighborhood Commercial,” “Village Residential,” and “Professional Commercial -Office,” the opportunity for an expanded urban core comprised of a jobs-based office, business park or research and development type land use supported or spun-off from UC Merced. This additional land use potential is represented on the Land Use Diagram by the Community Plan. This, along with other components of the Bellevue Road Corridor Community Plan” is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.7.”*

Figure 1.2.: Commercial and Industrial Corridors



#### ***1.4.4 Key Features and Issues of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan***

Section 3.7.4 (pages 3-71 to 3-73) of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* generally describes the future of the Bellevue Corridor Planning Area; key features and issues to be addressed in the Plan are listed in bullet format. This language appears below:

##### Economic Development

Bellevue Road will be a gateway to UC Merced connecting the campus to Castle Airport Aviation and Development Center, other employment centers, and to Downtown Merced via the “G”, “M” and “R” Street corridors. As such, their economic development strategies should be compatible and complementary. They should also connect to one another via a network of transportation and communications systems that optimize access between and among them. Due to the unique nature of this opportunity and the complexity of issues, landowners and agencies involved, the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan is proposed.

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

##### Land Use

The corridor should be designed as a place where services, shops, schools, businesses, public uses, and residences mix in a vibrant setting. The plan should assess the viability of expanding office, commercial, and research and development land use capacities in the plan area. The City’s Urban Village will be the backbone concept model for creating core commercial nodes along Bellevue Road connected to neighborhoods to the south and north. Some of the land uses could connect to research and development activities associated with the campus research programs or professional services associated with the campus’s professional schools.

- Special “Urban Village” designs suited to the “Bellevue Corridor Planning Principles” and potential expansion thereof to provide for increased opportunities for job-based land uses attracted by a university climate while still maintaining the basic concept of mixed-use, pedestrian, and transit oriented communities. These “Urban Villages” may differ from others in the Community in the mixture of business park,

research and development, office, public/cultural uses, and retail uses within the Village Core areas instead of the retail/office/public facilities focus of other Villages which are more residential in nature; and,

- Land Uses should be compatible and complimentary with one another and planned as integrated, coordinated mixed-use neighborhoods and communities; and,
- The influence and effects of the UC Merced and University Community land use and circulation plans on adjacent (western) properties; and,
- Interface issues and infill land use patterns adjacent to and within pre-existing “Rural Residential” properties; and,
- A variety of housing types and densities should be encouraged within the Community Plan area in addition to job-generating uses consistent with the City’s overall economic strategy and the Bellevue Corridor market study.

### Transportation

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

- Establish “Bellevue Parkway Planning Principles” describing the design [including appropriate right-of-way, function and land use pattern along Bellevue Road (to be renamed “Bellevue Parkway”)] recognizing two key traits: (1) multi-modal access corridor that accommodates both automobiles and public transit systems, as well as bikes and pedestrians; and (2) designed to unify rather than separate the community located on opposite sides of the road;
- Establish a system of collector streets and arterials with appropriate rights-of-ways to encourage internal circulation within the Community Plan area. This would include determining the proper alignment and right-of-way for Gardner Road.

### Timing

Development projects may proceed in advance of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan if all of the following findings can be made, as determined by the City Council upon recommendation by the Planning Commission:

- There is an immediate or near term need for the facilities or uses proposed by the plan; and,
- That the project is supportable by a project specific market study; and,

- That the project is designed consistent with the “Urban Village Policies and Design Guidelines” as defined in Chapter 6 of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*; and,
- That the project is designed to be compatible with adjacent land uses as illustrated in the General Plan; and,
- The owner consents that the development project, at the City’s discretion, may be required to be consistent with the plans and specifications approved as part of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan.

#### Public Facilities

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

#### Environment

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

#### Character/Design

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

#### ***1.4.5 The Bellevue Corridor Community Plan “Illustrative Plan”***

The *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* includes “illustrative plans” as an appendix to its Land Use Chapter. Illustrative plans are not adopted plans and are only included in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to inform the public of preliminary land use concepts under consideration in each of the Plan areas.<sup>5</sup> No land use entitlements are granted by including illustrative plans in that appendix.<sup>8</sup> The land uses shown in the northwest corner of Lake Road and Bellevue Road are a part of the formally adopted Land Use Diagram of the City of Merced, and not considered “illustrative,” however.

#### Bellevue Corridor Community Plan (BCCP)

With regard to the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*, a conceptual land use plan for illustrative purposes only is included in the appendix section of the Land Use Element of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*,<sup>7</sup> and is also shown in Figure 1.3 below. This illustrative plan also appears on the City’s Official Land Use Diagram. Through the development of the BCCP, the land use designations will be refined, notably along Bellevue Road and the northern portions of Lake Road.

Table 1.1. Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Land Use Designations		
Land Use Designation	Intended Uses	Density
Rural Residential (RR)	Residential: single-family	1 – 3 units per acre
Low Density Residential (LD)	Residential: single-family detached, condominium, and zero-lot line	2 – 6 units per acre
Low-Medium Density Residential (LMD)	Residential: single-family detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex, condominium, zero-lot-line	6.1 – 12 units per acre
High-Medium Density Residential (HMD)	Residential: multifamily, apartment, condominium, triplex, fourplex	12.1 – 24 units per acre
High Density Residential (HD)	Residential: multifamily	24.1 – 36 units per acre
Commercial Office (CO)	Commercial: primarily small-scale office uses as well as general retail and service commercial	0.50 FAR
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)	Commercial: retail, eating and drinking, commercial recreation, auto services, etc.	Average 0.35 FAR
Bellevue Corridor Mixed Use	A mixture of LMD, HMD, HD, CO and CN.	Varies
Thoroughfare Commercial (CT)	Commercial: auto-oriented commerce, large recreational facilities, some heavy commercial, lodging and hospitality, automobile sales and services	0.35 FAR
Business Park (BP)	Commercial and industrial: heavy commercial, office, research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, information-based and service-based activities	0.40 FAR
Open Space – Park/Recreation Facility (OS-PK)	Recreation: public parks, golf courses, greens, commons, playgrounds, and other public and private open spaces	0.10 FAR

Figure 1.3.: Bellevue Corridor Community Plan “Illustrative Plan”



## **1.5 – Constructing the Community Plan**

The development process of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan will be a dynamic process built on: realistic assessments of past and present information and assumptions, guiding principles and identified issues of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, Strategic Growth Council Objectives*; local community engagement and comments, and professional planning guidance and direction.

### ***1.5.1 Plan Inputs, Recommendation and Adoption Process***

The City Planning Division will take leadership role to craft the overall plan, and will place products developed by the consultant into the draft plan. Together, the City of Merced Planning Division and the project consultant constitutes the *Plan Leadership Team* (PLT), whose role is to craft the community plan based on recommendations from the project's Ad-hoc Citizens Advisory Committee, input from the community at-large, and comments from the project Technical Advisory Committee. The PLT will provide its recommendation, along with comment letters from other City Departments, Commissions, and Committees to the City of Merced Planning Commission, who will then make a recommendation to the City Council. The plan will be adopted by City Council Resolution.

### ***1.5.2 Study Elements of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan***

To help achieve the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan's* “Community Plan Guiding Principles” and “Key Features and Issues,” five study elements were crafted, and included:

- Economic Study
- Transportation Options (Mobility)
- Urban-Village Design
- Rights-of-Way Templates/Graphics
- Transit Priority Projects

### ***1.5.3 Strategic Growth Council Objectives and Outcomes***

The BCCP was developed using funds from the State of California Strategic Growth Council (SGC). In awarding a grant to the City for this project, the SGC found that the City's community plan project aligned with its program objectives, and are addressed in the BCCP. This involves identifying indicators that can be used to measure success, and to quantify projected outcomes. The State objectives include: 1) Strengthen the Economy, 2) Promote Energy Efficiency and Conservation, 3) Promote Water Conservation, 4) Improve Infrastructure Systems, 5) Promote Infill and Compact Development, 6) Improve Air and Water Quality, 7) Increase Housing Affordability, 8) Promote Public Health, 9) Promote Equity, 10) Reduce Automobile Use and Fuel Consumption, 11) Revitalize Urban and Community Centers, and 12) Protect Natural Resources and Agricultural Lands.

### ***1.5.4 The Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Development Process***

The plan was developed in six phases. The first phase, ***Plan Organization***, consists of mobilizing the community and getting started with the Planning Process. The second phase, ***Foundation Report*** describes the approach and content of various studies to be undertaken by the Planning Leadership Team, that will result in the third phase, a ***Project Studies & Findings Report***. The fourth phase, ***Public Workshops***, is an opportunity for the public to meet with the Planning Leadership Team and project committees to learn about and offer public input concerning the studies and plan options. The fifth phase, ***Draft and Adopt Community Plan***, synthesizes the study findings with committee and public input comments to formulate an administrative draft of the plan. The sixth phase, ***Draft and Adopt Bellevue Corridor Zoning Code***, completes the development process.

#### **Phase 1:**

##### Plan Organization

- Step 1: Project Kick-off Meeting
- Step 2: Assemble Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Step 3: Project Management Plan
- Step 4: Community Project Orientation & Stakeholders Meetings

#### **Phase 2:**

##### Foundation Report

- Step 1: Foundation Report
- Step 2: Outreach to Underrepresented Groups
- Step 3: TAC Review/Comment on Foundation Report
- Step 4: Formal Acceptance of Foundation Report
- Step 5: Citizens Advisory Committee Established

#### **Phase 3:**

##### Project Studies/Findings Report

- Step 1: Citizens Advisory Committee Orientation Meeting
- Step 2: Draft Findings Report
- Step 3: Formal Acceptance of Findings Report (TAC and CAC)
- Step 4: Formal Acceptance of Findings Report (Planning Commission & City Council)

#### **Phase 4:**

##### Public Workshops

- Step 1: Hold Public Meetings
- Step 2: Plan Renderings
- Step 3: CAC & TAC Involvement in Workshops
- Step 4: Public View of Recommended Plan Elements

#### **Phase 5:**

##### Draft and Adopt Community Plan

- Step 1: Draft Plan Preparation

- Step 2: CAC & TAC Committee Involvement:
- Step 3: Plan Adoption
- Step 4: Plan Distribution/Sharing

**Phase 6:**

Draft and Adopt Bellevue Corridor Zoning Code

- Step 1: Draft Code
- Step 2: CAC & TAC Committee Involvement
- Step 3: Code Adoption

The following *Phase* and *Step* description provide a detailed narrative of the planning process outlined above.

**NOTE: These phase and step actions represent the desired course of action, but may change during the course of developing the Plan. Amendment to this section may be needed to reflect the actual actions and order thereof.**

**Phase 1: Plan Organization**

**Step 1: *Project Kick-off Meeting.*** City Staff and the Consultant Team will hold a kick-off meeting to: review and adjust the Scope of Work, if needed; review and discuss the Plan preparation process; clarify roles and expectations; establish communication portals for information sharing and future discussions; discuss billing logistics; tour the plan area; and share background information and materials.

**Step 2: *Begin Process to Assemble the Citizens Advisory Committee.*** City Staff will initiate the formal process to assemble the Citizens Advisory Committee, including the preparation of applications, written committee duties, public noticing and associated City Council actions. Staff will also form the Project's Technical Advisory Committee.

**Step 3: *Project Management Plan.*** City Staff, its partners (Merced County, MCAG, and UC Merced), and the consultants craft a public Project Management Plan that describes: Bellevue Corridor Planning Process, Project Workflow/Benchmarking/Key Deliverables, Team Organization and Responsibilities, the Community Outreach Plan, a Public Workshop Schedule, Plan Development Inputs, Communication Plan and Document Style Guide, Data Request List, and Invoicing.

**Step 4: *Community Project Orientation & Stakeholders Meetings.*** City Staff will host a community-based information and orientation open house at the Merced Civic Center about the planning effort and future public workshops. Staff will present the vision for the Plan and provide opportunities for adjustments based on public feedback. The general public, property owners within and near the project area, and stakeholders were invited. Stakeholders include government agencies, community-based organizations, groups and individuals representing commercial interests, and organizations representing other interests such as public health and housing. City Staff and the Project consultant will meet with key stakeholders during a separate meeting.

## **Phase 2: Foundation Report**

**Step 1: *Foundation Report.*** The Consultant Team will prepare a *Foundation Report* that frames the work completed, sets direction for the background studies and BCCP chapters, establishes the expected outcomes, and bridges the gap between the goals in the 2030 General Plan and the BCCP. The report will help define the pending background studies and draft plan chapters on form-based code, transit priority projects, and right-of-way and public realm. The document will include maps, photos, and other graphics, as needed. Public input from the Community Project Orientation Meeting will be incorporated as appropriate in the *Foundation Report*, and feedback from City Staff will be incorporated into the background studies.

**Step 2: *Outreach to Underrepresented Groups.*** The Planning Staff will meet with underrepresented community groups to present the Project Overview and to receive comments to fold into the planning process where appropriate. These underrepresented groups will be encouraged to participate in the upcoming workshops.

**Step 3: *TAC Review/Comment on Foundation Report.*** Staff will provide the TAC with an opportunity to review and comment on the Foundation Report.

**Step 4: *Formal Acceptance of Foundation Report.*** At a study session between the City Council and the Planning Commission, UC Merced partners will present an overview of UC Merced planning efforts, and City Staff will request that the *Foundation Report* be accepted.

**Step 5: *Citizens Advisory Committee Established.*** City Staff will request the City Council to appoint the Project Citizens Advisory Committee.

## **Phase 3: Project Studies/Findings Report**

**Step 1: *Citizens Advisory Committee Orientation Meeting.*** City Staff will orient the CAC as to their duties, the project planning process, Project issues, and examine the site.

**Step 2: *Draft Findings Report.*** The consultants will provide Background Study memorandums, which include: *Mobility* Memorandum; *Urban Village Zoning Code* Memorandum; *Rights-of-way / Semi Public Spaces* Memorandum; *Transit Priority Project* Memorandum; and the *Economic Analysis* Memorandum. The Consultant Team will then prepare a draft *Findings Report*, compiling the studies above.

**Step 3: *Formal Acceptance of Findings Report.*** Staff will provide both the TAC and CAC an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Findings Report.

**Step 4: *Formal Acceptance of Findings Report.*** At a study session between the City Council and the Planning Commission, City Staff will request that the *Findings Report* be accepted.

## **Phase 4: Public Outreach Workshops**

**Step 1: *Hold Public Meetings.*** The Consultant Team will prepare for and conduct a series of separate public workshops, the goal of which is to present different methods to achieve community goals in the Project area, and to receive public feedback for purposes

of formulating a singular draft component for each topic for eventual inclusion in the BCCP. Design workshops will be key milestones in the community engagement process, and will occur over a 5-day period. During the design workshops, the community will be able to participate in the planning and design process in various formats, including formal opening and closing presentations, informal process presentations (pin-ups) held most evenings, topic-specific brown bag lunches, and casual one-on-one chats with Team members during the open studio hours. One of the benefits of design workshops is that a draft land use map, zoning concepts, and ROW templates/graphics, etc., can be drafted during the workshop.

**Step 2: *Plan Renderings.*** The community workshop is not only about engaging and communicating with the public, but also about creating detailed design solutions for the Plan area with specific direction for future planning and coding efforts. The Consultant Team will render numerous boards of three-dimensional drawings to clearly illustrate the Plan's intent. In addition to tying the public into the process, it will be critical to engage City Staff, other agencies and organizations, the Planning Commission, and the City Council as much as possible throughout the workshop events.

**Step 3: *CAC & TAC Committee Involvement in Workshops.*** Both the TAC and CAC will review and comment throughout this process.

**Step 4: *Public View of Recommended Plan Elements.*** A final public workshop/presentation will provide an overview of all draft components in the BCCP, and clearly depict the end-result that will be described in the Draft Community Plan.

#### **Phase 5 Draft and Adopt Community Plan**

**Step 1: *Draft Plan Preparation.*** City Staff will work with the Consultant Team to incorporate key deliverables, which include: Draft BCCP Land Use Map; Draft Urban Village Zoning Code Concepts; Draft *Transit Priority Project* Implementation Actions; produce Rights-of-Way Design Templates and Graphics; Outline, Integrate, and Adopt Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Policies, Programs, and Actions; and Quantify Projected Outcomes over the Base Line Using Specific Indicators. City Staff will prepare the draft BCCP, including the overall framework, order, and design.

**Step 2: *CAC & TAC Committee Involvement.*** Led by the Planning Staff, both the TAC and CAC will review and comment on the Draft Plan, prior to plan adoption.

**Step 3: *Plan Adoption.*** The Consultant Team will prepare for and attend a City Council hearing for adoption of the Plan. City Staff will present the item.

**Step 4: *Plan Distribution/Sharing.*** City Staff will begin the effort to distribute the completed Plan to outlets as appropriate. This effort may occur through and past June 2014.

#### **Phase 6: Draft and Adopt Bellevue Corridor Zoning Code**

**Step 1: *Draft Code.*** A Zoning Code will be prepared by the Consultant Team.

**Step 2: *CAC & TAC Committee Involvement.*** Both the TAC and CAC will review and comment on the Draft Code.

**Step 3: Code Adoption.** The City Planning Staff will present the Code to the City Planning Commission and City Council for adoption, with the Consultant Team in attendance at both meetings.

### ***1.5.5 Public Outreach***

The BCCP *Public Outreach* was developed to provide opportunities for the public to be involved in the development of the *Bellevue Corridor Community Plan*. This section is structured to describe three key elements of the public outreach strategy, including: (1) Plan Participants, (2) Public Outreach Methods, and (3) Public Outreach Events and Activities. The section concludes with the Project's *Public Outreach Table* that provides a summary of the Project's Community Participation in the development of the BCCP.

#### Plan Participants

The BCCP was crafted through a joint effort by the Plan Leadership Team (PLT) consisting of the City of Merced Planning Division and the professional planning firm of Lisa Wise Consulting (including sub-consultants Sargent Town Planning, Tony Perez and Associates, Economic Planning Systems and Nelson Nygaard Transportation Engineers). Their work was assisted by input from a project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the BCCP Citizens Advisory Ad-hoc Committee (CAC), and comments of an engaged community.

#### Public Outreach Methods

Depending upon the type of meeting, different public outreach methods were utilized to inform the community of the preparation of the BCCP, including:

- Direct Mailed Notices
- Published Legal Notices
- Project Website
- Email Notifications
- Posted Agendas at City Hall
- Press Releases
- Radio Public Service Announcements

#### Public Outreach Events and Activities

A key objective in the public outreach strategy was to give the public as many opportunities to participate during the drafting of the plan and prior to its adoption. These opportunities included:

- Informational Webpage
- Technical Advisory Committee Meetings
- Citizens Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee Meetings
- Various Community Outreach Meetings

- Formal Public Meetings with City Committees, Commissions, and the Merced City Council

**Footnotes**

To be added later.



<b>Code</b>	<b>Outreach Method</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>W</b>		Project Website
<b>NP</b>		Posted Agenda at City Hall
<b>PR</b>		Press Release
<b>RI</b>		Radio Public Service Announcement
<b>DMN</b>		Direct Mailed Notices
<b>PLN</b>		Published Legal Notices
<b>EN</b>		Email Notifications

<b>Code</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>PLT</b>	Plan Leadership Team
<b>CAC</b>	Citizens Advisory Committee
<b>TAC</b>	Technical Advisory Committee
<b>CS</b>	Community Stakeholders
<b>GP</b>	General Public

## 1.6 – Bibliography

1. *California Planning Guide: An Introduction to Planning in California*, December 2005.
2. *A Planner's Guide to Specific Plans*, January 2001.
3. *A Planners Guide to Specific Plans*, April 1998.
4. California Department of Finance, *California Added more than a quarter million in 2011; Total State Population Nearly 37.7 million*. May 1, 2012. Population Estimate for January 1, 2012.
5. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, Implementation Action 3.6.a, page 3-62, and Section 3.7.2 “Proposed Community Plans,” page 3-68.
6. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, Section 3.7.3 “University Community Plan,” page 3-70.
7. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, Section 3.7.4 “Bellevue Corridor Community Plan,” page 3-71.
8. *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*, Section 3.10.1 “Conceptual Land Use Plans for Proposed Community Plans,” beginning on page 3-86.