



CITY OF MERCED

BCP CITIZENS ADVISORY AD-HOC COMMITTEE CORE ELEMENTS HANDOUT

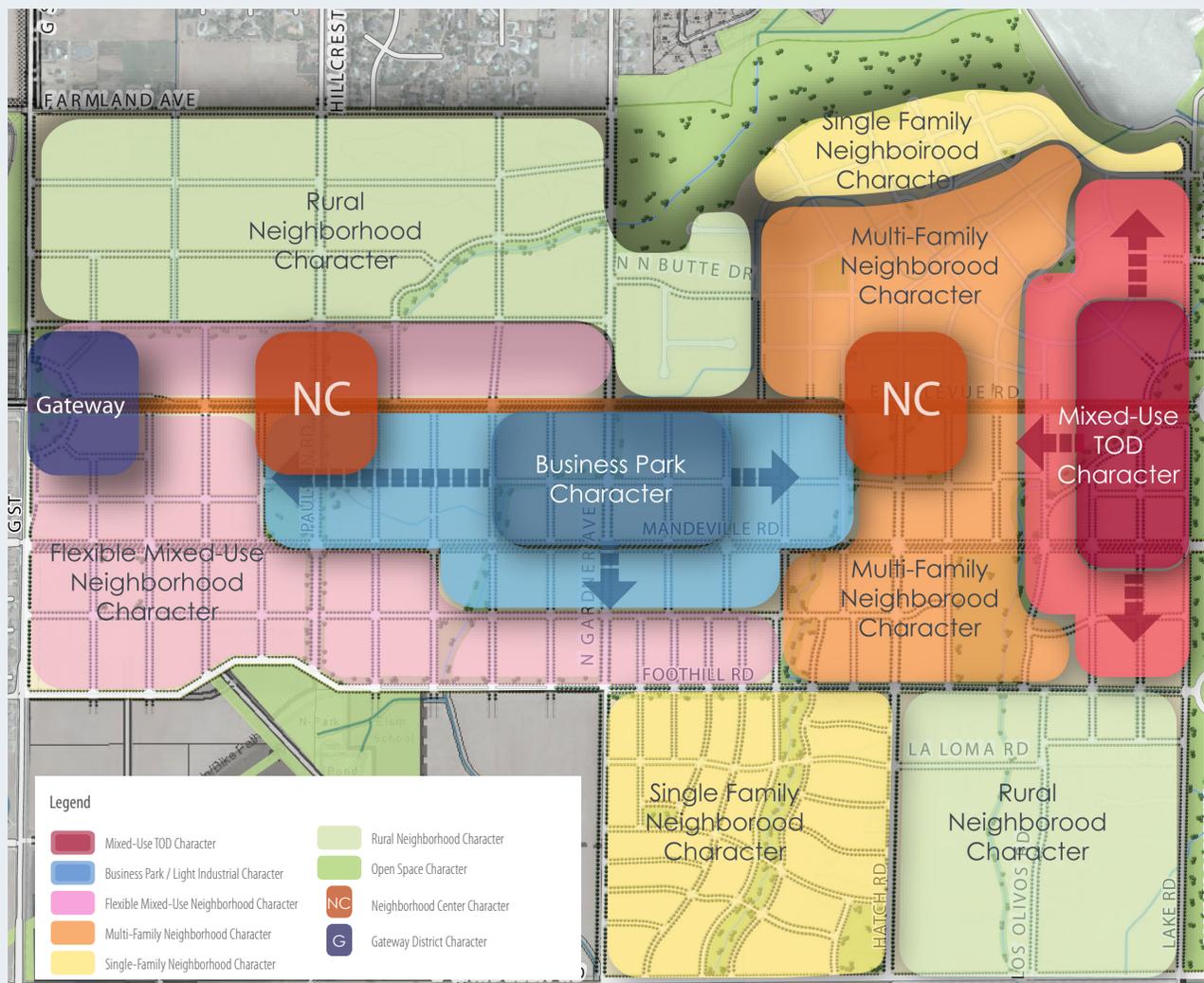
IN PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING ON
AUGUST 15, 2013



1. LAND USE CONCEPT PLAN

This diagram illustrates the recommended general distribution of “place types”, each of which is characterized by a range of land uses and a range of development types, scales and intensities. The Mixed-Use TOD, Business Park and Neighborhood Centers are intended to be variable in size to respond to future market conditions, but generally centers where shown, and could even grow into the Flexible Mixed-Use Neighborhood area. The Multi-Family Neighborhood is intended as flexible and variable in residential density, including single-family types.

Figure 1. Land Use Concept Plan



PLACE TYPES/CHARACTER AREAS:

The quantitative characteristics of these place types are as summarized in Table 1. These short descriptions focus on their physical design and basic land use characteristics.

Examples of Mixed-Use / T.O.D. Centers



MIXED-USE TOD

This is the most intense urban environment anticipated in the BCCP. It is characterized by a mix of uses in generally equal proportions ranging from multi-family residential to community retail to office/R&D, with some elements of entertainment and assembly. Buildings are expected to generally range between 3 and 5 stories in height, generally set close to the street with shallow front yards at residential or office ground floors and shop-fronts set right on the sidewalk for retail and entertainment uses. Parking is shared between uses as much as possible, with a minimal number of dedicated spaces for residential uses, probably one per dwelling in most cases. Curbside parking is provided on all streets, in some cases angled in at retail frontages. Over time the on-street parking and shared parking should be managed and priced to ensure that it doesn't fill up with unneeded cars in this transit-oriented environment in which residents are expected chose to own fewer cars on average than resident of other parts of Merced. Initially parking is expected to be on surface, and over time structured parking may be added, particularly if the transit service cannot keep pace with demand for mobility.

BUSINESS PARK

This place type is similar in character and scale to business and research "parks", characterized by one and two (or three) story larger office buildings, each usually with its own parking lot. This place type is inherently automobile-oriented, as it was developed for places like the Silicon Valley, and Irvine that are designed for auto access almost exclusively. The variation intended for the BCP provides large blocks (very comparable to those in Irvine and the Silicon Valley) but framed by complete streets. Typical site plans place buildings facing streets with front entries, and major parking lots typically beside or behind buildings, and limited visitor parking in front near entries. While "business park" is the primary use, mixed use buildings (retail, office,

Figure 2. Illustration of Business Park



residential) could occur between other place types to the east, south and west. Some amount of commercial and office uses associated with the business park and its workforce population are encouraged to locate within this character area, for example, along Gardner Road between Bellevue Road and Mandeville, or other nearby urban setting.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Neighborhood Centers are the places that can provide certain daily necessities and amenities within comfortable walking or biking distance of many (most) residences. The scale and program of such centers must be calibrated to the location, the intensity of surrounding neighborhoods, the presence of other nearby options for such goods or services, and generally to the market. Such centers are generally located at the edge of a neighborhood (or better, at the junction of multiple neighborhoods) on a street with relatively high traffic volumes to help support the businesses, such as a minor arterial or major collector, and configured for convenient access from that major street as well as safe and convenient access by smaller local streets from the neighborhoods. In addition to providing some very local access to goods and services, such centers also provide the places that one meets friends for coffee or dinner, or opens a service business. Such centers are also ideal locations for important transit stops, to allow transit riders to integrate a range of useful errands into their daily activity patterns.

Figure 3. Illustration of a Neighborhood Center



While many variations are possible, the following three examples may be helpful:

Major Neighborhood Center (Not described in Table 1)

Depending on market analysis at the time of development the Community Center targeted from Bellevue Road east of Avenue G might function as the neighborhood center for rural residential neighborhoods to the north and east, and for mixed-density neighborhoods to the south of Bellevue. Alternatively, a small “neighborhood shopping center” with a small supermarket, perhaps a drug store, and local serving shops might be sited along Bellevue or Cardella to serve the neighborhoods of northeast Merced. These larger centers would

Examples of Neighborhood Centers



include significant parking lots and have a more auto-oriented character than the other Neighborhood Center types, below.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center

The intersection of Mandeville and Gardener is an ideal location for a mixed-use neighborhood center. This type of center has shops and service businesses that are oriented to a major multi-modal street, such that customers arrive on foot, by bike and by transit, in addition of course to by car. Retail shops, restaurants and service businesses in such centers are generally below 5,000 s.f. in size, although with careful design – and the market supporting – might include a small supermarket up to 20,000 s.f. in size. We envision such a center as being no more than about a block long, transitioning then to multi-residential buildings and then to single family homes over the course of another block or two. Some of the buildings in such centers are likely to be one-story retail buildings, but multi-story buildings with offices or residences above are also allowed and encouraged. Shared parking arrangements are also encouraged – which are also provided in the larger neighborhood centers described above.

Figure 4. Illustration of Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center at Mandeville and Gardner



Rural/Small Neighborhood Center

In some of the lower density rural residential neighborhoods along Lake or north of Bellevue, neighborhood centers are still possible (optional) and can be valued meeting places. They are in scale and in character with their surroundings, and in this context would likely take the form of a single building, like a country store or roadside restaurant at a crossroads. Outdoor dining areas, hitching posts, gravel parking lots, big shade trees, and other rural design elements can make a small commercial business a very welcome neighbor and unique amenity.

MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD

Adjoining the “Mixed Use T.O.D.” area, and locating in selected areas throughout the “Flexible Mixed Use Neighborhood” area, are planned neighborhoods that are predominantly residential in use and that include multi-family housing at a range of densities mixed with smaller amounts of

single family housing. Commercial uses are generally limited to a single or pair of buildings scaled to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and pass-by customers on adjacent arterial or collector streets, and do not include neighborhood or community shopping centers. This mixing is expected to occur from street-to-street and block to block, with buildings that face one another across a street within a block being similar in scale and character, but potentially back to back across an alley with housing of a quite different scale and character. This traditional pattern for mixing various uses and densities allows, for instance, apartment buildings and neighborhood-serving shops to face a key intersection (for example, Mandeville and Gardner) while just a block away or behind those buildings across the alley can be houses and duplexes. It will be critically important in implementing such patterns that each neighborhood area (quarter section) be master planned at one time, rather than allowing an apartment builder to build “an apartment project” in one quadrant, a “patio-home builder” to fill up another quadrant with that product, and then fill the rest with houses. As evidenced by a great deal of local, regional and national experience in recent decades, that invariably generates places that are not walkable or transit-ready.

Figure 5. Illustration of Multi-Family Residential



RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND SINGLE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS:

A great deal of the BCP area is expected to be made up of low-density residences, which typically means single-family homes with or without accessory dwellings and duplexes. Triplexes and four-plexes, designed at scales and appearances of single-family homes can be located along collector roads or along the single-loaded roads delineated in the plan. Pedestrian-oriented, walkable blocks can form a seamless part of a transit-ready community. Neighborhood streets of the type illustrated here can connect directly to the streets of any of the other place types, allowing residents to live in a quiet residential environment that is a convenient and safe 2 or 5 or 10 minute walk or bike ride from a bus stop, a shop, a job, a park, or a school. Some blocks would not have alleys, and in such cases driveways would connect to the street, in which case the lots should be wide enough- and the drives should be narrow enough - that the front yard, the sidewalk and the parkway strip are not overwhelmed by pavement and cars. Homes that

Examples of Multi-Family Residential Housing



Example of Single-Family Neighborhood



front arterial streets should be equipped with alleys. A small amount of retail shops that serve the needs of the local neighborhood should be encouraged to locate within or near these neighborhoods, provided they are designed at a compatible scale and with residential flavor heights, setbacks, building materials and operation.

Figure 6. Illustration of Single-Family Residential



FLEX-MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD:

Because the BCCP is expected to be developed over the course of many decades, it is not reasonable to expect that the ultimate mix of uses within each area can be predicted at this time. Accordingly this designation will allow neighborhood planning areas (typically quarter mile square areas) to be developed as any one of the other Place Types above. The BCP will develop procedures for assigning one or a combination of the place types of those designations to each neighborhood planning area when development is timely, providing for appropriate transitions between each place type.

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Table 1 BCP Character Area Descriptions & Regulatory Framework

	TOD Center	Business Park	Neighborhood Centers	
			Mixed-Use	Rural/Small
	Regional node with a walkable design and high density, high quality development within a 10-minute walk of a transit station. A wide mixture of uses in close proximity, including residential, office, services, retail, and civic. The transit station should be a prominent feature and the pedestrian is the top priority. Designed to support feeder transit systems and easy use of other non-auto modes of transit. Reduced and/or managed parking programs.	R&D/business park districts would be research and employment centers that have strong ties to UCM and attract workers from throughout the region. Districts are areas that because of their size or function need to be regulated differently than other centers. These districts are typically located along or near major corridors.	Centers are located to serve adjacent neighborhoods and districts and are typically located along a Corridor. One of three types of Centers is applied to a location along a Corridor or along the edges of a District or Neighborhood. Streets and streetscapes are the most urban of all in the BCCP. Three types of centers provide for the expected range of land use activity.	
			Contains retail and service businesses and services aimed at the greater Bellevue area and City.	Contains retail and services to server nearby neighborhoods or businesses.
Physical Description				
Residential Density	35 - 50 du/ac	N/A	20 - 35 du/ac	20 du/ac
Non-residential Intensity	0.40 - 0.75 FAR	0.35 - 0.75 FAR	0.25 - .40 FAR	0.25 FAR
Height	3 - 5 stories	1 - 3 stories	1 - 4 stories	1 - 3 stories
Typical Block Size (Perimeter)	400 ft x 325 ft (1,600 ft)	400 ft x 600 ft (2000 ft)	1,600 - 2,400 sf perimeter	
Other Features	Streetscapes mostly with tree wells but parkway strips in residential areas allowed. Pedestrian amenities, such as wide sidewalks, small parks, and plazas, incorporated.	Streetscapes would be freelined streets with onstreet parking.	Streetscape mostly with tree wells but parkway strips in residential areas allowed. Pedestrian amenities, such as wide sidewalks, small parks, and plazas, incorporated.	
Primary Uses (Supplemental Retail and Services could be allowed where appropriate)				
Residential	✓			
Office	✓	✓	✓	✓
Retail	✓		✓	✓
Restaurants/coffee shops	✓		✓	✓
Services – personal and business	✓		✓	✓
Hotel/meeting facilities	✓			
Theater/entertainment	✓			
Light industrial		✓		
TPP Compatible?	Potential	Potential	Potential	Potential

Neighborhoods			Flex Neighborhood
Multi-Family	Single-Family	Rural	
<p>Neighborhoods are located between corridors and accommodate a wide range of housing choices with the most intense housing nearer corridors, centers, and Districts. Depending upon location, neighborhoods are composed of at least two and up to three neighborhood residential environments.</p>			<p>This designation will allow neighborhood planning areas (quarter mile square areas, typically) to be developed as any one of the other place types above. The development code will provide procedures for assigning one or a combination of these designations to each neighborhood planning area when development is timely, providing for appropriate transitions between each place type.</p>
<p>Consists of the most intense housing in the neighborhood and typically up to 25% of the total housing area depending upon location.</p>	<p>Consists primarily of single-family housing and typically up to 75% of the total housing area depending upon location.</p>	<p>Consists primarily of single-family housing on large lots and typically up to 25% of the total housing area depending upon location.</p>	
20 du/ac	10 du/ac	??	Varies
0.25 FAR	??	??	Varies
1 - 4 stories	1 - 2 stories	1 - 2 stories	Varies
1,600 - 2,400 sf perimeter		TBD	Varies
<p>Streets and streetscapes respond to and support the three general environments. Public amenities (neighborhood parks, bike trails, etc.) developed as part of the overall master plan.</p>			Varies
✓	✓	✓	Varies
			Varies
Potential			Potential

2. MOBILITY

A goal of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan is to create a comprehensive system of “complete streets” which address all modes of transportation. Implementation Action 2.1.d states, “The Bellevue Corridor and other important corridors should be designed using the “Complete Streets” concept, which emphasizes use of all forms of transportation on streets, including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit.” In describing the future development of the Bellevue Corridor, the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan states, “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 multimodal 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.” (pages 3-71 to 3-73). Figure 1 depicts Complete Streets components that are planned to be utilized in the Bellevue Community Plan:

Figure 7. Complete Street Components in the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan

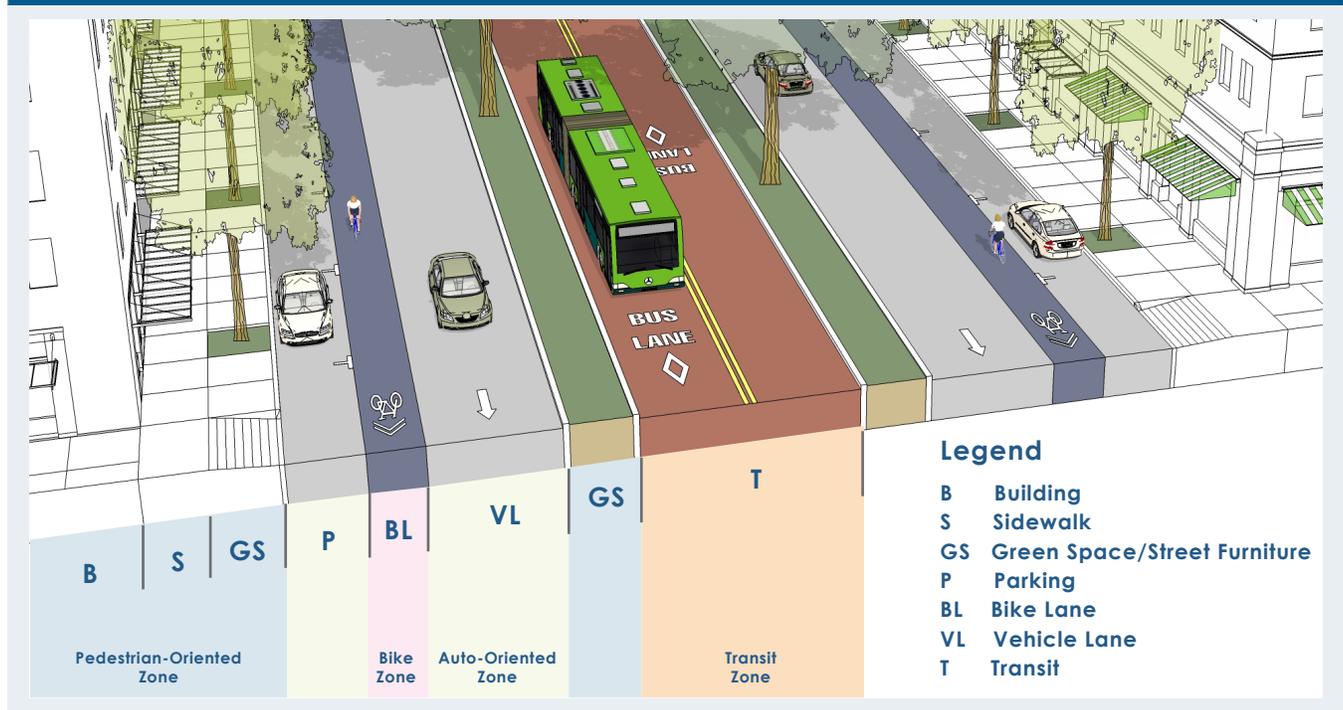
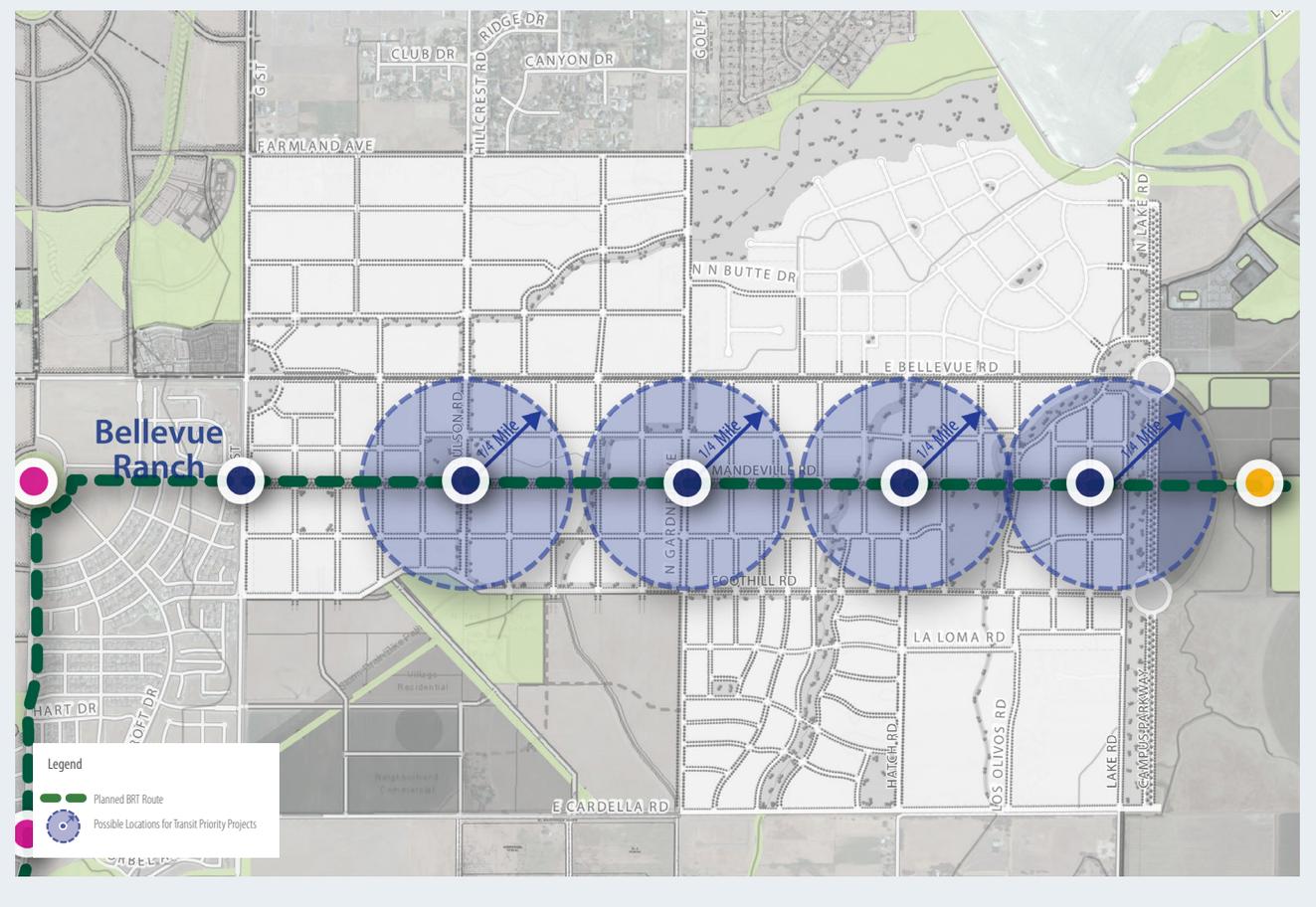


Figure 8. Proposed Transit Priority Project Sites



Example of a Comprehensive Street Design

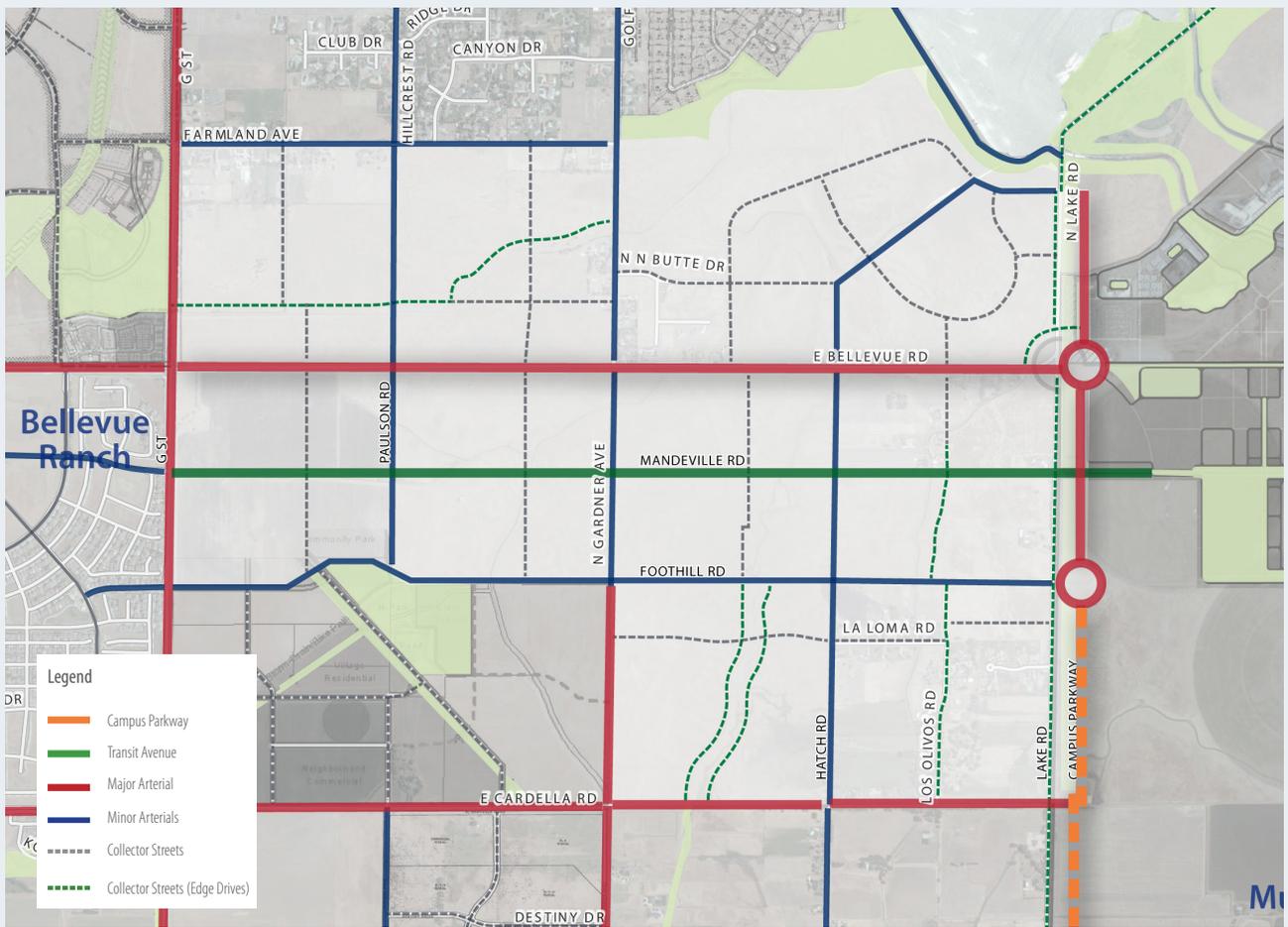


The BCP establishes BRT stops with potential Transit Priority Project sites along a centralized transit-oriented avenue called Mandeville. The recommended local street layout supports functional transit nodes that can be accessed within a five minute walking radius, and is an essential component of a successful transit system. The illustration of local streets in Figure 3 is an expression of an idea to guide future development; it is not binding. The idea of the illustration is to emphasize that a high degree of interconnected roads are needed to link a variety of places so people can walk to transit from work/home/shops/services or vice versa, without being discouraged by having to hike a great distance around something else. It represents a circulation concept and does not dictate specific form on any particular property, presenting one local road option of many. The actual location of local streets is very flexible as long as it maintains this type of connectivity. Natural features and certain land uses will influence the trajectories of local roads, and the illustrative plan shows how variations may include curving roads along open space corridors or hillsides, and removal of local roads in research and development, entertainment or community commercial areas; the illustrative plan does not lock in block size. In some cases, dead-end roads may be included in future development plans. By laying this comprehensive design framework early planning stages, potential future retrofitting costs can be significantly reduced.

3. CIRCULATION & STREET CLASSIFICATION MAPS

This following diagrams show the recommended hierarchy of street types, as well as the location and nature of other nearby roads.. All alignments are conceptual and any might eventually be varied or curved or otherwise realigned. The important points are a) to generate an interconnected network that – except for the arterials - favor pedestrians, bikes and transit over high volumes of high-speed automobile traffic, and b) to create walkable blocks, with pedestrian block perimeters in the 1,600 foot range, or smaller with blocks up to 2400 feet to accomodate large buildings in the Business Park areas.

Figure 9. BCCP Street Classifications Context



STREET CLASSIFICATION DESCRIPTIONS

CAMPUS PARKWAY – ORANGE LINE (SOLID AND THICK DASHED)

North of Yosemite Avenue, several conceptual alignments have been depicted in various plans, but have not been officially adopted by Merced County. Within the UCM Long-range Development Plan, this road is planned to be sited just east of and parallel to Lake Road. The BCP recognizes the extension of the Campus Parkway to the east of Lake Road with a dashed orange line, but does not delineate the actual future location of this roadway. The BCP also recognizes that the nature of the Campus Parkway within the University Community (north of Yosemite Avenue) is not an expressway, but rather a limited-access arterial road.

TRANSIT AVENUE (MANDEVILLE AVE.) - HEAVY GREEN LINE

This is the recommended Bus Rapid Transit avenue and includes:

1. A dedicated bus guideway down the median,
2. One lane of moving traffic each side, Class 2 bike lanes, and on-street parallel parking.
3. At signalized or stop intersections, the parking lane would be removed to allow the creation of left turn lanes to improve intersection performance. This would likely cause the through lanes to meander somewhat, which would also tend to slow traffic. This is a relatively common configuration in streets with BRT, streetcars, or light rail.
4. The sidewalk and street tree components of this basic street section are variable, with continuous parkway strips, 5 to 6 foot sidewalks in residential areas, and wider sidewalks with tree wells and street furniture in mixed-use, research and development, and commercial centers.

Full transit-service will be phased in over several years. Until BRT level services are provided, a wide, landscaped median will reserve a site or the BRT guideway.

Figure 10. Mandeville Transit Avenue - T.O.D. Center Cross Section



MAJOR ARTERIAL STREETS (BELLEVUE RD., G ST., CARDELLA RD., AND GARDNER AVE.) - RED LINES

Within the BCP, arterial streets fall into two categories. Class S (Standard) Arterials are those that are designed consistent with the City's adopted General Plan and Official Design Standards. These roads include G Street and Cardella Road. Class V (Variable) Arterials incorporate variations in street design that are needed to be consistent with and to support design objectives specific to the BCP, namely to create a gateway image and to create a transit supportive setting. Variable Arterials include Bellevue road and Gardner Road.

Existing Conditions Along Bellevue Road



Arterials incorporate variations in street design that are needed to be consistent with and to support design objectives specific to the BCP, namely to create a gateway image and to create a transit supportive setting.

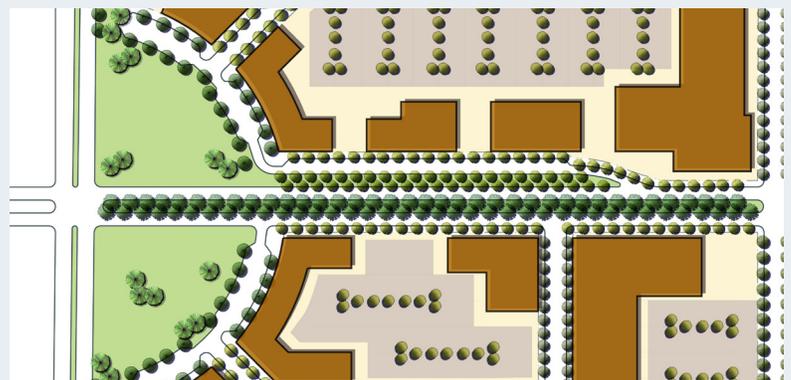
BELLEVUE RD.

The Bellevue Road standard will have adequate right-of-way for a landscaped median, up to three travel lanes each direction, a bikeway (could be a bike lane or cycle-track), a parkway, and sidewalk. Sound walls would not be allowed. Development of adjacent properties would generally follow any of the following options: 1) in areas where additional access is not needed, the buildings could be sited near the sidewalk provided housing units adequately buffer or shield noise impacts; 2) where additional side-road access is planned, required or desired by the owner, the buildings will be set adjacent to a one-way road that enters and exists Bellevue Road. Angled back-in parking is encouraged.

Figure 11. Bellevue Rd. with Side Roads



Figure 12. Bellevue Rd. without Side Roads - Plan View



GARDNER RD.

North of Cardella Road, Gardner is envisioned to transition to a three-lane boulevard with limited driveway access to balance the need to provide for high-traffic capacity with neighborhood compatibility. Buildings would be oriented to the street. In the Single-Family Character Area, residences would have large front yards; in high-intensity areas between Foothill Drive and Bellevue Road, the buildings would come to the street and the parkway and yards would be replaced by a wider sidewalk, tree-wells and a furniture zone.

Gardner is envisioned to transition to a three-lane boulevard with limited driveway access to enable steady flows of relatively low speed traffic, balancing the need for traffic throughput with the need for safer pedestrian and bicycle routes and a quieter neighborhood environment.

Figure 13. Gardner Road in Single-Family Area Cross Section



COLLECTOR STREETS (FOOTHILL, HILLCREST, PAULSON, HATCH, FARMLAND, AND OTHERS SPACED AT ¼ MILE INTERVALS BETWEEN ARTERIALS)- BLUE LINE

These are streets with one travel lane in each direction, Class 2 bike lanes, curbside parallel parking, parkway strips with street trees and sidewalks. Sound walls are discouraged and site designs with buildings oriented to the street are encouraged, however. BCP Collector Streets have a unique cross section with wider parkway strips in residential areas. In high-intensity Character Areas (Mixed Use TOD, Business Park, Multifamily Neighborhood and Flex-Mixed Use), the travel lanes will be wider, and the parkway strip

Figure 14. Typical Collector Street Cross Section - Neighborhood General



and sidewalk would be replaced with a wide sidewalk (14 to 18 feet) with tree wells and street furniture. Intersections would typically be provided with crosswalks and potentially bulb-outs for pedestrian convenience and safety. In most cases the vehicular speeds on these streets will be low enough that marked bicycle lanes are not needed, but in some cases Class II bike lanes may be provided between the travel lanes and parking lanes.

Existing Conditions Along Lake Road



EDGE DRIVES - LIGHT GREEN DASHED LINES

These are single-loaded streets (can be local or collector streets) that run along the edges of significant community open spaces, so that motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists experience those green spaces as part of their daily movement through the neighborhoods. These are located primarily along creek greenways, parks, and along the Lake Road greenway near the UCM Campus. These drives have a curb and parkway strip and sidewalk on the “residential side” (or wide sidewalk with tree-wells and street furniture at commercial or mixed-use frontages), and no curb on the greenway side to promote natural infiltration of storm water and emphasize openness to the adjoining green space. Where parking on the green space side is wanted (often to provide parking for those coming to play or jog in the park) a parking lane of pervious pavement can provide a soft edge. A Class 1 bikeway, jogging path or equestrian trail is often provided parallel to the street within the green space.

Lake Road - Local Road

Lake Road is a local road that runs alongside the Rural Residential and Mixed Use TOD Character Areas. In both, the road is a two-lane road with open space on the east side. The design elements on the west side of the road reflect the nature of the character areas. In the Rural Residential Area, the road retains its rural character with no sidewalks and a drainage swale. In the Mixed-Use TOD Area, a more urbanized flavor is created with on-street parking, street trees, and a sidewalk with adjacent buildings. The transitions between these west frontages would occur around Foothill.

Figure 15. Lake Road - Natural Rural Edge Drive Cross Section



Figure 16. Lake Road - Campus Parkway Edge Drive with Mixed-Use Cross Section



OTHER LOCAL STREETS – NOT SHOWN ON OFFICIAL CIRCULATION MAP

These streets are necessary to form the walkable blocks that are the foundation of any transit-oriented (or transit-ready/transit-servable) development. These streets are highly interconnected to disperse traffic and to provide access to a variety of destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The street cross-section is consistent with adopted City design standards.

While continuity and interconnectedness are essential features to the overall local street network in the BCP, there may be situations where it is desirable to provide variety in public spaces and flexibility in land use designs that result in dead-end local streets. For example, in mixed-use, research and development and commercial centers, local streets may be terminated in a close, or a rosewalk (pedestrian-only street/green with buildings facing it). In Single-Family and Rural Residential Characters Areas, these may also be designed as a cul-de-sac. All configurations should allow pedestrians and bicycles to pass freely so that the transit-orientation of the plan is not undermined.

All configurations should allow pedestrians and bicycles to pass freely so that the transit-orientation of the plan is not undermined.

Figure 17. Typical Local Street Cross Section - Mixed-Use



4. STREET CLASSIFICATION TABLE

Table 1 describes the proposed hierarchy of streets in the BCP including bicycle and pedestrian improvements to promote complete streets. A General Plan amendment may be needed to implement the BCP circulation system.

Table 2 Proposed Street Classifications within the Bellevue Community Plan

Streets in the BCP	Proposed Street Classification	BCCP Description	Right-of-Way	# of Lanes	Driveway Access Restrictions	Street Intersection Spacing	Parking	Bicycle Facilities	Pedestrian Frontage
Bellevue Rd.	Option 1: Boulevard	Major Arterials are important cross-town traffic carriers which bypass smaller streets. These streets provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance with some degree of access control.	110' - 140'	4 lanes with median / left-turn pockets	Full	1/4 mile for signalized intersections	No	Class 1 or 2	Sidewalk with tree wells and street furniture
	Option 2: Parkway with Secondary Arterial Streets	Parkways with Secondary Arterials allow faster moving traffic to remain in expressway-type lanes, uninterrupted by local traffic utilizing side roads. Secondary arterials permit on street parking and street facing uses, not normally allowed along expressways.	150' - 200' (dependent on frontage roads on 1 or both sides)	4 lanes (expressway) two-way frontage roads	Full (driveway access from frontage roads)	1/4 mile for signalized intersections	No (parallel or diagonal permitted on frontage roads)	Class 1 or 2	Sidewalk with tree wells and street furniture
Mandeville Ave. (New)	Transit Avenue	Transit Avenues are corridor streets designed with the future flexibility for prospective public transit options. Transit ways often have larger right-of-ways than most street levels.	120' - 130'	2 lanes	No (rear alley access recommended)	As needed	Permitted	Class 2	Sidewalk with tree wells and street furniture
Cardella Rd., G St., Gardner Ave.	Major Arterials	Arterials are anticipated to accommodate more, but shorter, vehicle trips which distribute vehicles to Expressways, Major Arterials, or Collector Streets.	80' - 100'	4 lanes with median / left-turn pockets	Full	1/8 mile to 1/2 mile (see General Plan)	No	TBD	TBD
Foothill Rd., Hillcrest Rd., Golf Rd., Hatch Rd., Gardner Ave.	Arterials (Collectors)	Collector streets provide the primary access to residential areas, businesses, farms, and other local areas.	60' - 80'	2 lanes with median / left-turn pockets	No (rear alley access recommended)	As needed	Permitted	Shared Travel Lanes	Sidewalks with tree wells

5. OPEN SPACE CONCEPT PLAN

The BCP Open-Space Plan is a composite of various open-space elements including a network of wildlife habitat areas; irrigation laterals and natural drainages; and passive and active recreational sites which may include urban squares, neighborhood and community parks, linear greenways and natural open-space, bikeway and equestrian trails, and similar elements. The Open Space Plan seeks to create a greenbelt/park system that threads through all land use Character Areas of the BCP, connecting to surrounding communities, to enable active and healthy lifestyles for future residents of the BCP and the City of Merced. Such an open space network also reduces motorized travel demand and supports efficient and effective transit service.

Additionally, such a network addresses General Plan objectives related to urban forest expansion, sustainable stormwater management strategies, and Mixed-Use, Mixed-Density development. However, the BCP Open-space Plan is meant to be a guiding and dynamic tool. While it establishes a defined network of City park land and greenbelts linking important designations, the Plan also recognizes that new information discovered through future permitting processes at the local, state and federal levels could shift alignments and increase or decrease the amounts of park and natural open-space lands. The intent of the illustrative BCP Open-space Plan is to establish a framework of community open space needs to be developed in pieces through development, but which can also adjust to future information and decisions.

Figure 18. Open Space Concept Plan

