

Technical Appendix F, “Public Participation”

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F.1 Public Outreach Strategy

The City of Merced designed a public outreach strategy to successfully capture agency and community input. Agency participation allows impacted organizations to provide expertise and insight into the planning process. Integrating citizen participation during the process resulted in increased public awareness and a reflection of community issues, concerns, and new perspectives on future development opportunities.

Public Outreach Objectives:

- Identify the *participants* in the planning process, who include: the Planning Leadership Team, the Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee, and the general public, including stakeholders;
- Satisfy the City’s Community Plan Guidelines to for “public outreach” in development of the plan;
- Utilize a variety of *public outreach methods*, for example, a questionnaire to gauge the public’s support for consultant ideas and solutions about future development in the plan area;
- Provide multiple *public outreach events* to collect meaningful input into each aspect of the plan; and,
- Attempt to reach a diverse mix of the public and as many citizens in the planning area as possible.

F.2 Plan Development Process

This section provides an account of how the Bellevue Community Plan (BCP) was developed, and serves as a permanent record that explains how decisions were reached, and demonstrates that it was developed with stakeholder input in a methodical and reasonable way.

F.2.1 Project Initiation

The City was awarded \$251,000 from the Strategic Growth Council of the State of California to prepare the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan over the course of 2 years, beginning November 2011. The planning effort was led by the City’s Planning Division. In February 2012, the professional consulting firm Lisa Wise Consulting was hired to assist City staff in developing the Plan. In July 2012, the City Council appointed the project ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), consisting of 21 members.

F.2.2 Planning Process

The plan was developed in five general phases. The first phase, **Plan Organization**, consists of mobilizing the community and getting started with the Planning Process. The second phase, **Project Studies & Findings Report** describes the approach and content of various studies to be undertaken by the Planning Leadership Team. The third phase, **Public Workshops**, is an opportunity for the public to meet with the Planning Leadership Team to learn about and offer public input concerning the studies and plan options. The fourth 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 following “Phase” and “Step” descriptions provide a detailed narrative of the overall project progression. Supplementing this Planning Process Narrative are: 1) committee meeting minutes included at the end of this Appendix; and 2) Table F-1 listing “Public Outreach Events.”

Phase 1: Plan Organization

1. Project Kick-off Meeting: On March 13, 2012, City Staff and the Consultant Team held a kick-off meeting to: 1) review and adjust the Scope of Work, if needed; 2) review and discuss the Plan preparation process; 3) clarify roles and expectations; 4) establish communication portals for information sharing and future discussions; 5) discuss billing logistics; 6) tour the plan area; and 7) share background information and materials.

2. Begin Process to Assemble the Citizen Advisory Committee: In March 2012, City Staff initiated the formal process to assemble the Citizen Advisory Committee, including the preparation of applications, written committee duties, public noticing and associated City Council actions. At this time, Staff also formed the Project’s Technical Advisory Committee.

3. Project Management Plan: City Staff, its partners MCAG and UCM, and the consultants crafted a project management plan as a tool to facilitate a smooth operation of project-related events and activities.

4. Community Project Orientation & Stakeholders Meetings: On May 2, 2012, City Staff and the Project consultant met with property owners with development interests within the BCP planning area. On May 4, 2012, City Staff hosted a community-based information and orientation open house at the Merced Civic Center about the planning effort and future public workshops. Staff presented the vision for the Plan and provided opportunities for adjustments based on public feedback. Invited project stakeholders included government agencies, community-based organizations, groups and individuals representing commercial interests, and organizations representing other interests such as public health and housing.

5. Outreach to Underrepresented Groups: In June 2012, the Planning Staff offered to meet with underrepresented community groups to present the project and to receive comments to fold into the planning process where appropriate. These underrepresented groups were encouraged to participate in the upcoming workshops and to consider a seat on the project committee.

6. Citizen Advisory Committee Established: On July 16, 2012, the Merced City Council appointed 21 members to the ad-hoc citizen advisory committee for the Bellevue Community Plan.

Phase 2: Project Studies/Findings Report

1. Foundation Report: In August 2012, the Consultant Team prepared the project *Foundation Report* that framed the work to complete, set direction for the background studies and BCP chapters, established the expected outcomes, and bridged the gap between the goals in the 2030 General Plan and the BCP. The document included maps, photos, and other graphics, as needed. Public input from the Community Project Orientation Meeting was incorporated, as appropriate, in the *Foundation Report*.

2. TAC Review/Comment on Foundation Report: In August 2012, the Plan Leadership Team provided the TAC with an opportunity to review and comment on the Foundation Report.

3. Committee Orientation Meetings: In August 2013, at separate meetings, City Staff oriented the TAC and CAC as to their duties, the project planning process, and project issues.

4. Project Committee Meetings: The consultants met with the TAC and CAC on October 4, 2012, discussing project opportunities and challenges, growth projections, and community design concepts.

5. Draft Findings Report: The consultants presented Background Study Reports to the Citizen Advisory Committee on November 1, 2013, and included the following topics: 1) Complete Streets; 2) Urban Villages; 3) Right-of-way / Semi Public Spaces; 4) Transit Priority Projects; and 5) Economic Analysis Memorandum. The completed Findings Report, which compiled all background studies, was completed on January 24, 2013.

Phase 3: Design Workshops

A series public meetings with the CAC engaged the community to comment and affect the final design of key aspects of the community plan. First, on January 31, 2013, the consultant presented the initial draft plan concept at three separate meetings to the TAC, CAC, and the general community. On March 14, 2013, a workshop with the community and the CAC was held to critique the initial plan, and to offer alternative designs. In May and August 2013, the Plan Leadership Team sought formal advisory recommendations from the CAC on key topics that arose during the prior meetings, including: 1) function and design of Bellevue Road and Mandeville Road; 2) location for

the project's Research and Development sites and Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development; 3) open space plan; and 4) location of a retail commercial site.

Phase 4: Draft and Adopt Community Plan

1. Draft Plan Preparation: During the months of September, October and November 2013, the Plan Leadership team assembled the results of the Community Design Workshops into a single complete draft BCP together with appendices. As appropriate, the voice of the community was woven into the plan images, maps, narratives and policies. This work included: 1) coordination with local school districts as to the possible general location of future school sites: 2) traffic assessments based on the proposed land use and circulation components of the plan; and 3) a plan maintenance sections to help track the progress of the plan.

2. CAC & TAC Committee Involvement: In January and February of 2014, led by the Planning Staff, both the TAC and CAC reviewed and commented on the Draft Plan, prior to plan adoption.

3. Formal Reviews by City Committees, Commissions and Council: [Describe].

4. Plan Adoption: [Describe].

5. Plan Distribution/Sharing: [Describe].

F.3 Participants in the Plan Development Process

The City of Merced Bellevue Corridor Community Plan was crafted by the Plan Leadership Team, guided by technical support staff and the project planning consultant and actions of an ad-hoc advisory committee, with input from an engaged community. Public involvement during the plan's development process occurred through partnerships between local multi-jurisdictional planning professionals, stakeholder participation, outreach to underrepresented groups, public workshops and recommendations from the project's ad-hoc advisory committee. The project's general public notice list included 135 community members.

F.3.1 Plan Leadership Team

The Plan Leadership Team (PLT) was assembled by the City's Planning Division early in the process to lead and manage the effort to draft the Bellevue Community Plan. This team consisted of City Planning Staff and was supported by a professional planning consultant, a technical advisory committee and other interested government agencies such as UC Merced Physical Planning Design and Construction, Merced County Planning and Community Development, and the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). A key role of the PLT was to assure that public outreach efforts during the

planning process were designed to capture community input in ways that guided the drafting of the community plan. Other duties of the PLT included:



- to initiate formation of the Citizens Advisory Committee at the selection/appointment by the City Council;
- to manage the project within the contractual framework of the grant;
- to Facilitate the Planning Process including Public Participation; and
- to produce the draft and final plan documents.



F.3.2 Citizens Ad-hoc Advisory Committee

The Community Plan effort invited collaboration among the parties whose interests could be affected by future development near and within the plan study area. By working together to understand the challenges and needs of the larger community, projects stakeholder with different interests sought to identify a common vision for the plan area. On July 16, 2012, the Merced City Council appointed 21 members to this ad-hoc committee. The *Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)* met [REDACTED] times during the planning period. Detailed minutes of committee meetings, located at the end of this Appendix, are retained as a record of their discussions.

The *Citizen Advisory Committee* was responsible for providing essential insight into several facets of the plan, including:

- First-hand knowledge of the planning area and adjacent projects;
- To comment on project background studies;
- To assess draft land use and circulation plan concepts;
- To identify policy topics to supplement the City's General Plan;
- To discuss current planning efforts and potential methods of implementing plan concepts;
- To review chapters of the community plan throughout the planning process; and,
- To provide a final advisory recommendation.





F.3.3 Technical Advisory Committee

The project benefitted from the coordinated efforts of a multi-jurisdictional technical advisory committee (TAC) that met throughout the planning process to 1) review the ideas from the Plan Leadership Team, CAC and general public; and 2) to give guidance on plan policies, maps and images, and general text of the draft plan. The TAC was comprised of representatives from the City of Merced, UC Merced, Merced County, the Merced Irrigation District, local school districts and the Merced County Association of Governments.

F.3.4 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals or groups that could be affected by the Bellevue Community Plan, or who can provide specialized knowledge of the area. Stakeholders include property owners within and adjacent to the BCP plan area, affected government entities, and community advocates. Plan stakeholders had several opportunities to participate in the development of the Plan, including: attending ad-hoc advisory committee meetings, hosting and attending community outreach workshops, commenting on the draft plan, and discussions with Plan Leadership Team members to share their ideas and concerns about the planning area. Development-focused property owners within the BCP met with the Plan Leadership Team early in the process (May 2012) to share their ideas and interests for consideration in drafting the BCP.

Some stakeholders were also members of the project’s ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee, and represented the following entities: Merced Bicycle Coalition, California Women for Agriculture, General Business Interests, UC Merced, Virginia Smith Trust, LWH Farms, LLC (part of the University Community Plan), Economic Development Advisory Committee, and the City of Merced Planning Commission. Many other committee members were property owners and/or residents in the area, some with development interests.

F.3.5 UC Merced ReCCES

City Planning Staff partnered with UC Merced Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarships (ReCCES) to examine and to develop draft plan text and policies regarding the potential for an “Innovation Hub” within the planning area of the Bellevue Community Plan. Through our understanding of successful Innovation Hubs, Merced can take actions to: support entrepreneurs, nurture innovations, incentivize UC spin-off development, and encourage job growth. Through *UC Merced’s Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES)*, undergraduate students, in coordination with UCM Professor S.A. Davis, conducted research about Innovation Hubs, and on November 1, 2012, shared their insights about Merced’s Innovation Hub with community members involved in the development of the BCP.



F.3.6 *General Public*

All members of the public were encouraged to attend the regularly scheduled meetings with the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee. At these meetings, City Staff and the project consultant presented plan-related materials and sought public input prior to action by the Committee.



F.3.7 *Underrepresented Groups*

The City of Merced includes several economically and socially underserved populations including: the NAACP, Hmong Community, Merced Lao Family Community, Hispanic Network, Area Agency on Aging, Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition, Healthy Communities Access Program, Merced County Farm Bureau, Boys and Girls Club, Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth, Merced Bike Coalition, the Community Partnership Alliance, various neighborhood groups, and several faith-based organization such as the Salvation Army. In Fall 2012, through direct mail service, phone calls and emails, City Planning Staff introduced the BCP project, offered to meet with, and invited participation from underrepresented groups in the community. Interest in the project from these groups was extremely low. The City was successful in working with local student through the UC Merced Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarships (ReCCES) as described above, however.

F.3.8 Local Tribal Governments

Consistent with the State of California, Tribal Consultation Guidelines, the following Native American Tribes were notified of the project and were invited to comment: the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the North Valley Yokuts Tribe, and the Dumna Wo-Wah Tribal Government.

F.4 Public Outreach Events and Activities

A key objective in the public outreach strategy was to give the public many opportunities to participate during the drafting of the plan. This objective was achieved and the events and activities utilized are detailed here. The full listing of public outreach events are summarized in Table F-1.

F.4.1 Opportunities for Public Comments

Public Survey and Comment Forms

At all Public Community Meetings and at the March 14, 2013 Citizen Advisory Committee meeting, the general public was invited to offer comments and ideas through survey efforts. These comments and responses are provided at the end of this Appendix.

Informational Webpage

An informational website was created to inform the community about plan development and to solicit information pertinent to its development. The webpage address www.cityofmerced.org was publicized in all press releases, mailings, questionnaires, and public meetings. Information on the Citizens Advisory Committee, public meetings, key elements of the plan, and drafts of the BCP were made available throughout this process.

Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings

All CAC meetings were advertised as public meetings on the City website, emails, and official public notice location at City Hall. Meetings were held in the Sam Pipes Room, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, generally from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM.

August 23, 2012: Orientation meeting for the Citizen Advisory Committee.

October 4, 2012: Presentation about corridors, street design, transit-oriented-development, city blocks and growth projections.

November 1, 2012: The Citizen Advisory Committee meeting had several presentation and discussion topic: Innovation Hub, Project Overview, Economic Study, Mobility Study, and Community Form. These subjects were assessed, presented and discussed to lay the foundation to craft alternative land use and circulation plans.

January 31, 2013: The Citizen Advisory Committee met to discuss draft alternative plans at an open public meeting at the Sam Pipes Room, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM. That evening, a community outreach event with a similar presentation was held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, at UC Merced, in the *California Room* on Scholars Lane. Public Comments were received.

March 14, 2013: The Citizen Advisory Committee met to continue their discussion about the draft land use plan at an open public meeting at the Merced City Civic Center from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Planning Staff presented background information about the Draft Community Plan Chapters, Urban Villages, and a recap of the consultant's presentation regarding the initial draft land use plan. The Committee then met in a workshop format in small groups to provide feedback to the consultant via a short questionnaire and by sketching alternative land use concepts for further consideration, review and action by the Committee at a subsequent project meeting. The Committee crafted five land use concepts.

May 2, 2013: The Citizens Advisory Committee reviewed land use and circulation plan-related issues and provided advisory recommendations on various topics. This exercise was partly based on the results of the survey from the March 14, 2013 CAC meeting. The advisory recommendations were made on the following topics: 1) the function of Bellevue Road and Mandeville Avenue; 2) the characteristics of the local street network; 3) the location of the future business park and the mixed-use cores within the plan area; 4) the open space plan; and 5) placement of retail commercial at the intersection of "G" Street and Bellevue Road. Prior to making these advisory recommendations, the project consultant presented background information.

August 15, 2013: Core elements of the draft community plan (see actions from March 14, 2013), along with new potential draft land use and circulation plan features (to provide greater definition to these elements) were presented to the Citizen Advisory Committee. Members provided comments on a variety of topics for consideration by Staff and the project consultant. Additionally, the consultant introduced new concepts and specific ideas concerning the design of a future "gateway entrance" to the BCP plan area. The Citizen's Advisory Committee also completed its review of a conceptual

community shopping site at G Street and Bellevue Road. The meeting concluded with a discussion of draft policies for the Bellevue Community Plan.

General Public Community Meetings

In addition to the public CAC meetings, several public community meetings occurred throughout the development of the BCP to identify common concerns and ideas regarding community planning and to discuss specific goals and actions of the BCP.

May 4, 2012: *Public Orientation Meeting*, held at the City of Merced Civic Center. This was a broad outreach effort to property owners within and adjacent to the project site, as well as to a variety of community groups, and public and private individuals interested or actively involved in local planning-related projects. More than 450 invitations, in addition to general advertising, were distributed. The meeting included two key presentations: 1) presentation by Richard Cummings, Principal Planner from UC Merced, Physical Planning, Design and Construction, described the UC Merced Campus Master Plan; and 2) presentation by Bill King, Principal Planner from the City of Merced, described the anticipated planning effort of the Bellevue Community Plan; its guiding principles; and the project's next steps - research of plan options. The public was provided an opportunity to offer written and verbal comments.

January 31, 2013: The Citizen Advisory Committee met to discuss draft alternative plans at an open public meeting at the Sam Pipes Room, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM. That evening, a community outreach event with a similar presentation was held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, at UC Merced, in the California Room on Scholars Lane. Public Comments were received.

F.4.2 Opportunities for Review by Policy Makers

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At public meetings on April 24, 2012, and October 22, 2013, the City's Bicycle Advisory Commission (BAC) reviewed and commented on the bicycle-related draft planning effort in the planning area of the Bellevue Community Plan. Individual comments from BAC members were offered and considered, and are reflective in the BCP Bicycle Transportation Plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PLANNING COMMISSION

On June 20, 2012, Planning Staff presented an overview of the Bellevue Community Plan project to the Planning Commission (PC), and also requested the PC to select a representative to sit as a member of the Bellevue Community Plan Ad-hoc Advisory Committee. May Ward was appointed. On December 5, 2012, City Planning Staff presented an update of the project to the PC. At this meeting, Carole McCoy was appointed as project's PC representative to replace Planning Commissioner Mary Ward, who had resigned from the position.

CITY COUNCIL

On May 17, 2010, the City Council authorized City Staff to submit a grant application to draft a community plan for the study area. On February 6, 2012, the City Council approved a contract with Lisa Wise Consulting to assist Planning Staff with the drafting of the Bellevue Community Plan. On July 16, 2012, the City Council appointed 21 community members to the project's ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee.

F.4.3 Table F-1: Public Outreach Events

Table 1.2: Bellevue Corridor Community Plan - Public Outreach Table			
Date	Event Title	Plan Participants	Outreach Methods
10-20-11	MCAG Staff	PLT	NA
3-13-12	Project Kick-off Meeting	City, Con, Part	NA
5-2-12	Community Stakeholder Meeting	CS	DMN, EN
5-4-12	Community Orientation Meeting	PLT, CS, GP	W, DMN, PR, EN
6-1-12	Government Review Committee /Greater Chamber of Commerce	PLT	Not a City meeting
6-20-12	Planning Commission	PLT, GP	PHN, PN
6-26-12	Economic Development Advisory Committee	PLT	PN
7-16-12	City Council – Appointed Citizen Committee	PLT, GP	PHN, PN
8-22-12	TAC Orientation Meeting	TAC, PLT, CS, GP	W, PN
8-23-12	CAC Orientation Meeting	CAC, PLT, CS, GP	W, PN, PR, EN
9-18-12	Merced City School District	PLT	Not a City meeting
10-4-2012	TAC and CAC / Community Meetings	CAC, PLT, CS, GP	W, PN, PR, EN
11-1-2012	CAC/Community Meeting - UC Merced ReCCES Presentation – Planning for an Innovation Hub & Findings Report	CAC, PLT, CS, GP	W, PN, PR, EN
12-14-2012	Partner Meeting with UCM Staff	UCM Staff/City	NA
1-8-2013	Partner Meeting with UCM/UCP Owners	PLT	NA
1-23-2013	Partner Meeting Merced County	PLT	NA
1-31-2013	TAC and CAC Meetings	PLT, CS, GP	W, PN, PR, EN
1-31-2013	Community Project Update Meeting at UC Merced	CAC, PLT, CS, GP, TAC	W, DMN, PR, EN
3-14-13	CAC Meeting/ Workshop	PLT, CS, GP	W, PN, EN
5-2-13	CAC Meeting	PLT, CS, GP	W, EN, PN
5-8-13	School Site Meeting	PLT	Not a City meeting
7-30-13	TAC Meeting; Review Draft Core Elements	PLT	NA
8-15-13	TAC and CAC Meetings	PLT, CS, GP	W, EN, PN
9-26-13	TAC Review of Draft Policies	PLT	EN

Community Participation Table Key

<u>Code</u>	<u>Outreach Method Description</u>
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DMN	Direct Mailed Notices
PHN	Published Hearing Notices
W	Website
EN	Email Notifications
PN	Posted Agendas at City Hall
PR	Press Releases

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

F.5 Public Comments/Survey Results

F.6 Minutes of the Ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings

- August 23, 2012 CAC Meeting Minutes
- October 4, 2012 CAC Meeting Minutes
- November 1, 2012 CAC Meeting Minutes
- January 31, 2013 CAC Meeting Minutes
- March 14, 2013 CAC Meeting Minutes
- May 2, 2013 CAC Meeting Minutes
- August 15, 2014 CAC Meeting Minutes

