City Planning

Two of a city’s fundamental purposes are to provide services and plan for the future needs of a community. Forward planning can help prepare for and identify where future growth (including housing and jobs) might occur, and what types of City services may be needed or required.

Considering Annexation

One of the future-planning activities currently underway by the City of Merced is to consider possible annexation (incorporation) of all or a portion of an area that is currently within the County. The area is generally located north of the City near UC Merced and encompasses approximately 7,670 acres. The area is partially rural and partially developed, mostly with homes.

Feasibility Study

The City has contracted with a land use planning firm (EMC Planning Group Inc.) to prepare a study about the northern area called the “North Merced Annexation Feasibility Study”. The main purpose of the Feasibility Study is to provide recommendations to the City for when and how it considers future annexations in this area over time for potential future development. A map of the Study area is attached to this handout.

The Study will identify:

- Potential constraints to development related to natural resources such as farmland, biological resources and flooding hazards that may exist;
- Types of infrastructure and other City services that may be needed or required (such as sewer collection/treatment services and utility and road improvements), and options as to how infrastructure might be provided;
- Future opportunities for development in the area based on economic analysis;
- Options for ways in which annexation might occur; and,
- Examples of general costs for annexing and developing land within the area.
The Process

The Feasibility Study is expected to take about six (6) months to complete.

After the Feasibility Study is completed, requests for individual annexations and development within annexation areas would have to be formally submitted to the City by landowners or other interested parties. The City’s consideration of each individual request would occur as part of a separate, subsequent process. An annexation and development approval process can take up to several years.

Should the City determine it is interested in considering individual future annexation and development requests, there is a decision-making process that must be followed.

The City must:

- Formalize its interest;
- Receive an annexation/development application from a landowner or other interest;
- Review the proposed annexation and development plans;
- Prepare an environmental assessment; and,
- Make a decision about whether to approve the request.

If the City approves a request for annexation and development, it must then submit an application for annexation to the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), which must also approve the request.

Subsequent steps then include:

- Review and approval by LAFCO;
- A vote of area property owners or registered voters; and,
- Other steps as required by law.

Public Participation

Opportunities for the public to stay informed about and participate in the Feasibility Study process will be available.

As the Feasibility Study progresses, information will be posted on the City’s website at www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/north_merced_annexation_feasibility_study_(2019).asp

Informational meetings and a meeting with the Planning Commission and City Council are planned as part of the process. Notices of these meetings will be posted on the City’s website. Public attendance at meetings is encouraged and welcomed. The first public workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21st, 2019.

Informational Meetings

Questions and comments can be submitted by email to planningweb@cityofmerced.org or by contacting Kim Espinosa, Planning Manager for the City of Merced, at (209) 385-6858. All comments will be considered by the City and the EMC Team as the Study is prepared.
North Merced Annexation Study Area

Legend:
- Proposed Annexation
- City Limit
- AGRICULTURAL
- BUSINESS PARK
- BUSINESS PARK RESERVE
- GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- COMMERCIAL OFFICE
- COMMERCIAL RESERVE
- THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY PLAN
- FUTURE PARK
- FUTURE SCHOOL
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED USE
- OPEN SPACE - PARK RECREATION
- PUBLIC/GENERAL USE
- MOBILE HOME PARK RESIDENTIAL
- REGIONAL COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- SCHOOL

North Merced Annexation Land Use Map
North Merced Annexation Feasibility Study

Source: City of Merced, County of Merced GIS 2018