

CITY OF MERCED

# SOUTH MERCED

strategic plan



December 2003



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**SOUTH MERCED  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**December 2003  
Prepared by MIG**

## Acknowledgements

*Dedicated to the members of the South Merced Strategic Plan Task Force, the Planning Commission, the City Council, members of the South Merced community, and to the memory of Council Member David J. Riordan (1926-2003), who served on both the City Council and Planning Commission, and who was a long-standing advocate for the preparation of this document.*

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

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# Section One

## Introduction

### SOUTH MERCED STRATEGIC PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

South Merced was identified as an area that could especially benefit from improved neighborhood conditions, economic development, more defined land uses, coordinated infrastructure improvements and expanded services. A Strategic Plan development process was set forth as an opportunity for the community to determine the preferred future for South Merced and to outline a set of logical steps for how to get there.

The planning process to develop the Strategic Plan for South Merced included a series of three community meetings, seven Task Force meetings, three Technical Advisory meetings, as well as seven months of hard work by community members, City staff and planning consultants. The Task Force, consisting of South Merced residents, property and business owners and community representatives, was formed to guide the development of the Strategic Plan and make recommendations to the City Council.

Plan development involved the following major steps: assessment of existing conditions; vision development; identification of potential improvement actions; and prioritization of implementation strategies to most efficiently allocate resources.

This Strategic Plan describes the community's vision for the future of the South Merced area, and outlines strategic implementation actions for achieving that vision. The Plan will guide future physical and service-based changes in the neighborhoods, and will also serve as the basis for future Specific Plans and General Plan Updates.

**SECTION TWO**

**VISION**

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# Section Two

## Vision

### SOUTH MERCED 2015...

South Merced is a safe and desirable place for families to live, work and play. Residents take pride in the area's strong, positive identity. South Merced is well-integrated with the rest of Merced, and offers unique retail and recreational resources that draw residents from other parts of the City.

Residents enjoy the rural and agricultural character of South Merced, and a diversity of housing stock is available in a number of neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods are attractive, clean and well-maintained with accessible walkways and bike paths that encourage pedestrian circulation. Sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and street trees contribute to a safe and pleasant environment. Several new neighborhoods are clustered around mixed-use "Neighborhood Villages."

The Neighborhood Villages provide a pedestrian oriented, small town environment with a mix of local-serving retail uses at the heart of the neighborhood. A mix of housing types (including apartments and condominiums, town houses, live/work lofts and smaller lot single family homes) surrounds the retail core. The scale and intensity of the Villages gradually steps down, transitioning into the surrounding single-family neighborhoods. Pedestrian and bicycle trails connect each Village to surrounding neighborhoods through a system of open space trails, on-site storm water drainage swales and retention basins.

Neighborhood parks provide places to play and enjoy the outdoors. Meandering storm water retention basins and bio-swales with adjacent trails and recreational spaces provide a unique network of green space, linking parks and open space in the area.

Community members gather regularly at South Merced's community retail plaza. Retail shops (including ethnic markets, art galleries and restaurants) line the plaza. It also features colorful gardens, water features, and performance spaces for cultural festivals and community events.

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South Merced is a vital commercial and employment center for the region. The Campus Parkway/Highway 99 interchange area provides a strong employment base related to high-tech industries, office and research activities and services, supporting University-related research. The area west of Route 59 near the airport primarily consists of industrial parks and related uses, such as industrial fabrication, office uses, warehousing and storage, and air cargo shipping

Highway 140's signature as a "Gateway to Yosemite" attracts regional visitors. The highway is a popular "tourist corridor" that caters to Yosemite tourists with hotels and motels, restaurants, sporting goods stores and specialty retail. The Childs Ave./Highway 99 interchange area is a regional-serving retail center with a major mall, freeway-oriented retail uses, and auto sales. Neighborhood shopping centers are located in two major parts of South Merced: near the Childs Ave./Martin Luther King intersection and east of Highway 99. These centers provide neighborhood retail and services, such as a full-service grocery store, pharmacy and bank. Highway 59, the extension of Martin Luther King Boulevard, is a major commercial corridor with auto services and agricultural activities that supports the whole community.

Many residents are actively involved in community planning efforts, and work together to resolve community issues. Residents, business owners, property owners and the City all contribute to the common goal of caring for the people and neighborhoods of South Merced.

**SECTION THREE**

**LAND USE AND CIRCULATION  
CONCEPT DIAGRAM**

**SECTION FOUR**

**TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS**

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## Section Four

# Top Priority Actions

- Complete Specific Plans in the South Merced area as a mechanism for implementing the strategic vision.
- Develop a public plaza/gathering place in connection with a new retail center.
- Rejuvenate the existing neighborhood shopping center on 9th between "T" and "S" (near Stephen Leonard Park).
- Develop a signature regional park as a draw to South Merced.
- Complete Highway 99 interchange improvements.
- Make intersection improvements at Childs and 59 (align, widen, improve visibility and pedestrian safety) to maximize developer interest in pursuing commercial development projects.
- Create incentives to attract neighborhood-serving retail uses near the Childs/MLK intersection and east of Hwy. 99.
- Use storm drain channels to create a multi-use green trail network linking parks and open space.
- Improve Highway 140 as a "tourist corridor" with visitor-serving retail uses such as hotels and motels, restaurants, sporting goods and specialty retail.
- Extend beautification efforts south along Martin Luther King from 16th Street to Childs.
- Provide education and outreach to the community with regard to successful urban planning strategies, development requirements, and existing housing-related programs.
- Promote Highway 59 south of Childs as a major auto service and agricultural service retail corridor.

**SECTION FIVE**

**ACTION FRAMEWORK**

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# Section Five

## Action Framework

The matrix presented on the following pages is intended to guide the South Merced development process. These actions, including the top priority actions identified in the previous section, will induce positive change and lead toward full realization of the South Merced Vision.

The Action Matrix is organized according to the following goals:

- Goal A: Enhance parks, open spaces and community facilities.
- Goal B: Improve circulation and transportation.
- Goal C: Build identity, character and community design.
- Goal D: Strengthen economic development.
- Goal E: Alter regulatory framework to facilitate development.
- Goal F: Revitalize and preserve neighborhoods and housing.
- Goal G: Improve infrastructure and public services.
- Goal H: Improve community programs and organization.

For each action, the matrix provides information on the priority level, implementation timeframe, and responsible parties and partners. The top priority actions identified in the previous section are highlighted with shaded boxes.

## GOAL A: ENHANCE PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b> High Medium Low	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Parks/Open Space</b>				
1	<p>Develop a public plaza/gathering place in connection w/a retail center. Features could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water features;</li> <li>▪ Colorful gardens;</li> <li>▪ Benches;</li> <li>▪ Gazebos;</li> <li>▪ Performance space;</li> <li>▪ Teaching space; and</li> <li>▪ Access to retail, such as cultural shops and markets, art galleries and restaurants serving an array of ethnic foods.</li> <li>▪ Explore ethnic/cultural theme.</li> </ul>	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning</li> <li>▪ Redevelopment</li> <li>▪ Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Funds</li> <li>▪ Redevelopment Tax Increment (on a limited basis)</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
2	<p>Develop a signature regional park as a draw to S. Merced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore potential for developing a new regional park on a 40-acre site north of Mission and south of Gerard between Brantley and the irrigation canal west of Henry. The park could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports fields (soccer/baseball)</li> <li>- Waterplay feature;</li> <li>- Open air theater;</li> <li>- Meeting hall/community hall (for weddings/events); and</li> <li>- Alternative uses for the site include slow pitch softball fields, a skate park, or a BMX circuit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning</li> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm. Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Facility Impact Fees</li> <li>▪ Quimby Act (Park In-Lieu) Fees</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Private Foundations</li> </ul>
3	<p>Expand Flanagan Park to the east - consider use of the expansion area as slow pitch softball field.</p>	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm. Services</li> <li>▪ City Planning (Annexation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ State Park Grants</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b> High Medium Low	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
4	Develop a new park between Campus Parkway and Coffee (west of Campus Parkway and north-east of Childs) to serve new residential areas and anticipated industrial park employees. The park could include picnic benches and fields.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm. Services</li> <li>▪ City Planning</li> <li>▪ City Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quimby Act (Park In-Lieu) Fees</li> <li>▪ Private Developer Construction</li> </ul>
5	Designate pedestrian and bicycle connections to key destinations, such as parks, schools and retail.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning</li> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm. Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning Budget</li> <li>▪ Caltrans Grants</li> </ul>
6	Develop storm drain channels to create a multi-use green trail network linking parks/open space.				
	a) Require new developments to dedicate appropriate storm drainage/retention ponds as part of development plan approvals.	High	Short - Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning &amp; Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Budget</li> <li>▪ Private Developers</li> </ul>
	b) Coordinate with the Merced Irrigation District to ensure feasibility, a maintenance plan, and appropriate filtration.	Medium	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merced Irrigation District (MID)</li> <li>▪ City Planning &amp; Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Budget</li> </ul>
	c) Utilize storm water quality improvements in the drainage swale/water feature concept.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Developers</li> </ul>
	d) Use the existing canal inventory map to begin mapping potential trail areas.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>
7	Ensure that new developments include new neighborhood parks or good access to nearby parks.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Planning &amp; Parks/Comm. Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quimby Act Fees</li> <li>▪ Private Developers</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Recreational Facilities</b>				
8	Refurbish/resurface existing tennis courts at Tenaya Middle School.				
	a) Pursue a potential partnership with the Mercoata Co. Tennis Assoc. (and Merced City School District) to help finance Tenaya Middle School tennis court improvements.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm Serv</li> <li>▪ School District</li> <li>▪ Tennis Assoc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>
9	Implement the recommendations in the City's Parks & Open Space Master Plan (2003)	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm. Serv. &amp; Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quimby Act Fees</li> <li>▪ Public Facility Impact Fees</li> <li>▪ Private Developers</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> </ul>
10	Complete master plan for recreation improvements at Tenaya Middle School.	Medium	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm Serv</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> </ul>
11	Complete lighting improvements at the Youth Sports Complex on West and 7 <sup>th</sup> .	Medium	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Public Wks</li> <li>▪ Youth Sports Assoc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ Donations</li> </ul>
12	Develop an aquatic recreation facility for year-round use.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm Serv</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Donations</li> <li>▪ Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT)</li> <li>▪ School District</li> <li>▪ UC Merced</li> </ul>
13	Build a cultural/community center, including theater space for performing arts, music and dance.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm Serv</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ Donations</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
14	Upgrade indoor facilities at Stephen Leonard Park.	High	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks &amp; Comm Serv</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
15	Consider developing a golf course near the airport.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Funds</li> </ul>

## GOAL B: IMPROVE CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Roadway/Circulation Improvements</b>				
16	Improve major arterials and collectors throughout the area.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City</li> <li>▪ County</li> <li>▪ MCAG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG/STP</li> <li>▪ Other local dvpmt. funding sources</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> <li>▪ PFFP</li> <li>▪ Partnership: Co.Transp.Com. &amp; City</li> </ul>
17	Make intersection improvements at Hwy. 59/Childs (align both sides of Childs/widen 59 and improve visibility and pedestrian safety).	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG</li> <li>▪ Other local dvpmt. funding sources</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> <li>▪ STP</li> <li>▪ Partnership: Co.Transp.Com. &amp; City</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ PFFP</li> </ul>
18	Complete Hwy. 99 interchange improvements.				
	a) Hwy. 99/Mission.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> <li>▪ MCAG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG</li> <li>▪ Other local dvpmt. funding sources</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> <li>▪ STP</li> <li>▪ Partnership: Co.Transp.Com. &amp; City</li> </ul>
	b) Hwy. 99/Childs (couple with new development).	Medium	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> <li>▪ MCAG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>
	c) Hwy. 99/"V".& "R" Ramps & 13/14 Sts one-way couplet.	High	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City</li> <li>▪ MCAG/Cal-trans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ MCAG/Cal-trans</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
19	Reroute truck traffic from residential "V" street to a new interchange north at 99 and Thornton. Potential truck route could follow 99, I40, Thornton and Mission.	Medium	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG</li> <li>▪ City</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PFFP</li> <li>▪ Caltrans/State</li> </ul>
	a) Complete the Atwater Merced Expressway study to ensure a connection to the airport.	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MCAG</li> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>
20	Improve access to the airport with an extension of West Avenue to Mission/Dickinson Ferry Road.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PFFP</li> <li>▪ FDA</li> <li>▪ Gas Tax Funds</li> <li>▪ General Fund</li> </ul>
	a) Investigate use of FAA resources for road improvements related to airport access.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Airport Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FAA</li> </ul>

## GOAL C: BUILD IDENTITY, CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>South Merced Identity</b>				
21	Integrate north and south Merced – draw residents from other parts of the City to S. Merced.				
	<p>a) Develop a unique feature in S. Merced to attract visitors and residents from other parts of the City. Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A park;</li> <li>▪ A cultural retail plaza;</li> <li>▪ A water theme park;</li> <li>▪ A distinctive water feature;</li> <li>▪ An amusement park (batting cages, miniature golf, etc.);</li> <li>▪ Sports park; and/or</li> <li>▪ An arts facility.</li> </ul>	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ RDA/Econ Develop.</li> <li>▪ City Parks and Comm. Develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private/Corporate</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ Public/Private Partnerships</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
	b) Improve pedestrian and vehicular connections under Hwy. 99 connecting the Downtown with S. Merced (walkways, lighting, landscaping, signage).	Medium	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA Tax Increment</li> </ul>
22	<p>Initiate a neighborhood cleanup program to improve the appearance of the S. Merced Area.</p> <p>a) Clean areas around the County Fair Grounds after special events and farmers’ markets.</p>	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Code Enforcement</li> <li>▪ County Fair Grounds</li> <li>▪ Neighbor. Associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Budget</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
23	Incorporate the City's "Neighborhood Village" concept into S. Merced development.				
	a) Incorporate the Neighborhood Village concept into the upcoming South Merced Specific Plan	High	Short	▪ Planning	▪ Planning Budgets ▪ Grants
	b) Distribute mixed-use Neighborhood Village designations along major arterials in South Merced.	High	Short	▪ Planning	▪ Planning Budgets ▪ Grants
	c) Explore the possibility of developing a Village Residential project at "P" and Gerard. This preliminary concept includes: ▪ One quarter mile of Village Residential use bordered by single family residential and a park-trail buffer; and ▪ Extension of W. Avenue to the south and east to connect w/Dickson Ferry (following the aviation zone border).	High	Short	▪ Planning	▪ Planning Budgets ▪ Grants
	d) Explore the possibility of developing a Village Residential project at the intersection of Tyler (east of Tyler) and Gerard. This preliminary concept includes: ▪ One quarter mile of Village Residential use surrounding central neighborhood-serving retail; and ▪ Radial street system connecting up to Childs, down to Mission, and across to a new frontage road west of 99.	High	Short	▪ Planning	▪ Planning Budgets ▪ Grants
	e) Create new development standards that call for "feathering" projects by lowering the scale of development to match adjoining uses.	Medium	Short	▪ Planning	▪ Planning Budgets ▪ Grants
24	Enhance identity by building on a diverse cultural theme.	Low	Long	▪ Planning	▪ N/A

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Pedestrian-friendly &amp; Bicycle-friendly Environment</b>				
25	Develop a safe pedestrian and bicycle system with routes between open space resources, schools and key destinations in South Merced. Conduct a study to determine where improvements are missing, then establish a program to:	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Safe Route to School”</li> <li>▪ CIP</li> </ul>
	a) Install missing sidewalks.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CIP</li> </ul>
	b) Stripe crosswalks.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CIP</li> </ul>
	c) Stripe bike lanes.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CIP</li> </ul>
	d) Install pedestrian scale lighting	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CIP</li> </ul>
	<b>Streetscape &amp; Landscape</b>				
26	Complete the approved street beautification project along MLK from 16 <sup>th</sup> St. north to Downtown.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>
27	Extend landscape improvements south along MLK from 16 <sup>th</sup> St. to Childs.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ Fair Board</li> <li>▪ County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ Fair Board</li> </ul>
28	Complete Hwy. 99 landscape improvements.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Caltrans</li> </ul>
29	Complete street improvements on S. Parsons.	High	Short-Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PFFP Impact Fees</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ State Transpo Funds</li> <li>▪ Private Devel.</li> </ul>
30	Continue the street tree planting program.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developers</li> </ul>

## GOAL D: STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Employment</b>				
31	Expand employment opportunities near the Mission Ave/Campus Parkway/Hwy 99 interchange related to U.C. Merced's professional programs and University-related research (such as environmental research).	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Develop.</li> <li>▪ MCEDCO</li> <li>▪ Chambers</li> <li>▪ U.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> <li>▪ Fed/State/ Local</li> </ul>
	a) Investigate opportunities to collaborate with U.C. partnership organizations to attract research-based companies.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Develop.</li> <li>▪ MCEDCO</li> <li>▪ Chambers</li> <li>▪ U.C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ U.C.</li> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
	b) Attract large corporations who can provide a significant number of jobs for locals with competitive salaries and benefit packages.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Develop.</li> <li>▪ MCEDCO</li> <li>▪ Chambers</li> <li>▪ U.C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Development</li> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
32	Continue to encourage industrial uses just east and south of the airport with industrial parks, manufacturing, and airport-related uses.	High (east)  Low (South of Mission)	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Development</li> </ul>
	a) Refine existing mapping for airport compatibility and determine appropriate areas for industrial and residential use.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> </ul>
33	Explore expanding railroad access to the University Industrial Park area.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Railroad</li> <li>▪ Private</li> <li>▪ City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> <li>▪ Railroad</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Commercial/Retail Use</b>				
34	Create incentives to attract neighborhood-serving retail uses near the Childs/MLK intersection and east of Hwy. 99. (Hwy 140 and Parsons, Gerard and Coffee, Mission and Coffee.)	High	Ongoing	▪ RDA	▪ Enterprise Zone Tax Credits (Incentives) ▪ RDA (for public improvements)
	a) Conduct a market study to determine what type and scale of commercial facilities may be appropriate and viable at the Childs/MLK area  Examples of preferred retail include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A full-service grocery store;</li> <li>▪ An international foods market;</li> <li>▪ A bank;</li> <li>▪ A pharmacy; and</li> <li>▪ Quality restaurants.</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	▪ RDA	▪ Enterprise Zone Tax Credits (Incentives) ▪ RDA (for public improvements)
	b) Complete intersection improvements at Childs/MLK to attract developers.	High	Medium	▪ RDA	▪ RDA ▪ Developer ▪ Caltrans ▪ State Infrastructure Bank
	c) Investigate opportunities for lot consolidation/land assembly.	High	Ongoing	▪ RDA	▪ RDA
	d) Streamline development approval processes.	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Planning ▪ Dev. Services	▪ N/A
	e) Investigate local, state and federal grants.	High	Ongoing	▪ RDA	▪ EDA ▪ HUD-CDBG Loans
	f) Collaborate with existing organizations (Merced Chamber, Hispanic Chamber, City Chamber).	High	Ongoing	▪ RDA/ Chambers ▪ MCEDCO	▪ N/A
	g) Develop community-based organizations for S. Merced small business promotion.	Medium	Medium	▪ Private ▪ Chambers	▪ Private
	h) Explore opportunities to relocate the County Fair Grounds and redevelop the site as a mixed-use Neighborhood Village.	Medium	Long	▪ County Fair Grounds ▪ City Planning ▪ RDA	▪ Private

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
35	Prioritize undeveloped land in neighborhood areas for neighborhood-serving retail (rather than for more housing).	Medium	Short	▪ ED/RDA/ Planning	▪ N/A
36	Promote family-oriented retail (currently, too many liquor stores).	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Planning	▪ N/A
37	Rejuvenate the existing neighborhood shopping center on 9 <sup>th</sup> between “T” and “S” Streets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore extending the RDA boundaries to include the shopping center site.</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	▪ Econ. Dev. ▪ Planning/ RDA	▪ Private (outside RDA boundary)
38	Develop regional-serving retail near the Childs Ave./Hwy. 99 interchange, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Major retail mall;</li> <li>▪ “Big box” retail;</li> <li>▪ Freeway-oriented retail;</li> <li>▪ Commercial recreation, such as an amusement park or water park.</li> </ul>	High	Long	▪ ED/RDA/ Planning/ MCEDCO	▪ Private
39	Promote visitor-serving retail uses along the Hwy 140 corridor related to access to Yosemite National Park.	Medium	Long	▪ RDA/ED/ Planning ▪ Tourism Council	▪ RDA ▪ Merced Co. ABC
	a) Improve Highway 140 as a “tourist corridor” with uses, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hotels/motels;</li> <li>▪ Restaurants;</li> <li>▪ Sporting goods;</li> <li>▪ Specialty retail; and</li> <li>▪ Art galleries.</li> </ul>	Medium	Long	▪ RDA/ED/ Planning ▪ Tourism Council	▪ RDA ▪ Merced Co. ABC
40	Encourage recreation-related retail uses in the vicinity of the Fairgrounds. Possible uses include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Party supply;</li> <li>▪ Events coordination; and</li> <li>▪ Food services.</li> </ul>	Low	Long	▪ RDA/ED/ Planning ▪ County	▪ RDA

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
41	Promote Hwy. 59 south of Childs as a major auto service/agricultural service retail corridor.	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ City Planning Budget</li> </ul>
	<p>a) Develop design guidelines to promote an adequate buffer between commercial uses and adjoining residential uses; buffers can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Landscaping</li> <li>▪ Sound walls</li> <li>▪ Light protection</li> <li>▪ Ample building setbacks</li> <li>▪ Appropriate building scale</li> </ul>	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ City Planning Budget</li> </ul>
	b) Investigate the formation of a joint City/County Redevelopment Area for the Hwy 59 corridor south of Childs.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City/County RDA</li> </ul>

## GOAL E: ALTER REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
42	Complete and adopt Specific Plans in the S. Merced area.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> </ul>
	a) Amend the General Plan and City Zoning Ordinance as necessary to accommodate the new vision for S. Merced.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> </ul>
43	Annex areas of S. Merced to the City of Merced.				
	a) Define specific areas in which to encourage annexation in phases, with priority attention to the Hwy. 59 corridor.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> </ul>
	b) Canvas the neighborhood for property owner consensus regarding annexation.	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City staff</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> </ul>	N/A
	c) Maintain “rural residential” use and amend the animal code to allow certain animals to be grand-fathered in (Make City match Co.) on larger parcels in selected areas.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning and City Attorney</li> </ul>	N/A
	d) Identify funding to finance required sewer/water connections related to annexation.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Assessment Districts</li> </ul>
44	Explore feasibility of extending the Gateways Redevelopment Project boundaries.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RDA</li> </ul>
45	Initiate a City growth boundary study to explore the extension of the southern Specific Urban Development Boundary (SUDB) south of Mission Boulevard.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ County</li> <li>▪ LAFCO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City</li> <li>▪ County</li> </ul>
46	Explore the development of a joint City/County Redevelopment Project Area for unincorporated areas of South Merced.	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City RDA</li> <li>▪ County RDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City RDA</li> <li>▪ County RDA</li> </ul>

## GOAL F: REVITALIZE AND PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Neighborhood Revitalization</b>				
47	Strengthen Code Enforcement and Housing programs to ensure that residential units are improved and well-maintained.				
	a) Use intensified Code Enforcement teams for residential neighborhoods, inspections.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code Enf.</li> <li>▪ Inspection Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG/HOME</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ General Fund</li> </ul>
	b) Reuse or clean-up vacant commercial buildings.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Econ. Dev.</li> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
	c) Reduce the number of cars parked on lawns in the neighborhood.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code Enf.</li> <li>▪ Police Dept.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
48	Strengthen outreach to neighbors about existing housing improvement programs through low-interest loans and deferred loans (for those w/low-moderate income levels).	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Div.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ HOME</li> </ul>
49	Revitalize government-owned housing on “V”, “T”, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> Streets.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Authority</li> <li>▪ Housing Div.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
50	Develop a program to encourage unified professional management to improve ongoing maintenance and security and to reduce apartment overcrowding.	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apts. Assoc.</li> <li>▪ Housing Div.</li> <li>▪ Police</li> <li>▪ Neigh. Watch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
51	Provide outreach to landlords about the benefits of improving rental units and prioritizing tenants who qualify for “Section 8” vouchers.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Authority</li> <li>▪ Housing Div.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ HOME</li> </ul>
52	Provide home ownership incentives to foster stewardship in the area.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
	a) Investigate grants and urban homesteading programs.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ HUD</li> </ul>
	b) Develop infill townhomes and condominiums to provide a wider range of opportunities for ownership.	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Div.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ HOME</li> <li>▪ Prop 46 Funds (State)</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
53	Help make neighborhoods safe and secure – especially around schools, residential areas, parks, and business/industrial parks.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Police Dept.</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood Watch Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Funds</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Comm. Fac. District</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>
	a) Improve lighting.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Funds</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Comm. Fac. District</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>
	b) Increase police presence.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Funds</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Comm. Fac. District</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>
	c) Coordinate with police to identify strategies for improving safety (such as Nbhd. Watch and mobile units).	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Funds</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Comm. Fac. District</li> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> </ul>
	d) Promote designs that are conducive to “eyes on the street”	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Funds</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ Comm. Fac. District</li> </ul>
	<b>Housing</b>				
54	Encourage a mix of housing types in new developments (affordable and market-rate) to accommodate all incomes.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>
55	Disperse and integrate affordable housing throughout the area.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>
56	Establish an inclusionary requirement for low income housing as part of market rate developments.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>
57	Identify potential sites for affordable housing development for groups like the Central Valley Coalition for Affordable Housing.	Medium	<i>Ongoing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDBG</li> <li>▪ HOME</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
58	Consider developing higher density housing around the new school at "G" Street north of Dickson Ferry.	Low	Long	▪ Planning	▪ N/A
	a) Align "G" Street around the proposed high density housing and school fields.	Low	Long	▪ Planning	▪ N/A
59	Encourage new infill construction within existing neighborhoods in keeping with current density.	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Planning Comm./ City Council ▪ Planning ▪ Housing	▪ N/A
	a) Avoid rezoning to higher densities or changing commercial zones.	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Planning Comm./ City Council	▪ N/A

## GOAL G: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Roadway Maintenance</b>				
60	Work with the City and County to ensure better street maintenance.	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Public Works	▪ General Fund
61	Repair road surfacing in the following key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Childs;</li> <li>▪ Highway 59;</li> <li>▪ Tyler;</li> <li>▪ Gerard; and</li> <li>▪ Parson Ave. (from Gerard to Childs).</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	▪ Public Works	▪ CFD ▪ Gas Tax ▪ ½¢ Sales Tax ▪ CIP ▪ General Fund
	<b>Drainage</b>				
62	Investigate and resolve flooding problems on Childs Ave.	Medium	Long	▪ Public Works ▪ Engineering	▪ CDBG
63	Explore opportunities for an area-wide drainage system integrated with an open space network and centralized detention basin as a natural water feature.	Medium	Long	▪ Public Works ▪ Planning ▪ MID	▪ CDBG ▪ CIP ▪ Private Developers
	<b>Public Services</b>				
64	Improve coordination of emergency response system.	Medium	Ongoing	▪ Police/Fire ▪ County	▪ General Fund ▪ Community Facilities District
65	Locate an additional Fire Station in Southeast Merced. (A new fire station at Gerard/Coffee is already in the Fire Dept Master Plan and Public Facilities Financing Plan.)	Medium	Medium	▪ Fire Dept.	▪ PFFP Impact Fees ▪ General Fund

## GOAL H: IMPROVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATION

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	<b>Community Programs</b>				
66	Provide outreach to the community with regard to community development strategies and requirements.	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> </ul>
67	Develop increased recreation programs and play activities (sports instruction) for youth and adults.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks/Com. Services Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ User Fees</li> <li>▪ Grants/Donations</li> </ul>
68	Develop after-school programs for students.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks/Com. Services Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Dist.</li> <li>▪ State Grants</li> <li>▪ User Fees</li> </ul>
69	Expand youth programs to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance arts;</li> <li>▪ 4-H activities; and</li> <li>▪ Other youth activities.</li> </ul>	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks/Com. Services Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ User Fees</li> <li>▪ Grants/Donations</li> </ul>
70	Provide more activities for seniors.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Parks/Com. Services Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ User Fees</li> </ul>
71	Celebrate arts and culture/showcase local talent.	Low	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi-cultural Arts Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
	<b>Community Organization &amp; Events</b>				
72	Create neighborhood associations to provide ongoing outreach, education and coordination.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Action Network (CAN)</li> <li>▪ City Planning, Police, &amp; Comm Serv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants</li> <li>▪ Police Dept.</li> <li>▪ RDA</li> <li>▪ General Fund</li> </ul>
73	Sponsor community events and community-building activities.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CAN</li> <li>▪ Code Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
74	Consider holding street fairs or farmers' markets on "N" Street (a wider street in the area).	Low	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hispanic Chamber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>

	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time Frame</b> <small>Short = 0-3 yrs Medium = 4-6 yrs Long = 7+ yrs</small>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Other Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
75	Initiate neighborhood organization-sponsored clean-up events for individual neighborhoods.	High	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neighborhood Watch</li> <li>▪ CAN</li> <li>▪ Code Enf.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>
76	Encourage ongoing community participation in planning efforts.	Medium	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Division</li> <li>▪ Planning Commission</li> <li>▪ City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Budget</li> <li>▪ Specific Plans</li> </ul>
77	Encourage faith-based organizations to coordinate efforts to target critical community needs, such as those related to social services, community facilities and low-income housing and rental assistance.	High	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CAN</li> <li>▪ Faith-based Organizations (e.g. Love, Inc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Donations</li> <li>▪ Private</li> <li>▪ CDBG</li> </ul>
78	Consider forming an economic development corp. to ensure long-term champions of the S. Merced vision.	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merced Co. Action Business Center</li> <li>▪ MCEDCO</li> <li>▪ City Econ. Dev.</li> <li>▪ Hispanic Chamber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul>

**A P P E N D I X   A**

**I M P L E M E N T A T I O N**

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# Appendix A

## Implementation

This South Merced Development Strategy represents the first step in making improvements in the South Merced planning area. The Strategy sets forth a set of land use and circulation concepts and implementation actions that serve as a focus for continued community participation in working toward achieving the long-term vision for South Merced. This Strategy should be treated as a "living document" by which goals, objectives, core values and big ideas are reconsidered and redefined as actions are accomplished and new actions are considered.

Action steps outlined in the Strategic Action Matrix are the key ingredients to a successful plan. However, they require a great deal of leadership and commitment from City departments and agencies, local businesses, as well as continuing involvement of community members and community organizations in responsibly guiding the Plan into the future.

Key implementation partners include:

- The City of Merced
- Redevelopment Agency of the City of Merced
- Conference and Visitors Bureau
- Design Review Commission
- The County of Merced
- Merced County Association of Governments
- Community Organizations
- Community Leaders

The acceptance of the South Merced Development Strategy does not constitute the final decision on specific land use policy for the area, but rather provides a framework for future actions. As each action item is implemented, there will be additional community input and review of the steps to be taken to advance the overall project.

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A well-defined implementation program is essential to completing the priority actions of the South Merced Development Strategy. Strategies and action steps outlined in the previous sections are the key ingredients to successful plans. However, they require continued leadership and commitment from City departments and agencies, local businesses, as well as continuing involvement of community groups who are responsible for guiding the South Merced Area into the future. As part of the Strategy implementation process, the following guiding principles should be adhered to help ensure the community's goals and objectives are achieved through the completion of the priority actions.

## BUILD ON STRENGTHS

South Merced has numerous identified assets and strengths. Community strengths include dedicated residents, an existing historic residential neighborhood, and a defined street system with connections to the State Highway network, and major commercial and public uses within the area. The community must continue to support existing programs and projects, and build on these strengths as a step toward implementing priority actions.

### **Develop a Realistic Timeframe**

Not all of the actions contained in the South Merced area can (or should) happen immediately. The priority actions and the action matrix offer guides for staging neighborhood improvements.

### **Identify Roles and Responsibilities**

The dedication, commitment, and accountability provided by a lead organization are key to successful implementation. The action portion of this South Merced Development Strategy identifies lead responsibilities and partnerships.

### **Establish Measurable Performance Indicators**

In order to determine whether or not an action has been completed, it is necessary to create measures of success. It is important that the community can objectively measure these indicators so that success of neighborhood improvements cannot be left open to interpretation. Easily measured outcomes provide concrete and realistic goals and objectives.

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### **Monitor and Evaluate Ongoing Progress**

The development strategy is not static. Strategic planning is dynamic and can change as projects are completed, new resources become available, and the community collectively identifies new directions. Over time, resources, opportunities, and new challenges will present themselves to the community.

Implementation activities will need to follow a decision-making process which emphasizes balancing short-term and long-term achievements, development of realistic time frames, constant communication with lead agency staffs in determining action steps and responsibilities, and dedication to monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of actions when completed.

Regular updates to the South Merced Development Strategy will be necessary to ensure continued progress toward achieving the community's vision. Periodic assessments of the Strategy help to identify barriers and to determine if mid-course corrections are needed, and to help identify accomplishments. Demonstrated achievements help to sustain or increase community support for the Strategy and ongoing success.

### **Implementation Funding Programs**

One of the key components of success for the actions identified in the South Merced Development Strategy is the availability of funding. Several sources of funding are available for the Priority Actions and other improvement actions identified in this document. Several sources of State and Federal funding are available to make physical improvements within the South Merced Area; money can also be used to provide assistance to start and expand small businesses in the community. The following section describes some of the funding sources that can be used to fund improvements.

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## FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING RESOURCES

Federal and State resources that can be attracted to the South Merced project area, and can be used for specific types of improvements. The capacity to access federal and state funding resources requires successful grantmanship efforts. To date, the RDA has successfully leveraged their own funds by obtaining grants for various projects. Due to limited community resources, grants will be a critical component of community development for the foreseeable future. Effective grantmanship requires the community to:

- Keep federal, state and regional elected officials and staff informed of plans, progress and successes. This plan will help guide the access of external resources.
- Work with the RDA, the County, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) and others, who can write grant applications and otherwise assist, especially for grants involving infrastructure and roadway improvements;
- Search for grant opportunities, especially:
  - From CalTrans for roadway improvements
  - CDBG - small cash match;
  - From EDA for planning and for business park development -- maximum amounts subject to budget allocations and internal policies. County and City both eligible; and
  - Look for grants and incentives from private sector.

## LOCAL FUNDING RESOURCES

No community can depend entirely on available federal and state grants to improve an area, and the South Merced Area is no exception. Local funding resources will also need to be directed towards improvements in the area. Some of the options for local funding include the tax increment financing (TIF) revenues earned by the Redevelopment Agency, a local Business Improvement District, other tax assessment districts, and the City general fund. In addition, the revitalization of the South Merced Area can utilize available federal tax credits for affordable housing or historical buildings. The most important local funding resources are described below.

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## **Redevelopment Agency Funding and Financing Resources**

The State of California originally approved the concept of redevelopment in 1945 in order to give cities and counties the authority to create redevelopment agencies and to give these agencies the authority and power necessary to attack and solve problems of urban decay and blight. Redevelopment agencies were (and are) able to apply for grants and loans from the federal government.

The economic base for redevelopment is tax increment financing (TIF). TIF allows the governing body of a city or county to adopt a redevelopment plan that provides for the redevelopment of a designated area and to use tax increment financing to fund the costs of redevelopment projects in the designated area. The method of financing involves the issuance of bonds or other obligations that are secured by a pledge of all or part of the funds raised by the redevelopment agency. The agency raises funds because of the increase in assessed valuation of taxable real property within its designated redevelopment area. The assumption being that the assessed value of real property within a redevelopment area will increase due to redevelopment improvements.

In addition to providing assistance with public improvements to facilitate redevelopment, a redevelopment agency can provide assistance to a variety of private development interests if the specific projects are in conformance with the agency's plan. Tax increment financing can be used to provide a variety of assistance as described below.

- Development of new industrial and commercial uses in the project area.
- Commercial building and property renovation and improvement projects.
- Rehabilitation and expansion of the community's existing private housing stock.
- "Writing Down" the cost of land when it is sold to a developer or owner participant (in accordance with an approved development agreement providing adequate assurances that the project would be completed).
- Provide low-interest loans or tax exempt financing to reduce financing costs through certificates of participation, lease revenue bonds, industrial development bonds or various forms of tax-exempt notes.

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The City of Merced Redevelopment Agency does have some funds that can apply to the priority projects identified in this strategy. The Redevelopment Agency has several options for funding projects:

- The Redevelopment Agency can use tax increment as it is generated annually, spreading out its value over the Project Area's remaining life span. With this approach, the Redevelopment Agency would typically only be able to fund a few significant projects, and may have to be content with small projects and marginal growth.
- The Redevelopment Agency can use funds as cash match for grants and loans from EDA, CDBG, USDA and others. This approach is often used by agencies to fund significant projects. The approach enables the Redevelopment Agency to significantly leverage its existing resources, and attract the funding required for large projects, especially if private, and grant funds are all applied to a single project.
- The Redevelopment Agency can offer gap financing, such as impact fee reimbursement or infrastructure assistance via loans, and write downs for desired projects that mitigate blight, provide quality full-time jobs, and/or significantly improve the City tax base.
- The Redevelopment Agency can also offer a percentage of expected fiscal revenues for proposed development projects as a location or expansion incentive.

The economic capability of a redevelopment agency is of utmost importance in deciding whether or not redevelopment is the primary tool for accomplishing major physical changes in a local community. If tax increment income projections are lower than the communities wants or expectations, redevelopment needs to be considered as one of the fiscal arrows in a community's financial quiver.

In general, redevelopment funds must be used within the designated Redevelopment Area. Much of the South Merced project area is outside the existing Redevelopment Project boundaries. Thus, the City and County may consider expanding the existing redevelopment project boundaries or create a new redevelopment district taking in the important portions of the South Merced area.

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FUNDING RESOURCES

The creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) or a property-based business improvement district (PBID) is a self-help tool that property owners and businesses can use to help fund physical and organizational improvements in the South Merced Area such as Martin Luther King/Highway 59 south of Childs Avenue or the Highway 140 corridor. A BID is a voluntary self-assessment mechanism that could provide ongoing funds to improve the Highway 59 corridor. A BID or PBID typically funds or augments established improvement programs such as security, maintenance, and marketing. Allowed under California law since 1994, BIDs and PBIDs have become a popular private sector tool to revitalize cities and towns, making them

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more economically viable. Funds to support BIDs and PBIDs are raised in the form of additional taxes and/or fees for services in a particular geographic area. These funds are used to improve specific business areas, including beautification efforts, increased maintenance, additional security, local promotion, special events, and other activities selected by the local BID or PBID board to benefit the business district. The differences between a BID and PBID are described below.

**Business Improvement District (BID)**

A BID is a self-help, self-taxing, merchant-based entity organized with the cooperation of local government. BIDs are renewed on an annual basis and merchants typically see their money go to work for them quickly. Typically, BID funds are used for smaller, more retail-oriented revitalization and economic development programs in downtowns and commercial corridors, including farmers' markets.

**Property Based Improvement District (PBID)**

A PBID is property-based and is an assessment district within a geographically defined area. Proceeds from assessments are used to provide services supplemental to those normally provided by municipal government. PBIDs have certain advantages over traditional BIDs, in that they can raise funds by directly assessing property owners who have a long-term stake in the area's vitality. A PBID is usually established for up to five years and is often used for larger districts with higher budget requirements.

PBIDs are fairly easy to set up, especially when compared to the process of creating a new redevelopment area. However, the process of forming a PBID takes from 9-12 months. In most cities, organizers just need to prove they have contacted every property owner within the proposed district. If a majority agrees, then each owner pays a special assessment on their property tax. Some of the advantages of a PBID are listed below.

- A PBID allows a wide range of service options, including security, maintenance, marketing, economic development, and special events among others.
- The PBID is designed and created by those who will pay the assessment.
- The PBID is governed and implemented by those who pay through a property and business owner advisory board that supervises operations and submits a yearly service plan. PBIDs are established for a set term determined by those who pay the assessment and must be reestablished by those who pay through a new petition process.

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## CREATION OF AN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE

This Plan envisions a ongoing Implementation Committee or Task Force as the pivotal organization responsible for the continuing life and success of the Strategy. The growth of this group into a cohesive planning body, capable of sustaining the interest of the community and sponsoring broad community participation over the coming years, should be a top priority. Several of the Implementation Committee's primary responsibilities during the implementation phase of the project will be to:

- Champion the implementation of South Merced Top Priority Actions, and assisting in seeking funding from the City and other funding sources, and ensure project completion;
- Provide input to the City for design and development of public projects;
- Act as an information liaison to the neighborhood on the status of projects in the South Merced Area;
- Periodically review the Strategy and reset priorities based on past accomplishments and existing conditions; and
- Coordinate with neighborhood associations, business associations, and the City of Merced on appropriate projects within the area.

## BENCHMARKS FOR MONITORING NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

The action plan of this strategy identifies priority projects, most of which will take many years to implement. There are a few priority projects that can demonstrate quick and visible improvements that can be monitored and reported back to the funding agencies and the City Council. For both long- and short-range goals, establishing benchmarks to measure neighborhood improvements will allow the city staff to provide regular progress reports to the community and civic leaders. It is recommended that progress against benchmarks should be reported in regular meetings of the City Council and in City publications.

**APPENDIX B**

**SOUTH MERCED FACT SHEET**



*The Strategic Plan will outline a vision for the future of the South Merced area and set forth a strategy and action plan for achieving that vision.*

### Where is the South Merced area?

The South Merced area is located just south of Downtown Merced and north of Mission Avenue. West Avenue delineates the west boundary, while the east boundary falls along the Doane-Hartley Lateral (irrigation canal). West Avenue also shares the eastern boundary of the Airport Industrial Park, and the Doane-Hartley Lateral is also the western boundary of the Eastern Industrial Area, so the South Merced planning area lies between these two industrial parks.

The northern perimeter follows Highway 99 until it crosses Highway 140, at which point it follows Highway 140 to the eastern boundary.

The area includes primarily a mix of residential, industrial, and agricultural uses, with some public uses and small commercial pockets throughout.

## SOUTH MERCED STRATEGIC PLAN

# Envision the Future!

### What is the Purpose of a Strategic Plan?

A Strategic Plan will outline a vision for the future of the South Merced area, and set forth a strategy and implementation actions for achieving that vision. The Plan will guide physical changes in the neighborhoods, as well as identify desired community improvements and services. The Plan will also serve as the basis for future Specific Plans and General Plan Updates. The planning process involves the following major steps:

#### 1. Assessment of Existing Conditions

This step will identify the assets, challenges and opportunities facing the South Merced area. Existing land use plans, transportation data and programs will be reviewed and meetings with community members will be held to guide the planning process.

#### 2. Vision Development

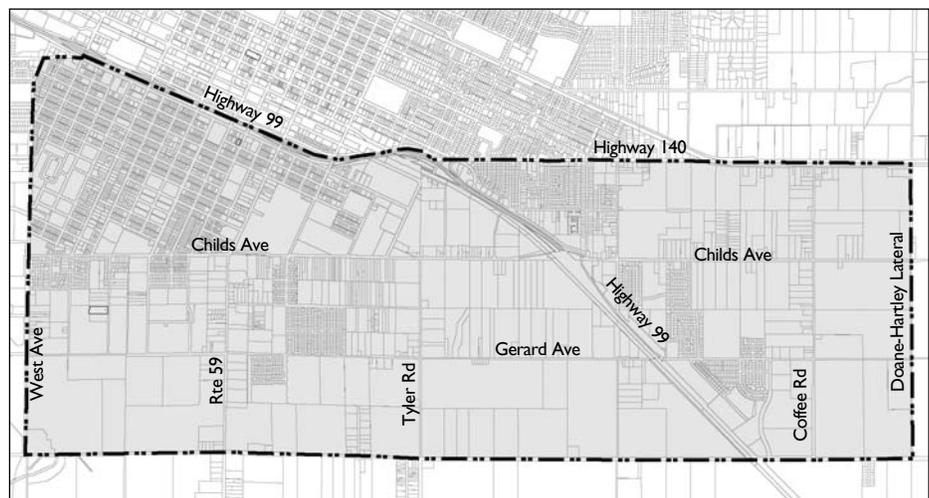
The Vision for South Merced is a statement describing the preferred future for the area. The Vision may address issues such as desired land uses, circulation, community facilities, services and activities, economic development, community design, and other goals for the future of the area.

#### 3. Alternatives Development

With community input, the process will identify a range of alternative actions to improve the area. The implementation strategies will be a set of near-term, mid-term and long-term actions that will enable us to achieve our goals for the future.

#### 4. Prioritization of Implementation Strategies

Practical, feasible implementation strategies will help bring the Vision into reality. Community members will help select and prioritize the strategic actions in order to most efficiently allocate resources.



*The South Merced Strategic Plan Study Area*





## Who is preparing the plan?

Community members will play a major role in creating and implementing the Strategic Plan. The planning process is being coordinated by the City of Merced Planning and Permitting Division with cooperation from the County, and assistance from the planning consultant team of Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) Inc.

## Why does South Merced need a Strategic Plan?

South Merced has been identified as an area that would benefit from improved neighborhood conditions, economic development, more defined land uses, coordinated infrastructure improvements, and expanded services.

This planning process is an opportunity for the community to determine the future of South Merced and to outline a set of logical steps for how to get there.

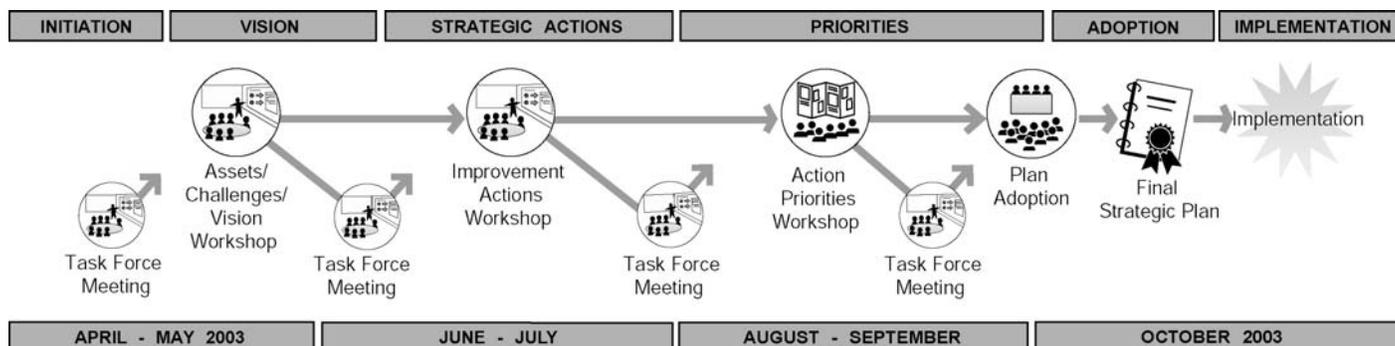
## How do I get involved?

There will be many opportunities for direct involvement in the planning process:

- ◆ **Attend public meetings.** Three public workshops will be held over the next five months, as well as seven Task Force meetings, and several focus group meetings.
- ◆ **Talk to City staff.** Planning staff are eager to hear your ideas! You may write, e-mail or call the planning staff.
- ◆ **Get your organization involved in the planning process.** Encourage your neighbors and your neighborhood associations, business groups, PTAs, or any other organization to join in meetings and discussions about the future of South Merced.
- ◆ **Stay informed.** You can stay informed about the progress of this project through workshop summary reports and draft action plan documents that will be available to the community at public meetings and at the City offices.



## PRELIMINARY PROJECT TIMELINE



For more information, contact the following individuals:

**Kim Espinosa**, Planning Manager, City of Merced: [espinosak@cityofmerced.org](mailto:espinosak@cityofmerced.org)  
**Jack Lesch**, Director of Development Services, City of Merced: [leschj@cityofmerced.org](mailto:leschj@cityofmerced.org)  
**City of Merced Planning and Permitting Division** 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340  
 Phone: (209) 385-6858  
 Fax: (209) 725-8775

**...A special THANK YOU to PG&E for their generous Economic Development Grant contribution to support the South Merced strategic planning process!**

**APPENDIX C**

**SUMMARY REPORTS**

# S U M M A R Y M E M O

*Project:* South Merced Strategic Plan

*Subject:* Workshop #1/Task Force Meeting #2

*Date:* May 8, 2003/ 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On May 8, 2003, approximately 75 community members convened for a workshop to share ideas regarding desired characteristics for the South Merced area in Merced. This was the first workshop in a series of public meetings that are being held to develop a Strategic Plan for the South Merced area. The first Task Force meeting was held on April 17, 2003.

The purpose of this meeting was twofold: it provided an opportunity for consultants and City Staff to explain the strategic planning process, and it served as a forum for the community to describe their vision for the future of the area. Participants also voiced their concerns about aspects of the South Merced area that could benefit from improvement. The feedback generated at this meeting, and at future workshops, will provide direction for the development of a South Merced Strategic Plan.

The meeting was held at the Merced Senior Center between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. City Council member Rick Osorio opened the meeting, welcoming community members and inviting them to participate in this planning process. Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., reviewed the agenda for the evening and introduced the Planning Team.

Next, Mr. Tuttle made a presentation, describing an overview of the strategic planning process and reviewing potential strengths to build on in the neighborhood.

The planning process will consist of a series of Task Force meetings and three community-wide workshops. Mr. Tuttle explained that a Task Force representing diverse interests in the South Merced area had been assembled to help develop the Strategic Plan and make recommendations to the City Council. The Task Force consists of residents, property and business owners and community representatives, who will meet regularly to provide guidance to City Staff and planning consultants in developing the content of the Plan.

Following these presentations, Mr. Tuttle facilitated a group discussion of vision, assets and challenges for the South Merced area. Jill Eulate (also of MIG, Inc.) assisted by recording community comments on a large wall graphic.

This report summarizes the community input generated during the workshop, as well as the ideas submitted on comment sheets (9 comment sheets were submitted). The summary is organized into sections that reflect the workshop discussion topics:

- Vision,
- Assets,
- Challenges,
- Process Comments/Questions, and
- Next Steps.

## **I. VISION**

Participants shared many goals and ideas in projecting a vision for the future of the South Merced area. Predominant vision themes that emerged are presented below, followed by more specific directives related to each theme.

### **Improve South Merced's Identity**

- Improve perception of the neighborhood and break down the psychological barriers between South Merced and other parts of Merced.
- Build on the area's signature as a "Gateway to Yosemite".
- Celebrate arts and culture.
- Showcase local community talent.
- Develop a unique feature in South Merced to attract visitors and residents from other parts of the City – Ideas include: a beautiful park, a golf course, a water park, an amusement park, a distinctive water feature, or an arts facility.
- South Merced is the future of Merced!

### **Strengthen Economic Development**

#### ***Expand Employment Opportunities***

- Support local employment
- Create an employment base in South Merced related to the new University.
- Expand Employment opportunities to enable young adults to stay in the community.
- Attract large corporations (possibly manufacturing/shipping companies) who can provide a significant number of jobs for locals with competitive salaries and benefits.
- Create jobs that offer healthcare and vacation packages.

### ***Attract Retail/Commercial Uses***

- Encourage neighborhood-serving retail uses.
  - Locate a full-service grocery store in South Merced.
  - Open an international market or a market with ethnic foods and resources.
  - Develop a retail center around a plaza for community and cultural celebrations.
  - Locate a bank in South Merced.
  - Locate a drug store in South Merced.
  - Attract quality restaurants to the area.
  - Adjust zoning to enable commercial development.
  
- Promote visitor-serving uses.
  - Develop motels/hotels.
  - Seek opportunities to promote economic development related to the area’s proximity to Yosemite.
  - Improve transportation options to Yosemite from the area.
  - Consider developing a tourist attraction, such as an amusement park or water theme park.
  - Encourage art galleries to locate in the area.
  - Develop a unique feature in South Merced to attract visitors.
  
- Develop freeway-oriented uses near/visible from freeway interchanges.
  - Attract “big box” uses and outlet stores near the freeway.
  - Develop motels and other visitor-serving uses.

### ***Preserve Agricultural and Manufacturing Uses***

- Farming: a major industry and economic resource for the community that needs to be preserved.
- Consider development in relationship to agricultural land, farming and dairies.
- Enhance agricultural and manufacturing markets.

### ***Revitalize South Merced’s Neighborhoods and Housing***

- Develop diverse housing types (upscale, affordable and upgraded).
- Use Code Enforcement to help revitalize existing housing.
- Encourage apartment owners to utilize apartment management services to ensure well-maintained buildings.
- Provide incentives for apartment owners to clean-up and upgrade their buildings.
- Revitalize government-owned housing in south-west Merced (on “V” and ”I” Streets, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets).
- Reuse and/or clean-up empty buildings.
- Reduce apartment overcrowding.
- Strengthen Code Enforcement to reduce numbers of cars parked on lawns.

### **Change the legal framework to facilitate development**

- Adjust zoning to enable desired development, such as commercial development.
- Annex south Merced to north Merced.

### **Improve Circulation and Transportation**

- Provide efficient transportation connections to all of Merced.
- Conduct intersection improvements at key intersections.
- Consider expanding to 6-lane roads with sidewalks around Golden Valley High School.
- Improve visibility and alignment at the intersection of Childs and Martin Luther King.
- Improve public transit.
- Improve transportation options to Yosemite.
- Utilize existing rail lines for manufacturing/moving products.
- Reactivate the railroad – make it viable with spurs or rail houses.
- Improve major arterials and collectors through the area.

### **Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Environment**

- Make neighborhoods walkable – many who live in the area do not own cars.
- Install sidewalks (especially along Parsons and around schools, such as Golden Valley High School).
- Stripe bike lanes.
- Develop pedestrian/bicycle connections between open space resources in South Merced.

### **Improve Streetscape and Road Maintenance**

- Improve appearance of Martin Luther King Jr. Way from Highway 99 to 8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Repair road surfacing (especially along Childs, 59, Tyler, and along Parson Rd. from Gerard to Childs).
- Work with the City and County to ensure better street maintenance.

### **Develop Community Facilities**

- Build a cultural facility.
- Include a theater for performing arts, music, and dance.

### **Enhance Parks/Open Space Resources**

- Develop more parks and open space throughout South Merced.
- Create a beautiful park as a unique South Merced resource.
- Design a community plaza/open space in South Merced for community celebrations, cultural events, and performances. The ambiance of the plaza would be one of celebration and relaxation. The space could include:
  - A retail center with cultural shops and markets, art galleries, and restaurants with ethnic foods of all kinds;
  - A large water fountain;
  - A gazebo;
  - Benches;
  - Colorful gardens with trees and flowers;
  - Teaching space for music and dance; and
  - Weekend performances by mariachis and other local musicians and dance groups.
- Develop an aquatic/recreation facility (for year-round use).
- Link open space resources with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly connections.

### **Expand Community Services and Programs**

- Ensure a strong, coordinated emergency service response in the South Merced area.
- Locate an additional Fire Station in South Merced. (NOTE: One currently is located at the Merced Airport.)
- Increase police patrol to improve safety in the area.
- Offer constructive activities for youth to help curb gang activity.
- Encourage youth involvement in performance arts.
- Alter codes to allow for agricultural/4-H uses for youth.
- Provide more activities for seniors.

### **Strengthen Community Organization and Involvement**

- Work toward building an integrated community.
- Sponsor community events and community-building activities.
- Encourage ongoing community participation in planning efforts.

## **II. ASSETS**

Participants shared their perceptions of the South Merced area's key assets:

### **Progress/People**

- Progress in the area – residents and City staff who have worked to make a difference in the area.
- Business improvements in the area.
- Community pride.
- Diversity of people in the community.

### **Location**

- Proximity to Yosemite.
- Access to resources of Downtown Merced.

### **Land Use**

- Rural Residential use and the agricultural/industrial corridor (with manufacturing services and tractor dealerships) south of Highway 59.
- Agricultural/4-H uses west of Weaver.

### **Housing**

- Access to affordable housing.

### **Economic Development**

- Farming – a major industry and economic resource for the community – agricultural land, dairies and farming need to be preserved.
- Economic benefits of a University of California locating in the area.

### **Development Opportunities**

- Vacant lots and vacant buildings in the area provide development and revitalization opportunities.

### **III. CHALLENGES**

Community members identified the following issues that need to be addressed in planning for an improved South Merced:

#### **Economic Development**

- There are no special destinations in South Merced.
- There is a lack of economic development in this area.

#### **Land Use**

- Agricultural uses need to be respected and preserved.
- There are too many liquor stores in the area.

#### **Housing**

- Many apartments are overcrowded.
- Government owned housing in south-west Merced (on “V” and ”I” Streets, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets) is in need of rejuvenation.

#### **Development Opportunities**

- Environmental and physical development constraints limit development opportunities.
- Since it is not possible to develop unincorporated County pockets or agricultural lands, and since about 1/3 of South Merced is made up of these land use types, development opportunities are limited.
- In considering development areas, it is critical that we are sensitive to the agriculture industry and their needs.

#### **Circulation/Transportation**

- The South Merced area is divided by four major roads.
- Highway 99 acts as a major barrier between South Merced and the rest of Merced.
- Visibility is extremely poor at the intersection of Childs and Martin Luther King.
- Highway 59 often experiences traffic-related issues and seems unsafe.
- The Railroad does not have any spurs or rail houses.
- All major collectors and arterial roads need improvement.

#### **Streetscape and Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation**

- Martin Luther King Jr. Way from Highway 99 to 8<sup>th</sup> Street is very unattractive.
- Many roads are not friendly for bicycles or pedestrians – need bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, and sidewalks.
- There are limited pedestrian and bicycle connections through the area.

#### **Road Maintenance**

- Some roads in the area need resurfacing (especially along Childs, 59 and Tyler).
- Tyler and Gerard need improvement – housing was built, but adjacent roads were not improved.
- Arterials in the area need improvement.

- Childs Avenue is very narrow and experiences flooding problems.

#### **Parking**

- Big-rig commercial trucks often cut through residential neighborhoods and park in residential neighborhoods.
- Residents often park their cars on front lawns.

#### **Safety**

- Transients often congregate at the park on 6<sup>th</sup> and “S” Street.

### **IV. PROCESS QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Participants asked the following questions and provided the following recommendations with regard to the planning process:

- What is a Strategic Plan?
- How was the South Merced planning boundary determined?
- The planning area is large – Consider reducing the planning area’s size.
- Determine which areas need the most critical improvements and concentrate resources into improvement nodes.
- Investigate the use of Brownfield resources for implementing top priority improvement actions.
- Consider using set-aside money toward South Merced improvements.
- Continue ongoing public participation in the planning process.

### **V. NEXT STEPS**

Two more Community Workshops are planned over the next four months, with the next one scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2003. The purpose of this workshop will be to begin to identify action steps for implementing the proposed vision. The next Task Force meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. in the Sam Pipes Room in the Civic Center at 678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced.

# S U M M A R Y M E M O

*Project:* South Merced Strategic Plan

*Subject:* Task Force Meeting #3

*Date:* June 19, 2003/ 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On June 19, 2003, the Task Force convened to discuss Strategic Plan development progress made to-date, and to refine potential action strategies for improving the South Merced area. This Task Force meeting was one of a series of meetings that are being held to help develop a Strategic Plan for the South Merced area. Three Community Workshops and a number of focus group meetings and Technical Advisory Committee meetings are also being held to develop the Plan.

The meeting was held at the Merced Civic Center, Sam Pipes Room between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., facilitated the meeting. He began by introducing the Planning Team and reviewing the agenda for the meeting. Next, Mr. Tuttle presented an overview of the emerging action framework and invited a discussion of additional actions and priority actions.

This memorandum summarizes the feedback generated during the meeting.

The summary is organized into the following sections:

- I. Emerging Action Framework
- II. Challenges
- III. Action Priorities
- IV. Process Comments/Questions
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Appendix

## **I. EMERGING ACTION FRAMEWORK**

Task Force participants reviewed the Emerging Action Framework and identified more specific directives related to many of the major goal areas. Their comments are organized into goal categories below.

### **Parks, Open Space & Community Facilities**

- Develop a central area with a retail plaza and park for South Merced.
- Expand the open space framework in South Merced (but also ensure safety, security and visibility).
- Consider designing a water feature that is unique to South Merced.
- Use South Merced’s irrigation canals and storm water drainage swales to create a unique and attractive water feature: meander the storm water swales to their detention area in a creative and attractive way.
- Consider developing a golf course near the airport to draw visitors to South Merced and to provide additional open space while satisfying airport adjacency requirements.

### **Economic Development**

- Conduct a market study to assess the population, shopping preferences, income levels, housing quantity, and traffic volume to determine what type and scale of commercial facilities may be appropriate and viable (for example, people shop differently today and this changes targets – one-stop shopping at big box grocery outlets may be more popular than shopping at small corner markets).
- Attract a grocery store and drug store (or a grocery store w/a drug store inside) to the area. The store should provide enough range of inventory to be able to provide a week’s worth of groceries for families.
- Establish criteria/standards for a new market/grocery store and other commercial developments in South Merced: development should be attractive and should be of high caliber quality and design.
- Improve Highway 140 with hotels/motels, retail and an outlet mall to cater to Yosemite tourists (“tourist corridor”).
- Build an RV Park at the Fairgrounds to support Fair visitors (County project underway).
- Consider developing recreation-related retail uses adjacent to the Fairgrounds, such as party supply, events coordination, and food services.
- Explore potential funding sources for commercial redevelopment, such as: redevelopment funding, Brownfield funding (for dairy and junkyard), Proposition

funding (50, 99, etc.), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for joint City/County efforts.

## **Regulatory Framework**

- Complete Specific Plans in the South Merced area.
- Define specific areas in which to encourage annexation in phases.
- Annex land to allow for development of commercial neighborhood services.
- Maintain “rural residential” use and amend the animal code to allow certain animals to be “grandfathered” in – (Make the City code match County code).

## **Circulation & Transportation**

### *Potential Improvement Areas*

- Align Childs/Highway 59 and improve intersection safety for pedestrians.
- Reroute truck traffic from “V” street to a new intersection farther north at 99 and Thornton. Potential truck route could follow 99, 140, Thornton and Mission.

### *Resource Opportunities*

- Seek local funding through Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG).
- MCAG is studying a transportation impact fee – Consider using area-wide impact fee resources for priority transportation improvements.
- Investigate potential RTPA funding.
- Explore Caltrans funding possibilities for safety-related improvements.
- Investigate potential TLC (Transportation for Livable Communities) funding resources.

## **Identity, Character & Community Design**

- Improve pedestrian access in South Merced with sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting (especially around schools, parks and retail areas – many residents do not own cars).
- Investigate “Safe Route to School” funding to finance potential pedestrian improvements.
- Preserve the rural character of South Merced.
- Tie North and South Merced together.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization and Preservation**

- Preserve existing residential neighborhoods.
- Resolve issues related to lack of services (such as roads, sidewalks, and shopping) before approving construction of additional housing.
- Do not allow rezoning to higher densities or changing commercial zones, which might limit opportunities for creating a neighborhood shopping center.
- Ensure that neighborhood parks, commercial areas and business parks are safe, secure and visible – Keep areas well-lighted, well-patrolled, and promote designs that are conducive to “eyes-on-the-street”.
- Improve lighting in existing neighborhoods
- Improve lighting in areas that provide access to airport industrial parks.
- Coordinate with the Police Department to identify strategies for improving safety in the area.

### **Programs, Services & Community Organization**

- Coordinate with the Police Department to identify strategies for improving safety in the area. The Neighborhood Watch Program and mobile units have proven successful.
- Improve neighborhood services.

## **II. CHALLENGES**

Task Force participants emphasized the following points as challenges to be addressed during Plan development.

### **Identity, Character & Community Design**

- Some areas around business parks and parks pose safety concerns.
- There are many constraints to locating opportunity sites for new residential and commercial development – sites are limited.

### **Transportation/Circulation**

- Many roads in the area are small, narrow and unimproved.
- Truck traffic from Highway 99 down “V” Street (residential) is heavy.

### **Economic Development**

- Some potential opportunity sites for commercial development are purchased and rezoned for higher density housing in the existing residential neighborhood.

### **III. ACTION PRIORITIES**

The Task Force highlighted the following actions as top priorities for implementation.

- ✓ *Complete Specific Plans in the South Merced area.*
- ✓ *Develop a public plaza/gathering place in connection with a retail center.*
- ✓ *Improve neighborhood services: roads, sidewalks, shopping.*
- ✓ *Attract neighborhood-serving retail uses, such as a grocery store/pharmacy near the Childs/MLK intersection and east of Hwy. 99 (accessible from surrounding neighborhoods).*
- ✓ *Use irrigation canals and storm water drainage swales to create a unique water feature and trails network linking S. Merced parks and open space.*
- ✓ *Make intersection improvements at Childs and 59 (align, widen, improve visibility and pedestrian safety).*
- ✓ *Improve Highway 140 as a “tourist corridor” with visitor-serving retail uses such as hotels/motels, restaurants, sporting goods and specialty retail.*

#### **IV. PROCESS COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

Task Force members posed the following questions for clarification to help the Strategic Plan development process move forward.

- What projects are currently underway in South Merced?
- Determine what an appropriate shopping center size would be for the South Merced area based on an economic/market study.
- Check the City's study on retail stores and market demand.
- Inventory how much land in the area is available for housing.
- Check on the location and timeline for development of the proposed golf course on Highway 140.

#### **V. NEXT STEPS**

Two more Community Workshops are planned over the next four months, with the next one scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2003. The purpose of this workshop will be to refine and prioritize action steps for implementing the proposed vision. The next Task Force meeting will also be held on Wednesday, August 27, 2003 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Sam Pipes Room in the Civic Center at 678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced.

# S U M M A R Y M E M O

*Project:* South Merced Strategic Plan

*Subject:* Workshop #2/Task Force Meeting #4

*Date:* July 17, 2003/ 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On July 17, 2003, approximately 25 community members convened for a Workshop to identify key improvement strategies for South Merced. This was the second community Workshop in a series of public meetings that are being held to develop a Strategic Plan for the South Merced area.

The purpose of this second Workshop was to confirm the vision described at the first Workshop and to review as well as refine improvement actions suggested at the first Workshop, the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting and Task Force Meetings.

The meeting was held at the Merced Senior Center between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., welcomed participants and reviewed the agenda for the evening. Next, Mr. Tuttle made a presentation, reviewing the strategic planning process and summarizing the community vision and action priorities discussed to-date. Jill Eulate (also of MIG, Inc.) assisted by recording community comments on a large wall graphic.

The major vision categories reviewed include:

- Improve Circulation/Transportation;
- Enhance Identity/Character/Community Design;
- Strengthen Economic Development;
- Alter Regulatory Framework to Facilitate Development;
- Revitalize and Preserve Neighborhoods and Housing;
- Improve Community Programs and Organization;
- Improve Infrastructure and Public Services; and
- Enhance Parks and Open Space/Community Facilities.

In connection with each one of these categories, Mr. Tuttle presented a number of key strategies that the community identified as critical to supporting the overall goals. During and after the presentation, participants made clarifications and additional suggestions to refine the emerging South Merced development strategy. Feedback generated at the Workshop is organized below under categories representing vision, implementation actions, and issues.

## **I. SOUTH MERCED VISION**

### **Enhance Identity/Character/Community Design**

- Use set-aside funding for street improvements – there are a number of set-aside sources.
- Establish a street tree-planting program.
- Organize neighborhood organization-sponsored clean-up events for individual neighborhoods.
- Create neighborhood associations to empower community members and improve neighborhoods.
- Continue County Fair-sponsored neighborhood meetings through Code Enforcement and the Police Department.

### **Strengthen Economic Development**

- Attract economic/employment uses for S. Merced related to U.C. Merced’s professional programs, such as environmental research and business.

### **Revitalize and Preserve Neighborhoods and Housing**

- Foster a sense of ownership in neighborhoods to support neighborhood improvement and stewardship.
- Provide home ownership incentives, such as through grants and “urban homesteading” programs.
- Develop infill housing such as town homes and condominiums to provide a wider range of opportunities for ownership.
- Limit additional affordable single-family housing.

### **Improve Circulation and Transportation**

- Relocate the truck traffic on Highway 59.
- Investigate the use of long-term state transportation dollars (STP program).
- Initiate a partnership between the County transportation Commission and the City to allocate funding for transportation/circulation improvements.

### **Enhance Parks and Open Space/Community Facilities**

- Include storm water quality improvements in the proposed drainage swale water feature concept.
- Designate safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to key destinations, such as schools, parks and retail.

- Refurbish/resurface the existing tennis courts at Tenaya Middle School.
- Pursue a potential partnership with the Mercoata County Area Tennis Association (and the Merced City School District) to help finance Tenaya Middle School tennis court resurfacing improvements.
- Develop a 10-court tennis center at Tenaya Middle School - Reserve the area between the existing Tenaya tennis courts and “P” Street for future expansion.

### **Improve Community Programs and Organization**

- Develop tennis instruction programs and play activities for youth and adults.
- Develop after-school programs in conjunction with tennis for students.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**

Participants shared a number of ideas for effective implementation:

- Develop a financing strategy.
- Consider forming an economic development corporation to ensure long-term champions of the South Merced vision.
- Complete South Merced Specific Plans next year and pursue annexations.

## **III. ISSUES**

Community members identified the following issues that need to be addressed in planning for the area:

- There are an abundance of liquor stores in the area – make sure that new neighborhood retail is family-oriented.
- Housing overcrowding needs to be addressed.
- Jobs and housing need to be well-balanced.
- Need to determine how long the hospital will be located in South Merced – how should this future employment gap be filled?

## **IV. NEXT STEPS**

A final Community Workshop is planned for September 18<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this workshop will be to celebrate work accomplished to-date and to prioritize key actions for implementing the proposed vision. The next Task Force meeting will be held on Thursday, August 27, 2003 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Sam Pipes Room in the Civic Center at 678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced.

# S U M M A R Y M E M O

*Project:* South Merced Strategic Plan

*Subject:* Task Force Meeting #5/Technical Advisory Committee

*Date:* August 27, 2003/ 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On August 27, 2003, the Task Force and the Technical Advisory Committee convened to discuss Strategic Plan development progress made to-date, and to refine potential action strategies for improving the South Merced area.

The meeting was held at the Merced Civic Center, Sam Pipes Room between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., facilitated the meeting.

He began by introducing the Planning Team and reviewing the agenda for the meeting. Next, Mr. Tuttle presented an overview of the emerging action framework and invited a discussion of additional actions and priority actions.

This memorandum summarizes the feedback generated during the meeting.

The summary is organized into the following sections:

- I. Emerging Action Framework
- II. Challenges
- III. Action Priorities
- IV. Process Comments/Questions
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Appendix

## **I. EMERGING ACTION FRAMEWORK**

Task Force participants reviewed the Emerging Action Framework and identified more specific directives related to many of the major goal areas. Their comments are organized into goal categories below.

### **Parks, Open Space & Community Facilities**

- Develop a central area with a retail plaza and park for South Merced.
- Expand the open space framework in South Merced (but also ensure safety, security and visibility).
- Consider designing a water feature that is unique to South Merced.
- Use South Merced’s irrigation canals and storm water drainage swales to create a unique and attractive water feature: meander the storm water swales to their detention area in a creative and attractive way.
- Consider developing a golf course near the airport to draw visitors to South Merced and to provide additional open space while satisfying airport adjacency requirements.

### **Economic Development**

- Conduct a market study to assess the population, shopping preferences, income levels, housing quantity, and traffic volume to determine what type and scale of commercial facilities may be appropriate and viable (for example, people shop differently today and this changes targets – one-stop shopping at big box grocery outlets may be more popular than shopping at small corner markets).
- Attract a grocery store and drug store (or a grocery store w/a drug store inside) to the area. The store should provide enough range of inventory to be able to provide a week’s worth of groceries for families.
- Establish criteria/standards for a new market/grocery store and other commercial developments in South Merced: development should be attractive and should be of high caliber quality and design.
- Improve Highway 140 with hotels/motels, retail and an outlet mall to cater to Yosemite tourists (“tourist corridor”).
- Build an RV Park at the Fairgrounds to support Fair visitors (County project underway).
- Consider developing recreation-related retail uses adjacent to the Fairgrounds, such as party supply, events coordination, and food services.
- Explore potential funding sources for commercial redevelopment, such as: redevelopment funding, Brownfield funding (for dairy and junkyard), Proposition

funding (50, 99, etc.), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for joint City/County efforts.

## **Regulatory Framework**

- Complete Specific Plans in the South Merced area.
- Define specific areas in which to encourage annexation in phases.
- Annex land to allow for development of commercial neighborhood services.
- Maintain “rural residential” use and amend the animal code to allow certain animals to be “grandfathered” in – (Make the City code match County code).

## **Circulation & Transportation**

### *Potential Improvement Areas*

- Align Childs/Highway 59 and improve intersection safety for pedestrians.
- Reroute truck traffic from “V” street to a new intersection farther north at 99 and Thornton. Potential truck route could follow 99, 140, Thornton and Mission.

### *Resource Opportunities*

- Seek local funding through Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG).
- MCAG is studying a transportation impact fee – Consider using area-wide impact fee resources for priority transportation improvements.
- Investigate potential RTPA funding.
- Explore Caltrans funding possibilities for safety-related improvements.
- Investigate potential TLC (Transportation for Livable Communities) funding resources.

## **Identity, Character & Community Design**

- Improve pedestrian access in South Merced with sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting (especially around schools, parks and retail areas – many residents do not own cars).
- Investigate “Safe Route to School” funding to finance potential pedestrian improvements.
- Preserve the rural character of South Merced.
- Tie North and South Merced together.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization and Preservation**

- Preserve existing residential neighborhoods.
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- Improve lighting in existing neighborhoods
- Improve lighting in areas that provide access to airport industrial parks.
- Coordinate with the Police Department to identify strategies for improving safety in the area.

### **Programs, Services & Community Organization**

- Coordinate with the Police Department to identify strategies for improving safety in the area. The Neighborhood Watch Program and mobile units have proven successful.
- Improve neighborhood services.

## **II. CHALLENGES**

Task Force participants emphasized the following points as challenges to be addressed during Plan development.

### **Identity, Character & Community Design**

- Some areas around business parks and parks pose safety concerns.
- There are many constraints to locating opportunity sites for new residential and commercial development – sites are limited.

### **Transportation/Circulation**

- Many roads in the area are small, narrow and unimproved.
- Truck traffic from Highway 99 down “V” Street (residential) is heavy.

### **Economic Development**

- Some potential opportunity sites for commercial development are purchased and rezoned for higher density housing in the existing residential neighborhood.

### **III. ACTION PRIORITIES**

The Task Force highlighted the following actions as top priorities for implementation.

- ✓ *Complete Specific Plans in the South Merced area.*
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- ✓ *Make intersection improvements at Childs and 59 (align, widen, improve visibility and pedestrian safety).*
- ✓ *Improve Highway 140 as a “tourist corridor” with visitor-serving retail uses such as hotels/motels, restaurants, sporting goods and specialty retail.*

#### **IV. PROCESS COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

Task Force members posed the following questions for clarification to help the Strategic Plan development process move forward.

- What projects are currently underway in South Merced?
- Determine what an appropriate shopping center size would be for the South Merced area based on an economic/market study.
- Check the City's study on retail stores and market demand.
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#### **V. NEXT STEPS**

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