Merced General Plan Update

Purpose of City Council Public Hearing

July 17, 2006

1) Receive Public Testimony
2) Adopt a Draft SUDP for use in the General Plan Update & EIR from the options presented
3) Environmental Determination (Statutory Exemption) for Draft SUDP; EIR to be prepared for Update

Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI)

LAFCO Criteria for Sphere Revisions

1) Does the City's General Plan identify the desired Sphere of Influence and all planned land uses within the Sphere?
2) Does the General Plan contain policies regarding phasing of future annexations?
3) Are there local policies re: timing of conversion of agricultural and open space lands and the avoidance of conversion of prime soils?

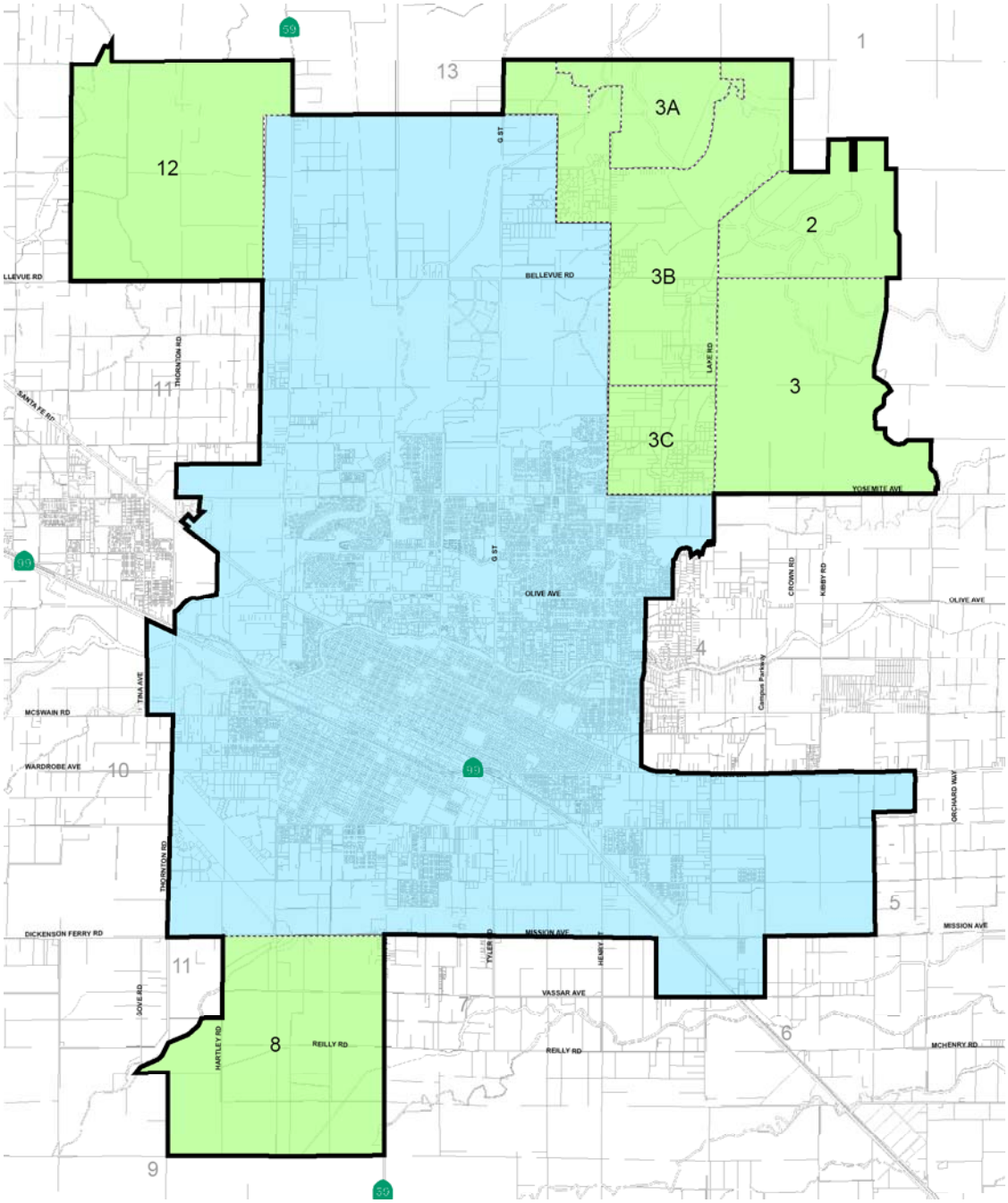
LAFCO Criteria for Sphere Revisions (Cont.)

4) Does the General Plan demonstrate the present & probable need for public facilities & services (including the sequence, timing, & probable cost) within the Sphere?
5) Does the General Plan identify the existence of any social or economic communities of interest (adjacent cities or special districts) within the planning area which may affect the boundaries?

Growth Boundary (SUDP) Expansion Options

Option 1—Limited SUDP Expansion

(360,000 Population Capacity)

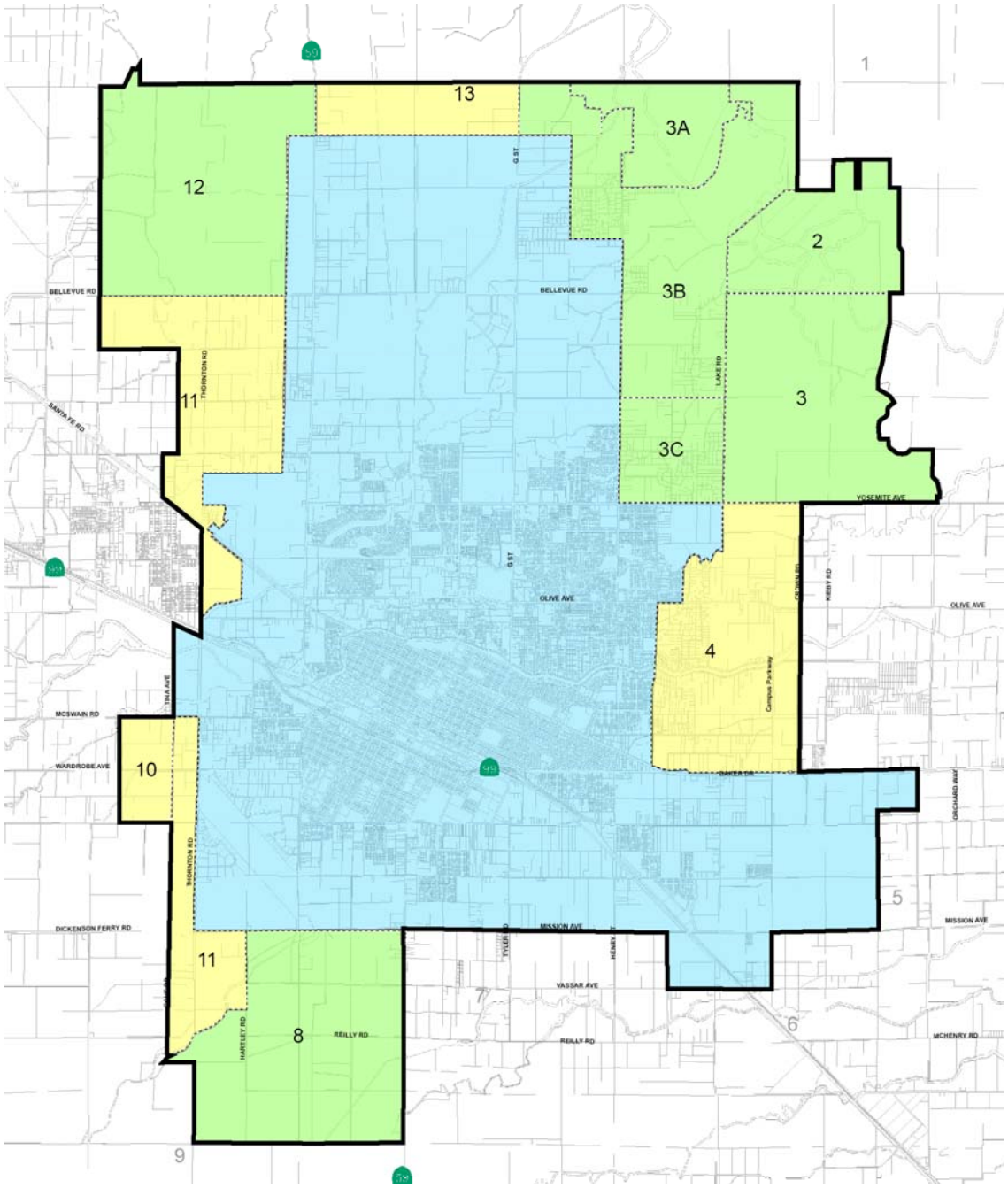


Option 1
Limited SUDP Expansion

- Includes 12,026 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 32,566 acres
- Includes Subareas:
  - Subarea 2 (UC Merced)
  - Subarea 3 (University Community)
  - Subareas 3A, 3B, & 3C (Yosemite Lakes & Rural Residential Centers)
  - Subarea 8 (Ranchwood Mission Lakes)
  - Subarea 12 (Castle Farms)
- Holding Capacity of 360,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 183,281 in new areas)

Option 2—Moderate SUDP Expansion

(436,000 Population Capacity)

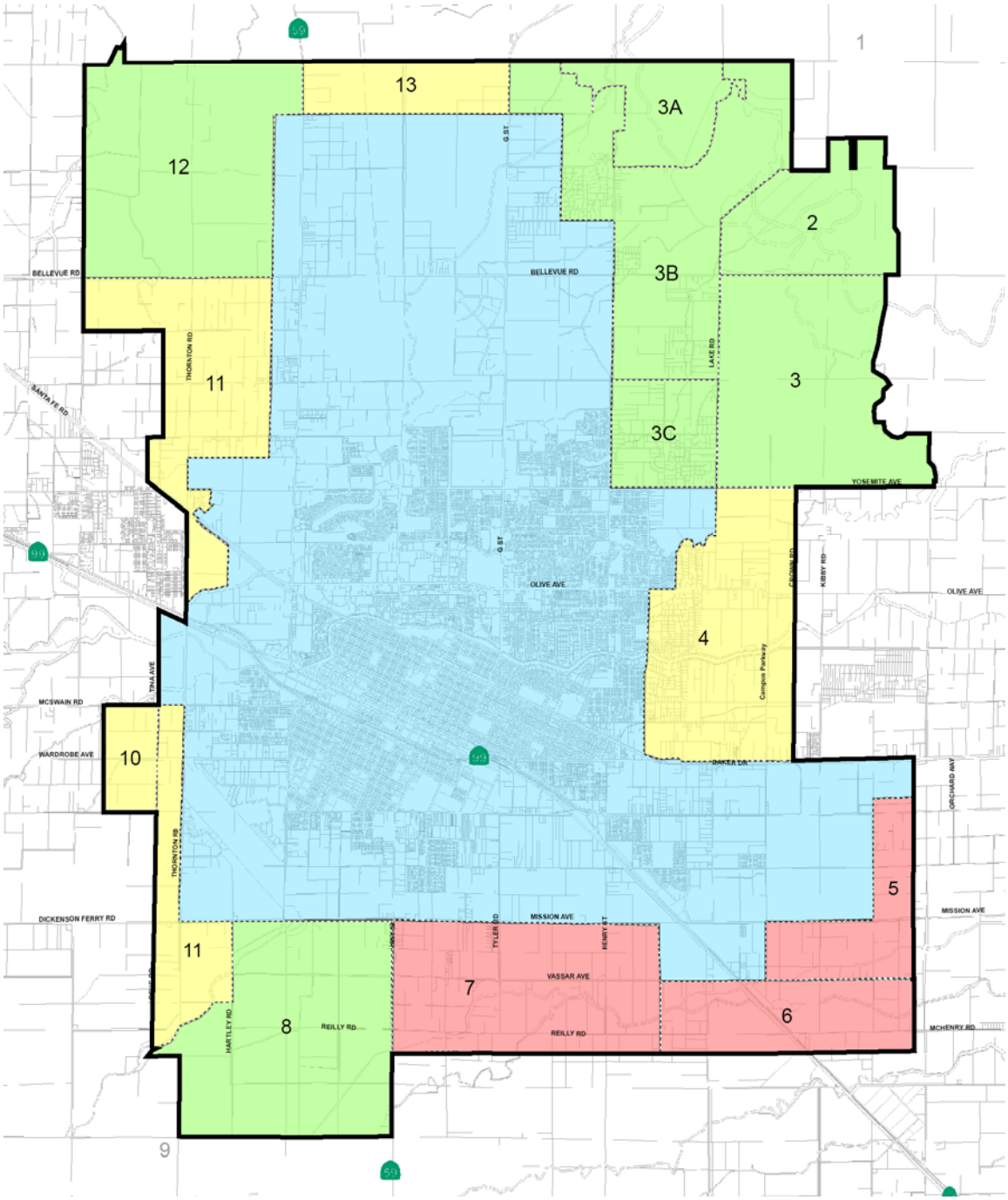


Option 2
Moderate SUDP Expansion

- Includes 17,301 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 37,841 acres
- Includes Subareas:
  - Subareas 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 3C, 8, & 12 from Option 1
  - Subarea 4 (Campus Parkway)
  - Subarea 10 (Thornton Industrial)
  - Subarea 11 (Thornton Road Corridor)
  - Subarea 13 (North Merced)
- Holding Capacity of 435,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 258,109 in new areas)

Option 3—Full Study Area/ Maximum SUDP Expansion

(493,000 Population Capacity)

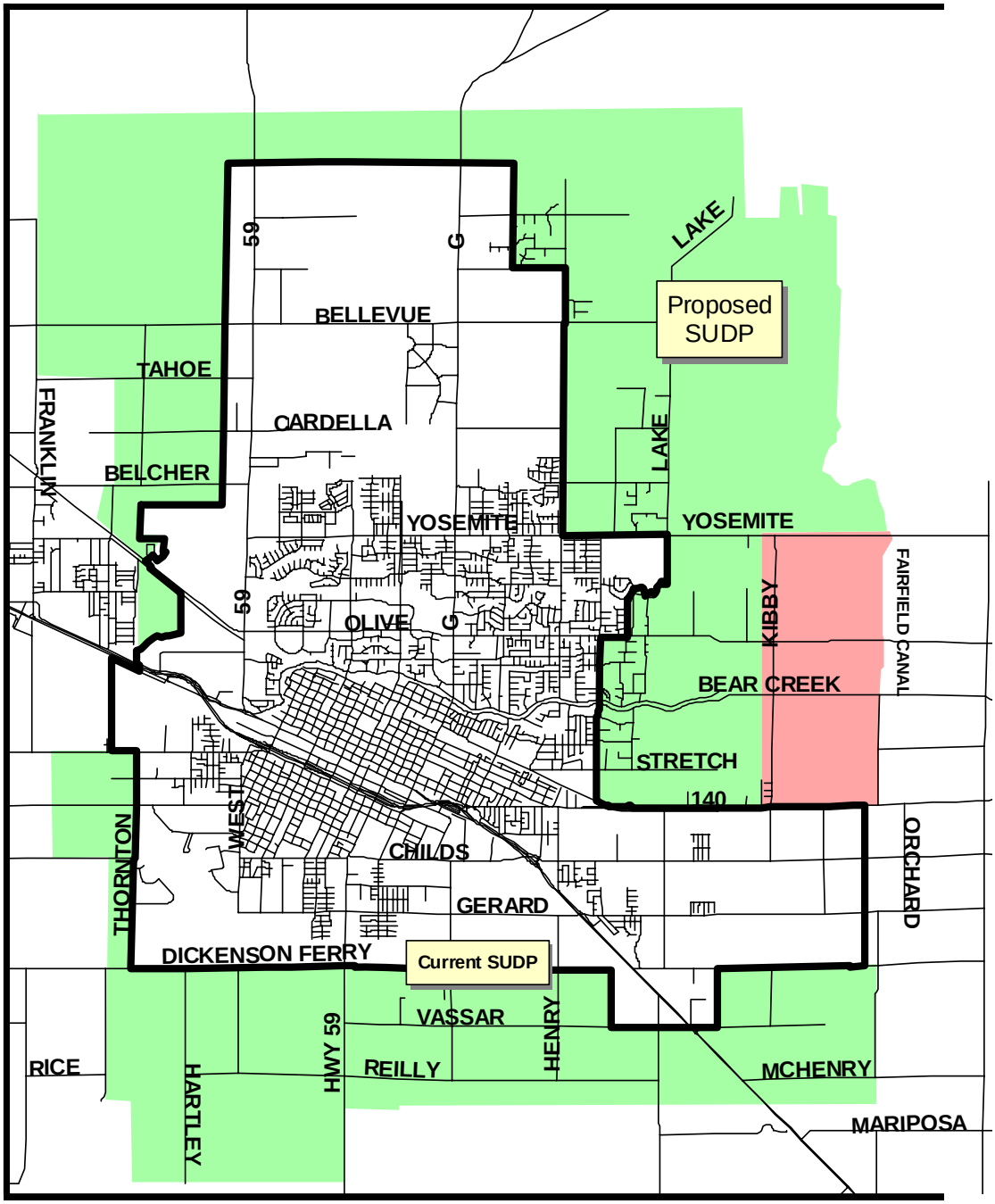


Option 3
Full Study Area/Maximum SUDP Expansion

- Includes 21,051 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 41,591 acres
- Includes Subareas:
  - Subareas 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 3C, 8, & 12 from Option 1
  - Subareas 4, 10, 11, & 13 from Option 2
  - Subarea 5 (SE Merced, North of Vassar)
  - Subarea 6 (SE Merced, South of Vassar)
  - Subarea 7 (South Merced)
- Holding Capacity of 493,000 Population (Includes 176,000 in existing SUDP and 316,709 in new areas)

Planning Commission Recommendation

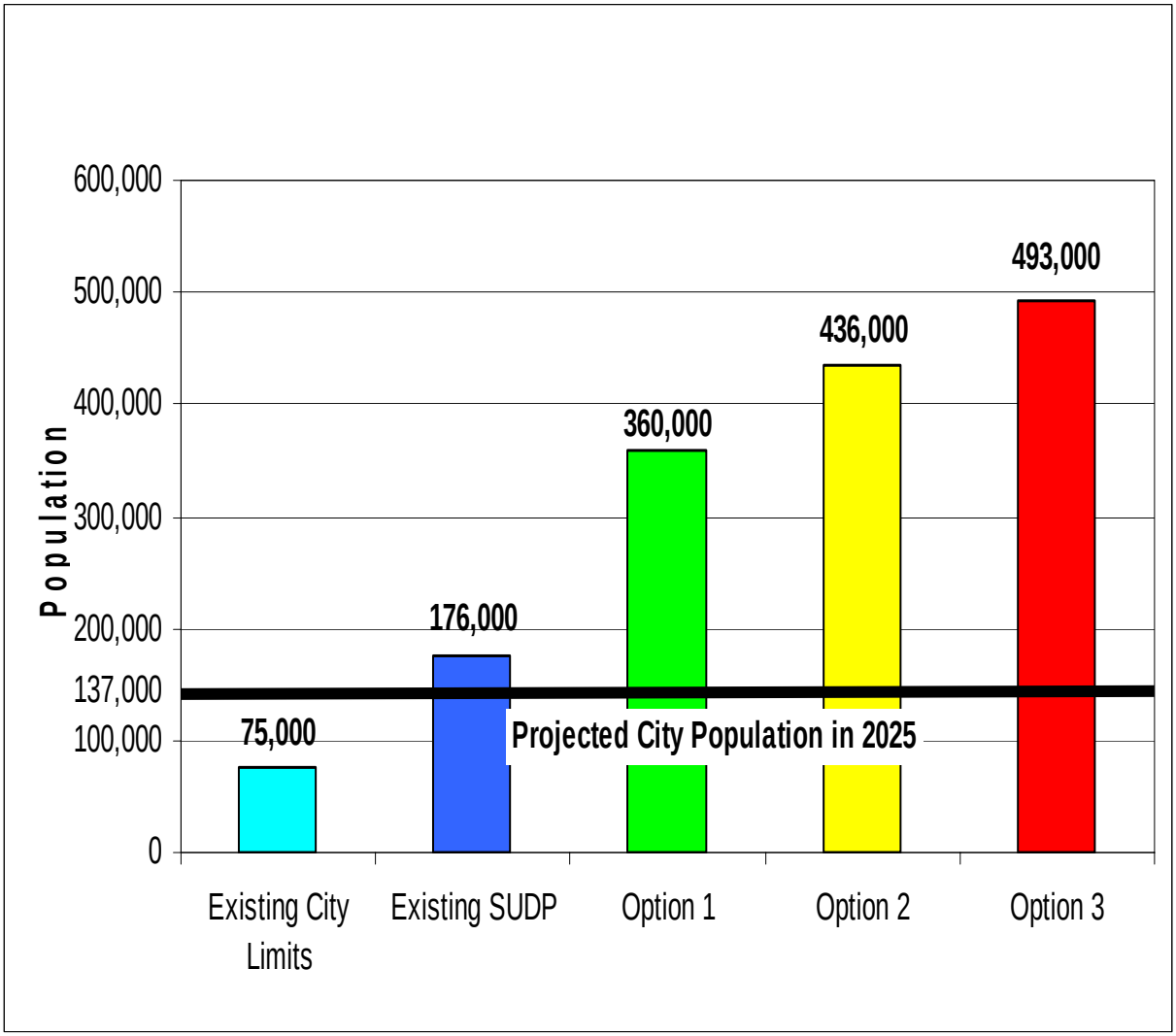
(Option 3 + Added Area to East)



Planning Commission Recommendation

- Includes 23,051 Additional Acres (beyond 20,540 acres in existing SUDP) for a total of 43,591 acres
- Includes Subareas:
  - All Subareas from Option 3
  - Plus an additional 2,000 acres east of Subarea 4, bounded by Yosemite Ave, Highway 140, & Fairfield Canal
- Holding Capacity of 493,000+ Population (Capacity of additional 2,000 acres is unknown at this time)

Holding Capacity vs. Population Projections



Growth Management Strategies

Present Growth Policies

- Policies in Merced Vision 2015 General Plan re: provision of public facilities & services, growth paying for growth, preservation of prime farmland, annexation criteria, etc.
- Master plans for public facilities, including Public Facilities Financing Plan
- LAFCO Sphere of Influence Policies (Reviewed earlier)
- LAFCO Annexation Policies

Facilities Driven Programs

- Infrastructure necessary for development must be funded prior to new development
- Set minimum levels of service and identify timing of infrastructure improvements
- Examples—Carlsbad & Chula Vista.
- Pros
  - Logical method of implementing standards
- Cons
  - City can’t control rate or direction of growth
  - Some policies are subjective and difficult to quantify

Location/Time Driven Programs

- Designate specific geographic areas that cannot be developed until a certain future point in time (“urban reserves”)
- Timing of development of reserves depends on dates (until 2010) or characteristics (development of 75% of City)
- Example—San Diego County
- Pros
  - Clear direction on where & when growth occurs
  - Transparent & predictable process
  - City needs to provide infrastructure when needed
- Cons
  - Can be inflexible
  - Projects with merit in reserve areas cannot be processed

Numerical Limits/ Growth Caps

- Set limits on amount of growth to occur over a given time frame, usually a year
- Can be a fixed amount (# of units) or a growth rate (2 % per year)
- Examples—Petaluma & Tracy
- Pros
  - Allocation process is predictable
- Cons
  - Projects with merit can't be processed if limits are already met
  - Cannot predict where or when development will occur, making infrastructure provision difficult
  - Impacts affordable housing goals

Preliminary Recommendation

- Use “Urban” and “Urban Expansion Area (UEA)” Classifications for Draft SUDP/SOI areas
- “Urban” for areas expected to be eligible for annexations in near term
  - Can meet General Plan Criteria for annexation (Policy UE-1.3.f)
- “UEA” for areas that need plans for urban services
  - Have preliminary plans in process
  - No sewer service presently available
  - Inadequate access but planning is underway
  - Areas not adjacent to existing developed areas of the City
- Area 4 (Campus Parkway) is a Joint City/County Planning Area along w/ Yosemite Lakes project

Prelim. Recommendation (Cont.)

- Criteria for converting from “UEA” to “Urban”
  - City Boundary is contiguous (or annexation is imminent) & no “islands” are created
  - A Specific or Area Plan is approved with land use, circulation, public facilities, & infrastructure
  - Public Facilities Financing Plan updated to include area; Revenue sources identified
  - Property owner is committed to finance WWTP & capacity is available
  - New sewer trunk lines planned
  - Revised Revenue Sharing Agmt w/ County in place
  - Developer agrees to install all off-site intervening infrastructure

Public Comment & Next Steps

Planning Commission/City Council Study Sessions (May 1 & 8, 2006)

- 25 citizens provided testimony
- Property owners expressed interest in being included within draft SUDP
- Some properties outside Study Area also wanted to be included
- Concerns expressed re prime farmland preservation, traffic & circulation, water supply, need for job growth, concentric growth pattern vs. linear city, etc.
- PC/CC members expressed strong support for Option #3

Letter from Gallo Farms re Yosemite Lakes Project

- Asked for 654-acre project area NW of Lake Yosemite to be left out of SUDP due to concerns re delays in obtaining State/Federal permits w/ overlapping jurisdictions
- Project proponents agreed in 2004 to be included within the future SUDP and to participate in General Plan Update
- If left outside SUDP, project will not be eligible for future City services
- Staff recommends that the project should be included within SUDP but as “Joint City/County Study Area.”

Next Steps

1) Amend Scope of Work with Consultants to complete Update & EIR
2) Planning Commission to serve as General Plan Advisory Committee
3) Plans for providing Public Facilities & Services
4) Future General Plan Recovery Fee

Questions?

Public Hearing