

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning & Permitting Division**

**STAFF REPORT: #17-09**

**AGENDA ITEM: 4.2**

**FROM:** Kim Espinosa,  
Planning Manager

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING DATE: April 19, 2017**

**PREPARED BY:** Julie Nelson,  
Associate Planner

**CITY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING DATE: May 15, 2017**

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**SUBJECT:**        **General Plan Amendment #17-01 and Site Utilization Plan Revision #2 to Planned Development (P-D) #72**, initiated by the City of Merced. This application involves: 1) amending the text of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* to designate the New Central Police Station as being located in “North Merced” instead of the previous text of “North Merced near Mansionette Drive and Yosemite Avenue;” 2) amend the General Plan land use designation from “High Medium Density Residential (HMD)” to “Neighborhood Commercial (CN)””; 3) amend the Site Utilization Plan for Planned Development #72 for the property from “Police Station” to “Neighborhood Commercial (CN).” The property is generally located at the northwest corner of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive within Planned Development (P-D) #72. \*PUBLIC HEARING\*

**ACTION:**        **PLANNING COMMISSION:**

Recommendation to City Council

- 1)        General Plan Amendment #17-01
- 2)        Site Utilization Plan Revision #2 to Planned Development (P-D) #72

**CITY COUNCIL:**

Approve/Disapprove/Modify

- 1)        General Plan Amendment #17-01
- 2)        Site Utilization Plan Revision #2 to Planned Development (P-D) #72

**SUMMARY**

The subject site is located at the northwest corner of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive (Attachment A) within Planned Development (P-D) #72. The 4.54-acre site was originally designated for High-Medium Density Residential (HMD), but in 2010, when Planned Development (P-D) #72 was established, it was designated for a future Police Station (Attachment B). After considering this site for a Police Station, the City Council determined it was not a suitable

site for the use, but is best suited for a commercial use. Therefore, the Council has directed staff to process a change to the General Plan designation from High Medium Density (HMD) to Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and to amend the Site Utilization Plan for Planned Development (P-D) #72 changing the designation for the site from “Police Station” to Neighborhood Commercial (CN) as shown on the map at Attachment C.

No specific commercial project has been proposed for the site. The proposed change to the land use designation would make it possible for a future commercial development to occupy this site. If the General Plan Land Use Designation and Site Utilization Designation are changed to “Neighborhood Commercial,” the uses allowed on this site would be those allowed in a Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) zone. For a list of permitted and conditional uses allowed within a Neighborhood Commercial zone, please refer to the table at Attachment D.

Because the site is located across the street from a developed parcel within an R-1-6 zone, all development on the site would be subject to the Interface Regulations found in Chapter 20.32 of the Zoning Ordinance. Interface regulations are intended to protect existing residential neighborhoods and to ensure that new development is designed in a manner to minimize negative impacts on nearby uses to the greatest extent possible. For a full explanation of the Interface Regulations, please refer to Attachment E.

In addition to changing the designation for the subject site, a text amendment is required for the General Plan document. Chapter 5.2.2 *Police Protection* of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* states: “The Central Station will be relocated in the future to a site in North Merced near Mansionette Drive and Yosemite Avenue.” Because the Central Police Station will no longer be located at this site, the text should be modified as follows: “The Central Station will be relocated in the future to a site in North Merced.” Refer to Attachment F for the specific text proposed to be changed. A new map of the Police Districts (included with Attachment F) will also be substituted at Figure 5.2 on page 5-5.

If the General Plan Amendment (including the change in the land use designation and the text amendment) and the Site Utilization Plan Revision are approved by City Council, the Council would take a subsequent action to declare the site “surplus property.” Once that is done, the site could be marketed for sale.

Planning staff is recommending approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment (for the land use designation and text amendment) and the Site Utilization Plan Revision.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of General Plan Amendment #17-01 and Site Utilization Plan Revision #2 to Planned Development (P-D) #72 (including the adoption of the Resolution at Attachment H) subject to the following conditions:

- \*1) The General Plan designation shall be changed from High-Medium Density Residential (HMD) to Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and the land use designation for the Site Utilization Plan for Planned Development (P-D) #72 shall be changed from “Police Station” to “Neighborhood Commercial” for the property located at the northwest corner of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive as shown on the map at Exhibit 1 (Attachment C of Planning Commission Staff Report #17-09).

- \*2) The official map for Planned Development (P-D) #72 shall be modified to show this site as “Neighborhood Commercial.”
- \*3) All future proposed projects at this site shall comply with all standard Municipal Code and Subdivision Map Act requirements as applied by the City Engineering Department as well as all standards adopted for Planned Development (P-D) #72.
- \*4) All other applicable codes, ordinances, policies, etc. adopted by the City of Merced shall apply.
- 5) The text found in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* at Chapter 5.2.2 Police Protection, page 5-6 shall be changed to read as follows: “The Central Station will be relocated in North Merced” (Refer to Attachment F of Planning Commission Staff Report #17-09). The map shown as Figure 5.2 on page 5-5 of the General Plan shall be changed to the map included with Attachment F of Planning Commission Staff Report #17-09.
- 6) All development on the site would subject to the Interface Regulations of Chapter 20.32 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, all permitted uses on the site would be subject to Site Plan Review.

(\*) Denotes non-discretionary conditions.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project involves a General Plan Amendment that would amend the land use designation for the subject site from High-Medium Density Residential (HMD) to Neighborhood Commercial and a General Plan text amendment that would remove the reference to the new Central Police Station being located at the northwest corner of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive. In addition, the project includes a Site Utilization Plan Amendment to change the land use designation within Planned Development (P-D) #72 from “Police Station” to “Neighborhood Commercial” (CN).

Surrounding Uses  
(Attachment A)

<b>Surrounding Land</b>	<b>Existing Use of Land</b>	<b>City Zoning Designation</b>	<b>City General Plan Land Use Designation</b>
North	Storm Drain Basin/Single-family Dwellings	P-D #72/R-1-6	High-Medium Density (HMD) / Low Density (LD)
South	In-Shape Health Club	P-D #26	Park/Open Space
East	St. Patrick’s Catholic Church	R-1-6	Low Density (LD)
West	Vacant	P-D #72	Commercial Office (CO)

## **BACKGROUND**

The project site was annexed into the City in 1990. At that time, the site was given a General Plan designation of High-Medium Density Residential and a corresponding zoning designation of R-3-2. These designations would allow for multi-family development. This area was also incorporated into the Northeast Yosemite Specific Plan and designated for residential development.

In 2010, the City approved General Plan Amendment #10-02, Zone Change #410, and the Establishment of Planned Development (P-D) #72. At that time, the site was designated as “Future Police Station” (Attachment B).

## **FINDINGS/CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **General Plan Compliance and Policies Related to This Application**

- A) The proposed General Plan Amendment and Site Utilization Plan (SUP) Revision would comply with the General Plan designation of Neighborhood Commercial and the zoning designation of Planned Development (P-D) #72 if the proposed amendments are approved by the City Council.

### **Traffic/Circulation**

- B) Traffic and circulation impacts would be evaluated upon receipt of a specific project. Typical uses within a Neighborhood Commercial zone could range from a grocery store, to a fast-food restaurant, to a retail store.

Commercial uses on this site would most likely have a driveway entrance on the future east-west road to be constructed between the subject site and the drainage basin (Attachment B). However, traffic would still have to travel on either Mansionette Drive or the future Sandpiper Drive on the west side of the site to access the east-west road. Therefore, there is potential for additional traffic to be generated on Mansionette Drive. Given the fact there is a traffic signal at the intersection of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive, it's likely Mansionette Drive would see the largest increase in traffic. Sandpiper Drive would only allow right turns onto Yosemite Avenue. Both Mansionette Drive and the future Sandpiper Drive would have access to Mercy Avenue to the north.

Traffic impacts for the previous land use designation were evaluated with the environmental review for the General Plan. Although uses under the proposed Neighborhood Commercial designation may increase the traffic slightly, it is not anticipated that the increase would be significant. Additionally, due to the fact that permitted uses on the site would be subject to Interface Regulations (Condition #6), traffic impacts would be reviewed at the Site Plan Review stage for permitted uses or the Conditional Use Permit stage for conditional uses.

### **Parking**

- C) The General Plan Amendment and Site Utilization Plan Revision do not include a specific project and is solely a change to the land use designation for the site. Any future use would be required to comply with all parking requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

### **Public Improvements/City Services**

- D) Per the requirements of the Merced Municipal Code, any future development on this site would be required to share in the cost of installing Sandpiper Drive along the property's western frontage and the east-west local road between this site and the drainage basin to the north. The site may be responsible for constructing the portion of either or both streets along the site's frontage or for paying a fair share of the cost of the construction of either or both streets in the future. If the streets were constructed prior to development, the site

would be responsible for reimbursing the developer who constructed the streets if development occurs within 15 years of the streets being constructed (Merced Municipal Code Section 17.58).

Development of the site would also be responsible for installing or repairing any missing or damaged public improvements along the property frontage at time of development. Additional may be needed depending on the type of development.

#### **Building and Site Design/Landscaping**

- E) There is no specific project at this time. Therefore, there is no building, site or landscape design.

#### **Neighborhood Impact/Interface**

- F) The subject site is located at the corner of Yosemite Avenue and Mansionette Drive. Mansionette Drive is the main access to the Mansionette subdivision north of the site. This subdivision consists of 114 existing homes and an additional 20 homes which will be under construction within the next year. Across Mansionette Drive from the site is the St. Patrick's Catholic Church. To the west across future Sandpiper Drive, a commercial office development is proposed which would include a pharmacy, a hotel, restaurant, bank, and other office uses. Across Yosemite Avenue is a commercial center which includes Raleys, restaurants, a gas station, and other retail and office uses. Refer to the map at Attachment A for the location of the surrounding uses.

Impacts to the surrounding neighborhood would depend on the proposed use. Possible impacts to the neighborhood resulting from the proposed change would include noise and traffic-related impacts. These impacts along with any other impacts from a specific development would be evaluated at the development stage through the Site Plan Review process (in compliance with Interface Regulations) or Conditional Use Permit process.

#### **Signage**

- G) Any future development on the subject site would be required to comply with the North Merced Sign Ordinance.

#### **Environmental Clearance**

- H) Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the project was reviewed and an Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan* SCH#2008071069 (Attachment G) was prepared and administratively approved in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The Planning Commission is not required to take any action on the Environmental Review, but it is provided at Attachment G for the Commission's information only.

#### **Attachments:**

- A) Location map
- B) P-D Map
- C) Map with Proposed Changes
- D) C-N Zoning Excerpt

Refer to Attachment 1 through 7 of the Administrative Report for Attachments A through F of the Planning Commission Staff Report.

- E) Chapter 20.32 – Interface Regulations
- F) General Plan Text Amendment and revised Figure 5.2
- G) Addendum to EIR for *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*
- H) Draft Planning Commission Resolution

Addendum to the Merced  
Vision 2030 General Plan  
Final Program Environmental  
Impact Report

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General Plan Amendment – GPA#17-01  
Site Utilization Plan Revision (SUP) #2 to Planned  
Development (P-D) #72  
Environmental Review File #17-04  
Initial Study/Addendum

**LEAD AGENCY:**

**City of Merced**  
678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340  
*Contact:* Julie Nelson, Associate Planner  
(209) 385 - 6967

April 2017

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# INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") recognizes that between the date an environmental document is completed and the date that the project is fully implemented, CEQA Section 15164 provides that "the lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some change or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 call for the preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.

On January 3, 2012, the Merced City Council approved the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report ("FEIR"). The FEIR analyzes the implementation and buildout of the General Plan through the 2030 planning period. As a Program level EIR, the FEIR did not review specific proposals, but rather analyzed the development potential of approximately 33,462 acres of land within the Specific Urban Development Planning Area (SUDP) and the Sphere of Influence (SOI). This included approximately 800.08 acres of HMD (High-Medium Density) residential lands and approximately 291.27 acres of CN (Neighborhood Commercial) lands (2.38 % and 0.87 percent of the total lands, respectively).

Language was included in Section 5.2.2 in the Public Services and Facilities Element to describe the need for a centralized police station to address the anticipated increase in demand for personnel, equipment and facilities in the Central Area. The proposed General Plan Amendment would remove the last paragraph of Section 5.2.2 that refers to the relocation of the Central Station to a location near E. Yosemite Avenue and Masonette Drive. This revision will provide flexibility for relocation of the Central Station to a location that better serves the actual increase in demand for personnel, equipment and facilities in the Central Area. The future location of the Central Station has not yet been determined. Once an appropriate site has been identified for the Central Station, any development would require separate planning and environmental review by the City.

The General Plan Amendment will redesignate the land use designation of subject parcel from HMD (High to Medium Density) to CN (Neighborhood Commercial) in the Land Use Map. In addition, Planned Development #72 and the Site Utilization Plan will be revised to remove the Police Future Station designation from the property located on the northwest corner of E. Yosemite Avenue and Masonette Drive. No specific development project is proposed at this time for this property.

The California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines Section 15162 (a) provide that after a FEIR has been approved, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for a project unless the lead agency determines that, based on substantial evidence in light of the whole record, one or more of the following criteria are met:

- (1) *Substantial changes are proposed in the project, which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;*

- 2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.
- 3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time of the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
  - A. *The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;*
  - B. *Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;*
  - C. *Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative;*
  - D. *Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.*

CEQA Guidelines 15164 (a) states the following regarding the preparation of an Addendum to an EIR:

- (a) *The lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.*

The Initial Study concludes that the environmental impacts of the General Plan, as modified by the General Plan Amendments and revision to the Planned Development (P-D) #72 and Site Utilization Plan proposed by this project do not require substantial changes to the FEIR, will not create any form of significant environmental impacts that were not previously analyzed in the FEIR, nor will the impacts of the project will be more severe than those already analyzed in the FEIR. Therefore, the City of Merced has determined that an Addendum to the FEIR is the appropriate level of CEQA documentation for the project.

Pursuant to Section 15164 ( c) and (d), this Addendum need not be circulated for public review, but shall be considered, along with the FEIR, by the City Council prior to approving the proposed amendments to the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan and Planned-Development #72 (P-D #72) & Site Utilization Plan.

## INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following documents were utilized during preparation of this Initial Study and are incorporated by reference in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15148 and 15150.

- City of Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, adopted January 3, 2012
- Final Program Environmental Impact Report City of Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, July 2011 (certified on January 3, 2012)

These documents are available at:

City of Merced Planning Department  
678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Merced, CA 95340

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

Merced is located in the Central San Joaquin Valley, and is the seat of the Merced County government. It is located approximately 159 miles southeast of San Francisco and is one of a chain of cities located along State Highway 99. It is located at the intersection of several state highways and is one of the primary access points to Yosemite National Park, approximately 80 miles west of the valley floor of the park, along Highway 140. The Merced General Plan planning area consists of the City's Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) boundary and the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI). The entire planning area encompasses approximately 33,462 acres (52.4 square miles).

### PROPOSED PROJECT

The project site is a vacant 4.54 acre parcel that located on the northwest corner of Yosemite Avenue and Masionette Drive. It currently designated HMD (High to Medium Density Residential) in the General Plan Land Use Map and zoned Planned Development #72 (P-D #72). The Public Facilities & Services Element includes language that refers to relocation of the Central Police Station in the future to a site in the vicinity of Yosemite Avenue and Masionette Drive. Accordingly, The Site Utilization Plan approved for P-D #72 identifies this parcel (parcel 3) a "Future Police Station".

The proposed project includes General Plan Amendments to 1) change the General Plan land use designation for the subject parcel from HMD (High to Medium Residential) to Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and 2) remove the last paragraph in Public Services and Facilities Element, Section 5.2.2, which refers to the relocation of the Central Station to a location near Yosemite Avenue and Masionette Drive. In addition, it includes a revision the Plan Development (P-D) #72 Site Utilization Plan to change the designation of parcel 3 to CN (Neighborhood Commercial). The proposed project does not include any specific project development application for this parcel. Any future specific development on parcel 3 will be subject to

approval of a revision of the Planned Development #72 Site Utilization Plan and applicable development entitlement permits and environmental review by the City.

## APPROVALS

The proposed project would require the following City approvals:

- Environmental Review File #17-04– approval of Addendum
- General Plan Amendment to Land Use Map and to Public Facilities and Services Element – GPA#17-01
- Site Utilization Plan Revision (SUP) #2 to Planned Development (P-D) #72

# INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

The Initial Study Checklist is as recommended by Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* and has been prepared to determine if the proposed changes to the General Plan will trigger any new or more severe significant environmental impacts as compared to those analyzed in the context of the FEIR.

The issue areas evaluated in this Initial Study include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A Final Program EIR ("FEIR") was previously certified for the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan; therefore, this Initial Study is being prepared by the Lead Agency, the City of Merced, to determine whether an Addendum, Subsequent EIR or a Supplement to an EIR is required for the proposed project, in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines*, §§ 15164, 15162, or 15163. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* §§ 15164(a), 15162(a)(1), 15162(a)(2), and 15162(a)(3), if the proposed action/revisions to the previous project do not cause "new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects," then an addendum to the previously certified EIR may be prepared.

## 1. AESTHETICS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

#### ***Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?***

The subject site is not located along any of the nine designated scenic corridors in the General Plan. Further, the Urban Design Plan in the Land Use Element contains goals and policies that will minimize impacts on these views to a less than significant level.

The proposed amendment would not modify the Urban Design Element. No specific development projects are proposed in conjunction with the General Plan Amendment. Thus, the proposed project would not involve a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista that was not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR of *less than significant impact*.

#### ***Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

The FEIR concluded that no impact to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur with implementation of the General Plan.

No state scenic highway is currently located within the project area, and the proposed General Plan amendment would not involve changes that would result in a state scenic highway being located within the project area. Thus, the proposed project would not involve scenic resources within a state scenic highway not previously considered within the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus *no impacts* would occur.

***Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?***

The FEIR concluded that the policies contained in the Urban Design Element will guide the relationship between new development and its surroundings. The City General Plan policies will work to enhance the overall aesthetic quality of streetscapes and development, and visual impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed amendment would not modify the Urban Design Element goals and policies intended to enhance the overall aesthetic quality and character of the City. Further, no specific development projects are proposed in conjunction with the proposed project. Any future development on parcel 3 would be required to undergo separate planning and environmental review, and would be required to comply with all applicable City policies and requirements related to design and aesthetics. Thus, the proposed project would not involve substantial impacts to the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings not previously considered within the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus impacts would remain less than significant.

***Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?***

The FEIR concluded that the City standard development procedures and the policies of the Urban Design Element would reduce potential impacts associated with light and glare that would affect day and nighttime views in the area to a less than significant level.

The proposed amendment would not modify the Urban Design Element goals and policies intended to reduce potential impacts associated with light and glare. Further, no specific development projects are proposed in conjunction with the General Plan Amendment. Any future development on parcel 3 would be required to undergo separate planning and environmental review, and would be required to comply with all applicable City policies and requirements related to exterior light fixtures and preventing light spillage and glare. Thus, the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare not previously considered within the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; no new impacts would result from the project that were not analyzed in the FEIR

## 2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

<i>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	No	No	Yes	✓	
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No	No	Yes	✓	
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

***Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?***

***Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?***

The proposed project site is not located within lands that are identified as Prime Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance, or within lands zoned for agricultural use of



a Williamson Act Contract. The proposed project would not involve changes to the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Thus, the proposed project would not involve lands identified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance or land zoned for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus no new impact would occur.

***Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?***

***Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?***

The FEIR stated that there are no forest lands are located within the General Plan study area. No impacts related to this environmental topic were anticipated as a result of implementation of the General Plan, and no mitigation measures were required.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

***Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?***

Refer to Impact Statements 4.2(a), 4.2(c), and 4.2(d), which concluded no impacts.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no new impact would occur.

### 3. AIR QUALITY

<i>Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</i>	<b>Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?</b>	<b>Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?</b>	<b>Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?</b>	<b>Same Impact as "Approved Project"</b>	<b>Less Impact Than "Approved Project"</b>
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	No	No	No	✓	

#### Impact Analysis

#### ***Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?***

The FEIR concluded that the General Plan policies contained in the Urban Expansion, Urban Design, Land Use and Sustainable Development Elements are designed to ensure that air quality impacts are minimized as development is designed to ensure City land-use decisions work to implement and comply with Federal, State, and local regulations pertaining to air quality. The General Plan would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the air quality plans for the region and impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The proposed project does not involve a specific development for the site, and the proposed amendments would not result in substantial changes in the planned development of the area that would result in a conflict with the air quality policies included in the General Plan.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?***

The FEIR concluded that construction-related impacts would be temporary and can be reduced to a less than significant level through compliance with existing City, State, and

SJAPCD regulations. However, the FEIR concluded that long-term impacts associated with new development in the City would contribute to a relative increase in emissions from mobile and stationary sources. Therefore, long-term air quality impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan were considered significant and unavoidable despite the implementation of goals and policies from the General Plan and mitigation measures. Therefore, buildout of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project.

The General Plan contains goals and policies to guide City efforts to support and promote a healthier and more sustainable community and help reduce overall emissions levels by promoting and supporting conservation of natural resources, reductions in automobile dependency, and reductions in waste generation. No specific development is proposed in conjunction with the proposed General Plan amendments, and therefore no pollutant emissions would occur beyond what were already accounted for in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

- ***Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?***

The FEIR concluded that development under the General Plan would result in emissions of criteria pollutants; ozone precursors and other pollutants cause by mobile source activity, area and stationary sources that would result in cumulative significant and unavoidable impacts. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project.

While the proposed amendment to the General Plan would result in a change in the planned land use of the subject site from HMD to CN, the change would result in only slightly different emissions assumptions than those reviewed under the General Plan FEIR. The proposed project would not be inconsistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR and would not result in significant impacts over those previously identified.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus impacts would remain significant, cumulative and unavoidable.

- ***Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?***

The FEIR concluded that development and operations under the General Plan would potentially expose sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations; however, the proposed General Plan amendment would not allow for additional growth beyond what was identified and analyzed in the FEIR. The proposed amendment would not lead to any new development that would generate operational emissions, nor would it result in any activities that would result in any significant impacts on sensitive receptors. The Sustainable Community Element includes policies to reduce private automobile dependence; thereby reducing vehicle trips

and potentially reducing CO hotspot impacts at intersections. No specific development is proposed as part of the proposed amendments, therefore no construction emissions would be generated as a result of the proposed project that could impact sensitive receptors.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?***

The FEIR concluded that development that would occur under the General Plan would be similar to current uses in the City and would not generate unusual or noxious odors. Any new uses would be required to comply with City regulations regarding odor control. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### 4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No	No	No	✓	
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	No	No	No	✓	

#### Impact Analysis

- ***Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***
- ***Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***

- ***Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?***
- ***Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?***
- ***Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?***
- ***Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?***

The FEIR concluded that development as envisioned in the General Plan could result in substantial adverse impacts on biological resources or habitat areas that occur within Merced, including candidate, special-status or sensitive species. Adherence to mitigation measures recommended by the biologist in the FER and standardized measures adopted by applicable regional, state and federal agencies will mitigate the potential impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, no impact to biological resources would occur with implementation of the General Plan.

The proposed amendment would not alter the boundaries of the General Plan study area, and does not propose any specific development. Thus, the proposed project would not involve areas with the potential for biological resources not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no new impact would occur as a result of the project and impacts would remain less than significant.

## 5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	No	No	No	✓	

***Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?***

***Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?***

***Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?***

***Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?***

The FEIR concluded that the implementation of the General Plan could potentially cause an adverse change to significant historic or archeological resources, and potentially disturb human remains or destroy a unique paleontological feature. Therefore, no impacts on historic resources were identified. However, policies and implementation actions in the General Plan and adherence to federal, state and local regulations will result in a less than significant impact to historic and archeological resources for individual projects. The FEIR also concluded that the incremental contribution to impacts on historic and archeological resources from the implementation of the General Plan and other General Plans in the County was a significant and unavoidable impact. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable cumulative impact that would occur without the proposed project, and to which the project would not contribute.

The proposed project would not alter the boundaries of the General Plan study area, and therefore would not include any areas not previously considered in the FEIR. Any future development within the project site would be reviewed to determine whether the proposed

project would involve removal of a historic resource or indirectly impact a historic resource; if so, appropriate mitigation would be required in compliance with state and federal law.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no new impacts from the proposed project would occur that were not previously analyzed in the FEIR.



## 6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:					
1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	No	No	No	✓	
2) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No	No	No	✓	
3) Seismic-related liquefaction? ground failure, including	No	No	No	✓	
4) Landslides?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1- B of the California Building Code (2004), creating substantial risks to life or property?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:***
- ***Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist- Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.***
- ***Strong seismic ground shaking?***

The FEIR concluded that there are no known active or potentially active, or Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones (formerly referred to as a Special Studies Zone) in the SUDP/SOI. While the planning area could be subject to ground shaking in the event of a severe earthquake along other faults in the region, seismic risk within the SUDP/SOI is considered to be less than significant.

The project does not propose any specific development or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Existing General Plan goals and policies that would minimize damage in the event of an earthquake would remain unchanged. Further, future development within the General Plan study area would be required to comply with the General Plan and existing building practices.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?***

According to the FEIR, the potential for liquefaction within the General Plan study area is low due to low groundwater levels. Therefore, no impacts associated with liquefaction were identified.

The proposed amendment would not alter the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Thus, the proposed project would not involve areas with the potential for liquefaction not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

- ***Landslides?***

According to the FEIR, slopes potentially subject to failure are generally not present within the SUDP/SOI. Existing City practices and policies in the General Plan would reduce the hazards associated with landslides to a less than significant level.

The project site is flat and would not be subject to landslides. In addition, the project does not propose any specific development.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?***
- ***Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in an on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?***
- ***Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the California Building Code (2004), creating substantial risks to life or property?***

- ***Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?***

According to the FEIR, the USDA generally describes soils within the SUDP/SOI as having light erosion potential. Soils in the area are generally moderate to deep, silty and clayey loams. The potential for soil subsidence due to earthquake motion is largely dependent on the magnitude and frequency of earthquake waves. Most of the ground subsidence in the area has happened slowly over a long period of time. No known subsidence has occurred in the Merced Planning area or has accompanied groundwater withdrawals. Soils in the Merced planning area are generally considered to be expansive with a low to moderate erosion potential and generally suitable for wastewater disposal using conventional septic systems.

The proposed project does not include a specific development. Existing General Plan goals and policies that would reduce hazards associated with soil conditions would remain unchanged. Further, future development within the General Plan study area would be required to comply with the General Plan and NPDES requirements.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus impacts would remain less than significant.

## 7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	No	No	No	✓	
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	No	No	No	✓	
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	No	No	No	✓	
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No	No	No	✓	
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**
- **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

- ***Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?***

As stated in the FEIR, businesses that use, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials would be required to comply with Federal, State, and local regulations. The General Plan goals and policies, along with existing regulations, would protect public safety. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The project would not result in any changes to General Plan goals and policies that would protect public safety. The project does not include a specific project. Further, new businesses that use, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials within the General Plan study area would be required to comply with the General Plan and existing regulations.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain *less than significant*.

- ***Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?***
- ***For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?***
- ***For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?***
- ***Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?***
- ***Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?***

Impacts related to aviation safety hazards were found to be less than significant by the FEIR. Merced participates in the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) that provides a framework for coordinating multi-agency emergency responses in case of a hazardous materials emergency. The City does not contain nor is it adjacent to any wildlands. Therefore, the FEIR concluded that no impact would occur in this regard.

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Further, the proposed amendment would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

## 8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	No	No	No	✓	
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	No	No	No	✓	
g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	No	No	No	✓	
h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	No	No	No	✓	
i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	No	No	No	✓	
j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

#### ***Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?***

As stated in the FEIR, implementation of the General Plan would allow new development, which could potentially create additional urban pollutants that may end up in surface water systems. However, the implementation of General Plan policies and implementing actions

would be self-mitigating. Therefore, the FEIR concluded the impact would be less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development. Thus, the proposed project would not involve any discharge into surface water or groundwater resources. Any future development on the site would be required to comply with regulations related to water quality.

The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?***

According to the FEIR, the Merced Sub-basin is being subject to critical conditions of overdraft, and the rate of overdraft will continue to increase with future urban development as projected in the General Plan. The implementation of policies and implementation actions in the General Plan will help reduce the impact; however, it will remain a significant and unavoidable impact. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project.

The proposed project would not change the maximum amount of urban development anticipated to occur over the planning period as part of the FEIR. No specific project is proposed at this time that would utilize groundwater. Any future development will be required to adhere to the goals and policies of the General Plan, which would continue to reduce potential impacts to groundwater resources.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain significant.

- ***Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?***
- ***Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?***

As stated in the FEIR, implementation of the General Plan itself will not alter the drainage pattern of the area. It allows for the development of future projects that could result in change of drainage patterns that could result in erosion, siltation or flooding. However, all new development will be consistent with City policies and the City's Storm Drainage Master Plan, the rules and regulations of the Merced Irrigation District (MID), federal and state regulations, and any future studies/plans as a result of the General Plan adoption. The impact was determined to be ***less than significant***.

The proposed project does not propose specific development for the subject parcel or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Existing General Plan goals and policies that would protect future development of the property from the effects of soil erosion and flooding would remain unchanged.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?***
- ***Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?***

As stated in the FEIR, implementation of the General Plan itself will not create or contribute runoff water which would exceed capacity of existing/planned systems or provide substantial additional sources of pollutants. However, it allows for the development of future projects that could result in stormwater capacity being exceeded or additional sources of pollutants. All new development will be consistent with City policies and the City's Storm Drainage Master Plan, the rules and regulations of the Merced Irrigation District (MID), federal and state regulations (such as preparing a SWPP), and any future studies/plans as a result of the General Plan adoption. The impact was determined to be *less than significant*.

The proposed project does not propose specific development for the subject parcel or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area. Existing General Plan goals and policies that would protect storm water drainage systems from the effects of future development of the property would remain unchanged.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?***
- ***Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?***

As stated in the FEIR, the City is not located within a 100-year flood hazard area. The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps classify all of Merced as Area X (minimal chance of flooding).

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area that would result in housing or structures being located within the 100-year floodplain.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.



- ***Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?***

According to the FEIR, the City could experience flooding associated with dam failure because it is located in the inundation area of two dams, Bear Reservoir Dam and Lake Yosemite dam. In addition, the implementation of the General Plan could result in additional city-wide exposure to risks associated with levee failures resulting from earthquake or other catastrophic conditions, such as earthquake or major flood event. New development must adhere to the General Plan Safety Element contains goals and policies, the City Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Municipal code, General Plan policies, MID rules and regulations, and the Merced Master Storm Drain Plan where applicable. For these reasons, the implementation of the General Plan would have a less than significant impact with respect to flood impacts associated with dam failure.

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area that would involve areas of flooding associated with a levee or dam failure not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?***

According to the FEIR, the City is not subject to tsunamis due to its inland location and distance from the ocean. The possibility of a seiche or tsunami at either at Lake Yosemite or Bear Reservoir is considered extremely low. The risk of mudflows is low due to its relatively flat topography and distance from any hillsides.

The proposed amendments would not result in modifications to the General Plan study area that would potentially subject people or structures to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

## 9. LAND USE AND PLANNING

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Physically divide an established community?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Physically divide an established community?***

The General Plan amendments do not provide for any new roadway or other physical feature that would disrupt these patterns. The FEIR concluded that no impact would occur in this regard.

The proposed amendment involves the redesignation of parcel 3 from a residential designation to a neighborhood commercial designation. This is not considered a significant change in land use patterns as land uses along Yosemite Avenue consist primarily of existing and planned commercial and institutional uses. This project does not include a any specific development.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

- ***Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?***

The General Plan implementation program provides for subsequent amendments of documents to ensure City plans/programs are consistent, as well as the ability to amend the General Plan as needed to meet development and service needs for the community and foster compact and efficient development patterns. As stated in the FEIR, implementation of the policies and implementing actions in the 2030 General Plan would result in less than significant land use conflicts with other plans, policies and regulations applicable to the Merced area..

The proposed amendments result in a minor reallocation of land uses from residential to neighborhood commercial on a 4.54 acre parcel in an area that is already planned for and developed with commercial uses. The property to the west of the subject parcel is designated Commercial Office (CO) in the General Plan. The revision to the Planned Development #72 and Site Utilization Plan would make general plan and zoning for the site consistent with each other, as well as with surrounding zoning.

Conclusion: The proposed project would involve a change in land use designation that is consistent and compatible with other land use designations in the vicinity of the project site, and would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?***

As stated in the FEIR, no Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans have been adopted for the Merced Planning Area. Therefore, the FEIR concluded that no impact would occur as a result of implementing the proposed 2030 General Plan.

The proposed amendment would not result in modifications to the General Plan study area that would involve areas subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Conclusions: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

## 10. MINERAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?***
- ***Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?***

The FEIR concluded that no impact associated with the loss of known mineral resources or a locally-important mineral resource recovery site would occur within the City of Merced or in the area designated for future expansion of the City (the SUDP/SOI). Therefore, there is no impact associated with loss of mineral resources.

The proposed amendments would not result in modifications to the General Plan study area that would involve areas with known mineral resources or locally-important mineral resource recovery sites not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusions: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

## 11. NOISE

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	No	No	No	✓	
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	No	No	No	✓	
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	No	No	No	✓	
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No	No	No	✓	
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?***
- ***Exposure to people to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.***

The FEIR determined that buildout of the General Plan will result in a significant increase in traffic noise levels along numerous roadway segments within the City and outside the SUPD/SOI area. The General Plan includes implementation actions which will assist in providing some mitigation of increased traffic noise. However, this impact was found to remain significant and unavoidable. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project.

The proposed amendment in itself would not increase traffic noise (the proposed project would not generate any traffic) or create new stationary or vehicular noise sources. The existing General Plan goals and policies would also ensure that noise levels resulting from

any future site-specific development would comply with the City's standards or be required to implement appropriate mitigation.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR and would result in no greater impacts than previously identified.

**d)        *A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?***

The proposed amendment in itself would not increase traffic noise (the proposed project would not generate any traffic) or result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. The existing General Plan goals and policies would also ensure that noise levels resulting for any future site-specific development would be required to comply with the City's noise standards.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

**c)        *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?***

Refer to Impact Statement 5.12(a), above. The FEIR determined that operational vehicular traffic noise would result in a significant increase in noise levels from implementation of the General Plan. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project. The proposed amendment would not generate any traffic and would not contribute to this impact.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR and would result in no greater impacts than previously identified.

- ***For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?***
- ***For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?***

While the City of Merced is served by two public airports, the subject parcel is not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip. Therefore, the FEIR concluded that no impact would occur in this regard.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

## 12. POPULATION AND HOUSING

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?***

According to the FEIR, the City's projected population increase associated with implementation of the General Plan would be slightly higher than projected for the subregion. The growth rate reflects a continuance of the relatively modest growth pattern and largely built-out character of the City. The General Plan is supportive of regional growth management goals and objectives and will provide opportunities for housing and employment-generating development. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The proposed amendment involves the change of land use designation of an individual parcel and does not propose site-specific development. The proposed amendment would not induce population growth within the City. In fact, the proposed amendment would involve the change of a parcel currently designated for medium-to-high density residential uses to commercial use, and therefore would preclude dwellings and resulting population growth from occurring upon that parcel.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?***
- ***Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?***

According to the FEIR, the General Plan would facilitate new housing largely within the proposed mixed-use land use categories near activity centers. General Plan policies preserve existing neighborhoods, and thus would not result in displacement of existing homes or people.

The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development. The proposed amendment would not displace existing housing or people. The project site, which is currently designated in the General Plan as HMD residential, was identified for the future location of a central police station. In addition, this site was not identified as an opportunity site in the Housing Element for purposes of meeting the city's regional housing needs allocation.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.



### 13. RECREATION

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	No	No	No	✓	

#### Impact Analysis

- ***Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?***
- ***Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?***

According to the FEIR, residents of Merced are well-served by the existing park system. Additional acreage for open space, parks, and other recreational facilities is included in the General Plan Land Use Plan Map. Goals in the General Plan Resources Element would optimize use of established parks and facilities and create additional passive recreation opportunities. Construction of new recreational facilities would follow regulations for new development and design guidelines in the General Plan. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development or allow for additional growth beyond what was identified and analyzed in the FEIR. No changes to existing land use designations that promote open space, parks, and other recreational facilities are proposed.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

## 14. PUBLIC SERVICES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:					
1) Fire protection?	No	No	No	✓	
2) Police protection?	No	No	No	✓	
3) Schools?	No	No	No	✓	
4) Parks?	No	No	No	✓	
5) Other public facilities?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:***
- ***Fire protection?***
- ***Police protection?***
- ***Other public facilities?***

According to the FEIR, current fire and police staffing and equipment and libraries are sufficient to meet City needs. The gradual population increase with General Plan implementation would incrementally increase demand for fire, police, library and health services. The General Plan Safety Element includes goals and policies to minimize impact on fire and police services. General Plan policies and existing regulations would sufficiently address fire and police protection. Library services are provided through the County and the City will continue to work with the County to insure that the County library system provides neighborhood-level service within the City. The implementation of policies in the Public Services and Facilities Element will result in less than significant impacts.

The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development. The amendments propose revisions to the language in the Public Facilities and Services Element to provide flexibility to allow the central police facility to be located where it will best serve the need that results from increased demand for police services in the Central Area. The proposed changes in the land use designation of the subject site would result in a slight reduction in residential growth beyond what was identified and analyzed in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Schools?***

The FEIR concluded that increase in population from the implementation of the General Plan would result in and increase by approximately 36,200 new residents by the year 2030. This increase in population would result in an increased student population and the need for additional school facilities. . The effects of construction and operation of additional school facilities would be evaluated by each school district when planning for new or rehabilitated schools. Construction of future school facilities is provided for through a combination of state and local sources, including the imposition of school impact fees on new construction. Accordingly, implementation of the General Plan would have no impact on schools.

The proposed amendment does not propose site-specific development. Further, the redesignation of the subject property from High to Medium Density Residential to CN (Neighborhood Commercial) would reduce the projected number of residents for the area and reduce the student population growth below what was identified and analyzed in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impact would occur.

- 
- ***Parks?***

The FEIR concluded that new development proposed under the General Plan has the potential to increase demand for parks and recreational facilities. The General Plan includes a policy of providing five acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The General Plan includes policies and implementation actions to ensure that the City's parkland goal is met, and to expand the City's bikeway and trail system and provide open space for public health and safety. Implementation of said policies and collection of fees for development of parks would result in less than significant impacts.

The proposed amendments do not include any specific development. Additionally, the amendments would result in a redesignation of the property from residential to commercial, which would reduce the number of future residents for the area.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

## 15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?	No	No	No	✓	
f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities.	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?***
- ***Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?***

The FEIR evaluated the impact from buildout of the General Plan and determined that the implementation of the General Plan would have a significant impact to the roadway system. In addition to the Goals, Policies and Implementing actions, mitigation measures were included to reduce impacts of the increased traffic. However, the traffic impacts associated with build-out are considered significant and unavoidable. The City adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012. Therefore, this is an existing significant and unavoidable impact that would occur without the proposed project.

One of the proposed mitigation measures includes improvements to “G” Street in the vicinity of the subject project. Based on the FEIR, the segment of “G” Street from Yosemite to Cardella is operating at LOS C+. This segment of roadway is to be widened from 2 lanes to 4 lanes, with projected Future LOS to remain at C+. The proposed amendment would result in a change in the number of vehicle trips and distribution of vehicle trips because of the change from HMD to CN. No specific development is currently proposed for the project site, so a full comparison of potential trip generation cannot be completed. However, based on the allowable density under the existing HMD designation, up to 109 dwelling units could be constructed, resulting in a corresponding generation of vehicle trips. Any new uses constructed under the proposed CN designation would likewise generate vehicle trips, but since development of this 4.54 acre site was already analyzed under cumulative traffic impact scenarios in the FEIR, this change is considered less than significant and would not result in conflict with policies establishing performance of the circulation system in the area, or with the congestion management program. Any future development on the site would be required to undergo planning and environmental review, as applicable, and ensure that any resulting traffic impacts are appropriately mitigated.

Therefore, significant and unavoidable impacts are anticipated to continue to occur at the identified intersections and CMP facilities with the proposed amendment, but the proposed project would not be expected to worsen or contribute to these deficiencies beyond what was already analyzed within the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR and would result in no greater impacts than previously identified.

- ***Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?***

As stated in the FEIR, there are two airports within the planning area: Merced Regional Airport is a publicly owned, public use facility providing commercial air service and freight air cargo service. Castle Air Force Base (CAFB) was closed in 1995 and renamed Castle Airport. The General Plan contains policies to ensure that development within the City of Merced and SUDP/SOI area are designed to minimize safety risks associated with traffic patterns. The impact is considered to be less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not involve site-specific development or modifications to the boundaries of the General Plan study area that would involve airport land use areas not previously considered in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, less than significant impacts would occur.

- ***Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?***
- ***Result in inadequate emergency access?***

As stated in the FEIR, the General Plan Circulation Element and Circulation Plan address design issues and land use compatibility. Additionally, future roadways and improvements will be designed in accordance with the City's Roadway Design Standards that include street cross sections designed to create a community circulation network to move people efficiently and safely through the City. Compliance with the policies of the General Plan and the City's Roadway Design Standards will ensure that there will not be a significant increase in hazards due to design features in development projects or incompatible uses. This impact is considered less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development and would not modify the goals and policies of the Circulation and Safety and Community Services Elements.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?***

As stated in the FEIR, the General Plan Circulation Element includes goals and policies that address the use of public transit and alternative modes of transportation. The Circulation Element supports alternative and public transportation that will benefit the residents of Merced. Therefore, the FEIR concluded that no impact would occur in this regard.

The proposed amendment does not involve any specific development. The proposed amendment would not modify related goals and policies of the Circulation Element.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, no impacts would occur.

## 16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No	No	No	✓	
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	No	No	No	✓	
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	No	No	No	✓	
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	No	No	No	✓	
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?***
- ***Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?***
- ***Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?***

According to the FEIR, implementation of the General Plan would be expected to result in additional growth requiring additional wastewater treatment. The General Plan would not

result in development of uses that could result in exceeding established treatment standards. Planned improvements to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) would be able to serve a population of 174,000, which is more than 12% higher than the projected 2030 population of 155,000 (SOI estimates). Since the City is required to comply with the CVRWQCB when expanding the WWTP to support the General Plan, implementation of the General Plan would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements. This impact is considered less than significant.

All water, sewer, and drainage improvements and infrastructure would be provided on a project- by-project basis. Payment of fees would provide funds for new regional systems and facilities to accommodate growth. The City, as part of its standard development review process, would review all individual improvement plans and control their construction. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development. The amendment would not impact policies included in the General Plan to address wastewater requirements.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?***

According to the FEIR, new development associated with implementation of the General Plan would result in the need for additional water supply facilities. The General Plan and Water Master Plan will provide a water system capital improvement program to ensure that this need is met. General Plan policies require that new development provide or pay for its fair share of public facilities and infrastructure improvements. The impact is considered less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not propose site-specific development. Implementation of the policies would support and enhance the water conservation goals and policies within the General Plan Resources Element.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?***

According to the FEIR, the City of Merced has already anticipated the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity to meet the demand for the implementation of the General Plan. Plans for the expansion of the treatment plant were approved by the California State Water Resources Board and the additional capacity will exceed the anticipated waste water general of the proposed City's 2030 population. Extension of the collection system was analyzed in the 2002 and 2007 Wastewater Collection Master Plan. The impact is considered less than significant.



The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development or changes that would allow for additional growth beyond what was identified and analyzed in the FEIR.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?***

According to the FEIR, solid waste services for the planned area will be provided by the City of Merced and hauled to the Merced County Highway 59 Landfill. The Landfill was expanded in 2001 and the expansion will meet the increased demand until 2030 as an expected close date. Policies in the General Plan will help reduce the amount of solid waste generated and increase recycling efforts in the City. The impact is considered less than significant.

Conclusion: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

- ***Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?***

As stated in the FEIR, the City has a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) in order to divert solid waste in compliance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939). The General Plan Safety and Community Services Element provides goals and policies that address solid waste reduction. The City complies with AB 939 to divert solid waste from local landfills through various conservation, recycling and composting measures, and continues to comply with federal, state, and local regulations related to solid waste.. Impacts were concluded to be less than significant.

The proposed amendment does not propose any specific development. Any future specific development will be required to meet goals and policies that encourage waste reduction, recycling, and composting.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant

## 17. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No	✓	
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?***

As discussed in the FEIR, the implementation of the General Plan will result in the cumulative increase in GHG concentrations in global temperature and associated shifts in climatic conditions. Mitigation measures will be included at a local level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at a local level to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas emission in accordance with existing plans and policies to address global climatic changes. However, even with proposed policies and implementation actions in the General Plan, the impact will remain a significant, cumulatively considerable and unavoidable impact because global climate change is a global issue that can only be addressed through regional, state, national and international cooperation. The project does not propose any specific development that would generate greenhouse gas emissions. Any future development would be required to undergo further planning and environmental review, as appropriate, and determine whether future analysis of, or mitigation for greenhouse gas emissions is necessary.

Conclusions: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain significant, cumulatively considerable and unavoidable

- ***Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?***

As noted in the FEIR, the implementation of General Plan policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent that they are practicable, will ensure City of Merced General Plan consistency with applicable plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouses gases. The impact was considered less than significant. The project does not propose any specific development that would generate greenhouse gas emissions or conflict with any plan or policy. Any future development would be required to undergo further planning and environmental review, as appropriate, and determine consistency with applicable plans, policies and regulations related to greenhouse gases.

Conclusions: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus, impacts would remain less than significant.

• 18. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<i>Would the project:</i>	Do Proposed Changes Involve New Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Circumstances Involving Significant Impacts or Substantially More Severe Impacts?	Any New Information Requiring New Analysis or Verification?	Same Impact as "Approved Project"	Less Impact Than "Approved Project"
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	No	No	No	✓	
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	No	No	No	✓	
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	No	No	No	✓	

### Impact Analysis

- ***Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?***

The FEIR recognized that future development and build-out of the SUDP/SOI will result in cumulative and unavoidable impacts in the areas of Air Quality, Loss of Agricultural Soils, Hydrology and Water, Electricity and Gas, Transportation and Traffic and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. As a result, the City Council adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations on January 3, 2012 for these Impacts, which is herein incorporated by reference.

The project will change the land uses for the project site, as specified in the General Plan Land Use Map. However, the change from multi-family to neighborhood commercial is considered only moderate change (see Land Use Section). The analysis of impacts will contribute to the cumulative impacts identified in the FEIR. However, the nature and extent of these impacts falls within the parameters of impacts previously analyzed in the EIR.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR

- ***Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?***

As concluded in the FEIR, the General Plan could potentially result in cumulatively considerable impacts associated with agriculture and forest resources, transportation and traffic, air quality, hydrology and water quality, and utilities (electricity and gas), .

As concluded in the previous discussions, the proposed project involves an amendment to the General Plan in order to remove language from the Public Facilities and Services Element, and predesignate the subject property from multi-family residential use to a neighborhood commercial use. The proposed amendment does not propose site-specific development and would not involve changes to the General Plan study area. Further, the proposed amendment (for a 4.54 acre site) would not result in a significant amount of growth anticipated to occur over the planning period analyzed as part of the FEIR. It is anticipated that cumulatively considerable impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan, as identified in the FEIR, would continue to occur with or without the proposed amendment.

Conclusions: The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR and would result in no greater impacts than previously identified.

- ***Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?***

As concluded in the FEIR, the purpose of the General Plan is to guide long-term development and ensure land use compatibility in the City, and to provide a safe living and working environment for the residents of Merced. The General Plan is anticipated to result in an overall beneficial effect on people. The full build-out anticipated in the General Plan will result in the incremental degradation of air quality, the loss of agricultural soils, the incremental increase in traffic, the increased demand in water, public resources and facilities. However, CEQA requires that the analysis of this project is limited to those impacts which are peculiar to the project site, which were not previously identified in the FEIR, or where not previously identified as significant effects.

The proposed amendment does not propose site-specific development. Further, based on the analysis presented in this Initial Study, the revisions to the General Plan Land Use Map, Public Facilities and Services Element and the Planned Development #72/Site Utilization Plan will not result substantial adverse effects on humans human beings, either directly or indirectly, that weren't otherwise analyzed in the FEIR.

**Conclusion:** The proposed project would be consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the FEIR; thus impacts would remain less than significant.

# ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION PERSONNEL

## **LEAD AGENCY:**

### **City of Merced**

678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street

Merced, CA 95340

Contact: Julie Nelson, Associate Planner

## **PREPARED BY:**

Deborah Ungo-McCormick, AICP

### **Berliner Cohen**

10 Almaden Boulevard, Eleventh Floor

San Jose, CA 95113-2233

## **PEER REVIEW:**

Jason Brandman, Director

### **FirstCarbon Solutions**

1350 Treat Boulevard, Suite 380

Walnut Creek, CA 94597

April 3, 2017

Mr. Frank Quintero, Director of Economic Development  
City of Merced  
678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

**Subject: Peer Review of Addendum to Merced Vision 2030 General Plan Final  
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

Dear Mr. Quintero:

FirstCarbon Solutions has reviewed the proposed Addendum to the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan EIR for a proposed amendment to General Plan Section 5.2.2 concerning the location of the Central Police Station, re-designation of the subject parcel from HMD (High to Medium Density) to CN (Neighborhood Commercial), and revision of Planned Development #72 and the Site Utilization Plan to remove the Police Future Station designation from the property located on the northwest corner of E. Yosemite Avenue and Masonette Drive. No specific development project is proposed at this time for this property.

We concur with the City's conclusion that an Addendum is the appropriate level of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and that none of the criteria under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that would require preparation of a subsequent EIR have been triggered. The environmental impacts of the General Plan, as modified by the proposed General Plan Amendments and revision to the Planned Development (P-D) #72 and Site Utilization Plan, do not appear to require substantial changes to the FEIR; do not appear to create any significant environmental impacts that were not previously analyzed in the FEIR; and no impacts appear to be more severe than those previously analyzed in the FEIR. We believe that the Addendum and the analysis contained therein meets the requirements of CEQA.

Due to the nature of our comments and suggested edits, we have provided suggested redline edits to the Addendum in electronic format (PDF and Word format). We appreciate the opportunity to be of service. Please let me know if you have any questions or if we can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jason Brandman, Director  
FirstCarbon Solutions  
1350 Treat Boulevard, Suite 380  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Attachments (Electronic)

**UNITED STATES**

Irvine  
250 Commerce, Suite 250  
Irvine, CA 92602

Los Angeles  
11755 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1660  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Bay Area  
1350 Treat Boulevard, Suite 380  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Central Valley  
7265 N First Street, Suite 101  
Fresno, CA 93720

Inland Empire  
650 E. Hospitality Lane, Suite 125  
San Bernardino, CA 92408

Sacramento  
915 Highland Pointe Drive, Suite 250  
Roseville, CA 95678

Connecticut  
1175 Post Road E  
Westport, CT 06880

**EUROPE**

United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 845.165.6245  
Fax: +44 (0) 20.3070.0890  
Future Business Centre  
Kings Hedges Rd.  
Cambridge CB4 2HY  
United Kingdom

**AUSTRALIA**

New South Wales  
Tel: +61 (02) 9418.7822  
Fax: +61 (02) 9418.7833  
13-15 Smith Street  
Chatswood, NSW 2067  
Australia

**AFRICA**

Kenya  
Tel: +254-737-433-621  
ADEC Kenya Services EPZ Ltd.  
Nairobi, Kenya

**ASIA**

Philippines  
Tel: +63 (2) 775.0632  
Fax: +63 (2) 775.0632 local 8050  
26<sup>th</sup> Floor, Philippine AXA Life Centre,  
Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue,  
Makati City, Metro Manila

**Malaysia**

Tel: +603 74902112  
Fax: +603 79606977  
15-7, Block A, Jaya ONE  
72A Jalan Universiti  
46200 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor, Malaysia