
MASTER RESPONSE 5: ADEQUACY OF THE GENERAL PLAN

A number of comments state that the County's General Plan is inadequate, and that the UCP cannot be adopted until the General Plan is revised.

The comments do not identify any particular inadequacy in the County General Plan. Therefore, it is not possible to respond directly to the claims of inadequacies. The Merced County General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1990 and has since that time been updated periodically in response to requirements of state law and changes in local conditions. The General Plan is adequate and is used on a regular basis to guide decisions of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on issues pertaining to land use, circulation, public infrastructure and services, and resource management and conservation.

As discussed under Implementation 2.1 on page 252 of the plan, the University Community Plan will be adopted as a Chapter of the County General Plan, consistent with California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. Therefore, the County will continue to apply all adopted countywide General Plan policies to the University Community and supplement these with the goals, objectives, policies, and programs contained in the UCP. As discussed below, pursuant to Section 15125(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR provides an analysis of the UCP's consistency with the adopted General Plan (see pages 4.9-23 through 4.9-25 of the Draft EIR).

The requirement to find that a project is consistent with the applicable General Plan is found in the Government Code, rather than CEQA. The DEIR provides information to the decision-makers for their consideration and use in determining whether the project would be consistent with the General Plan. The DEIR refers to applicable General Plan policies, analyzes the UCP's consistency with those policies, and identifies mitigation measures where potential inconsistencies exist (see, for example, pages 4.2-25 and 4.9-23 through 4.9-25). Prior to its consideration of project approval, the Board of Supervisors will receive a staff report that evaluates consistency of the UCP with the County General Plan. If the Board decides to approve the UCP, it must make findings of consistency with the General Plan, and these findings would be the subject of a public hearing prior to any formal action to approve the UCP.