

AA 1.3

Encourage the use of local agricultural goods for use in local restaurants, schools, and grocery stores, when possible. *(Imp 3.5, 5.10)*

Goal

Preservation of important farmlands south and east of the University Community.

Objective

AA 2.0

Protect land located south of the University Community boundary and immediately east of the City of Merced.

Policies

AA 2.1

Establish the University Community boundary as an urban limit line, outside of which no urban uses will be permitted in agricultural areas (refer to Policies LU 2.4 to LU 2.6). *(Imp 2.1)*

AA 2.2

Design and develop infrastructure to serve development within the University Community boundary, except where necessary for joint use by the Community and UC Merced and to provide connections to regional systems. *(Imp 2.4, 4.13)*

LAKE YOSEMITE REGIONAL PARK—SUSTAINING MERCED’S MOST IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ASSET

OVERVIEW

The general underlying themes in the University Community Area Plan relative to recreation include the importance of Lake Yosemite Regional Park to Merced County, the nature and amount of increased demand for recreational facilities caused by the new population generated by the University Community and the UC Merced campus, and the roles of Merced County, UC Merced and the University Community in providing recreational facilities sufficient to meet potential demand.

The goals and policies presented below assume, and seek to address, future demands on regional recreational facilities, especially Lake Yosemite Regional Park. These policies also establish a framework for future individual and collective action by Merced County, the University Community and UC Merced to respond effectively over time to the recreational needs of a growing population in eastern Merced County.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

Joint use of the University of California, Merced recreation facilities, and Lake Yosemite Regional Park.

Objective

ALY 1.0

To meet the recreational needs of UC Merced students, staff and faculty, as well as University Community residents.

Policies

ALY 1.1

Work with UC Merced for the shared use of its on-campus recreational, parking and sports facilities with the Merced community, especially with regards to campus parking in areas bordering Lake Yosemite Regional Park. Such cooperative programming may diminish impacts on the existing Park by providing additional recreational opportunities and shared parking for Park users. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 1.2

Encourage UC Merced to provide students, staff, and faculty with active recreational and sports facilities and programs on campus that meet or exceed any recommended standards for the anticipated campus population, concurrent with increases in campus population. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 1.3

Cooperate with UC Merced, to the maximum extent possible, to initiate and maintain a cooperative campus-run, water-related program on Lake Yosemite that combines academic programs with student and public recreational water sports activities year round. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

Goal

Expansion and Improvement of Lake Yosemite Regional Park.

Objective

ALY 2.0

To assure the continued capacity of Lake Yosemite Regional Park to serve the recreational needs of County residents.

Policies

ALY 2.1

Require that, prior to the transfer of title for any land that is currently or planned to be a part of Lake Yosemite Regional Park, UC Merced develop mechanisms for the acquisition of additional property to replace any parkland lost or impacted by the conversion for campus uses consistent with state and federal grant requirements. Eligible lands include, but are not limited to, lands contiguous with the existing developed Park and property on the Lake itself, subject to approval of the Board of Supervisors. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.2

Developers of the University Community and UC Merced shall participate in the development of additional parkland adjacent to Lake Yosemite to be included within the Lake Yosemite Regional Park in cooperation with UC Merced in order to meet the needs of the University Community and campus populations at a standard of 0.88 acres for each 1,000 residents, which may be satisfied by the payment of in-lieu fees. *(Imp 4.8, 5.6)*

ALY 2.3

Work with the City of Merced and UC Merced to expand Lake Yosemite Regional Park in response to impacts associated with buildout of the University Community and UC Merced. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.4

Encourage UC Merced to designate the County-owned property currently designated for Park expansion as an appropriate buffer for Lake Yosemite Regional Park, including, but not limited to, such lower intensity on-campus uses as athletic fields. *(Imp 3.3)*

ALY 2.5

Monitor the use of Lake Yosemite Regional Park associated with increased population and assess those impacts related to the build out of the University Community and UC Merced. The County, UC Merced, and developers shall work cooperatively with the University to assure that development adjacent to Lake Yosemite does not result in a net increase in costs to the County or decrease in service level. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.6

Initiate, in coordination with UC Merced, the development and implementation of a Lake Yosemite Regional Park Master Plan to determine the potential uses, necessary facilities, design standards, and funding strategies for public parkland surrounding Lake Yosemite. The Master Plan shall address active and passive recreation including playing fields, recreational equipment design and placement, a pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian recreational trail system around the Lake and connecting to existing or planned trails, parking and landscape planning and design. *(Imp 4.8, 5.6)*

Goal

Meeting the Recreational Needs of Eastern Merced County.

Objective

ALY 3.0

To establish a planning framework and identify resources to support recreation planning for Eastern Merced County

Policies

ALY 3.1

Work with UC Merced to create a joint task force to meet regularly in a public setting to achieve cooperative goals for recreation and open space planning, parkland and resource acquisition, and the provision of adequate active and passive recreation, parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the population of eastern Merced County and UC Merced. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 3.2

Work with the City of Merced to establish recreation fees to apply to all new development, including the University Community, to support the expansion of Lake Yosemite Regional Park. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 3.3

Encourage development of a public golf course in the vicinity of the University Community, UC Merced, and Lake Yosemite, as warranted by demand for such a facility. *(Imp 1.4, 5.6, 5.11)*

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF MERCED

CONTEXT

In 1997, the County and City entered into an agreement for the sharing of revenue for newly annexed areas to the City of Merced. Such a Revenue Sharing Agreement is required prior to the processing and approval of an annexation application to the City of Merced by the Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The Revenue Sharing Agreement contains provisions governing County land use within the City’s Growth Area (SUDP) Sphere of Influence, and the Rural Residential Centers that exist in the vicinity of the City of Merced. Under the current terms of the agreement, the County is limited within this RRC to residential land uses at a density no greater than one unit per net acre, even though County zoning provisions allow a greater density and certain institutional uses.

The proposed site of the University Community SUDP Plan Area is located adjacent to the City’s SUDP. In addition, Bellevue Road is designated by the City of Merced as a future transit corridor that would connect the University Community and campus with downtown Merced (via “M” Street). Cumulatively, these factors suggest that the intervening lands between the City and Community SUDP’s Plan Area, currently designated for rural uses, be reconsidered for higher density development comparable to those uses permitted on adjoining lands. This could create a continuous pattern of urban uses of comparable density between the City and University Community. While this may be viewed as a benefit, it may also be perceived as a detriment. Arguably, one-acre lot development is urban in character and, in many communities, is the density of upscale housing neighborhoods. The lack of a clearly defined transitional area could negatively impact the ability to establish the identity of a distinct community that may be necessary to attract the involvement of a high quality master developer.

This issue, along with the potential growth inducement associated with development of the University Community SUDP Plan Area and Campus Parkway, begs

fundamental questions about the long-term urban growth boundaries for the City and protection of agricultural lands. Such issues cannot be resolved independently and require collaborative efforts that build upon the history of collaborative planning fostered by the Revenue Sharing Agreement. A number of ancillary issues emerging from the development of the campus and Community, such as their impacts on the use of Lake Yosemite Regional Park, would also benefit from a collaborative approach.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

Development on lands between the University Community and City of Merced that is complementary and compatible reflects the area’s characteristics and natural resources.

Objective

ARM 1.0

To establish a process and policy, standards, and regulations for the development of lands between the University Community and City of Merced to ensure their compatibility with the University Community, UC Merced campus, and City of Merced.

Policies

ARM 1.1

Confer with the City of Merced in the joint planning of lands located between the University Community and City SUDP (location to be mutually determined by the County and City) that may designate land uses to be accommodated, development and design standards, transportation and infrastructure improvements, public services (schools, parklands, etc.), open spaces, resource management strategies, and governance. This would be accomplished through a Memorandum of Understanding, which builds upon the spirit of cooperation in the existing Revenue Sharing Agreement. *(Imp 3.3)*