

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)*

ARM 1.2

Assure that development in the area between the City and University Community SUDPs urban limit boundaries complements (in type, density/intensity, and design) and does not adversely impact uses in these areas. In particular, control uses located at key entries and edges to ensure that their quality is reflective of the campus and Community. *(Imp 2.1, 3.3)*

ARM 1.3

Plan for the development of cohesive transportation (roadways, transit, bikeway, and pedestrian) and infrastructure (water, wastewater, storm drainage, telecommunications, and energy) systems that link the University Community, campus, unincorporated Rural Residential Center, and City, where needed and appropriate. *(Imp 2.1, 2.4, 3.3)*

ARM 1.4

As part of the joint planning of lands located between the University Community and the City of Merced SUDP, the County and the City should evaluate the long-term viability of rural water and wastewater infrastructure, and should consider the potential for provision of urban water and wastewater infrastructure to this area. *(Imp 2.1, 2.4, 3.3)*

Goal

A long-term growth and development strategy for the greater Merced urban area, including the University Community, which recognizes the importance of preserving opportunities for agricultural uses.

Objective

ARM 2.0

To establish a process and policy, standards, and regulations for the management of agricultural lands.

Policies

ARM 2.1

Collaborate with the City of Merced in establishing a strategy for the long-term growth and management/protection of agricultural lands on properties east of the City, extending to and beyond the proposed Campus Parkway. *(Imp 2.1, 3.3)*

ARM 2.2

Collaborate with the City of Merced in implementing agricultural protection policies defined in the Area Plan—Agriculture (preceding section). *(Imp 3.3)*

Goal

Maintenance and enhancement of Lake Yosemite Regional Park as a recreational amenity serving residents of the County, City of Merced, and greater region.

Objective

ARM 3.0

To establish a process and policy, standards, and procedures for the long term use, management, improvement, and funding of Lake Yosemite Regional Park.

Policy

ARM 3.1

Identify community recreational needs and potential funding sources for the Lake Yosemite Regional Park in cooperation with the City of Merced and other jurisdictions that benefit from the Park's use. While the Park is under the authority of the County, the City and all jurisdictions whose constituencies use that Park should seek to identify how they can contribute to the Park's maintenance, enhancement, and programs (refer to policy ALY 3.2). *(Imp 3.3, 4.8, 5.6)*

Goal

Provision of adequate public services to the University Community throughout its development life.

Objective

ARM 4.0

To engage the City of Merced as a partner in providing adequate urban services to the University Community in the early years of development.

Policy

ARM 4.1

Enter into agreements with the City of Merced to provide interim police, fire, library, and other services to the University Community during the initial stages of development and sufficient resource capacities are created to support local services. *(Imp 3.3)*

Goal

Clearly understood linkages to City and County destinations.

Objective

ARM 5.0

To develop a system of information, visual elements, and transportation that integrate the County, City, and University Community into a cohesive community fabric.

Policies

ARM 5.1

Work with the City of Merced to develop a well-designed street signage and monuments/ landmarks program that will be commonly used throughout the University Community, City of Merced, and adjoining areas that provides clear information regarding major destinations and travel routes (“wayfinding”). (*Imp 3.3*)

ARM 5.2

Work with the City of Merced in establishing a unified transit system that connects the University Community with key destinations in the City. (*Imp 3.3, 4.1*)

RELATIONSHIP TO ADJACENT USES

CONTEXT

The University Community planning area divides both the Flying “M” property being acquired by the Virginia Smith Trust/UC Merced LLC and Hunt Farms. The lands west of the Fairfield and Le Grand Canals within the UCP are designated for urban uses. Lands east of these canals have a rural designation of “Agriculture” in the County General Plan. As lands within the University Community and UC Merced campus are developed over time, it may be appropriate to consider how the use of these adjoining properties inter-relate and fit. The area north of the Le Grand Canal is highly constrained, as it is near some of the most valuable and sensitive wetlands and endangered species habitat in the region. The lands south of the Le Grand Canal are currently irrigated pastureland, crop land, and non-irrigated pasture. The use of such lands would have to be carefully evaluated for its impacts on the region’s agricultural productivity, natural resource enhancement opportunities, and continuity with the University Community and UC Merced campus.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

Long-term use of the land east of the University Community that reflects the site’s natural resources, contribution to agricultural productivity, continuity with the University Community, and role as a definable urban limit.

Objective

AV 1.0

To provide a process for the consideration of the appropriate long-term use of lands east of the University Community Boundary.

Policies

AV 1.1

Evaluate the appropriate long-term use of the lands east of the University Community including consideration of, but not limited to, development, agriculture, habitat preservation, or habitat restoration. (*Imp 2.1, 5.1*)

AV 1.2

Evaluations of the lands east of the University Community shall consider the site’s soils, agricultural uses, and productivity; the existing presence of wetlands and significant plant and animal species, as well as habitat enhancement or restoration opportunities; relationship and ability to fit with the University Community’s land uses and infrastructure and UC Merced; and relationships to adjoining agriculture and open spaces. (*Imp 2.1, 2.3, 5.1*)