

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### ■ STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The State of California does not include Public Services among the mandatory elements of a general plan. However, *Government Code* §65303 allows local government to adopt any other elements or address any other subjects that in the judgment of the local government relates to the physical development of the community. Once adopted, the non-mandatory elements become a full-fledged part of the general plan with the same legal authority and effect as one of the mandatory elements. The provision of adequate public services for a newly developing community is considered crucial in establishing its vitality, livability, and health. The qualities of a community's schools, parks, libraries, youth and seniors programs, and health facilities are often cited as key determinants in a person's decision-making for a future residence. The development of a superior infrastructure of public services is essential to enable UC Merced to attract a high quality of students and faculty to the new campus.

### ■ CONTEXT

As an undeveloped property, the University Community planning area does not contain any of the key public service facilities that are essential to support the well-being of its future residents. As the Community grows, schools, parks, libraries, health, police, fire, health, and seniors, youth, and other social programs will have to be provided. These can expand from the existing service infrastructure that is provided to County of Merced and City of Merced residents. In some cases, new facilities will have to be developed in the Community, in others, services may be provided from centralized facilities in the City or another location. It is possible that wholly new service providers may be established to specifically serve the needs of the University Community's residents and businesses.

### ■ OVERVIEW

The social well-being of a population is nurtured and sustained by access to a full range of services that educate, enrich the lives, and meet basic human needs for health, safety, and quality of life. To reach these goals, the community will provide adequate educational and cultural services through schools, libraries, a range of cultural facilities, public safety services, health care, social programs, and programs for youth and seniors.

The policies will support the development of school facilities to meet the basic educational needs of the residents. They will also support opportunities for enhanced roles as centerpieces of community identity and integrated elements of the Merced area school districts for funding purposes. School will be located within village centers and within close proximity of parks, libraries, recreation facilities and day care centers to allow joint use of space. The new school building will use a sustainable approach in construction and maintenance to promote shared and mixed-use facilities, reduce energy consumption, avoid indoor air pollution causing materials. A partnership between UC Merced, the state, and Community will be encouraged to enrich educational programs and develop a “university laboratory school” on the campus for grade-school Community students.

Library facilities shared with schools and the campus will provide high quality library services to residents. Libraries will be integrated with multi-purpose community/cultural facilities, thereby creating community civic centers. High quality cultural facilities will be encouraged to provide amenities of the quality desired by related-related faculty and staff. Cultural facilities will be sited in the Town Center and distributed within each community center.

Adequate fast-response police and fire protection services are essential to the long-term social and economic sustainability of the Community. Polices establish the ratio of law enforcement personnel to residents, accommodating population growth, development characteristics, and coordination with the campus police programs. Neighborhood crime watch and prevention programs will be encouraged, as well as site design measures to provide maximum safety through well-lit open public spaces. Fire services and personnel will be expanded to keep pace with the community growth, including addition of fire suppression infrastructure. Fire protection measures will include coordination with the campus fire services and programs to prevent encroachment of wildland fires into the Community.

Appropriate and high quality health care, social services, and programs for youth and seniors promote the social vitality of residents in the Community. High quality services will be achieved through collaboration with existing County and City services and the planned campus services. Services will be sited at the community centers, allowing for expansion with growth and use of nearby commercial buildings to support these services, i.e. to house medical offices. Programs will focus on enriching the lives of residents and promoting social interactions, such as establishing community gardens (particularly for seniors), providing intergenerational facilities for youth and seniors, and offering programs for developmentally disabled youth, a variety of recreational programs for youth to promote hobbies, environmental awareness, sports, volunteerism, and the arts. Seniors programs will encourage fitness and nutrition, recreation, and volunteer opportunities as docents or greeters.