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## 4.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

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## 4.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the EIR describes existing public services available in the vicinity of the proposed UCP in Merced County, evaluates the effects of UCP development on those services, and recommends measures to maintain service at existing levels. The services evaluated in this section include the following:

- Law Enforcement;
- Fire Protection;
- Schools;
- Libraries; and
- Hospitals.

The analysis in this section of the EIR focuses on the ability of the existing service providers to provide services to the UCP while maintaining existing service standards. Impacts associated with the construction of facilities to maintain these standards are addressed in the other technical sections in Chapter 4 of this EIR. Impacts on parks that would be associated with the proposed UCP are discussed in Section 4.14, Recreation.

Comments received on the Notice of Preparation expressed concern about UCP effects on schools and fire protection services.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### Existing Conditions

The UCP area is served by the Merced County Sheriff's Department (MCSD). The nearest Sheriff's station is located in downtown Merced. The Merced County Sheriff's Department currently serves the County of Merced at a ratio of approximately 1 officer per 3,000 residents. The MCSD employs 80 total sworn officers (49 patrol staff, 13 detectives, with the remainder acting as special assignment officers who provide support to patrol staff)<sup>1</sup> with between 20 and 25 patrol vehicles. Additional units include a narcotics task force, an investigation unit, a major crimes unit, and a federal drug trafficking task force. The Merced County Sheriff's Department's response times for non-emergency calls are approximately ten to 30 minutes; response times for emergency calls are ten minutes or less. The County Coroner and County Jails are also operated by the Sheriff's Department. Capitol facilities and personnel for the Sheriff's Department are funded through tax revenues collected by the County.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### Merced County General Plan

The Merced County General Plan does not contain any policies or implementing actions related to law enforcement services, nor does it provide standards for levels of law enforcement service.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

The proposed UCP policies are intended to ensure that adequate law enforcement facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. By means of cooperative efforts with the University of California Merced police department and other appropriate policing authorities, as well as monitoring of growth and development, the UCP seeks to facilitate proper placement, staffing, and levels of service for law enforcement facilities.

The proposed UCP contains the following policies for law enforcement:

- PS 1.1:** Increase law enforcement personnel by approximately 40 personnel in order to accommodate the estimated 30,000 university community residents, based on the City of Merced Standard of 1.32 officers per 1,000 residents for urban services. This increase in personnel could differ if based on Merced County standards.
- PS 1.2:** Identify sites for police facility location(s) in subsequent Specific Plans for development in the University Community, based on need, phasing, and timing. The Town Center would be a priority candidate site.
- PS 1.3:** Coordinate development of public safety programs and personnel to serve the University Community with the UC Merced police programs, finding shared opportunities, where appropriate such as mutual response programs.
- PS 1.4:** Work with appropriate policing authorities to establish community and neighborhood safety and crime prevention programs (e.g. neighborhood watch).
- PS 1.5:** Work closely with UC Merced towards crime prevention specific to student/community conflicts.
- PS 2.1:** Require that Specific Plans incorporate site designs that help ensure maximum visibility and security for entrances, pathways, streets and sidewalks, corridors, public and private open space, and parking lots and structures.
- PS 2.2:** Require the incorporation of appropriate lighting that provides adequate exterior illumination around commercial, business center, public, parking, and multi-family structures.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

### Method of Analysis

The Merced County Sheriff's Department was contacted for up-to-date background information related to current services, staffing, and equipment levels. As discussed above, the Merced County General Plan does not contain level of service standards for law enforcement. The existing officer-to-population ratio is approximately one officer per 3,000 residents. This ratio was applied to the anticipated UCP population in order to determine the number of additional officers that would be needed to maintain existing service levels.

### ADDITIONAL BASELINE ASSUMPTIONS

The above setting information constitutes a portion of the baseline condition for the UCP. However, as discussed in Section 4.0, Introduction to the Analysis, the UCP will be adopted only after adoption of the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan. Therefore, concurrent development of the UC Merced campus and the University Community is assumed and the UC Merced campus is assumed in the baseline conditions. The existing conditions on the UC Merced campus site and anticipated conditions at buildout of the UC Merced campus are discussed below.

The UC Merced campus would generate demand for police services; however, the campus would be served by a fully staffed University police station that would be responsible for providing 24-hour service for all on-campus calls. The campus would result in the need for between 24.6 and 44.4 sworn officers. Additional support staff, equipment and office space would also be required. Please refer the UC Merced LRDP EIR for a complete description of setting and LRDP elements related to police services.

### Standards of Significance

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, an impact is considered significant if the proposed UCP would:

- 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 law enforcement.

### Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### **4.12-1 The proposed UCP would increase demand for Sheriff's Department services.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PS 1.1 through 1.5, 2.1, and 2.2

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Baseline Plus Buildout Scenario

Development of the UCP would result in an eventual community population of approximately 30,782. Residents and others in the proposed University Community would require the services of the Merced County Sheriff's Department. Although existing law enforcement resources may be adequate to accommodate early stages of UCP development, the existing Sheriff's Department resources would not be sufficient to accommodate the projected University Community population at buildout. In order to maintain existing officer to population ratios, approximately ten additional staff would be needed. In addition, jail and coroner services would need to be supplemented. The UCP includes policies to ensure that adequate law enforcement facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. Policy PS 1.1 requires an officer-to-population ratio of 1.32 officers per 1,000 residents, which is more consistent with an urbanized area than the county's existing ratio. Use of this ratio would result in the addition of approximately 41 new police officers, well above the number required to maintain current service levels. UCP Policies PS 1.2 through 1.5 calls for neighborhood watch programs, coordination within the UC Merced police, and the identification of appropriate police station sites based on needs of the community. It should also be noted that UCP Policies PS 2.1 and 2.2 require site design and lighting to maximize visibility and security, which would reduce opportunity for crime and reduce demand on police services. Therefore, with implementation of these policies, this impact would be less than significant.

County tax revenues would fund any new police stations that would be constructed. New stations would likely be located in the Town Center of the UCP area. New facilities could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created. Impacts of constructing new facilities are analyzed in Sections 4.3 Air Quality, 4.4 Biological Resources, 4.5 Cultural Resources, 4.6 Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources, 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality, and 4.10 Noise.

#### Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

At 2015, development of the UCP would result in a population of approximately 3,053. Residents and others in the proposed University Community would require the services of the Merced County Sheriff's Department. In order to maintain existing ratios in the year 2015, approximately one additional Sheriff's Department staff member would be needed. Policy PS 1.1 requires an officer-to-population ratio of 1.32 officers per 1,000 residents. This ratio would require far more law enforcement personnel than the current one officer per 3,000 resident ratio, and would result in the addition of approximately four new police officers, well above the number required to maintain current service levels. Therefore, with implementation of UCP policies, this impact would be less than significant.

County tax revenues would be used to fund new law enforcement facilities, which would likely be located in the Commercial Center of the UCP area. New law enforcement facilities (i.e., new police stations) could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created. Impacts of constructing new facilities is analyzed in the Sections 4.3 Air Quality, 4.6 Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources, and 4.10 Noise.

### Cumulative Impacts

#### **4.12-2 Cumulative Development within Merced County, in combination with the proposed UCP, would result in increased demands for Sheriff's Department services.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PS 1.1 through 1.5, 2.1, and 2.2

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

### Cumulative Buildout Scenario

This scenario assumes full buildout of the proposed UCP and proposed University and 2025 population of Merced County. The population in Merced County in 2025 would be 351,488. Adding the population associated with buildout of the campus (16,150) and the UCP (30,782) would result in a population of 398,420 under this scenario. The proposed UC Merced campus would include a campus police department to provide the primary law enforcement services for campus users and residents, and would work with or defer to local law enforcement agencies when appropriate. The existing Sheriff's Department resources would not be sufficient to accommodate the projected future population at the current officer-to-population ratio. In order for projected demands to be served, additional law enforcement staff and facilities would be needed. At the current officer-to-population ratio of one officer per 3,000 residents, this would demand an additional 51 officers to serve the total population. In addition, jail and coroner services would need to be supplemented. As noted above, the UCP itself would create a demand for approximately ten law enforcement staff. The policies noted above were established to ensure that adequate law enforcement facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. Policy PS 1.1 requires an officer-to-population ratio of 1.32 officers per 1,000 residents. This ratio would require far more law enforcement personnel than the current one officer per 3,000 resident ratio, and would result in the addition of approximately 41 new police officers for the UCP, well above the number required to maintain current service levels. This officer-to-population ratio cannot be applied to jurisdictions outside the UCP area, so the possibility exists that locations outside the UCP area could adversely affect police service levels. However, UC Merced would include its own police staff at levels constant with other campuses (between 0.72 to 1.32 officers per 1,000 residents). This level of police protection would also

exceed the current County service level. Because the UCP would not only meet, but would exceed, staffing levels required to meet its projected demand at current service levels, the UCP would not contribute to decreased service levels in the rest of the county and this impact would be less than significant.

Development would add to the County tax base, which could fund additional sheriff services, and additional facilities would be built as part of future projects.

### 2015 Cumulative Scenario

This scenario assumes the UCP, Merced County, and University would be developed at year 2015 levels. At 2015, development of the UCP would result in a population of approximately 3,053. Total UC Merced campus growth is projected at 4,678, and Merced County population is projected at 289,839; the combined total population for the County, Campus and UCP would be 304,295. In order for projected demands to be served under this scenario, additional law enforcement staff and facilities would be needed. In order to maintain existing ratios in the year 2015, approximately one additional Sheriff's Department staff member would be needed for the UCP. In addition, the campus would have its own police department. As noted above, because the UCP would not only meet, but would exceed, staffing levels required to meet its projected demand at current service levels, the UCP would not contribute to decreased service levels. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to this impact would be less than significant with implementation of these policies.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

### Existing Conditions

The UCP area receives fire protection services from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) through a contract with the County. The nearest Merced County Fire Department (MCFD) station is McKee Station, located just south of Yosemite on McKee Road, approximately three quarters of a mile from the southern edge of the UCP area. The station maintains one career firefighter and 15 on-call volunteers and has two engines. In the future, developed stations will each be staffed by two firefighters. McKee Station does not offer a medical squad; the nearest medical squad is located at Station 81 on Martin Luther King, Jr. Way in downtown Merced. The nearest Hazardous Materials response unit is located in the nearby town of Atwater. The MCFD's general response time for the UCP area is approximately five minutes, but can be up to eight minutes for areas near Lake Yosemite. Response time for the Atwater Hazardous Materials response team is approximately 15 minutes to the UCP area.<sup>2</sup> The County currently assesses a \$428 per dwelling unit development fee for fire protection; businesses are assessed a fee based on square footage and occupancy.<sup>3</sup>

The Merced County Fire Department also maintains a Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Merced Fire Department. The City of Merced Fire Department provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services to the UCP area. Station 53, Loughborough Station, is the City fire station nearest the UCP area.

## **WILDLAND FIRES**

The UCP area is located in a "mixed interface" zone for wildland fires, according to the CDF's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP). The CDF has also placed the UCP area and vicinity in a State Responsibility area (SRA), making the CDF the service provider primarily responsible for providing basic

wildland fire protection, in concert with the Merced County Fire Department. The fire season extends for approximately five to six months, from late spring to fall, with hazards being affected by climatic, vegetative, and physiographic conditions.<sup>4</sup> From approximately May 15 to November 1, the State of California assembles seasonal response staff to assist with wildland fire protection.<sup>5</sup>

The UCP area is also located in a local responsibility area for wildland fires. The Merced County Fire Department is locally responsible for wildland fire protection in the UCP area. During the year, when additional resources are needed, the MCFD may call upon the Merced City Fire Department for additional help in fighting wildland fires.<sup>6</sup>

Approximately 90 percent of Merced County does not have urban water and urban uses and is therefore at risk of experiencing wildland fires, at varying degrees.<sup>7</sup> See Section 4.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials for a discussion of wildland fire hazard in the UCP area.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### Merced County General Plan

The Merced County General Plan contains the following goals, policies and implementing actions related to wildland fire protection services.

#### Safety

Goal 5: The risk of injury and property damage resulting from wildland and urban fires is minimized.

Objective 5. A.: An adequate level of fire safety is provided in urban areas.

Policies:

1. Minimum peak-load water supply standards for developments in urban areas with public water systems should be established.
2. In urban areas where a public water system does not exist, ensure adequate water supplies are available for fire suppression prior to occupancy of any structure.
3. Sprinkler systems shall be considered in areas where the Fire Department determines alternate fire protection measures are not adequate.

Implementation: All buildings and structures shall be reviewed during the building permit stage to ensure that they are constructed to fire safety standards prescribed in the Building Code and the County Fire Prevention Ordinance. Where minimum fire flow water pressure is not available to satisfy Fire Department standards, alternate fire protection measures shall be identified and incorporated into the development.

Objective 5.B.: An adequate level of protection from wildland fires is provided in rural areas.

Policies:

4. In the review of subdivisions and building permits in rural areas, provision shall be made for safe all-weather access for fire and other, emergency equipment.
5. In areas designated as having a very high fire hazard severity, the establishment of safe all-weather access for fire and emergency equipment shall be encouraged to serve existing residential uses.

Implementation: A determination shall be made at the building permit or subdivision review stage in “Agricultural” and “Foothill Pasture” designated areas that all-weather access to a public road exists, or can be provided, for emergency equipment. Generally, this involves a minimum 20-foot access right-of-way. The County will assist property owners of existing residences in very high fire hazard zones in identifying appropriate access routes and improvements necessary to meet all-weather requirements.

6. In areas designated as having a very high fire hazard severity, the establishment and maintenance of “clear zones” around new and existing residential structures shall be encouraged.

Implementation: The County Fire Department will assist property owners in identifying appropriate clear areas around residences and how they should be maintained.

### Merced County Fire Department

The California Department of Forestry’s Master Plan for the Merced County Fire Department<sup>8</sup> provides the following relevant Level of Service Goals and Objectives:

#### Heavy Urban:

**Fire Protection Goal:** Initiate fire suppression prior to flashover in structure fires.

#### **Fire Protection Objectives:**

- Apply extinguishing agent to all fires within seven minutes of dispatch.
- Full first alarm assignment in operation within ten minutes.
- Control 90 percent of all fires with first alarm assignment.

**Emergency Medical Response Goal:** Provide First Responder Medical services within five minutes of dispatch.

#### Urban:

**Fire Protection Goal:** Confine structure fire to the building of origin with first alarm assignment.

**Fire Protection Objectives:**

- Apply extinguishing agent to all fires within 10 minutes of dispatch.
- Full first alarm assignment in operation within 15 minutes.
- Control 90 percent of all fires with the first alarm assignment.

**Emergency Medical Response Goal:** Provide First Responder Medical services within 10 minutes of dispatch.

**Rural:**

**Fire Protection Goal:** confine structure fires to the building of origin with first alarm assignment.

**Fire Protection Objectives:**

- Apply extinguishing agent to all fires within 14 minutes of dispatch.
- Full first alarm assignment in operation within 20 minutes.
- Control 80 percent of all fires with first alarm assignment.

**Emergency Medical Response Goal:** Provide First Responder Medical services within 15 minutes of dispatch.

The Merced County Fire Department currently maintains a fire station proximity of every 1.5 miles in heavy urban areas, three miles in urban areas, and five miles in rural areas in order to maintain the above-mentioned levels of service.<sup>9</sup>

The Master Plan makes it a priority to take an active role in the planning of the new University of California, Merced, and to work with the staff of other County departments and the University to coordinate the Fire Department's facility needs with plans for both the campus itself and the surrounding area.<sup>10</sup>

**PLAN ELEMENTS**

The proposed UCP includes policies to ensure that adequate fire protection facilities and levels of service would be available to the University Community. By means of cooperative efforts with the University of California Merced fire department and other appropriate policing authorities, as well as monitoring of growth and development, the UCP seeks to facilitate proper placement, staffing, and levels of service for fire protection facilities. The policies also call for implementation of wildland fire prevention programs in adjacent lands.

The UCP contains the following policies on fire protection:

**PS 3.1:** Ensure that fire facilities and personnel are expanded to serve the needs of the estimated 30,000 residents of the University Community and to maintain a five-minute response time.

**PS 3.2:** Include appropriate fire facility location(s) in subsequent Specific Plans for development in the University Community, based on need, phasing, and timing.

- PS 3.3:** Provide an adequate level of water-related infrastructure in development for use in the event of fire.
- PS 3.4:** Coordinate development of fire personnel and facilities with the UC fire protection programs, finding shared opportunities when possible.
- PS 3.5:** Implement brush clearing and other fire suppressing programs in adjacent lands, thereby reducing the possibility for the encroachment of wildland fires onto inhabited areas (in consideration of maintenance programs for important plant and animal habitats).

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

### Method of Analysis

The Merced County Fire Department was contacted for up-to-date background information related to current services, staffing, and equipment levels. As discussed above, the Merced County General Plan does not contain level of service standards for fire protection. The Merced County Fire Department Master Plan does; however, establish standards for response to fires. Adherence to the response times set forth in the MCFD Master Plan was used as the basis for analyzing UCP impacts.

### ADDITIONAL BASELINE ASSUMPTIONS

The above setting information constitutes a portion of the baseline condition for the UCP. However, as discussed in Section 4.0, Introduction to the Analysis, the UCP will be adopted only after adoption of the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan. Therefore, concurrent development of the UC Merced campus and the University Community is assumed and the UC Merced campus is assumed in the baseline conditions. The existing conditions on the UC Merced campus site and anticipated conditions at buildout of the UC Merced campus are discussed below.

The UC Merced campus would generate demand for fire protection services, which would be provided by the City of Merced Fire Department, Merced County Fire Department or/and CDF, depending upon mutual aid agreements established with these jurisdictions. Although there is no fire protection standard applied throughout the University of California system, the University of California, Davis has developed criteria that address the need to protect buildings and life from fire hazards. Fire protection at the Davis campus is provided by one or more of the following: maintaining 3.5 firefighters per 1,000,000 square feet of building area; adding additional equipment or improving techniques to meet fire protection needs; and/or expanding mutual aid assistance from adjacent jurisdictions.

### Standards of Significance

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, an impact is considered significant if the proposed UCP would:

- 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 fire protection.

### Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### **4.12-3 The proposed UCP would require additional fire protection services.**

**Applicable Regulations:** Merced County Fire Department Master Plan Level of Service Regulations

**Significance:** Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PS 3.1 through 3.5

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Baseline Plus Buildout Scenario

The proposed University Community would require the services of the Merced County Fire Department including fire protection and Emergency Medical Service. Existing Fire Department resources would not be sufficient to accommodate the needs of the University Community at buildout. New fire protection facilities would need to be constructed to provide fire protection services at the desired levels of service.

The UCP provides Policies PS 3.1 through 3.5 to ensure that adequate fire protection facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. In addition to making provisions for proper placement, staffing, and levels of service for fire protection facilities, the policies focus on cooperative efforts with the University of California Merced fire protection programs, as well as monitoring the need for services and facilities, to ensure adequate fire protection service levels for the UCP area. The policies call for implementation of wildland fire prevention programs in adjacent lands. In addition, the UCP Policy PS 3.1 includes a response time standard requiring first response within five minutes. This response time is less than the Merced County Fire Department Master Plan's response goal for heavy urban areas (the shortest response time outlined in the Master Plan). Use of this standard would result in fire protection response that exceeds current service levels. Therefore, with implementation of these policies, the UCP would maintain current fire protection standards and this impact would be less than significant.

County tax revenues would be used to fund new fire protection facilities and equipment (e.g., fire stations, engines), which would likely be located in the Commercial Center of the UCP area. New fire protection facilities could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be

created. Impacts of constructing new facilities are analyzed in Sections 4.3 Air Quality, 4.6 Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources, and 4.10 Noise.

#### Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

By the year 2015, portions of the Town Center and Residential Villages 1 and 2 under the UCP could be constructed. This would result in approximately 1,152 units of housing and approximately 101,000 square feet of retail and office development. Residents and users of the proposed University Community would require the services of the Merced County Fire Department including fire protection and Emergency Medical Service. It is possible that fire protection facilities might require expansion and additional staff or equipment in order to maintain current levels of service while serving year 2015-level development in the UCP area.

As stated above, UCP Policies PS 3.1 through 3.5 would ensure that adequate fire protection facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. Use of the UCP standard would result in fire protection response that exceeds the Master Plan's response goal; therefore, with implementation of these policies, this impact would be less than significant.

#### Cumulative Impacts

#### **4.12-4 Cumulative Development within Merced County, in combination with the proposed UCP, would result in increased demands for fire protection services.**

**Applicable Regulations:** Merced County Fire Department Master Plan Level of Service Regulations

**Significance:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PS 3.1 through 3.5

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Cumulative Buildout Scenario

This scenario assumes full buildout of the proposed UCP and proposed University. Development within Merced City and County would result in an increase in developed area over that which currently exists. Residents of Merced City and County would require the services of the Merced City and County Fire Departments. The existing Fire Departments' resources would not be sufficient to accommodate the projected future development; additional fire protection facilities and equipment (e.g., fire stations, engines) would be required in order to maintain MCFD Master Plan response standards. Recognizing that the Proposed UC Merced campus would provide land for an on campus fire department, it could rely on the City and/or County of Merced for fire protection services through a mutual aid agreement to ensure that the campus does not

adversely affect fire protection services. The proposed UCP would create demand for additional services from the MCFD, reducing the Department's responsiveness to other County locations.

As stated above, the UCP provides policies to ensure that adequate fire protection facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. Implementation of UCP policies would maintain current fire protection standards and would ensure that the UCP would not contribute to decreased levels of service. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to cumulative demand for fire protection services would be less than significant.

#### Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

This scenario assumes year 2015-level buildout of the County of Merced, the proposed UCP, and proposed University. Development within Merced County at Year 2015, including the UC Merced campus and University Community, would result in an increase in developed area over that which currently exists. The existing Fire Departments' resources would not be sufficient to accommodate the projected future development; additional fire protection facilities and equipment (e.g., fire stations, engines) would be required in order to maintain MCFD Master Plan response standards. The proposed UC Merced campus would provide land for a campus fire department, but, as stated above, would likely rely on the City and/or County of Merced for fire protection services through a mutual aid agreement that would ensure that the Campus would not adversely affect fire service levels. The proposed UCP would create demand for additional services from the MCFD, reducing the Department's responsiveness to other County locations.

As stated above, the UCP provides policies to ensure that adequate fire protection facilities and staff would be in place for the University Community. Implementation of these policies would maintain current fire protection standards and its contribution to cumulative demand for fire protection services would be less than significant.

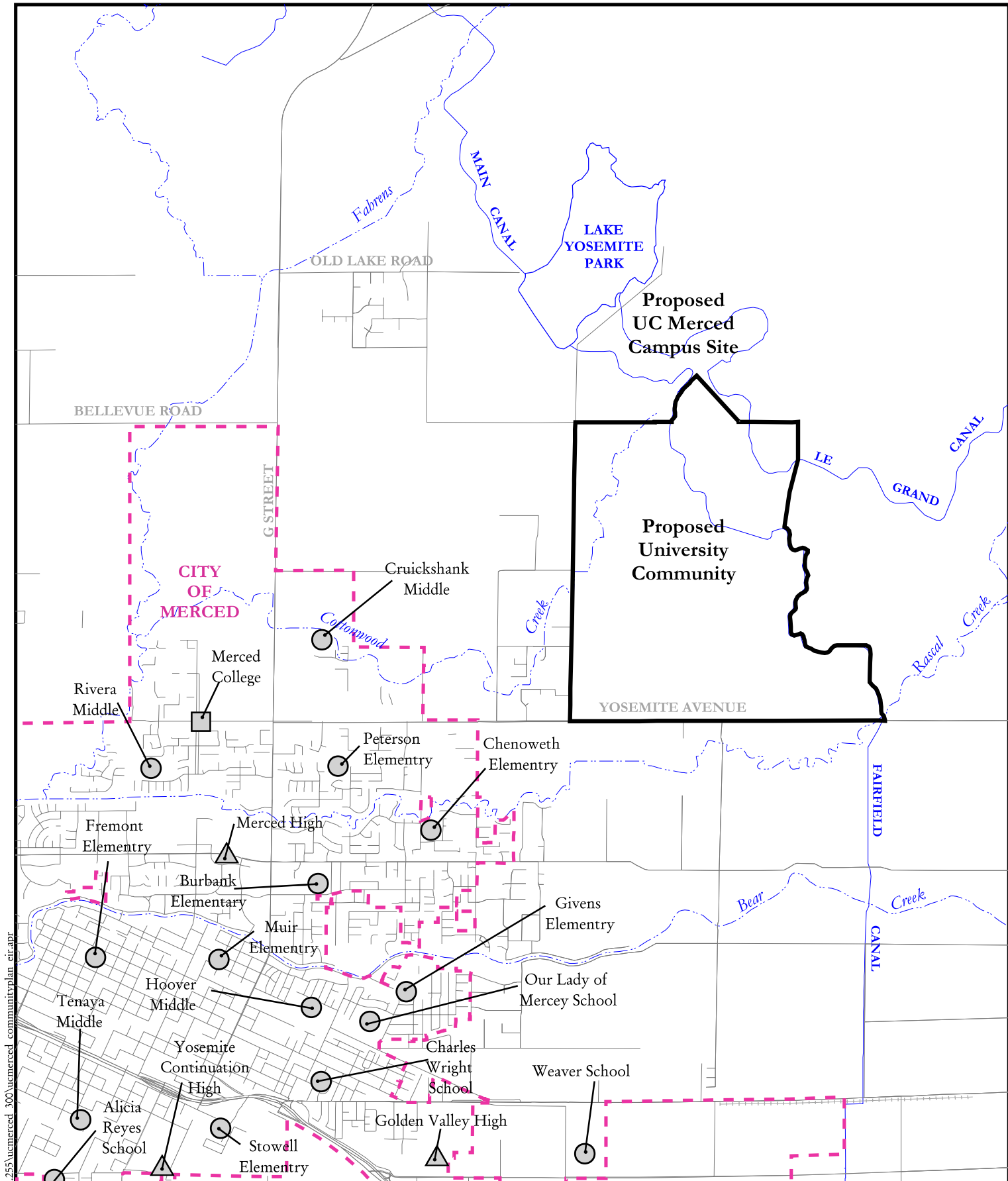
## SCHOOLS

### Existing Conditions

The UCP area is located in the Merced Union High School District for grades 9-12 and the Merced City School District for grades K-8. The Weaver School District (K-8) is located just south of the western portion of the site, and includes a southeastern portion of the UCP area.

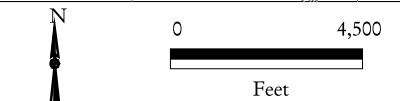
Figure 4.12-1 shows Merced area schools in relation to the UCP area. The closest elementary schools are Peterson Elementary School and Chenoweth Elementary School, located approximately 1.1 miles and 0.8 miles from the southwest corner of the UCP area, respectively. The closest middle school is Cruickshank Middle School, located at the end of Cormorant Drive, off Paulson Avenue, approximately 1.3 miles from the western side of the UCP area. These three schools are located in the Merced City School District.

Peterson Elementary currently has 768 enrolled students,<sup>11</sup> with a capacity of 908 students.<sup>12</sup> Enrollment at Chenoweth Elementary is 651 students,<sup>13</sup> and its enrollment capacity is 704 students.<sup>14</sup> Enrollment at Cruickshank Middle School is 1,002 students;<sup>15</sup> its capacity is 1,088 students.<sup>16</sup> These schools are currently not overcrowded, and there are no plans for expansion or addition of portable units to these schools.



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**EIP**  
ASSOCIATES



Source: Merced County, Planning & Community Dev. Dept., Roads, Creeks and Canals County GIS Files, June 18, 1999; and EIP Associates, Schools Data and GIS Program, August 1, 2001.

- Proposed UCP Area
- City Boundary
- Elementary School
- High School
- College

**FIGURE 4.12-1  
MERCED AREA  
SCHOOLS**

University Community Plan EIR  
Merced, CA

Capacity for schools in the Merced City School District has been evaluated through 2006; projected enrollments for that year are between 11,900 and 12,581 students, and the projected capacity for that date should be sufficient to handle such growth.<sup>17</sup>

The UCP area is located in the attendance area for Golden Valley High School. Current enrollment at Golden Valley High School is 2,157 (in excess of its planned capacity), with 110 Golden Valley students attending the East Campus Educational Center (ECEC) campus.<sup>18</sup> The closest high school to the UCP area is Merced High School, located at the corner of Olive Avenue and G Street, approximately 1.6 miles from the UCP area. Enrollment at Merced High School is over 2,700 students. The school is considered to be in excess of capacity. Also planned to open in fall 2001 is the new Buhach Colony High School.<sup>19</sup> This high school would relieve some of the enrollment pressure at Merced High School. This school is planned as a comprehensive high school initially housing approximately 762 students with a permanent capacity of 1,504.<sup>20</sup> A new “North Merced High School” is planned for Cardella Road at M Street, with a capacity of 2,000 students. This school will be approximately 4 miles from the proposed project.<sup>21</sup> The combined capacities of the existing high schools and the planned high school would exceed the current number of students in the district.

Peterson and Chenoweth Elementary Schools, Cruickshank Middle School, and Golden Valley High School would likely serve residents of the proposed UCP during its initial development stages.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### State of California

#### Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50

Proposition 1A/Senate Bill (SB) 50 (Chapter 407, Statutes of 1998) is a school construction measure that was approved by the voters on the November 3, 1998 ballot. It authorized the expenditure of State general obligation bonds totaling \$9.2 billion through 2002, primarily for the modernization and rehabilitation of older school facilities and the construction of new school facilities related to new growth. Of the \$9.2 billion, \$2.5 billion is targeted for higher education facilities and the remaining \$6.7 billion is targeted for K-12 facilities, throughout the state.

Of the \$6.7 billion for K-12 schools, \$2.9 billion is for new construction, \$2.1 billion is for modernization of older schools, \$1.0 billion is for districts in hardship situations, and \$700 million is for class size reduction. The new construction money is available through a 50/50 State/local match program. The modernization money is available through an 80/20 State/local match program. There are a number of other program reforms that are not summarized here.

Proposition 1A/SB 50 also implements significant fee reform by amending the laws governing developer fees and school mitigation in a number of ways:

- It establishes the base (statutory) amount (indexed for inflation) of allowable developer fees at \$1.93 per square foot for residential construction and \$0.31 per square foot for commercial construction.

- It prohibits school districts, cities, and counties from imposing school impact mitigation fees or other requirements in excess of or in addition to those provided in the statute.
- It also suspends for a period of at least eight years, a series of court decisions allowing cities and counties to deny or condition development approvals on grounds of inadequate school facilities when acting on certain types of entitlements.

The School Facilities Law of 1986 limited the amount of any fee or other requirement imposed on a development project for the mitigation of impacts on school facilities. Although the law appeared to prohibit denial of a project on the basis of inadequacy of school facilities, three subsequent court decisions held that this prohibition applied only to administrative land use approvals (such as tentative maps, use permits, and building permits), not to legislative land use approvals (such as general plan amendments and rezoning). These court decisions became known as the Mira-Hart-Murietta trilogy.

In reliance on these decisions, many cities and counties required payment of school fees in excess of the statutory limits as a condition to granting approval of general plan amendments, specific plans, rezoning, and other legislative approvals.

The new law overturns the Mira-Hart-Murietta cases by expressly prohibiting local agencies from using the inadequacy of school facilities as a basis for denying or conditioning approvals of any “legislative or adjudicative act . . . involving . . . the planning, use, or development of real property” (Government Code 65996(b)). In other words, the new regulations also explicitly prohibit local agencies from imposing school impact fees in excess of those provided by the statute in connection with approval of a project. Additionally, a local agency cannot require participation in a Mello-Roos for school facilities; however, the statutory fee is reduced by the amount of any voluntary participation in a Mello-Roos.

Proposition 1A/SB 50 has resulted in full State preemption of school mitigation. Satisfaction of the statutory requirements by a developer is deemed to be “full and complete mitigation.” The new law does identify certain circumstances under which the statutory fee can be exceeded. These include preparation and adoption of a “needs analysis,” eligibility for State funding, and satisfaction of one of four requirements (prior to January 1, 2000) identified in the law including year-round enrollment, general obligation bond measure on the ballot over the last four years that received 50 percent plus one of the votes cast, 20 percent of the classes in portable classrooms, or specified outstanding debt. After January 1, 2000, the district would have to satisfy two of the four requirements.

Assuming a district can meet the test for exceeding the statutory fee, the law establishes ultimate fee caps of 50 percent of costs where the State makes a 50 percent match, or 100 percent of costs where the State match is unavailable. All fees are levied at the time the building permit is issued. District certification of payment of the applicable fee is required before the City or County can issue the building permit.

### **Department of Education Standards**

The California Department of Education has published the Guide to School Site Analysis and Development in order to establish a valid technique for determining acreage for new school development. Rather than

assigning a strict student/acreage ratio, this guide provides flexible formulas that permit each district to tailor its answers as necessary to accommodate its individual conditions. The Department of Education then recommends that a site utilization study be prepared for the site, based on these formulas.

### Merced County General Plan

The Merced County General Plan does not extensively discuss school facilities, and defers school planning to local school districts. However, the General Plan does recognize overcrowding as an important issue, and notes that “[b]ecause school district boundaries overlap City and County Territory, problems of overcrowding affect all County residents.”

### PLAN ELEMENTS

The UCP contains the following policies related to schools:

- PE 1.0:** To provide sufficient school facilities within the University Community for its residents, in accordance with Merced City School District and Merced Union High School District standards.
- PE 1.1:** Designate sufficient lands for school sites within the UCP planning area to meet local population demands.
- PE 1.2:** Require school sites to be identified and dedicated for development through the preparation of sub-area Specific Plans.
- PE 1.3:** Cooperate with Merced area school districts to provide elementary, intermediate and high school sites to serve the needs of University Community residents.

### IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

#### Method of Analysis

In most cases, to estimate the number of students generated by a project that includes residential development, the number of proposed residential units is multiplied by a student generation rate from the local school district. Although this method would apply to a typical residential subdivision, it would substantially overstate the demand in a university community because university students, most of whom do not have children, would occupy a large percentage of the residential units. On average, UC undergraduate students generate substantially fewer children than does the general population. For instance, the K through 12-student population is 13 and 15 percent of the total population of the cities of Davis and Santa Cruz, respectively, compared to almost 21 percent of the population for the City of Merced.

The UC Merced campus would ultimately provide for 25,000 university students, with a goal to house 50 percent of those students (12,500) on campus. UC assumes that approximately ten percent of the total students (2,500) would commute to the campus (from outside of the University Community), with the remaining 10,000 students residing in the University Community. The LRDP EIR assumes that approximately ten percent of UC

students have dependents (e.g. married and/or have children).<sup>22</sup> Therefore, approximately 1,000 students living in the University Community could generate K through 12 students and 9,000 university students in the UCP would generate no K through 12 students. Using the average person per unit for the UCP, the 9,000 university students in the UCP would occupy 3,396 residential units. To provide a conservative estimate, it was assumed that these students would occupy multi-family units, which generate K through 12 students at a lower rate than single-family units (and these students would not displace residents in single-family units who would generate K through 12 students at a higher rate).

The 3,396 multi-family units assumed to be occupied by the 9,000 students without families were subtracted from the 4,648 total multi-family units in the proposed UCP. Student generation rates based upon a 1998 development fee justification study produced for the Merced City School District and Merced Union High School District<sup>23</sup> were then applied to the remaining units in the proposed UCP (6,968 single-family units and 1,252 multi-family units). The generation rates used for K through 5 students is 0.36 students per single-family unit and 0.22 students per multi-family unit; grades 5 through 8 is 0.2 students per single-family unit and 0.04 students per multi-family unit; and grades 9 through 12 is 0.227 students per single-family unit and 0.109 students per multi-family unit. Applying these rates to the UCP, the proposed UCP would generate 2,784 elementary school students, 1,444 middle school students, and 1,718 high school students (see Table 4.12-1). Typical school sizes in the district are 600 students for elementary schools, 1,100 for middle schools, and 1,800 for high schools. Based on the typical sizes, the UCP would generate a demand for 4.6 elementary schools, 1.3 middle schools, and 1 high school. The maximum school size for the district is 720 students for elementary and 1,200 students for middle school.

Assuming schools of this size, the proposed UCP would generate a demand for 3.9 elementary schools and 1.2 middle schools.

### **Additional Baseline Assumptions**

The above setting information constitutes a portion of the baseline condition for the UCP. However, as discussed in Section 4.0, Introduction to the Analysis, the UCP will be adopted only after adoption of the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan. Therefore, concurrent development of the UC Merced campus and the University Community is assumed and the UC Merced campus is assumed in the baseline conditions. The existing conditions on the UC Merced campus site and anticipated conditions at buildout of the UC Merced campus are discussed below. The campus is expected to provide on-campus housing for 12,500 students and that approximately ten percent of those UC students have dependents (1,250), residing in multi-family units. In addition, it is anticipated that there would be 710 faculty members living on campus, 60 percent in single-family housing (426) and 40 percent in multi-family housing (284). Applying the same K through 12-student generation rates to the on-campus student family and faculty units would yield 491 elementary school students, 147 middle school students, and 264 high school students. This would add a demand for between 0.7 and 0.8 elementary schools, 0.1 middle schools, and 0.1 high schools.

Please refer to the UC Merced LRDP EIR for a complete description of setting and LRDP elements related to schools.

<b>TABLE 4.12-1</b>								
<b>K THROUGH 12 STUDENT GENERATION</b>								
	<b>Buildout</b>				<b>2015</b>			
	<b>K-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Buildout Totals</b>	<b>K-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>2015 Totals</b>
<b>University Community Generation</b>								
SFR Student Generation Rate	0.36	0.2	0.227		0.36	0.2	0.227	
Single-family Units	6,968	6,968	6,968		589	589	589	
Children	2,508	1,394	1,582	5,484	212	118	134	464
MFR Student Generation Rate	0.22	0.04	0.109		0.22	0.04	0.109	
Multi-family Units	1,252	1,252	1,252		0	0	0	
Children	275	50	136	461	0	0	0	0
Total School Children	2,784	1,444	1,718	5,946	212	118	134	464
Typical School Size	600	1,100	1,800		600	1,100	1,800	
Maximum School Size	720	1,200	1,800		720	1,200	1,800	
Number of Typical Schools Required	4.6	1.3	1.0		0.4	0.1	0.1	
Number of Larger Schools Required	3.9	1.2	1.0		0.3	0.1	0.1	
<b>UC Merced Campus Generation</b>								
On-campus Demand	491	147	264	902	67	12	33	112
Number of Typical Schools Required	0.8	0.1	0.1		0.1	0.0	0.0	
Number of Larger Schools Required	0.7	0.1	0.1		0.1	0.0	0.0	
<b>Totals</b>								
Total Number of Typical Schools Required with UC	5.5	1.4	1.1		0.5	0.1	0.1	
Total Number of Larger Schools Required with UC	4.5	1.3	1.1		0.4	0.1	0.1	
Assumptions: 50% of UC students (12,500) will live on campus 10% of UC students (2,500) will commute from outside of UCP Remainder (10,000) will live in University Community Like on-campus, 10% of students in UCP (1,000) will have dependents Those 1,000 will generate K-12 students like general population Remaining 9,000 will not generate K-12 students and will live in multi-family housing At a rate of 2.65 persons per unit (9,000/2.65), 3,396 m.f. units will not generate children District student generation rates were applied to remaining units 6,968 s.f. and 1,252 m.f. units								
Source: URS, Michael Paoli and Associates, EIP Associates, 2001.								

### Standards of Significance

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, an impact is considered significant if the proposed UCP would:

- 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 performance objectives for schools.

### Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**4.12-5 The proposed UCP would require the expansion of existing schools and construction of new elementary schools and middle schools to accommodate the additional school children generated by the proposed UCP.**

**Applicable Regulations:** Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50

**Significance:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PE1.1 through 1.3

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Baseline Plus Buildout Scenario

As stated above, capacity of existing elementary and middle schools in Merced County is considered sufficient to handle enrollment growth to 2006.<sup>24</sup> However, these calculations do not take into account development of the University Community or the UC Merced campus. In addition, Merced High School and Golden Valley High School are at capacity. At buildout, the UCP would result in the creation of approximately 11,616 dwelling units. Based on the projected UCP student generation rates, this would result in the need for between 3.9 and 4.6 elementary schools, between 1.2 and 1.3 middle schools, and one high school. It is estimated that, at buildout, the UC Merced campus would generate 491 elementary school children, 147 middle school children, and 264 high school children. Therefore, the UCP and the UC Merced campus combined would result in a demand for between 4.5 and 5.5 elementary schools, between 1.3 and 1.4 middle schools, and 1.1 high schools. Existing schools would not be sufficient to meet this demand.

The UCP designates acreage for the construction of schools (five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school). However, because the actual demand for schools is unknown at this time, it is uncertain that this acreage would be sufficient to meet the demand. To ensure that sufficient school sites are available to serve the demand generated by the UCP and the campus, UCP Policy PE 1.1 requires that sufficient lands be designated for school sites within the UCP area to meet local population demands. Further, UCP Policy PE 1.2 requires school sites to be identified and dedicated for development through the preparation of sub-area specific plans. UCP Policy PE 1.3 requires the County to cooperate with the Merced Area school districts (which would be responsible for providing schools) to provide school sites to meet demands. These policies would ensure that sufficient school sites are available to serve the demand generated by the UCP and the campus.

Pursuant to Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50 (Chapter 407, Statutes of 1998), payment of statutory fees or alternate fees is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of school impacts. All development in the University Community would be required to pay applicable school district impact fees, assessed on a per

residential unit basis, toward development of schools. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant. In addition, as stated in the methods section, that the University Community would include residential units that do not generate K through 12 students; however, impact fees would be assessed on these units. By paying impact fees on units that do not generate K through 12 students, the proposed UCP would provide mitigation in excess of its impact on schools.

The construction of new schools could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created. These impacts are analyzed in the Air Quality, Noise, and Geology sections of this EIR.

#### Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

By the year 2015, the Town Center and portions of Residential Villages 1 and 2 could be constructed, with approximately 1,152 housing units, approximately 589 single-family and 563 multi-family units. This would result in the need for between 0.3 and 0.4 elementary schools, 0.1 middle schools, and 0.1 high schools. This small amount of school demand would not likely trigger construction of new school facilities, but could require expansion of some existing facilities. With student generation on the campus, the total projected number of schools required would be between 0.4 and 0.5 elementary schools, and demand on middle and high schools would each remain at 0.1 school.

As with the buildout scenario, some of the units constructed in the University Community would be occupied by people who do not generate K through 12 children. Therefore, the proposed UCP would contribute fees in excess of the actual students generated. As stated above, payment of statutory fees or alternate fees is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of school impacts. In addition, the above UCP policies would provide land designated for schools. With implementation of these policies and regulations, this impact would be less than significant.

To the extent that construction of new schools could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created, these impacts are analyzed in the Air Quality, Noise, and Geology sections of this EIR.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The proposed UCP would affect school services provided by school districts serving Merced City, including the Merced City School District and Merced Union High School District; development within these school districts' boundaries, including development of the UC Merced campus, UCP development, and development in the City of Merced, would create increased demand for schools. Therefore, the context for cumulative impact assessment for schools is growth within the service areas of these school districts.

#### **4.12-6 Cumulative development within the City of Merced, in combination with the proposed UCP, would require the construction of new schools.**

**Applicable Regulations:** Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50

**Significance:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PE 1.1 through 1.4

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Cumulative Plus Buildout Scenario

This scenario assumes full buildout of the proposed UCP, proposed UC Merced campus, and the City of Merced and areas within the school districts' service areas. Development of the UCP in combination with other development would increase demand on schools. Existing schools would not be able to accommodate the projected future population at their current capacities. As stated above, the Merced City School District has plans for school facilities to accommodate projected student population in the short term (to approximately 2006); however, growth beyond 2006 is not currently accounted for by the district. In order for projected demands to be served, additional schools would be needed.

Pursuant to Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50 (Chapter 407, Statutes of 1998), payment of statutory fees or alternate fees, as discussed above, is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of school impacts. Generally, the impact fees would be applicable to any future development within the school districts, including the UCP; however, development on the UC Merced campus would not be subject to the districts' fees. As stated above, however, only a small percentage of the housing units on the campus would generate K through 12 students. Further, at buildout, there would be almost 3,400 units within the University Community that are subject to impact fees that would not generate students, compared to approximately 2,000 units within the campus that generate students. Therefore, the impact fees paid would exceed the number of units that actually generate children.

Payment of applicable impact fees and implementation of the above UCP policies would ensure that there is sufficient land designated for schools. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to cumulative school demand would be less than significant.

#### 2015 Cumulative Scenario

This scenario assumes year 2015-level development of the County (including the City of Merced), proposed UCP and proposed UC Merced campus. Development of the UCP in combination with other cumulative development would increase demand on schools. Existing schools would not be able to accommodate the projected future population at their current capacities. As stated above, the school district has not accounted for growth beyond 2006. In order for projected demands to be served, additional schools would likely be needed. Year 2015 development of the UCP would result in demand for less than 0.4 elementary schools, approximately 0.1 middle schools, and 0.1 high schools. The demand from campus development would only minimally increase total demand. However, growth within the City and adjacent areas would likely increase demand to a level that could require the construction of one or more schools. As stated above, the UCP designates acreage for the construction of schools and includes policies to ensure that sufficient school sites are

available to serve the demand generated by the UCP and the campus. This land could be purchased by the district for the construction of a new schools site. Similar to the buildout condition, the number of units within the University Community that are subject to impact fees but generate no children would exceed the number of units on-campus that do are not subject to the fees. Therefore, the impact would be considered less than significant.

## LIBRARIES

### Existing Conditions

The Merced County Library system was established in 1910 and has a main branch in Merced and regional branches in Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston and Los Banos. These libraries lend books, records, cassettes and magazines to County residents. Computers are also available to residents for Internet and word processing services. The main branch is 44,050 square feet in size, and is open four days each week for an average of 7.5 hours per day. The regional branches are open five days each week for an average of 5.7 hours each day.

The public library nearest the UCP Area is the Main Branch at 2100 O Street. In addition to the Main Branch, one library is located to the south, but this facility is not likely to serve the UCP, as it is small and rather distant from the UCP area.

Since the early 1990s, library services in Merced County have been scaled back and funding, programs, hours, and staff have been reduced or terminated. In early 1997, the City and County adopted a property tax sharing agreement in which the County would receive a share of the tax increment from Redevelopment Project Area 2 specifically for library purposes. While this agreement is currently in place, the County library system still lacks the funding necessary to provide adequate circulation and staffing for existing libraries.<sup>25</sup> Compared to a State average library-spending rate of \$20.65 per capita, Merced County's per-capita expenditure in 1998 was \$4.03.<sup>26</sup>

## REGULATORY SETTING

### Merced County General Plan

The Merced County General Plan does not contain any policies or implementing actions related to libraries.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

The proposed UCP includes policies for regulating library site and design as well as appropriate services and resources to be provided by UCP libraries.

The UCP includes the following policies for library facilities:

- PLC 1.1:** Establish standards for the development of Community libraries that recognize opportunities for joint use with UC Merced, other institutions, and opportunities imposed by digital communication.

- PLC 1.2:** Develop library facilities that serve the University Community, as identified in sub-area Specific Plans, which may include:
- One or more free standing facilities for library services
  - Shared library facilities with area schools
  - Library facilities integrated with multi-purpose community/cultural facilities
  - Shared library facilities with UC Merced
  - Library facilities incorporated within commercial/retail development
- PLC 2.1:** Encourage the development of library facilities that can be jointly used by public schools and community residents.
- PLC 2.2:** Work with UC library system to explore opportunities for the sharing/linkage of library resources including facilities, staffing, and circulation materials. Promote access to the UC library system by Merced's residents.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

### Method of Analysis

As mentioned above, the Merced County General Plan does not contain any policies or implementing actions related to libraries. The Merced County Librarian was contacted for up-to-date background information related to current levels of service and service standards. As no local standards exist, current library levels of service were targeted as the desired service level.

### **Additional Baseline Assumptions**

The above setting information constitutes a portion of the baseline condition for the UCP. However, as discussed in Section 4.0, Introduction to the Analysis, the UCP will be adopted only after adoption of the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan. Therefore, concurrent development of the UC Merced campus and the University Community is assumed and the UC Merced campus is assumed in the baseline conditions. The existing conditions on the UC Merced campus site and anticipated conditions at buildout of the UC Merced campus are discussed below.

The library system on the campus would be available to the general public, and would provide a large array of adult non-fiction and reference materials that would allow the County library system to reallocate some resources away from adult needs and toward other types of materials, such as resources for children. Please refer the UC Merced LRDP EIR for a complete description of setting and LRDP elements related to libraries.

### Standards of Significance

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, an impact is considered significant if the proposed UCP would:

- 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 performance objectives for libraries.

### **Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

#### **4.12-7 The proposed UCP would result in the need for additional library facilities.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PLC 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** Mitigation Measure 4.12-7

*The County shall ensure that the County Library's level of service does not fall below the current service level.*

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### **Baseline Plus Buildout Scenario**

As discussed above, the County library system lacks the necessary resources to provide what library administrators consider adequate circulation and staffing for existing libraries. Development of the UCP would result in increased demand on these libraries, further reducing their ability to provide adequate service. UCP development assumes existence of the University of California Merced Campus, which would include library facilities that would offer limited use to the public. The resources available at this library would not, however, likely provide appropriate library resources for all members of the community (e.g., children). In order for projected demands to be served at current service levels, expansion of current libraries or construction of additional libraries would be needed. UCP Policies PLC 1.1 and 1.2 call for the County to establish standards for libraries and for the development of libraries within the UCP area. Policies PLC 2.1 and 2.2 encourage the joint use of library facilities, including coordination with the UC Merced campus. Therefore, impacts on the Merced County Library system associated with development of the proposed UCP would be less than significant. Compliance with the above mitigation measure would ensure that the current library level of service would be maintained.

To the extent that new facilities could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created, these impacts are analyzed in the Air Quality, Noise, and Geology sections of this EIR.

Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

Development of the UCP at 2015 would result in a community population of approximately 3,053. As discussed above, the County library system lacks the necessary resources to provide what library administrators consider adequate circulation and staffing for existing libraries. The additional population resulting from year 2015-level UCP development would result in increased demand on these libraries, further reducing their ability to provide adequate service. The UC Merced campus would include library facilities that would offer limited use to the public. Materials available in the campus library could free the County to allocate additional funds toward the provision of children's materials. Therefore, impacts on the Merced County Library system associated with development of the proposed UCP would be less than significant. Compliance with the above mitigation measure would ensure that the current library level of service would be maintained.

Cumulative Impacts

As growth in the County continues, the demand for library services will increase. This demand would be generated not only by the proposed UCP, but also by all development in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, including the UC Merced campus. The Merced County Libraries would be called upon to meet these service demands. Therefore, cumulative impacts are analyzed within the context of Merced County development.

**4.12-8 Cumulative development within Merced County, in combination with the proposed UCP, will result in increased demand for libraries.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** PLC 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** Mitigation Measure 4.12-8

*Implement Mitigation Measure 4.12-7.*

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

Cumulative Plus Buildout Scenario

This scenario assumes full development of the UCP and the University. As discussed above, the County library system lacks the necessary resources to provide what library administrators consider adequate circulation and staffing for existing libraries. Development within the County, including the proposed UCP, would result in growth that would place demand on library facilities, further reducing their ability to provide adequate service. UC Merced campus library facilities that would offer limited use to the public, which could allow the County to allocate funds to areas within the library system that are under-served. Therefore, the

UCP's contribution to impacts on the Merced County Library system would be less than significant. Compliance with the above mitigation measure would ensure that the current library level of service would be maintained with development of the UCP.

### 2015 Cumulative Scenario

This scenario assumes year 2015-level development of Merced County, the proposed UCP, and the proposed UC Merced campus. As discussed above, the County library system lacks the necessary resources to provide what library administrators consider adequate circulation and staffing for existing libraries. Development within the County, proposed UCP and campus, would result in growth that would place demand on existing library facilities, further reducing their ability to provide adequate service. Impacts under this scenario would be similar to, but less severe than, those under the buildout scenario. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to impacts on the Merced County Library system would be less than significant. As with that scenario, compliance with the above mitigation measure would ensure that the current library level of service would be maintained with development of the UCP.

## HOSPITALS

### Environmental Setting

The Merced Department of Public Health includes the Merced County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency, which provides oversight and regulation of the delivery of emergency medical services throughout Merced County. The proposed UCP area is located in the Merced Exclusive Operating Area, which also includes the City of Merced, Planada, El Nido, Snelling, and all the rural areas surrounding the City of Merced.

Riggs Ambulance Service is the primary transport provider in the county, serving approximately 80 percent of County land and 90 percent of the population.<sup>27</sup>

Mercy Medical Center Merced operates two hospitals in Merced: the Community Campus and the Dominican Campus. The Community Campus, previously the Sutter Merced Medical Center, provides medical services for all calls handled by Riggs Ambulance Service. The Community Campus provides 220 active physicians, 174 beds and 24-hour emergency services. The Dominican Campus hospital recently submitted an application for a license for 112 beds, an increase from 103 beds. There are approximately 250 physicians at this facility, as well as an Urgent Care unit.

A third hospital is being planned, and is expected to open in 2007. This facility, at G Street and Cormorant Street, would be closer to the proposed UCP area than the two existing hospitals. This new 245-bed hospital is being planned in accordance with projected population growth, including population associated with the proposed UC Merced campus and the UCP.<sup>28</sup>

Other health and social services are also available within the City of Merced and the surrounding region, including family planning and birth control clinics, a blood bank, two mental health clinics, and home care and hospice services. Urgent care facilities in the vicinity of the UCP area include Mercy Urgent Care and Olive Avenue Urgent Care. In addition, the proposed UC Merced would provide a non-emergency health clinic to provide health services to students, faculty, and staff, some of whom would reside in the University Community.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### Federal

No federal policies or implementing actions related to hospital services are relevant to the proposed UCP.

### State

No State policies or implementing actions related to hospital services are relevant to the proposed UCP.

### Local

#### Merced County General Plan Policies

The Merced County General Plan does not contain any policies or implementing actions related to hospital services, nor does it provide standards for levels of hospital service.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

### UCP Policies

- PHS 1.1:** Work with local health providers to ensure that adequate health services are provided for University Community residents. This may involve the development of new facilities within the Community and/or expansion of facilities outside of the Community.
- PHS 1.2:** Locate any health care facilities that are developed in the Community in the Town Center and, secondarily, in the Residential Village Centers to maximize access by local residents and interface with other public uses.
- PHS 1.3:** Identify and commit the appropriate location(s) for health care facilities in subsequent sub-area Specific Plans, based on need, phasing, and timing.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Methods of Analysis

The number of beds needed in a hospital depends on the specific needs of the population the hospital is serving. The planned new hospital at G Street and Cormorant Street has been planned to provide approximately 1.6 beds per 1,000 residents of Merced in 2008, including population growth associated with the proposed UC Merced campus and UCP.<sup>29</sup> The new hospital will add an additional 245 beds to the existing capacity of the medical system. The University of California at Davis uses a 1.5 bed per 1,000 resident ratio to

determine hospital need. Using the more conservative 1.6 beds per 1,000 resident ratio, the projected UCP population at buildout (approximately 30,782 residents) would require approximately 49 additional beds.

### **Additional Baseline Assumptions**

The above setting information constitutes a portion of the baseline condition for the UCP. However, as discussed in Section 4.0, Introduction to the Analysis, the UCP will be adopted only after adoption of the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan. Therefore, concurrent development of the UC Merced campus and the University Community is assumed and the UC Merced campus is assumed in the baseline conditions. The existing conditions on the UC Merced campus site and anticipated conditions at buildout of the UC Merced campus are discussed below.

The on-campus resident population would create a demand for approximately 24 to 26 new beds. Please refer the UC Merced LRDP EIR for a complete description of setting and LRDP elements related to hospitals.

### **Standards of Significance**

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, an impact is considered significant if the proposed UCP would:

- 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 hospitals.

### **Project Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

#### **4.12-9 The proposed UCP could require the expansion of existing hospitals and construction of new hospitals to accommodate the additional population generated by the proposed UCP.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Policies PHS 1.1 through 1.3

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

Baseline Plus Buildout Scenario

Development of the UCP would result in a population of approximately 30,782 who would require hospital services. Using a demand ratio of 1.6 beds per 1,000 residents, the projected UCP population at buildout would require approximately 49 beds. The planned new hospital will add an additional 245 beds to the existing capacity of the medical system. This additional capacity would be more than adequate to accommodate increased hospital demand created by the UCP. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

County tax revenues would fund any new hospitals that would be constructed. To the extent that new facilities could affect the environment, particularly during construction, when dust, noise, and erosion could be created, these impacts are analyzed in Sections 4.3 Air Quality, 4.10 Noise, and 4.6 Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources.

Baseline Plus 2015 Scenario

At 2015, development of the UCP would add 3,053 residents to the County who would require hospital services. Using a demand ratio of 1.6 beds per 1,000 residents, the projected UCP population in 2015 would require approximately five additional beds. The planned new hospital will add an additional 245 beds by 2007 to the existing capacity of the medical system. This additional capacity would be more than adequate to accommodate increased hospital demand created by the UCP. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As growth in Merced County continues, the demand for hospital services will increase. The proposed UCP and UC Merced campus would contribute to the population growth and demand for hospital services. The cumulative context for the proposed UCP includes the buildout of the UC Merced Campus, UCP, and Merced County.

**4.12-10 The proposed UCP, in conjunction with cumulative development in Merced County, will result in increased demand for hospitals.**

**Applicable Regulations:** None

**Significance:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Included in the UCP:** None

**Significance After Mitigation Included in the UCP:** Less than Significant

**Additional Mitigation:** None required

**Residual Significance:** Less than Significant

#### Cumulative Buildout Scenario

This scenario assumes full development of the UCP and the UC Merced campus and 2025 development in the County. Cumulative development would result in an increase in population over that which currently exists. Merced County's population would be approximately 351,488 in 2025 without the UC Merced campus. Adding an on-campus population of 16,150 and a UCP population of 30,782, the County population would be 398,420. The existing and planned area hospitals would not be sufficient to accommodate the projected future population. In order for projected demands to be served, additional hospital facilities would be needed. The UCP itself would create a demand for approximately 49 hospital beds, which would not significantly burden existing and planned hospital facilities. In addition, the UCP policies PHS 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 require planning to ensure that local health service is adequate to serve the University Community, which could include construction of facilities within the UCP area. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to cumulative demand for hospital services would be less than significant.

#### 2015 Cumulative Scenario

With 2015 University Community and UC Merced campus growth added to County 2015 growth, Merced County would grow to 304,295. These residents would require hospital services. As noted above, the new hospital is planned to open in 2007 and would provide 245 hospital beds in addition to those currently provided. Total demand under the 2015 Phased Cumulative scenario would be approximately 487 hospital beds. With the planned hospital, there would be 531 hospital beds, which is more than the 2015 demand. The UCP itself would create a demand for approximately five hospital beds, which would not significantly burden existing and planned hospital facilities. Therefore, the UCP's contribution to cumulative demand for hospital services would be less than significant.

**ENDNOTES**

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2. Patrick Kerrigan, Chief, Merced County Fire Department, personal communication, February 8, 2001 and June 4, 2001.
3. Diana St. Onge, Staff Services Assistant, Merced County Building Division, personal communication, May 29, 2001.
4. Merced County 2000 General Plan Update, Merced County Planning Department.
5. Patrick Kerrigan, Chief, Merced County Fire Department, personal communication, June 4, 2001.
6. Patrick Kerrigan, Chief, Merced County Fire Department, personal communication, June 4, 2001.
7. Patrick Kerrigan, Chief, Merced County Fire Department, personal communication, June 4, 2001.
8. *A Blueprint for the Future: A Master Plan for the Continued Success of the Merced County Fire Department*, Draft, Merced County Fire Department in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
9. *A Blueprint for the Future: A Master Plan for the Continued Success of the Merced County Fire Department*, Draft, Maps 4, 5, and 6; Merced County Fire Department in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
10. *A Blueprint for the Future: A Master Plan for the Continued Success of the Merced County Fire Department*, Draft, Merced County Fire Department in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
11. Gwen Auer, Administrative Secretary, Administrative Services, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
12. Mike Carter, Director, Facilities Planning, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
13. Gwen Auer, Administrative Secretary, Administrative Services, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
14. Mike Carter, Director, Facilities Planning, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
15. Gwen Auer, Administrative Secretary, Administrative Services, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.

16. Mike Carter, Director, Facilities Planning, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
17. Mike Carter, Director, Facilities Planning, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
18. Insert endnote for reference in “Schools” section.
19. Betty Davis, Data Entry Computer Operator, Merced Chion High School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
20. Michael Paoli and Associates, Development Fee Justification Study, May 1998.
21. Merced High School Greetings, [www.mhs.mhsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mhs.mhsd.k12.ca.us), May 23, 2001.
22. University of California, *2001 University of California, Merced, Long Range Development Plan Environmental Impact Report, August 2001*, Table 2-3, Housing Distribution, page 2-12.
23. Development Fee Justification Study, Michael Paoli and Associates, May 1998.
24. Mike Carter, Director, Facilities Planning, Merced City School District, personal communication, March 2, 2001.
25. Charlene Renteria, Librarian, Merced County Library, written communication, March 27, 2001.
26. California Library Statistics 2000, California State Library.
27. Merced County EMS, May 7, 2001. [www.merced.ca.us/health/ems](http://www.merced.ca.us/health/ems)
28. Neil Humphrey, Regional Director of Facility Development and Construction, Mercy Medical Center Merced, personal communication, April 5, 2001.
29. Personal Communication, Neil Humphrey, Regional Director of Facility Development and Construction, Mercy Medical Center Merced, April 5, 2001.