

# Parkway Progress

*The most up-to-date information about the Campus Parkway project!*

## In this Issue:

- 1 Construction to be Phased.
- 1 Roundabouts being Considered.
- 2 Impacts to Waters of the United States
- 2 Farmland Impacts
- 2 Project Schedule
- 3 Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle
- 3 Project Funding
- 4 Find out More

Merced County  
Department of Public Works  
715 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Merced, CA 95340

## Construction to be Phased

Campus Parkway will need to have four through lanes (two lanes in each direction) to support the growth anticipated to occur in the northern and eastern portions of the City of Merced through the year 2025. According to Director of Public Works, Paul Fillebrown, "Insufficient funds are available to construct the entire project in a single phase." As a result, Campus Parkway will be constructed in two phases.

**FIRST PHASE:** Two travel lanes (one lane in each direction) will be constructed with the first phase. Construction of the first phase is scheduled to begin in late 2005 and should be completed in 2007. The right-of-way necessary for the entire 4-lane facility will be acquired during the first phase. The cost of the first phase, including all environmental documentation, design, right-of-way and construction has been estimated to be \$41,700,000.00.

**SECOND PHASE:** The two remaining travel lanes will be constructed during the second phase. The second phase also includes the construction of a separate, bi-directional bike/pedestrian path parallel to the western side of Campus Parkway.

In order to maintain an adequate level-of-service along the Campus Parkway corridor, the second phase must be completed by the year 2015. The cost of the second phase has been estimated to be \$26,720,000.00.

**BEYOND 2025:** The City of Merced will continue to grow after the year 2025. The need for additional regional transportation capacity will also continue to grow. Campus Parkway is being designed to accommodate the potential construction of additional through lanes and other capacity increasing improvements. ■

**"Insufficient funds are available to construct the entire project in a single phase."**

## Roundabouts being Considered

Roundabouts may be constructed at the intersections that Campus Parkway will have with Olive Avenue and Yosemite Avenue. These roundabouts, if constructed, would be developed in place of traditional signalized intersections.

When most people think about roundabouts, the picture that usually comes to mind is a free-for-all traffic circle with little or no control. A modern roundabout, although at first glance may appear to resemble an archaic traffic circle, actually functions in a very orderly and controlled manner.

*Continued on Page 3*



# Impacts to Waters of the United States

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has verified the jurisdictional Waters of the United States within the Campus Parkway study area. Over 27 acres of Waters of the United States were identified within the study area. The majority of these waters have been avoided by the alternative alignments under investigation for Campus Parkway.

The Yellow and alt-Green alignments will impact less than 1/2 acre of Waters of the United States. As a result, the Campus Parkway project will qualify for a Nationwide 404 permit. An Individual 404 permit is required for projects that impact more than 1/2 acre. The individual permit process is significantly more complex than the nationwide permit process.

“We were surprised to learn that many canals that are owned and operated by the Merced Irrigation District are considered by the Corps of Engineers to be Waters of the United States,” said Steve Rough, Project Engineer for the Campus Parkway project.

The Green alignment appears to impact more than 1/2 acre of Waters of the United States. However, it is possible that a significant portion of these waters may be isolated wetlands. The Corps of Engineers has established procedures for determining if wetlands are isolated. According to a recent ruling by the United States Supreme Court, isolated wetlands do not qualify as Waters of the United States. If it can be determined that some of the wetlands are isolated, it is possible that the Green alignment may also qualify for a Nationwide 404 permit. “We plan to pursue the process that may classify a portion of the wetlands along the Green alignment as isolated,” said Rough. ■

# Farmland Impacts

What impact will Campus Parkway have on farmland? That is one of the most frequently asked questions. Determining the direct impact that Campus Parkway will have on farmland is a relatively straight-forward process. Determining the significance of these direct impacts is much more difficult.

**Acres Impacted:** The number of acres of farmland directly impacted by the Campus Parkway project is summarized in the following table:

Farmland Impacts			
Farmland Type	Impacted Acres of Productive Farmland along each Alignment		
	Yellow	Green	Alt-Green
Prime	68	44	63
Statewide	0	7	0
Unique	15	5	14
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>77</b>

This table does not include farmland that has been designated for urban development by either the City or County of Merced. For more information about farmland types, the following website is recommended:

[www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/FMMP/fmmp\\_intro.htm](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/FMMP/fmmp_intro.htm)

**Federal Standard of Significance:** The U.S. Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) establishes a standard of significance for federally funded projects. In order to determine the significance of a project, a farmland conversion rating form must be completed. The local staff of the National Resource Conservation Service (formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service) must be consulted as part of the process. According to the FPPA, “Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection and no additional sites need to be evaluated.”

All of the alignments being considered for Campus Parkway received a total score less than 160 on the farmland conversion rating form. Therefore, the Campus Parkway project is below the threshold of significance established by U.S. Farmland Protection Policy Act.

**Local Standard of Significance:** Merced County does not have an adopted measure of significance for impacts to farmland. However, the county has established an Agricultural Policy Strategy Committee (CAPS) as part of a proactive process towards developing a countywide farmland impact policy. It is anticipated that a policy, if adopted, would establish a threshold of significance for impacts to farmland as well as enact a mitigation strategy for reducing significant impacts to an acceptable level. The Campus Parkway project would be required to comply with any policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors. ■

. . .

## Project Schedule

- June 2002**  
- Publish Draft EIR-EIS
- June 2003**  
- Publish Final EIR-EIS
- August 2003**  
- Public Hearing by Board of Supervisors to certify CEQA
- September 2003**  
- Begin Right-of-way Acquisition
- September 2005**  
- Begin Construction
- September 2007**  
- End Construction



*Roundabouts  
Continued from Page 1*

Roundabouts are rapidly gaining popularity in the United States. In 1998 Caltrans adopted criteria for the appropriate application and design of roundabouts. In 2000, the Federal Highway Administration published, "Roundabouts, An Information Guide." The publication of this document represents a major milestone for the future development of roundabouts in the United States.

To find out more information about roundabouts, the following internet sites are recommended:

<http://roundabout.kittelson.com>

[www.tfhr.gov/safety/00068.htm](http://www.tfhr.gov/safety/00068.htm)

[www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/engineer/pdu/roundabout.htm](http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/engineer/pdu/roundabout.htm)

[www.engr.orst.edu/~taekrtha/round.html](http://www.engr.orst.edu/~taekrtha/round.html)

## Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle

Biological surveys conducted in the Campus Parkway study area failed to reveal the presence of any endangered or threatened species. However, Elderberry shrubs along the banks of Bear Creek provide potential habitat for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. To learn more about the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, the following internet links are recommended:

[www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/es/espdfs/velball.pdf](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/es/espdfs/velball.pdf)

[www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/es/espdfs/velbbio.pdf](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/es/espdfs/velbbio.pdf)

Mitigation for impacts to habitat of the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle usually involves either a financial

contribution to a mitigation bank or the creation of replacement habitat near the project site. ■

## Project Funding

The first phase of the Campus Parkway project will receive funding from the sources summarized below:

**TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century):** The Campus Parkway project will receive \$11,000,000.00 in special High Priority funds from this federal source.

**TCRP (Transportation Congestions Relief Program):** The Campus Parkway project will receive \$23,000,000.00 from the State of California through this source.

**RIP (Regional Improvement Program):** The Campus Parkway project will receive \$6,500,000.00 in regional transportation funds from this source that is distributed by the Merced County Association of Governments.

**City of Merced:** The Campus Parkway project will receive \$1,200,000.00 in development fees from the City of Merced.

The second phase of the Campus Parkway project is likely to receive funds from the Regional Improvement Program as well as from Regional Development Fees that are anticipated to be adopted later this year. A County transportation sales tax measure may be placed before the voters some time in the near future that may also provide funding for the second phase of the Campus Parkway project. ■



## Environmental Review Status

The Campus Parkway project is subject to both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as well as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

A joint Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR-EIS) is being prepared to assess the potential impacts of the Campus Parkway project. The Department of Public Works and their consultants have been busy conducting studies and preparing reports to support the EIR-EIS. All of the reports must be reviewed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) before they are released to the public.

Some of the reports that are being prepared for this project include:

**NES/BA (Natural Environmental Study/Biological Assessment):** The NES/BA contains an evaluation of the native species and habitat that have been found within the project study area.

**HPSR (Historic Property Survey Report):** The HPSR summarizes the findings of the HRER, ASR, and HASR.

**HRER (Historic Resource Evaluation Report):** The HRER contains an evaluation of certain man-made features in the study area (i.e. MID canals) to determine their historic significance.

**ASR (Archaeological Survey Report):** The ASR contains an

*Continued on Page 4*

**Don't forget to browse at:  
[www.campusparkway.com](http://www.campusparkway.com)**

**Environmental Review Status**

*Continued from Page 3*

evaluation of prehistoric archaeological resources that may be located within the project study area.

**HASR (Historic Architectural Survey Report):** The HASR contains an evaluation of any historic structures that may exist within the project study area.

**Traffic Operations Analysis:** This report contains a detailed analysis of how Campus Parkway will function during the peak hour at the design year. The results of this report are used for final project design as well as for the air quality and noise analysis.

**Air Quality Study:** This report will summarize potential impacts to air quality that may occur as a result of the project.

**Noise Study:** This report will summarize the potential noise impact that may occur as a result of

the project.

**Geologic Hazards Study:** This report evaluates the potential geologic hazards that may exist in the project study area.

**ISA (Initial Site Assessment):** The ISA evaluates the potential for encountering hazardous materials in the project study area.

**Floodplain Risk and Location Hydraulic Study:** This report analyzes the potential impact that the project may have on increasing risks of flooding.

**Hydrology and Water Quality Study:** This report analyzes the increase in storm water runoff likely to occur as a result of the project and the potential for impacts that the project may have on water quality.

**CIA (Community Impact Assessment):** The CIA evaluates the impacts that the project may have on land uses and the community. This includes neighborhoods and farmland.

## Find out More

If you have comments or questions about the Campus Parkway project, the following resources are available:

Visit the project website:

[www.campusparkway.com](http://www.campusparkway.com)

Contact the project engineer:

Steve Rough, Project Engineer

Phone: (209) 385-7601

e-mail: [srough@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:srough@co.merced.ca.us)

Mailing Address:

Merced County DPW  
715 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Merced, CA 95340



PRESRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 213  
MODESTO, CA

PARKWAY PROGRESS  
MERCED COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
715 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAY  
MERCED, CA 95340