

ATTACHMENT B

Responses to Policy-Related Comments on the November 2011 Draft 2030 Merced County General Plan: *Policy Response Matrix*

(Policy Comments on the Draft General Plan & Draft and Recirculated Draft Program
EIR in Addition to CEQA Responses in the Final Program EIR)
October 30, 2013

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
<i>Local and Regional Agency Comments</i>				
City of Merced	J-2	Disagrees with the exemptions from agricultural land mitigation requirements for commercial industrial and mixed-use projects within Urban Communities and Highway Interchange Centers but not in City Planning Areas under Policy AG-2.	AG-3	Agricultural mitigation only on residential projects would apply equally to cities. Modify policy based on Final PEIR mitigation measure AG-1a which modified mitigation measure to apply equally to all non-agricultural and urban projects.
	J-3	Takes exception to Policy PFS-1.5 regarding County provision of water and wastewater facilities adjacent to cities; equates the provision of water/wastewater facilities in unincorporated areas to encouraging sprawl.	PFS-3	In response to health and safety considerations, or for planned urban development, the County should retain the option for County-managed wastewater facilities as alternate to special districts. Retain

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				draft policy.
	J-4	Takes exception to several land use designations in land use diagram for the Merced Planning Area because they do not match the City's recently adopted Vision 2030 General Plan and historic Rural Residential Center boundary.	Land Use Diagram	Agricultural land use designation reflects the current agricultural zoning in City fringe areas, and the fact that the County does not intend to urbanize the fringe areas based on the City's Plan, but retain agricultural uses until annexation or the County processes a General Plan amendment and corresponding zone change. Correct the Merced Rural Residential Center boundary to reflect the current boundary.
	J-5	States that Celeste wastewater and water policies are incorrect and that the provision of urban services only involves water supply to limited properties.	LU-27	Celeste receives both City water and wastewater services to most existing development, therefore, it should be included in City Plan Area boundary. All other fringe areas of the City receiving City services are within the City Plan Area and City General Plan proposed sphere of influence. Retain draft policies.
	J-6	Takes exception to several policies (LU-7.1, LU-7.7, LU-10.5, and LU-10.6) related to County responsibility for development within unincorporated portions of city SOIs.	LU-28, LU-31	County has historically approved development on unincorporated land within city SOIs in compliance with existing revenue sharing agreements Referenced policies do not represent a change in County policy. Retain draft policies.
	J-7(a)	Takes exception to new town goal (LU-1) and policies (LU-1.5, LU-5.A.1) and location of new towns near cities, requests five mile separation between Cities and new towns.	LU-10, LU-17	Policy disagreement – five mile separation from City not feasible based on location of approved but unbuilt new towns. Retain draft policies.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
	J-7 (b)	Expresses concern about the creation of the University Community and Yosemite Lakes new towns within close proximity to the city of Merced,	LU-16, LU-17	The University Community was established as a new community in 2004, Yosemite Lake Estates Study Area established in 2004. Neither plan is being changed with this General Plan Update, and city annexation was considered an option in the Community Plan.
	J-7 (c)	Expresses concern about the development of Castle under the previously adopted Reuse Plan giving the County “veto power” over incompatible development within the Merced City limits. Castle is not a “full service urban community” with a full range of land uses and a balance between jobs and housing.	LU-17	Castle was established as a Special Planning Zone in 1993, the Reuse Plan was adopted in 1995, along with a County General Plan Amendment, based on the Reuse Plan EIR. Existing Urban Communities are encouraged to have balanced land uses, but only New Urban Communities are required to achieve a jobs/housing balance. Housing is not appropriate adjacent to the airport due to noise and safety issues, but housing is provided in adjacent Winton and Atwater. County decisions about Castle do not create “veto power” over development in the City. This is a both a revenue sharing and an ALUC Compatibility Plan issue. Retain draft policies.
	J-8	Takes exception to Goal LU-5.C and affordable housing policy LU-1.9, suggesting that the County does not intend to provide its fair share of affordable housing.	LU-11, LU-20	Policy LU-1.9 is not minimizing County share of affordable housing, just ensuring a fair share vs. Cities. Retain draft policies.
	J-9	Expresses concern that polices (ED-5.5 and LU-5.D.7) about development of the Castle new community, overlapping jurisdiction with the City, and the use of the	ED-8, LU-21	See response to comment J-7(c)

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
		Castle AFB Reuse Plan.		
	J-11	Disagrees that the County General Plan should address LAFCO related sphere of influence (SOI) expansion (Policy LU-7.3) and annexation (LU-7.9 and 7.10) policies, which are under LAFCOs jurisdiction; suggests that proposed policies interfere with good orderly planning and orderly development	LU-27, LU-28	The County has independent jurisdiction to comment on City sphere of influence and annexation proposals, even though decisions on SOI and annexation proposals are under LAFCO authority. However, cities do have to coordinate with the County on SOI expansion applications, and these policies will guide the County in these discussions. Retain draft policies LU-7.3 and 7.9; modify LU-7.10 as recommended in Response LC-A-2.
	J-12	Objects to Policies LU-2.5 and LU-2.1, and Program AG-1; suggests that the policies and program encourage urban development in rural areas under the guise of ag tourism or ag industry; requests a five mile buffer from the city for such uses.	LU-12, LU-13, AG-13	Ag tourism and ag industrial development is promoted by Farm Bureau and supported by the Board; this is an area of policy disagreement. Retain draft policies.
	J-13	Takes exception to economic development policies (ED-1.8, ED-2.6, ED-5.1) that are of concern to the City such as requiring a jobs/housing balance, promoting office development in Rural Residential Centers (RRCs), and development of an economic development resource allocation program.	ED-3, ED-4, ED-7	Jobs housing balance is County policy and does not apply to cities; offices are not allowed or proposed in RRCs; Policy ED-5.1 is current General Plan policy fostering coordination and cooperation between the County and all cities. Retain draft policies.
<i>Public Utility and Service Provider Comments</i>				
Merced Irrigation District (January 29,	M-3	Requests modification to Policy W-5.1 related to countywide water supply study by replacing the County as responsible for preparing updates to the study, with the	W-7	Policy W-5.1 and related Implementation Programs W-A through C were developed with

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
2013)		County only ensuring the updated studies are prepared by others – such as MID and partners in the IRWMP process.,		Focus Group input and cover entire County, including non-IRWMP areas. County study would incorporate data developed by water agencies in each hydrologic zone. Retain policy as modified in Final PEIR to reflect IRWMP process.
<i>Citizen / Non-governmental Organizations Comments</i>				
Anonymous (January 29, 2013)	N-1	Requests modified Goal HS-8 and Policy HS-8.1 to expand proposed county policy regarding the fair treatment of disadvantaged groups with respect to land use and environmental issues by including fair treatment based on “religion, gender, and gender orientation.”	HS-15	Goal HS-8 and Policy HS-8.1 are oriented to promote “Environmental Justice” principles enacted through SB 115-Chapter 690, Statutes of 1999. This legislation requires fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and incomes. The Draft Goal and Policy included “age” in the list, and the commenter requests further expansion of the groups listed. It is a Board policy decision to include more groups, but they should be included in a new policy, rather than include under the heading of Environmental Justice in Policy HS-8.1. Retain draft policy.
Merced County Farm Bureau (January 29th, 2013)	Q-2	Takes exception to definition of Agricultural Residential and reference to role as buffers between urban and rural land uses, the idea contributes to ranchette planning.	LU-5	Buffer is historic reference based on location of several Rural Residential Centers (RRCs) on the edge of cities. The concern for Agricultural Residential expansion is addressed in

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				Draft EIR Mitigation Measure AG-3c prohibiting new or expanded RRCs. No modification is needed.
	Q-3	Raises a question regarding policy LU-1.9 about MCAG's authority to guide planning in the County and LAFCO's role.	LU-11	MCAG is author of Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation, not LAFCO. Retain draft policy.
	Q-4	Policies LU-2.7, Rural Energy Production, AG-3.11, Solar and Wind Energy Production Facilities, and NR-2.4, Solar Power do not include a prohibition on prime or productive agricultural land.	LU-13, NR-4	Solar and wind projects are not prohibited on prime and productive agricultural land. Policy AG-3.11 (as proposed for modification in the Final PEIR) contains extensive criteria for evaluation and siting of solar and wind energy projects, including avoidance of Williamson Act contract land and dedication of agricultural and habitat mitigation. Retain draft policy as modified in FPEIR.
	Q-5	Questions why Yosemite Lake Estates is considered an Urban Community rather than a Study Area.	LU-17	The decision by the County in 2004 to amend the General Plan designating the "Yosemite Lake Estates Study Area" gave it the ability to be designated as an urban community, and the required Community Plan document, and associated EIR is in preparation. General Plan continues to identify it as a Study Area.
	Q-6	Disagrees with new town concept but supports added requirements for new towns in Policies LU-5.F.3, .4, and .5.	LU-25	Comment noted.
	Q-8	Suggests Policy LU-9 lacks acknowledgement and protection of solar projects in rural areas of the County; expected stronger guidelines to protect prime agricultural	LU-29	Several Draft General Plan policies encourage on-site solar and wind energy generation projects which

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
		land and ensure reclamation.		benefit the land owner (See LU-2.7, AG-3.11 and NR.-2.3) Direction from Joint Study Sessions and Board review of 7/1/2011 “Planning Commission Suggested Changes to the Draft 2030 General Plan” matrix, was to remove “solar farm” reference, not adopt prohibitions on agricultural land. Policy includes assurance for financing reclamation after decommissioning. (Also see response Q-4 above) Retain draft policies.
	Q-9	Wonders why there is no Agricultural Advisory Committee set forth in the General Plan; requests that several studies be appended to the General Plan	N/A	Board gave policy direction previously rejecting the creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee. New studies referenced by the commenter are in the administrative record. No modifications necessary.
	Q-11	Questions definition of prime farmland set forth in Table 4-5 of the Background Report; questions whether definition is consistent with the LAFCo definition of prime farmland.	G-11	Draft General Plan definition is consistent with current General Plan, using State Department of Conservation FMMP Map categories of “Prime,, Statewide Important and Unique”. LAFCO definition of “prime” is good for CEQA analysis but is too broad as policy basis to promote protection of the most productive lands.
	Q-12	Objects to agricultural land mitigation exemptions in Policy AG-2.2 for mixed use and highway interchange center development projects. Exemptions from mitigation were not mentioned during public proceedings on the General Plan.	AG-3	Policy AG-2.2 modification to remove employment-generating land uses from the mitigation requirement was discussed by the Planning Commission at their 6/22/2011 public meeting, and by

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				the Board of supervisors at their 7/12 and 8/9/2011 public meetings. Modify policy based on Final PEIR mitigation measure AG-1a which modified mitigation measure to apply equally to all non-agricultural and urban projects.
	Q-13	Questions the effect of the language regarding LESA model in Policy AG-2.2 and its effect on mitigation ratios; supports UC Cooperative Extension suggestions regarding mitigation	AG-3	Policy AG-2.2 requires a minimum 1:1 mitigation ratio; the LESA model may be used to assure that the mitigation lands are of equal or greater value than the land being converted. The Board of Supervisors has previously rejected mitigation ratios greater than 1:1. Retain draft policy as modified in Final PEIR Mitigation Measure AG-1a.
	Q-14	Opposes Policy AG-2.7 that would remove land not under Williamson Act contracts from the Agricultural Preserve.	AG-4, AG-5	Comment noted, alternative Policy AG-2.15 “Agricultural Preserve Consolidation” is provided which retains Preserve boundary but allows for exemptions for parcels less than 10 acres consistent with the Zoning Code and State law. The Board will decide which policy alternative to select.
	Q-15	Supports Policy AG-2.13 “Minimum Agricultural Parcel Size Requirement” which requires a 40-acre minimum agricultural parcel size.	AG-5	Comment noted. Board direction on 8/9/2011, was to provide an alternative Policy AG-2.13a for a 20 acre minimum. The Recirculated DPEIR addressed this policy alternative and the Farm Bureau’s comment R-V-4 also argues for the 40 acre minimum. The Board will

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				decide which policy alternative to select.
	Q-16	Questions the origin and need for including wording re San Luis Drain in policy W-1.9 “Water Supply Research and Protection.”	W-3	Policy W-1.9 is an implementation program in the existing Merced County General Plan (Implementation AG.4.4)
	Q-17	Water implementation programs W-A through W-C: Wonders if there is duplication of ongoing efforts for water management planning being conducted by other actors in the county such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP).	W-9	The Focus Groups requested the County continue to play a coordinating role in countywide water supply studies – two IRWMPs are in process in the County. Retain Draft Programs.
Sierra Club, Tehipite Chapter (January 29, 2013)	R-1	Requests a tie between the General Plan, DEIR, and the sustainable communities strategy (SCS) being prepared by MCAG.	AQ-6	The SCS will consider existing General Plans and should match the seven policies under Goal AQ-4 of the Air Quality Element. Policy AQ-1.9 requires interagency coordination on climate change
	R-2	Questions what metrics would be used to evaluate compliance with SB 375 targets and how the SCS be incorporated into the General Plan	AQ-9	Program AQ-A of the Air Quality Element requires a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to reduce GHG emissions and monitoring of emissions every 5 years. The CAP would be developed in recognition of the SCS adopted by MCAG.
	R-3	Expresses concern about jobs/housing balance requirements for rural developments and New Towns in Madera and Fresno counties and questions their potential for success	LU-25	New urban community Policies LU-5.F.5 and .6 are new requirements for 1:1 jobs/housing balance through land use mix and intensities. No mandate is included to require housing to match employment as a community grows.
	R-6	Questions how the County tracks metrics for farmland preservation and what performance standards adopted?	AG-10	Policy AG-2.2 will require 1:1 mitigation on urban conversion of agricultural land, and project level

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				mitigation monitoring is the method. Programs AG-B, D, and G all require programs referenced in the comment.
Valley Land Alliance (January 29th, 2013)	S-4	Recommends Alternative 2 – City Centered Growth Alternative	N/A	The policy preference for Growth Alternative D “City Centered Growth with New Town Emphasis” was selected by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on 1/12/2010. In combination with numerous policies that protect agricultural resources and require evaluation of impacts to productive agricultural resources, the General Plan policies reflect a balance of competing priorities – not inconsistent policy. Regardless of Alternative, the Board can modify individual policies in the Draft Plan
	S-5	Requests amendment of policy AG-2.2 via Mitigation Measure AG-1a in the DEIR.	AG-3	The 1:1 agricultural mitigation ratio in draft Policy AG-2.2 is a basis and a starting point. There is no implied limit to allowing a higher mitigation ratio, and the County recognizes that for full mitigation, the ratio would need to be greater than 1:1. Retain draft policy as modified in Final PEIR.
	S-6	Recommends deleting new towns from Policy AG-2.1, Agricultural Land Preservation.	AG-3	Whether or not to continue to allow consideration of New Urban Communities has been a debated policy by the public and among the Board. If New Community Goal LU-5.F and related policies are to be retained, the measures that protect

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				prime and productive farmland have been enhanced through evaluation of items a-k in Policy LU-5.F.2. The Board will determine final policy preference.
	S-7	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.6, Williamson Act Contracts Non-Renewal on Small Parcels.	AG-4	The intent of Policy AG-2.6 is to cancel contracts on small non-economic rural parcels for the tax increase. No policies in the Draft General Plan allow or promote urban development on this land. Retain draft policy.
	S-8	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.7, Merced County Agricultural Preserve Consolidation.	AG-4	The reduction in the Agricultural Preserve proposed in Policy AG-2.7 would remove restrictions on lands which don't receive the Williamson Act tax reduction. However, Alternative Policy AG-2.15 would retain the Preserve but provide exemptions to 10 acre minimum. The Board will determine final policy preference.
	S-9	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.14, Viability of Smaller Parcels.	AG-5	Policy AG-2.14 is proposed to scrutinize potential impacts from agricultural parcel divisions, and is desirable if Policy AG-2.13 establishing a 40 acre minimum parcel size is not adopted. Retain draft policy.
	S-10	Recommends modification of Policy AG-2.15 to delete the word "limited"	AG-5	The term "limited" reflects there are rare circumstances where the 10 acre minimum would be reduced – the details of the exceptions match those in the Zoning Code in Section 18.02.030. Retain draft policy.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
	S-11	Recommends modification to Policy AG-2.16 to add I-5 to list of potential route corridors.	AG-5	There are no high speed rail alignments along I-5; Policy Ag-2.16 should not be adjusted. Retain draft policy.
	S-12	Recommends omitting the phrase “suitably located new communities” from Goal LU-1.	LU-10	The preference for continuing to allow creation of new urban communities through policies in the General Plan Update is a policy decision for the Board. Also see Comment No. S-6.
	S-13	Recommends deleting Policy LU-1.5, New Urban Communities.	LU-10	New Urban Communities are promoted to provide an alternative for growth off the productive farmland on the Valley Floor rather than to promote additional growth. This is a policy decision for the Board as in the response to Goal LU-1.
	S-14	Suggests that Policy LU-2.1, Agricultural Designation, gives an inaccurate impression with respect to productive ag land inventory, and does not adequately protect ag lands	LU-11 LU-12	The productive agricultural lands inventory presented in the EIR (Pages 6-6 to 6-13) is based on the State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and US Census of Agriculture, and is accurate. The “Agricultural” land use discussion and Policy LU-2.3 recognize open-space resources in “Agricultural” and “Foothill Pasture” designated areas. Retain draft policy.
	S-15, S-16,	Recommends deleting Policy LU-5.A.1, Urban Communities Establishment, Goal LU-5.F, and Policy LU-5.F.1, New Urban Community Size and Location Requirements.	LU-17	The preference for continuing to allow creation of new urban communities through policies in the General Plan Update is a policy decision for the Board. Also see Comment No. S-6.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
	S-17	Requests modification of Policy NR-3.10 to replace “encourage” with ”require”	NR-8	This is a policy opinion proposing reclamation to agriculture be required after completion of surface mining projects. “Encourage” allows more flexibility and allows for beneficial habitat as an alternative reclamation. Retain draft policy.
	S-20	Recommends revising Policy AG-2.6 to remove the phrase “remove Williamson Act contract on small parcels.	AG-4	See Response to Comment S-7 above.
	S-21	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.7, Merced County Agricultural Preserve Consolidation.	AG-4	See Response to Comment S-8 above.
	S-22	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.14, Viability of Smaller Parcels.	AG-5	See Response to Comment S-9 above.
	S-23	Recommends deleting Policy AG-2.15, Merced County Agricultural Preserve Consolidation.	AG-5	See Response to Comment S-10 above.
	S-24	Suggests that the buffers described in Policies AG-3.2 and AG-3.3 be on the development side of the line and not result in the taking of agricultural land	AG-6	Comment makes correct statement; the agricultural buffer is the burden of the developer, not the adjacent farmer. Retain draft policy.
	S-25	Recommends modification of Policy AG-3.11 to delete the phrase “off productive agricultural land.”	AG-7	Policy AG-3.11 focuses on commercial solar and wind projects and their compatibility in agricultural areas. Policy NR-2.4 encourages on-site solar facilities. Retain draft policy as modified in the Final PEIR..
	S-26	Recommends a new policy under Goal AG-5 to create a public/private partnership to encourage ag tourism	AG-9	Implementation Program AG-I lists UC Cooperative Extension (which sponsors classes and education) as a supporting department for Policies AG-5.2 and 5.3 under this Goal. Retain draft policy.
	S-27	Recommends that the County and cities work together to encourage housing in cities or other developed urban	N/A	Consistent with this comment, Policy LU-1.9 “Regional Housing

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
		areas with available services		Needs Allocation Focus” promotes targeting cities for a higher share of RHNA affordable housing allocations. Retain draft policy.
	S-28	Recommends a new policy under Goal RCR-1 encourage public/private partnerships.	RCR-1	The Recreation and Cultural Resources Element contains numerous policies to encourage parkland, open space and recreation programs and facilities. Retain draft policy.
	S-29	References Goal AQ-1 regarding the link between the location of urban uses and GHG and AQ emissions	AQ-2	Comment on how we look at growth is key at reducing air pollution and GHG is noted. Major source of air pollution in rural Merced County is actually from agriculture, however, urban development policies – such as Policy LU-5.A.6 (Page LU-18) promote a jobs/housing balance in unincorporated communities. Retain draft policy.
	S-31	Recommends the Water Element policies include “Integrated Water Management stakeholders.”	W-1	The IRWMP is specifically referenced in Policy W-1.4, and coordination overlaps with other policies too. Retain draft policy.
Anderson, Patricia and Barry (January 29, 2013)	SN-C-1	Modify Policy ED-1.6 to “mandate” rather than “encourage” new developments provide state of the art telecommunication and digital capabilities.	ED-2	A policy to mandate high speed internet and wireless is not feasible in many parts of Merced County where high speed fiber optic cable does not exist. Retain draft policy language.
	SN-C-2	Add policy under Goal ED-3, Existing Business Expansion and Retention, by controlling liquor license oversaturation in communities and notify residents in a broader area than standard 300’ legal notice.	ED-4	This policy proposal is more appropriate on a Community Plan level based on the needs and orientation of the community.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				Adding policy to General Plan addressing liquor licenses not recommended.
	SN-C-3	Support Goal ED-4 by amending Policy ED-4.4, Physical and Social Infrastructure Development, by focusing on strengthening quality of life: hire local residents and embrace technology with the use of surveillance cameras, add businesses that meet the needs of a community and/or travelers (various examples listed).	ED-6	Goal ED-4 already includes promotion of local-serving high-technology and sustainable businesses. Other examples cited exist in many unincorporated communities already, and are allowed in Neighborhood and General Commercial designated areas, based on local market conditions. Retain draft goal and policy.
	SN-C-4	In referencing Land Use Element policies regarding Urban Communities, request creation of a countywide process that allows updating of neighborhood plans, especially where growth has occurred since prior Plan adoption.	LU-17	Draft policy LU-5.A.4 requires Community Plans for each Urban Community, and the County has an on-going program supporting Community Plan updates with three underway or programmed. No new policy is necessary.
	SN-C-5	Expand Policy LU-5.A.5, Smart Growth, by adding additional details to the smart growth principles.	LU-17	The recommendation to include the word “safe” to item a) walkable neighborhoods is good, but other suggestions are specific to Santa Nella, not all communities. Modify Policy LU-5.A.5 to add word “safe.”
	SN-C-6	Modify Policy LU-5.B.6, Crime Prevention Through Design, by updating lighting standards, mandate fencing and soundwalls, fence empty lots, utilize crawling plants and landscaping to protect walls from graffiti.	LU-19	County lighting standards are adequate for safety, landscaped soundwalls are mandated when a project generates or needs protection from excessive noise, fencing is considered on a project by project basis, but not for empty lots (maintenance problem), No new

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				policy is necessary.
	SN-C-7	Modify Policy LU-5.D.3, Neighborhood Commercial Development, by requiring location of commercial uses in a “commercial corridor” and building medium or high density housing above the commercial development.	LU-21	The General Commercial land use designation is applied in downtown areas and commercial corridors, while the Neighborhood Commercial designation is located close to residential to serve convenience commercial needs of the neighborhood. Housing above commercial is appropriate in Mixed Use areas, not Neighborhood Commercial. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-8	Modify Policy LU-7.3, City Sphere of Influence Expansions to reflect the communities desire to be part of a City Sphere of Influence (SOI) expansion, and the majorities of revenues generated in some Urban Communities is not being reinvested in the same community.	LU-27	Communities do have input in City General Plan updates proposing SOI expansion, and can vote to oppose annexation in most instances. Tax revenue generated in unincorporated communities is not retained in the community as are City taxes. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-9	Amend Policy LU-10.4, Revenue Sharing Agreements, by developing an equitable table to guarantee revenue generating communities receive reinvestment defined by community priorities.	LU-30	Policy LU-10.4 is oriented to mandatory revenue sharing agreements between the County and City in order to annex territory. Policy addressing taxes that are already retained by the County, to be redirected to the Community is a new policy issue, requiring policy direction from the Board to pursue.
	SN-C-10	Amend Policies LU-10.5 and 10.7 by allowing Community Specific Plans to define the SOI.	LU-31	This comment mixes city SOI policy with unincorporated Community Plan policy. City SOIs are proposed through city general plans, and unincorporated community SOIs are proposed by urban sewer and water

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				district boundaries. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-11	Amend Policy CIR-1.11, Public Road Frontage, by mandating lighting of roads for public safety.	CIR-9	Street lighting is included in County Improvement Standards for new urban development (but not rural roads or existing developed areas). No new policy necessary.
	SN-C-12	Various comments proposed for freeway on and off-ramp safety, specific to Santa Nella.	N/A	This is a community plan and Caltrans freeway off ramp design issue. No new General Plan policy is necessary.
	SN-C-13	Modify Policy CIR-1.4, Traffic Studies, to mandate developers include traffic calming measures as part of new projects, and have designated truck routes for projects during construction process.	CIR-7	Traffic calming is included in Policy CIR-1.22, Complete Streets. Truck routes for development projects are addressed as necessary in the development review and permitting process. No policy modification is necessary.
	SN-C-14	Comment on Goal HE-1 (Housing Element) and Policy 1-17 of the adopted Housing Element regarding community input on community plan updates, requesting community input when no Municipal Advisory Council exists.	1-2	Point is well taken, and community input is part of all community plan updates. No policy change necessary, and Housing Element is not being updated, it was adopted in 2010.
	SN-C-15	Policy 1-20 of Housing Element referenced.	1-3	Housing Element is not being updated, it was adopted in 2010.
	SN-C-16	Policy PFS-5.1, Adequate Utility Facilities and Services, should be modified to evaluate pre-existing development conditions prior to new development, enforce building standards, annual inspections of mobile homes, no trailer parks or medium density housing near schools, embrace surveillance cameras for public safety, have recreational amenities and street frontage for apartment projects.	PFS-8	These comments do not address adequate utilities and public services which are the scope of Policy PFS-5.1. Some of the issues are addressed in the adopted Housing Element to support housing preservation and rehabilitation, and other comments are oriented to community plan updates, not the

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				General Plan. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-17	Modify Goal PFS-1, Public Facility and Service Funding, by reinvesting revenues generated in urban communities into local public facilities, partner with State HWP to reopen weigh scales for trucks to generate local tax for public safety, build an emergency response substation in each urban community, increase the Transit Occupancy Tax by one cent to fund safety enhancements, and require monthly street sweeping.	PFS-2	These are broad requests which are already addressed in part through collection of development impact fees for public safety, including fire and Sheriff facilities, libraries, parks, schools, and roads. Street sweeping is local tax issue at the subdivision development level, and Transit Occupancy Tax policy is outside the scope of the General Plan update. Retain draft goal.
	SN-C-18	Amend Policy PFS-5.1, Adequate Utility Facilities and Services, to require inspection of existing utility lines in sub-standard developments and identify improvements in most needed communities.	PFS-8	Policy PFS-5.1 is oriented to adequate facilities for existing and new development. Inspection would be a responsibility of the utility service provider. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-19	Modify Goal PFS-6 regarding timely and adequate law enforcement in the County by including: embracing technology such as I-Pads and surveillance cameras, build a Emergency Response Substation and other government facilities, add public safety officers, more services and efforts to address gangs and drugs.	PFS-9	Existing public safety impact fees are in place, including capital facility fees for fire and general government facilities. Tax revenues and appropriations are monitored by the Board of Supervisors and County Auditor through annual budget process. Retain draft policies.
	SN-C-20	Modify Policies PFS-7.2, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8 regarding fire facilities and emergency medical services by embracing technology, establishing a emergency response station in Santa Nella, track how property taxes are being spent for public safety, and ensure everyone pays the same amount of assessment for fire protection.	PFS-10, PFS-11	Existing public safety impact fees are in place, including capital facility fees for fire and general government facilities. Tax revenues and appropriations are monitored by the Board of Supervisors and County Auditor through annual budget process. Retain draft policies.
	SN-C-21	Modify Policies PFS-8.2, New School Location, by including safe passage to schools, decorative fencing,	PFS-12	Safe passage to schools is already addressed in the policy, and the

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
		lighting, and specific school facility improvements.		other design features and amenities are under the authority of the Gustine Unified School District, not the Board of Supervisors. Retain draft policy.
	SN-C-22	Revise Policies RCR-1.4, Regional Recreation Facilities Master Plan, and RCR-1.12, Recreation Services, through several specific enhancements and improvements.	RCR-2, RCR-3	The list of improvements and enhancements are oriented to the Community of Santa Nella, and many amenities exist in other existing County parks. These are community plan level issues. Retain draft policies.
	SN-C-23	Modify Policy HS-3.9, Building Permit Review, to require annual inspections of apartments and mobile homes, and build soundwalls around developments and on freeways and Highway 33.	HS-7	Regulation of existing residential dwellings is an existing function of the Environmental Health Division of the County Health Department, based on complaints and observation. Soundwalls are required where noise level thresholds are exceeded. Retain draft policies.
	SN-C-24	Revise Policy HS-8.1, Environmental Justice, to provide local access to land use issues, and conduct Planning Commission meetings at various locations like Santa Nella.	HS-15	Discretionary land use decisions are noticed and advertised in accordance with State law. Moving the Planning Commission meeting location is a policy issue for Board consideration, not a General Plan issue. Retain draft policy.
<p><i>Comment on the DEIR Received After the End of the 60-Day review Period</i></p>				

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
Building Industry Association of the Greater Valley (January 30, 2013)	LC-A-1	Requests revision to policy LU-2.10, Industrial Uses, to ensure County doesn't attract desired employment generating types of industrial uses into the unincorporated county agricultural areas, and push undesired land use into cities.	LU-13	This policy was requested by members of Economic Development Focus Group to allow employment generating uses in agricultural areas that could be incompatible in urban industrial setting; it does not push undesirable land uses into cities. Retain draft policy.
	LC-A-2	Requests revision to policies LU-7.3, City SOI, and LU-7.10, Annexation Boundaries, to reflect quasi-judicial authority granted to elected and appointed officials to determine Sphere of Influence (SOI) and annexation boundaries, by deleting reference to "infill development programs," "minimizing the conversion of productive agricultural land" and replacing word "Oppose" with "Discourage" in Policy LU-7.10 related to islands and irregular boundaries.	LU-27, LU-28	County position on city SOI expansion mirrors similar policies for urban growth in unincorporated County communities. Retain draft policy. Support Policy LU-7.10 recommendation to replace word "Oppose" with "Discourage" in order to match State law regarding islands and irregular boundaries.
	LC-A-3	Requests that Policy AG-2.2, Agricultural Land Mitigation, be deleted as text appears to push certain types of undesired land uses into cities while retaining advantage in competing for specific industrial uses in unincorporated areas.	AG-3	The agricultural mitigation language in Policy AG-2.2 has been required by the County in the past for urban projects resulting in conversion of productive farmland. Modify policy based on Final PEIR mitigation measure AG-1a which modified mitigation measure to apply equally to all non-agricultural and urban projects.
	LC-A-4	Expresses concern that Policy ED-1.8, Jobs Housing Balance, is intended to capture high value industrial projects in the unincorporated area at the expense of the cities.	ED-3	The jobs/housing balance policy promotes jobs and a balance of land uses in communities rather than creating suburban housing centers. It addresses regional growth, not city vs. county growth. Retain draft policy.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
	LC-A-5	Suggests that some policies (not clearly specified) are inconsistent with Housing Element Programs 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9 related to rezoning land for affordable housing to meet Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers, and other policies, and requests a description of internal consistency between the General Plan Update and Housing Element.	N/A	Housing Element Policy is oriented to meet the County's RHNA numbers, and this Element was adopted in 2010 as required by State law. The Draft General Plan includes these existing housing policies, and also promotes more employment and economic development which is not inconsistent. No modification needed.
	LC-A-6	Indicates existing Housing Element Program HE-1-9 "Sufficient Capacity for Vacant Sites" is not being implemented, and requests a new goal: "Mitigate any potential governmental constraints to housing and productivity."	N/A	2010 Housing Element implementation is separate issue from 2030 General Plan Update. Proposed new goal for housing is too broad given multiple policies proposed in the General Plan Update. No modification needed.
<i>Comments on the Recirculated DEIR</i>				
Merced Irrigation District (September 10, 2013)	R-J-1	Requests new Policy AG-2.17 be added requiring an agricultural irrigation easement over any agricultural parcel created by a parcel map which may block access to irrigation water from a public water district	N/A	This is problematic as a blanket requirement because not all parcels will retain surface water rights. This concern will be addressed with individual districts during the processing of individual agricultural subdivision applications. See Final PEIR Mitigation Measure USS-1d.
	R-J-2	Requests a new policy in the Water Element that requires a replacement of groundwater on urban development when the property formerly was irrigated with surface water supplies.	N/A	This is not appropriate as blanket policy, but is more appropriately addressed in the environmental review of community plans and individual development projects to

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
<p>Andrews Farms and 13 Additional Letters from Landowners in support of 20 acre parcel size minimum</p>	<p>R-K-1, R-L-1, R-M-1, R-N-1, R-O-1, R-P-1, R-Q-1, R-T-1, R-W-1, R-X-1, R-Y-1, R-Z-1, R-AA-1, R-AB-1, R-AC-1</p>	<p>Supports the 20 acre minimum parcel size in areas designated Agricultural as land values of 20 acre parcels are significantly greater than on 40 acre parcels, and land is a farmer's greatest asset.</p>	<p>AG-5</p>	<p>address a significant impact. Alternate Policy AG-2.13a was added in the Recirculated Draft Program EIR to provide a 20 acre minimum alternative to Policy AG-2.13 which proposes a 40 acre minimum. This complied with Board direction given on 8/9/2011. The Board will decide which policy alternative to select.</p>
<p>George Jercich (August 1, 2013)</p>	<p>R-S-3</p>	<p>Requests the Snelling urban boundary (sphere of influence) be expanded to include an approximate five mile stretch of dredger tailings generally along Merced Falls Road, and the Zoning be changed to allow for a variety of urban or suburban parcel sizes ranging from one to five acres in size. Opposes the current A-2 (160 acre minimum parcel size) zoning of much of the area, wants the plan to address traffic, sewer and water services, public safety, recreation and other community issues.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>What the author is requesting involves a Snelling area focused planning and environmental review effort which is outside the scope and purpose of the comprehensive 2030 Merced County General Plan Update. As stated in the Draft Plan and throughout the General Plan Update process (initiated in 2006), the detailed community-level urban planning for the County occurs through preparation of "Community Plans." The community of Snelling will be designated as a "Rural Center" through this General Plan update (see discussion of Rural Centers starting on Page LU-14 of the <i>Draft 2030 Merced County General Plan</i> dated November 30, 2012). The Draft General Plan continues to</p>

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				reflect the open space and mineral resources of the Snelling region with both Agricultural and Foothill Pasture as the primary land use designations. Retain draft policies and Plan.
Dan McNamara (September 9, 2013)	R-U-2	Most citizens of the County and those attending General Plan Update Workshops support agriculture, and oppose New Urban Communities.	N/A	45 community workshops were held in 15 locations throughout the County, and there were six Focus Groups who also provided input in a series of four meetings. Support for agriculture was a strong theme and this is expressed in the Draft General Plan including the Agricultural Element. This is a broad statement, and the Board will determine the ultimate policies adopted.
	R-U-3	Does not support 1:1 agricultural mitigation in Policy AG-2.2 and states that effective ratio is 3:1.	AG-3	The 1:1 agricultural mitigation ratio in draft Policy AG-2.2 is a basis and a starting point. There is no implied limit to allowing a higher mitigation ratio, and the County recognizes that for full mitigation, the ratio would need to be greater than 1:1. Retain draft policy as modified in Final PEIR Mitigation Measure AG-1a.
	R-U-4	Author stresses importance of agricultural resources in Merced County and the San Joaquin Valley, and argues development should be allowed in the foothills and not the Valley floor.	LU-23	While the commenter opposes allowing new communities (Comment R-U-2), the set of New Community Policies (under Goal LU-5.F) are directed at providing opportunities to establish new development centers off the Valley floor since all six incorporated cities

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				and most all unincorporated communities in the County are located on the Valley floor. Retain draft policies.
	R-U-5	Opposes Policy AG-2.13a allowing a 20 acre minimum parcel size and Policy AG-2.14 (which scrutinizes divisions of agricultural land below 40 acres in size). The commenter disagrees with exemption for certain urban land uses from the agricultural mitigation requirement in Policy AG-2.2.	AG-5	Alternate Policy AG-2.13a was added in the Recirculated Draft Program EIR to provide a 20 acre minimum alternative to Policy AG-2.13 which proposes a 40 acre minimum. This complied with Board direction given on 8/9/2011. Policy AG-2.14 would add criteria to scrutinize divisions below 40 acres in size in an effort to minimize impacts and support appropriate divisions. Regarding Policy AG-2.2 Staff recommends the Board modify this policy based on the Final PEIR mitigation measure AG-1a which modified mitigation measure to apply equally to all non-agricultural and urban projects. The Board will decide which policy alternative to select.
	R-U-8	Areas with predominantly prime farm soils should not be zoned A-2 (160 acre minimum parcel size).	N/A	The General Plan Update does not propose rezoning any lands within the County. This is a comment outside the scope of the Draft General Plan and an issue not evaluated in the PEIR.
Merced County Farm Bureau (September 10, 2013)	R-V-3	Requests that Policy AG-2.2 and other policies in the General Plan that refer to mitigation for the loss of productive farmland should consistently include the language “at a minimum of 1:1” to leave room for mitigation increases.	AG-3	The Board of Supervisors has previously rejected requiring mitigation ratios greater than 1:1 as policy. The 1:1 agricultural mitigation ratio in draft Policy AG-

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				2.2 is a basis and a starting point. There is no implied limit to allowing a higher mitigation ratio, and the County recognizes that for full mitigation, the ratio would need to be greater than 1:1. Retain draft policy as modified in Final PEIR Mitigation Measure AG-1a.
	R-V-4	The commenter continues to support the 40 acre minimum parcel size in Agriculturally designated areas of the County and does not agree with the alternative Policy AG-2.13a that supports 20 acre parcels as a means to support commercial agricultural production.	AG-5	Alternate Policy AG-2.13a was added in the Recirculated Draft Program EIR to provide a 20 acre minimum alternative to Policy AG-2.13 which proposes a 40 acre minimum. Policy AG-2.14 would add criteria to scrutinize divisions below 40 acres in size in an effort to minimize impacts and support appropriate parcel divisions. This policy alternative complied with Board direction given on 8/9/2011. The Board will decide which policy alternative to select.
	R-V-6	Commenter states that infrastructure provision for New Urban Communities is much more costly than for development near existing municipalities. This is an overlooked constraint in the financial constraints of the present.	LU-23	Policy LU-5.F.2 contains numerous criteria to be considered in evaluating applications for new urban communities, including infrastructure master plan and an economic analysis. This will be a Board policy consideration.
Valley Land Alliance (September 9, 2013)	R-AD-2	Opposed to 20 acre minimum parcel size and submitted documents and studies to support this with earlier DPEIR comments; does not support Policy AG-2.13a.	AG-3	Alternate Policy AG-2.13a was added in the Recirculated Draft Program EIR to provide a 20 acre minimum alternative to Policy AG-2.13 which proposes a 40 acre minimum. Policy AG-2.14 would

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
				add criteria to scrutinize divisions below 40 acres in size in an effort to minimize impacts and support appropriate parcel divisions. This policy alternative complied with Board direction given on 8/9/2011. The Board will decide which policy alternative to select.
	R-AD-3	With several unbuilt new urban communities is there a need for more, and without infrastructure are these feasible?	LU-25	See response to previous comment letter from this commenter in Comment No. S-6 above. Policies LU-5.F.3, .4, and .5 contain numerous criteria to be considered in evaluating applications for new urban communities, including an economic analysis. Comment noted. This will be a Board policy consideration.
	R-AD-6	Opposes modification of the Williamson Act Agricultural Preserve rules in Policy AG-2.7.	AG-4, AG-5	See response to Comment No. Q-14 in this Table.
	R-AD-7	Opposes Policy AG-2.14 related to evaluation of agricultural parcel divisions below 40 acres in size, supports Policy AG-2.13.	AG-3	Comment noted on preference for 40 acre parcel. Policy AG-2.14 has value in providing additional scrutiny of divisions into parcels less than 40 acres in size should the Board decide to select the 20 acre parcel size option in Policy AG-2.13. Retain draft policy.
	R-AD-8	Policy to allow exceptions to Williamson Act Agricultural Preserve 10 acre minimum parcel size will lead to ranchettes.		In proposed Policy AG-2.15 the term “limited” reflects there are rare circumstances where the 10 acre minimum would be reduced – the details of the exceptions match those in the Zoning Code in Section 18.02.030. Retain draft policy.

Comment Class and Entity	Final PEIR ID #	Comment	Draft GP Page #	Staff Response
	R-AD-11	Supports selection of earlier General Plan Alternative No. 2 – City Centered Growth.	N/A	See response to Comment No. S-4 in this Table.
	R-AD-14	Recommends consultation with other public agencies and interest groups to obtain other options for protecting farmland.	N/A	Comment noted. Extensive input was obtained and research conducted during the drafting of the General Plan, including retaining consultant who was professor at UC Davis (Al Sokolow) with extensive statewide agricultural conservation experience. See Chapter 4 of the General Plan Background Report.