

A Newsletter Reporting on the Campus Parkway Alignment Study

**INSIDE:**

## Campus Parkway Alignment Study: Identifying Options

**PROJECT**

**ADDRESSES**

**FUTURE NEEDS**

The County of Merced, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is initiating studies to evaluate alternative transportation corridors for a new roadway serving the northeastern area of the County and City of Merced.

The County has initiated preliminary engineering and environmental studies, during which the County will develop and evaluate alternative alignments, perform and document environmental studies, and hold public information workshops to solicit input on the project and its potential impacts.

This process will take place prior to selection of a preferred alignment and will last approximately 18 months. The overall purpose of this route alignment study process is to identify the most suitable alternative alignment, by taking into consideration the need to minimize impacts to existing residences, the community, farmlands, and sensitive environmental resources.

**CRITERIA WILL**

**ASSIST IN**

**NARROWING**

**OPTIONS FOR**

**ALTERNATIVES**

This area has experienced much growth to date, but has limited existing transportation access and circulation options. The Parkway would serve existing and planned growth in northeast Merced as well as serve the planned University Community, which includes the University of Merced campus site.

**PROJECT**

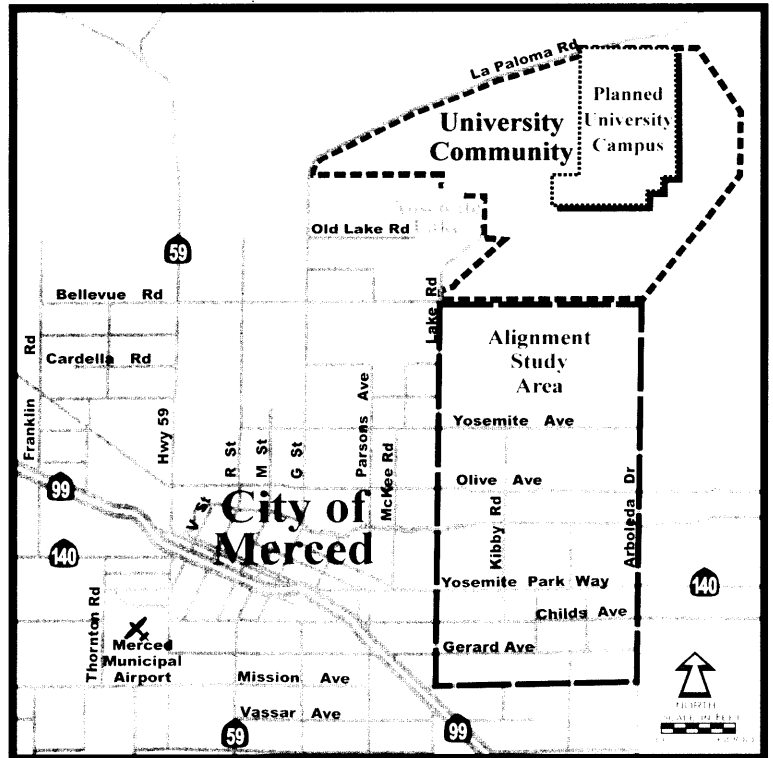
**DEVELOPMENT**

**TEAM SEEKS**

**PUBLIC INPUT**

The Campus Parkway project will provide a new major access route to relieve congestion in Merced and to serve planned northeastern development, as well as provide a corridor for utilities, transit service, and bicycles.

While a specific Parkway alignment cannot be determined at this early stage, the following can be identified: the purpose and need for the project, a general study area, initial alternative alignments, and initial project funding.



*The above map shows the Campus Parkway Study Area in relation to the City of Merced, the University Community area, and the University of California campus. The Study Area sits south of the community area and is bordered by Lake Road on the West, Arboleda on the East, Bellevue on the North, and Mission on the South.*

THE MERCED  
COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC  
WORKS  
PUBLISHES  
PARKWAY  
PROGRESS

**First Public  
Meeting  
Announced!**

**MARCH 18, 1999, 7-9PM  
Sam Pipes Room,  
Merced Civic Center**

*\*See back page for more information.*

# Project and Study Process Address Multiple Needs

## OVERVIEW

The 10,300-acre site of the University Community, which includes the planned UC Merced campus, sits northeast of the Lake Yosemite County Park and the City of Merced.

The north-south Campus Parkway project will provide a main access to this new development from State Highway 99, as well as fulfill a number of other important needs related to transportation in the City and County of Merced.

### *Assist in relieving current congestion*

Merced has experienced growth over the years that has resulted in increased traffic on existing roads running north-south of the city, including "G", "M", and "R" streets. Installation of an additional north-south arterial will help alleviate some of the congestion on existing roadways.

### *Help meet future needs*

Future anticipated growth for Merced reveals a need to establish additional north-south routes. Without additional road options, the expected growth patterns for the city would result in a greater degree of pressure upon existing north-south arterials and create a higher level of congestion.

The map on this page shows the current Merced City limits and where growth is expected in the future.

The Campus Parkway Alignment Study provides a process to determine which alternative alignments are most feasible and beneficial for this roadway.

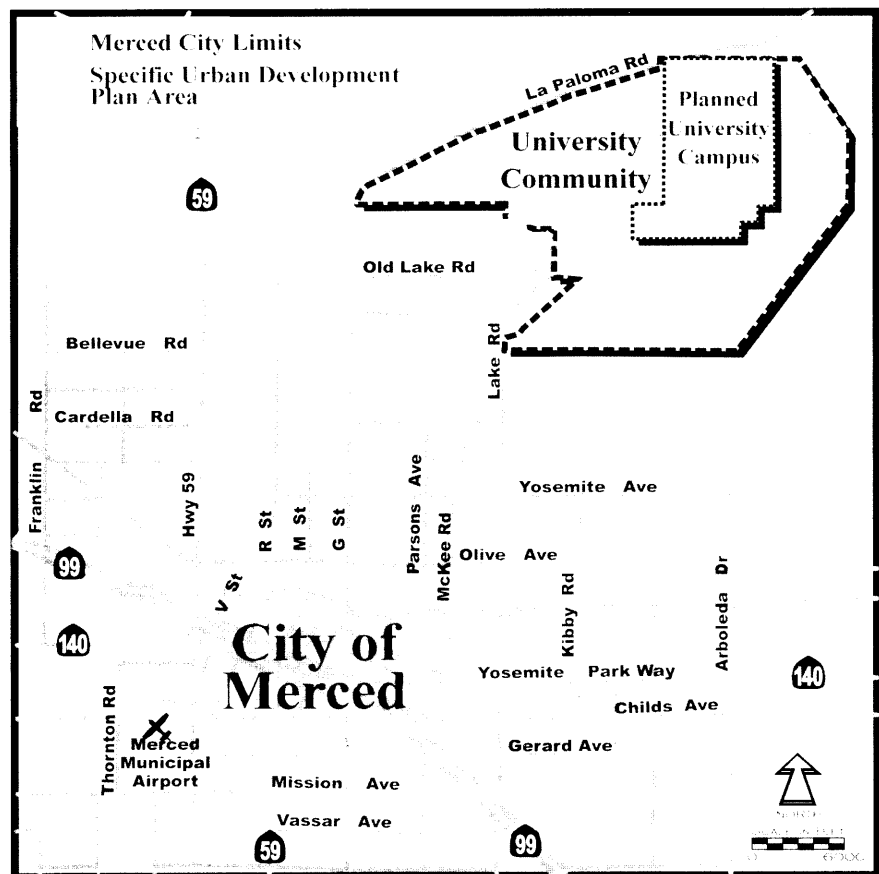
## THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

The process of evaluating and selecting a preferred alignment for the Campus Parkway corridor must comply with various Federal and State environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require state and federal agencies

to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. Both of these processes integrate public review and comment. Federal, State, and local jurisdictions and resource agencies participate throughout the development and review of the project and the environmental documentation.

The County will submit a combined Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for this

SEE PAGE 3, PROCESS



*This map shows the City of Merced, its future growth areas, and the University Community Planning Area. As the legend indicates, the darkly-shaded area covers the current city limits for the City of Merced while the lighter shade represents the Specific Urban Development Plan (SUDP) area. The SUDP is the area in which planners anticipate growth in the City of Merced in the future. The general direction of city growth has been to the North.*

## Potential Alignments to Evolve Based on Criteria

In order to identify the best option for an alignment, a broad range of feasible alternatives must be considered.

The County is currently in the process of developing those alternatives and establishing criteria with which to evaluate them.

The study area (shown on page one) outlines the area that contains alignment options that most appropriately serve the purpose and need of the project.

Currently, constraints that may impact the selection of alternatives to study in detail are being identified.

Homes, farmlands, parks, schools, recreation areas, buildings essential to a large segment of the community, and ecological concerns provide examples of land uses where impacts need to be avoided or minimized. For example, although it may prove impossible to avoid all farmland, these impacts could potentially be minimized through selecting an alternative along existing roads or section lines.

It is essential that a set of criteria and a sense of the importance of each to the community as a whole be identified.

Although environmental mandates require evaluation of certain criteria, citizens can help distinguish which are most important to their community.

By attending public meetings and submitting written comments, you can help assure that your concerns are heard.

### PROCESS

project. This comprehensive document will disclose the environmental resources, community services, and infrastructure within the vicinity of the project alignments, and the potential impacts each of the alignments might have on land uses and resources.

During this process, the County will consider a number

of factors, including the presence of residences, farmland, community infrastructure, sensitive environmental habitats, and the potential for adverse environmental impacts associated with air, water, community noise, floodplains, land use, and growth inducement.

The draft EIS/EIR will be

released for review and comment by agencies and the public. During this process, these parties will provide input through meetings and hearings to review the project, its alternative alignments, their impacts, and potential avoidance or mitigation measures.

At this early phase, an initial set of alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the project has been defined.

At the first meeting, scheduled for March 18, 1999, participants will provide input on the project and the initial set of alternatives, as well have an opportunity to comment on the type of studies that will be performed.

A series of neighborhood meetings will follow throughout the study period to help facilitate this process.

### Need more information?

Check out our site on the world wide web:

**[www.co.merced.ca.us/  
pwdept/professional/camppkwy.htm](http://www.co.merced.ca.us/pwdept/professional/camppkwy.htm)**

Or, call Project Engineer Steve Rough at (209) 385-7601

email: [jser@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:jser@co.merced.ca.us)



# Project Development Team Seeks Suggestions

If you have an interest in the Campus Parkway Alignment Study, County staff want to hear from you.

A series of public meetings will take place over the next year with the purpose of gathering comments and concerns on the proposed parkway.

The first meeting will take place on March 18, 1999, at the Sam Pipes Room of the Merced Civic Center, located at 678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street.

At this meeting, participants can view present preliminary alignments, hear about the study process and criteria, and ask questions of staff and consultants working on the project.

This first "Scoping" meeting will lead to a series of additional neighborhood meetings. At each meeting, the project team will continue

to collect comments from the community and use public input to refine the project in time for the next meeting.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

## **INITIAL COMMUNITY MEETING**

**March 18, 1999, 7-9pm  
678 W. 18th Street, Merced Civic Center**

## **SECOND COMMUNITY MEETING**

**Summer/Fall 1999**

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE EIR/EIS**

**Winter 2000**

## **THIRD COMMUNITY MEETING**

**Spring 2000**

DON'T  
FORGET THE  
PUBLIC  
MEETING  
MARCH 18TH!

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
Paid  
ABS PRESORT

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