



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED  
5200 N. LAKE ROAD | MERCED, CA 95343  
TEL: 209.228.4400

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

**Project Title:** Health and Behavioral Sciences-Medical Education Building Project

**Lead Agency:** University of California

**Project Location:** University of California, Merced  
5200 North Lake Road, Merced, CA 95343

**County:** Merced

**Contact Person:** University of California, Merced  
Physical & Environmental Planning  
5200 North Lake Road  
Merced, California 95343  
Attn: Phillip Woods

**Project Description:** The University of California, Merced (UC Merced) proposes to develop a new academic building to house the Campus' Health and Behavioral Sciences-Medical Education (HBS-ME) programs. The HBS-ME Building Project ("proposed Project" or "Project") would be located within the existing UC Merced campus at 5200 Lake Road, Merced, CA 95340 (Figure 1). The proposed building would be developed on the southeastern side of the campus, between Cottonwood Loop Road and the existing Arts and Computational Sciences Building (Figure 2). Modifications to existing campus storm water detention basins would occur within Cottonwood Meadow to accommodate the siting of the new academic building and to provide detention capacity for storm water runoff generated by the proposed building, parking lot, and other improvements.

The proposed HBS-ME Building would become home to the Departments of Psychological Sciences and Public Health, UC Merced's Medical Education program, and the Health Sciences Research Institute. The Departments of Psychological Sciences and Public Health would be relocated from the existing Social Sciences and Management building to the proposed building. The four-story HBS-ME Building would include approximately 182,698 gross square feet (gsf) of building space, including instructional, academic office, research, community facing space, and common areas.

**Background:** The 2020 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), which was adopted by the University of California in March 2020, sets forth the development plans for the UC Merced campus to the year 2030. The 2020 LRDP Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) (SCH # 2018041010) addressed the development of the campus to the full buildout enrollment of 15,000 students by 2030 on a 1,026-acre campus footprint.



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As described in the 2020 LRDP SEIR, based on an enrollment level of 9,700 students in 2020, the campus population is projected to increase by about 5,300 students by 2030, and employment at the campus is projected to increase by 1,131 faculty and staff during the same period. Approximately 1.83 million gsf of building space would need to be added to the campus between 2020 and 2030 to accommodate the projected enrollment increase and expanding academic programs.

The proposed Project would include development of approximately 182,698 gsf of additional building space and a population addition of about 2,999 people (2,811 students and 188 staff/faculty). Thus, the building space and population growth associated with the proposed Project are within the program-level growth assumptions used in the 2020 LRDP SEIR analyses.

**Environmental Review and Comment:** The University of California will be the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts from the approval and implementation of the proposed HBS-ME Building Project. An Initial Study has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines to identify environmental impacts that are adequately addressed in the 2020 LRDP SEIR or are not an issue for the proposed Project, and those potential environmental impacts that will be analyzed in the EIR. The Initial Study also includes a description of the proposed Project. At this time, based on the analysis in the Initial Study, it is anticipated that the EIR will address environmental impacts in the following topic areas: air quality, hydrology/water quality, public services, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities/service systems.

The 2020 LRDP SEIR analyzed potential impacts of traffic generated by campus growth through 2030 on roadway facilities based on an analysis of level of service (LOS) impacts. However, since the certification of the 2020 LRDP SEIR in March 2020, CEQA documents (as of July 1, 2020) must include an evaluation of transportation impacts based on vehicle miles travelled (VMT), pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 743. As specified by SB 743 and the associated updates to the CEQA Guidelines, automobile delay, as measured by "level of service" and other similar metrics, no longer constitutes a significant environmental effect under CEQA (Public Resources Code, Section 21099, subd. (b)(3)). Therefore, the EIR will include an updated supplemental program-level transportation impact analysis of campus growth through 2030 under the 2020 LRDP based on a VMT metric consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

A copy of this NOP and the Initial Study supporting the scoping of the proposed HBS-ME Building Project is available for viewing or downloading on UC Merced's Physical & Environmental Planning website at <https://planning.ucmerced.edu/ceqa-environmental-documents>.



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**Public Scoping Meeting:** The University will hold a public scoping meeting on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 for the EIR. Due to public safety concerns regarding COVID-19, the meeting will be held online via Zoom from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. To attend this Zoom meeting:

1) Go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) select "Join a Meeting," and enter the following:

**Meeting ID:** 502 461 673  
**Password:** 251644

2) For those calling in, dial 1-669-900-6833, Meeting ID: 502461673#

Please note that Spanish and Hmong translators will be available to translate upon request with a 7-day advance notice before the public scoping meeting on April 21, 2021.

**Public Comment Period:** We request your views as to the scope and contents of the EIR for the proposed Project. This NOP is being circulated for 30 days, from April 2, 2021 through May 3, 2021. Your comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 3, 2021. Your name, email and/or address should be included with your comments. Please send your comments to the attention of Phillip Woods at the address noted above.

Comments may also be submitted via email to the following email address: [CEQA@ucmerced.edu](mailto:CEQA@ucmerced.edu). Email comments must also be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 3, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding this NOP, please contact Phillip Woods at the above address or via email at [CEQA@ucmerced.edu](mailto:CEQA@ucmerced.edu).

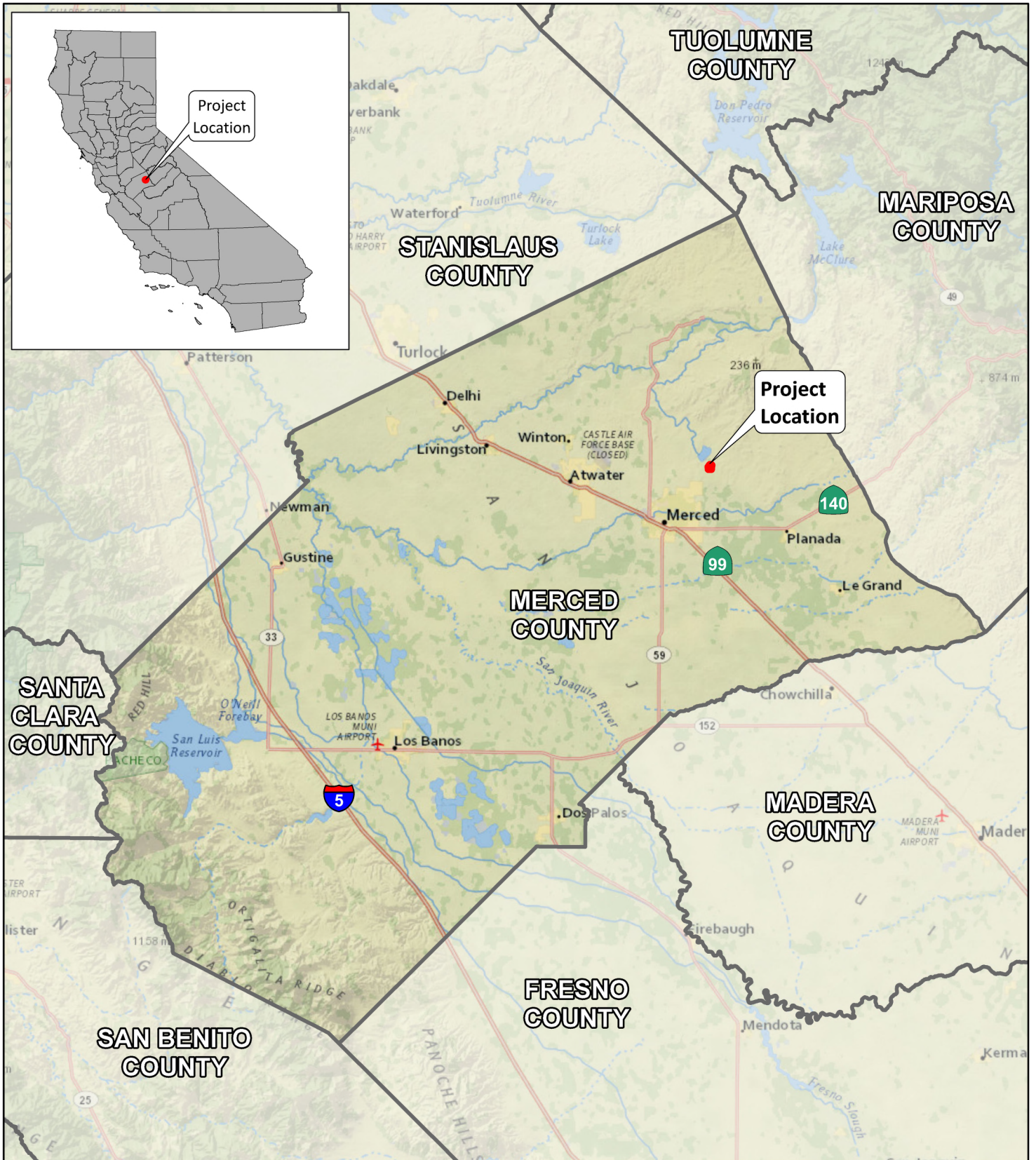
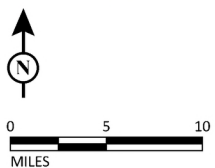


FIGURE 1

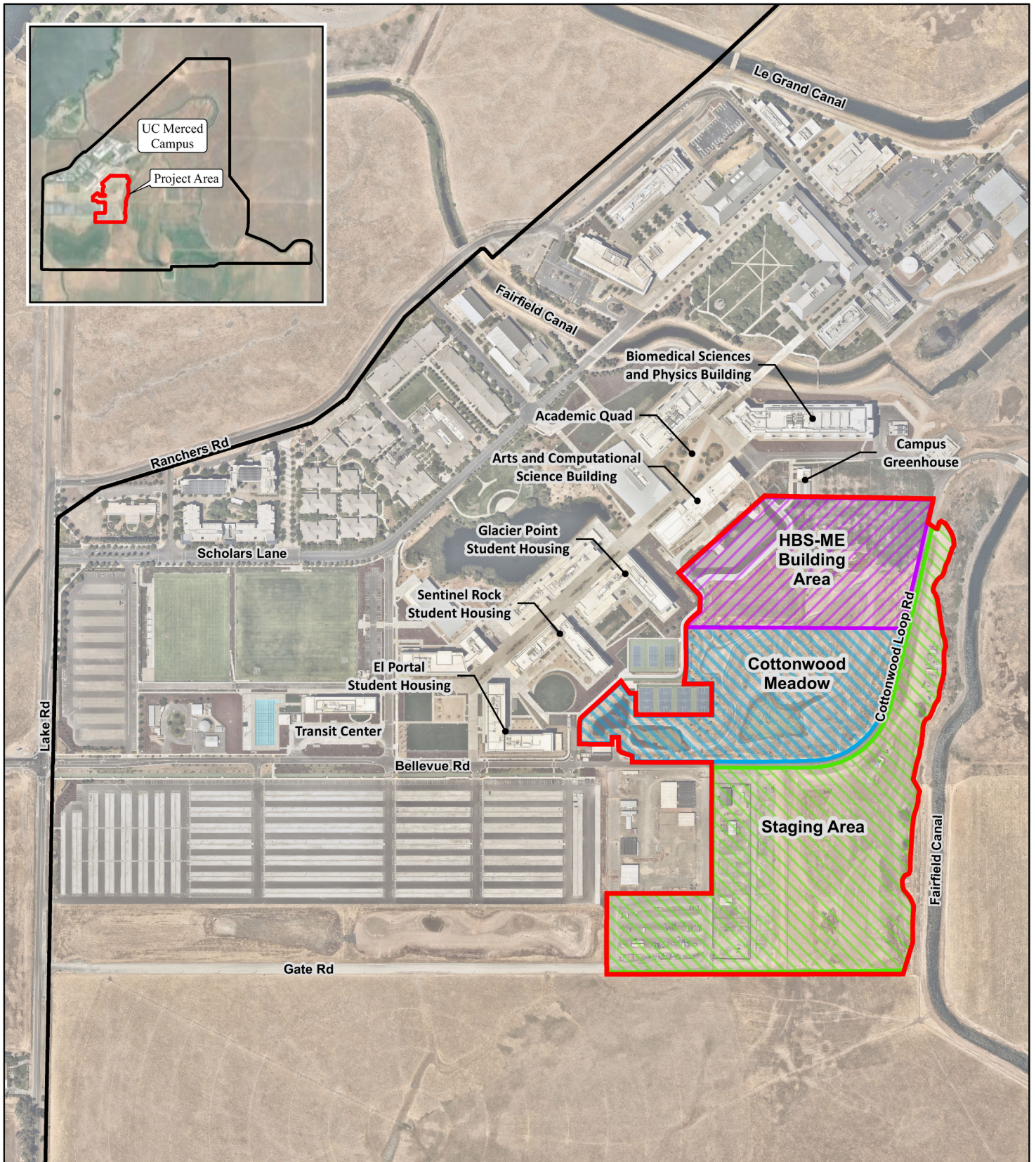
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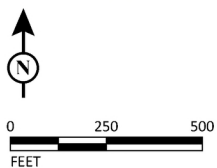
SOURCE: National Geographic World Map (2021).

I:\BTI2002.01\GIS\Maps\Project Description\Figure 1\_Regional Location.mxd (3/24/2021)

Health & Behavioral Sciences – Medical Education  
 (HBS-ME) Building Project, UC Merced  
 Merced County, California  
 Regional Location



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**LEGEND**

- Project Area (36.9 acres)\*
- HBS-ME Building Area (8.5 acres)
- Staging Area (18.0 acres)
- Stormwater Management Area (9.5 acres)
- UC Merced Campus Boundary

SOURCE: Aerial from Nearmap (07/2020).

\* Project Area also includes 0.9 acre internal access roads

**FIGURE 2**

*Health & Behavioral Sciences – Medical Education  
(HBS-ME) Building Project, UC Merced  
Merced County, California  
Project Area*