

4.7 PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

4.7.1 Introduction

This section of the Recirculated Draft SEIR (SEIR) describes the existing public services that serve the project site and its vicinity and potential impacts to these services from the development of the UC Merced campus under the 2020 LRDP. The public services addressed in this section include fire protection, law enforcement, schools, libraries, and parks. Regulations and policies affecting the public services and recreational resources in the project area are also described. Information presented in this section is based on consultation with service providers.

4.7.2 Environmental Setting

Law Enforcement Services

As with all UC campuses, law enforcement services to the campus are provided by the UC Merced Police Department out of a police station located on the campus. The UC Merced Police Department is responsible for providing 24-hour service for on-campus calls. The UC Merced Police Department has a mutual aid agreement with the Merced County Sheriff's Department and the City of Merced Police Department.

Currently, the Campus police department consists of 16 sworn officers. The UC Merced Police Department maintains service level standard of 0.7 officer per 1,000 persons of the campus population (Matthew 2008). It is anticipated that when the campus enrollment level is 15,000 full-time equivalent students, a total of 30 sworn officers would serve the campus (Her 2018).

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

The project site and its vicinity are currently served jointly by the Merced County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). The Merced County Fire Department (MCFD) is a full-service fire department, providing emergency services to all unincorporated areas of the county through a network of fire stations, personnel, and equipment. The MCFD provides the fire stations, equipment, and tools while Cal Fire provides administrative staff, firefighting personnel, and training. Fire stations are staffed 24 hours a day by a full-time career Fire Captain or Fire Apparatus Engineer, and emergency response is augmented with more than 227 Paid Call Firefighters (PCF) or volunteers (Merced County 2013). This joint service provides fire response from several existing fire stations in the local area. The nearest County fire station is Fire Station 85, located on McKee Road near the El Portal Road intersection. The station currently has one paid fire fighter to staff its one Type II

engine and a volunteer company (through County of Merced Fire Department, responding to 40-60 percent of calls per year) (Gladwin 2019).

As discussed in the Merced County 2030 General Plan Program EIR (PEIR), “the 1999 Merced County Fire Master Plan defined Levels of Service in terms of five land use categories within Merced County. These categories are High Urban, Urban, Rural, Outlying, and Basic Level of Service. These categories correlate with the Land Use chapter of the 2000 Merced County General Plan. Each land use category has its own response requirements, and the level of service provided varies accordingly. The level of service delivered by a fire department can be measured by fire flow delivery capability, response times of apparatus, number of firefighters per capita, square footage of facilities per capita, staffing levels on apparatus, and reserve capacity (County of Merced 2013).”

The PEIR further notes that, “according to the Merced County Fire Master Plan, many of the Department’s facilities are inadequately staffed and equipped. Several stations and equipment repair facilities are 40-50 years old, and were designed when fire apparatus were smaller and much less complicated. These facilities are in need of remodeling or replacement in order to meet current safety standards, and to provide adequate space for routine Department activities. In addition, response times in the county have increased due to rapid growth without a correspondent growth in fire protection facilities and staffing. The provision of adequate staffing for the MCFD is becoming increasingly difficult as the number of volunteers continues to decline. Adequate staffing cannot be accomplished without appropriate training and education for career and paid-call volunteers. Likewise, training cannot be delivered without appropriate facilities. State and federal mandates require in excess of two hundred hours of training per year for all career firefighters. Although the MCFD has acquired training facilities and offices at Castle Airport, certain training topics require the use of specialized facilities such as burn buildings and training towers. These facilities are not presently available in Merced County (Merced County 2013).”

The City of Merced Fire Department provides mutual aid support, upon request, to Merced County Fire Department/Cal Fire under a signed Mutual Aid Agreement. There is no automatic response contractual agreement in place between the two Fire Departments.

Schools

The project site is located within the boundaries of the Merced City School District (MCSD), the Weaver Union School District (WUSD), and the Merced Union High School District (MUHSD). The MCSD and WUSD provide education for kindergarten through eighth grade. The MUHSD serves students in grades 9 through 12.

There are 14 elementary schools and 4 middle schools in the MCSD. Peterson Elementary School is located closest to the project site at 848 East Donna Drive, approximately 3 miles southwest the project site. Enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year at Peterson Elementary is 676 students; below its capacity of 750 students (CDE 2018). The nearest junior high school is Cruickshank Middle School, located at 601 Mercy Avenue, approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the campus. Enrollment at Cruickshank is 561, well below its capacity of 1,088 students (CDE 2018). The student generation rates for MCSD are 0.441 student per dwelling unit for single-family residences and 0.195 student per multifamily apartment (MCSD 2017).

There are two elementary schools and one middle school in the WUSD. Pioneer Elementary School is located at 2950 Gerard Avenue, approximately 4 miles south of the project site. Weaver Middle School is also located approximately 5 miles south of the project site at 3076 East Childs Avenue. Enrollment in the Weaver Union School District for the 2017–2018 school year was 2,816 students, and the WUSD has a capacity for 2,470 students (CDE 2018). The District is currently operating above its capacity and will continue to do so until new facilities are developed. The student generation rate for WUSD is 0.5 student per single-family residence (WUSD 2018).

The MUHSD operates nine high schools, six of which are located within Merced City limits: Merced High School, Golden Valley High School, Sequoia High School, El Capitan High School, Yosemite High School and Independence High School; the latter two are alternative high schools. The other three high schools in the district are Atwater High School, Buhach Colony High School, and Livingston High School. The MUHSD also operates the Merced Adult School.

The project site is located within the attendance area of El Capitan High School. El Capitan High School is the closest high school to the campus, at 100 Farmland Avenue, approximately 2 miles to the west. Golden Valley High School and Merced High School are also close to the campus, located at 2121 East Childs Avenue and 205 West Olive Street, respectively. Enrollment at El Capitan High School is currently approximately 1,664 students and the capacity of the school in permanent classrooms is 1,800 students (CDE 2018). El Capitan High School is the District's newest school and opened in 2013 to mitigate overcrowding at the Merced and Golden Valley High Schools. The student generation rates for MUHSD are 0.213 student per single-family residence and 0.074 student per multifamily apartment.

Public Libraries

UC Merced provides extensive library resources through its Leo & Dottie Kolligian Library, located on the campus at 5200 N. Lake Road. The resources are primarily for the research and educational needs of students, faculty and staff; however, there is some public access.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

County of Merced Parks and Recreational Facilities

County-owned recreational facilities are managed by the Merced County Parks and Recreation Office. County recreational facilities near the project site are described below.

Lake Yosemite Regional Park

Lake Yosemite Regional Park is an important regional recreation facility serving thousands of area residents annually. The Merced Irrigation District owns the 486-acre lake and the surrounding shoreline, which has been a regional recreational site since the late 1930s. The County operates the lake and the shoreline for recreational uses under a 50-year lease (1976 to 2026). The County-owned regional park is approximately 233 acres total, and the developed portion of the County property is approximately 89 acres. Some land acreage within the park site currently is undeveloped and is not used for recreational purposes. In 1969 and 1974, the County purchased approximately 260 acres of land adjacent to Lake Yosemite Regional Park to expand the park. About 167 acres of this land has been placed under a conservation easement by UC Merced and those lands will not be used for park expansion. Furthermore, at this time, there are no plans to expand the park.

Lake Yosemite provides a variety of passive and active recreational facilities, including swimming, powerboat and sailboat facilities, and a boat ramp. Water skis and jet skis are allowed, and there are no maximum engine size or noise restrictions on boat motors or jet skis. Park facilities include the following:

- Picnic tables and barbeque pits
- Paved trails for bicycling and walking
- Two beach areas for swimming
- Two boat launching ramps
- Sixty sailboat slips
- Mooring slips for powerboat use
- Two recreational baseball fields
- Rainbow trout fishing
- Three playgrounds for children
- Volleyball courts

- Rental facilities (picnic sites and a building for indoor activities)
- Support facilities (first aid, food concession, restrooms, water wells, and parking)

Bike Paths in the Project Area

A Class I bike path is located along the eastern side of Lake Road between Yosemite Avenue and Lake Yosemite. The Merced and Atwater Bicycle Plan shows this existing bike path would connect to a bike path proposed on Lake Road, south of Yosemite Avenue, and continuing along Black Rascal Creek to the west. Another proposed extension of this bike path would be located east of Lake Road along the alignment of the future Campus Parkway. There is also a bike path along Bellevue Road between Lake Road and G Street.

City of Merced Parks and Recreational Facilities

The City of Merced Parks and Community Services Department maintains city parks and recreational facilities. Both active and passive recreational areas, which include a variety of park types, are available to residents, as well as an extensive off-street bicycle path system. The City currently maintains approximately 84 acres of community parks, 64 acres of neighborhood parks, 4 acres of mini-parks, 120 acres of linear parks, and 57 acres of other parks and recreational sites. Nearby community and neighborhood parks include Elmer Murchie Park, Fahrens Park, Bob Carpenter Neighborhood Park, Merino Park, Rahilly Park, and Burbank Park (City of Merced 2011).

4.7.3 Regulatory Considerations

State Laws and Regulations

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code (Title 24 CCR, Part 9) establishes minimum requirements to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare from the hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings. Chapter 33 of CCR contains requirements for fire safety during construction and demolition.

Senate Bill 50

The Leroy F. Greene School Facilities Act of 1998, or Senate Bill 50 (SB 50), restricts the ability of a local agency to deny project approvals on the basis that public school facilities (classrooms, auditoriums, etc.) are inadequate. School impact fees are collected at the time building permits are issued. These fees are used by the local schools to accommodate the new students added by the project, thereby reducing

potential impacts on schools to a less-than-significant impact. Payment of school fees is required by SB 50 for all new residential development projects and is considered full and complete mitigation of school impacts.

Quimby Act

California Government Code Section 66477, Subdivision Map Act, referred to as the Quimby Act, permits local jurisdictions to require the dedication of land and/or the payment of in-lieu fees solely for park and recreation purposes. The required dedication and/or fee are based on the residential density, parkland cost, and other factors. Land dedicated and fees collected pursuant to the Quimby Act may only be used for developing new, or rehabilitating existing, park or recreational facilities. The maximum dedication and/or fee allowed under current state law is equivalent to providing 3 acres of park land per 1,000 persons, unless the park acreage of a municipality exceeds that standard, in which case the maximum dedication is 5 acres per 1,000 residents (County of Merced 2004).

Local Plans and Policies

All of the development under the 2020 LRDP would be located on the campus which is owned by the University. None of the City and County plans and policies related to public services and recreation are applicable to campus projects.

4.7.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

This SEIR uses significance criteria derived from Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. For the purposes of this SEIR, impacts on public services and recreation would be significant if implementation of the 2020 LRDP would:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:
 - Fire protection
 - Police protection
 - Schools
 - Parks
 - Other public facilities such as libraries

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Issues Not Discussed Further

All of the CEQA checklist items listed above are addressed in the analysis below.

Methodology

The full development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP was used to analyze impacts to public services and recreational facilities. Public service providers in the Merced region were contacted to determine current operational service levels and whether there are existing service deficiencies. The proposed project's demand for public services was determined and compared to service providers' ability to meet the anticipated project-related demand with existing or planned facilities.

4.7.5 LRDP Impacts and Mitigation Measures

LRDP Impact PUB-1: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would increase demand for law enforcement services and would require the construction of new facilities but the impacts from construction would be less than significant with mitigation. (*Less than Significant*)

The 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR analyzed the potential for campus development under the 2009 LRDP to result in substantial demand for law enforcement services. The analysis under Impact PUB-1 in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR was based on the assumption that campus enrollment would increase to 25,000 students by 2030 and that the campus would also have an employee population of 6,560 faculty and staff for a total of 31,560 persons by 2030. Based on the fact that the University would add staff as the campus needs grow and that the campus had adequate land to expand the police station if needed, the EIS/EIR concluded that the impact related to law enforcement would be less than significant.

As noted in **Section 3.0, Project Description**, UC Merced is now expected to grow at a slower pace than originally anticipated, adding no more than 5,300 additional students between 2020 and 2030, such that by 2030, the enrollment level is expected to be 15,000 students, and the faculty and staff projection for 2030 is also substantially lower than previously projected and analyzed in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR. In light of this change in the proposed project and the conditions in which it would be implemented, a revised analysis of the project's impact on law enforcement is presented below.

As described above, the UC Merced campus is served by the UC Merced Police Department. The UC Merced Police Department would expand service as development of the campus continues. To maintain the right staffing level, about 30 sworn officers would be required at full campus development. Based on the experience at other UC campuses, adequate staff will be provided on the campus. The 2020 LRDP land use diagram includes adequate land for the expansion of the Campus police station as needed. The environmental consequences of developing campus facilities, including additional police facilities, on land designated CMU in the 2020 LRDP are evaluated in other sections of this SEIR and would be mitigated to the greatest extent feasible by the mitigation measures included in this SEIR. For reasons presented above, the impact of implementation of the 2020 LRDP related to police facilities and services would be less than significant.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not cause the campus population to increase and thereby affect police services. To the extent a small project would add employees to the campus, those new employees are accounted for in the campus population increase analyzed above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on police services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

LRDP Impact PUB-2: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would increase demand for fire protection services and could require an expansion of an existing fire station or the construction of a new facility, but the impacts from construction would be less than significant with mitigation. (*Less than Significant*)

As noted above, the campus is jointly served by the County of Merced Fire Department and Cal Fire. The nearest County fire station is the McKee Fire Station 85, which currently has one paid fire fighter to staff its one Type II engine and a volunteer company (through County of Merced Fire Department, responding to 40-60 percent of calls per year) (Gladwin 2019). The County Fire Department response standard for a building fire is a "2 in, 2 out" standard, i.e., in responding to building fires, the department requires that there be two fire fighters available outside and 2 fire fighters available to go inside the building. The County Fire department responds to incidents at UC Merced with its engine company out of Fire Station 85, supplemented by a ladder truck from the Atwater fire station (as needed) and PCFs (Krippner 2019). The University and the County have reached an agreement to increase staffing at Fire Station 85 to a

minimum of two paid fire fighters 24 hours per day, seven days a week, thereby increasing the station's capacity to serve the campus in the near term.

As noted in **Section 3.0**, the 2020 LRDP is not a specific development project but a long-range development plan to guide campus growth and development over the next 10 years. The 2020 LRDP would support the development of new buildings on the campus to accommodate the projected growth in enrollment and employment at the campus. The 2020 LRDP is similar to a general plan in that it focuses on designating land uses for portions of the campus. It does not specify densities or development standards, and the University has the discretion to develop the land at densities that are consistent with its specific programmatic needs. The scale and density of future phases of campus development are not known at this time. The scale and density of future campus development would be determined by the specific programmatic needs of the campus as well as available funding. What can be reasonably projected at this time is that as campus enrollment increases to 15,000 students between 2020 and 2030, there would be an accompanying increase in building space on the campus, which the 2020 LRDP projects will be on the order of about 1.83 million gsf of additional space, and more mid-rise buildings would be added to the campus. The growth in both enrollment and building space would occur incrementally over the planning horizon of the 2020 LRDP. Therefore, there would not be an immediate need for increased fire service or additional resources from the fire department. However, as building space and campus population increase over time, there would be an incremental increase in fire or EMT-related emergencies and therefore in the need for expanded fire service than the campus requires at the present time. The additional fire protection services needed could include additional equipment and/or staffing to meet response time and other performance standards adopted by the County or any other entity that would provide fire protection services, although precise estimates of additional staffing and equipment that would be needed cannot be developed at this time. As CEQA is concerned with the impacts on the environment, any additional demand for equipment and staffing to serve the campus growth to comply with the performance standards would not, in itself, represent an environmental impact of the project. However, if the demand for staff and equipment results in the need for new or modified fire station facilities to house the additional staff and/or equipment, the environmental impacts from fire station construction would need to be evaluated and disclosed.

Fire service to the expanded campus could be provided under one of the following options: (1) continuing to contract with Merced County Fire Department at the current or expanded level of service; (2) contracting with Merced City Fire Department for fire protection services; (3) constructing an on-site UC Merced Fire Department; or (4) contracting with a private fire protection service entity.

If UC Merced were to contract with the County for a higher level of service, an expansion of the County fire station may be required to serve the expanded campus. It is anticipated that should the expansion of

the nearest fire station (Fire Station 85) be needed, the County will complete CEQA documentation for any expansion that is proposed. Based on a review of the current condition at Fire Station 85, there appears to be vacant land available at the fire station to expand the facility. Furthermore, the area of expansion on the site is either paved (parking lot or driveway) or is previously disturbed or landscaped. Consequently, any expansion of the fire station would be unlikely to affect sensitive biological and cultural resources. To the extent that construction noise could affect birds nesting in nearby trees, it is anticipated that the County would comply with the California Fish and Game Code and ensure that pre-construction surveys are conducted and precautions are taken to avoid significant impacts on nesting birds. Similarly, while cultural resources are not expected to be affected by the expansion at this site due to previous disturbance, should cultural resources be encountered during construction, the County would implement mitigation measures, which would reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Similarly, the County would implement standard noise and construction emissions and dust minimization measures to minimize construction-phase noise and air quality impacts. Therefore, the impacts from an expansion of the existing fire station are expected to be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation. To the extent that Merced County Fire Department determines that it would not expand the existing station and instead build a new station to serve future development, including the expanded campus, where a new fire station would be located is not known at this time and the environmental impacts from its development cannot be analyzed. However, according to the Merced County 2030 General Plan PEIR, should new fire stations be constructed, their impacts would be less than significant because of the policies included in the General Plan and the County's environmental review process which would require mitigation if significant impacts are identified (Merced County 2013) (for a more detailed discussion, see **Cumulative Impact C-PUB-2** below). If an existing County fire station is expanded or a new one is constructed by the County and significant environmental impacts requiring mitigation are identified by the County, the University will pay for its fair share of the cost of mitigation.

While the University continues to work with the County for the provision of adequate fire service to the campus, if in the future the campus is served by the City of Merced Fire Department, the nearest City fire station is Station 55, located at 3520 Parsons Avenue, at the intersection of Parsons Avenue and Silverado Avenue. It is unclear whether the City would expand that fire station or construct a new fire station. However, based on the recommendations in the Standards of Coverage Assessment completed by the City Fire Department in 2018, the City should initiate planning for an additional fire station to serve existing and future development generally north of Merced College and within the City's current/projected sphere of influence (SOI). The Standards of Coverage Assessment also recommends that as strategic planning and fiscal resources permit, the Department and City should consider a second ladder truck in the north/northeast section as the City continues to expand in that direction toward UC Merced. The City should consider exploring a shared-cost fire and EMS partnership with UC Merced

(Citygate Associates 2018). The recommendations in the assessment are consistent with the City's General Plan which also identified the need for more fire stations to serve growth in the northern portion of the City and in the City's SOI. According to the City of Merced Vision 2030 General Plan EIR, "As the City continues to grow in population and area there would be increased demand for fire and emergency medical protection, and the fire protection system will have to change if it is to maintain this response time standard. This would require two existing stations to be relocated and five new facilities with personnel and equipment to be added to the system. The actual location of new and expanded facilities will depend on the pattern of growth that occurs in the City limits and proposed SUDP/SOI, which is not known at this time." However, according to the General Plan EIR, should new fire stations be constructed, their impacts would be less than significant because of the policies included in the General Plan and the City's environmental review process which would require mitigation if significant impacts are identified (for a more detailed discussion, see **Cumulative Impact C-PUB-2** below). If an existing City fire station is expanded or a new one is constructed and significant environmental impacts requiring mitigation are identified by the City, the University will pay for its fair share of the cost of mitigation.

If a fire station were to be constructed on the campus, it would be located in a CMU designated land use area. Construction of this on-campus facility could result in environmental impacts. These impacts would be analyzed in a project-specific analysis but are expected to be less than significant with the implementation of the 2020 LRDP mitigation measures set forth in other sections of this SEIR and in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR.

With regard to the option of UC Merced contracting with a private fire protection service entity, not enough information is available at this time to determine whether a new or expanded fire station would be needed and no further analysis is feasible.

Although CEQA does not require this SEIR to analyze fire operational metrics such as response times (as they do not constitute environmental impacts), it is noted that the 2020 LRDP does not propose off-campus circulation system changes that could affect the County or the City's fire department response time in the vicinity of and to the campus. No modifications to Lake Road, such as termination of access via Lake Road, would be made in connection with the proposed LRDP as the University does not own or control Lake Road. With regard to the concern that increased response times could result due to congestion at Bellevue/Lake intersection, please see the traffic analysis for this intersection in **Table 4.8-8** in **Section 4.8, Transportation**. This intersection would continue to operate acceptably (LOS B) in the AM peak hour in 2030 even with the implementation of the 2020 LRDP. While the intersection would degrade to LOS F in the PM peak hour, the traffic improvements identified for this intersection would improve intersection operations in the PM peak hour to LOS B (see **Table 4.9-9**). Furthermore, as stated under

LRDP Mitigation Measure TRANS-1, since this intersection directly serves the campus, the University will be responsible for the entire cost of improvements at this intersection. Therefore, the University will ensure that unacceptable congestion does not occur at this intersection, and fire department response times are not adversely affected.

In summary, for reasons presented above, the impact on fire facilities and services from implementation of the 2020 LRDP would be less than significant.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not result in a substantial increase in the need for fire services. To the extent a small project would require additional fire services, that demand is accounted for in the analysis above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on fire services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

LRDP Impact PUB-3: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would increase enrollment in local public schools but would not require construction of new facilities. (*Less than Significant*)

The 2009 EIS/EIR analyzed the potential for campus development under the 2009 LRDP to result in an increase in enrollment in the local public schools. The analysis under Impact PUB-3 in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR was based on the assumption that campus enrollment would increase to 25,000 students by 2030 and that the campus would also have an employee population of 6,560 faculty and staff for a total of 31,560 persons. The EIS/EIR concluded that the impact related to schools would be less than significant. As noted above, UC Merced is now expected to grow at a slower pace than originally anticipated, such that by 2030, the enrollment level is expected to be 15,000 students, and the faculty and staff projection for 2030 is also substantially lower than previously projected and analyzed in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR. In light of this change in the proposed project and the conditions in which it would be implemented, a revised analysis of the project's impact on local schools is presented below.

Continuing development of the campus would generate a demand for primary and secondary educational facilities. As stated in **Section 3.0, Project Description**, no faculty or staff housing would be built on the campus. The 2020 LRDP does not plan for any student family housing on the campus. Therefore, no student households would live on the campus and the on-campus resident student would also not generate primary or secondary school-age students. As shown in **Table 4.6-8, Campus Student**

Population and Employees, in **Section 4.6, Population and Housing**, enrollment is anticipated to increase by 5,300 students between 2020 and 2030. These students would be from the City of Merced, greater Merced County, and other parts of the state and country. For purposes of the analysis in **Section 4.6**, it is conservatively assumed that all students would be from outside Merced County. Between 2020 and 2030, faculty at UC Merced is anticipated to increase by 346 persons and staff is anticipated to increase by 785 persons, for a total employment increase of 1,311 persons. Faculty and staff that are hired could already be living in the City of Merced and/or greater Merced County at the time of hire. However, for purposes of the analysis in this SEIR, it was assumed that all new faculty would relocate from outside the area while half of staff would relocate from outside the area (half of the new staff would be local hires). Based on these assumptions, approximately 739 new employees would relocate from outside the area. It is assumed that 10 percent of students would have families (530 students with families) and all faculty and staff population relocating from outside the area would also be accompanied by dependents.

These 530 student households and 739 faculty and staff households would generate school-age children who would attend area schools. University-specific student generation rates were used to estimate the number of school-age children that would be associated with families living off-campus (UC Merced 2009). As shown in **Table 4.7-1, School-Age Children Associated with Buildout under the 2020 LRDP**, approximately 900 school-age children (630 K–8 students and 270 high school students) would be associated with these student, faculty, and staff households.

Table 4.7-1
School-Age Children Associated with Buildout under the 2020 LRDP

Housing Units ¹	K–8 Student Generation Rate	Total Students Generated
530 Student Families	0.496	263
739 Employees		367
Total K-8 Students		630
Housing Units	9–12 Student Generation Rate	Total Students Generated
530 Student Families	0.213	113
739 Employees		157
Total High School Students		270
Total K–12 students generated		900

The approximately 900 K-12 students generated from campus growth under the 2020 LRDP would be dispersed throughout the City of Merced as well as in other Merced County communities and in Mariposa and Stanislaus Counties. As enrollment growth continues and employees are hired within the parameters of the 2020 LRDP, homes will concurrently be developed throughout the study area. Pursuant to SB 50, developers will be required to pay school impact fees as single-family homes or multi-family

units are constructed. School impact fees are considered full and complete mitigation for school impacts. Students, faculty, and staff that are homeowners would also pay property taxes a portion of which would go towards the funding local K-12 public schools. Therefore, the impact related to schools would be less than significant.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not cause the campus population to increase and thereby affect schools. To the extent a small project would add employees to the campus, those new employees are accounted for in the campus population increase analyzed above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on schools would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

LRDP Impact PUB-4: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would not substantially increase demand for public libraries. (*Less than Significant*)

The 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR analyzed the potential for campus development under the 2009 LRDP to result in an increased demand for public libraries. The analysis under Impact PUB-4 in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR was based on the assumption that campus enrollment would increase to 25,000 students by 2030 and that the campus would also have an employee population of 6,560 faculty and staff for a total of 31,560 persons. The EIS/EIR concluded that the impact related to libraries would be less than significant. As noted above, UC Merced is now expected to grow at a slower pace than originally anticipated. In light of this change in the proposed project and the conditions in which it would be implemented, a revised analysis of the project's impact on libraries is presented below.

The increased population associated with the 2020 LRDP would result in increased demand for public library services compared to existing conditions. However, the library system of the campus would continue to meet the needs of a modern research and teaching institution, and thus provide a large array of library services, would continue to be available to students, staff, and faculty of the campus, as well as the general public on a limited basis. Therefore, the impact on the City library system associated with implementation of the 2020 LRDP would be less than significant.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not cause the campus population to increase and thereby affect libraries. To the extent a small project would add employees to the campus,

those new employees are accounted for in the campus population increase analyzed above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on libraries would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

LRDP Impact PUB-5: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would result in an increased demand for parks and recreational facilities but would not require the construction of new recreational facilities off site. (*Less than Significant*)

The 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR analyzed the potential for campus development under the 2009 LRDP to result in an increased demand for parks. The analysis under Impact PUB-5 in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR was based on the assumption that campus enrollment would increase to 25,000 students by 2030 and that the campus would also have an employee population of 6,560 faculty and staff for a total of 31,560 persons. The EIS/EIR concluded that the impact related to parks would be less than significant. As noted above, UC Merced is now expected to grow at a slower pace than originally anticipated. In light of this change in the proposed project and the conditions in which it would be implemented, a revised analysis of the project's impact on parks is presented below.

The land use diagram in the 2020 LRDP assigns nine acres for Active Open Space (athletic facilities and fields) and 289 acres for Passive Open Space (large landscaped spaces). Of the 1,026 acres on the campus, approximately 29 percent are planned as active and passive open space. Many of these areas on the campus, including trails and bicycle paths, would also be available to the general population of the surrounding area.

Development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP would result in a residential campus population of about 7,200 students by 2030. No employees would reside on the campus. Recreational facilities and open space that would be developed on the campus would adequately serve the needs of the residential population, as well as the daytime population of the campus. Consequently, the population increase would not result in demand for the construction of off-site recreational facilities. Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would not trigger the construction of new parks or expansion of existing parks in areas outside of the campus. There would be no environmental impacts from the construction of new parks or expansion of existing parks off site.

The environmental impacts from the development of all campus lands, including those lands that would be developed with recreational facilities and open space, are addressed in the other sections of this SEIR

and mitigated to the extent feasible by the mitigation measures included in this SEIR. The impact would be less than significant.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not cause the campus population to increase and result in the need for recreation facilities. To the extent a small project would add employees to the campus, those new employees are accounted for in the campus population increase analyzed above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on recreational facilities would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

LRDP Impact PUB-6: Implementation of the 2020 LRDP would increase the use of Lake Yosemite Regional Park which could accelerate physical deterioration of park facilities. (Potentially Significant; Less than Significant with Mitigation)

As discussed under **LRDP Impact PUB-5** above, adequate land for parks and recreational facilities is included in the campus land use diagram to serve the on-campus residential population. Therefore, implementation of the 2020 LRDP is not expected to result in the excessive usage of off-site recreational facilities. However, due to the proximity of Lake Yosemite Regional Park to the campus and the range of unique water-related recreational amenities offered at the regional park which would not be available on the campus, it is anticipated that new on-campus student residents as well as faculty and staff would use the regional park. As stated in the 2009 LRDP EIS/EIR, there is no measure available to estimate the level of usage that would represent over usage and would result in a corresponding deterioration of the park facilities. However, because the park is currently at capacity during summer months, this SEIR conservatively assumes that the use of the park by the students could accelerate the physical deterioration of the park facilities and contribute to the need for new park facilities. Although it is anticipated that most of the increase in park facility use associated with the campus (i.e., during periods in which the school is in session (i.e., fall until late spring) would not coincide with the current peak park use which occurs during summer, nonetheless the deterioration of existing park facilities could be accelerated and is considered a potentially significant impact associated with implementation of the 2020 LRDP.

As noted in **LRDP Impact PUB-5** above, the University will develop on-campus recreational facilities, including shared use facilities such as on-campus sports, recreational, and parking facilities, as part of the overall campus development. In addition, **LRDP Mitigation Measures PUB-6a** through **PUB-6c** are

proposed to reduce the impact from campus development to a less than significant level. These mitigation measures would focus on park improvements within the existing 298-acre park site and would not extend any improvements into adjacent County-owned lands that contain sensitive biological resources.

With respect to small-scale projects that may be located within lands designated CMU, CBRSL or ROS, due to the location, small size, and nature of these projects, they would not cause the campus population to increase and thereby affect regional park facilities. To the extent a small project would add a few employees to the campus, those new employees are accounted for in the analysis above. For the same reasons that are set forth above, the impact of small-scale projects on the regional park would be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation Measures:

LRDP MM PUB-6a: UC Merced shall work with the County to avoid physical deterioration of existing facilities at Lake Yosemite Regional Park, and/or improve park facilities within the existing park site as necessitated by the increased uses associated with development of the campus.

LRDP MM PUB-6b: UC Merced will pay its fair share of the cost of necessary improvements to the regional park. UC Merced's share of funding will be based on the percentage that on-campus residential population represents of the total population in eastern Merced County at the time that an improvement is implemented.

LRDP MM PUB-6c: In recognition of the sensitive resources present on lands immediately adjacent to the regional park, all regional park improvement projects that are implemented by the County within 250 feet of the park's eastern boundary pursuant to **LRDP Mitigation Measures PUB-6a** and **PUB-6b** above, will implement mitigation measures to avoid and minimize indirect effects on biological resources.

Significance after Mitigation: Implementation of these mitigation measures listed above would reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Furthermore, implementation of **LRDP Mitigation Measure PUB-6c** would avoid any substantial secondary impacts of these improvements.

4.7.6 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Cumulative Impact C-PUB-1: Campus development under the 2020 LRDP, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would result in increased need for law enforcement services, the provision of which would not result in a significant cumulative environmental impact. (*Less than Significant*)

With the construction of new housing and expansion of businesses in Merced, the population of the City of Merced and the surrounding areas would continue to grow and the need for law enforcement in the region would proportionally increase. New staff and facilities would be needed to serve increased demand. It is unknown exactly where the facility expansions would occur to support the cumulative increase in population, though they would occur within urbanized areas where there is a concentration of population. In the future, as specific police services and facilities expansion or improvement projects are identified, additional project-specific environmental analyses would be completed by the City or the County.

Campus development under the 2020 LRDP would be served by the UC Merced Police Department and would generally not result in an increased need for law enforcement services from the City Police Department or the County Sheriff's office. Therefore, implementation of the 2020 LRDP would not contribute to any cumulative impact related to law enforcement services. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Impact C- PUB-2: Development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would generate an increased demand for fire protection services, the provision of which would not result in a significant cumulative environmental impact. (*Less than Significant*)

As discussed above under LRDP Impact PUB-2, under one of the options for fire service that UC Merced may pursue, the expanded campus would be served by the Merced County Fire Department. Under this option, the cumulative context would be existing and reasonably foreseeable development in unincorporated Merced County and the development on the campus. The cumulative effect of future growth and development in unincorporated Merced County on fire service is analyzed in the Merced

County 2030 General Plan Program EIR (PEIR). The PEIR states that “The 2030 General Plan would result in future residential and commercial development leading to increased demands for fire protection and emergency response services. This increased demand would likely result in the construction of new or expanded facilities at unknown locations generally within cities’ spheres of influence or designated urban communities. The 2030 General Plan also contains policies to avoid or reduce many adverse environmental effects that could occur with the construction of infrastructure necessary to serve planned growth. Additionally, future facility plans for new fire station facilities would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and undergo project-level environmental review, which would ensure that the potential environmental effects of each new fire facility would be identified. Mitigation measures would also be identified.” The PEIR further notes that “2030 General Plan policies to minimize the number of new or expanded facilities necessary to maintain adequate levels of service, as well as policies to reduce or avoid environmental effects, coupled with the required subsequent site-specific environmental review of new facilities, would ensure that the construction of new fire stations and other facilities would not result in reasonably foreseeable, substantial adverse physical effects at a programmatic level, thereby resulting in a less-than-significant impact” (County of Merced 2013). Furthermore, as noted under **LRDP Impact PUB-2** above, if an existing County fire station is expanded or a new one is constructed by the County and significant environmental impacts requiring mitigation are identified by the County, the University will pay for its fair share of the cost of mitigation.

As discussed above under **LRDP Impact PUB-2**, under one of the options for fire service that UC Merced may pursue, the expanded campus would be served by the City of Merced Fire Department. The City of Merced also analyzed both the General Plan-level and cumulative impacts on fire service from the development of the city consistent with the Merced 2030 Vision General Plan. The General Plan EIR states that “As the City continues to grow in population and area there would be increased demand for fire and emergency medical protection, and the fire protection system will have to change if it is to maintain this response time standard. This would require two existing stations to be relocated and five new facilities with personnel and equipment to be added to the system. The actual location of new and expanded facilities will depend on the pattern of growth that occurs in the City limits and proposed SUDP/SOI, which is not known at this time. However, fire and emergency response facilities would be allowed in most proposed General Plan land use designations.” The General Plan EIR also states that the City would comply with Implementing Action 2.1.d which “provides guidelines for siting new firehouse facilities. Guidelines include fire stations being located on streets close to and leading into major or secondary thoroughfares; fire stations being near the center of their primary service area; convenient to high value areas of commercial or industrial districts; stations being located away from other uses which may be sensitive to the noise impacts of frequent alarms; and residential service areas, fire stations should be located in or near those sections which have the highest density” (City of Merced 2011). As a result, the

City concluded that both the General Plan level and cumulative impacts related to the provision of fire service would be less than significant. Furthermore, as noted under **LRDP Impact PUB-2** above, if an existing City fire station is expanded or a new one is constructed by the City and significant environmental impacts requiring mitigation are identified by the City, the University will pay for its fair share of the cost of mitigation.

Based on the analyses in the two general plan EIRs, it is reasonable to assume that should UC Merced continue its contract with the County for fire service or execute a new contract with the City for fire services in the future, in the event that new or expanded fire station facilities are needed, their construction and operation would not result in significant environmental impacts, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Impact C-PUB-3: **Development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would generate an increased demand for elementary and secondary school facilities, the provision of which would not result in a significant cumulative impact. (*Less than Significant*)**

The study area for a potential cumulative impact on schools is the service area of City School District, the Weaver Union School District, and the Merced Union High School District (MUHSD).

The cumulative context for impacts on school services is the increased demand for these services as a result of residential and non-residential growth in Merced under the adopted City of Merced General Plan. The projected growth in Merced would be expected to result in the need for additional schools.

Some of the schools within the study area are at capacity. The MUHSD has a five-year facility plan, which is continually updated to monitor and project the growth in enrollment and to identify additional facilities needed to serve the growth in enrollment. Other school districts also have similar plans for the development of new facilities. Developer fees are collected in order to address the school impacts from new development. In addition, the school districts work with developers of large residential developments to provide land for the construction of new schools within the project site to serve the new population.

As mentioned above, for purposes of the analysis in this SEIR, it was assumed that all new faculty would relocate from outside the area while half of staff would relocate from outside the area (half of the new staff would be local hires). Based on these assumptions, approximately 739 new employees would relocate from outside the area. It is assumed that 10 percent of students would have families (530 students with families) and all faculty and staff population relocating from outside the area would also be accompanied by dependents.

The increased population associated with the 2020 LRDP would result in an increased demand for educational services. Similarly, new development within the City of Merced SOI would result in an increased need for elementary and secondary schools. All new development would be required to pay school impact fees, which are considered full and complete mitigation for school impacts. Therefore, the cumulative increase in demand for school facilities would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Impact C-PUB-4: Development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would result in increased demand for library services, the provision of which would not result in a significant cumulative impact. (*Less than Significant*)

Public library services are provided to the region by Merced County. Therefore, the study area for a potential cumulative impact on library services is eastern Merced County. The Merced County Library system includes the main library, which is located in Merced and regional branches located in Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, and Los Banos.

The cumulative context for impacts on library services is the increased demand for these services as a result of residential and non-residential growth in Merced under the adopted Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, Merced County 2030 General Plan, and the development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP.

The cumulative effect of future growth and development in unincorporated Merced County on library service is analyzed in the Merced County 2030 General Plan PEIR. The PEIR states that “Implementation of the proposed 2030 General Plan would involve future population growth and urban development within the unincorporated county that could result in substantial changes to existing (school and) library services. Increasing demands would result in the need to provide additional (school and) library

facilities... Likewise, without needed improvements to libraries commensurate with the growing population and changes in information technology, these facilities could also become overused and outdated. This could result in the construction of new or physically altered (school or) library facilities, or the modification of existing facilities to serve growth. This construction could result in environmental impacts." "The 2030 General Plan would result in future residential and commercial development leading to increased demands for (school and) library services. This increased demand would likely result in the construction of new or expanded facilities at unknown locations generally within cities' spheres of influence or designated urban communities. The 2030 General Plan also contains policies to avoid or reduce many adverse environmental effects that could occur with the construction of infrastructure necessary to serve planned growth. Additionally, future plans for new (school or) library facilities would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and undergo project-level environmental review, which would ensure that the potential environmental effects of each new facility would be identified. Mitigation measures would also be identified." The PEIR further states that "2030 General Plan policies to minimize the number of new or expanded facilities necessary to maintain adequate levels of service, as well as policies to reduce or avoid environmental effects, coupled with the required subsequent site-specific environmental review of new facilities, would ensure that the construction of new school and library facilities would not result in reasonably foreseeable, substantial adverse physical effects at a programmatic level, thereby resulting in a less-than-significant impact" (County of Merced 2013).

Furthermore, the library system of the campus, which meets the needs of a modern research and teaching institution and provides a large array of library services, would be available to students, staff, and faculty of the campus, as well as the general public on a limited basis. The campus library system would also contribute to Merced County's available library resources, especially adult non-fiction and reference materials, which would permit the County public library system to reallocate resources toward other types of material, including resources for children.

Based on the analyses in the General Plan PEIR, it is reasonable to assume that in the event that new or expanded County libraries are needed, their construction and operation would not result in significant environmental impacts, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Impact C-PUB-5: Development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would not result in a cumulative impact related to neighborhood and community parks, but would result in a cumulative impact associated with the deterioration of the Lake Yosemite Regional Park facilities from increased use. The proposed project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable. (*Less than Significant*)

Because Lake Yosemite Regional Park is a regional park, the study area for a potential cumulative impact on this facility is eastern Merced County.

The cumulative context for an impact on Lake Yosemite Regional Park is the increased use of the park facilities services as a result of residential and non-residential growth in Merced under the adopted City of Merced General Plan and the development of the campus under the 2020 LRDP. As noted earlier, little growth is expected to occur in this portion of unincorporated Merced County. The projected growth in north Merced would be expected to result in the increased use of park facilities.

Lake Yosemite Regional Park is an important regional recreation facility serving thousands of area residents annually. The regional park is extensively used. The peak period begins on Easter Sunday and continues until mid-October. There are approximately 300,000 visits to the park annually. The park is currently at capacity during summer months.

As discussed above, the campus includes an adequate amount of parkland for the proposed increase in population of this area. Therefore, the development of the campus would not result in a cumulative impact on neighborhood and community park facilities in the region. To the extent that other development in north Merced results in an increased demand for neighborhood and community park facilities, the proposed project would not contribute to that demand.

As noted above, the one exception would be the Lake Yosemite Regional Park. As stated in **LRDP Impact PUB-6**, because the park is currently at capacity during summer months, this SEIR conservatively assumes that the use of the park by the campus-related population could accelerate the physical deterioration of the park facilities and contribute to the need for new park facilities. Although new park facilities would be developed in the existing park and would not have significant environmental effects, and it is anticipated that most of the increase in park facility use associated with the campus (i.e., during periods in which the school is in session (i.e., fall until late spring) would generally not coincide with the

current peak park use, nonetheless the deterioration of existing park facilities is considered a potentially significant impact associated with the proposed project.

Other development within eastern Merced County would also result in increased use of the regional park and would contribute to its deterioration and the cumulative impact would be potentially significant. However, UC Merced would implement **LRDP Mitigation Measures PUB-6a** through **PUB-6c**, which would render the project's contribution to the cumulative impact cumulatively less than considerable.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

4.7.7 References

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