General Plan Update and Downtown Station Area Plan

Public Comments

Last updated: March 1, 2026

The following is a log of all public comments received on the Imagine Merced website (https://imaginemerced.com). The comments are shown verbatim as they were received and are organized by the latest comment received.

Project	Date	Comment
General Plan	2/27/2026	Hello, I've been studying the general plan for years now and I will say good job on the progress considering the current economic climate. Although I will say that the city should cut back a bit on regulations if possible to help bring more warehouse or manufacturing jobs to the city as I see Merced will have a beltway in the future connecting merced airport and castle. I would also hope to see progress on the campus parkway shopping center with quality destinations since I see Merced is surpassing 100k residents.
General Plan	2/26/2026	Merced resident and worker, I highly approve of the southeast station plan, as the downtown plan would tear the southern portion, when you guys could rather be rezoning plenty of vacant lots on 14th and 15th street for high density residential or commercial which would highly benefit the area. And the southeast is an up coming area of Merced and has all the connections to the main arterials to get to Yosemite.
General Plan	2/23/2026	Would love to say this is a beautiful city just from looking at the pictures that have so much potential to thrive and be part of a lot of things and with time unity it definitely will be
General Plan	1/29/2026	This link from the UC Merced Community Labor Center High-Speed Rail, Community Preferences, and Public Participation in Merced Station Development survey offers valuable insights not only for the station where ever it is built but on community attitudes concerning the development of Merced. We need to partner with UC Merced in their scientific surveys that can offer much more valuable insights about the hopes of our community than anecdotal surveys at community meetings. https://clc.ucmerced.edu/sites/g/files/ufvvjh626/f/documents/the_merced_high_speed_rail_survey.pdf
General Plan	1/28/2026	Ryan, thank you for the opportunity to share observations with you. As mentioned there was a South Merced Community Study completed. In the event city staff has not shared this content with your team, here is the link: https://www.cityofmerced.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/5210 Additionally, here is an overview of the Urban3 value/revenue per acre analysis study I shared with you. https://civicwell.org/civic-resources/valuing-downtowns/#:~:text=A%20new%20review%20of%20city,land%20values%20are%20typically%20lower This study reinforces the importance of optimizing the Downtown for financial solvency. We trust this will further inform the conversation.
General Plan	1/26/2026	Please incorporate safe, smooth North/South bike routes into your downtown development plan. Recent construction (PG&E work?) on G Street has resulted in significant and potentially unsafe, uneven pavement in the bike lane between 23rd and 18th St. The other marked bike route (Canal St) is too bumpy to comfortably bike between 25th and 22nd; K St -- the other train track crossing -- is also too bumpy for easy downtown access. Our family lives in North Merced and primarily uses bicycles for local transit. Because of the lack of smooth, safe bike corridors, we go downtown less than we otherwise would. We would like to enjoy downtown food, business, and cultural events, but getting there is uncomfortable and unsafe, and so we don't make the trip as often as we'd otherwise like.
General Plan	1/19/2026	Suggestion: Replace the Marketplace at Merced sign. ONLY the name, "Marketplace Of Merced". The signs of most of the new stores are much better and larger letters.
General Plan	11/14/2025	There are two small parks near my neighborhood and one burned down and the second got fenced off. I would like for those to be rebuilt and reopened. They are the parks on either side of Cherokee and Columbia along the rascal bike path. I would like for the one Specifically on Cherokee (I believe it's park #5) to be rebuilt with large or significant sun protection for the kids in summer.
General Plan	11/13/2025	I would love to see Rascal Park number 5 be rebuilt after being gone for a few years. My kids and I love walking there and served as an incentive for them to do the long walk
General Plan	11/13/2025	please address * keeping south Merced affordable * bringing a supermarket or full service grocery store to south Merced * involving youth and young adults in planning processes * involving creatives and artists - making spaces for public art and civic engagement * developing and supporting local businesses
General Plan	11/13/2025	Merced has such beautiful bike paths! But there are no protected connections from the bike paths to places I want to go (especially with kids). Safe (actually protected, not just paint lines that drivers routinely ignore), biking routes Connecting down town to the Bear Creek and Black Rascak/Farhens park bike paths would make a HUGE difference to quality of life.
General Plan	11/12/2025	Please consider improving Canal Street by removing the one way restriction at Canal and 27th. If not possible, reroute designated bike path over to K st. Please repave Canal Street and add clear bike markings, lighting, and safe crossings to support active transportation and downtown vitality connecting the newly renovated Bob Hart Square with the bike path at Bear Creek. This would enhance the bike-ability of our town in respect to the new train station and HSR being built. Strengthen trail-to-downtown connections with signage and secure bike parking. Replant shade trees along key corridors to cool the area and improve walk ability. Incorporate winning images from a city photography contest into downtown banners and marketing to enhance civic pride.

General Plan	11/12/2025	Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback. Merced should prioritize restoration of neighborhood parks and green spaces. Please rebuild the Black Rascal Creek park that burned down (37°19'21.2"N 120°27'34.8"W) and reopen the fenced playground near Sutter Ct/Columbia. (Please shade against hot summer months!) The constraints of the area make it subject to vandalism so perhaps a concrete design that is fireproof would work here? Please replant trees in G to Parsons and Olive to Columbia neighborhood and Rascal Creek to restore shade and walk-ability. (Many trees are aging out and dying.) Please consider community renaming of Black Rascal Creek to Rascal Creek to remove racial undertone. Integrate the "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" early literacy program into the Library element of the General Plan. Consider creating a Peace Garden for quiet reflection open to all faiths in a community green space. Annual city photo contest for marketing and strengthen civic identity. Thank you
General Plan	11/12/2025	1) Please resurface Canal or K from 25th to 22nd. Our family mostly bikes in town; bad road quality means we go downtown less to shop, eat, & enjoy events. We have small kids & had close car encounters on G/M, so want a safer alternative. Canal 27th->downtown is labeled a bike route, but it's in terrible shape. K is a good N/S artery but it's even rougher. Smoothing Canal or K would improve safety, downtown appeal/access, and provide a more professional welcome when arriving by Amtrak. 2) The area bordered by Parsons, Olive, G/Cherokee, & Rascal Creek has many trees aging out (dying, falling, etc.). Often they aren't replaced, affecting future street temps and aesthetics. Please replant this neighborhood's tree lawns to retain much-needed summer shade. 3) Please repair/reopen two Rascal Creek playgrounds (south of Cordova; between Kingsland and Columbia). These were our kids' primary parks, but one burned 3 years ago & the other is fenced off. Our neighborhood misses our playgrounds!
General Plan	11/11/2025	A general comment on existing conditions for bikes in the city: a major obstacle in accessing strip mall type areas by bike, particularly on G St, is that there is often a wall around the development that prevents access from non-arterial streets. For instance, the Bear Creek Galleria is walled off from McCombs Dr, despite being only separated by landscaping. A bike/pedestrian access point there would allow access without using G or Bear Creek and avoid a lot of traffic exposure.
General Plan	11/11/2025	Re: Figure 4-10/Page 84: I suspect that there are side streets that see more bike traffic than most arterial streets due to having less traffic, and should be called out as existing ways people get around by bike even if they don't have dedicated bike lanes. For instance, K and Canal Sts connect downtown to Bear Creek. Meadows Ave connects the Rascal Creek path to south of Olive. Rascal Creek can connect to Bear Creek via Kingsland, Lincoln, Aspen, Alexander and Oleander while avoiding G St (this is how I bike to downtown). It would be much easier and cheaper to improve these routes in the short term than arterials, since it only requires changing certain intersections, adding wayfinding and basic pavement repairs.
General Plan	11/11/2025	Re: Table 4-2 and Figure 4-10, page 84: While the map of the existing bike infrastructure is technically correct as far as I can tell, it overstates the mileage of Class II bike lanes that an average rider would ever consider using. Much of on them are so narrow the E in the BIKE LANE stencil runs into the gutter so they actually say BIK LAN, and are next to 40+ mph traffic in overly wide lanes and go through busy intersections with lots of turning vehicles. For example, G and M St may have bike lanes their entire length, but I would never recommend someone use them to get across town. There are much safer alternatives on smaller streets (see next comment)
General Plan	11/11/2025	Re: page 83/M-12, Table 4-1: Paint-buffered bike lanes (Class IIB in some classifications) should be called out as an option as well, though none currently exist in Merced. They are a vast improvement over an unbuffered class 2 bike lane as long as the buffer is several feet, and they avoid the complications of having vertical features. Many other cities in the central valley have these (e.g. Fresno near the Tower District, Davis has them extensively)
General Plan	11/10/2025	How are these two initiatives sharing transit corridor findings to deliver a coordinated middle housing zoning guideline? https://www.mcagov.org/412/Merced-Regional-Multimodal-Access-Plan
General Plan	10/15/2025	Hello Imagine Merced, Very enthused to have infographics to start telling the Merced story. Given Merced County is the 5th largest ag producer in the state, behind Fresno, Kern, Monterey and Tulare Counties, the public will benefit from having more infographics addressing growth impacts on our significant resource -productive agricultural land. One of our collaboration partners reminds us, "once paved over, that is a one time harvest." Although the City of Merced has not adopted a Vision Zero strategy it will be beneficial to align the General Plan with Vision Zero Principles: a safe system approach, data-driven planning, equity and community engagement, leadership and accountability.
General Plan	10/15/2025	Request the following infographics be added: Land Development: illustrate number of zoning variances by type (commercial, high to low residential density, mixed use to automotive), between the pre-2030 General Plan and the 2030 General Plan Land Development: number of annexations (pre-approved and approved) between the pre-2030 General Plan and the 2030 General Plan Land Development: homeowner trend changes; provide a graph to illustrate number of actual owner occupied households 2015, 2000, 2015, 2015 (currently 44% of homes are owner occupied) Land Development: provide a heatmap to illustrate where non resident property ownership is Land Development: provide a heatmap to illustrate households with a cost burden exceeding 30% of income
General Plan	10/15/2025	Request the following infographics be added: Traffic: provide heatmap of vehicles per hour Traffic: provide heatmap of excessive idling due to traffic light and train crossing congestion Traffic: provide heatmap of excessive noise <60 dBA, >75 dBA Traffic: provide heatmap of surface streets being used as bypass for major arterials Traffic: collision heatmap; vehicle/vehicle, vehicle/pedestrian, vehicle/bicyclist
General Plan	10/15/2025	Request the following infographics be added: Environmental: provide a color coded soil productivity map within the city sphere of influence Environmental: provide a map of the water runoff catch basins within the city sphere of influence

Downtown Station Area Plan	10/9/2025	Attached is a comprehensive list of cultural assets within the proposed Downtown Arts District. While this compilation does not include every asset in the City of Merced, I believe it will be valuable for our consultants as they consider arts and culture, as well as activities and programs provided by community-based organizations (CBOs). For instance, Merced is home to Merced Shakespearefest, a 22-year-old Shakespeare theater company that performs mainly at the MOAT at Applegate Park, and various other public art installations throughout the city. Thank you!
General Plan	9/14/2025	Trade in marketing
General Plan	9/14/2025	Tank you for supporting 💕
General Plan	9/3/2025	Abolish parking minimums. Every unused parking stall in the city is a 250 sqft small apartment that could be providing low-income housing for a senior or a homeless person. Current parking requirements require there to be just as much parking space as there is floor space for grocery stores; this is an onerous and costly requirement that prevents infill commercial from happening. Supporting points: - Free market: Allow businesses to decide for themselves how much off-street parking they need. - Supports infill development: How many boys and girls clubs and senior centers would fit in the unused parking at the mall, or the future unused parking at the HSR station? - Fights urban heat islands - Improves the character of the town, because nobody has ever waxed poetic about a parking lot. - Often, parking requirements are not evidence based, and result in far more parking than actually needed - Many much larger cities have dropped parking minimums, few have looked back.
General Plan	9/3/2025	Require use of brick pavers on all new and resurfacing parking lots. The most important thing here is that surface parking covers many acres of our city's permeable surfaces with impermeable asphalt. As we get more of our rain over shorter periods, this puts ever greater strain on our waste water systems. Brick pavers alleviate this strain by offering very good permeability, among other benefits. Arguments in favor: - There are modern pavers and paver base designs that can tolerate the weight of even fire dept ladder trucks. - They look good, much better than bleak asphalt, and will add to the character of our city. - Pavers are long-lived, easy to maintain, and easy to remove if we want to infill or change the parking lot. - Reduces urban heat island effects - Reduces the amount of toxic runoff from cars that ends up in wastewater. - Encourages large construction to only build the parking they need due to the upfront cost.
General Plan	9/3/2025	We need to streamline the bus service. Currently, most of our buses run empty, which is a sign of low utility to most residents. Currently, due to the meandering routes, low frequencies, and spoke-and-hub network design, using the bus to get anywhere takes a long time; definitively slower than biking in some cases. We can improve frequencies and travel times on our network by going to a grid-based route network using our arterial streets. This will reduce route coverage, but should provide greater utility and get better ridership by reducing frequencies to every 15 minutes, reducing travel times, and reducing cognitive load required to use the system. Additionally, we can further optimize bus operations by implementing bus lanes, using Transit Signal Priority systems, deploying level boarding options, using multi-door boarding to reduce linger times at stops, and synchronizing traffic signals. Additionally, the use of bus lanes will facilitate emergency response by fire and EMS units.
General Plan	9/3/2025	Adopt a vision zero plan for the city. Currently, around six people per year are hit and killed by cars in Merced. If you apply the injuries per vehicle miles traveled and deaths per vehicle miles traveled on our bike lanes to Olive Ave, it would see over 20 injuries a day and a fatality about once every other day. Any civil engineer would agree that those numbers on an arterial street are unacceptable, so why would they be acceptable for our bike lanes? Other cities both larger and smaller than us have adopted vision zero plans to get to zero pedestrian fatalities per year. We can and should do it too.
General Plan	9/3/2025	Allow Accessory Commercial Units in all residential zones. ACUs are much like ADUs, except instead of an additional dwelling, it's an additional low-impact commercial use on a property. This will enable communities that have no nearby grocers to open their own small shops that kids, the elderly, the disabled, and anyone who doesn't want to or can't drive across town to get basic staples and fresh food from a short walk in their own neighborhood. Alcohol and tobacco can be restricted to less than 20% of total floor and shelf space and restricted to low-nuisance alcohol sales via existing alcohol licensing. Now there will be no need to drive to starbucks when you can visit the cafe on the corner. There's no limit to the number of creative, low-impact, charming shops that can pop up in our neighborhoods to add to their character, provide amenities and services that are otherwise absent today, and create a sense of community by giving neighbors a place to meet.

General Plan	9/3/2025	We need to re-zone existing residential zones to make zoning more permissive. The overwhelming majority of the city is zoned LDH; we can meaningfully add to the housing supply by increasing the upper bound on density in each of our residential zones, reducing our setback requirements to permit denser forms, permitting mid-rise and mixed use residential forms in MDH and HDH zone plans, and permitting single room occupancies in more zoning plans. We should also permit low-impact small commercial/retail uses by right throughout our residential zones, such as neighborhood cafes, delicatessans, and green grocers.
Downtown Station Area Plan	8/28/2025	Please make sure we have a focus on growing businesses and making Merced a city that keeps all generation, have activities and make Merced a place people are proud to be from and live in. We need to make sure we are supporting business growth and lean into attracting new young vibrant generations to keep Merced growing and evolving
General Plan	7/24/2025	We own 3,800 +- acres on HY 59 and Bellevue. 5935 N. HWY 59. Brokfield homes worked on a plan for this property around 2018. Being it is large it would be ideal for a plan for housing, parks and other amenities for the Merced city exexpansion.
Downtown Station Area Plan	7/7/2025	There needs to be planning to have access to public transportation once someone exits the train in Merced as well as better lodging accommodations and restaurants in that area.
Downtown Station Area Plan	6/26/2025	I am interested in participating in the Citizens Advisory Focus Group for this project and would love more information about how that group will be organized. Thank you!
General Plan	6/26/2025	I am a Merced resident and UC Merced graduate. I would like to learn more about being considered to the citizens advisory focus group. Based on my time as a resident of Merced as well as my career background, I believe that I can provide valuable feedback and insight to this group. I am passionate for my city's success and our city's vision.