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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MERCED COUNTY RELEASES AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT COMMUNITY SURVEY**

MERCED— On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) was signed into law, and included \$350 billion in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) for eligible state and local governments. In accordance with the American Rescue Plan Act, SLFRF funds are eligible to support the public health response, address negative economic impacts, replace public sector revenue loss (revenue replacement), provide premium pay for essential workers, and make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. SLFRF funding is being distributed through multiple governmental agencies, resulting in a variety of awards, allocations, and spending authorities. Merced County was allocated \$53,936,085 and each of the six cities within Merced County received their own allocation of SLFRF funds. Local governments are responsible for the SLFRF allocations, but may also receive funds that were assigned to the State for similar purposes.

To ensure an ongoing structurally balanced budget for Merced County, utilizing these one-time dollars to complete one-time projects is of significant importance. Special consideration is also given to ensure ARPA-SLFRF funded projects will have long-lasting, generational impacts for the benefit of Merced County residents. In accordance with the guidance released from the U.S. Department of Treasury, Merced County conducted an analysis to understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Merced County's state and local revenues and to identify revenue loss. Upon review of SLFRF guidance, Merced County's revenue loss is projected to exceed its SLFRF allocation. On August 10, 2021, a revenue replacement focused ARPA SLFRF funding framework containing various expenditure categories was presented to the Board of Supervisors. Through this framework, the Board of Supervisors has prioritized services for the homeless, COVID-19 support, improvements to community facilities, water infrastructure and flood control, road improvements, and public safety.

The County reviewed community outreach feedback which was obtained in 2020 in addition to years of direct feedback regarding the need to invest in county veterans' halls, community halls, parks, and libraries, to begin identifying projects to be funded in the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Final Budget. Additionally, unreimbursed expenditures were identified as part of the County's direct response to the pandemic and multiple capital projects were stalled due to economic and supply chain uncertainties. Examples of such ARPA-SLFRF projects that have been approved for funding include:

- Veterans and Community Hall improvements in various unincorporated communities
- Library improvements throughout Merced County
- Park infrastructure including irrigation systems, landscaping, and sidewalks
- Spring Fairgrounds water and infrastructure in Los Banos
- Black Rascal Creek Flood Control project benefiting Merced and the Beachwood-Franklin community

On August 31, 2021, Merced County published its 2021 ARPA-SLFRF Recovery Plan which outlined existing and planned community engagement efforts. Merced County has developed a Community Survey to solicit feedback directly from its residents and to complement the existing feedback received by the Board of Supervisors. Information gathered from the survey will help to inform the Board of Supervisors as they consider how to use the ARPA-SLFRF funding to provide long-lasting benefits to local residents. Members of the public may submit survey responses through January 31, 2022.

Survey (English): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ARPA-EN>

Survey (Spanish): <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/ARPA-SP>

Survey (Hmong): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ARPA-HM>

“Merced County is pleased to release the American Rescue Plan Act Community Survey,” said Chairman Daron McDaniel of the Merced County Board of Supervisors. “The one-time funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act gives Merced County the opportunity to make infrastructure investments throughout the county that will have multigenerational impacts. The Board of Supervisors places high value on community input and looks forward to hearing directly from the residents of Merced County.”

Merced County will be meeting with local Municipal Advisory Councils throughout our communities to provide information and solicit participant feedback with on-site translation services available. The County will also be conducting an online Virtual Community Workshop with translation available. Additionally, a Public Hearing is anticipated to be scheduled to provide results of the community outreach. For a schedule of ARPA-SLFRF community events and additional information, please visit <http://www.countyofmerced.com/3713/American-Rescue-Plan-Act>.

– 30 –

For more information regarding Merced County, please visit our website at [www.countyofmerced.com](http://www.countyofmerced.com)