

**Request:** Assistance with funding of **Atwater-Merced Expressway Phase 1B**.

**Description:** The Atwater-Merced Expressway (AME) is a multi-phase project to improve access to State Route 99 for Atwater, Merced, Castle Commerce Center and the University of California at Merced.

**Completed:** Phase 1A was completed in 2016. It replaced the Buhach Road ramps with a modern interchange, upgraded a mile of SR-99, and constructed Green Sands Avenue and the first portion of the AME as a two-lane facility. It cost \$66 million, including \$19 million from MCAG impact fees and regional transportation funds, and \$47 million for construction from California’s 2006 bond.



**Next:** Phase 1B would extend the expressway over Santa Fe Avenue and the Burlington-Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks and into Castle Commerce Center. Adequate funding exists to complete the Project from Green Sands Avenue to Santa Fe Avenue. If additional funding is obtained in the amount of \$16,570,000.00, the Project will extend to Franklin Road.

**Future:** Phase 2 will extend the AME to SR-59 and further via Bellevue Road. Phase 2 will provide an expedited connection to UC Merced. Phase 3 will connect SR-99 south to SR-140. AME phases 2 and 3 complete the western section of the long-term “Loop” project, a beltway around the City of Merced. The eastern section is the Campus Parkway, scheduled to be complete in 2023.

<b>AME Phases</b>		
Phase 1A	Complete	\$66 m
Phase 1B extension	Request	\$16.57 m
Phase 2	Future	\$84 m
Phase 3	Future	\$90 m

**Necessity:** The Atwater-Merced Expressway will connect major destinations to the state highway system and alleviate heavy freight and commuter traffic through congested areas in Atwater and Merced. The AME provides a direct connection between SR-99, Castle Commerce Center, and the UC Merced. Completion of the expressway will lead to future economic development of Castle Commerce Center, North Atwater, and North Merced.

Castle Commerce Center is a key multimodal freight transportation hub with air, ground, and rail connections. Castle Airport (IATA: MER) can service aircraft weighing up to one million pounds with enough fuel to fly non-stop to Asia. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway operates a spur into Castle Commerce Center. The center is also part of Foreign-Trade

**CONTACT:**  
 Dana Hertfelder  
 Public Works Director  
 Merced County  
 (209) 385-7601  
[Dana.Hertfelder@countyofmerced.com](mailto:Dana.Hertfelder@countyofmerced.com)

Zone, No. 226 and holds a partnership with the Port of Los Angeles. The center also has many warehouses, industrial buildings, and distribution facilities to allow for development into a major manufacturing hub. The construction of the Atwater-Merced Expressway would provide the perfect freight connection to and from SR-99.

The University of California, Merced is the newest of the ten UC campuses, specializing in STEM fields. As SR-99 is the main highway for the Central Valley, direct access will provide ease of transportation to and from campus.

