

2 LAND USE

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to present a framework to guide future land use decisions and development in Visalia, while also enhancing community character and improving the city's look and feel. The element forms the core of the General Plan, and its policies articulate the community's land use and growth management priorities through 2030.

The element includes the Land Use Diagram, land use classifications, standards for density and intensity, and growth boundaries and phasing. Additional detail on parks, schools and public facilities is in Chapter 4.

The objectives and policies focus on several distinct areas: economic development; urban boundaries and growth management; rural buffer and edge conditions; community design; infill development incentives; residential neighborhoods; commercial and mixed uses; Downtown and East Downtown; industrial land uses; institutional and civic land uses; and the airport. Together, these policies help define Visalia's physical development and reinforce its commitment to balancing land use requirements with community needs and economic growth, while also allowing for flexibility in implementation to respond to the real estate market.

2.1 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With a population of some 125,000, Visalia is the largest city in Tulare County. The city has grown concentrically around its historic core since its founding in 1852, and it remains a compact city surrounded by productive agricultural land. Downtown Visalia remains the physical, cultural, and economic center of the city, hosting government offices, a major hospital, a convention center, and many unique shops and restaurants. Predominantly single family neighborhoods surround the core, with pockets of higher density housing dispersed throughout the city. Mooney Boulevard is a regional retail destination and also hosts the College of the Sequoias. Significant industrial development has occurred on large parcels in the northwest quadrant of the city. Visalia's waterways—the St. Johns River along the city's northeast edge and the network of creeks and canals—are also important form-giving elements.

Existing Land Use Pattern

A comprehensive survey of existing land use is necessary to take stock of the Planning Area's existing assets as well as determine the development capacity of vacant and underutilized sites throughout the buildout of the General Plan and to plan for future urban growth. Existing land uses were identified from field surveys, aerial photography, and City data. **Figure 2-1** shows the existing land uses in the Planning Area.



Visalia is characterized by predominantly low density neighborhoods surrounding its historic, vibrant downtown.

Figure 2-1: Existing Land Use

The map displays the existing land use in the Visalia, CA area. The legend identifies the following categories:

- Agriculture
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- General/Retail Commercial
- Heavy/Service Commercial
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Parks/Recreation
- Vacant
- Reservoirs/Canals
- Planning Area
- City Limits

The map shows a dense urban core with a mix of residential and commercial land uses, surrounded by agricultural and rural areas. Major roads and highways are clearly marked, and the city limits are indicated by a dashed line.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the predominant existing land use in the Planning Area, with 39,518 acres. Over 90 percent of the agricultural lands in the Planning Area are outside of current city limits, but there are notable pockets of land under active cultivation even inside the incorporated area, totalling approximately 2,800 acres. The types and nature of agricultural activities in the Planning Area are discussed in more detail in the Conservation Element.

Residential

After agriculture, residential land uses are the most prevalent land use within the Planning Area, at 11,136 acres. Of the total residential land, the majority is low density (typically two to seven dwelling units per acre). Medium density (typically nine to 15 units per acre) and high density residential (typically 15 to 30 units per acre) occupy much smaller land areas. Rural residential land, at less than one unit per acre, is located mostly outside of the city limits or on the outskirts of town.

Commercial

Commercial uses comprise 1,341 acres in the Planning Area. A majority of commercial land is general retail/commercial uses, such as grocery stores, personal service establishments, neighborhood shopping centers, restaurants, etc. Heavy/service commercial, consisting of uses such as automotive services and fast food establishments, makes up the remaining commercial land area. In general, commercial uses are concentrated along the city's major corridors: Highway 198, Mooney Boulevard, and Goshen Avenue. Pockets of

smaller, neighborhood-serving commercial establishments are scattered throughout otherwise residential areas. Downtown Visalia also hosts many commercial establishments, stores and restaurants mixed with office and residential uses.

Industrial

Visalia's industrial land is concentrated in the northwest, and consists of a mix of light and heavy industrial uses. Total acreage is 1,770 acres. Light industry makes up the majority of the existing industrial uses and consists of operations such as warehousing, distribution, research and development, and limited manufacturing; versus heavy industry, which includes more intense manufacturing and agricultural processing operations. A smaller concentration of industrial uses is also found east of downtown, along Ben Maddox Way and Goshen Avenue.

Public, Semi-Public, and Community Facility

There are 1,960 acres of public, semi-public, and institutional uses in the Planning Area. These uses include schools and colleges, City and County government facilities, utilities, and medical facilities. Many of these uses occupy very large parcels (e.g. College of the Sequoias, Kaweah Delta Medical Center, the northeast public school "Golden West super campus," the Municipal Airport) and are activity centers in the community.



Agriculture is the predominant existing land use in the Planning Area, with 39,518 acres comprising 65 percent. The Planning Area has 1,770 acres of industrial land, including agricultural processing operations.

Vacant Sites

Vacant land totals 2,917 acres in the Planning Area, and consists of a wide range of parcel sizes, from small infill sites less than an acre in size in the older sections of the city, to larger sites of 10 acres or more.

Vacant land is scattered throughout the Planning Area, but sites are often clustered, for instance, along Goshen Avenue east and west of Ben Maddox; near Houston Avenue, Goshen Avenue, and Demaree Street; in the northwest industrial area; and in north Visalia where subdivisions are not complete.

Table 2-1: Existing Land Use in the Planning Area

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Inside City Limits</i>		<i>Outside City Limits</i>		<i>Total Planning Area</i>	
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture	2,778	15%	36,739	88%	39,518	65%
Low Density Residential	6,289	33%	351	1%	6,640	11%
Rural Residential	1,430	8%	2,675	6%	4,104	7%
Vacant	2,262	12%	656	2%	2,917	5%
Public/Institutional	1,554	8%	406	1%	1,960	3%
Light Industrial	1,180	6%	291	1%	1,471	2%
Parks and Recreation	1,108	6%	53	0%	1,161	2%
General Retail/Commercial	723	4%	79	0%	801	1%
Heavy/Service Commercial	343	2%	197	0%	540	1%
Office	338	2%	12	0%	351	1%
Heavy Industrial	233	1%	66	0%	299	0%
Medium Density Residential	262	1%	2	0%	264	0%
Right of Way	148	1%	106	0%	254	0%
Canal	34	0%	171	0%	205	0%
Water	163	1%	23	0%	186	0%
High Density Residential	126	1%	1	0%	127	0%
Railroad	46	0%	45	0%	91	0%
GRAND TOTAL	19,017	100%	41,872	100%	60,889	100%

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2012

Recent and Approved Development

As of late 2011, there were 6,451 housing units in various stages of development in Visalia, in a combination of tentative and final maps. Of these, 85 percent were single family units and 15 percent were multi-family units. These residential pipeline projects total approximately 1,740 acres.

In addition, 17 non-residential development projects were also in various stages of permitting and development. These projects comprise 437,000 square feet of commercial uses, 139,000 square feet of office uses, 511,500 square feet of industrial uses, and 185,100 square feet of public/institutional uses, on a total of 155 acres. It is estimated that these projects, when completed, could create some 2,300 jobs in Visalia.

Urban Land Needs

The extent of Visalia's urban footprint in 2030, the mix and distribution of various land uses, and those land uses' densities and intensities, all informed the city's population and job growth projections for the next several decades.

Population growth determines the need for residential land, schools and parks, while job growth and retail spending determines the need for non-residential land of various categories. By translating population growth into housing units needed and job growth into non-residential square footage needed, and then applying density and intensity assumptions, it is possible to estimate how much land is needed in each category to support the growth. But because population growth, employment growth, and future development are ultimately unpredictable and can only be approximated, they must be used as guide-

lines—general parameters—for land use planning. Consequently, the General Plan provides for land to be developed in a series of “tiers,” so that growth can proceed logically at either the slower or the faster rate. Tiers of development, urban boundaries, and growth management are discussed in section 2.4 of this element.

2.2 GROWTH STRATEGY

This General Plan shows how the community would like Visalia to grow over the planning period, through 2030. Through integration of all the General Plan Elements, this General Plan will guide sustainable physical and economic growth, while conserving natural and cultural resources and maintaining community character.

Compact Form

Urban Development and Urban Growth Boundaries

Clearly defined urban edges reflect a commitment to focus future growth within the City in order to prevent urban sprawl and protect environmentally sensitive areas. The Urban Development Boundary (UDB) and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which reinforce the concentric ring growth concept, are the best strategies to achieve a compact development pattern. The UDB/UGB protect the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of the residents of Visalia by concentrating future residential, commercial, and industrial growth in areas already served by urban services or areas where such services are to be provided consistent with this General Plan.



Nearly 6,500 housing units are in the development pipeline, helping to serve the city's growing population.

The UDB and UGB are administrative boundaries beyond which urban development is not allowed during the time periods for which they are effective. Plan policies provide specific criteria for moving from one growth tier to another, which are described in greater detail in Section 2.5. The General Plan anticipates that these boundaries will be reviewed and amended periodically to ensure an adequate land supply is provided to accommodate residential and non-residential land demand.

Open Space Action Plan

Visalia's Open Space Action Plan consists of the objectives and policies presented in the Open Space & Conservation Element along with some specific objectives and policies in this element. The open space network reinforces the limits of urban development by designating land around the growth area as Agriculture/Rural/Conservation, Park, and Rural Residential. Additional detail on how the action plan will be implemented is in the Implementation Chapter. Taken together, these initiatives specifically respond to and are consistent with the Government Code's requirements for an Open Space Action Plan.

Infill Development

The Urban Development and Urban Growth Boundaries complement General Plan policies emphasizing infill development, a thriving downtown, revitalization of the Mooney Corridor, new commercial and industrial development and additional housing opportunities. In addition to the 2,300 acres of vacant land within the city limits, many sites can be classified as underutilized, based on an improvement to land value ratio, and may have redevelopment poten-

tial. Infill development is encouraged with the Urban Development Boundary, and the General Plan introduces new incentives to facilitate infill development (see Section 2.8). In addition, the Land Use Element provides strategies for fostering a strong Downtown/East Downtown that is the center of the community and a source of positive identity for the City of Visalia.

Balanced Uses

The General Plan Land Use Diagram (Figure 2-2) illustrates a mix of land uses that meet the housing and economic development needs of the community while balancing growth so that Downtown continues to be the "heart of the City" and environmental and cultural resources are protected. In recent years, growth and development has occurred along the northern and western edges of the city; this Plan re-centers the city on Downtown by promoting neighborhood development in the southern and eastern portions of the Planning Area, while still ensuring balanced growth amongst all quadrants.

In addition to balancing the anticipated growth geographically, the General Plan Land Use Diagram balances residential growth with employment-generating land uses. More than 3,500 additional acres of commercial and industrial land for potential employment development have been planned. This will help not only to create jobs for local residents but also balance the job to housing ratio.

Equitable

This General Plan is predicated on the idea that new development should pay its own way, so existing residents do not have to assume the costs of providing infrastructure and services to growth areas. The key

principle underpinning the Plan's policies for development mitigation is that the development community has an obligation to pay its fair costs so growth will not diminish the quality of public services, facilities, and lifestyle that are enjoyed by those who live in the community. Development mitigation and growth management policies will be used as tools to manage all development within Visalia and protect and enhance open space and environmental resources.

Better Neighborhoods

The General Plan directs residential expansion in the new growth areas into a network of approximately 18 new neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are planned to contain a mix of uses and housing types. Each neighborhood will have a well-defined, mixed-use center with neighborhood commercial and publicly-oriented uses, such as a park and recreation facility or a school. By creating these centrally located hubs, a larger number of residents have the option to bike or walk for non-work related trips. The General Plan Land Use Diagram depicts four residential and two mixed use land use designations. These land uses will accommodate a diverse range of housing types and prices to provide more housing choices. Policies in the General Plan strive to promote the integration of new neighborhoods with existing urban development, and to preserve and enhance neighborhood connectivity with a continuous street network.

Economic Opportunities

A key initiative of this General Plan is to ensure opportunities for economic development for the residents and the City as a whole. New jobs and industries, a skilled labor force, thriving local businesses and a high quality of life for all residents will help pre-

serve the quality of life in Visalia. In order to facilitate economic development, a range of commercial and retail sites and ample land for industrial and educational development has been designated in the General Plan Land Use Diagram. The Land Use Element also provides guidance for new and revitalized commercial areas, including neighborhood and regional shopping centers, office parks and mixed use districts.

2.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Visalia is committed to enhancing economic development opportunities and defining a long-term framework for sustainable growth. In fact, the success of accomplishing the General Plan's objectives is closely related to a strong economic development strategy. This section contains policies and actions that will enable the City to direct local resources to retain and assist local businesses and attract new industry that will increase its tax base and economic diversity. It provides policy direction and concrete actions for improving the education and training programs; providing jobs for its growing population; creating opportunities for supply of retail goods and services that will be needed by the community; fostering the development of a City that sustains its downtown; and supporting regional-serving and neighborhood commercial centers that can meet the everyday needs of residents.

In conjunction with the other General Plan elements, the economic development strategy presented here enables the City to act as a "development partner," by providing supportive zoning and infrastructure and facilitating the approval process. Other policies in the Land Use Element, and the General Plan Land Use Diagram, allow for new commercial and industrial



The land use and economic development strategies in the plan were developed simultaneously, ensuring that future growth supports employment opportunities.



Manufacturing and healthcare are two of the largest contributors to Visalia's current economy.

development and provide sites for schools and campuses for higher education. The Circulation Element provides new multi-modal linkages from neighborhoods to commercial and employment centers. The Parks, Schools, Community Facilities and Utilities Element ensures that the underlying infrastructure necessary for new development is available in a timely manner. The other elements all contribute to increasing Visalia's quality of life.

The Economics of Visalia

The Current Economy

Visalia is largely defined by its position at the heart of the Central Valley economy, an eight- county region stretching north to Stockton in San Joaquin County and south to Bakersfield and Kern County. Although the City possesses a number of unique attributes, its general economic prospects are closely linked to the fundamental trends affecting this larger region. The primary drivers of the region's economy are agriculture and food processing; manufacturing; warehousing and distribution; government; and to a smaller extent, health care and professional services.

Similar to the broader Central Valley area, Tulare County's economy has been largely based on agriculture, food processing, and manufacturing, while professional services jobs have been limited. Tulare is the second most productive agricultural county in a State that itself is by far the most productive in the nation. Overall, agribusinesses produced \$5 billion in commodities in 2008 with the County considered one of the largest milk producers in the United States.

Similar to the broader countywide trends, Visalia's economy is based on distribution and agriculture, as well as manufacturing, education, and healthcare. However, as the county's population center core and the County Seat, other significant occupations include social assistance, management, and professional jobs. The city's largest employers include Tulare County, Kaweah Delta Healthcare, College of the Sequoias, and CIGNA HealthCare. The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) has estimated current (2010) employment by economic sector in the City. These estimates, which identify approximately 65,900 jobs, are summarized in **Table 2-2**.

The largest and most important economic sectors, in terms of employment, are services, industrial, and retail trade; together, these three sectors account for approximately 75 percent of all jobs in the City.

The Future Economy: Projected Employment

Employment projections prepared by TCAG anticipate the addition of about 25,000 jobs in the Planning Area (Visalia plus Goshen and other unincorporated areas) between 2010 and 2030. These projections do not account for the City's economic development programs, and it is important to note that these projections differ slightly from projected General Plan buildout. The increase in jobs is likely to be concentrated in the service, industrial, and retail sectors, which together would account for about two-thirds of the new jobs.

Some of these economic sectors—notably, retail trade, services, and government—are likely to grow in response to the needs of growing population. Others—such as industry and agriculture—respond to

market demands of a broader geographic area. Education is a mix: it certainly will grow to meet the needs of Visalia residents, but may also serve a larger population if educational institutions attract students from beyond the local area.

Economics and Land Use

Having a strong economy is important for Visalia. Appearing to have a strong economy is also important: it helps people feel good about their city and neighborhood; it creates a favorable impression on visitors; it attracts businesses that value the quality of life for their employees. To the casual observer, appearances of economic health generally center on the performance of retail space, and particularly on activity in the Downtown area.

Visalia is fortunate to have a healthy, attractive Downtown, which is active during the day and at night. While there are some storefront vacancies and older buildings in need of reinvestment, Downtown

Visalia is a truly vibrant core. On the other hand, East Downtown suffers from high vacancies, incompatible uses, and a lack of a cohesive sense of purpose or place. Policies in section 2.11 build on the current strategic direction for East Downtown and aim to help guide its revitalization.

Beyond Downtown, retail development along the major arterials presents a mixed appearance; some areas are occupied by new buildings that are well-occupied and busy; others have vacant stores that have not been occupied in some time. In older parts of the city, small parcel sizes and prolonged periods of disinvestment have contributed to difficulties in redevelopment. The City has begun to address this issue on South Mooney Boulevard with the recent rezoning effort.

To address the recent shift in consumer and corporate preferences, the General Plan Land Use Diagram includes an expanded Downtown Mixed-Use des-

Table 2-2: Visalia Employment Projections (2010-2030)¹

<i>Employment Category</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>Total New</i>	<i>Percent Increase</i>	<i>Annual Percent</i>
Agriculture	702	659	601	561	524	-178	-25%	-1.5%
Education	4,565	5,294	6,188	6,948	7,734	3,169	69%	2.7%
Government	6,500	6,841	7,274	7,642	8,075	1,575	24%	1.1%
Industrial	12,296	13,439	14,898	16,167	17,741	5,445	44%	1.8%
Office	4,701	5,083	5,491	5,851	6,344	1,643	35%	1.5%
Retail	11,183	12,281	13,447	13,891	15,525	4,342	39%	1.7%
Service	25,957	28,067	30,693	32,967	35,481	9,524	37%	1.6%
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT²	65,904	71,664	78,592	84,027	91,424	25,520	39%	1.7%

1. Projections developed by TCAG. Includes adjacent unincorporated areas outside the city, such as Goshen.

2. 2030 employment projections by TCAG served as a guide for developing the General Plan. Total jobs accommodated under General Plan buildout do not match TCAG projections.

Sources: Tulare County Association of Governments; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.



Small parcel sizes and disinvestment pose challenges for Mooney Boulevard.

ignation and clusters new commercial development near neighborhood centers to meet the daily needs of residents and at major regional shopping destinations near the highways. The new Commercial Mixed Use designation, applied to much of South Mooney Boulevard north of Caldwell, as well as along other major arterials and community shopping nodes, provides needed flexibility in retail and service formats and clustering. Both new mixed use designations allow housing, increasing efficiency and convenience for both residents and businesses.

Challenges to Economic Growth

To achieve the employment increase anticipated by TCAG, Visalia will have to retain existing businesses that are successful and growing, as well as attract businesses that are seeking new locations. However, the city also needs new “basic” economic development; that is, jobs in companies that make products and services that are sold outside the community, thereby creating income for local workers by bringing in new money into the community.

Some businesses, such as those that serve consumers directly, will be attracted by a growing population. As the number of residents increases from 125,000 to over 200,000, the City will attract an array of new stores, including department stores, supermarkets, drug stores, as well as restaurants and services.

Other businesses—those that comprise the “economic base” of the community—may not come automatically. Economic-base businesses bring new money into the City that can then be spent at the retail stores, restaurants, and service outlets. However, because their consumer base is regional, national, or international, they have more leeway in selecting their locations. To

compete with other communities—in an increasingly competitive economic environment—will require a concentrated effort that, to be successful, must address the following conditions:

- *Location.* Visalia is located in the Central Valley, generally between the larger cities of Bakersfield and Fresno, but 20 miles east of a major north-south transportation route (State Route 99). The City cannot change its location, but it can direct its efforts toward attracting the types of basic economic activities that do not rely on physical transportation of inputs or outputs, especially if those inputs or outputs are heavy or bulky.
- *Supply of sites.* Visalia has almost 1,000 acres of land available for employment-bearing land uses. The sites, however, are not all competitive: some are too small, some are in less-than-optimal locations, some are not served (or not adequately served) by infrastructure, and some are not available for sale or development. In order to address this issue, the General Plan Land Use Diagram increases the employment-bearing land uses to approximately 4,000 acres.
- *Major employment anchors* and linked economic activities. Although Visalia has several employers with more than 1,000 jobs, they do not attract linked economic activities – either because they are not large enough, or because their needs are too diverse to create a critical mass of demand for specific goods and services, or because they take care of all of their business needs in-house. As economies grow, they are sometimes able to attract suppliers who do businesses with a number of firms, such that when the collective demand for a particular good or service (such as cardboard

boxes, or glass bottles, or legal services, or truck repair, for example) is great enough a local supplier can be supported.

- *Workforce readiness.* While better educated than residents of Tulare County overall, the workforce in Visalia is not as well educated as the workforce of California in general. In particular, just 21 percent of Visalia residents over age 25 have completed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 30 percent statewide. The College of the Sequoias is the only public college in the City that offers junior college education and serves as a "feeder" institution, providing a pool of potential students to four-year universities. Availability of four-year undergraduate and graduate degrees only through private universities (or by commuting to Fresno) makes higher education more difficult to obtain, especially for lower-income residents.
- *Difficulty of horizontally or vertically diversifying the agricultural sector.* Agriculture activities do not always require inputs or produce outputs that can profitably be captured by related local manufacturing or processing operations. Economic opportunities presented by agriculture are usually in the service sector (e.g., equipment maintenance and repair) and transportation, though the potential for agriculture-related manufacturing can also be developed.
- *Lack of a basic industry that establishes a clear "direction" for Visalia development.* Few industries are of a significant size, and there is no resource outside the agriculture sector that would provide a "hook" or platform for related economic development.

Strategy for Economic Development

To support Visalia's projected population growth, the City will have to add jobs. At the same time, the General Plan recognizes that the expected growth must be disciplined by a vision of the future that maintains Visalia's community character. This vision includes: a strong downtown that is the keystone of community identity; a network of regional-serving and neighborhood commercial centers that serve the everyday needs of nearby residents; and, ample industrial land around the Airport to meet the needs of existing and new businesses.

Visalia's strategy for economic development takes into account the following two basic concepts:

- Visalia operates in a competitive context. Other Central Valley cities are as interested in new basic development as Visalia, and some have established pro-active economic development programs that are continuously funded and have a positive track record.
- Employer decisions to choose a site in Visalia (or elsewhere in the Valley) are likely "opportunistic:" neither local natural resources nor a specialized labor force create an obvious attraction for particular industries.

Therefore, the economic development approach presented in this Element calls for the City to:

- Ensure the availability of physical, institutional, and social capacity to respond to the needs of business.
 - Physical capacity includes the availability of sites (land and/or buildings) that are of



The economic development strategy builds on successful industry clusters and supports small businesses.

adequate size and in appropriate locations, served with urban infrastructure (roads and utilities).

- Institutional capacity includes the ability of local government to respond in a timely manner to applications for development, expansion, and relocation of economic activities that are consistent with the community's goals, and to proactively seek such development.
- Social capacity includes the availability of housing at prices that can be afforded by employees, educational opportunities that provide needed skills, and other social systems and amenities (health care, recreation, etc.) that maintain the current overall high quality of life.
- Support existing businesses and recruit new businesses that can provide jobs for local residents or resources for other local businesses.
- Identify industry clusters that are growing in the Visalia area, or for which Visalia offers advantages compared to other communities. Identify the conditions required by these clusters to locate and grow in Visalia.
- Provide incentives, including zoning for “ready-to-go” site and bonuses for targeted industries or institutions, reductions in utility connection fees and/or expedited permit processing for job-generating development.
- Foster positive relationships between the City and its businesses and a positive image that will help attract new businesses.

- Improve workforce training and attract new educational institutions to Visalia.

Economic Development Policies

The objectives and policies presented in this section include a number of specific programs that the City will undertake for economic development as well as policies intended to improve the overall business climate and establish a positive working relationship with the private sector. Additional policies related to commercial and industrial development and Downtown are in other sections of the Land Use Element.

In this section and in all others following, policies marked with an asterisk (*) indicate that they are newly introduced for this General Plan. All others are carried forward from the previous General Plan (in some cases with minor modifications in wording in order to match language and style).

Objectives

- LU-O-1** Maintain Visalia's role as the regional commercial and industrial center for Tulare, Kings and southern Fresno counties.
- LU-O-2** Promote diversity in Visalia's economic base to increase the stability of jobs and fiscal revenues.
- LU-O-3** Promote tourism and conference activities as part of Visalia's economic base.
- LU-O-4** Enhance the City's retail base through land use and development policies, to provide sales tax revenues, serve the needs of

local residents and attract shoppers from outside the community.

LU-O-5 Recruit regional-serving retail, healthcare, technology, warehousing and distribution, and agriculture-related industries.

LU-O-6 Provide employers with access to a skilled, educated, and well-trained resident workforce.

LU-O-7 Preserve and enhance qualities that make Visalia an ideal place to do business and promote a positive image of Visalia as a desirable place to live, visit, and do business.

LU-O-8 Foster a good working relationship between the business community and the City.

Policies

LU-P-1 Work to capture emerging market sectors and technologies to enhance Visalia's economic base, through incentives and other business attraction strategies described in this Element. Focus on businesses that:

- Possess a high growth potential, such as agricultural processing, healthcare, recycling industries, technology, light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution and other businesses that benefit from a Central Valley location;
- Provide opportunities for skill training;

- Create higher-paying and/or higher-quality jobs for Visalia residents;
- Complement or expand existing goods and services in Visalia;
- Have a minimal negative impact on the environment; and
- Require minimal public investment.

LU-P-2 Identify a package of incentives to offer to targeted businesses that invest in Visalia.

Incentives may include City loans, expedited permit review and approval, and floor area bonuses.

LU-P-3 Annually monitor economic trends to identify emerging industries and new market opportunities, so City policies and strategies can be proactive and timed to market changes.

LU-P-4 Continue to identify, pursue, and capture federal, State, and other grants for economic development, marketing, workforce training, and incentives to recruit new businesses.

LU-P-5 Work with the Visalia Economic Development Corporation to maintain an inventory of ready-to-go sites for commercial, office, and industrial development in consultation with property owners.

The list should be updated annually and distributed to the Chamber of Commerce, the Real Estate Board, and large commercial



Conferences and industry events are held year-round at the Visalia Convention Center, a unique asset for the region and a boon to local businesses.



Strengthening and diversifying the retail sector is a high priority for the General Plan.

LU-P-6

brokers and developers, as well as posted on the City's website.

Strive for a balanced mix of local, regional, and national retailers that offer a diversity of product and pricing choices, and undertake strategic initiatives to attract new retail development. Initiatives could include:

- Promote catalyst projects at key locations to stimulate private investment;
- Encourage quality retail and restaurant uses to locate where “multiplier effects” are most likely;
- Build on synergies that could occur between complementary businesses.

The concentration of certain uses can have positive multiplier economic effects on surrounding businesses. For example, concentrations of restaurant and nightlife activities or of home furnishing businesses create identifiable “go-to” places in the minds of diners and shoppers.

LU-P-7

Work with owners, managers and employers of retail, entertainment, dining, hotel, and recreation businesses in developing a cooperative marketing and programming approach.

Activities could include advertising campaigns and community events, such as “Taste of Downtown Visalia.”

LU-P-8

Provide technical support for existing and new business associations that represent businesses in specific areas of the city.

Business district associations such as the Downtown Visalia Alliance can provide support for neighborhood commercial areas.

LU-P-9

Support business retention by maintaining a revolving loan program for local businesses needing temporary support.

LU-P-10

Support community efforts to establish a permanent home for the Visalia Farmers’ Market, and facilitate the formation of additional temporary farmers’ markets.

LU-P-11

Continue to coordinate planning, economic development, local workforce training, tourism, and other activities of regional significance with the Chamber of Commerce, Tulare County and other cities and organizations to foster the economic health of the area.

LU-P-12

Work with the California Department of Transportation to provide additional signage for Visalia and its businesses from State Highways 99 and 198.

Signs should indicate the presence of convenience services and of Downtown Visalia.

LU-P-13

Provide incentives for new and existing business and industry to adopt local-hire policies, and give preferential credit to

contractors on public projects that employ Visalia residents.

LU-P-14 Recognize the importance of agriculture-related business to the City and region, and support the continuation and development of agriculture and agriculture-related enterprises in and around Visalia by:

- Implementing growth boundaries and cooperating with the County on agricultural preservation efforts;
- Accommodating agriculture-related industries in industrial districts;
- Facilitating successful farmers' markets;
- Helping to promote locally-grown and produced agricultural goods, and the image of Visalia and Tulare County as an agricultural region.

LU-P-15 Ensure high-quality, master-planned development at State Highway 198 and Plaza Drive and update or repeal the West Visalia Specific Plan to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and streamline the review and approval process.

Because development plans and agreements for this area are in place and the updated General Plan and zoning will apply to all new development, a specific plan may no longer be needed.

LU-P-16 Annually monitor the adequacy of City economic development efforts and effects

of economic activity on the Visalia Planning Area to ensure their consistency and conformance with the City's General Plan.

Support for the Arts and Festival Markets

LU-P-17 Promote implementation of the City's Cultural Plan, as well as additional initiatives supporting local artists and craftspersons by:

- Providing exhibit areas within public buildings and encouraging the creation of exhibit areas in major new Downtown commercial buildings and in regional shopping malls where the public gathers;
- Providing incentives to developers in in the Downtown and on the Mooney Boulevard Corridor to create residence, studio, and sales space for local artist and crafts persons;
- Initiating a "storefront art" program to display art work in vacant storefronts, and/or in storefronts of volunteering operating businesses;
- Encouraging a Festival Market (possibly in conjunction with a Farmers Market or Saturday Market) in Downtown or East Downtown to promote local art, crafts and produce; and
- Developing a program for public art by local artists in outdoor open spaces including roadway gateways to the



Economic development policies also support the arts in the community.

community, City parks, wall murals, and transit vehicles.

- LU-P-18** Study the feasibility of a performing arts center as part of Convention Center expansion.

2.4 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DIAGRAM

Land Use Framework

The land use framework embodies the community's vision of how Visalia will look in 2030. The plan depicts a workable and attractive land development pattern in Visalia, responding to development opportunities, environmental resources and constraints, the needs and desires of City residents, and historic planning policies that have served the City well. It is guided by a set of key ideas that distill community aspirations and opportunities for growth in Visalia, as well as the by GPURC direction, summarized below:

- *Balanced Growth.* Emphasize concentric development and infill opportunities to strengthen Downtown, revitalize existing commercial centers and corridors, and fill in gaps in the city fabric, balanced by moderate outward expansion and protection of agricultural lands.
- *High Quality of Life.* Build on Visalia's small-town feel by ensuring that each neighborhood is a complete, walkable area with parks, a full range of housing types, a discernible center, and a unique sense of place. At a citywide scale, the sense of place is preserved by keeping Downtown vital and accentuating the city's natural creek system.

- *Enhanced Connectivity.* Improve connectivity at the neighborhood, city, and regional scale, by improving key corridors, completing missing links in the roadway network, and ensuring that new neighborhoods accommodate the City's street grid. Create "complete streets" amenable to walking, biking, and transit use, and anticipate robust transit service within the City and beyond.
- *Vibrant Community.* Support Visalia's economic vitality, including higher-intensity development Downtown, the creation of a new urban district in East Downtown, the revitalization of the Mooney corridor, the facilitation of expanded medical and educational facilities, and attractive locations for expanding business in the industrial areas.
- *Forward-looking Retail Strategy.* Provide for new neighborhood commercial uses and regional retail development, to be staged over time in order to support the City's existing retail base.
- *Identity as a Free-Standing City.* Work with the County, the Farm Bureau and landowners, and the community to ensure physical separation between Visalia and adjacent communities.

The General Plan land use framework builds on Visalia's key community assets and natural features, providing direction for vibrant new neighborhoods and an enhanced living environment within the city. The plan focuses on strengthening existing neighborhoods and activity centers with infill and higher-intensity development, and establishing a neighborhood-oriented growth pattern to maintain the City's strong community identity.

The General Plan emphasizes the city's natural and urban corridors. The St. Johns River and other creeks

play an important role in defining the city's urbanized edge and in providing organizational and recreational features for new and infill development. Additionally, the natural corridors provide links between neighborhoods, parks, and activity centers in the city. Likewise, transportation corridors provide an enhanced network with improved multimodal mobility; accessibility to transit, key destinations, and community facilities; and streetscape improvements along major corridors and gateways into the city.

The Plan assumes that current development trends are largely maintained, with development densities and intensities similar to current and proposed development in the city. Its buildout population of approximately 210,000 corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, with an average residential density going forward of 5.3 units per gross acre. Densities and intensities of each land use category are described below.

At 50 square miles, the overall urban footprint represents a focus on infill and continued neighborhood-oriented development, with new growth extending in areas to the northeast, northwest, west, southwest and southeast. St. Johns River acts as the city's northern boundary, with no new development located to the north of the river. This urban footprint is 3.5 square miles smaller than the footprint adopted under the 1991 Land Use Element Update. Higher density and intensity development is focused within the heart of the city in Downtown and in urban infill areas, while lower density is located at the fringe of the city, creating a transition between developed and agricultural and rural areas.

The Land Use Diagram

The General Plan Land Use Diagram (Figure 2-2) depicts the desired ultimate land use pattern for the City of Visalia by 2030. The diagram is a graphic representation of land use classifications and locations, and it should be used in conjunction with policies established in the Plan—in this and other elements. The proposed general locations, distribution, and extent of land uses show the vision of development at buildout of this planning period.

The Diagram includes a legend that shows land use categories whose densities and allowable uses are specified in the following section, Land Use Classifications.

Density/Intensity Standards

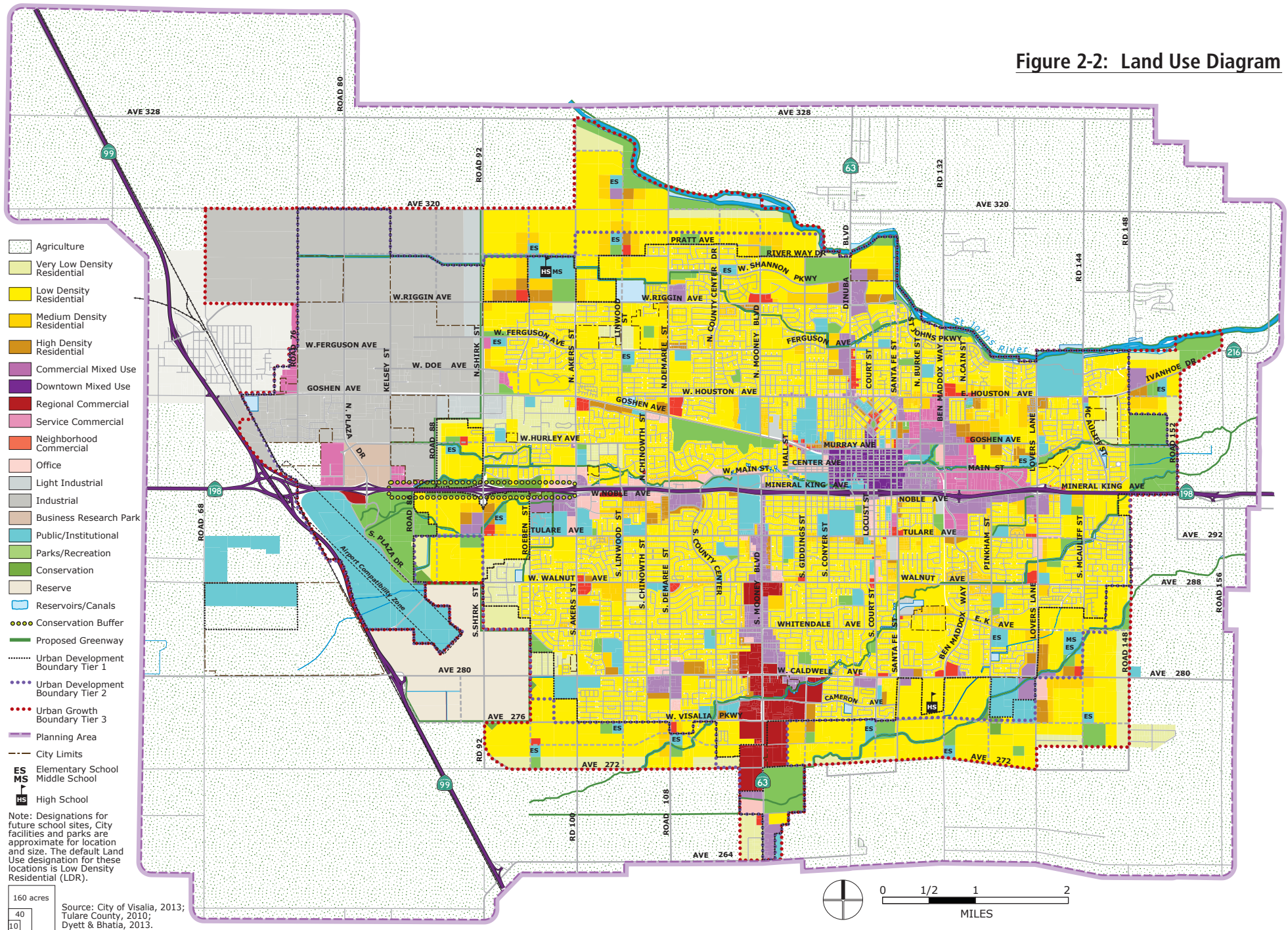
The General Plan establishes density/intensity standards for each type of land use. The purpose of the density/intensity standards is to indicate how much development is allowed or recommended on a single plot of land. Residential density is expressed as housing units per gross acre, including land for public streets and other rights of way and storm drainage that may need to be dedicated to the City. A maximum permitted floor area ratio (FAR) is specified for non-residential uses. FAR is a broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generation. It can be translated to a limit on building bulk in the Zoning Ordinance and is independent of the type of use occupying the building.

Density (units per acre) and intensity (FAR) standards do not imply projects will be approved at the maximum specified. Zoning regulations consistent



The land use framework balances accommodating growth with maintaining community character.

Figure 2-2: Land Use Diagram



with General Plan policies to be and/or site conditions may reduce development potential within the stated ranges.

Table 2-3 summarizes the density and intensity ranges of the land use categories. More detailed characteristics of each land use category are described in the next section.

Land Use Classifications

The land use designations shown in the General Plan Land Use Diagram provide the basis for new development. They are generally broad in scope, in order to provide flexibility while creating a vibrant and varied urban environment. The classifications are organized into five categories: Residential, Mixed Use, Commercial/Office, Industrial, and Public.

Residential

Very Low Density Residential. This designation is intended to provide for single family detached housing on large lots. Residential densities are typical of rural residential environments. The typical residential density for this designation ranges from 0.1 to two housing units per gross acre. Buildout is assumed at two units per gross acre.

Low Density Residential. This designation is intended to provide for single family detached housing. Residential densities are typical of single-family subdivisions. The typical residential density for this designation ranges from two to 10 housing units per gross acre. Buildout is assumed at four units per gross acre.

Medium Density Residential. This designation can accommodate a mix of housing types, from small-

Table 2-3: Density and Intensity Standards by Land Use Classification

Land Use Classification	Density (DU / gross acre)	Intensity	
		Minimum FAR	Maximum FAR ²
Residential			
Very Low Density Residential	0.1 to 2	—	—
Low Density Residential	2 to 10	—	—
Medium Density Residential	10 to 15	—	—
High Density Residential	15 to 35	—	—
Mixed Use ¹			
Commercial Mixed Use	Up to 35	0.25	2.0
Downtown Mixed Use	Minimum 20	1.0, including 0.25 Retail	5.0
Commercial and Office			
General/Service Commercial	—	—	0.6
Regional Commercial	—	—	0.6
Neighborhood Commercial	10 to 15	NA ³	NA ³
Office	—	—	1.0
Industrial			
Light Industrial	—	—	0.5
Business Research Park	—	—	0.5
Industrial	—	—	0.6

(1) Mixed Use designations do not require residential use, but when residential uses are provided, minimum densities apply. Minimum ground floor retail FAR of 0.25 is required for sites designated Downtown Mixed Use.

(2) Maximum FAR refers to non-residential and residential floor area combined.

(3) Intensity limits to be set by two story height limits and coverage standards in the zoning ordinance.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2011



Residential land use classifications allow housing at a variety of densities and configurations.

lot starter homes, zero-lot-line developments, and duplexes, to townhouses and garden apartments. Pedestrian-oriented design and clustering can support higher density. The typical residential density for this designation ranges from 10 to 15 housing units per gross acre. Buildout is assumed at 10 units per gross acre.

High Density Residential. This designation is intended to accommodate attached homes, two- to four-plexes, and apartment buildings. High density residential development is typically found at neighborhood centers and along corridors. The typical residential density for this designation ranges from 15 to 35 housing units per gross acre. Buildout is assumed at 16.5 units per gross acre.

Mixed Use

Downtown Mixed Use. This new designation characterizes development in the Downtown Core and replaces the existing Central Business District designation in the General Plan. It permits the highest density and intensity of development in the city in order to keep Downtown a vibrant, walkable environment. Vertical mixed use is strongly encouraged. Commercial, personal service, office, and residential uses are allowed. The typical residential density for this designation ranges from 20 to 35 housing units per gross acre. Buildout is assumed at 20 units per gross acre for residential uses and 0.5 FAR for non-residential uses. The maximum allowable combined FAR is 5.0.

Commercial Mixed Use. This new designation allows for either horizontal or vertical mixed use development, and permits commercial, service, office, and residential uses. Any combination of these uses,

including a single use, is permitted. This designation is found both at key activity nodes and along corridors, including locations currently designated Shopping/Office Commercial or Community Center. Residential density for this designation is permitted at up to 35 housing units per gross acre; buildout is assumed at 12.5 units per gross acre for residential uses. Allowable FAR ranges from 0.25 to 2.0, with buildout assumed at 0.25. The maximum allowable combined FAR for all uses is 2.0.

Commercial and Office

Neighborhood Commercial. This new designation builds on the existing Neighborhood Center and Convenience Center designations in the General Plan, by also permitting residential uses. It provides for small-scale commercial development that primarily serves local neighborhoods such as convenience shopping and small offices. Horizontal or vertical residential mixed use is also permitted. Typical FAR for commercial uses is assumed at 0.25; actual intensity limits are to be set by two story height limits and coverage standards in the zoning ordinance. Residential uses ranging from 10 to 15 housing units per gross acre are also allowed, but are not assumed in the buildout.

Service Commercial. This new designation builds on the existing General Plan's Service Commercial designation. It is intended for a range of retail and service uses that meet local and regional demand, such as auto sales and repair, storage facilities, equipment rental, wholesale businesses, and retail not typically located in shopping centers. Ancillary office spaces that support commercial development are also allowed. Maximum FAR for this designation is 0.8; buildout is assumed at 0.3.

Regional Commercial. This new land use designation is similar to the existing Regional Center use in the General Plan, and also incorporates areas previously designated Highway Commercial. It is intended to accommodate retail establishments that serve residents and businesses of the region at large. Shopping malls, large format, or “big-box” retail are allowed, as are supporting uses such as gas stations and hotels. Maximum FAR for this designation is 0.6; buildout is assumed at 0.25.

Office. This designation is intended for office complex development, including medical offices. General office uses also include administrative, financial, business, and professional operations. Ancillary supporting uses, such as restaurants, copy shops, and convenience retail, are also permitted. Maximum FAR for this designation is 1.0; buildout is assumed at 0.35.

Industrial

Business Research Park. This designation builds on the existing General Plan’s Business Research Park category and emphasizes research and development uses. Land with this designation is intended for research and development enterprises, educational, and office (limited customer access) uses. Maximum FAR for this designation is 0.5; buildout is assumed at 0.1.

Light Industrial. Land with this designation is intended for light manufacturing, warehousing, storage, distribution, research and development enterprises, and secondary office (limited customer access) uses. Maximum FAR for this designation is 0.5; buildout is assumed at 0.2.

Industrial. This designation allows primary manufacturing, processing, refining, and similar activities including those with outdoor facilities. It also accommodates warehousing and distribution with supporting commercial services and office space. Retail is not permitted. Maximum FAR for this designation is 0.6; buildout is assumed at 0.15.

Public

Public/Institutional. The public/institutional classification applies to lands owned by public entities, including City Hall and other City buildings, County buildings, schools, the Municipal Airport, and hospitals. It also includes public facilities such as fire and police stations, recycling centers, and sewage treatment. There is no maximum FAR specified for this land use designation; buildout is assumed at an FAR of 0.3.

Parks and Open Space. The park designation applies to both public and private recreational sites and facilities, including neighborhood, community, and regional parks; recreation centers; golf courses; and other open space areas.

Conservation. The conservation designation applies to open space areas that are not intended to be improved with park and recreation facilities, though public access is permitted. The conservation designation typically applies to creek buffers, areas along the St. Johns River, and in the West Highway 198 Corridor setback area.

Reserve. The Reserve designation applies to lands that are outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for which future planned development may be appropriate under criteria as stated in LU-P-26.

Use of lands in the “reserve” designation is anticipated to remain in agriculture.

General Plan Buildout

The term “buildout” refers to the hypothetical situation in which all anticipated development under the General Plan has occurred. It should be noted that although the General Plan assumes a 20 year horizon and anticipates buildout to occur in 2030, the actual timeline, pace, and amount of growth may be different.

Table 2-4 provides an overview of new and overall development at buildout of the General Plan. Table 2-5 shows the breakdown of buildout acreage in the Planning Area by land use category.

2.5 URBAN BOUNDARIES AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The General Plan establishes two new growth boundaries to reflect current conditions and available population and job growth projection data. Visalia’s previous general plans have also taken this approach to outlining and managing future growth, setting growth boundaries that are tied to future population numbers. As the Land Use Diagram has been designed around the most recent population projections, the growth boundaries are drawn accordingly.

The First Tier, also known as the Urban Development Boundary I or UDB (Tier I), is largely coterminous with the 2012 city limits. It comprises slightly over half of the potentially developable land under the Plan, and could support a target buildout population of approximately 160,00. The Second Tier, known as the Urban Development Boundary II or UDB (Tier II) comprises 27,936 acres and could support a target buildout

Table 2-4: Proposed General Plan Buildout

	<i>Existing (2010)</i>	<i>Pipeline Projects (2010)</i>	<i>New Development (2030)</i>	<i>Total Buildout (2030)</i>
Population	124,440	17,500	68,060	210,000
Housing Units	43,900	6,500	25,700	76,100
Households	41,500	6,100	24,300	71,900
Students	26,800	3,790	13,930	44,520
Schools Provided/ Needed	32	4	20	56
Parks (acres)	650	4	736	1,390
Park Ratio ¹	5.1	n/a	10.8	6.6
Jobs	65,900	2,220	25,610	93,730

(1) Parks ratio includes some future park land that is intended to be created outside of the development process.

Sources: US Census Bureau; California Department of Finance; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013

Table 2-5: General Plan Buildout (Acres by Land Use)¹

	<i>Pipeline Projects</i>	<i>New Development</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very Low Density Residential	29	510	5.3%
Low Density Residential	1,289	3,387	34.9%
Medium Density Residential	68	618	6.4%
High Density Residential	6	235	2.4%
Commercial Mixed Use		324	3.3%
Downtown Mixed Use		21	0.2%
Regional Commercial		262	2.7%
Service Commercial		214	2.2%
Neighborhood Commercial		82	0.8%
Office		46	0.5%
Industrial		1,771	18.3%
Light Industrial		132	1.4%
Business Research Park		85	0.9%
Park		740	7.6%
Public/Institutional		468	4.8%
TOTAL	1,391	9,613	100%

(1) Calculated acres account for an 80% net-to-gross factor for all opportunity sites except for schools and parks, which are assumed to develop at 100%.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

RESIDENTIAL USES

Very Low Density Residential

This designation is intended to provide for single family detached housing on large lots. Residential densities are typical of rural residential environments.



Very Low Density Residential, 0.1 - 2 h/acre

Low Density Residential

This designation is intended to provide for single family detached housing. Residential densities are typical of single-family subdivisions.



Low Density Residential, 2 - 10 h/acre

Medium Density Residential

This designation can accommodate a mix of housing types, from small-lot starter homes, zero-lot-line developments, and duplexes, to townhouses and garden apartments. Pedestrian-oriented design and clustering can support higher density.



Medium Density Residential, 10 - 15 h/acre

High Density Residential

This designation is intended to accommodate attached homes, two- to four-plexes, and apartment buildings. High density residential development is typically found at neighborhood centers and along corridors.



High Density Residential, 15 - 35 h/acre

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USES

Downtown Mixed Use

This new designation characterizes development in the Downtown Core and replaces the existing Central Business District designation in the General Plan. It permits the highest density and intensity of development in the city in order to keep Downtown a vibrant, walkable environment. Vertical mixed use is strongly encouraged. Commercial, personal service, office, and residential uses are allowed.



Downtown Mixed Use, maximum combined FAR of 5.0

Commercial Mixed Use

This new designation allows for either horizontal or vertical mixed use development, and permits commercial, service, office, and residential uses. Any combination of these uses, including a single use, is permitted. This designation is found both at key activity nodes and along corridors, including locations currently designated Shopping/Office Commercial or Community Center.



Commercial Mixed Use, maximum combined FAR of 2.0

Neighborhood Commercial

This new designation builds on the existing Neighborhood Center and Convenience Center designations in the General Plan, by also permitting residential uses. It provides for small-scale commercial development that primarily serves local neighborhoods such as convenience shopping and small offices. Horizontal or vertical residential mixed use is also permitted.



Neighborhood Commercial. Intensity limits to be set by two story height limits and coverage standards in the zoning ordinance.

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USES

Service Commercial

This new designation builds on the existing General Plan's Service Commercial designation. It is intended for a range of retail and service uses that meet local and regional demand, such as auto sales and repair, storage facilities, equipment rental, wholesale businesses, and retail not typically located in shopping centers. Ancillary office spaces that support commercial development are also allowed.



Service Commercial, maximum FAR of 0.6

Regional Commercial

This new land use designation is similar to the existing Regional Center use in the General Plan, and also incorporates areas currently designated Highway Commercial. It is intended to accommodate retail establishments that serve residents and businesses of the region at large. Shopping malls, large format, or "big-box" retail are allowed, as are supporting uses such as gas stations and hotels.



Regional commercial, maximum FAR of 0.6

OFFICE USES

Office

This designation would replace the existing Professional/Administrative Office designation and is intended for office complex development, including medical offices. General office uses also include administrative, financial, business, and professional operations. Ancillary supporting uses, such as restaurants, copy shops, and convenience retail, are also permitted.



Office, maximum FAR of 1.0

INDUSTRIAL USES

Business Research Park

This designation builds on the previous General Plan's Business Research Park category and emphasizes research and development uses. Land with this designation is intended for research and development enterprises, and secondary office (limited customer access) uses.



Business Research Park, maximum FAR of 0.5

INDUSTRIAL USES, CONTINUED

Light Industrial

Land with this designation is intended for light manufacturing, warehousing, storage, distribution, research and development enterprises, and secondary office (limited customer access) uses.



Light Industrial, maximum FAR of 0.5

Industrial

This designation allows primary manufacturing, processing, refining, and similar activities including those with outdoor facilities. It also accommodates warehousing and distribution with supporting commercial services and office space. Retail is not permitted.



Industrial, maximum FAR of 0.6

PUBLIC USES

Public/Institutional

The public/institutional classification applies to lands owned by public entities, including City Hall and other City buildings, County buildings, schools, the Municipal Airport, and hospitals. It also includes public facilities such as fire and police stations, recycling centers, and sewage treatment.



Public/Institutional, no maximum FAR

Parks and Open Space

The park designation applies to both public and private recreational sites and facilities, including neighborhood, community, and regional parks; recreation centers; golf courses; and other open space areas.



Parks and Open Spaces



The growth management strategy aims to prevent premature conversion of agricultural land.

population of approximately 178,000. The criterion for land in Tier II to become available for annexation and development is that such activity shall only occur if it does not result in excess of a 10-year supply of undeveloped residential land within the Tier I. The Third Tier, also known as the Urban Growth Boundary or UGB (Tier III), comprises 32,648 acres and could support a target buildout population of 210,000. **Figure 2-3** shows the development footprints of the three tiers.

Triggers for Proceeding from Tier I and Tier II to Tier III

Policies in this section describe the “triggers” at which development can proceed from Tier I and Tier II to Tier II, which differ for each land use category. Each of these triggers uses building permit totals because they accurately reflect investment-backed commitments to development and can be readily tracked.¹

Residential Land

Development of residential land in Tier I may occur at any time. Development of Tier II land designated for residential uses will be permitted once the City can demonstrate that less than a 10 year supply of land with residential designations remains. Development of Tier III land designated for residential uses will be permitted after the City has issued building permits for 12,800 housing units have been issued, starting from the 2010 Census date, resulting in a target population of 178,000. The residential building threshold is based on 80 percent of one half (16,000) of the total General Plan buildout of 32,000 units (rounded).

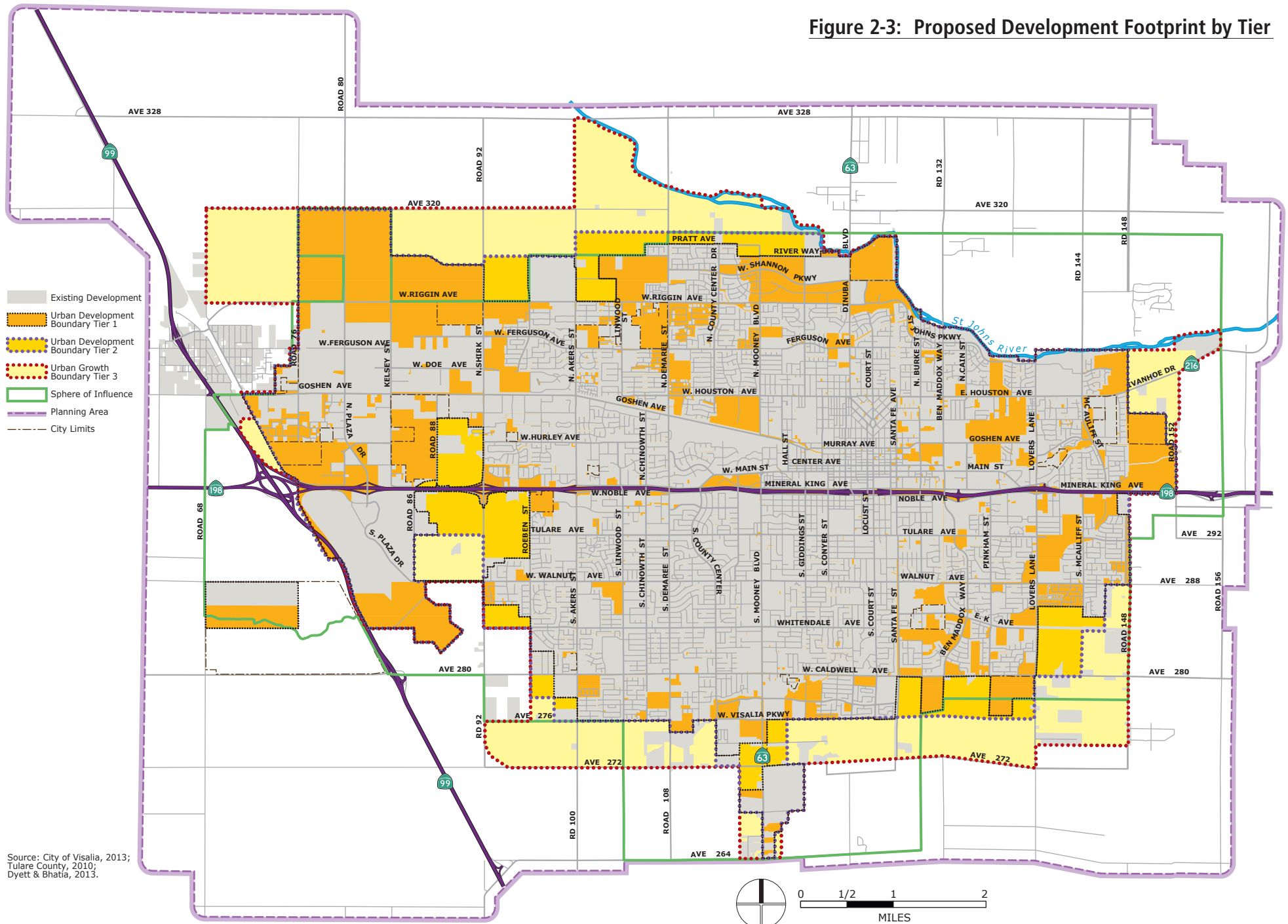
Commercial, Mixed Use, Office, and Service Commercial

Development of Tier III land designated for Commercial Mixed Use, Office and Service Commercial uses will be permitted after the City has issued building permits for new construction or alterations and additions to existing vacant non-residential space for a total of 960,000 square feet of space on designated Commercial Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, Office and Service Commercial land within Tier I and Tier II, starting from the 2010 Census date. (Development may extend out to Tier III at this time for these uses because the tier boundaries for commercial uses are virtually coterminous.) The basis for this trigger is as follows:

	<i>Gross Non-Retail Commercial Space (Square Feet)</i>
Total non-retail commercial and office space needed, 2010 to 2030	2,400,000
Tier I and Tier II = Half of 20-year need	1,200,000
80% of Tier I + Tier II Supply	960,000

¹ These triggers may be modified based on subsequent direction from the City Council.

Figure 2-3: Proposed Development Footprint by Tier



Source: City of Visalia, 2013;
Tulare County, 2010;
Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

Industrial

Development of Tier III land designated Industrial, Light Industrial, and Business Research Park uses will be permitted after the City has issued building permits for new construction or alterations and additions to existing vacant industrial space for a total of 2.8 million square feet of space or subdivision and site plan approvals for 250 acres on designated Industrial, Light Industrial, and Business Research Park land within Tier I and Tier II. Similar to commercial uses, development of industrial uses may extend out to Tier III after the threshold is reached because the boundaries for Tier I and Tier II are coterminous for this land use category. The basis for this trigger is as follows:

	<i>Gross Non-Retail Industrial Space (Square Feet)</i>
Total industrial space needed, 2010 to 2030 (rounded)	8,000,000
Tier I and Tier II = Half of 20-year need	4,000,000
70% of Tier I and Tier II Supply	2,800,000

Balancing Growth in Quadrants

Balanced growth amongst Visalia’s four quadrants is also a longstanding tenet of the city’s approach to land use planning that is being carried forward to this General Plan. The Plan adds developed acreage in a balanced fashion, in both the second tier of development and the third. The quadrant that sees the highest percentage of development is the Northwest, owing to several new neighborhoods and buildout of the Industrial Park. Development in the Northwest

would be concentrated in the Second Tier. Development in the Southwest and Northeast would be concentrated in the Third Tier, while the Southeast would develop in roughly equal proportion in the Second and Third Tiers.

In sum, the Plan “squares out” the overall city form, maintaining a compact, concentric development pattern. **Table 2-6** shows the percentage of overall developed acreage that would take place in each quadrant, by tier.

Objectives

LU-O-9 Implement and periodically update a growth management system that will guide the timing, type, and location of growth; preserve resource lands, natural features and open space; and promote infill and redevelopment.

LU-O-10 Protect agricultural land from premature urban development.

Policies

LU-P-19 Ensure that growth occurs in a compact and concentric fashion by implementing the General Plan’s phased growth strategy.

The General Plan Land Use Diagram establishes three growth rings to accommodate estimated City population for the years 2020 and 2030. The Urban Development Boundary I (UDB I) shares its boundaries with the 2012 city limits. The Urban Development Boundary II (UDB II) defines the urbanizable area within which a full range of urban services will need

Table 2-6: Percent of Total Developed Acres Added by Quadrant

	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	Northwest
Urban Development Boundary (Tier I)	28%	29%	27%	16%
Urban Development Boundary (Tier II)	4%	26%	15%	56%
Urban Growth Boundary (Tier III)	10%	27%	30%	33%

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2012

to be extended in the first phase of anticipated growth with a target buildout population of 178,000. The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) defines full buildout of the General Plan with a target buildout population of 210,000. Each growth ring enables the City to expand in all four quadrants, reinforcing a concentric growth pattern.

LU-P-20 Allow annexation and development of residential, commercial, and industrial land to occur within the “Tier I” Urban Development Boundary (UDB) at any time, consistent with the City’s Land Use Diagram.

LU-P-21 Allow annexation and development of residential, commercial, regional retail, and industrial land to occur within the Urban Development Boundary (Tier II) and the Urban Growth Boundary (Tier III) consistent with the City’s Land Use Diagram, according to the following phasing thresholds:

- “Tier II”: Tier II supports a target buildout population of approximately 178,000. The expansion criteria for

land in Tier II is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier I at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010:

Residential: after permits for 5,850 housing units have been issued; and

Commercial: after permits for 480,000 square feet of commercial space on designated Commercial Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, Office, and Service Commercial land have been issued.

Regional Retail: New Regional Retail areas in the Tier II Growth Boundary shall be eligible for urban development upon satisfactory demonstration that the following criteria have been met:

1. Existing Regional Retail Commercial zoned land south of Caldwell Avenue. that was undeveloped as of the date of adoption of the General Plan has received at least



The Plan clearly delineates the edge of urban development and preserves farmland.

922,383sq.ft. of commercial building permits [formula: 121 acres @43,560sq.ft. per gross acre = 5,270,760sq.ft. x .25 (assumed FAR for Regional Retail development) x 0.7 (recommended flex factor)]

2. The uses and tenants proposed for the area will substantially further the community's goal of providing high level regional retail goods and services.

3. That there is sufficient roadway capacity and adequate public facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development.

The regional retail zone classification shall provide for permitted and conditional uses that are of a regional draw only. Uses that are not exclusively of a regional draw may be allowed where a finding is made that such uses are ancillary or associated with the regional uses. Uses of a neighborhood or convenience level draw only shall not be permitted.

- “Tier III”: Tier III comprises full buildout of the General Plan. The expansion criteria for land in Tier III is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier I and Tier II at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010:

Residential: after permits for 12,800 housing units have been issued.

Commercial: after permits for 960,000 square feet of commercial space space on designated Commercial Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, Office, and Service Commercial land have been issued; and

Industrial: after permits for 2,800,000 square feet of commercial space space on designated Industrial, Light Industrial, and Business Research Park land have been issued.

To complement residential neighborhood development, the City also may allow small annexations for sites less than 30 acres in size that are contiguous to the City limits to allow for efficient development of a neighborhood, commercial area or employment center, provided no General Plan amendment is required and infrastructure is available or can be extended at no cost to the City.

Triggers for proceeding from Tier I and Tier II to Tier III may be modified based on subsequent direction from the City Council.

Annexations are subject to review against regulations and policies in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission Policy and Procedure Manual regarding develop-

ment and inventory of existing vacant land designated for urban uses in the city limits.

- LU-P-22** Allow for City Council approval of master plans, following Planning Commission review and recommendation, for sites under a single ownership or unified control, which may include developable land within both multiple development tiers. Allow for pre-zoning of this master-planned land, subject to execution of a development agreement between the City and the land owner conforming to the requirements of Government Code Section 65864 et seq., with the project allowed to annex and develop while the City is still limiting development approvals to land within the Tier I or Tier II designation.

An approved master-planned site then could be annexed before development is permitted in Tier II or Tier III under Policy LU-P-21. The development agreement would spell out details on overall development, density/intensity and phasing, infrastructure needs and financing, and what each party would do. This policy will allow large land owners, with Council approval, to have a longer time frame for development and infrastructure planning, consistent with the vision of the General Plan, and also “nail down” the numbers for their financial partners while still maintaining the City’s interest in having concentric growth through a phasing plan.

- LU-P-23** Continue to use a land development information system for the City’s Planning

Area to provide information on Visalia’s annual growth and implementation of the General Plan’s goals, objectives, and implementing policies.

- LU-P-24** Periodically adjust, no less frequently than once every five years, the land use and economic demand projections used to determine population estimates, needed land supply and amendments to Urban Development Boundaries.

This will be done as part of the General Plan Report.

- LU-P-25** Provide planning and technical support for the relocation of agricultural operations currently located in the City to compatible locations in the Planning Area or the County.

- LU-P-26** Continue to follow the Memorandum of Understanding with Tulare County, and work with the County to strengthen the implementation of the Visalia General Plan.

- LU-P-27** Initiate planning for post-2030 urban land needs in the area north of St. Johns River that is within the City’s Sphere of Influence, and other areas as may be identified by the City Council, when residential development with the Urban Growth Boundary Tier 3 reaches 80 percent of capacity, or earlier, at the initiative of the City Council.



The St. Johns River functions as a natural edge of development.



Central Visalia has a compact street grid and narrow roads, typical of older downtowns.

This long-term Planning Area is outside of the Urban Growth Boundary Tier 3 (UGB) established for this General Plan, and a General Plan amendment adding it to the UGB will require detailed studies of infrastructure needs, financing options for extension public facilities and services, and environmental resources and a determination by the City Council that the City's long term interests are best served by sensitively planned, appropriately timed development north of the St. Johns River, that development will provide a net fiscal benefit to the City, and that infill development opportunities within the City have been fully realized.

2.6 RURAL BUFFER AND EDGE CONDITIONS

Maintaining Visalia as a free-standing city, separate from neighboring urbanized areas, is a high priority for the community and a central feature of the Land Use Diagram. The land use plan establishes clear edges to new development. The St. Johns River forms a natural boundary in the northeast, and Highway 99 forms the western boundary (primarily for non-residential land uses). To the north, south, and east, county roads are used to set the limits of urban development during this planning period. In some instances, the Very Low Density Residential designation is used at the edges of neighborhoods to provide a more gentle transition to rural uses.

Objectives

- LU-O-11** Maintain Visalia as a separate and distinct community.

- LU-O-12** Provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land uses.

- LU-O-13** Minimize urban sprawl and leap-frog development by encouraging compact, concentric and contiguous growth.

Policies

- LU-P-28** Continue to use natural and man-made edges, such as major roadways and waterways within the City's Urban Growth Boundary, as urban development limit and growth phasing lines.

- LU-P-29** Use regional and community parks and open space to enhance gateways to the City and as a buffer between adjacent communities.

- LU-P-30** Maintain greenbelts, or agricultural/open space buffer areas, between Visalia and other communities by implementing growth boundaries and working with Tulare County and land developers to prevent premature urban growth north of the St. Johns River and in other sensitive locations within the timeframe of this General Plan.

Techniques to be applied selectively at appropriate locations in consultation with landowners with the objective of preserving agricultural lands and open space around the City could include voluntary programs for establishing open space and conservation easements, purchasing development rights,

support for agricultural land trusts and “land banking” and, if feasible, establishing a program for transfer of development rights. This program will need to be coordinated with post-2030 planning to avoid creating the potential for “leapfrog” development. See policy LU-P-27.

- LU-P-31** Promote the preservation of permanent agricultural open space around the City by protecting viable agricultural operations and land within the City limits in the airport and wastewater treatment plan environs.

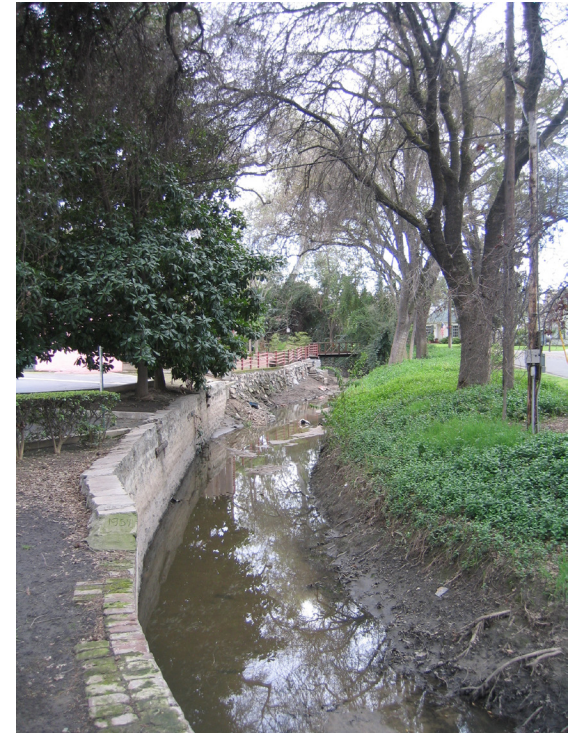
Land around the Airport may be developed with site-appropriate industrial uses during the planning period, providing it conforms to the land use compatibility requirements for the Visalia Municipal Airport environs established by the City.

- LU-P-32** Continue to maintain a 20-acre minimum for parcel map proposals in areas designated for Agriculture to encourage viable agricultural operations in the Planning Area.

- LU-P-33** Designate land areas for future development to be considered (if at all) under separate criteria from Citywide growth under Policy LU-P-19 (Urban Boundaries). These areas shall be designated for “reserve,” and remain in agricultural zoning until they are designated and pre-zoned for an appropriate urban land use through the City’s General Plan Amendment and Change of

Zone process. These areas may be re-designated and pre-zoned for an appropriate urban use upon the following findings as reviewed by the Planning Commission and decided on by the City Council:

- The proposed uses and intensity of development are consistent with all applicable policies and constraints as contained in the Visalia Airport Master Plan.
- Property is adequately served or will be adequately served by public facilities including streets, sewerage, police and fire protection, water supply, and other required facilities to be fully funded by the proposed development(s).
- Properties located within the previous development boundary or under the land use designation being proposed within the area are already being developed, or do not provide the likelihood of being developed in a timeframe appropriate to meet the needs of the community.
- Properties are determined to provide a significant social economic benefit to the community.
- There is a determined to be a Community-level need for the proposed use, including lack of sufficient acreage already designated for the proposed scale and intensity of the proposed use.



Visalia’s natural waterways help shape its urban form.

LU-P-34 Work with Tulare County and other state and regional agencies, neighboring cities, and private land trust entities to prevent urban development of agricultural land outside of the current growth boundaries and to promote the use of agricultural preserves, where they will promote orderly development and preservation of farming operations within Tulare County. Conduct additional investigation of the efficacy of agricultural conservation easements by engaging local, regional, and state agencies and stakeholders in order to further analyze their ongoing efforts and programs that attempt to mitigate impacts from the conversion of agricultural lands through the use of agricultural conservation easements. Support regional efforts to prevent urban development of agricultural lands, specifically at the county level. Tulare County's General Plan 2030 Update Policy contains two policies (AG-1.6 Conservation Easements and AG-1.18 Farmland Trust and Funding Sources) that discuss establishing and implementing an Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The City supports the implementation of these measures by the County, in which the City may then participate. Such a regional program could include a fee to assist and support agricultural uses, and would be most feasibly and strategically developed on a countywide or other regional basis.

In addition to supporting regional efforts to prevent urban development of agricul-

tural lands, the City shall create and adopt a mitigation program to address conversion of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance in Tiers II and III. This mitigation program shall require a 1:1 ratio of agricultural land preserved to agricultural land converted and require agricultural land preserved to be equivalent to agricultural land converted. The mitigation program shall also require that the agricultural land preserved demonstrate adequate water supply and agricultural zoning, and shall be located outside the City UDB, and within the southern San Joaquin Valley. The mitigation program shall, to the extent feasible and practicable, be integrated with the agricultural easement programs adopted by the County and nearby cities. The City's mitigation program shall allow mitigation to be provided by purchase of conservation easement or payment of fee, but shall indicate a preference for purchase of easements. The mitigation program shall require easements to be held by a qualifying entity, such as a local land trust, and require the submission of annual monitoring reports to the City. The mitigation program shall specifically allow exemptions for conversion of agricultural lands in Tier I, or conversion of agricultural lands for agricultural processing uses, agricultural buffers, public facilities, and roadways.

LU-P-35 Adopt the County's Right-to-Farm ordinance to support continued agricultural

operations at appropriate locations within the City limits, with no new provisions.

This ordinance should not limit urban development contemplated by the General Plan.

- LU-P-36** Adopt an Urban Agriculture Ordinance, reflecting “best practices,” to support community gardens and other activities.

This ordinance will be prepared in consultation with the Farm Bureau and other interested organizations and individuals.

Highway 198 Scenic Corridor

- LU-P-37** Adopt specific development standards for scenic entryways (gateways) and roadway corridors into the City, including special setback and landscape standards, open space and park development, and/or land use designations.

These standards will apply to the west and east entries into Visalia along Highway 198 and to the “gateway boulevards” identified in the Transportation Element: Caldwell and Riggan Avenues; Shirk Road; and Lovers Lane.

2.7 COMMUNITY DESIGN

While Visalia has a population of some 125,000, an overwhelming number of residents identify Visalia as a “small town,” or as a growing city that has maintained its “small town feel.” This shared sentiment is testament to the City’s success in maintaining the

quality attributes of a neighborly, close-knit community even in the face of rapid growth. As Visalia continues to add population over the next 20 years, the extent to which it can continue developing livable, desirable neighborhoods and commercial areas that reflect these values will be critical.

Evolution of City Form

Founded in 1852, Visalia drew its livelihood from the gold mines of the Sierra foothills and the fertile Kaweah River Delta. The town of 500 became the Tulare County seat in 1853 but was governed by the Board of Supervisors until its incorporation in 1864. Through expansion in the farming, cattle ranching, transportation, and trade, Visalia’s population continued to grow. By 1900, when Visalia became a main line stop on the Valley Railroad, it was home to over 3,000 residents.

Visalia’s urban form differs from many other Central Valley towns on account of its separation from the main north-south rail line. Visalia was connected by several feeder lines, and therefore its street grid follows the conventional cardinal directions. Many Valley towns aligned their original streets with the diagonal railroad right of way. However, Visalia’s core is still marked by a formal grid shift to a diagonal pattern around Oval Park, just north of downtown.

Citywide Structure

City Structure

The majority of Visalia is comprised of residential neighborhoods with much of the city’s non-residential development oriented along key travel routes. Highway 198 is the city’s primary east-west route, and



A new incentive program will facilitate the redevelopment of Visalia’s many vacant infill parcels.

also serves as an important regional connection to Sequoia National Park and the Sierras. Much of the city's public/institutional development, including the College of the Sequoias, Kaweah Delta Hospital and its related facilities, and the Downtown convention center, as well as newer highway-oriented commercial development, is located along the highway. The highway also serves as the southern edge of the city's downtown mixed-use and eastern commercial core, focused around Main Street and Ben Maddox Way. Perpendicular to the Highway 198 corridor, Mooney Boulevard, or State Route 63, acts as the primary community and regional commercial core in the city. Smaller pockets of retail and neighborhood-oriented commercial development are distributed throughout the rest of the city. While the city boasts a full range of uses, many are located in distinct areas and are not organized as mixed use destinations. Although the core of the city is located several miles to the east from Highway 99, development in the western reaches of the city has evolved over time to include the city's employment and industrial core, airport, and regional park space.

Context and Edges

Visalia is a relatively free-standing city, surrounded almost completely by agricultural lands and natural open space. While some edges of the city are well defined by physical features like Highway 99, St. Johns River, and the airport along the east side of Highway 99, development primarily in the form of residential subdivisions feathers out into these agricultural areas, often resulting in an indistinct urban edge. Current planned development projects, including several new residential subdivisions, park space, and public facilities, continue this development pat-

tern to the north and southeast. Closely guiding the design and location of new development through implementation of this General Plan will provide the opportunity to establish a more defined development edge that respects the city's natural and agricultural heritage.

Natural Systems

The city's gridded network of development overlays the natural Kaweah River Delta, which once defined the Visalia region. Still prominent in the overall structure of the city are its many rivers and creeks that wind their way through, alongside, and beneath the city. With significant views of the Sierra Nevada range to the east and agricultural lands beyond the edges of the city, these natural elements help define the overall image and character of Visalia today. Opportunities to daylight, naturalize, and provide recreation along existing creeks through the city serves as an important aspect and organizational tool for new development. Additionally, preserving and re-establishing the city's natural system and Valley Oak tree groves with parks, conservation areas, and trailways is important to retaining the city's unique character and high quality of life.

Objectives

LU-O-14 Create an overall urban form centered on a vital downtown and a higher-density core, surrounded by viable residential neighborhoods with walkable, mixed-use neighborhood centers.

LU-O-15 Maintain and enhance Visalia's physical diversity, visual qualities and small-town characteristics.

VISALIA'S INFILL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

What properties would be eligible?

Any property located within Visalia city limits, regardless of date of incorporation, would be eligible for the program. Properties that are located inside unincorporated county islands also qualify, but large unincorporated areas within the Tier I Urban Development Boundary, such as those in the Highway 198 corridor and south and north of the current city limits do not. Designation of eligible properties will be updated as the City allows development beyond the Tier I Boundary so the incentive program will apply in newly annexed areas as infill sites may exist or be created.

Eligible properties will be divided into two "priority zones," based on location and other characteristics that make infill development desirable from the City's perspective, with greater incentives offered for Priority 1 land.

Infill Incentives for Priority 1 Property

Priority 1 properties are those that:

- Are located inside Visalia's historic "Core" area (bounded by Houston Avenue, Tulare, Ben Maddox Way, and Mooney Boulevard) or are located within a 200-feet on each side of the right of way of: Mooney, Dinuba, Santa Fe, Court/Locust, or Lovers Lane; or
- Have a parcel size of less than 0.25 acres, or the development proposal consists of several adjacent parcels that will be consolidated and developed as one project, with a maximum aggregate site size of 5 acres; or
- Have a development proposal for housing where at least 50 percent of the units are affordable to households earning 120 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) or below, or 30 percent are affordable to households earning 80 percent of AMI or below.

Priority 1 properties qualify for:

- Transportation Impact Fee reductions per the City's existing program, not to exceed 50 percent of the base fee, with fee credit based on the prior use on the site.
- Density bonuses of 20 percent above base zoning (gross dwelling units per acre for residential; FAR for non-residential); or 33 percent above base zoning (provided the project density does not exceed the maximum established in the General Plan) with provision of community benefit, such as the following:
 - Daycare facility;
 - Community "flex space", such as a meeting room available for public use at a nominal rent; and
 - Publicly-accessible, privately-owned usable open space, in the form of a "pocket park" or plaza, with pedestrian amenities such as benches, fountains, or public art.
- Elimination or reduction of on-site parking requirements, based on size and street adjacency according to the following table:

<i>Parcel Size (Acres)</i>	<i>Location/ Street Adjacency</i>	<i>On-Site Parking Requirement (Examples, subject to refinement)</i>
Less than 0.25	Anywhere	None for the first 2,500 square feet of non-residential space
0.25 – 0.5	At least one lot line on a local or minor collector road	None
0.25 – 0.5	Adjacent to major collector or arterial with transit service	Parking requirement reduced by 15 percent
0.5 – 2	At least one lot line on a local or minor collector road	Parking requirement reduced by 10 percent, with provisions for shared or common area parking
0.5 – 2	Adjacent to major collector or arterial with transit service	Parking requirement reduced by 15 percent, with provisions for shared or common area parking
Over 2	Any	Parking requirement reduced by 15 percent, with provisions for shared or common area parking

Infill Incentives for Priority 2 Property

Priority 2 properties are those that are located within City limits in an area not specified under Priority 1, including any annexed unincorporated county islands (except for those in the Highway 198 Corridor).

Priority 2 properties qualify for:

- Transportation Impact Fee reductions per the City's existing program, not to exceed 33 percent of the base fee.
- Elimination or reduction of on-site parking requirements, based on size and street adjacency and the availability of transit service, as specified for Priority 1 land.
- Density bonuses of 10 percent above base zoning (gross dwelling units per acre for residential; FAR for non-residential); or 15 percent above base zoning (provided the project density does not exceed the maximum established in the General Plan) with provision of community benefit, such as the following:
 - Daycare facility;
 - Community "flex space," such as a meeting room available for public use at a nominal rent; and
 - Publicly-accessible, privately-owned usable open space, in the form of a "pocket park" or plaza, with pedestrian amenities such as benches and trash cans.



A diverse mix of housing types provides options for residents at all stages of life.

LU-O-16 Create a safe, walkable and attractive urban environment for current and future generations of residents.

LU-O-17 Use the St. Johns River and other waterways as structuring elements for the City's urban form as well as scenic and recreational features.

Policies

Policies on design and development standards for residential, commercial, Downtown and East Downtown, industrial and institutional land uses are in Sections 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13. Additional policies on design of creek-adjacent sites are found in chapter 6.

Streetscapes, Trees, Creeks and Open Space

LU-P-38 Develop a City-wide street tree and landscape master plan that enhances the City's overall identity and lends distinct character to specific streets and districts.

LU-P-39 Improve tree planting, landscaping and site design standards to minimize the visual impact of large parking lots and buildings, to enhance and promote natural characteristics compatible with urban form, to minimize heat gain and promote energy conservation, and to improve stormwater infiltration.

Standards should establish tree spacing and size requirements, and shading requirements for parking lots and usable open space. Standards should be integrated with require-

ments for stormwater infiltration and the use of native, drought-tolerant plants.

LU-P-40 Where possible, through the Site Plan Review process, retain native trees as landscape elements and for shading.

LU-P-41 Use Mill, Packwood and Cameron Creeks and other waterways as natural amenities and links between neighborhoods.

LU-P-42 Develop scenic corridor and gateway guidelines that will maintain the agricultural character of Visalia at its urban fringe.

Railroad and Utilities Corridors

LU-P-43 Work with utilities and transportation companies to landscape power line and railroad right-of-ways throughout the community and to underground utilities where possible.

LU-P-44 Develop land use and site design measures for areas adjacent to high-voltage power facilities. Measures will include landscape buffers and mandatory setbacks from substations and transmission towers and lines.

2.8 INFILL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

This General Plan builds on the City's interest in supporting infill development, and policies seek to establish a more cohesive city environment with vibrant activity centers. Infill has many positive attributes compared with development on the urban fringe:

- *Fiscal benefits.* Infill development is supported by existing infrastructure and services—streets, water and sewer systems, parks and schools, police and fire protection—and requires only marginal new public investments, many of which are already being planned or are under construction.
- *Social and economic benefits.* The new public and private investments related to infill development have the potential to inject vitality into older neighborhoods and business districts.
- *Environmental benefits.* Infill contributes to a more compact development pattern that means more people can make shorter trips to get to work and school, and are more likely to travel by foot, bike, or public transit. And of course, more infill means less conversion of valuable farmland at the urban edge and better air quality.

The General Plan anticipates that Visalia will build on its commitment to infill, with such projects as the East Downtown Plan and Mooney Corridor rezoning. At the same time, it is understood that development on infill properties is often challenging, and can be perceived as cost-prohibitive to developers under traditional development standards. Therefore, policies in this section focus on providing incentives for infill development in order to ease the burden often associated with these sites, while achieving the City's goals simultaneously.

Objective

- LU-O-18** Implement and periodically update an infill development incentive program to

achieve the objectives of compact development established by this General Plan.

Policies

LU-P-45

Promote development of vacant, underdeveloped, and/or redevelopable land within the City limits where urban services are available and adopt a bonus/incentive program to promote and facilitate infill development in order to reduce the need for annexation and conversion of prime agricultural land and achieve the objectives of compact development established in this General Plan.

Techniques to be used include designation of infill opportunity zones as part of the implementation process and provision of incentives, such as reduced parking and streamlined review, and residential density bonuses, and floor area bonuses for mixed use and/or higher-density development, subject to design criteria and findings of community benefit.

LU-P-46

Adopt and implement an incentive program for residential infill development of existing vacant lots and underutilized sites within the City limits as a strategy to help to meet the future growth needs of the community.

Infill will be supported by increasing allowable density or decreasing minimum lot size under zoning to the maximum limits set by the General Plan, by reducing off-street parking requirements, by creating an Infill



Complete neighborhoods include convenient access to daily shopping and services, as well as housing, parks, and schools.

Incentive Zone where reduced fees and other incentives may apply because infrastructure is in place, and by providing incentives that respond to different challenges (for example in Downtown or in historically underutilized areas). Infill development also is supported by growth management policies; see Policy LU-P-21 for details.

2.9 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The General Plan promotes a mix of residential densities and compact neighborhood design that provide for efficient use of available land resources and maintain a compact form that is less intrusive on the surrounding countryside. The Plan also provides for a mix of housing types to serve the needs of all Visalia residents.

Community facilities that are appropriate for a residential environment, including residential care, day care, elderly care, and alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities will be allowed within neighborhoods, consistent with State and federal law, because they are considered “protected” facilities and local zoning cannot exclude them as long as specified standards and licensing requirements are met.

Housing Choices for Changing Demographics

Population projections have implications beyond just the total amount of land allocated for development during the planning period. Certain aspects of demographics—age, household type, etc.—provide important indications of what types and proportions of residential land should be provided. The character of the new residential development proposed for this plan-

ning period is slightly more compact than the type that Visalia has seen over the last twenty years. Residential neighborhoods in the General Plan include a mix of traditional single family, small-lot single family, duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily apartments or condominiums. No specific proportion of housing types is recommended, or required, to allow for flexibility in planning for new neighborhoods (see section on “Planning for New Neighborhoods” below). Residential land use designations accommodate a range of lot sizes to meet current and projected demand.

Why More Housing Diversity?

Visalia will be trending towards a greater range of housing types for several reasons:

- *Changing demographics, relating to an aging population*, means that there will be greater demand for smaller housing types. The number of residents over the age of 60 is growing rapidly, more than any other age group. Visalia has built up its single family detached housing stock significantly, and the next planning period needs to provide some additional smaller housing types needed by seniors and other small households such as singles, new families, empty-nesters, and single parents.
- *Conservation of agricultural land*. A slightly more compact development pattern, with a minimum overall density of 5.3 units per gross acre, moving forward, will result in less farmland converting to nonagricultural/urban uses, helping Visalia support its agricultural economic base and

Table 2-7: Land Use Allocations for Residential Neighborhoods

	Allowable Gross Acreage (Percent of Total)	
	Minimum	Maximum
Residential		
Low and very low density (1 to 7.5 units/gross residential acre)	65%	80%
Medium and high density (7.5 to 35 units/gross residential acre)	20%	35%
Neighborhood Center	2%	10%
Civic/Institutional – Neighborhood-serving Facilities (e.g. elementary school, public safety facilities and community centers; the latter may be incorporated into Neighborhood Centers)	4%	10%
Parks and Recreation	(5 acres/1,000 residents)	–
Note: Individual neighborhoods are expected to be 100-250 acres in size.		

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2011

preserve the farmland that creates a greenbelt and is so integral to the city's identity.

- *State mandates for greenhouse gas emission reductions* mean that Visalia will have to explore ways to reduce its carbon footprint. Land use and transportation are the single most important factor in achieving this goal. Compact, walkable neighborhoods mean that residents can travel more easily on foot or by bicycle, and make fewer, shorter car trips.

Planning for New Neighborhoods

The vision for new residential neighborhoods embodied in the new General Plan provides direction for their desired character as well as their relationship to the rest of city. This vision builds on the interests of the community and reflects a general desire to increase flexibility for developers in new growth areas. Moving forward, the ultimate success of plan-

ning for these neighborhoods will likely be based on how this vision is translated into two inter-related components:

- *An enduring structure.* The General Plan provides the framework that will be utilized over time for a cohesive and unified development pattern. Thus, defining the key elements that will form this structure, rather than getting caught up in the minutiae of fine-grained design detail, is critical; and
- *A viable but flexible policy and regulatory framework.* New homes and neighborhoods in Visalia will be built by different builders and individual owners over an extended time period. Thus, much of the success of the planning effort will rest on the urban design and regulatory framework established in General Plan policies. Policies and regulations must be flexible and not



A system of open space and trails can link neighborhoods and other destinations.

dictate housing types or unit mixes precisely; they also must be capable of addressing the needs of the community at various stages of the plan's realization and be flexible enough to respond to market conditions.

Development Parameters for New Neighborhoods

The General Plan's development policies provide for flexibility within a general framework for land use, open space, and community facilities. Site planning policies set forth the basic parameters for more detailed master planning and development agreements. These development parameters include the general scale, character and mix of uses, as well as the overall density/intensity of development. The density/intensity ranges specified will support the traffic circulation and infrastructure investments that would be required. Also included is guidance for development of parks and open space systems and integration of creeks and trails into new development. This topic is addressed briefly in this section, and treated with greater detail in the Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element.

These parameters establish the basic character of new neighborhoods in Visalia, addressing street and block patterns, community infrastructure, open space, civic sites and other elements of the "public realm" that set the framework for private development.

With this in mind, objectives for new residential development are to:

- Encourage compact development that is pedestrian in scale and sensitive to the

environmental characteristics of the planning area.

- Allow sufficient density and intensity to enable new development to be self-sufficient, paying for all required infrastructure, community facilities, and open space.
- Ensure an interconnected local street and pedestrian circulation network that serves the needs of pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, and that functionally and physically integrates the various land use activities within the community and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide for a range of housing types and prices within new neighborhoods to ensure that the needs of all economic segments of the community are met and the overall development can support the costs of required infrastructure and allow developers flexibility in meeting housing needs.
- Provide amenities for all residents, with open space, parks, activity centers, and recreational opportunities, including shared use of school lands.
- Provide additional revenues (sales tax, property tax, impact fees, enterprise fees, etc.) that would support all services within the area to be developed and also contribute to the City's General Fund, resulting in a net fiscal benefit for the community at-large.

These six statements establish the ground rules for detailed master planning to be undertaken by the development community following General Plan adoption. To ensure that Visalia attracts high qual-

ity residential development and that desired land use intensities are attained, a minimum overall level of development and target density moving forward (5.3 units per gross acre) is established as a planning concept. Sites for schools, parks, and other special places and community amenities also will be needed. The specific requirements for these elements are presented in the following sections.

Site Planning Policies and Principles

Specific site planning policies and principles are designed to guide physical planning for new neighborhoods.

LAND USE MIX, DENSITY AND INTENSITY

The land use mix envisioned overall for new neighborhoods in Visalia is shown in **Table 2-7**. The ranges indicated—the minimum and maximum levels of development for each type of land use—are intended to allow for flexibility in master planning in response to market conditions, infrastructure costs, and site planning policies. An option for alternative compliance for the residential development land use allocations is also shown. This would allow for some additional flexibility by enabling the goal of a diversified housing mix to be met by a combination of housing types rather than a combination of different residential densities.

STREET GRID AND BLOCK STRUCTURE

The size and pattern of blocks and the planning of streets and pedestrian systems adjacent to roadways is one of the most important aspects of community design. A grid system of blocks and a hierarchy of streets—from parkways, to connector and collector streets, to alleys, that are designed properly—can

truly become an intuitive orientation and navigational device.

Within new neighborhoods, streets and pedestrian systems should be designed to minimize conflicts with the clear goal of pedestrian safety. The generous use of street trees can both define the new community's character and provide a comfortable microclimate for pedestrian movement through the community. Street trees can also mitigate wind, absorb air pollution, and counteract the emission of greenhouse gases. Street trees shade sidewalks, one of the most important public spaces in a residential community, and are necessary in Visalia's climate. The street grid and block structure for Visalia should be designed to create a comfortable environment for fostering both social interaction and movement.

The following site planning principles are intended to guide detailed planning and ensure it is consistent with the overall vision and development framework.

- Create compact development and facilitate connectivity and pedestrian accessibility by limiting block size, with standards such as the following (which may be varied during site plan review, as long as public benefits are provided):
 - *Maximum length:* 500 feet, except for blocks with single-family residential uses that may be up to 600 feet long (750 feet with a mid-block pedestrian connection);
 - *Maximum ratio of block length to width:* 2:1 for blocks with mixed-use development on them; none for single-family only blocks.
- Include a centrally located neighborhood center, school or park within each residential



The Medium and High Density Residential designations allow for a wide variety of housing types and design.

neighborhood that will serve as a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood, and will include neighborhood-serving stores and convenience retail.

- Make all streets and alleys connect to other streets and alleys to form a continuous vehicular and pedestrian network. Local, internal streets should be narrow and designed with traffic calming features to control speed.
- Limit use of dead-end streets, such as cul-de-sacs, to no more than 15 percent of the total length of local residential streets.
- Use street trees for shading, orientation and “place making,” creating a framework for an “urban forest.”

Following General Plan adoption, the City may allow flexibility through a planned development process or master planning for new neighborhoods. At that point, the City will approve proposed details about the location of various land uses, open spaces and linkages. In a planned development, the configuration of land use and local streets need not match precisely the Land Use Diagram in the General Plan, provided that the overall density/intensity targets are met.

Objectives

- LU-O-19** Ensure adequate land area is available for future housing needs, enabling an average citywide gross density of 5.3 dwelling units per acre of new residential development.
- LU-O-20** Allow sufficient density and intensity to enable new development to support all

required infrastructure, community facilities and open space.

- LU-O-21** Preserve and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods while facilitating infill development.
- LU-O-22** Create inclusive, compact neighborhoods with well-integrated single-family and multi-family residential development and activity nodes featuring schools, neighborhood parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.
- LU-O-23** Provide a range of housing types and prices within new neighborhoods to meet the needs of all segments of the community.
- LU-O-24** Enable multifamily developments that are accessible to major transportation and transit routes.
- LU-O-25** Create an open space system that links neighborhoods, complements adjacent land uses, and serves multiple needs.

See also objectives and policies for the open space system in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

Policies

- LU-P-47** Ensure that new neighborhoods meet land use mix standards established in Table 2-7 of the General Plan. The ranges indicated—the minimum and maximum lev-

els of development for each type of land use—are intended to allow for flexibility in master planning in response to market conditions, infrastructure costs, and site planning policies.

- LU-P-48** Establish criteria and standards for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation networks within new subdivisions and non-residential development.

These will be in the updated zoning ordinance and the updated subdivision ordinance.

- LU-P-49** Preserve established and distinctive neighborhoods throughout the City by maintaining appropriate zoning and development standards to achieve land use compatibility in terms of height, massing and other characteristics; providing design guidelines for high-quality new development; supporting housing rehabilitation programs; and other means.

- LU-P-50** Provide development standards to ensure that a mix of detached and attached single-family and multi-family housing types can be compatible in a single development.

Development standards may include but not be limited to requiring heights, setbacks, and building massing to be in scale with surrounding uses or to provide a transition in scale and character; and establishing the spacing of curb cuts and location of parking.

- LU-P-51** Provide development standards to ensure residential development is not negatively affected by adjacent non-residential land uses.

Development standards will be applied to both residential and non-residential development. Standards may involve required setbacks, building height step-backs, landscaping, screening, and other site characteristics.

- LU-P-52** Facilitate high-quality building and site design for multi-family developments by updating development standards in the zoning ordinance and providing clear rules for development review and approval and by creating and adopting design guidelines to be used in the development review and approval process.

Characteristics of high-quality site and building design include connectivity to the public realm; compatibility with surrounding development; small-scale buildings with variation in architecture and massing; usable open space and recreation facilities; orientation to natural features; and solar orientation.

- LU-P-53** Integrate multi-family development with commercial, office, and public uses in neighborhood nodes, Downtown, and with Commercial Mixed Use areas in East Downtown, along the Mooney corridor and elsewhere.



Visalia's regional retail centers have made the city a shopping destination for Tulare and Kings Counties.

Multi-family housing should be accessible on foot to public parks and gathering places, commercial areas, and transit.

LU-P-54 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Very Low Density Residential designation on the Land Use Diagram and create opportunities for residential dwellings at 0.1 to 2 units per gross acre, providing for single-family detached housing on large lots and a rural residential transition to surrounding agricultural areas.

LU-P-55 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Low Density Residential designation on the Land Use Diagram for development at 2 to 10 dwelling units per gross acre, facilitating new planned neighborhoods and infill development in established areas.

This designation is intended to provide for single-family detached housing with densities typical of single-family subdivisions. Duplex units, townhouses, and small-lot detached housing may be incorporated as part of Low Density Residential developments. Development standards will ensure that a desirable single-family neighborhood character is maintained.

LU-P-56 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Medium Density Residential designation on the Land Use Diagram for development at 10 to 15 dwelling units per gross acre.

This designation can accommodate a mix of housing types including small-lot single-family, townhouses, two- and four-plexes, and garden apartments, on infill lots or new development areas within walking distance of neighborhood nodes and corridors. Medium Density Residential development may also be permitted on corner lots in single-family zones and in infill areas where it can be made to be consistent with adjacent properties through the conditional use process. Development standards will ensure that new development contributes positively to the larger community environment. Projects on sites larger than five acres or involving more than 60 units will require discretionary review.

LU-P-57 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the High Density Residential designation on the Land Use Diagram for development at 15 to 35 dwelling units per gross acre, accommodating townhouses, two- and four-plexes, and multistory condominium and apartment buildings.

The designation is appropriate for some infill sites and new areas in close proximity to neighborhood centers and major transportation routes. High Density Residential development may also be permitted in infill areas where it can be made to be consistent with adjacent properties through the conditional use permit process. Development standards will ensure that new development contributes positively to the creation of neighborhood nodes or districts. Projects on sites larger than

Table 2-8: Neighborhood Commercial Centers

<i>Neighborhood Center</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Growth Tier</i>	<i>Size (Acres)</i>	<i>Potential Development (Square Feet)¹</i>
1	Goshen/Cain	Infill	3.6	39,400
2	Road 152/Mineral King	Infill	6.1	66,200
3	Lovers Ln/Walnut	Infill	9.1	99,500
4	Ben Maddox/Caldwell	Infill	11.5	125,500
5	Demaree/Visalia Pkwy	Infill	5.0	54,400
6	Mooney/Riggin (NW)	Infill	7.5	81,800
7	Mooney/Riggin (NE)	Infill	7.2	78,500
8	McAuliff/Caldwell	Tier I	5.8	63,200
9	Shirk/Tulare	Tier I	8.8	96,000
10	Hurley/west of Shirk	Tier I	5.0	54,200
11	Riggin/Roeben	Tier I	11.0	119,700
12	Linwood/River Way	Tier I	6.9	75,000
13	Mooney/Ave. 268	Tier II	5.0	54,600
14	Roeben/Ave. 274	Tier II	5.2	56,100

(1) Neighborhood commercial centers are projected to develop at an FAR of 0.25.

five acres or involving more than 60 units will require discretionary review.

LU-P-58 Establish an Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District (AHO) to promote the development of affordable housing on infill land within the existing City limits in areas designated by the General Plan for multi-family residential development. Participation by affordable housing developers in the AHO program would be voluntary, with the incentives offered intended to

make development of affordable housing feasible.

The City will continue to work with affordable housing developers to provide housing development opportunities that are geographically accessible to services, retail clusters, transportation corridors, and key nodes. The AHO District would be an alternative to the State-mandated Residential Density Bonus Program and could be applied for qualifying projects as a “floating zone” and not require



Mixed use designations allow more than one land use on the same site, integrated vertically or horizontally.

a General Plan amendment. It should be noted that in some cases re-zoning would be required to be consistent with the General Plan Land Use designation. Such re-zoning would be done concurrently with adoption of the AHO zoning district for the site.

Application requirements would be the same as those for the State-Mandated Residential Density Bonus Program, modified, as appropriate for the purposes of this district.

- *The City will initiate a work program to analyze the various options for an AHO District including the consideration of at a minimum the following development incentives:*
- *Residential density increase beyond those provided by State Density Bonus Law;*
- *Flexible zoning standards, including reduced development and parking standards, coupled with Form-Based Code standards for infill sites to ensure land use compatibility;*
- *Priority permit processing, including any applicable CEQA exemptions;*
- *Design Review requirements; and*
- *Deferral or reduction of City permit and development impact fees based on the Priority Zone designation for the site, as defined by the Infill Development Incentive Program.*

LU-P-59 Ensure that natural and open space features, such as Valley Oak trees and com-

munity waterways, are treated as special site amenities as part of any residential development.

See the Open Space, Conservation, Recreation and Parks Element for additional discussion and policies.

LU-P-60 Continue to enforce code compliance and provide support to neighborhood improvement efforts to ensure repair and maintenance of existing dwelling units.

2.10 COMMERCIAL LAND USE AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Retail & Commercial Uses

Clusters of commercial uses are designed to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities to both local residents and people from surrounding communities. These clusters are called neighborhood and regional centers. A neighborhood center is composed of a mix of retail, civic, and service-oriented uses, which is often surrounded by higher density housing. These centers help support local transit and provide places for social interaction for the neighborhood residents. The Plan provides for new neighborhood centers located closer to where people live and designed with the pedestrian in mind.

Attractive, well-designed regional centers are critical in shaping the identity and image of Visalia, and contribute to maintaining Visalia's role as a regional shopping destination for Tulare and Kings counties.

Retail Strategy

The General Plan recognizes the need to provide for a variety of retail formats, serving neighborhood, community, and regional markets. The Plan's land use designations distinguish between these types, as do retail sites' size and placement. Policies in this section guide the design and timing of retail centers throughout the plan buildout, not only to promote economic vitality and protect the City's existing retail base but also ensure that retail development does not adversely impact neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Retail for Walkable Neighborhoods

Fundamental to the proposed retail strategy is the provision of neighborhood-oriented shopping centers, which serve local residents' daily needs close to their homes. Neighborhood Centers are typically anchored by a grocery store or similar tenant, with square footage that range from 30,000 to 35,000 square feet or more. While this size is smaller than some "super" groceries which have developed over the past decade (greater than 45,000 square feet), it is in line with more recent market trends for new store formats and with concerns about potential impacts on neighborhoods. For instance, Wal-Mart has developed a "Neighborhood Market" store format, focusing on grocery items, which is generally around 35,000 square feet. The anchor can be accompanied by smaller "in-line" stores (such as coffee shops, banks, restaurants, professional offices, etc.), not to exceed 10,000 feet, and the entire center would generally not exceed 12 acres (no specific store size limits are recommended).

The strategy is not intended to limit the viability of existing centers or prevent reasonable improvements and upgrade, but it would limit impacts on neighborhoods associated with any future expansion of these existing stores. This strategy also supports the City's existing retail base on Mooney Boulevard and at other regional retail locations. Neighborhood Centers also should be designed to be integrated into a residential neighborhood with multimodal access and context-sensitive design, as shown on the Land Use Diagram. About 98 acres of new Neighborhood Commercial sites are designated in the Preferred Plan Concept, distributed throughout areas of new neighborhood development, summarized in **Table 2-8**.

Additional existing and future shopping areas are designated Commercial Mixed Use on the Land Use Diagram. Commercial Mixed Use areas are intended to provide for commercial, office, and residential uses and to foster a walkable, mixed-use environment.

Regional Retail

Visalia has traditionally been the regional retail hub for Tulare and neighboring Kings counties, with Mooney Boulevard serving as the core for these uses. The General Plan both responds to a general community desire to maintain and strengthen Downtown (with its unique shopping character) and Mooney Boulevard. This approach also allows the city to respond to the market, capitalizing on opportunities in a proactive way. Significant portions of Mooney Boulevard between the Sequoia Mall and Highway 198 are designated as Commercial Mixed Use, which allows community-serving retail in conjunction with other uses such as residential and office (the Regional Commercial designation is maintained for



The Commercial Mixed Use designation on Mooney Boulevard and other key corridors will allow these areas to intensify.



Neighborhood Commercial uses primarily serve surrounding residences. Their design must be context-sensitive and scaled appropriately.

Visalia Mall and adjacent retail at Mooney and Walnut). Further south, where lot sizes are larger and current regional tenants are located, preexisting regional commercial designations are preserved and expanded. This area is the city's near-term priority location for retail development.

Office

The General Plan responds to a general community desire to maintain and strengthen Downtown (with its unique shopping character) and Mooney Boulevard. Sites that can accommodate flexible office space facilities will be in demand as the local economy matures and the City implements the Economic Development strategy described in section 2.3.

The General Plan Land Use Diagram provides sites designated as Office for both larger site office parks and smaller, integrated office uses. Smaller sites are typically expected to be local-serving professional and administrative office environments, such as medical, real estate, or financial services. Larger sites are envisioned as office parks that draw employees from a wider area and provide more jobs. Offices are also permitted in Neighborhood Commercial areas, Downtown, and as accessory uses in Service Commercial areas and industrial uses. A vertical mix of uses where new office uses are located above the first floor or as a secondary use in multi-tenant buildings can be an efficient use of land and promote retail continuity at the street level. This is permitted in the Commercial Mixed Use and Downtown Mixed Use designations, described below.

Mixed Use

Mixed Use designations provide multiple uses, generally commercial and residential, on the same site. Mixed use developments can help reduce auto dependence, preserve green space and natural resources, and promote revitalization, economic development, and modestly priced housing. The Downtown Mixed Use designation encourages a higher-density, vertical mix of uses with residential or office uses above ground floor retail or other commercial uses. It also provides for the development of more multi-family residential within walking distance of Downtown. This designation, and the overall strategy for Downtown and East Downtown, is discussed in section 2.11. The Commercial Mixed Use designation allows for lower density but multi-story development where the uses may be either horizontally or vertically mixed.

Objectives

- LU-O-26** Facilitate development of new, well-planned commercial areas to meet the needs of residents of Visalia and its market area.
- LU-O-27** Provide adequate area for office developments in areas where they can be effectively integrated into surrounding areas and/or where they can provide close-in employment opportunities.
- LU-O-28** Promote pedestrian-oriented retail and mixed use development along transit corridors, in neighborhood nodes, and in Downtown and East Downtown.

LU-O-29 Ensure the continued viability of Visalia's existing commercial areas and enable the conversion of older or historic houses to office uses, where appropriate.

LU-O-30 Establish a development review process that provides ease, predictability, and flexibility to developers and ensures high-quality and neighborhood-compatible development.

Policies

LU-P-61 Support the continued development and revitalization of the following corridors as integral parts of the community, with offices, commercial uses, multi-family residential, and mixed use developments.

- Mooney Boulevard between Noble and Caldwell;
- Dinuba Boulevard between Houston and Ferguson;
- Ben Maddox Way between Tulare and Houston;
- Santa Fe Avenue between Tulare and Houston; and
- Houston Avenue between Hall and Cain.

The depth of commercial development along the Mooney Boulevard corridor, Ben Maddox Way, and North Dinuba Boulevard may be extended on a case by case basis if the extension increases the feasibility of commercial development and the proposed action

will not create land use conflicts or reduce viability of adjacent residential properties for each zone classification.

LU-P-62 Plan for Regional Commercial areas at a limited number of highly visible freeway-accessible locations as shown on the Land Use Diagram.

LU-P-63 In higher-intensity and mixed use areas, require pedestrian-oriented amenities such as small plazas, outdoor seating, public art, and active street frontages, with ground floor retail, where appropriate and justified.

New development can help create pedestrian environments with buildings oriented to the street, continuous walkways and sidewalks, limited blank walls, pedestrian-scaled buildings, and signage, parking screened from street view, landscaping and shading, and places for people to rest and meet.

LU-P-64 Provide incentives for new pedestrian-friendly retail and mixed use development along major transit corridors and pedestrian-oriented commercial streets.

Incentives may include increased floor area ratios, reduced or deferred impact fees, reduced parking, and priority processing. This incentive program will be integrated with, and not duplicate, the Infill Development Incentive Program.

LU-P-65 Continue to require a master-planning process for community and regional com-



Updating the zoning ordinance will facilitate the operation of more farmers' markets.



Downtown Visalia is one of the city's key assets, providing a lively, walkable environment day and night.

mercial development to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential areas, an attractive appearance from major roadways, and pedestrian accessibility and safety.

Planning strategies include the use of buffering land uses, such as office uses between residential and high intensity commercial uses, and sidewalk-facing retail and high-quality public realm elements that encourage pedestrian access.

LU-P-66 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Commercial Mixed Use designation on the Land Use Diagram, to allow for either horizontal or vertical mixed use development and a range of commercial, service, office, and residential uses.

New development in Commercial Mixed Use Areas should have an FAR of at least 0.4 and up to 1.0 for commercial space. If residential uses are included, density may be up to 35 dwelling units per gross acre. Commercial development must be part of all new development in the Commercial Mixed Use district.

LU-P-67 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Neighborhood Commercial designation on the Land Use Diagram, intended for small-scale commercial development that primarily serves surrounding residential areas, wherein small office uses as well as horizontal or vertical residential mixed use are also supported. Provide standards to ensure that neighborhood commercial

uses are economically-viable and also integrated into neighborhoods, with multi-modal access and context-sensitive design.

Neighborhood Commercial development shall be subject to design review and public input. If residential uses are included, density should be 10 to 15 dwelling units per gross acre. Shopping centers in Neighborhood Commercial areas shall have the following characteristics:

- *Anchored by a grocery store or similar business offering fresh produce, poultry, fish and meat;*
- *Include smaller in-line stores of less than 10,000 square feet;*
- *Total size of 5 to 12 acres or as shown on the Land Use Diagram; and*
- *Integrated with surrounding neighborhood uses in terms of design, with negative impacts minimized.*
- *Located no closer than one mile from other General Plan-designated Neighborhood Commercial or Community Commercial locations, or from existing grocery stores.*
- *No individual tenant shall be larger than 40,000 square feet in size.*

Standards for Neighborhood Commercial development also shall require design measures that create a walkable environment and require local street and pedestrian connections. Alterations and additions in exist-

ing nonconforming centers may be permitted, subject to design review and conditions of approval to minimize neighborhood impacts.

- LU-P-68** Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Office designation on the Land Use Diagram, intended for the development of office complexes, including medical offices and professional/administrative offices, as well as supporting uses such as restaurants and convenience retail.

The maximum FAR for the Office designation is 1.0.

- LU-P-69** Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Regional Commercial designation on the Land Use Diagram, for retail commercial uses that serve residents and businesses in the region at large, such as shopping malls and large-format or “big box” stores, as well as supporting businesses such as gas stations and hotels.

The maximum FAR in Regional Commercial areas is 0.6.

- LU-P-70** Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Service Commercial designation on the Land Use Diagram for a range of uses including auto sales and repair, storage facilities, equipment rental, wholesale businesses, and retail not typically located in shopping centers.

The maximum FAR in Service Commercial Areas is 0.8. Service Commercial uses should

be limited to supporting elements of new retail or mixed-use development, or to properties currently used for Service Commercial uses.

- LU-P-71** Update the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the operation of farmers’ markets in commercially designated areas, including the use of City streets and public spaces, and consider providing support for permanent streetscape or site improvements appropriate for farmers’ market operations.

- LU-P-72** Ensure that noise, traffic, and other potential conflicts that may arise in a mix of commercial and residential uses are mitigated through good site planning, building design, and/or appropriate operational measures.

2.11 DOWNTOWN AND EAST DOWNTOWN

Downtown Visalia is truly the “heart of the City.” Main Street forms a spine that supports significant cultural and governmental buildings as well as specialty retail stores and restaurants. Recent street improvements have increased the pedestrian-friendly aspect of Main Street with new paving, contrasting crosswalks, improved lighting and additional landscaping. Public spaces are regularly programmed with local music and cultural events. Plus, most of Visalia’s historic buildings are in or near Downtown. However, even with recent improvements, Downtown remains underutilized. Many buildings are aging and require rehabilitation; in some cases, the upper sto-



East Downtown has ample opportunity sites for new development. It is also home to Visalia’s historic stockyards.



Promote new development in East Downtown, building on the success of the Transit Center.

ries of buildings are vacant even if the ground floor is active, presenting possibilities for reuse and revitalization. There is ample opportunity to build on one of Visalia's most treasured assets, preserving and enhancing Downtown's role as Visalia's social and cultural core.

In addition to the primary Downtown core, it is a priority for the community to revitalize East Downtown. The General Plan establishes policies and direction for additional planning efforts to refine the long-term strategy for East Downtown, building on the recommendations in the East Downtown Strategic Plan. In particular, the General Plan supports creating new housing opportunities in and near Downtown, as new residents will help support local retail and provide a greater level of around-the-clock activity. Additional street improvements will be prioritized to expand the pedestrian-friendly areas beyond Main Street.

Additional policies regarding the economic development of Downtown are found in Section 2.3 of this Element. Historic preservation is discussed in the next chapter.

Objectives

LU-O-31 Support the continued development and vitality of Downtown (generally identified as the area north of Mineral King Ave., east of Conyer St., south of Murray Ave., and west of Tipton St.) and the redevelopment and revitalization of East Downtown (generally identified as the area north of Mineral King Ave., east of Tipton St., south of Murray Ave., and west of Ben Maddox Way, as well as the stockyards).

LU-O-32 Maintain Downtown as Visalia's medical, professional, government, cultural and entertainment center.

Policies

LU-P-73 Support new mixed-use development in Downtown and East Downtown, with an emphasis on ground-level retail and entertainment uses and upper-level residential and office uses. Support may involve expedited permit review and approval, loans, public-private partnerships, and floor area bonuses.

LU-P-74 Create new streets and public open spaces in East Downtown designed to be the focus for social and economic activities. Establish urban design guidelines to ensure that new projects help to shape and activate parks and streets; provide continuity and visual references; connect to contiguous development; and anticipate a future when central Visalia is the most sought after in-town residential and business address in the San Joaquin Valley.

LU-P-75 Provide incentives for infill development of opportunity sites and adaptive reuse and restoration of existing buildings in Downtown and East Downtown.

New development in Downtown and East Downtown will realize the inherent potential for higher intensity use of this district, and should include offices, mixed-use and live-work buildings, storefront commer-

cial buildings, apartments, condominiums and townhouses, and small-lot single-family houses. See also policies in section 2.8.

- LU-P-76** Improve and enhance East Downtown's physical image and desirability as a place to invest, through public investments in infrastructure, parking, streetscapes and public spaces.

Key investments will include extending the street and block pattern in the area, undergrounding utilities, and creating new parks.

- LU-P-77** Restore Mill Creek and Jennings Ditch as open space features in new parks; citywide linkage elements; and shapers of local circulation patterns in Downtown and East Downtown.

Implementation considerations include gaining year-round water flow and potential realignment and daylighting of portions of Mill Creek.

- LU-P-78** In East Downtown, emphasize creating and enhancing strong economic, pedestrian and visual connections to adjacent neighborhoods and downtown. East Main is envisioned as the "central spine"; Burke and Santa Fe as north-south civic streets; and Oak Street and Mill Creek as key east-west connectors.

The block system should be designed to reflect a walking pace in terms of scale and amenities.

- LU-P-79** Promote the integration of the area east of Bridge Street and west of Burke Street into Downtown in the near term, with the development of office, residential, and mixed-use buildings on available sites.

- LU-P-80** Improve Santa Fe Avenue to collector-street status.

Santa Fe Avenue is intended to function as a major connection to neighborhoods north and south with Downtown.

- LU-P-81** Develop East Main Street as a mixed-use street with ground floor retail and commercial uses. Issues to be addressed include the need to complement downtown Main Street; establish a clear relationship with the current service commercial character of the street; and assess financial feasibility for urban-scale housing.

Parking for East Main should be planned and implemented using a district approach where on-street and off-street parking facilities are shared by existing and future uses.

- LU-P-82** Promote new public-private investment in the eastern and southern portions of East Downtown, building on the success of the Transit Center in the western portion of the Planning Area as a catalyst for private development.

East Downtown can serve as a catalyst for long-term redevelopment of adjacent areas such as the stockyards.



A rail corridor extends through East Downtown, creating an opportunity for future transit-oriented development.



Downtown is enlivened by the weekly Farmers' Market. Policies aim to bring a similar energy to East Downtown through revitalization and creation of public spaces.

LU-P-83 Group new employment and retail uses in the East Downtown area to provide clear identities and economic synergies.

East Downtown's business areas are identified as the Santa Fe/Transit Station area; the Mineral King frontage; Ben Maddox Way; and the new Civic Center complex.

LU-P-84 Plan for new neighborhoods in East Downtown to provide high-quality living environments in a variety of settings, as follows:

- Santa Fe is to become a mixed-use address providing an opportunity to expand downtown's commercial activities, with residential use complementing offices in mixed-use projects.
- East Main has a large number of existing buildings that can be adaptively reused for commercial and residential uses. On the south side of the proposed Civic Center Park are sites that can take advantage of overlooking Mill Creek and the Civic Center. On blocks contiguous to East Main Street are sites that can accommodate a mix of commercial and residential uses. South of Acequia are larger sites that can become a townhouse neighborhood.
- The Central Park Neighborhood would face the proposed new Central Park and the Jennings Ditch water feature,

and would include townhouses, stacked flats and apartments with ground floor commercial or live-work uses.

- The Civic Center creates a place that is central to the region—as part of a transit hub, integrated into a vibrant urban center, and a catalyst for commercial and cultural investment.

LU-P-85 Continue to pursue development of a new Civic Center along Oak Street between Tipton and Burke, including a City Hall or Administrative Center; Public Safety Building; parking garages; and a park along Mill Creek.

The Civic Center should create a place that is central to the region as part of a transit hub, integrated into a vibrant urban center, and a catalyst for commercial and cultural investment. It is expected to be a joint-use project, involving multiple public agencies, private and private sector parties, with shared parking and infrastructure and distinct roles in the development process.

LU-P-86 Support revitalization of East Downtown by the extension of the city block pattern found in Downtown, and the creation of five distinct street types, with different roles and identities:

- *Transit Corridor.* Oak Street should support potential future light rail transit as well as on-street parking and pedestrian amenities, and function as a civic space.

- *Thoroughfare Commercial Streets.* Ben Maddox and Mineral King require four lanes and a turn lane, carry citywide traffic, and have uses that can take advantage of regional access.
- *Mixed Use Commercial Streets.* Santa Fe, East Main Street, and Burke Street should be two-lane streets with turn lanes at key intersections, parallel parking, and bus pull-outs. They have ground floor uses that add pedestrian interest and comfortable sidewalks, and provide key connections to Downtown.
- *Mixed Use Residential Streets.* Center and Acequia Avenues are two lane streets with turn lanes at key intersections, parallel parking, and bus pull-outs.
- *Neighborhood Streets and Alleys.* These are narrow two-lane streets with parallel and diagonal parking. They provide access to residential blocks and provide a quieter setting.

LU-P-87 Update development standards, design guidelines and other related documents and processes to support redevelopment of East Downtown according to the objectives and policies outlined in the General Plan.

LU-P-88 Use public funding sources to finance public infrastructure as a catalyst for continued private sector investment. Coordinate the use of private financial resources and

assets to implement both private and public improvements.

LU-P-89 Partner with business and non-profit associations such as Downtown Visalians, the Downtown Property Owners Association (POA), the Chamber of Commerce, the Arts Consortium, and the Visitors and Convention Bureau in promoting Downtown.

The City's role should include but not be limited to providing strong signage for downtown and providing visitor information on the City website.

LU-P-90 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Downtown Mixed Use designation on the Land Use Diagram.

This designation permits the highest density and intensity of development in the City in order to keep Downtown a vibrant, walkable environment. Vertical mixed use is strongly encouraged. Retail, restaurant, entertainment, office, public and community facilities, and urban residential uses are all allowed. New development should have commercial FAR of no less than 1.0, including 0.25 FAR for retail, and up to 5.0. If residential use is included, it should have a density of at least 15 dwelling units per gross acre.

LU-P-91 Promote the development and implementation of special districts and master plan areas to preserve and enhance Downtown and East Downtown the Core Area. Ongoing efforts include the Medical Dis-



The Land Use Diagram designates ample sites for industrial development, in line with VEDC recommendations.



Large industrial uses must be designed to interface well with adjacent views.

Table 2-9: Warehousing, Industrial, and R&D Land Demand	
Number of new employees ¹	7,000
Space need in square feet ²	8,400,000
Net Acres	802
Gross Acres (net = 0.75 * gross)	1,070
Multiplier (to account for vacant land, cushioning, and inefficiencies)	1.2
TOTAL DEMAND (ACRES)	1,280
(1) The Existing Conditions Report identifies 6,000 new employees in Warehousing/ Industrial. Because the industrial land use categories in the General Plan include R&D, an additional 1,000 employees are added.	
(2) Assumes a weighted average of 1,200 square feet per worker: 750 for Light Industrial R&D, 1,000 for Heavy Industrial, and 1,500 for Industrial Reserve.	

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2011

- LU-P-92

Provide enhanced pedestrian amenities and streetscape improvements in Downtown and East Downtown. Improvements may include landscaped open space areas, street furniture, lighting, and signage.

LU-P-93

Work with the Downtown Property Owners Association (POA) and other Downtown-oriented organizations to continue investment in downtown infrastructure improvement projects such as the acquisition of property for parking facilities and graffiti removal programs.

LU-P-94

Provide enhanced pedestrian connectivity between Downtown and the historic districts located both north and south of Highway 198 through construction of
- LU-P-95

Ensure that sufficient lands surrounding Kaweah Delta District Hospital are designated to accommodate expansion of the Hospital as well as associated ancillary uses. Medical uses such as professional offices and laboratories may continue to expand along Noble Avenue south of Highway 198 between Willis Street and Santa Fe Avenue in support of future Hospital support needs.

LU-P-96

Expand the Parking Overlay District to encompass the East Downtown area in order to provide options to property owners for on-site parking requirements.
- See also Transportation policies on updating parking standards with provisions for
- trict Master Plan, and historic preservation district.

ADA-accessible sidewalks and entry signage.

shared parking credits for on-street and off-site spaces, reduced standards with Transportation Demand Management and exceptions for small storefronts and related uses that do not require new off-street spaces.

LU-P-97 In order to avoid losing out on potential funding opportunities, to the extent financially feasible, prepare infrastructure improvement plans for future necessary facilities so that they are ready to bid when such funding opportunities become available.

2.12 INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The General Plan proposes to shift the focus of industrial development to areas south of State Route 198, particularly around the Airport. Existing, well established industrial areas in other parts of the City will be retained. Plan policies seek to increase the supply of pre-zoned, “ready-to-go” job producing land. This will improve Visalia’s competitiveness in the regional economy by decreasing start-up time for new development. In addition, the Plan reduces the potential for conflicts associated with industrial uses adjacent to other sensitive uses.

With regards to the amount of industrial land needed, the General Plan Land Use Diagram responds to the City’s goals and the recommendations put forth by the Visalia Economic Development Corporation (VEDC). Overall, the VEDC and the City seek to strengthen Visalia’s competitive advantage in attracting industrial users by providing adequate sites on a variety of parcel sizes that are well served by infra-

structure and transportation. The VEDC’s primary recommendations include:

- Adequate land should be designated to meet the demand for 1,500 to 2,000 acres over the next 20 years; and
- The City should maintain at least ten years’ worth of available undeveloped industrial land, served with infrastructure, at any one time.

The General Plan designates approximately 1,760 acres of potentially developable land in the Industrial designation allowing a full range of industrial uses. An additional 130 acres of Light Industrial land, 85 acres of Business Research Park land, and 675 acres of Airport Industrial land are also provided, for a total of about 2,660 acres available for immediate use. (These acreage numbers, and others provided in this element, represent vacant or under-utilized land, with an 80 percent “flex factor” applied to account for landowner preferences.) Virtually all of the land designated for industrial uses is located west of Shirk Road, and most is north of Highway 198. Industrial land located near the Visalia Municipal Airport is designated Airport Industrial and would be subject to additional design and intensity restrictions associated with that facility. Designating ample industrial land across a range of parcel sizes for both near and long term use ensures that Visalia will have the flexibility to meet the needs of future employers.

Table 2-9 shows the demand for industrial land (including warehousing, heavy, light, and R&D business park space) based on projected new industrial employees by 2030. Through provision of various types of industrial land, the General Plan’s industrial land allocation is more than sufficient to meet the



Civic uses include large institutions like College of the Sequoias, as well as community facilities, police, and fire stations.

projected demand generated by job growth and follows the recommendations of the VEDC.

Objectives

LU-O-33 Provide adequate land in a variety of parcel sizes for industrial development, and strengthen the City's role as a regional manufacturing center.

LU-O-34 Ensure compatibility between industrial lands and adjacent dissimilar land uses.

Policies

LU-P-98 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Business Research Park designation on the Land Use Diagram, to allow for light manufacturing, warehousing, storage, distribution, research and development enterprises, and secondary office uses.

LU-P-99 Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Industrial designation on the Land Use Diagram, to allow for primary manufacturing, processing, refining, and similar activities including those with outdoor facilities and also accommodate warehousing and distribution with supporting commercial services and office space. Retail is not permitted.

LU-P-100 Establish zoning standards to assure high-quality design and site planning for large-scale industrial development.

Standards should include requirements for landscaping in parking lots, along perimeters

and along building foundations visible from the street; visual screening of loading and parking areas visible from the street and adjacent residential neighborhoods; and basic requirements to break up large building masses and provide a unified façade treatment.

LU-P-101 As part of industrial developments, allow secondary uses such as restaurants, cafes, small convenience stores and day care facilities, to serve area employees.

LU-P-102 Ensure the timely completion of necessary infrastructure to support new industrial development.

LU-P-103 Require buffering land uses adjacent to existing or planned residential areas adjacent to industrial designations. Such uses may include parks, drainage ponds, open space, or other such uses.

LU-P-104 Preserve land designated for light and heavy industrial uses by limiting the intrusion of free-standing retail commercial or service commercial uses.

LU-P-105 Assist, on a case by case basis, in the relocation of older, existing service commercial and industrial uses from East Downtown or other redevelopment project areas to areas designated for similar uses.

LU-P-106 Develop performance standards to supplement and augment design standards to minimize the negative impacts (glare, signage, noise, dust, traffic) associated with

the establishment of new or expansion of existing service commercial and industrial development.

- LU-P-107** Reserve adequate sewage treatment plant capacity and sewerage capacity to meet the projected needs of industrial growth, and allow “package plants” where they represent a more fiscally appropriate solution if approved by the Department of Public Works.

2.13 INSTITUTIONAL & CIVIC

Public and quasi-public facilities, such as government facilities, hospitals and cemeteries, are important elements of community-building. Sites needed for large facilities are indicated on the General Plan Land Use Diagram near mixed-use neighborhood centers and Downtown; the new Kaweah Delta Medical Center campus is shown in the southeastern quadrant, near Caldwell and Lovers Lane. Public uses on sites less than two acres in size do not need a separate zoning classification and are not shown on the Diagram.

Houses of worship and other places for religious assembly as well as private schools and colleges will be permitted in residential and commercial areas, subject to appropriate location and development standards, and use-permit requirements which will ensure neighborhood compatibility.

For policies related to community facilities, see the Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element. For policies related to law enforcement and fire service standards, see the Safety and Noise Element.

Objectives

- LU-O-35** Plan for the integration of public facilities with surrounding districts, so that hospitals, schools, and libraries act as hubs for mixed-use activity centers and are easily accessible to the majority of residents in Visalia.
- LU-O-36** Facilitate the implementation of the College of the Sequoias (COS) Master Plan, and work with COS to resolve land use compatibility issues to ensure that Visalia continues to be home to the College’s main campus.
- LU-O-37** Facilitate a continued high level of health care services in the community.

Policies

- LU-P-108** Designate land for Public/Institutional uses on the Land Use Diagram, including City Hall and other City buildings, County and other government buildings, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, police and fire stations, the Municipal Airport, and waste management facilities.
- LU-P-109** Facilitate the creation of mixed-use activity centers on and adjacent to the College of the Sequoias campus and on other land designated for public/institutional uses by locating commercial and mixed land use areas adjacent to existing or planned public facilities, and by allowing mixed uses to be developed on Public/Institutional land through a master planning process.

Mooney Boulevard adjacent to College of the Sequoias and the vicinity of Caldwell Avenue and Lovers Lane adjacent to the planned new medical facility have the potential to be vital activity centers. Land designated for schools in several neighborhoods is intended to contribute to local “neighborhood nodes.”

- LU-P-110** Create design guidelines to be used in preparing and evaluating master plans for public facilities.

Guidelines should promote an open relationship with the public realm and pedestrian accessibility both within the site and between the site and neighboring land uses.

- LU-P-111** Promote development of a four-year college or university in Visalia by offering incentives or streamlined review of campus development at preferred sites, which may be designated by a University overlay zone to facilitate development.

A four-year college or university could be developed on land designated for commercial, office uses, or public/institutional uses or on a “greenfields” site with a General Plan amendment. Access, environmental impacts, and relationship to surrounding land uses will be key considerations in land use review.

- LU-P-112** Continue to work with Kaweah Delta Health Care District to facilitate expansion of its downtown facility and master planning for additional new facilities.

Master plans should incorporate an array of support uses and should integrate health care facilities with surrounding land uses. They may include age-restricted residential uses and continued care facilities.

- LU-P-113** Allow new public and private health care facilities in Downtown, East Downtown, and other commercial and office areas, as needed, and continue to coordinate land use issues with representatives from the healthcare community.

- LU-P-114** Continue to allow private day-care centers in residential zoning districts.

2.14 THE AIRPORT

Visalia owns and operates the Visalia Municipal Airport (VIS). Located at the intersection of State Routes 99 and 198, the airport serves Visalia, Tulare County, and eastern Kings County. The airport provides commuter airline and general aviation services, and it provides the only passenger air service in Tulare County (currently with daily service to Ontario, California). It has four fixed base operators that provide a variety of services including instruction, charter, maintenance and corporate transport. The airport is home to over 150 based aircraft, which, along with transient aircraft traffic, generate approximately 70,000 annual operations.

The airport is an important economic asset. The City also recognizes the importance of land use planning in maintaining safe and efficient airport operations. Land uses planned around the airport comply with the restrictions put in place by the Tulare County

Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan and the Visalia Airport Master Plan. Additional policies pertaining to airport operations are in the Circulation Element.

Objectives

LU-O-38 Continue to ensure safe and efficient airport operations.

Policies

LU-P-115 Protect the airport and its operational area from potential intrusion of incompatible land uses by strictly regulating development within the airport's operating area.

LU-P-116 Coordinate airport area development proposals with the Tulare County Airport Land Use Commission.

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