



# WEST VISALIA

SPECIAL PLAN

JUNE 1988

**WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN**

**Prepared by:**

**CITY OF VISALIA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**AND**

**QUAD CONSULTANTS**

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## **PREFACE**

This report is the policy document and Plan diagram for the West Visalia Specific Plan, a land use plan and guidelines for the evolution of the westerly portion of the community along Highway 198. One component of a series of community-wide plans and policies shaping the development of the City of Visalia, the West Visalia Specific Plan is intended to be integrated with the City's General Plan and with underlying zoning and development regulations to preserve and enhance the quality and character of the community. The Plan is further intended to reflect the values and priorities of the citizens of Visalia as they are applied to the general welfare of the City as a whole.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This document and accompanying plan diagram present the West Visalia Specific Plan, prepared for and adopted by the City of Visalia to guide the development and evolution of land uses and supportive services for the western portion of the community. The plan has been formulated by the City's Community Development Department, with the assistance of QUAD Consultants, a professional planning consulting firm based in Visalia, and with the input of a broadly representative group of community sources.

#### Purpose and Scope of the Plan

The purpose of the West Visalia Specific Plan is to establish a policy framework, guidelines and standards for the long-term evolution and development of land uses and supportive infrastructure and services for the planning area. Consisting of the western portion of the community, the planning area encompassed by the West Visalia Specific Plan includes a variety of existing urban development, agricultural lands, infrastructure, and physiographic features. The primary east-west access route into Visalia, State Highway 198, bisects the planning area and extends for its entire length, from State Highway 99 on the west to approximately Chinowth Avenue on the east. The planning area lies within, and under the jurisdictions of, both the City of Visalia and the County of Tulare at the present time. Preparation and adoption of this Specific Plan has been undertaken to provide for a uniform set of standards and criteria to be administered by both the City and the County governing the long-term development of the planning area.

The geographic extent of the areas encompassed by the Plan is illustrated by Figure 1, on the following page. In total, the Plan area includes approximately 3,850 acres. Selection of the Plan area was based upon the following criteria:

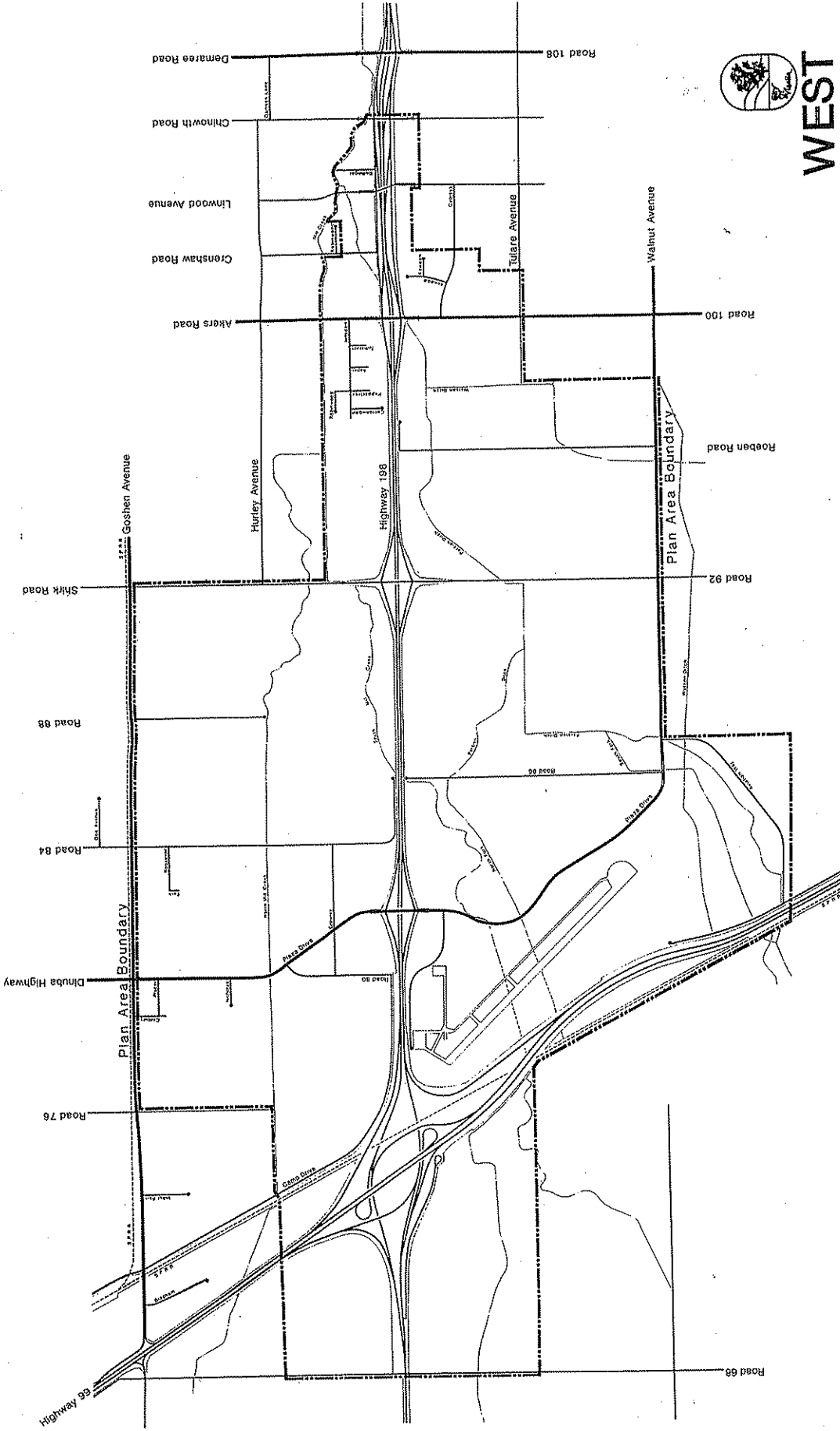
- Visibility from, and potential impact upon the aesthetic qualities of, the west Highway 198 corridor entrance to the community;
- Existence of unique or important natural resources and/or physiographic features (e.g. creek channels, stands of oak trees, etc.); and
- Potential susceptibility to "piecemeal" development pressures, suggesting the need for early, comprehensive, and integrated planning policy for the area.

The "planning period", the timeframe the Plan is intended to address, is thirty-two years, to the year 2020. This timeframe is consistent with that being applied to other major policy and land use planning efforts of the City of Visalia



# WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN

## Figure 1



## Plan Area Boundary



which will help determine the future shape and character of the community. At the same time, it is acknowledged that meaningful planning for such an extended period must also take cognizance of the potential for changes in the environment, the economy, and other factors affecting community priorities. Consequently, it is intended that this Plan be subjected to rigorous reevaluation and a process of revalidation and/or revision as necessary at five-year intervals.

### **Legal Basis for Plan**

As provided for in Sections 65450 through 65457 of the California Government Code, and described in the State General Plan Guidelines promulgated by the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR), a specific plan is a tool for the "systematic implementation" of the general plan of a local jurisdiction. Following the prescribed requirements of the referenced sections of the Government Code, a specific plan is to be composed of text and diagrams which:

- Depict the distribution, location and extent of land uses within the area covered by the plan;
- Describe the proposed distribution, location, extent, and intensity of major components of public and private infrastructure (e.g. sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, transportation, and related systems and facilities);
- Establish standards and criteria for the progress of development of the plan area and for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable;
- Spell out an implementation program to carry out the goals and policies of the plan, including regulations, programs, public works projects, and potential financing strategies and measures.

A specific plan may also include any other subjects which are, in the determination of the local agency, necessary to facilitate implementation and administration of the general plan as it affects the specific plan area.

Specific plans must be consistent with the applicable general plan elements of the adopting jurisdiction. A required component of a specific plan is a statement documenting the precise relationship of the plan to the local agency's general plan.

Specific plans are a comparatively common tool among California communities for implementing general plan policies and programs, particularly in instances where the planning environment is unusually sensitive or where planning issues are more complex. In the City of Visalia, two prior specific plans have been adopted, the Northeast Area Specific Plan and a specific plan for the northern

portion of the community in the vicinity of the Modoc Ditch. In each of these instances, planning and development policies and standards were prescribed at a significantly greater level of detail than in the City's overall General Plan, and were accompanied by a variety of programs and measures to accomplish their implementation. As reflected by the examples of these two plans, specific plans adopted by the City are both regulatory and policy documents.

### Historical Background

The Plan area for the West Visalia Specific Plan has been the subject of previous intensive review and planning studies. The natural scenic qualities of the west Highway 198 route into Visalia prompted the designation of this corridor as a "scenic highway" in the Tulare County General Plan (1964) and in the Master Plan for State Scenic Highways (1966). In 1967, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, acting upon the premise that "...the preservation and enhancement of Tulare County's scenic resources is in the public interest", requested the then-State Division of Highways to undertake an inventory of the Highway 198 scenic corridor. The intent of this inventory was to provide a data base for the eventual adoption of a comprehensive plan covering the length of this route through Tulare County. The first draft of the consequent Scenic Highway Report was completed by the State in January, 1972. The report concluded that Highway 198 west of Visalia "...offers a wide variety of scenic pleasures for people unfamiliar with the San Joaquin Valley".

Development of several intensive urban uses along west Highway 198 in 1970 and 1971 prompted the City of Visalia to request the County Board of Supervisors to take action to halt further incursion of urbanization into the "gateway" corridor to the community. The County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors concurred at that time with the City's request, and in response, in August of 1971, the County adopted an interim zoning measure which placed virtually all unincorporated lands fronting on Highway 198 between Highway 99 and central Visalia into the County's restrictive AE (Exclusive Agriculture) zone. Prior to this action, the area was zoned A-1, a zoning designation which was cited by the County at the time as "...ineffectual in the prevention of damage to existing improvements and land uses".... A year-long planning effort was subsequently undertaken by the County Planning Department to develop a detailed plan for the west Highway 198 corridor. Four "working parameters" for this planning study were identified by the Department:

1. The plan (was to) reflect the long-term development goals of the County.
2. The plan (was to) reflect the long-term development goals of the City of Visalia.
3. The plan (was to) be consistent with State Division of Highways plans for the eventual upgrading of Route 198 to full freeway status.
4. The plan (was to) be consistent with the objectives of the State Scenic Highways program.

Following more than a year of study and analysis, the County published a Highway 198 Gateway Design Concepts report in early 1973. This report suggested three potential development concepts as alternatives for application to the west Highway 198 corridor. Succinctly, these alternative concepts were:

- An *ad hoc* approach in response to specific development proposals in the corridor area.
- A "nodal" plan, contemplating development in concentrated areas surrounding anticipated freeway interchanges at Shirk Road, Akers Road, and Road 80, with single and multiple-family residential uses allowed to proliferate between these "nodes".
- A plan involving the development of set-back frontage "loops" (access routes paralleling the proposed freeway alignment), along which large scale, mixed-use urban development would be encouraged. Under this alternative, public acquisition of the frontage along west Highway 198 for scenic preservation purposes was included as an implementation program.

This report was never adopted by the County or City as policy for the west Highway 198 corridor, but did serve to focus discussion upon the long-term development issues which would continue to characterize public concerns for the corridor in ensuing years.

In 1975-76, the City of Visalia undertook a comprehensive update of the Land Use and Circulation Elements of its General Plan. Discussions regarding the "scenic corridor" entrance to the City of Visalia, along west Highway 198, were responsible for the emergence of renewed policy commitment by the City to preserve and enhance the aesthetic qualities of this portion of the community. Explicit policies prohibiting new industrial development along Highway 198 and endeavoring to maintain the open, scenic character of the corridor were included in the newly-adopted Land Use and Circulation Elements.

The County initiated an update of the Urban Boundaries Element of its General Plan in 1983, including consideration at that time of including within the City of Visalia's Urban Development Boundary lands lying along portions of the scenic corridor. The outcome of extensive discussions between the City and County, however, resulted in substantial portions of the corridor being left outside the Urban Development Boundary, based upon anticipated retention of properties in the vicinity in their existing agricultural use.

The Visalia City Council, in 1983, appointed a task force to review and make recommendations regarding the extent and distribution of commercially developed and designated land in the community. Following a year-long process of inventory, analysis and discussion, the so-called Commercial Task Force forwarded

recommendations to the Council in October of 1984 which included designation of 30 acres at the southwest corner of the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198 for community and/or regional-level retail commercial development. The Task Force also recommended the development of an auto mall on west Highway 198, to be comprised of not less than three dealerships, but this recommendation was not site-specific in the Task Force's report. The Council elected not to designate the Akers/Highway 198 site for commercial development at that time, however, pending further study.

In 1985, two significant additional development studies potentially affecting the corridor were completed. First, the development of a regional retail shopping center at the interchange of Highway 198 and Road 80 was proposed. In response to this initiative, the City commissioned both an environmental impact report and an economic impact analysis, including a market demand study. These studies were completed, concluding that the community and regional markets could support a regional mall of the scale being proposed by the mid-1990's and that the potential environmental effects of the project, while significant, could be partially mitigated, to ostensibly acceptable levels. Following extensive public review and discussion of this proposal, however, the applicant withdrew his request for project approval from the City, putting the project "on hold" for an indefinite period. At approximately the same time, CALTRANS prepared and presented to the community a series of conceptual design alternatives for the eventual upgrading of west Highway 198 to full freeway status between Road 80 and County Center Drive. Discussed in substantially more detail in later sections of this Plan document, the CALTRANS freeway concepts were the subject of a number of public forums to seek guidance regarding community preferences for the ultimate design of the proposed freeway.

Again in 1986, two planning studies with significant implications for the west Highway 198 corridor were initiated, this time both under the auspices of the City. In response to continuing Council and community concerns regarding the regional shopping mall issue, a study of potentially viable alternative sites for such a facility was undertaken by the City. Following months of data collection and analysis and several public meetings to test preliminary findings with local residents and business representatives, this study concluded that the most feasible site for a regional-scale retail shopping center in the Visalia area was at the southwest corner of the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198. The site originally proposed for the project, at Road 80 and Highway 198, was assigned a lower feasibility ranking on the basis of potential conflicts with the long-term operations of the Visalia Municipal Airport. Almost simultaneously, an update of the City's decade-old airport master plan was begun, and although not quite completed as of this writing, this plan has progressed sufficiently to have identified newly-defined zones of potential airport-related impacts, with corresponding implications for the relationships between ultimate land uses in the area and the operations of the airport itself.

In addition to the described planning programs and studies applying to the west Highway 198 corridor area, a number of site-specific individual development proposals have been made in the Plan area in recent years. Development of the easterly portion of the Plan area has evolved with the introduction of the Mineral King Plaza shopping center (Von's, Long's, etc.) and the commercial and professional office center surrounding the Connecticut General Insurance building along the south side of Highway 198. A variety of smaller-scale commercial uses

have been considered or proposed for the north side of Highway 198 in the same general vicinity, although development in this area has been restricted by small and irregular parcelization, traffic issues and other constraints. To the west, the construction of the Central Valley Christian School facility near the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198 has occurred. Limited service and retail commercial development has been approved and constructed along the north side of Highway 198, east of Road 80, and there have been several proposals to the City for highway-oriented commercial development at the northwest corner of the Highway 198/Road 80 interchange. Most recently, the County of Tulare heard and denied a request for an amendment to the County's General Plan to permit development of a regional retail shopping center along the north side of Highway 198 west of Shirk Road (Road 92). In response to these and similar development initiatives, and to enable the process of formulating a comprehensive plan for the west Highway 198 corridor to take place in a deliberate and objective manner, in November of 1987, the City Council adopted an emergency ordinance placing a moratorium on new development in the City-controlled portions of the Plan area for a period of one year. It was in this environment that the process of preparing the West Visalia Specific Plan was introduced.

### Plan Formulation Process

Preparation and adoption of the West Visalia Specific Plan has involved a process combining technical analysis and study with a strong public participation orientation. The Plan effort has paralleled development of a number of other City policy planning undertakings, including concurrent formulation of an updated airport master plan, storm drainage master plan, conservation/open space/recreation/parks element of the General Plan, circulation element of the General Plan, and Mooney Boulevard redevelopment plan.

To ensure that a diversity of perspectives and views would be applied to the planning process, the City Council appointed an advisory task force to participate in the formulation of the Plan in the capacity of screening Plan-related issues, alternative planning concepts for the study area, and recommended Plan alternatives. The Council intentionally constituted this task force from among the broadest possible representation of various interests pertaining to the Highway 198 corridor. Included on the task force were area property owners, west Highway 198 business operators, local agricultural producers, a realtor, a member of the City's Airport Commission, members of the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors, members of the City and County Planning Commissions, and several generally interested citizens. The deliberate diversity of interests represented on the task force was a determinant in the Council's definition of the role of the group: to evaluate and provide advice regarding the various aspects of the Plan, but not to try to develop a consensus recommendation for the Plan to be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption. It was felt by the Council that by relieving the group of the necessity to compromise to achieve consensus on any Plan recommendation, a significantly broader range of input in the Plan preparation process would be assured, and the role of the task force would be more substantive.

Meetings of the task force began in March, 1987, and focused initially upon defining the range of issues which legitimately would require resolution through the

Plan preparation process. Subsequent task force meetings entailed presentations from City staff, the consultant, and other technical professionals to establish a data base, documenting existing conditions affecting the Plan area and potentially influencing the eventual selection of Plan alternatives. By late summer, the task force began the process of reviewing alternative Plan concepts suggested by the staff and consultants. Based upon input from both the task force and from the public at-large, generated at a meeting in August, a series of recommended Plan land uses, circulation proposals, and associated implementation options were developed by staff and the consultants, and are embodied in the form of this draft Plan document and accompanying graphics.

Concurrently with the process outlined above, City and County staffs met on several occasions to review Plan issues and options. The existing dual responsibilities for portions of the Plan area necessitate that both the City of Visalia and the County of Tulare agree to the fullest extent possible upon the appropriate planning policies and uses applicable to the area. Both the City and County staffs also periodically met with their respective Planning Commissions and legislative bodies to generally update them upon the progress of the Plan's development. Comments from these informal review sessions were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the studies underlying the formulation of the recommended Plan.

An environmental impact report was prepared to evaluate the potential effects on the physical environment associated with implementing the Plan. The review and comment period for this EIR was thirty days, closing near the end of November, 1987. During that period, the draft EIR and the Plan itself were available for scrutiny by any interested parties, including the public at-large. Additionally, specific components of the Plan were covered extensively in the local media, contributing to the significant level of public interest in and awareness of the Plan which evolved during the review period. During the EIR review period, a final meeting of the task force was held. A public hearing before the City Planning Commission to take testimony on the Plan also took place during this timeframe.

Following conclusion of the public comment period on the EIR, staff and the consultants incorporated comments and testimony from the public and other interested parties into the draft Plan and EIR documents, "finalized" those documents, and submitted them to the City Planning Commission and City Council for formal review. One additional public hearing was held before each of these bodies prior to the Plan being adopted by the City Council in final form, in June 1988.

Subsequent to City approval of the West Visalia Specific Plan, the matter has been referred to the County of Tulare, with a request that the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors also adopt the Plan. It is likely that a minimum of one public hearing before each of these bodies will also be conducted prior to any final County action on the Plan.

### Content and Format of Plan Document

The content and format of this Plan document correspond to the requirements of the California Government Code and the State General Plan

Guidelines for the preparation and adoption of specific plans. Subsequent chapters of this document include a summary description of existing conditions in the Plan area; define the goals and policies determined to be appropriate for application to the Plan area and upon which specific planning recommendations set forth in the Plan are based; provide an exposure to the various alternative development concepts which were considered for the Plan area in formulating the recommended Plan; present the adopted land use, circulation, design and infrastructure development plan for the area; prescribe development standards and design guidelines for the various elements of the Plan; set forth potential implementation measures and programs to accomplish the goals and policies of the Plan; and review financing options potentially available to the City for furthering the intent of the Plan.

Accompanying the Plan text is the required Plan diagram, which outlines and delineates the distribution and extent of Plan land uses, major circulation elements, and other important public facilities and infrastructure.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXISTING CONDITIONS IN PLAN AREA

The overall Plan area for the West Visalia Specific Plan encompasses approximately 3,850 acres. The area lies westerly of the existing urban portion of the City of Visalia, along State Highway 198. The area is roughly bounded by Road 68 on the west, Walnut Avenue on the south, Chinowth Road on the east, and Goshen Avenue on the north. Figure 2, appearing on the following page, depicts the location of the Plan area in relationship to the rest of the community.

#### Definition of Plan Subareas

The Plan area has been disaggregated into seven subareas to facilitate the analysis of the specific planning issues particularly applicable to each. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of these subareas. Designation of each subarea was based upon two factors: (1) existing land use and development patterns; and (2) relationship to the issues identified through the task force review process as being pertinent to planning for the overall area. Brief descriptions of existing conditions prevalent in each subarea (at the time the Plan was prepared) are set out in the following paragraphs.

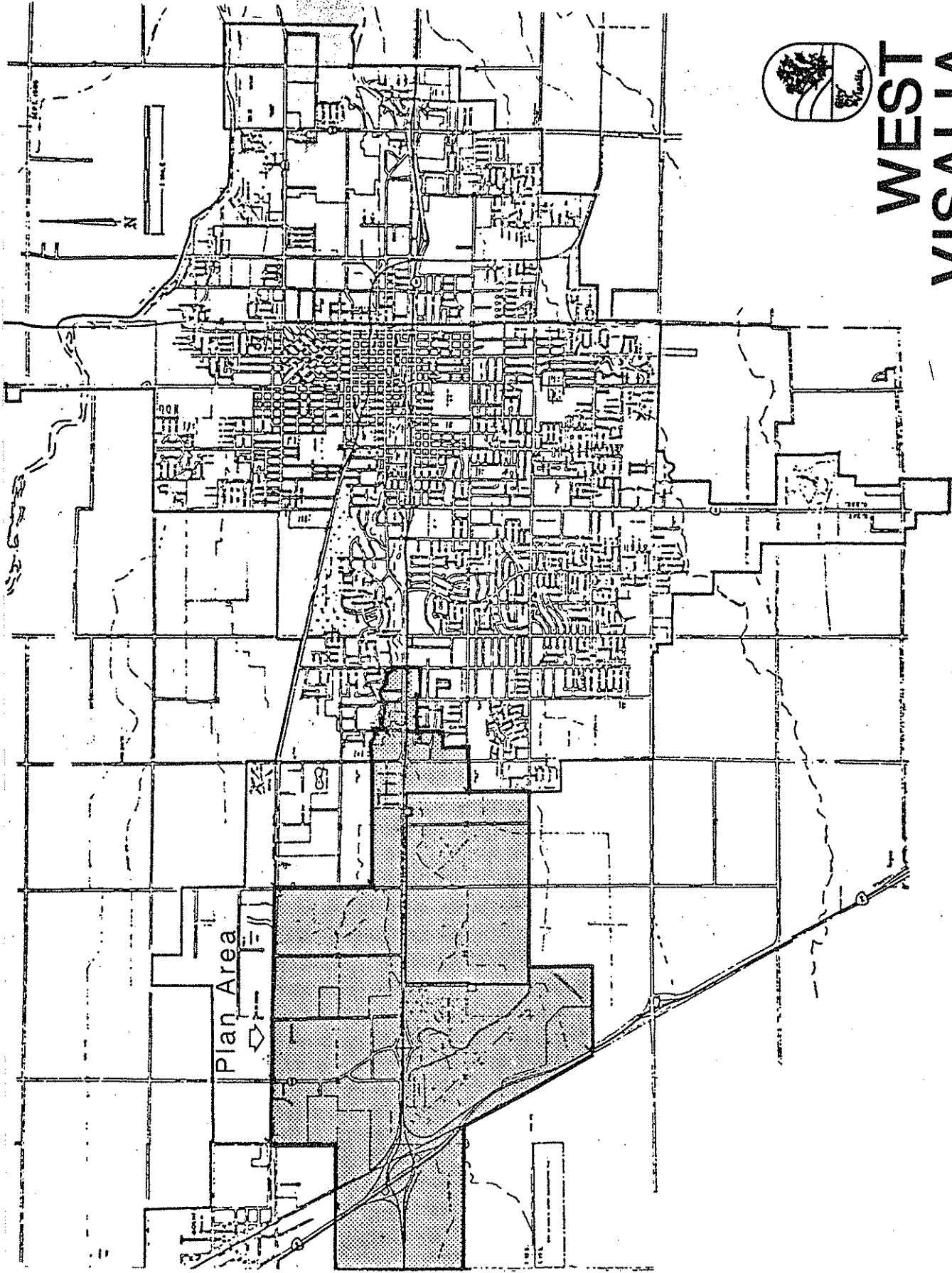
#### Subarea A

This subarea is comprised of large agricultural parcels located on both sides of Highway 198, west of Highway 99. Accessibility to the northerly portion of this subarea is comparatively good, from westbound Highway 198, west of the Plaza Interchange, and from northbound Road 68. Visibility of this northwest quadrant of the interchange is good from southbound Highway 99 and adequate from northbound Highway 99, south of the interchange. Both visibility and accessibility of the southwest quadrant of the interchange are slightly poorer. This quadrant can be accessed from Highway 198 and Road 68, as well, but would require a left turn for traffic exiting Highway 99 and proceeding westbound on Highway 198. A small portion of the northwest quadrant lies within Airport Compatibility Zone B, as defined in the draft update to the City's airport master plan, representing "substantial risk and high noise" exposure to existing and potential future development. The balance of this subarea lies within Airport Compatibility Zone D, representing small risk and frequent noise exposure. The entire subarea lies outside the City limits and the Urban Improvement Boundary of Visalia, but within the City's Urban Area Boundary, at this time.

#### Subarea B

Subarea B includes the land lying north of Highway 198, east of Highway 99, south of the Mill Creek Ditch alignment, and generally west of Road 84. The area includes the vicinity of the Highway 198/Road 80 interchange. Current land uses in this subarea are predominantly agriculture, with commercial/industrial

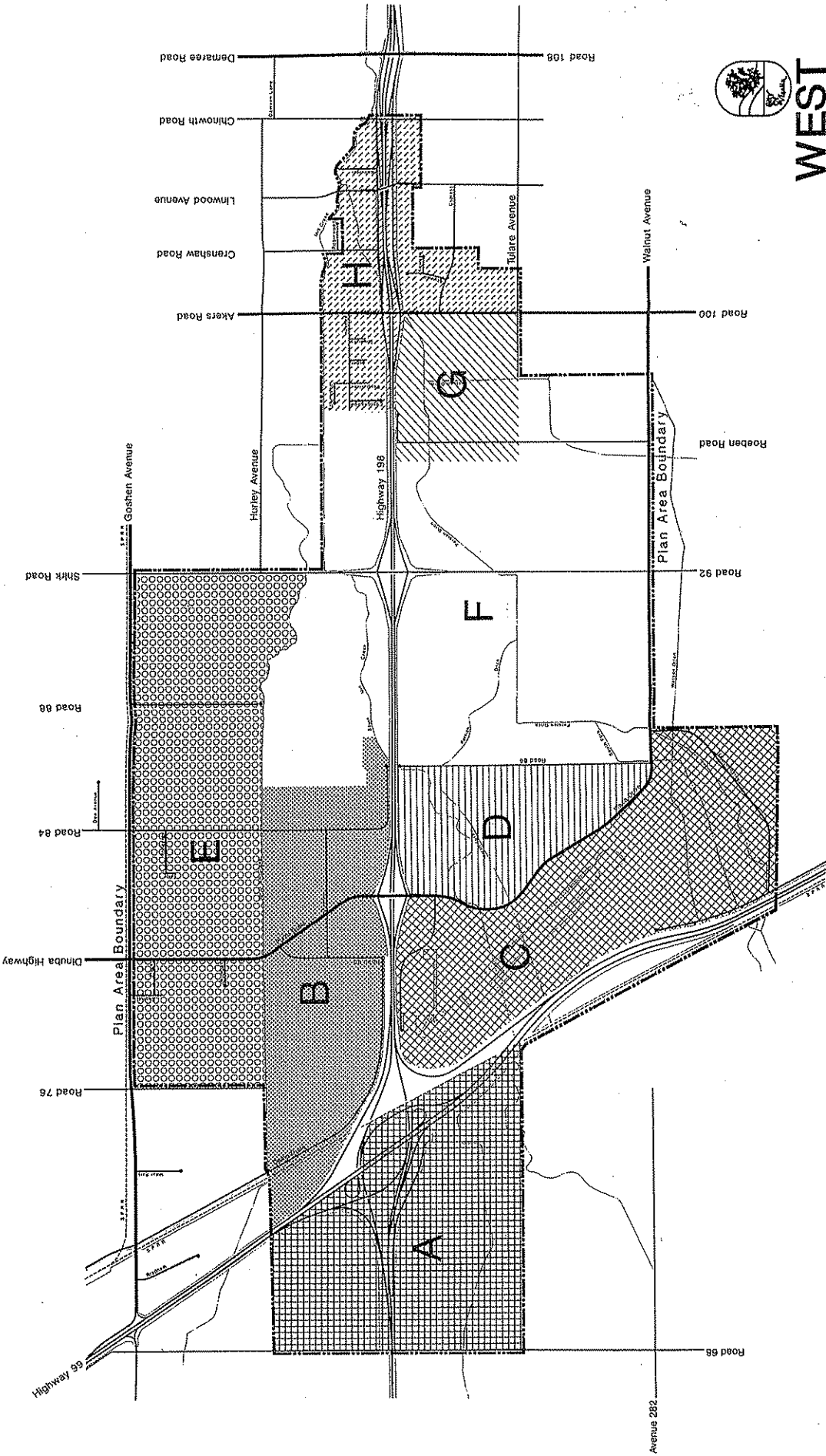




**WEST  
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Plan Area Location

Figure 2



**WEST  
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Figure 3

Plan Subareas

development located along the Highway 198 frontage east of Road 84. Accessibility to properties in this subarea is good, with the north-south alignments of Alta Avenue, Plaza Drive and Road 84 affording exposure to most of the larger parcels currently situated in this vicinity. Crowley Avenue also bisects a portion of this subarea on an east-west axis. The area is mostly located within Airport Compatibility Zone D, representing small risk and frequent noise exposure, although a portion of the area, at its westerly end, lies within Zone B, representing substantial risk and high noise exposure. Portions of the subarea lie within the limits of the City of Visalia, and the remainder is located within the City's Urban Improvement Boundary, although unincorporated at the present time. Included within this subarea are properties for which several substantial development proposals have already been entertained by private sector interests. Among those are the site of the proposed regional retail mall reviewed by the City in 1985-86, located west of Road 80, and a site for proposed commercial development, including a motel/fast food complex between Alta Avenue and the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange. Immediately north of this subarea, the vicinity is substantially developed to industrial and service-oriented commercial uses. The properties lying to the immediate east of the subarea are presently committed to agricultural use.

#### Subarea C

Subarea C of the Plan area is the aggregation of properties generally comprising the Visalia Municipal Airport. At the present time, An updated airport master plan for this facility is being prepared by the City which will prescribe the specific nature, scope and distribution of land uses and development on the airport site. It is anticipated that this master plan will accommodate additional airport-related and general commercial and industrial development on the airport and appurtenant grounds, augmenting the present terminal facilities, hangars, and office/commercial uses which have already been developed. Currently, this master plan effort is anticipated to be completed shortly after the adoption of the West Visalia Specific Plan.

#### Subarea D

Subarea D is comprised of Plaza Park and the Valley Oak Golf Course, operated and maintained by the City. The City is generally committed to the long-term continuation of these uses. Master planning work for Plaza Park, including the golf course, has been completed in the past by the City, and will likely be reevaluated following completion and adoption of the previously-referenced airport master plan currently in progress.

#### Subarea E

Subarea E of the overall Plan area is bounded by Goshen Avenue on the north, the Mill Creek Ditch alignment on the south, Shirk Road on the east, and the alignment of Road 76 on the west. This area is currently developed to industrial and service commercial uses, with a portion of the area still used for agricultural production. The area lies partially within the City of Visalia's corporate limits and Urban Improvement Boundary, but the southerly portion of the area is unincorporated and also lies outside the Urban Improvement Boundary, although it

is within the City's Urban Area Boundary. In general, however, current City and County development policies recognize and provide for a long-term commitment of the majority of this subarea to industrial and industrially-related uses. The importance of this subarea to the west Highway 198 corridor is the transitional relationship of the southern portion of the area to properties lying closer to, and affected more directly by, the highway corridor.

#### Subarea F

Subarea F represents the largest segment of the overall Plan area remaining in productive agricultural usage. Lying along both sides of Highway 198, and extending to Walnut Avenue on the south and the alignment of Mill Creek Ditch on the north, there is only limited commercial development (Bookout, Nash-de-Camp) and residential use in this area. Subarea F comprises much of the "scenic corridor" as that term is commonly applied to west Highway 198. Portions of this subarea lie within Airport Compatibility Zone C, representing exposure to substantial noise and moderate risk. The balance of the subarea lies within Zone E, representing only overflight nuisance, or outside the area of airport impact altogether. Portions of the subarea are presently under Williamson Act contracts for agricultural preserves. Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch and Persian Ditch all traverse portions of this subarea. The area lies entirely outside the corporate limits and Urban Improvement Boundary of the City of Visalia, although inside the City's Urban Area Boundary.

#### Subarea G

Subarea G is comprised of property located along the south side of Highway 198, westerly of Akers Road, and extending to just west of Roeben Road. On the south, this subarea is bounded by an extension of the Tulare Avenue alignment. Presently, this subarea is predominantly utilized for agriculture. Also located in this vicinity are a private school campus and scattered farm and rural residential homes. Mill Creek traverses the northern portion of the subarea, paralleling Highway 198. The area is almost entirely located within the City limits and Urban Improvement boundaries of the City of Visalia. The City's recent study of alternative locations for a regional retail shopping center designated the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198 as the most desirable site for this development. Other development proposals, including one for an auto mall, have also been considered at various times for this area.

#### Subarea H

Subarea H is the far easterly extreme of the overall Plan area. It encompasses all of the Plan area along both sides of Highway 198 from Akers Road east to Chinowth Road, and also includes property along the north side of the highway west of Akers Road, taking in the Visalia Medical Clinic and several professional office buildings, the proposed site of a church facility, several vacant parcels zoned for professional office development, and a mix of single-family residential and postage stamp lot development. Several parcels lying along the north side Highway 198 are in unincorporated portions of the County. The majority of this subarea, however, lies within the City limits of Visalia. Development along the south side of the highway in this subarea is comparatively recent, and includes such uses as the new Mineral King Plaza shopping center (Von's, Long's, smaller

ancillary shops, etc.), motels and professional offices. Development along the north side of the highway is typically older and has occurred on substantially smaller parcels, and includes a mix of commercial uses and residences. Mill Creek traverses the northerly portion of this subarea. Additionally, beginning at Akers Road and running to the east, Highway 198 traffic flow is augmented by a frontage road along the north side of the highway and providing direct access to abutting business and residences.

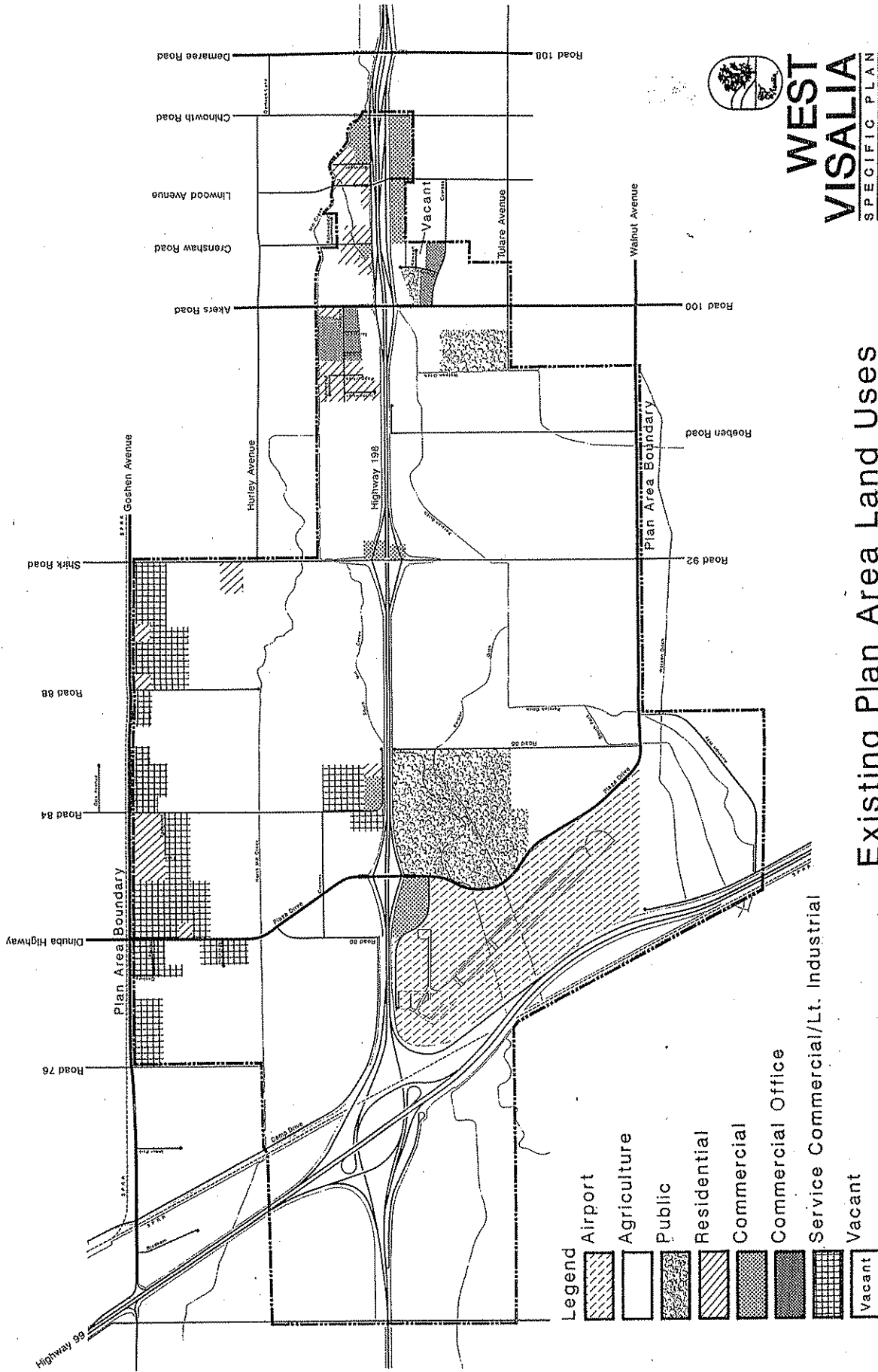
Remaining large, potentially developable parcels in this subarea include the referenced church project site along the north side of the highway west of Akers Road; property lying both east and west of the Visalia Medical Clinic facility, on Hillsdale Drive; property located on the east side of Akers Road, north of Highway 198; and several City-owned parcels south of Highway 198, on the site of the City's old wastewater treatment facilities, abandoned when the facilities were moved west of Highway 99 in the 1960's.

Potential conversion of Highway 198 to full freeway status, currently anticipated in the late 1990's, represents a major issue in planning for the ultimate utilization of this subarea. Existing preliminary concepts for the freeway development propose an interchange/overpass at Akers Road. Moreover, the freeway alignment in several alternative concepts for the freeway suggested previously by CALTRANS swings to the north of the present right-of-way limits at about Akers Road and would necessitate the acquisition of a substantial amount of property currently fronting along the highway to the east.

#### **Extent of Current Plan Area Development**

Figure 4, appearing on the following page, depicts the extent and character of existing land uses in the Plan area. Table 1 summarizes total acreages devoted to each of the land uses reflected in the referenced figure.

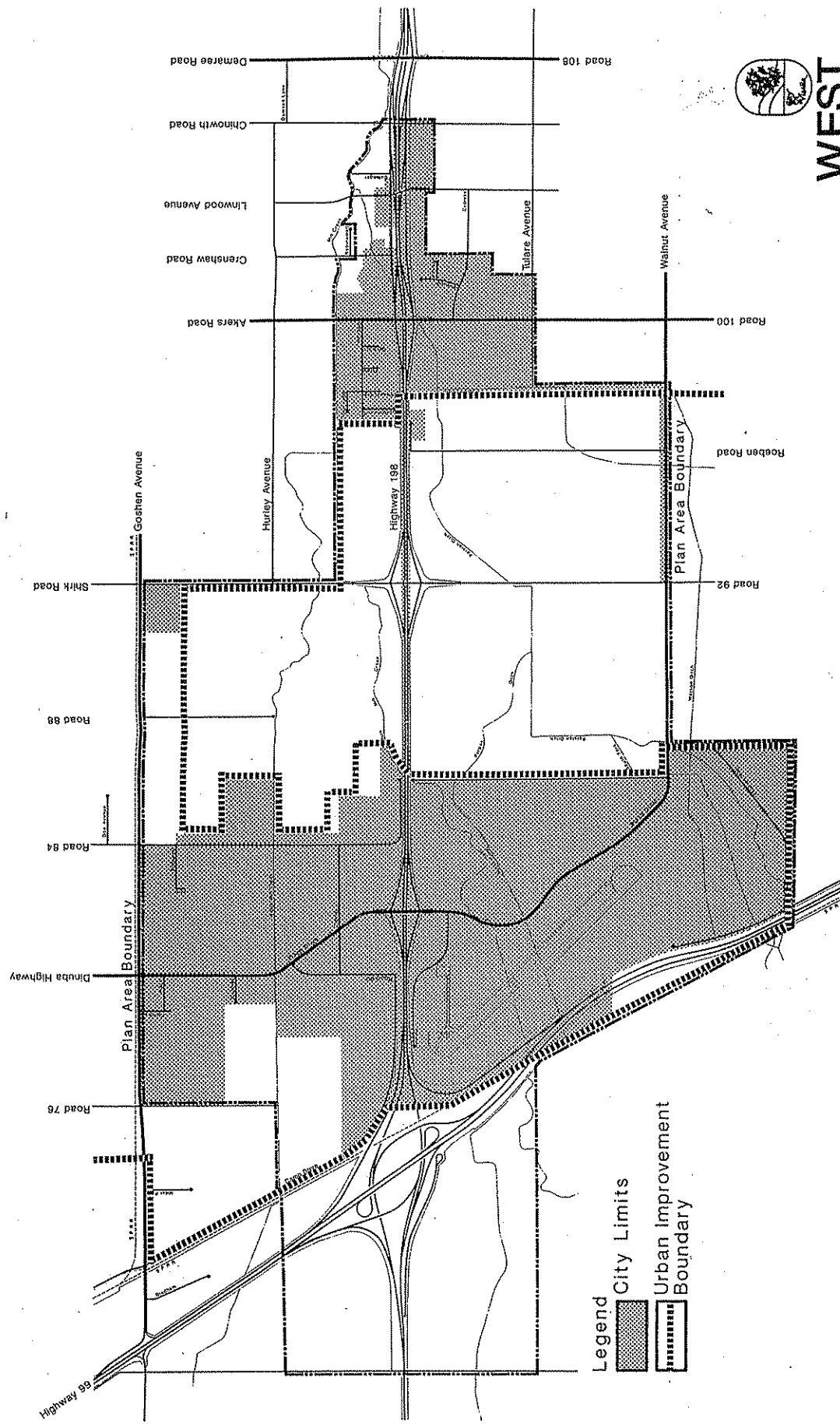
Jurisdiction over land use and development in the Plan area is currently shared between the City of Visalia and the County of Tulare. Figure 5 illustrates the present City limit line for the City of Visalia as it relates to the Plan area. This figure also depicts the existing adopted Urban Improvement Boundary of the City. Within the corporate limits of the City of Visalia, the City is responsible for the designation and enforcement of all applicable zoning and development designations and regulations. In those portions of the Plan area lying outside the City but within the City's Urban Improvement Boundary, the County's present planning policies call for development proposals to be referred to the City for review and potential annexation, prior to development occurring. (It should be noted that the County-designated Urban Development Boundary for the City and the City's Urban Improvement Boundary refer to essentially the same line; existing City policy precludes annexation of properties located outside its Urban Improvement Area.) Should the City decline to, or for some reason cannot, annex a project site, the County has the option of approving the proposed development with the site remaining unincorporated. Outside the City's Urban Improvement Boundary but within the Urban Area Boundary, County planning policy currently discourages any urban development at all. Land use proposals for sites located within Urban Area Boundaries of cities in the County are presumed to have potential impacts upon the



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VISALIA  
SPECIFIC PLAN**

**Figure 4**

**Existing Plan Area Land Uses**



**WEST  
VISALIA**  
SPECIFIC PLAN

Figure 5

City Limits and Urban Improvement Boundary

adjacent incorporated cities, and such proposals are also referred to the cities for review, with City input, by policy, to be given "serious consideration" as part of the land use review process. The entire Plan area lies within the City of Visalia's Urban Area Boundary.

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**TABLE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF ACREAGE DEVOTED TO VARIOUS LAND USES**  
**WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

<u>Land Use Designation</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Airport (and Related)	314
Agriculture	2,958
Service Commercial/Light Industrial	100
Residential	68
Commercial	161
Professional Office	30
Public/Quasi-Public	211
Vacant	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,848</b>

**SOURCE:** Land use survey, City of Visalia; 1987.

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Figure 6 depicts current City General Plan land use designations as they are applied to the Plan area. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of City zoning designations for the incorporated portions of the Plan area. Figure 8 delineates County General Plan land use designations, and Figure 9 reflects County zoning, applied by Tulare County to properties within the Plan area that lie outside Visalia's city limits.

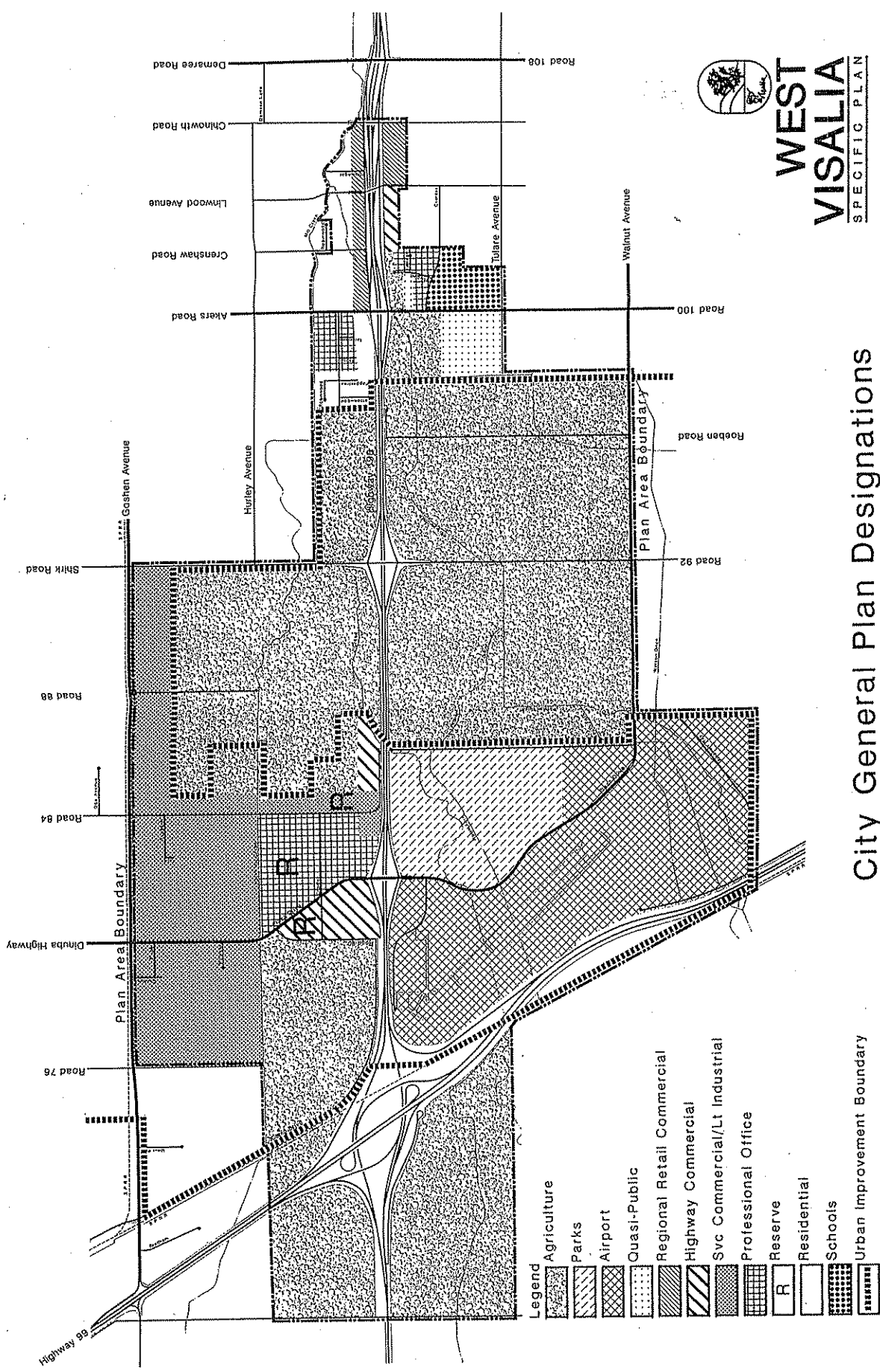
One additional regulatory influence upon current, and potential long-term, land uses in the Plan area is the existence of a number of agricultural preserve contracts, under the Williamson Act, scattered throughout the area. These contracts, entered into between a property owner and the County, restrict the assessment of lands for property taxation purposes to the valuation of the land in agricultural use, rather than at an inflated value based upon speculative alternative uses. Williamson Act contracts are established for a term of ten years, and are automatically renewed annually in perpetuity, unless a notice of nonrenewal is filed by the property owner or by the County. Figure 10 depicts the distribution and extent of lands in the Plan area currently committed as agricultural preserves under Williamson Act contracts. It should be noted that, as of the preparation of this Plan, none of the properties shown in Figure 10 have been made subject to a notice of nonrenewal of its contract.





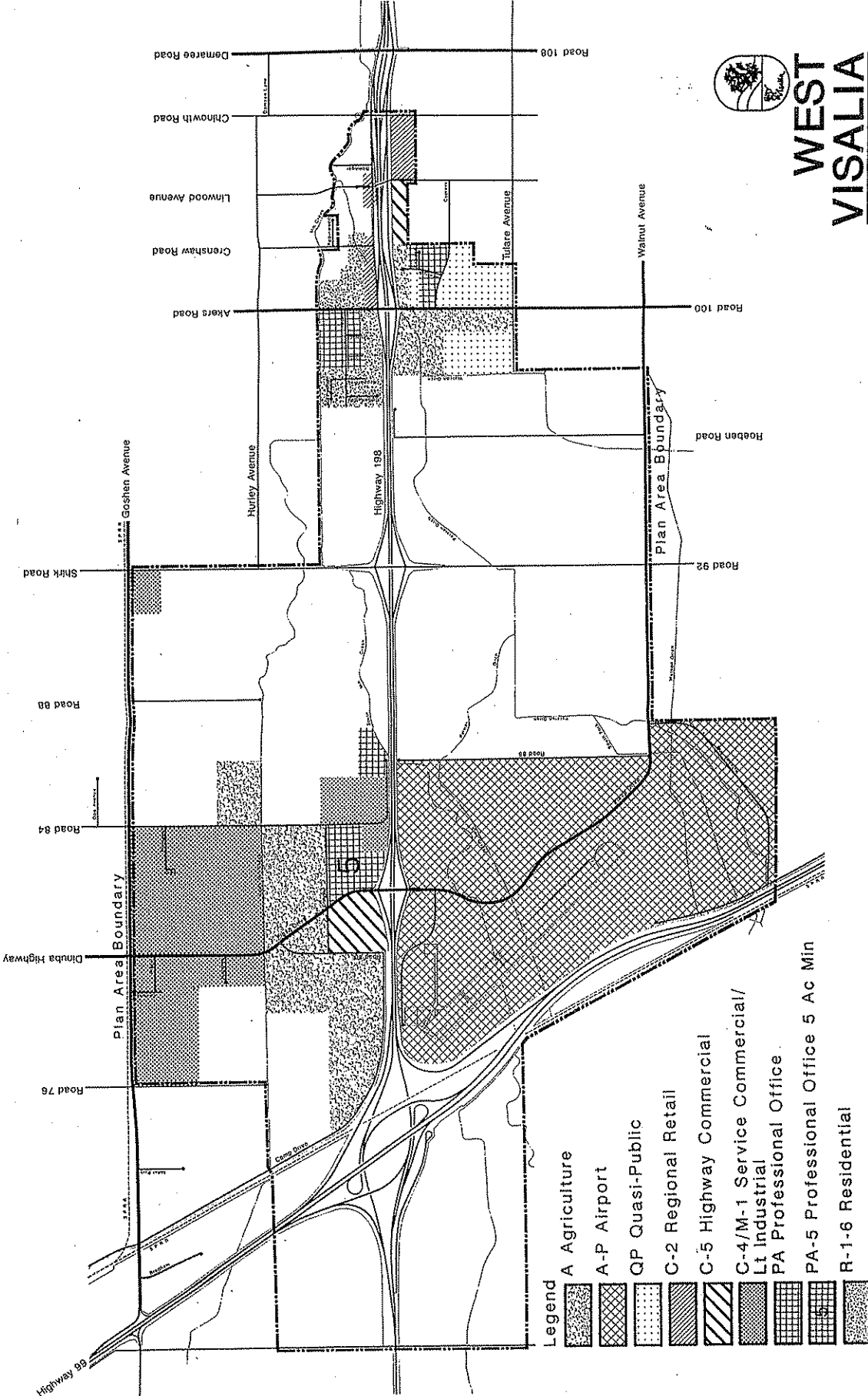
**WEST  
VISALIA**  
SPECIFIC PLAN

**Figure 6**



**City General Plan Designations**

- Legend**
- Agriculture
  - Parks
  - Airport
  - Quasi-Public
  - Regional Retail Commercial
  - Highway Commercial
  - Svc Commercial/Lt Industrial
  - Professional Office
  - Reserve
  - Residential
  - Schools
  - Urban Improvement Boundary



**WEST  
VISALIA**  
S P E C I F I C P L A N

Figure 7

City Zoning Designations

Legend

- A Agriculture
- A-P Airport
- QP Quasi-Public
- C-2 Regional Retail
- C-5 Highway Commercial
- C-4/M-1 Service Commercial/  
Lt Industrial
- PA Professional Office
- PA-5 Professional Office 5 Ac Min
- R-1-6 Residential



**WEST  
VISALIA**  
SPECIFIC PLAN

Figure 8

County General Plan Designations

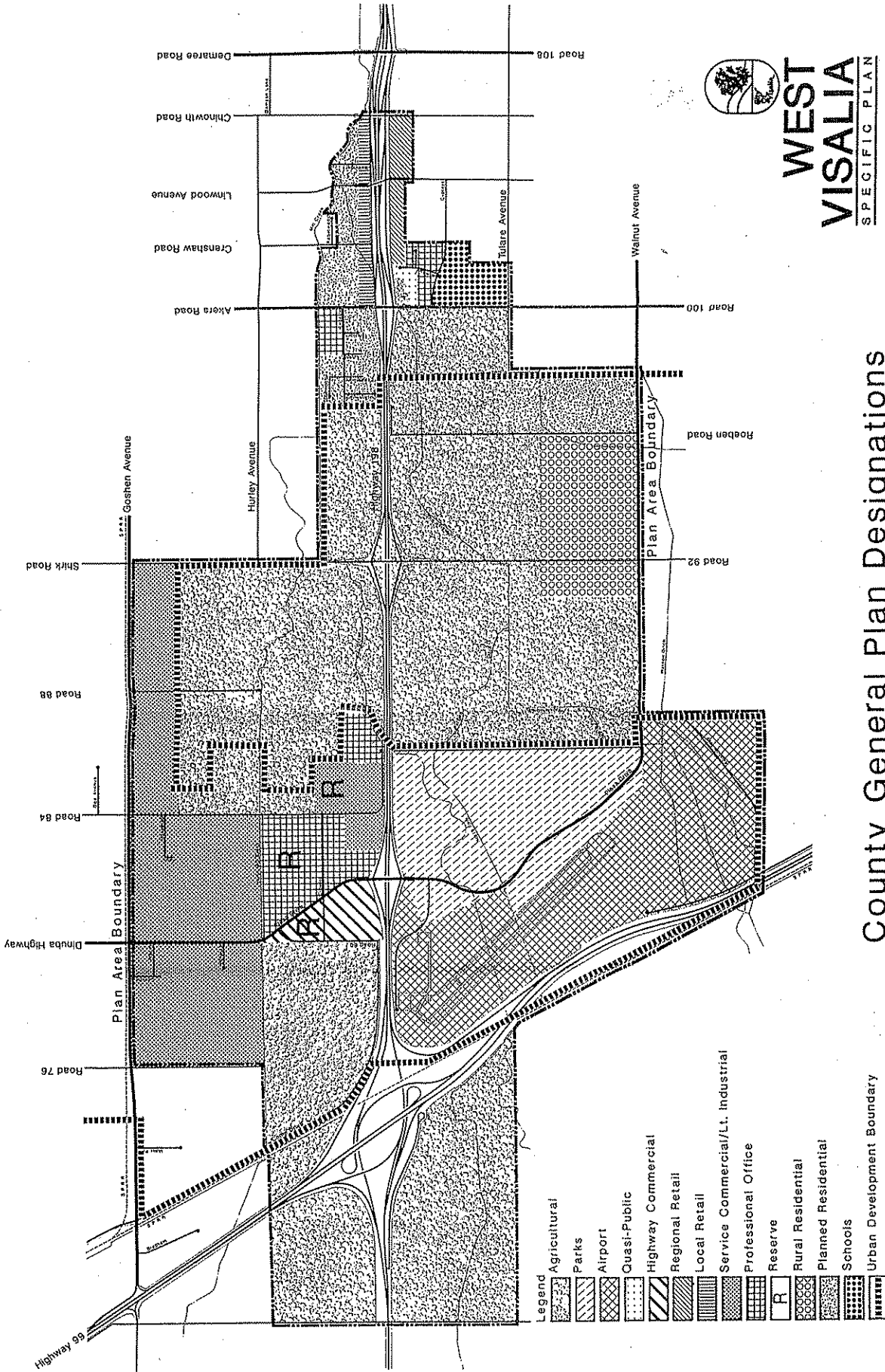
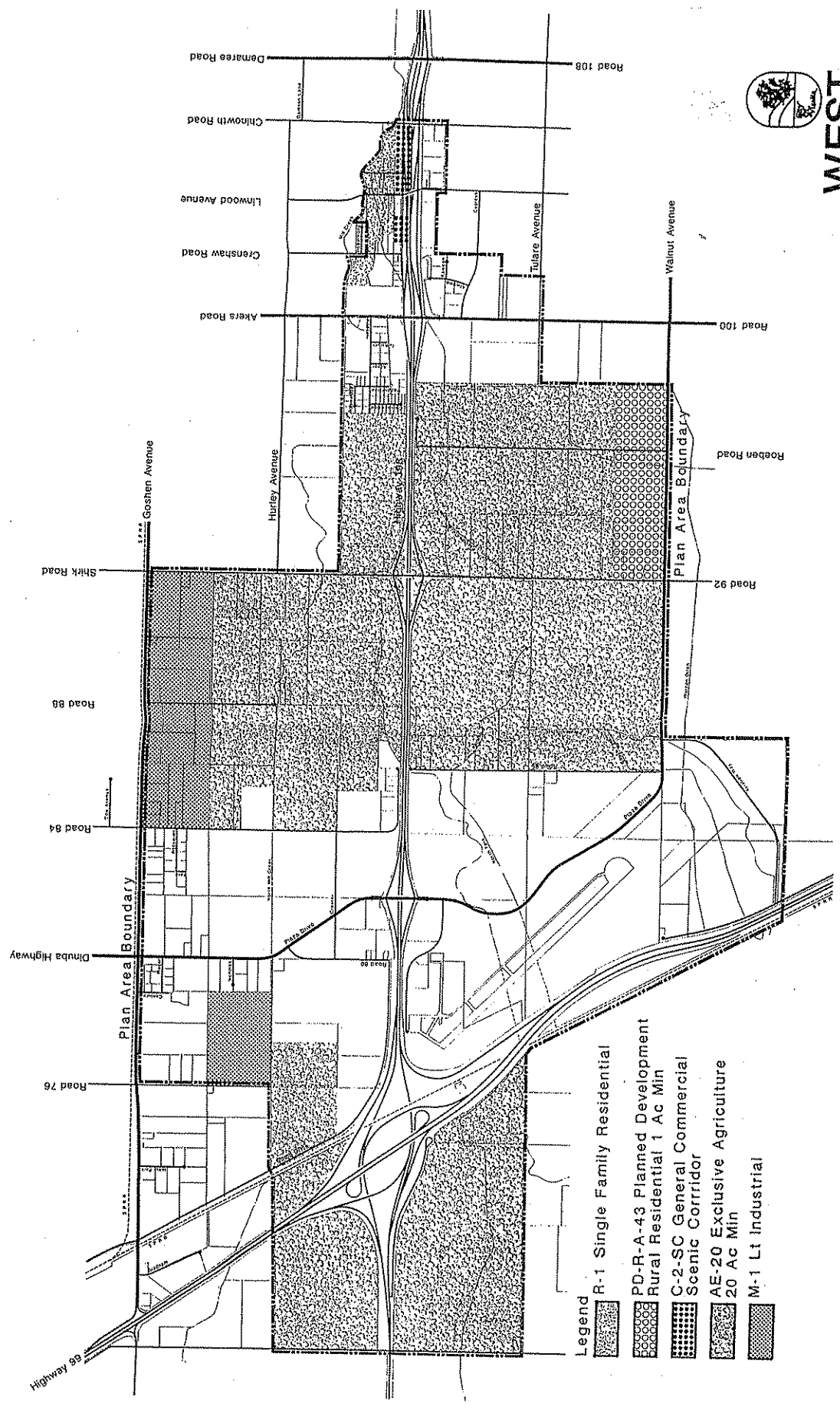
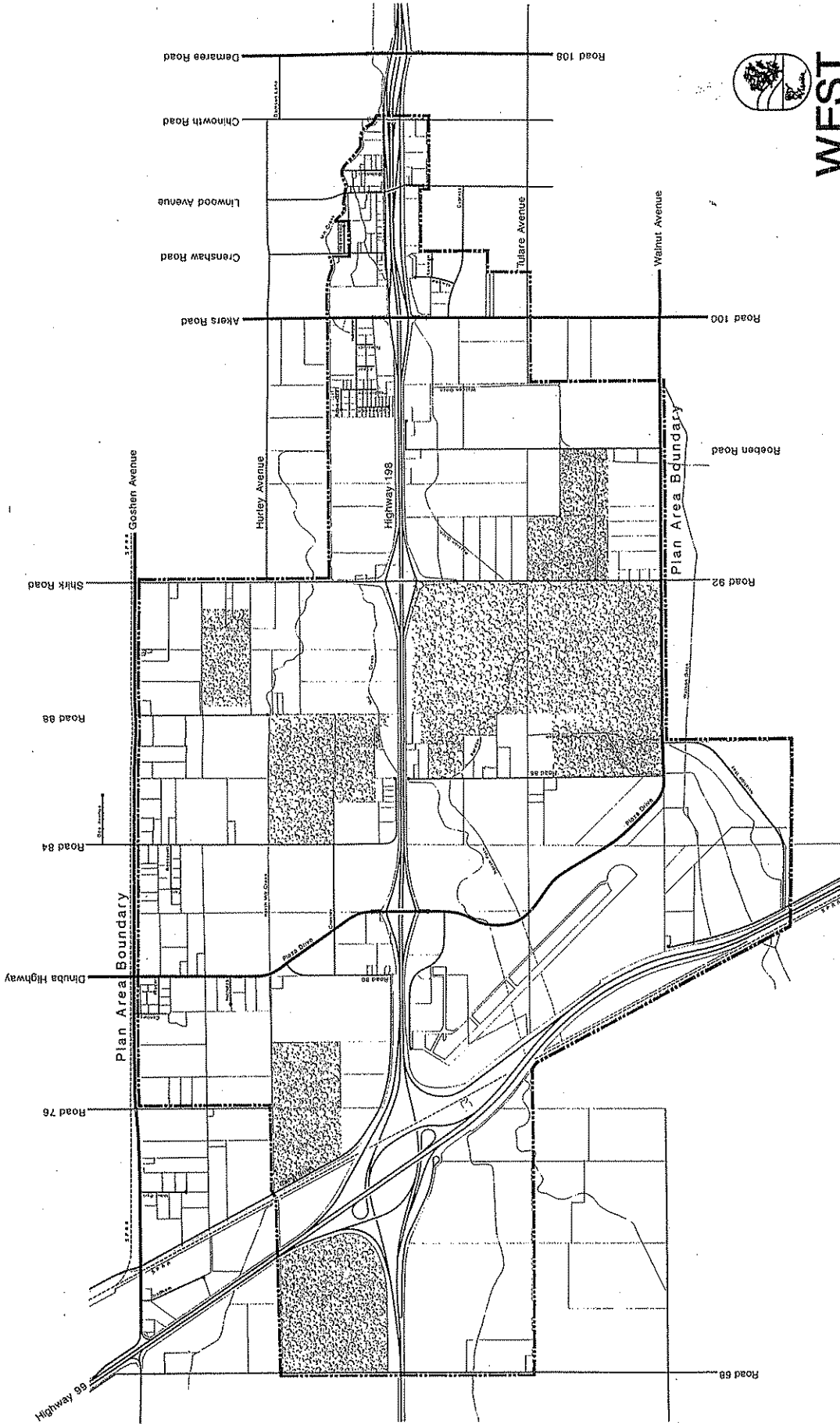




Figure 9



County Zoning Designations



**WEST  
VISALIA**  
SPECIFIC PLAN

Figure 10

Lands Under Williamson Act Contract

The circulation system serving the current distribution of land uses in the Plan area is illustrated in Figure 11. This system is comprised of the main traffic arterial of Highway 198, running east-west through the area and roughly bisecting it, of a series of other arterial streets, and of a network of collector and local streets providing access directly to properties located within the area. Beginning at Akers Road, Highway 198 is paralleled along the north side by a frontage road extending easterly to a terminus point located outside the Plan area, at County Center Drive. This frontage road provides direct access to properties located along the north side of the highway. The intersections of this frontage road with the highway and with the north-south streets that cross the highway, however, creates several instances of difficult traffic patterns. The intersections of Chinowth and Linwood Avenues with this frontage road are particularly responsible for awkward traffic flows through the Plan area. With the exceptions of specific intersection-related peak hour traffic restrictions, service levels on streets and roads within the Plan area are typically good. Table 2 summarizes levels of service on selected major roadways in the Plan area.

---

**TABLE 2**  
**LEVELS OF SERVICE (24-HOUR)**  
**FOR SELECTED PLAN AREA ROADWAYS**

<u>Roadway Designation</u>	<u>Level of Service</u>
State Hwy. 99 (south of 198)	A
State Hwy. 198 (west of Shirk)	A
State Hwy. 198 (east of Shirk)	B
Road 80	B
Shirk Road	A
Akers Road (South of 198)	A
Chinowth Road (north of 198)	A
Chinowth Road (south of 198)	A

**SOURCE:** City of Visalia, Community Development Department, 1987.

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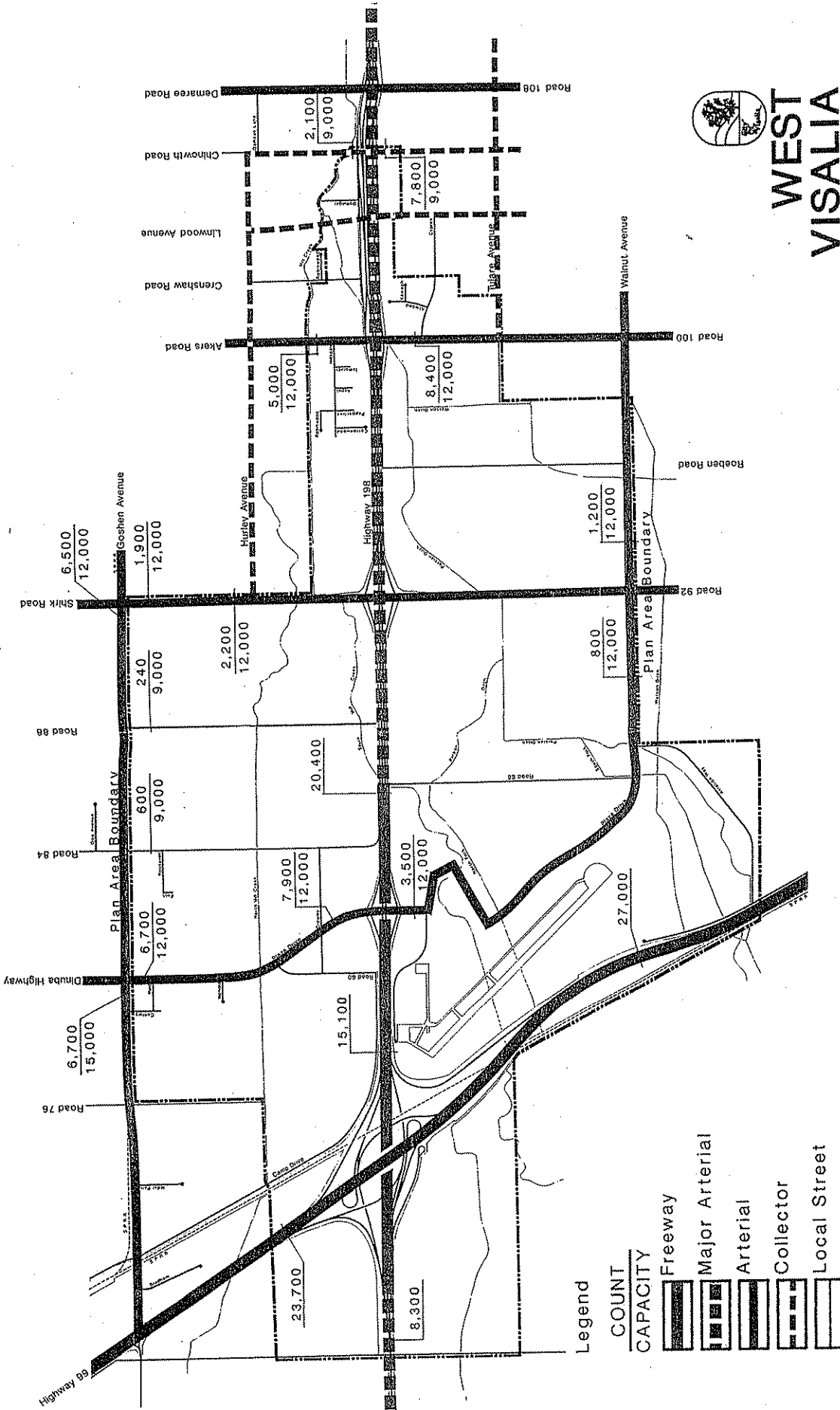
Figure 11 also presents data summarizing existing average daily traffic counts (for years ranging from 1983 through 1987) and current design capacities for selected segments of the street and road network currently serving the Plan area.

The presence of the Visalia Municipal Airport in the Plan area is one of the key determinants of potential long-term land uses in the area. The airport is generally regarded as one of the community's most important assets, and historically, both City and County planning policies have been oriented toward protection of the viability of the airport's operation. Typically, airport-related



# WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN

## Figure 11



## Plan Area Circulation System

conflicts with adjacent and nearby land uses are associated with potential exposure to safety hazards, predominantly in areas lying beneath immediate approach and take-off patterns, and to noise nuisances from aircraft overflights. Numerous court cases in California over the past several decades have held in favor of property and business interests impacted by nearby airport operations, even in instances when the impacted uses developed long after the establishment of the airport facilities to which the impacts have been attributed. Accordingly, there is increased emphasis among communities wishing to protect their airport facilities from unreasonable operating constraints upon planning for the protection of these facilities by establishing land use and development policies in airport areas which preclude the establishment of uses which are likely to experience conflicts with typical airport operations. As discussed in the City's draft update to its airport master plan, Visalia is particularly fortunate to have its airport facility still comparatively insulated from adjacent or nearby land uses which would present airport/development conflicts.

The referenced update of the airport master plan has resulted in the recent identification of Airport Compatibility Zones, based upon anticipated buildout and ultimate activity levels at the Visalia Municipal Airport. Figure 12 delineates the extent of each of these zones as prescribed by the draft airport master plan. Table 3, below, summarizes the characteristics of each of these compatibility zones as

**TABLE 3**

**DEFINITIONS OF AIRPORT COMPATIBILITY ZONES  
VISALIA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT**

<u>Zone Designation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Impact Elements</u>
A	Clear zone or primary surface	High risk, high noise
B	Inner approach/ departure zone	Substantial risk, high noise
C	Outer approach/ departure zone or adjacent to runway	Moderate risk, substantial noise
D	Common flight tracks	Small risk, frequent noise intrusion
E	Other airport environs	Overflight nuisance

**SOURCE:** Visalia Municipal Airport Master Plan Study; Hodges and Shutt; July, 1987.

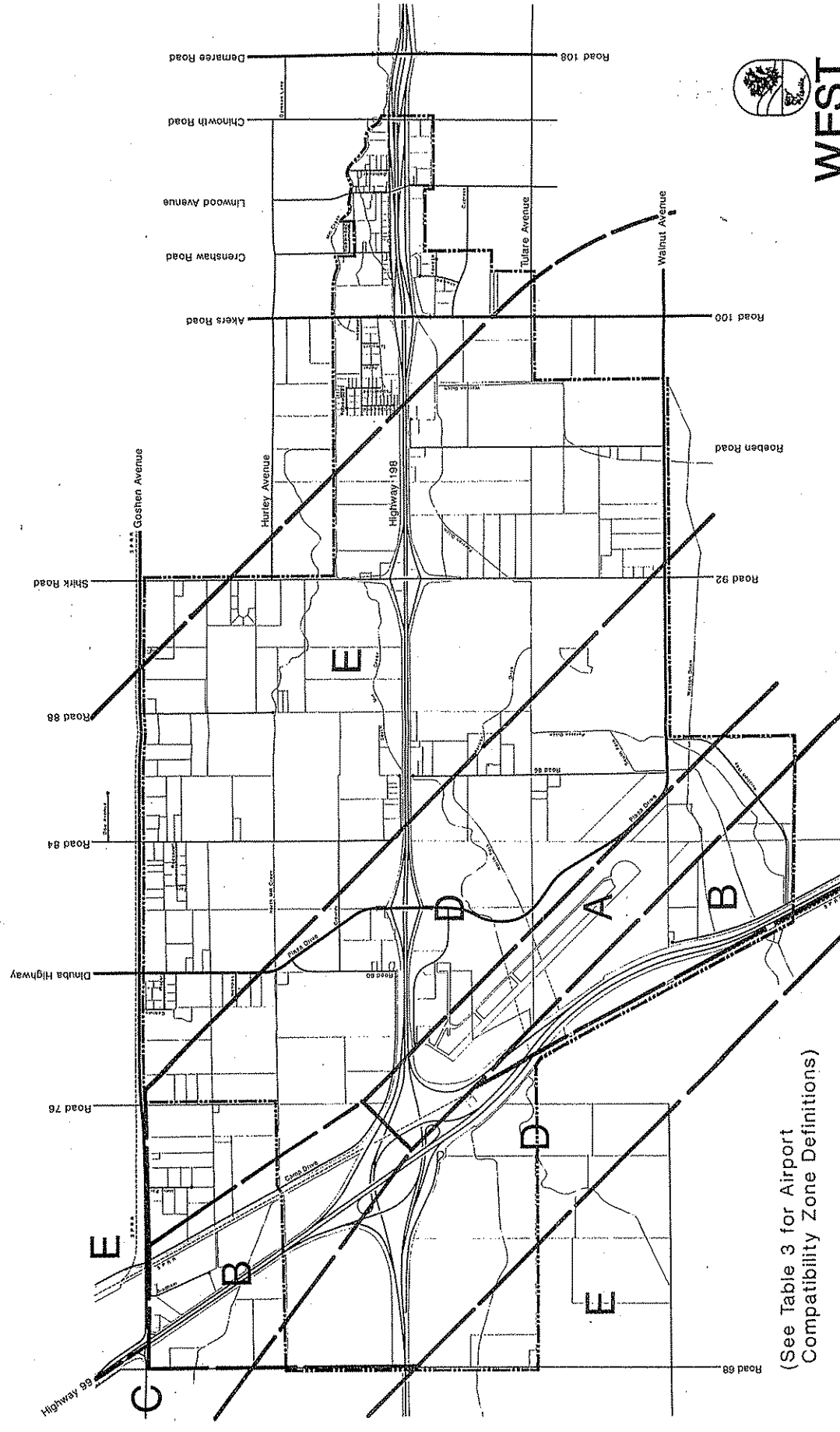




# WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN

## Figure 12

### Airport Compatibility Zones



(See Table 3 for Airport Compatibility Zone Definitions)

described by the referenced figure.

In planning for the environs surrounding the Visalia Municipal Airport, it is important that this Specific Plan be cognizant of three issues pertinent to the long-term viability of the airport facility: hazards to flight, ground safety, and nuisance. Flight hazards are physical obstructions to navigable airspace (e.g. tall structures, towers, etc.) and land uses which could affect flight safety (e.g. visual or electronic disruptions to the flight environment). Ground safety refers to the issue of risks from aircraft operations to persons or property on the ground. Nuisance is typically defined in terms of noise from aircraft at sensitive ground receptors, although some nuisance to electronics on the ground can, at times, result from nearby aircraft operations.

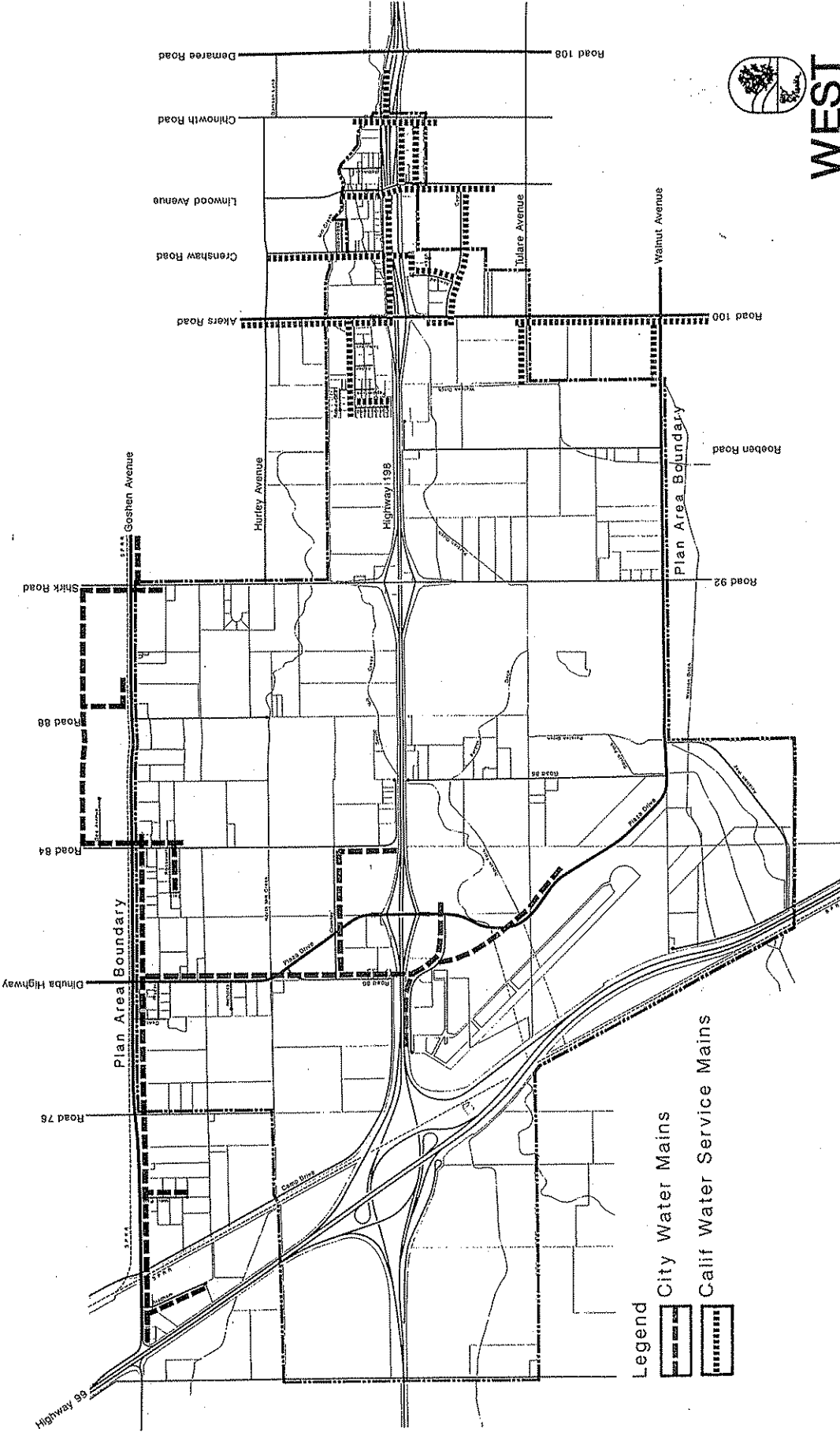
Further conditions of existing development in the Plan area which influence its long-term land use potential are associated with the existing and possible future extent of basic infrastructure systems, including water, sewer and storm drainage improvements. Water supply to the Plan area is, and will continue to be, derived from several systems. Developed urban portions of the area are predominantly served by the California Water Service Company domestic supply system, the source of which is groundwater from a network of wells distributed throughout the community. The City of Visalia also operates a water system which principally services the industrial portion of the Plan area, as well as the airport. Additionally, some residences and businesses located within the area are served by on-site wells, not connected to either of the institutional systems referenced. Although water supply from the local groundwater aquifers is an issue of long-standing concern in Visalia, as in much of the rest of central California, because of historic overdraft conditions attributable to extensive groundwater extraction for agricultural irrigation, it is not anticipated that either of the water system service providers to the Plan area would experience significant difficulty in meeting the expanded needs of a more extensive development of the Plan area. Figure 13 delineates the respective service areas of the California Water Service Company and the City of Visalia as they relate to the Plan area.

Sewer service to the developed portions of the Plan area is provided by the City of Visalia. Figure 14 depicts the extent of the City's existing wastewater collection system in the Plan area, including trunk lines which convey waste flows to the City's treatment facilities located west of Highway 99. Trunk line capacity serving the industrial park has recently been substantially upgraded. Similarly, the City has just completed an expansion of its wastewater treatment facilities, and is also involved in a study preparatory to the adoption of a long-range master plan for plant expansion to continue to serve the needs of the community as it grows. Necessary incremental additions to the City's wastewater collection and treatment system as required to accommodate development of portions of the Plan area appear to present no unusual circumstances which would serve to constrain the long-term evolution of land uses within the area. As portions of the area develop, moreover, from scattered rural residential and occasional business uses currently connected to on-site wastewater disposal systems, these systems would be supplanted by connections to the municipal wastewater collection and disposal network.





# WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN

## Figure 13



**Legend**

-  City Water Mains
-  Calif Water Service Mains

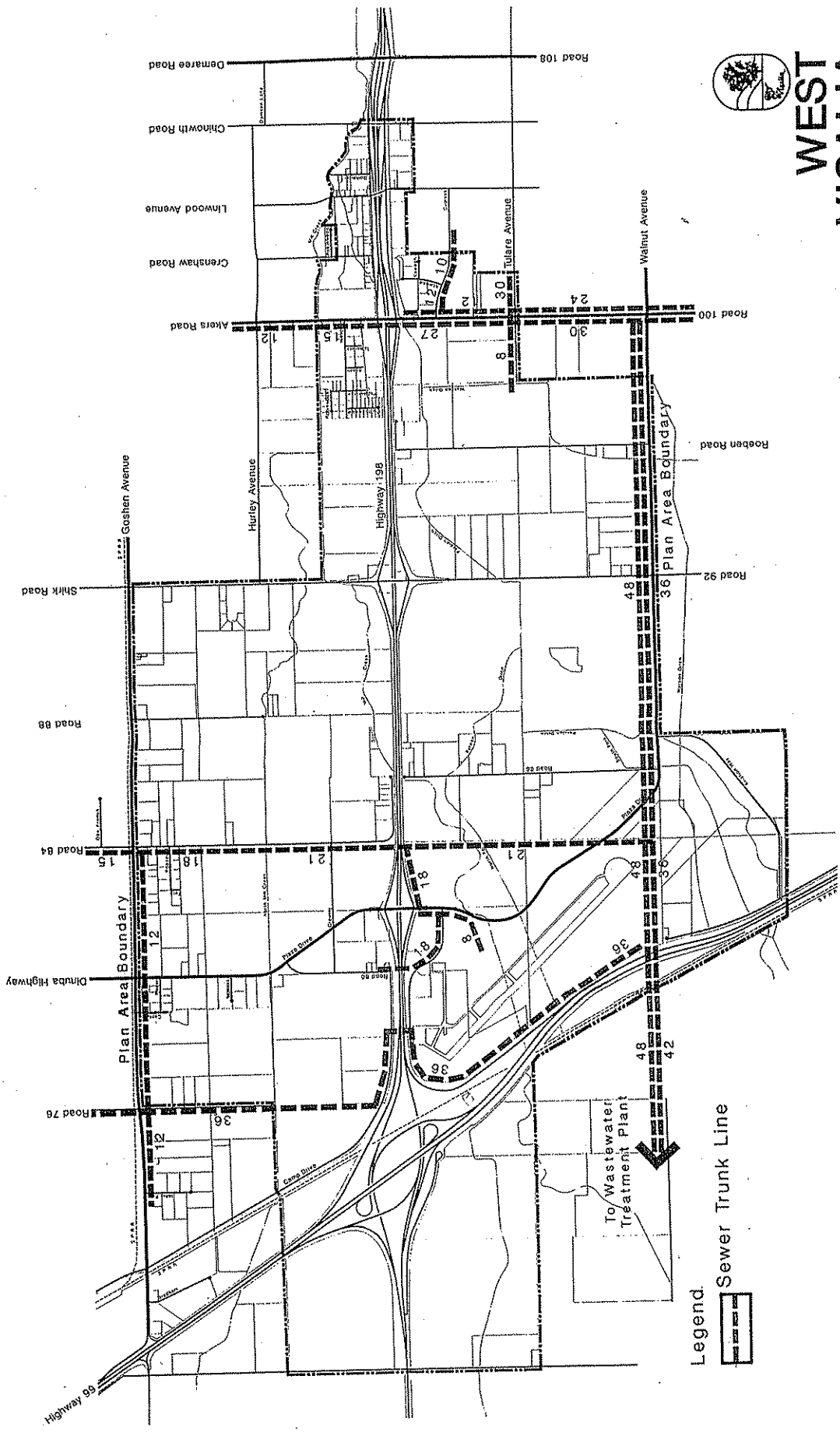
### Service Areas of Domestic Water Suppliers




# WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN

## Figure 14

### Plan Area Wastewater Collection System



Legend:  
 Sewer Trunk Line

Storm drainage in the Plan area is currently provided through a combination of surface channelization, piped collection, irrigation ditch and creek channel discharge, and on-site retention basin systems. Landfall in the Visalia area is slightly to the southwest, at a gradient of approximately five feet per mile. Historically, collected stormwater runoff in the community has been discharged into the series of creeks and irrigation channels which traverse the area. However, with the passage of time and the continued growth of the community, the downstream capacity of the distributary creek and ditch system in the Visalia area has increasingly been exceeded by stormwater runoff discharge requirements. In response to this issue, the City has completed a comprehensive storm drainage master plan. The storm drainage master plan calls for a series of upstream detention basins to be constructed to reduce peak flows in creek and irrigation channels. The plan also, significantly, prescribes the construction of several major stormwater retention basins within the boundaries of the Plan area for the West Visalia Specific Plan. One of these basins is to be located between the two creek channels north of Highway 198 west of Shirk Road. The other, slightly smaller, basin is to be located somewhere along Persian Ditch west of Shirk Road. Based upon the approach outlined in the storm drainage master plan, there do not appear to be any foreseeable drainage-related constraints to the evolution of land uses in the West Visalia Specific Plan area.

### Identified Issues of Significance in Determining Plan Approaches

An early exercise in the process of developing the West Visalia Specific Plan was the identification of issues which might potentially be influential or determinant in the establishment of the ultimate nature and content of the Plan. One full meeting of the Plan's advisory task force was devoted to this process of issue identification and analysis, and a portion of a subsequent meeting was used to confirm the manner in which each of the identified issues was being articulated and regarded in the context of the concerns of individual task force members. In the following segments of this chapter text, the issues initially perceived by the advisory task force as being important to shaping the Plan are repeated. It is important to note that the issues do not reflect agreement among the task force as a whole regarding any possible policy treatment of the Plan area; rather, the process of issue identification was utilized to afford each individual task force member an opportunity to express his or her concerns regarding treatment of the area as the Plan was developed.

### Issues Pertaining to Commercial Development

- Do not use existing auto dealership as a "benchmark" for commercial development standards.
- Apply uniform setbacks and landscaping to the commercial development in the Plan area; setbacks should be at least 50 feet and heavily landscaped; consistency is a key.
- Should the Highway 198 corridor be developed at all? Look at alternatives, including strip,

nodal, mall and frontage road commercial development patterns; frontage roads may complicate the area's circulation system.

- Types of commercial development which might be appropriate could include medical/mental health/institutional; roadside services, e.g. rest areas, tourist information center; major office complexes/office parks; support services (e.g. restaurants); and highway commercial, but with sensitivity to location and design standards.
- The C.O.S. farm or main campus, or a U.C. campus, would be attractive as uses in the corridor.
- The overall direction of planned commercial growth in the community is important.

#### Issues Pertaining to Freeway Development

- Freeway access points should be restricted to major cross streets and should be related to "nodal" development at interchanges.
- What are residual property owner access rights? Are frontage roads the most appropriate access?
- Should the freeway right-of-way be suppressed below grade?
- How much local agency and community influence on CALTRANS' freeway design can be exerted? It is important that local standards be incorporated into this design.
- What will the ultimate alignment of the freeway be?
- What is the realistic timing for the freeway project?
- An expressway, or some level of improvement below full freeway standards, should be evaluated for feasibility.

#### Issues Pertaining to the Agricultural Viability of the Plan Area

- Are remaining agricultural parcels economically viable? How will they be (have they been) impacted by the encroachment of urban development?

- What are the implications of property speculation in the Plan area?
- Is the "viability" of an agricultural property enhanced when the owner knows the site cannot be developed commercially?

#### Issues Pertaining to the Scenic Qualities of West 198

- The Plan should seek to preserve the "green" and "sense of country" characteristics of the 198 corridor.
- Has the concept of the "agrarian" approach along west Highway 198 been lost?
- Setbacks should be maintained along west 198, but how deep? Forty feet may be too little. A half-section may be too large. Should the setback necessarily be agricultural in character?
- Is a regional "strip" park desirable or viable?
- Scenic highway standards should apply to the corridor.
- Trees in the corridor are important.
- Remedial landscaping may be important.
- Mill Creek is an important feature.

#### Issues Pertaining to Development "Rights" of Property Owners

- Within well-defined standards, restrictions should be minimized.
- Compromise. Property owners have residual rights. Private rights, though, may be subordinate to the public good.
- Expectations of property owners will have to be dealt with. The Plan will have to answer owners who ask "Why can't I develop"?
- The potential sequence of development is important, related to the extension of services.
- Absorption capacity of the local development market, and the maintenance of community

equilibrium, are important to consider.

- Compensation to property owners should be considered, including, potentially, mechanisms such as transfer of development rights, acquisition of easements, property trades, differential value compensation, and "public" farms. Condemnation should be avoided.
- Is "old" ownership entitled to different compensation than "new" ownership?

#### Issues Pertaining to Airport Development

- The effects the updated airport master plan may have upon development of the Plan area must be considered. Sensitivity to such issues as noise and safety-related restrictions, the extent of proposed north-south airport expansion, and the magnitude of that expansion should all be incorporated into the Plan process.
- Support for and enhancement of the airport are important.
- Is the proposed shopping center site at Road 80 and Highway 198 incompatible with the operation of the airport?

#### Issues Pertaining to Political Jurisdiction over the Plan Area

- How much of the Plan area, and under what circumstances, should be annexed to the City?
- How does the Plan area, and its potential development, relate to the City's Urban Improvement Boundary?
- Responsibility for services, preservation, and development approvals in the Plan area should be equitable.
- The County is considering a shift in policy in the direction of permitting urban development in unincorporated areas adjacent to cities as a fiscal strategy.
- Cooperation between the City and County in developing and implementing the Plan is essential.



- **Development standards applied by both the City and the County will have to be compatible for the Plan area.**
- **The City and County must have a mutual understanding of needs, objectives, and perspectives regarding the Plan area.**

## CHAPTER THREE

### ALTERNATIVE PLAN CONCEPTS

An integral part of the planning process for any policy development program is the identification and evaluation of potential alternative approaches to the issues being studied. In the formulation of the West Visalia Specific Plan, the City, with input of the advisory task force and the general public, have considered a variety of alternatives for the near and long-term evolution of land uses in the Plan area. Each of these potential development options was discussed by the task force in detail. Factors which would determine the desirability and appropriateness of each alternative were reviewed, and task force and public input was incorporated into a process of selecting the potential "best" development concept for each subarea of the overall Plan area.

The following sections of this chapter summarize the various alternative development concepts presented and considered during the Plan preparation process for each subarea of the Plan area.

#### Subarea A

**1. Retention of Existing Agricultural Use:** This alternative proposed that the subarea, in its entirety, would be retained in agricultural use, enforced through application of appropriate zoning and general planning designation by the City and the County. Factors indicating in favor of this alternative include prevention of removal of productive acreage from agriculture, recognition of potential exposure to conflicts with the Visalia Municipal Airport, and preservation of the scenic qualities of agricultural use for the benefit of motorists passing through this portion of the community. Factors which might weigh against this alternative include property owner/developer pressure to capitalize upon the exposure of the area to high drive-by traffic volumes and develop the area commercially.

**2. Highway Commercial Development:** Under this alternative, the subarea would be allowed to develop to highway-oriented commercial and service uses (e.g. motels, retail gasoline sales, food outlets, etc.). Access to such development would be derived from westbound Highway 198 and Road 68 for the northwest quadrant of the interchange, and exclusively from Road 68 for the southwest quadrant. Comparatively rigorous design, landscaping and setback standards would be required to ensure that development of this subarea created as positive an aesthetic image of Visalia as possible for motorists passing through on the State highway routes. Factors indicating in favor of this alternative include the high visibility and exposure of the area to drive-by traffic and the consequent commercial potential of the area, the relatively good access patterns available to the area, and the comparative ease with which required infrastructure and services could serve the area. Factors which would weigh against this alternative include the potential aesthetic impacts associated with the creation of urban development on sites currently devoted to agriculture, the loss of productive agricultural acreage, and

possible constraining effects on the future development of the Visalia Municipal Airport. Also of concern regarding this alternative is the possible conflict between permitting highway commercial development at the Highway 99/198 interchange and the objectives of the County's Goshen Redevelopment Project, which is directed toward encouraging highway commercial development at the Highway 99/Betty Drive interchange a mile to the north. Finally, a policy-oriented concern associated with this alternative is entailed in the "jumping" of Highway 99 with urban development.

Implementation of Alternative A-1 would only require adoption and administration of an agricultural land use designation in the Specific Plan. This alternative is consistent with the previously-existing general plan and zoning policies of both and City and County.

Implementation of Alternative B-1 would necessitate amendment of the City and County general plans, including the Urban Boundaries Element; annexation of the area to the City; and subsequent formulation of City zoning and design standards and policies to accommodate highway-oriented commercial development in the subarea.

### Subarea B

**1. Regional Retail Commercial:** The previously-referenced 1987 study by the City of potentially viable sites for a regional-level retail shopping mall identified the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange as one of the areas in which such development was potentially feasible. The site is geographically placed advantageously to capture trade from throughout the regional trade market, and access to the site is considered to be excellent. Conflicts between use of this site for a regional mall and operations at the adjacent Visalia Municipal Airport were cited, however, as reasons indicating in favor of a Highway 198 site further to the east. Accompanying any regional mall development would be a substantial amount of ancillary, free-standing commercial uses. Were this development concept to be implemented, it is probable that the entire geographic subarea would be committed to, or would need to be designated for, regional retail commercial development. Accompanying this designation would be a broad scope of related improvement requirements, including upgrading of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange and surrounding access roads, as well as the formulation and imposition of rigorous design and development standards to ensure the quality and aesthetic character of the development which would take place.

**2. Regional Auto Mall:** Under this development scenario, a portion of the subarea lying west of the Road 80 alignment would be developed as a regional automobile sales and service center. Indicating in favor of this alternative are factors such as excellent access and highway visibility and good location with respect to the regional market for local automobile sales. Additionally, the comparatively low-intensity character of the auto mall use, in terms of persons concentrated per acre, renders this use more compatible with adjacent airport operations than other types of commercial use might be. Factors which weigh against this potential use include the loss of existing productive agricultural acreage and the potential conflict of this approach with the City's current commitment to development of an

automobile sales and service center in the easterly portion of Downtown Visalia as a catalyst for the East Visalia Redevelopment Project. The relocation of local automobile dealerships from the Downtown area would substantially alter the character of the redevelopment project area and necessitate significant reformulation of strategies for the East Visalia Redevelopment Project.

**3. Office Park Development:** In conjunction with either of the two alternatives described above, but more likely under a scenario in which the automobile sales center concept were pursued, the portion of this geographic subarea lying east of Plaza Drive would be committed to office uses, with encouragement of "office park" development. Currently, there is limited opportunity to assemble larger sites developable for office purposes, and this area affords the potential to accommodate multiple-building, multiple-acre office complexes, including a high degree of landscaping and amenities. This potential use is compatible with airport-related characteristics of the area. It should be noted, however, that designation of a substantial area for office park development in this geographic subarea may conflict with one objective of the City's East Visalia Redevelopment Project, which also includes a proposal for office park development.

**4. Retention of Existing Agricultural Use:** This alternative would result in the portion of the subarea lying west of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange being retained in its existing agricultural use. The portion of the subarea lying east of the Road 80 alignment and north of the properties fronting along Highway 198 would also be retained in agriculture. These are comparatively large parcels, and do not yet abut urbanized uses to the north. Properties fronting along Highway 198 east of the Road 80 interchange would be allowed to continue as urban uses, with required upgrading of landscape and design standards over time or as new development occurred.

In addition to the alternatives discussed above, discussions with the advisory task force for the Plan produced two additional suggested alternatives. First, it was suggested that an area of approximately forty-two acres located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Road 80 and Highway 198 be considered for the development of highway-oriented commercial uses. Advantages associated with this type of development on the recommended site were cited as good visibility from both Highways 198 and 99, the potential fiscal benefits which would accrue to the City of Visalia associated with the drawing of commercial activity from through traffic on Highway 99, and the comparatively minimal impact upon the aesthetic qualities of the scenic corridor which might result from this development, inasmuch as the interchange of Road 80 and Highway 198 has already largely been urbanized. Public and task force discussion focused upon the need to ensure the imposition of very high quality design standards on development at this location to ensure that the visual impacts on this entrance to the community were positive. A second alternative suggested by the task force entailed extension of the existing service commercial/light industrial development patterns currently located to the north into this subarea. Advantages cited in favor of this alternative included the probable future market demand for this type of use in the Plan area and the general compatibility of this use intensity with the operations of the adjacent Visalia Municipal Airport. Disadvantages associated with this alternative were identified principally as the comparatively high risk that such uses would not be as aesthetically pleasing as other land use concepts proposed for the subarea.

In implementing Alternative B-1, amendments to the existing general plan and zoning designations for much of the subarea would be required to accommodate extensive commercial development. Annexation of substantial portions of the area to the City would also be required. Formulation of appropriate development standards would be essential to accommodate the extent of development proposed without adversely impacting the aesthetic character of the "entrance" to the community. Significant improvements to the supporting street and highway network serving the area would also be required.

Implementation requirements for Alternative B-2 would be essentially the same as for Alternative B-1, other than it is likely that circulation system improvement requirements would be less rigorous.

For Alternative B-3, implementation requirements would be essentially similar to those for the alternatives described above, except that circulation system improvements would not be as substantial as for the regional mall alternative concept.

For Alternative B-4, no specific implementation measures would be necessary beyond specific plan adoption; this alternative is consistent with existing general plan and zoning policies of the City and County.

Implementation of the additional highway commercial alternative would also necessitate the formulation of rigorous design and development standards for the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange vicinity. To accommodate the service commercial/light industrial development option, design standards would have to be developed and the current City General Plan and zoning designations would have to be amended.

### Subarea C

1. **Airport Master Plan:** It is proposed that the West Visalia Specific Plan adopt and incorporate the pending Airport Master Plan for Subarea "C". In addition, the application to this subarea of design and development standards (e.g. landscaping, setbacks, etc.) promulgated through the West Visalia Specific Plan should be undertaken, to ensure consistency with other, comparable development in the planning area.

To accomplish implementation of Alternative C-1 would only require review of, and incorporation into the West Visalia Specific Plan, the pending Airport Master Plan and the addition of specific design and development standards to the policies and standards set out in the Airport Master Plan.

### Subarea D

1. **Retention of Park/Golf Course Uses:** This concept anticipates the long-term continuation of both the Plaza Park and Valley Oak Golf Course facilities at their present locations. No other alternatives were suggested for consideration for

this subarea. Included, however, within this concept is a recommendation that the portions of the park/golf course fronting along Highway 198 be upgraded in appearance. At the present time, the existence of old bridle path fencing, unpaved cart paths, and similar characteristics of the landscape are less attractive than is typical for park/golf course facilities, and landscape enhancements appear to be warranted.

Implementation of this concept necessitates the formulation and implementation of enhanced landscaping standards for the portions of the subarea fronting along Highway 198.

### Subarea E

**1. Industrial (C-4/M-1) Development:** The West Visalia Specific Plan would acknowledge the nature of the relationship between properties lying within this subarea and properties lying closer to, and potentially impacting, the West Highway 198 corridor. Land use designations would include the existing commercial/industrial mix and effectively mirror present City and County policy anticipating the continuing development of this subarea for those purposes. Standards would be developed to ensure that the encroachment of intensive commercial/industrial uses to the south (essentially to the Mill Creek Ditch alignment) would not adversely affect properties approaching the 198 corridor.

Implementation of the development concept described above would require formulation of appropriate design and development standards to provide for transition to, and buffering of, land uses lying to the south of the subarea, ensuring that they are not adversely affected by more intensive urban development.

### Subarea F

**1. Retention of Existing Agricultural Use:** This alternative would leave the subarea in agricultural use, with no new development taking place. Factors weighing in favor of this concept include retention of the current scenic qualities of the corridor, preservation of productive agricultural acreage, and avoidance of potential conflicts with airport operations. Obvious issues which might indicate against this approach are development pressures based upon highest economic return from the land and the relationship of this subarea to surrounding intensive urban development (e.g. regional retail in Subarea G), with consequent constraints upon agricultural operations.

**2. Commercial Development of 198 Frontage:** This concept would allow properties fronting along Highway 198 to a specified depth to develop for commercial purposes. This approach would be regarded as a logical extension of commercial development between the regional retail option for Subarea G (see next section for discussion) and the existing and potential future commercial development immediately to the west at Road 80. North of Highway 198, properties not fronting along the highway would probably also be developed to some urban usage, either office or industrial/service commercial, as a transition to the industrial area represented by Subarea E. Properties south of Highway 198, behind the

commercial development permitted under this alternative, would either be permitted to develop to residential uses or would be retained in agriculture, transitioning to the remaining agricultural properties still further to the south. This concept would necessitate the development of parallel access roads to Highway 198, possibly along the Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch or Persian Ditch alignments. Obvious arguments in favor of this approach are the higher economic return from affected properties and the logic of "infilling" along the highway corridor with commercial development between two other commercial areas. It would be necessary to develop rigorous design and development standards in association with this alternative to preserve some aesthetic character to the corridor. Factors weighing against this alternative include the loss of agriculturally productive land, loss of the corridor's scenic agricultural qualities and potential conflicts between intensive urban uses and the operation of the airport.

**3. "Setback" Commercial/Office Development:** Under this alternative, parallel traffic arterials would be created north and south of Highway 198, possibly along existing creek alignments and along which office or low-intensity commercial development would be allowed to take place. Such development, fronting along the new access routes instead of Highway 198, would allow a substantial setback from the highway to be retained in agricultural or some other "scenic" use.

**4. Residential Development:** This alternative would allow for the development of residential uses in the southerly portion of the subarea. Arguments in favor of this concept include the relative ease with which the area could be served with infrastructure and the obvious economic return potentially available from affected properties in comparison to the return they would generate for owners from continued agricultural usage. This concept would also reflect a continuation of growth in the area started by County approval of a rural residential subdivision immediately south of the subarea approximately a year ago. Disadvantages associated with this approach include the loss of productive agricultural acreage and potential conflicts with both remaining area agriculture and the operation of the airport.

To implement Alternative F-1, retention of the subarea in existing agricultural use, could necessitate one or more of a variety of techniques and approaches. Annexation to the City would be one option, although it would require amendment to existing Urban Boundaries policies; the City might then consider acquisition of properties and lease-back to agricultural interests for operation and maintenance; the option of acquiring, for some compensation set at less than full property market value, scenic easement rights across the highway frontage portions of subarea properties might also be considered. Non-monetary compensation (e.g. property trade, development rights transfer, etc.) also represents a potentially viable approach.

Implementing Alternative F-2 would necessitate both general plan and zoning redesignations; design and development standards would have to be formulated and administered.

For Alternative F-3, implementation requirements would be similar to those for F-2; additionally, the City would necessarily have to select some mechanism for

preserving and maintaining properties between the highway and the rear of new development along the parallel arterials.

For Alternative F-4, general plan and zoning revisions would be required.

### Subarea G

**1. Regional Retail Commercial:** This concept would designate the entire subarea for regional retail development, predominantly focusing on the ultimate advent of a regional retail mall. Factors cited in the City's alternative shopping center locations study supporting the designation of the Akers/198 site for this use included good highway access, adequate available acreage, good location in relationship to the market area's population centers and the absence of liabilities such as airport-related conflicts or traffic/circulation system deficiencies. This development alternative would, however, remove a substantial amount of acreage from current agricultural production and could correspondingly impact the aesthetic qualities of the Highway 198 corridor. Retail commercial development on a substantial scale in this subarea would also probably necessitate the relocation of the existing private school facility. To accommodate the freestanding ancillary commercial development that typically accompanies regional mall development, it would be logical to extend the commercial development of this area to the westerly frontage of Roeben Road.

**2. Professional Office:** This alternative would see the development of professional offices along the westerly side of Akers Road, continuing a trend already established to the east. The portion of the subarea north of Mill Creek would remain undeveloped and provide a landscape buffer between the highway and office uses. Property west of the current rear property line of parcels located along Akers Road would remain undeveloped and in agriculture.

**3. Retention of Existing Agricultural Use:** This alternative is applicable only to properties lying west of the parcels currently fronting along Akers Road, except for that portion of the subarea located north of Mill Creek. Advantages associated with this alternative include retention of productive agricultural acreage and preservation of the current scenic qualities of the highway corridor.

Amendment of the City's general plan and zoning ordinance would be required to implement Alternative G-1 and accommodate regional retail commercial development; upgrading of highway access to the shopping center site, possibly including frontage roads, would also be necessary; mall development has been identified as likely to be approximately a decade in the future.

For Alternative G-2, acquisition of a scenic easement or fee title to property located north of Mill Creek, to ensure preservation of aesthetic qualities, would be required.

For Alternative G-3, implementation steps would be same as for Alternative G-2.



## Subarea H

**1. Urban Development and Landscape:** The subarea would continue to be developed to a mix of commercial, office and institutional uses. Design and development standards would be imposed to ensure the maximum possible aesthetic quality of the area. To the extent feasible, Mill Creek would be utilized as a design amenity for properties developing in this subarea. With the conversion of Highway 198 to freeway status, frontage road (or parallel road) access would have to be maintained or developed to serve properties in this subarea. Implicit in this alternative is the designation of a right-of-way line for the future freeway alignment. Interim development standards and policies, pending ultimate freeway development, would have to be generated and administered.

Implementation procedures for the concept described above would include: establishment of a future right-of-way alignment for freeway development of Highway 198; development of plans for frontage road or parallel road access to properties; formulation and administration of interim design and development standards; and formulation of design and development standards to ensure appropriate landscaping, setbacks, etc.

## Screening and Consideration of Alternatives

Subsequent to discussion with the advisory task force for the Plan of the alternatives outlined in the preceding section, the potentially most viable alternatives, those which generated at least some significant support from among various constituencies represented on the task force, were subjected to further screening and analysis by City staff and the consultants. Included in this screening process were reviews and consideration of the relationship of these alternatives to other major policies and plans of the City, particularly the several planning studies under way at the time with specific implications for the Plan area: the airport master plan, the storm drain master plan, CALTRANS' conceptual plans for the Highway 198 freeway conversion, the update of the City's Conservation, Open Space, Recreation and Parks Element, the update of the City's Noise Element, and the update of the City's Circulation Element, as well as several older plans and studies, such as the Mooney Boulevard and East Visalia Redevelopment Project Plans, the sewer trunk line plan, and the previously-referenced regional mall site study. City representatives also met with and discussed Plan concepts with County planning staff, to ensure that County policies and planning programs were not overlooked in the selection of recommended alternatives for the West Visalia Specific Plan. Finally, in accordance with the recommended sequence for environmental clearance of major planning projects, City staff undertook preparation of environmental initial studies and the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Plan, providing an assessment of the potential environmental implications of various Plan alternatives and helping guide the selection of Plan concepts.

This process of screening and analysis enabled the Plan alternatives described in this chapter to be rigorously evaluated, and in several instances, significantly refined to better tailor them to the planning environment. On the basis

of this process, recommendations for each subarea of the overall Plan area were developed.

Plan recommendations were subsequently the subject of separate public hearings before the City's Planning Commission and the City Council. Based upon its review, the Planning Commission forwarded a version of the Plan to the City Council incorporating a variety of development and environmental preservation concepts and proposals. Included among the Commission's recommendations to the Council were a regional auto mall and auto-related service center at Road 80 and Highway 198; expansion of industrially-designated land adjacent to the City's existing industrial park to accommodate future industrial demand by in-filling; designation of rural residential land use along the west side of Shirk Road north of Mill Creek to accommodate such development already present at that location; a limited extension to the west of current office development at the intersection of Akers Road and Cypress Avenue; and a division of property fronting along the northerly side of Highway 198 east of Shirk Road between residential development and agricultural open space, enabling preservation of the scenic corridor concept through a form of transferring development rights.

At its public hearing on the Plan, in April 1988, the City Council accepted testimony from a number of individuals representing interests in various aspects of the Plan. On the basis of this testimony and its own studies and consideration, the Council adopted the Plan in the form which now appears in this document. The City Council's decision to modify the recommendations of the Planning Commission was based specifically upon the following factors:

- Establishment of potential growth-inducing impacts resultant from increased urbanization of West Visalia;
- Short-term impacts on the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area;
- Conservation of agricultural land use;
- Airport compatibility of Plan-designated land uses; and
- Possible conflicts with City "concentric growth" policies.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WEST VISALIA

This chapter outlines the components of the West Visalia Specific Plan as they will be applied to the Plan area. Components of the Plan include: Plan Goals and Policies; Land Use Plan and Circulation Pattern for Plan Subareas; Public Facilities; and Community Design.

#### Plan Goals and Policies

The West Visalia Specific Plan has been developed to facilitate the attainment of the goals and objectives of the General Plan of the City of Visalia. In furtherance of this purpose, specific goals and policies have been formulated pertinent to the Plan area which are an integral part of the Plan.

A *goal* is a "direction-setter". It is an ideal future end, condition or state related to the public health, safety or general welfare, toward which planning and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, is abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is typically not quantifiable, time-oriented or suggestive of specific actions for its achievement.

A *policy* is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is best stated when it is clear and unambiguous, and policy statements form the foundation of this Specific Plan in guiding future land use and development patterns for the Plan area.

#### Goal Statements for West Visalia Specific Plan

The following statements articulate the goals of the City of Visalia in adopting and implementing the West Visalia Specific Plan:

1. Establishment of land use and development patterns for West Visalia which reflect general community values, interests and priorities and which are, and will remain, consistent with the quality and character of the balance of the community.
2. Preservation and enhancement of the comparatively unique scenic qualities of the west Highway 198 entrance into Visalia.
3. Provision for an orderly and efficient transition between urban and rural land uses.
4. Preservation and maintenance of viable agricultural land.

5. Provision for equitable and appropriate economic returns from lands located within the Plan area.
6. Balance between the interests of private property ownership and the general benefit and welfare of the community at-large.
7. Protection of the long-term operating viability of the Visalia Municipal Airport.
8. Equitable distribution between the City and County of responsibility for Plan implementation and land use regulation in the Plan area, in proportion to "ownership" of values being served and other factors, such as agency fiscal benefits.
9. Establishment of a policy framework, guidelines, standards, and procedures for determining the long-term evolution and development of land uses and supportive infrastructure and services for the Plan area.

#### Policy Statements for West Visalia Specific Plan

The following statements express the general policy framework prescribed for the Plan area by the West Visalia Specific Plan. It should be emphasized that these policies augment, not replace, applicable policies set out in the City of Visalia's General Plan, as those statements might apply to the Plan area.

1. The agricultural quality and character of the "scenic corridor" along west Highway 198, between Plaza Park and Akers Road, shall be preserved and protected by the City of Visalia.
2. Conversion of agricultural land to urban uses shall be discouraged, except for selected parcels currently used for agriculture but designated in this Plan as appropriate for more intensive development because of unique circumstances of location, physiography and/or relationship to adjacent uses.
3. Both private and publicly-owned improved properties along west Highway 198 shall be subject to rigorous design and landscaping standards.
4. To the fullest extent practical and feasible, the City shall acquire properties, or interest in properties, determined to be integral to the preservation of the scenic corridor for which

reasonable private usage is demonstrably precluded by public policy or plans.

5. The long-term operational viability of the Visalia Municipal Airport shall be protected and preserved by prohibiting the development of land uses surrounding or in the vicinity of the airport which would adversely impact that facility.
6. Portions of the Plan area designated in this Plan as appropriate for urban uses shall be encouraged to develop; annexation of such properties shall be promoted by the City to facilitate such development.
7. The City shall encourage annexation of the entire Plan area over the long-term future; the responsibility for administering and providing services supporting urban development in the Plan area and for preserving the scenic and agricultural qualities of portions of the area shall be regarded as ultimately accruing to the City of Visalia.
8. Agricultural zoning shall be regarded as an appropriate and effective implementation tool to accomplish the long-term preservation of agricultural uses in the Plan area; application of this zoning designation by the City, as well as on an interim basis by the County, in the Plan area shall be continued as set out by the land use component of this Plan.
9. Economic opportunities to the community, and corresponding fiscal benefits to the City, shall be pursued by encouraging the development of certain specialized commercial land uses in selected portions of the Plan area (e.g. highway commercial uses at Road 80 and Highway 198, general retail commercial uses at Chinowth Road and Highway 198, industrial uses north of Mill Creek Ditch south of Goshen Avenue).
10. The designation of sites in the Plan area for development of professional office use shall be limited to encourage the location of such facilities in the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area.
11. The designation of sites in the Plan area for regional retail commercial development shall be limited to encourage the location of such facili-

- ties in the Mooney Boulevard Redevelopment Project Area.
12. Design and development standards shall be applied to all development projects in the Plan area to ensure that potential conflicts among adjacent uses are minimized.
  13. Natural physiographic features of the Plan area (e.g. creeks, stands of native trees) shall be utilized to the maximum feasible extent as design amenities and to provide transitions among adjacent land uses.
  14. The long-term viability of the private school facility located within the Plan area shall be protected by the City from potential denigration by adjacent land uses.
  15. The development and redevelopment of properties which may be impacted by upgrading of Highway 198 to full freeway status shall be carefully reviewed by the City; in instances where future right-of-way acquisition may be involved, the City shall discourage development plans which cannot be adapted to viable configurations subsequent to freeway improvement. Plans which can be converted to viable site usages upon freeway conversion and which help minimize the ultimate public cost of freeway right-of-way acquisition shall be encouraged by the City.
  16. The City shall aggressively seek to guide CALTRANS freeway design studies, and community standards for the west Highway 198 corridor shall actively be promoted during freeway design stages.
  17. Implementation of this Plan shall be closely coordinated with the simultaneous carrying out of other plans and community development programs of the City.
  18. The City of Visalia and the County of Tulare shall cooperate in the implementation and administration of this Plan, recognizing their interjurisdictional responsibilities for the Plan area and their mutual interests in the potential benefits of the Plan.

In the following section of this chapter, land use and circulation plans are described for each subarea of the overall Plan area, addressing and falling within

the framework of the goal and policy statements outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

### **Land Use Plan and Circulation Pattern for Plan Subareas**

Corresponding to the subareas of the overall Plan area described in Chapter Two, the following sections of this chapter set out the land use and development plan for each subarea and describe the circulation system and improvements necessary to support the anticipated uses and development. The basis for each aspect of the Plan is discussed, particularly in terms of the goals and policies outlined in the preceding section. The Plan Diagram accompanying this report document graphically depicts the land use and circulation designations discussed in the text below. Implementation measures and programs to accomplish the Plan are described in a following chapter.

#### **Subarea A**

**Agriculture** -- The Plan prescribes that Subarea A, the portion of the Plan area located west of State Highway 99, be retained entirely in agricultural use. The north "half" of this subarea is currently subject to a Williamson Act agricultural preserve contract. The parcels of property in this subarea are large, isolated from any urban development, and are currently productively farmed. No improvements to the abutting circulation system are required to continue to service this subarea as an agricultural use. Access to the properties in question will continue to be derived from Road 68 and Highway 198.

**Interchange Landscaping** -- Although not precisely a development alternative for the subarea, included in this Plan is a commitment to continue a program of landscaping the Plaza Interchange, at the intersection of Highways 198 and 99. Funding commitments have been made by the City Council to this project, and it is important to pursue its completion as part of the overall upgrading of the viewshed and landscape of the Plan area.

#### **Subarea B**

**Airport Protection Area** -- The westerly portion of Subarea B is designated as an airport protection area, with the intention that this area be retained in agricultural use to preclude conflicts between airport operations and potential land uses. This portion of the subarea lies directly under the airport's takeoff/approach pattern, and its designation for low-intensity land use is essential to ensure that air and ground safety and nuisance issues do not constrain future airport operations. Significantly, a substantial portion of this area is currently in agricultural production under Williamson Act agricultural preserve contracts.

**Agriculture** -- In addition to the area designated as agricultural because of airport-related conflicts, as discussed in the immediately preceding paragraph, the Plan designates another seventy-one acre site west of Road 80 for continued agricultural use. In the past, the site in question was considered for development as a regional retail shopping center, but an application for that project on the site was withdrawn before it had been fully processed (see discussion, Chapter One). During

the formulation of this Plan, the potential development of this site as a regional auto mall was also considered. This use was included among the Plan recommendations approved by the City's Planning Commission and forwarded to the City Council. However, substantial testimony was received by the City Council from auto-related service business operators located in east Visalia to the effect that relocation of the community's existing auto dealerships to the proposed auto mall site would create economic hardships among these service outlets. Concerns were also discussed at the Council level that the desired redevelopment of the eastern portion of Visalia's Downtown district might be at least somewhat dependent upon retention of retail automobile sales outlets in that area. Finally, the underlying intent of this Plan to preserve existing productive agricultural land was cited by the Council as an important priority and applicable to this site. Consequently, the Council determined, and this Plan prescribes, that agriculture is the most appropriate land use for the site in question. That use designation is consistent with both City and County current general plan designations for the site.

**Highway Commercial** -- This land use is prescribed for approximately 42 acres situated in the northwest quadrant of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange. The intent of this designation is to afford the opportunity to capture highway commercial trade from Highway 99. This development pattern would also represent a logical extension of the highway-oriented commercial immediately across Highway 198. Inasmuch as this location is highly visible at the "entrance" to the community, and will influence the visual impressions of Visalia made upon motorists traveling on Highway 99, it is regarded as essential that highway commercial development taking place at this location be subject to very rigorous quality and design standards. The Community Design component of this Plan sets out landscaping, architectural and design concepts to ensure the development of this portion of the Plan area takes place in a manner which conforms to the stated Plan goal of preserving and enhancing the scenic qualities of the west Highway 198 entrance to the community.

Included in the Plan for this subarea is the establishment of a highway-oriented tourist information center. It is anticipated that a site of approximately one-half acre to one acre would be required to adequately accommodate this use. The proximity of the site to both Highways 99 and 198, the comparatively high visibility of the site, its relatively easy access, and the potential to locate the facility adjacent to other highway-oriented services and uses combine to render this location for such a center optimal. The development of a center of this type is currently included in the Program of Action of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, pending resolution of a variety of related issues, including site acquisition, funding for staffing, and potential participation by other benefiting entities, such as local and regional tourist-oriented facilities and properties.

Finally, the Council applied a "Reserve" overlay to the Highway-Oriented Commercial use designation for the northerly 11.89 acres of this segment of the Plan area. This reserve status is intended to hold the site in question in agriculture until demand for additional highway commercial land uses requires that this site be available for such development.

**Professional Office** -- The Plan designates a site of approximately sixty-one acres east of Road 80 for development of professional office uses. The City Council, however, in assigning this land use designation, also prescribed a "Reserve" status



for this site, with the intention of forestalling its short-term development. Development phasing, standards and related issues applicable to this segment of the overall Plan area will be determined subsequent to the initial adoption of this Plan, based upon future study.

**Commercial/Industrial Zone** -- The Plan calls for a continuation and expansion of existing commercial and industrial development and use patterns along and behind the northerly Highway 198 frontage east of the Road 80 interchange. This portion of the Plan area encompasses approximately fifty-nine acres. This area is unobtrusive in the scenic corridor viewscape, being essentially hidden from eastbound traffic on Highway 198 by the Road 80 overpass abutment. It is, nevertheless, essential that appropriate design and development standards be applied to projects in this area to ensure compatibility with the character of the remainder of the corridor. Access to this portion of the Plan area would continue to be by local street and a frontage road along Highway 198.

#### Subarea C

**Airport Master Plan** -- The West Visalia Specific Plan calls for the specific extent and configuration of land uses and circulation in this portion of the Plan area to correspond to, and be determined by, the City's master plan for the Visalia Municipal Airport facility. Augmenting the provisions of the master plan, however, this Plan includes realignment of Walnut Avenue/Plaza Drive through Plaza Park to provide for smooth and efficient traffic flow to Highway 198. Also prescribed by this Plan is substantial enhancement of the landscaping along the north side of the airport property, abutting Highway 198 (see Community Design section of this chapter).

#### Subarea D

**Regional Park** -- This Plan calls for continuation of use of this subarea as a regional park and recreation facility. The principal impact on the regional park of this Plan, and related planning projects in progress at the time this Plan is being prepared, is the loss of active recreational facilities attributable to the realignment of Walnut Avenue/Plaza Drive prescribed by the Plan. It will be essential to replace these facilities, including tennis courts, playground equipment and area, and picnic facilities, elsewhere in the vicinity of the park.

This Plan also calls for improved landscaping along the north side of the Valley Oak Golf Course, along Highway 198 (see Community Design section of this chapter). Improvement of this frontage is important to the enhancement and maintenance of the scenic qualities of the west Highway 198 corridor.

#### Subarea E

**Industrial** -- The West Visalia Specific Plan provides for continued development and operation of light industrial uses in much of this portion of the Plan area. The extent of these uses as provided for in this Plan corresponds to the area previously provided for in City and County general plan policies and designations.

Circulation and access to this area will continue to principally be derived from the major arterial roads and streets serving the industrial district: Goshen Avenue, Road 76, Plaza Drive, Road 84, and Shirk Road. Local street networks will also develop as required to meet site-specific needs of new industrial uses introduced into this subarea.

**Agriculture** -- The southeasterly "quarter" of this subarea has been designated for continued agricultural use by this Plan. A portion of this area is currently under Williamson Act contract as an agricultural preserve. The extent of the Plan agricultural designation corresponds to the existing City general plan agricultural designation for the area.

### Subarea F

**Agriculture** -- The Plan designates the predominant majority of Subarea F, referred to earlier in this document as the "heart" of the scenic corridor along Highway 198, for continued agricultural use. Approximately 116 acres of the portion of this subarea lying north of Highway 198 are committed to an agricultural preserve under Williamson Act contract (see Figure 10). Additionally, the City's storm drainage master plans identifies the requirement for a forty to fifty-acre ponding/retention basin somewhere in this subarea, west of Shirk Road and between the north and south channels of Mill Creek. South of Highway 198 in this subarea, a total of approximately 245 acres are under Williamson Act contract for agricultural preserves. Parcels located in the area are generally large, and in instances where smaller parcels exist, they are often under common ownership. To the south of this subarea is further intensive agriculture. To the southwest is the City airport facility, the southerly portion of which is maintained in agricultural use to provide for clearance in the approach/takeoff pattern. The principal intent of this Plan designation is to provide for the long-term maintenance of the agricultural character of the scenic corridor through the preservation and protection of the prime agricultural lands lying within this subarea.

Supporting the position that continued agricultural use of most of Subarea F is potentially viable is data surfaced during the Plan formulation process. The soils underlying the area are generally Class I agricultural soils. As noted above, parcelization of the properties in the area is comparatively minimal. Encroachment by nearby urban development has also been minimal, with the area being abutted on the south, southwest and west by agricultural and open space uses. Consequent restrictions on agriculture, particularly in the southern portion of this subarea, are not severe in terms of pesticide/herbicide application, dust distribution and other aspects of agricultural operations which typically conflict with urban uses.

This aspect of the Plan is potentially one of its most controversial, from the standpoint that at least several of the property owners in this subarea have expressed interest in developing their land to urban uses. Impetus for this development orientation originates partly from the lengthy frontages of some of the properties involved along Highway 198, from historic City growth patterns toward the southwest, from recent County approval of rural residential development in the general vicinity, and from the one-time consideration by the City of the southwest corner of the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198 for regional retail commercial use. In addition to preservation of agriculturally productive lands and

protection of the agrarian character of the Highway 198 corridor, however, there is a basis for retaining agricultural designations for most of Subarea F to be found in other City and County development policies.

Among the most prevalent policies outlined in the County's General Plan are statements emphasizing the importance of orderly, concentric community growth that does not encroach unnecessarily into productive agricultural areas. Moreover, it is the current policy of the County that urban growth in the vicinity of incorporated cities should take place only within approved urban development boundaries and, to the fullest extent possible, within the limits of cities themselves.

Perhaps equally importantly, the City of Visalia has made major policy commitments in the past two decades to "squaring off" community growth patterns. The City's General Plan, its Northeast Area Specific Plan, its Downtown Improvement Plan, and a variety of *ad hoc* planning decisions and policies by the Planning Commission and City Council have all either explicitly or implicitly been intended to redirect growth away from southwest Visalia, where disproportionate development had occurred in previous years. The rationale for these policies and decisions has been sound: the effects of this redirection of growth over the years have included keeping the downtown business district comparatively centrally located with respect to the distribution of the community's population; avoiding the overtaxing of streets and infrastructure disproportionately in any single section of the City; and distributing a variety of neighborhoods and housing opportunities throughout Visalia, reversing a trend toward a community becoming increasingly divided socioeconomically between the north and south sides of Highway 198.

It should be noted that the Plan designation of agriculture for most of Subarea F includes properties located along the north side of Walnut Avenue, between Roeben and Shirk Roads. These properties are zoned for large-lot rural residential use by the County of Tulare as of the date this Plan was prepared. It is regarded as important to preserving the overall agricultural integrity of the area, however, for these properties to remain in their present, largely agricultural usage. Development of this portion of Subarea F to rural residential uses would "hem in" remaining agricultural properties to the north and could significantly compromise their continued viability for agricultural production.

It should also be noted that properties lying north of Highway 198 east of Shirk Road in this subarea are designated in this Plan for retention in agriculture. In the recommendations submitted by the Planning Commission to the City Council, portions of these properties, at their northerly extremes and abutting residential development already approved to the north of Mill Creek Ditch, were designated for residential development. However, the Council felt that displacement of existing agricultural uses in this vicinity was inappropriate.

**Residential** -- The Plan provides for residential development to take place in one portion of Subarea F. The extreme southeast portion of this subarea is identified for residential development as an extension of the existing urbanized pattern of development to the immediate east. Principal access to this development will be from Walnut Avenue and from an extension of the Tulare Avenue alignment, augmented by a network of local streets to be established in conjunction with project design.

## Subarea G

Among aspects of the Plan which received particularly intensive study, land use designations for Subarea G were particularly significant. As discussed previously in this document, the southwest corner of the intersection of Akers Road and Highway 198 was tentatively established by a study sponsored by the City as potentially the most suitable location in Visalia for development of a regional retail shopping mall. Moreover, this same site was identified by the previously-referenced Commercial Task Force study as appropriate for designation for regional retail commercial. Finally, the site has been discussed as one potential location for the development and operation of a regional auto mall. City ownership of a significant portion of this subarea has added an interesting further character to discussions regarding the future development potential of the area.

This Plan does not include provision for any of the three land use options described above. The regional retail shopping center concept is excluded on the basis that a development of that scale and intensity, with the ancillary retail commercial uses which would inevitably accompany it on adjacent properties, would substantially and irrevocably damage the quality and character of the scenic corridor. Impacts of a land use of this magnitude and intensity would also significantly affect the viability of the continued operation of the existing private school facility located in the southerly portion of this subarea. Moreover, and of virtually equal importance on a community-wide scale, is the potential relationship of such a project to existing retail trade districts in Visalia. According to the plan for the Mooney Boulevard Redevelopment Project, South Mooney Boulevard can accommodate the addition of over 600,000 square feet of net new retail commercial development. Reviewing two independently-generated projections of market demand for new local retail commercial development for the next twenty years, intensification of Mooney Boulevard to the extent envisioned in the redevelopment plan would appear to obviate the need for a new regional retail mall in Visalia until well past the year 2000.

The designation of other regional retail commercial use at the Highway 198/Akers Road intersection similarly threatens the integrity of the nearby school facility and the scenic corridor. Moreover, such development would be situated at essentially the far western extreme of residential development in the City of Visalia. Unless the nature of commercial uses established at this location were truly regional, not "community-level" (e.g. Mineral King Plaza shopping center, with a supermarket, drug store, ancillary shops) as often developed under this land use designation in Visalia, the Akers/198 intersection is poorly located with relationship to market area population.

The development of an auto mall at this location is judged to be weighted with the same potential negative consequences for nearby agricultural lands, the school, and the scenic corridor as those which apply to a regional retail mall, although probably at somewhat lower intensities of impact.

**Agriculture** -- The Plan designates most of Subarea G for agricultural use. This designation contributes to the preservation of prime agricultural lands, in conformance to goals of the Plan. It also recognizes the importance of the Highway

198 frontage in this subarea to the character and continuity of the scenic corridor. This use is essentially compatible with, and nondisruptive of the school site in the southerly portion of the subarea. Finally, inasmuch as the City is one of the property owners affected by this designation, there is an increased sharing of public sector investment with the private sector in preserving the scenic corridor as an outcome of this designation.

**Public/Quasi-Public** -- This land use designation is intended to accommodate the existing privately-operated K-12 school located in the southerly portion of Subarea G. In addition to the present school site, area has been provided for expansion of this facility toward Akers Road, on the east. Access to this facility will continue to be from Akers Road.

### Subarea H

Subarea H, as discussed previously in this document, is already essentially developed to urban uses, and it is at this point in the Highway 198 corridor that the agricultural character of the entrance to the community shifts substantially to a more urban landscape. Accordingly, this Plan seeks to provide for urban development in Subarea H in a manner which accomplishes several key objectives.

First, the "quality" of the landscape along the highway corridor must not be compromised. The eastward transition from rural to urban character on west Highway 198 approaching Visalia need not necessarily be accompanied by a diminishing attractiveness in the appearance of this portion of the community. High-quality urban landscaping is a prescription of the Plan for Subarea H to ensure that this segment of the entrance to the community from the west has a pleasant and attractive appearance.

Second, planning for this subarea must take cognizance of the impending conversion of Highway 198 in this vicinity to full freeway status. To a greater degree than any other portion of the Plan area, this subarea is potentially impacted by plans for the future freeway. Based upon an assumption that the freeway right-of-way will be suppressed below grade beginning approximately at Akers Road and continuing eastward, land use and circulation proposals for Subarea H must be compatible with the long-term introduction of the freeway into this segment of the community. One overriding objective of planning for the development and redevelopment of this subarea is the City's intent to minimize, to the fullest reasonable extent, the ultimate public costs associated with the acquisition of necessary land area for future freeway right-of-way.

Finally, it is the intent of this Plan to protect, enhance, and provide for the expansion of existing urban development in this subarea. Along the south side of Highway 198, existing land uses are comparatively new and developed on larger parcels. On the north side of the highway, development is mixed among both new and older uses, many of which are located on small and irregularly configured parcels. It is anticipated that existing development and land use trends along the south Highway 198 frontage will persist through the term of this Plan; substantial redevelopment of lands, including the introduction of new land uses, will take place in that portion of Subarea H lying north of the highway.

**Professional Office** -- Professional office and related institutional usage is designated for portions of Subarea H lying both north and south of Highway 198. To a large extent, this designation simply reflects the pattern of land uses already established for much of this segment of the subarea. New development would be confined to the southerly frontage of Cypress Avenue east of Akers Road, infill of an existing office complex on the north side of Cypress, several parcels in the vicinity of the Visalia Medical Clinic building north of Highway 198 on Hillsdale Drive, and several parcels on Akers Road north of the highway. Additionally, the Plan calls for the long-term redevelopment of parcels along the north side of Highway 198 east of Akers Road, to Bollinger Road, to office uses, ultimately replacing existing residential and commercial uses in this vicinity. Most of these existing uses will be displaced by the additional right-of-way required to accommodate the freeway conversion of Highway 198. Presently, it is anticipated that acquisition of 200 to 250 feet north of the existing edge of right-of-way will be required for the freeway. The Plan provides for a depth of approximately 200 additional feet to be developed to office uses along what will be a frontage road paralleling the highway.

**Highway Commercial** -- Along the southerly frontage of Highway 198, west of the current Highway Patrol headquarters, extending to Linwood Avenue on the east, the Plan calls for continuation of the present highway commercial uses located in that vicinity. Subsequent to freeway conversion, these properties would derive access directly from a frontage road paralleling the highway.

**Retail Commercial** -- The Plan designates two segments of Subarea H for general commercial development: the current location of the Mineral King Plaza shopping center on the south side of Highway 198, between Linwood and Chinowth Avenues, and property north of the highway, between Bollinger Road and Chinowth. Until such time as conversion of Highway 198 to freeway status is completed, the Mineral King Plaza center would continue to be accessed from Linwood and Chinowth, as well as from the highway (ingress only). Following completion of the freeway conversion, this property may derive access from a frontage road paralleling the highway, rather than from the highway itself. On the north side of Highway 198, however, commercial development of the properties between Chinowth and Bollinger would have to be accompanied by substantial improvements to the configuration and function of the existing intersection of Highway 198, Akers Road and the existing frontage road in this area. Moreover, any site design for commercial development in this area would have to make provisions for site utilization in both the pre-freeway and post-freeway environments (see Community Design section of this chapter).

**Residential** -- Residential uses are provided for by the Plan in three separate segments of Subarea H. First, continuation of residential development patterns which are already established is designated for the portion of this subarea lying immediately west of the Visalia Medical Clinic and north of Highway 198. Second, the predominantly older residential neighborhood between Crenshaw and Bollinger Roads, north of Highway 198 is also expected to persist under this Plan. Finally, additional new residential acreage is designated east of Akers Road, south of office development proposed along the south side of Cypress Avenue. This residential designation is intended to ensure land use compatibility at this location with the private school facility located immediately to the west, across Akers Road, as well as to reduce the total land area in this vicinity which might otherwise develop to

professional office purposes, consistent with the policy set forth in this Plan to facilitate redevelopment of the east downtown section of Visalia. Access to these residential areas would continue to be derived for the term of this Plan from the streets named above: Akers Road, Hillsdale Drive, Crenshaw Road, Linwood Avenue, and Bollinger Road.

### Public Facilities

The mandated requirements for a specific plan include a discussion of the proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan. In the following paragraphs of this section, a summary of public facilities and infrastructure components of the West Visalia Specific Plan is provided, delineating the extent to which such facilities will be developed in support of the land uses evolving in the Plan area.

### Circulation/Transportation

The circulation system required to serve the Plan area as designated land uses evolve is discussed generally in the preceding section of this chapter and reflected on the Plan Map attached to this document. The key element of the Plan area circulation system is the State Highway 198 route running east-west through the length of the area. Improvements and/or modifications anticipated to this highway during the term of this Plan are principally those associated with the ultimate conversion of this route to full freeway status. Specific design studies for this project have just been initiated as of the date this Plan document is being adopted. The following characteristics of the project have been identified, through previous community discussions and CALTRANS/City input, as being likely and potentially desirable aspects of the project: (1) Travel lanes at natural grade from the Road 80 interchange east to a point just easterly of Akers Road; (2) a right-of-way suppressed below grade, minimizing the visual impact of the project to the community, from just easterly of Akers Road to the existing freeway east of County Center Drive; (3) access to abutting properties from a system of parallel frontage roads extending along both sides of the freeway right-of-way from Akers Road east; (4) full freeway interchanges located at State Highway 99, Road 80, Shirk Road, and Akers Road, with an on-off ramp system in the vicinity of Chinowth and Demaree Roads; and (5) overpasses crossing the freeway and providing north-south circulation at Road 80/Plaza Drive, Shirk Road, Akers Road, Linwood Avenue, and Chinowth Road (an additional overpass will be provided at Demaree Road, just east of the Plan area). Minimal right-of-way acquisition will be required to accomplish this freeway conversion project west of Akers Road, with the exception of area necessary for interchange development at Shirk Road. A fifteen-foot special setback will be required on both sides of Highway 198 from Road 80 to Akers Road. Right-of-way acquisition requirements east of Akers Road, however, will be substantial. Approximately 200 to 250 feet of new State right-of-way, to accommodate the freeway and frontage road system, will be taken from properties lying along the north side of the existing highway route between Akers and Chinowth Roads.

In the interim period between Plan adoption and completion of the freeway conversion project, commercial development designated for the easterly portion of the Plan area in the vicinity of Chinowth Avenue, north of Highway 198, will require significant improvement to the existing interface among the highway, the parallel frontage road in this vicinity and Chinowth. Specific redesign of this intersection will necessarily include, at a minimum, separation of frontage road/Chinowth cross traffic from the current expressway right-of-way. It may be desirable, and more economically advantageous in the long term, to redesign this intersection on an interim basis to conform to its probable configuration subsequent to freeway conversion.

Other significant elements of the Plan area circulation system include a realignment of Walnut Avenue/Plaza drive south of Highway 198 to facilitate the flow of through traffic north to the highway; and the creation of localized street and road networks as required to access properties designated in the Plan for future urban development.

The importance of the Visalia Municipal Airport as a major transportation facility is recognized by the Plan. Plan land use designations, policies, and implementation programs are geared specifically toward the long-term preservation, maintenance and expansion of operations at the airport. As noted previously in this document, the specific extent and character of development on the airport site will be prescribed by the updated Airport Master Plan, being prepared concurrently with, but separately from, this Plan.

#### Wastewater Collection and Disposal

Wastewater collection and disposal in the Plan area will be accomplished in two ways. Portions of the Plan area designated for urban development will be connected to the City of Visalia's municipal sewage collection, treatment and disposal system (see Figure 14). Major components of this system include two trunk lines in Walnut Avenue, along the southerly boundary of the Plan Area and a trunk line serving the industrial area of the community which intercepts the Walnut Avenue lines at the southerly end of the airport, followed by transmission of flows under Highway 99 and west to the City's wastewater treatment and disposal facilities. Development in the vicinity of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange would discharge waste flows into a local collection system and then into the industrial trunk line running south toward the airport. Residential development designated for the extreme southeasterly portion of the Plan area would discharge locally-collected waste flows directly into the Walnut Avenue trunk lines. New office and residential development prescribed in the Plan for the vicinity of Akers Road and Highway 198 would require waste flows to be conveyed via an existing line in Akers Road to the Walnut Avenue trunk lines.

Wastewater treatment and disposal for those portions of the Plan area designated for continued, long-term rural or agricultural use will be accomplished by the utilization of on-site disposal systems, consistent with current practice.



## Domestic Water

Domestic water supply to development in the Plan area will be provided predominantly by the California Water Service Company, although a small portion of the area is served by the City of Visalia's municipally-owned industrial water system (see Figure 13). No major new facility construction is anticipated in conjunction with development of the Plan area as provided for in the Plan. Expansion of the two referenced water systems to serve Plan area development will be incremental and proportionately minor.

## Storm Drainage

Storm drainage needs in the Plan area will continue to be met by a combination of on-street surface conveyance and underground collection and conveyance facilities as the area develops. Concurrently with, but separately from, the formulation of this Plan, the City also completed a storm drainage master Plan for the entire community. This Plan provides for the introduction of two major storm drainage facilities into the Plan area, as well as specifying that the several creek and irrigation channels traversing the area will continue to play significant roles in the handling and disposal of storm drainage runoff community-wide. The storm drain master plan calls for the location of a forty to fifty-acre ponding/retention basin to be located north of Highway 198, west of Shirk Road between the North and South Mill Creek channels. This basin is intended to serve as a repository for storm runoff generated from the urban portions of the community located upstream. A similar, but smaller, basin is proposed for somewhere along the Persian Ditch channel, south of Highway 198 and west of Shirk Road.

## Other Public Facilities

There are no solid waste disposal or energy-related facilities projected for the Plan area over the term of the West Visalia Specific Plan. Only normal utility extensions for electrical and natural gas service to urban uses slated for the Plan area are anticipated.

Other public facilities not previously discussed in this section that will be developed or maintained in the Plan area include the Plaza Regional Park/Valley Oak Golf Course complex, the creek and irrigation ditch channels extending throughout portions of the area, and a tourist information center located in conjunction with highway-oriented commercial development in the vicinity of Road 80 and Highway 198. Each of these facilities is depicted on the Plan Map accompanying this document.

## Community Design

One of the most important aspects of ensuring that the goals and intent of the West Visalia Specific Plan are fulfilled as the Plan area evolves is the formulation and implementation of appropriate design and development standards for the area. Discussion of prospective land use patterns throughout the preceding sections of this Plan continually makes reference to the necessity for such standards,

recognizing that the *quality* of land development in the Plan area, not just the *type*, significantly influences the potential desirability of many of the land use directions established by the Plan. Accordingly, in this section of the Plan document, specific design and development standards are prescribed for key segments of the Plan area. It is intended that these standards be implemented in addition to those imposed by underlying provisions of City and County zoning and development regulations applicable to each area. Moreover, these standards are to be construed as equally authoritative in the administration and regulation of land use and development in the Plan area.

### Land Use Designations

This section describes the land use designations applied by this Plan to properties located in the Plan area and defines the types and intensities of uses associated with each designation.

**Agriculture** -- This Plan land use designation provides for intensive agricultural production, including cultivation and processing of agricultural crops and/or products. This designation does not, for the purposes of this Plan, encompass agriculturally-related industries or commercial uses. Minimum parcel size prescribed under this land use designation is twenty acres. One residence per parcel would be permitted under this designation. Subdivision of parcels below the twenty-acre prescribed minimum and/or the development of residential units in excess of the prescribed maximum of one per parcel will be prohibited under this Plan. Applicable zoning designations for this land use category are A (Agricultural) in the City of Visalia and AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-acre minimum parcel size) in the County of Tulare.

As urban development occurs within the West Visalia Specific Plan area, a variety of residential, commercial and industrial uses will locate adjacent to preexisting agricultural parcels. As a result, agricultural operations may become the subject of nuisance complaints or litigation and could be pressured to cease or curtail operations, or may be discouraged from making investments in farm improvements. To help conserve and protect the continued viability of agricultural operations in West Visalia, this Plan seeks to limit the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance. An intent of this Plan is to balance the rights of farmers to produce agricultural commodities with the rights of nonfarmers who own, occupy or use land adjacent to agricultural property. Accordingly, no agricultural operations conducted or maintained in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar agricultural operations in the region, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality if the agricultural operation was existing at the time the adjacent use was developed or created and was not a nuisance at the time such development was initiated. This provision should not be construed as invalidating any requirement or definition set out in the State Health and Safety Code, the Fish and Game Code, the Food and Agriculture Code, or Division 7 (commencing with Section 13000) of the Water Code of the State of California, nor does this provision modify or abridge any other section of State law set out in the California Civil Code relative to nuisances. It is, however, to be utilized in the interpretation and enforcement of applicable local codes and ordinances.

**Airport** -- This land use designation applies to the premises and environs surrounding the Visalia Municipal Airport. The development and utilization of any lands under this designation shall be subject to, and determined by, the policies and prescriptions of the adopted Airport Master Plan of the City of Visalia, as that plan may, from time to time, be amended. Zoning categories applicable to this land use designation include the City's AP (Airport Land Use) zone and such other zoning categories as may be consistent with development permitted under the Airport Master Plan.

**Commercial/Industrial** -- This land use designation is intended to provide for the continued development of the mix of service, commercial and light industrial uses evolving in the area located along the north side of Highway 198, east of the Road 80 interchange. Uses provided for by this Plan designation are those typically associated with and permitted, or conditionally permitted, under the City's C-4/M-1 (Planned Commercial Service/Light Industrial) zone, the applicable zoning designation for this portion of the Plan area as well.

**Highway Commercial** -- This land use designation is intended to provide for the development of highway-oriented commercial uses, offering sales, services and entertainment to the traveling public. Uses permitted under this designation include those typically developed at major highway interchanges. Applicable City zoning for this land use designation is C-5 (Planned Highway Commercial).

**Industrial** -- The Industrial land use designation under this Plan is intended to provide for the continued development of light industrial uses consistent with the intensity and character of such uses as already prevalent in the northerly portion of the Plan area. Applicable zoning categories for this land use designation are the City's C-4/M-1 (Planned Commercial Service/Light Industrial) and the County's M-1 (Light Industrial) zones.

**Professional Office** -- This land use designation provides for the development of professional office and institutional uses in the Plan area. Applicable zoning is the City's P-A (Planned Professional and Administrative Office) zone.

**Public/Quasi-Public** -- The purpose of this Plan land use designation is to provide for the continued operation and ultimate potential expansion of the private K-12 school facility located in the Plan area. Applicable zoning is the City's Q-P (Quasi-Public) zone.

**Regional Park** -- This designation prescribes the continued utilization of a portion of the Plan area for regional park and recreational purposes, including the existing Plaza Park and Valley Oak Golf Course facilities. Development and maintenance of these facilities shall be governed by the adopted master Plan for the park. Applicable zoning is the City's Q-P (Quasi-Public) zone.

**Residential** -- This designation provides for both the continuation of existing residential uses located within the Plan area and for the development of a limited amount of new residential use. Maximum residential density permitted under this designation is one dwelling unit per net 6,000 square feet of building site. This density may be increased only to the extent permissible and enabled by existing

provisions of the City's zoning ordinance, which provides for density bonuses in exchange for material amenities being included in a proposed development (e.g. usable open space). Applicable underlying zoning for this designation is the City's R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zone. Although some existing multiple-family residential development in the Plan area predates the adoption of this Plan, such uses are regarded herein as nonconforming, and no provision is made for any additional such development in the Plan area.

**Retail Commercial** -- This designation is established in the Plan to accommodate the existing Mineral King Plaza shopping center, at the far easterly extreme of the Plan area, and to provide for the development of additional regional-level retail commercial directly north of that shopping center, at Highway 198 and Chinowth Road. Although Mineral King Plaza is commonly referred to as regional commercial, it actually serves a community-level function in its provision of a supermarket, drug store and small ancillary shops; it is intended that development at Highway 198 and Chinowth to the north of this location be more regional and retail-oriented in its character, and the introduction of larger free-standing retail uses at this site shall be encouraged. Applicable City zoning for this land use designation is the C-2 (Planned Regional Commercial) zone.

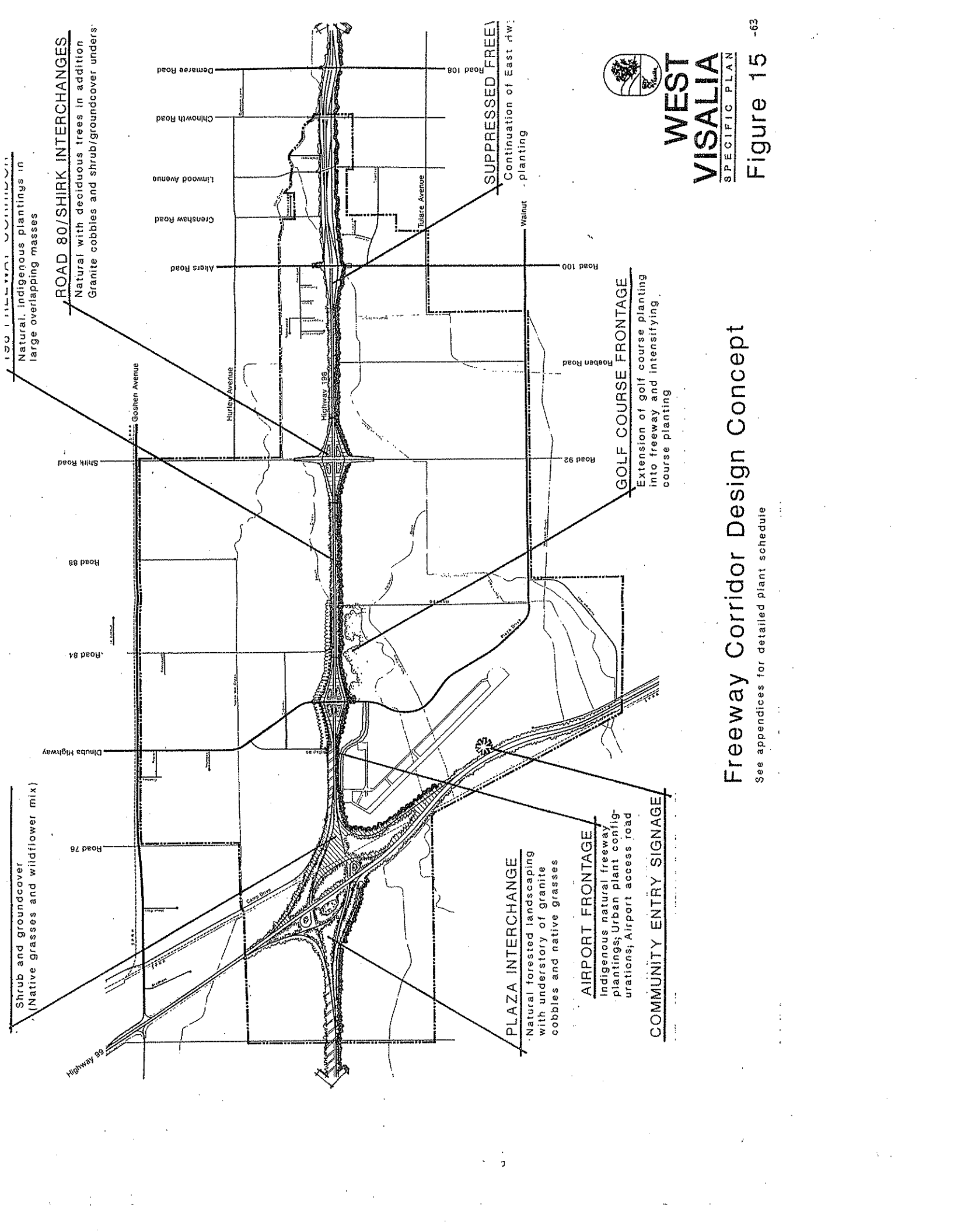
### Plan Design Elements and Standards

Design elements have been conceptually developed and standards established for the following segments of the Plan area: Freeway Corridor and Interchanges; Public Facilities; Highway Commercial Cluster; Service Commercial/Light Industrial District; the Crenshaw Commercial District; and for areas denoted as Waterways and Natural Features. Design concepts and standards for each of these Plan area segments are described in the following paragraphs.

**Freeway Corridor and Interchanges** -- Figure 15 conceptually illustrates landscape and design approaches for the Highway 198 freeway corridor for its length through the Plan area, including both public right-of-way and abutting privately-owned property. This Plan calls for intensive landscaping of the freeway right-of-way, including the four major interchanges existing and proposed along the length of the freeway through the area.

At the Plaza interchange, the Plan prescribes a "natural, forested" landscape scheme, with both climatically and culturally indigenous tree species creating an attractive "gateway" to the community for highway traffic and enhancing the visual impression of Visalia for passer-by traffic on Highway 99. The understory for this area will be characterized by native grasses and a wildflower mix and a distribution of granite cobbles. Appendix A to this document lists the plant and tree species determined to be most appropriate for utilization in carrying out this landscape concept.

East of the Plaza interchange, the Plan prescribes landscape treatment of the freeway right-of-way and of the abutting developed properties: the municipal airport property on the south and the proposed regional auto mall and highway commercial cluster on the north. Easterly along the freeway from the Plaza interchange toward the Visalia Municipal Airport, the treatment will consist of shrub and groundcover planting only, keeping landscape elements low to avoid air traffic conflicts. Along



Shrub and groundcover  
(Native grasses and wildflower mix)

Road 88  
Road 84  
Dinuba Highway  
Road 76  
Road 78

Road 80/Shirk Interchanges  
Natural, indigenous plantings in large overlapping masses  
Natural with deciduous trees in addition  
Granite cobbles and shrub/groundcover unders

PLAZA INTERCHANGE  
Natural forested landscaping with understorey of granite cobbles and native grasses

AIRPORT FRONTAGE  
Indigenous natural freeway plantings; Urban plant configurations; Airport access road

COMMUNITY ENTRY SIGNAGE

GOLF COURSE FRONTAGE  
Extension of golf course planting into freeway and intensifying course planting

SUPPRESSED FREEWAY  
Continuation of East rd; Walnut - planting

Road 108  
Demaree Road  
Chinowth Road  
Linwood Avenue  
Greshaw Road  
Akers Road  
Tulare Avenue  
Walnut - planting

Road 100  
Robben Road



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SPECIFIC PLAN

**Freeway Corridor Design Concept**

See appendices for detailed plant schedule

the freeway on both the north and south, intensive landscaping of the freeway right-of-way is prescribed by the Plan. Use of such culturally and climatically indigenous tree species as oaks, London Planes, cottonwoods, and zelkovas will typify this landscape treatment, with an understory of related, medium-size shrubs and groundcover (Honeysuckle). Throughout the freeway corridor, tree plantings are proposed in large, overlapping "drifts" of not less than seven trees in order to create a strong, substantive, more natural character to the landscape. Appendix A provides details of the planting scheme proposed for the freeway corridor.

Figure 16 presents a conceptual landscape treatment plan for the Road 80 and proposed Shirk Road at Highway 198 freeway interchanges. Carrying through the theme established for the corridor to the west, landscape concepts for these interchanges integrate the additional element of deciduous tree plantings, which will add seasonal color and create a transition to adjacent and nearby urban uses. The plan illustrated in Figure 16 represents a revision and enhancement to an existing landscape plan created for the Road 80 interchange. The key features of this revision are a plant list comprised of species more appropriate to the local environment and more consistent with the "natural" theme being established for the corridor (see Appendix A) and a configuration of plantings which strengthens this theme.

Landscape characteristics for the freeway corridor easterly of Akers Road are proposed to be essentially identical to the existing landscaping scheme for Highway 198 from County Center Road to the east. It is anticipated in this Plan that the freeway right-of-way will be suppressed below grade from Akers Road east.

**Public Facilities** -- Significant upgrading of the landscape treatment of the municipal airport property abutting Highway 198 is called for by this Plan. Figure 17, on the following page, conceptually illustrates proposed landscaping for this portion of the airport property. This landscape element is more urban in character than the overall freeway corridor, and is characterized by liquidambar, ginkgo, and pine trees. Planting patterns are more structured (double row) than is provided for in the freeway right-of-way. The access road to the terminal is lined with trees, and the turn-around portion of this road at the terminal building includes a landscaped median. Turf berms accent the parkways abutting this road, as well as the median at the turnaround.

Figure 18 illustrates a concept for enhancement of landscape treatment of the City-owned Valley Oak Golf Course frontage along Highway 198. Proposed by this Plan is an "extension" of the golf course landscape into the freeway corridor, with "windows" into the golf course viewscape created at the tees along the freeway edge. At the same time, the function of the course itself would be improved by substantially increased tree plantings behind the greens on this part of the course. Appendix A prescribes a planting list for this element of the Plan's landscape component; significantly, this list omits eucalyptus plantings in the freeway corridor as being inconsistent thematically with the remainder of the recommended plant mix.

**Highway Commercial Cluster** -- The location of the highway-oriented commercial development designated by the Plan for the vicinity of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange is prominently visible to vehicular traffic along

HIGHWAY 198  
MEDIAN WITH EXISTING  
OAKS AND GROUND COVER

GROUND COVER

SHRUB MASS

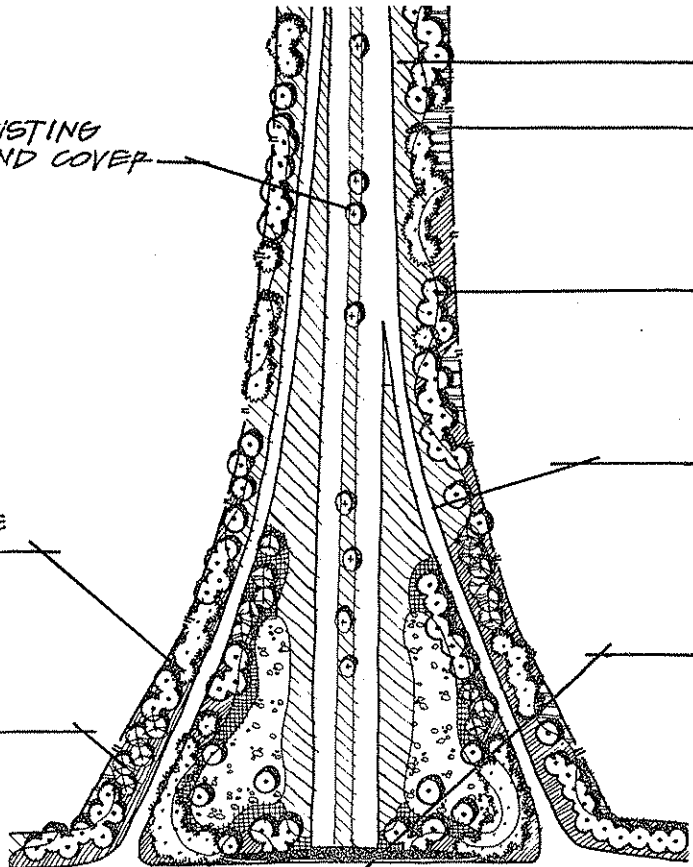
LARGE, NATURAL,  
OVERLAPPING TREE  
MASSINGS

ON-RAMPS

DECIDUOUS TREE  
ACCENTS

OVERPASS

ACCENT  
TREE PLANTING



DECIDUOUS TREE  
ACCENTS

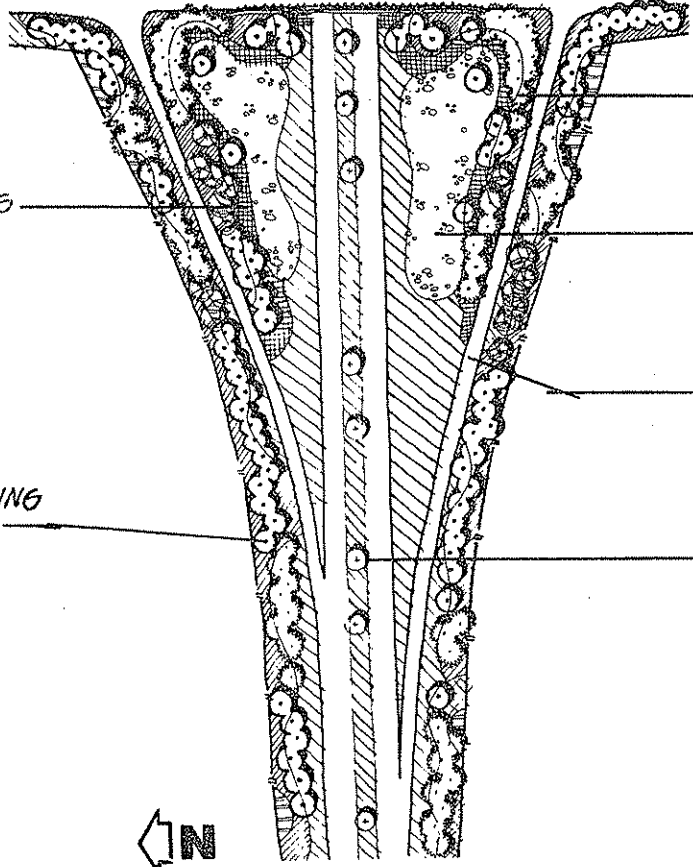
DARK SHRUB  
BACK-DROP TO  
GRANITE COBBLES

LARGE GRANITE  
RIVER COBBLES

OFF-RAMP

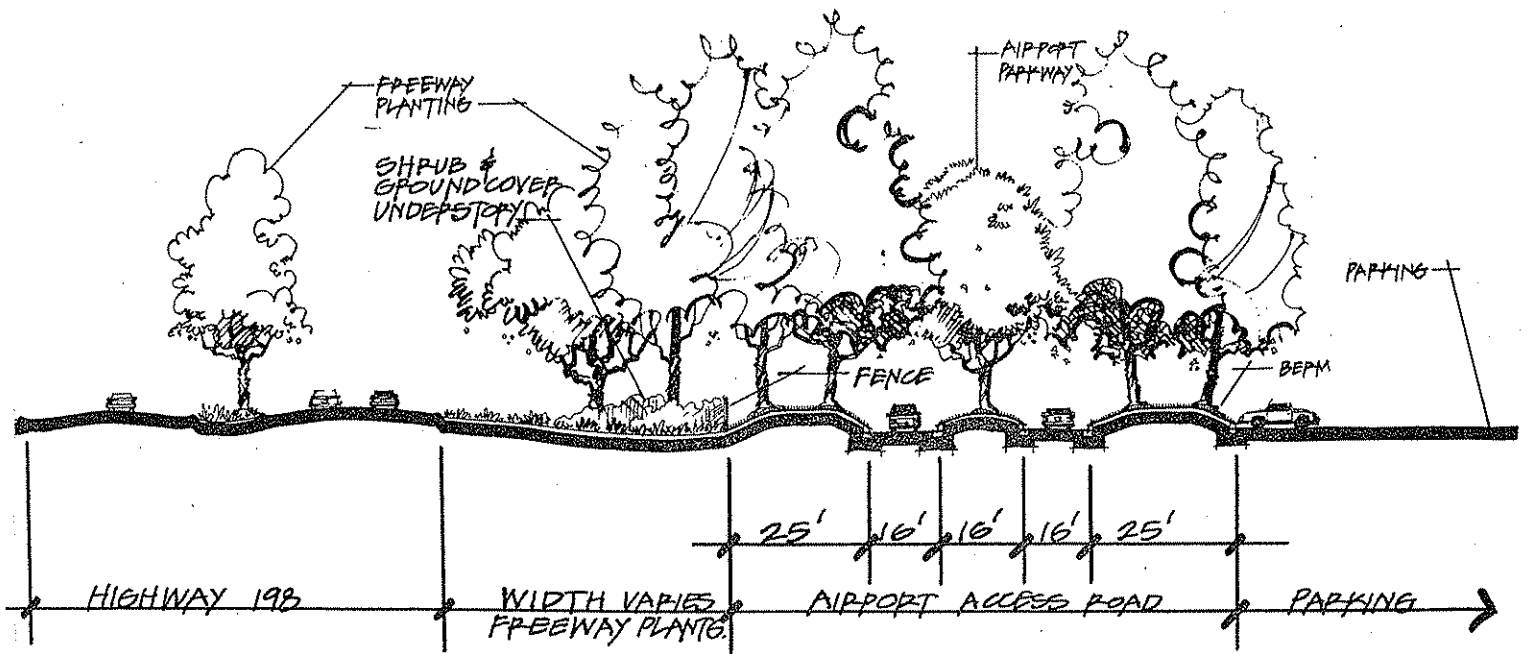
LARGE OVERLAPPING  
TREE MASSINGS

HIGHWAY 198  
MEDIAN

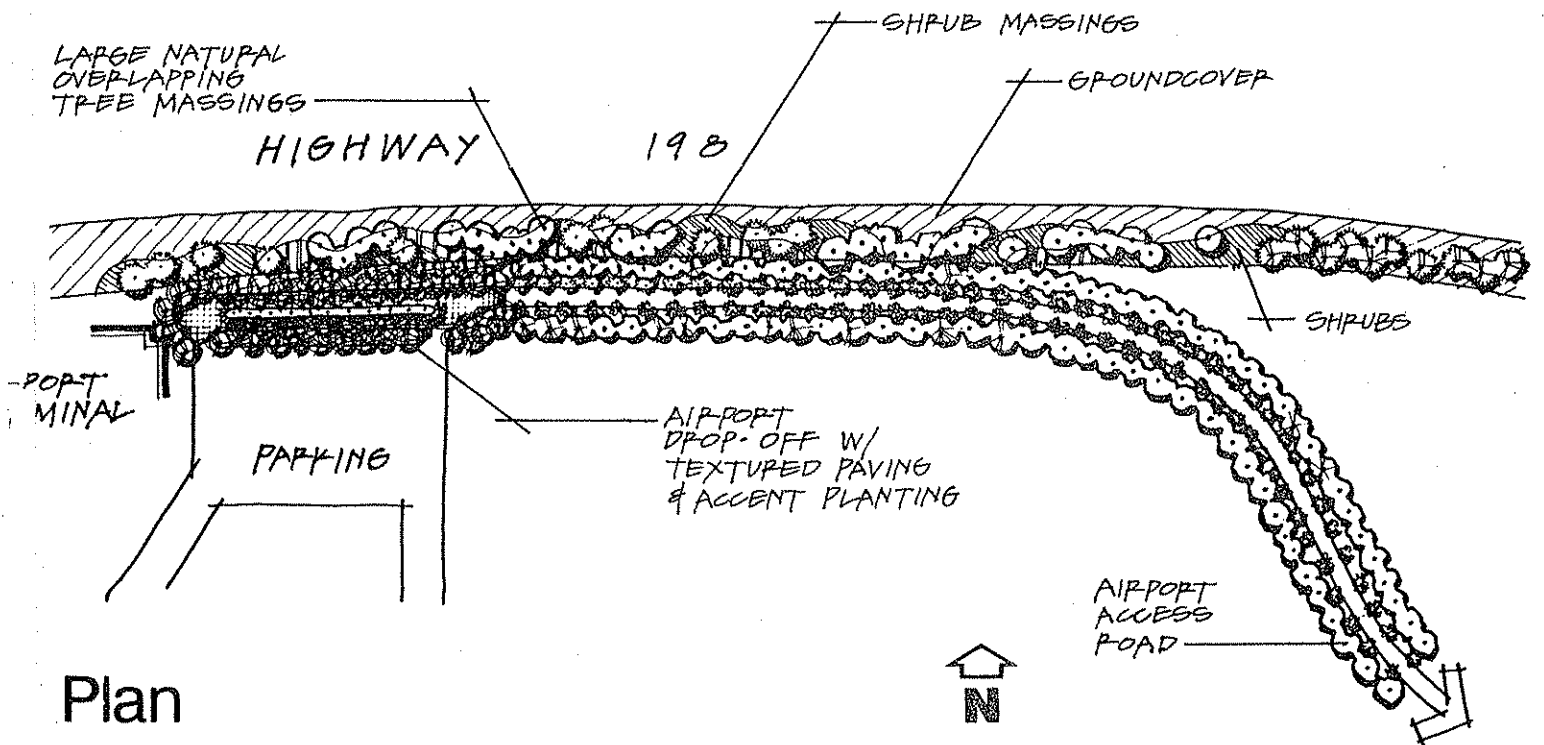


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Road 80 and  
Shirk Road Interchange



## Section

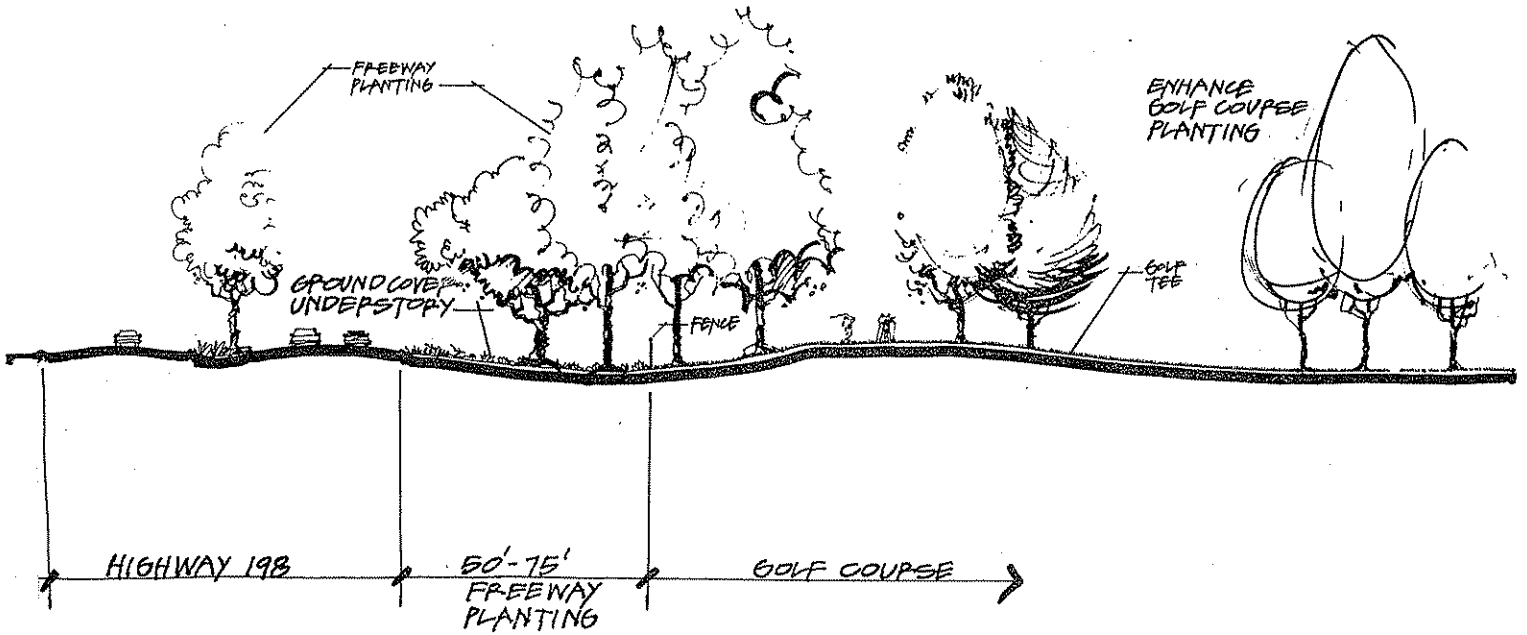


## Plan

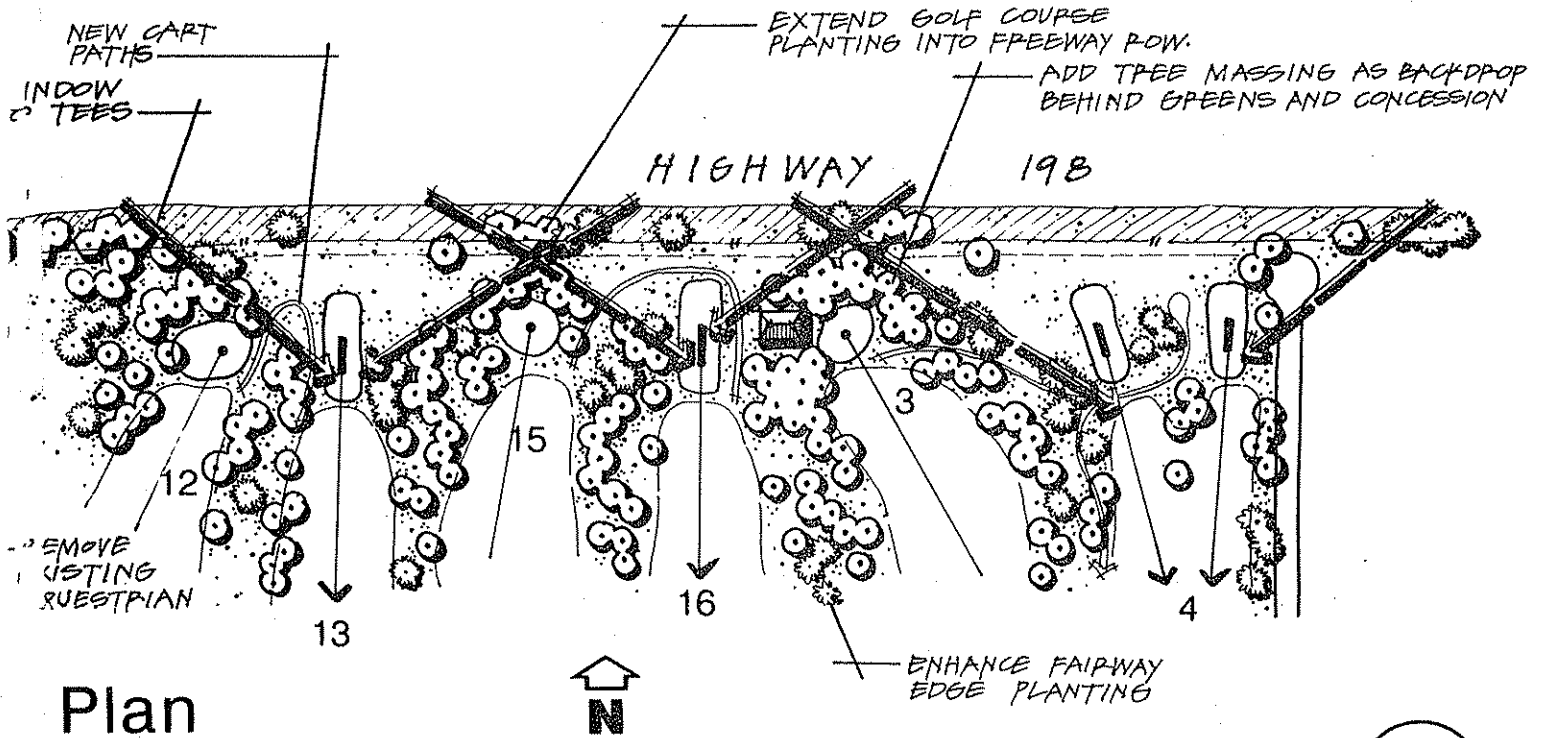


**WEST  
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**Section**



**Plan**



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Highway 198 eastbound, and also somewhat visible to travelers along Highway 99, both northbound and southbound, from a distance. Accordingly, design treatment of this segment of the Plan area is important to both afford exposure of developed commercial uses to the motoring public and to ensure that the aesthetic quality of this entrance to the community is maintained at the highest possible level.

This Plan prescribes that development of highway commercial uses at Road 80 and Highway 198 will be required to provide levels of landscape and design amenities in excess of those typically applied to similar uses in other portions of the community. Moreover, to ensure thematic consistency with the overall treatment of the corridor included within the West Visalia Specific Plan area, development in this segment of the Plan area will be required to utilize landscaping elements similar to those prescribed for the landscaped portions of the freeway right-of-way. Building materials with a "natural" character (e.g. wood, stone, block, etc.) are also mandated for construction in this segment of the Plan area. Architectural review of projects proposed for this area is also prescribed by this Plan. Appendix A details the permitted and recommended building and landscape materials for this segment of the Plan area.

**Service Commercial/Light Industrial District** -- The character of this segment of the Plan area is already substantially established. This Plan prescribes that future development projects along Highway 198 be landscaped in a manner consistent with the adjacent freeway planting scheme. Minimal requirements beyond existing City design and development standards are prescribed by this Plan for properties not oriented toward the highway alignment. To the extent feasible, the City should work with previously-established uses in the area to "retrofit" existing landscaping along the freeway corridor to conform to the freeway planting scheme prescribed for the balance of the corridor in this Plan.

Residential development along the northerly ends of the parcels in this segment of the Plan area will abut the southerly channel of Mill Creek. Treatment of the creek will be identical to that required of the residential development project already approved to the north, with a twenty to forty-foot landscape strip running the length of the creek channel.

**Crenshaw Commercial District** -- Future development in that portion of the Plan area lying north of Highway 198 and east of Akers Road will be subjected to a comparatively unique set of constraints. The anticipated alignment of the planned freeway right-of-way in this vicinity will necessitate acquisition by CALTRANS of substantial amounts of property north of the current highway and frontage road. Accordingly, the depth and configuration of parcels fronting along this area at the present time will be altered to a significant extent.

Proposals for new development in this area will be required, under this Plan, to demonstrate both: (1) how the project will function in the current environment with regard to access, site utilization, landscaping and design treatment, and relationship to adjacent properties and uses; and (2) how the project can still operate viably subsequent to realignment and conversion of Highway 198 to freeway status. It is a stated intent of this Plan to help minimize the public cost of acquisition of future freeway right-of-way; consequently, the City will discourage any

development of substantial, costly improvements within the anticipated right-of-way alignment.

Landscape and design treatment for this portion of the Plan area will be essentially similar to that applied to the general commercial uses located across Highway 198 to the south (see Appendix A). Exceptional treatment will, however, be required along the Mill Creek channel in this vicinity, with culturally indigenous landscaping prescribed for a development setback including the maintenance easement owned by the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District.

In order to promote effective site planning in the area south of Mill Creek between Bollinger and Chinowth Roads, a master plan will be required prior to consideration and approval of any development proposal. Review and approval of this master plan is to be carried out in accordance with the site plan review process prescribed by Article 12 of the City's zoning ordinance.

**Waterways and Natural Features** -- The Plan area contains a number of Valley Oak trees (distributed singly and in clusters) and several waterways (creeks and ditches). At waterway and/or roadway intersections, the oak tree clusters scattered throughout the Plan area represent a significant natural resource and aesthetic feature. Community-wide policies and standards regarding the preservation and enhancement of Visalia's waterway corridors are being developed, as part of the update to the City's Conservation, Open Space, Recreation and Parks Element under way as this Plan is being adopted. The City regards these waterways and adjacent riparian corridors as valuable community resources, which serve as plant and wildlife habitats and potential open space links, as well as components of the local and regional irrigation and flood control systems. The draft policies pertinent to these waterways are being formulated to encourage maximum public use and benefit from these resources (scenic, open space, recreational uses), while minimizing adverse impacts upon existing riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat. Programs and policies currently evolving include: (1) restoring continuous corridors of riparian vegetation along waterways; (2) the establishment of development setbacks along waterways where only maintenance and emergency accessways, trails and bicycle paths will be permitted; (3) a prohibition against back-on and side-on lot development adjacent to waterways; (4) the siting of public, instead of private, uses adjacent to waterways to promote access, security and "buffering"; and (5) the determination of appropriate waterway development setbacks on the basis of the extent of existing oak tree canopies.

Until these community waterway and related policies are adopted in the Conservation, Open Space, Recreation and Parks Element of the General Plan, this Specific Plan will require that any development proposal be subjected to extensive site analysis if the site includes or lies adjacent to any waterway and/or cluster of Valley oaks. All such development proposals must demonstrate, through the City's site plan review process, that these distinctive features are adequately preserved, buffered, and/or restored by the proposed project.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the West Visalia Specific Plan will necessarily involve the utilization by the City of Visalia of a variety of mechanisms. To a significantly lesser extent, the County of Tulare will be responsible for Plan implementation steps as well. This chapter summarizes the implementation program for the Plan, including a general description of the various implementation tools it is anticipated the City and County will employ, the specific application of these tools to different components of the Plan area, and the approximate costs associated with recommended and optional implementation activities.

#### Political/Jurisdictional Adjustments

Implementation of the West Visalia Specific Plan will necessitate annexation of some segments of the Plan area not currently under the jurisdiction of the City of Visalia. Those portions of the Plan area designated for urban development will require corresponding urban services. At the present time, both City and County planning and development policies generally prescribe that urban development located in the immediate vicinity of an incorporated city take place within, and be served by, that city. County planning policy, as well as that of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) which reviews and determines the appropriateness of proposed annexations and municipal service extensions, calls for long-term agricultural uses to be located outside city limits and urban development boundaries.

Inevitably, properties located within the West Visalia Specific Plan area designated for agricultural use will continue to be subject to development pressures, as property owners seek maximum potential economic return from their lands. Inasmuch as the values of "squaring off" urban development of the City of Visalia, preserving and protecting the long-term viability of the operation of the Visalia Municipal Airport, and preserving the agricultural character of the scenic corridor entrance to the community are arguably higher priorities to the City than to the County, it may be logical for the City to consider annexation of the entire Plan area, including those properties designated for agricultural use. In this manner, the County would not be not put into the position of continuously rejecting property owner applications for urban development on behalf of the City and its interests in the values represented in this Plan. This latter approach would, however, necessitate modification to current general plan policies of both the City and County, particularly the two jurisdictions' Urban Boundaries Elements.

It is imperative, for this Plan to be effective in fulfilling its stated goals and carrying out the policy framework it prescribes, that the City of Visalia and the County of Tulare concur in the major components of the Plan. This is particularly critical with respect to Plan land use designations. This requires several extremely difficult decisions to be made and agreed upon by and between the two jurisdictions.

For the County, it will be necessary to both deny applications for urban development on lands designated by the Plan for agriculture and to actually amend its existing general plan and zone plan to redesignate for agriculture fifteen parcels (totaling about 76.4 acres) presently indicated for large-lot residential development. These decisions will be politically unpopular with involved property owners, although more likely to be appreciated by the community at-large. For the City, it is required that it designate for long-term agricultural use portions of land it owns itself, land which has been contemplated for intensive commercial development based upon previous studies, and to redesignate for lower-intensity residential development City-owned property currently slated for higher-yield professional office use.

To summarize discussion of this issue, it is recommended in this Plan that the City and County cooperate to amend the City's current Urban Improvement/Development Boundary, and that the City initiate annexation proceedings within an appropriate timeframe for portions of the Plan area designated for urban development and the extension of urban services. Further, it is important that the City and County reinforce their mutual commitment to existing policies regarding limitations against urban development outside the Urban Improvement/Development Boundary and City limits. Should such a mutual commitment be determined to unfairly burden the County with protection of values ascribed principally to the City of Visalia, County and City planning policies should be revised to permit the annexation of the entire Plan area by the City with provisions allowing for the continuation of long-term agricultural uses within City boundaries.

### Land Acquisition

Acquisition of property, both in fee title and in the form of various easements, is proposed in this Plan for portions of the Plan area. The purposes of such acquisition by the City are several: (1) Creation of several stormwater ponding/retention basins along the downstream portions of creek and irrigation channels handling substantial storm runoff from the urban portions of the community to the east; (2) protection of the airport approach/takeoff zone north of the airport facility; (3) preservation of the scenic qualities of the Highway 198 entrance to the community; and (4) creation of a site for a highway-oriented tourist information center near the westerly entrance to Visalia. Proposed methods for such acquisition are also varied. The City may, for example, pursue fee title acquisition, exactions, gifts, or easements obtained pursuant to the provisions of the Conservation Easement Act (Civil Code Sections 815-816), the Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Government Code Sections 51070-51097), or the Scenic Easement Deed Act (Government Code Sections 6950-6954) or other related enabling legislation. The following discussion outlines anticipated property acquisition activities to be undertaken by the City in implementing this Plan.

### Stormwater Ponding/Retention Basins

The City's adopted Storm Drainage Master Plan recommends the acquisition of sites for, and the development of, two stormwater ponding/retention basins in the West Visalia Specific Plan area. One of these facilities is proposed for Subarea F

north of Highway 198 and west of Shirk Road, between the north and south channels of Mill Creek. The anticipated size of this facility is forty to fifty acres. The second proposed ponding/retention basin is to be located in Subarea F also, south of Highway 198 somewhere along the Persian Ditch channel. Estimated size requirements for this basin range from twelve to twenty acres. Presuming that each of these facilities would displace existing tree cropland, with an estimated current market value of approximately \$8,000 per acre, the cost of acquiring the sites for these basins would range from \$416,000 to \$560,000. It is anticipated that this cost would be funded through the imposition and collection of normal storm drainage-related fees for urban development throughout the community.

### Airport Protection

Acquisition of property for purposes of protecting the long-term viability of the Visalia Municipal Airport is one potential method suggested for preserving in agricultural use, compatible with airport operations, that portion of the Plan area lying north of Highway 198, in Subarea B, east of Highway 99. Currently, approximately 82.2 acres of property shown on the Plan Map for this area as agriculture is committed to agricultural preserve under Williamson Act contract. Up to an additional 69.6 acres of property lying within the airport approach/takeoff pattern could be acquired for an estimated \$372,000, based upon present prevailing land values in the area (from \$4,500 to \$8,000 per acre). Such acquisition would be initiated contingent upon availability of airport-related funding.

### Scenic Corridor Preservation

Acquisition of property by the City solely for the purpose of preserving the agricultural quality of the "scenic corridor" along west Highway 198 is recommended as appropriate and necessary only on a limited basis. On the north side of Highway 198, it is probable that acquisition and development of the previously-referenced stormwater runoff ponding/retention basin will leave remnant fragments of existing agricultural parcels which may be too small or irregularly configured to continue to be productively used for agriculture by the private sector. Accordingly, the City may, subject to evaluation, elect to purchase all or portions of these remnant parcels fronting along the highway, maintaining them in agricultural use for aesthetic purposes under contract. Depending upon the number and size of the affected parcels, estimated costs associated with this element of possible acquisition total approximately \$240,000.

A substantial portion of the acreage fronting along the south side of Highway 198 in the "scenic corridor" section of the Plan area is currently committed to agricultural usage under Williamson Act contracts for agricultural preserves. Many of the remaining parcels are comparatively large in size and generally productively cultivated at this time. The overall direction of the Plan designating this portion of the Plan area as long-term agriculture will, to a degree, insulate properties in this area from the constraints which typically make productive agricultural usage difficult. The greatest pressure to abandon agricultural production on these properties is, and will continue to be, attributable to owner interest in higher profits from potential urban development of their parcels. Accordingly, based upon presumptions that (1) continuing utilization of the parcels in question for agricultural production is economically reasonable, and (2) City and County

planning and development policies, including those established by this Plan, will continue to be applied to this portion of the Plan area with the intent of precluding conversion of existing agriculture to urban development, no City acquisition of properties in this area is recommended.

Optionally, there was discussion during the Plan preparation process of City acquisition of a "strip" of agricultural land along the Highway 198 frontage of the scenic corridor. For purposes of discussion only, estimated costs associated with acquisition of a strip along the south side of the highway approximately 660 feet deep, at current agricultural land values, would be about \$866,000. A strip of approximately 1,320 feet in depth south of the highway would cost approximately \$1.8 million. In both instances, these estimates do not include acquisition by the City of existing residential or commercial properties in the affected area, only agricultural parcels impacting the Highway 198 corridor to the referenced depths.

### Tourist Information Center Site

Finally, acquisition of a site by the City for the development and operation (by the Chamber of Commerce and/or related entities) of a highway-oriented tourist information center, in conjunction with the highway commercial node at the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange, is included as an element of this Plan. A site of from a half-acre to an acre is probably required for this facility. It is recommended in this Plan that such a site be sought as a dedication to the City by one or more private property owners as part of the development process for adjacent highway commercial uses.

### Public Improvements

The following public improvements are incorporated into this Plan and considered to be necessary for its implementation:

#### Freeway Corridor and Interchange Landscaping

By far the most significant category of public improvement included in this Plan is the proposed landscaping of the Highway 198 freeway corridor, associated interchanges (existing and future), and adjacent City-owned properties. Estimated costs associated with components of this landscaping and improvement plan are: Plaza interchange landscaping, \$250,000; interchange landscaping at Road 80 and at Shirk Road, \$170,000 each, landscaping of the balance of the freeway corridor, \$825,000; enhancement of the golf course frontage along Highway 198, \$125,000; and enhancement of the airport frontage along the highway, \$250,000. Total estimated public costs, accordingly, for landscape and aesthetic enhancement of the west Highway 198 corridor amount to approximately \$1.79 million.

Timing of the landscaping improvements discussed in this Plan will vary. Golf course and airport frontage enhancement could be undertaken by the City at any time, depending upon availability of funds. Landscaping of segments of the freeway corridor and of the Road 80/Highway 198 interchange might appropriately be deferred to occur in conjunction with development and corresponding landscaping of adjacent properties. Landscaping of the Plaza Interchange is already initiated, although progress on this project is limited to funding capacities.

Landscaping of the easterly portion of the corridor must, necessarily, await freeway development.

#### **Realignment of Walnut Avenue Plaza Drive**

This project would require an estimated \$350,000 to \$400,000 to accomplish. Timing should correspond with intensification of development north of Highway 198 at the Road 80 interchange. In conjunction with this project, the City should separately seek to replace the park and recreational area that the street realignment would remove. The estimated cost of such replacement would be widely variable, depending upon the size, location and current use of the site selected.

#### **Zoning and Development Standards**

Upon adoption of the West Visalia Specific Plan by the City and by the County of Tulare, it will be necessary to make a number of revisions to the two jurisdictions' existing land use, zoning and development standards for the Plan area. Moreover, the City will be required to subject projects proposed for the Plan area to review against the development standards specified in this Plan, as well as to those associated with the underlying zoning and design districts applied to the area.

#### **Activities Outside the Plan Area**

The implementation of this Plan is dependent upon a number of other City programs and policies being implemented outside the Plan area. Among the most significant of these are the implementation of the Mooney Boulevard and East Visalia Redevelopment Plans. Intensification of regional commercial activities on Mooney Boulevard is viewed as a desirable alternative to encouraging the proliferation of such uses in other parts of the community, particularly the Plan area.



## APPENDIX A

### WEST VISALIA SPECIFIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Standards and guidelines delineated in this Appendix are intended to supplement existing City development and design standards applicable to each segment of the Plan Area. Where standards and guidelines prescribed in this Appendix are more restrictive than underlying zoning and development regulations, this Plan shall prevail.

1. FREEWAY CORRIDOR AND INTERCHANGES

● PLAZA INTERCHANGE

Building Guidelines - (Not applicable)

Setbacks - (Not applicable)

Street Sections - (Not applicable)

Landscape Guidelines - (See Figure 15)

Theme

"Natural forested" landscape with indigenous trees and understory of native grasses and wildflowers

Plant Materials

TREES (THEME)

London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Bloodgood')

10% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses (typically minimum 7 trees)

Oriental Plane (*Platanus orientalis*)

20% of mix - (Same as above)

Western Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*)

30% of mix - (Same as above)

Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

30% of mix - (Same as above)

GROUND COVER

Native grasses and wildflowers mix

Hydroseed all areas except cobbles

Granite cobbles

Smooth river boulders, minimum 12"  
diameter massed in low drainage areas

● ROAD 80 AND SHIRK ROAD INTERCHANGES

Building Guidelines - (Not applicable)

Setbacks - (Not applicable)

Street Sections - (Not applicable)

Landscape Guidelines - (See Figure 16)

Theme

Natural, indigenous landscape with introduction of  
deciduous color

Plant Materials

TREES (THEME)

London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Bloodgood')

20% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses (typically minimum 7 trees)

Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

20% of mix - (Same as above)

Chinese Tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

Sawtoothed Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

TREES (ACCENT)

Maidenhair (*Ginkgo biloba*)

20% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses (typically minimum 7 trees)

Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

TREES (SMALL)

Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*)

Associated with accent trees -  
scattered drifts

Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Associated with Oaks - (Same as above)

Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

Associated with London Planes  
and Zelkovas - (Same as above)

SHRUBS

Dwarf Abelia (*Abelia grandiflora* 'Edward Goucher')

Large informal massings

Silverberry (*Elaeagnus pungens*)

(Same as above)

Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

Backdrop adjacent to granite cobbles  
and as accent massings in partial shade  
zones

Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*)

Large informal massings

Variegated Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*  
'Variegata')

Associated with London Planes

Evergreen Currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*)

Large massings adjacent to granite cobbles

#### GROUND COVER

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Below over passes - planted at 18" o.c.  
triangular spacing

Aarons Beard (*Hypericum calycinum*)

Associated particularly with *Elaeagnus* and  
London Planes and *Zelkova*s - Plant 18" o.c.  
triangular spacing in large massings

Hall's Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* 'Halliana')

Major thematic ground cover - planted 4 ft.  
o.c. (1 gal.) triangular spacing or 24"  
o.c. out of flats

*Santolina virens*

Plant 18" o.c. triangular spacing in  
scattered drifts and large masses  
alternated with Aarons Beard

Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)

Plant at base of overpass and train as vine  
to cover structure partially

Native grasses and Wildflower mix

Hydroseed over all areas except cobbles

Granite Cobbles

Smooth river boulders, minimum 12" diameter  
massed in low drainage areas

● **FREEWAY CORRIDOR (PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY)**

**Building Guidelines - (Not applicable)**

**Setbacks -** 15' right-of-way setback on both sides of Highway 198 from Akers Road to Road 80.

**Street Sections - (Not applicable)**

**Landscape Guidelines - (see Figures 15 and 16)**

Theme

Natural, indigenous landscape

Plant Materials

**TREES (THEME)**

London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Bloodgood')

10% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses (typically minimum 7 trees)

Oriental Plane (*Platanus orientalis*)

15% of mix - (Same as above)

Western Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*)

30% of mix - (Same as above)

Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

30% of mix - (Same as above)

**TREES (ACCENT)**

Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*)

5% in scattered drifts at on and  
off-ramps and at edges of view windows  
(e.g. golf course tees)

TREES (SMALL)

Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*)

Associated with accent trees -  
scattered drifts

Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Associated with Oaks - (Same as above)

Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

Associated with the London Planes  
and Zelkovas - (Same as above)

SHRUBS

Dwarf Abelia (*Abelia grandiflora*) 'Edward Goucher'

Large informal massings

Silverberry (*Elaeagnus pungens*)

(Same as above)

Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

Backdrop adjacent to granite cobbles  
and as accent massing in partial shade  
zones

Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*)

Large informal massings

Variegated Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*  
'Variegata')

Associated with London Planes

Evergreen Currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*)

Large massings adjacent to granite cobbles

GROUND COVER

Aarons Beard (*Hypericum calycinum*)

Associated particularly with *Elaeagnus*  
and London Planes and Zelkovas -  
plant 18" o.c. in large massings

Hall's Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* 'Halliana')

Major thematic ground cover - planted  
4 ft. o.c. (1 gal.) triangular spacing  
or 24" o.c. out of flats

*Santolina virens*

Plant 18" o.c. triangular spacing in  
scattered drifts and large masses  
alternated with Aarons Beard

Native grasses and Wildflower mix

Hydroseed over all areas



## 2. PUBLIC FACILITIES

### ● VISALIA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

**Building Guidelines** - (If prescribed, to be included  
in Airport Master Plan)

#### **Setbacks -**

- Building ○ 100 ft. minimum and 150 ft. average  
from Hwy. 198 right-of-way
- 30 ft. minimum and 40 ft. average from  
major airport access roads
- Parking ○ 15 ft. minimum and 35 ft. average from  
Hwy. 198 right-of-way
- 25 ft. minimum and 45 ft. average from  
major airport access roads

**Street Sections -** (See Figure 17, page 66)

- Landscaped median at turn-around. Two  
16 ft. paved lanes

**Landscape Guidelines -** (see Figure 17)

#### Theme

Urban configuration of indigenous landscaping

#### Plant Materials

##### TREES (THEME)

Liquidambar styraciflua

Plant 25 ft. o.c. within parkway

Mondell Pine (Pinus elderica)

Backdrop behind Liquidambar - staggered  
in triangular spacing pattern at 35. ft.  
o.c.

TREES (TURN-AROUND)

Maidenhair (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Plant in parkways double row, triangular spacing at 35. ft. o.c.

Italian Stone Pine (*Pinus pinea*)

Plant in median, single row at 35 ft. o.c.

SHRUBS

*Photinia fraseri*

Large informal massings as backdrop

Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*)

Large informal massings as theme plant

GROUND COVER

English Ivy (*Hedera Helix*)

Plant 18" o.c. triangular spacing

Mustang Tall Fescue

Sod or seed

● PLAZA PARK/VALLEY OAK GOLF COURSE

Building Guidelines - (Not applicable)

Setbacks - (Not applicable)

Street Sections - (Not applicable)

Landscape Guidelines - (see Figure 18)

Theme

Extension of golf course landscaping into freeway corridor, with "windows" created at the tees; eliminate obsolete equestrian trail

TREES (THEME)

Deodor Cedars (*Cedrus deodara*)

10% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses - (typically minimum 7 trees)

Mondell Pine (*Pinus elderica*)

25% of mix - (Same as above)

Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

5% of mix - (Same as above)

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

20% of mix - (Same as above)

Sawtoothed Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

TREES (ACCENTS)

Maidenhair (*Ginkgo biloba*)

30% of mix - (Same as above)

GROUND COVER

Mustang Tall Fescue

Sod or seed

NOTE:

Additional Eucalyptus are not recommended based on  
inconsistency with the theme of the corridor

3. SERVICE COMMERCIAL/LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (ALONG HWY. 198)

**Building Guidelines -**

- Two-story height limitation
- Encourage use of natural-appearing building materials (e.g. wood, block, etc.) and consistency of architectural treatment.

**Setbacks -**

- Minimum of 100 ft. from Hwy. 198 right-of-way

**Street Sections - (Not applicable)**

**Landscape Guidelines -**

- Encourage utilization of plant materials and planting configurations consistent with freeway corridor, as prescribed previously in this Appendix.

#### 4. HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL CLUSTER

##### **Building Guidelines -**

- Traditional and natural-appearing materials (in terms of color and texture)
- Two-story height limit
- Employ variety in building forms, to create visual character and interest
- Avoid the use of residential details and mixing of styles, (i.e. rustic wood shingle with polished chrome or a colonial front on a large, otherwise commercial building)
- Use a clear consistent design solutions; avoid confusion of forms, scales, materials and details
- Coordinate color and finishes on exteriors of all elevations to provide total continuity of design
- Building entries should be clearly announced with architectural orientation, details, and signage, as well as being integrally tied to overall building mass and composition

##### **Setbacks -**

- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| Building | ● | Minimum of 150 ft. from Hwy. 198 right-of-way |
| Parking  | ● | Minimum of 75 ft. from Hwy. 198 right-of-way  |

**Street Section** (Standard City commercial street sections will apply)

**Landscape Guidelines -** (see Figures 19 and 20)

##### **TREES (THEME)**

**Maidenhair (Ginkgo biloba)**

30% of mix - Informal plantings,  
30-50 ft. o.c. in large overlapping  
masses (typically minimum 5 trees)

Mondell Pine (*Pinus eldirica*)

10% of mix - (Same as above) and also used  
as backdrop on freeway display parkway

Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*)

15% of mix - (Same as above) and also used  
as backdrop on dealer frontage parkways

London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Bloodgood')

10% of mix - (Same as above)

#### TREES (ACCENT)

Liquidambar *styraciflua*

25% of mix - scattered drifts, 25-30 ft.  
o.c. at edges of view "windows", etc.

Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*)

10% of mix - (Same as above)

Tulip Tree (*Liriodendrom tulipifera*)

Plant 25 ft. o.c. at entry drives

#### TREES (ON-SITE)

Camphor Tree (*Cinnimomum camphora*)

Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*  
'Majestic Beauty')

Japanese Flowering Crabapple (*Malus floribunda*)

Holly Oak (*Quercus illex*)

Fern Pine (*Podocarpus microphylla*) - standard

Evergreen Elm (*Ulmus parrifolia* 'Brea')

#### SHRUBS

Dwarf Abelia (*Abelia grandiflora* 'Edward  
Goucher')

Used as hedge along edges of "Freeway  
Display" access drive

Lilly of the Nile (*Agapanthus africanus*)

Large informal masses as accents at entrys,  
display pedestals, etc.

Orégon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolia*)

Scattered drifts as accent massings - in  
partial shade zones

Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira* 'Wheeler's Dwarf')

(Same as above)

Varigated Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*  
'Variegata')

(Same as above - associated with pines)

Indian Hawthorn (*Raphiloepis indica* 'Springtime')

(Same as above)

#### GROUND COVER

Asiatic Jasmine (*Trachelospermum asiaticum*)

Plant at 3 ft. o.c. (1 gal.), triangular  
spacing

Dwarf Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Plant 12" o.c. triangular spacing

Gazania 'Mitsui Yellow'

Plant as accent ground cover

Landscape buffer on west and north edges.

#### TREES

Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)

Planted in large informal massings

Mondell Pine (*Pinus elderica*)

Planted in large informal massings

Giant Sequoia Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)

Planted in large informal massings

GROUND COVER

Native grasses and wildflowers

Hydroseed

All proposed development subject to a development agreement.



5. CRENSHAW COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Pre and Post Freeway Conversion - demonstrate proposed development's viability in:

- Current environment (access, site utilization, landscaping and design treatment)
- Future Highway 198 freeway status.

Waterway and Natural Features - see interum standards.

Master Plan - A master plan will be required prior to any development in the area south of Mill Creek between Bollinger and Chinowith Road.

6. WATERWAY AND NATURAL FEATURES

Until community-wide policies and standards are developed in conjunction with the General Plan's update to the Conservation, Open Space, Recreation and Parks Element, the following action will be required of plan area development proposals adjacent to waterways and/or Valley Oaks.

The proposal must demonstrate (through the City's site plan review process) that these distinctive areas have adequate waterway and/or Valley Oak tree buffers with transitions for these elements on adjacent properties.

Variables to consider in evaluating these proposals include but are not limited to:

- a. Restoring and enhancing continuous corridors of riparian vegetation along waterways
- b. Establishing development setbacks along waterways where only maintenance and emergency access ways, trails and bikepaths will be permitted
- c. Determining development setbacks will include access for creek maintenance, transition to bikepath and transition to street or development
- d. Prohibiting back-on and side-on lot development adjacent to waterways
- e. Siting public vs. private uses adjacent to waterways using "single-loaded", loop or cul-de-sac streets to promote access and security as well as riparian buffering.

