

VISALIA CITY COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
JANUARY 23-24, 2009

Visalia Convention Center – 303 E. Acequia, Visalia, CA 93291

AGENDA

JANUARY 23, 2009

The following agenda items are not time specific. The times indicated are approximate.

12:00 p.m. – Lunch

1:00 p.m. - Opening Comments

(20 min) Jesus Gamboa, Mayor
Steve Salomon, City Manager
Mike Ramsey, Facilitator

(20 min) Public Comment

(10 min) **REPORT:** Progress on projects from the 2008 Strategic Planning Workshop (Salomon)

(1 hr.) **REPORT:** Visalia's economic picture (Frost)

(10 min) **REPORT:** East Downtown Specific Plan. What's next and when? (Brusuelas)

(20 min) **REPORT:** Circulation. Update on progress with major traffic projects. (Young & Ennis)

DISCUSSION ISSUES:

The City Council will raise and discuss issues that they believe are important to Visalia now and in the future. These items are expected to include, but may not be limited to:

(1 hr.) **1. Sustaining Visalia's "Place" in the Region**

(30 min) **2. Improving Visalia's Economy**

(30 min) **3. Entertainment and Alcohol in the Downtown**

(20 min) **4. Neighborhood Preservation**

(15 min) **5. Project List Exercise:** City Council members will present their lists of five “one time” projects they would like staff to address in the next year, and the Council as a whole will prioritize the list to the top 5 projects for further work. Staff will incorporate the highest priority projects into their departmental work programs and report back to City Council at a later date on their progress.

7:30 p.m. **Adjourn to Closed Session**

Conference with Labor Negotiators (GC 54957.6)
Agency Designated Representatives: Eric Frost, Steve Salomon,
Janice Avila
Employee Organization: All Employee Groups

Adjourn from Closed Session to 8:30 a.m. on January 24, 2009

Breaks will be taken as needed, and an approximately 45 minute dinner break will occur, probably about 5:00 p.m.

JANUARY 24, 2009

8:00 a.m. - Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m. - Convene Workshop

(20 min) Public Comment

DISCUSSION:

The City Council will raise and discuss issues that they believe are important to Visalia now and in the future. These items are expected to include, but may not be limited to:

5. Community Planning Issues: The following topics relate to community planning but do not deal with any specific project under consideration by the City Council, Planning Commission or staff.

(1 hr.) **A. Mooney Blvd. from Main Street to Caldwell Ave.**

(45 min) **B. Economic Viability of the Commercial Development In and Around Northern Highway 63**

(30 min)

C. Smart Growth and Infill Land Use Planning

(2 hrs.)

D. General Plan Update Process Discussion and Request for Decision

(30 min.)

6. Gang Prevention and Suppression

(30 min)

7. Homeless Services

(20 min)

8. Communicating with the Public

4:00 p.m. Adjourn Workshop

Breaks will be taken as needed, and a lunch break will occur, probably about 12 noon.

Update on Action Plans and Objectives from 2008 Retreat

January 23, 2009

Council Action, Major Projects Completed

- ◆ Transportation impact fee ordinance revised; new fee program adopted December 2008.
- ◆ Changes made to parking in-lieu fees in July, 2008.
- ◆ Gang Injunctions implemented in May 2008.
- ◆ Visalia Police helped establish Tulare County Reduce Auto Theft Task Force in April 2008.
- ◆ Code enforcement efforts strengthened in partnership with Police.
- ◆ Construction begins on Santa Fe overcrossing; groundbreaking Feb. 20.
- ◆ Plaza Drive Improvement Project report completed in December, 2008.

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
Finance				
	4. Research decrease in property tax due to reassessment over next 2-3 years	Ongoing	Frost	In June 2008, property tax revenue estimates were reduced to reflect expected tax revenues. County is in the process of reassessing another round of properties, which will lead to lower property taxes in the future. Staff will work to prepare a better estimate for the mid-year report.
Police				
	1. Develop and implement Gang Strategic Plan	On-going	Jason Salazar	Ongoing: Members of the Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force have conducted Nominal Group Technique Sessions in the Law Enforcement, Education, and Business Areas to gather information for the Strategic Plan.
	2. Research, develop and implement a truancy partnership with VUSD	On-going	Ernie Villa	Ongoing: Each school site is identifying those students who are exhibiting habitual truancy issues. YSO's and school reps are conducting home visits and checks to assist these students in attending school.
	3. Assist in the development of a jobs for youth program with local CBOs	On-going	Ernie Villa	Ongoing: Initiated by the Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force, the Visalia business community came together to raise donations and provide jobs in order to fund this program that provides job skills and job training to at-risk Visalia youth. The program pays a stipend to the youth who also benefit from mentorship and relationships built with their respective employers. There are 35 youth enrolled in the Step Up Jobs Program at various businesses, including the City of Visalia.
	4. Promote youth and faith-based intervention options with local organizations	On-going	Gang Int. Tsk Frce.	Ongoing: A number of youth intervention programs are actively involved in the Gang Task Force and are being operated at local youth centers and churches. The Police Dept. has conducted Gang Watch trainings and spoken to numerous churches & faith-based groups regarding the impact of gangs and the importance of intervention/ prevention efforts. A number of Visalia church congregations have adopted school sites and neighborhoods as a means of reaching out to troubled youth and their families.

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
Finance				
	1. Develop various revenue alternatives to maintain current budget	Completed	Frost	During budget talks in June 2008, several options were considered, mainly in adjusting fees. Will present major revenue differences at Council retreat.
	2. Present potential cost savings alternatives	Completed	Frost	P&R - RSVP, Senior lunch, retiree health cost, vacancies
	3. Present Mid-year report and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report to Council	Completed	Frost	Completed and presented to Council on 1/20/09
Housing/ED				
	1. Research costs and develop plan for implementation of fee-based residential rental inspection program for single family residential rental properties.	Completed	Tim Burns	Substandard Housing Program was presented along with text amendments and approved by Council on Jan. 5, 2009.
	2. Direct funds from Central Redevelopment project areas to be set aside and used as down payments for Historic Homes Down Payment Assistance Program.	Completed	Tim Burns	Staff have begun marketing program to local employers and realtors. Goal is to finance a minimum of 2 loans in '09.
Police				
	1. Develop and utilize former gang members as Neighborhood Youth Counselors	Completed	Gang Int. Tsk Frce.	Completed; The City of Visalia was awarded monies through the California OES CalGRIP Grant Program. The City partnered with Proteus, Inc. and has hired five NYC's who are currently working in Community Centers and schools.
	2. Explore the development of providing assistance in a tattoo removal program	Completed	Jason Salazar	Creekside DaySpa currently operates a tattoo removal service geared specifically towards the removal of gang related tattoos. Clients who want gang tattoos removed can do so at a reduced cost, or in exchange for community service hours through local CBO's. This information has been provided to all partners in the Gang Task Force who use this service when possible.
	3. Establish a local auto theft task force in conjunction with the CA Highway Patrol	Completed	Perry Phipps	Completed: In May, 2008, Tulare County Regional Auto Theft Team (TRATT) began operation w/ focus on reduction of auto thefts in Tulare Co. Comprised of CHP as lead, VPD, PPD, WPD, DA's & TPD.
	4. Work with the Tulare County District Attorney's Office in the development and implementation of Gang Injunctions	Completed	Jason Salazar	Completed: Permanent civil gang injunctions were issued against the Norteno and Oriental Troop criminal street gangs in May 2008. The Police Dept. has served approximately 140 gang members with injunction notices and made four arrests for injunction violations. The service and enforcement of the injunction is an on-going process.
	5. Develop and implement Gang Watch training sessions with local organizations to increase public and parental awareness of the signs of gang activity.	Completed	Glen Newsom	Completed: Gang Watch is based on the Neighborhood Watch model. It is a training that seeks to educate the community about the history of gangs and signs of gang involvement in youth. To date there have been 38 Gang Watch presentations given to various organizations, businesses, government and faith-based organizations.
	6. Research potential for CHP partnership for expansion of local helicopter coverage	Completed	Co Chiefs Assoc.	this time. TCSO is currently looking into local helicopter coverage. PD will continue to pursue this item as opportunities arise.

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
	7. Evaluate and develop code enforcement options	Completed	Jason Salazar	In Progress; The City has hired a Code Enforcement Officer to work directly with the Police Department to partner in nuisance, anti-gang and narcotics suppression measures. Code Enforcement and the PD have also partnered with other City Departments to form the SMART Team to coordinate code enforcement efforts towards challenged neighborhoods.
Planning				
	1. Bring to a work session a plan, schedule and budget to prepare a comprehensive General Plan update, including a companion Environmental Impact Report	Completed	Smith/Scheibel	This project is now awaiting Council determination of either a focused or comprehensive General Plan Update. Staff had prepared a Request for Proposals for professional assistance for a Focused General Plan Update.
Natural Resources Conservation Division				
	1. Update work plan and present to City Council	Completed	Caviglia	Workplan completed and presented in March, 2008. Under development: Stage 3 water ordinance upgrades, (April, 2009), development of Stage 4 triggers and requirements, (June, 2009), Green Building Program, (June, 2009), Landscape Ordinance Revisions (April, 2009). More aggressive commercial recycling, water purchases, and water ordinance enforcement also underway. Further work pending outcome of recruitment for new Division Manager, slated to open the first week in February.
Community Beautification				
	1. Return to Council with realistic strategy for improving the visual appeal of the community within budget constraints	Completed	Caviglia	Due to budget constraints, work on this task has been limited. Continued clean up/beautification days are planned including Make A Difference Day and Earth Day. The Historic Preservation Committee has been asked to be more proactive in encouraging, promoting and possibly expanding the Historic District. The Planning Commission has been asked to continue the Beautification Awards. The Beautification Committee has not been revitalized due to staff constraints.
Downtown				
	1. Consider appropriate changes to the parking in-lieu fees on Main Street	Completed	Young	
	a. Consider extending the term of repayment for new construction from 5 to 10 years			Completed in mid-08
	b. Consider deleting the parking-in-lieu requirements for change of use request			Completed in mid-08
	in conjunction with the PBID increasing the parking fund contribution			
Circulation				
	1. Begin construction of the Santa Fe overcrossing	Completed	Ennis/Young	Contract awarded and construction to begin in 2/09
	2. Complete Plaza Drive improvement Project Report with early 2010 construction date	Completed	Ennis/Young	PR completed in 12/08. Design underway/start of construction 7/10. Working with developer and TCAG to expedite Hurley-Crowley section
	3. Complete the transportation impact fees assessment	Completed	Benelli	New fee program adopted on Dec. 1, 2008. Effective Jan. 31, 2009.

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
	4. Hire consultant to design plan for synchronization of Caldwell east and west of Mooney for implementation upon funding availability	Completed	Young/Bons	TPG hired and completed he analysis in October, '08, of the Caldwell Ave corridor for the improvement of traffic flow. Remove II grant not received. Will implement as funding becomes available.
	5. Improve the implementation of the Bike Path plan striping by the following:			
	Walnut Avenue, from Shirk Street to Akers Street	Completed	Bons	Roeben to Akers is complete. Additional signage between Shirk & Roeben completed Nov. 2008
	Whitendale Avenue, from Roeben Street to Akers Street	Completed	Bons	Completed Sept. 2008
	Roeben Street, from Whitendale Avenue to Tulare Avenue	Completed	Bons	Completed Sept. 2008
	Ferguson Avenue, from Demaree Street to Mooney Blvd	Completed	Bons	Completed July 2008
	6. Apply for Federal Safe Routes to School Grant	Completed	Carr/Loliva	Federal grant awarded in November for Pinkham School improvements along Tulare Avenue from Santa Fe to Pinkham.
	7. Complete the transportation impact fees assessment	Completed	Benelli	New fee program adopted on Dec. 1, 2008. Effective Jan. 31, 2009.
	8. Synchronize Demaree from Walnut to Caldwell	Completed	Bons	Completed

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
Finance				
	1. Develop transportation financing alternatives for advancing Measure R/road projects	Declined	Frost	Worked with TCAG to develop short-term financing concept. The City has advanced funds from the local Measure R to Regional Measure R. When projects are ready for construction, Measure R Local will be the bondable revenue source to advance funds to finance the Regional Measure R project until reimbursed by TCAG.
	2. Develop proposal for Storm Drain rate ballot in compliance with Prop. 218	Declined	Ross/Nielsen	Not proceeding with this finances are not justifying rate increase
Police				
	1. Research options for establishing Leg Monitor Program	Declined	Jason Salazar	Additional discussions & options need to be explored with Tulare County Probation & State Parole before proceeding further. Leg monitors have an average operating cost of \$8 per day/ per unit and would require court order and terms of probation/ parole to place an offender on the program. This is currently an unbudgeted item.
Circulation				
	1. Ensure the Circulation Element is updated as part of the General Plan update.	Declined	Brusuelas/Scheibel	No longer programmed for FY 2008 since Comprehensive General Plan Update deferred in favor of Focused Update of Land Use Element

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
Housing/ED				
	1. Develop and implement Property Management Educational Seminars to address substandard housing complaints and property management issues of landlords, and property management companies	In process	Tim Burns	Scheduled to kick off Spring 2009.
	2. Foreclosure Acquisition Program	In process	Ricardo Noguera	Acquire a minimum of 6 homes with use of RDA/NSP funds.
Planning				
	1. Schedule a future work session to consider potential strategies for the West Highway 198 Scenic Corridor	In process	Brusuelas	This item was placed on hold in favor of completing other, higher priority projects. If a Comprehensive General Plan Update is undertaken, this project will be incorporated into that analysis.
	2. Update subdivision standards and Engineering Improvement Standards to incorporate contemporary design criteria to better facilitate safe, walkable and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.	In process	Brusuelas/Young	Planning and Engineering Divisions have undertaken a joint effort to update these standards. A status report and preliminary recommendations are scheduled for a Work Session on 2nd meeting in February.
	3. Prepare work plan and estimated schedule to amend 2020 Plan and Municipal Code to incorporate infill strategies, higher minimum residential densities, increase population benchmarks for Visalia Urban Development, and establish criteria for prioritizing	In process	Scheibel/Smith	Actions to incorporate infill strategies, increase densities, and increase pop. benchmarks would require Amendments to the General Plan and EIR. In 2008, Staff revealed that a General Plan Update & Comprehensive EIR Update is most efficient way to pursue actions. Two General Plan Update options were presented: Comprehensive Update to the General Plan (four-year process) & Focused Update targeting growth strategies (two-year process). Council will discuss both options at 2009 retreat. Once direction is given, staff will prepare a work plan which will address financing, scope of plan, and public outreach strategies. Criteria for prioritizing annexation proposals has proceeded as a short-term project, to be reviewed by Planning Commission on 1/26/09 and the City Council in March 2009.
Downtown				
	1. Develop with Downtown Visalian's Strategic Plan Committee an action plan to recruit targeted retail businesses and encourage second-story projects	In Process	Noguera	The Downtown Visalians completed a Strategic plan in October 2007. City staff will attend the Monterey International Council for Shopping Centers Conference in March, 2009 to recruit select retailers for both downtown and commercial corridors.
	2. Implement a Façade renovation program, to be subsidized through grants, low-interest	In Process	Noguera	Staff developing program guidelines, role for Downtown Visalians and confirming availability of funding.
Circulation				
	1. Work with Cal Trans to begin improvements on East Bound Downtown Interchange	In Process	Ennis/Young	Working to obtain updated schedule from CalTrans (lead agency)
	2. Begin construction of the widening of Houston Avenue from Ben Maddox to N. Dinuba including the Santa Fe Circle	In process	Ennis/Young	Awarding construction early '09. May be partially funded by stimulus funding.
	3. Implement two-way traffic along Acequia Avenue	In process	Ennis/Young	Construction to be completed in early Feb. 09
	4. Approve contract for Downtown Circulation Plan.	In process	Bons/Young	To be awarded by April 09

Council Agreements and Action Plans for 2008

Dept	Subject	Status	Assigned	Update
	5. If 1B competitive grant funds are awarded, synchronize Caldwell east and west of Mooney. If grant not awarded, seek other funds.	In process	Bons	Grant was not awarded. To be incorporated in CIP budget 09-09 & 09-10. The portion of Caldwell Ave between Stonebrook and Santa Fe has been coordinated as of August 2008 and the coordination of Caldwell Ave west of Mooney will occur following the modification of the traffic signals at Caldwell and County Center as well as at Caldwell and Shady.
	6. Improve the implementation of the Bike Path plan striping by the following:			
	Cameron Avenue, from Stonebrook Street to Court Street	In process	Bons	Design completed by 5/09; construction completed by 8/09
	Pinkham Street from Caldwell Avenue to K Avenue	In process	Bons	Design completed by 5/09; construction completed by 8/09
	Giddings Street from Tulare Avenue to Goshen Avenue	In process	Bons	Design completed by 5/09; construction completed by 8/09
	Akers Street from Caldwell Avenue to Riggin Avenue	In process	Bons	Design completed by 11/09; construction completed by 4/10
	<i>Pending BTA Grant application notice or other funding:</i>	In process		
	Mineral King Avenue, from Akers Street to Mooney Blvd	In process	Bons	Pending release of State funding, design completed by 11/09, construction completed by 4/10
	Noble Avenue, from Akers Street to Woodland Street	In process	Bons	Pending release of State funding, design completed by 11/09, construction completed by 4/10
	7. Improve school sidewalk areas.	In process	Young/Bons	City awarded two state "Safe Routes to School Grants" for projects at Veva Blunt and Four Creeks School. Working on design and right of way to be completed 5/09, construction by 9/09
	a. Construct sidewalk improvements on Jacob	In process	Young/Bons	Coordinating design with RR tentatively scheduled to complete design by 10/09. Construction awarded by 3/10.
	b. Presentation on project list for sidewalk improvements utilizing the \$100,000 allotted for this purpose through Measure R.	In process	Young/Bons	To be presented in first quarter of 2009
	8. Fully implement new pavement management system purchased in 2007	In process	Benelli	New software purchased from "Pavement Management Systems." Staff members have been trained and system is being implemented over a four-year period, with full implementation scheduled for 2012.
	9. Explore options for funding to repair trench cuts.	In process	Goldstrom/Young	Updating standards and specifications for trench backfill and pavement replacement. Implemented Encroachment Permit Policy in 1/09
	10. Complete Ferguson St. connection utilizing Measure R funding for design and construction	In process	Ennis/Young	Design complete - to be awarded in Feb. 09

VISALIA FACT QUIZ

Many times our perception of something is different than the facts. To make sure our perception of Visalia is true, we are going to test you and then compare it to the trends and facts of Visalia. You will be given approximately 5 minutes to answer the questions below about Visalia's population, allocated positions, taxes, and sales tax.

Population Growth:

1. This is a two part question. Part A - circle the city that had the largest population in 1950? Part B - Underline, the city that had the smallest population?
Visalia
Tulare
Hanford
Porterville
2. This is a two part question. Part A – from the cities listed in question #1 (above), write which City in 1970 was the largest? Part B –on a percentage basis, circle how much larger the city was?
Part A : _____
Part B: 40%, 80%, 120%, 140%.
3. Since 1980 to present, Visalia has been how much larger on average than the other three cities? Circle your response below.
40%
80%
120%
140%.

Allocated Positions:

4. Allocated positions per thousand population is a rough measure of governmental capacity to serve the residents in their jurisdiction. From the following list, which year had the highest and the lowest allocated positions per thousand: Next to the year, please put “H” for highest and “L” for lowest.

1990
1995
2000
2005
2009

5. City's employees are assigned to work in various categories. Have the work categories for Visalia changed over time? For each question circle the correct answer.
- Enterprise positions, as a percentage of total allocated positions, has: increased, decreased or stayed the same for the last twenty years?
 - Public Safety positions, as a percentage of total allocated positions, has: increased, decreased or stayed the same for the last twenty years?
 - General Fund, non-public safety positions, as a percentage of total allocated positions, has: increased, decreased or stayed the same for the last twenty years?

Taxes:

6. The eight cities in Tulare County (Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, and Woodlake) have different tax bases. Please answer the following questions regarding cities in Tulare County.
- What city or cities has the highest and lowest share property tax base?
 - What city or cities have the highest and lowest sales tax override?
 - What city or cities have the highest and lowest utility users tax?
 - What city or cities have the highest and lowest TOT (Bed Tax)?
7. Tax bases are not equal among cities. For example, everyone in Tulare County pays a 1% property tax. The dollar amount given back to each city is based on the cities property tax rate established subsequent to passage of Prop 13 in 1978. In addition, cities may enact special taxes on utilities, taxable sales, or other special measures such as lighting and Landscape Maintenance Assessment Districts. The monies collected within each city make a difference in what a government can provide. Consider the differences between Visalia and Tulare.
- Do Tulare and Visalia have the same tax base? Circle: Yes or No
 - On a per capita basis, the incremental difference between the two is how much a year? Circle your response below.
 - \$25
 - \$50
 - \$75
 - \$100
8. Why has Visalia been able to compete with other cities? Circle your response below.
- Smarter employees
 - Increased tax base has been only a recent event
 - Smarter Councils
 - Stronger retail sales tax base
 - Stronger non-retail sales tax base
 - All of the above

Sales Tax:

9. This is a two part question. Sales Tax is classified into 10 different major categories by the State Board of Equalization. Part A – From the categories listed below, circle which is Visalia’s most important category for 2007 (the latest full calendar year that is available)? Part B – Underline the category that is the least important?

<u>Class</u>	<u>Example</u>
Auto Dealers	Giant Chevrolet
General Merchandise Stores	Costco
Food and Drinking Establishments	McDonalds
All Other Outlets	MWI Veterinary

10. Sales Tax comes from all parts of the City. What percentage of taxable sales does the Downtown area represent for the City of Visalia? Circle your response below.
- 10%
 - 18%
 - 25%
 - 4%
11. Sales Tax can move from city to city or jurisdiction to jurisdiction over time. Visalia has more taxable sales per capita than which of the following jurisdictions?
- Tulare
 - Hanford
 - Porterville
 - County of Tulare
 - State of California
12. From 2000 to 2007, indicate from the list of entities in question #11, whether Visalia has:
- Decreased the per capita gap;
 - Increased the per capita gap; or,
 - Kept the same per capita gap.
13. Between 2000 and 2007, all but one major sales tax category saw a decrease in the capita gap with Tulare and Hanford. Which of the following major categories which make up over 80% of the City’s sales tax base did not see a gap decrease between Hanford and Tulare compared to Visalia? Circle your response below.
- All Other Outlets (Non-retail)
 - General Merchandise Store
 - Auto Dealers
 - Other Retail Stores
 - Eating and Drinking Places
 - Building Materials and Farm Implements

14. What are Visalia's Top Three Sales Tax Categories? Circle your response below.
- All Other Outlets (Non-retail)
 - General Merchandise Store
 - Auto Dealers
 - Other Retail Stores
 - Eating and Drinking Places
 - Building Materials and Farm Implements

Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Fred Brusuelas, Community Development Assistant Director
Subject: East Downtown Strategic Plan Update
Date: January 23, 2009

Background:

The East Downtown Strategic plan was reviewed and accepted by the City Council in December 2005. The document is an urban vision for the area of the city that is east of the central business district and west of Ben Maddox Avenue. It reinforces the community's sustained efforts to keep downtown as the physical and economic center of the city complementing its retail and commercial function with residential, office and civic uses.

Since acceptance of the East Downtown Strategic Plan the following efforts have been initiated or completed:

1. Parking Lot at Tipton & Oak

The northeast corner of Tipton and Oak streets is a quadrant of the civic center block that was proposed for an office structure (liner building). A request for proposal to finance and construct the building was sent to interested developers and they responded that the project would not be economically feasible at this time. As an interim use the city established a public parking on the site that was completed in 2008.

Next Step: The Tipton/Oak public parking lot site is within the Civic Center Master plan that proposes a public parking structure with a liner building. This effort is a vision that will be dependent upon long term economic circumstances, market conditions and financial feasibility. At least 10 years is anticipated.

1a. New Parking Lot – 409 E. Murray

City Council has authorized a new parking lot on city owned land at 409 E. Murray. This lot will contain 22 spaces and will serve nearby businesses including Family Health Care Network and Buchman-Mitchell. This parking lot will be environmentally sensitive; including solar lights and irrigation systems with water saving landscaping, permeable and heat reflective surfacing. Planning Commission approved a CUP on January 12, 2009. Construction bids will open February 6, 2009 and completion expected early summer 2009.

2. Brownfield Grants

The City of Visalia has been the recipient of Brownfield grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A clean up grant is being used to remediate and clean up

contaminated soil in the East Downtown Area. An assessment grant is being used to further evaluate potential sites of contamination in the East Downtown Area.

Next Step: The consultants continue their work on assessments and clean up processing. It is anticipated that the physical clean up work will be completed by late 2009 and the assessment work will be completed by early 2010.

3. Street Infrastructure Plan for Civic Center Block

The East Downtown Coordinating Committee directed city staff to commence with design and construction necessary for street improvements around the future civic center block and for the Public Safety Building site. The civic block comprises the streets of Burke, Oak, School, and Tipton. Street improvement drawings are near completion and the environmental documents for the infrastructure have been completed. Coordination with utility companies and right of way acquisition arrangements are in progress. Appraisals are currently being prepared for the required right-of-way so that negotiations with property owners can be initiated. The Rule 20A undergrounding process for overhead utilities along Burke Street from Mill Creek to Goshen Avenue has been initiated with Southern California Edison (SCE). The City is waiting to receive a response from SCE on schedule, costs to the 20A fund and details for the process. The Rule 20B undergrounding process for overhead utilities on School Avenue between Tipton and Burke Streets has also been initiated with SCE and we are awaiting the details for this also. The railroad consultants are currently working on design and cost estimates for the Oak Avenue railroad improvements.

Next Step: Construction of the perimeter street improvements are anticipated by late 2009 or early 2010.

4. Public Safety Building

Located at the northwest corner of Oak and Burke Streets is the site of a future public safety building that is a component of the Civic Center Master plan.

The city staff established a committee to administer a plan for financing, designing and developing the proposed Public Safety Building. A draft "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for architectural services to design the building has been prepared but not released.

Next Step: Awaiting assessment of current economic opportunities and budget constraints prior to distributing the RFP.

5. Development Code

A draft Development Code document was prepared in the format of a "Form Based Code" that has been reviewed by the City Council and vetted with members of the developer/design consultant community. Input has been received that a better solution for a development code in the East Downtown Area is a conventional zoning approach.

A Technical Committee has been established and several meetings have been conducted to provide a forum for comments on practical code solutions.

Next step: Additional meetings will be scheduled with the goal of preparing suggested modifications to the current draft Form Based Code. The committee recommendations are anticipated to be completed by May 2009. It is anticipated that the development code adoption process will be part of the city wide General Plan Update. The code adoption process will be completed in conjunction with a city wide EIR and General Plan Update. The earliest date will be year end 2012.

6. Parks and Infrastructure Plan

The City Council reviewed and accepted the “Parks and Infrastructure Master Plan” (EDAW, Consultant) in the summer of 2008.

Next step: Implementation of the plan is on hold pending current financial/economic circumstances. Funding will be sought through various grant applications. An environmental document, general plan amendment and zoning must also be adopted prior to implementation of the plan.

6a. Mill Creek

City staff has been engaged in discussions with property owners regarding Mill Creek. It is the portion of Mill Creek that is conceptually identified in the Parks & Infrastructure Master Plan. The concept is to have private development front onto Mill Creek with a pedestrian path and open space along the private property frontage. Redevelopment assistance through grant funding and property owner cooperation is a part of the implementation. Presently all affected property owners are supportive of the joint public/private effort.

Next Step: A conceptual agreement is anticipated to be completed and reviewed by all the parties by summer 2009. Once the agreement is accepted then applicants for grants and funding sources may commence.

7. Civic Center Master Plan

The City Council reviewed and accepted the “Civic Center Master Plan” (Bruce Race, Consultant) in the summer of 2008.

Next Step: Implementation of the plan is on hold pending current financial and economic circumstances. An environmental document, general plan amendment and zoning must also be adopted prior to implementation of the plan.

8. General Plan Update

The East Downtown Strategic Plan Area must have a public hearing review process that includes amendments to various elements of the General Plan. The update must incorporate all the accepted plans within the East Downtown Area that has been reviewed by the City Council.

Next Step: Processing of the city wide General Plan Update to incorporate the East Downtown Strategic Plan, Civic Center Master Plan and Parks & Infrastructure Master Plan.

9. Environmental Document

The multiple East Downtown planning components will need an adopted environmental document prior to implementing provisions of the various plans. It is anticipated that a single Environmental Impact Report (*Program EIR*) will provide the best solution for incorporating all the planning proposals. Some individual projects may only require a categorical exemption or negative declaration document.

Next step: The city wide General Plan Update EIR is being considered as the document to incorporate all the East Downtown Plans. If so, it will be several years before an EIR will be adopted for the entire East Downtown Area.

Memorandum

TO: City Council
FROM: Chris Young, City Engineer
Adam Ennis, Engineering Services Manger
SUBJECT: Traffic Circulation and Related Information
DATE: City Council Retreat - January 23/24, 2009

Introduction

In a coordinated effort to improve traffic circulation and level of service (LOS) throughout the City, our Capital Improvements Program includes a number of streets and signalization projects. On a related note, Engineering Staff is implementing policies and procedures that will minimize traffic delays due to construction. These same policies and standards will also significantly reduce future street maintenance costs. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to the Council on the following:

- Appropriate policies/standards being implemented regarding construction traffic control, trench backfill and pavement replacement over trench cuts
- Existing and future traffic signal synchronization “corridors”
- Street, overcrossing and signalization projects that will promote improved traffic circulation, connectivity, and LOS.

Traffic Control, Trench Backfill, Pavement Replacement

Recently staff has implemented a new “Encroachment Permit Policy Manual”. This policy implements procedures that will minimize traffic delays due to construction and significantly reduce future street maintenance costs by requiring the following:

- Traffic control plans to be submitted by a certified technician or engineer
- Traffic control plans must meet established “professional standards”
- Requiring recessed plates over trenches on arterial or collector streets
- Updated trench backfill and pavement replacement standards
- Standardized quality control testing of materials

Traffic Signal Synchronization/Coordination

The City has many traffic corridors that can benefit from synchronization/coordination of traffic signals at the major intersections. Synchronization/coordination can provide more continuous flow of traffic and reduced emissions from vehicles. The synchronization/coordination of traffic signals can be accomplished in two ways:

- Interconnection: Consists of connecting traffic signals with wires, radios, or other electronic methods.

- Clock based timing: Consists of setting traffic signal controller timing by visual observation between adjoining traffic signals to allow vehicles to travel along a corridor at a constant speed with minimal interruptions.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods which can vary from one corridor to the next. Therefore, a study of each corridor is needed to determine the method and timing to provide the most efficient synchronization/coordination.

Current Year Completed Corridors: Caldwell Avenue from Santa Fe Street to Fairway Street and Tulare Avenue from Linwood Street to Woodland Street are two corridors that have been synchronized/coordinated in this fiscal year.

- The Caldwell Avenue corridor was synchronized/coordinated in August 2008 using clock based timing.
- The Tulare Avenue corridor was synchronized in October of 2008 using radio controlled interconnection.

Corridors Completed in Recent Years

- Noble Avenue from Giddings Street through Burke Street. (Wire interconnected)
- Mineral King Avenue between Burke Street and Bridge Street. (Wire interconnected)
- Demaree Street between Tulare Avenue and Whitendale Avenue. (Wire interconnected)
- Ben Maddox Way between Noble Avenue and Mineral King Avenue. (Wire interconnected)
- Downtown intersections of Center Avenue/Willis Street to Main Street/Willis Street to Main Street/West Street to Acequia Avenue/West Street. (Wire interconnected)

Proposed Projects: The proposed corridors to be synchronized/coordinated are listed below including timeframes for selecting a consultant and implementation. A consultant will be selected through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to perform the work. Each corridor will be studied for an effective use of traffic signal synchronization/ coordination to best meet the needs of each traffic corridor.

<u>Corridor</u>	<u>Limits</u>	<u>Solicit RFP</u>	<u>Implement Recommendations</u>
• Mineral King Ave	From West Street to Giddings Street	Nov. 2009	April 2010
• Akers Street	From Tulare Ave to Whitendale Ave	July 2010	Dec. 2010
• Whitendale Ave	From Akers Street to County Center	July 2011	Dec. 2011
• Demaree Street	From Mill Creek Drive to Riggins Ave	July 2013	Dec. 2014

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

There are many CIP transportation projects that have been assigned to project managers which are currently in progress. Below is a list of those projects with current status and anticipated schedules. Specific information for each of these projects is available if needed. These schedules may be impacted by the future availability of funds or a potential decline in revenue (based on future economic conditions). The numbering of the projects below corresponds with the attached exhibit indicating project locations.

STREET PROJECTS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

1.) **Akers Street Dual Left To Eastbound Cypress Avenue:** This project constructs dual left turn pockets on southbound Akers Street to Eastbound Cypress Avenue. This project is part of a future overall widening of Akers Street from Hillman Avenue to Tulare Avenue and improvements at the State Highway 198 interchange. The project includes the widening of Cypress Avenue to the south on the east side of Akers Street and modification to the traffic signal and striping at Akers Street and Cypress Avenue.

- Current Status: Under construction
- Schedule: Construction to be completed in February 2009

2.) **Acequia Avenue Two-Way Conversion:** This project converts the existing Acequia Avenue between Conyer Street and Bridge Street from one-way eastbound traffic to two-way traffic and adds bicycle lanes from Conyer Street to Santa Fe Street.

- Current Status: Under Construction
- Schedule: Construction Completed by Mid February 2009

STREET PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 2009

3.) **Santa Fe Overcrossing at State Highway 198:** The project includes removal of the abandoned railroad bridge at Santa Fe Street, and construction of a new five-lane vehicular overcrossing in its place. The project will widen Santa Fe Street for one-half block north of Mineral King Avenue and one-half block south of Noble Avenue to match the width of the proposed five-lane structure. Two new traffic signals will be installed and interconnected to, and synchronized with, the City's downtown signal timing system.

- Current Status: Contracts Being Signed and Construction Schedule Dates Being Set
- Schedule: Start Construction February 2009

4.) **Ferguson Avenue Extension (Mooney Boulevard – West of Giddings Street):** This project will provide street improvements starting at the intersection of Ferguson and Mooney extending to the east and connecting with the existing improvements just west of Giddings Street. A four-way stop and crosswalks will be provided at Mooney Boulevard. The design has been completed and the start of construction is scheduled for March of 2009.

- Current Status: Design Complete
- Schedule: Start Construction March 2009

5.) **Houston Avenue (Santa Fe Street – Ben Maddox Way):** This project's improvements will include street improvements from Santa Fe to Ben Maddox, a roundabout at Santa Fe, and signal modifications at Burke and Ben Maddox. Also included will be a storm drain line extension to the south and improvement of the Tipton/Race storm drain basin.

- Current Status: Design 95% Complete
- Schedule: Start Construction April 2009

6.) **Mooney Blvd. Widening:** The Mooney Boulevard Widening consists of three separate projects which compliment the Cal Trans Mooney Widening project. The three City projects include the widening and improving of the Mooney/Walnut intersection, the Mooney/Whitendale intersection and the Mooney/Packwood Widening. The projects will include the widening of the streets to add traffic lanes and signal/stripping modifications. The Walnut/Mooney intersection will also include undergrounding of utilities. These projects are being designed and scheduled to coordinate with the Cal Trans Mooney Widening project

- Current Status: Completing Right-of-Way Acquisition, Obtaining Encroachment Permits
- Schedule: Start Construction April 2009

7.) **Ben Maddox Overcrossing Widening at State Highway 198:** The widening of the Ben Maddox Overcrossing at State Highway 198 consists of adding two traffic lanes to the bridge and improving and widening Noble Avenue from the west side of Ben Maddox to east of the State Highway 198 off ramp. Improvements to the railroad crossing on Noble Avenue west of Ben Maddox Way will also be included.

- Current Status: Final submittal of plans to Cal Trans and Finalizing Right-of-Way Acquisition.
- Schedule: Start Construction April 2009.

8.) **McAuliff Street Overcrossing:** The McAuliff Street Overcrossing Project (at Mill Creek and Evans Ditch) consists of providing a roadway connection from the existing north end of McAuliff Street south of Evan's Ditch and the existing south end of McAuliff Street on the north side of Mill Creek. The project includes installing a cast-in-place concrete culvert at Mill Creek and a pipe culvert at Evan's Ditch. The project also includes removing an existing flume in Mill Creek and flow control devices and associated equipment in both channels and reconstructing them in alternate locations.

- Current Status: Design Review and Right-Of-Way Acquisition Being Completed
- Schedule: Permits obtained by April 2009 and Construction May 2009.

9.) **Civic Center Block Streets:** This construction includes the construction of Oak Avenue from Tipton Street to Burke Street, the extension of School Avenue from Tipton Street to Burke Street and the widening of Burke Street from Mill Creek to Goshen Avenue. These improvements are being constructed in anticipation of development of the new Civic Center. School Avenue will include right-of-way acquisition along the north side and Rule 20B undergrounding of overhead utilities. Oak Avenue will include railroad improvements and Burke Street will include Rule 20A undergrounding of overhead utilities.

- Current Status: Right-of-Way Acquisition underway, design at 80% completion, utility undergrounding initiated and railroad design underway.
- Schedule: Start Construction by end of 2009.

10.) Burke Street Extension (Houston Avenue to Roosevelt): The Burke Street Extension will consist of completing the connection between Houston Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue. This connection will make Burke Street continuous from Cambridge Avenue on the south to north of the St. John's Parkway at the north end. The project will include right-of-way acquisition

- Current Status: Environmental Document Preparation and Design underway
- Schedule: Start construction end of 2009

STREET PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 2010

11.) Tulare Avenue Extension (Lovers Lane – McAuliff Street): This project will extend street improvements from Lovers Lane to McAuliff Street on Tulare Avenue and provide a traffic signal at Tulare and Lovers Lane. Right-of-way Acquisition will also be a part of this project.

- Current Status: Right-of-way acquisition and Design underway
- Schedule: Start construction mid 2010

12.) Plaza Drive/State Highway 198 Interchange and Plaza Drive Widening: The Plaza Drive Interchange and Plaza Widening project consists of widening the overcrossing at State Highway 198 to seven lanes, improving the interchange ramps and widening Plaza Drive between State Highway 198 and Goshen Avenue. A private development currently planned on Plaza Drive, between Crowley Avenue and Hurley Avenue, may build this portion of Plaza Drive. Traffic signals will be installed at Crowley Hurley Avenues.

- Current Status: Project Report completed and design beginning
- Schedule: Start Construction July 2010

STREET PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 2013

13.) Visalia Parkway Overcrossing: The Visalia Parkway Overcrossing (at Packwood Creek) consists of providing a roadway connection from the east end of Visalia Parkway on the west side of Packwood Creek to the intersection of Visalia Parkway and County Center Drive on the east side of Packwood Creek. The project will include a culvert crossing on Packwood creek, construction of the roadway and the improvement of the Visalia Parkway and County Center intersection including a traffic signal. It is anticipated that the culvert will be constructed for the ultimate build-out of the street but the roadway on the culvert will be constructed to match the northern half of the existing street on each side of Packwood Creek until development occurs to the south.

- Current Status: Design, right-of-way acquisition, and permitting in 2009-2010
- Schedule: Start Construction in 2013, or sooner if funding becomes available.

14.) Lovers Lane Interchange at State Highway 198 Improvements: This project will widen Lovers Lane at the State Highway 198 interchange and improve the ramps to the State Highway. The project is intended to improve the levels of service at the interchange through future years. An interchange at Road 148 and State Highway 198 may be considered in the overall traffic solution for this area and considered as a later phase.

- Current Status: Preparing Project Study Report and Coordinating Traffic Solutions With Cal Trans.
- Schedule: Project Report in 2009, Design/Right-of-way 2010-2011, Construction 2013

Future Planned Street Projects

There are many CIP transportation projects that will be assigned to project managers in the next three to ten years. Below is a list of those projects with anticipated construction years listed for those projects where construction budgets have been planned. Specific information for each of these projects is available if needed. These construction years may be impacted by the future availability of funds or a potential decline in revenue (based on future economic conditions).

- Tulare Avenue Widening-Woodland To Fairway (Excluding Mooney Intersection)
- Caldwell Widening and Improvements- Santa Fe to Lovers Lane
- Ben Maddox Widening (Main to Houston)
- Tulare Widening - Encina To Church
- Houston Widening and Reconstruction (Lovers Lane - Ben Maddox)
- Caldwell Widening - Akers To Shady
- Shirk Widening (SR 198 to Goshen) – Construction 2011-2012
- Shirk Widening (Walnut to SR 198) – Construction 2011-2012
- Santa Fe Widening - Noble to K Ave – Construction 2013-2014
- Akers Widening and Ramp Improvements- Tulare to Hillsdale
- Santa Fe Widening - Noble to Riggins – Construction 2013-2014
- Riggins Widening and Improvements (Mooney to Dinuba Blvd.) – Construction 2013-2014
- McAuliff Widening and Improvements- Noble to Tulare– Construction 2013-2014
- Shirk/198 Interchange Widening and Improvements
- Chinoweth Extension (Houston to Goshen) – Construction 2013-2014
- Visalia Parkway Overcrossing of Packwood Creek and Intersection Improvements at County Center – Construction 2013-2014

TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROJECTS

S1.) Caldwell Avenue at County Center Traffic Signal: This project will upgrade the existing traffic signal by providing protected left turn arrows for the north and south bound traffic. The east and west bound direction of travel currently have protected left turn arrows. In addition to providing protected left turn arrows, LED indicators will be installed replacing any existing incandescent indicators and a battery back up system will also be added. This is a project to be included in the Economic Stimulus program.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise and award in April 2009 and begin construction in May 2009

S2.) Demaree Street at Whitendale Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will upgrade the existing traffic signal by providing protected left turn arrows for all directions. The upgrade will require the replacement of all the traffic signal equipment, installation of LED indicators, installation of a battery backup system, and minor improvements to the pedestrian ramps.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise in March 2009 and begin construction May 2009

S3.) Linwood Street at Walnut Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will provide left turn arrows for all four directions. The upgrade will require the replacement of the traffic signal mast arms, installation of LED indicators, installation of a battery backup system, and minor improvements to the pedestrian ramps.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise in March 2009 and begin construction May 2009

S4.) Court Street and Whitendale Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will provide a traffic signal at the intersection and related roadway improvements. The traffic signal will provide for efficient traffic flow along a major corridor within the City. The traffic signal installation will include energy efficient LED indicators and a battery backup system.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise in April 2009 and begin construction in June 2009

S5.) Mooney Boulevard at Goshen Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will provide a signal at the intersection along with railroad crossing improvements and related roadway improvements. The initial topographic survey has been completed and initial coordination meetings with the railroad have been scheduled. Construction could be completed as early as November of 2009 depending on the requirements/review of the railroad and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise in June 2009 and begin construction in August 2009

S6.) Demaree Avenue at Mill Creek Drive Traffic Signal: This project will install a traffic signal at an intersection that is currently controlled by an all-way stop. The traffic signal will provide for efficient traffic flow along a major corridor within the City. The traffic signal installation will include energy efficient LED indicators and a battery backup system.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise July 2009 and begin construction in Sept. 2009

S7.) Demaree Avenue at Goshen Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will upgrade the existing traffic signal to provide for the increased traffic in the northwest section of Visalia. The project will provide for dual-left turns for east bound traffic. Construction is scheduled to begin in December 2009 depending on the requirements/review of the Railroad and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) who governs the railroad crossings.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Construction to begin Dec. 2009

S8.) Demaree Street at Ferguson Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will install a traffic signal at an intersection that is currently controlled by an all-way stop and will include minor roadway improvements. The traffic signal will provide for efficient traffic flow along a major corridor within the City. The traffic signal installation will include energy efficient LED indicators and a battery backup system.

- Current Status: Design stage
- Schedule: Advertise project in Dec 2009 and begin construction in Feb. 2010

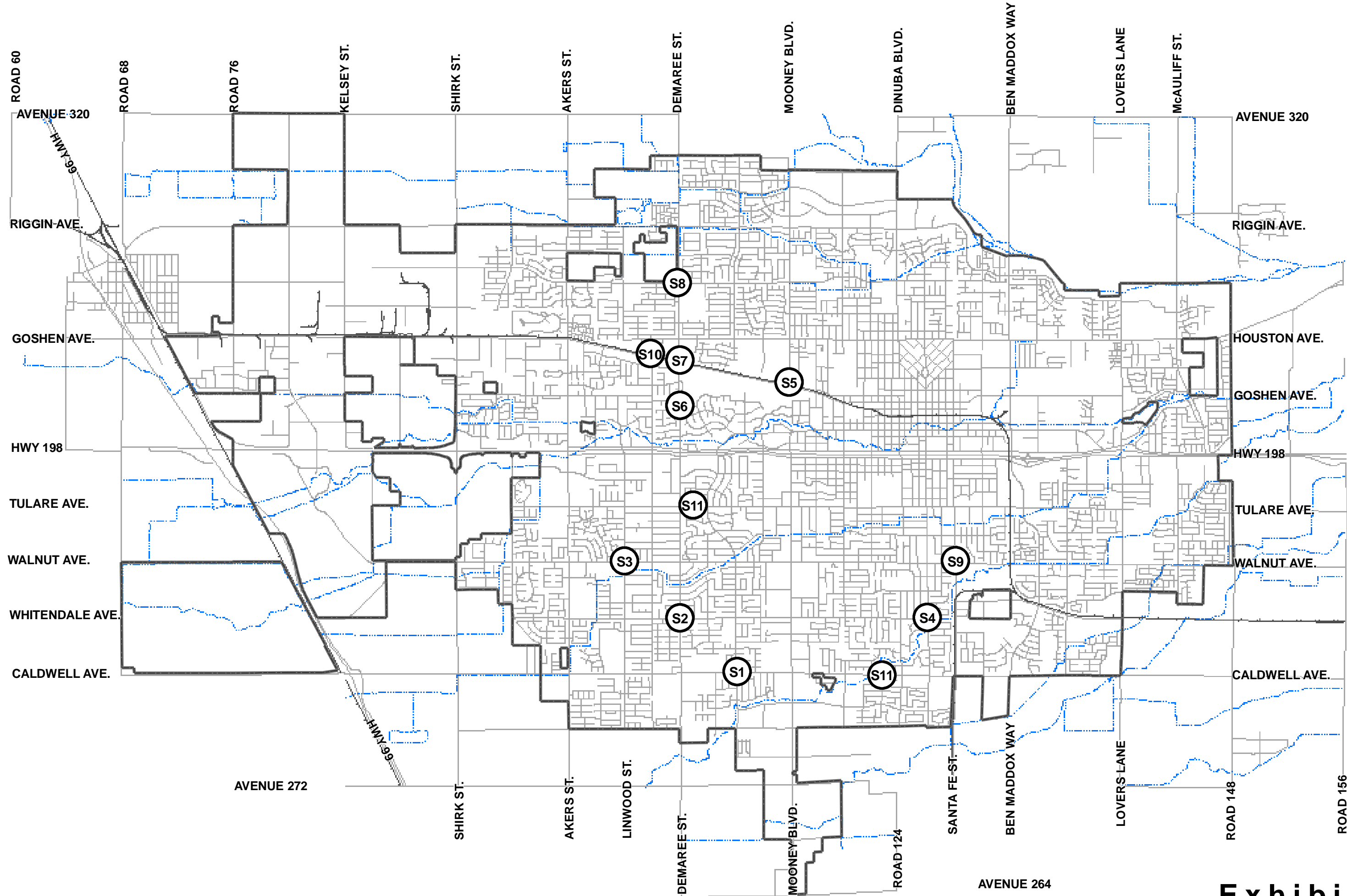
S9.) Santa Fe at Walnut Avenue Traffic Signal: This project will install a traffic signal at an intersection that is currently controlled by an all-way stop and will include major roadway improvements. The traffic signal will provide for efficient traffic flow along a major corridor within the City. The traffic signal installation will include energy efficient LED indicators and a battery backup system. There are significant roadway improvements associated with this intersection that will be addressed with the improvement of the Santa Fe corridor. Santa Fe is scheduled to be widened between Caldwell Avenue and Tulare Avenue along with a pedestrian trail within the old Santa Fe railroad right of way.

- Current Status: Planning stage
- Schedule: Advertise project in January 2011

S10.) Chinowth Street at Goshen Avenue Traffic Signal: The original intent at this intersection was to install a four-way traffic signal in conjunction with the extension of Chinowth Street north of Goshen Avenue over the railroad tracks and connecting to Houston Avenue. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) initially discouraged a new crossing of the railroad tracks at this location and requested justification for the need of the new crossing. The City staff will be preparing justification for this new crossing in an effort to obtain CPUC approval and continue with the extension of Chinowth Street. Since this process could take some time, City staff is considering installing a three-way traffic signal in the near future that could be converted to a four-way signal when/if the new railroad crossing is approved.

- Current Status: Planning stage
- Schedule: Budgeted in the fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14

Attachments: Exhibit #1 – Location Map of CIP Street Projects
Exhibit #2 – Location Map of CIP Traffic Signal Projects



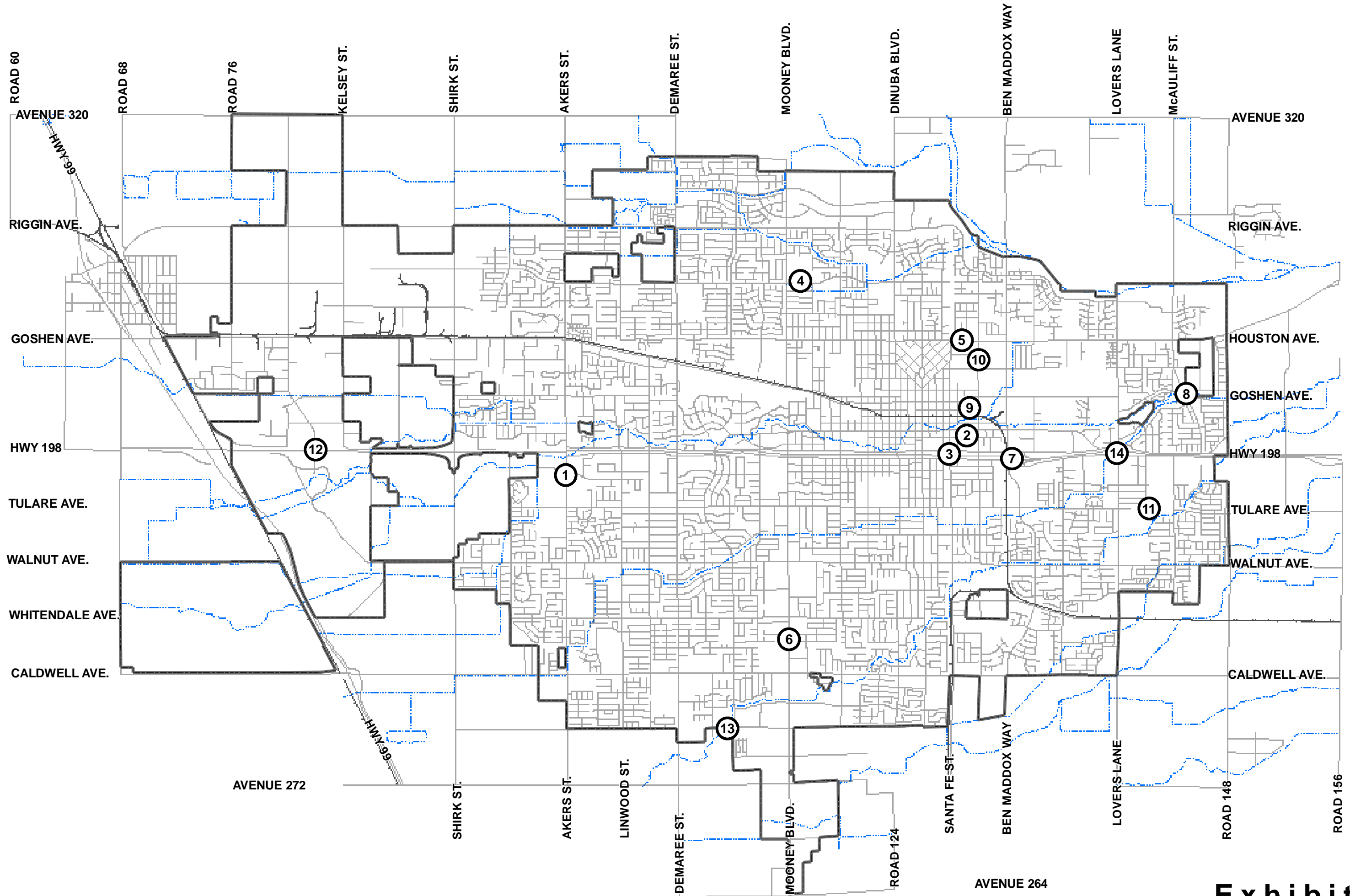


Exhibit 1

City Council Retreat Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Brandon Smith, AICP, Senior Planner (713-4636)
Fred Brusuelas, Community Development Assistant Director (713-4364)
Subject: **Comparison of Focused and Comprehensive General Plan Updates, and request for direction on the scope of Visalia's General Plan Update.**
Date: January 23, 2009

Department Recommendation: Staff recommends the City Council take the following actions:

1. Consider the contents of this transmittal that compares Focused and Comprehensive Updates to the General Plan, including completing a Citywide Program EIR with each
2. Direct staff to return with a work program for a Comprehensive General Plan Update for Council review and consideration, including a multi-year budget, and a mechanism to recover proportionate cost of the update from future development.

The Council has the option to authorize either a comprehensive or focused update; however a comprehensive update is directed by staff and most closely matches Council's original direction in May 2008.

Background: The City Council previously authorized proceeding on a General Plan update with the Focused Update approach. This direction was premised on the Council's determination that the immediate and highest priority need is to extend the effective life of the current 129,000 UDB by several years while simultaneously directing new residential growth to the current large inventory of approved but not developed residential lots, to the emerging Southeast Specific Plan area, and inward toward the City Core, and at higher densities than what is currently the norm.

However, some Council and community members have recently expressed concern that this approach may be shortsighted and that the need for a "Comprehensive" Update of the General Plan should instead be undertaken.

Summary: The maturing of the General Plan and the current state of development probes the question as to what is the City's vision for guiding future growth. The City Council has the choice to accept the current General Plan as the vision for the City, or it can make amendments needed to recast the vision. A Focused Update allows the City to continue utilizing the current General Plan as its vision and, realizing its past achievements, make adjustments so that it stays on course for the vision. A Comprehensive Update presents the City with an opportunity to recreate the vision, whether it is a new vision or building upon a vision of a previous general plan update. The vision or "big picture" would be the basis to craft new goals, policies, land uses, and growth boundaries necessary to achieve the vision.

City staff believes that a Comprehensive Update is the best choice as it provides the community an opportunity to recast a City's vision over the next 20 to 30 years. The Comprehensive Update allows the community to shape the City's vision for growth and allows for the adoption of new boundaries or growth management strategies as appropriate. It would entail the most cost effective amount of staff work and financial commitment in the short term (2 to 7 years), and allows the City to more quickly adapt to the vision voiced by the community.

Whether a Comprehensive or Focused General Plan update is pursued, a Strategy is needed to finance the cost, organize groups, prepare the plan, and conduct public hearings. It will be necessary for staff to return with a report to the City Council identifying the strategy and scope of work necessary to prepare and adopt the General Plan Update.

Comparison: This report is intended to provide a detailed comparison between the two General Plan Update options to enable Council to make an informed decision on this important topic. Table 1 below provides a visual comparison between a focused update and a comprehensive update. More detailed comparisons and explanations are provided in the sections below.

TABLE 1	General Plan Update Summary Comparison	
	Focused	Comprehensive
Process Timeline	<i>2 years</i>	<i>3 to 5 years</i>
Estimated Population at Completion (@ 3% growth)	<i>132,800</i>	<i>136,800 to 145,100</i>
Cost	<i>\$500,000</i>	<i>\$1,500,000</i>
Budgeted Cost per Year of General Plan / EIR Update	<i>\$250,000</i>	<i>\$300,000 to \$500,000</i>
G.P. Elements Affected	<i>One primarily - Land Use (residential land uses only) Housing Element being processed separately</i>	<i>Six - Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. Housing Element being processed separately</i>
Land Areas Affected	<i>98,700 and 129,000 UDBs</i>	<i>Entire Urban Area Boundary</i>
General Plan Life	<i>5 years</i>	<i>20 years</i>
Land Inventory	<i>5 years</i>	<i>20 years</i>
Personnel	<i>1 FTE Planning staff</i>	<i>1.5 FTE Planning staff, plus multi-dept. City staff on part time basis</i>
Environmental Consultant Team	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Land Use Consultant Team	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Subject Matter Expert Consultants Needed	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes – part of the land use / environmental team</i>

The report also contains technical discussions included for the purpose of providing background as the City Council decides between the Focused and Comprehensive Updates. An updated discussion on dwelling unit inventory and population capacity is included for reference and has no direct relevance on the decision of the two different updates. Discussion on a Citywide Program EIR Update is also included under the review of each option.

Citywide Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR): Regardless whether the City Council directs that a Focused or Comprehensive General Plan update (GP update) be pursued, either approach will need to update the City’s aging Program EIR. The updates would:

- reflect baseline conditions from the City’s built environment,
- evaluate impacts from goals and policies emerging from Update,
- evaluate impacts from the East Downtown Implementation Plan, and
- compliance with current CEQA practices and mandates, including AB 32 and SB 375 greenhouse gas / climate change mandates.

Comprehensive Update

The comprehensive GP update is the alternative preferred by staff and most closely matches the City Council's earlier (May 2008) direction and desired long-term (20 - 30 year timeframe). It also entails considerable commitment of money for professional consultants, and City staff resources, and will require significant community involvement and focus for an extended (up to five year) period. **The value of the Comprehensive Update is that it provides an opportunity to evaluate past community development successes and issues and establish new goals and priorities comprising a contemporary long-term vision for the community.**

The nature of a comprehensive update must be clearly understood. A comprehensive update will fully re-evaluate the City's vision for itself in terms of future growth and community development, and will develop a fresh, contemporary planning framework for the future. In other words, the vision for the community will be re-set in consideration of needs, trends, and issues occurring now and anticipated for the future. These considerations will include, but not be limited to:

- Pursuit of higher development densities emphasizing neighborhood sustainability through contemporary community-wide policies directing greater use of mixed use development, nodal planning, and contemporary urban design techniques.
- Establishment of new policies for managing greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, resource conservation and groundwater sustainability, enhancement and re-use.
- Establishment of Transit Oriented Corridors for future Rapid Bus and Light Rail systems, including Mooney Blvd.
- Creation of a potential transit oriented node around a future high speed rail station
- Evaluation of our transportation network, examining capacity issues along Highway 198, considering alternative beltway transportation networks, and establishing effective, inter-connected alternative transportation systems for a growing population.
- Incorporation of pertinent objectives of Senate Bill 375 and the Tulare County Blueprint.
- Management of future outward growth utilizing buffer areas between nearby cities and examining potential edge boundaries at Highway 99 and St. John's River.
- Establishment of a vision for unincorporated fringe areas around the community, using techniques that prevent establishment of inappropriate land uses in collaboration with Tulare County.
- An updated vision for quality of life amenities and essential services including health and wellness facilities, education, cultural arts, faith-based organizations, youth and senior facilities / services.
- Updating the City's position in the region with respect to commercial development, the impact of changing consumer spending habits and internet shopping, and how these factors affect future commercial development patterns and local demand.
- Evaluation of industrial location factors, including local demographic and other site selection criteria, in determining future job creation opportunities and goals and future industrial land demand.

Previous discussions about a comprehensive plan update have emphasized that its primary intent will be to plan for future growth within the 165,000 UDB. While this can be Council's

direction on a future update, in reality, this should not be the reason to undertake a comprehensive update. To achieve its greatest long-term community value, a comprehensive update should recast the entire General Plan, and all its elements and policies, and set a new, fresh contemporary vision for the future. This vision may revise the concepts of urban development boundaries, or significantly change the policies, including target populations, for these areas. It would also take a fresh look at all components of our planning systems, including all land use categories (residential, commercial, offices, industry, parks, etc.), institutional needs, education and health facilities, transportation systems, environmental sustainability for land uses and buildings, and the many other elements that comprise our urban framework. In addition the Comprehensive Update would evaluate the City's fiscal ability to deliver and sustain the new community vision and recommend financing mechanisms to enable the vision to be implemented.

Clearly, the 2020 Plan has served the community well and has many facets that remain timely and effective, and which can be carried over to a new General Plan. However, the 2020 Plan, though contemporary at the time of inception, is approaching 20 years of age. Even the best plans cannot remain fully responsive to changing conditions, new legal requirements (SB 375), and emerging concepts for urban life for a 20 year period. In addition, on January 1, 1991, the year of adoption of the 2020 Plan, there were 79,474 persons living in Visalia. On January 1, 2008, the population had grown by 42,024 residents to 121,498 an increase of approximately 52.9%. The additional residents were not part of the 2020 Plan visioning sessions; a Comprehensive Update will provide the current population an opportunity to participate in a process to determine what the City should be like in the future.

The benefits of a comprehensive update are strong. They include updating the City's vision, incorporating contemporary planning/resource management concepts, addressing emerging issues and trends, and engaging a significantly expanded resident population. For these reasons, staff continues to recommend that a comprehensive update, though costly, will provide much greater value to the community over the long term.

Process: All of the six required General Plan Elements (Housing Element excluded) will be updated in a Comprehensive Update. The update process would include the hiring of a qualified professional urban design and environmental team to conduct the General Plan Update and Program EIR Update. Significant public outreach will also be included in the form of charettes, workshops, presentations to community groups, public hearings, and so on. The public will be invited to evaluate the success of the existing policies and determine what new or carried-over policies would best serve the public interest.

Work would be carried out in the following steps:

1. Prepare a Scope of Work. Because the General Plan and its implementation will hold a heavy influence on how departments will be carrying out services within the City, it is crucial to include their input at this very early stage which will set a course of action for the remainder of the update.
2. Address time-sensitive updates, complete the background work needed to address issues defined in the scope of work, and secure consultant to guide the Update process.
3. City and consultant work to draft the General Plan Update and Program EIR update with public participation. Hold hearings before Planning Commission and City Council prior to adopting Updates.

EIR Update: If a Comprehensive GP Update is directed, an RFP for combined environmental and General Plan consulting services will be pursued as a packaged contract. Staff estimates the cost for this to be \$1,500,000 which includes the Program EIR Update. This cost estimate is

based on a survey of cities currently updating their General Plans and Program EIRs, and averaged for Visalia’s local conditions.

The final Program EIR with a Comprehensive Update can be expected to be valid for about ten years from the date of adoption. However, because the Comprehensive Update process is expected to take about four years, the City would be lacking an up-to-date Program EIR during this period for use with private sector development applications, City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, and various grant applications.

Staff and participation requirements: The update process would include the hiring of an experienced and well qualified professional planning team for the General Plan Update and Program EIR Update processes. In addition, one full-time staff equivalent would be assigned as the City-Consultant liaison and another part-time staff equivalent would be assigned to assist with coordination, and would be charged with assisting in coordinating meetings with and distributing information to the Citizen Advisory Committee, information gathering, public outreach, and public noticing. Staff would not advise performing the work of a Comprehensive Update entirely in-house and strongly recommends employing outside professional services to ensure the Update incorporates contemporary planning and urban design techniques and environmental analysis, meets all current legislative and legal mandates, is internally consistent, and is legally sufficient.

Timing: The preliminary work schedule attached as Exhibit “A” includes an approximate timeline for the Comprehensive Update option. An average timeframe associated with a city general plan update is approximately three to five years. Extensive community outreach and input has traditionally been a fundamental component of Visalia’s planning process. Staff anticipates that a Comprehensive Update for Visalia’s General Plan will take up to five years given sufficient time for public outreach. Additional tasks of addressing growth issues, meeting State deadlines to address required updates ahead of the update, and the preparation of a comprehensive EIR may increase the preparation time.

Financing: A Comprehensive Update and Program EIR Update for a city typical of Visalia’s size could cost as little as \$1.0 million. With the added factors of “state of the art” planning techniques, strong public participation, and the addition of traffic models or other technical planning/environmental studies, the price tag for the end product could range between \$1.5 and \$2.0 million. Data gathered from other nearby jurisdictions illustrate the amount spent on recent Comprehensive General Plan and Program EIR Updates:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Population (2008)</u>	<u>Cost per capita</u>
Tulare County	\$2 million projected (\$1.5 million spent to date)	144,075	\$13.88
City of Tulare	\$750,000	57,375	\$13.07
City of Clovis	\$1.0 million (anticipated)	94,289	\$10.61

Prior to adoption of a Comprehensive Update, the City can also establish a fee program to achieve reimbursement of some of the cost to prepare the Update. This can be done by levying a proportionate fee on future development being done with reliance on the Updated Plan / EIR. Over time, a substantial amount of the cost of preparing a Comprehensive Update can be recovered. The details of a cost recovery program would be discussed in a Strategy report should the City Council proceed with the Comprehensive Update.

Focused Update

The reduced-scale focus alternative is a least cost method that would prolong (three to five years) the time before the City would need to consider adding growth areas beyond the current 129,000 UDB or undertaking a full comprehensive General Plan Update. This extended life of the 129,000 UDB would be achieved by implementing higher densities and sustainable growth strategies already directed by the City Council.

In the Focused Update alternative, the City would

- continue to abide by the adopted 1991 Land Use Element and its goals and policies,
- focus on addressing the planning issues previously voiced by Council (residential densities, UDB holding capacity, infill development), and
- pursue updates and revisions to portions of the General Plan mandated by State law.

This means that the extended use of the 129,000 UDB would be based on policies and vision for the community established in 1991, with some adjustments primarily to increase density of development. The Focused Update would continue to build on the concepts contained in the 2020 Plan. It would provide a managed cost method to extend the effective life of the 129,000 UDB and defer the much higher cost of a comprehensive update several years into the future.

Process: The Focused Update process would be carried out through a major General Plan Amendment to address growth issues for which the City Council has already achieved consensus. The outcome would be to adopt those policies that will concentrate higher density growth using sustainable development principles within the current 129,000 UDB. Because staff was already authorized at the City Council retreat to address critical updates and growth-related issues, preparation of a separate Scope of Work is not needed before pursuing the updates.

Work would be carried out in the following steps:

1. Secure a Program EIR consultant through an RFP distribution. The consultant will first be tasked with preparing a background report evaluating the built environment, while the City develops the policies and measures which embody the Focused Update.
2. Consultant to prepare Draft EIR with public participation, based on background report and draft focus updates. Hold workshops with Planning Commission and City Council prior to adopting Focus Updates and EIR.
3. Work continues to develop policies and measures to address State-mandated updates. These amendments will be discussed with Planning Commission and City Council prior to hearings for consideration of adoption.

EIR Update: If the Citywide Program EIR is prepared with a Focused update, the final EIR will likely have a viable shelf life of approximately five years. If the City does a Comprehensive General Plan Update after five years, it is likely that no more than 30-50% of the cost of the Program EIR will carry over to a Comprehensive GP Update effort. This is because of the relatively short shelf-life of a certified EIR (five years on average, although the City's current Program EIR is over 17 years old).

If a Focused GP update is directed by the City Council, staff will proceed with the previously authorized release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an environmental consulting firm to prepare an updated Program EIR. This will be a stand-alone contract for environmental consulting only since City staff will do the Focused General Plan update work in-house. The reasonable estimate of cost for a Program EIR is \$500,000. This cost estimate is based on a

survey of cities currently updating their Program EIRs, contact with the State Clearing House and League of California Cities, and direct contact with several of the limited number of environmental consultants that have recent success with emerging CEQA issues such as AB 32 and SB 375.

Staff and participation requirements: The Focused Update would be accomplished primarily by City staff (1.0 full-time staff equivalent) with assistance from a Council appointed citizen advisory committee and with public outreach. The Focused Update process would also include the hiring of an experienced environmental consultant for the Program EIR Update process. The EIR consultant or a separate field expert may be used to assist staff in addressing the emerging state issues of greenhouse gases and floodplain management.

Timing: The preliminary work schedule attached as Exhibit “A” includes an approximate timeline for the Focus Update option. Staff anticipates that the total time associated with the Focus Update would take approximately two years. Tasks and timeframes associated with them are approximations only.

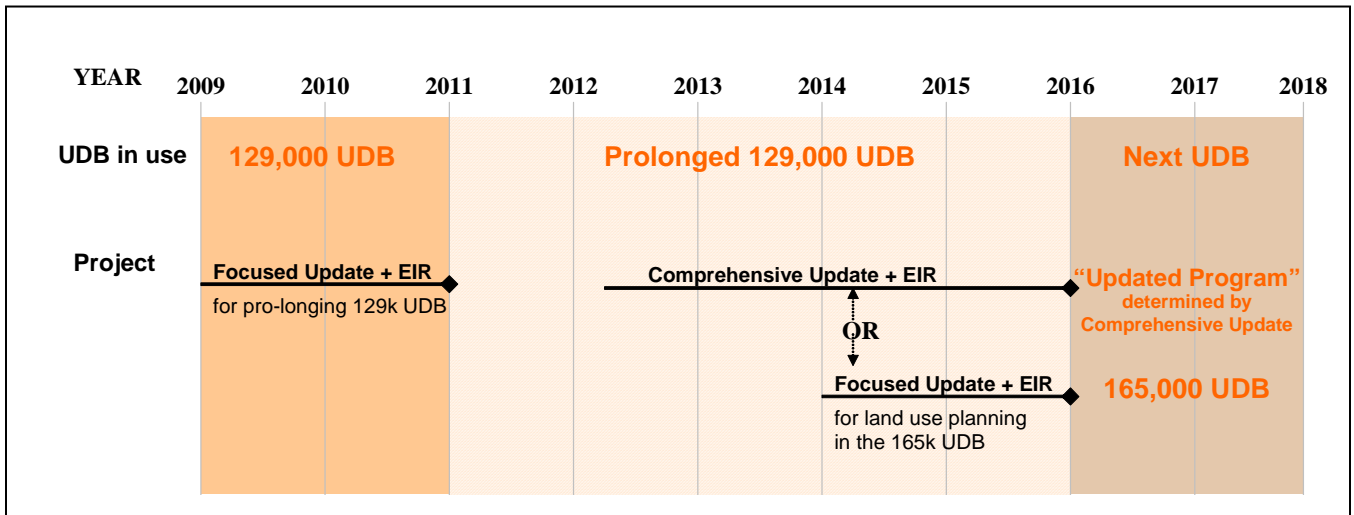
Financing: The cost for completing Focus Updates will be less since City staff will perform the majority of the Land Use Element amendment work using in-house resources. Consultants would only be used for the EIR Update and possibly to help prepare State-mandated updates. The estimated cost for a consultant to prepare and adopt a Program EIR Update is approximately \$500,000. The estimated cost for consultant assistance with the State-mandated updates is approximately \$200,000. The actual costs will be determined through a formal Request For Proposals process and contract award by Council. These costs may also be at least partially reimbursed through a program for proportionate reimbursement by future development.

Future Update for Growth Beyond 129,000 UDB: The Focus Updates will extend the life of the 129,000 UDB by an estimated five years beyond the estimated completion date. Assuming completion in early 2011, this means the growth boundary would be utilized to the year 2016. Staff projects the population in 2016 to range between 154,000 and 160,000 considering a consistent growth rate between 2.5% and 3.5%.

Before adding growth areas beyond the 129,000 UDB, the City Council must make a series of findings found in Land Use Policy 6.2.3 which consider adequate services, infrastructure, and community growth priorities. Findings must also be made with respect to year, population, and buildout as noted in Appendix C of the Land Use Element (see Exhibit “G” for Policy 6.2.3 and Appendix C). In correlation with the Focus Update, the criteria on Appendix C would be adjusted to compensate for the new 129,000 UDB target population and a higher percentage of required buildout. Thus, even by the year 2016, Council may find that the required criteria for expansion are still not being met. This was the case when population and buildout criteria for expanding beyond the 98,700 UDB – anticipated in 2000 – was not achieved until 2003.

Unless the City undertakes a Comprehensive Update by the year 2016, continued implementation of the 2020 Plan means that the City must implement another Focused Update to map out growth in the 165,000 UDB. Another EIR update would also be necessary to consider specific land use impacts and traffic modeling in the 165,000 UDB. Some cost savings can be carried over from an EIR for a Focused GP Update, but this value is projected to be minimal. This situation means that Council must make a critical decision now or in the next few years: Should the City pursue another future Focused Update concentrating on land use planning for future outward growth in the 165,000 UDB based on continued 2020 Plan implementation, or pursue a Comprehensive Update to evaluate future community goals and set a fresh vision for the community?

The following illustration demonstrates the timelines associated with the Focus Updates and target dates for implementing growth in the 165,000 UDB.



In summary, the City would only buy time through a Focused Update, but will again face a decision of undertaking another Update and Program EIR immediately after completing a Focused Update due to the limited additional time that would be gained.

Committee/Commission Review and Actions: N.A.

Attachments:

- Exhibit "A" – Preliminary Work Schedule for Comprehensive and Focus Updates
- Exhibit "B" – General Plan Land Use and UDB Map
- Exhibit "C" – Required and Critical Updates for General Plan Elements
- Exhibit "D" – December 15, 2008, City Council Staff Report
- Exhibit "E" – Dwelling Unit Inventory and Population Capacity in the 129,000 UDB
- Exhibit "F" – Undeveloped Lands in 129,000 UDB Map
- Exhibit "G" – Growth Boundary Expansion criteria – Policy 6.2.3 and Appendix C
- Exhibit "H" – Correspondence from Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 1/20/09
- Exhibit "I" – Correspondence from Home Builders Association, 1/21/09

Exhibit “C”

Required and Critical Updates for General Plan Elements

The year of each element’s last major update is represented in parenthesis.

Land Use Element (1991)

- Add air quality updates to general plan by August 31, 2010 per state mandate
- Identify FEMA flood plain areas per state mandate (AB 162 - Wolk)
- Address Central Valley Flood Management Plan by 2015 per state mandate (SB 5 - Machado)
- Land use planning for the 165,000 UDB prior to the boundary expansion, which could occur as soon as 2010 unless the schedule is revised by Council action
- Discussion of current planning efforts in East Downtown, Southeast, and Medical District
- Incorporation of principles emerging from the Smart Growth Task Force and Development Standards Task Force
- Updates to policies regarding annexation, growth boundary expansion, residential densities, and infill based on recent direction by Council
- Major updates to the Program EIR (adopted in 1990) to address City efforts in groundwater recharge, agriculture land conservation, infrastructure planning, public safety and services, etc., and to address State-mandated updates to climate change, air quality, flood plains, etc.

The remaining elements would also require updates as needed for Land Use Element consistency.

Circulation (2001)

- Update to address forthcoming changes in Transportation Impact Fees

Housing (2005)

- Full update of Housing Element required per state mandate by August 31, 2009
- Add flood hazard information in accordance with Assembly Bill 162

Conservation and Open Space (1989)

- Add flood water management information per state mandate (AB 162 - Wolk)
- Re-evaluate community-wide park and open space needs

Noise (1995)

Safety (1975)

- Add flood hazard information in accordance with Assembly Bill 162
- Discuss impacts of Measure T

Exhibit "E"

Dwelling Unit Inventory and Population Capacity in the 129,000 UDB

As of January 1, 2009, the City of Visalia had approximately 5,935 single-family residential lots and 744 multi-family residential lots which have been approved but have yet to be constructed. The following Table 2 breaks these figures into the categories of tentative lots and final lots, and recalls the figures of previous years:

TABLE 2: Vacant Lot Counts by Year

	<u>4/1/06</u>	<u>1/1/07</u>	<u>1/1/08</u>	<u>7/1/08</u>	<u>1/1/09</u>	<u>SINGLE-FAMILY LOTS</u>
	4729	4409	3825	3626	3554	# of Tentative Lots
	<u>2761</u>	<u>2920</u>	<u>2756</u>	<u>2544</u>	<u>2381</u>	# of Final (Recorded) Lots w/o Issued Building Permits
TOTAL	7490	7329	6581	6170	5935	# of Vacant Approved Lots w/o Issued Building Permits
	<u>4/1/06</u>	<u>1/1/07</u>	<u>1/1/08</u>	<u>7/1/08</u>	<u>1/1/09</u>	<u>MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING UNITS</u>
	708	746	608	595	558	# of Tentative Lots
	<u>200</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>186</u>	# of Final (Recorded) Lots w/o Issued Building Permits
TOTAL	908	810	824	801	744	# of Vacant Approved Lots w/o Issued Building Permits

Using the State estimate of 2.975 persons per household in Visalia for the year 2008, full buildout of these approved residential units could accommodate a population of 19,870 persons.

In terms of other undeveloped residential lands within the 129,000 Urban Development Boundary staff estimates that there are 3,489 undeveloped acres in addition to lands with tentative or final maps. Based on average densities and an estimated 2.975 persons per household, these remaining undeveloped lands could accommodate a population of 48,911 persons.

If additional populations are added to attribute for un-annexed County islands, the buildout of the East Downtown Area, and the buildout of the Southeast Master-Planned Area, the ultimate population capacity for the 129,000 UDB is estimated at 206,159 persons. This population capacity does not account for requiring annexations to develop at the upper density ranges of each land use category. If it did, the ultimate number would see a projected 5% to 10% increase.

Table 3 illustrates the number of acres, dwelling units, and population capacity associated with each type of undeveloped land. The map attached as Exhibit "C" plots each type of undeveloped land as a separate color.

It should be noted that the Draft EIR of the Land Use Element Update projected a buildout population of 247,767 in the 129,000 UDB by utilizing mid-range densities and an estimated 3 persons per household (pg. 4-72 of the adopted Draft EIR). Buildout is considered as the development of all residential designations up the 129,000 UDB (including infill and under-developed parcels) at average densities.

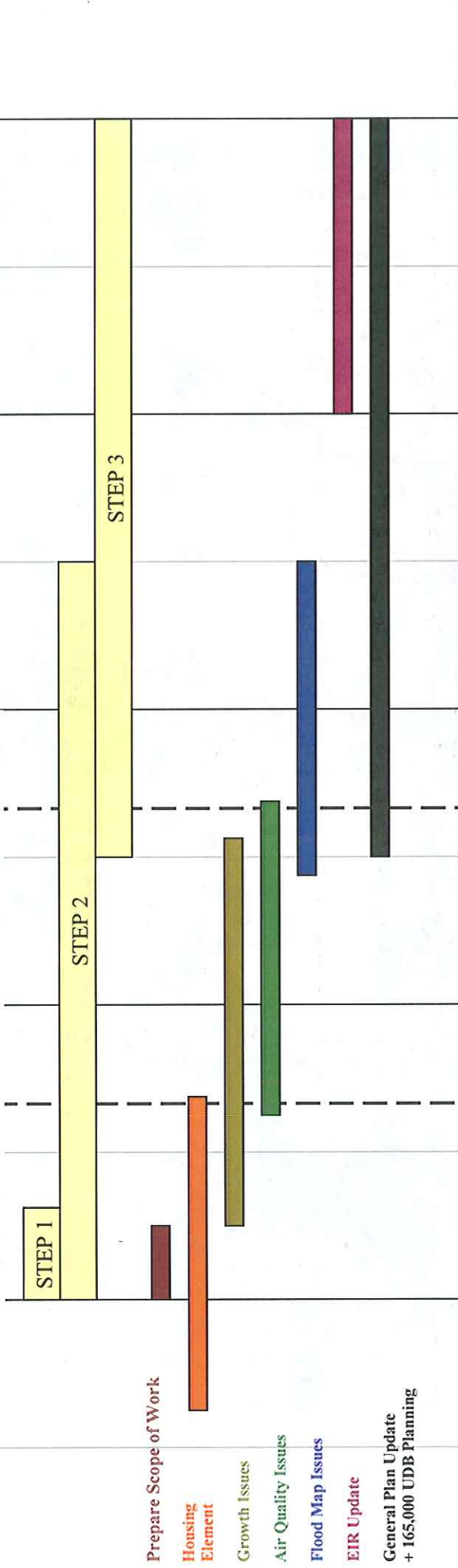
TABLE 3: Estimated Population Capacity within City Limits and 129,000 UDB

	# of Acres Undeveloped	Average Density per net acre	# of Units	Persons per Household*	Population Capacity	Accrued Population
Estimated City Population, Jan. 1, 2009					125,143	125,143
Estimated Population on Developed County Areas in UDB					2,000	127,143
Estimated Capacity of East Downtown Expansion						
Strategic Plan Area			1,000	2.500	2,500	
Framework Areas			2,000	2.500	5,000	
					7,500	134,643
Final (recorded) lots without issued building permits						
Rural & Low Density			2,381	2.975	7,083	
Med & High Density			186	2.975	553	
					7,637	142,280
Undeveloped land with Tentative Map approved						
Rural & Low Density			3,554	2.975	10,573	
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					12,233	154,513
Undeveloped land inside City limits						
Rural	52	1.5	79	2.975	234	
Low Density	699	4.0	2,796	2.975	8,318	
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Undeveloped land outside City limits, 98,700 UDB						
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High Density	5	18.0	83	2.975	247	
	394				5,389	175,060
Undeveloped land outside City limits, 129,000 UDB						
Rural	191	1.5	287	2.975	854	
Low Density	1,869	4.0	7,477	2.975	22,245	
Med. Density	72	12.0	862	2.975	2,566	
High Density	50	18.0	907	2.975	2,699	
	2,183				28,365	203,425
Estimated Additional Capacity of Southeast Master Plan						
			919	2.975	2,734	206,159
TOTAL	3,489					206,159

* 2.975 persons per household was the State Dept. of Finance estimate for the City of Visalia
Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Table E-5:
City / County Population and Housing Estimates, 2008. May 2008

July 2008 January 2009 July 2009 January 2010 July 2010 January 2011 July 2011 January 2012 July 2012 January 2013

COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE TIMELINE



FOCUS UPDATE TIMELINE

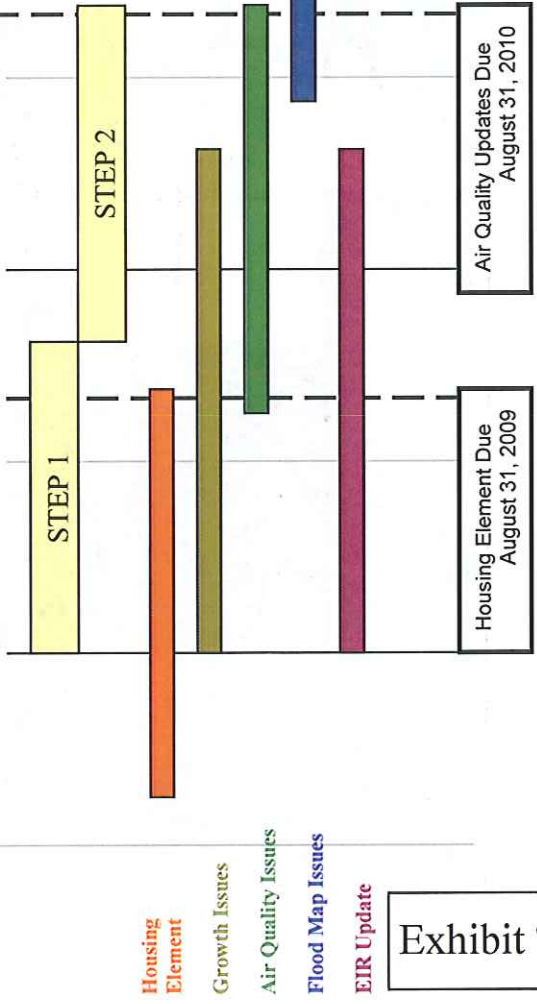
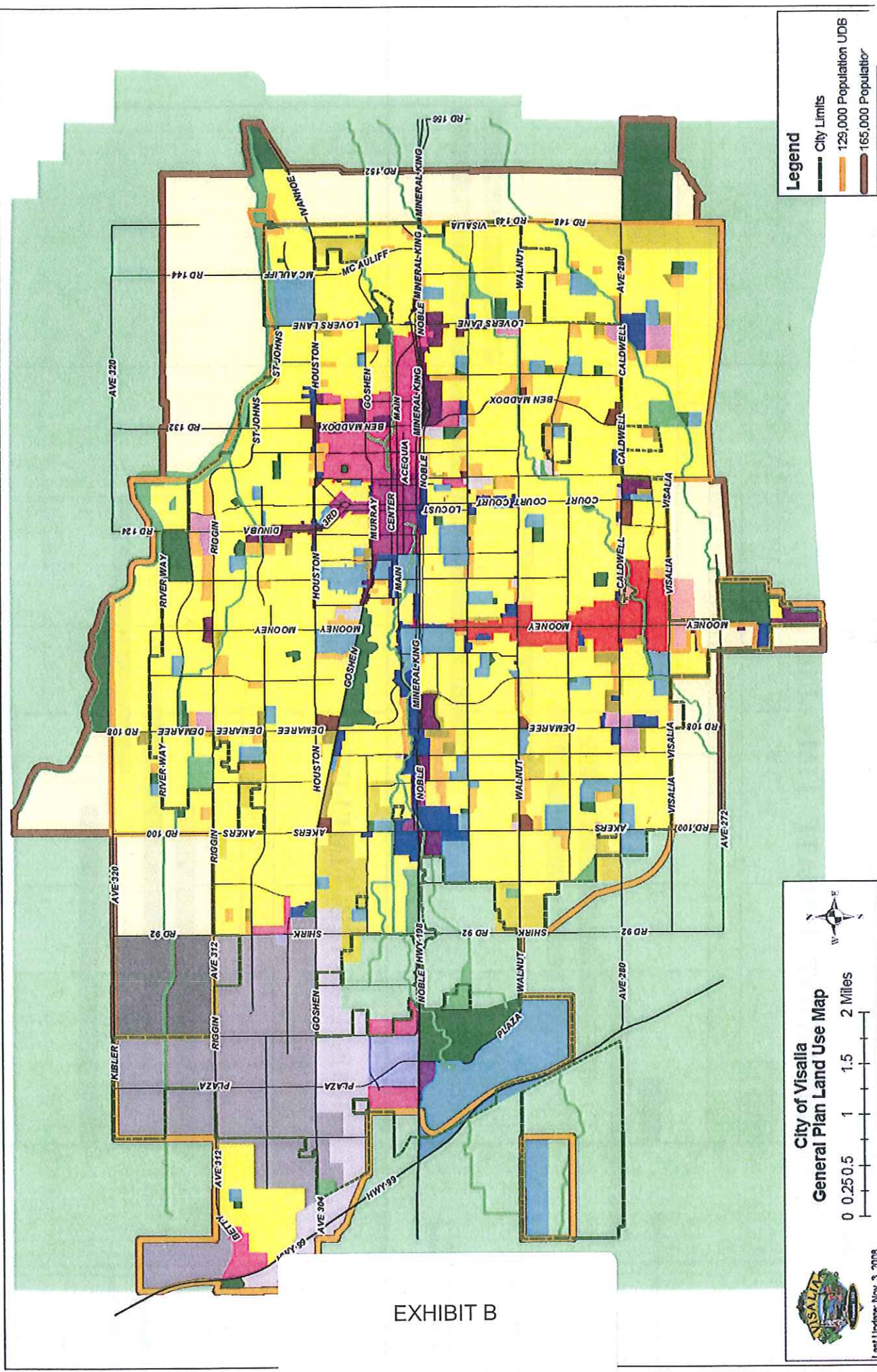


Exhibit "A"

Preliminary Work Schedule

* All timelines are approximate.



Legend

- City Limits
- 129,000 Population UDB
- 165,000 Population*

City of Visalia
General Plan Land Use Map

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Last Update: Nov. 3, 2003

EXHIBIT B

Exhibit "C"

Required and Critical Updates for General Plan Elements

The year of each element's last major update is represented in parenthesis.

Land Use Element (1991)

- Add air quality updates to general plan by August 31, 2010 per state mandate
- Identify FEMA flood plain areas per state mandate (AB 162 - Wolk)
- Address Central Valley Flood Management Plan by 2015 per state mandate (SB 5 - Machado)
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- Discussion of current planning efforts in East Downtown, Southeast, and Medical District
- Incorporation of principles emerging from the Smart Growth Task Force and Development Standards Task Force
- Updates to policies regarding annexation, growth boundary expansion, residential densities, and infill based on recent direction by Council
- Major updates to the Program EIR (adopted in 1990) to address City efforts in groundwater recharge, agriculture land conservation, infrastructure planning, public safety and services, etc., and to address State-mandated updates to climate change, air quality, flood plains, etc.

The remaining elements would also require updates as needed for Land Use Element consistency.

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- Update to address forthcoming changes in Transportation Impact Fees

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- Full update of Housing Element required per state mandate by August 31, 2009
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- Add flood water management information per state mandate (AB 162 - Wolk)
- Re-evaluate community-wide park and open space needs

Noise (1995)

Safety (1975)

- Add flood hazard information in accordance with Assembly Bill 162
- Discuss impacts of Measure T

**City of Visalia
Agenda Item Transmittal**

Meeting Date: December 15, 2008

Agenda Item Number (Assigned by City Clerk): 6

Agenda Item Wording: Approval of representatives on the General Plan Update Review Committee to work with staff on a Focused Update of the General Plan Land Use Element and Program EIR.

Deadline for Action: N.A.

Submitting Department: Community Development Dept. – Planning Division

Contact Name and Phone Number:

Brandon Smith, AICP, Senior Planner 713-4636
Paul Scheibel, AICP, Principal Planner, 713-4369

Department Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council review the representative list for the General Plan Update Review Committee and authorize the committee to work with staff on the preparation of a Focused Update of the General Plan Land Use Element and Program EIR.

Background: On November 3, 2008, the City Council authorized the formation of a General Plan Update Review Committee, with the added direction that the Committee's composition be expanded to include representation from several key stakeholders.

The City Council also authorized the City to prepare and publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) to begin the Program EIR consultant selection process. The form of the RFP has been finalized and will be distributed to consultants and published on December 16, 2008.

Summary: The General Plan Update Review Committee will gather on a regular basis until the Focused Update and the Program EIR are adopted by the City Council, expected in mid-2010. Under the Planning Division's direction, the Committee will be tasked with helping staff with the Program EIR consultant, and with providing input on new critical policies and measures intended to promote more compact and sustainable residential development and with contemporary policies for future commercial, office, and other land uses.

Letters were sent on November 7, 2008, to organizations and committees / commissions, asking for a representative to be selected and serve on the Review Committee. Each group was also individually contacted by phone to verify their participation in the Committee. The groups asked by the City Council to serve on the Committee are:

For action by:

City Council
 Redev. Agency Bd.
 Cap. Impr. Corp.
 VPFA

For placement on which agenda:

Work Session
 Closed Session

Regular Session:

Consent Calendar
 Regular Item
 Public Hearing

Est. Time (Min.) 30 min.

Review:

Dept. Head _____
(Initials & date required)

Finance _____
City Atty _____
(Initials & date required or N/A)

City Mgr _____
(Initials Required)

If report is being re-routed after revisions leave date of initials if no significant change has affected Finance or City Attorney Review.

Visalia City Council (2 members)
 Visalia Planning Commission (2 members)
 Parks & Recreation Commission (2 members)
 Citizens Advisory Committee
 Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
 North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee
 Environmental Committee
 Bicycle, Pedestrian & Waterways Trails Committee
 Tulare / Kings Home Builders Association
 Tulare County Affordable Housing
 Visalia Economic Development Council
 Visalia Chamber of Commerce
 Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
 Tulare County Board of Realtors
 Visalia Unified School District
 Kaweah Delta Hospital
 Tulare County Farm Bureau
 College of the Sequoias

To date, representative selections have been received from seventeen of eighteen (17 of 18) groups, which have yielded a Committee of nineteen (19) persons not including staff representatives from the Planning Division. The Committee members and their respective affiliations are:

REPRESENTATIVES

Vice Mayor Link
 Councilmember Collins
 Vincent Salinas
 Larry Segrue
 Dirk Holkeboer
 Tim Burns
 Bill Huott (Tom Lockwood – Alternate)
 Dean Mann (Brian Rouch – Alternate)
 Bob Brown (Ben Filiponi – Alternate)
 Mike Knopf
 Ken Kugler
 Jim Robinson
 Josh McDonnell
 Raymond Macareno
 Brian Icenhower
 Randy Groom
 Dena Cochran
 Brian Blain (Patricia Stever – Alternate)
 Eric Middlestead

GROUP NAME

Visalia City Council
 Visalia City Council
 Visalia Planning Commission
 Visalia Planning Commission
 Citizens Advisory Committee
 Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
 N. Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee
 Environmental Committee
 Bicycle, Ped., Waterways Trails Committee
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 Visalia Economic Development Council
 Visalia Chamber of Commerce
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 Visalia Unified School District
 Kaweah Delta Hospital
 Tulare County Farm Bureau
 College of the Sequoias

The Parks and Recreation Commission will be selecting representatives at their next meeting scheduled for December 16th.

Release of RFP: Upon City Council's approval of the Committee roster, the Planning Division will immediately release a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking a qualified environmental consulting firm to prepare the Program EIR Update. The RFP project description is written for a Program EIR Update that will analyze impacts of new growth management policies emerging

from the Focused Update, as well as impacts from execution of the East Downtown Implementation Plan. The EIR Update will also renew baseline conditions from the City's built environment and will bring the City's General Plan into conformance with current CEQA practices.

The City Council affirmed its direction for a Focused Update of the General Plan when it took action on November 3, 2008, to authorize release of the RFP and to form the Review Committee. The RFP is prepared and will soon be released for public distribution.

Financing: Staff estimates that the cost to prepare the Program EIR as described above to be approximately \$500,000, based on a survey of other cities' recent experiences. However, the exact cost will not be known until proposals received from qualified consultants are received.

The cost of the Focus Update EIR will be funded through the general fund that is budgeted for the General Plan Update. A total of \$350,000 is budgeted in the FY 08/09 (\$250,000 of this amount is frozen until the mid-year review), and an additional \$350,000 is budgeted in the FY 09/10. These budgeted amounts are in addition to the \$200,000 in General Plan Maintenance Fees collected on annexations since 2004.

Prior Council/Board Actions: The City Council previously commissioned work on a Focus Update of the General Plan on June 23, 2008.

On November 3, 2008, the City Council authorized to release an RFP for the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) assessing impacts from the Focused Update and the East Downtown Implementation Plan, and authorized forming a General Plan Review Committee to assist with examining the Focused Update content and EIR. The City Council approved these actions on a 3-1 vote (Shuklian – no; Landers – absent).

Committee/Commission Review and Actions: N.A.

Alternatives: None.

Attachments:

- o Exhibit "A" – Preliminary Work Schedule for Focus Update & Annexation Policies

Recommended Motion:

I move to

1) approve the representatives selected for the General Plan Update Review Committee to oversee a Focused Update of the General Plan Land Use Element and Program EIR.

Alternative Motion:

None.

Exhibit "E"
Dwelling Unit Inventory and Population Capacity in the 129,000 UDB

As of January 1, 2009, the City of Visalia had approximately 5,935 single-family residential lots and 744 multi-family residential lots which have been approved but have yet to be constructed. The following Table 2 breaks these figures into the categories of tentative lots and final lots, and recalls the figures of previous years:

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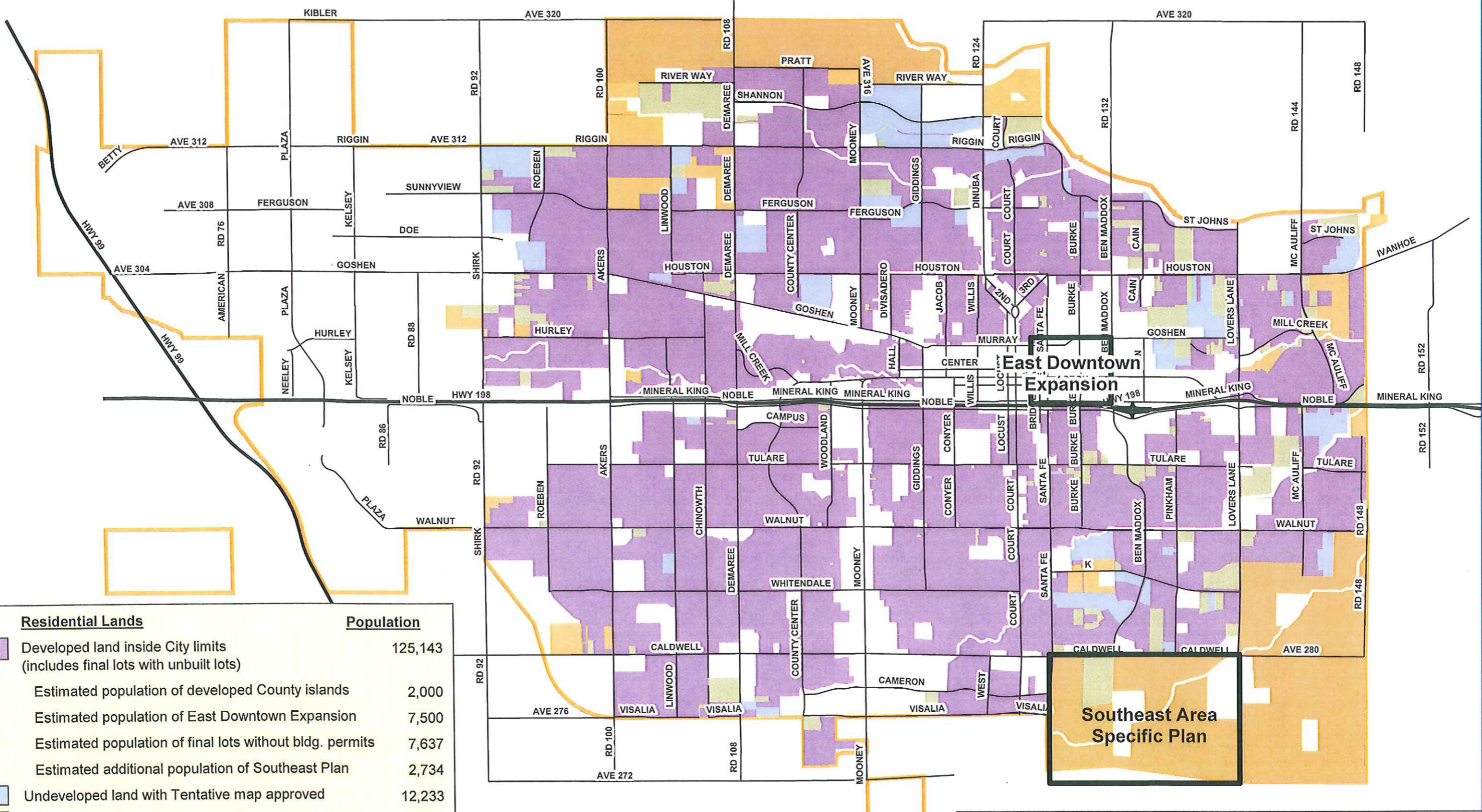
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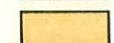


Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Table E-5:

City / County Population and Housing Estimates, 2008. May 2008



Residential Lands

Population

 Developed land inside City limits (includes final lots with unbuilt lots)	125,143
 Estimated population of developed County islands	2,000
 Estimated population of East Downtown Expansion	7,500
 Estimated population of final lots without bldg. permits	7,637
 Estimated additional population of Southeast Plan	2,734
 Undeveloped land with Tentative map approved	12,233
 Undeveloped land inside City limits	15,157
 Undeveloped land outside City limits, 98,700 UDB	5,389
 Undeveloped land outside City limits, 129,000 UDB	28,365
TOTAL	206,159

Legend
 129,000 UDB

Exhibit "F"

Undeveloped Lands in 129,000 UDB



Last Data Update: January 1, 2009

General Plan Requirements for Growth Boundary Expansion

Implementing Policy

6.2.3 Establish Urban Development Boundaries (UDB's), to accommodate estimated City population for the years 2000, 2010, and 2020, as the urbanizable area within which a full-range of urban services will need to be extended to accommodate urban development. These boundaries shall be established based on the following factors:

1. Adequate residential, commercial and industrial capacity for the projected population.
2. Inclusion of a thirty percent (30%) vacancy factor ("flexibility factor") for residential development and a twenty percent (20%) vacancy factor for commercial development.
3. Adequacy of infrastructure including existing and planned capacity of sewerage system, treatment plant, water system, schools, roadways, and other urban services and facilities.
4. Community growth priorities.
5. Progressive increase in the percentage of buildout in existing developed areas of the community, to a maximum of 90 percent buildout. Compliance with this policy shall be according to the methodology described in Appendix C.

Expansion of the urban development boundary shall be accomplished through amendment of the Land Use Element and be based on the above findings.

Table C-1 Percentage of Residential Buildout Required Before Advancing to the Next Growth Area

	1988	2000	2010	2020
Before expanding to 2010 boundary need	80%	70%		
Population Threshold	98,700			
Before expanding to 2020 boundary need	85%	80%	70%	
Population Threshold	129,000			
Before expanding beyond 2020 boundary need	90%	85%	80%	70%
Population Threshold	165,000			

Example: Before expanding to the 2020 Urban Growth Boundary 85% of the area within the 1988 Urban Development Boundary (UDB) must be developed, 80% of the area within the 2000 UDB must be developed, and 70% of the total area (area within the 2010 UDB) must be developed. Reference Policy No. 6.2.3

Source: Land Use Element of the Visalia General Plan, September 1991



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Visalia City Council

FR: Visalia Chamber of Commerce

DT: 20 January 2009

RE: General Plan Update

We appreciate the Council's recent decision to re-open public comment on the question of whether the City should undertake a Comprehensive General Plan Update rather than just engage in the currently anticipated Focused Update. The Chamber has gone on record in the past encouraging the initiation of a Comprehensive update and wish to reiterate our support for this direction.

Visalia has a reputation for good planning, centered on effective and inclusive decision making processes for community decisions. These processes have resulted in long term planning priorities that have enjoyed broad, long-term support. The key to this has been broad public participation.

In the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce, it appears that the City has departed from this model in recent years and instead engaged in a series of specific, disjointed planning projects which have not been well coordinated and which have not yet resulted in a clear, community-supported direction for the future growth of our community. Despite a lot of "visioning" exercises, there have been no real public hearings on these efforts, and many have gone years without final proposed plans, related environmental documents or public debate. Without these final steps to complete the process, these expensive efforts will not result in a tangible change in public policy that will direct action in the interest of the city, particularly the business sector.

The recent difficulty that the City staff and Planning Commission had in finding reasons to support the proposed commercial rezoning in North Visalia is a case in point. If the community had started the comprehensive update when first proposed by staff, our retail policies likely would have clearly supported this, or an alternative that could have been supported by all. As it is, there is no current policy to create "another Mooney Blvd" in North Visalia, and this proposal fundamentally conflicts with existing General Plan policies. As the Chamber of Commerce we are keenly concerned about the City's lack of a long term vision for neighborhood, community and regional retail uses in the community that will ensure we maintain our current position in the regional marketplace. This discussion will not be part of the focused update currently being proposed by the City.

EXHIBIT H



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The issues which would be addressed by a Comprehensive Update are of such import that they deserve to be fully vetted in public, with as much participation as possible from the general public and impacted parties. The limited nature of the proposed Focused Update incorrectly assumes that residential growth is the only issue which needs to be addressed at this time. We believe that, in fact, there are a wide range of questions which need to be discussed by the community as a whole. These issues include, to highlight a few:

- Does Visalia wish to continue to be the "regional hub" for major retail? As communities surrounding us have reached key population thresholds, they have made major inroads into reducing Visalia's preeminence as the retail center of the region. Sales tax revenue growth within the City limits has not kept pace with growth county-wide for several years. As we approach regional thresholds which will bring our area to the attention of the next level of regional retailers, are we prepared to attract and accommodate the needs of these new types of business?
- Does Visalia wish to continue to be the "industrial hub" for the region? Several communities in the County are beginning major initiatives to expand their industrial sites and to attract major employers to their communities, in direct competition with the Visalia Industrial Park. Does our current General Plan contain the necessary policies that will be needed to keep our community at the forefront of industrial development?
- Does our current transportation system support the kind of community we wish to develop? The City recently completed a major update to the Transportation Impact Fee program, which essentially endorsed continued development of the existing system. However, the program did not include principles discussed by the Smart Growth Task Force, or desired changes in development patterns endorsed by various members of the Council. We believe that the Circulation element of the General Plan also deserves attention and discussion.
- The Public Safety element of the General Plan has not been updated in many years, while the issues it seeks to address certainly have changed. We believe it is time to have a robust community discussion around these issues as well.

Clearly, there is need to talk about more than just where we are going to allow future residential development and under what conditions. After getting more than 17 years of use out of the last major comprehensive update, it is time to plan for the next 20-30 years, not just the next four years (the amount of life Staff says we will get out of a focused update). We believe that only a comprehensive update can achieve the coordination and consistency among the various planning efforts currently underway (East Visalia Plan, Southeast Visalia Plan, West Visalia Plan, Scenic Corridor Plan, Smart Growth Strategy, and the recently proposed Annexation policies) that needs to occur in order to ensure we don't have conflicting policies and direction. We also believe that our community has reached a size and diversity level which

warrants the kind of broad-based, inclusive dialogue possible only with a comprehensive update.

We are perplexed by the reasons given for NOT doing a comprehensive update now. In the short and long run a comprehensive update will be cheaper, it will make maximum use of in-house staff (rather than consultants), will involve the community, and will resolve the inherent conflicts in the City's isolated master planning projects.

Overall, we believe that the time is ripe for the City to engage in a full review and update of the City's General Plan, rather than segmented "nibbles" around the edges. Our existing plan has served the city well, primarily because it was inclusive, informed and open. We believe that, while a comprehensive update will take longer to complete, the results will be more comprehensive, cost effective, and supported than will be the case if policies and plans continue to be developed piece by piece. The key to timely completion is not to truncate the comprehensiveness of the review, but to start the project in earnest, and to make diligent progress to completion.

Questions about these comments should be addressed to:

Glenn Morris, Interim CEO
glenn@visaliachamber.org
559.734.5876



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MEMORANDUM

To: Visalia City Council
From: Robert Keenan, President/CEO
Date: January 21, 2009

RE: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Visalia has the reputation of being one of the best planned cities in the state. This long-standing honor came from the leadership opening up the long range planning process to the community for its input and participation.

Historically, this city has done comprehensive planning, not yielding to a piecemeal process.

The HBA is pleased that the council has reopened the discussion and comments on whether the city should undertake a Comprehensive General Plan Update or a Focused Update.

The HBA strongly encourages the city council to end the past few years of internalizing and micro-planning the community's future which has resulted in the development of several costly policies and plans with little public input, no public feedback, and therefore, questionable community understanding or support of implementation or its long-term commitment.

The city has been well-served by the existing 2020 Plan and we believe it is time for a full General Plan Review and Update. While we understand a full review process is much longer, we believe that the results will be more comprehensive, effective, understood and supportable by the community. Also, from the dollar amounts we've seen, it makes financial sense to do the comprehensive update now rather than later.

The HBA supports a Comprehensive General Plan Update and suggests that the process be undertaken immediately.

Affiliated with...

California Building Industry Association (CBIA)
National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)



EXHIBIT I