

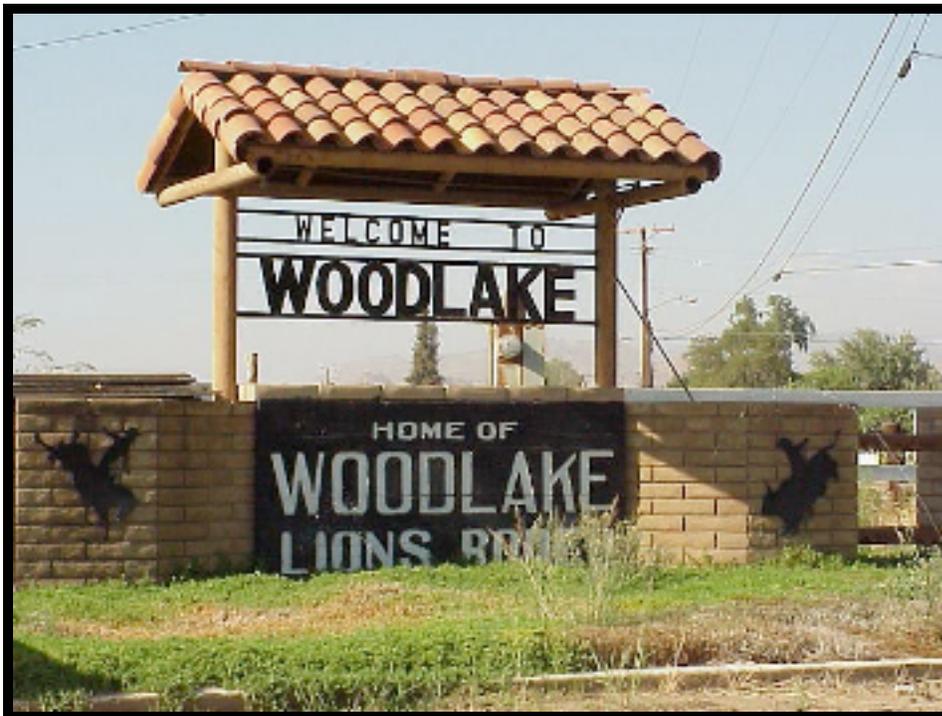
# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

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## Introduction

### Woodlake

Woodlake is located in Tulare County in the e southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Woodlake is 15 miles northeast of Visalia, the county seat of Tulare County, and 20 miles west of Sequoia National Park and eight miles north of Exeter (see Exhibit 1). Woodlake is bisected by State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard), which runs east and west, and State Route 245 (Valencia Boulevard), which runs north and south. The community is situated five miles north of State Route 198, a major east/west route that connects the coast range with the Sierras.



Woodlake has two welcome signs. One is on State Route 245 south of Woodlake and the second is located west of town on State Route 216.

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## **The General Plan**

Government Code Section 65300 requires that every planning agency (city and county) prepare, and the legislative body is required to adopt, a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city, and any land outside the city boundaries which in the city's opinion bears relation to its planning. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals for each of the general plan's mandatory elements, which include land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety and noise.

Woodlake's first general plan was prepared by the County of Tulare in 1978 when Woodlake had a population of approximately 4,300. The County also prepared the Urban Boundaries Element for the city of Woodlake, adopted in 1974. This document established growth lines around the city and delineated policies pertaining to the annexation of lands into the City.

This general plan will serve to update four of Woodlake's general plan elements - (1) land use, (2) circulation, (3) open space, and (4) conservation. Woodlake's Safety (1975) and Noise Elements (1976) are deemed adequate in regards to their long-term policies pertaining to issues of safety and noise. Woodlake's Housing Element was updated in 2002 and has been certified by the State Office of Housing and Community Department (HCD). This general plan document will combine the open space and conservation elements into one document and in addition, will add one optional element into the same document - parks and recreational element.

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**Woodlake will update its general plan, which was last updated in 1978.**

**This update will modernize the following elements - Land Use Element, Circulation Element and the Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element**

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Woodlake's vision and expectations for its future are best expressed through its General Plan. The general plan is frequently referred to as the "blueprint" for a city's future development patterns, roadway alignments and the location of its open space

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amenities. Its policies and implementation actions serve as the "directions" for executing the blueprint.

The General Plan is a narrative expression of Woodlake's vision and expectations for the future. Through its goals, policies and implementation actions, the four elements (three documents) that will be updated - Land Use; Circulation; and Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation, these visions and expectations will be addressed. In addition, maps included in these elements will provide a visual display of the location of such features like (1) existing and future land uses, (2) existing and future roadway, bike path and trail alignments, and (3) the existing and future locations of open space amenities and recreational facilities.

The primary purpose of the General Plan is to facilitate a well-planned community where the public's health, safety and welfare are protected. It can also:

- o guide the Planning Commission and City Council on land use, circulation, open space, parks, recreation, conservation and capital improvement decisions;
- o inform the public where certain types of development will occur in the community;
- o educate the public on how Woodlake's resources will be managed and its open space amenities will be conserved;
- o provide the private sector with a document upon which it can base investment decisions; and
- o direct the city in regards to opportunities for applying for grants and loans to implement certain financing strategies detailed in the General Plan.

## **Legal Background**

Planners and decision-makers have drawn a parallel between the General Plan and the U.S. Constitution. Decisions regarding land use, circulation, open space, housing and capital improvements must be consistent with General Plan just like the nation's laws must be consistent with the Constitution. In *City of Santa Ana v. City of Garden Grove*, 100 Cal. App. 3d521, 532 (1979), the Court of Appeal, in explaining California's general plan legislation in 1971, stated the following:

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"... transformed the general plan from just an interesting study to the basic land use charter governing the direction of future land use in the local jurisdiction. . . As a result, general plans now embody fundamental land use decisions that guide the future growth and development of cities."

City decisions that are not consistent with the General Plan place that jurisdiction in a legally tenuous position and subject to legal challenge. In *Friends of "B" Street et.al. V. City of Hayward, et.al.*, 106 Cal. App. 3d 988 (1980), the court concluded that construction of public improvements (e.g. street projects, sewer lines, etc.) must be consistent with the General Plan. Further, the court stated that the General Plan essentially is the constitution for all future development within the city.

An internally inconsistent general plan, lacks one or more of the mandatory elements or certain types of required information. This inconsistency can potentially prevent a city from issuing land use approvals on building permits, zone changes, tentative subdivision maps, etc., if the Court finds that any one of the aforementioned conditions exist (*Sierra Club v. Kern County*, 126 cal. app. 3d 698, 704 (1981); *Resource Defense Fund v, County of Santa Cruz*, 133 Cal. App. 3d 800, 802 (1982); *Camp v. Mendocino*, 123 Cal. App. 3d 334 (1981).

For example, the Woodlake Housing Element may include a policy that states that the city provides adequate sites for a range of housing types, including multi-family uses. The Land Use Element would have to be consistent with the Housing Element by insuring that multi-family uses were provided for in the planning area.

## **The Woodlake Planning Area**

The planning areas for the General Plan are delineated by Woodlake's sphere of influence (SOI) line, containing 3,707 acres; urban development boundary (UDB) line, containing 2,552 acres, and its city limits, containing approximately 1,689 acres (see Exhibit 2).

The UDB line, which is the primary planning line for the Woodlake General Plan, is defined by the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as follows:

*"... a 20-year planning boundary within which urban development is expected to occur over the plan period."*

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The larger planning area, delineated by the SOI line, contains the city of Woodlake; a rural county service area called the Wells Tract; Bravo Lake, an irrigation facility operated by Wutchumna Water Company; scattered rural residential lots; agricultural lands, containing citrus, olives and grazing land; and isolated industrial and commercial uses located near the intersection of Road 196 and State Route 216 (see Exhibit 3).

## **Document Organization**

The Woodlake General Plan will be presented as a single document that contains two parts. Part 1 will contain the General Plan - Chapter 1, Land Use Element; Chapter 2, Circulation Element; and Chapter 3, Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element. Part 2 will contain the draft environmental impact report (DEIR).

## **Public Participation**

The Woodlake City Council has directed the Woodlake Planning Commission to oversee the preparation of the General Plan. The Commission has worked with planning staff in the preparation of the General Plan. Specifically, the Commission has reviewed the goals, policies, and implementation actions contained in the elements as well as providing valuable expertise in the areas of schools, economic development, public safety and circulation.

## **Relationship to other Plans**

State planning law requires that a city's general plan be consistent with other city planning documents. In Woodlake, these other planning documents include the Woodlake Housing Element, Woodlake Redevelopment Plan, the zoning ordinance and various infrastructure master plans. The term "consistency" in planning terms means that the general plan and the other plans have similar community goals and policies, that they advocate similar land use patterns, and they are consistent in their guidance of direction and rate of growth.