

Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

PLANNING ISSUES AND LAND USE GOALS

Land use goals express a city's values and its vision for the future. They can refer to image and appearance, economic viability, health and safety, preservation of resources or fiscal soundness. Some of the goals listed below are the product of previously approved planning documents - housing element, Woodlake Redevelopment Plan, or Woodlake Zoning Ordinance.

Growth Management

The planning (management) of Woodlake's growth - direction, rate, density and arrangement of land uses is an important aspect of the general plan. A city that is well-planned is more attractive to potential residents, developers, businesses and investors than one that is poorly planned - land use conflicts, urban sprawl, a nonviable downtown, poor circulation patterns and blighted sections of town.

Discouraging urban sprawl is an important growth management objective in Woodlake. Woodlake has realized that a community that is compact and avoids sprawl has more efficient, cost effective infrastructure and service delivery systems than a community that lacks these characteristics.

- **Maintain Woodlake as a small, agriculturally-oriented city surrounded by farmland and open space features.**
- **Use natural barriers as a means of delineating the urbanized portion of Woodlake, including the St. Johns River, Antelope Creek, Bravo Lake, and foothill lands.**
- **Promote Smart Growth planning principals in order to discourage urban sprawl and the premature urbanization of agricultural land.**
- **Encourage the County of Tulare to upzone properties that surround the City of Woodlake so as to avoid future land use conflicts. An example of upzoning would be a reclassification of land from the AE (exclusive agriculture, five acre minimum) to the AE-20 (exclusive agriculture, 20 acre minimum) zone district.**

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Community Image

Image is an important community asset. It can influence how people feel about a community. A community that is clean, well-maintained, visually appealing and properly planned will (1) attract outside investment, (2) encourage people to maintain their property, (3) cause real estate values to appreciate and (4) stimulate city revenues - tax increment, sales tax and property taxes.

- **An attractive, clean and well-maintained community.**
- **A community that is free of land use conflicts.**
- **A city that portrays a “sense of community” through community events like the Woodlake Rodeo or events at the Woodlake Charros facility or the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden.**
- **A friendly community that encourages public involvement.**
- **A community that portrays an image that is progressive and energetic.**

Economic Development

The economic base of a city can be divided into two categories: 1) basic industries that produce and sell goods that bring new money into Woodlake (Monrovia Nursery and U.S. Towers); and 2) service and retail industries (Wood Bros. cabinet shop and Fruit Growers Supply) that provide services and sell goods that simply circulate existing money in Woodlake. The stimulation of either type of industry has a positive impact on Woodlake’s economy, which in turn, affects employment, housing starts, the city’s fiscal affairs and household income.

- **Increase tourism.**
- **Promote the development of the Woodlake Airport with airport-related uses.**
- **Market agriculture as a tourist attraction by encouraging visitation of the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden.**
- **Work with existing businesses in the community to foster expansion, efficiency**

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or better site design, such as site appearance, traffic circulation or building design.

- **Attract technologies to the Woodlake area that are related to the citrus, olive and nursery industries.**
- **Assist existing industries to expand their operations and increase employment by providing financial incentives.**
- **Increase the number of businesses operating in Woodlake in order to generate more sales, property, business and transient occupancy taxes.**

Employment

For those persons in the labor force, having a job is a fundamental need. The income generated from a job allows a person or family to pay for food, shelter, transportation, education, health care and recreation. To a great degree, a person's or family's quality-of-life is based on their job. A city's vitality and viability is also influenced by people having a job. A high unemployment rate (lack of jobs) can have an adverse impact on city revenues, crime rates and the existence of physical blight, whereas, a low unemployment rate can have the opposite affect.

- **Diversify employment base.**
- **Attract industries that are complementary to the existing workforce, and do not adversely affect air quality, the city's waster water treatment facility or the city's water system. Further, industries that do not have a negative impact on the health or safety of the immediate neighborhood or on the community as a whole.**
- **Encourage stable, year-around employment.**

Housing (from Woodlake Housing Element, adopted 2004)

Providing safe and decent housing for its citizens is a fundamental objective of all cities. Housing need is a complex issue, consisting of at least three major components: housing affordability, housing quality and housing quantity. In addition, certain

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segments of the population have unique needs, including the elderly, the handicapped, female heads of household, large families, and farm workers.

- **To develop through public and private channels, sufficient new housing to insure the availability of affordable housing for all households in Woodlake.**



- **To manage housing and community development in a manner that will promote the long-term integrity and value of each new housing unit and the environment in which it is located.**
- **To provide a choice of housing locations for all residents.**
- **To maintain and improve the quality of the existing housing stock and the neighborhoods in which it is located.**

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- To promote equal access to safe and decent housing for all economic groups.
- To promote energy conservation activities in all residential neighborhoods.

Fiscal Conditions

Revenue from local taxes is the lifeblood of a city's financial condition. Without a steady, diversified and reliable revenue stream, a city will have a difficult time paying for and financing its services and infrastructure. Decisions on land use matters can influence the fiscal condition of a city. For example, a viable downtown can enhance sales tax revenues, while a blighted downtown can have a depressing effect on sales tax revenue. A lack of shopping outlets (goods for sale) can cause persons to shop in nearby cities because the choice of outlets is greater and in many cases, the goods are less expensive. This condition leads to sales tax "leakage" - Woodlake residents spending their monies in other, nearby cities.

- Encourage a strong sales tax base.



Fruit Growers Supply is a strong sales tax generator for the City of Woodlake.

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- **Facilitate the construction of a small motel in Woodlake and impose a transient occupancy tax.**
- **Insure that development impact fees pay for public improvements required by the general plan and infrastructure master plans.**
- **Promote public-private and public-public partnerships towards the construction of projects that are of significant community value.**
- **Enhance tax increment revenues by encouraging development to occur in the redevelopment district.**
- **Retain the services of a grant writer to apply for housing, infrastructure, road and open space funds.**

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Infrastructure

A well designed, maintained and managed infrastructure system is necessary for the proper and efficient operation of a city. Local city councils quickly understand the importance of the infrastructure system if citizens complain about poor water quality or pressure, the waste water treatment plant emitting odors, or the streets flooding every time it rains.

From an economic development perspective, businesses wishing to locate in a city are concerned about the same issues. For example, if the business is an industry that generates large volumes of effluent, it will be concerned about the capacity of the treatment plant and its ability of treat certain types of effluent. Failure of a city to provide assurances that the industry can be accommodated by the city's infrastructure system will most likely cause that business to seek another city.

- **Adequately finance infrastructure systems.**
- **Periodically update infrastructure master plans, including sewer, water and storm drainage plans.**
- **Insure infrastructure master plans and the general plan are in concert with each other.**
- **Maintain, rebuild and upgrade infrastructure systems.**
- **Every three years the city should review its development impact fees to insure that the necessary funds are being collected to pay for future capital infrastructure improvements.**

Resources

There are two types of resources - natural and man-made. A natural resource is defined as "any form of matter or energy obtained from the environment that meets human needs." It includes air, water, land and native plants and animals. The wise use and management of these resources can influence a community's quality-of-life. With population growth and its secondary impacts, including air and water pollution, and urbanization of agricultural land, planning (resource management) is one of the primary tools used to insure a community's quality-of-life standard.

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Man-made resources are those that include the built-environment (historic homes, neighborhoods, and public places, like parks, gardens, and lakes) and cultural resources (public art, historic sites and prehistoric sites). Through planning, these resources can be preserved for the public's long-term enjoyment and education. This preservation effort also creates a city that is more interesting and visually appealing.

Natural Resources

- **Conserve natural resources, including native trees, agricultural land, and water.**
- **Preserve air quality.**
- **Promote ground water recharge.**
- **Promote energy and water conservation**
- **Preserve plants and animals of special concern.**

Man-Made Resources

- **Preserve historic buildings**
- **Discourage uses that are architecturally incompatible with existing structures in historic neighborhoods**
- **Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures that are zoned for non-residential uses**

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

Open space, parks and recreation add to the quality-of-life in a community. Open space delineates the edge of a community and affords the public views of orange groves, fields and/or the Sierras. People that live in a city that is surrounded by open space benefit psychologically because they can visually or physically take advantage of an open space feature.

A park is an outdoor open space feature that can accommodate an assortment of recreation and leisure activities. A park can include playgrounds, community recreation

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facilities, playing fields and community centers. Paralleling a city's park system is its recreation program. A city's recreation department is responsible for programming various activities, services and events in its park system. To have an effective recreation program, a city must also have a good park system.

This Element is contained in its entirety in Part 2 on the General Plan. The goals of this element have been provided below in order to give the reader how the goals of this element relate to that of the Land Use Element.

- **Plan for adequate park and recreation facilities to meet existing and future needs in Woodlake.**
- **Establish parks in appropriate locations and ensure their design caters to the needs of the community.**
- **Create and preserve open space in the Woodlake area to meet the needs of the community now, and in the future.**
- **Establish policies to reduce the impact of urbanization on agricultural lands, while allowing the City to grow.**
- **Protect air and water quality from negative impacts.**
- **Consider energy conservation in the planning and design of new and existing development in Woodlake.**
- **The City of Woodlake should explore opportunities for generating energy or conserving energy.**
- **Minimize the impact of new development on biotic resources in the planning area.**
- **Take actions to promote Woodlake's historic identity and protect cultural resources.**
- **Preserve the natural areas on the Woodlake Airport as open space.**

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Agriculture

Agriculture is the primary industry in the Woodlake area. This basic industry employs about 23 percent of Woodlake's labor force (2000 US Census). When other agriculturally-related sectors of the economy are factored in, the agricultural labor force increases to 35 percent. Agriculture is a relatively stable industry when compared to other sectors of the economy, like manufacturing, tourism and transportation industries. For this reason, agriculture should be encouraged and protected in the Woodlake area. Further, land use policies that minimize the impacts between urban and agricultural uses should be promoted.

- **Preserve agricultural land that lies outside the planning area.**
- **Discourage land uses outside the planning area of the general plan that conflict with existing agricultural operations.**
- **Insure that Woodlake's agriculturally-related businesses are encouraged to continue to operate and/or expand where appropriate.**

Residential Neighborhoods

The "neighborhood" is the fundamental building block of a city. The health and quality-of-life of a community is best measured at the neighborhood level. If a city's neighborhoods are noisy, contain excessive traffic, are unkempt, or include incompatible land uses, then the city as a whole is most likely spiraling towards a state of blight. In terms of community priorities, preservation of the neighborhood ranks as an important land use goal.

The ideal neighborhood should be inviting, quiet, cool in the summer, children-friendly, pedestrian-oriented and architecturally interesting. It should appreciate in value over time and it should provide for a wide range of housing types, styles and prices.

The multi-family neighborhood is a necessary part of a city's housing stock. It provides housing opportunities for persons or families who do not wish to own a single family dwelling or who can not afford to own one. Improperly located, designed or maintained, the multi-family neighborhood can have an adverse impact on surrounding neighborhoods and the community as a whole. To protect the health, safety and welfare of persons living adjacent to and within the multi-family

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neighborhood, the location, design and long-term maintenance of this type of housing must be well thought out.

- **Revitalize blighted neighborhoods using redevelopment and CDBG funds.**
- **Protect existing neighborhoods from incompatible land uses.**
- **Promote neighborhoods that are quiet, visually pleasing, and cool.**
- **Promote attractive, well-maintained and designed residential neighborhoods.**
- **Large multi-family projects should provide an on-site manager.**

Commercial Development

The Woodlake General Plan provides four types of commercial development - central, office, service and neighborhood. Each of these types of commercial uses is required if the community wishes to provide services and shopping opportunities for its citizens. Further, if a city is going to maintain its sales tax base, it is imperative that it not only retain its own shoppers but that it also attract shoppers from surrounding cities and outlying rural areas.

For each type of commercial development to be successful, it must be properly located, it must have adequate access and it should be designed so that it will attract patrons. For example, a parcel of land that is designated for community commercial uses should front onto a major roadway (with high traffic volumes), it should be designed so that it is attractive and visible from the roadway and it should incorporate ample off-street parking.

Office commercial is almost as important to the economic well-being of a community as other types of commercial or industrial uses. Offices support both small and large businesses, which on average, have a higher wage scale than most of the agricultural economy and some of the manufacturing/warehousing economy.

- **Insure that developable land is available for different types of commercial development, including offices.**
- **Promote commercial development that is aesthetically pleasing.**

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- **Promote the conversion of residential dwellings in the downtown into office and/or retail uses.**
- **Reduce sales-tax leakage.**
- **Encourage commercial development to be pedestrian-oriented.**
- **Encourage the replacement of service commercial operations (auto repair and towing services) that exist along Naranjo Boulevard with retail and offices.**

Industrial Development

Industrial uses are generally the economic foundation of a city. It is a source of employment and it provides a flow of revenue into the city from outside sources - other businesses buying raw materials or finished goods from the local industry.

Industries are typically poor land use neighbors because they can generate large volumes of truck traffic, they can produce noise and odors, and they can be unsightly. For these reasons, it is important that they be properly located in the community - away from land uses that are sensitive to these conditions, such as schools, residential development and parks.

- **Promote and encourage agriculturally-related industries.**
- **Diversify the City's industrial base.**
- **Promote agriculturally-related tourism.**
- **Attract small, light industries.**
- **Attract technologies that are related to agriculture, including irrigation, plant science, and pest management.**
- **Promote airport-related development at the Woodlake Airport.**

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Schools

One of the most frequently asked questions by families contemplating a move to a city is “How are the schools?” The education of one’s children is very important to most parents. A school system that can’t deliver a “good” education will adversely impact a city. Families and businesses contemplating a move to a city with a poor school system may opt for another city. In fact, if a city has a good school system, this attribute will sometimes be used as a marketing tool by the Chamber of Commerce, home builders and economic development professionals to attract persons and businesses to the community.

- **Schools that are easily accessible and free from land use and circulation conflicts.**
- **Schools that have adequate land for future expansion.**
- **Encourage the schools to forge partnerships with other public entities.**
- **Work with educational institutions to fashion a training program that teaches skills that mirror local industrial sectors, including equipment repair, irrigation technology, food processing, nurseries, and agricultural technology.**
- **Encourage college courses to be taught in the Woodlake area.**

Public Safety and Emergency Medical Services and Health Care

These types of services are crucial to the public’s health, safety and welfare. Public safety, which includes police and fire, insures that the public and their property are protected from criminal elements, exposure to hazardous materials, and fire. Emergency medical services responds to calls for emergency medical assistance and potentially, transport of the victim to a local health care facility. Health care facilities, which include hospitals, medical clinics and other types of medical-related uses, provide to the public physical and psychological care and treatment.

Public Safety and Emergency Medical Services

- **A community that is free of crime and fire hazards.**

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- Adequately financed police department.
- Woodlake should facilitate a cooperative working relationship between Woodlake's police department and other public safety departments, including the Tulare County Sheriffs Department, the Visalia Police Department and the Tulare County Probation Department
- A full-time ambulance service should be provided in Woodlake.
- A cooperative working relationship between the Woodlake Fire Department and the Tulare County Fire Department should be established.

Health Care

- Promote the continued operation and future expansion of health care facilities within the community, including not-for-profit health care clinics.
- The City and Kaweah Delta District Hospital should work together on projects that are of mutual benefit.

Public Facilities

Construction of city halls, police and fire stations, recreation centers, or parks can benefit a city by providing new employment, new investment in a blighted section of town, and/or it can improve the city's image. For example, a public facility like a new city hall, built in or near the downtown can bring additional people to that area of the community, it may encourage new development on surrounding properties or it can promote a sense of community pride.

- The city should forge partnerships with other public entities in the financing and construction of public facilities.
- The Bravo Lake Botanical Garden, built on city-owned land, should be enhanced with additional improvements that make the operation more attractive to tourists and local residents.
- Where possible, public facilities should have multi-purpose uses.

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A multi-purpose room on the campus of F.J. White Elementary School.

- **The Woodlake Airport, a city-owned facility, should be upgraded with a new runway in order to attract investors to the facility.**