

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element

### Introduction

Open space, parks, and recreation facilities enhance the quality of life in a community. The conservation of these types of resources is an integral part of providing for the needs and welfare of a community.

Conservation of open space takes planning for the future. If these areas are not planned for at this time and set aside for the future, a city runs the risk of losing them to development. Open space lands are undeveloped areas that provide a low density perception in an urban area, define the edge of a community, and provide the sight lines that allow long distance vistas to the Sierra Nevada, agriculture fields, or other local views. Most people think of open space as park areas, but a large portion of a city's open space is provided by residential yard areas and right-of-way along streets. Typical types of open space include farmland, lakes, floodplain, watercourses, parks and playgrounds and athletic fields.



On a clear winter day in Woodlake, the views of the Sierras can be breathtaking.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---



There are many open space features adjacent to Woodlake, including Bravo Lake, St. Johns River, Sierran foothills and agricultural lands.

A park is an open area that provides an assortment of recreation and leisure opportunities for a community. A park can include community recreation parks, school playgrounds, community centers, and other publicly-owned outdoor recreation areas. Parks can supply active as well as passive recreation. Activities can range from family picnics to organized sporting events.

One of the primary purposes of parks is to contribute to Woodlake's quality of life. The City accomplishes this through the provision of convenient, well-equipped and maintained park sites and facilities, and comprehensive programs of recreational activities and services for all citizens of the community.

## The Element

The open space portion of this Element identifies lands that are appropriate for open space, which includes parks, farmland, floodplain, gardens and Lake Bravo. The Element establishes goals, policies, action programs and standards for the conservation and treatment of open space.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

Government Code Section 65560 et seq. defines **open space** as land that can be used for any of the following uses:

- o Conservation of natural resources
- o Managed production of resources
- o Outdoor recreation
- o Preservation of lands for the purpose of protecting the public's health and safety

Specific requirements of the **conservation** portion of the Element are identified in Government Code Section 65302 (d). This portion of the element includes "the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, wildlife, and other natural resources." Items that are addressed in this category include the conservation of:

- o Agricultural lands
- o Soils
- o Air and water quality
- o Mineral resources
- o Wildlife habitat
- o View opportunities
- o Flood plains

The Parks and Recreation Element is an optional element of the General Plan. This Element identifies existing and potential recreational opportunities within the community. Since it is closely related to the City's open space system, integration of the four documents into one element makes good planning sense.

The Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element is one of the seven mandatory elements of the General Plan. It is the element that determines the general location of parks, open space and recreation facilities for the planning area. The Element contains the following sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Existing conditions;
- 3) Population and park land need projections;
- 4) Goals, policies and action plans;
- 5) Quimby Act Calculations; and
- 6) Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation map.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## **Existing Conditions**

A brief discussion of conditions within the planning area that are related to issues involving open space, parks, recreation and conservation are provided below.

### Land Use

Woodlake is a compact community occupying approximately two square miles of land and containing a population of 7,394 (Jan. 1, 2007). The urban growth has extended in all directions from the original 1912 townsite. Woodlake's downtown and its older residential neighborhoods are concentrated around its main intersection, Valencia (State Highway 245) and Naranjo (State Highway 216) Boulevards. These intersecting boulevards divide Woodlake into four quadrants each with its own unique mix of land uses. Exhibit No. 1 shows the arrangement of land uses within each of Woodlake's four quadrants.

The southeast quadrant is dominated by Bravo Lake, a 350-acre lake used to store water for irrigation and operated by the Wutchumna Water District, the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden (10 acres) and residential neighborhoods that back up to the west and southwest sides of the Lake. The Lake's southern and eastern borders are dominated by olive and citrus groves.

The southwest quadrant contains all of Woodlake's industrial users as well as the Woodlake Airport (80 acres), the Woodlake Charros (a 8.5 acre rodeo facility), and Woodlake's waste water treatment facility, which includes a 30-acre plant site and 87 acres of city-owned olives, eventually to be used for waste water disposal. Major industrial users located in this quadrant include Golden State Packers, Bradford Steel, Fruit Growers Supply, U.S. Towers, and Dryvit Industries. This quadrant also contains about 200 residential units, mostly single family dwellings.

The northwest quadrant contains the Woodlake Cemetery (12 acres), Woodlake Memorial Building (4.13 acres), Woodlake High School (27 acres), Woodlake Middle School (18.5 acres), F.J. White Elementary School (10 acres), and the Woodlake adult and preschools (10 acres). This quadrant contains the largest number of single family dwellings as well as a substantial number of apartments, over 150 units. A portion of Woodlake's downtown commercial development is located along the north side of Naranjo Boulevard and the west side of Valencia Boulevard. This quadrant also contains the largest number of churches.

The northeast quadrant contains all three of Woodlake's parks - Miller-Brown Park (6.74 acres), Rubra Park (10,000 square feet) and Willow Court Park (3.91 acres), and

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

most of Woodlake's public buildings, Woodlake City Hall, U.S. Post Office, and Woodlake Fire District. Woodlake's sole shopping center is located in this quadrant along with retail, office and service commercial uses that line the north side of Naranjo Boulevard and the east side of Valencia Boulevard. This quadrant contains the second largest concentration of single family dwelling but houses the largest concentration of apartments, over 200 units. This quadrant is bounded on the north and east by various types of agriculture, including olives, citrus, and grazing lands. The Wells Tract, a county service area that contains about 50 rural residential units, is situated just east of the city limits and just north of Naranjo Boulevard.

## Air Quality

Woodlake has a moderate climate with warm summers and generally mild winters. The City is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. The closest air monitoring station is located in Visalia, where Ozone and PM-10 (Particulate Matter-10 microns or less) are measured. The San Joaquin Valley, including Woodlake, has failed to achieve state and federal standards for these pollutants and is therefore designated as a non-attainment area. There are several factors which cause this to occur. They are:

1. The topography of the San Joaquin Valley as a basin surrounded by mountains has the effect of trapping stagnant or polluted air.
2. The local climate (abundant sunshine and high atmospheric pressure) is favorable for the formation of smog.
3. The primary factor is the growth of population in the Valley. With more and more people moving to the valley, smog is produced by fossil fuel burning, emissions from factories and other combustion processes, and vehicles miles traveled.

Mitigation of air quality problems in the San Joaquin Valley is the responsibility of the San Joaquin Valley Air District. Measures that will reduce air quality problems include reducing vehicle miles traveled, driving more fuel efficient vehicles and/or lower emission vehicles, and reducing agricultural burning.

## Water Resources

Woodlake currently obtains its water from underground supplies. The aquifer underlying the City is a good supply of water although the relative shallowness of the water table can make the supply susceptible to surface contaminants. In order to reduce the possibility of contamination, the city's well system draws water from 240 to 400 feet below the ground's surface level.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

The water table is recharged primarily by water moving downhill from the watersheds of Sierra Nevada streams. The St. Johns River, which forms the southern boundary of the Woodlake planning area, recharges the aquifer from which Woodlake pumps its domestic water. Water for irrigation, stored in Bravo Lake and distributed by Wutchumna Ditch, also assists with the recharge of the groundwater system. Rainfall in the Woodlake area provides only a small amount of groundwater recharge.

The City has four active wells along the St. Johns River. Water is pumped from these wells into Woodlake's distribution system that is composed of 6-inch, 8-inch, 10-inch, 15-inch and 18-inch water lines. To maintain pressure in the system, water is stored in a 500,000 gallon storage tank located in the northeast quadrant of the City. The City is in the process of replacing this tank with a new tank.

From time to time, water quality has become a problem in Woodlake. The water quality of Woodlake's domestic wells is regulated by the State Health Department. Over the years, Woodlake has had to abandoned wells due to high concentrations of nitrates. These wells have been taken off line. To date, Woodlake's existing wells meet State drinking water standards.

## Agricultural Resources

Woodlake is surrounded by thousands of acres of producing cropland. Agricultural lands have provided a strong economic base for the community as well as a rural landscape and open space "system" that surrounds the City. As Woodlake continues to grow, surrounding agricultural lands are taken out of production to accommodate residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

The primary crop types that surround Woodlake include citrus, olives, deciduous tree fruit and grazing land. Smaller, rural residential parcels are located south of the St. Johns River. These parcels are used for small plantings of specialty tree crops, cattle grazing and the boarding of horses. These agricultural and livestock operations support many businesses in Woodlake, including packing houses and cold storage buildings, feed and seed stores, hardware stores, agricultural equipment stores, and farm labor and trucking contractors.

In 1965, California adopted the Williamson Act to address the loss of agricultural lands due to urbanization. The Williamson Act provides property owners with a reduction in their property tax if they agree to maintain their land in agriculture for a ten-year period. This ensures, at least for the near-future, that agricultural lands will remain undeveloped, thereby continuing agricultural production and enhancing the sense of open space around Woodlake. Exhibit No. 2 shows properties within the Woodlake

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

planning area that have a Williamson Act contract. Approximately 300 acres within Woodlake's Urban Development Boundary are in agricultural preserves under Williamson Act contracts.

## Mineral Resources

There are no known mineral resources within the planning area and no known mining of mineral resources has occurred in the planning area. The closest significant mineral resources consist of sand and gravel deposits along the St. Johns River southeast of Woodlake, near the Sierra Nevada foothills. Several open-pit sand and gravel mines operate along the river. An application to expand an existing operation was recently approved by the Board of Supervisors. This operation will extract sand and gravel that will be used by the road building and construction industries in Tulare County.

## Soil Resources

The soils in the Woodlake area are described by the Soil Survey of Central Tulare County, prepared by the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture. The Soil Survey identifies many specific soils in the planning area (see Exhibit No. 3). They are as follows:

- o Grangeville loam
- o Porterville clay
- o San Emigdio loam
- o San Joaquin loam
- o Seville clay
- o Tujunga sand
- o Exeter loam

According to the survey, many of these soils have limitations for urban development. Soils with high clay content can expand and contract as water conditions change. This can cause road or foundation failure if the project is not properly engineered. Tujunga sand is subject to flooding and is not conducive for agricultural production. Table No. 1 provides information on site development for the above listed soils.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

**Table No. 1  
Site Development for Soils**

<u>Soil</u>	<u>Dwellings</u>	<u>Commercial Bldg.</u>	<u>Roadways</u>
Grangeville loam	severe: floods	severe: floods	moderate: low strength
Porterville clay	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell
San Emigdio loam	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell
San Joaquin loam	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell
Seville clay	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell	severe: shrink-swell
Tujunga sand	slight	slight	slight
Exeter loam	moderate	moderate	severe: low strength



Many areas in Woodlake are dominated by clay soils, which makes road building and construction difficult and more expensive.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Biotic Resources

The Conservation Element is required to discuss the presence of native plants and animals and in particular, native species that are regarded as rare, threatened, or endangered. In addition to inventorying these species, the element must plan for their preservation.

For the Woodlake area, a list of sensitive species was developed from California's Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) for the Woodlake Quadrangle. These plant and animal species are listed below. The Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Swainson's Hawk, and Willow Flycatcher could frequent the riparian woodland along the St. Johns River and there are isolated pockets of vernal pools where fairy and tadpole shrimp could exist.

### State and Federally Threatened and Endangered Plant Species

Green's Tuctoria  
Hoover's Spurge  
Kaweah Brodiaea  
San Joaquin Adobe Sunburst  
San Joaquin Orcutt Grass

### State and Federally Threatened and Endangered Animal Species

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp  
Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp  
Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle  
California Condor  
Swainson's Hawk  
American Peregrine Falcon  
Willow Flycatcher  
San Joaquin Kit Fox

State and federal agencies also list animal species of Special Concern. These species range from the California Tiger Salamander to the Golden Eagle and from the Western Pond Turtle to the Western Burrowing Owl. The likelihood that these Species of Special Concern occurring in the Woodlake planning area is somewhat remote, however, there are isolated pockets of land where they might frequent. To insure that a proposed project does not adversely impact these species of plants or animals, a biotic survey will be conducted prior to construction. The survey may recommend denial of the project, redesign of the project or development of mitigation measures that will reduce the

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

project's impact on plant or animal species.

## Flood plains

A significant amount of land within the Woodlake city limits is within a 100-year floodplain (See Exhibit No. 4). Only land along the St. Johns River is within a floodway. So long as a structure is built above the flood elevation contour line detailed on the FIRM (flood insurance rate maps) maps, development can occur within the 100-year floodplain. Development is not permitted in a floodway.



The St. Johns River contains the only significant floodway in the Woodlake planning area.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Park and Recreation Resources

### Parks

The City of Woodlake currently has two developed park sites and one privately owned park site, located in Olivewood Estates. Willow Court Park, containing 3.91 acres, contains a baseball field, playground equipment and a low elevation area designated for storm water detention. Miller-Brown Park, containing 6.74 acres, houses playground equipment, picnic arbors, a skate park feature, and a basketball court. A small watercourse traverses the area. In addition to the city's parks, the athletic fields on the campuses of Woodlake's two school districts provide recreational opportunities after school hours.



Miller-Brown Park in Woodlake.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Recreation Programs

At this time, the City does not have an established recreation program. The City contracts with the Visalia YMCA to develop recreation programs for younger children in the community. These programs are operated from the Francis J. White Community Building. Programs include T-ball, flag football, and various after school indoor activities.

## Regional Parks Facilities

There are several regional parks that are within driving distance to Woodlake. Generally speaking, at a maximum, most people are willing to travel thirty minutes to get to a regional park facility, and possibly one hour if there was some type of event scheduled there, such as a church gathering, family reunion, or school function.

Woodlake has one regional park operated by Tulare County within 15 minutes driving time. Cutler Park is a regional park located about 5 miles west of Woodlake. The park is situated on 50 acres along the bank of the St. Johns River and features grassy areas shaded by towering oak trees. Facilities include picnic tables and barbecues, walking paths, restrooms and passive play areas.

About seven miles southwest of Woodlake is Kaweah Oaks Preserve. This 324-acre property contains the largest protected example of Great Valley valley oak riparian forest anywhere within the Kaweah River Delta. About half the property at the Preserve is an equally rare habitat called alkali meadow where bunch grasses and other alkali-loving native plants thrive. The Preserve is frequently used as an educational resource by local school classes.

Kaweah Oaks Preserve was originally operated by the Nature Conservancy but is now owned and operated by the Sierra Los Tulares Land Trust. The trust also operates the Herbert Wetland Prairie Preserve on 725 acres about 15 miles south of Woodlake. This site features vernal pools scattered amid extensive grassland and is a rare example of the valley landscape before widespread agricultural and urban development. Located approximately five miles east of Woodlake is the Dry Creek Preserve, which contains Foothill Woodland and Sycamore Woodland plant communities on 1,200 acres situated along Dry Creek.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## **Population and Park Land Need Projections**

A primary objective of this Element is the establishment of criteria that will guide the acquisition and development of future open space areas. These standards should be realistic and represent the actual amount of area and facilities necessary to meet the needs and desires of the community. These open spaces can be provided in a variety of ways, and do not necessarily need to be under the control of the City to meet Woodlake's needs.

State Government Code Section 66477 (b) requires a minimum of three acres of open space for every one thousand residents. Each jurisdiction can require that a maximum of five acres of open space be set aside per one thousand residents if the community feels that current standards are not meeting demands.

Presently, Woodlake has a total of 10.9 acres of developed parkland. Using Woodlake's 2007 population of 7,094 persons, the City only has 1.54 acres of park land per one thousand residents. At a rate of three acres per 1,000 residents, the City should have about 21.28 acres of parks. As such, Woodlake is currently "short" by about 10 acres.

Projections of a community's open space and park needs involves many factors. Population, income, education, accessibility, and age must all be considered in determining the correct amount of open space/parks for a community.

Park acquisition must strike a balance between use and the maintenance available to sustain the park. Generally speaking, city parks cost approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 per acre per year to maintain.

A city may have five acres of open space per 1,000 persons; however, if this acreage is not maintained properly, its value as usable open space will be greatly diminished. As Woodlake acquires more parkland, it must also dedicate the resources to adequately maintain that land.

Americans today are spending more of their time in recreation leisure activities than ever before. This emphasis has created a much higher demand than ever for quality open space, parks and recreation facilities. In response to this, cities must designate areas for such uses, before development occurs.

Another important factor in the planning of future parks is to insure that parks are accessible to all citizens of the community. For instance, although a city may currently meet the standards regarding the amount of parkland required; the existing park sites

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

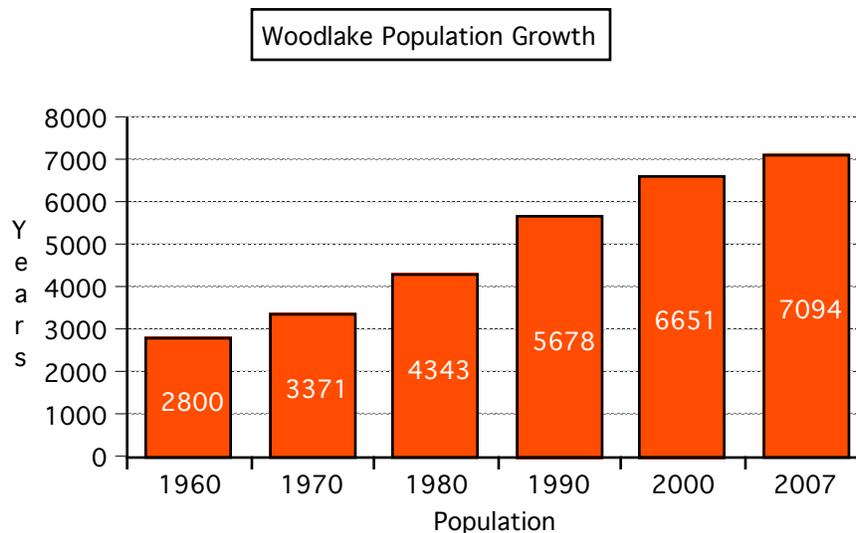
may not be easily accessible from all areas of the community. In other words, a park site may not be located in close proximity to certain neighborhoods within the community.

Exhibit No. 5 shows the location of existing park facilities and their service areas. Service area dimensions are those provided by the National Parks and Recreation Association. Generally, a community park will have a one-half mile service area, and a neighborhood park has a one-quarter mile service area. A review of existing parks in Woodlake shows that parks do not exist in the southwest and northwest quadrants of the city. Future development in these quadrants should provide for park sites

## Population

From 1980 to 2000, Woodlake had the lowest growth rate of the eight incorporated cities in Tulare County, except for Lindsay. During that period, Woodlake grew by 2.15 percent, from 4,343 to 6,651. The average growth rate of all eight Tulare County cities during this time period was 2.71 percent. During the decade from 1990 to 2000, Woodlake grew at even a slower pace, 1.59 percent. On average, the County's eight cities grew by 2.51 percent. Figure No. 1 below graphically illustrates Woodlake's population growth over the last 47 years.

**Figure No. 1**  
**Population Growth in Woodlake**



# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Park Land Need Projections

In order to determine the amount of land needed for parks in Woodlake over the next 20 years, population projections and land use demand projections were prepared. Two population projection scenarios (low and high) were used to formulate the future demand for parks. These population figures are projections from the base year of 2007, provided by the State Department of Finance. The Plan's "low" population projection is based on Woodlake's growth rate from 1990 to 2000 (1.59 percent), and its "high" population projection is based on its growth rate from 1980 to 2000 (2.15 percent). Both of these growth rates are based on the U.S. Census Bureau population figures.

**Table No. 1  
Population Projections**

	2008	2018	2028
<b>Low Population Projection (1.59 %)</b>	7,524	8,809	10,315
<b>High Population Projection (2.15 %)</b>	7,524	9,307	11,514

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; State Department of Finance; Collins & Schoettler, 2008

Projections for park land for the years 2018 and 2028 are based on the population projections above and other types of demographic data, including persons per dwelling unit, residential units per acre and acres of parkland per 1000 persons.

Park land demand projections (low and high) for the years 2018 and 2028 are calculated below. Parks uses include open space, sport and recreation facilities, and water features. Criteria for the location and demand for this type of land use are as follows:

- The City of Woodlake has set a standard through its *Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element* of three acres of parkland for every 1000 persons in Woodlake (Note: Many communities opt for five acres per 1000 persons, however, given that Woodlake enjoys existing open space features in or near Woodlake, like Bravo Lake, the St. Johns River, and the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden, the need for five acres of parkland per 1000 persons is unnecessary).
- The open space associated with school grounds, botanical gardens, Bravo Lake and land adjacent to waterways, like St. Johns River and Antelope Creek, will not be counted as park land.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

- The City of Woodlake currently has 10.9 acres of passive and active parkland.
- The City of Woodlake's current parkland ratio is 1.45 acres of parkland for every 1000 persons

## **Park Land Need Calculations**

### Park land demand, low population projection, 2018

Three acres of parkland per 1000 persons or 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons

$8,809$  (2018 estimated population) / 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons = 26.54 acres of parkland

26.54 acres of parkland needed - 10.9 acres of existing parkland = 15.55 acres of parkland needed by 2018

### Park land demand, high population projection, 2018

Three acres of parkland per 1000 persons or 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons

$9,307$  (2018 estimated population) / 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons = 27.95 acres of parkland

27.95 acres of parkland needed - 10.9 acres of existing parkland = 17.04 acres of parkland needed by 2018

### Park land demand, low population projection, 2028

Three acres of parkland per 1000 persons or 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons

$10,315$  (2028 estimated population) / 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons = 30.98 acres of parkland

30.98 acres of parkland needed - 10.9 acres of existing parkland = 20.08 acres of parkland needed by 2028

### Park land demand, high population projection, 2028

Three acres of parkland per 1000 persons or 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons

$11,514$  (2028 estimated population) / 1 acre of parkland per 333 persons = 34.58 acres of parkland

34.58 acres of parkland needed - 10.9 acres of existing parkland = 23.68 acres of parkland needed by 2028

Woodlake's park land demand for 2018 will range from 15.55 to 17.04 acres and by 2028 Woodlake will require between 20.08 and 23.68 acres. To secure these acres the city will

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

utilize the Quimby Act, either to purchase lands outright or take position of land in-lieu of collecting park fees. Woodlake's current park fee is \$250.00 per single family dwelling; \$200.00 per multi-family dwelling unit and \$125.00 per mobile home.

Woodlake can also apply for Proposition 1C funds, State park or open space funds or private grants to purchase park sites, or install infrastructure or streetscape improvements. There are other State grants that can be used to purchase open space features, like riparian woodlands, or installs bike paths or pedestrian pathways.



Quimby funds and State Park funds can be used to purchase land for open uses, including passive and active parks. Monies can also be used to install irrigation, hardscape, playground equipment, and trees.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## **Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Issues/Goals, Objectives and Action Plans**

This portion of the Element establishes goals, objectives and action plans to guide to the future development of parks and recreation facilities as well as the preservation of Woodlake's natural resources.

Goals, objectives and action plans are organized under topical issues, including:

- Issue One: Designation of Park Facilities
- Issue Two: Parks Location and Design
- Issue Three: Acquisition and Funding
- Issue Four: Urban Boundaries and Farmland Protection
- Issue Five: Air and Water Quality
- Issue Six: Energy Conservation
- Issue Seven: Biotic Resources
- Issue Eight: Historic/Cultural Resource

### ISSUE ONE: DESIGNATION OF PARK FACILITIES

The City's General Plan must designate adequate recreational facilities for future development. The Land Use Element and this Element must provide locations for the future open space, parks and recreation facilities. If adequate sites are not designated in advance, the City will continue to grow with no property set aside for these uses.

#### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

#### **Plan for adequate park and recreation facilities to meet existing and future needs in Woodlake.**

1. Maintain compliance with adopted city park standards now, and as the City grows.
  - a. The City shall review and, if necessary, increase its park impact fees in order to ensure that it maintains its ratio of at least three acres of parkland per 1,000 people.
  - b. The City shall purchase the necessary acreage to increase Woodlake's parkland acreage to equal or exceed three acres per 1000 people.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

2. Provide a variety of park sites and recreational facilities to accommodate the City's diverse population.
  - a. Future park sites are identified on Exhibit No. 6 .
3. Plan for the acquisition of parks prior to urban growth and development. These lands may be acquired and left vacant until funding for development is available.
  - a. Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Element will provide implementation of this item.
  - b. The City shall work with property owners outside the city limits to identify potential park sites for purchase.
4. The City as part of its open space plan will develop a system of pathways along the waterways that traverse Woodlake.
  - a. The City will require dedication of land developing adjacent to watercourses for pathways and other types of open space amenities.
  - b. The City will apply for State grants to acquire funds to purchase land for trails and construct the trails.
5. Add between 20.08 and 23.68 acres of conservation, open space and parks and recreation area by the year 2028. This figure is based on a 2028 population of between 10,315 and 11,514 and a standard of three acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Woodlake currently has 10.9 acres of public parks.
  - a. This element and the Land Use Element identify future park locations in the planning area. City Planning and Engineering Departments must ensure that developers are assessed park impact fees.
  - b. The City of Woodlake shall reevaluate its park impact fee consistent with AB 1600.
6. Creeks and ditches in the planning area shall be investigated for use as public open space features, with landscaped pathways and landscaping adjacent to the waterway.
  - a. Woodlake will work with local water and irrigation districts to develop standards to incorporate local waterways as open space features. The City

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

should require developers of adjacent lands to install a pathway and landscaping within canal easements. This could satisfy the developer's open space dedication obligation.

## ISSUE TWO: PARK LOCATION AND DESIGN

The City of Woodlake must work to ensure there is an adequate distribution of park and open space facilities throughout the City. Active park sites and passive open space areas should be accessible to all segments of the community.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

**Establish parks in appropriate locations and ensure their design caters to the needs of the community.**

1. Design park sites that fulfill the open space, and passive and active recreational needs of all the citizens of Woodlake.
  - a. Prior to the design of each new park, the Planning Commission shall conduct public workshops to receive input from citizens regarding the design of the park.
2. Locate future parks so that they are accessible and available to all the citizens of Woodlake.
  - a. Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Element map and its policies will provide implementation of this policy. The City must observe this policy when considering the location of new parks.
3. Locate park and recreational facilities so that they do not conflict with adjacent land uses.
  - a. Adoption of this Element's and its policies will provide implementation of this policy. Factors to consider include avoiding streets with high traffic, industrial uses, and noisy land uses.
4. Consider the design of parks that double as storm water retention/detention facilities.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

- a. The Planning Department and City Engineer shall explore the feasibility of designing future parks to act as dual use facilities, incorporating recreation and storm drainage.



This park in Visalia serves as both a park and a storm water detention basin during the winter months.

5. All parks shall be designed to meet the needs of the handicapped.
  - a. The Building Department shall review plans for proposed facilities for compliance with handicap/ accessibility requirements of the Uniform Building Code.
6. Parks and other facilities that may require a significant amount of night lighting, such as ball parks and tennis courts, should be designed in such a way as to minimize the impacts of lighting on the surrounding neighborhood.
  - a. The Planning Department shall review lighting schemes for all projects.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

7. Park design may incorporate the use of berms and small hills where appropriate to provide relief to the otherwise flat terrain of Woodlake.

a. Grading plans for all park sites should include areas of berms and mounding, as appropriate. Earth moved from ponding basins or other construction projects can provide a ready source for berms and hills.

## ISSUE THREE: ACQUISITION AND FUNDING

Adequate funding is the key to establishing and maintaining a quality parks and recreation program. Numerous sources of funding exist, however it is not always easy to tap these sources. To be successful, the City should evaluate a variety of funding methods and sources. The City may want to contract with a grant writer to apply for these funds.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

**Create and preserve open space in the Woodlake area to meet the needs of the community now, and in the future.**

1. Woodlake shall continue to require developers to pay park impact fees (Quimby fees) or dedicate land in lieu thereof. The State of California adopted Section 11546 of the Business and Professional Code, which allows a jurisdiction to require the dedication of parkland by a subdivider, or in-lieu-of dedication, to pay a fee of equivalent value.

a. The City shall reevaluated its fees for recreational programs, park lands and rentals to insure that they are sufficient to finance future park needs. Areas that could be considered for review include:

- Increasing the park impact fee to insure that the standard from 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents is implemented.
- Charging user fees for use of a facility or participation in an activity,
- Charging rental fees for the use of recreation equipment or property, and
- Admission fees can be charged for special events, exhibits, or rallies.

2. Ensure that the City of Woodlake receives its full share of federal and state grant funds including matching and competitive grants. The City shall also seek out available

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

charitable contributions for parks and open space facilities.

- a. The City shall apply for available state and federal grants as they become available. Contracting with an established grant writer should be considered.
  - b. The City shall apply for TEA, Measure R, Proposition 1C and State urban tree grants.
3. Woodlake should explore the financing of park and recreational facilities through the use of tax-increment funds, generated by the sale of tax-allocation bonds.
- a. The City should conduct a feasibility study of financing park and recreation facilities by the sale of tax-allocation bonds.
4. The City should consider approaching Woodlake's school districts and Tulare County Parks Department to discuss a joint powers agreement for the sharing of park and recreation facilities.
5. Woodlake should utilize, where appropriate, landscape and lighting districts to maintain parkways and neighborhood parks.
- a. Where appropriate, the City shall require proposed subdivisions to establish landscape and lighting districts to maintain open space areas.
6. Coordinate efforts to acquire and develop park and recreational facilities with the Woodlake school districts to ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication of facilities or programs.
- a. The City of Woodlake shall coordinate the development of recreation facilities with the Woodlake school districts.

## ISSUE FOUR: URBAN BOUNDARIES AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

The City of Woodlake and its surroundings have locally significant natural resources that must be preserved. Chief among these natural resources are the surrounding agricultural lands. As the city grows, increased pressure to develop these areas can result in conflicts, which may lead to the permanent loss of these resources. The City will adopt policies so that these precious resources can be conserved.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Goals, Objectives, Action Plans

**Establish policies to reduce the impact of urbanization on agricultural lands, while allowing the City to grow.**

1. Preserve and protect agricultural lands as a means for providing open space and for the managed production of resources.
  - a. The City shall strive to ensure that new development is designed in a manner that uses land efficiently and reduces the need to expand the urban area outward onto prime agricultural lands.
  - b. The Planning Department shall conduct an annual review of canceled Williamson Act contracts and development proposals on agricultural land within the City Limits and Sphere of Influence.
2. Develop buffers and transition areas between urban uses and agricultural land to reduce incompatibility issues that are associated with cultivation, pest control and harvesting of crops.
  - a. Adoption of the Land Use Element and land use map will provide the implementation of this policy.
3. Promote infill and moderately increase overall residential densities in the City of Woodlake to reduce the rate of urbanization of surrounding agricultural lands.
  - a. Strive to create an overall community-wide residential density of four units per acre. All unit types (single and multi-family residential) shall be counted in calculating community-wide density.
4. Establish and maintain "hard edges" around Woodlake that define where urbanization stops and agricultural open space begins.
  - a. Where appropriate, the City will discourage zoning requests in Woodlake's Sphere of Influence and surrounding county areas to permit parcelization for development of large lot residential purposes ie; ranchettes.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## ISSUE FIVE: AIR AND WATER QUALITY

The City of Woodlake exceeds two important air pollution standards - ozone and particulate matter. As growth occurs, more smog is produced by fossil fuel burning and emissions from factories. The City must encourage development that will minimize vehicular emissions by providing an adequate circulation system.

The City of Woodlake obtains its water supply from a vast aquifer underlying the San Joaquin Valley. The quantity and quality of water appears to be adequate, however, in the future, Woodlake must provide for long-range community water needs and protect water quality and quantity. It must also maximize the efficient use and conservation of the community's water resources.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

#### **Protect air and water quality from negative impacts.**

##### Air Quality

1. Participate in the regional planning efforts to meet air quality goals by working to improve air quality for the entire planning area.
  - a. The Planning Department will send proposed development plans to the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District for review of potential air pollution impacts.
2. Consider traffic flow in the planning of residential, commercial and industrial developments.
  - a. The Planning and Engineering departments will review all new projects to ensure that efficient traffic flow maintained, thereby minimizing vehicle-related air emissions.
  - b. The Circulation Element will insure that proper roadway connectivity is provided in the planning area. This design feature will reduce vehicle miles traveled.
3. Maintain adequate roadway levels of service (LOS) to avoid congestion which contributes to the air pollution problem.
  - a. The Planning and Engineering departments will review all proposed

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

development projects to ensure that roadway service levels do not fall below Level C for arterioles, collectors and intersections. The City will utilize gas tax and transportation funds to maintain these transportation standards.

4. Develop an organized and efficient circulation system to reduce vehicle trips in the planning area, idling time, intersection delays, and other emissions-producing activities.
  - a. The Circulation Element establishes policies that will encourage increased connectivity in the City's street patterns.
5. The City shall encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation.
  - a. The City will seek funds to implement the bike path system, consistent with the Circulation Element map.
  - b. The City will apply for State funds for bike path improvements consistent with the Tulare County Bike Path Plan.



The Bravo Lake Botanical Garden contains an asphalt bikepath/pedestrian walkway that is over a mile in length.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Water Quality

1. Promote a community awareness program that will educate the community in water-saving methodologies at the home and the work place.

a. The Public Works department will provide the community with information brochures containing water-saving techniques. Further the department should prepare a Water Conservation Ordinance for adoption by the City Council.

2. Promote the use of native and drought-tolerant new landscaping in existing and future parks.

a. The City shall stress the use of native and drought-tolerant species in private and public landscaping areas.

3. Allow for adequate groundwater recharge by developing storm ponding and retention basins where feasible. In some areas these ponds or basins can be incorporated into a recreational area or used as wildlife habitat area.

a. The Engineering Department shall implement the policies of this Element with regard to locations of future park/pond basins.



Drought-tolerant landscaping reduces the demand for irrigation water.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## ISSUE SIX: ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy conservation is a topic of increasing importance. The State of California has experienced recent power shortages that have threatened to cripple the local economy. It is becoming increasingly difficult to tap new sources of energy, from a fiscal, political and environmental perspective. At the same time, the state continues to grow at a rapid pace.

Local governments can take a number of actions to ensure that new (and existing) development is as energy-efficient as possible. Strategies for Woodlake are outlined below.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

**Consider energy conservation in the planning and design of new and existing development in Woodlake.**

1. Development in the planning area shall be designed in a fashion that maximizes energy efficiency.
  - a. Street standards shall be revised to increase shading along all future streets. Residential street widths for future streets shall be narrowed, thereby reducing the amount of pavement area - reducing heat buildup. Shade trees will also help to reduce heat buildup. For more information, see the Circulation Element.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---



Street trees whether it be in a median, parkway or front yard can significantly reduce cooling costs in adjacent residential dwellings.

b. The City shall work with subdividers to design subdivisions so that a majority of dwelling units are properly oriented with respect to the sun, to take advantage of passive solar heating and cooling opportunities. The City shall encourage streets to run east/west rather than north/south.

c. The City shall work with developers to maximize the planting of deciduous shade trees around buildings and in paved areas.

**The City of Woodlake should explore opportunities for generating energy or conserving energy.**

1. The public works department should investigate the opportunity of installing solar panels on city owned buildings or on city owned property.

2. The City of Woodlake should investigate the use of energy savings technologies, including LED lighting, upgraded heating and cooling units, and installation of insulation, solar panels or double-paned windows.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## ISSUE SEVEN: BIOTIC RESOURCES

Conservation of biotic resources generally refers to the protection of plant and animal species that have been determined to be rare, threatened or endangered. A biotic survey prepared for the General Plan did not indicate the presence of any listed species in the planning area. The survey did note, however, several locations in the planning area that could serve as habitat for species of special concern, particularly the riparian habitat along the St. Johns River on the south side of the community and in and around Bravo Lake, which supports numerous migratory birds.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

#### **Minimize the impact of new development on biotic resources in the planning area.**

1. Explore establishing the banks of local waterways as an open space resource.
  - a. The Planning Department shall review development that is adjacent to a watercourse to determine if the watercourse and adjacent lands should be dedicated for open space.
2. The City shall review any attempts to pipe local waterways. This policy recognizes the value of local waterways as historical sources of groundwater recharge and wildlife habitat.
  - a. The City shall remain vigilant in monitoring activities of local canal and irrigation districts and shall forward comments regarding lining or piping canals.
3. Protect areas that may serve as habitat from impacts of development.
  - a. Where warranted, the City Planner shall require a biotic assessment for projects that may impact habitat areas.
4. Investigate the expansion of the recreational trail around Bravo Lake and new trails along the St. Johns River, Wutchumna Ditch, and Antelope Creek.
  - a. Where new development is proposed adjacent to these water courses right-of-way along the water course should be dedicated for trail and open space purposes.
  - b. The City should apply for TEA grants to pay for improvement costs along these future trails.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

- c. The City should apply for other state grants that provide funds for open space improvements and/or acquisition of land.

## ISSUE EIGHT: HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES

Although the City of Woodlake does not have any structures designated as "historic" by the Tulare County Historical Society, there are some architecturally significant structures that enhance Woodlake's identity. Several buildings along Valencia and Naranjo Boulevards in the central area display an interesting architectural character that create a sense of place. Spanish and western style architecture is used prominently, helping to give the community identity.



An early Woodlake building that serves offices for Woodlake Middle School.

Conservation of cultural resources generally refers to the protection of historic and pre-historic artifacts. In the arena of city planning, this often pertains to buried objects (such as human remains, arrowheads, tools, and other objects left behind by previous cultures. State law requires the protection of these objects. The City is responsible for implementing these preservation laws.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Goals, Objectives, Action Plans

### **I. Take actions to promote Woodlake's historic identity and protect cultural resources.**

1. Work with developers and architects in creating new buildings and renovating old buildings in a manner that is sensitive to the architectural character of Woodlake and the San Joaquin Valley.

a. The City shall adopt design guidelines that promote good architectural design that reinforces Woodlake's identity and sense of place.

2. Protect cultural resources that may be impacted by new development.

a. The Planning Department may require preparation of a cultural resources analysis where warranted. Areas along waterways are of particular concern. When cultural resources are uncovered during construction projects, all work in the vicinity of the "find" must be stopped and a qualified cultural resources expert consulted to determine appropriate protective measures.

### ISSUE NINE: BRAVO LAKE BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Bravo Lake Botanical Garden Project is an agricultural demonstration project sponsored by Woodlake Pride, a local, non-profit organization that works with youth in the community to provide instruction and guidance in the development of work skills; the City of Woodlake and the Wutchumna Water Company. The Garden Project is located on the north side of Bravo Lake adjacent to State Route 216 in the City of Woodlake.

The Garden Project is a cooperative effort between the youth from Woodlake Pride and the agricultural community, composed of farm advisors from the U.C. Extension Service, nursery and seed companies, and local farmers. It is intended to attract visitors and tourists who are interested in viewing the types of agricultural crops grown in the San Joaquin Valley. The Garden Project will also:

- o Attract visitors and tourists to the Garden who are visiting Sequoia/Kings National Parks.
- o Display in one location most of the agricultural crops grown in the San

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

Joaquin Valley, arguably the richest agricultural region in the world.

- o Provide valuable work opportunities for youth in the Woodlake through the efforts of the Woodlake Pride Coalition.
- o Provide recreation opportunities for persons who wish to walk or ride a bike around Bravo Lake or through the gardens.
- o Provide nature-watching opportunities for persons who wish to observe bird life in and around Bravo Lake.
- o Provide a powerful outdoor education laboratory for students to learn about plants, agriculture and wildlife.

The Garden Project is planted with agricultural crops, horticultural plantings, and native plants. This has been accomplished by local students who are members of Woodlake Pride and local volunteers. A pedestrian/bike trail bisects the Garden Project. Benches and interpretive signage is installed along the trail. The Garden Project is contained within an abandoned railroad right-of-way that is 6000 feet long and varies from 80 to 200 feet in width. The City of Woodlake purchased this right-of-way for Woodlake Pride using state park funds.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---



The Bravo Lake Botanical Garden is bisected by a pedestrian walkway.

## Goals, Objectives, Action Plans

**Insure that the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden is a well designed and well funded agricultural demonstration garden.**

1. The City of Woodlake should continue to apply for state, local and private grants to finance the installation of improvements within the Garden, including irrigation, benches, signage, fencing, etc.

- a. The City should retain the services of a grant writer to apply for various grants for this facility as well as other potential park and open space projects in the community.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---



The Garden contains numerous examples of vegetables, including many species of peppers.

**Insure that the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden is a public amenity that is well used by Woodlake residents.**

1. The City of Woodlake should continue to apply for state and federal grants for pedestrian, bike path and roadway improvements that will enhance the Garden's ability to serve as an open space feature, which encourages walking, bike riding, and bird-watching.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---



An illustration of the many flowers that have been planted in the Bravo Lake Botanical Garden.

- a. The City should apply for TEA funds to continue to improve the Botanical Garden with various improvements including fencing, irrigation, etc.
- b. The City should apply for private grant funds for improvements within the Garden.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## ISSUE TEN: WOODLAKE AIRPORT

The City of Woodlake purchased the Woodlake Airport in 2004. The Airport is located on the north side of the St. Johns River, occupying about 2,800 feet of the river frontage. The Airport contains two parcels, a 30-acre parcel, which contains the runway, hangars and other airport improvements; and a 50-acre parcel that is composed of grazing land and riparian woodland. The 50-acre parcel exhibits numerous open space features that are valuable to the community. These features include flood plains, wildlife habitat and passive open space opportunities such as nature trails, bird watching, bike trails, and walking paths.

### **Goals, Objectives, Action Plans**

#### **Preserve the the 50-acre parcel as open space.**

1. Utilize Measure R funds to purchase the development rights on the land from the City of Woodlake.
2. Apply for state grants to construct trails and bike paths along the St. Johns River.

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Quimby Act Calculations

The Quimby Act, a section of the state Subdivision Map Act, permits a public agency to adopt an ordinance requiring either park land dedication, a fee in lieu of dedication, or a combination of both. Such an ordinance may be adopted when:

- a open space, parks, recreation and conservation element containing park standards and a map showing the future location of parks has been adopted by the local city council.
- a formula is derived that identifies the amount of required land to be dedicated in a subdivision.
- A process is established for determining whether land or in lieu fees will be collected, as well as a determination of the fair market value of land.

Woodlake first adopted a Quimby Act fee in the early 1970s and it was updated in the 1990s. An examination of the current park fee schedule shows that it is not adequate to finance the purchase and development of parkland based on current land prices and construction costs. Woodlake currently collects \$250.00 per single family dwelling, \$200.00 per multi-family unit and \$125.00 per mobile home.

Under Woodlake's current Quimby Act Ordinance, the City can either require a dedication of land, payment of fee, or both. The proposed amendment to this ordinance, which is outlined below, will not change this protocol.

Policies and action plans contained in this Element recommend that Woodlake reevaluate its park land impact fee based on current land prices and park construction costs. It is recommended that Woodlake's amended park land impact fee be composed of two parts - land acquisition and park construction costs. Further, that the amended park fee will be based on a ratio of three acres of parkland for every 1,000 persons and 2000 Census data for household size, which is 3.78 persons per single family dwelling, 3.69 persons per multi-family unit and an estimated 2.4 persons per mobile home.

A review of current land prices for residential land in Woodlake indicates that per acre value of \$50,000. This figure was higher in the period from 2004 to 2006, however, land prices in California and the San Joaquin Valley have softened.

Park construction costs, which includes grading, hardscape, landscaping, equipment and irrigation, is approximately \$2.00 per square foot. This per square foot cost is less as the

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

size of the park increases, however, given most of Woodlake's new parks will be less than five acres, the \$2.00 per square foot figure will be used.

## Quimby Act Calculation for Single Family Dwellings

### Land Acquisition

Goals and policies in Woodlake's Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element indicate that the community should adopt as its parkland standard of three acres of parkland per 1000 people. Using the 3.78 persons per household census figure, the formula is converted to three acres of parkland per 264.55 single family dwellings, Further reduced, the formula becomes one acre of parkland per 88.18 single family dwellings. Using the land acquisition cost of \$50,000 per acre, each single family dwelling will be assessed \$567.02 for parkland acquisition.

### Park Construction

Using the parkland construction cost of \$2.00 per square foot or \$87,120.00 per acre, each single family dwelling will be assessed \$987.98 for parkland construction.

Total Park Impact Fee = \$1,555.00

## Quimby Act Calculation for Multi-Family Dwellings

### Land Acquisition

Goals and policies in Woodlake's Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element indicate that the community should adopt as its parkland standard of three acres of parkland per 1000 people. Using the 3.69 persons per household census figure, the formula is converted to three acres of parkland per 271 single family dwellings, Further reduced, the formula becomes one acre of parkland per 90.33 multi-family dwellings. Using the land acquisition cost of \$50,000 per acre, each multi-family dwelling will be assessed \$553.52 for parkland acquisition.

### Park Construction

Using the parkland construction cost of \$2.00 per square foot or \$87,120.00 per acre, each multi-family dwelling will be assessed \$964.46 for parkland construction.

Total Park Impact Fee = \$1,518.00

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## Quimby Act Calculation for Mobile Homes

### Land Acquisition

Goals and policies in Woodlake's Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Element indicate that the community should adopt as its parkland standard of three acres of parkland per 1000 people. Using the 2.4 persons per household census figure, the formula is converted to three acres of parkland per 416.66 mobile homes. Further reduced, the formula becomes one acre of parkland per 138.88 mobile homes. Using the land acquisition cost of \$50,000 per acre, each mobile home will be assessed \$360.02 for parkland acquisition.

### Park Construction

Using the parkland construction cost of \$2.00 per square foot or \$87,120.00 per acre, each mobile home will be assessed \$627.30 for parkland construction.

Total Park Impact Fee = \$987.32

# Woodlake General Plan 2008 to 2028

---

## **Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Map**

Exhibit No. 6 shows the reader to location of parks and open space features within the Woodlake Planning Area.