

Woodland Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee
Draft General Plan Update 2035 Comments
August 25, 2016

Land Use (section 2)

1. Policy 2.A.3 would require 1:1 acres of conservation for each acre converted to “urban development”. However, this ratio should be weighted based on location, grade of soil, and type of conservation desired, and set at 1:1 when addressing mitigation of like-for-like property and adjusted when not like-for-like. For example a parcel of prime farmland should sitting on the edge of town would be more valuable to conserve than a similar sized parcel elsewhere. So a sliding scale should be developed to take this into account where developing some land (infill or other redevelopment uses) may have no mitigation requirement, while other may require significant contributions in key areas on the outskirts of town.
2. The growth estimates noted in the document make sense at an average of 350 units per year and a total of 19,000 new residents over 20 years. However, trying to limit development artificially by selecting either the East or South alternative for development seems misguided. Each of the three future growth areas already faces real constraints to development (e.g., flood solutions, annexations with County tax sharing agreements, County/LAFCO land mitigation requirements, etc.). Instead, we should be focusing on:
 - a. Funding for the necessary infrastructure without any risk to the City through the use of Mello-Roos, CSD, or other developer financing.
 - b. The natural timing of processing new specific plans will not likely interfere with the build-out of Spring Lake, plus the impact costs/fees will be sufficient to protect any remaining lots through build-out, false triggers to protect Spring Lake and other specific plan areas should be avoided. Therefore, Policy 2.B.1 and Policy 2.L.1 should be removed.
 - c. Infill high density projects should be exempt from job create requirements to further incentivize these types of developments.
 - d. Since State law allows the City to approve development agreements and discretionary permits for areas within floodplains, Policy 2.B.2 should be rewritten to allow planning to proceed, but require urban level flood protection before commencing vertical construction.
3. We encourage an effort to ensure infill development through the use of discounted fees in order to ensure these types of developments are competitive with “greenfield” new development, even though the hard construction costs are significantly higher. This lower cost should be coupled with a fast-track approval process since the infrastructure is already in place.
4. Specifically identify the Fairgrounds as a location for future corridor mixed-use development, similar to the land use designation planned for the surrounding parcels. Not that the current location of the Fairgrounds is an inappropriate use based on both its current and future surroundings. This should be done as an overlay in the General Plan in a manner that encourages the future developer to provide a more appropriate location on the outskirts of town which would also allow of an amphitheater for larger concerts and events than currently available.
5. Ensure that the development of Bed & Breakfast inns Downtown and secondary residential units (granny flats) in the historical areas are specifically encouraged in order to provide additional short-term and lower cost alternatives for housing.

6. High Density residential units would be required to provide articulated facades and varied rooflines plus parking lots with shade trees and other landscaping. To encourage this type of development to meet the needs of lower income households, we should:
 - a. Specifically discourage or limit the use of turf grass and focus on drought-tolerant landscape design with significant use of shade trees.
 - b. Further encourage the use of shade trees in the parking lots and other common areas behind the buildings (not visible from the streets), allow the use of larger and more intensive planting of shade trees as a way to break up the visible mass and minimize the amount of architecture articulation required in these areas.
7. In the document, Downtown is intended to be the entertainment and cultural center of the City with Policy 2.H.7 noting exclusive location of VENUES for live performances and movie theaters should be Downtown. The policy should reference mechanisms to control the use of other venues for live entertainment through limits (through zoning) on the amount of space or the amount of time these spaces can be used for various types of entertainment.
8. New Downtown buildings are limited to 2-6 stories with FAR of 1.-4.0 with stepbacks on upper stories to help break up the mass. There should also be a measured height limit and language about transitions within the historic Downtown area and more specifically by city block. The real concern is maintaining the small-town historical look and feel to Downtown while allowing for some growth and true mixed use buildings. Specific language to be addressed with zoning ordinances by block or historic nature of the buildings.

Transportation and Circulation (section 3)

1. This document should have a general policy to more clearly address the use of permits and other parking restrictions in the residential areas adjacent to Downtown.
2. The General Plan policies in this area should more specifically identify/reference their connections to the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and explain how the noted policies and the necessary time to implement them will address the CAP goals. Any transportation and circulation items that are not consistent with CAP goals should be reevaluated.

Economic Development (section 4)

1. Specifically state strategic plan(s) to achieve the goal of retaining and creating new businesses as part of language/policy in the document.
2. Reinforce the need to have job creation drive the housing permit allocations in order to avoid creating more of a bedroom community rather than bringing jobs to Woodland. The focus must be on playing to the strengths of Woodland with respect to job creation with a focus on the industries and areas stated throughout the General Plan to ensure they are actually fully developed and realized.
3. Woodland Chamber Mission Statement should be corrected to show the current one.