

City Council Special Meeting Agenda

Joint Meeting of Turlock City Council and Planning Commission



FEBRUARY 19, 2009

6:00 p.m.

**City of Turlock Yosemite Room
156 S. Broadway, Turlock, California**

Mayor
John S. Lazar

Council Members
Amy Bublak
Kurt Spycher
Mary Jackson
Ted Howze
Vice Mayor

Interim City Manager
Gary Hampton
City Clerk
Rhonda Greenlee
City Attorney
Phaedra A. Norton

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AGENDA PACKETS: Prior to the City Council meeting, a complete Agenda Packet is available for review on the City's website at www.cityofturlock.org and in the City Clerk's Office at 156 S. Broadway, Suite 230, Turlock, during normal business hours. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Council after distribution of the Agenda Packet are also available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office. Such documents may be available on the City's website subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP

- Presentation and discussion on the General Plan and Housing Element update.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

The foregoing meeting is hereby called by Mayor John S. Lazar at the above mentioned date and time pursuant to California Government Code §54956.

JOHN S. LAZAR, Mayor



Council Synopsis

February 19, 2009

From: Michael G. Pitcock, PE, Director of Development Services/City Engineer

Prepared and Presented by: Debra Whitmore, Deputy Director of Development Services - Planning

1. DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE

BACKGROUND:

The last time the Turlock General Plan was comprehensively updated was 1993. The primary function of the General Plan is to lay out the City's plan for the physical development of both the city and any land outside the city's boundaries that the city determines relates to its planning. State law requires a city to periodically update its general plan to bring the Plan into compliance with current statutory and regulatory requirements, and to ensure the impacts of new development are adequately addressed through the preparation of an environmental impact report.

Since 1971, State law has required that all land use approvals be consistent with the city's general plan. This includes the zoning ordinance and all actions related to the physical development of private and public property, including public property acquisitions, public works projects, and land development. Failure to have a legally adequate general plan has resulted in the invalidation of, and in a few cases moratoriums, on discretionary land use approvals (such as rezoning and conditional use permits).

In September 2008, the City Council selected the planning firm of Dyett & Bhatia Regional Planners to prepare the General Plan, Housing Element and Environmental Impact Report. The planning team includes: Economic and Planning Systems (EPS), Omni-Means, Charles Salter, and West Yost Associates. The scope of services approved by the City Council include the development of the updated General Plan, an updated Housing Element to meet the state-mandated August 2009 deadline, the environmental documents necessary to support both plans, and an update to the City's Capital Facility Fee Program. The consultant team estimates that it will take approximately two and a half (2 ½) years to complete all of these products (see Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

The purpose of the special joint meeting is to introduce the City Council and Planning Commission to the process that will be undertaken over the next two and a half years to update the General Plan, Housing Element and Capital Facility Fee Program. The consultant has started to collect background information and data from a variety of sources that will be used to characterize the existing conditions and future growth trends for the City of Turlock. The preliminary findings of this research will be shared at the meeting. Staff is seeking general direction from the City Council and Planning Commission on the study areas and key issues to be addressed in the process. The results of this meeting will help staff and the consultant better understand the breadth of the issues to be addressed in the general plan update.

The joint meeting will begin with a brief introduction by the staff of the Planning Division. The consultant will then facilitate an open discussion among the members of the City Council and the Planning Commission following the outline below:

- GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT BACKGROUND: A brief overview of the scope of services, schedule and public outreach strategy will be provided.

- PAST SUCCESSES AND FUTURE ISSUES: The results of the Community Interviews held back in December 2008 will be reviewed. The full report is provided in Attachment 2. The consultant will then lead a discussion, allowing each member of the City Council and Planning Commission address the following questions:

1) What has been most successful about Turlock's growth and development over the last 15 years? Give specific examples of places, projects, city facilities, etc. How should the General Plan build on the community's assets?

2) What are the main issues and challenges that Turlock will face over the next 15 years? Which of these do you think should be top priorities for the General Plan update, and why?

3) What types of major achievements and improvements would you like to see the City accomplish over the next 15 years?

- FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: Population and employment trends will be examined and projected demand will be compared with the vacant and/or underutilized land available for development within the City's current planning area boundary. Areas of growth and/or change will be identified (see Attachment 3). The consultant will lead a discussion, allowing each member of the City Council and Planning Commission address the following question:

1) Which geographic areas of the City should be considered for change or growth over the next 15-20 years?

- KEY ISSUES: A draft list of focus topics has been developed by the consultant based on the Community Interviews report and the background data compiled by the consultant team (see Attachment 4). The consultant will provide the opportunity for members of the City Council and Planning Commission to add or modify the list of focus topics:

1) What topics should be deleted or revised?

2) What topics should be added?

- COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND NEXT STEPS: The City Council and Planning Commission will have the opportunity to review and make modifications to the proposed community outreach strategy:

1) Do you have any recommended modifications to the planned schedule and program of community outreach?

2) Do you have any suggestions about how to encourage community participation in the General Plan?

2. NEXT STEPS

The first community meeting is currently scheduled on Thursday, March 26, starting at 6 p.m. at the Turlock Senior Center. An existing conditions report is being prepared and will be made available on the General Plan Update website (<http://www.gpupdate.turlock.ca.us>) prior to the meeting. A special e-mail address has been set up to allow members of the public to provide input to staff by e-mail (gpupdate@turlock.ca.us). The purpose of the meeting is to review the findings of that report and engage the community in a discussion on the vision, goals, and principles for the General Plan Update. A second joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission will be scheduled to review the results of that meeting and seek direction for the next step in the development of the plan.

3. FISCAL IMPACT:

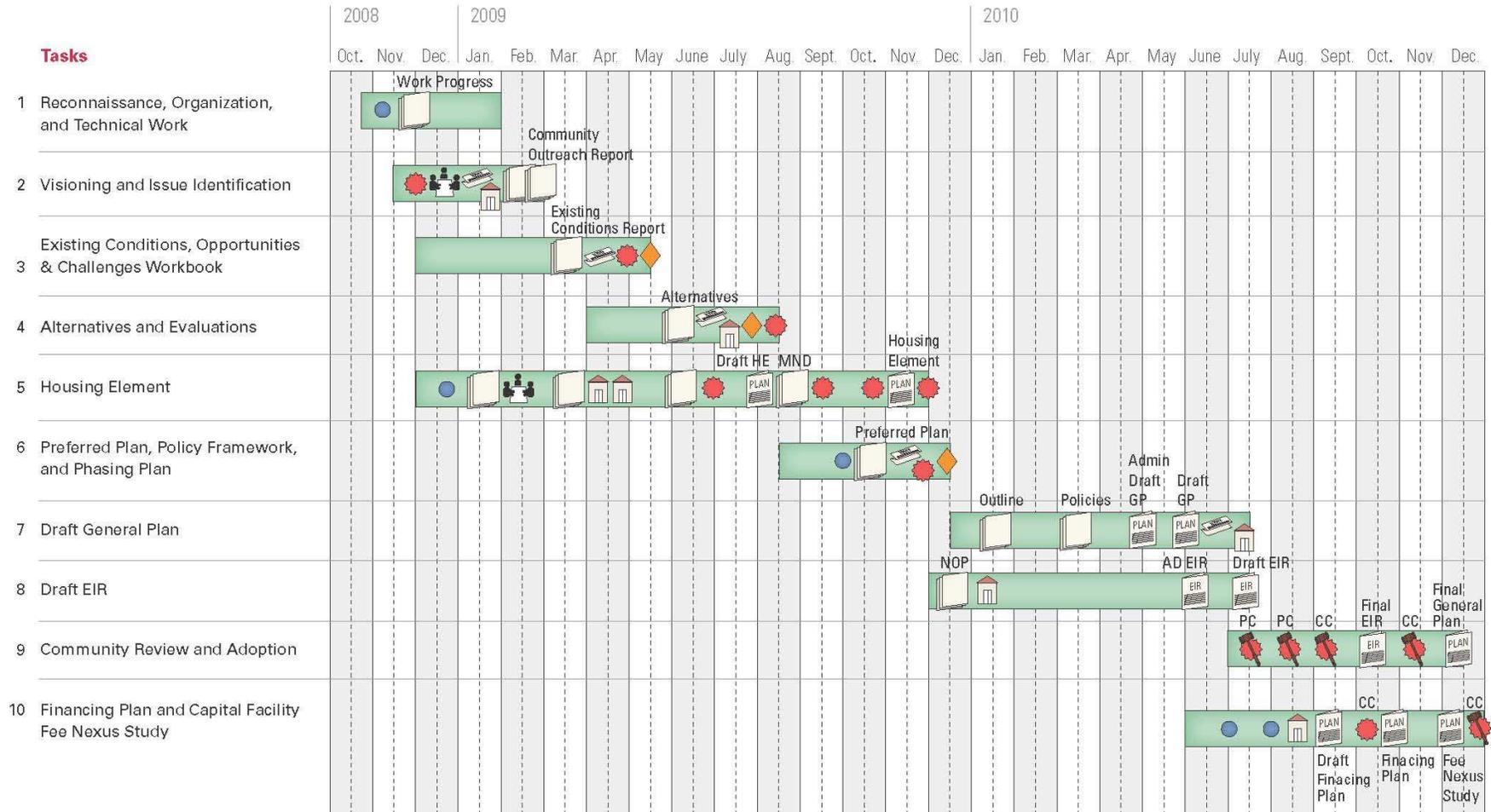
The cost to update the General Plan and Housing Element, including its Environmental Impact Report and the Capital Facility Fee Program, is \$1,242,470. The effort has been funded through the following Funds and Contract Services accounts. The Capital Facilities Fees funds \$535,000. Sewer, Water and RDA fund a percentage based on their current budget: Sewer 10%, Water 11%, RDA 9%. The General Fund has contributed the remaining balance.

CFF Fund	175/778-02-50	\$535,000
Sewer Fund	129/432-02-50	\$70,747
Water Fund	141/433-02-50	\$77,822
RDA Fund	150/472-02-50	\$66,672
General Fund	110/411-02-50	\$495,229

Attachment 1 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT

SCHEDULE

Project Team and Schedule



Consultant Effort
 Interim Product
 Final Product
 Stakeholder Interviews
 Newsletters

Community Meeting/Workshops
 Planning Commission/City Council Meeting
 Public Hearing
 City Staff Meeting
 Focus Group/Citizen Group Meeting

PC Planning Commission
 CC City Council

Attachment 2 - Community Interviews

1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Turlock is conducting an update of its General Plan, the comprehensive local policy document that guides growth, development, and resource conservation over a 15- to 20-year time period. The initial stage of the General Plan update process involves gathering information about the city from a wide variety of sources. To supplement the input from staff, Council Members, and workshops for the general public, interviews were conducted with participants representing a broad range of local interests: public agencies, institutions, business groups, major employers, industry organizations, community groups, residents, social service organizations, and local and regional governments. The list of the participants is on the following page.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

The community interviews were held over a two-day period on December 8th and 9th, 2008. Participants were interviewed individually or in groups of two, in sessions generally lasting between 30 minutes and one hour. A total of 36 people participated. Participants were provided with a brief summary of the General Plan update project and were asked three basic questions, which served as starting points for conversation. The questions asked participants to list what they thought were:

- Turlock's greatest successes over the last 15 years;
- the current issues and challenges facing Turlock; and
- Goals the City should aim to accomplish over the next 15 years.

These questions form the organizational structure of this report. However, the interview questions served as "conversation starters," and many participants spoke at length on issues specific to their areas of expertise. The full text of the questions is at the end of this report.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

City Council

John Lazar, *Mayor*

Planning Commission

Amos Reyes, *Planning Commissioner*

Mike Brem, *Planning Commissioner*

Community Leaders

Scott Dorius, *Attorney*

Axel Gomez, *Attorney*

Mike Ireland, Jr., *Insurance Agent*

Business Groups

Sharon Silva, *Chamber of Commerce*

Trina Walley, *Downtown Property Owners' Association*

Steve Madison, *Building Industry Association of Central California*

Julio Hallack, *Stanislaus Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*

Major Employers

Yubert Eniva, *Foster Farms*

Matt Swanson, *Associated Feed*

Jeff Woodsmall, *Sunnyside Farms*

Agriculture Organizations

Ray Souza, *Western United Dairymen*

Developers

James Brenda, *JKB Homes*

Shawn Fitzpatrick, *Fitzpatrick Homes*

Real Estate

Jim Theis, *Coldwell Banker Endsley*

Pam Toombs, *Coldwell Banker Endsley*

Tim Bettencourt, *CoSol Commercial Real Estate*

Community Interviews

Westside Industrial Park

Buster Lucas, *Acme Electric*

George Rose, *Western Asset Recovery*

Contractors

Clark Hulbert, *Teichert Construction*

Major Institution Representatives

John Sigsbury, *Emanuel Medical Center*

John Sims, *Turlock Unified School District Board President*

Dr. Sonny Da Marto, *Turlock Unified School District Superintendent*

Robert Gallego, *CSU-Stanislaus Capital Planning and Facilities Management*

Public Agencies

Larry Weiss, *Turlock Irrigation District*

Marjorie Blom, *Stanislaus County LAFCO*

Brad Hawn, *Stanislaus County LAFCO; City of Modesto City Council Member*

Regional Government

Vince Harris, *Stanislaus Council of Governments*

Community Organizations

Ron Eivas, *Harvest Christian Church*

June Rodgers, *United Samaritans Foundation*

Joe DiGrazia, *Westside Ministries*

Jolynn DiGrazia, *Westside Ministries*

Chris Alley, *Central Valley Coalition for Affordable Housing*

Chris Kiriakou, *Turlock Gospel Mission*

COMMON THEMES (MAJOR GOALS)

There was surprisingly strong consensus amongst participants regarding the primary issues that are important for the General Plan to address. Following is a list of the main themes and issues that the participants identified:

- Identifying the location for future residential neighborhoods – Southeast Turlock or Northwest Turlock
- Attracting jobs and businesses; realize the potential of the WISP
- Diversity of housing types
- Revitalizing Downtown
- Choosing a direction for future growth
- Forming better partnerships with CSU-Stanislaus
- Providing entertainment, recreation, cultural and youth activities
- Fostering a business-friendly attitude at the City
- Beautifying the city and its gateways
- Continuing master planning – sensible growth
- Addressing homelessness issues
- Upgrading transportation
- Incorporating County islands
- Achieving fiscal stability
- Maintaining quality of life for residents

Specific details and ideas pertaining to these main themes are discussed in the sections that follow.

2 PAST SUCCESSES, EXISTING ASSETS

Interviewees were asked to identify what they considered to be Turlock's strengths, and what they thought its greatest successes had been over the last 15 years. Due to the diversity of the participants, the responses also reflect a combination of residents' and business owners' perspectives.

Master Planning

Many participants appreciated how the city's growth over the last 15 years has proceeded in an orderly and controlled fashion. They cited the City's adherence to the policies and growth boundaries of the existing General Plan, and in particular, the use of the master planning process to develop discrete areas of the city comprehensively. Many people noted that while developers and builders had been skeptical of the master plans initially, they ultimately found that the City's upfront planning added significant value to their product and created highly desirable neighborhoods and amenities.

City Hall

Participants also supported actions the City had taken regarding its own facilities. In particular, many felt that moving City Hall to its current location set a good example of reinvesting in the Downtown and in older buildings, and maintained the government's presence in the center of town.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Numerous participants also applauded the City's investment in the new wastewater treatment facility, which they saw as being a foresighted commitment to handling future growth (especially employment growth) and creating a source of revenue by being able to treat surrounding areas' wastewater as well. Finally, the new Public Safety facility was seen as an important project, and one that would help address some of the problems facing the older neighborhoods close to Downtown.

In addition to acknowledging the strengths of the master planning process in general, most participants also identified specific development projects (that arose as part of the master plans) as big successes. The most commonly mentioned projects were Monte Vista Crossings and the Westside Industrial Specific Plan (WISP).

Monte Vista Crossings

Monte Vista Crossings was nearly universally viewed as having had a positive impact on both the local tax base and on residents' quality of life (through increased retail options). It was also seen as an important demonstration of successful commercial development, one that helped establish Turlock as a competitive destination to Modesto and other nearby regional centers.

Westside Industrial Specific Plan

Even though it is not yet fully built out, participants agreed that the establishment of the WISP was a very important recent accomplishment. Because economic

development is such a great ongoing concern, participants felt that setting aside such a large area for industrial and business park development was crucial to ensuring that Turlock would be able to attract high quality jobs in the future.

Downtown Improvements

Also included in this category are the notable improvements that the City has made to the Downtown, particularly beautification. While many acknowledged that the process of achieving the improvements was difficult, it has paid off by creating an enhanced look and feel to the city's historic core. Now that the physical environment has been addressed, the City must take the next step by formulating a plan for the Downtown's economic revitalization.

Quality of Life – Good Schools, Small-Town Feel

Many attributes of Turlock contributed to a feeling of good quality of life over the past 15 years, including good schools, a "small town feel" even in the face of growth, and well-designed neighborhoods in the new development areas.

Educational, Sports and Arts Facilities

Participants also cited CSU-Stanislaus as a cultural resource and liked other recent or ongoing developments such as the Carnegie Arts Center and the new regional sports complex. Many of the desired goals for the future involve maintaining or expanding upon these existing assets that make Turlock a desirable place to live and raise a family.

3 CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

While participants easily cited many positive attributes of Turlock and numerous recent achievements, there clearly remain many present challenges for the City and the new General Plan to address. Responses can be loosely grouped into the categories of economic development and business attraction; social issues; transportation and infrastructure improvements; direction of growth; fiscal stability; and quality of life. For several of the more complex issues, specific recommendations that participants offered are provided. These recommendations do not represent a full in-depth analysis of the issues; rather, they are meant to be starting points for discussion of policy solutions for the General Plan update.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Participants were nearly unanimous in listing economic development and business attraction as a top priority issue for Turlock. There was general widespread concern over the City's ability to retain the jobs that it already has, as well as to attract new businesses to the area. While most participants were comfortable with Turlock's status as an agricultural-based community, there was also a growing sentiment that it needs to diversify its economic base in order to remain competitive in the region. The Central Valley is growing overall, and it is important for Turlock to be able to capture some of the better paying jobs that are being generated.

A number of participants felt that the City's attitude and practices were not "business friendly." Specifically, they felt that the permitting process was onerous and confusing, that the building department was too rigid in its code enforcement for small businesses and renovation projects, and that fees and exactions could be prohibitive.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Develop a "fast track" permitting process for new businesses, and speed up the permitting process in general.
- Allow greater flexibility in building code for those renovating older buildings and starting new small businesses; work with a structural engineer to come up with less expensive seismic retrofit options.
- Improve consistency within the planning and building departments, so that the directions an applicant receives from different city employees do not vary from person to person.
- Adjust Plan Check and Building Inspection fees so that they are not tied to the value of the permit.
- Offer financial incentives, such as fee deferrals, to get new businesses in the door.
- Invest in other aspects of the City that create important appeal to prospective businesses, such as nice hotels, street improvements, and beautification.

However, it is important to note that the sentiments about the City's attitude towards businesses were not shared by all participants. Those who were very experienced in the development industry did not find the permitting processes to be unduly

burdensome, nor did they think that the city's fees were notably higher than surrounding jurisdictions. Rather, those who were new to the city, starting a business for the first time, or trying a more unconventional development proposal were more negatively impacted by the process.

SOCIAL ISSUES AND YOUTH FACILITIES

Participants discussed numerous social issues facing the city, many of which were particularly relevant to the older neighborhoods close to the Downtown core. Both community and political leaders cited ongoing problems with drug abuse (especially methamphetamines), gang violence and related crime. Several participants pointed out that the existence of the county islands contribute to the crime problems; as areas outside of City of Turlock police jurisdiction with slower response time from the county sheriff, the county islands have crime and drug issues.

Many participants also believed that reducing homelessness, and particularly providing a homeless shelter, are pressing needs for the city. There was doubt about the efficacy of the proposed hotel voucher program. Related to the homelessness issue, some participants noted the need for more transitional and supportive housing. While it is true that Turlock's generally low home prices are affordable for much of the population, the housing needs of several special population groups are not being met. People suggested that transitional and supportive housing must go beyond just providing shelter to offering programs to help residents become productive members of society. Another underserved group is large households; most of the existing affordable units are not suitable for families with many children or live-in relatives.

Another common theme expressed is the need for more entertainment and activity centers for youth. Participants representing both affluent and low income communities shared this sentiment. Suggestions included a bowling alley, skating rink, after school centers, additional fields for sports besides soccer, and programmed recreational activities through City Parks and Recreation.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Partner to create a youth center with activities and clubs, with the City providing the space and a local organization providing the programming.
- Develop a funding mechanism that would bring parks, facilities, and streetscape improvements to the older, less affluent neighborhoods, the same way that assessment districts are used to maintain public space in newer developments.
- Consider a new high school location in the southwestern part of town, where substantial household growth exists.
- Solidify the City's position on developing a permanent homeless shelter, identify an adequate site amidst neighbors' concerns and poor public perception, and work with local nonprofits to set up and manage the facility.
- Utilize social organizations' connections to include underrepresented communities in the General Plan public participation process.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Participants' concerns about transportation and infrastructure fell into two types: capacity and quality. Concerns about roadway capacity pertained to the need to accommodate more traffic as the city grows. In particular, as Turlock continues to develop commercial and employment centers with a regional draw, the City will likely have to embark on several new regional-scale projects, including the new Highway 99 interchange on the south side of town and a north-south connector with Merced County on the east side of town. Some participants also worried about the city having an adequate connection to Interstate 5, to the west, as a matter for attracting new businesses.

While the projects above will be important for handling long-term growth, participants also pointed out the more immediate need for improving capacity in the east-west direction across the City. Nearly all participants who mentioned this problem pointed to Modesto as an example of what to avoid, where congestion and limited east-west capacity makes cross-town travel there extremely difficult.

Improving existing street and road quality within city limits was also mentioned repeatedly. The rundown condition of the roads is a considerable issue in the western neighborhoods near Downtown and in the older industrial areas. Many streets in these areas are severely deteriorated, and some lack curb and gutter. The same issue exists in the county islands. Participants saw road quality as both a safety concern and as a problem for business attraction. Some also linked the road problem to Turlock's fiscal situation, pointing out that while there was no funding mechanism available for ongoing improvements, the repairs would only become more costly the longer they were postponed.

Most of the discussion surrounding infrastructure improvements pertained to transportation. However, some participants also brought up provision of utilities to newly developing areas and maintenance of the city's water quality as issues of concern.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Continue with plans for a north-south connector with Merced County's General Plan.
- Continue to pursue a southern Highway 99 interchange in conjunction with development plans for the southeast side of the city.
- Convert Taylor Road into a four-lane expressway to better accommodate east-west traffic on the north side of the city.
- Work with Stanislaus County on cost-sharing mechanisms for road improvements that connect the community of Denair with Turlock.
- Consider the impacts of the forthcoming high-speed rail in the General Plan Update.
- Expand water and sewer infrastructure to county islands, but hold the hookup fees as a lien on new development.

DIRECTION OF GROWTH

City staff and officials identified choosing a direction for future growth—either to the northwest or to the southeast—as a primary task for the General Plan update. Those interviewed were fairly evenly divided in their opinions of which direction growth should go. On the same topic, many participants emphasized the importance of infill development and staying within the existing urbanized area. Those supporting infill development reasoned that it would help revitalize older parts of town, limit the city’s carbon footprint, and preserve high quality farmland.

Many participants focused on the issue of where new residential development would be located, because that has broad implications for the location of other land uses and city services. The Turlock Unified School District waits to site new schools until it knows where the households will be; retailers need sufficient households in their trade area in order to be successful.

The participants recognized the significant issues involved with expansion in either direction. Those who would prefer growth to occur in the southeast acknowledged the substantial freeway and infrastructure improvements needed and the challenges of assembling land associated with highly parcelized ownership patterns. At the same time, those who believe that the northwest is the more logical place to grow (based on the momentum of Monte Vista Crossings and other recent development) are also aware that the City’s “holding the line” of Taylor Road and Highway 99 is viewed as a success. The farmland is also recognized as being superior in the northwest.

FISCAL STABILITY

Many interviewees were concerned about Turlock’s fiscal stability, both immediately and in the future. Fiscal stability is of course tied to many other issues discussed in the interviews, most notably business attraction, economic development, and residential growth. Participants’ present concerns related to the current recession and the recent departure of several businesses from Turlock, as well as the State of California’s financial troubles and its propensity to take funds from municipalities during such times. Funding for crucial city services and projects could disappear if revenues continue to drop. Therefore, immediate efforts to retain and attract business were seen as being crucial for the City’s solvency over the next few years.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Participants saw quality of life in Turlock as both an existing asset and a concern for the future. They wished for positive aspects of daily life to be maintained, but also pointed out areas for improvement. There was strong agreement on how quality of life issues could be improved. These improvements were viewed as important not only for existing residents, but also for demonstrating to prospective businesses that their employees would enjoy living in the city. While there is some overlap between this category and others in this section, many participants cited “quality of life” specifically as an issue of concern. Those interviewed would like to see a range of new amenities, including arts and entertainment facilities, expanded trails and parks, restaurants, boutique shops, and a mall.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Expand arts and entertainment opportunities, both through CSU-Stanislaus and independently.
- Create a system of trails for pedestrians and cyclists, possibly utilizing the Turlock Irrigation District right-of-ways.
- Attract high-end restaurants and boutique, non-chain shops that residents currently must travel to Modesto or even the Bay Area to access.
- Develop more parks in the older neighborhoods that are underserved in terms of open space and recreation areas.
- Plan space for a shopping mall (probably in the northwest), even though one is not likely to be developed in the near future.

4 QUESTION 3: FUTURE GOALS

The final question asked participants to think broadly about the future, and envision what they would like to see Turlock accomplish over the next 15 years. Not unexpectedly, their responses overlap somewhat with the previous categories, as they wished to maintain the city's positive attributes and solve the current challenges. But at the same time, participants provided concrete examples of goals and policy ideas that the City could set for the next general planning period. Ideas included forming a better partnership between the City and CSU-Stanislaus, growing sensibly, creating a range of housing types, realizing the potential of the WISP, revitalizing Downtown and other older areas, and expanding recreation.

CSU PARTNERSHIP

Many of those interviewed believe that the Turlock is missing out on a real opportunity by not forming a stronger partnership with CSU-Stanislaus. Close "town-gown" relationships are generally mutually beneficial to both entities. Residents can take advantage of the University's cultural resources, facilities, and employment opportunities; and the University benefits from city businesses, event patronage, and public exposure. Participants mentioned several assets of the University, including its excellent performing arts department and the nursing program's relationship with the Emanuel Medical Center. The University has also increased its visibility by partnering with the city and renaming a portion of Monte Vista Avenue "University Way." However, there are other ways over the next 15 years that the University and the City of Turlock can form a cohesive, synergistic relationship.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Arrange regular meetings between appropriate City and CSU staff to discuss partnership opportunities and community relations.
- Increase advertising of University cultural events, through lamppost flags and other highly visible means, to boost attendance and awareness for the University and help fill the entertainment gap that some city residents feel.
- Open University offices or even a satellite campus in Downtown Turlock, thus increasing the University's presence in the community, improving access to classes, taking advantage of underutilized buildings, and helping revitalize the historic core.
- Partner with local developers to create more student housing on vacant parcels near the University campus.
- Find workable solutions to the issue of overflow student parking in residential neighborhoods.

SENSIBLE GROWTH

Regardless of the direction of growth that decision-makers ultimately choose to pursue, all of the people interviewed would like to see the City realize future development in the same orderly, well-planned manner that characterized the last 15 years. They also wanted to see Turlock remain a distinct urban area, surrounded by agriculture and not bleeding into surrounding communities. Compact growth was a commonly mentioned strategy for achieving this goal, through infill development,

reuse of existing older structures, and development of higher density housing such as townhouses.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Continue the master/specific planning process to comprehensively plan and develop discrete areas one at a time.
- Consider agricultural soil quality and productivity in making policy decisions about urban growth.
- Actively encourage and remove barriers to development of infill sites and reuse of existing buildings.

RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES

In the same vein of sensible growth, participants wished to see Turlock ultimately provide a wider range of housing types for its diverse population. To date, the vast majority of recent local new home construction has been detached single family homes. However, there is growing awareness that this traditional model is not appropriate for all household types, and as Turlock's demographics continue to shift, more variety is needed. Participants representing a broad range of interests, from market-rate developers to advocates for low-income communities, shared this sentiment. Many business interests also noted that a range of housing types is necessary to attract new employers, because they need housing for everyone from their hourly employees to their executives. Participants identified the following housing types needed:

- Student rental housing
- Higher density types including townhouses and stacked flats, both for rent and for purchase (condominiums)
- Supportive and transitional housing
- Affordable rental or ownership units appropriate for large families (5+ members)
- Permanent homeless shelter

REALIZING THE WESTSIDE INDUSTRIAL SPECIFIC PLAN

Participants interested in economic development generally said that a major goal they would like to see Turlock accomplish is realizing the potential of the Westside Industrial Specific Plan. There was strong support for the creation of the WISP and belief that it puts the city in a good position to accommodate new employers, which would bring additional jobs. However, as discussed earlier, many interviewed were also concerned about the City's attitude and policies towards businesses, and consequently its ability to attract new employers to the WISP despite having the land set aside in a Specific Plan. Their suggestions for how to accomplish this goal are captured in the Specific Recommendations section of the "Economic Development and Business Attraction" section above.

DOWNTOWN AND OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS REVITALIZATION

Building upon the successful façade and streetscape renovations of the Turlock Downtown Plan, participants would like to see the City take the next step over the next 15 years and help bring economic revitalization to the Downtown area. In addition, a number of participants also included revitalizing other older parts of Turlock as a part of this initiative. Most participants did recognize, however, that substantially more residential density was needed in order to make Downtown into a thriving commercial area. Depending on the success of bringing housing Downtown, the area might also need to focus on office development.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Increase professional office development and business services in Downtown.
- Build new housing in and around Downtown.
- Find solutions to building code issues, to better facilitate conversion of upper stories to residential units.
- Open CSU-Stanislaus offices and/or classrooms Downtown.
- Develop unique retail and restaurants that are feasible, appropriate for the building stock, and create a destination identity for Downtown; however, do not let retail fall into too specific of a niche that does not serve city-wide needs.
- Continue to expand beautification efforts into older neighborhoods near downtown and to the city's gateways, to create a sense of arrival.

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

The topic of recreation and entertainment amenities came up repeatedly, and to many participants this was an important goal in the new planning period ahead. While many of the ideas have already been mentioned in previous sections discussing quality of life, it is important to underline this need as a priority. As Turlock continues to grow, diversifies its economy, and becomes more sophisticated, residents will expect to be able to meet most of their recreation and entertainment needs without leaving town. People feel that Turlock is on the right track with the renovation of the Carnegie Arts Center. The City can further meet residents' entertainment needs by leveraging CSU-Stanislaus.

Specific Participants' Suggestions

- Create an "entertainment" zoning designation where certain indoor entertainment uses would be permitted without needing to go before the Planning Commission.
- Develop:
 - Youth and family activity centers
 - More sports fields
 - Bowling

- Golf
- A shopping mall

The Turlock General Plan Update community interviews, which comprised a broad range of members of the Turlock community, painted a comprehensive picture of the city's existing assets and current challenges that the General Plan should address. Additionally, participants proposed goals they would like to see the City accomplish over the next 15 years, and provided concrete suggestions for meeting future objectives.

Economic issues were high on participants' lists of priorities, and included business retention and attraction, municipal fiscal stability, and realization of the Westside Industrial Specific Plan's potential. Direction and type of future growth were also important considerations. Other common themes were improving transportation, addressing homelessness, continuing with the master planning process, partnering with CSU-Stanislaus, revitalizing Downtown and older neighborhoods, and enhancing the quality of life for residents through increased recreation and entertainment options. All of these issues will be carefully considered in the General Plan process moving forward and in the eventual formulation of new policies.

INTERVIEW MATERIALS

Below is the information and questions provided to each participant:

PURPOSE

The City of Turlock is starting to prepare an update to its General Plan. The purpose of the General Plan Update project is to create a comprehensive vision and policy framework that will guide the City's growth and enhancement over the next 15 to 20 years. The General Plan will address major issues including direction of growth, economic development strategies, infrastructure improvements, and fiscal stability of the City. It will build upon the foundation of the existing General Plan, the City's Strategic Plan, and other prior planning endeavors.

As part of initial information gathering for this process, we are interviewing key participants – individuals of knowledge, influence, and investment in the area – to gain insight into their priorities, desires, and issues of concern. Your role as a key participant is to be an information resource and provide observations and suggestions. You will also be notified about future meetings and the release of draft documents.

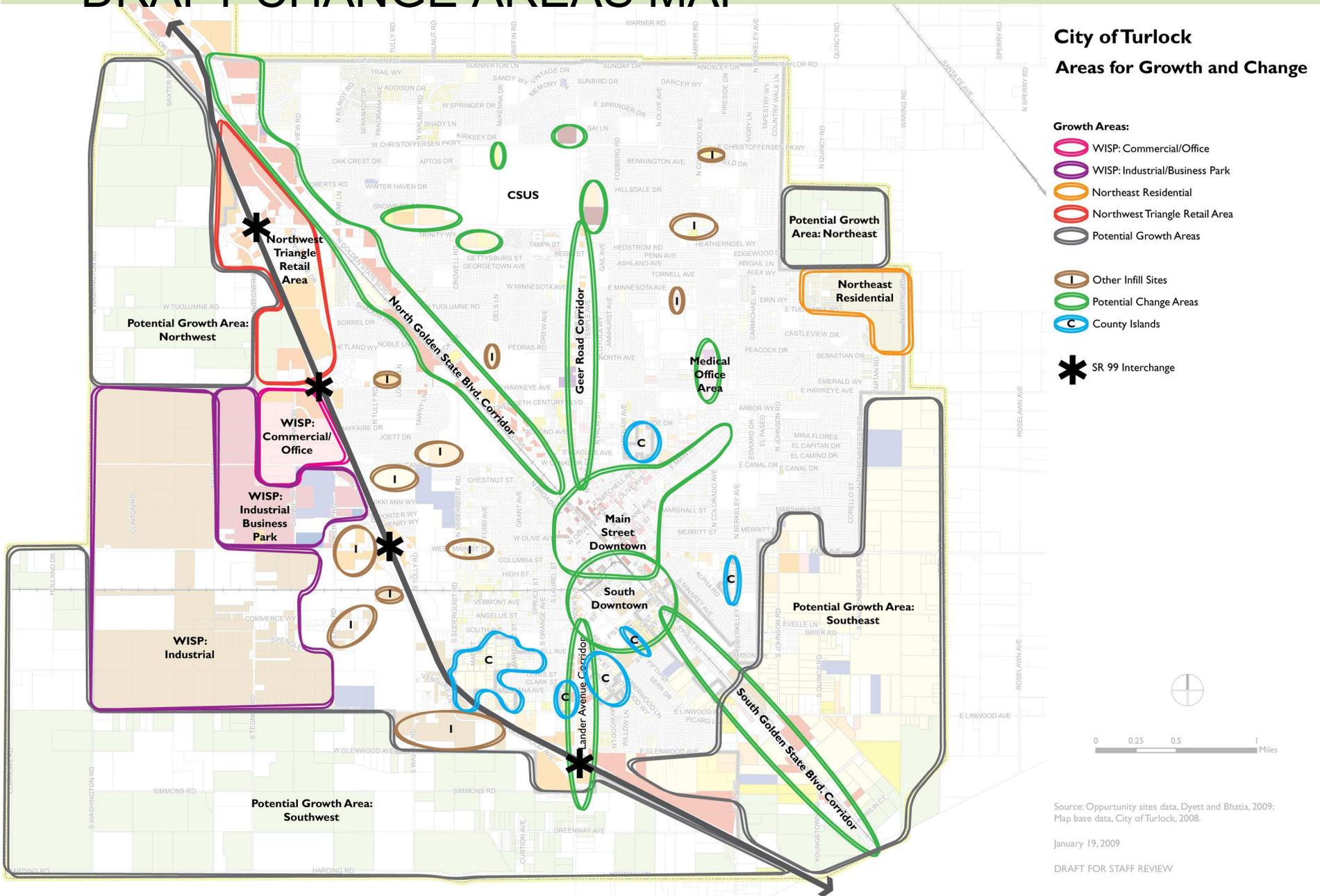
Below is a list of general interview questions. However, we plan to keep the interview informal, asking follow-up questions and inviting you to share any opinions or comments relevant to the General Plan update. We will be preparing an overall summary memo about the participant interviews, but no quotes or names will be used, and no specific comments will be attributed to any individual.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What has been most successful about Turlock's growth and development over the last 15 years? Give specific examples of places, projects, city facilities, etc. How should the General Plan build on the community's assets?
2. What are the main issues and challenges that Turlock will face over the next 15 years? Which of these do you think should be top priorities for the General Plan update, and why?
3. What types of major achievements and improvements would you like to see the City accomplish over the next 15 years? Some possible categories include:
 - Community facilities
 - Design character
 - Amount and direction of growth
 - Fiscal stability
 - Employment growth

Attachment 3 FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT DRAFT CHANGE AREAS MAP

Focus Areas for Growth and Change



Source: Opportunity sites data, Dyett and Bhatia, 2009; Map base data, City of Turlock, 2008.

January 19, 2009

DRAFT FOR STAFF REVIEW

Recommended Focus Topics Based on Research

- Regional Circulation
- Local East-West Circulation
- Economic Development Strategies
- Mix of Housing Types and Densities
- Special Housing Needs – Homeless Population, Transitional Housing
- Future School Sites
- Future Park Types and Locations
- Cultural, Recreation, and Entertainment Facilities
- Agricultural Land Mitigation
- Improving Older Areas
- Downtown Revitalization

- County Island Strategies
- Public Services
- Infrastructure Expansion