

Visalia

General Plan Update



Community Workshop Report #1

PREPARED FOR
THE CITY OF VISALIA BY:

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

JUNE 2010

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2010, the City of Visalia began the City’s General Plan Update process. The General Plan Update will articulate a long-term vision for Visalia and outline policies and programs to realize this vision. Updating the General Plan will enable the City to affirm or modify existing policies and establish new policies; create a foundation for community involvement and informed decision-making; and react to recent and on-going regional housing, environmental and transportation planning efforts as well as the City’s interest in job creation and economic development.

The project team has interviewed community leaders to discuss important issues and concerns in Visalia and is in the process of collecting information and preparing a report on existing conditions in the Planning Area.

This report summarizes community input from the first community workshop held on June 9, 2010, which focused on identifying planning issues and a vision for Visalia in the future. This will serve as a valuable reference to guide elected officials, the General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC), City staff, the consultant team and others, as development alternatives and a policy framework are formulated.

The General Plan Update work program is proceeding as follows:

- Kickoff Meeting
- Community Leader Interviews
- Community Workshop: Visioning  **WE ARE HERE**
- Existing Conditions and Key Issues Report
- Alternative Plans Working Paper
- Alternative Plans Workshops
- Preferred Plan and Key Policies Working Paper
- General Plan Design and Drafting



Community Workshop #1

The first community workshop conducted as part of the General Plan Update was held on June 9, 2010 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center. The objectives of the workshop were the following:

- To initiate dialogue with community members on the future of Visalia over the next 20 years and engage people in the process;
- To provide a discussion forum where all attendees could participate and be heard; and
- To begin to identify common themes, visions, and planning issues for Visalia's General Plan Update.

Approximately 75 community members attended. The Mayor, members of City Council, the Planning Commission, the General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC), and City staff also participated. The workshop agenda is summarized below, and included as Appendix A.

Welcome and Background

The workshop began with a welcome from Mayor Bob Link and Paul Scheibel, the City's Planning Services Manager and project manager for the General Plan Update. Consulting planner Michael Dyett, FAICP followed with an introductory presentation on the purpose and scope of the General Plan update; the schedule of the Update process and the role of public input; and an overview of population growth, economic development, community character, stewardship of natural resources; and other important issues for the General Plan. His presentation is included in Appendix B.

Activity #1 – Planning Issues

Workshop attendees received “post-it” notepads and pens as they signed in. After the opening presentation, attendees were asked to provide quick, written responses to questions read by one of the facilitators. Questions were organized around the themes of *Identity and Vision*; *Transportation and Circulation*; *Economic Development*; and *Future Growth and Development*. Participants then got up and posted the notes on exhibits along a wall of the meeting room.





Activity #2 – 2030 Vision for Visalia

After the first activity, participants relocated to nine round tables for the remainder of the workshop. At the tables were blank covers for the special edition of a magazine (“*California Today*”) dated June 9, 2030, and focusing on Visalia’s accomplishments. Participants were asked to create a headline or illustrate a cover, conveying their vision for how Visalia could be known in twenty years, with adoption of a new General Plan. Participants at each table shared their covers – and their visions for Visalia. Appendix C features a number of these imagined covers.

Small Group Discussions

The magazine covers activity led into discussions at each table of the key issues and priorities for the General Plan Update. Facilitators sought to ensure that everyone at the table was heard and recorded comments on large flip pads. Finally, each group was asked to identify their top three priorities. These were reported back to the group at large at the end of the workshop.

Next Steps

The General Plan Update project team will incorporate the issues identified in the community workshop and interviews into the research and mapping efforts to produce the report on *Existing Conditions and Key Issues*. This report will be presented to the GPURC and to the Planning Commission and Visalia City Council, and serve as the springboard for General Plan alternatives and policies.

Next, sketch plan alternatives will be prepared, which will be presented at a second community workshop for public input, and at targeted community meetings and presentations. The alternatives will evaluate options for where to direct growth, including a mix of infill and expansion, and will focus discussion of key policy choices by the GPURC and community at large. A hands-on workshop with City staff will be held to review preliminary concepts for planning alternatives which will then be refined for transportation and economic analysis, and in consultation with the GPURC. The GPURC and City staff will then select a Preferred Plan concept, which will become the framework for Visalia’s new General Plan.

PLANNING ISSUES AND COMMUNITY VISION

As noted in the Introduction, the first community workshop involved two individual activities, and a small group discussion period that synthesized the activities' themes of key issues and vision. Highlights of the activities are summarized below, followed by a discussion of priorities that emerged from each small group.

Activity #1: Planning Issues

We posed Activity #1's ten questions as a warm-up exercise on what planning issues are facing the city today and would be important to the General Plan update. Similar responses have been grouped, and the focus here is on the larger patterns of responses. Where percentages are referred to below, they refer to the percent of responding workshop participants that named the given subject in their response to a question. Because in many cases participants gave multiple responses to a question, or didn't fully answer a question, totals may not add up to 100 percent.

Identity and Vision

Three questions were posed to address aspects of Visalia's identity and draw out ideas about a vision for the city's future development and ways that the General Plan could help achieve this vision.

WHAT WORD DO YOU THINK BEST DEFINES VISALIA?

Nearly half of participants' responses to the first question (44 percent) referred to Visalia as a community, or as a place that feels like a small town. Visalia was characterized as having a "small-town feel but with amenities of a larger community," as being a "close-knit community," and a "great small town." A significant number of participants (about one in five) described Visalia as a "growing city", or a variation such as "thriving." Another eight chose words associated with a positive quality of life, such as "clean" and "comfortable." Five responses reflected particular pride in the city, calling Visalia the "Jewel of the Valley," and "a cool city!"

"Great small town"



WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT VISALIA?

The most typical responses to this question showed that in the first question, participants had chosen words to describe Visalia which reflected what they most like about the city. Twenty responses (about 30 percent) referred to small-town feel or community. Some associated community with a sense of friendliness, while others noted community involvement or "community spirit." While downtown didn't appear in response to the first question, it rated highly in the second, cited by 18 participants (28 percent of all who responded). Downtown Visalia was praised for its activity, restaurants, and entertainment. Visalia was also appreciated by a handful of participants for being "easy to get around," with short commutes and easy access to shops and services. Its central location in the regional context was also noted positively. The relationship between the city and its natural surroundings (orchards, oak trees, mountains) was lauded by seven attendees.

"Its active downtown"



WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED THE MOST?

A quarter of the responses to this question (17 altogether) referred to transportation issues. Traffic was the most-cited issue, but roadway conditions, public transportation, and bike lanes were also noted. Public safety was also an important concern, identified by 11 meeting participants. Gangs were the chief focus of the safety-related comments. The ability of public services

"Public safety must match planned growth"



to keep pace with population growth was also called out. Eight participants proposed that the promotion of infill development should be a focus, while seven identified the need for neighborhood revitalization, especially on the north side. Air quality was identified by six participants as the aspect of Visalia needing the most improvement. Jobs and higher education also earned multiple mentions.

Transportation and Circulation

Two questions were posed to address traffic congestion and ways people get around the community.

IS TRAFFIC CONGESTION A PROBLEM IN VISALIA? IF SO, WHERE AND WHEN?

Sixty-five percent of respondents (42) either stated that traffic congestion was a problem or identified locations where it was an issue. The others were split between those who felt it wasn't a problem (18 percent) or was only a limited or occasional problem (15 percent).

Mooney Boulevard was the clear leader in perceived traffic congestion, identified by nearly half of attendees who cited traffic congestion locations. Six respondents specified that congestion was worst during holiday season. Another six stated congestion on Mooney as bad all the time, while four felt it was worst in the evening rush hour.

The Lovers Lane/Highway 198 interchange was identified by ten participants (23 percent), with most connecting traffic there with commute times. Seven participants identified other Highway 198 interchanges (at Ben Maddox, Mooney, and Akers) or Highway 198 interchanges in general. Lovers Lane was also cited by four participants as a traffic hot-spot at Walnut or between Walnut and Houston. Another four participants felt that traffic congestion was an issue for the city's north-south corridors in general.

Six participants noted congestion downtown, with respondents divided on when it occurs.

DO YOU USE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION – SUCH AS WALKING, BICYCLING, OR THE BUS – TO GET AROUND VISALIA? WHEN DO YOU USE IT AND WHERE DO YOU GO?

Thirty-six participants (56 percent) stated that they only use their cars to get around. Twenty-three (36 percent) described doing some walking, some bicycling, or some of both. Three persons wrote that they sometimes use the bus.

*“Mooney,
holidays and
5pm”*



*“198 & Lovers
Lane”*





“No, too far away from local shopping & services to walk”



“Walk from work to lunch, sometimes bike from home to work”



Several respondents gave reasons for why they only use their car. These included the need to use a car for business; the impracticality of using the bus; safety concerns having to do with narrow sidewalks; and the distance to local shopping and services.

Among persons who described their walking habits, the greatest number (seven) noted walking downtown (this could refer to walking *around* downtown or walking *to* downtown.) Five noted that they sometimes walk to the store or to go shopping, and two said they walked around their neighborhood.

Six of the 18 participants who sometimes ride their bike specified that they ride to work; four mentioned using their bike to go shopping; three identified downtown; and two said they ride for exercise or for fun.

Two participants who ride the bus use it to get to Tulare.

Economic Development

Two questions were posed to draw out ideas about how economic development should be addressed in the General Plan.

WHERE DOES FUTURE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN VISALIA BELONG, AND WHAT TYPE SHOULD IT BE?

In analyzing responses to this question, we separated it into its two parts: first, *where in Visalia* should future retail development go; second, *what type* of retail should it be?

Mooney Boulevard was identified by 26 participants (41 percent of respondents to the question) as a primary location, while 16 (25 percent) identified downtown. Seven respondents identified the north side of Visalia or specific north Visalia streets (Dinuba Boulevard, Riggin Avenue) for more retail development.

Twelve responses indicated that new retail development should take place in existing buildings, vacant spaces, and infill sites; in many cases these responses also noted Mooney Boulevard. Eleven participants wrote that retail development belongs in places accessible to nearby neighborhoods or in existing retail areas. Six responses called for new malls, and two of these identified Caldwell Avenue and Highway 99 as a good location.

Concerning the second part of the question, responses ranged rather evenly between regional retailers and big box stores (nine); small businesses, locally-owned stores, non-chain restau-

“Fill in empty spaces on Mooney Blvd. first”



rants, etc. (eight); shopping centers or grocery stores (six); and new malls (six). Four participants said they wanted Visalia to gain all kinds of shopping options. Trader Joe's and Whole Foods were specifically called out in multiple responses.

WHAT TYPES OF NEW EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESSES DO YOU THINK THE CITY SHOULD ATTRACT?

Manufacturing was cited in 26 responses (28 percent of the total) as a key employment sector for Visalia. Some respondents specified clean or light industry, and some specified industries that could employ workers without a high level of skills or training. Eleven responses (12 percent) proposed alternative energy or "green jobs" as a niche for Visalia, with specific mentions of solar and wind energy. Ten responses advocated for high-tech jobs such as biotech or information technology. Nine responses identified distribution, shipping, or logistics, and another nine focused on agriculture-related businesses such as food processors or specialty food producers. Education, in particular the idea of a four-year university; retail and food service; and health care also received strong responses.

"Manufacturing and green jobs"



Future Growth and Development

The last three questions returned to issues related to growth and development and what the most important issues are for the General Plan to address.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING VISALIA IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

Air quality was cited in 30 responses (23 percent) to this question, emerging as the single greatest source of concern. Fourteen respondents (11 percent) identified water as a major source of concern, with four responses each specifying water quality and water supply.

"Air quality"



The related issues of population growth (11 responses) and growth management (14 responses) represented another major focus of attention among community members. Seven of these responses characterized the issue in terms of the need to prevent sprawl by promoting "smart growth" and infill development. Two saw the need to find a balance between maintaining quality of life and allowing for development opportunities.

"Population Growth"



Gangs and public safety (13 responses); traffic, transportation, and infrastructure (13 responses); and jobs and economic development (12 responses) also came through as important issues for Visalia.



*“West,
northwest”*



WHERE SHOULD NEW HOMES AND BUSINESSES BE ALLOWED IN THE FUTURE? IN WHICH DIRECTION SHOULD THE CITY GROW?

Twenty-four responses to this question (29 percent) indicated that Visalia should grow to the west, toward Highway 99. Three of these responses specified industrial development and two specified housing; the remainder did not distinguish and so presumably saw west as the most desirable general direction for urban growth. Eleven responses (13 percent) proposed that the city should grow to the east. Smaller numbers preferred growth primarily to the southeast (6 responses); the northwest (4); the south (3); the north (3); or the southwest (2 responses). Six responses stated a strong preference for development to stop at the St. Johns River.

*“Fill in vacant
land in city”*



Fifteen workshop participants (18 percent of the responses to this question) stated that growth should take place only within the existing city, or with a strong infill emphasis. Some of these focused on filling in vacant land, while others discussed higher-density development (“build up, not out!”) There were also six responses advocating more development on the north side of the city. These responses seemed to be focused on improving the area’s image, or adding more shopping, services, and entertainment.

“Waterways”



“Farmland”



WHAT TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES NEED TO BE PROTECTED AS THE CITY GROWS?

Workshop participants were able to sort out four main priorities for environmental resource conservation. The first was water and waterways, cited in 51 responses (36 percent of the responses to the question). Many participants did not more specifically describe their concern; of those who did, waterways themselves (streams and rivers) were the primary focus. Farmland was the second most-cited resource, identified in 32 responses (23 percent). Trees emerged as a very important consideration as well. Twenty-three community members (16 percent) promoted protecting oaks or Valley oaks; growing more trees; and nurturing the “urban forest.” Air quality was cited in 19 responses.

Activity #2: 2030 Vision for Visalia

After the first activity, workshop participants moved to nine small-group tables. At the tables, participants were given blank magazine covers for a hypothetical special issue in the year 2030, celebrating Visalia. They were asked to provide headlines or illustrations that captured their vision for Visalia in twenty years.



The major themes of these headlines and illustrations are summarized below, and suggest visions to guide the General Plan Update. Themes are amplified with a sampling of headlines; a larger selection of the magazine covers is provided in Appendix C.

Vision Themes

SMALL TOWN CHARACTER

Visalia holds onto the feeling of a small town even as it gains the amenities of a larger city.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Visalia thrives as a center of agriculture, industry, and small business development, with plentiful jobs.

EDUCATION

Visalia is home to a new four-year university, bringing with it an educated workforce and making the city a good place for young people.

TRANSPORTATION

New transportation connections make Visalia easily accessible by air, highway or rail. A regional transit system and walkable streets make it convenient to get around locally without a car.

ENVIRONMENT

Visalia's environment is healthy and beautiful after ambitious efforts to conserve water, plant trees, restore streams, and create parks. The air is clean and the mountains are visible.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Downtown continues to thrive as a place for work, shopping, and entertainment, and as a place to live.

LIVABILITY AND GROWTH

Visalia is both prosperous and "green", with attractive neighborhoods, good jobs, and close contact with the natural environment.

Magazine Headlines

A sampling of headlines for the 2030 *California Today* special issue on Visalia add color to the vision themes described above.

"Visalia Continues to Stand Out as the Premier Hometown City in the South Valley"

"Visalia Celebrates 10,000 Manufacturing Jobs"

"Visalia Rated #1 in Attracting Small Business"

"University of California at Visalia Celebrates 10th Anniversary"

"Visalia, Gateway to the Valley. Come by Car or Without"

"Visalia Residents Plant Their 1,000,000th Tree"

"Visalia Enjoys a Beautiful View of the Sierras on this Sunny June Day"

"Visalia Downtown Still a Classic Draw"

"City Receives National Recognition for Work in Improving Lives of Homeless and Transitory Populations"

"Visalia Establishes National Reputation for Being a Thriving City While Preserving Farm Land and Protecting the Environment"

"Visalia: Beautiful, Well Planned and Balanced Growth Serving the Diverse Population"

"Visalia, the Jewel of the Central Valley: Prosperous, Green, and Livable"



Small Group Discussions

Facilitators at each table asked participants to share their sense of the most important issues for the General Plan to address, in order to reach the visions expressed in the magazine cover exercise. Discussions at each table culminated in an effort to identify the issues most of them seemed to agree upon. One person from each table then shared these with the full workshop audience. The priorities from small-group discussions were recorded by a facilitator. They are included here as Appendix D, and summarized below, by theme, more or less in order of how many tables clearly identified related issues.

Natural Resources and Farmland

Seven of the nine small groups identified the protection of Visalia's natural assets as a key General Plan priority. Most of these groups referred to clean air and clean water. Two groups pointed out the potential for environmental protection to have a positive economic dimension, in terms of attracting clean industry and jobs in environmental fields. One table emphasized the importance of maintaining agricultural resources and water supplies.

"Natural beauty: preserve the assets"



Education

Seven tables highlighted education as a priority issue for Visalia. Four of these groups presented the education issue in terms of maintaining good public schools, as a dimension of both quality of life and economic positioning. Three groups focused on the goal of improving higher education offerings, or attracting a four-year university. These groups associated better higher education with holding onto a young, educated workforce.

"Higher education to keep a young and educated workforce"



Public Safety

Public safety was reported as a high priority by six of the discussion groups. Two of these groups specifically called out gangs and criminal activity, while three addressed safety in the context of livability. One table connected public safety improvements with neighborhood revitalization.

"Address gangs"



Jobs and Economic Development

Five tables brought up jobs or the local economy as a top priority. There were a variety of visions for an economically thriving Visalia: to one table, this meant having "business-friendly" policies. Another emphasized cultural diversity and education as elements of a desirable workforce.

"Clean technology jobs"



One group emphasized the need for quality, well-paid jobs, while another emphasized the need for enough jobs for the growing population.

Compact Development and Downtown

Five tables promoted compact and infill development as an important priority for the General Plan Update. For three of these groups, downtown was seen as having a special potential to be made more vibrant by more density and a greater mix of uses. Multi-story development, senior housing, remodeled storefronts, and walkable streets were part of this picture.

Transportation

Transportation was seen as among the top issues as reported by five of the discussion groups. Two tables focused on better traffic circulation or optimizing the relationship between circulation and land use patterns. Two groups emphasized the desire for Visalia to make its streets more pedestrian-friendly and to improve transit service—to create “complete streets” and a balanced transportation system. A fifth group identified transportation as an issue that needed to be addressed in the context of environmental concerns, since transportation has implications for air pollution, water quality, and urban sprawl.

Housing and Social Services

Three tables brought up the need for better meeting social service and housing needs as a key consideration for the General Plan Update. Specific references were made to affordable housing, services for homeless persons, job training and reentry programs. A stable, revitalized Oval Park neighborhood was discussed in this context.

Neighborhood Quality and Community Character

Three other tables emphasized the goal for high-quality neighborhoods, in particular existing, older neighborhoods. There was a desire to protect neighborhoods from inappropriate or low-quality development, and to not neglect older neighborhoods or allow them to decline in the rush to develop new areas. One table proposed a comprehensive goal for Visalia to be “safe and walkable, with good transit and good public education,” thus connecting other concerns with a vision for livable neighborhoods. The same group was also the only one to recast the positive quality many identified as Visalia’s “small-town feel” as a goal to maintain for the future.

“Fill storefronts”



“Walkable neighborhoods”



“Affordable multi- and single-family housing”



“Need to demand great, not settle for good!”



LOOKING FORWARD

The visions and planning issues highlighted by community members at the first workshop will help to set the course of the General Plan Update. The General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC) will comment on community input, together with the findings of an extensive research effort and discussions with community leaders. Periodic reports on the General Plan Update, including the results of this workshop, will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council, and community priorities concerning natural resource conservation, the circulation system, development patterns, and other subjects of the community workshop will be evaluated as part of the planning process for the General Plan Update.

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Visalia

General Plan Update



Community Workshop #1 AGENDA

- I. Welcome**
Paul Scheibel, Planning Services Manager
Bob Link, Mayor
- II. Introductory Presentation of Project Background and Key Issues**
Michael Dyett, Dyett & Bhatia
- III. Activity #1: Planning Issues**
Michael Dyett and Sophie Martin, Dyett & Bhatia
- IV. Table Count-Off**
- V. Short Break, Relocate to Tables**
- VI. Report on Activity #1**
Michael Dyett
- VII. Activity #2: 2030 Vision for Visalia**
Michael Dyett and Facilitators
- VIII. Groups Report on Activity #2**
- IX. Wrap-Up and Door Prizes**
Michael Dyett
- X. Adjournment**

Por favor, mira al otro lado para ver el programa en español.

*Wednesday, June 9, 2010
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Visalia Convention Center
303 E. Acequia Avenue*

Visalia

La actualización del Plan General




Taller de Comunidad #1 PROGRAMA

- I. Bienvenida**
Paul Scheibel, Director de Servicios de Planificación
Bob Link, Alcalde
- II. Introducción sobre el proyecto y los temas claves**
Michael Dyett, Dyett & Bhatia
- III. Actividad 1: Temas de planificación**
Michael Dyett y Sophie Martin, Dyett & Bhatia
- IV. Asignación de mesas**
- V. Pausa corta, mover a las mesas**
- VI. Informar sobre los resultados de actividad I**
Michael Dyett
- VII. Actividad 2: Visión para Visalia en 2030**
Michael Dyett and Facilitators
- VIII. Los grupos informan de los resultados de Actividad 2**
- IX. Resumen y premios**
Michael Dyett
- X. Aplazamiento**



*Miércoles, 9 junio, 2010
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Visalia Convention Center
303 E. Acequia Avenue*

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP PRESENTATION





Visalia General Plan Update

Community
Workshop #1
Visioning
June 9, 2010




Agenda

- Overview of General Plan Update
- Where we are in the process
- Key issues for Visalia
- Hearing from you




Workshop Part 1

OVERVIEW OF GENERAL PLAN UPDATE





Visalia's Character and Growth

- Close-knit community
- Vital downtown, good neighborhoods and schools
- Oldest city in the Valley
- Strong and ongoing growth




A New General Plan for Visalia

- Give the community a voice in shaping its future
- Focus on the issues Visalia cares about
- Build consensus on controversial issues
- Identify key actions to make Visalia a better place over the next 20 years
- Provide comprehensive base data and maps



Purpose of a General Plan

- Establish a long range vision for the City
- Provide direction for physical development and infrastructure improvements
- Establish a basis for determining whether specific development proposals are in harmony with the vision
- Allow agencies and developers to design projects that enhance and preserve community resources



Who is Involved?

- The Visalia Community
 - Community meetings frame issues and choices
- Community Development Department
 - Will review the draft plan and make recommendations to the **General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC), Planning Commission** and **City Council**
- Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners
 - Leads the consultant team effort, works with GPURC and with residents, business owners, other stakeholders

Why is the Plan Being Updated?

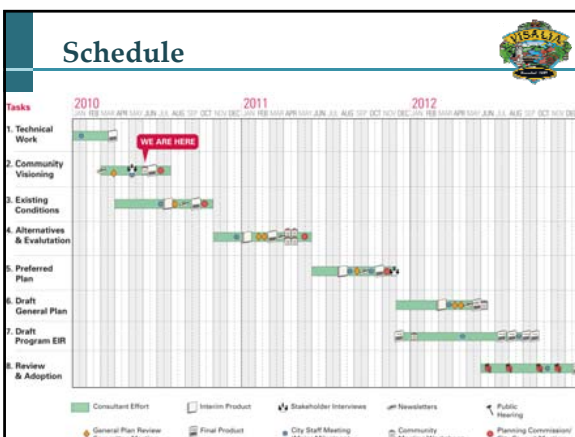
- The current General Plan is out of date
 - Policies have not been systematically reviewed and correlated with new housing policies and growth prospects
- The Plan Update is an opportunity to:
 - Affirm or change existing policies
 - Create a foundation for community involvement and good development decisions
 - Respond to regional transportation and land use planning initiatives
 - Respond to State environmental legislation

Key Issues for Visalia and the General Plan Update

- Maintaining economic vitality
- Building neighborhoods
- Developing a complete transportation system
- Providing open space and recreation amenities
- Maintaining and extending public services
- Supporting air quality improvements
- Conserving farm land
- Managing urban growth

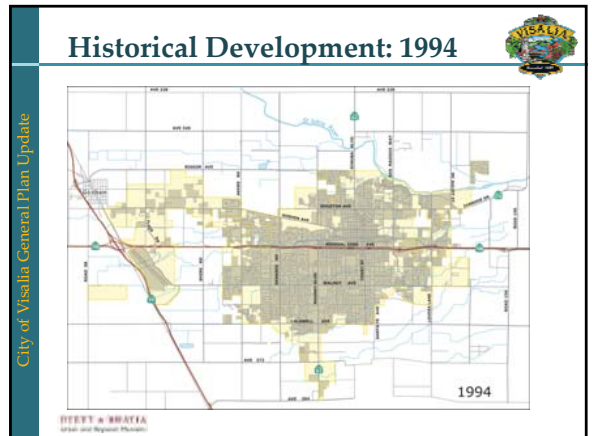
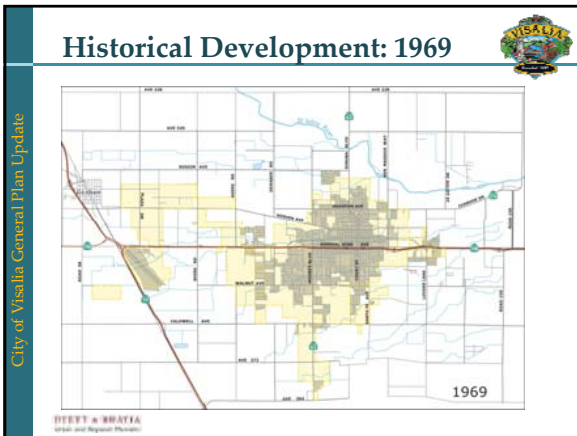
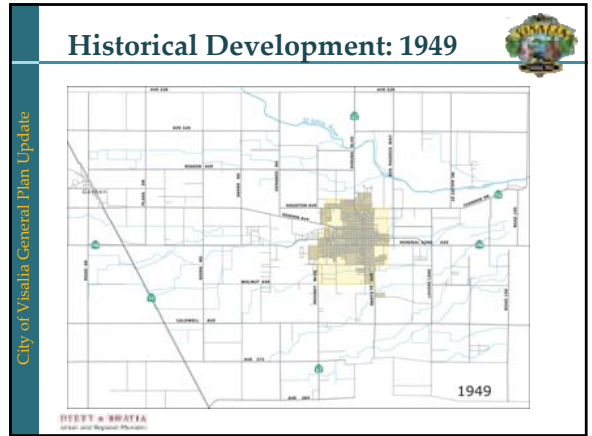
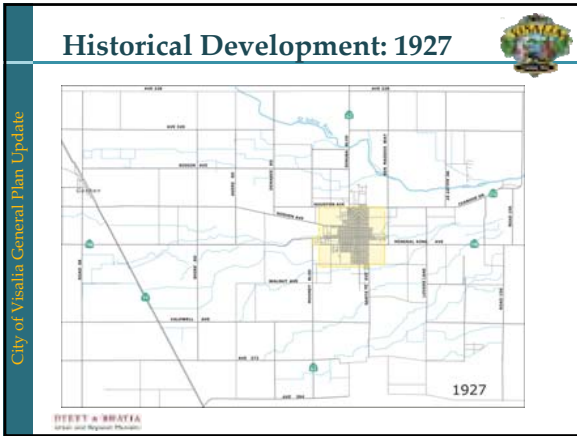
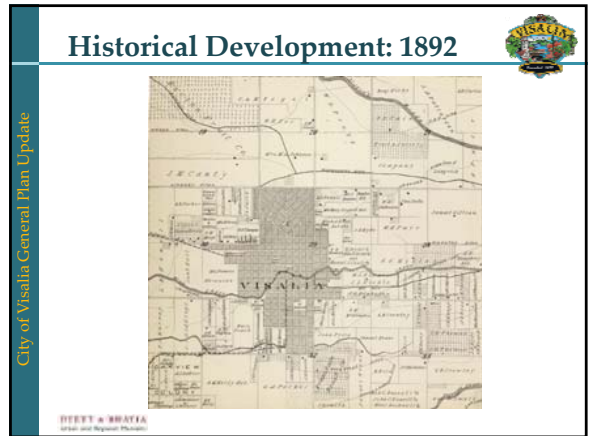
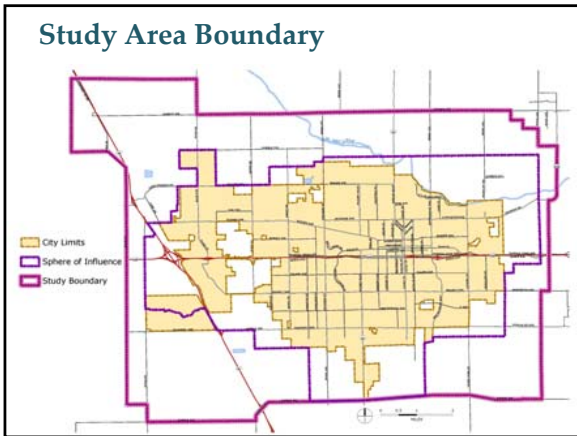
Work Program and Process

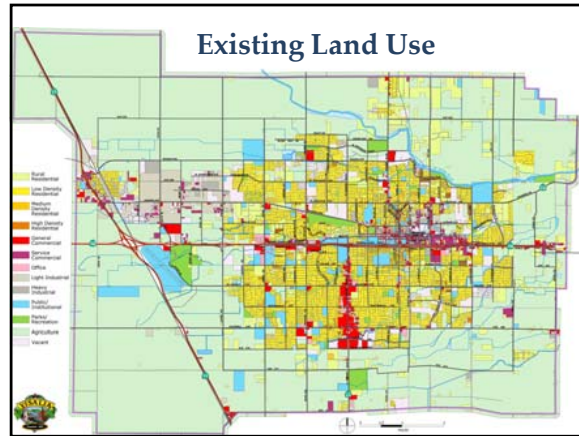
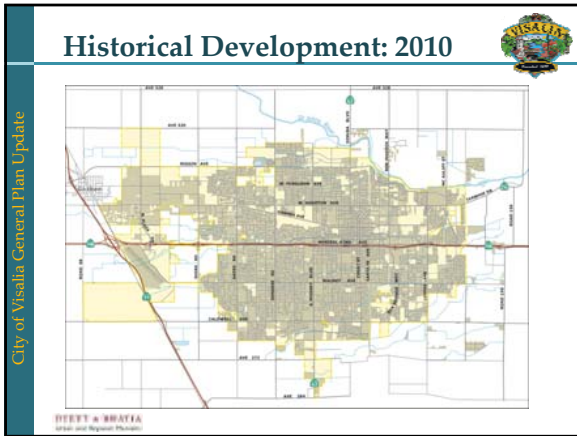
- Community Visioning and Issue Identification
- Analysis of Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints
- Alternative Plans Workbook
- Preferred Plan and Policy Formulation
- Drafting and Completion of the General Plan
- Environmental Review



General Plan Goals

- Build a complete vision to support optimal quality of life in Visalia
- Encourage and attract business and employment opportunities
- Facilitate development of a balanced supply of housing
- Promote responsible use of resources
- Ensure that Plan policies are mutually supportive, internally consistent, and in accordance with State law





Workshop Part 2
KEY PLANNING ISSUES IN VISALIA

- Community Leader Interviews**
- Conducted interviews with community leaders May 5th and 6th
 - 14 interview sessions, 37 participants
 - Elected officials, City staff members, representatives from major institutions and organizations, and others
 - Briefed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on May 5th

- Community Leader Interviews**
- Participants were asked a series of questions addressing multiple aspects of life in Visalia
 - Emerging Themes:
 - Build on Visalia's assets
 - Address challenges and threats
 - Increase educational and employment opportunities for all residents
 - Maintain and improve community livability

Community Leader Interviews

"I came back with the intent of being involved in the community"

"I love the waterways and the fact that the City cares about them"


"There are challenges even when times are good, and now we are asked to do more with less"

"We should build neighborhoods, not gang-hoods"


"I want other cities to say, 'Did you see what Visalia did?'"

"As a fourth-generation native, my biggest concern is air quality"

City of Visalia General Plan Update



Exploring the Issues



City of Visalia General Plan Update



Economic Vitality




City of Visalia General Plan Update




Economic Development



- Job growth in key industries: manufacturing, distribution, health care, retail, education, government
- Continue to support Downtown and East Downtown
- Revitalize commercial corridors
 - Mooney Boulevard, Others
- Create policies for business attraction and retention



City of Visalia General Plan Update



Maintaining a Strong Downtown

City of Visalia General Plan Update



Development of East Downtown




City of Visalia General Plan Update



Neighborhood Quality



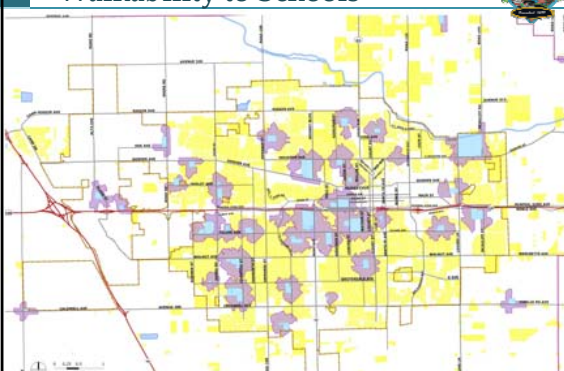



City of Visalia General Plan Update

Neighborhood Quality

- Create complete neighborhoods with schools, parks, and community amenities
- Revitalize older neighborhoods
- Support neighborhood shopping areas
- Produce balanced housing choices




Walkability to Schools

City of Visalia General Plan Update

Complete Transportation System







City of Visalia General Plan Update

Complete Transportation System



- Future street network and traffic capacity
 - Improving connections north/south and east/west
 - Improving traffic signal synchronization
- Focus on the idea of building complete streets
 - Accommodating all modes, not just cars
- Connectivity, walkability, bike network
- Transit service and High Speed Rail

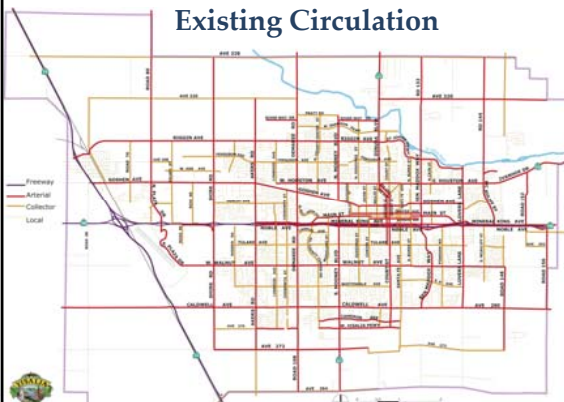

City of Visalia General Plan Update

Complete Transportation System

- Recent transportation improvements:
 - Overcrossing at Santa Fe Avenue
 - Extending Visalia Parkway
- Some planned transportation improvements:
 - Mooney Boulevard widening
 - Caldwell Avenue arterial widening
 - Road 108/Demaree widening to Tulare
 - Overcrossing at McAuliff Street
 - Eventual widening of Highway 99 to six lanes

Existing Circulation

Environmental Quality

- Improving air quality
- Conserving water and energy
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Related to State and federal legislation
- Facilitating green building
- Fostering community education and participation

Conserving Farmland

Conserving Farmland

- Agricultural land preservation: consideration of valuable farmland in annexation criteria
- Urban/farmland edge conditions; land use compatibility
 - Recognize different types of edge conditions
- Cooperation with Tulare County

Farmland in the Planning Area

"We are feeding the world"

Managing Urban Growth

Population Growth


- Current Population – 124,000 residents
 - 50,000 people added since General Plan of 1991
 - 32,000 people added since 2000
- Population Projections:

– 2020	40,000 new people	165,000 Pop'n
– 2030	45,000 new people	210,000 Pop'n
– 2040	35,000 new people	250,000 Pop'n

Visalia is changing from a small town to a big city.


Population Change

City of Visalia General Plan Update




- Children and Young Adults
 - 42,000 Children under 18 (almost 1/3 of the population)
 - 12,000 Young Adults, and a lot more coming
- Elderly and Retirees
 - 11% of the population and growing rapidly: 150% by 2030, compared to 100% total population
- Diversity
 - 45,000 Hispanic, 25% Non-English Speaking

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Potential Urban Land Needs

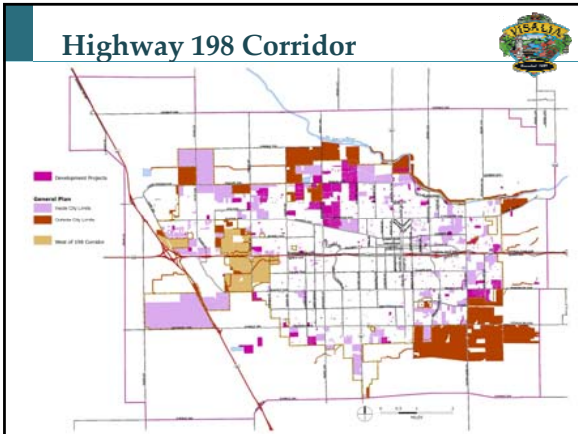
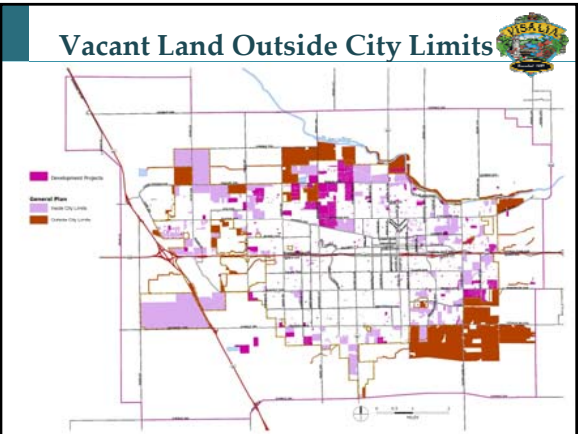
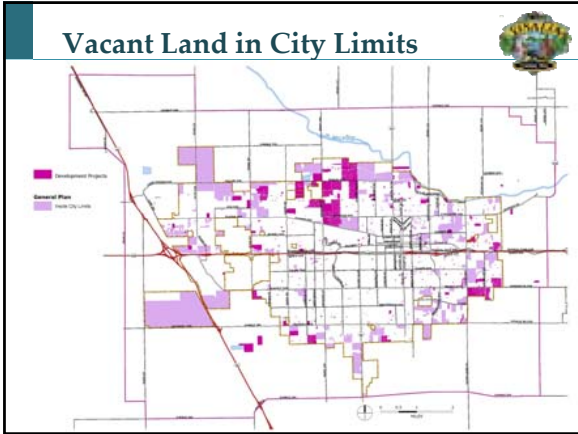
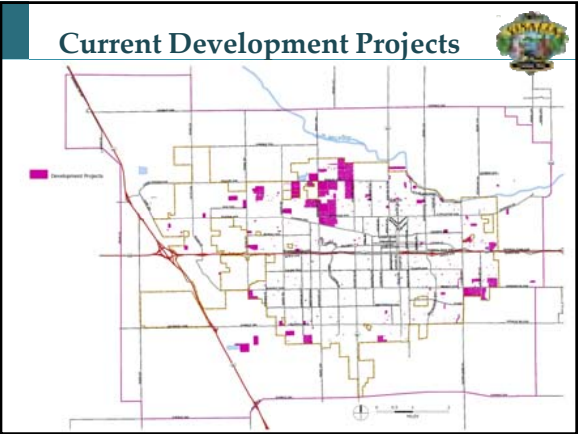
City of Visalia General Plan Update

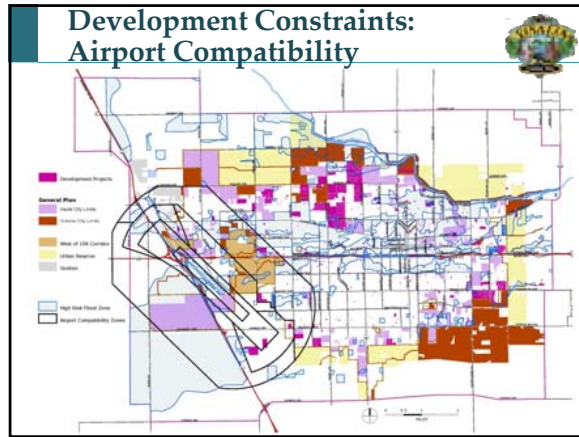
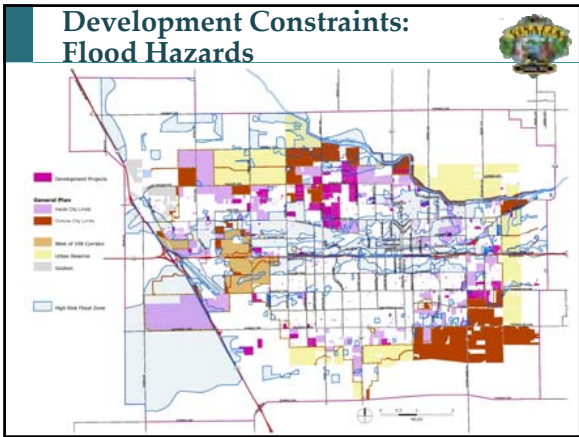
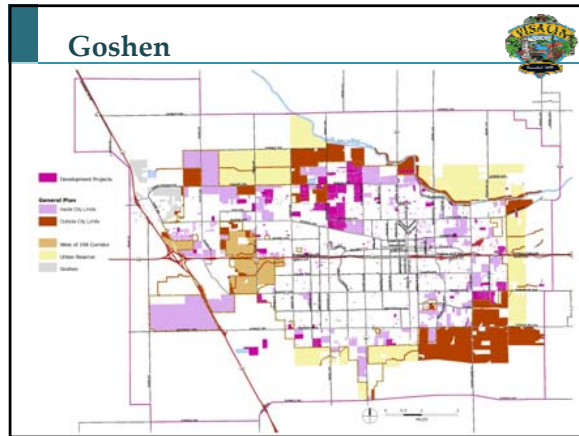
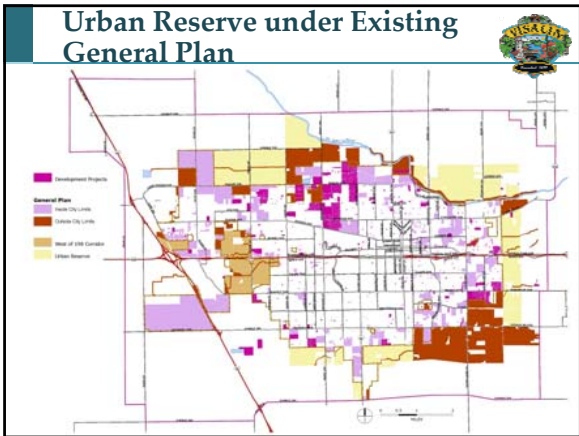


- Housing and Household Types
 - 75% single family homes; 25% multi-family
 - May need more townhome and multi-family residential development for future households
- Shift in Housing Mix
 - May need more townhome and multi-family residential development for future households

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City of Visalia General Plan Update

Workshop Part 3
GETTING YOUR INPUT

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Your Turn: Warm-Up Activity


- Identity and Vision
- Transportation and Circulation
- Economic Development
- Future Growth and Development

City of Visalia General Plan Update

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Small Group Activity




- Proceed to your assigned table for an activity and discussion in small groups
- Every table will report back to the group

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City of Visalia General Plan Update

Next Steps



- Summarize community input on issues and vision
- Complete technical studies (land use, transportation, economics, environmental issues) for the Existing Conditions Report
- Prepare Sketch Plan Alternatives
- *Community Workshop #2* on Sketch Plan Alternatives (Fall/Winter 2010)

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City of Visalia General Plan Update

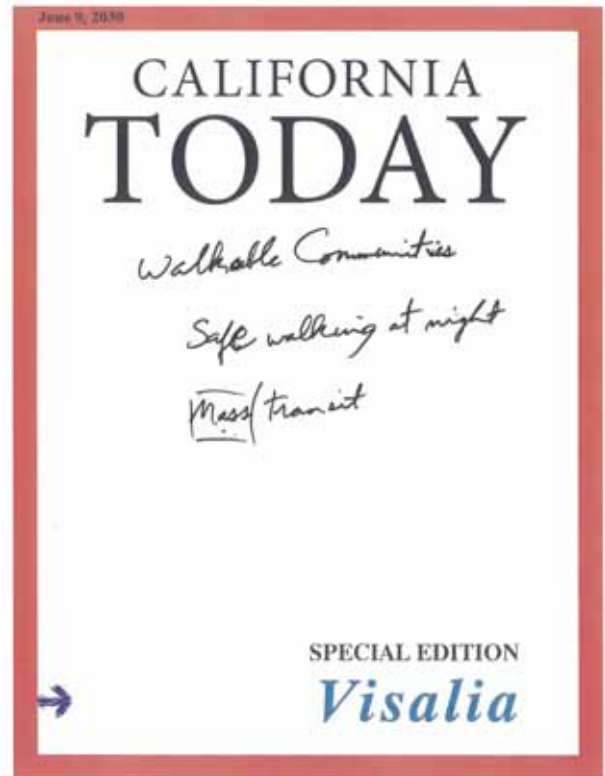
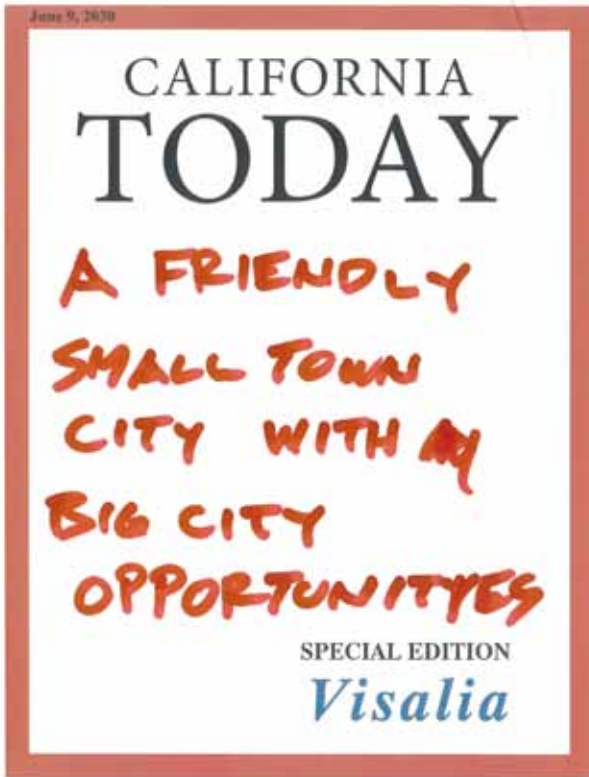
How to Stay Involved



- General Plan Update newsletters
- Website
 - Follow the General Plan Update Process and share your thoughts online at <http://www.visaliageneralplanupdate.com/>
- Contact Paul Scheibel at 559-713-4369 or pscheibel@ci.visalia.ca.us

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APPENDIX C: SELECTED MAGAZINE COVERS



June 9, 2030

CALIFORNIA TODAY

OVAL Park, HUGE SUCCESS!

Park is a "HIT", Events for families every weekend.

ST. JOHN'S River Beach - Central Valley's newest Summer Attraction -

New Park for North Visalia -

Giddings and Ferguson - Helps Youth

SPECIAL EDITION
Visalia

June 9, 2030

CALIFORNIA TODAY

A GOOD USE OF SPACE AND RESOURCES

A DOWN TOWN FOR YOU TO LIVE, WORK, EAT AND SHOP

SPECIAL EDITION
Visalia

June 9, 2030

CALIFORNIA TODAY

- City ~~now~~ receives national recognition for work in improving lives of homeless & transitioning populations.
- City receives national recognition for innovative, walkable neighborhoods and energy-efficient home/building designs.
- University ~~now~~ increases cultural & well-being of Visalians.
- Low-income neighborhoods have great access to fresh produce.

- ~~of~~

- inequality increases - Gap between ~~the rich & the poor~~ grows
- Low-income and poor still struggle to access - not enough services available for their real need.
- Lack of educational / ~~career~~ ^{academic} performance outcomes for low-income ~~areas~~
- obesity & diabetes rampant | Decrease in health

SPECIAL EDITION
Visalia

June 9, 2030

CALIFORNIA TODAY

VISALIA ESTABLISHES NATIONAL REPUTATION FOR BEING A THRIVING CITY WHILE PRESERVING FARM LAND AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.

SPECIAL EDITION
Visalia

APPENDIX D: DISCUSSION GROUP PRIORITIES

June 9 Community Workshop – Group Reports on Top Issues and Priorities

Table 1

- Infill revitalization – esp downtown
- Neighborhood safety
- Improve circulation/connectivity with land uses

Table 2

- Housing: more dense, in a mixed use environment
- Social services – shelter/services for homeless and others
- Environment – clean air, water
- Improve traffic circulation throughout the city

Table 3

- Maintaining quality neighborhoods and development – eliminate slums, fill unused storefronts, don't forget older neighborhoods
- Protect assets and limited resources – air, water, education, safety
- Raise the bar, demand excellence

Table 4

- Higher education – keep young, educated workforce around
- Complete streets, transit
- Protect natural resources
- Protect neighborhoods
- Make Visalia business-friendly

Table 5

- University, higher education, reduce brain drain
- Jobs, especially jobs/housing ratio. Increase density downtown, keep it walkable
- Safety – reduce gangs, crime, and traffic hazards

Table 6

- Continue to see downtown area be vibrant, consider mix of uses – senior housing, multi-level, mixed use
- Keep small town feel, home town feel
- Diversified land use – maintain agricultural resources, water. Don't want to be Tulare!
- Work with agricultural community
- Safe, walkable, with good transit, good public education

Table 7

- Clean air, clean water, protect environment – attract companies that are involved with clean tech
- Attract cultural diversity – including good jobs, good education
- Compact development – infill, refilling existing vacant storefronts

Table 8

- Higher education – 4 year university as well as increased job training programs, including for reentry folks (from prison) – give people second chances
- Affordable housing – infill development, affordable multifamily rentals, focus on Oval area, this is also related to public safety
- Environmental issues – air, water, transportation, attracting more environmentally friendly jobs
- Economic development – high value-added jobs, high quality, well paid

Table 9

- Safety – including fighting crime
- Economy – enough jobs
- Services – providing what the community needs, including education
- Put these things together = high quality of life