AMENDMENT 77-2:

VISALIA LAND USE AND CIRCULATION PLAN



Approved: Tulare County Planning Commission Resolution 4837 - April 27, 1977 Resolution 4887 - July 13, 1977

Adopted: Tulare County Board of Supervisors Resolution 77-2116 - August 2, 1977

Note: This Amendment supersedes the following:

- That part of the 1963 Area General Plan, as adopted on May 26, 1964, which pertains to the Visalia area.
- 2. The Visalia Airpark amendment as adopted on November 22, 1966.
- 3. That portion of the Mooney Boulevard Plan, as adopted on June 12, 1973, which lies north of Avenue 264.
- 4. General Plan Amendment 75-1A.

This Amendment incorporates General Plan Amendment 74-2A, which remains effective. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 77-2
AMENDMENT TO THE TULARE COUNTY AREA
GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE & CIRCULATION
ELEMENTS - VISALIA AREA

I. INTRODUCTION

On May 26, 1964, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Tulare County Area General Plan which included the Land Use and Circulation Element for the Visalia area. Since that date, that element has been modified by a number of amendments, the most recent being the East Highway 198 Plan which was adopted by the Board on July 1, 1975.

On August 17, 1976, the City of Visalia adopted a Land Use and Circulation Element which included all of the area within the Visalia Urban Area Boundary, and which represented a comprehensive re-work of previous City-adopted development policies. Subsequently, the City requested the County to consider an amendment to the County's Land Use and Circulation Element which would bring the County General Plan into closer conformance with that of the City. The object of such conformance is to provide mutually supportive plans and policies for urban growth within the Visalia Urban Area Boundary.

This amendment to the County's Land Use & Circulation Element is fundamentally identical to that adopted by the City of Visalia. Conflicts between this amendment and the City's Land Use & Circulation Elements are noted.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Urban Improvement Area

The Urban Improvement Area adopted by the City of Visalia is considerably smaller than that adopted by the County, although each version of the Urban Improvement Area purports to show the 20-year urban growth limit. Any significant contraction of the County-adopted Urban Improvement Area could conflict with existing County policies and commitments involving public works and urban improvements.

Since the full range of effects of modification of the UIA has not yet been studied, the UIA is not altered by this amendment.

B. Highway 198 East Corridor

The objectives, plans and policies of the Highway 198 East Corridor General Plan Amendment (GPA 75-1A) are still valid, and are incorporated in essence in this amendment. The minor modifications are primarily those designed to accommodate those portions of the City of Visalia's Land Use and Circulation Element which are located inside the city limits and to reconcile minor conflicts between the City's element and the Corridor Plan adopted by the County. Specific land use designations are discussed in paragraph TV.

The policy of restricting industrial development from all areas within 1/4-mile of State Highway 198, as contained in GPA 75-1A, has been expanded to include all of State Highway 198.

C. Mooney Boulevard Corridor

One of the crucial points of the City's element is the decision to discourage urban growth south of Packwood Creek; the element reflects that decision by showing urban classifications south of Packwood Creek only to the extent necessary to reflect existing uses. At the heart of the City's policies in this area is the determination that Mooney Boulevard cannot accommodate the additional traffic that would be generated by new development south of Packwood Creek, and that existing circulation patterns dictate that future urban growth should be oriented more nearly east/west rather than north/south. Such an orientation would provide better utilization of such arterials as Lovers Lane, Ben Maddox and Caldwell Avenue, and minimize additional congestion of Mooney Boulevard.

The City's element is in conflict with the Mooney Boulevard Corridor Amendment which was adopted by the County in June, 1973. The area affected by that amendment extended northward into the Visalia Urban Area Boundary to a point 1/2-mile north of Liberty Avenue, westward to a point about 1 mile from Mooney Boulevard, and eastward to a point slightly less than 1/2-mile from Mooney. The thrust of the amendment was to establish design standards for development within the corridor based on the Planned Unit Development concept.

In view of the City's expressed intent to direct future growth eastward, the fact that all of Mooney Boulevard lies within corporate limits except for an area on the west side of Mooney extending northward from Liberty Avenue about 1/2-mile, and a local school's expressed concerns regarding development in the area, it is logical to adopt the City's land use designations for this area (with a minor variation as noted in paragraph IV.

D. Residential Policies

The City's Element does not assign specific densities to specific areas. Instead, it controls the overall density of each neighborhood (with a neighborhood being defined as a section of land, or 640 acres) by maintaining a ratio of single-family and multi-family units. This would result in a density of 6 dwelling units per gross acre of residential development.

To make such a plan workable, it is necessary to have an accurate inventory of dwelling units, by type, within each neighborhood. This data is not readily available for unincorporated areas. For that reason, and since it may be desirable to allow urban area densities higher than 6 dwelling units per acre, three other approaches to residential densities were considered.

First, the traditional method of assigning various residential densities to specific areas offers some simplicity. However, it is less flexible than some other methods and requires detailed land use data.

A second possibility is to control density by regulating the ratio of multifamily to single-family zoning within a given area (neighborhood). Using the maximum holding capacity of the different types of zoning as a basis, this method could produce any desired overall density. It also raises a question as to whether it is desirable to precisely plan densities very far in advance. For example, community service and circulation systems may develop with higher capacities than now envisioned, and it might be convenient if the Land Use Element permitted development to higher densities without a General Plan Amendment. Therefore, this approach was rejected in favor of that following.

A third alternative is predicated on the proposition that, in urban areas and with land resources becoming ever more scarce, it is illogical to place arbitrary upper limits on urban densities. Urban land would be used more efficiently if densities were allowed and encouraged to develop to the highest level that could be sustained by circulation and community service systems. Such an approach offers flexibility of design while eliminating the necessity for maintaining detailed land use data, since densities can be governed by service system capacities.

These higher densities must be made attractive to the developer; at the same time, a degree of regulation is necessary in order to avoid overtaxing service systems, provide design coordination and provide for certain desirable amentiies. The policies contained in paragraph III below rely on the Planned Unit Development concept for both the incentive and control. Those policies are expected to achieve densities that will be somewhat higher than those of the City of Visalia, and yet be compatible with the City's policies.

Planmed Residential development may include units in detached, semi-detached, attached, multi-storied structures or any combination thereof. It may also include land uses of a religious, cultural, recreational and commercial character to the extent that they are designed to serve the residents. Structures may be grouped more closely than in conventional development in order to obtain park land and outdoor areas for enjoyment.

E. Rural Residential Considerations

There are three approaches to determine areas suitable for this designation:

- The "demand" approach, wherein the market demand for rural-residential property is estimated, then areas within the UAB are set aside to meet that demand.
- The "pure planning" approach, wherein demand is ignored, and the need for and location of rural-residential designations are determined solely by considerations of landuse efficiency.
- A "compromise" approach, involving elements of both approaches listed above.

An assumed market area was surveyed for division-of-land activity for the years 1970 - 1975. The survey area is a 6-mile-radius circle centered at downtown Visalia, plus the western extremity of the Visalia UAB which extends beyond the 6-mile circle, but excluding those areas lying within the UAB's of Farmers-ville and Ivanhoe. The results of the survey are tabulated on the following page:

New Lots Created, 5 Acres or Less in Size

	TOTAL		VACANT LOTS SOLD	
YEAR	NO. OF LOTS	ACRES	NO. OF LOTS	ACRES
1970	32 65	52 143	30 49	50 108
1971 1972	67	163 96	54 15	133 66
1973 1974	21 4	13	1 1 22	1 80
1975	36	140		438
TOTAL	225	607	171	
YEARLY AVERAC		101	28	73

Two factors would act to increase the 28-lots-per-year average:

- Some transactions have undoubtedly been accomplished by means of unrecorded deeds, contracts of sale, etc. Since such documents are not of public record, their precise impact is unknown.
- Since early 1973, the 5-acre minimum parcel size applicable to the AE and A-1 Zones may have artificially dampened demand.

There are two factors, on the other . hand, which would seem to deflate the indicated demand for rural residential lots:

- Some lots may have been purchased speculatively; such purchases obviously do not indicate demand since the property has not passed into the hands of the ultimate user.
- Some lots were purchased for purposes other than rural residential (church, etc.).

The effects of these factors are probably compensating, and the figure of 28 new vacant lots per year that were subsequently sold is a good indication of market demand within the study area.

Consideration was given to meeting a 20-year demand for rural residential properties, that demand being calculated as follows:

20-Year Demand = (20) (28) = 560 Lots

+ 35% (10% streets, 25% flexibility) = 196 Lots

TOTAL 756 Lots

However, it has been determined that the entire 20-year demand should not be met, since low-density development is generally inappropriate for urban areas, it is difficult to accurately assess demand over a 20-year period and such low-density development is an inefficient and uneconomic use of land.

The existing concentrations of supply of Rural Residential designations are in an area on the north bank of the St. Johns River (so designated by General Plan Amendment No. 74-2A - Northeast Visalia), and in the incorporated portions of an area centered around Hurley Avenue and generally bounded on the west by Shirk Road, on the east by Akers Road, and extending from a line about 1/4-mile north of State Highway 198 northward to about 1/4mile north of Avenue 304 (so designated by the City of Visalia's Land Use Element). The Northeast Visalia area is proposed for 178 lots, ranging in size from 1 to 3 acres, with an average lot size of 2.29 acres. The objectives, plans and policies of GPA 74-2A are still valid, and are incorporated in this amendment.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

	Vacant Acreage	No. of Lots
Northeast Visalia	548	146
Hurley Avenue Area	496	496
TOTAL	1,044	642

The 642 lots contained in these two areas is 114 lots short of the desired total of 756; however, as explained previously and with the exceptions indicated in paragraph IV below, the Rural Residential designation has been limited to these two areas.

F. Green Acres Airport

This airport has not been designated on the Land Use Element because of three factors:

1. It is assumed that, over the long term, private airports will not continue to provide service to the public at large. (The County Airport Master Plan considered this assumption valid enough to base its final recommendations on it.)

- Much of the airports approach corridor lies over existing denselypopulated areas.
- The airport's continued existence would hamper the City's northward expansion, should growth in that direction be deemed appropriate.

III. POLICIES

A. Residential

- Multi-family dwelling units shall be permitted only with Planned Unit Developments.
- The minimum size of a residential Planned Unit Development shall be 5 acres.
- 3. The minimum size of a Planned Unit Development containing a neighborhood commercial center shall be 40 acres, except where it can be demonstrated that the goals of this plan can be substantially achieved with Planned Unit Development on parcels smaller than 40 acres. This policy shall not be applicable to any Planned Unit Development of less than 40 acres which was approved prior to the adoption of this amendment.
- Single-family conventional development, not designed as part of a residential Planned Unit Development, shall have a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.
- Single-family development, if designed as a part of a residential Planned Unit Development, may have a minimum lot size smaller than 6,000 square feet.
- No industrial uses shall be permitted within a residential Planned Unit Development.
- The maximum height of any residential structure shall be 2-1/2 stories or 35 feet to the uppermost part of the roof.

B. Industrial

No new industrial development shall be permitted within 1/4 mile of State Highway 198 within the Visalia Urban Area Boundary.

C. Airport

All applications for zone changes, use permits, subdivisions and parcel maps shall be reviewed by the Airport Land Use Commission whenever property involved in such applications lies within the 1990 100-CNR contour or within the "AA" Zone (extended to a distance of 2 miles from the runway end), "AT" Zone, or "LT" Zone as such zones are defined in the Tulare County Zoning Ordinance.

D. Agricultural

It shall be the policy of the County of Tulare to zone all areas designated as Agricultural by the Land Use & Circulation Element as AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-Acre Minimum).

IV. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land use designations for incorporated areas are as shown by the City of Visalia's Land Use Element. The following paragraphs refer to unincorporated areas.

A. Planned Residential

This designation is applied to the areas shown as "Residential" by the City of Visalia's Land Use Element except as noted.

The City's Residential designation contrasts with previous County designations at several locations; however, the only significant contrast is that area within the Highway 198 East Corridor which was shown as Agricultural in the County Element. This area is outside the County-adopted Urban Improvement Area but inside the City-adopted Urban Improvement Area. As indicated previously, the County-adopted Urban Improvement Area is not altered. Policy IV. B.1. of the County's Land Use Element for the corridor stated that all properties outside of the Urban Improvement Area shall be shown as agricultural use until such time as the Urban Improvement Area is amended. The rationale behind this policy (as contained in GPA 75-1H) remains valid; therefore, the area within 1/4-mile of State Highway 198 and within the present County-adopted Urban Improvement Area is not shown for residential development by this amendment.

A minor conflict exists because of the City's Agricultural designation at the northwest corner of Mooney and Liberty Avenue, and bounded on the west by Harrison Road and on the north by Avenue 266. A residential designation is appropriate at this location to reflect existing residential development and PUD No. 76-1 which has been approved for the northwest corner of Mooney and Liberty Avenue.

B. Rural Residential

This land use category is shown for five widely-separated areas, two of which are developed to such uses. The developments known as Oak Ranch (located north of the St. Johns River and immediately east of Road 144), and Tract 354 (located at the northeast corner of Avenue 264 and Road 124, southeast of Mooney Grove Park), are almost completely built-up with uses which are reflected by a Rural Residential designation. A third area, in the northeast corner of Road 72 and Rasmussen Avenue, is almost completely built up with residential uses.

The fourth area shown for this classification is in the general vicinity of Hurley Avenue, between Roads 92 and 100. This unincorporated island is bounded on the north, west and south by incorporated areas designated as Rural Residential, on the east by incorporated areas designated as Residential, and on the northwest by incorporated areas designated as Industrial and Service Commercial/Light Industrial. The site is presently designated as Residential Reserve on the County's Land Use Element. Of the area's 590 total acres, about 226 acres are vacant and about 64 acres are developed to rural residential uses. Adjacent properties are vacant, except for a mobilehome park at the southeast corner and industrial uses near the northwest corner. Soils are Class I/II. Soils in about half of the area pose moderate-to-severe limitations on leach fields; however, those limitations would not prohibit septic tanks on lots of sufficient size (i.e., 1 acre or more). Except for about 2 acres in the northwest corner of Hurley Avenue and Akers Road which is zoned C-2 (General Commercial) around an existing ceramics shop, the southeast quarter of the area is zoned R-A (Rural Residential); the balance of the area is zoned AE (Exclusive Agricultural).

The C-2 Zoning in the northwest corner of Hurley and Akers is incongruous with surrounding existing and proposed development; therefore, this commercial use is not formalized by designating the site for commercial purposes.

A Rural Residential designation is appropriate for this location because it would help in providing a buffer between residential developments on the east and industrial/service commercial uses on the northwest, and because it would

be consistent with the designation of incorporated areas on the north, west and south. A minimum lot size of one acre would be compatible with the suggested designation and the semi-urban nature of the general area. The City has indicated that, due to terrain slopes, it is not feasible to sewer this area; thus, development at this location will require individual sewage disposal systems.

The fifth area designated as Rural Residential lies on the north bank of the St. Johns River and on both sides of Road 132. This 580 acre site was designated as Rural Residential by General Plan Amendment 74-2A. The objectives, plans, and policies of GPA 74-2A remain valid, and are incorporated in this amendment.

C. Regional Retail Commercial

The first unincorporated area shown with this designation is located on the north side of State Highway 198 between Roads 100 and 106 (Chinowth). The County Element previously showed this area as Highway/Neighborhood Commercial and Low-Density Residential. About 80% of this area is developed to retail, general, and highway commercial and light industrial uses, with the balance being vacant or residential. Regional Retail Commercial is appropriate for this location since it is more descriptive of the diverse uses, and it is not advisable to break land use designations into the small segments necessary to precisely describe the existing uses.

The second site with this classification is situated immediately east of Mooney Boulevard and just north of Avenue 280. It was previously designated as Low-Density Residential, and is zoned R-A. Regional Retail Commercial is appropriate for this vacant site because it is easily accessible by major arterials and roads through adjacent regional commercial developments that have been required by the City, and because it is contiguous to existing regional retail commercial development.

The third site with this designation is located just south of that previously described, on the south side of Avenue 280. Existing uses consist of older single-family residences throughout much of the area, and light commercial uses along Avenue 280. This area was previously designated as Highway Commercial

by the County Land Use Element; the north half of it is zoned C-2, with the south half being R-1. The area is adjacent to incorporated areas with the same designation. The site's access via two major arterials, its proximity to existing regional commercial development and the deteriorating condition of much of the existing development make it a logical choice for a Regional Retail Commercial classification.

A fourth area, on the south side of Noble Avenue and 1/2-mile east of Road 132, is presently shown as Planned Commercial on the County's element, but as Commercial Regional Retail on the City's element. There is no serious conflict between the two designations. The City's designation is an extension of identical designations lying to the east and west. Much of this area lies within city limits, and is developed to commercial use.

D. Local Retail Commercial

No unincorporated areas are shown with this category.

E. Central Business District Commercial

No unincorporated areas are shown with this category.

F. Highway Commercial

This designation is applied to those areas classified as General Commercial by the Highway 198 East Plan (GPA 75-1A). The area is located on both sides of Highway 198 in the vicinity of Road 152. The designation is generally equivalent to the General Commercial designation, and is appropriate for the location.

G. Highway Commercial (Reserve)

No unincorporated areas are shown with this category.

H. Service Commercial/Light Industrial

This designation is shown for five unincorporated areas. One such area lies in the industrialized northwest portion of the Urban Area Boundary, on the south side of Avenue 304, and extending from Road 72 (extended) to a point about 2,000 feet east of Road 92; the area varies in width from about 1,000 feet to 1/2-mile. Roughly half of the area is unincorporated, and is broken into five segments. Two of the western-most

segments were previously shown as Limited Industrial. The third segment extends westward from Road 92 for one mile. The Land Use Element previously showed the area as Agricultural; the zoning is M-1 (Light Industrial) on the easterly 2/3 of the area, and AE on the remainder. A Service Commercial/ Light Industrial designation is appropriate for this area since it is about 35% developed with such uses and lies between 2 incorporated areas with the same designation. The fourth segment is located 1/4 mile east of Road 92. Its previous classification was Residential Reserve; the zoning is AE. Existing uses are residential and agricultural. The designation of this site for Service Commercial/Light Industrial results in a "squaring off" of land use lines so that a compatible use faces the existing industrial use of the incorporated area on the north side of Avenue 304. The fifth segment lies between State Highway 99 and the Southern Pacific Railroad; although this site was previously designated as Agricultural, the new designation reflects the existing zoning (M-1) and use (packing plant). The sixth and western-most segment lies on the west side of State Highway 99 and in the southeast corner of Avenue 304 and Road 68; previously designated as Agricultural, this site's small size and proximity to the airport departure path make it suitable for low density non-agricultural designation.

A second area shown with this designation is in the northeast corner of State Highway 198 and Road 84. Incorporated areas on the northwest, west, and south are designated Professional Office, Service Commercial/Light Industry, respectively. Unincorporated areas on the north and east are Service Commercial/Light Industrial (Reserve) and Professional Office, respectively. The site was previously designated as Agricultural; zoning is M-l (Light Industrial). Existing uses are a residence, mobilehome sales and an ice skating rink; a Service Commercial/Light Industrial classification reflects these uses.

The third location with this land use category is on the north side of "K" Road, between 1/4 and 1/2-mile east of Santa Fe Avenue. The incorporated area to the north bears the same designation. The site was previously shown as Limited Industrial. A Service Commercial/Light Industrial category reflects the existing uses and zoning (M-1).

The fourth area shown with this designation is the unincorporated island lying generally on the north side of Mineral King Avenue and 1/4-mile east of Road 132 which was previously designated as Planned Commercial. The City's policies prohibit industrial development adjacent to Highway 198. Since those policies preclude significant industrial uses in this area, there is no important conflict between the two elements. The previous Planned Commercial designation prohibited zone changes until such time as appropriate design standards could be required and enforced. However, this restriction did not apply to this site since it is presently zoned C-2 (General Commercial). This zone allows commercial development uninhibited by the existing County Land Use Element and in close conformity with the City's element. Existing commercial uses occupy about 50% of the area.

The fifth area with this classification is located at the southwest corner of Avenue 280 and Santa Fe Street. Existing uses are reflected in this designation.

I. Service Commercial/Light Industrial (Reserve)

This designation is shown for two sites, one of which is located on the north side of the area in the northeast corner of State Highway 198 and Road 84 shown as Service Commercial/Light Industrial. This site is vacant, zoned AE, and previously designated as Agricultural. It is unsuitable for agricultural uses because of previous uses (borrow pit). Although the City sees no need for additional Service Commercial/Light Industrial in the immediate future, the Reserve classification is suitable for this site due to its contiguity to such designation.

The second area shown with this classification is located on the north side of Rasmussen Avenue, about 330 feet east of Road 72, and consists of about 19 acres. The County's Land Use Element had previously designated this area as Limited Industrial. Two parcels within this area (one of which is occupied by a light industrial use) are zoned M-1 (Light Industrial); therefore, the new designation reflects existing development trends.

J. Industrial

The City's Industrial category lies entirely in the northwest portion of the Urban Area Boundary, on the north side of Avenue 304. The only unincorporated area included therein is in the northwest corner of Avenue 304 and Road 92. An Industrial designation for

this small site is appropriate because it is bounded on three sides by incorporated areas bearing the same designation, and because of the existing industrial use (fabrication of plumbing components).

K. Industrial (Reserve)

One area adjacent to the previouslydiscussed Industrial area is shown with this designation. It is a 160-acre area at the southwest corner of Avenue 312 and Road 92; it was previously designated as Agricultural and zoned AE. The site is under agricultural uses with thinly-scattered residences. An Industrial Reserve classification is suitable for this site because it is adjacent to incorporated areas designated as Industrial, it is removed from intensive residential development, and would have the effect of squaring off the boundaries of industrial development when it is converted to an Industrial classification.

L. <u>Professional & Administrative Office</u> No unincorporated areas are shown for this category.

M. Professional & Administrative Office (Reserve)

No unincorporated areas are shown for this category.

N. Quasi Public

This description is shown for a proposed cemetery on an 80-acre site immediately north of Green Acres Airport.

O. Airport

This designation is applied to the area around the municipal airport as shown on the City's Element. This designation, in conjunction with Policy III. C., recognizes the City's intent to protect the airport from encroachment of incompatible uses.

P. Parks

This designation is applied to the Sierra View Golf Course, located on the north side of Liberty Avenue and about 1 mile east of Mooney Boulevard, in order to reflect the existing use. The City's Element shows this area as Agricultural.

Q. Institutional - Public Facilities

This category is shown for three sites to reflect existing uses:

- The City sewer plant, located about one mile southwest of the municipal airport.
- The County Civic Center complex, at the northwest corner of Mooney Boulevard and Mineral King Avenue.
- The Division of Forestry Fire Station at the northeast corner of Avenue 288 and Road 140.

R. Schools

One site is shown for this designation to accommodate a proposed school on the north side of Avenue 280, about 1/2-mile east of Mooney Boulevard.

S. Agricultural

All areas not otherwise designated are included in this category.

V. CIRCULATION

The Circulation Element's street classifications are basically the same as those of the City of Visalia's Element. The exceptions are as follows:

- A. Road 144 (McAuliff) is designated as a Collector in view of the traffic originating from the Oak Ranch subdivision area. The City's Element did not designate this road.
- B. Rasmussen Road, between Roads 72 and 76, is designated as a Collector in order to support traffic loads between State Highway 99 on the west and the industrial areas on the east and along Rasmussen Road itself. Further, a proposed Collector is designated between the west end of Rasmussen and Avenue 304.

- C. County Center Drive, between Avenue 280 (Caldwell) and Avenue 264 (Liberty), is designated a Proposed Arterial to facilitate the flow of traffic between Visalia and Tulare.
- D. Road 124 (West Street), between Avenue 280 (Caldwell) and Avenue 264, is designated a Proposed Arterial to facilitate the flow of traffic between Visalia and Tulare.
- E. Avenue 312 (Riggin), easterly from Road 124 to the south bank of the St. Johns River, thence along the River to Road 140, is designated a Collector to facilitate access to future development immediately south of the River.

VI. FLOODING

The Government Code, Section 65302(a),, states that "a land use element shall identify areas which are subject to flooding...". According to the publication "Flood Plain Information - Visalia" (U. S. Army Corps of Engineers; 1972), most of the area within the Visalia Urban Area Boundary is flood-prone to some degree. Areas subject to Intermediate Regional Floods (i.e., floods which occur with an average frequency of once every 100 years) are depicted on a separate map as a part of this amendment.