



A system of open space and trails can link neighborhoods and other destinations.

dictate housing types or unit mixes precisely; they also must be capable of addressing the needs of the community at various stages of the plan's realization and be flexible enough to respond to market conditions.

Development Parameters for New Neighborhoods

The General Plan's development policies provide for flexibility within a general framework for land use, open space, and community facilities. Site planning policies set forth the basic parameters for more detailed master planning and development agreements. These development parameters include the general scale, character and mix of uses, as well as the overall density/intensity of development. The density/intensity ranges specified will support the traffic circulation and infrastructure investments that would be required. Also included is guidance for development of parks and open space systems and integration of creeks and trails into new development. This topic is addressed briefly in this section, and treated with greater detail in the Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element.

These parameters establish the basic character of new neighborhoods in Visalia, addressing street and block patterns, community infrastructure, open space, civic sites and other elements of the "public realm" that set the framework for private development.

With this in mind, objectives for new residential development are to:

- Encourage compact development that is pedestrian in scale and sensitive to the

environmental characteristics of the planning area.

- Allow sufficient density and intensity to enable new development to be self-sufficient, paying for all required infrastructure, community facilities, and open space.
- Ensure an interconnected local street and pedestrian circulation network that serves the needs of pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, and that functionally and physically integrates the various land use activities within the community and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide for a range of housing types and prices within new neighborhoods to ensure that the needs of all economic segments of the community are met and the overall development can support the costs of required infrastructure and allow developers flexibility in meeting housing needs.
- Provide amenities for all residents, with open space, parks, activity centers, and recreational opportunities, including shared use of school lands.
- Provide additional revenues (sales tax, property tax, impact fees, enterprise fees, etc.) that would support all services within the area to be developed and also contribute to the City's General Fund, resulting in a net fiscal benefit for the community at-large.

These six statements establish the ground rules for detailed master planning to be undertaken by the development community following General Plan adoption. To ensure that Visalia attracts high qual-

ity residential development and that desired land use intensities are attained, a minimum overall level of development and target density moving forward (5.3 units per gross acre) is established as a planning concept. Sites for schools, parks, and other special places and community amenities also will be needed. The specific requirements for these elements are presented in the following sections.

Site Planning Policies and Principles

Specific site planning policies and principles are designed to guide physical planning for new neighborhoods.

LAND USE MIX, DENSITY AND INTENSITY

The land use mix envisioned overall for new neighborhoods in Visalia is shown in **Table 2-7**. The ranges indicated—the minimum and maximum levels of development for each type of land use—are intended to allow for flexibility in master planning in response to market conditions, infrastructure costs, and site planning policies. An option for alternative compliance for the residential development land use allocations is also shown. This would allow for some additional flexibility by enabling the goal of a diversified housing mix to be met by a combination of housing types rather than a combination of different residential densities.

STREET GRID AND BLOCK STRUCTURE

The size and pattern of blocks and the planning of streets and pedestrian systems adjacent to roadways is one of the most important aspects of community design. A grid system of blocks and a hierarchy of streets—from parkways, to connector and collector streets, to alleys, that are designed properly—can

truly become an intuitive orientation and navigational device.

Within new neighborhoods, streets and pedestrian systems should be designed to minimize conflicts with the clear goal of pedestrian safety. The generous use of street trees can both define the new community's character and provide a comfortable microclimate for pedestrian movement through the community. Street trees can also mitigate wind, absorb air pollution, and counteract the emission of greenhouse gases. Street trees shade sidewalks, one of the most important public spaces in a residential community, and are necessary in Visalia's climate. The street grid and block structure for Visalia should be designed to create a comfortable environment for fostering both social interaction and movement.

The following site planning principles are intended to guide detailed planning and ensure it is consistent with the overall vision and development framework.

- Create compact development and facilitate connectivity and pedestrian accessibility by limiting block size, with standards such as the following (which may be varied during site plan review, as long as public benefits are provided):
 - *Maximum length:* 500 feet, except for blocks with single-family residential uses that may be up to 600 feet long (750 feet with a mid-block pedestrian connection);
 - *Maximum ratio of block length to width:* 2:1 for blocks with mixed-use development on them; none for single-family only blocks.
- Include a centrally located neighborhood center, school or park within each residential



The Medium and High Density Residential designations allow for a wide variety of housing types and design.

neighborhood that will serve as a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood, and will include neighborhood-serving stores and convenience retail.

- Make all streets and alleys connect to other streets and alleys to form a continuous vehicular and pedestrian network. Local, internal streets should be narrow and designed with traffic calming features to control speed.
- Limit use of dead-end streets, such as cul-de-sacs, to no more than 15 percent of the total length of local residential streets.
- Use street trees for shading, orientation and “place making,” creating a framework for an “urban forest.”

Following General Plan adoption, the City may allow flexibility through a planned development process or master planning for new neighborhoods. At that point, the City will approve proposed details about the location of various land uses, open spaces and linkages. In a planned development, the configuration of land use and local streets need not match precisely the Land Use Diagram in the General Plan, provided that the overall density/intensity targets are met.

Objectives

- LU-O-19** Ensure adequate land area is available for future housing needs, enabling an average citywide gross density of 5.3 dwelling units per acre of new residential development.
- LU-O-20** Allow sufficient density and intensity to enable new development to support all

required infrastructure, community facilities and open space.

- LU-O-21** Preserve and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods while facilitating infill development.
- LU-O-22** Create inclusive, compact neighborhoods with well-integrated single-family and multi-family residential development and activity nodes featuring schools, neighborhood parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.
- LU-O-23** Provide a range of housing types and prices within new neighborhoods to meet the needs of all segments of the community.
- LU-O-24** Enable multifamily developments that are accessible to major transportation and transit routes.
- LU-O-25** Create an open space system that links neighborhoods, complements adjacent land uses, and serves multiple needs.

See also objectives and policies for the open space system in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

Policies

- LU-P-47** Ensure that new neighborhoods meet land use mix standards established in Table 2-7 of the General Plan. The ranges indicated—the minimum and maximum lev-