

**COUNCIL and CITY MANAGER
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
AGENDA
Convention Center
Jan. 25 – 26, 2008**

Jan. 25, 2008

12 Noon

Introductions

Presentations and Discussion:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| -City Budget & Financial Challenges | Eric Frost |
| -Neighborhood Preservation | Ricardo Noguera |
| -Gangs Issue Review & Proposals
Going Forward | Bob Carden |
| -City Planning Issues | Michael Olmos |

Begin Strategic Goal Setting

Jan. 26, 2008

8:00 am

Strategic Goal Setting (cont.)

Council Team Building

Summary
Evaluations
Adjourn

City of Visalia Agenda Item Transmittal

Meeting Date: January 25, 2008

Agenda Item Number (Assigned by City Clerk):

Agenda Item Wording: Visalia's current budget status

Deadline for Action: None

Submitting Department: Administrative Services

Contact Name and Phone Number: Eric Frost, x4474; Gus Aiello, x4423

Department Recommendation: That the City Council receives this report discussing preliminary budget forecasts for the remainder of the FY 07/08 and implications for the FY 08/10 biennial budget and direct the staff to do the following:

1. List potential cost savings alternatives to improve the City's budget picture;
2. Develop limited revenue alternatives in order to maintain the current budget;
3. Reduce expenditures in the development functions in the rest of FY07/08
4. Bring to Council, for its consideration the following items:
 - A potential Pension Obligation Bond offering, to be presented at the City's Feb. 19, 2008 meeting.

A pension obligation bond is a different way of funding the City's PERS obligation. It can be equated to refinancing a home mortgage to a lower rate. If the bond issue were offered at an interest rate of approximately 5.75%, as opposed to the 7.75% currently paid to PERS, it would save the City approximately \$7.6 million (present value) over a 30 year period. This equates to an average annual savings of \$485,000.

- Transportation financing alternatives for advancing Measure R and other road projects;
- A proposal for a Storm Drain rate ballot. Prop. 218 requires that increases in the Storm Drain operating fee be voted upon by property owners. The fee has not been raised since FY 04/05 and the City's ability to adequately handle stormwater has been diminishing.

For action by:

City Council
 Redev. Agency Bd.
 Cap. Impr. Corp.
 VPFA

For placement on which agenda:

Work Session
 Closed Session

Regular Session:

Consent Calendar
 Regular Item
 Public Hearing

Est. Time (Min.): _____

Review:

Dept. Head _____
(Initials & date required)

Finance _____
City Atty _____
(Initials & date required or N/A)

City Mgr _____
(Initials Required)

If report is being re-routed after revisions leave date of initials if no significant change has affected Finance or City Attorney Review.

Summary/background: A number of potential issues face the City which could negatively impact this year's General Fund budget, namely:

- Potential State Budget Take-aways
- Some stagnant local revenues caused by the building slowdown and the general decline in the economy
- Increasing ongoing commitments such as employee contracts, retiree health and other operating costs
- Significant capital projects such as the Oaks Stadium and the SPCA building
- Potential back-up finance commitments for transportation projects which will encumber the General Fund
- Greater demands upon the City's General Fund cash resources as various operations borrow cash from the City's General Fund
- A lessening of the City's historical competitive advantage as other cities' revenues are on par or greater than Visalia's

A couple of positive aspects of the FY 07/08 budget process include:

- A balanced budget
- Property taxes which continue to increase due to the taxes assessment lag
- Projected General Fund expenditures are slightly below budget
- Relatively low levels of debt

As a result of these factors, a good budget this next cycle might be a status quo budget which continues to implement the direction already set by Council. However, new cost initiative should only be adopted to the extent they are offset by new revenues or cost savings else where in the General Fund Budget.

Visalia's fiscal situation. Gus Aiello has attached a General Fund projection for this coming fiscal year. Out of a \$70 million budget, operating expenses are tracking about \$300,000 less than budget while revenues are projected to fall short by an almost equal amount. Both General Fund Sales Taxes and developmental fees, such as building permit revenues, are down compared to budget. This leaves the budget about breakeven going into next year's budget.

If this year's budget leaves the General Fund starting at zero next year, consider the following challenges to Visalia's budget beyond the potential impact from the State:

- **Reduced sales tax.** Sales tax, the major General Fund revenue, is flat for this year. The City's budget assumed a 4% increase, leading to a \$629,000 shortfall in that revenue category.
- **Increasing ongoing commitments** such as employee contracts, retiree health and other operating costs. Employee contracts are scheduled to increase by at least 4 percent this next year. Some other commitments will add costs, making a status quo budget at least 4 percent more expensive next year compared to last year. If revenues are flat next year, the City may be facing a 4 percent gap at the start of the budget year. Remember, 1% of the General fund budget is about \$600,000.

- **Significant capital projects** such as the Oaks Stadium and the SPCA building may grow in scope and cost more money.
- **Potential back-up finance commitments for transportation projects** which will encumber the General Fund. The transportation impact fee fund has consumed all its cash. The City is working to reevaluate the fee. However, if a decision is made to borrow money to continue the development of roads to be eventually repaid by impact fees, lenders will probably require some type of back-up credit, reducing General Fund flexibility.
- **Greater demands upon the City's General Fund cash resources.** To a greater or lesser extent, the City has used the General Fund to advance funds to other funds to eventually be paid back to the General Fund. Funds such as East Visalia Redevelopment Agency and the Valley Oaks Golf Course have had long-term multi-million dollar advances from the General Fund. Although these funds pay interest, the principal amount is not currently available to the General Fund. Further, new advances are putting additional demands upon the City's General Fund such as an advance to the parking fund which will eventually repay the General Fund from parking structure revenues and an advance to the Police Impact Fee fund for Precinct construction which will eventually repay the General Fund from future impact fees.

The use of the General Fund as a bank saves the City interest cost from loans and uncomplicates its borrowing efforts. However, the growing demands on the General Fund coupled with the City's use of monies saved to build capital assets, such as the Sports Park, cannot continue in the near future and will require the City to increase its borrowing from outside sources to fund capital projects.

- **A lessening of the City's historical competitive advantage** as other cities' revenues are on par or greater than Visalia's is a subtle, long-term change. One of the reasons that Visalia has been successful has been its relative financial position. Visalia has been the center of commerce for the Tulare/Kings counties. This has allowed Visalia to receive more than its proportional share of sales tax. That historical trend will probably change as other local communities gain size and begin to gain more of their share of the local sales tax.

In addition, the other communities have developed other revenue sources that Visalia has not, such as larger public safety override sales taxes and utility user taxes. As a result, the historical ability of Visalia to pay somewhat more than other communities is lessening.

All these short and long-term trends point to a more difficult budget year. Now consider the impact the State budget on top of the local issues the City must grapple with.

State Budget. The governor has proposed a state budget for next year. His budget is a proposal, one which is **unlikely to be the final solution**. The Governor's January Budget proposes few cuts which will affect cities and should probably be considered the best that cities can hope for. The adopted budget will probably ask that cities contribute more to the final budget solution.

The Governor has proposed a budget that addresses the fundamental State budget problem: the State spends more money than what it brings in. The Governor's fundamental approach is

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to reduce the size of the State's budget by reducing all discretionary programs by 10%. This difficult approach seeks to balance State revenues with State expenditures. If implemented, the City would suffer the following reductions:

- 10% reduction in booking fee reimbursements, approximately \$20,000.
- Some potential reduction in Citizen's Options for Public Safety (COPS) grants. This program would be decreased by 10% and State may not fund proposed grants from the City.
- Delay in the receipt of various street monies.

The challenge to the state budget is that a 10 percent cut in services is difficult and painful to achieve. Tremendous pressure will build to find other solutions rather than make the hard cuts. As a result, the legislature will probably look for alternatives to implementing the cuts. If that occurs, one potential source is taking local agency's revenues which are limited by Prop 1A, passed in November of 2004.

Michael Coleman, a policy advisor to the League of California Cities has written the following commentary on how the State could take local government revenues since the implementation of Proposition 1A, the Local Revenue Protection Act.

How Much Property Tax Could the State Borrow Under Prop 1A?

I've had lots of questions like this recently.

Proposition 1A (2004), in Section 25.5 (1)(C)(iv) of Article XIII of the State Constitution, that *"A suspension of subparagraph (A) shall not result in a **total ad valorem property tax revenue loss to all local agencies within a county that exceeds 8 percent** of the total amount of ad valorem **property tax revenues that were allocated among all local agencies within that county** for the fiscal year immediately preceding the fiscal year for which subparagraph (A) is suspended."*

Note that this is a cap on the total revenue loss to "all local agencies" within a county, not on each individual agency. "Local agencies" are defined in Proposition 1A as cities, counties and special districts but not redevelopment agencies or schools. So the total the state could borrow is eight percent of the sum of property taxes allocated among the cities, special districts and the county in each county in the prior year.

Although it is not defined in Prop 1A, we believe "property tax revenues that were allocated" includes secured and unsecured, supplemental as well as property tax in lieu of VLF - but probably not property taxes in lieu of the sales taxes under the triple flip (although this is unclear). The intention of the writers of Prop 1A was to set the cap at approximately the level of ERAF III which totaled \$1.3 Billion annually in FY04-05 and FY05-06 including \$350 million per year from cities. The total amount in FY08-09 statewide is over \$2 billion.

But note that Proposition 1A says nothing about how those loans are exacted among those individual agencies. The Legislature could hold the county harmless, borrowing only from cities and special districts. Or it could borrow the entire amount from the county. So a city really can't say its exposure is 8% of its property tax revenue. It could be more and it could be less. It's just too early to say.

And finally, be comforted for now that we have heard of no serious proposal by the administration or legislative leadership to invoke Proposition 1A property tax borrowing. For more information on Proposition 1A see: { HYPERLINK "<http://www.californiacityfinance.com/>" \l "PROP1A" }

Mr. Coleman’s analysis appears well reasoned and provides the City with a couple of yardsticks for assessing potential revenue “borrowings”. If the City were to lose 8% of its General Fund property tax, then the City could expect the following revenue loss as shown in Table I, Potential State Revenue Borrowing.

Table I
Potential State Revenue Borrowing
All Amounts in Millions

2006/07 Property Tax	23.5
Less: Triple Flip Sales Tax Swap	-6.4
Net Property Tax at Risk	17.1
8% potential borrowing	1.4

The problem with this analysis is that if the State pursues a borrowing strategy, they may decide to borrow all the money from local agencies. Since cities represent approximately ½ of all the local agency money, the 8% borrowing could increase to about 16% or almost \$3 million for Visalia.

Last fiscal year, the City spent around \$60 million from the General Fund. Thus, the potential impact of borrowing is somewhere on the order of 2.5% to 5% of the City’s revenues.

It is important to note that currently there is no proposal to borrow any money. However, the difficulty of gaining approval of a state budget with the proposed deep cuts will surely lead to a discussion of potential alternatives to the Governor’s proposed budget.

Other Indicators

Last year, the City developed some fiscal health indicators that rating agencies apply to cities in evaluating their credit worthiness. Finance staff has updated some of these displays for 2007 which are found in attachment #2. The general tenor is that Visalia’s fiscal strength has lessened for understandable reasons as 1) Planned use of reserves to pay for such items as the Sports park, 2) the general economic conditions in the Central Valley have worsened; and, 3) the City has issued more debt such as the Section 108 loan for the Parking Structure and the Mooney Redevelopment Agency. As a result, these indicators further emphasize the need for caution.

Conclusions

In developing next year’s budget, caution and restraint are needed because Visalia must meet its own revenue challenge as well as potentially being subject to State take-aways. As a result, a good budget this year might be to maintain the current service levels. To meet this objective, management recommends that the City Council direct staff to:

1. Develop revenue alternatives in order to maintain the current budget;
2. List potential cost savings alternatives to improve the City’s budget picture; and;
3. Bring to Council, for its consideration the following items:

- A potential Pension Obligation Bond offering, to be presented at the City's Feb. 19, 2008 meeting;
- Transportation financing alternatives for advancing Measure R and other road projects;
- A proposal for a Storm Drain rate ballot. Prop. 218 requires that increases in the Storm Drain operating fee be voted upon by property owners.

In addition, Staff will bring to Council on February 19, 2008 the City's CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Statement) and the City's Mid-year report is schedule for March.

Prior Council/Board Actions:

Committee/Commission Review and Actions:

Alternatives:

Attachments: Attachment #1, General Fund Projection
Attachment #2, General Fund Fiscal Indicators

Recommended Motion (and Alternative Motions if expected):

Environmental Assessment Status

CEQA Review:

NEPA Review:

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Copies of this report have been provided to:

Memorandum

To: Eric Frost, Administrative Services Director
From: Gus Aiello, Finance Manager
Date: January 23, 2008
Re: Status of the General Fund

Visalia's current fiscal situation

Table I - General Fund Current Status, below, currently indicates revenues are projected slightly below budget offset by an almost equal amount in expenditure savings. No adjustment to the budget is recommended until at least the mid-year report.

Table I – General Fund Current Status, details current year budgeted revenues as well as projections by type.

Table I
 General Fund - Current Status
 Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2008
 (in thousands)

REVENUES	Current Budget	Projection	Variance Fav/(Unfav)
Property Taxes	\$ 22,117	\$ 22,747	\$ 630
Sales Taxes	17,313	16,684	(629)
Other Taxes	5,595	6,185	590
Subventions and Grants	3,140	3,755	615
License and Permits:			
Construction Permits	3,525	3,200	(325)
Other Licenses & Permits	50	74	24
Fees and Fines	1,106	1,269	163
Use of Money and Property	2,313	1,461	(852)
Charges for Current Services:			
Zoning Fees	348	284	(64)
Engineering and Subdivision Fees	1,436	1,291	(145)
Special Police and Fire Services	366	414	48
Recreation Programs	792	651	(141)
Other Service Fees	112	113	1
Miscellaneous	332	202	(130)
Total Operating Revenues	58,544	58,329	(215)
Fund Balance for Designated Capital Projects	8,836	146	(8,690)
Prior Year Capital Roll-over	3,600	3,600	-
Total Resources	\$ 70,980	\$ 62,075	\$ (8,905)
EXPENDITURES			
Current:			
General Government	\$ 1,609	\$ 1,529	\$ 80
Community Development	5,420	5,412	8
Public Safety:			
Police	23,708	23,954	(246)
Fire	10,140	10,290	(150)
Public Works	3,765	3,654	111
Parks and Recreation	7,011	6,520	491
Total Operating Expenditures	51,653	51,359	294
Capital Outlay	15,158	6,487	8,671
Transfers Out to Other Funds	4,085	4,085	-
Total Expenditures	70,896	61,931	8,965
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenditures	\$ 84	\$ 144	\$ 60

Revenues

The current revenue exceeds the budget by approximately \$60,000. Some items to note are:

- Property taxes remain strong due to an increase in assessed value.
- Sales taxes are projected to come in lower than budget by \$629,000 based on a slowing economy. The projection is approximately the same as the actual received last fiscal year, however, the budget programmed a 4% increase in revenues for the current year, which is not expected to occur given the current economic conditions.
- Transient occupancy tax and business license tax are anticipated to come in \$500,000 over budget, combined.
- Grant revenues should exceed budget by approximately \$527,000.
- Construction permits are projected to be lower than budget by \$325,000 based on the continued slowing trend in the housing market.
- Interest earnings are anticipated to be \$771,000 lower because interest earning for projects with designated fund balances were incorrectly budgeted in the general fund. These interest earnings are dedicated back to those designations and removed from this analysis.
- Engineering fees are projected to come in lower than budget by \$140,000.

Expenditures

The operations portion is the direct spending within departments. As presented in Table I - General Fund Current Status, total operating expenditures are projected to come in lower than budget by approximately \$294,000. Major items to note include:

- There is a projected over-expenditure in Police of \$246,000. This is due to booking fees of over \$200,000 which were not included in the budget.
- Fire is projecting to exceed its expenditure budget by \$150,000 this is primarily due to overtime from the deployment of a strike team to combat the fires this fall in southern California. The City will be reimbursed for much of this expense in the 2008/09 fiscal year.

Finally, capital expenditures consist of large capital items such as buildings and streets projects, vehicles and other expenditures over \$25,000. The revised budget amount of \$15.1 million includes designated fund capital expenditures of \$8.8 million and prior year capital roll-overs of \$3.5 million, funded from designated Fund Balance.

Fiscal Health

City of Visalia



What do other people say?

- In 2005 S&P gave an “A” rating
 - Which means: **A+, A, A-**: "A" indicates a strong capacity to pay interest and repay principal, although it is somewhat more susceptible to adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than debt in higher rated categories.
 - Based upon:
 - Likelihood of default
 - Nature of and provisions of the obligation.
 - Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy

Why they gave the rating

Rationale

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services assigned its 'A' rating to Visalia, Calif.'s certificates of participation (COPs), reflecting:

- Management policies that support exceptional financial reserves;
- Favorable economic trends in the growing central valley; and
- A moderate debt level that is not expected to increase significantly.

Why would our rating decline?

- Substantial reduction in reserves

Unreserved Fund Balance

2006 - \$37M

2007 - \$25M – \$3.3M decrease due to building of sports park, \$12M due to advances expected to be paid back in fiscal year 2007-08

- Prolonged, unfavorable economic climate

- Credit Crunch
- Housing Market
- Stock Market

- Substantially increased debt load

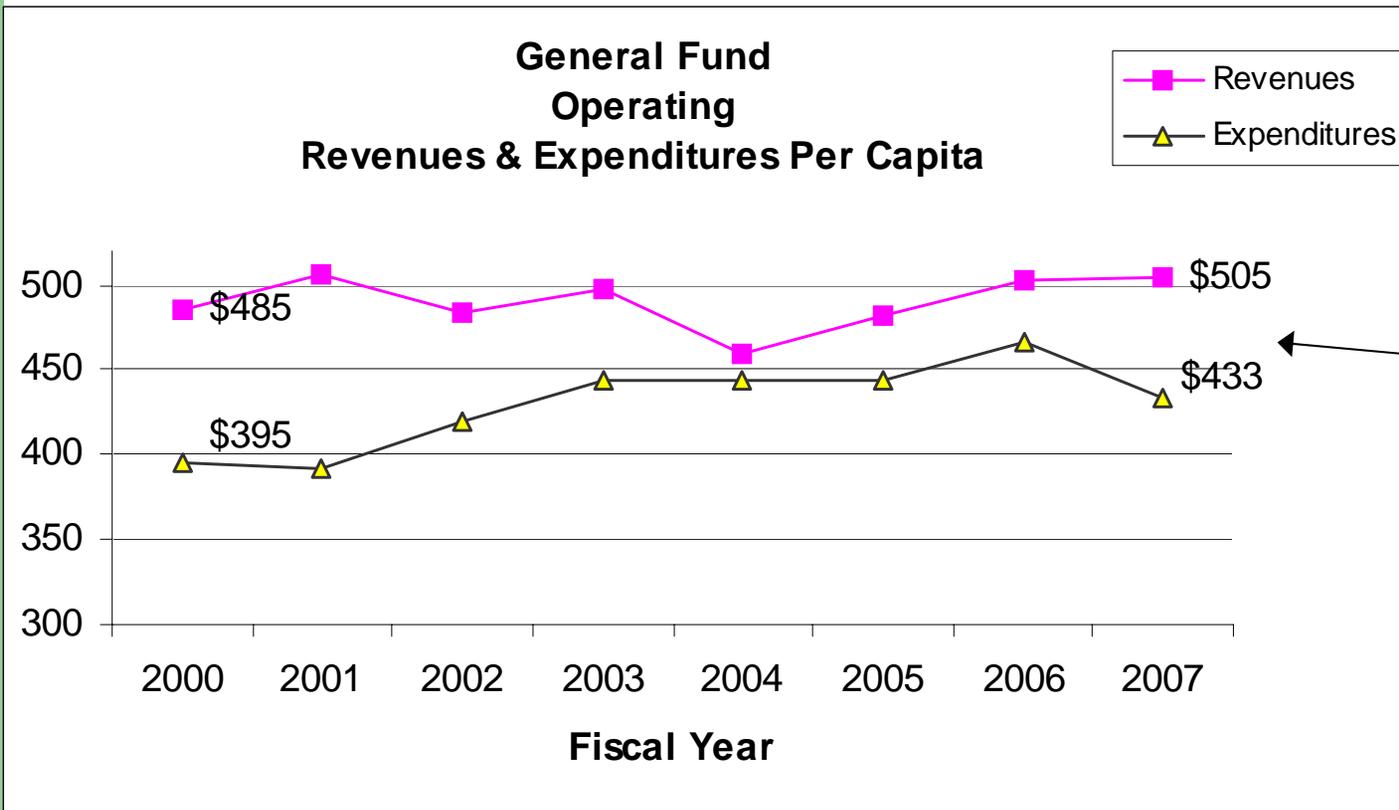
- New Debt
 - RDA- Mooney
 - Section 108
- Potential Debt
 - RDA- Central
 - Pension Obligation Bonds
 - Transportation Bonds
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant Environmental Upgrade

Evaluation of City's economic health

Consider three ways of looking at the City's finances.

1. Immediate ability to pay the bills
2. Debt load – ability to pay
3. Past practice of handling money

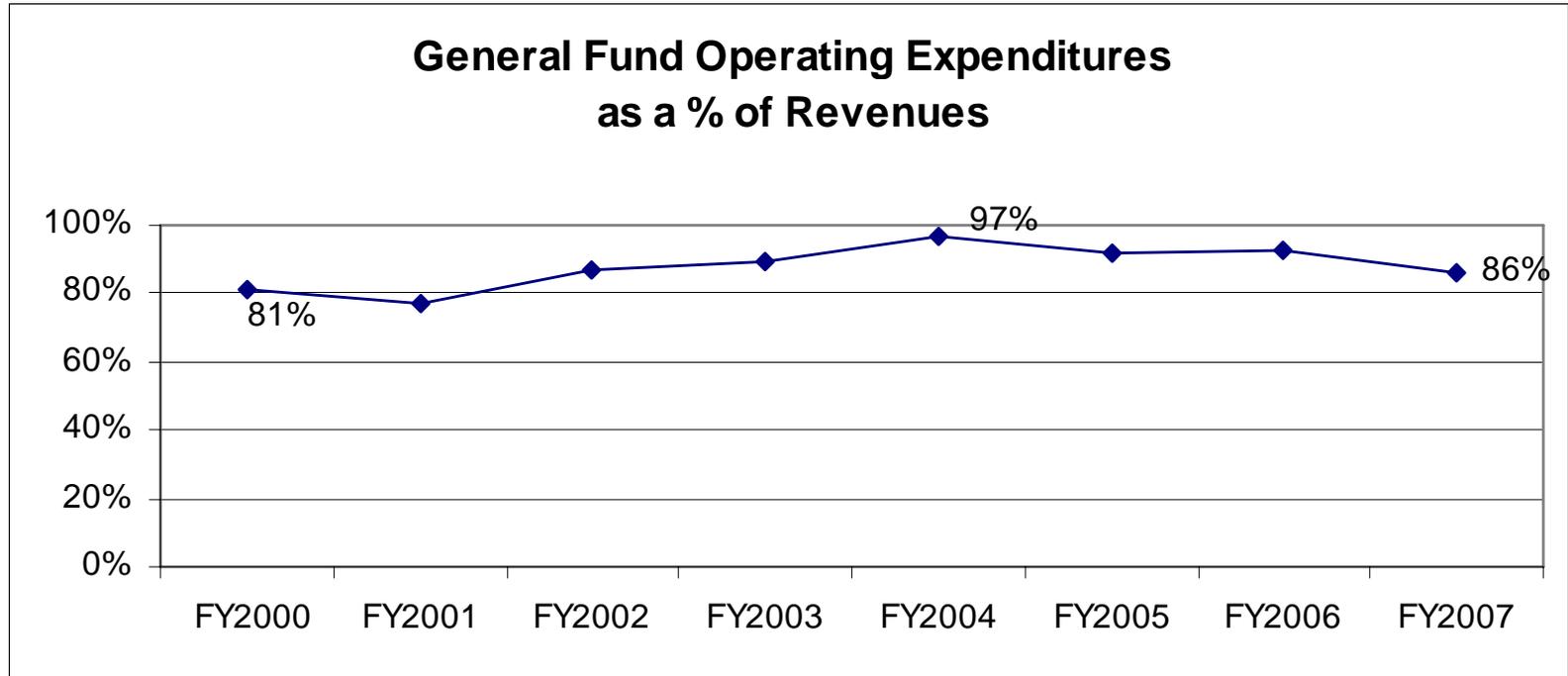
1a. Immediate fiscal health



The wider the gap the better the fiscal health.

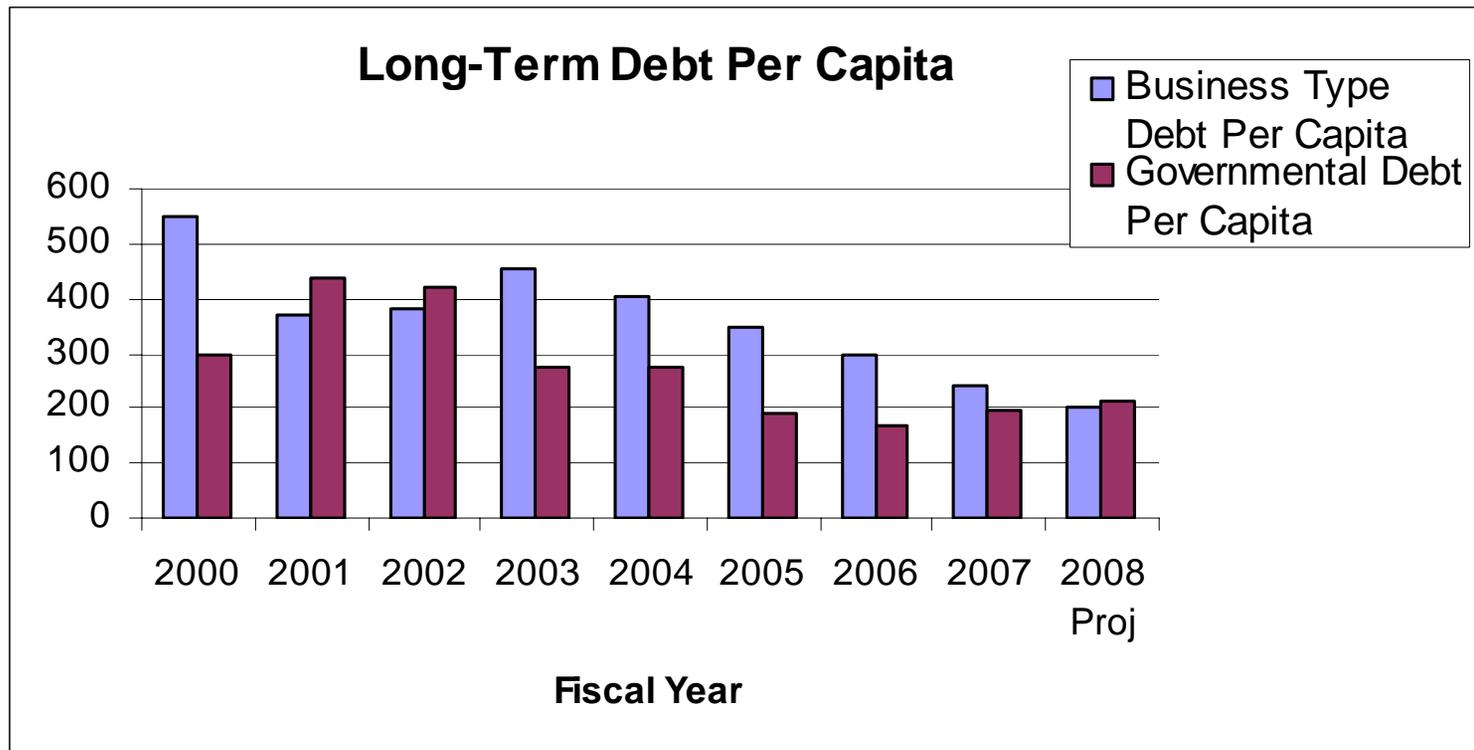
Includes transfers to the convention center.

1b. Substantial monies not committed to operations

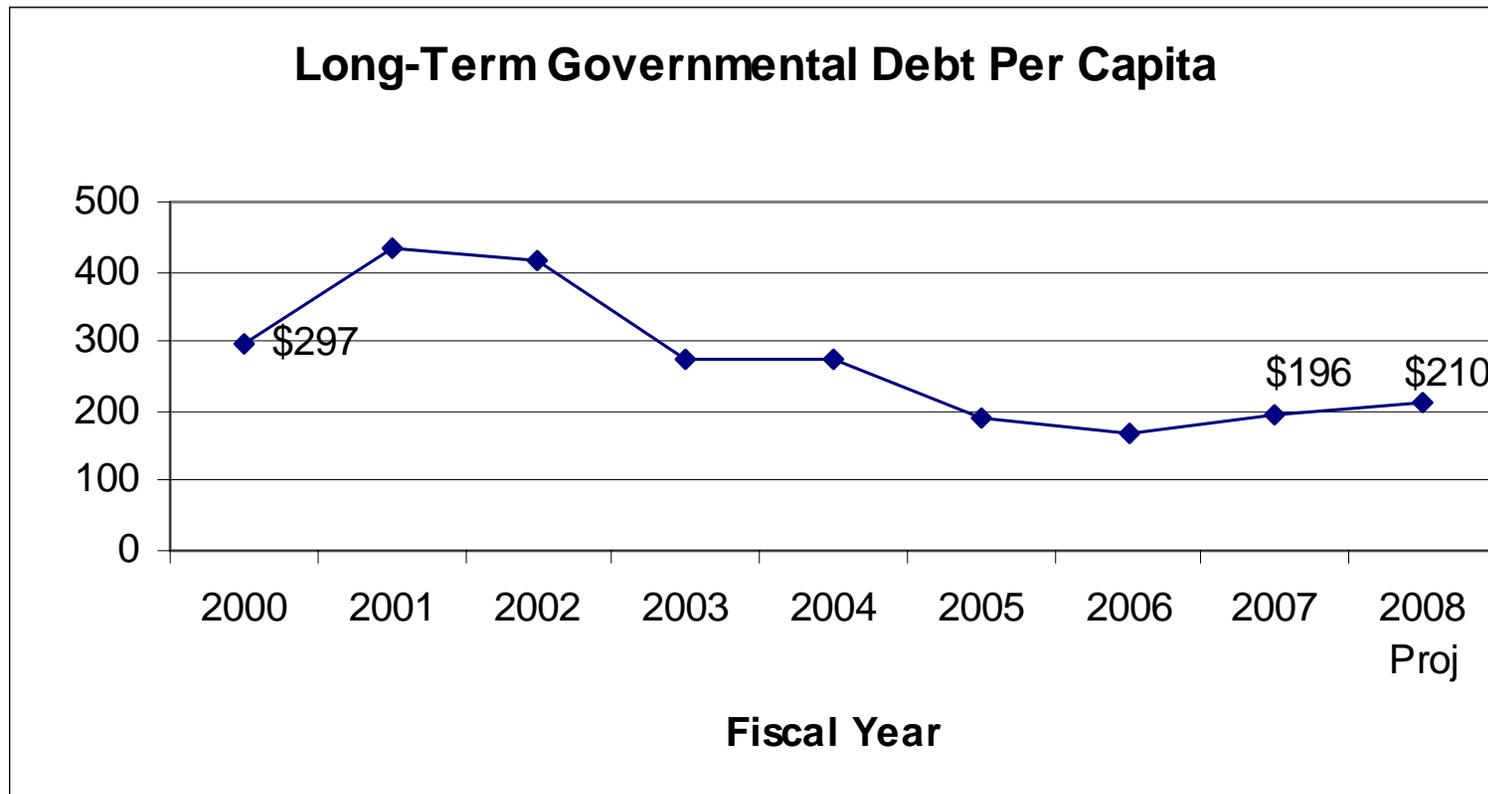


Includes transfers to the convention center.

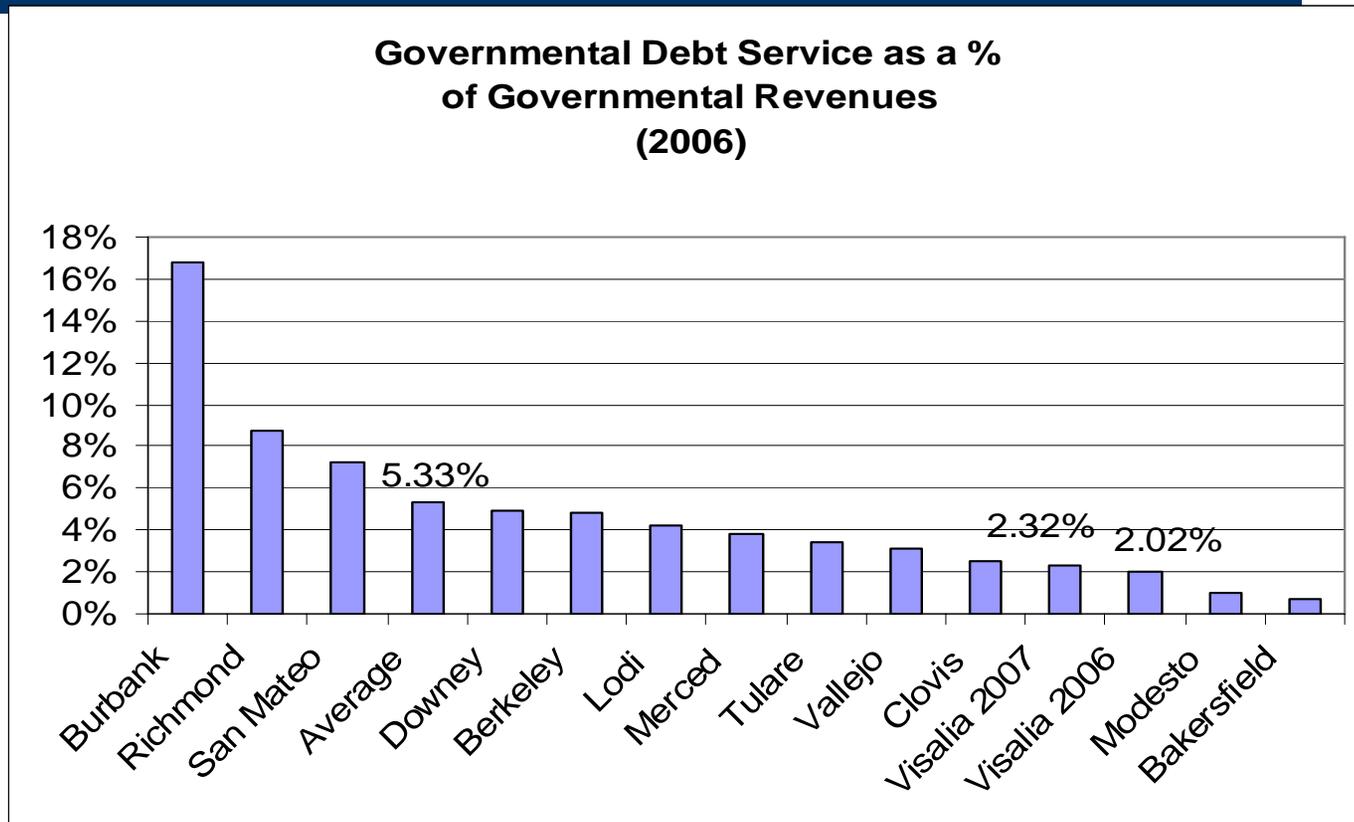
2a. How has the City handled debt?



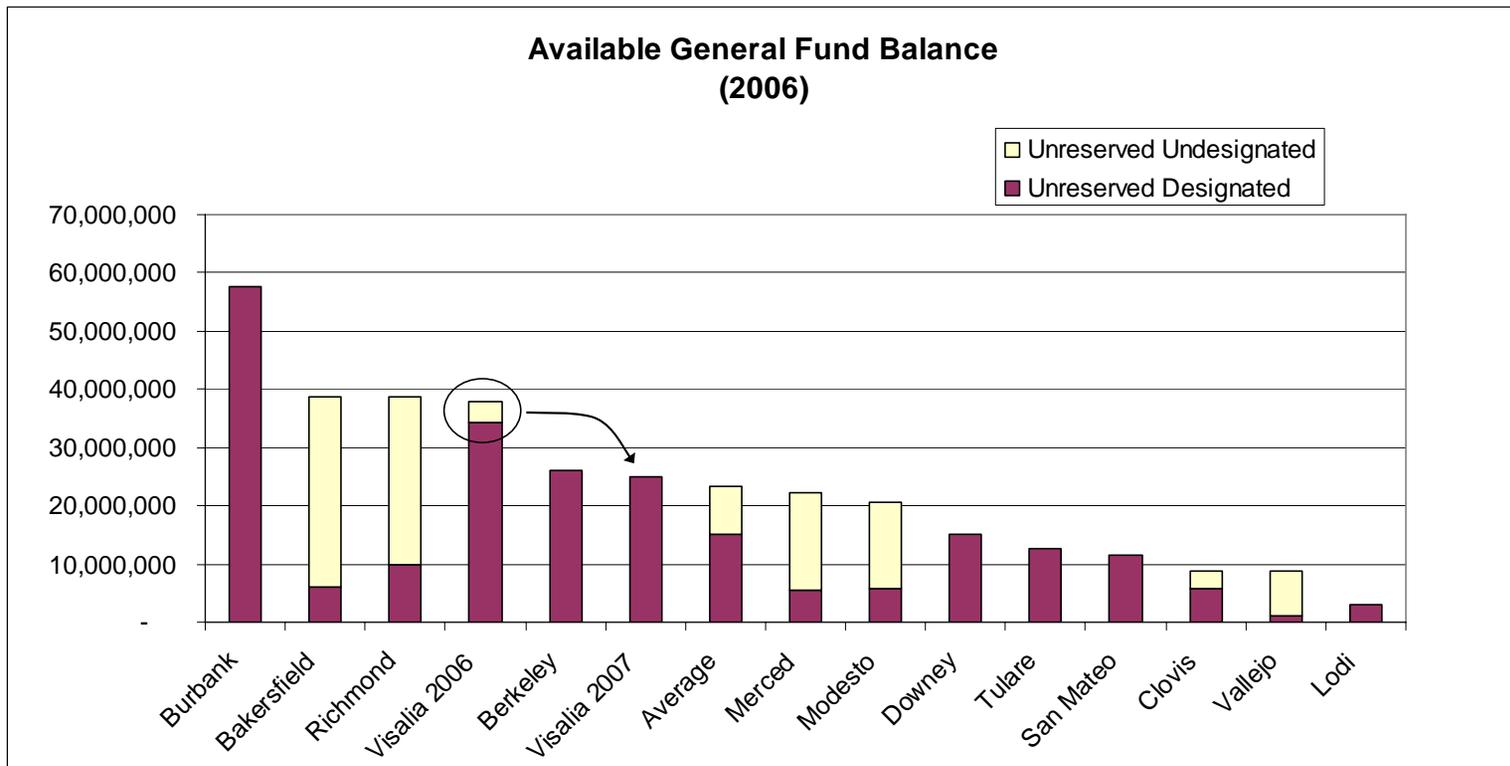
2b. How has the City handled governmental debt?



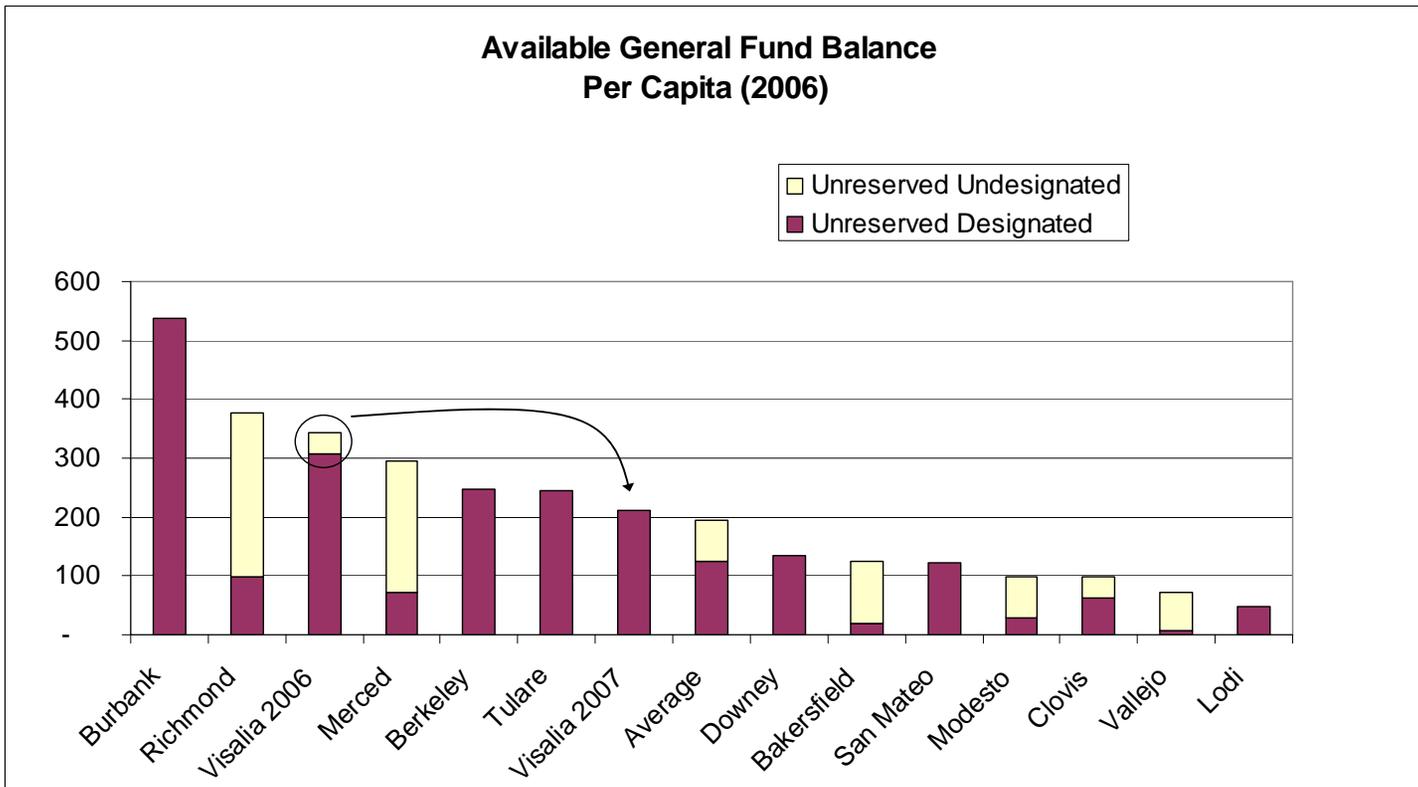
2c. How does Visalia compare to other cities?



3a. How has the City handled its money in the past?



3b. How has the City handled its money in the past?



What did we learn?

- Immediate health is not as good as last year.
- Debt load has declined over time, but has recently increased
- Past practices have helped City have substantial reserves, but reserves will decline as projects are built



Measures to watch (measure #1)

- Operating expenditures as a percentage of operating revenues
 - Visalia high – 97%
 - Visalia 2007 – 86%
 - Visalia low – 81%
 - Recommend no more than 90%
 - Ensure that current revenues pay for current expenses

Measures to watch (measure #2)

- Percentage of Governmental Debt Service compared to revenues
 - Visalia 2006 – 2.0%
 - Visalia 2007 – 2.3%
 - Average of comparison group – 5.3%

Measures to watch (Measure #3)

- Per capita general fund balances
 - Visalia 2006 – \$342, or \$38 million
 - Visalia 2007 – \$211, or \$25 million
 - Average of comparison group – \$194, or \$23 million

Why they gave the rating

Rationale

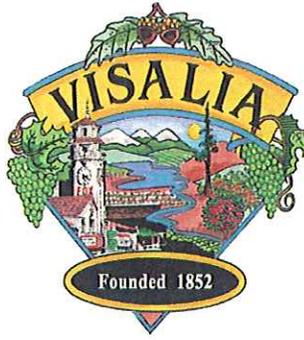
Standard & Poor's Ratings Services assigned its 'A' rating to Visalia, Calif.'s certificates of participation (COPs), reflecting:

- Management policies that support exceptional financial reserves;
- Favorable economic trends in the growing central valley; and
- A moderate debt level that is not expected to increase significantly.

Summary



- Visalia is in good fiscal shape, but the future will prove to be difficult and restraint is needed.
 - Objectives:
 - Governmental Debt Service as % of Revenues - <5.3%
 - Operating Expenditures as % of Operating Revenues - <90.0%
 - Per Capita General Fund Balance - >\$194



2006-2007 Neighborhood Preservation Division Accomplishments and Proposals

Staff Recommendations

To promote and maintain a safe and desirable living environment, to discourage neighborhood decline, and to improve the safety and appearance of the homes and properties in Visalia it is suggested that Council give consideration to the following proposals:

- Residential Rental Inspection Program,
- Historic Home Down payment Assistance Program,
- Effective Property management Educational Seminar.

2006 Accomplishments

The Neighborhood Preservation Division of the Housing and Economic Development Department has been tasked with identifying, assessing and addressing code enforcement challenges within the City. 2006 accomplishments included:

- Transition from a code enforcement program into a Neighborhood Preservation Division.
- Implementation of a monthly Neighborhood Preservation meeting involving representatives from several city departments, divisions, interested agencies and community members. The meeting is regularly attended by representatives from the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Housing and Economic Development Department, Community Development Department, City Attorney's Office, Health and Human Services Department, SPCA, Cal Water, Northern Visalian's Advisory Committee and Washington Residents For A Better Community. All City Manager(s) and Department Heads receive minutes from the monthly meeting.
- Implementation of a weekly meeting involving personnel from the Police Department, Fire Department and Neighborhood Preservation Division to discuss common concerns.
- Adoption of a revised Nuisance and Administrative procedures ordinances.
- Received 844 complaints, investigated and resolved 629 complaints (72%). For the specific nature of complaints received refer to attachment #1.
- Successfully recruited and hired a Code Enforcement Technician.
- Gained compliance with the removal of 120 subdivision development signs.
- Removed 4,811 non permitted portable signs.

2007 Accomplishments

- Received 866 complaints. Investigated and resolved 642 complaints (74%). For the specific nature of complaints received refer to attachment #2.
- Identified and posted 79 residential properties as "Unsafe to Occupy". Identified and declared 30 residential properties as "Public Nuisances".
- Removed 3,427 un-permitted signs.
- Implemented the Administrative Citation and Hearing Program. 270 Administrative citations were issued citywide. 16 of the 270 citations were appealed in 2007. The Administrative citation program has generated \$46,695.00 in fines. To date \$21,695.00 has been received.
- Received a \$135,000 Cal Trans' Environmental Justice Context Sensitive Planning Grant to assess traffic issues in the Oval Park area.
- Recovered \$58,542.00 through cost recovery efforts (2008 revenues recovered to date \$36,639.00)
- Staff will be tax rolling 129 properties for \$93,378.82 for outstanding cost recovery fees due.
- Implemented a "Conditional Use" permit review and inspection program.
- Successfully recruited and hired a bilingual 1,000 hours Code Enforcement Technician for CDBG areas specifically. (Oval and Washington School Neighborhoods included)
- Hosted and attended several meetings with representatives from the Washington Residents For A Better Community and Northern Visalia's Advisory Committee

Tasks

The Neighborhood Preservation Division has been tasked with identifying, assessing and addressing residential challenges in specific neighborhoods. Key challenges include:

- Dilapidated and/or substandard housing
- Ineffectively managed rental properties
- Properties entering into or in foreclosure
- Abandoned properties and vacant lots
- Absentee landlords
- Nuisance properties unnecessarily draining city resources and
- Historic properties not being maintained and/or altered without Historic Preservation Committee review and approval.

2006 Substandard Housing Data

- 844 Code Enforcement complaints were received.
- 234 of the 844 complaints involved substandard housing.
- 137 of the 234 substandard housing complaints involved single family residences
- 96 of the 137 single family residence involved rental properties.
- 44 of the 137 rental properties were absentee property owners.

2007 Substandard Housing Data

- 866 Code Enforcement complaints were received
- 236 of the 866 complaints involved substandard housing
- 151 of the 236 substandard housing complaints involved single family residences

- 105 of the 151 single family residences involved rental properties
- 49 of the 151 rental properties are absentee property owners
- 79 properties were identified and as "Unsafe to Occupy"
- 30 properties were identified and declared "Public Nuisances" residences based on ineffective management practices
- 78 of the 236 substandard housing complaints received in 2007 have been investigated, resolved and closed with no further action necessary.

2008 Pending Housing Enforcement Actions

- There are 682 open Code Enforcement cases from previous years.
- 395 Open cases consist of housing complaints.
- 230/395 Of The Open Cases Involve Rental Properties
- 215/395 Open rental property complaints are for substandard housing
- 109/230 Of The Rental Properties Involve Absentee Property Owners
- 22/395 Of The Open Cases Involve Properties That Are Vacant

Current Substandard Housing Enforcement Practice

The City of Visalia's current practice is to respond to substandard housing complaints on a reactive basis.

The Combination Building Inspector assigned to investigate these complaints currently has approximately 395 open housing complaints. A significant number of these complaints involve single family residences. Frequently cases involve absentee landlords.

When complaints are confirmed the property owner is sent a written correspondence titled Notice and Order detailing the violation and what is required to resolve the violation. Property owners are required to pay code enforcement cost recovery fees of \$158.14 per hour for staff time required to bring the property into compliance. The fee was established through the Zucker Fee Study and report.

As a standard practice staff files a Notice of Pendency (clouding of the title advising potential buyers or refinancees that the property has an enforcement action by the City for substandard condition(s) pending against the property) Action Pending on all identified substandard properties with the Tulare County Records' Office. Releases are only issued when the property condition is brought into compliance and all fees assessed and owed are paid.

Lincoln Oval Park Area Assessment

- In 2006-2007, 241 Code Enforcement complaints were received within ½ mile of the Oval Park. Based on the 2000 census figures, there are 76 vacant lots and abandoned homes in the area representing approximately 16% of all properties.
- Approximately 60% of all properties are occupied by tenants.
- Recently, there have been quite a few transients congregating in the Oval Park.

Actions Taken

- Staff has attended the Northern Visalians' Committee meeting to provide information and discuss committee concerns
- Applied for and received the CalTrans Environmental Justice Context Sensitive Planning grant to address traffic and safety issues around the Oval Park.
- Staff met with Saint Mary's Catholic Church Monsignor Raymond C. Dreiling to discuss the church's concerns in the neighborhood and their desire to develop affordable housing on their property.
- Toured the Oval Park with representatives from the Northern Visalians' Advisory Committee to identify their major concerns.
- Toured the Oval Park with Police personnel to understand what the concerns are in the area.
- Staff has approved a 4,000 square foot commercial development at the northern edge of the Oval Park. The owner/developer has joined the City's Parking In-Lieu District

Next Steps

- Staff will meet with the Northern Visalians' Advisory Committee on February 13, 2008 to discuss the Oval Park.
- A Request For Proposal will be issued to select a traffic consultant to complete a traffic study as part of the CalTrans grant.
- Staff will host community meetings to discuss future plans for the Oval Park and the surrounding area including the use of the Park/Recreation Building on site.
- The City is pursuing acquisition of nearby lots with the use of parking in-lieu fees to develop more parking.

Washington Elementary School Assessment

- In 2006-2007 140 code enforcement complaints were received within ½ mile of the school. Based on the 2000 census figures, there are 93 vacant lots and abandoned homes representing 7% of all properties. .
- Approximately 75% of all properties are rental properties.
- NEIGHBORS HAVE RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT INSUFFICIENT LIGHTING, ILLEGAL DUMPING AND POOR MAINTENANCE OF SOME RENTAL PROPERTIES.

Actions Taken

- Staff has attended meetings with members of The Residents For A Better Community to discuss lighting and other neighborhood concerns.
- Staff met with the Washington Elementary School Principal Mary Kalasian and Randy Groom to identify safety concerns involving the school.
- Staff from Police t, Public Works and Housing and Economic Development Departments have met and toured the area to assess safety concerns.
- The City has re stripped the crosswalks surrounding the school and surveyed Garden Street to possibly add tandem parking for the school facility.
- Public Works staff is in the process of surveying the neighborhood to determine where new streetlamps can be installed on existing poles.
- Fencing has been installed in the alleyway to limit inappropriate use between S. Bride Street and S. Santa Fe Street just south of Noble Ave.

Next Steps

- Meet with Washington Residents For A Better Community on January 28, 2008 to discuss the possibility of establishing a Landscaping and Lighting District, affordable housing activities in the area, a development project sponsored by the Tulare County Housing Authority and code enforcement and police department efforts.
- Follow up with Public Works staff, Washington Elementary School officials and Garden Street residents on the possibility to implement tandem parking on Garden Street.
- Pursue the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of twenty (20) units with the Tulare County Housing Authority.
- Coordinate development of infill housing with the Habitat for Humanity.
- Pursue the establishment of a Landscape and Lighting District if members of the community are interested. If this is not possible then evaluate where 2-3 new streetlamps can be installed within the neighborhood with the use of CDBG funds.
- Southern Cal Edison will install a new light on Myrtle Avenue directly outside the Washington School between Garden and Bridge streets.

The majority of code enforcement complaints received in both neighborhoods involve:

- Lack of property maintenance.
- Lack of effective property management.
- Accessibility to vacant homes and lots.

Residential Rental Inspection Program Proposal

Based on the complaints received emphasis should initially be focused on addressing single family residential rental properties. The long range goal of the program should be to inspect all residential rental units within a 3 year period. Initial emphasis will focus on life safety violations however the long range goal should be total compliance.

The cost for inspection would be borne by the property owners. The program is intended to be self sustaining through the inspection fee and through cost recovery efforts.

Staff recommends that Council give consideration to exempting:

- all new residential construction from inspection during the first 10 years of existence,
- properties owned by or subject to annual inspection by the Tulare County Housing Authority and

In the event that Council is supportive of staff's recommendation to consider implementation of a Residential Rental Inspection Program staff will research the costs associated with implementation and a process for implementation.

Preliminary research of similar programs would suggest that 3 Building Inspectors and 1 Office Assistant would be required to implement such a program.

Historic Homes Down Payment Assistance Program Proposal

Intent

The program is intended to increase home ownership rates in the City's Historic Districts, approximately 650 properties are located in the districts.

Funding Conditions

A maximum of \$50,000.00 may be loaned as a secured second. The buyer must contribute not less than 5% towards the initial down payment. The second shall not exceed the initial down payment contribution from the buyer. An example is:

- \$200,000.00 sale price
- \$20,000.00 down payment from buyer
- \$20,000.00 historic home down payment assistance from city

Funding Source

\$500,000.00 in Central Redevelopment project area funds (both general and low/mod in the event that the applicant meets the requirements) will be set aside as a funding source. If the applicant meets the requirements for the HUD Federal Home Program (Home Investment Partnership Funds) these funds may also be utilized as a funding source.

Terms

The second will be deferred for the first 5 years with a 25 year repayment plan commencing on the 61st month.

Interest Rate

3% fixed

Loan Servicing

AmeriNational

Monitoring

The City will monitor the program participants on an annual basis to insure that the parcel and structures are maintained in a code compliant condition and in accordance with historic guidelines.

Occupancy Requirement

The City shall require proof of owner occupancy annually. The home must remain owner occupied or the interest rate of the note will be accelerated to the current market rate.

Effective Property Management Educational Seminar Proposal

The City of Visalia has a significant number of residential rental properties and absentee landlords. To assist in the enforcement of substandard housing complaints hosting a seminar to address substandard housing complaints and property management issues will assist in clearly defining the rules and regulations necessary for compliance.

While engaged in enforcement actions landlords and property managers frequently advise that if the City had informed them of the problem they would have taken action to resolve the problem. Staffs response has consistently been that the City is not in the property management business and it is the property owner's responsibility to insure that the property is being effectively managed beyond the collection of rent.

The California Landlord Tenants Handbook will be distributed to all attendees to assist them in understanding landlord and tenant rights and requirements.

Staff representing various City Departments, Divisions and allied agencies will be invited to address and respond to the attendee's questions. Participation is anticipated from the following Departments, Divisions and allied agencies:

- Police Department (excessive calls for service)
- Fire Department (fire prevention, inoperable vehicles, junk, trash and debris)
- Housing and Economic Development Department (code enforcement, substandard housing complaint investigation)
- Parks and Recreation Department (graffiti abatement)
- Waste Management Division (trash collection)
- SPCA (animal complaints)
- Environmental Health (infestations)
- Cal Water

In Summation

The goal is to reduce substandard housing through enforcement of a **zero tolerance for substandard housing policy** with aggressive enforcement of existing ordinances and proactive programs.

2006 NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION DIVISION CODE ENFORCEMENT COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATIONS

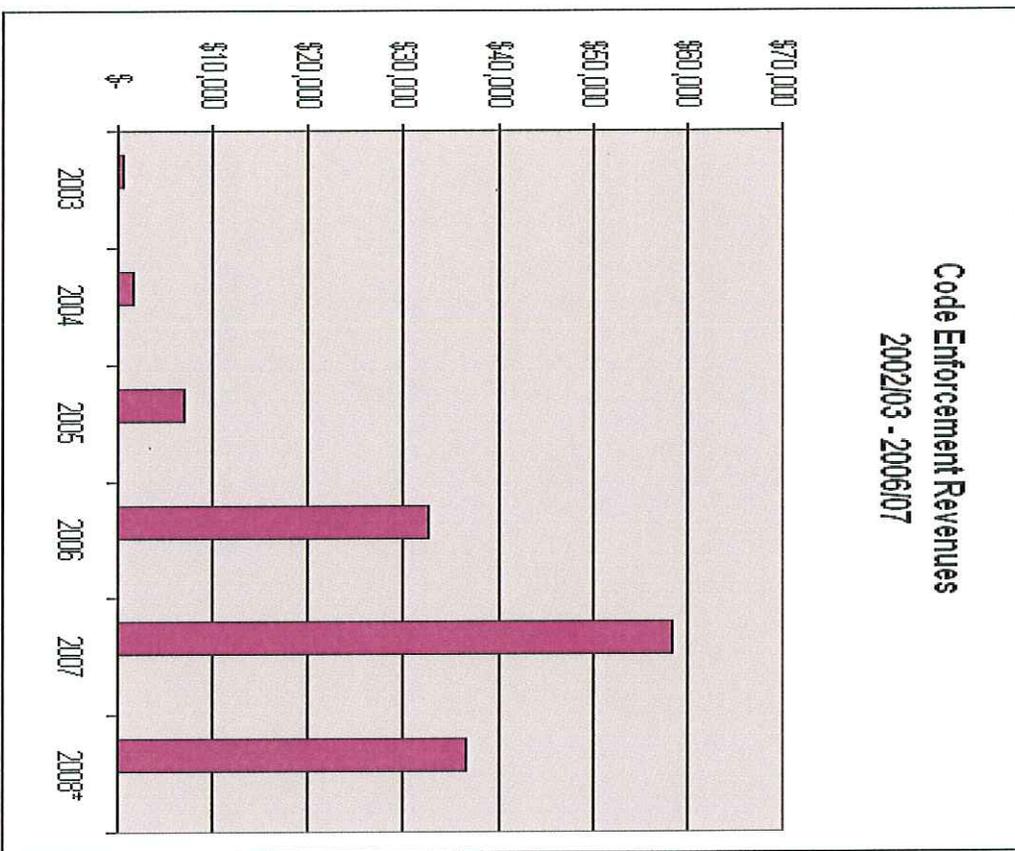
Abandoned Vehicles	23	Non operational vehicles.
Auto Repairs	16	Vehicle repairs done at a residence.
Animals	46	chickens, roosters, goat, dog feces not being cleaned up.
Business in Residence	34	Residential roofing company w/employees. Violation of HOC for plumbing company.
Commercial	31	Merchandise displayed in public parking lot. Raw sewage in business.
Illegal Vendors	0	Illegal Mobile Vendors.
Junk	115	Trash, junk, furniture, appliances, mattress, boxes, etc
Maintenance	16	Fire Hazards, Overgrown weeds and yard.
Marijuana Grow	0	Growing Medical Marijuana at residential location.
Work W/O Permit	113	Construction with no permits.
Signs	28	A-Frame, billboards, banners, door flyers, etc.,
Substandard Housing	231	Electrical, plumbing, roof leaks, vacant houses collapsed roof, no heat, additions w/o permit sewer backed up, broken windows.
Nuisance Properties	32	Drug Activity, Gang Activity; Dangerous properties.
Trailer	25	Living in trailer on property.
Traffic Safety	37	Trees, bushes obstructing street signs, stop signs, traffic lights or view of traffic. Dead tree leaning into street.
Yard Sales	13	Continuous yard sales, over the permitted two per year.
Other	130	Large boat parked on lawn, landscape drainage problem, pool full of green algae water, illegal fence, illegal canopy, radio tower protruding into public right of way.

2007 NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION DIVISION CODE ENFORCEMENT COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATIONS

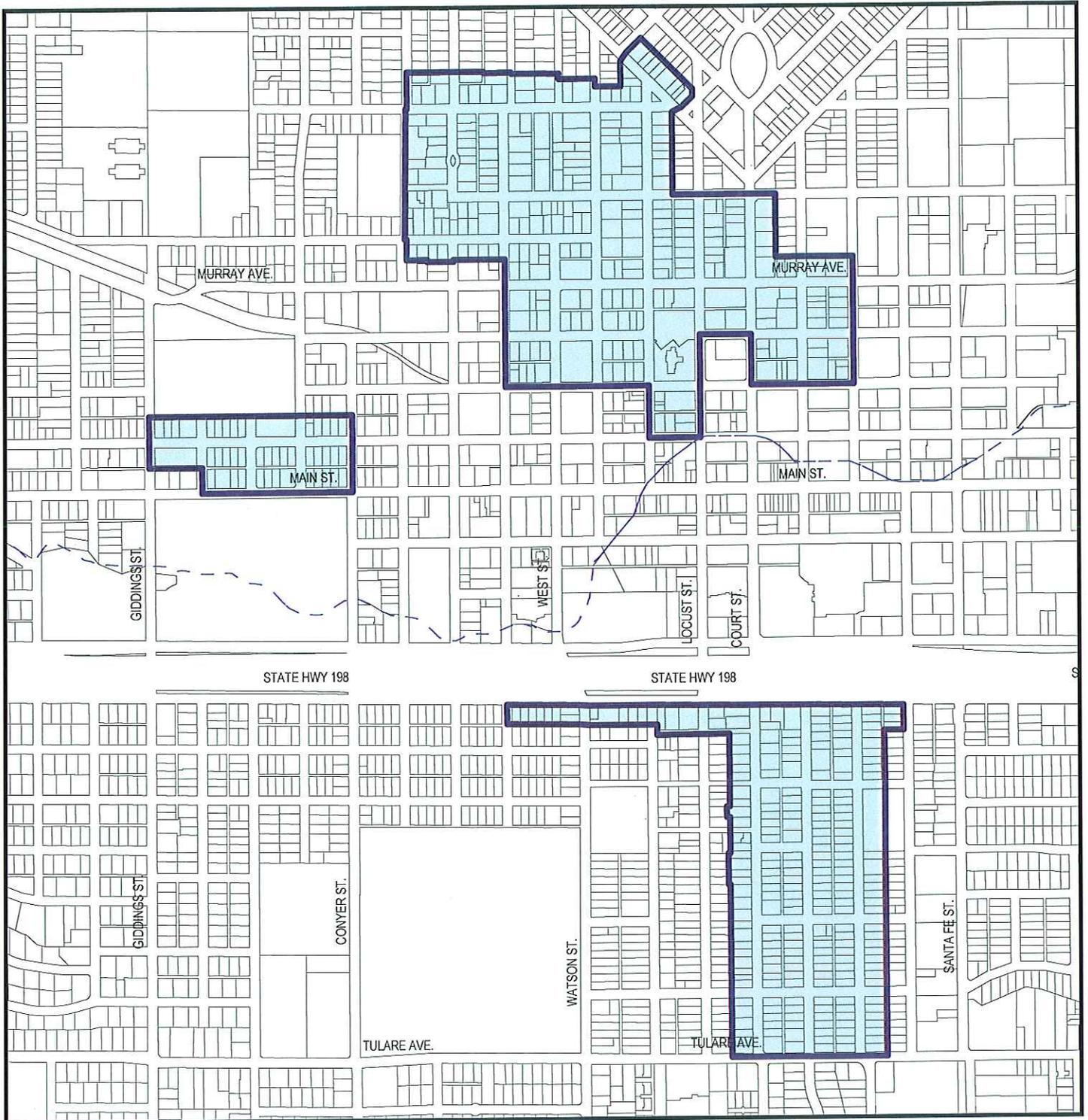
Abandoned Vehicles	30	Non operational vehicles.
Auto Repairs	19	Vehicle repairs done at a residence.
Animals	58	Dog barking continuously, dog breaking fence, chickens, too many dogs.
Business in Residence	36	Business being conducted in residential areas. Large equipment & repair work at all hours. Selling vehicles in residential area.
Commercial	32	Improper location, zoning violations.
Illegal Vendors	1	Illegal Mobile Vendors.
Junk	57	Trash, junk, furniture, appliances, mattress, boxes, etc
Maintenance	17	Fire Hazards, Overgrown weeds and yard.
Marijuana Grow	3	Growing Medical Marijuana at residential location.
Work W/O Permit	109	Construction with no permits.
Signs	15	A-Frame, billboards, banners, door flyers, etc.,
Substandard Housing	236	Electrical, plumbing, roof leaks, vacant houses collapsed roof, no heat, additions w/o permit sewer backed up, broken windows.
Nuisance Properties	36	Drug Activity, Gang Activity; Dangerous properties.
Trailer	26	Living in trailer on property.
Traffic Safety	18	Trees, bushes obstructing street signs, stop signs, traffic lights or view of traffic. Dead tree leaning into street.
Yard Sales	12	Continuous yard sales, over the permitted two per year.
Other	161	Possible inappropriate marking of handicap door, illegal boarding house, tree vandalized, trash containers obstructing sidewalk. A Single family residence split into 4 units. Stagnant green pool, block wall damaged by trash dumpsters, fire damage in kitchen, refrigerator in front lawn.

Code Enforcement Revenues

2002/03-2006/07



City of Visalia



-  CITYLIMITS
-  WATERWAYS
-  PARCELS
-  HISTORIC DIST.



Scale: 1"= 324'

ATTACHMENT # 4



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: January 11, 2008
To: City Council
From: Chief Bob Carden
Subject: Visalia Police Department Gang Suppression & Intervention Efforts

The purpose of this memo is to update the City Council on the Visalia Police Department's gang suppression and intervention efforts accomplished during 2007 and upcoming efforts for 2008. Gangs have continued to be an issue of great concern to this community and to the Visalia Police Department. During this past year, the Police Department has engaged in a practice of continuous evaluation of our response to the gang issue. These evaluations have resulted in redeployments that are intended to use our resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. These evaluations have also resulted in the strengthening of our working relationships with all aspects of the community from faith-based, education, health services, allied law enforcement agencies, and others. The relationships that have been forged along the way are building on our belief that a comprehensive approach of intervention, prevention, and suppression is necessary to break the cycle of gang violence in our community.

During 2007, the number of validated gang members increased from 883 to 928. It is possible that the increase in the number of validated gang members may be the result of increased enforcement and identification efforts. A trend that was noticed in 2006 is that gang members have become savvy to the validation efforts that are required in order to obtain gang enhancements on court convictions that result in stiffer sentences. As a result, validation of gang members has become increasingly challenging as fewer gang members admit their membership outright, requiring more investigation to validate gang members. Efforts have been made since that time to improve our identification efforts.

There were twelve homicides in 2007, six of which were believed to be gang related, an increase of 3 from 2006 levels. The City, however, experienced a 14% decrease in the number of gang-related attempted murders and assault w/ deadly weapon reports in 2007 compared to 2006. There was also a 12% decrease in the number of drive-by shootings.

Visalia Police Department 2007 Gang Efforts

Suppression Efforts

Special Enforcement Bureau / Gang Suppression Unit

Gang violence in 2007 seemed to occur very sporadically during the course of the year, with a majority of the events occurring in early spring (April-May) and during the summer (July-August). A redeployment of resources occurred in order to more effectively and efficiently address the gang issue. As a result of these efforts, the Special Enforcement Bureau was created and the name of the Special Enforcement Unit was changed to the Gang Suppression Unit. The Narcotics Unit was moved from the Support Services Division to the Operations Division and is now also a part of the Special Enforcement Bureau as is the G.R.E.A.T. Officer (Gang Resistance Education And Training) who transferred from the Youth Services Unit to the Special Enforcement Bureau in the Operations Division. These deployments are intended to increase sharing of information and resources that are used to conduct directed and focused enforcement measures on Visalia's gangs.

Increased suppression efforts by the Visalia Police Department's Gang Suppression Unit, with assistance from MAGNET (Multi-Agency Gang Network Enforcement Team), Visalia Police Patrol, and the Tulare County Gang Suppression Task Force resulted in 179 arrests during a five-week period; 99 of those arrests were felony arrests. Efforts by the Gang Suppression Unit in 2007 resulted in a total of 495 gang arrests and the recovery of 56 firearms.

MAGNET

The Visalia Police Department has maintained its commitment of two Gang Suppression Officers to MAGNET, our joint enforcement partnership with the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. MAGNET focuses its enforcement efforts in the greater Visalia area to include Cutler-Orosi, Ivanhoe, Goshen, Linnell Camp. MAGNET is comprised of officers from the Visalia PD, TCSO, Tulare County DA's Office, CHP, State Parole, Tulare County Probation. The partnerships formed between these agencies has resulted in greater sharing of information and a combined multi-agency effort to impact gangs in Tulare County.

Tulare County Gang Task Force

Officers of the VPD Gang Suppression Unit continue to work with and participate in gang details with the Tulare County Gang Task Force, which is facilitated by the Tulare County District Attorney's Office and acts as a rapid response unit to gang issues anywhere in the County.

Intervention & Prevention Efforts

L.O.O.P.

The L.O.O.P. (Local Organization Outreach Program) was implemented in June of this past year and has proven to be a successful venture by providing safe means of transportation from Visalia neighborhoods to Youth Centers throughout the City of Visalia. Total ridership for the L.O.O.P. program since its inception (June – December) was 6,573.

G.R.E.A.T Program

The GREAT Program continues to be taught in Visalia Unified School District elementary schools between grades 2-6. Officer Rob Zieg spends time with students daily discussing the dangers of gang involvement and the importance of making good decisions in their lives. Officer Zieg also conducts classes that are aimed at informing and educating parents and the community about gangs and how to identify gang involvement in youth and intervention methods.

Youth Services Unit

The Visalia Police Department Youth Services Officers work closely with the Visalia Unified School District to address gang issues on school campuses. During the summer months of 2007, Youth Services Officers were assigned to work at the various Community Centers in the City of Visalia where they connected with neighborhood youth and provided a safe environment at the centers. Youth Center representatives reported that having the Officers at their centers during the summer months made a difference in incidents occurring at the centers compared to years past.

Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force

The Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force and the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force (City of Visalia & County of Tulare) partnered together and sponsored the "Step Up" Tulare County Gang Summit on December 6, 2007, at the Visalia Convention Center. The Summit was host to more than 1,400 attendees who heard keynote speakers from local and State authorities and attended break-out sessions designed to inform and engage participants in the aspects of gang intervention, prevention, and suppression. The Gang Summit received very positive marks from the community and has sparked other community efforts to become more involved in the gang issue. A Youth Summit and Faith-Based Seminar are in the planning stages and should contribute to the momentum on gang intervention and prevention.

Members of the Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force applied jointly for State funds from the Cal-GRIP Program in an effort to receive State funding to expand the Neighborhood Youth Counselor Model in the greater Visalia area by adding seven NYC's in order to reach more at-risk youth and connect them to resources available from task force members. The grant application has been submitted and is awaiting review.

P.A.L. Unit

The Visalia Police Department Police Activities League continues to thrive through its leadership programs, sports programs, mentoring, and relationship-building with youth in Visalia and Police volunteers. In the year 2007, P.A.L. served a total of 2,500 kids in various P.A.L. programs such as P.A.L. Boxing, P.A.L. Jr. Giants baseball, P.A.L. Honor Camp, P.A.L. BBQ, P.A.L. Trash a Thon, P.A.L. Easter Egg Hunt, & P.A.L. Christmas party. Currently, the P.A.L. Unit is working to renovate and move into the new P.A.L. building at the old Cal-Trans facility on East Race Street in 2008.

Tulare County Probation

The Gang Suppression Unit is in the process of completing an MOU with the Tulare County Probation Department that would bring a Probation Officer into the Gang Suppression Unit to work closely with our officers. While this certainly provides the Gang Suppression Unit with a valuable resource to target known gang offenders, the goal of this relationship is to increase the

number of quality home visits conducted by probation and gang officers in order to prevent gang activity and seek to intervene with known gang offenders.

Upcoming Prospective Programs & Strategies

While the Visalia Police Department has made strides in a positive direction during the course of 2007, we remain true to our practice of constantly evaluating the effectiveness of our approach and the need to be innovative and proactive against gangs. The following paragraphs highlight some of the programs that are on the horizon in our gang efforts for the upcoming year.

Suppression Strategies

Gang Strategic Plan

The Special Enforcement Bureau is in the process of developing a gang strategic plan that will address the available resources through the Department and other City, County, and State resources to attain maximum impact on Visalia's gang activity. The Special Enforcement Bureau will seek to implement more directed and focused enforcement measures aimed at core gang activities.

Special Enforcement Bureau

The strategy of the Special Enforcement Bureau for 2008 will be to conduct directed and focused enforcement measures and investigations at known gang offenders within the City of Visalia to reduce their ability to impact activity in the city. This strategy will employ narcotics investigations, search warrants, surveillance, warrant details, probation and parole searches, multi-agency cooperation, code enforcement, sector officer involvement, etc., to reduce the effectiveness of gang leadership and known offenders within the city. It is our intent to impact gang violence in Visalia by minimizing the impact of known offenders.

Gang Injunction

The Visalia Police Department Gang Suppression Unit is actively working in conjunction with the Tulare County District Attorney's Office in obtaining a civil gang injunction to target some of the most violent gangs in the City of Visalia. The civil gang injunction will arm the officers of the Visalia Police Department with an effective enforcement tool intended to create a safer environment for intervention and prevention efforts to take root.

Evaluate Code Enforcement Options

The Visalia Police Department is exploring the possibility of developing a unit that would include adding a Code Enforcement Officer to the Special Enforcement Bureau as a resource to address nuisance residences or residential complexes that generate excessive calls for service due to gang activity.

Local Auto Theft Task Force

In conjunction with the California Highway Patrol, the Visalia Police Department intends to participate and support a local agency Auto Theft Task Force.

Intervention & Prevention Strategies

Neighborhood Youth Counselors

The City of Visalia has applied jointly with members of the Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force for State Cal-Grip funding to expand and enhance the neighborhood youth counselor model currently being used at the Visalia Youth Centers. Neighborhood Youth Counselors are reformed gang offenders who mentor and develop relationships with at-risk youth to steer them away from the gang lifestyle.

Gang Watch Program

The Gang Watch program has been created by the Visalia Police Department based on the G.R.E.A.T program. The intention and design of the Gang Watch program is to educate members of the community in recognizing, identifying and reporting gang activity. Members of the Visalia Police Department have been given training and will utilize the information they have received to instruct community members. The program is designed to be taught in small group settings like Neighborhood Watch meetings to allow ample opportunity for questions and open discussion.

Truancy Partnership with VUSD

Visalia Police Department Youth Services Officers will work closely with the Visalia Unified School District to develop a strategy to reduce truancy in an effort to reduce juvenile crime and gang involvement.

Jobs for Youth

Jobs for Youth is a training program designed to help at-risk youth from becoming involved in gang activity. It is a collaborative work experience program involving businesses, youth, education and government agencies for at-risk youth. At-risk youth receive life skills training and work experience while paired with mentors.

Youth & Faith-Based Intervention Options

The Visalia Police Department is supporting efforts to conduct a County-wide Youth Summit targeted to occur in Fall 2008. This is a cooperative effort amongst members of the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force. The Visalia Police Department and the faith-based community are also partnered in developing a faith-based seminar to mobilize resources of the faith-based community to address the issue of gangs.

Tattoo Removal Assistance

The Visalia Police Department is exploring participation of local businesses to offer “tattoo removal” assistance to aid former gang members in their efforts to leave the gang lifestyle.

Family Intervention Task Force

The Visalia Police Department is exploring the possibility of creating a Family Intervention Task Force to identify and assist at-risk families by connecting them to resources available through the Multi-Agency Gang Task Force.

Conclusion

While the Police Department continues to be concerned about the level of gang violence impacting our community, we are encouraged by the progress that was made over the course of this last year on the issue of gangs. Overall crime decreased in the City of Visalia by 17% with an 8% decrease in violent crime and a 19% decrease in property crimes. The Visalia Police Department Gang Suppression Unit logged 534 total arrests, 495 of those being gang arrests and recovered 56 firearms. It is believed that these gang efforts taken during the course of this last year had an impact on those overall crime decreases. This progress was accomplished not only by the Police Department and the City of Visalia, but the community as a whole. The success of the L.O.O.P. Bus program, the growth of youth participating in P.A.L., the attendance of the Gang Summit, the relationships being forged through the gang task forces and with other local agencies, as well as the media attention, are all promising examples that this community is willing to partner with the Visalia Police Department to claim ownership of this program and to “step up” and be involved. It is imperative in this upcoming year that we continue to build on those relationships and remain focused on the goals of intervention, prevention, and suppression. Positive strides in areas of intervention, prevention, and suppression all stress the message of anti-gang, but even more importantly, pro-youth, pro-family, pro-community.

If you have comments or require further information, I am available at your convenience.

BC/cm

Visalia Police Department



City Council Retreat
January 25th – 26th, 2008

Presented by Chief Bob Carden

Overview

- *Active Gangs in Visalia*
- *Gang Demographics*
- *Gang Violence in Visalia*
- *Multi-Agency Efforts*
- *Department Realignment Strategies*
- *Crime in 2007*
- *Prevention & Intervention Strategies*
- *Upcoming Prospective Programs*
- *Questions*

Active Gangs in Visalia

	2007
Total Active Gangs	12
Total Validated Gang Members	928
Female	38
Male	892
Gang Related Arrests	495
Recovered Firearms	56

Gang Demographics

Visalia Gangs:

Norteno	539
Oriental	104
Sureno	202
Crip	31
Prison	6
White Supremacist	46



Gang Violence in Visalia

Offense	2005	2006	2007
Total Homicide / Gang Related	10 / 80%	8 / 38%	12 / 50%
Total ADW / Gang Related	287 / 28.5%	321 / 24%	337 / 20%
Total Shootings at inhabited dwelling / Gang Related	78/ 100%	89 / 100%	78 / 100%

Multi-Agency Efforts

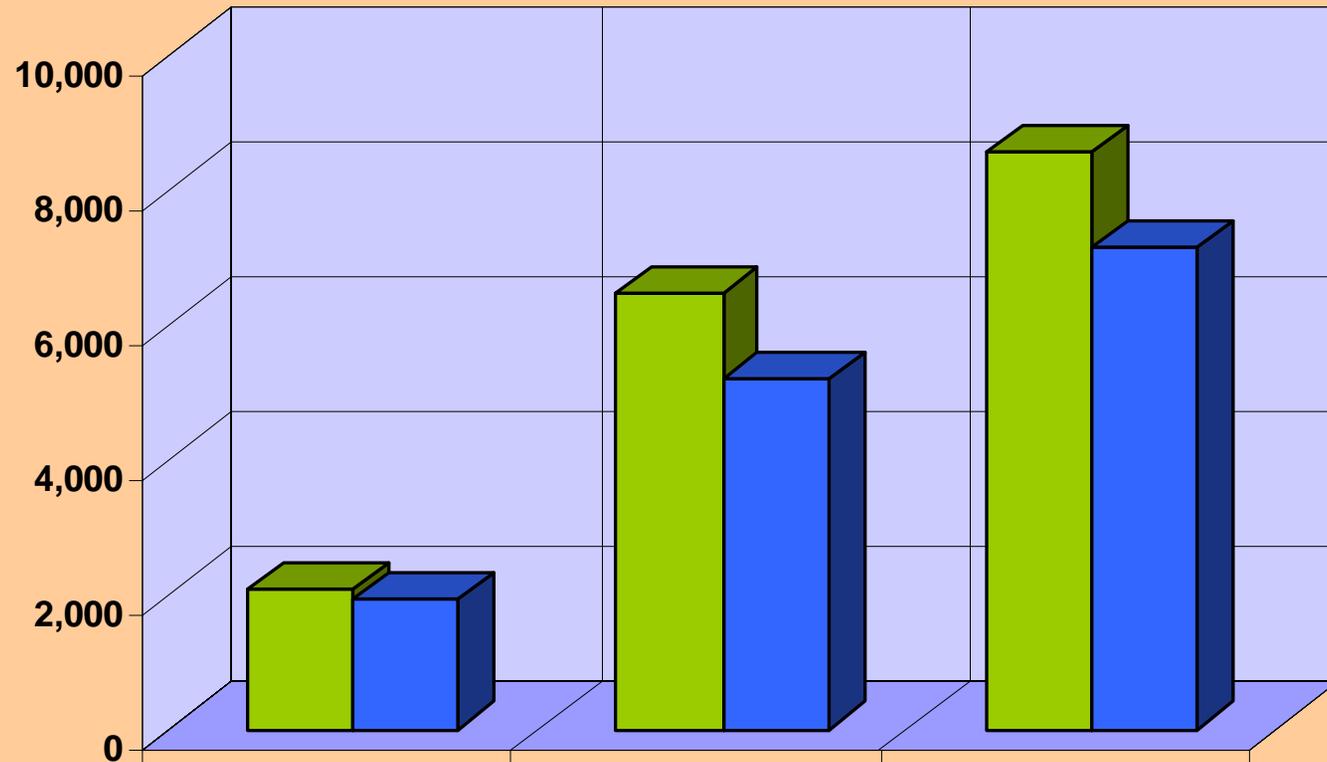
- **M.A.G.N.E.T.**
 - Multi-Agency Gang Network Enforcement Team
 - VPD, TCSO, DA's, Parole, Probation, & CHP
- **Tulare County Gang Task Force**
 - V PD, TCSO, Probation, Parole, CHP, Tulare PD, Woodlake PD, Lindsay PD, Dinuba PD, Farmersville PD, Porterville PD, Exeter PD, DA's Office
- **Tulare Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force**
 - Mayor, VPD, COV Parks & Recreation, TCSO, DA's Office, Probation, VUSD, TCOE, Reaching Youth
- **Tulare County Probation & VPD Partnership**
 - Intense supervision program
- **District Attorney's Office & VPD Partnership**
 - Court Liaison / Case filing program

Department Realignment Strategies

- **Formation of Special Enforcement Bureau (S.E.B.) consisting of:**
 - **Gang Suppression Unit - 9 Officers**
 - **Narcotics Unit - 5 officers**
 - **G.R.E.A.T. Officer (Gang Resistance Education and Training) – 1 officer**

Crime in 2007

Part 1 Crimes



	Violent Crimes	Property Crimes	Overall Crimes
■ 2006	2,093	6,465	8,558
■ 2007	1,926	5,209	7,135
% Difference	- 8%	- 19%	- 17%

Prevention & Intervention Strategies



- **G.R.E.A.T. Program**
- **PAL**
- **L.O.O.P.**
- **Youth Services Officers Presence at Community Centers**
- **Gang Summit 2007**

Upcoming Prospective Programs

- **Gang Strategic Plan**
- **Neighborhood Youth Counselors**
- **Explore Truancy Partnership w/VUSD**
- **Evaluating Code Enforcement Options**
- **Jobs for Youth**
- **Youth & Faith Based Intervention Options**
- **Tattoo Removal Assistance**
- **Family Intervention Task Force**
- **Local Auto Theft Task Force w/CHP**
- **Gang Injunction**
- **Gang Watch**

Questions?

Memo To: City Council
From: Community Development Staff
Subject: Planning Issues

City Council Retreat January 25 & 26, 2008

Recommendation: Following the discussion of planning issues contained in this report, staff recommends Council authorize the following strategies:

1. Prepare a work plan and estimated schedule to prepare a community wide comprehensive General Plan update, including a companion Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
2. Authorize a future work session to consider potential strategies for the West Highway 198 Scenic Corridor.
3. Update Subdivision standards and Engineering Improvement Standards to incorporate contemporary design criteria to better facilitate safe, walkable and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.
4. Prepare a work plan and estimated schedule to amend the 2020 Plan and Municipal Code to incorporate the following items:
 - a. Infill Strategies
 - b. Higher minimum residential densities
 - c. Increase population benchmarks for Visalia Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs)
 - d. Criteria for prioritizing annexation proposals for the 98,700 and 129,000 UDBs

This paper will provide background information regarding several community planning issues. Council discussion on these issues is anticipated and direction is requested regarding a package of long range planning efforts for the coming year.

Status of the Current General Plan– Recommendation No. 1

The General Plan Land Use Element has provided the underpinnings of the City's physical growth and area expansion during the last 17 years. This includes almost 40,000 new residents and development in two UDBs (98,700 and 129,000). The Land Use Element has effectively guided the development patterns and practices typical of the City's current era.

However, as has been identified in previous development policy forums and as outlined in the preceding sections of this report, the Land Use Element is gradually becoming outdated, creating certain limitations in its ability to comprehensively address the individually complex and interrelated policy issues that may be desired in the coming years. Additionally, the other General Plan Elements (please see Exhibit A), which by state law must be compatible and consistent with the Land Use Element and with each other, are also in need of

substantial updates to satisfy state planning law requirements related to General Plans.

- The Safety Element (1975) does not take Measure T into account, and it will require an update to incorporate new flood hazard information required by AB162.
- The Housing Element adopted in late 2005, is on a state mandated track for revision by 2009.
- State mandated air quality updates must be incorporated into the Land Use Element and other elements by June 30, 2010.
- Based on current General Plan framework, the City can consider moving into the 165,000 UDB in the next few years, based on meeting development criteria in the current 2020 Plan for the 129,000 UDB and population growth (current population is estimated at 120,000). The 165,000 UDB expansion area is shown as Urban Reserve and is currently unplanned.
- Planning efforts in various parts of the City (Southeast Specific Plan Area, East Downtown, Medical District) should be woven together by a community wide comprehensive update.
- Consideration of contemporary planning principles emerging from the Smart Growth Task Force.

Perhaps an even more critical deficiency is the dated nature of the General Plan Program EIR as a viable CEQA tool. Adopted in 1991 with the 2020 Plan, the analyses pertaining to many of the environmental categories such as air and water quality impacts, habitat and protected species identification and mitigation, historic preservation, and agricultural land preservation are largely out of date. This is because new state and federal legislation, jurisdictional agencies' rules, and in some cases the City itself, have created new standards and protocols that are not reflected in the General Plan EIR, including mitigation measures and statements of overriding considerations.

The potential risk of producing flawed environmental documents based on outdated information and conclusions in the current GP EIR have recently caused several developers to prepare their own environmental documents for the City's acceptance and adoption. The City itself is increasingly facing these same risks in processing public projects such as infrastructure improvements, park and trail construction projects, affordable housing partnerships, and a variety of grant applications that require CEQA review.

Updating the General Plan Program EIR in conjunction with a comprehensive General Plan update is the best approach for achieving the City's long-range vision for growth and development in an environmentally defensible manner. The substantial costs and efforts involved in a comprehensive General Plan update and Program EIR are warranted in light of the complexity of the policy issues and the environmental compliance challenges facing the City now and in

the coming years. Upon direction from the City Council, staff will begin preparing a work program for the Council's consideration. The work program will include estimated timelines and costs based on current industry standards and practices tailored to the City's unique circumstances and requirements.

A community wide comprehensive General Plan update will take approximately three to five years to complete given the extensive community outreach normally desired by Council and the EIR process. The estimated cost to prepare the update is \$1,000,000 however the true cost will be determined during the Request for Proposal process.

West Highway 198 Scenic Corridor – Recommendation No. 2

The West 198 corridor has been the subject of several planning efforts spanning many years. While numerous ideas have emerged over the years, no planning strategy has gained significant traction. Potential strategies that have been considered include establishing an open space setback area for Highway 198, clustered development concepts, and an enterprise zone. While the area remains controversial, given ongoing community interest in developing a permanent scenic corridor plan and land owner interest in development opportunities, it is worthwhile to again seek a planning strategy for the area. Council could take a fresh look at the corridor to consider a planning effort to merge the various interests. Given the complexity and long history on this issue, it should be discussed as a separate item. Staff recommends that a work session be set within 90 days to discuss potential strategies for West Highway 198.

Design Standards – Recommendation No. 3

Design standards for subdivisions and other developments are contained primarily in the Subdivision Ordinance and Engineering Improvement Standards. These standards should be updated periodically to reflect advancements in subdivision and infrastructure design principles. Design standards for residential subdivisions were updated several years ago to reduce local street widths, widen sidewalks, create street parkways and incorporate tree-scapes. However, standards can also be improved regarding storm water basin design, permeable concrete parking areas, street connectivity and other areas. This update can be conducted over a period of 6 months to a year given that considerable information on design issues has been developed based on recent local planning efforts.

Amend Current 2020 Plan and Municipal Code – Recommendation No. 4

Infill Strategies – Recommendation No. 4-a

As Visalia expands outward through annexation and development of edge lands, there is the question of whether the community is effectively infilling areas that

have been by-passed by development. There are a variety of vacant and under-utilized residentially zoned properties within the existing City limits. These properties range in size from under a ½ acre to over 20 acres. In June of 2007 staff estimated there are approximately 503 acres of vacant or under-utilized residential property within the City limits. This was done by examining the City aerial photos dated February 2006. Underutilized parcels consist of parcels which have existing development on them (for example, a farm house on a large parcel in the R-1-6 zone), with the greater balance of the parcel being vacant.

While it is unavoidable to have some undeveloped properties within the City, the key policy questions include: 1) How much is too much? 2) How can under-utilized properties be encouraged to develop to their highest density potential?

Strategies for achieving effective infill include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The City should adopt a definition of “Infill Parcels”, as prescribed in Land Use Element Policy No. 4.1.18. To date, no formal criteria for classifying “infill” properties exists in the General Plan. This determination and criteria is needed to categorize infill areas and for implementation of incentives for development.
2. The City could initiate a Zoning Ordinance text amendment to permit the use of 5,000 square foot lots on designated R-1-6 infill parcels, including development standards, as prescribed in Land Use Element Policy No. 4.1.18.
3. The City could streamline incorporation of smaller lots and mixed densities in new single-family subdivisions.
4. Consider creating a process for a Master CUP for small Infill PUD’s, to streamline the process for eligible developments, and to establish a uniform set of standards for mixed/higher densities.
5. Pursue completion and development of Specific Plans such as the Southeast Area Specific Plan and other “master plans” that include higher density residential development.
6. Encourage the development of higher density mixed-use through a Form Based Code in selected areas of the community.
7. Develop a fee waiver for the processing of active tentative maps wherein the map is processed with a 10 percent minimum increase in density over the adopted tentative map.

These individual policy proposals also simultaneously relate to the General Plan Goals cited at the beginning of this report.

Higher Minimum Residential Densities – Recommendation No. 4-b

Council previously indicated their consensus to consider raising the range of units per acre (density) for the residential categories in the General Plan (citywide), which would increase the minimum number of units per acre required

for subdivisions and parcel maps to at least the mid-range density for that land use designation. For example, the R-1-6 zone comprises approximately 85% of the residentially designated property in the City with a density range of two (2) to seven (7) units per acre. Raising the minimum to five (5) units per acre would result in a modest density increase for new subdivisions. The current estimated average density for subdivisions is 4 units per acre.

Annexations and UDB Expansion – Recommendation No. 4-c&d

As of January 1, 2008, the amount of undeveloped and non-annexed land within the:

- 98,700 UDB totals 1,667 acres, or approximately 6.8% of the 24,504 acres (38.29 sq. miles) that are within the 98,700 UDB line.
- 129,000 UDB (including the 98,700 UDB) totals 4,407 acres, or approximately 15.4% of the 28,441 acres (44.44 sq. miles) that are within the 129,000 UDB line.

In calendar years 2006 and 2007, the City completed four property owner-initiated annexations totaling 732 acres, which includes the 483-acre Vargas Annexation. As of January 1, 2008, there are seven owner-initiated annexation applications on file with the City totaling 827.2 acres, for which no scheduled public hearing before the City Council has been set, due to application incompleteness or unresolved policy issues.

At the June 11, 2007, Joint Work session, the City Council considered strategies recommended by staff to increase development densities and to extend the life of the 129,000 UDB, thus promoting more compact infill development, and delaying expansion into the agriculture lands beyond the 129,000 UDB. There was support for the following strategies:

- Develop criteria to prioritize Annexations inside the 98,700 and 129,000 UDBs. Staff recommends scheduling a future work session to bring back options for the prioritization of residential annexations.
- Increase population benchmarks for the 129,000 and 165,000 UDBs by 10% to 141,900 and 181,500 respectively.

Regarding the other planning concepts, staff requests Council affirmation for amending the 2020 Plan to incorporate the other planning strategies listed above. If Council supports these strategies, staff will prepare a work program to amend the 2020 Plan and will target a one to two year timeframe to complete the work.

Exhibit "A"
List of General Plan Elements and Adoption Dates

	<u>Date of Last Update</u>	<u>Previous Updates</u>
Land Use	1991	1963, 1976
Land Use Element EIR - 1990		
Circulation	2001	1976, 1989
Circulation Element EIR - 2000		
Conservation, Open Space, Recreation & Parks	1989	1974, 1981
Housing	2005	1984, 1993
Noise	1995	1975
Safety	1975	
Seismic Safety	1975	
Urban Boundaries	1975	
(Consolidated into Land Use Element, 1990)		
Historic Preservation	1979	
Scenic Highways	1976	

Other Reference Documents

	<u>Date Adopted</u>
Zoning Ordinance	1993 (updated 2007)
Subdivision Ordinance	1996 (updated 2004)
Engineering Improvement Standards	2004

SINGLE-FAMILY LOTS

2835 # of Lots on Un-recorded Tentative Maps
2756 # of Lots without Issued Building Permits on Recorded Final Maps
5591 # of Approved Lots that are Vacant

MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING UNITS

608 # of Units on Un-recorded Tentative Maps
216 # of Units without Issued Building Permits on Recorded Final Maps
824 # of Approved Units that are Vacant