

# Steering Committee Meeting #1 Summary

February 7, 2013, 6:00-8:00 PM | Woodland City Council Chambers, 300 1<sup>st</sup> Street

## MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Review the project and planning process
- Define committee roles and responsibilities
- Brainstorm issues and vision for the future of Woodland

The Meeting Agenda is included in Appendix A, and Steering Committee members present in Appendix B.

## MEETING SUMMARY

### 1. Call to Order

Cindy Norris (City of Woodland) welcomed participants and asked Committee members to introduce themselves and their affiliation, as appropriate.

### 2. Project Purpose and Process

Rajeev Bhatia and Sophie Martin (Dyett & Bhatia) provided an overview of the project, explaining the General Plan process, the current need for a plan update, and the key project components (General Plan, Housing Element, EIR, and CAP).

### 3. Committee Role and Responsibilities

Rajeev Bhatia (Dyett & Bhatia) explained the role of the Steering Committee to provide leadership and input in the planning process. He described that decision making during meetings will be conducted through a consensus process, wherein the group will agree on recommendations collectively. He defined ground rules for discussions, which included listening, respecting others' opinions, and allowing everyone a chance to speak. If members would like to share information, they were asked to provide documents or comments to Cindy Norris at least one week in advance of a meeting.

### 4. Key Issues Brainstorming

**Steering Committee members were asked to provide their ideas on the overall vision, economic development, and land use/physical development for Woodland.** Rajeev Bhatia asked the committee members initially to participate in a visioning exercise in which they were given 5

minutes to answer the question: “What is your vision of Woodland in 2035”. Each member was then asked to read their response. Focused discussion then followed on Economic Development and Land Use. The three questions posed to the group are as follows:

*Overall Vision:* What are the major challenges and opportunities for Woodland? What is your long-term (2035) vision for Woodland, and how does that differ from the condition of the City today? What aspects of Woodland do you value and want to preserve?

*Economic Development:* What are your thoughts and ideas on economic development priorities? What long-term strategies you would like the General Plan to explore?

*Land Use and Physical Development:* What are the most important considerations relating to the city’s physical development? (Possible topics include Downtown, commercial/industrial revitalization, important corridors, neighborhood preservation, infill, community design, parking and traffic, historic preservation, greenfield development)

These ideas have been synthesized into subcategories below:

## **A Overall Vision Summary**

### **Key Components**

- **Preserve and Enhance Woodland’s Agricultural Heritage.** Surrounding agricultural uses are an integral component of the community’s economy and job base and in the region as a whole. The Steering Committee members generally agreed that Woodland’s agricultural heritage and historical character should be preserved. Linkages between economic development and agriculture—such as building on the emergence of the seed industry in Woodland—should be further explored. What is Woodland’s niche in the regional agricultural economy?
- **Promote Downtown Revitalization.** Committee members widely agreed that that a revitalized downtown is a key to enhancing the community’s identity. Downtown lacks uses or amenities to draw residents or visitors. Committee members believed Woodland residents’ quality of life could be improved through implementing strategic mixed-use development developments, new restaurants and housing—especially as community members age and look for more walkable environments. *See more on specific downtown strategies later, under Land Use and Physical Development.*
- **Expand Multimodal Transportation Opportunities.** Many Committee members expressed enthusiasm for improving pedestrian and bicycle movement. Improvements could include providing better lighting, signage, bike paths, and additional bike racks downtown, as well as new bike paths. Members noted that offering alternative transportation options would also enhance accessibility and better integrate downtown with the rest of the city.

### **Other Components**

- **Refocus on Education.** Committee members would like to improve the quality of education at public schools; however, they are wary of the limitations of the City to control

or influence the school district's strengths, weaknesses, and available funding. With better schools, Woodland would have a higher-educated workforce which would broaden the range of job opportunities for workers of all ages, incomes, and educational backgrounds. It was noted that the quality of the school district can be an economic incentive as Woodland looks to attract new "higher paying" industry.

- **Preserve and Enhance Safety.** Committee members take pride in Woodland's general sense of safety, although some areas are increasingly prone to crime and gang activity. Crime and safety concerns were raised, although several members noted that residents feel comfortable walking around their neighborhoods at night. This aspect of the city should be preserved and is a desirable goal to enhance.
- **Promote Greater Housing Diversity.** While overall there are ample housing opportunities in the community, committee members expressed some concerns about housing. Some were dissatisfied with the housing stock diversity and upkeep in the historical downtown district. In the future, they would like to see the city continue to promote a greater balance of housing types, including more affordable, multi-family, and a range of single family types citywide.
- **Promote Sustainable Development.** Several members voiced support for establishing flexible land use policies that promote smart growth, infill development, and responsible urban sprawl. These members were also concerned about preserving the city's mature tree canopies and reducing future air, water, or noise pollution from Woodland's industrial sites.
- **Preserve Neighborhood Character.** Multiple Committee members envisioned changes that would support the development of vibrant, individual neighborhoods that engage community members with public events, block parties, arts and culture fairs, and other local attractions. Several members also mentioned that they were drawn to Woodland because of its historical neighborhoods; more could be done to preserve their character.

## **B Economic Development**

- **Economic Development Happens When There is Good Quality of Life.** This theme was mentioned by several members. Good schools, perception of safety, available amenities, and recreation options and youth activities were mentioned as key factors. Further, first impressions and image were raised as important and that keeping streets clean and well kept, creating welcoming and attractive entries are important.
- **Capitalize on Key Assets.** Committee members listed proximity to the I-5 freeway, Hwy 113 and UCD as key elements, as well as the city's regional proximity to great soil and its educated population. Historic downtown is a key asset, yet the members noted that when visitors get off the freeway, they may not realize that there is a downtown.
- **Preserve and Promote Agriculture.** Committee members agreed on the importance of preserving the community's agricultural heritage and land while exploring the potential to capitalize on agricultural tourism. "Agriculture is the economic engine that drives Woodland." Current agricultural use within the city itself is limited, but the abundance of soil, students/young workforce, and local amenities can attract large agriculture companies. One member noted that other local communities with a similar economic and agricultural

background, such as the town of Winters and West Sacramento, have brought regional buyers through showcasing local producers or the Port. The desire is to discover the niche in the agricultural base economy that Woodland can serve to benefit the entire region. Is it manufacturing and supply?

- **Support and Grow Jobs and Businesses.** Woodland’s projected population growth and its proximity to the Interstate 5 off-ramp can attract future businesses. Committee members hope to attract diverse job, shops, and services that residents of all ages and backgrounds could enjoy. A few Committee members believed that marketing the current success of local businesses and improving supportive amenities will bring more large companies to the area. How does Woodland develop the conditions users need in order to “plug and play”?

### **C Land Use and Physical Development**

- **Revitalize Downtown.** Committee members agree that Downtown should be revitalized and rebranded as a regional destination. Committee members envision a downtown that attracts new regional markets but also supports existing “mom and pop” shops. The revitalized downtown should have ample recreation, entertaining, dining, gathering, and lodging opportunities both at the core and periphery. It should host a variety of open space, residential, commercial, and retail uses that serve a wider array of clientele and are better integrated with the rest of the town. To achieve these goals and to make downtown a more attractive place to live and work, improvements need to be made to pedestrian alleyways, commercial loading areas, stoplight timing, non-automobile accessibility, business tax structures, and the housing supply. Specific comments were offered about the need to have attractive public open space in downtown to encourage people watching and “hanging out”. The existing plaza could be more inviting.
- Building on a cohesive “theme” (such as what Winters has for agricultural tourism), improving signage for visitors, and a downtown “square” or open space were some other ideas advanced. It was noted that the downtown would benefit from an organizational structure to allow property owners the ability to both police and promote themselves, and that a tax may be necessary for owners to afford the things they want to do.
- **Redevelop Opportunity Sites.** One Committee member noted that the relocation of the Rail and the Yolo County fairgrounds leaves the area below Interstate 5 an economically viable site for development. The site’s convenient location next to the highway off-ramp is currently underutilized and could be better serviced through signage, entry gateways, and marketing.
- **Promote Historic Preservation.** Woodland’s historic buildings help define the community character. Several Committee members agreed that architectural design standards and new city policies should be put in place to ensure that new development complements Woodland’s historic center and unique history.
- **Freeway Uses.** It was noted that freeway uses may not be incompatible with downtown—that we want people to come off the freeway, but that there should be more information provided to inform people about the downtown.
- **Increase Accessibility.** One Committee member noted that all new development and redevelopment should be wheelchair accessible.

- Enhance Industrial Areas.** One Committee member suggested that Woodland’s industrial areas should be more accessible via public transportation. This was noted as being particularly important for those in low-paying jobs, because industrial areas can be secluded and difficult to access by biking or walking. The member also noted that flooding is a big concern for these areas and flood controls should be addressed in the future.

The following table transcribes ideas noted during the meeting. The check marks in the left hand column indicate the number of participants that shared similar ideas.

**Table: Steering Committee Meeting Ideas**

<b>“What is your Vision of Woodland in 2035” Overall Vision</b>	
	Population 75,000
✓✓✓✓	Surroundings: Ag; Ag Heritage
✓✓✓✓	Downtown revitalized
	Flood control
	State theater revitalized
✓	Sustainable/smart growth /environmentally responsible
✓✓✓✓	Walkable/multimodal, remove barriers, more transit options
✓	Economically diverse
✓	Mixed Use downtown
✓✓	Architectural standards for historic buildings; Strong design guidelines for commercial and residential
	Vibrant neighborhoods
✓	Engaged community, events
✓✓✓	Business friendly environment, Promote development/growth
✓	Integrate downtown better with rest of city
✓	Balance of uses and residential (mf and sf)
✓✓	City of trees
✓	Environmentally sustainable/responsible Clean attractive downtown
	Fiscally sound
✓	Strong agricultural industry ADA accessible
✓✓✓	Quality schools/ schools district involved
✓	Maintain streets, clean, free of weeds and trash Well educated workforce
✓✓✓	Safety, gang problems gone
✓✓✓	Mix of housing types
✓	Sustainable growth/infill New development complements historic center Quality of Life (QOL) overall

**Table: Steering Committee Meeting Ideas**

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	Reduce noise
	Distinct, stand-alone city
	Limited freeway development
	Urban Limit Line protect Ag land
✓	Diverse
	Arts/culture
✓	Job opportunities/economic development
	Capitalize on economic clusters
	Rail line relocated off east
	Fairgrounds relocated/ redeveloped
	Bring city together around downtown, cohesive
✓	Youth empowered–legacy opportunity
✓	Create a destination, pride of place, where others want to come live and visit
✓	Promote history
✓	Jobs/housing balance (both live and work in town)

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**Economic Development**

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Limited agriculture in the city, but still an important economic engine

- Integrate strategy with region

What’s attractive to these agriculture companies?

- Soil
- Students/workforce
- Amenities/housing/schools

How to benefit from them

Economic development happens when you provide QOL

Winters has taken advantage of this well

- Showcase small, local producers

Downtown: Additional housing beyond historic homes

- Hotels/boutique lodging
- Draw regional visitors there
- Reinforce walkable neighborhoods

County has three sectors on which to build

- West Sacramento Ag Port
- Winters agriculture tourism
- Woodland: industrial space underutilized, processors, services
  - Complement each other and promote a sector for Woodland
  - Transparent infrastructure
  - A.B. 32 Important

Large operations buy from local providers

Housing schools, other amenities need to match the jobs we want

**Table: Steering Committee Meeting Ideas**

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Schools: need to keep it in perspective, recognize strengths/weaknesses, funding

First impressions matter!

- Image issue
- Entrance/gateways
- Signage, marketing, branding

Home-based business support

- Meeting space
  - Live/work
  - Hi-speed internet/other services
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**Land Use/Physical Development - Downtown**

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Bikeable: racks, signage, lights

- Less auto-dominated

Improve alley utilization (cat/dog)

Light timing

Trucks/business loading/deliveries

Tension between capturing regional money versus supporting downtown businesses?

- Downtown needs a unique position

Market for housing

- What's there is not new, cool
- Need money to improve stock
- Illustrate potential

Downtown needs to create a benefit district, tax itself to do what it wants

Needs a place to just hang out. E.g., plaza

- Elm/Main idea?

Need to improve west side, too

- Periphery can host building users and improve image, too
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**Land Use/ Physical Development - Opportunity Sites/Corridors**

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Want people to get off freeway then draw them downtown

Need to create a destination

Design guidelines

Restaurants: we say we want them, but need to support them

Hotel

Entertainment/recreation

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**Industrial Area**

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Improve transportation access (beyond cars)

Flooding issues: big problem

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**Table: Steering Committee Meeting Ideas**

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**Final Thoughts**

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I-5: Underutilized Sites

Tomato processing facility future?

- Area has potential to connect to downtown
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**5. Upcoming Outreach Activities**

- A. *Citywide mail-in survey.* A mailer regarding community preferences will be issued to all city residences in March.
- B. *Community Visioning Workshops.* Steering Committee members were asked to contact their networks to publicize the upcoming visioning workshops on April 3 and 6, 2011 at the Woodland City Council Chambers, 300 1<sup>st</sup> Street (exact times to be determined).

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

## **Appendix A: Meeting Agenda**

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## A G E N D A

**Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting  
City of Woodland General Plan Update**

February 7, 2013, 6-8 pm

Woodland City Council Chambers, 300 1<sup>st</sup> Street**1. Call to Order (6:00 – 6:15 pm)**

- Welcome
- Committee Member and Project Team Introductions

**2. Project Purpose and Process (6:15 – 6:30 pm)**

- General Plan Basics
- Why Update Now?
- Key Components (Plan, Housing Element, EIR, CAP)

**3. Committee Role and Responsibilities (6:30 – 6:40 pm)**

- Steering Committee Role
- Project Timeline and Approximate Meeting Dates

**4. Key Issues Brainstorming (6:40 – 7:45 pm)**

- *Overall Vision:* What are the major challenges and opportunities for Woodland? What is your long-term (2035) vision for Woodland, and how does that differ from the condition of the City today? What aspects of Woodland do you value and want to preserve?
- *Economic Development:* What are your thoughts and ideas on economic development priorities? What long-term strategies you would like the General Plan to explore?
- *Land Use and Physical Development:* What are the most important considerations relating to the city's physical development? (Possible topics include Downtown, commercial/industrial revitalization, important corridors, neighborhood preservation, infill, community design, parking and traffic, historic preservation, greenfield development)

**5. Upcoming Outreach Activities (7:45 – 7:55 pm)**

- Citywide Mail-in Survey
- Visioning Workshops

**6. Adjournment (8:00 pm)**

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## Appendix B: Steering Committee Participants

The Steering Committee Meeting attendees included:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Al Eby	Downtown Business Owner
Chris Dreita	Downtown Business Owner
Chris Holt	Planning Commission
Christine Casey	Water Utility Advisory Commission Historic Preservation Commission
Debra LaVoi (Ronda DeAnda-Vannucci)	Woodland School District
Don Sharp	REMAX Woodland Real Estate
Enrique Fernandez	Parks and Recreation Commission
Kathy Trott	-
Kay Hohenwerter	Community Member
Lisa Baker	Yolo County Housing Authority
Mark Engstrom	Engstrom Properties
Mel Losoya	Retired
Michael Brady	Attorney, Brady + Vinding
Roger Kohlmeier	Woodland Healthcare Foundation
Terry Basset	Erik Reitz Yolo County Transportation District

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