

1

Introduction

In order to develop and maintain a vibrant and inviting Downtown, the City of Woodland looked to develop a Downtown Specific Plan that met the following goals:

- Develop a plan that is based on community input,
- Develop a plan that has a clear vision for where the Downtown should be in the future, and
- Develop a plan that is action-oriented to ensure the desired results.

With these goals in mind, the Downtown Specific Plan was created.

Guiding the development of the Specific Plan is a series of vision statements and guiding principles. The following section gives an overview of the future envisioned for the Downtown, with more specific vision statements for the different areas/districts that make up the Downtown provided in Chapter 3, "Land Use and Development." The guiding principles used to reach the envisioned future are discussed later in this chapter in Section 1.6, "Guiding Principles."



1.1 VISION

To better describe the vision for Downtown Woodland, the remainder of this section is written as a description of the Downtown area as seen 20 years from today. The developments and ideas described in this section illustrate a potential future that can be realized by implementing this Specific Plan.

The vision guiding this Specific Plan is that of a vibrant Downtown area where visitors, shoppers, and business people stroll on attractive sidewalks shaded by trees, canopies, and tasteful awnings that reflect the historic nature of the area. Along the sidewalks are benches that encourage people to stop to talk or rest along the way.

Shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities abound in Downtown. Scattered along the entire length of Main Street are a number of restaurants open throughout the day. These restaurants serve those looking for a quick lunch, a full dinner, or late-night fare to satisfy patrons enjoying the entertainment venues offered by the Downtown. Along the sidewalks, colorful umbrellas signal the presence of outdoor cafes.

At the center of Woodland's Nationally Registered Historic Downtown, the Opera House continues to be a focal point for theater in the region. Adding to the attraction of this area is an expanded Heritage Plaza with new seating areas, a shade structure to protect patrons from the



afternoon sun, a platform for outdoor entertainment, and a new water feature. To the east of this area is two blocks of new development replacing the auto dealership that moved to the City's new auto mall. This develop includes a range of small retail uses and a cinema complex offering first-run movies. The cinema complex faces onto a plaza bordered by a new food court. A new public parking structure built in this area serves the entertainment uses at night and the nearby employment centers during the day.

Throughout the Downtown, rehabilitation of historic buildings continues, and new plaques on their facades identify their heritage to interested passersby. For buildings with upper floors, rehabilitation programs have allowed for some to return to full use with offices and housing units using the upper floors and specialty retail and restaurants occupying the ground floor. Other buildings are looking to renovate. A few of the larger Victorian homes in the area have found new uses as office conversions or as bed and breakfast lodgings.

At both ends of the Downtown, new gateway features signal entry into a unique part of Woodland. The primary gateways at both ends of Main Street consist of structures arching over the street with enhanced paving across the street. The entries are also denoted by rows of tall columnar trees. Secondary gateways at Court Street, Lincoln Avenue, Oak Street, and Cross Street include enhanced paving and entry signage.

The two ends of Downtown on Main Street have seen some of the largest changes in land use. On the west end, the expected relocation of the automobile

dealers out of the Downtown left a large area of available space. This has been filled with new mixed-use developments that combine ground floor retail uses with upper floor residential units. These mixed-use developments provide sales tax revenues to the community and provide patrons for the Downtown as well.

The east end of the Downtown has a range of new uses. The north side of Main Street provides a continuation of the old Rice Mill (located north of Court Street) design, carrying the agricultural heritage reflected in this design directly onto Main Street. The north side of Main Street

features an expansion of Freeman Park that provided a more prominent civic feature in the area. The south side of Main Street includes several mixed-use buildings with some ground floor retail and restaurant uses.

South of Main Street between Fifth and East Streets has had substantial change. A new Police Station, business park, and new and rehabilitated housing on the south end provided a needed boost to the area.

The changes in the Downtown have created a vibrant and interesting centerpiece to the City. The Downtown remains a reflection of the heritage of the community while reflecting the community's future. It is an area that draws people together to celebrate the quality of life that brought them to Woodland.

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.
— Joel Arthur Barker

1.2 BACKGROUND

This document is an update of the Woodland Downtown Specific Plan that was adopted by the City Council in August 1993. The update follows the guidance provided by the Woodland General Plan (adopted in 1996), and is consistent with the direction and policy provided by the General Plan. This plan was also developed concurrently with the City's General Plan Update, which is expected to be adopted at the end of 2002. In addition, it complements the goals of the adjacent East Street Specific Plan.

This update was undertaken by the City to address:

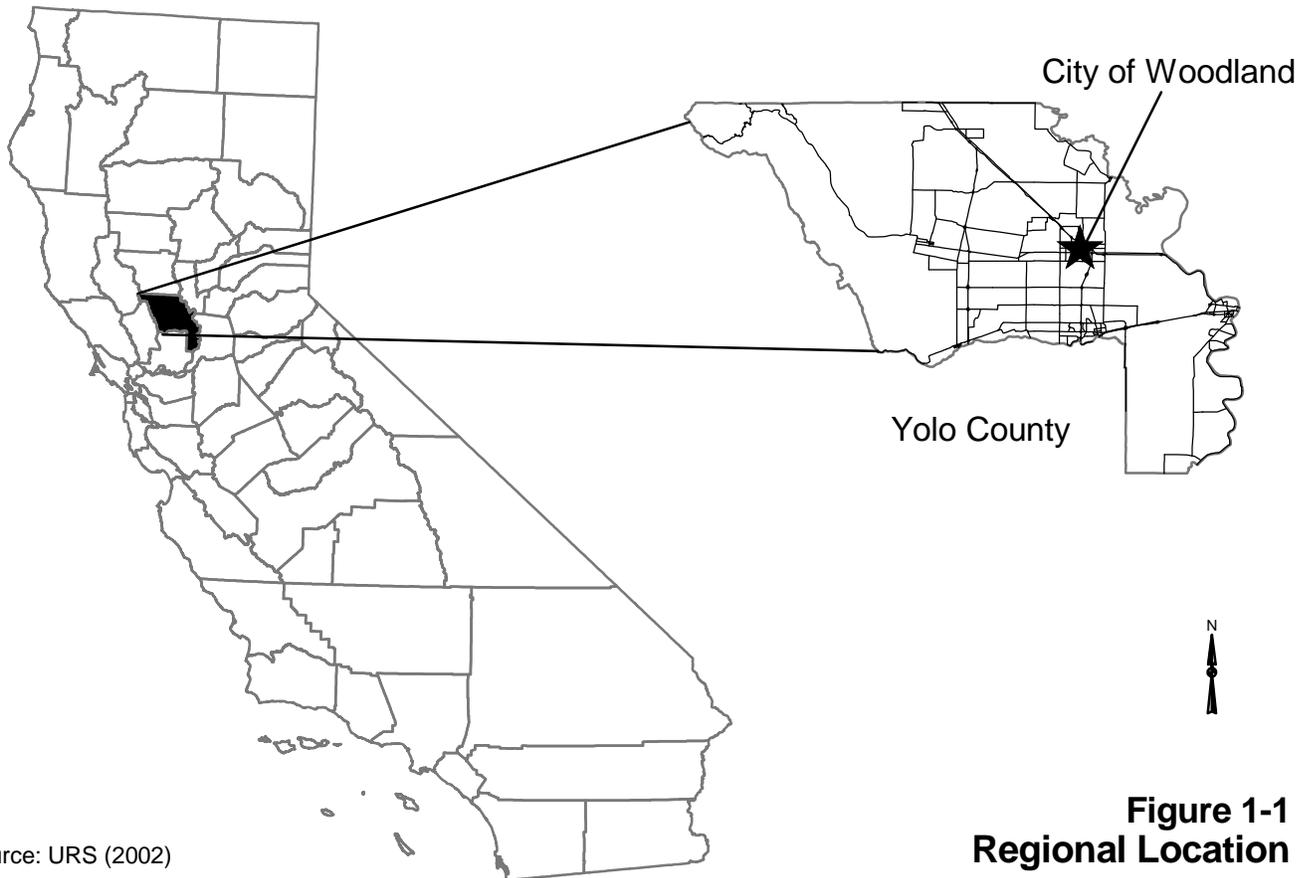
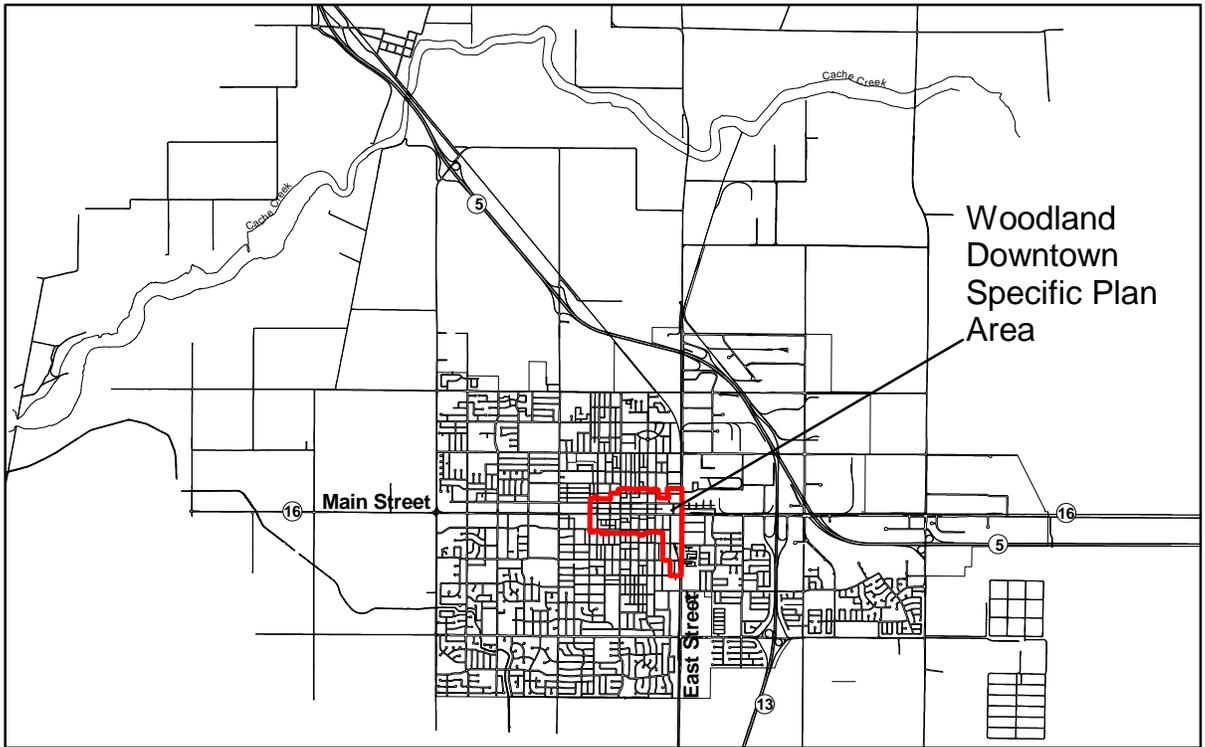
- the removal or update of concepts that are now considered outdated (e.g., the proposed two-way couplet on Lincoln Avenue and Court Street)
- the addition of information needed to meet current State requirements for a specific plan (e.g., the addition of an infrastructure component to the plan)
- provide information on current and future traffic flows in the Downtown and improvements needed to maintain adequate levels of service in the Downtown
- the revision of land use requirements and design guidelines to streamline the development process (e.g., reducing conditional use permits, providing a Downtown-oriented sign regulation)
- the review and reformulation of specific plan policies to reach the future vision seen for the Downtown
- taking advantage of current market trends and available land/space in the Downtown area

- taking full advantage of the employment core in the Downtown area
- providing a set of actions and projects to guide the development of the Downtown area

1.3 PLANNING AREA

The City of Woodland, where the Specific Plan area is located, is the county seat of Yolo County, and is situated in the northern end of California's Central Valley. Woodland is located 20 miles northwest of Sacramento at the intersection of Interstate 5 and State Route 113. To the south is the city of Davis, home to a University of California campus, and 8 miles to the southeast is the Sacramento International Airport. Area waterways include the Yolo Bypass and Sacramento River to the east, Willow Slough to the southeast, and Cache Creek to the north. Figure 1-1 illustrates the regional setting of the City of Woodland and the Downtown Specific Plan's planning area.

The Downtown Specific Plan Area (Downtown area) is the central core of the City of Woodland (see Figures 1-2 and 1-3). As shown on Figures 1-2 and 1-3, the Downtown area is bounded approximately by Cleveland Street on the west, North Street on the north, East Street on the east, and Lincoln Avenue on the south. The Gateway Revitalization Master Plan area extends south of Lincoln Avenue down to Pendegast Street. The Specific Plan covers approximately 139 acres, including the 27-acre Gateway Revitalization Master Plan area. The entire Specific Plan area is contained within the City's Redevelopment Area.



Source: URS (2002)

**Figure 1-1
Regional Location**

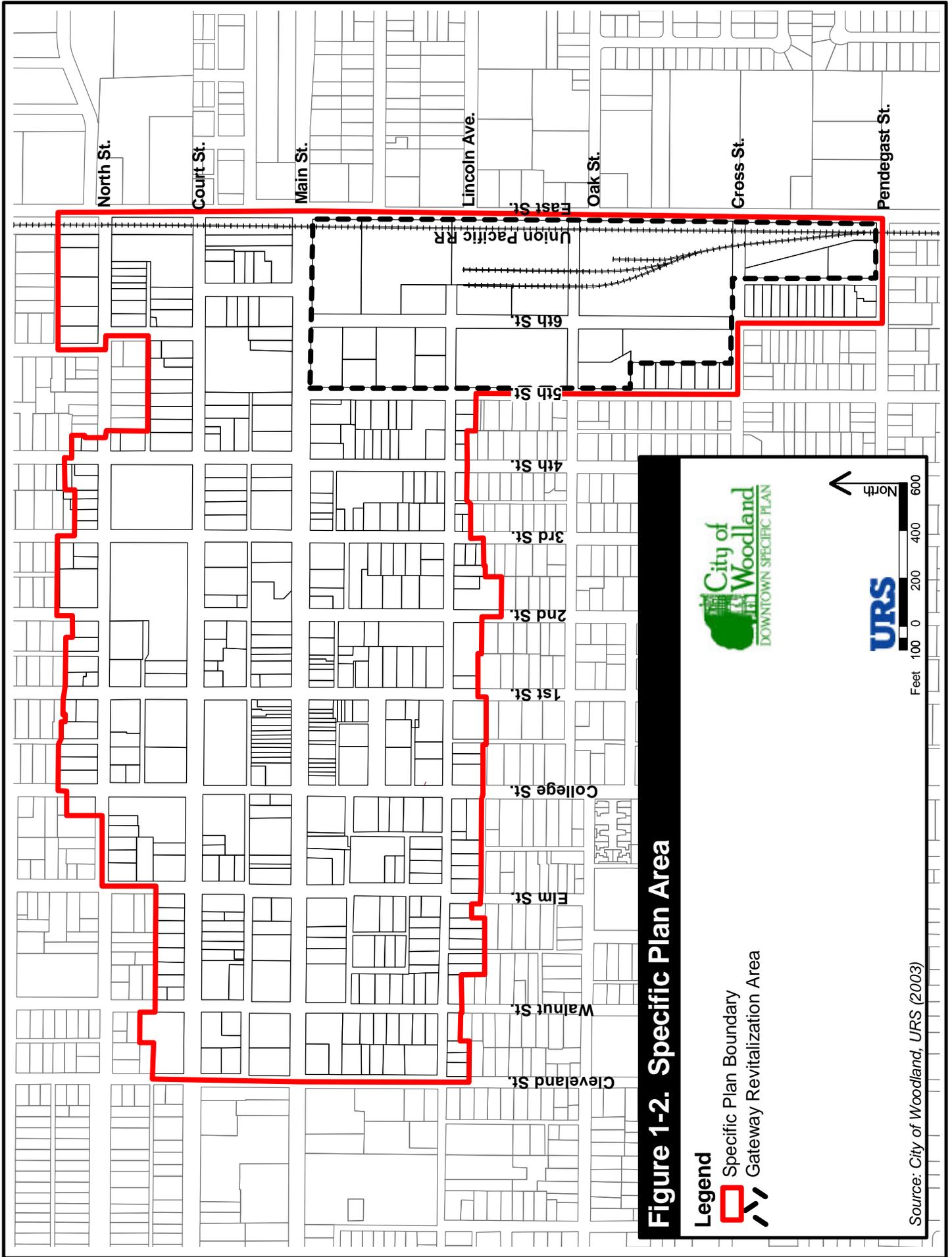
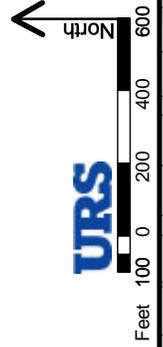


Figure 1-2. Specific Plan Area

- Legend**
-  Specific Plan Boundary
 -  Gateway Revitalization Area



Source: City of Woodland, URS (2003)

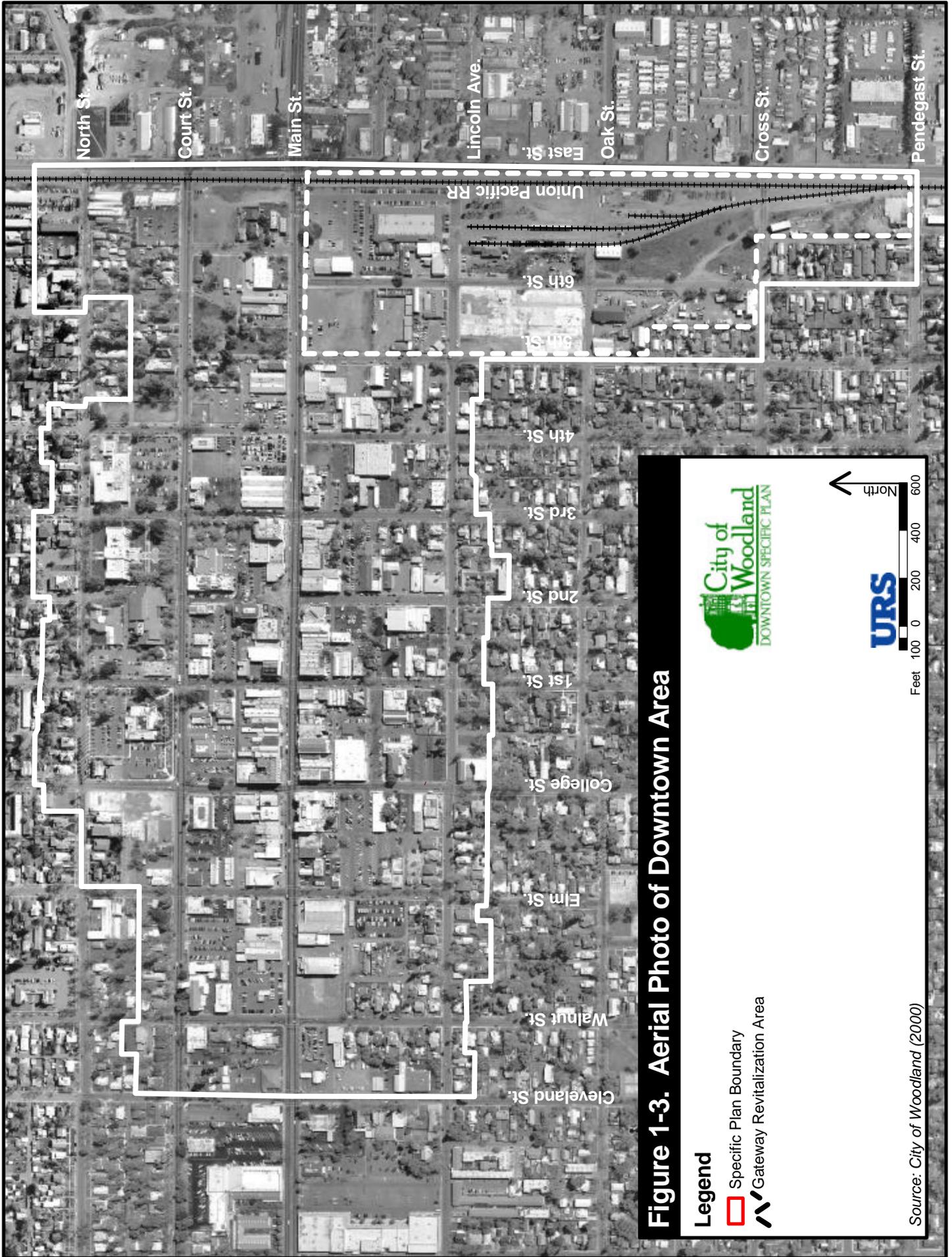


Figure 1-3. Aerial Photo of Downtown Area

Legend

-  Specific Plan Boundary
-  Gateway Revitalization Area





North  600
400
200
0
100
Feet

Source: City of Woodland (2000)

Gateway Revitalization Master Plan Area

At the start of the Specific Plan update, the City identified a 27-acre area in the southeast corner of the Downtown area that needed additional attention. This area, shown on Figure 1-2, is referred to as the Gateway Revitalization Master Plan area.

The need for additional planning attention in this area is based on:

- the high proportion of vacant land and a number of underutilized or vacant industrial buildings, and
- the planned development of a new Police Station in this area.

As the Specific Plan update was developed, it became evident that a more substantial update was needed to address the needs of the Downtown area. It also became apparent that the level of detail being developed for the Downtown Specific Plan was similar to the planning guidance envisioned for the Gateway Revitalization Master Plan. Therefore, the planning for the Master Plan area was incorporated into this Specific Plan.

1.4 SPECIFIC PLAN PURPOSE

Intention

The intention of this Specific Plan for Woodland's Nationally Registered Historic Downtown is to revitalize the "heart" of the City, thereby re-establishing it as the specialty retail, business, entertainment, and cultural center of the community and to enhance its role as the governmental center for both the City and Yolo County.

The Specific Plan as a Policy and Regulatory Document

The Woodland Downtown Specific Plan is a policy *and* regulatory document with its authority derived from the City of Woodland General Plan. As a policy document, the Specific Plan is designed to build on the policies in the General Plan. Thus, any project approved within the Specific Plan area must not only be consistent with the Specific Plan, but also with the General Plan.

As a regulatory document, the text, illustrations, and maps contained in this Specific Plan augment the zoning for the planning area, including specifications for allowable land uses, intensities, character, and design. The regulations contained in this Specific Plan supersede other regulations where there is a conflict. Where a topic is not addressed in the Specific Plan, other applicable City regulations apply.

Required Components of a Specific Plan

As stated in State planning law, a specific plan must include the following:

- The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
- The proposed distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.

1. Introduction



- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
- A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to implement the objectives set forth by the purpose of the specific plan.

This Specific Plan addresses all the components required by State law.

1.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In the development of any plan, especially a downtown plan, public participation is an essential component in ensuring that the plan meets the needs of the community and those that will be asked to help implement the plan.

In this project, a number of techniques were used to gain public input.

- **Open House.** At the very start of the project (August 2001), a storefront was borrowed to set up shop for the planning team. With the help of the City and their Downtown Coordinator, the open house was announced to business and property owners in the Downtown area. Over a three-day period (August 1-3), interested persons stopped by to discuss the future of the Downtown.



- **Public Workshops.** Over the course of preparing this Specific Plan, the following workshops were conducted. These workshops, charettes, and briefings were used to gain insight into issues and opportunities, development potential and constraints, design issues, the location of community facilities, and development of the Gateway Revitalization Master Plan area.

Project Scoping Meeting
August 30, 2001

Downtown Charette
September 19, 2001
City Council Update
September 25, 2001

Community Visioning #1
October 29, 2001



Community Visioning (PC/RDA) #2
November 28, 2001

City Council Interviews
January 10, 2002

Community Visioning (PC/RDA) #3
January 23, 2002

Community Visioning #4
January 24, 2002

City Council Study Session
January 29, 2002

Downtowners Briefing
January 31, 2002

Downtowners Briefing
 March 6, 2002

City Council / Planning Commission Study Session
 April 30, 2002

Planning Commission Presentation
 July 3, 2002

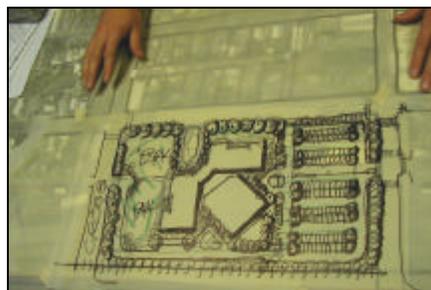
City Council Presentation
 July 16, 2002

Downtowners Briefing
 August 22, 2002

Redevelopment Citizens Advisory Committee
 August 28, 2002

- **Staff Input.** During preparation of the Specific Plan, the project team also met with City staff on several occasions to discuss issues, opportunities, and potential development alternatives. Major working meetings with staff include the following.

Staff Design Charrette
 December 10, 2001



Department Head Interviews
 January 10 – 11, 2002

1.6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Description of “Plan Concepts”

The following “Plan Concepts” serve as the Specific Plan’s guiding principles and will further implementation of the goals and policies contained in the City of Woodland General Plan.

Economic Viability

The main purpose of this plan is to update the existing Specific Plan and to create an economically viable Downtown. To this end, the Specific Plan proposes to intensify office and residential uses in the Downtown area, which will in turn support a range of new eating establishments and some retail establishments such as book stores and service commercial use (such as a photocopy center). The concentration of entertainment opportunities in the Downtown area will also support these additional retail and eating establishments.

The development of these establishments will also be encouraged by the physical improvements in the Downtown such as enhanced streetscapes, improved and expanded parking lots and a new parking structure, pedestrian paths linking these parking lots to the Downtown core along Main Street, and other improvements.

Physical Environment

The physical aspects of the Downtown influence how the area is perceived and used. At the present time, the Downtown is perceived as a long, narrow thoroughfare designed primarily to address the movement of cars through the area. The area is also seen as lacking effective



streetscaping and not having a consistent visual appearance.

The treatment of the edges of a downtown area are important in terms of perception of its overall physical environment and land use compatibility. For Woodland’s Historic Downtown, the Union Pacific Railroad along the East Street corridor forms the eastern edge of the Downtown. The heavily used East Street, with the adjacent railroad corridor, forms a definite boundary ("hard edge") to the Downtown.

The west edge of the Downtown has a less defined boundary since the adjoining land uses along Main and Cleveland Streets are more compatible with the anticipated Downtown development. The most sensitive transition is between the Downtown development and single-family residential neighborhoods to the north and south. The existing office uses along these boundaries serve as an appropriate buffer to the adjacent residential areas.

While much of Historic Downtown Woodland's economic growth will take place by utilizing existing structures, additional structures will need to be constructed in order to accommodate future growth. There are many opportunity sites for this in-fill development.

The intention is to:

- create specialty retail, office, and entertainment uses in the Downtown,
- to preserve and enhance the governmental center along Court Street,
- to support the “smart growth” of the City by providing for a sustainable and vibrant Downtown,

- to continue to provide buffer zones that would protect the existing single family neighborhoods,
- to provide housing opportunities in the Downtown that will bring people to Main Street on a 24-hour basis, and
- to provide development within the Gateway Revitalization Master Plan area that would complement the Downtown core.

Accommodating Pedestrians

The Downtown shall include improvements designed to increase pedestrian use. This will be accomplished by improving streetscaping to beautify the sidewalk areas and to provide shade and conveniences such as kiosks and benches. Deciduous street trees will cool the sidewalks in the heat of the summer while allowing the sun to warm them in the cool of the winter. More awnings and canopies will also contribute to making the north side of Main Street more eye engaging and cooler in the warmer months. Pedestrian pathways that would link existing and proposed parking lots to Main Street are also encouraged.

Public Transportation System

As the Downtown grows in use, a small-scale public transit system designed to move people within the Downtown should be sought. Providing a convenient and efficient public transportation system will reduce the reliance upon automobiles in the Downtown, thereby reducing the demand for parking, improve air quality, and make the Downtown more pedestrian friendly. It will also increase the use of the commercial core by workers in the government buildings along Court Street.

Parking

Parking is an essential element in the economic viability of the Downtown. It is important that there be sufficient and convenient parking facilities within the Downtown to accommodate the need. Parking facilities should be located throughout the Downtown, with some lots located adjacent to uses which generate high traffic volumes (such as office buildings, entertainment establishments, and restaurants). Parking lots that face Main Street should be avoided so as to minimize the traffic on Main Street. When determined by the City to be feasible, a parking structure will be built to meet parking demand.

Bicycle Accessibility

Creating obvious and convenient bicycle parking and routes in the Downtown will encourage increased bicycle use to and within the Downtown. The routes to be used will need careful planning to ensure safety. The presence of bicycles will reduce the use autos and therefore the overall impact of motor vehicles within the Downtown area.

Automobile Accessibility

The Downtown must be accessible by vehicles in order for it to be successful. At the same time, it must be pedestrian friendly. High volumes of traffic can deter motorists from shopping in a downtown, leading to an eventual decline in retail activity. At the same time traffic speeds must be kept at an acceptable level to avoid creating an environment that is uninviting to pedestrians.

Historic Preservation

The core of Woodland's Downtown is a Nationally Registered Historic District, and its many historic buildings create much of Downtown Woodland's special visual character. As such, they are the Downtown's most important assets.

Since several have been demolished over the years, it is imperative that those that remain are protected, and structurally and aesthetically upgraded whenever possible to ensure their continued benefit to the Downtown and the City.

In addition to preserving existing resources, it is also important that new construction be done with sensitivity to the historic setting in the Downtown area. The design guidelines in this Specific Plan provide guidance on ways to construct new facilities that blend in with the Downtown's historic heritage.

Landmarks

Landmarks are important ingredients in a community in that they provide orientation and meeting places. They are often historic and provide physical ties to Woodland's past. Woodland's Downtown has an abundance of landmarks such as the Historic Opera House and the adjacent Heritage Plaza, the Henry Wyckoff building (Woodland's first commercial building), the China Town site, the City Hall, Carnegie Library and the County Court building.

Community Life

The Historic Downtown has served as the heart of the City since Woodland was founded in 1871. It was the center of economic, cultural, and community life

until the spread of commercial uses to other areas of the community drew people away from the Downtown area.

An important issue to address in the Specific Plan is how to bring the focus of the community back into the Downtown. While it is not likely to replace neighborhood commercial, regional centers, or the regional mall in today's commercial mix, it can capture its place as the soul of the community.

As a social location, while the Opera House and the movie theater do serve some of the cultural and entertainment needs of the community, they are not enough to create the critical mass of activities that will serve to energize the Downtown with community activity. The Downtown needs more restaurants, theaters, and nightspots to bring life back into the Downtown.

1.7 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Specific Plan is comprised of eleven chapters and four technical appendices. The following is a brief overview of the information found in each chapter and appendix.

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction.** This chapter provides an introduction to the Downtown's future, a description of the planning area and overall planning process, the purpose of the Specific Plan, the public participation process, and a look at the guiding principles that were used in developing this plan.
- **Chapter 2 – Planning Context.** This chapter provides an overview of existing conditions in the Downtown.
- **Chapter 3 – Land Use and Development.** This chapter provides an overview of the existing land uses in the Downtown, and then provides a detailed look at the issues, opportunities, and vision for the districts (sub-areas) that make up the Downtown.
- **Chapter 4 – Circulation.** Included in this chapter is a discussion of existing circulation conditions (automobiles, pedestrians, and public transit) in the Downtown.
- **Chapter 5 – Infrastructure.** This chapter covers the existing infrastructure capabilities in the Downtown area and looks at their ability to serve the future needs of the area.
- **Chapter 6 – Design Guidelines.** For both new development and renovations, applicants will need to look to the Design Guidelines section to help determine the requirements for project design. This chapter also includes a new sign section to guide signage in the Downtown.
- **Chapter 7 – Gateway Revitalization Area.** Building on information in the other chapters of this Specific Plan, this chapter provides a more detailed look at the development envisioned for this key area.
- **Chapter 8 – Policies and Standards.** Key to the success of any plan are the tools that make it a reality. Chapters 8 and 9 provide a full set of policies, standards, actions, and projects designed to achieve the Downtown's vision. This chapter covers the policies and standards that will be used to evaluate and guide development in the Downtown.
- **Chapter 9 – Actions.** While the policies and standards will help guide the City's reviews of projects, this



chapter provides the proactive side of the City's approach to the Downtown. This chapter contains the activities, programs, promotions, and projects that should be actively pursued by the City and the businesses and community members looking to invest in the Downtown's success.

- **Chapter 10 – Glossary.** This chapter provides definitions for words that are not used in everyday conversation.
- **Chapter 11 – References.** This chapter identifies references consulted in the preparation of the Specific Plan.
- **Appendix A – Downtown Case Studies.** In planning for your future, it is often useful to learn from what others have tried before. This appendix provides case studies prepared for specific land uses (such as business incubators) and case studies on the downtowns of similar communities.
- **Appendix B – Market Study.** As part of the Specific Plan process, a market study was prepared to look at where Woodland is today and what the prospects look like in the future based on economic trends and indicators.
- **Appendix C – Fiscal Study.** After the draft Specific Plan was prepared, a study was prepared to evaluate the fiscal impacts of the changes proposed. The complete study is presented in this appendix.
- **Appendix D – Traffic Study.** As part of the Specific Plan update, a traffic study was prepared that looked at the implications on the circulation systems in Downtown if the proposed level of development occurs.

1. Introduction



Please see the next page.