

## RESOLUTION NO. 14-2000

RESOLUTION OF THE WILLOWS CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING  
A COMMUNITY VISION AND ACTION PLAN DATED JUNE 2000

WHEREAS, a Community Vision and Action Plan has been prepared for the City of Willows; and

WHEREAS, during the fall and winter of 1999, a public process was carried out to gather opinions from residents of Willows that included two public workshops; and

WHEREAS, this process resulted in development of 19 community goals, organized into four major topics: Economic, Quality of Life, Housing and Land Use, and Community Design; and

WHEREAS, these goals together with implementation measures are intended to guide future actions of the City; and

WHEREAS, it is not the intent of the City to adopt the Community Vision and Action Plan as a part of the City's Zoning Ordinance or General Plan, but rather to adopt it by resolution as a stand-alone document that can be easily modified, should circumstances warrant; and

WHEREAS, the Willows Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to take public comment on the proposed Community Vision and Action Plan and has recommended its adoption by resolution; and

WHEREAS, comments and questions were received concerning the Community Vision and Action Plan, specifically, its effect on building demolition and visual appearance; and

WHEREAS, City Manager Mistrot responded that the Plan is a guideline and is not intended to establish a historic or other designation on anyone's property; there is no prohibition of building demolition in the document; and

WHEREAS, this City Council has held a duly noticed public hearing to take public comment on the proposed Community Vision and Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, no one spoke in opposition to adoption of the proposed Community Vision and Action Plan during the public hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Willows City Council does hereby adopt by resolution the proposed Community Vision and Action Plan dated June 2000 for the City of Willows and on file in the office of the City Clerk.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Willows at a regular meeting this 13th day of June 2000 by the following vote:

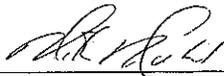
AYES: Murray, P. Brown, Taylor-Vodden and Holvik

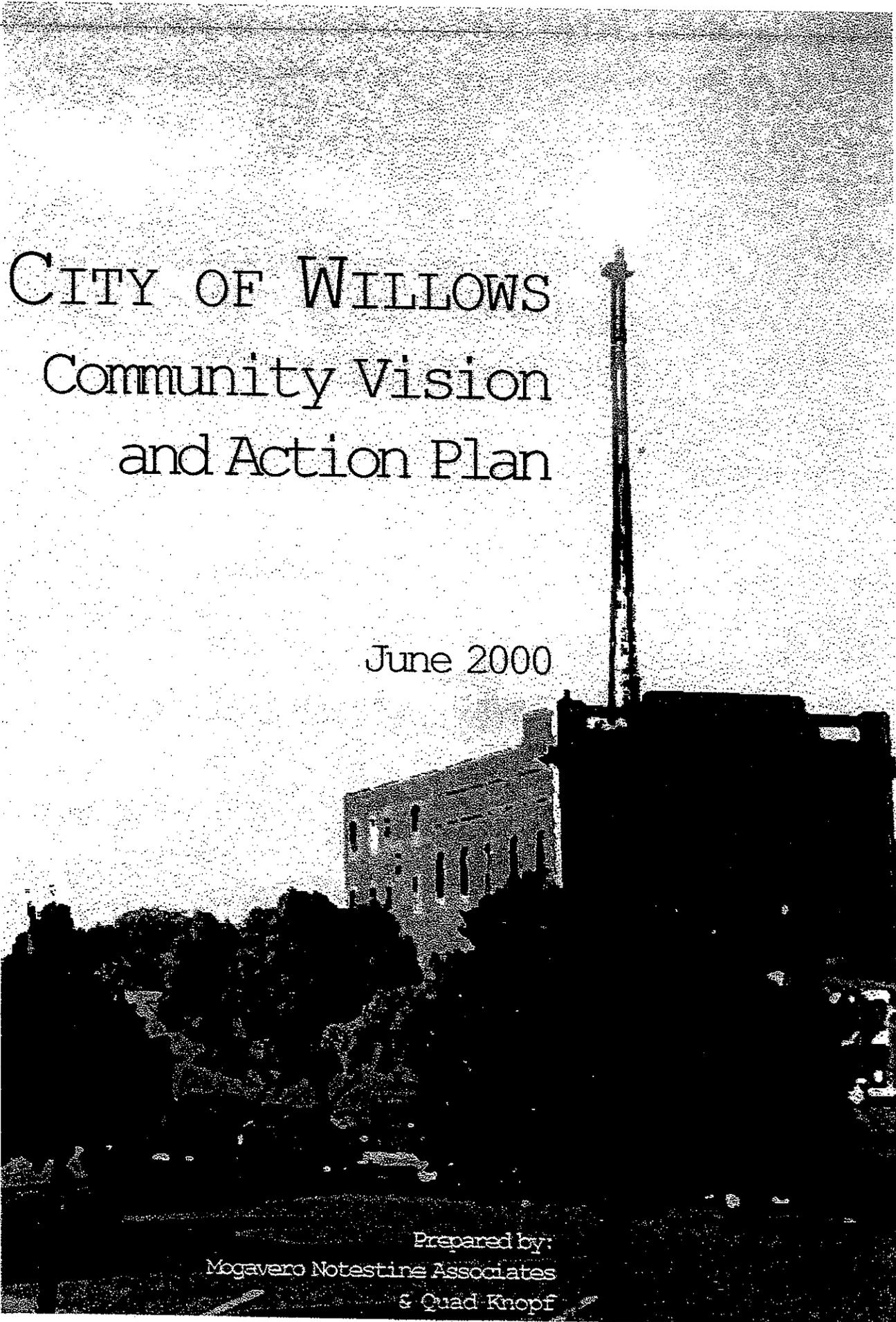
NOES: None

ABSENT: None

  
BILL WESLEY BROWN, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



CITY OF WILLOWS  
Community Vision  
and Action Plan

June 2000

Prepared by:  
Mogavero Notestine Associates  
& Quad Knopf

# CREDITS

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John Brooks  
Hector Vargas  
Rose Marie Thrailkill  
Joan Thodas  
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CONSULTANT TEAM

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and  
Quad Knopf

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

The City of Willows would like to express its deep appreciation to the U.S. Forest Service for their financial support of this project. The development of the City's Community Action Plan was made possible as the result of a grant provided by the U.S. Forest Service under the Pacific Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative. Grant Number #GT-5-98-08-023

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# THE CITY OF WILLOWS

## COMMUNITY VISION AND ACTION PLAN

### I PURPOSE

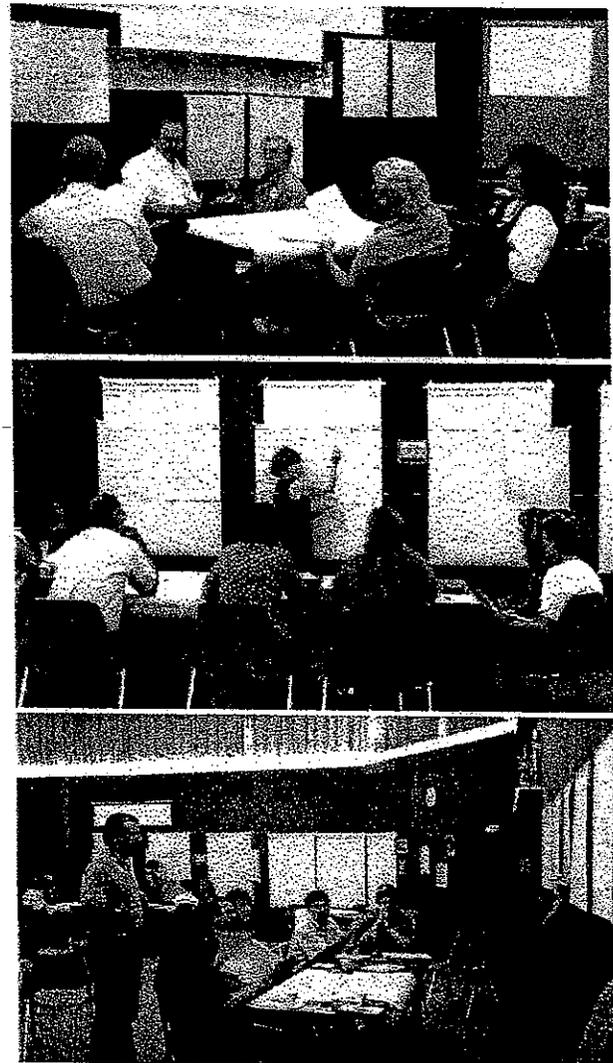
Working through the City, the people of Willows are interested in positive approaches to enhancing the Community. The City, recognizing the need for proactive approaches to strengthen the community's economic position, while maintaining its splendid quality of life, initiated this project. The timing of this Plan is very important to prevent further degradation of the existing environment and to direct constructive change.

This Plan has been designed to be a community development tool. It can be implemented through the cooperative partnerships of the community - individuals, businesses, organizations and governments.

A goal of this Plan has been to identify opportunity programs, uses and sites, and link them to an overall strategy for expansion, reuse and revitalization. The Plan considers how particular projects or particular sites may function as catalysts to create momentum for further growth. The Plan identifies what steps will be required and who must take them in order to seize the opportunities.

### II METHODOLOGY

During the planning process, Mogavero Notestine Associates and Quad Knopf conducted a two-part workshop - attended by over forty participants. They distributed and assessed a mail-in public opinion survey (prepared in English, Spanish and Hmong), undertook a field survey, met with members of the community, conducted market research, and reviewed background documents. The elements contained in this Plan are aimed at enhancing Willows' quality of life, and have been developed and combined into a comprehensive program. The Plan emphasizes and recommends an implementation program that can be carried out through a public and private sector partnership, a partnership that establishes specific responsibilities for action and financial commitments.



*Community members participating in the individual working group session of the September 29th visioning workshop.*

### III. VISION STATEMENT

The Citizens of Willows are proactively seeking to expand and diversify the community's economic base in order to provide needed goods and services, as well as to expand employment opportunities for all its residents. While in this process, the community will strive to maintain its wonderful quality of life: its small town charm, a balance between jobs and housing opportunities, community members and organizations working together, friendly atmosphere, quaint neighborhoods, quality design, good schools, and ample recreational resources. Willows embraces and, wherever possible, will build upon its generational, cultural and economic diversity through inclusiveness and social interaction.

### IV. COMMUNITY VISION GOALS

#### 1. Economic

To:

- expand the economic base and become less dependent on agriculture and government.
- promote and enhance tourism.
- develop an aggressive marketing program to attract both new businesses and business activity.
- continue the City's pro-business orientation through an express permit process and development incentives, and
- work aggressively to improve the skills of the available workforce.

#### 2. Quality of Life

To:

- actively foster quality of life and small town atmosphere when making civic, business and personal choices.
- continue to enhance the City's public infrastructure by investing in streetscapes, parks, cultural facilities and other public places.
- be inclusive by engaging and empowering persons of all abilities, ages, and ethnic backgrounds, and
- support and enhance the community's public safety, health, educational, and recreational resources.

#### 3. Housing

To:

- improve the existing stock of single and multifamily housing.
- provide for the development of new housing that is in proportion with the number of new employment opportunities.
- encourage the development of a variety of housing types (large single family, small single family, small scale multifamily, senior, etc.) scattered throughout the community.
- encourage the development of housing that is more desirable to upper-middle income residents, and
- encourage the development of infill housing throughout the City, and in particular in close proximity of the downtown area.

#### 4. Land Use and Community Design

To:

- revitalize downtown into a mixture of employment, civic, cultural, visitor, retail, and residential uses.
- allow a wider range of uses along Wood Street.

- develop design guidelines that will provide for quality in rehabilitation of existing structures and new development.
- provide streets, pedestrian ways, and bike routes that contribute to an overall transportation system that links all destinations, and
- encourage the development of vacant properties along Tehama Street in a manner that is consistent with the downtown.

## V. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

### I Subject Areas

#### A Demographics

With a 1999 estimated population of 6,375 (Department of Finance) Willows is experiencing a period of no growth and no decline dating back to 1996. The population has been estimated at 6,375 each year since 1996. Population change during the 1990s has been modest, with a gain of just 387 in the nine years since the 1990 Census (5,988 population) - less than a one percent annual average growth rate.

As shown in Table 1, Willows' population increase has been gradual for more than a century. In the eleven decades from 1890 to 1999, increases of more than 1,000 have occurred three times (the 1910s, 1950s, and 1980s).

Table 1.  
Willows Population 1890 - 1999

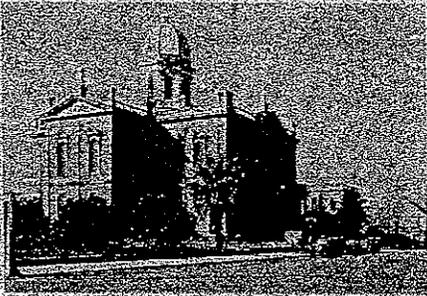
Year	Population
1890	1176
1900	893
1910	1139
1920	2190
1930	2024
1940	2215
1950	3019
1960	4129
1970	4085
1980	4777
1990	5988
1999	6375

Since 1950, the City's population has ranged from 19% to 24% of the total population of Glenn County. Current estimates place the City's share at just over 19%, a slight decline from 20.1% in 1990.

Despite overall population stability, however, the ethnic composition of Willows has begun a significant shift during the 1990s, as interpreted from Glenn County data from 1990 to 1996. That data shows an increase in the County's Hispanic population of more than 1,800 (from 4,900 to 6,700), a 36% jump in just six years. During the same period, the County's Asian population increased

### A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Willows, established in 1876 and incorporated as a city in 1886, is the county seat of Glenn County.



Long before the city was organized, the area was home to Native Americans of the Nontaki/Wintun peoples.

During the time of Mexican rule, the "plains" here in Willows were covered with vast tracts of grass and wild flowers. A few hardy souls ventured into the territory of the "Buenaventura River," now the Sacramento. The earliest known explorers were from the famous Hudson's Bay Company. Reports spoke of abundant antelope and a few elk on the plains and foothills. In the 1830's, settlers had claimed many of the river front lands, and interest turned to the creeks and foothills. Two creeks joined just east of the present town, and the watering spot became known as "The Willows." Gradually families from other California valley towns settled in the area, and the Zimwalt family built the first home around "The Willows." In 1876 a general store was built in what is now the town of Willows, but was then just a barley field. The general store was on the northeast corner of the intersection of Tehama and Walnut Streets, close to the planned route of the railroad. The present town grew up from these modest beginnings. The Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1878, encouraging commerce and growth. Fire ravaged much of the downtown in 1882, but the townspeople had come to stay, and soon the buildings reappeared.

President William H. Taft visited Willows in 1909, and commented positively on the efforts to bring irrigation to the plains around the town.

1910 - 1912 saw a building boom. Many of the existing downtown buildings came from that time. The growing irrigation projects in the area attracted national attention, and farmers from east and west came to settle here due to the fertile land and abundant water. Rice growing was later introduced into the area and has become one of the major agricultural products of the region.

In July, 1920 the Million Dollar Fire wiped out ten buildings and 37 firms in downtown Willows. Newspaper articles from the period show how quickly firms started rebuilding. Willows business people were resilient, and the town recovered.

Source: "HISTORIC WILLOWS" Tour

83%, from about 490 to 890. The American Indian population increased 41%, from 755 to 1066. Together, the three (Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian) populations accounted for nearly 80% of total county growth.

Interestingly, Willows demographics were influenced greatly when, according to the City's Housing Element, "In 1989, approximately 600 Southeast Asian refugees relocated to Willows". This event, alone, accounts for the relatively dramatic population increase the City experienced during the 1980s, contrasted with other decades from 1960 forward.

The vast majority of Glenn County's Asian population are Hmong living in Willows. The City's Hispanic population is roughly 15% of the total County population. Few American Indians reside within the Willows City limits.

According to the 1990 Census, the white population of Willows was 76% of total population, with Hispanic and Asian populations about 10%. Both Asian and Hispanic populations have increased their shares of the City total since 1990. Native Americans make up 1.8% of the City's population and .06% of the population are Black.

### B. Market Demand and the Future of the Willows Economy

Willows has served several roles over the decades.

- Farm service center for Glenn and portions of Tehama and Colusa Counties (including manufacturing, processing, distribution).
- Glenn County government center.
- Rail stop, and
- Highway-oriented town (Highway 99, then I-5).

Fundamental changes in agriculture since the 1950s have reduced, if not eliminated, the farm service center role. Simultaneously, direct rail service to local business has all but disappeared, and with it, a variety of small industries whose



presence in town depended on the freight train. Although old Highway 99 was replaced by Interstate 5, routing traffic around (rather than through) town, Willows did not suffer the fate of many small towns who found themselves miles from through-traffic when Interstate highways were built.

Approaching the Year 2000, Willows finds itself in search of new and expanded economic activities to carry the town and its citizens into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Tourism? Manufacturing? A retail/service center? Government center? Cultural/educational center?



Perhaps the answer is "all of the above" as the City strives to re-establish multiple roles and sustain a balanced economy. The increasing diversity of Willows' population is an asset not to be overlooked in the quest for economic improvement.

Several possibilities merit consideration. All appealing options should be explored in greater depth than is possible here. These options are not mutually exclusive.

- **Highway-oriented business.** With two interchanges on I-5, Willows has more potential than is being tapped to serve the convenience needs of Freeway travelers. Of course, market forces determine actual demand. Over time, if not immediately, vacant land near the Wood Street interchange and the South Willows interchange (Road 57) will become prime properties for highway-oriented businesses such as restaurants, lodging facilities, and gas/convenience stores. This assumption is based partially on the dearth of such facilities on I-5 north of Woodland and south of Redding.
- **Day-trip-oriented business.** Not just making a pit stop, day-trippers may utilize highway-oriented businesses, and may also look for more to see and do in town. Downtown, approaches to downtown, and local "events" attract and hold this group of tourists. Shops and restaurants conducive to browsing and strolling are the key here. These are people eager to get out of their cars and explore, not just stop and run.
- **Major event-oriented business.** The Willows area has a major attraction operating weekends throughout the year - Thunderhill Park. Here is a close, but not quite captive audience for Willows. Predominantly out-of-area visitors, people attending Thunderhill events are a ready-made market if properly attracted.
- **End-destination tourism.** Golfing, hunting, fishing, and nature-oriented tourism abound in the Willows vicinity. Willows as a jump-off point for out-of-doors activities might bring travelers to town for brief stays throughout the year.
- **Industry.** Willows has several significant assets as a location for small to medium sized industries: a good "quality of life"; abundant land at reasonable prices; location on I-5, the west coast's busiest north-south interstate highway; an airport capable of servicing large aircraft; a railroad spur that services the area west of I-5; and a pro-business climate. Manufacturing, processing and distribution/storage operations might, for various reasons, be established anew or relocated from elsewhere.
- **Education.** Expansion of Butte Community College enrollment and staff, plus other training and educational institutions would contribute to the local economy generally, while preparing new leaders, business people, and professionals.
- **Health services.** Willows is the unquestioned medical center of Glenn County, a role likely to be enhanced over time.
- **Retirement.** Many long-time residents retire in Willows. Movement to Willows for retirement, however, is rare. Although retirement patterns are often hard to predict, the sheer numbers of people retiring in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century represent a market not to be overlooked. With good health services, a strong sense of community, and leisure activities, Willows has many of the

attributes most important to prospective retirees. Additional "infrastructure", including senior living accommodations and public transportation, might be necessary.

- **Bedroom community.** Willows is a net importer of employees. Many workers commute in by day and leave at night. A large percentage call Chico and Butte County home. They represent a lost market for dozens of local businesses. Were this small army of commuters to reside, shop, recreate, and do business locally, the economic results would be substantial.

### C. Quality of Life

During the initial Community Workshop, and from the analysis of a Survey instrument, second to developing a strong economy, the community identified the most important issue as the maintenance of the "Quality of Life" currently enjoyed by the citizens of Willows. Elements that create a high quality of life were identified as:

- Small Town Atmosphere.
- Strong Economy.
- Parks and Trees.
- Friendly People Who Work Together.
- Cultural Diversity.
- Central Location.
- Community, Health and Educational Opportunities.
- A Well Maintained Community.
- Low Crime Rate.
- Recreational Activities, and
- Good Public Services.

### D. Housing



*A recently rehabilitated home adjacent to one in need of rehabilitation (above) and a multifamily structure in need of assistance (below).*

Though there are areas of high quality housing, generally the quality of the existing housing stock varies from parcel to parcel. The City currently offers low interest housing rehabilitation loans which are funded through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). CDBG is a federal funding source administered through the California Department of Housing and Community Development. These funds, through the reuse pool, are limited for upgrading multi-family units.

The list of permitted uses in the Zoning Ordinance for the R1 and R2 or Single-Family and Two-Family District zones does not permit multi-family residential uses. The nonconforming uses provisions (Section 7.09) of the Zoning Ordinance make the financing, refinancing, or rehabilitation of existing nonconforming multi-family residential uses difficult. The nonconforming uses provisions of the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed and amended to remedy this situation.

The community has indicated that it would like new housing development to be small in scale and balanced with the growth in jobs. They also point out that opportunities for professionals to live in the



community are sparse. Further, they would like to see as much housing as possible be built on infill parcels throughout the City and, in particular, near the downtown.

There are numerous vacant parcels scattered throughout the City (including the Downtown area). These vacant parcels can accommodate most of the infill development demand for several years. Other than a statement of encouragement, finding ways to help meet the need for more upscale professional housing will require more market analysis than can be provided within this current planning process.

As infill opportunities diminish over time, new housing can be provided as part of the development of the northern portion of the "Murphy" property (See the South Willows discussion that follows), and a potential annexation area in the northern section of the City between Green Street and the Railroad (See Exhibit A). In the more distant future, as the need for additional land for residential development is justified, the criteria, which determine where new annexations for housing is appropriate, should include flooding and efficiency of infrastructure (streets, waste water, parks, water, etc.).

## **E Community Design**

Community design is about community building. It concerns the built character, order, and psyche of the City. It is the interrelationship of various components: buildings, transportation system, open space, vistas, human interaction between each other and the natural environment, heritage, and economics. When put together these components make up a total community.

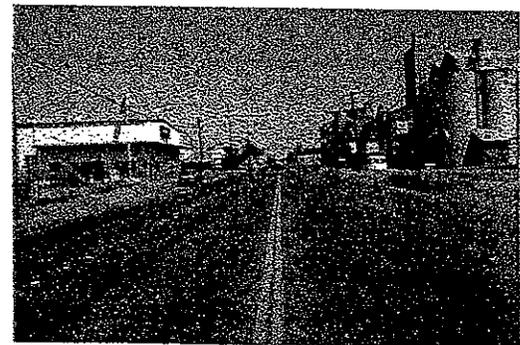
Good community design is how to build neighborhoods and commercial districts that are safe either for children to walk to school or for the elderly to cross the street. It is how to maintain the downtown as a place where locals as well as visitors want to go. It respects the quality of life, the natural environment, as well as economic gain. It creates places for people to feel comfortable with each other and with the built environment.

The City of Willows has a nice tree canopy, wide streets that are generally safe for the pedestrian and bicyclist, great parks, museum, library, wonderful civic buildings and other elements that make up good community design. However, there is really no design continuity anywhere - not even in the Downtown. There are contemporary buildings adjacent to historic buildings, large expansive blank walls adjacent to storefronts, poorly designed newer residential structures built in quaint older neighborhoods, large vacant parcels along the railroad, etc.

In addition, there are areas where access is difficult for the young and old. The primary impediments are Wood Street and Tehama Street along the railroad. Wood Street will be vastly improved, through the creation of safe zones, with



*A quaint tree lined street in northern Willows.*



*Tehama Street and Wood Street are inhospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists.*

the proposed improvements to be made by Caltrans. Tehama Street would benefit by making similar improvements.

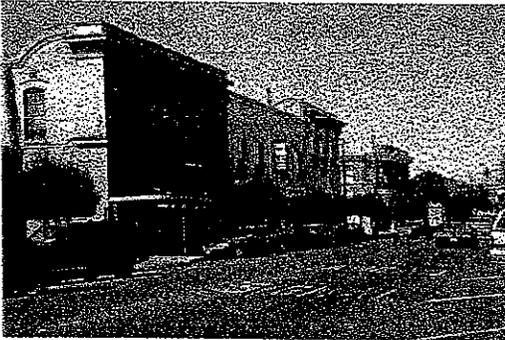
Traditionally, Willows has not had comprehensive design review criteria. This has led to disparate development patterns and design. One way to direct future development in a way that would improve the overall built, as well as interactive community environment, is through the adoption of updated design guidelines. Design guidelines may include elements such as:

- Architectural building design and character (Including site planning, scale, massing, orientation, windows, entries, courtyards, roofs, and materials).
- Streetscape/landscape design and criteria.
- Creation of gathering places.
- Defensible space.
- Placement and design for appropriate camouflage of storage buildings, utility and mechanical equipment.
- Signage design and criteria (Currently being prepared by the City).
- Site, street, and building lighting.
- Parking lot design, and
- Open space, bicycling, and pedestrian circulation.

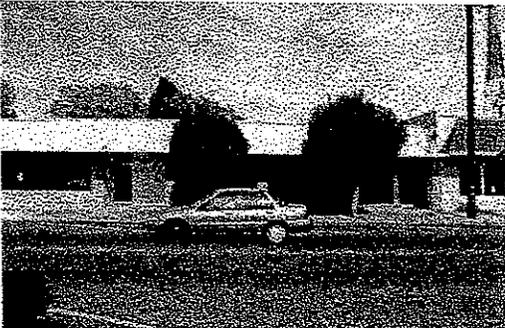
Requiring quality design protects the property values of all property owners and eliminates any uncertainty in the development approval process.

## 2 Locations

### A. Downtown



*Second story commercial space provides an opportunity for senior housing*



*Small street trees that don't provide for a needed canopy for shade*

The Downtown area is currently defined by Tehama Street on the east, Oak Street on the south, the alley between Butte and Shasta Street to Sycamore between Oak and Walnut Streets then Butte Street on the west, and Willow Street on the north (See Exhibit B).

The list of permitted uses in the Zoning Ordinance for the Central Commercial District (CC) zone does not permit residential uses other than boarding houses and group dwellings with a Conditional Uses Permit. This makes the financing, refinancing or rehabilitation of existing residential uses difficult due to the nonconforming uses provisions (Section 7.09) of the Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance also prohibits the reuse of upper level commercial buildings for residential purposes such as apartments or senior housing, a viable reuse option. To remedy this difficulty, the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to allow residential and multi-family uses on upper levels, as well as other uses such as hotels, motels, theaters, art galleries, and other retail or services uses not allowed by the current Zoning Ordinance. These uses can be allowed either by right or through a Conditional Use Permit process.



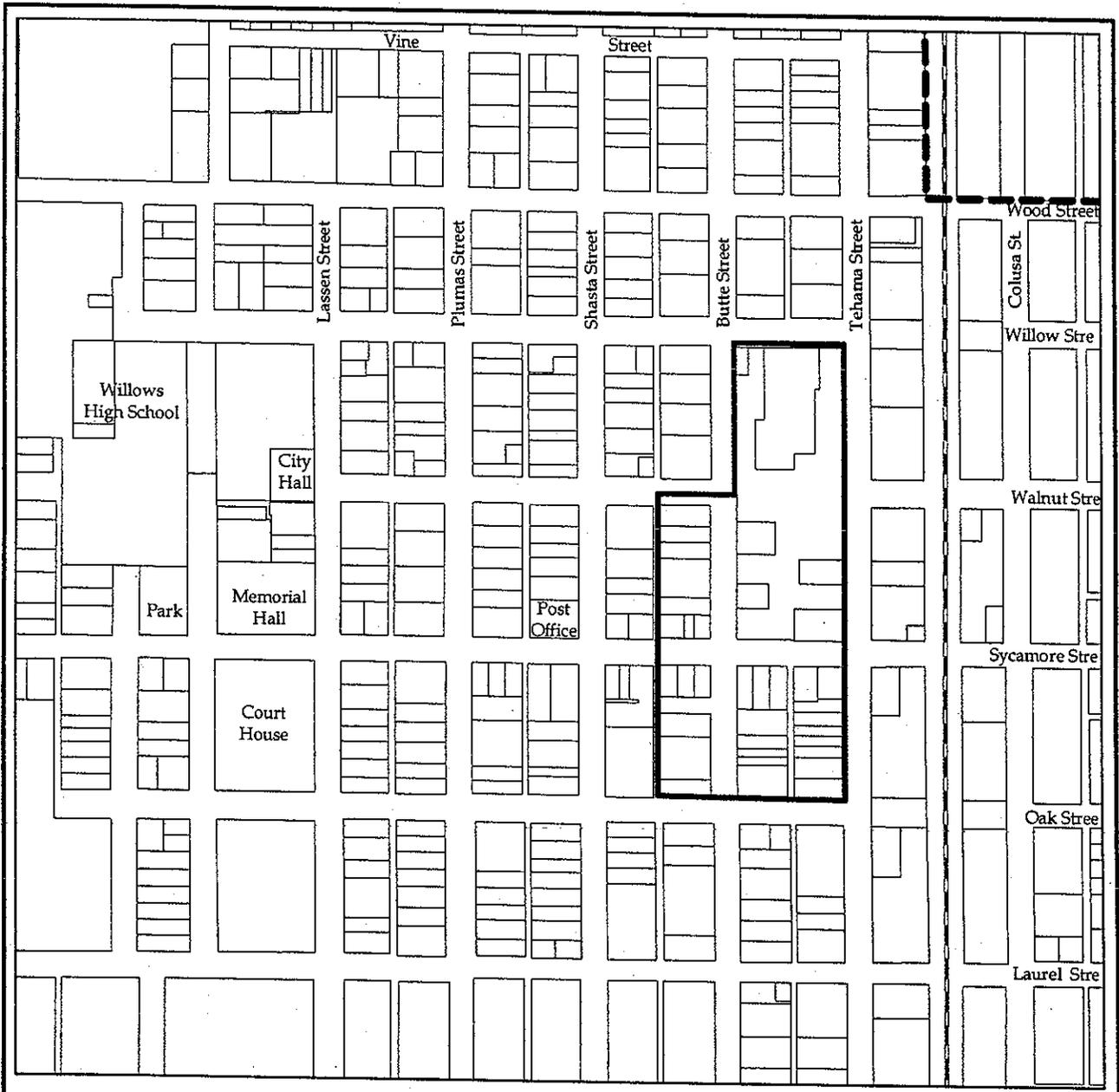
LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Railroad
-  Proposed Annexation

**Exhibit A**  
**Proposed Annexation**  
November 16, 1999  
Community Vision Plan  
and General Plan Update

**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA

Mogavero/Notestine Associates and  
Quad Knopf



LEGEND

-  Existing Downtown
-  City Limits
-  Railroad

**Exhibit B**  
**Existing Downtown**  
November 16, 1999  
Community Vision Plan  
and General Plan Update

**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA

Mogavero, Notestine Associates and  
Quad Knopf

Most of the upper levels of Downtown commercial buildings are underutilized and should be the subject of a reuse analysis.

As indicated in the Community Design Section, the Downtown lacks any design continuity. Many historic structures are adjacent to more contemporary buildings that diminish their character. Streetscape trees tend to be smaller species that are trimmed into shrubs and will never provide a needed canopy for shade. Recent plantings do, however, appear to be of a canopy variety. Street name signs are in need of maintenance and refinishing. Other streetscape improvements such as enhanced sidewalk treatments, pedestrian crossings, street furniture, parking lot landscaping, and public gathering areas should be designed and implemented in order to invigorate the aesthetic as well as shopping environment. These improvements should extend beyond what is currently designated as Downtown, and include an area roughly bounded by the railroad tracks on the east, Wood Street on the north, Shasta Street on the west (extending out Sycamore to the County complex) and Oak Street on the south (See Exhibit C).

The design of the redevelopment area (the area bounded by Tehama, Sycamore, Butte and Willow Streets) is out of context with the remainder of the Downtown. The redevelopment area should be refined to be more in keeping with the historic qualities found in some of Downtown's older buildings. In addition, the landscaping and public areas within the redevelopment area are in need of improved maintenance.

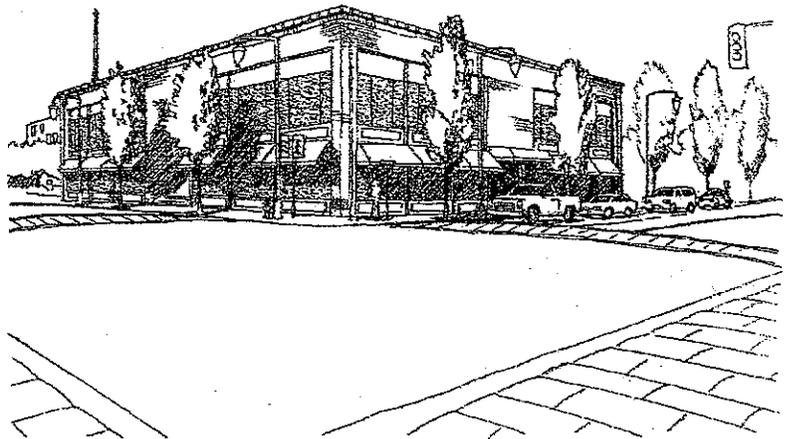
The Downtown area would also benefit from being designated as a National Register Historic District. This would protect the historic character of Downtown and provide tax incentives for appropriate building renovations.

Infill opportunities exist in the Downtown area (See Exhibit D). These properties should be inventoried and marketed to prospective users as part of the community's Economic Development program.

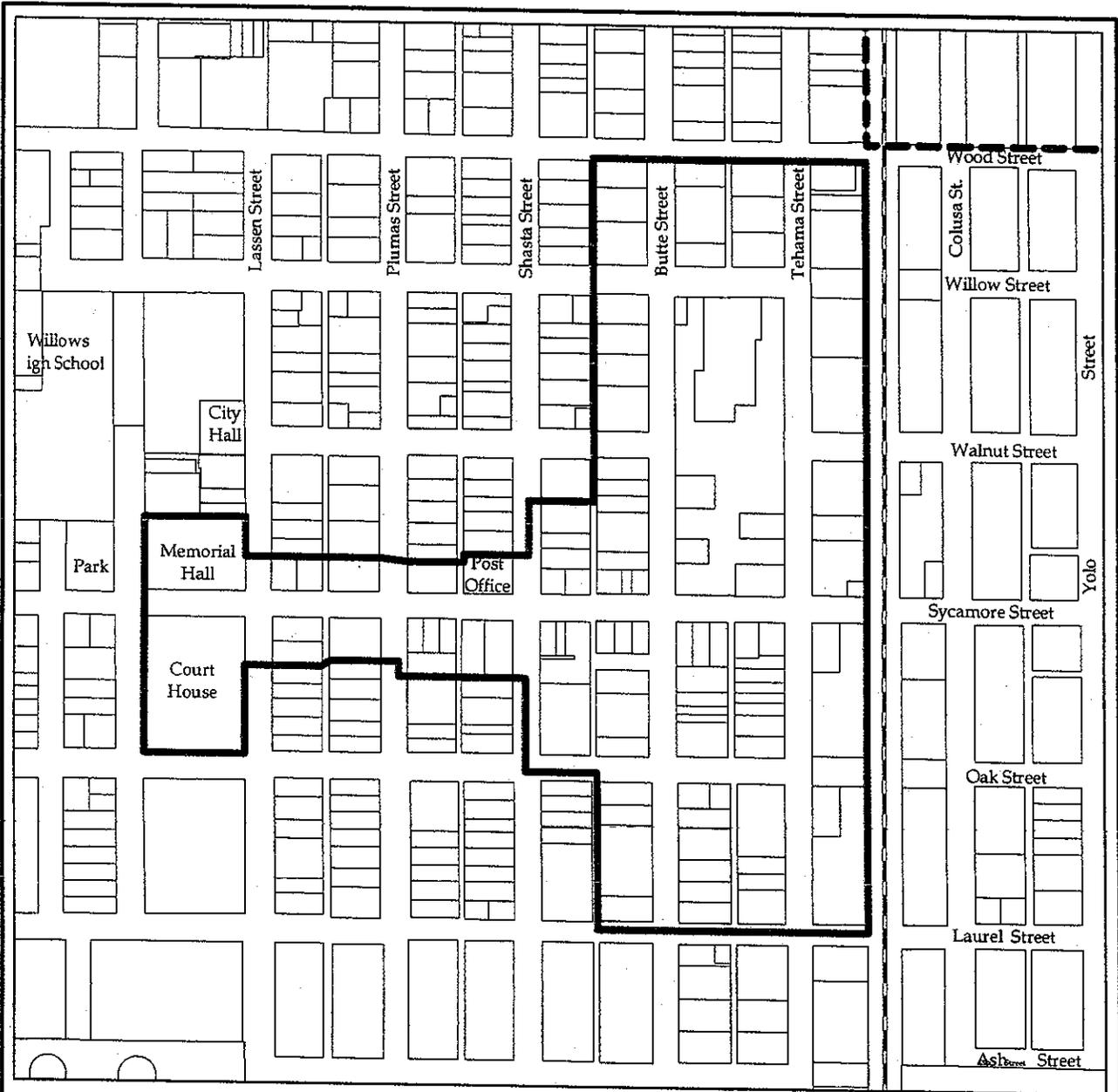
Activity enhancement opportunities in the Downtown area could include mid-week evening events (such as a farmers market, phantom galleries, or moonlight sales), extended shopping hours, relocation of the library, and relocation of public and social programs. These would attract more residents and thereby shoppers to the area.

## **B Wood Street**

The list of permitted uses in the Zoning Ordinance for the Multiple Residence - Professional Office District (RP) zone, which covers most of the Wood Street Corridor, does not permit retail or other general commercial uses other than professional offices. This limits the reuse of these properties to very specific activities. To stimulate redevelopment, the zoning could be changed to allow the additional



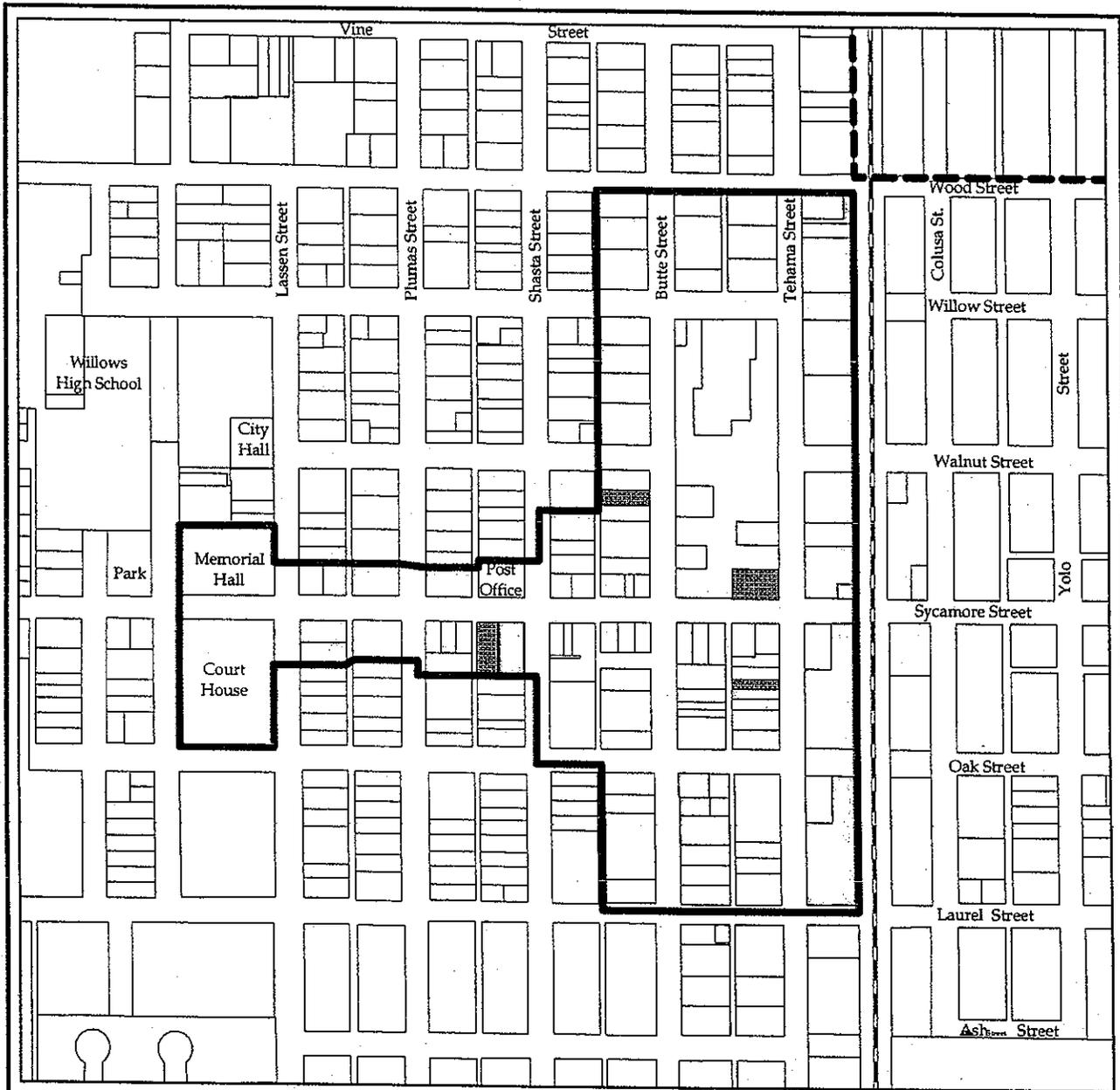
*Renovation of the Daughtrey building would assist in the revitalization of Downtown.*



LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Railroad
-  Expanded Downtown Area

**Exhibit C**  
**Expanded Downtown**  
 November 16, 1999  
 Community Vision Plan  
 and General Plan Update  
**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
 GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
 Mogavero/Notestine Associates and  
 Quad Knopf



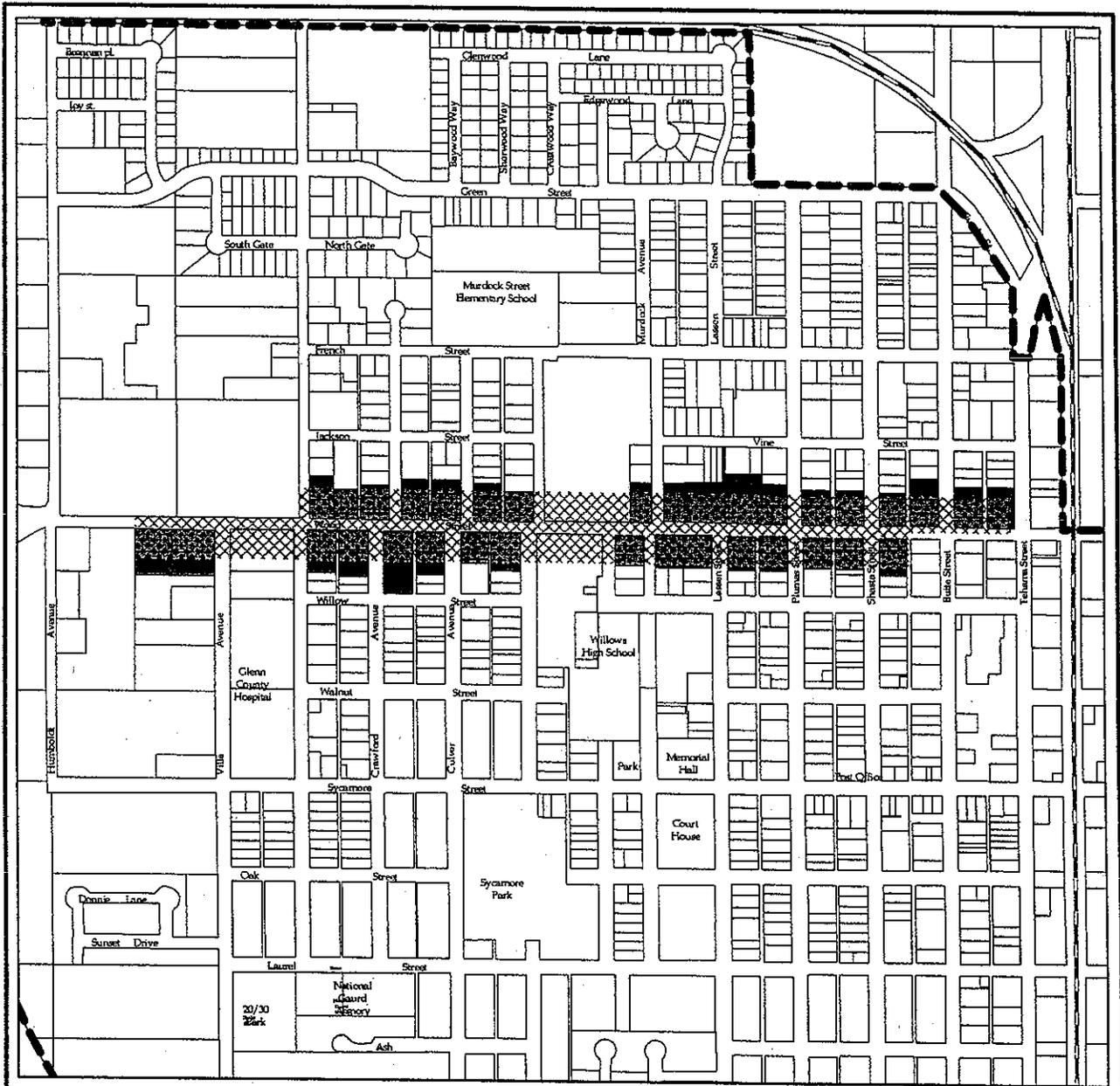
LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Railroad
-  Expanded Downtown Area
-  Vacant Building
-  Vacant Land

**Exhibit D**  
**Vacant Downtown**  
**Parcels**  
 November 16, 1999  
 Community Vision Plan  
 and General Plan Update

**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
 GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA

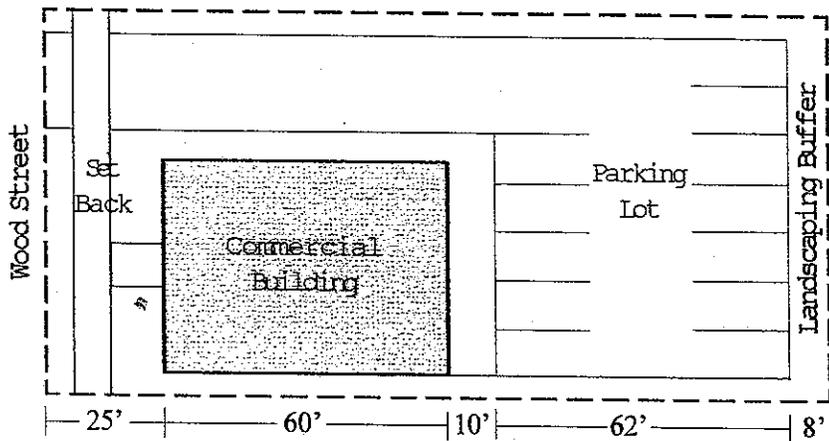
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LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Railroad
-  Wood Street 165' Zone
-  Parcels Falling Within the 165' Zone

**Exhibit E**  
**Wood Street (165')**  
 November 1999  
 Community Vision Plan  
 and General Plan Update  
**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
 GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
 Mogavero/Notestine Associates and  
 Quad Knopf



The appropriate depth for parcels fronting onto Wood Street is 165 feet.

commercial uses that would be compatible with offices uses.

Because Wood Street is a State Highway with relatively high traffic volumes, new residential uses should be limited from the new zone.

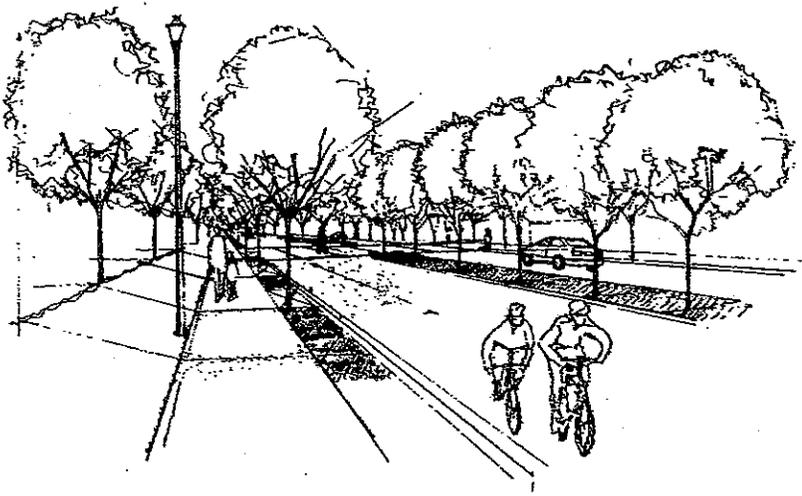
To protect the existing single family residential areas just off the corridor, new commercial uses should not extend more than 165 feet to the north or south of Wood Street (See Exhibit E). Other resources that may need protection, if commercial development is

stimulated along Wood Street, are the historic homes in the vicinity of Murdock Avenue.

The community has indicated that it is important for Wood Street to act as a conduit leading visitors to the Downtown area. Four important factors that will help to lure visitors are quality design, streetscape improvements, a "Vista Element" at Wood and Tehama Street, and a Downtown directional sign near the off-ramp from I-5.

Design guidelines should be prepared and adopted that continue the residential scale found along the Wood Street Corridor. Other important elements are relationship to the street, diminishing the impact and visibility of parking, quality materials, pitched roofs, landscaping, minimizing the impact on adjacent residential uses, etc.

The proposed streetscape improvements should maintain on-street parking, if feasible. Improvements should also include canopy street trees, highly visible crosswalks with specialty paving, pedestrian islands, minimum six foot sidewalks that are held back a minimum of six feet from the curb (where existing development allows), pedestrian scaled architectural street-lighting, and other pedestrian amenities such as benches, shade, and water fountains.



Wood Street with Caltrans improvements and additional street trees and sidewalks set back from the street.

A vista point or architectural element that attracts the eye would help to draw visitors to the downtown. A vertical design element such as a flag pole, sculpture, or grouping of tall palm trees could be located in the



center of a roundabout at the intersection of Wood and Tehama Streets. Another architectural element could be an archway announcing the Downtown. The element should be lit and tall enough to be visible from Humboldt Avenue.

Another simple way to let visitors know about Downtown would be through a directional signage program. The program could be as down-to-earth as "Visit Downtown Willows" or include something more elaborate such as a Willows "You are Here" map. Any signage should be tasteful and of high quality.

### C. South Willows

South Willows is defined by the Central Canal and Road 53 on the north, Interstate 5 on the west, Road 57 on the south, and a section line on the east. The City limits also extend south of Road 57 to take in the southeastern quadrant of the I-5 interchange.

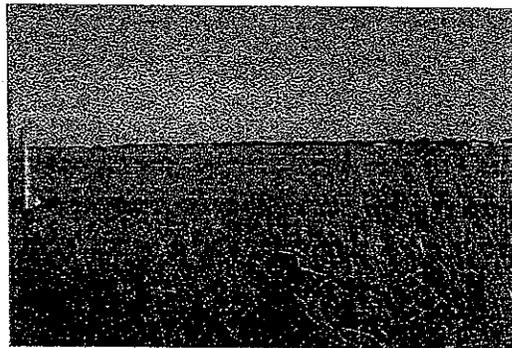
Old Highway 99 bisects South Willows. On the east of Highway 99 is substantial acreage devoted to the City Wastewater Treatment Plant, flanked on the north by light industrially-designated land and on the south by property designated general commercial (in the General Plan) and heavy manufacturing on the zoning map.

The west side of Highway 99 to I-5 is largely devoted to agriculture, although a trucking facility has recently located at the southern end near the I-5 interchange. The northern two-thirds of South Willows is designated and zoned for low density, single family residential. The southern one-third is zoned for a combination of general commercial, light manufacturing, highway commercial, and planned development (commercial/manufacturing).

Comprehensively planned, South Willows can serve as both a new residential area and an employment center, complementing currently developed areas within the City limits.

Environmental considerations require attention, but do not appear to be obstacles to well-planned development. Included are drainage (high ground water levels but not widespread flooding potential); compatibility of land uses, present and future (wastewater treatment plant, chemical plant); I-5 impacts such as noise and glare.

As witnessed by the recent addition of the truck transfer facility near the I-5 interchange, South Willows has potential for job-creating businesses and industries. The area is attractive to firms requiring a certain level of public services, excellent freeway access, adequate land area, and some distance from residential areas. Freeway visibility, proximity to the airport, and availability of rail access might be attractive to some. A potential workforce and established community close at hand, but not too close to cause land use conflicts, are big pluses.



*Agricultural uses currently dominate South Willows.*



*The Willows Waste Water Treatment Plant lies just east of Highway 99 and the railroad.*

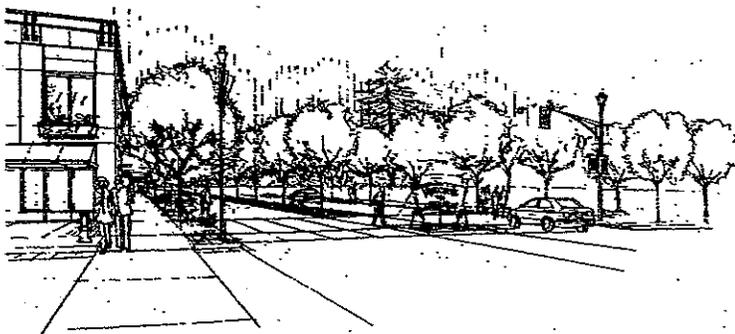
South Willows is the most attractive area in or around the City for a range of industries. These include heavy manufacturing and fabricating plants, processing operations (agriculture, wood, and related products), and large-scale warehouse and distribution facilities. In short, South Willows could host a wide variety of facilities whose operating characteristics might be incompatible with residential land uses, without adversely affecting the rest of the town.

South Willows also has potential for a new residential neighborhood, south of and along the Central Canal. The new residential development could extend from the small existing Fern Street neighborhood west of Tehama Street westward toward I-5. The Airport Overflight Safety Zone occupies a thin pie-shaped wedge of land along the east side of I-5, but all land uses are compatible within this relatively non-restrictive area. The southern extent of the South Willows residential neighborhood may vary, depending upon the demand for residential development contrasted with the demand for land in the proposed business/industrial park to the south. Wherever the residential-business/industrial park boundary is placed, a substantial open space buffer between the two uses should be established (see Exhibit F).

To connect the South Willows residential neighborhood to older Willows, Merrill Street could be extended over the Canal into South Willows. Merrill would serve as a residential connection only, and would not be used as an access street for business/industrial park purposes. A pedestrian/bicycle-only bridge or two across the Canal would effectively make Jensen a neighborhood park serving South Willows, and facilitate non-vehicular traffic both ways across the Canal. Pedestrian and bicycle trails would continue south into the planned business/industrial park.

South Willows may hold a key to achieving several Community Vision Goals, including expansion of the economic base, encouragement of upper-middle income level housing, and provision of an overall transportation network (with pedestrian and bicycle routes) linking all destinations.

#### D. Tehama Street

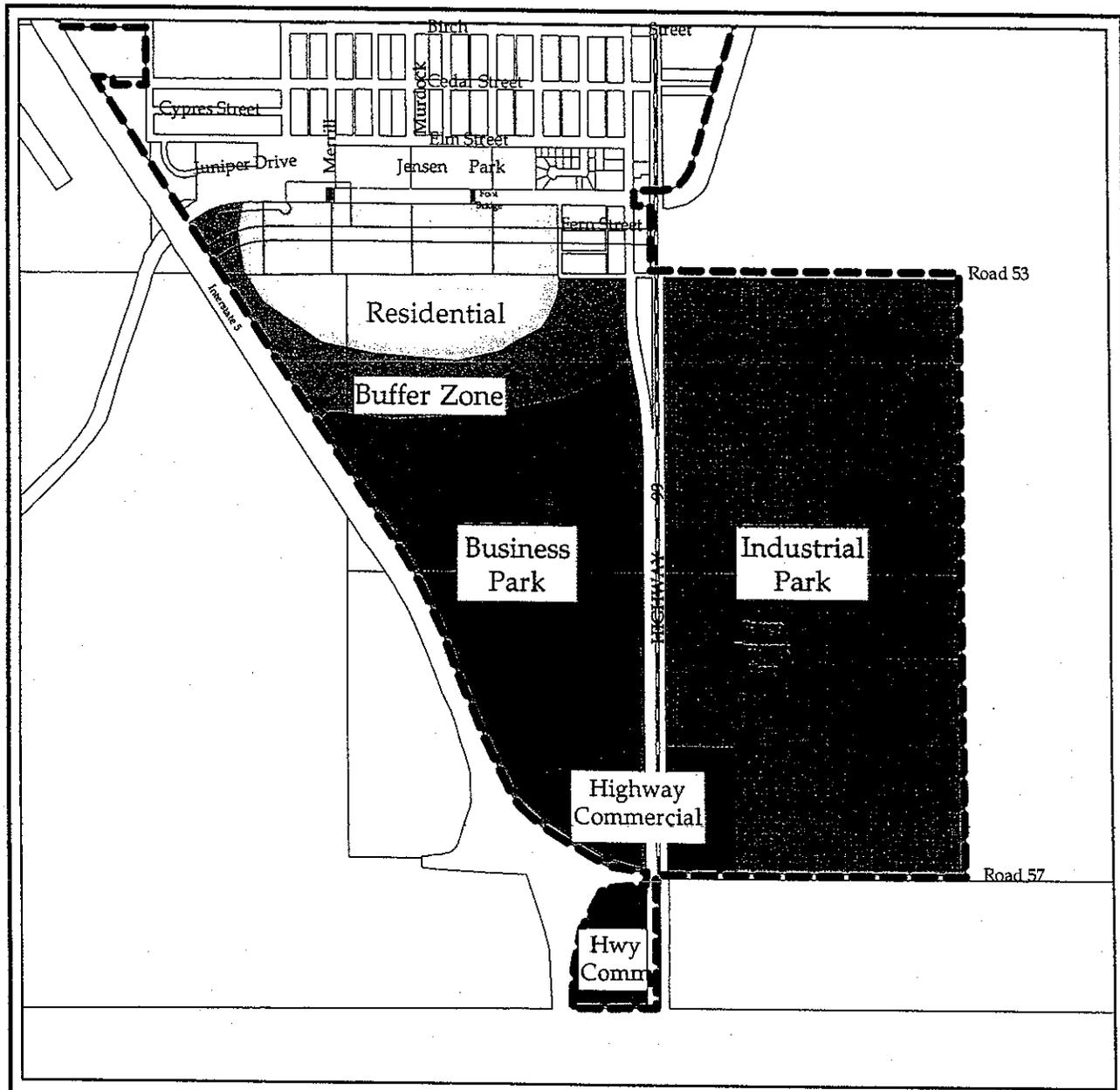


*Tehama Street with streetscape improvements.*

Tehama Street, old Highway 99, parallels the railroad north-south through Willows from the I-5 County Road 57 interchange, north across the Central Canal, through downtown, and exiting the City limits at the railroad curve near Eureka Street.

From the County Road 57 interchange north to the Central Canal, Tehama Street is a rural road. North of the canal, however, the streetscape becomes distinctly "urban". From the canal to downtown, Tehama shows signs of busier times past. Once Tehama Street bustled with travelers,

local shoppers, and industries. Now, either vacant or underutilized properties line the street for several blocks south of downtown. North of downtown, Tehama hosts light industrial, storage and general commercial uses. Through downtown, Tehama serves as one of Willows' main streets, perhaps a shared honor with Butte Street one block west and Wood Street, now the corridor connecting downtown with the traveling public on I-5.



LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Railroad
-  Business Park
-  Buffer Zone
-  Highway Commercial
-  Industrial Park
-  Residential

**Exhibit F**  
**South Willows**  
 November 16, 1999  
 Community Vision Plan  
 and General Plan Update  
**CITY OF WILLOWS**  
 GLENN COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
 Mogavero/Notestine Associates and  
 Quad Knopf

Considering Tehama Street's colorful and diverse past, what roles might this once-proud highway play in years to come? In South Willows, Tehama Street should be prepared to: 1) accommodate a limited amount of off-freeway convenience traffic (though not as much as the Wood Street interchange); 2) facilitate traffic in and out of the planned business/industrial park areas; 3) provide one of two access points to the new South Willows residential neighborhood; 4) serve as a commuter route for Willows residents to and from jobs in South Willows; and 5) lure travelers off the Freeway and into downtown.

A tree-lined Tehama Street from the County Road 57 interchange north to the Central Canal would offer an attractive and functional corridor, providing for set back pedestrian/bicycle pathways. North of the immediate interchange area, Tehama Street should have a parkway character, uninterrupted by strip commercial establishments and curb cuts, other than cross streets serving the business/industrial park areas and the new South Willows residential neighborhood.

From the canal north into downtown, Tehama Street's role tends to become that of serving primarily local traffic with some tourist traffic, though not competing directly with downtown business. Commercial uses in this stretch should be of a general commercial nature (as currently designed by the General Plan and zoned). Tehama Street continues as a tree-lined street with set back sidewalks on either side. A few small parks and well-landscaped commercial properties reinforce the parkway character on the approach to downtown.

Within downtown, vacant and underutilized properties on either side on Tehama dampen the interest of potential investors. Continuous activity through downtown on the west side of Tehama is an essential element of downtown revival. The east side, bounded a half-block away by the railroad, may be better suited to "green space". A particularly good park area is the half block east of Tehama Street, between Sycamore and Walnut Streets. A sidewalk should be provided as part of the Tehama streetscape along the frontage of the mall/grocery store.

The use of landscaping, street trees, and a parkway character should be continued at least to the intersection of Tehama and Wood Streets.

## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

This section of the Plan contains a list of Programs and Actions designed to enhance the quality of life and economic viability of the community and in the process create employment opportunities for Willows residents.

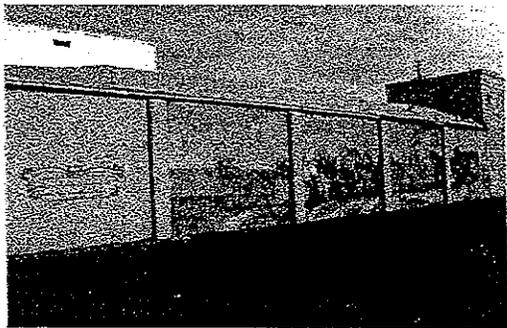
### **1 Programs and Actions**

The list of Programs and Actions is not presented in order of priority. The cost estimates are provided as an order of magnitude and will need refinement as projects are implemented.

Following the list of Projects and Activities are potential funding sources and a matrix which includes the list and identifies projects, costs, schedule and responsible implementation partners.

#### **A. Downtown**

- **Multicultural Craft Center** - Investigate the desirability and feasibility of providing space in a currently vacant downtown building for the display and sale of crafts provided by the diverse population.



*Continue the mural program.*



*Clean up unsightly areas.*



*Restore the historic street signs.*

- **Mural Program** - Continue the mural program to improve the aesthetics of large vacant walls. A high priority should be the Pacific Bell building on Butte Street.
- **Cleanups** - Coordinate existing community organizations and downtown property owners and businesses to conduct downtown area cleanups.
- **The Tower** - Work with Pacific Bell to enhance the current non-functional communications tower to provide a visual icon that leads visitors to the downtown area.
- **Upper Floor Residential /Seismic Analysis** - Conduct a market feasibility, financing, and seismic analysis to evaluate reusing second floor commercial space. The space could be used as senior housing or offices.
- **Public Space and Equipment Maintenance** - Many of the City's facilities, including the clock and water feature in the Willows Mall and street signs throughout the area, are in dire need of maintenance. The City should allocate resources to ensure that these and other City facilities are well maintained. The historic street signs should be preserved and rehabilitated.
- **Downtown Revitalization Strategy** - Conduct a more detailed revitalization strategy focused on the downtown and Tehama Street corridor in order to develop approaches to more fully utilize the Downtown.
- **National Register Historic District** - The City should sponsor an application for the nomination of a Downtown National Register Historic District(s). The nomination, if approved, would provide a twenty percent Federal tax credit

to property owners who restore contributing properties. The rehabilitation work must conform to Federal standards. More modest credits are available for the rehabilitation of buildings over 50 years old, whether or not they are listed in the National Register.

Modest tax incentives exist at the state level for property owners who donate a facade easement to a nonprofit preservation organization. A facade easement works like the Williamson Act for farmland, reducing property taxes in accordance with the restricted land use associated with the easement.

The Mills Act provides for a reduction in property taxes on historic property when certain conditions are met. Owners of designated historic properties must enter into a preservation contract directly with the local government, agreeing to restore the property if necessary, maintain its historic character, and to use it in a manner compatible with its historic characteristics. Use of the Mills Act requires the county tax assessor to adjust the assessed value of the property downward to reflect the restrictions placed on the property. A lower assessment will result in lower taxation.

While not a formal grant or incentive program, the State Historic Building Code can be a considerable incentive for historic preservation when it results in lower cost rehabilitation. The

State Historic Building Code provides an alternative building code that may be used on any property that is designated at the local, state, or federal levels. Experience has shown that rehabilitation using the alternative code is typically less expensive than work conducted using only the Uniform Building Code.

- **Sidewalks** - Sidewalks throughout the downtown are in need of repair or replacement as well as ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) compliance. These improvements should be conducted in coordination with any streetscape/landscaping improvements.
- **Design Guidelines** - Buildings should utilize the historic context existing in the Downtown. This does not mean that new development should copy "Victorian" design, but rather, that design guidelines should be developed that incorporate traditional design elements relative to height, bulk, shape, fenestration (size and distribution of windows and other openings), and materials. These guidelines should require that modifications to existing historic buildings be based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation.
- **General Plan and Zoning Ordinance** - Amend Non-conforming section of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the reconstruction of a destroyed building under certain circumstances. The permitted and conditional uses in the CC Zone should be expanded.
- **Expand the CC Zone** - The CC Zone should be expanded to include an area roughly bounded by the railroad tracks on the east, Wood Street on the north, Shasta Street on the west (extending out Sycamore to the County complex) and Oak Street on the south.
- **Improve Downtown - Tehama Street Streetscape** - Streetscape, Street Furniture, Lighting, and Public Signage, should be designed to provide a coherent theme throughout the expanded Downtown area. The theme should be based on the historic character of the community. Streetlighting, for example, should be based on historic fixtures found in older pictures of the Downtown Area, and furniture (though probably not present in those pictures) consistent with the light fixtures.
- **Economic Development Program** - The City, County, and Chamber should develop a Marketing Strategy that stresses the unique shopping and recreational opportunities in a significant Historic Downtown District. The Strategy should include a centralized clearinghouse for visitor information. The plan should also develop funding sources to engage the talent and expertise of either a professional marketing agency or individual to generate the consistency and coordination of marketing and media information. As part of the Marketing Strategy, the City, County and Chamber should collectively develop, prepare, and improve existing and new collateral marketing materials for distribution in motels, restaurants, retailers, etc. The types of materials might include:
  - √ A Community Profile containing general background material on the entire city such as demographics, weather, utilities, schools, medical facilities, events, government, history, and plans for the future.
  - √ Business Location Map containing a map with the location and brief description of visitor oriented businesses.
  - √ Historic Walking Tour (s) containing maps, drawings and descriptions of historic commercial and residential properties - include other points of interest such as the museum, parks, community theater and the library.
  - √ Annual Events Calendar containing a listing of all events (including but not limited to those at Thunderhill Park, the Chamber, the Golf Course, the Community Theater, and Sporting Clays) that would be of interest to visitors.

√ A Downtown Willows Web Page that includes the above information as well as information on the Downtown revitalization efforts, links to the City's web page, cross links to other appropriate pages (such as Thunderhill Park, area Motels, Sacramento Valley hunting and fishing information, county government, etc.), and links to member business pages.

√ A Marketing Brochure specific to the Vision Plan that will provide key support to all implementation projects and activities, and

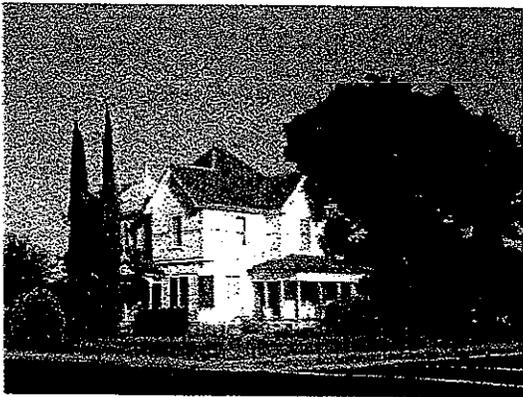
√ To help lure local patronage, there is a need to develop a Business Directory listing all businesses, the service they provide, hours of operation, etc.

- **Façade Improvement/Commercial Loan Program** - Seek grant funding to develop a revolving loan pool either to rehabilitate existing commercial structures or to develop new projects in the downtown area.

## B. Housing

- **Expand The Housing Rehabilitation Program To Include More Resources for Multi-Family** - Many of the older multifamily housing units are in need of rehabilitation. The existing rehabilitation program should be expanded to include these properties.
- **Amend Zoning Ordinance Related to Nonconforming Uses** - Amend Non-conforming section of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the reconstruction of a destroyed building.
- **Annexation Policy** - The City should develop an annexation policy that considers flood-prone areas, the ability to provide services at no cost (capital as well as operational costs) to the City, and a balance between housing units and available jobs in the community.

## C. Wood Street



*Adopt a Demolition Ordinance to preserve historic structures.*

- **Evaluate and Expand the Uses Allowed Along Wood Street** - In order to incorporate a broader array of uses it is recommended that the City, as a part of this current planning effort, expand the uses allowed on properties either fronting or siding on Wood Street. In order to protect the existing residential uses to the north and south, the area should include those properties that are located at least within 165 feet of Wood Street.

- **Demolition Ordinance** - The City should develop an ordinance that regulates the demolition of historic structures.

- **Implement Caltrans Improvements** - Implement the proposed roadway improvements along Wood Street. As part of those improvements the City should attempt to have sidewalks setback from the curb six to eight feet and be a minimum of six feet in width. Textured high visibility crosswalks are also desirable. To accommodate some on-street parking the City should consider providing parallel parking on the south side or alternating south to north. It is further recommended that wherever practical that street trees be of a canopy species.

- **Enhance Streetscape and Design Guidelines** - Beyond the Caltrans improvements, additional streetscape, street furniture, lighting, and public signage as well as Design Guidelines, should be designed to provide a coherent theme along Wood Street from the freeway to Colusa Street. The theme should be based on residential character of the corridor. Buildings, for example, should be one and two stories with a scale consistent with a residential structure and have front yard landscaping.
- **Vista Element** - A roundabout and tall architectural element should be located at the intersection of Wood and Tehama Streets. The tall element would act as an attraction to lure visitors from the freeway area to the downtown.
- **Signage and Banners** - The City and Chamber of Commerce should develop an entrance signage and banner program for Wood Street. Banners should be personally designed for the City and used to inform the visitor of upcoming events or to guide them to the downtown.

#### D. South Willows

- **General Plan Changes** - Amend the General Plan Land Use Map in accordance with Exhibit F, South Willows. New designations should be: Low-Density Residential for the residential area south of the Central Canal; Commercial/Industrial Combining Use for the area shown as Business Park; Highway Commercial at the I-5 interchange and Tehama Street/Road 57 intersection; and General Industrial in the area shown as Industrial Park. For the area shown on Exhibit F as Buffer, designate as Agriculture.
- **Zoning Changes** - Change the Zoning Map to consistent categories, reflecting General Plan redesignations listed above. Use Table 8.1 (Zoning Consistency), page 8-2 of the General Plan Land Use Element to identify consistent zoning categories.
- **Specific Plan** - Initiate, with the cooperation of South Willows property owners, a Specific Plan for the entire area. Upon completion and City adoption, the Specific Plan will assume the roles of the General Plan, zoning ordinance, capital improvements program, and design guidelines for South Willows.
- **Circulation Improvements** - Plan for the southward extension of Merrill Street, over the canal, as a "residential traffic only" access link serving the new residential area. Plan for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge some distance east of the Merrill extension, connecting the new residential area and Jensen Park. Plan for the improvement and extension of Road 53 from Tehama Street west into the new residential area, serving as an alternative access to the residential community.
- **Signage** - As a secondary access to downtown, Tehama Street from the South Willows interchange (I-5) north to the Central Canal should have some consistent signage directing visitors to downtown. The City and Chamber of Commerce should develop a signage program of a more modest scale than the signage-banner program for Wood Street.
- **Tehama Street in South Willows** (South of the Canal) - Include road and streetscape improvements in the Specific Plan for South Willows, to be implemented as development in accordance with the Specific Plan occurs.

## **E Tehama Street**

- **Street Improvements** - Plan and implement roadway improvements similar to those planned for Wood Street, to include turn pockets, landscaped median, setback sidewalks, and landscaping in the "parkway" between the street and sidewalks.
- **Enhance Streetscape and Design Guidelines** - Develop streetscape, street furniture, lighting, and public signage guidelines to provide a coherent street character from the canal north into downtown.
- **Signage** - Provide for visitor-attraction signage oriented to southbound traffic, consistent with signage planned for Wood Street.
- **Downtown Strategic Plan** - The portion of Tehama Street north of Laurel should be included in the proposed Downtown Strategic Plan.

## **2 Coordinating Committee**

The City should expand the current Vision General Plan Advisory Committee to include active organizations such as the County, Chamber, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, etc. The individual members would report back to their organizations and direct the work that the organization might be responsible for. It should meet monthly or every other month to review status reports from other organizations, city, or other public agency staff on the progress of implementation. The committee would provide policy direction and guidance as required. Some of the members of the new Vision Implementation Coordinating Committee would also serve on subcommittees that are needed for specific projects or groups of projects.

The subcommittees should be given a written charge for one or more of the recommendations contained in the Plan. These individual committee members would be selected based on their knowledge and interest in the various subject areas. Various Department Directors or the City Manager would work with the various committees. For example, one committee could work on zoning and design guidelines, parking, historic building code, permit processing and related items. A second committee could work on financing, fee incentives, grants, and assessment districts. A third committee could concentrate on Public Works type projects including street lighting, streetscape design and similar projects.

## **3 Potential Funding Sources**

The following discussion outlines potential funding sources for improvements and programs proposed in the Willows Community Vision and Action Plan, including any pertinent issues and constraints related to each.

The City of Willows will need to use a variety of funding sources to implement the Community Vision and Action Plan. These include: (1) funding provided directly by private property owners (usually in conjunction with new development projects); (2) Redevelopment Agency tax increment; development impact fees; (3) assessment districts (such as special assessment districts, Business Improvement Districts, and landscape and lighting districts); (4) local Rule 20A utility undergrounding funds; (5) state and federal funding such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); (6) Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA21) funds; (7) developer contributions; and (7) potential grant funding (as available).

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## A. Private Funding

Private funding can be a range of personal capital expenditures, exactions, dedications, and contributions made by property owners and developers to pay for specific new projects that serve their properties. As an alternative to providing required funding up-front, property owners and developers are often willing to participate in either assessment districts or other special taxing arrangements that provide a long-term financing mechanism for costly projects.

If private property owners are interested in undertaking the improvements, the City will encourage them as soon as practical. However, if property owners are not interested, the projects will be delayed. Generally, these decisions by private property owners can be made independent of the decisions regarding the priorities for expenditure of public funds on other projects.

## B. Development Impact Fees

In recent years it has become increasingly common for cities and counties to charge fees on new development to fund construction of capital facilities that will serve that new development. California State Government Code Section 66000-66003 (AB 1600) applies to development fees used to finance public facilities, which are established, increased or imposed on or after January 1, 1989. AB 1600 requires that any jurisdiction establishing development impact fees comply with the following:

- Identify the purpose of the fee.
- Identify the use to which the fee is to be put.
- Determine how there is a reasonable relationship between the fee's use and the type of development project on which the fee is imposed.
- Determine how there is a reasonable relationship between the need for the public facility and the type of development project on which the fee is imposed.
- Determine whether there is a reasonable relationship between the specific amount of the fee imposed and the cost of the public facility attributable to that project.
- Maintain fee revenue in a separate account from the general fund in order to avoid co-mingling of capital facilities fees and the general fund.
- Make specific findings once each fiscal year regarding any portion of the fee remaining unexpended or uncommitted five years after deposit to identify the purpose and need for the fee, and
- Refund any fees unexpended or uncommitted after five years for which need cannot be demonstrated.

It should be noted that these provisions apply to development impact fees only (used to fund capital facilities required for development) and specifically do not apply to reimbursement agreements, fees charged for processing development applications, development agreements, and fees charged in lieu of park land dedication under the Quimby Act.

**C. Rule 20A Utility Set-Asides**

Pacific Gas and Electric is required to set aside funds each year that accumulate to finance local utility undergrounding projects.

**D. Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA21) Funds**

One potential federal funding source might come from the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA21). The Act was initially passed in 1990, and ISTEA funds were made available for two three-year funding cycles. Available funds under both cycles have been committed, and the Act has recently been re-authorized for additional funding cycles.

TEA21 funds can be used to construct a wide variety of transportation improvements, including transit and intermodal facilities; highways, streets and roads; park and ride lots; bicycle and pedestrian projects; and transportation control measures. TEA21 will generally fund up to 80 percent of a project's total cost, with the remaining 20 percent funded through a local matching funds.

It may be possible for the City to apply for TEA21 funding to pay for some of the transit, streetscape, traffic calming, and trailway improvements. The City of Willows should aggressively pursue funding for any projects that would be competitive.

**E. Transportation Development Act (TDA) Funds**

The Transportation Development Act is a one-quarter cent sales tax enacted statewide to fund various transportation activities. The state allocates funds annually to local agencies using a population-based formula. This allocation can be expected to fluctuate each year based on statewide retail sales trends, which drive the collection of the one-quarter cent sales tax.

While this funding source is primarily intended to finance transit system capital projects and operations, the City can apply to spend a portion of its TDA allocation on different types of roadway, pedestrian, and bike improvements. In order to do this, the City must first show findings that other transit needs, which can reasonably be addressed, have been met. The City has currently allocated these monies for the establishment of local bus service.

**F. Grant Funding Sources**

Other state and federal grant funding sources may be available to fund a portion of the various improvements proposed in the Plan area. While specific funding sources and dollar amounts have not been researched as part of this background report, it is anticipated that additional funding sources could be pursued by appropriate department staff either within the City of Willows or other local agencies. These funding opportunities may arise during the course of implementing the Willows Community Vision and Action Plan.

**G. Special Assessment Districts**

A special assessment is a charge imposed on real property for a public improvement (or service) directly benefiting that property. The rationale for a special assessment is that the assessed property has received a special benefit over and above that received by the general public.

Special assessments are distinguished from real property taxes by a number of factors. Unlike taxes (including special taxes, such as Mello Roos taxes), the sum of a special assessment cannot exceed

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either the cost of the improvement or service it is financing. Furthermore, special assessments cannot be levied against those properties that do not benefit from the improvements being financed. Conversely, property within an assessment district that benefits from the improvements being financed must pay a portion of the assessment.

California statutes give local governments the authority to levy a number of special assessments for specific public improvements such as streets, storm drains, sewers, streetlights, curbs and gutters and landscaping. Some of the most commonly used statutes include the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 (authorizing assessments, with bonds issued under the Improvement Bond Act of 1915), and the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972, as summarized in G.1 and G.2 below.

It should be noted that passage of Proposition 218 in November 1996, has imposed additional requirements and limitations on the use of special assessment districts, raising various legal issues, which will likely require future court rulings for resolution. The changes brought about by Proposition 218 are also summarized in G.3 below.

Assessment districts can be useful financing mechanisms to pay for improvement costs attributable to both new and existing development, as long as a strong nexus exists between benefits that taxpayers receive and the assessment they are asked to pay. Assessment districts are one of the mechanisms available for the City's use that will allow up-front construction of costly improvements using bond proceeds, to be secured by property within the district and repaid by property owners over time.

For all assessment districts, but particularly when bonds are to be issued, there is a need for the City to consider whether the proposed assessment district will be of a sufficient size to justify the costs for district administration, and costs associated with bond issuance.

Where funds from existing sources are not available to pay the existing development's share of necessary improvements, including all benefiting properties in an assessment district, may be one of the few feasible ways to fund an improvement. However, this will require existing development to take on a greater tax burden.

#### G.1 Municipal Improvement Act of 1913/Improvement Bond Act of 1915

The 1913 Act authorizes cities and counties to levy assessments against properties within a district to fund acquisition, engineering and construction costs. This applies to the following types of improvements: (1) transportation systems; (2) street paving and grading; (3) sidewalks, parks, parkways and landscaping; (4) recreation areas; (5) sanitary sewers and drainage systems; (6) street lighting; (7) fire protection and flood protection; (8) water supply systems; (9) facilities for providing water service, electrical power and gas service, and (10) seismic safety and fire code upgrade requirements.

The Improvement Bond Act of 1915 does not authorize assessments, but instead provides a vehicle for issuing bonds (including variable interest bonds) to be repaid through assessments levied under the 1913 Act (as well as a number of other benefit assessment statutes). Assessment bonds are not a direct obligation of the issuing agency, and are not considered a personal or corporate indebtedness of the respective property owners paying the assessments. The bonds are secured by a public lien on the individual parcels (i.e., property benefiting from the improvements). Under the 1915 legislation, the local legislative body may also issue bond anticipation notes prior to actual bond sale - in effect borrowing money against the assessment bonds being proposed for sale.

## G.2 Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972

The 1972 Act enables assessments to be imposed to finance the following:

- Acquisition of land for parks, recreation and open space.
- Installation or construction of landscaping, street lighting, ornamental structures and park and recreational improvements, and
- Maintenance of any of the above improvements.

Public facilities such as community centers or municipal auditoriums are specifically excluded from being financed through a landscaping and lighting district, unless approved by the property owners owning 50 percent of the area of assessable lands within the proposed district.

## G.3 Effect of Proposition 218

Proposition 218 requires all new or increased assessments (and some existing assessments) to meet four conditions.

First, local governments must estimate the amount of special benefit landowners would receive from a project or service. If a project provides both special and general benefits, a local government may charge landowners only for the cost of providing the special benefit, and must use general revenues to pay the remaining portion of the project or service's cost.

Second, local governments must ensure that no property owner's assessment is greater than the cost to provide the improvement or service to the owner's property. This requires local governments to examine assessments in significant detail, potentially on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Third, local governments must charge schools and other public agencies their fair share of assessments. (Previously, public agencies did not pay assessments.)

Finally, local governments must hold a mail-in election for each assessment. Only property owners and renters responsible for paying assessments are eligible to vote. Ballots cast in these elections will be tallied based on the proportionate share of the assessment of the respective property owner. For example, if a business owner's assessment were twice as high as that of a homeowner, the business owner's vote would count twice as much as the homeowner's vote.

(Previously, most of the statutes required no popular vote. Rather, a resolution of intention to form a district was considered at a noticed public hearing and affected landowners were provided with the opportunity to protest the proposed assessment. A majority protest by the landowners might stop the project, but many of the statutes allowed for an override of protests by four-fifths vote of the legislative body.)

In addition to these specific provisions, this initiative shifts any burden of proof to local government. In other words, in lawsuits challenging property assessments, the courts previously placed any burden of proof on taxpayer(s), and allowed local governments significant flexibility in determining assessment amounts. This measure shifts the burden of proof in these lawsuits to local government.

As a result of these various changes, many municipalities have been reluctant to initiate proceedings to form special assessment districts, since many of the requirements (e.g., precise calculation of specific benefit) are considered potentially litigious at the present time. Based on the above considerations, new assessment district financing is likely only in the case of providing a

mechanism for property owners to finance construction of new improvements. These improvements would have to either provide direct enhancements to existing property (i.e., streetscape improvements, enhanced pedestrian crossings) or enable private property owners to intensify development on their properties (i.e., new roadway extensions).

In a recent decision the court said Proposition 218 defines an assessment, which requires a vote, as a levy against real estate. That does not apply to a district that imposes charges against businesses rather than property.

The court also said the levy was not a special tax, which would also require a vote, because the money raised would chiefly benefit the fee-payers rather than the general public.

## **H. Mello Roos Community Facilities District**

The Mello Roos Community Facilities District (CFD) Act was initially passed in 1982, but has subsequently had a series of legislative amendments. Mello-Roos can be used by cities, counties, special districts and school districts to finance public improvements, equipment, services, developer fees, and acquisitions of rights of way.

In general, a broader range of improvements can be financed through a Mello Roos than through an assessment district, including:

- Streets, water, sewer and basic infrastructure.
- Local parks, recreation, parkway and open space facilities.
- Elementary and secondary school sites.
- Libraries.
- Natural gas pipeline facilities, telephone lines and facilities for the transmission or distribution of electrical energy.
- Fire and police protection services.
- Flood and storm facilities and services.
- Governmental facilities which the legislative body creating the CFD is authorized by law to construct, own or operate, and
- Developer fees.

Any bonds issued by a Mello Roos CFD are repaid through the levy of a special tax, which must be approved by a two-thirds vote within the District. The primary advantage of the special tax is that it is not subject to the engineering special benefit rules that govern the allocation of assessment liens. The Act allows flexibility in the structuring of the special tax. For example, the tax can be structured so that it varies depending upon the zoning or development intensity of the property being assessed. The only limitation is that it may not be done on an *ad valorem* basis.

The Mello Roos Act also allows latitude with respect to drawing CFD boundaries. Improvement areas can be formed within the CFD to segregate certain areas of the development into sub-districts. There is no requirement that the CFD be contiguous. Consequently, CFD boundaries can be drawn in such a way as to exclude recalcitrant property owners.

## **I Community Development Block Grant Program**

The City of Willows is not a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement community, meaning that the City needs to compete for CDBG funds from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to use for various community development purposes. Eligible uses

can include certain public improvements/facilities, social services, economic development, and housing rehabilitation and development activities primarily benefiting low- and moderate-income households.

**J General Revenues**

Due to budgetary constraints, the likelihood of securing General Fund contributions for project implementation in coming years is small. Based on this, it is assumed that General Fund will not provide significant financing for the Willows Community Vision and Action Plan improvements. Other non-development impact fee revenues, such as assessment district proceeds, special grants, CDBG, and other revenues not collected from new development must be relied upon to pay for the City's current share of new improvements.

**K. Implementation Matrix**

Table 2 is a compilation of the individual Implementation Projects and Activities identified in Section VI.



Table 2 - Implementation Matrix

Project	Cost	Schedule	Responsible Party
<b>Downtown</b>			
Multicultural Craft Center	\$ 8,500 P/ TA Grant - CDBG	2000	County Economic Development
Mural Program	\$ 2,000/ year Fraternal Organizations	2000 +	Coordinating Committee
Clean-Ups	\$ 1,500/ year Fraternal Organizations	2000 +	Coordinating Committee
The Tower	Unknown	2002	Downtown Plan Consultant
Upper Floor Residential Seismic Analysis	\$ 35,000 P/ TA Grant - CDBG	2002	City Public Works/ Consultant
Public Space and Equipment Maintenance	\$12,000 General Fund	2000+	City Public Works
Downtown Revitalization Strategy	\$ 37,500 P/ TA Grant - CDBG	2001	City Manager/ Consultant
National Register Historic District	\$ 25,500 P/ TA Grant - CDBG	2003	City Manager/ Consultant
Sidewalks	Unknown - TEA21	2002	City Public Works
Design Guidelines	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
General Plan and Zoning Ordinance	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Expand the CC Zone	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Improve Downtown-Tehama Streetscape	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Economic Development Program	\$50,000 P/ TA Grant - CDBG / Chamber / City/ BID	2000	County Economic Development - Chamber - City Manager
Façade Improvement Program	\$ 200,000 Revolving Loan Fund - CDBG	2002	City Manager
<b>Housing</b>			
Housing Rehabilitation Program for Multi-family	\$ 400,000 CDBG	2001	City Manager
Amend Zoning Ordinance Related to Non-conforming Uses	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Annexation Policy	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant

Table 2 - Implementation Matrix - Continued

Project	Cost	Schedule	Responsible Party
<b>Wood Street</b>			
Evaluate and Expand the uses allowed along Wood Street	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Demolition Ordinance	\$ 2,500 General Fund	2000	City Manager/ City Attorney
Implement Caltrans Improvements	N/ A Existing Program	2001	Public Works
Enhance Streetscape and Design Guidelines	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Vista Element	Unknown pending ultimate design - TEA21	2005	Coordinating Committee
Signage and Banners	\$ 15,000 - BID - Fraternal Organizations	2002	Coordinating Committee
<b>South Willows</b>			
General Plan Changes	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Zoning Changes	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Specific Plan	Unknown - Private	Unknown	Private Landowner with City Approval
Circulation Improvements	Unknown - Private	Unknown	Private Landowner with City Approval
Signage	\$ 7,500 - BID - Fraternal Organizations	2002	Coordinating Committee
Tehama Street	Unknown - Private	Unknown	Private Landowner with City Approval
<b>Tehama Street</b>			
Street Improvements	\$ 3,000,000+/- TEA21	2005	Public Works
Enhance Streetscape and Design Guidelines	N/ A part of this study	2000	City Manager/ Consultant
Signage	\$ 5,000 - BID - Fraternal Organizations	2003	Coordinating Committee
Downtown Revitalization Strategy	N/ A Included Above	2001	City Manager/ Consultant

P/TA - Planning and Technical Assistance Grant  
 CDBG - Community Development Block Grant  
 TEA21 - Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century  
 BID - Business Improvement District