LODI GENERAL PLAN

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CITY OF LODI AUGUST 2009

1 INTRODUCTION

Lodi is a distinctive Central Valley community along the Mokelumne River, adjacent to the Sacramento Delta. It is a compact city surrounded by vineyards, with a revitalized downtown and attractive neighborhoods. Lodi is also a burgeoning center of wine production and tourism, with the local appellation increasingly gaining in prestige, especially for its zinfandels. Because of its charm and small-town atmosphere, Lodi remains the preferred residential choice for many residents of the greater San Joaquin County region, and an increasing draw for employers.

This General Plan outlines a vision for Lodi's future, building on the city's assets, including its historic downtown, parks, arts and culture, and sense of community. With the wine industry increasingly vital to the city's economic sustenance and character, the General Plan promotes continued compact form and emphasizes preservation of surrounding agricultural and viticulture lands. Economic development, downtown vibrancy, revitalization of commercial corridors with a mix of uses, and creation of walkable neighborhoods are priorities, along with a commitment to a sustainable development pattern, ranging from overall city form to the design of buildings and open spaces.

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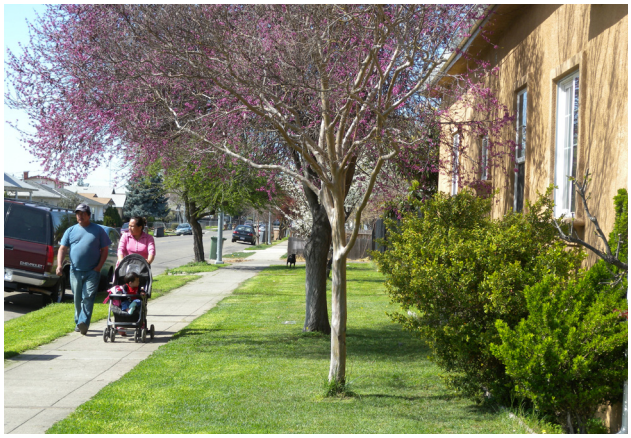
1.1 PLANNING THEMES

The General Plan presents eleven central planning themes, which were highlighted during the visioning phase and developed through discussions with community members. These themes are woven throughout the Plan and specified through policy measures.



Livable neighborhoods, with access to retail, public facilities, jobs, and parks, are priorities for both existing and future development areas.

1. **Compact Urban Form.** The Plan enhances Lodi's compact urban form, promoting infill development downtown and along key corridors, while also outlining growth possibilities directly adjacent to the existing urban edge. The City's overall form will be squarish, reinforcing the centrality of downtown, with virtually all new development located within three miles from it.

2. **Mokelumne River as the City's Northern Edge.** The Lodi community has expressed a desire to see the river remain as the city's northern edge. The southern bank of the river (within the city) is occupied by residential uses and streets do not reach the river. Therefore, connectivity across the river to knit the urban fabric would be challenging if growth were to extend northward.

3. **Enhanced Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors.** The Plan designates downtown as a mixed-use center, with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Stretches of major commercial corridors are depicted with a mixed-use designation to enable continued investment in these areas and enhancement of vacant and underutilized parcels.

4. **Walkable, Livable Neighborhoods.** The Plan envisions new neighborhoods with a variety of uses, diversity of housing types, and short blocks, organized around mixed-use centers. This pattern provides retail, housing, offices, parks, and other uses.

5. **Street Connectivity and Urban Design.** The Plan provides community design strategies for improving street connectivity, particularly in terms of access to downtown, neighborhoods, jobs, and shopping.

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6. **Preservation of Existing Neighborhoods.** Existing development in a vast majority of the Planning Area is proposed to remain as is, in terms of land use and density. Lodi residents are proud of their vibrant neighborhoods. They enjoy the small-town character of the city and would like to ensure that Lodi's high quality-of-life is enhanced as the city grows.

7. **Agricultural Preservation Along Southern Boundary.** In order to preserve agriculture and maintain a clear distinction between Lodi and Stockton, the Plan acknowledges the Armstrong Road Agricultural/Cluster Study Area along the south edge of Lodi, from Interstate 5 (I-5) to State Route (SR) 99, and south to Stockton's Planning Area boundary.

8. **Employment-Focused Development in the Southeast.** The area east of SR-99 toward the south is designated as a growth area for office, business park and commercial uses. This area has excellent regional access, and is adjacent to existing urbanized areas.

9. **Enhanced Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections.** Lodi already has an expansive bicycle network and good pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, signals, landscaping and street furniture, particularly downtown. Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle pathways in new and existing neighborhoods are identified in the General Plan.

10. **Recreation Path along Irrigation Canal Right-of-Way.** The Woodbridge Irrigation District Canal runs through the city, passing through residential neighborhoods. A public recreation trail is envisioned to enable walking, jogging, and biking.

11. **Phasing Future Development.** The Plan identifies urban reserve areas along the west and east edges of the city to provide additional area for development, if needed. These urban reserve areas ensure that the city conforms to its Growth Management Ordinance and grows at a reasonable rate.

The Plan ensures that Lodi maintains its compact form, by preserving existing neighborhoods, enabling infill development, defining growth boundaries, and phasing development over time.

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1.2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

General Plan Purpose

The General Plan governs all City actions relating to Lodi's physical development. The General Plan is mandated by and derives its authority from California Government Code Section 65300, which requires each city and county in California to adopt a General Plan, "for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which… bears relation to its planning." The Lodi General Plan is a document adopted by the City Council that serves several purposes:

- To outline a vision for Lodi's long-term physical and economic development and community enhancement;
- To provide strategies and specific implementing actions that will allow this vision to be accomplished;
- To establish a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with Plan policies and standards;
- To allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- To provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, the Capital Improvements Program and facilities plans.

State law requires that a variety of City actions be consistent with the General Plan so regular ongoing use of the Plan is essential. The Plan is both general and long-range; there will be circumstances and instances when detailed studies are necessary before Plan policies can be implemented.

General Plan Requirements

A city's general plan has been described as its constitution for development—the framework within which decisions must be made on how to grow, provide public services and facilities, and protect and enhance the environment. California's tradition of allowing local authority control over land use decisions means that the state's cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans. However, State planning laws do establish basic requirements about the issues that general plans must address. The California Government Code establishes both the content of general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans. They should be:

- **Comprehensive.** This requirement has two aspects. First, the General Plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the full range of issues that affects the City's physical development.
- **Internally Consistent.** This requirement means that the General Plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. "Horizontal" consistency applies as much to figures and diagrams as to the general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the General Plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.
- **Long-Range.** Because anticipated development will affect the city and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every general plan to take a long-term perspective. The time horizon for this general plan is approximately 20 years.

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1.3 PLAN PROCESS

The Plan draws its ideas from many citizens, community groups, business owners, elected officials, and City staff who participated in decision-making during the update process. The maps and policies in this Plan are based on the need to accommodate a future population and employment base and the desire to be an ideal place to live, work, and play. The Plan will be used on an ongoing basis, since many City regulations and actions are required by State law to be consistent with the General Plan.

Public Participation

Public participation was an essential component to the development of the Lodi General Plan. The update process was initiated in fall 2006—Lodi's centennial year—to replace the 1991 General Plan. Community members and stakeholders participated in the planning process through several different medium over the course of three years. They formulated a vision, determined future development patterns, and informed policy development, through the following participation opportunities:

- A mail-in survey sent to all residential addresses in the city;
- Public workshops and meetings;
- Stakeholder interviews and neighborhood meetings;
- Workshops with the City Council and Planning Commission;
- Presentations to organizations and neighborhood groups;
- Newsletters;
- Comments via e-mail; and
- A project website.

Community members shared ideas and offered feedback on General Plan issues and policies during workshops and meetings.

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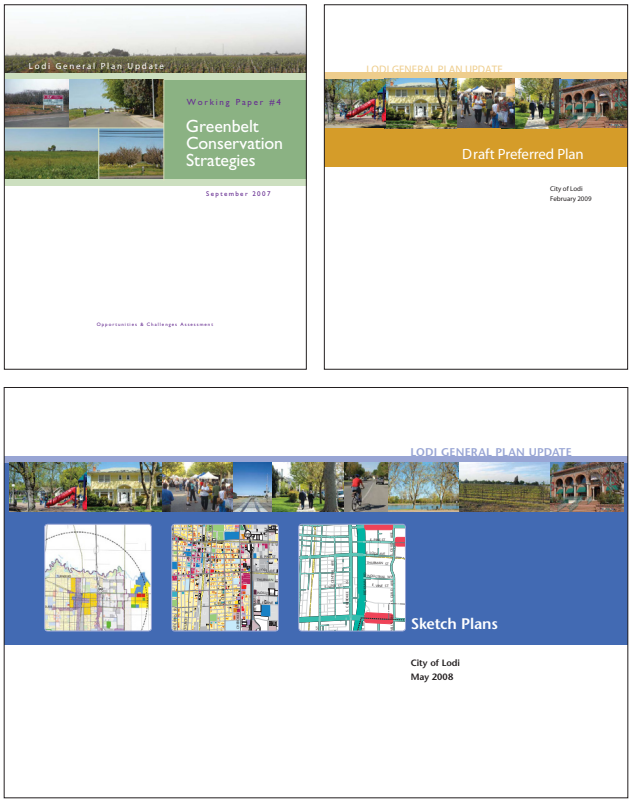
Interim Documents

As part of the General Plan update process, four working papers documenting existing conditions, trends, planning issues, and implications were prepared:

- **Working Paper #1: Land Use, Transportation, Environment, and Infrastructure** provided a baseline of existing conditions in the city, focusing on its physical environment and built form.
- **Working Paper #2: Urban Design and Livability** outlined qualities of Lodi that contribute to its livability and which should be embodied in the future.
- **Working Paper #3: Growth and Economic Development Strategy** presented growth trends, likely demand for various land uses—including retail demand by sector—and opportunities, challenges, and possibilities for their arrangement in Lodi's future.
- **Working Paper #4: Greenbelt Conservation Strategies** focused on the issue of a greenbelt along the southern edge of the city, including its viability, size, location, and feasible implementation techniques and incentives.

Following these analyses, three land use alternatives for future development and their transportation, infrastructure, and fiscal impacts were prepared in a Sketch Plan Report. The sketch plans presented a range of options to guide future development and intensification in Lodi, addressed goals for conservation, economic development, and walkable livable neighborhoods, and analyzed relative impacts on traffic and infrastructure.

Finally, a preferred plan was selected based on the most desired portions of the sketch plans, following a community open house and meetings with citizen and business groups. The Preferred Plan was endorsed by the City's decision makers and became the starting point for the General Plan Land Use Diagram and associated policies.



Interim analyses and products informed the development of the General Plan.

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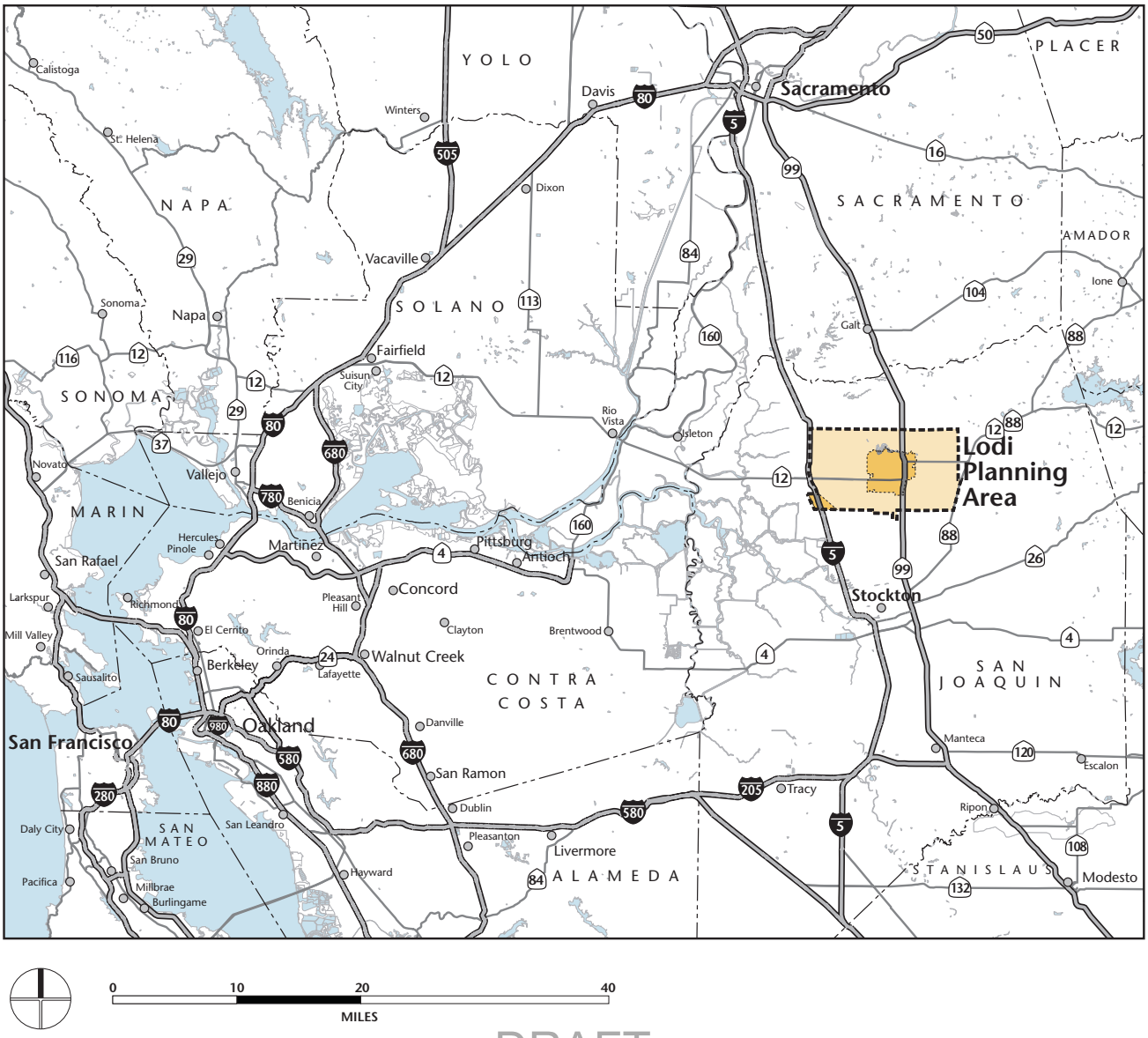
1.4 REGIONAL LOCATION AND PLANNING BOUNDARIES

Regional Location

Located along the Mokelumne River, adjacent to the Sacramento River Delta, Lodi is situated in the San Joaquin Valley between Stockton, six miles to the south; Sacramento, 35 miles to the north; and along SR-99. The city is located on the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad and is within five miles of I-5 via SR-12. Figure 1-1 illustrates the city's regional location.

FIGURE 1-1: REGIONAL LOCATION



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Planning Boundaries

The General Plan must cover Lodi's adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI), as well as any land outside these boundaries that is relevant to the city's planning. The Planning Area covers 79.4 square miles, or 50,827 acres. This land area is dominated by vineyards and agriculture. Development in the Planning Area is concentrated in the urbanized areas: within Lodi city limits and Woodbridge—a community contiguous to Lodi and within Lodi's SOI; and in Flag City, an unincorporated commercial center at the junction of I-5 and SR-12. Figure 1-2 shows this Planning Area.

Lodi's current (2008) SOI includes, in addition to Woodbridge, lands west and east of City limits where developments have been recently approved, as well as a small pocket in the northeast portion. Lodi's SOI covers 16.6 square miles, or 10,623 acres of land.

The city is largely flat, distinguished by Lodi Lake and the Mokelumne River that form the northern edge of the city. The White Slough Water Pollution Control Facility (White Slough) is located within City limits, but is separated from the urbanized area of Lodi. Lodi's incorporated limits (exclusive of White Slough) encompass an area of about 12 square miles.

A view toward the northwest corner of Lodi and the Town of Woodbridge shows Lodi Lake and the Mokelumne River—the city's northern boundary.

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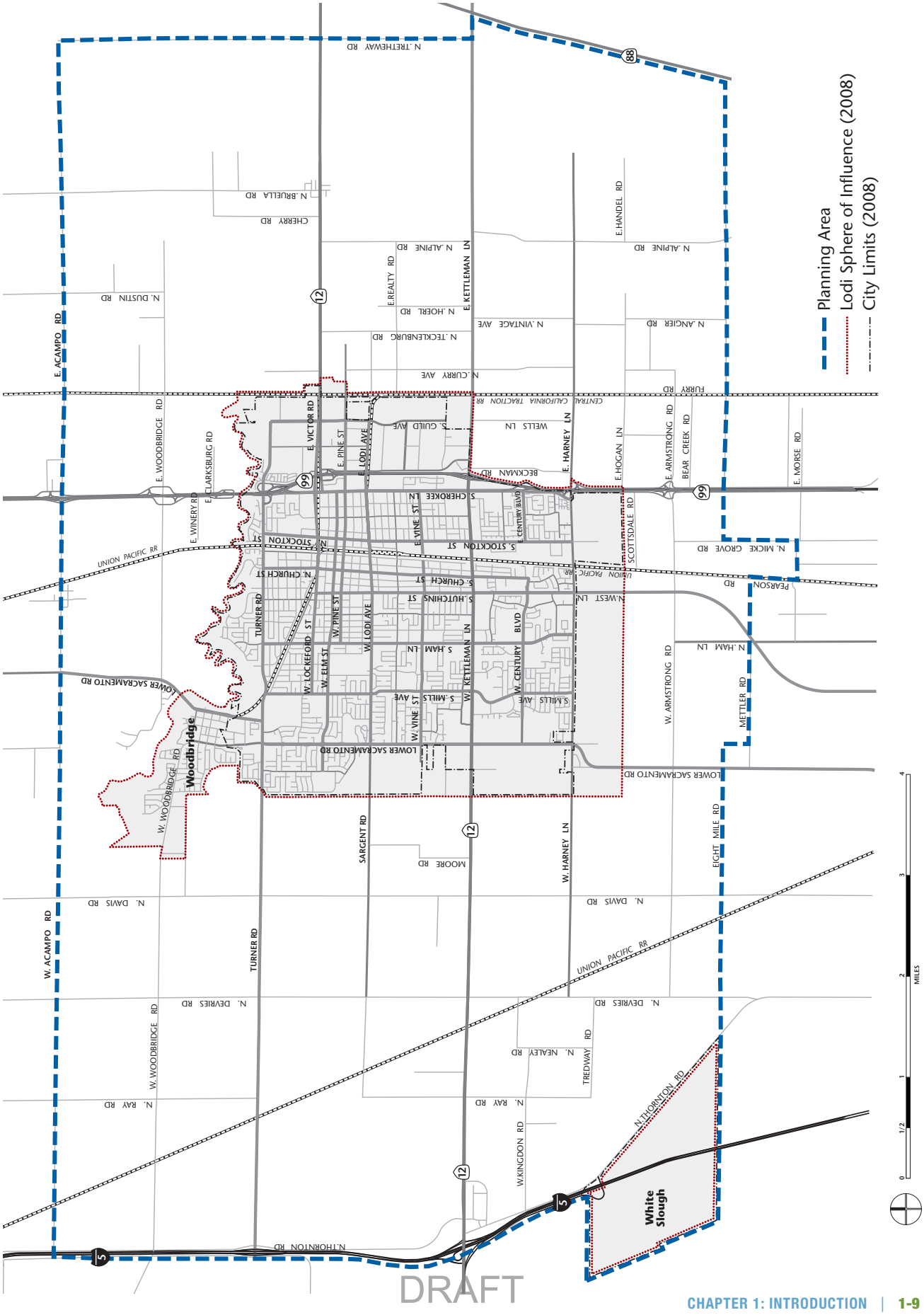
FIGURE 1-2: LODI PLANNING AREA



1.5 PLAN ORGANIZATION

General Plan Structure

State law mandates that general plans include seven elements: Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Noise and Safety, and Housing. Elements for other topics of local concern may also be included. This General Plan includes all mandated and two optional elements: Growth Management, and Community Design and Livability. Topics related to sustainability are woven throughout the Plan. For example energy efficiency is discussed in the Conservation Element and green building is discussed in the Community Design and Livability Element. The Housing Element is updated every five to seven years, per State requirements, and therefore is included as an appendix. An implementation program is also included as an appendix. Table 1-1 illustrates how the nine elements are arranged.

Organization of the Elements

Each chapter of this General Plan includes brief background information to establish the context for the policies in the chapter. This background material is not a comprehensive statement of existing conditions nor does it contain any adopted information, unless noted otherwise, such as with land use classifications. (Readers interested in a comprehensive understanding of issues related to a particular topic should refer to the working papers described in Section 1.3.) This background information is followed by guiding policies and implementing policies:

- Guiding policies are the City's statements of broad direction, philosophy, or standards to be achieved.
- Implementing policies are specific statements that guide decision making. They may refer to existing programs or development standards or call for establishment of new ones.

Together, these policies articulate a vision for Lodi that the General Plan seeks to achieve. They also provide protection for the city's resources by establishing planning requirements, programs, standards, and criteria for project review.

Numbering System

Policies are organized using a two-part numbering system. The first part refers to the element and the second is the order in which the policies appear, with a letter designation to distinguish guiding policies (G) and implementing policies (P). For example, the first guiding policy in the Land Use Element is numbered LU-G1 and the first implementing policy is LU-P1. Thus, each policy in the Plan has a discrete number for easy reference.

TABLE 1–1: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REQUIRED GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS AND THE LODI GENERAL PLAN

STATE MANDATED/OPTIONAL ELEMENT	LOCATION IN THE LODI GENERAL PLAN
Land Use	Chapter 2: Land Use
Circulation	Chapter 5: Transportation
Open Space	Chapter 6: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
Conservation	Chapter 7: Conservation
Safety	Chapter 8: Safety
Noise	Chapter 9: Noise
Housing	Chapter 10: Housing
Community Design and Livability (optional)	Chapter 4: Community Design and Livability
Growth Management and Infrastructure (optional)	Chapter 3: Growth Management and Infrastructure

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1.6 ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, it may be subject to amendments over time to address site-specific or comprehensive needs, to respond to changes in State of Federal law, or to modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic over time.

Amendments to the General Plan

State law limits the number of times a jurisdiction can amend its general plan to no more than four times per year, although each amendment may include more than one change. However, this restriction does not apply to amendments that update optional elements (such as Growth Management or Community Design and Livability); allow for the development of affordable housing; or comply with a court decision.

Annual Report

The California Government Code requires that City staff submit an annual report to the City Council on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report is also submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the City's share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of affordable housing. In addition, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act should be addressed in the annual report because they are closely tied to plan implementation. Finally, the report should include a summary of all general plan amendments adopted during the preceding year, a description of upcoming projects or general plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, and a work program and budget.

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