

# 3 Land Use

## 3.1 HISTORICAL GROWTH AND URBANIZATION PATTERN

Turlock was incorporated in 1908. Like many San Joaquin Valley towns from the time period, the original downtown core was focused around the railroad station, with streets arranged in a grid oriented to the tracks. The town proceeded to grow outward, shifting to an orthogonal north-south grid matching the rural road and parcel pattern around it. Golden State Boulevard, paralleling the railroad, was part of the original highway through the central valley, which became U.S. 99 in 1926. Figure 3-1 illustrates Turlock’s urbanization over the last 100 years.

The city’s growth since the 1940s has mainly occurred north of the downtown area and east of the railroad. When the California State University, Stanislaus campus opened in 1965, it was still well to the north of town. By the end of the 1980s housing boom, Turlock had reached Zeering Road on the north and Daubenberger Road on the east. Completion in 1973 of the Route 99 bypass, a long arc to the west, also drew development west of the railroad. (The Turlock bypass, a 6-lane freeway, was among the last improvements to be completed as Route 99 was incrementally upgraded through the Valley.)

Beginning in the 1990s, Turlock’s growth occurred through a master planning process, one area at a time. Almost all the recent residential development has occurred north of Monte Vista Avenue on the east side of the railroad. The “Northwest Triangle,” north of Fulkerth Road between the railroad and Highway 99, has also grown to be a major new commercial area.

A limited amount of commercial and industrial development has occurred west of Route 99 in the past 10 years. The City recently completed a large specific plan for industrial development in that area, in 2006. Turlock’s industrial presence is expanding, and its center is shifting away from an older concentration of industrial land south of downtown.

## 3.2 EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN AND MAGNITUDE OF USES

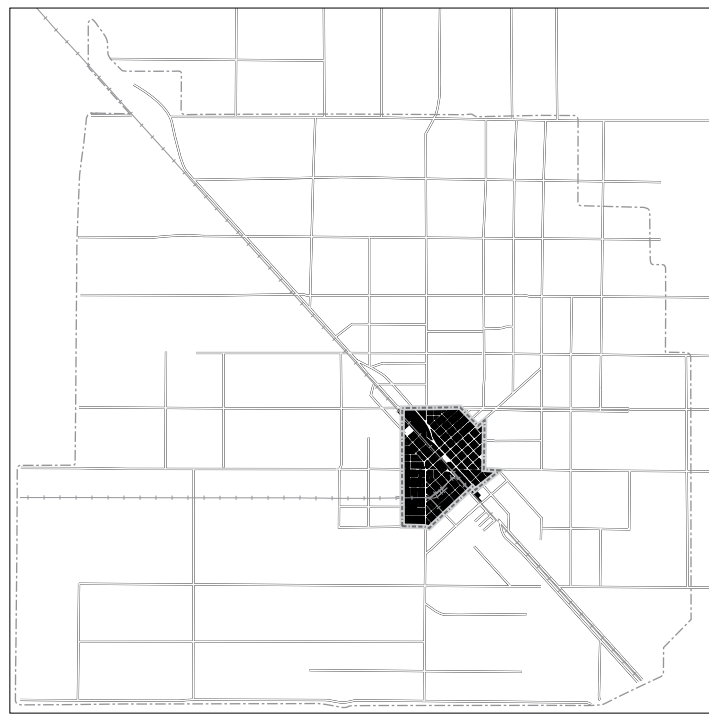
Existing land uses were identified from information from the City, field work, and aerial photographs. Data was compiled and analyzed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software.

There are approximately 8,900 acres in the current city limits, and an additional 5,800 acres of land are contained within the Planning Area outside of city limits. Agriculture makes up the largest existing land use in the Planning Area, occupying 43 percent of the total land area. Virtually all of the agricultural land is outside city limits, concentrated in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the Planning Area. Agriculture is also the predominant use in the southeast, with large lot residential properties interspersed. Around 29 percent of the total land area is residential (23 percent low and medium density, five percent residential estate, and less than two percent high density). Public, semi-public, and community facility uses, such as schools and city buildings, occupy just under five percent of the Planning Area. Commercial and office uses constitute just over six percent of the city, and include a mix of downtown, community, and highway-oriented commercial uses. Around eight percent of the land in the Planning Area is developed as industrial, and another eight percent of land is vacant. Table 3-1 shows the breakdown of existing land uses in the Planning Area, and Figure 3-2 maps the pattern of existing land uses.

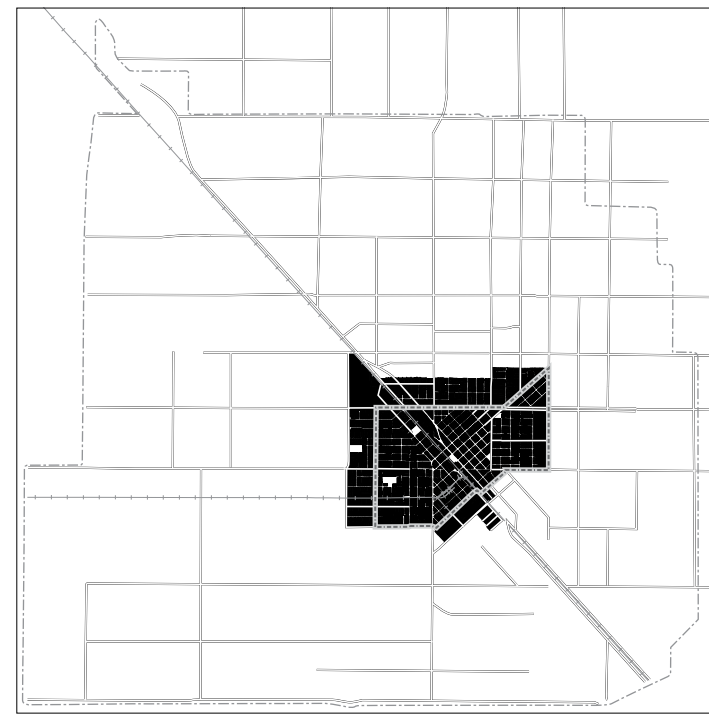
**Table 3-1 Existing Land Use**

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture	6,260	42.9%
Residential: Low and Medium Density (3-15 du/ac)	3,283	22.5%
Industrial	1,126	7.7%
Vacant	1,131	7.7%
Commercial and Mixed Use	811	5.6%
Residential Estate (Less than 3 du/ac)	734	5.0%
Public/Semi-Public/Community Facility	696	4.8%
Residential: High Density (15-30 du/ac)	229	1.6%
Park and Open Space	209	1.4%
Office	118	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,597</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

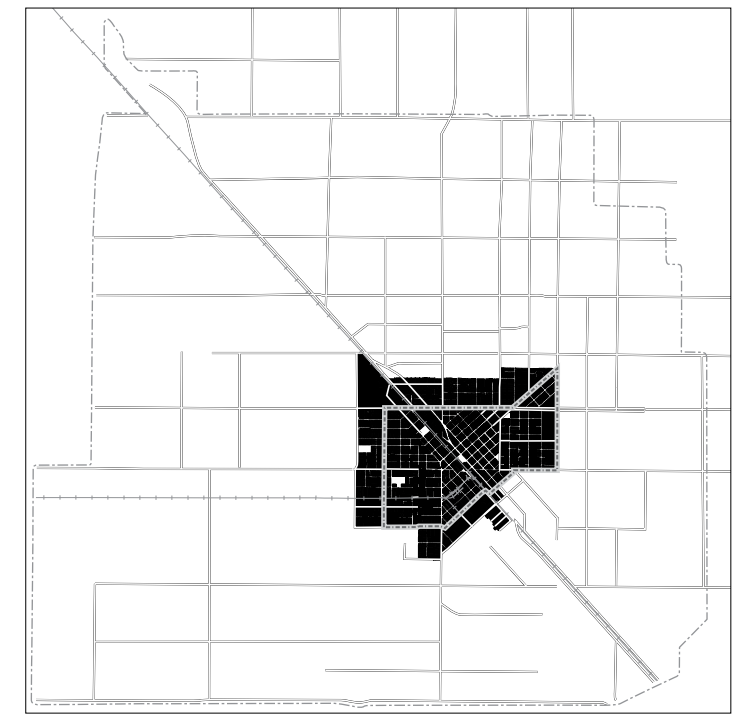
Figure 3-1: Historical Growth



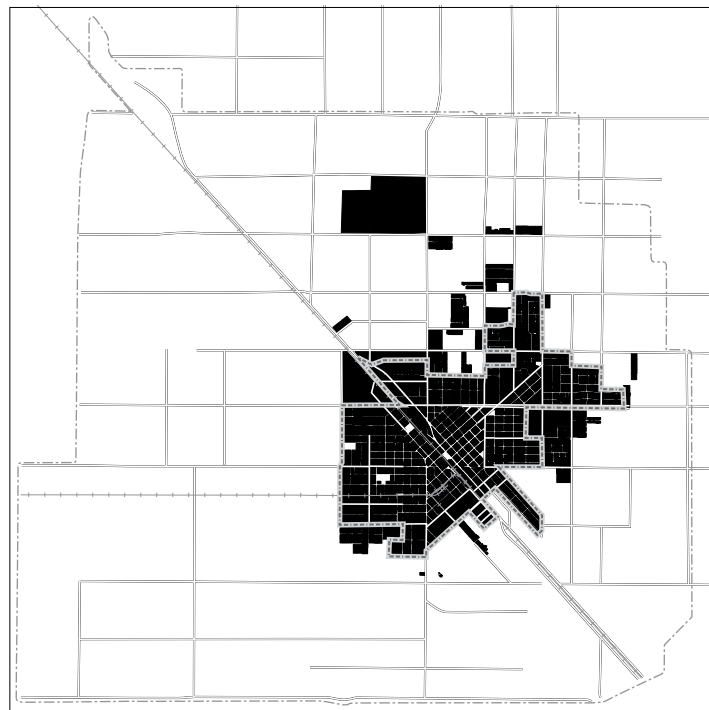
1907



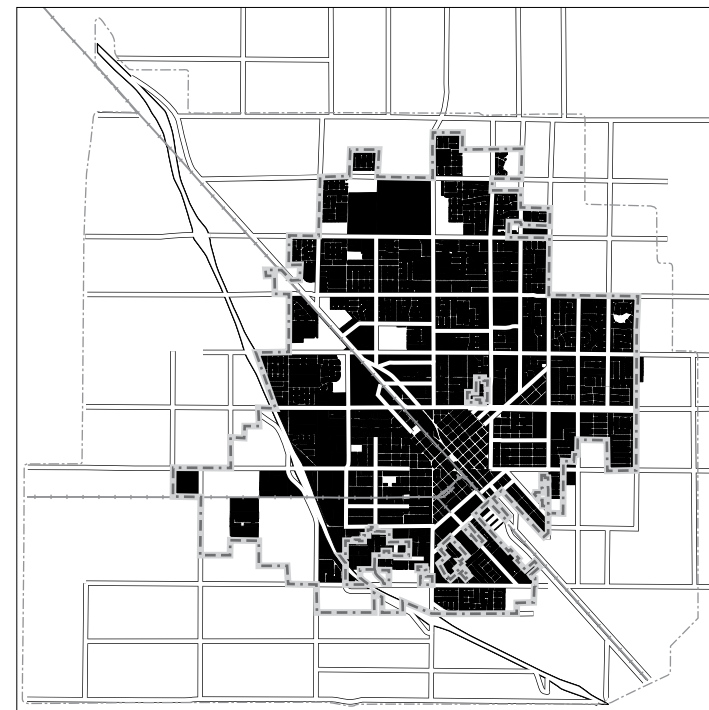
1922



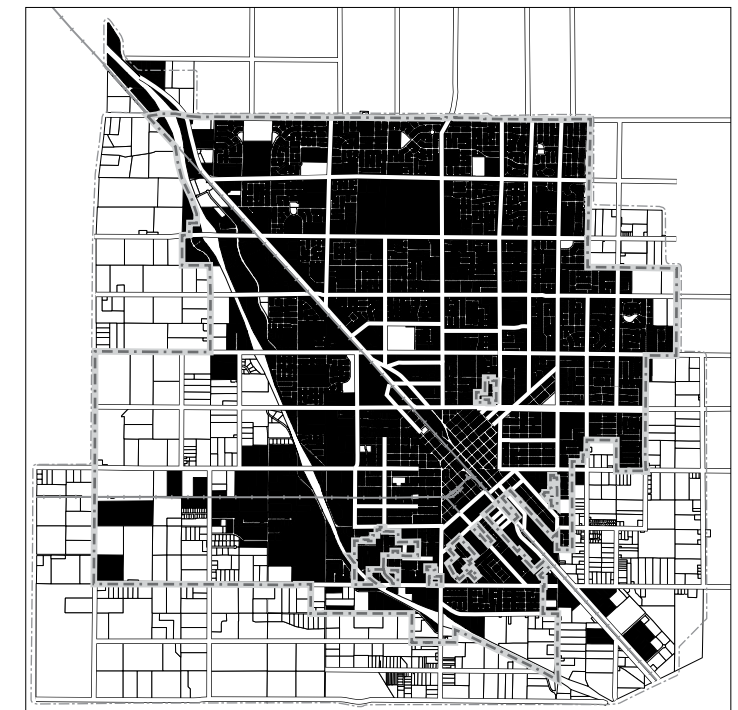
1943



1962



1992



2008

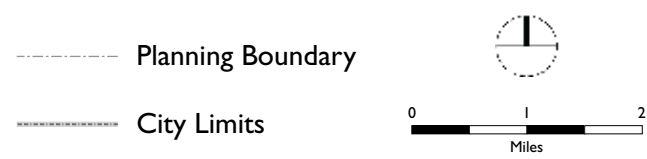
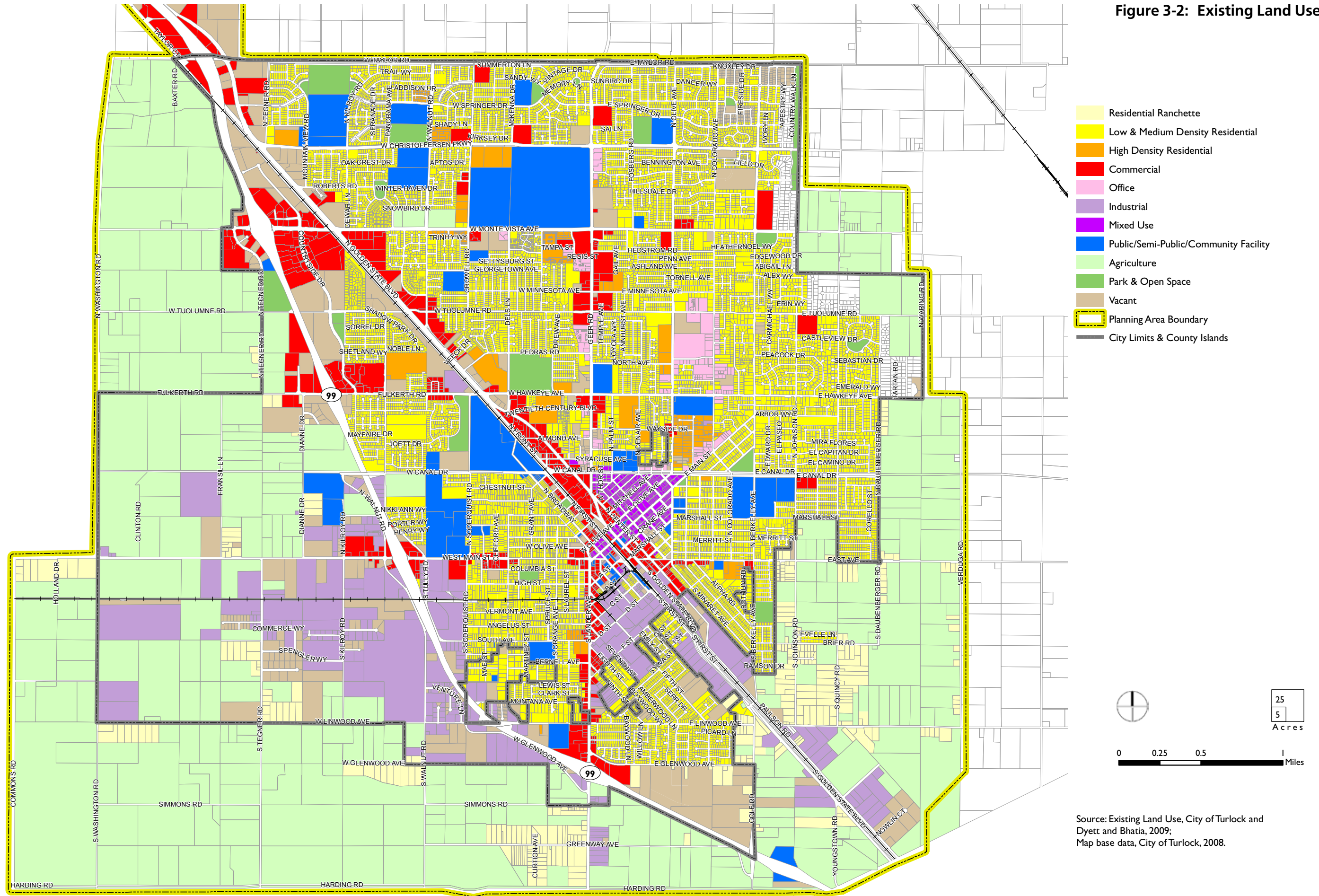


Figure 3-2: Existing Land Use





## Land Use Pattern

### Residential

Altogether, residential land uses occupy 29 percent of the land in the Planning Area. Existing residential development is concentrated on the east side of the railroad tracks, north of downtown. There are also several residential neighborhoods in southwest Turlock, between the railroad and Highway 99. About half of the residential development within the city limits is low density single family homes, ranging from three to seven dwelling units per acre. The older neighborhoods, those within about one mile of the downtown, also consist of predominantly single family homes, but of slightly higher densities than the more recently developed areas. Multifamily housing occupies less than two percent of the land in Turlock; however, some of the more recently developed neighborhoods in the northwest quadrant of the city include a greater diversity of housing types, including townhouses and three-story apartment complexes.

Residential “estate” lots, with densities from 0.2 to 3.0 units per acre, make up much of the eastern border of the city near Denair. They function as part of the rural buffer between the two communities. Residential development outside of the city limits, in the southeastern quadrant of the planning area, is primarily very low density “ranchette” style homes, generally on five- to ten-acre parcels.

### Commercial

Commercial development in Turlock is comprised of several specific nodes in different locations, and makes up approximately five percent of the total land area. The largest concentration of retail development is Monte Vista Crossings, a major “power center” located just east and south of the Monte Vista interchange of SR 99. Developed over the last five years, Monte Vista Crossings includes numerous large anchor tenants such as Target, Safeway, Home Depot, and Kohl’s; two hotels; and numerous smaller national-brand specialty stores and restaurants.

Community-oriented commercial uses, comprising both national chains and locally-owned businesses, dominate the downtown core and continue north along much of Geer Road up to CSU-Stanislaus. Much of the development in the Downtown can be characterized as mixed use, though it is primarily commercial with some office and residential uses mingled throughout. Emanuel Medical Center is a large commercial land use northeast of downtown, with the hospital anchoring a collection of smaller medical offices surrounding it. Older automobile-oriented commercial development lines Golden State Boulevard and is also concentrated just south of Downtown.

### Industrial

Nearly eight percent of land (nearly 1,130 acres) in the Planning Area is currently developed with industrial uses. The majority of existing industrial development is located immediately south of the downtown core, on both sides of the railroad tracks. Additional existing industry is located just west of the SR 99/Lander Avenue interchange. Of the land designated for industrial and industrial business park uses in the WISP planning area (approximately 1,500 acres, and an additional 535 acres in Industrial Reserve), approximately 450 acres has been developed as such. Most of Turlock’s existing industrial users are in the food processing industry. Major users include Foster Farms, Sensient Flavors, Kozy Shack, and Valley Fresh.

### Public, Semi-Public, and Community Facility

Public, semi-public, and community facility uses account for approximately five percent of development within city limits. These uses include city buildings, schools and other government-owned facilities. Several large public and institutional users have sizable land holdings in Turlock. The California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS) occupies 210 acres along Monte Vista Avenue and Geer Road. The Stanislaus County Fairgrounds are on 67 acres, just northwest of the downtown core on the west side of the railroad tracks. The City of Turlock’s wastewater treatment facility is on 166 acres in the WISP area. The remainder of acreage in public, semi-public or community facility use consists primarily of public school grounds and stormwater detention areas.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is the predominant existing land use in the Planning Area, occupying 43 percent of the land area. While only four parcels remain actually zoned for agriculture within Turlock city limits, the majority of non-urbanized land within the Planning Area boundary is currently used for agriculture. In the WISP area, there are over 1,000 acres of farmland, while the area is zoned for industrial uses. In the southeast quadrant of the Planning Area, outside city boundaries, there are over 900 acres of farmland that have been designated for low density residential development in the existing General Plan.

### Vacant Sites

Vacant land is scattered throughout the city. Parcels range from small urban infill sites measuring less than one acre to large, formerly agricultural parcels measuring up to 25 acres. Some vacant parcels are clustered, creating larger development opportunity sites of 100 acres or more. All together, vacant sites make up nearly eight percent of the land area within the planning boundary, approximately 1,130 acres. Areas where vacant land is more concentrated include along SR 99, in the WISP area, along major corridors such as Geer and Golden State



Boulevard, and near CSU-Stanislaus. The County islands in the southern part of town also contain vacant sites, though most are a quarter acre or less in size.

### 3.3 ZONING ORDINANCE

Turlock’s zoning ordinance provides separate zoning districts for the following types of uses: residential, commercial, office, industrial, public/semi-public, and planned development. Figure 3-3 shows a map of existing zoning districts in Turlock.

#### Base Districts

Residential uses are split into five categories of density, ranging from Residential Estate, at 0.2 to 3 dwelling units per acre, to High Density Residential, allowing 15 to 30 dwelling units per acre. The majority of residential land is zoned Low Density Residential, which permits between three and seven dwelling units per acre. Residentially-zoned land is present across the city, with the exception of the WISP area. Higher density areas are located around downtown and CSU-Stanislaus; lower densities are concentrated in the north and east.

Commercial designations range from Community Commercial, which includes neighborhood-level shops and services, to Heavy Commercial and Commercial Thoroughfare along SR 99 and major arterials. The density allowed is expressed in terms of Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which measures the total amount of floor area divided by the total area of the lot. FAR limits range from 0.25 to 0.35.

A relatively small amount of land is zoned Commercial Office. It is located Downtown, around the Emanuel Hospital, and on the northeast side of the WISP. In the WISP, retail uses are also permitted in the Commercial Office zone. The maximum FAR for Commercial Office districts is 0.35.

Land zoned for industrial use falls into two designations: Industrial and Industrial Business Park. Whereas the General Industrial district allows for the full range of heavy industrial and manufacturing activities, the Industrial Business Park District allows industrial office development, limited manufacturing, warehousing, and limited retail uses. The Industrial Business Park district is also held to higher landscaping and architectural standards. The majority of land zoned for both types is found in the WISP, with some additional Industrial-zoned land just south of Downtown, where Foster Farms and other smaller industries are located. All land zoned for Industrial Business Park is in the WISP.

Planned Development districts allow for greater flexibility than the traditional zoning designations, and are used to create variety in new development through the use of alternative development standards. Planned Development districts intended for residential use also result in improved common open space, the maintenance of which is funded by those directly benefiting from it. Most

Planned Development areas are located in the residential areas in the Northwest Triangle Specific Plan, the North Turlock Master Plan, the Northeast Turlock Master Plan, and the East Tuolumne Master Plan. The WISP also contains some land zoned for Planned Development.

Land zoned for Public and Semi-Public uses is scattered throughout the city. This district includes public schools, parks, and municipal facilities.

#### Downtown Overlay District

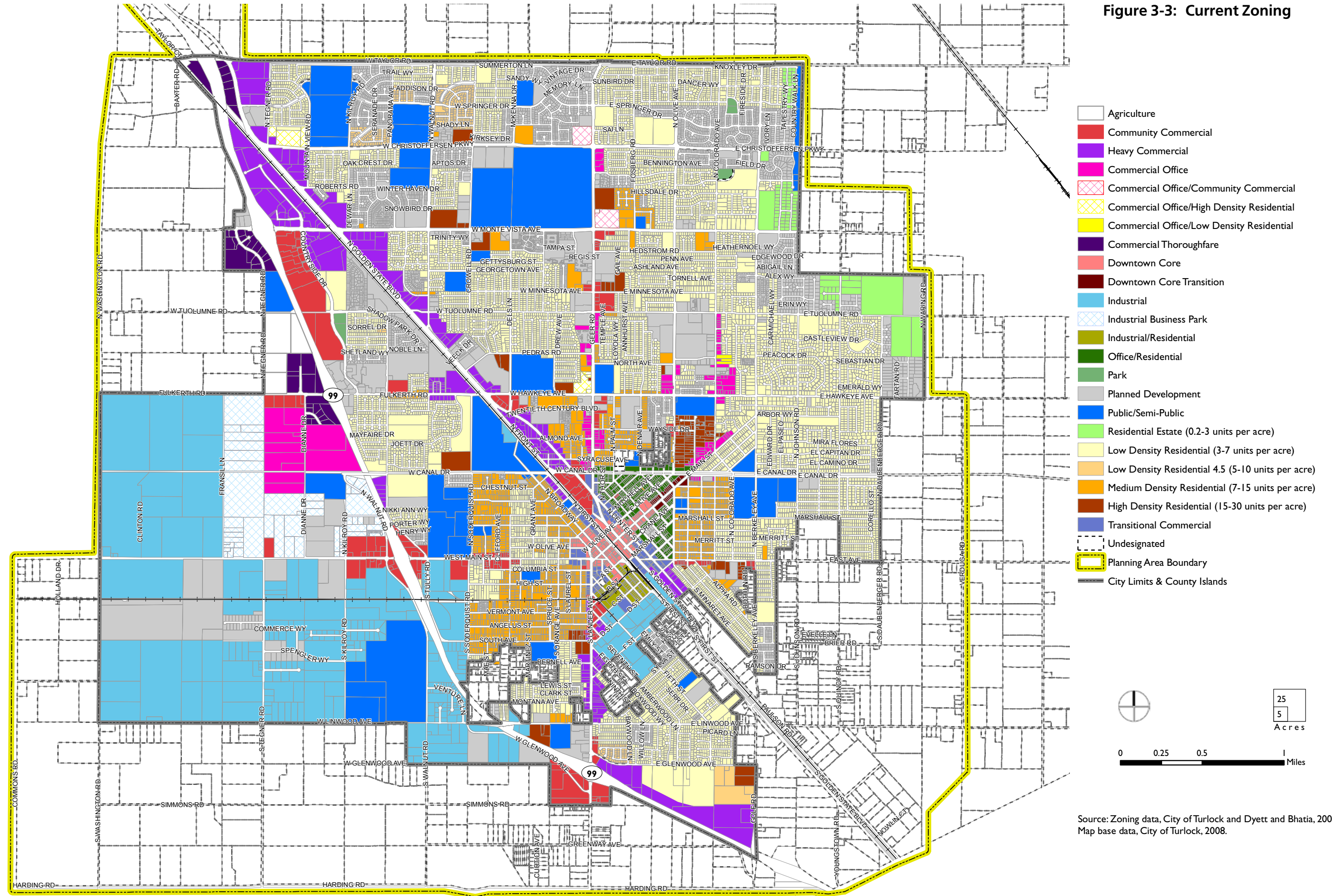
Turlock’s zoning ordinance defines an overlay district for the city’s Downtown. The purposes of the overlay district are to promote a pedestrian environment, encourage economic investment in the area, preserve Downtown’s historic architectural character, and preserve and enhance the district as Turlock’s core. The Downtown overlay district includes the Downtown Core, Downtown Core Transitional, Transitional Commercial, Industrial Residential, and Office Residential zones. Most zones allow a vertical mix of uses and higher densities (up to 3.0 FAR) than traditional districts. The zones encourage a concentration of activity in the core, and mix uses to ease the transition to surrounding industrial and residential uses that border the Downtown. Parking, signage, and lot coverage regulations are specified for each zone within the Downtown overlay district as well, with the goal of creating a pedestrian-oriented environment and a traditional style of urban design.

**Table 3-2 Downtown Overlay Zone Specifications**

<i>Downtown Overlay Zone (Abbreviation)</i>	<i>Applicable Base Zone</i>	<i>Uses Permitted</i>	<i>Allowable Density (FAR)</i>
Downtown Core (DC)	Community Commercial	Ground Floor: Retail, office Upper Floors: Residential, office, hotel	3.0 for mixed use; 1.0 for retail
Downtown Core Transition (DCT)	Commercial Office and Community Commercial	Office, retail, residential	1.0
Transitional Commercial (TC)	Community Commercial	Office, retail, residential	0.6
Industrial Residential (IR)	Industrial	Light industry, office, residential	0.40 for industrial; 0.75 for residential

Source: City of Turlock

Figure 3-3: Current Zoning



Source: Zoning data, City of Turlock and Dyett and Bhatia, 2008; Map base data, City of Turlock, 2008.



### 3.4 SPECIAL JURISDICTIONS

#### Redevelopment Area

The purpose of Turlock's Redevelopment Agency, which consists of the City Council plus the City Manager, is to eliminate blight from the city and prevent its reoccurrence through redevelopment, reconstruction and rehabilitation of designated parts of the city. The activities of the Redevelopment Agency are governed by the regulations in the California Redevelopment Law (CRL), Health and Safety Code Section 33490. The City adopted the Redevelopment Plan for the original Project Area in 1993; the Project Area was expanded in 1996. Figure 3-4 shows the current extent of the Redevelopment Agency's Project Area. The Project Area includes most of Downtown, the neighborhood west of Downtown in between Golden State Boulevard and SR 99, the Golden State Boulevard corridor, the central part of the WISP, all the County islands, and several parcels adjacent to CSU-Stanislaus.

The CRL includes several statutory requirements involving housing, including providing a specified percentage of new or substantially rehabilitated housing with long-term affordability covenants. Redevelopment Agencies must also allocate a minimum of 20 percent of their tax increment funds towards provision of affordable housing. Finally, the Agency must replace any housing removed as a result of redevelopment activity.

Current Redevelopment Agency activities include:

- Upgrade of Fire Station No. 1
- Rehabilitation of the Carnegie Arts Center
- Infrastructure installation and upgrade in the WISP
- Funding of affordable housing programs

Upcoming Redevelopment Agency activities include:

- Public facility upgrades to numerous parks and community centers
- Revitalization of the Downtown Core, specifically upgrading second story spaces
- Development of a parking and/or transit facility Downtown
- Infrastructure improvements in County islands
- Landscaping of community gateways
- Land acquisition and improvements at the Fulkerth/SR 99 interchange

#### Enterprise Zone

Portions of Turlock are part of the Stanislaus Enterprise Zone (E-Zone 40), designated by the California Department of Housing and Community Development in November 2005. The initial zone included parts of Modesto, Ceres, Turlock, and unincorporated Stanislaus County. In 2006 and 2007, it was expanded to include parts of Patterson, Oakdale, Riverbank, and Hughson. In California, Enterprise Zones are meant to stimulate economic development by providing tax incentives for hiring and investment in the designated areas. In the Stanislaus Enterprise Zone, in addition to the five tax credits offered by the state, four additional incentive programs are in place that aim to attract new businesses.

The extent of the Stanislaus Enterprise Zone in Turlock includes the Golden State Boulevard corridor, the SR 99 corridor, Downtown and the areas immediately north and south of it, the Emanuel Medical Center, the Geer Road corridor, and most recently, the WISP.

### 3.5 CURRENT PLANS

Turlock's growth over the past several decades has been guided by a number of plans. The City has engaged in general planning since the mid-1900s. The most recent General Plan was adopted in 1993 and updated in 2003. Recent residential development (since 1993) has proceeded according to numerous Specific and Master Plans that carried out the policies of the General Plan in discrete, phased areas of the city. The development resulting from the Specific and Master Plans has been met with enthusiasm from new and longtime residents alike, and many community members interviewed cited continuing the Master Planning process as a priority moving forward.

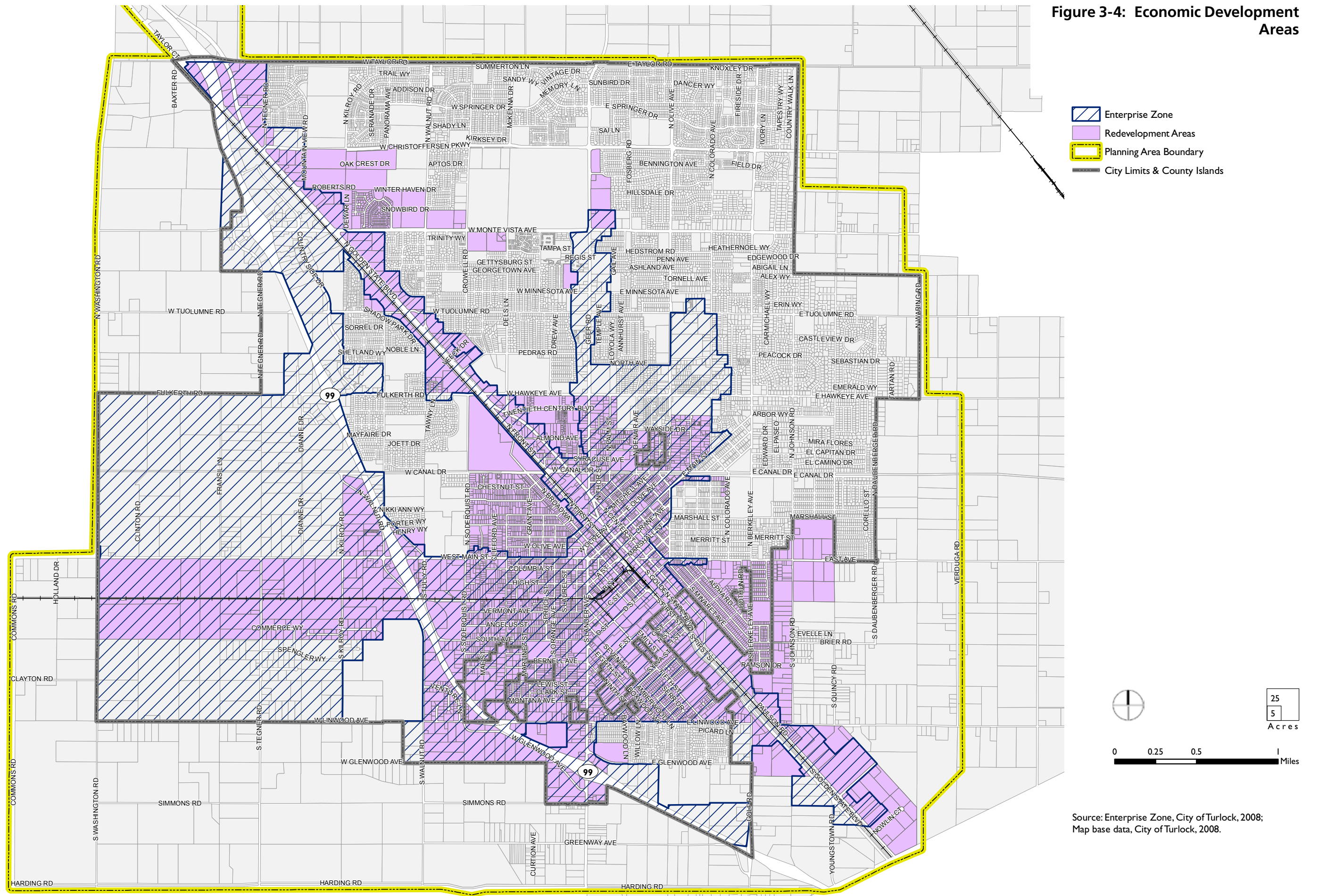
Turlock's development—particularly its long-range planning and annexation—is also influenced by the plans created by neighboring jurisdictions. For example, as Turlock annexes land and converts farmland to non-agricultural uses, it must consider Stanislaus County's agriculture conversion mitigation policy in the County's General Plan. Regionally, Turlock is part of the San Joaquin Valley, which is preparing a 50-year, region-wide land use and transportation plan that will outline a preferred growth scenario.

#### Turlock General Plan (1992-2012)

Turlock's original General Plan was prepared in the early 1950s. While it was never adopted, it set the precedent for comprehensive planning in the City and served as a departure point for future plans. The General Plan of 1969 addressed issues such as urban growth and limiting destruction of farmland. It was updated in the early 1980s. The most recent General Plan, adopted in 1993 and updated in 2003, reflects six overall themes:



**Figure 3-4: Economic Development Areas**



Source: Enterprise Zone, City of Turlock, 2008;  
Map base data, City of Turlock, 2008.

- Establishing limits to urban growth that will maintain Turlock as a free-standing city surrounded by productive agricultural land
- Maintaining an economically and socially diverse population by promoting a greater variety of housing types citywide and a localized mix of housing types in some areas
- Providing commercial and industrial sites consistent with Turlock’s growth
- Fostering development that offers alternatives to auto use, especially for non-commute trips
- Creating an economic and social balance among different city sectors
- Using growth management to implement General Plan policies and quality of life objectives

The General Plan includes the following elements: Land Use, Housing, Public Facilities, Transportation, Open Space and Conservation, City Design, Noise, Safety, Implementation, and Financial. Figure 3-5 shows Turlock’s existing General Plan land use designations.

Turlock’s current General Plan would accommodate a population of 85,190, and an additional 38,700 if development were to be permitted in the Urban Reserve. At the existing General Plan’s projected annual growth rate of 3.38 percent, the city would reach its build-out population (not including the Urban Reserve) in 2012. The updated General Plan will update growth projections, and consider how and where longer-term growth should be accommodated.

In the current General Plan, half of the projected 10,130 new housing units required to accommodate “build-out” population would be provided in the Southeast Area, a roughly 2,000-acre area mostly outside current city limits. The future of the Southeast area remains a key question for Turlock.

## Growth Management

Turlock has always prioritized maintaining a distinctive edge between its urban development and its agricultural surroundings. Various growth management strategies over the past few decades have helped maintain Turlock’s discrete urban form and remain important policies in the current General Plan.

Following the city’s rapid growth in the 1980s, Turlock has developed several strategies for controlling the type, pace, and location of urban development. A growth management program adopted in the early 1990s was replaced in 1998 with a Residential Annexation Policy that focuses annexations and growth to one quadrant of the city at one time (City Council Resolution No 98-036). There are four quadrants, and new residential development was designated to occur first in the Northwest Quadrant. Notably, development was intended to be completed

in one quadrant before proceeding to the next. Growth management policies put in place in the existing General Plan require that unincorporated areas for new development be rezoned prior to city annexation, that adequacy of public facilities and services be established, and that new development be contiguous to existing development. The existing General Plan’s Open Space and Conservation Element also specifies that from the perspective of agricultural land preservation, land is only to be annexed to the city for development purposes only as it is needed.

Furthermore, in 1999, the City adopted a policy that requires area-wide planning in conjunction with future annexations (City Council Resolution No 99-021). Area-wide plans must address land use, circulation, housing, open space, infrastructure, public facilities and public services consistent with the General Plan. The goal of both policies was to focus development in one area at a time, which would better allow for timely and efficient use of infrastructure and resources. The developments created as a result of these policies are discussed in the following section, which describes each of the Specific and Master Plans that followed from the city’s growth management strategy.

## Specific and Master Plans

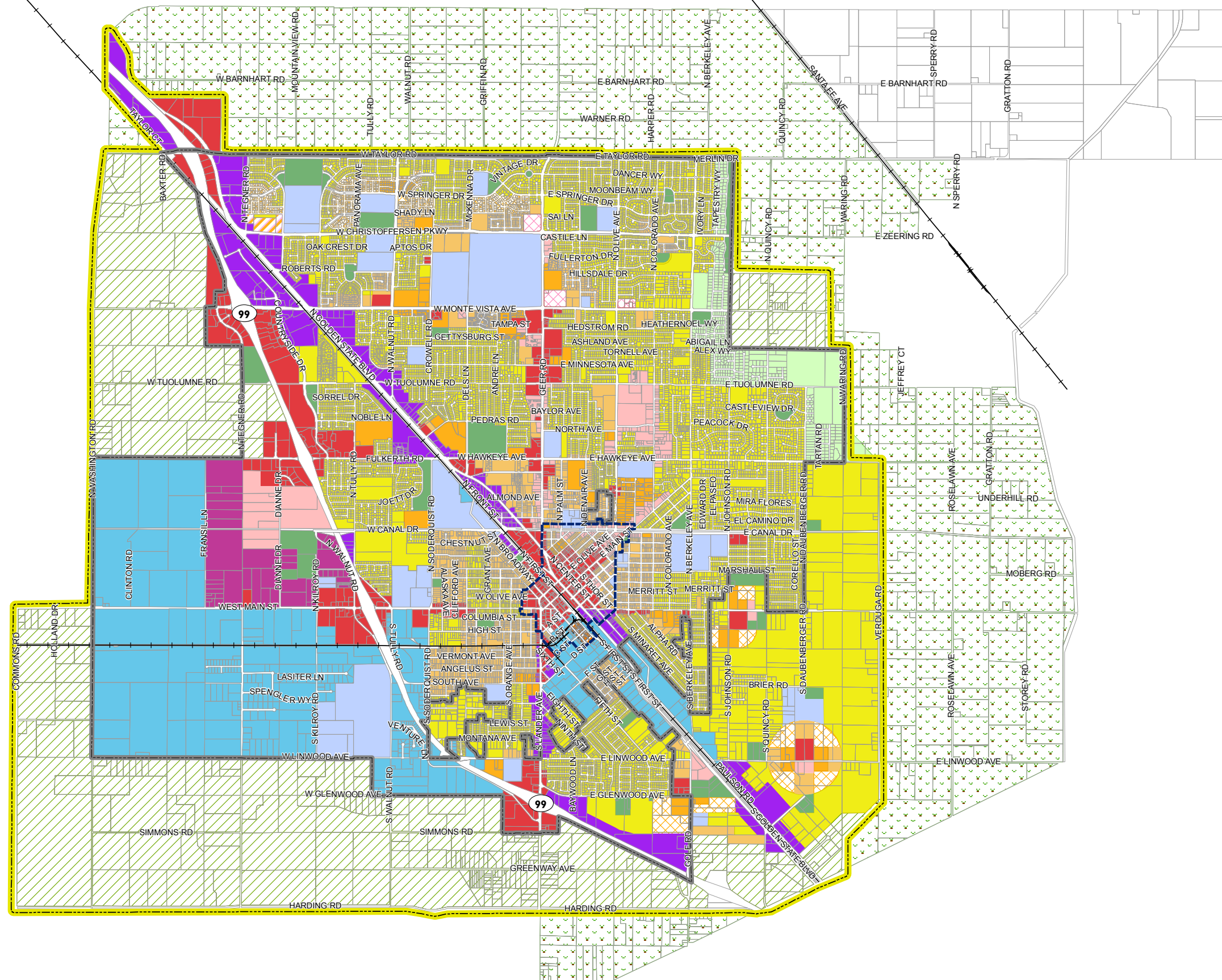
Turlock has adopted a number of Specific Plans and Master Plans following the General Plan, which guide growth in the specified areas. Specific and Master Plans implement General Plan policies by analyzing the land use, circulation, public facilities, infrastructure, and financing issues of particular areas to evaluate their development potential, often prior to annexation by the City. Figure 3-6 outlines the areas where Master Plans, Specific Plans, and feasibility studies have been developed.

**Table 3-3 Turlock Master and Specific Plans**

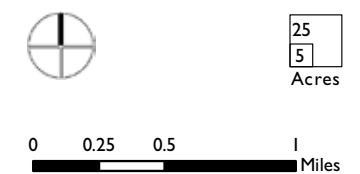
<i>Master or Specific Plan Name</i>	<i>Year Adopted</i>	<i>Status</i>
Northwest Triangle Specific Plan	1995, amended 2004	Developed
North Turlock Master Plan	2001	Developed
Northeast Turlock Master Plan	2004	Developed
East Tuolumne Master Plan	2005	Development On Hold
Westside Industrial Specific Plan	2006	Beginning Development



**Figure 3-5: Current General Plan  
Land Use Designations**



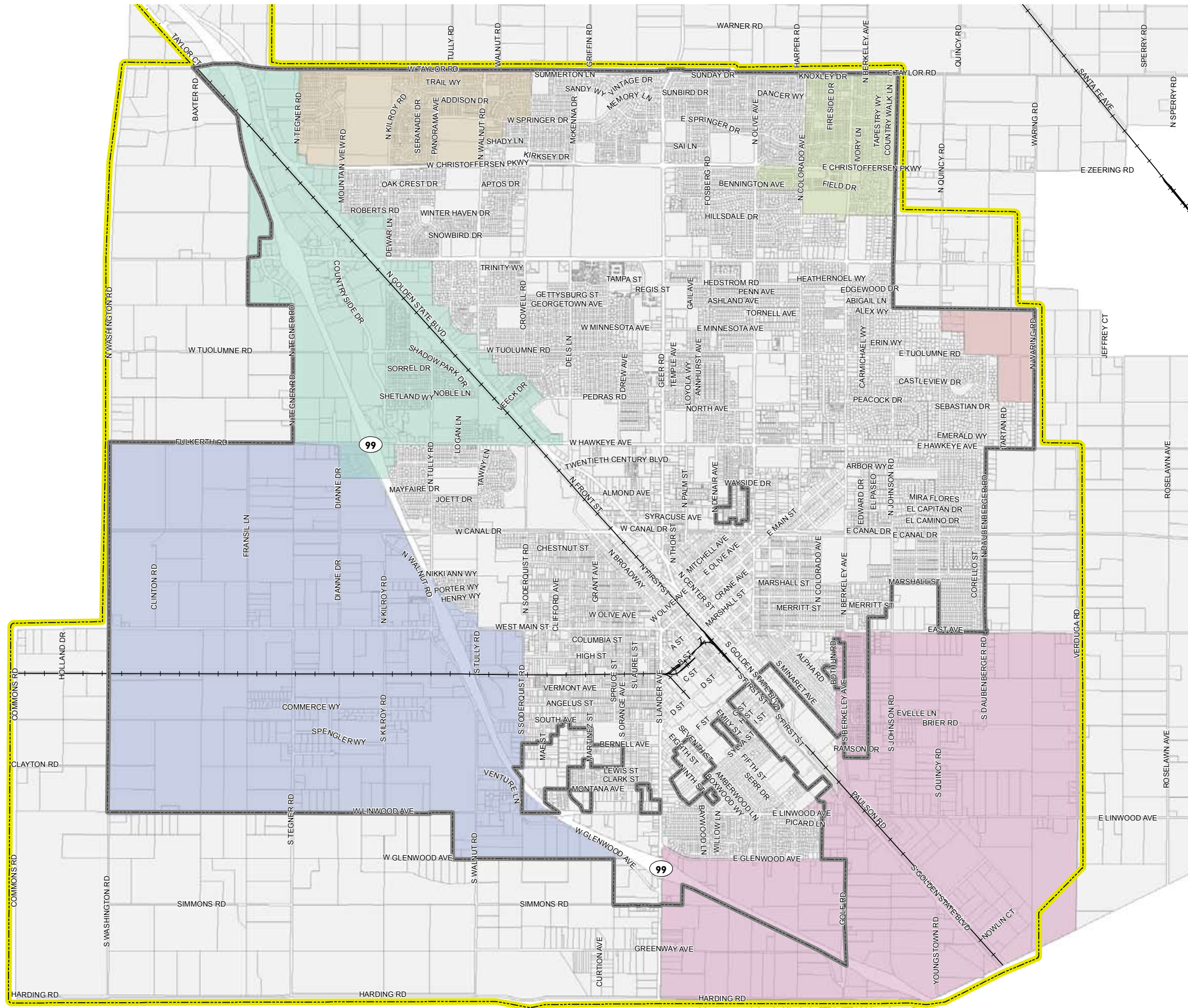
- VLDR - Very Low Density Residential (0.2-3 units per acre)
- LDR - Low Density Residential (3-7 units per acre)
- LDR or MDR (3-15 units per acre)
- MDR - Medium Density Residential (7-15 units per acre)
- HDR - High Density Residential (15-30 units per acre)
- O HDR - Office or High Density Residential
- HDR or HC or I
- CC - Community Commercial
- CC or O
- HC - Heavy Commercial
- O - Office
- BP - Business Park
- I - Industrial
- PUB - Public
- P - PARK
- A - Agriculture
- UR - Urban Reserve
- Planning Area Boundary
- City Limits & County Islands



Source: General Plan data, City of Turlock, 2002;  
Planning boundary data, Dyett and Bhatia, 2008;  
Map base data, City of Turlock, 2008.



**Figure 3-6: Master and Specific Plan Areas**



- East Tuolumne
- North Turlock
- Northeast Turlock
- Northwest Triangle
- Southeast Area Feasibility Study
- Westside Industrial
- Planning Boundary
- City Limits & County Islands

Source: Current Plans data, City of Turlock, 2008; Current Plans data, Dyett and Bhatia, 2009; Map base data, City of Turlock, 2008.

January 16, 2009

#### Northwest Triangle Specific Plan (1995, amended 2004)

New residential development was designated to occur first in the Northwest quadrant of the City, and the Northwest Triangle Specific Plan was adopted in 1995 to allow development in that area. The Northwest Triangle Specific Plan (NWTSP) covers an area of approximately 800 acres in the triangle created by Golden State Boulevard to the east, Highway 99 to the west, and Fulkerth Road to the south. Its four goals are:

- Implement the General Plan
- Allow development to proceed without unnecessary delay (by facilitating the approval of subsequent development projects consistent with the Specific Plan policies)
- Provide for efficient extension of services
- Establish funding mechanisms for improvements

The plan covers land use and urban design; transportation and circulation; infrastructure (including sewer, water, storm drainage, and energy); public services; natural resources and public health; and implementation. A Master EIR was completed in conjunction with the Specific Plan.

Much of the NWTSP area has been built out. Low density residential and community commercial development dominates the southern part of the plan area. Highway-oriented commercial uses occupy the northern part of the plan area along Monte Vista Avenue. Some agricultural land still remains in the central area, along West Tuolumne Road. The Pedretti Park community ball fields are also in the plan area.

#### North Turlock Master Plan (2001)

The North Turlock Master Plan (NTMP), completed in 2001, continued to guide development in the Northwest quadrant of the City. The NTMP plan area is just east of the NWTSP, bounded by Tegner Road to the west, Christofferson Parkway to the south, Crowell Road to the east, and Taylor Road and the Turlock Irrigation District Lateral 3 to the north. The plan area encompasses approximately 370 acres. At the time of the plan's creation, the land under study was not yet annexed to the city.

The primary objective of the NTMP was to incorporate “smart growth” planning and design principles into the development of cohesive neighborhoods. The plan established a wide range of land uses, including low, medium, and high density residential, commercial, office, schools, and park sites. Furthermore, the residential, school, and open space areas were to be linked by a network of pedestrian and bike trails. As built, the neighborhoods in the NTMP include other “neo-

traditional” design elements such as narrower streets, a diversity of housing types, homes oriented towards the street, and several streets with wide landscaped medians.

The NTMP plan area also includes Turlock's second high school, John H. Pitman (the first high school to be built in Turlock since 1904), and the new Regional Sports Complex.

#### Southeast Area Feasibility Study (2003)

The 1993 General Plan designated the southeast quadrant of the Planning Area for a variety of uses, ranging from low density residential development to a town center. Due to the area's existing development pattern and parcel configuration, urban growth in this part of the city has been viewed as more difficult than areas to the north. In 2003, the City initiated a Transportation and Infrastructure Feasibility Study of the southeast area as part of an analysis of its development potential. The feasibility study estimated the area's build-out capacity, calculated the cost of developing the necessary transportation and infrastructure facilities to support it, and then prepared a preliminary financing model. The study concluded that while residential development in the southeast appeared financially feasible, the non-residential development envisioned would be more problematic due to high infrastructure cost burdens. No formal Specific Plan of the area has completed, and the southeast area has not been developed as such.

#### Northeast Turlock Master Plan (2004)

The next master plan, the Northeast Turlock Master Plan (NETMP), focused on an area at the northeast corner of the City. Covering approximately 255 acres, the plan area is bounded on the north by Taylor Road and the Turlock Irrigation District Lateral 3; on the east by the rear parcel lines of the lots that front the east side of Berkeley Avenue; on the south by the midpoint between Christofferson Parkway and Monte Vista Avenue; and on the west by Colorado Avenue, with a rectangular “finger” that stretches along Christofferson Parkway to Olive Avenue. At the time of the plan's creation, the subject area was not yet annexed to the city.

The NETMP pursued the goal of expanding carefully guided development (primarily residential) to the northeastern edge of Turlock and integrating it into the rest of the city. At the same time, the NETMP endeavored to create a well defined “edge,” maintaining a clear separation between Turlock and the neighboring community of Denair. Nearly all of the land in the plan area prior to development was productive agriculture, but the area had been designated for growth in the General Plan. Therefore, in order to be consistent with Turlock's growth management goals, an important focus of the NETMP was allowing



appropriate new residential development while still maintaining the agricultural buffer between Turlock and the community of Denair.

As built, the NETMP area consists primarily of low density residential development, transitioning into very low density residential development toward the plan area's eastern edge. A greenbelt buffer, creating a transition zone from urban to rural uses between Turlock and Denair, includes detention areas and a community trail.

#### East Tuolumne Master Plan (2005)

The East Tuolumne Master Plan (ETMP) was adopted by the City in 2005. The plan area covers approximately 100 acres along East Tuolumne Road between North Quincy and North Waring Roads. The purpose of the ETMP is similar to the Northeast Turlock Master Plan—to create a smooth transition from urban to rural land uses along the City's eastern border, while creating a distinct boundary between Turlock and Denair.

The plan calls for the development of very low density (generally less than three dwelling units per acre) single family homes, with some open space and trails. However, since the plan's adoption, the market conditions in Turlock have not supported developing the land in this manner. The planning area remains largely agricultural with a few existing estate homes.

#### Westside Industrial Specific Plan (2006)

The Westside Industrial Specific Plan (WISP) is the most recent of the City's Specific Plans, and the first to focus exclusively on non-residential development. The Plan Area covers 2,615 acres, bounded by Fulkerth Road to the north, Highway 99 to the east, Linwood Avenue and Simmons Road to the south, and Washington Road to the west. The Plan Area is partially developed with industrial and commercial uses, and the majority of the site is currently used for agriculture.

The City prepared the plan in order to facilitate economic growth in the industrial sector, with an emphasis on agricultural products, food processing, and related businesses. Through development of the WISP, Turlock aims to implement the General Plan's goal for a major industrial center in Turlock, simultaneously improving the jobs-housing balance in the area. The plan covers land use regulations, design guidelines, and phasing. Through the creation and nurturing of an 'Agri-Science' industry cluster, which would include biotech, life sciences, and agri-business, the WISP aims to create a "bridge" for Turlock's current agriculture and manufacturing industries to transition to newer products and technologies.

### 3.6 OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Planning and development in Turlock must also be responsive to the plans laid out by other jurisdictions, including the neighboring communities of Denair and Keyes, and Stanislaus and Merced Counties. Turlock's General Plan update also takes place in the context of a regional planning effort underway for the eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley, and a corridor improvement plan for Route 99. Figure 3-7 shows the boundaries of relevant other jurisdictions' plans.

#### Stanislaus County General Plan

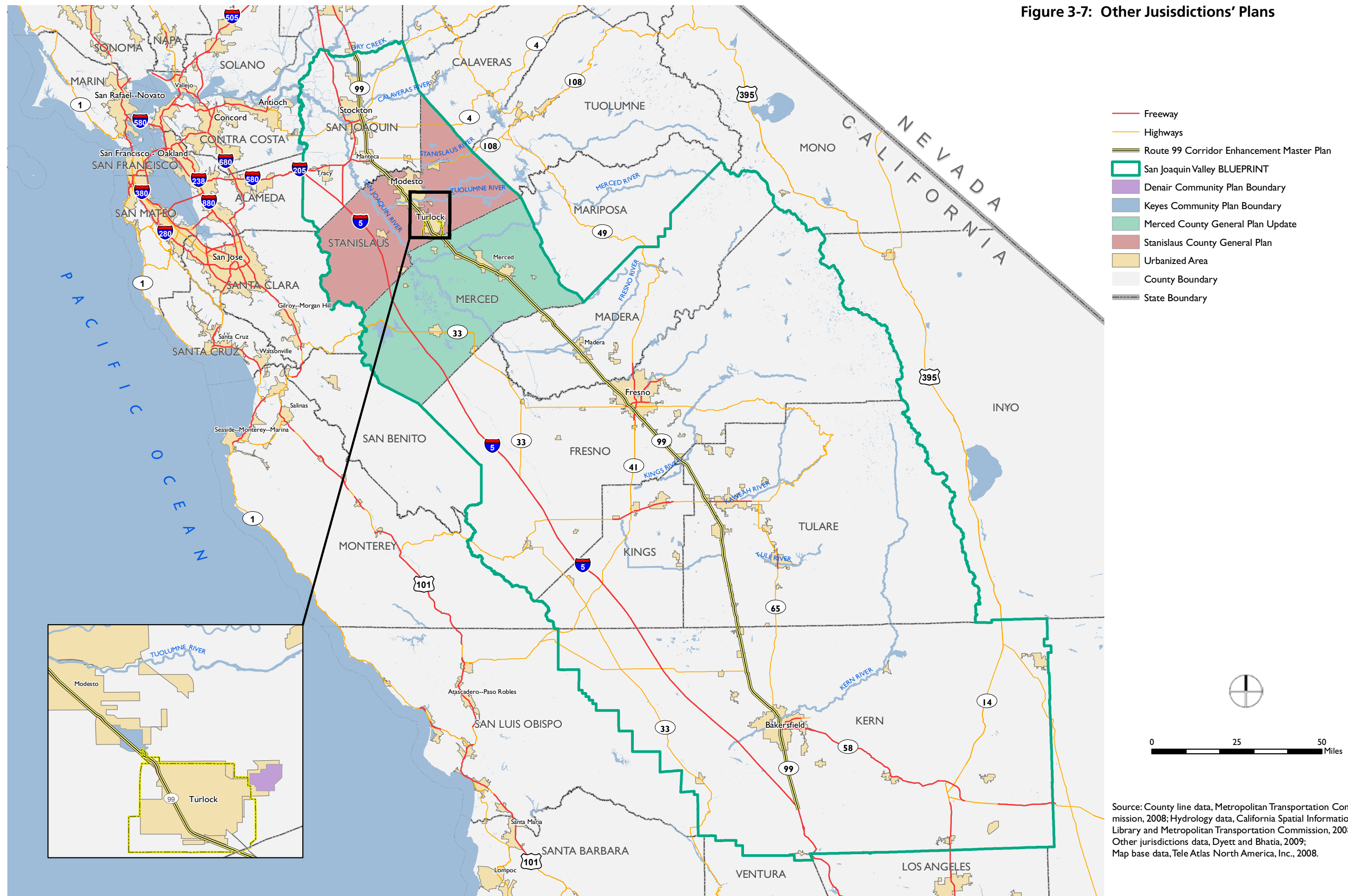
The most recent Stanislaus County General Plan was adopted in 1994. In addition to the elements mandated by the State, it includes an Agriculture Element that was most recently updated in 2008. Roughly a quarter of the County's population lives in unincorporated areas. The majority of the County's growth has occurred in its incorporated cities, due in part to a general shift towards urban lifestyles, and also due to the ongoing annexation of County lands by cities. In response to population growth and a changing economy, the General Plan addresses such issues as regional growth management; conversion of agricultural land; jobs/housing balance and housing affordability; expansion of infrastructure and public services; and air quality, water availability, and resource protection.

From the County's perspective, the primary relationship between the County's General Plan and the City of Turlock concerns the Urban Transition areas—County-designated areas that are outside city limits but within the city's general planning area boundary. As a matter of policy, the County General Plan refers preliminary project approval to the city in whose sphere of influence the project lies (with the exception of agricultural uses and churches). The city may also specify what the project must do to meet city standards to facilitate possible future annexation. The county retains ultimate authority to approve projects. However, decisions regarding any land that falls within a municipality's Sphere of Influence are primarily under the influence of the city in question due to the city-county revenue sharing agreement.

Additionally, as part of its own General Plan, Stanislaus County prepares Community Plans for most of the unincorporated towns in the County. Of particular importance to the County is the land use designation for the transition areas between the urbanized towns and the surrounding land, which is primarily agricultural. Two unincorporated towns are within two miles of Turlock's city limits: Denair, to the northeast, and Keyes, to the northwest.



Figure 3-7: Other Jurisdictions' Plans



## Denair Community Plan

Denair is an unincorporated community in Stanislaus County, located just northeast of the City of Turlock. The Denair Community Plan area covers just over 1,000 acres between Taylor Road to the north and Tuolumne Road to the south. The eastern border is the Turlock Irrigation District's main canal, and the western border is Waring Road. The 2000 Census lists Denair's population as 3,446; the plan area contains enough land to support a population of approximately 8,000 residents.

The Denair community wishes to reinforce its small town atmosphere and maintain its status as a physically separated agricultural community. To that end, the plan specifies that medium- and medium high-density land uses shall move to the center of town, away from the periphery; the commercial area will be centralized and compacted; and the outskirts of town will be developed as low density estate residential areas, in order to form a distinct boundary between the community and the City of Turlock.

### Plan Goals:

- Reinforce Denair's small rural town character.
- Provide a well-defined community edge between Denair and adjacent agricultural land, as well as between Denair and the City of Turlock.
- Provide for the non-motorized transportation needs of the Denair Community.
- Provide for the recreational needs of the residents of the Denair Community.

## Keyes Community Plan

Keyes is located just northwest of Turlock city limits, along the Highway 99 corridor. The community plan area encompasses 857 acres, bounded by the Turlock Irrigation District Lateral Number 2 ½ to the north, Washington Road to the east, Keyes Road to the south, and Faith Home Road to the west. According to the 2000 Census, Keyes has a population of 4,575; the community plan area can accommodate a population of approximately 9,300 residents.

Keyes consists of primarily low and medium density residential uses, as well as some industrial and highway-oriented commercial properties. Land in the area designated as Urban Transition is presently under Williamson Act contracts; however, if the contracts are not renewed in the future, the plan states that the land may be developed as low density residential.

### Plan Goals:

- Achieve a harmonious relationship between the urban environment and surrounding agricultural setting.
- Improve the visual appearance of the Keyes community.
- Encourage attractive and orderly development which preserves a small town atmosphere.
- Promote highway-oriented commercial development in the State Route 99 corridor.
- Provide an interconnected system of streets and roads to distribute traffic and meet the circulation needs of the community.
- Provide for the non-motorized transportation needs of the Keyes community.
- Provide for the recreational needs of the Keyes community.

Recently, the County has approved significant development in Keyes that is outside of Turlock's Sphere of Influence but within its Planning Area boundary, meaning it is not governed by the revenue sharing agreement. Stanislaus County has not mandated this development's annexation into Turlock, but its occurrence has had impacts on the City of Turlock and has become an issue of policy.

## Merced County General Plan Update

The Merced County boundary is just south of the Planning Area, and land use and transportation policies adopted there will influence conditions in Turlock. Merced County is currently in the process of updating its General Plan, and anticipates completion in 2009. Like Stanislaus County, Merced County has experienced rapid growth in recent decades, and is faced with challenges concerning farmland conservation, economic diversification, provision of public services, water supply, and air quality. A Background Report and Issues and Opportunities Report were published in 2007. These were followed by a series of community workshops in which four growth alternatives were weighed; two of the alternatives would direct a significant share of new growth into unincorporated areas, while the other two would refine existing County policy of directing urban growth into cities and designated unincorporated urban centers.

Since then, specific policies have been discussed by the Board of Supervisors/ Planning Commission and by focus groups. Policies to improve agricultural mitigation policies; set larger minimum lot sizes to discourage rural land division; create buffer design guidelines; and diversify the agricultural economy were supported. Participants also favored compact development and jobs-housing proximity; policies to ensure infrastructure adequacy in coordination with

development; water reuse programs; and stronger water sufficiency requirements before permitting new wells.

### San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Plan

The San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Plan is a region-wide effort to develop a preferred land use and transportation plan for the year 2050. Funded by the State Business Transportation and Housing Agency and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the process brings together eight metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to develop a comprehensive growth management strategy. While the policies and recommendations resulting from the plan will not replace local authority over land use decisions, those involved in the Blueprint process hope for it to achieve broad support. The Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) is one of the lead agencies, partnering with the Council of Fresno Governments, the Kern Council of Governments, the Kings County Association of Governments, Madera County Transportation Commission, the Merced County Association of Governments, San Joaquin Council of Governments, the Tulare County Association of Governments and the Great Valley Center.

The San Joaquin Valley is the fastest growing region in California, and the population of the eight counties covered by the plan is projected to grow from 3.3 million to over seven million in 40 years. The plan aims to quantify and represent alternative development patterns and attendant transportation investments. Of three scenarios presented, the “locally preferred” option involves a shift toward increased residential densities and limited agricultural and environmental impacts. It is estimated to require 25% less land for development, be one-third less disruptive to habitat and natural areas, produce more multi-family housing, and reduce energy consumption, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions. This scenario represents a middle ground between the current development pattern and a development pattern that emphasizes infill and some higher density.

The Blueprint Regional Summit held in January 2009 brought together 500 people to evaluate and vote upon four different scenarios for regional development. The alternatives showed the scale and spread of development by the year 2050 and projected average residential densities ranging from 4.3 to 10.0 units per acre. When votes were tallied, 53 percent of participants chose the scenario that resulted in the highest residential density and most compact development.<sup>1</sup>

### Route 99 Corridor Plans

California Route 99 traverses the San Joaquin Valley, connecting Sacramento with Interstate 5 south of Bakersfield; it is the spine of an intensively agricultural

and increasingly urbanized region. Caltrans’ 1998 Interregional Transportation Specific Plan (ITSP) set goals to eliminate non-freeway gaps and increase capacity to six lanes at minimum for the Route 99 corridor between I-5 and the Sacramento County line. This plan was followed by the Transportation Concept Report (TCR), which established performance targets and roadway improvements needed to meet these targets. The TCR calls for Highway 99 to perform at Level of Service “D” in urban areas, and LOS “C” in rural areas (Turlock currently meets the standards.)

Stanislaus County’s 2007 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identifies one Highway 99 project in Turlock: improvements to the Lander Avenue (Route 165) interchange, with an estimated completion date of 2015. No projects in the Turlock planning area are included in the 2008 State Highway Operation and Protection Plan (SHOPP) or the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

Caltrans has adopted a policy of “Context Sensitive Solutions,” with the goal of harmonizing environmental and aesthetic values with safety and mobility goals. In 2004, the agency conducted the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan. The Plan reviews current roadway conditions and planned improvements, and promotes the realization of these improvements in a way that creates a unified aesthetic experience and enhances regional identity. The Plan proposes a guiding theme for the highway: “Route 99 – the Mainstreet of California’s Heartland, Linking Heritage to Innovation.” This theme would be carried out by Caltrans in its landscaping and structural projects, and by local jurisdictions in their land use, development, and signage regulations. In Stanislaus County, the Route 99 Image Enhancement Plan Implementation Project (PIP) has sought to move these ideas forward.

There has been discussion of making Route 99 part of the Interstate highway system. This would require upgrading the road to meet Interstate standards, at an estimated cost of between \$14 billion and \$19 billion. In 2004, an Assembly resolution was passed stating that California should request Interstate designation if the state would be exempted from financing upgrades, and if Route 99 was given historic status.

### Route 165 Plans

Route 165 connects Interstate 5 south of Los Banos to Route 99 in Turlock (where the roadway is called Lander Avenue.) The highway has become heavily travelled by both passenger vehicles and freight trucks, creating hazardous conditions, particularly where it goes through the center of Hilmar, several miles south of Turlock. Merced County has recently completed updates to its plans for Hilmar and Delhi and is working on planning for the Stevenson Ranch area. All of these

<sup>1</sup> San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Summit Follow-Up. <http://www.valleyblueprint.org/after.summit.html>



communities are within Turlock’s economic trade area, and their growth and development has direct impacts on the conditions of Route 165.

Five jurisdictions--The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), the County of Merced, the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG), the County of Stanislaus, and the City of Turlock--are currently undertaking a study of potential rerouting and improvement options. This project is of particular importance to Turlock because some resolution on the future new connection with SR 99 is necessary for starting master planning work on the city’s southeast quadrant.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

### City Design Guidelines

The City’s Design Guidelines complement the development regulations in the zoning code. Through graphics and written descriptions, the Design Guidelines provide additional reference for designers to understand the City’s goals and objectives for high quality development. They apply generally to residential, commercial, and industrial property in all zoning districts and planned development zones, as well as to landscaping and signs. The Guidelines attempt to foster variety and interest along city streets while still maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods. The Guidelines also emphasize screening and landscaping of utilities and parking to create a more pleasant environment.

### Downtown Design Guidelines and Zoning District

Adopted in 2003, the Downtown Design Guidelines and Zoning Regulations build on the vision for Downtown Turlock outlined in the General Plan and in an earlier Downtown Master Plan. Recent public and private investment has increased interest in the Downtown Core, with future investment in Downtown Turlock anticipated. The Zoning Regulations and Guidelines are intended to encourage and facilitate appropriate private investment within the Downtown Area that reflects the historic commercial character of the core and the traditional residential character of the adjoining neighborhoods. The documents contain guidelines and standards for physical design and land use in the area. The focus of the City’s General Plan and this document is to emphasize the importance of pedestrian access and accessibility throughout the Downtown Area, making it a place people can access easily, and where they will want to linger and spend time.

The goals for the Zoning Regulations and Design Guidelines include:

- To ensure the current and future success of the Downtown by preserving and enhancing its unique historic character.
- To encourage future development that is compatible with the overall feel of Downtown.
- To protect and enhance the pedestrian environment and accessibility in and around the Downtown Core Area.
- To conserve the traditional character of the immediate surrounding residential neighborhoods while guiding future development for use and reinvestment through alternative uses.
- To promote renovation of historic buildings in Downtown and promote new investment and construction.

### Turlock Beautification Master Plan

The Turlock Beautification Master Plan aims to provide additional guidance for creating a unified visual image and identity for the City. Unlike the Design Guidelines, which focus primarily on individual property developments, the Beautification Master Plan takes a more holistic view of Turlock and focuses on the City’s “gateways” and corridors (the primary entrances to and paths through Turlock), which have the highest potential for imparting a unified visual impact. The Plan addresses signage, streetscape, landscaping, and public art along Highway 99, numerous Gateway Zones, and along secondary corridors through the City. Efforts are currently underway on an implementation plan that will identify funding sources for the projects proposed in the Beautification Master Plan.

### 3.7 PLANNING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Turlock's historical and current land use planning present numerous key issues that the General Plan update must address. The City has pursued development in a coherent and orderly fashion through the use of master planning and now faces critical decisions regarding how future development will proceed over the next 15 to 20 years. Key issues include:

- *Location of Future Growth.* Through implementing a series of master and specific plans, Turlock has built out most of the large, vacant areas of land that existed at the time of the 1992 General Plan update. While scattered sites within city limits offer infill and redevelopment opportunities, the city must determine in what areas outside of the city limits new development will be allowed to occur. Chapter Four, Growth and Development Potential, explores of Turlock's existing capacity for new development on infill, redevelopment, and greenfield sites and compares it to projected demand.
- *Residential Densities and Mix of Housing Types.* As well as determining the location of future growth, Turlock must also consider the types of residential densities and housing types that will occur. Future residential development in the Planning Area may not take the same form as that which was built over the last decade. Both demographics and market trends need to be considered to ensure that future growth will accommodate Turlock's growing and changing population.
- *Downtown and Older Neighborhood Revitalization.* A city's vitality is enhanced by the strength of its core. Turlock's Downtown and older neighborhoods will require reinvestment over the next planning period. The city has implemented beautification efforts Downtown, and now needs to focus on economic revitalization to ensure that the area is a viable center for residents to work, shop, and live. Similarly, many older residential areas are in need of physical and economic investment, and funding sources will have to be identified in order to accomplish these goals.
- *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation Planning Decisions.* Urban growth generally results in increased strains on a city's transportation network, and the city has already identified several areas of concern regarding traffic. The location and intensity of new growth will have impacts on the city's existing roads and will determine the type of new investment in transportation infrastructure that is necessary to support it. Chapter Five, Transportation and Circulation, discusses the current conditions of the city's road and transit system.
- *Coordinating with County and Inter-County Planning Efforts.* Numerous land use and transportation planning efforts are underway in Stanislaus, Merced, and other counties. These plans will have impacts on Turlock's future growth and development, particularly in the southeast quadrant of the Planning

Area. Additionally, development activity in the urban/rural transition zones between the City of Turlock and the communities of Keyes and Denair has become a key issue for the city as it seeks to maintain its growth management policies.