

# MEMO

To: Cindy Norris, Principal Planner  
From: Lisa Wise and Monica Szydlik, LWC  
Date: November 11, 2019  
Subject: Woodland Comprehensive Zoning Update: Stakeholder Interview Summary

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On Tuesday, October 29 and Wednesday, October 30, 2019, the Woodland Comprehensive Zoning Update team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews at City Hall. While the team was prepared with a list of questions and prompts listed in on page 12 below, the discussions were generally conversational in nature and guided by the interviewees, their experiences, interests, concerns and recommendations.

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

### Design and Context

Interviewees indicated that Woodland's code should embrace and preserve its agricultural and architectural history while attracting and facilitating more development. There was a general acknowledgement that car-centric design has led to a decline in the quality of life, business, and climate, and that Woodland should become more walkable with neighborhood amenities within residential zones, outdoor dining, and alleyway access to pedestrians.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of context, especially along historic preservation areas, with buildings that reflect the neighborhood scale and prevailing design aesthetic. Design also must be high in quality and avoid pastiche. There was a general consensus that East Street corridor needs attention in terms of design—both the right-of-way, building types, and frontages—but views about appropriate design varied.

Interviewees indicated that while development regulations are good, new design standards are not entirely compatible with existing uses and infrastructure. The new code needs to carefully address the framework of old/existing uses so that new ideas don't create impractical/problematic conditions in an infill environment.

## Transitions and Compatibility

There was a general agreement that corridors and transitional areas at the edges of industrial and light industrial areas have suffered in terms of economic development due to a lack of tools to ensure good design. Discussions addressed incompatibilities and sensitivities among various uses, including compatibility among different industrial uses as well as compatibility between industrial, residential, and commercial/retail. In addition, there was some concern expressed about unsightly uses at entry points to the city compromising the image of the city.

## Code Usability and Economic Development

There was a general consensus among stakeholders that the permitting process is difficult/convoluted, that administrative procedures are restrictive, fee structures are prohibitive, and that requirements for entitlements lack clarity/predictability. The team heard that the learning curve for the code is an obstacle to outside developers, hurting economic development and housing development in Woodland. Interviewees stressed that streamlining the process is key to improving business, especially in the downtown/industrial areas, and that there should be review at the staff level.

Other hurdles mentioned by stakeholders included the FEMA Flood Zones, the Yolo County Habitat Conservation Plan (specifically, hawk and burrowing owl), cost of energy, the requirement for EIRs, design standards that are incompatible with existing uses and infrastructure, and shortage of labor.

## Affordability

Interviewees recognized the need for the City to address affordability. Particular concern was expressed for how to best support construction of affordable units and to ensure that affordable units are distributed throughout the City. Interviewees advised that the code needs to facilitate by-right low-income housing and not wait for the housing element. Strategies suggested by stakeholders included an affordable housing overlay, an in-lieu fee to pay into affordable housing development, mandated duplex corner housing development in the South East Area, development in the infill opportunities throughout the city, and a further streamlined ADU construction process. In particular, the Armfield area was discussed as a major opportunity for affordable housing.

In general, all interviewees expressed support for ADUs, duplexes, and triplexes within existing residential areas of the city. While interviewees generally felt that flexibility in the code will be crucial in addressing the housing crisis, support for allowing housing in Industrial and Light Industrial Flex areas was mixed.

## INTERVIEW NOTES

Tuesday, October 29, 9-10 am

*Dave Snow, Residential Developer*

- Two downtown residential infill projects (both within the Downtown Specific Plan Area):
  - *Downtown Suites*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Lincoln. 14 HOA for-sale units on a 21,000 square foot parcel. Three story single family detached, concrete podium construction type, no common area, shared drives, small yards. This was a tentative map approval with subdivision and design done in tandem, so it required planning commission approval. Then design was appealed, issues being height, density, roof form/architecture, and drive aisle.
  - *Cleveland Street Suites*. 421 Cleveland (100 feet off Main). 16 units, single-story duplexes and triplexes. Staff-level approval.
- Experience with Staff has been good.
- The IZO changed a lot of the standards/design guidance, and the new design standards are not entirely compatible with existing uses and infrastructure. Major issues include required drive aisle/curb radius, new slope requirements that cause stormwater drainage problems, regulations for utility boxes, and landscaping. We should be careful to make sure that new standards work within framework of old/existing, and that new ideas don't create impractical/problematic conditions in an infill environment.
- People do like the vision though. The issues he sees are mostly Public Works issues. Public Works should participate in the process.
- Densities, density bonuses, and development regulations are good.

Tuesday, October 29, 10-11 am

*Don Sharp, Realtor, Former planning commissioner, Chair of Woodland Economic Renaissance Committee*

*David Wilkinson, Architectural historian, historic preservation commissioner, Woodland Tree foundation, author of Crafting a Valley Jewel: Architects and Builders of Woodland, economist for the CA preservation commission*

*Dee Rosenberg, Dee Rosenberg Architects*

*Lisa Baker, CEO, Yolo County Housing, member of GP Advisory Committee*

- Don currently works with developers and construction industry professionals who are not familiar with Woodland, and their specific feedback is not positive. The feeling is that the process is convoluted, entitlements keep changing (habitat preservation, traffic mitigation, utility

obstacles, etc.) and it can be hard to keep up with. The learning curve is a huge obstacle to outside developers.

- There needs to be staff education when there is a new comprehensive zoning code update.
- The Downtown needs to be expanded outward to accommodate people. The current form is linear and only accommodates cars. There are opportunities along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and other streets outside the Downtown boundary. Mixed use corridors have presented an opportunity and would be more useful if expanded North to South.
- David is receptive to New Urbanism and would like to see more modern development. He is a fan of evolving architecture. The issue is *context*, especially along historic preservation areas. There needs to be more attention to height, style, scale, massing, building placement, building patterns, etc.
- In her practice, Dee focuses on contextualism and green aspects of new development. She'd like to see the new code preserve the pattern and character of Old Main Street. Would like to see the code encourage modern development without breaking up the continuity of the streets.
- Dee designed Z Specialty Food LLC on Harter Street, a new mixed-use development that is mainly a honey processing facility. The project is Zero Net Energy, with on-site stormwater. Planned Phase II will expand project with non-residential mixed-use. Other amenities to include food/environmental education, organic food production. Zoned for Regional Commercial. Staff-level approval.
- Woodland is a scary place to bike. Dee would like to use her bike to get around town but does not currently feel comfortable doing so.
- Dee would like to know that the lovely, old buildings and residential areas of Woodland are preserved, as they add so much charm and humanity to the city (painted ladies, craftsman). Is there a way to prevent the bad actors from ruining the really great older houses? Some have been ruined by bad, thoughtless or insensitive renovations or flips.
- Concerns about empty storefronts and high rents on Main Street. The people who own property on Main Street could be advocates for making Main Street more vital if they would ease rents.
- Hurdles to Z Specialty Food LLC project included FEMA because it was in a Flood Overlay Zone, and also endangered species sensitivity (some hawk/burrowing owls/sounds like species and protected species acts).
- The Zoning Code needs to be appropriate to the neighborhood. There is an interesting agricultural history that should be preserved. Development patterns are lost at the edges of the corridors. There needs to be an improvement of densities. Avoid pastiche/"Disneyland" of old architecture.
- Yolo County Housing Authority/owns properties outright, in partnership, and in subdivision.

- There is not a lot of certainty in the code.
- There is no need for the south side of Lemen St to be light industrial. Armfield should consider a zone change. Armfield is an affordable housing opportunity zone for the City. A Master Planned development would deal with site constraints, reconfigured as needed. and open up Armfield to redesign.
- Armfield and surrounding areas have turned out modern craftsman houses. There was a paint survey done at one point to create the neighborhood pallet.
- Yolo County Housing's plan for the areas is for a public housing trust to develop row housing or townhomes on six acres. The project will not displace anyone currently there. Yolo County Housing has partnered with the City on the project to improve circulation and connectivity in the area as well.
- Mercy Housing built West Beamer Place, but there was some pushback from the community, which pointed out that there was no "middle" housing.
- Qualified Census Tracts in the East Main and East St/Matmor Road area.

Tuesday, October 29, 11 am - 12 pm

*Mike Vinnecombe, Bright People Foods*

- City must get away from being a little country town. There is limited land within the city limits and the city needs to understand that. The Small-town feel is not sustainable.
- Woodland has done well marketing food clusters in the City. But zoning currently hurts the marketing/branding and feel of the city by allowing unsightly uses along the major access points to the city. Zoning needs to be ahead of the city's marketing.
- Owns a food processing plant off Tide Ct.
- Property on Pioneer between East Main and Tide Ct was vacant, purchased by public storage business before Mike could purchase. Zoning allowed for this use when the form/context should have allowed for heavier industrial/food processing uses. There is now no space for these plants to warehouse and now Woodland is potentially losing jobs.
- Mike is receptive to ADUs, duplexes, and triplexes in Woodland. Densities need to be improved. Woodland can be a focal point for the region in terms of style. If we can capture a style of Woodland and repeat throughout the City in infill/opportunity sites while improving density, then the City would benefit immensely. Keep with the historical structure theme.
- Other uses incompatible with heavy food-related industry includes maintenance yards, anything that affects air quality. Generally, factors that are incompatible with food uses are pathogens, air quality issues, rodents, and toxicity.

- There aren't really regulating standards that helps the food industry stay in Woodland. There is a lack of concern about the sensitivity of some uses to others.
- Create cluster zoning districts specific to food manufacturing and ag-specific industrial uses. Code needs to find a way to push out the lighter industrial uses like public storage, U-Haul, and car washes.

Tuesday, October 29, 2-3 pm

**Steve Machado**, *Commercial and industrial developer, broker, and property manager, Landmark properties. Previously worked for Grubb & Ellis in Sacramento leasing facilities for companies throughout Northern California.*

**Mark Aulman**, *Lifetime Woodland resident, chair for the sustainability advisory committee, founder of the Tree foundation, Historic preservation commissioner.*

- Steve noted that when working with a company, flexibility within the code is key. Avoiding conditional use permits and hearings helps attract companies into the city. For example, he filled a vacant space with a Japanese restaurant when there were fewer hurdles to jump. As far as building standards and code go, streamlining the process is KEY to improving business and downtown/industrial areas especially.
- The City wants to see specific uses that aren't necessarily aligned with the community. There is a rigidity of uses currently permitted in the Code. Currently, there are many ag companies – particularly, seed companies – in Woodland.
- In the Industrial zone, there is only a 4-7% vacancy rate. The rents have increased substantially over the past few years, and are currently so high that it's more worth it to industrial developers/property managers to simply rent out existing spaces rather than construct new ones. Before new building will occur, rents must go down.
- Development regulations are not a deterrent but the smoother the process, the more likely "good businesses" will come. A few good companies would really spur a lot of growth in the City. It always starts with the tenant.
- Steve would like to see staff have more discretionary review and approval.
- East Street corridor needs a lot of help. It needs a very flexible overlay that includes industrial, commercial, and residential. Steve sees it as quasi industrial/commercial.
- Physically, there are barriers to the clean-up needed along the East Street corridor. East Street doesn't really support any kind of on street parking, railroad tracks are a huge barrier to quality of life and street form, and bikes are very unsafe.

- Access to and influence from UCD needs to be improved within the City. Provide incubator spaces, bike routes to Davis, etc. Davis loses companies because it lacks facilities, and Woodland should take advantage of this.
- The City should streamline the process for new industrial. South Sutter County has done this.
- Mark agreed that residential densities need to be right. Infill is important, and duplexes are fine, but he is not a fan of apartment buildings and other multi-family units. As far as he has seen since the 70's there has been no benefit to including this building type.
- Historic properties suffer when multifamily is developed nearby. Fourplexes are OK, seem feasible, and can fit in the context of certain areas like Cleveland Street and the end or outside of the Downtown Specific Plan area, particularly to the south.
- Sustainability should be kept in mind when thinking about economic development and the Code update. When driving is central to design, then overall quality of life and climate suffer. Start to work in more neighborhood amenities throughout the neighborhoods.

Tuesday, October 29, 3-4 pm

**Kathy Trott**, longtime Woodland resident, retired banking executive, national board for the Presbyterian church and other non-profit work, affordable housing advocate.

**Duane R. Thomson**, architecture firm owner, works on public, commercial, and residential projects, custom only, no track development.

- Legibility of the specific code itself is fine.
- Architects need to respect the planner's job and vice versa.
- Mall is a site of concern.
- Living in the old historic neighborhood is walkable but neighborhood amenities that were promised haven't come to fruition.
- Scale is very important, and the new courthouse is very out of scale. Color of newly painted house on College Street also incompatible with context.
- Last decade, Woodland has really missed the mark on building affordable housing. Contextual and creative infill will be an issue with NIMBYism. Suggestions:
  - There should be an in-lieu fee to pay into affordable housing development and create a variety of housing.
  - In the South East Area, there needs to be duplex corner housing (mandate it). Infill is huge and needs to be taken advantage of.
  - Streamline ADU/granny flat construction. Rents are going up and are displacing seniors and millennials.

- Zoning should permit housing in Industrial and Light Industrial Flex areas. For example, the property on Beamer and Harter showed promise, but the City would not allow a zone change. Flexibility in code is crucial especially in addressing the housing crisis.
- Square One Village in Eugene, OR could be a case study for NIMBYism. This model will also help understand how to drop the price point (\$/sq ft) for creating affordable housing.
- Trees need to be encouraged and incentivized throughout the city. Utility easements often preclude trees.
- Open the use of alleys.
- Be more permissive of outdoor dining. Outdoor dining was not, but should have been, permitted at Tazzina Bistro.

### Wednesday, October 30, 9-10 am

*John Buckle, Real estate developer, primarily in the industrial zones. Owns a 72-acre site on E Kentucky*

*Brenda & Monty Pate, Property owners/managers, construction company owner. Own low-income single-family properties.*

*Alysa Meyer, Attorney, Legal Services of Northern CA*

*Jim Hilliard, and State Farm Agent and former City Council member*

- John noted that the industrial land use table is clear and understandable and he generally has no problem with zoning but does have an issue with storm water diversion. Also, uses should be updated to minimize need for CUPs.
- John owns a remainder parcel on Paddock Place in the Light Industrial Flex overlay zone that has been sitting empty for 30-years. Environmental company wants to access the land but a storm water issue has been preventing new construction. An administrative permit is required to develop on this property.
- Take away impediments. Be as black and white as possible and eliminate as much discretion as possible. Be open for business and don't make it hard to build. Fee structures (flood, traffic, sewer) are making construction prohibitive.
- Alysa pointed out that the City has not been able to find sufficient sites for its RHNA needs, leaving it open to lawsuits.
- RHNA sites should be distributed throughout the city.
- Alysa is interested in planning for low-income families, and has an issue with the zoning for low-to very-low- income levels for family residential. These zones need to be dispersed throughout the area to avoid a low-income zone of the city. There should be an affordable overlay --

anything that helps by-right low-income housing. Zoning code needs to address this issue and not wait for the housing element.

- For low-income housing, large parcels are not great. Small, infill parcels are better.
- The CEQA process is a time consuming and expensive obstacle that impedes affordable housing.
- Seismic and ADA are also barriers.
- ADUs are a great opportunity but need to be approached right in order to cater to low-income people. Infill is the best approach to addressing affordability.
- See CHOC, a low-income housing provider out of Fairfield, as a good example.
- Procedural challenges have prevented Brenda/Monty Pate from building more low-income housing however, barriers described are largely building code issues.
- Jim Hilliard did note that some procedural changes are hurting business and implied that Woodland should welcome all business with little to no regulation, like West Sacramento.
- Group noted that the HCP only applies to discretionary projects, and it is a fee only (not a mitigation).

### Wednesday, October 30, 11 am - 12 am (By Phone)

#### *Paul Petrovich, developer (Petrovich Development Company, Sacramento)*

- Petrovich focuses on medical, office, restaurants and retail
- Owns Woodland Gateway Shopping Center at Interstate 2 and County Road 102.
- He would like to develop the two parcels south of the Gateway center between Bronze Star Drive and Maxwell Ave.
- As a condition of approval for the Gateway project, Petrovich agreed to develop a downtown property.
- He says that downtown rents are not high enough to justify new construction. Rising construction costs and the need to deliver on time for tenants also pose challenges for developers.
- Petrovich also owns vacant property on the NW corner of East and Main streets.
- He has a property 3rd and Main streets with a historic structure - City regs require an EIR to demolish the building.
  - He has no immediate plans for the property
  - He would save any historic elements when demolished (e.g. siding)

- Has 3 key recommendations:
  - The City should work on annexation areas to expand development potential.
  - The City should streamline the entitlement process.
  - The City should remove the requirement for an EIR on the property at 3rd and Main streets.

### Wednesday, October 30, 1-2 pm

#### *Josh Yarborough, Pacifica Coast Producers*

- PCP is a tomato processing and cannery business (largest in the world).
- PCP is a grower-owned company (Co-operative).
- PCP operations are primarily between July and September. During this time they have 1,200-1,300 full-time employees (24 hours/7 days per week).
- They do some shipping via the rail line along Main Street, so they need/like the rail spur.
- Company pipes wastewater to the wastewater ranch on the southeast side of the City.
- Biggest threats to the business are tariffs, cost of energy, new EPA laws for water, and shortage of labor.
- PCP would be concerned about additional residential development in the area, because of the industrial nature of their operations.

### Wednesday, October 30, 4-5 pm

#### *Skip Davies, longtime resident, former mayor*

- Zoning has done well but some areas haven't materialized. Conflict between developers' interest and the community.
- A lot of water/flood issues. The urban limit line has contributed to some other issues. Levee failure would put much of the northeast corner of the City underwater.
- Transitional areas and corridor areas have suffered due to a lack of tools to address economic development through good design. Administrative procedures are restrictive to the point where it deters development.
- East Street needs flexibility in the code. The corridors are only conducive to small business and maybe some affordable housing. Housing can only form around the west side of the corridor.
- Need flexibility in uses for North East Street. Small businesses, some affordable housing (on east side of tracks – not west side).

Wednesday, October 30, 5-6 pm

*Brent Meyer, City Engineer, Community Development/Engineering Department*

- Doesn't think we need to address the street in the zoning code.
- Anything we do on East Street will be a road diet. But there are higher priorities/better opportunity sites before East Street is addressed. The City is already constructing a diet on Gibson from West Street to Cottonwood.
- Code does need a follow-up discussion on parking standards for R-5 and R-6 zones (high density and small-lot single family residential). Davis/Roseville/North Natomas/Vacaville would be good examples of well-designed parking standards that would fit the context of Woodland.
- Permit parking programs are not desired but do exist in parts of the city. Same goes for shared parking. Also, the Code section on parking lots can be deferred to industry best practices because these standards will be updated much more frequently.
- Corner site distance should be addressed – contact Eric about this.
- Issues to discuss with Council include:
  - How zoning can enhance or depreciate housing costs. How do you improve property values through zoning? Form? Property tax?
  - Being more prescriptive for developers but creating escape hatches (flexibility) to encourage infill/affordable housing,
  - Creating a rule book (see Steve Coyle's 25 rules for improving Woodland)
  - Creating clear criteria for getting development approved without being restrictive (i.e. dimensions in frontage standards with allowable modification, little architectural standards).
  - Defining criteria for each T-zone.

## INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

### Introduction

- Purpose of project [implement new Zoning Code, improve permitting process, make code easier to use and administer, improve outcome of development projects—better designed, implement community vision, protect historic and natural resources, develop form-based components as appropriate]
- Objective of the interviews—the first step in understanding development code/permitting issues that needed to be addressed

- Describe project timeline and note that there will be other opportunities for input
- Structure of the interview: explain the roadmap—talk about your background and familiarity, existing code, and how it can be improved. Questions are prompts—purpose is to talk about issues that are of most concern to them

## Questions

### *Background*

1. What types of development are you involved with, and what are the specific regulations with which you are most familiar? Have you used the Interim Code?
2. When was the last time you had experience with any development code issue in the City of Woodland? Talk about your familiarity with code, a specific project, and your experience using the code.

### *Current Regulations*

3. Thinking about a specific project or projects with which you are familiar, how did the City's land use and development regulations affect the outcome?
  - Did some regulations affect/limit feasibility of your project?
  - Would different regulations have resulted in "better" projects?
  - If not, what would have made a difference?
4. Before we talk about what we should change, I want to first ask you what you find particularly beneficial or effective about the current regulations. What would you NOT change? Consider the Zoning code and IZO.
5. What do you see as the major problems with the zoning code? e.g., Do you think the regulations are effective in achieving quality development in the City? If not, what are their shortcomings and drawbacks? Please be as specific as possible.
6. Which of these problems [that you've mentioned] do you think are most significant in terms of their effect on the nature, location, and quality of development, and why?
  - Do you think that the City's development standards are being met on a site-by-site basis, but as a whole the overall effect is not what is desired?
  - Do the City's development standards adequately express the character of specific areas/corridors?
  - Are permitted residential densities and building types appropriate for Woodland's residential areas? Consider R-1 and R-2 areas.

- Do the development regulations keep out development that is incompatible with surrounding uses? Development that is poorly designed?
- Do you think the development regulations may deter businesses from coming to Woodland? If so, why?

### *Specific Components*

7. Are the physical development standards in keeping with contemporary development practices in the region?
8. What role do the Community Design Standards play in the design of your projects? If active in the Downtown, what role do the Downtown Design Guidelines play?
9. Do you think the use regulations are effective in keeping out undesirable uses, but also letting in desired ones?
10. Let's talk about regulations for specific areas. Are you aware of any particular land use or development issues that negatively affect development in a specific area(s)? Or detract from the area's character? What do you consider the center of the area(s)? Nodes or destinations that call for walkability? Consider building height, mixed-use development, density/intensity, permitted uses, compatibility between new and historic development.
11. Parking and access. Do the parking requirements match actual parking demand?
12. Are parking and access requirements seen as a hindrance to development or expansion of certain uses or in certain locations? Think about parking location, ratios, walkability, alleys.
13. Do the sign requirements and allowances provide a good balance between providing enough signage for information and advertising while addressing aesthetic and sign clutter concerns?
14. What Code elements most encourage/deter housing development? Housing affordability? New businesses/job creation?
15. Idea of having an R-2 zoning as the base and allowing duplexes as a right.

### *Downtown and Corridors*

16. Think about the Downtown. How would you describe Downtown's character? What role do the following play in establishing the character of downtown?
  - Alleys
  - Building height (is 65' appropriate everywhere?)
  - Building frontages
  - Building materials
  - Mixed-use development

- Adjacencies (different uses, historic buildings)
- Transit access

17. Would any of these qualities/elements [that you've described above] be appropriate in other areas of Woodland? What design features or uses that are incompatible with such a character? (sound walls, fencing, industrial uses, parking requirements, etc.)

### *Process*

18. How well do the administrative procedures work for development?

- How effective are the processes that allow flexibility in development requirements i.e. appeals, variances, planned development, conditional use permits? How can these be made better?
- Are there decisions that require a Planning Commission hearing action that you think should be made at the Staff level?

### *Ease of Use*

19. How does the Zoning Code compare to the IZO in terms of usability?

20. Are there situations where the City has multiple regulations to achieve the same objectives? Could some of these be eliminated? Are some of these inconsistent?

21. Do you think that the land use and development code and/or IZO is understandable and easy to use? If not, are its problems related to:

- Overall organization and format?
- Confusing/conflicting/redundant language?
- Lack of graphic illustrations?
- Lack/outdated of tables?
- Conflict between current Code and IZO?

22. What are the most important changes that could be made to the format and organization of the development regulations to make them easier to use?

23. Are there other issues we have not covered that are important for us to consider?