

# 1.0 Executive Summary

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## 1.1 SPECIFIC PLAN PROCESS

Specific Plans are beneficial when planning large land areas or complex development projects because they provide a comprehensive document that contains all of the land use and infrastructure policies necessary to fully address the potential impacts of the project, and to implement subsequent development requests. The use of specific plan documents to guide growth is authorized by Sections 65450 through 65457 of the California Government Code. Section 65451 of the Government Code requires that Specific Plans include exhibits and discussion illustrating land use, circulation, infrastructure, development standards, phasing and financing, as well as a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan. Section 65453 allows specific plans to be adopted by resolution and/or ordinance and to be amended as often as is necessary. Specific Plans define the "rules" that pertain to a certain property, but also are able to evolve over time in response to economic and market demands.

The West Landing Specific Plan (WLSP) will serve to implement the City's General Plan policies and establish clear direction for the development of the entire Plan Area. It is both a policy and a regulatory document. It provides definition of policy direction, establishes zoning designations for the property, and includes standards to guide the detailed design of individual projects within the Plan Area.

The Land Use Plan contained herein has been prepared in response to input from a variety of sources including property owners within the Plan Area, City staff, County staff, agency staff, and the general public through a series of workshops. A more complete history of this process is discussed in Chapter 2.2.

The purpose of the West Landing Specific Plan is to create a comprehensively planned community that provides an appropriate balance of land uses and systematically constructed infrastructure and services to adequately and responsibly support development. The Specific Plan process provides a planning mechanism by which all of the issues are explored and policies and standards can be created to guide

the build-out of the Plan Area. It allows development standards to be tailored to the unique vision of a particular area, and provides consistency during the build-out of the Plan Area.

## 1.2 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

The West Landing Specific Plan document is organized into eleven chapters. The chapters are described as follows:

**Chapter 1 - Executive Summary** provides a brief overview of the specific plan process and document contents, identifies Plan Area location and summarizes the context, vision, land use plan, circulation system, parks and open space, design guidelines, public facilities, infrastructure, environmental resources, financing and implementation.

**Chapter 2 – Specific Plan Context and Setting** discusses in more detail the legal authority of specific plans and severability, West Landing's history, relationship with other documents such as the zoning code, consistency with the General Plan, and Plan Area setting.

**Chapter 3 – Vision** presents the project vision, guiding design and planning principles for West Landing, and their specific application to the West Landing Specific Plan.

**Chapter 4 – Land Use** provides further definition of the Land Use Plan and lists policies and development standards for each land use, which will serve to guide the development of the Plan Area.

**Chapter 5 – Circulation** provides an overview of the proposed transportation system including roadways, bus transit, bikeways and walkways, illustrates street sections, and lists policies that encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.

**Chapter 6 – Parks and Open Space** describes the parks, open space, paths and streetscape design contributing to a high-quality and unique West Landing community.

**Chapter 7 – Public Services and Facilities** discusses law enforcement, fire, emergency services, and schools. This chapter identifies the proposed locations for public facilities and the service ratios proposed for the Plan Area.

**Chapter 8 – Infrastructure** summarizes the proposed "backbone" systems for sewer, water and drainage. Detailed engineering studies were prepared in support of the proposed land use plan. These

studies will need to be periodically reviewed and may need to be revised or augmented as detailed subdivision plans are submitted and approved.

**Chapter 9 – Design Guidelines** provides the site planning and architectural standards for each land use district, further ensuring a high-quality and unique West Landing community.

**Chapter 10 – Project Financing Plan** summarizes the phasing of backbone infrastructure and roadways that are discussed in detail in the Financing Plan and Capital Improvement Plan prepared in support of this Specific Plan, the construction costs of major facilities and roadways, fee structures and funding programs.

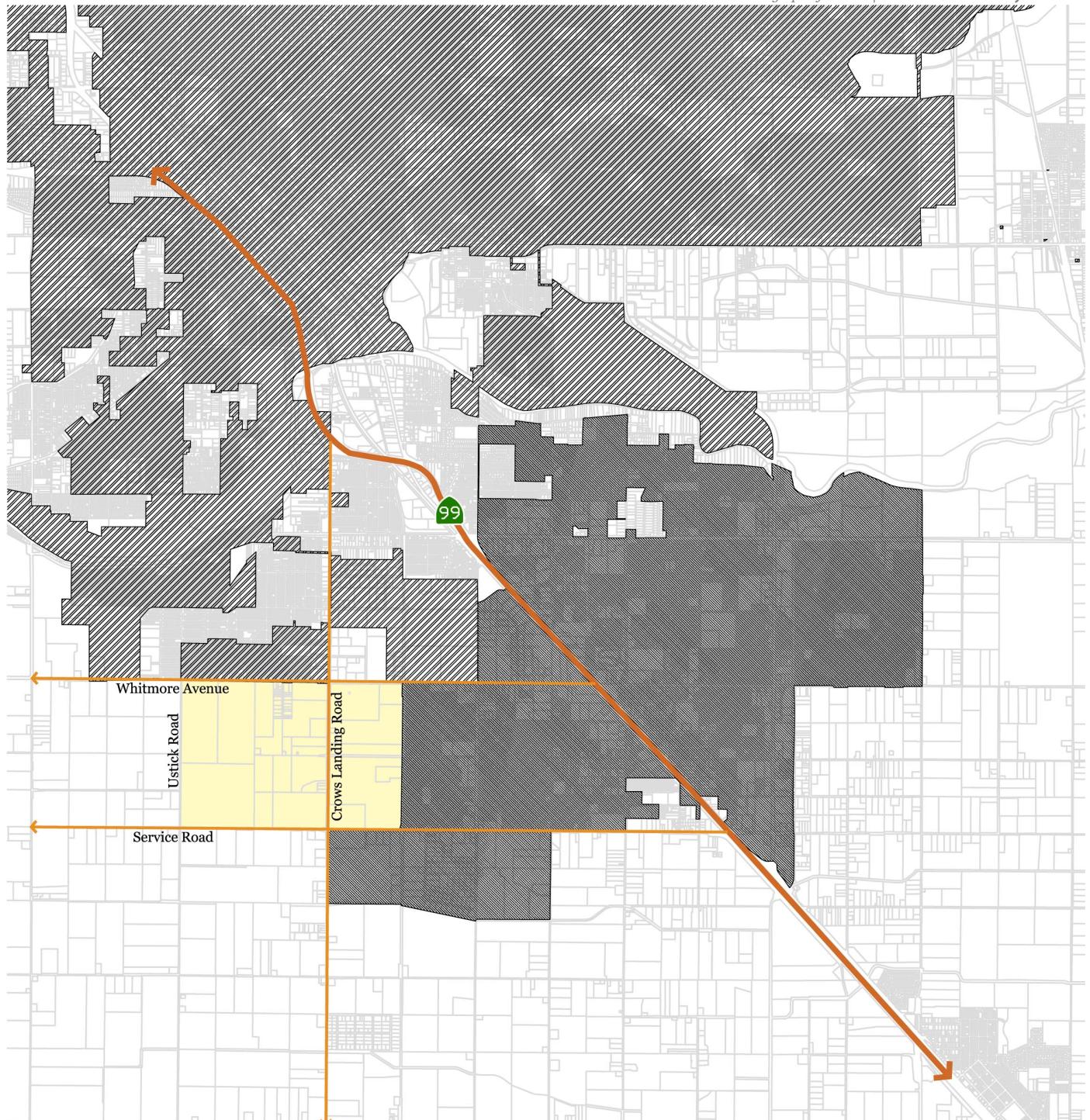
**Chapter 11 – Implementation and Administration** describes the process and policies by which subsequent submittals are made, or if necessary, how amendments may be made to this plan.

**Appendices** – Several documents are included as attachments to this specific plan document including the WLSP General Plan Consistency Analysis, supplemental development regulations, and a summary of community outreach efforts.

### **1.3 PROJECT LOCATION**

The West Landing Specific Plan encompasses approximately  $960\pm$  acres located in an unincorporated area of Stanislaus County, adjacent to the City of Ceres. It lies west of Union Pacific Railroad, south of Whitmore Avenue, east of Ustick Road, and north of Service Road. Although the West Landing Specific Plan currently falls under the jurisdiction of Stanislaus County, it is within the Phase 1, Phase 2, and Reserve Urban Growth Areas of the City of Ceres 1997 General Plan.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the WLSP boundary in relation to the city limits of the City of Ceres and the City of Modesto.



**Figure 1.1: Plan Boundary and the City of Ceres**

Date: August 2010

West Landing Specific Plan  
Ceres, California

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## 1.4 SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following provides a brief discussion of the site conditions that played a role in the formulation of the Land Use Plan and this specific plan document. Chapter 2, Specific Plan Context and Setting and the West Landing Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provide a full discussion of the existing conditions found within the Plan Area.

### 1.4.1 Property Ownership

The WLSP Area encompasses approximately  $960\pm$  acres and a total of 58 parcels, of which there are 4 general ownership groups: sponsoring property owners; non-sponsoring property owners; Stanislaus County; and Carol Lane Neighbors. The sponsoring property owners, who control approximately 494 acres, or 51% of the Plan Area agreed to financially sponsor the preparation of this Specific Plan document and the supporting infrastructure engineering studies, and provided funding to the City of Ceres to prepare the environmental impact report and environmental studies.

### 1.4.2 Existing Land Use

The WLSP Area includes a variety of existing land uses. Agricultural uses are located in the western and central plan area. Rural homes sites are distributed throughout the plan area, including the Carol Lane development. The G3 Enterprises Inc. industrial and commercial uses are located in the northeastern plan area. El Rematito Flea Market is located on the northwest corner of Crows Landing Road and Hackett Road. Stanislaus County uses, including the County Jail, Criminal Justice Training Center and Office of the Agricultural Commissioner, are located in the southeastern plan area.

### 1.4.3 Surrounding Land Use

The WLSP Area is surrounded by a variety of existing land uses. Low-density residential and industrial uses are located north of the Plan Area. Low density residential uses are located east of the Plan Area, across the Union Pacific railroad tracks. Industrial and agricultural uses are located south of the plan area, and agricultural uses are located to the west.

### 1.4.4 Topography and Drainage

The project area is essentially flat with elevations ranging from 85-feet on the northeast to 77-feet on the southwest, mean sea level (MSL). Elevation contour lines generally trend northeast/southwest through the project area. Based on this observation, the project area generally slopes and drains downward to the southwest.

#### 1.4.5 Biological Resources

Existing uses within the WLSP Plan Area consist of industrial, commercial, rural residential homes, almond orchards and fields farmed in hay crops. Due to previous development, intensive agriculture, and associated lack of suitable habitat, the likelihood of special-status plants and animals within the Plan Area is considered extremely low. No special-status wildlife species were observed. Due to the historic and current use of the property, no potentially jurisdictional wetlands or Waters of the U.S. were observed in or near the Plan Area.

### 1.5 SUMMARY OF VISION

The following guiding principles were developed based on input from a series of public workshops, stakeholder meetings, City Council/Planning Commission Study Sessions, and coordination with City of Ceres senior staff during the initial planning stages of the project. The following principles guided the formulation of the Land Use Plan and the policies and standards contained within this document:

- Protect adjacent farmland and provide transitional buffers sensitive to the character and function of adjacent land uses.
- Promote a mixed-use, compact development pattern linked to regional transportation systems.
- Promote a balance of uses – housing, employment, schools, parks, recreation, and shopping that support a healthy balance of jobs and housing in the City.
- Create a livable, walkable, and safe environment with a distinct community identity and sense of place.
- Encourage an efficient use of energy and resources through sustainable design practices.
- Provide a diversity of recreational opportunities and community gathering places, including community, and neighborhood parks.
- Create friendly and inviting streetscapes through landscaping and design elements that reflect a high quality development.
- Encourage high quality architecture and urban design.
- Provide a diversity of housing choices, types, styles, densities, and cost.

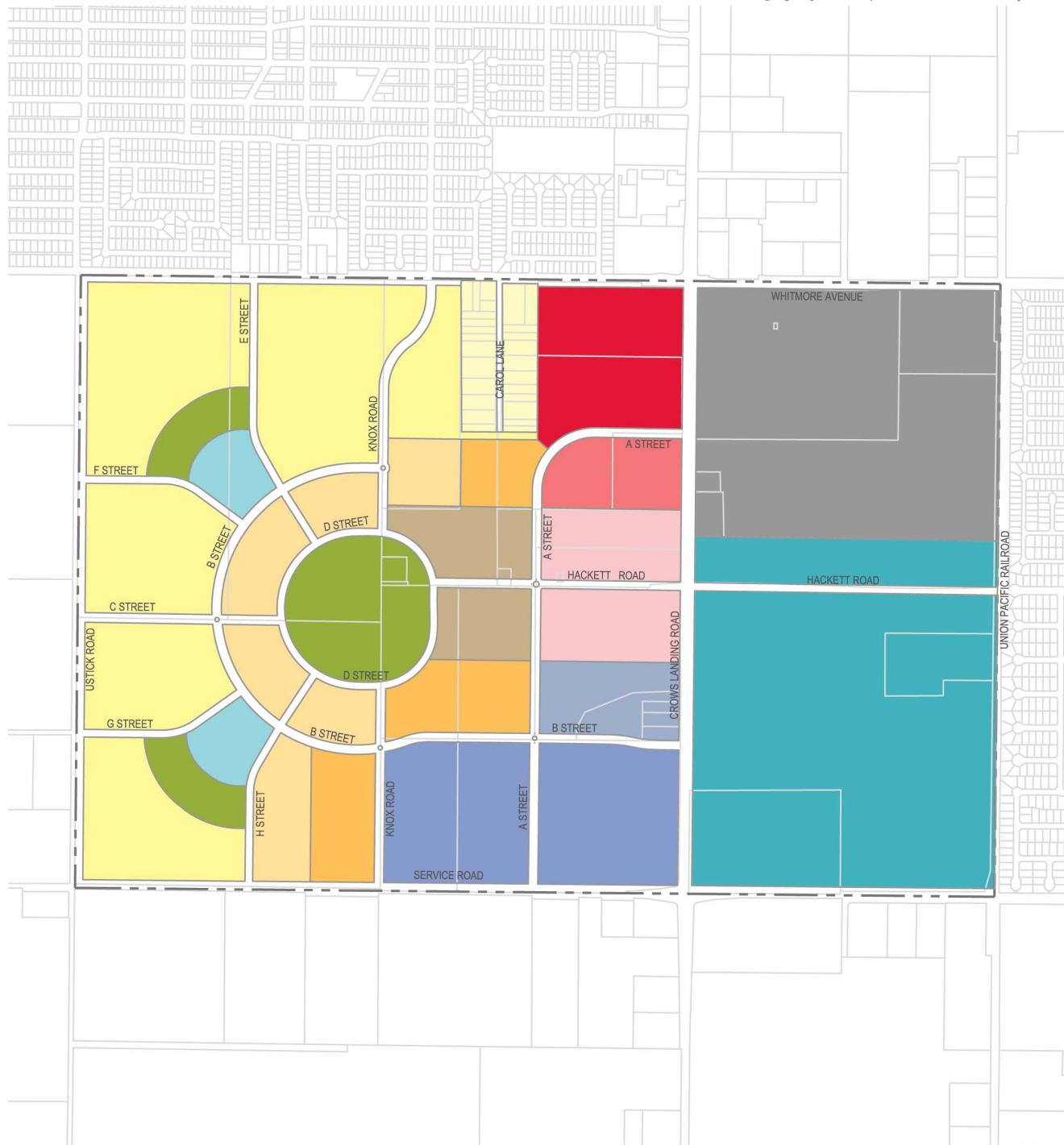
- Provide a range of transportation choices – streets, paths, trails, and links to public transportation systems.
- Reinforce existing commercial corridors. Designate sufficient commercial and employment oriented land uses to create job opportunities and improve the jobs to housing balance.
- Create safe and accessible links between neighborhoods, community facilities and shopping within the plan area and to the surrounding community.

## 1.6 SUMMARY OF LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan would permit the development of up to 1,992 single family homes and 1,667 multi-family units for a maximum of 3,659 dwelling units, and 171.1 acres of new commercial (regional, community & neighborhood), office, and business park uses, which will allow for approximately 2.0 million square feet of space at typical densities. The Plan also includes approximately 47 acres for parks and 16 acres for two elementary schools (approximately 8 acres each). The number of acres and units may vary slightly depending on more accurate survey information and the final alignment of roadways, however the maximum total of 3,659 units establishes an approximate carrying capacity for the Plan Area. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the Land Use Plan:

**Table 1-1: Land Use Summary**

Map Symbol SP/ Zone Designation	Land Use	Maximum Density (Calculation)	Approx. Acres±	Estimated Units±
VLDR	Very Low Density Residential	4.5 du/ac.	18.0	81
LDR	Low Density Residential	7.0 du/ac.	178.9	1,252
MDR	Medium Density Residential	12.0 du/ac.	54.9	659
HDR I	High Density Residential I	18.0 du/ac.	39.7	715
HDR II	High Density Residential II	25.0 du/ac.	26.5	662
RC	Regional Commercial		35.7	
CC	Community Commercial		15.9	
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	18-25 du/ac.	34.3	200
O	Office	18-25 du/ac.	17.7	90
BP	Business Park		67.5	
GI	General Industrial		128.5	
CF	Community Facilities		175.5	
S	Schools (Elementary)		16.0	
P	Parks (Neighborhood and Community)		47.0	
	Major Roads		103.3	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>959.4</b>	<b>3,659</b>	



#### Legend

VLDR	Very Low Density Residential	RC	Regional Commercial	GI	General Industrial
LDR	Low Density Residential	CC	Community Commercial	S	School (Elementary)
MDR	Medium Density Residential	NC	Neighborhood Commercial	CF	Community Facilities
HDR I	High Density Residential I	O/HDR	Office/Mixed-Use	P	Park & Plazas
HDR II	High Density Residential II	BP	Business Park		Project Boundary

**Figure 1.2: Land Use Plan**

Date: August 2010

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Ceres, California

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### 1.6.1 Community, District, and Neighborhood Concept

For land use planning purposes this  $960\pm$  acre community can be considered as three interdependent sub-areas or districts (Figure 1.3). Each of the three districts is defined by its unique mix of uses, character, and function. Adjacent districts have been assigned complimentary land uses to promote unity and seamless transition from one district to another. The districts are further united by a community-wide modified-grid of collector streets, and a system of shared-use paseos connecting residential neighborhoods to the activity and job centers of the community.

The land uses within the West Landing Specific Plan are arranged with the highest density and intensity uses located along Crows Landing Road, transitioning to less dense and intense uses moving toward the western Plan Area boundary at Ustick Road.

The Eastern District, located between the Union Pacific Railroad and Crows Landing Road, consists of substantially built-out land including G3 Enterprises, Inc. and Stanislaus County facilities. The northern portion of this district includes existing industrial and commercial uses owned by G3 Enterprises Inc., including manufacturing, warehousing and convenience commercial. Stanislaus County facilities are located within the southern portion of this district, including the County Jail, Community Services Agency, Department of Child Support, Public Safety Center, Office of the Agricultural Commissioner, U.C. Cooperative Extension, and Criminal Justice Training Center. The existing G3 and Stanislaus County uses provide jobs, as well as social and commercial services for future residents of the Plan Area. In addition, these businesses act as anchors for future businesses along the Crows Landing Road corridor. It is anticipated that both the G3 Enterprises, Inc. and County properties will build out in a manner similar to the current development.

The Central District, located between Crows Landing Road and Knox Road concentrates commercial-oriented uses and high-density residential toward Crows Landing Road, with a large Regional Commercial center located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Whitmore Avenue and Crows Landing Road. Major commercial centers that include large discount retailers, theatres, and similar land uses rely on a broad market for their economic viability, and therefore are logically located along major roadways. For this reason, Community Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial uses are also located along Crows Landing Road. The Neighborhood Commercial parcels are organized north and south of Hackett Road to create a pedestrian-oriented, central gathering area of the community.

The Central District residential neighborhood features a blend of medium and high-density residential dwellings organized around the community park. The residential neighborhood of the Central District is envisioned to be urban in nature, with the front doors, stairs and porches of townhomes, condominiums, and apartments connecting directly to sidewalks along tree-lined streets. This dense and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood provides a variety of housing types and sizes, placing the highest concentration of residents near existing public transit facilities and the future job center of the community.

The Western District, located between Knox Road and Ustick Road consists of two residential neighborhoods, each with a neighborhood park and elementary school at the center, within convenient walking or cycling distance for school children and residents. The residential neighborhoods feature a blend of very low, low and medium-density residential villages, transitioning from medium-density residential near Knox Road to low-density residential at Ustick Road. Residential neighborhoods of the Western District are envisioned to be lower density in nature than the Central District neighborhood, with a blend of high-quality, standard single-family homes, small lot homes, cluster homes and cottages contributing to a charming, walkable streetscape.

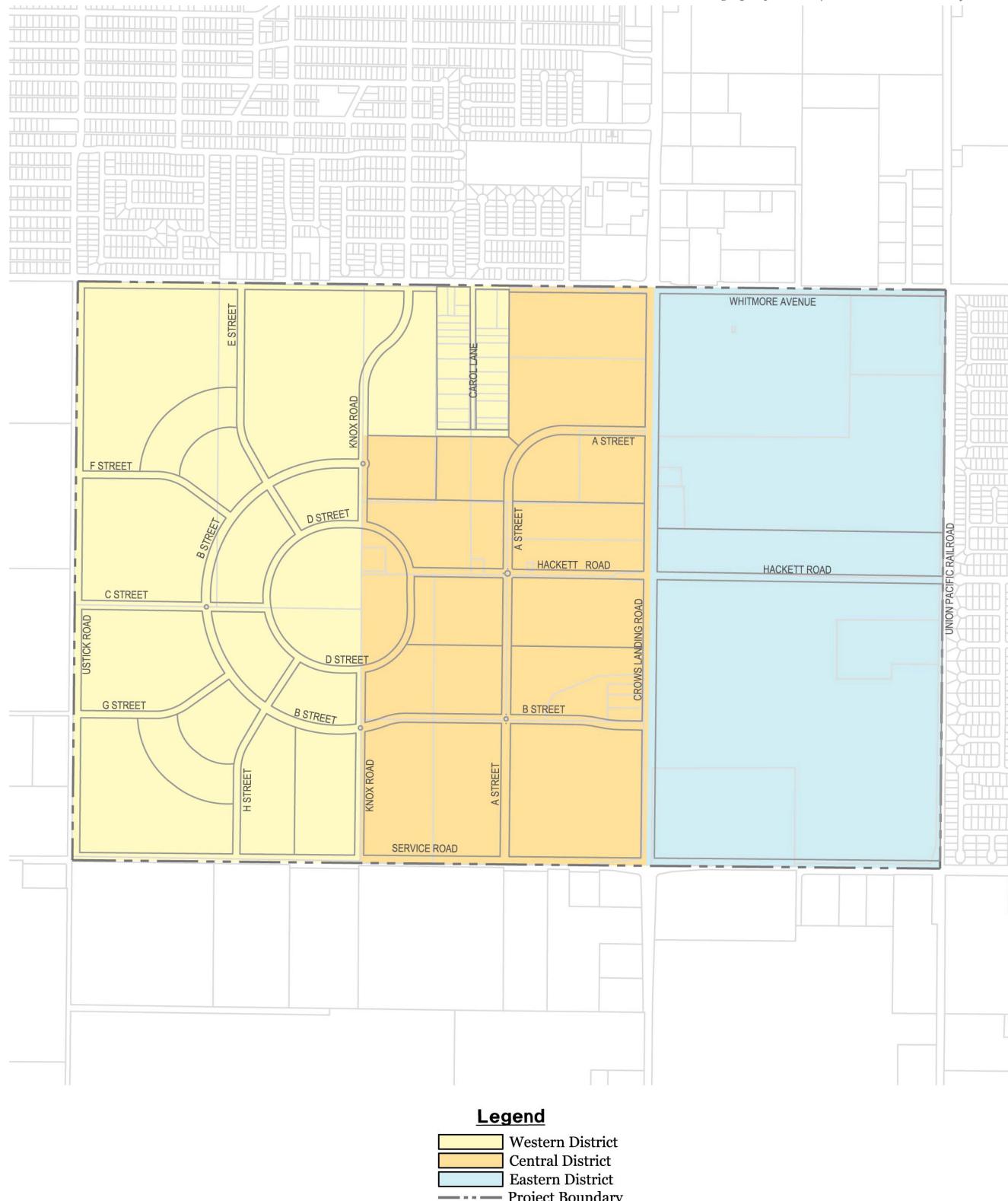


Figure 1.3: District Map

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## 1.7 SUMMARY OF CIRCULATION SYSTEM

The WLSP proposes a well-structured network of streets and pathways to serve the Plan Area. The creation of a well-connected hierarchy of roadways allows for the efficient flow of vehicular traffic, and also encourages walking, biking and public transit alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.

The construction of roadways within the Plan Area will occur in a coordinated and timely manner, and will be phased as needed for development. Chapter 10 provides a summary discussion of the Project Financing Plan. These documents were prepared to define the costs of roadways, sewer, water, drainage and other facilities and to demonstrate how they will be financed to ensure they are installed concurrent with development.

Expressway and arterial streets (which include six-lane and four-lane roads) serve to convey significant "cross-town" traffic. These streets will provide for efficient access through the City of Ceres, and connections to major commercial uses, employment centers, and amenities. They are generally located on a one-mile spacing along the perimeter of the Plan Area. These streets have been excluded from the calculations of developable acres in the Land Use Plan.

Primary and secondary collector streets provide connections into and through neighborhoods, linking to school and park facilities, and allowing residents of one neighborhood to visit another neighborhood without traveling on arterial streets. Generally located on 1/4 mile spacing, these streets have also been excluded from the calculations of developable acres in the Land Use Plan.

Modesto Area Express, Ceres Area Transit, and Stanislaus Regional Transit currently provide transit service to the Plan Area at the eastern intersection of Crows Landing Road and Hackett Road. The design of the Land Use Plan and the policies contained within this document encourage the use of existing public transit, as well as expansion of routes within the Plan Area with additional stops at key intersections. Land uses are generally more intense adjacent to arterial streets to encourage ridership, and it is anticipated that the transit agencies will expand bus service to the Plan Area as development occurs and demand increases.

The WLSP also includes a comprehensive plan for bikeways and pedestrian pathways. All expressway, arterial and primary collector streets will have bike lanes and sidewalks separated from the street by tree-lined landscaped corridors. Off-street Class I bike trails are envisioned to be located along the primary collector streets. This comprehensive system promotes non-motorized connectivity both within the Plan Area and to destinations within the City of Ceres and beyond.

## **1.8 SUMMARY OF PARKS, PATHS, TRAILS AND TREES**

As with any community it is important to create a cohesive outdoor environment that complements the surrounding built forms. The West Landing community will contain a mixture of built forms with different land uses, housing types and outdoor spaces. Amid such a diverse community it will be crucial to produce a strong landscape theme that creates connectivity between the residential neighborhoods, the commercial/retail shops, mixed-use office centers and parks. The Parks, Paths, Trails and Trees section contains the landscape design guidelines that will define approximately 47.0 acres of parkland as well as landscape character within the path and streetscape networks. The principles included in this section define the anticipated park system uses and ensure that the ultimate landscape theme is carried out through monument features, street trees, shrub planting, hardscape material, and site furnishings.

## **1.9 SUMMARY OF DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Design Guidelines chapter establishes the vision for the residential, commercial, and business park architecture within the West Landing Specific Plan area. The chapter provides guidance for the developers, builders, designers and the City who will ultimately create the built environment of the West Landing Specific Plan. Each section within the chapter addresses site design and architecture, including building placement and orientation, public spaces and pedestrian amenities, and style and design details. The Guidelines are intended to be flexible enough to allow for creativity, while also assuring a quality community that the City of Ceres can proudly point to as a high watermark of development.

## **1.10 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Currently, fire protection to the unincorporated West Landing Specific Plan area and the surrounding areas is provided by the Westport Fire Protection District. As part of the annexation process, it is anticipated that the Fire District boundaries will be reorganized so that the West Landing Specific Plan Area will fall within the fire protection service area of the Ceres Fire Department. The Ceres Fire Department has indicated that they may not be able to provide adequate fire protection for the West Landing Specific Plan area from their existing stations at build out of the plan area. Therefore, preliminary fire station locations have been identified on Figure 7.1 along C Street east of Ustick Avenue.

Currently, law enforcement service to the unincorporated West Landing Specific Plan area is provided by the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office. Once, annexed, the West Landing Specific Plan area will fall within the service area of the City of Ceres Police Department. To serve the specific plan area, the Ceres Police Department has indicated that they will likely need a substation within the plan area. This

substation, which would be approximately 800 square feet, could be combined with the future fire station.

The Eastern District of the West Landing Specific Plan area, between the Union Pacific rail line and Crows Landing Road, is within the Ceres Unified School District. However, no students would be expected to be generated in this area as it includes only the Stanislaus County and G3 Enterprises, Inc. facilities.

The Central and Western Districts of the West Landing Specific Plan, between Crows Landing Road and Ustick Road are located within the Modesto City School District. Modesto City School District representatives have indicated that capacity for future West Landing junior high and high school students can be met with existing facilities. However, nearby elementary schools are at or above capacity. Therefore, it is anticipated that at least one and possibly two elementary schools will need to be constructed in the Plan Area. The land plan embodied in this Specific Plan provides for two schools. Transfer of the Plan Area into the Ceres Unified School District is under discussion.

A total of approximately 47 acres has been designated for Parks within the Plan Area, which meets the 4 acres per 1,000 parkland dedication requirement. The calculation of required parkland is based upon project population factors of 3.2 persons per low density residential dwelling unit, 2.75 persons per medium density dwelling unit, and 2.50 persons per high density dwelling unit, resulting in an estimated build-out population of 10,245. The City of Ceres Planning and Building Division and Recreation Department have been involved in the development of the parks program for West Landing, including the size and distribution of neighborhood parks, and community parks.

## **1.11 SUMMARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **1.11.1 Sewer**

The proposed Plan Area will be served by the City of Ceres Sanitary Services Division, within the Public Works Department. At project build-out, sewage generated in the Plan Area will be collected and conveyed by both gravity mains with limited use of force mains. Lift stations are anticipated to provide for conveyance of flows to existing gravity lines in Service Road, which will direct flows east to the City of Ceres WWTP, located south of Service Road between Morgan Road and Blaker Road. Interim lift stations within the Plan Area will be utilized to facilitate phasing of development.

### 1.11.2 Water

The City of Ceres Public Works Department will be responsible for providing water service to the Plan Area. The sources of water shall be groundwater in conjunction with the possible development of surface water sources from the Turlock Irrigation District (TID). The groundwater will require treatment, therefore treatment facilities will be constructed along with new wells and storage facilities. The potable water transmission system is designed for conjunctive use and will allow for future water deliveries from surface water sources.

The Plan Area has included the use of reclaimed water to irrigate parks and selected landscape corridors. Ultimately a separate distribution system is proposed to allow the use of this non-potable water as a measure to conserve potable water supplies

### 1.11.3 Storm Drainage

The Plan Area is essentially flat, with surface flows moving roughly in a southwesterly direction. Site development will necessitate the need for the Plan Area to construct retention basins as well as swales and roadside ditches which will collect and re-direct the flow. The proposed collection system will contain a series of gravity drainage pipes directing flows towards the appropriately sized retention basins and be maintained by the City of Ceres Public Works Department.

## 1.12 SUMMARY OF PHASING AND FINANCING

The Financing Plan chapter identifies the public infrastructure requirements of the Plan Area. These infrastructure requirements are composed of a variety of backbone infrastructure improvements including roads, sewer, storm drainage, water, and other public facilities (e.g., parks, fire facilities, schools), which will be phased to establish an orderly pattern of development with minimal construction impacts on the community. The chapter provides a set of principles and policies regarding how these financing obligations should be met. In addition, the chapter identifies several financing mechanisms that may be used to fund backbone infrastructure and other public facilities associated with the Plan Area. A set of recommended action items are presented to help the City establish the ultimate mix of financing mechanisms during the implementation process. Finally, the Chapter addresses identification of potential financing mechanisms to fund ongoing operations and maintenance costs for backbone infrastructure and public facilities in the Plan Area.

### **1.13 SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Implementation and Administration chapter establishes the procedures by which subsequent submittals are made to allow the development of the Plan Area. As development applications are brought forward they will be reviewed by the Planning and Building Division for consistency with this Specific Plan and other City documents and standards, and will determine if the application requires any amendment and if a specific plan fee is due. An initial study and environmental review will be prepared to comply with CEQA requirements and the application will be processed through to the appropriate approval body.