



## Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

### Introduction

This section is a summary of the issues that were identified at the public workshops. This portion of the report represents a concerted effort to involve the public in identifying issues, opportunities, and constraints in the decision making process of the General Plan Update.

### Issues

The first step in the update process is to identify the issues and concerns identified by residents in Gustine. After three workshops, which included outreach with the planning commission, city council, chamber of commerce, and the general public, several repeating themes emerged.

A joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission was held where the following question was asked: *"The City of Gustine would function more efficiently and have a higher quality of living if the following concerns were addressed"*.

Among the issues and concerns identified:

- Revitalizing the downtown
- Review of current codes for applicability
- Ability to attract grant money to fund public services
- Attracting various businesses including:
  - Industrial
  - Retail
  - Improved medical facilities
- Consistent funding to improve community/public services
- Attracting light industry to increase tax base and create new jobs
- Active parks and recreation program
- Transportation services
- Increase new housing market
- Controlled growth
- School sites
- Safe sidewalks

### ***Revitalizing the Downtown Area***

The most reoccurring theme was revitalizing the downtown area. Within this concept, there are a number of issues that were identified that include the high rents within the downtown area, enforcement of the zoning code to enhance the area and an increase of the current building standards in an effort to enhance the area. Revitalizing downtown area adds a lot of hype to "what Gustine can be", if only it had a thriving downtown.

It was also mentioned that Gustine's proximity to the interstate, state highways, and the national cemetery should be promoted as a marketing tool to attract visitors.

### ***Retail Services***

The lack of everyday conveniences such as adequate retail stores, medical and dental facilities, recreation facilities, and restaurants were viewed as a disadvantage for the community. These are services that are associated with more urban areas. However, it was also noted that the small town atmosphere and the "quaintness" of Gustine add to its appeal.



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### ***Growth and Public Services***

There was considerable discussion regarding the impact of additional facilities to enhance the community and the costs associated with new infrastructure.

Increased growth places a burden on public agencies to keep pace with new service demands and maintaining past service levels.

### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture is an integral part of the community's identity, its economic base, and its heritage. Agricultural use is the desirable and viable land use within the community.

While agriculture remains a major industry within the Gustine community, the ability to attract new industries has also been identified as an opportunity. Citizens envision that with new industry more jobs would result and thus, more money for community services.

### ***Opportunities***

Participants at the workshops view Gustine as a city with a lot of potential, "if only it could overcome a few obstacles." It appears that there are concerns over where the city "should go" relative to what types of businesses the City would like to attract.

Among the opportunities identified:

- Proximity to state highways
- Proximity to the National Cemetery
- Proximity to national wildlife refuges
- Quaint history
- Attracting light industry
- Proximity to the Bay Area
- Gateway to Silicon Valley
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Safe place to live
- Gustine as an emerging technology hub

### ***Prime Proximity***

Gustine's location is ideal for attracting tourists. The direction the city wants to take, however, is dependent on the overall vision of the community. Tourism can lead to local spending within local businesses, but tourist related amenities must be present, such as hotels, sidewalks, and attractions.

Attracting tourists can lead to increased retail services and increased local spending, however, more maintenance dollars must go into the local infrastructure system such as the road system. This will be important in the future as the City decides which direction to take.

In addition to attracting tourists, Gustine's location could also be ideal for attracting potential residents who work in the Silicon Valley; thus Gustine could be a "bedroom community". Infrastructure concerns may be addressed if this is the direction the City decides to take as technology increases.



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The idea of Gustine becoming a technology hub was also discussed at a workshop. Technology will be playing a more important role in society, and some citizens felt that Gustine could have an opportunity to attract that type of industry.

### **Constraints**

Constraints for the City were also identified. Among those identified:

- Lack of zoning enforcement
- Appearance of properties along the highway
- Clean up of Main Street buildings
- Attractions for young people

### **Code Enforcement**

Residents expressed great concern that the codes needed to be either stricter or enforced in an effort to "clean up" Gustine. There were concerns that in an effort to attract visitors to Gustine, the downtown area needed to be enhanced.

The lack of caretaking for properties along the major corridors coming into Gustine also had residents concerned that "newcomers" would get a bad impression of Gustine.

### **Recreation**

Residents listed recreation activities as a major factor affecting the quality of life. Recreational use policies in public areas may need to be considered and evaluated to accommodate the needs of the local residents, specifically targeting the youth of the community.

### **Challenges**

As Gustine grows and addresses community concerns the ability of the City to provide for the social needs of residents will need to be addressed. There is also a critical need to provide or attract sustainable employment opportunities.

Employment opportunities must be balanced between government, retail, and other sector opportunities to insure long term economic vitality for the community.

Increased growth, types of employment, and wages need to be considered to balance the housing choices.

It is important to note here, however, that there is not a clear view regarding what types of business opportunities that the City should seek to attract. Residents seem to want employment opportunities, retail services, and tourists to come to the area; however, they would also like to explore light industry to increase the tax base.

While the ideas expressed at the workshops would impact the current style of living, it will be important for the City to identify its direction as infrastructure and other needs will need to be accommodated to make Gustine an attraction.

