

# Part I

## **Introduction**





## INTRODUCTION

Located in the central Sierra Nevada region of California, Calaveras County is characterized by a wide variety of natural and cultural landscapes, ranging from low-elevation foothill lands and their associated ranching and mining landscapes, to higher-elevation forest regions and their associated logging and wilderness landscapes. Major watersheds include the Mokelumne River watershed at the county's northern border, the Stanislaus River watershed at the county's southern border, and the Calaveras River watershed in the north-central part of the county.

Together with neighboring foothill counties, Calaveras County makes up the central part of the Mother Lode Region of California, an area with a deeper and more readily visible connection to history than almost any other area in the western United States. The county's history is the foundation of its economically-important tourism industry and influences the physical and cultural character of many of the county's towns.

While Calaveras County is not part of the Central Valley, urbanized areas such as Stockton and Modesto draw many workers from Calaveras County and are also a significant source of household migration to the county. The county also has

strong links to the more distant Sacramento and San Francisco Bay metropolitan regions.

The Calaveras County 2035 General Plan sets a new direction for the future of the county. The plan includes detailed goals, policies, and programs to achieve the community's vision and guiding principles. This includes 16 new or updated Community Plans. The plan also addresses issues of sustainability, including environmental protection, economic expansion and diversification, and equity. The 2035 General Plan was shaped over a four-year period by an extensive outreach process that engaged residents, businesses, developers, and decision-makers. This introduction answers the following six questions about the 2035 General Plan:

- What is the Community's Vision for 2035?
- What is a General Plan?
- How is the General Plan Organized?
- How Should the General Plan be Used?
- How Was the General Plan Prepared?
- How Does the General Plan Address Recent State Mandates?

## What is the Community's Vision for 2035?

The County held a series of community workshops early on in the General Plan Update process to solicit input on what residents envisioned for Calaveras County in 2035. The following is the Vision Statement that was developed out of that process and a series of guiding principles that are necessary to implement the vision.

### Vision Statement

A vision statement is a summary of the shared values of the community to be preserved and enhanced in the future through the updated General Plan. The vision provides the foundation for more specific guiding principles, goals, policies, and programs that make up the plan. The following Vision Statement reflects input received from members of the public, community groups, stakeholders, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and County staff.

*The historical character of the county's communities, the value of its productive resources, and the distinction of its physical beauty will continue to create a high quality of life for residents and a remarkable and memorable experience for visitors to the county.*

## Guiding Principles

Contained in the Vision Statement, guiding principles are fundamental ideas that represent the County's philosophy about land use, change, economic development, and sustainability. Guiding principles were written early in the General Plan Update process so that they could be used to guide the development of land use and policy alternatives. Similar to the vision, the guiding principles have been used to help shape the goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan.

The following Guiding Principles are based on input received from members of the public, community groups, stakeholders, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and County staff.

- A. The history of the Gold Rush era will be alive in the culture of distinctive communities that provide a high quality of life for generations of residents.
- B. Open space, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, agricultural lands, forests, rivers, and lakes will be protected and maintained for wildlife habitat, productive grazing and agricultural lands, and recreation.
- C. Communities will have clear boundaries and be separated from one another by working landscapes, greenbelts, or parks.
- D. Communities will have distinct centers where shopping, medical services, childcare, schools, jobs, and infrastructure are available. They will provide a range of housing types and affordability so people of all income levels can live in the same community.
- E. Businesses will thrive in a strong local economy based on sustainable natural resources and innovative industries. New opportunities for economic development will capitalize on advanced technology and catalyze growth and innovation.
- F. Visitors from around the state will be attracted to Calaveras County's historic communities, local businesses, recreation areas, and wineries. Tourism will play a major role in the local economy and protection of natural and scenic resources.
- G. Development will not outpace the ability of County government to provide adequate services and infrastructure or reduce the level of service provide to existing communities.
- H. Highways and streets will be well-maintained and well-connected. Public transit and bike/pedestrian facilities will provide choices for travel within communities and to major destinations.

- I. Water quality and water rights will be protected to ensure that they are sustained for future generations.
- J. The risks of flooding, fire hazards, and climate change will be mitigated to the greatest extent possible to protect residents.
- K. Residents will have access to medical and emergency services, and opportunities for life-long learning and enrichment at educational institutions.
- L. Government services will be efficient and effective with measurable results. Through community involvement and volunteerism, residents will be active participants in guiding Calaveras County towards a common vision for the future.

## What is a General Plan?

### Purpose of this General Plan

The General Plan is the County's "constitution." It provides a vision for how the county will grow and change in the future. The General Plan contains the County's official policies on land use, economic development, transportation, community design, housing, resource protection, public services, and health and safety. It describes the County's long-range goals for the community's future and guides day-to-day decision making. A comprehensive general plan provides a jurisdiction with a consistent framework for decision-making. The general plan and its maps, diagrams, and development standards form the basis for the County's zoning, subdivision, and public works actions.

### Legal Authority and Requirements

The 2035 General Plan was adopted in compliance with the requirements of California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. The General Plan is a legal document and much of its content is specified by State law. The legal adequacy of the General Plan is critical, since many County actions and programs are required to be consistent with the General Plan.

State law requires each city and county to prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range general plan for its physical development (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.). Under California law no specific plan, zoning, subdivision map, nor public works project may be approved unless the County finds that it is consistent with the adopted general plan. The State General Plan Guidelines recommend that general plans be updated every five to ten years to ensure that they remain relevant. This is important not only to reflect local physical and demographic changes, but also broader changes in culture and technology.

State Law requires that general plans address the seven topics (referred to as “elements”) of land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise (California Government Code Section 65302), to the extent that the topics are locally relevant. A general plan may also include other topics of local interest, as chosen by the local jurisdiction (California Government Code Section 65303).

A local jurisdiction may adopt a general plan in the format that best fits its unique circumstances (California Government Code Section 65300.5). In doing so, the jurisdiction must ensure that the general plan and its component parts comprise an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of development policies. Calaveras County has chosen to adopt a general plan that consolidates some of the mandatory elements and includes several optional elements targeted at addressing the unique planning needs of the county (see table below). In addition to the mandatory elements described above, the Calaveras County 2035 General Plan addresses two additional topics: economic development and water. These elements carry the same weight of law as those that are specifically mandated.

		General Plan Elements Required by State Law							Optional Elements
		Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	
Calaveras County General Plan Elements	Land Use Element	x							
	Economic Development Element								x
	Transportation and Circulation Element		x						
	Housing Element			x					
	Water Element				x				x
	Public Facilities and Services Element								x
	Natural Resources Element				x	x			
	Scenic, Recreational, and Cultural Resources Element				x				
	Health and Safety Element						x	x	
	Energy Element				x				x

## **Planning Area**

State law requires counties to adopt a general plan that addresses physical development within its boundaries. The 2035 General Plan includes goals, policies, and programs for development and environmental protection on land within the county boundary, excluding the area within the city limits of the City of Angels, which has its own general plan.

## **Implementing the General Plan**

The General Plan is the foundation for planning in Calaveras County. All development and future planning must be consistent with the General Plan. General Plan policy is implemented through a broad range of actions and decisions by the County that are nearly as broad as the County's responsibilities and authority. While the General Plan sets out policies and identifies ways to put these policies into action, the actual implementation of the plan is a complex and lengthy process.

Local officials must take many separate but interconnected actions according to the direction set out in the General Plan. These various actions rest on two essential powers of local government: corporate and police powers. Using their "corporate power," local governments collect money through bonds, fees, assessments, and taxes, and spend it to provide services and facilities such as law enforcement, streets, water systems, and sewage disposal facilities. Using their "police power," local governments regulate citizens' use of their property through zoning, subdivision, and building regulations in order "to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public." The General Plan provides the framework for the exercise of these powers by local officials.

To ensure that the policies and proposals of the general plan are systematically implemented, State law since the early 1970s has increasingly insisted that the actions and decisions of each local government concerning both its own projects and the private projects it approves are consistent with its adopted General Plan. The courts have supported and furthered this trend through their interpretations of State law.

The following is a partial list of County actions that must be consistent with the General Plan:

- Master plans
- Redevelopment plans
- Specific plans
- Capital projects (including indirectly facility master plans)
- Development agreements
- Subdivision approvals
- Zoning Code
- Development projects



## **Revising and Amending the General Plan**

The General Plan is intended to be a living document. As conditions and needs change, the County will need to amend the General Plan to eliminate or modify policies and programs or update the Land Use Diagram. Amendments may also be necessary to conform to State and Federal laws passed after adoption of the General Plan.

State law limits the number of times a county can amend its General Plan. Generally, no jurisdiction can amend its General Plan more than four times each year, although each amendment may include more than one change to the General Plan. Exceptions to this rule include amendments that allow development of affordable housing or comply with a court decision.

## **How is the General Plan Organized?**

The 2035 General Plan contains four parts and appendices as follows:

### **Part I: Introduction**

This part includes General Plan vision, guiding principles, organization; explains what the General Plan is and how it is used; reviews the process that was used to develop the General Plan; and explains how the General Plan addresses State mandates.

### **Part II: Countywide Goals and Policies**

This part includes an introduction followed by nine topical elements that set out the countywide goals and policies, organized as follows:

- Introduction
- Land Use Element
- Economic Development Element
- Transportation and Circulation Element
- Housing Element
- Water Element
- Public Facilities and Services Element
- Natural Resources Element
- Scenic, Recreational, and Cultural Resources
- Health and Safety Element

### **Part III: Community Plans**

This part provides policy direction for 16 Community Plan Areas in the county. This part contains policies and procedures for maintaining the Community Plans consistent with the countywide goals and policies. The introduction to Part 3 is organized as follows:

- Community Plan Overview
- Community Plan Organizing Goal and Policies
- Community Plan Administration, Implementation, and Maintenance
- Community Plans:
  - Arnold Community Plan
  - Avery-Hathaway Pines Community Plan
  - Copperopolis Community Plan
  - Ebbetts Pass Special Plan
  - Mokelumne Hill Community Plan
  - Mountain Ranch Community Plan
  - Murphys & Douglas Flat Community Plan
  - Paloma Community Plan
  - Ranch Calaveras Special Plan
  - Glencoe-Railroad Flat Community Plan
  - San Andreas Community Plan
  - Sheep Ranch Community Plan
  - Valley Springs Community Plan
  - Wallace Community Plan
  - West Point Community Plan
  - Wilseyville Community Plan

#### **Part IV: Administration and Implementation**

This part contains procedures for maintaining and carrying out the General Plan in a predictable, systematic, and consistent manner. This part is organized as follows:

- Introduction
- General Plan Administration
- Priority Implementation Programs
- General Plan Maintenance and Monitoring
- General Plan Amendments
- General Plan Consistency in Implementation
- Categories of Implementation Actions/Tools
- Specific Implementation Programs

#### **Appendices**

The General Plan includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms
- Appendix B: Addressing Recent State Mandates
- Appendix C: EIR Mitigation Measures
- Appendix D: General Plan Amendments Summary

## **How Should the General Plan Be Used?**

The County's General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community including residents, businesses, developers, County staff, and decision-makers. The organization of the General Plan allows users to find topics or sections that interest them and to quickly review county policies. Users should realize that all of the policies are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively and must be considered together when making planning decisions.

### **Residents**

For Calaveras County residents the General Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted around housing, the long-range plans and changes that may affect neighborhoods, and the policies the County will use to evaluate development applications. The General Plan indicates how the County will attract businesses that provide goods and services to meet daily needs and new jobs that are closely matched to educational skills and that lessen the need to commute. The General Plan informs residents how the County plans to improve transportation infrastructure, continue to provide adequate public services, and protect valued open spaces and environmental resources. Cumulatively, the General Plan identifies the actions the County will take to achieve the community's Vision.

### **Businesses**

For Calaveras County businesses the General Plan outlines the measures the County will take to protect investments and encourage future success. Expectations for county business areas are spelled out, while policies ensure that business operations will be compatible with other businesses and nearby residential areas.

### **Developers**

For developers within the county the General Plan introduces the community, provides background information, and outlines development regulations. It is important to review all maps and policies throughout the General Plan. In addition, developers should also review the Baseline Report and the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances to get a complete perspective on how and where development may take place.

### **County Staff**

The General Plan is used by County staff to determine if proposed development and public facilities projects are consistent with County policies. The General Plan establishes standards for internal County plans (e.g., infrastructure master plans) and operations. The General Plan is used by County staff as the basis for making recommendations to decision-makers. The General Plan also provides short- and long-term implementation programs that are used by County staff to achieve the community's Vision.

## **Decision-Makers**

The General Plan is a tool to help the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, and the Board of Supervisors make land use, environmental, and public investment decisions. All development decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan is also intended to help other public agencies, from the City of Angeles to Caltrans to local school districts, as they contemplate future actions in the unincorporated areas of Calaveras County.

## **Goals and Policies Readers' Guide**

The General Plan contains numerous goals and policies that will be used by the County to guide future land use, economic development, and environmental protection decisions. A goal is a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or "end" state. Goals describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic and tend to be very general and broad. A policy is a clear statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal.

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## **Implementation Programs Readers' Guide**

To help ensure that appropriate actions are taken to implement the General Plan, Part IV of the General Plan includes a set of implementation programs. Implementation programs identify the specific steps to be taken by the County to implement the goals and policies of the plan. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that are assigned to different County departments after the General Plan is adopted. The types of tools or actions the County can use to carry out its policies and implementation programs generally fall into eight categories. These are explained in detail in Part 4, Administration and Implementation, along with the specific implementation programs.

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## **How was the General Plan Prepared?**

The General Plan Update process began in January 2007 and concluded on **TBD** when the 2035 General Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The

General Plan Update included an extensive public outreach process to solicit feedback on major concepts, alternatives, and proposals throughout the process. Over the four-year update process, hundreds of county residents, property owners, business owners, and stakeholders representing all segments of this community participated by providing their ideas, passions, and energy to plan Calaveras County's future. This input has directly shaped the 2035 General Plan. The following is a summary of the 2035 General Plan public outreach program.

### **Community Workshops Round #1**

During May and June 2007 the County held seven public workshops to help kick off the General Plan Update. Over 500 people attended workshops in San Andreas, Murphys, Copperopolis, Arnold, Rail Road Flat, Valley Springs, and Jenny Lind. The workshops provided an opportunity for the public to offer their thoughts on what they like and do not like about their communities and the county as a whole, and what issues should be addressed during the update process.

### **Community Workshops Round #2**

During December 2007 the County held six public workshops to develop a vision and guiding principles. Approximately 300 people attended workshops in Arnold, Copperopolis, West Point, Murphys, San Andreas, and Valley Springs. Input from this round of workshops was incorporated into the Issues and Opportunities Report and the Working Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles document.

### **Community Workshops Round #3**

During March 2010 the County held seven public workshops to solicit input from community residents and other interested parties on the draft alternatives and the Alternatives Report. Participants were asked to select the one which most closely fit their vision for the County over the next 25 years, and to recommend modifications to the selected alternative that would make it better fit their vision.

### **Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission Study Sessions**

The Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission held numerous study sessions during the General Plan Update to provide direction to County staff and the Consultants. This included two workshops held in August and September 2008 to discuss the Public Review Draft Issues and Opportunities Report and the Working Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles document, two workshops held in March 2010 to discuss the Alternatives Report and take

public comments, and one study session held on TBD to review the Public Review Draft 2035 General Plan.

### **Property Owner Request**

Note to staff: This may or may not be summarized depending on how we organize this effort. Let's discuss.

### **Public Hearings**

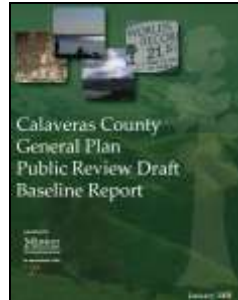
*Note: Summary will be prepared once the 2035 General Plan is adopted by the Board of Supervisors.*

### **Community Plan Updates**

In addition to the comprehensive General Plan Update, the County, working closely with local community groups, also updated existing and prepared new community plans for 16 Community Plan Areas. The Community Plan Update process included TBD meetings and workshops with residents and community groups between TBD and TBD 2010. The County reorganized, streamlined, and physically incorporated existing community plans and developing new community plans for unincorporated areas that did not previously have plans. These community plans are considered part of the General Plan under State law and are included as Part III of the 2035 General Plan.

### **Milestone Documents**

The County prepared several milestone documents during the General Plan Update process. These documents served as the building blocks for the 2035 General Plan and analyzed the fiscal and environmental impacts associated with implementing the plan. These documents included:



**Baseline Report (January 2008)**

This report summarized the baseline year (2007) trends and conditions in Calaveras County. This report provided detailed descriptions of a wide range of topics within the Planning Area, including demographics, land uses, public facilities, and environmental resources. The report provided decision-makers, the public, and local agencies with context for developing policy decisions. Unlike the Policy Document, the Baseline Report is objective and policy-neutral. The Baseline Report also served as the “Environmental Setting” section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the General Plan.



**Draft Working Vision and Guiding Principles (June 2008)**

This report, released simultaneously with the Issues and Opportunities Report (see below), was developed based on input received at the second round of community workshops held in December 2007. The report summarizes the community’s vision for the county in 2035, and the guiding principles necessary to achieve that vision.



**Issues and Opportunities Report (June 2008)**

This report identified key physical, environmental, economic, cultural, social, and planning issues affecting Calaveras County. These key conditions and issues were derived from the Baseline Report and a series of community workshops conducted during the initial phases of the Update process. The information summarized in this document provided a framework for developing the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.



**Alternatives Report (February 2010)**

This report included an evaluation of land use and policy alternatives to be considered during the Update process. The report was designed to frame an active discussion among stakeholders, community members, and County decision-makers. This analysis helped the Board of Supervisors provide direction on a preferred land use alternative, which became the basis for the General Plan Land Use Diagram.



**Draft 2035 General Plan (January 2011)**

This report contains all of the goals, policies, and standards that will guide future land use and environmental decisions within the county. It also identifies implementation programs that will ensure the goals and policies in the General Plan are carried out. The Draft 2035 General Plan was released for public review on **TBD**.

*To Be Prepared*

**Fiscal Impact Assessment Report (TBD)**

This report includes a fiscal impact assessment of the Draft 2035 General Plan. This report was used by the Board of Supervisors to understand the potential revenue impacts associated with implementation of the 2035 General Plan. This includes assumptions about the absorption of various future land uses.

*To Be Prepared*

**Environmental Impact Report (TBD)**

This report was prepared to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as set forth in Sections 15126, 15175, and 15176 of the CEQA Guidelines Act. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors used this document during the General Plan Update process in order to understand the potential environmental implications associated with implementing the General Plan.

*To Be Prepared*

**Final 2035 General Plan (TBD)**

The Draft 2035 General Plan was revised based on the fiscal evaluation, Environmental Impact Report analysis, public hearings, and ultimately the direction from the Board of Supervisors. The Final 2035 General Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on **TBD**. The 1996 General Plan and all existing Community Plans are superseded by the 2035 General Plan.



## How Does the General Plan Address State Mandates?

As described earlier, the General Plan must comply with State requirements, most of which date to the 1970s or earlier. Since 2006 the State of California has passed a series of laws that require regional and local governments to include sustainability, complete streets (e.g., auto, transit, bike, pedestrian), and greenhouse gas reduction in their planning documents. These include the California Global Warming Solutions Act (Assembly Bill 32), the Redesigning Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases Act (Senate Bill 375), and the Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill 1358). The following summarizes how this General Plan addresses these recent State mandates. *(Note: See the Baseline Report for detailed summaries of these and other recent State laws.)*

### Complete Streets

The California Complete Streets Act of 2008 requires cities and counties to include complete streets policies as part of their general plans so that roadways are designed to safely accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, as well as motorists. It also requires Caltrans to fully consider the needs of non-motorized travelers in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations, and project development activities and products on State highways. Beginning January 2011 any substantive revision of the circulation element in the general plan of a California local government must include complete streets provisions. The General Plan includes these provisions in the Land Use Element and Circulation Element.

### Climate Change and Sustainability

Climate change refers to the change in the average weather of the earth that may be measured by changes in wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. Human activities associated primarily with the use of carbon-based fossil fuels have led to changes in the composition of the atmosphere. The combustion of carbon-based fossil fuels creates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), which has caused the earth's atmosphere to absorb more heat from the sun.


Sustainability refers to the long-term social, economic, and environmental health of the community. A sustainable community grows and prospers while not compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Sustainable communities are those that use resources efficiently and effectively, provide economic security, and distribute benefits evenly throughout the county.

In 2006 the California State Legislature took a proactive role in addressing the challenges of climate change with the adoption of the California Global

Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). AB 32 focuses on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in California. AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the State agency charged with regulating statewide air quality, to adopt rules and regulations that would achieve GHG emissions equivalent to 1990 statewide levels by 2020.

Finally, an emerging topic related to climate change and sustainability is adaptation to the expected impacts of climate change. In 2008 Governor Schwarzenegger issued Executive Order S-13-08 to prepare a statewide strategy to manage the impacts and challenges from climate change. The 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy summarizes the best known science on climate change impacts in specific sectors and provides recommendations on how to manage against those threats.

The General Plan includes policy standards for greenhouse gas reduction targets for both County operations and communitywide emissions consistent with AB 32. The cumulative effects of the General Plan policies addressing greenhouse gas emissions result in measurable reductions in emissions consistent with the adopted standards. The General Plan also includes policies to mitigate the impacts that are expected to occur due to climate change.

Sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and climate change adaptation are addressed by policies and programs throughout the General Plan, rather than in a single section. Each policy and program in the General Plan that promotes sustainability or addresses climate change is indicated with the  icon. In addition, Appendix C: Addressing Recent State Mandates, includes a table that summarizes by topic area General Plan policies and implementation programs that address climate change.