



The Community Plan Areas boundaries were determined by a combination of factors including topography, roads, size of the areas, presence of existing developed subdivisions, gateway corridor issues, location of existing utilities to serve the area, and the use of Townships and Range Section lines.

## Location and Community Description

The Copperopolis Community Plan Area encompasses approximately 39 square miles and is located north of and adjacent to Lake Tulloch with O'Byrnes Ferry Road and Highway 4 serving as the primary transportation routes. The Community Plan Area extends from the Diamond XX Subdivision north of Highway 4, south to the Stanislaus River and the Tuolumne County Line. The Planning Area is located 12 miles south of the City of Angels (Angels Camp) along Highway 4, separated by Bear Mountain, Copperopolis Mountain, Lightner Peak, and numerous ridges with elevations ranging from 1,100 feet to 1,800 feet.

Major water bodies include Lake Tulloch and the Stanislaus River that flows from the dam for New Melones Reservoir. Minor water bodies include Sawmill Lake and Flowers Lake. The Community Plan Area also has several creeks including Black Creek, Loucks Creek, Campbell Creek, Copper Creek, Littlejohns Creek, and Sawmill Creek.

Copperopolis was historically agricultural land primarily used for cattle grazing and certain mining activities prior to the 1950s, when numerous subdivisions near and/or adjacent to Lake Tulloch were approved. The region is classified as the Sierra Foothills ecological region. *Class I and II Prime Farmland is scarce, with less than 5% of the County containing prime soils, which are defined as those suitable to maintain extended production of sustainable crop yields over a prolonged period. Weathered rock is primarily present, with a thin soil mantle of less than 6 inches covering much of the Planning Area.*

*However, ranching still thrives adjacent to Copperopolis. Farmland of Local Importance, as determined in accordance with the state's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, surrounds much of Copperopolis in the form of rangeland. Farmland of Local Importance includes "lands zoned General Agricultural (A1) and/or enrolled in the California Land Conservation Act."*

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## Physical Description of the Planning Area

The Copperopolis Community Boundary is depicted as a broad red line on the map of the Community Plan Area. ~~The map for the Copperopolis Community Plan Area that~~ was adopted as part of the County's 2019 General Plan. The map identifies ~~and identifies the following areas:~~

Historic Copperopolis, near the intersection of Main Street (O'Byrnes Ferry Road) and Highway 4, and existing and proposed residential subdivisions. ~~These subdivisions include Sawmill Lake, Copper Valley Ranch (amended to 88 lots), Copper Valley, Copper Cove, Oak Canyon Ranch (dedicated as permanent open space), the Copperopolis Town Square, Sanguinetti, Diamond XX, Calypso Bay, Tuscany Hills, Bridlewood Estates, Black Creek, Poker Flats, Connor Estates, and Peninsula Estates.~~

## History

During the late prehistoric period, the Copperopolis Community Plan Area was situated within the territory claimed by the Central Sierra Mi-Wuks. Much of the population relocated seasonally to collect foods and economically important resources, which were then stored. The central food staple of the Mi-Wuks subsistence was the acorn, supplemented by a wide variety of other plant and animal foods. Mi-Wuk villages were typically located near water sources, within easy reach of bedrock outcrops where milling stations could be established. Such grinding rock artifacts remain in the Planning Area.

Early European settlers were drawn to the Copperopolis area in response to the discovery of gold in 1849. The discovery of copper in 1860 and the growing demand for copper provided the impetus for the community to grow to more than 2,000 inhabitants, making Copperopolis the principal copper producing community in the Western United States in the 1860s. Copper mined in the area came from several mines including the Union, Empire, and Keystone, as well as smaller mines such as the Table Mountain Top, Scorpion, Kentucky, Index, Inimitable, and Harlem mines.

Reeds Turnpike, a private toll road, was an important feature in the development of Copperopolis since it was considered one of the best roads in the state, and there were good watering places located along its route. During the rainy season, it received practically all the Stockton travel. Teams from Stockton bound for Chinese Camp, Sonora, and Columbia came through Copperopolis by this route, then went on to cross the Stanislaus River on the O'Byrnes Ferry Bridge. On the return route, wagon trains of ore were hauled by oxen and mule teams to Stockton for loading onto riverboats, then taken to San Francisco where the ore was reloaded and sent by sailing ship around the Horn to Atlantic ports and to Swansea, Wales, to be smelted and refined where much of it was used in the manufacture of paint.

The Copperopolis Armory, located at 695 Main Street, was built in 1861. Of brick construction, huge iron doors and barred windows, it survived the 1867 fire. During the Civil War, it was used by the Union Guard as their meeting place for enlisting and training troops. In 1864, the property was sold to the Copperopolis Armory Hall Association and was used during the 1860s and 1870s for Congregational and Methodist Church services, as well as for public meetings, balls, and rallies. In 1874, the property was purchased by the Mineral Lodge, Independent Order of Odd

Fellows (IOOF), and used as their lodge until 1903, when they moved to the Congregational Church which they purchased. In 1939, they merged with Campo Seco Lodge of Jenny Lind, and the following year (1940) sold the hall to the Copperopolis Community Center, which has used it since. The armory was added to the National Register of Historic Places on December 30, 1997.

Other historic structures in Copperopolis include the Gothic Revival Congregational Church, St. Ignatius Catholic Church, the Honigsberger and Reed buildings, and the Old Corner Saloon. On the corner of Main Street (O'Byrnes Ferry Road) and Reeds Turnpike is the Old Corner Saloon. Built in 1862, this establishment boasts of being the second oldest saloon (in continuous operation) in California. Surviving through 142 years of fires, feast, and famine, this popular Copperopolis "watering hole" still offers a thirsty traveler a friendly place to stop and enjoy a cool drink.

After the closure of the copper mines, the development of Copperopolis was greatly influenced by the creation of Lake Tulloch, which has continued to be an important catalyst for bringing newcomers to the area.

### Historic Copperopolis Buildings

All pictures courtesy of Copperopolis resident Nancy Henderson,

#### The Armory

#### The Old Corner Saloon



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The Honisberger and Reed Buildings



The Congregational Church



## Lake Tulloch

Lake Tulloch was constructed in the late 1950s and began operation in 1958. Lake Tulloch is a reservoir which is bounded by both Calaveras and Tuolumne counties that has a normal maximum water surface elevation of 510 feet, a surface area of 1,260 acres at full pool, and has gross storage capacity of 66,968 acre-feet. The reservoir has approximately 55 miles of shoreline. Lake Tulloch is subject to fluctuating water levels that occur on a daily and seasonal basis. Reservoir levels are controlled by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and are subject to fluctuation within the limitations of an agreement required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The Tulloch Project is a multi-purpose project that stores approximately 66,968 acre-feet of water, and annually generates about 93,000,000 kw/h of electricity. The Oakdale Irrigation District (OID) and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID), cooperatively operating as the Tri-DAM Project, are the current owners and operators of the Tulloch Project.

Photo Courtesy of Jack Forkner



## Table Mountain

Table Mountain is a series of flat-topped hills visible from Lake Tulloch that roughly parallels the modern Stanislaus River. These hills are capped by lava which flowed down from the crest of



the Sierra Nevada 10.4 million years ago and hardened into a rock (latite) that is relatively resistant to erosion. The top of Table Mountain is composed of Table Mountain Latite, which formed from potassium-rich lavas erupted from a center of volcanism near modern-day Sonora Pass around 10.4 million years ago.



### New Melones Road

*In 2001, a report called Copperopolis Community Vision 2020 produced in coordination with the Copperopolis Community Plan Advisory Committee, proposed a community boundary, suggested basic land use designations, and mapped possible new roads. One of the outcomes of that report was to “Create the Morrissey Trail to link Copperopolis to New Melones Lake.”*

*In 2005, the Draft Copperopolis Community Plan (CCP) was produced with residential land use designations to accommodate a population of no more than 40,000 people. One criticism was that Lake Tulloch was already overcrowded with boats creating safety problems on weekends and holidays with fewer than 4,000 people living in Copperopolis. What would it be like with 40,000 people living in Copperopolis? The 2005, 2009, or the 2013 versions of the Copperopolis Community Plan were never adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Among the major concerns were the inability of the two-lane roads in the 2005 plan to accommodate the projected traffic, the opposition to increased benefit basin fees to pay for the new roads needed by the 2013 plan, and the need for a new “southern crossing” bridge at the time of the 2019 GPU.)*

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*To address the crowded lake criticism and accommodate the recreation demand that would be created by a population of 40,000 people in a lake-centered community, the idea of a road linking Copperopolis to New Melones was promoted. Because New Melones had underperformed in providing the recreational benefits anticipated when it was planned and built, a road from Copperopolis was viewed as a means to serve local residents and help New Melones to increase its annual visitor days. The road may also serve as an additional amenity that would add value to private residential development envisioned in the future, but not yet applied for or planned for on the community plan map.*

*With the knowledge that the population of Copperopolis will not reach 40,000 people by the year 2040, it is becoming increasingly clear that the road to connect Copperopolis to New Melones will not be a reality.*

## **Community Vision**

Copperopolis will retain its small town, rural community identity, preserve its natural beauty, and protect its vast recreational opportunities while embracing diverse housing, commercial, recreational and employment opportunities integrated with the natural resources and open space elements of the community. Lake Tulloch will flourish as a community attraction.

Revitalization efforts have turned “historic” Copperopolis into a vibrant, attractive town center and tourist destination with community events, and neighborhood and tourist-serving opportunities. The Copperopolis Town Square located off Hodson Road, has turned into an attractive tourist destination with a hotel, retail shops, restaurants, and housing, and is hosting community events and providing opportunities to serve residents and tourists.

Copperopolis will remain a nice, prosperous community with long-term residents who care, and new residents who embrace the lifestyle and culture of the area. Copperopolis will also continue to enrich the next generation through participation in groups like 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

Motorized circulation, and non-motorized circulation where appropriate and with the suitable infrastructure, in parts of Copperopolis will provide safe and attractive access to all areas of the community, and residents, young and old, will take advantage of the community’s pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle pathways that will tie into the community’s business centers and recreational amenities.

The Community will continue to enjoy the golf course and beautiful open space, and parks in Copperopolis.

While the Community Plan seeks harmony of land uses, it will respect the Constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property.

The fervent wish of the community is that people who visit Copperopolis leave with the impression that it is a beautiful place and a friendly town where all are welcome.



## Community Plan Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures

### 1) Land Use

**GOAL: Aesthetics/Community Character** - Encourage orderly development while retaining a rural mining/ranching town atmosphere with an emphasis on community appearance and character.

#### **Policies & Implementation Measures:**

- CCP 1.1      Ensure that all new development is consistent with the goals and policies of the community plan and the County General Plan. (CP-1B, LU-2G).
- CCP 1.2      Ensure high quality, well-designed development that is compatible with surrounding uses and is integrated with the community and the physical environment in which it is located. (LU-4A).
- CCP 1.3      Protect and retain the historic assets of the community. (LU-4A, LU-4D, LU-4E).
- CCP 1.4      Ensure that new developments within the plan area provide a mix of uses including a wide range of residential, commercial, visitor-serving and job-generating uses that facilitate their development as independent and economically viable projects. (LU-2B, LU-2E, LU-2F, LU-4D, LU-5C).
- CCP 1.5      Design new developments in the plan area to be compatible with the natural, scenic, and historic resources of Calaveras County. (LU-4B, LU-4C).
- CCP 1.6      Preserve and enhance existing buildings and other structures of historic and architectural importance, as reflected in state and federal standards for significance, and that contribute to the historic identity of Calaveras County. (LU-4E).
- CCP 1.7      Establish and identify entryways for the community – through monuments or other methods.
- CCP 1.8      Provide adequate land for schools and parks. (PF-7C, COS-7A).
- CCP 1.9      Preserve the rural character of the area. (COS-1A).
- CCP 1.10     Encourage beautification and enhancement of properties.

- CCP 1.11 Maintain and improve commercial districts within historic Copperopolis.
- CCP 1.12 Encourage attraction of new compatible businesses and industries to the plan area.
- CCP 1.13 Collaborate with Homeowners Associations and others willing to promote public participation in community plan implementation.

**2) Circulation**

**GOAL: Traffic/Circulation** - Improve traffic circulation and provide safe routes for both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic in the Plan Area.

**Policies & Implementation Measures:**

- CCP 2.1 Improve traffic circulation.
- CCP 2.2 Provide a safe intermix of vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. Require a balanced circulation system that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while maintaining the rural and historic character of the community (C-1A, C-5A).
- CCP 2.3 Improve the safety of O’Byrnes Ferry Road.
- CCP 2.4 Implement measures to reduce travel speeds within community and neighborhood areas to protect the historic character or unique features of the community and to protect public safety.
- CCP 2.5 Ensure that new development is responsible for all off-site circulation improvements necessary to mitigate a project’s transportation impacts (including safety, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, public transit, and level of service-related impacts). (PF-1C, PF-1E, PF-1G).
- CCP 2.6 Where feasible, non-motorized transportation options should be incorporated into transportation and development projects. (C-1C, C-5A, COS-7E).
- CCP 2.7 Increase roadway connectivity to reduce trip lengths, enhance emergency response, and encourage opportunities for trips to be made by walking and bicycling. (C-1A).
- CCP 2.8 Encourage and support a safe, effective, and efficient public transportation service in the plan area that meets the reasonable needs of Calaveras residents. Encourage

the use of public transit, as well as ridesharing, and vanpools. (C-1B, C-1C, C-3C, C-2D).

CCP 2.9 Work with Tri-Dam to reduce boating congestion and improve boating safety on Lake Tulloch.

### **3) Housing**

**GOAL: Affordable Housing** - Provide a varied housing mix to accommodate the needs of future residents in the community.

#### **Policies & Implementation Measures:**

CCP 3.1 New residential construction shall consist of a broad range of new housing types to meet the needs of all residents of Calaveras County. (H-1B, H-1E, H-2A, H-2E, H-2F, H-2G, H-3C, H-3E, H-3F).

CCP 3.2 Develop, construct, and maintain safe, decent, and well-built affordable housing units in the community. (H-1H, H-5A, H-5C).

CCP 3.3 Ensure that all new and existing housing units are equipped with energy-efficient and appropriate weatherization. (H-6A, H-6B, H-6C, H-6D).

CCP 3.4 Control the use of single-family homes for short-term vacation rentals by improving the County-required Administrative Use Permit process. Regulate approval of vacation rental units to ensure that they do not adversely affect the lifestyle of the existing and future community and the County's housing stock.

CCP 3.5 Any new or extended subdivision map that includes four or more single-family residential lots shall be conditioned to address housing needs in the following ways: at least 25% of the units will be and remain 1200 square feet or less, be a single story, and meet ADA accessibility standards.

### **4) Conservation & Open Space**

**GOAL: Natural Resources** - Achieve a harmonious relationship between the developed environment and its surroundings by preserving open space and agriculture/rangelands and protecting and enhancing the natural resources of the Planning Area.

#### **Policies & Implementation Measures:**

- CCP 4.1 Promote tourism by leveraging the region’s natural resources and cultural heritage to attract visitors, generate revenue, and create sustainable jobs.
- CCP 4.2 Provide for the protection of resource production operations and activities and their economic viability. (L-2E, RP-1A, RP-1B, RP-1C, RP-1D, RP-1E, RP-1F, RP-2B, RP-2C).
- CCP 4.3 Ensure that there is adequate water supply and wastewater collection available for existing residents, businesses, and future development in Copperopolis. (PF-2B, PF-2C,PF-2D).
- CCP 4.4 Conserve natural and historic landscapes and important landmarks as scenic resources important to the County’s rural character, scenic beauty, and the tourism component of the economy. (COS-3C, COS-4L, COS-4N, COS-6B.)
- CCP 4.5 Complete and protect a high-quality system of recreational facilities enhancing the quality of life and health of residents and visitors and contributing to the County’s economy. (COS-7A through 7I).
- CCP 4.6 Restore, preserve, and enhance the historic assets of historic Copperopolis.
- CCP 4.7 Apply the County’s Historic Preservation Ordinance to protect the area’s historic resources and in turn promote tourism and economic development. (COS-8G, COS-8H).
- CCP 4.8 Preserve prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, historical, and paleontological resources. (COS-6A, COS-8A through COS-8H).
- CCP 4.9 Identify and protect scenic resources that preserve rural character, quality of life, and tourism-based economic development, while protecting property rights. (COS-6A, COS-6B).
- CCP 4.10 Retain existing mature trees in landscaping for new development, consistent with fire protection needs, to facilitate carbon sequestration. (COS-4D; COS-4J).
- CCP 4.11 Preserve oak woodlands in the plan area in accordance with local and state law. (COS-4D).

- CCP 4.12 Include design features in new development to capture stormwater and recharge groundwater whenever feasible. (PF-2J).
- CCP 4.13 Preserve agricultural uses in the plan area. (L-2E, RP-1A, RP-1B, RP-1C, RP-1D, RP-1E, RP-1F, RP-2B, RP-2C)
- CCP 4.14 Conserve existing mining sites in the plan area for future mineral extractions. (RP-4A).
- CCP 4.15 The County will complete a Natural Communities Conservation Plan prior to the approval of additional development of special status species habitat.

**5) Public Safety**

**GOAL: Public Safety** - Ensure that public safety is maintained and enhanced through fire protection measures, adequate law enforcement, and emergency services.

**Policies & Implementation Measures:**

- CCP 5.1 Protect people, property, economy, and natural resources from the risks of natural and manmade hazards. (PF-4A, PF-4B, PF-4C, PF-5B, PF-6A, S-1A, S-1C, S-1H, S-2A, S-2B, S-2C, S-2D, S-3E, S-3F, S-3G, S-3H, S-3M, S-3O, S-3Q, S-3R, S-3S, S-3V, S-3W).
- CCP 5.2 Apply established standards designed to protect the community from unreasonable risks of death, injuries, property damage and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires. (S-1B, S-3B, S-3C, S-3D, S-3I, S-3N, S-3P.)
- CCP 5.3 Apply established standards designed to protect the community from unreasonable risks of death, injuries, property damage and economic and social dislocation resulting from the use, transport, treatment and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes. (S-5D, S-5E, S-5F).
- CCP 5.4 Prohibit the sale of all types of fireworks in the Plan Area, "safe and sane", or not.
- CCP 5.5 When considering whether or not to approve discretionary permits on agricultural lands in the Community Plan Area the County will minimize wildfire ignitions by limiting permitted activities, and the County will not concentrate people in hard to evacuate areas.

CCP. 5.6 The County will try to cooperate with the local fire district, the fire safe council, the Resource Conservation District, and the Red Cross to:

- establish and maintain a functional system of fuel breaks around Copperopolis.
- notify homeowners of opportunities to make home improvements to harden their homes against wildfire.
- identify, maintain, and sign roads essential for evacuation, and inform residents of their evacuation routes.
- establish effective means of providing the community with notice of emergencies necessitating evacuation (sirens, reverse-911, etc.)
- hold emergency evacuation drills in every even numbered year.

### **6) Public Facilities**

**GOAL: Public/Community Services** - Support the development of additional public facilities with respect to the community's growth.

#### **Policies & Implementation Measures:**

- CCP 6.1 Promote and foster the enhancement of infrastructure that will support economic growth within the community boundary including roads, water systems, sewer systems, and transportation networks. (C-1D, C-2A, C-2D, COS-7F).
- CCP 6.2 Ensure that the design of community-oriented public facilities is compatible with community character. (LU-4A).
- CCP 6.3 Consider the location of a satellite sheriff's station in Copperopolis by 2030.
- CCP 6.4 Provide recreational activities for children and the elderly.
- CCP 6.5 Explore the possibility of building a multi-purpose community center with sports facilities, a playground, dog park, senior citizen activities, swimming, and cooling. (COS-7H, COS-7I).
- CCP 6.6 Cooperate with state and federal officials as needed to facilitate replacement of the O'Byrnes Ferry Road bridge.
- CCP 6.7 Cooperate with federal officials as needed to facilitate additional access to recreation at New Melones Reservoir for Copperopolis residents.



- CCP 6.8 Improve infrastructure to reduce our dependence on propane, enhance the robustness of the power grid, and provide more affordable access to high-speed internet. (PF-3A, PF-3F, PF-7A, COS-2E, COS-5E).
- CCP 6.9 Collaborate with Tri-Dam to promote equitable public access to Lake Tulloch for motorized and non-motorized uses.
- CCP 6.10 Cooperate with a community college district to establish a satellite campus to serve the residents of Copperopolis.

**7) Economic Development**

**GOAL:** Establish, promote, and enhance commercial development designed to complement the character of the appropriate areas within the community boundary.

- CCP 7.1 Promote overnight accommodations that will create jobs and economic benefits to the County which would generate additional Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT).
- CCP 7.2 Promote commercial activity within the community boundary.
- CCP 7.3 Promote jobs in the recreational sector to attract tourists to the region and create long-term economic benefits to the area.
- CCP 7.4 Support opportunities for additional education and job internships for the community's youth. Invest in education and training programs that will provide residents and young people with the skills and knowledge needed for the jobs of the future. This will help create a more skilled and diverse workforce, which will attract new business and industries to the area. (LU-5E, PF-7B)
- CCP 7.5 Support entrepreneurship through small business and start-ups.