Amador County
GENERAL PLAN

FINAL
OCTOBER 2016

General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016
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<tr>
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<td>dBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>NEV</td>
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<td>Office of Emergency Services</td>
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<td>OF</td>
<td>Open-Forest</td>
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<td>Governor's Office of Planning and Research</td>
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<td>OR</td>
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<td>Open-Wilderness</td>
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<td>Pacific Gas and Electric Company</td>
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<td>Public Service</td>
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<td>QCEW</td>
<td>Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages</td>
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<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>U.S. Bureau of Reclamation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Residential-Medium Density</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROW</td>
<td>rights-of-way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
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<td>RSC</td>
<td>Regional Service Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTP</td>
<td>Regional Transportation Plan</td>
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<td>RWQCB</td>
<td>Regional Water Quality Control Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Senate Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoping Plan</td>
<td>Climate Change Scoping Plan</td>
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<td>SCS</td>
<td>Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
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<td>SMARA</td>
<td>Surface Mining and Reclamation Act</td>
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<td>SOI</td>
<td>sphere of influence</td>
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<td>Special Planning Area</td>
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<td>Statewide Transportation Improvement Program</td>
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<td>TC</td>
<td>Town Center</td>
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<td>TCP</td>
<td>traditional cultural property</td>
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<td>TPZ</td>
<td>Timber Production Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSM</td>
<td>Transportation System Management</td>
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<td>TTL</td>
<td>Tribal Trust Land</td>
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<td>UA</td>
<td>Urban Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>USACE</td>
<td>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</td>
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<td>USFS</td>
<td>U.S. Forest Service</td>
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<td>USFWS</td>
<td>United States Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>VMT</td>
<td>vehicle miles traveled</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUI</td>
<td>wildland urban interface</td>
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INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Amador County residents and businesses value a high quality rural lifestyle, historic resources, healthy natural environment, vibrant local economy, scenic resources and vistas, and services that meet people’s needs. The primary benefit of the Amador County General Plan (General Plan) is that it allows the County to control, to the degree possible, its own destiny in achieving these objectives. The General Plan forges links between land use and the countywide transportation, infrastructure, and public service networks. It will provide the flexibility needed to accommodate growth and change while effectively managing the county’s wealth of natural resources.

PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Amador County’s General Plan might be compared to a roadmap leading to a better future. Contained within this roadmap is a description of Amador County today, a vision of a desirable future, and a path, expressed through goals, policies and implementation, to achieve the vision. The General Plan clarifies and articulates the County’s intentions in responding to the expectations of residents, landowners, and businesses, regarding their long-term vision for the county.

Each local government within California is required to adopt a general plan and update this plan at regular intervals. State law defines the purpose of the general plan as anticipating and planning for “the physical development of the county.” To be considered comprehensive, the General Plan must address many issues that influence land use decisions. Specifically, State law requires the County to develop a plan for land use, circulation, housing, resource conservation, open space, noise, and public safety. Amador County has also identified governance and economic development as locally important priorities in addition to State requirements. Thus, the General Plan consists of nine chapters, known as elements, addressing these priorities.

Throughout the General Plan, the County defines goals, policies, and standards. County decisions affecting land use and development must be consistent with the General Plan. An action, program, or project would be considered consistent with the General Plan if, considering all of its aspects, it would further the goals and policies set forth within the General Plan and not obstruct their attainment.
AMADOR COUNTY PLANNING AREA

Amador County is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Range, approximately 25 miles east of Sacramento. State Route (SR) 49 traverses the county from north to south along the Mother Lode, connecting the cities of Plymouth, Sutter Creek, Amador City, and Jackson. SR 104 and SR 124 connect Ione with neighboring areas of Amador and Sacramento Counties, and SR 16 connects the county with Sacramento to the west. SR 88 extends from Stockton on the west, through the county to the Kirkwood ski resort, passing through Jackson, and the unincorporated communities of Martell, Pine Grove, Pioneer, Red Corral, and Buckhorn. SR 88 is an important route over the Sierra Nevada, connecting the Central Valley to U.S. 395 in the eastern Sierra Nevada.

Amador County is bordered by El Dorado County on the north, Alpine County on the east, Calaveras County on the south, and Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties on the west. The only public airport in Amador County is Westover Field, located in Martell. Private airports in the County include the Eagle’s Nest Airport in the northwestern portion of the county, south of SR 16. The former Amador Central rail line extends from Ione to Martell, and connects to active Union Pacific lines in the Central Valley. Figure I-1 illustrates Amador County’s location.

Amador County’s planning area encompasses the unincorporated land within the County’s boundaries (that is, excluding the land within the city limits of Amador City, Ione, Jackson, Plymouth, and Sutter Creek). Goals and policies, as well as land use and circulation plans set forth and quantified in the General Plan address the unincorporated county area.

AMADOR COUNTY, THE HEART OF THE MOTHER LODGE

The eastern Miwok historically occupied Amador County and surrounding areas to the west. While the Plains Miwok shared a common language and cultural background, they consisted of a number of separate and politically independent groups. Each group used a number of permanently inhabited and seasonally occupied locales. The eastern Miwok relied on a broad spectrum of plant and animal food sources. Of the plant species, the Plains Miwok most valued the valley oak, but also used buckeye, laurel, and hazelnut. Various seeds include wild oats and balsam root, several species of edible roots, and greens such as wild pea and miner’s lettuce, berries, and a number of different mushroom varieties. Tule elk and pronghorn antelope were the most important animal species. Various species of rabbit were
hunted in the summer. Waterfowl and fish, especially salmon, were extremely important food sources for the eastern Miwok.

On January 28, 1848, John Marshall, a foreman working for John Sutter’s sawmill near Coloma happened upon a discovery that would shape the history of California and the nation: gold.

As word spread of the discovery, gold miners flooded to the Mother Lode to search for fortune. In 1849, the population of California surged from 14,000 to over 100,000, comprised of Americans and immigrants from around the world. Throughout the Mother Lode, small mining camps and towns sprung up to supply gold mines and miners – the demand for food, booze, supplies, building materials, and entertainment drove development along the American and Mokelumne Rivers, and deep into the Sierra foothills.

Early in the gold rush, streams were placer mined (1846–1857). Most of the important lode deposits were discovered in the 1850s. From the 1870s to the 1890s, mining expanded to maintain profitability. By 1875, mines such as the Keystone, South Spring Hill, Oneida, Old Eureka and Plymouth had become large and highly profitable. As mining progressed to greater and greater depths, costs increased. The Argonaut, Kennedy, Central Eureka, Bunker Hill, Fremont Gover, and Lincoln Cons were major gold sources in the 1880s and 1890s.

By some estimates, merchants supplying gold miners made more than the miners themselves. In Amador County, a proliferation of other industries, like wine, lumber, and agriculture supplied mining camps and towns with provisions. During the 1850s, the soil in Shenandoah Valley was found to be excellent for growing grapes without irrigation. The official Amador County map of 1866 lists 8 sawmills, and the 1881 map lists 10 sawmills. During the 1870s, cattle ranching became commonplace. As the county developed, towns rose up around early mining settlements and homes and buildings reflecting the popular architectural styles were built.

Mining costs continued to increase, and during the early 1900s and World War I the South Spring Hill, Lincoln Cons, Oneida, Zeila, South Eureka, Bunker Hill and Treasure mines were shut down. However, the county continued to yield large amounts of gold as the Argonaut, Kennedy, Central Eureka and other mines grew. Mining occurred at greater and greater depths until the Argonaut and Kennedy became the deepest mines in the country.

All of the mines were shut down soon after the beginning of World War II. The Central Eureka mine was reopened in 1945, but due to high costs and a federally fixed price on gold, the mine was shut down again in 1953. This was the last active major gold mine on the Mother Lode in Amador County. However, in recent years, shaft mining activity has been resumed between
the towns of Amador City and Sutter Creek, and gold panning continues to
thrill hobbyists and professional gold miners alike.

Since the 1950s, Amador County has seen steady population growth,
primarily in rural residential areas. As mining and timber production have
declined, tourism has become more important to the County's economy.

CUSTOM, CULTURE, AND TRADITIONS OF AMADOR COUNTY

Amador County was established in 1854. The name “Washington” was
considered by the State Senate, but the name “Amador” was substituted in
the State Assembly. The name pays homage to ranchero Jose Maria Amador,
and is a loose Spanish translation for “love of gold.”

Today, Amador County is rich in history, spectacular scenery, and year-round
recreation. Sightseeing throughout scenic Amador County is popular. Visitors
can trace the paths of pioneers and gold miners by visiting historical
landmarks of the Mother Lode gold mines, Chaw Se Indian Grinding Rock
Cultural Center, Amador County Museum, Shenandoah Valley wineries,
Daffodil Hill, Volcano Theater, Historic Preston Castle, antique shops and
shows, art galleries, flea markets, and family events such as the Amador
County Fair. Opportunities for every sports enthusiast are available in all
seasons. Numerous resorts, lakes and rivers, in addition to scenic roadways to
the high Sierras, provide for camping and recreational vehicle parks, fishing,
swimming, boating, jet skiing, hiking, jogging, picnicking, horseback riding,
rafting, hunting, skiing, and golfing. The county offers a wide range of
hospitality from economical to elegant, including historic Victorian inns,
hotels, and bed and breakfasts. Many family-owned dining
establishments offer classic American food, as well as outstanding Italian,
French, Chinese, and Mexican cuisine.

More than 85,000 acres of land in Amador County (more than 20 percent of
the County's total area) is managed by federal agencies, primarily the U.S.
Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Amador County has rich
and valued customs, tradition, and culture that reflect its history of mining,
timber harvesting, agriculture, and grazing on public land. Land in Amador
County has not always been federally managed. At the start of the gold rush,
California was technically still a part of Mexico. The relationship between
federal management and individual use of public land has long been a topic
discussion in the county. That relationship and related discussion continues
today, and will in the future so long as there is productive use of both public
and private land for grazing cattle, timber harvesting, hunting, and
recreation.
The culture and customs surrounding life in the county have been shaped by the productive forests which carpet much of the eastern portion of Amador County, including parts of the El Dorado National Forest. The people of Amador County have historically depended on the forests. Beginning with the Miwok Indians who used the forests for sustenance, followed by the 49ers and pioneers who used wood for campfires, to cook, warm their bodies, repair their wagons and build their homes. The pioneers’ very survival depended upon the availability of wood and wood products. Forest lands in Amador County are some of the most productive in the world. With proper management and use, they should supply the county’s needs for countless generations to come.

Grazing on public lands has been part of the custom and culture of Amador County, long before the concept of public lands. Early grazing of cattle on common area lands provided milk and meat for the miners and early settlers. In the 1870s, beef cattle were introduced and annual cattle drives began. Cattle were driven up into the high country from May through October, then gathered and driven three or four days to the lower wintering ranges. By the 1960s, very few cattle were driven, in favor of trucking which continues today. Many families that grazed cattle and sheep left their names associated with places such as Allen Camp, Maggie’s Meadow (Badaracco), Burk Cabin, Culberts, Dufrene, Ellis Meadow, Kirkwood Meadow, Mattley Meadow, Meiss Meadow, Mehrten Springs, Pardoe, Plasse Trading Post, Schneider Cow Camp, and Votaws.

Amador County has a long tradition of hunting that continues today. Thousands of hunters visit the El Dorado National Forest each year for deer, bear, grouse, quail, coyotes, squirrels, as well as fishing. Hunting is permitted seasonally, except in the Salt Springs State game refuge. Countless thousands of hunters and anglers visit public forests and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), bringing revenue to sporting goods stores, motels, grocery stores, fuel stations, and vehicle repair shops.

Public lands in Amador County are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Early in the 20th century, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) permitted private residents to build recreational cabins on public land. These residences, built between 1922 and 1959, are located at Kirkwood Lake, Devil’s Gate, South Silver Lake, East Silver Lake, and Bear River. Today, 178 recreational cabins are privately owned and leased from USFS on 20-year terms. Some cabins are now used by the fourth generation, providing recreation and enjoyment for the permittees and their families.

Agriculture has been an important economic sector for Amador County since the county was formed in 1854. As a result, Amador County is renowned for its primary agricultural products – wine, walnuts, apples, and beef. Originally, much of the agricultural land was used for grazing animals and raising grains.
and hay. Since the first winery was established in 1956 in Shenandoah Valley, Amador wineries have continued to grow in both number and stature. Many of these are small, family-owned operations.

**Vision for the Future**

As part of the General Plan update public outreach process, county residents established a Community Vision Statement. The Vision Statement is the foundation for General Plan goals, policies, and programs. It is an expression of residents’ shared values and requirements for Amador County’s future. The Vision identifies the ideal conditions to work toward over the next 25 years and provides guidance for policy makers as they work to improve quality of life.

**Preamble**

We, the citizens of Amador County, envision the county as a place known for its high quality rural lifestyle, historic resources, healthy natural environment, vibrant local economy, scenic resources and vistas, and services that meet our people’s needs.

**Community**

Amador County continues to be a place of small, distinct towns where neighbors know and can depend on one another, and where low crime rates foster a feeling of security and residents are enabled to participate in the decision-making process. We have a vibrant economy—one that provides jobs with enough income to allow residents a reasonable quality of life, and encourages and supports business, especially locally-owned, unique businesses and our historic business districts. We have created a livable community—one with a supply of housing affordable to those who live and/or work in our community.

**Character**

We protect and enhance our county’s unique character – its history, natural beauty, and rural lifestyle. Due to our successful efforts, our historic and cultural heritage; scenic vistas, agriculture, rivers, streams, and other natural areas; and historic buildings and towns continue to attract visitors.

**Resources**

We judiciously manage the county’s wealth of natural resources—mineral, agricultural, timber, surface and groundwater, soil, air, open space, and wildlife—managing and enhancing our resources for present and future
generations. We preserve our resources while also protecting our property and personal rights.

**SERVICES**

We strive to serve current and future generations by providing utilities and services that are available, affordable, well-maintained, and well-planned while maintaining our rural character. We provide transportation choices through upkeep of our roadways, safe bicycle and pedestrian paths, and transit opportunities that respond to our needs. We have access to health services, professional, well-trained emergency service providers, quality childcare and senior services, and expanded opportunities for recreation and lifelong learning. Working with our local schools, we have created an excellent learning environment where both children and adults can obtain high-quality education and skills to achieve personal and economic success.

**GENERAL PLAN PREPARATION**

**Public Participation and Outreach**

Amador County initiated a comprehensive General Plan update in 2006. Public participation played an important role in the preparation of this General Plan. Because the General Plan reflects the goals of the community, citizen input was essential to identify issues and formulate goals. The public had several opportunities to participate, including the following:

- **Five introductory community workshops** were held during September 2006. These workshops provided an introduction to the General Plan update process and a forum to discuss visions for the future. Discussion at each workshop focused on four broad elements – community, character, resources, and services.

- **Twenty-seven General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) meetings**, were held on a bi-weekly to monthly basis from July 2006 through April 2008. The public participated in GPAC discussions regarding issues and opportunities, existing conditions, vision, goals, and land use alternatives.

- The County hosted workshops and open houses on alternatives, goals, and policies in June and September 2008.

- **Two rounds of study sessions** before a joint session of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in October and November 2008, and March through July 2009.
General Plan documents, including meeting agendas and summaries, background working papers, draft goals and policies, and draft land use alternatives, have been continuously posted on the county's website for public access since 2006.

The GPAC played a critical role in developing the framework for the General Plan. The GPAC was a twelve-member group of Amador County residents (with alternates) appointed by the Board of Supervisors to assist County staff and consultants preparing the Draft General Plan. The GPAC reviewed and provided feedback on the vision, key policy issues and plan proposals, and assisted with outreach and communication with the general public. GPAC members (and their alternates) represented each of the five county supervisorial districts, and also represented the Commission on Aging, Board of Realtors, Foothill Conservancy, Farm Bureau and Chamber of Commerce.

**Organization and Use of the General Plan**

The General Plan consists of nine elements, or chapters, that together meet State requirements for a general plan. These elements are presented in Table I-1, below. The General Plan also includes an introduction and a glossary.

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<th>Amador County General Plan Elements</th>
<th>State Mandated Elements</th>
<th>Optional Elements</th>
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The General Plan represents the County's policy for determining the appropriate physical development and character of Amador County, and establishes an overall future development capacity.

An Implementation Plan has been prepared describing the programs which the County intends to use to achieve General Plan goals and policies. Although not a part of the General Plan, the Implementation Plan is included as an attachment to the plan. The General Plan Program Environmental
Impact Report (EIR) also provides programmatic information and analysis of the General Plan, and can be used as a base for analysis by later projects implementing the General Plan.

The General Plan process was informed by working papers which presented issues and opportunities in several policy areas for the County. Working paper topics included Agriculture, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Circulation, Cultural Resources, Demographics, Energy, Hydrology and Water Quality, Infrastructure, Land Use, Local Economy, Noise, and Public Health and Safety. The working papers served both to inform discussions by the GPAC, and also to provide background information used to prepare the General Plan.

General Plan Structure

The General Plan is comprised of this introduction and nine elements. Each element may stand alone, but is also an integral part of the overall plan. The General Plan is accompanied by an Implementation Plan and Glossary. Each of the elements contains several common organizational features:

- The **Purpose, Scope and Contents, and Relationship to Other Elements** briefly identify the purpose of the element, describe its contents, and specify the relationship of the element to other General Plan elements.

- The **Plan** section offers an overview of the County’s course of action to implement the goals and policies. Many of the elements also contain one or more policy maps which consolidate the various opportunities, constraints, classifications, and policies expressed in the element in graphic form. For example, the Land Use Element contains a “Land Use Diagram” identifying and describing the locations of future land uses by type, density and intensity within Amador County.

- The **Issues, Goals, and Policies** section of each element contains a description of identified planning issues, goals, and policies. The issues, goals, and policies are based on input received from the community, the GPAC, the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, and County staff. Issues represent the needs, concerns or desires addressed within the General Plan. Goals are overall statements of community desires and consist of broad statements of purpose or direction. Policies serve as guides to the Board of Supervisors and County staff in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect future growth and development.
Related Plans and Policies

State law places the General Plan atop the hierarchy of land use planning regulations. Several local ordinances and other County plans must conform to General Plan policy direction and work to implement the General Plan. Also, regional government agencies, such as the Amador Air District and the Regional Water Quality Control Board have been established, recognizing that planning issues extend beyond the boundaries of individual counties. Efforts to address regional planning issues such as air and water quality, transportation, affordable housing, and habitat conservation have resulted in the adoption or consideration of regional plans and regulations. Policies adopted by Amador County both affect and are affected by these plans. The paragraphs below describe important ordinances, plans, and programs associated with the General Plan.

Amador County Zoning Code

The Zoning Code, the primary tool used to implement the General Plan, regulates development type and intensity throughout the unincorporated county. Development regulations include limits on building height, setback requirements, and landscaping. The Zoning Code also outlines standards for many other land use issues.

Westover Field Airport Land Use Plan

The Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP) for Westover Field was prepared in October 1987 and amended in July 1990 by the Amador Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). The plan provides a basis for determining which land uses which are compatible with airport operations.

Three “Safety Areas” are defined in the ALUP. These include Clear Zones, Approach/Departure Zones, and an Overflight Zone. Compatible land uses are identified for each zone. Please refer to the ALUP for more specific identification of permitted uses. No existing conflicts were identified in any of the three zones, although potential for future conflicts in the Clear and Overflight Zones from future development activity was identified. Conflicts may include both safety and noise conflicts with airport operations.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the State legislature in response to a public mandate for environmental analysis of projects affecting the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA Statute and
Guidelines. CEQA is the instrument for ensuring that environmental impacts of local development projects are appropriately disclosed, assessed, and mitigated.

**Local Agency Formation Commission**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 sets forth procedures for Local Agency Formation Commissions, or LAFCOs, throughout the state to review annexation applications. The Act was adopted to:

- Encourage orderly development including the provisions of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (CKH) Section 56001;
- Efficiently extend government services; and
- Guide development away from open space and prime agricultural lands, unless such action promotes planned, orderly, and efficient development.

Amador LAFCO implements the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act and other statutes in its review of future city and district boundary changes, changes of local government organization, and adoption of spheres of influence.

**Amador County Regional Transportation Plan**

The Amador County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is prepared by the Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC). The RTP is the long-term plan for the County’s transportation infrastructure. It identifies and analyzes the County’s transportation needs, and identifies priority projects to improve the County’s transportation infrastructure.
PurPOSE

The Land Use Element sets forth the County’s vision for future land uses, and identifies how the physical environment will be shaped. This element defines the future location, type, and intensity of land uses, and the desired mix and relationship between them. Land use designations presented in this element identify the types and nature of development permitted throughout the unincorporated area of the County (the planning area).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This Land Use Element provides an overview of the different land uses in the county and context for the County’s land use policy direction. The goals, policies, and implementation programs that make up the County’s land use strategy through 2030 are also provided. Other contents of this element include:

- **A Land Use Diagram** (Figure LU-1) depicting the types, locations, and intensities of current and future land uses;
- **Future Growth Estimates** and estimates of how much growth can be accommodated by the land use designations;
- **Mixed-use Areas**, including descriptions of areas that are targeted for future growth: Special Planning Areas (SPAs), Town Centers (TCs), and a Regional Service Center (RSC);
- **Public Facilities and Community Services**, including descriptions of public facilities and community services available in the county;
- **Land Use and Energy**, describing the relationship between land use and energy efficiency; and
- **Issues, Goals, and Policies** defining Amador County’s approach to land use decisions.

The Land Use Element is one of seven mandated general plan elements required by California Government Code Section 65302, and the California General Plan Guidelines. The information found in this element is supported by the Land Use; Population, Housing, and Employment; Public Facilities and Services, and Utilities analyses included in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this General Plan Update.
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Land Use Element serves as a guide for future development in the county and determines many key issues evaluated in other elements of the General Plan. For example, different land uses generate various trip demands, which influence the capacity and service levels of transportation systems. The Circulation and Mobility Element identifies transportation routes and services designed to meet the demands of both existing and future development.

Land use decisions and the County’s long-range economic development strategy are also directly related. This element proposes new development strategies for several unincorporated rural communities, encouraging the development of mixed uses and commercial centers in the form of Town Centers and a Regional Service Center. These centers will provide increased commercial and business opportunities in the county, and will include services for tourists as well as residents. These Land Use Element policies are directly related to the long-range policies of the Economic Development Element.

Future residential development described in and allowed by the various residential land use designations of the Land Use Element affects the County’s housing goals, programs and objectives, which are discussed in the Housing Element.

The Land Use Element also designates areas for conservation and preservation of natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Goals and policies regarding the preservation and maintenance of these areas are addressed in the Conservation Element. The Conservation Element’s discussion of surface water and lands that may accommodate floodwater for groundwater recharge and stormwater management was considered in the development of the County’s Land Use Diagram.

Noise abatement issues also relate to land uses. To comply with noise level requirements, land use designations are determined in tandem with noise contour maps in Exhibits N-2 and N-3, and the goals and policies in the Noise Element.

To mitigate or avoid damage and injury from natural and human-caused hazards, hazards identified in the Safety Element must affect the land use plan presented in the Land Use Element. Some sensitive land uses may be limited in areas more prone to hazards. Flood Hazards, including those mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the California Department of Water Resources, are identified in the Safety Element, and annually reviewed as described in Program P-5 of the Implementation Plan.
DIVERSE LAND USES

Amador County’s land use pattern includes large areas of forest land, agricultural land for both crop production and grazing, rural residences, mineral and resource extraction areas, and unincorporated communities, which generally consist of more developed mixes of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

A complete community supports a variety of land use types. Diverse land uses create a desirable environment for residents and visitors alike, providing places where people can live, work, shop, visit, walk, and recreate. With a balanced mix of uses, residents can work and use services locally in the unincorporated communities of the County near their homes, rather than traveling outside the County to larger commercial centers. This in turn keeps tax revenues within the County, and provides a higher quality of life for residents.

The proposed Town Centers and the Regional Service Center seek to restore and build anew the county's historic town environments, creating places where residents and visitors can walk and bike to services, stores, restaurants, parks and other public uses. Mixed, concentrated land uses also enable efficient public transit, since more uses and residences can be within a short distance of transit stops, making cars less of a necessity and providing alternatives for those unable to drive. These environments create regional destinations for tourists, provide business and economic growth opportunities and jobs for residents, and generate additional tax revenues.

The County also has areas suitable for rural residential uses, ranchettes, and small-scale agricultural uses; these areas are designated Rural Residential (RR) and Agricultural-Transition (AT). Some residents desire a rural lifestyle and larger lots, and the County will continue to promote such uses in tandem with the mixed-use areas. New rural residential uses face challenges including access, provision of utilities, and fire hazards. The General Plan includes goals, policies, and programs to ensure the safety of future rural residential uses.

Amador County’s land use diagram (Figure LU-1) allows a full spectrum of uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and resource uses. The land use designations encourage flexibility, for example, residential uses may range from multifamily communities to infill development matching the character of existing developed areas; commercial uses can range from small neighborhood-serving retail stores to larger uses such as office parks to provide regional employment opportunities. Industrial uses may range from
smaller storage facilities to larger uses like manufacturing or processing facilities; agricultural uses can include rural residential home sites, grazing areas, or crop or timber production. Other land uses allow for natural resource extraction and production, recreation, public facilities, and other public lands such as forests. Each land use designation and its allowed range of uses is described in detail below.

Land Use Designations

Each land use designation generally describes intended land uses for an area and establishes an allowable density or intensity range for land development. Corresponding zone districts specify the permitted uses for each category as well as applicable development standards. The maximum allowable density or intensity on any individual parcel may be affected by such factors as the physical characteristics of the parcel, access and available infrastructure, and compatibility with nearby uses or resources.

Density describes the population and development capacity of a given parcel or group of parcels. Residential density is expressed in terms of the number of dwelling units allowed per gross acre (units/acre). Intensity is used for non-residential uses and refers to the extent of development allowed on a parcel of land or lot (that is, the total building square footage, building height, the Floor Area Ratio [FAR], and/or the percent of lot coverage). The FAR describes the intensity of use on a lot (see Figure LU-2) and represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total land area of that lot. For example, a 20,000-square-foot building on a 40,000-square-foot lot yields an FAR of 0.50. A 0.50 FAR can describe a single-story building covering half of the lot, a two-story building covering approximately one-quarter of the lot, or a four-story building covering one-eighth of the lot.

For purposes of illustration, the diagrams (Figures LU-3 through LU-5) below provide examples of FAR for existing commercial retail and office sites found throughout Amador County.

This example at the intersection of State Route (SR) 49 and Industrial Boulevard in Martell includes a car dealership and other highway-oriented commercial businesses.

This example, along SR 88 in central Pine Grove shows a typical upcountry commercial area, again centered on the highway.

This example illustrates a higher FAR in downtown Sutter Creek. An FAR of 0.85 indicates a developed environment, with most of the lot area occupied by buildings, including buildings of more than one story. Parking is generally located either behind buildings or along the sidewalk.
Figure LU-1
Land Use Diagram
Figure LU-2  Floor Area Ratio

FAR: 0.10  
Building Floor Area: 54,550 Sq. Ft.  
Parcel / Lot Area: 569,130 Sq. Ft.

Figure LU-3  Martell FAR
LAND USE
Final

AMADOR COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
LU - 8

General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016
# Table LU-1
Preliminary Land Use Classification System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Density or Intensity Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Agricultural-General 0.025 unit/acre (40-acre minimum)</td>
<td>Valley and foothill areas that are best suited for grazing and varied agricultural uses. Agriculture is the primary use. Permitted density in this designation is based on site factors including the slope of the parcel, soil conditions, and water availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Agricultural-Transition 0.05–0.2 unit/acre (5- to 20-acre minimum)</td>
<td>Lands where a transition is occurring from agricultural to rural residential uses. This classification provides for rural ranchettes, limited animal husbandry, and family garden, orchard, or supplementary agricultural income. Permitted density in this designation is based on site factors including the slope of the parcel, soil conditions, and water availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Designations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Residential-Rural 0.20-1 unit/acre (1- to 5-acre minimum)</td>
<td>Low-density residential use. One-acre net minimum lot sizes are acceptable in areas served by public water. Five-acre minimum lot sizes are required in areas lacking public water service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>Residential-Low Density 1–7 units/acre</td>
<td>Lands in developed areas suitable for residential use where public water and sewer systems are (or may be) made available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Residential-Medium Density 9-25 units/acre** Maximum 0.2 FAR</td>
<td>Lands suitable for higher density single- or multi-family uses in developed areas with public water and sewer service. Areas set aside for primarily residential planned development under specific plans or master plans. Some compatible neighborhood commercial uses may be permitted. This designation is applied to areas within city spheres of influence and/or near available public water and sewer services. **Projects must exceed 50% of the maximum residential density of 18 units/acre (25 units/acre for deed-restricted low- and very low-income households).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Designation</td>
<td>Density or Intensity Range</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed-Use Activity Center Designations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC Town Center</td>
<td>0.21–7 units/acre**</td>
<td>Smaller rural towns and service centers with relatively compact clusters of residential, commercial, industrial, and public service uses serving one or several nearby communities. Each TC area has different unit and square foot caps, specific to that community. **In addition, densities as high as between 10 to 18 units/acre may be permitted for developments that help meet the County’s goals for accommodating lower-income housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC Regional Service Center</td>
<td>7.1–18 units/acre</td>
<td>Larger-scale service centers with combinations of residences, commercial, industrial, and public service uses serving countywide needs and/or communities in nearby counties. There is only one RSC area in the county, located on 690 acres in the community of Martell. No more than 3,000 units and 3.5 million square feet of commercial or industrial space is permitted in the Martell RSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA Special Planning Area</td>
<td>0.2–18 units/acre</td>
<td>Areas set aside for planned development under specific plans or master plans. These areas require comprehensive area planning, including specific development guidelines and/or other detailed implementation measures because of natural, environmental, or other factors. Uses may range from mining operations to complex land development projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commercial and Industrial Designations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Commercial</td>
<td>Maximum 0.2 FAR</td>
<td>Central commercial areas, general or heavy commercial, highway service commercial, neighborhood commercial, offices, services, and institutional uses are appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Industrial</td>
<td>0.5 FAR</td>
<td>Provides for a broad range of industrial uses. Appropriate uses include manufacturing, processing, distribution, and storage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table LU-1
Preliminary Land Use Classification System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Density or Intensity Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Per use permit if required</td>
<td>Public, quasi-public, or public utility sites used for public services such as schools, public buildings, corporation yards, public airports, fairgrounds, water and sewer plants, cemeteries, and power substations, etc. Large acreages in highway rights-of-way (ROWs) may be included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>0.025 unit/acre (40-acre minimum)</td>
<td>This designation is applied to the sites of proposed or possible future water development projects which may have a major impact on adjacent land uses and involve a substantial public interest. Permitted uses are those appropriate to the particular site area, such as agriculture, forestry, mining, and passive recreation. Regulations are those necessary to protect the intended project purposes of the site, with restrictions against subdivision or major developments inconsistent with the classification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Space and Resource Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| OR                   | 0.2 unit/acre (5-acre lot minimum) | Public recreation lands, including national, state, and local parks and recreation areas, game and wildlife refuges, and recreation and resort developments. Permitted uses include:
  - public, quasi-public, and private recreation uses, either exclusively or in combination with compatible uses;
  - resource uses such as managed forestry, mining, and grazing; and
  - residential, resort, and commercial recreation uses under appropriate controls and zoning. Amador County’s policy in Open-Recreation areas is to fully maintain and encourage the open and recreational character and natural environmental values of the land. |
<p>| GF                   | 0.025 unit/acre (40-acre lot minimum) | Lands in both public and private ownership where significant timber production resources have been identified. Conversion to other uses and encroachment of incompatible land uses that may adversely affect timber production are discouraged. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Density or Intensity Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRZ</td>
<td>0.025 unit/acre (40-acre minimum)</td>
<td>Lands having current mining operations or significant mineral resource deposits. This classification is intended to prevent premature conversion of these lands to other land uses and to restrict the encroachment of land uses which would preclude or seriously hamper the extraction of mineral resources. Such uses include high density residential and non-compatible industrial, commercial, or public uses. Compatible uses may include residential (less than 0.025 du/acre), industrial (related to extracting, manufacturing, or processing of the mineral resources), passive recreation, agricultural, silviculture, grazing, and open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF</td>
<td>No Residential, Intensity range per use permit if required</td>
<td>Forest lands, generally located within U.S. National Forests and mostly in U.S. Forest Service ownership. Provides for forestry and sustained yield timber production, grazing, mining, and passive recreation activities which do not require developed facilities, as well as cabin, resort, and commercial recreation uses as permitted by the U.S. Forest Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW</td>
<td>No Residential</td>
<td>Lands located in existing or proposed Wilderness areas within U.S. National Forests. These lands are in public ownership, protected and regulated to maintain natural environmental features. Permitted uses are determined by the U.S. Forest Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonjurisdictional Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>This designation includes lands within incorporated cities. Amador County zoning and land use regulations are not applicable to these lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTL</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Tribal lands that have been taken into trust by the U.S. Government. Amador County zoning and land use regulations are not applicable to these lands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Town Center and Regional Service Center designations, described in more detail below, both densities (dwelling units per acre [du/acre]) and intensities (FAR) are established. In cases where a range is established, the minimum value represents the least intense land use permitted within the area, while
the maximum value represents the most intense land use permitted. Land use designations are presented in Table LU-1 and described below.

**Development Capacity**

Table LU-2, below, provides information regarding the development capacity of the Land Use Diagram. The development capacity presented in Table LU-2 assumes a population of 25,241 in the unincorporated area of the County in 2030, compared to an estimated 2009 population of 22,123.

**Table LU-2**
**Draft General Plan Development Capacity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>2030 Units</th>
<th>2030 Non-residential Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>2030 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural-Transition (AT)</td>
<td>39,799</td>
<td>3,854</td>
<td>7,279</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural-General (AG)</td>
<td>191,899</td>
<td>2,019</td>
<td>3,813</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential (RR)</td>
<td>9,499</td>
<td>3,741</td>
<td>7,068</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential-Low Density (RL)</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>1,426</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential-Medium Density (RM)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (C)</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>570,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial (I)</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Center (TC)</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>585,000</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Service Center (RSC)</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Planning Area (SPA)</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>1,840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service (PS)</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Recreation (OR)</td>
<td>6,107</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Forest (GF)</td>
<td>29,850</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)</td>
<td>10,758</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Forest (OF)</td>
<td>56,205</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Wilderness (OW)</td>
<td>22,238</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Area (UA)</td>
<td>7,458</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Trust Land (TTL)</td>
<td>1,384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>2,301</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way (ROW)</td>
<td>3,313</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>387,874</td>
<td>13,364</td>
<td>6,185,000</td>
<td>25,241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Projected dwelling units for 2030 are based on projected population of 25,241 (DOF, 2013) 2.274 people/household (DOF 2009); and 16.94% vacancy rate (DOF 2009).

**General Plan and Zoning Consistency**

The Land Use Element is primarily implemented by the Amador County Zoning Code, which specifies districts and performance standards for the various types of land uses described in the General Plan. **Table LU-3** identifies the current zone district or districts which correspond to each General Plan
land use designation. The zone districts specify the permitted uses and applicable development standards for each designation. The Regional Service Center and Town Center land use designations shown in Table LU-3 are new designations. Corresponding zoning districts will be developed as part of a Zoning Code update implementing the General Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Plan Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Compatible Zoning Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT Agricultural-Transition</td>
<td>A, AG, RE, R-1, R1-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG Agricultural-General</td>
<td>AG, A, RE, R1-A, MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR Rural Residential</td>
<td>RE, R-2A, R-1, R1-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL Residential-Low Density</td>
<td>R-1, R1-A, PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM Residential-Medium Density</td>
<td>R-2, R-3, PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC Regional Service Center</td>
<td>M, MM, LM, PD, R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1, C-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC Town Center</td>
<td>R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1, C-2, LM, MM, PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA Special Planning Area</td>
<td>PD, X, M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Commercial</td>
<td>C-1, C-2, H, PD, LM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Industrial</td>
<td>M, MM, LM, MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS Public Service</td>
<td>PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP Water Project</td>
<td>A, AG, O-S, R1-A, MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR Open-Recreation</td>
<td>O-S, R1-A, MR, AG, PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF General Forest</td>
<td>AG, A, O-S, R1-A, MR, TPZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRZ Mineral Resources Zone</td>
<td>X, MR, R1-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF Open-Wilderness</td>
<td>AG, O-S, R1-A, MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW Open-Wilderness</td>
<td>AG, O-S, R1-A, MR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Area Descriptions

The General Plan allows for future development of residential, commercial, and industrial uses throughout the planning area. However, it is the County’s intent to focus new growth toward existing unincorporated communities—the RSC at Martell and TCs, each of which are described in detail below. The RSC and TC areas represent key locations within the County, each of which has unique future development objectives, responding to priorities established in the General Plan Vision Statement, and community input.

Regional Service Center

The General Plan proposes one RSC, to be located in the community of Martell. The Martell RSC encompasses approximately 679 acres of land located near the intersection of SR 49, SR 88, and SR 104 near Westover Field. This RSC is planned to include a mix of retail commercial uses, industrial uses, and higher-density housing, and the designation of this area as an RSC is
intended to encourage more creative future development, including potential for mixed-use development. A total of approximately 2,500,000 square feet of commercial and 1,000,000 square feet of industrial uses (compared to about 1,080,000 square feet of existing commercial and industrial uses) can be accommodated within the Martell RSC. About 678 acres are available for these uses (approximately 390 acres of which are currently vacant), developed at an overall intensity of 5,100 square feet per acre (0.12 FAR), although any individual site could develop at up to 0.5 FAR. The Martell RSC can accommodate 1,200 to 3,000 housing units over a 20-year period, making it the largest future housing location in the unincorporated county. Densities range from 7 to 18 units per acre.

In 2010, Martell is the largest commercial center in Amador County, offering a variety of commercial, industrial, and residential uses to county residents and residents of nearby areas. Martell is well connected by roads and transit, and draws visitors from a large surrounding area. However, internal circulation is generally poor, and most travel between locations at Martell occurs by car on a State highway.

As the RSC in Martell develops, it will remain the dominant commercial center of Amador County, and will be the county’s largest industrial area. A key challenge will be providing better internal circulation, including pedestrian and automobile circulation options, both within the “Martell triangle” (the area bordered by SR 104, SR 88, and SR 49) and to other areas outside of SR 104, SR 88, and SR 49. Another key challenge is creating a compatible residential component, allowing residents to live close to the county’s major service center while protecting the nearby Westover Field. Design guidelines and zoning specific to Martell will encourage new land uses to face the street (with parking located behind), help knit together existing uses, improve circulation (including for pedestrians and bicycles), create visual cohesiveness and identity, and encourage use of alternative transportation for local trips.

New buildings in Martell may be three- to four-stories high. Mixed-use in Martell includes compatible uses both located close to one another (homes next to retail or offices, for instance), and/or in the same building (apartments or offices above shops). Zoning for Martell will include form-based characteristics (regulating form and appearance of buildings rather than use) to provide flexibility beyond existing zone districts, while preventing incompatible uses.

Town Centers

The General Plan designates three Town Centers to focus new growth within the existing unincorporated communities of Pine Grove, Buckhorn, and River Pines. Below are descriptions of each planned Town Center.
Pine Grove Town Center

The Pine Grove TC includes approximately 360 acres of land in Pine Grove, centered along SR 88 between Ridge Road and Tabeaud Road. Land uses along an approximately 1-mile stretch of the highway include commercial uses such as individual retail stores, restaurants, small service and office buildings, and smaller strip shopping centers; some low density residential fronting the highway, some public uses such as government buildings, churches, a fire station, and a school; and some light industrial businesses. In 2010, connectivity between the existing facilities is generally poor. Although a wide variety of services and activities are available along both sides of the highway, SR 88 dominates the landscape, and a person running multiple errands must make several short trips by car. Where sidewalks are available, they do not connect multiple services or offer a meaningful alternative to the automobile.

The Pine Grove TC will provide a “downtown” for the upcountry area, offering a central site where services will be available to upcountry residents. The TC is envisioned to include a cluster of mixed land uses with cohesive design elements to create a defined “main street,” establishing a sense of place specific to Pine Grove. The Pine Grove TC will encourage infill development of additional services, stores, offices, and housing.

Future development in Pine Grove will be used to knit together the scattered existing uses into a more physically cohesive community. The County will establish design guidelines for new commercial development in the TCs, specifying that new buildings in Pine Grove will be built closer to the street, with the front of buildings facing SR 88, which will be upgraded to include sidewalks. Rear parking areas will be screened by topography, berms, buildings, and vegetation. Sidewalks will be a required part of new projects, connecting new and existing buildings. The County will encourage use of shared driveways and access easements to reduce the number of driveways on SR 88, improving through traffic flow and reducing barriers to pedestrians.

New buildings in the Pine Grove TC may be two- to three-stories high. Mixed-use projects can include compatible uses both located close to one another (homes next to offices, for instance), or in the same building (apartments or offices above shops). Zoning for Pine Grove will include form-based characteristics (regulating form and appearance of buildings rather than use) to provide flexibility beyond existing zone districts, while preventing incompatible uses.

Jackson Creek flows through the Pine Grove TC area, separating existing commercial and service uses along SR 88 from residential areas to the south. New projects in Pine Grove should treat the creek as an asset, considering
views of the creek in site design and building placement, and using it to offer pedestrians an alternative to walking along SR 88.

The Pine Grove TC accommodates a total of 900 residential units and creates potential for up to 400,000 square feet of commercial space. As of 2010, about 250 housing units and 215,000 square feet of commercial space are present in the Pine Grove TC area. Appropriate services include supermarkets, convenience stores, drugstores, restaurants, schools, and community facilities such as health clinics, in addition to office and limited industrial opportunities.

**Buckhorn Town Center**

The Buckhorn TC covers approximately 140 acres in Buckhorn, centered around SR 88 east of Buckhorn Ridge Road (near the Mace Meadow Golf Club). Similar to Pine Grove, land uses in Buckhorn are spread out along SR 88, although fewer residences are located adjacent to the highway. Commercial and light industrial uses such as gas stations, small markets, stores, restaurants, and a storage facility are located along the south side of the highway. In several places, stands of trees separate parking lots from small commercial centers. The terrain along the north side of the highway is slightly higher in most places than to the south. A small commercial office complex and a few residences are located to the north, although they are generally set back further from the highway than uses on the south side.

Similar to Pine Grove, SR 88 dominates the landscape, and connectivity between buildings and uses along the highway is generally poor. A person moving from one place to another must drive from place to place since uses are spread out and walking or biking along the highway in this area is dangerous.

Buckhorn will also be a “downtown” area offering local services and employment opportunities for residents, as well as a stopping point for tourists traveling through to Kirkwood and Lake Tahoe. Tourism services and accommodations will be located alongside local services in a well-connected mountain village environment featuring sidewalks, public spaces, and ample landscaping, creating an area separate and distinct from the highway. Village-scale homes will be mixed in and adjacent to the more concentrated commercial areas, and some buildings will contain apartments in second and third floors above ground-level retail commercial, and office uses.

Parking areas will be located behind buildings, landscaping, and topography to de-emphasize the automobile. The varied topography and vegetation will be an integral part of the mountain village character of this Town Center. Buildings, public spaces, and landscaping should be designed using cohesive design elements described in the County’s commercial design guidelines,
employing distinct architectural styles, shared driveways to reduce barriers to pedestrians, and mixed-uses directed by form-based zoning.

The Buckhorn TC accommodates a total of 250 housing units and 130,000 square feet of commercial uses focused on the needs of upcountry communities, offices, and limited industrial uses. In 2010, there were about 90 housing units and 92,000 square feet of non-residential development in the Buckhorn TC area.

**River Pines Town Center**

The River Pines TC includes approximately 35 acres in River Pines, extending along Shenandoah Road to the Cosumnes River. The community of River Pines is centered along Shenandoah Road as it bends around a hill on the south side of the road. Along the stretch of road that will comprise the core of the town center, land uses include primarily single-family residential units on both sides of the road, with some limited pockets of commercial. The area north of the road is generally more level than the land to the south, so most concentrated future development will likely occur there.

A pedestrian-scaled rural center will be developed as a cluster or several connected clusters located primarily along the north side of Shenandoah Road. The center will include commercial services and public uses for nearby residents, mixed with traveler services supporting the region’s vineyards, as well as new homes mixed among other uses and apartments built above ground-level retail and commercial. Sidewalks, landscaping, and building styles will connect the various uses. Buildings should be designed within the character of the Shenandoah Valley, consistent with the County’s commercial design guidelines. Similar to the other town centers, pedestrian access will be a priority, and the auto-oriented character of the community will be de-emphasized. Development techniques appropriate for River Pines include placing buildings together in groups, fronting buildings directly to the street, locating parking lots behind buildings, sharing driveways to protect pedestrian access, and using ample landscaping and berms to establish and separate public and private spaces.

The River Pines TC accommodates up to 100 housing units and approximately 20,000 square feet of tourist-supporting retail and service uses. In 2010, there were about 65 housing units and about 7,000 square feet of commercial space in River Pines.

**Special Planning Areas**

Several SPAs are identified on the Land Use Diagram (Figure LU-1). Most SPAs are small and have already been subdivided. The General Plan assumes that these smaller SPAs will build out at a rate proportional to the growth of the
county as a whole. Two larger SPAs are also identified on the Land Use Diagram, and are considered by the General Plan in more detail than the smaller SPAs. They are described below.

**Camanche Village Special Planning Area**

The Camanche Village SPA encompasses approximately 500 acres of land on the western edge of the Camanche community. A specific plan will be required prior to development of this area. The Camanche Village SPA may accommodate up to 1,000 residential units. Because this SPA is located adjacent to agricultural parcels in both Amador and San Joaquin Counties, future development densities and types shall provide a visual transition between agricultural lands and the developed portions of the Camanche Village SPA.

**Camanche North Shore Special Planning Area**

The Camanche North Shore (Unit 6) SPA encompasses approximately 105 acres and comprises Lots 53 through 142, 217 through 254, and 367 through 388 as shown on that certain subdivision recorded in Book 3 of Subdivisions at Page 53, Official Records of Amador County. These lots are currently zoned “R2,” “PD,” “R1,” “C1,” or “H.” Future land uses and designations shall remain a combination of these zone districts not to exceed an aggregate total of 600 residential units and 35,000 sq. ft. of commercial and service uses to provide for neighborhood commercial and tourism based services, such as convenience stores, service stations, drugstore, restaurants, boat or other outdoor recreation services, hotel, motel, and community facilities.

**Airport Compatible Land Uses**

Amador County contains a total of five airports, all located in the western portion of the county. These include one public airport, Westover Field, located in the unincorporated area between the Cities of Sutter Creek and Jackson. The remaining four airports are Eagle’s Nest (located northwest of Ione about halfway between SR 16 and SR 104 near the Sacramento County line); Horse Shoe A Ranch (near the intersection of SR 16 and SR 124); Ranch Airstrip (southwest of Ione); and Howard Airport and Camanche Skypark, both of which are located in the same area northeast of Camanche Reservoir. **Figure LU-6** depicts airport locations in Amador County.

Airports provide many benefits by allowing easy transport of goods and people, and airport operations require additional land use planning considerations for the areas surrounding these facilities. Airports typically generate noise and light and need unobstructed airspace for takeoffs and landings. Safety issues around airports must also be considered in land use decisions for nearby areas. Airport land use compatibility plans (ALUCPs) help
reduce the potential for land use conflicts between the airports and surrounding uses. State law requires the preparation of ALUCPs for each public-use and military airport in California. ALUCPs address land use compatibility around airports, including issues of noise, overflights, safety, and airspace protection. They are not plans for airport development and do not require any changes to current land uses. Rather, state law requires future land use development near airports to be consistent with compatibility criteria included in an ALUCP.

The Amador County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) has jurisdictional authority to prepare ALUCPs, oversee the orderly development of airports, and adopt land use measures to minimize public exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards in areas around public airports, to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses. State law requires local agencies to modify their general plans and any affected specific plans to be consistent with ALUCPs. A general plan must address compatibility planning issues and avoid direct conflicts with compatibility planning criteria.

Westover Field is the largest airport in the county and is owned and operated by Amador County. The airport has one 3,400-foot runway oriented in a northeast to southwest direction. Figure LU-7 shows the location of Westover Field Airport in relation to nearby land uses. The majority of the land located within the airport’s northeast approach and takeoff zone is agricultural. The southwest approach and takeoff zone overlays the Martell RSC. In 2010, this area was partially developed with commercial and industrial uses, but future implementation of General Plan policies will see this area developed with mixed residential and commercial uses. The RSC land use designation provides flexibility, but incompatible uses will not be allowed in areas where airport operations would make them unsafe. The ALUCP for Westover Airport was originally prepared in 1987 and last amended in 1990.
Figure LU-7: Westover Field Safety Zones
Energy and Land Use

This Land Use Element includes policies to guide land use patterns and building sites and designs toward more energy-efficient modes. Building orientation, siting, and landscaping are important links between land use and energy use.

However, transportation and land use planning techniques provide substantial opportunity to decrease energy use and household transportation costs, since transportation energy (i.e., use of gas in automobiles) accounts for 39% of energy consumption in California. Efficient land use and circulation patterns can reduce transportation energy use and cost by reducing vehicle travel demand and increasing energy efficiency. Strategies to accomplish this include mixed-use development, pedestrian and bicycle connections, providing additional local services in town centers to support outlying rural communities, and infill development of underdeveloped land to place homes and destinations closer together. In addition, infill and town center development will result in energy retrofits for existing buildings as part of the overall plan to change the land use patterns of those communities; further increasing energy efficiency in the county.

These strategies will help to meet state-mandated energy efficiency standards such as the California Green Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 24, Part 11), which became mandatory in 2010. The Green Building Standards Code is expected to reduce building energy consumption by 15%, water consumption by 20% and landscape water consumption by 50%. New residential buildings will be required to use zero net new energy by 2020 and commercial buildings will need to achieve this target by 2030. In addition to buildings, a variety of strategies for design and construction of infrastructure and public facilities can provide energy conservation benefits.

Energy conservation strategies in the General Plan will also help the County reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to comply with the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) and California Executive Order 03-05 (EO-S-3-05, 2007). AB32 AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. EO-S-3-05 goes even further to require statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to a level 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

Public Facilities

One of the greatest challenges facing successful implementation of the General Plan is available utilities, particularly public water and wastewater.
As of 2010, infill development is limited by a lack of additional water and sewer capacity. Limitations on public water or sewer systems include sewer collection systems (in River Pines), sewer treatment capacity (in Martell and Pine Grove), water treatment capacity (in Martell), and water supply (in Pine Grove and Buckhorn). Other areas of the County, including Camanche, also face water and sewer limitations.

The County does not provide water or sewer service. Where available, water and sewer services are provided by the Amador Water Agency, the Amador Regional Sanitation Authority, the Jackson Valley Irrigation District, and other providers. Amador County is committed to working with these providers to improve the capacity of water and sewer systems in the county, and to broaden the availability of water and sewer services. Public water and sewer service in the proposed TC and RSC areas are prerequisites for the development envisioned in the General Plan. The Implementation Plan includes programs directing the County to support efforts by providers to improve water and sewer service, including seeking additional water rights.

Community Services

Amador County is a rural community, and services, including health care, social support services, and senior services are currently concentrated in the cities and Martell. A key objective of the General Plan is to place more residents closer to more services. Creating Town Centers brings local services closer to more county residents. The policies and programs of the Economic Development Element also support this aim.

New technologies, including telecommunication improvements, may improve the range of services available in rural centers. General Plan policies support continued improvement of telecommunication services, including providing high-speed data services throughout the County.

The Amador County Unified School District provides public K–12 education in the county. The County will work with the district to provide quality education for county residents. The County also seeks to work with the district to provide recreational opportunities and facilities where possible.

In addition to K–12 education, the County seeks to provide educational opportunities including college-level and continuing-education classes locally.
GOALS AND POLICIES

Diverse Land Uses

The diversity of land uses within Amador County affects an important balance between the generation of public revenues and the provision of public services and facilities. Achieving and maintaining a diverse and desirable balance of land uses can help protect the county’s fiscal viability and promote a desirable community in which people can work, shop, live, visit, and recreate.

Compatibility between adjacent land uses is essential to maintaining safe, efficient, and well-organized communities. Issues which affect the compatibility of proposed projects include traffic, access, noise, public service demands, site design, visual appearance, and public safety. Residents desire adequate buffers from light, noise, and traffic associated with non-residential uses. In turn, farmers and ranchers desire that surrounding residents understand and accept the noise, dust, and other effects of agriculture and ranching. Similarly, timber harvesting and mineral extraction are important parts of Amador County’s history and economy, and residents must acknowledge the noise, dust, and other effects associated with them.

By providing for a diverse mix of land uses, Amador County can achieve a suitable inventory of housing for a range of income groups, a viable commercial and employment base for residents, productive agricultural lands, ample open spaces and recreational opportunities, and adequate public facilities and services.

Goal LU-1: Attain a diverse and integrated mix of residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, public, and open space land uses.

Policy LU-1.1: Protect existing land uses and public facilities from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Policy LU-1.2: Designate residential areas of varying densities to create the opportunity to provide affordable housing for all income levels. Consider affordable and senior housing needs in the siting and design of residential projects.

Policy LU-1.3: Encourage development patterns which support water quality objectives; protect agricultural land and natural resources; promote community identities; minimize environmental impacts; enable viable transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and promote public health and wellness.
Policy LU-1.4: Ensure that county land use decisions do not reduce military readiness.

Policy LU-1.5: Encourage the continued viability of agricultural production in the County's agricultural areas.

Policy LU-1.6: Balance the community’s interests in protecting agriculture, historic, cultural, and natural resources, and species with the property rights of individual landowners.

Goal LU-2: Enhance and maintain separate and distinct community areas within the county.

Policy LU-2.1: Direct development to areas with existing urban services and infrastructure, or to areas where extending of urban services is feasible given distance from developed areas and topography, capacity, or land capability.

Policy LU-2.2: Target future commercial, industrial, and residential growth to Town Center and Regional Service Center locations, including the communities of Martell, Pine Grove, Buckhorn, and River Pines.

Policy LU-2.3: Promote higher density or intensity development in infill areas, or areas adjacent to existing communities or activity centers.

Public Facilities

Public facilities encompass a variety of uses, including public safety and fire facilities, corporation and service yards, and wastewater treatment plants. Public utilities, including water delivery and sewer facilities, are also included in this section. The goals and policies presented in this section provide guidelines for the levels of service the county intends to support and provide.

Goal LU-3: Ensure the provision of effective law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and animal control throughout the county.

Policy LU-3.1: Ensure that effective public safety facilities, staffing, and equipment are provided to maintain service levels as the county’s population and development change.

Policy LU-3.2: Coordinate with fire districts to maintain and improve fire service levels in the county.

Policy LU-3.3: Increase community awareness regarding public safety, fire, and emergency response issues.
Goal LU-4: Ensure adequate wastewater treatment, storage, and disposal capacity exists to serve the county’s current and future demand.

Policy LU-4.1: Work with the cities and water and wastewater providers to ensure that existing and potential locations for wastewater treatment are protected from nearby incompatible uses.

Policy LU-4.2: Consider infrastructure availability and expansion in the evaluation of individual projects.

Policy LU-4.3: Support efforts by water purveyors to educate the public on how to reduce water use, and utilize reclaimed water.

Policy LU-4.4: Encourage countywide regional coordination and organizational structures to fully implement maximum recycled water reuse opportunities throughout the county.

Policy LU-4.5: Encourage and promote water conservation and reuse to reduce new effluent disposal needs.

Goal LU-5: Maintain efficient solid waste service.

Policy LU-5.1: Increase public awareness of waste disposal options, recycling, composting, and other waste reduction options.

Policy LU-5.2: Ensure the continued availability of waste disposal sites for solid waste.

Policy LU-5.3: Continue to make solid waste transfer stations available and accessible.

Goal LU-6: Ensure that adequate water supply, wastewater disposal, and public services are available prior to development.

Policy LU-6.1: Ensure that new development is able to meet water supply, wastewater disposal, and public service standards.

Community Services

Community services, including health care, education, social support and senior services contribute to the superior quality of life found in Amador County. The County faces sizeable ongoing challenges in providing community services based on the relatively small and decentralized population.

Health care is a major community concern, based on the current and ever increasing age of the population. Education, including community schools and higher education options, is another important issue. Schools and libraries also provide valuable locations for the community to gather.

Goal LU-7: Ensure the provision of accessible health care services.
Policy LU-7.1: Support efforts to provide health care services in rural communities and activity centers located throughout the county as the population expands.

Policy LU-7.2: Support and promote transportation options which permit seniors and residents with reduced mobility to receive adequate health care.

Policy LU-7.3: Support education options, including community college programs, which provide training for health care workers.

Goal LU-8: Maintain high quality child care facilities, schools and libraries.

Policy LU-8.1: Work with the Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD) to maintain local schools as community gathering and recreation locations. Work toward joint use of school facilities for recreation and lifelong learning wherever feasible and desirable.

Policy LU-8.2: Encourage and facilitate the development of early care and education services throughout the county to meet the current and future needs of young children and families.

Policy LU-8.3: Work with ACUSD to ensure that new school facilities can be planned, financed, and constructed as necessary to serve current population and future development.

Policy LU-8.4: Provide for County library facilities and services consistent with community needs.

Policy LU-8.5: Ensure that new residential developments include on-site pedestrian facilities to provide safe routes to schools.

Goal LU-9: Ensure that land is available for future cemetery use.

Policy LU-9.1: Identify and designate areas suitable for future cemeteries.

Town Centers

Amador County is a livable community comprised of incorporated cities and small, distinct unincorporated towns. The General Plan supports the continued viability of existing communities by focusing commercial, public facility, and residential growth into these areas. In addition to guiding future growth into incorporated cities, three mixed-use Town Centers – Pine Grove, Buckhorn, and River Pines – are designated in unincorporated areas.

Goal LU-10: Guide future residential and local commercial uses into established cities, unincorporated Regional Service and Town Centers, and existing community areas (e.g. Pioneer, Volcano, Camanche, Fiddletown, Red Corral).
Policy LU-10.1: Clearly establish individual guidelines and boundaries to govern future land uses within the Town Centers. These guidelines should include a diverse mix of commercial, residential, public facility, and other uses. Community participation should provide direction for these guidelines.

Policy LU-10.2: Develop form-based code specifications for the individual Town Centers. These specifications will be used to guide future development decisions in the Town Centers. Community participation should provide direction for these code specifications.

Policy LU-10.3: Support Town Centers as desired sites for small, locally-owned businesses.

**Regional Service Center**

Martell will continue to be the preferred location for land uses which draw people from throughout Amador County and the surrounding region. The Regional Service Center (RSC) designation has been applied to Martell to support this role.

**Goal LU-11:** Focus services that cater to a regional market in Martell.

Policy LU-11.1: Develop guidelines to govern future land uses within the boundaries of the Martell RSC. These guidelines will include the desired mix of industrial, commercial, residential, public facility, and other uses.

Policy LU-11.2: Develop form-based code specifications for Martell. These specifications will be used to guide development decisions to support a mix of uses and alternative modes of transportation, especially bicycle and pedestrian transportation. Promote green building standards and low impact development (LID) practices, consistent with State and federal law.

**Fire Protection, Emergency Services, and Public Services**

Amador County is a large, rural community. Public services – especially fire protection and emergency services, but also water, wastewater disposal, and roads – are difficult to provide to the entire county. Many parts of Amador County face infrastructure challenges, including missing road connections, and inadequate traffic capacity, emergency services, and fire protection. Adequate fire protection and emergency services must be available concurrent with future development.
Goal LU-12: Reduce fire risks to existing and future structures.

Policy LU-12.1: Ensure that appropriate levels of emergency services, including fire protection, can be demonstrated for new development.

Policy LU-12.2: Ensure that new roadways meet County standards for firefighting access. These standards include minimum width, surface, grade, radius, turnaround, turnout, and bridge standards, as well as limitations on one-way roads, dead-end roads, driveways, and gate entrances.

Policy LU-12.3: Continue to ensure that the County’s development code addresses evacuation and emergency vehicle access, water supplies and fire flow, fuel modification for defensible space, and home addressing and signing.

Policy LU-12.4 Ensure that new development or redevelopment in the Wildland-Urban Interface meets building and development standards to ensure adequate defensible space.

Airport Compatibility

Westover Field is Amador County’s only public airport. Future land uses in the vicinity of the airport must be conducive to the continued function of the airport.

Goal LU-13: Maintain compatible land uses in the vicinity of Westover Field.

Policy LU-13.1: Ensure that future development proposals within the Airport Land Use Plan area are consistent with the requirements of the ALUP.

Policy LU-13.2: Protect the viability of Westover Field. Future land uses should not restrict activities permitted at the airport.
CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

PURPOSE

The Circulation and Mobility Element outlines a plan for efficient and safe transportation of people and goods in Amador County. The Element contains goals, policies, and implementation programs that establish the county’s circulation system to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, motor vehicles, public transit, and other means of travel. Together, the policies, implementation programs, and diagrams are intended to ensure transportation connectivity between incorporated cities, within existing and new development in unincorporated areas, within the Town Centers, Martell Regional Service Center, and Special Planning Areas, and to places outside the county.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Circulation and Mobility Element provides a brief introduction to the county’s transportation infrastructure, methods, and patterns as context for circulation and mobility policy. The goals, policies, and implementation programs establish the County’s transportation strategy through 2030. Specific topics that will be covered by this element include:

- Roadway circulation;
- Complete streets;
- Public transit systems, use, and needs; and
- Bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

The Vehicular Circulation Diagram (Figure CM-1) graphically depicts major highways and streets, including both existing and planned facilities. This information was used to inform the preparation of the Land Use Diagram.

The Circulation and Mobility Element is one of seven general plan elements required by Government Code Section 65302, which has established guidelines for the content of general plans in California. The information found in this element is supported by the Transportation and Traffic Section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared as part of the General Plan Update process.

The topics discussed in the Circulation and Mobility Element are related to the contents of many other elements in the General Plan, particularly the Land Use Element. The circulation and mobility needs of Amador County are largely determined by the type and distribution of land uses in the county.
Relationships between circulation and infrastructure, economic development, safety, noise, and natural resources are also important since transportation systems connect these uses, create noise, contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, carry people and goods to different places, and extend into inhabited and uninhabited areas.

**ROADWAY CIRCULATION**

There are nearly 670 miles of roads in Amador County, including roads in the incorporated cities, county roads in unincorporated areas, state highways, and federal and state roads. Within the unincorporated county, there are approximately 410 miles of county roads. Of the 126 miles of state highways in the County, 115 miles traverse the unincorporated areas. The goals and policies of the Amador County General Plan apply to all roadways in unincorporated areas.

As of 2010, approximately 19 percent of the vehicle miles of travel (VMT) within Amador County are served by County roadways. Over 77 percent of the daily VMT are served by the state highway system, with the remainder served by roads operated by the U.S. Forest Service, California State Park Service, or the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Roadway Classifications**

Roads are assigned classifications in the Circulation and Mobility Element that describe their functions and primary uses. These classifications reflect how roadways serve the surrounding land uses. **Table CM-1** below defines roadway classifications in Amador County. These classifications are for purposes of the Circulation Element only. The definitions are not intended to reflect other regulatory roadway classification systems such as the County Code, County Standard Plans or the Federal Highway Administration Functional Classification definitions. **Table CM-2** illustrates the roadway classifications for major roadways in the County.

**Major Routes and Roadways**

Several major transportation routes and roadways provide connections between the County’s communities, and also connect to other counties and cities. These major routes are listed below in **Table CM-2**.
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CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Final

Table CM-1
Roadway Classifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arterials</td>
<td>Link cities and larger towns (and other traffic generators, such as major resort areas) and form an integrated network of arterial highways providing interstate and intercounty service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Collectors</td>
<td>Generally serve intracounty travel rather than statewide travel with shorter routes and travel distances than arterials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Collectors</td>
<td>Serve adjacent and nearby communities with shorter routes and travel distances than major collectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Roads</td>
<td>Provide access to adjacent properties. Provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to higher order facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table CM-2
Major Routes and Roadways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arterials</th>
<th>Major Collectors</th>
<th>Minor Collectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Route 16</td>
<td>Argonaut Lane</td>
<td>Buckhorn Ridge Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Route 26</td>
<td>Buena Vista Road</td>
<td>Bunker Hill Road (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>Camanche Road</td>
<td>Camanche Parkway North (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Route 88</td>
<td>Climax Road</td>
<td>Cedar Heights Drive (off Silver Drive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Route 104</td>
<td>Fiddletown Road</td>
<td>Charleston Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(from SR 88 to County line)</td>
<td>Industry Blvd.</td>
<td>China Graveyard Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson Gate Road</td>
<td>Jackson Valley Road</td>
<td>Clinton Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson Valley Road (From Camanche Rd to Buena Vista)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coal Mine Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation Street (Volcano)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martell Road</td>
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<td>Curran Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan Bar Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Defender Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Ranch Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>East School Street (Amador City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Highway 49</td>
<td></td>
<td>Five Mile Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect Drive</td>
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<td>Hale Road</td>
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<td>Ridge Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Irishtown Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakeridge Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jackson Valley Road (portions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kennedy Flat Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutter Creek Road (from Sutter Creek city limits to Pine Gulch Road)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Main Street (portion)-Volcano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabeaud Road (from Clinton Bar Rd. to SR 88)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mc Kenzie Drive (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow Way</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meadow Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Chicago Road (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Old Ridge Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Old Sacramento Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Old Stockton Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pine Grove – Volcano Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pine Gulch Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pioneer Creek Road (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pioneer Volcano Road (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rams Horn Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silver Drive (portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stony Creek Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar Pine Drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table CM-2
Major Routes and Roadways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arterials</th>
<th>Major Collectors</th>
<th>Minor Collectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sutter Creek Road (east of Pine Gulch Rd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sutter – Ione Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tabeaud Rd (Clinton Rd to Clinton Bar Rd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tiger Creek Road (portion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Service

Level of service (LOS) is a method to measure traffic congestion. LOS standards range from A (representing free flow of traffic) to LOS F (representing a breakdown in traffic flow, with long delays). Table CM-3 describes the different LOS categories for rural roadways.

Table CM-3
Level of Service Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>Average Travel Speed (mph)</th>
<th>Percent of Time Delayed</th>
<th>Number of Cars Traveling Together</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Less than 30%</td>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>Vehicles don't need to pass to maintain desired speeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>52-55</td>
<td>30 to 45%</td>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td>Vehicles need to pass to maintain desired speeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>49-52</td>
<td>45 to 60%</td>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>Passing becomes difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>60 to 75%</td>
<td>5 to 10</td>
<td>Passing becomes very difficult, left turns across traffic delayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>75 to 95%</td>
<td>10 to 15</td>
<td>Passing is virtually impossible. Left turns across traffic become very difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 40</td>
<td>95 to 100%</td>
<td>More than 15</td>
<td>Very low speeds, no passing, left turns become extremely difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amador County’s LOS standard is LOS C for roads in rural areas, and LOS D for roads in urban or developing areas, including Town Centers and the Regional Service Center.

The Traffic and Transportation Section of the EIR for the General Plan includes annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts from 2008. Overall, the highest AADT counts were found along SR 88 and SR 49, followed by SR 16 and SR 104. Traffic studies prepared for the General Plan determined that the County’s average annual growth rate for traffic would be approximately 3.5%.
This average was used to determine the future traffic levels anticipated to occur during the planning horizon of the General Plan.

**Traffic Congestion**

Traffic congestion is a problem in some areas of the County. Congested roadways in the County include:

- SR 16 at the Junction with SR-124,
- SR 88 from the San Joaquin County line to SR 49,
- SR 88 at East Junction SR 104,
- SR 88 at North Junction SR 49,
- SR 88 at Ridge Road,
- SR 88 at Pine Grove-Volcano Road,
- Ridge Road east of Old Ridge Road, and west of New York Ranch Road.

Generally, these areas lack adequate roadway capacity to carry the existing volume of traffic. Potential improvements could include road widening, addition of turn lanes, intersection signalizations, or creation of new bypass roadways to separate local traffic from through traffic. Improvements may not be feasible; limitations include funding, availability of right-of-way, topographic conditions, or constraints based on existing structures or uses.

Land use changes offer the potential to reduce traffic congestion, or avoid making congestion worse. Changes which reduce the number of long distance trips, or increase the potential for pedestrian, bicycle, or transit trips all have the potential to change traffic conditions in the County.

**Capacity Needs**

Amador County’s terrain conditions, relatively dispersed population, and funding constraints all limit the feasibility of roadway improvements to reduce congestion. Other congestion reduction programs, such as transportation demand management, transportation systems management, and alternative transportation improvements for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit users can help reduce congestion. Reducing the number and distance of automobile trips through land use changes and placing more residents in closer proximity to more services will also reduce congestion. Although all of these measures in the General Plan work to reduce congestion, limitations on roadway improvements mean that congestion on County roadways is likely to increase as the County and its economy grow. Pass-through traffic and growth in surrounding communities will also contribute to increased congestion on County roadways.
Transportation Demand Management

Travel demand management programs are designed to reduce the existing demand on the roadway system by changing user behavior to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on the road during peak traffic hours. Encouraging use of alternative transportation modes can reduce vehicle demands on the existing transportation system, improve system efficiency, lower emissions from vehicles, and delay or eliminate the need for costly capacity improvements.

Typical strategies to promote the use of alternative transportation modes include:

- providing safe and efficient alternatives to driving alone such as commuter-oriented transit services;
- providing Class I and Class II bike lane facilities connecting residential areas to employment sites;
- providing park-and-ride lots to facilitate carpooling/ridesharing; and
- encouraging employer-based incentives for carpooling or using alternative forms of transportation to work and establishing rideshare programs (such as rideshare match lists) to help promote and facilitate ridesharing to work by interested individuals.

Land use patterns influence travel patterns within the county. Areas with mixed land uses offering both housing and employment opportunities generally require people to travel less, whereas housing areas which lack employment opportunities generally will require residents to travel longer distances from their homes to their jobs, which contributes to more intensive use of roads, traffic congestion, and air emissions.

As of 2000, approximately 26 percent of Amador County’s workforce commutes outside the County for work. The primary destination is Sacramento County, where roughly 40 percent of the out-going commuters work. Fewer people from outside the County commute to Amador; the number of inbound commuters is about 80 percent of the outbound total. The primary county of origin for inbound non-resident workers is Calaveras County, which contributes approximately 43 percent of the inbound workers to Amador County.
Transportation System Management

Transportation System Management (TSM) aims to increase system capacity without constructing new roads or requiring major widening of existing roads or intersections. Operational strategies to accomplish this that are applicable to rural areas include:

- Traffic Signal Timing Management (synchronizing a series of closely spaced signals along a major roadway can enhance “progression” or the smooth movement of a group of vehicles without the need to fully stop)
- Pavement Management Systems (a process for cost-effective maintenance and repairs)
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (applying telecommunications technology and information processing to improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system); and
- Parking Management (including remote park-and-ride lots).

Complete Streets

Complete streets are those designed to support safe and comfortable access and travel for all users, whether in motor vehicles, on foot, on bicycle, or using public transit. The County will require complete streets in all new neighborhoods and will improve existing streets to be more complete in providing for bicycle and pedestrian movements, as funding is available.

State highways play an important role in the circulation system for Amador County. These arterials (State Routes 16, 26, 49, 88, 104, and 124) link cities and towns, but also serve as main streets as they intersect these communities. While it is important to maintain traffic flows of these state highways, it is also vital to ensure that a safe and comfortable environment is also provided for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The details of what comprises a “complete” street will depend on the development context. In new developments within or near unincorporated town centers, complete streets would typically include sidewalks and on-street bicycle routes. In other unincorporated areas, complete streets could include separated bicycle/pedestrian paths or trails on or adjacent to roadway shoulders. The design of such paths depends on the roadway function and speed limit, but the goal would be to safely accommodate vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit where feasible while respecting private property rights.
CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Improvements required for complete streets within unincorporated activity centers depend on the type of the street (see Figure CM-1 above). Pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit improvements should be focused in the mixed use areas and activity centers targeted for future growth, including Special Planning Areas (SPAs), Town Centers (TCs), and the Regional Service Center (RSC).

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit in the county is provided by a single operator, Amador Transit. Amador Transit is administered by the Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and was formed through a joint powers agreement with Amador County and each of the incorporated cities. Amador Transit provides the general public fixed-route service within the unincorporated areas of Amador County and the incorporated cities. Amador Transit also provides regional commuter service to Sacramento County, and dial-a-ride service for people with disabilities.

Primary activity centers served by Amador Transit include retail shopping centers; senior activity centers, medical facilities, government facilities, schools and recreation sites. Most of these activity centers are located within the incorporated cities as well as in the unincorporated communities of Martell, Pioneer, and Pine Grove.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that just under 4% of county residents walked or rode bicycles to work. Amador County’s communities are generally spread far apart from one another, and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity is limited, particularly in the unincorporated areas. Most bicycle routes are designated Class III bike lanes, which are on-street bike lanes marked by signs and shared by vehicles and pedestrians. Public input during the General Plan update process indicates a need for additional and improved bicycle infrastructure.

ACTC developed the Amador County Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan in partnership with its member agencies. This plan identifies a system of regionally significant bikeways within the County that links the major population centers; and within these centers, links major trip origins and destinations. The study also identified needs for bikeway and pedestrian improvements, including improvement costs by city and unincorporated area throughout Amador County. The plan currently serves as the County’s pedestrian and bicycle master plan.
The plan identifies a total of just over 82 miles of existing and proposed bike lanes, about 65 miles of which are in the unincorporated area. The plan also identifies bicycle and pedestrian improvements, including widening paved shoulders, constructing Class I bike paths, and adding bicycle racks.

**Rail Transportation**

Freight rail companies operate between Ione and the Central Valley, and a rail line used for recreational purposes extends to Martell. Existing and potential future freight rail connections represent an important resource for industrial land uses in the County. Amador County does not have passenger rail service. The closest passenger rail stations are located in Sacramento and Stockton.

**Air Transportation**

Westover Field, located near Martell, is the only public airport serving Amador County. Approximately 130 aircraft are based at the airport, which is permitted to accommodate up to 230 aircraft. The airport serves most small general aviation aircraft (i.e., those with less than 12,500 pounds gross weight and a 49 foot wingspan). The airport is situated at an elevation of 1,694 feet above sea level and includes a 3,400-foot-long, 60-foot-wide runway.

Four other private airports are located in the county, including Eagles Nest – located about halfway between SR 16 and SR 104 near the Sacramento County line; Horse Shoe A Ranch – located near the intersection of SR 16 and SR 124; Ranch Airstrip – located southwest of Ione; and Howard Airport and Camanche Skypark – both located northeast of Camanche Reservoir.

**Issues, Goals and Policies**

**Roadway Circulation**

The local and regional roadway system serves the community's primary needs for mobility and access, and consists of a hierarchy of streets to meet those needs, ranging from rural roads to state highways.

**Goal CM-1: Maintain adequate regional and local transportation facilities.**

Policy CM-1.1: The County’s Level of Service (LOS) standard is LOS C for rural roadways, and LOS D for roadways in urban and developing areas. For Caltrans facilities, the LOS standard shall be that established by Caltrans.
Policy CM-1.2: Work with Caltrans and regional and local transportation agencies to address regional issues and opportunities related to growth, transportation financing and infrastructure, and other planning issues.

Policy CM-1.3: Plan for future maintenance and expansion of roadway, trail, and other circulation infrastructure on an annual basis, factoring for changes in funding and project priority or feasibility.

Policy CM-1.4: Encourage greater connectivity on local roads and improve the connections between unincorporated communities. Ensure multiple routes are available between communities wherever possible.

Policy CM-1.5: Regional traffic should be directed around the historic centers of established communities where feasible.

Goal CM-2: Maintain a safe, efficient, and comprehensive traffic circulation system.

Policy CM-2.1: Plan, build, and maintain a multi-modal and hierarchical transportation system.

Policy CM-2.2: Identify key roads and intersections with historical or projected traffic congestion and/or safety problems and apply creative management measures to improve circulation.

Policy CM-2.3: Work with Caltrans, Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC), cities and surrounding jurisdictions to improve regional roadways.

Policy CM-2.4: Maintain a Traffic Impact Fee program whereby new transportation needs (including bicycle and pedestrian needs) generated by new development are paid for by the development on a fair-share basis. Increased roadway capacity should be funded through developer fees to the extent legally possible.

Alternative Transportation

The majority of future trips in Amador County are expected to be completed in automobiles. However, increasing alternative transportation offerings, including public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle routes, can reduce the growth in automobile use and traffic congestion associated with future residential and commercial development within the county. Future development patterns and forms should be planned with an eye toward encouraging and maintaining a variety of transportation options.
Public transit offerings are primarily provided by Amador Transit. The rural development character of the county limits the scope of public transit available. The County will consider the mobility needs of residents and the availability of public transit in development decisions.

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation options are currently limited. Safety concerns related to walking or riding on roadways which serve busy automobile traffic keep many residents in their cars. Amador County will consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in future development plans. In addition, development patterns which place dwellings within a short distance of essential services and activity areas offer increased opportunities for alternative transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

**Goal CM-3:** Provide transportation alternatives to the automobile.

*Policy CM-3.1:* Identify priorities for the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian transportation that respect the rights of private property owners.

*Policy CM-3.2:* The County will seek funding for, and include pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Capital Improvements Planning, as feasible. These improvements should connect residents to communities, activity centers, and adjacent developments, and offer an alternative to automobile transportation.

*Policy CM-3.3:* Coordinate with public agencies to connect trail facilities.

*Policy CM-3.4:* Consider transportation needs in the context of new development proposals. Promote land use patterns which place residents near activity centers and essential services to reduce the need for frequent automobile travel.

*Policy CM-3.5:* Coordinate with Amador Transit and other agencies to improve the availability of public transit connecting residents to services.

*Policy CM-3.6:* Coordinate with Amador Transit to continue to provide public transportation from Amador County to regional job and activity centers located outside the county.

*Policy CM-3.7:* The County will work cooperatively with Caltrans and local jurisdictions to identify priority alternative transportation improvements for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit users for state routes that intersect cities and towns and serve as main streets for these communities.
Scenic Highways

The County and Caltrans have designated a portion of SR 88 as a Scenic Highway, and the U.S. Forest Service has designated a portion of SR 88 as a National Forest Scenic Byway. SR 49 and SR 88 between SR 49 and Dew Drop are eligible for designation as Scenic Highways by the State of California. Protecting the visual character of these scenic corridors is a key consideration in future planning. The County’s intent is to provide land use controls and regulatory safeguards to preserve and enhance an area of special and unique natural beauty and aesthetic interest in Amador County which has been identified as being a basic resource in the economy of the County.

Goal CM-4: Maintain and enhance the visual quality and scenic views along designated scenic corridors.

Policy CM-4.1: Maintain visual quality and scenic views along designated scenic corridors through project review and adoption of a scenic highway ordinance.
PURPOSE

The purpose of the economic development element is to focus attention and effort on the need to provide an appropriate balance between residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, timber, and open space land uses. The appropriate balance will allow the county to provide the necessary and desirable service while maintaining a desired quality of life.

Amador County’s economic development objectives include:

- Promote a positive corporate identity that positions the County as a business friendly community with a superior quality of life;
- Create employment opportunities suited to the local workforce;
- Expand and diversify the tax base;
- Support small business development, expansion and retention;
- Attract new businesses and investment that meets social, environmental and economic objectives; and
- Pursue necessary resources, including water, to allow continued economic growth.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Economic Development Element includes the following sections:

- **Economic Conditions and Trends**, This section includes a description of the County’s economic foundation, employment characteristics, and targets for future growth.
- **Agricultural conditions**. This section includes description of the County’s agricultural production and the County’s different agricultural areas.
- **Economic Agencies and Programs**. This section includes a description of the County’s economic development “infrastructure.”
- **Economic Strategies**. This section includes a description of the County’s broad economic development goals of providing incentives, improving education, and building tourism.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural Strategies. This section discusses the use of new agricultural activities to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

Issues, Goals and Policies. This section identifies economic development issues in Amador County, and describes the goals and policies developed to address these issues.

The Economic Development Element provides policy direction ensuring economic prosperity in all industries, but places particular focus on agriculture as a continuing viable industry, and allows all residents to enjoy the quality of life Amador County provides.

The Element provides a brief overview of existing conditions to provide context for the goals and policies. The information presented in this chapter includes the composition of the local economy. Unless otherwise noted, the references and statistics quoted in this section originate from the Local Economy Background Working Paper and the Agriculture Working Paper prepared to support the General Plan update.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has established guidelines for the content of general plans in California. Economic development is not a required element of a general plan; however, OPR provides guidance on potential issues of focus for economic development should a county choose to address this topic in its general plan. Among the issues suggested by OPR are business development and retention by sector, employment development, and business recruitment. Economic goals and policies contained in this Element are intended to support the General Plan vision and move the County closer to its desired economic future. The economic strategy contained in this chapter is based on an understanding of the current historical trends and existing conditions in Amador County.

Economic development describes the actions that can be taken by the County and the County’s economic agencies to promote or support job- and revenue-generating uses. These actions may include, but are not necessarily limited to: land use decisions that ensure an adequate amount of land is available for commercial and industrial uses; incentives or support activities to attract and retain businesses, including financial incentives or technical assistance; actions designed to affect the economic environment of the County, including support for education, child care, and job training; and efforts to maintain or increase the quality of life in the County, which have the effect of increasing its desirability for potential businesses and residents. The County’s economic development activities will be most effective when they are targeted to take advantage...
of Amador County’s unique characteristics, including its natural, mineral, and scenic resources.

Large areas of Amador County are in agricultural use, and many of the County’s economic development issues directly relate to agricultural practices, businesses, and industries. Many issues identified during the preparation of the General Plan were associated with agricultural land use. This chapter also includes goals and policies related to encouraging and expanding economically viable agricultural activities in the County. Agricultural land use and conservation issues are addressed in the Land Use and Conservation Elements of the General Plan.

**ECONOMIC ATTRACTORS, CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

Given the changing nature of the economy, it is important to understand the conditions providing the foundation for the County’s economic development goals and policies. These conditions affect future decision-making related to land use and economic development. Many factors in the local economy can vary from year to year. The following descriptions provide current snapshots of trends in Amador County related to the local economy, including employment and the labor force, and also provide brief summaries of Amador County’s unique economic attractors.

**Economic Attractors**

In addition to Amador County’s economic statistics, including employment, education, and labor force information, the economic development strategy for the County must take into account those conditions and resources—attractors—which are unique or special about Amador County. Amador County’s location is a prime attractor for the thousands of individual entrepreneurs who have chosen a rural Amador County lifestyle, sustaining small businesses in our communities and within their homes. Amador County’s proximity to the Sacramento and Stockton metropolitan areas offers businesses an opportunity to market to sizeable population bases.

The judicious use of Amador County’s mineral, agricultural, and timber resources are key elements of the County’s economy. Historic towns, buildings, and sites offer recreational opportunities and attract visitors from inside and outside the County. The County’s natural resources, including rivers, lakes, and scenic beauty also offer opportunities to draw visitors. Artistic and cultural resources, including performing arts, are also important assets. Amador County’s high quality of life and sense of community have the potential to attract visitors, businesses, and new residents to the County.
Employment

Employment Sectors

In 2006, the largest employment sector in Amador County was retail trade, followed by health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. Earlier employment trends show retail trade has been the County’s largest employment sector since as early as 1990, followed closely by the manufacturing industry; however, since that time, the manufacturing employment sector has seen an employment decline of approximately 25 percent (see Table E-1). The retail trade sector added 787 new jobs between 1990 and 2006 (see Figure E-1), while the health care and social assistance sector added 383 new jobs. Other sectors showing significant numbers of new jobs between 1990 and 2006 include construction (246 new jobs), accommodation and food services (202 new jobs), professional and technical services (190 new jobs), and information technology (59 jobs).

One industry poised to experience economic growth—which could translate into employment opportunities—is the tourism industry. The County has recognized this industry as an opportunity area that could improve its economic circumstances and provide additional jobs for residents. This General Plan includes several policies intended to expand and encourage this type of economic development in the long term.

Labor Force

Between 1990 and 2005, Amador County saw a 50 percent increase in its labor force, from 11,500 to more than 17,000 (see Figure E-2). More recently, the growth rate of the labor force slowed to about 1.59 percent annually between 2001 and 2005.

The gradual slowing in the growth of the labor force has led to increasing dependence on tourist-serving industries. The slowing growth in Amador County’s labor force is likely related to broader population trends in the county; the number of county residents between the ages of 18 and 24 declined between 1990 and 2000, and this demographic group typically replaces the people retiring from the labor force. This decline in younger residents entering the labor force may reflect an absence of appropriate jobs in the County for these residents.
### Table E-1

Amador County Employment Trends (1990–2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAICS</th>
<th>Industry Title</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Percent Change (1990–2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>1,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Professional and technical services</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Management of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Administrative and waste services</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>1,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6,008</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,284</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NAICS – North American Industry Classification System

Source: ADE based on California Employment Development Department (EDD) - Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
Figure E-1  Net Change in Jobs by Sector, 1990–2006

Source: ADE 2008, Based on California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division

Figure E-2  Growth in Amador County Labor Force
Education

Educational attainment is an important factor in considering economic development strategies, especially with regard to attracting jobs to an area. For example, an area with a population characterized by low levels of educational attainment would not attract businesses and employers that require employees with high levels of education; these jobs tend to be higher paying jobs than those which can be filled by people with lower levels of education.

Increasing the population of highly-educated and skilled people is an important element in an economic strategy to attract high-paying jobs. In 2000, high school graduates made up 30.4 percent of the population over 25 years of age, with an additional 30 percent of the population having some college education. Approximately 24 percent of the population had four or more years of college education, while the population with lower education attainment levels was smaller; people with less than a high school education made up about 15 percent of the population. These statistics represent a shift towards more County residents with higher levels of education compared to 1990 figures (see Table E-2). Vocational training, though hard to quantify based on Census data, should also be an important component of the County’s education strategy, as many jobs which require a high school diploma and specialized training or apprenticeship offer higher incomes than jobs requiring college education.

Table E-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>-78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>3,657</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>7,537</td>
<td>7,721</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>6,593</td>
<td>7,609</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Years of College or More</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>6,123</td>
<td>112%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADE 2008, based on U.S. Census

Despite higher levels of education among the population aged 25 and over, the number of residents who did not complete high school doubled between 1995 and 2005, with levels reaching as high as 11 percent in 2003. This rate dropped only slightly between 2003 and 2005. At the same time, the County experienced a decreasing trend in the number of high school graduates who met the University of California/California State University entrance requirements: in 1995, 26.5 percent met the criteria, while in 2005 only 22.6 percent met the criteria.
Trends for Future Employment

Targeted Sectors and Industries

Agricultural, retail, and services employment has been expanding at a faster pace in Amador County than the rest of the state for more than a decade (1992 to 2004). With the County’s wine grape growing industry continuing to grow, it is likely the expansion of agricultural industry will continue. In addition, as the County’s population continues to expand, so too will its demand for services and retail. The General Plan focuses regional commercial and retail activity in Martell, but also encourages development of community retail and services at three rural Town Centers, located in Buckhorn, Pine Grove, and River Pines. These expanded commercial centers may result in an increased number of jobs in those industries. It is anticipated the fastest growing industry in the County will be personal services until approximately 2020, followed by public services and retail trade.

In addition to attracting and expanding commercial and industrial businesses, the County’s economic development strategy includes components directed to the agricultural industry, with a particular focus on tourism, agri-tourism and agriculture-supporting businesses. Approximately one-fourth of the County’s employment in 2004 was dependent on visitors to the County and the direct spending they generated. Agri-tourism could include hospitality services, such as bed-and-breakfasts, farm stays, farm tours, winery tours, education, entertainment, and outfitter services. In addition to agricultural attractors, historic resources, scenic beauty, outdoor recreation opportunities, and tribal gaming offer continued opportunities to boost tourism. By attracting tourists, Amador County will also increase demand for service and retail industry jobs supporting these visitors.

Opportunity Sites for Job-Generating Uses

The General Plan includes mixed-use Town Centers in Buckhorn, Pine Grove, and River Pines, and a mixed-use Regional Service Center (RSC) in Martell (See Figure E-3). These centers support intensified residential, commercial, public, and industrial uses in development patterns similar to those historically present in rural communities. These areas represent the County’s largest opportunity areas for the development of major commercial and industrial space that could potentially provide new economic opportunities for new and expanded businesses as well as jobs.
Figure E-3: Economic Development Opportunity Sites
Each Town Center serves the immediately surrounding areas and travelers with uses such as grocery stores, hardware stores, local offices, and health care providers, in addition to encouraging housing that reduces the need for residents to drive long distances for basic goods and services. The Martell Regional Service Center, on the other hand, features a higher residential density and intensity of non-residential uses, and is intended to serve people from the entire County, as well as people from other counties and travelers. The Town Center and Regional Service Center locations represent the primary opportunity sites within the County for new job-generating commercial, service, or office development, offering sites for many new businesses to locate in the County. Industrial development would be appropriate in Martell in addition to other commercial and industrial sites located throughout the County, with only limited industrial uses possible in Town Centers. Additional rural industrial locations are designated for those industrial uses which are not compatible with residential or sensitive uses.

Please refer to the Land Use Element for additional information on the proposed mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses and business types appropriate in each Town Center and RSC.

Historic resources such as the County’s gold-rush-era towns and buildings, cultural and artistic offerings, vineyards and agricultural lands, and other natural resource areas all offer valuable opportunities to enjoy the County’s scenic beauty and outdoor activities. Given the importance and anticipated growth of tourism and visitor services within the County’s economy, the County’s economic development activities should include preservation and enhancement of resource areas attractive to visitors as a high priority.

**Agricultural Conditions**

Agriculture is an important component of Amador County’s economy, as well as the County’s character. Protection of the County’s agricultural resources will remain a vital concern for County residents through the year 2030 and beyond.

**Agricultural Production**

The crop reports prepared by the Amador County Agriculture Department break down the County’s crop and livestock values into six categories: fruit and nut crops; field crops; livestock and poultry; livestock and poultry products; miscellaneous; and timber and related products. In 2009, the fruit and nut crops category brought in the highest values, with $11,582,232 overall; $11,413,952 of which came from wine grape production alone.
The livestock and poultry category brought in $6,124,698 in 2009. Cattle and calves brought in about 89 percent of the total value of livestock and poultry.

Field crops, including hay and alfalfa; hay and grain; hay, other; irrigated pasture; pasture and range; and miscellaneous (including Sudan Grass and corn) had a total value of $3,472,688, led by the pasture and range subcategory. The timber and related products category had a value of $438,921 (substantially lower than other recent years); other miscellaneous crops and agricultural products had values of about $1.1 million in 2009.

Table E-3 illustrates the acreage in use for various agricultural crops and products, as described in the County’s 2009 Crop Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural Product</th>
<th>2009 Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wine Grapes</td>
<td>3,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnuts</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Fruits and Nuts</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay (including alfalfa, grain)</td>
<td>1,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated Pasture</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture and Range</td>
<td>156,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Field Crops</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>164,484</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Acreages rounded to the nearest whole acre.

Source: Amador County 2009

Major Agricultural Areas

The Land Use Element includes descriptions of the General Plan land use designations for agriculture. These designations are intended to support agricultural use, defining minimum lot sizes for various types of agricultural activities. Agriculture in Amador County occurs in numerous geographic areas with distinct soil resources and economic characteristics. The following two primary types of agricultural landscapes are found in Amador County:

- **Rangeland** – Rangeland makes up significant portions of the County, including areas not suitable for farming because of slope, soil, or water availability. Pastures here provide excellent weight gains for livestock.
These lands also provide the open space and natural vistas which attract tourism to the County. Significant development pressure exists in Amador County’s rangeland areas, especially in locations near cities or unincorporated rural communities.

Timberland – Timberland in Amador County is located above approximately 3,500 feet elevation, and includes both privately- and publicly-owned softwood forests. Many of the larger land holdings are located in Timber Production Zones (TPZs), however development pressure exists on other timber lands. At lower elevations between 2,000 feet and 3,500 feet, Amador County’s softwood forests have been largely converted to rural residential uses.

Within these landscapes, as many as eight major agricultural resource areas exist. The location of each agricultural landscape and agricultural resource area is identified in Figure E-4. Following are descriptions of each agricultural resource area.

**Willow Springs Area**

The Willow Springs area follows Willow Creek along State Route (SR) 16 in the northwest part of the County. It includes an area west of Plymouth that follows Indian Creek. Both of these areas have hay and pasture with late season creeks to provide green pasture for cattle and sheep production with some irrigated and some sub-irrigated pastures and vineyards. Development pressure exists, as a significant portion of this area has been carved into smaller residential parcels. Much of the land in this area is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Ione Valley**

This area is located south and west of the City of Ione and generally follows Dry Creek and Sutter Creek. Water is provided from creeks or wells. The Ione Valley is the only area other than Jackson Valley within foothill counties that has class I soil. Crops grown in the area include orchards, vines, berries, row crops, hay, grain, livestock pasture, and Christmas trees. Development pressure in this area is strong, and Mule Creek State Prison is also located in this valley. Much of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Jackson Valley**

Jackson Valley is located in the southwestern portion of the County and follows Jackson Creek as it leaves Lake Amador. This area features the only irrigation district in the County with water delivered to some parcels under pressure at a reasonable cost. The Jackson Valley is the only area other than Ione Valley within foothill counties that has class I soil. This
means any climatically-suited crop can be grown here. Crops grown in the area include orchards, vines, row crops, hay, grain and livestock pasture. Wineries are also located in this area. This area is beginning to experience Development pressure. Much of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Shenandoah Valley**

The largest and best known farming area in Amador County is the Shenandoah Valley, an area of gently rolling hills set in a high valley above Plymouth. Soils are deep, and easily support grapes, walnuts, prunes, hay, flowers and livestock. Fields are either dry farmed or drip irrigated with well water. Most local wineries are located in this area and as such, they attract most of the County’s agricultural tourists. Most of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Fiddletown Area**

Adjacent to Shenandoah Valley, the Fiddletown area sits between 1,500 and 2,500 feet elevation. Crops grown in the area include grapes, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Livestock is also raised in the Fiddletown area. Both dry farming and drip irrigation using well water occur. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Ridge Road Area**

The Ridge Road area is located above Sutter Creek between SR 49 and New York Ranch Road following Ridge Road. Water for this area is served by the Amador Water Agency and wells. This area’s moderately deep soils support grapes and wineries. Crops grown in this area include orchards, vines and pasture. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

**Clinton Road/Tabeau Road Area**

This agricultural area is located east of Jackson along the south fork of Jackson Creek between SR 88 and the Mokelumne River. The area receives water from the Amador canal, the south fork of Jackson Creek and numerous groundwater wells. Agricultural commodities grown in this area include orchards, vines, floriculture, fruits and vegetables, and livestock pasture. Development pressure exists, as a significant portion of the area has been subdivided into smaller residential parcels. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.
Figure E-4 Major Agricultural Areas
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Shake Ridge Road Area

The Shake Ridge Road Area is located along Shake Ridge Road at elevations ranging from 1,200 to 3,000 feet. Crops include orchards, vines, floriculture, timber, hay and range. Development pressure exists, as a significant portion of the area has been subdivided into smaller residential parcels. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

Economic Agencies and Programs

Amador County Farm Bureau

The Amador County Farm Bureau is the local component of the California Farm Bureau Federation, which is a voluntary, non-profit, and non-governmental corporation with the interest of protecting and promoting agricultural interests throughout California.

Amador County Agriculture Department

The Amador County Agriculture Department serves as the County’s local authority to enforce the regulations and requirements set in place by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Pesticide Regulation, and Structural Pest Control Board. The Department also administers several programs, including: the Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection, Pest Eradication, Pest Management, Pesticide Use Enforcement, Seed Certification, Nursery Inspection, Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Standardization, Egg Inspection, and Crop Statistics programs. The Crop Statistics Program is required under the California Food and Agriculture Code to compile records and prepare the County’s annual crop report, which reports on the gross production and value of the County’s agricultural commodities.

Amador County Chamber of Commerce

The Amador County Chamber of Commerce is an association of businesses and organizations which works to advance commercial interests in Amador County. The Chamber’s interest is generally focused on economic, commercial, tourism, and recreational issues. Promoting tourism in Amador County, and marketing the County and its businesses, are major activities of the Chamber.
University of California Cooperative Extension

The Amador County Cooperative Extension of the University of California provides information, resources, and professional advice to the County’s farmers on topics ranging from viticulture to livestock and range management to natural resources and environmental quality. The Extension also sponsors the Farms of Amador, a countywide program for marketing agricultural produce.

Amador Learning Center

Amador County is not located within a California community college district, although Cosumnes River College, part of the Los Rios Community College District in Sacramento, operates the Amador Learning Center in Sutter Creek, providing Amador County residents with some access to community college education opportunities.

Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association

The Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association works to promote Amador County wine grapes to grape buyers. To support this mission, the Association advertises to grape buyers, provides information and education to members, and supports research in viticulture applicable to Amador County.

Other Related Agencies

Amador County is also served by a range of other associations and non-profit organizations which contribute to the County’s economic health in various ways. These groups serve as advocates, and take action based on the interests of their members. Examples of these groups include the California Cattlemen’s Association, the Amador Vintners Association, the Amador Council of Tourism, and the Central Sierra Mining Association. A successful economic development program for the County will include these and other groups in planning and execution efforts.

Economic Development Strategies

Maintaining the economic health of the community is vital to maintaining and improving Amador County’s quality of life. Economic conditions are expected to change and develop over the life of the plan, and continuing evaluation of economic activities and successes will lead to shifts in the strategy over time. This section describes the County’s strategies for
economic development. These strategies will be carried out through goals and policies which follow later in this Element.

**Provide Economic and Development Incentives**

The County will continue to work with economic development entities, and will designate a lead economic development entity to identify specific ways to maintain a favorable business environment for new and existing businesses. These efforts will include continued assistance to new and existing businesses that contribute to the County’s culture of small business, including information on economic incentives and assistance to small businesses with research and marketing.

In addition, the County will collaborate with the lead economic development entity to attract new businesses, especially those capable of providing higher-wage jobs to County residents. New business attraction efforts include:

- providing attractive and affordable areas to support development of commercial and industrial businesses (such as the Town Centers and Martell Regional Service Center);

- focusing on attracting key industries that will play a significant role in improving the County’s economic future;

- providing economic incentives and assistance for relocating businesses to Amador County;

- improving services for businesses; and

- marketing the County’s positive business environment and high quality of life for employees.

**Promote Higher and Continuing Education**

Amador County will seek to attract and expand high-paying industries and jobs. Education levels in the County are on the rise, but with the lack of jobs requiring higher levels of education, County residents lack local incentives to pursue higher education, and educated residents may be forced to leave the County for higher-paying jobs. In addition to the lack of higher-paying jobs, Amador County’s only post-high school education opportunity is the Amador Learning Center, which is operated in conjunction with Cosumnes River College.

The County will seek to attract additional higher education institutions—such as community colleges or vocational schools—to provide residents with the opportunity to attend college and increase the education attainment level for County residents. In addition, expansion of the
Amador Learning Center would aid in promoting higher education opportunities for County residents. Continuing education and university extension programs can also be an important element of this strategy. Such programs offer opportunities to hone specialized skills, and also opportunities for seniors or others interested in broadening their general knowledge or embarking on new career paths. Increasing the percentage of the population with college-level education is an important element of the County’s strategy to attract businesses that provide higher-paying jobs, improving the overall economic health of the community.

**Promote Tourism**

Tourism is an important element in the County’s economy, and the continued strength of this sector will help to build the County’s economic health. Linking existing tourist attractors, including historic sites, agri-tourism areas, scenic areas, and recreation sites, is an important part of this strategy. These linkages might include marketing efforts to broaden the types of activities pursued by tourists, and also to broaden the range of visitors to Amador County. Visitors to the County support a variety of businesses, and individual Amador County tourist experiences can result in the County being considered as a site for the development or expansion of a business.

Amador County draws visitors because of its resources, including historic, agricultural, scenic, habitat, and recreational resources. The responsible stewardship of the County’s resources is therefore a key element to the County’s economic development strategy.

**Maintain Amador County’s Rural Lifestyle**

Amador County’s rural lifestyle, including the quality of Amador County’s rural communities, natural beauty, and the historical and cultural resources, are all key draws. Maintaining these qualities is important both for drawing new businesses to the County, and promoting the County’s potential for tourism.

In order to support these qualities, the County should continue to support the use and placement of community-building programs and facilities in town centers, including schools, post offices, retail services, child care, higher education, and health care. This support might include consultation with the economic development entities to draw retail businesses or professional services to town centers, encouraging the placement of services, including health care and government services, in town center and rural communities, and coordinating with health care providers to increase the range of services in town centers, perhaps through co-location or shared facilities.
Agricultural Strategies

Agriculture plays a significant role in the economy of Amador County by providing jobs, business opportunities, and income. It is in the County’s best interest to continue to maintain a healthy agricultural economy; therefore, the County has developed several strategies to support continued agricultural activity.

Provide Agricultural Economic and Development Incentives

To progress toward these broad agricultural economic development objectives, General Plan policies lay out an agricultural economic development strategy. Agricultural economic development activities will be guided by producers and landowners in the individual agricultural areas or industries. Each of these groups experiences unique economic conditions which affect their individual goals.

Economic strategies for agriculture aim to generate new agricultural business opportunities, including agricultural tourism and agriculture-supporting businesses such as on-site or local processing and/or sales and distribution. Other strategies include providing support for agricultural businesses, and development of agricultural services to serve local operations.

Marketing or branding of the County’s produce and agricultural areas is another way to add value to agricultural products. As the market for local produce grows, Amador County is in a position to provide locally grown produce to nearby markets throughout the Mother Lode and Sacramento metropolitan area. The General Plan also provides a framework for developing services to support agri-tourism, including restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, and similar tourist-oriented services.

Agri-tourism

Agri-tourism represents the greatest agricultural economic opportunity for Amador County. With a location near growing communities in Sacramento and beyond, as well as its growing wine industry and scenic rural character, the County is well-positioned to capitalize on agri-tourism as a way to improve its economic viability and benefit from tourism dollars brought into the County by visitors.

The County seeks to support the development of agri-tourism and associated sub-industries like nature tourism, agri-entertainment, and agri-education businesses. These may include outdoor recreation services such as fishing, hunting, gold panning, wildlife study, and horseback riding; educational experiences such as mine tours, cooking...
classes, and wine tasting; and entertainment associated with agriculture, such as harvest festivals, fairs, and barn dances. Direct agri-tourism services may include hospitality, such as bed-and-breakfasts, farm stays, farm tours, winery tours, and outfitter services. These services provide tourists with incentives to visit and stay in Amador County, as well as providing a full range of local products they can purchase during their visit. A companion strategy for the County's efforts to support these businesses is agricultural land conservation, which is addressed in the Conservation Element of the General Plan.

Generational Succession of Agricultural Lands

A major issue for Amador County agriculture is the lack of incentives for younger generations to continue in the industry. Contributing factors include the lack of agricultural economic opportunities, a movement away from passing down agricultural experience and knowledge to future generations, distribution of property among multiple heirs (reducing the size of agricultural properties), and inheritance taxes which may be triggered when valuable agricultural property is passed from one generation to the next. Often, an agricultural operation can support only one family, leading children to move elsewhere to seek better economic opportunities and build careers in industries other than agriculture. New owners of agricultural properties may lack incentive or experience to keep the lands in agricultural production, so these lands are often vulnerable to sale and/or withdrawal from the Williamson Act.

The Mother Lode Land Trust is a local organization which purchases both land and conservation easements to maintain land in agricultural use. In addition, California Farmlink and other similar organizations work to connect farmers nearing retirement with those interested in beginning a farming career, linking people through lease, mentoring, and similar arrangements.

**Issues, Goals and Policies**

**Economic Development**

A healthy, vibrant economy provides jobs for county residents, and also aids in the continuing fiscal viability of county services. Amador County’s economy has historically depended on agricultural, commercial, industrial, mineral, mining, tourism, and forest production activities, and these industries will be important to the County's future, as well.

Economic development goals and policies include efforts to raise the jobs-to-housing ratio for the county and to increase the proportion of non-residential development to support the county’s fiscal health. Efforts to
provide employment and education opportunities that retain young people in Amador County are also important.

A favorable business environment includes an efficient and consistent regulatory environment, retention and expansion of existing businesses, technical assistance, and support for infrastructure and services needed to support job-generating development. Infrastructure and service needs for commercial and industrial businesses can include water, wastewater, transportation and transit infrastructure, high-speed communications, and basic utilities. Infrastructure improvements and expansion to support future economic development should not be at the expense of existing users.

For the County’s economic development activities, it is important to consider the fiscal impacts – both costs and benefits – of economic development efforts, including infrastructure expansion.

**Goal E-1:** Develop and maintain a favorable business environment in the county.

Policy E-1.1: Encourage an efficient and consistent regulatory environment, including a predictable development process.

Policy E-1.2: Support and collaborate with local economic development organizations to bring new businesses and industry to the county, and to help local businesses develop and expand.

Policy E-1.3: Refer businesses seeking economic development grants, loans, and other funds from state, federal, and private sources to local agencies and organizations that offer technical assistance.

Policy E-1.4: Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the county.

Policy E-1.5: Support improvement of infrastructure serving commercial and industrial development and agricultural business,

Policy E-1.6: Promote the availability of early care and education facilities at locations which permit the parents of small children to work.

**Goal E-2:** Improve the availability of communications services to businesses and residents.

Policy E-2.1: Coordinate with utilities and private service providers to encourage the provision of high-speed communications infrastructure and service throughout the county to encourage business development and expansion, and support home-based work.
Goal E-3: Develop educational and training options for county residents.

Policy E-3.1: Encourage the establishment of higher education facilities in the county, including a community college and technical education or trade school facilities.

Policy E-3.2: Work with existing and new businesses located in the county to coordinate training opportunities with existing and planned job requirements.

Goal E-4: Improve the jobs-housing balance and maintain the fiscal health of the county.

Policy E-4.1: Promote development of light industrial, manufacturing, and other commercial businesses to diversify the county’s economic base.

Policy E-4.2: Promote a balance of commercial and industrial development to residential development which maintains the fiscal health of the county.

Policy E-4.3: Improve the continued health of Amador County’s small businesses.

Policy E-4.4: Focus job development activities on higher wage jobs for the local population and jobs which produce goods or services for export from the region in order to maximize potential benefits.

Policy E-4.5: Support the expansion of industrial activities in Amador County in accordance with the industrial development priorities identified in this Element.

Goal E-5: Promote cultural and economic development of rural communities throughout the county.

Policy E-5.1: Support existing and new programs and facilities which contribute to the cohesion and prosperity of our rural communities, including local schools and shops.

Policy E-5.2: Work to expand the availability of community services and opportunities in the county’s rural communities.

Goal E-6: Retain existing and attract new businesses expand our economic base.

Policy E-6.1: Work with community members, business leaders, and local organizations to develop and implement a strategic plan for economic development in Amador County that encourages and attracts private sector investment.

Policy E-6.2: Target key industries which are important to the future of the county for economic development.
Policy E-6.3: Use Amador County’s quality of life as an economic development and business attraction tool.

Policy E-6.4: Establish benchmarks to measure the success of local economic development activities.

Tourism

The County will encourage continued expansion of tourism in Amador County. Amador County’s tourist draws include agricultural areas and products, scenic and natural beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and gold rush history. In addition to providing economic benefits in its own right, increased tourism offers expanded opportunities to showcase the County’s rural character and high quality of life.

Goal E-7: Promote and expand tourism opportunities in Amador County.

Policy E-7.1: Partner with local and regional agencies to promote Amador County locally, nationally, and internationally as a tourist destination.

Policy E-7.2: Identify key resources which are current or potential tourist draws, and work to maintain and enhance these resources. Encourage and promote nature tourism and outdoor recreational tourism. Identify key sites, locations, and activities which draw tourists, and develop a strategy to promote and market these resources.

Policy E-7.3: Encourage agri-tourism which provides an additional source of income to farmers and ranchers.

Policy E-7.4: Promote development of support businesses and tourism-related services in cities and rural communities near tourist sites, including retail uses such as lodging and restaurants.

Policy E-7.5: Encourage and promote the County’s mining and gold rush history as a tourism resource.

Policy E-7.6: Promote collaboration between the county, cities, and non-governmental organizations to share resources and plan effectively for tourism.

Economically Viable Agriculture

The County will encourage the continued economic viability of farming, ranching, and agricultural business. Agriculture-related businesses and agri-tourism can offer important sources of income for farmers and ranchers. The County will support continued use of agriculture-related businesses, including wine tasting and roadside stands. Provision of
adequate water for farming is also a critical need for farmers. Conservation of agricultural land is key to the continued health of Amador County’s agricultural economy.

**Goal E-8: Preserve the land base necessary to sustain agricultural production and maintain long term economic viability of agricultural land uses.**

**Policy E-8.1:** Ensure future land uses are appropriately located and scaled to fit in with the county’s rural and agricultural context.

**Policy E-8.2:** On lands under Williamson Act contracts, provide for and support value-added agricultural activities designed to provide an additional source of farming income while maintaining the land for viable agricultural production, in accordance with state law.

**Policy E-8.3:** Provide for and support value-added agricultural activities designed to provide an additional source of farming income while maintaining the land for viable agricultural production.

**Policy E-8.4:** Promote development of support businesses associated with agri-tourism.

**Goal E-9: Maintain important farmlands for agricultural uses and agri-tourism.**

**Policy E-9.1:** Maintain the right of individuals in Amador County to farm, including enforcement of the County’s “Right to Farm” ordinance.

**Policy E-9.2:** Encourage use of Williamson Act contracts to maintain farm and ranch lands in agricultural use.

**Policy E-9.3:** Educate landowners about alternative methods of farmland preservation, including identification of funding for conservation easements.

**Policy E-9.4:** Direct future development toward “infill” areas (areas of existing urban development), areas contiguous to cities, and areas with infrastructure and services in order to maintain the viability of existing agricultural land.

**Policy E-9.5:** Review future development for compatibility with existing adjacent and nearby agricultural uses.

**Policy E-9.6:** Direct future development away from farmlands of local or statewide importance.

**Policy E-9.7:** Encourage provision of farm family and farm worker housing in a manner that conserves important farmlands.
Policy E-9.8  Encourage the use of site planning techniques such as properly maintained buffers, building envelopes and setbacks on lands adjacent to agricultural uses in order to protect agriculture from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Goal E-10:  Encourage alternative means of providing water to agricultural users.

Policy E-10.1: Promote use of reclaimed water in compatible farming and ranching settings.

Policy E-10.2: Support the continued availability of water supplies to agricultural users. Agricultural water users should be encouraged to utilize surface water supplies.

Timber Resources

Timber harvesting is an important industry in Amador County. Although timber harvesting is often described as an agricultural activity, the cultural importance of timber production in Amador County is distinct from other agricultural production. Amador County supports the continued viability of timber harvesting. Proper management and production of timber resources can also reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, especially in the eastern portion of the County.

Goal E-12:  Promote sustainable forest management that ensures continued timber production, water quality and the timber land base, and reduces the risk of catastrophic fires.

Policy E-12.1: Encourage the continued economic and ecologic viability of timber harvesting and promote creation of defensible space and community wildfire protection.

Policy E-12.2: Maintain Timber Production Zone (TPZ) areas as a renewable source of timber and wood products.

Policy E-12.3: Encourage value-added activities (such as sawmills, cogeneration plants, timber-based manufacturing, and other uses) which contribute to the economic viability of timber production.

Policy E-12.4: Protect timber resource areas from incompatible uses.

Mineral Resources

Mineral production has been an important part of Amador County’s economy and culture since the County’s founding. Amador County’s mineral resources include (among others) clay, sand, gravel, aggregate,
quartz sand, copper, silver, gold, soapstone, marble, slate, greenstone, river rip rap, road base, limestone, sandstone, zinc, chromite, talc, lignite, and diamonds.

**Goal E-13:** Maintain the viability of mineral and aggregate resources and encourage mineral and aggregate resource production in the county.

Policy E-13.1: Ensure extraction and processing of mineral resources and aggregate deposits may continue. Encourage extraction and processing of mineral and aggregate resources.

Policy E-13.2: Promote the expansion or greater utilization of Amador County’s mineral and aggregate resources.

Policy E-13.3: Promote value-added manufacturing and processing of Amador County’s minerals.

Policy E-13.4: Guide development away from areas where mineral and aggregate extraction is currently occurring and where resources are known to exist. Consider the location of known resources when approving new development.

**Industrial Development**

Industrial uses in Amador County range in size and type from machine shops to major natural resource processing facilities. Because of this range, the County has identified broad intentions and general priorities for industrial development.

The County supports innovative uses which would result in energy conservation, use of waste products, and in-county processing of primary resources which would otherwise be exported as raw materials. The County seeks to make the best use of existing resources, roads, utilities, services, and land while contributing to the economic base and stability of private employment.

Some areas of the County, especially east of SR 49, have physical restrictions (such as lack of sewer, terrain, or surrounding residential land uses). Smaller and less-intensive industrial uses, including “clean” industries, may be found compatible in these areas on a case-by-case basis through careful review and public hearing process.

These priorities will be followed where it can be shown that new industrial activity will not unduly disturb the lifestyle and environment currently enjoyed by County residents. New or expanded industries should not be encouraged which would use a disproportionate share of County water, sewage treatment capacity, power, traffic circulation capacities, or cause air quality deterioration out of proportion to their economic importance to the County.
Goal E-14: Support and encourage industrial development that does not unduly disturb the lifestyle and environment currently enjoyed by County residents.

Policy E-14.1: Encourage existing industries to remain, expand, and rehabilitate or renovate their facilities.

Policy E-14.2: Promote new industrial development projects which are compatible with and complement existing industry, offer beneficial use of the County’s natural resources, and make use of the present labor force.

Policy E-14.3: Encourage new industrial activity on existing undeveloped sites where existing infrastructure and surrounding land uses are compatible with the type and nature of the potential use.
CONSERVATION

Purpose

This element describes the breadth of natural and cultural resources present in Amador County, which contribute to its rural character and economic diversity. The purpose of the Conservation Element is to identify the County’s important resources—including water, energy, agriculture and agricultural lands, timber, mineral resources, historic and cultural resources, and clean air—and establish a framework for their conservation and judicious use.

Scope and Content

The Conservation Element includes the following sections:

- **Water**, including a description of the county's water bodies, source of water supply, and water rights, as well as issues regarding water quality.

- **Energy Resources**. This section briefly describes energy production in the County, including hydroelectric dams and renewable and locally available energy resources.

- **Agricultural Lands**. This section provides an overview of agricultural resources and existing conservation efforts, including descriptions of State-designated Farmlands and Williamson Act properties.

- **Historical and Cultural Resources**. This section presents the county’s known cultural resources, including prehistoric sites, gold-mining sites, and other historic sites that tell the county’s story.

- **Air Quality and Climate Change**. This section summarizes potential effects of air pollutants on county residents, resources, and businesses. It also describes causes and effects of climate change.

- **Mineral Resources**. This section presents the County’s known mineral resources and their locations.

- **Timber Resources**. This section provides an overview of timber resources and operations in the county.

- **Related Plans and Programs**. This section provides an overview of plans and legislation related to the topics covered in this element.
**CONSERVATION**

**Issues, Goals, and Policies.** This section identifies natural and cultural resource conservation planning issues in the county. It also describes countywide conservation goals and policies.

The Conservation Element is one of the seven mandated general plan elements required by the California Government Code Section 65300. The information found in this element is supported by background information presented in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) accompanying the General Plan. Please refer to the EIR for data and maps describing current conditions which are subject to change over the lifetime of the General Plan.

The Conservation Element includes a discussion of water, and goals and policies related to water supply and water quality protection. This portion of the element was prepared to include input from the County’s water providers, including the Amador Water Agency.

Development of the Land Use Diagram (Figure LU-1) designates lands in public ownership for Open-Forest, Open-Wilderness, or Agricultural-General uses. These designations allow for continued stewardship of natural resources on these public lands.

**WATER SUPPLY AND WATER QUALITY PROTECTION**

The Mokelumne and Cosumnes Rivers are the largest rivers in the county. Each is a tributary to the San Joaquin River. Other significant rivers and streams include: Sutter Creek, Jackson Creek, Dry Creek, Tiger Creek, Panther Creek, Bear River, and Cole Creek. **Figure C-1** shows the locations of major water bodies in the county. Amador County lies primarily within the Upper Mokelumne and the Upper Cosumnes watersheds. The far northeastern portion of the County (around Kirkwood) is in the South Fork American River watershed. Snowmelt and rainfall are transported downstream through these watersheds via rivers and their tributaries.

Several water storage reservoirs are used to generate power and supply water along county rivers and streams, although much of the power and water is used outside of Amador County. The Mokelumne River flows into Pardee Reservoir and subsequently, Camanche Reservoir. Both reservoirs are located along the southwestern boundary of Amador County. Pardee Reservoir serves as the primary water supply for the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). The Pardee Powerhouse is located at the base of the dam. Camanche Reservoir is located downstream of Pardee Reservoir, on the Mokelumne River. This reservoir is operated jointly with Pardee Reservoir storing water for irrigation and stream-flow regulation, providing flood protection, and storing water to meet the demands of downstream water rights holders. The reservoir also provides significant recreation opportunities.
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Lake Amador, also known as Jackson Valley Reservoir, is an impoundment on Jackson Creek located southwest of Jackson. Lake Amador serves as an irrigation water supply for the Jackson Valley area and is managed by the Jackson Valley Irrigation District. Jackson Creek flows out of Lake Amador and eventually into Dry Creek.

In addition, the Bear River Reservoir, Salt Springs Reservoir, and Silver Lake are used to store water for a combination of domestic use, irrigation, and power generation.

**Water Supply**

The Amador Water Agency (AWA) is the largest domestic water purveyor in Amador County. Through the Amador Water System, which was acquired by AWA from Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) in 1985, AWA provides retail treated water service to Sutter Creek, Ione, Amador City and surrounding areas, wholesale treated water to the cities of Jackson and Plymouth, and to the Community of Drytown, and untreated water service to properties along the Amador Canal. The water supply for the Amador Water System is furnished by PG&E pursuant to a 1985 agreement whereby AWA is entitled to a supply of 15,000 acre-feet of water annually. PG&E holds the water rights to such supply which comes from the Mokelumne River. The water rights have a priority dating back to the 1850s.

AWA owns and operates the Central Amador Water Project, which provides wholesale and retail treated water service to 10 communities in the central portion of the County. The Central Amador Water Project water supply is authorized pursuant to a water right permit issued by the State Water Resources Control Board in 1979 authorizing the annual diversion of 1,150 acre-feet of North Fork Mokelumne River water, with storage of 1,600 acre-feet. AWA uses PG&E facilities for the diversion and storage of the North Fork Mokelumne River water pursuant to an agreement between the parties initially entered into in 1975. The Central Amador Water Project water rights have a 1927 priority. AWA also operates several groundwater wells serving Lake Camanche Village and La Mel Heights, but groundwater makes up only a small portion (about 2 percent) of supply.

Other retail water purveyors in the County include:

- City of Plymouth
- City of Jackson
- Drytown County Water District
- River Pines Public Utilities District
Kirkwood Meadows Public Utilities District

Amador Regional Sanitation Authority (ARSA)

Fiddletown Community Services District

First Mace Meadow Water Association, Inc.

Jackson Valley Irrigation District

Pine Grove Community Services District

Rabb Park Community Services District

Volcano Community Services District

East Bay Municipal Services District

Groundwater from individual wells represents a major water source in the county. In most of Amador County, groundwater-bearing units and aquifers are poorly defined. The majority of available groundwater is transient and found in fractured rock. This fractured bedrock aquifer has not been adequately studied, and no information is available concerning the capacity of the aquifer. The Cosumnes Groundwater Subbasin underlies southwestern Amador County. The Cosumnes Subbasin is in overdraft; in other words, more water is leaving the groundwater basin than entering it.

Typical groundwater inflow sources include:

- natural recharge from precipitation;
- recharge from surface water channels;
- intentional recharge via ponds, ditches, and injection wells and other groundwater recharge programs;
- recharge from percolation of water for agricultural and other irrigation uses;
- unintentional recharge from leaky conveyance pipelines; and
- subsurface inflows from outside groundwater basin boundaries.

Groundwater leaves the basin through subsurface groundwater flows to surface water bodies and springs, and by evaporation. Other outflows include pumping for urban, residential, and agricultural use.
Water Quality

The quality of surface water and groundwater can be affected by a variety of activities. Amador County’s surface and groundwater quality is very high, and the County will maintain water quality by implementing state and federal water quality regulations, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

Low Impact Development

New development adds pavement and structures, often altering natural drainage patterns and reducing infiltration and percolation of rain and snow. Using low impact development (LID) strategies helps to reduce the amount of excess runoff generated by new development, and also to improve the quality of the water which drains off a property.

Floodplains and Groundwater Recharge

Figure S-1 in the Safety Element illustrates the locations of floodplains. These areas, as well as areas of riparian habitat along the rivers and streams illustrated on Figure C-1, may accommodate floodwaters for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management.

Energy Resources

The production and use of energy within California has come under increasing scrutiny as the State works to lessen dependence on out-of-state and foreign energy supplies and increase the production and use of renewable energy sources. The goal of increased energy conservation has implications for land use, building design, individual practices, and transportation. The cost of energy is of particular concern to Amador County residents because of the temperature extremes experienced in parts of the county.

Amador County hosts eight power plants, including six hydroelectric facilities, one natural gas plant (at Mule Creek State Prison), and one cogeneration plant/facility (not currently operating). Because of Amador County’s relatively small population and high energy production capacity, the county is a large energy exporter. However, the county imports both oil and gas. Population growth, business expansion, increases in tourism, and energy conservation measures will all have an effect on energy consumption.
Hydroelectric Facilities

Large hydroelectric facilities are located at several creeks, dams, and waterways throughout the county, including Pardee Dam, Tiger Creek, Salt Springs, and Lake Amador Dam (see Table C-1). Most electricity generated in Amador County originates from one of these six hydroelectric facilities. In addition to rivers and streams, small hydroelectric plants can be sited in irrigation canals and water treatment plants.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plant Name</th>
<th>Year Online</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Online Megawatts</th>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>PG&amp;E</td>
<td>East Bay Municipal Utility District</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<td>1931</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: California Energy Commission, September 2009

Renewable and Locally Available Energy Sources

Amador County has the capacity to further develop renewable energy resources to protect residents from volatile energy prices and reduce the state’s dependence on out-of-state and foreign oil and gas. Solar power and biomass are potential future sources of renewable energy in the county.

Solar power can be harnessed for several applications, including heating and electricity generation. When used to produce energy, the most common method is to use photovoltaic cells, which convert sunlight directly into electricity. Amador County currently does not generate solar power at a large scale. However, individual businesses or home-owners may find smaller-scale solar energy applications beneficial to meet their electricity needs.

Biomass refers to organic material which can be used as fuel. Biomass materials range from wood and crops to trash and manure. Many biomass materials are burned to release their stored energy, either directly like wood burned for home heating or indirectly to generate electricity. Additionally, biomass materials can be used to produce biodiesel, ethanol, or methane.
Transformation projects (also known as resource recovery projects or “waste-to-energy” development) convert agricultural and municipal wastes to fuel or electricity. Amador County’s agricultural, timber, and building industries provide a direct source of waste products that can be used to generate energy and boost the revenue potential of agriculture.

**Agricultural Lands**

Agriculture is important to the history, character, culture, economy, and environment of Amador County. The County’s primary agricultural policy is to maintain the economic viability of agricultural land uses. For this reason, economic issues related to agriculture are addressed in the Economic Development Element, which also includes the majority of goals and policies for agriculture in the General Plan, and a description of the county’s agricultural areas and produce.

However, in addition to agriculture’s status as one of Amador County’s key industries and economic engines, agricultural lands provide other benefits to Amador County and its residents. When agricultural lands are converted to other uses, the potential future agricultural value of these lands is lost, and so the agricultural land base is an important topic for this Conservation Element.

In 2004, the county contained almost 200,000 acres of agricultural land, the overwhelming majority of which was grazing land (defined in the California Government Code as land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing or browsing of livestock). The county also contained about 10,000 acres of land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland (Farmland) by the State (Please refer to the General Plan EIR for an illustration of areas of Farmland in Amador County). Over a 20-year period (1984 through 2004), the acreage of designated Farmland in the County increased. However, the county has experienced a long-term loss of grazing land since 1984. About 4,500 acres converted from farmland to non-farmland uses between 2002 and 2004.

**Farmland**

In 1982, the California Department of Conservation launched the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) database in response to a critical need to assess the location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands in the state and to track conversion of these lands over time. FMMP is a non-regulatory program that defines three categories of Farmland:

- **Prime Farmland:** Prime Farmland is land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the
soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods.

**Farmland of Statewide Importance:** Farmland of Statewide Importance is land other than Prime Farmland which has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

**Unique Farmland:** Unique Farmland is land which does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance that has been used for the production of specific high economic value crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods.

Please refer to the General Plan EIR for a depiction of farmland classifications in Amador County as of 2010. Prime Farmland and some small areas designated as Unique Farmland are located in the Shenandoah Valley and in several areas south and west of Ione.

**Williamson Act**

The California Land Conservation Act, better known as the Williamson Act, has been the state’s premier agricultural land protection program since its enactment in 1965. Locations of Williamson Act contract parcels as of 2008 are shown in the General Plan EIR.

The Williamson Act supports the conservation of agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature conversion to urban uses. Under the Act, private landowners contract with the County to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open-space uses. The vehicle for these agreements is a rolling term 10-year contract. Unless either party files a “notice of nonrenewal” the contract is automatically renewed each year to cover the next 10 years. Parcels under Williamson Act contracts pay property taxes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value.

In 2006, there were about 93,400 acres of land in Amador County protected by Williamson Act contracts. Most of these lands are located in the western portion of the county and generally surround the cities of Plymouth, Sutter Creek, Ione, and Jackson.
Conserving and Protecting Agricultural Lands

Agriculture remains a crucial industry for Amador County, both in terms of its economic importance and because farming and ranching lie at the core of the community’s identity and culture. Amador County faces the challenge of ensuring the continued viability of agricultural practices and businesses in the face of increasing development pressure, while respecting the rights of individual landowners.

The County will encourage the continued economic viability of farming and ranching. Agriculture-related businesses and agri-tourism can offer important supplementary sources of income for farmers and ranchers. The County will support continued use of agriculture-related businesses, including wine tasting and roadside stands. Providing adequate water for farming is also a critical need.

Farming and ranching activities can create noise and dust, and lead to the need for aerial spraying. Future residential development which would detract from the ability of farmers and ranchers to maintain their businesses on nearby properties will be restricted. The County’s “Agricultural Lands and Operations” ordinance (Amador County Code Chapter 19.80) protects farming operations from nuisance and other complaints by encroaching residential uses, and requires notices to purchasers of property in agricultural areas.

Farming and ranching do have the potential to degrade water quality. Promoting sustainable farming and ranching practices can help protect the quality of surface water resources.

The Economic Development Element contains goals and policies which support conservation of agricultural lands by encouraging the continued economic viability of farming and ranching. Relevant goals include goals E-8, E-9, and E-10.

Historical and Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are important to Amador County because they are reminders and remnants of the rich history of the area and offer physical evidence of the prehistoric and historic occupation and exploitation of the county.

Known Cultural Resources

Amador County has a variety of known cultural and historic resources, including prehistoric sites, gold mining-related sites, and other historic sites.
It is important to note that these sites are generally identified in the course of an archaeological survey for a planned development, such as federal projects, new construction, or other similar activities. Therefore, the known sites tend to cluster in regions where development has occurred in the past. Although less information is available for less-developed areas, the density and types of known cultural resource sites are presumed to continue into unexplored areas. Examining groupings of similar site types can help to predict the types and densities of cultural resource sites in similar geographic locations within Amador County.

Prehistoric sites in Amador County include bedrock mortars, occupation sites, and traditional cultural properties (TCPs). Bedrock mortar sites tend to be found in locations that include nearby oak trees, a water source, and bedrock. TCPs can include gathering areas, religious sites, or mythic locations. These locations are important to maintain the continuing cultural identity of Native American communities.

Historic sites in Amador County include mining and prospect locations associated with the Gold Rush, and other sites ranging from historic houses and buildings to locations such as trails, cemeteries, and mills. Gold mining has enormous historical significance in Amador County and has literally shaped the landscape in many areas. Larger mining landscapes might include open pits, sluices, placer-scoured stream channels, ditches, open entries or shafts, tailings piles, and habitation areas. Smaller sites can contain any combination of these features.

The groupings of mines can be interpreted as following gold-bearing geologic strata. Linear ditches and canals are generally found running from a higher-elevation water source down to the mine complex.

At some locations, combinations of different resource types are found, such as historic homestead sites and prehistoric sites. The same types of resources may have been exploited by both the historic and prehistoric occupants, such as nearby water and level land. Thus, these types of sites may be found together. In other instances, it is more likely to be coincidence, such as when prehistoric sites are later intersected by mining or logging efforts.

**Cultural Resources Sensitivity Guidance**

The known locations of cultural and historic resources, along with historic maps, provide some ability to predict the locations of as-yet unknown cultural resources. Historic gold, clay, silica sand, and coal mines are located in the western part of the county, and the regions in and around those mines may include similar resources. East of Ione and west of SR 49, there is a north-south belt of copper ore and a series of related mines. SR 49 runs along the Motherlode, a similar north-south belt of gold-bearing quartz veins and thus...
helps to define a long, narrow series of hard-rock veins. Another large region of gold mining activity exists near the Volcano/Red Corral area. Each of these areas may indicate a higher likelihood of historic resources related to mining or support for mining. Both the Cosumnes and Mokelumne Rivers were also extensively mined.

Prehistoric resources can be found through an association with available natural resources, including water, types of food, or stone outcrops that supply materials for tool-making. With these factors in mind, it would be reasonable that river and creek drainages are more likely to contain prehistoric cultural resources. Based on known information regarding cultural resources, physical geography and mine resources, Figure C-2 illustrates culturally sensitive areas of Amador County.

**AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Chronic exposure to air pollutants is a serious health risk to millions of California residents, particularly the young, the elderly, and people with heart disease and respiratory problems. Air pollution also affects local economies by damaging agricultural crops, natural vegetation, buildings, and other materials. General Plan air quality policies are designed to help maintain air pollution to levels consistent with standards set by the state and federal governments. With effective planning, project mitigation, public education and inter-agency cooperation, air quality can be maintained at appropriate levels.

Air quality policies guide land use decisions, including, but not limited to decisions affecting proposed development projects and the location of new roads and transit facilities. Air pollutant levels from existing land uses, including mining, agricultural, and industrial activities, must also be closely tracked to ensure compatibility with state and federal standards, especially where residential and other sensitive receptors have encroached into areas adjacent to these uses. Policies and implementation programs address existing and foreseeable air pollution problems, and set guidelines for compliance with air quality control requirements.

**Greenhouse Gases**

Various gases in the earth’s atmosphere trap solar radiation through the greenhouse effect and play a critical role in determining the earth’s surface temperature. These gases are known as atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs). Prominent GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), ozone, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, chlorofluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Human-caused emissions of these GHGs have exceeded their naturally-occurring levels, intensifying the greenhouse effect, which has led
Climate change is a global problem because GHGs are global pollutants, unlike other air pollutants of regional and local concern. Additional resources beyond air quality could be indirectly affected by increased GHG emissions. For example, an increase in the global average temperature is expected to result in a decreased volume of precipitation falling as snow in California and an overall reduction in snowpack in the Sierra Nevada. The Sierra Nevada snowpack provides both water supply (runoff) and storage (within the snowpack before melting), which is a major source of potable water for the state and Amador County in particular. Although current forecasts vary, it is evident that this phenomenon could lead to significant challenges in securing an adequate water supply for a growing population. A shift in precipitation from snow to rain could also lead to increased flooding potential because water that would normally be held in the snowpack until spring could flow into the Central Valley with winter storm events.

Mineral Resources

The discovery of gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills in 1849 led to the settlement of Amador County, and Amador County's mineral resources remain an important part of the county's economy and identity.

Currently, mining in the county includes clay, gold, lignite, and aggregate materials, but the county’s mineral products include (among others), clay, sand, gravel, aggregate, quartz sand, copper, silver, gold, soapstone, marble, slate, greenstone, river rip rap, road base, limestone, sandstone, zinc, chromite, talc, lignite, and diamonds.
Figure C-2: Cultural Resource Sensitivity

Legend

- Cultural Resource Sensitivity
  - High
  - Moderate

Roadways
- Highways
- Railroads
- Streams and Creeks
- Major Water Features
- City Spheres of Influence
- Incorporated Cities
- Amador County
- Adjacent Counties

Note: This map is based on known site locations and densities, which are then projected into areas/zoned areas.


General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016.
**Mineral Resource Zones**

The California Geological Survey identifies several categories of mineral resources in its Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classifications. MRZ-2 describes areas where there is adequate information to indicate that significant mineral deposits are present, or have a high likelihood of being present. MRZ-2a describes areas where geologic information indicates significant mineral resources are present, and MRZ-2b describes areas where the presence of significant mineral resources is inferred from geologic information.

Amador County’s mineral resource zones include areas with known or inferred deposits of gold, lode gold, copper, zinc, talc, limestone, sand, silica sand, clay, and lignite. Figure C-3 illustrates the known locations of these mineral resources. The continued viability of mineral and aggregate resources in the county should be a factor when considering future development proposals. Goal E-12 and associated policies in the Economic Development Element address the county’s mineral resources, including protecting their continued viability.

The Ione Formation, located in western Amador County, is a source of mineral products, including primarily clay. The Ione Formation is the only large source of super duty refractory clay in the western United States. This resource is used in the production of heat-resistant brick for high-temperature furnaces.

Amador County is one of the few places in the state where coal mining occurs. Lignite, a form of low-grade coal found in Amador County, is brown, very crumbly, and has been mainly used at the source to generate electricity. The power plant on Coal Mine Road has used lignite coal in its process in the past; as of 2010, this power plant is not in operation.

**Timber Resources**

Timber harvesting is an important industry in Amador County. Although timber harvesting is often described as an agricultural activity, the cultural importance of timber production in Amador County is distinct from other agricultural production.

Timberland in Amador County is located in areas above approximately 3,500 feet elevation, and includes both privately- and publicly-owned softwood forests. Many of the larger, privately owned land holdings are located in Timber Production Zones (TPZs), the largest of which are owned by Sierra Pacific Industries. At lower elevations between 2,000 feet and 3,500 feet, Amador County’s softwood forests have been largely converted to rural residential uses.
Amador County supports the continued viability of timber harvesting. Effective management and production of timber resources can also reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, especially in the eastern portion of the county. The Economic Development Element includes a goal (E-11) and policies describing conservation and protection of timber resources.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Senate Bill 18, Traditional Tribal Cultural Places

SB 18 was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2004 (Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004). SB 18 requires the County to consult with California Native American tribes to aid in the protection of traditional tribal culture through local land use planning. The intent of SB 18 is to provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places. SB 18 requires local governments to consult with tribes prior to making certain planning decisions and to provide notice to tribes at certain key points in the planning process. These consultation and notice requirements apply to Amador County’s General Plan.

The principal objective of SB 18 is to preserve and protect cultural places of California Native Americans. SB 18 refers to Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 and 5097.995 to define cultural places as:

- Native American sanctified cemeteries, places of worship, religious or ceremonial sites, or sacred shrines (Public Resources Code §5097.9).

Native American historic, cultural, or sacred sites, that are listed or may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources pursuant to Section 5024.1, including any historic or prehistoric ruins, any burial ground, and any archaeological or historic site (Public Resources Code §5097.995).

Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act

In September 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act (Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006). AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. This reduction will be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions that will be phased in starting in 2012. To effectively implement the cap, AB 32 directs the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop and implement regulations to reduce statewide GHG emissions from stationary sources.
AB 32 requires that ARB adopt a quantified cap on GHG emissions representing 1990 emissions levels and disclose how it arrived at the cap; institute a schedule to meet the emissions cap; and develop tracking, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the state achieves the reductions in GHG emissions necessary to meet the cap. AB 32 also includes guidance to institute emission reductions in an economically efficient manner and conditions to ensure that businesses and consumers are not unfairly affected by the reductions.

**Senate Bill 375, Sustainable Communities Strategy**

Promoted as the critical implementation tool for AB 32, SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) introduced numerous changes in California’s land use and transportation planning process. SB 375 firmly links land use planning, transportation planning, affordable housing, and CEQA to GHG reductions. SB 375 places additional planning responsibilities on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) throughout the state, which are now charged with preparing sustainable land use plans known as Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs). The SCS is a preferred growth scenario designed to achieve certain GHG reduction goals for transportation emissions, and becomes the land use allocation for transportation modeling in future Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). Future RTP funding decisions are tied to the SCS, creating strong incentive for local governments to participate in these efforts in order to ensure funding for much-needed system improvements. Future development projects that are consistent with adopted SCSs are also eligible for new CEQA exemptions and streamlining provisions established by the law. Amador County does not fall within the jurisdiction of an MPO, and so is not directly subject to the provisions of SB 375.

**Senate Bills 221 and 610**

SB 221 (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2001) requires a county or city to include as a condition of approval of any tentative map, parcel map, or development agreement for certain residential subdivisions a requirement that a “sufficient water supply” be available. Proof of a sufficient water supply must be based on a written verification from the public water system that would serve the proposed development.

SB 610 (Chapter 643, Statutes of 2001) requires a water supply assessment for projects with 500 or more residential units or equivalent. The assessment must document long-term water demand and water supply over a 20-year planning period, including normal years, dry years, and multiple dry years.
ISSUES, GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies of the Conservation Element present strategies to protect and conserve Amador County's natural resources, including water supply and water quality, energy resources, agriculture and agricultural lands, air quality, timber, mineral resources, historic resources, and cultural resources. The Conservation Element also outlines the County's GHG reduction and climate change adaptation strategy.

Water Supply and Water Quality

Adequate water supply for the county, including water for residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial use, is of primary importance. Maintaining the water supply includes providing quality water for to support both current and future development.

Development of reclaimed water should play an important role in providing sustained water supply for appropriate uses and extending finite supplies. Conservation must also be expanded as an important mechanism to extend available water supplies in addition to developing new water supply projects to meet future water demands.

Because surface water is the primary water supply source, preventing pollution from point- and non-point sources is important to the future well-being of the county. Providing adequate sewage treatment capacity is important for maintaining and improving water quality. In addition, residential development generates increased urban runoff to streams, which is a source of pollution. Agricultural practices can also generate pollutants such as eroded material from stream banks and fields, and pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer runoff. The county's historic and current mining activities also represent potential sources of pollution to streams and rivers, including heavy metals and eroded soil.

Water planning for Amador County should consider the Urban Water Management Plan and the California State Water Plan as updated and revised periodically. The AWA actively participates in the State Water Plan Updates.

Goal C-1: Ensure that all future development permitted in the county can be provided adequate amounts of water.

Policy C-1.1: Coordinate with the county's water suppliers to ensure that water is available to serve both current and planned future residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural needs. Include upland areas in future water management plans.
Policy C-1.2: Guide future development to areas of the county where adequate water supplies can be ensured.

Policy C-1.3: Limit reliance on groundwater wells as sources for community water systems. Where possible, encourage connection of developments to existing water supply systems.

Policy C-1.4: Encourage new development, renovation, landscape, and agricultural projects to include water conservation measures, including use of graywater, reclaimed, or recycled water for irrigation, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and low-water landscapes.

Goal C-2: Maintain and improve water supply planning and infrastructure.

Policy C-2.1: Encourage integrated management of surface water and groundwater resources, wastewater, stormwater treatment and use, and the development of reclaimed water.

Policy C-2.2: Encourage conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water by water agencies to improve water supply reliability.

Policy C-2.3: Support the county’s water suppliers, including public agencies and private entities within Amador County, in their efforts to protect water rights and water supply contracts.

Policy C-2.4: Pursue management strategies that develop upstream/downstream interregional conjunctive use/water transfer programs to meet future water needs in Amador County.

Policy C-2.5: Support efforts by water and wastewater agencies to respond to state mandates addressing the future challenges posed by climate change.

Policy C-2.6: Reduce erosion and sediment loads which might limit the lifespan of existing water storage facilities.

Policy C-2.7: Promote development patterns and practices which permit the continued use and future development of water storage and power generation facilities on the county’s streams and rivers.

Policy C-2.8: Support federal, state, and local projects or designations that preserve the County’s long term water needs.

Goal C-3: Minimize negative effects of sewage treatment on water quality.
Policy C-3.1: Guide future development to areas of the county with the ability to obtain adequate wastewater service and treatment capacity.

Policy C-3.2: Encourage recycling and water-saving features in new development, including use of graywater, recycled, or reclaimed water for irrigation, to limit the water flows to septic systems and leach fields.

Policy C-3.3: Encourage countywide coordination and organizational structures to maximize recycled water reuse opportunities throughout the county.

Policy C-3.4: Work with landowners and wastewater providers to provide alternative systems for inadequate or failing septic and sewer systems.

Goal C-4: Minimize negative effects of point and non-point sources on water quality.

Policy C-4.1: Encourage site plan elements in proposed development such as reduced pavement/cover and permeable pavement, as well as drainage features which limit runoff and increase infiltration and groundwater recharge.

Policy C-4.2: Limit the effects of current and former mining and mineral extraction activities on groundwater and surface water.

Policy C-4.3: Promote agricultural and development practices which limit soil erosion and runoff.

Policy C-4.4: Promote use of protective measures to limit the effects of industrial or hazardous materials sites on surface water resources and groundwater recharge zones.

Goal C-5: Reduce the negative effects of new development on stormwater runoff and non-point source water pollution.

Policy C-5.1: Develop Low Impact Development (LID) standards for new construction, including residential developments of 5 or more units, and commercial or industrial projects. These standards should be incorporated into the County’s development ordinances.

Policy C-5.2: Encourage the use of LID strategies to help Amador County sustain and improve both surface- and groundwater quality.
Energy Resources

Increasing energy efficiency and making better use of current and local energy resources can reduce direct and hidden energy costs in the future, as energy costs rise and sources of energy become more difficult to obtain. Improving energy efficiency and increasing the amount of local, micro-scale energy generation will help reduce energy costs and the effects of our energy use on the environment.

Goal C-6: Reduce energy use and promote renewable and locally available sources of energy.

Policy C-6.1: Encourage new development to be pedestrian-friendly, and located near existing activity centers to limit energy use associated with automobile transportation.

Policy C-6.2: Encourage energy-efficient businesses and manufacturers of green products to locate in Amador County.

Policy C-6.3: Promote increased energy efficiency and green building practices through the County’s use of these practices and through use of incentives.

Policy C-6.4: Encourage development of renewable energy generation options.

Policy C-6.5: Support use of renewable and locally-available sources of energy where feasible.

Historical Resources

Amador County has a rich history, and is characterized by historical structures, districts, and mines dating back to the Gold Rush of 1849. These historical resources offer an important tool for education, help to provide a distinctive “sense of place” to the county, and are vital to promoting tourism. The County will support the preservation of historical resources through both property owner incentives and educational and interpretive opportunities.

The County will explore using building envelopes or cluster development to allow development of properties while also preserving cultural or historical resources located on the property. Cluster development is describes a development pattern where the total improvements (roads and residences) permitted for a property are clustered on a small portion of the original or proposed parcels, instead of being scattered evenly over the available space. The balance of the parcel is then dedicated to either open space or
agricultural use. In addition to preserving land for agricultural or conservation uses, cluster development allows for cheaper and more efficient infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer service.

**Goal C-7:** Preserve the county’s historical resources.

Policy C-7.1: Balance the community’s interest in historic preservation with the rights of individual property owners.

Policy C-7.2: Promote use of building envelopes or cluster development as a means of protecting historical resources when land is developed.

Policy C-7.3: Support the preservation of historic structures, including rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of structures. Encourage property owners to preserve and maintain historic structures.

Policy C-7.4: Promote the preservation of historically significant Gold Rush sites, mining sites and other identified sites.

Policy C-7.5: Collaborate with interested groups to develop interpretive materials for historically-important sites.

Policy C-7.6: Promote historic preservation as an engine for Amador County’s tourist economy.

**Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources are important reminders and remnants of the rich history of Amador County. These resources offer physical evidence of the prehistoric and historic occupation and exploitation of the county. Cultural resources sites include both prehistoric and mining related sites. Amador County will work with interested groups, including Native American communities, to preserve and protect cultural resources. Incentives and cluster development are two tools which may be used. In addition, an inventory of cultural resource locations maintained by the County can help landowners become aware of the presence of cultural or archaeological resources on their properties, potentially affecting future development. Protecting cultural resources is mandated by the State of California through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review process and the SB 18 consultation process.

**Goal C-8:** Preserve the county’s cultural resources.

Policy C-8.1: Balance the community’s interest in the protection of cultural resources with the rights of individual property owners.
Policy C-8.2: Encourage project design that will protect cultural and archaeological resources, and consider using incentives to support protection of these resources when land is developed.

Policy C-8.3: Educate local realtors, property owners, and developers regarding the need to protect and preserve cultural resources, with the objective of increasing cultural resource awareness among existing and new property owners.

Policy C-8.4: Encourage other interested groups to develop interpretive materials for culturally and archaeologically important sites.

Air Quality

Air quality is an issue throughout California. Automobile emissions are a major contributor to air quality problems, and efforts to improve air quality are increasingly directed at the relationship between growth, land use activities, and air quality. Land use patterns directly influence transportation demand which, in turn, affects air quality. Amador County can help to maintain its good air quality by modifying development patterns and offering alternative transportation options, as well as encouraging energy conservation and efficiency.

Goal C-9: Maintain and improve air quality.

Policy C-9.1: Encourage development of commercial or industrial businesses which provide jobs for county residents in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled for residents who must drive elsewhere for employment.

Policy C-9.2: Encourage infill development, and development near existing activity centers in order to encourage walking or bicycle use in running local errands.

Policy C-9.3: Promote the separation of emission sources from sensitive receptors such as schools, day care centers, and health care facilities.

Policy C-9.4: Encourage energy conservation and energy efficient design in new development projects.

Policy C-9.5: Promote recycling of waste materials and the use of recycled materials.
Policy C-9.6: Maintain viable public transportation options in Amador County, and provide transit connections such as park-and-ride services to job centers in nearby counties.

Policy C-9.7: Work with state and federal agencies to seek recognition of air pollutant movement from valley to mountain counties as a contributor to reduced air quality.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) was passed in September 2006. AB 32 requires that statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. The Climate Change Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan) was approved by ARB in December 2008 and outlines California’s plan to achieve the GHG reductions required in AB 32. The Scoping Plan contains the primary strategies California will implement to achieve a reduction of 169 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or approximately 28% from the state’s projected 2020 emission levels. Future planning efforts that do not encourage reductions in GHG emissions would conflict with AB 32, impeding California’s ability to comply.

In the Scoping Plan, ARB encourages local governments to adopt a reduction goal for municipal operations emissions and move toward establishing similar goals for community emissions that parallel the State commitment to reduce GHGs. The Plan identifies California’s cities and counties as “essential partners” within the overall statewide effort and recommends that local governments set a GHG reduction target of 15 percent below today’s levels by the year 2020. Though the specific role local governments will play in meeting California’s GHG reduction goals is still being defined, they will nonetheless be a key player.

Statewide, more than 40% of GHG emissions are associated with transportation. Reduction of GHG emissions will thus primarily require a reduction of motor vehicle fuel consumed and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Other means of addressing global climate change include use of alternative low- or no-emission energy sources at the local and micro scale (i.e., solar cells), since electric power generation also accounts for nearly a quarter of GHG emissions. Conservation efforts which reduce energy use are also effective in reducing GHG emissions associated with electric power generation.
Goal C-10: Reduce GHG emissions associated with automobile travel, electrical power generation and energy use.

Policy C-10.1: Evaluate the potential effects of climate change on the county’s human and natural systems and prepare strategies that allow the County to appropriately respond and adapt.

Policy C-10.2: Develop and adopt a comprehensive strategy to reduce GHGs within Amador County by at least 15 percent from current levels by 2020.

Policy C-10.3: Guide new development to areas where pedestrian and bicycle access to existing activity centers is possible, in order to reduce the need for automobile travel and VMT.

Policy C-10.4: Work with service providers to ensure that transit offerings in the county are stable or expanding, and that transit is tailored to meet residents’ needs.

Policy C-10.5: Require new development projects to incorporate building placement and design features to increase energy efficiency in new structures.

Policy C-10.6: Support green building through incentives for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification of new commercial, industrial, public, and multi-family residential buildings. Promote incentives for compliance with this standard as a way to increase the energy efficiency of new structures. Promote increased energy efficiency and green building practices through the County’s use of these practices.

Policy C-10.7: Support parcel-scale energy generation, including addition of solar panels for residential structures and cogeneration for larger commercial or industrial uses.

Policy C-10.8: Expand recycling and waste minimization efforts, including recycling of construction and demolition materials.
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OPEN SPACE

Final

PURPOSE

This element addresses open spaces for:

- the managed production of resources,
- outdoor recreation,
- public health and safety, and
- the preservation of natural resources.

General Plan Consistency with Government Code 65560

Government Code 65560 requires that the Open Space Element include a discussion of the 1) preservation of natural resources, 2) manage production of resources, 3) outdoor recreation, 4) public health and safety, 5) military installations, and 6) places, features, and objects of significance to Native Americans. The preservation of natural resources is discussed under Policy OS 3.1. The managed production of resources is discussed under the “Economic Development” and the “Conservation” elements. Outdoor recreation is discussed extensively within the Open Space Element. Public Health and Safety is discussed under the “Safety” element. Places, features, and objects of significance to Native Americans are discussed under the “Conservation” element. Military installations are not applicable to the General Plan as no military bases are located within Amador County.

Amador County’s open space areas support recreational uses, vegetation, and wildlife habitat and help to maintain the County’s scenic beauty. The purpose of this element is to identify goals, policies, and implementation measures that manage, conserve, and enhance these resources for current and future residents and visitors.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Open Space Element describes the County’s goals and policies with respect to open space areas and addresses the following topics:

- preserving and creating community separators and managing existing agricultural, open space, and recreational resources;
- conserving, improving, developing, and maintaining recreational facilities;
- protecting local scenic highway corridors; and
The Open Space Element is closely related to the Conservation and Economic Development Elements, and these elements contain additional and more specific information and policies about related topics, including water supply and quality, energy resources, agriculture and agricultural lands, forest lands and forest resources, mineral resources, historic and cultural resources, and air quality.

In addition, action programs (implementation programs) for the Open Space Element have been developed consistent with the requirements of Government Code Section 65564. These implementation programs are also General Plan Final EIR mitigation measures. Once CEQA findings and the General Plan are adopted, these implementation programs legally are incorporated into the General Plan; see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2). Implementation programs for Open Space Element goals and policies are reproduced at the end of the Open Space Element, following the discussion of issues, goals, and policies.

**Recreation**

**Parks and Developed Recreation Areas**

More than 30 parks and/or recreational facilities are located within Amador County. The incorporated cities and two community service districts in the unincorporated areas own and maintain most of the developed recreational facilities in the county. Amador County and the Amador County Recreation Agency (ACRA) own and maintain five developed parks. Overall, Amador County includes over 700 acres of developed parkland and designated recreational open space owned by the cities, community service districts, the County, and ACRA.

A Recreation Master Plan was prepared by ACRA in 2006. The plan inventoried parks and recreational facilities in the county and identified existing deficiencies and future needs, including park needs for the unincorporated communities of Pine Grove, Volcano, and Camanche Village. The recreation master plan found that in the unincorporated areas, one new 20- to 30-acre rural day-use park would be needed in the northern portion of the county and that Molly Joyce Park in Pioneer should be improved to better serve passive uses.

Trails, used for biking, hiking, walking, and horseback riding, are among the most popular and in-demand recreational facilities. The Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) has adopted a Pedestrian and Bicycle
Transportation Plan, and ACRA seeks to expand recreational trail opportunities.

General Plan policies and programs support continued expansion of developed recreation areas in Amador County to meet the needs of future residents and visitors.

Undeveloped Recreation Areas

In addition to developed parks and recreation areas, the county contains many areas of publicly owned, undeveloped open space land that is available for passive recreation uses. Through General Plan policies and programs, the County seeks to maintain these areas for public recreation and to support increased tourism.

The majority of the land located in the eastern portion of the county (above Dew Drop) is part of the Eldorado National Forest, which extends into Alpine, El Dorado, and Placer Counties. The national forest contains more than 600 miles of fishable streams, nearly 300 lakes (including 11 large reservoirs), miles of trails, campgrounds, and a variety of vegetation types including chaparral, woodlands, mixed conifer, true fir, and subalpine. Recreational uses include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, cycling, horseback riding, target shooting, off-road vehicle use, skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. In addition, numerous rivers and lakes offer water sports like boating, canoeing, kayaking, and swimming.

The Mokelumne Wilderness, a designated wilderness area, is located in the easternmost portion of the county along the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The wilderness contains over 105,000 acres within the Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Toiyabe National Forests. Wilderness areas are reserved for non-motorized passive recreational uses; the only travel allowed is by foot or on horseback, and a wilderness permit is required for entry.

Amador County also contains lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM lands along the Cosumnes and Mokelumne Rivers provide opportunities for water recreation. These areas are popular for activities such as swimming, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and tubing. In addition, hunting is allowed on most BLM lands.

The County also contains one California State Park, Indian Grinding Rock State Park, near Pine Grove. The park has a museum and cultural sites that can be viewed by the public, but also offers passive recreational opportunities like camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Mt. Zion Demonstration State Forest is operated by Cal FIRE and offers hiking and wildlife viewing.
The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) is a large landowner in the County. EBMUD owns and manages Camanche and Pardee Reservoirs and the Camanche Hills Hunting Preserve in the western portion of the County, as well as miles of trails open for public use near the Mokelumne River. Camanche and Pardee Reservoirs allow both motorized and non-motorized boating, and fishing. Camanche Reservoir also allows waterskiing, jet-skiing, and swimming. Lands surrounding the reservoirs provide hiking trails and camping areas. The Camanche Hills Hunting Preserve is located near the north shore of Camanche Reservoir, and provides hunting opportunities, including facilities for hunting education and classes.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) owns and manages several reservoirs within the Eldorado National Forest. These reservoirs are open for public use. The largest and most popular of PG&E’s reservoirs include Bear River and Salt Springs Reservoirs. Lake Tabeaud, located outside of the Eldorado National Forest in southern Amador County south of the historic Town of Clinton, is a day use recreation area also operated by PG&E.

Also popular for recreation and located in the Eldorado National Forest is Silver Lake, which has public recreation facilities operated by El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), the U.S. Forest Service, and Plasse’s Resort.

**Scenic Roadways**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has designated a segment of State Route (SR) 88 from Dew Drop Ranger Station, east of Buckhorn, to the Nevada state line as a State Scenic Highway. The rest of SR 88 in Amador County (west of the Dew Drop Ranger Station), and the entire length of SR 49 traversing the County are eligible for State Scenic Highway listing, but neither is officially designated. The State Scenic Highway Program seeks to protect scenic beauty along particularly picturesque roadways to enhance the experience of travelers along the roadway as well as to support recreation and tourism in those areas. The officially designated segment of SR 88 is located east of Dew Drop, and based on the land use designations in this area, there is little potential for development along this portion of the highway.

**Natural Resource and Species Protection**

The county’s broad range of elevation and topography results in a rich diversity of natural and biological resources. The western half of the county is characterized by rolling hills covered with oak woodland, grassland, and chaparral. The forested upcountry, which is part of the Eldorado National
Forest, has a more rugged topography characterized by steep slopes, deep river canyons, and high mountain peaks covered by forests, montane shrublands, and lakes.

The information on biological resources provided in this element focuses on the western foothill region of the county, where the effects of the General Plan and threats to biological diversity and sensitive resources are greatest. Important planning issues in this region include increased urbanization, habitat fragmentation, and water pollution.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The complex array of habitats in Amador County supports many diverse animal species because large tracts of land are covered by habitats known to have outstanding value for wildlife, such as mixed coniferous forests and oak woodlands. The oak woodlands that span the western portion of the county support a high diversity of wildlife species. Other habitats, like the lone chaparral, are unique plant communities found only in western Amador County. Large contiguous blocks containing multiple habitat types have the potential to support the highest wildlife diversity and abundance.

The South Fork Cosumnes River, the North Fork Mokelumne River, Dry Creek, Sutter Creek, Jackson Creek, Lake Camanche, Pardee Reservoir, and Lake Amador all provide vital fish spawning, rearing, and/or migratory habitat for a diverse range of fish.

Deer migration corridors are also a concern in many foothill counties, including Amador County. The county is home to both resident and migratory deer populations, with critical winter range for deer found at elevations between 2,000 and 4,000 feet above sea level, and summer critical habitat at 4,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level. Because of animal migration needs, both the quantity and the location and connectivity of habitat are important considerations.

Oak Woodland Habitat

Loss of wildlife habitat associated with anticipated future urban growth in western Amador County will be greatest in the county’s oak woodlands, which form the dominant habitat type in this half of the county. In addition to being an essential element of the county’s rural character, oak woodlands support an unusual diversity of animal species and provide important corridors for wildlife movement. This is a result of the many resources that oak trees provide, including roosting and nesting sites, and an abundant food supply such as large acorn crops.
Wetlands, Riparian Habitats, and Other Sensitive Communities

The vernal pool complexes and lone chaparral of western Amador County, and the riparian habitats along corridors such as the Cosumnes River, the Mokelumne River, and Dry Creek are examples of some of the sensitive communities found throughout the county. These sensitive communities are a part of the county’s biological wealth and are home to some of its unique plant and animal species. Future residential, commercial, and infrastructure development and expansion of agricultural or mining activities have the potential to directly remove, degrade, or fragment these sensitive habitats.

Special-Status Species

Amador County is home to several plant and wildlife species listed as endangered, threatened, or rare based on federal and/or state criteria, including but not limited to Ione Manzanita, California tiger salamander, and Central Valley steelhead. These species are an important part of the county’s biological heritage worth protecting for future generations to experience. Special-status species could be affected by existing and projected land uses if habitat is lost, existing habitat is fragmented, or land use changes on adjacent lands degrade current habitat areas.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Federal Endangered Species Act

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protects certain animal and plant species. Under the ESA, species are put on lists and categorized as endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate. Endangered species are those that are in imminent danger of extinction while threatened species are those likely to be in danger of extinction. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) maintain the lists and enforces protection of these species. Actions that may result in “take” of a species are monitored and permitted by the USFWS. “Take” is broadly defined and includes actions that would “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect” listed species.

Listed species are often called special-status species. Plants are not as heavily protected as animal species and are only protected when a take occurs on federal land or by federal action.
California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) prohibits take of any species that the California Fish and Game Commission determines to be an endangered or threatened species. Federal and state lists of threatened and endangered species are generally similar; however, a species present on one list may be absent from the other. The CESA is also somewhat different from the ESA in that the state regulations include threatened and endangered plants on nonfederal lands within the definition of take.

Oak Woodland Conservation

In 2001, the California Legislature passed the California Oak Woodland Conservation Act, establishing a fund to financially support counties’ oak woodland conservation efforts. The act authorizes the Wildlife Conservation Board to purchase oak woodland conservation easements and provide grants for land improvements and restoration efforts. The Wildlife Conservation Board also funds oak woodland preservation outreach and education efforts.

California Public Resources Code Section 21083.4 directs counties to require feasible and proportional habitat mitigation for impacts on oak woodlands as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. During CEQA review, the County is required to determine whether proposed projects “may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment.” The law applies to all oak woodlands except those dominated by black oak. If the County determines that a proposed project may have a significant effect on oak woodlands, mitigation is required. The law prescribes four mitigation options:

- conserving oak woodlands through the use of conservation easements,
- contributing funds to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund to purchase oak woodland conservation easements,
- replanting trees (replanting cannot fulfill more than 50% of the required mitigation), and/or
- implementing other mitigation actions as outlined or developed by the County.

Issues, Goals and Policies

The goals and policies of the Open Space Element present strategies to enhance recreation and natural resource protection in the County. The Open Space Element is closely related to the Conservation Element and the
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Economic Development Element, which address topics such as agriculture, mineral resources, and visual resources.

Scenic Corridors

The State of California has designated a portion of SR-88 as a Scenic Highway, and the U.S. Forest Service has designated a portion of SR-88 as a National Forest Scenic Byway. SR-49 and the balance of SR-88 are eligible for designation as Scenic Highways by the State of California. In addition, the Circulation and Mobility Element includes goals and policies which address these scenic corridors.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities, including parks, trails, and water recreation areas, are important to residents and visitors alike. ACRA is responsible for meeting the recreation facility needs for the county as a whole, including both unincorporated areas and cities. ACRA’s Recreation Master Plan establishes a blueprint for expansion of recreation facilities and program offerings in the county.

Goal OS-1: Ensure provision of park and recreational facilities serving residents and visitors.

Policy OS-1.1: Support efforts by ACRA to maintain and enhance existing parks.

Policy OS-1.2: Support efforts by ACRA to provide a range of recreational facilities and programming to serve all county residents, including facilities and programs geared toward youth and seniors.

Policy OS-1.3: Identify potential revenue sources to develop and maintain existing facilities, as well as to provide and expand recreational facilities as needed.

Goal OS-2: Encourage the development and use of recreational and transportation trails within Amador County.

Policy OS-2.1: Promote the development of a network of recreational trails for pedestrians, hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists. Where possible, promote the functional use of trails as transportation corridors.

Policy OS-2.2: Link trails to existing infrastructure, including other recreation opportunities, parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas. Coordinate with surrounding counties and
communities to connect trails to regional and statewide systems.

Natural Resource and Species Protection

Conservation and stewardship of the natural environment, including wildlife habitat, is important to the future of the county. The County will work to guide development and use of the land in ways which limit degradation of the natural environment, always seeking to maintain a balance between the community's interests in preservation and the rights of individual property owners.

Goal OS-3: Protect wildlife habitats, including sensitive environments and aquatic habitats, consistent with State and federal law.

Policy OS-3.1: Encourage preservation of oak woodlands in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

Policy OS-3.2: Encourage the conservation of corridors for wildlife movement, particularly in oak woodland areas and along rivers and streams.

Policy OS-3.3: Support voluntary conservation easements to protect wildlife habitat, including oak woodlands.

Policy OS-3.4: Use site planning techniques, including, but not limited to, buffers, setbacks, and clustering of development to protect sensitive environments, including wetlands, riparian corridors, vernal pools, and sensitive species.

Policy OS-3.5: Protect aquatic habitats from the effects of erosion, siltation, and alteration.

Policy OS-3.6: Encourage the use of appropriate native species for reclamation and revegetation components of development projects. Restrict the introduction of invasive exotic species. The County will amend Chapter 15.40 of the County Code (governing grading and erosion control) to include a section addressing the requirement to limit the potential for introduction and spread of invasive species during soil disturbance and construction activities.

Goal OS-4: Protect special status species, including threatened and endangered species, consistent with State and federal law.

Policy OS-4.1: Ensure that new development complies with State and federal laws concerning special status species preservation.
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

As required by Government Code Section 65564, the following action programs (implementation programs that are also EIR mitigation measures) implement Open Space Element goals and policies (please note that additional implementation programs help implement policies for open space categories that are addressed in other General Plan elements):

Program D-1a(12), Development Proposal Evaluation (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.4-4a)

Impacts to oak woodlands. The County will assess impacts of proposed projects on oak woodlands, and require mitigation per Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

Program D-4, Biological Resources (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.4-1a)

When considering discretionary development proposals, it is the County’s objective to avoid or substantially reduce impacts to special-status species, riparian habitat, lone chaparral, oak woodlands, and wetlands (including vernal pools and non-jurisdictional wetlands) through project design and modification to the extent feasible.

Additional action programs for other categories of open space are listed below. These implement goals and policies are found in other elements.

Managed Production of Resources (implementing selected Conservation Element and Economic Development Element goals and policies):

- Program P-11, Farmland (Mitigation Measure 4.2-1a)
- Program D-1a(9), Development Proposal Evaluation (Farmland) (Mitigation Measure 4.2-1b)
- Program P-10, Timber Production (Mitigation Measure 4.2-5a)
- Program D-1a(10), Development Proposal Evaluation (forestland and timberland) (Mitigation Measure 4.25-b)
- Program P-9, Mineral Resource Management (Mitigation Measure 4.6-8a)
- Program D-1a(13), Development Proposal Evaluation (mineral resources) (Mitigation Measure 4.6-8b)
Public Health and Safety (implementing selected Safety Element goals and policies):

- Program D-10, Evacuation Planning and Routes (Mitigation Measure 4.8-2b)
- Program D-2, Fire-Safe Development (Mitigation Measure 4.8-7a)
- Program P-4, Flood Planning (Mitigation Measure 4.9-5a)
- Program P-1b, Zoning Code and Development Regulations (Mitigation Measure 4.9-5b)
- Program D-1a(11), Development Proposal Evaluation (flood prone areas)(Mitigation Measure 4.9-5c)

Places, features, and objects of significance to Native Americans (implementing selected Conservation Element goals and policies):

- Program D-6, Historic Preservation, Cultural Resources (Mitigation Measure 4.5-1a)
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GOVERNANCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Governance Element is to provide an understanding of the governing structure in Amador County and its relationship to land use and planning. Governance is broader than regulatory authority; it also describes how the County interacts with its citizens, as well as with State, federal, and local agencies and organizations to carry out policies in this General Plan.

State law does not require counties to address governance within their general plans. However, citizen involvement in government is fundamental to Amador County’s character, economic vitality, and local history. Land use and other decisions guided by the General Plan principally address orderly residential, commercial, and industrial growth. The General Plan also guides Amador County’s future course of action on a variety of related and critical topics, including agriculture, timber production, mining, hunting, and fishing, water resources, and tourism.

Amador County has a tradition of relying on public participation and involvement to ensure successful and meaningful land use decisions, as well as the stewardship, use, and conservation of natural resources. The goals and policies of the Governance Element define and build upon Amador County’s history of civic involvement and community vision.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Governance Element includes the following sections:

- **Amador County Government.** This section describes the structure of Amador County’s government, including responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the County Administrative Officer, County Counsel, and County departments responsible for implementing the General Plan.

- **Local, State, and Federal Agencies.** This section briefly describes other local, state, and federal agencies which operate in Amador County, and describes how these agencies interact with the County relative to land use decisions.

- **Planning in Amador County.** This section summarizes the legal basis for land use planning in California, and a summary of how this process is applied in Amador County.
Issues, Goals, and Policies. This section builds on the background information presented in earlier sections to define Amador County’s approach to interactions with its citizens and other government agencies.

Amador County Government

Amador County is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors (Board) elected by qualified voters residing in Amador County and a County Administrative Officer (CAO) who receives direction from the Board. This form of governance is provided for in California’s constitution. The following sections describe how the County has organized its local system of governance, and how each part relates to one another.

Board of Supervisors

Each member of the Amador County Board of Supervisors is elected by district on a non-partisan basis. Board members must reside within the district they are elected to represent. Within the broad limits established by the State constitution, the Board exercises both the legislative and the executive functions of government. The Board of Supervisors is also the governing body for a number of special districts within Amador County, such as water, sewer, county service areas, and fire protection. Each of the five members is elected to overlapping four-year terms.

Each of the Supervisors also serves as a member of various advisory committees, on topics such as Agriculture and Natural Resources, Land Use, Tribal Relations, and the Martell and Carbondale Business Parks. Committee recommendations are referred to the full Board for action.

The Board has the authority to make both legislative and quasi-judicial discretionary decisions. Legislative acts are usually general policy decisions, such as general plan revisions and zoning changes, and are binding only when they are approved by the Board. The Planning Commission may make recommendations, but only the Board can approve legislative actions, which are, in-turn, subject to California’s initiative and referendum processes. Quasi-judicial decisions apply legislative policy (as established by the Board) to individual developments. In other words, they require discretion and interpretation by local government agencies.

Each Supervisor nominates/submits for approval by the Board of Supervisors, a resident from their district to serve on the County’s Planning Commission. Supervisors also hire and direct the County Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO manages the day to day operation of the County’s departments to implement the Board’s direction and ensure proper delivery of County services.
Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of five members, one from each supervisorial district, nominated by that district’s supervisor and approved by the Board as a whole. The Planning Commission holds public hearings and reviews development applications. The Commission makes recommendations to the Board regarding interpretation, updates, and maintenance of the General Plan, county code amendments, zoning changes, variances, and environmental studies and analysis for these projects and actions pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission also makes decisions, applying legislative policy established by the Board of Supervisors, on use permits, tentative subdivision maps, tentative parcel maps, and appeals of staff’s interpretation and/or enforcement of county codes. The Planning Commission’s decisions on these matters are legally binding, but may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

Other County Commissions

In addition to the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors appoints other public commissions (such as the Commission on Aging) that meet on regular schedules to consider issues of local importance and make recommendations to the Board as needed. Commissioners are Amador County residents who volunteer their time and work to serve their community’s interests. The types of commissions have varied over the years, and will continue to vary in the future in response to community objectives and interests. These commissions remain an important opportunity for citizen involvement in County government.

County Departments

Amador County’s governing structure includes a variety of departments that carry out the day-to-day business of the County. The General Plan provides policy direction which affects all of the County’s departments. Following is a brief description of County departments whose functions have the greatest effect on land use and planning decisions.

County Counsel: renders legal advice and provides legal representation on civil matters to County officers, departments, and the Board.

County Administrative Officer: directed by the Board; administers all County departments and programs including development and maintenance of the County budget, oversight of County departments, staff support to the Board, and management of specific programs as directed by the Board.
Assessor: administers the County’s property tax system.

Building Department: processes and issues building permits, reviews construction plans in unincorporated Amador County, provides field inspection of projects requiring construction approval, and enforces County and State building codes.

Environmental Health Department: supports compliance with State and County regulations regarding control of toxic materials, sewage and solid waste, protection of food and water supply, public bathing areas, nuisance complaints and housing conditions.

Public Health Department: supports community health through education and programs, disease prevention, and protection from environmental risk.

Planning Department oversees the processing of plans for new development and redevelopment plans; maintains and updates the General Plan; proposes policy for land use; and regulates, monitors and enforces the County Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision, Surface Mining, and other ordinances. The Planning Department processes land use permits and applications, and provides summary reports and recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board for legislative and quasi-judicial land use and planning decisions.

Sheriff’s Department and Office of Emergency Services: The Sheriff’s Department performs law enforcement functions for the County. The Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) is responsible for the administration of County emergency management; planning, coordination, response support and communications with all agencies in the event of large scale emergencies or disasters.

Department of Transportation and Public Works: provides County roads, bridges, and infrastructure maintenance and construction, waste management oversight, and land development infrastructure, plan review, and inspection. The Department of Transportation and Public Works also is responsible for implementing state fire and life safety regulations.

Agricultural Commissioner: provides for the local administration of statewide agricultural enforcement programs that protect the agricultural industry and environment of Amador County. The Agricultural Commissioner also performs a variety of pest management functions, as well as enforcement of pesticide regulations, seed certification, and compilation of crop statistics for the County.

Amador County Library: provides a network of community libraries, including a main library, six branch libraries, and outreach services.
LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

Although the County is solely responsible for many local land use and planning decisions and policy development, numerous issues require Amador County to work together with other local, state, and federal agencies to achieve solutions that benefit County residents and the environment. Following is a description of other local, state and federal agencies operating in Amador County.

Cities

In addition to County departments and countywide agencies, cities exercise jurisdiction over land within their limits. Five cities are located within Amador County: Amador City, Ione, Jackson, Plymouth, and Sutter Creek. Each city has its own General Plan and zoning regulations. Each city shares an interest with the County regarding future land uses within areas surrounding its established limits. Prior to annexation, such areas are within the land use jurisdiction of Amador County. Following annexation, they are within the land use jurisdiction of the city.

The Amador Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approves spheres of influence, which may be outside cities. The sphere of influence is a planning document that defines a city’s (or a district’s) probable future boundary and service area. These SOIs, which are updated every five years following a municipal service review, designate lands which are expected to be annexed into the City in the future. Large lot or rural-style development within SOIs can impede future city annexations, since these types of development typically do not require urban services, or cannot be economically provided with urban services. When Amador LACFO approves amendments to the SOIs outside cities, the County incorporates these revised SOI boundaries into the General Plan land use diagram, with no amendment required to the General Plan.

Although the County does not have authority over land use decisions in the five incorporated cities, residents of these cities do vote for County elected offices, and receive a variety of services from the County. For instance, judicial services (courts), elections, public records (such as deeds), and many health and social services (such as mental health services) are provided by the County in both incorporated and unincorporated areas. In addition, some of the County’s cities contract with the County to provide law enforcement and other services within their boundaries.
Neighboring Counties

Neighboring counties, including Sacramento, San Joaquin, Calaveras, El Dorado, and Alpine, also make decisions in their jurisdictions which have the potential to indirectly affect Amador County, including changing traffic patterns and changing demand for commercial services. Their interactions with regional, state, and federal agencies also have potential to affect Amador County’s planning process. County officials routinely engage in discussions with our neighbors and monitor their inter-jurisdictional activities to ensure positive outcomes for Amador residents and businesses.

Special Purpose Agencies and Districts

Special purpose agencies and districts advise the County Board of Supervisors and city councils with regard to planning policy and implementation. Although each agency or district has its own Board and executive director, these roles often overlap with elected and appointed County and city positions. Following are descriptions of the special purpose agencies and districts which have direct roles in implementing the General Plan.

Amador Air District: local agency responsible for air quality planning and monitoring activities, as well as permitting of commercial and industrial uses.

Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC): Serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Amador County. ACTC’s functions include preparation and implementation of the Countywide Regional Transportation Plan, and allocation of State and federal funds for transportation improvements.

Amador County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC): The Airport Land Use Commission, which is governed by California Public Utilities Code Section 21670, has a basic responsibility to assist the County and cities in ensuring compatible land uses in the vicinity of airports located within the County. The ALUC reviews land use proposals near airports and other land use issues which have the potential to have an effect on airport operations.

Amador County Recreation Agency (ACRA): Joint Powers Authority established in October 2003 between City and County governments, as well as several special districts. ACRA operates parks and recreation areas, as well as recreation programs throughout the county.

Amador Transit: operates a fleet of 12 buses with weekday service between all major population centers in the County and into downtown Sacramento.
Amador Water Agency (AWA): special district which provides water and wastewater services to some residents of Amador County. AWA provides wholesale, treated, and irrigation water to other agencies and districts, as well as providing retail water service directly to customers.

Amador County Unified School District: provides K–12 education for approximately 5,000 students throughout the County. Government Code sections 65351 and 65352 define the close working relationship between County government and the school district regarding planning agency decisions, the General Plan, and the potential expansion of existing school sites or the necessity to acquire additional school sites. The school district is an independent agency, and has authority to make land use decisions concerning its facilities independent of the land use authority held by the County or cities.

Amador Fire Protection Authority: In 2003, the Amador Fire Protection District, the Sutter Creek, Jackson Valley, and Lockwood Fire Districts, and the cities of Ione, Jackson, and Sutter Creek joined together to form the Amador Fire Protection Authority (AFPA). AFPA coordinates future fire protection planning, mutual aid partnerships, and funding.

Amador Fire Protection District: responsible for emergency fire, rescue, and medical aid services in approximately 85 percent of the unincorporated portion of Amador County. Services are provided by volunteer firefighters, through mutual aid agreements with nearby fire districts, and by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. A one-half cent sales tax ballot measure was passed in 2008 to fund some paid firefighting staff.

Local Special Purpose Districts: A variety of local districts are responsible for providing services such as water and/or sewer service to specific areas. An example is the Pine Grove Community Services District, which provides retail water supply and parks to Pine Grove.

Amador Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO): LAFCO is an independent regulatory commission created by the legislature to control the boundaries of cities and most special districts. LAFCO is not a part of County government.

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD): EBMUD provides water service to portions of the Bay Area. EBMUD’s primary source of water is the Mokelumne River, including its reservoirs in Amador County. EBMUD is a large landowner in the County, holding approximately 28,000 acres along the Mokelumne River and Camanche and Pardee Reservoirs. EBMUD has a particular interest in maintaining water quality in Amador County and the Mokelumne River watershed.
State Agencies

Several State agencies have jurisdiction over certain lands in Amador County, or perform functions in the County which affect land use. The County seeks to interact with these agencies in a manner that promotes responsible management of resources while preserving the interests of the County and ensuring that the culture and traditions that define Amador County are maintained. Following are descriptions of the State agencies that routinely interact with the County related to implementation of land use and planning policies.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH): responsible for protecting the public from unhealthy or unsafe environments, ensuring access to health services, and responding to public health emergencies. CDPH’s responsibilities include regulation of public water systems and residential water treatment.

California Air Resources Board (CARB): responsible for coordinating and providing oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California, and for implementing the provisions of both the California Clean Air Act of 1988 and the California Climate Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32).

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE): responsible for fighting wildland fires in State Responsibility Areas, which includes most of the unincorporated County (non-federally owned, unincorporated land). A large portion of the County, particularly upcountry, is classified as a high- or very high- fire hazard severity zone. CAL FIRE also reviews and approves Timber Harvest Plans, which are required for timber harvesting conducted on State or privately-owned lands.

Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR): prepares CEQA guidelines, provides planning assistance to local agencies, and administers some planning procedural requirements.

California Department of Water Resources (DWR): operates the State Water Project, which brings water from Northern California and the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Central Valley. DWR also coordinates the Inter-Regional Conjunctive Use Project (IRCUP) to provide inter-regional water supply reliability benefits in Amador, Calaveras, and San Joaquin Counties, and within the EBMUD service area.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans): builds and maintains the state highway system. Amador County is located in Caltrans District 10. Caltrans has authority over the state highways within Amador County’s boundaries, including SR-16, SR-26, SR-49, SR-88, SR-104, and SR-124. Access to state highways for purposes such as driveways and road connections is
controlled by Caltrans, which can affect determinations of what uses or activities are appropriate on adjacent parcels with no other means of access. In addition, the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics permits airports and heliports in California, and is involved in land use decisions for schools.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR): builds, maintains, and operates correctional facilities and rehabilitation centers throughout the state. In Amador County, CDCR administers Mule Creek State Prison and Preston School of Industry in Ione, and the Pine Grove California Youth Authority Camp.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW): makes determinations with the potential to affect land use through streambed alteration permit requirements and enforcement of laws such as the California Endangered Species Act.

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB): regional boards are subdivisions of the California Water Resources Control Board, and are responsible for water quality, wastewater treatment, wetland protection, and surface water allocation rights. Amador County is located in RWQCB Region 5.

California Department of Conservation (DOC): responsible for agricultural land conservation, mining and mine reclamation, geological research and mapping, regulation of oil, gas, and energy resources, and recycling. DOC implements the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, which identifies and tracks conversion of important farmland to other uses, and the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), which requires that each operating mine have a permit, reclamation plan, and financial resources to ensure reclamation.

Federal Agencies

Federal agencies also affect local land use decisions. Federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, also manage public land within the boundaries of Amador County. Amador County does not have jurisdiction over federally-owned lands within its boundaries; rather federal agencies have historically made land use decisions affecting these lands independently.

Federal laws, including laws intended to protect air quality, water quality, and endangered species, also affect local land use decisions. The County seeks to interact with these agencies in a manner that promotes responsible management of resources and preserves the interests of County residents, ensuring that the culture and traditions that define Amador County are maintained.
The actions of federal agencies—including planning, adoption of rules and regulations, acquisition of land or interests in land, promulgation of programs, adjustments of land, and other activities on public lands—can have significant effects on the culture, traditions, economy, and resources of Amador County and its residents.

In order to protect the customs, cultures, economy, resources and environment of the County of Amador as set forth in County policy, the County considers it to be critical that federal agencies recognize and address the effects of any proposed action which would affect land in the County.

Federal coordination with the County, and consideration of the County's interests, is required by law by the National Environmental Protection Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, and numerous other federal statutes and administrative procedures.

There is a clear need to establish an effective and consistent joint planning procedure for advance notification, referral, coordination and participation. This joint planning procedure should be followed by all federal agencies when undertaking activities or actions affecting the public health, safety, land use, customs, culture, economy, conservation of natural resources, and environment of Amador County, including its agricultural industry, livestock grazing, production of timber and wood products, water resources, summer cabin usage, access to public lands, mining, tourism, recreation, Native American interests, and hunting and fishing.

The Board expects the following advance notification, referral, coordination and joint participation process to be followed by all federal agencies active in Amador County:

- In accordance with federal law, the Board expects all federal agencies to inform the County of pending, contemplated, or proposed actions affecting local communities, citizens, or affecting County policy. The Board expects that agencies shall coordinate planning and implementation of those actions with the County upon the County's request. Notification of these proposed actions must be timely, and include a description of the proposed action sufficient to permit an informed response by the County and its citizens. These reports shall be provided to the County for review and coordination with sufficient time to prepare a meaningful response.

- Federal agencies must provide notification when documents pertaining to projects or actions in Amador County are available, and these documents must be available for the minimum time set forth by the
Amador County contains large areas of public lands. The erosion of revenues directly and indirectly attributable to multiple-uses of public lands represents a threat to the County’s fiscal stability. Other County concerns related to use of public lands include:

- Need for continued renewal of Forest Service leases for recreational cabins as a valid way of supporting the “multiple use” concept of forest management. The Board supports the continuation of these permits.
- Need for continued road access to public lands for public use, including hunting and fishing. The Board opposes the closure or gating of roads on public lands without County input.
Need for continued issuance of grazing permits on public lands to allow continuation of agricultural use. The Board supports the continued use of public lands for agricultural activities.

Following is a brief listing of some of the federal agencies which manage public land within the County, may be involved in local land use decisions, or both.

**U.S. Forest Service (USFS):** USFS, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, manages large tracts of public land, including approximately 78,116 acres in Amador County. The Forest Service’s primary task is conservation, but the Service must also accommodate recreation and resource extraction land uses.

**U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** BLM, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages public lands, including approximately 9,045 acres of environmentally sensitive open space in Amador County where urban development is not permitted. The BLM balances competing preservation, resource extraction, and recreation uses.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** EPA is responsible for a broad range of environmental issues. EPA’s primary role in planning is through administration of the Clean Air Act.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):** USACE is responsible for large public works projects. USACE most commonly affects land use decisions through its administration of permits to dredge and fill wetlands (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act).

**U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation):** Reclamation, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, builds and maintains water systems, including the Central Valley Project that brings water from Northern California and the Sierra Nevada Mountain Ranges to the Central Valley.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):** USFWS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the federal Endangered Species Act, including protection of endangered species habitat.

**U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT):** provides funding for roads and transit facilities throughout the County.

**National Park Service (NPS):** in addition to its administration of national parks, the park service (part of the U.S. Department of the Interior) also administers the National Register of Historic Places, which lists numerous sites and buildings within Amador County.
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): controls airspace in Amador County, including permitting authority for tall towers.

Native American Tribes and Rancherias

California Senate Bill (SB) 18 (2004) requires that the County consult with Native American groups to aid in the protection of traditional tribal cultural places through local land use planning. Pursuant to SB 18 requirements, the County invited representatives of the region’s Native American groups to contribute to the General Plan update process, and will continue to seek such interaction with regard to future development proposals.

Federally-recognized Native American tribes can petition to have land taken into trust by the federal government, such as Jackson Rancheria. The Buena Vista Rancheria and the Ione Band of Miwok Indians have sought to have tribal lands established (either under trust status or otherwise as “Indian Country”) within the boundaries of Amador County. These lands are not subject to Amador County jurisdiction.

Planning in Amador County

California has created a legal framework for local land use planning. Most of the state’s land use and planning laws are located in the Government Code, Public Resources Code, and Health and Safety Code. California’s planning laws are largely procedural; that is, they do not prescribe specific policies for local governments to implement, but rather establish a procedural structure to guide local agencies. This procedural structure creates a uniform planning process throughout the state, but allows local agencies’ land use plans and decisions to cater to local conditions and customs. Local governments must follow a detailed set of procedures when adopting land use plans. The General Plan Law, the Subdivision Map Act, and CEQA are three very influential state land use laws affecting Amador County.

California General Plan Law requires the County and each of its cities to prepare a general plan, which describes a jurisdiction’s vision of future development via policy statements. This law specifies the seven topics (also known as ‘elements’) required in all general plans, and identifies the general plan review and adoption process. Specific Plans may be created to implement the General Plan within more precise geographic areas of the County.

1 Required elements are land use, circulation, housing, safety, conservation, open space, and noise.
The **Subdivision Map Act** grants the County the authority to establish regulations regarding land subdivisions. The act establishes procedures that the County must use, but does not require specific designs or public infrastructure improvements. Under the Subdivision Map Act, the County has the authority to require improvements, or funding for improvements, such as roads, sewer, and water utilities, prior to granting planning approvals.

The **California Environmental Quality Act** requires public disclosure of potential environmental effects of proposed projects. The County conducts environmental analysis of most public and private development projects, general plan amendments and rezones, specific plans, and subdivision actions. This analysis results in a determination as to whether project implementation would result in one or more negative impacts on the physical environment. CEQA often requires preparation of Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Negative Declarations. Because CEQA’s purpose is disclosure, the County may approve projects found to have significant impacts on the environment which offer other community benefits through adoption of specific findings and a statement of overriding considerations. Amador County serves as a CEQA lead agency for many projects within its jurisdiction, and routinely comments on CEQA documents prepared by other agencies described within this Element.

California **Housing Element Law** requires local governments to consider the housing needs of all income levels in their general plans. Jurisdictions must also demonstrate that their development regulations provide adequate opportunities for housing development to meet the area’s housing need. The California Department of Housing and Community Development reviews local housing elements for compliance with state law.

The **Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act** regulates the procedures through which government boundaries, including city limits, spheres of influence, and special district service areas, can be modified. Each county has a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) which processes these boundary changes.

In addition to these basic planning laws, a number of other laws and regulations can affect local land use planning. For instance, the **Endangered Species Act** can affect land use changes which would limit critical habitat for species which are either listed or being considered for listing as threatened or endangered. **SMARA** governs mining and reclamation of former mines. **Voluntary Williamson Act** contracts require that land remain in agricultural use for 10-year contract terms. In **Timber Production Zones (TPZs)**, lower value is assessed for property taxes, with timber harvesting considered the highest and best use.
Amador County’s Planning Process

The County exercises its land use authority through a combination of planning principles, procedures, and documents, as described below. The General Plan outlines the County’s vision, goals, and policies for both development and conservation, which are then implemented in more detail in other planning documents, including the Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance, and design review guidelines.

The General Plan includes a Land Use Map, which identifies land use designations in the unincorporated County. A general plan land use designation includes information regarding the types of uses which are appropriate, and provides a range of how many dwellings, or how large a commercial or industrial building may be developed on a per-acre basis. For example, a parcel’s general plan land use designation might be “Rural Residential,” which permits a general range of residential uses on parcels of 1 to 5 acres.

The County’s Zoning Code (Title 19 of the County Code) provides much more detailed information about development which is appropriate for a parcel. The example “Rural Residential” parcel described above might be in a “Residential Estate” zoning district. This district would describe details such as how far a building must be set back from the road or from property lines, building height limits, or the required number of garage parking spaces. Some uses which are potentially appropriate in a given zone, but could cause negative noise, light, or odor effects on neighboring properties or property owners may require a discretionary use permit. Such uses and procedures for use permits are also defined in the zoning code.

Ministerial actions include those decisions where discretion is not required to evaluate the proposal. If a proposed project meets the criteria defined in the Zoning Code and General Plan, it may be approved administratively by the Planning Department, and is not generally subject to review by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. For instance, in the example above, a property owner could bring forward a proposal for a single-family residence meeting zoning code requirements for the Residential Estate district.

However, proposals which differ from the established general plan or zoning requirements must request to modify these standards. For instance, on the parcel above, if the property owner wished to construct a restaurant or service station, the parcel’s general plan designation and zoning district would first have to be changed. Such changes require approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, which is considered a legislative action. The Board and the Planning Commission would evaluate the proposal and make a decision whether or not to amend the general plan.
or zoning code, as well as whether to approve or deny the proposal based upon its merits, applying policies defined in the general plan and knowledge of local conditions and needs. This decision requires the Board and/or the Planning Commission to exercise considerable discretion, thus a disclosure of potential environmental impacts under CEQA and public hearings are required. Pursuant to California law, the County may amend the General Plan no more than four times per year.

**ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES**

Goals and policies for the Governance element provide direction regarding how the County government intends to conduct its interactions with the public and other agencies. Governance issues addressed within the General Plan include public notification and information distribution, public participation opportunities, and successful collaboration with other agencies to achieve mutual goals.

**Public Involvement**

Amador County’s culture is characterized by strong local involvement and pride in the community. The Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and all levels of County government will continue to work in and for the community, and our decisions will continue to be the result of respectful and meaningful input and deliberation.

**Goal G-1:** Amador County will make decisions in the public interest, and will seek meaningful public input to support its decisions.

**Policy G-1.1:** Conduct open meetings where County residents have an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns.

**Policy G-1.2:** Provide public notice of meetings by a variety of methods.

**Policy G-1.3:** Encourage public participation in the County’s discussions, meetings, and policy development.

**Cooperation with Other Local Agencies**

Many of Amador County’s land use, economic development, agricultural, conservation, and public safety goals can be better met through cooperation with cities, special purpose agencies and districts, community organizations and by working with our neighbors. The County is committed to working with all willing partners to support and promote the interests of County residents.
Goal G-2: Amador County will promote the interests of its residents in its dealings with other local governments and coordinate with cities and other local government agencies to ensure orderly growth and efficient service provision.

Policy G-2.1: Encourage participation by County residents and business owners in solutions to County and regional issues.

Policy G-2.2: Coordinate with other agencies and jurisdictions to identify and resolve regional problems.

Policy G-2.3: Actively participate in long-range regional land use and transportation planning efforts to ensure positive outcomes for the County.

Policy G-2.4: Encourage collaboration among public agencies, residents, and civic organizations.

Policy G-2.5: Work with other local agencies, including cities, the Amador County Transportation Commission, the Amador County Recreation Agency, the Amador Fire Protection Authority, and the Amador Water Agency, to ensure that public services such as fire protection, flood protection, recreation, water, and wastewater services are provided efficiently and cost-effectively.

Policy G-2.6: Consider schools an essential part of the infrastructure required to accommodate new development and establish maintaining adequate school facilities as a community priority. Ensure that potential effects on the County educational system are considered when reviewing development projects.

Cooperation with State, Federal, and Tribal Agencies

Certain actions of State and federal agencies and tribal governments are not subject to County jurisdiction. However, Amador County will continue to work proactively to support the interests of county residents in its interactions with these bodies. A healthy economy, preservation of property rights, orderly growth, judicious use of natural resources, access to reliable water supplies, and stewardship of the natural environment are all important County goals. Through active participation and deliberation in intergovernmental affairs, the County will ensure that these goals are considered and respected by other levels of government.
Goal G-3: Amador County will promote the interests of its residents in its dealings with the State and federal governments.

Policy G-3.1: Maintain regular communication with State and federal agencies which manage public land or are involved in land use decisions in Amador County.

Policy G-3.2: Communicate the County’s and residents’ interests and opinions to State and federal agencies throughout their decision making processes.

Policy G-3.3: Promote the County’s goals for stewardship, property rights, judicious use, and conservation of natural and agricultural resources in interactions with State and federal governments.

Policy G-3.4: Consult with Native American Tribes to aid in the protection of traditional tribal cultural places when reviewing future development projects.

Policy G-3.5: Evaluate future planning and development activities of Native American Tribes to ensure that potential traffic, noise, light, public safety, and other effects from these activities are minimized within the County’s jurisdictional area.
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Safety Element is to reduce or avoid potential hazards to community residents, structures, community facilities, and infrastructure. This element identifies actions needed to manage crisis situations such as earthquakes, fires, and floods. Specific policies and guidance to regulate development in hazard-prone areas (such as floodplains, seismic risk areas, or high fire-danger areas) are included. The objectives of the Safety Element include:

- Reduce risks associated with earthquakes, fires, floods, and other natural and human-caused disasters; and,
- Respond effectively to emergencies.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Safety Element is intended to satisfy the requirements of California planning law, and is a mandatory component of the County’s General Plan. Government Code section 65302(g) presents a list of hazards which must be covered by the Element if they pertain to conditions in the county. These hazards include:

- Seismically induced conditions including ground shaking, surface rupture, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure;
- Slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides;
- Subsidence, liquefaction, and other geologic hazards;
- Flooding;
- Avalanche;
- Wild land and urban fires; and,
- Evacuation routes.

State law also allows additional issues to be addressed by specific communities. This Safety Element addresses other issues, including mining sites, hazardous material use, and emergency preparedness.

The Safety Element contains goals and policies to reduce the dangers posed by various hazards. These goals and policies will in many cases be related to goals and policies for other General Plan elements, including
the Land Use Element (for instance, the standards for allowable development in flood-prone areas). A well-planned and maintained circulation network is an essential public safety concern. Evacuation routes utilizing the circulation system are also described in the Safety Element. The provision of viable evacuation routes is inextricably linked to the planned circulation system described in the Circulation Element.

In addition, feasible implementation programs for the Safety Element have been developed consistent with the requirements of Government Code Section 65302(g)(2)(C). These implementation programs are also General Plan Final EIR mitigation measures. Once CEQA findings and the General Plan are adopted, these implementation programs legally are incorporated into the General Plan; see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2). Implementation programs are reproduced at the end of the Safety Element, following the discussion of issues, goals, and policies.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN AMADOR COUNTY**

As in all communities, natural conditions and human activities in Amador County affect the quality of life and safety of residents. Reducing risks associated with these hazards, and preparing for emergency situations is essential to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment.

Public health and private property are protected through prevention and emergency preparedness planning. The County has established goals and policies to safeguard community health, and prepare for emergency situations. The sections below briefly describe some of the hazards resulting from natural conditions and human activities in Amador County, and provide context for the goals and policies that follow. The Safety Element includes implementation programs describing specific actions the County will take to protect public safety. In addition, the County’s Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan is adopted by reference as a part of the Safety Element. This plan can be found in Appendix S-1.

**Flood Hazards**

Floods can be among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss, and can be caused by a number of different weather events. Floods can cause substantial damage to structures, landscapes, and utilities, as well as endanger life and safety. Public health hazards are also common with flood events that include standing water and wet materials in structures. This can breed microorganisms (including bacteria, mold, and viruses) causing disease, triggering allergic reactions, and damaging materials after the flood dissipates.
Flood risk is greatest in the floodplain located adjacent to a stream channel. Floodplains are illustrated on inundation maps, which show areas of potential flooding and water depths, and most often refer to areas that could be inundated by a 100-year flood (a flood that has a one-percent chance in any given year of being equaled or exceeded). The 100-year flood is the national minimum standard for regulated floodplains through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The State of California additionally requires flood hazards within the 200-year floodplain to be considered in General Plans. The Department of Water Resources has prepared maps illustrating the best available 200-year floodplain.

Flood potential can increase through land use and land surface changes. A change in the environment can create localized flooding problems both inside and outside of natural floodplains by altering or confining natural drainage channels. Such changes are most often the result of human activity.

Amador County contains multiple rivers, streams, creeks, and associated watersheds. The county is situated in a region that dramatically drops in elevation from the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the easternmost portion of the county to the central and western portions, where excess rain or snow can contribute to downstream flooding. Flood flows generally follow defined stream channels, drainages, and watersheds. Floods causing severe damage or risk have historically occurred primarily in developed portions of the county. Flooding events generally occur in areas near waterways, and have caused significant damage in the western portion of the county near population centers, such as Jackson, Ione, and Sutter Creek. Figure S-1 illustrates the locations of local, state- and federally-designated flood hazard areas, as required by Government Code Section 65302 (g) (2). Please note that all figures presented in this document illustrate a snapshot of conditions using the best data available in 2009. For current data, please contact the Planning Department.

Inundation can also occur as the result of partial or complete collapse of a dam or impoundment and often results from prolonged rainfall and flooding. The primary danger from dam failure is high velocity flooding of properties located downstream. Numerous dams provide downstream flood protection, water storage, and hydroelectric generation in the county and along its borders. Some dams and their reservoirs are located in steep river canyons. In the unlikely event of structural dam failure, inundation areas of these dams would closely follow stream courses and then broaden once they reach the flat lands located in the west end of the county. Areas subject to flooding from a dam failure would primarily be those located along these streams and drainages. These maps are on file at the County and are incorporated into the General Plan by reference for consideration in land use decisions.
Fire Hazards and Protection

Risk and vulnerability from wildfire in Amador County primarily result from the combination of dense vegetation and geographic and topographic features which create potential for natural- and human-caused fires. According to the Amador County Fire Reduction Plan, the county has a very high risk to experience catastrophic wildfires. Given the distribution and quantity of wildland vegetation, most of the county is a wildland urban interface (WUI) zone. Figure S-2 illustrates fire threat levels in Amador County.

A comparison of Figure S-2, “Fire Hazard Severity Zones” with Land Use Element Figure LU-1, “Land Use Diagram” identifies the location and distribution of land uses in relation to Very High, High, and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and State responsibility areas. State responsibility areas cover the majority of Amador County excluding those areas identified in Figure S-2 as federal land (federal responsibility areas) and incorporated cities (local responsibility areas). The General Plan proposed land uses directs development outside of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and State responsibility areas, and into Town Centers (TCs), Regional Service Centers (RSCs), and existing communities with essential public facilities (i.e. hospitals) and adequate infrastructure (i.e. public water systems, fire hydrants). Multiple-family residential and sensitive uses (e.g. care homes, schools, large day care facilities, etc.) are generally located in cities and in the Martell RSC which are not located in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and which have the necessary services and infrastructure these uses require. The General Plan also proposes decreasing the allowable density of development for areas located in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and State responsibility areas, including:

- Decreasing the density in the Amador Pines area (located above Buckhorn) from 1- to 5-acre density to 5- to 20-acre density.

- Decreasing the density in the Camanche North Shore Planning Special Planning Area from 18 dwelling units per acre to one unit per 1- to 5-acre density.

- Decreasing the density in areas near Willow Creek Road (west of Amador City) and Buena Vista (south of Ione) from 1- to 5-acre density to 40-acre density.
Figure S-1 Flood, Landslide, and Mine Hazards
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AMADOR COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Figure S-2: Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Legend
Fire Hazard Severity Zone
- Very High
- High
- Moderate

Roadways
Highways
Railroads
Streams and Creeks
Major Water Features
City Spheres of Influence
Incorporated Cities
Federal Land

Source: USGS 30M, Amador County GIS Data, CA DMORT 1997 and 2006

General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016.
• Decreasing the density in areas near Fiddletown, in the Burke Ranch subdivision, and areas north of the City of Sutter Creek and Amador City from 1- to 5-acre density to 5- to 20-acre density.

Fire hazards continue to increase from rapid population growth and residential construction in WUI zone areas. Dense vegetation provides fuel, which when combined with drought, high temperatures, low relative humidity, and high winds, creates prime conditions for frequent and catastrophic fires.

Providing adequate water supplies is essential to high-quality fire protection services. In rural areas, large numbers of residents are not located near a water hydrant. As a result, providing water for putting out fires relies on the water carrying capacities of fire engines available to each fire protection district. Most rural areas do not allow for efficient placement of water hydrants and, therefore, rely primarily on the capabilities of fire engines, which are often operated by volunteer fire departments. Over the past decade, wildfires have primarily occurred upcountry. The largest of these was the Power Fire in 2004 which burned approximately 16,800 acres of U.S. Forest Service land and private timberland in the upcountry area east of Dew Drop. Previous to that the largest fire in Amador County was the Rancheria Creek Fire in September of 1961 which burned 34,104 acres in a 3.5 mile wide and 13.5 mile long area starting southeast of Fiddletown. The fire initially burned easterly and then turned westerly toward Ione before circling back to Sutter Creek destroying approximately 10 homes and the gymnasium at the Amador County High School valued at over $243,750 before being stopped. The fire also inflicted over one million dollars in damages to fences, outbuildings, and range land. More recently, in July of 2014, the 4,240 acre Sand Fire located east of State Route 49 along the Cosumnes River, burned approximately 500 acres in Amador County with the remaining acreage being burned in neighboring El Dorado County. In 2015, the Butte Fire burned a total of approximately 70,868 acres. The fire resulted in 475 residences and 343 outbuildings burned, and 45 structures damaged. The Butte Fire also resulted in 2 civilian fatalities and 1 injury. However, only 7 percent (approximately 5,000 acres) of the Butte Fire burn area was located in Amador County; the primary burn area was in Calaveras County. The fire may have been caused by an overhead power line coming into contact with a tree. Additional information regarding wildland fires is available from the Amador County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services (http://www.co.amador.ca.us/departments/office-of-emergency-services/wildland-fires), the CAL FIRE fire incident database (http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/), and the U.S. National Forest Service Incident Information Center (http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/). As shown in Figure S-2, much of the county is characterized as high- or very high fire threat level.
The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Forest Service have developed the Fire Potential Index (FPI), which depicts the wildfire potential for forests, shrublands, and grasslands. FPI maps use satellite-derived information to assess the impact of vegetation on fire danger. The FPI is updated daily to reflect changing weather conditions and is used in daily wildfire decision making. FPI data is available at: http://firedanger.cr.usgs.gov/viewer/viewer.htm. In addition, to monitor the risk of actively burning wildfires, the USGS, in cooperation with the National Interagency Fire Center, developed GeoMAC—an Internet-based mapping tool that provides a national view of current wildfire situations to fire managers and the public. GeoMAC data is available at: http://www.geomac.gov/viewer/viewer.shtml.

Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards include seismic (earthquake) hazards, as well as volcanoes, landslides, and avalanches.

Seismic Hazards

Seismic hazards in Amador County are considered to be relatively minor compared to other areas of California. No Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is located in the county, and areas subject to liquefaction, ground failure, or surface rupture are not identified on State hazard maps. However, ground shaking has been felt in Amador County from earthquakes with epicenters elsewhere. The western portions of the county may experience ground shaking from distant earthquakes on faults to the west and east. Both the San Andreas fault (source of the 6.9 estimated Richter magnitude Loma Prieta earthquake causing damage in the Bay Area in 1989) and the closer Hayward fault have the potential for earthquake events with a greater than 6.7 magnitude.

Another potential source for earthquakes in Amador County is a series of faults associated with the western edge of the Central Valley, recently defined as the Coast Range Central Valley (CRCV) boundary thrust fault system. Various documents define portions of this little known system as the Midland Fault Zone or the Dunnigan Hills fault where the 1892 Vacaville-Winters earthquake occurred. A southern part of the CRCV system may have been the source of the very damaging 1983 Coalinga earthquake.

According to maps recently developed by the Department of Conservation’s California Geological Survey, Amador County has potential for ground shaking from earthquakes. The seismic hazard in this area is related to faults on both sides of the California-Nevada border. The eastern, upcountry portion of the county is at greatest risk from earthquakes. The most recent moderately strong earthquake affecting the area occurred on September 12, 1994 near South Lake Tahoe,
measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale. Structural damage from ground shaking has not historically been reported in Amador County.

**Subsidence**

Subsidence occurs when earth material sinks due to the underlying presence of natural or artificial voids. In Amador County, past mining activity has caused subsidence in some areas. Subsidence can result in serious structural damage to buildings, roads, underground utilities, irrigation ditches, and pipelines. Figure S-1 illustrates the location of some known former mines, which may represent locations where subsidence is likely to occur.

**Landslides, Debris Flows, and Avalanches**

Landslides include a wide variety of processes resulting in downward and outward movement of soil, rock, and vegetation. Common names for landslide types include slumps, rockslides, debris slides, lateral spreading, debris avalanches, earth flows, and soil creep. Although landslides are primarily associated with slopes greater than 15 percent, they can also occur in relatively flat areas and as cut-and-fill failures, river bluff failures, lateral spreading landslides, collapse of wine-waste piles, failures associated with quarries, and open-pit mines. Landslides may be triggered by both natural- and human-caused activity.

Debris flows also occur in some parts of the county, generally in the immediate vicinity of drainage swales or steep ravines. Debris flows occur when surface soil in or near steeply sloping drainage swales becomes saturated with water during unusually heavy rains and begins to flow down a slope at a rapid rate. Figure S-1 illustrates the location of historic landslide and debris flow events.

Rainfall, topography, and geology affect landslides and debris flows. Mining, construction, and changes to surface drainage areas also affect landslide potential. Landslides often accompany other natural hazard events such as floods, wildfires, and earthquakes. Landslides can occur either slowly or very suddenly; can damage and destroy structures, roads, utilities, and forested areas; and can cause injuries and death.

Avalanches occur when the weight of new snow increases stress faster than strength of the snowpack develops, causing the slope to fail. Avalanche conditions develop more quickly on steeper slopes and where wind-blown snow is common. The combination of steep slopes, abundant snow, weather, snowpack, and a trigger to cause movement create avalanches. Avalanche-prone areas are found upcountry along SR 88 in the Devil’s Gate and Kirkwood areas, where these combinations readily occur. Most avalanches occur during and shortly after storms between
January and March. Avalanches generally affect a few snowboarders, skiers, and hikers who venture into backcountry areas during or after winter storms. Avalanches cause road closures, and can damage structures and forests.

Mining and Hazardous Materials Sites

The Gold Rush of 1849 brought gold mining to Amador County on a large scale, and mining activities have continued to the present day. The county has more than 300 known historic mine locations, along with other hazardous materials storage and release sites. Figure S-1 illustrates the location of historic mine locations. These sites can pose a health risk to residents due to their effects on surface water, groundwater, and/or soils.

The County will use existing hazardous materials inventory information to guide decisions on future development applications, and will prepare an inventory of historic mine locations. The inventory will be used to avoid subsidence hazards as well as hazards posed by exposure to mine wastes.

Emergency Preparedness

Despite the best efforts of the County and individuals, disasters and emergencies will occur in the future. Amador County’s emergency preparedness strategy consists of implementing the disaster response plan, public education, coordinating with other governmental agencies, and identifying evacuation routes. The primary responsibility of the Amador County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) is to coordinate the county government’s response to disasters or other large scale emergencies. The office is charged with providing the necessary planning, coordination, response support, and communications with all agencies affected by large scale emergencies or disasters. The OES website (www.amadorgov.org/departments/office-of-emergency-services) includes links to the County’s plans associated with emergency services and related to the Safety Element, including:

- Amador County Emergency Operations Plan;
- Amador County Long Term Care Facility Evacuation Plan;
- Amador County Hazardous Materials Plan;
- Amador County Auxiliary Communications Plan; and
- Amador County Road Atlas.
Other emergency preparedness and response resources include:

- Amador-El Dorado Unit Strategic Fire Plan (http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/pub/fireplan/fpupload/fpppdf1537.pdf);
- A State of California resource for consumers who are seeking information about what they need to do to recover from a disaster (www.rebuildyourlife.ca.gov);
- Amador Fire Safe Council (www.amadorfiresafe.org).
- When preparing all types of fire plans (e.g., planning, recovery, disaster preparedness [pre-disaster], post-disaster, etc.) for the County, use as a reference the following website: (http://www.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/14%20Recovery%20Executive%20Summary%202010-30-13.pdf); and
- Fire Department Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid Agreements.

**RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

Many plans and programs enacted through State and local legislation directly relate to the Safety Element. These plans and programs are administered by agencies with powers to enforce State and local laws.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the State legislature in response to a public mandate for a thorough environmental analysis of projects that might adversely affect the environment. Public safety hazards are recognized as environmental impacts under CEQA. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedures are described in the CEQA Statutes and the CEQA Guidelines. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the land use decision-making stage, County officials and the general public will be able to assess safety impacts.

**Landslide Hazard Identification Program**

The Landslide Hazard Identification Program requires the State Geologist to prepare maps of landslide hazards within urbanizing areas, including portions of Amador County. Public agencies are encouraged to use these maps for land use planning and to support decisions regarding building, grading and development applications.
Amador County Code

The County has adopted the most recent sections of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24), including the Uniform Building, Mechanical, Fire, Electrical, and Plumbing Codes, which contain structural requirements for both current and new buildings. These codes are designed to ensure structural integrity during seismic and other hazardous events, and to prevent injury, loss of life and substantial property damage. To protect public safety, construction in Amador County is subject to these structural codes. Amador County Code Chapter 15.30, “Fire and Life Safety Regulations” have been adopted for the purpose of establishing minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction, and development in State responsibility areas.

Amador County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan describes the County’s actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property from hazards. Hazard mitigation planning is the process through which natural hazards potentially threatening communities are identified, likely impacts of those hazards are determined, mitigation goals are set, and appropriate strategies that would lessen the impacts are determined, prioritized, and implemented. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan is incorporated by reference within this Safety Element, and attached to the General Plan as Appendix S-1.

Fire Hazards and Protection

Fire Protection Areas and Districts

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) provides fire protection on federally owned lands (i.e., federal responsibility areas) in Amador County, which primarily include the El Dorado National Forest located in the easternmost portion of the county. CAL FIRE provides fire protection to federal and local areas through local agreements in addition to all State responsibility areas, which cover the majority of Amador County excluding only federal responsibility areas and local responsibility areas.

Local fire protection services in Amador County are provided by seven separate, but cooperative, districts, which include Amador Fire Protection District, Ione Fire Department, Jackson Fire Department, Jackson Valley Fire Protection District, Lockwood Fire Protection District, Sutter Creek Fire Protection District, and Kirkwood Public Utilities District. These local fire protection districts are responsible for responding to structural fires
and wildland fires, as well as providing emergency medical services within their service area.

All of these departments are staffed by volunteer personnel with the exception of CAL FIRE, the USFS, and Mule Creek State Prison. USFS fire engines are only staffed during the wildland fire season and stop operations in the winter and spring months. An agreement between Amador County and CAL FIRE provides for year-round dispatch services to all local government fire departments in Amador County.

**Amador Fire Protection District**

The Amador Fire Protection District (AFPD) was organized in 1990 by approval of the voters and resolution of the Amador County Board of Supervisors. The District is responsible for emergency fire, rescue, and medical aid service in approximately 85 percent of unincorporated Amador County. AFPD provides services through the efforts of volunteer firefighters and response of firefighters in surrounding fire departments/districts through automatic aid and mutual aid agreements. In addition, AFPD contracts with CAL FIRE for year-round dispatch services to all local government fire departments in Amador County.

The District operates seven fire stations and provides emergency fire, rescue, and medical aid service to the communities and surrounding areas of Amador Pines, Pioneer, Pine Grove, Pine Acres, Volcano, Martell, Drytown, Willow Springs, Fiddletown, River Pines, and the City of Plymouth.

**Jackson Valley Fire Protection District**

The Jackson Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection services primarily to an area located in the southwest corner of Amador County north of Lake Camanche and northwest of Pardee Reservoir. The District operates two fire stations.

**Lockwood Fire Protection District**

The Lockwood Fire Protection District provides fire protection services primarily for the area along Shake Ridge Road, located in north central Amador County and extending from Quartz Mountain Road to the CAL FIRE fire station at Dew Drop. The District operates two fire stations.

**Kirkwood Meadows Fire Department**

The Kirkwood Meadows Fire Department provides fire protection services primarily to the Kirkwood Resort area at the northeastern tip of Amador County. The Department operates one fire station.
City Fire Departments

Fire departments composed of some paid and volunteer firefighters provide fire protection services to the cities of Ione, Sutter Creek, Plymouth, Amador City, and Jackson.

Community Facilities District 2006-1

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors established Community Facilities District (CFD) 2006-1, which provides funding for fire protection services. Property owners in CFD 2006-1 are responsible for payment of an annual special tax which is used to fund additional service costs for fire protection. Annexation into CFD 2006-1 is a required condition of certain County approvals, including subdivision approvals and some use permits in the unincorporated County.

ISSUES, GOALS AND POLICIES

The Safety Element addresses natural conditions and human activities that can potentially threaten public health and safety. Natural hazards in Amador County include the potential for flooding, wildland fire hazards, earthquakes and associated hazards, avalanche hazards, and geologic conditions such as unstable soils and landslides. Human-caused hazards include those associated with mining and use of hazardous materials. Understanding these hazards and preparing to deal with them on both an incident-related and ongoing basis are important objectives. The following goals and policies can reduce the risks associated with these hazards, and help the County to prepare for emergency situations.

Flood Hazards

Flood risk is generally focused on low lying areas near streams and rivers, including Dry Creek, Sutter Creek, and Jackson Creek. Flood risk associated with dam failure is also a factor near rivers and streams. Developed uses are already present within the 100-year floodplain, particularly within incorporated areas of the county.

The County’s approach to flood hazard management includes limiting new construction in floodplain areas, requiring floodproofing for structures built in flood-prone areas, and an expressed preference for parks, open space, and other passive uses in flood-prone areas. Essential facilities such as hospitals, emergency shelters, fire stations, and public safety facilities should be located outside flood hazard areas. In addition, both existing and new structures and improvements can be designed differently to reduce stormwater runoff. Possible changes might include increased use of permeable pavement, narrower and smaller streets and
parking areas, and low-impact drainage features such as swales and detention or retention basins.

**Goal S-1:** Prevent loss of life or property from flooding.

**Policy S-1.1:** Direct future development (as defined in “Floodplain Management Regulations” set forth in the Amador County Code) to areas outside the floodway portion of the 100-year floodplain.

**Policy S-1.2:** Limit development in other areas prone to flooding, including the floodway fringe, other portions of floodplains and inundation areas. Require structures in these areas to incorporate floodproofing measures, including elevation above the 100-year floodplain profile.

**Policy S-1.3:** Reduce urban runoff and maintain the carrying capacity of floodplains or flood channels. Require provision of on-site retention and detention basins in new development applications as needed to reduce downstream flooding hazards.

**Policy S-1.4:** Designate agriculture, passive parks, open space, and other low-intensity uses within floodplain areas.

**Policy S-1.5:** Provide for construction of dams and water retention facilities on agricultural lands to support agricultural land uses, consistent with state and federal law.

**Fire Hazards and Protection**

Amador County is at very high risk to experience catastrophic wildfires. Most of the county is considered to be in a WUI zone. Wildfires occurring in the WUI zone pose severe risks to life, property, and infrastructure and are one of the most dangerous and complicated fire situations firefighters encounter.

The County seeks to guide future development toward areas with better fire suppression infrastructure and/or lower fire risk. In addition, the County supports improved fire response and suppression. Reviewing building setbacks, building code requirements, and infrastructure requirements for future development applications are some of the many steps the County will take to ensure wildland fire preparedness does not decline in the future.

**Goal S-2:** Reduce fire risks to current and future structures.

**Policy S-2.1:** Consistent with state regulations and local code requirements, require new buildings to be constructed to
provide fire-defensible spaces, separated from property lines and other buildings on the same or adjacent properties by adequate building setbacks clear of brush and fuel. Require new buildings in areas of moderate to high fire risk to be constructed using building materials and designs that increase fire resistance.

Policy S-2.2: Guide new development to areas where adequate fire protection, roads, and water service are available to support fire response.

Policy S-2.3: Incorporate fire safety site planning techniques within new development applications in high- or very-high fire risk areas. Encourage building envelope or cluster development techniques to increase defensible areas.

Policy S-2.4: Work with fire districts or other agencies and property owners to coordinate efforts to prevent wildfires and grassfires including consolidation of fuel buildup abatement efforts, firefighting equipment access, and water service provision.

Policy S-2.5: Work with fire districts and other agencies to educate the public regarding fire risks and periods of elevated or extreme risk due to drought or other factors.

Goal S-3: Maintain or improve fire response times.

Policy S-3.1: Support efforts by fire districts to obtain adequate funding to provide fire protection at desired levels. Implement impact fees if needed to provide adequate fire service.

Policy S-3.2: Encourage cooperation and regional agreements among fire districts and state and federal fire agencies to maximize fire protection capabilities across the county.

The Implementation Plan sets forth implementation programs to carry out the above goals and policies. These include Programs P-6 (effective county services), P-12 (emergency response), D-1 (development proposal evaluation), D-2 (fire-safe development), D-10 (evacuation planning and routes), C-3 (transportation coordination), C-4 (interagency coordination), and F-3 (fire services funding).

Geologic and Seismic Hazards

Seismic hazards in Amador County are considered to be relatively minor compared to other areas of California. Ground shaking has been felt from earthquakes with epicenters elsewhere. Subsidence, landslides, and
avalanches also pose risks in some areas. The County seeks to reduce future damage from seismic hazards, and to reduce landslides and avalanches by avoiding development practices which steepen slopes or place structures in the path of these phenomena.

**Goal S-4:** Protect people and property from seismic hazards.

- **Policy S-4.1:** Enforce site-specific seismic design category requirements per the California Building Code (CBC) to minimize earthquake damage.

- **Policy S-4.2:** Require minimum setbacks for habitable construction along streams between the stream bank and structure, based upon the susceptibility of the bank to seismic shaking-induced lurching.

- **Policy S-4.3:** Discourage new construction of structures or improvements in or near a seismic risk area or geologic hazard area unless these projects meet design standards to minimize or eliminate seismic risk.

**Goal S-5:** Protect people and property from landslides, mudslides, and avalanches.

- **Policy S-5.1:** Use the development review process to lessen the potential for erosion and landslides. Restrict site grading which steepens unstable slopes.

- **Policy S-5.2:** Limit development in areas with high landslide, mudslide, or avalanche susceptibility.

**Mining and Hazardous Materials Sites**

Hazardous materials storage and release sites have the potential to affect public health and safety if human contact with these materials is not minimized or avoided. Mine sites can pose additional risks, including subsidence.

**Goal S-6:** Protect people and resources from hazards posed by mining facilities and hazardous materials sites.

- **Policy S-6.1:** Coordinate with State and federal agencies to limit hazardous materials risks through the land use planning process. Utilize existing County hazardous materials facility information to identify areas of hazardous materials use, and restrict the use of hazardous materials to non-residential and non-sensitive areas.
Policy S-6.2: Locate hazardous materials facilities so as to limit potential hazards related to the proximity of sensitive populations and the distance and routes traveled for local deliveries.

Policy S-6.3: Encourage the use of programs and products to reduce and replace the use of hazardous materials where feasible.

Policy S-6.4: Develop a map and inventory of former mine locations to alert property owners to areas with potential subsidence issues.

Policy S-6.5: Work with other agencies to limit the effects of former mining activities.

**Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

No amount of planning or preparation can avoid all emergency situations. Amador County bears a risk of being affected by a variety of natural and human-caused disasters. Citizens and first responders must be prepared to react to such an emergency.

**Goal S-7:** Respond appropriately and efficiently to natural or human-caused emergencies.

Policy S-7.1: Maintain a disaster response plan to coordinate response actions.

Policy S-7.2: Continue to coordinate with other local public safety and law enforcement agencies to ensure effective emergency response.

Policy S-7.3: Work with other agencies to designate evacuation routes for various natural or human-caused emergencies.

Policy S-7.4: Maintain the operational integrity of essential public facilities during emergencies, including flood emergencies.

Policy S-7.5: Implement the following recommendations of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, consistent with availability of County resources:

- Prioritize data collection and mapping to improve fire protection planning, or coordinate with partners with mapping and data capabilities that could support Amador County planning;

- Look ahead to recovery planning and pre-planning for post-disaster which will provide further protection for County residents from wildfire;
Safety

Final

- Identify the assets at risk relating to the wildfire threat;
- Develop a recovery plan for the County for all disasters; and
- Develop the disaster recovery plan specific to Amador County necessity by priority in the future to meet the goals and policies of the plan.

Implementation Programs

As required by Government Code Section 65302(g)(2)(C), the following implementation (that are also EIR mitigation measures) implement Safety Element goals and policies:

Program P-4: Flood Planning (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.9-5a)

a. In order to avoid or substantially reduce the risk that flooding poses to people and property, the County will conduct an annual review of the floodplain map shown in Figure S-1 of the Safety Element, comparing Figure S-1 to flood mapping available from state and federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Water Resources. The purpose of this review is to ensure changes are noted and corresponding portions of the General Plan, including land use designations if necessary, are revised.

b. The County will update flood protection policies and programs in the General Plan and applicable development standards (including the Zoning Code) to integrate data from the State Plan of Flood Control and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan on an annual basis, if required, based on the annual review. For flood-related revisions to the Safety Element, the County will consult with relevant agencies serving the County, consistent with State law. Subsequent subdivision approvals, development agreements, permits, and other County entitlements will incorporate these revised policies and regulations.

Program P-6: Effective County Services (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.13-5a)

a. In order to evaluate and maintain the effectiveness of County services, the County will develop service standards for library, public safety, fire response, emergency response, human, and social services. Actual performance will be compared to these standards on an annual basis, and results presented to the Board of Supervisors, with recommendations for action if necessary.

b. Develop a standard for public safety staffing, facilities, and equipment. Based on the cost of maintaining this standard, the County will
establish a program consistent with the Mitigation Fee Act to levy proportional impact fees on new development proposals.

Program P-12: Emergency Response (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-2a)

a. In order to maintain effective emergency and disaster response and reduce hazards related to fire, flood, and public safety emergencies, the County will implement and periodically update disaster plans, including the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operations Plan, to meet federal, state, and local emergency requirements. This effort will include planning to coordinate response actions, and the identification and planning for evacuation routes for dam failure, wildfire, and flooding.

b. The County will regularly assess the resources needed to effectively respond to disaster situations, and ensure proper staffing levels at emergency response agencies.

c. The County will regularly assess the operational integrity of essential public facilities during emergencies, including flood emergencies, and identify actions to maintain operations, as necessary.

d. The County will update equipment and training as necessary, including adopting training standards that meet or exceed state and national standards.

e. The County will develop its capability to handle mass shelters in case of major disasters by maintaining a list of appropriate emergency shelter locations. These sites should be well connected to evacuation routes.

Program P-14: Hazardous Materials Tracking (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-4)

a. In order to avoid or substantially reduce hazards related to the use, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials, the County will continue implementing the Certified Unified Program Agency program, identifying businesses using, storing, and/or transporting hazardous materials. The County will continue to monitor these operations, and will require compliance with state and federal laws.

b. The County will review, revise, and continue permitting and inspection practices for businesses using, storing, and/or transporting hazardous materials, and will provide public agencies (the sheriff, fire departments, California Highway Patrol, and city police departments) with a list of such businesses upon request to encourage hazardous material training before an event occurs.
Program D-2: Fire-Safe Development (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-7a)

a. The County will review new development applications in moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones to confirm they meet the standards of the Title 24 Wildland Urban Interface Building Codes and 14 CCR 1270.

b. The County will require new structures and improvements to be built to support effective firefighting.

c. New development applications in very high fire hazard severity zones shall include specific fire protection plans, actions, and/or comply with Wildland Urban Interface codes for fire engineering features.

d. The County will seek fire district input on development applications to allow proposed projects to incorporate fire-safe planning and building measures. Such measures may include (but are not limited to) buffering properties, creating defensible space around individual units, using fire-resistant building materials, installing sprinkler systems, and providing adequate on-site water supplies for firefighting.

e. Transportation improvements shall incorporate access for firefighting, within and between existing neighborhoods to provide improved connectivity, but also in areas with no structures. Access standards include minimum width, surface, grade, radius, turnaround, turnout, and bridge standards, as well as limitations on one-way roads, dead-end roads, driveways, and gate entrances.

f. Where public water is available, the County will consult with water agencies on needs for additional water, water mains, fire hydrants, and related appurtenances needed to meet required fire flow criteria and for sufficient water capacity to serve peak demands of multiple fire engines to protect improvements from wildland fires.

g. A 100’ setback for defensible space will be required, when possible, for high density multiple-family residential or sensitive uses (e.g., care homes, schools, large day care facilities, etc.) proposed to be located in high or very high fire hazard severity zones.

Program D-3: Avoid Airport Hazards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-5)

a. In order to reduce or avoid impacts related to land use compatibility with Westover Field, the County will require projects to comply with the requirements of the Airport Land Use Plan, subject to the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.
Program D-8: Soil and Geotechnical Evaluation (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-3b)

a. The County will require geotechnical evaluation and recommendations in compliance with California Building Code requirements before construction of buildings meant for occupancy.

b. The County will provide any available soil shrink-swell information upon request, and ensure appropriate foundation elements are included on all projects proposed in areas prone to expansive soils.

c. New structures and improvements shall incorporate project features avoiding or minimizing the hazards identified through geotechnical evaluation to the satisfaction of the County.

Program D-9: Hazardous Materials (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-3a)

a. The County will maintain and update a list of hazardous sites, buildings, and uses in the unincorporated area, or use databases tracking the location of hazardous materials sites, buildings, and similar features, including active and abandoned mines. If possible, the County will make this list available to applicants.

b. The County will consult the hazardous sites list to evaluate and condition future development applications and projects, as necessary, to protect environmental and public health.

c. For applications submitted to the County involving construction activities at Cortese-listed sites, project applicant(s) shall comply with requirements of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and/or other applicable agency regulating the investigation and cleanup of the site.

Program D-10: Evacuation Planning and Routes (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-2b)

a. When considering development proposals and discretionary actions, the County will ensure that actions will not prevent the implementation of emergency response plans or viability of evacuation routes established by the Office of Emergency Services.

b. Establish adequate fire buffers along heavily traveled roads by promoting grazing, thinning, mowing, plowing, disking, or controlled burning of roadside grass. Favor those methods that have the least impact on air quality, such as grazing.
Program F-3: Fire Services Funding (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.8-7b)

a. The County will consult with the Amador Fire Protection District to establish funding mechanisms, including impact fees, to offset fire protection costs for new development in areas of high wildfire risk.
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Noise Element is to reduce noise through a combination of land use planning, site criteria, site and building design approaches, and enforcement strategies. The policies and programs described in this element focus on protecting the quality of life found within rural communities, residential areas, schools, and other noise-sensitive uses from the persistent hazards of excessive noise, and on protecting existing and potential noise generators from encroachment by noise-sensitive uses.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Noise Element is intended to:

- define which sounds constitute “noise” and under what conditions;
- describe when and where certain populations groups are especially sensitive to noise;
- protect noise-sensitive uses from excessive noise;
- provide sufficient information so that noise may be effectively considered in land use planning, transportation planning, building design, and other process in which noise may be a concern;
- describe strategies for reducing exposure to excessive noise through cost-effective mitigation measures to avoid incompatible land uses;
- protect existing noise-producing agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses from encroachment by noise-sensitive land uses; and
- provide guidance for the County in balancing goals for the community’s noise environment with other environmental, economic, social, and fiscal sustainability goals to support balanced community development, redevelopment, and revitalization.

The California Government Code and other state guidelines specify both the contents of a Noise Element and the methods used in its preparation. The Office of Noise Control Guidelines requires that certain major noise sources and areas containing noise-sensitive land uses be identified and quantified by
preparing generalized noise exposure contours for current and projected levels of activity within the county.

In addition, feasible implementation measures for the Noise Element have been developed consistent with the requirements of Government Code Section 65302(f)(4). These implementation programs are also General Plan Final EIR mitigation measures. Once CEQA findings and the General Plan are adopted, these implementation programs legally are incorporated into the General Plan; see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2). Implementation programs are reproduced at the end of the Noise Element, following the discussion of issues, goals, and policies.

State law requires the Noise Element to consider the following major noise sources:

- Highways and freeways;
- Primary arterials and major local streets;
- Railroad operations;
- Aircraft and airport operations;
- Local industrial facilities; and
- Other stationary sources.

Noise-sensitive areas include areas containing the following uses:

- Residences;
- Schools;
- Hospitals;
- Rest homes;
- Long-term medical or mental care facilities; and
- Other uses deemed noise-sensitive by the local jurisdiction (such as places of worship and libraries).

Measuring Noise

Noise is commonly defined as unwanted sound. At high enough levels, noise can become a serious community health problem. As a form of environmental stress, noise can interfere with human activities such as sleep, conversation, recreation, and tasks demanding concentration. Sound is a change in air pressure, the level of which is expressed in decibels (dB). A decibel is a logarithmic measure of the intensity of sound (change in air pressure) relative to zero (no change). Therefore, sound can be easily quantified and measured.

However, whether sound becomes “noise” is somewhat subjective based on an individual’s perception of sound. Since individuals have differing physical responses to sound, this complicates the analysis of its effects on people.
People judge the relative magnitude of sound sensation in subjective terms, such as noisiness or loudness. **Table N-1** presents the subjective effect of changes in sound pressure levels as perceived by humans.

Although the human ear is able to detect a wide range of sound pressure changes, the ear is not equally sensitive to all sound frequencies. To account for the pitch of sounds and an average human ear’s response to such sounds, a unit of measure called an A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA) is used.

Most jurisdictions use the dBA scale to measure noise levels and regulate environmental noise. **Figure N-1**, below, provides a description of noise levels associated with common activities, expressed according to the dBA scale.

### Table N-1
Changes in Sound Pressure Levels, dB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dB Change</th>
<th>Change in Apparent Loudness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+/- 3 dB</td>
<td>Threshold of human perceptibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/- 5 dB</td>
<td>Clearly noticeable change in noise level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/- 10 dB</td>
<td>Half or twice as loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/- 20 dB</td>
<td>Much quieter or louder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Community noise is commonly described in terms of the “ambient,” or all-encompassing noise level associated with a given noise environment. Many metrics have been developed to account for the way people perceive sound. The most common of these descriptors are the average “equivalent” noise level (L<sub>eq</sub>), the maximum noise level (L<sub>max</sub>), and the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). L<sub>eq</sub> represents a measure of the average noise level at a given location over a specified period of time. CNEL is based on a 24-hour L<sub>eq</sub> which applies added weights to evening and nighttime noise levels to account for the increased sensitivity of people to noise occurring during these periods.

- **L<sub>eq</sub> (Equivalent Noise Level):** The energy mean (average) noise level. The instantaneous noise levels during a specific period of time in dBA are converted to relative energy values. In noise environments determined by major noise events, such as aircraft overflights, the L<sub>eq</sub> value is heavily influenced by the magnitude and number of single events that produce the high noise levels.
NOISE
Final

EXAMPLES

Near jet engine
Threshold of pain
Rock band
Accelerating motorcycle a few feet away
Noisy urban street/heavy city traffic
Gas lawn mower at 3 feet
Garbage disposal at 3 feet
Vacuum cleaner at 3 feet
Busy restaurant
Near freeway auto traffic
Window air conditioner at 3 feet
Business office
Soft whisper at 5 feet
Quiet urban nighttime
Quiet rural nighttime
Human breathing
Threshold of audibility

DECIBELS (dB)*

140
130
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Subjective Evaluations

Deafening
Very Loud
Moderately Loud
Quiet
Faint
Very Faint

Times as loud
32
16
8
4
1
1/2
1/4
1/8

Range of Speech

Continuous exposure above here is likely to degrade the hearing of most people.

* dB are "average" values as measured on the A-scale of a sound-level meter.
• **L_{max} (Maximum Noise Level):** The maximum instantaneous noise level during a specific period of time. The L_{max} may also be referred to as the “peak (noise) level.”

**CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level):** CNEL is an average of 24-hour L_{eq} with a 10 dBA “penalty” for noise events that occur during the noise-sensitive hours between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. In other words, 10 dBA is added to noise events that occur in the nighttime hours, and thus contributes to a higher overall noise level when determining compliance with noise standards. An additional 5 dBA “penalty” is added to noise events that occur during the noise-sensitive hours between 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., which are typically reserved for relaxation, conversation, and reading. These “penalties” represent noise during evening and nighttime hours is more disruptive than noise during the day.

• **Sound Exposure Level or Single Event Level (SEL).** SEL is a characterization of the severity/intensity of short-duration events. It reflects a time-averaged, constant intensity, A-weighted sound level over a one-second reference time that would produce the same sound exposure as the actual time-varying sound over the actual exposure time. Typically, SEL is applied to situation where multiple isolated sound events would occur, each one having its own characteristic SEL. SEL is also often used to evaluate the potential for waking sleeping residents.

The County uses the CNEL metric for the purposes of noise analysis and regulation of transportation noise sources and the L_{eq} and L_{max} metrics for stationary noise sources.

**Existing Amador County Noise Levels**

**Roadway Noise**

The most prevalent noise source within the County is vehicular traffic on highways and local roads. Roadway noise levels vary from day to day, depending on factors such as local traffic volumes and speed, shielding from existing structures and vegetation, and meteorological conditions. Baseline noise levels in Amador County were modeled using existing average daily traffic volumes on major county roads.

The community noise environment can be illustrated on a map using contours derived from monitoring major sources of noise. Noise contours define areas of equal noise exposure and can be used to visually represent the extent of noise levels from mobile sources (e.g., roadway traffic, railroads, and airports). **Figure N-2** identifies existing noise contours for major county roads.
in baseline year 2007. **Figure N-3** identifies estimated 2030 noise contours for major county roads.

As shown in **Figure N-2**, high-volume road segments are the primary contributors to the county noise environment. This includes, but is not limited to, state highways, such as SR-88, SR-104, SR-124, SR-16, and SR-49, as well as local roads, such as New York Ranch Road, Michigan Bar Road, Tabeaud Road, and Latrobe Road.

As development continues to occur within the county, increased traffic volumes on the main arterials will expand the noise contours as shown on **Figure N-3**. Policies included in this Element consider a changing noise environment and address potential future land use incompatibilities in areas adjacent to these arterials.

**Railroad Noise**

Amador County’s sole rail operator is Union Pacific. Union Pacific runs 4 daily trips through western Amador County, passing through the county’s western border to Ione. Similar to the roadway traffic source noise, distances to the CNEL railroad contours were modeled for average daily train operations, both with and without train warning horns. **Figure N-2** shows a distance of 137 feet to the 65 dB CNEL contour without horns. The distance increases to 325 feet with the addition of horns.

Railroad traffic is not a major contributor to the county noise environment. However, as future growth encroaches upon railroad corridors, a potential for land use incompatibility exists. To protect continued railroad operations, noise contours are used to guide land use decisions in the immediate area. Policies included in this Element address the changing noise environment that results from future growth and directs incompatible uses away from railroad corridors.

**Aircraft-Source Noise**

Existing noise level contours from Westover Field are presented below in **Figure N-4**. The Westover Field noise contours include areas within the Martell community, including portions of the Martell RSC. Although most existing uses in Martell are commercial or industrial in nature, future land uses in the Martell RSC include a variety of residential uses. As new uses are planned in the Martell area, a primary consideration is to avoid placing noise-sensitive uses in areas which would be affected by noise from the airport.
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Figure N-3: Projected 2030 Noise Contours
General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016
General Plan including errata as approved by Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2016
The Eagle’s Nest airstrip and community consists of pilots and aircraft enthusiasts. Noise contours do not currently exist, but may be needed in the future as the area grows. There are currently only about three flights per day—although an average of 13 flights per day are permitted on the airstrip based on a use permit which allows a maximum of 5,000 operations (one operation being a take-off and landing) per year. The use permit also limits decibel levels for jet aircraft on the airstrip, and requires setbacks for dwellings constructed west and south of the airstrip. Because all area residents are aware of the airstrip, and surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural and mining uses, noise issues are not likely at Eagle’s Nest.

**Stationary-Source Noises**

The largest sources of stationary-source noise in the County include industrial operations such as Sierra Pine and large quarry operations such as Unimin, ISP and George Reed. Industrial and quarry noise is not encroaching upon noise-sensitive land uses, but future growth could encroach into these areas potentially resulting in conflict between uses. Policies included in this Element were created to protect the economic viability of existing and future industrial operations from incompatible land uses, such as schools, hospitals, and residences.

**Noise Control Techniques**

The most efficient and effective means of controlling noise is to reduce noise at the source. However, the County has no direct control over noise produced by trucks, cars, and trains with the exception of reducing local roadway speeds, which has a secondary and potentially deleterious effect on circulation, because state and federal noise regulations preempt local laws. Given that the County cannot control transportation noise at the source, County noise programs and standards focus on reducing transportation noise along freeways, arterial roadways, and rail corridors through noise reduction methods that interrupt the path of the noise or directly shield the receiver. Site planning and design (e.g., building orientation, spatial buffers, landscaping, and noise barriers) are the primary noise reduction methods applied to transportation noise. The use of noise barriers, such as sound walls, should be considered as a means of achieving the noise standards only after all other practical design-related noise reduction measures have been integrated into the project.

Noise levels from stationary and non-transportation sources should be addressed at the source. For mixed-use development in particular, acoustical design should be used to isolate residential portions of mixed-use development from both commercial portions and external noise sources.
After measures have been taken to address stationary noise at the source and to minimize transportation noise effects through site planning and design, interior noise control measures may be used. Table N-2 summarizes noise reductions accomplished by typical interior noise control measures.

Improving the building structure and using wall/façade treatments are the most common and feasible methods to control exterior-to-interior noise levels. Uniform Building Code (UBC) requirements typically provide approximately 15 dBA of exterior-to-interior noise level reduction (NLR) with windows open, and 25 dBA of NLR with windows closed. The NLR of a wall element or building façade can be calculated by first assuming a generalized A-weighted noise frequency spectrum for roadway traffic noise. Then, the composite transmission loss of the various wall materials and the wall’s structural design is considered in determining the resulting noise level in the receiving room. After correcting for room absorption, the overall noise level in the room is calculated. The ability to perform these calculations requires detailed floor plans and façade construction details. Calculation of required NLR and resultant interior noise levels should be conducted by a qualified acoustical consultant. Table N-2 provides an example of varying levels of building façade improvements that may be required to achieve an interior noise level of 45 dBA CNEL for land uses exposed to three different noise levels: 60 dBA CNEL, 65 dBA CNEL, and 70 dBA CNEL.

To mitigate non-transportation-related noise, the County can require site plan adjustments, higher insulation performance, spatial buffers, and other mitigation measures to absorb and block sound, as needed. Design features incorporated into residential projects can be used to shield residents from excessive noise. For example, bedrooms, balconies and open space areas can be located away from streets and focused toward the interior of a project.

**Noise Standards**

The County has developed land use compatibility standards rating compatibility in terms of normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable. Using these land use compatibility guidelines the County has established interior and exterior noise standards.

The County’s Land Use Compatibility Standards are presented in Table N-3. These standards, which use the CNEL noise descriptor, are intended to be applicable for land use designations exposed to noise levels generated by transportation-related sources. Residential uses and hotels or overnight lodgings are generally considered to be the most sensitive to their noise environment and have the lowest range of normally acceptable noise exposure levels. Other uses, such as fairgrounds, are less sensitive and can occur in areas with higher existing noise levels.
Table N-3 also identifies interior land use standards for the uses that may occur within the County. These standards establish maximum interior noise levels for new development, requiring that sufficient insulation be provided to reduce interior ambient noise levels to 45 dBA CNEL.

**Table N-2**
Sample Interior Noise Control Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noise Exposure Level</th>
<th>Exterior to Interior Noise Level Reduction (NLR) Required to Achieve 45 dBA CNEL</th>
<th>Noise Control Measures and Façade Upgrades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;60 dBA CNEL</td>
<td>15 dBA</td>
<td>Normal construction practices consistent with the Uniform Building Code are typically sufficient.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 60 dBA to 65 dBA CNEL| 20 dBA                                                                           | Normal construction practices consistent with the Uniform Building Code are sufficient with the addition of the following specifications:  
  • Air conditioning or mechanical ventilation systems are installed so that windows and doors may remain closed.  
  • Windows and sliding glass doors are mounted in low air infiltration rated frames (0.5 cfm or less).  
  • Exterior doors are solid core with perimeter weather-stripping and threshold seals. |
| 65 dBA to 70 dBA CNEL| 25 dBA                                                                           | Normal construction practices consistent with the Uniform Building Code are sufficient with the addition of the following specifications:  
  • Air conditioning or mechanical ventilation systems are installed so that windows and doors may remain closed.  
  • Windows and sliding glass doors are mounted in low air infiltration rated frames (0.5 cfm or less).  
  • Exterior doors are solid core with perimeter weather-stripping and threshold seals.  
  • Glass in both windows and exterior doors should have a Sound Transmission Classification (STC) rating of at least 30.  
  • Roof or attic vents facing the noise source of concern should be boxed, or provided with baffling. |

Notes:  
1 The information listed in this table is sample guidance for interior noise control recommendations and is not intended for application to individual development projects, renovations, or retrofits. Noise-sensitive land uses located in areas with noise level exposures exceeding 60 dBA CNEL should have a detailed acoustical analysis performed on a case by case basis.
## Table N-3
Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>CNEL (dBA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior(^1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and passive agricultural operations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-family and duplex</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile home park</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple-family</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Use</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient lodging—motels, hotels</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports arenas, outdoor spectator sports</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditoriums, concert halls, amphitheaters</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office buildings, business, commercial and professional</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, utilities, processing, distribution, storage</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools, nursing homes, day care facilities, hospitals, convalescent facilities, dormitories</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Facilities—offices, fire stations, community buildings</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Worship, Churches</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds, neighborhood parks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, managed forestry</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Recreation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, cemeteries</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: N/A = Not Applicable to specified land use category

1. Interior habitable environment excludes bathrooms, closets and corridors.
2. Interior noise standards shall be satisfied with windows in the closed position. Mechanical ventilation shall be provided per Uniform Building Code (UBC) requirements.
3. Exterior noise level standard to be applied at outdoor activity areas. Where the location of an outdoor activity area is unknown or not applicable, the noise standard shall be applied inside the property plane of the receiving land use.
4. Within the Town Center, Regional Service Center, and SPA land use designations, exterior space standards apply only to common outdoor recreational areas.
5. Mitigation will be determined on an as-needed basis and to achieve interior noise standards and noise standards of adjacent uses.

Source: AECOM 2012
Due to the potentially different characteristics of transportation-related source and stationary source noise (e.g. HVAC, loading dock activities, etc.), the County applies a second set of standards when planning and making development decisions to ensure stationary noise sources do not adversely affect noise-sensitive land uses. These hourly and maximum performance standards (expressed in $L_{eq}$ and $L_{max}$) for stationary noise sources are designed to protect noise-sensitive land uses adjacent to stationary sources from excessive and continuous noise. Table N-4 summarizes County stationary source noise standards. These standards represent the acceptable exterior noise levels at the sensitive receptor’s property plane.

Table N-4
Noise Level Performance Standards for Non-Transportation Noise Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noise Level Descriptor</th>
<th>Daytime (7 a.m.–10 p.m.)</th>
<th>Nighttime (10 p.m.–7 a.m.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly average level ($L_{eq}$)</td>
<td>60 dBA</td>
<td>45 dBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum equivalent levels ($L_{max}$)</td>
<td>75 dBA</td>
<td>65 dBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Each of the noise levels specified shall be lowered by 5 decibels for simple tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech, or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g., caretaker dwellings). The noise standard is to be applied at the property planes of the affected land use.

Goals and Policies

Noise and Land Use Planning

Current community noise levels in Amador County are consistent with the population density and activities located around them. The General Plan ensures the enforcement of low community noise standards and encourages residents to take an active part in keeping the county noise levels low.

Noise issues should be considered during the planning process so that needed measures are incorporated into design and location of new development. In addition, the costs of noise attenuation measures can then be incurred by the property developer, and not by current or future landowners who may not anticipate additional noise.
Goal N-1: Manage noise levels throughout the County through land use planning and development review and promote a pattern of land uses compatible with current and future noise levels.

Policy N-1.1: Enforce noise standards to maintain acceptable noise limits, especially near noise-sensitive uses. Noise measurement methods are subject to County approval.

Policy N-1.2: Encourage the use of siting and building design techniques as a means to minimize noise impacts.

Policy N-1.3: Evaluate potential noise conflicts for individual sites and projects, and require mitigation of all significant noise impacts (including construction and short-term noise impacts) as a condition of project approval.

Policy N-1.4: Protect existing areas with acceptable noise environments, and also those locations deemed “noise sensitive” from new noise sources.

Policy N-1.5: Promote the use of ‘smart design’ including berms, landscaping, setbacks, and architectural design features for noise abatement as an alternative to sound walls to enhance community aesthetics and minimize barriers to pedestrians. Use of sound walls should be restricted to cases where all other methods have been exhausted.

Roadway and Railroad Noise

As the main arteries of the County continue to carry more traffic, surrounding areas will need to be carefully regulated to prevent land use incompatibilities. Noise impacts from main arteries are expected to expand as traffic increases. Currently railroad traffic is not a major contributor to noise in the county but with future growth and change, encroachment on railroad corridors may be inevitable.

Goal N-2: Minimize noise conflicts from transportation sources.

Policy N-2.1: Minimize noise conflicts between current and proposed land uses and the circulation network by encouraging compatible land uses around critical roadway segments with higher noise potential.

Policy N-2.2: Minimize noise conflicts between current and proposed land uses and railroad corridors by protecting railroad corridors from encroachment of incompatible land uses and by adhering to the noise standards presented in Tables N-2 and N-3.
Policy N-2.3: Encourage coordinated site planning and traffic control measures that minimize traffic noise in noise-sensitive land use areas.

Policy N-2.4: Encourage the use of alternative transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, and mass transit to minimize traffic noise.

Policy N-2.5: Support establishment of quiet zones near areas where rail crossing intersect public roads to minimize the noise associated with the use of train horns.

Aircraft Noise

Westover Field’s noise affects areas designated for residential land use. Eagle’s Nest is a community of pilots and aircraft enthusiasts. Noise contours for Eagle’s Nest do not currently exist, but may be needed in the future as the area grows.

Goal N-3: Minimize noise conflicts between airports and surrounding land uses.

Policy N-3.1: The airport noise section of the Westover Field ALUP is hereby incorporated into the General Plan by reference.

Policy N-3.2: Ensure future development in the vicinity of airports, including Westover Field and Eagle’s Nest Airport, is compatible with current and projected airport noise levels for each facility in accordance with the noise standards presented in Table N-3.

Stationary Noise Generators

Several industrial operations are located in unincorporated areas of the County. Currently industrial noise does not generally affect noise-sensitive land uses, but new development may increase the possibility of encroachment.

Goal N-4: Minimize noise conflicts with stationary noise generators.

Policy N-4.1: Protect the continued viability of economically valuable noise sources such as farm operations, mining activities, commercial and industrial facilities, and airports.

Policy N-4.2: Restrict the location of sensitive land uses near major noise sources to achieve the standards presented in Table N-3.
Policy N-4.3: Prevent the encroachment of noise sensitive land uses into areas designated for use by existing or future noise generators.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

As required by Government Code Section 65302(g)(2)(C), the following implementation programs (that are also EIR mitigation measures) implement Noise Element goals and policies:

Program D-11(m): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-1a)

All construction equipment shall be properly maintained per manufacturers’ specifications and fitted with the best available noise suppression devices (e.g., mufflers, silencers, wraps); all impact tools will be shrouded or shielded; and all intake and exhaust ports on power equipment will be muffled or shielded.

Program D-11(h): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-2)

During review of development proposals by the Land Use Agency and CEQA review, the County will apply noise standards from Tables N-3 and N-4 in the Noise Element. New developments proposing noise-sensitive land uses in areas exposed to existing or projected noise levels from transportation and other noise sources shall incorporate noise control techniques, including but not limited to those identified in Table N-2 [Table 4.11-12] to reduce noise exposure in outdoor activity areas and interior spaces to acceptable levels, as specified in Tables N-3 [Table 4.11-1] and N-4 [Table 4.11-2] of the Draft General Plan.

Program D-11(i): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-4)

The County will require the evaluation of railroad noise impacts for any proposed residential or other sensitive use development located within 750 feet of a railroad corridor. The evaluation shall include potential for waking associated with rail movement and horn blowing.

Program D-11(c): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-5a)

Where legally permitted, the County will require that the newest land use is responsible for mitigating noise, whether as a generator or sensitive receptor. If a new use that generates noise is proposed adjacent to lands zoned for uses that may be sensitive to noise (i.e., residential neighborhoods), then the noise-generating use is responsible for mitigating noise consistent with Noise Element Tables N-3 [Table 4.11-1] and N-4 [Table 4.11-2] standards along the property line of the affected land use. Where sensitive uses are proposed near noise sources or lands with zoning that
would permit new noise sources, these new uses are responsible for mitigating their noise exposure consistent with the standards in Tables N-3 and N-4 of the Noise Element. The County seeks to protect the continued viability of economically valuable activities that produce noise (including farm operations, mining activities, commercial and industrial facilities, and airports).

Program D-11(d): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-5b)

During review of development proposals, the County will apply daytime and nighttime land use/noise environment standards at the property line of the source as shown in Table N-4 [Table 4.11-2] of the Noise Element for non-transportation sources.

Program D-11(e): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-5c)

During review of development proposals, the County will apply the standards in Table D-11-1 [Table 4.11-10]. These standards identify what changes to ambient noise levels at the property line of a sensitive receptor will be considered to be significant noise increases. Land uses within the County that are considered to be noise-sensitive include any residential property or residential unit located within a vertical mixed-use development on a single-parcel, residential divisions of land, residential land use designations, schools, churches, hospitals, care facilities, libraries, and auditoriums.

Program D-11(f): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-5d)

During review of development proposals by the Land Use Agency and CEQA review, the County will apply the noise standards identified in Table N-3 [Table 4.11-1], as measured at the property line. These standards limit acceptable periodic noise increases to the levels shown in Table D-11-2 [Table 4.11-13].

Program D-11(j): Noise Standards (FEIR Mitigation Measure 4.11-6)

The County will require that development proposals in the vicinity of airports/airstrips, including Westover Field and Eagle's Nest Airport, demonstrate compatibility with current and projected airport noise levels for each facility (including the Airport Land Use Plan) in accordance with the noise standards presented in Table N-3 [Table 4.11-1] of the Draft General Plan.
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This glossary includes primarily technical terms used in the General Plan. However, the glossary also includes some commonly used and understood words in cases where a specific meaning is intended. The Glossary is intended to provide definitions for words that are used throughout the plan; in some cases, the General Plan may use technical terms only once, or only in a single, discrete discussion (a few paragraphs at most) in the plan. Where that is the case, the term will be defined in the text where it is used. These glossary definitions apply only to the Amador County General Plan.

In general, the language used in the goals and policies of the General Plan communicates the broad outlines of the County’s desired direction. The language of the goals and policies is intended to preserve the discretion of current and future decision makers to weigh competing objectives and interests in their decisions. Unless specific, directive language (such as “The County will” or “The County shall”) is used, goals and policies indicate a preferred direction, and do not require (or prohibit) specific actions or activities.

Accessible: 1) Capable of being reached. 2) Capable of being used or seen.

Activity Centers: Cities and areas of the County (such as Town Centers and Regional Service Centers) where residents go to do their shopping and obtain services, such as health care, post offices, legal services, etc.

Affordable: 1) Having a cost which may be borne without serious detriment; to be able to bear the cost of.

Agricultural Land: Agricultural land includes not only Farmland (as defined below), but also other land used for agricultural purposes.

Agriculture: Use of land for the primary purpose of producing food, fiber, or fuel, including the growing of crops, value-added activities, and/or the grazing of animals.

Agriculture-related Businesses: Businesses, such as agricultural product sales, on-farm sales, roadside stands, produce stands, farmer’s markets, self-pick operations, agri-tourism, and agricultural home stays, which may provide an additional source of income on agricultural lands.
Agri-tourism: Recreational travel to agricultural areas, or to participate in agricultural activities or education. As used in the General Plan, agri-tourism includes activities directed at agricultural tourists, including agri-entertainment and agri-education activities.

Alternative: 1) Offering or expressing a choice. 2) Different from the usual or conventional.

Appropriate: Suitable or fitting.

Available: 1) Present or ready for immediate use. 2) Qualified or willing to assume a responsibility. 3) Accessible or obtainable.

Best Management Practices: Methods which are determined to be the most effective, practical means of achieving desirable outcomes.

Buffer: An area of land or physical feature separating two distinct activities that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other. Buffer areas may include but are not limited to undeveloped open space, developed or built lands, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms, or any combination of these things.

Building Envelope: The area formed by the front, side, and rear building restriction or setback lines within which all buildings must be located.


Cluster Development: A project design technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on a site to allow remaining land to be used for open space, recreation, agriculture, or the preservation of historically or environmentally sensitive features.

Community Water Systems: Defined by the U.S. EPA.

Coordinate, Collaborate, Coordination, Collaboration – Use of these terms indicates the County’s intent to seek input or cooperative action with another agency or organization, but does not indicate an obligation by the County to accept or implement any suggestions, requests, instructions, or activities proposed by other agencies.
**Conservation easement**: A voluntary method of restricting development on private property to maintain the long term conservation or natural resource value of the property in exchange for compensation to the property owner.

**Cortese List**: The Cortese List (formally known as the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List) is a planning document required by California Government Code Section 65962.5. The California Environmental Protection Agency is required to compile the list, which is used by state agencies, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of potential hazardous materials release sites.

**Culture**: The body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a distinct complex of tradition of a racial, religious or social group – that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, morals, law, customs, opinions, religion, superstition, and art.

**Cultural Resources**: As defined in the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15064.5.

**Defensible space**: Area surrounding a building or buildings in which basic fire protection and prevention measures are implemented. These measures typically include control of vegetation, fuel modification, and the provision of adequate emergency access.

**Density**: The amount of residential development permitted in a given area, typically expressed as the number of allowed dwelling units per acre of land (du/ac).

**Develop**: To expand or construct physical structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; to install water and sewer systems, conduct grading activities, deposit refuse, debris or fill, or clear vegetative cover. The definition of develop does not include agricultural activities.

**Discretionary Decision**: A decision requiring the exercise of judgment, or deliberation on the part of the decision-making authority in the process of approving or disapproving an activity.

**Diverse**: Differing from one another; composed of distinct or unlike elements or qualities.

**Economically Viable Agriculture**: Agricultural and related activities which provide sufficient net income to the landowner or operator to sustain agricultural operations.
F

**Facilitate:** To make easier; to assist the progress of.

**Farmland:** Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, as determined by the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Note: *FMMP applies these designations based on technical soil ratings and current land use.* Note: “Important Farmland” was identified as a glossary word. This definition is for “Farmland” to differentiate the definition for the purposes of CEQA (which includes the categories described here) from “Important Farmland,” which is defined by FMMP and includes other lands which are not included in the CEQA Appendix G Thresholds.

**Fire Hazard Severity Zone:** Areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. Moderate, high, and very fire hazard severity zones are mapped by CalFIRE, and State WUI building standards apply in these zones.

**Forestland:** Land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. (Public Resources Code Section 12220[g])

**Form-Based Code:** Land use standards that apply to the physical form of structures on a site, and allow greater flexibility in the range of uses that are permitted. Form-based codes differ from traditional zones that define which uses are permitted in a given location.

**Fuel Modification:** Manipulation or removal of combustible matter (such as vegetation) to reduce the likelihood of ignition, to lessen potential damage, and/or to facilitate control by firefighters.

G

**General Plan Policy:** A statement in the General Plan intended to provide guidance for future decision-making.

**Geotechnical Evaluation:** an evaluation of the physical characteristics of the soils and bedrock at a site, conducted to determine the requirements for buildings or earthworks.
Goal: In the General Plan, a goal is an abstract description of an ideal future condition that provides a broader context or guide for policies and implementation measures.

Graywater: Domestic wastewater from sources such as bathtubs, showers, washing machines, and dishwashers, but excluding water from kitchen sinks and toilets.

Green Building: Construction and site development techniques that reduce environmental effects or resource consumption.

Groundwater Recharge Zones: Areas where stormwater infiltrates through permeable soils or exposed rock fractures to recharge aquifers.

Guide: To steer, lead, or advise.

Hierarchical Transportation System: A transportation system in which roads meet different standards depending on whether they serve local or “through” traffic, and the volume of traffic.

Historic Preservation: The preservation of historically significant structures in order to facilitate restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s).

Historic Structures: Structures which are listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places.

Impact Fee: A fee charged by a public agency as compensation for additional services or costs which will be incurred as a result of a particular development project. *California law specifies that impact fees must not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged.*

Incentives: Financial or technical assistance that facilitates a particular course of action on the part of an individual or organization.

Infill Development (Areas of Urban Development): Development of vacant, skipped-over parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas.

Integrated (Integrate): To form, coordinate or blend into a functioning or unified whole; to unite with something else; to incorporate into a larger unit.
Intensity: The amount of commercial or industrial development permitted on a particular parcel. Typically expressed as a lot coverage standard (the maximum percentage of a parcel that can be covered by a developed use) or by a Floor Area Ratio (the ratio of interior space to the area of the parcel as a whole).

Ione Chaparral: Ione chaparral is a plant community which occurs on soils of the Ione formation. Ione chaparral is characterized by the presence of Ione manzanita, although Ione buckwheat and Irish Hill buckwheat may also be present.

Jobs-Housing Balance: The relationship between available jobs and housing units, which balance is determined by the free market.

Labor force: Residents of a community who are either working or actively looking for work, regardless of the work location.

Amador Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO): LAFCO is an independent regulatory commission created by the legislature and is responsible for the planning, oversight and control of the boundaries and spheres of influence of cities and most special districts in Amador County. Amador LAFCO implements the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, other statutes and its locally adopted policies in the exercise of its jurisdiction. LAFCO is not part of a County government.

Large Retailer: Large commercial retail or warehouse stores with footprints greater than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area (including outdoor storage and sales area).

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design): An independent certification for energy-efficient and environmentally-sensitive buildings, provided by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Level of Service (LOS): A general measurement of traffic operating conditions for a specific road segment or intersection. LOS assigns letter grades A through F to particular levels of congestion and delay at a specific location.

Local: 1) Of, relating to or characteristic of a particular place. 2) Primarily serving the needs of a particular limited district.
Local Businesses: Businesses which have their primary place of business in Amador County.

Local Services: Services (such as shops, medical offices, post offices) which are directed to the residents of the immediately surrounding area or neighborhood.

Low Impact Development: Development techniques intended to address stormwater management through surface detention and infiltration that mimic natural systems rather than constructed piped systems.

Manage: 1) To make or keep compliant; to treat with care; to exercise executive, administrative and supervisory direction of. 2) to work upon or try to alter for a purpose.

Mills Act: California legislation which encourages conservation of historic structures through property tax reductions.

Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ): A land classification created by the California Geological Survey used to designate sites with known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate material. (Note: In addition to state-designated MRZs, Amador County designates local MRZs through application of the MRZ land use designation).

Mining: The act or process of extracting resources, including but not limited to; oil, coal, mineral deposits, sand, gravel, rock, or metals from the earth.

Mitigation Measure: An action that is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to avoid or reduce a significant or potentially significant environmental impact of a project.

Mixed-Use: Sites combining more than one use as an integrated project and sometimes in the same building, such as office, residential, commercial, or services.

National Register of Historic Places: The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation’s history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

Noise Control Techniques: Noise control techniques interrupt the path of noise or directly shield the receiver. Noise control techniques may include
(but are not limited to) building orientations, spatial buffers, landscaping, acoustical design features, and noise barriers.

**Non-point Sources:** Sources of water pollution which result in water running off hard or paved surfaces and picking up contaminants.

**Oak Woodland:** As defined by Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

**Opportunity:** 1) A favorable juncture of circumstances. 2) A good chance for advancement or progress.

**Performance criteria:** Standards which define specific objectives or targets which must be attained. Once the standards have been established, performance criteria do not prescribe the specific methods that may be used to attain the objectives or targets, allowing individuals to select the method or methods which best suit their particular situations.

**Permeable Pavement:** Paving materials that allow water to infiltrate through the material into the ground beneath.

**Preserve** (verb): To keep safe from destruction or decay;

**Program:** An action or strategy carried out to implement an adopted goal and/or policy.

**Promote:** 1) To contribute to the progress or growth of; further. 2) To urge the adoption of; advocate.

**Protect:** To maintain the status or integrity of, especially through financial or legal guarantees; to foster or shield from infringement or restriction.

**Provide:** 1) To make preparation to meet a need. 2) To supply or make available.

**Quality:** Degree of excellence (grade).
R

**Reasonable:** Not extreme or excessive; moderate; fair.

**Reclaimed:** Obtained from a waste product or by-product.

**Reclaimed water:** See Recycled Water.

**Recycled water:** As defined in the California Water Code, “water which, as a result of treatment of waste, is suitable for a direct beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur.”

**Redevelopment:** The revitalization or reuse of areas which already have (or have had in the past) a developed use, typically as an alternative to extension of developed uses into new growth areas.

**Renewable:** Capable of being replaced by natural ecological cycles or sound management practices.

**Renewable Energy Generation:** Methods of generating electrical power which do not require the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas. Renewable energy generation might include (but is not limited to) solar, wind, and geothermal power, or the generation of energy from biomass or other sources.

**Riparian Habitat:** Areas adjacent to rivers and streams with a differing density, diversity, and productivity of plant and animal species relative to nearby uplands.

**Runoff:** Water from precipitation (such as rain or snowmelt) that flows across a land surface into surface water bodies rather than being absorbed into the ground.

S

**Sensitive receptors:** Those people or things which are most susceptible to adverse effects. For instance, sensitive receptors to noise and air pollutants might include schools, day care centers, and health care facilities.

**Setbacks:** Areas of a parcel, expressed as a distance in feet from a property line, that may not be occupied by structures or buildings. These areas are kept clear in order to achieve a desired separation from roadways, neighboring structures, or other parcels.

**Shall:** That which is obligatory; an unequivocal direction.
Should: A less rigid directive than “shall;” a directive to be followed if at all possible in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations.

Special Status Species: Plants and animals that are legally protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), or other regulations, and species that are considered sufficiently rare by the scientific community to qualify for such listing.

Sphere of influence: A plan for the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency, as determined by the Amador Local Agency Formation Commission (Amador LAFCO).

Subdivision and Subdivision Map Act: As defined in Section 66410, et seq. of the California Government Code.

Support: 1) To promote the interests of; 2) To provide a basis for the existence or subsistence of.

Timberland: Land which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees.

Timberland Production Zone (TPZ): Under California law (the Z'berg-Warren-Keene-Collier Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976), an area which has been zoned pursuant to Government Code Section 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and other compatible uses, which can include watershed management, fish and wildlife habitat management, and outdoor education and recreation activities as defined in State law.

Value-added Agricultural Activities: See Agriculture-related Businesses, Agri-tourism.

Viable: 1) Capable of living or surviving; 2) Capable of growing or developing.

VMT (vehicle miles traveled): The number of travel miles in a single automobile that are generated by a particular activity or land use.
W

**Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI):** The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels (CAL FIRE 2010 California Fire Plan).

**Williamson Act:** A California law (Government Code Section 51200-51297.4) which allows land used for agricultural purposes to enter a 10-year contract to be taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than market value. This contract includes certain restrictions, and specific conditions must be met prior to entering into a contract. The 10-year contract is renewed automatically each year unless a notice of non-renewal is filed.

Z

**Zoning:** The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, that specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the general plan.
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