



ATTACHMENT A: PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

Revised by Joint Panel

July 2009

Contents

This document presents preliminary draft goals and policies, with revisions by the joint panel of the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission completed through July 8, 2009. The goals and policies are presented based on their organization into eight elements; Land Use, Circulation, Economic Development, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, Noise, and Governance. The ninth element, Housing, is being updated separately, and Housing Element goals and policies are not included here.

The Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission have directed County Staff to make certain changes to the goals and policies before they are brought back to the board in the draft General Plan Elements. These changes include specific revisions, along with general direction to streamline, simplify, and reduce redundancy of goals and policies. Some policies may also be reformatted as implementation programs. To reduce confusion between previous policy numbers, and likely future numbering changes associated with policy streamlining, goals and policies have not been re-numbered in this document. Some policies therefore appear out of sequence. This will be resolved in the draft General Plan Elements.

These goals and policies are presented only as a preliminary draft. Goals and policies are subject to revision by the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission up until the point of adoption of the updated General Plan.

Definitions of important concepts, such as *issues*, *goals* and *policies* that will be used in the general plan are provided below to assist in understanding the relationship of these concepts.

Definitions and Examples

The following definitions and examples are provided for important concepts to assist in understanding the relationship of these concepts within the general plan.

Community Vision

A *community vision* has been drafted based on input received from the community and the GPAC at meetings at the beginning of the General Plan Update process. The community vision is the foundation of the general plan and an expression of what the county wants to be in the future.

Issues

Issues have been developed through analysis of the content of the current general plan, background reports prepared for the general plan update, community workshops, GPAC meetings, and resident correspondence. Issues are general statements describing a planning need, concern, opportunity, or desire that should be addressed by the general plan.

Goals

Goals are broad statements of community desires contained within the general plan elements. Goals are related to the community vision, and represent desired outcomes the County seeks to achieve through the implementation of general plan policies.

Policies

Policies are statements that support the achievement of goals. Policies serve as guides to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, other appointed County commissions and boards, and County staff in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect future growth and development. Policies are written as action statements that illustrate the community's desired means to achieve goals.

Implementation Programs

Implementation programs are specific actions that put policies into practice. Implementation programs are designed to collectively achieve established general plan goals. Programs are written in a variety of formats best suited to the topic at hand.

Implementation programs are the most specific type of policy statements contained in the plan. Often, these programs identify funding sources, responsible agencies, and time frames for completion. The programs will be developed and finalized with County staff as the individual General Plan elements are prepared, and will be a topic of public comment and modification by the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission in future hearings.

Draft Community Vision

At GPAC meetings, committee members and the public provided input regarding the shared values, strengths, weaknesses, and issues that characterize Amador County. Based on that input, the following community vision was developed by the GPAC. Our objective is to ensure that subsequent goals, policies, and programs are responsive to the vision.

Vision 2030

We, the citizens of Amador County, envision the county in the year 2030 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 the 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 child-care 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.



Preliminary Draft Issues, Goals and Policies

The community vision forms the foundation of the general plan, and establishes a framework for the issues, goals and policies in each element, and implementation actions that put the goals and policies into action. The following pages list draft issues, goals and policies for each element of the proposed general plan update.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element describes desired patterns and distribution of land use, including agricultural, open space, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, in Amador County. Land Use policies affect goals and policies throughout the General Plan. The priorities identified in this element include maintaining diverse land uses within the county, providing public facilities and community services, and supporting economic development efforts to maintain a healthy tax base.

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 ensure 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 impact the compatibility of proposed projects include traffic generation, access locations, noise impacts, public service demands, site design and visual appearance, and public safety. Residents desire adequate buffering 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 of these uses.

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 space 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: Review proposed projects for consistency with goals, policies, and implementation programs of this general plan, and consider potential impacts on surrounding land uses and infrastructure.

Policy LU-1.2: Promote development of light industrial, manufacturing, and other commercial businesses to diversify the county's economic base.

Policy LU-1.3: Encourage development of educational and health care facilities to serve county residents.

Policy LU-1.4: Protect existing land uses and public facilities from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Policy LU-1.5: Designate residential areas of varying densities to create the opportunity to provide affordable housing for all income levels.

Policy LU-1.6: 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; and contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy LU-1.7: Consider affordable and senior housing needs in the siting and design of residential projects.

Policy LU-1.8: Promote land use patterns which promote public health and wellness.

Policy LU-1.9: Encourage the continued viability of timber harvesting and promote creation of defensible space and community wildfire protection.

Policy LU-1.10: Ensure that county land use decisions do not reduce military readiness.

Policy LU-1.11: Consider the fiscal impact of development proposals on public services, including cost and revenue effects.

Policy LU-1.12: Encourage redevelopment of Brownfield properties.

Policy LU-1.13: Encourage the continued viability of agricultural production in the County's agricultural areas.

Policy LU-1.14: Balance the community’s interests in agricultural protection, protection of historic, cultural, and natural resources, and species protection, 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 extension of urban services is feasible given distance from developed areas and topographic, capacity, or land capability considerations.

Policy LU-2.2: Establish target areas for future commercial, industrial, and residential growth. *[Note: This policy will be updated to describe desired locations based on direction from the Board regarding Local and Regional Service Center locations.]*

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 will provide a guideline 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 County’s cities and the Amador Water Agency to ensure that potential locations for wastewater treatment are protected from nearby incompatible uses.

- Policy LU-4.2: Consider infrastructure availability and expansion opportunities in the development review process to avoid exceeding wastewater conveyance or treatment capacity. (change to “review” in implementation, broaden in policy)
- Policy LU-4.3: Encourage the use of reclaimed water for irrigation, mining, and compatible agricultural, public, commercial, and industrial applications wherever possible in order to reduce the loading of the wastewater system and wastewater storage and disposal needs, and extend available water supplies.
- Policy LU-4.4: Support the Amador Water Agency’s efforts to educate the public on how to reduce water use, and utilize reclaimed water.
- Policy LU-4.5: Encourage countywide regional coordination and organizational structures to fully implement maximum recycled water reuse opportunities throughout Amador County.
- Policy LU-4.6: Encourage and promote water conservation and water reuse to reduce new effluent disposal needs.
- New Policy LU4a: Support efforts by the County’s wastewater providers to educate the public on wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, including the proper handling and disposal of fats, oils, and greases. (*merge with other “educate” policy*)

Goal LU-5: Maintain efficient solid waste service.

- Policy LU-5.1: Educate the public and businesses regarding waste disposal requirements, such as universal and hazardous waste disposal practices.
- Policy LU-5.2: Increase public awareness of recycling, composting, and other waste reduction options.
- Policy LU-5.3: Ensure the continued availability of waste disposal sites for the county’s solid waste.
- Policy LU-5.4: Continue to make solid waste transfer stations available and accessible to county residents.
- Policy LU-5.5: Establish performance criteria for commercial and industrial developments to incorporate on-site waste reduction, waste segregation, and/or recycling of pre- and post-consumer wastes.

Goal LU-13: Ensure that safe and adequate water supply, wastewater disposal, and public services are available prior to development.

- Policy LU-13.1: 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 providing options for higher education, is another important issue. In addition, schools and libraries provide valuable locations for the community to gather.

Goal LU-6: Ensure the provision of health care services accessible to the population.

Policy LU-6.1: Support efforts to provide health care services in rural communities and activity centers located throughout the county as the population expands.

Policy LU-6.2: Support and promote transportation options which permit seniors and residents with reduced mobility to receive adequate health care.

Policy LU-6.3: Support education options, including community college programs, which provide training for health care workers.

Policy LU-6.4: Promote the development of health care and early care and education services directed toward young children.

Goal LU-7: Maintain high quality schools and libraries.

Policy LU-7.1: 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-7.2: 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-7.3: Provide for County library facilities and services consistent with community needs.

Policy LU-7.4: Ensure that new residential developments include on-site pedestrian facilities to provide safe routes to schools.

Goal LU-8: Ensure that land is available for future cemetery use.

Policy LU-8.1: Identify and designate areas suitable for future cemeteries.

Town Centers

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

Goal LU-9: Guide future residential and local commercial uses into established cities and unincorporated Town Centers.

Policy LU-9.1: Develop individual guidelines to govern future land uses within the boundaries of Town Centers. These guidelines should include the desired mix of commercial, residential, public facility, and other uses. Community participation should provide direction for these guidelines.

Policy LU-9.2: 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-9.3: Support Town Centers as desired sites for small, locally-owned businesses.

Policy LU-9.4: The guidelines and boundaries of Town Centers located along SR 88 will be clearly established to avoid strip-style commercial development along SR 88.

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-10: Focus services which cater to a regional market in Martell.

Policy LU-10.1: 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-10.2: 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.

Low Impact Development and Water Quality

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.

Goal LU-11: Reduce the negative effects of new development on stormwater runoff and non-point source water pollution.

Policy LU-11.1: Develop Low Impact Development (LID) standards for new construction. These standards should be incorporated into the County’s development ordinances. *(modify to reflect the intended focus on large developments, clarify in implementation)*

Policy LU-11.2: Encourage the use of LID strategies to help Amador County sustain and improve both surface- and groundwater quality.

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 areas of Amador County face infrastructure challenges, including lack of road connections, 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 current and future structures.

Policy LU-12.1: Ensure that appropriate levels of emergency service, 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-12.3: Ensure that new development or redevelopment in the Wildland-Urban Interface meets building and development standards to ensure adequate defensible space.

Circulation and Mobility Element

The Circulation Element addresses Amador County’s systems for moving people and goods. This element describes the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, roadway and non-roadway transportation routes, railroads and airports.

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: Work with Caltrans, regional and local transportation agencies to address regional issues and opportunities related to growth, transportation financing and infrastructure, and other planning issues.

Policy CM-1.2: 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-1.3: Encourage greater connectivity on local roads and improve the connections between the County’s communities. Ensure multiple routes are available between communities wherever possible.

Policy CM-1.4: 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 to encourage that new transportation 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/NEV 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 the Amador Regional Transit System (ARTS). The rural development character of the county limits the scope of the public transit available. The County will consider the mobility needs of Amador County's residents and the availability of public transit in development decisions.

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation options are currently limited. Safety concerns related to the necessity of 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.
- Policy CM-3.2: Promote bicycle/NEV routes and pedestrian walkways. These routes 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: Promote pedestrian and bicycle safety by communicating safety practices to the public, and maintaining consistent, recognizable facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Policy CM-3.5: 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-3.6: Coordinate with ARTS and other agencies to improve the availability of public transit connecting residents to services.
- Policy CM-3.7: Continue to provide public transportation from Amador County to regional job and activity centers located outside the county.

Policy CM-3.8: Encourage development of facilities which support carpooling and public transportation within the county.

Scenic Highways

Several of Amador County's highways, including SR-49 and portions of SR-88, are eligible for designation as Scenic Highways by the State of California. In addition, 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. Together, Amador County's eligible and designated scenic highways and byways are referred to as scenic corridors. Protecting the visual character of these scenic corridors is a key consideration in future planning.

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

Policy CM-4.1: Ensure that new and relocated public utility distribution lines along designated and eligible scenic corridors are placed underground in compliance with Public Utilities Commission regulations for scenic highways. All other utility features should be placed and screened to minimize visibility.

Policy CM-4.2: Review development projects and timber harvest plans that include areas within 1,000 feet of designated scenic highways for their visual effects on the scenic corridors.

Policy CM-4.3: Review signs and advertising along scenic corridors to minimize their effects on the scenic corridor.

Economic Development

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.

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. Consider changes to the development process to reduce time, cost, and complexity for applications. Avoid regulatory duplication.

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: Mitigation fees and other County fees should be kept at a level that does not impede economic development. This may require incentive programs or other measures to mitigate project effects.

Policy E-1.4: Collaborate with local agencies and organizations to offer technical assistance to businesses seeking economic development grants, loans, and other funds from state, federal, and private sources.

Policy E-1.5: Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the county. Identify and reduce constraints that limit retention, expansion, or attraction of business and industry.

Policy E-1.6: Support efforts to build the “Amador Brand.” Continue to give preference to local businesses and suppliers for County business, and encourage residents to patronize local businesses and suppliers.

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: Promote 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: Facilitate 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: Encourage the development of new commercial and industrial businesses in the county.
- 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: It is in the best interest of Amador County residents to protect the County’s small retail businesses. To that end, the County requires that large retailers submit a fiscal analysis that specifically identifies the impact their business would have on these small retail shops. (*“large” to be defined in Draft General Plan, perhaps based on definition in design review guidelines.*)
- Policy E-4.4: Require that residential developers submit fiscal impact analyses detailing the project’s impact to local services for all developments of NN units. (*threshold to be developed for Draft General Plan.*)
- Policy E-4.5: 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.
- 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 rural communities, including local schools and shops.
- Policy E-5.2: Work to expand access to community services and opportunities available in the county’s rural communities.
- Goal E-6: Retain existing and attract new businesses to facilitate the expansion of Amador County’s 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.

Policy E-6.5: Provide or assist businesses in ensuring necessary infrastructure improvements are provided to support new or expanding businesses in Amador County.

Note: Additional language proposed by AEDC will be incorporated as an implementation program for the General Plan.

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. The County's tourism goals are further supported by goal OS-1 (Protect resources important to tourism and maintain the rural lifestyle valued by county residents) and associated policies, which can be found in the Open Space Element.

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 coordination among cities and other jurisdictions, tourist industries and businesses in local areas and regional partnerships, linking multiple attractions.

Policy E-7.7: Promote collaboration between the county, cities, and non-governmental organizations to share resources and plan effectively for tourism.

Policy E-7.8: Identify historic and cultural resources within the county which are used by tourists. Promote the preservation of these resources, including interpretive and educational activities centered on these resources.

Economically Viable Agriculture

The County will encourage the continued economic viability of farming and ranching. 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. Goals, policies, and implementation programs which address the conservation of agricultural land are found in the Conservation Element, and include Goal C-7 (Maintain important farmlands for agricultural uses and agri-tourism), C-9 (Encourage alternative means of providing water to agricultural users), and C-10 (Support the efforts of farmers and ranchers to incorporate environmentally friendly practices in their business practices), as well as associated policies.

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 that 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 (such as 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 C-7: Maintain important farmlands for agricultural uses and agritourism.

Policy C-7.1: Maintain the right of individuals in Amador County to farm, including enforcement of the County's "Right to Farm" ordinance.

Policy C-7.2: Encourage use of Williamson Act contracts to maintain farm and ranch lands in agricultural use.

Policy C-7.3: Educate landowners about alternative methods of farmland preservation, including identification of funding for conservation easements.

Policy C-7.4: 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 C-7.5: Review future development for compatibility with existing adjacent and nearby agricultural uses.

Policy C-7.6: Direct future development away from farmlands of local or statewide importance.

- Policy C-7.7: Discourage the extension of city spheres of influence into areas of important farmland. Infrastructure improvements into areas of important farmland should include conditions to avoid inducing urban growth.
- Policy C-7.8: Encourage provision of farm family and farm worker housing in a manner that conserves important farmlands.
- Policy C-7.9: 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 C-9: Encourage alternative means of providing a sustainable water supply to agricultural users.**
- Policy C-9.1: Promote use of reclaimed water in compatible farming and ranching settings.
- Policy C-9.2: Support the continued availability of water supplies to agricultural users. Agricultural water users should be encouraged to efficiently utilize surface water supplies in the absence of available reclaimed water.
- Policy C-9.3: Encourage the County’s water suppliers to develop reduced rates for agricultural water users.
- Goal C-10: Support the efforts of farmers and ranchers to incorporate environmentally friendly practices in their business practices.**
- Policy C-10.1: Promote the use of environmentally and financially sustainable farming and ranching practices.
- Policy C-10.2: Promote education and incentives to support expansion of sustainable practices.

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-9: 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-9.1: Encourage the continued viability of timber harvesting and promote creation of defensible space and community wildfire protection.
- Policy E-9.2: Maintain long term economic viability of timber harvesting.
- Policy E-9.3: Promote the use of environmentally and financially sustainable timber harvesting practices.

- Policy E-9.4: Maintain Timber Production Zone (TPZ) areas as a renewable source of timber and wood products.
- Policy E-9.5: Encourage value-added activities (such as sawmills, cogeneration plants, timber-based manufacturing, and other uses) which contribute to the viability of timber production.
- Policy E-9.6: Protect timber resource areas from encroaching 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, chromites, talc, lignite, and diamonds.

- Goal E-12: Maintain the viability of mineral and aggregate resources and encourage mineral and aggregate resource production in the county.**
- Policy E-12.1: Ensure that extraction and production of mineral resources and aggregate deposits present in the County may continue. Encourage extraction and production of mineral and aggregate resources.
- Policy E-12-3: Promote the expansion or greater utilization of Amador County’s mineral and aggregate resources.
- Policy E-12-3: Promote value-added manufacturing and processing of Amador County’s Minerals.
- Policy E-12-4: 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 in approving new development.
- Policy E-12-5: Develop standards for exploration, development, and reclamation activities associated with mineral extraction projects.

Conservation Element

The goals and policies of the Conservation Element present strategies to protect and conserve water supply and water quality, energy resources, agriculture and agricultural lands, air quality, historic resources, and cultural resources.

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 both current and future development.

The primary source of water for Amador County is surface water from the Mokelumne River, derived from both precipitation and snowmelt. Water from the Mokelumne River is transported to the areas of the county characterized by higher population and more water use.

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 of extending 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 mining heritage 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 Amador Water Agency (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 future residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural needs.

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, redevelopment, landscape, and agricultural projects to include water conservation measures, including use of graywater, reclaimed, or recycled water for landscaping irrigation, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and low-water landscapes.

Implementation C1: Where available, new development should be encouraged to participate in the extension of reclaimed water facilities (either off-site or on-site) for beneficial use.

Policy C-1.5: In consultation with the County's water suppliers, develop reasonable best management practices (BMPs) for water conservation in the county.

- Policy C-1.6: Encourage regional and interagency coordination to ensure future water supply. Include upland areas in future water management plans.
- Policy C-1.7: Coordinate with the County’s water suppliers to develop water-use standards and regulations to limit demands during water supply emergencies and droughts.
- Policy C-1.8: Coordinate with the County’s water suppliers to plan for future water supplies, and respond to future water supply emergencies and droughts.
- New Policy C1a: Encourage integrated management of surface water and groundwater resources, wastewater, stormwater treatment and use, and the development of reclaimed water.
- New Policy C1b: Encourage conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water by water agencies to improve water supply reliability.
- New Policy C1c: 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.
- New Policy C1d: Pursue water and wastewater plans to develop new, reliable future sources of supply, including, but not limited to, the expansion of surface water storage and conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater, while promoting water conservation and water recycling. (move to implementation)
- New Policy C1e: Pursue management strategies that develop upstream/ downstream interregional conjunctive use/water transfer programs to meet future water needs in Amador County.
- New Policy C1f: Work with the County’s water suppliers and local agencies to identify and pursue alternative funding sources for projects that improve water resources management opportunity in Amador County.
- New Policy C1g: Support efforts by water and wastewater agencies to respond to State mandates addressing the future challenges posed by climate change.
- Goal C-2: Minimize negative effects of sewage treatment on water quality.**
- Policy C-2.1: Guide future development to areas of the county with the ability to obtain adequate wastewater service and treatment capacity.
- Policy C-2.2: 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-2.3: Encourage countywide coordination and organizational structures to maximize recycled water reuse opportunities throughout the County.
- New Policy C2a: Encourage development of new treatment facilities or conveyance systems to minimize disposal by leach field in areas of marginal soils or site conditions which may lead to degrading groundwater quality.
- New Policy C2b: Encourage and support the installation of wastewater treatment facilities in existing communities that are experiencing significant on-site wastewater treatment system failures and/or are posing a potential threat to county water resources or the public.
- New Policy C2c: Require any new development, where septic or connection to an approved sewer system is not feasible, to demonstrate that sewer service will be provided from an alternative wastewater system with adequate financial, managerial, and operational resources. (to implementation)
- Goal C-3: Minimize negative effects of point and non-point sources on water quality.**
- Policy C-3.1: 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. Measures may include reduced pavement or site coverage, permeable pavement, and/or drainage features.
- Policy C-3.2: Limit the effects of current and former mining and mineral extraction activities on groundwater and surface water, especially through planned avoidance of these sites.
- Policy C-3.3: Promote agricultural and development practices which limit soil erosion and runoff.
- Policy C-3.4: Promote use of buffers or protective measures to limit the effects of industrial or hazardous materials sites on surface water resources and groundwater recharge zones.
- Policy C-3.5: Develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management program to limit the quantity and increase the water quality of runoff flowing to the county's streams and rivers. Any stormwater management program for agricultural land should be developed and maintained within the Amador County Agricultural Department and follow state agricultural guidelines.
- Policy C-3.6: Maintain and improve existing drainage and stormwater infrastructure, and develop new drainage and stormwater infrastructure as needed. Consolidation of this function to a single County department or responsible agency is desirable. When maintaining or developing drainage and/or stormwater infrastructure, consider vector control.

Mining and Aggregate Resources

Amador County's mining history extends to the Gold Rush of 1849. Currently, mining in the county includes clay, gold, lignite, and aggregate materials, but the 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, chromites, talc, lignite, and diamonds. The continued viability of mineral and aggregate resources in the county should be a factor in the consideration of future development within the county. Goal E-10 and associated policies in the Economic Development Element address the County's mineral resources, including protecting the continued viability of these resources.

Energy Resources

Increasing energy efficiency and making better use of current and local energy resources is an important mechanism for reducing 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-5: Reduce energy use and promote renewable and locally available sources of energy.

Policy C-5.1: Encourage new development to be pedestrian friendly, and located near existing activity centers to limit automobile transportation energy use.

Policy C-5.2: Encourage energy-efficient businesses and manufacturers of green products to locate in Amador County.

Policy C-5.3: Promote increased energy efficiency and green building practices through the County's use of these practices.

Policy C-5.4: Encourage development of alternative energy generation options.

Policy C-5.5: Support use of renewable and locally available sources of energy where feasible.

Policy C-5.6: Coordinate with other organizations and agencies to promote public education regarding energy efficient practices and technologies which can be used by individuals to reduce their energy use.

Policy C-5.7: Provide incentives (e.g. waived building or planning fees, or expedited processing) for use of energy-efficient features for residential and commercial construction.

Policy C-6.1: Reduce erosion and sediment loads which might limit the lifespan of existing facilities.

Policy C-6.2: Promote development patterns and practices which permit the continued use and future development of water power generation facilities on the County's streams and rivers.

Policy C-6.3: Guide future development to preserve possible future suitable locations for water storage or hydroelectric generation facilities.

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. Provision of adequate water for farming is also a critical need for farmers.

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. 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

Conserving and Protecting 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. The Economic Development Element includes a goal (E-11) and policies describing conservation and protection of timber resources.

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 a significant resource in promoting tourism. The County will support the preservation of historical resources through both property owner incentives and educational and interpretive opportunities.

Use of building envelopes or cluster development will be explored as a method to allow development of properties while preserving cultural or historical resources located on the property. Cluster development is 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 cheaper and more efficient provision of infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer service.

Goal C-12: Preserve the County’s historical resources.

Policy C-12.1: Balance the community’s interest in historic preservation with the rights of individual property owners.

Policy C-12.2: Use incentives where possible as a means of protecting and preserving historical structures and districts. Consider using Mills Act contracts as a way of providing such incentives.

Policy C-12.3: Promote use of building envelopes or cluster development as a means of protecting historical resources when land is developed.

Policy C-12.4.: Support the preservation of historic structures, including rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of structures. Encourage property owners to preserve and maintain historic structures.

Policy C-12.5: Promote the preservation of historically significant Gold Rush sites, mining sites and other identified sites.

Policy C-12.6: Collaborate with interested groups to develop interpretive materials for historically important sites.

Policy C-12.7: 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 the area. These resources offer physical evidence of the prehistoric and historic occupation and exploitation 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. Protection of cultural resources is mandated by the State of California through the CEQA environmental review process and the SB18 consultation process.

Goal C-13: Preserve the County’s cultural resources.

Policy C-13.1: Balance the community’s interest in the protection of cultural resources with the rights of individual property owners.

Policy C-13.2: Use incentives where possible as a means of protecting and preserving cultural and archaeological sites.

Policy C-13.3: Promote clustering of development as a means of protecting cultural and archaeological resources when land is developed.

Policy C-13.4: 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-13.5: Utilize the County’s inventory of identified cultural resources to help educate property owners and developers, and alert them to potential cultural resources issues associated with new development.

Policy C-13.7: Enforce laws that preserve and protect Native American cultural and archaeological sites.

Policy C-13.8: Collaborate with 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-14: Maintain and improve air quality.

Policy C-14.1: 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-14.2: Encourage infill development, and development near existing activity centers in order to encourage walking or bicycle use in running local errands.

- Policy C-14.3: Promote the separation of emission sources from sensitive receptors such as schools, day care centers, and health care facilities.
- Policy C-14.4: Encourage energy conservation and energy efficient design in new development projects.
- Policy C-14.5: Promote recycling of waste materials and the use of recycled materials.
- Policy C-14.6: 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-14.7: Work with state and federal agencies to seek recognition of air transport from valley to mountain counties as a contributor to reduced air quality.

Global Climate Change

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, which represents about a 25% reduction relative to current levels. Future planning efforts that do not encourage reductions in GHG emissions would conflict with AB 32, impeding California’s ability to comply with the policy. Binding and enforceable General Plan goals and policies which reduce GHG emissions are one outcome of AB 32.

In California, 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-15: Reduce GHG emissions from automobile travel.

- Policy C-15.1: Guide new development to areas where pedestrian and bicycle/NEV access to existing activity centers are possible, in order to reduce the need for automobile travel and VMT. Require new development projects to provide bicycle/NEV and pedestrian facilities to increase the safety and feasibility of non-automobile travel.
- Policy C-15.2: On an annual basis, set goals and assess progress on the priorities identified by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan in order to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation options in the county.
- Policy C-15.3: 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.

- Goal C-16: Reduce GHG emissions from electrical power generation.**
- Policy C-16.1: Require new development projects to incorporate building placement and design features to increase energy efficiency in new structures.
- Policy C-16.2: Identify a desired Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification level for 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. *[Note: General Plan text will identify the desired LEED certification level, and policy will be revised to reflect the standard.]*
- Policy C-16.3: Require that new residential building permits for more than 6 market-rate units provide solar power generation and/or solar heating systems for water on 25% of units. This may include participation in the California Energy Commission’s New Solar Homes Partnership rebate program.
- Policy C-16.4: Promote parcel-scale energy generation, including addition of solar panels for residential structures and cogeneration for larger commercial or industrial uses.
- Policy C-16.5: Expand recycling and waste minimization efforts, including recycling of construction and demolition materials.
- Policy C-16.6: Require that new residences use Energy Star-rated appliances and the most energy-efficient water heaters and air conditioning systems feasible.

Open Space Element

Open space includes undeveloped land used for the preservation of natural resources, for the managed production of resources, for outdoor recreation, for public health and safety, and to maintain the rural lifestyle residents enjoy.

Tourism

Tourism is an important contributor to Amador County’s economy. Tourist draws include agriculture and viticulture, scenery and natural resources, recreation, and historic sites, including Gold Rush and mining sites. The County will protect and promote resources which have importance in generating and maintaining tourism. Policies pertaining to tourism are found in the Economic Development Element under Goal E-4.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities, including parks, trails, and water recreation areas, are important to residents and visitors alike. The Amador County Recreation Agency (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-2: Ensure provision of park and recreational facilities serving residents and visitors.

Policy OS-2.1: Supports efforts by ACRA to maintain and enhance existing parks at levels which provide maximum recreational benefit.

Policy OS-2.2: 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-2.3: Promote joint recreational use of open space lands and facilities owned by school districts and cities.

Policy OS-2.4: Use the Recreation Master Plan as a guide to provide adequate park facilities to serve the current and projected population.

Policy OS-2.5: Identify potential revenue sources to develop and maintain existing facilities, as well as to provide and expand recreational facilities as needed.

Policy OS-2.6: Promote the provision of sanitation stations and solid waste collection facilities at trailheads and recreation areas as needed to minimize the impacts of this use.

Goal OS-3: Encourage the development and use of recreational and transportation trails within Amador County.

Policy OS 3.1: Promote the development of a network of recreational trails for pedestrians, hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists.

Policy OS 3.2: Promote construction of trail facilities within the county.

Policy OS 3.3: Promote construction of trails on public lands and rights of way within the county, respecting private property rights.

Policy OS 3.4: Use existing property lines, avoid bisecting properties.

Policy OS 3.5: Link trails to existing infrastructure, including other recreation opportunities, parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.

Policy OS 3.6: Where possible promote the functional use of trails as transportation corridors.

Policy OS-3.27: Coordinate with surrounding counties and communities, as well as the State, to connect county 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-4: Protect wildlife habitats, including sensitive environments and aquatic habitats, consistent with State and federal law.

Policy OS-4.1: Encourage preservation of oak woodlands in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4. Require assessment of impact to oak woodlands for new development, and mitigation per Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

Policy OS-4.2: Encourage the conservation of corridors for wildlife movement, particularly in oak woodland areas and along rivers and streams. Use development tools, such as clustering, to maintain corridors where possible.

Policy OS-4.3: Support voluntary conservation easements to protect wildlife habitat, including oak woodlands.

Policy OS-4.4: 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-4.5: Protect aquatic habitats from effects of erosion, siltation, and alteration.

Policy OS-4.6: Encourage the use of appropriate native species for reclamation and revegetation components of development projects. Restrict the introduction of invasive exotic species.

Goal OS-5: Protect special status species, including threatened and endangered species, consistent with State and federal law.

Policy OS-5.1: Ensure that new development complies with State and federal laws concerning special status species preservation.

Safety Element

The purpose of the Safety Element is to identify and address physical and environmental characteristics in Amador County which represent 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.

Flood Hazards

Amador County encompasses 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 east to the central and western portions, where excess rain or snow can contribute to downstream flooding.

Flood risk is generally focused on low lying areas located 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. Amador County will work to direct future development, including both the location and characteristics of development, to minimize the danger to life and property from flooding.

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

Policy S-1.1: Direct future development 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 development in these areas to incorporate floodproofing measures for all new structures, 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 to reduce downstream flooding hazards.

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

Fire Protection

Amador County is at very high risk to experience catastrophic wildfires. Because of the extensive distribution and quantities of wildland vegetation and developed properties, most of the county is considered to be in a wildland urban interface (WUI) zone. Wildfires that occur in the WUI zone pose severe risks to life, property, and infrastructure and are one of the most dangerous and complicated fire situations that firefighters encounter.

Fuel loading problems have substantially increased due to rapid population growth and residential construction in WUI zone areas. High levels of fuel loading combined with natural weather conditions such as drought, high temperatures, low relative humidity, and high winds can create prime conditions for frequent and catastrophic fires.

The County has identified goals and policies intended to improve fire prevention and fire defense capacities. Issues addressed include water supplies, structures built in fire-defensible spaces (building setback areas which are kept clear of brush and fuel), and building code provisions to protect new and renovated structures from fire danger. Goals and policies guide development towards areas with better fire suppression infrastructure and/or lower fire risk.

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

Policy S-2.1: 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 which allow adequate provision of fire protection and ensure provision of roads and water service adequate to permit fire response.

Policy S-2.3: Incorporate fire safety site planning techniques within new development proposals 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, fire fighting 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 for new developments if needed to provide adequate fire service.

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

Geological and Seismic Hazards

Seismic hazard levels in Amador County are considered to be relatively low compared to other areas of California. No Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are located in the county, and areas subject to liquefaction, ground failure, or surface rupture have not been identified in the county. Ground shaking has been felt in Amador County from earthquakes with epicenters elsewhere.

Subsidence occurs when earth material sinks due to the underlying presence of natural or artificial voids. Past mining activities have also caused subsidence in some areas, and as future development occurs within the county, the incidence of subsidence above abandoned mines is likely to increase. Subsidence can result in serious structural damage to buildings, roads, underground utilities, irrigation ditches, and pipelines.

Landslides refer to a wide variety of processes that result in the perceptible downward and outward movement of soil, rock, and vegetation under gravitational influence. Although landslides are primarily associated with steep slopes (i.e., greater than 15 percent), landslides can also occur in areas of generally low relief and occur as cut-and-fill failures, river bluff failures, lateral spreading landslides, collapse of mine-waste piles, failures associated with quarries, and open-pit mines. Landslides may be triggered by both natural- and human-induced changes in the environment resulting in slope instability.

Avalanches occur when loading of new snow increases stress at a rate faster than the strength of the snowpack develops, causing the slope to fail. Critical stresses develop more quickly on steeper slopes and where deposition of wind-transported snow is common. The majority of avalanches occur during and shortly after storms. Avalanche hazards are present in eastern Amador County. Historically, avalanches occur within the county mostly between January and March, following snowstorms. Avalanche-prone areas include SR-88 in the Devil's Gate area and the Kirkwood area.

General Plan goals and policies aim to reduce damage caused by 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. [*Note: General Plan text would include an implementation measure to develop the setback standard.*]

Policy S-4.3: Make information about soils with a high shrink-swell potential readily available. Require proper foundation designs in these areas.

Policy S-4.4: Discourage new development projects in or near a seismic risk area or geologic hazard area unless these projects meet design standards to minimize or eliminate seismic risk.

Policy S-4.5: Site public facilities to avoid known seismic dangers, and construct these facilities to meet seismic safety requirements of the CBC.

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

Policy S-5.1: Establish development regulations which 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

Amador County is home to more than 300 known mine locations, in addition to hundreds of hazardous materials storage and release sites. Mines are a significant source of contamination of surface water in the county. Abandoned mine sites also have the potential to cause subsidence at the ground surface.

Hazardous materials storage and release sites have the potential to impact public health and safety if human contact with these materials is not minimized or avoided.

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 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: Educate and prepare citizens to react effectively in an emergency situation.
- Policy S-7.3: Continue to coordinate with other local public safety and law enforcement agencies to ensure effective emergency response.
- Policy S-7.4: Work with other agencies to designate evacuation routes for various natural or human-caused emergencies.

Noise Element

The purpose of the Noise Element is to reduce noise through a combination of land use planning, site criteria, 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.

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.

Policy N-1.1: Develop and enforce standards that will maintain acceptable noise limits. *[Note: General Plan text will present recommended exterior and interior noise standards.]* Develop a procedure based on common noise practices that establishes a county recognized process for measuring noise.

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.”
- 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 strictly restricted, and sound walls should only be used when other methods have been exhausted.
- Policy N-1.6: Develop noise standards limiting loud activities during nighttime quiet hours. *[Note: Implementation for this policy may include preparing and adopting a County Noise Ordinance.]*

Roadways and Railroads

As the main arteries of the county continue to carry more traffic the surrounding land use 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. The following goal and policies ensure that appropriate land uses are encouraged within areas surrounding roadways and railroads.

Goal N-2: Minimize noise conflict with 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 by incompatible land uses.

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. The following goal and policies have been developed to ensure through land use planning that conflicts do not occur with stationary sources that could affect sensitive receptors.

Goal N-3: Minimize noise conflicts with stationary noise generators.

- Policy N-3.1: Protect the continued viability of economically valuable noise sources such as farm operations, mining activities, commercial and industrial facilities, and airports.

- Policy N-3.2: Restrict the location of sensitive land uses near major noise sources.
- Policy N-3.3: Prevent conflicts between future stationary noise sources and sensitive receptors.
- Policy N-3.4: Prevent the encroachment of noise sensitive land uses into areas designated for use by existing or future noise generators.

Aircraft Noise

Westover Field’s noise impacts areas of designated residential uses. The airport noise section of the ALUP is incorporated into the General Plan. 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-4: Minimize noise conflicts between airports and surrounding land uses.

- Policy N-4.1: Ensure that future development in the vicinity of Westover Field and Eagles Nest Airport is compatible with current and projected airport noise levels for each facility. Maintain buffers between the airports and incompatible land uses.
- Policy N-4.2: Discourage future proposed airports from locating in areas near current or proposed sensitive receptors.

Governance Element

Goals and policies for the Governance element provide direction regarding how the County government intends to conduct its interactions with the public and with 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: Cooperate with cities in order to ensure that future development occurring within Urban Reserve areas proceeds in a manner consistent with adopted city general plans.
- Policy G-2.6: 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, recreation, water, and wastewater services are provided efficiently and cost-effectively.
- Policy G-2.7: Consider schools an essential part of the infrastructure required to accommodate new development and establish maintaining adequate school facilities as a community priority.
- Policy G-2.8: Ensure that potential effects on the County educational system are considered when reviewing development projects.

The following policy recommended by the School District would be appropriate as an implementation program for policies 2.7 and 2.8:

Project developers shall work closely with the Amador County Unified School District to mitigate the impact of these projects to the educational system. Residential developers are strongly encouraged to coordinate with the school district to ensure that needed school facilities are available for use in a timely manner. To the extent possible, projects shall be phased or conditioned to provide that new school facilities are constructed and operating prior to the occupation of the residences which the schools are intended to serve.

Additional Implementation proposed by stakeholders: Consider whether regular meetings with agencies on processes and plans might be needed, perhaps every 2 years to avoid conflicts and overlaps.

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, 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-4: Amador County will promote the interests of its residents in its dealings with the State and federal governments.

Policy G-4.1: Maintain regular communication with State and federal agencies which manage public land or are involved in land use decisions in Amador County.

Policy G-4.2: Communicate the County's and residents' interests and opinions to State and federal agencies throughout their decision making processes.

Policy G-4.3: 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-4.4: Consult with Native American Tribes and Rancherias to aid in the protection of traditional tribal cultural places when reviewing future development projects.

Policy G-4.5: Evaluate future planning and development activities of Native American Tribes and Rancherias to ensure that potential traffic, noise, light, public safety, and other effects from these activities are minimized within the County's jurisdictional area.