



# PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

## *GPAC Workbook*

*August 2007*

## **Purpose**

The purpose of upcoming General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) meetings is to provide recommendations regarding goals and policies addressing the major planning issues identified in previous GPAC meetings and community workshops.

**GPAC Members should review this material and make notes in the spaces provided prior to upcoming GPAC meetings on September 13 and 27, 2007. Please come to the meetings prepared to offer your comments and suggestions.**

## **Workbook Content**

This workbook provides an overview of the proposed structure and organization of the General Plan, reviews the community vision developed by the GPAC, and presents preliminary draft goals and policies separated into the various general plan elements, or chapters. The workbook provides spaces for comments from members of the GPAC that clarify, refine, add to or delete draft goals and policies. All comments received will be considered during preparation of the preliminary draft 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. A description of the proposed organization of the general plan itself is also provided.

## **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 previous meetings. 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, previous 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. GPAC members are encouraged to offer ideas concerning potential implementation programs throughout our discussion of goals and policies. The programs will be developed and finalized with County staff as the individual General Plan elements are prepared.

## Proposed General Plan Organization

The following is a description of the proposed organization for the updated Amador County General Plan. At this time, the proposed organization corresponds to the following seven elements required by the State of California.

- ✓ Land Use
- ✓ Circulation and Mobility
- ✓ Conservation
- ✓ Open Space
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Noise
- ✓ Housing

The Housing Element was recently adopted in 2005 and is not being updated as part of this effort.

The Board of Supervisors may direct staff and consultants to pursue one or more optional elements addressing topics such as agriculture, economic development, air quality, or climate change. All of these topics are addressed within the proposed structure as part of one or more of the required elements. GPAC comments on these topics would be carried over into the optional element(s) if requested by the Board.

The General Plan document will be comprised of an introduction, community vision and the elements listed above. Each element may stand alone, but is also an integral part of the plan. The elements will be organized according to the following format: 1) introduction; 2) goals and policies; 3) plan; and 4) implementation programs. The general plan will be accompanied by a glossary (as an appendix).

The *introduction* of each element will describe the focus and the purpose of the element. The introduction will also identify other plans and programs outside of the general plan that may be used to achieve general plan goals. The relationship of the element to other general plan elements will also be specified in the introduction.

The *goals and policies* section of each element will contain a description of identified planning issues, goals and policies related to the element topic. The issues, goals and policies will be based on input received from the community, the GPAC, members of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and County staff.

Each element will also contain a *plan* section. The plan section will offer an overview of the desired course of action to implement the identified goals and policies. For example, the land use element contains a "land use plan" indicating the types and intensities of land use permitted throughout the county. The circulation element contains a "circulation plan" identifying and describing

the circulation system required to meet future needs. Wherever possible, the plan section contains maps, illustrative diagrams and tables to illustrate policies.

The final section of each element will be the *implementation programs*. This section identifies specific actions to achieve the goals, policies and plans identified in each element.

The *glossary* will be an appendix to the general plan, providing definitions for technical terms used throughout the plan.

## **Draft Community Vision**

At previous GPAC meetings, committee members have 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. Please refer back to this vision as you review and comment upon the materials located throughout the remainder of this workbook. 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 it's high quality of life, historic resources, healthy natural environment, sustainable 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 sustainable 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. [And we have created a healthy community, where residents are protected from natural disasters and health hazards.](#)



## **Character**



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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 and serve local residents.  
Because we have planned well, we can see the Milky Way from our dark night skies and enjoy the quiet at night.

## Resources

We judiciously use and protect the County's wealth of natural resources – mineral, agricultural, timber, water, soil, air, open space, and wildlife – conserving 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 is carried through the general plan by 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. Please use the spaces provided to comment on the material and be prepared to discuss your comments with others at upcoming GPAC meetings.

Please note that agreement was not reached on all issues. In many cases, a range of goal and policy options, indicated by *italic type* and boxes, have been prepared to identify the variety of opinions expressed and convey various policy options, along with meeting records, reactions and comments from the GPAC to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

## 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.

*Note: The following land use policies originate largely from GPAC discussions on topics other than land use. Additional land use issues, goals, and policies will be developed following GPAC discussion of land use alternatives.*

## **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.

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:** ~~Maintain~~**Attain** a diverse ~~and integrated~~ mix of residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, public, and open space land uses.

**Policy LU-1.1:** ~~Review~~Require that proposed projects ~~for be consistent consistency~~ with community goals, and the policies, and implementation programs of this general plan, and that they do not adversely affect~~consider potential impacts on~~ surrounding land uses, natural resources, scenic beauty, and or infrastructure.

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

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

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

Policy LU-1.5: ~~Designate~~ Ensure that there is residential areas of varying densities to encourage provision of affordable housing affordable for people of all income levels.

Policy LU-1.6: ~~Encourage~~ Require smart growth development patterns ~~which that~~ support water quality objectives; preserve agricultural lands and natural resources; 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~~ Require land use patterns ~~which that~~ promote public health and wellness.

Policy LU-1.9: Support the continued viability of timber extraction from designated areas.

Policy LU-1.10: ~~Ensure that county land use decisions do not reduce. Consider the effect of county land use decisions on~~ military readiness.

**Goal LU-2: Enhance and maintain separate and distinct communities within the county.**

Policy LU-2.1: Direct development to areas with existing urban services and infrastructure, or to areas and adjacent areas, while maintaining separation between communities 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 include desired locations following GPAC consideration of land use alternatives.*]

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

Policy LU-2.4: Do not extend infrastructure into areas that are used for agriculture or resource extraction, or that include important cultural, natural, watershed, or scenic resources.

Policy LU-2.5 Maintain working landscapes, parks, and greenbelts between existing communities.

GPAC Comments

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**Economic Development**

A healthy, vibrant economy provides jobs for county residents, and also aids in the continuing fiscal viability of county services.

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.

**Goal LU-3: Develop and maintain a favorable? Means? business environment in the county.**

Policy LU-3.1: Encourage an efficient and consistent regulatory environment, including a predictable development process.

Policy LU-3.2: Support and collaborate with local economic development organizations to bring new businesses and industry to the county and support the development and expansion of local small business.

Policy LU-3.3: 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 LU-3.4: Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the county.

Policy LU-3.5: ~~Support improvement of water and wastewater infrastructure in areas designated for future commercial or industrial~~

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development. Ensure that land use decisions do not threaten the viability of historic business districts.

Policy LU-3.6: Promote the availability of early care and education facilities at locations which-that permit the parents of small children to work. This is the wrong place for this, but a good policy...

**Goal LU-4: Develop educational and training options for county residents.**

Policy LU-4.1: Facilitate the establishment of higher education facilities in the county, including a community college and technical education or trade school facilities.

Policy LU-4.2: Work with existing and new businesses located in the county to match training opportunities with existing and planned job requirements.

**Goal LU-5: Improve the jobs-housing balance and maintain the fiscal health of the county.**

Policy LU-5.1: Encourage the development of new commercial and clean industrial businesses in the county.

Policy LU-5.2: Promote a ratio of new commercial and industrial development to new residential development which-that maintains the fiscal health of the County. [Note: General Plan text will describe the current ratio and projected future ratio under the preferred land use alternative. Policy may be updated to incorporate desired future ratio.]

Avoid approving residential projects before jobs exist for those who will reside in them.

**Policy Options: Fiscal impact analysis**

*Policy LU-5.3a: Require businesses/national chains seeking to locate in Amador County to conduct that fiscal-fiscal and local business impact analyses be completed by large businesses/national chains seeking to locate in Amador County. [Note: General Plan text will identify which project types would be required to prepare fiscal impact analyses. Policy may be updated to incorporate threshold.]*

*Policy LU-5.3b: No-policy. Require residential developments over X units to conduct fiscal impact analyses.*

Policy LU-5.4: Focus job development activities on higher-family-wage and "basic" jobs in order to maximize potential benefits.

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Goal LU-6: Promote ~~cultural and~~ economic development of the county's unincorporated towns and communities: Buckhorn-Pioneer, Fiddletown, Pine Grove, River Pines, and Volcano, ~~rural communities throughout the county.~~

Policy LU-6.1: Preserve existing programs and facilities ~~which that~~ contribute to the cohesion and prosperity of rural communities, including local schools and ~~shops~~retail businesses.

Policy LU-6.2: Work to expand services and opportunities available in the county's ~~rural existing towns and communities,~~ (list here) including retail businesses, health care, ~~continuing~~ education, ~~agricultural education~~professional services, and job opportunities.

**Goal LU-7: Focus and improve economic development success.**

Policy LU-7.1: Establish benchmarks to measure the success of local economic development activities ~~by the Amador Economic Development Commission and the County.~~ [Note: General Plan text and implementation measures would establish benchmarks and a way to track progress annually.] Good, but who would do?

Policy LU-7.2: Target key industries ~~which that~~ are important to the future of the county, such as health care, for economic development. Who decides which are important? How change over time?

**Goal LU-8: Promote the availability of advanced communications services to businesses and residents.**

Policy LU-8.1: 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 home-based work.

Goal LU-9: Maintain the county's scenic beauty, cultural resources, and natural resources as draws for tourism and recreation.

Need policies here for this...

**GPAC Comments**

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## **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-9:       Ensure the provision of effective law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services throughout the county.**

Policy LU-9.1:    Ensure that adequate public safety facilities, staffing, and equipment are ~~provided~~ available to ~~maintain~~ provide adequate service levels as the county's ~~population and development~~ needs change.

Policy LU-9.2:    Coordinate with fire districts to ~~maintain~~ ensure adequate fire and emergency medical ~~fire~~ service levels in the county.

Policy LU-9.3:    Increase community awareness regarding public safety, fire, and emergency response issues.

Need development pattern policy here. It is too expensive and inefficient to deliver services to people spread out all over the county.

**Goal LU-10:       ~~Increase wastewater treatment capacity to serve the county's population~~ Ensure adequate wastewater treatment capacity exists to meet the county's needs.**

Policy LU-10.1:   Ensure that potential locations for wastewater facilities are protected from ~~Work with Amador Water Agency to identify a desired location for a regional wastewater treatment plant, and restrict the development of nearby~~ incompatible uses ~~in the vicinity of the site.~~

Policy LU-10.2:   ~~Consider~~ Ensure that adequate wastewater capacity exists before approving developments that add to wastewater treatment demand. ~~infrastructure availability in the development review process to avoid exceeding wastewater conveyance or treatment capacity.~~

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Policy LU-10.3: ~~Encourage~~ Require the use of reclaimed water for irrigation and industrial uses wherever possible in order to reduce the loading of the wastewater system.

Require the use of reclaimed water for golf course irrigation.

Require new construction to incorporate water conservation and efficiency measures.

Policy LU-10.4: Educate the public regarding ways to reduce water use and the volume of water requiring wastewater treatment and disposal.

**Goal LU-11: Maintain efficient solid waste service.**

Policy LU-11.1: Educate the public regarding waste disposal requirements, such as universal and hazardous waste disposal practices.

Policy LU-11.2: ~~Increase~~ Adopt programs to promote public awareness of recycling, composting, and other waste reduction options.

Policy LU-11.3: Ensure the continued availability of waste disposal sites for the county's solid waste.

Policy LU-11.4: Continue to make solid waste transfer stations available and accessible to county residents.

**GPAC Comments**

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**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-12: Ensure the provision of health care services accessible to the population.**

Policy LU-12.1: Support efforts to provide health care services ~~in in the county's existing~~ rural communities ~~and activity centers located throughout the county~~ as the population expands.

Policy LU-12.2: Support and promote transportation options ~~which that~~ permit seniors and residents with reduced mobility to receive adequate health care.

Policy LU-12.3: Support education options, including community college programs, which provide training for health care workers.

Policy LU-12.4: Promote the development of health care and early care and education services ~~directed toward for~~ young children.

**Goal LU-13: Maintain high quality schools and libraries.**

Policy LU-13.1: 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-13.2: 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-13.3: Provide for County library facilities and services consistent with community needs.

Ensure that adequate school facilities exist before approving development that adds to the student population.

**Goal LU-14: Ensure that land is available for future cemetery use.**

Policy LU-14.1: Identify and designate areas suitable for future cemeteries.

**GPAC Comments**

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## **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.

*[Note: Additional and/or revised policies may be developed following GPAC discussion of non-roadway transportation on August 23, 2007.]*

### **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: Each year, Pplan 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 work to improve the connections between the County's communities. ~~Ensure multiple routes are available between communities wherever possible.~~

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

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

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

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 regularly updated Traffic Impact Fee program to encourage-require that new transportation needs generated by new development are paid for by the development. Increased roadway capacity should be funded primarily through developer fees, with less than half of funding coming from State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other local tax revenue sources.

Deny any project that would worsen an identified deficiency in local or state roads or highways or create a new deficiency if funds are not available to correct the problem, or require the applicant to fully fund the necessary improvement or transportation alternatives that would remedy the problem.

**Goal:** Ensure that road and highway development does not disrupt wildlife corridors or increase road-related wildlife deaths.

Design roadway construction, improvements, and maintenance to mitigate all impacts on wildlife corridors, to provide for the continued movement of wildlife, and to minimize road-related wildlife deaths.

**GPAC Comments**

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## **Alternative Transportation**

The majority of future trips in Amador County are expected to be completed in automobiles. However, increasing alternative transportation offerings, including public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle routes, can reduce the growth in automobile use and traffic congestion associated with future residential and commercial development within the county. Future development patterns and forms should be planned with an eye toward encouraging and maintaining a variety of transportation options.

Public transit offerings are primarily provided by 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,

### **Policy Options: Trails on public v. private property**

*Policy CM-3.2.a: Establish bicycle routes and pedestrian walkways in public rights of way and on public lands. These routes should connect residents to communities and activity centers and offer an alternative to automobile transportation.*

*Policy CM-3.2.b: Establish bicycle routes and pedestrian walkways and work with private property owners where needed to obtain easements to promote connectivity of the bicycle and walking trail system. These routes should connect residents and activity centers and offer an alternative to automobile transportation.*

Policy CM-3.3: Coordinate with ~~federal~~ agencies, including the [East Bay Municipal Utility District](#), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and [U.S. Forest Service](#) to connect trail facilities.

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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~~ Require new development proposals to meet transportation needs in the context of new development proposals. ~~Promote~~ Require smart growth land use patterns ~~which that~~ 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 that~~ support carpooling and public transportation within the county.

Policy CM-3.9: Encourage provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new development projects.

**GPAC Comments**

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**Scenic Highways Vistas**

The scenic vistas from the county's highways and roads are an important part of the county's character, valued by local residents and tourists alike. Several of Amador County's highways, including SR-49, SR-16, 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, county roads and highways

Policy CM-4.1: Ensure that new and relocated utilities along designated and eligible scenic ~~corridors~~ highways 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~~ Ensure that development projects and timber harvest plans that are visible from the county's roads and highways do not detract from the county's scenic beauty, ~~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~~ roads and highways to minimize their effects on the scenic corridor.

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Protect the county's scenic vistas and rural character by concentrating development in existing towns and communities and maintaining separation between them.

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Promote protection of scenic vistas by establishing funding mechanisms to enable the county and qualified nonprofit land trusts to purchase scenic easements along roads and highways.

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Do not allow clearcut logging within the viewsheds of designated and eligible scenic highways.

## **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, and commercial use, is of primary importance. Maintaining the water supply includes providing water for both current and planned future development and ensuring water quality.

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.

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.

Goal C-1: ~~Ensure that all future development permitted in the county is permitted only when adequate water supply exists to serve it. can be provided adequate amounts of water.~~

Policy C-1.1: Coordinate with the Amador Water Agency (AWA) and other organizations to ensure that water is available to ~~serve meet both current and planned 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-Prohibit~~ reliance on private groundwater wells as sources for new community water systems.

Policy C-1.4: ~~Encourage-Require~~ new development projects to include water conservation measures, including such as the use of graywater for landscaping, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and low-water landscapes.

Policy C-1.5: Develop and implement best management practices (BMPs) for water conservation and water quality preservation in the county.

Policy C-1.6: ~~Encourage-Require~~ regional and interagency coordination to ensure future adequate water supply. ~~Include upland areas in future water management plans.~~

Policy C-1.7: Coordinate with the Amador Water Agency (AWA) and other organizations to develop water-use standards and regulations to limit demands during water supply emergencies and droughts.

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Policy C-1.8: Coordinate with the Amador Water Agency (AWA) and other organizations to plan for coordinated response to future water supply emergencies and droughts.

**Goal C-2:** ~~Minimize~~ Protect water quality from pollution due to negative effects of sewage treatment on water quality and wastewater disposal.

Policy C-2.1: Guide future development to areas of the county with adequate wastewater service and treatment capacity.

Policy C-2.2: ~~Encourage~~ Require recycling and water-saving features in new development, ~~including such as~~ graywater irrigation and water-saving appliances and fixtures, to limit the water flows to septic systems and leach fields.

**Goal C-3:** **Minimize negative effects of point and non-point pollution sources on water quality.**

Policy C-3.1: ~~Encourage~~ Require site plan ~~elements~~ measures in proposed development ~~that limit runoff and increase infiltration and groundwater recharge, 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 use of natural water-filtering features and/or drainage features.

Policy C-3.2: ~~Limit~~ Protect ground and surface water quality from degradation by the effects of current, future and former mining and mineral extraction activities ~~on groundwater and surface water.~~

Policy C-3.3: Promote agricultural, timber harvest and development practices ~~which that~~ limit soil erosion and runoff.

Policy C-3.4: ~~Promote~~ Require use of buffers or protective measures to ~~limit prevent surface and groundwater pollution by 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, effective stormwater management program to limit the quantity and increase the water quality of runoff flowing to the county's streams and rivers.

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.~~

**GPAC Comments**

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**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. 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 C-4: Maintain the viability of mineral and aggregate resources in the county.**

Policy C-4.1: Ensure that extraction of mineral resources and aggregate deposits present in the County may continue.

Policy C-4.2: ~~Guide~~ Ensure that new development away does not intrude on from areas where mineral and aggregate extraction is currently occurring and or where resources are known to exist, or conflict with existing mining operations. ~~Consider the location of known resources in approving new development.~~

Policy C-4.3: Develop standards for exploration, development, and reclamation activities associated with mineral extraction projects.

**GPAC Comments**

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## **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~~ Require new development to be pedestrian friendly, and located ~~near—in or adjacent to~~ existing ~~activity centers~~ community 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 and distributed 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.

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Promote energy efficiency and conservation by establishing green building standards for new development.

**Policy Options: Hydroelectric power generation**

*Goal C-6.a: Maintain the viability of hydroelectric (dam) power generation in the County.*

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

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

*Policy C-6.3.a: Guide future development to preserve possible future locations for off-stream water storage or low-impact hydroelectric generation facilities.*

***Goal C-6.b: Maintain the viability of existing hydroelectric (dam) power generation in the County. County has no control***

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

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

*Policy C-6.3.b: ~~Prohibit~~Oppose further onstream dam construction and stream impoundment, whether for water supply or power generation use. (Not within county's ability to prohibit.) Any expanded hydroelectric generation should occur on pipelines or channels, or through hydrokinetic improvement to existing facilities, rather than natural streams.*

**GPAC Comments**

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**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~~ that 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.

**Goal C-7:** ~~Maintain~~ Prevent conversion of agricultural land to other uses. important farmlands in agricultural use.

Policy C-7.1: Maintain a balance between the County's efforts to preserve farmland and the rights of individual landowners. Meaning what? Who decides what balance is?

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

**Policy Options:** Conservation easements, agricultural mitigation, transfers of development rights

*Policy C-7.3.a: Study alternative methods of farmland preservation, including conservation easements and transfer of development rights.*

*Policy C-7.3.b: ~~Encourage~~ Develop and implement the use of alternative methods of farmland agricultural land preservation, including mitigation measures for farmland agricultural land conversion, the identification of funding for purchase of conservation easements, and establishment of a program for the transfer of development rights.*

Policy C-7.4: Direct future development toward "infill" areas, areas contiguous to cities, and areas with existing infrastructure and services in order to maintain the viability of existing agricultural land.

Foothill Conservancy recommended edits Fall 2007

Policy C-7.5: Require that future development be compatible with existing adjacent and nearby agricultural uses.

Policy C-7.6: Direct future development away from farmlands ~~of local or statewide importance.~~ rangelands, and timberlands.

Policy C-7.7: Discourage the extension of city spheres of influence or provision of urban services such as water or sewer into areas of important farmland.

Policy C-7.8: ~~Encourage~~ Require the provision of farm family and farm worker housing in a manner that conserves important ~~farmlands~~ agricultural lands.

Policy C-7.9 ~~Encourage~~ Require the use of site planning techniques such as buffers, building envelopes and setbacks on lands adjacent to agricultural uses ~~in order~~ to protect agriculture from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

**Goal C-8: Maintain long term economic viability of agricultural land uses.**

Policy C-8.1: Ensure that any future agri-tourism uses are appropriately located and scaled to fit in with the county's rural and agricultural context.

Policy C-8.2: Encourage agri-tourism and limited agriculture-related businesses ~~which that~~ provide an additional source of income to farmers and ranchers.

Policy C-8.3: Promote development of support businesses associated with agri-tourism where adequate infrastructure and services are available to serve them. Encourage tourism-related services to be offered in cities and rural communities near ~~tourist agricultural areas~~ sites.

**Goal C-9: Ensure that new development does not reduce the amount of water currently available for agriculture. Encourage alternative means of providing water to agricultural users.**

Policy 9.1: Promote use of reclaimed water in compatible farming and ranching settings.

Policy 9.2: ~~Support the continued availability of water supplies to agricultural users. Reject new residential, commercial, or industrial projects that would reduce the amount of ground or surface water available for agriculture in general or particular agricultural operations.~~

Goal C-10: Reduce the environmental effects of farming, logging, and ranching activities.

Policy C-10.1: ~~Promote~~ Require the use of environmentally, socially and financially sustainable farming, logging, —and ranching practices.

Policy C-10.2: Promote education and incentives to support expansion of sustainable practices.

**GPAC Comments**

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**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, development standards, 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-11: Preserve the County’s historical resources.

Foothill Conservancy recommended edits Fall 2007

Policy C-11.1: Balance the community's interest in historic preservation with the rights of individual property owners. Not necessary. Legal rights are guaranteed by law.

Policy C-11.2: Use Provide incentives ~~where possible as a means of protecting to protect~~ and ~~preserving preserve~~ historical structures and districts. Consider using Mills Act contracts as a way of providing such incentives.

Policy C-11.3: Promote Require the use of building envelopes or cluster development ~~as a means of protecting to protect~~ historical resources when land is developed.

**Policy Options: Property owner and County-based historic preservation tools**

*Policy C-11.4.a: Support the preservation of historic structures, including rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of structures. Encourage property owners to preserve and maintain historic structures.*

*Policy C-11.4.b: Establish a County Historic Preservation ordinance, including regulations for development, demolition, and construction affecting historic structures or districts. Consider participating in the Certified Local Government program.*

Policy C-11.5: Promote Require the preservation of historically significant Gold Rush sites, mining sites and other identified sites.

Policy C-11.6: Collaborate with ~~other~~ interested groups to develop interpretive materials for historically important sites.

Policy C-11.7: Promote historic preservation as an engine for Amador County's tourist economy.

**GPAC Comments**

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## Cultural Resources

Amador County is rich in cultural resources, with a high number and quality of sites that document the history and culture of indigenous people for thousands of years. 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-12: Preserve the County's cultural resources.

Policy C-12.1: Balance the community's interest in the protection of cultural resources with the rights of individual property owners. No need - rights are guaranteed by law.

Policy C-12.2: Use-Provide incentives ~~where possible as a means of protecting and preserving to protect and preserve~~ cultural and archaeological sites.

Policy C-12.3: Promote clustering of development ~~as a means of protecting to protect~~ cultural and archaeological resources when land is developed.

Policy C-12.4: Educate local realtors 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-12.5: Utilize-Use 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 Options: Resource sensitivity zones

*Policy C-12.6a: ~~Utilize-Develop and implement a resource sensitivity zone map to review-direct proposed development projects in-away from areas with archaeological sensitivity.~~*

*Policy C-12.6b: No policy.*

Policy C-12.7: Support the preservation and protection of Native American cultural and archaeological sites.

Policy C-12.8: Collaborate with ~~other interested groups~~ all interested parties to develop interpretive materials for culturally and archaeologically important sites.

**GPAC Comments**

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**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 misleading we don't have good air quality now by modifying development patterns and offering alternative transportation options, as well as encouraging energy conservation and efficiency.

**Goal C-13: Maintain and improve air quality.**

Policy C-13.1: Encourage development of job-creating commercial or industrial businesses near existing towns ~~which provide jobs for county residents in order~~ to reduce vehicle miles traveled ~~for residents who must drive elsewhere for employment.~~

Policy C-13.2: ~~Encourage~~ Promote infill development, and development near existing activity centers towns and commercial centers ~~in order~~ to encourage walking or bicycle use in running local errands.

Foothill Conservancy recommended edits Fall 2007

Policy C-13.3: ~~Promote~~Require the separation of emission sources from sensitive receptors such as schools, day care centers, and health care facilities.

Policy C-13.4: ~~Encourage~~Require energy conservation and energy efficient design in new development projects.

Policy C-13.5: ~~Promote~~Require recycling of waste materials and promote the use of recycled materials.

Policy C-13.6: Maintain viable public transportation options in Amador County, and provide transit connections such as park-and-ride services to job centers in nearby counties.

Limit development in rural areas where residents must drive for work, school, shopping, and other errands.

## **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-14: Reduce GHG emissions from automobile travel.**

Policy C-14.1: Guide new development to areas ~~where with~~ pedestrian and bicycle access to existing ~~activity center towns and shopping are possible, in order~~ to reduce the need for automobile travel and VMT. Require new development projects to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities to increase the safety and feasibility of non-automobile travel.

Policy C-14.2: 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-14.3: 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.

[Reduce vehicle miles traveled by limiting growth in rural areas where residents must drive to work, shopping, etc.](#)

**Goal C-15: Reduce GHG emissions from electrical power generation.**

Policy C-15.1: Require new development projects to incorporate building placement and design features to increase energy efficiency in new structures.

Policy C-15.2: Identify a desired Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification level for new commercial, industrial, public and multi-family residential buildings. Enforce 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-15.3: Require that new residential building permits for more than 6 units provide solar power generation on 50% of units. This may include participation in the California Energy Commission's New Solar Homes Partnership rebate program.

Policy C-15.4: Promote parcel-scale energy generation, including addition of solar panels for residential structures and cogeneration for larger commercial or industrial uses.

Policy C-15.5: Expand recycling and waste minimization efforts, including recycling of construction and demolition materials.

Policy C-15.6: Require that new residences use Energy Star-rated appliances and the most energy-efficient water heaters and air conditioning systems feasible.

[Require wastewater treatment systems to incorporate the latest in energy-saving technologies.](#)

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## **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. Tourism 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. Tourism policies intended to support agri-tourism operations are closely related to policies in the Conservation and Land Use Elements which seek to maintain land in agricultural use by providing supplementary economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers. Agri-tourism operations may include winery tours, wine tasting, roadside stands, and similar operations.

**Goal OS-1: Protect resources important to tourism and maintain the rural lifestyle valued by county residents.**

Policy OS-1.1: Identify scenic resources and viewsheds within the county. Ensure that new development maintains the quality of scenic resources through creative site planning, including use of clustering where appropriate.

Policy OS-1.2: Provide for agri-tourism activities designed to provide a supplementary source of farming income while maintaining the land for viable agricultural production. Encourage coordination among tourist industries and businesses in local areas.

Policy OS-1.3: Identify historic and cultural resources within the county which are used by tourists. Protect and promote the preservation of these resources, including interpretive and educational activities centered on these resources.

Policy OS-1.4: ~~Preserve~~Protect the county's rivers and creeks~~waterways~~ and promote ~~water~~river and stream-based tourism and recreation activities such as fishing, whitewater boating, and water play~~uses~~

**GPAC Comments**

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**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~~that 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 and visitors, 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 one 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.

Ensure that new developments provide adequate recreation resources for their residents and do not overburden existing recreational facilities, trails, and sites.

Goal OS-3: Provide a network of recreational trails for pedestrians, hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists.

**Policy Options: Recreational trails on public v. private lands**

*Policy OS-3.1.a: Promote construction of bicycle, pedestrian, hiking, and equestrian trails on public lands and rights of way within the county. Where possible, facilitate both recreational and transportation use of trails.*

*Policy OS-3.1.b: Promote construction of trail facilities within the county. Work with property owners to obtain easements for critical trail connections. Where possible, facilitate both recreational and transportation use of trails.*

**Policy Options: Trail connections**

*Policy OS-3.2.a: Coordinate with surrounding counties and communities, as well as the State, to connect county trails to regional and statewide systems.*

*Policy OS-3.2.b: No policy.*

Identify quiet recreation uses of local lands and ensure those uses are not curtailed by future development or other recreation uses

**GPAC Comments**

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## Natural Resource and Species Protection

Conservation and stewardship of the natural environment, including wildlife habitat, is important to the future of the county and its residents. The County will work to guide development and use of the land in ways which that protect the natural environment for current and future generations. ~~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 habitat~~ Ensure the continued viability of native plant and animal populations. s, including sensitive environments and aquatic habitats.

Policy OS-4.1: Balance the community's interests in natural resource and species protection with the rights of individual landowners. Rights are guaranteed by law. How serves goal?

**Policy Options: Oak woodland preservation and management**

*Policy OS-4.2.a: ~~Encourage~~ Require 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. This says "comply with the law"?*

*Policy OS-4.2.b: Encourage preservation of oak woodlands and savannah. ~~in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.~~ Prepare a countywide Oak Woodlands Management Plan to promote the protection of oak woodlands, ensure consistent land use regulation associated with oak woodlands, and become eligible for state funding for restoration and conservation activities.*

Policy OS-4.3: ~~Encourage~~ Maintain 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-4.4: Support voluntary conservation easements to protect wildlife habitat, including oak woodlands.

**Policy Options: Site planning techniques for resource conservation**

*Policy OS-4.5a: ~~Encourage~~Require the use of site planning techniques such as buffers, setbacks, and clustering of development to protect sensitive environments, including viewsheds, wetlands, riparian corridors, vernal pools, and sensitive species.*

*Policy OS-4.5b: ~~Encourage~~Require the protection of sensitive environments, including viewsheds, wetlands, riparian corridors, vernal pools, and sensitive species.*

Policy OS-4.6: Protect aquatic habitats from effects of erosion, siltation, and alteration.

Conserve native plant and animal populations for future generations by directing new development into or adjacent to community centers.

Design roadway construction, improvements, and maintenance to avoid wildlife corridors, provide for the continued movement of wildlife, and minimize road-related wildlife deaths.

Require fence setbacks along county roads to provide for the safe movement of wildlife and minimize road-related wildlife deaths.

Establish development and grading standards that minimize damage to plant and animal habitat.

**Goal OS-5: Protect special status species, including sensitive, threatened and endangered species, and species of concern.**

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

Policy OS-5.2: Explore regional habitat conservation planning as a potential mechanism to protect habitat while providing opportunities for development.

Promote safe-harbor agreements that protect special status species and provide landowners with predictability and assurances.

**Rural character**

**Goal: Preserve the county's dark night skies for future generations.**

Establish standards for exterior lighting to ensure light sources do not contribute to light pollution. Exempt agricultural practices that occur after dark and temporary, portable lighting sources.

Goal                    **Maintain the scenic beauty of the county's natural hillsides.**

Limit hilltop development or grading that changes the character of scenic viewsheds.

**GPAC Comments**

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**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 melt 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: ~~Guide~~ Prevent future development ~~to areas outside~~in 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 associated with dams and impoundments. 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 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.

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**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~~Protect people, property, and wildlife from the hazards of wildland interface fire-

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 to be constructed using building materials and designs that increase fire resistance. Already in 4291. State law.~~

Policy S-2.2: ~~Guide~~Allow new development ~~to only in~~ areas ~~which allow with~~ adequate ~~provision levels~~ of fire protection, ~~including adequate fire personnel, equipment, and water supply.~~

~~Allow new development only in areas where roads are adequate to provide for simultaneous fire response and evacuation. and ensure provision of roads and water service adequate to permit fire response.~~

Policy S-2.3: ~~Limit land subdivision in~~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.

Direct development to areas in or adjacent to community centers to avoid expanding the wildland-urban interface, reduce the likelihood

of human-caused fire, facilitate safe evacuation, and allow effective and efficient wildland firefighting.

Identify specific local areas of higher fire danger and restrict building in those areas.

Provide large buffers adjacent to industrial and public timberland to ensure that timberland managers can use a full range of fuel reduction and forest management methods, including prescribed fire.

**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. Consider—Establish additional impact fees for new developments if needed to provide adequate fire service. Can impact fees be used for personnel?

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

**GPAC Comments**

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**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 the standards for Seismic Zone 3 per the California Building Code (CBC) governing seismic safety and structural design to minimize earthquake damage. [Legally required](#)

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~~that lessen the potential for erosion and landslides. Restrict site grading ~~which~~that steepens unstable slopes.

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

**GPAC Comments**

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**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.

Policy S-6.2: Locate hazardous materials facilities to limit 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 and remediate the effects of former mining activities on the natural environment and water quality.

**GPAC Comments**

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**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.

[Allow development only in areas where roads are adequate for simultaneous emergency response and evacuation.](#)

**GPAC Comments**

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**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:**            **Minimize 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.*]

- Policy N-1.2: ~~Encourage~~ Require 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. ~~Sound walls should only be used when other methods have been exhausted.~~ No sound walls
- 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 from transportation sources.**

- Policy N-2.1: Minimize noise conflicts between current and proposed land uses and the circulation network by ~~encouraging~~ allowing only compatible land uses around critical roadway segments with higher noise potential.
- Policy N-2.2: ~~Minimize~~ Avoid 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~~ Allow future ~~proposed~~ airports only in from locating in areas where there are no near current or proposed sensitive receptors.

**GPAC Comments**

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