
“Economic competitiveness and access to opportunity are the foundation for a prosperous and thriving community and region.”

CEDAC Report on Targeted Economic Development Opportunities for El Dorado County

August 10, 2017

“Economic competitiveness and access to opportunity are the foundation for a prosperous and thriving community and region.”¹

CEDAC 2017 RECOMMENDATIONS TARGETED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CEDAC is tasked by the Board of Supervisors to:

“analyze economic development opportunities and present recommendations on how best to achieve the goal of creating prosperous and sustainable communities while maintaining the county’s quality of life”.²

With this responsibility in mind, CEDAC presents the following 2017 recommendations, many of which are derived from the County’s General Plan and 2017 Strategic Plan.³

1. Identify positive opportunities and strength of El Dorado County
(General Plan Economic Development Element Goal 10.1)⁴
See pages 7-9 for CEDAC suggestions positive opportunities and strength of El Dorado County.
2. Promote opportunities for economic development
based on 1) El Dorado County’s positive opportunities and strength and
2) The Targeted General Plan Amendment-Zoning Ordinance Update
(TGPA-ZOU approved by the Board in December 2015).
(General Plan Economic Development Element Goal 10.1).
See page 10 for suggested business opportunities.
3. Develop a strategic and marketing plan for outdoor recreational tourism in El Dorado County
Brand and market EDC as the Outdoor Capital of the World. This requires a collaborative platform, industry stakeholder involvement, and support of key industry leaders. Must use sophisticated software to create a bold online presence which includes branding and image development. Collaborate not only with outdoor recreation industry leaders, but other tourism related industry leaders such as

¹ From 2010 California Regional Progress Report, One State, Many Regions, Our Future.

² Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 147-2015, Passed and Adopted by the Board of Supervisors August 18, 2015.

³ First developed by CEDAC’s 2017 Targeted Economic Development ad hoc sub-committee Lead Linnea Marengo, and ad hoc sub-committee Members Maryann Argyres and Roberta Long.

⁴ The first goal of El Dorado County’s Economic Development Element of the General Plan is Goal 10.1 Cooperation which reads: The County shall work with all levels of government and with the various economic development organizations including the business community to cooperatively identify and promote the County’s positive opportunities and strength.

wineries, lodging, events, restaurants, etc. This includes getting the message out to the right people. Consider synergistic opportunities and regional partnerships and linkages. Consider Strawberry Lodge as the epicenter of rock climbing.

Pages 4-6 present reasons for the value of outdoor recreation as an industry.

4. Encourage communities to identify opportunities for economic development appropriate for them yet not harmful or inappropriate for other parts of the County as a whole.

(Strategic Plan Task 5.4)

As an example, South Lake Tahoe has developed a strong community of key leaders who are effectively developing a nucleus of talented entrepreneurs to improve the economic focus of their area. They are uniting to create a more vital downtown area with a plan to move Lake Tahoe into a vibrant mountain community in the U.S.. They have established a broad vision with Area Plans created by hundreds of dedicated community members to improve the built and natural environment around Tahoe.

5. Develop business clusters and Geographically-Targeted Economic Development Areas
(Strategic Plan Task 1.1)

One industry cluster could be outdoor recreation tourism. Arts and Entertainment could be another business cluster as El Dorado County is nearly two times more concentrated in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry sector when compared to the Sacramento region.⁵ Health care might be another industry to consider. An example of a geographically-targeted economic area would be the Tahoe Prosperity Center. The Tahoe Prosperity Center is working to foster a collaborative environment to improve the prosperity of the Tahoe Basin, improve job opportunities, and effectively work together to diversify their economy.

6. Deploy a small business/entrepreneurial development strategy
(Strategic Plan Task 1.2)

7. Promote new types of business opportunities (lodging: guest ranch, health resort and retreat center, agricultural homestay) to increase Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT)
(Strategic Plan Macro Measure 5)
(General Plan Objective 10.1.6 – Capture of Retail and Tourism Dollars).

8. Utilize Transient Occupancy Taxes to help tourist-oriented entrepreneurial business formation and expansion
(Strategic Plan Task 1.2)

⁵ El Dorado County's share of regional industry employment is highest for Arts., Ent., and Recreation, according to Center for Strategic Economic Research, February 23, 2015, data source: CSER estimates based on Moody's Economy.com: CA Employment Development Department, Employment by Industry Date, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages information

9. County plans, including the General Plan and Strategic Plan, should have a formal process to evaluate compliance, accountability and end results. We have noted some elements we believe especially warrant further attention for economic development.

CEDAC recommendations for targeted economic development opportunities from 2016 are provided on pages 4-6.

CEDAC 2016 Recommendations

Targeted Economic Development Opportunities

After reviewing the Board approved Targeted General Plan Amendment-Zoning Ordinance Update (TGPA-ZOU), implemented in 2016, key opportunity areas for targeted economic development were identified by CEDAC in 2016. CEDAC focused on key economic development opportunities which could “help achieve the goal of creating prosperous and sustainable communities while maintaining the county’s quality of life” as per the Board’s request. Long Range Planning and Agriculture Department were consulted in November/December 2016.

Training of county staff is essential to successful implementation, as well as adequate communication to and with the public.

The recommended key opportunities are listed below.

- World-class outdoor recreation/natural resources tourism
- Agriculture/agricultural tourism
- New lodging facilities
- Improved home-based business ordinance
- New agricultural support services

Why outdoor recreation/natural resources tourism and agriculture/agricultural tourism?

1. El Dorado County excels at both and has earned a positive reputation extending far beyond El Dorado County.
2. Tourism can be a major portal for relocation of people and businesses into El Dorado County.
3. Not only do these unique strengths help set El Dorado County apart from others, they maintain the County’s cherished quality of rural life.
4. These can be areas of interest to millennials. Local demographic trends currently portray an aging peak population while the younger population is declining in El Dorado County – it is important to create an environment inviting to those who are younger and can help contribute to the County’s future.
5. The General Plan supports outdoor recreation/natural resources tourism and agriculture/agricultural tourism industries.
 - ✓ General Plan Parks and Recreation Goal 9.3 encourages the development of additional recreation/tourism businesses and industries.

- ✓ General Plan Economic Development Element Policy 10.1.5.4 promotes agricultural based industries in El Dorado County and provides for the expansion of value added industries.
 - ✓ The Economic Development Element of the General Plan (Policy 10.1.4.1 - Program 10.1.4.1.2) recommends promotion of increased tourism.
 - ✓ A Principle of the General Plan Economic Development Element is to recognize, promote, facilitate, and support activities that provide a positive economic sustaining base for the County and to maximize the economic potential of the County's natural resources (page 201).
 - ✓ A Principle of the El Dorado County General Plan Economic Development Element calls for opportunities for positive economic growth including a greater capture of tourism.
6. El Dorado County is nearly two times more concentrated in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry sector than is the Sacramento Region, an activity where the broader Region is somewhat under specialized.⁶
7. Tourism can generate revenue, jobs and sales tax to the County.
- Tourism in California annually generates more than \$95.1 billion in direct travel spending into the economy
 - Tourism directly supports jobs for 873,000 Californians
 - Tourism generates \$6.1 billion in direct state and local tax revenues in California⁷
8. The County already has already accomplished a great deal to promote agriculture and natural resources tourism: e.g., the El Dorado County Visitor's Authority, Farm Trails and Visitors Guide, VisitElDorado.com, El Dorado Farm Trails Association, Eldoradoadventureloop.com to name a few. Continue to build on what has already been established - what we already know and do well.
9. There is a growing movement to promote health and well-being through outdoor recreation activities and active transportation, nationally and locally.⁸
10. El Dorado County, including Lake Tahoe, can be considered the US Outdoor Capital of the World with an extensive trail network for hikers and bikers with moderate trails.

⁶ El Dorado County's share of regional industry employment is highest for Arts., Ent., and Recreation, according to Center for Strategic Economic Research, February 23, 2015, data source: CSER estimates based on Moody's Economy.com: CA Employment Development Department, Employment by Industry Date, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages information

⁷ White Paper on California Tourism, produced by multiple key professional travel organizations, June 2011

⁸ El Dorado Hills Community Services District, Park & Recreation Facilities Master Plan Update, June 2016

Lake Tahoe is established as the moderate rock climbing mecca of the US, and provides improved access to backcountry adventures.⁹ The Western States Trail Foundation presents a 100-Mile One Day Tevis Cup ride from Tahoe to Auburn which is a world-class endurance trail ride and draws competitors internationally. As Dr. Karen Donley, winner of the Tevis Cup in 2016 writes: The Tevis Ride has stood out for us as the ultimate ride. The challenge, the beauty, and the massive efforts of volunteers to put on such an event is unparalleled.¹⁰

New land uses were identified for new types of lodging facilities resulting from the TGPA-ZOU approved by the Board of Supervisors in December 2015. These new and relatively unique lodging facilities provide new business opportunities, create jobs, promote agriculture and natural resources, yet still allow the County to remain uniquely rural. They also generate Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT). They are supported by General Plan Policy 9.3.9.1 which encourages the development of private lodging facilities for tourists. The newly approved land uses which provide for new types of lodging/overnight facilities, and thus new economic opportunities which should be effectively promoted, are:

- guest ranch
- health resort and retreat center
- agricultural homestay

The new home-based business ordinance and agricultural support services were also noted as important in creating the potential for new business opportunities and jobs and should be promoted.

⁹ Midtown Tahoe, The Lake Trail, and the US Outdoor Capital, by Chris McNamara and Corey Rich

¹⁰ Western States Trail Foundation, Tevis Forum 2017, page 5.

Positive Opportunities and Strength of El Dorado County

With the county's investment in the Greater Sacramento Economic Council (GSEC)¹¹ and competition for new businesses in general, it is important to define and market ways in which El Dorado County stands out in comparison to other counties also competing for businesses. The following suggestions from CEDAC as to what makes El Dorado County special should be reviewed by others for input, including local realtors, and may vary depending upon the given community.

The following suggestions for qualities which make El Dorado County special help fulfill El Dorado County's Economic Development Element of the General Plan Goal 10.1 Cooperation which states:

"The County shall work with all levels of government and with the various economic development organizations including the business community to cooperatively identify and promote the County's positive opportunities and strength."

El Dorado County: Key Assets and What Makes Us Special

Quality of Life

- Rural lifestyle
- Outdoor recreation and world-class natural resources
- Strong sense of family
- Can quickly go from rural home to outdoor settings and activities in world-class natural environments
- Pace of life can be considered a little slower than other areas, e.g., the Bay Area
- Excellent public education system
- Close proximity to major shopping including Sacramento and San Francisco
- Residential gated communities for those who prefer living in a gated community
- Opportunity to work from home, which allows less commute time, less air pollution, flexible hours, and more time at home with the family
- Rural residential offers the opportunity to live and conduct an agricultural or other type of business on residential property

¹¹ GSEC is designed to develop strategies to make the larger Sacramento region, including El Dorado County, competitive with other markets.

- Close to Sacramento and the Bay Area for work yet far enough away to offer a better quality of personal and family lifestyle
- Relatively low home prices; housing is more affordable than the Bay Area for example
- Relatively low traffic, especially in contrast to more urban areas found in the Bay Area and Southern California

World-class natural outdoor resources, opportunity for outdoor recreation tourism, and scenic landscapes

- Vast opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, snow skiing, horseback riding, rock climbing, white water river rafting, kayaking and other water sports, fishing
- Described as the Outdoor Disneyland for Adults
- Fifty percent of El Dorado County consists of timber and forest

Agriculture

- Agriculture is highly valued in El Dorado County including grape growing, cattle grazing, farm crops, and raising animals
- Agriculture can occur on small, residential properties, which can include a single family home, a second dwelling of up to 1,600 sq. ft., plus a guesthouse
- Award winning wineries
- Agritourism such as Apple Hill ©
- Agricultural scenic views – people enjoy seeing cows grazing and beautiful rolling hills with vineyards as they drive on country roads

Early California History

- The history of El Dorado County is rich; gold was discovered in El Dorado County and the resulting Gold Rush brought life to California
- Marshall Gold Discovery Site and Park in Coloma is open to the public and offers a glimpse of life during the days of the Gold Rush

Business Opportunities

- An inherent strength is the ability to attract a talented workforce because the quality of life is unmatched
- Multiple business parks with existing infrastructure
- Most businesses in the rural lands of El Dorado County are of a smaller, more personalized nature; many are family-owned and operated

- Home-based business opportunity – one can stay at home and work; home businesses may allow up to two employees
- Some properties allow agricultural support services and other smaller businesses on their rural residential property
- World class outdoor natural resources offer extensive opportunities

Potential Business Opportunities in El Dorado County

(These potential business opportunities are suggested by CEDAC and should receive input from others.)¹²

As of January 2016 El Dorado County offers a unique zoning ordinance provision which permits operating a business from home and allows 1 or 2 employees, depending on the size of the parcel. With proper permits and zoning, and in some cases, allowed by right, the following can occur on property where one lives: student instruction, a health resort and retreat center, bed and breakfast inn, agricultural homestay, guest ranch, crop production, animal raising, lodging facility, agricultural support services, vet clinic, ranch marketing and winery, to name a few. These types of economic opportunities can help create prosperous and sustainable communities yet still maintain the county's quality of life

El Dorado County has commercial land waiting to be developed especially near Highway 50. Opportunities to purchase existing businesses also exist. There is some leased business space available throughout the County. The majority of businesses are small (63 percent employ between 1-4 employees followed by those with 5-9 employees, combined accounting for almost 82 percent). Although El Dorado County does not presently have large-scale industries, research campuses, think-tanks or major universities, this means the potential to create them could exist. The desire for a variety of housing products offers an opportunity. El Dorado County leads the state in increasing numbers of those 65 years and older per the AARP Public Policy Institute. As they age, people want to downsize to a smaller home with no acreage to care for, yet still remain in the county. Those younger want the same. A variety of housing products, consistent with the quality of life of the County, is important.

Larger commercial centers are primarily located close to Highway 50 between El Dorado Hills and Placerville, but there are also smaller rural business centers distributed throughout the County. Rural Centers, such as Cool, provide more localized shopping and dining out. There are many one of a kind, unique, boutique, family owned stores and restaurants in El Dorado County. The recently updated zoning ordinances (approved by the Board of Supervisors in December 2015) permit more economic opportunities distributed throughout the County. Revisions to the zoning code allow more business opportunities, as well as a reduction of some fees.

It is important to keep in mind the desired and intended vision for the future of the County when considering economic opportunities to encourage and promote. Industries which could promote employment, but not destroy the rural character of the region include: destination tourism/promote tourism, agricultural industries, technological industries, energy farming (solar), lumber and timber production, health care education/four year, home-based businesses, outdoor recreational industries, farming and livestock, small scale/organic, medical technology and boutique medicine, research and development, bio fuels/waste wood and brush/forest slash, Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ).

Elevate to El Dorado County – A Wonderful Place to Live, Work and Play

¹² El Dorado County's Economic Development Element of the General Plan Goal 10.1 – Cooperation reads: The County shall work with all levels of government and with the various economic development organizations including the business community to cooperatively identify and promote the County's positive opportunities and strength.