



Community Planning Guide



El Dorado County
Community Development Agency



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Community Planning Guide

Overview of the Process

El Dorado County is fortunate to have community members who are fully engaged in the pursuit of enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Whether their goals are creating a community that offers good paying jobs, improving the ability to age-in-place or preserving the historical and rural character, citizens are collaborating to create communities throughout the County that build for the future while featuring and enhancing their distinctive community character.

This Community Planning Guide outlines an easy-to- follow seven (7) step process (“roadmap”) to initiate, collaborate and implement a community’s vision. Whether the goals are large or small, or involve comprehensive or incremental improvements, the County wants to partner with community members to realize a vision that fits within a community’s values and goals.

The approach is general to allow each community the flexibility to decide how far they want to go down the road towards a formal plan. There are no predefined geographic boundaries for each community in this process; each community may determine the planning area that makes sense for their community goals.

The Guide explains how and when the County gets involved in the process, providing the community with helpful resources, partnership opportunities and technical assistance when needed. The Guide was prepared based on input from the Community Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC) and public comments received during the community outreach effort.

Relation to the County General Plan

This Guide was crafted to assist with implementation of General Plan Goal 2.4 and other General Plan objectives related to community planning. This Guide is intended to provide specifics on how the broad outlines of the County General Plan can be customized for each community. (See Appendix D for a list of the main elements of the General Plan.) The plans covered by this Guide include many possibilities, from just one aspect of the General Plan to a comprehensive “mini” general plan that covers all elements of the countywide General Plan. Each community has the opportunity to contribute to the overall scope of the plan. While this Guide is purposely general to make it useful across a variety of scenarios, it also includes the key steps to ensure a successful community planning process.

Why Have a Community Plan?

The purpose of a community plan is to implement the General Plan at a local level. A Community Plan allows a community to achieve General Plan implementation while maintaining and enhancing the character of existing communities with emphasis on the natural setting and built design elements. A Community Plan can enhance economic development opportunities and refine other countywide goals and policies to address a community's unique needs. With a robust Community Plan, implementation of the General Plan is not a "one size fits all" plan, but is tailored to follow the vision created by the community during the planning process.

A formal Community Plan is one optional outcome of the Community Planning Guide. The Guide also offers pathways to varying levels of "guidelines only" plans that do not require the level of technical detail provided for a formal plan, but still makes elected leaders aware of community preferences as they make decisions.

A formally adopted plan is a comprehensive planning document for a specific area that addresses a variety of land use related subjects in more detail than the General Plan. It is consistent with the General Plan but adds more specificity. Within the broad framework of the General Plan, a Community Plan is built with community preferences and reflects the community's goals for its future. Once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the provisions in the plan are codified, making them enforceable.

If a community's vision would be supported by the creation of a comprehensive plan for the community, then this Guide will help ensure that all the needed steps are followed so that a final plan can be considered for adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

How Does the County Get Involved?

The County will be a valuable partner throughout the community planning process. The County's Community Development Agency (CDA) will be the primary point of contact for the community planning process. CDA staff will be happy to bring in other County resources as needed, and help to connect community-based planning groups with the Board of Supervisors for "check-ins" as plans progress. County staff can also connect community-based planning groups with any important outside agencies that may be required to participate in the process, and make the appropriate linkages to County Committees and Commissions. A full list of these can be found on the County website at <http://www.edcgov.us/Commissions.aspx>

If community-initiated efforts determine the need for a County-adopted Community Plan, the County will assist with all aspects of the formal adoption process, beginning with community outreach and culminating with the County's preparation of final documents for Board of Supervisors' consideration.

Each step in this guide will identify available County resources and require County interaction using the following categories:

- **Helpful Resources:** The County can provide technical expertise and data, and assistance with connecting the community to a wide variety of government resources available for the plan. It is not required to use these resources, but they can get the community off to a great start.
- **Partnership Requirements:** Most of the steps in this guide require the community and the County to work together, jointly completing each step in the community planning process. This will ensure the process is efficient and does not have to be revised in later phases.
- **County Led Technical Requirements:** A full Community Plan is an official planning document adopted by the County. Therefore, the process requires County involvement, with the final stages consisting of highly technical work, led by the County. This ensures the community vision is consistent with all of the current laws, regulations and relevant planning documents and that the plan can be implemented. Requirements to periodically present the current status of the planning effort directly to the Board of Supervisors will be indicated in the section and underlined for emphasis.

JOIN TOGETHER

Begin the Journey

Any community members that care about the community they live in, and want to secure their community's future can initiate the process. Prior to initiating any changes within their communities, it is vitally important for community members to take leadership within their communities by identifying and engaging many diverse groups of interested community members, not just a select group. This group should research existing and past plans and efforts so they can build on what is currently in place. This step is led by the community with the County providing resources including necessary links to local government required processes and procedures.

Outreach:

The first step is for the community to identify diverse community perspectives, gather existing mailing lists and build a master contact list. Then planning can begin for the first outreach steps, to discover the community values and priorities; what does the community care about the most?

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- The Community Planning Guide, including helpful charts like the "Roadmap" to the community planning process (page 14).
- The County has a wide variety of technical abilities to assist communities, access to studies and reports, and lists of interested citizens from each community to add to the outreach efforts.

Partnership Requirements:

- The County's awareness of who is involved and will be included to ensure comprehensive community representation.

County Led Technical Requirements:

- The County will provide a link to related Board-appointed advisory committees and commissions and the Board of Supervisors to ensure appointed and elected countywide leaders are aware of the community's interest and that it is embarking on a planning process. Any entities that are central to the desired goals of the community will be brought in at this point to participate and/or advise.

CAPTURE UNIQUE CHARACTER

Open Meetings and Outreach

In this step, the community planning group begins the formal outreach process, reaching out to the broader community asking questions like:

- Where have we been?
- Who are we now and where should we go as a community?
- What are our assets?

Begin the process by gaining an in-depth understanding of the short and long-term future the community wants for themselves. This is the visioning stage, where the community clarifies its values and goals.

Now is a good time to consider the community's preferred planning area for the planning process. Communities can use the General Plan as a guide to create custom planning areas focusing on selected areas within a community such as around commercial and downtown centers. Just keep in mind that participation in the planning process needs to be inclusive - everyone needs to have a voice in the process.

This is the time when the community should work with the County to decide how best decisions will be made in the planning process to ensure the direction remains consistent with the General Plan and that it is inclusive of all the varying viewpoints.

This step is led by the community with the County providing guidance on public outreach and decision frameworks.

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CAPTURE UNIQUE CHARACTER

Open Meetings and Outreach

Outreach:

The process to reach out to the community and make decisions on the input is developed in this step. The most common form of outreach in this step is a facilitated open meeting or series of meetings with surveys and other outreach tools to assist. At this stage, the Community should begin creating a dedicated website to inform the community of process and store the elements of the plan.

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- Zoning, standards, and guidelines to inform the public process
- Media and public involvement resources

Partnership Requirements:

- Involvement of the community at-large, the community planning group and the County

County Led Technical Requirements:

- Workshops to inform and engage the community (see Appendix C)
- Use of Community Planning Guide roadmap and framework
- Board appointed planning group to act as a steering committee if proceeding to a formal plan

If no county enforcement is required in order for a community to achieve its goal(s), the community may now present its preferences to the Board of Supervisors (“taking a Roadmap off-ramp”).



Stop here if the goal(s) do not require any county enforcement.

GATHER AND SHARE DATA

Sub-Committees Are Formed

In this step, the planning group forms sub- committees to dig deeper into all of the topics of interest identified in the public meetings. Committees usually fall into the areas of social, fiscal and economic issues, and the character, aesthetics and environment of the community. Specific considerations include:

- Commercial and multifamily areas
- Historical and cultural assets
- Unique community resources
- Walk/bike, automobile, and transit

This step is led by a partnership between the Community and the County.

Outreach:

Data can be gathered from the County, but the community planning group should also reach out to experts, hold focus groups, use online tools and ensure that the broader community is kept involved in and informed of the work of the committees via regular notifications. Website updates and email blasts are important components of the public notification process.

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- The County can help both with direct data and in finding data sources

Partnership Requirements:

- Certain data is key to the process and the County will provide what is available

County Led Technical Requirements:

- The County must review the data presented to ensure accuracy and consistency with the General Plan

FORMAL PLAN PROCESS

Key Questions Guide

At this point, the community has reached a critical juncture in the process where the community must determine the direction the planning process will follow. After documenting the progress to date, the community planning group can choose to end the process and simply provide elected leaders with preferred guidelines, instead of a formal and enforceable plan. If a decision is made to proceed to a full community plan, then other questions must be addressed:

- Are all of our preliminary plans consistent with the General Plan?
- Are we in a designated Community Identity area?
- Do we have a final preferred planning area?
- How should the process and ultimate implementation of the Plan be governed at the community level?

This step is led by a partnership between the community and the County.

Outreach:

Input from the larger community is critical at this juncture. Surveys, other community engagement and facilitated meetings can help to consider, evaluate and prioritize options. A synopsis of all stakeholder input to date should be publicly available and comments considered as the details are finalized. A transparent and inclusive process is an important part of this step as the pieces begin to form into a whole.

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FORMAL PLAN PROCESS

Key Questions Guide

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- The County can help in navigating the decisions
- The County can prepare a Consistency Finding report

Partnership Requirements:

- Assist with governance structure guidelines
- Assist in determining planning area
- Help integrating Community ID if applicable

County Led Technical Requirements:

- Identify any amendments needed to the General Plan
- *Present decisions to the Board of Supervisors*

The community should begin to turn decisions into draft plans. Options for “Capture Unique Character” should be created with visuals such as maps, photos, simulations, and artistic/architectural renderings.

In partnership with the County, the community should discuss how the proposed plan will be implemented and what kind of governance structure may be appropriate. Depending on the size and scope of the proposed plan, the plan may be implemented by the County and/or with the establishment of a Community Advisory or Design Review Committee.

This is the community’s vision for the future, informed by the General Plan.

PUT IT ON PAPER

Create the Draft Plan

This step is led by the County in partnership with the community planning group. The Draft Plan must be comprehensive, long-range, related to the planning area, and include an implementation plan.

Outreach:

In this step the County will work with the community planning group directly, but the step does not require any additional outreach until the draft plan is finalized.

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- The County can help with both technical assistance and grant applications to obtain resources, if needed.

Partnership Requirements:

- The Draft Plan will be done together with the community planning group

County Led Technical Requirements:

- The County will determine the final Community plan elements. Some examples of commonly used elements are:
 - Transportation
 - Design
 - Public Facilities and Services
 - Economic Development
- *Present decisions to the Board of Supervisors if taking the off ramp (See Roadmap)*



Stop here if the community is to be self-organized with an agreement on guidelines. Board awareness of preferences, but no enforceable plans will be adopted.

PRESENT THE DRAFT

Time for a Workshop

A workshop is a special kind of community meeting, designed for community members to discuss and “weigh in” on the proposed community plan that is anticipated to be adopted. A workshop is filled with visual displays, experts and creative ways for community members to give their input on the proposed plan, ask questions and discuss trade-offs and priorities. This takes a plan from draft stage to an adoptable plan. The Workshop makes the planning choices clear, and also provides suggested governance options.

This step is directed by County with Community participation.

Outreach:

The workshop is the outreach vehicle for everyone who participated in the previous steps. Also it is important to devise a way to discern the input of the actual residents of the planning area. The plan should reflect the whole county context that can be provided by countywide stakeholder groups, but prioritize the input of the residents living and working within the plan area.

County Involvement

Helpful Resources:

- County can assist with the necessary steps to a successful workshop
- County can provide both technical analysis and grant application assistance to obtain resources, if needed

Partnership Requirements:

- County will lead the public planning process with community participation

County Led Technical Requirements:

- The Workshop is a required step in the process
- *Members of the Board of Supervisors will be invited to attend the Workshop*

FINALIZE THE PLAN

Who is Responsible?

After the workshop, the Draft Plan will be modified to incorporate the input of the workshop participants. The last step is to finalize the governance structure of the proposed community plan. There are many ways to govern a Community Plan, ranging from allowing the Board of Supervisors to directly manage the Plan, using the Plan guidelines for enforcement, to the creation of a Board-appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to meet regularly and oversee routine enforcement of the Plan. On a regular basis, the CAC could also hear testimony from the public and make recommendations to the Board regarding significant governance issues or proposed development projects within the Plan area. In any case, guidelines for governance will need to be created and approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Outreach:

The governance guidelines should include a plan to engage the broader community on a regular basis, beyond the open meetings of the governing body.

County Involvement

Partnership Requirements:

- County will lead the preparation of Community presentations

County Led Technical Requirements:

- CEQA requirements will be led by the County
- Board resolutions for governance will be prepared by the County
- *The final Plan and governance structure will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. The governance plan requires approval, and the Plan can be adopted once all the regulatory requirements are met.*



Adopt the Plan, Celebrate and Implement!

Community Planning Guide Roadmap

LEGEND

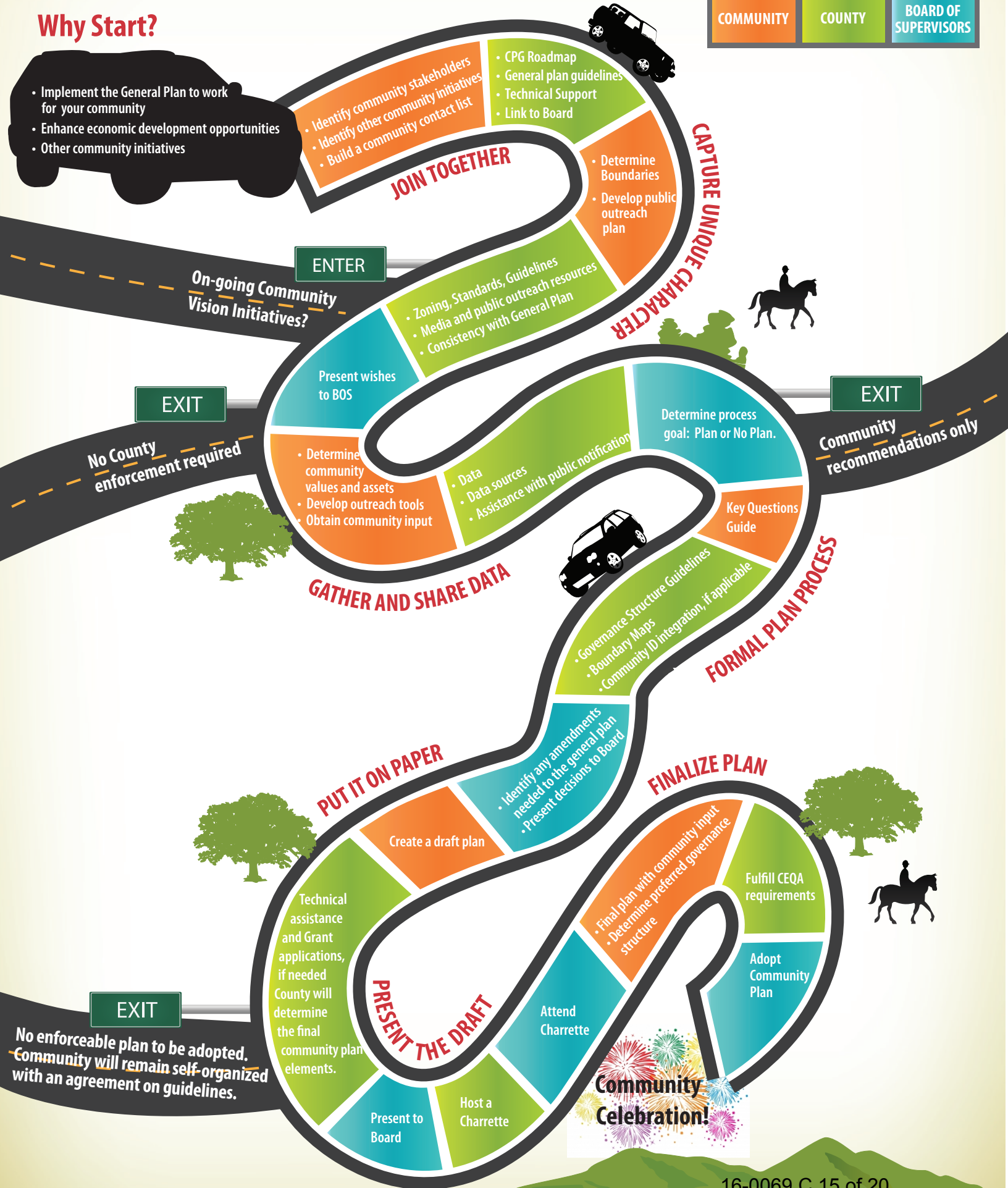
COMMUNITY

COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Why Start?

- Implement the General Plan to work for your community
- Enhance economic development opportunities
- Other community initiatives



JOIN TOGETHER

- Identify community stakeholders
- Identify other community initiatives
- Build a community contact list
- CPG Roadmap
- General plan guidelines
- Technical Support
- Link to Board
- Determine Boundaries
- Develop public outreach plan

CAPTURE UNIQUE CHARACTER

- Zoning, Standards, Guidelines
- Media and public outreach resources
- Consistency with General Plan

- Determine community values and assets
- Develop outreach tools
- Obtain community input
- Data
- Data sources
- Assistance with public notification

GATHER AND SHARE DATA

Determine process goal: Plan or No Plan.

- Governance Structure Guidelines
- Boundary Maps
- Community ID integration, if applicable

FORMAL PLAN PROCESS

Key Questions Guide

PUT IT ON PAPER

Create a draft plan

- Identify any amendments needed to the general plan
- Present decisions to Board

FINALIZE PLAN

- Final plan with community input
- Determine preferred governance structure

PRESENT THE DRAFT

Technical assistance and Grant applications, if needed County will determine the final community plan elements.

Present to Board

Host a Charrette

Attend Charrette

Fulfill CEQA requirements

Adopt Community Plan

Community Celebration!

On-going Community Vision Initiatives?

No County enforcement required

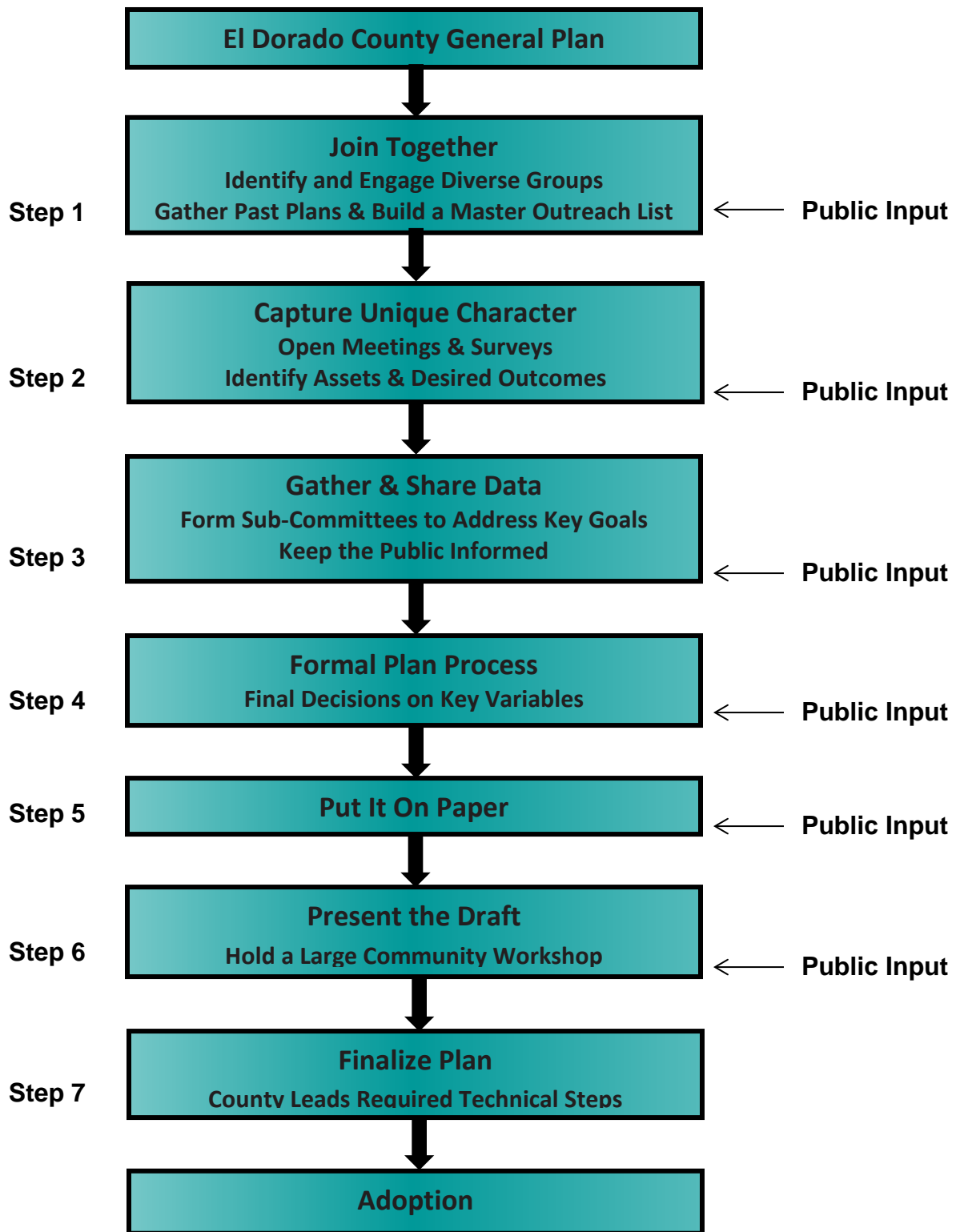
No enforceable plan to be adopted. Community will remain self-organized with an agreement on guidelines.

Appendix A: Planning Timeline

General Community Plan Update Timeline <i>(Actual duration of update components will vary)</i>										
Possible Community Plan Update Components		Phase I: 6 months		Phase II: 1 st Year			Phase III: 2 nd Year			
Community Plan <i>(New or Update)</i>	30 months									
Contracting	3–6 months									
Establish a Community Planning Group & Develop a Public Outreach Strategy	3 months									
Public Meetings and Planning Commission Workshops <i>*Community Workshops/Charrette</i>	24 months				*	*	*		*	
Existing conditions data gathering and analysis	3 months									
Mobility/Traffic Studies and Forecasting	15 months									
Developing and drafting plan policies <i>*Drafts of Community Plan</i>	12 months							*		*
Identify and prepare Zoning Updates <i>(if necessary)</i>	5 months									
Environmental Impact Review (EIR) process – screenchecks, Draft EIR, public review and Final	10 months									
Public Facilities Financing Plan <i>(if necessary)</i> – Conducted on a separate timeline, but concurrent with Community Plan Process	5–7 months									
Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors approval Process. <i>*Schedule first hearing</i>	3–4 months									*

**The 2 month hearings timeline is not included in the plan update schedule.*

Appendix B: Process Steps



Appendix C: Outreach Strategy Schedule

Outreach Strategy Schedule						
Outreach Effort	Timeframe	Phase I: 6 mos.	Phase I: 6 mos.	Phase II: 1 st Year	Phase III: 2 nd Year	Public Hearings ¹
Establish a Community Planning Group	3 months	*				
Weekly subcommittee meetings 1st: Kick off meeting See Table 2-2: for subsequent subcommittee meeting topics	1 meeting/month					
Subcommittee Focus Group Meetings	varies					
Community Planning Group Progress reports and updates Formal Recommendation	Every 1–3 months			*		
Community Surveys	1–5 months					
Public workshops	5 workshops minimum					
Visioning (2)	2 workshops					
Goal setting (2)	2 workshops					
Alternatives (2)	2 workshops					
Special Issues	varies					
Intense charrette process (up to six days in the length)	2–6 days					
Walk audits	1 day					
Presentations to appointed and elected boards – updates/workshops	6 meetings minimum					
Planning Commission	2 workshops average					
Board of Supervisors	2 workshops average					
Tribal Noticing and Consultation	90 day notice					
Public Hearing Process	3–4 months					
Planning Commission	<i>1 month</i>					
Noticing	10 business days					
Report	6 wk from docket date					
Board of Supervisors	<i>2 months</i>					
Noticing	10 business days					
Report	6 wk from docket date					

1. The hearings timeline is not included as part of the official 2½ year plan development/update schedule.

Appendix D: **General Plan Elements**

There are nine elements in the El Dorado County General Plan. Community Plans can cover anywhere from one of these to all nine.

1. Land Use
2. Transportation and Circulation
3. Housing
4. Public Services and Utilities
5. Health, Safety and Noise
6. Conservation and Open Space
7. Agriculture and Forestry
8. Parks and Recreation
9. Economic Development

County General Plan:

http://www.edcgov.us/Government/Planning/Adopted_General_Plan.aspx

Appendix E: Links to Sample Community Plans

El Dorado County Meyers Area Plan (Third Draft, June 2014):

http://www.edcgov.us/Government/Meyers/Documents/Meyers_Area_Plan_Revised_Draft_June2014.aspx

Prior Meyers Community Plan (October 27, 1993):

<http://www.edcgov.us/Government/Planning/LandUsePlans/MeyersCP.aspx>

Meyers Community Plan Main Page:

<http://www.edcgov.us/Meyers/>

Grass Valley's Community Design Guidelines:

http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com/services/departments/cdd/pdf/Community_Design_Guidelines/CH7.pdf

Nevada County Area Plans

<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/cda/planning/Pages/Nevada-County-Area-Plans.aspx>

Nevada County's North San Juan Rural Center Area Plan

<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/cda/planning/docs/Area%20Plans/North%20San%20Juan%20Rural%20Center%20Area%20Plan.pdf>

Placer County's Sheridan Community Plan

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/sheridan>

Placer County's Tahoe Basin Area Plan

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/tahoebasinareaplan>

For more information on El Dorado County's community planning process, contact:
Community Development Agency, Long Range Planning Division
(530) 621-4650 or www.edcgov.us/LongRangePlanning/