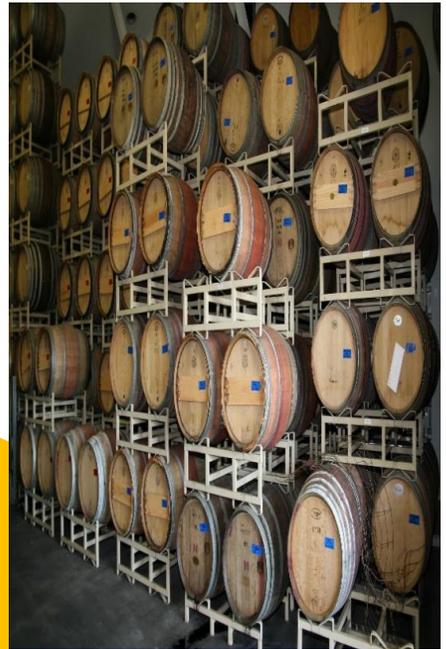




El Dorado County General Plan 2021-2025 Five-Year Review



Planning and Building Department
Long Range Planning
March 2026

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The General Plan establishes long-range policies guiding land use within the County’s unincorporated areas. The following report describes the legal framework and background for the General Plan and reviews findings for each of the Plan’s seven major assumptions. It summarizes the major planning activities for the review period of 2021 to 2025 and assesses the trends in land use and development in the unincorporated portions of the County.

1.2 Monitoring Requirements

General Plan Policy 2.9.1.2 requires the County to monitor the General Plan two years after adoption and every five years thereafter. This local requirement is distinct from the State-mandated Annual Progress Reports submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) which require annual submission of progress reports on the General Plan as well as the Housing Element. During the self-imposed five-year review of the General Plan, if monitoring results indicate growth distribution significantly deviates from the Plan’s major assumptions, the County must adjust development potential through a General Plan amendment.

1.3 Growth Trends and Distribution

Over the past decade, population growth has slowed compared to the previous ten years. State and regional forecasts indicate continued slow growth, stagnation, or even slight declines over the next 15-20 years.

Within the West Slope, growth distribution aligned with the General Plan’s goal of concentrating development in Community Regions (El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, Shingle Springs, Diamond Springs/El Dorado, and City of Placerville). Key findings include:

- 2021-2025 Residential Development:
 - 77% occurred in Community Regions
 - 23% occurred in the rest of the County
- 2021-2025 Non-Residential Development
 - 87% occurred in Community Regions
 - 13% occurred in the rest of the County

These trends reflect the Board of Supervisors (Board) 2014 directive to focus at least 75% of growth in Community Regions. Based on 2004 General Plan forecasts, the County continues to have sufficient residential and employment capacity in both Community Regions and the rest of the County.

1.4 Staff Recommendation

The 2004 General Plan established a 20-year planning horizon through 2025, noting that the timeline for reaching population projections is not critical as long as underlying assumptions remain valid. However, the projected population of 200,000 is unlikely to be reached by 2030 or in the foreseeable future. Moreover, many original assumptions have been superseded by current environmental, economic, and regulatory conditions.

Although data indicates sufficient land supply for future single-family residential and non-residential development, the availability of land for multi-family housing remains limited. Staff recommends continued monitoring of progress toward meeting the County's share of affordable housing and increasing efforts to facilitate such development, given that many low-income residents cannot afford to rent or own homes in various areas of the County.

Seven of the nine General Plan elements and their associated Implementation Measures have not been substantially updated in recent years. As of the end of 2025, approximately 85 of 114 measures, nearly 75 percent, have been completed. These figures exclude the Housing Element and the Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element, which were both updated within the last five years. While substantial progress has been achieved, some remaining measures may be challenging to implement or may require reevaluation to ensure alignment with current conditions.

Given these factors, and others discussed throughout this report, staff recommends the Board authorize staff to initiate a comprehensive update to the General Plan to ensure alignment with present-day realities and future needs within the County. This proposed update would not be a complete rewrite of the General Plan, rather, staff is proposing to build upon the existing General Plan framework, policies, and vision. The intent is to modernize and refine the plan to reflect current conditions, emerging trends, and future needs within the County, while preserving the foundational elements that continue to serve the community well. Additionally, elements of the General Plan that have been updated more recently and remain relevant will be retained and integrated into the updated plan to ensure continuity and efficiency.

2.0 Framework and Background of the General Plan

2.1 Legal Framework

California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. requires local jurisdictions to “adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning.” The General Plan serves as the blueprint for development throughout the County and is the primary tool for balancing competing interests. It addresses all aspects of development, including housing, transportation, open space, economic development, agriculture and timber, safety, land use, and public facilities.

A General Plan looks to the future, making land use, economic, social, and environmental decisions based on assumptions and analyses of existing conditions. Often referred to as the “constitution” for future development, the General Plan reflects the community’s long-term goals and vision for land use while protecting historical and cultural resources that define the County. The General Plan must also be compatible to regional plans and comply with applicable state and federal laws.

On July 19, 2004, the County Board adopted the 2004 General Plan (https://www.edcgov.us/Government/planning/pages/adopted_general_plan.aspx). The General Plan became effective on September 1, 2005, following the discharge of the Writ of Mandate in *El Dorado County Taxpayers for Quality Growth, et al. v. El Dorado County Board of Supervisors*. On August 31, 2005, the Superior Court of California in Sacramento County ruled that the County had satisfied all terms of the Writ.

2.2 Background

The General Plan establishes long-range policies to guide land use, promote environmentally balanced growth, and maintain the County’s rural character and quality of life. It also ensures adequate infrastructure while conserving agricultural lands, forests, woodlands, and other natural resources. The General Plan represents a careful balancing of competing economic, social, and environmental interests.

The General Plan recognizes that the County will continue to grow but emphasizes preserving its natural resource base, both consumptive and environmental, to maintain local customs, culture, and long-term economic stability. It acknowledges the ecological and historic value of these lands and seeks to conserve them for future economic benefit. The rural character of the County is considered its most important asset. Through careful planning and management, the County can maintain this character while accommodating reasonable growth and supporting economic stability.

2.3 Statement of Vision

The General Plan framework is built upon a clear vision for future growth, supported by assumptions and strategies.

- Plan assumptions establish the foundation for physical planning policies.
- Plan strategies outline methods for achieving the vision and goals, ensuring the Plan’s principal purposes are carried forward.

The framework directs growth into distinct planning concept areas, creating a more manageable and sustainable land use pattern. It also recognizes that service levels will differ between Community Regions and Rural Centers, reflecting the County’s diverse geography and development needs.

The 2004 General Plan consists of nine elements, each addressing a critical aspect of planning:

- Land Use
- Transportation and Circulation
- Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Public Health, Safety, and Noise
- Conservation and Open Space
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Parks and Recreation
- Economic Development

Through these elements, the General Plan establishes overarching objectives and specific implementation measures that translate policies into actionable steps.

Implementation of the General Plan must be applied comprehensively. No single component can stand alone in the review and evaluation of a development project. It is the task of the Board and Planning Commission with the CAO’s Office and Department Heads, consistent with state law, to weigh project benefits and consequences against the General Plan and its objectives. The Zoning Ordinance and other County policies implement the General Plan and must be consistent with the standards in the General Plan.

2.4 General Plan Assumptions

The 2004 General Plan identifies seven key assumptions developed in consideration of the County’s physical, economic, and political conditions of the past, present and future as they stood at that time. These assumptions provided a valid foundation for

monitoring and reviewing the Plan during its intended 20-year horizon. However, as priorities and conditions evolve, the underlying assumptions of the County's governing document must also adapt.

The 2004 General Plan Assumptions are as follows:

1. **Population Projections** – Projected growth for the County, as determined by the State Department of Finance (DOF), can be accommodated within the General Plan's planning horizon.
2. **Auburn Dam** – The General Plan does not address authorization for Auburn Dam construction. This assumption is included because, if authorized, the dam would affect certain Plan policies.
3. **Jurisdiction of Other Agencies** – Other agencies will continue to exercise significant policy control over lands within the County.
4. **Agriculture and Timber** – These industries will remain economically viable throughout the planning horizon.
5. **Water Supply** – Adequate water supply will be available for the current population, and additional supplies will be developed to support projected growth. Lack of water availability could affect the General Plan's validity. Designation of the American or Consumnes Rivers as "Wild and Scenic" or their drainage basins as "National Recreation Areas" would conflict with the County's water storage objectives.
6. **Housing** – Policies and implementing directives will strive to minimize impacts on affordable housing goals. Housing needs for all economic segments in unincorporated areas may be met if the Housing Element is implemented.
7. **Traffic Service Levels** – The General Plan is designed to match roadway capacity improvements with projected demand to maintain Level of Service (LOS) and concurrency policies in the Transportation and Circulation Element.

Each assumption and related findings are discussed later in this report. The General Plan's vision, assumptions, strategies, concepts, and objectives are detailed in the Introduction chapter of the Plan, available at

https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/1/documents/land-use/planning-amp-zoning/adopted-general-plan/1_introduction.pdf.

Background information on planning issues addressed in the Plan is contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), certified by the Board of Supervisors upon adoption of the Plan, which is available at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Planning-and-Building/Planning-Division/Adopted-General-Plan/General-Plan-Supporting-Documents/Final-Environmental-Impact-Report-EIR>.

3.0 Previous Five-Year Report Recap (2016-2020)

3.1 Key Findings

The 2016–2020 General Plan Five-Year Review found that the assumptions in the 2004 General Plan remained valid for the review period, although the Board had concerns about the General Plan assumptions for the Auburn Dam, Agriculture and Timber, Water Supply, and Traffic Levels of Service as well as the visions and purpose of the General Plan. Staff found that overall development during these years was consistent with the type, density, and locations envisioned in the General Plan. Based on this consistency, staff determined that a comprehensive update was not required at that time.

The report found that population growth slowed significantly compared to earlier projections. The report concluded that growth would continue to decline over the next 15 years, resulting in population numbers lower than originally forecast in 2004. By 2020, the County’s population reached approximately 159,000, making it unlikely to achieve the 200,000-benchmark projected for the end of the 2004 General Plan planning horizon.

Housing capacity for new construction remained available while affordable housing continued to present significant challenges as the gap between market prices and low-income affordability widened substantially. Job growth lagged behind housing, resulting in a jobs-to-housing ratio of 0.80:1, well below the recommended 1.5:1 balance.

Water purveyors reported that water supplies remained adequate and that the General Plan assumptions of availability remained valid. Agriculture continued to thrive, though the timber industry faced wildfire and drought risks along with challenges from complexities of coordination with other agencies and a loss of markets. Transportation planning shifted under SB 743, adopting Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metrics to support greenhouse reduction goals.

3.2 Major Planning Activities 2016-2020

Biological Resources Policy Update (Oak Resources Management Plan)

On October 24, 2017 (Item No. 12-1203, Resolution Nos. 127-2017, 128-2017, 129-2017, 130-2017) the Board adopted an Oak Resource Management Plan as a part of its Biological Resources Policy Update as a part of the Conservation and Open Space Element, establishing mitigations, permit requirements, and exemptions for oak woodlands and individual oak trees impacted by development.

Meyers Area Plan Adopted

On March 20, 2018 (Item No. 18-0376, Resolution No. 036-2018), the Board adopted the Meyers Area Plan (MAP) which replaced the 1993 Meyers Community Plan (MCP). The

approved MAP built upon the MCP and maintained much of the same vision, and many of the same policies and priorities. This Plan established new land use designations, zoning standards, and development guidelines tailored to the Meyers Community, promoting sustainable growth, improved transportation, and enhanced design standards.

SB 743 VMT implementation

On October 6, 2020 (Item No. 20-1059, Resolution 141-2020), the Board adopted an implementation plan to transition from Level of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metrics under CEQA, defining thresholds, modeling methods, screening criteria, and mitigation tools aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable travel.

Commercial Cannabis Ordinance

Following voter approval in November 2018, the Board adopted the County's Commercial Cannabis Ordinance on September 10, 2019 (Item No. 19-1152, Ordinance Nos. 5109, 5110, 5111, 5112). These ordinances established regulations for commercial cannabis activities, including cultivation, retail, and distribution, and amended County Code Chapter 130 to implement these provisions.

3.3 Emerging Priorities and Staff Recommendations

Looking ahead to the 2021-2025 planning review period, priorities included updating the Housing Element and the Safety Element, developing an Affordable Housing Ordinance, creating permit-ready plans for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and updating the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) Program.

Staff recommend increasing efforts to facilitate affordable housing development as data showed that many low-income residents cannot afford to rent or own homes under current market conditions. These efforts were deemed essential to meeting the County's share of the RHNA targets and providing housing for all economic segments.

The review also supported maintaining existing Community Region boundaries, as sufficient capacity remained for residential and non-residential development within those areas and no significant deviation from growth distribution assumptions was observed. Finally, staff advised considering a comprehensive update to the General Plan beyond 2025. Although most assumptions remained broadly valid, population projections were unlikely to be met by 2030, and nearly two decades had passed since the Plan's adoption in 2004 and regulatory frameworks, environmental and economic conditions, and community priorities have evolved substantially.

4.0 2021-2025 General Plan Five-Year Review

4.1 Assumptions and Findings

The 2004 General Plan identifies seven foundational assumptions based on the physical, economic, and political conditions of the past, present, and future. These assumptions form the basis for the General Plan’s policies. While many remain relevant and continue to guide policy decisions, some have become obsolete and, therefore, no longer drive the County’s priorities. Others, although still valid, warrant re-evaluation and further study to reflect today’s realities and emerging trends within the County.

4.1.1 Assumption 1: Population Projections

The projected growth for the County, as determined by the State Department of Finance, can be accommodated over the 20-year planning time horizon. However, the actual number of years to reach a particular population projection is not critical to the validity of this Plan. Many other factors, such as water availability, creation of local jobs, economic conditions, etc., will determine the period of time over which this Plan remains valid.

Analysis:

For the 2016-2020 review period, DOF estimated the County’s unincorporated population at just under 159,000 in 2020. Current projections for 2025 show only a slight increase to just over 159,000, indicating negligible growth during the last five years. This leaves the capacity for approximately 41,000 additional residents before reaching the theoretical threshold of 200,000 outlined in the 2004 General Plan.

Growth trends confirm a significant slowdown:

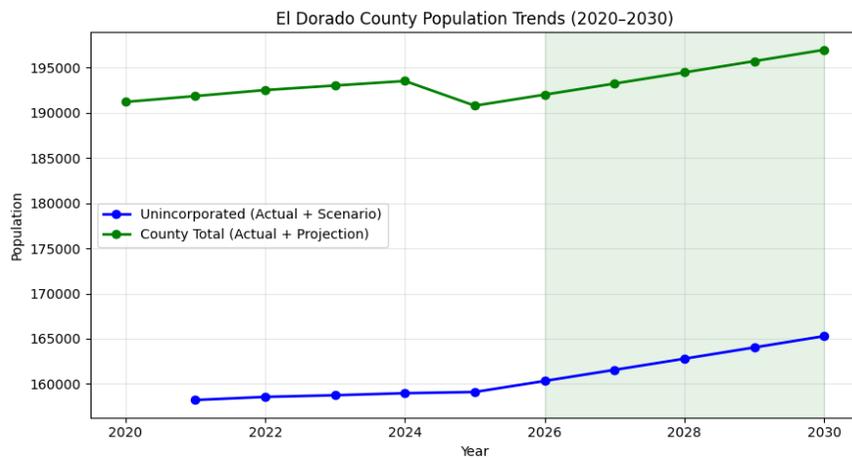
- 2000-2010: Average annual increase of 2,619 persons/year (2.1%)
- 2010-2020: Average annual increase of 1,008 persons/year (0.7%)
- 2020-2025: Average annual increase of 222 persons/year (0.14%)

This trend is expected to persist through 2030. Figure 1 illustrates that total County population, including incorporated cities, will be approximately 197,000 by 2025, with the unincorporated West Slope remaining below the 200,000 threshold through 2030 and beyond.

Findings:

Policies 2.9.1.1 and 2.9.1.2 require the County to monitor population growth on an annual basis and review the results of this monitoring every five years to determine if observed growth varied significantly from the major assumptions of the General Plan. While the General Plan assumes that projected population growth can be accommodated within its planning horizon, using a fixed population target as a benchmark for policy validity is not recommended. Community needs and priorities evolve over time, driven by factors such as housing affordability, infrastructure capacity, economic conditions, and environmental resilience. A static figure does not account for these dynamic influences and may lead to outdated or misaligned policies. Best planning practices emphasize flexibility and adaptability, ensuring that the General Plan remains responsive to changing conditions.

Figure 1: DOF Population Estimates and Growth Trends 2020-2030



4.1.2 Assumption 2: Auburn Dam

Authorization for construction of the Auburn Dam is currently not addressed in the General Plan; however, if authorization for the construction is approved, the Plan must be updated within a reasonable time to accommodate this significant change.

Analysis:

Since adoption of the 2004 General Plan, Congress has formally de-authorized construction of the Auburn Dam, effectively eliminating any plans for its development. As a result, the assumption that the dam is not addressed in the General Plan and that authorization has not been granted remains valid for the 2021-2025 monitoring period. Although recent droughts have influenced California’s long-term water supply strategies, there has been no interest from either the state legislature or U.S. Congress in

authorizing new dams or reservoirs during this review period. Therefore, construction of the Auburn Dam remains highly unlikely, and this assumption is no longer expected to play a significant role in shaping County policy in the foreseeable future.

Findings:

Due to the lack of authorization for construction of the dam throughout the 20-year planning horizon of the 2004 General Plan and for the foreseeable future, this assumption is likely outdated and irrelevant to the County. The Auburn Dam assumption no longer serves as a relevant policy consideration for the County.

4.1.3 Assumption 3: Jurisdiction of Other Government Agencies

Other agencies will continue to exercise significant policy control over lands within El Dorado County.

Analysis:

State, federal, and tribal agencies continue to play a significant role in shaping land use and infrastructure planning within the County. While no major legislative changes occurred during this review period, the regulatory environment remains dynamic, and future updates are anticipated. This trend is expected to continue throughout subsequent review periods. These changes reflect an ongoing evolution of policies that encourage collaboration and alignment between jurisdictions. Increasingly, the County is focusing on building strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with these agencies to ensure that policy decisions support shared goals and priorities.

Findings:

The assumption that other agencies will continue to exercise significant policy control over lands within the County remains valid. This dynamic is expected to continue, reinforcing the need for continued coordination and relationship building. Recognizing this ongoing influence ensures that the County remains proactive in interagency coordination, compliance, and strategic alignment, positioning the County to adapt effectively to future policy changes.

4.1.4 Assumption 4: Agriculture and Timber

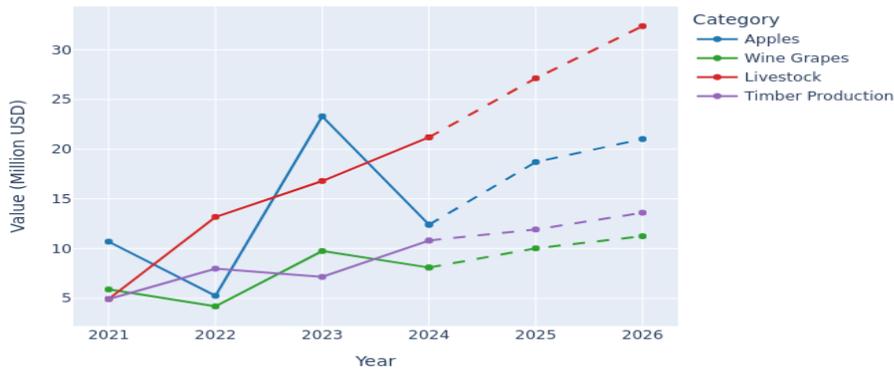
The agriculture and timber industries will remain economically viable during the 20-year planning time horizon of the Plan. The viability of these industries is critical to the maintenance of the County's customs, culture, and economic stability.

Analysis:

The County’s agricultural economy remains diverse, anchored by specialty crops like apples and wine grapes alongside livestock and timber. From 2021 to 2023, total gross agricultural value surged by nearly 65%, driven primarily by livestock gains and a rebound in apple production. However, 2024 saw a slight contraction of 3%, signaling volatility in crop sectors. Apples and wine grapes, historically signature commodities, have faced yield fluctuations and market constraints. Wine grapes in particular saw 16.5% of tonnage go unsold in 2024. Conversely, livestock has emerged as the strongest performer, while timber rebounded post-Caldor Fire.

The County’s agriculture and timber sector is poised for moderate growth, with livestock and timber continuing to lead value gains. Apples and wine grapes will remain central to the County’s identity, but their profitability will hinge on market access and climate resilience.

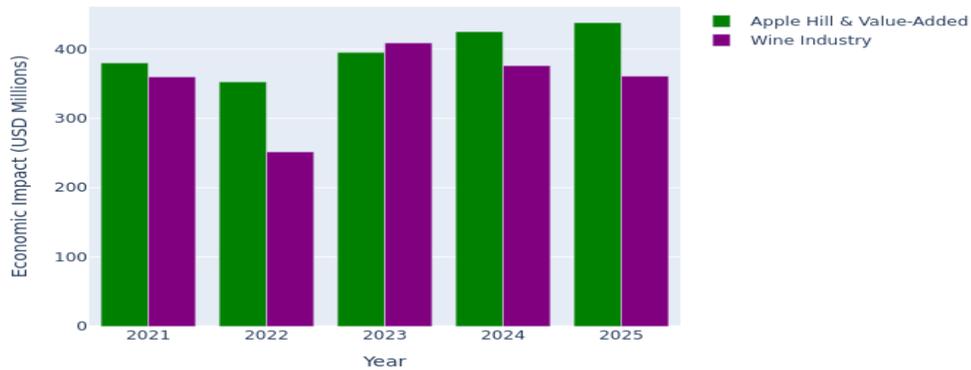
Figure 2: Agricultural Categories Over Time



*Sources: El Dorado County & Alpine County 2023 Crop Report (PDF), CDTFA Timber Production Figures, BBER California Harvest by County – El Dorado

The County’s Ranch Marketing Ordinance (Zoning Code 130.40.260) is designed to support agritourism by allowing on-site agricultural enterprises to combine traditional farming with various tourism and value-added business activities. These activities enable farms to extend the visitor experience, generate new revenue streams, and showcase local products and farm life. The Ranch Marketing Ordinance empowers farmers to integrate a variety of agritourism ventures, such as on-site sales, events, lodging, and recreational experiences into their agricultural operations. It strikes a constructive balance between economic opportunity and agricultural preservation that supports both farmers and the rural tourism industry.

Figure 3: Agritourism Impact



*Sources: El Dorado County Crop Reports (2022, 2023, 2024), Placerville NewsWire summary of 2022 report, Visit California 2025 forecast, local reporting on Apple Hill and wine industry trends.

Findings:

Agriculture and timber are foundational to the County’s economy and identity. Specialty crops such as apples and wine grapes remain culturally significant and central to agritourism, despite market fluctuations. These trends demonstrate resilience and adaptability in the face of environmental and economic challenges. Given their economic resilience, cultural significance, and policy support, the agriculture and timber industries are expected to remain viable in and integral to the County’s customs and economic stability. This assumption remains valid.

4.1.5 Assumption 5: Water Supply

An adequate supply of water will be available to serve the County’s current population; additional water supplies will be developed to support projected growth; lack of water availability may change the period of time over which this Plan remains valid; and the designation of the American or Cosumnes Rivers as “Wild and Scenic” or their drainage basins as “National Recreation Areas” would be incompatible with the County’s water storage objectives.

Background:

General Plan Objective 5.1.2 states: “...it shall be the policy of the County to cooperate with responsible service and utility purveyors in ensuring the adequate provision of service. Absent evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, the County will rely on the information received from such purveyors and shall not substitute its judgment for that of the responsible purveyors on questions of capacity or levels of service.” In accordance with General Plan Objective 5.1.2 requirements, the assessment of findings below is based on available water purveyor reports and the 2024 Water Resources Development and Management Plan (WRDMP24) prepared by El Dorado

Water Agency (Water Agency) with collaborative contributions from water purveyors, County staff, and other stakeholders. Additionally, the assessment references the County Drought and Water Shortage Resilience Plan (CDRP), which was developed by the Water Agency and County, in collaboration with a Task Force of water purveyors and other stakeholders.

The WRDMP24 is the Countywide water plan to support sustainable and responsible water resources planning and economic prosperity in the County. This plan satisfies the requirements of Ordinance 5096 adopted by the County for water resources long-range planning. The Water Agency regularly collaborates with six public water purveyors in the County for water resources planning: El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), Georgetown Divide Public Utility District (GDPUD), City of Placerville, Grizzly Flats Community Services District (GFCSD), South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD), and Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD). The Water Agency also represents the Other County Area (OCA), which is comprised of areas that currently fall outside of the service areas of the above six public water purveyors, private timber land, and state and federally managed land.

Findings:

Required water supply sub-findings A-D are discussed below with staff’s conclusion(s) presented at the end of this section.

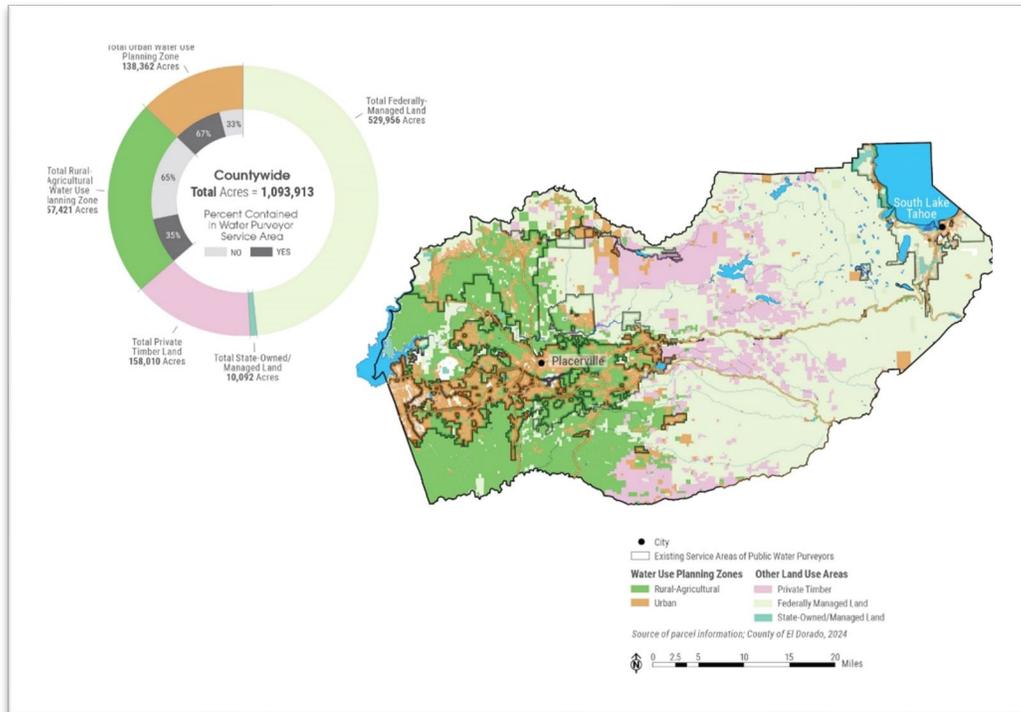
Sub-Finding A: An adequate supply of water will be available to serve the County’s current population.

Background

Considering the current population within the County, the urban water suppliers (EID, GDPUD, STPUD, and TCPUD) generally have adequate water supplies to meet demand projections through at least 2040, including up to multiple dry year scenarios. These supply and demand scenarios are assessed in the suppliers’ 2020 Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) and Water Shortage Contingency Plans (WSCP). However, these urban water suppliers still have vulnerabilities to the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather patterns. The next UWMP update for 2025 will be finalized in 2026.

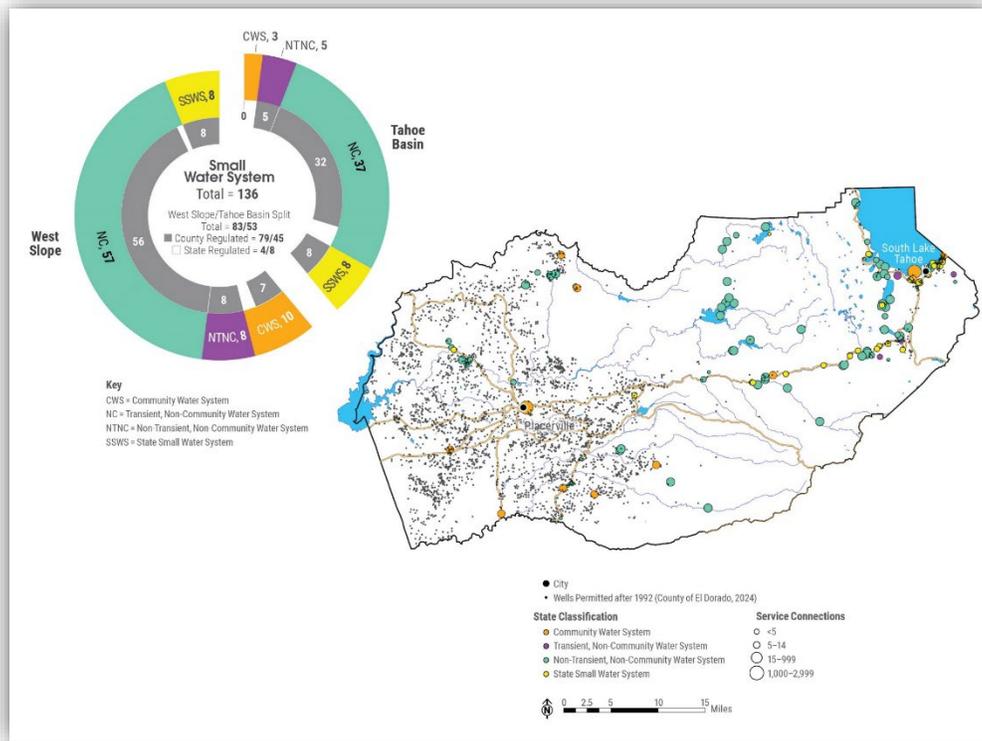
In the OCA, residents, farms, ranches, and businesses often rely on domestic wells or small water systems for their consumptive use. Figure 4 shows the substantial area of water use planning zones outside of a public water purveyor service area boundary, and Figure 5 shows the distribution of the 136 small water systems and thousands of domestic wells throughout the County. Small water systems generally have less reliable water supplies and infrastructure than urban water suppliers due to fewer resources and a smaller base of ratepayers.

Figure 4: Land Use Planning Areas and Existing Public Water Purveyor Service Area Boundaries



(Source: El Dorado Water Agency, WRDMP24)

Figure 5: Groundwater Wells and Small Water Systems



(Source: El Dorado Water Agency, WRDMP24)

Water Supply Vulnerabilities

Fractured Rock Aquifers

Across much of the County, the only existing water sources available are unreliable groundwater supplies. According to the CDRP, 71% of small water systems (99 systems) rely on a single water source, which is typically a groundwater well.

Despite the vast number of small water systems and domestic well owners dependent on groundwater wells for their current water supplies, there is no meaningful source of groundwater supply across the entire West Slope and in parts of the Tahoe Basin. Other than two recognized groundwater basins in the county (Tahoe Valley South Subbasin and Tahoe Valley West Subbasin), localized groundwater resources in the rest of the Tahoe Basin and throughout the entire West Slope are often shallow and unreliable in fractured rock formation. These areas with fractured rock groundwater are not considered reliable enough to serve as a supply for water wholesalers or retailers in the county.

Drought

As the past several decades have shown, seasonal variations in weather patterns have a significant impact on water supply availability. Despite ongoing improvements in water

use efficiency and technological advancements, the increasing frequency and severity of extreme conditions continue testing the limits of water management throughout the state. California experienced two back-to-back severe droughts in 2012-16 and 2020-22, both with record-breaking persistence and intensity that created widespread water stress.

In the West Slope, the OCA and small water suppliers are likely to experience hardships as a result of not having secure water supplies or lack of backup supplies. While the larger water purveyors in the county had sufficient water stored in their local reservoirs to meet customer demands during recent droughts, some smaller water systems and domestic wells had springs and groundwater wells run dry. Compared to urban water suppliers, small water suppliers (i.e., small public water systems, state small water systems, and domestic wells) are often less resilient to natural disasters, such as drought and fire, have more difficulty adjusting to regulatory changes, and may struggle to fund infrastructure maintenance and replacement due to poor economies of scale and lack of staff. Some residents with dry wells obtained needed water supplies from EID's bulk water stations, but residents' level of preparation for water shortage varies and there are limited resources for emergency assistance.

Wildfire

Water resources-related impacts from wildfires can be direct or indirect, with both affecting the ability to reliably deliver water of acceptable quality. In the County, direct impacts on water supply from the damage to water supply related infrastructure (treatment facilities, powerhouses, conveyance, etc.), and indirect impacts (such as increased risks for landslides, erosion, water pollution and flooding that can cause damage) are often realized long after the disaster.

EID, GDPUD, and GFCSD have observed an increase in sediments and turbidity in their source water as a result of fire impacts. EID and GFCSD have also experienced more algae growth due to lack of tree covers after the Caldor Fire. The Water Agency obtained a \$1.875M federal grant in collaboration with the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and U.S. Forest Service for restoring a portion of GFCSD's source watershed that was significantly damaged by Caldor Fire. The RCD is the project implementer and on-the-ground reforestation activities are expected to start in 2026. This project will initiate efforts to improve the GFCSD's water resources by reducing water quality impairments and maintenance costs from debris flows. However, full recovery from the Caldor Fire is a long-term process that is expected to take at least 20 years.

Drought and Water Shortage Planning

To improve the understanding of drought impacts in the West Slope and develop response and mitigation actions on a regional level, the Water Agency completed an

Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan (UARB RDCP) in 2023 in collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the County, public water purveyors, and interested parties.

Following the completion of the UARB RDCP, the County and the Water Agency, in collaboration with a Task Force of water purveyors and other stakeholders, developed the CDRP in 2025 to improve drought planning and preparedness for small water suppliers and rural communities. The CDRP covers the 136 active small water systems and approximately 3,700 domestic wells with available electronic permitting data in the county. Based on the CDRP, there are four main categories of drought and water shortage vulnerabilities, each with key factors of greatest risk within the County:

- **Environmental** – High wildfire risk; Fractured rock aquifer dependency
- **Infrastructure** – Lack of water supply redundancy; Inability to receive water transfers, lack of water metering
- **Regulatory** – Lack of system-specific drought planning
- **Social** – Certain locations have disadvantaged communities (impacts approximately 6,000 water connections)

The above vulnerabilities informed short- and long-term actions to be implemented by the County, Water Agency, public water purveyors, small water systems, and domestic well owners. These actions include emergency potable water supply provisions, emergency assistance, water supply and system infrastructure improvements, water conservation, data and educational information, and planning resources. Many of these tasks require a substantial increase in the available financial and technical assistance resources to achieve the desired on-the-ground outcomes for small water systems and domestic well owners. The Water Agency will continue to convene the Task Force and coordinate with the California Department of Water Resources to support implementation measures through collaboration and resource sharing.

Sub-Finding B: Additional water supplies will be developed to support the projected growth.

Water Resources Planning Framework

As a countywide water resources agency, the Water Agency assesses the collective long-term water needs through a proactive approach for water supply and resilience planning. The WRDMP24 focuses on the realization of the vision provided by the General Plan in terms of land use and associated economic activities to support the preferred rural-agricultural way of life. The period of planning spans more than 50 years and currently, through the end of the 21st Century. Under the existing regulatory framework, major public water purveyors (EID, GDPUD, STPUD, TCPUD) are subject to the requirements for preparing the UWMP and WSCP with a planning period of 20 years. With exceptions and assumed stewardship roles, when applicable, public water

purveyors respond to water supply needs of the planned and approved development on a first-come, first-served basis.

The WRDMP24 includes the considerations of the economic growth potential as allowed and anticipated in General Plan through land use policies and ordinances. These growth opportunities are mostly in OCA within the West Slope; however, some growth opportunities are in existing service areas of the public water purveyors. Most of these potential increased demands are for furthering the opportunities of growth of agricultural economy, which is the largest sector of the economy in the County. These demands are not included in the near-term estimate of public water purveyors in their corresponding UWMP and WSCP as they go beyond the planning horizon of those required plans.

Water Supply-Demand Imbalance Assessment

Supporting the vision of the General Plan requires that land use, at the capacity level, be consistent with the policies, requirements, and conditions in the adopted General Plan. While a given parcel may be identified as eligible for a certain water use, it does not imply that demands will be realized because additional factors will affect the owner's decision and County's approval to incur certain demands such as:

- Physical conditions (e.g., soil types, slopes)
- Setting (e.g., access roads, limits in dwelling density, preferences in agricultural districts or community center designations)
- Economic growth potential (e.g., agritourism, commercial agriculture)
- Other policies in the County General Plan and associated regulations and permitting requirements (e.g., the total population cap)

These factors can be used to screen parcels to inform the demand estimate, where applicable economic activities, demand management practices, use of technology, and other water management strategies are also considered. This provides the basis for water supply planning and infrastructure development. The Water Agency reviews and updates water supply demand updates every five years to reflect changing conditions and new information, re-evaluate risks and uncertainties, and account for the lengthy lead time to go from planning to implementation of an action or infrastructure.

For the WRDMP24, the Water Agency coordinated with public water purveyors and interested parties to conduct an update of projected water supply-demand imbalance. The assessment integrated the full implementation of urban water conservation requirements, and market-informed economic growth potential for commercial agricultural practices and agritourism. The assessment incorporates 41,000 acres of additional developable agricultural lands, as identified by the County and Water Agency in the 2020 El Dorado County Agricultural Development Assessment.

In the West Slope, a substantial water supply-demand imbalance is likely to occur at the capacity level defined in the General Plan. The assessment showed that the projected need for additional long-term water supplies for the West Slope ranges from an average of 53,300 acre-feet per year (AFY) to 79,500 AFY under varying climate change conditions. In the Tahoe Basin, the water supply-demand imbalance is likely to be minimal because projected demands are relatively low in comparison to the available snowpack, even under climate change conditions.

El Dorado Water Reliability Project

To improve water supply reliability for existing residents, especially those relying on groundwater in the OCA and to support future demand under changing hydrologic and regulatory conditions, the Water Agency is working to secure additional water resources through the El Dorado Water Reliability Project (EDWRP). Based on the West Slope water supply-demand imbalance identified above, the Water Agency is pursuing area-of-origin surface water rights of up to 40,000 AFY from the upper tributaries of the American River. In late 2024, the Water Agency released a Draft Environmental Impact Report for public review, and response to comments are ongoing.

Sub-Finding C: Lack of water availability may change the period of time over which this Plan remains valid.

Long-term hydrologic and regulatory conditions are a key factor in determining future water availability. Changing hydrologic conditions have already impacted water use by residents and resulted in agricultural cultivation practices to migrate upward in elevation. As witnessed over the last decade, the volume of snowpack changes dramatically year to year, which is the predominant water storage for the County and the state. This variable snowpack is particularly troublesome for the West Slope due to the reliance on surface water with limited opportunities for alternative water supplies from fractured rock formation or water reuse.

It is anticipated that the County will likely see increased runoff during winter months and reduced snowmelt in spring months for water supply. The existing facilities, which were designed and operated based on historical hydrology and typical snowpack conditions, will be overwhelmed and unable to provide adequate water supply for all beneficial uses. The projected changes in hydrology vary between different elevation bands signaling potential significant impacts on the way of life in foothill communities particularly in areas above 3,000 ft in elevation.

Sub-Finding D: Designation of the American or Cosumnes Rivers as “Wild and Scenic” or their drainage basins as “National Recreation Areas” would be incompatible with the County’s water storage objectives.

The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 protects rivers that possess outstanding natural, cultural, and/or recreational values. This act prohibits federal support for new dams and

instream water storage to preserve free-flowing rivers. River segments may be designated as 'Wild,' 'Scenic,' or 'Recreational' depending on the level of development in the riparian area. 'Wild' river segments are only accessible by trail, while 'Scenic' river segments are accessible by vehicles, though both types are free of impoundments and remain mostly undeveloped. 'Recreational' river areas may have undergone some development or impoundment.

As of February 2026, there are currently two segments of the American River within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System database: the [North Fork American River](#) in Placer County and the [Lower American River](#) in Sacramento County. The North Fork American River contains 38.3 miles designated as 'Wild' and the Lower American River contains 23 miles designated as 'Recreational.' Though these segments lie outside of the County boundaries, they are hydraulically connected waterways of the American River.

Conclusion:

While major purveyors are relatively secure, rural and small systems lack reliability and redundancy, creating a significant risk for water shortages during droughts or disasters. Current supplies are unlikely to be able to support long term growth, requiring new water sources and infrastructure, particularly as related to agriculture sectors. Climate change and variable snowpack will significantly affect water availability, and increased winter runoff and reduced spring snowmelt will potentially strain existing infrastructure. The assumptions outlined in the General Plan regarding water supply remain partially valid but require updates to reflect current conditions and emerging risks.

4.1.6 Assumption 6: Housing

Policies in this Plan and implementing directives will acknowledge and attempt to minimize their cost impact on the County's affordable housing goals and objectives. The housing needs for all economic segments for the unincorporated portions of the County may be achieved if the Housing Element is implemented.

Analysis:

The General Plan Housing Element sets forth the County's strategy for enhancing and preserving the housing stock to expand housing opportunities for various economic segments. Along with the Land Use Element, the Housing Element provides policy guidance for decision-making related to housing.

California Government Code Section 65583 requires the County prepare and adopt an update to the Housing Element of the General Plan that includes a review of the County's ability to accommodate its fair share of the region's housing need. The Board adopted the 2021-2029 Housing Element Update, along with changes required by HCD, on March 22, 2022 (Legistar File NO. 22-0407). HCD certified the 2021-2029 Housing Element Update on May 10, 2022.

State law requires the County’s Housing Element include sufficient land with appropriate zoning to accommodate its fair share of the region’s future housing needs for all income groups through the planning period. (Government Code Sections 65863 and 65584) The Legislature has declared that availability of low-income housing is an area of “statewide concern.” Section 65580 states, “[t]he availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every Californian, including farmworkers, is a priority of the highest order.” Unlike other mandatory general plan elements, the Housing Element is required to be reviewed “as frequently as appropriate to evaluate...the appropriateness of the housing goals, objectives and policies in contributing to the attainment of the state housing goal.” (Government Code Section 65588) The Housing Element is also subject to detailed statutory requirements and a mandatory review by a state agency. (Government Code Sections 65580-65589.8)

- **Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)**

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is the agency tasked with identifying housing needs for each jurisdiction within the six-county SACOG region, consistent with state-approved regional forecast totals. On November 21, 2019, the SACOG Board unanimously approved the 2021-2029 RHNA. SACOG determined that the new housing needed for the unincorporated West Slope area of the County would be 4,994 additional housing units for the 2021-2029 planning period (see Table 1).

Table 1: Regional Housing Growth Needs 2021-2029
Unincorporated El Dorado County West Slope

Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
1,350	813	840	1,991	4,994
27%	16%	17%	40%	100%

Source: SACOG, 11/21/19

Table 2 shows that the County continues to make progress toward meeting its RHNA for the 2021-2029 planning period. Progress has been made across all income categories, with notable success in the higher-income housing production. However, lower-income categories remain a challenge that may require targeted efforts to ensure compliance with state housing mandates. Current trends indicate that additional actions will be necessary to address gaps in very low and low-income housing.

Table 2: RHNA Progress Report Through December 2025

Income Category	RHNA Allocation	Achieved Deed-Restricted	Achieved Non-Deed-Restricted	Total Achieved	Remaining Need
Very Low	1,441	139	39	178	1,263
Low	868	85	68	153	715
Moderate	903	1	137	138	765
Above Moderate	2,141	0	2,268	2,268	0 (Exceeds by 127)
Total	5,353	225	2,512	2,737	2,743

**Includes West Slope and Tahoe Basin unincorporated areas*

- **Housing Affordability by Income Level**

HUD and HCD publish annual income limits used to determine housing affordability for the six different income groups (acutely low, extremely low, very low, low, moderate, and above moderate). Table 3 shows the County income limits (i.e., the maximum income for each income category as determined by HCD) in 2025. These limits are revised annually by HCD, consistent with state and federal law.

Table 3: 2025 Income Limits for El Dorado County¹

Household Size	Acutely Low (15%)	Extremely Low (30%)	Very Low (50%)	Low (80%)	Median ² (100%)	Moderate (120%)
1 person	12650	27050	45050	72050	84550	101450
2 persons	14500	30900	51450	82350	96650	115950
3 persons	16300	34750	57900	92650	108700	130450
4 persons	18100	38600	64300	102900	120800	144950
5 persons	19550	41700	69450	111150	130450	156550
6 persons	21000	44800	74600	119400	140150	168150
7 persons	22450	47900	79750	127600	149800	179750
8 persons	23900	51000	84900	135850	159450	191350

Source: HCD 2025 Income Limits.

Notes:

¹ Based on a Median Family Income for a four-person family of \$120,800. Above-moderate income category not included as there is no upper limit for that category.

² The median income of the household, based on number of persons in that household.

According to federal standards, an affordable housing cost is 30 percent of gross household income spent on rent or mortgage plus utilities. Table 4 lists 2025 affordable rental and home sale prices for the County within HCD-established income categories based on a four-person household. Based on these income groups, an acutely low-income household could afford a monthly rent of \$452 or a home price of up to approximately \$75,358, an extremely low-income household could afford monthly rents of \$965 or a home price up to approximately \$160,709. A very low-income household

with an annual income of \$64,300 could afford a monthly rent of \$1,607 or a purchase price of approximately \$267,709. A low-income four-person household with an annual income of \$102,900 could afford a monthly rent of \$2,572, or a purchase price of \$428,418 and a moderate-income household with an annual income of \$144,950 could afford a monthly rent of \$3,623 or a home purchase price of \$603,491.

When comparing these affordable housing costs and rental rates to what is available in the County (see Tables 5 and 6), there are very limited housing options for extremely low-income households and rental options for very low-income households are in short supply. There are, however, more rental and purchase options for both moderate and above moderate-income households.

Table 4: Income Level and Housing Affordability

Category	Annual Income	Affordable Monthly Payment	Affordable Home Price
Acutely Low (15%)	\$18,100	\$452.50	\$75,358
Extremely Low (30%)	\$38,600	\$965.00	\$160,709
Very Low (50%)	\$64,300	\$1,607.50	\$267,709
Low (80%)	\$102,900	\$2,572.50	\$428,418
Median (100%)	\$120,800	\$3,020.00	\$502,944
Moderate (120%)	\$144,950	\$3,623.75	\$603,491

Source: HCD 2025 State Income Limits – El Dorado County

Notes:

1. Affordable cost 30 percent of gross household income spent on housing.
2. Affordable housing sales price is based on conventional 30-year loan at 6.5% interest and a 5% down payment.

Rental Prices

Table 5 shows the results of a survey of apartment rental prices in the unincorporated area of the County in 2025. At the time of the report, listings in the unincorporated county were limited. Overall, the median rent was \$2,397 in 2025, which was significantly higher than median rents in the Sacramento—Roseville—Arden Arcade Metropolitan Statistical Area, which was \$2,033 using the same sources and time period.

Table 5: Rental Rates in Unincorporated El Dorado County – 2025

	Median Rental Price 2025	Median Rental Price 2020	Percent Increase from 2020
Studio	\$1,825	\$1,047	74.31

1- Bedroom	\$1,931	\$1,179	63.78
2- Bedroom	\$2,397	\$1,484	61.52
3- Bedroom	\$3,252	\$2,142	51.82
4- Bedroom	\$3,754	\$2,606	44.05

Source: HUD 2020 and 2025 Small Area Fair Market Rents (50th Percentile) for El Dorado County

Housing Sales Costs

According to Redfin, the median sales price for homes in the County in 2025 was \$645,000. Additionally, Table 6 provides the median sales prices for communities in the County in 2025.

Table 6: Median Sales Prices in El Dorado County – 2025

Community	Median Sales Price 2025	Median Sales Price 2020	Percent Increase From 2020
Tahoma	\$1.1M	\$671,376	63.84%
South Lake Tahoe	\$630,000	\$454,574	38.59%
El Dorado	\$540,000	\$382,700	41.10%
Cool	\$552,500	\$354,900	55.68%
Pollock Pines	\$399,000	\$324,257	23.05%
Cameron Park	\$635,000	\$469,912	35.13%
El Dorado Hills	\$907,000	\$671,563	35.06%

Source: Redfin, 2025

Findings:

The assumption that housing needs for all economic segments within the unincorporated areas of the County can be met through full implementation of the Housing Element remains valid. The County’s 2021–2029 Housing Element, certified by HCD, identifies sufficient land inventory and incorporates policies and programs designed to minimize cost impacts on affordable housing development. These measures include zoning strategies, density bonuses, and streamlined permitting intended to support production across all income levels. While the framework and capacity to achieve RHNA targets are in place, successful attainment of housing goals will depend on sustained funding, effective implementation of adopted programs, and continued collaboration with stakeholders to address affordability challenges.

4.1.7 Assumption 7: Traffic Levels of Service (LOS)

In determining what levels of growth-related traffic are acceptable, the Plan balances a number of competing considerations. If the County sized its roadways solely to guarantee the smooth flow of traffic during limited peak periods in which commuter trips push traffic to maximum levels, one result would be the need to modify many rural two-lane roads by adding new lanes, thereby reducing the rural character of the affected adjacent lands. Such modifications would also entail enormous expense, while generating benefits only realized during limited periods. In addition, County revenue financing mechanisms, such as user fees in the form of gasoline tax or a road benefit assessment, are limited. In light of these considerations, the Plan has been designed to match any increases in the size of roadways to those necessary to meet the LOS and concurrency policies included in the Transportation and Circulation Element (General Plan Introduction, page 5).

Analysis:

The Transportation and Circulation Element of the General Plan continues to apply level of service (LOS) and concurrency policies to determine roadway sizing. This approach balances multiple considerations, including maintaining rural character, controlling costs, and meeting operational needs, rather than widening roads solely to accommodate short peak-period traffic volumes. Voter-adopted measures such as Measure Y and its 2016 update (Measure E) reinforce the requirement to maintain LOS standards and manage growth-related congestion. Although SB 743 shifted CEQA transportation analysis from LOS to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the County retains LOS standards for General Plan concurrency and facility planning. Funding constraints, including limited revenue sources such as fuel taxes and benefit assessments, further support the policy of matching roadway improvements to LOS thresholds and available resources rather than peak-only design.

Findings:

The assumption remains valid for the County. The County's transportation policies continue to prioritize a balanced approach that avoids unnecessary roadway expansion, preserves rural character, and aligns improvements with LOS and concurrency standards. Recent updates to the Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) Program (Major Update Resolution 213-2024, Adjustment to Update Resolution 073-2025) and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (Major Update Resolution 213-2024, 2024 Annual Update Resolution 110-2024, 2025 Annual Update Resolution 087-2025) confirm that roadway sizing decisions are based on policy thresholds and fiscal realities, not peak-hour traffic alone. This approach ensures that growth-related traffic impacts are managed in a manner consistent with General Plan objectives and available funding mechanisms

4.2 Trends in Land Use and Development

4.2.1 Housing – Residential Development

The 2004 General Plan accommodates approximately 32,500 new dwelling units. 17,900 new units were built between 2000 and 2020, with 2,000 more units constructed during this review period of 2021-25. Therefore, 12,600 units remain to be built. On April 8, 2014, the Board approved a growth forecast that distributes 75 percent in Community Regions and 25 percent in the Rural Area (see Table 7). (See [April 8, 2014 Board Agenda](#), Item No. 12, Legistar File No. 14-0245.)

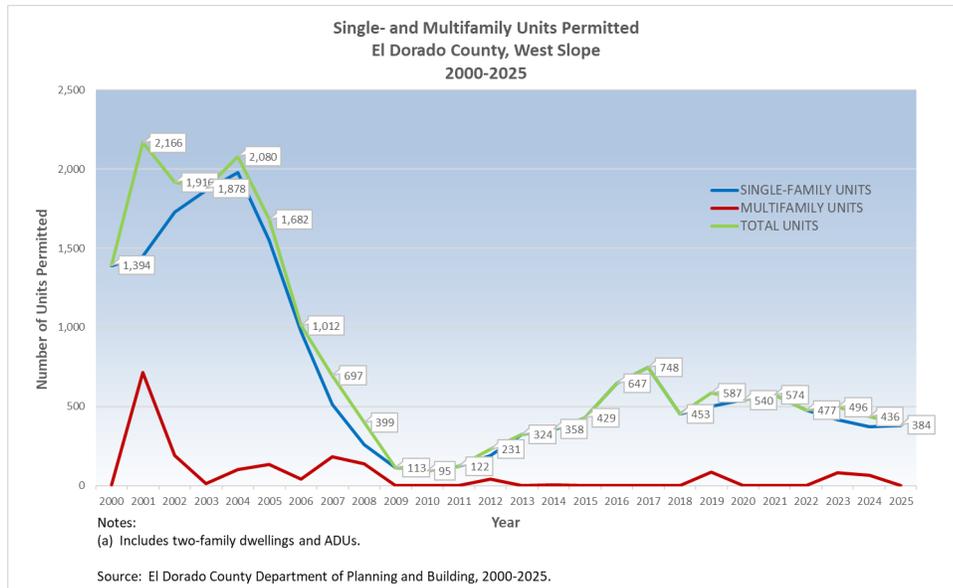
Table 7: General Plan Housing Supply/Demand

	No. of Dwelling Units*
2004 General Plan accommodates:	32,500
Units Built between 2000-2020:	17,900
Units Built between 2021-2025:	2,000
Remaining Unbuilt (Demand):	12,600
Community Region Share (75% of Remaining)	9,450
Rural Area Share (25% of Remaining)	3,150
<i>*All numbers are rounded</i>	

**Sources: El Dorado County Development Services (2026)*

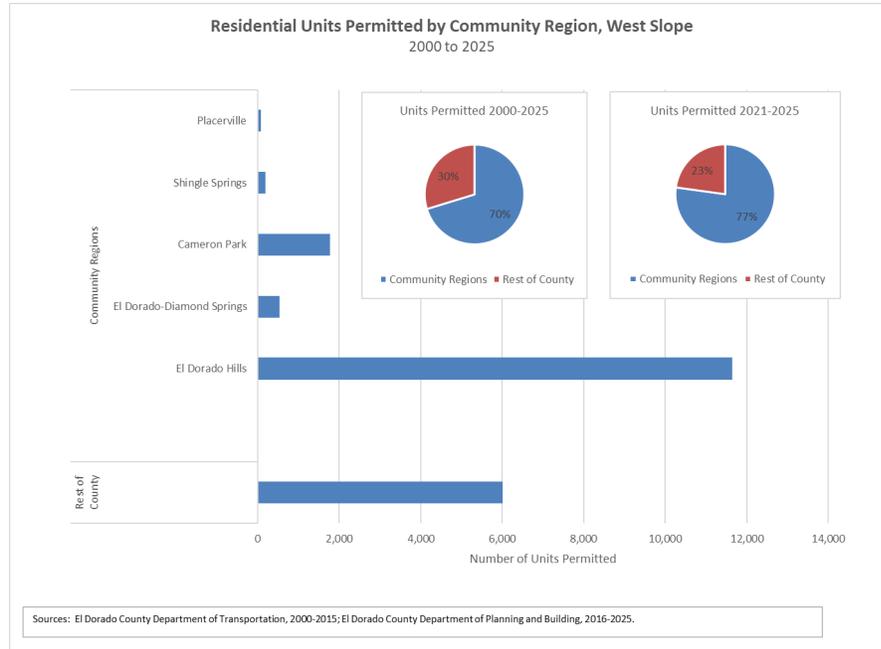
From 2000-2025, an average of 778 residential permits have been issued each year (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Single-and Multifamily Units Permitted in El Dorado County, West Slope 2000-2025*



The housing permit data indicates that between 2000-2025, approximately 70 percent of the permitted housing units for the West Slope were in Community Regions and 30 percent were in the rest of the unincorporated West Slope. While the share of housing units in the Community Regions during 2000-2020 period fell short of the 75 percent target established by the Board, more recent permit activity during 2021-2025 indicates that the pattern has shifted to within this parameter, with 77 percent of the permitted units located in Community Regions and 23 percent located in the rest of the unincorporated West Slope.

Figure 7: Residential Units Permitted by Community Region 2000 – 2025



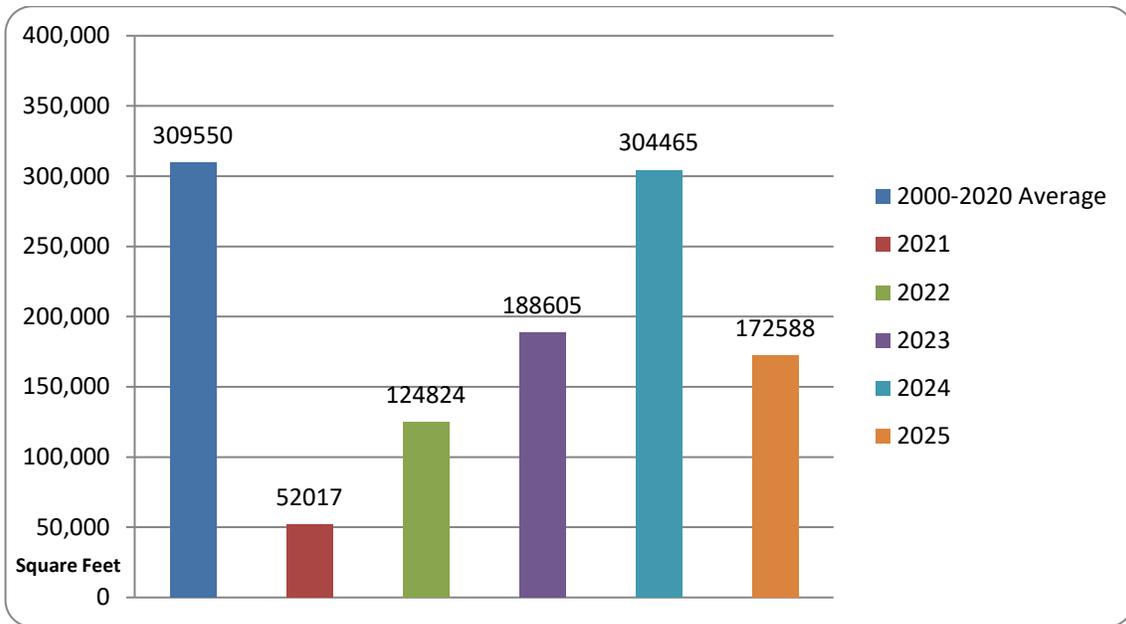
4.2.2 Jobs – Non-Residential Development and Employment

The 2004 General Plan plans for 42,202 jobs. Non-residential square footage built between 2000-2025 was 7,343,058, which, using commonly accepted formulas, is equivalent to about 15,900 new jobs. According to these figures, the General Plan can accommodate approximately 26,302 additional jobs. During the 2021-2025 planning review period, nearly 850,000 square feet of non-residential square footage was constructed and received a final inspection. Of nearly 850,000 square feet, roughly 290,000 square feet was considered commercial, just over 475,000 was considered industrial, and just under 80,000 of public facilities square footage was constructed. This non-residential development added an estimated 1,500 jobs over the planning review period. Figure 8 shows the non-residential square footage for the County over the most current planning review period as compared to the average square footage constructed between 2000 and the end of the last planning review period in 2020. Outside of a spike in non-residential growth in 2024, the County remains well below the 2000-2020 average in non-residential construction for the majority of the review period.

During this planning period the jobs and housing estimates trended lower than originally forecasted. In comparing the number of new jobs to housing units from 2021 to 2025, the report found that the jobs to housing ratio is 0.73:1. In another words, for every three new jobs created in the County, there were roughly four new housing units in the County. According to the County’s Housing Element and the State of California General

Plan Guidelines prepared by the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, a “balanced” jobs-to-housing ratio is 1.5:1 to minimize employment-related commuting.

Figure 8: Non-Residential New Building Square Footage



Non-residential permit activity for 2000-2025 totaled approximately 7.3 million square feet of building space. Of this, just over half of the new square footage (59%) was Commercial space, while nearly 30 percent of the space was Industrial. Public facilities accounted for the remaining 11 percent of the non-residential total. The vast majority of the non-residential development activity (93 percent) was permitted within Community Regions and only 7 percent was in the county’s Rural Areas. For the 2021-2025 review period this trend shifted slightly but remained well within the Board mandated percentages with 87% of non-residential development in the Community Regions and 13% of development in the rest of the County.

El Dorado Hills remains the most dominant location for non-residential development with just over 300,000 square feet of development for the 2021-2025 review period, or 37% of the total West Slope non-residential development. In addition, within the each of the three non-residential sub-categories — Commercial, Industrial and R&D, and Public Facilities — El Dorado Hills also tallied the largest amount of development of any sub-area.

Table 8: New Non-Residential Square Footage (2000-2025)

Type	Square Footage	Job Equivalents*
Commercial	4,377,570	10,950
Industrial and R&D	2,105,210	3,500
Public Facilities	860,320	1,720
Total	7,343,100	16,170
Distribution		
Community Regions	6,856,100	15,100
Rural Area	486,950	1,070

**400 square feet per employee for Commercial; 600 square feet per employee for Industrial and R&D; 500 square feet per employee for Public Facilities*

Sources: El Dorado County Planning and Building, 2025

4.2.3 General Plan Implementation Measures Completed through 2025

Overall, the County has made significant progress toward implementation of the 2004 General Plan. By the end of calendar year 2025, out of 239 total implementation measures, 185 measures (77 percent) have been implemented, 47 (20 percent) are in progress, and 7 measures (3 percent) remain to be initiated and implemented. Additional information on General Plan implementation can be found in the 2025 General Plan Annual Progress Report.

4.2.4 General Plan Mitigation Monitoring Program Status

State law requires local jurisdictions implement a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) as part of the General Plan implementation process. The MMP is a valuable tool to regularly review and assess the progress of specific mitigation measures incorporated into the General Plan to reduce environmental impacts. (Public Resources Code Sections 21081.6 and 21081.6(b); Government Code Section 65400; and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091.d, 15097, and 15097(b).) The General Plan also requires regular reviews of these same mitigation measures. (General Plan Policy 2.9.1.5) The General Plan is deemed “self-mitigating” because all mitigation measures are incorporated into the Implementation Plan. The status of many implementation measures directly affects the completion of the MMP.

Out of approximately 54 mitigation measures identified in the 2004 General Plan EIR, forty-two (42) mitigation measures have been completed, eleven (11) mitigation measures are in progress, and one (1) mitigation measure remains to be addressed (Impact No. 5.1-2 – associated with General Plan Implementation Measure LU-H [preservation of community separation]).

5.0 Summary of Major Planning Activities (2021-2025)

5.1 2021-2029 Housing Element Update

The 2021-2029 Housing Element established a comprehensive strategy to meet the County's housing needs through 2029. Its primary objective is to plan for the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), which, as determined by SACOG on November 21, 2019, requires the County to accommodate 4,994 housing units across income categories, including very low, low, moderate, and above moderate-income households. The element aims to ensure housing opportunities for all residents by promoting a mix of housing types and densities, supporting affordable housing development, and encouraging accessory dwelling units (ADU) as an additional source of lower-cost housing in the County. Parts of the Implementation Program address special-needs populations such as seniors, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, and the unhoused/homeless while advancing fair housing practices and preventing discrimination.

The 2021-2029 Housing Element was adopted by the Board on August 31, 2021 (File No. 21-1397) and amended on March 22, 2022 (File No.22-0407). HCD certified the County's updated Housing Element on May 10, 2022, confirming the element fully complies with State Housing Element Law.

Additional information can be found here:

https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/1/documents/land-use/planning-amp-zoning/adopted-general-plan/final-2021-2029-housing-element_bos-adoption-3-22-22.pdf.

5.2 Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element Update

California Government Code Section 65302 requires that the General Plan Public Health, Safety and Noise Element (Safety Element) be updated, if necessary, upon each revision of the Housing Element or Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), but not less than once every 8 years. The County updated its Housing Element in 2022, which triggered the need to update the Safety Element.

On May 21, 2024 (File No. 24-0938), the Board approved GPA24-0002/Safety Element Update and adopted Resolution 082-2024 to amend the General Plan to incorporate the Safety Element Update. The major changes of this Safety Element Update were centered on 1) addressing wildfire risks in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) and developing policies to mitigate that risk, 2) addressing climate change hazards and incorporating the Climate Vulnerability Assessment to integrate climate adaptation and

resiliency strategies, 3) referencing the updated LHMP and traffic evacuation analysis that evaluated the capacity, safety, and viability of the routes in the plan under a range of scenarios, and 4) identifying residential developments in hazard areas that did not have at least two emergency evacuation routes.

Additional Information can be found here: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Planning-and-Building/Long-Range-Planning-Division/Approved-Projects/2022-General-Plan-Safety-Element-Update>.

5.3 Capital Improvement Program and Traffic Impact Fee

General Plan Implementation Measure TC-A requires an annual update of the CIP with a priority list of road and highway improvements based on a 10-year horizon. Measure TC-A also requires a major CIP update every five years, in coordination with the five-year major review of the General Plan, for roadway improvements programmed within the next 20 years. The annual and major CIP updates ensure the program continues to meet the requirements of General Plan policies TC-Xb(a), TC-1k, TC-1m, and TC-1n.

General Plan Implementation Measure TC-B requires the TIF Program to be updated annually for changes in project costs, and to be updated every five years with revised growth forecasts, a revised improvement project analysis and list, and revised construction cost estimates to ensure the programs continue to meet the requirements of General Plan policies TC-Xa, TC-Xb, and TC-Xg. In February 2023, the cost index used to adjust costs during annual updates was updated, and since then the Construction Cost Index published by Engineering News Record (ENR) has been utilized for these updates (Ordinance No. 5173).

The Major 5-Year CIP and TIF Program updates were originally adopted on December 3, 2024, via Resolution 213-2024. An adjustment was subsequently adopted on June 10, 2025, via Resolution 073-2025.. The updated fees went into effect on August 9, 2025. Growth forecasts are an essential element of the development of a CIP and TIF Program. Forecasting growth is an iterative and ongoing process; forecasts are reviewed and adjusted annually as part of the annual CIP and TIF Program updates, and every five years as part of the major CIP and TIF Program updates. Routinely verifying and updating growth forecasts allows the County to account for new information and adjust its assumptions accordingly. During the 2025 Major Update, forecasted growth rates were reduced because of updated housing growth data and local building permit data. Similarly, the amount of projected grant funding that might be available for use on TIF CIP projects was significantly reduced, as well.

Additional information can be found here: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/County-Projects/CIP-TIF-Program/TIF-CIP-Major-Updates>.

5.4 Tahoe – El Dorado Area Plan (TED)

The County is coordinating with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) to facilitate an expanded Area Plan. This expanded and updated Area Plan will also replace both the TRPA Plan Area Statements and the County Zoning with a single document. The TED Area Plan will encompass the current Meyers Area Plan (revised in 2022) and will incorporate other areas of the County within the Tahoe Basin, including Tahoma, Meeks Bay, Emerald Bay, and Christmas Valley. The TED Area Plan will also identify and incorporate modern planning practices and implement actions recommended in TRPA’s threshold evaluation reports.

Facilitation of this expanded Area Plan began in August 2023 with a presentation to the Board of Supervisors District 5 advisory group. Early public outreach and engagement efforts began in 2024. Those efforts included 4 in-person events, two remote events, and an online survey to hear public input regarding the future of their neighborhoods. Staff also provided updates to the County Board and Planning Commission. The County’s consultant for the project has developed a website (TEDareaplan.com) which will provide the public with a single source of information including the existing planning documents and the future EIR/EIS and draft Area Plan. Staff prepared the Public Draft TED Area Plan and released it for review at the end of February 2026. Staff plans to recommend the TED Area Plan for adoption in winter 2027.

Additional information can be found here: <https://www.tedareaplan.com/>.

5.5 Conservation and Open Space Element Update

In 2022, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1425 (SB 1425) which requires every local jurisdiction to review and update its Conservation and Open Space Element to include the following: 1) access to open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic, and racial equity; 2) climate resilience and other benefits of open space, correlated with the safety element; and 3) rewilding opportunities, correlated with the land use element.

On December 11, 2025, (File No. 25-1986), staff presented the Conservation and Open Space Element Update to the County General Plan (General Plan Amendment GPA25-0003) to the Planning Commission. Staff, using guidance from the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, drafted targeted amendments to the existing Conservation and Open Space Element with the goal of complying with the State’s SB 1425 directive while still maintaining reasonable and achievable goals and policies for the County. The proposed update to the Conservation and Open Space Element is

expected to be presented to the Board for consideration and possible adoption in March 2026.

Additional information can be found here:

<https://eldorado.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7761755&GUID=FBA7DF2F-5B6F-4E6A-8D50-C6B153C9DBE3&Options=&Search=>.

5.6 Affordable Housing Task Force

On April 2, 2024 (File No. 24-0411), through Resolution No. 046-2024, the Board established the Affordable Housing Task Force (AHTF) to aid in the development of an Affordable Housing Ordinance. Since October 2024, the AHTF has met regularly to coordinate with County staff and to identify housing issues and topics to include in an Affordable Housing Ordinance. On April 8, 2025 (File No. 25-0610) the AHTF held a workshop with the Board to present their findings and update the Board on their progress on the Affordable Housing Ordinance. The Board then directed the AHTF to return to the Board with additional options that outline potential solutions and priorities to be included in the ordinance.

Under the guidance of the Board, the AHTF completed a summary of essential components for an Affordable Housing Ordinance which would integrate these components and restructure, modify, and revise the current content in Title 130 to include additional affordable housing policies and applicable State updates. On November 4, 2025 (File No. 25-1517), the Board adopted a Resolution of Intention directing staff and the AHTF to initiate the necessary processes and procedures to propose amendments to Title 130 for Board consideration. Completion of the Affordable Housing Ordinance and related amendments to Title 130 is expected in July 2027.

5.7 Housing Element Implementation Measures

On November 4, 2025 (File No. 25-1768), the Board adopted Resolution of Intention 166-2025 directing staff to initiate the process to propose amendments to various sections of Title 130 and the Land Use Element of the General Plan to implement measures in the Housing Element for the purpose of compliance with State law, General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance consistency.

Forty implementation measures were identified in the Housing Element. After four years of having a certified Housing Element, the County has implemented 21 measures. The County now must implement the remaining 19 measures to remain in compliance with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) certification.

Completion of outstanding implementation measures is essential to ensure compliance with the County’s Housing Element, State law, and HCD’s current certification of the County’s Housing Element. This effort will address the remaining measures that are not addressed as a part of the Affordable Housing Taskforce efforts. Completion is anticipated in April 2027.

5.8 Community Design Standards

On December 3, 2024 (Item No. 24-1961, Resolution Nos. 214-2024, 205-2024, Ord No. 5219) the Board adopted Interim Objective Design Standards for state-streamlined, ministerial multifamily and mixed-use projects, along with Interim Design Standards and Guidelines for multifamily, mixed-use, and commercial projects in the County’s Community Regions and Rural Centers.

Beginning in May 2025, County staff launched a collaborative process with community members to develop permanent design standards for new multifamily, mixed-use, and commercial projects in the County’s Community Regions. This phased approach will begin with the Shingle Springs Community Region, followed by the El Dorado/Diamond Springs Region, Cameron Park, and El Dorado Hills.

The permanent design standards project is anticipated to conclude in Winter 2026, with all proposed standards subject to review and approval by the Board prior to adoption.

Additional information can be found here: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Planning-and-Building/Long-Range-Planning-Division/Active-Projects/Commercial-and-Multi-Family-Design-Standards/Community-Region-Design-Standards>.

6.0 Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board direct staff to initiate a comprehensive update to the General Plan. The 2004 General Plan was adopted with a 20-year planning horizon intended to guide growth and development through approximately 2024. The Plan’s assumptions and strategies no longer fully reflect current conditions or anticipate emerging risks and evolving community needs effectively. A comprehensive update is necessary to ensure that the County’s guiding land use document remains relevant and effective in addressing today’s realities and tomorrow’s challenges.

While the 2004 General Plan has served the County well for over two decades, many of its foundational assumptions, such as population growth projections, water supply conditions, agriculture and timber viability, and traffic level of service are now outdated.

Growth has slowed dramatically, water reliability is emerging as a primary constraint, and housing affordability challenges threaten compliance with state mandates. These shifts underscore the need for a modernized approach that addresses today's realities while preparing for tomorrow's uncertainties.

Importantly, updating one element of the General Plan inevitably affects other elements because the Plan functions as an integrated framework. While the recently updated Safety Element and Housing Element provide strong foundations and will remain largely intact, adjustments may still be necessary to ensure consistency across all elements. A targeted update to limited elements would risk inconsistencies and missed opportunities for overall alignment. A comprehensive update ensures that all elements work together cohesively to support the County's vision and the Plan's purpose.

A comprehensive update will allow the County to preserve the existing framework and vision while integrating new strategies that reflect current demographic, environmental, and economic trends. Updating the General Plan will allow the County to adopt a more adaptive, forward-looking approach that reflects environmental, economic, and regulatory changes while preserving its rural character and quality of life. By modernizing policies and aligning them with today's conditions, the County can maintain local control, reduce risk, and position itself to meet future challenges effectively. This process will also provide an opportunity for strong community engagement, ensuring the updated General Plan reflects the shared values and priorities for the next planning horizon.