

## **“A Road Map” to Maintaining and Enhancing the Unique Character of Existing Rural and Urban Community Cores within the County of El Dorado**

### **WHY**

The General Plan *Statement of Vision and Plan Strategies* encourages growth to reflect the character and scale of the community in which it occurs. General Plan Goal 2.4 promotes the enhancement of the character of existing rural and urban communities, placing an *“emphasis on both the natural setting and built design elements which contribute to the quality of life, economic health, and community pride of the County residents”*.

A community is protected when projects place an emphasis on both the natural setting and architectural design and urban form of a community’s downtown core. Detailing specific qualities and features unique to the community for which a project is proposed, and requiring the design to reflect these qualities, helps ensure that growth contributes to the quality of life, economic health, and the community.

While the General Plan land use map and zoning adequately regulates the type and location of land uses within the County, these rules do not fully address the site design, urban layout and appearance of the proposed development.

General Plan Policy 2.4.1.2 directs the County, in coordination with the residents, to develop community design guidelines for the commercial and multifamily land uses of each community identified in General Plan Policy 2.1.1.1 (Community Regions) and 2.1.2.1 (Rural Centers).

### **WHAT**

1. The community develops enforceable standards and guidelines to be applied to proposed development within the urban core of each community comprised primarily of Commercial and Multi Family land uses.
2. Standards and guidelines for each community may be developed for discretionary and ministerial projects setting forth standards for site design, road standards, landscaping, architecture and other urban design elements within Commercial and Multi Family land uses and consistent zones.
3. Standards and guidelines may include, but are not limited to, the following criteria: Historic Preservation; Streetscape elements and improvements; Signage; Maintenance of existing scenic road and riparian corridors; compatible architectural design; Designs for landmark land uses; Outdoor art, Recreation, and Open Space.
4. Standards and guidelines shall be consistent with General Plan policies, Zoning and all ordinances of the County of El Dorado.

5. Following the approval of, or concurrent with, the approval of standards and guidelines, the Board of Supervisors may appoint, by Resolution, an advisory committee for each community region to assist with implementation of community design standards and guidelines (*Design Review Committee -Draft Zoning Section 17.60.070; Design Review Committee*).
6. Standards and Guidelines should reflect the true pulse of the community, and not represent the desires of any single advocacy group with a limited or narrow scope of interest.

## **HOW**

### **Step One**

To implement Policy 2.4.1.2, communities may use the following format for the development of Community Design Standards and Guidelines for communities identified in General Plan Policy 2.1.1.1 (Community Regions) and Policy 2.1.2.1 (Rural Centers).

The community should facilitate the development of community design standards and guidelines through the following general process:

1. Identify the Commercial and Multi-Family designated land areas within each community's core.

The community shall determine appropriate specific planning areas within each community's core with the assistance of Planning Staff and local landowners. Criteria shall include historical patterns, General Plan policies, community services, neighborhood walkability, transit and general economic stability of the area.

Planning areas identified by a community shall be reviewed and authorized by the Board of Supervisors prior to moving forward with the development of any design standards and guidelines.

2. Outreach for assistance in developing the guidelines to, at minimum, the following groups within each community: land owners; area advocates (e.g. historical and archaeological societies); design professionals (e.g. landscape professionals, engineers); agriculture; health professionals; transit and other public, business and community groups;
3. Assist in preparation for community workshops or a Charrette that will harness the talents and energies of all interested parties, and supports a feasible plan that best represents the community's vision. The workshops and or a Charrette shall frame the opportunities and constraints unique to each planning area.
4. When the preparation work has been completed, arrange for community meetings or Charrette;

5. Provide direct notice of the meeting to all property owners and businesses within the planning area; and all known social, fraternal, political and business groups within the Community Region. Provide notice, for example by publication, public service announcements and posters;
6. Participate in the community workshop(s) or Charrette. To ensure the voice of the community has been incorporated and considered, the BOS may require a Charrette in addition to any completed community workshop(s); and
7. Prepare draft Design Standards and Guidelines in a format best fitting and consistent with the outcome of the workshops or Charrette.
8. Return to the Board of Supervisors through the agenda process for a review of community workshops/Charrette outcome possible adoption of Community Design Guidelines and next steps.

Upon adoption of the enforceable standards and guidelines for a particular community core, a formal Design Standards and Guideline checklist shall be developed, listing specific "yes/no" questions for each design element to determine whether a proposed project conforms to fixed standards, form based code, or the objectives exemplified within the adopted standards and guidelines.

### **Step Two**

After adoption of initial Design Standards and Guidelines, the Board of Supervisors may direct the an appointed community advisory committee or council to consider additional proposals for community action, including but not limited to:

1. Zoning amendments;
2. Advanced Form based codes;
3. Formation of special districts (LLD, CSD);
4. Parks and Recreation;
5. Historical preservation;
6. Amendment of GP text and maps;
7. Incorporation;

### **Funding**

Funding Sources for further community action: including but not limited to Transportation funds; Facade Improvement Grants; other grants; private contributions; Government; and Economic Development funds.

1. The community may utilize a neutral facilitator/moderator for a community workshops or Charrette.
2. The community may also seek, if necessary, outside funding and/or staff assistance.

---

## **Terms**

**Charrette:** *A technique used for consulting with all interested stakeholders when creating a design solution. A Charrette involves intense multi-day meetings, typically being 3-5 days in duration, that involve public officials, developers, urban planner, and local residents in a collaborative session in which a group of designers create a design concept. A successful Charrette provides early definitive input into the planning process and, promotes joint ownership of solutions, and attempts to defuse typical confrontational positions between residents and developers. To learn more you may want to review recommended process for a Charrette at <http://www.charretteinstitute.org/>.*

**Community:** *A geographic urban and rural areas generally identified as a neighborhood, suburb, hamlet, village, town, or city and refers to a specific group of people living in somewhat close association, usually under common rules.*

**Urban Design (form):** *The layering of buildings and infrastructure types, natural ecosystems, communities and cultures that gives a place their unique characteristic. Urban design is typically a set of standards and guidelines that regulate the physical scale, space and ambience of a place, and establish the built and natural forms within which individual buildings and infrastructure are sited. Urban design influences the health, social and cultural impacts of a locality: how people interact with each other, how they move around, and how they use a space or place. Urban design facilitates a long-term plan and process that continues to evolve over time.*