

Project Background

The El Dorado County General Plan was adopted in 2004. Following completion of the first 5-year review of that plan through the work of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Regulatory Reform Subcommittee and County staff, a set of targeted amendments and implementing actions were developed. The present project consists of targeted amendments to the adopted policies of the 2004 General Plan (targeted general plan amendments or TGPA), along with implementing actions. The primary implementing actions are the Zoning Ordinance Update and the development of design standards and a design handbook for mixed-use development.

Project Location

This project involves changes to policies of the El Dorado County General Plan and an update to the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance.

El Dorado County encompasses 1,805 square miles in east-central California. The county's westernmost portion contains part of Folsom Lake, and the County's eastern boundary is also the California-Nevada state line. The county is topographically divided into two zones. The northeast corner of the county is in the Lake Tahoe Basin, while the remainder of the county is in the area referred to regionally as the *western slope*—the area west of Echo Summit. [Source: El Dorado County website, accessed 10-11-12] Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests comprise a major portion of the eastern portion of the county.

There are two incorporated cities in El Dorado County. The county seat is the City of Placerville, 45 miles northeast of Sacramento. Placerville's population was estimated by the US Census to be 10,383 in 2011. The City of South Lake Tahoe, with a 2011 population estimate of 21,388, is the largest city in El Dorado County. The population of the unincorporated areas of the County was 149,167 in 2011 [Source – Census Quick Facts]. The county contains a number of unincorporated communities. The following adopted plans cover specific unincorporated communities.

- Meyers Community Plan
- Carson Creek Specific Plan
- Promontory Specific Plan
- Valley View Specific Plan
- El Dorado Hills Specific Plan
- Bass Lake Hills Specific Plan
- North West El Dorado Hills Specific Plan

The proposed changes to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance will take effect county-wide in El Dorado County, affecting those areas that are under County jurisdiction. In addition, as a part of the

General Plan Amendment project, the County will consider amending the Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region Boundary and Agricultural District Boundaries in the General Plan.

Some areas within the county boundaries are not under County jurisdiction and therefore not subject to land use regulation by the County through the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. These areas include incorporated cities; tribal lands such as the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Rancheria and the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) Rancheria; and federal and state lands such as National Forest lands (Eldorado National Forest, Tahoe National Forest, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit), BLM lands, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation lands (Folsom Lake), and State Parks. Nearly half the land area of El Dorado County falls under the jurisdiction of such entities [Source: El Dorado County General Plan EIR 2003].

Project Objectives

The County's objectives for the TGPA and ZOU project are listed below.

TGPA

1. Establish policies related to the development of housing affordable to the moderate income earner.
2. Establish policies that will result in job creation and improved sales tax revenues.
3. Establish policies that will promote and protect agriculture in the county.
4. Establish policies consistent with State and Federal law.
5. Revise existing General Plan policies as needed to provide clarity.

Zoning Ordinance Update

1. Revise the zoning map to conform to standardized rules sets for zoning modifications based on the General Plan land use designations.
2. Eliminate conflicting provisions within the existing ordinance.
3. Include provisions in the ordinance to implement General Plan Implementation Measures LU-A, HO-6, HO-16, HS-K, CO-A, AF-A, ED-N, ED-P, ED-II, ED-JJ, ED-KK, and ED- QQ.
4. Ensure that the ordinance is consistent with applicable state and federal laws.
5. Reorganize the ordinance for ease of use, including the use of tables to identify permitted uses and development standards, establishing specific use regulations for administrative review of specified uses.
6. Create new zones to reflect current zoning needs and implement the General Plan, including Rural Lands, Forest Resources, Agricultural Grazing, and Limited Agriculture.
7. Delete obsolete zones.
8. Create overlay zones to more effectively implement General Plan policies.

9. Expand potential uses in the agricultural and rural lands zones to provide for opportunities for agricultural support, recreation, and rural commerce, including allowing ranch marketing on grazing land.
10. Provide a range of intensities for home occupations, based on size and zoning of parcels, adding the use of accessory structures, customers, and employees.
11. Modify zoning for Williamson Act contracted and rolled out land to reflect the underlying General Plan land use designations.
12. Provide a range of commercial zones to specify and direct the type, design, and location of commercial uses, consistent with the General Plan.

Fundamental Objectives of the Project

Of the preceding objectives, the fundamental objectives of the project are the following:

TGPA

- Establish policies related to the development of housing affordable to the moderate income earner.
- Establish policies that will result in job creation and improved sales tax revenues.
- Establish policies that will promote and protect agriculture in the county.
- Establish policies consistent with State law including the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 and the Housing Element law.
- Revise existing General Plan policies as needed to provide clarity.

Zoning Ordinance Update

- Conform the zoning ordinance (text) to General Plan policies and directives.
- Conform the zoning map to the General Plan land use designations.

Description of the Proposed Project

The County is proposing a limited number of amendments to its General Plan policies and land use designations and a comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance. The Targeted General Plan Amendments and comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update have been circulated for public review and comments received during that review were taken into consideration in the drafting of the TGPA and ZOU. The texts of the TGPA and ZOU are available for review at <http://www.edcgov.us/landuseupdate/>. This section summarizes the proposed General Plan amendments and changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

Proposed General Plan Amendments

Amendments to the General Plan are proposed for the elements listed below.

- Land Use Element

- Transportation and Circulation Element
- Public Services and Utilities Element
- Public Health
- Safety and Noise Element
- Conservation and Open Space Element
- Agriculture and Forestry Element

The majority of the proposed General Plan amendments consist of policy changes within the existing general plan designations rather than changes to the General Plan Land Use Map or to land use designations. As discussed below, a limited number of changes to the Land Use Map and General Plan Land Use Designations have been identified for potential amendment and are analyzed in this EIR.

The proposed changes to General Plan maps and policies analyzed in this EIR are listed below.

Proposed Land Use Map Changes

The following proposed Land Use Map Changes:

1. Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region Boundary amendment to create three (3) Rural Centers including Camino, Cedar Grove, and Pollock Pine, to allow for separate and distinct opportunities for each of the communities.
2. Agriculture District Boundary Expansion for Garden Valley-Georgetown, Coloma, Camino-Fruitridge, Gold Hill, Oak Hill, Pleasant Valley, and Fair Play-Somerset.
3. Limited Land Use Element clean-up identified through the Zoning Ordinance Update.

Proposed General Plan Policy Changes

1. *Policy 2.1.1.3: Commercial/Mixed Use-* Amend to allow residential density by increasing residential use as part of a mixed-use development from 16 units per acre to 20 units per acre.
2. *Policy 2.2.1.2, Table 2-1, and Table 2-1:* Commercial and Industrial- Amend to allow for commercial and industrial uses in the rural regions.
3. *Policy 2.2.1.2: Commercial/Mixed Use-* Delete sentence, "The residential component of the project shall only be implemented following or concurrent with the commercial component."
4. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* Delete requirement that industrial lands be restricted to areas within, or in close proximity to community regions and rural centers. Delete the requirement that industrial lands in rural regions have more limited industrial uses, for support of agriculture and natural resource uses.
5. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* Amend multi-family density from 24 units per acre to 30 units per acre to comply with California Government Code 65583.2(c)(iv) and (e). Amend the multi-family land use to encourage a full range of housing types including small lot single family detached design without a requirement for a planned development.
6. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* High Density Residential- Delete requirement for a planned development application on projects of 3 or more units per acre.

7. *Policy 2.2.1.2*: Open Space- Amend policy to refer to Objective 7.6.1
8. *Table 2-2*: Amend table to reflect changes in density for commercial/mixed use from 16 units per acre to 20 units per acre and multi-family from 24 units per acre to 30 units per acre.
9. ~~*Amendment Policy 2.2.1.5 and Table 2-3*: Amend policy to direct the regulation of building intensities be established in the Zoning Ordinance and delete Table 2.3-no longer under consideration.~~
10. *Policies 2.2.3.1, 2.2.3.2, and 2.2.5.4*: Amend the 30% open space requirement for Planned Development community regions and rural centers to allow lesser area of “improved open space” on site, ~~and consider options to provide a portion of the required open space off-site or by an in-lieu fee option.~~
11. *Table 2-4*: Amend as necessary to reflect Zoning Ordinance Update revisions.
12. *Policy 2.2.4.1*: Amend the density bonus criteria, and consider placing the specifics of this policy into the Zoning Ordinance.
13. *Policy 2.2.5.4*: Delete policy requiring a Planned Development application on projects requesting the creation of 50 parcels or more.
14. *Policy 2.2.5.8*: Amend the policy creating the Neighborhood Services zone and allow for objectives to be met in a related commercial zone.
15. *Policy 2.2.5.10*: Delete policy requirement for special use permit for agriculture support services; incorporate standards and permitted into Zoning Ordinance
16. *Policy 2.4.1.3*: Amend policy to recognize the historical town sites of El Dorado/Diamond Springs and other historical town sites.
17. *Policies 2.9.1.2, 2.9.1.3, and 2.9.1.4*: Amend criteria for establishing community region and rural center boundaries by deleting the restriction that boundaries can be amended every five years, and allow revisions to the boundaries to be initiated by Board of Supervisors whenever necessary.
18. *Policy 2.4.1.5* Set criteria for and identify infill sites and opportunity areas that will provide incentives for development of these vacant/underutilized areas, including streamlining the CEQA process for these identified locations. These policies may support the use of traditional neighborhood design guidelines, mixed use, and “form based” codes. These policy changes would not include amending the land use designations, or increasing the densities currently provided for in the General Plan.
19. *Policies TC-1a, TC-1b, and Table TC-1*: Revise policies, and table to further support the important objectives found in policies TC-1p, TC-1r, TC-1t, TC-1u, TC-1w, TC-4f, TC-4i, HO-1.3, HO-1.5, HO-1.8, HO-1.18, HO-5.1 and HO-5.2, allowing for narrower streets and road ways and to support the development of housing affordable to all income levels.
20. *Policies TC-1m, TC-1n(B), TC-1w*: Amend to make minor modifications to clarify language including; TC-1m delete “of effort”; TC-1n(B) replace accidents with crashes; and TC-1w, delete word maximum.
21. *Tables TC-2, Policy TC-Xb, and Policy TC-Xd*: Amend or delete Table TC-2; if Table TC-2 is deleted, amend all references to TC-2, including the references in TC-Xb and TC-Xd.

22. *Policy TC-Xb (C)*: Consider minor amendment to refer to Figure TC-1 when referencing the circulation diagram.
23. *Policy TC-Xg*: Amend to clarify the requirement that development constructs or funds necessary road improvements, and include the requirement to design, or fund design.
24. *Policy TC-Xi*: Amend to allow for coordination of regional projects to be delivered on a schedule agreed to by related regional agencies and therefore not subject to meeting the scheduling requirements of the policies of this General Plan.
25. *Policies TC-4a, TC-4d, and TC-4f*: Amend to clean up language to ensure consistency with subsequent adopted plans.
26. *Policies TC 4i, TC-5a, TC-5b, and TC-5c*: Amend to provide more flexibility of when sidewalks are required.
27. *Add New Goal and associated policies* to provide for CEQA streamlining opportunities for qualified projects that are consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plans.
28. *Add New Policy* to support the development of new or substantially improved roadways to accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, older people, and disabled people, as well as motorists, to comply with the requirements of Assembly Bill 1358, the Complete Streets Act of 2008. Add implementation measure to update the applicable manuals and standard plans to incorporate elements in support of all users.
29. *Objective 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and Table 5-1*: Amend as needed policy(s) and table to clarify Board authority when determining minimum level of service requirements consistent with General Plan objectives, standards, and related policies.
30. *Policy 6.4.1.4 and 6.4.1.5*: Amend policies and remove flood insurance rate maps, to address recommendations by the Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security regarding dam failure inundation.
31. *Policy 6.5.1.11 and Tables 6-1 thru 6-5*: Amend existing noise standards to establish attainable noise thresholds with regard to temporary nighttime construction activities and other temporary exceedances.
32. *Objective 6.7.1 and 6.7.5*: Amend these objectives to reflect updated air quality plan opportunities that support the adoption of a separate Air Quality - Energy Conservation Plan.
33. *Policy 7.1.2.1*: Amend the restrictions for development on 30% slopes, and set standards in the Zoning Ordinance and Grading Ordinance.
34. *Policy 7.2.1.2 and 7.1.2.3*: Amend to clarify which mineral resource zones are required to be mapped.
35. *Objective 7.6.1.3(B)*: Amend to delete specific references to zone districts to conform to the changes proposed in the Zoning Ordinance update.
36. *Policy 8.1.3.2*: Amend policy to provide a limited buffer for lands within a community region by adding language similar to Policy 8.4.1.2 to Policy 8.1.3.2.

37. *Policy 8.2.4.2:* Amend policy to eliminate the requirement for a special use permit for all visitor serving uses, and instead establish standards, permitted uses, and requirements for permits, in the various zone districts in the Zoning Ordinance.
38. ~~*Policy 8.2.4.4: Consider amending the policy to allow for ranch marketing activities on grazing lands.*~~ *Amendment no longer under consideration.*

~~Additional Optional General Plan Policy Changes Analyzed in this EIR~~

~~The following additional optional General Plan policy changes have been identified for consideration by the County and are analyzed in this EIR.~~

- ~~1. *Policies 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.2.1:* Analyze the possibility of adding, amending or deleting existing Community Regions or Rural Center planning areas.~~
- ~~2. *Policy 2.2.1.2: High Density Residential:* Analyze the potential effects of increasing high density residential land use density from a maximum of 5 units per acre to 8 units per acre.~~
- ~~3.39. *Policy TC-1y:* Analyze the potential for deleting the El Dorado Hills Business Park employment cap limits by deleting this policy.~~
40. *Policies TC-Xd, TC-Xe and TC-Xf:* Analyze impacts to revising the policies to clarify the definition of “worsen”, to clarify what is required if a project “worsens” traffic, identifying the methodology for traffic studies (e.g., analysis period, analysis scenarios, methods), and identifying the timing of improvements.
- 4.41. *Policy 8.1.1.6: Amend policy to eliminate requirement for parcels encumbered by a Williamson act Contract to be zoned Exclusive Agriculture (AE).*

Zoning Ordinance Update

The proposed comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update has two elements:

1. Revising the zoning maps to bring existing zoning designations into conformance with the General Plan, as required by state law, and
2. Providing a comprehensive update of the text of the Zoning Ordinance both to bring conformance with the General Plan and to modernize implementation tools.

The following is a summary of the proposed changes.

1. Ensure that the zoning designation for all parcels in the County conforms to the General Plan land use designations for those parcels.
2. Eliminate inconsistent provisions of the existing Zoning Ordinance.
3. Include provisions in the Zoning Ordinance to implement General Plan Implementation Measures LU-A, HO-6, HO-16, HS-K, CO-A, AF-A, ED-N, ED-P, ED-II, ED-JJ, ED-KK, and ED- QQ.
4. Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance is consistent with applicable state and federal laws.
5. Reorganize the Zoning Ordinance for ease of use, including the use of tables to identify permitted uses and development standards, establishing specific use regulations for administrative review of specified uses.

6. Create new zones to reflect current zoning needs and implement the General Plan, including the following zones: Rural Lands, Forest Resources, Agricultural Grazing, Neighborhood Service, and Limited Agriculture.
7. Delete obsolete zones, including Unclassified, Agriculture, Residential-Agricultural, and Planned Commercial.
8. Create combining zone districts (e.g. Historical, Community Design, etc.) to identify land that needs additional regulation, protection of resources, protection of public health and safety, or establishes a review process to more effectively implement General Plan policies and related ordinances.
9. Expand potential uses in the agricultural and rural lands zones to provide for opportunities for agricultural support, recreation, and rural commerce, including allowing ranch marketing on grazing land.
10. Provide a range of intensities for home occupations, based on size and zoning of parcels, addressing the use of accessory structures, customers, and employees.
11. Modify zoning for Williamson Act contracted and rolled out land to reflect the underlying General Plan land use designation.
12. Revise the zoning map to conform to standardized rules (i.e. mapping criteria) for zoning modifications based on the General Plan land use designations.
13. Provide a range of commercial zones to specify and direct the type, design, and location of commercial uses consistent with the General Plan. Proposed zones include Commercial Regional (CR), Commercial General (CG), Commercial Community (CC), Commercial Planned Office (CPO), Commercial Limited (CL), and Commercial Mainstreet (CM).
14. Create a Rural Commercial Zone that would be permitted within the rural regions planning concept area.
15. Increase potential uses to provide additional agricultural support, recreation, home occupation, and other rural residential, tourist serving, and commercial uses in zones in the rural region.
16. Create standards (master plans) for proposed mixed use and traditional neighborhood design development on commercial and multi-family zoned parcels to provide for a streamlined approval process and to protect the commercial viability of the parcels.
17. Include standards for single family detached development proposed in multifamily zones. Create a standard to allow a limited percentage of commercial use in proposed mixed use development in multifamily zones.
18. Provide multiple industrial zones to specify and direct the type, design, and location of industrial uses.
19. Provide alternative means to any open space requirement as part of a planned development to provide more flexibility and incentives for infill development and focus on recreation in community regions and rural centers.
20. Amend Zoning map to include a historical overlay zone district to the historical townsites of El Dorado and Diamond Springs, consistent with adopted General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies.

21. Establish standards for wetland and riparian setbacks.
 22. Provide opportunities for residential and recreational uses on Timber Production Zone land compatible with timber management and harvesting.
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