

VALLEY SPRINGS COMMUNITY PLAN

Final Version



OCTOBER 2010

Final Version

Valley Springs Community Plan

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1

The Valley Springs Community Plan is an update to the 1974 Valley Springs Community Area General Plan. The plan applies to approximately 3,600 acres located in western Calaveras County northwest of the New Hogan Reservoir. Existing development within the planning area includes the historic Valley Springs neighborhood, the La Contenta development, the Gold Creek residential neighborhood, the Mar Val shopping center and surrounding commercial and industrial properties, and commercial properties distributed along SR 12 and SR 26. The planning area also includes hilly, undeveloped land around Valley Springs to the north, west, and east, and large areas of undeveloped land south and west of Hogan Dam Road.

This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the structure, content, and purpose of the Valley Springs Community Plan, including topical summaries of each chapter.



INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 Introduction provides a basic overview of the Community Plan and its fundamental principles. It describes the scope and purpose of the plan, community vision and guiding principles, planning area location, and document format. It also describes input from participants with views that differ in some instances from the direction and recommendations contained in this plan.

VISION

Valley Springs will have a small-town rural atmosphere, framed by open space vistas, agricultural lands, oak trees, rolling hills with tree-covered ridgelines, Castle Rock, and other prominent natural features. New Hogan Reservoir will flourish as a community attraction and recreation destination, along with Pardee and Camanche Reservoirs, and the Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers. Wildlife will continue to inhabit the surrounding community areas and coexist with local residents.

Valley Springs' historic core will evolve into a prosperous, walkable mixed-use district, building upon its original 18-block grid and its roots as a farming, ranching, and late-1800s railroad town. The Town Center will serve as a focal point for tourism, commerce, public institutions, and public space for community interaction.

A diversity of housing types within and adjacent to the Town Center will support local businesses and provide homes for residents of all ages and a variety of backgrounds.

A safe and effective transportation network will provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists with complete and attractive routes that honor Valley Springs' natural surroundings, agricultural and ranching heritage, and respond to surrounding community needs, from rural edges to residential neighborhoods to the Town Center.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Maintain the small-town ambiance, community character, design, and scale for present and future generations of Valley Springs' residents.
- Protect Valley Springs' natural, cultural, and visual resources, including oak woodlands and mature trees, dark night skies, peace and quiet, wildlife habitat, undeveloped open space, creeks and rivers, floodplains, and agricultural lands.
- Preserve view corridors along major roads with setbacks, landscaping, and minimum sign use.
- Expand Valley Springs' economic base and diversity with local businesses that provide shopping, services, and jobs in the Town Center that better serve the needs of residents and businesses. Large-scale industrial, businesses, and retail uses are envisioned for nearby areas such as the Toyon Industrial Area east of Valley Springs.
- Support existing, and encourage new, visitor and local-serving businesses, including tourism, outdoor recreation, educational, professional, medical, and new service commercial and light industrial businesses in the Town Center.
- Preserve and revitalize the original, unique gridded street system, the 1862 Late House and grounds, and the railroad depot in the historic central core of Valley Springs. Ensure adequate parking and access to local highways, with sidewalks for access to the historic Town Center along the highways.

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- Develop parks, trails, and recreational facilities near the Town Center for children, youth, vulnerable populations, and adults to safely and efficiently engage in both organized and spontaneous activities.
 - Create greenway and park spaces for recreational and trail use utilizing the Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek riparian corridors, wetlands, and flood areas.
 - Protect the community's local underground and surface water resources, wetlands, watersheds, and floodplains, and ensure new growth does not occur in floodplains or negatively affect water supply or water quality.
 - Improve facilities and routes to support safe, efficient, and convenient motorized and non-motorized transportation, including walking and bicycling for users of all ages and abilities.
 - Include a mix of housing types in new residential development to meet the needs of existing residents and future generations in all life stages and income categories, including senior housing.
 - Encourage conservation subdivision design in new residential development, with buffer zones and protection of on-site open space and natural and historic resources, including but not limited to agricultural areas, woodlands, wetlands, trees, ridgelines, and wildlife habitat.
 - Ensure new development keeps pace with the availability of public services and infrastructure by focusing growth where facilities and services currently exist. New development and subdivisions should have public sewer and surface water. Services to outlying areas may be limited and will reflect actual costs of providing those services.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chapter 3 Public Participation describes the extensive community outreach, various meetings, and numerous opportunities provided for public input into development of the plan. It summarizes key concepts from meetings and activities, and demonstrates the role the public played in defining the boundary and issues to be addressed in the plan.

The development of the plan included a wide range of public outreach techniques and opportunities:

- A Stakeholder Advisory Committee worked with the project team to improve opportunities for public participation. The committee met eight times during the outreach process, and evolved into a “sounding board” where the project team could present information in advance of public meetings.
- Public meetings included three community workshops, addressing the overall vision for the plan, and providing specific focus on boundary selection, land use, and circulation.
- Meetings and workshops were advertised in local newspapers, including the *The Valley Springs News*, *Calaveras Enterprise*, *Stockton Record*, and *Union Democrat*. Posters & flyers were distributed in the community, including door-to-door. Direct mailers and email newsletters were sent and robo-calls were made.

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- Project information, including maps, meeting notes, and presentation, were posted on the Calaveras Council of Governments' website.
 - Questionnaires solicited public opinion, including approximately 6,000 questionnaires mailed to residents at the start of the visioning process, and an online questionnaire (with available hard copies) about land use and circulation.
 - Focus group meetings were held with the Calaveras County Water District, the Valley Springs Public Utility District, large parcel owners, business owners, and members of the Spanish-speaking Latino community.

PLANNING AREA

Chapter 4 Planning Area gives a broad overview of the area included within the Community Plan boundary. It includes a brief description of Valley Springs' development history, and then describes the planning area's subregions, defining characteristics, predominant land uses, and existing circulation system.

Five subareas are described in Chapter 4, including the Valley Springs Town Center, VSPUD Sphere of Influence, CCWD Assessment District 604 (AD 604), La Contenta, Areas Adjacent to AD 604, and the Paloma Road Industrial area. Figure 4-1 illustrates the locations of these subareas. For each subarea, the plan describes distinguishing features, existing uses, circulation features, water and sewer availability, and other planning considerations (such as slope, floodplain, agricultural uses, natural habitat, development applications, and key undeveloped properties).

ISSUES

Chapter 5 Issues discusses the key issues identified throughout the public process that are addressed in the Community Plan. Participants of the Community Plan process identified and prioritized the most important issues facing the community. These ranged from general statements about the area's loss of identity to specific concerns about traffic problems at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection.

Land use issues largely related to past development trends have affected Valley Springs and how the community wishes to redefine its local identity while promoting economic growth. New subdivisions have altered the rural character of the area, changing the visual environment and funneling traffic onto a few major roads. Strip-style commercial development has created environments that are hostile to pedestrians and increase safety concerns for drivers as more driveway connections are added to large roads.

Transportation issues include traffic congestion, especially at the intersection of SR 12 and SR 26, but also at other frequently traveled intersections. An alternative route for SR 12 and roadway improvements are recommended for a number of intersections to advance safety and traffic flow. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure—including sidewalks, trails, and dedicated lanes—is limited in the planning area.

Economic development issues reflect resident's concerns that few employment opportunities exist within the planning area aside from local retail and services. Residents would like to attract higher-paying jobs requiring more education, and draw continuing education facilities to Valley Springs to provide continuing workforce training for area youth and adults. Economic diversity, including a wider variety of retail offerings to allow residents to meet their needs locally, is also important.

Other concerns include:

- Housing affordability for a range of residents, diversity of housing (more than just for-sale single-family homes), and the condition and maintenance of housing;
- Public facilities, services, and infrastructure issues such as the lack of additional sewer capacity in much of the planning area, use of septic systems and domestic wells, access to recreation opportunities, and access to health care and senior services;
- Natural resource issues such as the loss of open rural vistas, removal of oak trees, protection of riparian corridors along streams, preventing “light pollution,” and preservation of historic resources in the Valley Springs Town Center; and
- Health and safety issues such as flooding along Cosgrove Creek, pedestrian safety issues, gangs and criminal activity, fire hazards, highway traffic noise, and access to healthy food options.

PROPOSED LAND USE AND CIRCULATION PLAN

Chapter 6 Proposed Land Use and Circulation Plan introduces the Community Plan land use diagram and land use designation descriptions. The land use diagram is further simplified into use districts, which are referenced in *Chapter 7 Goals and Policies* and *Chapter 8 Programs*. Proposed circulation improvements, including an alternate route for SR 12 and key intersection improvements, are identified and described.

The proposed distribution of land uses within the Community Plan is broadly described through four use districts, including Working Landscapes, Community Residential, Commercial, and Town Center. The use districts are aggregations of similar land use designations that are based on the County’s general plan land use designations, and are organized so that areas of higher development intensities are at the center of the planning area and transition to lower intensity uses further away from the center.

The proposed land use diagram was designed to address the primary objectives identified by residents: to protect rural character, address circulation issues, support additional commercial growth, and attract employment opportunities. The land use diagram is intended to establish a compact, mixed-use community core that builds from the historic Valley Springs’ settlement and street grid system. Agricultural and residential agricultural areas near the core are designated to preserve the area’s rural character, protect expansive views of hillsides, and create a sense of arrival along SR 12. New residential growth is directed to areas served by existing sewer and water infrastructure to protect water quality (related to septic systems) and groundwater levels (related to private wells), as well as to maximize returns on previous public investments in CCWD’s AD 604 area. Commercial areas are located to serve existing and future neighborhoods and support commercial and employment uses that might locate within the Town Center.

The circulation plan identifies the location of a future SR 12 alternate route to address congestion at the existing SR 12/SR 26 intersection. The plan also presents options for intersection control (including turning pockets, traffic signals, merging lanes, and roundabouts) at key intersections identified within the planning area. Finally, the circulation plan presents proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements to support non-motorized circulation within the planning area.

This chapter also presents planning and design concepts for new residential subdivisions, commercial development along the SR 26 corridor, and development in the Town Center.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Chapter 7 Goals and Policies builds off of the previous chapters by defining goals and policies to address the unique issues and priorities identified by the public. This chapter is also organized topically based on the County's General Plan elements to provide easy reference to *Chapter 5 Issues*. Policies described in the chapter are intended to meet the following planning area-specific goals:

- Protect the rural, small-town character and local identity of the planning area.
- Improve traffic flow through the planning area with a priority on the SR 12/SR 26 intersection.
- Increase opportunities for nonmotorized circulation throughout the planning area.
- Develop neighborhoods that promote circulation and emergency access.
- Increase local employment opportunities, including jobs for area youth.
- Provide access to continuing education training facilities that increase employment skills of area residents.
- Increase the local sales tax base.
- Provide diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents.
- Plan infrastructure expansions to protect rural character and maintain water quality and availability.
- Provide access to recreation facilities, health care, and senior services.
- Protect the natural resources and rural qualities in the planning area.
- Manage stormwater and runoff to protect property and water quality.
- Preserve character of Valley Springs' history through urban design.
- Protect residents and visitors from wildfire hazards.
- Deter criminal and gang activity in the community.
- Encourage healthy food options in the community.
- Protect residents from highway-related noise.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Chapter 8 Implementation Programs describes how the goals and policies will be applied to realize the vision of the Community Plan. Timelines, funding sources, and implementing agencies are defined for each program.

2 INTRODUCTION



2

The Valley Springs Community Plan was developed through a collaborative public process responding to the unique issues and opportunities present in the Valley Springs area. The Community Plan provides supplemental guidance to the Calaveras County General Plan. This introduction provides an overview of the Community Plan. It describes the scope and purpose of the plan, community vision and guiding principles, planning area location, and document format. It also describes input from participants with views that differ in some instances from the direction and recommendations contained in this plan.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The Community Plan is an update of the 1974 Valley Springs Community Area General Plan. Preparation of the plan was supported by a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Community-Based Transportation Planning (CBTP) grant. Prior to securing grant funding, community-based efforts were already underway to establish a new vision and Community Plan for Valley Springs. The 1974 plan, previous update efforts, and the CBTP are described below.

1974 VALLEY SPRINGS COMMUNITY AREA GENERAL PLAN

The 1974 Valley Springs Community Area General Plan included similar concepts to those described in this Community Plan. The 1974 plan promoted growth in Valley Springs, but sought to reduce sprawl by encouraging compact development and growth near utilities. It encouraged commercial activity along State Route (SR) 12 and discouraged strip development.

Since adoption of the 1974 plan, substantial growth has occurred beyond the original plan boundaries, primarily southwest of Valley Springs along SR 26. This growth has strained roadways and other infrastructure, as it consisted primarily of low-density, automobile dependent development. In Valley Springs, the lack of coordinated planning and effective development standards have resulted in competing town centers – the existing historic Valley Springs and newer, automobile-oriented strip-commercial development located along SR 12 and SR 26. This in turn has resulted in congested intersections and a disconnected street system. It has also increased the conversion of greenbelts and undeveloped land to subdivisions, which degrades Valley Springs’ rural character, typified by working landscapes, rolling foothills with open views, and plant and wildlife habitats.

PREVIOUS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE EFFORTS

As a result of a desire by many in Valley Springs to revisit the 1974 plan, community-based efforts sought to establish a new vision for Valley Springs and update the previous document. Visioning workshops were held in 2007 to identify community values and planning priorities. Participants identified community values as family, friends, and neighbors; open space; rural character and lifestyle; peace and quiet; recreation, and trees. The top priorities resulting from the workshop were to:

- preserve rural atmosphere and agriculture,
- improve roadway circulation,
- preserve oak trees,
- provide more housing options/senior housing,
- conserve water,
- enforce existing development codes,
- provide parks and recreation,
- conserve wildlife habitat, and
- attract additional jobs.

A Calaveras County General Plan update workshop was also held in Valley Springs in 2007 to identify the area's top three assets and problems. The top assets identified by participants were the lakes and recreation, open space and oak trees, and rural quality and lifestyle. The top problems were roads and traffic, water and sewer, no jobs, public safety, and affordable housing.

CALTRANS COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT

The Valley Springs Community Plan update was funded through the Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant Program. The purpose of the grant program is to fund coordinated transportation and land use planning that promotes public engagement, livable communities, and a sustainable transportation system that includes mobility, access, and safety. The unique Project Partner team secured support for the application from grant administrators.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CALAVERAS COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The Valley Springs Community Plan is a tool to implement the Calaveras County General Plan. It covers a defined community area and focuses in greater detail on specific issues of local importance, such as open space protection, commercial development, and circulation opportunities. Community Plan policies and programs supplement the General Plan, and provide an opportunity to add focus and respond to local priorities that might otherwise be overlooked in the General Plan.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Community members were asked to participate in a community questionnaire at the start of the planning process to help identify the primary priorities for the Community Plan. The community visioning workshop also included activities to help define an overarching vision and to prioritize issues facing the community. Through these activities, a preliminary list of issues and community values began to take shape.

Participants' priority issues included developing additional shopping, services, and jobs in Valley Springs; protecting rural character and the natural environment; improving traffic congestion and providing circulation options; and revitalizing downtown. Community values shared by many participants included a sense of community, small town feel, wildlife and nature, access to outdoor recreation, and support for local businesses.

A draft vision statement and guiding principles were prepared based on these initial public comments and presented at the third community workshop for additional discussion and revision. Comments received from that workshop were incorporated into the final Community Plan vision statement and guiding principles presented below.

VISION STATEMENT

Valley Springs will have a small-town rural atmosphere, framed by open space vistas, agricultural lands, oak trees, rolling hills with tree-covered ridgelines, Castle Rock, and other prominent natural features. New Hogan Reservoir will flourish as a community attraction and recreation destination, along with Pardee and Camanche Reservoirs, and the Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers. Wildlife will continue to inhabit the surrounding community areas and coexist with local residents.



Community workshop participants identified what they most value about Valley Springs.

Valley Springs' historic core will evolve into a prosperous, walkable mixed-use district, building upon its original 18-block grid and its roots as a farming, ranching, and late-1800s railroad town. The Town Center will serve as a focal point for tourism, commerce, public institutions, and public space for community interaction.

A diversity of housing types within and adjacent to the Town Center will support local businesses and provide homes for residents of all ages and a variety of backgrounds.

A safe and effective transportation network will provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists with complete and attractive routes that honor Valley Springs' natural surroundings, agricultural and ranching heritage, and respond to surrounding community needs, from rural edges to residential neighborhoods to the Town Center.



Pedestrian safety is a concern throughout the planning area.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Maintain the small-town ambiance, community character, design, and scale for present and future generations of Valley Springs' residents.
- Protect Valley Springs' natural, cultural, and visual resources, including oak woodlands and mature trees, dark night skies, peace and quiet, wildlife habitat, undeveloped open space, creeks and rivers, floodplains, and agricultural lands.
- Preserve view corridors along major roads with setbacks, landscaping, and minimum sign use.
- Expand Valley Springs' economic base and diversity with local businesses that provide shopping, services, and jobs in the Town Center that better serve the needs of residents and businesses. Large-scale industrial, businesses, and retail uses are envisioned for nearby areas such as the Toyon Industrial Area east of Valley Springs.
- Support existing, and encourage new, visitor and local-serving tourism and outdoor recreation businesses; educational, professional, and medical institutions; and new service commercial and light industrial businesses in the Town Center.
- Preserve and revitalize the original, unique gridded street system, the 1862 Late House and grounds, and the railroad depot in the central core of Valley Springs. Ensure adequate parking and access to local highways, with sidewalks for access to the Town Center along the highways.
- Develop parks, trails, and recreational facilities near the Town Center for children, youth, vulnerable populations, and adults to safely and efficiently engage in both organized and spontaneous activities.



Local landmarks and natural features, like Castle Rock, will continue to define the community in the future.

-
- Create greenway and park spaces for recreational and trail use utilizing the Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek riparian corridors, wetlands, and flood areas.
 - Protect the community’s local underground and surface water resources, wetlands, watersheds, and floodplains, and ensure new growth does not occur in floodplains or negatively affect water supply or water quality.
 - Improve facilities and routes to support safe, efficient, and convenient motorized and non-motorized transportation, including walking and bicycling for users of all ages and abilities.
 - Include a mix of housing types in new residential development to meet the needs of existing residents and future generations in all life stages and income categories, including senior housing.
 - Encourage conservation subdivision design in new residential development, with buffer zones and protection of on-site open space and natural and historic resources, including but not limited to agricultural areas, woodlands, wetlands, trees, ridgelines, and wildlife habitat.
 - Ensure new development keeps pace with the availability of public services and infrastructure by focusing growth where facilities and services currently exist. New development and subdivisions should have public sewer and surface water. Services to outlying areas may be limited and will reflect actual costs of providing those services.

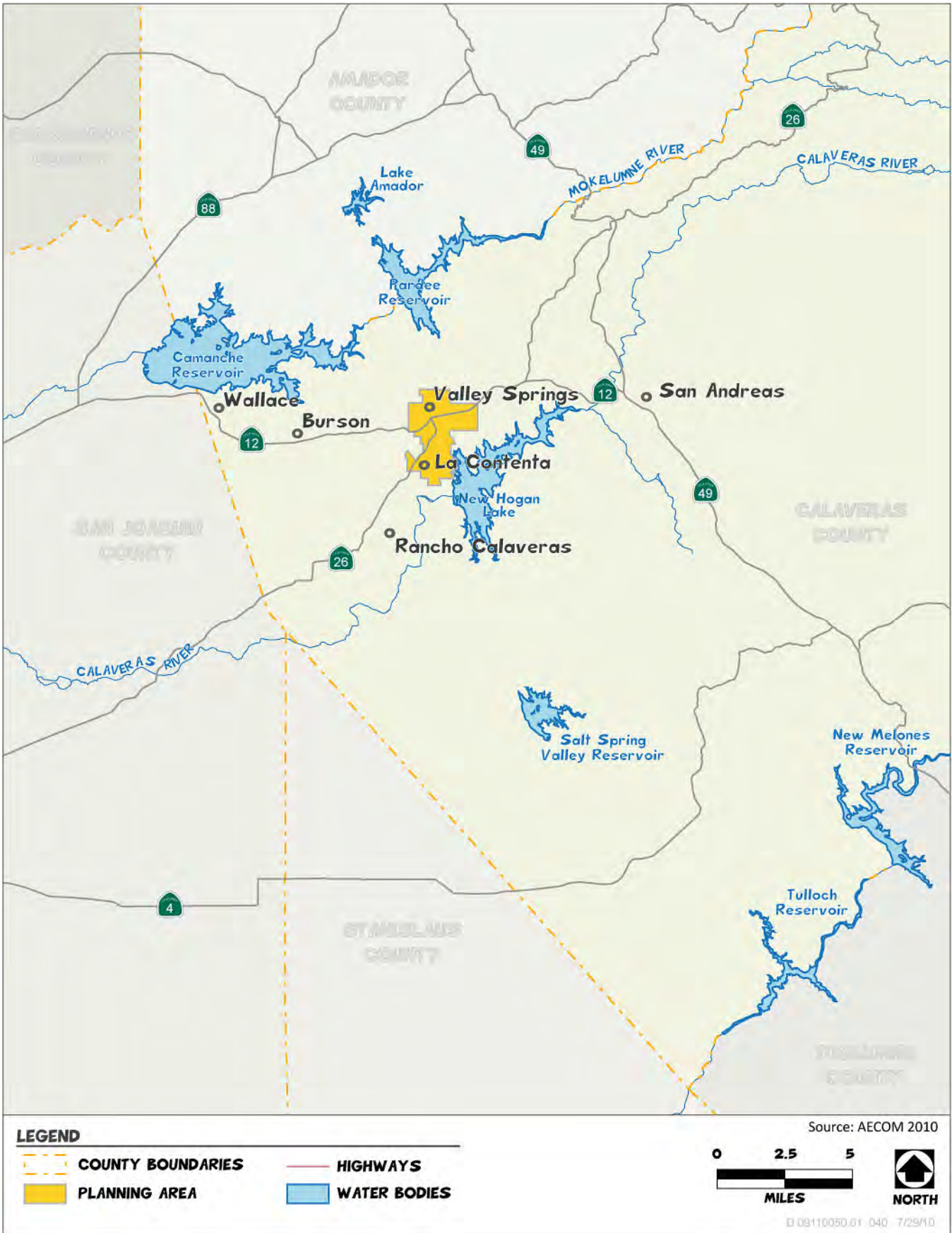
RELATION TO THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The County General Plan update includes a vision statement with guiding principles that apply to the entire county, whereas those in the Community Plan describe a unique Valley Springs future with values and perspectives specific to the local community. The Community Plan vision statement and guiding principles contribute to and support those of the General Plan through a shared commitment to:

- providing a high-quality of life in the context of historic communities;
- maintaining the open space and natural settings that are unique to Calaveras County;
- promoting tourism through the provision of vibrant town centers and access to recreation amenities;
- protecting water quality;
- establishing clear boundaries between communities with green belts, working landscapes, and parks; and
- ensuring development keeps pace with the provision of infrastructure and services.

LOCATION

The Valley Springs Community Plan applies to approximately 3,600 acres located in western Calaveras County northwest of the New Hogan Reservoir (see Figure 2.1). Existing development within the planning area includes the historic Valley Springs 18-block street grid, the La Contenta development, the Gold Creek residential neighborhood, the Valley Oaks Shopping Center (known locally and referred to in this document as the Mar Val shopping center) with surrounding commercial and industrial properties, and commercial properties distributed along SR 12 and SR 26. The planning area also includes hilly, undeveloped land around Valley Springs to the north, west, and east, and large areas of undeveloped land south and west of Hogan Dam Road.



Planning Area Location

Figure 2.1

PLAN FORMAT AND CONTENT

The Community Plan consists of the following eight chapters and supporting appendices.

The **Executive Summary** provides a snapshot of the main issues identified in the Community Plan and the key planning concepts used to address these issues.

The **Introduction** provides a basic overview of the Community Plan and its fundamental principles. It describes the scope and purpose of the plan, community vision and guiding principles, planning area location, and document format. It also includes a discussion of alternative views that describes areas where the plan provides direction that differs from some public recommendations.

Public Participation describes the extensive community outreach, various meetings, and numerous opportunities provided for public input into development of the plan. It summarizes key concepts from meetings and activities, and demonstrates the role the public played in defining the boundary and issues to be addressed in the plan.

Planning Area gives a broad overview of the area included within the Community Plan boundary. It includes a brief description of Valley Springs' development history, and then describes the planning area's subregions, defining characteristics, predominant land uses, and existing circulation system.

Issues describes the key issues identified throughout the planning process that are addressed in the Community Plan. The issues are organized topically based on the County's General Plan elements.

Proposed Land Use Designations and Circulation Plan introduces the Community Plan land use diagram and land use designation descriptions. The land use diagram is further simplified into use districts, which are referenced in the Policies and Programs chapter. Proposed circulation improvements, including an alternative SR 12 route, key intersection improvements, and additional connector routes are identified and described.

Goals and Policies builds on the previous chapters by defining goals and policies to address the unique issues and priorities identified by the public. This chapter is also organized topically based on the County's General Plan elements to provide easy reference to the Issues chapter.

Implementation Programs describes how the goals and policies will be applied to realize the vision of the Community Plan. Timelines, funding sources, and implementing agencies are defined for each policy.

Appendices display the breadth of data compiled and shared with the public throughout the planning process, including workshop maps and diagrams.

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS

Reaching consensus was a key goal of the Valley Springs planning process. Residents, property owners and business leaders expressed similar ideas on many topics, particularly when describing their future visions of the area and when identifying the primary issues facing the community. It was in defining the best approach to address these issues that divergent recommendations became most apparent.

The key issue of concern was protecting private property rights in the planning process. Consistent support was also expressed for maintaining the area's rural character. Many residents cited rural qualities, such as open

views and small town living, as their main attraction to Valley Springs. Many residents also said they relocated to the area from more urban places and that they feared the Community Plan would be a precursor to the urbanization of Valley Springs.

Combined with the appreciation of the area’s rural character was an equally strong belief in the protection of private property rights. Many participants believed that property owners should be allowed to develop their land according to its underlying zoning. Further, they believed that altering the underlying zoning by changing land use designations in the Community Plan was an unacceptable means of protecting rural character.

The Community Plan land use diagram includes several areas where existing land use designations are proposed to be changed to better protect rural character in areas with notable natural resources or expansive views by encouraging development of a walkable, mixed-use Town Center. These land use designation changes result in increased maximum densities on some properties, for example the undeveloped land located south and west of Hogan Dam Road was changed from Agricultural Rural to Residential Low Density. This area is already served by sewer and water infrastructure through the Calaveras County Water District’s Assessment District 604, and can support residential development at higher densities than originally allowed by the 1974 plan and the County General Plan. Other areas of land use change result in lower development densities, for example the undeveloped lands located west, north, and east of Valley Springs. These areas have been changed from Agricultural Rural to Agricultural. The previous designation would have allowed subdivision into 5-acre lots, while the new designation limits subdivision to 40-acre lots. Undeveloped commercially zoned land located between the SR 12/SR 26 intersection and Lime Creek Road is also designated as Agricultural in the Community Plan.

These changes reflect substantial community sentiment to protect rural character and open views, create a walkable Town Center to support increased commercial development, and make efficient use of public services (e.g., fire, police, school buses) and existing water/sewer infrastructure. However, some changes are inconsistent with comments made in the Large Property Owners focus group meeting (see *Chapter 3 Public Participation*), which questioned the long-term viability of ranching and agricultural activities around Valley Springs. They are also inconsistent with comments made by many participants that land use designations should not be changed in any way that might result in decreased property values.



Community workshops and meetings included public discussions about how best to address the identified community values and priorities.

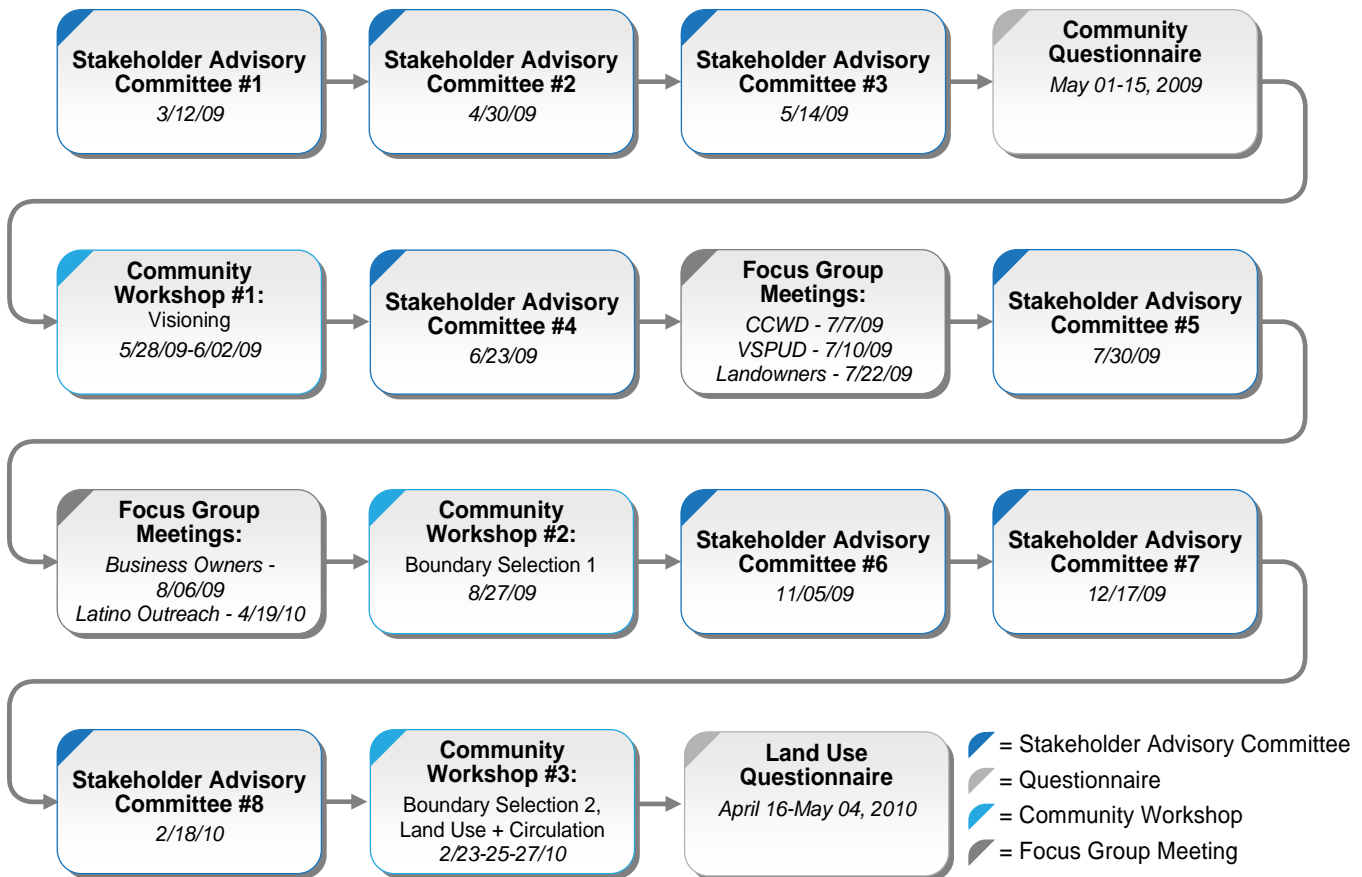
3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



3

This section describes the extensive outreach, technical meetings, and numerous opportunities provided for public input into development of the Community Plan (see Figure 3.1). The plan was crafted based on information collected through two questionnaires, several days of community workshops, and multiple public and focus group meetings. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) provided feedback to the project team on outreach tactics and the presentation of information to ensure it would be understandable to the general public.

The planning process began with a community preference questionnaire to identify primary issues and to start defining the boundaries of the planning area. Three community workshops were held, including two multi-day workshops, in which the public was invited to actively participate in data collection and important project decisions. The first workshop was a week-long community visioning workshop held to identify guiding principles, meet with focus groups, further refine complex issues, and begin discussing plan boundaries. Following the first workshop, the project team held five more focus group meetings to gather additional information from utility providers (CCWD and VSPUD), major landowners, the Latino community, and local business owners. After incorporating the new information with comments from the questionnaire and first workshop, the project team held the second community workshop to select a Community Plan boundary. In response to opposition to the first boundary selection process, a third workshop was held to re-select the plan boundary. The proposed land use and circulation diagram for the new plan boundary and several land use study areas were also presented during the third workshop, along with draft vision and guiding principles. A land use questionnaire was administered electronically to gather public preferences and comments on the land use study areas before the proposed land use plan was submitted to the Board of Supervisors. These extensive public participation opportunities are described in further detail below.



Public Participation Opportunities

Figure 3.1

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) originally consisted of 23 volunteer community members who were invited by the project team to provide assistance with the project’s public outreach activities. SAC members were residents from the community who represented various interests and points of view in the community, including business owners, large parcel owners, public agency representatives (e.g., public safety, public works, public health), homeowner association/property owner association representatives, and developers among others. SAC members worked with the project team to improve opportunities for public participation by identifying successful outreach techniques (e.g., road signs, Robo calls, local media coverage) to keep the public informed of upcoming meetings. The SAC met eight times during the public participation phase, and evolved into a sounding board where the project team could present information in advance of public meetings to receive feedback on its clarity. The SAC did not have decision-making authority; however, the project team did postpone public meetings based on the suggestion from SAC members that presentation materials were not suitable for public review.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH METHODS

Participation opportunities were advertised to the public using various media to inform as many people as possible. The SAC worked with the project team to decide which outreach methods were most effective in reaching the target audience. Public meetings were announced in *The Valley Springs News*, *Calaveras Enterprise*, *Stockton Record*, and *Union Democrat* newspapers prior to public meetings or workshops. Project information,

such as maps, presentations and meeting notes, was posted on the Calaveras Council of Governments' (CCOG's) website to provide a record of the public process for community members that were unable to attend meetings or workshops in person. Throughout the process, outreach techniques included:

- Local media coverage and press releases
- Posters and flyers
- Road signs
- Door-to-door solicitation
- Latino Partnership meetings
- Robo-calls
- Direct mailers
- Local television
- Email newsletters
- Board of Supervisors meetings
- Project website

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

To kickoff the planning process, the project team mailed nearly 6,000 community questionnaires to residents in the Valley Springs Benefit Basin area in advance of the first community workshop. The questionnaire was intended to capture residents' sense of potential Community Plan boundaries by asking self-defined questions, such as "Do you consider yourself a resident of Valley Springs?" and "What neighborhood or community do you most identify with?" It was also a starting point for identifying community issues by asking respondents to rank important factors in choosing a community and asking what improvements respondents would most like to see in Valley Springs. Over 800 people participated in this first questionnaire, which established a baseline understanding of community priorities (see Appendix A). Results from this questionnaire identified the following factors to be most important in choosing a community:

- open space/natural surroundings,
- safety/low crime rate, and
- rural character.



The Stakeholder Advisory Committee assisted with community outreach to increase participation.

Respondents also selected the top improvements they would like to see in Valley Springs:

- shopping and services,
- open space/natural environment preservation,
- reduced traffic congestion
- downtown revitalization,
- parks and trails,
- improved roads,
- job opportunities, and
- agricultural preservation.

The results of this questionnaire were reinforced and expanded upon by participants at the community visioning workshop, described below. These preferences have been incorporated into the Community Plan in various ways, such as land use policies identifying rural areas and the establishment of a Town Center providing enhanced shopping opportunities and spaces for community activities. The merits and relative importance of these preferences were also discussed in detail at the workshops and during focus group meetings. Support for these priorities was repeated throughout the public planning process. The Community Plan takes its direction from this community-based sentiment.

WORKSHOP #1 – COMMUNITY VISIONING

The first community workshop was held in May 2009 to introduce the public to the community planning process. The workshop was held over six days and included public presentations and information-gathering activities, focus group meetings, and open house hours for the public to catch up on the latest workshop progress. Over 200 people signed attendance sheets. Key outcomes from the workshop included:

- identifying the need for additional community discussion regarding the selection of a Community Plan boundary. The idea to describe the planning area in terms of component subareas came from public comments on the last day of the workshop.
- establishing the basis for the draft vision and guiding principles that were presented during the third workshop.
- reinforcing community values and preferences that were previously identified in the community questionnaire, such as protecting open views, addressing traffic concerns, and attracting employment-generating uses.
- identifying a need for the project team to gather additional information and feedback from specific focus groups, including local utility districts, landowners, and the business community.

Numerous maps were created for and as a result of the community visioning workshop. These have been included in Appendix B.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Public presentations were held on Thursday evening (May 28, 2009), Saturday morning (May 30, 2009), and Tuesday evening (June 2, 2009) at the Valley Springs Elementary School multi-purpose room. These presentations allowed the project team to describe the purpose of the Community Plan update and its relationship to the County's General Plan, as well as to facilitate information-gathering activities.

THURSDAY EVENING

The first evening of the workshop began with community visioning activities. Participants were asked to imagine Valley Springs 20 years in the future and write down their vision on a note card. On the reverse side they wrote their 'places of the heart' that reflect landmarks or places they cherish in their community. Several volunteers were asked to read their responses to the entire group. Places of the heart included:

- New Hogan Lake,
- the train depot,
- Castle Rock,
- open space,
- the Veterans' Hall,
- Jenny Lind Park,
- the oak savannah,
- agricultural and rangelands, and
- individuals' homes.



Many participants value the small town character of Valley Springs.

Participants were then asked to write their main values on sticky notes and place them on a wall near similar values. The primary value groupings were:

- sense of community,
- small town feel/rural lifestyle,
- access to outdoor recreation,
- local businesses,
- open space, and
- wildlife/nature.

Following the visioning and values exercises, Randall Arendt, an expert on rural community design issues and strategies, gave a presentation on approaches to accommodate growth while preserving natural resources and rural community character. The project team also gave a presentation on the links between land use and transportation, and approaches to create safe and efficient streets to accommodate all users.

To conclude the first day of the workshop, the project team facilitated an activity to prioritize key issues. Participants shouted out issues that the Community Plan should address while project team members wrote their ideas on the wall. Participants were then given three adhesive dots with which they could vote for the issues they found most important. The top issues identified were:

- trees (21),
- habitat protection (16),
- safety and law enforcement (14),
- keeping it rural (12),
- pedestrian walkways (12),
- parks (11),
- more jobs in Valley Springs (11),
- architectural standards (11),
- roundabouts (11),
- retail in Valley Springs core (10),
- bike lanes (10), and
- limiting chain stores and restaurants (10).



Workshop participants prioritized the key issues facing the community during one of the workshops exercises.

SATURDAY MORNING

The Saturday presentations began with a recap of activities from Thursday evening and a summary of outcomes from the focus group meetings held during the first two days of the workshop (discussed below). The project team then led a Valley Springs-specific discussion about natural resources in the planning area.

The Saturday session ended with a community mapping exercise. Participants were randomly organized into five groups and each given a base map of the greater Valley Springs area and a constraints map that identified fire hazard areas, flood zones, wetlands, sensitive habitat areas, properties under Williamson Act contracts (to conserve high-quality agricultural lands), and proposed development projects. The groups were then asked to define the planning area boundary that should be used in the Community Plan. Each group presented their map and gave the rationale for their decisions. The boundaries presented ranged from an area that spanned much of western Calaveras County (the entire extent of the base map provided) to the immediate area surrounding the traditional Valley Springs street grid. Lack of consensus emerging from this exercise led to additional boundary discussions and exercises.

TUESDAY EVENING

The Tuesday evening presentation began with an overview of the previous five days of workshop activities, meetings, and presentations. The project team then presented their initial impressions of the planning area

boundary based on discussions during the workshop. The Community Plan was envisioned to identify two areas: the *Valley Springs Town Center* based around the established traditional community, and the *Valley Springs Community* area consisting of the surrounding neighborhoods that depend upon and support the Town Center. The Town Center was envisioned as the minimum area that would be included in the boundary, with different surrounding neighborhoods included according to public feedback. A series of maps were shown identifying the surrounding neighborhoods that might be included in the plan boundary. Natural features to be preserved and enhanced within the Town Center were listed and shown on a map, such as Cosgrove Creek and its floodplain, oak woodlands, viewsapes, ridgelines, and Castle Rock. Land use and circulation proposals for the Town Center area were also presented. The proposed Town Center land use diagram identified a mixed-use activity core along State Route (SR) 26, commercial centers at major intersections, residential neighborhoods, and resource lands. Circulation proposals described short-term and long-term roadway improvements for the SR 12 and SR 26 intersection.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Three focus group meetings were held during this workshop to collect information and gain insights on community planning issues from the perspective of various agencies and organizations that operate in the area. The project team met with community service representatives, local agencies, and natural resource managers on May 28 and 29, 2009 at the Methodist Church in Valley Springs. Summaries of these discussions are provided below.



Focus group meetings provided input from a range of agencies and service providers.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Eleven (11) participants attended the Community Services focus group meeting to discuss community issues and their desires for improvement. Participants represented the Foothill Communities Parks and Recreation District, Calaveras County Parks and Recreation Commission District 5, American Legion Ambulance, Calaveras County Public Health Department, Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency, Valley Springs Public Utilities District, Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital, Valley Springs Elementary School, First 5, and the Jenny Lind Veteran's District.

The meeting participants identified eight issues that should be addressed in Valley Springs:

- jobs and educational opportunities,
- road safety,
- connectivity,
- community identity,
- recreation,
- water and sewer infrastructure,
- public health, and
- the ebb and flow of residents and visitors.

AGENCIES AND DISTRICTS

Seven (7) participants attended the Agencies and Districts focus group meeting. Participants represented CalFire, Caltrans, Calaveras County, Foothill Fire Department, Calaveras County Sheriff's Department, Calaveras County Water District, and the local business community. Representatives were asked to describe the major issues faced by their organizations in relation to western Calaveras County. They identified the following issues:

- traffic congestion and large service areas affecting emergency response times,
- subdivisions constructed in high fire hazard areas,
- limited resources for fire prevention inspection, enforcement, and education,
- traffic accidents and gang activity,
- septic tanks creating water quality issues, and
- private wells going dry while surface water is plentiful.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GROUPS

The project team, including a water resources specialist and an ecological restoration specialist, met with representatives from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Calaveras County Game Warden to discuss natural resource management issues within the Valley Springs area. Together, the group drew a map of wildlife and natural resource features to inform future planning work. The group identified areas of common traffic collisions with deer, turkey poaching areas, mountain lion sightings, hunting areas, flood-prone areas, potential sites for riparian restoration, and locations of cattle ranching operations. The group also discussed recreation opportunities and access to Hogan Dam Reservoir.

OPEN HOUSE HOURS

The project team held open house hours during the workshop for community members to drop in and see the progress, review meeting notes, and provide additional comments on planning opportunities and concerns.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

In response to comments received on the final day of the community visioning workshop, additional focus group meetings were scheduled to collect additional data and input necessary to move forward with the planning process. Specifically, participants requested information regarding existing infrastructure and service capabilities of the Valley Springs Public Utilities District and the Calaveras County Water Department.

CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

The project team met with the Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) on July 7, 2009 during a CCWD Engineering Committee meeting. The committee gave a presentation on how CCWD does water planning, and shared service maps with the project team to identify locations where they provide customers with water, sewer, or both. CCWD also provided a map showing the extent of Assessment District 604 (AD 604), where water and sewer infrastructure is in place, but development has not yet occurred. Information collected from this meeting was used to identify portions of the planning area that were appropriate for future growth based on previous infrastructure investments.

VALLEY SPRINGS PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

The project team met with the Valley Springs Public Utility District (VSPUD) on July 22, 2009 to discuss VSPUD system capacity to support growth and future service expansion plans. VSPUD has enough water to serve their entire sphere of influence. They have one working well and one new well drilled, but not yet online. Both wells supply high-quality water requiring less treatment than surface water. VSPUD has capacity for an additional 80 sewer connections, with 60 of those already pre-sold to a development project in Valley Springs. The existing treatment plant provides secondary-level treatment, which is then sprayed on the hill south of Lime Creek Road. VSPUD would like to provide tertiary-level treatment in the future, if a location for a new plant and the required funding can be secured.

LARGE PARCEL OWNERS

The project team also met with property owners of large landholdings near Valley Springs to discuss future plans for their properties and to hear their suggestions about how Valley Springs could be improved. Participants noted that ranching in the Valley Springs area is not a viable long-term goal from a rancher's perspective, and that protecting farmland in the Central Valley is a greater concern than protecting farming and ranching activities around Valley Springs.

BUSINESS OWNERS

Local business owners provided suggestions for improving the economic environment of the Valley Springs area. Many of their comments reiterated public comments at the first workshop:

- focus on commercial development because Calaveras County is Amador County's best customer;
- create a venue for residents and tourists, similar to Copperopolis;
- develop a commercial corridor from the SR 12 and SR 26 intersection to La Contenta;
- provide additional services to support visitors or Valley Springs cannot become a destination; and
- identify a Delta Community College site.

LATINO OUTREACH MEETING

On April 19, 2010 a meeting was held at the Valley Springs Elementary School specifically to engage the Spanish-speaking Latino community living within the planning area. The Latino community was identified as the largest minority group within the planning area, and the Spanish language barrier was an obstacle to promoting full community participation. A Spanish language translator was present at the meeting to help solicit input on residents concerns. An overview of the planning process to date was provided and participants discussed how the Community Plan could encompass their issues of concern. The discussion indicated that those present were concerned with their children's ability to safely travel from their homes to school and also to access recreation. One example given was that the only place to play soccer was on the school field, and that no restroom facility is provided to the community for recreation after school hours. The new Class I bike and pedestrian facility that was built along Daphne Street was cited as a community feature that was appreciated. Participants also wanted additional shopping opportunities and increased access to public transit.

WORKSHOP #2 – BOUNDARY SELECTION

The second workshop was held on August 27, 2009 at Valley Springs Elementary School to select the boundary that the project team would use to develop the Community Plan. More than 175 people signed the workshop attendance sheet. Participants were given a frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet to answer common questions about the community planning process (see Appendix C) and an electronic response device to participate in boundary selection exercises.

During the presentation, the project team reviewed the planning process to date and the results from the first workshop and focus group meetings. The project team then presented a series of maps describing the maximum buildout potential (i.e., a planning exercise to illustrate the potential for future growth by hypothetically developing all parcels to their maximum current zoning designations) for the Valley Springs area.

To frame the Community Plan boundary discussion and exercise, the project team described the potential planning area as a collection of eleven distinct components:

- 1) industrial and adjacent areas,
- 2) Valley Springs Public Utility District Sphere of Influence,
- 3) remaining 1974 Community Plan area,
- 4) Valley Springs Town Center,
- 5) Assessment District 604,
- 6) land adjacent to Assessment District 604,
- 7) Gold Creek,
- 8) Quail Oaks,
- 9) La Contenta,
- 10) Rancho Calaveras, and
- 11) land adjacent to Rancho Calaveras.

This approach was developed based on public comments from the first workshop. The eleven components were individually identified and described. After describing the components that could make up the planning area, six boundary alternatives (identified using the letters “A” through “F”) were presented using different combinations of the components and representing a broad spectrum of plan boundary options. Participants were then led through an exercise to select their preferred boundary alternative.

After some warm up questions to make sure participants understood how to use their electronic response devices, they were asked to select a preferred boundary from the six alternatives; responses were immediately displayed on the screen for everyone to see. Boundary “C” was preferred by 47 percent of participants, Boundary “B” by 17 percent and Boundary “E” by 11 percent. Each of the other three alternatives received preferences of less than 10 percent. Participants were then asked to choose between Boundary “C”, which

included Rancho Calaveras, and Boundary “B”, which did not. Boundary “C” was preferred 52 percent to 48 percent over Boundary “B”. Participants then selected Boundary “C”, which included Rancho Calaveras, over Boundary “E”, which did not, by 57 percent to 41 percent. Based on the results of the second workshop, the project team decided to move forward with Boundary “C” for the next phases of Community Plan development.

WORKSHOP #3 – BOUNDARY RE-SELECTION, LAND USE, AND CIRCULATION

The third workshop was held at the Valley Springs Elementary School on Tuesday February 23, 2010; Thursday February 25, 2010; and Saturday February 27, 2010. The Community Plan boundary was revisited at the third workshop. A large group of residents were opposed to including Rancho Calaveras in the Community Plan because there is already an adopted Rancho Calaveras Special Plan, and substantial disagreement exists about how the two planning documents would be reconciled. This third workshop was designed to allow for a second boundary selection process on Tuesday evening, a presentation of the proposed land use and circulation diagrams for the selected planning area on Thursday evening, and a community open house on Saturday morning where residents could go to ask additional questions and make comments about the proposed land use and circulation diagram.

BOUNDARY RE-SELECTION

Over 350 participants attended the Tuesday evening workshop to re-select the Community Plan boundary. Paper comment cards were used during this workshop to alleviate perceived concerns with the electronic devices used during the second workshop and to accommodate a large number of participants. The project team presented information about Boundaries “B” and “C” for consideration that night because those received the highest preferences at the first workshop. Before submitting the comment cards indicating their preference, a facilitator led a public comment period where anyone who wished to speak on behalf of either boundary was allowed two minutes to address the audience. Participants then selected their preferred boundary using the comment cards and submitted the cards to be counted by four members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Boundary “B” was overwhelmingly selected as the preferred boundary and accepted by the project team to move forward with the planning process. From this point forward, Rancho Calaveras was excluded from the Community Plan area.

While the comment cards were being counted, the project team presented a draft vision statement and guiding principles for the Community Plan, based on public input from past workshops and meetings. Each participant was given a paper copy of the draft vision and guiding principles (see Appendix D) and was asked to submit revisions or additions before leaving.

LAND USE AND CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

On Thursday evening, the project team reviewed the boundary selection from Tuesday night, described recommended Community Plan land use designations, presented two land use diagram alternatives, and presented a draft circulation diagram and intersection concepts. The presentation on land use designations described minimum parcel size requirements, residential densities, non-residential floor area ratios, and typical uses that could occur within each designation.

The project team developed two land use diagram alternatives for discussion purposes. Alternative “1” represented how the principles identified in previous workshops were applied to the map, such as the

preservation of rural character, commercial development, and the provision of public services. Alternative “2” reflected direct input from property owners and individuals within the community relative to specific parcels under their control. Alternative “1” was presented to provide an overview of the entire planning area. Alternative “2” was presented by focusing on five specific areas where proposed land uses were different than Alternative “1”. The workshop included a brief discussion of the merits of each alternative. As a result of incomplete public discussion on these land use issues, the project team developed a questionnaire to solicit community preferences.

After presenting the land use alternatives, the project team described the existing circulation system within the planning area and reiterated public comments received in previous meetings, workshops, and questionnaires regarding circulation and traffic. Three configurations for the eastern leg of the SR 12/SR 26 alternate route were shown and described. The project team also identified intersections that could receive additional traffic control improvements to address safety or congestion issues, and presented illustrations of proposed long-term improvements, such as road widening and installation of bike lanes, turning pockets, and roundabouts.

LAND USE AND CIRCULATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The project team created an online questionnaire (with hardcopies available) to solicit community preferences and comments regarding the two proposed land use alternatives. The questionnaire presented seven study areas where the proposed land uses differed between Alternatives “1” and “2”. The study areas were:

- 1) SR 26 commercial corridor,
- 2) Paloma Road industrial area,
- 3) Castle Rock area,
- 4) Agricultural preserve area,
- 5) Ranch lands east of Town Center,
- 6) Lime Creek Road, and
- 7) South of Lime Creek Road.

The project team created the preferred land use and circulation diagram presented in this Community Plan (see *Chapter 6 Land Use Designations and Circulation Plan*) based on the answers and comments from the 116 individuals that completed this questionnaire. Those responses reinforced the themes heard from community members throughout the planning process, such as protecting the area’s rural character, promoting additional commercial and industrial development, and taking advantage of previous infrastructure investments to limit growth-related public costs.

CONCLUSION

This Community Plan was developed on a foundation of extensive public participation. The SAC assisted the project team with community outreach and presentation of technical information. Focus groups provided topic-specific expertise and comments to address local issues, and the public remained actively engaged throughout the planning process. Through numerous workshops and questionnaires, the community has crafted a plan that responds to the unique character and history of Valley Springs.

4 PLANNING AREA



4

This section provides a broad overview of the planning area beginning with a brief community profile and description of Valley Springs’ development history. It describes the subareas that make up the planning area in terms of their location, existing uses, infrastructure, considerations for future planning, and distinguishing features. This section also presents the existing transportation and circulation system, including roadway classifications, non-motorized circulation options, and public transit.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Valley Springs is a quiet Sierra foothill town at the junction of State Routes 12 and 26. Brush-covered hills rise to the north and west of town with flat and rolling grassland to the south and east. At an altitude of 660 feet, Valley Springs has an average annual rainfall of about 20 inches.

Valley Springs also lies at the junction of the roads leading to New Hogan Lake and Pardee Reservoir and has become the main local supply center for visitors using these lakes. Pardee Reservoir and New Hogan Lake are within 5 miles of Valley Springs, and Camanche Reservoir is a few miles farther. Besides providing water storage, these lakes draw thousands of weekend visitors and vacationers for boating, fishing, and camping. SR 12 serves as Valley Springs' main street through its commercial center, and is lined with stores and restaurants. The historic Valley Springs residential neighborhood extends from this narrow commercial strip to the base of the hills north of town. SR 26 leads south of Valley Springs to the La Contenta and Gold Creek neighborhoods, and is lined with additional businesses and services.

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING HISTORY

The Valley Springs town site was laid out in 1884 on an 18-block street grid with tree-lined streets named after flowers and trees. In 1885, the San Joaquin and Sierra Nevada Railroad was constructed from Brack's Landing on the Mokelumne River to Valley Springs in the east, and eventually became the property of Southern Pacific Railroad. The historic Valley Springs train depot was constructed around 1885. The rail line was extended 13 miles east to Kentucky House near San Andreas in 1925 to service the Calaveras Cement Company. An additional line was laid to the Mokelumne River to deliver supplies for the construction of Pardee Dam from 1924 to 1929. Passenger service on the rail line ended in 1932, but freight shipping continued until the cement plant closed in 1983. Since that time, the tracks have been removed, and the former railroad right-of-way has been segmented into smaller parcels and sold. Valley Springs is designated as California Historical Landmark #251. The original Valley Springs settlement still contains the Valley Springs Elementary School, which serves students within town and from a broader area of western Calaveras County, along with the Jenny Lind Elementary School in Rancho Calaveras. The Jenny Lind Veterans community park and community hall are located adjacent to the elementary school.



Valley Springs was once the shipping center of the county due to its railroad lines, which have since been removed.

Development of the areas to the south of the original Valley Springs settlement began in the mid-1960s. In 1965, developers combined several large ranches south of Valley Springs to create the Rancho Calaveras subdivision, which is not a part of the planning area. This subdivision includes approximately 3,600 parcels ranging from 0.5 to 3.0 acres and covers approximately 6,000 acres. The developers sold all of the lots within 18 months, though many remain undeveloped. The La Contenta subdivision was developed north of Rancho Calaveras in 1975 to include 650 home sites and the La Contenta Golf Course. The Gold Creek subdivision is located north of La Contenta along SR 26. Other smaller-scale residential development occurred around Valley Springs, including the area known as Quail Oaks southwest of the Town Center.

SUBAREAS

As described in *Chapter 3 Public Participation*, the planning area boundary was selected through a public process. As part of that process, the area was described as a composition of various subareas that could be included or excluded to define the community planning area. As a result of this public process, Rancho Calaveras was excluded from the planning area and further consideration in the Community Plan. The planning area includes five subareas, as shown on Figure 4.1: Valley Springs Town Center, VSPUD Sphere of Influence, CCWD Assessment District 604 (AD 604), La Contenta, and Areas Adjacent to AD 604. Figure 4.2 maps several of the distinguishing features that define the subareas as discussed in this chapter. Additional characteristics of the subareas are described below.

VALLEY SPRINGS TOWN CENTER

LOCATION

The Valley Springs Town Center is located at the intersection of SR 12 and SR 26. It primarily includes the historic Valley Springs settlement, the Mar Val shopping center, and undeveloped properties to the east.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Historic Valley Springs settlement within the 18-block street grid
- Castle Rock
- VSPUD spray hill
- Valley Springs Elementary School and Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District Park
- Mar Val shopping center
- Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek floodplain

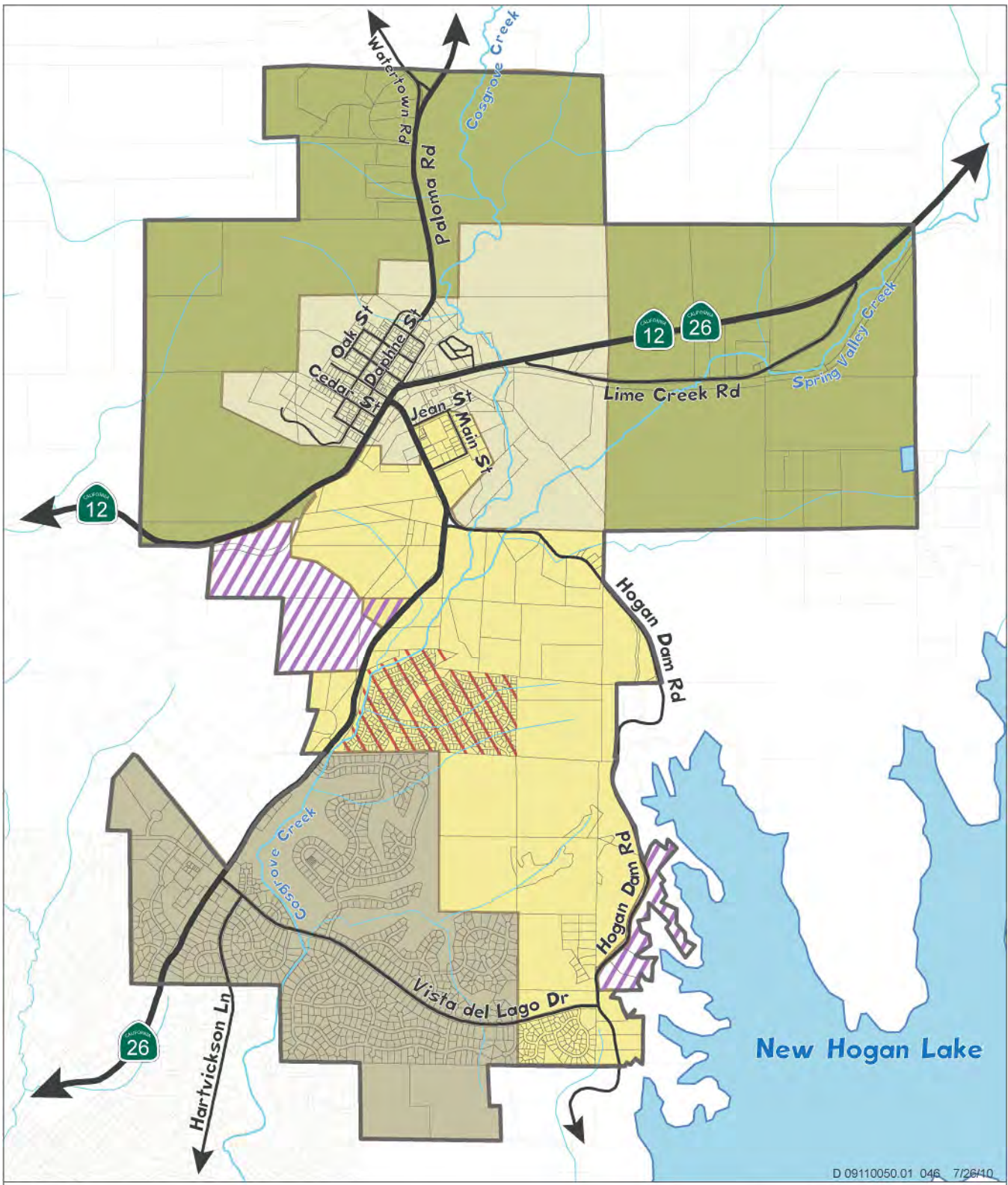
EXISTING USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This subarea includes residential uses that are concentrated in the historic street grid and two mobile home parks north and east of the street grid. Businesses along SR 12 serve the local population, and include restaurants, realty services, an auto parts store, a small auto dealership, a bar, and other locally-oriented services. The Mar Val shopping center includes a grocery store, drugstore, the Post Office, a doctor's office, beauty salons, fast food and sit-down restaurants, a bank, and other retail options.

VSPUD currently provides water and sewer service to part of the subarea, including the street grid and Mar Val shopping center, while most of the remainder lies within the VSPUD sphere of influence, which makes future service expansions possible (see Figure 4.3).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The intersection at SR 12 and SR 26 is a four-way stop that experiences heavy congestion in mornings and afternoons from school and commuter traffic, and in summer months from recreationalists at the nearby reservoirs. Designated flood hazard areas within this subarea are located along Cosgrove Creek east of Valley Springs and the Mar Val shopping center. There is a large floodplain north of Hogan Dam Road surrounding Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek. A development application has been filed for a residential subdivision located north of Cedar Street (see Figure 4.4).



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LEGEND

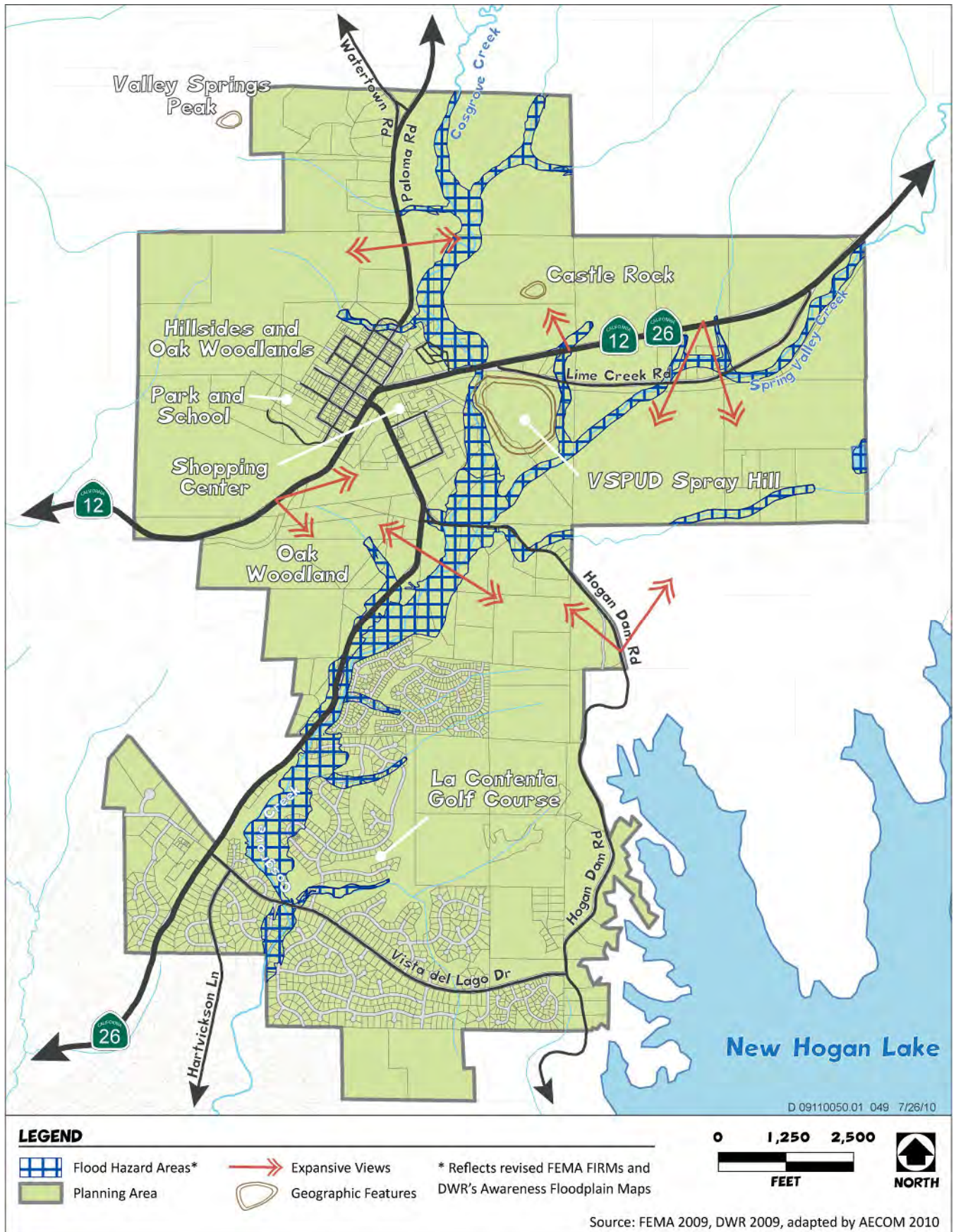
- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Valley Springs Town Center |  La Contenta |  Water Bodies |
|  VSPUD Sphere of Influence |  Areas Adjacent to AD 604 | |
|  CCWD AD 604 |  Gold Creek | |



Source: AECOM 2010

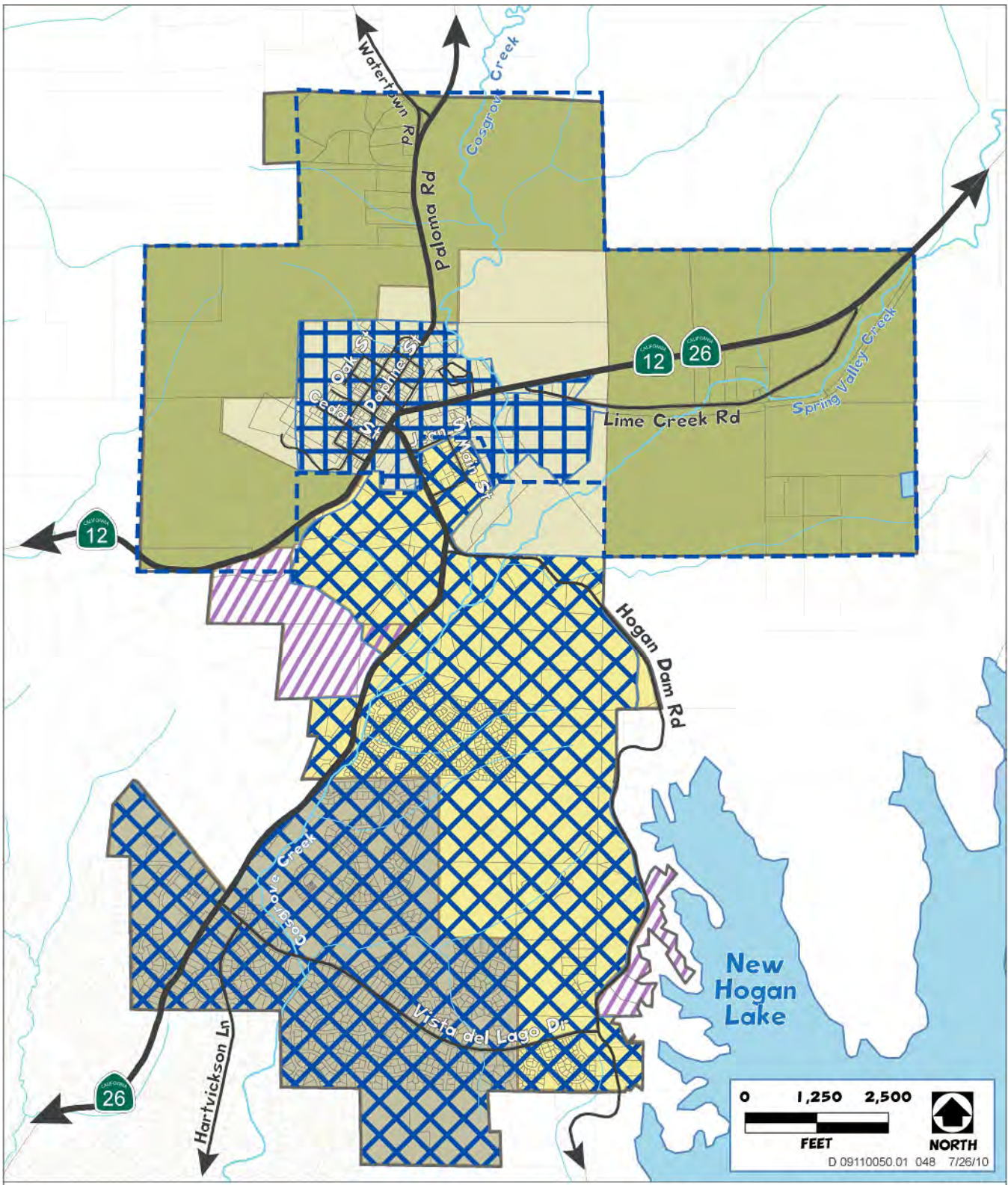
Community Plan Subareas

Figure 4.1



Distinguishing Features

Figure 4.2



0 1,250 2,500
 FEET
 NORTH
 D 09110050.01 048 7/26/10

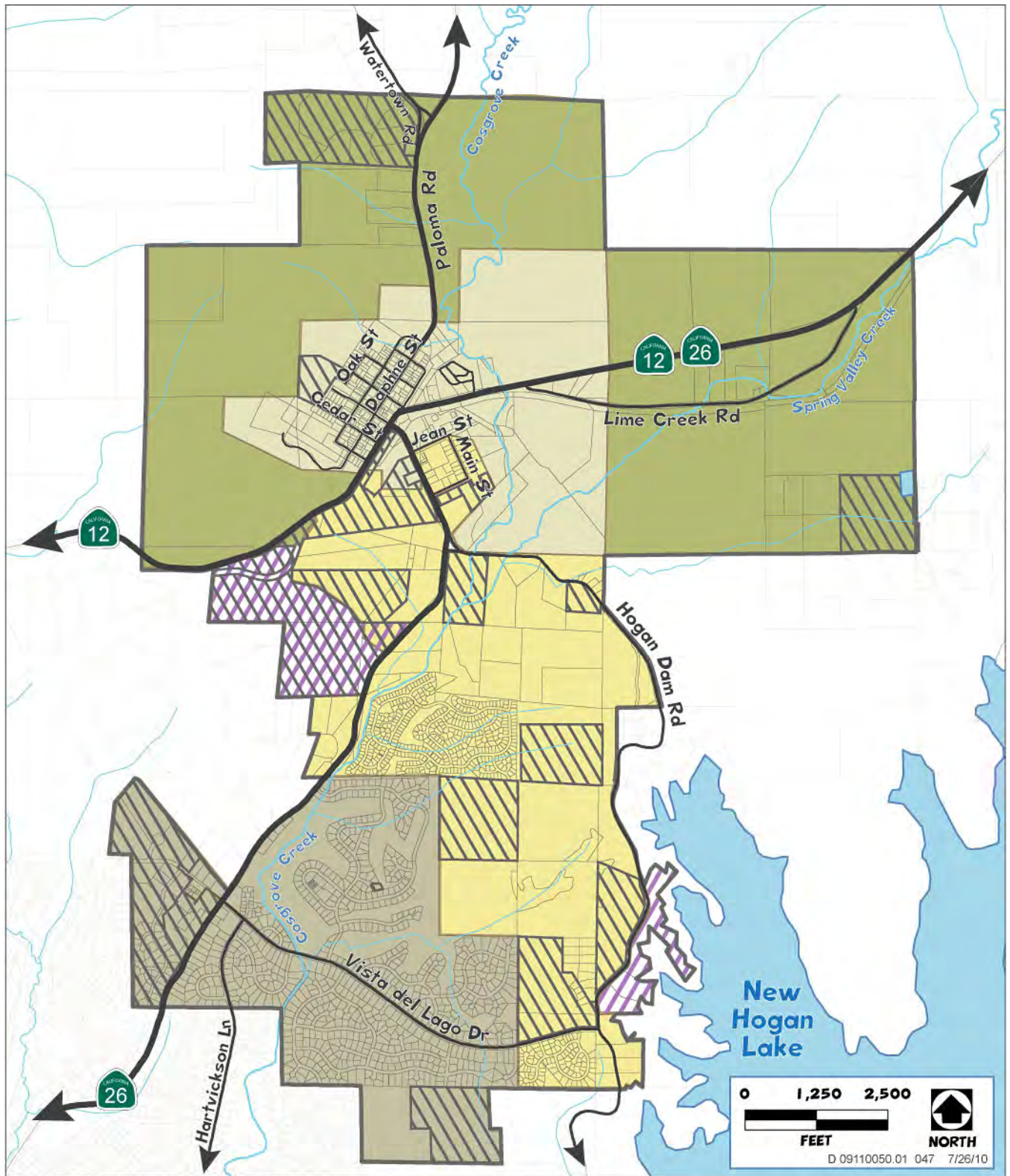
LEGEND

VSPUD Water and Sewer	CCWD Sewer	Valley Springs Town Center	VSPUD Sphere of Influence	Areas Adjacent to AD 604
CCWD Water	VSPUD Sphere of Influence	CCWD AD 604	La Contenta	

Source: Calaveras County 2009, adapted by AECOM 2010

Water and Sewer Service Areas

Figure 4.3



LEGEND

- Active Development Applications*
- VSPUD Sphere of Influence
- CCWD AD 604
- Valley Springs Town Center
- Areas Adjacent to AD 604
- La Contenta

Source: Calaveras County 2009, adapted by AECOM 2010

* Includes tentative subdivision tract maps and tentative project maps on file with the County Planning Department

Active Development Applications

Figure 4.4

VSPUD SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

LOCATION

The VSPUD Sphere of Influence (VSPUD SOI) wraps around the Valley Springs Town Center to the north, east, and west.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Valley Springs Peak and hilly topography
- High fire hazard zones
- Large undeveloped properties
- Ranchlands
- Open views
- Oak woodland habitat
- Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek floodplains



Open views and hilly terrain characterize the VSPUD Sphere of Influence subarea.

EXISTING USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Small clusters of rural residential development are located in this subarea, primarily west of Paloma and Watertown Roads, and south of St. Petersburg Road. The remainder of the subarea is largely undeveloped with some active ranching activity west of town and east of Paloma Road and north of SR 12/SR 26.

This subarea represents the extent of the VSPUD SOI, in which future water and sewer service expansion could take place, but where services are not currently provided (see Figure 4.3). During a focus group meeting, VSPUD representatives indicated that there are no current plans for service expansion into the SOI. Residences within this subarea rely on groundwater wells and septic systems.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This subarea frames the historic Valley Springs Town Center. The largely undeveloped expanses offer a sense of arrival when approaching Valley Springs from the east and west on SR 12. Hilly terrain throughout the subarea contributes to the open views seen from other locations in the planning area. The hillsides north and west of Valley Springs contain steep slopes (i.e., greater than 25%), which can pose structural challenges to development. High fire hazard areas are also located there. An application for land use and zoning change has been filed for a property north of SR 12 and west of Valley Springs, but no tentative subdivision map or development request has been submitted to the Planning Department, so this application is not reflected on Figure 4.4. Open views within the subarea can be found across the undeveloped land south of SR 12, including ranchlands east and west of Paloma Road. VSPUD does not currently serve this area with water or sewer. Flood hazard areas are located along Cosgrove Creek, Spring Valley Creek, and smaller tributaries. Agricultural properties north of SR 12/SR 26 are currently under Williamson Act contracts; a voluntary tool used to preserve agricultural lands. The areas under contract also provide suitable habitat for protected wildlife species.

CCWD ASSESSMENT DISTRICT 604

LOCATION

CCWD's AD 604 represents a portion of the CCWD service area that already has sewer and water infrastructure in place. This subarea is approximately bound by the Valley Springs Town Center to the north, La Contenta to the south, Quail Oaks to the west, and Hogan Dam Road to the east.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Gold Creek neighborhood
- Open views to the east and west from SR 26
- Large undeveloped properties
- Rolling hills and oak woodlands
- Flood plains along Cosgrove Creek and tributaries
- Existing sewer and water infrastructure

EXISTING USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The majority of this subarea is currently undeveloped. Existing uses include the Gold Creek residential neighborhood along SR 26, New Hogan Lake Estates subdivision and apartments east of La Contenta on Vista del Lago Drive, and commercial and industrial properties on Jean Street, Main Street, Nove Way, and SR 26. CCWD has already installed sewer and water infrastructure throughout the AD 604 subarea (see Figure 4.3).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Flood hazard areas are located along Cosgrove Creek, Spring Valley Creek, and other tributaries within this subarea. A large floodplain is located north of the Gold Creek subdivision and extends beyond Hogan Dam Road. This subarea is included in the Community Plan because substantial infrastructure investments have already been made here. Several development applications have been filed for properties in this subarea (see Figure 4.4).

LA CONTENTA

LOCATION

La Contenta is located in the southern portion of the planning area. It is primarily east of SR 26 and divided approximately in half by Vista del Lago Drive. La Contenta borders Rancho Calaveras, which is south of the planning area.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Golf course community
- Winding road network with cul-de-sacs
- Commercial development around intersections of SR 26 and Vista del Lago Drive and SR 26 and St. Andrews Drive



The La Contenta Golf Club is a distinguishing feature of the La Contenta subarea.

EXISTING USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

La Contenta is a residential subdivision with a golf course and commercial uses. Most residences are located east of SR 26. A collection of commercial properties surrounds the intersection of SR 26 and Vista del Lago Drive, including a gas station, a small medical facility, and commercial centers with two dental offices, a coffee shop, restaurants, fitness center and other uses. Other commercial properties are located at the intersection of SR 26 and St. Andrews Drive. The subarea includes two large undeveloped properties at its southern border. Two approved residential subdivisions have yet to be constructed west of the SR 26/Vista del Lago Drive intersection.

La Contenta has both sewer and water services, provided by CCWD.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

La Contenta is a stable residential neighborhood. With the exception of undeveloped properties described above, this subarea is unlikely to change much in the future. In addition to the approved subdivision west of SR 26, a development application has been filed for one of the undeveloped properties along the southern boundary (see Figure 4.4).

AREAS ADJACENT TO AD 604

LOCATION

This subarea includes two non adjacent collections of parcels to the east and west of the CCWD AD 604 subarea. Parcels to the west are located between SR 12 and SR 26. Parcels to the east are located between Hogan Dam Road and New Hogan Lake.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Oak tree habitat
- Open views to southeast when entering Valley Springs on SR 12 from the west

EXISTING USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Parcels located west of AD 604 are currently undeveloped. The eastern extent of these parcels overlaps with the AD 604 subarea and has sewer and water service (see Figure 4.3).

One of the parcels east of AD 604 is developed with a residence, and the other two are undeveloped. This collection of parcels does not currently have water or sewer service.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Extensive oak woodlands cover the parcels west of AD 604. This area has been studied as part of a possible alternate route for SR 12. A development application for this area has been filed proposing a residential subdivision with commercial development along SR 26 (see Figure 4.4) and a connector road between SR 12 and SR 26.



Extensive oak tree habitat located throughout the planning area is highly valued by residents.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEM

This section describes the roadways that provide vehicular circulation within the planning area and to and from the outlying region. Descriptions of existing non-motorized circulation networks are also provided below.

The Circulation Element of the Calaveras County General Plan categorizes the circulation system in terms of arterials, major collectors, and minor collectors.

ARTERIALS

STATE ROUTE 12

SR 12 is a state highway that begins in Sebastopol in Sonoma County and terminates at the SR 49 junction just outside of San Andreas in Calaveras County. SR 12 is an important route between Valley Springs and both SR 99 and Interstate 5 (I-5). SR 12 is also a critical link to the county seat in San Andreas and a primary large-truck access route to Calaveras County. SR 12 is one of four major arterials in the county's transportation network, and is a state highway-designated Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) route for large trucks. STAA trucks are longer than California legal trucks, and as a result have a larger turning radius than most local roads can accommodate. Through the planning area, SR 12 is a two-lane east-west arterial that includes a four-way stop at the SR 26 intersection in Valley Springs. SR 12 also serves as the "Main Street" for Valley Springs.

STATE ROUTE 26

SR 26 is a state highway that begins in Stockton in San Joaquin County and terminates at SR 88 near Pioneer in Amador County. SR 26 provides an important regional link between Stockton, SR 99 and I-5, and the Valley Springs area and upcountry communities. SR 26 also provides access from SR 12 to the residential areas south of Valley Springs, including Gold Creek, La Contenta, and Rancho Calaveras. Through the planning area, SR 26 is a two-lane predominately north-south arterial that includes a four-way stop at the SR 12 intersection. To the east of this intersection, both SR 12 and SR 26 overlay as state routes until Toyon, where SR 26 splits to head north to Mokelumne Hill.

MAJOR COLLECTORS

PALOMA ROAD

Paloma Road is a two-lane major collector within the planning area. It is an extension of Daphne Street north of Sequoia Avenue. Paloma Road provides a regional connection to Campo Seco, Pardee Reservoir, and Amador County to the north. Paloma Road intersects SR 26.

LIME CREEK ROAD

Lime Creek Road is a two-lane major collector roadway. It is important to the circulation of recreational vehicles in the Valley Springs area because it provides one of two connections from SR 12/SR 26 to the boat launch and campgrounds on New Hogan Lake. Lime Creek Road begins and ends on SR 12/SR 26 east of Valley Springs. Access to the boat launch is provided from Lime Creek Road by South Petersburg Road via New Hogan Parkway.

HOGAN DAM ROAD

Hogan Dam Road is another two-lane major collector roadway providing access to the New Hogan Lake boat launch and campgrounds via New Hogan Parkway from SR 26. Hogan Dam Road also provides circulation along the west side of New Hogan Lake and is an alternate connector route for area residents going into downtown Valley Springs. Hogan Dam Road connects to Vista Del Lago Drive and Silver Rapids Road in the La Contenta and

Rancho Calaveras neighborhoods respectively. Hogan Dam Road continues further south past New Hogan Lake to Salt Spring Valley and Reservoir.

LOCAL STREETS

In addition to the County-designated roadways described above, numerous important roadways in the planning area provide local access to goods and services as well as residences and recreational amenities.

COMMERCIAL STREETS

Local commercial roadways include Jean Street, Main Street, and Nove Way. These three streets provide access to commercial and industrial properties south of the Mar Val shopping center and east of SR 26. These are private streets that are not maintained by the County Public Works Department. Vista del Lago Drive in La Contenta also provides access to commercial properties near its intersection with SR 26.

RESIDENTIAL STREETS

Local residential streets include the original street grid of historic Valley Springs and newer internal street networks that serve the La Contenta, Gold Creek, and other neighborhoods.

NON-MOTORIZED PATHWAYS

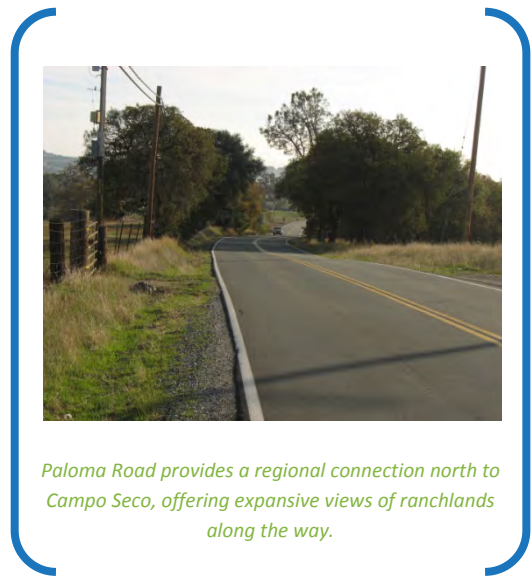
Providing opportunities for non-motorized travel is important to meet the circulation needs of the entire population, including children, older residents, and those who cannot or chose not to drive. Designated bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails are examples of non-motorized pathways.

Bicycle improvements are described as Class I, Class II, and Class III facilities. Class I bike trails are off-street facilities that separate cyclists from vehicles. Class II bike lanes are striped between the driving lane and the road shoulder or sidewalk. Class III bike routes are on-street facilities marked by signs and shared by vehicles, but are not striped.

The number of bike lanes or trails within the planning area is limited. New Class II bike lanes have been constructed on Daphne Street, and a short Class I bike/pedestrian trail has been built on Paloma Road between Rose Street and Sequoia Avenue. Some existing right of way on SR 12 and SR 26 could be paved and used for Class II bike lanes, and some existing pavement along the same roads could be formally striped and also used for Class II lanes.

Sidewalks are also limited within the planning area. Some sidewalks are present within the historic Valley Springs street grid, but they are discontinuous. No sidewalks are present in the La Contenta or Gold Creek neighborhoods.

No public trails within the planning area connect La Contenta or Gold Creek neighborhoods to the Valley Springs Town Center, or connect to the public trail system around New Hogan Lake. The floodplain running north-south along Cosgrove creek would be a suitable location for public walking trails and potentially Class I bike trails.



Paloma Road provides a regional connection north to Campo Seco, offering expansive views of ranchlands along the way.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Calaveras Transit provides public bus transportation service in Calaveras County. Route 1 serves the planning area, and connects Valley Springs with San Andreas and Angels Camp. Two bus stops are located in the planning area: one in Valley Springs on Daphne Street and one on Vista del Lago Drive at La Contenta Plaza. Nine buses stop daily at Daphne Street and three stop daily at Vista del Lago. After leaving Valley Springs Route 1 stops at the San Andreas Post Office, Government Center, and terminates at the transfer location at Monte Verde Street in Angels Camp. Riders can transfer to Route 2 at the San Andreas Government Center for trips to Mokelumne Hill (with transfers to Jackson), Glencoe, West Point, and Mountain Ranch. Transfers at Monte Verde Street to Route 3 serve Copperopolis, and transfers to Route 4 serve Columbia College and various communities on the way to Arnold in eastern Calaveras County.

EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

As part of the Community Plan update, a traffic engineering firm was hired to collect data regarding the current traffic conditions found in the planning area. Circulation conditions in the community are generally acceptable based on the County's current General Plan Circulation Element policies. However, several key intersections have been identified where traffic circulation is constrained or the intersection is of significance to the community.

The traffic engineering firm collected existing local daily traffic counts in the planning area to assist in developing the circulation component of the Community Plan. Traffic counts were collected for the following roadway segments:

- SR 12, west of Pine Street
- SR 12, west of SR 26 South
- SR 12, east of SR 26 South
- SR 12, west of SR 26 North
- SR 26 South, south of SR 12
- SR 26 South, north of Hogan Dam Road
- SR 26 South, south of Hogan Dam Road
- SR 26 South, north of La Contenta Country Club Entrance
- SR 26 South, south of La Contenta Country Club Entrance
- Vista del Lago Drive, east of SR 26
- Lime Creek Road, south of SR 12
- Hogan Dam Road, east of SR 26

Although all studied roadways were found to be operating at acceptable levels based on daily volumes and capacity compared to the target thresholds found in the current County General Plan Circulation Element policies, SR 26 south of Valley Springs is approaching its acceptable limits (see Appendix E). In addition to traffic

volumes on SR 26, residents mentioned concerns with traffic safety due to speeding and the dangerous nature of windy, rural roads, especially for young drivers.

The congestion at several intersections within the planning area was also discussed during community workshops and meetings, including SR 12/SR 26, SR 26/Hogan Dam Road, SR 26/Hagen Court (entrance to Jenny Lind Elementary School), and entrances/exits at the Mar Val shopping center. The nature of these intersections is described briefly below.

SR 12/SR 26 INTERSECTION

In addition to the daily highway traffic volume evaluation, a peak hour analysis was also conducted at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection. Based on the collected AM and PM peak hour traffic counts, the acceptable threshold was exceeded during the AM peak hour, which can lead to congestion and delays. Signal warrants have been met for the intersection, indicating that traffic control measures beyond the existing four-way stop signs may be warranted in the future. Some area residents drive through the Mar Val shopping center parking lot to bypass the intersection during peak traffic hours.

Alternative improvements for this intersection are currently under consideration, including signals, roundabouts, and an SR 12 alternative route. The proposed alternative route and proposed intersection improvements are discussed further in *Chapter 6 Proposed Land Use Designations and Circulation Plan*.

SR 26/HOGAN DAM ROAD INTERSECTION

The intersection of SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road is important because of the safety concerns due to its configuration. Hogan Dam Road is the primary access road to New Hogan Lake and is heavily used by recreationalists towing boats and trailers. It is also used by some La Contenta residents to avoid traffic on SR 26. The intersection has a non-traditional design with two legs of Hogan Dam Road intersecting with SR 26 in a triangular configuration. Mangili Road extends west across SR 26 from the southern leg of Hogan Dam Road. Drivers heading south on SR 26 can make a left turn onto a narrow leg of Hogan Dam Road, but doing so causes traffic to back up because there is no left-turn pocket to allow non-turning drivers to safely pass. North bound traffic turning east on Hogan Dam Road can have difficulty navigating the sharp turn, especially when towing boats and trailers. Additional traffic is generated from drivers entering and existing Mangili Road to access existing businesses along that street, including a fitness center and a drive-through coffee shop. A commercial plaza is proposed at the southeast intersection of SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road and a medical center is proposed on Mangili Road, which will increase traffic and safety concerns. Accidents and congestion at this intersection limit circulation within and through Valley Springs and impact the timely provision of emergency services.

SR 26/HAGEN COURT INTERSECTION

Jenny Lind Elementary School is accessed from a three-way intersection on SR-26. A stop sign on Hagen Court is currently the only traffic control at the intersection. Traffic backs up in both directions on SR 26 during morning and afternoon hours when school buses and parents pick up and drop off students. Congestion at this intersection disrupts commuter traffic as there is no convenient alternative to SR 26 for local residents. The La Contenta, Gold Creek, and Rancho Calaveras subdivisions all use SR 26 as the primary entrance and exit to their neighborhoods. The County was awarded a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) grant to begin addressing traffic issues at this intersection.

SR26/MAR VAL SHOPPING CENTER

The Mar Val shopping center is an important destination in Valley Springs. It serves as the primary commercial hub of the community offering restaurants, a major drug and grocery store, bank, small businesses, and the post office. The mix of uses in this area creates a concentration of activity that keeps the shopping center consistently busy throughout the day. The shopping center is bordered by SR 12/SR 26 on the north side and SR 26 on the west side. The volume of traffic entering and exiting the shopping center from the State Routes can be problematic for local circulation, leading to prolonged congestion in the area. The Mar Val shopping center also serves as a default bypass of the SR 12/SR 26 intersection; automobiles travel through the shopping center to avoid this congested intersection. Large speed humps in front of the Mar Val grocery store discourage this activity. However, travelers still use this route as an option when it is perceived to reduce travel time. Additionally, movements within the shopping center can be strained as a result of its poorly designed internal circulation routes. Through traffic (i.e., drivers not intending to stop at the shopping center) adds to the existing internal circulation issues.

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5 ISSUES



5

This section discusses the key issues identified throughout the public process that are addressed in the Community Plan. Participants of the Community Plan process identified and prioritized the most important issues facing the community. These ranged from general statements about the area’s loss of identity to specific concerns about traffic problems at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection. The issues presented below are specific to the planning area and are not likely to be directly addressed in the County’s General Plan update. The issues are organized topically based on the County’s General Plan elements of Land Use, Transportation/Circulation, Economic Development, Housing, Public Facilities and Services, Natural Resources, Water (Hydrology in the Community Plan), Cultural Resources, Health and Safety, and Noise. Chapter 7 Policies and Programs is similarly organized to show the relationship between these issues and the proposed solutions.

LAND USE

Land use issues largely relate to the role that past development trends have played in changing the unique sense of place that has characterized Valley Springs and the community's desire to redefine its local identity while promoting economic growth through employment development and increased retail opportunities.

RURAL SPRAWL

New residential and commercial developments are expanding into previously undeveloped areas, affecting the landscape's rural character that attracted many current residents. Such development consumes agricultural and open space lands that define the Valley Springs area, impacts open views, alters local hydrology, and increases auto-dependence and traffic volumes on local roadways. What many perceive as the unplanned conversion of Valley Springs' natural, rural areas was a primary concern of workshop and meeting participants.

Residential subdivisions in the area typically remove existing trees and level hillsides during site preparation, are designed without integration or connectivity to adjacent developments, and are designed primarily to accommodate cars, making it challenging for pedestrian and bicycle travel. Subdivisions often rely on a development pattern with street hierarchies that funnel traffic onto increasingly larger streets, such as SR 26 or Hogan Dam Road. These larger streets must then accommodate all traffic generated within the subdivision, contributing to the congestion experienced on SR 26.

Construction along the SR 26 commercial corridor between SR 12 and Vista del Lago Drive has been in the tradition of "strip mall" developments. This style of development is auto-oriented, placing parking lots between the road and the buildings, and places buildings far back from the road in a linear fashion. It is also common to separate adjacent commercial or industrial properties from surrounding residences with fencing or other barriers, forcing shoppers to drive from one location to the next and making walking difficult. Strip development creates an environment that is inhospitable to pedestrians and can become unsafe for drivers as the number of curb cuts increases along SR 26.

LOSS OF IDENTITY

In community design, sense of place can be described by strong visual elements (natural or manmade) that residents and visitors readily identify with a location. For example, canals define a sense of place in Venice, Italy. Steep hills and bay views define San Francisco's sense of place. In Valley Springs, residents identify with the rolling hillsides, open pastoral views, and small-town charm. Recent development trends threaten to erode Valley Springs' identity and replace it with a generic character that could be experienced in many places across the state.

There is currently no defined Town Center to the Valley Springs area other than the SR 12/SR 26 intersection. Valley Springs began as an 18-block settlement built on a street grid with a commercial district on SR 12. Recent development in the area has gradually shifted the focus of commercial activity southward to the Mar Val shopping center and other locations along SR 26. Substantial residential development occurred even further away from the original settlement, and further diminished the area's identity as a historic railroad settlement. Today, the overwhelming majority of residents live well south of the original Valley Springs town settlement.

In addition, recent development patterns have failed to consider the local environment that defines the area's identity. For example, residents value the oak tree habitat and rolling hills in the area. However, as discussed above, subdivisions often remove natural topography and vegetation during construction and replace it with flat lots and non-native species that are found in many communities. This contributes to a generic character rather than a strong sense of place based on the local environment. Also, strip mall development along SR 26 places a visual emphasis on parking lots and cars that interrupts open views of the surrounding hillsides.



The eastern entrance of Valley Springs is marked with billboards that do not create a unique sense of arrival into the community.

A clear sense of arrival can also reinforce local identity. This can be achieved through use of decorative signs, landscaping treatments along entry roadways, or a sharp contrast between the natural, rural environment and the built community. As the edges of development continue to expand in Valley Springs, the clear sense of arrival from the east and west on SR 12 continues to be threatened.

TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

Transportation and circulation issues are directed at the planning area's street network and circulation facilities, such as sidewalks, pedestrian, and bike trails. Emergency response is also affected by congestion on roadways and intersections.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Frequent congestion at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection and other intersections (e.g., SR 26/Vista del Lago, SR 26/Hogan Dam Road) creates problems for residents and emergency vehicles. School buses and family cars contribute to intersection congestion during morning and afternoon hours throughout the school year. In the summer months, recreationalists towing boats and campers to the area's reservoirs and campgrounds add to the seasonal congestion. Semi-trucks also drive through the center of town because there is currently no alternative to traveling through the heart of Valley Springs.



School buses contribute to intersection congestion in morning and afternoon hours.

This congestion can be annoying for residents and a safety hazard for the County Sheriff, fire departments, and emergency medical technicians. A dispersed, rural population creates a challenge in and of itself to law enforcement and emergency responders. Traffic congestion can add to the challenge and results in slower response times than might otherwise be possible. During a focus group meeting, the Sheriff's department noted particular concerns during the summer months when deputies need to move their only rescue boat from one reservoir to another via the SR 12/SR 26 intersection.

Residents identified the intersection of SR 26 and Hagen Court as another local issue. Jenny Lind Elementary School is accessed via Hagen Court, and the line of school buses entering and exiting SR 26 during morning and afternoon hours can increase travel times for commuters.

The following key intersections could benefit from improvements, either to improve traffic flow or to slow down traffic to increase safety for drivers and pedestrians (see Figure 5.1).

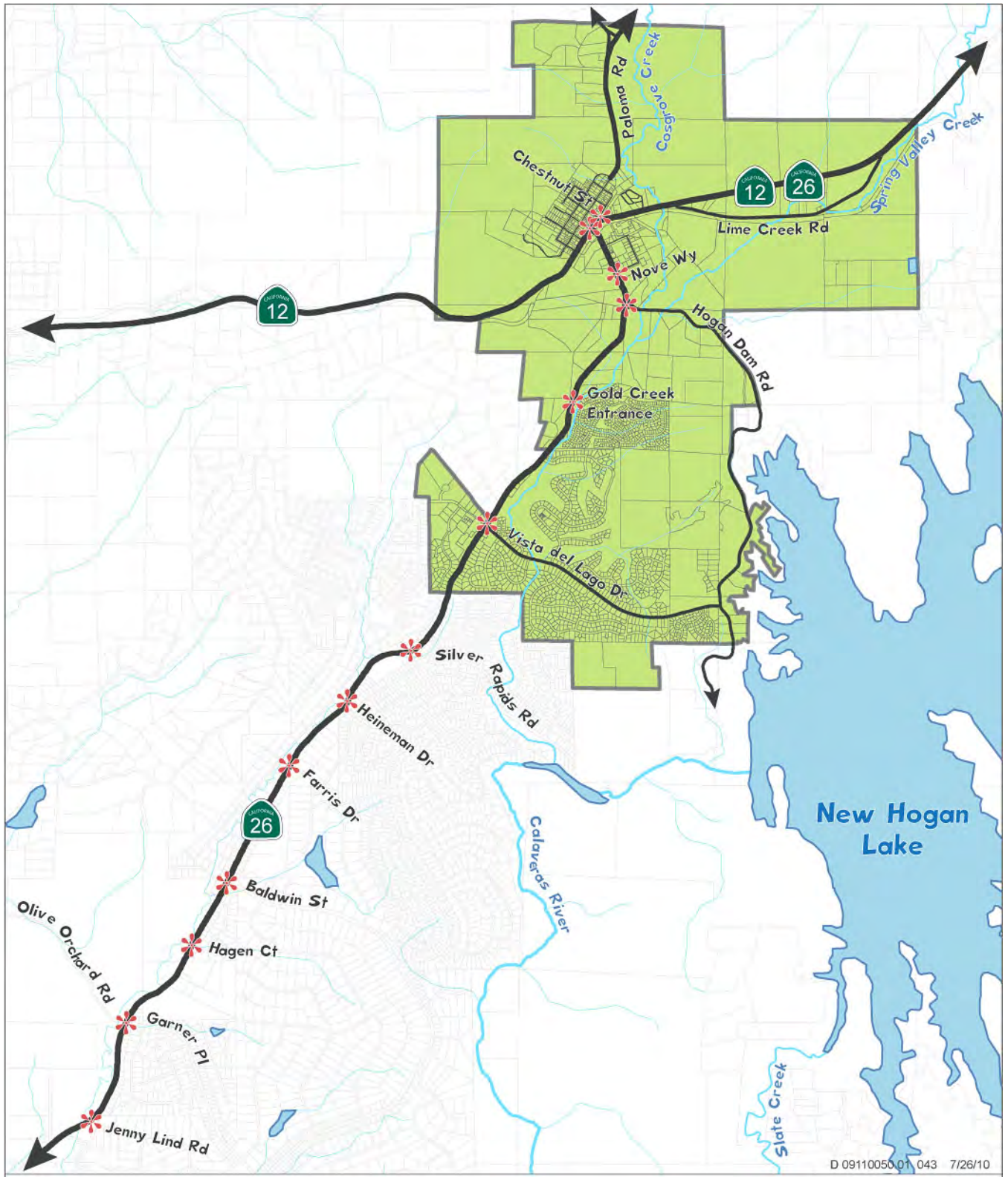
- SR 12/SR 26
- SR 12/Chestnut Street
- SR 26/Hogan Dam Road
- SR 26/Vista del Lago
- SR 26/Gold Creek entrance
- SR 26/Nove Way
- SR 26/Silver Rapids Road
- SR 26/Heineman Drive
- SR 26/Farris Drive
- SR 26/Baldwin Street
- SR 26/Hagen Court (entrance to Jenny Lind Elementary)
- SR 26/Garner Place/Olive Orchard Road
- SR 26/Jenny Lind Road

There was discussion at the third workshop about selecting the best improvement techniques and whether roundabouts are appropriate for Valley Springs. Some residents do not support the idea of slowing traffic down, and would like to see unimpeded traffic flow to reduce congestion.

ALTERNATIVE CIRCULATION OPTIONS

The planning area has an incomplete sidewalk network; sidewalks are not present in residential subdivisions or on most blocks of the historic street grid. The area also lacks a bicycle and multi-use trail system to connect the Town Center and neighborhoods to each other and to New Hogan Reservoir. Designated bike lanes within the planning area are limited to Daphne Street and a short portion of Paloma Road. Some residents do not want sidewalks at all because they create an urban character that is contrary to the rural environment they prefer. Other residents do not want to pay higher taxes to fund sidewalks that will be constructed outside of their neighborhood.

Public transit service is also limited within the community. Transit-dependent members of the community may be elderly, disabled, young people, financially disadvantaged, or individuals who otherwise have no means of personal transportation. Calaveras Transit provides public bus transit in Calaveras County, with one route connecting directly to the planning area (destinations and route frequency for the bus system are described in *Chapter 4 Planning Area*). Calaveras Transit services in Valley Springs are designed to allow residents to access shopping, education, social and medical services, and recreation opportunities. However, due to the limited funding that public transportation has to operate, the distance between towns in Calaveras County, and the



LEGEND

- Key Intersections
- Planning Area
- Water Bodies
- Rivers
- Highways
- Roads
- Parcels

0 2,000 4,000

 FEET

NORTH

Source: AECOM 2010

Existing Intersections Recommended for Improvement

Figure 5.1

rural, dispersed nature of residential subdivisions, it is difficult to effectively serve large segments of the population. As a result, the overall ability of Valley Springs' residents to use public transit as a primary source of transportation is limited. Public transportation is typically more successful in serving the community when there are more people living within closer proximity to one another and to daily services.

As Valley Springs continues to develop, it will be important to plan for improvements to the Calaveras Transit system. This could include the installation of bus shelters with benches, and sidewalks/pathways to access transit; increased housing density near transit service; or other amenities that would serve to strengthen access to public transit.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY

The benefit of an integrated street network is that it disperses traffic among multiple streets to reduce traffic volumes on any one street. Limited roadway connections between recently developed neighborhoods (e.g., La Contenta and Gold Creek) pose a challenge to creating a more integrated road network that could reduce traffic on SR 26. Existing residential subdivisions were designed with internal street networks, but provide limited outlets to existing or future adjacent developments. Although many residents expressed concern about traffic congestion along SR 26, others also expressed concerns about the potential impacts to their neighborhoods of through traffic that might result from better connectivity among neighborhoods.



Limited access to designated bike lanes and sidewalks are a constraint to increasing non-motorized transportation options.

A connectivity index can be used to quantify how well a street network connects destinations. One method is to count the total intersections within an area and divide by the total intersections plus any dead ends, like cul-de-sacs. This index rates connectivity on a scale from 0 to 1, where a score of 0.75 and higher is desirable. For comparison purposes, Figure 5.2 shows that the historic street grid in Valley Springs scores a 0.87 while an area in La Contenta scores 0.63. Integrated street networks also contribute to increased walkability, or the ability for pedestrians to easily get from one place to another, assuming there are pathways on which to walk.

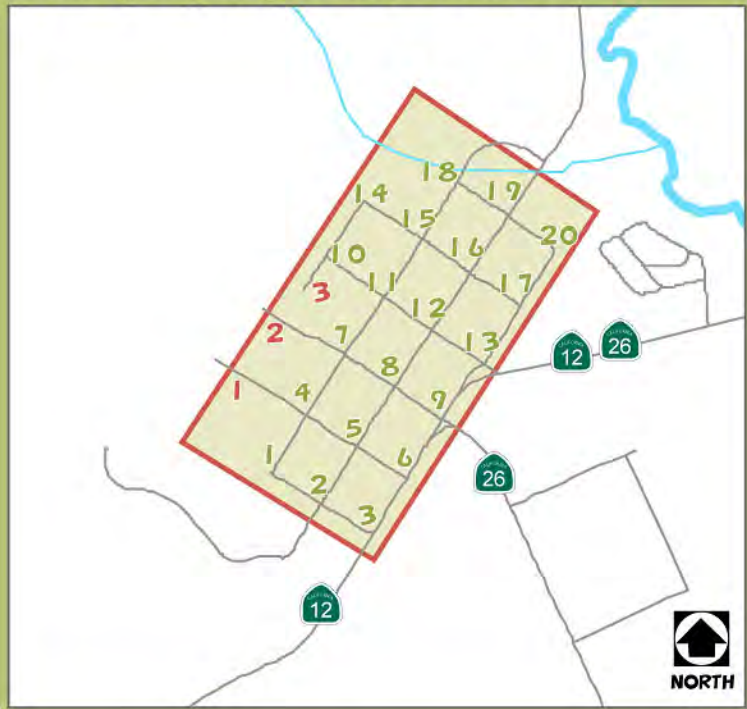
Studies have also shown that high intersection densities (i.e., the number of street or trail intersections per square mile) contribute to traffic safety. As intersection densities increase, drivers tend to decrease their speed, resulting in fewer auto accident fatalities, even if the total number of accidents does not decline. Using the same areas shown in Figure 5.2, Valley Springs' street grid has 20 intersections per 0.1 square miles, or 200 per square mile. La Contenta's subdivision network has 120 intersections per square mile.

As illustrated with the example of the historic street grid, increasing connectivity and intersection density does not run contrary to protecting the area's character. In fact, it would reinforce the historic character of the area while improving walkability and dispersing traffic to reduce congestion on SR 26 and other main roads.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development issues reflect resident's concerns that few employment opportunities exist within the planning area aside from local retail and services, and that local shopping choices are limited. Demographic data from the County General Plan Baseline Report suggest that high school graduates are leaving the county to find

Valley Springs Town Center



Connectivity Index

$$\frac{(20 \text{ intersections})}{(20 \text{ intersections} + 3 \text{ deadends})} = 0.87$$

La Contenta



Connectivity Index

$$\frac{(12 \text{ intersections})}{(12 \text{ intersections} + 7 \text{ deadends})} = 0.63$$

LEGEND

- # Intersections
- # Deadends (e.g., cul de sacs)
- 0.1 square miles
- Roads
- Rivers

D:\GIS\10030\03_044_725\10

Source: AECOM 2010

Connectivity Index

Figure 5.2

work, and college graduates are not coming back, possibly due to a lack of suitable jobs. Residents would also like to attract continuing education facilities to Valley Springs to provide continuing workforce training for area youth and adults.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Numerous public comments described a lack of local jobs for Valley Springs' youth and the area's inability to attract young workers. The balance between jobs and housing (the jobs/housing balance) is used to describe whether an area is a net importer or exporter of workers or if the two markets are in balance. Although specific data for the planning area is unavailable, residents comment on a jobs/housing imbalance in Valley Springs that results in residents driving to work in other communities (Calaveras County is a net exporter of workers). During these commutes, residents likely spend money outside of Valley Springs on daily services, such as coffee, food, and gas. The lack of housing that is affordable to young professionals (based on countywide data) presents a constraint to increasing the area's workforce, which may deter potential employers from locating in Valley Springs (see Housing issues below for further discussion).

Some residents would like a commercial shopping center in Valley Springs to compete with Martell in Amador County. This would help to keep additional tax dollars in the local community and provide a source of employment and increase shopping options. Other residents suggested this type of development would be better suited to the Toyon Industrial Area east of the planning area on SR 12/SR 26.

The County General Plan Baseline Report identifies the tourism industry as a growth sector within the county, specifically because of its access to national forests; State parks; lakes, rivers, and reservoirs; and a growing wine industry. The planning area is well-suited to take advantage of this projected growth given its proximity to New Hogan Reservoir, Pardee Reservoir, and Camanche Reservoir. However, the lack of overnight accommodations (e.g., hotels, motels) could limit its ability to increase tourism-related revenues.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The planning area lacks continuing education facilities (e.g., community college, vocational school, four-year college) to train residents, both youth and adults, who cannot go further afield in search of such opportunities. During the planning process residents commented on attempts to attract a San Joaquin Delta Community College (SJDCC) satellite campus to the area. The location for such a facility has not been finalized yet, but the opportunity is viewed favorably by many area residents. A unique curriculum has also been presented to the SJDCC Board for consideration that would allow the region to offer classes to residents and visitors in topics such as Native American Studies, Water/Wastewater Management, Watershed Management, and Forest Sustainability classes.

The County General Plan Baseline Report includes industry and occupation projections from the California Employment Development Department, which could suggest education and career development programs that would be useful to target the growth industries. The fastest job growth in the region is expected to occur in education and health services, leisure and hospitality (mostly food services and accommodations), and construction.

ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Many residents commented that existing retail options do not fully meet the community's needs. Some fear losing tax dollars to the Martell retail center in Amador County. Others want to limit chain stores and

restaurants to support the expansion of existing local businesses and the development of new ones. Lack of diversity of retail and other businesses could be the result of several factors: the “leakage” of sales outside the area due to the large number of workers commuting elsewhere to jobs, the local population base and disposable income among local residents to attract a wider diversity of businesses, the proximity of the Martell commercial center to Valley Springs, and/or other reasons.

HOUSING

Housing and economic development issues are interconnected and have regional implications. Framing these issues in the context of the planning area can provide opportunities to address residents’ concerns, but regional housing and employment realities must also be considered.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Based on countywide data, the average home price in the county is higher than what a family earning the median income in the county can afford. This limits home ownership opportunities for the local workforce including young professionals, older residents living on fixed incomes that wish to age in place, young adults that grew up in the area and wish to buy their own homes, and lower-wage earners.

As described in the Economic Development issues, the lack of housing that is affordable to the working-age population can be a constraint to attracting employers. Growth in the tourism industry related to the area’s reservoirs and recreation activities would attract service sector jobs that typically do not pay very well. Without providing a diverse and affordable housing stock, these jobs would be filled by seasonal workers or commuters from outlying communities instead of benefiting the local community.

The percentage of second homes in the region also affects the availability of year round housing for the local workforce. High percentages of second homes in an area reduce workforce housing options, and also tend to increase housing costs.

HOUSING DIVERSITY

The majority of new home construction in the area has been single-family detached housing. The lack of housing variety (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, and apartments) also limits homeownership and rental opportunities. A diverse housing stock provides opportunities for home ownership throughout the various stages of life. Rental housing, including apartments, allows both young adults who may not be able to purchase a home and seniors who may not be able to manage a home a housing choice in the community. Housing diversity allows young residents to purchase their own homes when smaller, more affordable houses are present. It also helps older residents to age in place, allowing them to downsize to smaller homes that require less upkeep. If the region cannot attract young workers to replace older, retiring employees it could lead to larger economic issues, such as retaining businesses and jobs.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Some residents may have trouble maintaining their homes due to the age of the buildings, which can be more costly to upkeep than newer homes. There is a concentration of older homes in Valley Springs’ historic street grid. Flooding along Cosgrove Creek poses maintenance concerns for the residents of adjacent mobile homes.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Many new residents in the area relocated from more urban communities and are unaccustomed to the rural level of public services provided in Valley Springs. In addition, the density and lot sizes of most residential areas currently on public water and/or sewer has proved challenging in providing cost-effective service. Access to recreation opportunities and services for older residents are also concerns.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

A majority of developed properties in the planning area have access to public water and sewer. However, a majority of the undeveloped properties in the planning area lack access to these services, with the exception of those served by CCWD's AD 604. Development in areas without water and sewer service would potentially rely on groundwater wells and septic systems, unless service pipelines were extended. Most undeveloped properties are within the VSPUD SOI, although there are no near-term plans for service extensions. Poor soil conditions and steep topography will likely necessitate larger lot sizes to avoid risks of water contamination when using septic systems. New State laws will also limit the area's ability to continue using septic systems as opposed to extending infrastructure to new subdivisions.

Increasing sewer service within areas served by VSPUD would require the construction of a new treatment plant. During a focus group meeting, representatives from VSPUD stated they have the capacity for an additional 80 sewer connections. However, 60 connections have already been pre-sold to a residential development in Valley Springs.

INFRASTRUCTURE EXTENSIONS

A representative from CCWD stated that developing the County's surface water infrastructure would alleviate problems associated with groundwater pumping, such as lower water tables that require deeper wells and disappearing natural springs from water drawdown. Extending water and sewer lines into undeveloped areas could induce additional unplanned growth without Community Plan policies that direct how, where, and the amount of development that should occur.

ACCESS TO RECREATION

Residents commented on the area's poor access to, and availability of, recreation opportunities, even with its proximity to New Hogan Reservoir. There is no local trails system connecting to the trails around New Hogan Reservoir, and few bike lanes for safe cycling on the area's windy roads. The trail system developed by the Army Corps of Engineers around New Hogan Lake was regularly identified as a favorite community benefit. Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District was also mentioned as a community benefit. It is a 32-acre park that includes a community meeting hall, two ball fields, a small playground, picnic areas, and trails. A new community meeting hall is partially funded and construction is moving forward.



Residents want better access to recreation opportunities, like hiking trails, bike lanes, and sports parks.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE/SENIOR SERVICES

The Economic Analysis included in the *General Plan Update Baseline Report* states that the percentage of county residents aged 65 and over is higher than that for the northern San Joaquin Valley. A growing senior population in the area will require additional local medical services and transportation options. Some residents noted that it

is difficult for seniors that cannot drive to arrange for transportation to doctor's appointments. The lack of sidewalks and trails limits use of electric scooters and wheelchairs in the community. There is also no senior center for structured activities and gathering or meeting space.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Many residents highly value the area's natural resources, particularly expansive views, oak woodland habitat, and other features that reinforce the rural character. Development patterns in recent decades threaten to erode these important qualities.

OPEN RURAL VISTAS

Residents strongly identify with the unobstructed views of foothills and range land in the planning area. The commercial corridor between SR 12 and Vista del Lago Drive includes some of the planning area's prime open views, which contribute to its rural character. For example, there is an expansive view to the east across the Cosgrove Creek floodplain south of Hogan Dam Road. Strip commercial development along SR 26 has begun to disrupt these rural vistas, and continued strip-mall style development will drastically alter open views.

OAK TREE REMOVAL

Residents commented on the importance of oak woodlands to Valley Springs' natural environment and character. The County's oak tree ordinance is currently voluntary. As a result, residential and commercial developments often remove trees during site preparation. The loss of established oak and other trees affects the visual character of the area and the health of natural ecosystems.

RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

Rivers and creeks are important physical features in the area and require careful planning to protect their ecological habitats and biological functions. Development within riparian areas disrupts wildlife corridors, affects water quality and runoff volumes, and affects the health of freshwater fish ecosystems (see Water issues for discussion on flooding). The County has not developed a riparian buffer ordinance to protect these sensitive areas from further development.

NIGHT SKY

Dark night skies allow rural residents to see stars clearly at night, free from light pollution and glare typically found in more urban areas. However, several sources of light pollution are common in rural communities. High mast lighting is typically used in parking lots to address safety and security concerns, but can also contribute to light pollution when improperly designed or when left on all night. The Mar Val shopping center has high-mast lighting in its parking lot. Illuminated business signs are another source of light pollution in rural communities. For example, gas station and fast food outlet signs are often illuminated, and can be mounted on high posts to increase visibility from a distance. Residential users can also affect the night sky. Excessive outdoor lighting from residences can produce glare that affects neighboring properties. Development on hillsides can detract from the rural character if interior lighting produces a lantern effect that illuminates the house to the surrounding area.



Commercial signs and masonry block walls built with limited setbacks block views of the surrounding foothills.

HYDROLOGY

Development has already occurred in Valley Springs' flood plains, placing property and safety at risk during storm events. Future development in flood plains can affect open views and natural habitats that residents value for their contribution to the area's rural character.

FLOODING

Properties adjacent to Cosgrove Creek are subject to seasonal flooding. Parts of the planning area are also within the 100-year flood plain as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Development has already occurred within the floodplain, and some levees have been constructed to protect properties (e.g., levees on Cosgrove Creek adjacent to the Gold Creek subdivision). Additional development in the flood plain increases the potential for property damage and injury during a flood event. Flood plain development also affects open viewsheds along SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road as these areas tend to be flat plains providing expansive views to the surrounding foothills.

In June 2010, FEMA notified the County Board of Supervisors that the updated flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) for Calaveras County were complete. The FIRMs identify properties that will be required to purchase flood insurance (if property owners have a federally-backed mortgage) once the new maps become effective on December 17, 2010.

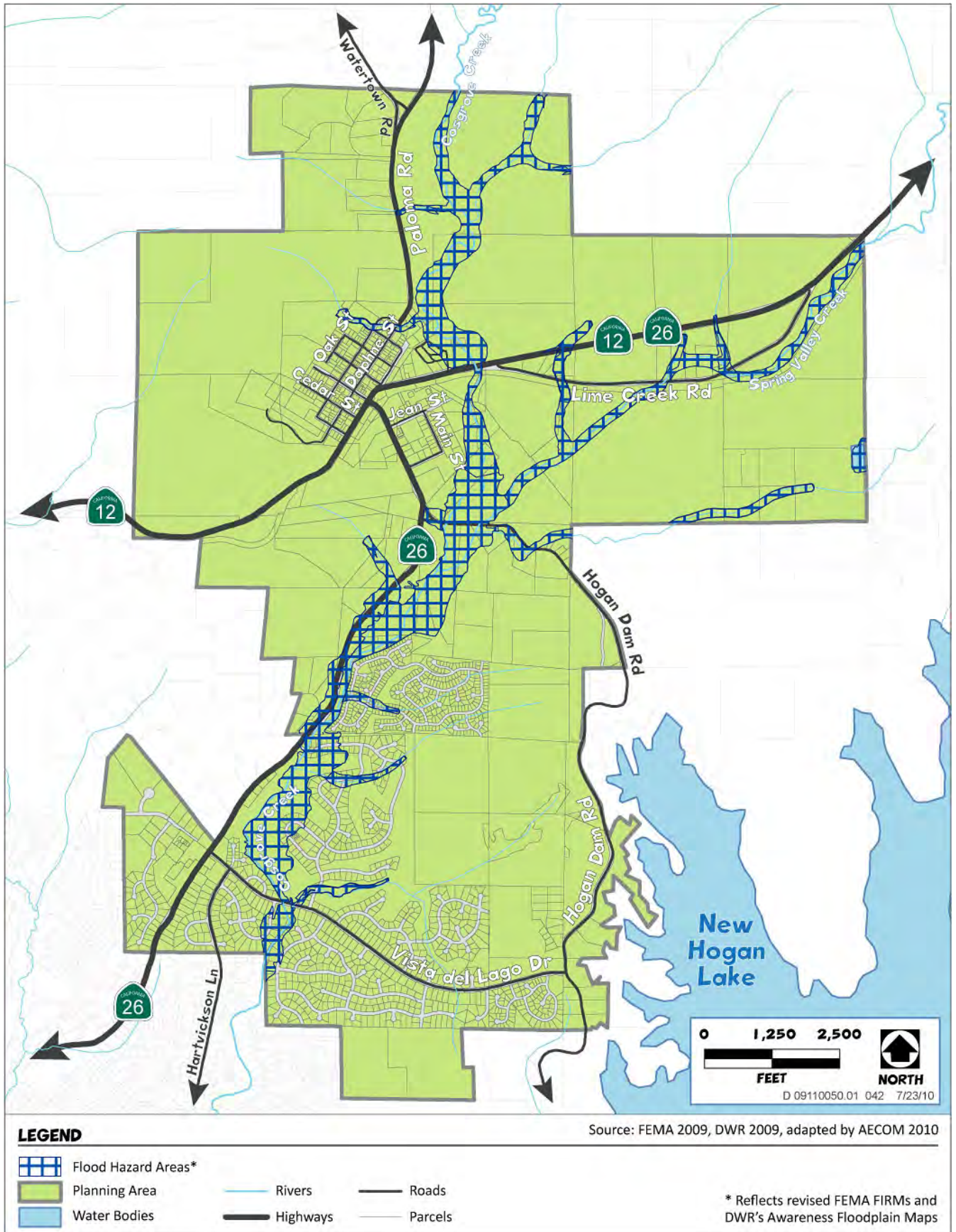
The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) established the Awareness Floodplain Mapping project to identify flood hazard areas not mapped as part of the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program. The DWR maps are not regulatory maps as with the FEMA FIRMs. Figure 5.3 shows the updated flood plains in the planning area according to the updated FIRMs and DWR awareness floodplain maps.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Valley Springs' history dates back to the late 1800's and remnants of that past are still visible today, such as the train depot, historic homes and the gridded street blocks. Recent development trends have shifted the focus from the historic settlement to areas spread along SR 12 and SR 26. Retaining a sense of Valley Springs' history and preserving its unique character is valued by many residents yet is a challenge given changes in the area over the past several decades.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Several properties along SR 12 in Valley Springs may be old enough to be considered historic resources under state and federal definitions, including the train depot and the former Pliker's Market building at the intersection of SR 12 and Cedar Street. The Late House (also known as the White House) at the western entrance to Valley Springs on SR 12 was built in 1862. There are also historic homes along the gridded streets in the Town Center. Development of the Mar Val shopping center shifted the commercial focus away from the historic commercial area between Pine Street and Chestnut Street.



Flood Hazard Areas

Figure 5.3

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Rural qualities that attracted many residents to Valley Springs can also be a source of health and safety concerns. Access to healthy food options can be a challenge for small communities. The rolling hills and native grasses promote the spread of wildfires and limited in-roads can make fighting them more difficult. Seasonal population increases from recreationalists can strain limited Sheriff's Department resources. Incomplete pedestrian networks can also cause problems for non-motorized circulation.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Most of the planning area lacks sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian improvements. Residents raised concerns about the safety of mobility for school children and residents in wheelchairs or electric scooters given current conditions. The presence of semi-trucks passing through the Town Center contributes to safety concerns. Some residents commented that providing sidewalks would detract from the rural character. Others said they did not want to pay for sidewalks located outside of their own neighborhood.

GANGS/CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Residents are concerned with local gang and criminal activity that originates in Stockton. At a focus group meeting, the Sheriff's Department noted their lack of resources to be proactive in addressing the issue. Valley Springs is the busiest beat for the department, especially in the summer months when recreationalists increase and alcohol-related accidents become more common. Speeding and traffic accidents are a problem on SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road, but less so on SR 12. Gang shootings around Valley Springs have been a problem for the Sheriff's Department, with three incidents of officers involved in shootings in the previous year. The Valley Springs Sheriff sub-station is closed until further notice. The closest operating stations are the Camanche South Shore substation in Burson (approximately 15 minutes away) and the Mokelumne Hill substation (approximately 20 minutes away).

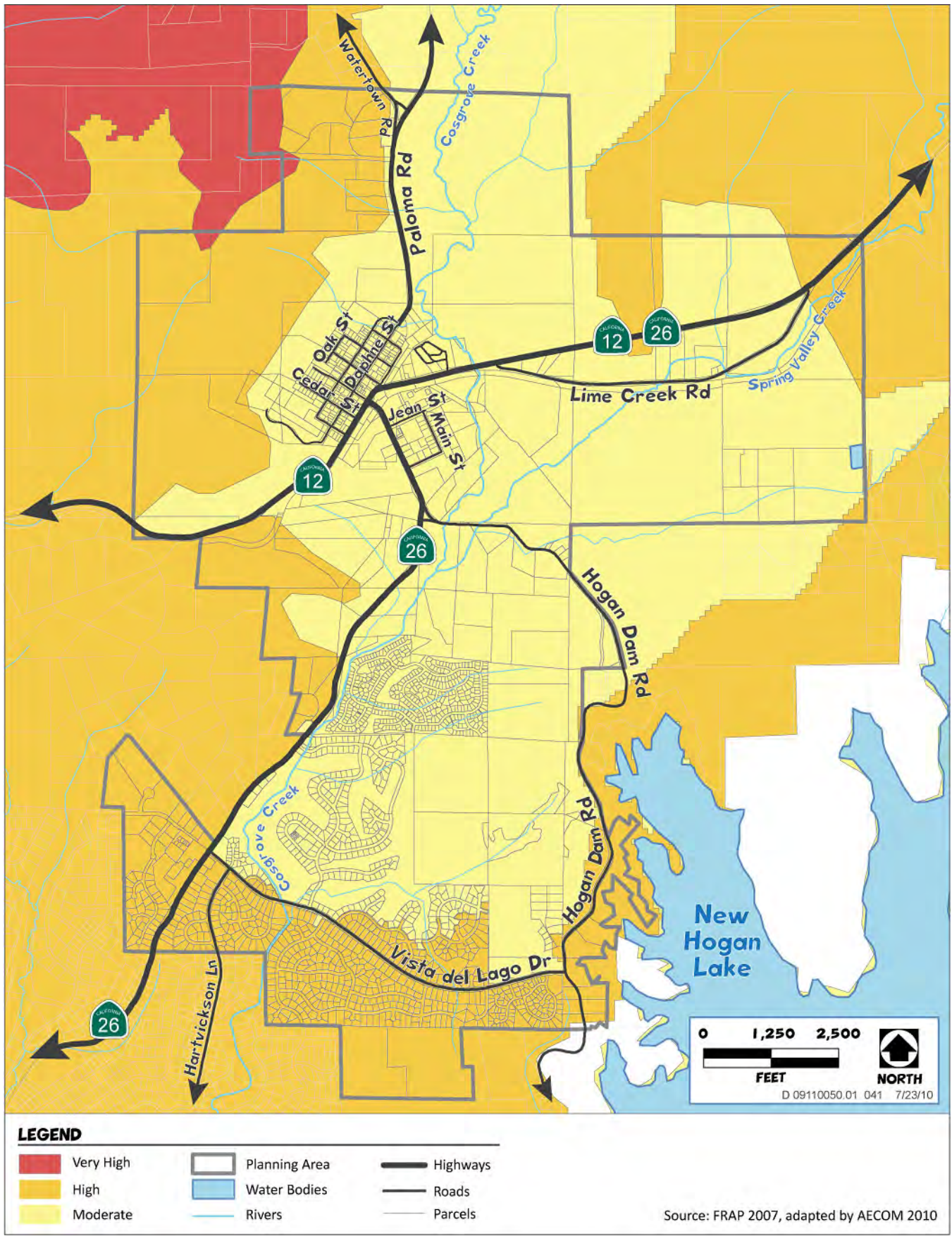
FIRE HAZARDS

The planning area has a history of wildfires. Parts of the planning area are designated as high fire hazard areas on CalFire maps, and two small areas are designated as very high hazard areas (see Figure 5.4). Limited fire and emergency medical services due to the rural nature of the planning area affect response times during wildfires. Circulation issues described above, such as frequent congestion at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection, can also increase response times. Limited access to public water infrastructure (for fire hydrants) is another concern.

Specific fire service response issues were discussed with representatives from the Foothill Fire District and CalFire during the planning process. Two volunteer fire departments operate in the area: the Foothill Fire District and the Jenny Lind Fire District. The Foothill Fire District is the least funded and third busiest of the County's ten fire districts. The majority (60-75%) of emergency response calls in the district are for medical assistance, many of which come from the area's population of seniors and retirees. CalFire is also a first responder for fires and



Wildfires pose a threat in the planning area, and constraints to providing wildfire education and emergency access can worsen their danger.



Fire Hazard Areas

Figure 5.4

other emergency calls, and is the primary wildland fire agency for the area. CalFire manages dispatching for Calaveras County, and has a fire station on Hogan Dam Road that is open five months of the year during fire season. CalFire representatives also stated concerns for wildfire education and enforcing compliance with defensible space requirements (i.e., providing up to 100-foot clear zones around rural structures). Due to budget cuts, CalFire lost funding for fire prevention aid and outreach programs that would provide education to homeowners about how to protect their property from wildfires. Of particular concern is the ability of property owners who do not live year round in Valley Springs to manage fuel loads on their properties, which can feed wildfires.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

Some residents commented on the area's lack of healthy food options. The Mar Val grocery store is located in the shopping center between SR 12 and SR 26 and is the primary food provider in the planning area. There are fast food chain restaurants and locally-owned restaurants in the Mar Val shopping center and in the commercial plazas at the intersection of SR 26 and Vista del Lago Drive. A farmers' market has recently opened at one of the commercial plazas. Calaveras County has two certified farmers' markets where residents can buy fresh, seasonal produce and other food items from farmers: one in Arnold on Sundays and one in Angels Camp on Fridays.

NOISE

Increased traffic noise on SR 12 and SR 26 is a source of frustration for some residents in the planning area.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC

Highway traffic is a source of noise in the planning area. Semi-trucks and groups of motorcyclists pass through Valley Springs on SR 12 and SR 26 near residential neighborhoods, and recreationalists towing boats and campers pass through on their way to area reservoirs during summer months. Emergency vehicles with sirens use the highways year-round. The topography leading into Valley Springs from the east and west on SR 12 can cause semi-trucks to use engine brakes (i.e., Jake brakes) that produce loud noises for periods of five to ten seconds. Braking at the four-way stop in Valley Springs may result in loud brake squeaks on semi-trucks, as well as loud engine noises associated with deceleration and acceleration from complete stops.

6 PROPOSED LAND USE AND CIRCULATION PLAN



6

This chapter introduces the Community Plan land use and circulation diagrams. These diagrams express objectives identified by residents to protect rural character, address circulation issues, support additional community growth, and attract employment opportunities. The planning area is first described in terms of land use districts, which are collections of similar land uses designations. These use districts provide a broad overview of land uses in the planning area, and are referenced in *Chapter 7 (Policies)* so that land use and other policies can be applied to specific areas of the Community Plan. The land use designations that make up the use districts are then presented and described in terms of their intent and maximum densities and intensities. The circulation plan describes the alignment of a proposed alternate route for SR 12, as well as key intersection improvement options that could be used within the planning area and to the south along SR 26. A nonmotorized circulation plan is also provided to show the approximate location for proposed hiking trails and bike paths. The proposed community character is described and illustrated with planning and design approaches that promote development consistent with Valley Springs’ rural qualities.

USE DISTRICTS

The proposed distribution of land uses within the Community Plan is broadly described through four use districts, including Working Landscapes, Community Residential, Commercial, and Town Center (see Figure 6.1). The use districts are composed of similar land use designations that are described later in this chapter, and are organized so that areas of higher development intensities are at the center of the planning area and transition to lower intensity uses further away from the center. Some land use designations occur in more than one use district, including Parks and Recreation and Public Services. The two hazard overlay areas occur in all use districts.

The presentation of the use districts describes the community character intent of each. *Chapter 7 Policies* refers to these use districts when applying Community Plan policies to specific areas to reinforce the intended community character.

WORKING LANDSCAPES

The Working Landscapes district includes ranching, Williamson Act contracts, undeveloped areas, and rural residential property around the planning area periphery that will primarily be used for grazing activity with some very-low density residential uses (i.e., 5-80 acre lot sizes). This use district also includes an area that would allow residential uses on 1-5 acre lots, depending on the provision of public water, within the Residential – Rural land use designation.

This use district will provide a sense of natural openness that residents and visitors value. Directing future growth towards the community center will help to protect the open views seen throughout the planning area and along important entrance corridors (e.g., SR 12 and SR 26). This district also establishes a sense of arrival from the east and west for travelers on SR 12. The sharp contrast between rural landscapes and the Town Center will let visitors know when they have arrived in Valley Springs. The Working Landscapes use district includes the following land use designations:

- Agricultural Lands
- Residential- Agriculture
- Residential – Rural

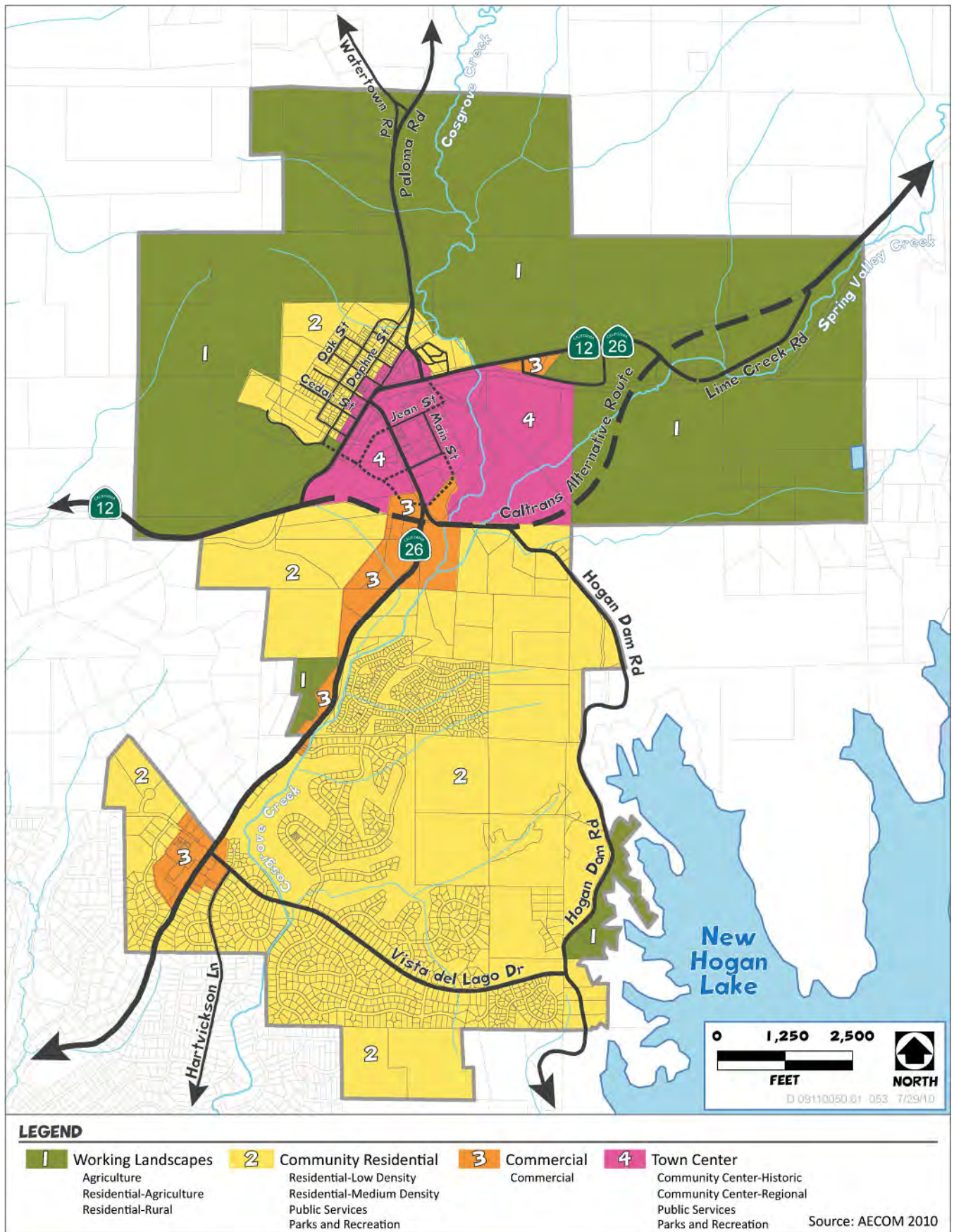
COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL

The Community Residential district is for residential developments that can be served by VSPUD or CCWD water and sewer infrastructure. Single-family residential development characterizes the district, and includes an elementary school, small library, park, community hall, and some areas of multi-family housing. The existing La Contenta, Gold Creek, and historic Valley Springs neighborhoods typify this use district. New growth in this district will be served by existing infrastructure (e.g., CCWD’s AD 604) and will be developed to be compatible with the area’s rural character. The Community Residential use district includes the following designations:

- Residential- Low Density
- Residential- Medium Density



Dominant natural features can help establish a sense of arrival to rural communities.



Use Districts

Figure 6.1

-
- Public Services
 - Parks and Recreation

COMMERCIAL

The Commercial district includes the SR 26 commercial corridor between Hogan Dam Road and Vista del Lago Drive. It also includes the commercial uses between SR 12 and Lime Creek Road. These areas should offer neighborhood-oriented goods and services to complement the retail and employment options provided in the Town Center use district. These areas should also cluster commercial developments where possible to provide windows of open views along the commercial corridor. The Commercial use district includes the following designations:

- Commercial

TOWN CENTER

The Town Center use district represents the commercial and civic heart of the planning area. It is envisioned to be a compact, walkable, and mixed-use district to complement the historic Valley Springs settlement. The Town Center land use designations allow for retail, offices, new service commercial and light industrial businesses, residences, and public services designed in a rural context. The Mar Val shopping center serves in part as the current Town Center and meets many of the residents' day-to-day commercial needs, but currently lacks facilities commonly associated with a community center, such as a community center building with meeting rooms, plaza and park space, a library, and other civic institutions, some of which are currently located in the historic Valley Springs settlement. The Town Center land use framework is intended to be flexible to allow for the development of neighborhood-oriented community activities, with the possibility to include larger regional attractions, such as a community college satellite campus or employment centers. The Town Center is envisioned to be accessible on foot from residential neighborhoods with a mixture of townhomes, small-lot single family houses, and garden-style apartments. Employment generating uses should be encouraged along the Town Center's busier streets to support new businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, retailers, and neighborhood services. New roads within the Town Center should be designed to extend Valley Springs' street grid for increased connectivity options that support walking and biking, in addition to automobiles. Parking should be located on-street, behind buildings, or in alleys to enhance the public realm for pedestrians. The Town Center use district includes the following designations:

- Community Center- Historic
- Community Center- Regional
- Public Services
- Parks and Recreation

LAND USE DIAGRAM

The proposed land use diagram shown in Figure 6.2 was created based on the extensive public input described in *Chapter 3 Public Participation*. The primary objectives identified by residents were to protect rural character, land use diagram addresses these objectives using four planning concepts:

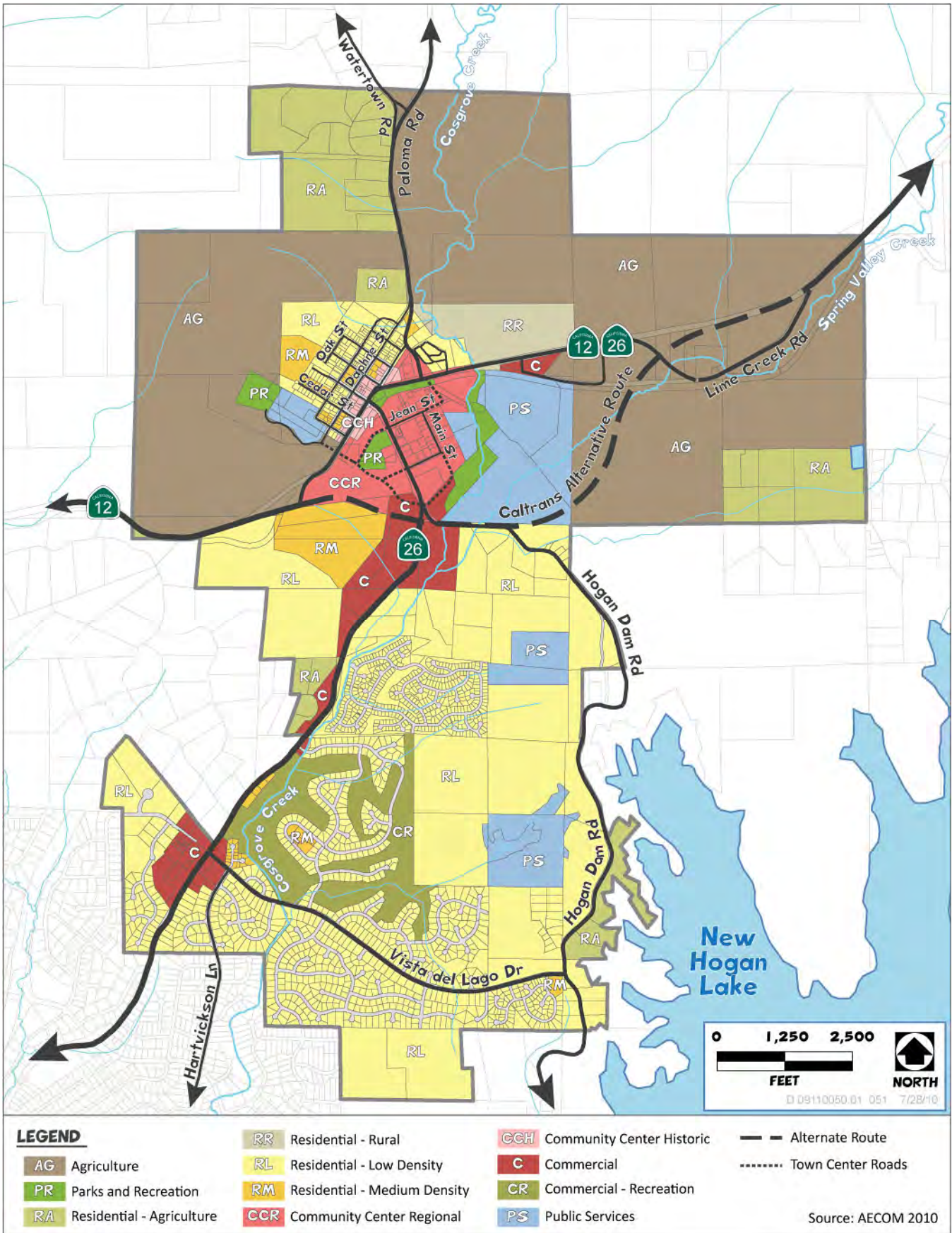
- Establishes a mixed-use Town Center to support additional commercial growth,
- Protects undeveloped land without existing infrastructure to maintain rural character,
- Directs growth to areas with existing infrastructure, and
- Preserves existing commercial uses to attract employment opportunities.

The land use diagram is intended to respond to community input that favored the establishment of a mixed-use community core that offers more shopping, an improved ability to move through the Town Center, and protection of the historic Valley Springs' settlement and street grid system. Agricultural and residential agricultural areas near the core are a reflection of the many comments received detailing the initial attraction to the area – its rural character, expansive views of hillsides, and the sense of arrival along SR 12. New residential growth is encouraged in areas served by existing sewer and water infrastructure to protect water quality (septic systems) and groundwater levels (private wells), as well as to maximize taxpayer investments (i.e., CCWD's AD 604 area, VSPUD infrastructure). Commercial areas are located to serve existing and future neighborhoods and support commercial and employment uses that might locate within the Town Center. Key intersection improvement options and nonmotorized circulation are discussed later in this chapter to address residents' concerns about circulation issues in the planning area.

LAND USE DESIGNATION DESCRIPTIONS

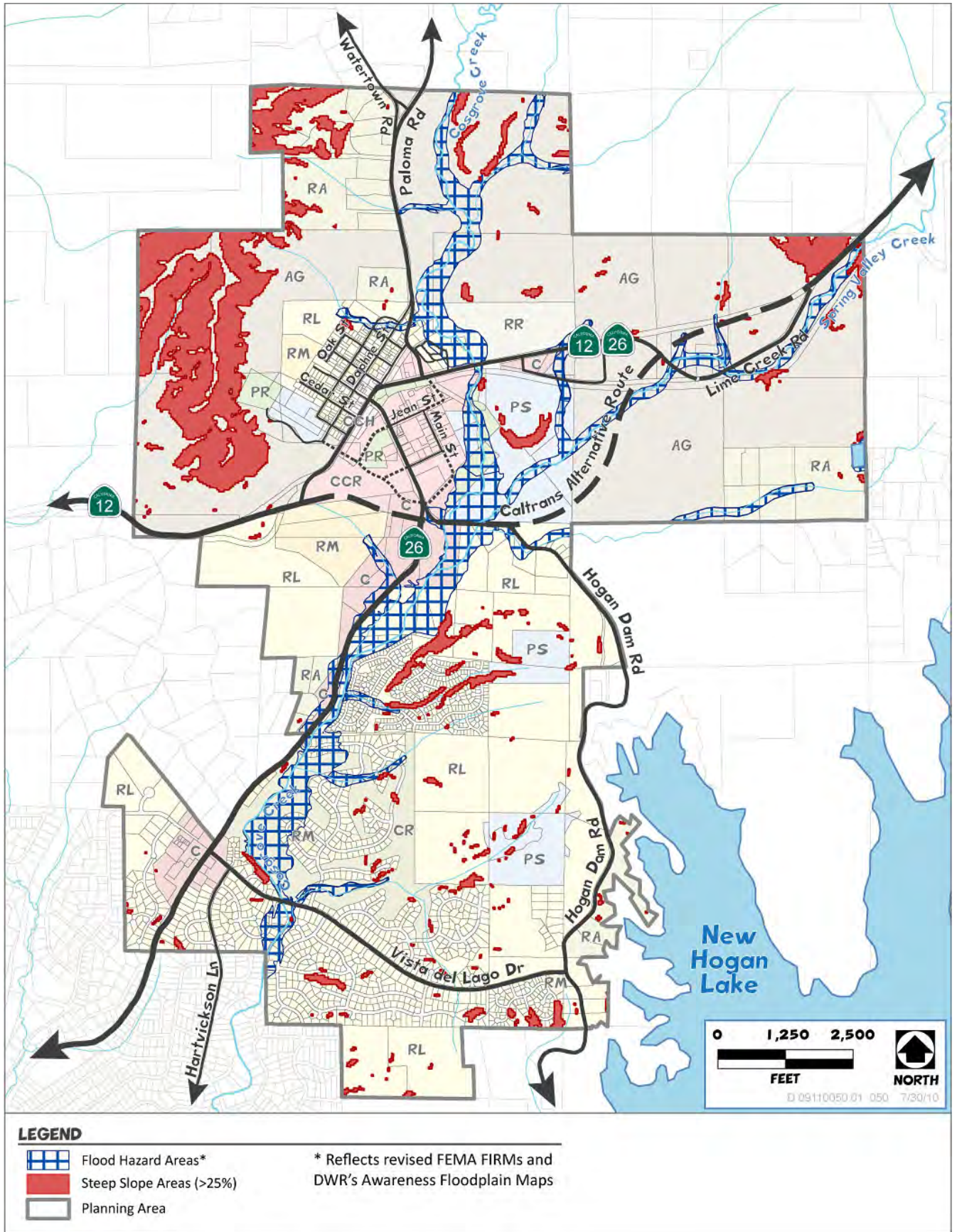
The Community Plan uses 11 land use designations, which are consistent with the County's General Plan land use designations, to implement the previously identified planning concepts. The mixed-use designations (e.g., Community Center Regional and Community Center Historic) have been modified from those included in the County General Plan to address conditions unique to Valley Springs and support the flexibility of development described in the Town Center use district. The County General Plan provides broad ranges for the allowed density and intensity in these mixed-use designations, which have been more narrowly defined for their use in this Community Plan. The intent and allowed uses for the mixed-use designations have also been expanded here to more appropriately address Valley Springs' community values and respond to public feedback regarding future growth.

In addition to the land use designations, the Community Plan identifies two hazard overlay areas with additional development restrictions to protect sensitive resources: Steep Slope Areas and Flood Hazard Areas are shown on Figure 6.3. The land use designations and hazard overlays are presented in Table 6.1.



Land Use and Circulation Diagram

Figure 6.2



Hazard Overlay Areas

Figure 6.3

TABLE 6.1 LAND USE DEVELOPMENT TABLE

LAND USE DESIGNATION	MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE	DENSITY OR INTENSITY	ACRES
Natural Resource Lands			
Agriculture (AG)	40 - 80 acres	1 unit/parcel	1,236
<p>The purpose of this designation is to preserve and protect lands capable of and generally used for the production of food, fiber, and plant materials.</p> <p>Allowed uses include all land-dependent and non-land-dependent agricultural production and related activities.</p>			
Parks and Recreation (PR)	-	-	37
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide land for recreational uses. It applies to publicly-owned parks and recreation facilities (e.g., city, County, and State parks facilities). It also applies to privately-owned facilities (e.g., golf courses, resorts, community or homeowner association-operated facilities).</p> <p>Allowed uses include public, quasi-public, and private recreation uses, either exclusively or in combination with compatible combination or ancillary uses, and residential, resort, and commercial recreation uses. The construction of new residences or general commercial uses is not allowed.</p>			
Residential			
Residential – Agriculture (RA)	5 - 40 acres	1 unit/parcel	275
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for rural residential and smaller-scale agricultural uses including limited animal husbandry, and family garden, orchard, or supplementary agricultural income. Applies to agricultural lands that have been subdivided into 5 to 40 acre lots. Each lot allows for one single family home.</p>			
Residential – Rural (RR)	1 - 5 acres (varies by services available)	1 unit/parcel	55
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for rural residential uses with a range of lot sizes from one to five acres. One-acre minimum lot sizes are allowed in areas served by public water. Five-acre minimum lot sizes are required in areas without public water service.</p> <p>Allowed uses include detached single family homes and accessory structures, with keeping a limited number of livestock.</p>			
Residential – Low Density (RL)	-	1.0 - 6.0 units/acre	1,144
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for single family residential development in urban areas served by public water and sewer systems.</p> <p>Allowed uses include detached single family homes and accessory structures.</p>			
Residential – Medium Density (RM)	-	7.0 - 12.0 units/acre	79
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for single family or multi-family uses in urban areas with public water and sewer service.</p> <p>Allowed uses include detached single family homes, duplexes, mobile home parks, and multi-family units such as condominiums, townhouses, and apartments.</p>			

**TABLE 6.1
LAND USE DEVELOPMENT TABLE**

LAND USE DESIGNATION	MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE	DENSITY OR INTENSITY	ACRES
Mixed Use			
Community Center Regional (CCR)	-	8.0 - 20.0 units/acre 0.3 - 1.0 FAR	93
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for larger-scale service centers with combinations of residences, commercial, employment, and public service uses serving countywide or regional needs. Development should contribute to a walkable environment that is safe and inviting to pedestrians by incorporating generous landscaping and streetscape elements, such as benches, lighting, and native plant species. Wide sidewalks should be considered to allow for potential outdoor seating for restaurants and coffee shops/bakeries. Residential uses should incorporate shared open space, such as pocket parks or landscaped alleys. Parking should be located behind buildings or in alleys to enhance the public realm. Buildings should typically be one- to two-stories high, in keeping with the historic character of Valley Springs. Taller buildings could be allowed if they provide substantial public benefits.</p> <p>Allowed uses include retail stores and services, offices, light industrial, public institutions, such as community centers, libraries, and higher education facilities, and residential uses, including small-lot single family detached houses, townhomes, and garden-style apartments (typically two-stories with generous landscaping). Up to 50% of total square footage constructed in the CCR designation may be developed for residential purposes.</p>			
Community Center Historic (CCH)	-	8.0 - 20.0 units/acre 0.3 - 2.0 FAR	10
<p>The purpose of this designation is to preserve and protect the historic commercial core of Valley Springs and support development that could include a pedestrian-oriented district with vertically mixed uses of residences and businesses. New construction should be compatible with the character of historic foothill community commercial districts, which have minimal building setbacks, public sidewalks or arcades, windows and doors overlooking the street, and parking located on-street or behind buildings.</p> <p>Allowed uses include retail, stores, offices, public buildings, such as libraries and post offices, and housing options that could include apartments over ground floor retail or office space.</p>			
Commercial/Industrial			
Commercial (C)	-	0.1 - 1.0 FAR	108
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for a broad range of general and heavy commercial uses found in neighborhood, community, thoroughfare, and highway settings.</p> <p>Allowable uses include retail, stores, offices, services, institutional, public, semi-public, and religious uses.</p>			
Commercial – Recreation (CR)	-	0.1 - 1.0 FAR	129
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for a range of privately-operated recreational uses, including marinas and similar facilities, campgrounds, golf courses, and outdoor sports and athletics complexes.</p>			
Other			
Public Services (PS)	-	0.1 - 1.0 FAR	206
<p>The purpose of this designation is to provide for public, quasi-public, or public utility sites such as schools, community centers, libraries, airports, cemeteries, fire stations, sewer and water treatment facilities, and power substations.</p>			

**TABLE 6.1
LAND USE DEVELOPMENT TABLE**

LAND USE DESIGNATION	MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE	DENSITY OR INTENSITY	ACRES
Overlay Designations			
Flood Hazard Areas	-	0 units/acre 0.0 FAR	326
<p>The purpose of this overlay is to protect property and public safety from flooding events. Flood hazard areas are defined in the Community Plan according to the current FEMA flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) and the California Department of Water Resources Floodplain Awareness Maps.</p> <p>Allowed uses include recreation uses, such as unpaved sports fields and multi-use trails, and agricultural uses, such as livestock grazing. New construction is prohibited.</p>			
Steep Slope Areas	-	0 units/acre 0.0 FAR	273
<p>The purpose of this overlay is to protect the public from health, safety, and environmental hazards associated with development on steep slopes, including landslides and increased erosion, fire hazard risks, emergency services access problems, and septic system failure. Steep slope areas are defined in the Community Plan as areas of greater than 25 percent slope.</p> <p>Allowed uses include recreation uses, such as unpaved sports fields and multi-use trails, and agricultural uses, such as livestock grazing. New construction is prohibited.</p>			

CIRCULATION PLAN

The circulation plan identifies a potential solution to address current congestion at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection. The plan also presents options for intersection control at key intersections identified within the planning area to address the safety concerns discussed at community workshops and meetings. Finally, the circulation plan presents proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements to support nonmotorized circulation within the planning area.

The circulation plan is intended to serve as a template for future development. It identifies proposed future improvements so that as development applications are reviewed the community’s long-term circulation needs can be considered and accommodated. For example, future development around a proposed key intersection should consider traffic improvements that may take place and incorporate sufficient setbacks to accommodate future right of way acquisition for the improvements. The plan generally describes where future improvements and roadway alignments should occur and what type of intersection improvements should be considered. However, further detailed studies will be required before proposed improvements can be implemented.

SR 12/SR 26 ALTERNATE ROUTE

As a long term fix to the congestion at the SR 12/SR 26 intersection, the Community Plan proposes an alternate alignment of SR 12 to eliminate the need for regional traffic (i.e., those not intending to stop in Valley Springs) to pass through the heart of Valley Springs. A 2003 study by Caltrans looked at a SR 12/SR 26 “bypass”, but concern

expressed by the community discouraged further study of SR 12 bypass roadway alignments. Some residents were concerned that a bypass would remove the Town Center from travelers' view, allowing them to completely avoid Valley Springs and its businesses. To address these community concerns, other circulation options were explored as part of the Community Plan process. Instead of a bypass, the Community Plan proposes the SR 12/SR 26 alternate route, which would locate the new roadway closer to the Valley Springs Town Center and its local businesses. The alternate route maintains Valley Springs' visibility with drivers, while still addressing residents' circulation concerns.

Planning for the SR 12/SR 26 intersection improvement is a long-term process. The preferred improvement at this intersection is now under serious study by the County of Calaveras and Caltrans. The current study is evaluating three separate alternatives including a traditional signalized intersection; a roundabout; and the addition of a free right turn lane (SR 26 heading east) and left turn pocket addition (SR 12/SR 26 turning west on SR 26). In addition to intersection improvements, a local road alternate route is under consideration that will allow those heading east and returning west to avoid the current four way stop.

Although a preferred alignment was not available when this Community Plan was prepared, Figure 6.2 shows the approximate location of the alternate route described above, which has been shared and generally accepted by the community (labeled as Caltrans Alternate Route). As indicated, the proposed alignment begins near the west side of the Town Center with Valley Springs in full view of travelers. The Town Center is also fully visible from the downhill grade into the community when approaching Valley Springs from the east side of the proposed alignment before it veers south toward Hogan Dam Road.

The alignment as shown would create a new intersection with SR 12 west of the existing SR 12/SR 26 intersection. It would travel east to the existing intersection of SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road. The alternate route would approximately follow the existing Hogan Dam Road alignment east, which would require additional improvement to support future levels of traffic. At a new intersection with Hogan Dam Road the proposed alternate route would travel northeast to a new intersection with Lime Creek Road and the existing SR 12 and SR 26.

Widening SR 12 and SR 26 to four lanes each (an alternative that received no community support) will not be necessary in the future to support continued growth of the community and region if the alternate route is created south of the Town Center. Additionally, the improvements to the SR 12/SR 26 intersection that are currently under study will likely be ones that could be adequate for the foreseeable future.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

Potential intersection improvements that could be installed in the planning area to address current and future circulation problems are described below. The improvement options were selected for their ability to address the community's safety concerns, including speeding on SR 26, dangerous conditions for drivers turning off of SR 26 into La Contenta and Rancho Calaveras, and the movement of boats and trailers through the planning area for recreation purposes. The following options present a broad range of potential improvements from which to choose as new development occurs. The proposed circulation plan improvements should be phased to keep pace with new growth, although it may not be necessary to improve all proposed key intersections during the life of the Community Plan. Intersection improvement options include turning pockets, traffic signals, merge/diverge lanes, and roundabouts. These improvements are defined as follows and shown on Figure 6.4.



Minor Intersection

Improvements:
Add left turn pocket to main corridor



Major 3-Leg Intersection

Improvements:
Install signal, add merge lanes, add left and right turn pockets to main corridor, add left turn pocket to intersecting street



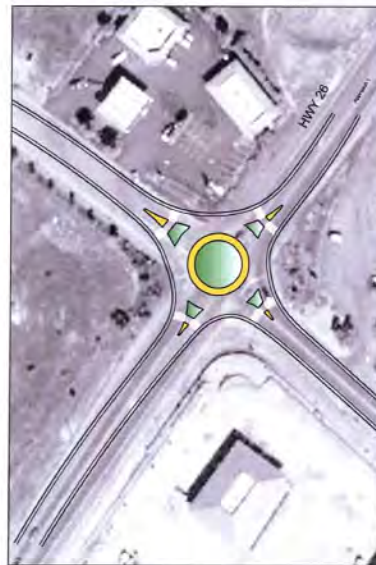
Major 4-Leg Intersection

Improvements:
Install signal, add merge lanes, add left and right turn pockets to main corridor, add left turn pocket to intersecting street



3-Leg Single Lane Roundabout

Improvements:
Single lane roundabout



4-Leg Single Lane Roundabout

Improvements:
Single lane roundabout

Generalized cost estimates for the improvement options are included in Appendix E.

- **Turning pockets** are simply refuge lanes for vehicles who desire to turn left at intersections. They improve circulation and safety by separating left turning vehicles from the travel way, allowing those traveling through or making right turns to continue without having to wait for left turning vehicles to clear the single lane travel way.
- **Traffic signals** are an upgraded traffic control and safety measure at intersections over simple 2-way and/or 4-way stop sign control. They improve circulation and safety by clearly indicating who has the right of way through intersections, and with the changing of signals, the ability to change that right of way to others traversing in a different direction.
- **Merge/Diverge** lanes are an additional way to maintain traffic flow safely. They improve circulation and safety by providing a separate lane to enter and exit traffic with minimal disruption to travel flow.
- **Modern Roundabouts** in the United States have become a viable and often cost efficient alternative to traffic signal control of major intersections. Modern roundabouts provide circulation and safety to intersection operations comparable and sometimes better than signal controlled intersections. Also, because there are no mechanical and/or electrical operations, the operating costs are minimal compared to maintaining signal operations. Lastly, although vehicles must slow when traversing through roundabouts, studies have shown that overall delay is less than the delay experienced at signalized intersections. Therefore, air quality and noise impacts are lessened as well.

Integrating these circulation and safety improvements into existing intersections in the planning area will create a safer and more efficient circulation system. The proposed SR 12 alternate route would also require the construction of new intersections and the addition of improvements to existing intersections (Figure 6.5).

Table 6.2 identifies which intersections in the planning area would benefit from each type of improvement shown on Figures 6.4 and 6.5. Appropriate improvements for each location are identified with an “X” in the corresponding intersection’s row. The intersection numbers listed in Table 6.2 are identified on Figure 6.6. These improvement options are for consideration only.

NONMOTORIZED CIRCULATION

Throughout the planning process, community members identified the need for nonmotorized circulation options within the planning area. Some discontinuous sidewalks exist within the historic street grid of Valley Springs, but the residential subdivisions and commercial areas do not include sidewalks. Bike lanes are only present on Daphne Street and one block of Paloma Road. There are currently no public multi-use trails to connect with existing trails around New Hogan Lake. However, a Transportation Enhancement project is planned for a CCWD easement between the Gold Creek and La Contenta subdivisions. The project would connect St. Andrews Road to Hogan Dam Road with an ADA accessible walking and biking trail. Figure 6.7 shows the proposed bicycle and multi-use trail systems designed to address



Multi-use trails along rural roadways provide nonmotorized circulation options and can be designed to maintain rural character.



New 3-Leg Major Intersection - Signalized

Improvements:
4-lane SR 12 with left and right turn pockets, merge lanes, and signal



New 4-Leg Major Intersection - Signalized

Improvements:
4-lane SR 12 with left and right turn pockets, merge lanes, and signal



New 3-Leg Major Intersection - Roundabout

Improvements:
Multi-lane roundabout



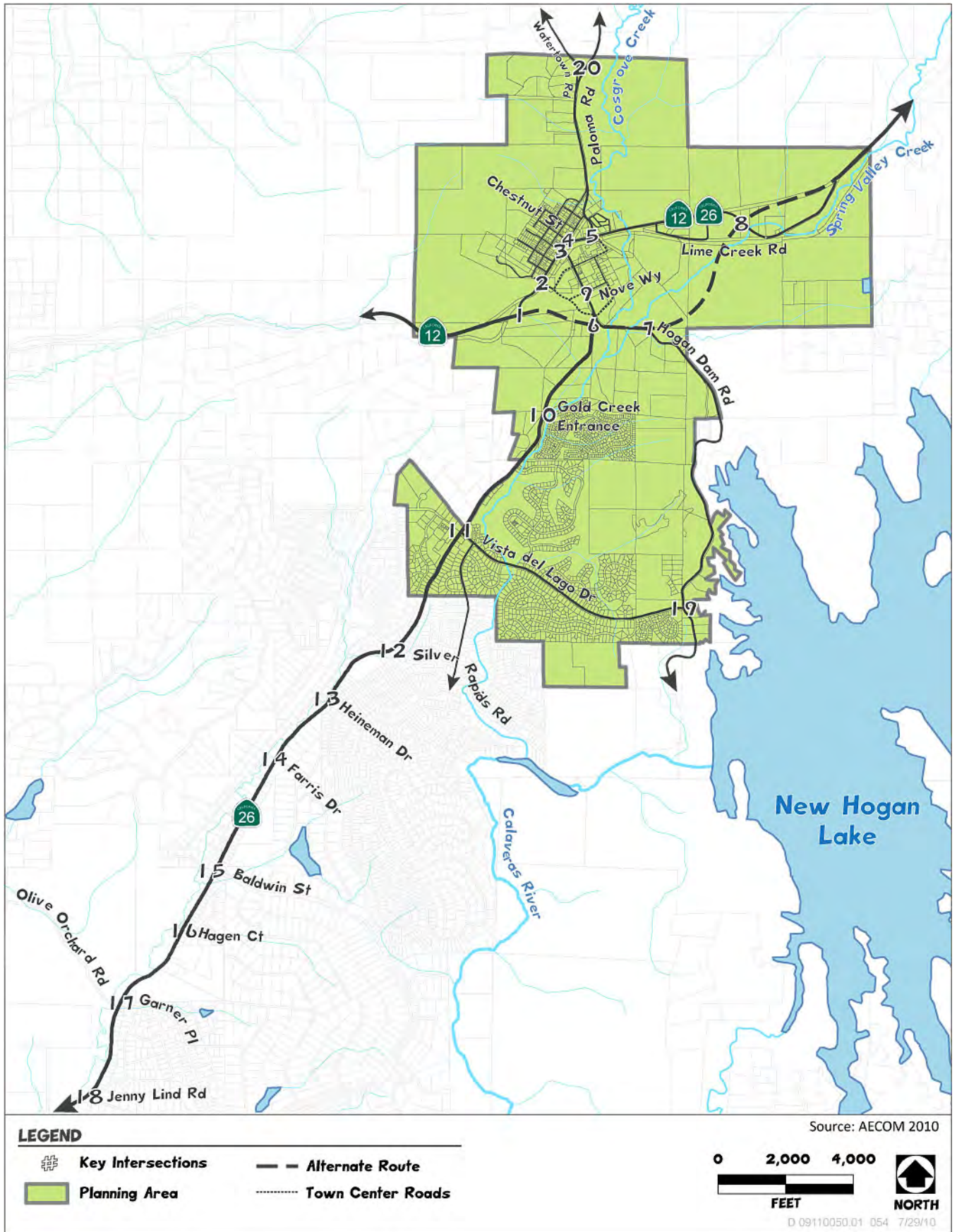
New 4-Leg Major Intersection - Roundabout

Improvements:
Multi-lane roundabout

TABLE 6.2 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT MATRIX

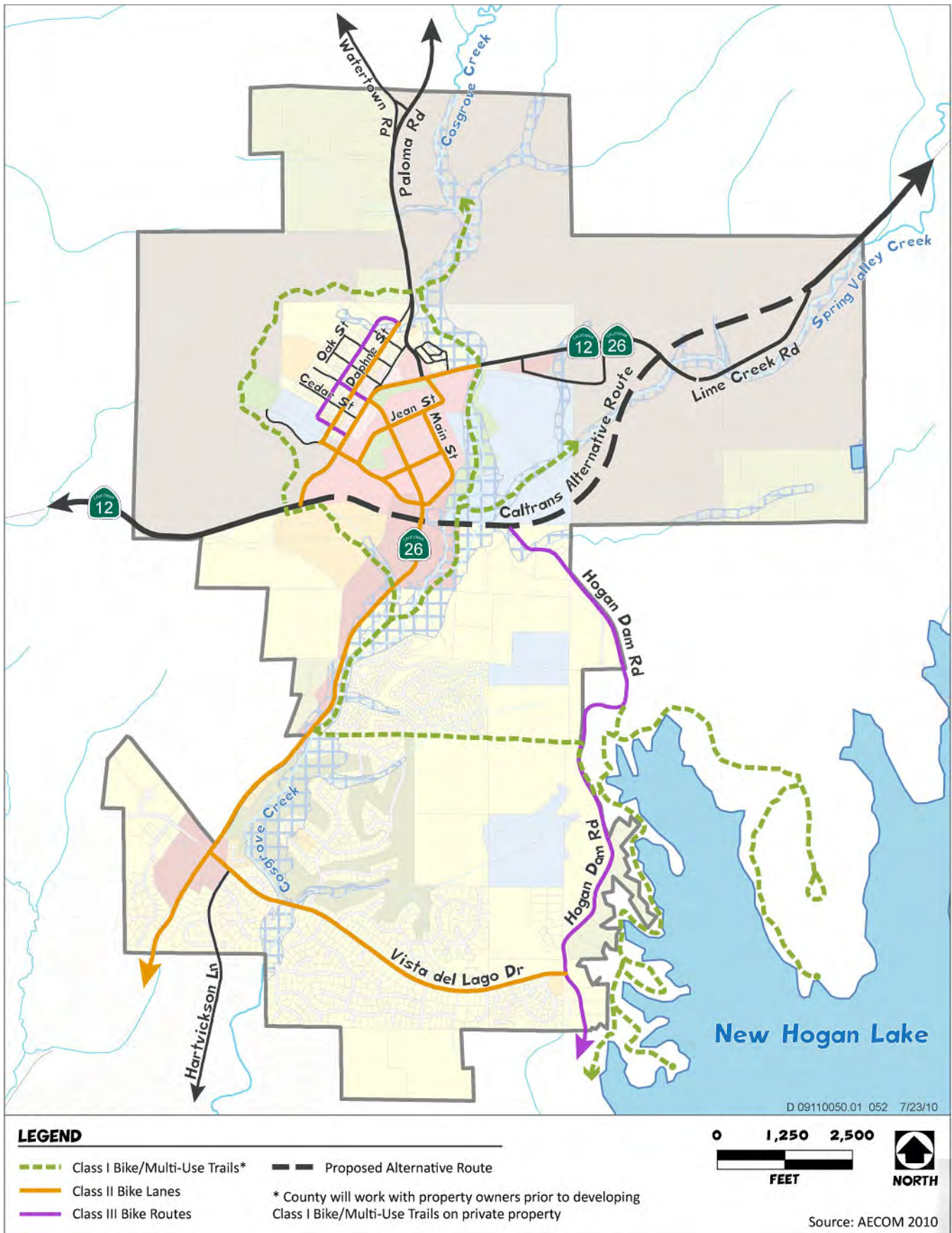
Intersection Number	Intersection Location	Minor Intersection Improvement	Major 3-Leg Intersection Improvement	Major 4-Leg Intersection Improvement	3-Leg Single Lane Roundabout	4-Lane Single Lane Roundabout	New 3-Leg Major Intersection - Signalized	New 4-Leg Major Intersection - Signalized	New 3-Leg Major Intersection - Roundabout	New 4-Leg Major Intersection - Roundabout
1	Existing SR 12 / SR 12 Alternate Route						✓		✓	
2	Existing SR 12 / Daphne Street Extension	✓				✓				
3	Existing SR 12 / SR 26			✓		✓				
4	Existing SR 12 / Chestnut Street	✓				✓				
5	Existing SR 12 / Paloma Road Extension							✓		✓
6	SR 12 Alternate Route / SR 26							✓		✓
7	SR 12 Alternate Route / Hogan Dam Road						✓		✓	
8	SR 12 Alternate Route / Lime Creek Road							✓		✓
9	SR 26 / Nove Way	✓				✓				
10	SR 26 / Gold Creek Entrance		✓		✓					
11	SR 26 / Vista Del Lago Road			✓		✓				
12	SR 26 / Silver Rapids Road			✓		✓				
13	SR 26 / Heinemann Drive	✓				✓				
14	SR 26 / Farris Drive	✓				✓				
15	SR 26 / Baldwin Street			✓		✓				
16	SR 26 / Hagen Court		✓		✓					
17	SR 26 / Garner Place	✓				✓				
18	SR 26 / Jenny Lind Road		✓		✓					
19	Vista Del Lago Road / Hogan Dam Road	✓			✓					
20	Paloma Road / Watertown Road	✓			✓					

Source: Omni Means 2010



Proposed Intersection Improvement Locations

Figure 6.6



Proposed Nonmotorized Circulation Plan

Figure 6.7

community concerns. The County will work with property owners prior to developing Class I Bike/Multi-Use Trails on private property, and should encourage multi-use trails to be incorporated into future planning efforts for all current projects without entitlements.

BIKE LANES

Class I, II, and III bike facilities (defined in *Chapter 4 Planning Area*) are proposed as part of the nonmotorized circulation system. Class I bike trails are proposed along Cosgrove Creek within the Flood Hazard Area overlay to provide north-south circulation between the Town Center, Gold Creek, and the northern part of La Contenta. The bike trail will have a western branch north of Gold Creek that connects with a Class II bike lane at SR 12. The segment of the proposed alternate route between SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road will also be improved with a Class I trail segment connecting the Class II bike lanes in the Town Center with the Class III bike path on Hogan Dam Road.

Class II bike lanes will be added on SR 26 to provide additional connection between the Town Center, Gold Creek, La Contenta, and possibly Rancho Calaveras. Vista del Lago Drive will be improved with Class II bike lanes to provide an east-west connection within La



Multi-use trails would provide access to natural areas adjacent to Cosgrove and Spring Valley Creeks.

Contenta to link SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road. New roads constructed within the Town Center will be designed to accommodate on-street bike lanes, and will be connected to the existing bike lane on Daphne Street. Class III bike routes are proposed along Sequoia Avenue, Pine Street, and Laurel Street within the Valley Springs street grid to provide additional safe routes within the neighborhood. Hogan Dam Road is a great candidate to be signed as a bike path from the intersection with the proposed alternate SR 12 route south to Vista del Lago Road. This bike path will connect to the existing trail system around New Hogan Lake.

MULTI-USE TRAILS

Multi-use trails will provide for healthy recreation outlets for community members, youth, and visitors and tourists alike. The proposed trail system would include a loop around the Valley Springs street grid and the proposed Town Center. The eastern part of the trail would parallel, but be separate from, the Class I bike trail within the Flood Hazard Area. The trail would continue east along the Spring Valley Creek flood plain and further north and south along Cosgrove Creek.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Maintaining open views and protecting natural features are important goals while still allowing future development to occur in the planning area. The following planning and design concepts provide suggestions for new residential subdivisions, the commercial corridor along SR 26, and development of the Town Center.

CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DESIGN

Residential developments that occurred outside of the 1974 Valley Springs Community Plan area were designed as conventional subdivisions, including Gold Creek and La Contenta, as described in *Chapter 5 Issues*. Residents were concerned that additional conventional developments would erode the area's unique character. Conservation subdivision design strategies will help to maintain the area's rural qualities while still allowing residential development to occur. *Chapter 7 Policies* describes where the following strategies should be

incorporated into new residential subdivisions within the planning area. Figure 6.8 illustrates these concepts on a hypothetical 55-acre parcel. The measures listed below are features of subdivision design that could help enhance the natural features already present in Valley Springs and protect the rural character that so many residents described at community meetings as being important to them.

CIRCULATION

Rural subdivisions should be designed with circulation networks that promote connectivity to adjacent properties and also support safe nonmotorized circulation. Stub roads should be provided at the edges of subdivisions to connect future neighborhoods.

“CLOSES”

“Closes” are an alternative to traditional cul-de-sacs, consisting of a one-way loop around a small central green space. This lot design allows houses to front shared green space, which contributes to the natural character of the neighborhood. The turning radii are engineered to allow turning movements required by longer vehicles, such as fire trucks and moving vans.

ATTACHED GREENS

Attached greens are areas where the front lot-lines of houses have been pulled up to the edge of a neighborhood green. Garage access is provided along rear-loaded streets so that the houses are oriented with their front doors opening onto the shared green space.

NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN

Neighborhood greens are long, deep properties that create separate, but related outdoor rooms defined by central open space. They can range from small greens to larger, more formal parkland areas. These areas also act as natural stormwater management systems and can include walking trails.

TERMINATING VISTAS

Terminating vistas are a design technique that deliberately position green space at the ends of streets or along outside edges of curving streets. This maximizes visibility of open space amenities to reduce the visual presence of the built environment. This technique is especially useful in the planning area, where the sense of openness contributes so directly to the area’s character.

SMALL-LOT DETACHED HOUSES

Small-lot residential development trims traditionally large residential lots to smaller sizes (typically 2,500 to 4,500 square feet) to protect natural resources and provide open space, while still allowing maximum development potential. Small-lot residential housing types that would be appropriate for the planning area include single-story cottages, two-story single family houses, and duplexes.



Small-lot detached houses would reinforce the area’s existing character and provide housing opportunities that meet a range of residents’ needs.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DESIGN

Previous development along the SR commercial corridor has been of a strip mall character often found in American suburbs, as described in *Chapter 5 Issues*. As with the conservation subdivision design strategies described above, commercial corridor design techniques could be used for future development to ensure this corridor develops in a way that is consistent with its rural location. Figure 6.9 illustrates several commercial corridor design concepts that are described below.

BUILDING SETBACKS

The SR 26 commercial corridor includes some of the planning areas prime open views to the surrounding hillsides because much of it lies within the broad, flat Cosgrove Creek floodplain. Setting buildings back from the highway reduces their visual presence and allows drivers to experience the openness of the area. Depending on the depth of the setbacks, off-street pedestrian and biking trails and on-site stormwater detention basins could be constructed in front of buildings. However, setbacks that are intended to provide parking in front of new commercial buildings should generally be avoided so as not to create new strip malls (see the next section).

PARKING IN REAR

Similar to the discussion on building setbacks, locating parking lots in front of buildings can be a visual distraction in the commercial corridor from the area's natural character. Placing parking lots behind buildings helps to maintain a natural roadside edge and hides some of the urban character associated with commercial development.

CLUSTER BUILDINGS

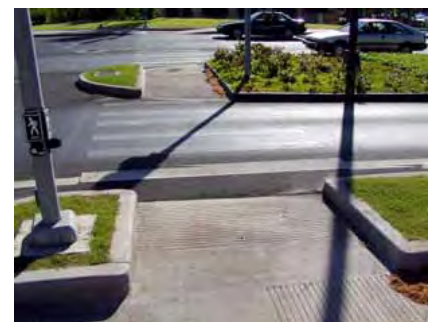
Clustering commercial buildings around shared parking lots reduces the total pavement area needed, which reduces on-site stormwater runoff, and increases land available for open space, pedestrian trails, and habitat preservation. Clustering within the commercial corridor could also help to protect open views towards the foothills.

ON-SITE PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Providing building setbacks and moving parking to the rear of buildings leaves space in front for meandering walkways or trails. Attractive on-site pedestrian trails encourage shoppers to spend more time walking around commercial areas and increase opportunities for car free shopping trips within a commercial center when connected to a larger trail system. Clustering commercial development, as shown in Figure 6.6, provides more opportunities for shoppers to use trail systems than in areas with stores spread out along a long corridor.

TOWN CENTER DESIGN

As described above, the Town Center is envisioned as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood with residential, employment, retail, and civic uses. The Town Center should be designed as an extension of the historic Valley Springs street grid and complement the area's rural small-town character. Cohesive development of this district can provide an additional draw for tourists interested in the foothills experience and the other attractions within the county. Figure 6.10 illustrates the following concepts.



Pedestrian islands allow pedestrians to safely cross halfway while waiting for traffic to stop in both directions.

STREET DESIGN

Short blocks and a street grid with narrow roads contribute to pedestrian-friendly environments. They provide multiple options for getting from one location to another and keep traffic moving slowly for pedestrian safety. They also provide regular open views towards the surrounding foothills to visually connect Town Center visitors with the area's rural character. Intersections in the Town Center should be designed to promote pedestrian safety. Major intersections should incorporate crosswalk features, such as bulb-outs, raised crosswalks, pavement pattern and color changes, and pedestrian islands.

BUILDING SCALE, MASSING, AND SETBACKS

The form of individual buildings and their relationship to one another and to the street also define the Town Center's character. Scale describes the size, bulk, and height of buildings; buildings in the Town Center should typically be one to two stories high to reinforce the small-town qualities of the planning area. Taller buildings would be out of context with the historic Valley Springs settlement and the more recent residential and commercial developments. The articulation of building facades helps to break up the building's massing and bulk by providing visual interest. Facade articulation, such as front stoops, bay windows, and projected or recessed building planes, should be designed at a human-scale to enhance the pedestrian environment. In contrast, highway commercial development is often designed at an automobile-scale to increase visibility from a distance and at high speeds. Building setbacks also define the pedestrian environment. Non residential buildings in the Town Center should be constructed up to the sidewalk edge with parking located in the rear, on-street, or in alleys. Residential buildings should minimize the visual appearance of garages by setting them behind the primary building façade or locating them at the rear of the lot or along alleys.

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Landscaping and streetscaping help define an area's character through use of color, texture, and pattern. Landscaping should incorporate native and drought-tolerant species to reinforce the local natural character and reduce maintenance costs. Decorative signs and street lights help residents and visitors to safely enjoy an area. Street trees provide a shady canopy for pedestrians. Landscaping elements can define community gateways and create a sense of arrival. Rain gardens and bioswales allow for natural stormwater management and provide visual interest. Seating in public plazas and along busy pedestrian corridors support informal gatherings and relaxation for visitors and Town Center employees. Wide sidewalks in retail areas offer space for patio dining at restaurants and cafes.



Building form and scale help to define space for public gathering and informal meetings.



Rain gardens provide on-site stormwater management and reduce flows to the wastewater treatment plant.

Conservation Subdivision Design



Source: Randall Arendt adapted by AECOM 2010



This example shows roadway and block configurations for a typical 55-acre parcel. The design incorporates neighborhood greens, "closes", attached greens, and terminating vistas to preserve the site's rural character. Conservation subdivision design trims typically oversized parcels to a smaller size so developers can achieve their full density allowance while still preserving open space. The design would yield approximately 230 units with 30-35% of the site set aside as permanent open space. The layout assumes a mixture of small-lot single family detached houses and townhouse options oriented towards shared open space.

Design Techniques

Neighborhood Green



Source: Randall Arendt

Neighborhood greens are long, deep properties that create separate, but related outdoor rooms defined by central open space. They can range from small greens to larger, more formal parkland areas. These areas act as natural stormwater management systems and should be planted with native, drought-tolerant vegetation.

Terminating Vistas



Source: Randall Arendt

Terminating vistas deliberately position green space at the ends of streets or along outside edges of curving streets. This maximizes visibility of open space amenities to reduce the visual presence of the built environment. This technique is especially useful in the planning area, where the sense of openness contributes so directly to the area's character.

"Closes"



"Closes" are an alternative to traditional cul-de-sacs, consisting of a one-way loop around a small central green space. The turning radii are engineered to allow turning movements required by longer vehicles, such as fire trucks and moving vans.

Attached Greens

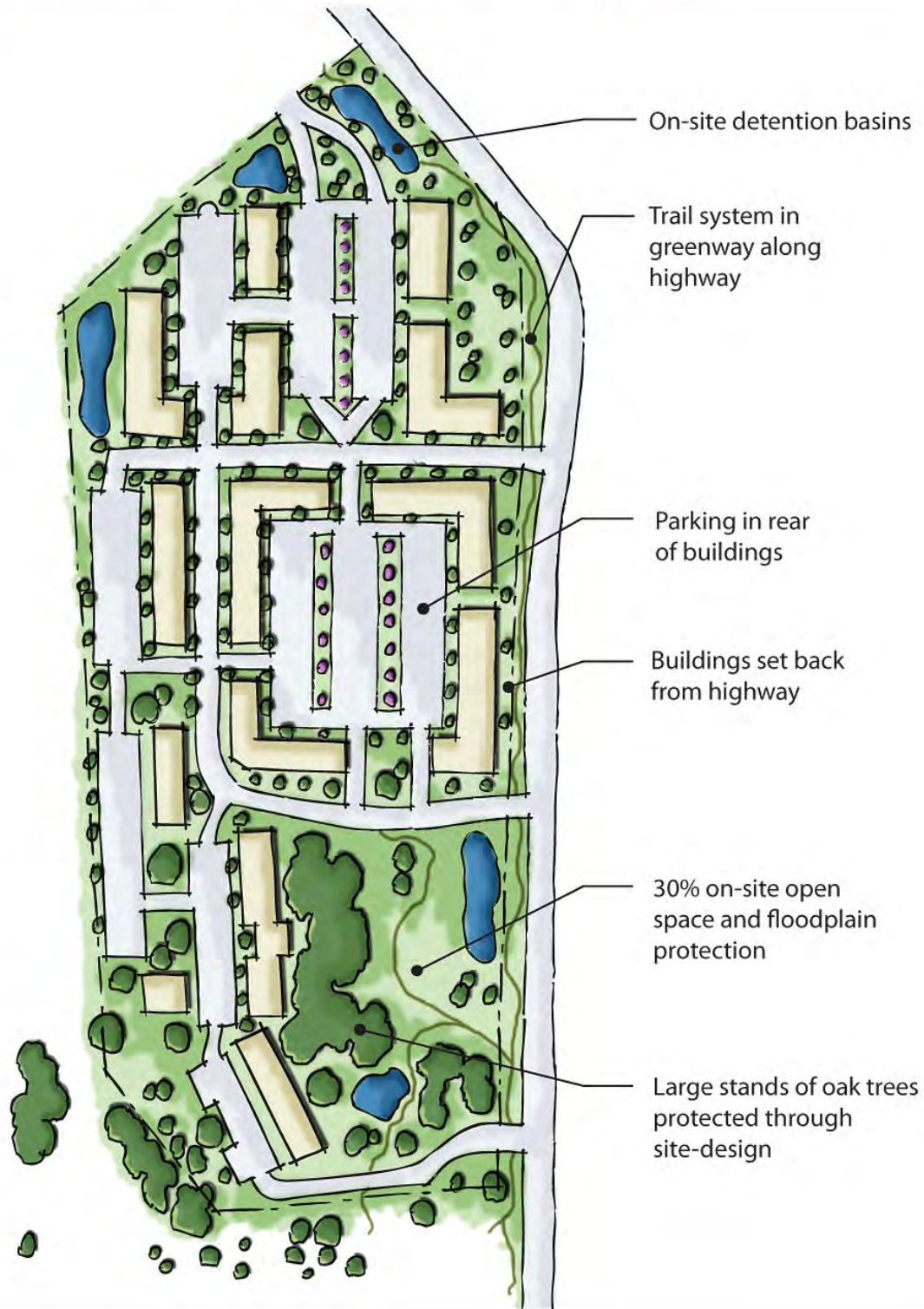


Attached greens are areas where the front lot-lines of houses have been pulled up to the edge of shared open space. Garage access is provided along rear-loaded streets so that the houses are oriented with their front doors opening onto the shared green space.

Conservation Subdivision Design

Figure 6.8

Commercial Corridor Design



Design Techniques

On-Site Pedestrian Trails

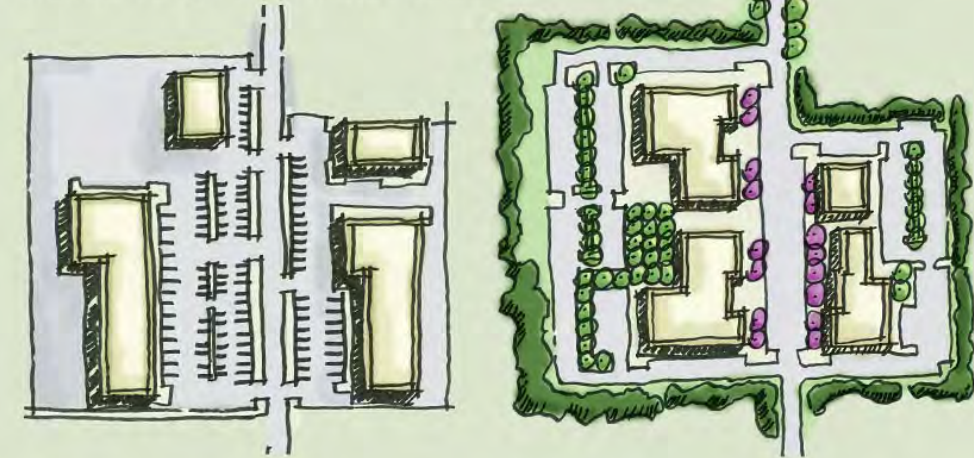


Attractive on-site pedestrian trails encourage shoppers to spend more time walking around the commercial centers and increase opportunities for car free shopping trips when connected to a larger trail system.

The example to the left shows commercial site design for a typical one-third mile segment of the SR 26 commercial corridor, and represents 45-acres. The design clusters buildings around shared parking that is hidden from the street view. This increases the amount of on-site open space and preserves oak woodland habitat. Building setbacks provide space for on-site stormwater detention basins and hiking trails. The design would yield approximately 154,000 square feet of single-story commercial floor area with 30% of the site set aside as permanent open space.

Rear Parking

Placing parking behind buildings reduces its visual effect on the area's rural character, while generous landscaping enhances the existing natural character along the commercial corridor.

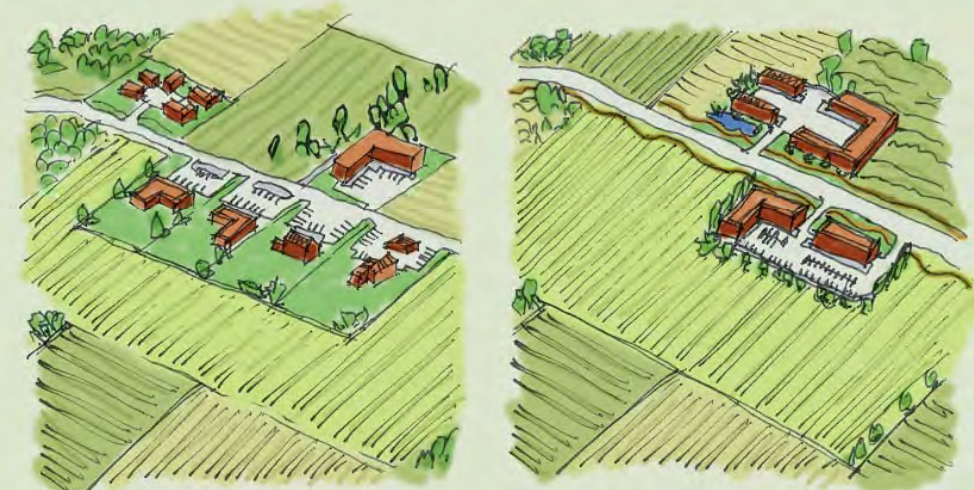


Typical Development

Preferred Development

Cluster Buildings

Clustering buildings allows for shared parking lots, which can reduce the total pavement needed. Clustering in the commercial corridor would also preserve expansive views towards the foothills.



Typical Development

Preferred Development

Source: AECOM 2010

Commercial Corridor Design

Figure 6.9

Town Center Design



- Street grid continued from historic Valley Springs
- Small-lot single family houses
- Streets aligned to provide views of the foothills
- Two-story height limit to preserve community scale
- Tree-lined streets with sidewalks or trails along short blocks
- Civic buildings
- Plaza

The Town Center would contain areas of different use, including a community center, neighborhood-oriented retail, employment generating uses, and residential neighborhoods. The sketch above is an example of what the community center and adjacent residential neighborhoods could look like. Community uses are located around a plaza. The regular street grid of historic Valley Springs is extended throughout the Town Center in short, walkable blocks. Nearby trails and park space offer recreation access for Town Center residents, employees, and visitors. New buildings retain the scale and form of the small-town community.

Design Techniques



Bioswales provide on-site stormwater management, filter roadway runoff, and maintain the area's natural character.



Wide sidewalks allow patio dining at restaurants and cafes to increase street activity and pedestrian interest.



Plazas provide space for formal events and informal gathering.

Bulb-outs reduce the distance pedestrians need to cross within a crosswalk.



Two-story buildings maintain the existing community scale, while maximum setbacks establish a consistent street edge for pedestrian comfort in a neighborhood-oriented part of the Town Center.

Source: AECOM 2010

Town Center Design

Figure 6.10

7

GOALS AND POLICIES



7

This chapter presents the goals and policies designed to address issues unique to the Valley Springs Community Plan area. The following policies are intended to supplement the County’s General Plan policies, which apply countywide; policies contained herein only apply to the Valley Springs Community Plan area. As with *Chapter 5 Issues*, this chapter is organized according to the elements of the County’s General Plan so readers can easily reference the planning area’s primary issues to see how they are addressed through Community Plan policies.

Chapter 7 Goals and Policies and *Chapter 8 Implementation Programs* are extremely important because they translate community sentiment on the myriad topics discussed as part of the planning process into goals, policies, and implementation programs. The goals, policies, and implementation programs are meant to guide the County in review of development applications, investments in the transportation and circulation network, pursuit of grant opportunities, and other activities that may affect the Community Plan area. These chapters are not designed to negatively affect developers or private property rights; on the contrary, they offer clarification and consistency to the development community and the County regarding what residents of the planning area value.

Chapters 7 and 8 serve as building blocks for one another and can be logically followed as outlined in the example below:

GOAL LU-1 → POLICY LU-1.1 → IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM 1 2

Each topic area presented below includes a goal or goals followed by the associated policies. The corresponding implementation program numbers are listed after each policy for clarity in referencing Chapter 8, where the full text of the implementation programs can be found.

LAND USE

Land use policies address the community's desire to maintain the area's rural character, while still acknowledging the need for new growth to occur. *Chapter 6 Proposed Land Use and Circulation Plan* provides illustrations for some of the concepts included in the policies below.

Goal LU-1 *Protect the rural, small-town character and local identity of the planning area.*

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT DESIGN

LU-1.1 Encourage subdivisions designed with 1/2-acre lots or smaller arranged around shared open spaces, such as neighborhood greens.

Implementation Program 12

LU-1.2 Protect natural site features to make developments visually compatible with their environment.

Implementation Program 12

LU-1.3 Encourage open space or greenbelt buffers between subdivisions and external streets to protect open views to surrounding foothills and provide space for off-street trails, habitat conservation, and stormwater management.

Implementation Program 12

LU-1.4 Promote greenbelt areas for fire protection as part of conservation subdivision designs in high fire hazard areas.

Implementation Program 12

COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DESIGN

LU-1.5 Encourage parking areas to be located behind buildings to hide them from view along SR 12 and SR 26. Parking areas should be generously landscaped to screen from view when adjacent to residential uses, and to provide shade for cars making the area more attractive to visitors and customers.

Implementation Program 1

LU 1.6 Discourage use of perimeter fences and/or walls that would deter shared parking configurations or limit pedestrian connections between adjacent properties.

Implementation Program 1

LU-1.7 Establish minimum building setbacks that provide space in front of buildings for on-site trails, stormwater retention basins, and/or oak tree preservation, and protect views of the surrounding foothills.

Implementation Program 1

- LU-1.8** Cluster commercial development around shared parking to preserve expansive views in the Commercial district.

Implementation Program 12

- LU-1.9** Encourage use of on-site pedestrian trails to connect adjacent commercial developments; provide connections to community-wide trails where possible.

Implementation Program 12

- LU 1.10** Encourage commercial signs in the Town Center and Commercial districts to be consistent with the rural community character.

Implementation Program 5

TOWN CENTER DISTRICT DESIGN

- LU-1.11** Extend the grid street system found in the historic Valley Springs settlement.

Implementation Program 20

- LU-1.12** Establish building height limits to preserve the small-town character.

Implementation Program 1

- LU-1.13** Plan for civic space to allow for community events and informal gathering, including use as a farmers' market.

Implementation Programs 1, 30

- LU-1.14** Plan for space for a community center/senior center building located in or adjacent to the Town Center district near other amenities and bicycle and pedestrian paths to support walkability.

Implementation Programs 1, 28, 30

- LU-1.15** Encourage civic uses to locate in the Town Center.

Implementation Program 30

TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

Transportation policies address the proposed SR 12 alternate route, intersection improvements, nonmotorized circulation, and opportunities for circulation connections in new developments.

- Goal CIRC-1** *Improve traffic flow through the planning area with a priority on the SR 12/SR 26 intersection.*

SR 12 ALTERNATE ROUTE

- CIRC-1.1** Pursue construction of a SR 12 or other alternate route that would shift highway traffic from the center of historic Valley Springs to a newly constructed road south of the existing SR 12.

Implementation Program 13, 14

KEY INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- CIRC-1.2** Prioritize improvements to intersections identified in the Community Plan.

Implementation Program 14

- CIRC-1.3** Incorporate traffic calming devices on roadways in the Town Center, Commercial, and Community Residential districts to slow traffic speeds in areas with high pedestrian activity.

Implementation Program 17

Goal CIRC-2 *Increase opportunities for non-motorized circulation throughout the planning area.*

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN

- CIRC-2.1** Require new development to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Implementation Programs 12, 16

- CIRC-2.2** Develop a community-wide trail system that connects uses within the planning area to each other and to the Hogan Reservoir and Mokelumne Coast to Crest trail systems.

Implementation Programs 12, 15

Goal CIRC-3 *Develop neighborhoods that promote circulation and emergency access.*

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

- CIRC-3.1** Ensure new subdivisions can connect to existing and/or future subdivisions using through streets, pedestrian and bicycle trails, and live end cul-de-sacs.

Implementation Programs 17, 19

- CIRC-3.2** Provide multiple points of access in new developments to discourage concentration of traffic at a few intersections.

Implementation Program 19

- CIRC-3.3** Promote walkable block lengths in the Town Center and Commercial districts and set standards for residential block lengths.

Implementation Program 21

-
- CIRC-3.4** Soundwalls and gated residential areas that impede emergency access and detract from the area’s rural character should generally not be used.

Implementation Program 17

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development policies address residents’ concerns for the lack of jobs available to area youth and adults, lack of economic diversity and sales tax base, and desire for tourism as a growth industry in the county.

Goal ED-1 *Increase local employment opportunities, including jobs for area youth.*

JOBS/HOUSING BALANCE

- ED-1.1** Promote a balance of commercial and light industrial development to residential development.

Implementation Programs 1, 22

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

- ED-1.2** Encourage development of visitor-oriented businesses and supporting services to increase tourism potential associated with the area’s reservoirs.

Implementation Programs 24, 25

Goal ED-2 *Provide access to continuing education training facilities that increase employment skills of area residents.*

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- ED-2.1** Provide land use designations suitable to accommodate employment training and continuing education centers.

Implementation Program 1

Goal ED-3 *Increase the local sales tax base.*

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- ED-3.1** Ensure sufficient land is zoned in the Town Center and Commercial districts for economic growth and employment generating uses.

Implementation Program 1

- ED-3.2** Support the expansion of existing local-serving businesses and the development of new ones.

Implementation Program 25

HOUSING

The housing policies address the lack of housing diversity in the planning area that limits ownership and rental opportunities for area youth, young families, single adults, retired workers, the disabled, residents on a fixed income, and seniors.

Goal H-1 *Provide diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents.*

HOUSING DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY

H-1.1 Encourage higher-density housing in the Town Center district in close proximity to community services.

Implementation Programs 1, 23

H-1.2 Allow for a range of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached multi-family units, and mixed-use residential developments in the Town Center district.

Implementation Program 1

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public facilities and services policies address use of septic systems in the planning area, infrastructure extensions, and development of additional community services, and recreation facilities.

Goal PS-1 *Plan infrastructure expansions to limit rural sprawl and maintain water quality and availability for area residents.*

SEPTIC SYSTEM STANDARDS

PS-1.1 Prohibit residential development within the Community Residential district until public services are provided.

Implementation Program 18

INFRASTRUCTURE EXTENSIONS

PS-1.2 Extension of water in the Working Landscapes district should specifically be for agriculture and related uses.

Implementation Program 31

Goal PS-2 *Provide access to recreation facilities, health care, and senior services.*

COMMUNITY CENTER

PS-2.1 Identify an appropriate site for a community center that would allow activities for all age groups, including meeting and gathering space for residents, organized activities for school children, and senior services.

Implementation Program 28

PS-2.2 Encourage development of additional health services in the planning area, including medical clinics, which can serve residents routine healthcare needs.

Implementation Programs 1, 24

PARKS AND RECREATION

PS-2.3 Encourage development of additional park and recreation facilities in the planning area.

Implementation Programs 17, 30

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resource policies address the protection of the natural resources and qualities that contribute to the planning area’s rural character, such as hillsides, hydrologic systems in flood plains and riparian corridors, oak tree and wildlife habitat, and the dark night sky.

Goal NR-1 *Protect the natural resources and rural qualities in the planning area.*

HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

NR-1.1 Prohibit development on steep hillsides to the north and west of the historic Valley Springs settlement to protect natural resources and scenic views that frame the area.

Implementation Programs 2, 17

FLOOD ZONE OVERLAY

NR-1.2 Prohibit development within the Cosgrove Creek floodplain to protect natural resources, expansive views, and public health and safety.

Implementation Programs 3, 17

NIGHT SKY PROTECTION

NR-1.3 Protect the dark night sky by controlling light pollution (glare, light trespass, and sky glow).

Implementation Programs 7, 17

RIPARIAN BUFFER

NR-1.4 Protect the water quality and habitat value of the planning area’s rivers and streams with riparian buffer zones.

Implementation Programs 4, 17

OAK TREE HABITAT PROTECTION

NR-1.5 Protect oak trees, oak woodlands, and wildlife habitat.

Implementation Programs 12, 17

HYDROLOGY

The stormwater policy addresses the management of stormwater runoff to protect property and water quality.

Goal W-1 *Manage stormwater and runoff to protect property and water quality.*

WATER SENSITIVE DESIGN

W-1.1 Incorporate water sensitive design techniques for new construction in the Town Center, Commercial, and Community Residential districts.

Implementation Programs 8, 17

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The cultural resource policy addresses preservation of Valley Springs' historic character.

Goal CR-1 *Preserve character of Valley Springs' history through urban design.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

CR-1.1 Encourage historic architectural design features for new construction and redevelopment in the Community Center Historic land use designation and along highways in the Town Center.

Implementation Programs 9, 17

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety policies address flooding, wild fires, crime prevention, and the proposed farmers' market. Policies NR-1.1 and NR-1.2 also promote community health and safety by directing development away from steep slopes and flood plains in the planning area.

Goal HS-1 *Protect residents and visitors from wildfire hazards.*

WILD FIRE PREVENTION

HS-1.1 Adopt a wildfire prevention strategy that includes site design and public education techniques.

Implementation Programs 10, 17

Goal HS-2 *Deter criminal and gang activity in the community.*

CRIME PREVENTION

HS-2.1 Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies for buildings in the Town Center and Community Residential districts.

Implementation Programs 11, 17

Goal HS-3 *Encourage healthy food options in the community.*

FARMERS' MARKET SITE

HS-3.1 Promote establishment of a regular farmers' market located in the Town Center or Commercial districts.

Implementation Programs 26, 27

NOISE

The noise policy addresses highway-related noise.

Goal N-1 *Protect residents from highway-related noise.*

BUILDING SETBACKS

N-1.1 Require building setbacks for new residential construction along SR 12 and SR 26 to protect residents from highway noise.

Implementation Program 1

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8 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS



8

This chapter presents the implementation programs for the policies described in *Chapter 7 Goals and Policies*. The programs are organized into five broad categories: code updates, education and outreach, capital improvements and funding, development review, and coordination with other agencies.

TABLE 8.1 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Implementation Program	Implementation Program Description	Related Community Plan Element Policies	Responsible/Participating Agency	Funding Source	Time Frame	
Code Updates						
Program 1	County Zoning Code Amendments	Amend the County Zoning Code to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ update the County zoning map per the Valley Springs Community Plan land use diagram ▪ allow for 1-2 story buildings by right in the Town Center district, and allow up to 3 stories for buildings that provide substantial public benefits, such as affordable housing, publicly accessible open space, or exceptional design quality ▪ allow farmers' markets and continuing education facilities, such as community colleges, as permitted uses within the Community Center Regional land use designation ▪ require parking to be located behind buildings in the Commercial district ▪ prohibit construction of uninterrupted perimeter fences or walls around commercial retail properties and heavily trafficked commercial service properties, such as gas stations, in the Town Center and Commercial districts ▪ establish minimum building setbacks for residential and commercial uses along SR 12 and SR 26 in the planning area 	LU-1.5, LU-1.6, LU-1.7, LU-1.12, LU-1.13, LU-1.14, ED-1.1, ED-2.1, ED-3.1, H-1.1, H-1.2, PS-2.2, N-1.1	Planning Department Planning Commission	General Fund Grant sources: Strategic Growth Council	Within 12 months of General Plan update
Program 2	Steep Slope Overlay	Adopt an ordinance that prohibits construction on slopes of 25 percent or greater. Public trails may be developed within these areas. Steep slope areas are shown on Figure 6.3 of the Valley Springs Community Plan.	NR-1.1	Planning Department	General Fund Transfer of Development Right (TDR)	Concurrent with General Plan update
Program 3	Flood Zone Overlay	Adopt an ordinance that prohibits construction within the FEMA 100-year flood plain as designated on the most current Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and on the California Department of Water Resource's Awareness Flood Plain maps. Public trails may be developed within these areas. Flood hazard areas are shown on Figure 6.3 of the Valley Springs Community Plan.	NR-1.2	Planning Department FEMA Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)	General Fund Department of Water Resources Grants,	Concurrent with General Plan update
Program 4	Riparian Buffer Guidelines	Conduct study to determine adequate buffer widths for Cosgrove Creek and Spring Valley Creek. Buffer guidelines shall be based on the ecological function(s) to be protected (e.g., water quality, freshwater habitat, wildlife corridors). Guidelines should consider topography, vegetation, adjacent uses, and wildlife present to define buffer widths that are specific to existing conditions.	NR-1.4	Planning Department ACOE CCWD Department of Fish/Game/Wildlife	General Fund	Concurrent with General Plan update
Program 5	Commercial Sign Ordinance	Amend the County's sign ordinance to require consistency with community character in the Valley Springs Community Plan area. Additional ordinance requirements should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ limiting individual signs within the Town Center and Commercial districts to wall-mounted business name signs, ▪ prohibiting construction of post-mounted signs that would interrupt long distance views. ▪ limiting entrance signs that identify businesses in a shopping plaza to no more than 8' in height 	LU-1.10	Planning Department VSABA Chamber of Commerce	General Fund	3 years

Program 6	Locate Civic Uses in Town Center	Adopt a resolution stating that new civic uses in western Calaveras County would first seek to locate in the Valley Springs Town Center, such as a library, Sheriff's substation, and continuing education facilities.	LU-1.15	Board of Supervisors Community Advocacy Groups	General Fund	Within 12 months of General Plan update
Education and Outreach						
Program 7	Night Sky Protection	Educate Building Department staff and project applicants on the benefits of and techniques for preserving "night sky" qualities. Design recommendations could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install outdoor lighting that is designed to reduce light pollution Incorporate site design and landscaping principles to limit light trespass onto adjacent properties Select building materials and finishes that limit glare 	NR-1.3	Building Department	General Fund	On going
Program 8	Water Sensitive Design	Educate planning staff, Public Works Department staff, and project applicants on the benefits and types of water sensitive design techniques, including the installation or construction of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rain gardens, bioswales, pervious pavement, and urban wetlands. 	W-1.1	Planning Department, Public Works Department CCWD VSPUD Environmental Protection Agency ACOE	General Fund Strategic Growth Council	On going
Program 9	Historic Architectural Features	Educate planning staff and project applicants on historic architectural features that reinforce the character of historic main streets in foothill communities. Historic features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ground floor windows overlooking the street, constructing buildings to the back of the curb to maintain a consistent street edge, one- to two-story buildings, vertical mixed-use with retail/office uses on the ground floor and residential uses above, business signs located in windows and/or on building façades, architectural elements, such as similar roofing types, façade treatments, and porch overhangs or arcades 	CR-1.1	Planning Department Historical Society	General Fund	On going
Program 10	Wild Fire Prevention	Work with local fire districts, CalFire, planning staff, and project applicants to address the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply Public Resources Code 4291-4299, which requires property owners to address fire fuel reduction measures for undeveloped lots Encourage a defensible space buffer of 100' around houses in High fire hazard areas in the Working Landscape districts Incorporate greenbelt areas for fire protection as part of subdivision designs in High fire hazard areas Initiate a fire wise community program where CalFire would provide residents with training and support to increase forest fire awareness and preparation 	HS-1.1	CalFire Foothill Fire District Planning Department	General Fund	On going

Program 11	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	Educate planning staff and project applicants on the benefits and application of CPTED techniques, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing windows to overlook streets and parking areas Providing adequate lighting in walkways, entrances, and parking lots that are compatible with the community's "night sky" character Designing active public spaces Maintaining landscaping, building facades, signs, and other improvements to demonstrate active surveillance of properties Limiting fencing and walls to the lowest possible heights to preserve clear sight lines 	HS-2.1	Planning Department Calaveras County Sheriff's Department Planning Commission	General Fund	On going
Program 12	Rural Community Design	Educate planning staff on appropriate rural community design techniques so they can work with project applicants to develop projects that are consistent with the community character described in the Valley Springs Community Plan. Rural community design techniques include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing green belt buffers to maintain a sense of openness and natural views. Buffer land could include oak woodland preservation areas, stormwater retention areas, leased agricultural grazing land, or other conservation options. Providing off-street trails and paths within the Commercial and Community Residential districts to support non-motorized circulation Clustering residential development on small-lots to increase open space Designing around landscape features, such as rock outcroppings, trees, and ponds, Incorporating natural contours to minimize site grading Clustering commercial buildings along the SR 26 commercial corridor to allow shared parking 	LU-1.1, LU-1.2, LU-1.3, LU-1.4, LU-1.8, LU-1.9, CIRC-2.1, CIRC-2.2, NR-1.5	Planning Department Planning Commission Parks and Recreation Commission Public Works Department	General Fund	On going

Capital Improvements and Funding

Program 13	SR 12 Alternate Route	Continue active coordination with Caltrans on the design, funding, and construction of an alternate route to the existing SR 12. The alternate route would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve connection to Hogan Dam Road for summer visitors, reroute truck traffic away from residential areas, and provide alternative circulation options for emergency vehicles. Full implementation of the improvements would occur through phases as funding is secured. 	CIRC-1.1	Public Works Department Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG) California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	General Fund Road Impact Mitigation (RIM) fee program Caltrans CCOG State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	5-10 years
Program 14	Capital Improvement Program	Ensure the following infrastructure improvements are considered for funding in the annual Capital Improvement Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SR 12 alternate route Intersection improvements identified in Table 6.3 of the Valley Springs Community Plan 	CIRC-1.1, CIRC-1.2, CIRC-1.3	Public Works Department	RIM program Valley Springs Benefit Basin program	10-20 years
Program 15	Non-motorized Circulation Funding	Pursue funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure described in Figure 6.7 of the Valley Springs Community Plan.	CIRC-2.2	Public Works Department CCOG Parks and Recreation Commission Community Groups	State transportation funds, state/federal grants Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	5-10 years

Program 16	Town Center Non-motorized Circulation Improvements	Require Class II bike lane designation and striping on roads in the Town Center District, and require new development in the Town Center and Commercial districts to include sidewalks.	CIRC-2.1	Public Works Department	County transportation fund	On-going
Development Review						
Program 17	Community Character	<p>Planning staff should review the Valley Springs Community Plan for guidance on maintaining community character when applicants submit new projects. The following considerations should be made during project review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discourage use of soundwalls, except where no other feasible options exist to meet the County's noise standards; ▪ discourage construction of gated residential areas, unless project applicants provide multiple opportunities for pedestrian and automobile connections to adjacent development and ensure unimpeded emergency access; ▪ encourage construction of traffic calming devices, including raised crosswalks, bulb-outs, pavement pattern and color changes, and pedestrian islands, at busy pedestrian intersections; ▪ incorporate water sensitive design techniques in the Town Center, Commercial, and Community Residential districts; ▪ incorporate historic architectural features in the Community Center Historic land use designation; ▪ incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design techniques in the Town Center and Commercial districts; and ▪ comply with Steep Slope and Flood Hazard overlays as shown on Figure 6.3 in the Valley Springs Community Plan. ▪ address protection of night-sky qualities ▪ encourage oak tree and other woodland habitat avoidance ▪ avoid construction in riparian buffers ▪ encourage conservation of open space and agricultural lands through use of clustering development, green belt buffers, and Williamson Act contracts ▪ encourage the development of outdoor recreational opportunities and facilities, including playgrounds, neighborhood parks, sports fields, and walking and biking trails 	CIRC-3.4, W-1.1, CR-1.1, HS-1.1, HS-2.1, PS-2.3, NR-1.1, NR-1.2, NR-1.3, NR-1.4, NR-1.5	Planning Department Planning Commission Public Works Parks and Recreation Commission Historic Society Community Groups CCWD VSPUD CalFire Foothill Fire District Calaveras Unified School District Area HOA/POA representatives Local Churches Calaveras County Sheriff's Department Caltrans ACOE	General Fund	On going
Program 18	Septic Systems	Prohibit construction of new septic systems on properties outside of the Working Landscapes district to protect groundwater quality and direct growth to areas served by existing wastewater infrastructure.	PS-1.1	Planning Department Environmental Health	General Fund	On going
Program 19	Neighborhood Connections	Require new subdivisions in the Community Residential district to include stubbed roads at a minimum of 600-foot intervals to allow for future roadway connections to adjacent properties. Encourage developers to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle trails within subdivisions.	CIRC-3.1, CIRC-3.2	Planning Department Public Works Department	General Fund	On going
Program 20	Town Center Street Grid	Require projects located in the Town Center district to design street systems that connect to the existing grid system in the historic Valley Springs settlement.	LU-1.11	Planning Department Public Works Department	General Fund	On going
Program 21	Block Lengths	When reviewing new development applications for the Town Center and Community Residential districts, average block lengths should ideally be 450 feet , but no longer than 600 feet.	CIRC-3.3	Planning Department Public Works Department	General Fund	On going
Program 22	Jobs/Housing Ratio	Strive for a 1:1 ratio between jobs and housing units.	ED-1.1	Planning Department	General Fund	On-going

Program 23	Housing Density	Provide density bonuses to applicants that provide affordable housing, senior housing, special-needs housing, public open space, or other community benefits.	H-1.1	Planning Department	General Fund	On-going
Coordination with Other Agencies						
Program 24	Economic Development	As part of the County's economic development activities, the following considerations should be made to support implementation of the Valley Springs Community Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus recreation-oriented businesses and other supporting services in Valley Springs Locate new medical facilities and health services in the Town Center district 	ED-1.2, PS-2.2	Planning Department Chamber of Commerce VSABA Calaveras County Economic Development Company	General Fund	On going
Program 25	Support Local Businesses	Conduct a study of local businesses to identify obstacles to expansion for existing businesses or obstacles to start up for potential new businesses.	ED-1.2, ED-3.2	Planning Department	General Fund	5 years
Program 26	Farmers' Market Site	Work with businesses, land owners, and California Certified Farmers' Markets to find a suitable location to accommodate a regular farmers' market in the Town Center or Commercial District.	HS-3.1	Planning Department	General Fund	5-8 years
Program 27	Farmers' Market Development	Work with California Certified Farmers' Markets to establish a regular farmers' market in the planning area.	HS-3.1	Planning Department, California Certified Farmers' Markets Calaveras Grown Foothill Collaborative for Sustainability (FOCUS) Paloma Pollinators	General Fund	5-8 years
Program 28	Community Center Funding	Work with residents, businesses, and landowners to pursue funding for development of a community center to be located in or adjacent to the Town Center district.	PS-2.1	Planning Department	CDBG, State/federal grants HUD Grants	10 years
Program 30	Town Center Master Plan	Work with landowners to secure funding to prepare a Town Center Master Plan that would define specific types and locations of uses to be developed in the Town Center district. Through the planning process, the County should coordinate with County departments and other agencies that might be interested in locating in the Town Center, including continuing education facilities, medical clinics, and other civic and social services.	LU-1.13, LU-1.14, LU-1.15, PS-2.3	Planning Department	State/federal grants, property owners, Strategic Growth Council grants	10 years
Program 31	Public Water Extension	Work with CCWD and VSPUD to develop water service extension strategies to provide surface water for uses allowed in the Agricultural land use designation.	PS-1.2	Public Works Department, VSPUD CCWD	General Fund	5-10 years

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