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***Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation
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For Immediate Release

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Updates to the Zoning Ordinance Promise to Respect Rural Quality of Life and Promote Public Safety

Wildfire safety, small business, housing, telecommunication facilities among issues addressed by the update

San Andreas, CA. After nine months of public meetings, the Planning Commission passed a resolution on June 5th encouraging the Board of Supervisors to approve the Zoning Ordinance Update (ZOU). The zoning ordinance identifies which land uses can occur in which zones by-right, which uses require permit approvals, and which standards apply to many different uses. Most of the ZOU retains existing code provisions but in a more organized format with better explanations and illustrations. Some new provisions have been added to implement the 2019 General Plan Update. The last complete overhaul of the zoning ordinance took place in 1986, nearly four decades ago. If the Board of Supervisors (BOS) heeds the Commission's recommendation to approve the ZOU, residents could benefit from modern policies that could help improve the quality of life for all.

Updates to various sections of the code would better protect the community from the risk of wildfire, one of the biggest threats to Calaveras County. The update would require permits for certain uses in certain zones, which can help prevent human-caused ignitions in remote locations with long emergency response times, and without adequate evacuation routes.

The code supports a broad spectrum of local economic opportunities. In addition to the typical commercial and industrial uses, zoning provisions outline opportunities for home occupations and for rural home industries. The proposed zoning ordinance outlines where residential uses can be intermixed with commercial use, establishes the ratio of commercial to residential use, and limits the square footage of detached dwelling

units. Allowing for residential uses in commercial zones could provide economic benefit for small businesses, as well as opportunities for affordable housing.

While promoting economic development, the code also seeks to respect the rural quality of life in Calaveras County. A new illumination ordinance would set clear standards for the types of exterior lighting that are allowed. By setting maximum light levels at property lines, it would provide a measurable and enforceable requirement. Requiring a permit for telecommunication facilities in certain zones should help prevent the proliferation of monopine cell towers, allow for public input, and ensure facilities are more beneficial than burdensome for the community.

Additional updates include development setbacks from streamsides, wetlands, and agricultural lands. These development setbacks attempt to protect those resources while balancing aesthetic, natural resource, and property interests.

The Zoning Ordinance Update is an opportunity for Calaveras County to retain the best aspects of the current ordinance while making meaningful policy changes that impact the daily lives of residents and visitors to Calaveras County. The Board of Supervisors can choose to adopt the ZOU when it comes before them for a vote, or they may request additional changes before approval.

Megan Fiske is the Outreach Coordinator for the Community Action Project (CAP). You can contact Megan Fiske at calaverascap@gmail.com. To receive action alerts about the ZOU you can sign up at www.calaverascap.com.