

Long-awaited Copper plan approved

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The Copperopolis Community Plan was unanimously approved last week by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

District 4 Supervisor Amanda Folendorf, who represents Copperopolis, was instrumental in bringing the project over the finish line on Feb. 11. She thanked the community for the accomplishment and said, “They navigated this well.”

Thirteen-year resident Nancy Henderson returned the compliment, “I want to say thank you to Amanda. We made it through!”

District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper acknowledged the challenges of the accomplishment, “Good job getting here. It was no easy climb.”

Efforts toward a community plan for Copperopolis have spanned many years. This latest effort, like others, had multiple starts and stops. Determined community members, supported by the Calaveras Planning Coalition, stuck with the process and brought the plan to fruition. Twenty-five-year resident Janet Sterling heralded the success, “Everybody had input. I’m super happy we’re here.”

A community plan identifies projects and programs the county is willing to work on with the residents to improve their community. It also identifies the level of support and effort the county is willing to provide in Copperopolis, the county supports protecting historic structures, beautifying the community, improving vehicular and non-vehicular traffic circulation, connecting roadways, preserving open space and rangeland, recharging groundwater, implementing the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for fire and flood safety, and developing a multi-purpose park and community center.

The county will help to implement the Copperopolis Community Plan by adopting community design guidelines, implementing complete streets, funding a circulation plan that includes bicyclists and pedestrians, updating the road basin fee, planning and funding parks and recreation, adopting landscaping standards, implementing the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and maintaining levels of service. Public participants and County staff did an excellent job selecting these general plan implementation provisions and including them in the community plan.

Of course, the county will not automatically make these efforts. Unfortunately, according to the Calaveras Planning Coalition, the community plan does not create a municipal advisory council to assist in implementing the plan, as is done in other counties in California. Therefore, residents will have to participate in these many county implementation processes and ask for what they want.

Fortunately, Copperopolis residents do participate in county government. Tom Infusino, facilitator of the Calaveras Planning Coalition notes, “Last month at the planning commission hearing on the community plan people from the Copperopolis area made suggestions to improve the plan. The planning commission was kind enough to accept those suggestions.”

The county did not address all community needs in the community plan, according to the Calaveras Planning Coalition. One of the most important needs not addressed by the community plan is accessible affordable housing. Community members did propose local housing policies and selected their associated Housing Element implementation measures. Nevertheless, county staff refused to include those provisions in the community plan.

When it comes to addressing community needs residents can, of course, get help from non-profit organizations and apply for grants from private foundations and government agencies, the coalition added. In this way local residents can succeed in addressing additional community needs primarily through private activity and with minimal county government effort.