

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a comprehensive update to the Tuolumne County General Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “General Plan Update”). The General Plan Update, which updates the 1996 General Plan, establishes the community’s vision for the development of Tuolumne County and will serve as the fundamental land use policy document for the County. The General Plan Update consists of two components: the Countywide General Plan and Community Plans, which relate to the communities of Jamestown, Columbia, East Sonora, Tuolumne, and Mountain Springs. The General Plan Update includes goals, policies, and implementation programs to guide the development of Tuolumne County through the year 2040. Consistent with Policies 8.D.1, 8.E.2, and 8.E.3 and Implementation Programs 8.D.a and 8.E.c in the Agriculture Element, the General Plan Update also includes proposed amendments to Title 17 of the Ordinance Code, which would expand the range of economic activities allowed on land zoned for agriculture. The amendments to Title 17 are described further below under the description of the Agriculture Element, and the actual proposed text amendments (in strike-through/underline) are included as Appendix F of this Draft EIR.

This chapter of the EIR describes the key characteristics of the General Plan Update, including the geographic extent of the plan, project objectives, development forecasted for the plan area, and required approvals.

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN AREA

Tuolumne County is located in the center of the California Mother Lode along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The County is bordered on the north by Calaveras County, on the south by Mariposa and Merced counties, on the west by Stanislaus County, and on the east by Alpine and Mono counties. Sonora, the County seat, is the only incorporated city. Tuolumne County encompasses 2,274 total square miles, or 1,455,360 acres. Exhibit 2-1 shows a regional map of the County, its major highways, its incorporated city and unincorporated communities, and its relationship to adjacent counties.

Tuolumne County’s diverse terrain and land uses include the Columbia State Historic Park, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, lands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and much of the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park. Tribal lands of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and Chicken Ranch Band of Me-Wuk Indians are located within Tuolumne County. Calaveras Big Trees State Park, with its world-renowned giant sequoia trees, is found mainly within the County’s borders. The County is also home to the two highest highway mountain passes through the Sierra Nevada: Tioga Pass (9,945 feet) and Sonora Pass (9,628 feet). Approximately 77 percent of Tuolumne County is under the jurisdiction of a government agency, such as the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, schools, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Transportation, or irrigation districts. Thus, the General Plan Update acknowledges that Tuolumne County has limited jurisdiction over those lands.

As described above, Sonora is the only incorporated city within Tuolumne County. However, several unincorporated communities (called “identified communities” in the General Plan Update) are also located within the County. The General Plan would apply to the unincorporated areas of Tuolumne County, including the identified communities (thus, Sonora is not included within the General Plan’s policy area).

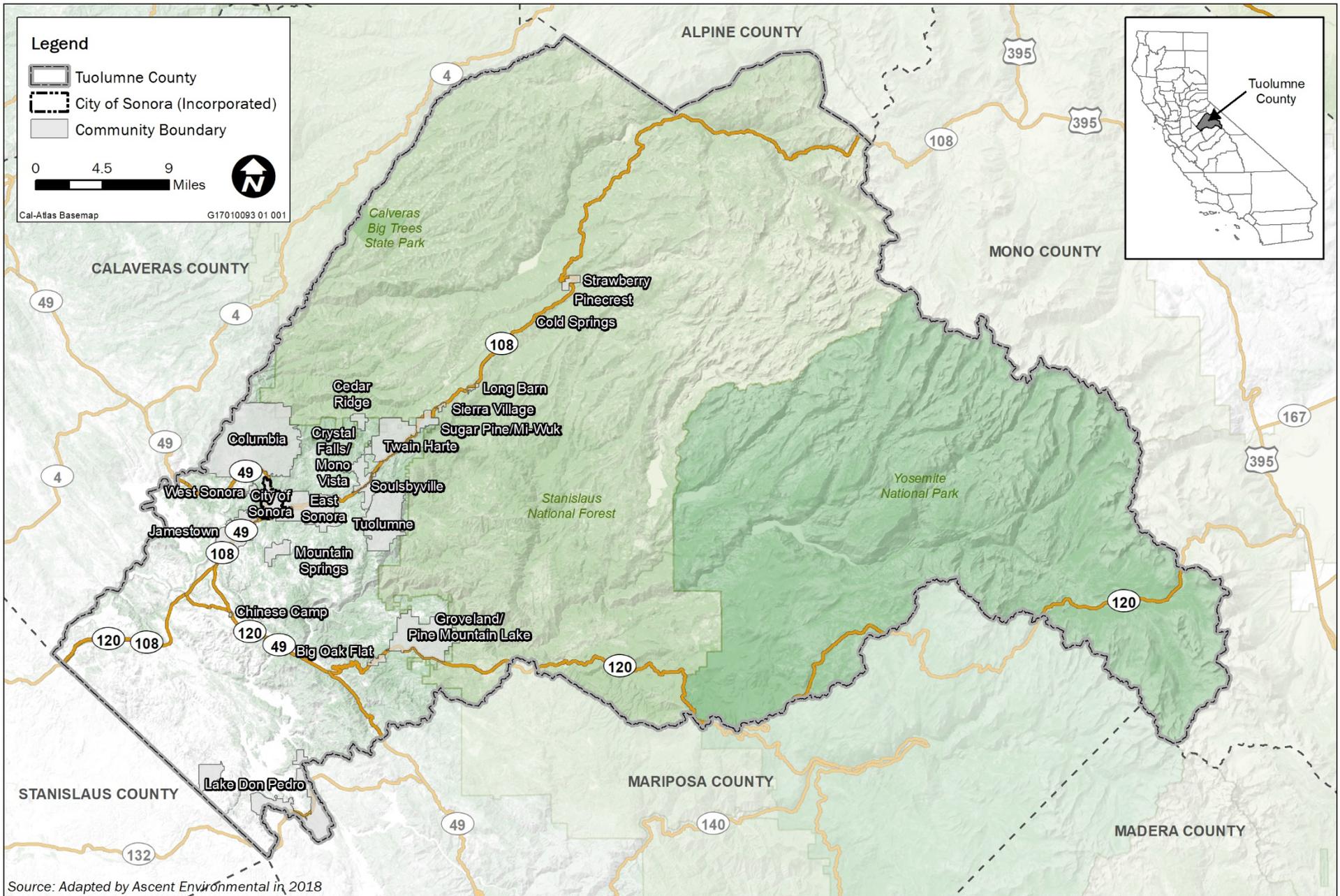


Exhibit 2-1

Regional Location



2.2 1996 GENERAL PLAN

The Tuolumne County General Plan serves as the primary policy document that guides land use decisions in the unincorporated areas of the County. The latest comprehensive update of the general plan for the County was adopted on December 26, 1996.

The 1996 Tuolumne County General Plan consists of the following elements, as well as five Community Plans:

- ▲ Agricultural Resources Element,
- ▲ Air Quality Element,
- ▲ Circulation Element,
- ▲ Community Identity Element,
- ▲ Conservation and Open Space Element,
- ▲ Cultural Resources Management Element,
- ▲ Economic Development Element,
- ▲ Housing Element,
- ▲ Land Use Element,
- ▲ Noise Element,
- ▲ Public Facilities and Services Element,
- ▲ Recreation Element, and
- ▲ Safety Element.

2.3 DISTINCTIVE COMMUNITIES GROWTH SCENARIO

Since 2007, the County of Tuolumne has been participating in Tuolumne Tomorrow, a Regional Blueprint planning process aimed at directing future growth and enhancing the quality of life in the County over the planning horizon of 2040. Through this coordinated effort, the City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, the Tuolumne County Transportation Council (TCTC), and community members developed Guiding Principles for growth and development and studied the potential effects of the likely land use development pattern and possible alternative growth scenarios on the transportation system, housing, local economy, quality of life, natural resources, and the environment. This planning process utilized growth forecasts derived from calculations conducted utilizing the U-Plan model and the Tuolumne County Regional Travel Demand Model. The U-Plan land use forecasting model is a rule-based model that is not calibrated on historical data and that simply projects the detailed footprint of development for various land use types. A detailed description of how the U-Plan model was used to develop the growth projections and patterns in this General Plan Update can be found in the Tuolumne Tomorrow: Tuolumne County Regional Blueprint Project Report.

The Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario, one of the growth scenarios developed through this effort, was selected and adopted by the Board of Supervisors in August 2012 as the preferred growth scenario for Tuolumne County. Within the Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario, each community contains a well-defined, cohesive, and compact community built around an appropriately scaled community core and community gathering places. The General Plan Update has been formulated to reflect this preferred growth scenario.

The Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario would create and provide for a mixture of residential, retail, entertainment, office, and commercial uses near each other, encouraging active communities. By having more compact communities, auto dependency would be reduced, and walking, bicycling, and transit use could become increasingly popular forms of transportation. Urban development is centralized, with rural development beyond the urban development areas and between identified community boundaries. Surrounding rural development would serve as buffers between communities and help meet the functional needs of the natural environment and nearby agriculture production. Rural development may be primarily

located on the fringe of identified communities, but clustered or grouped together to make the best use of infrastructure and avoid disruption to agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas.

Under this scenario, no changes to land use designations would be made that reduce allowable density on any parcels (i.e., down-zone), and development outside communities would continue to be allowed in the rural areas of the County. Transportation investments are used to link communities and to support a wide range of mobility choices within individual communities. More than one downtown, community center, or pedestrian-oriented center is possible in each community, providing a 5-minute walk (0.25 mile) between home and the core of a community, jobs, recreation, community facilities, and transit. Local government policies and programs would work in concert to encourage more complete and economically self-sufficient communities, where residents can live, work, and shop in the same community.

Because the General Plan Update is based on the Distinctive Communities Scenario that was created during the Regional Blueprint planning process, the General Plan Update includes policies that would help guide and direct the foreseeable development and growth that would occur in the County by 2040. In other words, the policies in the General Plan Update are more likely to shape rather than to cause the foreseeable growth in the County.

2.4 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

2.4.1 Overall Objectives

The General Plan Update is intended to function as a policy document to guide land use decisions within Tuolumne County's planning area through the year 2040. As discussed above, Tuolumne County's General Plan Update has been formulated to reflect the preferred growth scenario (the Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario of the Tuolumne Tomorrow Blueprint). Based on the general philosophy and input from the community and County decision makers, the General Plan Update includes the following overall objectives:

- ▲ Adopt a County-wide General Plan that reflects the current values and vision of the communities in the County and reflects the latest legal, statutory, scientific, and technical changes and advancements.
- ▲ Update the County General Plan to achieve and enable maximum flexibility for development within the bounds of state and federal law as well as an ever-evolving legal, cultural and environmental landscape.
- ▲ Promote the delivery of efficient and cost-effective public services.
- ▲ Enhance the unique nature of identified communities while providing services and amenities for residents, businesses, and visitors on a County-wide basis.
- ▲ Minimize or eliminate restrictions and requirements that can increase delays and/or the cost to development.
- ▲ Promote development within the County that is designed to fit the needs of the County's residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ▲ Promote the stewardship of the County's natural resources, which includes providing for the productive use of natural resources, and management to reduce risks of wildland fires.
- ▲ Conserve the County's historic resources and recognize their unique value to the County's social and economic fabric.
- ▲ Allow residents and property owners to use their land to the maximum extent of the law, while respecting the values of the community.

Individual General Plan Update elements include specific goals, policies, and implementation programs. These are further discussed below and within each of the resource sections in Chapter 3, “Environmental Impact Analysis.”

2.4.2 Growth Projections

The existing (year 2015) population of Tuolumne County, including the City of Sonora, is 54,337. The unincorporated area of Tuolumne County represents approximately 91–92 percent of this total population figure, while the City of Sonora makes up approximately 8–9 percent. The General Plan Update is based upon growth projections published by TCTC to maintain consistency with the Regional Blueprint planning process. TCTC adopted a population projection of 63,243 residents in Tuolumne County (including incorporated Sonora)¹ by the year 2040 after considering the California Department of Finance forecasts, U.S. Census Bureau population projections, and past TCTC-adopted population projections. This represents an increase of 8,906 people over the 25-year (2015–2040) forecast period, or 16 percent, which would be a growth rate of around 0.6 percent per year.

This low annual growth rate is somewhat reflective of historic growth trends in the County. Based on U.S. Census data, the County had a 1990 population of 48,456, which grew to 54,522 people by 2000—a 12-percent growth rate (1.2 percent per year) over this 10-year period. The population of Tuolumne County reached a peak of 56,788 in 2005 and declined to 55,365 by 2010—a 1.5-percent increase over the 2000 population (less than 0.2 percent annual growth). By 2015, population declined further, to 54,337 individuals, 4.5 percent fewer people than lived in the County in 2005. The most recent California Department of Finance data indicate that the County’s population recently grew slightly, to 54,740 (as of January 1, 2018). With this 0.2-percent increase over 2015 population levels, the County has roughly the same population level it had in 2000.

ANALYSIS OF GROWTH IN THIS RECIRCULATED DRAFT EIR

The General Plan Update and this Recirculated Draft EIR are based upon the assumption that the population of Tuolumne County (including the City of Sonora) will reach the projected population of 63,243 residents by year 2040. However, this assumes an annual projected growth rate of 0.6 percent that is much higher than the rate of growth that has occurred over the past 20 years. It is further noted that this rate of growth, from a foreseeable environmental impact perspective, is considered a conservative growth rate. This 0.6 percent rate of projected annual growth is also higher than what the California Department of Finance has projected. The California Department of Finance forecasts show a relatively flat population for Tuolumne County, growing to only 55,400 people (a growth of around 1,000) between 2015 and 2040 (California Department of Finance 2018). Therefore, the EIR assumes a generous growth rate that may not be reflective of the foreseeable level of growth.²

This EIR bases its analysis on the total net population growth in the County, including Sonora. Assuming that population growth will occur at the same rate in both unincorporated and incorporated (City of Sonora) areas, therefore, the analysis of projected development under the General Plan Update uses projections that are 8–9 percent higher than anticipated for the unincorporated area due to inclusion of the City of Sonora. As shown in Table 2-1, based on the existing 2015 population and TCTC’s future projected population, the increase in population in Tuolumne County is estimated to be 8,906 people by 2040. Although conservative, TCTC’s total population projection is used in this analysis to maintain consistency with previously released analyses, specifically the TCTC analysis that forms the basis of the analysis of potential effects related to

¹ For purposes of this Recirculated Draft EIR, the population of the Sierra Conservation Center is excluded.

² The California Department of Finance forecasts population growth using a variety of factors, including birth projections, death projections, and migration projections. The projections rely on trends and relationships from the past, and overall modeling. It is noted that, at the same time Tuolumne County population growth is projected by the Department of Finance to be flat, overall growth in California between 2015 and 2040 is projected to grow from 39 million to 47 million people—20-percent total growth and a rate of 0.8 percent per year (California Department of Finance 2018).

traffic and associated (air quality, noise) impacts and because the proportion of growth in the City of Sonora could change over time.

Table 2-1 Existing and Projected Population

County/City	Population	Percentage of County
Unincorporated	49,458	91
City of Sonora (Incorporated)	4,879	9
Total Existing Population (Year 2015)¹	54,337	100
Total Projected Population (Year 2040)²	63,243	
Net Increase	8,906	

Notes:

1. California Department of Finance, E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 1/1/2015.

2. TCTC's Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario forecasts for population, 2013.

Sources: California Department of Finance 2015, TCTC 2013

Table 2-2 provides an estimate of the various land use acreages in the County, comparing the existing designations (under the 1996 General Plan) to those proposed in the General Plan Update. Based on the net changes in acreage for land use designations, this Recirculated Draft EIR also uses future forecasts (or projected development) for dwelling units and commercial and industrial uses based on the Tuolumne County Regional Travel Demand Model (TCTC 2015). As part of the Tuolumne County Regional Travel Demand Model Update – Model Development Report prepared by Wood Rodgers, existing base year and future year (2040) growth forecasts were estimated. These forecasts were used as part of the Tuolumne County General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan Update EIR Traffic Study (TCTC 2015) and are also used for this EIR analysis.

As shown in Table 2-2, the quantity of land in commercial and industrial land use designations would be roughly the same for the General Plan Update and the 1996 General Plan. There would be an increase in Low Density Residential, Estate Residential, and Rural Residential land use. There would also be an increase in land designated Public. There would be less land designated for Agriculture and Timber Production. The General Plan Update includes these changes to land use designations for several reasons. Foremost among these are to match the current zoning designation, to account for existing public ownership of land, and to shift toward a land use pattern wherein development is more likely to occur within identified communities. These land use designation changes would occur throughout the County, but would be more prevalent near the communities of Jamestown, Columbia, Tuolumne, Chinese Camp, and Groveland.

Table 2-2 Existing and Projected Land Use Acreage

Land Use Designation	1996 General Plan Acreage	General Plan Update Acreage	Net Change
Residential			
High Density Residential	610	781	171
Medium Density Residential	125	259	134
Low Density Residential	11,127	12,588	1,461
Estate Residential	12,649	15,315	2,666
Homestead Residential	6,290	4,710	-1,580
Rural Residential	31,567	34,372	2,805
Large Lot Residential	11,946	9,562	-2,385

Table 2-2 Existing and Projected Land Use Acreage

Land Use Designation	1996 General Plan Acreage	General Plan Update Acreage	Net Change
Residential Subtotal	74,314	77,587	3,273
Commercial			
Neighborhood Commercial	80	73	-7
General Commercial	719	678	-40
Heavy Commercial	111	106	-5
Special Commercial	572	578	6
Commercial Subtotal	1,482	1,435	-46
Industrial			
Business Park	674	319	-355
Light Industrial	503	565	62
Heavy Industrial	901	1,046	145
Industrial Subtotal	2,078	1,930	-148
Other Uses			
Mixed Use	277	389	113
Agricultural	160,697	156,277	-4,420
Timber Production	87,043	85,652	-1,391
Open Space	1,021	736	-285
Public	1,122,501	1,125,238	2,736
Parks and Recreation	5,092	5,287	195
Total County Acreage	1,454,505	1,454,431	27¹

Notes:

¹ The net change in total County acres does not account for the County's road network, as roadways are not a designated land use under the General Plan. With the inclusion of land devoted to the road network, the total County acreage would remain the same.

Source: Prepared by Ascent Environmental using GIS data provided by Tuolumne County in 2017

As shown in Table 2-3, incremental buildout of the General Plan Update would result in a net increase of approximately 5,159 dwelling units. In addition, as shown in Table 2-3, commercial uses would increase by approximately 938,000 square feet and industrial uses would increase by approximately 196,000 square feet in the entire County by 2040.

Table 2-3 Projected Development Under the General Plan Update

Land Use Designation	Existing (Year 2015)	Projected (Year 2040 with General Plan Update)	Net Change
Residential			
Single Family Residential	19,435 du	23,767 du	4,332 du
Multi-Family Residential	1,805 du	2,632 du	827 du
Residential Subtotal	21,240 du	26,399 du	5,159 du
Commercial	4,624,000 sf	5,562,000 sf	938,000 sf
Industrial	1,718,000 sf	1,914,000 sf	196,000 sf

Notes: du = dwelling units, sf = square feet

Source: TCTC 2015

In other words, this Recirculated Draft EIR uses the projected population figure of 63,243 people by year 2040 in its analysis of potential impacts of future development within unincorporated areas of the County because the County has decided to be conservative in its approach to the analysis and mitigation of environmental impacts. But the County's analysis in this EIR also considers the level of foreseeable growth throughout the County based in part upon consideration of where existing infrastructure is located and where previously-issued building permits and other land use approvals have been sought. Full buildout of every parcel in the County is not foreseeable. In fact, the term "buildout," when used in this EIR, refers only to projected development that would occur by 2040.

In summary, the County's assumptions and projections about future growth are based on: 1) historical data about past development in the County's unincorporated areas, 2) the constraints of existing infrastructure (e.g., water, electricity), and 3) the population projections of various agencies (e.g., Department of Finance, TCTC). The General Plan Update does not promote the growth of the County's population to that level. The philosophy of the General Plan Update is that the County will be prepared and able to accommodate projected growth, if it occurs, while adhering to policies that define where and how development will occur. The General Plan Update provides guidance in determining the appropriate or desirable locations for this growth, thereby preventing an unnecessarily scattered pattern of development, which often results in extraordinary demands on public services, above-average public service costs, and unnecessary and avoidable destruction or degradation of valuable resources.

2.4.3 Definition of Terms

This section defines key terms used in this EIR. Additional definitions can be found in the Technical Background Report for the General Plan Update.

- ▲ **Urban:** areas that are characterized by residential densities exceeding one dwelling unit per 2 acres and commercial development except on land designated on the General Plan land use diagrams as Special Commercial (SC).
- ▲ **Rural:** areas generally characterized by agricultural, timberland, open areas, and residential development that is less than one dwelling unit per 2 acres, and generally is not served by public water or sewer.
- ▲ **Infill:** the development of previously undeveloped parcels bounded on at least two sides by development. Infill development would generally occur within identified communities.
- ▲ **Identified Community:** one of 18 unincorporated communities in the County: Big Oak Flat, Cedar Ridge, Chinese Camp, Columbia, Crystal Falls/Mono Vista, East Sonora, Groveland/Pine Mountain Lake, Jamestown, Lake Don Pedro, Long Barn, Mountain Springs, Sierra Village, Soulsbyville, Strawberry, Sugar Pine/Mi-Wuk, Tuolumne, Twain Harte, and West Sonora. The identified communities are the same as the "defined communities" referenced in other County planning documents.
- ▲ **Community Boundary:** Community boundaries were established as part of the Regional Blueprint effort and are included in the Regional Transportation Plan and Tuolumne Tomorrow report. Where applicable, the community boundary is consistent with the boundary in the Community Plan. Boundaries for other unincorporated communities were defined by the Blueprint Committee.

2.4.4 Contents of the General Plan Update

The General Plan Update includes the update of the seven mandatory General Plan elements. Government Code Section 65302 requires a General Plan to have both a Conservation Element and an Open Space Element, but also authorizes these elements to be combined. Due to the similar themes of these elements,

they have been combined in the General Plan Update as the Natural Resources Element to minimize redundancy. The mandatory elements included in the General Plan Update are as follows:

- ▲ Community Development and Design Element (equivalent to a land use element),
- ▲ Transportation Element (equivalent to a circulation element),
- ▲ Housing Element,
- ▲ Natural Resources Element (equivalent to a combined open space and conservation element),
- ▲ Noise Element, and
- ▲ Natural Hazards Element (equivalent to a safety element).

In addition to the mandatory elements discussed above, the General Plan Update includes the following optional elements to guide the development of the County through 2040:

- ▲ Utilities Element,
- ▲ Economic Development Element,
- ▲ Managed Resources Element,
- ▲ Agriculture Element,
- ▲ Healthy Communities Element,
- ▲ Parks and Recreation Element,
- ▲ Education and Libraries Element,
- ▲ Cultural Resources Element,
- ▲ Water Supply Element,
- ▲ Air Quality Element,
- ▲ Public Safety Element, and
- ▲ Climate Change Element.

The key features of each element of the General Plan Update are summarized below. More detailed information regarding the policies in each element is discussed in the resource analysis sections in Chapter 3, “Environmental Impact Analysis.”

Finally, there are plans for five of Tuolumne County’s identified communities:

- ▲ Columbia Community Plan,
- ▲ East Sonora Community Plan,
- ▲ Jamestown Community Plan,
- ▲ Mountain Springs Community Plan, and
- ▲ Tuolumne Community Plan.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN ELEMENT

This element is the core of the General Plan because it essentially establishes what land uses can be conducted in which locations. A land use element must, at a minimum, include land use maps or diagrams, as well as population density and building intensity standards.

The Community Development and Design Element describes the general distribution, location, and extent of various land uses. It contains a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity, types of permissible uses, and special development and permit review requirements. Twenty primary designations have been established to provide a mixture of land uses for the 1.4 million acres comprising unincorporated Tuolumne County. Overlay designations have also been established to recognize areas that have constraints to development or opportunities for conserving valuable resources. To illustrate the distribution of the land use designations established by the General Plan Update, the 20 primary designations have been generalized into four categories: Public/Agriculture/Other, Commercial, Residential, and Industrial.

General Plan Update Land Use Diagrams

The purpose of the General Plan land use diagrams is to guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various types of land uses throughout the County. The primary land use designations established by the General Plan, and depicted on the General Plan diagrams, are listed in Table 2-4 along with the approximate acreage and percent of total acreage in the County for each land use designation. The specific purpose and generally allowed uses within each land use category are described in Table 2-5. Exhibit 2-2 shows the existing Land Use designations. Exhibit 2-3 shows the Land Use Map under the General Plan Update. Exhibit 2-4 shows the parcels that would have a changed land use designation under the General Plan Update compared to the existing General Plan.

Table 2-4 General Plan Update Land Use Designations by Acreage

General Plan Designation	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
High Density Residential (HDR)	781	0.05
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	259	0.02
Low Density Residential (LDR)	12,588	0.86
Estate Residential (ER)	15,315	1.05
Homestead Residential (HR)	4,710	0.32
Rural Residential (RR)	34,372	2.36
Large Lot Residential (LR)	9,562	0.66
Agricultural (AG)	156,277	10.74
Timber Production (TPZ)	85,652	5.89
Open Space (O)	736	0.05
Public (P)	1,125,238	77.36
Parks and Recreation (R/P)	5,287	0.36
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	73	<0.01
General Commercial (GC)	678	0.05
Heavy Commercial (HC)	106	0.01
Special Commercial (SC)	578	0.04
Business Park (BP)	319	0.02
Light Industrial (LI)	565	0.04
Heavy Industrial (HI)	1,046	0.07
Mixed Use (MU)	389	0.03
Total Acreage¹	1,454,531	100

Notes: ¹ Values may not sum to totals due to rounding, right-of-way, and inconsistencies in the digital data.

Source: Prepared by Ascent Environmental using GIS data provided by Tuolumne County in 2017

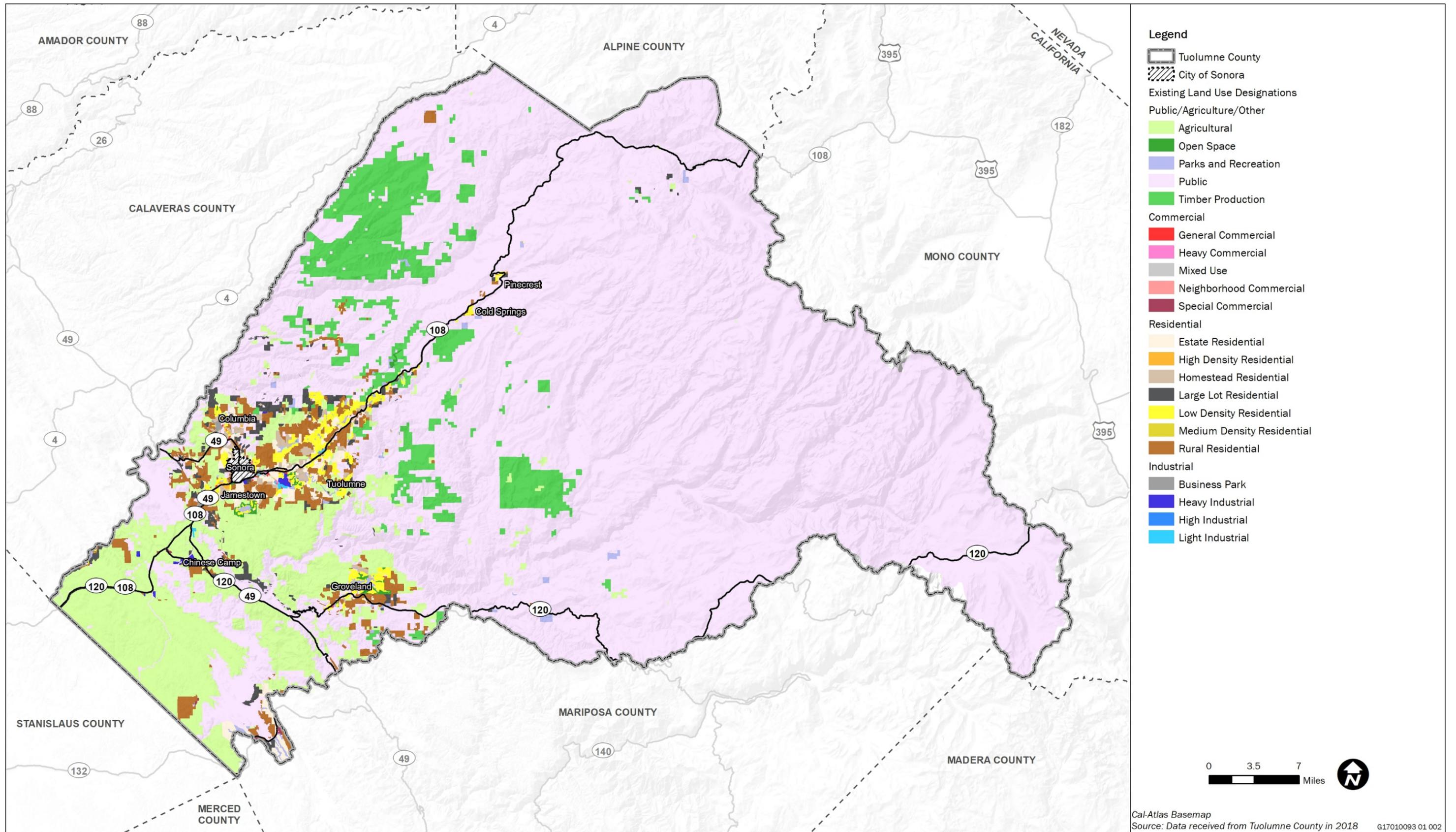


Exhibit 2-2

Existing 1996 General Plan Land Use Diagram



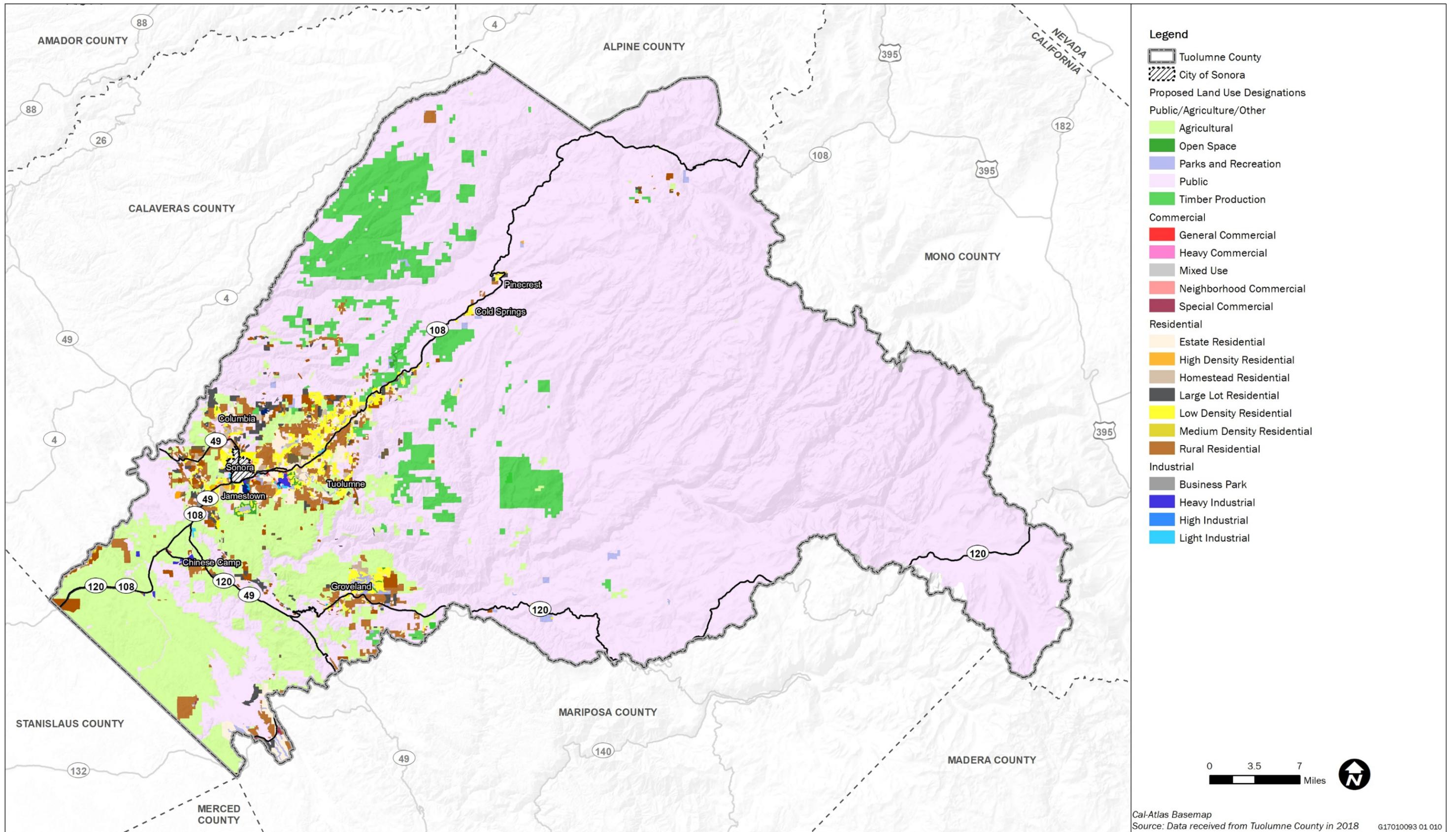


Exhibit 2-3

General Plan Update Land Use Diagram



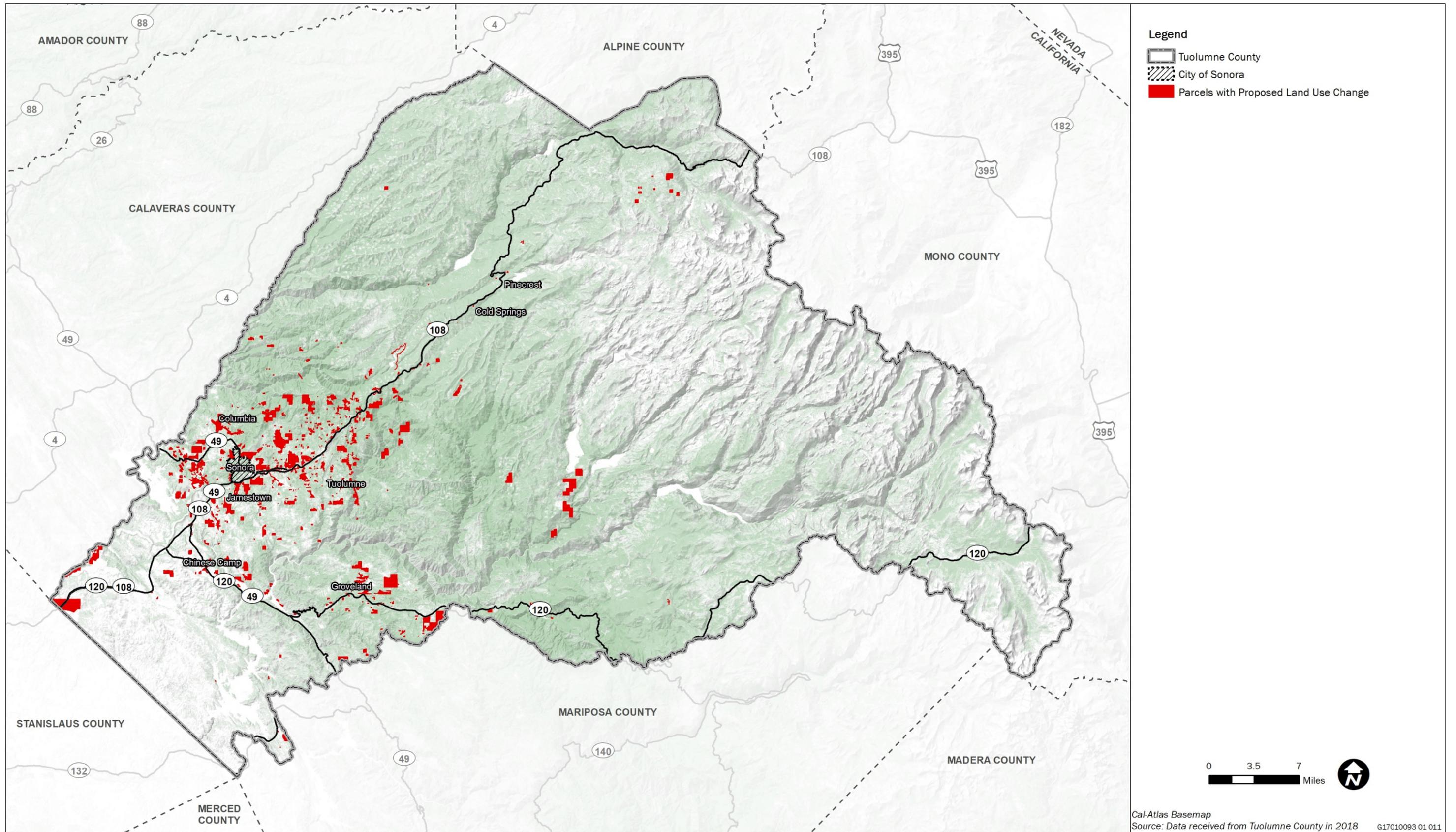


Exhibit 2-4

Parcels with Proposed Changes in Land Use Designation



Table 2-5 Description of General Plan Land Use Designations

Urban	
HDR High Density Residential	The HDR designation provides for detached and attached single-family dwellings; secondary dwellings; all types of multiple-family dwellings, such as duplexes, apartments, and senior housing projects; residential accessory uses; parks; child care facilities; and public facilities. (Up to 5 du/acre)
MDR Medium Density Residential	The MDR designation provides for detached and attached single-family dwellings; smaller-scale multiple-family dwellings, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes; residential accessory uses; parks; child care facilities; and public facilities. (Up to X du/acre)
LDR Low Density Residential	The LDR designation provides for detached single-family dwellings, secondary dwellings, residential accessory uses, parks, child care facilities, and public facilities. (Up to X du/acre)
MU Mixed Use	The MU designation provides for detached and attached single-family dwellings; all types of multiple-family dwellings, such as duplexes, apartments, and senior housing projects; small-scale commercial facilities; parks; child care facilities; and public facilities.
NC Neighborhood Commercial	The NC designation provides for limited commercial uses in areas intended to serve the nearby residential areas. This designation is found within urban areas, near population centers, to provide small-scale retail and office operations, in enclosed buildings not exceeding 50 feet in height.
GC General Commercial	The GC designation provides for a variety of sales and service establishments that serve both the residents of Tuolumne County and its visitors. This designation is found within urban areas and along highway corridors to provide large-scale retail and office operations in buildings not exceeding 50 feet in height. Accessory outdoor storage and display areas are allowed under this designation. Establishments in this category have a larger market area and greater volume of customers than those under the NC designation.
HC Heavy Commercial	The HC designation provides for a variety of sales and service establishments, including outdoor sales and wholesale businesses, that serve both the residents of Tuolumne County and its visitors. This designation is found within urban areas to provide for wholesale and heavy commercial uses and services necessary within the County. In addition to the uses permitted in the NC and GC designations, the HC designation provides for limited uses that are light industrial in nature, such as general manufacturing, processing, and refining. Buildings in this designation are limited to 50 feet in height.
Non-Urban	
ER Estate Residential	The ER designation provides country estate-type living conditions while maintaining limited areas of open space dedicated to agricultural pursuits or to grazing or left undisturbed. This designation serves as a buffer between urban and urbanizing areas and areas where public services are limited.
HR Homestead Residential	The HR designation provides country estate-type living conditions while maintaining areas of open space dedicated to agricultural pursuits or to grazing or left undisturbed. This designation, with its maximum residential density of one (1) primary dwelling per three (3) acres, is intended to comply with the density restrictions of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the areas around the Columbia and Pine Mountain Lake Airports; consequently, this designation is concentrated within the jurisdictional boundaries of that plan for those airports but can also be found in other areas which have limited public services and where a buffer between urban and urbanizing areas and rural areas is desired.
RR Rural Residential	The RR designation provides country estate-type living conditions while maintaining large areas of open space dedicated to agricultural pursuits or to grazing or left undisturbed. This designation is found in areas that have limited public services and serves as a buffer between urban and urbanizing areas and agricultural land.
LR Large Lot Residential	The LR designation provides country estate-type living conditions while maintaining large areas of open space dedicated to agricultural pursuits or to grazing or left undisturbed. This designation is found in areas that have limited public services and serves as a buffer between urban and urbanizing areas and agricultural land.
AG Agricultural	The AG designation provides for the production of food, feed, fiber, nursery, and apiary commodities and other productive or potentially productive lands where commercial agricultural uses can exist without creating conflicts with other land uses or where potential conflicts can be minimized. This designation is found throughout the County but is concentrated in the western part of the County.
TPZ Timber Production	The TPZ designation provides for the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products in concert with limited, low-intensity public and private commercial recreational uses. This designation is found primarily in the eastern part of the County at elevations above 3,000 feet and is interspersed with federally owned land within the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park.

Table 2-5 Description of General Plan Land Use Designations

O Open Space	The O designation provides for the protection of important natural and cultural resources, serves as a buffer between incompatible land uses, and limits development in hazardous areas. This designation can be used throughout the County to preserve scenic resources, archaeological resources, unique topography, vegetation, habitat, stream corridors, prominent ridgetops, and watersheds and to limit development in floodplains, unstable slopes, and fault zones.
P Public	The P designation identifies lands that are owned by public agencies and recognizes that these lands are exempt from County land use regulations. This designation applies to lands such as the Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite National Park, Columbia State Historic Park, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, and lands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, public schools, public utilities, and other public agencies, as well as the County's own property.
R/P Parks and Recreation	The R/P designation provides for recreational uses of a commercial nature to serve the tourist industry and provides leisure activities for the County's residents. This designation is found primarily along the County's highway corridors and is also interspersed in the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park.
SC Special Commercial	The SC designation provides for a variety of sales and service establishments that serve both the residents of Tuolumne County and its visitors in areas that do not have public water and/or sewer service. This designation is found primarily along highway corridors to provide commercial facilities that are easily accessible to the County's tourists.
BP Business Park	The BP designation provides for a mixture of industrial and commercial land uses with an emphasis on manufacturing, processing, assembly, storage, distribution, wholesale businesses, and research and development activities in campus-like business or industrial park settings. This designation is applied to areas with good access to major truck transportation routes and rail lines, located near concentrated residential areas so that employee commute times and distances are minimized.
LI Light Industrial	The LI designation provides for industrial land uses with an emphasis on manufacturing, processing, assembly, storage, distribution, and research and development activities. This designation is applied to areas with good access to major truck transportation routes and rail lines, located near concentrated residential areas so that employee commute times and distances are minimized.
HI Heavy Industrial	The HI designation provides for all the same uses as the LI designation but also provides for uses that are normally considered incompatible with residential development. This designation is applied to areas with good access to major truck transportation routes and rail lines that are located away from concentrated residential areas to minimize impacts to the County residents.
Overlay Designations	
MPZ Mineral Preserve (Overlay)	The MPZ overlay designation provides for the extraction and processing of mineral resources. This overlay is used to identify land that has been classified as either Mineral Resource Zone MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b by the State Mining and Geology Board under the State Classification System and meets criteria for relationship to surrounding land uses, access, and other issues. The -MPZ overlay designation is found along the Mother Lode gold ore zone, the carbonate belt from Columbia to Algerine, and the Table Mountain basalt as an aggregate source. This overlay designation will be used to direct the development potential of the designated properties towards the types of development that are compatible with possible mineral resource extraction.
AIR Airport (Overlay)	The AIR overlay designation provides for the orderly development of land surrounding the public use airports within the County to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses. The purpose of this designation is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by minimizing the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards associated with use of the airports. Development within this designation must comply with the Tuolumne County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan in addition to other requirements applicable to land development in Tuolumne County. The -AIR designation is found in the areas surrounding the County's public use airports, specifically encompassing all area within the airport influence area boundaries as defined in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The purpose of the Transportation Element is to determine a baseline of existing transportation and circulation conditions in Tuolumne County, establish projected future circulation needs through 2040, and provide policy direction and implementation efforts to ensure the continued efficient movement of people and goods while simultaneously striving toward reduced vehicle emissions and associated greenhouse gases.

The Transportation Element reflects the goals, policies, and programs of the Community Development and Design Element and the land use diagrams. This integration of the Community Development and Design and Transportation Elements has been accomplished by identifying transportation needs associated with the growth and development identified in the Community Development and Design Element and formulating circulation improvements to accommodate that growth. Conversely, the growth projected in the Community Development and Design Element has been directed to areas that currently can, or have the potential to, accommodate increased demands on the circulation system.

The goals of the Transportation Element and changes to policies aim to preserve the County's existing transportation infrastructure and provide for the long-range planning and development of the County's transportation system for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. It also aims to encourage the use of alternative means of transportation by providing safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities within and between communities with high traffic volumes, thereby reducing road congestion and improving circulation, health and air quality within the County. Exhibit 2-5 provides a regional map of the proposed circulation network.

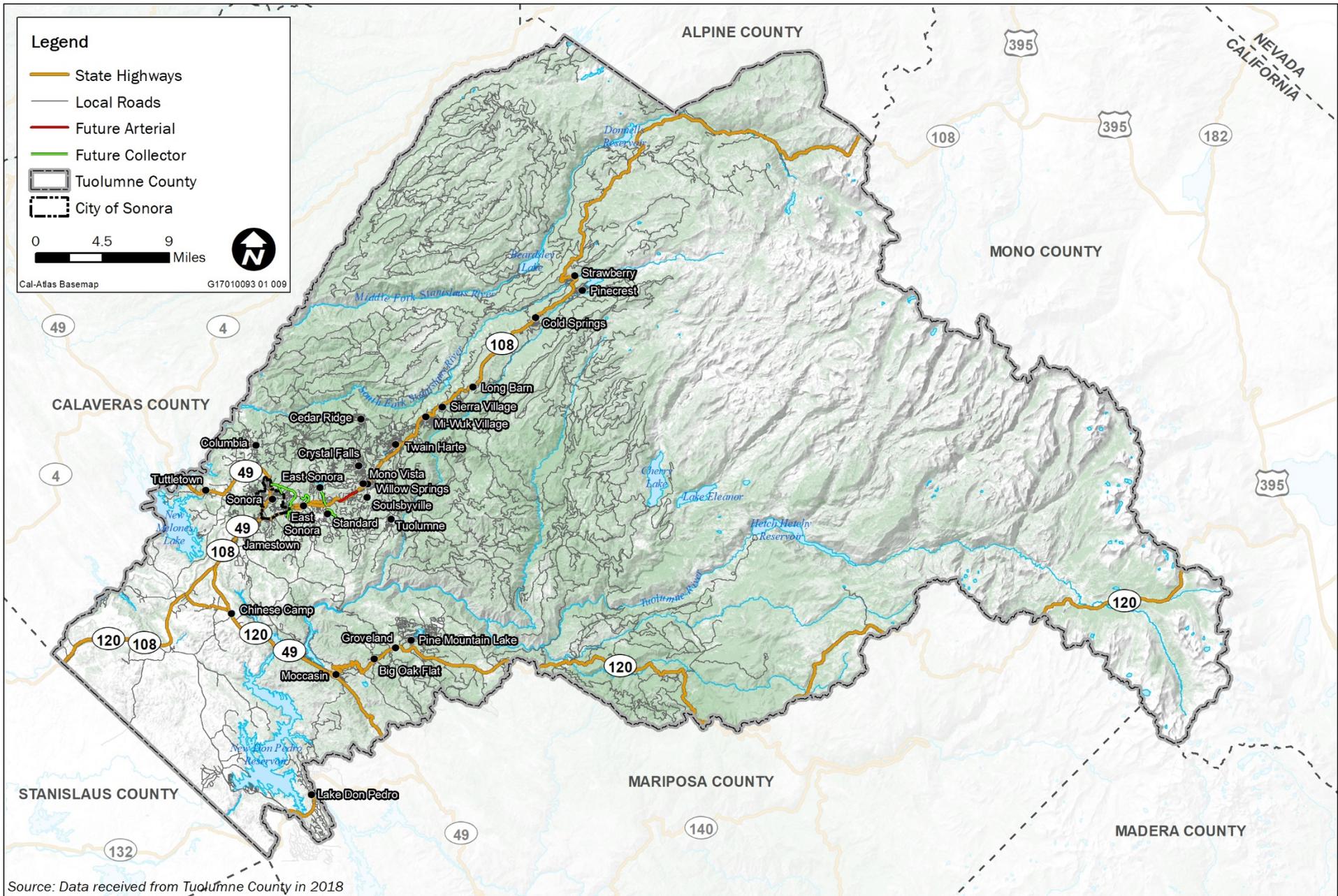
HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element describes a variety of policies and programs intended to conserve the existing supply of housing in unincorporated Tuolumne County, including affordable housing, as well as to provide capacity for the development of new housing in accordance with the County's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation. Tuolumne County's RHNA allocation for the 2014–2019 period is 450 new units. This total includes 176 units in the "extremely low," "very low," and "low" income categories. As shown in Table 2-6, Tuolumne County has designated more than sufficient land for potential housing units to meet the housing needs for the planning period. As part of the General Plan Update, additional acres are proposed to be designated for High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Mixed Use zoning. Thus, Tuolumne County provides ample capacity to develop residential units in the "extremely low," "very low," "low," "moderate," and "above moderate" categories based on the number of remaining vacant lots in the County.

Table 2-6 Tuolumne County Total Potential Affordable Housing Units and 2014–2019 RHNA Allocation

Land Use Designation	Total Potential Affordable Units	2014–2019 Tuolumne County RHNA Allocation
HDR	1,106	450
MDR	49	
MU	286	
Total	1,441	

An important goal of the Housing Element is to ensure that Tuolumne County continues to grow and develop as a clean and safe County where residents have access to adequate, dignified, and affordable housing without overcrowding, where population density is in balance with resources, and where land use planning, zoning, and building code enforcement carry out this expressed vision.



Source: Data received from Tuolumne County in 2018

Exhibit 2-5

Countywide Circulation Network



NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

To ensure the maximum coordination between the management and use of natural resources and open spaces in Tuolumne County, the state-required Conservation Element and Open Space Element are combined into this single Natural Resources Element. This element establishes policies related to open space lands for the preservation of natural resources, open space used for the managed production of resources, social-use open spaces, and open space for public health and safety. Natural resources considered include forests, soils, fisheries, wildlife, plants, energy, minerals, and viewsheds. It should be noted that changes to the Natural Resources Element from the previous General Plan include establishing new policies for protecting oak woodlands and revising the thresholds of significance for oak woodland conversion. These potential revisions and the impacts associated with the revisions are discussed further in Section 3.4, “Biological Resources.”

NOISE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Noise Element is to identify the existing and projected future noise environment in Tuolumne County, and provide policy direction and implementation efforts to protect County residents from exposure to excessive noise levels. This element provides the basis for comprehensive local policies to control and abate environmental noise from stationary and mobile noise sources and reduce conflicts between noise and noise-sensitive land uses. California Government Code Section 65302 also requires that noise contours be identified for all of these sources and stated in terms of community noise equivalent level or day-night average sound level. The noise contours must be prepared on the basis of noise monitoring or following generally accepted noise modeling techniques for various noise sources. The Noise Element was developed using noise modeling instead of extensive noise monitoring. Based upon this modeling, standards for noise levels for land use compatibility have been formulated. The noise contour maps are shown in Section 3.12, “Noise.”

NATURAL HAZARDS ELEMENT

The intent of the Natural Hazards Element is to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property. This element concentrates on those hazards and community factors that are within the responsibility of the County to mitigate. These include land use decisions and patterns of development that directly and indirectly affect the health, well-being, and personal/property protection of County residents, and the mitigation of potential natural hazards.

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

Utilities Element

The purpose of the Utilities Element is to address the public facilities and services necessary to support the current and future residents and visitors of Tuolumne County. The focus of this element is on those services provided by the County of Tuolumne and other local agencies related to public water, sewer, and solid waste, and how the need for those services relates to future growth.

Economic Development Element

In 1990, the City of Sonora and County of Tuolumne jointly adopted an Economic Development Policy. One of the measures included in that policy was to develop and adopt an Economic Development Element for the General Plan. The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to outline a policy framework and implementation programs whereby economic development benefits local citizens, businesses, public, private, and non-profit sectors. Policies of the Economic Development Element that facilitate economic development in Tuolumne County could result in physical developments and improvements, particularly within identified communities. Under Implementation Program 6.A.i, land development applications for the expansion of existing or construction of new facilities for commercial, industrial, or recreational enterprises

would be prioritized. The Economic Development Element also supports and encourages development or expansion of communications and airport facilities.

Managed Resources Element

The Managed Resources Element establishes policies and implementation programs to promote the stability and productivity of the County's timber and mineral lands and related industries. This element is intended to provide clear guidelines for land use decisions in timberland areas and express policies that promote and protect the current and future needs of Tuolumne County's timberland resources. The Managed Resources Element recognizes that working landscapes provide stewardship values for the County's natural environment and that stewardship of the County's natural resources includes the productive use of resources.

Agriculture Element

The Agriculture Element addresses the important agricultural industries in the County and identifies measures to protect agricultural lands from the encroachment of development and incentives to retain these lands in agricultural production, including increased flexibility to allow more agritourism uses to support agricultural operations. This element is intended to provide clear guidelines for decisions in agricultural areas and to promote the stability and productivity of the County's agricultural lands.

Consistent with Policies 8.D.1, 8.E.2, and 8.E.3 and Implementation Programs 8.D.a and 8.E.c in the Agriculture Element, the General Plan Update also includes amendments to Title 17 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code, which would expand the range of activities allowed on land zoned for agriculture. The proposed changes to Title 17 can be generalized into the following categories:

1. Administrative/non-substantive changes to align the ordinance code with current regulations.
2. Addition/revisions to the definitions in Chapter 17.04, such as the definition of "general farming and ranching" and modifying the definition of "agricultural labor housing."
3. The addition/modification of permitted and conditional agritourism land uses with similar land development impacts as what is currently listed as permitted/conditional uses as well as the removal of land uses in the following zoning districts: AE-37, A-20, A-10, RE-1, RE-2, RE-3, RE-5 and RE-10.
4. The addition of two new zoning districts, including Chapter 17.07 Exclusive Agricultural, one hundred sixty-acre minimum (AE-160) and Chapter 17.08 Exclusive Agricultural, eighty acre minimum (AE-80). These proposed zoning districts are intended to allow property owners engaged in large-scale agricultural operations to down-zone property to further protect agricultural operations in the County by increasing the minimum parcel size. Larger minimum parcel sizes could also result in increased efficiencies in agriculture operations.
5. New language in Chapter 17.52, General Provisions and Exception, regarding the operation of commercial events on agricultural land. These commercial events are permitted uses in the A-20, AE-37, AE-80, and AE-160 and conditional uses in the A-10, RE-10, and RE-5 zoning districts. Section 17.52.220 outlines the requirements that these commercial events must comply with, in addition to a list of performance standards which includes the provision of sanitation facilities, the hours of operation, permissible noise levels, parking requirements, signage, waste management, and building requirements. Use permits would also be able to be secured to increase the size of events, allow additional events, or request modifications to the performance standards.

The full-text of the proposed amendments to Title 17 can be seen in Appendix F of this Draft EIR.

Healthy Communities Element

Tuolumne County is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all its residents. Therefore, the Healthy Communities Element was created to address three public health and land use issues: physical

activity, access to healthy foods and nutrition, and smoke-free living. Potential physical development that may result from the Healthy Communities Element would be related to policies that promote constructing pedestrian routes, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and mixed-use development and orienting development near street infrastructure to encourage walkability.

Parks and Recreation Element

The Parks and Recreation Element contains an assessment of the recreational needs of residents and tourists of Tuolumne County. Goals and policies have been formulated for providing the recreational facilities identified as being needed through that assessment. Another important aspect of this element is the identification of sources of funding for acquisition, development, and maintenance of new parks and recreational facilities. Physical development that may occur as a result of the Parks and Recreation Element policies include the acquisition or construction of new parks and the construction of bicycle and pedestrian trails near the County's major population centers and transportation networks. It should be noted that the General Plan Update includes an update to the previous standard for providing parks. The 1996 General Plan established a goal of providing 30 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. This standard has been demonstrated to be infeasible; therefore, the County is proposing a revised standard of 5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. This amount of parkland is consistent with the Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477), which generally requires that jurisdictions set aside 3–5 acres of recreational lands for every 1,000 residents. The Parks and Recreation Element policies would also amend the Tuolumne County zoning ordinance to include bicycle rental facilities and other such facilities as permitted uses within commercial and recreational zoning districts.

Education and Libraries Element

The purpose of the Education and Libraries Element is to address the public facilities and educational services necessary to support the current and future residents and visitors of Tuolumne County. This element also identifies mechanisms for funding these important services for new and existing development.

Cultural Resources Element

The Cultural Resources Element includes a priority system for protection of cultural resources based on significance criteria and policies for management of these resources. This element also identifies means of streamlining the review process by identifying when cultural resource studies are required.

Water Supply Element

The Water Supply Element includes policies designed to ensure access to County water; diversify the County water portfolio; achieve adequate water storage; and ensure secure, safe, and sustainable water and sewer infrastructure. The driving force is to ensure adequate water supplies to meet the diverse needs of a healthy and economically viable community. Such water supply needs include domestic consumption; fire protection; economic development; base industries, such as recreation and agriculture; and habitat protection. Potential physical development as a result of the Water Supply Element would be related to policies that encourage new development to be located in areas where public water and sewer services are available or can be developed and measures that promote water conservation, such as landscaping standards.

Air Quality Element

The Air Quality Element was drafted in consultation with the Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District and focuses on development standards to minimize pollution of the County's air. Key provisions of the Air Quality Element include reducing vehicular emissions and greenhouse gases through land use planning and transportation planning that promote public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access to homes, businesses, schools, and civic centers; siting sources of industrial air pollutants away from residences and other sensitive receptors; and minimizing wood smoke from woodstoves and burning activities associated with fire hazard reduction and forest management practices.

Public Safety

The Public Safety Element is the primary vehicle for relating local safety planning to County land use decisions. While the Community Development and Design Element identifies areas where hazardous land uses may be located, the Public Safety Element contains policies for determining acceptable levels of public risk imposed by these land uses, as well as policies for mitigating the effects of man-made catastrophes. Potential development that could occur under the Public Safety Element would be associated with the implementation programs that would require new developments to install prevention and protection measures and mitigation against fires, flooding, and other hazards. This element, while focusing on fire, also addresses other public safety issues relevant to Tuolumne County, including emergency services, crime, and hazardous waste.

Climate Change Element

The Climate Change Element is intended to guide regional and local land use and transportation decisions toward sustainability, while meeting residents' needs and providing a high quality of life. The Climate Change Element identifies policies and programs that the County can implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with state greenhouse gas targets and promotes the adaptation and resiliency of the County's communities in a changing climate.

COMMUNITY PLANS

Plans for five of Tuolumne County's individual communities (Jamestown, Columbia, East Sonora, Tuolumne, and Mountain Springs) have been included in the General Plan Update to provide goals and policies to address the unique character of those communities. These plans address the issues discussed in the individual General Plan elements on a community level. Each plan has been prepared to reflect the character of the community. For example, the Columbia plan emphasizes historic preservation while the East Sonora plan focuses on design standards and creating a sense of place. These plans are not intended to be stand-alone documents, but rather to provide a close-up of the community within the context of the General Plan Update. Additional community plans may be formulated as individual communities seek specific development goals, policies, and standards to guide the future growth of their unique areas. The formulation of these plans will be undertaken by the County in response to requests from the communities. The County will not initiate such plans without the support and participation of a community's residents, property owners, and businesses.

The General Plan Update revises the Community Plans only to ensure internal consistency and improve clarity. Upon the completion of the General Plan Update process, the County intends to engage stakeholders and conduct community outreach through a comprehensive community plan process.

2.5 REQUIRED DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

As the lead agency under CEQA, Tuolumne County is responsible for considering the adequacy of the EIR and determining if the overall project should be approved. Following the completion of the Final EIR, the Tuolumne County Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation on the General Plan Update to the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors. The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors will then conduct a separate public hearing to consider:

- ▲ Certification of the Final EIR on the General Plan Update,
- ▲ Approval of the 2018 Tuolumne County General Plan, and
- ▲ Adoption of the amendments to Title 17 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code.