



Chapter 6

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A place where all citizens enjoy opportunities to thrive in a safe, healthy, and productive community.
- The Tuolumne County Vision

Introduction

The purpose of economic development is to raise the standard of living for everyone in a region by optimizing human, financial, natural and cultural capital to produce income, goods and services to support the region and for export. Economic development activities within a region are broad based and include the public, private and non-profit sectors and their involvement in retail, wholesale, recreational, agricultural, health care, manufacturing, service, tourist and industrial activities.

The Economic Development Element is intended to support the retention and expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses and industries to the County. Through creating efficiencies within the County’s regulatory authority, projects can become “shovel ready” in a timely manner. This element also supports the creation, expansion and rehabilitation of public infrastructure needed to support and sustain local business and industry. By providing funding, the County can enable business development that will benefit both residents and visitors.

Purpose
Promote economic development within Tuolumne County that is designed to fit the needs of the County’s residents, businesses, and visitors. Support a development strategy that retains and creates living-wage job opportunities to allow all residents to thrive.

Overarching Vision

OAV1. Promote development in Tuolumne County that reflects the values and vision of the community and implements the latest legal, statutory, scientific, and technical changes and advances.

OAV2. Achieve, enable and preserve maximum flexibility within the constraints of state and federal law and an ever-evolving legal, cultural and environmental landscape.

OAV3. Recognize that the County has a unique role to collaborate with special districts/stakeholders within the County to promote the delivery of efficient and cost effective public services.



GOAL 6A:

Develop and maintain a favorable environment for conducting business in the County by providing a consistent, efficient and positive regulatory climate.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.A.1: Provide a stable and sound blueprint for investment and business decisions by providing consistency in developmental requirements.

Implementation Programs

6.A.a – Maintain simple forms, instructions, and handouts related to land development, both in print and digital formats.

6.A.b - Utilize technology to disseminate development information and to improve the processing of development applications.

6.A.c - Maintain standards that are required for each generalized type of development to provide greater certainty to applicants of the regulations and conditions that can be anticipated for the respective types of development projects.

Policy 6.A.2: Project a pro-business image through a pro-active planning and regulatory policy framework.

Implementation Programs

6.A.d - Review and amend, where appropriate, County codes and regulations to address provisions that have the potential to deter the retention or expansion of local businesses or the attraction of new businesses.

6.A.e - In cooperation with the business and economic development organizations in the County, develop a proactive effort to identify policies, regulations, fees and other issues related to the County's programs for the issuance of various permits, licenses and other land use entitlements that are problematic or represent obstacles to businesses and develop solutions, such as adjusting, replacing, or eliminating the regulations to be more amenable to the economic development interests of the County.

6.A.f - Support or initiate appropriate political efforts which will promote local economic development or business activities, especially those which pay family wage salaries.

6.A.g - Review and evaluate on a periodic basis, any County fees related to land development projects for comparability with similar fees in neighboring jurisdictions. Balance fee adjustments between keeping development fees favorable to economic development and maintaining services to review and process applications in a timely manner.

Policy 6.A.3: Strive to make the development process more user-friendly, efficient and effective by streamlining the processing of business related entitlements.



Implementation Programs

6.A.h - Assist businesses by streamlining application and permit review processes by identifying a single point of contact for each development project and continuing to coordinate improvements in the efficiency of the respective development divisions. Establish a priority for responses by staff to requests for data and assistance pertaining to land development projects that entail the creation of new jobs.

6.A.i - Continue to prioritize land development applications for the expansion of existing or construction of new facilities for commercial, industrial or recreational enterprises, particularly within identified communities.

6.A.j - Reduce processing times for project review within County departments by cross-training and integrating staff from different departments to encourage a broad understanding of the various application review processes. Review staffing levels to determine if adding staff will reduce delays in permit processing.

6.A.k - Conduct customer service surveys, on a periodic basis, for all development divisions, including follow-up questionnaires for specific development entitlements, to gauge customer satisfaction and implement changes to improve permit processing in response to customer comments.

6.A.l - Expand the County's automated computer tracking system, which is used by all development divisions, to enable applicants to access information regarding project status online and to improve the efficiency of the respective divisions through automation.

6.A.m - Encourage the development of new businesses that will provide employment and diversify the local economy by maintaining a database of available sites, fast track permit processing and pre-zoning suitable sites for commercial development.

Policy 6.A.4: Focus the permit process on regulatory intent while recognizing that an effective customer service program seeks solutions that are within the law and public interest.

Implementation Program

6.A.n - Provide training in customer service and communication skills to all County staff.

Policy 6.A.5: Maintain an ongoing relationship with business, industry, tourism, agriculture, recreation, cultural, and historic preservation groups, such as the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, Yosemite Chamber of Commerce, Tuolumne County Farm Bureau, Tuolumne County Visitor's Bureau, Tuolumne County Association of Realtors, Tuolumne County Building Industry Association, Central Sierra Arts Council, Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, and Chicken Ranch Band of Me-Wuk Indians, to assist the County in its efforts to develop and maintain a favorable environment in which to conduct business.

Implementation Programs

6.A.o - Provide education to County staff, commissions, elected officials and the public regarding economic development.

6.A.p - Promote an open line of communication between the Board of Supervisors, the public, and all agencies or departments which issue permits related to commerce.



GOAL 6B:

Promote the improvement of the infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines, roads, power, railroads and airports, and communication facilities throughout the County to increase the marketability of the County for the retention, expansion, and attraction of business and industry.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.B.1: Support a schedule of reasonable and justified mitigation fees for new development to pay its proportional share of the cost of expanding services and infrastructure.

Policy 6.B.2: Actively work to maintain, improve and expand, where appropriate, the transportation system to facilitate economic development.

Implementation Program

6.B.a - Work cooperatively with Caltrans and neighboring counties to improve regional transportation facilities by engaging in public dialogue through the Tuolumne County Transportation Council.

Policy 6.B.3: Support the efforts of the utility providers to maintain, improve, enhance reliability, and expand where appropriate their infrastructure and service within the County.

Implementation Programs

6.B.b - Continue to cooperate with utility companies in securing funding to improve utilities throughout Tuolumne County.

6.B.c - Support water and wastewater agencies in identifying areas zoned for commercial use that are lacking adequate infrastructure, support agency designs for infrastructure of adequate size and types to meet current and future business service needs and support the efforts of agencies that are filing grant applications to fund upgrades to water and wastewater facilities.

Policy 6.B.4: Support efforts to install state of the art communication facilities throughout Tuolumne County.

Implementation Programs

6.B.d - Support the efforts of communications companies to identify the key facilities and technology required to facilitate increasing business needs for communications services and to keep Tuolumne County competitive in attracting new businesses which depend on such services.

6.B.e - Actively work to improve the telecommunications infrastructure in the County in order to increase opportunities for telecommuting and facilitate economic development.



GOAL 6C:

Identify financial sources which could be obtained for economic development purposes.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.C.1: Provide financial support to the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority's programs and activities.

Implementation Programs

6.C.a - Support the continued provision of a countywide revolving loan fund, currently through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, to assist local businesses in expansion or retention activities.

6.C.b - Continue to allocate funds to the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority and the Visitor's Bureau on an annual basis.

6.C.c - Support Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority's efforts to develop funding and technical assistance sources for local micro-enterprises.

GOAL 6D:

Promote the development of commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational facilities and tourism uses to provide jobs for County residents and diversify the local economy.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.D.1: Enhance and promote the position of Tuolumne County as a regional recreational center for the Central Valley and Bay Area regions.

Implementation Programs

6.D.a - Encourage and support private sector initiatives to develop recreational and tourist-oriented facilities.

6.D.b - Coordinate with the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, the Visitor's Bureau, and other organizations to include the County's recreation opportunities and tourism potential in their promotional activities.

Policy 6.D.2: Promote a diverse, countywide tourist industry that relates to the agricultural, historical, cultural, recreational, and natural attractions of the County.

Implementation Programs

6.D.c - Encourage the development of agritourism enterprises in the County.



6.D.d - Promote heritage tourism by highlighting Tuolumne County's cultural resources through support for programs emphasizing the recognition and/or use of cultural resources for the enjoyment, education and recreational use of visitors to Tuolumne County.

6.D.e - Support a voluntary Historic Marker Program and preparation of a guide for walking, bicycling and driving tours describing the resources and locations of the resources included in the program. Guides should be distributed to the Visitor's Bureaus, the Chambers of Commerce, Lodging Associations, Columbia State Historic Park, Yosemite National Park, Railtown 1897, Tuolumne County Museum, Stanislaus National Forest and other similar organizations. Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources or the Tuolumne County Register of Cultural Resources and located within an historic district or visible from a designated heritage corridor shall be recognized in the Historic Marker Program with a Marker to be mounted on the structure. Funding for the program is likely to be from donations and grants and may be a limiting factor; therefore, coordination with interested organizations and agencies is encouraged.

Policy 6.D.3: Encourage the expansion of the tourist industry by supporting new development that serves that industry.

Implementation Program

6.D.f - Prepare a land use map identifying parcels near existing or anticipated population centers which are properly zoned and have a high potential for supporting proposed new recreational facilities, such as a covered swimming pool or roller skating rink. This information will be made available to the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce and other appropriate agencies for informing private industry of the County's support for these new facilities. The information should be included in subsequent updates of the Tuolumne County Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 6.D.4: Address the needs of visitors and provide recreational opportunities which enhance business within the County's identified communities consistent with the goals and policies of the Economic Development Element of the General Plan.

Implementation Program

6.D.g - Prepare a brochure indicating the location of existing trails, recreation facilities, and destination points for distribution by the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, Tuolumne County Visitor's Bureau, the County libraries, area lodging facilities, and other entities who contact residents and visitors.

Policy 6.D.5: Enhance and promote the position of Tuolumne County as a regional trade center for the Central Sierra Nevada region.

Policy 6.D.6: Identify areas within the County which will be appealing to, and capable of accommodating, the amount of industrial and other employment-generating development required to meet the County's needs over the planning horizon of this General Plan.

Implementation Programs

6.D.h - Continue efforts in determining the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial and recreational development to meet the County's needs during the planning horizon of this General



Plan and, utilizing the computerized database inventory of suitable land for such uses, designate the respective amounts of land needed for each use on the land use diagrams. Rezone the land in accordance with the land use designation to make it more available for development.

6.D.i - Maintain a database inventory of suitable sites in Tuolumne County for industrial, commercial, and recreational development based on land use designations, zoning, infrastructure availability, transportation, proximity to labor and market and other factors utilizing the County's computerized mapping system. This inventory will address ownership, zoning, infrastructure capacities and other site attributes and constraints.

6.D.j - In cooperation with the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, encourage the attraction of businesses and industries by maintaining a database of available sites and buildings, fast tracking permit processing and rezoning suitable sites to be consistent with their land use designations. Encourage the reuse of historic buildings for new businesses.

GOAL 6E:

Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, attraction of new business and industry and assist in entrepreneurial programs to generate local employment opportunities, reduce retail leakage out of the county trade area and diversify the local economy, while maintaining its environmental and cultural integrity.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.E.1: Encourage small businesses, home occupations and cottage industries throughout the County.

Implementation Program

6.E.a - Continue to allow home occupations and cottage industries within residential areas subject to specific criteria. Provide guidelines on home occupations to be included in the business start-up packet. Include information on the criteria for determining whether or not a business qualifies as a home occupation.

Policy 6.E.2: Encourage local business organizations to provide programs that assist local start-up enterprises.

Implementation Programs

6.E.b - Cooperate with the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority in creating and updating a business inventory list to facilitate the tracking of new business starts and home based businesses which may need assistance and other small business support services. Additionally, the list could be utilized to update the inventory of manufacturing firms so the directory may be used to organize venture forums, bringing together similar businesses to discuss technologies, ideas and other opportunities.

6.E.c - Provide technical assistance to and participate in local seminars and workshops sponsored by local organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce or the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, to provide information to entrepreneurs on local government regulations; and, support the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority's Small Business Development Center and its partnership with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and other business and educational organizations.



Policy 6.E.3: Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Implementation Programs

6.E.d - Actively support and cooperate with local economic development organizations, such as the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, in their efforts to retain and expand existing businesses, attract new business and industry, and encourage entrepreneurship in Tuolumne County.

6.E.e - Through the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, Yosemite Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations, promote the concept of "doing business locally" and assist in the promotion of purchasing local goods and services.

6.E.f - Continue to incorporate language into County invitations to bid for goods and services indicating preference for local vendors and suppliers, other factors being equal; exercise such preference in selecting vendors and suppliers; develop a list, by type of goods and services, of local vendors for County acquisitions and purchases.

6.E.g - Encourage and support regional and local business recruitment efforts initiated by the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority and other business organizations.

Policy 6.E.4: Encourage the development of business activities that are considered particularly well-suited to Tuolumne County.

Implementation Programs

6.E.h - Actively support and promote the film industry in Tuolumne County by initiating, coordinating and/or adopting programs to preserve the unique cultural resources and historic landscapes sought by the film industry.

6.E.i - Support the Tuolumne County Film Commission in consulting with film industry representatives to identify areas and resources in Tuolumne County considered most important to the film industry. Consider proposals to protect historic film areas and, when appropriate, support such proposals.

6.E.j - Continue to "fast-track" film permits through the permitting process in order to expedite movie, television, commercial and other cinematic or video productions.

6.E.k - Promote and support the film industry through such means as "fast-tracking" film permits and preserving natural and cultural resources that provide backdrops for filming.

Policy 6.E.5: Encourage development of alternative energy-producing facilities which conserve the County's natural resources.

Implementation Programs

6.E.l - Support biomass energy facilities as an alternative to traditional forms of energy.



6.E.m - Plan development so as not to preclude the future utilization of significant energy producing minerals or water resources necessary for hydroelectric facilities.

6.E.n - Actively participate and be engaged in State and Federal water policy and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of hydroelectric projects in the County.

6.E.o - Encourage land uses which maximize the efficient use of energy and facilitate the use of renewable energy resources in order to reduce dependence on imported and non-renewable energy supplies.

6.E.p - Expedite all permits under the County's jurisdiction which are necessary for the development of energy generating facilities using renewable resources and enterprises which are engaged in other types of energy conservation programs, such as biomass co-generation facilities, businesses which utilize recycled products and materials, and recycling facilities.

Policy 6.E.6: Encourage the building of the local economy and its associated new commercial and industrial development in a manner which recognizes the importance to wisely conserve, utilize and promote the County's scenic beauty, natural and cultural resources, environmental setting and educational assets.

Policy 6.E.7: Encourage improvement of the physical appearance of the County, while promoting retention of structures and other features which contribute to the County's character.

GOAL 6F:

Link human resources development and services programs and agencies with economic development agencies.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.F.1: Support the efforts of the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority and other local organizations in providing education and employment placement programs to assist the entrepreneurial efficiency of existing retail and service businesses.

Implementation Programs

6.F.a - Support the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority, Columbia Community College, Mother Lode Job Training and other local, state and federal programs that provide job training, re-training, and career counseling in offering the type of training needed by employers.

6.F.b - Provide technical assistance and data to other local agencies and organizations that require such support to apply for job training and employment development grants and allocations.

6.F.c - Participate in the Mother Lode Job Training program, and the internship programs at Columbia Community College and Tuolumne County's high schools, by providing job training sites and programs in various County agencies.



GOAL 6G:

Maintain County public service functions at an adequate level by identifying funding sources to allow public services to expand as the County population increases.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 6.G.1: Continue to establish fee schedules for applications, permits, and other entitlements or services in accordance with the actual or estimated costs of performing the requested function.

Policy 6.G.2: Identify revenue sources to generate funding to provide acceptable levels of County public services as the County population changes.

Implementation Program

6.G.a - Review the County Services Impact Mitigation Fee on a regular basis to determine that all the service-providing functions of County government agencies have been considered and the various components remain adequate.