

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY IDENTITY ELEMENT OF THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

## CHAPTER 13: COMMUNITY IDENTITY ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

~~"Quality of life" perhaps begins with the~~ The aesthetic and scenic values of Tuolumne County contribute to the "quality of life" of its residents near one's living areas: a landscape that is a pleasure to live in, where the senses are heightened by its richness, aesthetic quality, and feeling of life; and, a place in which all valuable resources, both natural and urban, blend in concert to elevate the human spirit.

The rural environment of the Sierra foothills is characterized by a population generally dispersed throughout small town communities of mixed use development surrounded by large areas of open expanses consisting of agriculture, native vegetation, and low density development. These open areas contributes to the identity of the communities. ~~Many communities within Tuolumne County have not as yet grown together because the open areas around them affords the opportunity to identify the community.~~

Roads and highways traverse areas of great scenic beauty within the County, offering enjoyable experiences for passing motorists, cyclists and hikers. The visual separation of the County's communities benefits from the conservation of open areas, especially along the road corridors connecting the communities. The relatively low density and scenic routes between communities and at entrances to the County give it much of its rural and natural character. Native vegetation and tree cover are important ingredients in this regard, as are the species of plants and their patterns in the natural and managed landscape.

~~The basis for our communities lies within their historic beginnings; each has its own unique assets, characteristics, identity and goals. The communities themselves are in a strong position to assist the County in assessing the extent of their particular need to apply County policies regarding the preservation of small town atmosphere and surrounding open areas in their pursuit of long-term goals. Tuolumne County has long used local citizen planning committees to define existing communities, growth boundaries and buffer areas and will continue to do so in the future.~~

Tuolumne County is made up of the following defined communities: Strawberry, Sugar Pine/Mi-Wuk Village, Sierra Village, Long Barn, Twain Harte, Tuolumne, Soulsbyville, Crystal Falls/Mono Vista, Cedar Ridge, Columbia, West Sonora, Standard, East Sonora, Jamestown, Chinese Camp, Moccasin, Lake Don Pedro, Big Oak Flat, and Groveland/Pine Mountain Lake. The new community of Mountain Springs has been approved but not yet developed. ~~A new community is also proposed off Lime Kiln Road to provide a new area for accommodating part of the County's anticipated population growth and to facilitate dispersion of that growth among communities and throughout the County.~~ The Community Identity Element is the framework for preserving the uniqueness and character of each of these communities. The General Plan addresses standards for some of these communities in individual community plans.

The individual community plans clearly endorse the development of mixed use towns and urban centers surrounded by residential neighborhoods consistent with the Regional Blueprint's preferred Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario. The plans promote a sense of community, foster a pedestrian-friendly environment, and respect historic growth patterns of dense, mixed-use communities surrounded by ranchlands, timberlands and open areas. ~~Focus~~ The focus is on designing the community rather than the individual structures.

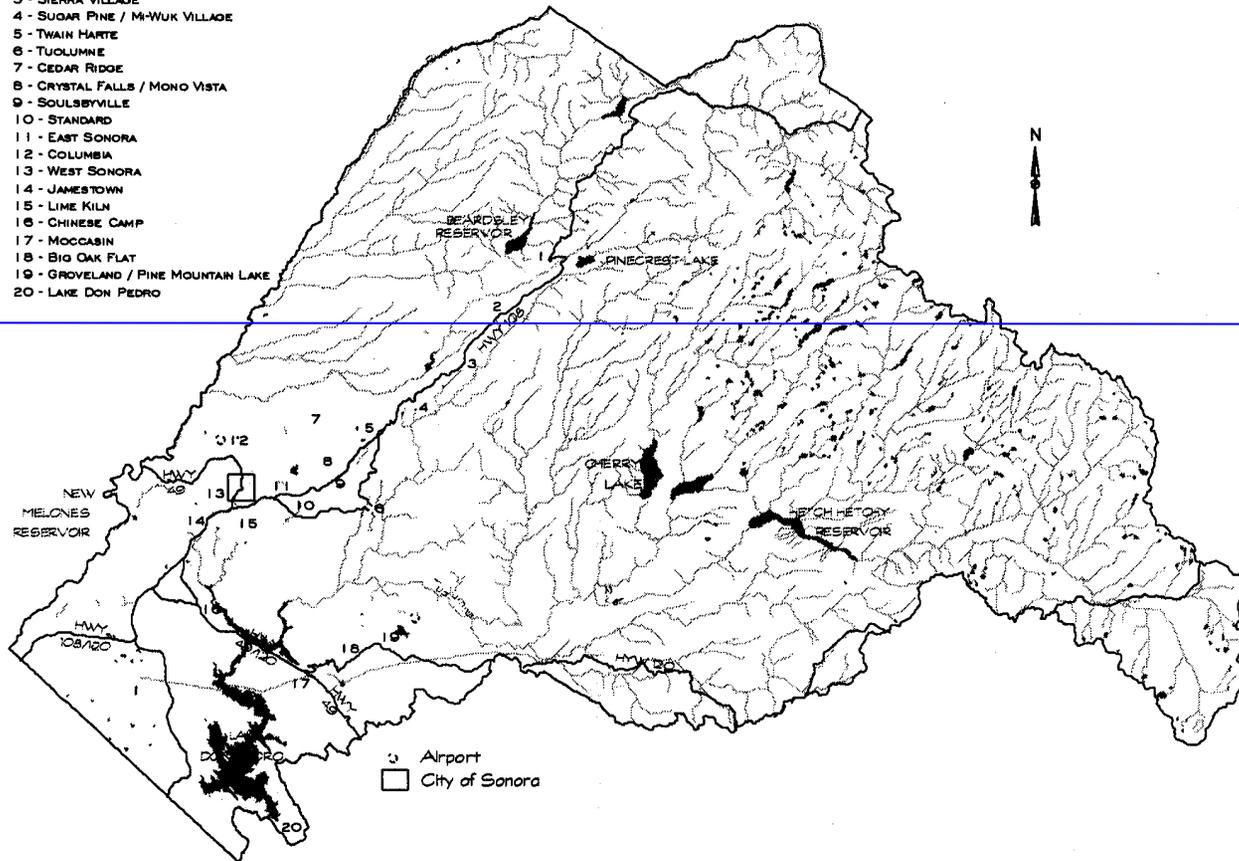
It has been observed that when history and progress collide, it is a wise community that honors its heritage with good planning practices. It is the presence of the past that contributes immeasurably to community identity, rural character, cultural continuum and economic vitality in the form of tourism. It is both reassuring and invigorating to maintain this continuity with the achievements of past generations and to perpetuate them into the future.

The Community Identity Element is designed to recognize each of the County's communities and establish a blueprint for creating more liveable environments while preserving and enhancing the character and identity of each community. By doing so, future development will be guided to promote compact urban development, provide for efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, conserve resource lands, and safeguard environmentally sensitive lands.

FIGURE 13.1

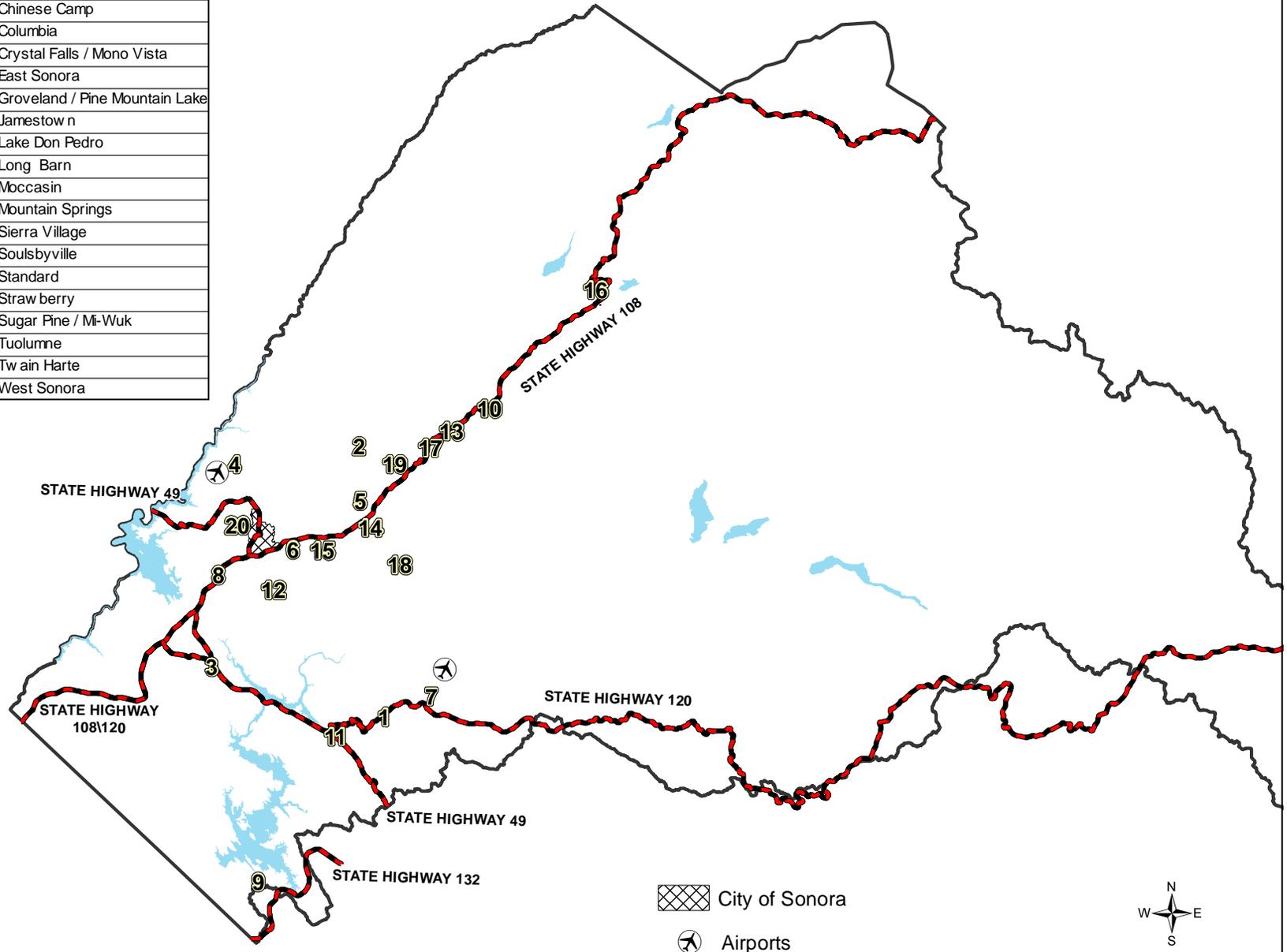
EXISTING AND PROPOSED DEFINED COMMUNITIES

- 1 - STRAWBERRY
- 2 - LONG BARN
- 3 - SIERRA VILLAGE
- 4 - SUGAR PINE / MI-WUK VILLAGE
- 5 - TWAIN HART
- 6 - TUOLUMNE
- 7 - CEDAR RIDGE
- 8 - CRYSTAL FALLS / MONO VISTA
- 9 - SOULSBYVILLE
- 10 - STANDARD
- 11 - EAST SONORA
- 12 - COLUMBIA
- 13 - WEST SONORA
- 14 - JAMESTOWN
- 15 - LIME KILN
- 16 - CHINESE CAMP
- 17 - MOCCASIN
- 18 - BIG OAK FLAT
- 19 - GROVELAND / PINE MOUNTAIN LAKE
- 20 - LAKE DON PEDRO



Label Number	NAME
1	Big Oak Flat
2	Cedar Ridge
3	Chinese Camp
4	Columbia
5	Crystal Falls / Mono Vista
6	East Sonora
7	Groveland / Pine Mountain Lake
8	Jamestown
9	Lake Don Pedro
10	Long Barn
11	Moccasin
12	Mountain Springs
13	Sierra Village
14	Soulsbyville
15	Standard
16	Strawberry
17	Sugar Pine / Mi-Wuk
18	Tuolumne
19	Twin Harte
20	West Sonora

**FIGURE 13.1  
DEFINED COMMUNITIES**



## GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

**GOAL 13.A** Maintain separation of communities through the establishment of open **space** and buffer areas around urbanizing areas.

### Policies

- 13.A.1 Promote the conservation of the natural scenic quality of hillsides and hilltops surrounding defined communities.
- 13.A.2 Encourage retention of features important to the context or setting of cultural resources such as mature trees, retaining walls, viewsheds, hills, bridges and old rock fences.
- 13.A.3 Maintain existing and create new buffer areas between defined communities through the use of agricultural lands, timberlands, open areas, rural density development, clustering of land uses, and recreational uses.
- 13.A.4 Discourage strip development along the County's arterials connecting communities.
- 13.A.5 Encourage the efforts of individual communities which desire to promote the compatibility of new development with the architectural types or natural setting at the entrances to and within their respective communities.
- 13.A.6 Encourage cluster development to promote the retention of open areas.
- 13.A.7 Require new development at the entrances to rural communities be designed to include elements such as signage, landscaping and appropriate architectural detailing to help establish and maintain distinct identities for such communities.
- ~~13.A.8 Encourage the defined communities to implement the Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario.~~

### Implementation Programs

- 13.A.a Conserve Scenic Hillsides and Hilltops
- Encourage hillside development to be designed and located to be compatible with, rather than imposed on, the landscape and environment by minimizing the amount of grading and topographical alteration it necessitates.
- 13.A.b Conservation Easement
- Consider providing an incentive program to encourage private landowners with visually significant property to grant or sell a conservation easement to protect the land as open **areas space**.
- 13.A.c Support Community Efforts to Retain Scenic Character
- Support the efforts of individual defined communities which desire to promote the compatibility of new development with their respective characters. Support may include the formulation of design guidelines to assist developers in designing projects that reflect the architectural **styles designs** that characterize a given community.
- 13.A.d Maintain Boundaries Between Communities

Designate land between defined communities for non-urban land uses, except where there are recognized concentrations of urban uses outside of defined communities, to protect the individual character of each defined community and to maintain distinct boundaries between the communities.

13.A.e Design Considerations with Cluster Development

Utilize the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Permit process ~~Amend the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code~~ to recognize and, where appropriate, promote cluster development through the use of acceptable design and construction standards for the creation of buffer areas and in support of compact development.

13.A.f Preserve Rural Scenic Quality

Continue to preserve the County's rural heritage and the scenic quality of the rural landscape by designating land for new urban development to within, or directly adjacent to, the defined community boundaries.

13.A.g Distinctive Communities

Maintain the integrity of separate, distinct communities and discourage inappropriately placed development between the identified community boundaries.

**GOAL 13.B Advocate the master planning of new and existing communities to direct the development of integrated communities containing housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.**

**Policies**

13.B.1 Identify urban growth areas of the defined communities that will accommodate growth during the ~~General Plan's 25-year~~ planning period of the General Plan. Each community should be considered as an urban core, surrounded by suburban residential development with a buffer between urban and rural areas.

13.B.2 Require new defined communities to meet the following objectives:

- a. Concentrate higher-density residential uses and appropriate support services in areas with access to public transportation and with adequate road access.
- b. Support the development of integrated mixed-use areas, including residential, recreational, retail, office, open space and public uses, while making it possible to travel by transit, bicycle or foot, as well as automobile.
- c. Provide buffers between residential and incompatible non-residential land uses.
- d. Enhance community identity by establishing design guidelines for non-residential development, such as commercial centers.
- e. Provide a bicycle path and pedestrian walkway network to link public facilities, housing, recreational facilities and commercial and community services.

13.B.3 Require new defined communities to be comprehensively planned, rather than developed on an individual property by property basis.

- 13.B.4 Require master planned communities to provide adequate public services and infrastructure to support the community.
- 13.B.5 ~~E Identify and e~~ encourage ~~mixed-use areas to include~~ community focal points to serve as gathering and/or destination points. Examples of focal points include civic centers, parks, fountains, monuments and street vistas. On-site natural features, such as wetlands and streams, can also function as focal points.
- 13.B.6 Encourage the creation of specialized open areas in the form of squares, greens and parks whose frequent use is encouraged by their proximity to workplace and residential districts.
- 13.B.7 Encourage new development to be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area. Structures, especially those outside defined communities and urban and commercial centers, should be designed and located so that:
- a. The structures themselves do not silhouette against the sky above ridgelines or hilltops; landscaping could be used as a buffer around the structure.
  - b. Rooflines and vertical architectural features blend with and do not detract from the natural background or ridge outline.
  - c. They fit the natural terrain.
  - d. They utilize building materials, colors and textures that blend with the natural landscape and avoid high contrasts.
- 13.B.8 Support the location of new school facilities that provide convenient and safe access for students; schools should be linked by footpaths to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 13.B.9 Provide each community or cluster of communities with a well defined boundary, such as rural development or agricultural activities.
- ~~13.B.10 Encourage and support programs and facilities that provide services to senior citizens in Tuolumne County.~~

### Implementation Programs

- 13.B.a ~~Growth~~ ~~Development~~ Boundaries
- Designate adequate land in and around existing and new defined communities for urban land uses to provide for ~~the growth projected by the State Department of Finance~~ and limit the future conversion of land with non-urban designations to urban designations to parcels immediately adjacent to the urban ~~development~~ ~~growth~~ boundaries established on the General Plan land use diagrams.
- 13.B.b Mixed Use
- Designate land for integrated mixed-use areas which may include residential, recreational, retail, office, open space and public uses to facilitate travel by transit, bicycle or foot, as well as automobile, and to promote a sense of community.
- 13.B.c Community Plans

Develop Community Plans for defined communities that wish to guide development activity over the General Plan's ~~25-year~~ planning period which would be compatible with the cultural, historical and natural resources of the respective defined communities.

13.B.d Infrastructure

Establish urban boundaries ~~within~~ ~~around~~ defined communities on the General Plan maps to promote the efficient use of urban infrastructure and services. This will also serve to promote the improvement of infrastructure within the communities to meet standards for infill development, such as fire flow.

13.B.e Site Design

Support the establishment of design criteria for those communities that wish to create balance for streets and structures with the community's scale and character; place neighborhood commercial centers within convenient walking distance of most neighborhood residents; utilize natural vegetation buffers and screening techniques in relationship to adjacent residential development; and provide public parks and spaces in proximity to workplace and residential neighborhoods.

13.B.f Public Accessibility

Encourage, where feasible, the incorporation of publicly accessible open areas, including parks, courtyards and gardens, into public improvements and private projects. For example, private development bordering a public park should integrate with the park by providing a courtyard or garden to visually link the development to the park and provide access between the development and the park.

13.B.g Pedestrian Accessibility to Commercial Development

Designate land for neighborhood commercial development within walking distance of residential areas to encourage alternative methods of transportation and eliminate the dependence on automobile transportation.

13.B.h Buffers

Designate adequate areas for greenbelts comprised of non-urban land uses, open areas, parks and recreational facilities in and around defined communities to meet the needs of ~~changing~~ ~~growing~~ populations and to reflect the needs of the County's changing demographics.

13.B.i Review of Land Use Designations

Provide for periodic review of land use designations within the defined communities to ensure sufficient land is available to accommodate the expansion of community areas, including sites for affordable housing. The County will continue to work with property owners in changing land use designations to meet future needs.

13.B.j Senior Citizen Services

Support organizations and programs, such as the Southside Senior Services, Inc. "The Little House" in Groveland/Big Oak Flat, that provides services, such as adult health, recreation and socialization, to senior citizens in Tuolumne County.

13.B.k Communal Living for Seniors

Consider modifying the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code to allow communal living facilities for senior citizens in the Multiple-Family Residential (R-3) and Medium Density Residential (R-2) zoning districts.

**GOAL 13.C Recognize, preserve and enhance the character and identity of each of the County's individual communities with new urban development encouraged to occur within and adjacent to existing communities and in planned new communities.**

**Policies**

- 13.C.1 Encourage infill development within defined communities. New urban residential subdivisions should occur within, or immediately adjacent to, defined communities.
- 13.C.2 Encourage the continued use and enhancement of existing public facilities located within the communities.
- 13.C.3 Provide incentives to preserve historically and architecturally significant buildings and structures.
- 13.C.4 Promote the preservation of and discourage substantial alteration to historically or architecturally significant buildings which serve as focal points of community design.
- 13.C.5 Assist in retaining the special character of historic districts and promote compatible development within ~~them historic districts~~ by reducing, adapting and/or modifying some development standards within historic districts.
- 13.C.6 Establish incentive programs and adopt flexible development standards for rehabilitation, restoration and reuse of historic structures.
- 13.C.7 Encourage new development to be designed in an architectural style which is aesthetically appealing and blends into the architectural character of the individual community.
- 13.C.8 Encourage landscaping around parking lots to provide screening by retaining or replanting native vegetation and/or through the use of topography or other natural features and require landscaping to enhance new commercial and industrial development.
- 13.C.9 Continue to explore the design and construction of bypass roads around historic communities.
- 13.C.10 Establish road standards that allow rural character roadways, compatible with Tuolumne County Fire Safety Standards Department guidelines, when they are appropriate to create or maintain a small town atmosphere and preserve natural and cultural features such as steep slopes, drainages, tree lines, and historic features for consistency with community design objectives.

13.C.11 Promote the Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario.

**Implementation Programs**

- 13.C.a           Community Survey
- Continue the County's program of surveying defined communities for cultural and historical features and resources which should be preserved and enhanced to protect the character of the community. Preservation of these resources shall be as provided in the Cultural Resources Element.
- 13.C.b           Community Plans
- Assist those communities that wish to formulate a community plan in developing a plan which considers community size so that housing, jobs, daily needs, transit and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
- 13.C.c           Buffer Areas
- Establish buffer areas around existing residential neighborhoods to protect them from infringement of potentially incompatible land uses, such as agriculture, mining, industry, solid waste facilities, airports and sewage treatment facilities. These buffer areas may include building setbacks and/or limit land uses within an established distance of existing residences.
- 13.C.d           Community Design Guidelines
- Work with those communities that wish to develop design guidelines for new development ~~within the defined communities~~. While these design guides should not require a specific architectural theme or style, ~~except in historic districts~~, the guidelines should address:
1.       Appropriate setbacks, building siting, building height and mass, landscaping, lighting and signage.
  2.       The type, size, location and planting of street trees.
  3.       Compatibility with historic structures and streetscapes.
- 13.C.e           Commercial Development
- Assist communities in formulating design standards for new commercial development within their boundaries to reflect the character of the individual community and, where appropriate, to integrate open areas into the development, taking advantage of any natural amenities such as creeks, hillsides and scenic views.
- 13.C.f           Parking Design
- Encourage parking areas for new commercial, industrial and business park development to be located behind buildings or sufficiently screened from public roads.
- 13.C.g           Mills Act
- Continue to implement the Mills Act in Tuolumne County and update Resolution 171-92 to reflect legislative changes to the Mills Act when necessary to provide reduction in property taxes through historic preservation.
- 13.C.h           Fee Waiver

Establish provisions for ~~reduced~~ ~~waiving~~ fees for requests to zone to :H (Historic Combining) and :HDP (Historic Design Preservation Combining).

13.C.i Modified Development Standards

~~Amend the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code~~ Continue to provide ~~for~~ reduced and/or modified development standards for work done on resources zoned Historic Combining (:H) or Historic Design Preservation Combining (:HDP) listed on the Tuolumne County Register of Cultural Resources which is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and applicable design guidelines. These reduced and/or modified standards ~~shall~~ include reduced setbacks, ~~reduced road standards,~~ reduced landscaping requirements, ~~density bonuses~~ and in-lieu or off-site parking provisions.

13.C.j Building Setbacks within Historic Districts

~~Establish~~ Continue to allow building setbacks in historic communities ~~to that~~ follow the same line as the historic structures to maintain a continuous commercial facade on all street frontages.

13.C.k Parking within Historic Districts

~~Amend Title 17 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code~~ Continue to provide for off-site parking in historic districts ~~to encourage~~ encouraging parking for new commercial development to be consolidated in well-designed and landscaped lots or parking structures.

13.C.l Community Road Standards

Develop standards which allow flexibility in design of new roads that will allow meandering roadways or roads that otherwise reflect a rural character, compatible with Tuolumne County Fire Safety Standard Department guidelines, when they are appropriate to create or maintain the character of existing communities or preserve natural and cultural features such as steep slopes, drainages, tree lines, and historic features for consistency with community design objectives.

13.C.m Bypass Alternatives

Explore funding options for the design and construction of bypass roads around historic communities.

13.C.n Target Funding for Distinctive Communities

Target public funds toward defined communities consistent with the Distinctive Communities Growth Scenario, through strategies such as transit-oriented, mixed use development and infill projects to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

13.C.o Compatible Development

Ensure that all development within and adjacent to an existing community is compatible with the pattern of development within that community and the surrounding landscape.

**Responsibility for Programs:** Administration of the Implementation Programs listed in this Element is the shared responsibility of the Board of Supervisors and the Community Resources Agency Planning

~~Department~~ with the Community Resources Agency ~~Planning Department~~ serving as the primary administrator.

**Funding Sources:** Administration of the Implementation Programs listed herein will be funded through the County's General Fund.

**Time Frame for Implementation:** The target date for implementation of the programs listed in this Element related to amendments to the County's development regulations will be completed is Fiscal Year 2019-2020 ~~FY 98-99~~; all other programs are ongoing.