

# **MONO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

## **LAND USE ELEMENT**

DRAFT

11. The county Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPACs) and community planning groups have generally expressed a desire to maintain the rural recreational attributes of the county, to preserve the small-town character of existing communities, and to protect the county's natural resources. The overall attitude is that growth should be contained in and adjacent to existing communities, that agricultural lands should be protected for their open space and economic value, that the protection of scenic resources is a critical concern, and that the use and development of resources should be regulated in a manner that allows for development but protects the resource.
12. The presence of significant environmental concerns will have a critical effect on future development and land use in the county. Environmental concerns focus on natural resources, cultural resources and natural hazards. A key issue affecting development in the county is the conservation of a variety of natural resources, including wetlands, special-status species (both plants and animals) and special habitats, wildlife habitat (in some places critical), fisheries and aquatic habitats, visual quality, surface and groundwater resources, cultural resources, and mineral resources. The presence of significant natural hazards also affects development. Natural hazards in the county include fault zones, flood zones, volcanic hazard areas, steep slopes, fire hazard areas, debris-reflow areas, and avalanche-prone areas. Information on the county's environmental resources and natural hazards is contained in the **MEA**, along with maps showing the location of those resources and hazards.
13. Economic concerns focus on the need for development projects to "pay their own way" and on the need to provide for local economic growth. Most of the services and infrastructure in the county are provided either by the County or local Special Districts. All of these agencies have been hard hit by lower property tax revenues and increasing service demands. The County must ensure that development does not adversely impact service agencies.

There is also a need to provide for local economic growth by creating jobs for local residents. Many of the county's residents are unable to work in the community in which they reside, and many of the area's younger residents must leave the area in order to find work. Lack of year-round employment in the tourist and recreation industry – the dominant industry in the county – is the primary cause of employment instability. How to plan for and encourage a diversified economic base in order to provide stability in the job market is a concern, as is the need to maintain a balance between economic growth and environmental concerns.

14. Increasing federal and state legislation and guidance governing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions tend to be geared toward urban development patterns, and can be a challenge given the rural nature of Mono County. While the County is not always subject to the legislation, grant opportunities for areas with applicable plans in place appear to be increasing.
15. Promoting the health and well-being of residents should be integrated throughout the General Plan. Recognizing the links between built environments and health, particularly the influence that patterns of land use, density, transportation strategies, and street design have on chronic disease and health disparities, is a key opportunity to improve community health.

## **ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES/CONSTRAINTS FOR COMMUNITY AREAS**

This section lists issues and constraints that apply to specific planning areas throughout the county. These issues are in addition to the general countywide issues, opportunities, and constraints discussed above.

### **Antelope Valley**

1. There is a significant amount of privately owned high-quality agricultural land in the Antelope Valley. The desire is to maintain this land in agricultural uses in order to preserve the area's scenic qualities. Increasing development pressures could affect the use of the agricultural land in the Valley.

2. Residents in the Antelope Valley are interested in preserving the existing rural character of the communities and the Valley as a whole.
3. The BLM, in its Resource Management Plan, has identified privately owned land in the Valley for potential acquisition and has identified a smaller amount of federal land for disposal into private ownership. Residents of the area are concerned about a potential loss of private land.
4. There is the potential to enhance the natural resource-based recreational opportunities in the area, particularly by developing additional recreational facilities and opportunities at Topaz Lake. In planning for additional recreation at Topaz Lake, there is a need to designate a boat launching area to provide boat access within California and to designate restricted boating areas to protect critical water bird nesting and rearing habitat. The Walker River Irrigation District is currently working cooperatively with other agencies to develop a recreation management plan for Topaz Lake.
5. Much of the Valley is in the floodplain of the Walker River and may also contain wetlands.
6. Sewage disposal may become a constraint to additional development in existing community areas. Currently, individual septic systems are in use throughout the Valley.
7. There is substantial local interest in protecting the surface and groundwater resource in the Valley.
8. Seismic hazards are situated in several areas of the Valley, including along the western portion of the US 395 corridor.
9. There is a need to preserve critical deer migration corridors and winter habitat.
10. There is interest in developing a Main Street plan on US 395 for Walker to improve the visitor experience and tourism, provide for enhanced way finding and use of community assets (park, community center, Mountain Gate, etc.), develop a common theme for main street (street trees, landscaping, town center, common signage for communities, etc.), and improve pedestrian/bicycle facilities.
11. There is interest in continuing to expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors (e.g., proposed fishing regulation change on West Walker River, ATV jamboree, and other events).
12. There is interest in continuing to promote the Antelope Valley as a tourist destination.
13. There is interest in enabling more residents to establish home-based businesses.
14. There is interest in exploring ways to reduce burdensome regulation for agricultural uses in order to support the agricultural economy and heritage of the Valley.

### **Sonora Pass**

The primary issue within the Sonora Junction Planning Area is the continued successful integration of private property use with activities such as recreation and military operations associated with the USMC Mountain Warfare Training Center. There is an opportunity to develop policies that ensure there will be minimal or no impact from military training or operations that occur near private land, and if impacts were to occur, to provide for their disclosure.

**Action 3.A.4.c.** Support opportunities for community gardens and encourage participation by residents.

**Action 3.A.4.d.** Preserve regional agriculture and farmland as a source of healthy, local fruits and vegetables and other foods.

**Policy 3.A.5.** Encourage healthy eating habits and healthy eating messages.

**Action 3.A.5.a.** Support educational efforts, events, and outreach.

**Action 3.A.5.b.** Encourage community classes and activities related to healthy lifestyles, such as gardening, composting, cooking, etc.

**Policy 3.A.6.** Pursue affordable housing consistent with the Housing Element to provide safe, affordable, and healthful living opportunities.

**Policy 3.A.7.** Support Mono County Public Health programs and collaborations, such as Maternal Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH), Tobacco Education and Nutrition, and Physical Activity Task Force.

## PLANNING AREA LAND USE POLICIES

### Antelope Valley

**GOAL 4. Provide for orderly growth in the Antelope Valley in a manner that retains the rural environment, and protects the area's scenic, recreational, agricultural, and natural resources.**

#### **Objective 4.A.**

Guide future development to occur within the US 395 corridor and existing communities.

**Policy 4.A.1.** Discourage subdivisions into five parcels or more outside community areas. Remainder parcels do not count toward the five-parcel total.

**Action 4.A.1.a.** Designate land outside community areas and the US 395 corridor<sup>1</sup> for Agriculture or Resource Management.

**Action 4.A.1.b.** Maintain large minimum parcel sizes outside community areas and the US 395 corridor.

**Action 4.A.1.c.** Limit the type and intensity of development in flood plain areas.

**Action 4.A.1.d.** Prior to accepting a development application in potential wetland areas, require that the applicant obtain necessary permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

**Policy 4.A.2.** Provide for a mix of residential, commercial, recreational, institutional, and industrial park land uses in a manner consistent with the overall goal for the Antelope Valley.

**Action 4.A.2.a.** Designate a sufficient amount of land to accommodate tourist and community commercial needs within existing community areas.

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<sup>1</sup>The US 395 corridor is defined as the area in the Antelope Valley along both sides of US 395 between the West Walker River to the east of US 395 and the sloping terrain to the west of US 395.

**Action 4.A.2.b.** Designate a sufficient amount of land to meet the housing and lodging needs of Antelope Valley's residents and visitors.

**Action 4.A.2.c.** Designate suitable lands for industrial park uses. Designated industrial park areas should be limited to community-serving industrial uses that will have no adverse environmental impacts. All industrial development must be compatible with surrounding land uses. Give consideration to landownership adjustments to consolidate such uses.

**Policy 4.A.3.** Along the US 395 corridor between existing communities, provide for limited development that is compatible with natural constraints and the Valley's scenic qualities.

**Action 4.A.3.a.** Maintain the large-lot residential nature of the US 395 corridor.

**Policy 4.A.4.** As a general goal, retain the existing privately owned land base in the Antelope Valley.

**Policy 4.A.5.** Encourage the use of alternative energy and communications innovations.

**Policy 4.A.5.a.** Mobile or satellite-based communication sources may be substituted for conventional land-based sources in satisfying land development conditions.

Parcels that will not have conventional land-based sources extended to the property shall have that information prominently noticed on the map.

All conventional communication lines subsequently installed shall be underground.

**Policy 4.A.5.b.** Alternative energy (e.g., solar, wind, water, etc.) systems may be substituted for conventional power in satisfying land development conditions.

Parcels that will not have conventional power lines extended to the property shall have that information prominently noticed on the map.

**Policy 4.A.5.c.** Proposed parcels that have existing street frontage with existing power lines along either side of that street frontage shall not be conditioned with bringing conventional power across the street or onto the property.

#### **Objective 4.B.**

Maintain the scenic, historic,<sup>2</sup> agricultural, and natural resource<sup>3</sup> values in the Valley.

**Policy 4.B.1.** Maintain and enhance scenic resources in the Antelope Valley.

**Action 4.B.1.a.** In order to protect and enhance important scenic resources and scenic highway corridors, designate such areas in the Antelope Valley for Open Space, Agriculture, or Resource Management.

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<sup>2</sup> Under the conditions that no coercive methods shall weigh upon project applicants for historic dedications except as allowed under the state Subdivision Map Act and that eminent domain will not be used to obtain such historic preservation.

<sup>3</sup> Within Objective B, "natural resource" does not include exploitive practices such as mining or drilling extractions.

**Action 4.B.1.b.** Inform private landowners with visually significant property that they have the option to grant or sell a conservation easement to a land conservation organization to protect the land as open space.

**Action 4.B.1.c.** Continue to use land use designations and subdivision regulations to preserve open space for scenic purposes.

**Action 4.B.1.d.** Conserve scenic corridors by maintaining and expanding large-lot land uses.

**Policy 4.B.2.** Preserve the agricultural lands and natural resource lands in the Antelope Valley.

**Action 4.B.2.a.** In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for projects that may convert agricultural lands to other uses.

**Action 4.B.2.b.** Encourage agricultural land owners to utilize the property tax incentives for agricultural land provided for in the county Williamson Act program.

**Action 4.B.2.c.** Inform owners of critical wildlife habitat areas of the potential for open-space easements to protect such areas and of the potential for property tax adjustments.

**Policy 4.B.3.** Work with appropriate agencies to manage water resources in a manner that protects natural, agricultural, and recreational resources in the Antelope Valley.

**Action 4.B.3.a.** Work with the Lahontan RWQCB and other appropriate agencies to require appropriate actions to ensure that future development does not degrade water quality or impair adequate water quantity in the area. Resources should be sought to provide suitable statistical benchmarks for refresh rates and other technical data for proper agency review.

**Action 4.B.3.b.** Work with the Walker River Irrigation District, adjacent Nevada counties, and other appropriate agencies in developing a water management plan for Topaz Reservoir.

**Policy 4.B.4.** Ensure that an adequate water supply exists for new development projects.

**Action 4.B.4.a.** As a condition of approval, require development projects to demonstrate that sufficient water exists to serve both domestic and fire flow needs and that use of the water will not deplete or degrade water supplies for wells within a 500' radius (residential projects creating fewer than five parcels shall be exempt).

**Policy 4.B.5.** Work with appropriate agencies to manage fish and wildlife resources within the Antelope Valley.

**Policy 4.B.6.** Preserve rural character of lands within the Antelope Valley.

**Action 4.B.6.a.** Allow the storage of heavy equipment on parcels greater than five acres in the Antelope Valley for personal on-site use or community benefit.

#### **Objective 4.C.**

Maintain and enhance natural resource-based recreational opportunities in the Valley and the surrounding area.

**Policy 4.C.1.** Work with appropriate agencies to maintain or improve natural resource base needed for recreational opportunities in the Antelope Valley and vicinity.

**Policy 4.C.2.** Work with appropriate agencies to initiate recreational facility development in environmentally suitable areas.

**Action 4.C.2.a.** Work with the Walker River Irrigation District and other appropriate agencies to develop a recreation management plan for Topaz Lake. Potential issues to address in the plan include:

- a. Provision of a designated boat launch area to provide boat access within California; and
- b. Creation of restricted boating areas to provide protected water-bird nesting and rearing habitats at the south end of the reservoir.

**Policy 4.C.3.** Encourage Trail Easements in the Antelope Valley under the conditions that no coercive methods shall weigh upon project applicants to dedicate trail easements and that eminent domain will not be used to obtain trail easements.<sup>4</sup> “Combined” enjoyment among users such as hikers, bicyclists, off-road vehicles, equestrians and runners shall be encouraged where practical.

**Objective 4.D.**

Maintain and enhance the local economy.

**Policy 4.D.1.** Incubate home businesses:

Definition: A home business is any enterprise conducted by the resident of a parcel on which the enterprise is conducted.

Policy Assumption: Home businesses are to be allowed in the Antelope Valley on parcels over one acre in size, absent the determination of an actual nuisance (noise, odor, etc.). An actual field survey to determine size will not be necessary provided applicant provides a legal description, a subdivision map, Assessor’s Parcel Map or other similar documentation.

A. Recognition that home businesses with business licenses are permitted in all residential and agricultural parcels.

Business licenses and nuisance code infraction, however, may be appealed for cause through the Code Enforcement process.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Within land divisions of five or more parcels, however, dedications will be made according to the CA Subdivision Map Act.

<sup>5</sup> Appeal of a business license or subsequent complaints to the Code Enforcement Office of Mono County must be by a) not fewer than two residents of parcels adjoining the business licensee’s property or b) one resident of an adjoining parcel to the business licensee and another resident whose parcel lies along an affected (non-arterial) access route to the licensee’s parcel or c) residents of three different parcels along an affected (non-arterial) access route to the licensee’s parcel.

The director of Community Development shall establish reasonable noise and traffic volume standards under which non-compliant business licenses may be revoked. Optionally, noise, dust, odors, vibration, smoke or other substantial nuisance standards may be developed as well. Standards applicable to agricultural uses are separate from these standards.

B. Construction and/or use of ancillary buildings for home businesses is/are allowed, but lot coverage and building setback limitations apply.

C. Storage of materials for the use in the home business on site, and home business vehicle parking are both allowed, but not within building setback limitations.

D. Materials used for the business may be stored in the open, but not within the building setback limitations.

E. A non-illuminated sign (8 sq. ft. or less in area) describing the business is permitted. It must be on the home business parcel, not in the right of way.

F. County health and safety ordinances apply.

#### **Objective 4.E.**

Promote the economic revitalization of the Walker and Coleville Main Street districts.

**Policy 4.E.1.** Work with local businesses and the community to develop a Main Street District identity that integrates existing business character into a distinctive core that invites investment and revitalization.

**Action 4.E.1.a.** Inventory Main Street assets, strengths, and limitations.

**Action 4.E.1.b.** Develop a Main Street Program that builds upon the strengths and assets to serve as a foundation for revitalization.

**Action 4.E.1.c.** Utilize grant funding for Main Street Program development.

**Policy 4.E.2.** Encourage district infill that improves connections and integration among businesses and improves the physical appearance of Walker and Coleville Main Streets.

**Action 4.E.2.a.** In development of a Main Street Program, assess and specify opportunities for business growth, infill and access improvements/connections.

**Action 4.E.2.b.** Based on the Main Street Program goals, consider adjustments to guidelines and regulations to better preserve district character and promote business sustainability.

**Action 4.E.2.c.** Specify actions for both public and private sectors to work together toward common goals and long-term success.

#### **Sonora Junction**

**GOAL 5. Provide for orderly growth in the Sonora Junction area in a manner that recognizes the established military, residential, and recreational uses, and reduces potential conflicts between those uses.**

#### **Objective 5.A.**

Protect the established military uses in the Sonora Junction area from encroachment.

**Policy 5.A.1.** Follow state guidelines relating to the notification of military when development projects and/or substantive General Plan Amendments may affect base operations.