

General Plan 1980-2000

Nevada City, California



1. Downtown & Exchange
 2. Nevada Plaza
 3. Square
 4. Hillside
 5. Flower Hill

1875
 VIEW OF NEVADA CITY, FROM PROSPECT HILL
 Adapted by C. W. Sanford, Nevada
 Copyright 1975 by Robert E. Crossland

6. Mountain
 7. San Gabriel State Penitentiary
 8. The Casino
 9. Yarn Warehouse
 10. Josephson

Nevada City, California 1980-2000

General Plan

Adopted March 24th, 1986

***Updated to incorporate Resolution 2009-49 (Land Use Element)
And Sphere of Influence Boundaries Map, dated October 8, 2008**

***2014-2019 Housing Element Adopted January, 2014**

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FOREWORD

Probably the most important single purpose of this Plan is to preserve the existing essential character of Nevada City. This “essence” is that of a small, compact, historic town surrounded by green, wooded hills. The special appeal of Nevada City – both to residents and to visitors – has survived over time because this character has not been destroyed by the type of growth which has surrounded so many other historic towns. However, pressures for change and development are now urgent, as a result of unprecedented growth in the surrounding county. Nevada City must take stock of its valuable qualities and ensure their preservation, while still allowing a measure of desirable and beneficial growth consistent with the adopted goals of the community.

The Plan is based on four major principles:

1. **PRESERVE THE SENSE OF WOODED ENCLOSURE** by protecting views from the highways and by maintaining rural density surrounding a tight urban cluster.
2. **ENHANCE THE HISTORIC CORE** by appropriate complementary development such as visitor accommodations and infill residential.
3. **REINFORCE EXISTING COMMERCIAL CONCENTRATIONS** and strongly limit additional commercial locations.
4. **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND REVENUE GENERATORS** tucked away in wooded surroundings, but tied closely to the highways.

This document outlines a clear policy direction and course of action toward the above goal. The major proposals are described in the Land Use and Economic Development Plan (Section II). Further sections describe related issues such as neighborhood preservation, circulation, and city resources. The final sections address protection of the public from all potential environmental hazards, and outline techniques for putting the plan into action. As a whole, the General Plan is dedicated to providing constructive guidance toward community goals for the future of Nevada City.

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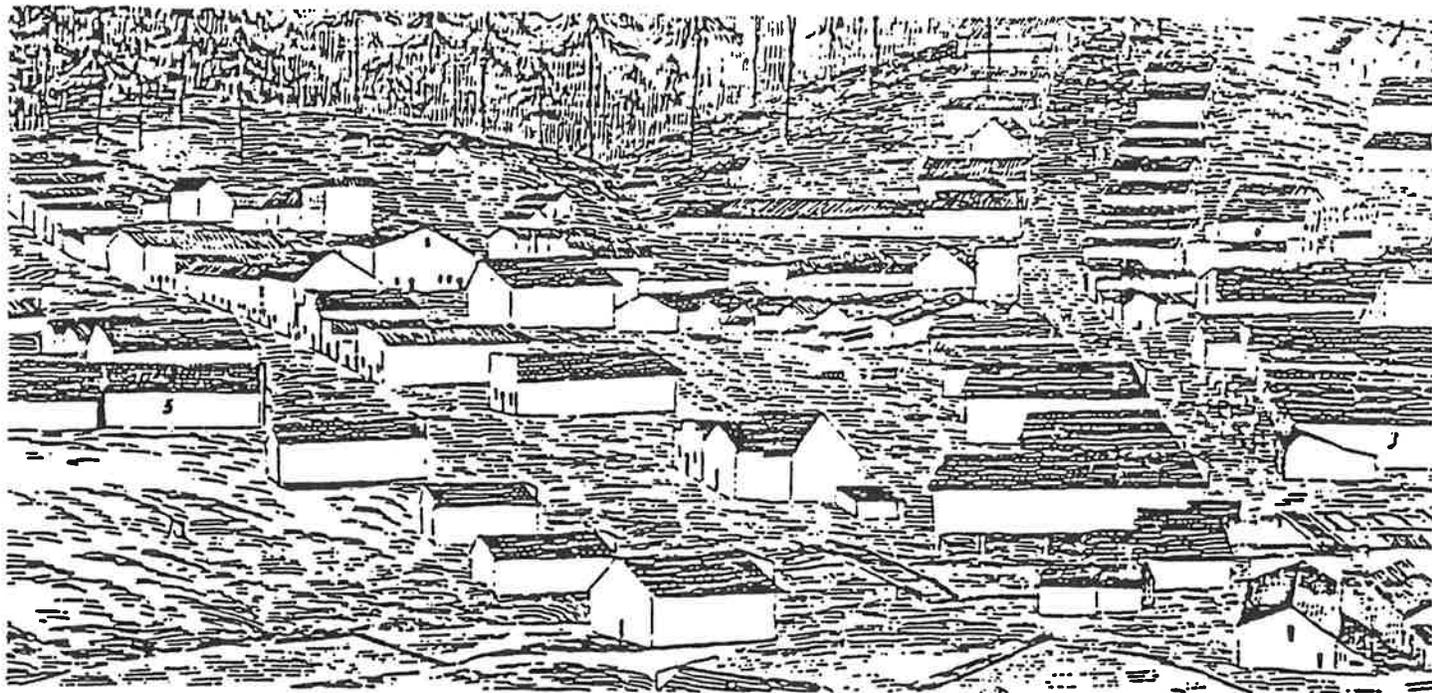
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INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY GOALS



INTRODUCTION

What is a General Plan

A General Plan is a long-term, comprehensive guide which addresses all aspects of future growth, development, and conservation within a city or county. Because a General Plan is a long-range document, it usually addresses conditions up to a point approximately twenty years in the future. It is intended to describe a generalized “vision” of the city’s proposed future pattern of growth and development.

In addition to guiding future growth, a General Plan is legally binding on local jurisdictions. Once a city has formally adopted a General Plan, new development approved by the jurisdiction must be in keeping with the plan’s policies, standards and locational criteria.

Purpose of the General Plan Update

Nevada City’s last General Plan was prepared in 1973. Since then, there have been numerous changes and a sense of growing urgency for more explicit attention to the city’s growth and development. The General Plan process required by state law is the logical first step at addressing these issues.

The purpose of this General Plan is as follows:

- To provide citizens with background information about their community, and allow them the opportunity to participate in planning and decision making.
- To respond to relevant county and state law and policies
- To establish the foundation for further planning efforts, such as zoning amendment and the environmental review process.

The first step in preparing a new General Plan was to formulate and adopt community goals. In a series of public meetings before the General Plan Committee and the Planning Commission, the statement on the following pages was prepared. It was officially adopted by action of the City Council on August 22, 1983.

Content and Organization of the General Plan:

State law establishes certain minimum requirements regarding the substance and content of a General Plan. The most basic and perhaps significant requirement is that a General Plan must consist of a diagram or diagrams and a text which set forth long-range goals and objectives as well as policies, principles, standards, and plan proposals designed to make sure that the goals and objectives are met. A General Plan also must address nine subject areas: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, seismic safety, noise, scenic highways, and safety. All of the various component parts of a general plan, when taken together are required to comprise a document which is integrated and internally consistent.

This General Plan contains the nine elements required by state law (Government Code Section 65300). These nine required elements are combined with a number of optional topics into five major headings, as follows:

- 1) Land Use and Economic Development
 - Land Use
 - Economic Development
 - Public Services
- 2) Housing and Neighborhood Conservation
 - Housing
 - Socio-cultural Environment
- 3) Circulation
- 4) City Resources
 - Historic Preservation
 - Conservation
 - Scenic Highways
 - Open Space
- 5) Public Safety
 - Noise
 - Seismic Safety
 - General Safety

Under each major heading will be a discussion of key Findings and then a statement of Objectives and Policies recommended to carry out relevant community goals. The last Chapter contains recommendations on further steps toward implementation of the plan.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY GOALS

To Paraphrase John Steinbeck's opening lines in his novel, "Cannery Row":

Nevada City in the Sierra Nevada foothills in California is a poem, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream.

Nevada City is an accumulation of well-preserved nineteenth century Gold Rush architectural treasures and a few that are not. It is a state of being, a paradox. It is many things to many people and nothing to some.

Its survival is determined by the attitude of those people who are willing to care.

The City of Nevada City is a compatible mixture of historic, residential, recreational, commercial, and industrial development representing both the best and worst examples of nineteenth and twentieth-century architectural styles and planning modes which foster a desirable variety of lifestyles and endeavors.

The residents of Nevada City are very much aware of the charm, the historic significance and the great beauty of the City and its physical setting. Uniformly they like the friendly people, the hospitality, the cultural amenities, and the way of life. People like the size of the City, its architecture, appearance, and general aesthetics.

Many of the residents have grown up in Nevada City. Others are long time residents, while others have come more recently because of these same city attractions. Few, on the other hand, express any desire to live anywhere else. This means the City should anticipate some growth which is both essential and desirable.

The following are the principal goals of the City.

Social and Cultural Environment

Nevada City, for a community of its size, has a remarkably diverse social make-up and rich cultural life. People of varied social backgrounds live together in truly mixed neighborhoods – both in housing sizes and income levels – in a city that is still small enough to maintain a pedestrian scale.

Nevada City provides an extremely wide range and abundance of cultural events, attended by many visitors – some of whom came to participate along with local residents. There are amateur and professional stage productions, concerts and exhibitions in all disciplines, fairs and sports events. Parades celebrate both Independence Day and Constitution Day. To complement the year-round cultural activities, Nevada City has a host of restaurants with reputations that reach far beyond the local area.

A goal of the City is to encourage, preserve and foster its diversity of social and cultural opportunities. Specific objectives supporting this goal have been frequently mentioned, including an increase in visitor-serving accommodations and additional conference/performing arts facilities. All possibilities to enhance the cultural growth of the community deserve consideration.

Historic Preservation

The City had its origin in the gold rush and owes much of its present charm and attractiveness to the fact that, more than in any other Mother Lode community, the historic character of both the city and its setting have been preserved, while at the same time accommodating contemporary pursuits.

Primary among the goals of the community are those relating to historic preservation.

1. The City aims to continue its efforts to preserve and enhance the architectural diversity of historic buildings in the central area, to maintain the remarkable collection of city-owned historic buildings, and to encourage private efforts of historic preservation and restoration
2. Whereas many other Mother Lode towns are being surrounded by modern subdivisions and commercial development, the Nevada City Basin remains nearly pristine. The City seeks means to preserve its sense of a historic town surrounded by open forest.
3. As the City grows and new buildings are added outside the historic district, it is the City's aim to encourage design which is appropriate to our own age, but which is unassertive, allowing the dominance of the City's primary, nineteenth century historic period.

Conservation

Nevada City has a settling of great beauty which should be preserved. The City began at the confluence of Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek and grew up the hill to the north on the sunny side of the creek. The City lies in a basin which wraps around the City, with Cement Hill, Sugar Loaf Mountain, Harmony Ridge, and Banner Mountain forming a forested backdrop. The open space surrounding the City is one of the distinctive characteristics. A goal of the City is to preserve its strong sense of entry and the sense of a distinct city surrounded by green, wooded hills. A joint city-county effort should be made to preserve the forested part of Nevada City's historic setting. Special consideration should be given to the perception of the City as seen from the highways.

Residential Areas

Nevada City is basically a city of single-family homes, all within a reasonable walk from the center of town. A goal of the City is to preserve this quality, yet recognize that new forms of housing can offer economies in both housing cost and land requirements. In addressing the question of housing, the City will seek means to preserve its residential neighborhoods and to maintain the diversity of people and of economic strata within each neighborhood.

The multi-family areas of most cities are near the city center. In Nevada City's case, the single-family areas are at the very edge of the central commercial area. Multi-family housing should have a minimum impact on the perception of the downtown area.

Parks and Recreation

Nevada City possesses a significant amount and variety of park space for a town of its size. It is a goal of the city to increase park and recreational opportunities with an eye to the future. In this way, key parcels can be acquired early, before they are irretrievably committed to other uses. In addition, the open space plan should recognize that Nevada City attracts a large number of visitors from the rest of the county and beyond. Both the minimum standards and the funding/maintenance methods should be chosen accordingly.

Circulation

Nevada City has many narrow, twisting and dead-end streets; these eccentricities are part of the unique character of the town and should be preserved. However, the unusual street pattern creates great potential for congestion and safety problems, even though traffic volumes are low relative to other cities. A prime circulation goal is to preserve Nevada City's special character. Through-traffic should be diverted directly to the highways, which should be separated from development by wooded green belts.

Commerce

Nevada City's primary commercial area is limited and is the center of the historic district. This limits the kind of commercial activities which can be accommodated there. Some Nevada City residents are going outside the city from some types of shopping.

The City's commercial goals are:

1. Maintain the central business area as a dominant historic district, keeping all commercial activity and building in character and scale with the historic period.
2. Reinforce parts of Zion Street and Searls Avenue as a commercial area serving Nevada City residents, but in a manner which is sensitive to visual impact on the highway.

3. Consider additional commercial areas in and around the City while at all times maintaining sensitivity to the visual impact of all commercial development on the highway.

Economic Development

The economy of Nevada City is based at present primarily on tourism and government service. Other important industries include timber, construction, and a small but growing light industrial sector. The economic goals of the City are as follows:

1. Encourage and assist local business and jobs to remain in Nevada City.
2. Maintain Nevada City's existing concentration of employment as the seat of county government
3. Diversify the economy of the City by attracting additional types of economic development.
4. Generate direct and indirect tax revenue necessary to provide adequate basic public services.
5. Support the historic and visual quality of the City.
6. Support the development of a Conference Center.

Growth

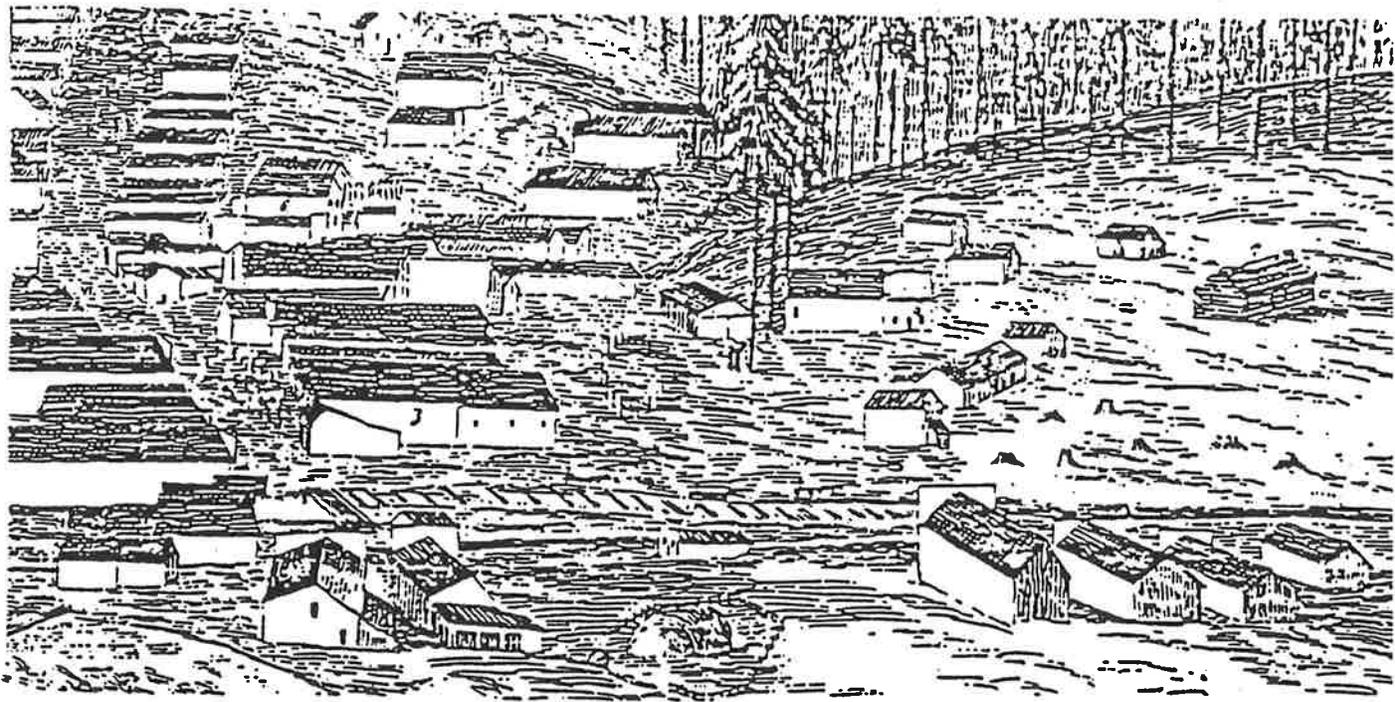
The City recognizes and accepts the fact that Nevada City exists in a dynamic society where growth is inevitable. The City believes that some growth is both essential and desirable. Therefore, it is the City's goal to provide for a balanced mix of residential, commercial, historic, and industrial development at a scale complementary to that existing, in order to promote and maintain a fiscally sound and aesthetically acceptable environment for present and future residents and business.

Annexation

The Nevada City Basin is all of the developed, partially developed, or undeveloped land in close proximity in any direction of Nevada City's present city limits. It includes that land which is part of the natural Deer Creek drainage system or which can be feasibly connected to the Nevada City sanitary sewer system or its future extensions.

The City intention is ultimately to include its entire sphere of influence within its boundary. Each proposal for annexation, however, will be judged individually on its physical, fiscal, and aesthetic compatibility with the goals and policies of the City of Nevada City.

II. LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: FINDINGS

Existing Conditions and Recent Trends

Land use – the present city limits are only slightly larger than the original square-mile section incorporated as Nevada City. At the center is the historic core, largely composed of a mixture of general business and public uses. Clustered around the core are several residential neighborhoods. The “grain” of the core and surrounding neighborhoods is that of small parcelization, narrow street frontage and radially patterned streets to negotiate the terrain.

Further out from the core there is a mixture of newer residential areas with large estates and a few pockets of non-residential use. The most important of these “pockets” is the Searls-Zion commercial area, which provides mainly convenience goods and services, in contrast to the general and tourist businesses in the historic district. Other commercial is limited to a few restaurants, gas stations, etc., mainly along the old highway route.

There is very little of what could be called “industrial” use in the Nevada City vicinity. There are truck yards located at Gold Flat just west of the Freeway, a timber mill is out Gracie Road just southeast of the City, and several outlets more closely corresponding to “heavy commercial” – welding and machine shops, auto service garages, etc. - - near the Gold Flat and Highway 49 intersection.

The most striking feature concerning land use in the Sphere of Influence as a whole is the overwhelming proportion of vacant or very low density rural residential land. The overall impression is strongly that of a tightly clustered village maintaining its clear form within a rural setting.

Current General Plans -- the existing Nevada City General Plan includes the following land use classifications:

AF	Agriculture Forestry
R	Rural
E	Estate
PD	Planned Development
SF	Single Family
MF	Mixed Residential
UHD	Urban High Density Multiple Family Residential
GC	General Commercial
SC	Service Commercial
EC	Employment Center
OP	Office and Professional
SL	Service Lodging
OS	Open Space Preserve
P	Public
P/R	Public / Recreation

The Nevada City General Plan designations for areas within the city's Sphere of Influence largely coincide with existing zoning, which will be discussed below. However, the more important point to be made about these designations is the fact that, because there are so few areas opened up to non-residential use, the "Commercial" or "Industrial" areas become more desirable for development. Since the areas so classified by the county are in some of the most conspicuous locations in the vicinity, it is in Nevada City's interest to take measures to ensure that any development will not harm the essential image of the town. This will take joint city – county efforts until such time as these areas are incorporated into Nevada City.

Current Zoning – Consistent with existing land use and the General Plan described above, there are only a few pockets of non-residential zoning in the city's Sphere of Influence. The historic core is the "General Business" district; the Searls-Zion area is the largest "Local Business" zone, intended to "meet the daily needs of the residential neighborhood or to meet the unique commercial demands placed upon Nevada City." Other areas zoned "LB" include the Tahoe National Forest Headquarters, the "Old Bottling Works" parcels in the north of the city, strips along the freeway to the north and south of the historic district, and the intersection of Gracie and Gold Flat Roads.

The city's "Light Industrial" zoning is intended to encourage non-nuisance industrial development. Areas classified "LI" include a portion of the Searls-Zion area, the Railroad Avenue vicinity, and a portion of the Amaral property along Highway 49 in the north of the city.

As for county zoning, most of the Sphere of Influence is very low-density residential. There are several "Public" and "Open Space" designations as consistent with current uses. The only non-residentially zoned parcels are located on both sides of the Freeway at Gold Flat, north of the city on the Nevada Street extension, at Indian Flat, and along Gracie Road.

Recent Economic Trends – The growth in Nevada City population and housing stock will be addressed in the Housing Element of this plan. This section will examine non-residential growth and economic development. For further background, refer to the Review of Nevada City Economy and the Economic Implications of Land Use Alternatives (Lord & Associates, June, 1983).

Retail sales tax has been the principal source of income to the community in the past. However, in recent years all categories except tourist-oriented sales – restaurants and specialty shops – have either failed to grow appreciably or have declined. Apparently, Nevada City residents are more and more frequently making their food, automotive supply, and standardized general merchandise purchase outside of the city. Discounting for inflation, sales volume in 1982 was roughly comparable to 1977 levels.

The municipal government sector has recently experienced a similar stagnation. Although capital expenditures have received several “shots in the arm” from federal, state and county sources, operating costs remain a problem. As one indication of this, from 1976-1981 the city’s hotel and room tax revenue increased by 240 percent, substantially outrunning the city’s operating costs. Since 1981, the municipal cost index has exceeded the sales and room tax index. Continuation of such an operating cost “squeeze” could force the city to cut back services to an even greater extent than cutbacks that have already occurred.

Future Economic Prospects -- If the city is to resuscitate its flagging municipal governmental sector, it must expand its tax base. There are three basic land use alternatives available to the city that could help in this regard. There are development of (a) more retail space (b) more visitor accommodations (for example, a major lodging facility with conference and convention facilities), and (c) industrial park space, designed for light manufacturing/research and development uses. Each of these uses would, assuming comparable amounts of land in use, have roughly the same positive fiscal impact on the community. In addition to considering revenue impact, the city should evaluate proposals on the basis of potential market demand, cost of services, and employment consequences. Better than any single use would be a carefully balanced combination of all three economic development prospects.

Jobs/Housing Balance – The Nevada County ratio of employment to households is only two-thirds that of the Sacramento region, which is itself 12 percent less than the state. A balanced economy will require substantial additional employment. In other words, there is a large pool of available labor already residing in the area. (Source: Demographic/Economic Trends and Data, John W. Cone, November, 1983) This fact, combined with the need for revenues explained above makes it clear that the city should place a high priority on attracting new commercial/light industrial development.

Proposed Projects -- There are a number of projects either now on the market or proposed for the near future. The largest is the 400,000-square-foot, 2,000-employee complex proposed by Grass Valley Group on its 160-acre property just west of the city. Other projects include the Gold Flat industrial subdivision currently advertising fully served lots, and the 40-acre parcel south of Gold Flat Road, designated Planned Development for a combination of residential and office and professional use.

There are a number of additional projects waiting in the wings. Several proposals have been advanced for the Old Seven Hills School property, as well as several proposals for the remaining Erikson lands west of the city. Nevada City will also be the location for a significant expansion of county office facilities in the near future.

The combined effects of this increased development would be very significant. It is the city’s responsibility to evaluate its capacity to serve such growth, and to establish a sound and equitable procedure for judging all proposals and for allocating the costs of necessary increases in city services and facilities

Limits to Future Growth

There are two kinds of factors influencing the desired amount of future growth in and around Nevada City. The first category is the more or less quantifiable limits -- to public services, the circulation network, etc. For these constraints, it is possible to identify "thresholds" beyond which future growth will require additional expenditure to improve support systems. Later in this section we will examine quantifiable growth "thresholds" relating to public utilities.

The second category is more difficult to capture. It has to do with the image people have of what kind of city they want. Nevada City, in formulating its goals, has stated that it wants a balanced mix of uses at a scale complementary to that existing. Thus, both new housing and new employment should be accommodated -- the question is in what proportions. This issue will have to be addressed periodically over the time frame of the General Plan. Priority will be given to whatever use is most needed at that time, within the overall purpose of balanced growth complementing what exists.

Sewer System Constraints -- Nevada City provides sewer services to an area slightly larger than that within the existing city boundaries. Areas outside of these service boundaries depend on private septic tank/leach field systems for sewage disposal. There are severe soil limitations to the use of private sewer systems, and the only long-term solution is to provide community-type sewerage facilities. Therefore, the extension of the public sewer system becomes one of the most important determinants of growth and development.

The most efficient way to provide sewer collection and treatment capacity for the future growth of the city is to improve the collection system and thereby limit the intrusion of illicit flows, which currently account for approximately 65 percent of average dry weather flow. This can be done with measurable results as the city grows without undertaking a large construction program with high capital costs. The city is committed to a continuous maintenance program designed to improve lines and expand regulation of illegal connections, thereby reducing infiltration and inflow. Crammer Engineering completed in 1981 a collection system improvement program affecting approximately 10 percent of the lines in the city.

They estimate that illicit flows can be reduced to approximately 25 percent of total future flows. Under this assumption, excess treatment capacity over current flows will be approximately as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} 690,000 \text{ gpd} \\ - 172,500 \text{ gpd (25\% allowance for illicit flows)} \\ \hline 517,500 \text{ gpd} \\ - 180,000 \text{ gpd current flows} \\ \hline 337,500 \text{ gpd excess capacity for growth} \end{array}$$

See Table 1 for translation of this excess capacity into approximate quantities of land use.

The 25 percent illicit flow level may, or may not be possible to achieve. However, information derived from the illicit flow removal program will enable the city to act in a timely manner should discharge requirements need revision or plant capacity need increasing. The collection of sewer connection fees or annexation fees will provide the capital for such improvements. In other cities, such fees are levied per residential unit or per thousand square feet of non-residential development.

Water System Constraints -- Nevada City's service area for water supply consists for the most part of the square-mile section that was the original city limits. Nevada Irrigation District service area boundaries are illustrated in the Public Utilities and Facilities section of the Environmental Assessment. The city is limited by a mutual agreement with NID to provide water service only to those areas within its city limits. Moreover, it cannot service annexations within NID's proposed service area.

As described in the Public Utilities and Facilities section of the Environmental Assessment, the water treatment system needs to be expanded when the population of its service area reaches approximately 4,000 to 5,000 (existing population plus 1,500 to 2,500 persons). Assuming the current boundaries of the service area, this threshold will not be reached before the year 2000. However, if the city expands its service area, treatment capacity could be reached with the time horizon of this General Plan.

The existing and projected service area boundaries should be a factor in determining desired priority areas for growth. The first priority would logically be infill development of areas already having water service. The second priority would be those areas within Master Plan projected service area boundaries. Development outside projected service area boundaries should be discouraged.

Future Population and Growth Assumptions

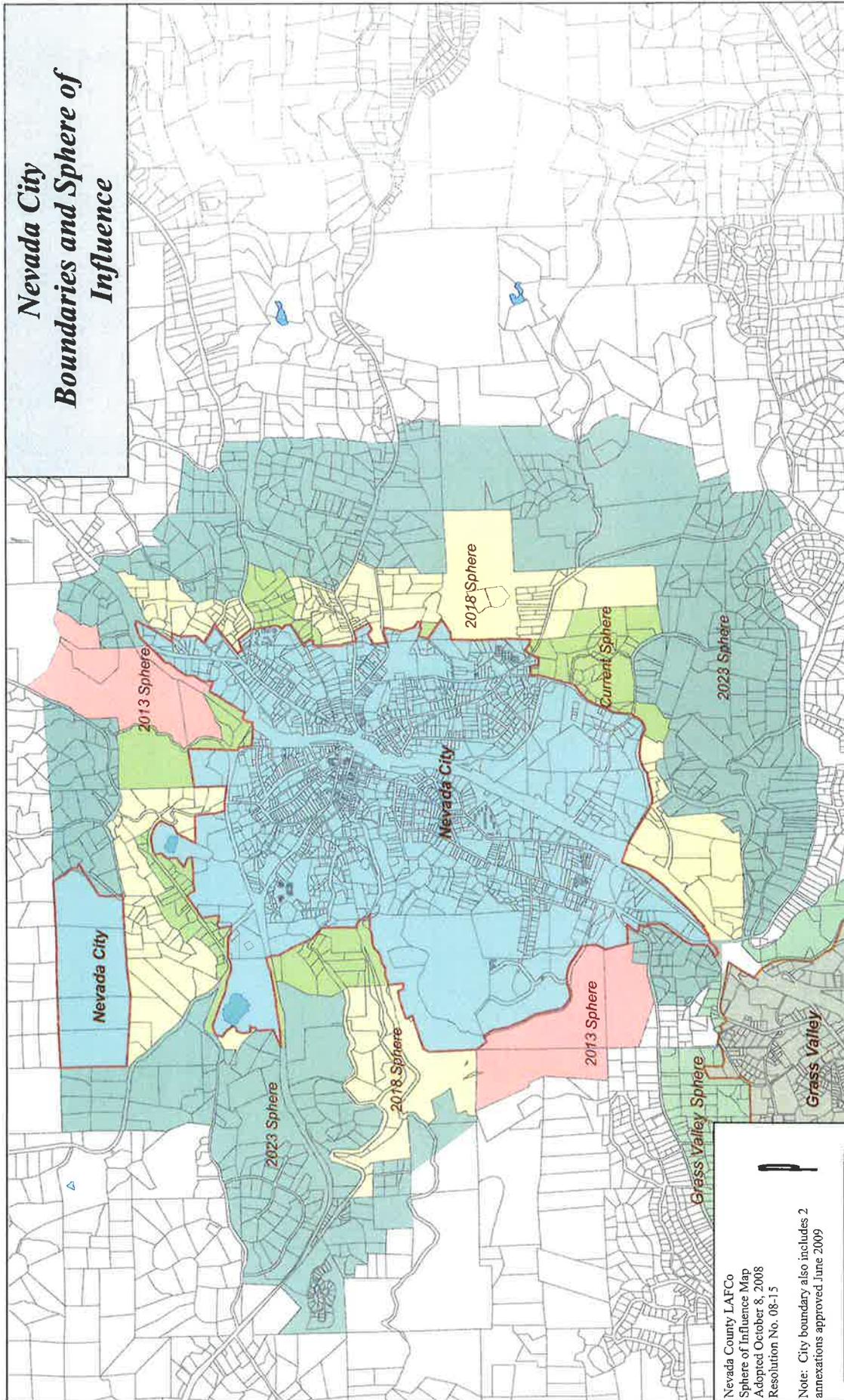
Nevada City's current incorporated area is projected to contain 3,400 persons in the year 2000, a growth of 970 persons or approximately 500 new households. The total Sphere of Influence (see Figure 1) is projected to contain approximately 6,400 persons, an increase of 3,700 persons or some 1,700 households more than are now estimated to live in the Sphere. The growth in population is partially a result of new residents moving in, and partially a result of existing residents in the territory added.

This analysis assumes future economic development will include community commercial sufficient to serve the new residents, plus approximately 3,500 new jobs in office, research, and development, and light industrial use (e.g., Grass Valley Group), and 200 new hotel/motel units.

The implication of these assumptions is that for every five new jobs, Nevada City would accommodate two new households; other employees would either be drawn from existing pool of available labor, or would commute from elsewhere. Even though Nevada City would attempt to accommodate only 40 percent of the households generated by new employment, there would still be 1,700 new dwelling units needed.

Assuming this balance of residential growth and economic development, Table 1 illustrates the year 2000 population and necessary additional sewer capacity.

Nevada City Boundaries and Sphere of Influence



Nevada County LAFCo
Sphere of Influence Map
Adopted October 8, 2008
Resolution No. 08-15

Note: City boundary also includes 2
annexations approved June 2009

FIGURE 1

TABLE 1

SEWER SYSTEM: FUTURE ADDITIONS TO DEMAND FOR TREATMENT

<u>Use</u>	<u>Average Daily Flow (gallons per day)</u>	<u>Increase in Demand for Treatment</u>	<u>Total Future Growth Assumed</u>	<u>Future Development</u>
Residential	150 gpd/unit	264,000 gpd	1,763 units (3,526 persons)	5,958 persons
Hotel	75 gpd/unit	15,000 gpd	200 units	
Service Commercial	25 gpd/employee	750 gpd	30 employees	
Office/R&D	25 gpd/employee	32,000 gpd	1,290 employees	
GVG Complex	15 gpd/employee	30,000 gpd	2,000 employees	

Plan Concept

The Plan is based on four major principles (see Figure 2):

1. PRESERVE THE SENSE OF WOODED ENCLOSURE by protecting views from the highways and by maintaining rural density surrounding a tight urban cluster.
2. ENHANCE THE HISTORIC CORE by appropriate complementary development such as visitor accommodations and infill residential.
3. REINFORCE EXISTING COMMERCIAL CONCENTRATIONS and strongly limit additional commercial locations.
4. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND REVENUE GENERATORS tucked away in wooded surroundings, but tied closely to the highway.

This concept is illustrated by the Land Use Map attached, and further elaborated in the Objectives and Policies at the end of this and the following section.

Summary of Problems, Opportunities, and Strategies

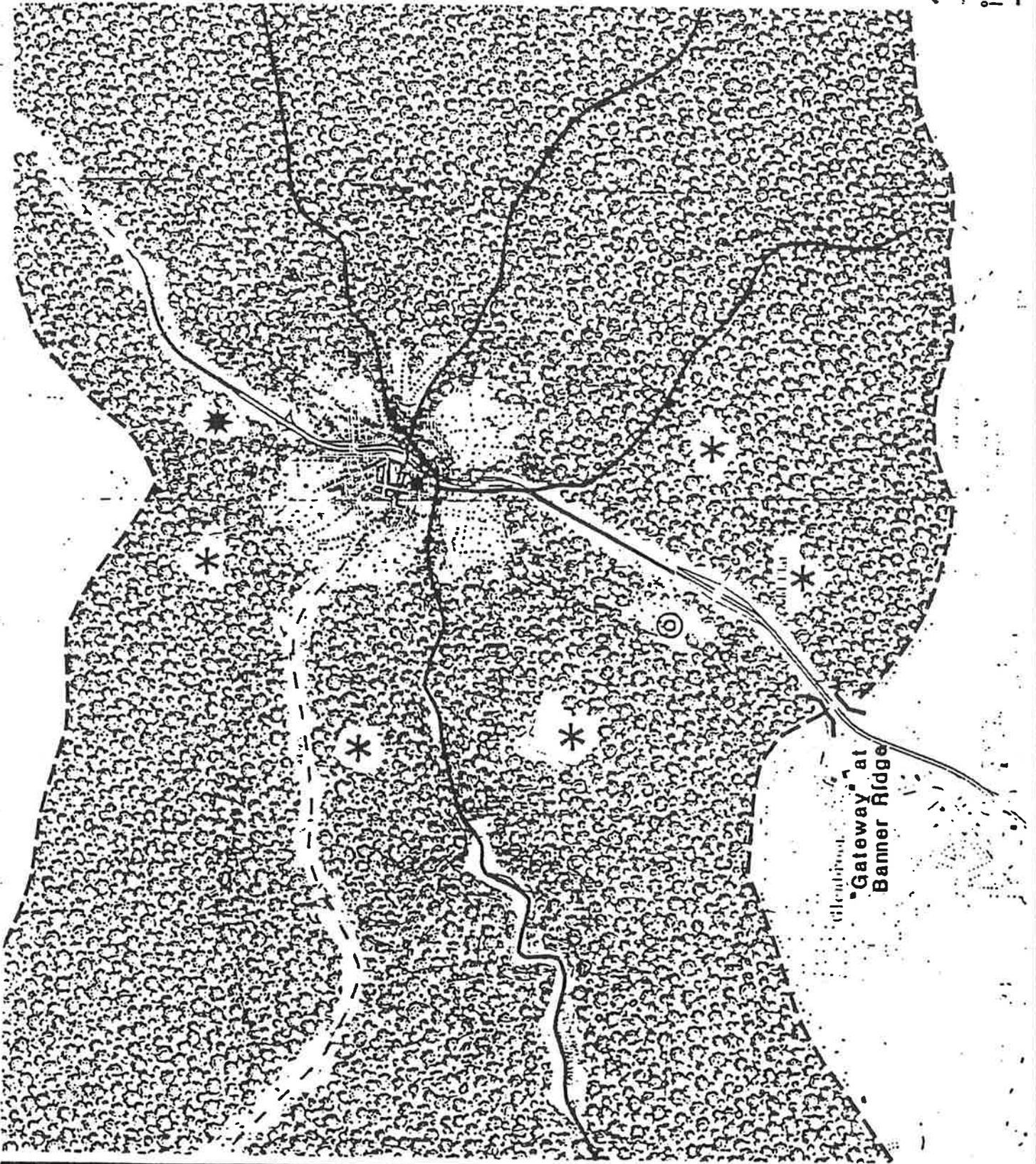
To simplify further description and recommendations, the Sphere of Influence has been divided into a number of planning sectors on the basis of existing use, parcelization, access, service, and other environmental characteristics. These are illustrated in Figure 3.

Nevada City -- Within Nevada City's present limits, the numerous creeks and watercourses form the boundaries between the famous "Seven Hills": Nabob Hill, Oregon Hill, Lost Hill, Aristocracy Hill, Piety Hill, Boulder Hill, and Prospect Hill. In addition, the Railroad Avenue District consists of the largely undeveloped lowlands along Gold Run and Railroad Avenue.

The Nabob/Oregon Hill District contains the general commercial core, as well as housing, visitor accommodations, and civic or cultural uses. New development should complement the form and character of the historic district, and should reinforce this area as the heart of the city and its focus of activity.

Figure 2.
Plan
Concept

-  Preserve sense of wooded enclosure
-  Enhance Historic Core with appropriate Infill development
-  Reinforce service commercial concentration
-  Create opportunities for employment and revenue generators hidden away in woods
-  Employment centers shown on this diagram are for illustration only and floating in nature. They are not intended to suggest the specific locations of the symbols.
-  Create opportunities for visitor-related development



**Figure 3.
Planning
Sectors**

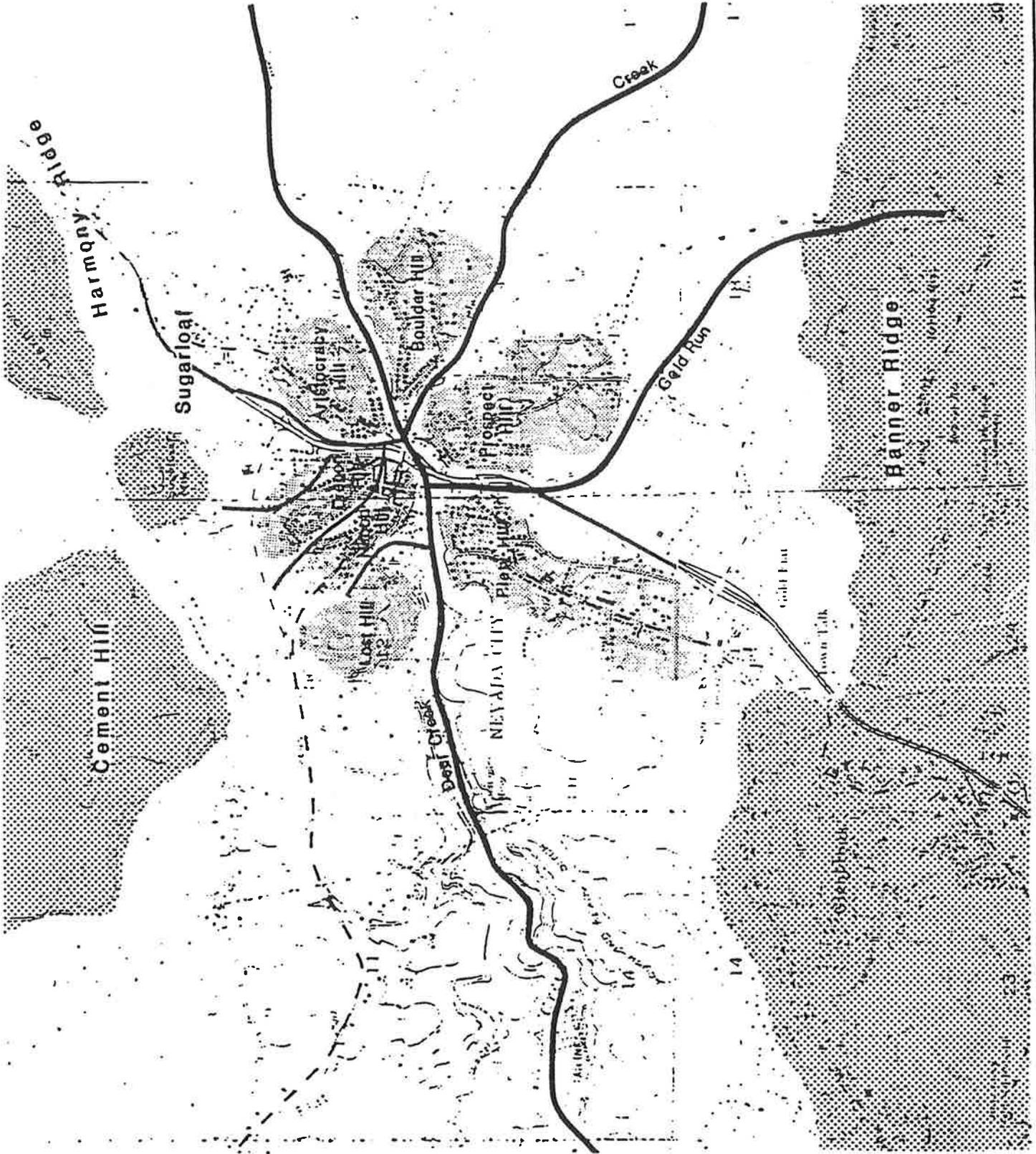
Summary of Strategy:

Nevada City

- Hahob/Oregon/Lost Hills: Infill and strengthen city core
- Aristocracy and Prospect Hill Districts: Reinforce as SF residential neighborhoods
- Boulder St. District: Limit to low-density SF and rural residential because of traffic and service capacity
- Plety Hill District: Reinforce both residential neighborhood and service commercial area
- Railroad Ave. District: Enact guidelines protecting view from road, tree cover, and open space/trail network

Sphere of Influence

- East of City: Preserve rural-density residential quality
- Freeway Environs: Initiate strong remedial action to protect aspects of the city's essential image
- West of City: Ensure coordinated development of Erickson lands; Create opportunities for hidden employment centers; Protect view from Highway 49 and other important access routes



The Piety Hill District includes both stable residential neighborhoods and the main service commercial concentration of the city. These uses can coexist and indeed compliment each other, as long as commercial projects are required to be sensitive to possible harmful effects on adjacent residents. The most appropriate area for expansion of community-serving commercial uses is that area between Ridge Road, Zion Street, and Searls Avenue, as illustrated on the Land Use Map. However, such development should retain existing mature trees, and should enhance the visual character of the area by incorporating such features as generous landscaping, high-quality building design, and low-key signage and lighting. In addition, negative environmental impacts such as increased traffic and noise should be minimized. Such development should not be visible from the freeway.

The Lost Hill District northwest of the downtown area, along with Aristocracy Hill, Prospect Hill, and Boulder Hill Districts east of the freeway, should be reinforced as predominately low-density residential neighborhoods, consistent with their present character and access constraints.

The Railroad Avenue District poses the most complicated issues of any land currently within the city limits. Most of it is zoned commercial or industrial, but relatively little development has occurred up to now. Strong guidelines should be enacted in order to protect and enhance the character of the area as it becomes built up. The most important elements to be protected include attractive views from primary access routes, existing mature trees, and a generous open space network, including pedestrian trail easement along the old Narrow Gauge Railway right-of-way. The City has expressed favor toward the concept of the reactivation of a portion of the narrow gauge railroad track along Railroad Avenue. Development in this area should strive to allow the roadway, railroad, and pedestrian/bike paths to exist in harmony.

Outside the City -- The unincorporated area is most easily understood as three general areas. To the east is predominately rural-density residential development, with a few exceptions (the county HEW complex, the timber mill on Gracie Road, and a limited amount of "crossroads commercial"). The present attitude of residents and property owners in the area is generally in favor of preserving this rural quality. There are numerous constraints to traffic and service capacity. For these three reasons, there should be very little additional commercial or industrial development east of the City. The area is more appropriate for residential infill complementing the existing context.

To the northwest, Highway 49 is the main access route. The previous Highway 49 (Old Downieville Highway) is a narrow road winding through the extensive Erickson Lumber Company holdings and limited rural residential. When the new Highway 49 was cut through the forest, it created excellent access for a number of adjacent sites, which are now receiving much interest for development proposals. However, the very characteristic which makes them prime development sites -- visibility and accessibility from the highway - - also makes them sensitive and vulnerable locations with regard to preserving Nevada City's essential image and character.

The strategy for this area is to protect the view from Highway 49 by creating a strictly controlled scenic corridor, but to allow hidden pockets of development to occur behind a screen of mature trees and vegetation.

Toward the west are additional large Erickson Lumber Company holdings, this time receiving access from Zion Street and the Gold Flat freeway interchange. Recently, 160 acres of this woodland has been bought by the Grass Valley Group, which has applied for annexation and zoning change to allow construction of it high-technology complex. This complex would be an ideal model for the kind of job- and revenue-generating, clean industry desired by Nevada City.

There remain approximately 90 acres of Erickson land which were part of the former Champion Trails proposal. There is a proposal for an office-professional complex on the 2-1/2-acre site at Lone Pine Road and Zion Street. A proposal for a major shopping center on the 4-1/2-acre site at Zion and Ridge Roads was only recently abandoned. There are no proposals for the remaining 80+ acres adjacent to the Grass Valley Group property.

This area should not be planned piecemeal, on a case-by-case basis. Rather, to the maximum extent possible, it should receive coordinated environmental evaluation of the cumulative traffic, noise, and other impacts of all proposed development.

Southwest of the city are the freeway environs. This area is served by the Gold Flat interchange, and is under greater pressure for development than any other part of the Sphere of Influence. It also needs the greatest amount of remedial action to improve the "view from the road" and other aspects of Nevada City's essential image.

Priority measures in this regard are the establishment of a scenic corridor ensuring sufficient screening of views from the freeway, protection of mature trees, and native vegetation, and reservation of riparian areas and the former Narrow Gauge right-of-way as open space corridors or trail easements.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

The City's adopted goals most relevant to this section include those on Commerce, Economic Development, Growth, and Annexation. These issues are the most urgent to be faced by the city, and the immediate reason for the present update of the General Plan.

In a nutshell, the city's aim is to grow and diversify economically, while still maintaining the good qualities so cherished by residents and visitors. The following objectives and policies are intended to reinforce that aim.

Development and Annexation

Objectives –

Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to preserve the existing impression of a tightly clustered, fine-grained core within tree-covered, rural surroundings, to prevent "strip" development along the highways, and reduce the extent and cost of public services.

Determine appropriate use for land in Nevada City on the basis of the following criteria

- Physical characteristics (slope, soils, vegetation, visual sensitivity, accessibility, etc.)
- Priority level (first priority for annexation are areas already on public services; second are areas within planned extensions of public services)
- Special Resource or landmark significance implying consideration for open space or public use (e.g., Sugar Loaf Reservoir and Bowl, Old Seven Hills School properties)
- Fiscal and employment effect on the city.

Use these same criteria to guide decisions on location and timing of future annexations to the city. Areas most appropriate for annexation are those which can be provided with public services that would have a positive fiscal and employment effects and are conspicuously located (therefore important to the city's essential image). Unincorporated areas within the Sphere of Influence should be subject to cooperative growth by the city and county.

Coordinate planning for growth areas, in order to ensure evaluation of cumulative environmental impacts and contribution to mitigation of such impacts by all involved projects.

Policies –

- Do not permit urban density uses beyond the Sphere of Influence boundary as shown on the Land Use Plan.
- Encourage urban-type development to occur as infill within the city. Urban-type development in county territory in most cases is inconsistent.
- Designate additional urban land only when it is clearly demonstrated that the supply in a particular area is insufficient to permit a reasonable choice of sites for new development of desired uses, and that scattered development will not occur.
- Change specific land use designations only after it has been determined that the change enhances eventual achievement of the objectives, policies, and the plans of the General Plan, and that it will serve a public purpose to make such a change.
- Require all new development served by the Gold Flat interchange to contribute jointly to mitigation of increased traffic in the area.
- In recognition of the visual value of Sugarloaf Mountain and the nearby ridgetops, the following restrictions shall be included in any development for this area:
 - Avoid any land disturbance such as major grading and/ or tree removal which would cause visible scars.
 - Any structures shall be carefully sited so that they are not visible.
 - In the vicinity of any structures, the tree canopy shall be retained to screen views.
 - Building material shall be in natural colors which will blend into the hillside. No materials which will cause visible glare or reflection shall be used.
- Regarding the property located between Ridge Road and the Nevada City Highway just southwest of the intersection of the two roadways, the following development restrictions shall apply:
 - Any development of the property shall recognize that the parcel is a visually sensitive corridor property
 - The property shall be developed using generous setbacks.
 - At least 50% of the property shall remain as open space.

- Scenic Corridor combining district zoning regulations, when adopted, shall apply to the development of the property
- Any development plan for the property shall include the necessary street dedications for the improvement of the intersection.

Public Service/Fiscal

Objectives –

Encourage a rate of growth which does not exceed the city's ability to provide necessary public services or the ability of the local economy to support such growth.

Policies –

- Encourage commercial and employment-generating uses which provide tax revenues and employment to help support planned residential growth, including auxiliary public facilities and services.
- Develop a program of growth phasing, wherein only those lands where public facilities and services are available at a given time will be able to develop at urban densities and standards at that time.
- Initiate planning for incremental expansion of the city sewer and water systems. Specifically, verify existing excess capacity, alternative means to increase capacity, and comparative costs to those alternatives.
- Enact measures requiring new development to contribute to costs of necessary improvements, by such means as mitigation fees, or sewer impact fees proportional to the quantity of new space.
- Identify areas with capacity constraints, and place appropriate policy restrictions on those areas. For example, limit growth in the area served by Boulder Street, because of traffic constraints

Land Use (Revised per Resolution 2009-49)

Objectives –

Establish General Plan classifications of adequate variety and specificity to guide further elaboration by means of zoning and other implementation methods.

Policies –

- The following categories are adopted, corresponding to the desired future land use pattern diagrammed in the Land Use Plan. Most categories correspond to one of the existing zoning classifications.
 - Open Space Preserve (OS): Land of high scenic, recreational, and/or resource value in an essentially unimproved state.
 - Public (P): Sites or facilities intended to remain in long-term public use.
 - Public/Recreation (P/R): Areas for public use, providing recreational facilities by public entities.
 - Agriculture/Forestry (AF): Farmland, timberland, and other areas suitable for only very rural uses. (5-acre minimum lot size)
 - Rural (R): Areas outside of projected public service boundaries that should remain very low density agricultural and/or residential use. (Maximum 1 dwelling unit/1-5 acres)
 - Estate (E): Areas outside of projected public service boundaries that should remain very low density agricultural and/or residential use. (Maximum 1 dwelling unit/1-3 acres).
 - Single Family Residential (SF): Historic or other sensitive single family neighborhoods inappropriate for increased densities. (Maximum 4 dwelling units/acre)
 - Mixed Residential (MF): Areas suitable for increased housing density by such means as smaller lot sizes, planned unit development, townhouse, or garden apartment site plans. (Maximum 8 dwelling units/acre)
 - Urban High Density Multiple Family Residential (UHD). The UHD land use designation is intended to accommodate up to 16 units per acre. UHD is intended to accommodate town house style units, apartments and condominiums without distinction as to owner or renter occupancy. The primary purpose of the UHD land use designation is to fulfill the Housing Element needs to provide adequate sites to accommodate the City's

regional requirements for Very Low and Low income households as defined in Section 50079.5 and 50105 respectively of the California Health and Safety Code. As such, lands that are designated shall be done as part of the implementation of the Housing Element. Notwithstanding, additional lands may be designated through the general plan amendment process if the City finds that such lands would meet the needs of future Housing Elements. The R3, High Density Multiple Family Residential zoning district implements this general plan land use designation.

- General Commercial (CG): Businesses and services oriented to community-wide or tourist needs, with the inclusion of mixed residential uses, and while complementing the nature and scale of Nevada City's central business district. (Analogous to General Business zoning classification)
- Service Commercial (SC): Shops and services catering to the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. Mixed residential uses are also encouraged. (Analogous to Local Business zoning classification)
- Service Lodging (SL): Existing hotels, motels, and lodging facilities located outside of service commercial or general commercial designations in areas suited for future lodging facilities. Based on future zoning ordinance implementation, this designation could include use permit or other provisions for conference or convention facilities and/or other visitor support land uses.
- Office and Professional (OP): Professional offices, general business offices, and research and development facilities not oriented toward general retail sales located in areas of transition between residential and more intensive land uses and/or where traffic access and circulation is good, but not sufficient for retail commercial. The Office and Professional land use designation is also ideal for mixed use residential uses to provide both short and long-term employee housing while advancing the residential-office transition.
- Employment Center (EC): Light commercial or light industrial development concentrations which address the city's need for jobs and revenue but which do not harm the essential visual character of "historic town surrounded by open forest," and which remain sensitive to established neighborhoods. This designation is intended to include existing light industrial development and future development opportunities. Future zoning and development under this designation should fall within the following different categories, based on zoning and/or site plan review considering the nature of the neighborhood and surroundings:

- a) Areas of traditional light industrial development in areas where this land use is already established and neighborhoods can tolerate higher levels of noise and visual impact related to metal buildings, outside storage, and shop activity. The existing industrial area on the east side of Searls Avenue is typical of this type of category.
 - b) Relatively small parcels available for job generating land uses as very light manufacturing, research and development, and related activities, where such uses are esthetically designed, do not generally involve outside storage, and have mitigated characteristics that allow the uses to exist in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. The City will consider noise, light, glare, signage, traffic generation, and hours of operation among the neighborhood compatibility factors for development in these areas. The Tahoe Forest Headquarters on Highway 49, the Gold Flat Road parcels, and the Old Bottling Works on Uren Street are typical of this type of category.
 - c) Large parcels which provide opportunities for larger, well planned employment centers, hidden in wooded enclosure from general view and perception of their scale. This category is demonstrated by the approved development for Grass Valley Group on Providence Mine Road.
- All such employment centers should have good access to the highways but remain screened from view from major highways or entry streets and conserve mature trees and important topographic features.
 - Proposed employment centers should be the subject of a coordinated development proposal and environmental review process for the entire property at once, if reasonably possible. Evaluation standards should include at least the following criteria:
 - Street pattern and lot subdivision should be appropriate for the intended use and should be sensitive to adjacent uses.
 - Access should be well integrated with the surrounding traffic context.
 - A generously landscaped buffer zone should screen the view from surrounding roads, and existing tree cover should be retained insofar as possible.
 - Private open space should link into and reinforce the citywide open space and trail system
 - At least 25% should be vegetated open space, preferably by preserving existing trees.

- Grading and removal of vegetation should be minimized, in order to prevent erosion damage caused by increased impervious surfaces
- Planned Development (PD): Large ownerships or other special opportunities for clustering or mixed-use development. “Planned development” classification allows more creative solutions to provision of open space and amenities than do the standard setback, coverage, and height requirements. However, it also requires more attention to design review.

Evaluation standards should be similar to those for “employment center” classification above. Clustering of development should enable the provision of generous landscaping, open space, and conservation areas.

This PD designation may be combined with other land use designations (such as SF-PD for single family-planned development) where clustering of development, providing generous open space, and other planned development features are clearly desirable.

When using the planned development designation in combination with another land use designation, the density standards of the other designation shall apply.

- Mixed Use Residential: Mixed use residential land uses, including live-work units are encouraged in the General Commercial, Service Commercial and Office and Professional land use designations. Mixed use development is an important ingredient that reflects Nevada City’s downtown character, livability, sense of community and place while promoting a high quality of life. It is also one of the cornerstones of the General Plan that is intended to promote walkability, energy conservation, keeping eyes on the street, and a variety of smart growth principles. Mixed use residential development within commercial and professional offices is encouraged to be included within a second or third story as a means to maximize use of infrastructure, encourage a high degree of pedestrian activity, promote a safe town environment through maintaining human activity throughout the day and evening. Mixed uses will encourage infill, reinforce a compact form and help maintain the clear edge between the forested surrounding and the historic urban townscape.
- Development of residential land uses are encouraged in close proximity to employment centers and light industrial land uses if it can be shown that traffic and noise conflicts would be minimal, pedestrian or other forms of non-motorized access can be accomplished and such development could take advantage of existing infrastructure (water, sewers, roads, etc).

III. CITY RESOURCES



CITY RESOURCES: FINDINGS

Purpose

The following section is intended as an outline of the valuable existing elements of Nevada City. The purpose is to instill a sense of the heritage, public trust, and the enormous potential influence -- for good or for bad -- of the city as protector of those valuable elements.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Both the layout of the town and the large number of Gold-Rush-era buildings give a strong sense of the nineteenth century origin of Nevada City. There are not only many designated "historic landmarks," but also a more permeating sense of place arising from the combination of topography and man-made objects. Natural features are complemented by tightly framed views up the narrow streets. There is a sense of unity and coherence within the diversity of architectural detail and materials, and the wide expanses of forest benefit by the contrast of the tightly clustered, intricately fine-grained texture of the historic core.

There is a thriving concentration of cultural activity to reinforce these distinctive physical features: theatre performances and concerts almost every week, sports events, and numerous museum and visual arts exhibitions. There is a weekly newspaper and local radio station in town, and also a daily newspaper and two radio stations serving the town. Finally, one of the greatest resources of the town is its people, including many pioneer families, representing a link with more than a century of Nevada City history.

Conservations and Scenic Resources

Following the discovery of gold at the confluence of Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek, the town was born, quickly filled the small amount of level ground, then began to grow up and around numerous hills enclosing Deer Creek Ravine. Even now there is a very strong sense of a concentrated "village on seven hills" in the midst of the wooded Deer Creek Basin. These hills have names which evoke Nevada City's past -- Prospect Hill, Aristocracy Hill, Piety Hill, Lost Hill, Nabob hill, Oregon Hill, and Boulder Hill. They form a large part of the unique character of the town, along with the frequent glimpses of Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek winding through the wooded ravine at their feet.

The historic village is seen against the backdrop of Cement Hill, Sugarloaf Mountain, and Harmony Ridge to the north, and Banner Ridge to the south. As one approaches the city at Ridge Road on the south, there is a strong sense of "portal" or entry - - of leaving the urbanized portion of the county and entering the forest. Approaching Nevada City from the north, there are panoramic views over the Basin, with the city clustered tightly as its heart.

Scenic Highways

Both Highways 20 and 49 through Nevada City are part of the State Scenic Highways Master Plan. Any highway that is part of this plan is eligible for designation as an "Official Scenic Highway."

In order for Highway 49 to be designated an Official Scenic Highway, the following steps would be necessary:

1. The legislative body having jurisdiction over lands adjacent to the highway (in this case, the County Board of Supervisors) must request the Director of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to make a corridor survey and highway facility study, to culminate in a Scenic Highways Report containing maps, photographs and other forms of documentation suggesting scenic corridor boundaries and scenic elements.
2. The Scenic Highways Report will be given to the local jurisdiction for preparation of the local scenic corridor protection and enhancement plan and programs.
3. When the Department of Transportation determines that the local jurisdiction has properly implemented a protection plan, and upon request from the local jurisdiction and recommendation of the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee, the Department shall designate the "Official State Scenic Highway" in all applicable publications, and provide appropriate signs.

The County General Plan recommended that the State DOT prepare a Scenic Highway report for all county highways shown on the above-mentioned Master Plan. It also recommended implementation of such studies by means of a "Scenic Corridor" zoning district. The County has already amended the zoning ordinance and map to include this "Scenic Corridor" combining district along much of Highway 20. However, only a small portion of Highway 20 adjacent to Tahoe National Forest has been officially designated by the state.

Regarding scenic corridors, there are two principal types of conditions. The first is where the land adjacent to the road is undeveloped. The second, more difficult circumstance is where there are existing structures which it would be desirable to screen out. A scenic corridor can vary in width, depending on the specific conditions. Generally, the narrower the width the more dense would have to be the needed vegetation.

In the first case of undeveloped land, the City should use its several types of powers of approval such as annexation, subdivision review, use permits, and zoning to require the needed setbacks and planting programs. It is very important not to permit uses near the highway which desire to attract attention from people on the highway, such as motels or commercial uses.

The second case, where there are existing buildings, will require the city to initiate a cooperative program of working with the property owners and with CalTrans to develop appropriate screening. Fortunately, there are in Nevada City a limited number of such cases, primarily on the south.

At the center of the town, on the other hand, the historic buildings and white church steeples are part of the very attractive scene which should be seen to denote the arrival in Nevada City.

It would be appropriate in the new zoning ordinance to spell out the details of the scenic corridor. The general purpose will be to screen all development except at the center of town, so that the appearance from the highway will be as though one were in the forest, as it must have been in the early days of Nevada City.

Parks and Recreation

Existing Standards and Facilities – For a town of approximately 2,500, Nevada City provides approximately 15 acres of public parks and three school playgrounds. This translates into over 6 acres per 1,000 population compared with the following typical standards:

Park Type	Service Radius	Minimum Site Size	Standard No. of Acres per 1,000 Population
Neighborhood	½ mile	5-7 acres	2
Community	1 mile	10-30 acres	4
Regional	10 miles	200-500 acres	15

Source: Planning and Design Criteria, De Chiara and Koppelman

However, Nevada City parks serve not only its residents population but also the surrounding unincorporated area and many out-of-town visitors during tourist season. Thus, planning for future parks should be undertaken assuming a service area including the entire Sphere of Influence, and a user population which swells considerably during spring and summer.

Potential Future Facilities – There are a number of opportunities for additional parks and recreation facilities in and around the city; the Sugarloaf Reservoir parcel, which would be an ideal community park, consists of 13 acres currently owned by the city. Hirschman's Pond is another appropriate park site, as is the Sheriff's marker site at the old Airport north of the city.

Immediately adjacent to Nevada City on the west are approximately 160 acres of beautiful, wooded land along Deer Creek. Much of this land is part of the large Erikson Lumber Company holdings and has previously been offered for public open space dedication and/or annexation to Nevada City. The remainder of the creekside lands are owned by the Grass Valley Group, who intend to donate them as a permanent open space preserve.

Additional future recreational opportunities include the possibility of extending pedestrian trail links along Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek through the city. The possibility exists to acquire the Old Seven Hills property for park and recreational uses. There are now partial and unofficial trails from Pioneer Park to Deer Creek and under the Freeway. At one time the Rough and Ready Ditch easement offered an ideal trail gradient climbing from Little Deer Creek to the top of the ravine. This easement has not been fully retained by NID, but the possibility of reopening it should be explored. In particular, the flume at Pine Street Bridge, which has historic value by preserve and possibly made accessible to the public by means of an interpretive trail link.

There are two parcels in the Nevada City Sphere of Influence which are now owned by the federal government and should be mentioned in connection with parks and open space. The 15-acre Bureau of Land Management parcel between Gold Flat Industrial Park and the Freeway is one of the last remnants of pristine woodland surround the city. It should be retained its natural state.

The enormous Bureau of Land Management holdings southeast of the city on Gracie Road are currently held as timberland. It should be retained in its original state. Part of these lands is currently leased to a gun club, whose firing range causes noise impacts on surrounding residences.

CITY RESOURCES: OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objectives –

The adopted goals most directly relevant to this section include Historic Preservation, Conservation, and Parks and Recreation. The following are recommended objectives and policies to preserve the city's valuable historic, cultural and open space resources.

Historic/Cultural Resources

Objectives –

Maintain the dominance of the city's primary, nineteenth-century historic period.

Allow new development which is complementary to the form and scale of its context.

Ensure continued concentration of public and cultural activities which reinforce the historic core as the "heart" of Nevada City.

Policies –

- Encourage private efforts at historic rehabilitation and restoration.
- Seek innovative means to maintain and improve city-owned historic buildings (leases to appropriate private use, grants from private and/or government sources).
- Formulate design guidelines laying out the essential elements constituting Nevada City's special "flavor." These guidelines would be a handbook to prospective developers and a guide for evaluation by the architectural review committee.
- Retain a maximum amount of city and county government functions in downtown Nevada City.
- Encourage appropriate infill uses in downtown (e.g., visitor accommodations and cultural facilities).

Conservation and Scenic Resources

Objectives –

Preserve the existing impression of a historic town surrounded by open forest, especially from the “Gateway” at Ridge Road.

Preserve and enhance the important natural features, e.g., Sugarloaf, the ridges, the creeks, Gold Run, the hills within the city, and the steep terrain lying west of the city core.

Policies –

- Reinforce important vistas and scenic corridors by reducing roadside clutter and emphasizing focused views to important landmarks (e.g. Sugarloaf).
- Develop and implement a program to secure special easements to protect streamside zones as potential open space or pedestrian/bike trails, wildlife habitat, and permanent open space.
- Discourage tree cutting within the city. (The Open Space District in the zoning ordinance provides some measure of control in this area.)
- Prevent soil erosion and hillside scarring through control of grading, restrictions on removal of vegetation, and limitation of development on steep slopes.

Scenic Highways

Objectives—

To encourage the designation of both Highway 20 and Highway 49 as Official State Scenic Highways.

To protect and enhance the scenic qualities of these highways by controlling the type and form of development within the adjacent corridor as discussed under findings: Scenic Highways.

Policies—

- Adopt a “Scenic Corridor” combining district (see Glossary) patterned after that of the county, and apply it to Highway 20 and 49 through Nevada City.
- Encourage the county to extend “Scenic Corridor” classification to the remainder of unincorporated lands adjacent to Highways 20 and 49.

- Include specific provisions such as the following:
 - Prohibition of billboards and similar signage.
 - Discouragement of individual access in favor of commonly planned joint access to adjacent properties.
 - Encouragement of “PD” or similar planned development along such routes.

Open Space and Parks and Recreation

Objectives—

Include consideration of both resident and non-resident users in planning future park needs and funding sources.

Take steps to ensure acquisition, dedication, or conservation of potential open space preserves, public park sites and trails easements.

Policies

- Consider allocating part of the cost of maintaining and improving the city park system to non-residents, by such means as user fees.
- Require new development to contribute to improvement of the open space system by park dedication or in-lieu fees as a condition of approval.
- Investigate opportunities for extension of public trails along Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek, especially in connection with features of historic importance, such as the flume at Pine Street Bridge.
- Ensure preservation of important natural areas by reclassifying to “Public” or “Open space Preserve” use. “Public” classification is appropriate if the area is being considered for parks and recreational use, whereas “Open Space Preserve” enables conservation of areas with natural resource value, without requiring outright acquisition.
- Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require mandatory open space areas and/or site coverage limitations, as is now required in the light industrial (LI) district, in other zoning districts, including those consistent with the following General Plan land use designations:
 - Employment Center
 - Office and Professional
 - Service Lodging.

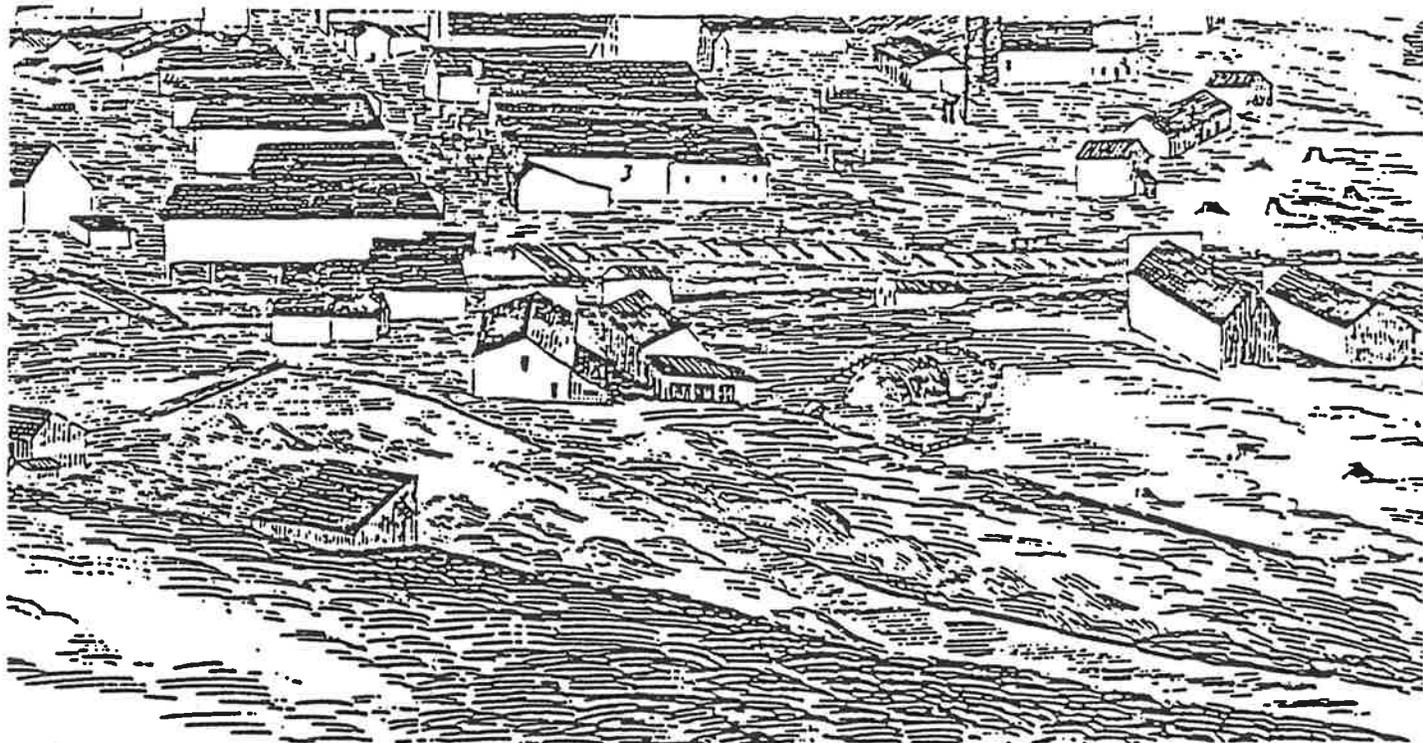
- Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require landscape buffer yards where land uses consistent with the following General Plan land use designations abut single family residential properties:
 - Service Commercial
 - Employment Center
 - Office and Professional
 - Service Lodging

IV. HOUSING AND
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

See 2014-2019
HOUSING ELEMENT
ON FILE W/ NEVADA CITY



V. CIRCULATION



CIRCULATION: FINDINGS

Purpose:

The access network is intimately related to growth and development. Poor access can slow or prevent development, and access improvements can spur growth. The aim of the Circulation Element is to ensure close coordination of traffic, parking, transit, and other access with proposed land use, environmental sensitivity, scenic conservation, and other elements of the long-term plan for the city.

Existing Policy Background

The 1978 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was prepared by a Transportation Commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors and by joint action of mayors of the two incorporated cities, Grass Valley and Nevada City. The Plan documented transportation needs based on the population and land use as projected by the County Planning Department in May, 1978, and on the goals and objectives developed and revised through an extensive public involvement process extending over three years. The Plan made a series of proposals for transportation improvement, estimated costs, and identified possible funding sources.

In addition to fulfilling state requirements for an RTP, the 1978 Plan stated its intention to be carried forward as the Circulation element for the Cities' and County's General Plans. It was subsequently adopted as the County Circulation Element in early 1980.

Updates to the Plan were published in 1980 and 1984-85. They were intended as supplements to the 1978 Plan, with revised policy, action, and financial recommendations. The major difference in the updates was an attempt to reduce implementation costs in response to the significant projected funding shortfall. Because the overwhelming majority of programmed expenses were for street and highway programs, the primary thrust was the elimination of street and road projects.

With respect to Nevada City, proposed circulation improvements were reduced from approximately \$1.66 million in projects to only \$470,000. This \$470,000 compares to a projected \$440,000 in funding sources. A similar balance was effected for public transportation-- \$880,000 in Transportation Development Act Fund distribution as compared to an equal amount of projected expenses.

The County Regional Transportation Plan should be used as a basis for Nevada City's circulation planning, since it draws on a data base and funding far beyond Nevada City's resources. Upon release of each update to the RTP, the city should evaluate, make appropriate revisions, and finally adopt the updated RTP as a part of Nevada City policy.

As an example, the functional hierarchy of road types for Nevada City should be consistent with the County RTP system (see glossary for transportation Classification). In particular, local streets should be protected from the intrusion of through traffic.

CIRCULATION: OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Nevada City's prime circulation goal has been quoted earlier in this plan. Briefly, it emphasizes the importance of preserving the "eccentricities" of the road network as an integral part of the special character of the city. This specialized local goal should be kept in mind simultaneously with the regional objectives and policies outlined in the RTP.

Regional Circulation

Objectives—

Cooperate with the county in fulfilling the aims of the current RTP.

Policy—

- Use the county RTP as the basis for the Nevada City Circulation Element, subject to adoption of the current version by the City Council.
- All circulation improvements shall be consistent with the circulation plan Map classifications.

Local Circulation

Objectives—

Limit road widening and other major change to the characteristic street pattern. Rather, use these eccentricities as traffic capacity constraints, and encourage added traffic to be diverted as directly as possible to the highways.

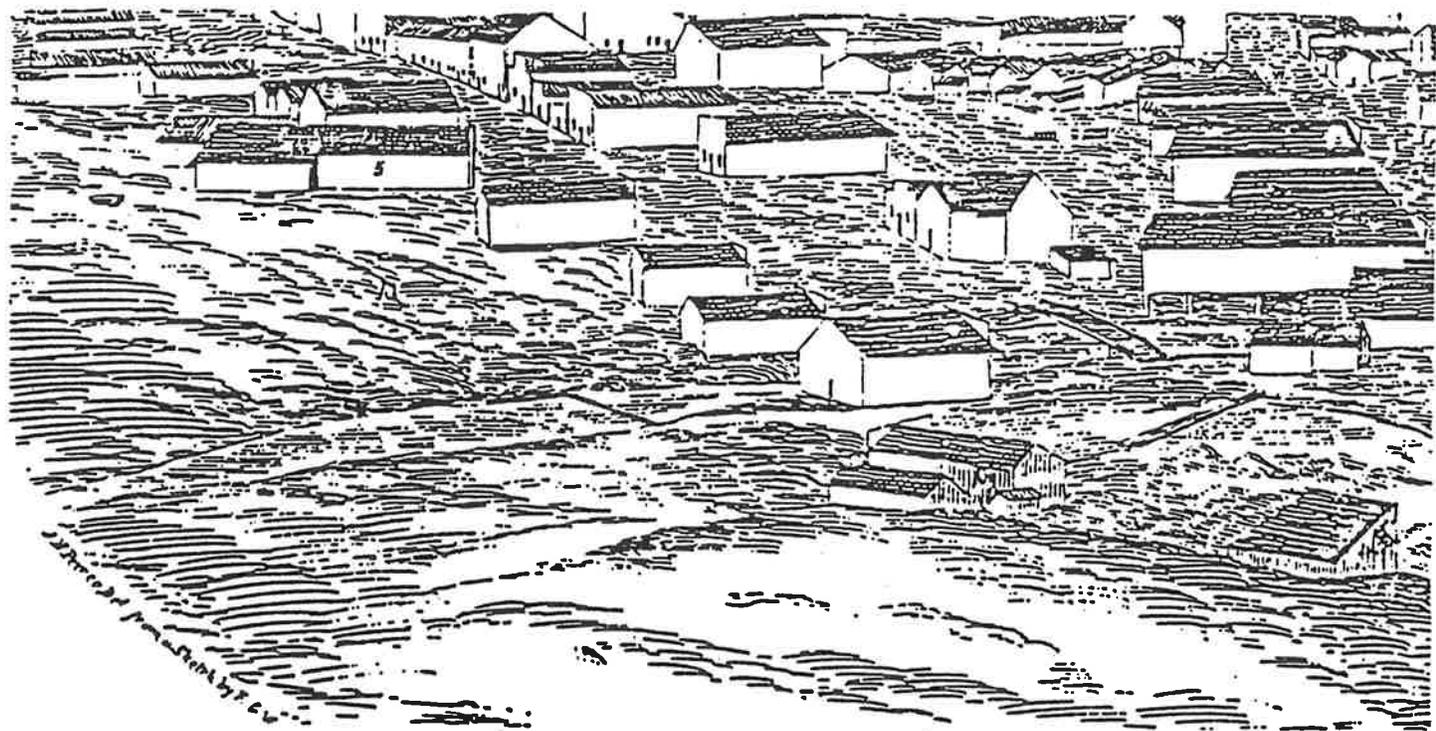
Improve the access to the few freeway interchange points, since they are to receive a large portion of future added traffic.

Policies—

- Maintain reasonable traffic levels on local streets to protect residents from the harmful effects of noise, fumes, and safety hazards.
- Limit development served by traffic capacity constraints.
- Require proposed development served by the Gold Flat interchange to contribute to coordinated evaluation and implementation of needed traffic improvements in the area, as determined by RTP proposals and cost estimate, or else an independent evaluation prepared for Nevada City.

- Encourage the construction of pedestrian and bicycle pathways where appropriate, to provide safe alternatives to vehicular travel.

VI. PUBLIC SAFETY



PUBLIC SAFETY: FINDINGS

Purpose

This section will examine hazards to the public safety, including noise exposure, geotechnical and seismic hazards, fire and other hazards. It is based on the technical data found in Nevada County General Plan.

Noise Exposure

The major noise generator in the City is traffic; noise exposure increases with traffic volume, unless measures are taken to shield uses adjacent to the traffic corridor.

Figure 5 sets out a Land Use Compatibility Chart for noise exposure, as recommended by state guidelines. To maintain noise levels within the “normal acceptable” range, single family residential should not be exposed to greater than 60 Ldn, hotel/motel to no greater than 65 Ldn, and office/commercial, no greater than 70 Ldn.

Seismic Hazard

Earthquake hazard consists of both primary (surface ruptured/ground shaking) and secondary hazards. There are no active or potentially active faults near Nevada City, thus virtually no possibility of surface ruptures. Ground shaking hazard is dependent on earthquake magnitude, type of bedrock, depth and type of soil, general topography, and groundwater. In the Nevada City vicinity, as in most of the county, the prevalence of relatively shallow weathered material underlain by dense bedrock lessens the seismic risk. Many authorities list igneous and metamorphic bedrock (found extensively throughout Nevada County) as providing the least amount of seismic hazard due to ground shaking.

Secondary hazards include ground settlement or subsidence, liquefaction, and landslides. Because Nevada City (along with most of the county) is underlain by igneous and metamorphic bedrock, it is assumed to have low risk of these secondary effects.

The Uniform Building Code has placed the county in seismic zones, providing for a high level of building construction safety for earthquake hazard. Since many of the buildings in Central Nevada City are unreinforced masonry, they would be subject to considerable damage in a major earthquake despite the fact that they are mostly 1-2 stories.

Table 6

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NOISE ENVIRONMENTS

LAND USE CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NOISE EXPOSURE L _{dn} OR CNEL, dB					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
RESIDENTIAL - LOW DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY, DUPLEX, MOBILE HOMES	[Normal Acceptable: 55-80 dB]					
RESIDENTIAL - MULTI. FAMILY	[Normal Acceptable: 55-80 dB]					
TRANSIENT LODGING - MOTELS, HOTELS	[Conditionally Acceptable: 60-80 dB]					
SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, CHURCHES, HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES	[Conditionally Acceptable: 60-80 dB]					
AUDITORIUMS, CONCERT HALLS, AMPHITHEATRES	[Conditionally Acceptable: 60-80 dB]					
SPORTS ARENA, OUTDOOR SPECTATOR SPORTS	[Conditionally Acceptable: 60-80 dB]					
PLAYGROUNDS, NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	[Normal Unacceptable: 60-80 dB]					
GOLF COURSES, RIDING STABLES, WATER RECREATION, CEMETERIES	[Normal Unacceptable: 60-80 dB]					
OFFICE BUILDINGS, BUSINESS COMMERCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL	[Clearly Unacceptable: 60-80 dB]					
INDUSTRIAL, MANUFACTURING UTILITIES, AGRICULTURE	[Clearly Unacceptable: 60-80 dB]					

INTERPRETATION



NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE

Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.



CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.



NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.



CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

CONSIDERATIONS IN DETERMINATION OF NOISE-COMPATIBLE LAND USE

A. NORMALIZED NOISE EXPOSURE INFORMATION DESIRED

Where sufficient data exists, evaluate land use suitability with respect to a "normalized" value of CNEL or L_{dn}. Normalized values are obtained by adding or subtracting the constants described in Table 1 to the measured or calculated value of CNEL or L_{dn}.

B. NOISE SOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

The land use-noise compatibility recommendations should be viewed in relation to the specific source of the noise. For example, aircraft and railroad noise is normally made up of higher single noise events than auto traffic but occurs less frequently. Therefore, different sources yielding the same composite noise exposure do not necessarily create the same noise environment. The State Aeronautics Act uses 65 dB CNEL as the criterion which airports must eventually meet to protect existing residential communities from unacceptable exposure to aircraft noise. In order to facilitate the purposes of the Act, one of which is to encourage land uses compatible with the 65 dB CNEL criterion wherever possible, and in order to facilitate the ability of airports to comply with the Act, residential uses located in Com-

munity Noise Exposure Areas greater than 65 dB should be discouraged and considered located within normally unacceptable areas.

C. SUITABLE INTERIOR ENVIRONMENTS

One objective of locating residential units relative to a known noise source is to maintain a suitable interior noise environment at no greater than 45 dB CNEL or L_{dn}. This requirement, coupled with the measured or calculated noise reduction performance of the structure under consideration, should govern the minimum acceptable distance to a noise source.

D. ACCEPTABLE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Another consideration, which in some communities is an overriding factor, is the desire for an acceptable outdoor noise environment. When this is the case, more restrictive standards for land use compatibility, typically below the maximum considered "normally acceptable" for that land use category, may be appropriate.

Geotechnical Hazards

There are many types of potential geotechnical hazards, including landslides, mudflows, settlement, subsidence, expansiveness, shrink-swell, and others. All refer to a loss of strength in consolidated, unconsolidated, and semi-consolidated material. The amount of movement can vary from a few inches to hundreds of feet, and can occur in anything from a few seconds to many years.

The main precaution necessary to prevent these hazards is careful management of steeply sloping areas. Slopes over 30% are better left in their natural state, and slopes from 20-30% should allow only carefully limited grading and preserving vegetation to prevent hillside erosion.

A geotechnical hazard of a slightly different nature concerns soil limitations. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and County General Plan data indicate that virtually all of the soils surrounding Nevada City to the east and west are poor to very poor for septic tank leach fields. This rating is based on criteria including depth to bedrock, permeability, and slope. It implies that densities in affected areas should be strictly limited unless development is served by the public sewer.

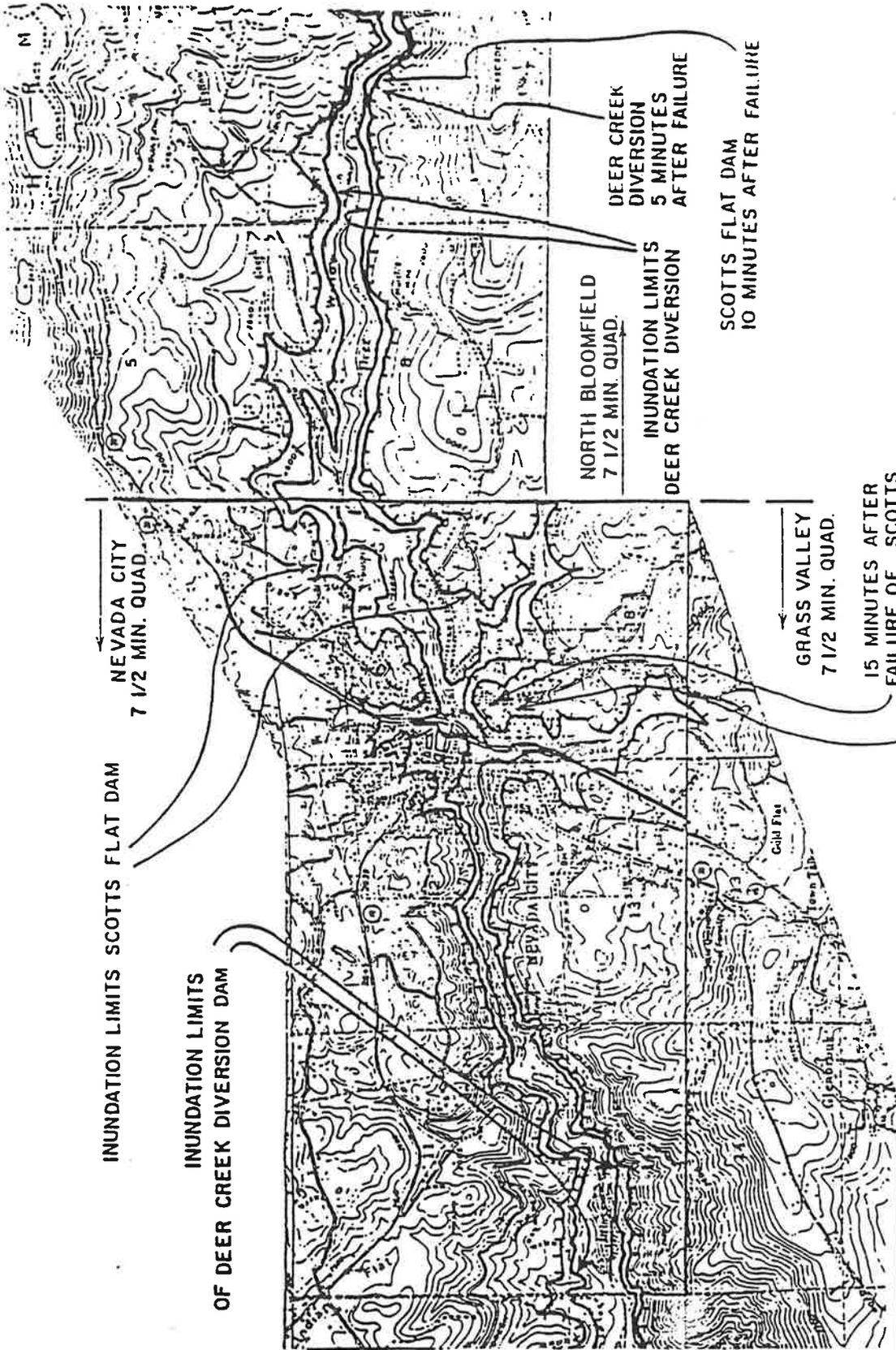
Fire Hazard

Fire hazard is of two types: that in developed areas, and what is called "wildland fire hazard." The former is the responsibility of individual fire districts and will be discussed in the Public Facilities portion of the General Plan EIR. Wildland fire hazard is the responsibility of the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the National Forest Service. These agencies provide protection only during the fire season, and are not legally responsible for structural fires.

Flood Hazard

The only areas identified in the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as being within the 100-year flood plain are in the Deer Creek Ravine.

The Nevada County Land Use and Development Code currently require a 100-foot setback from the high-water mark of only lake, stream or flood plain for any building constructed in the county.



INUNDATION LIMITS SCOTTS FLAT DAM

INUNDATION LIMITS OF DEER CREEK DIVERSION DAM

NEVADA CITY 7 1/2 MIN. QUAD.

NORTH BLOOMFIELD 7 1/2 MIN. QUAD.

DEER CREEK DIVERSION 5 MINUTES AFTER FAILURE

SCOTTS FLAT DAM 10 MINUTES AFTER FAILURE

GRASS VALLEY 7 1/2 MIN. QUAD.

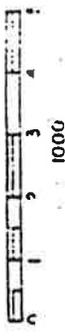
15 MINUTES AFTER FAILURE OF SCOTTS FLAT DAM

15 MINUTES AFTER FAILURE OF DEER CRK. DIVERSION

NEVADA CITY 7 1/2 MIN. QUAD.

GRASS VALLEY 7 1/2 MIN. QUAD.

ADAPTATION OF INUNDATION MAP OF SCOTTS FLAT DAM AND DEER CREEK DIVERSION DAM



Water Quality Hazard

Surface water quality in Nevada City and more populated areas is markedly below that in the rest of the county. This is due to currently inadequate treatment and disposal at the public sewage treatment plants and to lack of adequate treatment by certain private septic tank systems. The former problem is now being addressed by a treatment system improvement program; the latter should continue to be subject to strict enforcement of the county ordinance dealing with private sewage disposal.

Health and Emergency Facilities

Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital is the only licensed acute care facility in western Nevada County. Miners Hospital in Nevada City has the capacity to serve as a general hospital, but will no longer be used as such.

Nevada County has an Office of Emergency Services which functions as a coordinating agency in times of disaster. It details the responsibility of participating agencies -- the County Sheriff's Department, Public Works Department and various fire districts, health facilities, and law enforcement agencies, including those of Nevada City.

The OES also coordinates the function of the Emergency Aid facility in Grass Valley, and substation aid facilities including one at Nevada City Hall.

Nevada City has its own Emergency Medical Training (EMT) rescue unit.

PUBLIC SAFETY: OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

None of the adopted community goals directly address public safety which is required to be addressed by the General Plan. Clearly, the goal of this element is to ensure public safety from hazards such as extreme noise exposure, seismic and geotechnical hazards, fire, and flooding.

Noise Exposure

Objective—

Maintain noise levels compatible with the rural and small-town setting of Nevada City.

Policy—

- Adopt the Land Use Compatibility Chart “normally acceptable” range as a standard to be used in environmental evaluation of proposed uses.

Seismic and Geotechnical Hazard

Objectives—

Ensure a high level of safety from earthquake, landslide, severe erosion, and other geotechnical hazards.

Policies—

- Require detailed soils and geologic studies prior to approval for development in potentially hazardous areas. Require mitigation measures if significant hazards are identified.
- Encourage upgrading of unreinforced masonry buildings to prevent disastrous earthquake damage.
- Consider establishing a slope/density formula to limit development on steep hillsides.
- In cooperation with the county, maintain rural densities in areas not provided with public services.

Fire Hazard

Objective—

Ensure safety for life and property in both wildlands and developed areas.

Policy—

- The Nevada City Fire Department, in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and the relevant Fire Districts, shall maintain high fire protection levels by requiring adequate access and water flow, based on established standards.

Flooding and Drainage

Objective—

Protect the life and property by minimizing exposure to flood hazards.

Policies—

- In cooperation with the county, enforce a required building setback from all drainageways
- Include assessment of drainage impact of proposed projects as part of the environmental evaluation process.

Water Quality

Objective—

Protect and improve quality of both surface water and groundwater.

Policies—

- Improve wastewater treatment system to meet state standards (program currently underway).
- In cooperation with the county, strictly regulate private sewage disposal systems.
- Encourage programs to reduce erosion and sedimentation (e.g., control of hillside development).

Emergency Facilities

Objective—

To contribute to an efficient and effective system of health and emergency services.

Policy—

- Cooperate with other agencies in maintaining hospitals and other health facilities in appropriate areas, and in planning for emergency aid.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan provides long-range and comprehensive policy guidance for the development of Nevada City and its eventual extensions. It will be necessary to translate these long-range policies into implementation measures; the following are the “tools” most relevant to a town of Nevada City’s size:

Zoning -- Zoning is the single most useful tool for carrying out the General Plan. Not only can it include the traditional specification of allowable use, parcel size, height, coverage, and setbacks; it can be written as “performance zoning,” laying out intent and evaluation criteria and allowing a range of creative solutions. By state law, zoning must be consistent with the General Plan.

To be most useful in Nevada City, zoning and development standards should be structured in such a way as to create leverage for the city to accomplish its aims for provision of amenities. For instance, the city should maintain explicit open space, coverage, and setback standards, but allow their flexible interpretation by the Planning Commission in return for equivalent contributions to the open space network.

Development Approval Process-- The questions which should be addressed by all development applications include the following:

- Proposed land uses, quantity and/or density.
- Outline of needed sewer, water, drainage, and circulation infrastructure-- both on-site and off-site
- Demand for other community facilities.
- Estimated cost of the above services and facilities.

Environmental Impact Reports—The EIR process mandated by the state can be one of the city’s best means of achieving its goals, if it is begun in early planning stages rather than being an after-the-fact documentation. Potential harmful effects of the project should be identified as early as possible in order to allow their avoidance or mitigation. The EIR process also allows the City to require an estimate of the fiscal and employment effects of development proposals.

Design Review — Nevada City already requires design review to ensure compatibility with the historic district. This design review process would be made more effective if the evaluation criteria were laid out in “design guidelines,” illustrating and exploring what elements of Nevada City should be preserved and enhanced.

Specific Plans — Nevada City expects within the horizon of this General Plan to annex substantial areas of adjacent unincorporated land. Some of this land is in large ownerships, but there will also be numerous development proposals from smaller, individual land owners. One way to ensure coordinated advance planning would be to identify one or more “Specific Plan areas” and require a joint plan and EIR for future development. These Specific Plans could be prepared under city auspices, and funded by developer contributions.

An example of an appropriate Specific Plan Area is the freeway environs southwest of the city, where coordinated planning would ensure preservation of important open space, and the joint participation in solving potential traffic problems at the Gold Flat interchange.

Annexation Program — The Sphere of Influence designates the legal limits to which Nevada City could annex future territory. Annexations plans should be refined as more information becomes available on population growth, proposed development, and planned extension of public services.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Buffer Lands—Land use which protect public safety and provides sufficient distance and barriers between the side and nearby land use to lessen noise, dust, vibration, and visual blight.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—Requires the assessment of projects for environmental effects and establishes procedures for preparing and processing environmental documents (Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21176).

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)—Provides for the creation of agricultural preserves to protect agricultural lands. Includes procedures for preferential tax assessment in exchange for release at development rights. (Government code Sections 51200-51295)

Clustered Development—Site layout which concentrates development to conserve large unbroken areas of open space, as opposed to typical subdivision into individual building site with setback and coverage limitation. Examples of clustered housing include townhouses, patio homes, garden apartments, and zero lot lime site layout. For father information, consult site Planning for Cluster Housing, of Richard Untermann and Robert Shall, 1977.

Combining District—A combining district is a special district which has certain additional requirements to help achieve certain specific objectives for whatever is the underlying use. For example, an historic district (H) could apply either to an underlying residential area (R), e.g., R-2(H), or to a commercial area (GC), e.g., GC(H). A scenic corridor could be called SC in the zoning ordinance, e.g., R-2 (SC), GC (SC), etc.

Fire Hazard Zone—An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather, or other fire-related conditions, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.

Flood Plain—A low land or relatively flat area adjoining inland or coastal waters that is subject to a one-percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (i.e. 100-year flood).

Freeway—A road serving high-speed traffic with no crossing intercepting the flow of traffic (i.e., no crossing at grade).

Fuel Break—A wide strip of land on which plants have been thinned, trimmed, pruned, or changed to types which burn with lower intensity so that fires can be more readily put out.

General Plan Terminology:

Goal – The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable; a broad statement of intended direction and purpose.

Example: To develop adequate recreational facilities to serve future open space need

Objective – A measurable goal; a statement of desirable accomplishment within a specific time frame that is definite enough to know when and if it has been achieved.

Example: Expand recreational opportunities in the city by adding a major park by 1985.

Policy – A specific statement guiding action and implying a clear commitment.

Example: New development in the city should be required to provide usable open space to serve the needs of both daytime and resident population.

Standard – A specific, quantified guideline defining the relationship between two or more variables. Standards can often directly translate into regulatory controls.

Example: Adequate park space is based on the standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 population.

Plan Proposal – An explanation of how policies specifically apply to an area.

Example: New development in the Special Office District shall provide usable open space which can be linked to the Olympic Corridor linear park.

Implementation Measure – An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy.

Example: The city should revise its park dedication standards to require fulfillment of the needs of both daytime and resident population.

Geotechnical Evaluation – A professional evaluation using scientific methods and engineering principles of geology, geophysics, hydrology, and related sciences.

Greenbelt – A strategically located, landscaped zone of variable width maintained in a “green” or “live” condition throughout the year, designed to slow or stop the spread of fire, to prevent soil erosion (e.g., golf courses, parks) and to buffer land uses.

Ground Coverage – The percentage of total lot area covered by structures.

Historic Resources – “Includes, but is not limited to any object, building, structure, site, area, or place which is historically or archeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California” (Public Resource Code Section 5020.1).

Infill Development – The process of developing those parcels by-passed during the course of urbanization, usually because of problems such as difficult soils, poor drainage, odd shape, complicated ownership, poor access, or other characteristics. For detailed information consult Infill Development Strategies, Real Estate Research Corporation, Washington, D.C., 1982.

Infrastructure – The physical systems and services which support development and people, such as streets and highways, transit services, airports, water and sewer systems, and the like.

In-lieu Fee – Acquisition of a partial interest in land.

Acquisition of Easement – California cities and counties may purchase or accept “open-space easements,” whereby the property owner relinquishes for a period of time or in perpetuity the right to alter the property in a manner that will disturb the open-space character of the land (Government Code Section 51070 et seq.). Easements may also be employed to preserve historic resources and provide public access through private land.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) – Knox-Nisbet Act. Requires the establishment in each county of a LAFCO with the power to approve or disapprove proposals to form new cities and special districts and to change their boundaries (Government Code Sections 54773-54921).

Mitigation Fee – Payment furnished by a project sponsor in order to reimburse the city for impacts of the project. For example, contribution to road or public facility improvements required to accommodate growth.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning – A floating zone allowing innovative land use within a plan for the development of an area (e.g., cluster, mixture of housing types and other uses, commonly owned open space, and recreational facilities).

Public – As used in this plan, this land use classification signifies long-term public or quasi-public lands and facilities, e.g., schools, government facilities, public parks, hospitals and cemeteries. The intent of this classification is to protect the general welfare by ensuring that lands currently in the public domain remain subject to public influence, i.e., that the city has some influence in their disposition.

Riparian Habitat – The land and vegetation bordering a watercourse or body of water.

Scenic Highway Corridor – The visible area outside the right-of-way of designated scenic highways. For General Plan purposes, the scenic highway corridor is an overlay classification extending approximately three hundred feet in both sides of the road, within which proposed development is subject to design review in order to preserve the scenic quality of the “view from the road.” This overlay district is consistent with, and similar in intent to, the County Scenic Corridor classification.

Special Studies Zones Act (Alquist-Priolo) – Provides for preparation of geologic and seismic studies by the State Geologist for specified fault zones. Requires cities and counties to adopt procedures for review of development proposals within designated zones (Public Resources Sections 2621-2526).

Specific Plans – Provides for the adoption and administration of specific plans as a means of systematically implementing the general plan (Government Code Sections 6540-65554).

Sphere of Influence – Limit to which a city can annex, according to state law. The sphere of influence is determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO); Nevada City’s current sphere was adopted in 1983.

Subdivision Map Act – Establishes procedures for the fulfilling and approval of tentative, final, and parcel maps (Government Code Sections 2710-2793).

Timberland Preserve Zone – “An area which has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 (of the Government Code) and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses...” (Government Code Section 51100(g)).

Transportation Classification System – As consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan, the circulation hierarchy is as follows:

Freeways and Expressways: Roads serving high-speed traffic with no at-grade crossings to interrupt flow.

Principal Arterials: Major streets connecting freeways and other major traffic carriers to local and collector streets. Implies controlled intersections and joint rather than individual access to properties.

Minor Arterials: Secondary arterial, which may provide direct access to individual properties.

Local Streets: Streets providing direct access to properties which should be designed to discourage through traffic.

Urban Boundary – Limit beyond which the General Plan recommends that urban uses not be permitted. This boundary includes more than the current city limits but less than the Sphere of Influence.

Acknowledgements

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