I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY PLAN

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan (FDCP), in combination with the Placer County General Plan, is the official statement of Placer County setting forth goals, policies, assumptions, guidelines, standards and implementation measures that will guide the physical, social and economic development of the Foresthill Divide Community Plan area to approximately the year 2030. The Plan will provide overall direction for future growth in the Foresthill Divide.

The Community Plan, in combination with the Placer County General Plan, satisfies the requirements of California Planning and Zoning Law. The Plan is organized into the following elements and sections:

Community Development Element
Population and Housing
Land Use
Community Design
Public Facilities
Parks & Recreation
Resource Management Element
Natural Resources
Cultural Resources
Air Quality
Transportation and Circulation Element



The final chapter of this document, entitled Implementation, summarizes the implementation measures presented throughout the FDCP, and describes how the FDCP will be implemented through zoning and other methods.

The FDCP also includes, as appendices, the Foresthill Community Survey conducted for the FDCP, development standards for the "Forest Ranch" Specific Plan area, and the Foresthill Community Design Guidelines prepared as part of the Plan.

The FDCP provides an opportunity to comprehensively address issues facing the community and to responsibly and proactively plan for the next 20 years. The FDCP is being proposed as part of a 20-year review and revision of the current plan, and in conjunction with a community-wide "visioning" process. The Vision Statement developed by the Foresthill Divide Community Plan Team is presented at the end of this chapter.

The FDCP includes the goals, policies, standards, implementation program, quantified objectives (for the Housing Element), the Land Use Diagram and the Circulation Plan Diagram, which together constitute Placer County's formal policies for land use, development, and environmental quality. The following definitions describe the nature of the statements of goals, policies, standards, and implementation programs.

Goal: The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable.

Policy: A specific statement in text or diagram guiding action and implying clear commitment.

Standard: A specific, often quantified guideline, incorporated in a policy or implementation program, defining the relationship between two or more variables. Standards can often translate directly into regulatory controls.

Implementation Program: An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy. Implementation programs also specify primary responsibility for carrying out the action and a time frame for accomplishment.

B. THE PLAN AREA

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan area (Plan area) comprises approximately 109 square miles located in the foothills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in central Placer County. Several small, rural communities are located on the Divide, including Foresthill, Todd's Valley, Baker Ranch, Michigan Bluff, and Yankee Jim's. The majority of the Plan Area is forested and/or part of the steeply sloping topography that slopes to the Middle and North Forks of the American River. As shown in Figure I-1, the Plan area is generally bounded by:



- North Fork of the American River, Shirttail Canyon, the watershed of Sugar Pine Reservoir, and Elliott Ranch Road on the west and north.
- West branch of El Dorado Canyon on the east
- North Fork of the Middle Fork American River and the Middle Fork American River on the south.

The Foresthill Divide is a large ridge located within the American River Watershed that supports numerous small, rural communities. These communities include establishments that are remnants of the Gold Rush era, and are of unique historical and cultural value. As the communities have continued to grow, new developments have been introduced. While the Plan area remains predominantly rural in character, along with other unincorporated areas of the county, the Foresthill Divide has absorbed some of the growth in Placer County. This has resulted in the subdivision of land and the introduction of modern patterns of development characterized by large-lot residential development, development that occurs away from the core

of the community, and automobile-oriented development. Development of the Plan area has also resulted in opportunities for re-use of existing structures and sites.

C. REGIONAL SETTING/CONTEXT



The FDCP is one of twenty-two Community Plans within the unincorporated area of Placer County. As stated in the Placer County General Plan, "[b]ecause of the diverse geography and land uses within the county...individual community plans have been prepared within the framework of the overall county plan to address the unique issues and concerns arising in the different unincorporated areas." The Plan area is approximately twice the size of the area encompassed by the 1981 Foresthill General Plan, and includes areas previously subject to the 1994

Placer County General Plan and the 1981 Weimar/Clipper Gap/Applegate General Plan.

D. PLANNING PROCESS

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan is a joint effort by staff of the Placer County Planning Department and the Foresthill Divide Community Plan Team (FDCP Team), a working group of seven local residents appointed by the Placer County Board of Supervisors who spent literally hundreds of hours developing Plan Assumptions, a Vision Statement, General Goals, Goals and Policies, and the Land Use Map. The FDCP Team conducted a detailed survey of the residents and property owners on the Divide (Foresthill Community Survey, included as Appendix A to the FDCP), and held a series of Town Hall meetings to give residents of the Divide the opportunity to express their views. All meetings of the FDCP Team were open to the public, and public comment was invited. Subcommittees of the FDCP Team met and prepared reports on such topics as community design, public facilities, economic development, natural resources, public safety, recreation, schools, and traffic and circulation. Four newsletters were published and distributed summarizing progress on the Community Plan. As a result of those comments by the Foresthill Forum, the plan was further revised to address additional community concerns. Community Plan adoption follows public hearings before both the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

E. PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

- The Foresthill Divide will continue to be an attractive place to live due to the rural, forested characteristics of the area.
- Population growth is expected to increase at a moderate rate of 2% per year during the 20-year time horizon of the Plan.

- The primary commercial area in the Plan will be along Foresthill Road, generally from the Foresthill Divide Middle School easterly to the Foresthill Elementary School, and including the historic downtown area.
- Septic tank/leach field systems will continue to be the principal method of sewage disposal within the Plan area.
- Foresthill Road will be improved to County standards from the end of the recently completed federal highway project (approximately one-half mile west of the Foresthill Divide Middle School) to the intersection of Foresthill Road and Mosquito Ridge Road.
- A majority of the working population will be employed off of the Divide, although efforts will be continued to increase employment opportunities on the Divide.
- The economy of the Foresthill Divide will be based upon a mixture of the following: tourism, recreation, forestry and the production of agricultural products, mining, small high-tech and home-based businesses, and various cottage industries.
- The automobile will continue to be the primary form of transportation serving the Plan area.
- Foresthill Road will remain the principal access route to and through the Plan area; no other major access routes will be developed during the 20-year time horizon of the Plan.
- The primary land use demand will be for single-family residential development.
- The demand for parks, recreation facilities and equestrian/pedestrian/bicycle trails will continue to increase as the area develops.
- Sugar Pine Reservoir will continue to be the main source of water for the Foresthill Divide.
- The need to protect and conserve natural resources and open space on the Divide will become more important as the population increases.
- Fire safety concerns will play an increasingly important role in the future development of the community
- A significant portion of the Plan area will continue to be held in public ownership.

F. RELATIONSHIP TO COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

On August 16, 1994, the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted the Placer County General Plan (PCGP) which establishes an overall framework for development of the unincorporated area of the county and protection of its natural and cultural resources. The goals and policies

contained in the PCGP are applicable throughout the county, except to the extent that County authority is preempted by cities within their corporate limits.

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan (FDCP or Plan) provides a more detailed focus on a specific geographic area of the unincorporated county. Some of the goals, policies, and implementation measures contained in the FDCP repeat those goals, policies, and implementation measures contained in the PCGP which pertain to the FDCP area. Other goals, policies, and implementation measures in the FDCP go further to supplement and elaborate upon (but not supersede) those contained in the PCGP to address specific community concerns and issues. In some instances, the FDCP relies entirely on the PCGP to address certain issues which are not unique to the FDCP area and which are more appropriately addressed in a broader sense in the PCGP. In particular, goals, policies and implementation measures related to noise rely entirely on the PCGP, while the seismic safety and air quality sections rely on the PCGP for the broader issues, and also contain policies to address issues specific to the Foresthill Divide.

G. VISION STATEMENT



The community of Foresthill is located in a special position; between the outer edges of the rapidly-growing population centers in the Sacramento Valley and public forests and park lands. The community rests atop a broad, relatively flat ridge between the two deep river canyons of the North Fork American River and the Middle Fork American River. Foresthill also serves as a primary entry point into the western central Sierra Nevada mountains. These particular geographic characteristics have helped

create a unique community. The people who have inhabited this area, beginning with the native Nisenan and Maidu peoples, have always valued its natural resources and beautiful environment. The current inhabitants, both recent arrivals and those whose families have lived here for many generations, continue to treasure and protect Foresthill's natural setting. Residents and visitors alike value the wildlife, the unusual natural landforms, and, most of all, the extensive forest backdrop.

This historic Gold Rush community, somewhat off the beaten path and with its long tradition of self-reliance, has generated both a strong spirit of individualism and community interdependence. This community spirit has fostered a climate characterized by extensive volunteerism and pride of place which has sustained the community for almost 150 years. As the community continues to develop, it is essential that the existing character of the community be retained and enhanced wherever possible to preserve these important aspects. Creating more local employment opportunities without substantially degrading the scenic, forested environment of the Divide will be an ongoing challenge for the residents of the Plan area.

The Foresthill Divide will likely not have a future population large enough to support major new commercial enterprises. Small retail stores, personal services businesses, professional offices, restaurants and similar uses can be expected to develop within the downtown area which will continue to provide for the daily needs of the residents and visitors while expanding upon the original small town character of the historic area. The historic downtown district will remain as a cherished focal point of the Plan area and will be a source of pride for the community. The traditionally industrial areas near the historic Foresthill townsite will be redeveloped to provide new employment opportunities for residents of the Divide. It is anticipated that expanded tourist and outdoor recreation-oriented businesses will continue to develop as a consequence of the community's unique location and proximity to public lands. The emphasis on outdoor recreation on the public lands surrounding the Foresthill community and the increasing population growth west of the Divide will have substantial effects on the residents of the Plan area. Future growth on the Foresthill Divide should reflect an awareness of and consistency with this vision.