

I Introduction and Purpose

This Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document provides direction on future land use decisions for the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area, and articulates a vision of what the area aspires to be. It provides an overview of current conditions and is the over-arching policy document that addresses land use and natural resource policy for the entire portion of Placer County within the Tahoe Basin. The Policy Document draws its goals from residents, business owners, elected officials, and County staff, and translates these ideas into a set of policies for present and future generations. It leverages prior work efforts including the Pathway 2007 Basinwide Management Plan, the Existing Conditions Report and the Policy Framework, which outlined overarching goals for the Community Plan Area. As a policy document, it provides for the legal basis for all zoning, subdivision, and related actions. It also provides the legal basis for County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) regulations and the initiation of public projects.

The Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document is implemented through four Area Plan Development Codes: the West Shore Area Plan Development Code, the Greater Tahoe City Area Plan Development Code, the North Tahoe West Area Plan Development Code, and the North Tahoe East Area Plan Development Code. Collectively, the Community Plan Policy Document and all four Area Plan Development Codes documents serve as a TRPA “Area Plan” and are developed and intended to comply with and implement the TRPA Regional Plan goals and policies and meet the requirements of Chapter 13: *Area Plans in the TRPA Code of Ordinances*.

2012 TRPA REGIONAL PLAN

In December 2012, the TRPA Governing Board adopted an updated Regional Plan. The TRPA Regional Plan Goals and Policies serve as a guide for all future land use decisions within the Lake Tahoe Region, and are adopted by reference as amended into the Placer County Area Plan. The priorities of the updated Regional Plan include:

1. Accelerating water quality restoration and other ecological benefits by supporting environmental redevelopment opportunities and Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) investments.
2. Transitioning to more permitting by local governments to create one-stop-shopping for homeowner improvements in order to return TRPA to the more regional role the Compact originally intended.
3. Creating walkable communities and increasing alternative transportation options.

Important policies addressed in the Regional Plan include:

- Retaining the established regional growth control system. Under this system, rampant overdevelopment was stopped and open spaces preserved. Most of the policies from the 1987 Regional Plan stayed in place.
- Creating a more efficient planning system that integrates TRPA requirements into the plans and permits of other government agencies.
- Encouraging property owners to transfer development rights from sensitive or outlying areas to town centers with the goal of restoring these lands.
- Eliminating regulatory barriers to the environmental redevelopment of rundown buildings.
- Simplifying burdensome regulations for homeowners while achieving threshold gain.
- Integrating with the Regional Transportation Plan to support sidewalk and bike trail projects that reduce automobile dependency and increase walkability and safety.
- Continuing to deliver restoration projects under the EIP that achieve erosion control on roadways and restore forests and wetlands.

AREA PLANS

The 2012 TRPA Regional Plan Update initiated a region-wide transition to a planning and permitting system where all requirements—TRPA, local, state, and federal—are addressed in coordinated Area Plans. Area Plans replace Plan Area Statements and TRPA Community Plans as the primary land use and planning tool for communities located in the Tahoe Basin. Prior to becoming effective, Area Plans must be reviewed and approved by TRPA and found to be in conformance with the Regional Plan and Chapter 13: Area Plans of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. Approved Area Plans provide various benefits including more autonomy at the local level by removing the need in most cases for two layers of permit requirements and approvals (Placer County and TRPA) and allows for local jurisdictions to implement Regional Plan goals and policies at a local level. Area Plans contain the following common elements: current conditions, conservation, land use, transportation, recreation, public services and facilities, and implementation. For TRPA’s purposes, the overarching Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document, combined with the four separate Area Plan Development Codes that contain zoning/development standards and design guidelines for individual sub-areas, will collectively serve as a TRPA “Area Plan” for the Placer County portion of the Tahoe Basin.

I.1 Purpose of the Community Plan Policy Document

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In addition to the TRPA requirements, the Community Plan Policy Document is designed to meet the California requirements related to a local jurisdiction's responsibility to adopt a General Plan (California Government Code Section 65300). California State law requires every city and county in California to prepare a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning. The general plan acts as a constitution for future development, and expresses the community's development goals and policies relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private. In addition to the Placer County General Plan, Placer County maintains many community plans that are intended to serve as General Plans for various unincorporated towns and communities within the county. The purpose of the Placer County Community Plans is to recognize the unincorporated but unique communities that exist within the county by developing land use and natural resource goals and policies that are specific to those communities. Accordingly, this Community Plan Policy Document serves as the County's General Plan for the Tahoe Basin portion of Placer County.

POLICY DOCUMENT

This document—Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document—embodies the expressed goals of residents, business owners, and elected officials and establishes concrete and achievable actions. Broad objectives such as “reinvest in and revitalize existing centers,” “improve connections,” and “improve environmental conditions area-wide,” are translated into policies, maps, guidelines and specific actions that are tangible and can be implemented. The Policy Document is designed for a range of users, from County staff to residents. It is written in simple language and covers a wide range of issues. Nonetheless, the Policy Document cannot, and does not, aim to be an all-inclusive document. Where greater specificity is needed, the County will rely on separate Area Plans that establish zoning/development standards and design guidelines for four sub-areas within the Community Plan Area boundary, reflecting the unique characteristics of those communities.

Specifically, this Policy Document aims to achieve the following purposes:

- Outline a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community;
- Serve as the overarching policy document when combined with the separate zoning/development standards and design guidelines for individual sub-areas, will serve as Area Plans in conformance with the TRPA Regional Plan for the Placer County portion of the Tahoe Basin;
- Establish goals and policies to guide development and conservation decisions by the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, TRPA, and County staff;
- Provide a basis for determining whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with the Community Plan Area's long-range vision;

- Reflect the Community Plan Area’s current planning efforts;
- Allow County departments, TRPA, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that enhance the character of the community, promote public health, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards;
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

There are currently three general plans, six community plans, and 51 plan area statements within the Placer County Tahoe Basin. Most of these plans are dated, reflecting conditions and trends from nearly 20 years ago. In 2011, the County embarked on a Community Plan Update effort to update and consolidate these plans. The Community Plan Update consists of two main parts: (1) this Policy Document which will consolidate those plans into one, single, over-arching policy document that addresses land use and natural resource policy for the entire portion of Placer County within the Tahoe Basin, and (2) separate zoning/development standards and design guidelines for four sub-areas within the Community Plan Area boundary that reflect the unique characteristics of those communities.

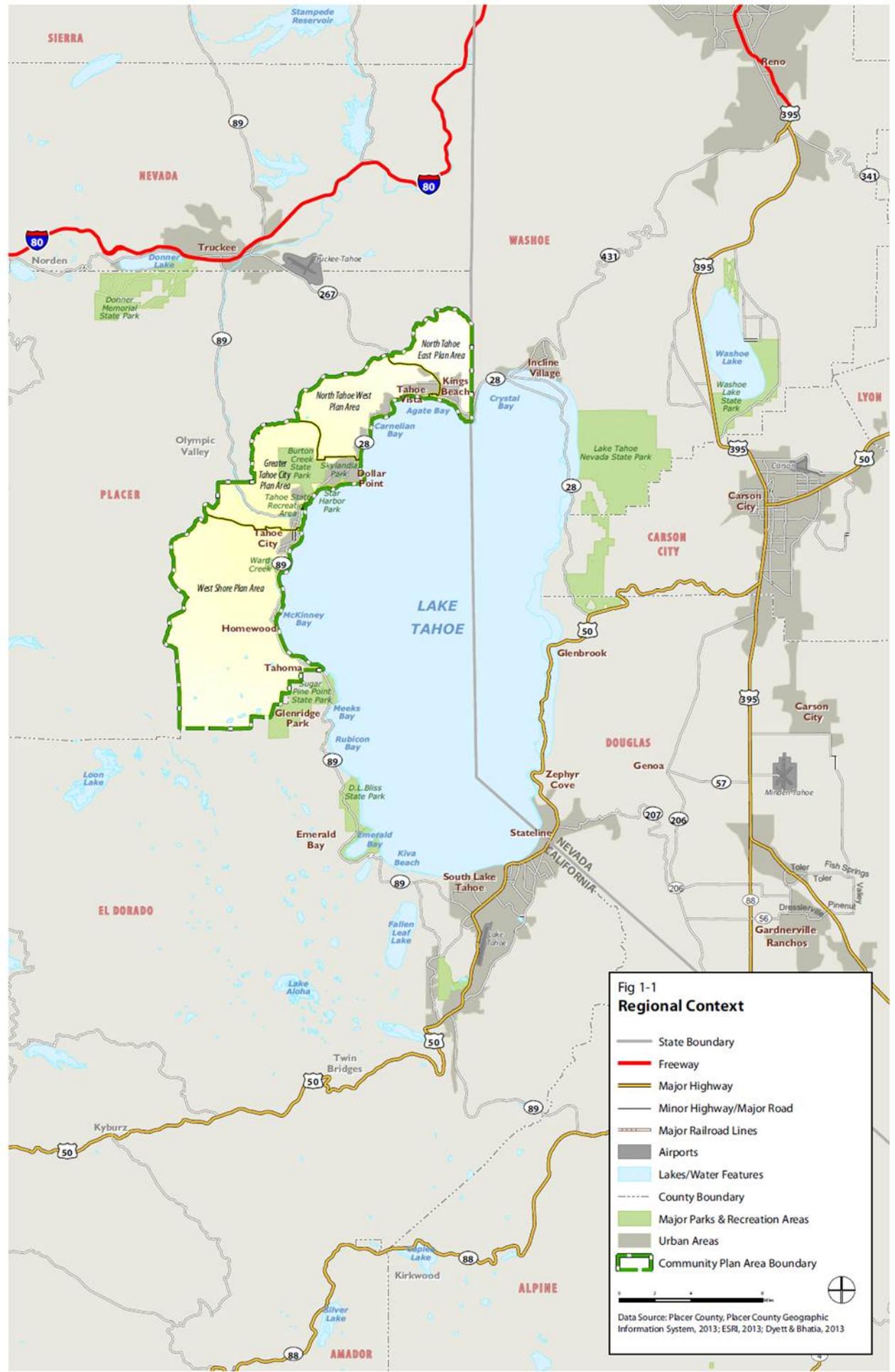
1.2 Regional Location and Planning Boundaries

REGIONAL LOCATION

This Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document is the overarching policy document for the entire Placer County Tahoe Basin (Community Plan Area). The Community Plan Area is located 114 miles east of Sacramento, California and roughly 48 miles south of Reno, Nevada along the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe. It encompasses approximately 80 square miles along the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe and consists of a series of beachside communities near the lakeshore and vast areas of open space, recreational, and backcountry lands. Lake Tahoe and the surrounding natural landscape provide for extraordinary recreation and scenic experiences. The Lake is the dominant feature of the Region—one of the largest and deepest lakes in the world. Figure 1-1 shows the Community Plan Area in its regional context.

COMMUNITY PLAN SUB-AREAS

The County has identified four sub-areas within the boundary for the purpose of creating four Area Plan Development Codes with separate zoning/development standards and design guidelines intended to reflect the unique characteristics of those communities: North Tahoe East Area Plan Development Code, North Tahoe West Area Plan Development Code, Greater Tahoe City Area Plan Development Code, and West Shore Area Plan Development Code. Figure 1-2 shows the location of the sub-areas within the Community Plan Area.



**Fig 1-1
Regional Context**

- State Boundary
- Freeway
- Major Highway
- Minor Highway/Major Road
- Major Railroad Lines
- Airports
- Lakes/Water Features
- County Boundary
- Major Parks & Recreation Areas
- Urban Areas
- Community Plan Area Boundary

Data Source: Placer County, Placer County Geographic Information System, 2013; ESRI, 2013; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013

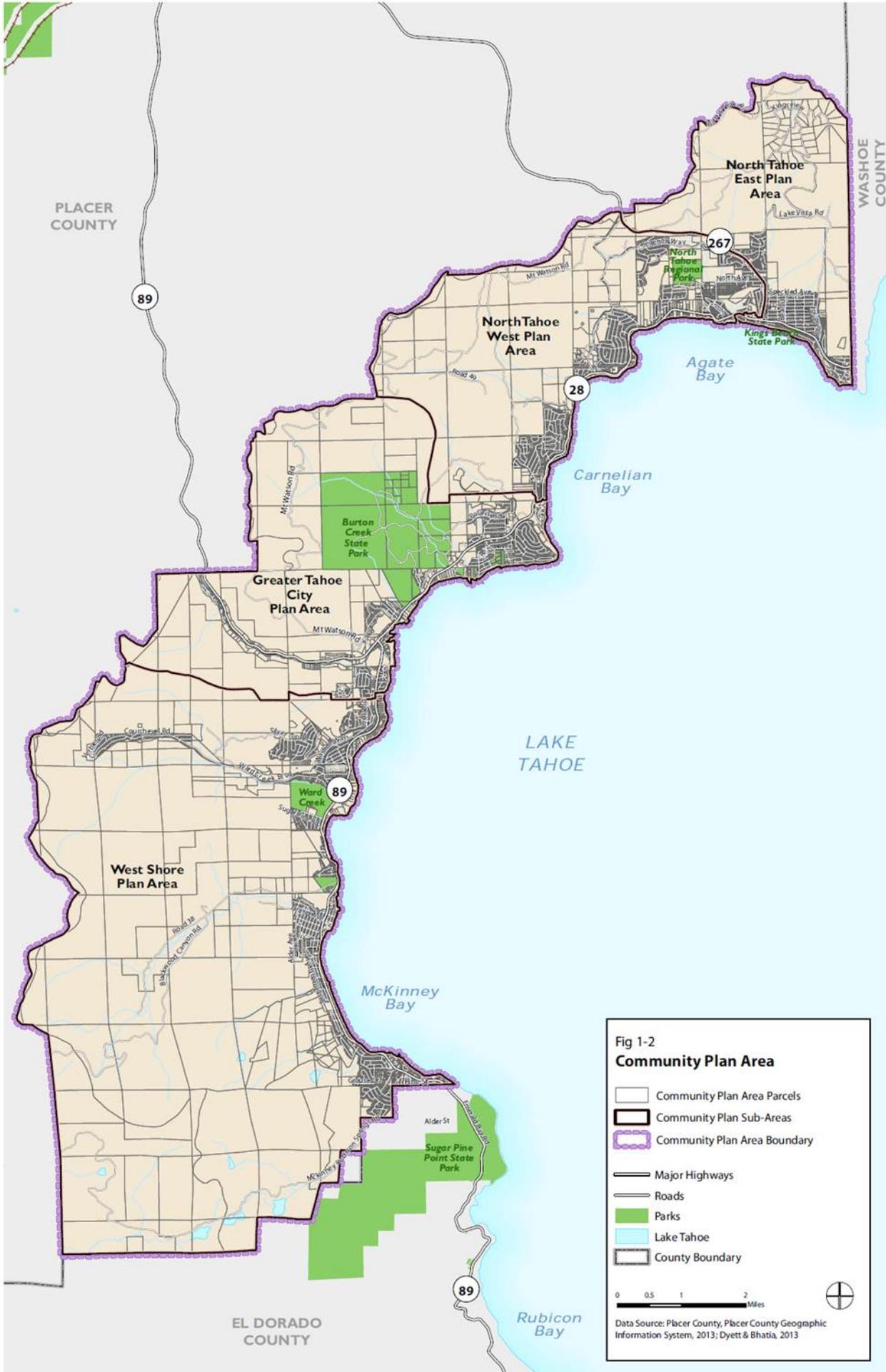


Fig 1-2
Community Plan Area

- Community Plan Area Parcels
- Community Plan Sub-Areas
- Community Plan Area Boundary
- Major Highways
- Roads
- Parks
- Lake Tahoe
- County Boundary

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Data Source: Placer County, Placer County Geographic Information System, 2013; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013

I.3 Policy Document Overview

Each chapter of the Policy Document includes brief background information to establish the context for the goals and policies in the chapter. This background information is followed by goals and policies. Goals are the County's statement of broad direction, philosophy, or standards to be achieved. Policies are specific statements that guide decision making. They may refer to existing programs or development standards or call for establishment of new ones. Together the goals and policies articulate a vision for the Community Plan Area that the Policy Document seeks to achieve.

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

The purpose of the Land Use and Community Design Element is to provide goals and policies to enhance community character, improve the appearance of the built environment within the Community Plan Area, and to present a framework to guide future land use decisions and development approved in the Community Plan Area.

Land Use - Land use goals and policies ensure equilibrium between the preservation and enhancement of the Community Plan Area's natural environment and appropriate development and redevelopment of the manmade environment.

Mixed Use - Mixed use goals and policies seek to accommodate growth while helping to reduce auto dependence, preserve open space, promote economic development, and increase housing opportunities.

Town Centers - Town Center goals and policies encourage redevelopment and revitalization of Town Centers in a manner that improves environmental conditions, creates a more sustainable and less auto-dependent development pattern, and provide economic opportunities.

Community Design - Community design goals and policies provide direction and guidance for the development of the Community Plan Area's built environment. These policies seek to create more walkable, livable neighborhoods through improved connections and mixed-use centers, while ensuring that design elements of new, remodeled and redeveloped buildings are compatible with the natural, scenic and recreational values of the Community Plan Area.

Development and Redevelopment - Development and redevelopment goals and policies seek to link the timing and phasing of new development, redevelopment and environmental improvement projects with progress toward meeting environmental thresholds.

Housing - Housing goals and policies emphasize the desire to protect the character of the Community Plan Area's residential neighborhoods. They also encourage housing opportunities for full-time and seasonal residents, as well as housing affordable to seniors, families and workers.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The Transportation and Circulation Element is intended to provide goals and policies to ensure an efficient circulation system for all users. It includes provisions for roadway, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation modes, as well as parking and transportation demand management strategies.

Transportation Network - Transportation network goals and policies seek to establish a safe, efficient, and integrated transportation system while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to water quality.

Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle - As a recreational/resort area with a limited roadway network, public transit services, sidewalks and bike paths are important in expanding mobility capacity and improving environmental conditions.

CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Conservation and Open Space Element is to provide goals and policies to protect, preserve, and enhance the Community Plan Area's natural and cultural resources.

Vegetation - Vegetation goals and policies are intended to guide the protection and management of the Community Plan Area's vegetation resources.

Wildlife - Wildlife goals and policies focus on maintaining suitable habitats and habitat diversity for wildlife.

Fisheries - Lakes and streams play a key role in sustaining fish populations as some fish species use both lake and stream environments to fulfill their lifecycles. Similar to wildlife, fishery goals and policies focus on the maintenance of prime fish habitats.

Soils - Human activity increases erosion potential, primarily through the development of structures and impervious surfaces, and the removal of vegetative cover. Soil goals and policies seek to maintain soil productivity and vegetative cover, and prevent excessive sediment and nutrient runoff into streams and Lake Tahoe.

Shorezone - Competing demands for development of the shorezone need to be reconciled in light of the unique qualities that stand to be lost. Goals and policies for the shorezone seek to preserve and protect the shorezone of Lake Tahoe while allowing for appropriate shorezone uses.

Scenic Resources - The modification of scenic resources is a byproduct of development. Scenic resource goals and policies seek to minimize and mitigate the impacts of development on the natural scenic features within the Community Plan Area.

Stream Environment Zone - SEZ goals and policies seek to promote maintenance, protection and restoration of SEZ land in the Community Plan Area.

Cultural Resources - Cultural resource goals and policies prioritize the preservation and protection of historic resources in the Community Plan Area including sites, buildings, structures, or objects that may have archaeological, historical, cultural, or scientific significance.

Energy - Energy goals and policies seek to promote energy conservation and reduce impacts to natural resources and the environment.

Water Quality - Several external and internal factors are known to affect water quality of the Basin's aquatic system including: precipitation, air quality, atmospheric deposition, land use intensity, impervious cover, urban stormwater runoff, and soil disturbance. Water quality goals and policies seek to reduce or eliminate point and non-point sources of pollutants in a manner consistent with the County of Placer Lake Tahoe Pollutant Reduction Plan (PLRP).

Air Quality - Air quality goals and policies aim to reduce air pollution, reduce exposure to air pollutants, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase communitywide resilience to anticipated long-term effects of climate change on the Community Plan Area and Tahoe Basin.

Noise - Noise goals and policies seek to mitigate the impacts from noise sources such as transportation corridors, motorized watercraft, construction vehicles and equipment, machinery associated with refuse collected and snow removal, and off-road vehicles through both preventative and responsive measures.

Natural Hazards - Natural hazards goals and policies are intended to mitigate the potential impacts from natural hazards that pose a threat to public health and safety in the Community Plan Area, including seismic and geologic hazards, flood, fire, emergency preparedness, and coordinated response measures.

RECREATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES ELEMENT

The purpose of this element is to ensure that recreation and public services and facilities meet the needs of community members and visitors as the Community Plan Area grows.

Recreation - Recreation goals and policies provide a framework to improve existing facilities and develop new facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Public Services & Facilities - Public services and facilities goals and policies focus on ensuring that public services and facilities have the capacity to meet growth demands in the Community Plan Area.

IMPLEMENTATION

The zoning, development standards, and design guidelines contained in the four Area Plan Development Codes serve as the implementing element to the Community Plan Policy Document.