



1.1 Introduction

Tulare County is located in Central California in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. The County is composed of eight incorporated cities and numerous unincorporated communities. Most of the unincorporated communities and all of the cities are located on the Valley floor. The foothills and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks form the eastern half of the County (see regional map page 2).

The Housing Element is a comprehensive assessment of current and future housing needs for all segments of the County's population living in unincorporated areas, as well as a program for meeting those needs. In the last decade, significant economic and demographic changes in Tulare County have challenged the ability of local jurisdictions and the private sector to construct adequate and affordable housing. Rapidly rising home prices and continued population growth have contributed to the scarcity of affordable housing. Recently the housing market has collapsed, reversing the prolonged trend of escalating home prices. At this time, however, it is not possible to gauge the long-term effects of a weak housing market, including a considerable increase in foreclosure activity. Despite housing market adjustments, providing adequate housing—especially extremely low and low income housing—remains a significant challenge to both local governments and the private sector.

The Housing Element serves as policy guide during the 2015 to 2023 planning period.

The Tulare County Housing Element serves as a policy guide to address these issues, as well as the comprehensive housing needs of the unincorporated areas of Tulare County during the December 31, 2015 to December 31, 2023 planning period and beyond. The provision of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for current and future residents of the unincorporated areas of Tulare County is the primary focus of the Housing Element. Additionally, the Housing Element places special emphasis on certain segments of the population, such as the elderly, the disabled, single-parent households, teenage parents, large families, farmworkers, overcrowded households, residents of group quarters, ethnic or racial minorities and the homeless; as these groups may have more difficulty in finding decent and affordable housing due to their special needs.

The purpose of the Housing Element is to:

- Determine the existing and projected housing needs of residents of the unincorporated areas;
- Establish goals, objectives, policies, and programs that guide decision-making to address housing needs; and
- Implement actions that encourage the private sector to build housing, while ensuring that governmental policies do not serve as a constraint to housing production.

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The Housing Element is designed to incorporate various assumptions about housing and development trends in Tulare County. These planning assumptions include:

- Housing demand, especially for affordable housing, will remain high;
- There will be a continued decrease in land available for new housing throughout the County;
- Maintaining the County's goal of long-term preservation of productive and potentially-productive agricultural lands;
- Inadequate infrastructure continues to be a major constraint to housing development;
- Higher density housing and mixed-use developments are needed to balance the shortages of land for development and the increasing needs for housing and commerce.

Summary Goal

Attainment of a suitable, affordable and satisfactory living environment for every present and future resident in the unincorporated area of Tulare County, regardless of race, age, religion, sex, marital status, ethnic background, source of income or personal disability.

An array of special housing needs is related to the following general housing needs: a suitable home, an affordable home, and a satisfactory environment. A housing unit is suitable if its condition is standard, it is not overcrowded and if it provides special amenities for special needs. An affordable housing unit is one for which the owner can meet reasonable financial obligations toward mortgage, property taxes and insurance. For the renter, an affordable housing unit is one for which reasonable financial obligations can be met toward contract rent.

A satisfactory living environment is one in which residents are beneficially influenced by services such as adequate public facilities, access to employment opportunities, transportation, compatible adjacent land uses and convenient access to commercial uses. All of the housing needs, outlined above, are discussed in detail in the following chapters.

1.2 Requirements for a Housing Element

The Housing Act of 1949 established a national housing goal for a “decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.” However, the federal government did not develop legislative commitments in terms of programs and procedures through which the nation’s housing need would be met. Consequently, for many low and moderate-income families, that goal was not fulfilled. Nineteen years later, Congress adopted the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 to speed up the building and rehabilitation of housing through federal assistance incentives.

<p>National Housing Goal: ”a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family”</p>

In 1969, the California Legislature amended the California Planning Act, adding a required housing element to the list of general plan elements. In 1971, the Planning Act was again revised to require that general plans of all counties and cities, both general law and charter agencies include a mandatory housing element “consisting of standards and plans for the improvement of housing and for provision of adequate sites for housing,” and which “shall make adequate provision of the housing needs for all economic segments of the community.”

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In 1977, the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) adopted regulations under the California Administrative Code, known as the Housing Element Guidelines, which are to be followed by local governments in the preparation of local housing elements. AB 2853, enacted in 1980, further codified housing element requirements. Since that time, new amendments to State Housing Law have been enacted. Each of these amendments has been considered during development of this Housing Element. Further, State Planning law, which took effect on January 1, 1992, requires localities to meet projected housing needs consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan (RHNA) prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG).

The law recognizes that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required to contribute to the attainment of the state housing goal, provided such a determination is compatible with the state housing goal and regional housing needs.

The Legislature recognizes that in carrying out this responsibility, each local government also has the responsibility to consider economic, environmental, and fiscal factors; community goals set forth in its general plan; and to cooperate with other local governments and the state in addressing regional housing needs. Housing policy in the state rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and, in particular, local housing elements.

Pursuant to state law, each county governing body is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county. General plans must include the seven mandated elements, one of which is the housing element. Housing elements must be updated once every five years.

Recent Housing Element Legislation

AB 162 (2007)

Requires all cities and counties to amend the safety and conservation elements of their general plan in include analysis and policies regarding flood hazard and flood management information upon the next revision of the housing element on, or after, January 1, 2009. In addition, cities and counties are required to annually review the land use element for those areas subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by the Federal Management Agency (FEMA) or the State Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Any amendments to the safety, conservation, and land use elements, based on the requirements of Government Code 65302, will require a review of the housing element for internal consistency, which may in turn require amendments to the housing element. For example, if sites identified in the housing element as suitable for housing development are subsequently identified as inappropriate for development, other sites may need to be identified.

AB 2348 requires a parcel-specific land inventory to demonstrate an adequate supply of available land for housing development at all income levels.

AB 2348 (2004)

Amended State housing element law to clarify the land inventory requirements and to provide greater residential development certainty. Established a specific “default density” that is assumed to be adequate to facilitate lower-income housing. Also requires that when land inventory does not demonstrate an adequate supply of land for housing at all income levels, sufficient land must be rezoned to accommodate 100% of the shortfall and multi-family housing must be permitted “by right.”

AB 2158 (2004)

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Made changes to the methodology used for allocating the Regional Needs Housing Assessment (RNHA) and in the rules for transferring RHNA between cities and counties. This bill includes the “2158 Factors” that may be used to support requests for reduction in a jurisdiction’s RHNA. A COG may request the use of population and household forecast assumptions used in the regional transportation plan.

SB 520 (2001)

Analyze constraints to housing development, maintenance and improvement of housing for persons with disabilities and demonstrate local efforts to remove governmental constraints that hinder the locality from meeting the need for housing persons with disabilities. Further, the law requires programs that remove constraints or provided reasonable accommodations for housing designed for persons with disabilities.

AB 1233 (2005)

Requires that any portion of a jurisdiction’s share of regional housing need that is not accommodated in the land inventory during one planning period, the local government must zone or rezone to address this need within one-year of update – in addition to new projected need.

SB 1087 (2005)

Requires local governments to immediately forward the adopted housing element to water and sewer providers and further requires those water and sewer providers to establish specific procedures to grant priority service to housing with units affordable to lower-income households. Additionally, it prohibits water and sewer providers from denying or conditioning the approval of, or reducing the amount of service for an application for development that includes housing affordable to lower-income households unless specific written findings are made.

SB 575 (2005)

Strengthens anti-NIMBY law relating to affordable housing projects and prevents cities and counties from rejecting or conditionally approving a project unless the jurisdiction has met its fair-share housing needs for the planning period.

AB 2511 (2006)

Amended several sections of general plan and housing laws, including provisions strengthening anti-NIMBY protections and no-net loss requirements. Additionally, it added potential penalties for non-reporting of annual general plan progress report.

AB 2634 (2006)

Requires the analysis of population and projected housing needs for all income levels to include extremely low income households (30% or less of countywide median). Elements must also identify zoning to encourage and facilitate supportive housing and single-room occupancy units.

SB 2 (2007)

Clarifies and strengthens housing element law to ensure zoning encourages and facilitates emergency shelters and limits the denial of emergency shelters and transitional and supportive housing under the Housing Accountability Act. With certain exceptions, requires all jurisdictions to designate at least one zoning district where shelters are

AB 2634 establishes an extremely low income level at 30 % or less of median income.
SB 2 requires at least one zone where shelters are permitted “by right”.

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permitted by right.

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SB 244 (2011)

“SB 244 (Wolk, 2011) requires cities and counties to address the infrastructure needs of unincorporated disadvantaged communities in city and county general plans and LAFCO Municipal Service Reviews... and annexation decisions...For cities and Counties, SB 244 requires that before the due date for adoption of the next housing element after January 1, 2012, the general plan land use element must be updated to identify unincorporated disadvantaged communities; analyze for each identified community the water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, and structural fire protection needs; and identify financial funding alternatives for the extension of services to identified communities...”¹

SB 812 (Chapter 507, Statutes of 2010 (SB 812))

“Housing elements must include an analysis of the special housing needs of the disabled, including persons with developmental disabilities...Chapter 507, Statutes of 2010 (SB 812), which took effect January 2011, amended State housing element law to require the analysis of the disabled to include an evaluation of the special housing needs of persons with developmental disabilities. This analysis should include an estimate of the number of persons with developmental disabilities, and assessment of the housing need, and a discussion of potential resources.”²

AB 720, AB 1867, and AB 1103

These are recent amendments to the “Alternate Adequate Sites” sections of State Housing law: “Statute (Government Code 65583.1(c). AB 720 (Caballero – Chapter 467, Statutes of 2009 expands the timeline for a local government to provide committed assistance for the rehabilitation, conversion or preservation of affordable housing units. AB 1867 (Harkey) – Chapter 367, Statutes of 2010 allows multifamily “ownership” housing converted to rental housing affordable to lower income households by acquisition or the purchases of affordability covenants to qualify towards meeting the alternative adequate sites requirement...AB 1103 (Huffman) – Chapter 210 Statutes of 2011 allows, under specific conditions, foreclosed properties converted to housing affordable to lower income households by acquisition or the purchase of affordability covenants to qualify under the alternative adequate sites requirement.”³

SB 745 (2013)

SB 745 amends zoning requirements related to transitional and supportive housing. “In 2007, SB 2 (Chapter 633, Statutes of 2007) revised housing element law requiring that transitional and supportive housing be permitted as a residential use, subject only to restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type in the same zone. SB 745, which took effect on January 1, 2014, generally amends the Section 65582 of the Government Code to replace prior Health and Safety Code definitions of “supportive housing,” “target population,” and “transitional housing” with definitions now more specific to housing element law.”⁴

¹ Valley Blueprint Toolkit monograph on SB 244, <http://toolkit.valleyblueprint.org/statreg/sb-244-planning-unincorporated-disadvantaged-communities>

² CA Dept. of Housing and Community Development (HCD) – Division of Housing Policy Development (HPD), Memorandum June 21, 2012, <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/NoticeCoverLtrSB812.pdf>

³ HCD-HPD, Division Memorandum August 24, 2012, http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/hrc/plan/he/alt_adeq_sites082412.pdf

⁴ HCD Memorandum, SB 745, dated April 24, 2014

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SB 375 (2008, 2014)

SB 375 is the “sustainable communities” planning law (climate control law) passed in 2008 (Government Code Section 65400). It requires regions to develop plans that link transportation and housing needs, and the law includes an option for local governments to complete their transportation and housing planning on parallel eight-year schedules. SB 375 legislation requires a firm timetable on required rezoning to meet housing needs, and mandates that the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation numbers conform to the region’s SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. SB 375 also adds streamlining benefits under CEQA to assist housing projects consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Local governments must present an annual progress report to HCD and must hold an annual public meeting to take public comment on the report.⁵

1.3 Purpose of This Update

State Housing Element Law requires that Housing Elements be updated periodically – previously on 5 year intervals. Currently, as a result of SB 375, Housing Elements may be updated on an optional 8 year cycle that allows better synchronicity between transportation and housing. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) for Tulare County is prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). The current RHNA is for the fifth housing element cycle and covers a 9.75-year projection period (January 1, 2014 to September 30, 2023). The planning period for this Housing Element is eight years (December 31, 2015 through December 31, 2023). The Element must be updated and certified by State HCD for compliance with State Housing Law by December 31, 2015.

The State requires that Housing Elements be prepared to address the following requirements:

- To assure that counties and cities recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the State housing goal. Local and State governments have a responsibility to use the powers invested in them to facilitate the improvement and development of housing to make adequate provision for housing needs of all economic segments of the community.
- To recognize that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required by it to contribute to the attainment of the State housing goal, provided such a determination is compatible with the State housing goal and regional housing needs. In carrying out this responsibility, each local government also has the responsibility to consider economic, environmental, and fiscal factors and community goals set forth in the general plan and to cooperate with other local governments and the State in addressing regional housing needs.

Previous Housing Elements and Reports

1971 Housing Report

The first housing report for the Tulare County region “Housing Report, First Year,” was published in August 1971. It was based on a locally performed housing conditions survey, the “Housing Inventory of Tulare County.” The Board of Supervisors adopted the Housing Report, First Year, on February 13, 1973, as the Housing Element of the Tulare County General Plan.

⁵ Sustainable Communities, <http://www.p4sc.org/articles/all/california-cities-brace-sb-375-impact-housing-element-updates>

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1973 Housing Report

The second housing report, "Housing," was published in March 1973. It was based on data from the 1970 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. This report was not presented for adoption as an element of the General Plan, but was distributed for review to the Board of Supervisors, city councils and planning commissions, as well as to concerned agencies and citizens.

1975 Housing Element

Following receipt of the 1974 State Housing Element Guidelines, the third housing report was prepared. Entitled "Housing Element", and published in September 1975, this report summarized the large quantity of data presented by the second housing report and contained housing goals, objectives, and policies that met the requirements of the 1974 Guidelines. It was adopted by the Board of Supervisors as the Housing Element of the Tulare County General Plan on March 23, 1976.

1979 Housing Element

In 1979, TCAG completed a Model Housing Element for use by its member jurisdictions (the County of Tulare and the eight incorporated cities) to satisfy requirements of the 1977 Housing Element Guidelines. This document also provided population and housing data and projections for all the cities and the County, which were required to be included in each local housing element.

1981 Housing Element

The County of Tulare tailored the Model Housing Element to meet the County's needs. The 1981 Housing Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on July 7, 1981. The Housing Element contained programs to implement goals, objectives and policies, and was prepared in compliance with 1977 Housing Element Guidelines.

1984 Housing Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the 1984 Tulare County Housing Element on July 31, 1984. This Housing Element incorporated information from the 1983 Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan that identified housing needs by income group for each jurisdiction in Tulare County. The Housing Element covered the planning period 1984 to 1990. Correspondence from HCD in 1990 indicated that household projections from the State Department of Finance (DOF) for 1992 were approximately the same as those contained in the 1984 Housing Element for 1990. As a result, the 1984-1992 new construction need was considered the same as the 1984-1990 need.

1992 Housing Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the 1992 Tulare County Housing Element in June 1992. The five-year or 1997 housing need projections were provided from the 1991 Tulare County Housing Needs Determination Plan.

2003 Housing Element

The 2003 Tulare County Housing Element was adopted by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors as General Plan Amendment No. GPA 03-011 by Resolution No. 2003-0943 on December 9, 2003. The 2003 Housing Element was subsequently certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on April 27, 2004 and is considered to be valid until August 31, 2009.

2009 Housing Element

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The most recent 2009 Tulare County Housing Element was adopted by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on March 23, 2010, and amended the Element on May 8, 2012. The 2009 Housing Element was subsequently certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The 2009 Housing Element is considered to be valid until December 31, 2015.

1.4 Housing and Local Government

Tulare County, in cooperation with State and federal governments, has the power to influence the housing delivery system. If local housing goals are set, a variety of local public policies can be identified to create conditions under which goals can be met. These policies represent commitments on the part of Tulare County to reach its housing goals.

The impact of local government is far greater than that of developer, financing agency, owner or the Federal government.

However, the housing delivery system is essentially a private system. The production, exchange and management of the housing stock is largely in private hands and influenced by many factors beyond those in which Tulare County government plays a part. This means that the implementation of public policies related to housing goals must rely on the housing industry and community groups interested in housing.

Nevertheless, Tulare County government continuously touches and influences the housing delivery system on a variety of fronts. Virtually every area of local government responsibility (i.e., public safety, community infrastructure, education, roads, health and human services) has implications for housing development and availability. Policies directly related to land development, property taxation, utility extension and zoning may be the most relevant to housing, but they are only part of the total range of local governmental relationships to housing. The relationship of local government to any housing unit begins before it is constructed and continues until it is demolished. In the long run, the impact of local government is far greater than that of the developer, financing agency, owner or the Federal government.

Consistency with General Plan

“In construing the provisions of this article, the Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.” Government Code Section 65300.5

“...means by which consistency will be achieved with other general plan elements and community goals.” Government Code Section 65583 (c) (7)

General Plan Update

Tulare County recently adopted a comprehensive update of its General Plan.

The Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 28, 2012. At that time, the Board also certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the project. The General Plan Update includes several state mandated Elements and several optional elements. The seven State of California mandated Elements include: Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety and Noise Elements. In addition to these required elements, the General Plan 2030 Update includes five new optional

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elements: Economic Development, Agriculture, Scenic Landscapes, Air Quality and Water Resources. The General Plan Update also includes the adoption of a Climate Action Plan.⁶

Consistency with Adopted General Plan

In accordance with State law, the Housing Element must be consistent and compatible with adopted General Plan elements. The Housing Element must also provide clear policy and direction for making decisions pertaining to zoning, subdivision approval, housing allocations and capital improvements. Government Code Section 65300.5 requires the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.

Any amendments to the safety, conservation, and land use elements pursuant to the requirements of Government Code Section 65302, will require a review of the housing element for internal consistency, which may in turn, require amendments to the housing element. Consistency is important because general plan designations and subsequent zoning must provide for a range of housing types consistent with housing needs.

“The General Plan 2030 Update combines and reorganizes the County’s historical Elements under modern concepts. However, it still segregates policies into specific subjects. It is generally recognized that certain land use planning concerns “cross” subject lines...Two of the current “hot topic” concerns in 2012 that cross subject lines are the marshalling of resources in light of growing populations and reducing activities emitting greenhouse gases that may impact climate. Three factors are common to both of these concerns: resources, emissions, population growth. Resources are finite and therefore the use must be balanced. A population must be provided adequate services. As the population grows, more resources are required and used.”⁷

“In interpreting the General Plan Consistency, “Goals...serve as general direction-setters for the County...Policies, however, set out the direction against which consistency findings will be made. General Plan 2030 Update policies fall into four categories depending on the purpose they serve and how they are implemented.” The four classes of General Plan policies include: framing policies; consistency standard policies; County directory policies; and environmental mitigation policies.⁸

General Plan 2030 Update: Policies Affecting Housing Development and Standards

A. General Plan Framework Component

The Planning Framework Element provides “a planning framework that promotes the viability of communities, hamlets, and cities while protecting the agricultural, open space, scenic, cultural, historic, and natural resource heritage of the County.” (Goal PF-1) Policies have been added to promote appropriate separation of urban and rural land uses. For example, Policy PF-1.2 states that urban development shall only occur in appropriate areas such as incorporated cities, within Urban Development boundaries of cities, planned community areas, and hamlet development boundaries. Regional planning frameworks for guiding growth are provided by Area Plans for each distinctive region. The Tulare County Area Plans include the Rural Valley Lands Plan, the Foothill Growth Management Plan, the Mountain Framework Plan and mountain sub-area plans.

Key General Plan Planning Tools Impacting Housing Decisions: Urban Boundaries, Area Plans, and Community Plans

Tulare County’s planning framework has, in the past, used three key planning tools to guide urban development in all unincorporated areas of the County: Urban Boundaries, Area Plans, and

⁶ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Introduction , page 1-12

⁷ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Introduction, page 1-14

⁸ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Introduction, page 1-13

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Community Plans. In the General Plan 2030 Update, these tools are discussed throughout the document: Urban Boundaries are included as a component in the Planning Framework (Part 1 - Goals and Policies Report); Area Plans are discussed in Part II; and Community Plans are included by reference in Part III of the General Plan Update.⁹

Several General Plan policies provide a planning framework that promotes the viability of communities, hamlets, and cities, while protecting valuable natural and cultural resources:

PF-1.1 Maintain Urban Edges

“The County shall strive to maintain distinct urban edges for all unincorporated communities within the valley region or foothill region, while creating a transition between urban uses and agriculture and open space.”¹⁰

PF-1.2 “Location of Urban Development

“The County shall ensure that urban development only takes place in the following areas:

1. Within incorporated cities and CACUDBs;
2. Within the UDBs of adjacent cities in other counties, unincorporated communities, planned community areas, and HDBs of hamlets;
3. Within foothill development corridors as determined by procedures set forth in Foothill Growth Management Plan;
4. Within areas set aside for urban use in the Mountain Framework Plan and the mountain sub-area plans; and
5. Within other areas suited for non-agricultural development, as determined by the procedures set forth in the Rural Valley Lands Plan.”¹¹

PF-1.3 Land Uses in UDBs/HDBs

“The County shall encourage those types of urban land uses that benefit from urban services to develop within UDBs and HDBs. Permanent uses which do not benefit from urban services shall be discouraged within these areas. This shall not apply to agricultural or agricultural support uses, including the cultivation of land or other uses accessory to the cultivation of land provided that such accessory uses are time-limited through Special Use Permit procedures.”¹²

Three Urban Boundary Types: Urban Development Boundaries, Urban Area Boundaries, and Hamlet Development Boundaries

Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs) are officially adopted and mapped County lines delineating the area expected for urban growth in cities and unincorporated communities over a 20-year period. Within UDB boundaries, the County and cities will coordinate plans, policies and standards related to building construction, subdivision development, land use and zoning regulations, street and highway construction, public utility systems, environmental studies, and other closely related matters affecting the orderly development of urban fringe areas. These boundaries provide an official definition of the interface between future urban and agricultural land uses.¹³

“For cities, the County Adopted City UDB is an officially adopted and mapped County line delineating the area expected for urban growth over a 220-year period. This line may be coterminous to the Local

⁹ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-3

¹⁰ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-7

¹¹ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-7

¹² TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-7

¹³ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-3

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Agency Formation Commissions Sphere of Influence. Land within a County Adopted City UDB may be appropriate for development.”¹⁴

“For unincorporated communities, the UDB is a County adopted line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for agricultural, natural, open space, or rural uses. It serves as the official planning area for communities over a 20 year period. Land within an unincorporated UDB is assumed appropriate for development and is not subject to the Rural Valley Lands Plan or Foothill Growth Management Plan (RVLP Policy 1-1)”¹⁵

The Tulare County General Plan has established Urban Development Boundaries for twenty one unincorporated communities to serve as official urban planning areas:¹⁶

- Alpaugh
- Cutler/Orosi
- Ducor
- Earlimart
- East Orosi
- Goshen
- Ivanhoe
- Lemon Cove
- London
- Pixley
- Plainview
- Poplar/Cotton Center
- Richgrove
- Springville
- Strathmore
- Sultana
- Terra Bella
- Three Rivers
- Tipton
- Traver
- Woodville

Urban Area Boundary (UAB). “This is an officially adopted and mapped County line around incorporated cities. The hierarchy is as follows: incorporated city limits, Urban Development Boundary (may be coterminous with the Sphere of Influence adopted by LAFCo), and the Urban Area Boundary of an incorporated city. The UABs establish areas (the area between the UDB and UAB) around incorporated cities where the County and cities may coordinate plans and policies relating to street and highway construction, public utility systems, and future right of way preservation, affecting the orderly development of urban fringe areas.”¹⁷

Hamlet Development Boundary (HDB). “This is an officially adopted and mapped County line around a hamlet that divides lands suitable for development from lands to be protected for agricultural, natural, or rural uses. Land inside a HDB is appropriate for development and is not subject to the criteria evaluation of development as established in the Rural Valley Lands Plan or Foothill Growth Management Plan (RVLP Policy 1-1).”¹⁸

¹⁴ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-3

¹⁵ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-3

¹⁶ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-9

¹⁷ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-3

¹⁸ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-2

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HDBs have been adopted for each of the following eleven Tulare County Hamlets:¹⁹

- Allensworth
- Delft Colony
- East Tulare Villa
- Lindcove
- Monson
- Seville
- Teviston
- Tonyville
- Waukena
- West Goshen
- Yettem

B. Area Plan Policies (Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update, Part II)

Four Area Plans are included in Part II of the General Plan 2030 Update:

Rural Valley Lands Plan

“The General Plan incorporates the RVLP adopted by the County in 1975. “The RVLP applies to the Central Valley generally below the 600-foot elevation contour line along the foothills of the Sierra Nevada (including Valley Agricultural Extensions as described in Part II-Chapter 3) outside the County’s Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs), Hamlet Development Boundaries (HDBs), Urban Area Boundaries (UABs) for cities, and other adopted land use plans which may include urban corridors, planned communities, and the Kings River Plan. Scenic and regional corridor plans may retain the RVLP subject to the policies developed in those plans (Part II-Figure 1-1: Rural Valley Lands Plan). The RVLP was initiated in order to establish minimum parcel sizes for areas zoned for agriculture and to develop a policy that is fair, logical, legally supportable, and which consistently utilizes resource information to determine the suitability of rural lands for non-agricultural uses. The policies in this chapter will act as a guide to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in determining appropriate minimum parcel sizes and areas where non-agricultural use exceptions in the rural areas of the County may be allowed.”²⁰

Corridors Framework Plan

“The Corridors chapter provides guidance in the unincorporated portions of the County that are adjacent to transportation routes. There are three types of corridors: Regional Corridors, Urban Corridors and Scenic Corridors. This chapter provides framing policies for future corridor plans to be adopted. This chapter also provides for an interim policy for development of a Regional Corridor until a Plan is in place.”²¹

Foothill Growth Management Plan (FGMP)

“The Foothill Growth Management Plan (FGMP) was originally adopted in 1981 and includes a comprehensive statement of the development policies and standards that prescribe land use and circulation patterns for the foothills of Tulare County, generally above the 600-foot elevation line (Part II,

¹⁹ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Planning Framework, page 2-35

²⁰ TCGPU Part II, Area Plan Policies, page 1-1

²¹ TCGPU Part II, Area Plan Policies, p. 2-1

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Figure 3-1: Foothill Growth Management Plan). The FGMP covers approximately 675,641 acres of land bounded on the east by the federally-owned parks in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and on the west by privately-owned lands on the San Joaquin Valley floor. The plan's policies set out guidelines for community identity, new development, recreation/open space, agriculture, environmental protection, scenic corridors protection, history/archaeology, infrastructure facilities, and public services. The communities of Springville and Three Rivers, each with their own community plans, lie within the FGMP boundaries. The FGMP identifies lands outside the communities of Three Rivers and Springville."²²

Mountain Framework Plan

"The Mountain Framework Plan...provides policy guidance in the unincorporated mountain area on the eastern side of the County (Part II-Figure 4-1: Mountain Framework Plan). This area includes all land located east of the foothills, which generally coincides with the westerly boundary of federal lands. This includes lands under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (Sequoia National Park), the U.S. Forest Service {USFS} (Giant Sequoia National Monument), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The County has never adopted an overall plan for the mountain area. The private lands in this region amount to about 40,000 acres identified in... seven separate geographical locations or 'sub-areas ...Of the seven sub-areas..., only the Kennedy Meadows and Great Western Divide (North ½) Sub-areas have adopted plans. These two plans use unique land use designations that provide for the future growth of each sub-area. These two plans collectively cover about 50 percent of the privately held land in the mountain area."²³

C. Existing Planning Documents for Communities, Hamlets, and other areas (Plans incorporated by reference) (Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update, Part III)

Community planning documents include Sub-Area Plans, County Adopted City General Plans, and Community Plans. These planning documents are incorporated by reference in Part III of the General Plan 2030 Update. "Each of these plans...applies tailored policies to specified portions of the County. These existing plans were not revised or readopted in 2010 as part of the General Plan Update with two exceptions...[T]he General Plan 2030 Update anticipates adopting additional Sub-Area Plans, County Adopted City General Plans, and Community Plans, as well as Mountain Service Center Plans, Hamlet Plans, and Corridor Plans... Each will become components of Part III of the General Plan when adopted."²⁴

There are twelve existing adopted community plans: Cutler/Orosi Community Plan (1988); Earlimart Community Plan (1988); Goshen Community Plan (1978); Ivanhoe Community Plan (1990); Pixley Community Plan (1997, revised 2010); Poplar/Cotton Center Community Plan (1996); Richgrove Community Plan (1987); Springville Community Plan (1985); Strathmore Community Plan (1989); Terra Bella/Ducor Community Plan (2004); Three Rivers Community Plan (1980); Traver Community Plan (1989). The General Plan Update designates eight additional communities, and calls for adopting a Community Plan for each: Alpaugh, East Orosi, Lemon Cove, London, Plainview, Sultana, Tipton, Woodville. All but Sultana have existing Urban Development Boundaries.²⁵

Hamlet Development Plans: The Goals and Policies Report also designates eleven locations as Hamlets and calls for the adoption of a Hamlet Development Plan for each of these small communities (Allensworth, Delft Colony, East Tulare Villa, Lindcove, Monson, Seville, Teviston, Tonyville, Waukena, West Goshen, Yettem) (GPR Part 1 Introduction, pages 1-6 and 1-7 .

Mountain Service Center Plans: The Goals and Policies Report designates sixteen existing developed areas within the boundaries of the Mountain Framework Plan as Mountain Service Centers

²² TCGPU Part II, Area Plan Policies, page 3-2

²³ TCGPU Part II, Area Plan Policies, pages 4-1, 4-2 and 4-4

²⁴ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, page 1-4

²⁵ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, page 1-5

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and calls for adopting the Mountain Service Center Plans (Balance Rock, Balch Park, Blue Ridge, California Hot Springs/Pine Flat, Fairview, Hartland, Johnsondale, McClenney Tract, Panorama Heights, Posey/Idlewild, Poso Park, Silver City, Sugarloaf Mountain Park, Sugarloaf Park, Sugarloaf Village, Wilsonia).²⁶

General Plan Consistency (2): Other Elements

The Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update includes policies in several optional elements that will also impact housing decisions. Key among these are the following:

Planning Framework: Infrastructure (Goals and Policies Report Component D)

Several elements that were addressed separately in the previous General Plan have now been combined. The Infrastructure” component of the General Plan Update now includes the Transportation and Circulation Element, the Public Facilities and Services Element, and the Flood Control Master Plan (adopted 1972). Of these, the Transportation and Circulation and Public Facilities and Services Elements will be addressed in more detail:

Transportation and Circulation Element

The safe and efficient transport of people and goods via well-designed circulation patterns within the County is considered of crucial importance to the County, affecting the well being of residents and the economic viability of the County. The General Plan 2030 Update amendment includes planning objectives, policies, and standards to reduce green house gases.

The Tulare County General Plan infrastructure section provides for the development and expansion of public services throughout the County. Transportation and public services are addressed through its Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures to provide the County’s urbanized and developing areas with adequate services to function and grow.

Tulare County is served by highway, rail, aviation, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian circulation modes. The General Plan Infrastructure Component Concept 1 (Transportation and Circulation) states that “The overall transportation and circulation pattern in the Tulare County General Plan focuses on enhancing the connections between cities, communities, and hamlets through existing highways and roadways. Coupled with this is the improvement of bike and pedestrian facilities along with public transportation facilities and services that will enable efficient movement throughout the County and region.”²⁷

A General Plan “Guiding Principle for Transportation and Circulation” is stated as follows: “Site planning and land use planning for developments in Tulare County’s communities and hamlets will support transit and pedestrian modes of travel. Improvement to existing services and development of new facilities will dictate the success of the County’s transportation and circulation system through the orderly movement of goods and people.”²⁸

Public Facilities and Services:

Infrastructure facilities and the services they provide are crucial to Tulare County’s communities. The continued maintenance and adequate capacity are crucial to the continued growth and development of communities. Public buildings, schools, parks and other facilities are the “centers of communities” and their distribution, design, and funding of these facilities make them visible and accessible community features. Principles include enhance and expand infrastructure facilities in communities that are at or above capacity; plan infrastructure and provide assurance for new infrastructure and develop

²⁶ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, pages 1-6 and 1-7

²⁷ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Infrastructure, page 13-2

²⁸ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Infrastructure, page D-1

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infrastructure facilities prior to new development occurring; parallel investments: Plan facilities as parallel investments to grow and integrate them into community, social, cultural and commercial places. There are two major regional highways, State Highway 99 and 198. Tulare County is served by freight and passenger rail service. There are eight public use airports in Tulare County.²⁹

Health and Safety (included as Concept 4 of Component C: Environment)

The Safety element is one of the state-required elements of the General Plan. It has been incorporated as an element in the “Environment” Component of the General Plan Update. The Health and Safety Element includes several sections: General, Geologic and Seismic Hazards, Airport Hazards, Hazardous Materials, Flood Hazards, Urban and Wildland Fire Hazards, Emergency Response, Noise, and Healthy Communities, with a work plan and implementation measures for each.

Other elements in the “Environment” component include scenic landscapes, environmental resources management, air quality, health and safety, and water resources.³⁰

Tulare County Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan 2014-2023 (TCAG, June 2014)

State housing element law assigns the responsibility for preparing the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) for the Tulare County region to the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). The RHNA is updated prior to each housing element cycle. The current RHNA, adopted on June 30, 2014, covers a 9.75-year projection period (January 1, 2014 to September 30, 2023). The growth projections applied in the Housing Element Update are based upon growth projections developed by the State of California. The RHNA housing allocations for Tulare County were incorporated into Table 1-A. “A Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan” (Table 1-A) provides a general measure of each local jurisdiction’s responsibility in the provision of housing to meet those needs. The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) was responsible for allocating the State’s projections to each local jurisdiction within Tulare County including the County unincorporated area, which is reflected in this Housing Element.

“The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375) was passed to support the State’s climate action goals...to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through coordinated transportation and land use planning. The bill mandates each of California’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) prepare a *sustainable communities strategy* as part of its regional transportation plan (RTP). The SCS contains land use, housing and transportation strategies that, if implemented, would allow the region to meet its GHG reduction targets. In the past, the RHNA was undertaken independently from the RTP. SB 375 requires that the RHNA and RTP/SCS processes be undertaken together to better integrate housing, land use, and transportation planning. In addition to the RHNA requirements, SB 375 requires that TCAG address the region’s housing needs in the SCS of the RTP, to include sections on state housing goals (Government Code Section 65080(b)(2)(B)(vi)); identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region (including all economic segments of the population) over the course of the planning period for the RTP (out to 2040 for the 2040 RTP/SCS); and identify areas within the region sufficient to meet the regional housing needs”³¹

The RHNA housing results are summarized in Table 1, below. The Tulare County RHNA Plan recommends that the County provide land use and zoning for approximately 7081 units per year in the unincorporated portions of the County. The County administratively agreed to a housing share of 7,081 units (726 units per year over the 9.75-year RHNA planning period). The RTP allocates 30% of population to the County. The RHNA bases the housing needs assessment on this percentage.

²⁹ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, Infrastructure, page D-2

³⁰ TCGPU Part 1, Goals and Policies Report, page 10-1

³¹ TCAG, Final RHNP for Tulare County 2014-2023 (adopted June 30, 2014), page 5

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**Table 1-A Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan
January 1, 2014 – September 30, 2023**

Jurisdiction	Income Category				Total
	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	
Dinuba	211	163	121	470	965
Exeter	143	125	85	272	625
Farmersville	74	65	68	259	466
Lindsay	80	80	82	348	590
Porterville	623	576	566	1,431	3,196
Tulare	920	609	613	1,452	3,594
Visalia	2616	1,931	1,802	3,672	10,021
Woodlake	71	41	69	191	372
Unincorporated Area	1,477	1,065	1,169	3,370	7,081
Total Tulare County	6,215	4,655	4,575	11,465	26,910

Source: Table 1: "2014-2023 Final RHNA Allocations by Income Category," Final Regional Housing Needs Plan for Tulare County 2014-2023, page 19 (TCAG, 2014)

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