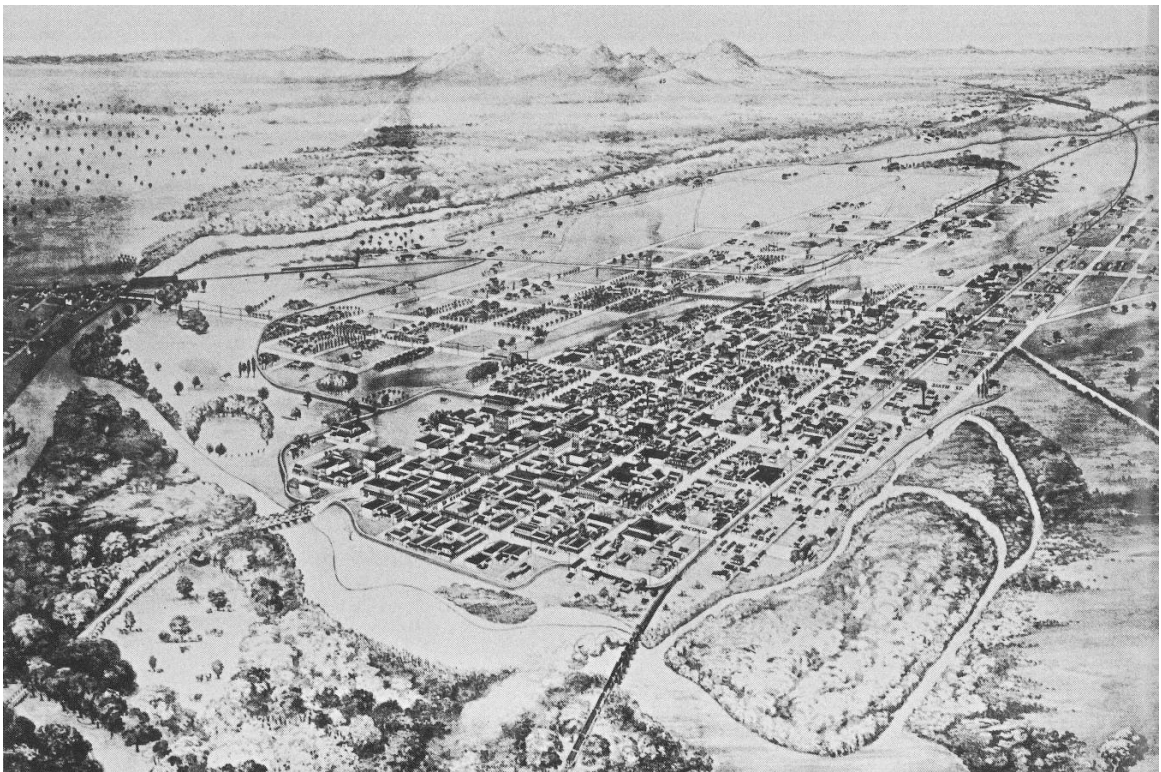


# Vision for the 2030 General Plan

## Yuba County – “Our History, Our Future”

Shortly after the discovery of a gold fleck in a California mill in 1848, thousands of wealth-seekers began to sift through northern California streams to pinpoint the rich deposits of gold in the mountains. By the time Governor Peter Burnett signed the 1850 document establishing Yuba County as one of the state’s original 27 counties, the population of the County’s largest community, Marysville, had exploded to nearly 10,000. Marysville’s location at the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers made it the perfect community to support mining activities in the foothills. As gold mining operations dwindled in the late 1800s, other industries emerged to keep Yuba County’s economy moving forward.



Source: Janet R. Sullivan and Mary-Jane Zall, 1974.

Yuba County’s 644 square mile topography is influenced by the Sierra-Nevada foothills and mountains, but the bulk of its population resides on the Sacramento Valley floor, among thousands of acres of fertile agricultural ground. During the early years of Yuba County, the commerce, transportation, and water provided by the river system drove location of our communities near the rivers. Along with the benefits of being near the rivers came the negative of periodic flooding. Over the past 150 years, Yuba County has struggled from time to time with both flooding and fires. Following devastating floods in the 1950s, coupled with an aquifer that wasn’t keeping pace with water demands for agriculture, the Yuba County Water Agency was created to address these issues. In the 1960s the New Bullards Bar Dam, the Colgate Power Plant, and Lake Francis reservoir were constructed to improve flood safety, water supply and fire protection. Although control of the Yuba River was vastly improved, flooding in 1986 and 1997 again



tested the County's resolve, which has resulted in over \$400 million in levee system improvements over the past decade.

Due to the ring levee system that was constructed to protect the County's largest city, Marysville, but constricted its growth, most development since the 1950s occurred outside the City. Yuba County's other incorporated city, Wheatland, has also been constrained until recently. For these reasons, growth has occurred in unincorporated areas of the valley floor. Today, three-quarters of the County's population lives outside the two cities. Even with this development, the vast majority of the fertile agricultural ground on the valley floor remains in active production today, representing the single most important economic activity and most prevalent land use in the County. In 1942, the U.S. military established Camp Beale at the edge of Yuba County's foothills. The military base eventually became Beale Air Force Base and currently occupies over 23,000 acres of land in the County. From 1942 to present, the presence of this military base has been a source of pride and economic importance to the County.

Many factors have shaped our past and influence where we are today, including our rich natural resources, entrepreneurial spirit, military base, and the "can-do" attitude of our residents and businesses. This General Plan is designed to help us get from where we are to where we want to be over the next 20 years. Although there have been floods and fires that have hindered the County's forward momentum, they did not crush our spirits. With each obstacle, we have learned a valuable lesson. The development boom of the early 2000s gave the County a taste of forward momentum that had not been felt since the gold rush era. This General Plan capitalizes on the lessons learned during that time. One of the most valuable lessons learned from the recent development boom was the need for clarity: clarity from the current residents and businesses of our County as to their vision for the future and clarity to future residents and businesses as to how they can be a part of our future success. The General Plan strives to achieve this by laying out a clear vision with supporting goals, policies, and actions. During the preparation of the updated General Plan, the County embarked on a parallel process to examine near term strategic priorities. In order to ensure a consistent vision for our future, both the strategic planning process and updated General Plan share the same vision:

***To create a golden future for Yuba County by: Inspiring a community of participation, embracing our unique history, and discovering the wealth of our untapped potential.***

The County's rich history has helped shaped who we are today as a County, with two incorporated cities, a military base, vast amounts of active agricultural lands, numerous rural communities, streams and rivers, forested mountains, and more than 73,000 residents. Having a clear vision that recognizes lessons learned from our history, respects our natural resources, capitalizes on the "can-do" attitude of its residents and businesses, and listens to their hopes and desires will help us realize a prosperous future.

## 2030 General Plan Themes

Based on this overall vision, there are themes that run throughout this General Plan. These themes include:

- **Economic, environmental, and social sustainability.** The County recognizes the dynamic relationship between economic, social, and environmental objectives. The 2030 General Plan policies and actions are designed to achieve the optimal balance among these sometimes-competing objectives.
- **Managed Growth and Development of land use and infrastructure.** The County encourages revitalization and development of land uses and infrastructure from existing areas outward, where greenfield development occurs. The County's policies are designed to avoid "leapfrog development," and carefully consider the regional land use and economic context. As the County develops, there will be new opportunities to improve and diversify the economy, preserve and enhance the environment, and provide better and more affordable housing. Growth will be managed to preserve



and enhance the quality of life for residents rather than allowing the benefits to accrue only to newcomers or people living outside Yuba County. Infrastructure and other public improvements will be planned for in advance of development, utilizing the General Plan as a basis for commitment of public funds, and by requiring development to finance specific infrastructure and improvements.

- **Use and Conservation of Resources.** The County's natural resources, especially agriculture and timber, are important parts of the local economy along with water, mineral resources, and existing and future sources of energy.
- **Protection of Public Health, Safety, and Welfare.** The General Plan places great emphasis on protecting environmental and public health. The County wants to promote healthy communities through its policies and programs.
- **Regional Planning and Coordination** with the cities, surrounding counties, SACOG, state and federal agencies, special districts and school districts, Beale Air Force Base, the Local Agency Formation Commission, and other public agencies. The County's General Plan supports regionalization of infrastructure and services, where this make sense, and strategically considers the County's position in the region and policies necessary to achieve a future desired position in the region.
- **Rural Lifestyle.** Rural residential areas will be preserved, recognizing the need to provide for a variety of lifestyles. On the valley floor, lands that are the least productive for agricultural purposes will be committed to development while higher value agricultural land will be protected from encroachment and preserved for future generations of farmers.
- **Local Quality of Life** will be crucial to the County's success during buildout of the 2030 General Plan. Employment development will depend on high quality parks, schools, culture, retail, services, and natural beauty, among other factors.

These themes were included among a document that was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2009 to guide preparation of the 2030 General Plan. This document is summarized below.





## General Plan Update Vision & Goals

The General Plan provides the framework for decisions from guiding where and how development should occur to the prioritization of the County's natural resources in order to achieve the highest quality of life possible for its residents. The quality of life provided truly drives the sustainability of the County by encouraging people to live, work and play in Yuba County. In order to accomplish the vision of the County, the following goals and how we will achieve them were developed to help guide the drafting of the Update.

### Improve the Overall Quality of Life

To achieve this goal, we will

- Have safe neighborhoods/communities that preserve community character and meet resident's service needs.
- Create a healthy economy with a balance between the number/types of jobs and the needs of working residents.
- Revitalize existing communities, neighborhoods and primary transportation corridors.
- Have schools, parks, and public gathering places that provide a safe enjoyable environment and promote active, healthy lifestyles.
- Provide public services such as law enforcement, fire protection, public transportation and civic facilities at appropriate levels for urban and rural communities.
- Provide the highest level of flood protection possible for our residents.
- Encourage efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable infrastructure.
- Offer a variety of housing types to meet "lifecycle" needs (young adulthood through retirement), freedom of choice, and affordability to local workers.
- Protect agricultural lands, rural landscapes, air and water quality, and natural resource areas that prove to be positive characteristics of Yuba County.

### Economic Independence

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Strive for a balance between jobs and housing—both numerically and demographically—by promoting jobs for our residents.
- Promote and encourage new commercial and industrial development to balance the recent residential development, generate revenues, and create local jobs and services for residents.
- Through efficient infrastructure planning and prudent financing mechanisms, keep impact fees as low and competitive as possible in order to attract employment opportunities to the County.
- Promote appropriate home business opportunities which utilize advances in electronic technology and have minimal impacts on residential areas.
- Continue to support and take advantage of our existing economic assets such as Beale AFB, Yuba College, Yuba County Airport, agriculture, and existing local businesses.



- Promote existing growth areas as the engines of the economy by focusing on existing cities, downtown areas, and primary corridors.
- Continue to promote our recreational and tourism opportunities.

### **Sustainable and Vibrant Valley Communities**

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Encourage retail, services, and jobs conveniently located for residents in order to reduce travel demand, reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated air pollution, lower household transportation costs, and reduce transportation infrastructure costs.
- Support the vision, goals and policies of the cities of Marysville and Wheatland in order to achieve their future sustainability.
- Encourage the ability for future incorporation and/or annexation of unincorporated areas by establishing realistic and manageable growth boundaries.
- Focus on build out of the partially built existing specific plans and promote modification to those plans consistent with the vision and goals of the General Plan when opportunities arise.
- Provide flexibility for a property owner to sell their land development entitlement to another property owner (Transfer of Development Rights) if the transfer does not result in impacts to either the receiving or transferring community that cannot be adequately mitigated.
- Link new transportation, water and sewer infrastructure to sound and sustainable policies. Efficiently provide public improvements and services. Consider lifecycle costs—long-term operation and maintenance costs in addition to initial construction costs. Strive for regionalized facilities.
- Ensure that existing and future communities are healthy places to live by promoting a physically active lifestyle with clean air to breathe and safe facilities to meet the community's needs.
- Invest in the physical infrastructure of existing communities through infill, reuse, and intensification of well-served centers and corridors.
- Build communities that respond to the social and cultural needs of existing and new residents.
- Strive to create a distinctive sense of place, character, and vibrancy for every community that attracts people and investment.

### **Preservation of Rural Lifestyle**

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Reexamine existing plans in the foothills that provide for urban or suburban levels of density that may no longer be preferred for the County and should be re-evaluated in light of infrastructure feasibility, interests of the community, etc.
- Preserve foothill community boundaries that will continue to enhance and allow for open space, grazing lands, deer herds and oak woodlands which define the rural character of the foothills and the County as a whole.



- Reexamine feasibility of continued subdivision into five acre parcels within the foothill community boundaries based on water availability, adequate soil for waste disposal, and other environmental or physical constraints.
- Ensure that existing residences and resources are protected in the process of evaluating future subdivisions.

## Resource Protection

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Protect prime agricultural lands, rural landscapes, and other natural resources.
- Consider importance of these lands to the County's quality of life.
- Increase the viability of our agricultural areas by allowing for compatible agricultural related businesses such as, but not limited to, processing facilities, agro-tourism, and boutique farming.
- Encourage and promote the use and harvesting of natural resources in ways that benefit the County as a whole.
- Protect agricultural lands from residential encroachment.
- Protect our air and water quality by implementing responsible and realistic policies that protect these precious resources.

