



CALAVERAS COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
891 Mountain Ranch Road,  
San Andreas, California 95249  
(209) 754-6394

**Planning Commission Staff Report**

<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>August 13, 2020</b>
<b>Project Number/Name</b>	2020-036 Amendment to General Plan adding Valley Springs Community Area Policies
<b>Supervisory District Number</b>	All
<b>Assessor's Parcel Number(s)</b>	N/A
<b>Planner</b>	Peter N. Maurer, Planning Director

**Date: July 31, 2020**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Calaveras County is proposing to amend the General Plan to add a Valley Springs section to the Community Planning Element.

**ANALYSIS:**

**Background:** On November 12, 2019 the Board of Supervisors adopted the Calaveras County General Plan. The Plan included a Community Planning Element that contains a description of and policies relating to several of the unique communities in the County. This element also provides for the opportunity to add communities for which descriptions and policies had not been completed by the time that the County was ready to adopt the General Plan as a whole. Two communities that were identified as those whose citizens desired to be included were Valley Springs and Copperopolis. Many hours of staff and citizen effort had been previously spent on developing policy language in the form of separate community plans. At a study session in January, 2020, the Board of Supervisors identified a number of priorities for General Plan implementation. High amongst those priorities were completing plan policies for Valley Springs.

Development of plan policies for Valley Springs goes back many years. In 2008 the Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG) received a Caltrans grant to develop a plan for Valley Springs. A draft plan was developed with much community input, but not without controversy. The planning area included the Rancho Calaveras community, and an alternative plan was developed by a group of citizens that did not agree with the content and direction of the CCOG plan. Both planning efforts were ultimately shelved as the Planning Department focused on completion of the county-wide General Plan. In 2014 the Board of Supervisors provided direction to the Planning Department to complete the General Plan update without including community plans. This direction was reversed in 2015, with revised direction to include the District 2 communities, and any other community plans that had had sufficient work completed to be incorporated into the General Plan without significant delays.

While the Planning Commission conducted hearings on the Draft General Plan in 2015 and 2016, staff worked to refine and revise the community plans that were ready to be incorporated into the plan. Hearings on the Community Planning Element were conducted in late 2016.

As staff and the Planning Commission neared the completion of those hearings, citizens from Valley Springs approached staff with a proposal to combine the two previously developed plan alternatives. Staff agreed to consider this, and after review with citizens representing the CCOG plan, developed a draft that was scheduled to be heard by the Planning Commission in January, 2017. This draft, however, was pulled from the calendar, and the General Plan was adopted without including Valley Springs.

**Discussion:** The draft before the Planning Commission is virtually the same as that on the January, 2017 agenda. Notice was provided to the public in May of this year that the County intended to bring the policies to the Commission and provided a two-month window for public comments. Several comments were received that indicated support for the CCOG plan. Another expressed concerns about the lack of signalization at the SR 12/26 intersection. Lengthy comments were received from MyValleySprings.com (MVS) which will be discussed further below. All of the comment letters are attached to this report.

The primary concern expressed by MVS is the lack of implementation measures (IM). While most policies in the General Plan do have corresponding IMs, not all do, and none of the Community Planning Element policies do. Not all policies require specific implementation measures as some are self-implementing. MVS provided a copy of the implementation program of the draft CCOG plan as an example of what they would like to see in this amendment. Staff has reviewed the policies and implementation measures contained throughout the rest of the General Plan, and has added references to the appropriate implementation measures in the other elements that would apply to these community planning policies. Staff does not find that creating new implementation measures specific to Valley Springs is necessary since the activities identified in the other measures can be tailored, where appropriate to implement those policies.

These policies supplement all of the other policies contained in the General Plan and are not intended to be a substitute for any of them. The land use map is not proposed to be amended, so there is no change in density or intensity of development.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the General Plan and certified when the Board adopted the plan in November, 2019 (State Clearinghouse #2017012043). A number of impacts were found to be significant, and while mitigation measures were added to the plan to reduce those impacts, many were found to still be significant and unavoidable as a result of implementing the plan. The Draft and Final EIR may be viewed or downloaded at: <https://planning.calaverasgov.us/General-Plan#gsc.tab=0>. Copies of the EIR are also available at the Planning Department for review or purchase.

An addendum to that EIR has been prepared pursuant to Section 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines and is provided as Attachment 3. This addendum found that the proposed amendment would not create new or expanded impacts, no new information was available that would change the previous findings, and the findings necessary in CEQA could be made for utilization of an addendum. Pursuant to Section 15164(d) the decision-making body must consider the addendum when making a decision on the project.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution 2020-016, recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the Addendum to the EIR and adopt the proposed general plan amendment adding a description and policies for the Valley Springs community to the Community Planning Element of the General Plan.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1      Draft General Plan Description and Policies for Valley Springs
- Attachment 2      Resolution 2020-016
- Attachment 3      Valley Springs Community Area Map
- Attachment 4      Addendum to the General Plan EIR, SCH# 2017012043
- Attachment 5      Comment Letters