

CIRCULATION TOPIC VISIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Circulation Topic Vision for the greater Valley Springs area is guided by State of California guidelines and Calaveras County Community Development Agency. A Circulation plan is not simply a transportation plan. It is an infrastructure plan addressing the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications. The efficiency of our community's circulation system can either contribute to or adversely affect our economy.

BACKGROUND

Valley Springs' town center is located at the junction of California State Route 12 and Route 26 in northwest Calaveras County. SR 12 generally runs east-west, serving as the town main street, and is intersected by SR 26, which runs in a northeasterly direction and then turns easterly together with SR 12. Retail sales, offices, banks, medical centers, restaurants, and other services for the most part occur within blocks of the SR 12/26 junction. To the north of the SR 12/26 intersection, Paloma Road is a major road leading north to Amador County.

The town center area receives potable water from wells delivered by the Valley Springs Public Utility District. The remainder of the town is provided water by CCWD which utilizes surface water from New Hogan Lake. Sewage collection and treatment for those same areas are operated by the respective entities. Outside of town water may be supplied by wells and sewage treatment is by septic system.

Energy, for the most part, is provided by P. G. & E. Alpine Natural Gas does have 1200 customers in the study area with the remainder using propane.

Communication services are provided by A. T. & T., Calaveras Telephone, and Comcast in their respective franchise areas.

Valley Springs is home to breathtaking views, open spaces, historic buildings such as the Train Depot, The Late House, and others (to be listed and included as community resources), landmarks such as Castle Rock and Valley Springs Peak/Lookout Mountain, three recreational water bodies, (New Hogan, Pardee and Camanche Reservoir).

VISIONS

The circulation system is a primary determinant of the pattern of human settlement with major impacts on air quality, animal and plant habitats, energy use, noise, etc. The Valley Springs community encourages free-flowing auto and truck traffic on the major arterials and highways in the commercial areas, while keeping residential neighborhood streets safe for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Residents envision a rerouting of Paloma Road to intersect with Highways 12/26 east of town, avoiding a residential area.

Local residents also envision other measures to create a safe, walkable town center area, such as consideration of a roundabout at the SR 12/26 intersection and/or traffic calming devices. Completion of bike paths and sidewalks, underground utilities, adequate vehicle and bicycle parking, safe pedestrian crosswalks, landscaped areas with trees, and storm drainage improvements are also desirable for town center streets.

Traffic congestion around the SR 12/26 junction often detracts from good traffic circulation. Highway officials and area residents have long considered a bypass around the downtown area, but the excessive costs involved make a highway bypass unlikely in the near future. Alternate local connector roads between SR 12 and SR 26, channeling local traffic around the SR 12/26 intersection shall be created. New connector routes will allow the majority of the residents living in the La Contenta, Gold Creek, and Rancho Calaveras areas to travel west and east on SR 12 and SR 26 without going through the SR 12/26 intersection. Yet will still allow local traffic to go through the town center area. These connector routes are critical to the development of effective Valley Springs Emergency and Evacuation plans. For that reason evacuation routes shall be clearly designated and signed.

In considering 'Circulation', local residents envision a balanced, multi-modal transportation network encouraging the use of public transit, and bike and pedestrian trails/paths. Circulation enhancements must be consistent, complementary, and required in future land use decisions. A circulation network that helps achieve a clean and sustainable environment by minimizing environmental and neighborhood impacts, all while contributing to an efficient network of services, infrastructure, utilities, emergency routes, available to all segments of the population, including people with restricted mobility. Transit corridors and stations would be near high-density residential and commercial developments, schools, hospitals, and government services. The area shall use solar technology, recycling of treated wastewater, detention of storm runoff, and energy and water efficient appliances and systems. Environmental protection is a major consideration in the planning and construction of transportation facilities.

Most growth shall occur within and on the periphery of areas with infrastructure and public services rather than random "leapfrogging". Infill development of vacant lots is encouraged so as to reduce impact on and need for additional infrastructure, services, and facilities.

We place a high priority on providing safer travel for bicyclists and pedestrians, through widening of shoulders and adding bicycle and pedestrian pathways along area highways and arterials.

Our most heavily used intersections along Highways 12 and 26 shall have left turn lanes added for safety and operational improvements. Highly visible pedestrian crosswalks with cautionary signs and flashing yellow lights will be installed where there are a significant number of pedestrians.

Safety improvements for vehicle traffic, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic shall be made at our schools. Existing problems with congestion and lack of sufficient evacuation routes will be fixed by designing new and better ingress/egress to the school sites.

The Valley Springs Community shall be serviced by arterial and local roads, with urbanized areas utilizing traffic calming devices. A minimum Level of Service (LOS) C will be maintained for all roads throughout the Community and benefit basin. Regional and major arterials will be planned for in advance, consistent with the General Plan, with later land use approvals conforming to those routes. Major local arterials shall consider the location of viewpoints, historical sites, recreational areas, etc. to accommodate visitors and residents. It is expected that utilities and other public services will generally occupy public rights of way.

Expansions of and extensions to transportation facilities, additional energy and communications improvements, expanded sewer treatment facilities and delivery systems, additional infrastructure for treating and delivering potable water and additional law enforcement and fire protection staffs which are needed to support new development, will be provided and/or paid for by the developer. Appropriate documents/contracts will be in place to ensure that these facilities and improvements occur in a timely manner, recommended as being in the initial phases of a project. This will avoid quality of life degradation.

The Valley Springs area shall have adequate water supply and wastewater facilities. The Valley Springs Public Utility District must relocate its sewage treatment plant out of the town center area or incorporate sewage treatment operation into CCWD and abandon existing VSPUD facilities. The area shall also have sufficient services such as, storm drainage and flood control, telecommunications, energy, and other infrastructure. All utilities shall be placed underground.

Surface water supplies from New Hogan Lake, groundwater basins, and water rights from the Calaveras River shall be protected for the benefit of the Valley Springs study area. Local tributaries and creeks, such as Cosgrove, Spring Valley, Indian, and Bear Creeks, shall be protected from impacts to water quality, flood control, and encroachment by and impacts of development. These creeks will also contribute to groundwater recharge which will be enhanced by preserving and creating wetlands, floodplains, recharge zones, and riparian areas.

Water resource conservation principles, 'The Ahwahnee Water Principles', will be followed in community design and implementation policies. Recycling of wastewater through the use of "dual plumbing" shall be included in the infrastructure of new development to make the best use of non-potable water supplies. Water-efficient landscape and irrigation systems shall be encouraged. We envision a highly effective water conservation campaign fully supported by business, developers, government and the general citizenry alike.

Water resource conservation, environmental protection, a reduction of environmental effects without accepting a lower quality of life in the process, providing for preservation, enhancement of natural beauty, retention of view-sheds, scenic highways/byways, minimal movement of earth for construction of transportation facilities, a communication infrastructure that will accommodate telecommuting and efficient cell phone transmission, routes for improvement of traffic flow and emergency/evacuation, and mitigation of all impacts shall all be high priority considerations.

GVSAG, through the Calaveras COG (Calaveras Council of Governments) shall coordinate with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of Forestry (CDF), and local fire and law enforcement to develop more effective transportation planning and congestion management programs. It is important to note that the Calaveras COG should be an advisor to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Circulation Topic. The Circulation Topic should embrace and support the successful implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). At such time as a Community Congestion Management Plan (CCMP) is prepared for the purpose of addressing air quality, it should be consistent with the Circulation Topic.

The Greater Valley Springs Advisory Group (GVSAG) intends to provide assistance in planning for circulation infrastructure in support of the Land Use, Housing, Open Space and Conservation Topics, including suitable locations for new schools and public facilities. Proposed changes in the aforementioned Topics may **require** changes in the Circulation Topic, and should be addressed accordingly.

(Note: Many of the above suggestion came out of the Valley Springs Community Design Workshop Summary of Results, pages 7-9, Dec. 2007)