

# El Dorado County Overview of the General Plan and County Code/Zoning Ordinances

## A. General Plan

### General Plan Purpose (*From July 2004 Page 1 Introduction El Dorado County General Plan*)

The General Plan provides for long range direction and policy for the use of land within El Dorado County. It provides a mechanism through which the County can focus on the issues of greatest local concern as well as a basis for rational decision making regarding long-term physical development. It provides for growth in an environmentally balanced manner, maintains the rural character and quality of the living environment, providing adequate infrastructure while conserving agricultural lands, forest and woodlands, and other natural resources.

The General Plan is a living document which must be updated periodically, consistent with the desires of the public, and provide for public involvement in the planning process.

State law requires the county to adopt a 'comprehensive, long-term plan for its physical development. (Government Code 65300). The County has a responsibility to develop, adopt, and maintain a legally adequate general plan pursuant to State planning law. A general plan by definition looks into the future and attempts to make land use, economic, social, and environmental choices based on assumptions and analysis of existing conditions. These choices will shape the direction of growth to achieve the goals expressed through the vision that the County has established. This General Plan was directed by a public process which defined a collective long-term vision for the future of El Dorado County.

The Plan must also reflect technical and financial realities and meet legal State planning requirements and other State and Federal mandates for the management of regional resources. The General Plan must be in conformance and compatible with numerous State laws and regional plans.

A General Plan contains official County policy regarding the location of housing, business, industry, roads, parks, and other land uses and conservation of natural resources. The legislative body of the County (Board of Supervisors) is responsible for adopting a General Plan and Zoning and other ordinances to regulate land uses and to carry out the policies of the General Plan.

State planning law (Government Code 65302) requires the General Plan must address seven subjects, such as land use and housing. El Dorado County also addresses agriculture and forestry, and economic development.

The County will actively participate with Federal and State agencies in the development and implementation of policies that affect our custom, culture, and economic stability.

## General Plan Concept Areas

Historically, growth in El Dorado County resulted in compact development patterns. Communities such as Cool, Georgetown, Mt. Aukum, and Placerville were small, mixed-use communities where residents lived, worked, and shopped.

The 2004 General Plan instead established land use Concept Areas:

1. Community Regions:

where growth will be directed and facilitated; higher levels of infrastructure and public services of all types shall be provided within Community Regions to minimize the demands on services in Rural Regions. The Capital Improvement Plan for the County and all special districts will prioritize improvements.

2. Rural Centers:

where growth and commercial activities will be directed to serve the larger Rural Regions; and

3. Rural Regions:

where resource based activities are located will be enhanced while accommodating reasonable growth and

4. Planned Communities

## General Plan Land Use Designations/Zoning Designations

Every parcel in the unincorporated areas of El Dorado County is assigned a General Plan Land Use designation and a Zoning designation. Each Concept Area (Community Region, Rural Center, or Rural Region) allows only certain Land Use Designations. In addition, the County has ordinances which regulate the use of land.

### A. Land Use

- **General Plan Land Use Designations** identify generalized permitted land uses such as Commercial (D), Multifamily Residential (MFR), Low Density Residential (LDR), Rural Residential (RR), Agricultural Lands (AL), Natural Resources (FR), Research and Development (R&D), Industrial (I), Open Space (OS), and Tourist Recreational (TR), and PF.
- **Zoning Designations.** Zoning designations identify the official zones that are established and shown on the zoning maps created in compliance with Section 17.12.020 (Zoning Maps and Zones).

Table 2-4 of the General Plan provides a matrix of Land Use Designations allowed within Zones.

## B. El Dorado County Code/Zoning Ordinances

**Zoning Ordinances.** The current Zoning Ordinance, Title 17 of the El Dorado County Code, dates back to the 1960s, with numerous amendments made over the years. Zoning ordinances provide standards for the zone. The Zoning Ordinance constitutes a portion of the County Ordinance Code. El Dorado County Development Services has begun the process to update the County Zoning Code to implement the [General Plan](#) adopted on July 19, 2004 by updating Zoning Ordinances.

**17.10.10 Title** (Prior Code Section 17.06.010). This Title shall be known as, and may be cited and referred to as, the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance or “Ordinance”.

**Purpose of Zoning Ordinance** (Prior Code Section 17.06.040)

The purpose of this Title is to protect and promote the public health, safety, peace, comfort, and general welfare of the County, and more particularly to:

- A. Implement the goals and objectives of the El Dorado County General Plan by guiding and managing the future growth of the County in accordance with adopted General Plan goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures.
- B. Direct land use in a manner that will assure the orderly development and beneficial use of the unincorporated areas of El Dorado County for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, recreation, open space, and other purposes.
- C. Manage the distribution of population in accordance with the availability of natural resources, public services, and infrastructure necessary to support the population.
  - A. Encourage growth that reflects the character and scale of the location in which it occurs and recognize that planned developments are an effective planning tool to maximize community identity and minimize impacts on surrounding properties.
  - B. Encourage economic activities that create employment opportunities that are commensurate with housing costs, maximize the economic potential of the County’s natural resources, reduce out-of-county retail purchase and employment travel, and provide housing and job opportunities for all levels of the County’s population.
  - C. Maintain and protect the County’s natural beauty and environmental quality, vegetation, air and water quality, natural landscape features, cultural resource values, and maintain the rural character and lifestyle while ensuring the economic viability critical to promoting and sustaining community identity. (Source: GP Vision Statement, item 1)
  - D. Provide for the housing needs of present and future residents of the County and allow for the construction of housing affordable to all segments of the population.

H. Reduce hazards to the public resulting from the inappropriate location, use, or design of buildings, structures, and land uses in relation to natural and built hazards and the County highway system.

Article 1 Zoning Ordinance Applicability Page 2 Draft El Dorado County Code

**CHAPTER 17.12 – ZONING MAPS** Last Revised 3/30/11

**17.12.010 Purpose:** The purpose of this Section is to identify the official zones that are established and shown on the zoning maps created in compliance with Section 17.12.020 (Zoning Maps and Zones).

**A. Official Zones.**

**1. Residential**

Residential, Multi-unit (RM)  
Residential, Single-unit (R)  
Residential, One-acre (R1A)  
Residential, Two-acre (R2A)  
Residential, Three-acre (R3A)  
Residential, Estate (RE)  
Neighborhood Service (NS)

**2. Agricultural and Resource**

Agricultural Exclusive (AE)  
Agricultural Preserve (AP)  
Limited Agricultural (LA)  
Planned Agricultural (PA)  
Agricultural Grazing (AG)  
Timber Production (TPZ)  
Forest Resource (FR)  
Rural Lands (RL)

**3. Commercial**

Commercial, Professional Office (CPO)  
Commercial, Retail and Service (C)  
Commercial, General (CG)

**4. Industrial**

Industrial (I)  
Research and Development (R&D)

**5. Special Purpose**

Recreational Facilities, Low-Intensity (RF-L)  
Recreational Facilities, High-Intensity (RF-H)  
Open Space (OS)  
Transportation Corridor (TC)

**6. Codified Community Plan**

Meyers Community Plan (MCP)

Article 2 of the El Dorado County Code provides Zones, Allowed land uses, and Zone Standards. They include:

- 17.20 Development and Land Use Approval Requirements
- 17.21 Agricultural and Resource Zones
- 17.22 Commercial Zones
- 17.23 Industrial and Research and Development Zones
- 17.24 Residential Zones
- 17.25 Special Purpose Zones

Article 4 – Chapter 17.40 of Identifies Specific Use Regulations. They include:

- 17.40.050 Agricultural Homestays
- 17.40.090 Bed and Breakfast Inns
- 17.40.160 Guest House
- 17.40.170 Home Occupations
- 17.40.180 Mixed Use Development
- 17.40.210 Outdoor Recreational Facilities
- 17.40.220 Outdoor Retail Sales
- 17.40.260 Ranch Marketing
- 17.40.370 Vacation Home Rentals
- 17.40.400 Wineries

Within Zones, we have uses which are permitted by:

Permitted Use; allowed by Right (P)  
Administrative Permit required  
Temporary Use Permit required  
Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required (Section 17.52.020), or  
use is not allowed in the Zone.

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