

Section

2



Ukiah Valley Area Plan Vision

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The vision establishes the basis for UVAP goals, policies, and implementation measures. It expresses the community's goals and aspirations on a range of issues, such as inclusiveness, conservation, character, economic opportunities, and governance. The vision for the UVAP planning area was created based primarily during public meetings held in 2006 and 2007. The following documents and events provided the framework from which the vision was drawn:

- The 2003 Tentatively Adopted Ukiah Valley Area Plan;
- Community Open House on September 25, 2006;
- Community Workshop #1 on November 4, 2006;

- Focus group meetings between October and December 2006;
- Board of Supervisors, City Council and Planning Commissions Joint Study Session #1 on January 10, 2007;
- Community Workshop #2 on March 10, 2007;

Additional refinement of the vision statements occurred at subsequent meetings with the Board of Supervisors concurring at their August 21, 2007 hearing, to select the Preferred Land Use alternative. Following this selection, staff worked to finalize the document format for public review and subsequent hearings for adoption.

VISION FOR THE UKIAH VALLEY



The future of the Ukiah Valley is of special interest to many people. It is the commercial heart of Mendocino County, seat of government, and home to many of its businesses. Situated at the crossroads of US 101 and California State Highways 20 and 253, the Ukiah Valley is a destination to many residents outside of the valley and seen by thousands more who pass by on a daily basis. But most importantly, the Ukiah Valley is home to many of this County's residents, each and everyone of them having a stake in the future of this Valley.

Most residents, as well as those who conduct business in this area, have ideas on how development should happen, what business types should be pursued, what resources need to be protected, and how the valley should be governed. Taken collectively, these individual opinions have been grouped together to form the following vision for the community:

The Ukiah Valley is a special place to us now and we wish to preserve those aesthetic qualities such as its small town nature, historic buildings, and surrounding views of the hills and agricultural lands that give the Valley its character. Equally important to many residents is that the community retains the peace and quiet that comes from its rural setting. We want new development to be mindful of the community's existing characteristics when new projects are proposed so that they are not out of character when they are ultimately constructed. We desire our community to remain as compact as possible and prefer that our communities grow inward and upward before expanding. Finally, we would like to see our heavily traveled routes and major gateways to the community beautified to present a better appearance to both travelers and residents alike.

Growth can be positive for the community if properly planned for. We believe it is important to take steps to ensure that proper infrastructure investments occur in a timely manner. By coordinating road, water, sewer, and other infrastructure improvements before development occurs, we can be sure that it can be implemented concurrent with development and not in response to it. Just as we want new buildings to relate to the existing structures, we want newly constructed transportation networks to link to existing routes and reflect the transportation needs and desires of the community. We prefer that improvements that make it easier for people to walk, bike, or take transit to and from their destinations be prioritized over new road construction.

Just as important to us is a stable, community-based economy. We envision an economy that promotes local business ownership and an employment base to retain capital within the community. We support diversification in our local economy so that we are not overly dependent on only a handful of employers or industry types. At the same time, we would like to leverage this area's resource and production strengths, especially if it adds value to goods sold elsewhere, and stand ready to support them through promotional marketing efforts. We encourage our employers to be conscious of environmental impacts from their operations. In conjunction with educational opportunities and improvements to the job base, it is hoped that our efforts will help create a community that will encourage the valley's youth to remain.

One of the Ukiah Valley's most important shared goals is to provide the community with a range of housing types and social, cultural, and recreational amenities. We strongly believe in having a community with a range of housing options for all ages and socioeconomic groups. Likewise, having a wide range of cultural and recreational facilities is important to maintaining the quality of life that drew many of us to this Valley. These facilities will also provide space for special events and gatherings that help draw us together as a community.

Preservation of the Ukiah Valley's natural and agricultural resources are important to us as well. Part of what gives this Valley its unique character is its connection to the agricultural and open space lands surrounding the individual communities that are located in the valley. We believe these lands should be protected for the health and well being of future generations and that any decision to develop these lands not be taken lightly. We also believe that development should be reconsidered or avoided in those areas with known hazard issues.

Likewise, we envision making a transition away from unsustainable practices. We are supportive of measures that will help reduce our

dependence on non-renewable resources for the transportation of people, goods, and food, improve the efficiency of our homes and businesses, increase the availability of renewable energy, and increase our self-reliance and resilience. These measures should be implemented by our community, businesses, and the government itself. As a matter of practice, we believe our businesses should evaluate the sustainability of their operations so that they are better positioned to continue carrying on as conditions change.

Finally, no planning effort can be successful in an area with multiple jurisdictions without some form of cooperation. The Ukiah Valley already functions as a single community in many respects. We believe that both the County and City should take a broader planning approach when considering development proposals and consider the costs and benefits to the entire valley. Both jurisdictions should collaborate with



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each other on planning matters and sharing tax revenues in a more equitable manner to avoid making poor land use decisions based on fiscal concerns.

Taken together, the overall vision text and statements represent the direction for revising the UVAP and set forth guidelines to direct future policies and implementation measures. This framework responds to the needs, values and desires of community members, while taking into account the physical, social and economic opportunities and constraints.

VISION CONCEPTS AND SPECIFICS

Maintaining an Attractive Community

An aesthetically pleasing community that stays true to its small-town roots is of paramount concern to Ukiah Valley residents. This widely expressed concept is reflected in numerous vision statements that collectively address the community's viewpoints on the shape, location and scale of new development as well as the protection of the Valley's rural areas.

Section Four, Community Design contains many goals and policies that pertain to maintaining an attractive community. Additional policies, in Section Nine, Open Space and Conservation and Section Ten, Historical and Archeological Preservation, are also responsive to the vision statements under this concept.

Vision: Aesthetic qualities are incorporated into the design and construction of the community.

- Design review guidelines for development projects maintain and enhance the visual character of the Valley.

- Usable open space and common spaces are provided and protected within developed communities.
- Landscaping is a significant component of all development and redevelopment projects.

Vision: The scenic viewsheds of the Valley are preserved.

Vision: The natural beauty of the Ukiah Valley is conserved and enhanced and viewsapes of the forested western hills are protected.

Vision: Development includes mixed-uses that reflect the rural and small-town character of the Ukiah Valley.

Vision: Communities have a compact urban form surrounded by open space and agricultural land.

Vision: The agricultural lands needed to enhance economic vitality and the sustained identity of Ukiah as a rural agricultural community are protected from incompatible land uses or development.

Note:

For additional policies that may apply, please see the County of Mendocino General Plan, adopted August 2009.

Vision: Historical buildings and spaces that create a sense of place are preserved.

Appropriate Infrastructure Investments

Another consistent concept expressed by Ukiah Valley residents was making the appropriate and timely infrastructure investments needed to support growth. Of particular focus were non-vehicular transportation-related investments. There was strong support in coordinating infrastructure improvements with development so that one does not occur without the other.

Sections Five through Seven discuss goals and policies pertaining to transportation, water, and energy related infrastructure systems.

Vision: Construction of infrastructure is coordinated with planning for development.

Vision: Future growth is managed to ensure that adequate transportation, sewer, water, and other facilities will be available prior to development.

Vision: The pedestrian environment includes amenities such as sidewalks, trails, and paths that are safe and continuous, to encourage more walking.

Vision: Communities consist of human-scale development that has inviting and engaging street frontage and mixed-use development to promote walking.

Vision: Pedestrian and bicycle routes provide continuity between neighborhoods and community/village centers, linking them to each other and other local destinations, such as schools, parks, and commercial centers.

Vision: Connectivity via transit, bicycle routes and traffic management provides for ease of use.

Building a Stable, Community-Based Economy

A stable local economy that builds on the area's strengths, provides a range of employment opportunities, and reinvests locally is a concept expressed by many individuals. Several vision statements encapsulate this concept, focusing on adding value to existing goods or services, business attraction and retention, and "branding" strategies that seek to improve the area's visibility to consumers in other areas.

Section Three, Land Use, contains the goals and policies that address issues pertaining to building a stable local economy.

Vision: Viable businesses that add value to local products, services and resources already found or processed in the Ukiah Valley.



Timber processing at Mendocino Redwood Company.

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Vision: Local business development and employment opportunities emphasize local ownership of businesses in order to keep capital and growth within the community.

- Programs are in place that nurture growth and prosperity of the Valley job base.
- Characteristics that support local substantive businesses are recognized, enhanced, and maintained over time.
- Independent businesses are attracted to the area.

Vision: The high quality of environmental and community standards are maintained and



Halloween in Downtown Ukiah.

improved as a means of attracting and keeping large and small employers.

Vision: Ample educational and employment opportunities encourage the community's youth to remain in the Ukiah Valley.

Community Development and Amenities

Having a community that is rich in opportunities for affordable housing, recreational opportunities, cultural events, and access to health care is important to many in the Ukiah Valley. Many vision statements under this concept focused on improving the access to such things as natural resource areas or health care or increasing the range of housing opportunities within the community.

The corresponding goals and policies for the vision statements that focus on community development needs and amenities can be found in Sections Three, Land Use; Eight, Health and Safety; and Eleven, Parks and Recreation.

Vision: A diverse mix of housing types meets the needs of residents of different ages, income levels, and social needs within the valley.

Vision: The community's ability to expand its population base is supported by compact, infill development and mixed use development.

Vision: Create town/village centers that provide mixed use opportunities that support community life with infill and mixed use; focusing on the existing small town centers of Calpella, the Forks, and Talmage.

Vision: Cooperation with the City and other entities ensures the continued availability and improvement of a variety of parks, recreational facilities, and points of river access.

Vision: The community has ample access to the natural resources of the Valley, particularly the Russian River, for cultural and recreational uses.

Vision: The community's needs for recreation, cultural resources, and on-going education are met.

Vision: Quality and affordable health care is accessible within the community.

Vision: Events, gathering places, and shared facilities provide a sense of community.

Protection of Natural and Agricultural Resources

Preserving the rural and agricultural lands of the Ukiah Valley and its surrounding hillsides is very important to many individuals. During the public process, the protection of these natural and agrarian resources ranked highly in many response cards and surveys. Given the constrained water situation and periodic droughts, water conservation also was frequently mentioned by many.

The goals and policies that these vision statements support can be located in Section Six, Water and Section Nine, Open Space and Conservation.

Vision: The area's natural resources are maintained and enhanced by balancing protection, conservation, replenishment and use.

- Natural resource guidelines direct the use in future planning and development decisions.
- Water supplies are protected from adverse impacts.
- Air quality is of a high standard.

Vision: The open space, hillsides, stream courses, and indigenous flora and fauna are conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

Vision: Water conservation, reclamation, and additional storage projects allow for the communities' water needs to be met.

Vision: Existing agriculturally zoned lands in the Ukiah Valley are protected from incompatible land uses and development.

- The irreversibility of conversion from agricultural to other uses is recognized.
- All such conversions are subject to a citizen review process with public hearings.
- The Ukiah Valley Unified School District works cooperatively with citizens and organizations to ensure that the siting and design of schools and local State and Federal facilities minimizes the use of, and impact on, agricultural lands.

Vision: Natural and man-made hazards are avoided or mitigated when planning development, minimizing potential conflicts.

Sustainable Practices

Using energy and water in a more sustainable manner while generating less waste and pollution was a vision expressed by a number of individuals. Both the direct reduction of energy use by improved energy efficiency as well as creating a land use and circulation system that avoids or reduces the use of the private vehicle were offered as visions for the future by community members.

Land Use and Circulation goals and policies that promote the use of non-vehicular forms of transportation can be found in Sections Three on Land Use and Five on Circulation. Methods to reduce energy and water use are discussed in Sections Seven and Six, respectively.

Vision: A diverse and healthy natural environment is sustained.

Vision: Energy and water efficient construction strategies and technology to minimize impacts to the local infrastructure and environment are incorporated into the building code.

Vision: Ukiah and Mendocino County leaders are educated in the development of businesses and practices that conserve resources and avoid needless consumption and waste.

- Make sustainable business practices central in the County's program to solicit businesses for the community.
- Provide incentives, wherever possible, to promote environmentally responsible activities, both business and personal.
- The County models the sustainable use of resources which includes investing in comprehensive conservation of energy, minimizing polluting activities, and avoiding needless consumption and waste.

Vision: The use of nonrenewable resources is minimized.

- Public transportation and services are within walking distance to neighborhoods, which prevent needless vehicle use and pollution.
- The use of fossil fuels is minimized to the greatest feasible extent in all activities, including investment in low and zero emission vehicles.
- Encourage the use of low and zero emission alternatives to fossil fuels for all modes of transportation.

Vision: Ways to replace wasteful practices that imprudently use resources are developed and programs to reduce motor vehicle dependency are in place.

Vision: Sustainability principles and techniques to promote a compact urban form are incorporated into the County codes and guidelines.

Comprehensive Planning Efforts

There was recognition that an area with multiple jurisdictions would need to take a cooperative approach to planning for the Valley's future. This was reflected in often-repeated suggestions that the County and the City cooperate more to solve pressing housing, infrastructure, and economic/fiscal concerns. The last part of Section Three on Land Use discusses collaborative approaches to planning to be taken by the various agencies that have jurisdiction in the Ukiah Valley.

Vision: The Ukiah Valley is understood to be one community with collaborative decision-making between County and City agencies.

- Planning is approached as a regional issue that affects residents, regardless of political jurisdictions, that share a Valley-wide vision.

Vision: Specific criteria for project approval and the permitting process are clear and understandable.

- Develop land development codes and regulations that streamline the permitting process.
- Permitting requirements are coordinated with all other regulatory agencies.
- City and County policies are consistent to encourage business development.

Vision: An ongoing process of community involvement is in place for the purposes of providing input and monitoring the success of the Area Plan.

- Residents, including under-represented community members, are engaged in the planning and policy-making processes.