

Chapter 3: Public Facilities and Services

Introduction and Setting

Public facilities and services within Nevada County are provided by a multitude of agencies. In addition to the County, services are provided by school districts, fire districts, water districts, sewer districts, public utility districts, park districts and other single purpose districts, as well as by federal and state agencies.

Nevada County provides a wide range of services through the various offices and departments: Board of Supervisors, Administrator's Office; Assessor's Office; Clerk/Recorder's Office; Public Health Department; Mental Health Department; Services for Transportation, Aviation and Recreation (STAR); Department of Transportation; Department of Planning; Data Processing; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Personnel; Cultural Services; Veterans Service Officer; Air Pollution Control; Department of Social Services; County Counsel; Probation Department; District Attorney; Sheriff's Department; Library Systems; Building Inspector; Department of Sanitation; Environmental Health Department; Agricultural Commission; Community Action Agency; Municipal Court; Superior Court; Treasurer/Tax Collection; Office of Education; and Commission on Aging. Most of the County's departments and offices are located at the Eric W. Rood Center in Nevada City, while the County Library and County Jail are located on adjacent sites. Other County facilities are located in the Grass Valley/Nevada City area and in Truckee. In 1993, the County had approximately 1,000 full time staff positions, and occupied nearly 290,000 square feet of office space.

In addition to the services provided by the County, major public services provided by other districts and agencies are water systems, sanitary sewer systems, fire protection, parks and recreation, cemetery, and in the eastern county, airport and hospital. (Schools are discussed separately in Chapter 7: Education.)

Availability of a reliable public water supply is necessary to support long-term development in urban areas. Both eastern and western Nevada County are blessed in most years with water good in both quantity and quality. In the eastern County, the primary purveyors are Truckee Donner Public Utility District, the Donner Summit Public Utility District, Donner Lake Utility Company

Chapter 3: Public Facilities and Services Element

and Glenshire Mutual Water Company. The western County is served primarily by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and the cities of Nevada City and Grass Valley.

In the western county, water development began during the gold rush era. Water was diverted into mining ditches from the rivers that flowed from high in the Sierra Nevada to the east. As farming replaced mining activities, the mining ditches were extended to the west in the lower elevations. In the western County, those early mining ditches formed the backbone of the Nevada Irrigation District which supplies surface water to its domestic, industrial and agricultural customer. The major source of their water supply is from approximately 70 square miles of the upper reaches of the Middle and South Forks of the Yuba River and the Bear River. Outside of the existing service areas, water users depend primarily on ground water through individual or small systems.

In the eastern portion of the County, the water purveyors depend primarily on ground water from the Martis Valley Aquifer and springs to supply domestic, commercial and industrial users. It is estimated that 1,000,000 acre-feet (AF) of ground water is located in the Martis Valley aquifer. Recharge is estimated at 18,000 AF per year with a safe yield of 18,000 AF.

The City of Nevada City provides water primarily within the City limits, with the majority of Nevada City water originating from Little Deer Creek water rights. Grass Valley's source of water is raw water purchased from NID.

The Donner Summit Public Utility District provides domestic water to customers in the Soda Springs area from sources at Lake Angela and Lake Mary. The Donner Lake Utility Company serves customers around Donner Lake from springs at the north side of Donner Lake, wells and Donner Lake itself.

The Glenshire Mutual Water Company (GMWC), formed to serve the Glenshire subdivision, is supplied entirely by ground water wells.

Public sanitary sewer systems in the western part of the County are provided by the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City and the Nevada County Sanitation District No. 1. The Grass Valley and Nevada City sewage treatment plants were both constructed around 1950 and discharge into Deer Creek and Wolf Creek. From the 1970's through 1992, the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City continued to expand or upgrade their plans in incremental steps to provide capacity to growth within the existing boundaries and areas that were annexed into the districts, and to meet more stringent discharge standards. Both plants have very limited available capacity although the City of Grass Valley has long-range plans to expand its capacity to serve a population of over 25,000.

In areas outside the cities' service areas, the County of Nevada, through the Nevada County Sanitation District No. 1, provided the needed mechanism to develop sewage collection and treatment facilities. The Nevada County Department of Sanitation operates and maintains the sewage collection and treatment facilities for areas outside of Grass Valley and Nevada City constructed by the Sanitation District. Currently there are nine systems or zones within the Nevada County Sanitation District No. 1. These zones are Lake Wildwood, Lake of the Pines,

Kingsbury Greens, Gold Creek, Penn Valley, Mountain Lakes Estates, North San Juan, Cascade Shores, and Glenbrook (which contracts with the City of Grass Valley for treatment and disposal). The available capacity in these systems vary, but collectively they have only enough capacity to support less than 1,500 additional connections.

The Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency (TTSA) was created in 1972 to provide wastewater treatment services for the Truckee area as well as portions of Placer County, including north and west shores of Lake Tahoe and Squaw Valley and Alpine Valley. The member districts are the Truckee Sanitary District, North Tahoe Public Utility District, Tahoe City Public Utility District, Alpine Springs Water District and Squaw Valley County Water District. In 1978, an advanced wastewater treatment plant was completed on the bank of the Truckee River approximately one mile east of downtown Truckee. TTSA expects that expansion of the existing plant will not be needed until the year 2005. The Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) serves customers in the Soda Springs area. The sewage treatment system currently treats an average of 520,000 GPD with an additional 300,000 GPD available.

In the early 1970s, the County undertook a study for a Regional Wastewater Collection/Treatment System in the western part of the County. The recommended project included approximately 18 miles of new sewer mains and a stabilization pond wastewater treatment facility southwest of Grass Valley in the French Ravine area. The recommended system was not implemented, possibly because at the time the availability of 87.5 percent grant funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California State Water Resources Control Board favored continuing to add to the existing facility units and capacity.

As the population increases and as surface water discharge requirements established by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board are increased, solutions other than a discharge to the surface waters will need to be addressed. The costs to communities to implement new or expanded sewage collection and treatment systems will be much greater than it has been in the past. With the elimination of the Federal and State Clean Water Grants, local communities will face the true and full cost of growth without the old subsidy.

There are currently 10 separate fire districts that serve Nevada County, including 49er, Higgins Area, North San Juan, Rough and Ready, Truckee, Peardale-Chicago Park, Penn Valley, Nevada County Consolidated, Watt Park, and Ophir Hill. Eight of the districts report deficiencies, primarily in staff, response time and equipment. Two districts have inadequate space for office functions.

There are three recreation and park districts in Nevada County: Western Gateway Regional and Bear River in western County and Truckee Donner in eastern County. Western Gateway operates the Western Gateway Park, a large park offering a variety of recreational facilities. Truckee Donner operates a number of park and recreational facilities, primarily within the Town of Truckee. Bear River is a new District and currently operates the Magnolia Sports Complex in conjunction with the Pleasant Ridge School District.

Nevada County owns no lands available for public recreation other than the Western Gateway Park, which the County leases to the Western Gateway Regional Recreation and Park District.

Chapter 3: Public Facilities and Services Element

With the exception of the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency, none of the service providers appear to have significant capacity in existing facilities to accommodate additional development, and a majority of the providers reported deficiencies in existing service. Although most of the reported deficiencies were in staff or equipment, rather than facilities or sites, the future ability to provide adequate levels of service will also involve needs for expanded facilities and new sites.

Based upon the desirable Level of Service (LOS) standards for County facilities contained in Policy 3.10 of this General Plan the County administrative, jail, and library facilities provide adequate levels of service for the existing population. However, the recreation facilities provided by the County are seriously deficient in meeting level of service standards for County facilities. Based upon the standard of 3.0 acres of land per 1,000 population for County parks serving regional needs, the County would need approximately 400 acres of land to meet the LOS standard. The County owned land at Western Gateway Park, totaling approximately 80 acres, would satisfy only 20 percent of the need. However, because it is leased to a local park district, it should be considered to serve primarily local needs. Thus the deficiency in County parks is close to 100 percent of the current need.

While development impact fees provide a significant means of funding for facilities to serve future growth, such fees are not intended to provide funding to solve existing deficiencies. Therefore, providing an adequate level of service for existing development will require funding from other sources. While grants from State and Federal Agencies may be available in very limited cases, the County itself would need to provide the majority of funds, either by allocating funds from existing sources or by obtaining new funding through additional taxing authority.

Further discussion of public facilities and services, including criteria for future facility needs, is contained in Section 6: Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure of Volume 2 of the Nevada County General Plan; and in Section 11 of the Nevada County Master Environmental Inventory, which is part of Volume 3 of the Nevada County General Plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Provision of adequate public services to a diverse and growing county and the correlation of service needs with economic and population growth are fundamental to the long-term development of a balanced, self-sustaining community. Also, because the services are the responsibility of many different providers, there is need for coordination in planning and provision of service among many different public agencies.

Additional goals, policies and objectives related to public facilities and services are located in Chapter 1: Land Use; Chapter 2: Economic Development; Chapter 4: Circulation; Chapter 5: Recreation; Chapter 7: Education; Chapter 8: Housing; Chapter 9: Noise; Chapter 10: Safety; Chapter 11: Water; and Chapter 16: Agriculture.

Goal 3.1

Provide for public facilities and services commensurate with development type and intensity.

Objective 3.1

Public facilities and services shall be directed as follows: a higher level to *Community Regions* and a lower level to *Rural Regions*.

Directive Policies

Policy 3.1

The levels of service and provision of public facilities in *Community Regions* shall be based upon improving the capacity of public facilities to serve higher levels of development directed to *Community Regions*. The levels of service and provision of public facilities in *Rural Regions* shall be based upon limiting the amount of development to ensure that adequate facilities are available. Planning for future public facilities and services in *Community and Rural Regions* shall be based upon the following criteria:

COMMUNITY REGIONS

- a. public water and sewer
- b. retention of existing emergency response time
- c. intercommunity-transit

RURAL REGIONS

Rural Centers

- a. public or on-site community water and sewer systems
- b. decreased emergency response times

Rural Areas

- a. individual septic and wells or on-site community water and sewer systems
- b. decreased emergency response time
- c. limited transit

Policy 3.2

The County shall encourage development within *Community Regions* where higher density development can more efficiently be provided with a full range of public facilities and services.

Policy 3.3

The land use pattern reflected in the Nevada County General Plan Land Use Map is correlated with the future provision of public facilities to adequately serve said land uses based upon the service

criteria and levels of service identified in Policy 3.1 and Policy 3.10. All General Plan amendments shall be required to show that the public facilities and services necessary to serve the proposed development are also correlated with the future provision of facilities and services according to the same criteria.

Policy 3.4 To enable public services to be provided with the greatest degree of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, development within *Community Regions* shall be encouraged at the maximum density under the respective land use designations shown on the General Plan Land Use maps, consistent with environmental, infrastructure and other site constraints.

Policy 3.5 Within Community Regions with existing public sewer and water systems, all new residential land divisions shall be required to connect to public sanitary sewer and water systems. Temporary use of private on-site systems may be allowed where public systems are not yet available but where a specific improvement plan and funding mechanisms are in place. A legally binding mechanism shall be required to insure that the development will connect to the public systems when available, and that the private systems will be discontinued.

Objective 3.2

Ensure that the capacity, availability, financing, and capability of public services and facilities are sufficient to meet levels of service requirements for development.

Action Policies

Policy 3.6 The County shall prepare a long-range Capital Facilities Plan for all facilities to be included in the development impact fee program, as well as facilities to solve existing deficiencies, including a funding and phasing program for provision of facilities in not less than five-year increments.

Policy 3.7 Based upon the long-range Capital Facilities Plan, the County shall prepare and adopt a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for facilities for which it is responsible, and shall encourage the other affected agencies to also adopt a Five-Year CIP for facilities for which they are responsible.

In preparing the CIP, the County shall give priority to improvements which resolve or decrease an existing deficiency. To the maximum extent feasible, improvement projects shall support development of the following:

- a. employment generating uses
- b. affordable housing
- c. circulation/safety needs

Policy 3.8

Based upon the adopted level of service standards, the County shall adopt a comprehensive development fee impact program meeting the requirements of AB 1600 and SB 327 in order to offset the costs of growth-related infrastructure and facilities based upon buildout of the General Plan.

The County shall impose comprehensive development fees in amounts sufficient to offset the costs identified as the appropriate share of the public facility improvements necessary to serve future development. The comprehensive development fee structure shall ensure that future growth fully mitigates its direct and cumulative impacts upon the County.

Policy 3.9

The County shall formally approach the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City to consider jointly undertaking a long-range feasibility study for a Regional Wastewater Treatment System to serve the *Community Regions* in the western part of the County. The study should identify possible options for the future development of a regional system with consideration given to its long-term effect on water quality and ability to meet future water quality standards; long-term cost in relation to expansion and upgrading of existing systems; and potential financing for a regional system.

Directive Policies

Policy 3.10

The following specific level of service standards shall be applicable to *Community Regions* and *Rural Regions* for public facilities which the County has responsibility for providing:

Overall County Services and Human Services

- a. For *Community and Rural Regions*:
2,500 square feet for each increase of 1,000 persons in county-wide population

County Jail

- b. For *Community and Rural Regions*
1 inmate bed per 1,000 of the county-wide population

County Library

- c. For *Community* and *Rural Regions*:
300 square feet for each increase of 1,000 persons in county-wide population

County Parks (Regional)

- d. For *Community and Rural Regions*:
3.0 acres of land for each increase of 1,000 persons in county-wide population
(Local parks to be provided by municipalities or local districts; Regional parks may be separate from local parks or an expansion of such facilities)

County roads (other than local roads, as identified on the County Road Functional Classification Plan).

Recognize existing LOS, including segment and intersection deficiencies, and at a minimum, maintain the following minimum LOS:

- e. For *Community Regions*
Level of Service (LOS) “D”, except where the existing LOS is less than "D". In those situations, do not let the LOS further decline.
- f. For *Rural Regions*
Level of Service (LOS) “C”, except where the existing LOS is less than "C". In those situations, do not let the LOS further decline.

These standards shall be used by the County as a basis for the long range Capital Facilities Plan.

Policy 3.11

Implement a comprehensive and aggressive funding program that ensures that all Federal, State and local funding sources are identified, analyzed and used to the maximum extent possible in meeting the funding needs in providing public facilities.

Policy 3.12

Encourage all other districts serving the County (including school, utility, cemetery, park, and fire districts) to develop and to regularly update a Master Service Plan based on realistic growth which specifies a district’s policies and requirements for facilities based upon buildout of the County’s General Plan. The County shall

review all proposed facility sites in the districts' Facilities Master Plans for consistency with the General Plan.

Policy 3.13

The County shall encourage all affected districts within the County to adopt an impact fee program to offset the costs identified as the appropriate share of the capital improvements necessary to serve future development.

Policy 3.14

In order to ensure that capacity of public facilities is coordinated with the timing of development the County shall require for any development requiring a discretionary permit, and for any General Plan amendment, a determination of the adequacy of public facilities, or an impact fee program, to serve the proposed development.

The adequacy of public facilities shall be determined upon the available capacity in existing facilities, plus the net additional capacity to support new development resulting from construction of the improvements in the Five-Year CIP of the County and other affected local agencies, the County 5-Year Road Improvement Program, and the State Transportation Improvement Program.

Additional capacity provided by such improvements to resolve existing deficiencies shall not be counted in the basis for determining capacity available to serve new development. Where adequate public facilities are planned, but not yet available to serve a proposed development, the County may require that mitigating measures be undertaken by the proponent of the development. Such measures shall not be in lieu of development impact fees; such measures may include, but are not limited to, alteration in the timing or phasing of the proposed development, construction of temporary improvements, or construction of off-site improvements necessary to serve that development.

Policy 3.15

The County shall encourage and may require, where appropriate and feasible, that mechanisms be provided as a condition of discretionary project approval to facilitate the funding of public improvements which are attributable to that project. Such mechanisms may include, but not be limited to, creation of an independent or dependent entity (independent district, dependent district, county service area, community service district).

Policy 3.16

Where community sewer or water systems are installed or required as a condition of development, there shall be a contract, development agreement, formation of an area service district, or

Chapter 3: Public Facilities and Services Element

other legally enforceable mechanism to insure long term maintenance of the community system.

Policy 3.17

The use of community sewer and/or water systems are encouraged where such systems are economically feasible for the intended service area.

Policy 3.18

All proposed land divisions shall be connected to a public water supply if the initial and long-term cost of extending the public water system to serve the land division is less than the installation of individual water supply system.

Policy 3.19

Maintain the existing requirement for minimum lot sizes for single-family residential uses based upon type of water and sewer facilities as follows:

- a. Public domestic treated water and public sewage system - 10,000 square feet, except for low/moderate income housing where the lot size may be reduced.
- b. Public domestic treated water and individual sewage disposal system - 1.5 acres.
- c. Groundwater well and public sewerage system - 1.5 acres.
- d. Groundwater well and individual sewage disposal system - 3 acres.

These minimum requirements may be increased where other considerations, including adverse soil, geologic or topographic conditions may warrant larger parcel sizes.

For clustered development consistent with policy 1.18, the following standards shall apply:

Maintain minimum lot size standards sufficient to maintain adequate area for the appropriation of water and disposal of sewage and ensure the continued protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

Availability of public treated water and/or sewerage facilities shall not be solely used as justification to increase residential density. Many other factors, as provided for throughout the Plan, shall be used to determine the appropriate density for any given area.

Policy 3.19A

For all discretionary development, increases in stormwater runoff due to new development, which could result in flood damage to

downstream residences, commercial, industrial, active natural resource management uses (i.e., farming, ranching, mining, timber harvesting, etc.), public facilities, roads, bridges, and utilities shall not be permitted. Required retention/detention facilities, where necessary, shall be designed such that the water surface returns to its base elevation within 24 hours after the applicable storm event. The sizing of such facilities, when needed, shall be based upon the protection of downstream facilities.

Policy 3.19B The County shall strongly encourage the use of geographically-limited independent or dependent entities (Community Service Area, County Service Area, special district or equivalent entities) for the purpose of maintaining drainage facilities to handle stormwater runoff.

Policy 3.19C For all discretionary projects, the County shall require that maintenance of all onsite drainage facilities and all offsite facilities constructed as part of the project is assured through a permanent, legally-enforceable mechanism such as, but not limited to, a CSA or CSD.

Policy 3.19D Discretionary development south of the Truckee River (excluding the Glenshire/Meadows area) that would result in a net increase in traffic at Highway 267 and Commercial Row, shall not occur until the Highway 267 Bypass is in place. This restriction shall expire by the year 2000 unless the Town of Truckee has provided for other transportation improvements which provide relief to Highway 267.

Objective 3.3

Emphasis shall be placed upon the development of sustainable job-generating uses when extending public facilities and services within *Community Regions*.

Directive Policy

Policy 3.20 The County will consider the creation of programs that will allow the use of “recapture” provisions to recover costs through subsequent connections for planned extension of infrastructure to new job generating land uses, and will encourage the use of such programs by other public or quasi-public agencies.

See: Policy 3.7

Objective 3.4

Develop and operate public facilities and services in an environmentally sound way.

Chapter 3: Public Facilities and Services Element

Directive Policies

- Policy 3.21** Where water, sewer, and other underground utilities are extended through undeveloped natural areas, consideration shall be given to restoration of areas of cut, back-fill, and grading. All surfaces shall be revegetated with appropriate ground covers and plant materials.
- Policy 3.22** The County shall encourage the purveyors of aerial public utilities to install said utilities underground, pursuant to PUC rules.
- Policy 3.23** The visual affects of telephone transmission lines and high voltage utility transmission lines shall be mitigated wherever feasible so that they are inconspicuous from Scenic Highways and viewsheds.
- Policy 3.24** The County, in cooperation with other affected agencies, shall continue to implement the County Integrated Waste Management Plan. Preparation of a comprehensive long-range facilities plan for the County shall consider the need for transfer stations, composting sites, hazardous waste collection facilities, and other solid waste disposal facilities.

Action Policy

- Policy 3.25** It is recognized that for the immediate future, solid waste is being disposed of outside the County. However, this method of disposal may not be viable in the long term. Therefore, the County will develop a long-range plan for disposal of solid waste.

Objective 3.5

Develop a telecommunication program that ensures community access.

Directive Policy

- Policy 3.26** In approval of all proposed land divisions, the County shall consider the need for easements to provide for potential access to telecommunication systems, and require that such easements be provided where necessary.

Action Policy

- Policy 3.27** Standards for telecommunications facilities shall be included in the Comprehensive Site Development Standards, including but not limited to standards for setback, screening, angle of sight requirements, and visual compatibility.

*Also see: Chapter 1: Land Use
Policy 1.17*