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Introduction

The General Plan is the foundational land use document for the City of Folsom and includes goals, policies, and programs on a wide range of topics. This introduction describes the structure and purpose of the Folsom General Plan and it introduces the concepts, issues, and themes of the General Plan.

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DRAFT

A Blueprint for Folsom's Future

Folsom's story is one of growth and prosperity. When Folsom incorporated in 1946, development was largely restricted to the Historic District. By 1980, 35 years later, development had expanded east and north of the Historic District on both sides of the American River and the city limits had expanded to most of their present day extent. When the last General Plan was adopted in 1988, Folsom had gone through a massive expansion; the city grew from a population of 5,800 in 1970 to 23,000 in 1988 – quadrupling in size in less than 20 years. The previous General Plan guided Folsom's continued growth for almost 30 years. Now, in 2016, Folsom has over 77,000 residents and has nearly filled its city limits north of Highway 50. The City annexed 3,585 acres south of Highway 50 in 2012. Growth and development in this area will define Folsom's next phase.

Folsom is remarkable in that it grew so rapidly, yet still retains its small town charm. Folsom has many urban assets, including region-leading shopping, a walkable and historic downtown, and high-capacity transit while still offering residents the parks, open space, and great schools associated with smaller communities.

With a strong history and a wealth of amenities, Folsom's future trajectory is moving toward continued prosperity. This 2035 General Plan is designed to protect and enhance Folsom's assets, guide Folsom's growth in the area south of Highway 50, strengthen existing neighborhoods, and provide a cohesive vision for the Folsom of 2035.

Major Trends

The City of Folsom last updated its General Plan in 1988. The world has changed in many ways since then. In 1988 the World Wide Web had not yet been created. Many of today's young workers were not born. This new General Plan responds to the trends of today as well as those that may affect the city in the future. By identifying trends we can ensure that any goals, policies, and implementation programs are timely and flexible enough for a changing world. The trends described below cover the demographic and economic shifts that may define Folsom today and into the future.



Trend #1: The Changing Nature of the American Household



An apartment over a garage may be the perfect size for a growing number of small households.

The nuclear family has been on the decline for decades, and the ‘traditional family’ – mom, dad, and two kids – is now a minority. During the significant growth period for American suburbs – the 1970s – the nuclear family made up 40 percent of new households, whereas today it accounts for less than 20 percent of new households. According to an August 2013 report by the US Census, 66 percent of American households in 2012 were family households, down from 81 percent in 1970. Households growing the most include single women (including single mothers), domestic partners, and empty nesters.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

How does Folsom address this shift? Do we continue to plan and build for a shrinking segment of the housing market – single family homes – or encourage new housing types in the city? At any rate, new housing types should respect the local character and building intensities.

Trend #2: Driving Less



Many young people prefer to use bikes instead of cars. In some U.S. cities, over 4 percent of all commute trips are made by bike.

Today’s young people are buying and driving cars less than previous generations. People 16 to 24 years of age have been obtaining driver’s licenses more slowly than any generation since record keeping began. If car ownership rates by this generation were at the same levels as they were prior to 2000, there would be 5 million more cars on the road. The Federal Government’s National Household Travel Survey recorded a 23 percent drop between 2001 and 2009 in annual miles traveled by people ages 16 to 34.

Previous generations placed a higher importance on vehicles as a part of their identity, while today’s young people are connected virtually, reducing the need for a car as a means of expression. For some young people, the ability to be social without driving somewhere outweighs the costs associated with owning and driving a car.

The transportation needs of this generation have been replaced by car-sharing networks, bike-sharing networks, an increased willingness to use mass transit, and residence selection based on an ability to walk to necessary services.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

In light of these changes, Folsom sits at an important ‘intersection.’ With three light rail stations and a great recreational bicycle network, Folsom already has some of the necessary facilities to appeal to young people. In the future, Folsom could direct more resources, policy emphasis, and capital

improvements to transit-oriented development around the transit stops and expanding the bicycle network to serve commuters. These changes could be supported by more dense, mixed-use nodes that would support living without the need for a private automobile.

Trend #3: The Changing Face of Employment

Technologies such as email, video conferencing, and portable computing make it easier for today's office workers to do their jobs remotely. This workplace technology revolution means less space is needed in physical offices and large office campuses. Workers may not need a dedicated office or desk, but may need access to meeting spaces for collaboration with other remote workers. These meeting spaces could exist within an office building, but today many workers may prefer meeting at a coffee shop in a mixed-use district that combines offices, residences, and services.

The design of workplaces is changing, as is their location. In the past, skilled employees moved to areas with jobs, but a new trend is emerging. Increasingly, employers are moving to where talented workers want to live. For example, many former Silicon Valley companies have moved to downtown San Francisco. Office space is significantly more expensive in downtown San Francisco, but these companies believe the cost is outweighed by locating near talented engineers.

Richard Florida, professor and author of books on America's "creative class," believes that communities that provide amenities that attract creative and skilled workers will be more successful at attracting high-wage jobs. These amenities include easy access to great recreation, a diverse population (supported by diverse housing choices and an open-minded citizenry), high quality foods, and areas with a vibrant night life.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

Folsom could create policies and incentivize developments that attract businesses looking for that "creative class" workforce. The developments could include a variety of housing types, access via multiple modes of transportation, and supporting retail and dining options. The City could support smaller technology companies through streamlined business start-up services, access to local venture capitalists, and continuing education for workers. Folsom could position itself as a magnet for entrepreneurs looking for a quality workforce but in a community with excellent family and recreational amenities.



Sacramento's Urban Hive is a co-working community for Sacramento's Creative Class and occupies a small, one story structure in Midtown.

Trend #4: Focus on Health as a Lifestyle Choice

A variety of smaller trends and campaigns – aging baby-boomers, a national conversation on health care, growing concerns over obesity and diabetes, increased interest in healthy foods – have come together to make health a hot topic and the new face of sustainability. In response to this trend, communities are now vying to be “the healthiest place to live.” Colorado has set a goal to be the healthiest state in the nation. Community members’ health can be influenced by the policies and design patterns of a city. For instance, sidewalks can encourage walking, the most popular exercise activity for Americans.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

Folsom already possesses many of the raw ingredients that contribute to healthy communities. These ingredients include ready access to great recreation outlets and access to fresh food. In some areas, however, Folsom still has opportunities to complete trail connections, install or improve sidewalks, and improve the overall walkable environments needed to support a healthy community. Folsom has an opportunity to evaluate the current state of its health and ways it can improve its health from a design, construction, and policy standpoint. Folsom already has a head start in this area compared to other communities, but more can be done to capitalize on existing assets and perhaps become the healthiest city in California.



Sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian overpasses can complete the pedestrian network and encourage people to walk more.

Trend #5: Lifelong Learning

In today’s knowledge-based economy, education is as important as coal and iron ore once were for an industrial economy. Education cannot stop at high school or even college. The provision of diverse, multi-generational education opportunities is critical for building a well-trained workforce that will attract leading employers, create new entrepreneurs that can succeed in a fast moving economy, and continue to support a vibrant and forward-thinking citizenry. Students provide only part of the vibrancy of cities with colleges and universities; much of the vibrancy comes from the constant influx of professors and lecturers, and provocative conversations and presentations they provide. When combined with new or existing industry, educational institutions can also create new research, business partnerships, and opportunities.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

The presence and rapid growth of Folsom Lake College (FLC) provides a significant asset for Folsom that should not be overlooked. This center for



Folsom Lake College owns land between its current campus and East Bidwell Street. This land could be developed as a catalyst for mixed-use development.

higher education, coupled with high quality elementary and secondary schools, provides a great foundation for Folsom to compete effectively in a knowledge-based economy. Partnerships between the City and the educational institutions could help integrate the schools with the community both physically and operationally. FLC's campus could serve as a catalyst for the development of a new business hub, further supporting housing, services, and food establishments, all while reducing reliance on driving and creating new centers of excitement and vitality.

Trend #6: Shifting Retail Preferences

With the growth of online shopping, consumers have many more choices about where they spend their money. Websites like Amazon.com often provide consumers with lower prices than brick-and-mortar retailers. Smartphones allow shoppers to comparison shop for the best value online when shopping at a conventional store. Increasingly, shoppers are completing their purchases on their smartphones. Online retailers will compete strongly against brick-and-mortar retailers that rely on convenience purchases or having the lowest prices. Brick-and-mortar shopping centers that can create an excellent shopping and entertainment experience will fare better. Consumers cannot stroll, window shop, meet friends for lunch, or try on clothes online.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR FOLSOM

Folsom has a strong and growing retail economy that is responding to the changing retail landscape. The Palladio is an excellent example of a shopping center that creates an excellent shopping experience that cannot be replicated online. Shopping centers that do not offer that experience may have to retrofit their facilities or otherwise change to woo consumers away from their laptops and smartphones.

Vision and Guiding Principles

A general plan's vision and guiding principles provide direction and introduce key themes. All of the goals, policies, and implementation programs must be consistent with the vision and guiding principles.

The Vision and Guiding Principles are based on input from the community. The City received hundreds of comments from residents at the first Community Workshop in April 2013 and on the General Plan's online Town Hall Forum.

Vision

A vision statement is an aspirational description of what the community would like to be in the future. It is a summary of high level goals to be achieved by the updated General Plan. The vision provides the foundation for more specific goals, policies, and programs developed during the update process. The visioning process is valuable in identifying issues important to the community and in providing early direction for alternatives development and analysis.

THE FOLSOM 2035 VISION

In 2035 Folsom is sought out by new residents and employers as the most desirable and prosperous city in which to live and work in the region. It has matured into a beautiful, vibrant, and sustainable city, with livable neighborhoods that are walkable, and full of amenities. At the same time, the city has maintained its close-knit, small-town feel and embraced its rich historical heritage. Folsom is a healthy, safe, happy, and cohesive community.

Folsom is a prominent and innovative technology hub that is nationally recognized for its highly-educated and creative workforce, ample employment opportunities, excellent public schools, and distinguished institutions of higher education.

Folsom is a premier recreational and tourist destination in Northern California, offering a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, which support both its active lifestyle and healthy community status. The city serves as the gateway to the Sierra Foothill wine country and is a tourist destination of its own, given its historical and recreational offerings.

Guiding Principles

At the heart of the General Plan are “Guiding Principles” that express the key values and aspirations for Folsom’s future and act as guideposts for the goals, policies, and implementation measures contained within the General Plan. These principles expand on the main ideas contained in the vision statement so that important concepts are given more weight. Guiding principles are purposefully broadly stated in order to guide the City throughout development of the updated General Plan. All general plan goals, policies, and implementation programs need to be consistent with the Vision and Guiding Principles.

THE FOLSOM 2035 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principle #1: Maintain a close-knit, neighborly, family-friendly city with a small town feel

Preserve and enhance Folsom's small town charm by ensuring Folsom remains a safe, attractive, family-friendly community with social gathering places where neighbors can meet and interact.

Guiding Principle #2: Focus on Historic Folsom as a center of shopping, dining, entertainment, and cultural attractions

Focus on maintaining Historic Folsom as a vibrant mixed-use entertainment district that offers high-quality housing, a dynamic nightlife, and rich cultural experiences for residents, families, and visitors. Preserve and enhance the historic area's pedestrian orientation, architectural integrity, and collection of unique, locally-owned businesses. Embrace the city's rich historical Gold Rush heritage and connections to the historic railroad by conserving and enhancing historical and cultural amenities and attracting visitors through cultural events and programs.

Guiding Principle #3: Promote Town Centers as Social Gathering Places

Promote mixed-use, walkable districts that serve as social gathering places for the community. Ensure that all residents have convenient access to town centers by establishing several throughout Folsom.

Guiding Principle #4: Promote the revitalization of aging commercial corridors

Encourage pedestrian-oriented infill and redevelopment of Folsom's aging commercial corridors. Create mixed-use developments that take advantage of alternative transportation modes, where people can live, work, and shop.

Guiding Principle #5: Support the Regional Retail Base

Expand Folsom's role as a regional retail center that provides a broad range of goods to area residents, ensures financial security for the city, and supports the high level of community services that Folsom residents enjoy.

Guiding Principles #6: Enhance gateways into Folsom

Signify arrival into Folsom by enhancing the major entryways into the community with context-appropriate solutions including landscaping, public art, and design that strengthen Folsom's unique identity.

Guiding Principle #7: Continue to be a premier recreation destination in Northern California

Enhance and expand Folsom's role as a premier outdoor recreation destination in Northern California by continually improving cultural revenue activities and programs, recreation opportunities and quality including new bicycle trails, parks and open space, and sports facilities.



Guiding Principle #8: Brand Folsom as the “Gateway to the Foothill Wine Region”

Capitalize on Folsom’s location near the wine country by expanding lodging and dining opportunities, and marketing Folsom as the “Gateway to the Foothill Wine Region.”

Guiding Principle #9: Provide all residents with opportunities to live an active, healthy, and green lifestyle

Promote healthy lifestyles by enhancing opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating, and sustainable living.

Guiding Principle #10: Provide for a range of attractive and viable transportation options, such as bicycle, pedestrian, rail, and transit

Support higher-density, mixed use, transit-oriented development near light rail stations and in core areas where alternative transportation modes are planned. Support transportation improvements that allow and encourage more residents, workers, and visitors to walk, bike, or use transit.

Guiding Principle #11: Provide a range of housing choices for all generations

Provide for a range of housing choices to ensure Folsom is a community for all generations, where children can grow, raise families, and age in place.

Guiding Principle #12: Preserve the High Quality of Folsom’s Neighborhoods

Preserve the high quality of Folsom’s neighborhoods by maintaining quality housing stock, convenient access to parks and trails, attractive landscaping, and functional and efficient infrastructure.

Guiding Principle #13: Foster economic growth and diversity to become recognized as one of the smartest cities in the region

Build a thriving innovation-based economy that creates new jobs and welcomes businesses and entrepreneurship. Support the incubation of new startups as well as the efforts of Folsom Cordova School District and Folsom Lake College to provide quality education to the community and beyond. Foster partnerships between educational institutions and local employers to grow a highly-educated local workforce.

Guiding Principle #14: Commit to high-quality design

Promote development that strengthens the physical form of the city, enhances livability, incorporates sustainable design practices, and fosters a unique sense of place through context-sensitive design and commitment to high-quality execution.

Guiding Principle #15: Foster a sustainable community for the next generation's benefit.

Balance resource conservation with economic growth to ensure that meeting today's needs does not compromise the ability of the community to meet future needs. Lead by example in municipal projects and daily operations through City commitments and policies to advancing best practices in sustainability. Conserve resources and reduce operational costs without sacrificing quality of life.

Guiding Principle #16: Integrate the "old" and the "new" areas of the city

Promote an integrated, cohesive city by connecting new development areas with the existing city fabric through pedestrian and bicycle linkages, harmonious design, and shared gathering places.

Guiding Principle #17: Encourage citizen participation and good leadership

Facilitate active and meaningful community participation by maintaining a transparent and open government and actively seeking citizen input in the decision-making process. City government shall be guided by the public interest and be an active leader in maintaining and improving quality of life in Folsom.

General Plan Basics

Every city and county in California must have a general plan, which is the local government's long-term framework or "constitution" for future development. The general plan represents the community's view of its future and expresses the community's development goals. The general plan contains the goals and policies upon which the city council and planning commission will base their land use decisions. California State law requires that each city adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the city and any land outside its boundaries that bears relation to its planning." Typically, a general plan is designed to address the issues facing the city for the next 20 years.

The general plan is made up of a collection of "topical elements," of which seven are mandatory. The seven State-mandated elements are: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety (California Government Code Section 65302). Communities may include other elements that address issues of particular local concern, such as economic development or urban design. Communities can also organize their general plan anyway they choose, as long as the required issue areas are addressed. The following table shows how the elements of the Folsom

2035 General Plan are organized to meet the mandatory requirements of State law.

ELEMENTS OF THE FOLSOM 2035 GENERAL PLAN								
Folsom 2040 General Plan Elements	General Plan Elements Required by State Law							Optional Elements Allowed By State Law
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Noise	Open Space	Safety	
Land Use	●							
Mobility		●						
Economic Prosperity								●
Housing			●					
Natural and Cultural Resources				●		●		
Public Facilities and Services								●
Parks and Recreation						●		
Safety and Noise					●		●	

The general plan is not to be confused with zoning. Although both the general plan and the zoning ordinance designate how land may be developed, they do so in different ways. The general plan has a long-term outlook. It identifies the types of development that will be allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. Zoning regulates present development through specific standards such as lot size, building setback, and a list of allowable uses. However, the land uses shown on the general plan diagrams will usually be reflected in the local zoning maps as well. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the zoning ordinance, but also the broader policies set forth in the general plan.

Structure of the Plan

The General Plan is made up of two documents: the Policy Document and the Background Report.

General Plan Policy Document

The Policy Document is the heart of the General Plan. It contains the goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the city and identifies implementation programs that will ensure the goals and policies in the General Plan are carried out. The Policy Document also contains a land use diagram, which serves as a general guide to the distribution of land uses throughout the city. The General Plan Policy Document contains elements as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Land Use
3. Mobility
4. Economic Prosperity
5. Housing (separate document)
6. Natural and Cultural Resources
7. Public Facilities and Services
8. Parks and Recreation
9. Safety and Noise
10. Implementation

General Plan Background Report

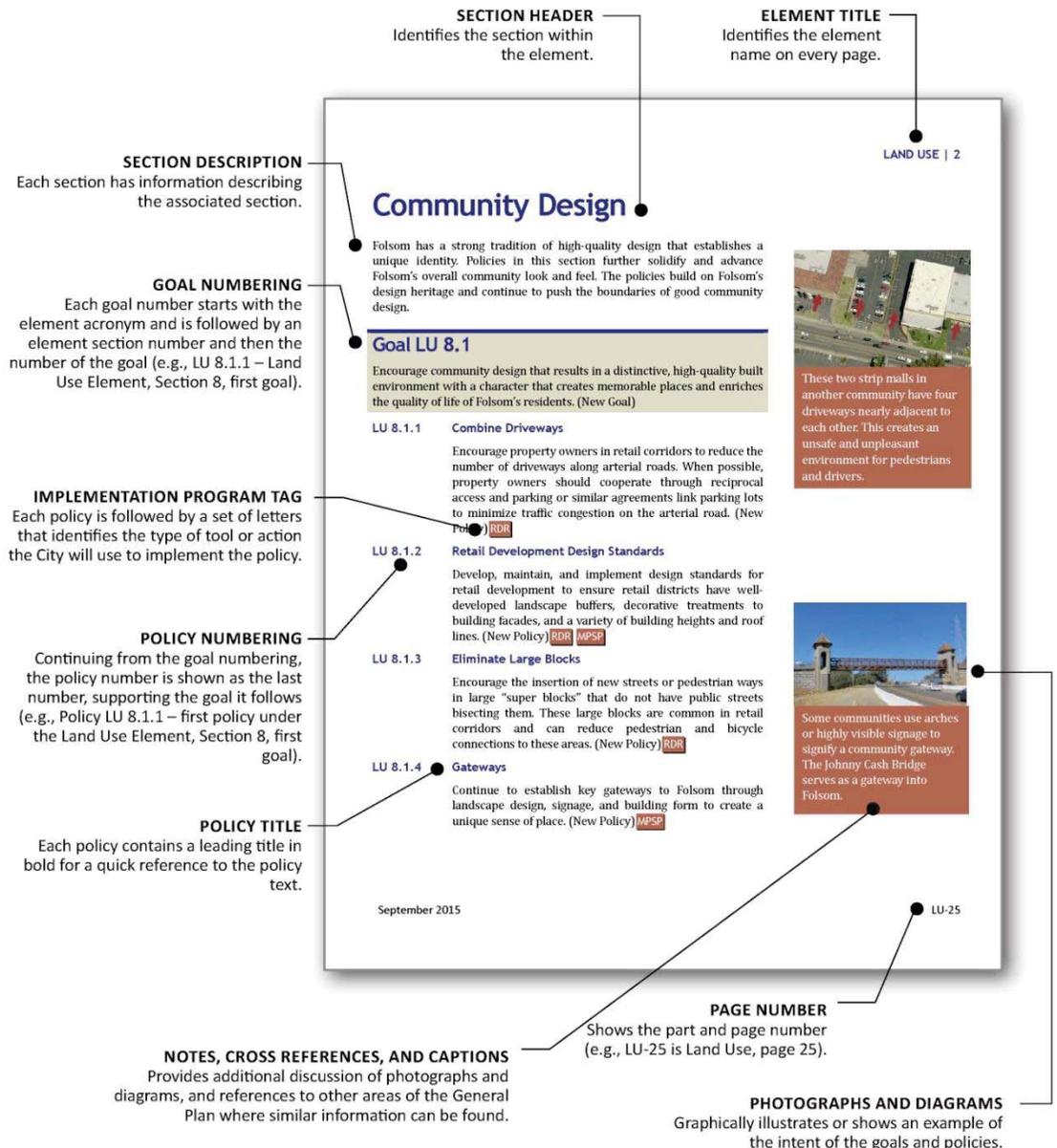
The Background Report is a profile of Folsom as it exists today. The Background Report, which provides the formal supporting documentation for general plan policy, addresses ten subject areas: land use, housing, growth and development, transportation and circulation, open space and natural resources, parks and recreation, public facilities and services, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and safety, and noise. The Report provides decision-makers, the public, and local agencies with a factual context for making policy decisions. The Background Report also serves as the description of existing conditions for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared on the General Plan.

Goals and Policies Readers' Guide

Qualified Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy

In addition to laying out Folsom's framework for future development, the 2035 Folsom General Plan will also serve as the City's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy. For selected policies, there is a globe icon () next to the policy title. This indicates that the policy contributes to the City's reduction of GHG emissions.

Each element contains the goals and policies that will be used by the City to guide future land use, development, and environmental protection decisions. A goal is a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or "end" state. Goals describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic and tend to be very general and broad. A policy is a clear and unambiguous statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal.



Implementation Programs Readers' Guide

To help ensure that appropriate actions are taken to implement the 2035 General Plan, the Plan includes a set of implementation programs. Implementation programs identify the specific steps to be taken by the City to implement the policies. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, plans and capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that should be assigned to different City departments after the General Plan is adopted. The types of tools or actions the City can use to carry out its policies and implementation programs generally fall into the eight categories listed below. These are explained in detail in the Administration and Implementation section, along with the specific implementation programs.

- Regulation and Development Review **RDR**
- City Master Plans, Strategies, and Programs **MPSP**
- Financing and Budgeting **FB**
- Planning Studies and Reports **PSR**
- City Services and Operations **SO**
- Inter-governmental Coordination **IGC**
- Joint Partnerships with the Private Sector **JP**
- Public Information **PI**



TABLE NUMBER AND NAME
Each section begins with a new table number and section name.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM TEXT
Specific action(s) the City will take to implement the General Plan.

TIMELINE
Identifies an estimated timeframe for when the implementation program will be completed. Implementation programs may not be completed as indicated due to budget or resource constraints.

Table 9-1: Land Use Implementation Programs		2017-2019	2020-2024	2025-2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>1. Update the Zoning Ordinance</p> <p>Develop a priority list for how sections of the Folsom Zoning Ordinance and applicable guidelines will be updated consistent with the General Plan. The City shall identify and prioritize key areas (e.g., urban centers, transit-oriented development areas), infill areas, and new growth areas for rezoning to ensure consistency with the General Plan. The City shall review and update the Folsom Zoning Ordinance and applicable guidelines, consistent with the policies and diagrams of the General Plan. RDR PSR</p>		X				
<p>● Implements Policy(ies):</p>	LU 1.1.1					
<p>Responsible Department(s)</p>	Community Development					
<p>Supporting Department(s)</p>						

SUPPORTING POLICY(IES)
Identifies which policy(ies) the implementation program supports.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)/ SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT(S)
Identifies which City department(s) are responsible to see the specific implementation is completed and which City department(s), if necessary, will support the responsible department.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM TAG
Each implementation program is followed by a set of letters that identifies the type of tool or action the City will use to implement the program.

