

Part 3, Chapter X.
Sheep Ranch Community Plan

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Location and Features

The Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area, which includes a small quiet town and its surrounding area, is located in the remote and rural area of northern Calaveras County. The community is located halfway between Mountain Ranch and Murphys. Sheep Ranch Road, which bisects the town's center, connects the community to Highway 4 to the south via Murphys and Highway 49 to the west via Mountain Ranch Road.

History of the Area

Sheep Ranch is rich in gold-mining history and historic buildings. The Sheep Ranch Town Center essentially follows the boundaries of the Sheep Ranch Townsite that was established in the survey completed November 6, 1878, and amended October 31, 1879.

Planning and Development History

The Sheep Ranch Town Center was called the "Sheep Ranch Community Center" in the 1996 General Plan. A new draft Sheep Ranch Community Plan was developed by a group of residents in 2008-2009 and endorsed by the residents with full consensus (no dissents) at a meeting on January 30, 2009. The Sheep Ranch Community Plan was submitted to the County for inclusion in the General Plan Update.

SECTION 2. VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The people in Sheep Ranch prize its rural environment, with peace and quiet, clean air, low population density, diversity of landscape and wildlife, minimal light pollution, open space, little traffic, lack of commercialism, and general beauty.

Large ranches and timberlands frame our area and reinforce our solitude and lifestyle. How rural is Sheep Ranch? The Sheep Ranch sheep roam the streets of town and graze wherever they want, except where property owners have fenced them out.

In a county where other communities are developing, Sheep Ranch will serve as an increasingly rare living example of Calaveras County's past. The community does not seek further development of the area. With no public sewer service available, and with no plans to expand current water service, the community

wishes to remain a very small rural town and surrounding area with very low population density.

SECTION 3. POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

A. Policies for the Entire Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area:

- Continue use of the Sheep Ranch firehouse as a fire station and community center serving the entire Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area.
- Preserve the rural character of the Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area and maintain the local road system as two-lanes with minimum improvements needed to meet county public safety standards.
- Ensure that development is consistent with the natural beauty of this low-density area and protects important wildlife habitats.
- The community respects lawful use of firearms, consistent with safe practice and consideration for others. The community discourages all use of firearms between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, except for particularly needed nighttime usages (such as the elimination of feral pigs and defense of livestock).
- The community encourages pedestrian and horse trail links between Sheep Ranch and Mountain Ranch and between the Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area and the Arnold Rim Trail.

B. Policies for Sheep Ranch Town Center:

- Maintain current densities (one dwelling per acre for parcels served by public water and conventional septic, and one dwelling per five acres on parcels served by well and conventional septic) and current subdivision limitations in the Town Center, with all existing parcels maintaining their current development potentials and restrictions.
- Maintain the noncommercial nature of all properties other than the one parcel (parcel 36023012) now zoned "Rural Commercial."
- Maintain the county's ordinance permitting open-range grazing of sheep.
- Preserve the historic nature of the Sheep Ranch Town Center by encouraging the traditional Mother Lode architectural style for any new building construction or exterior renovation in the Town Center.
- Provide public water service to properties currently physically connected to that service, but do not expand public water service to other properties.

- The community supports development of an open-space park on the parcel behind the firehouse and bordered on two sides by Sheep Ranch Road: it is a keystone in preserving the town's rural nature.
- Preserve the ability of Sheep Ranch citizens to conduct reasonable agricultural activities, including the keeping of sheep, horses, chickens, and pigs, and raising of fruit, vegetables, grain and lavender.

C. Policies for Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area other than the Sheep Ranch Town Center

- For parcels currently above 20 acres, maintain a 40-acre minimum subdivision parcel size for lands in the Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area other than the Sheep Ranch Town Center. For parcels currently 20 acres or smaller, maintain a 20-acre minimum subdivision parcel size for lands in the Sheep Ranch Community Plan Area other than the Sheep Ranch Town Center.
- The community strongly supports the establishment of more voluntary conservation easements covering lands in the area or the public acquisition (not through condemnation) of full title to those lands for conservation purposes.