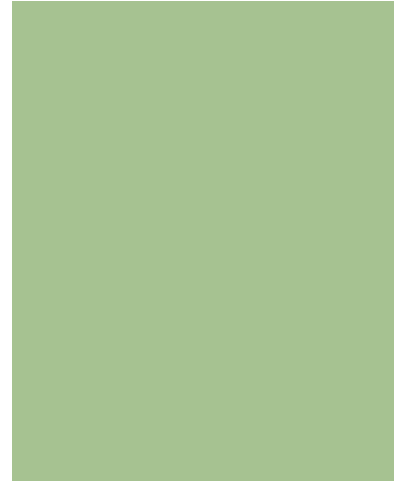




Sierra County

HOUSING ELEMENT

2019 – 2024



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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Purpose of the Element.....	1
General County Characteristics	1
Public Participation.....	2
Consistency with the General Plan	3
Chapter Two: Existing Needs Assessment	4
Population	4
Employment	6
Household Characteristics	9
Housing Stock Characteristics	18
Special Housing Needs.....	20
Population	28
Chapter Three: Resources and Constraints	30
Regional Housing Need	30
Land Inventory.....	31
Analysis of Governmental Constraints	35
Constraints on Persons with Disabilities	44
Analysis of Non-Governmental Constraints	45
Chapter Four: Evaluation	51
Chapter Five: Housing Program	52
Overall Housing Goal	52
Policies and Implementation Measures	52
Appendix A: Inventory of Vacant Land Designated for Affordable Housing—Unincorporated Sierra County	
Appendix B: Evaluation of Sierra County 2014 Housing Element Policies and Programs	

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List of Tables

Table 1: Population Trends	4
Table 2: Population by Place.....	5
Table 3: Population by Sex by Age	5
Table 4: Employment Characteristics.....	6
Table 5: Employment by Industry	6
Table 6: Average Annual Employment by Industry	7
Table 7: Employees by Industry	8
Table 8: Household Growth Trends	9
Table 9: Households by Tenure	10
Table 10: Maximum Household Income Level by Household Size	12
Table 11: HUD Income Limits.....	12
Table 12: Ability to Pay.....	14
Table 13: Housing Cost Burden by Household Income Category 2015.....	16
Table 14: Household Income.....	17
Table 15: Housing Units by Type	19
Table 16: Housing Units by Age	19
Table 17: Vacant Housing Units	20
Table 18: Employment Status by Disability Status.....	22
Table 19: Persons with Disabilities by Disability Type	23
Table 20: Householders by Tenure by Age.....	24
Table 21: Household Size (Including Large Households).....	25
Table 22: Household Size by Tenure (Including Large Households).....	25
Table 23: Number of Farmworkers.....	26
Table 24: Female Headed Households	26
Table 25: Cases of County Aid.....	28
Table 26: Population Projections.....	29
Table 27: Sierra County 6 th Cycle Regional Housing Needs, 2019-2024	31
Table 28: Vacant Land Designated for Housing in Unincorporated Sierra County.....	33
Table 29: Residential Zoning Districts	36
Table 30: Housing Types Permitted by Zoning District	37
Table 31: Development Standards in Residential Districts	40
Table 32: Estimated Planning and Development Fees	42
Table 33: Timelines for Permit Procedures	43
Table 34: Summary of Quantified Objectives.....	64

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List of Figures

Figure 1: Median Household Income 11
Figure 2 Historical Mortgage Rates 49

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Chapter One: Introduction

Purpose of the Element

In response to California’s critical housing needs, the legislature enacted housing element law with the goal of adequate, safe, and affordable housing for every Californian. The attainment of housing for all requires the cooperation of local and State governments. Housing element law requires local governments to adequately plan to meet their existing and projected housing needs, including their share of the regional housing need. Housing element law is the State’s primary market-based strategy to increase housing supply. The law recognizes that the most critical decisions regarding housing development occur at the local level within the context of the general plan. In order for the private sector to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory schemes that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development for all income groups.

Unlike the other mandatory elements of the general plan, the housing element is subject to detailed statutory requirements regarding its content and must be updated every five years. The housing element is also subject to mandatory review by a State agency. This reflects the statutory recognition that the availability of housing is a matter of statewide importance and that cooperation between all levels of government and the private sector is critical to attainment of the State’s housing goals.

General County Characteristics

Sierra County, located at the northern end of the Mother Lode area, is bordered by Plumas and Lassen Counties to the north, Nevada County to the south, Yuba County to the west, and the State of Nevada to the east.

With an area of 958 square miles inhabited by only 3,201 total residents in 2020, Sierra County is the 45th largest of California’s 58 counties by size and second smallest by population. Over 71 percent of the county is in public land ownership, primarily the Federal Tahoe National Forest, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and Plumas National Forest. Another 10 percent of the land is privately held agricultural land.

Green and heavily timbered, the mountains and canyons in the western half of Sierra County include the towns of Downieville, Goodyears Bar, Pike, Sierra City, and Alleghany, which hold memories of the Gold Rush and logging era. Historic buildings are abundant and there are many examples of rough-hewn 49er architecture. It remains today much as it was over 100 years ago when the gold miners worked the rivers and mountains in search of their fortune in gold. The majestic Sierra Buttes, a regional landmark overlooking Sierra City, reaches 8,600 feet into the heavens. Sierra County claims more than 40 alpine lakes, most of them in the Sierra Buttes Lakes Basin area. Camping, fishing, hiking, mountain

biking, kayaking, rafting, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and other activities abound in a natural and tranquil setting.

Just across the 6,700-foot high Yuba Pass in the middle lies eastern Sierra County and the towns of Calpine, Sattley, Sierraville, and the only incorporated city of Loyalton in the beautiful Sierra Valley. This 5,000-foot elevation mountain valley reflects life as it used to be in much of the west. Herds of cattle graze amid century-old barns built by early ranchers. Due to its extensive wetlands and location on a major flyway, the valley is a noted bird-watching location. The County also shares the town of Verdi with the State of Nevada in the southeastern corner of the county.

Public Participation

Government Code Section 65583(c) requires local governments to “make a diligent effort to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element, and the element shall describe this effort.” The County contacted the following stakeholders regarding the 6th Cycle Housing Element update process and additionally invited to join a public workshop at the October 15, 2020 Planning Commission meeting to provide information on the ongoing Housing Element Update and solicit input on housing issues, opportunities, and potential implementation programs:

- Sierra County Social Services
- Sierra County Health & Human Services Department
- FREED Center for Independent Living
- Downieville Volunteer Fire Protection District
- Sierra City Volunteer Fire Protection District
- Pliocene Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- Loyalton Fire District
- Sierra County Fire Safe Council
- Sierra County Senior Centers
- Sierra County Senior Transportation
- Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Coop
- Liberty Utilities
- Pliocene Ridge Community Services District
- Private Community Water Purveyors
- Downieville Public Utilities District
- Alleghany/Pliocene Ridge Water District
- Sierra Brooks Community Water System (Sierra Co. DPW)
- Sierra County Director of Health and Human Services
- Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District
- Sierra County and Eastern Sierra Valley Chambers of Commerce
- Sierra County Child Care Council
- Native American Tribes (SB-18 tribal consultation)
- Local Health Care Providers: Western Sierra Medical Clinic, Eastern Plumas Hospital District
- California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD)
- Cal Trans
- United States Forest Service-Yuba River Ranger District
- Sierra Brooks Property Owners Association
- Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District
- City of Loyalton
- Sierra County Board of Supervisors
- General public outreach (newspaper, county website, post office postings, etc.)

County staff gave an overview of the General Plan Housing Element Update process as well as a summary of the County's RHNA obligation. The County distributed consultation letters to the Native American Tribes notifying them of updates being made to the Housing Element and soliciting feedback pursuant to Senate Bill 18. In addition, the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Housing Element was made available to the public prior to, and during, duly noticed public hearings before the Sierra County Planning Commission on November 12, 2020 and the Sierra County Board of Supervisors on December 1, 2020.

Consistency with the General Plan

Government Code Section 65300 requires each county or city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its physical development. Section 65302 states: "The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals." Section 65302 also enumerates seven elements which every general plan must include: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. State law requires the elements of the general plan to be internally consistent. This Housing Element meets the requirement of internal consistency.

Sierra County's 6th Cycle housing element update (for the planning period of 2019-2024) meets the specific requirements of Government Code Article 10.6 and the intent of the Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines. It also meets the requirement of internal consistency.

The Housing Element goals, policies, objectives and programs are consistent with and complement the land use and transportation goals, policies, objectives and programs. Specifically, the land use element provides for more than enough land for future housing needs. It also describes potential deficiencies in services and infrastructure. Both the Housing Element and the General Plan identify the need to expand housing in areas that already have services and infrastructure and to seek ways and means to expand infrastructure in existing communities, consistent with local community plans. When the County amends the General Plan, the County will review and update the Housing Element if necessary, to maintain consistency.

Chapter Two: Existing Needs Assessment

The main sources of the information for this chapter are the California Housing and Community Development (HCD) pre-approved data package, the 2012–2016 and 2014-2018 American Community Surveys (ACS), and the California Department of Finance (DOF). The ACS is conducted by the Census Bureau and is an ongoing survey that compiles data for a five-year estimate. The ACS is considered less accurate than the decennial census because it is a less comprehensive estimate but is available on a yearly basis and is used because it provides more current data. Other sources of information include the State of California’s Employment Development Department (EDD), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, California Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Sierra County officials and staff.

Population

Population Growth Trends

Sierra County is the second-smallest county in California in population and has been experiencing a decline or stagnant population change since 2010 (see Table 1). Much of the population decline has been due to families leaving the county for better employment opportunities. As homes come on the market, they are often being purchased as recreational or vacation homes.

Table 1: Population Trends
Unincorporated Sierra County
1970-2018

Year	Population	Annual Percent Change
1970	1,420	
1980	2,043	4.4%
1990	2,366	1.6%
2000	2,693	1.4%
2005	2,603	-0.7%
2010	3,240	-1.0%
2015	3,197	-1.3%
2016	3,201	0.1%
2017	3,212	0.3%
2018	3,215	0.1%
2019	3,210	-0.2%
2020	3,201	-0.3%

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011-2020, with 2010 Census Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2020

Approximately 75 percent of the county population lives in the unincorporated areas. Table 2 shows the population countywide, in the City of Loyalton, and in the unincorporated county.

Table 2: Population by Place
City of Loyalton, Unincorporated County, Sierra County
2020

Jurisdiction Name	Number	Percentage
City of Loyalton	781	24.4%
Unincorporated County	2,420	75.6%
Sierra County	3,201	100.0%

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011-2020, with 2010 Census Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2020.

Population by Age

Based on the 2018 ACS, 53 percent of the unincorporated county population is male, with nearly 30 percent of the unincorporated county population being over 65 years of age, the largest age group (see Table 3). Also based on the 2018 ACS, 17.6 percent of the population in the unincorporated areas is 19 years of age or younger. The 20- to 24-year-old population makes up only 2.8 percent of the total population.

Table 3: Population by Sex by Age
Unincorporated Sierra County
2018

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percent of Total
Under 5	83	29	112	3.8%
5 to 14	138	126	264	9.0%
15 to 19	102	39	141	4.8%
20 to 24	17	66	83	2.8%
25 to 34	121	66	187	6.4%
35 to 44	195	185	380	13.0%
45 to 54	123	131	254	8.7%
55 to 64	324	332	656	22.4%
65+	439	414	853	29.1%
Total	1,542	1,388	2,930	100.0%

Source: 2014–2018 American Community Survey, Table S0101

As shown in Table 4, of the total population living in the unincorporated areas in 2020, 89.5 percent are employed and 10.5 percent were unemployed.

Table 4: Employment Characteristics
City of Loyalton, Unincorporated County, Sierra County
2020

	Labor Force		Employment		Unemployment	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
City of Loyalton	420	35.6%	370	88.1%	50	11.9%
Unincorporated County	760	64.4%	680	89.5%	80	10.5%
Total	1,180	100.0%	1,050	89.0%	130	11.0%

Source: California Employment Development Department, Monthly Labor Force Data, June 2020 (preliminary)

Employment

Employment by Industry

Government employment makes up approximately two-thirds of all employment in Sierra County (see Table 5). Within Sierra County's private-sector employment, service-providing is the largest industry, accounting for 27.5 percent of the total employment base. Private goods-producing has declined by approximately 6 percent since 2014.

Table 5: Employment by Industry
Sierra County
2020

Employment by Industry	Monthly Employment	Percent of Total Employment
Total, All Industries	510	100.0%
Farm	10	2.0%
Nonfarm	500	98.0%
Total Private	160	31.4%
Goods Producing	20	3.9%
Service Providing	140	27.5%
Government	340	66.7%
Federal Government	30	5.9%
State Government	40	7.8%
Local Government	270	52.9%

Note: Data may not add due to rounding.

Source: California Employment Development Department Industry Employment & Labor Force, Sierra County, July 2020

Based on official EDD data for 2020, total employment in Sierra County has declined by approximately 4.5 percent since 2014 (see Table 6). The decline has been felt across most industries, with the largest declines being private industry employment and non-farm services providing.

Table 6: Average Annual Employment by Industry
Sierra County
2014–2019

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Five-Year Change	
							Number	Percent
Total Private	280	240	240	220	210	230	-50	-17.9%
Goods Producing	40	40	50	30	30	40	0	0.0%
Total Farm	20	20	20	20	20	20	0	0.0%
Non-Farm Services Providing	240	200	190	190	190	190	-50	-20.8%
Government	360	370	360	350	350	380	20	5.6%
Federal Government	50	50	50	40	50	50	0	0.0%
State Government	70	70	60	50	50	50	-20	-28.6%
Local Government	240	250	260	260	260	290	50	20.8%
Total Employment	660	620	620	590	580	630	-30	-4.5%

Source: California Employment Development Department, July 2020.

According to the 2018 County Business Patterns gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 69 employer establishments in the county. Of these, 83 percent have fewer than five employees and another 14 percent have five to nine employees. These businesses are distributed throughout the county. The largest government employment base is in Loyaltown and Downieville with the schools and county government and in Sierraville (Forest Service and school).

Also significant for Sierra County is the number of non-employer businesses that account for 259 establishments according to the 2018 Annual Economics Survey. Self-employed businesses account for approximately 25 percent of all employment within Sierra County, with 73.8 percent of those self-employed businesses being not incorporated. The largest number of self-employed businesses are in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries (53 percent), with another 44 percent in the construction industry. The distribution of employment by industry is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Employees by Industry
Sierra County
2016

Description	Sierra County	
	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	67	5.5%
Construction	175	14.3%
Manufacturing	20	1.6%
Wholesale trade	9	0.7%
Retail trade	95	7.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	94	7.7%
Information	19	1.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	16	1.3%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	108	8.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	340	27.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	81	6.6%
Other services, except public administration	21	1.7%
Public administration	180	14.7%
Total for all sectors	1,225	100.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table DP-03

Household Characteristics

Household Growth and Tenure Trends

The total number of households in the county has been steadily decline since 2011 having decreased by a total of 86 households. There was a slight increase of 2 households from 2012 to 2013; however, there has been an average decrease of 9 households per year. Table 8 shows this trend in the number of households in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 8: Household Growth Trends
Unincorporated Sierra County
2010–2020

Year	Households	Numerical Change	Annual Percent Change
2010	1,174		
2011	1,174	0	0.0%
2012	1,162	-12	-1.0%
2013	1,164	2	0.2%
2014	1,154	-10	-0.9%
2015	1,151	-3	-0.3%
2016	1,123	-28	-2.4%
2017	1,116	-7	-0.6%
2018	1,096	-20	-1.8%
2019	1,087	-9	-0.8%
2020	1,088	1	0.1%

Source: California Department of Finance, 2020; U.S. Census.

The 2016 ACS data shows that in unincorporated Sierra County, 80.2 percent of occupied housing units are owner occupied, and 19.8 percent are renter occupied. As shown in Table 9, there has been a steady shift toward more owner-occupied households since 1990. Statewide, only 54.8 percent of housing units are owner occupied. Two reasons for the higher rate of home ownership locally may be the larger proportion of mobile homes (which tend to cost less than site-built homes) and the relatively low cost of home ownership for all homes in Sierra County compared to most urban areas in the state. Another reason for the higher percentage of homeownership locally may be the large number of retirees that have moved to the county over the past few decades and are financially able to purchase homes. Individuals aged 65 to 69 tend to have the highest rate of home ownership throughout California.

Table 9: Households by Tenure
Unincorporated Sierra County
1990–2016

	1990		2000		2016	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner	679	69.1%	861	71.9%	757	80.2%
Renter	303	30.9%	337	28.1%	187	19.8%
Total	982	100.0%	1,198	100.0%	944	100.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table B25009

Overcrowded Households

The U.S. Census Bureau defines overcrowding as a housing unit occupied by more than one person per room (not including kitchens and bathrooms). Units with more than 1.5 persons per room are considered severely overcrowded and indicate inadequate housing.

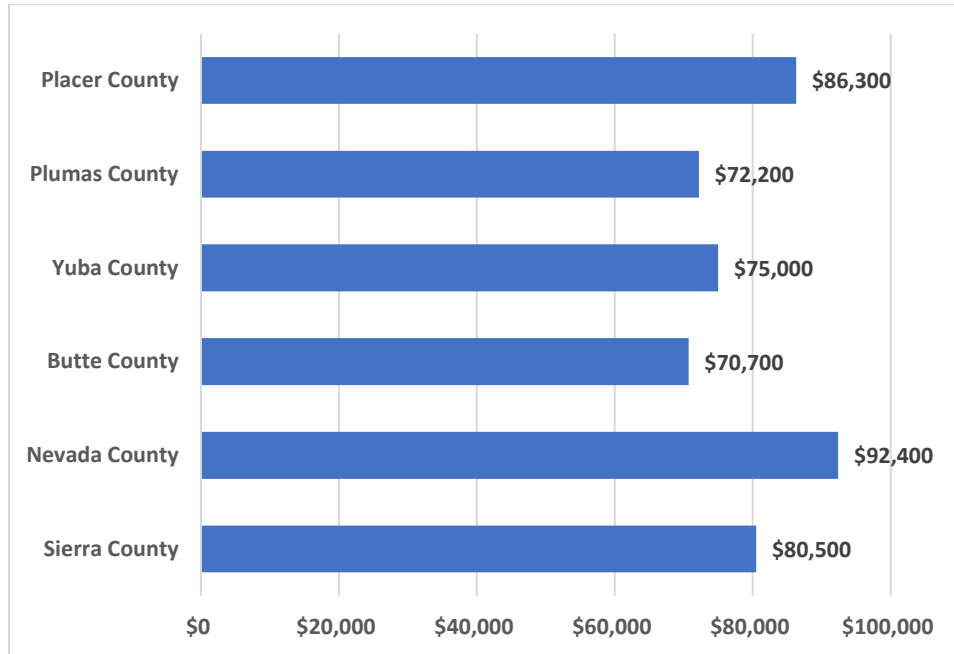
Overcrowding is not a significant housing issue in Sierra County. According to the 2016 ACS, there were only two overcrowded households countywide, and zero in the unincorporated county. The data shows a decline in overcrowding conditions since 2000 when there were 48 overcrowded households reported in Sierra County.

Household Income

According to HCD’s 2020 State Income Limits, the median household income for Sierra County was \$80,500. State Income Limits are used to determine applicant eligibility for designated programs, including Housing Choice Vouchers, and are used to calculate affordable costs for housing assistance programs. Unlike income estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, that are based on data collected through a national survey, the State Income Limits are updated annually based on HUD Section 8 Income Limits that are calculated using Fair Market Rent definitions for each metropolitan area and each non-metropolitan county.

When compared with California as a whole, the county’s 2020 median household income is significantly less than the statewide median of \$87,100. In comparing neighboring counties, Sierra County’s median household income, as defined by the 2020 State Income Limits, was lower than that of Placer and Nevada Counties, but greater than Butte, Yuba, and Plumas Counties, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: State Income Limit Median Household Income
Neighboring Counties
2020



Source: HCD State Income Limits 2020

Income data is defined using an Area Median Income (AMI), as classified by HCD into five income groups:

- Extremely Low Income: Less than 30 percent of AMI;
- Very-Low Income: 30 to 50 percent of AMI;
- Low Income: 51 to 80 percent of AMI;
- Moderate Income: 81 to 120 percent of AMI; and
- Above-Moderate Income: More than 120 percent of AMI.

Table 10 shows the maximum annual income level for a household to be included in the extremely low-, very low-, and low-income groups, adjusted for household size, for Sierra County, according to HCD. The maximum annual income data is then used to calculate the maximum affordable housing payments for different households (varying by income level) and their eligibility for federal housing assistance.

Table 10: Maximum Household Income Level by Household Size
Sierra County
2020

Household Size	Median Income	Maximum Income Level		
		Extremely Low	Very Low	Low
1-Person	\$80,500	\$19,450	\$32,400	\$51,800
2-Person		\$22,200	\$37,000	\$59,200
3-Person		\$25,000	\$41,650	\$66,600
4-Person		\$27,750	\$49,950	\$73,950
5-Person		\$30,680	\$53,650	\$79,900

Source: HCD State Income Limits 2020.

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also defines income limits for counties, as shown in Table 11. These income limits are based on a median income of \$80,500 or a four-person household. The HUD and HCD income limits are used to determine eligibility for housing programs. The income limits reported by each agency differ slightly due to adjustments made at the State level to HUD income limits. While HCD uses HUD income limits as the basis for State income limits, HCD adjusts these limits according to 1) California's non-metropolitan county median income determined by HUD, if necessary; 2) HCD's 2013 Hold Harmless (HH) Policy to not allow decreases in area median income levels and household income category levels; 3) adjustments for family size; and 4) income levels applicable to California's moderate-income households defined by law as household income not exceeding 120 percent of county area median income. These adjustments account for the slightly higher income levels reported by HCD.

Table 11: HUD Income Limits
Sierra County
2020

Household Size	Extremely Low (30%)	Very Low (50%)	Low (80%)
1-Person	\$16,950	\$28,200	\$45,100
2-Person	\$19,350	\$32,200	\$51,550
3-Person	\$21,750	\$36,250	\$58,000
4-Person	\$26,200	\$40,250	\$64,400
5-Person	\$30,680	\$43,500	\$69,600
6-Person	\$35,160	\$46,700	\$74,750
7-Person	\$39,640	\$49,950	\$79,900
8-Person	\$44,120	\$53,150	\$85,050

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020

Housing is considered affordable if a household pays no more than 30 percent of its monthly income for housing costs. Table 12 illustrates affordable monthly rents for households of very low-, low-, and moderate income, using the 30-percent standard and HCD's maximum income levels in these categories. Given that the County's median contract monthly rent was \$888 as of 2018, this table indicates that, in general, most Sierra County households would find rental costs affordable. Of course, household circumstances will vary, and some households may have difficulty finding housing with affordable rents. Moreover, this does not take into consideration issues such as housing quality and overcrowding.

Table 12 also shows the affordable maximum monthly gross rent/payment and maximum purchase price for the different income levels, as defined by HUD. Given that the median value of a single-family home in the county was \$173,200 in 2018, and approximately 35 percent of households in the county earn less than \$35,000, these households may have difficulty finding housing affordable to own. As with rental housing, issues such as housing quality and overcrowding are not considered.

Table 12: Ability to Pay
Sierra County¹
2020

Extremely Low-Income Households at 30% of 2020 Median Family Income					
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5
Income Level	\$16,950	\$19,350	\$21,750	\$26,200	\$30,680
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$424	\$484	\$544	\$655	\$767
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$87,891	\$101,808	\$112,199	\$122,610	\$135,167
Very Low-Income Households at 50% of 2020 Median Family Income					
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5
Income Level	\$28,200	\$32,200	\$36,250	\$40,250	\$43,500
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$705	\$805	\$906	\$1,006	\$1,088
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$145,514	\$166,133	\$187,346	\$207,667	\$224,815
Low-Income Households at 80% of 2020 Median Family Income					
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5
Income Level	\$45,100	\$51,550	\$58,000	\$64,400	\$69,600
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$1,128	\$1,289	\$1,450	\$1,610	\$1,740
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$234,576	\$266,398	\$300,805	\$332,500	\$358,856
Median-Income Households at 100% of 2020 Median Family Income					
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5
Income Level	\$56,350	\$64,400	\$72,450	\$80,500	\$86,950
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$1,409	\$1,610	\$1,811	\$2,013	\$2,174
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$294,429	\$332,500	\$376,829	\$415,334	\$449,902
Moderate-Income Households at 120% of 2020 Median Family Income					
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5
Income Level	\$67,600	\$77,300	\$86,950	\$96,600	\$104,350
Max. Monthly Gross Rent/Payments (1)	\$1,690	\$1,933	\$2,174	\$2,415	\$2,609
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$359,929	\$399,962	\$449,902	\$499,843	\$549,016

¹Assumes that 30 percent of income is available for either: monthly rent, including utilities; or mortgage payment, taxes, mortgage insurance, and homeowner's insurance.

²Assumes 20% down payment, 4.5% annual interest rate, and 30-year term.

Sources: HCD 2020 Sierra County Income Limits, Mint.com Home Affordability Calculator (July 2020)

<https://www.mint.com/tools/home-affordability-calculator/>

The general perception of “affordable housing” tends to be negative in character. Many people have concerns about the location of housing considered affordable to lower-income households. One image people have is that affordable housing attracts undesirable residents who would contribute to the degradation of the community. In fact, the definition of affordable housing is that housing should cost a household no more than 30 percent of its income. Also, the definitions of “very low” and “low” income are based upon the median income of the area being considered. Therefore, a household with a certain income may be considered “low income” in an area where the cost of living is high but would be considered “moderate” or “above moderate” in a lower-cost area. Moreover, the entry-level income of many professions may qualify those employed as being a lower-household income. These include professions whose members are considered an integral part of a community, such as fire fighters, police officers, and nurses. Also, households with retirees may also be lower-income households, particularly those relying on relatively fixed incomes.

Households Overpaying

Households are considered to be overpaying for housing if payment (rent or mortgage) is 30 percent or greater than household income. According to data from HUD in 2015, an estimated 401 households in Sierra County (32.1 percent) were overpaying for housing (see Table 13). This incidence of overpayment occurs more frequently in owner households (17.4 percent), which is reverse from typically having more renter households overpaying. Further, 148 households are experiencing a cost burden greater than 50 percent (11.8 percent). These figures would indicate that there is a lack of low-income housing available. (For further discussion on overpayment by extremely low-income households, see the section on “Special Housing Needs.”)

Table 13: Housing Cost Burden by Household Income Category 2015

Total Household Characteristics	Number	Percent of Total Households
Total occupied units (households)	1,250 ¹	100.0%
<i>Total renter households</i>	270	21.6%
<i>Total owner households</i>	980	78.4%
Total lower income (0-80% of HAMFI) households	585	46.8%
<i>Lower-income renters (0-80%)</i>	220	17.6%
<i>Lower-income owners (0-80%)</i>	365	29.2%
Extremely low-income renters (0-30%)	90	7.2%
Extremely low-income owners (0-30%)	90	7.2%
Lower-income households paying more than 50%	148	11.8%
<i>Lower-income renter HH severely overpaying</i>	53	4.2%
<i>Lower-income owner HH severely overpaying</i>	95	7.6%
Extremely Low Income (0-30%)	100	8.0%
<i>ELI Renter HH severely overpaying</i>	45	3.6%
<i>ELI Owner HH severely overpaying</i>	55	4.4%
Income between 30%-50%	19	1.5%
Income between 50%-80%	29	2.3%
Lower-income households paying more than 30%	292	23.4%
<i>Lower-income renter HH overpaying</i>	133	10.6%
<i>Lower-income owner HH overpaying</i>	159	12.7%
Extremely Low Income (0-30%)	139	11.1%
Income between 30%-50%	54	4.3%
Income between 50%-80%	99	7.9%
Total Households Overpaying	401	32.1%
<i>Total Renter Households Overpaying</i>	183	14.6%
<i>Total Owner Households Overpaying</i>	218	17.4%

¹ This estimate includes the entire County, resulting in a higher estimate than the unincorporated estimate presented in Table 8.

Source: 2006–2015 CHAS Data Set

Table 14 shows the distribution of household incomes in Sierra County using household incomes as reported by the American Community Survey (ACS). While ACS median income estimate differs from the State Income Limits, the data demonstrates the need for affordable housing options for households that are overpaying. Since 2010, the percent of households that earn less than \$50,000 has increased from 49.5 percent to 50.8 percent. Households earning less than the median income are more likely to have to overpay for housing.

Table 14: Household Income
Unincorporated Sierra County
2010–2018

Annual Income	2010		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	115	8.0%	45	3.60%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	125	8.7%	127	10.20%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	65	4.5%	145	11.70%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	171	11.9%	118	9.50%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	236	16.4%	196	15.80%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	283	19.7%	139	11.20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	251	17.5%	135	10.90%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	149	10.4%	263	21.20%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	27	1.9%	48	3.90%
\$200,000 or more	14	1.0%	25	2.00%
Median Income*	\$52,950		\$67,464	

*For County overall, including incorporated areas.

Source: 2006–2010 and 2014–2018 American Community Survey Table S1901

Sierra County has programs to encourage production of low-income housing, such as Section 8 and Section 504. The County also allows manufactured housing, which is a source of lower-cost housing, on parcels zoned for residential use. A limited amount of assistance is available through various programs for those with low or very low incomes (i.e., Section 8, Social Services general assistance programs).

Housing Stock Characteristics

Home Value

According to the 2018 ACS, the median home value in the county was estimated to be \$173,200. An analysis done in October 2015 identified 31 single-family homes for sale in Sierra County ranging in price from \$70,000 to \$2,450,000. The median asking price in this analysis was \$382,000. Zillow.com reports that the median home value in Sierra County in 2020 was \$240,355. The housing stock in Sierra County presents a very wide range of values due to the contrasting presence of older, dilapidated homes and luxury vacation rental homes on large-acre ranches.

The most recent data regarding median gross rent is the 2014-2018 ACS. According to the ACS, the median gross rent for Sierra County in 2018 was \$888.

Housing Units by Type

The majority of housing units, approximately 88 percent, in unincorporated Sierra County are single-family detached, site-built structures. The number of single-family detached homes increased from 1,750 in 2010 to 1,761 in 2018. The second-largest category of housing units is mobile homes. The number of mobile homes in the unincorporated county being used for housing only increased by two units from 2010 to 2018. By percentage, the biggest increase in housing type is single-family attached homes, which increased 42.9 percent from 2010 to 2018. There was no change in the number of multifamily housing units from 2010 to 2018.

This current trend is expected to continue. Those building second homes and retirees with a good income will continue to build single-family dwellings. For lower-income households, used manufactured and mobile homes will continue to provide a more economical source of permanent housing. Sierra County will continue to allow the placement of these types of homes in all areas where a single-family residence is permitted, as long as the manufactured home meets the standards outlined in the County's code, including the restriction that the home must have been constructed after June 15, 1976. Some areas of the county also require architectural restrictions, such as a permanent, perimeter foundation and proper flood proofing, but the majority of the county allows for placement of any age or style manufactured home.

Table 15 indicates the trend for housing units has been, and continues to be, single-family homes. Multifamily housing construction has historically been sparse in the county. Individuals seeking single-family homes spark most home construction. Most subdivisions are small, creating four parcels or less. The County has had trouble attracting developers of multifamily units. The rural nature, low incomes, and minimal infrastructure are some reasons cited by developers.

Table 15: Housing Units by Type
Unincorporated Sierra County
2010–2018

Housing Unit Type	2010		2018		Change 2010–2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single- Family Detached	1,750	89.4%	1,761	89.0%	11	0.6%
Single- Family Attached	21	1.1%	30	1.5%	9	42.9%
2–4 Units	33	1.7%	33	1.7%	0	0.0%
5-Plus Units	73	3.7%	73	3.7%	0	0.0%
Mobile Homes	80	4.1%	82	4.1%	2	2.5%
Total	1,957	100.0%	1,979	100.0%	22	1.1%

Source: California Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State - January 2011–2018

Housing Stock Conditions

The 2018 ACS shows that less than half of housing units (40.4 percent) in Sierra County are less than 40 years old, constructed since 1980, with no new housing units constructed since 2010 (Table 16). Typically, housing units that are built prior to 1980 are expected to need some type of rehabilitation. Therefore, it is anticipated that approximately 59.7 percent, or 1,402 housing units, are in need of rehabilitation or replacement.

There is currently no deed-restricted affordable housing at risk to converting to market rate in Sierra County.

Table 16: Housing Units by Age
Sierra County
2016

Year	Number	Percent
Built 2014 or later	0	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	0	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	234	10.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	317	13.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	396	16.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	332	14.1%
Built 1960 to 1969	126	5.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	133	5.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	257	10.9%
Built 1939 or earlier	554	23.6%
Total	2,349	100.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table DP04

Communities within the county with substantial housing rehabilitation need are Alleghany, Downieville, Sierra City, Goodyears Bar, Calpine, Sattley, and Sierraville. The need for rehabilitation of the housing stock in these communities is visibly evident. Many dwellings are propped by large rocks or by rotting boards, which are making the floorboards slope or fall through. Residents have often spoken of the need for repairs to their septic or for the need of a foundation. Outside financial assistance, in the form of grants or low-interest loans, needs to be secured to fund the much-needed housing and infrastructure repairs in the communities.

Approximately 60 percent of the housing stock in the county needs some rehabilitation. While there have been some remodels since the prior planning period began, overall, the number of units needing rehabilitation has gone up.

Occupancy Status

According to the 2016 ACS, there were 1,924 housing units within the unincorporated county area (see Table 17). Approximately half (975 units) were unoccupied in 2016. Thirty-eight percent (736 units) in the unincorporated county are considered seasonal, recreational, or occasional use units by the U.S. Census.

Table 17: Vacant Housing Units
Sierra County and Unincorporated County
2016

Type	Sierra County	Unincorporated
Occupied Housing Units	1,275	949
Vacant Housing Units	1,074	975
For Rent	0	0
Rented, not occupied	0	0
For sale only	44	44
Sold, not occupied	22	22
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	767	736
All other vacant units	241	173
Vacancy Rate	45.7%	50.7%
Homeowner vacancy rate	4.0%	5.3%
Rental Vacancy Rate	0.0%	0.0%
Total Housing Units	2,349	1,924

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Tables B25002, B25004, B25014

Special Housing Needs

Within every community, there are identifiable groups who have special housing needs. Section 65583(a) of the California Government Code requires the Housing Element to address the needs of the following special population groups: Seniors, large households, female-headed households, persons with disabilities (including

developmental disabilities), farmworkers, and homeless. State law also requires an analysis of extremely low-income households.

Extremely Low-Income Households

Extremely low-income (ELI) is defined as households with income less than 30 percent of AMI. The AMI in the county, as defined by HCD, in 2020 was \$80,500 for a four-person household. For ELI households, this results in an income of \$24,150 or less for a four-person household, or \$16,905 or less for a one-person household. Households with extremely low incomes have a variety of housing needs. Most families and individuals receiving public assistance, such as social security insurance (SSI) or disability insurance, are considered ELI households.

In 2015, approximately 180 ELI households resided in the county, representing approximately 14.4 percent of the total households. Exactly half of ELI households are renters. ELI households are targeted as a special housing need group because they tend to experience a high incidence of housing problems (including overpayment, defined as cost burden greater than 30 percent of income; and/or overcrowding; and/or households without complete kitchen or plumbing facilities).

Overcrowding by itself as an indicator of housing problems, does not appear to be a significant issue for ELI households in Sierra County. According to the 2011 ACS, there were zero incidences of overcrowding or severe overcrowding identified in unincorporated Sierra County.

However, overpayment is a significant issue for ELI households in unincorporated Sierra County. As shown previously in Table 13, an estimated 401 households (32.1 percent) were overpaying for housing in 2015. This incidence of overpayment occurs more frequently in owner-occupied households (17.4 percent). Further, of the 585 households reporting incomes less than 80 percent of the median family income (MFI), approximately 50 percent were overpaying in 2015. These figures would indicate that there is a lack of housing available for ELI households. See further discussion on projected needs for ELI households in Chapter 3.

Persons with Disabilities

Disabled persons may experience difficulty due to a lack of available housing that is specifically designed to accommodate their specific needs. Inadequate bathrooms and kitchens, lack of ramps, and narrow hallways are examples of inappropriate design. In addition, disabled persons may also be low-income persons due to work disabilities. Often, their housing needs are more costly than conventional housing.

In 2016, a total of 536 persons had a disability within the county as a whole and 371 of disabled persons identified resided in the unincorporated areas. Twenty-eight persons with disabilities were in the labor force. Adequate housing for individuals with disabilities remains an important concern for the County. Table 18

shows the number of persons with disabilities in comparison to employment status in the unincorporated county in 2016.

Table 18: Employment Status by Disability Status
Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

	Number	Percent
In the labor force:	807	65.1%
Employed:	776	62.6%
With a disability	28	2.3%
No disability	748	60.4%
Unemployed:	31	2.5%
With a disability	0	0.0%
No disability	31	2.5%
Not in labor force:	432	34.9%
With a disability	238	19.2%
No disability	194	15.7%
Total	1,239	100.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table C18120.

According to Section 4512 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, a “developmental disability” means a disability that originates before an individual attains age 18 years, continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual, which includes mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. This term also includes disabling conditions found to be closely related to mental retardation or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with mental retardation but shall not include other handicapping conditions that are solely physical in nature.

Many developmentally disabled persons can live and work independently within a conventional housing environment. More severely disabled individuals require a group living environment where supervision is provided. The most severely affected individuals may require an institutional environment where medical attention and physical therapy are provided. Because developmental disabilities exist before adulthood, the first issue in supportive housing for the developmentally disabled is the transition from the person’s living situation as a child to an appropriate level of independence as an adult.

The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) currently provides community-based services to more than 330,000 persons with developmental disabilities and their families through a statewide system of 21 regional centers. The Alta California regional center in Sacramento serves 23,640 people across a 10-county service area, including Sierra County as well as Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. This

regional center has seven field offices in Grass Valley, Roseville, Woodland, Yuba City, Placerville, South Lake Tahoe, and Truckee. Thirty-five percent of the center's clients are age 18 to 40 and approximately 77 percent live in their own home or with family. According to the Department of Developmental Services, less than 55 of the center's clients are in Sierra County, including Loyalton.

There are currently no facilities in the county that strictly serve disabled persons. It is assumed that disabled persons in the county are generally taken care of by family members, in their own home or under the care of persons in an unregulated private home. To assist with this, the County offers the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program to help pay for service so individuals can stay in their homes.

There are several types of disabilities categorized for this study. Most people are affected by more than one type. Table 19 shows the total for each category of disability by age.

Table 19: Persons with Disabilities by Disability Type
Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

	Sierra County		Loyalton		Unincorporated Area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Total Disabilities for Ages 5–64</i>	335	62.50%	69	41.82%	266	71.70%
Hearing Difficulty	117	21.83%	11	6.67%	106	28.57%
Vision Difficulty	86	16.04%	8	4.85%	78	21.02%
Cognitive Difficulty	80	14.93%	15	9.09%	65	17.52%
Ambulatory Difficulty	232	43.28%	58	35.15%	174	46.90%
Self-Care Difficulty	124	23.13%	17	10.30%	107	28.84%
Independent Living Difficulty	194	36.19%	23	13.94%	171	46.09%
<i>Total Disabilities for Ages 65 and Over</i>	201	37.50%	96	58.18%	105	28.30%
Hearing Difficulty	117	21.83%	58	35.15%	59	15.90%
Vision Difficulty	77	14.37%	43	26.06%	34	9.16%
Cognitive Difficulty	85	15.86%	33	20.00%	52	14.02%
Ambulatory Difficulty	146	27.24%	49	29.70%	97	26.15%
Self-Care Difficulty	72	13.43%	17	10.30%	55	14.82%
Independent Living Difficulty	95	17.72%	25	15.15%	70	18.87%
Total Disabilities Tallied	536	100.0%	165	100.00%	371	100.00%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table S1810.

The design of housing-accessibility modifications, the proximity to services and transit, and the availability of group living opportunities represent some of the types of considerations that are important in serving persons with disabilities.

Incorporating barrier-free design in all, new multifamily housing (as required by California and federal Fair Housing laws) is especially important to provide the widest range of choices for disabled residents. Special consideration should also be given to the affordability of housing, as people with disabilities may be living on a fixed income.

Seniors

Seniors are defined as persons 65 and older. According to the 2016 ACS, 382 seniors reside in unincorporated Sierra County, which is 40.6 percent of the total households (see Table 20). Of the 382 senior households, only 64 were renters, which indicates a strong ownership trend among seniors.

Table 20: Householders by Tenure by Age
Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

Householder Age	Owners	Renters	Total
15-24 years	0	0	0
25-34 years	47	28	75
35-64 years	392	100	492
65-74 years	194	64	258
75 plus years	124	0	124
Total	757	192	949

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey.

As they age, senior households face a number of needs related to their changing physical and financial capacity. As they become less mobile, seniors may require physical modifications to their homes to permit greater accessibility and increase their ability to live independently.

Seniors need access to healthcare and other supportive services and transportation access to these services. A common special need for a portion of the senior population is for assisted-living facilities that combine meal, medical, and daily living assistance in a residential environment.

There is an affordable senior housing development with 49 units in unincorporated Sierra County just outside Loyalton called Sierra Valley Senior Apartments.

Large Households

Large households are defined as households with more than five persons. They can have difficulty securing adequate housing due to the larger number of bedrooms they need (three or more) to avoid overcrowding. It becomes even more difficult when large households try to find adequate rentals within their budget, because rentals typically have fewer bedrooms than ownership housing. Low-income large households typically need financial assistance to secure affordable housing that meets their space needs. As discussed previously, overcrowding is

not a significant housing challenge in the county, with only four overcrowded households countywide and zero in the unincorporated county.

Table 21 shows the breakdown of household size in unincorporated Sierra County. According to the 2012–2016 ACS, approximately 60 percent of the unincorporated population lived in households of two to four persons, 36 percent lived alone, and 3 percent lived in households of five or more persons. Table 22 shows this same breakdown by tenure. Of all householders living alone in unincorporated Sierra County, 66.6 percent owned their homes. Of all households consisting of two to four persons, 87.3 percent owned their homes.

Table 21: Household Size (Including Large Households)
Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

Type	Number	Percent
Total householder living alone	341	36.1%
Total households 2-4 persons	573	60.7%
Total large households 5+ persons	30	3.2%
Total households	944	100.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table B25009.

Table 22: Household Size by Tenure (Including Large Households)
Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

Type	Number	Percent
Owner householder living alone	227	66.6%
Renter householder living alone	114	33.4%
Total householder living alone	341	100.0%
Owner households 2-4 persons	500	87.3%
Renter households 2-4 persons	73	12.7%
Total households 2-4 persons	573	100.0%
Owner large households 5+ persons	30	100.0%
Renter large households 5+ persons	0	0.0%
Total large households 5+ persons	30	0.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table B25009.

Farmworkers

The 2012 Census of Agriculture estimated a total of 32 farmworkers in Sierra County. In 2019, the California EDD estimated a total of 20 persons employed in the farm industry (see Table 6). Farmworker housing needs do not represent a significant portion of the unincorporated Sierra County housing needs. The

housing needs of farmworkers can be addressed by existing programs to identify sites to facilitate development for all income levels and assist in the development of lower- and moderate-income housing needs.

Table 23: Number of Farmworkers

Sierra County
2012

Category	Number
Hired Farm Labor	
Farms	19
Workers	32

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Female-Headed Households

The U.S. Census provides data on the total number of households headed by a female, the number of those with children, and the number with incomes below the poverty level. Female heads of household are often the households most in need of affordable housing, childcare, job training, and housing rehabilitation funds.

In unincorporated Sierra County, there were 33 female-headed households, according to the 2012–2016 ACS (see Table 24). None of the female-headed households were below the poverty line, indicating that there is not a special housing need for this group.

Table 24: Female Headed Households

Unincorporated Sierra County
2016

Householder Type	Number	Percent of Female Households	Percent of Total
<i>Female-Headed Householders</i>	33	100.0%	6.0%
<i>Female Heads with Children</i>	7	21.2%	1.3%
<i>Female Heads without Children</i>	26	78.8%	4.7%
<i>Female-Headed Householders Under the Poverty Level</i>	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Households Under the Poverty Level	0	--	0.00%
Total Householders	33	100.0%	6.0%

Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Table B17012.

Of the female-headed households in unincorporated Sierra County, seven households, or 21.2 percent, have children. Single mothers tend to have difficulty obtaining suitable, affordable housing. Such households also have a greater need for housing with convenient access to childcare facilities, public transportation, and other public facilities and services.

Female-headed households with children and no spousal support frequently depend on public assistance or work in jobs that pay low wages. In addition, they must arrange for childcare, which may consume a sizable portion of their pay. These female-headed households must seek suitable housing with less disposable income than some families earning the same amount. As a result, their housing choices are very limited, and most are probably paying more than 30 percent of their total incomes for housing.

Families and Persons in Need of Emergency Shelter

Homelessness is caused by a number of social and economic factors, including a breakdown of traditional social relationships, unemployment, shortage of low-income housing, and the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill. A homeless person lacks consistent and adequate shelter. Homeless persons can be considered resident (those remaining in an area year-round), or transient. Emergency and transitional shelters can help to address the needs of the homeless. Emergency shelters provide a short-term solution to homelessness and involve limited supplemental services. In contrast, transitional shelters are designed to remove the basis for homelessness. Shelter is provided for an extended period, and is combined with other social services and counseling, to assist in the transition to self-sufficiency.

The Sierra County Department of Social Services reports that the incidence of homelessness in the county is minimal. The County estimates a fluctuating number of homeless persons, ranging from 1 to 15. During the 2020 point-in-time county survey conducted on January 27, 2020 by the NorCal Continuum of Care, nine homeless individuals were counted in Sierra County. Three of these individuals were considered chronically homeless. There were no children counted and of the nine adults, six reported being male, two reported as female, and one declined to state. There are no formal facilities in Sierra County providing shelter for homeless or other displaced persons; however, the Salvation Army and local churches provide assistance.

The County provides once-in-a-lifetime assistance through the CalWORKS program. This program can provide the security deposit and one-month's rent for families with children.

Table 25 shows an approximate breakdown of those who received aid from County services during the month of August 2020, according to Sierra County Health and Human Services.

Table 25: Cases of County Aid
Sierra County
August 2020

County Aid	Number of Recipients
CalWorks	18
CalFresh	151
Medi-Cal	412
General Relief	7
CMSP *	0
Total	588

* County Medical Services Program (not for the disabled)

Note: Cases do not reflect individual persons; each case could range from a single person to a family with as many as eight household members.

Source: Sierra County Social Service/Eligibility Staff, August 2020.

Sierra County Victim & Witness Services, located in Loyalton, administers the Victims/Witness program, by assisting with counseling, relocation, and medical bills. Also located in Loyalton is the Sierra SAFE Program for victims of sexual assault crimes and domestic violence. The Plumas Rural Services, a non-profit organization based in Quincy, provides a safe house for battered women and their children seeking emergency refuge.

Population

Population Projections

The DOF produces the official population projections by county for California. In January 2020, DOF released the most recent population projections for 2020 to 2060 in 1-year increments. Table 26 shows the DOF population projections for 2020 to 2060 in 5-year increments. The table also shows the average annual growth rate (AAGR) for each period. As shown in the table, Sierra County's population is projected to continue to decline until 2055 at least.

Table 26: Population Projections
Sierra County
2020–2060

Year	Sierra County	
	Population	AAGR
2020	3,115	
2025	3,073	-0.27%
2030	3,009	-0.42%
2035	2,923	-0.57%
2040	2,829	-0.64%
2045	2,747	-0.58%
2050	2,692	-0.40%
2055	2,666	-0.19%
2060	2,711	-0.34%

Source: California Department of Finance Total Estimated and Projected Population for California and Counties: 2010–2060, January 2020.

Chapter Three: Resources and Constraints

Regional Housing Need

A requirement of State law (Sec. 65583(a) and 65584 of the California Government Code) is that each city and county is to accommodate its share of the region's future housing needs, called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

State law also establishes the method for determining regional housing construction needs. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), working with California Department of Finance (DOF), prepares regional population projections and from these projections estimates housing construction needs for each region of the state.

Table 27 on the following page summarizes Sierra County's housing construction need for the RHNA projection period of December 31, 2018 to August 31, 2024. Since Sierra County is not represented by a council of governments (COG), HCD provided the determination of Sierra County's existing and projected housing need and RHNA Plan.

Under the sixth cycle RHNA plan, Sierra County must accommodate six new dwelling units, of which two units are to be affordable to *very-low income*, two units to *low income*, and two units to *above-moderate income* households. The very low-income category must be further divided into *very low-* and *extremely low-income (ELI)*¹.

Since December 31, 2018, the County has issued building permits for 15 housing units, including four new manufactured homes and 11 single-family homes, of which, two were demolition and replacements. In total, the County has experienced a net gain of four manufactured homes and nine single-family homes, for a total of 13 housing units, since 2018. Based on average sales prices for a new home in Sierra County, manufactured homes have been counted as moderate and traditional single-family homes have been counted as meeting both the moderate and above moderate-income need.

After accounting for units built, the county has a remaining need of 4 units affordable to lower income households by 2024, including 1 extremely low-income unit, 1 very low-income unit, and 2 low-income units.

¹ Chapter 891, Statutes of 2006 requires quantification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs of extremely low-income households. ELI is a subset of the very low-income and is defined as 30 percent of area median income and below.

Table 27: Sierra County 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs, 2019-2024

Income Group	RHNA	Building Permits Issued since December 31, 2018	Remaining Need
Extremely Low	1	0	
Very Low	1	0	4
Low	2	0	
Moderate	0	4	0
Above Moderate	2	11	
TOTAL	6	15	4

Although State law requires the Housing Element to address the housing needs of all income groups, the County must focus special attention on meeting the needs of lower-income households. These households face the greatest challenges obtaining affordable housing. The County can satisfy its responsibility for providing adequate sites for housing, especially for lower-income households, by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of sites for attached housing, multifamily rental housing, modular homes, secondary dwelling units, and other forms of housing with the potential to provide affordable shelter.

Land Inventory

Table 32 shows the total amount of vacant land with zoning that allows for residential development. The RR-1/2 designation in the General Plan allows two units per acre, which is assumed to provide housing opportunities for moderate and above moderate-income households. The Multiple Unit Residential (MUR) designation provides higher density housing opportunities, which are assumed to meet the needs for lower-income households. It allows duplexes and multifamily housing of up to 12 units per acre, which exceeds the default density standard of 10 units per acre for lower-income housing in a nonmetropolitan county.² However, only MUR-designated parcels of one-acre in size or larger are counted toward the lower-income RHNA. Smaller MUR parcels are assumed to only accommodate single-family homes and are counted in the moderate- and above-moderate-income RHNA.

The sites inventory focuses on Community Core areas identified in the General Plan, including: Alleghany, Bassets, Calpine, Forrest City, Goodyears Bar, Indian Valley, Loyalton Area, Pike, Sattley, Sierra Brooks, Sierra City, Sierraville, and Verdi. While most of the county has infrastructure constraints, these areas are more likely to have access to infrastructure and allow for smaller lots and higher densities than the areas outside of Community Core areas.

Table 31 on the following page shows the acreage and maximum capacity on sites within Community Core areas that were identified as having development potential

² Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)(B)

for new housing. Lots were reviewed for geographical or environmental constraints and either removed from the inventory or the capacity was reduced to reflect a more realistic development potential. The methodology for estimating the reported 'maximum new units' was to divide the available unconstrained vacant acreage by the allowable maximum density in each of the applicable land use designations (i.e., two units per acre in the RR-1/2 designation, and 12 units per acre in the MUR designation). The realistic capacity estimate takes into account infrastructure constraints and reflects more typical densities by assuming 1 unit per acre for the land designated RR-1/2, which is 50 percent of the maximum capacity, and 8 units per acre for MUR, which is 67 percent of the maximum capacity.

One of the key sites included for higher density affordable housing is located within Sierra City. It is a 5.59-acre site zoned MUR, currently the site of a special occupancy park but does not include any permanent residences. This site makes up for half of the land available for higher density development with a maximum capacity of 67 units and a realistic capacity of 45 units. The new owner has approached the Planning Department about a potential project to develop several new units; however, no applications have been submitted.

An additional site included for affordable housing is in Campbell Hot Springs, an unincorporated community southeast of Sierraville. This site contains 158 acres designated for RR-1/2 and 5 acres for MUR development. The County has received an application for 40 units of attached higher-density employee housing units on this site; however, the project is currently on hold at the applicant's request. The MUR portion of the site has a maximum capacity for 60 units and a realistic capacity of 40 units included in the inventory.

Refer to Appendix A for an individual parcel list and maps of vacant residential sites identified in this table.

Table 28: Vacant Land Designated for Housing in Unincorporated Sierra County

	RR-1/2 (2 du/acre)			MUR and CR (12 du/ac)		
	Vacant acres *	Maximum New Units	Realistic Capacity	Vacant acres *	Maximum New Units	Realistic Capacity
Alleghany	1.3	2	1	0.89	7**	3
Goodyears Bar	7.13	6	4	0	0	0
Downieville	7.29	12	6	0	0	0
Sierra City	82.61	157	78	5.59	67	45
Sattley	0.94	1	1	0	0	0
Sierraville	158	316	158	5	60***	40
Totals	256.48	494	248	11.48	134	88

* Only completely vacant land is shown here. Thus, this column cannot be multiplied by density factors to result in total potential units. This column is provided as an inventory of vacant land, which could most readily be developed without the constraint of already existing development on site. It does not account for potential accessory dwelling units. The community of Sierra Brooks was not included in this analysis.

**MUR sites in Alleghany are smaller than 0.5 acre and inventoried as moderate/above moderate-income

*** Within Campbell Hot Springs.

Source: Sierra County Assessor's Office, 2020; Sierra County General Plan 2012; Ascent, 2020.

In addition to what is shown in Table 31, there is a vacant site in the Loyalton Area that is the site of the former Loyalton Mobile Home Park, which was demolished in 2018. The entire site is 12.09 acres, with 10.97 acres in the unincorporated county. The portion of the site within the county is zoned Commercial Residential (CR), which allows mobile home parks up to a maximum density of 12 units per acre. This is a prime opportunity site for affordable housing given the location and access to public water and sewer from the City of Loyalton. However, because the site has been occupied in the previous five years by lower-income residents, it can only be counted in the inventory if replacement housing is provided that is affordable at the same level. The Housing Element includes a program to work with the property owners to encourage affordable housing at this site, but the County will not be requiring replacement housing; therefore, the site is not officially included in the sites inventory.

Projected Accessory Dwelling Units

State law allows the county to count a reasonable projection of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) toward meeting the RHNA. The County has permitted three new secondary dwelling units since 2015 and is projecting five more over the course of the next five years. Based on average sales prices, these units are anticipated to be affordable to lower income households. Therefore, the County is including five lower income ADUs in the sites inventory.

Availability of Infrastructure

Most of the unincorporated area is served by individual water and septic systems. All unincorporated areas use septic systems with the exception of the Sierra Valley

Senior Citizens complex. The poor suitability of soils for septic systems throughout much of the county represents one of the greatest constraints to housing development. The small populations of the existing compact communities and the low density of housing elsewhere make the development of sewage treatment plants infeasible. While the County Health department prefer that new development include standard septic systems, engineered “alternative” septic system designs are also allowed in the county. (The State provides a Health Officer to oversee environmental health in the county; therefore, State regulations are used.) Several community water systems are at or near capacity, creating a further limitation.

Specific sewer/water concerns (and opportunities) in individual communities are discussed below:

- **Alleghany.** A number of septic systems have failed in recent years and numerous water systems have resulted in water quality problems. A grant has been secured to create one coordinated system to solve this problem. The inventory includes capacity for one single-family unit and three multifamily units in this area. Development on vacant lots identified in this community would all be on the community water system and individual septic systems.
- **Goodyears Bar.** Development is constrained by the lack of a public water system. A small private water system is at capacity though water rights are available. Development on vacant lots identified in this community would all be on individual well and septic systems, which is adequate to support the development of the four single-family units identified in the inventory.
- **Downieville.** Septic system failures occur occasionally. The public water system has capacity to accommodate additional growth, although the pipeline infrastructure is becoming quite old with frequent maintenance and repair issues. Development on vacant lots identified in this community would all be serviced by a public water district and utilize individual septic systems. Infrastructure can accommodate the additional six single-family units identified in the inventory.
- **Sierra City.** The private water systems have limited capacity, but generally have some surplus capacity to accommodate some additional growth. Lots identified in this community would all be serviced by either a well or private water company and utilize individual septic systems, but they would be able to support the available capacity to accommodate the RHNA of 78 single family units and 45 multifamily units.
- **Sattley** is experiencing no known water or septic problems. The one unit identified in the inventory would be on individual well and septic.
- **Sierraville.** A high water table results in occasional septic system failures, but engineered onsite wastewater treatment systems are currently

permitted as an option under the provisions of Sierra County’s Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP). The public water system was recently upgraded and has additional capacity. Further capacity is being sought through grants and private development. Lots identified in this community would all be serviced by either a well or public water company and utilize individual septic systems. There is a current design for an engineered septic system to support the multifamily units proposed at Campbell Hot Springs.

A number of options are available to reduce the sewer and water system limitation to housing development in the county, including:

- Continue to seek grants to construct and upgrade public water systems.
- Continue to allow engineered alternative septic system designs for housing constructed affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

Analysis of Governmental Constraints

Land Use Controls

The Sierra County General Plan establishes goals and policies that guide new development in the unincorporated areas of the county. The General Plan designates land uses within the county, including residential uses. The policies pertaining to residential uses establish and control the type, location, and density of residential development in the unincorporated areas of the county. The following are the General Plan residential land use designations:

- R – Residential
- RR – Rural Residential
- MUR – Multiple-Unit Residential
- PD – Planned Development
- OS – Open Space Residential

Part 15, Zoning Ordinance, of the Sierra County Code is the main implementing instrument for the land use policies set forth in the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance lists permitted land uses within each zone and sets development standards with which the permitted land uses must comply. Table 29 lists the primary residential zoning districts in Sierra County.

In addition to these residential zones, some residential uses are permitted in the General Forest (GF) and Agricultural (A1) districts, as shown in Table 30.

Table 29: Residential Zoning Districts
Sierra County
2016

Designation		District	Primary Residential Type
General Plan	Zoning		
RR 1/2-1	R1, RR-1	Residential One Family	Single-family dwelling
MUR	R2	Residential One and Two Family	Single-family dwelling or two one-family attached units (duplex)
MUR	R3	Residential Multiple Family	One-family or two-family dwellings, or multiple-family dwellings
R	RR-1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 4, 5, 10	Rural Residential	Single-family dwelling, mobile homes ¹
R	OS-20, 40, 60, 80, 160	Open Space Residential	Single-family dwelling, mobile homes ¹
PD	PD	Planned Development	Various

Note: (1) mobile homes are permitted in the Rural Residential and Open Space Residential zones as a conditional use.

Source: Sierra County Code – Part 15 – Zoning

Table 30 depicts the housing types permitted by each residential district. Some housing types are allowed by-right in the zoning district, while others require a conditional use permit. Modular homes are allowed in all residential districts of the county. Certain areas have a Modular Home Standards Overlay. This overlay contains requirements for the year the structure was built and architectural standards. Area suppliers of this type of housing have no difficulty in meeting these standards.

Table 30: Housing Types Permitted by Zoning District

Housing Types Permitted	R1	R2	R3	GF	RR	OS	A1
Single-Family Residential	P	P	P	P	C	C	P
Duplexes	X	P	P	X	X	X	X
Multifamily (Triplexes, Fourplexes, and 5+ Units per Structure)	X	X	P	X	X	X	X
Manufactured Homes ¹	C	X	C	C	P	C	P
Second Units	P	P	X	X	C	C	P
Emergency Shelters	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Transitional Housing	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Supportive Housing	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Single-Room Occupancy	P	P	P	X	X	X	X
Farmworker Housing ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Convalescent/Nursing Home (more than six persons)	X	X	C	X	X	X	
Residential Care Homes (6 persons or fewer) ³	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes: P = Permitted Use, C= Conditional Use Permit, X=Not Permitted

¹Modular and manufactured homes permitted in most zoning districts.

²The County currently classifies permits farmworker housing as caretaker residences, inconsistent with state law. Currently, Caretakers residences are permitted in other, non-residential zone districts. Implementation of Measure 4.3 will permit farm labor housing for six or fewer people in all zones that permit single family units and farm labor housing providing up to 36 beds, or 12 units, in all zones that allow agricultural uses.

³The County does not currently permit residential care homes for six or fewer persons in residential zones.

Implementation Measure 4.4 will amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow these housing units by right in all zones that allow single family residential use.

Source: Sierra County Zoning Code, 2016

The County amended the Zoning Code in April 2016 to ensure requirements for emergency services, transitional housing, and supportive housing are the same as for any residential use; that these forms of housing will be allowed without discretionary review in any zone allowing residential uses, subject only to those requirements and restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same time in the same zone. The amendment defines an emergency shelter, supportive housing, and transitional housing as follows:

- “Emergency Shelter” shall mean housing with minimal support services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person, where no individual or household may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.
- “Supportive Housing” shall mean housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the target population and that is linked to on-site or off-site services that assist the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing,

improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible, work in the community.

- “Target Population” shall mean persons with low incomes who have one or more disabilities, including mental illness, HIV, or AIDS, substance abuse, or other chronic health condition, or individuals eligible for services provided pursuant to the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Division 4.5 (commencing with Section 4500) of the Welfare and Institutions Code) and may include, among other populations, adults, emancipated minors, families with children, elderly persons, young adults aging out of the foster care system, individuals exiting from institutional settings, veterans, and homeless people.
- “Transitional Housing” shall mean rental housing operated under program requirements that call for the termination of assistance and recirculation of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at some predetermined future point in time, which shall be no less than six months from the beginning of the assistance.

Farmers provide what little seasonal farmworker housing is needed. Farmworker housing is permitted as caretakers’ units in Agricultural and General Forest (GF) districts with an approved special-use permit. Second dwelling units are allowable in the R-1, R-2, RR, and Open Space (OS) zoning districts, with certain restrictions on the maximum size and proximity to the primary residence. Implementation Measure 4.3 will amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow farm labor housing that serves six or fewer persons shall be treated as a single family unit and shall be permitted by right in all districts that permit single family units by right, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.5. The amendment shall also permit farm labor housing that provides up to 36 beds or 12 units shall be permitted by right in all zones that allow agricultural uses, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6.

The County’s Zoning Ordinance does not currently explicitly allow residential care facilities serving six or fewer persons. In compliance with state law, the County will implement Measure 4.4 to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow these facilities as a use by right in all zones that allow single family residential use and will identify districts in which residential care facilities for more than six persons, including group homes, may be located with a conditional use permit.

The County administers minimal land use controls. The County does not have growth controls, or any other land use controls outside of zoning on residential development. The County’s zoning and development standards, such as height, lot coverage, setbacks, and parking are minimal and do not impede the ability to achieve the maximum density within any given zoning district. For example, in the R-3 district, even with the most conservative estimates, a multifamily development could easily achieve the maximum density with 1,200-square-foot unit sizes. The County does administer a courtyard requirement for multifamily that controls spacing between buildings; however, this standard is negligible and does not

constrain multifamily development. Further, the County does not require minimum-unit sizes beyond state health and safety standards and minimum lot or parcel sizes are required to uphold sewage disposal standards.

Table 31 sets forth the development standards under each residential zone. For the PD district, the applicable standards shall be as specified in the use permit, except for parking. The County does not have a maximum density for its zoning districts, although the County General Plan proposes a range of densities for its residential land use designations. A project must satisfy the development standards identified in Table 31.

Table 31: Development Standards in Residential Districts

Standard	R-1	R-2	R-3
Permitted Uses	One single family dwelling per lot or parcel.	One single family dwelling or two one-family attached units (duplex) per lot or parcel.	One family or two family dwellings, or multiple family dwellings.
Setbacks	Front yard, 20 feet; Side yard, 5 feet, 15 feet on street side of corner lot; Rear yard, 25 feet.	Front yard, 20 feet; Side yard, 5 feet, 15 feet on street side of corner lot; Rear yard, 25 feet.	Front yard, 20 feet; Side yard, 5 feet, 15 feet on street side of corner lot; Rear yard, 20 feet. (1)
Lot Coverage	Lot or parcel width of 60 feet. 60% of lot or parcel shall be open and clear of structures.	X	Lot or parcel width of 60 feet. 60% of lot or parcel shall be open and clear of structures.
Minimum Lot Size	8,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and sewerage system; 10,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and individual sewerage disposal system; one acre when an individual private well and an individual sewerage disposal system are used.	8,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and sewerage system; 10,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and individual sewerage disposal system; one acre when an individual private well and an individual sewerage disposal system are used.	8,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and sewerage system; 10,000 square feet when connected to an approved public water system and individual sewerage disposal system; one acre when an individual private well and an individual sewerage disposal system are used.
Parking	One off-street parking space for each dwelling or housing unit or guest house	One off-street parking space for each dwelling or housing unit or guest house	One off-street parking space for each dwelling or housing unit or guest house
Maximum Height	Two stories not to exceed 35 feet	Two stories not to exceed 35 feet.	No main building shall exceed 40 feet in height, and no accessory building shall exceed 25 feet in height.

(1) Distance Between Buildings on Same Lot or Parcel: Minimum distance of 20 feet between buildings used for dwelling purposes. Minimum distance of 10 feet between a building used for dwelling purposes and an accessory building. Minimum distance of 6 feet between accessory buildings.

X – Not listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Typical building densities for the residential zones are as follows:

- R-1: 2 units per acre. However, some densities may be as low as one dwelling unit per 10 acres, if the Site Performance (SP) combining zone is applied.
- R-2: 8 units per acre
- R-3: 12 units per acre

Codes and Enforcement

Sierra County enforces the 2019 California Building Standards Code. No additional regulations or amendments have been adopted by the County that would hinder or add cost to development. The County conducts code enforcement on a complaint basis. In instances where it becomes known that construction is being done without a permit, the County makes an effort to bring the structure into compliance with the Code to ensure the health and safety of present and future occupants.

The County does not have a formal procedure for providing reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the enforcement of building codes and the issuance of building permits. This Housing Element includes a program to adopt a reasonable accommodation ordinance.

On-/Off-site Improvement Standards

Nearly all existing vacant residential parcels identified in the Land Inventory require sewage disposal, water, and access as most of the unincorporated area is served by individual water and septic systems. Homebuilders are not required to widen streets or put in sidewalks and gutters. Encroachment permits are required for access onto State and County roads. Work and costs involved can range from zero for an acceptable existing encroachment to several thousand after widening the driveway, installing culverts, and paving the entrance of the encroachment. Street improvements are generally not required for home construction. Normally, street improvements are required during the subdivision process.

Potable water is required for domestic purposes. Two communities provide water through special districts. Other areas may have small private water companies, or developers must rely on surface water, springs, or wells. The costs involved in developing water sources are as varied as the methods of supplying it.

A regular septic tank and leach lines are the only approved methods of sewage disposal in the county. With materials and installation labor costs, these generally run several thousand dollars.

Fees and Exactions

Planning fees are administered on an “actual cost” basis to recover all or part of the actual cost of processing overhead, calculated on a \$65 per hour basis, plus an application review fee of \$100. An estimated cost for processing an application is determined based on previous similar projects and a deposit in this amount is required. The Planning Department tracks all expenses associated with the project and will either determine that the estimated costs are sufficient, request an additional deposit of more funds, or complete a refund to the applicant. Applications that require a deposit included, but are not limited to, minor and major special use permits, variances, zone amendments, General Plan amendments, parcel map subdivisions, site plan review, and more. If the deposit is insufficient to

cover the cost of reviewing the application and implementing the service or program, the County will notify the applicant of the additional amount required. The only development impact fee charged in the county is from the Sierra County Fire Protection District 1, which covers most of Eastern Sierra County. The current (2020) fee is \$1.25 per square foot. No other impact fees including school district fees are charged in the county.

The fees presented in Table 32 are comparable to surrounding counties and cities and therefore do not provide a hindrance or constraint to promote affordable housing and housing in the County.

Table 32: Estimated Planning and Development Fees

Fee Category	Est. Fee Amount
Variance	\$1,500
Conditional Use Permit, minor	\$600
Conditional Use Permit, major	\$1,500+
General Plan Amendment	\$2,000+
Zone Change	\$2,000+
SUBDIVISION	
Certificate of Compliance	\$1,000+
Lot Line Adjustment	\$1,500+
Parcel Merger	\$1,500+
Tentative Parcel Map (≤ 4)	\$2,000+
Tentative/Final Map (> 4)	\$4000+
ENVIRONMENTAL	
Categorical/Statutory Exemption	\$50
Negative Declaration (Consult. Cost + DFW Fee)	\$12,000+
Mitigated Negative Declaration (Consult. Cost + DFW Fee)	\$12,000+
Environmental Impact Report (Consult. Cost + DFW Fee)	\$100K+
IMPACT	
School	\$0
Fire Impact Fee – SCFPD #1	\$1.25/sq.ft.

Source: Sierra County Planning and Building Department; Res. 2018-024

Processing and Permit Procedures

Sierra County strictly adheres to the Permit Streamlining Act to prevent lengthy permit review processes. A streamlined permit process promotes growth, reduces costs associated with construction, and encourages developers looking to create employment and affordable housing.

Ministerial permits, such as buildings, additions, or rehabilitation are usually processed within 5 to 12 business days. Minor entitlements, such as Zone Variance or Conditional Use Permits, often have processing times of four to eight

weeks (Table 33), depending on the required environmental review. Projects requiring Board of Supervisor approval and environmental analysis or review can be expected to take six months or longer.

Table 33: Timelines for Permit Procedures

Type of Approval or Permit	Typical Processing Time
Conditional Use Permit	3-6 months
Zone Change	3-4 months
General Plan Amendment	4-6 months
Tentative/Final Maps	6-12 months
Parcel Maps	6 months
Initial Environmental Study	1-3 months
Environmental Impact Report	1 year
Zone Variance	1-3 months

Source: Sierra County Planning Department, 2020.

Most development in Sierra County is single-family residences. Permits for the residences are almost exclusively applied for by the owner/potential resident and are often built by a licensed contractor or the owner/builder. Building permits for single-family residences are checked for zoning compliance, life and safety review, structural review, waste disposal and water, and fire regulations. In addition, the Sierra County General Plan and County Code do outline some “special treatment areas” and overlay zones for scenic corridors or special-use areas. These applications can require site plan review entitlements (discretionary review) and may have to comply with exterior design standards or location-specific criteria, depending on the overlay zone. Any permits outside of special overlay districts are not subject to aesthetic design review.

Most subdivisions in Sierra County have historically been created through the tentative parcel map (TPM), creating no more than four parcels. If the tentative parcel map is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), it can take only three to four months. If CEQA is required, the TPM process can take an additional 6 to 12 months. The Sierra County Code process for approving a Parcel Map with greater than four resulting parcels is similar to the TPM, and as a result, it often falls within a similar time frame to approve the map.

Sierra County historically has not required extensive infrastructure improvements for subdivision developers, attempting to keep the costs lower and promote growth. Sierra County has most often required that the developer only meet State and County codes as related to the road conditions and Cal Fire conditions of fire safety.

The County does not require residents to obtain any special permits to retrofit homes for disabled accessibility (e.g., wheelchair ramps) beyond regular building permits. The Building Department, upon request, may offer suggestions on the

construction of home features designed to improve accessibility for disabled persons.

Constraints on Persons with Disabilities

Under Senate Bill (SB) 520, which became effective January 1, 2002, a Housing Element is required to analyze potential and actual constraints upon the development, maintenance, and improvement of housing for persons with disabilities, and to demonstrate local efforts to remove governmental constraints that hinder the locality from meeting the need for housing for persons with disabilities (California Government Code, Section 65583(a)(4)). In accordance with the provisions of SB 520, the following section analyzes constraints on housing for persons with disabilities.

Sierra County requires compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) on all commercial buildings. Other than requiring compliance with ADA, the County has no policies or regulations that would discriminate, hamper, or make housing for persons with disabilities difficult and has in place processes for reasonable accommodation applications.

As previously discussed, in 2016, a total of 266 persons between the ages 18 to 64 had a disability in the unincorporated county, 28 of whom were in the labor force. Also, in 2016, there were 105 persons over the age of 65 who reported having a disability. There are currently no facilities in the county that strictly serve disabled persons. It is assumed that disabled persons in the county are generally taken care of by family members, in their own home, or under the care of persons in an unregulated private home.

One reason for the lack of housing for persons with disabilities may be constraints on this type of housing imposed by governmental ordinances and procedures. This analysis looks at three general categories of potential constraints: Zoning and land use, permits and processing procedures, and building codes. The analysis is based on the SB 520 checklist provided by HCD to local jurisdictions.

Zoning and Land Use

In compliance with State law, the County's will implement Measure 4.4 to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow these residential care facilities for six or fewer persons as a use by right in all zones that allow single family residential use and will identify districts in which facilities for more than six persons, including group homes, may be located with a conditional use permit. Following this amendment, the County's Zoning Ordinance will not unduly restrict the placement of residential care facilities that could serve disabled persons.

No special design or permitting standards have been established for residential care facilities other than the requirements for a conditional use permit. The County's Zoning Ordinance does not establish special standards or requirements for residential care facilities that would serve adult disabled persons, such as occupancy standards or siting requirements. The conclusion is that the County's

zoning and land use regulations do not represent a significant constraint on development of housing for persons with disabilities.

The County Zoning Ordinance applies the same requirements for parking spaces to housing projects that are exclusively occupied by seniors and persons with disabilities as to other projects.

The County has included Implementation Measure 5.1 to address housing discrimination and refer residents to resources. Additionally, the County will review all its zoning laws, policies, and practices for compliance with fair housing law, including occupancy standards.

Analysis of Non-Governmental Constraints

Not all constraints to development are governmental. Land costs, construction costs, environmental constraints, and financing all play a role in the feasibility of new development.

Environmental Constraints

Some land in Sierra County is unavailable for development because of environmental features. These features either pose a hazard to those who may choose to build in the area or diminish valuable resources. As a result, builders avoid these areas because they understand the danger involved or do not wish to incur the added cost of building in these areas. These features include geologic hazards, soils with low permeability, and excessive slopes.

These constraints affect land use categories that can accommodate single-family residences. In most cases, the presence of these constraints will not preclude development of a single-family home on a minimum five-acre parcel, but may limit the placement of a home.

Environmentally constrained lands may also limit the subdivision potential of some parcels. Areas that permit multifamily units are not affected, as environmentally constrained lands are not designated for such use.

- **Geologic Hazards** - The most common geologic hazard that must be considered in Sierra County is the potential for wet season landslides and rock falls where man has altered natural conditions. Soils on slopes of up to 50 percent contain the combination of factors that could pose landslide problems when human activities are superimposed on natural conditions.
- **Soils with low permeability rates** - Most parts of the county are not served with public sewer systems, and therefore, must rely on septic systems. In some parts of the county, septic systems cannot be used because the soils have low-permeability rates that prevent effective operation of septic tank systems.

- Excessive slopes - In areas with a slope of 20 percent or more, improvements for accessibility, site preparation, and sewage disposal are very difficult. As a result, these areas are generally avoided, or more costly systems are required. Parcels with slopes exceeding 30 percent are generally un-developable for residential purposes (current Environmental Health standards preclude development of septic systems on slopes greater than 30 percent). However, most of these lands are within resource-designated lands that do not have significant residential development potential.
- Water quality - Some areas in the county lack sufficient water for development (either surface or groundwater). In addition, there are areas where there may appear to be sufficient water but the potability is affected by heavy metals or minerals, such as arsenic, mercury, sodium, chloride, and boron.
- Flood Hazard - Development in flood hazard areas can result in property damage and loss of life. Additionally, if the County allows development in these areas, it also runs the risk of losing its eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Cultural Resources - There is potential for historical and/or cultural resources (e.g., Native American village sites, gold mining camps) to constrain housing development in the county.

Land Costs

Economic trends over the past decade have contributed to increased demand for land and housing. As a result, land and housing costs have increased significantly in Sierra County. These cost increases have been moderated somewhat by lower financing costs. The overall impact, however, is that low- and moderate-income households find it more difficult to purchase or rent housing in the county than they did a decade ago.

A review of residential land available for sale during 2020 indicates that:

- The average cost of a residential lot (less than five acres) with public water and/or sewer service is \$99,960, with asking prices ranging from \$18,000 to \$197,000. The average price per acre is approximately \$62,926.
- The average cost of a residential parcel of five acres or more is \$273,800 with prices ranging from \$125,000 to \$499,000. The average price per acre is approximately \$7,927.

Construction Costs

According to the Craftsman Book Company, in 2020, the construction cost for a wood-framed, single-story, four-cornered home in Sierra County is estimated to be approximately \$282,482 to \$282,697, depending on the location within the county. This cost excludes the cost of buying land; the estimate is based on a 2,000-square-foot house of good quality construction, including a two-car garage and forced air heating. Table 34 summarizes the projected construction costs based on the home's location within the county, by its zip area (first three digits of the zip code).

Table 34: Single-Family Home Construction Cost Estimates

Item Name	Zip Area 959			Zip Area 961		
	Materials	Labor	Equipment	Materials	Labor	Equipment
Direct Job Costs ¹	\$110,978	\$114,328	\$5,047	\$112,075	\$113,358	\$5,096
Indirect Job Costs ²	\$18,106	\$1,774	--	\$18,119	\$1,775	--
Contractor Markup	\$32,249	--	--	\$32,274	--	--
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$161,333</i>	<i>\$116,102</i>	<i>\$5,047</i>	<i>\$162,468</i>	<i>\$115,133</i>	<i>\$5,096</i>
Total Cost	\$282,482			\$282,697		

¹ Includes foundation, plumbing, materials, etc.

² Includes insurance, plans and specifications, etc.

Source: *Building-Cost.net*, accessed September 2020.

According to this estimate, the cost per square foot of construction of a single-family home is approximately \$141 per square foot. Typically, the larger the dwelling unit, the lower the construction cost per square foot. According to the HCD 2020 State Income Limits, the household estimate for Sierra County is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Mobile homes, rental apartments, and ADUs can provide affordable rental alternatives for extremely low- and very low-income households. However, market rents in some areas of the County may still be unaffordable to some of these households. Regulatory incentives, financial incentives, and financial assistance can bring these development costs down, as the County has shown with two affordable rental apartment projects constructed since 1988. Ongoing rental assistance, such as Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) may be necessary in addition to incentives for rental apartment construction to maintain affordability for extremely low- and very low-income households.

Availability of Financing

The primary factor related to home finance affecting housing affordability and availability is the cost of borrowing money (interest rates). Historically, substantial changes in interest rates have correlated with swings in home sales. When interest rates decline, sales increase. The reverse has been true when interest rates

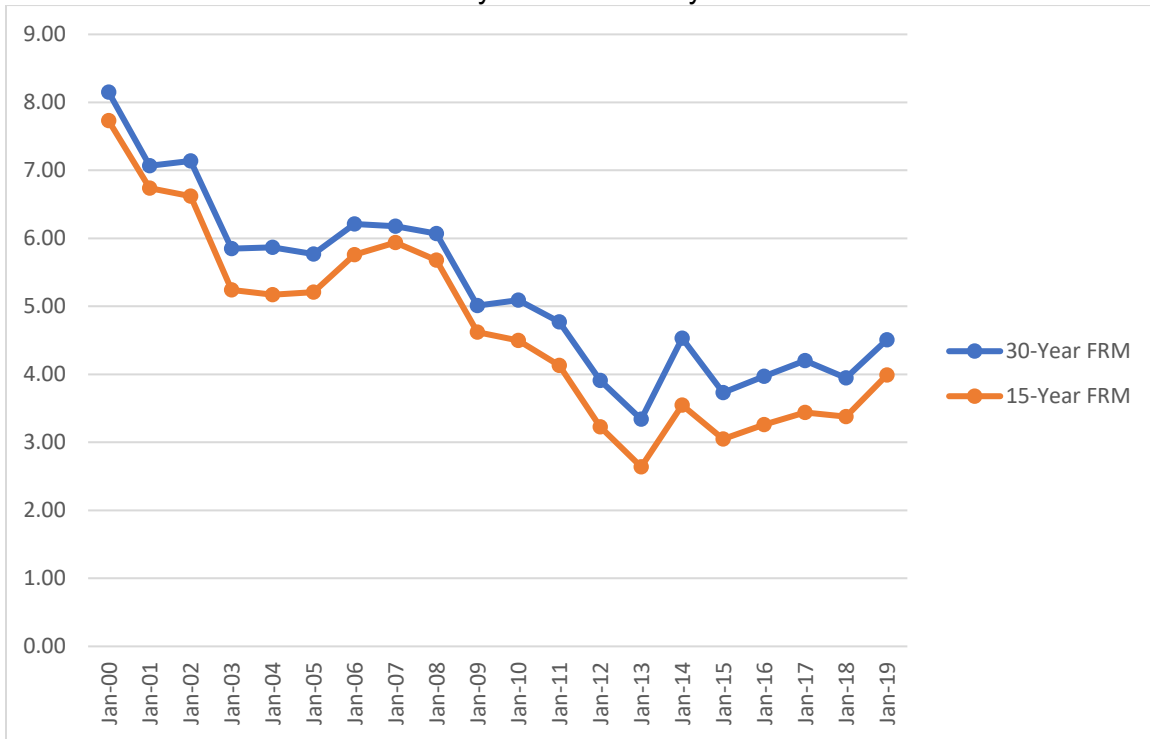
increase. Market factors impact these interest rates; however, they are largely determined by the Federal Reserve Board's monetary policy.

The 2008 mortgage banking crisis was largely precipitated by "creative" mortgage products, such as variable and adjustable mortgage rates, "stated income" loans with no income verification, interest-only loans, graduated payment mortgages, and zero-down payment loans. These mortgage products increased homeownership rates but allowed customers to purchase housing without sufficient income levels by traditional loan qualifications. Many of these homeowners owed more on their homes than their homes were worth, ultimately resulting in huge rates of foreclosures.

Since the mortgage banking crisis that began in 2008, financing availability has shifted. The federal government tightened lending standards on subprime loans by passing the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (2010). This legislation is intended to regulate loan interest rates through setting requirements for a "qualified mortgage."

National mortgage rates decreased from 2007 until 2013, when they reached a historic low, and have since begun to slowly increase (see Figure 2). When interest rates are high, the market typically responds with a decrease in housing prices. Similarly, if rates decrease, housing prices rise. There is often a lag in the market during this fluctuation period, causing housing prices to remain high; during this time, lower-income households find it most difficult to purchase a home.

Figure 2
Historical Mortgage Rates
 United States
 January 2000 – January 2019



Note: FRM- Fixed Rate Mortgage

Source: Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey, 2019.

Energy Conservation

Energy-related costs could directly impact the affordability of housing in Sierra County. Title 24 of the California Administrative Code sets forth mandatory energy standards for new development. Subsequently, the housing industry must meet these standards and the County is responsible for enforcing the energy conservation regulations. Alternatives that are available to the housing industry to meet the energy standards include:

1. A passive solar approach that requires suitable solar orientation, appropriate levels of thermal mass, south-facing windows, and moderate insulation levels.
2. Higher levels of insulation than what is previously required, but not requiring thermal mass or window orientation requirements.
3. Active solar water heating in exchange for less-stringent insulation and/or glazing requirements.

Three utility companies serve the county, Liberty Utilities in the southeast region of the county and the City of Loyaltan, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)

in Western Sierra County, and Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative in Sierra Valley and Long Valley areas.

Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is a member-owned electric Cooperative offering electric service to Plumas, Sierra, and Lassen Counties within California, and Washoe County in Nevada. The company offers a variety of low-income assistance programs, including a Winter Rate Assistance Program, Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance and Weatherization Assistance, and Personal Crisis and Emergency Assistance. Plumas REC also offers rebate programs for residences, including an Energy Star Appliance and Lighting Rebate Program, Weatherization Rebates, Irrigation Efficiency Program, Irrigation Pump Test Rebate Program, and HVAC Rebate Program.

Sierra Pacific Power and Nevada Power merged into Nevada Energy. Liberty Utilities acquired Nevada Energy's California operations, also known as CalPeco Electric LLC. As a subsidiary of Liberty Energy Utilities, CalPeco Electric was founded in 2010 and is based in South Lake Tahoe, California.

PG&E is a privately owned utility whose service area covers most of northern and central California. PG&E also provides energy conservation services for residents, as well as energy assistance programs for lower income households to help lower income households to conserve energy and control utility costs. These programs include the CARE program and the Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help (REACH) programs. The REACH program provides one-time energy assistance to customers who have no other way to pay their energy bills. The intent of REACH is to assist low-income households, particularly seniors, disabled, sick, working poor and the unemployed, who experience hardships and are unable to pay for their necessary energy needs. PG&E has also sponsored rebate programs that encourage customers to purchase more energy-efficient appliances and heating and cooling systems.

Weatherization programs continue in Sierra County largely through the work of the Plumas County Community Development Commission.

Chapter Four: Evaluation

State law (Govt. Code Section 65588) requires each jurisdiction to identify specific programs that will allow it to implement policies and achieve housing goals and objectives. At the beginning of each Housing Element update, the programs from the previous element are required to be evaluated for effectiveness and progress in achieving housing goals and objectives.

The 2014 Housing Element contained 31 specific programs designed to meet the County's overall goal of providing an adequate supply of affordable housing units for both current and future county residents — regardless of race, age, religion, sex, marital status, ethnic background or personal disabilities. Some of the highlighted accomplishments from the preceding Housing Element cycle are listed below:

- The voters approved a fee increase for water and sewage facilities and the County secured a \$3.2 million grant for the Sierra Brooks community water system improvements.
- The County received \$890,000 to rehabilitate 50 housing units at Sierra Valley Senior Apartments.
- The County updated the Zoning Code to provide supportive housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelters without discretionary review ("by right") in any zone allowing residential uses.

A detailed evaluation of the implementation programs from the previous Housing Element is contained in Appendix B: Evaluation of Sierra County 2018 Housing Element Policies & Programs.

Chapter Five: Housing Program

Under California law, the Housing Element must include the community's goals, policies, quantified objectives, and housing programs for the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing. This Housing Element sets out policies that guide the County toward reaching its housing goals. Implementation measures are actions the County will take to implement its policies. The implementation measures include a specific time frame for implementation and identify the agencies or officials responsible for implementation.

Overall Housing Goal

To provide an adequate supply of sound, affordable housing units in a safe and pleasant environment that enhance community quality of life for the present and future residents of the County, regardless of race, age, religion, sex, marital status, ethnic background or disabilities.

Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Accommodate the County's Housing Allocation

The County shall plan to accommodate at least six dwelling units between 2019 and 2023 in order to meet its share of the State's housing needs for this region.

Policies:

Policy 1.1: The County will not impose any requirement for construction other than those mandated by State law or those necessary to maintain the health and safety of citizens.

Policy 1.2: Whenever the County updates its Zoning Ordinance, General Plan or community plans, it shall consider the need to provide additional land for various types of residential development.

Policy 1.3: The County shall strive to provide adequate services for development of housing units by assisting in the expansion of water and sewer facilities, as appropriate and feasible.

Implementation Measures:

1.1 Permit Review: The County shall periodically review its permit procedures to increase efficiency by reducing the cost and time of processing permits but still remain effective and meet legal review requirements. This review will be conducted as part of the County's ongoing permit streamlining program.

Objective: Reduction of time and cost to developers.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Time Frame: Review annually

Funding: Permits fee, General Fund

- 1.2 Improvement of Community Water and Sewage Facilities:** In an effort of any local community to improve their environmental health and housing expansion possibilities by providing some form of community water and/or sewage treatment facilities, the County will provide assistance and encouragement in the form of supporting resolutions and providing assistance in obtaining grants. Assistance will be provided by the County to developers to create and maintain joint or shared sewage disposal systems for new subdivisions. Assistance will be provided by the County to the communities of Alleghany, Downieville, Sierra City, Calpine, and Verdi to identify the potential inadequacies of their systems, provide solutions and identification of and assistance with obtaining grants.

Objective: To improve and expand local water and sewer services and remove infrastructure constraints to new housing.

Responsible Agency: Board of Supervisors, Public Works Department

Time Frame: Will review infrastructure grant funding opportunities on a bi-annual basis

Funding: Grants, General Fund

- 1.3 Water and Sewer Priority:** Pursuant to Government Code section 65589.7 the County will immediately deliver its adopted Housing Element to water and sewer providers describing the content of the Housing Element, including the County's housing needs and share of the Regional Housing Need related to water and sewer service to developments which include affordable to lower-income households.

Objective: To communicate new housing objectives to affected water and sewer providers.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Time Frame: Immediately following adoption of Housing Element.

Funding: General Fund

Goal 2: Provide Affordable Housing

The County shall strive for the production of housing that will be affordable to serve the needs of lower-income households in the county.

Policies:

Policy 2.1: The County shall provide opportunities for the development of a variety of affordable housing types.

Policy 2.2: The County shall allow for the transfer of development rights to allow for clustered family/farm worker housing complexes.

Policy 2.3: The County will continue to allow manufactured housing on parcels zoned for single family residences, allow permits for State-licensed mobile home parks, and will not adopt unreasonable restrictions regarding their size or architectural features which would prevent manufactured housing from being placed in these areas.

Policy 2.4: The County will continue to allow second units in conjunction with single-family residences.

Policy 2.5: The County shall allow housing developments with at least 20 percent affordable housing by-right on lower-income housing sites that have been counted in previous housing element cycles, consistent with AB 1397. *(New Policy)*

Implementation Measures:

2.1 County Support of Low and Moderate Income Housing Development:

The County will encourage, support, and assist agencies and developers to apply for funds from available State and Federal programs to provide housing for extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income households, including special needs households such as seniors. The County will provide support services such as:

- Helping identify sites where low and moderate income housing will not conflict with existing zoning regulations;
- Applying for state and federal funds on behalf of housing providers when funding sources require public agency involvement. Funds should include costs for building permit fees and inspections;
- Supporting funding applications by housing providers;
- Offering regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, for projects that include housing units affordable to very low- and/or low-income

households, provided that enforceable commitments are secured to ensure that units continue as affordable housing for target groups;

The County shall provide information to developers of the funds available from state and federal programs to provide housing for extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Information brochures shall be printed and made available at County offices, libraries, and other public agencies, and shall be posted on the County website.

Objective: 4 units of affordable housing

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Time Frame: At least twice in the planning period and ongoing as needed

Funding: State and Federal Grant Programs (CDBG, HOME, USDA Rural Housing Services)

2.2 Density Bonus: The County will amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Density Bonus consistent with state law.

Objective: The development of housing units affordable to lower income households.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors

Time Frame: Implement with update of Zoning Ordinance

Funding: General Fund

2.3 Expansion of Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8): The County shall continue to coordinate with the Nevada County Housing Development Corporation to provide Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) allocations for Sierra County.

Objective: Additional resources to assist 10 lower income households.

Responsible Agency: Health and Human Services

Time Frame: Annually

Funding: General Fund

- 2.4 Replacement of High-Density Housing:** The County shall work with the property owner of the former Loyalton area mobile home park to encourage the development of affordable housing on the site. The County shall also consider potential zoning changes to allow higher density development. *(New Program)*

Objective: At least 50 units of affordable housing

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Timeframe: Coordinate at least once annually

Funding: General Fund

- 2.5 Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance:** The County shall adopt an ordinance allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) (i.e., second units) consistent with State law. The County shall develop and distribute promotional materials to encourage the development of ADUs. *(New Program)*

Objective: 5 new accessory dwelling units

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Timeframe: December 2022

Funding: SB 2, LEAP, or General Fund

<p>Goal 3: Maintenance, Rehabilitation, and Replacement of Existing Housing The County will continue to assist in the rehabilitation of substandard dwelling units and the abatement of dangerous residential structures through code enforcement.</p>

Policies

Policy 3.1: The County shall continue to provide housing rehabilitation assistance to low-income homeowners throughout the unincorporated communities.

Policy 3.2: The County will continue to enforce the California Building Standards Code, Fire Safe Codes, and the Health and Safety Regulations.

Implementation Measures:

- 3.1 Housing Rehabilitation:** The County shall apply for State and Federal assistance through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for technical assistance to conduct a survey to assess resident housing conditions and explore a program to finance the rehabilitation of substandard homes in the county. The County shall support the efforts of other agencies in pursuit of this same effort. If funded, the County will continue its existing housing rehabilitation program. The County will continue to retain Plumas County Community Development Commission or create a new commission to seek housing grants, loans, and programs.

Objective: Rehabilitation of 2 substandard housing units.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Time Frame: Apply for funding by 2023

Funding: CDBG, HOME, USDA Rural Housing Services

- 3.2 Energy Conservation:** The County will continue to participate in programs and policy development that encourage energy conservation. The County shall support other agencies that offer home weatherization programs and other technological advancements related to resource use and production by providing information to the public and referrals on the programs and seek program funds. Examples of County participation include: incentives to promote alternative or higher density housing within existing communities by encouraging green building techniques, green building materials, energy cost reductions, and coordination with serving utilities to encourage energy conservation retrofits. The County will continue to implement weatherization programs, adoption and implementation of the Green Building Code, continued promotion of solar and wind energy solutions, and continued use of proper wood heating—all of which are in compliance with State law.

Objective: Providing information to the public about available weatherization programs and promote energy conservation.

Responsible Agency: Planning and Building Departments, Board of Supervisors.

Time Frame: Ongoing

Funding: Grants, General Fund

3.3 Code Compliance: The County will continue to encourage voluntary code compliance by providing guidance and technical assistance to residents who wish to make their own repairs. The County will support local educational and home repair clinics by supplying fliers and announcement of the clinic on the County website.

Objective: Preserving the County’s housing stock.

Responsible Agency: Building and Development Services, Board of Supervisors

Time Frame: Ongoing, Annually

Funding: Permit fees, General Fund

Goal 4: Meet Special Housing Needs
The County shall encourage the construction of sufficient housing units necessary to meet the needs of households with special housing requirements. The County shall also work towards eliminating barriers to the disabled throughout the County.

Policies:

Policy 4.1: The County shall encourage a variety of housing types to meet the special housing needs of the diverse population.

Policy 4.2: The County will encourage the inclusion of units designed to accommodate wheelchair bound, blind and other physically restricted persons in new or rehabilitated multifamily projects of more than four units which are funded through Community Development Block Grants or other federal/state sources.

Implementation Measures:

4.1 Incentives for Special Needs Housing: The County shall use a variety of incentives including zoning and land use controls, flexible development standards, technical assistance, and expedited processing to promote housing that meets the needs of special groups (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with developmental disabilities, farmworkers, large households, extremely low income and the homeless).

Objective: Facilitate the development of housing for special needs groups.

Responsibility: Planning Department, Building Division.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Funding Sources: General Fund

- 4.2 Senior Housing:** The County shall encourage private developers, nonprofit groups and other interested parties to construct housing projects that serve seniors. As part of this effort, the County shall meet with governmental agencies, nonprofit groups and other agencies that are involved with senior citizens to ensure that the necessary support services for senior residents in Sierra County are provided. Senior housing projects that include onsite support services shall be given special consideration by the County.

Objective: 10 senior housing units

Responsibility: Planning Department, Building Division.

Timeframe: Coordinate with prospective developers twice during the planning period

Funding Sources: Grants (CDBG, HOME, USDA Rural Housing Services), General Fund

- 4.3 Farm Labor Housing:** The County shall update the Zoning Ordinance to state that farm labor housing that serves six or fewer persons shall be treated as a single family unit and shall be permitted by right in all districts that permit single family units by right, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.5. The County shall also update the Zoning Ordinance to state that farm labor housing that provides up to 36 beds or 12 units shall be permitted by right in all zones that allow agricultural uses, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6.

Objective: Update Zoning Ordinance to permit farm labor housing by right in certain zones, in accordance with State law.

Responsibility: Planning Department

Timeframe: December 2021

Funding Source: General Fund

- 4.4 Zoning for Residential Care Facilities:** In conformance with the Lanterman Act and Health and Safety Code Section 1566.3, the County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to explicitly allow licensed residential care facilities serving six or fewer persons as a use by right in all zones that allow single family residential use. The County shall clearly identify districts in which facilities serving more than six persons, including but not limited to group homes, may be located subject to a conditional use permit.

Objective: Update Zoning Ordinance to identify where license residential care facilities may be located.

Responsibility: Planning Department

Timeframe: December 2021

Funding Source: General Fund

4.5 Removal of Housing Constraints for Persons with Disabilities: The County shall establish a reasonable accommodation policy or procedure separate from a variance or CUP for providing exception in zoning and land use for housing for persons with disabilities.

Objective: Removal of possible governmental constraints to the development of housing for persons with disabilities.

Responsibility: Planning Department, Building Department.

Timeframe: December 2021

Funding Sources: General Fund

4.6 Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing: The County shall continue to support non-profit and other social service organizations and encourage the maintenance and development of emergency and transitional housing for the citizens of the County, by providing incentives, such as fee reductions and modifications to development standards, annual outreach to developers and providers, ongoing referrals to existing providers (such as Health and Human Services), and providing assistance in obtaining grants.

Objective: The support, maintenance and production of emergency and transitional facilities.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department, Board of Supervisors, Health Services

Time Frame: Ongoing as needed

Funding: General Fund

4.7 Zoning Code Amendments for Emergency and Transitional Housing: The County shall amend the Zoning Code to ensure compliance with State law and encourage emergency shelter, supportive housing, and related services for persons experiencing homelessness, as follows:

- Allow Low Barrier Navigation Center developments by right in mixed-use zones and nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses.
- Allow for the approval of 100 percent affordable developments that include a percentage of supportive housing units, either 25 percent or 12 units, whichever is greater, to be allowed without a conditional use permit or other discretionary review in all zoning districts where multifamily and mixed-use development is permitted. *(New Program)*

Objective: Compliance with State law

Responsibility: Planning Department

Timeframe: December 2021

Funding Sources: General Fund

Goal 5: Prevent Housing Discrimination

The County will not allow discrimination to interfere with the attainment of its housing goals and objectives.

Policies:

Policy 5.1: The County shall further the cause of fair housing and encourage compliance with fair housing laws.

Policy 5.2: The County will only support housing programs that are in compliance with the State Rumford Fair Housing Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act which prohibit arbitrary discrimination in housing.

Implementation Measures:

5.1 Housing Discrimination: The County will direct persons with complaints of housing discrimination to the appropriate state and federal agencies that handle such complaints. The County will continue to make literature available on housing discrimination and fair housing resources at the County offices, community centers, libraries, County website, and other areas in which the public gathers information.

Objective: Ensure that any persons subjected to any housing discrimination shall be provided with a conduit to eliminate this discrimination.

Responsible Agency: District Office of Fair Employment and Housing

Time Frame: Ongoing

Funding: Grants, General Fund

5.2 Amend Definition of “Family”: The County will amend its definition of “family” as contained in Chapter 15 of the Sierra County Code (Zoning) to remove language that constrains the definition of family to occur by being related or related by blood.

Objective: Prohibit arbitrary housing discrimination.

Responsible Agency: Planning, Board of Supervisors

Time Frame: December 2021

Funding: General Fund

5.3 Further Fair Housing: The County will disseminate fair housing information in appropriate public locations and events. The County will work with other local agencies and service providers to include fair housing information in appropriate format within their facilities. Specific actions will include:

- Refer interested persons to the California Fair Housing and Employment Council.
- Facilitate public education and outreach by creating informational flyers on fair housing that will be available to public counters, libraries, and on the County’s website. Board of Supervisor meetings will include a fair housing presentation at least once per year.
- Utilize Community Development Block Grant funds for fair housing enforcement, education, and technical assistance activities.
(*New Program*)

Objective: To promote equal housing opportunity access

Responsible Agency: Department of Social Services (primary), Planning

Time Frame: Ongoing

Funding: General Fund, CDBG

Goal 7: Ensure General Plan Consistency and Citizen Participation

The policies of all elements of the General Plan are required to be consistent with each other. This type of consistency requires periodic annual review, in order to maintain the Housing Element's consistency with the other elements of the General Plan, and to ensure citizen involvement and review of the programs of the Housing Element.

Policies:

Policy 7.1: The County will use General Plan Land Use Maps for density decisions until a new implementing Zoning Ordinance is adopted.

Implementation Measures:

7.1 General Plan Annual Review: The County shall review the General Plan and Housing Element on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the Element in achieving goals and objectives and update the data in the Element on a continual basis. County staff shall provide annual reports as to the effectiveness of the Housing Element to the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and the State, as required by Government Code Section 65400.

Objective: Maintain a General Plan, including the Housing Element, which contains current data and is effective in implementing housing goals.

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Time Frame: Annually

Funding: General Fund

Quantified Objectives

State law requires the Housing Element to include quantified objectives by income level that, at a minimum, address development (new construction), conservation (housing rehabilitation), and preservation (of at-risk rental units).

Quantified housing objectives are provided in Table 34 below for the construction of new housing units, the rehabilitation of existing units, and the preservation of affordable and special needs housing units as a result of implementation of the above programs. These objectives, which are for the 2014-2019 planning period, are based upon past development trends and the results of the County's programs discussed above.

Table 34: Summary of Quantified Objectives
 Unincorporated Sierra County
 2019-2024

Income Group	New Construction	Rehabilitation	Preservation	Total
Extremely Low Income	1	0	3	
Very Low Income	1	1	3	
Low Income	5	1	4	
Moderate Income	2	0	0	
Above Moderate	10	0	0	
Total	19	2	10	

During the planning period, the quantified objectives for new construction of one extremely low-income, one very low-income, five low-income, two moderate-income, and 10 above moderate-income units. In addition to new construction units, 2 lower-income housing units are targeted for rehabilitation and 10 units should be preserved through the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Appendix A

Vacant Sites Inventory

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Appendix A: Inventory of Vacant Land Designated for Very Low, Low, and Moderate - Income Affordable Housing - Unincorporated Sierra County

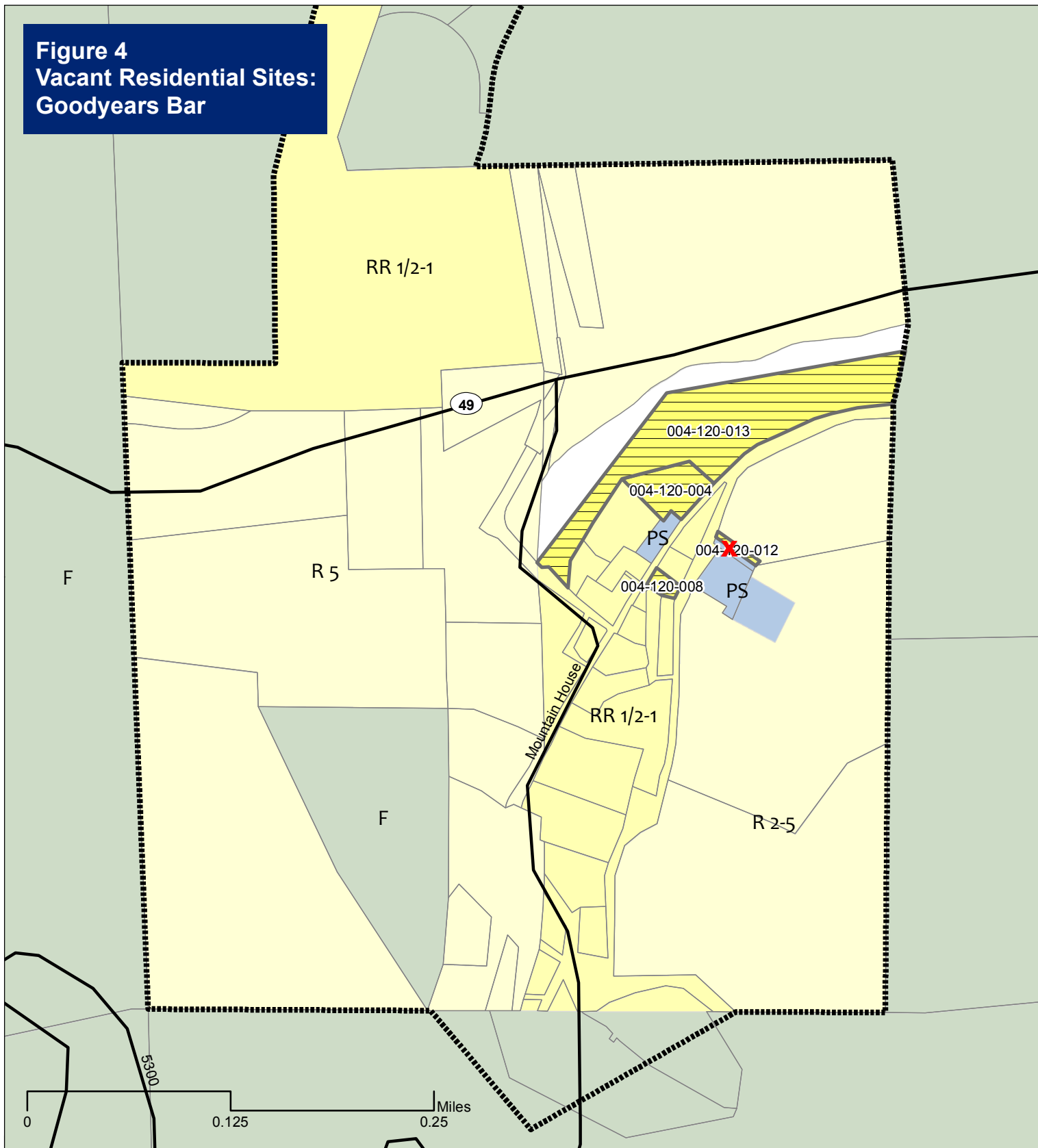
APN	Acres	GP	Zoning	Environmental Constraints	Max # of Units	Realistic Capacity	Income Level Assumption
Goodyears Bar							
0041200040	0.69	RR-1/2	R-1	partial stream zone	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0041200080	0.14	RR-1/2	R-1	none	0	0	Moderate/Above Moderate
0041200170	0.81	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0041200130	4.69	RR-1/2	R-1	stream zone, slopes	4	2	Moderate/Above Moderate
Subtotal	7.13	RR-1/2			6	4	
Alleghany							
0042400330	1.3	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0042400240*	0.3	MUR	R-3	none	3	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0042400060	0.26	MUR	R-3	none	3	2	Moderate/Above Moderate
0042400390	0.08	MUR	R-3	none	1	0	Moderate/Above Moderate
Subtotal	1.3	RR-1/2	R-1		2	1	
	0.89	MUR	R-3		7	3	
Sierra City							
0081850200	3.8	RR-1/2	R-1	none	7	3	Moderate/Above Moderate
0082500340	1.01	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0082500360	0.99	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0082500390	0.92	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0082500380	0.91	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0090200370	0.73	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	0	Moderate/Above Moderate
0091120120	20.8	RR-1/2	R-1	none	41	20	Moderate/Above Moderate
0081610270	1.04	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0081610170	0.31	RR-1/2	R-1	none	0	0	Moderate/Above Moderate

APN	Acres	GP	Zoning	Environmental Constraints	Max # of Units	Realistic Capacity	Income Level Assumption
0081200230	21.6	RR-1/2	R-1	slopes	43	21	Moderate/Above Moderate
0090200800	4.39	RR-1/2	R-1	none	8	4	Moderate/Above Moderate
0091110160	2.81	RR-1/2	R-1	none	5	2	Moderate/Above Moderate
0082300080	19.4	RR-1/2	R-1	slopes	38	19	Moderate/Above Moderate
0091700010	3.90	RR-1/2	R-1	none	7	4	Moderate/Above Moderate
0091700090	5.59	MUR	R-3	None	67	45	Lower
Subtotal	82.61	RR-1/2	R-1		157	78	
	5.59	MUR	R-3		67	45	
Downieville							
0031300080	1.02	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0031300320	1.22	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0031300250	2.47	RR-1/2	R-1	stream zone	4	2	Moderate/Above Moderate
0031300290	1.27	RR-1/2	R-1	stream zone	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0031300240	1.05	RR-1/2	R-1	none	2	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0030820050	0.26	RR-1/2	R-1	none	0	0	Moderate/Above Moderate
Subtotal	7.29	RR-1/2	R-1		12	6	
Sattley							
0130800120	0.84	RR-1/2	R-1	none	1	1	Moderate/Above Moderate
0130800140	0.1	RR-1/2	R-1	none; small lot	0	0	Moderate/Above Moderate
Subtotal	0.94	RR-1/2	R-1		1	1	
Sierraville							
0180300270 ⁱ	439.03	PD	PD	Slopes: this is a planned development in Campbell Hot Springs of which 158 acres are identified for	316 for RR-1/2, 60 for MUR		Lower and Moderate/Above Moderate

APN	Acres	GP	Zoning	Environmental Constraints	Max # of Units	Realistic Capacity	Income Level Assumption
				RR ½ and 5 acres are identified for MUR development.			
Subtotal	158	RR-1/2			316	158	
	5	MUR			60	40	
TOTAL	256.48	RR-1/2			494	248	
	11.48	MUR			134	88	

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**Figure 4
Vacant Residential Sites:
Goodyears Bar**



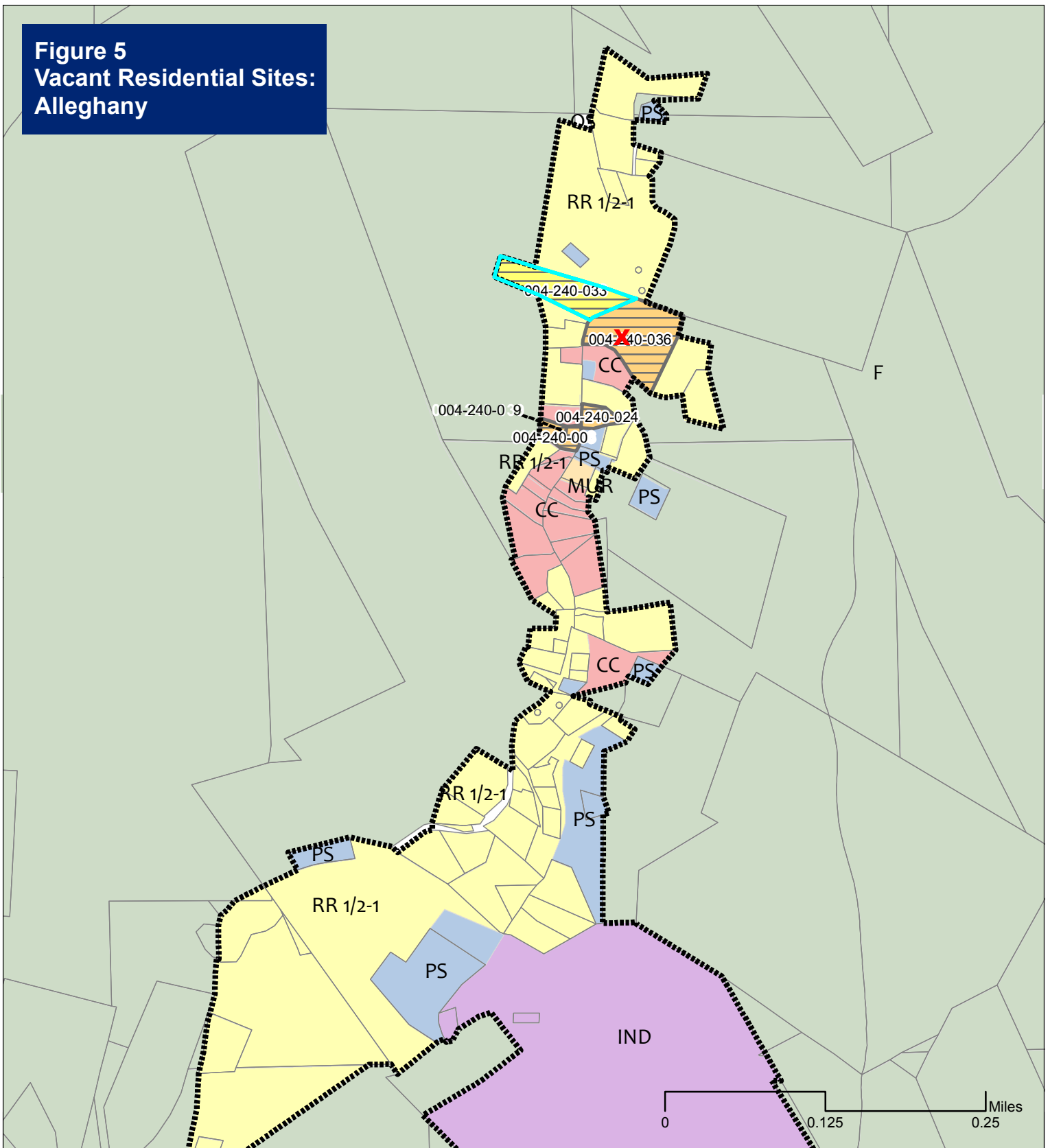
Legend

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant R-1/2 Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Community Boundary | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Major Roads | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
| Parcels | Rural | Visitor Commercial | |
| | Rural Residential | Industrial | |



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**Figure 5
Vacant Residential Sites:
Alleghany**



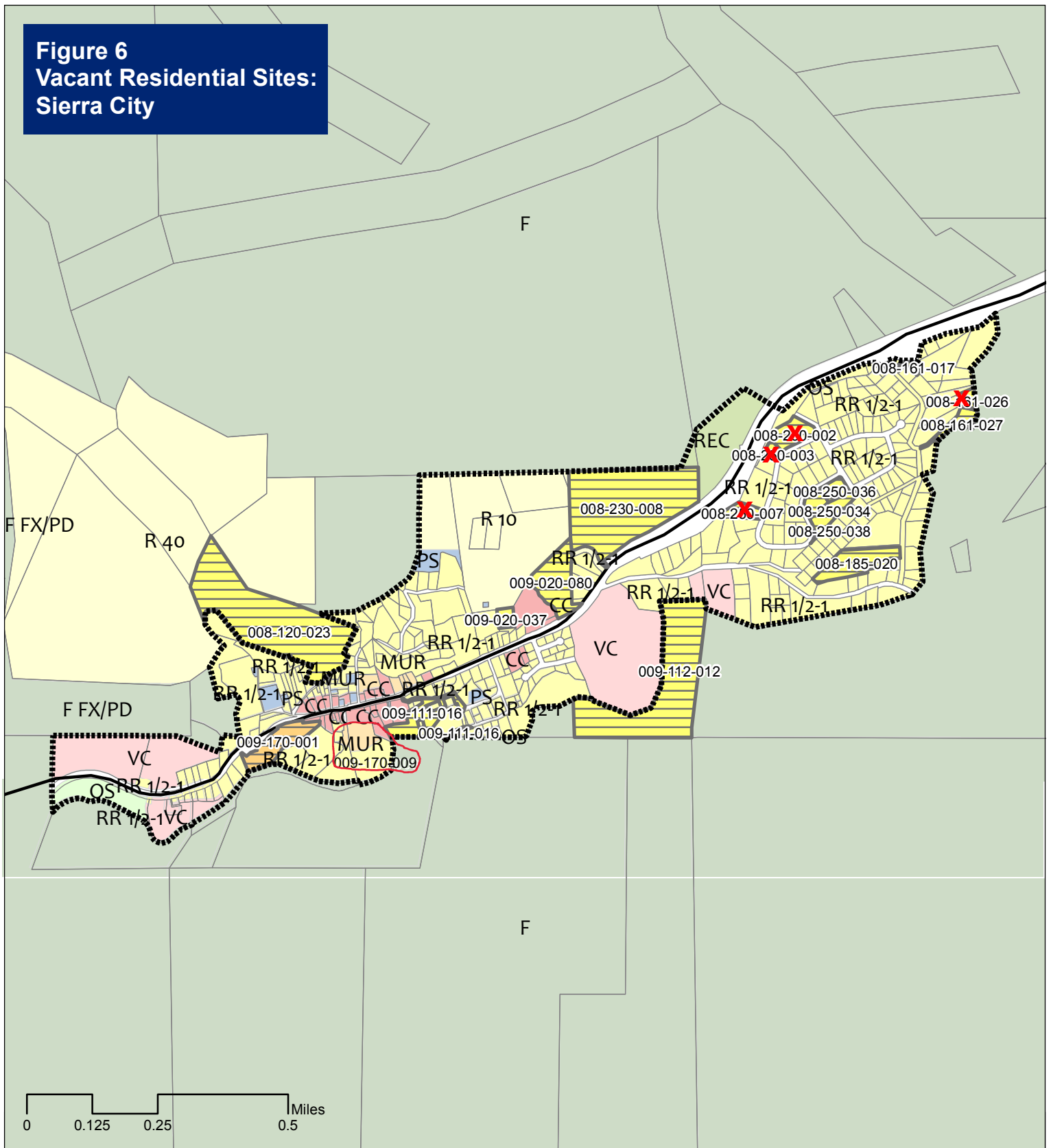
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- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant R-1/2 Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Vacant MUR Site | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Community Boundary | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
| Major Roads | Rural | Visitor Commercial | |
| Parcels | Rural Residential | Industrial | |



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**Figure 6
Vacant Residential Sites:
Sierra City**



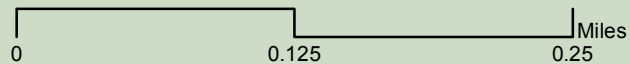
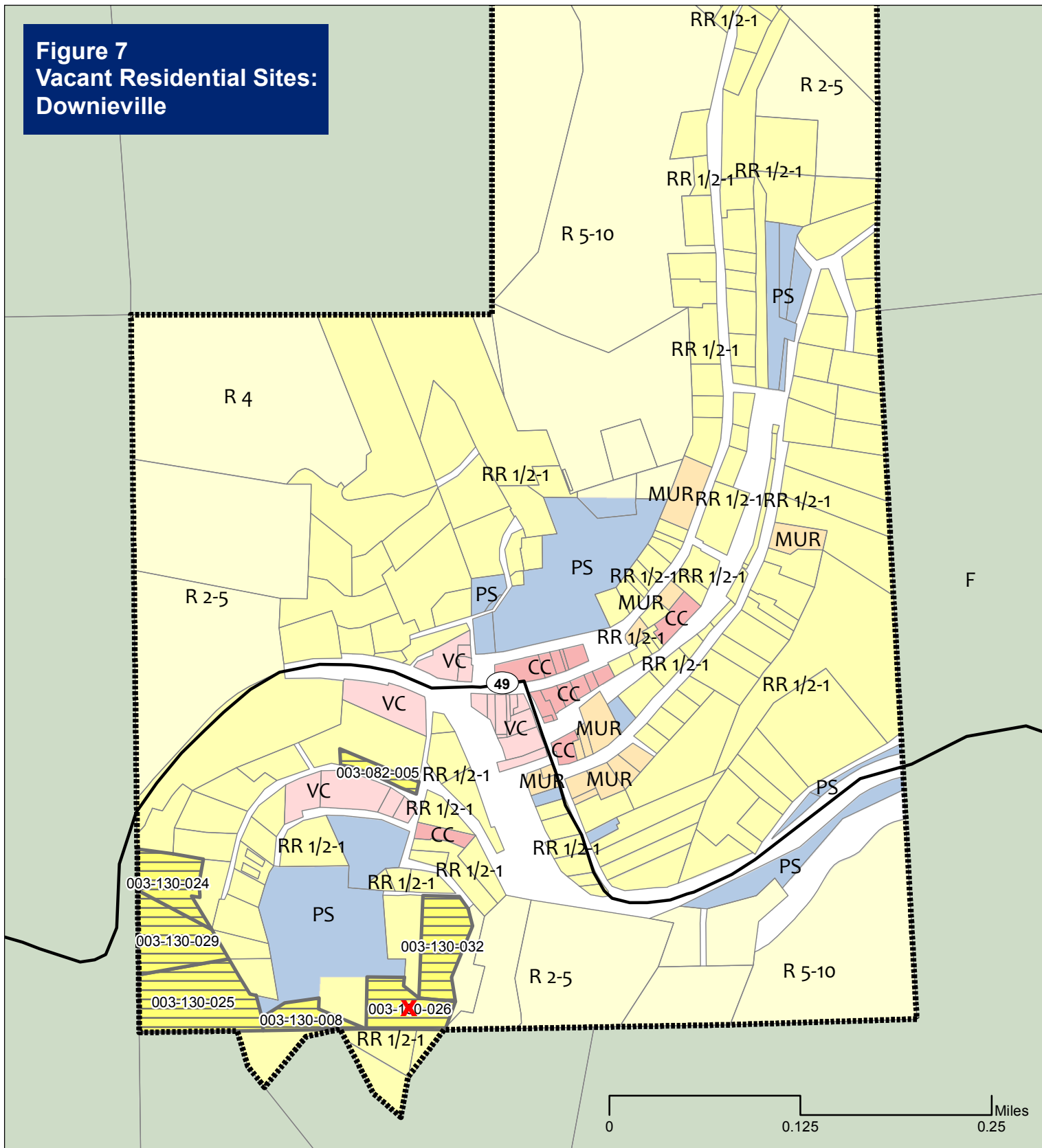
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|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant R-1/2 Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Vacant MUR Site | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Community Boundary | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
| Major Roads | Rural | Visitor Commercial | |
| Parcels | Rural Residential | Industrial | |

*Note: APN 009-170-001 is designated RR 1-2 not MUR

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**Figure 7
Vacant Residential Sites:
Downieville**



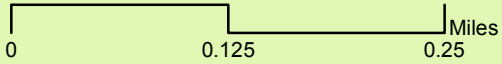
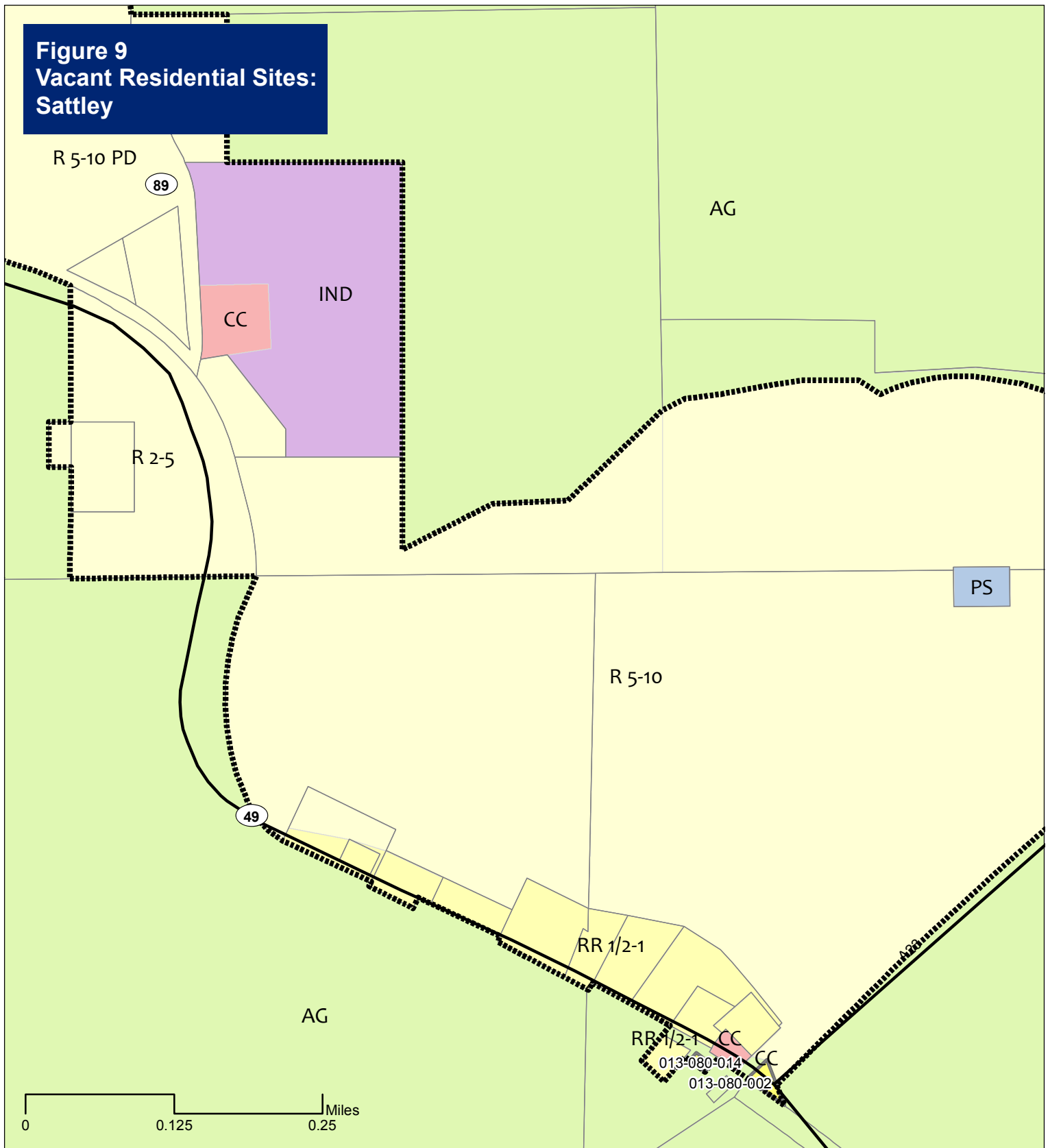
Legend

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant R-1/2 Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Community Boundary | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Major Roads | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
| Parcels | Rural | Visitor Commercial | |
| | Rural Residential | Industrial | |



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**Figure 9
Vacant Residential Sites:
Sattley**



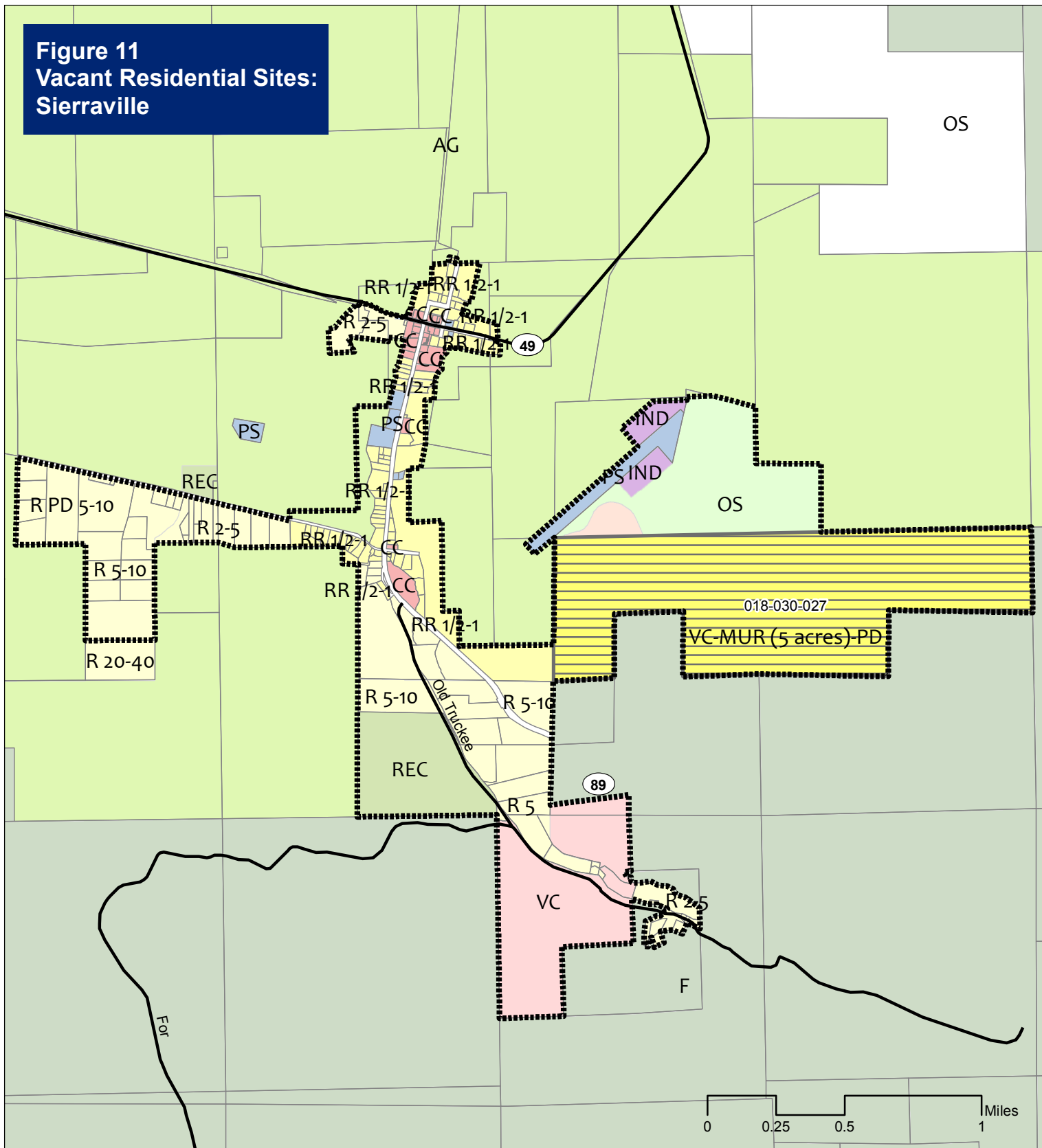
Legend

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|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant Residential Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Community Boundary | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Major Roads | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
| Parcels | Rural | Visitor Commercial | |
| | Rural Residential | Industrial | |



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**Figure 11
Vacant Residential Sites:
Sierraville**



Legend

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|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Vacant PD Site | Land Use Designations | Multiple Unit Residential | Public Service |
| Community Boundary | Agriculture | Community Commercial | Open Space |
| Major Roads | Forest | Visitor Commercial-MUR | Recreation |
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Appendix B

2014 Housing Element
Program Evaluation

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**Appendix B: Evaluation of Sierra County 5th Cycle (2014-2019)
Housing Element Policies & Programs**

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>1.1 Permit Review. The Planning Department shall periodically review its permit procedures to increase efficiency by reducing the cost and time of processing permits but remain effective and meet legal review requirements. This review will be conducted as part of the County's ongoing permit streamlining program.</p>	<p>Ongoing review of policies and procedures, with periodic (4 - 6 times/year) update of forms, templates, submittal and review checklists, submittal procedures, costs, operations efficiencies, inter-departmental coordination, etc.</p>	<p>Maintain as a program.</p>
<p>1.2 Improvement of Community Water and Sewage Facilities. In an effort of any local community to improve their environmental health and housing expansion possibilities by providing some form of community water and/or sewage treatment facilities, the County will provide assistance and encouragement in the form of supporting resolutions and providing assistance in obtaining grants. Assistance will be provided by the County to developers to create and maintain joint or shared sewage disposal systems for new subdivisions. Assistance will be provided by the County to the communities of Alleghany, Downieville, Sierra City, Calpine, and Verdi to identify the potential inadequacies of their systems, provide solutions and identification of and assistance with obtaining grants.</p>	<p>Voter-approved fee increase completed; \$3.2 million grant secured for Sierra Brooks community water system improvements; Phase 1 completed 2015; Phase 2 - design and bidding completed, construction begun, with projected completion early 2020.</p>	<p>Maintain as a program.</p>
<p>1.3 Water and Sewer Priority. Pursuant to Government Code section 65589.7 the County will immediately deliver its adopted Housing Element to water and sewer providers describing the content of the Housing Element, including the County's housing needs and share of the Regional Housing Need related to water and sewer service to developments which include affordable to lower-income households.</p>	<p>Following adoption of the Housing Element, the County delivered it to water and sewer providers with communication about RHNA and goals. The County will continue to comply with this program, per State law.</p>	<p>Maintain as a program.</p>
<p>2.1 County Support of Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Development. The County will encourage, support and assist agencies and developers to apply for funds from available state and federal</p>	<p>The County surpassed its RHNA in the previous Housing Element period.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>programs to provide low to moderate income housing. The County will provide support services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping identify sites where low- and moderate-income housing will not conflict with existing zoning regulations; • Applying for state and federal funds on behalf of housing providers when funding sources require public agency involvement. Funds should include costs for building permit fees and inspections; • Supporting funding applications by housing providers; • Offering regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, for projects that include housing units affordable to very low - and/or low-income households, provided that enforceable commitments are secured to ensure that units continue as affordable housing for target groups. 		
<p>2.2 Density Bonus. The County will amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Density Bonus consistent with state law.</p>	<p>County is currently under contract with consultant to prepare General Plan update and comprehensive new Zoning Code, including density bonus provisions consistent with State Law. The legislature has made additional amendments to Density Bonus law which will need to be incorporated into the updated zoning code.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>2.3 Expansion of Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8). The County shall request the Nevada County Housing Development Corporation to obtain additional Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) allocations for Sierra County.</p>	<p>Individual application assistance provided through Health & Human Services for residents in Sierra Valley Senior Apartments (ongoing as needed).</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>3.1 Housing Rehabilitation. The County shall apply for state and federal assistance for housing rehabilitation to finance the rehabilitation of substandard homes in</p>	<p>The County received \$890,000 to rehabilitate 50 housing units in Sierra Valley Senior Apartments.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>the County and support the efforts of other agencies in pursuit of this same effort. If funded, the County will continue its existing housing rehabilitation program. The County will continue to retain Plumas County Community Development Commission or create a new commission to seek housing grants, loans, and programs.</p>		
<p>3.2 Energy Conservation. The County will continue to participate in programs and policy development that encourage energy conservation. The County shall support other agencies that offer home weatherization programs and other technological advancements related to resource use and production by providing information to the public and referrals on the programs and seek program funds. Examples of County participation include: incentives to promote alternative or higher density housing within existing communities by encouraging green building techniques, green building materials, energy cost reductions, and coordination with serving utilities to encourage energy conservation retrofits. The County will continue to implement weatherization programs, adoption and implementation of the Green Building Code, continued promotion of solar and wind energy solutions, and continued use of proper wood heating—all of which are in compliance with State law.</p>	<p>In coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, Sierra County has provided information flyers and word-of-mouth encouragement for people to attend energy conservation workshops. One meeting held in Downieville with people interested in learning about the County's new Energy Action Plan and various programs and resources provided by local utilities.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>3.3 Section 502 Loan Program. The County will publicize Section 502 loan program which provides low interest loans to very low, low, and moderate-income households for construction, purchase, and rehab of homes. Devote two weeks yearly (May 1-15) to publicizing housing programs/options, which should include presentations on the key programs at a Board of Supervisors workshop.</p>	<p>This program has not yet been implemented in the County and given limited staff resources to research and distribute information, this program has not been successful.</p>	<p>Delete program.</p>
<p>3.4 Code Compliance. The County will continue to encourage voluntary code compliance by providing guidance and technical assistance to</p>	<p>The County continually provides information and education to homeowners and permit applicants about Code</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>residents who wish to make their own repairs. Local educational and home repair clinics will be supported in their efforts by the County supplying fliers and announcement of the clinic on the County's website.</p>	<p>requirements, Code updates, and workshop opportunities in neighboring jurisdictions.</p>	
<p>4.1 Incentives for Special Needs Housing. The County shall use a variety of incentives including zoning and land use controls, flexible development standards, technical assistance, and expedited processing to promote housing that meets the needs of special groups (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with developmental disabilities, farmworkers, large households, extremely low income and the homeless).</p>	<p>County Zoning Code was updated to provide supportive housing without discretionary review ("by right") in any zone allowing residential uses.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>4.2 Senior Housing. The County shall review its codes, ordinances and standards to determine whether there are constraints on the development, maintenance and improvement of housing intended for seniors, and to remove such constraints if their removal would not jeopardize the health and safety of the residents. The review shall include an evaluation of the approval process for residential care homes and a removal of any unreasonable constraints to approvals.</p> <p>The County shall encourage private developers, nonprofit groups and other interested parties to construct housing projects that serve seniors. As part of this effort, the County shall meet with governmental agencies, nonprofit groups and other agencies that are involved with senior citizens to ensure that the necessary support services for senior residents in Sierra County are provided. Senior housing projects that include onsite support services shall be given special consideration by the County.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing County program to evaluate the approval processes for residential care homes and encourage the construction of housing that serves seniors. The most recent project, permitted in 2018, is the rehabilitation of 50 senior housing units near Loyalton. The County has reviewed its codes and standards as part of this housing element update and determined they do not act as a constraint on the development of senior housing.</p>	<p>Modify program.</p>
<p>4.3 Farm Labor Housing. The County shall update the Zoning Ordinance to state that farm labor housing that serves six or fewer persons shall be treated as a single</p>	<p>The County zoning ordinance allows for 'Caretakers Residences' (including farm labor housing) allowable in agricultural district "by right"</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>family unit and shall be permitted by right in all districts that permit single family units by right, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.5. The County shall also update the Zoning Ordinance to state that farm labor housing that provides up to 36 beds or 12 units shall be permitted by right in all zones that allow agricultural uses, in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6.</p>	<p>on parcels > 10 ac. in size. (SCC 15.10.040); however, the zoning code is not fully in compliance with this requirement.</p>	
<p>4.4 Zoning for Residential Care Facilities. In conformance with the Lanterman Act and Health and Safety Code Section 1566.3, the County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to explicitly allow licensed residential care facilities serving six or fewer persons as a use by right in all zones that allow single family residential use. The County shall clearly identify districts in which facilities serving more than six persons, including but not limited to group homes, may be located subject to a conditional use permit.</p>	<p>The County is in the process of conducting a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update and will implement this program as part of this Update. Currently, County Zoning Code permits licensed residential care facilities in the R3 zone by right, and other zones with Conditional Use Permit.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>4.5 Removal of Housing Constraints for Persons with Disabilities. The County shall establish a reasonable accommodation policy or procedure separate from a variance or CUP for providing exception in zoning and land use for housing for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>No governmental constraints have been identified which would discourage development of housing for persons with disabilities (other than costly State regulations and complexities under Title 24). However, the County has not adopted a reasonable accommodation ordinance.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>4.6 Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing. The County shall continue to support non-profit and other social service organizations and encourage the maintenance and development of emergency and transitional housing for the citizens of the County, by providing incentives, such as fee reductions and modifications to development standards, annual outreach to developers and providers, ongoing referrals to existing providers (such as Health and Human Services), and providing assistance in obtaining grants.</p>	<p>Emergency shelters and transitional housing provisions were adopted into the Zoning Code in 2016, allowing these "by right" in any zone allowing residential uses. County Planning Department and Health & Human Services continue to collaborate on homeless services and solutions, including outreach and community meetings.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>

2014-2019 Implementation Measure	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>5.1 Housing Discrimination. The County will direct persons with complaints of housing discrimination to the appropriate state and federal agencies that handle such complaints. The County will make literature available on housing discrimination and fair housing resources at the County offices, community centers, libraries, County website, and other areas in which the public gathers information.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing County program; however, the County has not received any complaints of housing discrimination. Resources are available to the public through Health & Human Resources, the Planning Department, and the District Office of Fair Employment and Housing.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>5.2 Amend Definition of “Family.” The County will amend its definition of “family” as contained in Chapter 15 of the Sierra County Code (Zoning) to remove language that constrains the definition of family to occur by being related or related by blood.</p>	<p>The restrictive definition of "Family" that is contained in the current Zoning Code (SCC 15.08.070) is slated for amendment as part of the comprehensive Zoning Code update currently underway, with completion and adoption estimated toward end of 2020.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>7.1 General Plan Annual Review. The County will review the General Plan and Housing Element on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the Element in achieving goals and objectives and update the data in the Element on a continual basis. Provide annual reports as to the effectiveness of the Housing Element to the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and the Planning Department, as required by Government Code Section 65400.</p>	<p>The Planning Department continually reviews the effectiveness of the Housing Element through the Housing Element Annual Progress Report.</p>	<p>Maintain program.</p>
<p>8.1 Notify Residents. Each time a housing project is proposed, which may have an effect on a particular group or neighborhood, efforts will be made to distribute information on the project to ensure that the group or neighborhood is made aware of the project and the process and has the opportunity to respond.</p>	<p>The County follows State law for public notification with each project--including posting and publishing of notices (newspaper and online), and direct mailing to affected neighbors and anyone who requests to be kept notified. For larger projects, community "workshop" meetings are held to educate and solicit input from all concerned. This is standard practice and a program is not needed to ensure continued compliance.</p>	<p>Delete program.</p>

