

CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY VISION

2.1 Master Plan Summary

Mountain House is envisioned as a new self-sufficient community offering employment, goods, services, and recreation. Land use and circulation are designed to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use in a highly landscaped, visually attractive community. Mountain House will also provide a diversity of housing types, employment opportunities and recreational amenities for its residents. In the tradition of California Central Valley towns, Mountain House is designed as a community of pedestrian-scaled, tree-lined neighborhoods, each focused on the neighborhood core, with schools and parks linked to nearby shopping.

2.1.1 Specific Plan III Description

Specific Plan III (SP III) implements the Master Plan goals and objectives, and establishes the framework for land use and development standards that will govern the community build-out of the neighborhoods within its planning area. SP III also added a major new land use objective to the Master Plan to accommodate a satellite campus within the community for Delta Community College. The Specific Plan also identifies the public infrastructure and services needed to support development. It defines the permitted uses, development density, building setbacks, building heights, and other development standards to be utilized for projects in the planning area.

2.2 Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The Master Plan, Sections 2.2 through 2.9, established the following goals and objectives for the Mountain House community, to be implemented over the years through the development of each Specific Plan area.

Overall Goals

- Create a high quality environment where people of all economic levels can live and work.
- Develop a distinct and unique new community that is separate from existing communities.
- Develop Mountain House as a community that will accommodate a portion of the growth projected by the County's General Plan 2010 in an orderly, well-organized development pattern.
- Provide for a lifestyle that is less reliant on the automobile, more directed towards activities within the local community and neighborhoods, and more oriented toward the use of transit, bicycle and pedestrian transport.

Community Character

Create attractive and diverse environments for living, working and playing.

- Develop 12 identifiable, pedestrian-oriented residential neighborhoods, each organized around Neighborhood Centers consisting of K-8 schools, parks, neighborhood commercial, and other neighborhood serving facilities.

- Develop three Village Centers that will provide shopping centers, transit, and other services with easy access from the 12 residential neighborhoods.
- Use roadway landscaping as a primary method of establishing community character and of distinguishing between neighborhoods.
- Establish neighborhood and Community Parks, and support regional recreation for Mountain House residents.
- Contribute to regional recreation needs by creating one or more golf course(s) and providing public access to the Delta waterways through a linear park and marina on Old River.

Provide for a pedestrian-oriented character within and between residential neighborhoods, village commercial centers, and the Town Center.

- Locate Neighborhood Parks of approximately five acres adjacent to schools for joint use of park and school facilities.
- Utilize an interconnected network of relatively small-scale streets within neighborhoods in order to create a pleasant and safe street environment for pedestrian use.
- Orient important public buildings and land uses, including neighborhood commercial and appropriate buildings or building facades within Village Centers, toward the street.
- Connect the Town Center to the linear park and bikeway systems and provide pedestrian amenities within the Town Center.
- Design neighborhoods, village commercial centers and the Town Center to facilitate transit and bicycle use.

Land Use

Establish a balance of housing, employment, and a full range of services and infrastructure within the community, while encouraging interaction between land uses.

- Develop a new community with its own balanced mix of housing, public services, employment opportunities, parks, schools, and shopping facilities to serve the projected residential population.
- Create neighborhoods that provide for the daily commercial, educational, and recreational needs of the residents within walking distance.
- Provide light industrial and commercial office use areas suitable for the development of high quality business parks, allowing potential employers to relocate and expand in a strategic regional location with adequate transportation, services, moderate land costs, few site constraints and housing affordable to the jobs provided.
- Accommodate a satellite campus within the community for Delta Community College.
- Allow for a diversity of residential areas and a hierarchy of commercial areas.
- Provide sufficient employment areas to create a job for every resident of the community who is projected to be working.

Minimize impacts on County agricultural lands.

- Develop the community in an orderly and efficient manner, at average residential densities of at least 6.5 units per acre.

- Establish strong community boundaries and reduce potential conflicts with adjacent agricultural lands by creating buffers along the western and eastern community boundaries.

Housing

Provide an adequate supply of housing for all income groups in the community.

- Establish neighborhoods with varying levels of amenities and a mixture of housing densities ranging from golf course related residential developments to entry-level neighborhoods.
- Designate an average density of between six and seven units per acre overall in order to achieve a higher density than is currently found in the County, thereby meeting market needs and achieving more affordability and entry-level housing opportunities.
- Establish a balance of jobs and housing by matching projected income levels of jobs provided within the community with the projected cost of housing.
- Ensure housing for a variety of income levels within each neighborhood.
- Provide multi-family housing within the community, to be concentrated near Neighborhood Centers or adjacent to the Mountain House Creek corridor, Village Centers, employment centers, and in and adjacent to the Town Center.

Economic Development

Create a financially and fiscally viable community resulting in positive economic impact on the County.

- Ensure fiscal protection of the County and future community residents by creating an independent and self-sustaining community.
- Provide for efficient phasing in order to avoid potential fiscal impacts.
- Plan for the location of new, expanding or relocating businesses serving the Central Valley and the Bay Area, by designating areas for industrial and office commercial use.
- Attract businesses to provide an economic base, provide jobs and serve residents.
- Provide employment areas with arterial roadway access, transit service, nearby housing, and state-of-the-art telecommunication services.
- Provide for efficient, cost effective community operations.

Circulation

Establish a safe and efficient circulation system to accommodate the movement of people and goods, reduce environmental impacts, and advance the quality of life in the community.

- Minimize impacts on regional roadways and air quality by providing a community design that emphasizes trip length reductions, reduced off-site trips, pedestrian and bicycle travel, and access to regional transit facilities.
- Provide a complete multi-modal transportation system, including on and off-site roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

- Minimize high-speed traffic through neighborhoods by establishing a network of arterial streets which are located between neighborhoods and effectively link residential, community college, employment and commercial uses.
- Locate collector and local streets to allow low-speed, alternative routes through neighborhoods while linking school and other public destinations within the different neighborhoods.
- Provide major road access to trip generating uses such as community college, commercial, employment, and recreational areas.

Public Services

Provide adequate public services and facilities to serve the new community.

- Provide on-site water treatment and sewage treatment systems at quality standards which meet or exceed standards of regulatory agencies, and to re-use treated wastewater either on-site or off-site for the most economical and beneficial use.
- Follow a pattern of residential growth that will provide each stage of development with adequate services and infrastructure, and to plan and construct infrastructure to avoid creation of excess capacity.
- Size public services and facilities to maintain the community's boundaries by serving only the Master Plan area.
- Minimize administrative impacts on the County by annexing to the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D) to provide on-site water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, parks and other necessary services.

Resource Conservation

Minimize impact on sensitive environmental resources.

- Preserve and enhance wetlands and riparian areas within the project including wetlands along Mountain House Creek and Dry Creek.
- Incorporate effective and feasible energy and water conservation techniques and procedures into the development.
- Minimize and/or mitigate regional and site impacts to the extent possible by meeting the requirements of the Mitigation Monitoring Program.
- Protect sensitive environmental and visual resources at the community's edges by establishing effective buffers along the northern boundary with Old River, the southern boundary with I-205, and the eastern and western boundaries with agricultural lands.
- Maintain and enhance the habitat resources of Mountain House Creek as a park and wildlife corridor through the community.
- Minimize air quality impacts by providing for more efficient transportation systems and neighborhood design and services.

Source for Sections 2.3 through 2.9: Mountain House Master Plan, 1994, as amended 2005, pages 2.2 to 2.7.

2.3 Specific Plan III Neighborhood Vision

The neighborhood vision for SP III is unique within Mountain House. SP III combines the best aspects of master-planned development providing a mix of historic housing styles with the landscaping and open spaces of long established neighborhoods. The design character is also heavily influenced by the constraints created by the electrical and pipeline transmission corridors that crisscross the planning area, which also present the opportunity to use the corridors for an open space and trail system to serve residents of SP III (see Figure 7-1: Recreation and Open Space Plan).

The area south of Grant Line Road combines Neighborhoods A and B into a single neighborhood, Neighborhood A/B, with a community college campus, Community Park, consolidated neighborhood center, and abundant open spaces. Neighborhood A/B has two open space corridors that cross near the center of the planning area linking its residential areas together with its schools, Neighborhood Parks and Community Park. This provides for an intricate system of pedestrian and bicycle trails providing safe access to schools and parks with minimal street crossings.

The area of SP III north of Grant Line Road in Neighborhood D is designed to be harmonious with the community character of both Neighborhood A/B and Neighborhood D which is partially within Specific Plan II. The distinction for the Neighborhood D component within SP III will be the landscape enhancement of the power line easement running diagonally through the residential areas. A neighborhood trail system with tree planting along the perimeter of the easement provides an open space corridor system that enhances the visual open space character and sense of pedestrian connectivity in this neighborhood area. The residential and industrial architecture and landscape shall comply with the standards and conditions specified in SP III, maintaining the continuity of this community concept.

The Delta College campus will be the focal point of the southwest corner of the planning area. The College, located on Central Parkway, will be a major educational and recreational resource for the community. The location of the College at this site led to combining Neighborhoods A and B to provide arterial street access to the College, a scaled down industrial park south of Central Parkway, a central Community Park, and consolidation of the two K-8 school sites into one Neighborhood Center, while maintaining the planning area's jobs-housing balance.

Consolidation of the Neighborhood Center takes advantage of the open space corridor as a safe walk-to-school route, incorporates a common Neighborhood Park located on the open space trail corridor separating the two schools, and meets state-mandated school setback criteria from the two crisscrossing, utility, transmission line facilities. The location for the Neighborhood Center was also chosen to allow convenient walking distances to homes and minimize the number of children who would need to cross Central Parkway to get to school.

Central Parkway is designed to be the icon street of the community and is envisioned to be its "parade route". Acting as a strong community linkage element, the parkway has a distinctive character as it threads through the entire community from north to south. Central Parkway will be dominated by groves of canopy trees with occasional vertical tree species or colorful deciduous

trees at nodal or accent points. The character is informal, with heavily shaded street corridors and pathways separated from the roadway by a planted parkway strip.

One key to the success of the community is the appropriate architectural vocabulary and theme. Prairie and Spanish Colonial architecture themes have been established for the Neighborhood Center with its two K-8 schools. These themes, one for each school, should also be reflected in the architecture of approximately 25% of the homes surrounding the Neighborhood Center. The architectural design of homes within the planning area will exhibit several themes that are compatible with each other.

A variety of housing types, densities and lot sizes will be provided within the planning area to accommodate a diversity of family incomes and lifestyle conditions. Lotting patterns include standard front driveway lots, corner side driveway lots, cluster lots with common driveway access (courtyards/auto courts), alley lots with garage access to the rear, and lots with common open spaces or green courts with rear alleys. Two multi-family residential areas, one in the southeastern area of Neighborhood A/B and the other in Neighborhood D along the open space corridor will provide higher density housing opportunities emphasizing pedestrian access and connections. The general density of proposed residential areas of SP III would be slightly higher than the Mountain House neighborhoods to the north and would provide a relatively more affordable neighborhood context.

The “surplus” 62 units from the conversion of the two R-H sites to R-MH shall be reserved for future amendments that include R-H density to the plan. The county shall also strongly encourage inclusion of R-H density for any other request for change in use that requests an amendment to the Specific Plan. If additional wastewater sewage capacity is found to exist for Specific Plan III, the first priority for these connections shall be for projects that include R-H density as a primary use.

The Community Park, which is located to the southwest on Central Parkway across from the Community College, balances the location of the Neighborhood Center within Neighborhood A/B such that most homes are within easy walking or bicycling distance to a park. All parks within Neighborhood A/B are also on the open space trail corridors. The Community Park’s location across from the Community College also allows for convenient joint use of recreation facilities.

A mix of public and private uses to serve the daily needs of people in the neighborhood is encouraged within the commercial portion of the Neighborhood Center. A variety of retail uses and community facilities such as a day care center, recreation building, or meeting hall are allowed. Outdoor dining areas, pedestrian plazas, and sitting areas are encouraged in the neighborhood commercial site to emphasize its place as a social center of the neighborhood.

The Industrial Park areas on the southern and eastern boundaries of the community are intended to accommodate modern business park developments suitable for location along major community roadways and near residential neighborhoods. The industrial and office uses will be incorporated into campus-like settings, with common treatment of open space, amenities, circulation or other common elements. The office and industrial uses will reflect a similarity of design. Industrial and office sites will also be designed to facilitate easy vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections.