

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

The vision in our Comprehensive Plan is to build a sustainable community. People, the environment and the economy must be balance in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. How do we get from here to there? Following are five guiding principles to show the way.

1. Develop a vibrant and diversified economy. Economic vitality is crucial to maintain our standard of living and attain a sustainable community. We need to grow our economic base to be more disparate from retail, tourism and education in order to create more permanent and higher paying jobs while diversifying our tax base away from homeowners.
2. Protect rural lands and agricultural landscapes. Protecting rural lands, working agricultural landscapes and open space are critical to our quality of life. In the light of population growth, the preservation of these resources depends on both a vibrant, diverse agricultural economy and planning and regulatory efforts that support innovative site design.
3. Promote sustainable land use planning and livable communities. Changing the way we develop and use our land and natural resources will have an enduring effect on our community. Smart and sustainable development that decreases urban sprawl and encourages adaptive reuse of buildings is critical. Growth management should advocate human scale neighborhoods.
4. Protect environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources. Natural land features which are environmentally significant or which constitute a natural resource of importance to the community should be maintained and enhanced. Significant and important archaeological resources should be maintained and protected. Public access to and enjoyment of the county's streams, creeks and other watercourses should be enhanced.
5. Promote green initiatives and the use of sustainable energy, water and design. Green building practices should be adopted county wide to reduce energy consumption and environmental impacts with county government leading the way. The tradeoffs of mandates versus incentives will need to be resolved.

Future pieces will consider each of these principles in more depth.

Jack Fraley