

Wheeler Crest Area Plan Policies

GOAL 24. Retain, as nearly as possible, the character and quality of life presently enjoyed in the community.

Objective 24.A.

Prevent incompatible or conflicting uses within the Wheeler Crest community.

Policy 24.A.1. The timing and location of new residential developments shall be directed to areas with existing services or adjacent to areas with existing services (i.e., fire protection, water supply, sewage and utilities).

Action 24.A.1.a. In-fill, to the greatest extent possible, developed private land to the residential densities specified in this plan (i.e., Estate Residential designation, one-acre minimum lot size). Overall densities for areas outside existing developed areas shall not exceed one unit per two acres (Estate Residential designation, two-acre minimum lot size). As specified in the Plan EIR and other Plan policies, larger minimum lot sizes may be appropriate for sensitive resource areas.

Action 24.A.1.b. Require developers, at time of application submittal, to demonstrate adequate service availability (water supply, fire flow, sewage/septic, utilities).

Action 24.A.1.c. If any extension of services will be required for a proposed project, an economic analysis, including projected public costs, shall be required.

Action 24.A.1.d. Consider, and mitigate, the cumulative impact of any new development prior to project approval.

Action 24.A.1.e. The residential density of any proposed project shall be consistent with surrounding densities as built.

Action 24.A.1.f. Petition the Board of Supervisors to establish a development fee and/or land bank for community uses.

Policy 24.A.2. Residential development shall have a minimum impact on the environment.

Action 24.A.2.a. Adequate open space shall be provided as part of any proposed development.

Action 24.A.2.b. Preserve adequate solar access for all existing and proposed development.

Action 24.A.2.c. Discourage installation of street lights unless necessary for safety reasons.

Action 24.A.2.d. Place all utilities underground unless the geology will not allow it.

Action 24.A.2.e. Develop design review standards indicating desired architectural type and outside treatments that will harmonize with the rural character of the area.

Action 24.A.2.f. In order to preserve the brilliant night-sky quality of the Wheeler Crest area, continue to apply the "dark sky" regulations to restrict local night lighting.

Action 24.A.2.g. In order to better preserve continuous open areas for deer and wildlife use, and to facilitate maintenance of a residential structure's defensible space for wildland fire protection purposes, encourage Accessory Dwelling Units be attached to the primary dwelling.

Policy 24.A.3. Retain the rural residential character of the entire study area.

Action 24.A.3.a. Permit only single-family residential and related accessory structures. Bed-and-breakfast establishments shall also be permitted on parcels of 100 acres or greater, if designed to be compatible with existing residential uses, and if the undeveloped portion of the parcel remains as open space or agricultural use in perpetuity.

Action 24.A.3.b. General commercial uses are not desired within the residential area, and shall be prohibited. Bed-and-breakfast establishments shall be exempt from this provision, as detailed in Action 3.1.

Action 24.A.3.c. Permit small-scale agricultural uses (including the keeping of animals for personal use) within the mandate of the County requirements for the ER designation, or more-restrictive CC&Rs, as applicable.

Action 24.A.3.d. Avoid community strife by respecting current, more-restrictive CC&Rs, as well as County land use designations.

Action 24.A.3.e. Consider amending the Land Development Regulations or this Plan in order to further restrict the intensity of animal use in residential areas.

Action 24.A.3.f. Prohibit all types of short-term rentals that may be permitted under Chapter 25 in the Wheeler Crest Planning Area.

Policy 24.A.4. Encourage a diversity of architectural styles that reflect a rural residential lifestyle.

Action 24.A.4.a. Permit and encourage innovative construction techniques, as long as permitted by local ordinance and building codes (i.e., passive/active solar design).

Action 24.A.4.b. New construction shall be reviewed by the Wheeler Crest Design Review Committee.

Policy 24.A.5. Encourage the transfer of privately owned, environmentally sensitive or isolated land within the Wheeler Crest planning area.

Action 24.A.5.a. Identify parcels incompatible for private use by virtue of location and/or environmental sensitivity (i.e., avalanche area, deer migration route, etc.).

Action 24.A.5.b. Coordinate with the USFS or BLM to exchange public land that is more suitable for private ownership.

Objective 24.B.

Preserve the value of land dedicated or deeded for community services, natural resources or recreation use as development occurs in the planning area (parks, community centers, equestrian trails, ski trails, hiking trails, tennis courts, deer migration corridors, etc.).

Policy 24.B.1. When utilities are installed in new residential areas, ensure that they are adequate for future local needs and are compatible with the rural residential flavor of the planning area.

Policy 24.B.2. Provide sites and/or facilities to accommodate a variety of community activities.

Action 24.B.2.a. Closely regulate any proposed community facility to ensure compatibility with rural residential and open-space uses.

Action 24.B.2.b. As necessary, provide an environmental impact analysis of all proposed community facilities.

Action 24.B.2.c. Evaluate and improve, if necessary, all utilities to adequately serve community facilities.

Action 24.B.2.d. Provide incentives to encourage private parties to contribute toward necessary community facilities.

Policy 24.B.3. Guarantee that improvements for community use will increase the attractiveness of the use, and that the use will be compatible with residential uses and surrounding resource values.

Action 24.B.3.a. Buffer all community use from residential uses with a combination of open space, plantings, and physical barriers.

Action 24.B.3.b. Evaluate traffic, safety and air quality impacts of all proposed community facilities.

Action 24.B.3.c. Buffer new developments from deer corridors or other key wildlife habitats using a combination of open space, plantings and physical barriers.

Objective 24.C.

Provide for recreational and open-space uses in and around the Wheeler Crest area.

Policy 24.C.1. Preserve adequate open-space rangeland to protect movement of wildlife, cattle and pack stock.

Action 24.C.1.a. Monitor and discourage the conversion of viable agricultural land.

Policy 24.C.2. Prevent the intrusion of development into rangelands, with special attention to protecting range vegetation and water supply.

Action 24.C.2.a. Discourage extensions of public and private facilities, especially roads, into open space rangeland as defined by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, BLM, and USFS.

Policy 24.C.3. Provide for recreational and aesthetic open space in and around the Wheeler Crest planning area.

Action 24.C.3.a. Explore opportunities to finance park and recreation development. Capture currently available state and federal moneys allocated for these purposes.

Policy 24.C.4. Ensure that recreational facilities are compatible with land uses, maintain environmental quality and protect property rights.

Action 24.C.4.a. Recreational needs should be considered in the planning and development of circulation and transportation improvements.

Action 24.C.4.b. Maintain and enhance recreation opportunities.

Policy 24.C.5. That existing National Forest and BLM lands surrounding the community be retained in public ownership or be utilized for community purposes.

Action 24.C.5.a. Coordinate all planning and development activities adjacent to public lands with the affected public entity.

Action 24.C.5.b. Assist in the preservation of valuable deer habitat by establishing a land bank, or other mechanisms, to retain migration corridors.

Action 24.C.5.c. Coordinate with public agencies to preserve and enhance natural stream courses.

Action 24.C.5.d. Consider requiring a fire-safety buffer between public land and any new development.

Action 24.C.5.e. Assign Open Space designation for surrounding LADWP lands.

Policy 24.C.6. That isolated public lands within the study area be exchanged for private lands better suited for watershed protection and other public purposes.

Action 24.C.6.a. Identify and designate those lands that, by reason of their remote, isolated, or hazardous location, should be exchanged.

Policy 24.C.7. Encourage sound management and utilization of public lands to benefit local recreational and energy needs.

Action 24.C.7.a. Any proposed hydroelectric facilities shall be consistent with the goals of this plan.

Objective 24.D.

Ensure adequate public services (e.g., fire protection) and infrastructure (e.g., water supply, sewage treatment, utilities) for the area.

Policy 24.D.1. Ensure that necessary public facilities are planned for as new residential development is proposed. Ensure that adequate land, in appropriate locations, is set aside for public facilities.

Action 24.D.1.a. The Mono County Health Department and the Wheeler Crest Community Services District shall evaluate, as the community expands, the need for community water systems in the planning area.

Action 24.D.1.b. Maximize groundwater recharge by protecting natural drainage areas and encouraging their preservation as open space.

Action 24.D.1.c. Encourage use of all water saving devices, above and beyond CalGreen building code requirements at building construction.

Policy 24.D.2. Necessary public facilities shall be located and designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Action 24.D.2.a. All proposed public facilities shall provide sufficient buffering to protect residential areas from noise and visual impact.

Action 24.D.2.b. Provide adequate parking, snow storage, underground utilities, etc., in accord with the nature and function of the facility.

Objective 24.E.

Provide for a quality residential life by maintaining and improving the existing housing stock while ensuring that housing needs of the entire community are being met.

Policy 24.E.1. Conserve, by maintaining or rehabilitating, the planning area's housing stock.

Action 24.E.1.a. Allow alternative housing construction modes, as long as these conform architecturally to existing homes (i.e., modular, manufactured, etc.) and retain the rural-residential character.

Policy 24.E.2. Improve the supply of buildable land by encouraging land exchanges of undevelopable parcels in wet meadow and avalanche-prone areas for more suitable areas.

Objective 24.F.

Protect and enhance the environmental resources in the area that contribute to the quality of life and form the basis for the recreation-oriented local economy; i.e., open space, air and water quality, scenic resources, streams, and wildlife.

Policy 24.F.1. Protect all year-round streams from encroachment or development that detracts from their natural beauty.

Action 24.F.1.a. CEQA analysis that considers direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources at Witcher and Birch creeks, including amphibians, will be required for any project that may impact these resources.

Action 24.F.1.b. Utilize open space and drainage easements as well as clustering of major new development as stream preservation tools.

Action 24.F.1.c. Adopt erosion control and grading regulations that will minimize removal of natural vegetation to help prevent downstream sedimentation.

Action 24.F.1.d. Prohibit artificial redirection of water courses, especially Lower Rock Creek, Witcher Creek and Birch Creek.

Action 24.F.1.e. Maintain and preserve existing vegetation and habitat along stream courses.

Policy 24.F.2. Preserve clean surface and groundwater resources.

Action 24.F.2.a. Maximize groundwater recharge by protecting natural drainage areas. Ensure their preservation by leaving them in open space.

Action 24.F.2.b. Monitor groundwater levels and quality and consider initiation of a groundwater management plan to ensure protection of the resource.

Action 24.F.2.c. Cooperate and coordinate with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board in protecting the area's water resources. This may include requirement of on-site sedimentation control devices.

Action 24.F.2.d. Promote water conservation through the use of native and/or drought-resistant plantings.

Policy 24.F.3. Protect wildlife and native plants, especially rare and endangered species.

Action 24.F.3.a. Create a list of known or potential rare and endangered plants that may exist within the study area. Retain the expertise of the California Native Plant Society.

Action 24.F.3.b. Require an environmental analysis for any proposed land use located in areas that are known habitats for rare and endangered wildlife or flora. The analysis would study the effects of the proposed development upon this resource and how adverse impacts would be mitigated.

Action 24.F.3.c. The entire planning area is either within or in close proximity to valuable deer migration routes. Thus all projects, other than homes on subdivided lots, shall assess and mitigate to the greatest degree possible the impacts of development on this resource. Mitigation measures may include but not be limited to: clustering; reduction of density; large minimum lot sizes; prohibiting construction in certain locations; relocation; contribution to a land bank for alternate routes; fencing of gardens/landscaping; protection of special habitat types such as wet meadows; and building setbacks.

Action 24.F.3.d. Restrict off-road vehicle use in areas of environmental sensitivity (i.e., deer migration and habitat areas).

Action 24.F.3.e. Support the CDFW's continuing program to reintroduce native game species (bighorn sheep).

Action 24.F.3.f. Consult/engage with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the responsible agency for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep prior to approving any new or renewed grazing use or a or altering any existing grazing use for domestic sheep.

Policy 24.F.4. Protect open space and scenic values within and around the community.

Action 24.F.4.a. Require developers/builders to protect views from parcels that are on the "upper" side of a proposed development. This applies to any affected property regardless of whether it is inside or outside the project boundaries.

Action 24.F.4.b. Retain areas inappropriate for development (i.e., wet meadows, avalanche hazard zones) in natural open space.

Action 24.F.4.c. Prohibit road extensions into valuable open space areas.

Policy 24.F.5. Identify and protect significant historical and archaeological sites from damage or destruction.

Action 24.F.5.a. Any proposed project in an area having potential archaeological resources shall conduct a site assessment prior to project approval or any grading activity.

Action 24.F.5.b. Cluster or relocate projects away from unique cultural resources.

Action 24.F.5.c. Revise County procedures regarding cultural resources to assure recordation/preservation prior to site disturbance.

Policy 24.F.6. Develop programs that prevent the harassment of wildlife by domestic animals.

Action 24.F.6.a. Support enforcement of the leash law in the Wheeler Crest community.

Action 24.F.6.b. Support active cooperation of community organizations.

Policy 24.F.7. Preserve and protect native vegetation and sizable stands of native trees.

Action 24.F.7.a. Work with all federal, state, and local agencies to implement and maintain tree preservation programs.

Action 24.F.7.b. Site plans for all proposed projects, including single-family homes, shall identify all mature native trees and native plants. The plans should demonstrate a reasonable attempt to retain as many native trees and native plants as possible.

Objective 24.G.

Ensure public safety from the unreasonable risks presented by natural hazards (i.e., seismic, avalanche, flood, wildland fire).

Policy 24.G.1. Take all feasible steps to reduce the threat to life and property from fire by implementing effective fire-prevention measures.

Action 24.G.1.a. Consider requiring expanded fuel breaks and greenbelts between new development and public lands.

Action 24.G.1.b. Where feasible, require two access points (built to current standards) for all development projects that are easily accessible to all emergency vehicles.

Action 24.G.1.c. Require that vegetation within new developments use native and drought-resistant species.

Action 24.G.1.d. Require a minimum of 30 feet between all new residences unless existing structures make this unfeasible.

Action 24.G.1.e. Set up an emergency evacuation plan that is available prior to a fire's breaking out. This could also be used for other natural disasters.

Action 24.G.1.f. Propane, gasoline, and other fuel storage should be confined to peripheral locations to provide a safety buffer from areas of human occupancy.

Action 24.G.1.g. All new development shall comply with all requirements of the Wheeler Crest Fire Protection District (FPD), as well as existing County requirements. Fire hydrants, water storage and water lines shall be provided as necessary to guarantee sufficient fire flow.

Action 24.G.1.h. Require a consistent street naming and housing numbering system for the area and require all names and numbers to be clearly visible.

Action 24.G.1.i. The County, supported by the FPD, shall continue to require road designs that guarantee adequate width, moderate grades, and wide-turning radii, so that emergency vehicles can quickly and safely respond to any call.

Action 24.G.1.j. Work with applicable agencies to provide a secondary/emergency access route for the Wheeler Crest community.

Policy 24.G.2. Establish appropriate siting and development standards in order to reduce the risks of earthquakes.

Action 24.G.2.a. Assist in enforcing State seismic requirements.

Policy 24.G.3. Identify avalanche danger areas and protect life and property accordingly.

Action 24.G.3.a. Implement the avalanche policies and mitigation measures in the Safety Element.

Policy 24.G.4. Develop and provide an adequate level of safety-oriented services: sheriff, paramedic and fire.

Action 24.G.4.a. Utilize the sheriffs and Public Works to assist in monitoring and evacuating procedures during natural disasters.

Action 24.G.4.b. Promote increased emergency medical services for the community.

Action 24.G.4.c. Support and monitor compliance of the county "No Shooting" ordinance.