



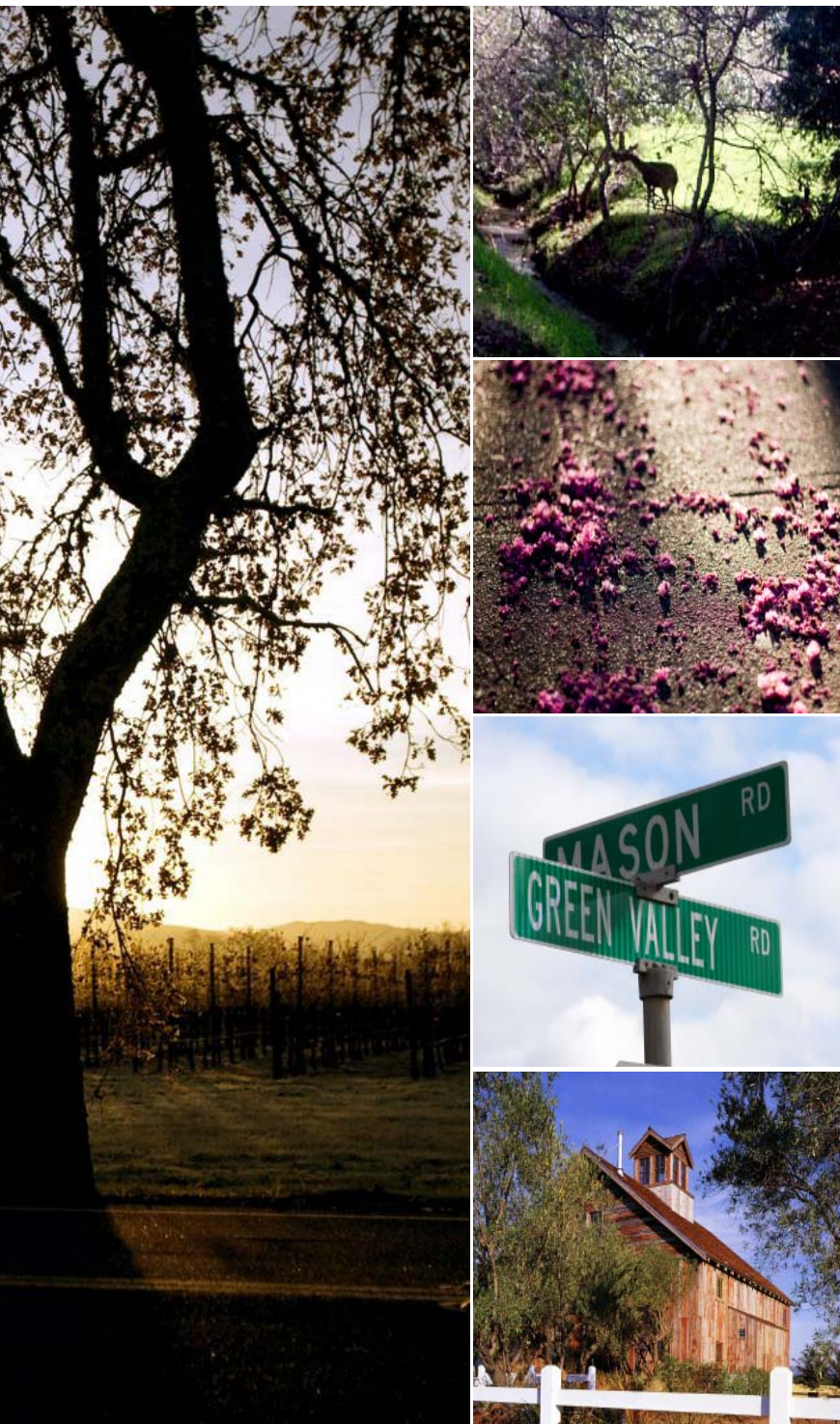
1.0

VISION

“For many of us today hunting and gathering and growing our own food is by and large a form of play... So though a hunter-gatherer food chain still exists here and there to one degree or another, it seems to me its chief value for us at this point is not so much economic or practical as it is didactic. Like other important forms of play, it promises to teach us something about who we are beneath the crust of our civilized, practical, grown-up lives.”

- Michael Pollan, Omnivore's Dilemma





1.1 INTRODUCTION

The **Specific Plan for Middle Green Valley** is built upon the fundamental concepts of conservation, sustainability and community. This Plan works to recognize and enable a rural settlement pattern of varying intensities, uses and opportunities that honors the agricultural legacy of the land while protecting the unique rural setting. The Specific Plan builds upon the goals and policies of the Solano General Plan (General Plan) as well as the recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to create an integrated vision based on four overarching Principles. These Principles are supported throughout this Specific Plan by related policies and regulations that direct future actions and implementation methods to create a series of neighborhoods **connected to the land, the place and its history.**





fabric / `fa-brik: (noun)... the arrangement of physical components in relation to each other

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

1.2 THE MIDDLE GREEN VALLEY PLAN: CREATING A CONSERVATION FABRIC

Envisioned as a collection of small neighborhoods that nestle along the base of the oak wooded foothills, Middle Green Valley is a comprehensively planned community that reflects the traditional rural settlement patterns of the past. The Specific Plan proposes a mix of land uses, including up to 400 new primary residential units, agricultural tourism, local neighborhood retail and community facility uses and over 1,400 acres of protected agriculture and open space. The end result is a multi-layered Plan based on the concepts of clustered development, conservation and limited and appropriate settlement, that provides a certain future for Middle Green Valley.

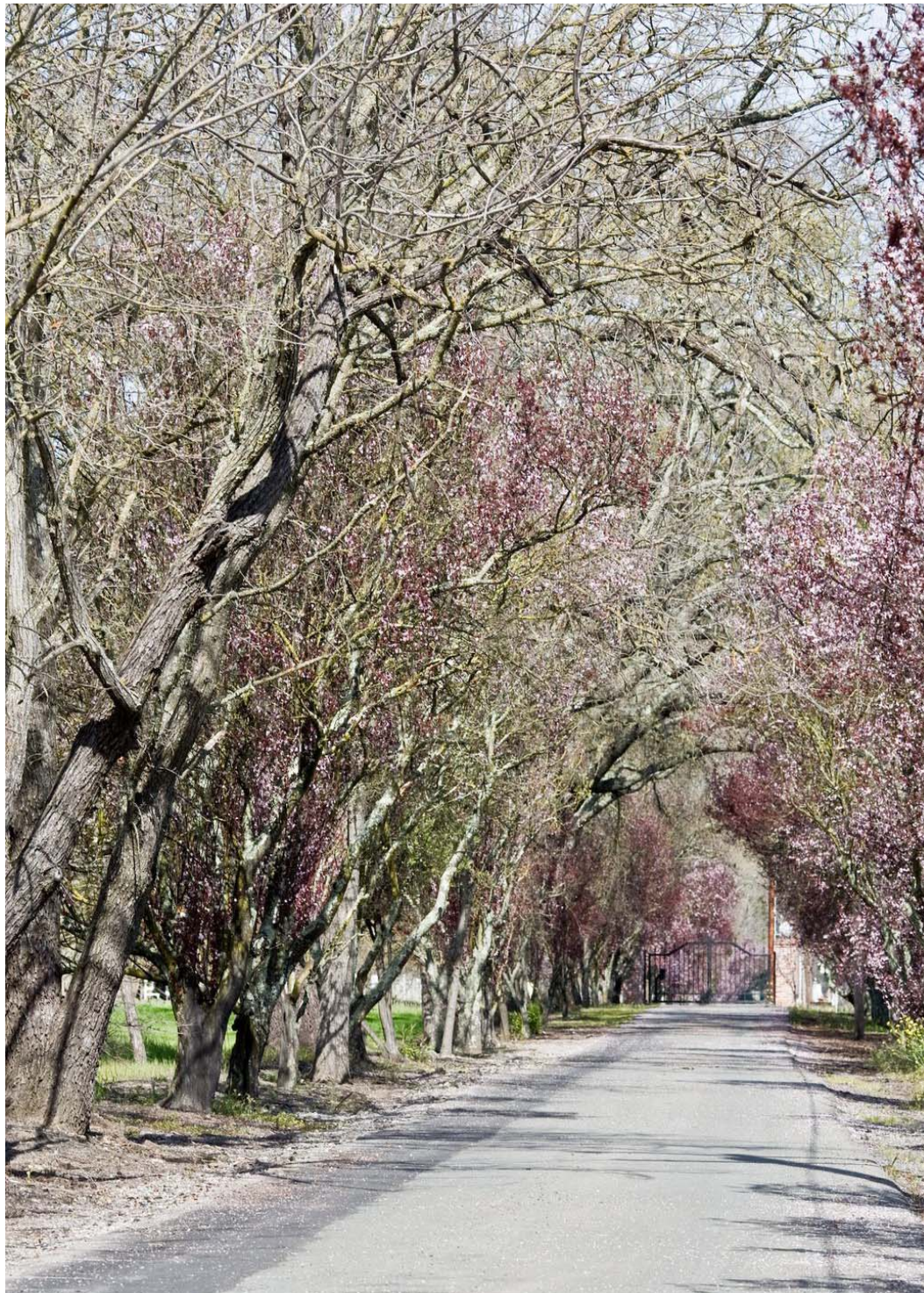
Three patterns work together to give rise to an intricate and interdependent fabric of settlement:





A. THE GREEN FABRIC – THE STARTING POINT

The community plan starts with the Green Fabric (Open Lands) that directs the placement of settled or development areas on the most suitable lands while setting aside the most sensitive, scenic and productive lands in conservation and public spaces. This Open Lands network then provides the basis for a pattern of settlement that is responsive to the natural and cultural setting. A diverse network of passive and active Open Lands results in a quilt of vineyards, riparian corridors, drainages, fields, neighborhood parks, greens, overlooks, meeting places and woodlands **that provides the connective tissue that is the promise and the future of this community.** By letting the landscape drive the development pattern, the Specific Plan reinforces the vast open feeling of the agricultural, pastoral landscape so that over 75% of the Study Area is set aside in Open Lands.





B. THE GRAY FABRIC – CONNECTING UP THE COMMUNITY

Layered over this Green Fabric is a diverse circulation and servicing system that interconnects the neighborhoods as well as the surrounding communities. An informal grid network of rural streets, country lanes, rambling paths and informal driveways utilizes the Green Street approach. This approach combines the old fashioned design goals of walkability, access, and the establishment of rich streetscapes with stormwater technologies and best management practices that maximize the functionality of these areas while **creating beautiful places for people to work, live and play.**





C. THE BUILT FABRIC – COMPLETING THE RURAL AESTHETIC

The final layer is that of the vertical massing and elements – buildings, facades, roofscapes and fencing will evolve over time to reinforce the contrast of the dominance of the pastoral landscape to the understated, rural built environment. Settlement areas are clustered in the most suitable locations in order to aggregate Open Lands areas. The Specific Plan includes a diversity of Building Types and land uses spread between four general neighborhood areas of the Specific Plan Area (Plan Area) to give rise to a small town setting that draws from the principles of rural architecture – **simplicity, craftsmanship and authenticity.**

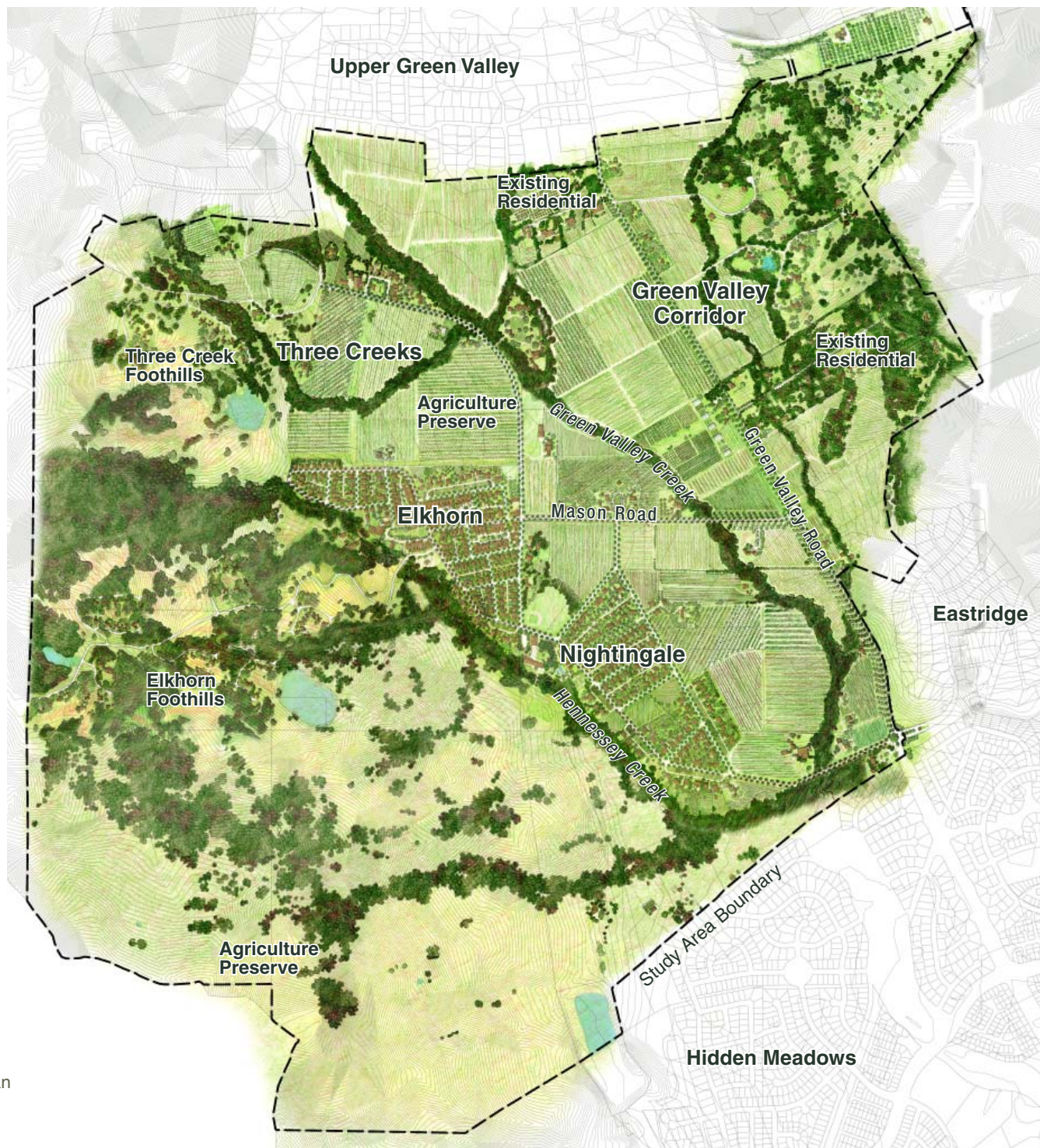


Figure 1-1: Illustrative Plan for Middle Green Valley



D. SHAPING THE COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP ETHIC – THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GREEN VALLEY CONSERVANCY

Preserving the rural beauty and cultural legacy of the Green Valley area is the guiding vision in crafting a long term, equitable, and sustainable development plan. This Specific Plan seeks to celebrate and perpetuate the tradition of the cherished working landscapes that have characterized this part of Solano County for over 150 years. A core component of the plan is the promotion of sustainable food and agriculture systems as a means to synergize the relationships between agricultural lands, the built and natural environments, community health and natural resource stewardship. To provide assurances for the long term preservation and management of the Open Lands, the Specific Plan includes the creation of the **Green Valley Agricultural Conservancy (Conservancy)**, a non-profit organization that manages and oversees the ±1,490 acres of productive agricultural land, pastures, and natural areas placed under conservations easements.

The Conservancy is a defining feature for the Middle Green Valley Plan. It is envisioned as:

- *an agricultural operation*, overseeing the agricultural productivity for the local community and regional foodshed,
- *a land steward*, responsible for managing and oversight of the conservation easements, as well as the evolution of the built environment;
- *a community builder* – providing a framework for educational, interpretive opportunities – the social glue for the new community.

Together, this multi-layered plan creates a small, vital residential community which provides the **philosophical, cultural and financial support required to preserve the rural and cultural heritage of Middle Green Valley.**



Figure 1-2: Conceptual Street View of Elkhorn Neighborhood



With the loss of tradition, we have lost the thread which safely guides us through the vast realms of the past, but this thread was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past. It could be that only now will the past open up to us with unexpected freshness and tell us things that no one as yet had ears to hear.

- Hannah Arendt

1.3 THE PRINCIPLES

The vision starts with an understanding of the land, the history and the community. Through an extensive community-based design process, a shared vision was crafted that underpins a future of managed and appropriate growth, economic stability, on-going resource preservation and the creation of vibrant and diverse neighborhoods. These aspirations are summed up in four guiding Principles that build upon the initial goal and policies outlined in the General Plan for the Middle Green Valley Special Study Area (SSA), outlined in Section 1.3A at right.

1.3A: GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

:SPECIAL STUDY AREA – GOAL & POLICIES:

A goal and policies were developed for Middle Green Valley based on the initial community vision process. The goal and policies outlined in the General Plan below provide the framework for implementing the future vision of a **“rural community with compatible residential development”**. The Specific Plan Principles and policies described throughout this document build on this goal and policies to outline ways to achieve this community vision.

[GOAL]

SS.G-1: Protect and maintain the rural character of Middle Green Valley while allowing opportunities for compatible residential development to occur.

[POLICIES]

SS.P-1: Maintain the rural character of Middle Green Valley while still allowing development to be guided into areas screened from Green Valley Road because of natural contours in the land, woodland vegetation, and/or riparian vegetation. Locate upland development in areas screened by landforms or vegetation.

SS.P-2: Balance the protection of resources in Middle Green Valley (e.g. view sheds, oak woodlands, riparian habitat, sustainable agricultural use) while allowing development to occur.

SS.P-3: Allow for the migration and movement of wildlife.

SS.P-4: Provide a variety of incentives and techniques to encourage property owners to preserve natural and visual resources, in addition to the transfer of development rights.

SS.P-5: Encourage cluster residential development through incentives to property owners in hillside and valley floor areas that can support residential uses with least affect on resources, steep slopes, or very high wildfire hazard areas.

SS.P-6: In accordance with balancing the protection of resources described in these policies, adopt a program that provides residential development credits to property owners who voluntarily forego or limit development on their lands. The transfer of development rights program should focus incentives on land in areas to be preserved.

SS.P-7: Adopt a specific plan or master plan to implement these policies for Middle Green Valley.

SS.P-8: Create additional methods to assist landowners who choose to continue farming, such as, but not limited to:

- enforcing the right-to-farm act and educating residents on the act; and
- investigating mechanisms for providing farmers with economic assistance to ensure agricultural viability.



1. RESPECT AND HONOR THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING TO ESTABLISH A STEWARDSHIP ETHIC AND SUSTAINABLE WAY OF LIFE.

It is time to take stock of the uniqueness of Middle Green Valley and its surroundings, and ensure that the rural legacy of the area lives on through generations to come. This Specific Plan is built on the foundation of a community shared vision and belief; that of the value of protecting the valley's rural beauty. This is the result of an environmental and cultural analysis that placed development in the most suitable areas while protecting the vast open feeling of the pastoral landscape.

This Specific Plan envisions and describes opportunities to continue these fundamental precepts of shared ownership and stewardship through various design and implementation measures, such as The Conservancy and the Neighborhood Design Code, which are based on giving rise to a built pattern that respects and is connected to this place (Chapters 4 and 5). The framework described in this document has the intended goal of creating a community of stewards **that actively participate in understanding, preserving and making thoughtful decisions regarding the use and treatment of their cultural and natural resources.**





2. REVITALIZE AND RECONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO THE AGRICULTURAL AND RANCHING LEGACIES OF THE AREA.

This Specific Plan is based on honoring, celebrating and weaving the rich agricultural and ranching history into the day-to-day lives of the residents that live here. This Specific Plan describes a diversity of rural Building Types, a mix of agricultural tourism uses, an intricate quilt of row crops, vineyards and/or orchards and informal community gathering and gardening spots. The notion of living in a beautiful, agricultural, working landscape that is connected to the regional network of open space and agricultural lands will shape life in this community in many positive ways. The result is a community that has the opportunity and promise of **reconnecting with the land, its history and agricultural legacy.**





3. VALUE FLEXIBILITY AND ANTICIPATE CHANGE WHILE PROVIDING AN INNOVATIVE, RIGOROUS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.

The most thriving, diverse communities are those that may evolve and flex to the ever-changing needs of the population, economic setting and the times. This Specific Plan sets out a framework that may be responsive to changing needs and financial realities. Derived from traditional rural settlement concepts, land uses and patterns encourage a dynamic process to take place in the development of the Middle Green Valley neighborhoods. This flexibility includes the use of a form based community design code that is based on Building Types to emphasize the design and character of the environment rather than letting distinct and separate land uses drive development decisions.





4. SUPPORT AND ENABLE THE VALUES OF CRAFTSMANSHIP THAT EMPHASIZE THOUGHTFUL, DURABLE, HIGH QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CONCEPTS.

At the core of this Specific Plan is that a place is being created rather than a project, and over time this place becomes a living, breathing, dynamic environment. The design of the community is an interrelated, amalgam of the built, natural, and cultural environments -- rather than these components being cleanly separated, very controlled or some non-existent. To this end, policies and standards support an integrated design concept that reinforces a custom, efficient and innovative development approach **that challenges the business-as-usual development models of the past.**



Throughout this document, a summary of the relationship of the Specific Plan Principles to the Specific Plan policies and regulations, as well as their relevance to the goals and policies set out in the Solano County General Plan further clarifies this Specific Plan’s consistency with these documents. Refer to Appendix C for a compilation of these references.

1.4 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Plan consists of five primary chapters and related appendices as described below:

Preamble: An overview of the history behind the preparation of this Specific Plan, the lessons learned and why it is important to the future of planning in Solano County.

- 1.0 **Vision:** Presents the overall structure of the Plan, the vision, and the four main planning Principles.
- 2.0 **Plan Purpose, Authority and Context:** Presents the purpose, intent, public participation and background for this Specific Plan.
- 3.0 **The Neighborhood Plan – Patterns, Concepts and Character:** Describes the three Specific Plan design components that make up the development plan -- the **Green**, the **Gray** and the **Built** Fabric and the resource, agriculture, circulation and land use policies related to each of these components.
- 4.0 **Implementation – Finance, Implementation and Execution:** Outlines the administration, implementation measures and necessary utility infrastructure required to carry out this Specific Plan.
- 5.0 **The Neighborhood Design Code:** Presents the Development Standards, regulations, Guidelines and design review process for all development projects within the Plan area, including site, infrastructure, landscape, architectural and sign design.

Appendices: The Appendices contain reference and back up documentation to support and supplement the information contained in this document. The following Appendices have been included:

- A. **Definitions:** Capitalized terms used throughout this document are defined in the Appendix.
- B. **Sustainability Index:** A matrix which lays out the specific sustainable measures that have been included in this Specific Plan.
- C. **General Plan Consistency Reference:** A matrix which lays out each General Plan policy and goal and the Specific Plan section(s) which demonstrate compliance.
- D. **Approved Plant List:** A list of plants suited to the Study Area, including trees, shrubs, ground covers and grasses.
- E. **Acronyms:** A list of commonly used abbreviations, acronyms and corresponding nomenclature used throughout this document.

1.4.1 SPECIFIC PLAN NOMENCLATURE

In reading this Specific Plan, use the following interpretations for Guiding Principles, Development Standards and Design Guidelines:

- **Guiding Principles (“Principles”):** Principles described in this document are a “guide” to achieving the overall objectives and goals for the community. Principles are intended to be used as a map to guide design choices and decisions.
- **Development Standards (“Standards”):** Standards that appear throughout this document may be identified with the use of the phrases “shall” and “is to be.” Standards establish the minimum criteria that must be satisfied to be consistent with the Plan and to gain design review approval.
- **Design Guidelines (“Guidelines”):** Guidelines that appear throughout this document may be identified with the use of the phrases “should,” “may,” “encouraged” or “discouraged.” Guidelines provide a higher level of detail in describing the overall design aesthetic and approach to achieve consistent and high quality community design solutions.
- **Capitalized terms** used throughout this Specific Plan are defined in Definitions in Appendix A.