

14 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The County of Mariposa has a rich and colorful history. Within the County are many historical and archaeological sites warranting special consideration for preservation and protection.

The Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the General Plan identifies issues and programs related to the preservation, rehabilitation, and use of historic resources, as well as the preservation and assessment of cultural resources.

14.1 HISTORIC RESOURCES ISSUES AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A common phrase, “those who fail to learn from history are destined to repeat it” is applicable to the concept of knowing and learning the cultural and historic roots of this area. Historic preservation is important to Mariposa County, and the County has an opportunity to proactively preserve its past through the General Plan .

Without policies and standards aimed specifically at preserving and enhancing tangible evidences of the past, future development or neglect could result in further destruction to the County’s history. The Historic and Cultural Resources Element addresses the following issues.

- Deterioration of Historic and Cultural Resources
- Identification of Historic and Cultural Resources
- Relationship of Cultural and Historic Resources to the General Plan Issues
- Opportunities For Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources
- Balancing Private Property Rights and Historic Preservation
- Native American Consultation

14.1.01 DETERIORATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Reasonably slow growth has served as a type of preservation in Mariposa County. There are structures, ruins, or signs of the past countywide that tell of the County’s contribution to both state and national history.

Allowing destruction of historic structures by neglect is not consistent with maintaining the historic character of Mariposa County. The historic buildings of the County are considered part of the economy, helping to define the County's character.

14.1.02 IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The character of a community is defined by its physical, cultural, and social qualities. Mariposa County has been shaped by historical development. As part of the County's scenery, historic and cultural resources contribute to tourism in the local economy. The key to success is ensuring these assets are preserved. Knowing where to direct the visitor interested in history is as much a part of the marketing efforts of the County as it is a part of the management of historic and cultural resources.

14.1.03 RELATIONSHIP OF CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES TO THE GENERAL PLAN ISSUES

A. THE COUNTY'S ECONOMY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Throughout the Mother Lode, and in fact throughout the United States, communities maintaining historic character and integrity flourish economically. Mariposa County recognizes its best avenue to encourage visitors to spend an extra day in the County is to provide something for the visitors to see. Routing visitors through the County's historic sites can generate their extended stay.

The historic sites must meet the expectations of the visitor market. This requires the County to implement a strong program of historic design review. The General Plan enables the design review process to begin, but the specific guidelines and criteria will be developed through General Plan implementation.

B. HISTORIC RESOURCES AND THE COUNTY'S CHARACTER

Towns, districts, and areas within Mariposa County that continue to retain a significant level of historical resources include Mariposa town, Bear Valley, Hornitos, El Portal, Fish Camp, Coulterville, and Greeley Hill.

14.1.04 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Varieties of management tools exist to preserve and restore the many historic sites in Mariposa County.

A. ZONING, USE, AND DESIGN REVIEW

California’s Legislature recognizes historic and archaeological preservation as a legitimate planning concern. The National Trust for Historic Preservation manages federal programs intended to preserve aspects of the County’s history. Historic preservation programs ensure cultural, social, and economic benefits for the County. Zoning and design codes implement General Plan policies.

The Secretary of the Interior offers useful guidelines for the rehabilitation, expansion, renovation, and construction of structures within historic districts. The County of Mariposa may tailor these national guidelines to meet local needs.

B. CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Nationally recognized Certified Local Government (CLG) Program integrates local governments with the national historic preservation program. Certification provides strong management tools for local government decision-making. Local governments collect and analyze information on the location and significance of historic resources for use by the existing Mariposa County Historic Sites and Records Preservation Commission. Using grants awarded by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a CLG may undertake studies or inventories, create design guidelines, and prepare publications defining resources and assistance opportunities.

C. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The County of Mariposa is home to a number of historical and archaeological resources. Many of the known resources are privately owned historical structures. Maintenance and upkeep of homes is an ongoing expense and can be a burden for some. For those County residents that own historic structures the imposition of design guidelines for structures in historic districts and the requirement to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties can seem like an even greater financial burden. Therefore, the County may want to consider providing its residents with a wide range of incentives to alleviate the apparent burden and to promote the preservation of its historic resources.

14.1.05 BALANCING PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

There is a need to reconcile preserving historic structures and sites with reducing governmental intrusion on private property. Traditionally, Mariposa County has not imposed strict design review standards on residences.

The residents of Mariposa County value the rights of property owners. Owning historic properties includes certain responsibilities to retain the property for the general benefit of the community. This is a national policy supported by tax incentives, special grants, and other programs designed to ease the burden of responsibility for public purpose placed on the private owner of historic property.

Mariposa County offers a unique collection of historic structure, sites and properties. These sites, properties, and structures are a significant asset in meeting the County’s economic development goals. Another issue of concern is the lack of use of historic structures. This creates two problems. First, the buildings fall into disrepair and may become impossible to rehabilitate or restore. Secondly, some property owners intentionally demolish a building through neglect and deferred maintenance.

14.1.06 NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

Today, the Native American presence in Mariposa County is represented by the Southern Sierra Miwok Indians. Representatives of the Native American community have a responsibility and role in reviewing and monitoring projects that would affect known archaeological sites, archaeologically sensitive areas, and traditional cultural places. State law defines the consultation process.

14.2 GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Goal 14-1: Determine appropriateness of Certified Local Government Status or alternate program for the County of Mariposa to better serve owners of historic properties.

Policy 14-1a: Evaluate services and funds for owners of historic properties through the Certified Local Government program or alternate program.

Implementation Measure 14-1a(1): The Historic Sites and Records Preservation Committee should be reorganized to meet the requirements for a local Historic Preservation Commission recognized by the Department of Interior.

Timing:	Intermediate-term
Responsibility:	Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact:	Nominal administrative costs; operational costs paid by grant entitlements.
Consequences:	Preservation of historic sites.

Implementation Measure 14-1a(2): The Planning Director shall be designated the County’s Cultural Resources Coordinator/Historic Preservation Officer.

Timing:	Ongoing
Responsibility:	Administration.
Fiscal Impact:	None.
Consequences:	This is a technicality for CLG purposes.

Implementation Measure 14-1a(3): Retention of historic records shall be within the purview of the Historic Sites and Records Preservation Commission.

Timing:	Ongoing
Responsibility:	Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact:	None.
Consequences:	This reinforces the records preservation role of the Commission so that this responsibility does not get lost.

Goal 14-2: Identify historical resources within the County of historical significance.

Policy 14-2a: Identify historic resources to determine marketing opportunities.

Implementation Measure 14-2a(1): Update the County historic sites inventory.

Timing: Intermediate-term
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Costs of consulting services to update.
Consequences: Current inventory.

Implementation Measure 14-2a(2): The Board of Supervisors shall include qualifying sites and structures on the list of Mariposa County Historic sites.

Timing: Intermediate-term
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: None.
Consequences: Creates a historic sites map—which is an economic asset for tourism.

Implementation Measure 14-2a(3): Analysis of qualifying historic sites and structures shall be undertaken in conformance with appropriate standards of the California State Historic Preservation Office and the standards of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Timing: Ongoing review standard
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Ongoing review.
Consequences: Establishes a threshold.

Goal 14-3: Use financial incentives and partnership opportunities to preserve historic and cultural resources.

Policy 14-3a: Attempt to increase the number of historic resources in Mariposa County that are preserved, protected, and/or rehabilitated.

Implementation Measure 14-3a(1): Seek options through partnerships with private organizations, local financial institutions, and by the use of Federal and State grants and tax incentives.

Timing: Intermediate-term
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Costs of grant administration.
Consequences: Allows the CLG grants to be used as incentives—one of the rare times government funds can be passed to private property owners.

Goal 14-4: Utilize the County’s historic sites to increase tourism opportunities.

Policy 14-4a: Development within historic districts shall enhance and improve historic scenery.

Implementation Measure 14-4a(1): The County shall prepare and adopt Historic Design Review Guidelines for use within Districts.

Timing: Intermediate-term
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Cost incorporated into the update.
Consequences: Historic preservation.

Implementation Measure 14-4a(2): Within County-identified historic districts, all exterior construction, renovation, rehabilitation, or restoration shall be subject to design review approval.

Timing: Ongoing review standard
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Increases number of projects requiring permit review.
Consequences: County Code standard.

Implementation Measure 14-4a(3): Demolition of County-identified historic structures should require review from the Historic Sites and Records Preservation Commission.

Timing: Ongoing review standard
Responsibility: Building Department, Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Ongoing site review, permit review costs.
Consequences: Provides a safety valve against the County's history being destroyed without reason.

Goal 14-5: Create historic districts to preserve the County's historic character and promote tourism.

Policy 14-5a: Identify areas of the County that qualify as historic districts.

Implementation Measure 14-5a(1): The County, in cooperation with the Historic Sites and Records Preservation Commission and local Planning Advisory Committees, should identify new or expanded historic districts for nomination to the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places. This may include, but not be limited to cemeteries.

Timing: Intermediate-term
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Staff or consulting costs.
Consequences: Creates a locally available resource for County communities.

Goal 14-6: Avoid demolition or destruction of historic and cultural resources.

Policy 14-6a: Seek alternatives to demolition or destruction of historic resources.

Implementation Measure 14-6a(1): Prior to the approval of a demolition permit for any historic site, structure, or cultural place the Historic Sites and Records Preservation Commission shall review the application pursuant to CEQA and determine whether alternatives to the proposed demolition or destruction shall be required.

Timing: Ongoing review standard
Responsibility: Historic Preservation Commission.
Fiscal Impact: Staff time and meeting time.
Consequences: An additional safety valve.

Implementation Measure 14-6a(2): Prior to the approval of a demolition permit or grading permit for a cultural place the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation Consultation Committee shall review the application pursuant to CEQA and determine whether alternatives to the proposed demolition or destruction shall be required.

Timing: Ongoing review standard
Responsibility: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation Consultation Committee.
Fiscal Impact: Staff time and meeting time.
Consequences: An additional safety valve.

Goal 14-7: Include Native American representatives in discretionary project review.

Policy 14-7a: Encourage cooperation and communication between County officials and the Native American population of Mariposa County.

Implementation Measure 14-7a(1): Mariposa County shall invite the participation of representatives of the Native American community in the review of discretionary projects for which there is a likelihood of potential archaeological artifacts and cultural places.

Timing: Ongoing
Responsibility: Mariposa County Planning Department.
Fiscal Impact: Ongoing.
Consequences: Helps property owners determine if there are potential CEQA impacts early in the process.

14.3 RELATED GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

14.3.01 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The preservation of the County’s historic and cultural heritage is important in the ability to achieve its economic development goals, as set forth in the Economic Development Element. The County’s scenery, along with its rich history, is a fundamental part of creating a Mariposa County “brand” for marketing the County’s tourism potential. A Mariposa brand gives the County an identity that can attract visitors, thereby expanding the visitor-serving economy.

14.3.02 REGIONAL TOURISM

The County's historic and cultural character is one of the aspects that the Regional Tourism Element identifies as the basis for programs to encourage visitors to make extended trips within the County. The Regional Tourism Element includes policies and implementation measures for improving visitor awareness of and accessibility to the County's historic communities and native American cultural traditions and practice