



5. Economic Development

The Economic Development Element is divided into the following sections:

- General (Section 5.1)
- Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention (Section 5.2)
- Diversified Economy (Section 5.3)
- Labor Force Development (Section 5.4)
- Tourism (Section 5.5)
- Commercial Development (Section 5.6)
- Work Plan/Implementation Measures (Section 5.7)

Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout this Element to describe economic development issues:

Economic Base. The portion of the local economy that primarily sells its goods and services to customers outside the County or local region. These industries draw income into the County that is then re-circulated in local-serving “Non-Basic” businesses such as retail and service establishments.

Economic Development Corporation (EDC). A private, Countywide organization that promotes economic development through informational packages, site tours of the region, and presentations to corporations in support of EDC members. The EDC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of representatives from local communities, private sector leaders, and other organizations.

Emerging Industries. Industries that currently have low concentration in the County but are growing rapidly.

Industry. A term for the collective activities of a group of firms that produce the same kind of commodity or service or are engaged in the same type of operations. The auto industry and the steel industry are examples of industries within the manufacturing sector.

Labor Force. Persons that are either employed or are actively seeking work.

Value-Added. The increase in the value of products over the cost of their raw materials. Higher-value-added products support higher wages and generally return greater economic benefits to the locality in which they are produced.

Existing Conditions Overview

Tulare County, like many agricultural areas in the San Joaquin Valley, finds itself facing the first half of the Twenty-First Century coping with new growth and opportunities. While this may be said of nearly all of California, the challenge in Tulare County is compounded by an economy in transition.

Historically, agriculture drove Tulare County’s economy. For most of the past 100 years, Tulare County has had one of the largest agricultural outputs of any County in the United States. Despite a strong agriculturally-based economy, Tulare County’s unemployment rate has remained much higher than the State average because of the seasonal nature of agricultural employment.

Tulare County’s long and short-term objectives are to work with cities, communities, and hamlets, the private sector, and other organizations to bring the County more in line with State employment and income growth averages. The first step in improving Tulare County’s economy is to build upon the strong agricultural base. Tulare County has an opportunity to expand its agricultural economy through the advent of new technologies and marketing to international markets. It is essential for the County’s agricultural economy to remain at the cutting edge in crop selection and growing practices.

Tulare County has several opportunities to diversify its economy both in existing and emerging industrial sectors. Newer business opportunities in areas such as ethanol production, value-added food processing, and dairy production have established a foothold in the County within the past twenty years and should be nurtured and expanded to serve as the economic base for the County and region.

Tulare County is also the gateway to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest, and other Sierra attractions, creating opportunities for recreational and resort development in the foothills, creating jobs, and increasing housing demand.

Training and education must also be expanded to build a base of skills that will attract firms locating or seeking to expand in the area. A quality work force is one key requirement for selecting a site, according to site location professionals. Efforts to create a highly skilled workforce must be made to attract industry into the area to ensure a diversified and vibrant economy.

5.1 General

ED-1 To maintain a healthy and diverse local economy that meets the present and future employment, shopping, recreational, and service needs of Tulare County residents.

- ED-1.1 Economic Leadership**
The County shall provide Countywide and regional leadership in economic development and coordination of economic development resources with attention to attraction of clean industries.
- ED-1.2 Staff Resources**
The County may allocate County staff resources to economic planning and coordinate with cities and regional organizations in related economic development and planning efforts.
- ED-1.3 Economic Strategy**
To the extent appropriate, the County shall maintain, monitor, and periodically update an Economic Development Strategy, which shall be used as an operational guide to implement the economic development goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan, as well as fulfilling federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to receive grant funding.

ED-1.4 Local and Regional Coordination

The County shall work with city, local, and regional agencies to develop a resource allocation program that efficiently and equitably distributes the cost and benefits of economic development to local government jurisdictions in the County. The program should include a Countywide capital improvement plan.

ED-1.5 Regional Cooperation

The County will work cooperatively with regional economic development activities to expand and improve the economic base of the County.

ED-1.6 Develop Public/Private Partnerships

The County shall pursue partnerships to encourage the development of public facilities and infrastructure improvements that benefit communities.

ED-1.7 Grant Funding

The County will research and pursue grant funding that will promote tourism, support community growth, and maintain the quality of life for its residents and businesses.

ED-1.8 Adequate Facilities and Services

The County shall encourage new industries to locate within communities that have or can acquire adequate infrastructure capacity to meet the needs of new development.

5.2 Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention

ED-2

To promote business growth and industry diversification and maintain a favorable business climate and a supportive economic foundation.

ED-2.1 Business Retention

The County shall participate in regional business retention and expansion programs, such as the Rapid Response program to ensure that County services are accessible to businesses.

ED-2.2 Land Requirements

The County shall ensure there is capacity for new and expanding businesses by:

1. Reserving sufficient locations for industry, recognizing industry's need for greater land requirements;
2. Recognizing the need for a variety of locations to avoid creation of a monopoly of the industrial land market and to reflect varying requirements for transportation facilities and utility services; and
3. Reserving land for exclusive industrial use to encourage development of like industries that complement each other and to prevent encroachment on industrial areas by incompatible uses.

ED-2.3 New Industries

The County shall encourage new industries to locate within cities, unincorporated communities, hamlets, regional growth corridors, and other unincorporated County areas where appropriately zoned. The County, in cooperation with cities and communities will identify locations for industrial uses in unincorporated areas around cities consistent with the cities' economic development strategies, taking into account opportunities offered by variations in local environmental conditions.

ED-2.4 Job Quality – Diversify Jobs

The County shall focus its business expansion and industry attraction efforts on companies and institutions that bring quality jobs to the County and provide benefits and self-sufficiency wages for County residents.

ED-2.5 Small Business

Recognizing the powerful job creation potential of small businesses, the County shall support entrepreneurial development and small business expansion.

ED-2.6 Agency Support for Small Businesses

The County shall coordinate with other agencies to provide well-tailored services and job creation resources for small businesses, such as incubator zones.

ED-2.7 Home-Based Businesses

The County shall support the formation and operation of home-based businesses that maintain compatibility with surrounding uses.

ED-2.8 Jobs/Housing Ratio

The County shall strive to achieve a jobs-to-housing ratio of greater than one in areas planned for urban development.

ED-2.9 Regional Processing

The County shall encourage processing facilities that obtain raw materials regionally and locally, including those which have potential to expand into regional processing facilities, to locate in industrial parks within existing unincorporated communities or under city jurisdiction.

ED-2.10 Supporting Agricultural Industry

Recognizing that certain critical requirements of food processing industries, such as wastewater treatment, may require innovative solutions, the County shall support and encourage technology development programs in collaboration with research institutions, such as the College of the Sequoias, for use by industries to support expansion on agricultural processing facilities in UDBs.

ED-2.11 Industrial Parks

As part of new or updated community plans, the County shall designate sites for industrial development to meet projected demand.

ED-2.12 Intermodal Freight Connections

The County shall support the creation and enhancement of intermodal connections along major highways and thoroughfares for freight handling that supports existing and future industrial development.

ED-2.13 Airport Capacity

The County shall support the expansion of airport capacity for cargo, as well as passengers.

ED-2.14 Railways

The County shall encourage improvements to rail lines and services for cargo and passenger services in support of existing and future industrial and commercial development.

5.3 Diversified Economy

ED-3 To diversify the economic base of Tulare County through the expansion of non-agricultural industry clusters and through the development and expansion of recreation and visitor-serving attractions and accommodations.

- ED-3.1 Diverse Economic Base**
The County shall actively promote the development of a diversified economic base by continuing to promote agriculture, recreation services, and commerce, and by expanding its efforts to encourage industrial development including the development of energy resources.
- ED-3.2 Industry Clusters**
The County shall support an approach to economic development that targets the development of industry clusters through strategic partnerships with higher educational institutions, work force training agencies, business associations, financial institutions, and venture capital concerns.
- ED-3.3 Non Agricultural Industries**
The County shall encourage the development and expansion of non-agricultural industry clusters such as information technology and ethanol production within UDBs.
- ED-3.4 Telecommunications**
The County shall encourage the development of County-wide telecommunications infrastructure.
- ED-3.5 High Speed Rail**
The County shall support development of high speed rail through the Central Valley with service to Tulare County.
- ED-3.6 Higher Learning**
The County shall help facilitate, where possible, collaboration between institutions of higher learning and local and regional technology firms.
- ED-3.7 Attractive Economy**
The County shall support efforts to enhance the cultural and recreational amenities available in the County to attract business entrepreneurs and employees from other metropolitan areas in California and throughout the nation and the world.
- ED-3.8 Business Technology**
The County shall actively support the efforts of existing and new businesses to access and maintain the highest levels of technology available for their operations.
- ED-3.9 Non-Agricultural Business Development**
The County shall encourage major financial institutions, venture capital firms, and business finance agencies to provide access to capital and financing programs for non-agricultural businesses.
- ED-3.10 Specialty Business Program**
The County shall promote and support programs focused on specialty business and ethnically diverse enterprises.

5.4 Labor Force Development

ED-4

To improve labor force preparedness by providing the local workforce with the skills needed to meet the requirements of an increasingly diverse business sector in the Twenty First Century global economy.

ED-4.1 Workforce Skills Development

The County shall develop programs and work with other agencies and organizations to support efforts that improve the skills of the County's workforce, which is needed to meet the requirements of new and expanding businesses.

ED-4.2 Workforce Education

The County shall work with school districts to prepare students for the Twenty First Century global economy. For example, school districts in the County should be encouraged to adopt the School-to-Work program as a model for K-12 education and focus on the requirements of those industries targeted for future growth.

ED-4.3 Specialized Training

The County shall encourage local colleges and industries to offer technical training and provide specialized training for employees.

ED-4.4 Workforce Programs

The County shall support programs that prepare the hard-to-serve unemployed for job readiness.

ED-4.5 Higher Education

The County shall encourage and support the development and expansion of higher education facilities, including community, State, and private college and university campuses.

ED-4.6 Vocational Training in Secondary Schools

The County shall serve as a catalyst, as well as an active participant, in bringing key organizations together to expand vocational and technical programs in secondary schools.

ED-4.7 Retain Local Graduates

The County shall actively support efforts to keep local graduates in the local workforce.

5.5 Tourism

ED-5

To take full advantage of the natural, cultural, and social opportunities available in the County for the enhancement of tourism.

ED-5.1 Development of a Recreation Industry

The County shall capitalize on the economic potential of recreation as a major industry in all ways consistent with other policies of the General Plan.

ED-5.2 Agricultural and Ecological Tourism

The County shall support the development of agri-tourism and eco-tourism activities that highlight the agricultural and natural resources of the County.

ED-5.3 Highway Tourism

The County shall support the development of welcome centers that promote agricultural-tourism along State Highway 99 and other State Highways within the County.

ED-5.4 Recreational Accommodations

The County shall support the development of visitor-serving attractions and accommodations in unincorporated areas near natural amenities and resources that would not be diminished by tourist activities.

ED-5.5 Rivers

The County shall encourage the development of recreational activities and promote tourism along the Kaweah, Tule, and Kings Rivers.

ED-5.6 Lakes

The County shall promote Lake Kaweah and Lake Success as major recreational areas that include camping, water sports, hiking, golf, conference/hotel facilities, and historic attractions.

ED-5.7 Foothills

The County shall encourage additional recreational and visitor-serving development in the Sierra and foothills in areas such as Three Rivers and Springville.

ED-5.8 Foothill Gateways

The County shall encourage the identification and development of additional recreational opportunities in the foothills and other areas where there are "gateway opportunities".

ED-5.9 Bikeways

The County shall support the enhancement of the County's recreational bikeways and promote the bikeway network as a component of the County's tourism program.

ED-5.10 Visitor-Serving Business

The County shall encourage visitor-serving businesses to coordinate their advertising.

ED-5.11 Marketing Programs

The County shall regularly evaluate marketing programs and provide assistance to marketing campaigns that attract visitors to the County.

ED-5.12 Heritage Tourism

The County shall encourage agricultural, ecological, and heritage tourism by highlighting Tulare County’s agricultural, historical, and cultural resources, such as Allensworth State Park and Sequoia Field.

ED-5.13 National Parks Tourism

The County shall work with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest, and others to market these areas of the County as tourist destinations.

ED-5.14 Interagency Cooperation

The County shall cooperate with federal land management agencies to develop and promote Three Rivers and Springville as gateway communities.

i Also see Chapter 7-Scenic Landscapes, Policy SL-2.2: Gateways to the Sequoias, for further information about gateway communities.

5.6 Commercial Development

ED-6 Address regional and local commercial needs by continuing to support downtowns, town centers, and neighborhood services.

ED-6.1 Revitalization of Community Centers

The County, through public and private collaboration, shall strive to strengthen the core areas of communities to serve as the center for public, financial, entertainment, and commercial activities.

ED-6.2 Comprehensive Redevelopment Plan

The County may promote private sector investment in community core areas through implementation of comprehensive redevelopment plans.

ED-6.3 Entertainment Venues

The County shall encourage the establishment of community and regional entertainment venues within community core areas.

ED-6.4 Culturally Diverse Businesses

The County shall promote and support the expansion of culturally diverse businesses in community core areas through the use of Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Redevelopment Funds .

ED-6.5 Intermodal Hubs for Community and Hamlet Core Areas

The County shall work with communities and transit providers to develop intermodal hubs that focus on both local and regional bus service.

ED-6.6 Core Area Beautification

The County shall promote the beautification of communities, hamlet core areas, and mountain service centers.

ED-6.7 Existing Commercial Centers

The County shall help protect the viability of community retail centers by promoting a business mix that responds to changing economic conditions and provides needed services to surrounding neighborhoods.

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5.7 Work Plan/Implementation Measures

The following table documents the Implementation Measures included with the General Plan to implement the goals and policies included in this Element.

Implementation	Implements what Policy	Who is Responsible	2012-2015	2015-2020	2020-2030	On-Going
1. The County shall work with the EDC to update and adopt a strategy that supports the economic goals and policies of the General Plan.	ED-1.3	RMA		■		
2. The County shall coordinate a committee of representatives from the County, cities, and other local and regional agencies to develop a resource allocation program.	ED-1.4	CAO	■			
3. The County shall commit staff resources to engage in regional transportation initiatives, such as the TCAG's Tulare County Regional Blueprint and San Joaquin Partnership that encourage regional planning and economic development.	ED-1.5	RMA, Planning; TCAG				■
4. The County shall develop criteria for the location of value-added agricultural processing facilities that are compatible with an agricultural setting. Such criteria shall take into account the service requirements of facilities for processing agricultural products and the capability and capacity of the cities to provide the services required.	ED-2.3 ED-2.10	RMA, Planning; Agriculture Advisory Committee				■
5. The County shall work with the Tulare County EDC and agricultural interests to create agricultural enterprise zones with incentives to encourage agricultural support industry.	ED-2.10	RMA; EDC				■
6. The County shall continue to provide seed funding and training through the Micro Enterprise Program, the Small Business Development Center, and similar programs.	ED-3.10	RMA,				■
7. The County shall continue its collaborative planning and funding efforts with agencies such as the County Office of Education, State Employment Development Department (EDD), local school districts, post	ED-4.1 ED-4.2 ED-4.3 ED-4.4	RMA				■

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Implementation	Implements what Policy	Who is Responsible	2012-2015	2015-2020	2020-2030	On-Going
secondary educational institutions, training agencies, and the cities. Such efforts may include education management services, employment placement services, relocation and retention programs, youth employment programs, jobs clubs, and neighborhood jobs services.						
8. The County, in conjunction with the Sequoia Valley Visitors Council, EDC, and local chambers of commerce, shall develop visitor and tourism marketing programs and provide funding assistance as appropriate to support effective marketing programs that attract business and recreational travelers to the County.	ED-5.1 ED-5.11	RMA,				■
9. The County shall conduct an evaluation of allocating transit occupancy tax revenues to programs that directly support tourism.	ED-5.1	CAO	■			
10. The County shall continue to partner with community leaders and organizations to promote beautification of unincorporated communities and hamlets. Such programs could include amnesty days, community clean up days, etc.	ED-6.6	RMA,				■