

YOUNTVILLE FLYER

a
news sheet about the Master Plan

The City Council has given this "statement of direction" to our planning consultants to guide them in drawing up the new General Plan. What do you think of it? If you have any comments or questions phone the City Clerk (944-2515) or leave a note at the City Hall.

introduction / goals

We want to preserve Yountville's unique character - its rural pace, its close connection with nature and the natural beauty of its setting.

We want Yountville to be a place for people first; and traffic, buildings, and business second.

And we want to be able to afford to live here.

At the same time - we recognize that Yountville will have to grow. There is much outside demand for new homes and businesses, and a large portion of our town is not yet built upon.

We believe that Yountville can absorb this growth and even benefit from it - provided it is done in a way that harmonizes with the goals set out above.

We look to you to show us how to accomplish this.

We want to be a community, not a suburb.

specific points

TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION



We have a good basic street pattern, and we'd like to keep it; including the Madison and Washington Street connections to Highway 29 at the north end of town and the existing route from the Silverado Trail to Highway 29 via the Yountville Crossroad and Madison Street.

But the traffic sometimes flows too fast for safety and peace of mind, especially on Washington Street and Yount Street (near the school). Yountville should be a place where it's easy and pleasant to get around on foot.

Parking can also be a problem. At times, in the business district, there appear to be more cars than people. A parking lot on part of the City Hall property could help this situation. (Perhaps the merchants could help pay the tab, if it benefited them and improved the appearance of their shops by removing on-street parking.)

One kind of traffic we would like to encourage is bicycle traffic. It's quiet, slow, and safe. We like the kinds of visitors who come on bicycles, and it's also a good means of transportation for our senior citizens. Could we make a better connection with the bicycle path that comes up from Napa at the southern end of town (also a better crossing for pedestrians)?

All the entrances to town could have their appearance improved, especially the "main" entrance at California Drive. We prefer the natural look with plantings and landscaping, rather than a monument or other structure.

dwellings, condominiums, townhouses, etc). That way they have more of an "investment" in the community.

Whatever is built, we don't want a high average density. Either keep good-sized lots or, if the units are clustered, provide ample open-space around them.

And a final word: we're assuming you will suggest height limitations on all construction. Two stories is enough - we don't need "high-rise" in Yountville.



PUBLIC FACILITIES

As you know, we are exploring the possibility of moving the City offices to the old school building, once the new school is built. This might also be a good location for the library. We'd like to know if some of the school property could serve as a recreation area (or creek-side park) for the rest of the community when not being used by the children (also, let's not lose the Little League diamond). In the same spirit of cooperation, the present City Hall might become, part time, a school auditorium.

As for the rest of the City-owned land around City Hall, part might become a nicely landscaped parking lot (as mentioned above) and the rest developed into recreation facilities.

As an added factor, the Veterans' Home has expressed a willingness to explore the possibility of making some of their recreation facilities available to the (other) residents of Yountville.

Probably our biggest need in the area of public facilities is to provide a good range of healthy activities for Yountville's children and teenagers. This is a real community responsibility, and a community is what we want to become.

in Conclusion

In conclusion, we'd like to point out that we have intentionally avoided specifying any numbers - whether population limits or densities. That's because we don't want to plan Yountville from a number, but rather from the ideas we have about what kind of place we'd like to live in. We want to give you flexibility in putting together a Plan to fit our needs and goals. We've told you what we want - you tell us how many people that means. Then we'll work from there.

We will have ample opportunity to modify and correct our ideas and make adjustments for specific problems, after you present us with the draft of the final Plan. After all, even when the Plan is approved and accepted by the City Council, that doesn't mean that planning is all finished and done. Rather, it's the first step, a working tool really, for Yountville to control and guide its own future.

What Happens Next

In about four weeks (the end of April) the planning consultants will give the City a map showing what they think should be done with every parcel of land within the City limits. Then there will be public meetings so that everyone can see what is proposed and point out problems or ask questions. Once the "bugs" have been worked out, the consultants will draw up the final version of the Plan and submit it to the City Council for approval.

In summary, keep the street pattern pretty much the way it is, but let us see some specific ideas for meeting the traffic, parking, and circulation problems we've laid out above.

We certainly don't want a Trancas or a Jefferson Street. Two lanes, one each way, is about the limit for Yountville.

OPEN SPACE



Most of the land in Yountville without buildings on it is in vineyards. At the moment, grape growing is very profitable, but if prices should drop or real estate values rise, there could be strong pressures to put this land to other uses. We don't want to subsidize the vineyards, but if ways could be found to incorporate some vineyards with other commercial activities (for instance, as at Vintage 1870), we would be happy to see them stay. They help maintain the rural and natural character of Yountville.

With the creek, we would go further and identify it as a community asset and a key to achieving the general goals we have set out for Yountville. It runs through the heart of town, linking the community together. Its natural aspect should be preserved or enhanced throughout its length. Some portions (near the school and through the Faith 7 Development for instance) may be suitable for public access. In other portions, this would create a hardship for property owners. We will have to work out the details within the community but give us some ideas to start from.

We are also interested in using trees, flowers, and shrubbery to buffer the noise from Highway 29 (but not the view, please) and to soften the borders between different land uses, vineyards, and houses for example. We think that Yountville really lends itself well to this kind of beautification and that much could be accomplished towards our basic goals, even in terms of modifying the traffic flow, through creative use of these "tools".

The Park is another important community asset. At the moment, it is adequate to serve our needs and share with those visitors who find their way to it. But as Yountville grows, it could become overcrowded; and then it wouldn't be good for anyone. Is there any way we can protect or expand it? We would like to consider the possibility of a second park in the eastern part of town, to be developed as that area is built up. It might be possible to require developers to provide land or cash for such a purpose, as a condition on allowing them to build there.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Many people in Yountville have said they would like to have the necessities of life available here in town so they wouldn't have to make so many trips to Napa. The "necessities" include; groceries, medicines and other drug store items, banking, medical and dental facilities, possibly hardware and "varieties". And this means a reasonable selection at reasonable prices.

We're told that Yountville is too small to attract the supermarket chains, which is fine with us - we don't want everything clustered together in a center, but rather spread through town like the existing businesses are. However, one way to get around the problem of being too small is to locate these new commercial facilities we need, where the tourists will patronize them. By going together with our visitors, we may be able to generate enough business to justify the kind of service we want.

Tourism can benefit Yountville in many ways and we foresee some expansion of tourist facilities, but we must control it. This means basically two things:

- (1) We go for quality tourism, in terms of appearance and service; and
- (2) We attract the type of tourist who fits into and appreciates the community.

For all new commercial buildings we'd like to see not only attractive design, and construction that will last, but also design that is in keeping with what's already here. The idea of renovating existing structures rather than building new ones has proven successful in Yountville, and, where possible, we'd like to encourage more of it.

We feel strongly enough about the design of new buildings and how important it is to accomplishing our main goals, that we would consider some kind of design-review process in the granting of building permits. Better yet, we'd like to encourage good design rather than control bad design. (Incidentally, "design" for us, includes signs and advertising.)

One type of tourist-oriented business that could tie in well with Yountville's goals, is overnight accomodations for visitors. The idea of country inns has been mentioned, possibly with recreation facilities. (This is a type of commercial activity that could be tied together with vineyards as mentioned in the section on open space.)

However, careful thought should go into deciding how much of this business Yountville can stand. A moderate amount could be beneficial; too much could turn us into a "motel town". What's more, we shouldn't have too many units in any one establishment. And there are also parking and traffic problems to consider. (By the way, 3 or 4 spots for overnight travel-trailer parking would also be appreciated.)

A final point, Moet and Hennessy is planning a major champagne winery on land adjacent to the California Veterans Home. Because of its location and the size of its public facilities, this could provide a big boost for business, and possibly a big headache at the same time. Let's take advantage of their cooperative attitude and work together to plan for this new situation in a positive way.

RESIDENTIAL



This is probably the most difficult element to plan for. We feel strongly that the "old" part of town will be a key factor in preserving Yountville's unique qualities. We don't want it ripped out and replaced by large high-density apartments. We don't want the vacant lots filled with box-style buildings that don't fit in with what is already there. And we don't want to force out the low and moderate income people, mostly renters, now living in some of these homes.

We recognize that many of the structures are "run down" by other communities standards and don't meet County codes, but they are unique and they give Yountville a great deal of its rural charm. As these homes need repair, give us ways to help the owners to renovate them (rather than making it harder to do, with unrealistic health and building codes). This can help keep rents down.

And show us some creative ideas for new construction on the undeveloped lots. We don't want to fight people who want to build, but we would like to give them some clear and practical guidance. If they build something that fits into Yountville, we'll all be better off.

Your economic consultant tells us that housing for those on low and fixed incomes is going to be a problem no matter what direction Yountville takes. We don't think that the standard approaches - subsidies, low-income apartments or developments - would work well here. These members of our community shouldn't be grouped together with a label on them. Like most other things in Yountville, they're mixed in together and that's how we'd like to keep it. We'll be very interested in what you come up with here.

As for the new construction that will eventually go on land now in vineyards, we can't be so specific. For one thing, we don't know how soon or how fast this will come. We'd prefer gradually, so that we can learn while we grow.

We're sure we don't want large apartment complexes. And while we recognize a need for rental units, we don't want too many "transient" residents. We'd prefer that the people who live here own their homes (whether single family