

Community Design Workbook - Yountville Commons

Draft #1

November 2024

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PREFACE

Preserving and building upon Yountville's small-town qualities and social and cultural legacy is the guiding principle in crafting a long-term, practical, and “human-centered” neighborhood design for the former Yountville Elementary School site. The school site has been renamed the Yountville Commons (The Commons) to mark a new chapter for this property and reinforce that this neighborhood is for the benefit of all residents of Yountville.

Town Purchase Agreement

A purchase agreement between the Napa Unified School District and the Town of Yountville was finalized in the Spring of 2024. That has allowed the Town to use the former school site and some existing school buildings and fields on an interim basis. Yountville has also started a visioning process for future uses consistent with the General Plan, the guiding land use document for Yountville. Kelly + Morgan Architects and Planners have been hired to lead the engagement process. They have begun to help the Town develop a vision that meets this goal and the applicable policies of the Town of Yountville General Plan and updated Housing Element. Integral to that process is holding a series of meetings with the Town Council, Commissions, residents, and other stakeholders to prepare a vision for a combination of alternative uses on the eight-acre site.

This vision for the Commons, to be successful, is to meet the following criteria:

A consensus-built vision – The vision for the Commons is based on and reflects a shared understanding of priorities developed from input from stakeholders so that the community takes ownership and advocates for the vision.

Contextual – The vision is based on a full understanding of the geographical, environmental, economic, cultural, and social contexts.

A small-town pattern of settlement and sustainability – The vision incorporates sustainable community design concepts and development incentives to maintain the small-town aesthetic. This includes exploring a range of land use and housing options, to create a healthy, walkable, human-centered neighborhood that is an integral part of Yountville.

A vision is consistent with General Plan Policies – The vision builds on the applicable policies of the General Plan that emphasize enhancing and maintaining the Town’s unique qualities and open space network while allowing for appropriate mixed-use community development.

A vision that can be implemented – The Plan reflects the realities of existing assets and incorporates strategic financing and phasing concepts while meeting Town-wide implementation policies.

About this Document

This Community Design Workbook is a first draft documenting the process in crafting a comprehensive vision for the Yountville Commons. This book is divided into four main sections:

1.0: The Vision and Foundational Principles – which summarizes the foundational principles, policies, and ideas that drive the vision for this new neighborhood and that reflect stakeholder input to date.

2.0: Concepts – which compiles the context mapping and resulting developable lands, and the options for neighborhood patterns, land uses, and connectivity.

3.0: Community Patterns – which summarizes the green, gray, and built fabrics and how a range of built forms and road and trail connections surrounding the site provide context for future development.

4.0: Implementation – which summarizes the economic feasibility and phasing options and how this relates to implementing the vision, guiding principles, and Town land use policies.

This first draft is a precursor to the preparation of the Yountville Commons Plan and Development Standards that the town requires for the property to be incorporated into the General Plan. This document is a tool to be updated and added to as the vision process gains consensus on the community design and implementation options. Ongoing input and feedback are appreciated to ensure the creation of a “Consensus Built Plan”.

The General Plan and Applicable Goals and Policies for Yountville Commons

Yountville General Plan

California state law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (Gov. Code § 65300). The general plan expresses the community’s development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private. The California Supreme Court has described general plans as the “charter to which [zoning] ordinance[s] must conform”.

Yountville’s General Plan is a state-mandated document that addresses issues such as transportation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and much more. As the last General Plan was adopted in 1992 and the Town has grown and changed considerably, the plan has been updated to respond to a new landscape and economy, as well as new State laws. The most recent update is the Housing Element, a portion of the General Plan that was adopted in 2023 after significant community input and includes the state-mandated minimum housing units that Yountville must include as a part of their General Plan. Please refer to Appendix A for the current policies and goals applicable to the Commons Site.

Yountville Demographic Trends and the Vision Process for the Commons

This vision process also uses demographic information to address housing and complementary opportunities at the former Yountville Elementary School property. ***The trends reveal an older, predominantly senior community with small household sizes and a growing demand for workforce housing, particularly for hospitality and public workers who commute large distances for employment.*** Please refer to Appendix B for a summary of these trends with specific references including chapter, section, and page numbers from the [Yountville Housing Element \(2023-2031\)](#):

1.0 VISION AND FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Foundational Principles

The foundational principles that are guiding the vision process for the planning and design of a new neighborhood for residents that include Yountville’s workforce are the following:

Extend and build on the small-town aesthetic – This means having a full understanding of the social, cultural, and physical contexts and connecting into the existing patterns of open space, infrastructure, and built form so there is a seamless transition to this new neighborhood.

Prioritize “human-centered” design concepts – This means prioritizing human life over built form and creating a place that has a common thread of accommodating density, diversity, and social infrastructure that delivers comfort, a healthy environment, convenience, vitality, and community.

Embrace flexibility and adaptability to create long-term value– Be open and adaptive to bring about an incremental approach to developing the school site. The neighborhood then can evolve naturally, becoming a more authentic and vibrant place that truly becomes integrated into the fabric of Yountville.

Respond to and build on the Town’s land use and policy framework - Incorporate the General Plan’s policies and actions that emphasize enhancing and maintaining the Town’s unique qualities and open space network while allowing for appropriate mixed-use community development that meets the housing needs of the community.

Co-create a shared vision for the Commons with the Community – The vision process includes an inclusive and collaborative process where all voices are valued, and diverse perspectives are embraced. Ultimately the Commons vision should reflect a shared understanding of priorities developed with the community, reflecting its long-term goals, and rooted in meaningful, sustainable change.

Commit to sustainable building practices to create a resilient and environmentally responsible neighborhood – Prioritize energy and water efficiency, the use of renewable resources, and eco-friendly designs to foster a healthier, more sustainable community for generations.

1.2 The Vision for The Commons

The vision for the Yountville Commons is based on the foundational principles outlined above which are a synthesis of community input, the Town’s land use and policy framework, and the physical, social, and cultural legacies of Yountville.

The vision for the Commons is to foster a healthy and vibrant neighborhood where residents and neighbors can thrive together and that, over time, becomes an integral part of the small-town fabric of Yountville.

1.3 Connecting into and Extending the Open Space Network (The Green Fabric)

The green fabric of Yountville is the starting point in developing a comprehensive vision for the Commons neighborhood. Stitching into, honoring and extending this existing fabric, including trails, paths, and informal gathering places are all opportunities to increase neighborhood comfort, socialability, and integration into the community. This means:

-Celebrate and honor the Hopper Creek Corridor – The neighborhood pattern should celebrate the creek corridor by providing easy access to the creek path, arranging buildings to take advantage of the views of the creek, and by investing in the health and preservation of the creek corridor.

-Provide a diverse and “leafy” open space network- This includes connecting to existing trail systems and providing a series of landscaped “outdoor rooms”, paths, and courtyards that draw from the rural landscapes of the region.

-Adopt Permeability – The open space network should be designed to allow for as many paths and route options in and around the Commons while ensuring safety.

-The dominant use of native and adapted landscape plantings - Landscapes draw from the agricultural legacy of the area while utilizing plant communities that are a hybrid of resilient, drought tolerant, and native plants of the region.

1.4 Sustainable Infrastructure, Mobility & Utilities (the Gray Fabric)

Layered over the Green Fabric is the Gray Fabric, the circulation and servicing system that interconnects this new neighborhood with surrounding Yountville. This is the informal network of streets, lanes, parking areas, and informal driveways. Important design principles that guide the design of the Gray Fabric are:

Design for the pedestrian and the bike rather than the car. The small towns of the 20th century, like Yountville, were initially patterned to encourage walking and human interaction. Placing the pedestrian, rather than the car, as the priority in designing the neighborhood is key in creating an appropriately scaled, connected, and walkable neighborhood that engenders community engagement.

Pay Attention to the Edges- The surrounding streets, buildings, and Creek Corridor should all be looked at as “outdoor rooms”. These are all opportunities to increase neighborhood comfort and stitch into the surrounding neighborhood. This includes creating informal places to gather, a bench to wait for the bus, a continuation of a trail, and/or a seasonal landscape that could be harvested.

Design Streets, Parking Areas, and Lanes as "Outdoor Rooms". Treating the streets as places to "design", with every attention to detail as buildings, helps to create streets that are "contained places" rather than areas to just "pass-through". This includes using street tree planting patterns, paying attention to parking area designs, and crafting thoughtful building setback and front facade standards.

Design Streets, Lanes, and Parking Areas to be safe and multi-functional: The street system should minimize lane widths to calm traffic and increase walkability while using stormwater design techniques to infiltrate, capture, and treat stormwater.

1.5 Preserving Small Town Character (Built Fabric)

This final layer is that of the vertical massing and elements – buildings, facades, and roofscapes that will evolve over time and slowly grow into an integral and connected neighborhood of Yountville. The key concepts that guide the successful establishment of small-town character are:

Simplicity – Using uncomplicated forms and massing is the foundational idea of creating a small-town character.

Human scale sets the standard – At its root, the small-town character creates environments that are scaled to human proportions or “human-centered design”. This approach puts the way people live and interact as the center of focus.

Face on the Street – An underlying principle of small-town communities like Yountville is the idea of civic and/or collective stewardship and participation. These ideals are displayed in the way the buildings contribute and interact with the streets, public gathering areas, and open space areas, such as the Hopper Creek Corridor. Front stoops or porches, artisan details, paths, and shared courtyards all convey a sense of neighborhood pride and community engagement.

Mix it up – Develop a dynamic, mixed-income, intergenerational community that is high quality, with safe spaces to live, learn, work and play. This means accommodating a range of diverse uses, building types, and multi-functional spaces that are flexible, accessible and changeable.

2.0 CONCEPTS

The vision for the Commons is based on articulating an overall small-town pattern of development that the community would like to achieve. The main objectives are to craft a plan that is consensus-built, based on a full understanding of the site and context, and that is economically feasible. Within this section, we summarize the site and context findings, the resulting potential development scenarios, and an analysis of these scenarios and their consistency with the General Plan and vision.

APPENDIX A - Town of Yountville General Plan & Housing Element Policies

GOALS OF THE TOY GENERAL PLAN (APPLICABLE TO COMMONS SITE)

Goal ES-1: Maintain a vibrant and diverse economy

Goal QL-1: Maintain a high quality of life in Yountville

Goal LU-1: Manage growth and maintain community character

Goal LU-2: Preserve and enhance the small-town character, scale, and pace of life in Yountville and the Town's connection to its natural surroundings.

Goal LU-3: Manage future growth to ensure orderly development.

Goal LU-4: Maintain land use and design standards that enhance the identity and character of the town and ensure an attractive, safe, clean, and accessible community.

Goal LU-5: Residential development shall be compatible with and integrated into the surrounding neighborhood and respectful of its natural surroundings.

Goal LU-7: Ensure that new commercial development maintains an appropriate balance between the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses to ensure a livable community for residents.

Goal LU-8: Continue to maintain and improve all public facilities and services for residents.

The specific Housing Goals (section 6.6) from the 2023 Housing Element are as follows:

Goal H.1: Town Character

Preserve the rural, small-town character and scale of Yountville.

Goal H.2: Promotion of Residential Development

Promote the development of infrastructure and regulations that accommodate increased residential development of all housing types.

Goal H.3: Variety of Housing Types

Promote the development of a variety of housing types.

Goal H.4: Affordable Housing Opportunities

Provide increased opportunities for multifamily and affordable workforce housing and maintain affordability for all income groups.

Goal H.5: Commercial Development

Optimize opportunities for residential development but allow for mixed-use and commercial development in appropriate areas, subject to providing for their fair share of the Town's housing needs.

Goal H.6: Public Information and Involvement

Provide housing-related information to the public and involve the public in determining policies and programs.

Goal H.7: Housing Assistance

Provide housing assistance to households in need and publicize the availability of such assistance.

Goal H.8: Maintenance of the Housing Stock

Conserve existing affordable housing and rental units and promote rehabilitation of deteriorating units.

Goal H.9: Special Housing Needs

Encourage the development of housing for households with special needs.

Goal H.10: Consistency with State Requirements & Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Ensure that the Town's policies and regulations address all state housing requirements. The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the Town of Yountville during the 2023–2031 planning period is set at 72 housing units. These units are divided across different income categories as follows:

- Very Low-Income (<50% AMI): 19 units (26% of total RHNA)
- Low-Income (50-80% AMI): 11 units (15% of total RHNA)
- Moderate-Income (80-120% AMI): 12 units (17% of total RHNA)
- Above Moderate-Income (>120% AMI): 30 units (42% of total RHNA)

The RHNA requirements aim to ensure that Yountville can meet the housing needs for all income levels, facilitating the development of affordable housing options and addressing community growth.

Source: TOY Housing Element, 2023-2031, Section 6.4 Regional Housing Need

Housing Element Policies

The following are **approved policies** the Town of Yountville is using to address housing and complementary opportunities at the former Yountville Elementary School property, with specific references including chapter, section, and page numbers from the [Yountville Housing Element \(2023-2031\)](#):

1. **Expand Housing Sites:** Identify and rezone additional sites suitable for high-density residential development to meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals. (Chapter 6, Program 1, Page 14).
2. **Facilitate Public Involvement:** Foster greater public participation in housing planning by providing information on housing programs and policies and encouraging citizen involvement in shaping housing solutions. (Appendix A, Section A.1, Page A-2).
3. **Address Workforce Housing Needs:** Collaborate with local businesses and employers to identify and address housing needs for employees, including exploring employer-assisted housing options and Single Room Occupancy Units. These references highlight Yountville's focus on workforce housing solutions for local employees, particularly in the hospitality and public service sectors. (Chapter 6, Policy 4.1 and 4.5, Page HO-15, and HO-6).
4. **Encourage Higher-Density Multifamily Housing:** Policy 4.3 encourages higher-density multifamily affordable workforce housing subject to appropriate standards and design. (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Policy 4.3, Page HO-6)
5. **Encourage Mixed-Use Development:** Where residential and commercial uses are integrated, this policy helps to address workforce housing needs and create more vibrant, walkable neighborhoods by ensuring housing projects include neighborhood-serving businesses. (Chapter 6, Policy 5.2, Page HO-7)
6. **Promote Affordable Housing Development:** Streamline the approval process for multifamily housing, especially for projects with affordable units. (Chapter 6, Program 27, Page 15).
7. **Integrate Recreational Uses:** This policy encourages the integration of recreational amenities and open space within new residential developments, ensuring that they are accessible to residents and contribute to the town's overall quality of life. (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Policy 5.3, Page HO-7)
8. **Support Parks & Trails:** This program supports the development of “parks, trails, and recreational areas” as an integrated part of residential neighborhoods. It ensures that these amenities are incorporated in both new and existing developments to serve residents and promote walkability. (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Program 12, Page HO-14)
9. **Increase Housing for Seniors and Special Needs Populations:** Encourage the construction of accessible housing units tailored to seniors, persons with disabilities, and large families. (Chapter 6, Program 10, Page 17)

10. **Promote Energy Efficiency and Sustainability:** Encourage new developments and housing rehabilitations to incorporate energy and water conservation measures. (Chapter 6, Program 5, Page 14).

Housing Element - Requirements and Goals for Public Involvement

The 2023-2031 Yountville Housing Element followed the **requirements and goals for public involvement** in addressing requirements for new housing projects, emphasizing the importance of community engagement at multiple stages. The specific details are as follows:

Requirements and Goals for Public Involvement

1. **State Law Compliance:** State law mandates that cities and counties make a diligent effort to involve all segments of the community in preparing a Housing Element. This included actively seeking input from lower-income households and special needs groups, ensuring comprehensive public participation (page A-1)
2. **Public Participation Methods:** The Town conducted public outreach activities starting in January 2022, which included stakeholder consultations, town council meetings, ad hoc meetings, community workshops, and public hearings (page HO-4). Notifications for all meetings were sent to local housing advocacy groups, individuals, and organizations that had previously requested notices related to the housing element. The Town made active efforts to reach households at all income levels and special needs groups (page A-2).
3. **Community Workshops:** Two community workshops were held: one virtual workshop on February 16, 2022, and an in-person workshop on March 2, 2022, at the Yountville Community Center. Participants were given opportunities to provide input on the housing element and potential housing types they would like to see developed (page A-6).
4. **Stakeholder Consultations:** The Town reached out to nine stakeholder organizations and conducted one-on-one consultations on housing needs and program opportunities between February and April 2022. Stakeholders represented various groups, including affordable housing representatives, community housing agencies, and service providers for special needs populations (page A-2).
5. **Town Council and Zoning, Design, Review Board (ZDRB) Meetings:** Public hearings and meetings with the ZDRB and Town Council were held to ensure that public feedback was integrated into the decision-making process. These meetings allowed the community to review proposed developments and zoning changes (page A-4).

6. **Ad Hoc Meetings:** Ad hoc meetings were convened with representatives from the Town Council and the ZDRB to discuss specific housing needs, review potential development sites, and consider community feedback (page A-5).
7. **Focus Group Meetings:** A focus group meeting was held on March 2, 2022, with local business owners and managers to discuss housing needs for employees. This meeting identified housing affordability as a primary concern, with feedback focused on finding affordable housing options for employees (page A-6).
8. **Monthly Newsletters and Community Notices:** The Town used monthly newsletters, distributed through the water bill, and local newspaper advertisements to keep residents informed of housing plans and public engagement opportunities. This effort aimed to reach a broader audience and encourage feedback from residents who might not attend formal meetings (page A-1).
9. **Dedicated Housing Element Website:** A custom website was created to provide information on the housing element, upcoming meetings, and opportunities for public involvement. The Town also utilized press releases to inform the public about key developments in the housing element process (page A-1).
10. **Opportunity for Written Comments and Feedback:** The Draft Housing Element was made available for public comment for 30 days, from July 8, 2022, to August 7, 2022. Public comments received during this period were incorporated into the revised draft before submission to the Department of Housing and Community Development (page A-8).

These actions demonstrate the Town of Yountville's comprehensive approach to public involvement, ensuring that a wide range of community members had the opportunity to provide feedback and shape housing policies for new locations for potential housing such as the Yountville Commons.

APPENDIX B - Demographic & Trend Information for Yountville

The following is a summary of **demographic data and trends** of the Town of Yountville's non-Veterans Home population. This information is used to address housing and complementary opportunities at the former Yountville Elementary School property, with specific references including chapter, section, and page numbers from the [Yountville Housing Element \(2023-2031\)](#):

1. **Population Decline:** The town's population decreased by 4% from 2,933 in 2010 to 2,829 in 2022. This decline reflects regional trends (Page C-1) as well as the growth of the second-home market in the Town including the market for shared weekend homes which reduces the number of full-time residents and correspondingly decreases the housing supply (Page A-3).
2. **Ageing Population:** The median age of Yountville's population increased from 52.4 in 2010 to 64.4 in 2019. Seniors aged 65 and older make up 49% of the town's population as of 2019 (page C-3).
3. **Small Household Size:** Yountville's average household size is 1.88 persons, significantly smaller than Napa County's average of 2.73 (page C-2).
4. **Senior-Dominated Demographic*:** Seniors aged 55 and older make up over two-thirds (66.2%) of the town's population. This trend highlights the need for senior services and housing they can afford. (page C-28).
5. **Income Distribution:** Yountville households have a relatively high proportion of moderate- and above-moderate-income households, particularly among homeowners. However, a significant share of renters falls into the low- and very-low-income categories (page C-9).
6. **Racial and Ethnic Composition:** The town's population is predominantly White (74%), though this is down from 84% in 2010. The Hispanic population has grown from 10% to 17% over the same period (page C-4).
7. **Low Percentage of Children:** Only 10.3% of Yountville's population is aged 24 or younger, underscoring the small number of families with children in the town (page C-3).
8. **High Rate of Single-Person Households:** About 46% of Yountville households are single-person households, compared to 26% in Napa County and 25% in the Bay Area. This highlights the aging population and smaller household sizes (page C-6).

9. **Senior Homeownership:** Around 78.6% of senior households in Yountville own their homes. The majority of these senior homeowners are in moderate- and above-moderate-income categories, but many lower-income seniors face high housing cost burdens (page C-28).
10. **Low Labor Force Participation:** Yountville has a low labor force participation rate, largely due to its aging population. Less than 40% of residents aged 65 to 74 are employed (page C-12).

The trends reveal an older, predominantly senior community with small household sizes and a growing demand for workforce housing, particularly for hospitality and public workers who commute large distances for employment.