



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: October 6, 2009
Item Number: F-9
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Shana Epstein, Environmental Utilities Manager
Subject: THE WESTSIDE CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
ENDORISING THE AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES

Attachments:

1. Ahwahnee Original Principles
2. Ahwahnee Economic Development Principles
3. Ahwahnee Water Principles
4. Ahwahnee Climate Change Principles

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council support the Westside Cities Council of Government's proposed action to adopt the Ahwahnee Principles in concept.

INTRODUCTION

The Westside Cities Council of Governments will be considering the Ahwahnee Principles for approval at their next meeting. These principles were originally written in 1991 by land use architects and then presented to 100 local government officials at Yosemite's Ahwahnee Hotel. From that point forward, the non-profit Local Government Commission continues to promote these principles.

DISCUSSION

In 1991, land use architects began to craft the attached principles. These architects included Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Stefanos Polyzoides, Elizabeth Moule, Peter Calthorpe, and Michael Corbett. Stefanos Polyzoides is the same architect of the Urban Design Project that gave a new look and feel to portions of the business triangle.

The Local Government Commission tasked these architects to create new planning ideas that bridge neo-traditional planning to sustainable design and then to develop a set of community principles. They were then asked how each community should relate to

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the region, and to develop a set of regional principles. Finally, they were charged with defining how these ideas might be implemented by cities and counties.

The goals of the principles reflects upon changing the social norms that created neighborhoods and cities after World War II to developing sustainable communities that minimize consumption of natural resources and encourage open space to be preserved or planned. The primary implementation principle is that the City's General Plan reflect these goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

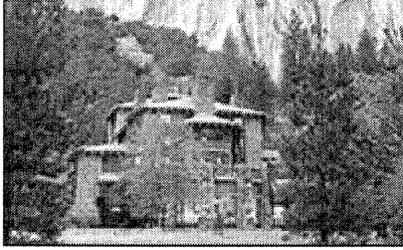
No financial impact to endorse the principles in concept.

Cheryl Friedling
Approved By



Attachment 1

Ahwahnee Original Principles



ORIGINAL AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES

Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities

Preamble

Existing patterns of urban and suburban development seriously impair our quality of life. The symptoms are: more congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles, the loss of precious open space, the need for costly improvements to roads and public services, the inequitable distribution of economic resources, and the loss of a sense of community. By drawing upon the best from the past and the present, we can plan communities that will more successfully serve the needs of those who live and work within them. Such planning should adhere to certain fundamental principles.

Community Principles

1. All planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
 2. Community size should be designed so that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
 3. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops.
 4. A community should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.
 5. Businesses within the community should provide a range of job types for the community's residents.
 6. The location and character of the community should be consistent with a larger transit network.
 7. The community should have a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
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8. The community should contain an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.
 9. Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people at all hours of the day and night.
 10. Each community or cluster of communities should have a well-defined edge, such as agricultural greenbelts or wildlife corridors, permanently protected from development.
 11. Streets, pedestrian paths and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully-connected and interesting routes to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use by being small and spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting; and by discouraging high speed traffic.
 12. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of the community should be preserved with superior examples contained within parks or greenbelts.
 13. The community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste.
 14. Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping and recycling.
 15. The street orientation, the placement of buildings and the use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.
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Regional Principles

1. The regional land-use planning structure should be integrated within a larger transportation network built around transit rather than freeways.
 2. Regions should be bounded by and provide a continuous system of greenbelt/wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions.
 3. Regional institutions and services (government, stadiums, museums, etc.) should be located in the urban core.
 4. Materials and methods of construction should be specific to the region, exhibiting a continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate to encourage the development of local character and community identity.
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Implementation Principles

1. The general plan should be updated to incorporate the above principles.
 2. Rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development, local governments should take charge of the planning process. General plans should designate where new growth, infill or redevelopment will be allowed to occur.
 3. Prior to any development, a specific plan should be prepared based on these planning principles.
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4. Plans should be developed through an open process and participants in the process should be provided visual models of all planning proposals.
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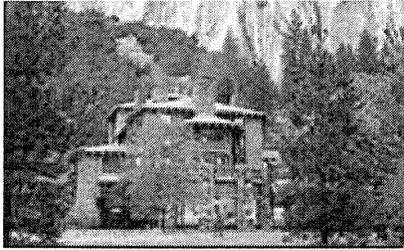
Authors: Peter Calthorpe, Michael Corbett, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Moule, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Stefanos Polyzoides
Editor: Peter Katz, Judy Corbett, and Steve Weissman

(Adopted in 1991)

If you would like more background information on the Ahwahnee Principles (including where the name came from), please read the [article](#) reprinted from [Western Cities Magazine](#).

Attachment 2

Ahwahnee Economic Development Principles



AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Smart Growth: Economic Development for the 21st Century

A Set of Principles for Building Prosperous and Livable Communities

Preamble

Prosperity in the 21st Century will be based on creating and maintaining a sustainable standard of living and a high quality of life for all. To meet this challenge, a comprehensive new model is emerging which recognizes the economic value of natural and human capital. Embracing economic, social, and environmental responsibility, this approach focuses on the most critical building blocks for success, the community and the region. It emphasizes community-wide and regional collaboration for building prosperous and livable places. While each community and region has unique challenges and opportunities, the following common principles should guide an integrated approach by all sectors to promoting economic vitality within their communities, and in partnership with their neighbors in the larger region.

1. Integrated Approach

Government, business, education, and the community should work together to create a vibrant local economy, through a long-term investment strategy that:

- encourages local enterprise
 - serves the needs of local residents, workers, and businesses
 - promotes stable employment and revenues by building on local competitive advantages
 - protects the natural environment
 - increases social equity
 - is capable of succeeding in the global marketplace.
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2. Vision and Inclusion

Communities and regions need a vision and strategy for economic development according to these principles. Visioning, planning and implementation efforts should continually involve all sectors, including the voluntary civic sector and those traditionally left out of the public planning process.

3. Poverty Reduction

Both local and regional economic development efforts should be targeted to reducing poverty, by promoting jobs that match the skills of existing residents, improving the skills of low-income individuals, addressing the needs of families moving off welfare, and insuring the availability in all communities of quality affordable child care, transportation, and housing.

4. Local Focus

Because each community's most valuable assets are the ones they already have, and existing businesses are already contributing to their home communities, economic development efforts should give first priority to supporting existing enterprises as the best source of business expansion and local job growth. Luring businesses away from neighboring communities is a zero-sum game that doesn't create new wealth in the regional economy. Community economic development should focus instead on promoting local entrepreneurship to build locally based industries and businesses that can succeed among national and international competitors.

5. Industry Clusters

Communities and regions should identify specific gaps and niches their economies can fill, and promote a diversified range of specialized industry clusters drawing on local advantages to serve local and international markets.

6. Wired Communities

Communities should use and invest in technology that supports the ability of local enterprises to succeed, improves civic life, and provides open access to information and resources.

7. Long-Term Investment

Publicly supported economic development programs, investments, and subsidies should be evaluated on their long-term benefits and impacts on the whole community, not on short-term job or

revenue increases. Public investments and subsidies should be equitable and targeted, support environmental and social goals, and prioritize infrastructure and supportive services that promote the vitality of all local enterprises, instead of individual firms.

8. Human Investment

Because human resources are so valuable in the information age, communities should provide life-long skills and learning opportunities by investing in excellent schools, post-secondary institutions, and opportunities for continuous education and training available to all.

9. Environmental Responsibility

Communities should support and pursue economic development that maintains or improves, not harms, the environmental and public health.

10. Corporate Responsibility

Enterprises should work as civic partners, contributing to the communities and regions where they operate, protecting the natural environment, and providing workers with good pay, benefits, opportunities for upward mobility, and a healthful work environment.

11. Compact Development

To minimize economic, social, and environmental costs and efficiently use resources and infrastructure, new development should take place in existing urban, suburban, and rural areas before using more agricultural land or open space. Local and regional plans and policies should contain these physical and economic development planning principles to focus development activities in desired existing areas.

12. Livable Communities

To protect the natural environment and increase quality of life, neighborhoods, communities and regions should have compact, multi-dimensional land use patterns that ensure a mix of uses, minimize the impact of cars, and promote walking, bicycling, and transit access to employment, education, recreation, entertainment, shopping, and services. Economic development and transportation investments should reinforce these land use patterns, and the ability to move people and goods by non-automobile alternatives wherever possible.

13. Center Focus

Communities should have an appropriately scaled and economically healthy center focus. At the community level, a wide range of commercial, residential, cultural, civic, and recreational uses should be located in the town center or downtown. At the neighborhood level, neighborhood centers should contain local businesses that serve the daily needs of nearby residents. At the regional level, regional facilities should be located in urban centers that are accessible by transit throughout the metropolitan area.

14. Distinctive Communities

Having a distinctive identity will help communities create a quality of life that is attractive for business retention and future residents and private investment. Community economic development efforts should help to create and preserve each community's sense of uniqueness, attractiveness, history, and cultural and social diversity, and include public gathering places and a strong local sense of place.

15. Regional Collaboration

Since industries, transportation, land uses, natural resources, and other key elements of a healthy economy are regional in scope, communities and the private sector should cooperate to create regional structures that promote a coherent metropolitan whole that respects local character and identity.

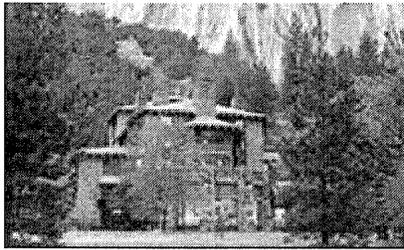
(Adopted in 1997)

More information and case studies of each principle are available in our guidebook, "[The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development: An Implementation Guidebook](#)".

Attachment 3

Ahwahnee Water Principles

- **Water Principles**



AHWAHNEE WATER PRINCIPLES

The Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource-Efficient Land Use

Preamble

Cities and counties are facing major challenges with water contamination, storm water runoff, flood damage liability, and concerns about whether there will be enough reliable water for current residents as well as for new development. These issues impact city and county budgets and taxpayers. Fortunately there are a number of stewardship actions that cities and counties can take that reduce costs and improve the reliability and quality of our water resources.

The Water Principles below complement the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities that were developed in 1991. Many cities and counties are already using them to improve the vitality and prosperity of their communities.

Community Principles

1. Community design should be compact, mixed use, walkable and transit-oriented so that automobile-generated urban runoff pollutants are minimized and the open lands that absorb water are preserved to the maximum extent possible. (See the [Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities](#))
 2. Natural resources such as wetlands, flood plains, recharge zones, riparian areas, open space, and native habitats should be identified, preserved and restored as valued assets for flood protection, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, habitat, and overall long-term water resource sustainability.
 3. Water holding areas such as creek beds, recessed athletic fields, ponds, cisterns, and other features that serve to recharge groundwater, reduce runoff, improve water quality and decrease flooding should be incorporated into the urban landscape.
 4. All aspects of landscaping from the selection of plants to soil preparation and the installation of irrigation systems should be designed to reduce water demand, retain runoff, decrease flooding, and recharge groundwater.
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5. Permeable surfaces should be used for hardscape. Impervious surfaces such as driveways, streets, and parking lots should be minimized so that land is available to absorb storm water, reduce polluted urban runoff, recharge groundwater and reduce flooding.
6. Dual plumbing that allows graywater from showers, sinks and washers to be reused for landscape irrigation should be included in the infrastructure of new development.
7. Community design should maximize the use of recycled water for appropriate applications including outdoor irrigation, toilet flushing, and commercial and industrial processes. Purple pipe should be installed in all new construction and remodeled buildings in anticipation of the future availability of recycled water.
8. Urban water conservation technologies such as low-flow toilets, efficient clothes washers, and more efficient water-using industrial equipment should be incorporated in all new construction and retrofitted in remodeled buildings.
9. Ground water treatment and brackish water desalination should be pursued when necessary to maximize locally available, drought-proof water supplies.

Implementation Principles

1. Water supply agencies should be consulted early in the land use decision-making process regarding technology, demographics and growth projections.
2. City and county officials, the watershed council, LAFCO, special districts and other stakeholders sharing watersheds should collaborate to take advantage of the benefits and synergies of water resource planning at a watershed level.
3. The best, multi-benefit and integrated strategies and projects should be identified and implemented before less integrated proposals, unless urgency demands otherwise.
4. From start to finish, projects and programs should involve the public, build relationships, and increase the sharing of and access to information.
5. Plans, programs, projects and policies should be monitored and evaluated to determine if the expected results are achieved and to improve future practices.

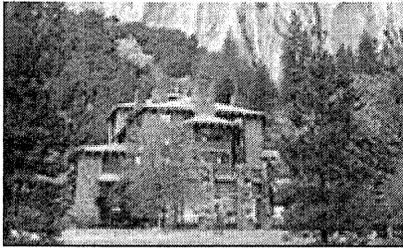
Authors: Celeste Cantu, Martha Davis, Jennifer Hosterman, Susan Lien Longville, Jeff Loux, John Lowrie, Jonas Minton, Mary Nichols, Virginia Porter, Al Wanger, Robert Wilkinson, Kevin Wolf
Editor: Judy Corbett

(Adopted in 2005)

Attachment 4

Ahwahnee Climate Change Principles

- **Climate Change Principles**



AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Ahwahnee Principles for Climate Change

[Ahwahnee Principles for Climate Change \(PDF\)](#)

Preamble

Climate change is not just another environmental issue. Concentrations of human induced greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere have already reached unprecedented levels and are causing well documented adverse changes to our planet's physical and biological systems.

We must act decisively to reverse this trend, to lessen the potentially devastating environmental, economic and social impacts that could result.

At the same time, we must predict and prepare for, and adapt to, the unavoidable climatic changes that will likely occur due to the high concentration of greenhouse gas pollutants that are already in the atmosphere.

Community Principles

1. Climate Action Plans for mitigating GHG emissions should be put in place by local governments; these will include inventories, targets for reduction, implementing strategies, timelines and a system for reporting annual progress. Plans should be incorporated into general plans either as a separate element that has influence over a broad range of activities or by incorporation into each of the traditional general plan elements.
2. Emissions related to personal auto use are often the largest single source of greenhouse gas pollution, therefore, addressing this source should be central to a Climate Action Plan and a priority for early implementation. Infill development should be recognized as the primary location of new construction, however all new development,

wherever it may occur, should be guided by the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource Efficient Communities. Development built according to these principles will display a compact mixed-use pattern that supports walking, biking and transit, and protects open space and agricultural land. Development plans should be coordinated with a regional plan, where one exists. This kind of development can reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and CO2 emissions by 20% to 40% per capita (Growing Cooler, Urban Land Institute, 2008).

3. The Electricity and Commercial/ Residential sector is likely the second largest source of community GHG emissions and an important target for reduction. Thus, energy conservation programs, energy efficiency and the use of a diverse array of clean alternative energy sources should also be central to the community Climate Action Plan and a priority for timely adoption. Applied to new and existing development, green building ordinances, energy conservation retrofit measures, energy efficiency standards for new buildings, and incentives/disincentives to reduce average square footage of new houses are among the measures that can be adopted (www.energy.ca.gov/energy_aware_guide).

4. Climate Action Plans should also include strong water efficiency standards, increased water conservation and water recycling strategies guided by the Ahwahnee Water Principles.

5. A Climate Action Plan should include measures that will help the community to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. This will involve planning for rising sea levels, shrinking water supplies, rising temperatures, food shortages and other challenges predicted to occur in the region.

6. Local governments should lead by example in reducing their own carbon footprint by enacting and implementing policies to reduce GHG emissions from their municipal operations while preparing for unavoidable climate change impacts.

7. Climate Action Plans should be developed through an open process that includes diverse members of the community and public health professionals. The process should include public outreach strategies and assure that the positive and negative impacts of reducing emissions are borne equally by all.

Regional Principles

1. Each region should develop and adopt, with its cities and counties, a blueprint for growth that achieves regional GHG emissions reduction targets. Blueprints should form the basis for city-centered growth, infill development, open space protection, transit-oriented development and multijurisdictional corridor development. They should reflect differences among their communities.

2. Regional Transportation Plans and major regional transportation projects should be consistent with the regional blueprint.

3. Projects consistent with the blueprint that support infill development and reduce single occupant vehicle trips should be given priority in funding and a streamlined implementation process.
 4. Efforts should be made by regions to vocally support such projects and defend them against opposition.
 5. Regional Housing Needs Assessments that recognize the differences between regions and between communities should be coordinated with and reflect Climate Action Plans and other mechanisms for GHG emission reductions. Regional transportation, land use, and GHG reduction plans must recognize differences between regions and between communities.
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Implementation Strategy

1. All General Plans and Climate Action Plans should be made consistent with the principles contained in Regional Blueprint Plans and Regional Transportation Plans.
 2. General Plans and environmental review processes should be integrated with city and county Climate Action Plans to include climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and adoption procedures.
 3. Zoning codes should be modified to be consistent with the General Plan to ensure implementation of the integrated General Plan/Climate Action Plan. Performance and form-based codes should be used to achieve the specified outcome.
 4. City and county policies should be made consistent with the goals of the community Climate Action Plan (such as flexible work schedules, car-sharing and bike-sharing programs, etc.)
 5. Monitoring and measurement of progress made in meeting both goals and targets set forth in the Climate Action Plan should be conducted regularly with results reported to the community.
 6. When appropriate, communities should form joint powers authorities to jointly implement their climate action plans through developing sustainability corridors between two or more jurisdictions.
 7. Cities and counties should coordinate with nearby jurisdictions and the regional government to share computer tools and other resources, and avoid duplicative efforts.
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Authors: Larry Allen, San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District; Geoff Anderson, Smart Growth America; Gary Cook, ICLEI; Councilmember Jennifer Hosterman, City of Pleasanton; Dr. Richard J. Jackson, MD, MPH; Mayor Jake Mackenzie, City of Rohnert Park; Jim Murley, Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems, Florida Atlantic University; Councilmember Pam O'Connor, City of Santa Monica; Geof Syphers, Coddling Enterprises; Dr. Robert Wilkinson, Water Policy Program, UC Santa Barbara; Steve Winkelman, Transportation Program Center for Clean Air Policy.

Editors: Gregg Albright, California State Department of Transportation; Councilmember Jon Harrison, City of Redlands; Judy Corbett and Kate Wright, Local Government Commission.