



## DRAFT 2035 VISION FOR SAN BENITO COUNTY

*Revisions recommended by the Planning Commission on April 13, 2011*

At pace with the changing world, but still rural in nature, our vision of San Benito County in 2035 is of a positive and prosperous future, in which balance has been attained between business and residential growth without surrendering our rich natural resources, valuable agricultural assets, active country character, or our historic heritage.

Walkable neighborhoods, parks and public lands, business districts, and job centers are linked to one another by a sensibly-sized, well-maintained transportation network, suitable for foot, bicycle, auto, bus, or sometimes horse. Connection to distant destinations is readily available by auto, bus, train, or plane, or “virtually” by way of enhanced telecommunications.

~~Downtowns are not taken for granted.~~ Established local businesses, not just the buildings they inhabit, are understood to be important foundations to thriving prosperous downtowns. To ensure continued relevance of the downtowns, infill development containing compatible enterprises is supported. Visitors find ample retail and dining prospects, welcoming accommodations, and unmatched outdoor recreational opportunities.

The county continues to widen the spectrum of business and industry, enhanced educational opportunities, and broadened leisure time activities available for a population that is diverse in age, culture, education, and lifestyle. People are afforded the facilities needed for healthy lives. Environmentally-sustainable technologies are embraced, and businesses of any size are encouraged to put down roots here, hire local talent, and grow in the rich soil, clean water, beautiful climate, and rural atmosphere of San Benito County.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE 2035 GENERAL PLAN

### Land Use and Community Character

1. ~~Direct Encourage~~ new growth ~~towards cities, in~~ compact villages, or clustered developments in order to preserve prime farmland, rangeland, protect natural habitats, and reduce the financial, social, and environmental impacts of urban sprawl.
2. Ensure that compact villages include a mix of residential, commercial, employment, park, open space, school, and public land uses in order to create a sense of place by supporting condensed, pedestrian accessible, and transit-oriented development.
3. Promote higher residential densities in existing unincorporated urban areas and new compact villages while encouraging mixed-use development ~~and downtown revitalization~~.
4. Ensure new development complements and preserves the unique character and beauty of San Benito County.
5. Establish defined boundaries to separate cities and compact villages from prime agricultural land and important natural resources, using such features as agriculture buffers, greenbelts, open space, and parks.

### Housing

6. Ensure a full range of housing options are available to accommodate residents of all income levels and life situations.
7. Balance housing growth with employment growth in order to provide local, affordable housing choices so people can live and work in the county.

### Agriculture

8. Ensure that agriculture and agriculture-related industries remain a major economic sector by protecting productive agriculture lands and industries, promoting new and profitable agricultural sectors, and supporting new technologies that increase the efficiency and productivity of commodity farming.
9. Encourage agriculture that is locally owned/produced, profitable, and attracts related businesses.

### Economic Growth and Prosperity

10. Expand and diversify the local economy by supporting quality businesses, supporting quality jobs for the diverse population, and capitalizing on the county’s natural and human resources.
11. Support existing and establish new local businesses that are based on industries that are innovative, technology-based, and sustainable.
12. Support programs that educate the local workforce on conventional, productive, sustainable, and organic agriculture concepts; water conservation strategies; high-tech industries; and alternative energy production.
13. Support the county’s growing tourism industry.

### Transportation and Infrastructure

14. Locate Encourage future growth near existing transportation networks such as the major roadways, State highways, airports, rail corridors, and other major transportation routes.
15. Encourage Locate future growth near available water and sewer infrastructure to ensure improvements are economically feasible.
16. Encourage Ensure that future growth that can be supported by adequate, long-term access to water, sewer, electric, gas, and other utilities.

### Natural Resource Protection

17. Protect natural resources and open space areas from incompatible uses.
18. Preserve the county’s environmental quality and diverse natural habitats.

### Health and Sustainability

19. Encourage a healthy living environment that includes walkable neighborhoods, access to recreation and open space, healthy foods, medical services, and public transit.
20. Become a leader in the efficient use of resources, including renewable energy, water, and land.