

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES¹

Preamble:

These principles are meant to function as guidelines rather than formal requirements. There may be instances where a strict application of these guidelines is difficult in light of existing development patterns, environmental constraints, and/or other overriding considerations.



Mission:

To create, strengthen and sustain a livable community in the urban unincorporated areas of Alameda County.

Community Principles:

1. All planning should consider the integration of communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks, libraries, cultural arts venues, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
2. Community design should work to ensure that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
3. The location and character of the community should be consistent with and facilitate a larger transit network. As many activities and services as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit.
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. Each community should have one or more focal points that combine commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
7. 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.
8. Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people of all ages and interests.
9. Each community or cluster of communities should have a well-defined edge, through mechanisms such as signage, public art, agricultural greenbelts, wildlife corridors, community gardens, etc.

¹ Based on the Ahwahnee Principles - The Ahwahnee Principles for More Livable Communities were prepared in 1991. They outline a more sustainable way to develop and redevelop our communities. They provide specific recommendations for communities and regions and include an implementation strategy. The principles or portions of the principles have been adopted in the general plans of over 120 local governments in California.

10. Streets as well as pedestrian and bike facilities should contribute to a safe 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.
11. Wherever possible, the historical character and resources, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of the community should be preserved.
12. The community design should help conserve resources, minimize waste and promote a healthy environment.
13. Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping and recycling.
14. The street orientation, the placement of buildings and the use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.
15. Community designs should incorporate elements that support and enhance a public safety presence through collaborative efforts that promote safe routes and neighborhoods, blight removal, adequate lighting, quality of life concerns and overall community well being.

Regional Principles:

1. The regional land-use planning structure should be integrated within a larger transportation network built around transit rather than freeways.
2. Where practicable, regions should be bounded by and provide a continuous system of greenbelt/wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions. Appropriate tools (e.g., land trusts, urban growth boundaries) shall be utilized to clearly delineate areas suitable for urban development from open space/agriculture areas.
3. Regional institutions and services (government, stadiums, museums and performing arts venues, etc) should be located in the urban core and/or near a major transit hub.
4. Materials and project designs should be consistent with local standards, exhibiting a continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate to encourage the development of local character and community identity.