

Chapter 10 Community Character

Vision

In the year 2020, Lake County will have communities that retain their distinct character, have an enhanced sense of place, and a positive self-identity.

Significance

Lake County has communities and neighborhoods that range from urban, to suburban, to rural in character. Community character, in this sense, is not just the visual appreciation of the communities' physical appearance or aesthetics. It conveys a conception of lifestyle and quality of life.

In the 1994 *Framework Plan*, community character was defined "as a mental image of a community made up of the physical, historical, socio-cultural, biophysical, political, and technological characteristics of the community" (Lake County, 1994: 12-1). It consists of both the built-up environment and the natural environment. Beyond the physical, community character is concerned with how people use and perceive their environment as they live in it and move through it (Nelessen, 1994:7).

As used in this chapter, the term "community" does not only mean an incorporated city or village. A community can be a village or a group of villages. A community can also be a neighborhood or a group of neighborhoods. Communities include areas that are both incorporated and unincorporated. Some communities may have village centers or downtowns while others may not. Rural communities include farmland, natural areas, large lot residential areas, conservation developments, and scattered commercial activities. They are identified by natural landscapes and agricultural uses, not by town centers.

This chapter will identify issues and opportunities and describe strategies to preserve and enhance the distinct character of Lake County's communities and neighborhoods, as locally appropriate. It is intended to promote and support the goals and policies of Lake County's communities and enhance the locally expressed community character of the municipalities. Retaining and enhancing a sense of place is crucial to preserving Lake County's distinct communities and their characters.

Issues and Opportunities

- Communities in Lake County vary and exist within and outside of municipal boundaries; communities in incorporated areas may extend beyond municipal boundaries and unincorporated communities may extend into incorporated areas.
- Tearing down historic commercial and other non-residential buildings and replacing them with strip malls can detract from the community character.
- Conversion of uses, such as tearing down small houses and replacing them with larger homes, can detract from the established neighborhood character, but may be appropriate

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for revitalizing certain areas and in some cases creates a new, desired community character.

- Transit Oriented Development and Employment Oriented Development can create more vibrant communities and promote a sense of place.
- At-grade railroad crossings and commuter parking can present challenges and can disrupt traditional downtowns and residential areas by: 1) increasing traffic congestion from commuters driving to a station parking lot; and 2) stopping street traffic when trains pass.
- The perceived image and character of one community may impact neighboring communities.
- Farmland, Nature Preserves, parks, and rural large lot subdivisions (incorporated and unincorporated) between communities provide edges that mark separate communities.
- The availability and close proximity of public buildings can enhance a sense of place and create a sense of community and civil society.
- Rural large lot residential development is appropriate to maintain the character that exists within some communities.
- Conservation of natural resources and open space may enhance community character.
- Character in predominantly rural large lot residential communities is often defined by ecological features such as prairies, wetlands, and forests.
- Conservation development design can create common open space for recreation, agriculture, natural habitat, and resource management.
- Intergovernmental land use planning agreements among Lake County and municipalities can be used to protect desirable community character.

Analysis

The traditional small towns established in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries were characterized by dense commercial and residential development at the center surrounded by expanses of family farms and open space. The towns had a defined and limited geographic extent. Downtowns or town centers consisted of a closely spaced street grid, lined with stores, restaurants, taverns, and theaters, with residences above. Because of their compact nature, a pedestrian could reach many destinations through a short walk. The façade heights of the downtown buildings formed “outdoor rooms” that promoted interaction among members of the community.

Surviving town centers can provide a sense of continuity and linkage to the community’s cultural and historical past, which in turn reinforces the character of the community (Lake County, 1994). The design of a traditional town provides places for cultural interaction and development—such as public facilities, libraries and town halls, plazas, parks and squares—that give the town its character.

Lake County's oldest village is Hainesville, which was incorporated in 1847. Volo, incorporated in 1993, is the most recent. The cities and villages were established for a variety of reasons including farm towns, railroad suburbs, automobile oriented communities, manufacturing centers, resort communities, and religious communities. Because of the range in dates of incorporation and their varied primary functions, the cities and villages of today are diverse, ranging from large lot residential communities to urban centers that include mixes of industrial, office, commercial, recreation, military, educational, and residential uses.

Growth pressure has increasingly transformed Lake County's original rural character and traditional towns. The main commercial center of a traditional town grows and expands from the core to the periphery over a period of years or decades. The residential neighborhoods and commercial center of a traditional town grew together and coexisted in close proximity with one another, frequently both were historically oriented to the railroads.

Suburbs are typified by single use developments or subdivisions that are clearly separated from each other and from other uses. For rural large lot residential communities, single use residential subdivisions are desirable. They provide for less through traffic, extensive green areas, more privacy, and extensive yard areas. The desirable rural character includes houses with expansive yards; it includes ecological features such as prairies, wetlands, and forests that promote the desired rural character.

Preserving, Enhancing, and Making Community Character

A community is not necessarily limited by municipal boundaries, but may expand beyond them. Although many communities lie within incorporated areas, some unincorporated areas of Lake County have their own individual sense of character as well. This section describes techniques that can be used to preserve and enhance the identity and individual character of communities in both incorporated and unincorporated Lake County.

Community Revitalization

As discussed in Chapter 6, Community Revitalization, stabilizing, revitalizing, and redeveloping existing commercial, industrial, and residential areas are critical to maintaining the County's farmland and natural resource areas. Redeveloping the older, built up areas of the County should be emphasized in order to utilize the infrastructure that already exists and to also increase the value of the properties. This will also enhance the character of these communities and preserve the historical aspects that provide character and personality.

Infill development can detract from community character if it is inconsistent with the style of the community. In some cases, some zoning ordinances actually prohibit compatible development by requiring new development to set back from the established "build-to" line. Continuous requests for zoning variations or development proposals that are inconsistent with the current character and values of the community, but comply with the ordinance, may demonstrate the need to adjust the zoning code to promote desirable community character (Hibner, 2002).

In Lake County, examples of successful community revitalization include downtown Deerfield, Libertyville, and Antioch.

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Historic Preservation

Building new buildings and tearing down old buildings can cause communities to lose part of their history. Without the old structures, cities take on a different character and neighborhoods lose their distinct identity (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 2001). Historic preservation is important in maintaining a community's appearance, character, and personality.

Residents generally appreciate and value the architectural styles of their community's past and respond positively to efforts to rehabilitate neighborhoods and business centers that have historic buildings. The documented economic benefits from historic preservation include construction activity, an increase in property values, and revenues from tourism (Morris, 1992).

Chapter 6, Community Revitalization, describes federal and state programs that provide financial incentives to communities that identify their significant historic buildings and districts. These programs include the Illinois Main Street program,¹ Illinois Heritage Grant, the Property Tax Assessment Freeze program, and the Federal Historic Preservation Income Tax Credit.

Chapter 4, Environmental Resources, Open Space, and Farmland, discusses the National Register of Historic Places. Numerous individual sites and districts in Lake County are listed in the National Register. The preservation of historic sites and districts should be used as an opportunity to enhance the existing character of a community.

The Main Street program has helped Libertyville preserve its traditional character.

Design or Appearance Codes

Well-designed spaces can establish community identity, enhance local quality of life, protect environmental quality, and increase property values. A well designed street is inviting. It enhances the appeal of walking and cycling (Skosey and Campbell, 2002).

Some local governments use design standards or design review criteria. These standards describe the requirements for such things as building height and architectural elements such as window locations, door orientation, and signage. When design standards are lacking, an infill building might be designed in a way that clashes with the surrounding buildings and may detract from the desired neighborhood character.

One technique to assure the preservation of character in terms of building design is to use design guidelines. These are used to advise developers on recommended architectural practices and standards for a given area. These could be mandatory in historic districts and conservation development areas (Skosey and Campbell, 2002).

In Lake County some appearance codes have been adopted for subdivisions and are enforced by the homeowners associations. In some areas the Village works with the developer to establish appearance codes, which are then turned over to the homeowners association. Although the municipalities do not impose these guidelines, village boards may review and approve them as part of the approval process for a new development. Other municipalities include appearance codes with the other building and development codes that are reviewed when developers request permits or other project approval. In the unincorporated area, the County does not have appearance codes, nor does it enforce codes enacted by neighborhood associations.

¹ This program is currently not funded.

Lake Forest and Highland Park are two examples of communities in Lake County that have used design or appearance codes to enhance community character.

Multi-jurisdictional Planning Councils

Multi-jurisdictional planning councils can be created in order to join the efforts of a group of communities whose efforts are to enhance, create, or preserve community character.

Corridor planning is one method for a planning council to enhance or create community character. The Route 12 Corridor Planning Council is an example of corridor planning that is working to create a sense of character along Rand Road.

The Route 12 Corridor Planning Council was created to improve the physical appearance of the Route 12 corridor (also known as Rand Road), including landscaping, setbacks, signage, and building height. The vision is to make Rand Road a gateway to and from Southwestern Lake County and to foster a “sense of place” for both residents and visitors (Route 12 Corridor Planning Council, 2003A).

The council is made up of representatives from the villages of Deer Park, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods, and North Barrington; Ela Township; and the Lake County department of Planning, Building and Development. With the assistance of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, meetings held by the council have resulted in a set of guidelines for landscaping and signage for future development along Rand Road (Route 12 Corridor Planning Council, 2003B).

The Barrington Area Council of Governments (BACOG) is another multi-jurisdictional planning council. The council serves to develop recommendations to BACOG government members. It works to address community challenges that affect the entire BACOG community and coordinates action among its member governments. The goal of the Barrington Area Council of Governments Comprehensive Plan is: “A balance between conservation, preservation, and development which responds to the needs and desires of BACOG area residents, and is supportive of the unique qualities of the BACOG environment” (Barrington Area Council of Governments, 2003).

BACOG is made of elected officials from the Villages of Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington, and Tower Lakes.

Public Buildings and Services

Libraries, museums, public service buildings, and village squares are important for the cultural well being of the residents of a community. They define the physical location where civil society gathers to socialize and to accomplish the work of democracy. Locating these facilities in close proximity to one another culturally enhances a community and gives it a sense of identity.

A town center represents the commercial and/or civic heart of a community. It may include office, retail, cultural, and government uses such as municipal buildings, shops, schools, libraries, and parks. Ideally a town center is pedestrian-scaled, is easily accessible to the community, includes public transit, and provides a diverse housing stock.

Gurnee is an example of a community that has concentrated public buildings to form a town center. The post office, library, schools, a public park, and the village hall are all located on O’Plaine Road creating a town center for the Village. Libertyville is an example of a community

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that has concentrated public buildings and retail shops in the town center. The area provides for pedestrian accessibility, has a town square, and includes a train station.

Smart Growth

The goal of Smart Growth is to establish compact, mixed-use communities where residents obtain satisfaction from a quality of life deriving in part from a desirable “sense of place.” Smart Growth seeks to restore community and vitality in center cities and older suburbs where infrastructure already exists. Smart growth is transit and pedestrian oriented, and emphasizes a mix of housing, commercial, and retail uses to improve quality of life (Sustainable Communities Network, 2003). Compact development and redevelopment will help reduce development pressure on the more rural areas and communities of Lake County, thus preserving open space and environmental resources.

Each community distinguishes community character differently and can use different facets of smart growth to protect and enhance that character. In some areas Transit Oriented Development may be the most appropriate, while other communities without a local train station would encompass Traditional Neighborhood Design. Although some communities prefer large lot residential subdivisions as a method of preserving rural character, other communities might find that Conservation Developments are the best way to appropriately deal with growth pressures and maintain a rural quality of life.

Transit Oriented Development, traditional neighborhood design, and conservation development all involve more compact lot sizes. Transit Oriented Developments and traditional neighborhood designs can be used to enhance character within dense villages or along transportation corridors. Conservation developments could be appropriate in less dense areas to serve as “green wedges” between more densely developed communities (Arendt, 1996: 8).

There are examples of organizations that are working to encourage Smart Growth concepts in Lake County. The Campaign for Sensible Growth, of which Lake County is a member, is a coalition of government, civic, and business leaders in northeastern Illinois’ Six Counties working to promote economic development while preserving open space, minimizing the need for costly new infrastructure and improving the livability of our communities (Campaign for Sensible Growth, 2003). Metropolis 2020 is a membership organization made up of representatives from business, labor, civic, religious, and governmental organizations, which works to address issues related to the region’s social and economic well-being including “unlimited, low density sprawl; concentration of poor minorities; the spatial mismatch between jobs, affordable housing, and transportation; and disparate degrees of access to quality education” (Chicago Metropolis 2020, 2003). The Metropolis 2020 Plan is a plan for the Six-County Region that promotes smart growth.

Transit Oriented Development

Transit Oriented Development can be used to promote tightly integrated mixed-use neighborhoods. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) refers to residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access by transit and nonmotorized transportation such as walking and bike riding. These neighborhoods can offer a vibrancy missing from typical suburban development. They can provide a strong sense of place and act as a village center in municipalities that lack a traditional downtown.

A TOD neighborhood is designed for cycling and walking with adequate facilities and attractive street conditions. Streets have traffic calming features to control vehicle traffic speeds. Each neighborhood development is mixed-use that can include shops, schools, and other public services, and a variety of housing types and prices. TOD neighborhoods generally have less land devoted to parking compared with conventional development, and are thus able to take advantage of the parking cost savings associated with reduced automobile use (Morris, 1996: 17).

A typical TOD neighborhood has a center with a rail or bus station, surrounded by relatively high-density development, with progressively lower-density spreading outwards. TOD neighborhoods typically have a diameter of 1/4 to 1/2 mile, which represents pedestrian scale distances (Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2003). Transit Oriented Development generally requires about seven residential units per acre in residential areas and 25 employees per acre in commercial centers. Rail service requires about twice that in both residential and commercial areas (Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2003). These densities create adequate transit ridership to justify frequent service. The density helps create active street life and commercial activities, such as grocery stores and coffee shops, within convenient walking distance of homes and worksites.

A study commissioned by Metra found that a minimum of 1,500 to 2,000 households within a 1/2 mile radius of a commuter train station (approximately 3-4 units per acre)² would result in 225 to 300 commuters. Metra's study results in a density that is significantly lower than that of a typical TOD. The study also indicated that a mix of 2/3 single-family units and 1/3 multifamily units can produce sufficient transit ridership (S.B. Friedman & Company, 2000).

Many zoning ordinances do not recognize and protect transportation assets. Parking requirements might be uniform for all development, regardless of proximity to transit stations (Hibner, 2002). Communities should consider transit options and encourage parking in a manner that encourages the use of public transit.

Typical zoning ordinances that address the fundamental elements of height, bulk, and use separate land-uses and actually may make a TOD infeasible (Hibner, 2002). Ordinances should include standards that allow for concentrated, mixed-use, and higher density development near transit.

In Lake County communities like Highland Park, Lake Forest, and Waukegan grew quickly with the completion of the Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad on January 1, 1855 (Dretske, 2002: 34). Families moved to the outlying communities while still working in Chicago. Villages like Antioch, Lake Villa, and Fox Lake began as resort towns of summer homes and stores, and businesses later followed. Communities such as Grayslake, Round Lake, Round Lake Park, Hainesville, Libertyville, and Gurnee were opened to commerce with the extension of rail into these areas (Nasenbeny, 1976). Recent redevelopment in Lake County has led to the development of some new examples of TOD neighborhoods, such as downtown Highland Park, Lake Forest, and the new downtown Deerfield.

Employment Oriented Development

Employment Oriented Development (EOD) refers to development that is designed to be located near employment centers. Such development has many of the same amenities as Transit Oriented Development, but is oriented near employment centers instead of transit. Just as in a TOD, EOD can help to maximize non-motorized transportation such as walking and bike riding, since the

² Assuming that one household equals one residential unit.

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daily commute does not exist. The community has adequate facilities and attractive street conditions that have traffic calming features. Each neighborhood development is mixed-use that can include shops, schools and other public services, and a variety of housing types and prices. This type of development can provide for densities that could enhance community character.

Chapter 8, Housing, has information about the mismatch of workforce housing and employment locations in Lake County. It describes programs that are intended to encourage employees to live closer to their jobs. Some of these programs include the Employer-Assisted Housing Program and Illinois state tax credits.

Traditional Neighborhood Design

There is a growing desire to live in newly developed neighborhoods that are similar to those designed prior to 1950 (Hibner, 2002). Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) includes a grid street pattern with alleys and sidewalks that make them “walkable,” but also accommodate automobiles. Detached garages that are accessible from the alleys do not require curb cuts that may cause blocked sidewalks. TND emphasizes functional front porches and discourages front-facing garages.

Traditional Neighborhood Design improves the quality of life by providing local public services and facilities within walking distance, and the pedestrian-oriented environment reduces automobile dependency (Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2002). These features can increase property values when well designed. Traditional zoning ordinances may discourage or even prohibit TND developments (Hibner, 2002). Updated ordinances should include provisions that encourage TND, where appropriate.

Centennial Crossing, located on Route 45 in Vernon Hills, is an example of Traditional Neighborhood Design. The community has large front facing porches located close to the sidewalks and promotes interaction among neighbors. Access to the garages are through alleys creating a more pedestrian friendly environment along the street.

Conservation Development

In conservation developments, half of the buildable land in a residential subdivision is platted for housing, while up to one-fourth of the buildable land is set apart for active recreation. The last quarter of the buildable land is left as relatively undisturbed open space. This development pattern creates compact, small lots for narrower single-family homes, but leaves large areas as natural open space that can be used by the public (Arendt, 1996).

Zoning and residential subdivision ordinances often discourage open space preservation. Open space preservation should be explicitly addressed in zoning ordinances in order to provide for open space preservation, for providing connections to other parks and open space outside of the development, and for providing “greenway” systems that benefit the entire community (Hibner, 2002).

Conservation developments can be exclusive due to high housing prices. In addition to providing conservation developments that are more inclusive, a balance should be reached in order to supply greater density clustered housing in appropriate green space areas. They are intended to protect the natural environment from sprawl developments that may otherwise destroy the natural landscaping and habitats.

There are examples of developments in Lake County that use clustering/conservation subdivision criteria to maintain open space. In addition, the County development standards have requirements that serve to preserve the natural character of an area. The Unified Development Ordinance has resource protection standards, stormwater design standards as well as buffering/landscaping requirements that all attempt to preserve the natural character of property being developed in unincorporated Lake County. The County also encourages the use of native plant material in landscapes. The County works to design developments around the natural features on the property being developed (Tierney, 2003A). Preserving environmental resources contributes to the area's character.

Prairie Crossing is a well-known conservation development located in Grayslake. It has been designed to combine development with the preservation of open space including wetlands, prairie, and farmland. The center of the development has a traditional neighborhood design and will soon incorporate a train station with small scale commercial development that is transit oriented. Extending from the center, home sites are clustered leaving 60% of the 678-acre site open. Amber Shores, in Lake Villa Township, is a mixed-use, conservation development with both commercial and residential uses. When completed, the commercial uses will be along the highway with residential uses behind. The natural wetlands in the development have been preserved. In Lake Napa Suwe Estates, in Wauconda Township, half of the buildable land has been set aside as natural open space and parkland with meandering trails. These houses have smaller lots, but there is more open space available as recreational, stormwater detention, and natural areas (Tierney, 2003B).

Rural Large Lot Subdivisions

In parts of Lake County, rural large lot residential developments have come to define community character. Rural large lot residential communities are those with three-acre lots or more, that retain some state of the natural environment. Rural residential subdivisions do not include just houses and lawns, but rather include areas where prairie, forests, and other natural landscapes exist on private property (which may or may not be deed restricted) and along roads. Although these developments separate individual houses from one another and from other uses, the large lots are desired by residents of these areas. Many existing rural large-lot communities have a desirable character that should be protected and enhanced. In areas being developed with new large lot subdivisions, neighborhoods should include more than houses and yards; they should seek to establish a desirable rural character that takes advantage of agricultural areas and natural landscapes.

The Bluffs at Lake Fairview Estates is a large lot development located in unincorporated Wauconda Township. Open space is located on individual properties and designated as deed restricted open space. Other natural resource areas in the subdivision are held in common ownership by the homeowners association and are located outside of the residential lots. Preservation is assured through standards contained in the County's Unified Development Ordinance and private covenants recorded with the final plat (Tierney, 2003B).

Housing Options

Community Character is enhanced by having a variety of housing types and options, which allow a more diverse community. Local governments can help ensure that residents remain in their communities even as their household sizes, incomes, ages, and lifestyles change. Rather than using zoning to only regulate height, bulk, and use, specific design standards for a broader range of housing options can be defined (Hibner, 2002). Housing options should accommodate changes

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in lifestyle. Various housing types include townhouses, condominiums, affordable housing units, senior housing, coach houses, accessory dwelling units, live/work units, and mixed residential/commercial development.

Zoning

Zoning codes should be written in a manner that preserves the elements of community character (Hibner, 2002). If local plans do not contain community character objectives, zoning policies should be developed to form the basis for zoning changes and to gain consensus on defining and maintaining community character. A community should keep its comprehensive plan up to date so that a zoning ordinance can implement the land use and development policies written in the comprehensive plan (Hibner, 2002). Zoning districts and administrative procedures in the zoning ordinance could be prefaced with a purpose statement that includes a detailed description of the desired physical character and function of each district, while allowing some flexibility of design, furthering community character objectives.

Certain areas such as downtowns, commercial corridors, historic districts, and open space areas should be recognized as specialized districts in ordinances in order to protect the unique characteristics of these areas. Customized review procedures for these unique areas that use design standards that clearly express community desires can help protect the character of special areas in the community (Hibner, 2002).

Intergovernmental Agreements

Intergovernmental agreements can help communities establish a sense of place and enhance community character. Through land use and boundary agreements municipalities can designate rural areas such as farmland, open space, parkland, conservation developments or rural large lot residential developments as transitions between denser communities. Different municipalities that have adjacent dense areas can use land use and boundary agreements to create a shared community character. With land use agreements along municipal boundaries, an area that lies on the border of two municipalities can be considered one single community with a character of its own.

Conclusion

Techniques described in this chapter can be used to enhance the locally expressed character of Lake County's communities. Some techniques can be used to create a new desired character, where appropriate. The goals and policies of this chapter are intended to promote and encourage the goals for community character in each of Lake County's various communities.

Goals and Policies³

10.1 Goal: Maintain traditional Lake County community atmospheres where appropriate.

³ As stated in Chapter 1, Introduction, a Goal is defined as "the desired result to be achieved by implementing the *Plan*;" and a Policy is defined as "a general method or action designed to achieve a goal."

- 10.1.1 **Policy:** Use available state and federal program funds to establish local programs that proactively preserve and protect historic districts and sites through the revitalization of communities and the rehabilitation of buildings.
- 10.1.2 **Policy:** Encourage the state to fund Illinois Main Street.
- 10.1.3 **Policy:** Encourage County and municipal officials to set zoning standards, building codes, and architectural guidelines that maintain and enhance the existing historical architectural styles of the community.
- 10.2 Goal:** Promote a positive community character and unique identity within each community and residential neighborhood.
 - 10.2.1 **Policy:** Encourage housing-style diversity, in coordination with the local comprehensive plan, within and among housing developments and neighborhoods.
 - 10.2.2 **Policy:** Encourage residential developments designed with a neighborhood concept that includes open space, recreation, residential convenience shopping, and schools, where appropriate.
 - 10.2.3 **Policy:** Encourage commercial design, within and among commercial developments and neighborhoods, that enhances the desired character of the community.
 - 10.2.4 **Policy:** Create pedestrian scale downtowns with waterfront linkages (where available), small parks, overlooks, plazas, enhanced public rights-of-way, and attractive streetscapes.
 - 10.2.5 **Policy:** Support the efforts of multi-jurisdictional planning councils that promote community character.
 - 10.2.6 **Policy:** Encourage the use of Traditional Neighborhood Design principles for redevelopment in order to encourage mixed-uses and to enhance community character, where designated in the local comprehensive plan.
 - 10.2.7 **Policy:** Encourage large lot residential communities to use mature trees and natural landscapes on lots to enhance the rural character.
- 10.3 Goal:** Encourage land uses and designs that create rural transition areas that distinguish one community from the next.
 - 10.3.1 **Policy:** Encourage rural large lot residential communities and agricultural communities to use natural landscapes and open space in order to effectively serve as rural transitions between denser communities.
 - 10.3.2 **Policy:** Encourage the adoption of intergovernmental boundary and land use agreements that maintain low-density uses and open space in unincorporated and incorporated areas as rural transitions between denser communities.
 - 10.3.3 **Policy:** Purchase development rights to support agricultural uses as transitions between denser communities.

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- 10.3.4 Policy: Encourage conservation development techniques in areas where appropriate.
- 10.3.5 Policy: Improve community gateways by applying a higher level of building design and landscapes that visually impacts and defines the entryway to a community.
- 10.4 Goal:** Promote town centers as the focal point of community life.
 - 10.4.1 Policy: Develop town squares and parks within town centers.
 - 10.4.2 Policy: Place public buildings and services in town centers.
 - 10.4.3 Policy: Place entertainment oriented establishments in town centers.
 - 10.4.4 Policy: Place residential developments, which serve diverse populations including seniors, in town centers.
- 10.5 Goal:** Designate Future Land Uses to obtain the desired blend of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial uses, natural space, and transportation corridors.
 - 10.5.1 Policy: Create smooth transitions between uses such as industrial and residential areas and between low-density and high-density development.
 - 10.5.2 Policy: New developments—both residential and commercial—should be compatible and harmonize with the desirable character of adjacent buildings and streetscape.
 - 10.5.3 Policy: Promote land uses in unincorporated Lake County that reflect the character of surrounding communities.
 - 10.5.4 Policy: Encourage Transit Oriented Development within 1/2 mile of transit centers and Employment Oriented Development within 1/2 mile of employment centers, where appropriate and consistent with local comprehensive plans.
 - 10.5.5 Policy: Encourage differential railroad grade crossings and screened parking facilities for transit riders.

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