
3.0 TOURISM MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

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3.1 PURPOSE OF THE ELEMENT

The Tourism Management Element is not a State-mandated General Plan Element, but has been included because of the significant impact that tourism plays in the life of this community. The purpose of the element is to provide a clear statement of community intent regarding tourism, that will guide decision-makers when faced with applications for additional tourist-serving uses. Tourism is not an isolated phenomenon. Its effects are experienced in many different arenas, including traffic, recreation, public services, land use (e.g. reduction in the number of local-serving businesses), and community design. For this reason, policies in this element will overlap with and be complementary to policies in other elements. Policies and programs in this element should be considered in conjunction with policies in the other elements, particularly the Land Use & Growth Management Element and the Transportation Element.

3.2 TOURISM ISSUES

The growth of the wine industry over the past few decades has been accompanied by a burgeoning tourist industry in the Napa Valley. It has been estimated that Napa County hosted approximately 6.7 million visitor-days (A visitor-day represents one visitor staying for one day) in 1988. While visitors come to the area to view the scenery and visit the spas, recreation areas, and historic sites, the primary reason for coming to the area is to visit the wineries.

This influx of people and dollars into the Valley has had significant implications for the City of St. Helena. Tourism has created, and additional tourism will increase, the following effects:

- revenues to the City through transient occupancy taxes and sales taxes,
- jobs in tourist serving businesses, many at the minimum wage level,
- increased number of shoppers for local businesses,
- economic support for the renovation/rehabilitation of historic structures,
- a movement for preservation of the existing community character and support for protection of prime agricultural land for vineyards,
- new types of retail stores and restaurants,
- an additional need for low income housing for many employees of tourist-serving businesses,

- increased pressures for new development, both commercial and residential,
- displacement of local-serving businesses from the CBD and higher rents in the CBD because of the more competitive tourist-serving uses,
- serious traffic congestion on Highway 29/Main Street particularly during weekends, holidays, and midday and afternoon periods,
- increased demand for public services related to police, fire, and park maintenance, and
- increased demand on the City's infrastructure especially water and sewer,
- shortages of convenient downtown parking.

While most of the residents of St. Helena recognize the economic significance of the tourist industry, they also believe tourism has substantial associated costs, particularly as it impacts the character of the community. A few residents and several business owners believe the character of the community has already been changed by tourism and increased tourism should be promoted.

A major problem exists in that the more successful St. Helena is in controlling the impacts of tourism, the more appealing it becomes to tourists and tourist developments. The more Calistoga, Yountville and Napa solicit tourists and tourism, the more attractive and charming a local-serving orientation in St. Helena becomes.

The majority of the citizens of St. Helena believe that tourism has provided more benefits than drawbacks, but also believe that additional tourism-related development would detract from their quality of life. This view of tourism is a fundamental element of the entire General Plan, i.e., additional tourism-related development should be discouraged.

3.3 MANAGEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

Guiding Policies

- 3.4.1 Prohibit any visitor-serving activity or development which would compromise the quality of life for St. Helena residents.

Although a proposed visitor-serving use may be economically beneficial to the City, it should not be approved if it significantly impacts residents by increasing traffic, introducing visitors into residential areas, increasing noise levels, obscuring scenic vistas, etc.

- 3.4.2 Support the development of a responsible visitor-serving component to the City's economy as a valuable source of jobs, tax revenues, and cultural amenities.

Although tourism has some adverse side effects on the community, it also plays a very positive role in supporting a healthy economy and contributing to the diversity of the community's social and cultural life. Uses that enhance the community as a whole should be welcome, even if they are not solely local-serving in nature.

- 3.4.3 Give preference to visitor-serving uses whose orientation is toward a more discriminating upscale market consistent with the Valley's reputation as a producer of world-class wines, and discourage the introduction of uses that are dependent upon a mass tourist market, while not increasing the total number of tourists.

Tourism studies in the Valley have shown that the qualities and amenities provided by Napa Valley attract visitors with an appreciation for fine things and the financial means to purchase them. From an economic standpoint, it is considered preferable to have uses that attract fewer visitors who spend more during their stay, than encouraging uses which attract large numbers of visitors but do not significantly improve the economic benefit. There is some indication that increased tourist numbers may actually result in diminished economic returns. The 1984 Napa Valley Tourism Project indicated that some vintners reported a decline in per capita sales at wineries after daily visitor counts reached a certain level. From a land use and environmental standpoint, it is preferable to minimize the numbers of visitors in order to protect the aesthetic character of the Valley and the limited physical resources, such as agricultural land.

- 3.4.4 Prohibit the development of any new retail uses that are oriented primarily toward tourists. Non-retail type tourist-serving uses, such as transient occupancy units, tasting rooms, and restaurants, will be controlled by city ordinances.

Uses which are clearly appealing primarily to tourists, such as souvenir and novelty shops, are not appropriate.

- 3.4.5 Limit the commercial activities permitted at wineries to those directly related to the sale of wine produced or bottled by the winery and to items which enhance the recognition and sales of those wines.

- 3.4.6 Allow the development of visitor-serving uses only within the capability of existing road capacities to accommodate increased traffic.

Increasing roadway capacities by widening City streets or removing on-street parking is considered an unacceptable response to increased

demand for tourist-serving commercial uses. Widening streets tends to be growth inducing in that it creates facilities that provide more capacity than needed by a specific project. The economic and aesthetic costs associated with wider streets is also not considered an equitable trade-off for the benefits gained.

- 3.4.7 Encourage alternate modes of travel and reduce the number and length of vehicle trips generated by visitors to the community.

Enhancing the pedestrian environment within the commercial area, providing bicycle trails connecting to a countywide system, and the use of small vans for group wine tours, are all measures that would decrease tourist-generated traffic congestion.

- 3.4.8 Restrict the number, location, and scale of new transient occupancy facilities.

The City now has reached the limit of hotel, motel, and bed & breakfast rooms permitted under current zoning. The City also seems to have as many hotels and motels as are appropriate given their size and prominence within a community the size of St. Helena.

- 3.4.9 Place a cap on the number of restaurant uses that are permitted in the community.

Restaurants can be both local- and tourist-serving in nature, but given the high number of restaurants already in the city, community consensus is that no additional restaurants are needed based on current population. The method for regulating restaurant use shall be determined through zoning regulation.

Implementing Policies

- 3.4.10 Work with the County to establish a Valley-wide bicycle trail network that will allow users to circulate without placing additional demand on local streets, and will allow visitors to travel within the Valley from a centrally-parked vehicle.

- 3.4.11 Develop clear criteria for use by decision-makers in controlling the types of tourist uses by use permit, when reviewing applications for potential tourist-serving uses. Such criteria could include:

- limits on number of overnight rooms and restaurant seats;
- limits on the absolute number of a specific use that should be allowed (e.g., ice cream and frozen yogurt stores; art galleries);

- uses which are unacceptable in a given district (e.g., tee shirt shops); etc.
- 3.4.12 Revise zoning for commercial districts to reflect the limits on tourist-oriented uses in the two General Plan commercial designations; including the cap on restaurants.
- 3.4.13 Revise zoning for the CB district to specify a maximum percentage of tourist-oriented ancillary goods/uses within a commercial enterprise, and maximum areas of window display to be devoted to advertising or displaying tourist-serving goods and/or services.

Much of the change in character of the CBD that is attributed to the influx of tourist-serving uses is related to the fact that many businesses, including predominantly local-serving businesses, have incorporated postcards, souvenirs, film, and other tourist-oriented items into their storefronts to attract non-residents. By restricting the introduction of such ancillary goods and services, the perceived impact of tourism on local-serving uses can be reduced.

- 3.4.14 The City shall continue to take a proactive role in reviewing the operation of the Napa Valley Wine Train to preclude intensification of tourism in the City. Significant issues associated with the operation of the train include:
- Local authority to require an acceptable environmental document.
 - Land use authority to determine appropriate location and scale of passenger facilities in the City.
 - Determination of acceptable levels of service provided by the train with priority given to local transit needs.
- 3.4.15 The City shall develop local ordinances regulating the use of tour buses, limousines, vans, and other public transportation carriers to minimize impacts to the City local residents.

