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New guidelines set to add character

By Noel Stack | City editor

Developers in the Missouri Flat Corridor have a new tool to create a desirable project. The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Missouri Flat Design Guidelines last week.

"The guidelines are just that ... they are guidelines, not standards," said Peter Maurer with Planning. "So there's no requirement but hopefully they will provide direction when an applicant comes forward. "They would go hand in hand with the development standards that are contained in the zoning ordinance," he added.

The guidelines encourage builders to consider one of four preferred architectural styles mountain, agrarian, craftsman, or Gold Rush with details like decorative trim, covered porches, wood or brick exteriors, and vertical windows.

The new Missouri Flat bridge over Highway 50 incorporated some of the recommended styles with a faux brick exterior and stylish street lamps. Supervisor Helen Baumann said many people have called into her office complimenting the county on that work.

The guidelines also state that property owners should create projects that "complement one another and create a unified project appearance."

"Dated 'L' shaped suburban shopping centers should be avoided," according to the guidelines. "Clusters of smaller buildings with pad buildings at the street edge are strongly encouraged."

Using natural features of the property is encouraged in the guidelines.

"Incorporate existing vegetation and natural rock formations where possible," the guidelines state. "Consider incorporating large boulders into landscaping plans to provide a pleasing contrast to the plant materials found in a mountain setting."

The guidelines also recommend that builders create outdoor areas for shoppers and the public with "pedestrian amenities, such as shade, benches, fountains, landscaping, public art, etc."

RRM Design Group prepared the guidelines after holding public workshops on the issue. Shingle Springs resident Art Marinaccio, who represents some property owners on Missouri Flat, said the consultant didn't make an effort to reach out to those most affected by the guidelines.

"This was a real waste of effort, unfortunately," Marin-accio said.

Marinaccio suggested the supervisors receive and file the guidelines but not adopt them. The work needs to begin on guidelines to maintain the historical character of Diamond Springs "and then work out backward from there," he said.

While agreeing that Diamond Springs should have its own set of guidelines, Diamond Springs resident Bob Smart commended the supervisors for taking action on the Missouri Flat Design Guidelines.

"We have a potpourri of stuff none of us is really proud of," Smart said. "In the future people are going to want a classier looking society, classier looking buildings than what we have now."

Supervisors Jack Sweeney, Norma Santiago, Rusty Dupray, Ron Briggs and Helen Baumann approved the guidelines.

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