WHEREAS, the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors has committed that Economic Development for Mariposa County is a high and continuing priority; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Board of Supervisors approved the Mariposa County General Plan, which contains Chapter 6, the Economic Development Element; and

WHEREAS, the Mariposa County General Plan Chapter 6 Economic Development Element is a policy document which identifies broad areas of opportunity for economic development in Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved the Mariposa County Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Mariposa County Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan is an action document which provides specific proposed actions in a variety of economic arenas; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has acknowledged that Mariposa County must have an Economic Development Plan which enjoys broad public support in order to attract and give potential business investors a high degree of entrepreneurial confidence; and

WHEREAS, an effective Economic Development Plan will also enable Mariposa County to compete for a wide variety of grant assistance to support job growth; and

WHEREAS, on the 8th day of December 2015, the Board of Supervisors commenced a process to solicit input from all community partners interested in Economic Development in Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, on the 5th day of January, 2016, the Board of Supervisors identified county advisory committees, councils and commissions and other local organizations that may have an interest in Economic Development. These included: Mariposa County Planning Commission, Catheys Valley Planning Advisory Committee, Midpines Planning Advisory Committee, Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee, Fish Camp Planning Advisory Council, Greeley Hill Planning Advisory Committee, Coulterville Planning Advisory Committee, El Portal Planning Advisory Committee, Agricultural Advisory
Committee, Historic Sites & Records Preservation Commission, Airport Advisory Committee, Transportation Center Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee, Yosemite West Maintenance Advisory Committee, Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce, Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau, Mariposa Rotary, Mariposa County Business Association, Mariposa County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Mariposa Farm Bureau, Hornitos Patrons Club, Lushmeadows Homeowners, Ponderosa Basin community, and Mt. Bullion community; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors scheduled a series of meetings and identified staff to assist these groups in conducting a discussion regarding the Mariposa County Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan and the Mariposa County General Plan Chapter 6 Economic Development Element. The Board of Supervisors identified specific questions regarding these documents, and asked for input on the questions; and

WHEREAS, the Mariposa County Planning Commission obtained public input through publicly noticed meetings on the 4th day of March, 2016, the 18th day of March 2016 and the 8th day of April 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the questions and information contained in the Board of Supervisors’ correspondence dated the 19th day of January 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission identified others with an interest or potential interest in Economic Development. These included the Mariposa County Contractor’s Association, the Mariposa County Arts Council, University of California (UC) Merced Staff and Faculty, Yosemite National Park, the Mariposa County Board of Realtors and local Native American tribes including the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California, the North Fork Mono Tribe, the American Indian Council of Mariposa County Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation and the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Planning Commission does hereby recommend actions to the Board of Supervisors as contained in Attachment A of this resolution.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner Herman seconded by Commissioner Harter, this resolution is duly passed and adopted this 8th day of April, 2016 by the following vote:

AYES: Kennec, Becker, Herman, Harter

NOES: None

EXCUSED: None

ABSTAIN: Kehoe
Mark Becker, Chair
Mariposa County Planning Commission

Susan Hunter, Secretary to the
Planning Commission
ATTACHMENT A
Planning Commission Response and Additional Comments

ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR MARIPOSA COUNTY
NOVEMBER 2007
and the
MARIPOSA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN, CHAPTER 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Commission considered the Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan (EVS) and Chapter 6 of the General Plan at noticed public meetings on March 4, 2016, March 18, 2016 and April 8, 2016.

The following summarizes the Commission’s discussion and input regarding Economic Development in Mariposa County and these documents:

GENERAL PLAN COMMENTS

1. The General Plan’s strong policies to support rural character and the rural lifestyle are at odds with conventional economic development. Without a change in these fundamental policies regarding the importance of rural character, Mariposa County cannot attract significant economic development.

2. The flexibility associated with the County’s Rural Home Industry provisions offers good opportunities for small scale businesses to start up, but these businesses are not going to provide higher paying quality jobs. Once a business is established and has invested in on-site improvements, it is costly for them to move to areas zoned for light industrial development.

3. There are no provisions in the General Plan for industrial development in rural areas of the county and there are very few locations actually zoned to accommodate light industrial development. This makes it difficult to implement any interest or possibility in diversifying economy.

4. Most communities do not want industries or only want them if they have a small footprint; this is in conflict with their interest to diversify Mariposa County’s economy. Areas which are possible for industrial development include Mariposa Town, Mount Bullion Town, and the Bardini Industrial Park.

INFRASTRUCTURE

5. Mariposa County must update its infrastructure to attract modern development.

6. There are few industrial areas in Mariposa County that are “development-ready”.

IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING
7. There are very few housing opportunities available for seasonal employees (including Yosemite National Park employees) and low wage earning employees. There is an interest in expanding affordable housing now. Without adequate housing, employees will be forced to commute to their jobs every day from out of county.

8. The popularity of the Vacation Rental program in Mariposa County has exacerbated the housing crisis.

9. Mariposa County should consider reducing the minimum parcel size in areas where there is community sewer and water. Affordable housing should provide opportunities for home ownership, not just rental.

10. Mariposa County should investigate micro-housing.

11. Providing housing will benefit the county from an economic development perspective.

TRAINED EMPLOYEES

12. There are few trained employees in Mariposa County.

ENTITLEMENT PROCESS

13. In most situations, the process to obtain entitlements for economic development is difficult. It entails a discretionary, time consuming and costly process.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

14. It may be appropriate to assign the responsibility for economic development to the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Corporation. Let them do the jobs they are established to do. Even consider housing them together for collaboration.

15. Assign the responsibility to promote tourism to the Tourism Bureau.

16. Is Mariposa County Government willing to spend big money to pursue diversified economic development in the county; to pursue infrastructure development; to pursue affordable housing development; to provide economic development incentives?

MARIPOSA COUNTY’S YOUTH

17. Encourage and facilitate cooperation with Mariposa County’s schools, especially with respect to potential job opportunities and internships.

18. Foster programs which train youth and give them employable vocational skills.
19. Foster programs which provide opportunities for county youth to “try” a job, to learn if it is something they would enjoy pursuing.

20. Reach out to businesses to learn what skills are needed from employees.

FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS

21. Update the Tourism website.

22. Make Mariposa County’s website easier to use.

SUMMARY THOUGHTS

23. Without a significant change in fundamental policies in the General Plan and without addressing the need for costly infrastructure, it is a good idea, at least in the short term, to accept what we have in Mariposa County, focus on what we have in Mariposa County, and do what we do best – tourism! It is important to recognize that tourism has its ups and downs, but we should strive to do tourism better than everyone else!

24. There is a strong interest in diversifying Mariposa County’s economy. Mariposa County should have a long term plan to pursue economic diversification. Diversification does not necessarily mean light industrial type development.

25. If we are going to have all of our economic development eggs in one basket, then we’d better pay close attention to that basket.

26. It is important for the County’s economic development efforts to recognize all routes into Yosemite, including Highways 140, 41 and 132. Each corridor has potential, opportunities and limits. Mariposa County’s businesses along Highway 41 have experienced problems with employees (necessitating a commute from Oakhurst or even Fresno), sewage disposal and water.

27. There is a conference facility developed in Fish Camp (Highway 41). There is a conference facility being developed along the Highway 120 corridor (Rush Creek – Tuolumne County). There is an opportunity to develop a conference facility in Mariposa for the Highway 140 corridor.

28. A conference center or events center (like that located in Murphys CA) offers the potential to attract more tourists in the off-season and more tourists in the community of Mariposa.

29. Encourage cultural events in the shoulder seasons to attract visitors.

30. Consider a staging area to encourage transit into Yosemite.

31. Businesses exist based on a “natural selection” process. If Mariposa County was a good place to develop business, it would’ve been here long ago. Businesses are not knocking down our doors to come here. We need to feather the nest, by providing zoned parcels, adequate roads, available
housing and broadband. When an individual comes to Mariposa County with a business, Mariposa County should be ready for them. The current situation is discouraging, time consuming, costly and risky (due to discretionary process).

1/19/16 Board of Supervisors QUESTIONS

1. The EVS contains two goals. One is to strengthen the tourism industry by making Mariposa a year-round designation. The second is to diversify Mariposa County’s economy with suitable business development opportunities.

a. Do you believe these two goals are still appropriate for Mariposa County?

- Yes these two goals are still appropriate for Mariposa County.
- It is important to be specific about what is included in “suitable business development opportunities”. We are far from main trucking and rail lines, but UPS shipping is viable. We need businesses which pay a living wage. To attract “modern” businesses, Mariposa County needs infrastructure improvements. Need to:
  - Identify buildings and areas appropriate for industrial development,
  - Research infrastructure which needs to be updated,
  - Determine costs for infrastructure improvements, and
  - Determine how the county will pay for the infrastructure improvements.
- It is important to educate students in modern schools.

b. Are there additional goals which should be considered?

- Diversify economy.
- Assign responsibility for implementation of EVSIP actions:
  - Without an identified organization or department taking responsibility for implementation, Mariposa County cannot expect success

b. Are each of these goals equal in value to contribute to the county’s economy, or should one have a higher priority?

- Response from individual commissioners was not uniform and included:
  - Tourism should have the highest priority. Money from tourism should be used to fund efforts to diversify the economy. Money should be given to outside groups to seek out businesses that will come to Mariposa with the existing infrastructure.
  - Mariposa County needs to focus on diversifying the economy.

2. Within each goal, there are strategies to achieve the goal, and a number of actions to achieve the strategies. Please review each action.

Please identify five actions to which you believe the county should give priority.
• #1 – There should be an emphasis on technology
• #2 – Mariposa County should pursue development of a conference center
• #3 – #6
  o Address zoning permitting challenges (make it easier to develop). This includes addressing both the lack of any provisions for light industrial development in rural areas (beyond that possible through a rural home industry) and the limited amount of light industrial zoning throughout the county. This may take re prioritizing Planning's work load or hiring additional consultant assistance. Mariposa County needs to be ready for a light industrial type of land use, when it comes.
  o Address infrastructure (identify needs and pursue development). This includes broadband – recognize that most businesses rely on e-services.
  o Pursue development of more affordable housing opportunities (for employees),
  o Establish economic development coordinator in Mariposa County (whose primary responsibility it will be to pursue economic development)

General Comments – The businesses which one planning commissioner has worked with in the past would never relocate to Mariposa County. It is too far from Highway 99. Typical businesses need sewer, water, and natural gas. There would be no place for 80+ employees to live (no housing / no affordable housing / vacation rental impacts). There are not enough potential trained employees already living here.

The businesses which one planning commissioner worked with in the past have one desire – to open their businesses. They need readily available parcels to develop or readily available structures to move into.

To address this, Mariposa County needs to:

- Establish a business enterprise zone
- Establish adequate infrastructure, including broadband
- Develop housing
- Research the ability to offer incentives to businesses

Cottage industries are okay for startup opportunities for individuals, but they do not pay a living wage in most instances.

It will take financial resources to pursue getting a business area established – there may need to be some changes in how the county spends its discretionary funds.

3. *Are there additional strategies or actions which should be included in the EVS?*

We need to diversify our economy, but we aren’t ready now. The first step should to work within the confines of the existing General Plan. We need to work with what we do best – don’t fight it! We need to do “tourism” better than anyway else – and make Mariposa County the BEST!
We need to put the existing zoned light industrial areas near the Fairgrounds into MPUD’s service area for sewer and water.

4. **Are there strategies or actions which are no longer relevant or appropriate?**

   - Set aside provisions for “friendly service”. We all already do that.
   - Set aside provisions for “marketing experience”.
   - The document needs to be updated to make it current.
     - The technology section and discussions need to be updated.
     - Update Tourism Bureau provisions.

5. **Are there economic development issues or opportunities which are unique to your community and that are not identified within the EVS (for example, issues which are unique to the Midpines community or unique to agriculture)?**

   Need to “bundle” activities, to bring in tourists and have them stay and participate in more than one activity. For example, have a fly-in at the Mariposa Airport and “bundle” with that with a pass to the Civil War Re-Enactment or bundle that with a pass to the Butterfly Festival. Could also bundle with a bus pass to Yosemite. There needs to be a concierge or organizer for these kinds of bundled activities / events.

   Establish responsibility for Economic Development. This is CRITICAL. Hire an Economic Development Coordinator. Make this employee accountable to the Board of Supervisors. Have employee be responsible for enticing businesses to come to Mariposa County.

Review the EVSIP annually.