



City of Nevada City

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NEVADA CITY – GROWTH AND PHILOSOPHY 1850 TO 2008

Founded in 1850 and incorporated April 19, 1856, Nevada City was a gold-mining community consisting mainly of tar-paper shacks and tents. Its population was approximately 3,500. One hundred fifty (150) years later, the tar-paper shacks and tents are gone, replaced by a mix of humble “miners’ shacks,” modest cottages, elegant Victorian houses and impressive brick buildings occupied by a population of 3,000.

The population is economically and philosophically diverse, and the residents of Nevada City work vigorously to protect the unique blend of housing, businesses and citizens that comprise the high quality-of-life of our community. Historic preservation is a top priority, and ordinances protect not only the downtown district which is on the National Register of Historic Places but homes in the residential areas, as well.

This focus on preservation of a strong sense of community, coupled with geographic, topographic, and infrastructure constraints has limited growth to a slow, manageable pace. Statistically, Nevada City has grown by less than 30 people a year between 1980 and 2000. (U.S. Census figures show a population of 2,431 in 1980, 2,855 in 1990 and 3,001 in 2000.) Citizen participation in government and planning issues is high with applications for new or remodeled homes filling the City Council chambers as easily as applications for multi-lot subdivisions.

As Nevada City struggles with the challenges of maintaining a viable “living” community with a mix of businesses, residential housing, philosophies, and cultural and economic diversity, it is also faced with the reality of rising costs, limited land suitable for building and an economically-challenged State and City budget. The City Council and the Planning Commission recognize the enormity of these challenges and the importance of compliance with State mandates. They are working diligently to fulfill their responsibilities to their constituents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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