**Community Focus Statement A:** Improve the quality of our built environment to enhance community health, safety, neighborhood character, and the image of our business corridors.

# A4

*Action Statement A.4: Adopt development standards and public infrastructure in commercial areas appropriate for a rural mountain community.*

**Benchmark**: Bear Valley advisory design review committee organized and design guidelines implemented.
**Champion**: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community
**Estimated Cost**: $50,000–$175,000



*Design standards can help create a cohesive aesthetic appearance in commercial areas. Photo source: Arpingstone*

The identity of Bear Valley's built environment, particularly along commercial corridors, is threatened by the lack of development standards and design guidelines that maintain a strong sense of community character. Improving the appearance of commercial areas is important for community identity, business recruitment, and the success of existing businesses. Attractive and well-maintained businesses demonstrate pride of ownership and will draw more visitors. Few properties along commercial corridors have been updated in recent years, and economic growth is limited. The communities should adopt design guidelines that preserve the identity of the Bear Valley area.

These guidelines can focus on a number of architectural characteristics that help to create a unique feel for Bear Valley. Guidelines may encourage or require a specific roof design, frontage size and type, building color and materials, and other design-related components. Design guidelines should also emphasize public infrastructure, such as streets and sidewalks, and address issues such as street furniture, planters and landscaping, and public lighting. Design guidelines should be strict enough to create a particular type of aesthetic and discourage commercial buildings that are inconsistent with the community, but at the same time they should be sufficiently flexible to allow for variety and the individual needs and tastes of the building owners. The communities should avoid guidelines that are overly restrictive.

In order to help ensure the success of any design guidelines program, the Bear Valley communities should take steps to ensure that property owners are able to achieve consistency with the guidelines. The communities can establish matching grant programs to help provide financial resources, such as a façade and sign improvement matching grant program for commercial buildings to help property owners make physical improvements to building exteriors. This program should include a provision that allows the property owner to match the grant either in the form of financial support or in sweat equity (e.g., doing some work on the property). The communities may also

wish to consider establishing a public-private partnership involving local banks, property owners, business owners, and others.

| Action | Action Leader | Timeline | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Contact residents, and organize a Bear Valley design review advisory committee. | Champion | Month 1 | Crest Forest Sign Program http://cms.sbcounty.gov/lus/Planning/DevelopmentCode.aspx |
| 2. Select a leader to serve as chair of the committee. | Design review advisory committee | Month 2 | Scenic America – Community Planning & Design http://www.scenic.org/issues/community-planning-a-design |
| 3. Secure funding for preparation of design guidelines. | Design review advisory committee | Month 3 - 8 | |
| 4. Procure consultant to develop work plan to prepare design guidelines. | Design review advisory committee | Month 9 - 12 | Improving the architectural review process http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab096257.pdf |
| 5. Draft and adopt development standards and design guidelines for commercial areas in Bear Valley. | Design review advisory committee, consultants | Months Year 1 - 2 | Creating and Using Design Guidelines (National Park Service publication) https://www.nps.gov/tps/education/workingonthepast/writingsteps.htm |
| 6. Educate local developers and designers about the design guidelines. | Design review advisory committee | Year 2 | |
| 7. Submit to County Land Use Service for review and consideration by Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. | Design review advisory committee, San Bernardino County Land Use Services | Year 2, ongoing | Complete Streets https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/ http://www.dot.ca.gov/transplanning/ocp/complete-streets.html  San Bernardino County Land Use Services http://cms.sbcounty.gov/lus/Home.aspx  Placer County, Rural Design Guidelines https://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/documentlibrary/designguidelines  San Luis Obispo County, Design Guidelines http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Assets/PL/Design+Plans/Countywide_Design_Guildelines.pdf |