



benton community visioning

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

NOVEMBER 2008

PREPARED BY



MIG, Inc.



Caltrans District 9

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A Vision for Benton

Benton's striking scenic views and beautiful natural areas continue to exemplify its unique rural character. Benton establishes a town core that maintains its small town feel and historic features while offering services and amenities for residents and visitors.

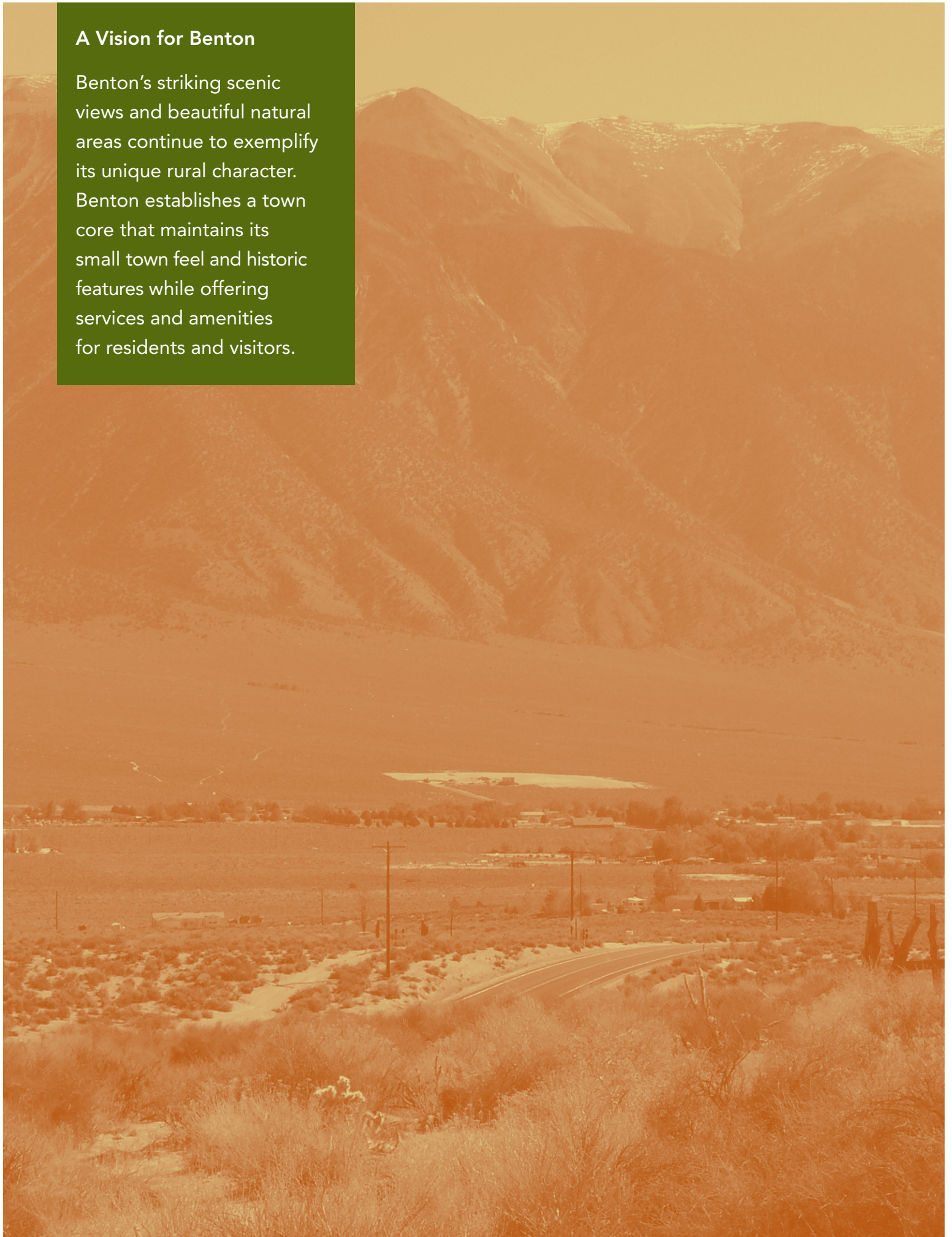


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executive summary

INTRODUCTION

All too often, small communities address local planning concerns in response to a crisis, with limited options and the need for a quick response. While such a sense of urgency may help achieve results, it does not allow a community time for in-depth discussion to plan its future and create a shared vision that can guide and inform local development activities.

The Benton Community Visioning process is a rare example of a small, rural community being given the time and resources it needs to thoughtfully and proactively plan for the future. This deliberative process has resulted in a set of guiding principles and strategies that encapsulate the desires of a passionate citizenry committed to the place they call home.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The town of Benton, California has a rich history and a bright future. Situated along critical regional and

interregional transportation corridors, it is home to residents with strong ties to the community who want to see Benton grow in a coordinated and environmentally sensible manner.

In the fall of 2007, the Berkeley-based consulting firm MIG, Inc. began a 12-month visioning process, soliciting input from the general public and key stakeholders in order to establish preferences and priorities for Benton's future. The results of this process are encapsulated in the Vision and Guiding Principles summarized in this report. These products will inform Caltrans District 9 and Mono County planning efforts in the Benton area for the next 20 years.

While there are no current or pending development plans that will drastically alter Benton's present condition, change is inevitable. The Community Visioning process has provided residents an opportunity to discuss this change and inform decision makers about their preferences for the future. The resulting products





from this effort will provide a valuable resource for years to come.

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The *Benton Community Vision* document is organized into the following sections:

I. Benton Snapshot

The 'Benton Snapshot' places Benton in a historical and cultural context by describing the demographic and land use characteristics that have influenced and continue to shape the community. The snapshot identifies

key planning issues facing the community and illuminates the value of the Community Visioning process for residents and agency representatives alike. Maps in this section illustrate a variety of existing community and regional characteristics.

II. Public Outreach Process and Outcomes

This section describes the public outreach and engagement methods employed during the Benton Community Visioning process, including publicity methods, stakeholder interviews and interactive community



meetings. The section also reviews key outcomes from the outreach process that lead to the Vision and Guiding Principles.

III. Vision and Guiding Principles

Crafted from input generated during the Community Visioning workshops, the Vision and Guiding Principles are the culmination of the entire process and serve as the heart of this report. Maps in this section depict preferences identified at the community meetings.



Guiding Principles

- A. Protect and Maintain Benton's Distinct Character
- B. Protect and Manage Natural Resources
- C. Support Community Services
- D. Promote Coordinated Development Practices
- E. Develop a Safe and Efficient Transportation Network
- F. Encourage a Sound and Stable Economy