North Lake Communities Planning Area Elements

~~Public Review~~Revised Draft - ~~February~~ Summer 2026

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NORTH LAKE COMMUNITIES PLANNING AREA ELEMENTS

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Introduction

This chapter presents the General Plan elements specific to the North Lake Communities Planning Area: Land Use; Circulation; Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation; Environmental Justice; Public Facilities and Services; and Economic Development. The chapter also includes a section on Special Study Areas and Design Guidelines that offers more detailed policy and design guidance for specific geographies in the Planning Area.

This chapter, combined with the countywide elements, make up the General Plan for the North Lake Communities Planning Area. The countywide elements are Health and Safety, Noise, Geothermal Resources, Agricultural Resources, Water, Housing, and the Aggregate Resources Management Plan.

In recognition of the deep and ongoing connection of the Southeastern Pomo and Eastern Pomo native to the North Lake Communities region, this General Plan acknowledges the area as part of the ancestral homelands of these Tribes. The County affirms its commitment to working collaboratively with Tribal governments to preserve and promote Tribal Cultural Resources, sacred sites, and ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge.

The General Plan incorporates the perspective of tribal communities to ensure that planning decisions reflect the values, history, and rights of the original stewards of this land. Coordination with Tribal governments guides:

- Identification and protection of cultural and sacred landscapes
- Integration of ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge into land use, conservation, and resource management decisions.
- Consultation processes that respect Tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship between Lake County and federally recognized Tribal governments.
- Inclusion of tribal perspectives in Environmental Justice and Economic Development strategies to support cultural revitalization and community well-being.

The County recognizes that sustainable planning for the North Lake Communities Planning Area requires honoring the cultural continuity, environmental stewardship, and historical resilience of the Southeastern Pomo and Eastern Pomo people indigenous to the land.

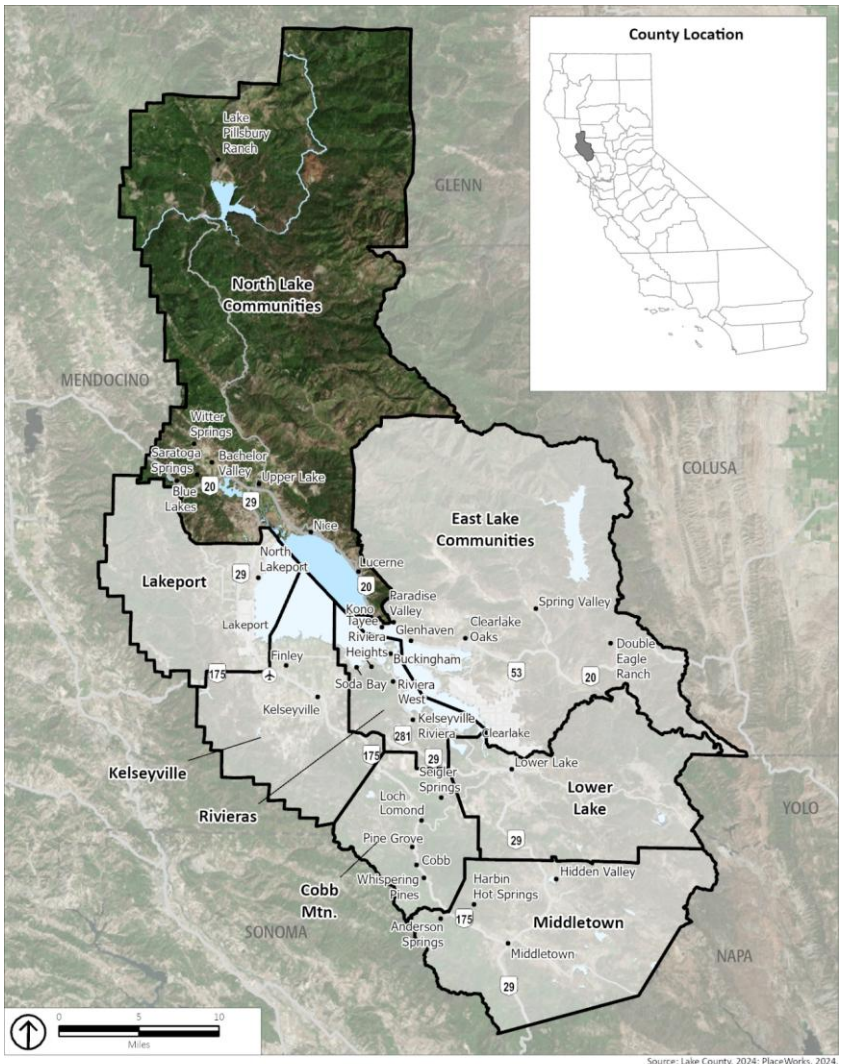
Location and Setting

The North Lake Communities Planning Area (sometimes referred to as the North Lake Communities Area or the Planning Area) is the northern gateway into Lake County and the northernmost Planning Area in Lake County. The Planning Area borders Mendocino County to the west and north, Glenn County to the northeast, and Colusa County to the southwest. Its southern boundary touches both the Lakeport and East Lake Communities Planning Areas. At 470 square miles, the North Lake Communities Area encompasses 35 percent of the county's land area and is the largest of the seven other planning areas. **Figure NL-1** shows the location of the North Lake Communities Planning Area in relation to the other seven planning areas in Lake County.

The Planning Area features a variety of landscapes, including forested hills, creek corridors, and the lakefront. The elevation ranges from approximately 1,330 feet above sea level at Clear Lake to 7,050 feet above sea level at the summit of Snow Mountain in Mendocino National Forest.

The North Lake Communities Planning Area has a Mediterranean climate. Summers are dry and warm to hot, with temperatures frequently exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are cool and wet with some frost and snowfall at higher elevations. Average rainfall is approximately 28 to 32 inches annually at lake-level, where most of the Planning Area's population resides. Northern portions of the Planning Area receive greater amounts of rainfall.

Figure NL-1 North Lake Communities Planning Area Regional Setting



The Planning Area includes the following communities:

Lucerne Castle is one of many historic resorts in the Planning Area.

- **Bachelor Valley**, approximately six miles north of Clear Lake along State Route (SR) 20, is rural and agricultural in character, with orchards, ranch lands, and other farming operations set in a pastoral valley, surrounded by rolling hills.
- **Blue Lakes**, approximately seven miles north of Clear Lake, is a recreational area known for trout fishing. Blue Lakes features resorts for visitors and has a residential subdivision with approximately 70 homes. The area is made up of two lakes and most commercial activity is centered around tourism and recreation. The residential subdivision is between the lakes.
- **Lake Pillsbury**, approximately 20 miles north of Clear Lake, is a reservoir formed by Scotts Dam in the Mendocino National Forest. The dam was part of a project built in 1918 to curb flooding downstream in the Russian River. Lake Pillsbury is surrounded by outdoor water recreational areas, a resort, campgrounds, and some residential areas that are primarily vacation home communities.
- **Lucerne** is on the Clear Lake shoreline in the southeastern portion of the Planning Area, several miles southeast of Nice along SR 20. Lucerne is a lakeside community with residential neighborhoods, waterfront parks, and a mix of service and retail uses. The area is home to Lucerne Harbor Park and features public lake access, picnic areas, and boat launch. It also hosts the impressive Lucerne Castle, which was built in the 1920s and boasts impressive views of Clear Lake.
- **Nice** is a community on the northern shore of Clear Lake along SR 20 in the southeastern portion of the Planning Area. Nice provides overnight accommodation, service, and retail uses to Planning Area residents and visitors.
- **Saratoga Springs**, approximately seven miles north of Clear Lake, is a set of springs in the Scotts Creek watershed that was developed as a resort in the 1870s but later closed after the main hotel burned down. In 1991, the resort reopened as a retreat center.
- **Upper Lake** is approximately four miles north of Clear Lake with a historic town center area with restaurants, a boutique historic hotel, and local retail uses surrounded by residential neighborhoods.
- **Witter Springs**, approximately three miles north of the community of Upper Lake and adjacent to Bachelor Valley, is a set of springs in the Scotts Creek watershed. Like Bachelor Valley, this area also contains mostly agricultural and ranch properties in a pastoral landscape.

Outside of these communities, the Planning Area is primarily made up of agricultural, rural, public, and resource conservation land. In particular, agriculture is a dominant feature of the landscape and a core part of the history in the area, with vineyards and walnut orchards serving as major crops. There are also ~~is a~~ significant ~~presence of agricultural lands and activities in the Planning Area, as well as a significant amount of~~expanses of tribal land and tribal communities in the Planning Area.

The major roadway accessible to the Planning Area is SR 20, running northwest to southeast between neighboring Mendocino County to the west and the East Lake Communities Planning Area to the east. Circulation in the Planning Area is highly dependent on highway transportation and local roadways.

The 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the U.S. Census estimates that the population in the North Lake Communities Planning Area is approximately 8,630 residents, primarily in the Lucerne (3,000), Nice (2,510), and Upper Lake (1,200) communities. According to America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) Employer Database, as of 2024, the North Lake Communities Planning Area's major employers are Robinson Rancheria Resort & Casino, the Rancheria Grille (located inside the Casino), and Running Creek Casino. [1] Upper Lake Unified School District is also a major employer in the area, as well as several resort hotels in the Planning Area.

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The southern part of the North Lake Communities Planning Area along the northern shoreline of Clear Lake houses most of its population. Most of the northern part of the Planning Area is part of Mendocino National Forest and features large swaths of protected wilderness.

The communities of Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake are the area's primary population centers. Lucerne sits on the eastern shore of Clear Lake and SR 20 runs the length of the community, along the shoreline. The lake fronting Alpine and Lucerne Harbor Parks support lake access for residents and visitors to Lucerne. In Nice, lakefront parks and fishing access points provide community gathering spaces and recreational opportunities, with Lakeshore Boulevard serving as the main commercial and scenic corridor. Upper Lake is known for its historic downtown containing preserved early twentieth-century buildings with cafes, antique shops, and local businesses. Local restaurant and hotel businesses in the area host live music, wine events, and regional dining experiences. Community groups often hold civic and cultural events at the Upper Lake Grange Hall.

North of these community areas is the gateway to the Mendocino National Forest, featuring hiking trails, campgrounds, and access to Blue Lakes and the Rice Fork tributary of the Eel River. Lake Pillsbury and the Community of Lucerne ~~in the Planning Area~~ are gateways to Snow Mountain National Monument, which features hiking trails, whitewater rafting on Cache Creek, and other outdoor recreation activities. The region has long been important to the Pomo tribes, whose history and culture remain integral to the area's identity. Tourism related to Clear Lake, cultural heritage, and outdoor recreation continue to support small businesses and shape the local economy of the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

[1] https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/majorer/countymajorer.asp?CountyCode=000033

History and Planning Context

Interpretive signage preserves and celebrates Lake County's past.

The Eastern Pomo and Southeastern Pomo are the historic inhabitants and original stewards of the area. The Eastern Pomo Tribe ancestrally resided in areas further from the shoreline of Clear Lake, along streams in current-day Upper Lake and Scotts Valley. The Southeastern Pomo Tribe typically resided closer to the northern and eastern shores of Clear Lake and on the lake's islands, including on the current-day Anderson Island, Rattlesnake Island, and Lower Lake Island. When Euro-American colonizers first arrived in the Clear Lake region, the Indigenous population is estimated to have been between 6,000 and 8,000 people. By comparison, the 2020 U.S. Census reported 1,353 Native Americans residing in Lake County, making up roughly 3 percent of the total Lake County population.

Euro-American colonizers first arrived in the region on wildlife trapping expeditions in the 1830s. Through the 1840s, additional colonizers settled in the area, benefitting from land grants from the Mexican government. ~~In 1841, a Spanish settler named Salvador Vallejo established a large cattle ranch in Big Valley, which was later taken over by Charles Stone and Andrew Kelsey, the namesake of the Kelseyville Planning Area. In 1844, Manuel Michelltorena, the Governor of California under Mexican rule, granted Rancho Lupyomi, which encompassed much of the present-day Kelseyville community, to Salvador Vallejo. In 1847, Vallejo sold his remaining livestock in the area to Andrew and Ben Kelsey, Charles Stone, and E.D. Shirland. Andrew Kelsey and Charles Stone interned and enslaved the local Pomo and Wappo people, subjected them to severe abuse, and murdered or caused the death of many tribal members. This abuse ultimately led to the killing of Kelsey and Stone by tribal members.~~ After the culmination of the Mexican-American War~~In the mid-1800s~~ ~~response~~, the U.S. Army launched a violent military campaign in response to two ~~of these~~ settlers being killed at the hands of the Pomo and Wappo people that they had enslaved and abused. This~~that~~ culminated in the Bloody Island Massacre in 1850, where many Pomo were killed, including children, women, and elderly tribal members. The Bloody Island Massacre took place near the present-day community of Upper Lake and is now a California Historical Landmark, and a focus of annual healing ceremonies for our still-impacted tribal communities.

After California became part of the United States in 1848, an influx of Euro-American colonizers moved to the area. In 1861, Lake County was established, absorbing parts of Napa, Colusa, and Mendocino Counties. The first wave of settlers were primarily cattle ranchers. Economic industries rose to support this new population, including resorts along lakes and capitalizing on the mineral springs. By the 1920s, electricity and improved roads spurred further growth in the local tourism industry and set the stage for increased development of residential subdivisions in the area. The Clear Lake Villas subdivision was constructed in 1922 and included a general store. The area was later renamed to Nice, after the

mediterranean French city. Between 1923 and 1924, the Clearlake Beach Company began subdividing Lucerne, creating hundreds of smaller lots that lacked modern services.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt set aside the Stoney Creek Reserve, later changed to Mendocino National Forest in 1932. Approximately 397 square miles of the National Forest is within Lake County.

In the late nineteenth century, agricultural crop farming, specifically the production and canning of string beans grown near Tule Lake, also drove economic growth in the area. The Upper Lake community was a wine-growing region beginning in the 1880s and continuing until the Prohibition era. Once Prohibition was enacted, the vineyards were either abandoned or converted to walnut orchards, which remain a major crop in the area. The area began replanting vineyards in the 1970s with about 300 acres of vines recorded in 2022. That same year, the Upper Lake Valley was recognized as part of the Clear Lake American Viticultural Area.

Environmental Justice in the General Plan

While each General Plan element addresses specific aspects of county life, these topics often overlap. This is especially true for the topic of environmental justice, which is the ideal state achieved when all people, regardless of race, income, or other factors, are able to live in a safe and healthy environment. The Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan identifies specific locations in the Planning Area, termed Equity Priority Areas, and certain subgroups of the population, termed Equity Priority Populations, experiencing the greatest barriers to achieving environmental justice; the Equity Priority Areas are mapped in **Figure NL-12**. Because environmental justice touches all aspects of the community, there are policies throughout the General Plan that call for prioritizing the needs of these Equity Priority Areas and Equity Priority Populations to support environmentally just outcomes.

Equity Priority Area is a designation applied to federally recognized tribal lands and certain areas with concentrations of low-income households, identified as being at risk of suffering disproportionate impacts of economic, health, and environmental burdens. Equity Priority Areas are mapped in **Figure NL-12**.

Equity Priority Populations are community members with characteristics often associated with being vulnerable to environmental justice, health, and safety challenges. These Equity Priority Populations include older adults, individuals with disabilities, farmworkers and other outdoor workers, non-English speakers, and low-income individuals and households.

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Land Use

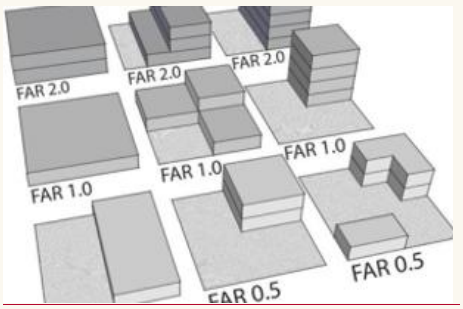
Land use patterns and related policies play an important role in defining local character. The scale, location, and type of development influence the sense of community or feeling of being in nature. Street trees and local art enhance the sense of place. The location and design of lighting can determine whether stars are visible.

The Land Use Element works to maintain the Planning Area's unique character and charm.

This Land Use Element fosters continued conservation of agricultural lands and open space while supporting cohesive communities. It shapes the future physical development of the North Lake Communities Planning Area and works to conserve and enhance livability and quality of life for residents. This element begins by presenting the General Plan Land Use Map and designations, which establish regulations and standards for development. The map is supported by goals, policies, and actions that follow, upholding the principles on which the map was developed, including balancing growth and conservation and preserving community character in the Planning Area.

Land Use Designations and Map

State planning law requires the Land Use Element to designate the general distribution, location, and extent of the various land uses covered by this General Plan. The General Plan Land Use Map is presented in **Figures NL-2** (countywide) and **NL-3** (North Lake Communities Planning Area). The following sections describe each land use designation shown in the maps, including the standards for allowed density of residential uses and intensity of nonresidential use. The density and intensity of designations are summarized in **Table NL-1**. Finally, Appendix E includes a comparison of land use designation acreages between this Plan and the previously adopted General Plan.



This illustration shows how various building configurations represent different FARs on similarly sized lots. This graphic is intended only to show the relative differences in FAR and does not represent an intensity standard for this General Plan.

Standards for residential densities are expressed in dwelling units (DU) per gross acre while development intensities for nonresidential uses are expressed as maximum floor-area ratios (FAR). Gross acreage includes all land (including streets and rights-of-way) designated for a particular residential use. Expressed as a decimal, FAR is the ratio of gross building square footage to gross land area. When a building's square footage is equivalent to the area of its lot, the FAR is 1.0. For example, on a lot of 10,000 square feet, an FAR of 1.0 would allow a building of 10,000 square feet. On the same lot, an FAR of 0.5 would allow 5,000 square feet.

Substandard Older Subdivisions

Prior to the preparation of General Plan 2050, throughout Lake County, including in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, there were approximately 10,000 undeveloped older subdivided properties with urban or suburban densities, known as "paper subdivisions," primarily designated Rural Residential by the General Plan. These properties are substandard in relationship to existing zoning and subdivision regulations with design, size, or physical improvements that don't meet County standards. These parcels are characterized by steep slopes and lack of adequate public services and facilities such as streets, fire protection, sewer, or water services. As a part of General Plan 2050, these parcels were redesignated to Public Facilities in recognition that they are not developable and better suited for future open space, trail access, or watershed protection. As part of the process to implement the General Plan, these parcels will need to be rezoned to account for the changed land use designation.

Community Growth Boundaries

Figures NL-2 and **NL-3** also show community growth boundaries (CGBs). CGBs are regulatory tools that support both development and conservation goals by preserving open space between communities and maintaining community separation and identity. These boundaries define areas where residential and commercial development may occur by dividing land to be developed at higher densities (1 or more DU/acre) from land to be protected for conservation or developed at lower densities (1 DU/5 or more acres). Land beyond the boundary of the CGB is preserved for uses such as agriculture, forestry, open space, greenbelts, and conservation. The North Lake Communities Planning Area includes three CGBs: Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake.

- The **Lucerne CGB** is in the southeastern portion of the Planning Area. SR 20 runs along the CGB's Clear Lake shoreline, where most commercial activity is located, including restaurants and hotels. Lakefront parks and a linear park nestled in the residential area, Lucerne Park, offer both passive and active recreation opportunity.
- The **Nice CGB** is also in the southeastern portion of the Planning Area along Clear Lake and is designed to have Lakeshore Boulevard serve as its focus of commercial activity. The Nice CGB also features lakefront parks and fishing access points with community gathering spaces and recreational activities.
- The **Upper Lake CGB** is in the south-central part of the Planning Area. It is known for its historic downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Areas along Main Street and Clover Drive are geographically central commercial destinations in the Upper Lake CGB.

Figure NL-2 Countywide Land Use Map

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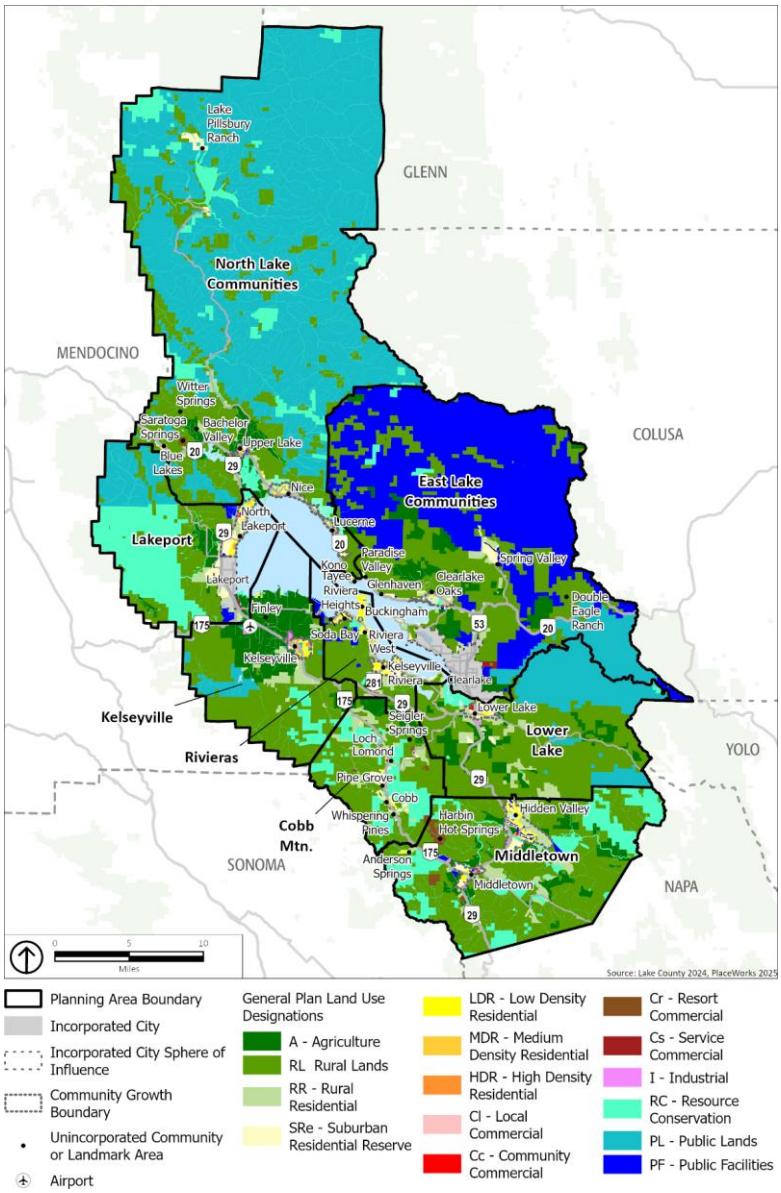

Figure NL-3 North Lake Communities Area Land Use Map

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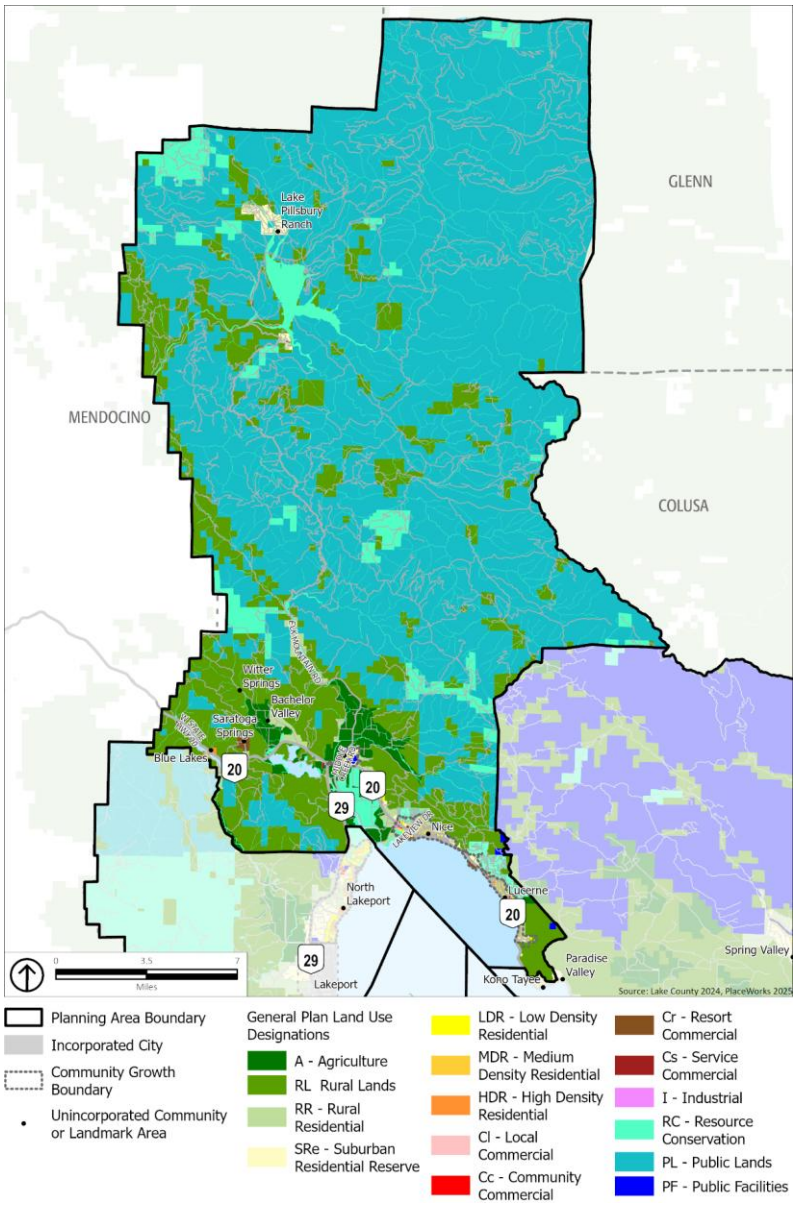

Agriculture

A main function of this land use designation is to protect the county's valuable agricultural resources and prevent development that would preclude its future use in agriculture. These lands are actively or potentially engaged in crop production, including horticulture, tree crops, row and field crops, and related activities. Wineries and the processing of local agricultural products, such as pears, cannabis, and walnuts, are encouraged within this designation. Other agriculture-supporting uses, such as microbreweries, distilleries, agriculture equipment sales, youth agriculture, and wilderness education activities, are also allowed. These lands also provide important groundwater recharge functions. As watershed lands, they collect precipitation and filter water to improve water quality. They are generally supportive of the management of the natural infrastructure of the watersheds. While there are some existing lands with this designation inside CGBs, future applications of the designation should be limited to areas outside CGBs. Agricultural operations are protected from nuisance complaints by the County's Right to Farm Ordinance, located in Chapter 3 (Agriculture), Article IV, of the County Code of Ordinances. The Right to Farm Ordinance is discussed in the Agriculture Element.

Density/Intensity: 1 DU/40 acres

Rural Lands

The purpose of this land use designation is to allow rural development in areas that are primarily in their natural state, although agricultural production, including farming, cannabis cultivation, and vineyards, can occur on these lands. The category is appropriate for areas that are remote, or characterized by steep topography, fire hazards, and limited access. Typical uses permitted by right include, but are not limited to, animal raising, crop production, single-family residences, game preserves, and fisheries. Other typical uses permitted conditionally include, but are not limited to, recreational facilities, manufacturing and processing operations, mining, and airfields. These lands also provide important groundwater recharge functions. As watershed lands, they collect precipitation and filter water to improve water quality. These uses generally support the natural infrastructure of the watersheds and are outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 0.4 FAR; 1 DU/20-45+ acres

Average slope describes the "rise over run," or the degree of vertical increase divided by the degree of horizontal increase of a sloped area, and determines the extent of allowable development. The base density of 1 DU/20 acres shall be reduced when the average slope of the property increases, as follows:

- 1 DU/30-acre maximum density if average slope is 20 percent or higher, but less than 30 percent
- 1 DU/40-acre maximum density if average slope is 30 percent or higher, but less than 35 percent
- 1 DU/45+-acre maximum density if average slope is 35 percent or higher

The maximum density in the Rural Lands designation may be reduced based on factors related to wildland fire/fuel loading, landslide hazards, and distance to the nearest fire station, as enumerated in the Zoning Ordinance.

Rural Residential

This land use designation is designed to provide single-family residential development in a semi-rural setting. Large-lot residential development with agricultural activities is appropriate. These areas are intended to act as a buffer between urban residential development and agricultural uses. Building intensity should be greater where public services, such as major roads, community water systems, or public sewer are available, although most of the lands designated for this land use rely on wells and septic systems. Typical uses permitted by right include single-family residences; crop production (including cannabis); raising poultry, rabbits, and other small animals for domestic use; raising bovine animals, horses, sheep, and goats for domestic use; and sale of crops produced on the premises. Typical uses permitted conditionally include agricultural-related services and recreational facilities. These lands also provide important groundwater recharge functions. As watershed lands, they collect precipitation and filter water to improve water quality. They are generally supportive of the management of the natural infrastructure of the watersheds. This designation is primarily outside of CGBs, but some areas will be appropriate inside these boundaries as well.

Density/Intensity: 1 DU/5-10+ acres

- 1 DU/5 acres if average slope is less than 30 percent and outside an area identified with Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility
- 1 DU/10+ acres if average slope is 30 percent or greater, or in an area identified with Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility

Suburban Residential Reserve

This land use designation serves as a transitional designation between rural residential and urban residential uses, but due to soil and slope characteristics, lots generally larger than one-acre minimum are necessary. Larger lot residential development with small-scale, incidental agriculture is appropriate.

Where found in mountain areas, this designation serves to limit densities until the establishment of appropriate infrastructure to support higher densities. However, exceptions have been made for existing subdivisions outside of CGBs, and additional land division may be appropriate on parcels already designated Suburban Residential Reserve when found to be consistent with the existing development pattern already established in the vicinity. ~~Expansion of this land use designation outside of CGBs may be considered to implement **Action NL-LU-5.d** for appropriate mixed-use resort or business/industrial park developments.~~ This designation has the potential to result in conflict when located on the fringe of CGBs, adjacent to agricultural uses, unless cluster policies are employed and agricultural buffers are provided. This designation is mostly outside of CGBs, but some parcels with this designation are inside CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 1 DU/1-5 acres

- 1 DU/acre if the area is not identified as a primary recharge area and the area has less than 30 percent average slopes

- 1 DU/2 acres if the area is identified as a primary recharge area and the area has less than 30 percent average slopes
- 1 DU/3 acres if the area has 30 percent or higher average slopes, but is not in an area identified with Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility in the Health and Safety Element
- 1 DU/5 acres if the area has 30 percent or higher average slopes and is in an area identified with Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility in the Health and Safety Element

Low-Density Residential

This land use designation is designed to establish areas suitable for single-family residences at relatively low densities. Typical uses permitted by right include single-family homes. This designation is appropriate where the traditional neighborhood character of single-family units prevail, and where the level of services, including roads, shopping, and recreation, does not justify higher densities. While there are some existing lands with this designation outside of CGBs, future applications of the designation should be limited to areas within CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 1-~~6~~7 DU/acre

In hazard-prone areas, such as areas with slopes exceeding 20 percent, flood hazard zones, High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility areas, and Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, reduced residential densities below the minimum density may be allowed.

Medium-Density Residential

This land use designation is designed to provide areas for residential developments such as duplexes, triplexes, and manufactured homes. This designation is appropriate only where the level of development is compatible with the overall character of the surrounding neighborhood and where adequate public facilities, such as potable water and sewer systems, roadways, and other public services are available. While there are some existing lands with this designation outside of CGBs, future applications of the designation should be limited to areas within CGBs.

Density/Intensity: ~~7~~6–9 DU/acre

In hazard-prone areas, such as areas with slopes exceeding 20 percent, flood hazard zones, High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility areas, and Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, reduced residential densities below the minimum density may be allowed.

High-Density Residential

This land use designation is designed to provide for areas of multifamily residential uses that include a wide range of living accommodations, including duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. This designation is appropriate in community areas where a full range of urban services are available, including public water and sewer, adequate circulation facilities, and adequate public services, and where the level of development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. This designation is only within CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 10–22 DU/acre

In hazard-prone areas, such as areas with slopes exceeding 20 percent, flood hazard zones, High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, Class VII-X Landslide Susceptibility areas, and Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, reduced residential densities below the minimum density may be allowed.

Local Commercial

The purpose of this land use designation is to establish areas for small, localized retail, recreational, and service businesses that provide goods and merchandise to the immediate surrounding residents. Convenience facilities may include eating and drinking establishments; food and beverage retail sales; limited personal, medical, professional, and repair services; and other retail sales. Such facilities may range from a single use to a cluster of uses. Residential uses are also allowed in this designation, either as the primary or secondary use. This designation is primarily within CGBs; it may be allowed outside of a CGB to expand an existing commercial development that is already outside of the boundary.

Density/Intensity: 0.5 FAR; ~~where residential uses are allowed with a combining district, the allowed density is~~ 1-9 DU/acre~~6-9 DU/acre~~.

Community Commercial

The purpose of this land use designation is to provide a full range of commercial retail and service commercial establishments serving multiple neighborhoods or the entire community. These districts should include or enable a variety of convenience and shopping opportunities. Typical uses permitted include gasoline service stations, hardware stores, eating and drinking establishments, food and beverage sales, public buildings, general merchandise stores, professional offices, and finance offices. Multifamily residential uses are permitted as secondary uses on upper floors of multistory buildings. Commercial accessory residential uses are also allowed. This designation is primarily within CGBs, and may be allowed outside of a CGB to expand existing commercial development that is already outside of the boundary.

Density/Intensity: 1.2 FAR; when development includes mixed uses, the maximum FAR is 2.0 and the maximum residential density is- 1-22 DU/acre~~10-22 DU/acre~~.

Resort Commercial

This land use designation provides for a mix of commercial uses oriented toward tourists and other visitors to the county, including agriculturally based tourism. Typical uses permitted include recreation activities (e.g., golf courses); dining; entertainment services; destination resorts; various types of lodging facilities such as, but not limited to, hotels, motels, retreats, fractional ownership lodging units and time-share units; wineries; spas; and on-site residential uses if secondary and subordinate to commercial resort uses. This designation is both inside and outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 1.0 FAR

Service Commercial

The purpose of this land use designation is to provide areas suitable for heavier commercial uses in developed areas. Typical uses permitted with appropriate buffer distances include automotive-related or heavy equipment sales and services, building maintenance services, construction sales and services, and warehousing. This designation is both inside and outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 1.2 FAR

Industrial

This land use designation provides for a range of manufacturing, the processing of natural resources, research facilities and high-tech campuses, and heavy commercial activities. The intent is to encourage sound industrial/heavy commercial development by designating appropriate areas for such uses, including geothermal service yards, large construction/contractor yards, warehouses, asphalt batch plants, mills, lumber yards, boat building, welding, and fabrication shops. This designation is both inside and outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: 1.5 FAR

Resource Conservation

The purpose of this land use designation is to assure the maintenance or sustained generation of natural resources in the county. The highest priority for these lands is to provide for the management of the county's natural resources. This management should include, but is not limited to, functioning as watershed lands, which collect precipitation and filter water to improve water quality. In addition, these lands provide important groundwater recharge capability, which is critical to the maintenance of the natural ecosystem and to providing a sustainable groundwater supply for the county. This category includes significant plant or animal habitats; forest lands in Timberland Preserve Zones; agricultural lands within the Williamson Act; grazing lands; important parts of watersheds, such as waterways and wetlands; outdoor parks and recreation areas; mineral deposits and mining areas that require special attention because of hazardous or special conditions; publicly owned land (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management land, State lands, and County lands); and open space activities. Uses allowed in this designation are those related to resource utilization and resource conservation activities. Resource utilization operations and facilities require a conditional use permit. This designation is both inside and outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: Density: 0. Intensity: Not Applicable (determined on a case-by-case basis)

Public Facilities

This land use designation establishes areas for services and facilities that are necessary to maintain the welfare of the community and the natural environment. Typical uses include parks, public marinas, schools, civic centers, hospitals, liquid and solid waste disposal and recycling sites, cemeteries, and public utility facilities, including water and wastewater treatment facilities. This designation does not preclude future facilities from being located outside areas designated Public Facilities. This designation is both inside and outside of CGBs.

Density/Intensity: Density: 0. Intensity: Not Applicable (determined on a case-by-case basis)

Public Lands

This land use designation identifies lands owned or managed by federal, State, or local public agencies for recreation, education, resource management, public safety, utilities, or other governmental purposes. These lands are generally expected to remain in public ownership, although compatible ancillary uses may occur.

Density/Intensity: Not Applicable (determined on a case-by-case basis)

Table NL-1 Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Label	Residential Density	Nonresidential Intensity	Located Inside/Outside Community Growth Boundary
Agriculture	A	1 DU/40 acres	N/A	Outside[1]
Rural Lands	RL	1 DU/20-45+ acres	0.4 FAR	Outside
Rural Residential	RR	1 DU/5-10+ acres	N/A	Inside/Outside[2]
Suburban Residential Reserve	SR	1 DU/1-5 acres	N/A	Inside/Outside[3]
Low-Density Residential	LDR	1-~~7~~ 6 DU/acre	N/A	Inside[4]
Medium-Density Residential	MDR	~~6~~7-9 DU/acre	N/A	Inside[4]
High-Density Residential	HDR	10-22 DU/acre	N/A	Inside
Local Commercial	CL	~~6~~1-9 DU/acre[5]	0.5 FAR	Inside/Outside[3]
Community Commercial	CC	1~~0~~-22 DU/acre	2.0 FAR	Inside/Outside[3]
Resort Commercial	CR	--	1.0 FAR	Inside/Outside
Service Commercial	CS	--	1.2 FAR	Inside/Outside
Industrial	I	--	1.5 FAR	Inside/Outside
Resource Conservation	RC	0	N/A	Inside/Outside

Land Use Designation	Label	Residential Density	Nonresidential Intensity	Located Inside/Outside Community Growth Boundary
Public Facilities	PF	0	N/A	Inside/Outside
Public Lands	PL	N/A	N/A	Inside/Outside

[1] Agriculture is primarily outside CGBs; any future applications of the designations should be limited to areas outside CGBs.

[2] Rural Residential is primarily outside of CGBs, but some areas will be appropriate inside these boundaries. Refer to the General Plan Land Use designation description for more information.

[3] Suburban Residential Reserve, Local Commercial, and Community Commercial are allowed outside of the CGB in limited instances. Refer to the General Plan Land Use designation description for more information.

[4] Low-Density Residential and Medium-Density Residential are primarily inside CGBs; any future applications of the designations should be limited to areas within CGBs.

[5] ~~Where residential uses are allowed with a combining district.~~

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-LU-1

Balanced and orderly growth and conservation that preserve and promote a high quality of life, safe community, conservation of resources, natural beauty, and the recognition and protection of the cultural and historical heritage of indigenous peoples.

Policies

NL-LU-1.1

Preserve natural open space resources by concentrating development in existing communities, clustering development, maintaining large lot sizes in agricultural areas, avoiding conversion of lands currently used for agricultural production, and limiting development in areas constrained by natural hazards.

NL-LU-1.2

Encourage clustering of allowable densities to reduce development footprints; protect sensitive habitats, scenic resources, natural features, and open spaces; and avoid hazardous areas.

NL-LU-1.3

Require proposed developments within designated Community Growth Boundaries served by special service districts to demonstrate capacity to sustain growth as a condition of approval.

NL-LU-1.4

Review development proposals for adequate parking while encouraging multi-modal travel options.

Some of the topics addressed under this goal are also covered in other elements, including:

- Open space and resource conservation—addressed in the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element
- Water and wastewater services—addressed in the Public Facilities and Services Element
- Natural hazards—addressed in the countywide Health and Safety Element

~~NL-LU-1.3~~NL-LU-1.5

Maintain distinct urban edges for all unincorporated communities, while creating a gradual transition between urban uses and open space.

~~NL-LU-1.4~~NL-LU-1.6

Ensure future amendments to the General Plan Land Use map only allow development where it has access to adequate water supply, wastewater treatment, and public roadways; avoids steep terrain, sensitive natural resources, and natural hazards; and provides appropriate buffers with agricultural land and other incompatible uses.

~~NL-LU-1.5~~NL-LU-1.7

Limit urban development to the areas within designated Community Growth Boundaries, as shown in **Figures NL-2** and **NL-3**.

NL-LU-1.8

Encourage residential development at densities higher than one dwelling unit per 3 acres to be located in areas where infrastructure is available, or can be extended, and applicable source capacity is adequate.

~~NL-LU-1.6~~NL-LU-1.9

Consider development intensity in areas outside of Community Growth Boundaries according to the area's ability to support water and wastewater needs, access, slope characteristics, protection of sensitive natural resources, and the site's susceptibility to natural hazards.

Smart growth supports choice and opportunity by promoting efficient and sustainable land development, incorporates redevelopment patterns that optimize prior infrastructure investments, and consumes less land that is otherwise available for agriculture, open space, natural systems, and rural lifestyles.

- American Planning Association, 2012

~~NL-LU-1.7~~NL-LU-1.10

Prohibit uses not related to timber production on lands designated Resource Conservation in Timberland Preserve Zones unless the use:

- Is consistent with the Aggregate Resources Management Plan for mining operations;
- Is consistent with the Geothermal Resources Element for geothermal activities;
- Supports a biomass utilization business that helps reduce threat of wildfire from dead and dying trees;
- Preserves unique natural landmarks;
- Is compatible with sustainable forest practices and uses;
- Is managed to avoid interfering with forest practices;
- Is managed to minimize impacts on viewsheds;
- Minimizes forest site productivity losses; and

- Meets General Plan and Zoning Ordinance standards relating to the availability of fire protection, water supply, water quality, groundwater recharge and extraction, watershed management or restoration programs, and waste disposal.

~~NL-LU-1.8~~NL-LU-1.11

Consult with Tribal governments on discretionary development projects to protect and preserve areas with known Tribal Cultural Resources.

~~NL-LU-1.9~~NL-LU-1.12

Integrate ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge from Tribes into resource conservation strategies, including watershed management, forest management, and habitat restoration.

Actions

NL-LU-1.a

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a provision that would exclude land lakeward of 7.79 Rumsey from being used in the calculation of lot coverage.

NL-LU-1.b

Work with Tribal governments to explore opportunities to integrate traditional stewardship practices and ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into development reviews, land management, conservation, restoration, recreation planning, and facility planning, siting, and operations.

NL-LU-1.c

Work with Tribal Governments to promote Tribal co-management of public lands.

NL-LU-1.d

Develop educational materials regarding Tribal Ecological Knowledge practices.

Goal NL-LU-2

Development patterns that support a sustainable lifestyle.

Policies

NL-LU-2.1

Promote and practice the principles of smart growth.

Transportation-related topics discussed under this goal, including transit access, active transportation, and vehicle miles traveled, are also addressed in the Circulation Element.

NL-LU-2.2

Encourage infill development.

NL-LU-2.3

Encourage urban development that locates origins and destinations in close proximity to reduce vehicle trips and enhance visual and pedestrian access.

NL-LU-2.4

Encourage potential transit destinations, including employment centers, schools, personal services, administrative and professional offices, and social/recreational centers, to be clustered within a convenient walking distance of one another and to a transit stop.

NL-LU-2.5

Support the development of land uses with increased densities and mixed uses to reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote walking, biking, and transit use.

Actions

NL-LU-2.a

Develop incentives to promote infill development.

~~**NL-LU-2.b**~~

~~Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a smart growth overlay zone that encourages higher-density housing, transit-oriented development, and mixed-use development and provides guidelines for development and redevelopment in these zones.~~

~~**NL-LU-2.c**~~**NL-LU-2.b**

Work collaboratively with Tribal governments to develop educational programs highlighting traditional ecological practices, such as controlled burns and habitat stewardship, to inform sustainable development policies.

Goal NL-LU-3

Cohesive and vibrant communities that preserve and celebrate their historic character and design heritage, and tribal cultural identity.

Policies

NL-LU-3.1

Recognize the unique character and assets of each community in the Planning Area and support efforts to strengthen and revitalize all communities.

NL-LU-3.2

Support efforts to enhance gateways and transitional zones between communities in the Planning Area to make each community more distinct and inviting for residents and visitors.

NL-LU-3.3

Ensure future development within Community Growth Boundaries is planned at a walkable, neighborhood scale with a range of uses in close proximity and a safe pedestrian environment.

NL-LU-3.4

Collaborate with the Municipal Advisory Council to identify preferred locations for infill, mixed use, public gathering spaces, pedestrian improvements, and tourism related uses.

~~NL-LU-3.4~~NL-LU-3.5

Promote the creation of community focal points and gathering places in Blue Lakes, Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake.

~~NL-LU-3.5~~NL-LU-3.6

Encourage and support the arts in the North Lake Communities Planning Area with music and art installations, public art, and programming throughout the community, prioritizing areas that lack them.

~~NL-LU-3.6~~NL-LU-3.7

Encourage and support community and regional events (e.g., outdoor concerts, art shows, farmers' markets, races, and festivals) and recreational activities to bolster community pride and identification, including by engaging in marketing efforts.

~~NL-LU-3.7~~NL-LU-3.8

Encourage preservation of open areas within Community Growth Boundaries to retain a rural character and promote low intensities of development in areas separating communities to retain distinct communities.

Some of the topics addressed under this goal are also covered in other elements or sections, including:

- Historic preservation and Tribal Cultural Resources—addressed in the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element
- Commercial development design—addressed in the Special Study Areas and Design Guidelines section

~~NL-LU-3.8~~NL-LU-3.9

Review commercial and industrial development to ensure compatibility with the North Lake Communities Planning Area Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, consistent with Article 54, Design Review Permit, of the Zoning Ordinance.

~~NL-LU-3.9~~NL-LU-3.10

Maintain the character of established neighborhoods by preserving buildings and areas with special and recognized historic, architectural, or aesthetic value. Ensure the design of new development and remodels of existing structures are compatible with the character of surrounding and adjacent buildings, public spaces, and cultural and historic resources and require new development to complement architecturally and historically significant buildings to protect the overall historic integrity of the area.

~~NL-LU-3.10~~NL-LU-3.11

Encourage the preservation and maintenance of existing native trees and the incorporation of native, fire-resistant, and drought-tolerant plants, including culturally significant species traditionally used by local Tribes, in public spaces, street landscaping, and in new public and private developments.

~~NL-LU-3.11~~NL-LU-3.12

Continue to fund code enforcement programs and periodically evaluate enforcement priorities based on community needs and input, including from the Municipal Advisory Council.

~~NL-LU-3.12~~NL-LU-3.13

Encourage and support efforts to promote a greater public awareness of the county's architectural, urban design, and Tribal cultural heritage.

~~NL-LU-3.13~~NL-LU-3.14

Recognize and incorporate tribal heritage in public art, interpretive signage, community events, and wayfinding throughout the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

NL-LU-3.15

Encourage community and regional events that comply with parking, traffic, sanitation, and emergency regulations.

Actions

NL-LU-3.a

Coordinate with local non-profit and other non-governmental organizations to install or maintain public art and gateway, wayfinding, and interpretive signage in Blue Lakes, Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake to support each area's sense of place; foster an understanding and appreciation for local history and culture, including tribal culture; promote inclusivity; and improve the visual quality of each community.

NL-LU-3.b

Investigate a 1 percent assessment on development permits or other types of permits/assessments to fund art installations supported in **Action NL-LU-3.a.**

~~NL-LU-3.b~~NL-LU-3.c

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate redundancies in the design review process between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. This includes eliminating Article 53, Design Review Combining District, instead relying on **Policy NL-LU-3.~~8~~ 9** to ensure compatibility with the North Lake Communities Planning Area Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, and revisions to Article 54, Design Review Permit, as needed.

~~NL-LU-3.c~~NL-LU-3.d

Work with the community to prepare updates to the following design guidelines to reflect current values and priorities and ensure the guidelines addressing lakefront areas enhance visual and physical access to Clear Lake:

- The General Community Design Guidelines;
- The Lucerne Community Area Additional Design Guidelines;
- The Upper Lake Additional Design Guidelines; and

- The Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines applicable to the entire North Lake Communities Planning Area.

~~NL-LU-3.d~~NL-LU-3.e

Work with the community to prepare updates to the following Special Study Areas to reflect current values and priorities:

- Blue Lakes Special Study Area
- "The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area
- "The Strand" Lucerne Special Study Area

~~NL-LU-3.e~~NL-LU-3.f

Work with local preservation groups and community property owners to improve building facades and exteriors, consistent with the historic and visual character of the surrounding area.

~~NL-LU-3.f~~NL-LU-3.g

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow adaptive reuse of historic resources that preserves the integrity of the resource while allowing for its ongoing use.

~~NL-LU-3.g~~NL-LU-3.h

Prepare and publish an inventory of underutilized land and encourage adaptive reuse of these properties.

~~NL-LU-3.h~~NL-LU-3.i

Collaborate with Tribal governments to create a heritage trail, interpretive exhibits, or other programming that celebrates tribal history and presence.

NL-LU-3.j

Develop and implement a tree preservation ordinance.

Goal NL-LU-4

Coordinated and effective planning over the life of this General Plan.

Policies

NL-LU-4.1

Ensure that permitting procedures and regulations are consistent, timely, and cost-effective.

NL-LU-4.2

Coordinate growth and development with surrounding jurisdictions, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and other agencies, as appropriate, to maintain open space between communities and promote common goals.

NL-LU-4.3

Require that the sizes and shapes of new parcels will not compromise future land divisions.

NL-LU-4.4

The General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) assumes the following maximum development projections in the unincorporated county for the year 2050:

- 3,800 new dwelling units
- 986,700 square feet of new commercial and office space
- 393,000 square feet of new industrial space

If new development approved within the unincorporated county reaches the maximum number of residential units and commercial/office and industrial square feet projected in the General Plan EIR, require that the environmental review that is conducted for any subsequent development project address growth impacts that would occur from development exceeding the General Plan EIR's projections.

NL-LU-4.5

Work with the Municipal Advisory Council, business organizations, and community to update this Planning Area Element in a timely manner.

NL-LU-4.6

Promote co-management of public lands with Tribal governments.

~~NL-LU-4.5~~NL-LU-4.7

Conduct early and ongoing engagement with Tribal governments in planning and permitting processes to ensure development aligns with tribal cultural, environmental, and historical interests.

Actions

NL-LU-4.a

Encourage potential developers to attend pre-development meetings and work closely with appropriate public agencies to consider whether the potential development projects will meet the County's goals and requirements and have adequate infrastructure.

NL-LU-4.b

Track growth to ensure it does not exceed the development projections analyzed in the General Plan EIR and described in **Policy NL-LU-4.4** without subsequent environmental review.

NL-LU-4.c

Update the Planning Area Elements no less than every five to eight years.

~~NL-LU-4.c~~NL-LU-4.d

Update the Zoning Ordinance to revise the development standards, where needed, to ensure consistency with the density and intensity standards established in this General Plan, including for the Suburban Residential Reserve and Rural Residential Districts.

~~NL-LU-4.d~~NL-LU-4.e

Update the zoning map to implement the land use map established in this General Plan, including to rezone paper subdivisions to the Open Space district.

~~NL-LU-4.e~~NL-LU-4.f

Consistent with State law, continue to conduct tribal cultural impact assessments in coordination with local Tribal governments in discretionary permitting and General Plan amendment processes.

Goal NL-LU-5

A range of residential areas that accommodate the housing needs of all income groups with quality living environments.

Policies

Community housing needs are addressed comprehensively in the Housing Element. Additionally, the Housing Action and Implementation Plan serves as a manual with more detailed strategies to address current and forecasted housing need throughout Lake County.

NL-LU-5.1

Plan for and encourage a variety of housing types with a full range of affordability.

NL-LU-5.2

Develop housing in a manner that complements the small-town community identity and incorporates quality design, consistent with the rural character of the Planning Area.

NL-LU-5.3

Encourage development of 'workforce housing' that meets the needs of the local workforce and is affordable to individuals and families earning between 60 percent and 120 percent of the area median income.

NL-LU-5.4

Encourage medium-density residential development that is compatible with the neighborhood character within Community Growth Boundaries, is close to services, and where adequate infrastructure is available or can be made available.

NL-LU-5.5

Encourage high-density residential development (e.g., apartments and townhouses) within Community Growth Boundaries along collector roadways and transit routes and within walking distance of schools, libraries, parks, shopping, and entertainment areas.

NL-LU-5.6
Promote development of affordable, high density housing near public transit and essential services whenever possible.

NL-LU-5.7
Encourage the development of housing for seniors and other Equity Priority Populations.

NL-LU-5.8
Continue to allow density bonuses for residential development projects that include affordable or qualifying senior housing or incorporate energy-efficient techniques exceeding State standards into the project design, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance.

NL-LU-5.9
Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses and activities that adversely affect public health and safety, like industrial uses that produce hazardous waste.

NL-LU-5.10
Encourage innovative, non-traditional housing designs and layouts in response to evolving housing trends and needs.

Actions

NL-LU-5.a
Continue to support construction of affordable housing, including by pursuing State and federal funding for affordable housing development.

NL-LU-5.b
Develop incentives for affordable housing, in addition to density bonuses, to further encourage its development.

NL-LU-5.c
Update the density bonus allowances in Article 27 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a density bonus for residential development projects that include affordable housing that is consistent with State law, which offers a density bonus of up to 50 percent.

NL-LU-5.d
Update the density bonus allowances in Article 27 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow up to a 20 percent density bonus for mixed-use residential development projects within a Community Growth Boundary that include an employment-inducing industrial or business park development component.

NL-LU-5.e
Consider updating the density bonus process to minimize government obstacles to housing development, consistent with State law.

NL-LU-5.f
Continue to promote the development of affordable, senior, and energy-efficient housing by informing developers of the benefits of density bonuses in preapplication conferences.

NL-LU-5.g
Develop objective design standards for residential and mixed-use development to provide a streamlined approval process; ensure compatibility with existing community character; and ensure appropriate open space, buffers, and pedestrian improvements are provided.

NL-LU-5.h
Develop and maintain an inventory of County-owned surplus lands with residential development potential and post the inventory on a County website to inform developers of potential building opportunities.

NL-LU-5.i
Conduct periodic farmworker housing studies to identify the housing needs of farmworkers by location.

Goal NL-LU-6

Commercial and mixed-use areas that serve community needs and support a robust local economy.

Policies

NL-LU-6.1
Encourage centrally located businesses and services in places that conveniently serve residential areas and/or support revitalization or creation of town centers.

Economic development is addressed in more detail in the Economic Development Element.

NL-LU-6.2
Encourage mixed-use development with commercial and residential components in downtown and other appropriate commercial areas, when adequate infrastructure is available or can be made available.

NL-LU-6.3
Encourage conversion of existing commercial areas to a mix of uses to reduce travel distances and create neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing options.

NL-LU-6.4
Continue to allow parking reductions for residential uses in mixed-use areas where it can be demonstrated that shared residential and commercial parking will not result in an unacceptable impact on parking in the public right-of-way or off-street parking lots.

NL-LU-6.5
Encourage and support the establishment of more restaurants, retail, and other commercial services.

NL-LU-6.6

Encourage development of smaller neighborhood-supporting retail and services, including those offering local agricultural sales, to meet the everyday shopping and personal needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

NL-LU-6.7

Encourage development of larger regional commercial centers within Community Growth Boundaries (CGBs) that meet resident and visitor needs, such as supermarkets, restaurants, personal services, retail sales, professional offices, medical services, and other complementary uses, as well as venues for selling locally produced agricultural and related products.

NL-LU-6.8

Discourage strip commercial development, allowing it only when alternative layouts are infeasible at the project site.

NL-LU-6.9

Locate commercial service businesses, such as warehouses, repair services, and building materials sales, away from housing, schools, and other sensitive receptors. Use the following criteria for siting commercial service areas:

- Provide good access to highways or major collectors;
- Buffer existing or planned residential areas, schools, and other sensitive uses;
- Develop in depth rather than in a strip fashion along the access road to provide adequate room for parking, buffering, and other needs; and
- Encourage development as integrated planned areas in conjunction with community commercial areas or with common architectural and site development features.

NL-LU-6.10

Encourage members of the private sector to establish new commercial recreation opportunities and to rehabilitate and restore older resorts, including destination resorts, lakefront resorts, dance halls, health and athletic clubs, equestrian facilities, and recreational camps.

NL-LU-6.11

Require proposals for budget retailers and discount chains to include a community meeting with the Municipal Advisory Council early in the proposal process to gather input from community members and incorporate refinements to the proposal in response to community concerns. Also require such projects to prepare an analysis of economic and blight-inducement impacts of the proposed development on retail businesses in the market area, employment, County revenues and services, and other relevant economic considerations. ~~The County may waive the requirement for this analysis if the new establishment is found to offer a public benefit and is in alignment with the community's vision for its future development.~~

NL-LU-6.12

Encourage opportunities for indigenous-owned businesses within mixed-use and commercial areas.

Actions

NL-LU-6.a

Update regulations for cannabis retail uses to maintain setbacks from sensitive receptors, including schools, parks, and residential neighborhoods.

NL-LU-6.b

Investigate options to provide permit technical assistance for older resorts, retreat centers, and underused commercial properties.

~~NL-LU-6.b~~NL-LU-6.c

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to diversify the types of resort uses allowed and conditionally permit resort/recreational uses in commercial land use districts.

~~NL-LU-6.c~~NL-LU-6.d

Devise and offer incentives for reconstruction and/or redevelopment of local historical resorts.

Goal NL-LU-7

Industrial areas that are compatible with their surrounding environment while supporting the economy.

Policies

The Economic Development Element provides more comprehensive guidance for supporting the local economy.

NL-LU-7.1

Encourage a wide range of industrial development activities, prioritizing industries that create living-wage jobs that maximize the education, skills, and talents of county residents.

NL-LU-7.2

Encourage development of visually attractive, carefully planned industrial parks and planned developments in areas with suitable topography and adequate infrastructure.

NL-LU-7.3

Require new industrial or heavy commercial uses to be sited appropriately, on land with average slopes not exceeding 20 percent and outside of a hazard zone, preferably served by public sewer and water facilities and within a Community Growth Boundary.

NL-LU-7.4

Encourage industrial uses that use geothermal energy generated on-site when compatible with surrounding land uses.

NL-LU-7.5

Require a planned development process for permit approvals of any industrial or heavy commercial uses of five acres or more in size.

NL-LU-7.6

Require new industrial and heavy commercial uses to be designed to avoid adverse impacts to adjacent uses, particularly residential neighborhoods, schools, and other sensitive uses, with respect to air quality, noise, odor, vibration, and other impacts.

NL-LU-7.7

Allow asphalt batch plants and similar processing facilities that are directly associated with the development of a resource to be located at the source of the resource under the following criteria:

- Require a use permit;
- Prohibit any commercial or industrial uses that are not related to the processing of the resource; and
- Require mitigation for impacts to surrounding land uses, the environment, and Lake County watersheds to protect air, surface water, and groundwater quality.

NL-LU-7.8

Consider including a requirement for consultation with Tribal governments to include Tribal Cultural Resource analysis within the Cultural Resource Reports for discretionary projects.

Circulation

An effective transportation network promotes health, safety, and well-being of all communities by supporting:

- **Public health,** in terms of how well it supports walking and biking and access to food, healthcare, public services, tribal community centers, and traditional gathering areas.
- **Safety,** in terms of how efficiently community members can evacuate and first responders are able to reach destinations during emergency events, as well as how safe the network is for all users.
- **Personal and community economic stability,** in terms of how well it supports access to employment opportunities, shopping, and services; distribution of locally produced products; and the ability of tourists to access the region's attractions, including tribal cultural tourism.
- **Equity,** in terms of how easily community members of all ages, abilities, and income levels can access their daily needs.
- **Environmental quality,** in terms of the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) and air pollutant-emitting vehicle miles are driven by both personal automobiles and trucks, and the availability of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure or other amenities to support the use of active transportation and high occupancy vehicles.
- **Financial soundness,** such that the community can afford to operate and maintain the network in a state of good repair with existing revenue sources and that any expansion has complete funding for capital costs and its long-term operations and maintenance (O&M) costs.

This Circulation Element aims to provide a transportation network that moves people and goods in and around the North Lake Communities Planning Area conveniently and with minimal risk of injury. The North Lake Communities Planning Area's circulation network is highly dependent on highway transportation. There is limited pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian infrastructure, and, as with many rural communities, the Planning Area does not have extensive transit services. However, this element serves to optimize mobility options for bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, and transit-dependent populations, like older adults, to the extent possible. The element also aims to support safe routes to school and access to key destinations, including opportunities for recreation.

The Circulation Element supports mobility options for those driving, walking, and biking.

The following sections describe the existing and planned roadway network in the Planning Area, including goods movement, active transportation and transit networks, and aviation travel options, followed by emerging trends in circulation. The element concludes with a comprehensive set of goals, policies, and actions to optimize these networks in the years to come.

Roadway Network

Existing Roadway Facilities

Highways, roads, and streets are classified based on their functionality (i.e., the role they play in the overall roadway network). The North Lake Communities Planning Area circulation network features local roads and streets, collectors, and arterials depicted in **Figures NL-4** (countywide) and **NL-5** (North Lake Communities Planning Area). **Table NL-2** describes major roadways in the North Lake Communities Planning Area by their functional classification and **Table NL-3** shows Lake County road standards by functional classification.

The primary highways that underpin the roadway system in the North Lake Communities Planning Area are SR 20 and SR 29. SR 20 provides access to communities along the north and east sides of Clear Lake, including Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Nice, and Lucerne. SR 20 is also crucial for interstate traffic to the coastal communities in neighboring Mendocino County to the west. SR 29 splits off from SR 20 in the south-central portion of the Planning Area and serves regional traffic throughout Lake County, including to the City of Lakeport and communities along the western side of the lake. Notable major collector roads in the Planning Area include Elk Mountain Road, Lakeview Drive in Nice, and Country Club Drive in Lucerne. Other roadways in the Planning Area are minor collectors and local County-maintained roads (also called County roads or CRs).

Roadway Classifications

Local roads and streets primarily provide traffic movement within neighborhoods and are generally low-speed, low-volume roads.

Collectors (major or minor) provide access between low-speed/low-volume local streets and high-speed/high-volume arterials. As their name implies, minor collectors collect traffic from the local streets and distribute it to the arterial system or to the smaller urban areas that they directly serve. Major collectors provide circulation between neighborhoods.

Arterials (principal or minor) primarily link cities and towns within and outside the state. Arterial roadways typically have two or more lanes and allow the highest speeds of any roadway functional class.

Figure NL-4 Existing Countywide Roadway Functional Classifications

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Figure NL-5 North Lake Communities Planning Area Roadway Functional Classifications

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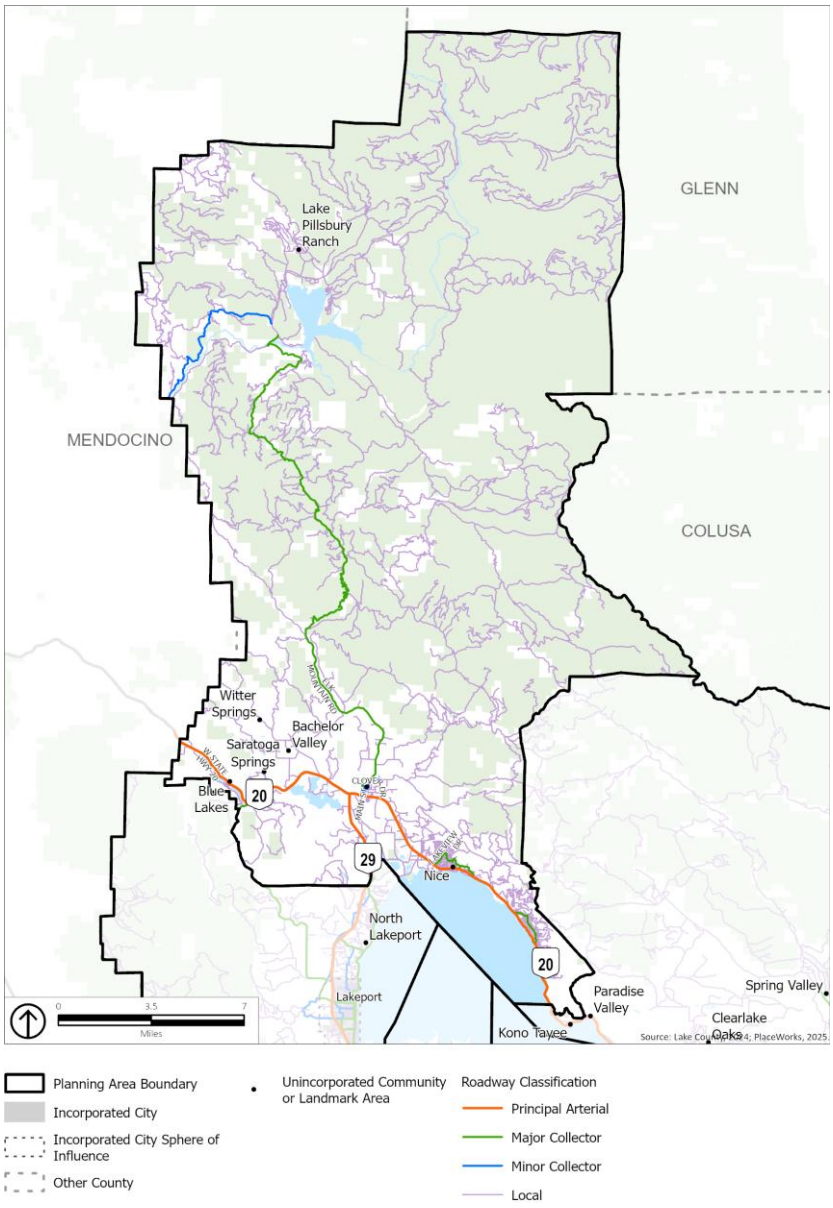


Table NL-2 Functional Road Classifications for Major Roadways in the Planning Area

Function	Number	Name	Limits
Principal Arterial	SR 20	SR 20	From US Highway 101 to Interstate 5 and continuing west to Fort Bragg
Principal Arterial	SR 29	SR 29	From SR 20 (Upper Lake) to SR 128 (Calistoga)
Major Collector	CR 301	Elk Mountain Road	From 20 N 01 Road (Lake Pillsbury) to SR 20
Major Collector	NA	Lakeview Drive (Nice)	From SR 20 (north) to SR 20 (south)
Major Collector	NA	Foothill Drive (Lucerne)	From SR 20 to Country Club Drive
Major Collector	NA	Country Club Drive (Lucerne)	From Foothill Drive to SR 20

CR = County Road; SR = State Route; NA = Not Applicable

Table NL-3 Lake County Road Standards

Standards	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Major Collector	Minor Collector	Local
Speed Limit	60 MPH	50 MPH	40 MPH	30 MPH	20 MPH
Number of Lanes	2-4	2-4	2	2	2
Lane Width	12 ft	12 ft	12 ft	11 ft	10 ft
Right-of-Way Width	60 ft	60 ft	50 ft (minimum)	50 ft	40 ft
Maximum Grade	12%	12%	12%	12%	16%

ft = feet; MPH = miles per hour

Level of Service

Traffic in Lake County fluctuates significantly by season due to the influx of tourists to the area in the summer months. State facilities accommodate the highest volumes of traffic in the Planning Area.

Level of service (LOS) is used as a quantitative measure of roadway conditions based on the quality of their traffic operations from a driver's perspective. LOS considers conditions such as road configuration, traffic volume, speed, convenience, and capacity.

LOS is generally defined as follows under peak hour conditions (e.g., 7 to 8 a.m. or 5 to 6 p.m.):

- **LOS A** represents free-flow travel with an excellent level of comfort and convenience and the freedom to maneuver.
- **LOS B** has stable operating conditions, but the presence of other road users causes a noticeable, though slight, reduction in comfort, convenience, and maneuvering freedom.

- **LOS C** has stable operating conditions, but the operation of individual users is substantially affected by the interaction with others in the traffic stream.
- **LOS D** represents high-density, but stable flow. Users experience severely restricted speed and freedom to maneuver, with poor levels of comfort and convenience.
- **LOS E** represents operating conditions at or near capacity. Speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform, value. Freedom to maneuver is difficult with users experiencing frustration and poor comfort and convenience. Unstable operation is frequent, and minor disturbances in traffic flow can cause breakdown conditions.
- **LOS F** represents congested conditions where traffic operates well below posted speeds, delays accumulate at intersections, and queuing forms at bottleneck locations. This condition exists wherever the volume of traffic exceeds the capacity of the roadway. Travel times become less reliable under LOS F conditions and drivers start adding buffer time to their trips to ensure being on time to appointments.

These definitions of LOS are contained in the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). HCM methodology is the prevailing measurement standard currently throughout the United States.

LOS expectations are used to determine specific roadway types and sizes (e.g., functional classification and number of lanes). Providing better conditions comes with higher costs and other tradeoffs like higher energy consumption, emissions, and safety risks that must be balanced against the County's environmental goals. Stable LOS E conditions represent the most efficient use of the roadway space since the public roadway is operating near its capacity.

As part of the Lake County 2050 General Plan update, a 2025 analysis of existing circulation conditions evaluated LOS for several roadways in the county. The segments of SR 20 studied in Upper Lake, Nice, and Lucerne all operate at LOS D or better.

Truck Route Classifications

Truck route classifications are based on the allowable size and design specifications of truck tractors or semitrailers.

Terminal Access Routes allow STAA* trucks, which include semitrailers up to 53 feet long that meet several other conditions regarding distance between axles.

California Legal Routes allow California Legal trucks, which include truck tractors with total lengths of up to 65 feet (truck and semitrailer combined) or double trailers of up to 75 feet.

California Legal Advisory Routes also allow California Legal trucks, but provide additional travel advisories for trucks that exceed posted kingpin-to-rear-axle lengths due to roadway turning radii.

Special Restriction Routes restrict certain trucks based on vehicle length or weight, cargo type, or number of axles.

*An STAA truck is one allowed to operate on the national network of highways due to the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) of 1982, which permits larger and heavier trucks to use certain federally aided highways, including the Interstate system and specific primary routes.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

If the number of residents, workers, and visitors increase in the county over time, more driving will occur. While some driving in and through the county is inevitable given the long distances between destinations in the county, the County and other agencies can take actions to concentrate growth within and near denser areas to help reduce the length of trips and to increase the viability of walking, bicycling, or taking transit. For example, the developed communities depicted in **Figure NL-1** are areas where land uses can be located near enough to support walking or biking as a viable mode of transportation, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). VMT is a metric that accounts for the number of vehicle trips generated and the length or distance of those trips. California law connects VMT reduction to the State's GHG reduction goals and other objectives, including the encouragement of public transit, infill development, and promotion of active transportation for public health. Though Lake County recognizes the importance of these objectives, the nature of the region's rural land uses with long distances between destinations limits the potential for VMT and GHG reduction through public transit or large mixed-use development projects.

VMT can be measured with a variety of methods and using multiple metrics. This General Plan relies on VMT estimates and forecasts from the Lake-Mendocino travel demand model to assess planning goals and environmental impacts.

Goods Movement

Many businesses and residents in the North Lake Communities Planning Area rely on goods movement for deliveries and importing or exporting products. Goods in the North Lake Communities Planning Area are primarily transported along SR 20 and SR 29, which are Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) Terminal Access Routes. **Figure NL-6** shows the County's designated truck routes to accommodate large vehicles, including for goods movement.

Planned Roadway Network Improvements

The 2022 Lake County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a State and federally mandated plan for transportation improvements in the county. The RTP is updated every four years by the Lake Area Planning Council for Lake County. The RTP is required to include a list of prioritized transportation improvement projects that are financially constrained or that have funding earmarked for the project as well as those that are 'financially unconstrained,' meaning they do not have funding earmarked and do not have a specific timeline for implementation.

All planned roadway projects must undergo environmental review to identify potential project impacts to ecological, archeological, Tribal, and cultural resources, as well as VMT and other impacts, and establish measures to avoid or mitigate against impacts during the project implementation phase. New transportation projects must also undergo tribal consultation to identify and protect sacred sites, traditional use areas, burial sites, and archaeological resources. Mitigation measures, alternative alignments, and culturally sensitive design practices should be implemented where impacts cannot be avoided.

Figure NL-6 Countywide Designated Truck Routes

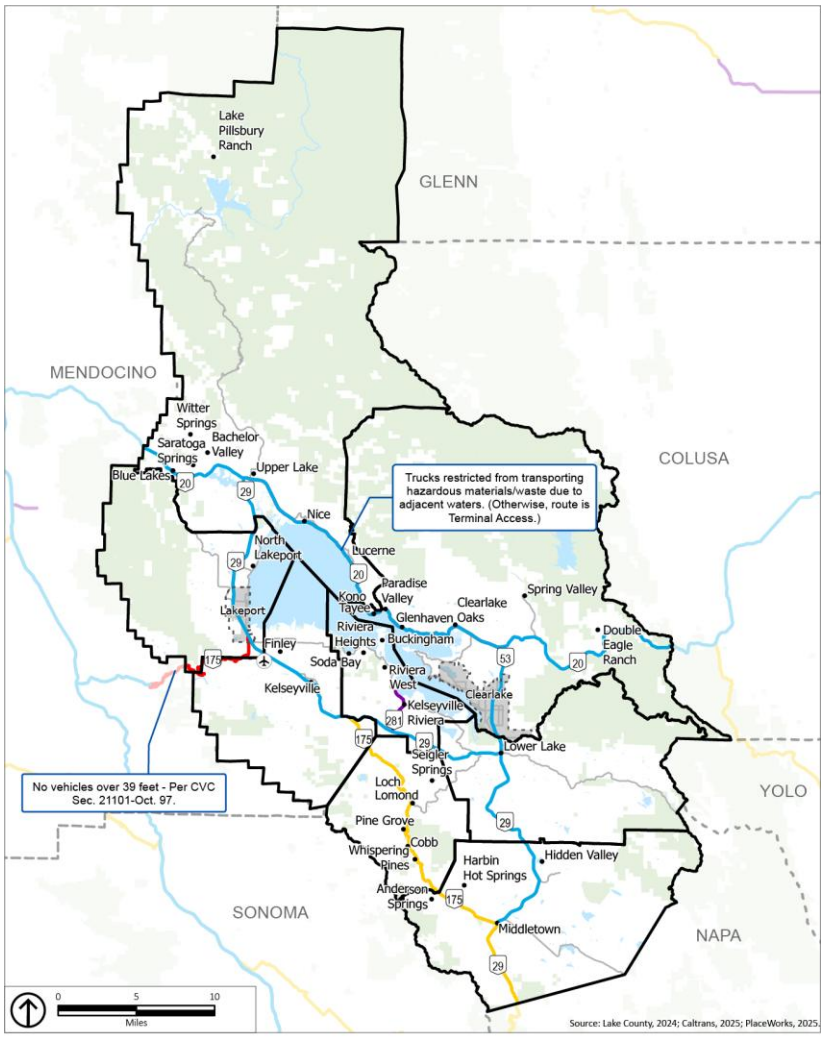


Figure NL-7 shows the County's planned, financially constrained roadway network improvements in the North Lake Communities Planning Area from the RTP. As shown in the figure, shoulder widening is planned to occur on SR 29, south of SR 20, from Scott's Creek to Westlake Road. Additionally, bridge upgrades are funded at Robinson Creek Bridge on SR 29, near Mockingbird Lane, and the Polk Jones Cattlepass Bridge on SR 20, west of Lucerne Road.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is defined as the transport of people or goods through non-motorized means, based around human physical activity. Nearly all the North Lake Communities Planning Area lacks active transportation facilities, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes. The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element includes information about recreational trails.

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

Most of the North Lake Communities Planning Area does not have any sidewalks or marked crosswalks. There are some exceptions in several central business districts, such as sidewalks on segments of Main Street in Upper Lake, several high-visibility crosswalks along SR 20 in Nice, and several sidewalk segments and high-visibility marked crosswalks in Lucerne.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

The California Streets and Highways Code Section 890.4 establishes three primary bikeway classifications, described in the text box. In addition to those listed, Class IV Separated Bikeways are classified in the California Vehicle Code, though none of these facilities exist in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Bikeway Classifications

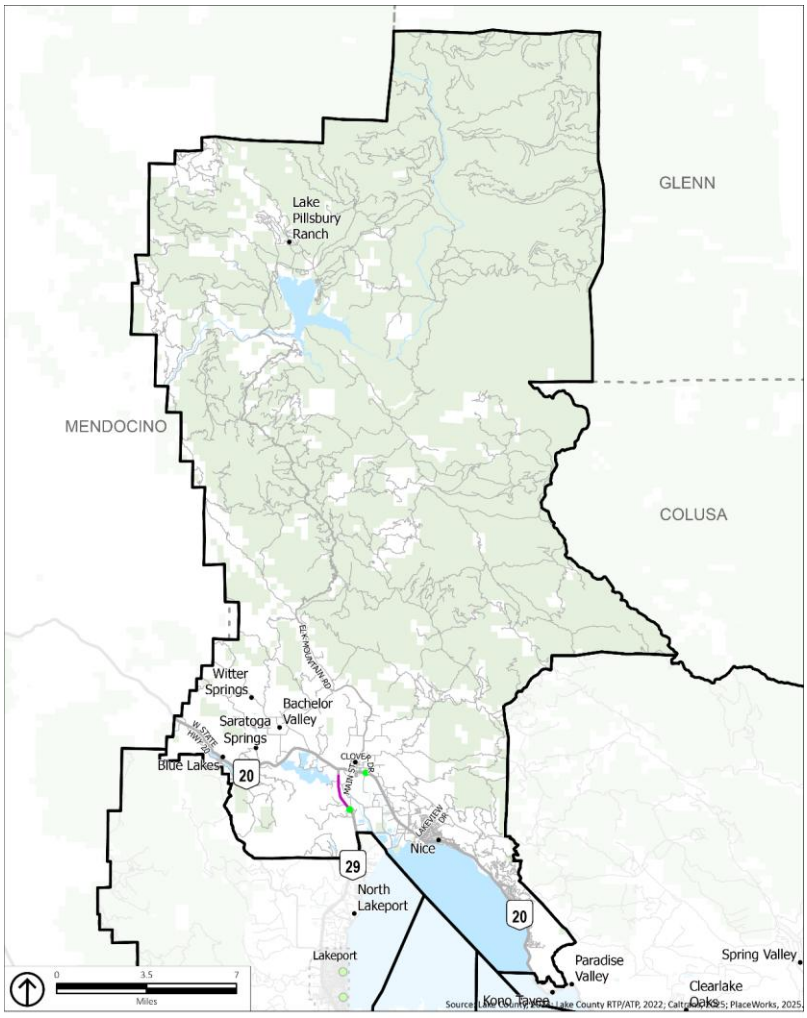
Shared-Use Path (Class I), also called bike paths, these facilities provide a fully separated, paved facility for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians. Shared-use paths have minimal cross flow with motorists and are typically located along landscaped corridors.

Bike Lane (Class II) are on-street facilities that use striping, stencils, and signage to denote preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists. Bike lanes are contiguous with motor vehicle travel lanes and should provide a minimum standard width of five feet for comfortable riding.

Bike Route (Class III), a route for bicyclists designated by signs or optional pavement markings where bicyclists travel on the shoulder or share a lane with motorists. Bike routes are typically utilized on low-speed and low-volume streets to connect bike lanes or paths along corridors that do not have enough space for dedicated Class I or II facilities.

No Class I, Class II, or Class III bike facilities exist in the Planning Area, but there are some planned facilities. These are described in the later subsection discussing planned active transportation improvements.

Figure NL-7 North Lake Communities Planning Area Planned Roadway Network



Note: All projects Financially Unconstrained except as mentioned in the report.

Existing Equestrian Facilities

Equestrian facilities are not specifically identified within the Planning Area, and the RTP does not propose any equestrian trails in the North Lake Communities Planning Area. However, Lake County residents have expressed strong support for expanding non-vehicular transportation options, including walking, biking, and horseback riding. Equestrian facilities are seen as an important part of the community's rural character and recreational opportunities, and residents have emphasized their value in promoting connectivity, outdoor access, and sustainable transportation alternatives.

Planned Active Transportation Improvements

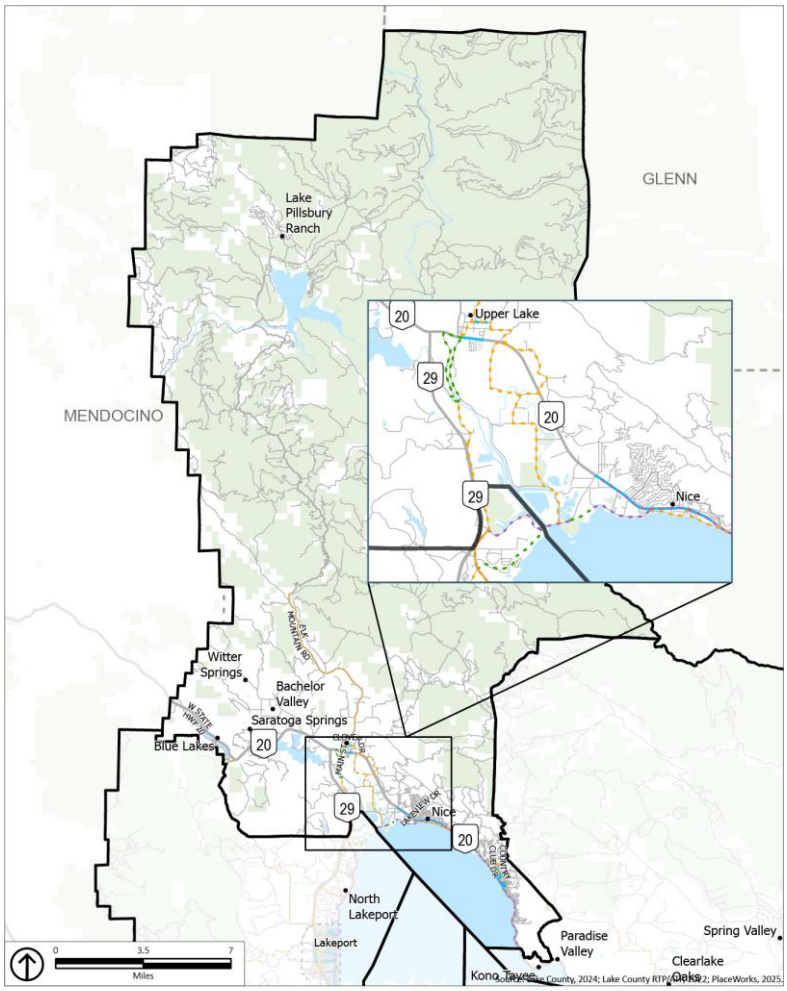
The Lake County Active Transportation Plan (ATP), integrated into the 2022 RTP, recommends a network of Class I shared-use paths, Class II bike lanes, and Class III bike routes in the North Lake Communities Planning Area. **Figure NL-8** shows the future bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements that are planned, including sidewalks on segments of SR 20 in Upper Lake, Nice, and Lucerne, as well as several other locations. **Table NL-4** lists the planned bicycle facilities in the North Lake Communities Planning Area from the County's 2022 ATP/RTP. These projects are all financially unconstrained. While the County and other responsible agencies are actively seeking funding for these projects, there is currently no funding identified, so the projects are uncertain.

Table NL-4 Planned Bicycle Facilities

Class	Roadway	From	To	Length (Miles)
I	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff	Lakeshore Blvd (Nice)	0.4
I	Bridge Arbor	SR 20/Main St	Edmands Blvd/Mackie Rd	1.2-1.6*
II	SR 20	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff (Upper Lake)	Sulphur Bank Drive (Clearlake Oaks)	17.4
II	Lakeshore Blvd (Nice)	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff	Lakeshore Blvd	1.0
II	13th/Castle Drive (Lucerne)	HWY 20	Country Club Drive	0.2
III	Elk Mountain Rd	Middle Creek Rd	Middle Creek Camp	7.7
III	Middle Creek Rd/Clover Dr (Upper Lake)	Second St	Elk Mountain Rd	0.4
III	Clover Valley Rd (Upper Lake)	First St	Second St	0.1
III	Second St (Upper Lake)	Washington St	Clover Dr	0.3
III	Main St (Upper Lake)	SR 20	Washington St	0.1
III	Washington St (Upper Lake)	Main St	Second St	0.3
III	Old Lucerne Rd (Upper Lake)	First St	SR 20	0.7
III	Upper Lake-Lucerne Rd	Old Lucerne Rd	Reclamation Rd	1.4
III	Westlake Rd	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff	Bridge Arbor Rd	1.5
III	Bridge Arbor Rd	Westlake Rd	End	0.7
III	Reclamation Area	SR 20	Reclamation Rd	1.4
III	Reclamation Rd	SR 20	Nice-Lucerne Cutoff	3.0
III	Lakeshore Blvd (Nice)	SR 20	Lakeshore Blvd Ext	1.5
III	Country Club Dr (Lucerne)	Foothill Dr	SR 20	1.2
III	Foothill Dr (Lucerne)	Country Club Dr	SR 20	0.5

Note: * Two alternatives
Source: County of Lake, 2022, *Lake County Regional Transportation Plan/Active Transportation Plan*.

Figure NL-8 North Lake Communities Planning Area Existing and Planned Active Transportation Facilities



Transit

Existing Transit Service

Lake Transit Authority (LTA) provides public transit services throughout Lake County and operates connecting routes to intercity and regional bus services in adjacent Napa and Mendocino Counties. As shown in **Figure NL-9**, the Planning Area is served by Route 1 and Route 7. Route 1 provides 10 roundtrips every weekday primarily along SR 20 and SR 29. Route 1 connects communities along the north and east side of the lake, starting in North Lakeport in the neighboring Lakeport Planning Area to the south, and continuing to Upper Lake, Nice, and Lucerne before continuing further along SR 20 to Glenhaven and Clearlake Oaks in the neighboring East Lake Communities Planning Area, and eventually to the City of Clearlake. Route 7 connects the City of Lakeport and the Robinson Rancheria in the Lakeport Planning Area with Upper Lake and Blue Lakes via SR 29. It then meets with and continues westward along SR 20 to the City of Ukiah in neighboring Mendocino County. Route 7 provides three roundtrips on weekdays and two roundtrips on weekends.

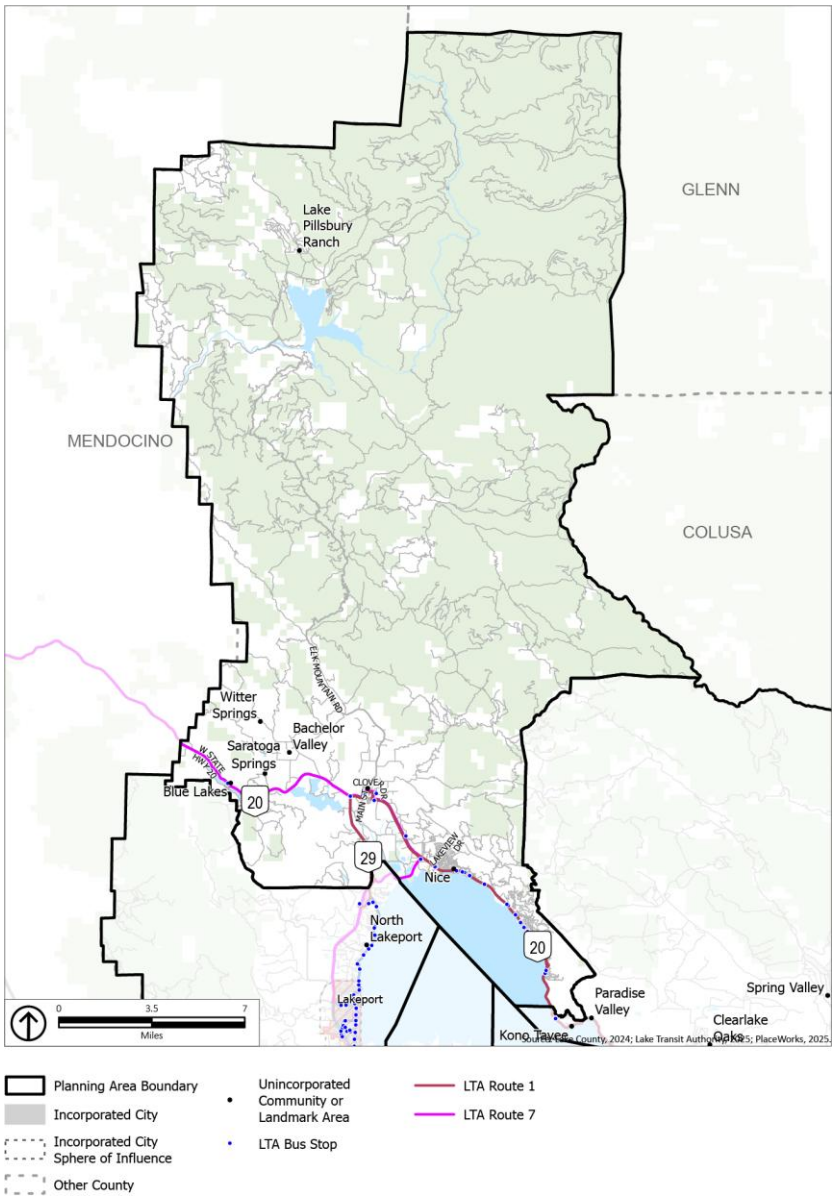
In addition to fixed routes, LTA offers Dial-a-Ride services near the City of Lakeport. In areas not served by Dial-a-Ride, LTA offers Flex Stop service where the bus will travel up to one mile beyond its regular route to provide more convenient service, though it must be reserved at least a day in advance.

LTA also offers Medi-Links, which provides nonemergency medical transportation throughout Lake County as well as out-of-county destinations such as Deer Park/St. Helena, Napa, Santa Rosa, Ukiah, Willits, and the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay areas. Medi-Links is a shared ride service and must be arranged at least seven days prior to a medical appointment.

Planned Transit Improvements

The 2023 Lake County Transit Development Plan analyzes current public transportation operations and identifies potential changes that could improve transit and better serve Lake County communities. No improvements are planned for transit service on Route 1 or Route 7 in the Planning Area in the 2023 Transit Development Plan. However, financially constrained transit projects identified in the RTP include both short- and long-term projects, such as improving bus stop amenities for existing and new routes, expanding operations facility/fueling infrastructure, and purchasing new transit vehicles. Note that RTPs often contain optimistic funding projections that may not be consistent with current financial realities.

Figure NL-9 North Lake Communities Area Transit Service and Facilities



Aviation

There are no public airports in the North Lake Communities Planning Area but there are several private airfields. The nearest public airports are Lampson Field, in the Kelseyville Planning Area between the City of Lakeport and the community of Kelseyville, and the Ukiah Municipal Airport in Mendocino County.

Emerging Trends

Technological advancements have contributed to new options for moving people and goods around Lake County; these include:

- Commercial ride-sharing services (e.g., Uber, Lyft)
- Food and grocery delivery services (e.g., Grubhub, Uber Eats, DoorDash, or independent restaurants and grocery stores offering their own delivery services)
- Electric vehicles (EVs) (e.g., cars, bikes, and scooters)

Ride-sharing services offer residents, workers, visitors, and students the choice to travel by automobile to their desired destinations. Given the distances between origins and destinations in Lake County, this service offers one of the fastest travel time options in the county for those that do not have access to a private vehicle, cannot drive, or prefer not to drive. These services contribute to countywide VMT and emissions but also offer access to a wide variety of destinations that would otherwise be difficult to access.

Food and grocery delivery services similarly offer more options for community members to meet their needs, while being cost prohibitive to some. In some cases, coordinated online shopping and on-demand delivery can reduce VMT compared with in-store shopping, but the reduction depends on a number of other factors.

Alternative fuel vehicles help reduce GHG emissions, but they still contribute to vehicle congestion and delay. This Circulation Element includes policies that support installation of EV charging infrastructure as feasible. Currently, there are two public electric charging stations in the Planning Area, one in Upper Lake on Main Street and one at the intersection of SR 20 and SR 29, also in Upper Lake.

Other transportation technologies may use the Lake County transportation network in the coming years, including Autonomous Vehicles (AVs), also known as self-driving cars and trucks. As of 2025, AVs are being tested but are not yet in widespread use, though many predict that they will be by 2050. AVs would lower the cost of vehicle travel, which could contribute to sprawl and greater levels of vehicle use. However, they could also lower the risk of collisions from human factors like driving under the influence, falling asleep, being distracted, and speeding and would allow more people that do not have access to private vehicles to travel more frequently at automobile speeds. In anticipation of AVs, this General Plan focuses on supporting growth suitable to the rural character of Lake County.

Costs and Revenues

Transportation costs and funding are important considerations for the General Plan. The Circulation Element should be financially constrained for capital, operations, and maintenance costs. As such, this element needs to include appropriate policies and actions that will align transportation network performance expectations with reasonable funding expectations. The County's ability to expand the transportation network to accommodate new growth will depend on its ability to fully pay for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the network.

There are 27 projects planned in the Lake Area Planning Council's RTP, outlining a variety of operation and maintenance projects aimed at improving the existing transportation infrastructure. Funding relies on multiple sources, such as State and federal grants and the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account.

The County does not have sufficient funding to maintain the existing network in a state of good repair. A good example of the current challenge is the cost and funding of pavement. This is one of the larger maintenance costs for the County and does not include other transportation infrastructure or services such as transit services and facilities, sidewalks, bike paths, signals, markings, signs, or storm drains.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-C-1

Effective intergovernmental communication and cooperation on transportation issues.

Policies

NL-C-1.1

Coordinate with the incorporated Cities of Clearlake and Lakeport on regional transportation planning to support the goals of the Regional Transportation Plan.

NL-C-1.2

Maintain a cooperative relationship with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to provide maintenance and safety improvements on State highways.

NL-C-1.3

Work collaboratively with local Tribal governments on transportation network design and implementation, as applicable.

Actions

NL-C-1.a

Work with Caltrans and other transportation agencies to maintain the Regional Transportation Plan, identify funding priorities, and develop an expenditure plan for available transportation funds in accordance with federal, State, and regional transportation planning and programming procedures.

NL-C-1.b
Work with local agencies to identify road improvement opportunities.

NL-C-1.c
Maintain working relationships with transportation agencies in the region to ensure coordination of road improvements, data exchange on projected traffic impacts, and County participation in regional transportation planning activities.

NL-C-1.d
Work with Lake County Transit to expand Dial-a-Ride services, particularly for Equity Priority Populations.

NL-C-1.e
Support efforts to ensure transportation provider services are online-accessible to enhance utilization of current transit providers for out-of-county transportation needs.

NL-C-1.f
Consult local Tribal governments when reviewing capital improvements for Tribal Cultural Resource impacts.

NL-C-1.g
Pursue opportunities for native plant restoration and habitat protection along rights-of-way and medians.

Goal NL-C-2

A unified, coordinated, and cost-efficient road and highway system that is safe, uncongested, and efficient.

Policies

NL-C-2.1
Plan and construct a road network to accommodate projected growth in traffic volumes resulting from residential, commercial, industrial, and other development.

NL-C-2.2
Maintain, and improve where feasible, the road system to reduce traffic accidents, improve circulation, and maintain or improve its physical condition, in conformance with the priorities and recommendations established in the Regional Transportation Plan.

NL-C-2.3
When undertaking roadway improvements, prioritize maintenance and safety, considering both public reports and internal expertise and data.

NL-C-2.4

Prioritize roadway improvement or maintenance projects as follows:

- **Priority One: Urgent Projects.** Projects of an urgent nature that are clearly needed to protect the health and safety of the traveling public, such as imminent bridge or roadbed failure.
- **Priority Two: Safety Projects.** Projects that are intended to reduce the number and severity of collisions in a particular location.
- **Priority Three: Reconstruction/Maintenance Projects.** Projects that involve ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction requirements to preserve the existing bridge and road network.
- **Priority Four: Capacity Improvements.** Projects that involve operational improvements to the existing road network that increase service efficiency and capacity.
- **Priority Five: New Construction Projects.** Projects that involve construction of a new bridge or road. New County construction projects will receive higher priority when they accommodate development in locations within reasonable proximity to employment and shopping centers and encourage energy conservation in the transportation sector.

NL-C-2.5

Work with Caltrans to support maintenance and improvements to Caltrans-managed roadways to support these roadways operating at LOS D or better. However, Caltrans no longer receives funding to maintain operational levels of service and instead receives funding that support strategies to minimize vehicle miles traveled and maximize the safety of all road users.

NL-C-2.6

To maintain traffic flow and minimize potential collisions, only allow access from individual parcels to highways and arterials when access to lower road classifications is not feasible, as determined by the County. The County is best able to assess the feasibility of making roadway connections to local or lower order roads; however, Caltrans right of way designations and permit requirements will govern the ability of applicants to obtain Caltrans encroachment permits.

NL-C-2.7

Require roadway facilities constructed or used by new development to comply with the Lake County Road Standards (**Table NL-3)**.

NL-C-2.8

Require new roads in residential areas to:

- Be designed to avoid cut-through traffic through the residential area.
- Be paved when serving more than four lots.
- Be improved with processed gravel at a minimum when serving four or fewer lots at densities less than one dwelling unit per five acres.
- Offer adequate right-of-way to contain road improvements for dedication.

NL-C-2.9

Work with California Highway Patrol and Lake County Sheriff to limit truck traffic to designated truck routes, as shown in **Figure NL-6**.

NL-C-2.10

Support the formation of maintenance districts to fund road maintenance and improvements in a manner consistent with County standards and when there is demonstrated community support.

Actions

NL-C-2.a

Implement and maintain the Capital Improvement Plan to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the North Lake Communities Planning Area as they evolve.

NL-C-2.b

Improve and construct roads to the Lake County Road Standards, as shown in **Table NL-3**. Use the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards, Caltrans standards, and County expertise to inform any revisions to the Lake County Road Standards.

NL-C-2.c

Explore options to implement a traffic mitigation fee that would apply to new development and/or subdivisions for the maintenance of existing County roads.

NL-C-2.d

Implement vehicle weight limit restrictions on roadways near sensitive uses, like schools and residential neighborhoods, to discourage cut-through truck traffic.

NL-C-2.e

Pursue all available sources of funding and protect existing sources of funding for the development, improvement, and maintenance of the existing roadway system.

Goal NL-C-3

A transportation network that accommodates new development while reducing per-capita VMT and GHG emissions and promotes environmental protections and stewardship.

Policies

NL-C-3.1

Incorporate complete streets principles and practices into the planning, design, and construction of circulation network improvements to accommodate all network users, including people walking, biking, and riding transit.

"**Complete Streets** is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities."

- Smart Growth America, 2025

NL-C-3.2
Lead and encourage activities to design and construct streets to support connectivity and promote pedestrian comfort and safety by including appropriate amenities, such as sidewalks on both sides of the street, shade trees, public benches, and pedestrian-scale lighting, when feasible.

NL-C-3.3
Encourage vehicle trip reduction through home occupations and telecommuting.

Air quality, a topic closely related to VMT and GHG emissions, is covered in the Health and Safety Element.

NL-C-3.4
Encourage regional employers to provide employees with options and incentives to use alternative modes of transportation to work or to otherwise reduce VMT (e.g., transit subsidies, bicycle facilities, ridesharing, alternative work schedules, telecommuting, and preferential parking for carpools).

NL-C-3.5
Require new land use development projects to reduce VMT through feasible California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) on-site VMT reduction strategies.

NL-C-3.6
Support transitioning on-road vehicles, including personal, business, government, and public transit fleets, to electric power from renewable sources or other zero-emission fuels.

NL-C-3.7
Support efforts to build electric vehicle charging stations at employment and community destinations, as allowed by market conditions.

NL-C-3.8
Encourage the use of road construction methods that reduce air, water, and noise pollution associated with road and highway development.

NL-C-3.9
Avoid locating roadways on naturally occurring asbestos whenever feasible alternative locations exist. If locating a roadway on asbestos is unavoidable, ensure adequate construction and surfacing with non-asbestos materials in compliance with local and State requirements.

NL-C-3.10
Consult with local Tribal governments when planning street, transit, and roadway projects that could impact tribal cultural sites.

Actions

NL-C-3.a *[2]

Adopt and maintain a VMT environmental threshold and development project screening process based on the Lake Area Planning Council Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Regional Baseline Study.

NL-C-3.b *

Require new development with the potential to increase VMT, to prepare a VMT analysis and to reduce VMT through feasible California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) on-site VMT reduction strategies, as needed to be consistent with the County's adopted VMT threshold.

NL-C-3.c

Develop a program to encourage trip reduction measures among County employees using various strategies, such as transit and/or carpool/vanpool subsidies, bicycle facilities, alternative work schedules, ridesharing programs, telecommuting options, employee education, and preferential parking for carpools/vanpools.

NL-C-3.d

Encourage carpooling by providing information to community members about park-and-ride locations and available programs.

NL-C-3.e

Amend Article 46 of the Zoning Ordinance to create electric vehicle charging and parking requirements for new development (e.g., one electric vehicle space per every 15 non-electric vehicle spaces and one charging station for large development based on square footage).

NL-C-3.f

Encourage and support annual maintenance to unpaved rural, ranch, and fire roads.

NL-C-3.g

Coordinate with local Tribal governments and local community organizations when siting public EV charging infrastructure, roads, or transit facilities.

[2] General Plan policies and actions marked with an asterisk (*) denote policies and actions that work to mitigate effects of cumulative development expected during the life of the General Plan, identified in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Goal NL-C-4

A transportation system that protects human life.

Policies

NL-C-4.1

Implement a safe systems approach to designing the transportation network for all users; this approach acknowledges that people make mistakes and focuses on roadway design and operational changes to create safe streets.

NL-C-4.2

Strive to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users by 2050 through a holistic view of the roadway system that includes provisions that account for human error, recognize vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, and promote redundant and proactive safety measures.

NL-C-4.3

Require safety improvements, such as reflective signage and street lighting (where appropriate) to reduce the likelihood of collisions during any roadway infrastructure improvement process, while avoiding offsite light impacts, including dark skies best practices..

NL-C-4.4

Consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan, implement traffic calming and safety improvements along State highway segments that function as the Planning Area's "Main Street."

NL-C-4.5

When modifying the transportation network, consider opportunities to expand emergency access so that all residential areas have at least two means of emergency access.

NL-C-4.6

Promote slow travel in neighborhoods through installation of infrastructure associated with reduction in crash risk, such as marked crosswalks, new lighting, and improved intersection controls.

NL-C-4.7

Pursue funding for a Safe Routes to School program and implement improvements, such as traffic-calming measures and high-visibility sidewalks and crosswalks.

NL-C-4.8

Regulate the location of private airfields and heliports to protect public safety and minimize impacts on nearby residents and other sensitive uses.

NL-C-4.9

Engage local Tribal governments and local community organizations in safety planning and emergency access identification.

Actions

NL-C-4.a

Identify safety corridors and areas that generate high concentrations of bicyclists and/or pedestrians. In these areas, use evidence-based strategies, including strategies identified in the United States Department of Transportation's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, to develop safety measures specific to those areas that are intended to eliminate traffic fatalities, with an emphasis on preventing fatalities of bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of other micromobility devices.

A **safety corridor** is a roadway segment within an overall roadway network where the highest number of serious injury and fatality crashes occur.

- California Vehicle Code Section 22358.7(a)(1)

NL-C-4.b

Engage local Tribal governments when developing safety measures for high-risk corridors near tribal lands.

Goal NL-C-5

A safe and efficient public transportation system that offers a convenient alternative to the private automobile, reduces roadway congestion, and meets the community's transit needs.

Policies

NL-C-5.1

Support public transportation programs that promote access to shopping, employment, education, health care, and recreation.

NL-C-5.2

Support the continuation and coordination of transportation programs provided by social service agencies, particularly those serving older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other Equity Priority Populations.

NL-C-5.3

Support Lake Transit Authority on improvements to fixed-route bus and dial-a-ride services, including expanding the service area, providing more frequent buses at key times of the day, and improving transit amenities, such as bus shelters, benches, and wayfinding signage at bus stops.

NL-C-5.4

Prioritize support for the following transit service efforts outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan and Lake County Transit Development Plan:

- Provide new and improve existing transportation services for older adults, individuals with access and functional needs, low-income individuals and/or other vulnerable populations;

- Provide intercommunity services between communities in the Planning Area and throughout the county; and
- Expand intercity transit carriers, particularly to Ukiah and the Bay Area.

NL-C-5.5
Encourage transit access and compatibility during the review and approval process for industrial, commercial, and residential development.

NL-C-5.6
Encourage bus stops at key destinations, population centers, and/or along arterials and collectors to facilitate public transit use.

NL-C-5.7
Engage local Tribal governments and local community organizations in planning routes and transit services, particularly for elders and community centers.

Actions

NL-C-5.a
Cooperate with the Lake Area Planning Council, Lake Transit Authority, and other related agencies in studying transit needs and developing an implementation program for public transportation services in the county.

NL-C-5.b
Explore opportunities to improve Lake Transit Authority services to Planning Area residents during updates to the Lake County Transit Development Plan, including regional connections to major destinations like the Sacramento International Airport.

NL-C-5.c
Update the Transit Development Plan with input from local Tribal governments to include tribal community needs.

Goal NL-C-6

A continuous and easily accessible active transportation system that facilitates safe, equitable, and connected walking, biking, and micromobility options.

Policies

NL-C-6.1
Construct new and maintain and improve existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, consistent with the countywide Active Transportation Plan, as funding is available.

NL-C-6.2
Support efforts to develop a Class I bike path from Lakeshore Boulevard east around the Inner Harbor.

NL-C-6.3
Incorporate facilities for non-motorized users, such as sidewalks and bike routes, when constructing or improving roadway facilities and when reviewing new development proposals.

NL-C-6.4
Require bicycle lanes, multiuse paths, and sidewalks in conjunction with road improvement projects, as feasible. Develop, as funds become available, Class II bicycle lanes and multiuse paths on new collector and arterial streets.

NL-C-6.5
Require facilities for nonmotorized users, such as sidewalks and bike routes, for subdivisions ~~with a density of one or more dwelling units per acre~~within Community Growth Boundaries. Required facilities should be commensurate with the impacts of the project, consistent with local and regional plans, and provide for infrastructure that integrates circulation and recreational use and aligns with surrounding development.

NL-C-6.6
Require new residential and commercial development to incorporate bike lanes and sidewalks, as appropriate.

NL-C-6.7
Require public and private development projects to include bicycle access and safe bicycle parking facilities at office buildings, schools, shopping centers, and parks, where feasible.

NL-C-6.8
Follow the adopted Caltrans design standards for the development, maintenance, and improvement of bicycle facilities.

NL-C-6.9
Construct and maintain bicycle routes and multiuse trails in a manner that minimizes conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrian users with automobiles and private property rights.

NL-C-6.10
Prioritize active transportation improvements benefitting tribal communities and Equity Priority Areas.

NL-C-6.11
Incorporate ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge in the design of active transportation improvements.

NL-C-6.12
Ensure new pedestrian/bike paths avoid or mitigate impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources, when feasible.

Actions

NL-C-6.a

Engage in each update to the countywide Active Transportation Plan, prepared by the Lake Area Planning Council, to ensure the active transportation needs of the North Lake Communities Planning Area are met.

NL-C-6.b

Pursue funding to improve and maintain the existing bicycle system and to plan and construct new bicycle facilities that encourage commuting and recreation.

NL-C-6.c

Pursue funding to eliminate gaps in the existing sidewalk network and/or upgrade pedestrian facilities, with priority given to facilities near schools, connections between residential areas and commercial centers, and facilities in Equity Priority Areas.

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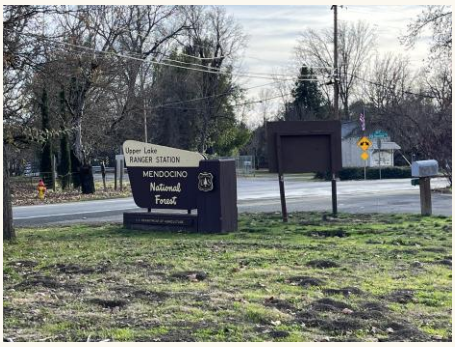
Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation

The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element addresses a wide range of natural and cultural resources as well as public parks and recreation facilities. The specific topics covered in this element include:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources, including Archaeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Scenic Resources

Use of natural resources must be balanced with responsible management and conservation efforts to ensure their ongoing availability, quality, and reliability. The resources addressed in this element are among the North Lake Communities Planning Area's most sensitive assets to be conserved and sustained for future generations, like publicly accessible natural areas, healthy ecosystems, and historic and indigenous culture.



Mendocino National Forest is a treasured recreation destination for residents and tourists.

Lake County is also committed to improving government to government relations with all Native Sovereign Nations in the county. As part of this commitment, at the time of this plan release, the County is drafting a Co-Management Agreement for the Clear Lake watershed and basin to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding. The County also has been working on a Heritage Resource Treatment Plan drafted by the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake and Koi Nation of Northern California and forwarded to the other five Tribal governments. As of the publication of this General Plan, all three are still in the draft stage.

This element inventories these natural and built resources in the North Lake Communities Planning Area and provides goals, policies, and actions to manage their use for all current and future residents.

Biological Resources

Natural Communities and Habitats

Natural vegetation communities in the North Lake Communities Planning Area are diverse and support a range of wildlife. Their components are impacted by factors like water availability, soil depth and chemistry, slope, and climate. At higher elevations, like Snow Mountain, mixed conifer and deciduous forest are the primary vegetation communities. Conifer communities are defined by their evergreen tree varieties, like firs and pines. Deciduous forests host trees that lose their leaves in colder months, like oaks and buckeyes. The Planning Area's eastern and southern areas primarily contain grasslands, brush, and chaparral communities, which are characterized by low-growing, dense, woody shrubs and brush in lower elevation areas.

The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element recognizes the ecological and cultural importance of the North Lake Communities Planning Area's native habitats. Through partnership with Tribal governments, Lake County will protect biodiversity, restore natural systems, and sustain traditional ecological and cultural relationships that have cared for these lands since time immemorial.

Wetlands and Riparian Corridors

Wetlands and riparian corridors (i.e., land areas bordering rivers, streams, and other water bodies) support the widest array and highest number of mammals, reptiles, birds, and amphibians of the vegetation communities in the Planning Area. Riparian areas also create a buffer between land and water, filtering out sediment, debris, nitrogen, pesticides, and other pollutants before they reach the water body, while also protecting against erosion and slowing floodwaters.

In the North Lake Communities Planning Area, Scotts Creek and Middle Creek feed into Rodman Slough, which flows south for approximately 2.5 miles until it reaches Clear Lake. Rodman Slough is a remnant of a larger wetland area that was first altered by levees built in the early twentieth century to drain the lands for agricultural purposes. The slough and its surrounding oak woodlands are an important stopover for migratory songbirds as well as important habitat for waterfowl and water birds, including great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), and American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). It is also an important breeding and nursery area for fish. Other major wetlands and riparian corridors in the Planning Area include Alley Creek, Bear Creek, Little Soda Creek, Eel River, Parramore Creek, and Robinson Creek.

Freshwater emergent wetlands, where tall, freshwater-dependent grasses and reeds emerge from the surface of the water, are common along the Planning Area's Clear Lake shoreline. Emergent wetland vegetation includes soft, non-woody, and water-dependent plants. Example species are sedge, common cattail, and tule.

Ecologically Sensitive Resource Areas

Ecologically sensitive resource areas are areas containing unique, representative, and/or sensitive habitats, communities, or ecological processes.

There are a variety of ecologically sensitive resource areas in the county. These can include mountain regions, valleys, forest lands, riparian corridors, and lakes, as well as habitats that support State or federally listed threatened or endangered species, or species that are under consideration for listing, including wetland, riparian, vernal pool, and oak woodland habitats.

Clear Lake and its tributaries throughout the county are an ecologically sensitive resource area as habitat for the Clear Lake hitch (*Lavinia exilicauda chi)*. The Clear Lake hitch is only found in the Clear Lake watershed, including Clear Lake and its tributaries, such as Blue Lakes and Thurston Lake, due to geologic processes that have isolated the Clear Lake hitch ecosystem. Adult hitch migrate upstream in tributaries of Clear Lake to spawn each spring and then return to the lake. Though there were once an abundance of hitch, their population has significantly declined as the Clear Lake ecology has been altered and degraded. Historically, the hitch were a vital part of the lake's ecosystem; an important food source for numerous birds, other fish, and wildlife; and a staple food for the Pomo tribes of the Clear Lake region. This General Plan establishes a 20-foot Resource Conservation buffer around Clear Lake and its tributaries, as shown in **Figures NL-2** and **NL-3**, to protect the area from development that might further impact the hitch population.

Cultural Resources

The Clear Lake basin, which encompasses parts of the North Lake Communities Planning Area, is well studied and considered one of the state's most important regions for cultural resources. The region contains numerous ancestral village sites, ceremonial areas, petroglyphs, trails, and historic structures, which remain vital to both the tribal and broader community's identity. For tribal communities, these cultural resources are not relics of the past but living connections to language, tradition, and spiritual practice. Many cultural sites are intertwined with natural features, such as lakes and creeks that hold ecological and ceremonial significance. The sites, structures, and artifacts found in this area contribute significantly to local character and culture and enable the present-day community to connect to the Planning Area's long history.

The protection, study, and enhancement of cultural resources, like historic buildings and landmarks, archaeological sites and resources, and sites of tribal cultural importance, allows for important research and education. State legislation and programs, including the California Historical Building Code and the 1976 Mills Act, aid in the protection of these significant resources. The California Historical Building Code ensures historic buildings are maintained and rehabilitated using historically sensitive construction techniques. The Mills Act provides property tax incentives to owners of qualified, owner-occupied, historical properties to maintain and preserve them in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Direct coordination with Tribal governments and collaborative management approaches ensure that Tribal cultural landscapes are identified, protected,

and interpreted in accordance with Indigenous values and laws. By studying and protecting the Planning Area's cultural resources, past cultural patterns and processes will continue to provide a better understanding of the area's history and enrich its present.

Archaeological and Historic Resources

The North Lake Communities Planning Area is an archaeologically rich and culturally sensitive region, containing a high density of prehistoric sites. There are more than 15 archaeological sites along the banks of Rodman Slough near the Nice-Lucerne Cutoff, the roadway bisected by the boundary between the North Lake Communities and Lakeport Planning Areas. There are also many historic buildings throughout the Planning Area dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. One location in the Planning Area is listed as a California Historical Landmark: the Battle of Bloody Island near Upper Lake.

Tribes and Tribal Cultural Resources

Prior to European colonization, the Eastern Pomo and Southeastern Pomo tribes inhabited the North Lake Communities Planning Area for at least 11,000 years. The Clear Lake basin supported Indigenous populations in the thousands due to its ample water resources and remained relatively uncontacted by Europeans until the mid-1800s, much later than other parts of California, primarily due to the area's isolated geography. Descendants of these tribes maintain a living presence in the area, continuing traditional practices and stewardship of ancestral lands.

The Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, known until 2004 as the Upper Lake Rancheria, is one of two federally recognized native sovereign nations in the Planning Area. Once occupying a roughly 564-acre area granted by the U.S. government in 1907, the tribe's land today consists of the 119-acre Rancheria just north of Upper Lake, as well as an 11-acre area northeast of the larger Rancheria that is a small part of the tribe's original sovereign land holdings. Running Creek Casino is an enterprise of the tribe and has been in operation since 2012. The tribe's goals are to preserve Pomo culture; protect the interests of its children (e.g., early childhood development and education); use, conserve, and control acquired land and natural resources; promote the stability and security of the tribe and its families; and promote its people's social and economic well-being. A range of programs support these objectives, including its Elder Meals Program, Disaster Emergency Home Repair Program, Student Rental Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and discretionary and emergency loan programs.

Robinson Rancheria (Pomo Indians of California) is a federally recognized tribe of Eastern Pomo people, with multiple land holdings in the Planning Area. Its enterprises include the Robinson Rancheria Resort and Casino, which opened in 1989; Pomo Pumps, a gas station; and Robinson Rancheria Recycling CRV Buy-Back Center. Robinson Rancheria is led by the Robinson Rancheria Citizens Business Council (RRCBC). The RRCBC has six elected tribal members that collaborate with members of appointed committees to promote the mission and vision for the tribe, which emphasize preserving and practicing culture, economic development, and the success of future generations.

This rich tribal history and living tribal culture are reflected in a range of Tribal Cultural Resources throughout the Planning Area. Tribal cultural resources often are less tangible than an object or a site itself. For example, sometimes the importance is tied to views of or access to a sacred site. Therefore, consultation with culturally affiliated indigenous tribes is key to identifying Tribal Cultural Resources, as required by Assembly Bill 52. In addition, Assembly Bill 52 also requires that local agencies evaluate and mitigate to the extent feasible a project's potential impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources.

Pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 18, the County notified and consulted with local tribes throughout the General Plan update process. The policies and actions in this element reflect that tribal consultation and commit the County to sustaining a collaborative relationship through implementation of the General Plan.

Energy Resources

The North Lake Communities Planning Area, which includes Bachelor Valley, Blue Lakes, Lake Pillsbury Ranch, Nice, Lucerne Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, and Witter Springs, has a total population of approximately 8,630 people. The highest energy demand is from hotel and resort, residential, recreational, and commercial uses. Affordable and reliable energy is an ongoing, high-priority issue for Planning Area residents.

Most of the Planning Area's electricity, like the rest of the county, is supplied from the statewide electrical grid operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). Recent data shows that PG&E's electric power mix is largely GHG-free and/or from renewable sources. In 2022, 49 percent was from non-emitting nuclear generation, 38 percent from eligible renewable resources (wind, geothermal, biomass, solar, small hydro), 8 percent from hydroelectric facilities, and 5 percent from natural gas. Throughout the county, most homes and businesses use on-site propane storage tanks as an additional fuel source, as PG&E does not supply natural gas in Lake County. The use of private solar and wind turbines is not widespread but is growing.

Electric utilities operators throughout California, including PG&E, have begun to occasionally "de-energize," or turn off the electricity for power lines that run through areas where there is an elevated fire risk. This is intended to reduce the risk of damage to power lines and igniting a wildfire. These events, called public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events, result in a loss of power for customers served by the affected power lines. A PSPS event may occur at any time of the year, but they usually occur during high wind events and dry conditions. PSPS events can also create vulnerabilities for community members that lack backup power supplies and depend on electricity for heating or cooling homes and buildings, lighting, and internet, as well as people who depend on electrically powered medical devices.

Mineral Resources

The California Department of Conservation, Geological Survey (California Geological Survey) classifies lands into Aggregate and Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) based on guidelines adopted by the California State Mining and Geology Board, as mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA; Public Resources Code Sections 2710 et seq.). Cities and counties are required to incorporate MRZs delineated by the State into their General Plans. According to the California Geological Survey, there are no MRZs delineated by the State in the Planning Area or Lake County as a whole.

Mining activity in the Planning Area consists primarily of sand and gravel extraction. The California Geological Survey has mapped three terrace mining locations in the Planning Area, all of which are located along Middle Creek: Hale Ranch Quarry, Middle Creek Terrace Pond Project, and Young Pond. While no longer employed today, the historic practice of extracting gravel directly from creek beds has resulted in a variety of impacts to the ecosystem, including stream bank erosion, flooding, water quality degradation, loss of riparian vegetation, and increased sedimentation in Clear Lake.

The Lake County Aggregate Resource Management Plan identifies three potential quarry sites in the Planning Area. The first of these is White Rock Mountain, an approximately 2,400-acre site about 10 miles northwest of Lakeport. Its highest elevation is White Rock Mountain's peak at 2,690 feet. The lowest elevation at the site is 1,400 feet, along Scotts Creek. The site consists of rocks in the Franciscan Formation, which includes graywacke sandstone, greenstone, chert, and serpentinite. The second site is Black Oak Springs in the Cow Mountain Area, occupying over 1,200 acres. Like White Rock Mountain, the site is underlain by graywacke sandstone. There is some greenstone and chert, but they are not considered potential quarry material. The third site, Little Cow Mountain, is approximately 4,000 acres in size, located south of Blue Lakes, and has two predominate rock types: graywacke sandstone and greenstone. Sandstone accounts for around 75 percent of the site.

Conflicts between mining and urban uses throughout California led to the passage of SMARA, which established policies for conservation and development of mineral lands. It contains specific provisions for the classification of mineral lands by the State Geologist.

The 1992 Lake County Aggregate Resources Management Plan, provided as **Appendix A** to this General Plan, provides more detail on the mineral resources and mining operations in Lake County.

Open Space and Recreation

Open space and recreation areas are depicted in **Figures NL-10** (countywide) and **NL-11** (North Lake Communities Planning Area).

Figure NL-10 Countywide Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Areas

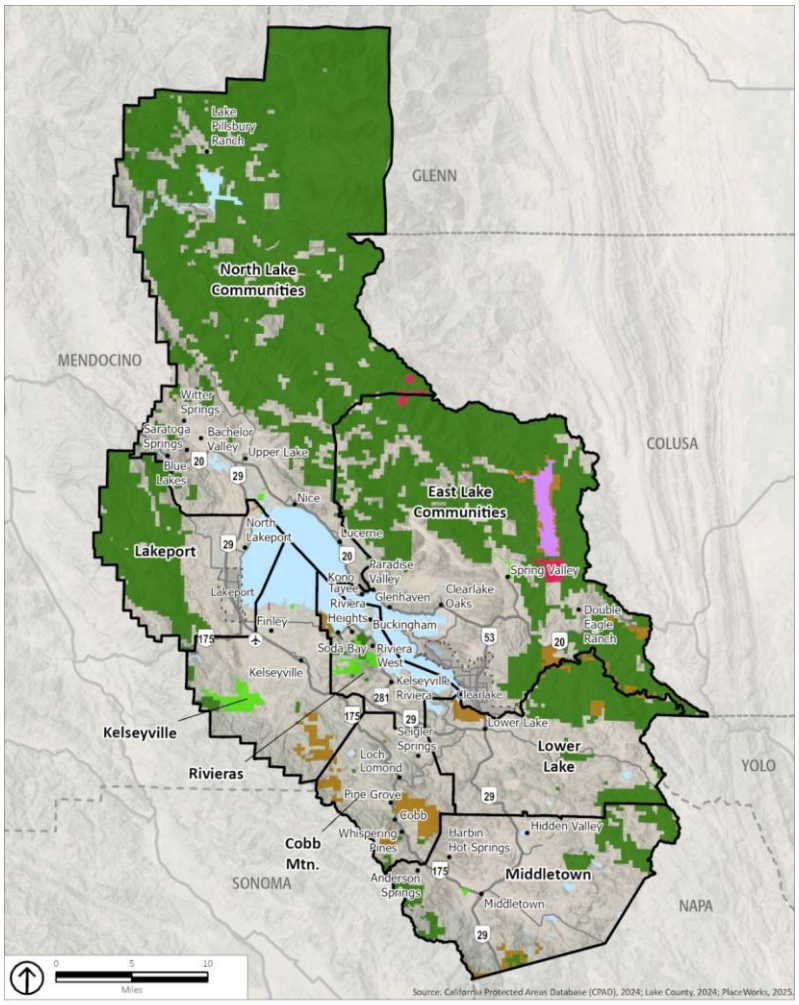
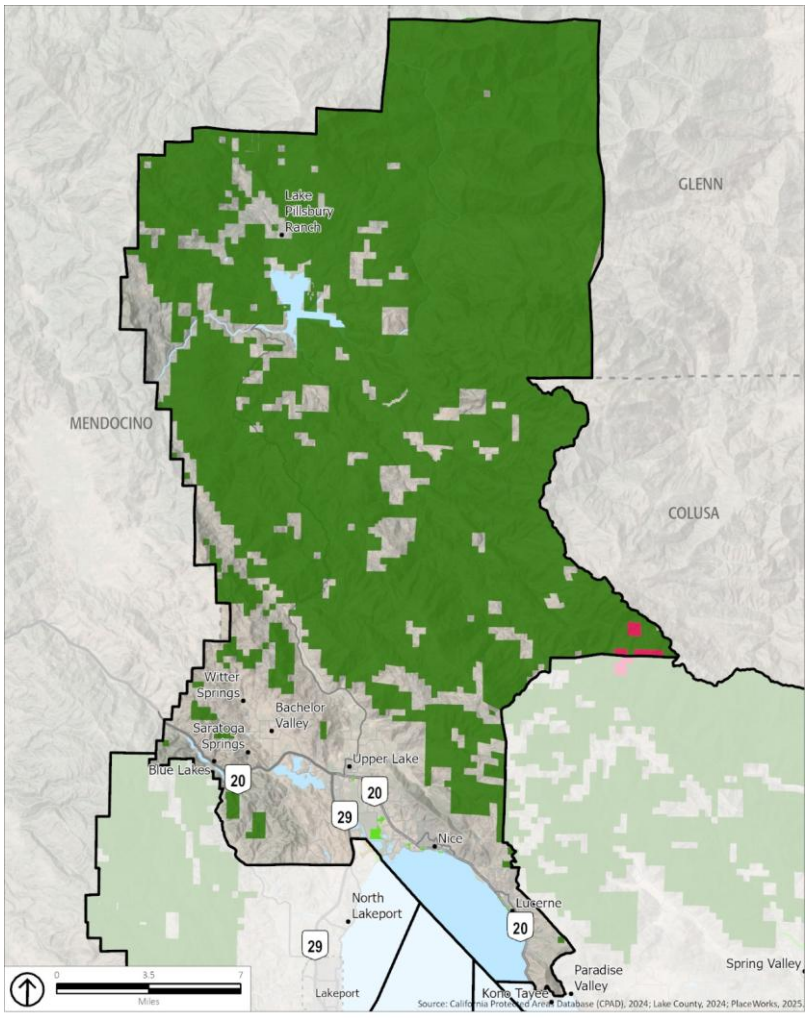


Figure NL-11 North Lake Communities Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Areas



The Blue Lakes area offers a variety of recreational tourism opportunities like swimming and boating. Photo by Wes Nelms, 2005

Roughly 70 percent of the Planning Area's 470 total square miles is covered by Mendocino National Forest lands. In addition, the North Lake Communities Planning Area has 11 County-owned public recreation areas totaling approximately 74 acres. Hammond Avenue Park and Upper Lake Park are the Planning Area's two Community Parks, which are larger parks designed to accommodate sporting activities; appeal to people of varied ages, abilities, and interests; serve more than one neighborhood; and accommodate large groups and events. Existing amenities at Hammond Avenue Park include a softball field, dog park, wetland-adjacent trails, and interpretive signage. Planned additions to the park include a multi-sport court, exercise circuit, native gardens, a multiuse lawn, and more. Upper Lake Park is located on the south side of Highway 20 roughly a third of a mile east of Main Street in the Community of Upper Lake. It features a large playground, shaded picnic areas, restrooms, a baseball field, tennis courts, and several paved trails.

Smaller local parks in the Planning Area include Alpine Park, Lucerne Creek Park, Lucerne Harbor Park and Artist Village, Hinman Park, and Keeling Park. In addition, several beaches along Clear Lake are part of the County park system. These include Davis Beach, Holiday Harbor Beach, and Nice Community Beach. These beaches are considered Special Use Parks because they provide a particular facility or recreational use, which in this case is access to Clear Lake. The Planning Area's beaches offer swimming, non-motorized watercraft launching, and fishing opportunities.

In addition to the Mendocino National Forest, there are other public lands owned by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the California State Lands Commission (SLC) in the northern part of the Planning Area. These large swaths of public State and federal lands also offer a range of camping and outdoor recreational opportunities.

The 2024 Lake County Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan provides a roadmap for park, recreation, and trail improvements, addresses maintenance and operations of the County's park system, and guides ongoing improvements and decisions, all informed by input from local residents, agencies, and environmental organizations. The plan discusses the need for invasive species management, natural resource preservation, expanded interpretation, amenities, and uses, facility upgrades, and improved connectivity between open spaces in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

The Konocti Regional Trails Plan, adopted by the Lake County Board of Supervisors in January 2011, is a framework for developing a countywide network of nonmotorized trails for activities like hiking, biking, and horseback riding while preserving natural and cultural resources. The 2024 Lake County Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan also proposes additions to the trails network outlined in the Konocti Regional Trails Plan, including trails through the North Lake Communities Planning Area that would connect to regional

recreation areas like Blue Ridge-Berryessa Natural Area (BRBNA), Mendocino National Forest, and more. Implementation of these plans is ongoing; several trail projects remain in the planning, permitting, or funding stages.

Scenic Resources

The North Lake Communities Planning Area's scenic resources contribute substantially to residents' quality of life. They serve as a source of community pride, enhance property values, and offer beautiful and interesting views throughout the region. The Planning Area's historic character; forested ridges; grasslands and hills; agricultural landscapes; star-filled night sky; and views of Mt. St. Helena, the Callayomi and Coyote Valleys, and St. Helena Creek are all valued scenic resources. The region's scenic landscapes and viewsheds also hold deep ancestral and spiritual significance to tribal communities. Protection of Tribal Cultural Resources within these visual corridors is essential to maintaining both the physical beauty and the Planning Area's cultural heritage.

Views can be impacted by anything from billboards and utility lines to unmaintained structures and unscreened industrial or construction operations. Development on ridgelines and steep slopes can negatively impact scenic resources because it is often visible from a distance. Thoughtful policy, land use designations, and guidelines can preserve and improve a community's identity and maintain the quality of viewsheds.

Well-maintained scenic resources, especially scenic routes and highways, can bolster the Planning Area's recreation-based economy, providing value for residents and visitors. Scenic routes are publicly accessible roadways that traverse picturesque landscapes. They offer extensive views of scenic areas or prominent features. SR 29 and SR 20, both of which cross the North Lake Communities Planning Area, are eligible to be designated as State Scenic Highways. These roadways offer vistas of Elk Mountain and Hogback Ridge to the north of the Planning Area, the Mayacamas Mountains to the west, and Mount Konocti in the distance. Views of Blue Lake and Clear Lake are visible along SR 20, which runs along the Clear Lake shoreline in the southeast portion of the Planning Area.

While they do not have official designations, there are several other significant open space corridors in the Planning Area, including:

- Nice-Lucerne Cutoff between SR 29 and SR 20. This roadway connects the North Lake Communities Planning Area with the Lakeport Planning Area.
- Scotts Valley Road from the southwestern Planning Area boundary to SR 20, connecting the North Lake Communities and Lakeport Planning Areas.
- Elk Mountain Road from Upper Lake to the Mendocino National Forest.
- Bachelor Valley Road throughout its entire length.
- Witter Springs Road throughout its entire length.
- Clover Valley Road from the Upper Lake Community Growth Boundary to the end of Clover Valley.

To maintain the quality of life and the rural character of the North Lake Communities Planning Area, policy guidance in this section works to preserve and enhance scenic resources.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-OS-1

Protection of the North Lake Communities Planning Area's diverse biological resources, sensitive significant habitats, and ecosystem health.

Policies

NL-OS-1.1

Coordinate with applicable federal, State, regional, and local land management agencies on natural resources and habitat planning, preservation, and mitigation measure development.

NL-OS-1.2

Support protection and restoration of wetland, riparian, and other significant natural areas in the North Lake Communities Planning Area for wildlife habitats, groundwater recharge, and passive recreation.

NL-OS-1.3

Protect natural lands, including natural resource areas, wildlife habitat, and open space, from encroachment or destruction by incompatible development and invasive species.

NL-OS-1.4

Require development patterns and practices that conserve habitat for protected species and sensitive biological resources, limiting encroachment into areas that support sensitive habitats and directing development into less-sensitive areas.

NL-OS-1.5

Maintain ecologically sensitive resource areas in their natural state to the greatest extent possible. Limit development in and near these areas to compatible, low-intensity uses with adequate provisions to protect sensitive resources, including setbacks around resource areas. Prohibit projects that would lead to fragmentation of ecologically sensitive resource areas.

NL-OS-1.6

Require the use of conservation easements, transfer of development rights, mitigation banking, or similar equity transfer documents to protect unique vegetation, habitat areas, habitat corridors, and sensitive biological resources in new projects.

NL-OS-1.7 *

Require a qualified biologist to prepare a biological resource assessment as part of project approval for proposed development on sites that may support special-status species, sensitive natural communities, important wildlife corridors, or regulated wetlands and waters to identify potential impacts and measures for protecting the resource and surrounding habitat. Require a qualified

biologist conduct focused surveys, as identified and recommended in the biological resources assessment, during the appropriate season(s) for identification of the resource.

NL-OS-1.8

When reviewing development proposals, consult with the most updated California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and other available studies prepared by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to avoid potential impacts on sensitive habitats or special-status species.

NL-OS-1.9 *

Require a wetland delineation study prepared using the protocol defined by the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of project approval for proposed development on sites with the potential to contain wetland resources. Require that a report on the findings of this survey be submitted to the County as part of the application process and, where proposed development would impact a wetland resources, require mitigation measures prior to project approval.

NL-OS-1.10 *

Require that construction or other ground-disturbing activities avoid nests of native birds when in active use by implementing protection measures to ensure compliance with the California Fish and Game Code and federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Compliance guidelines are detailed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

NL-OS-1.11 *

Require installation and maintenance of construction barrier fencing around sensitive resources on or adjacent to construction sites prior to construction activities and throughout the construction period.

NL-OS-1.12

Maintain creeks in their natural state ~~whenever possible~~ and allow creeks and floodways to function as natural flood protection features during storms.

NL-OS-1.13 *

Require new development along significant watercourses, riparian vegetation, and wetlands to establish an ecological buffer zone between the waterway and development to protect the resource. Consider providing opportunities for multiuse trails and recreation within the buffer zone when appropriate.

NL-OS-1.14 *

Require Creek Management Plans and Mineral Reclamation Plans to include measures to protect and maintain riparian resources and habitats.

NL-OS-1.15

Encourage federal, State and local agencies that manage public lands in the county to prevent vehicular travel in streambeds to minimize sedimentation and protect overall water quality, and in particular Clear Lake hitch and their habitat.

NL-OS-1.16 *

Support the conservation and management of oak woodland communities and their habitats and, where a proposed development would impact an oak woodland community, require mitigation measures prior to project approval.

NL-OS-1.17

Increase planting and regeneration of native trees, shrubs, grasslands, and natural landscapes and protect existing native plant species ~~whenever possible~~ to preserve the visual integrity of the landscape, provide habitat, and improve air quality and community health, especially in Equity Priority Areas.

NL-OS-1.18

Require majority use of California native plant species in large, landscaped areas in new development projects, and require construction practices that avoid spread of invasive plant species by minimizing surface disturbance; seeding and mulching disturbed areas with certified weed-free native mixes; disinfecting/decontaminating equipment; and using native, noninvasive, drought-resistant species in erosion-control plantings.

NL-OS-1.19 *

Protect wildlife migration corridors and, prior to approval of projects that might impact identified wildlife connectivity and wildlife linkage areas, require that a habitat connectivity/wildlife corridor evaluation be completed by a qualified biologist. The evaluation shall identify project design features that would reduce potential impacts to wildlife movement and incorporate wildlife corridors for new development plans where appropriate.

NL-OS-1.20

Discourage use of fencing that poses risks to wildlife.

NL-OS-1.21

Work with conservation agencies to identify appropriate locations and methods for incorporating wildlife crossings into future road projects.

NL-OS-1.22

Encourage Caltrans to consider the installation of wildlife over or under passes.

NL-OS-1.23 *

Require lighting in residential areas, along roadways, and adjacent to sensitive habitat areas to prevent artificial lighting from spilling and/or reflecting into adjacent properties, including natural or open space areas by incorporating design features, such as shielded lighting and landscaping.

NL-OS-1.24

Integrate ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in biological resource management, habitat restoration, and open space stewardship.

Actions

NL-OS-1.a

Consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify significant environments and priorities for acquisition or maintenance of open space areas based on biological and environmental concerns and develop a strategy for maintaining areas that will preserve the populations of plants and animals in the county.

NL-OS-1.b

Prepare and maintain a mapped inventory of ecologically sensitive resource areas, including unique natural areas, wetlands, floodplains, riparian resources, and the habitat of rare, threatened, endangered, and other uncommon and protected species. The map should include Rodman Slough among other areas identified based on the established criteria.

NL-OS-1.c *

Adopt a Creek and Riparian Area Management Ordinance in consultation with a qualified biologist to support Clear Lake hitch and other sensitive riparian habitat and educate affected property owners on their responsibilities and options for proper maintenance on private properties.

NL-OS-1.d

Improve County roads, where needed, to prevent vehicular travel in streambeds to minimize sedimentation and protect overall water quality, and in particular Clear Lake hitch and their habitat.

NL-OS-1.e

Develop educational materials regarding the impacts of off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel in streambeds to sedimentation, water quality, and Clear Lake hitch and their habitat, prioritizing distribution to landowners with riparian areas on their property.

NL-OS-1.f

Continue to work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement the Middle Creek Restoration Project to restore the Reclamation Area in Upper Lake to wetlands and purchase private property within the Reclamation Area for public stewardship, in an effort to support habitat and reduce the nutrient load flowing into Clear Lake.

NL-OS-1.g

Develop, adopt, and implement an Oak, Landmark, and Heritage Tree Preservation Ordinance.

~~NL-OS-1.g~~NL-OS-1.h

Develop and implement a Countywide Wildlife Migration Corridor Preservation Plan.

~~NL-OS-1.h~~NL-OS-1.i

Review “WW” Waterway, “FW” Floodway, “FF” Floodway- Fringe, and “W” Wetlands combining district information on a periodic basis. Update the boundaries of these combining districts as needed to reflect updates to mapped ecologically sensitive resource areas.

Goal NL-OS-2

Archaeological, Tribal, cultural, and historical resources that are protected and preserved throughout the Planning Area for the long-term benefit of residents, tourists, and future generations.

Policies

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines offer definitions for some of the key terms used in this Goal's policies and actions and are included in the following pages for reference.

NL-OS-2.1 *

Review proposed development projects in conjunction with the California Historical Resources Information System, Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University, to determine whether project areas contain known archaeological resources, both prehistoric and/or historic-era, and Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs), or if they have the potential to hold such resources and if so, implement mitigation to protect the resource.

NL-OS-2.2 *

Whenever possible, require new development to preserve significant historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources on-site through project design. If on-site preservation is not feasible, mitigate impacts through techniques such as relocation of structures, adaptive reuse, preservation of facades, and thorough documentation and archival of records. Any documentation of historic resources shall be conducted in accordance with Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Level III standards, as defined by the US Secretary of the Interior.

Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register; and/or included in a local register of historical resources; and/or a resource determined by the lead CEQA agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant."

- CEQA Guidelines Section 20174

NL-OS-2.3 *

Upon discovery of significant archaeological, paleontological, historic, or Tribal Cultural Resources during site development, require all activity to be halted within 100 feet of the find(s) and notify a professional archaeologist, paleontologist, historian, and/or local Tribal government representative (if appropriate) to evaluate the find(s) and recommend mitigation procedures, if necessary. Findings and mitigation measures are subject to review and approval by the Lake County Community Development Director prior to resuming site development work.

NL-OS-2.4 *

As a condition of approval for discretionary grading permits, require construction employees to be trained in recognizing potentially significant archaeological, paleontological, historic, or Tribal Cultural Resources that may be discovered during ground-disturbing activities. Require project proponents to submit verification that all site workers have received sensitivity training prior to commencement of ground-disturbing activities.

NL-OS-2.5 *

Require discretionary review for demolition permit applications on important historic sites to mitigate impacts.

NL-OS-2.6

Protect cultural and archaeological sites with potential for placement on the National Register of Historic Places and/or inclusion in the California State Office of Historic Preservation's California Points of Interest and California Register of Historical Resources. Such sites may be of statewide or local significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific, religious, or other values.

NL-OS-2.7

Follow the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction for the treatment of historic properties.

NL-OS-2.8

Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings, sites, and areas with identified archaeological, cultural, or historic significance.

NL-OS-2.9

Coordinate historic and cultural resources management with local Tribal governments, planning and regulatory agencies, and nearby jurisdictions.

NL-OS-2.10

Support and distribute information to the community from local, State, and national education programs about cultural and archaeological resources.

NL-OS-2.11

Conduct education and outreach to the community about the various federal, Tribal, State, local, and private funding sources and economic mechanisms available to support historic resource preservation.

A **historical resource** is a resource listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR by the State Historical Resources Commission, a resource included in a local register of Historical Resources, or identified as significant in a Historical Resource survey meeting the requirements of Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1(g), or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.

- CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)

A **unique archaeological resource** is "an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria: it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; it has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or it is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person."

- CEQA Guidelines Section 21083.2

Actions

NL-OS-2.a

Contract with a qualified cultural resource coordinator for the development of review procedures and ordinances for the protection of cultural heritage resources, including mechanisms for the protection of identified cultural sites from vandalism and instances when owners of designated historic properties assert economic hardship.

NL-OS-2.b *

Contract with an archaeologist(s) that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professionally Qualified Standards to perform Cultural Resource Studies for environmental analysis on discretionary projects where a cultural resource report is deemed necessary, including outreach to Tribal governments for input on Tribal Cultural Resources.

NL-OS-2.c

Establish a process for considering the designation of structures older than 50 years as historic structures or landmarks eligible for special recognition and preservation protections.

NL-OS-2.d

Engage the North Lake Area community to identify appropriate sites for the Historic Preservation Combining District and apply the District to identified sites.

NL-OS-2.e

Support continued operation of the Lake County Heritage Commission to review development projects that may impact historic resources.

NL-OS-2.f

Prepare a historical resources inventory for the Planning Area, using State and federal standards to evaluate their significance.

NL-OS-2.g

Apply to the State to become a Certified Local Government, making the County eligible for historic preservation programs.

Goal NL-OS-3

Celebrated, amplified, and preserved tribal influences and Tribal Cultural Resources throughout the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Policies

NL-OS-3.1

Protect tribal heritage, honor the early stewards of this land, and treat Native American remains and Tribal Cultural Resources with sensitivity and respect.

NL-OS-3.2

Support educational and other opportunities to increase knowledge and promote awareness of the history of indigenous peoples in what is now the North Lake Communities Planning Area, and how the County's relationship with local Tribal governments has evolved.

NL-OS-3.3

Respect and protect Tribal Cultural Resources, including historic, cultural, and sacred sites; cultural landscapes; views of or access to resources; and objects with cultural value to California tribes, recognizing that protecting Tribal Cultural Resources supports both cultural preservation and environmental health outcomes.

NL-OS-3.4

Conduct formal and early government-to-government consultation with culturally affiliated Tribes on all projects with potential cultural, environmental, or scenic impacts to identify and protect recorded and unrecorded Tribal Cultural Resources through the discretionary development review process.

NL-OS-3.5

Require protection of cultural resource sites in subdivision projects by avoiding identification of sites on maps, relying instead on other techniques, including establishing building envelopes.

NL-OS-3.6 *

Consult with culturally affiliated Tribal governments when developing mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts on Tribal Cultural Resources. Mitigation could include notification of culturally affiliated Tribal governments prior to and tribal monitoring during ground-disturbing activities.

NL-OS-3.7 *

Upon discovery of a burial, human remains, or suspected human remains, require immediate halt to all work within 100 feet and notify the Sheriff's Department, the culturally affiliated Tribal governments, and a qualified archaeologist for proper internment and tribal rituals according to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5.

NL-OS-3.8

Work with appropriate Tribal governments to protect sacred sites from visual intrusion or development inconsistent with cultural values, particularly along scenic corridors and riparian areas.

Actions

NL-OS-3.a

Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with local Tribal government representatives to facilitate tribal consultation, preserve Tribal Cultural Resources, and coordinate land use planning in areas around tribal lands.

NL-OS-3.b

Work with local Tribal governments to establish programs and secure funding to implement actions aimed at preserving Tribal Cultural Resources.

NL-OS-3.c

Collaborate with Tribal governments to identify cultural sites, sacred landscapes, cultural viewsheds, and traditional use areas, and incorporate them into land use planning through a Tribal Resource Conservation Overlay or equivalent mechanism, that requires a consultation-based review for any future land use designation changes affecting these areas to protect Tribal Cultural Resources and uphold the tribes' ongoing stewardship of their ancestral lands. Where appropriate, explore partnerships for co-management, conservation, and interpretive uses that honor the ancestral and ongoing relationship between Tribal governments and these lands.

Goal NL-OS-4

Conserved energy resources.

Policies

NL-OS-4.1

Require the use of energy conservation features and encourage renewable and carbon-free energy generation and storage systems in new construction and renovation of existing structures.

NL-OS-4.2

Support efforts to increase renewable and carbon-free energy generation, including wind, solar, and biomass.

NL-OS-4.3

Promote and incentivize small-scale, on-site renewable energy and storage systems for existing residential units, nonresidential buildings, and in the agricultural sector.

NL-OS-4.4

Participate in local and State programs that reduce the consumption of energy.

NL-OS-4.5

Work with energy providers to promote and expand cost saving options for low-income households.

NL-OS-4.6

Construct all new or remodeled County buildings and retrofit existing buildings to be energy efficient and rely on renewable and carbon-free energy resources where feasible.

NL-OS-4.7

Consider fuel efficiency as one of the main selection criteria when purchasing new County vehicles.

NL-OS-4.8

Coordinate with energy providers to locate transmission systems in locations that minimize environmental and other impacts.

Actions

NL-OS-4.a

Prepare a new General Plan Energy Element to guide the development, governance, financing, and ongoing management of energy generation projects and energy resources within the county in a manner that maximizes benefits to the Lake County community.

NL-OS-4.b

Investigate use of community benefit agreements for new energy generation developments.

~~NL-OS-4.a~~NL-OS-4.c

Explore opportunities to purchase and install solar panels and battery storage in bulk to serve homes and businesses in the community, prioritizing Equity Priority Areas and Equity Priority Populations, including establishment and subsidization of community solar programs that supply electricity to multiple consumers from a single photovoltaic solar location.

~~NL-OS-4.b~~NL-OS-4.d

Explore options to create a bulk buying program or revolving loan fund that allows people to purchase energy-efficient electric appliances (heat pumps, fans, air purifiers, heaters, stoves, ovens, etc.) and other items that increase building efficiency at wholesale prices or minimal cost to increase energy efficiency and replace hazardous appliances in their home or business. Work with volunteer groups to support installation and disposal of old appliances in Equity Priority Areas and for Equity Priority Populations.

~~NL-OS-4.c~~NL-OS-4.e

Coordinate with local utility providers and educational institutions to develop informational brochures that promote energy conservation and the use of renewable and carbon-free energy sources. Make these brochures available to the public and distribute them with building permit application materials.

~~NL-OS-4.d~~NL-OS-4.f

Work with local agencies and non-profits to retrofit and upgrade homes for energy efficiency and climate resiliency, particularly in Equity Priority Areas.

Goal NL-OS-5

Continued economic viability of mineral extraction activities while minimizing impacts on the public and the environment.

Policies

NL-OS-5.1

Require that all mining operations prevent environmental contamination from storage and disposal of wastes and hazardous materials or general operating activity at the site.

NL-OS-5.2

Prioritize remediation, monitoring, and restoration of historic mine sites located within or near tribal ancestral territories.

NL-OS-5.3

Ensure that all mining operations are performed in compliance with the policies and implementation measures included in the Lake County Aggregate Resources Management Plan (**Appendix A** to this General Plan).

NL-OS-5.4

Require new development adjacent to existing mining operations to be designed to provide a buffer between the proposed use and the mining operation. Require new mining operations to provide a buffer between the mine and existing or likely adjacent uses to minimize incompatibility issues and mitigate environmental and aesthetic impacts. Required buffer distances will be based on an evaluation of noise, aesthetics, drainage, operating conditions, topography, lighting, traffic, operating hours, and air quality.

NL-OS-5.5

Promote the use of Best-Available Control Technology to minimize dust, smoke, fumes, and odors associated with mining and processing operations.

NL-OS-5.6

Require review and approval by the Environmental Health Department and Air Quality Management District for storage of hazardous materials associated with new mining operations.

Goal NL-OS-6

A parks, recreation, and open space system that serves the recreational needs of North Lake Communities Planning Area residents and visitors.

Policies

NL-OS-6.1

Provide and promote a balanced recreation system offering a variety of quality social activities and recreational opportunities for all community members.

NL-OS-6.2

Coordinate the development of parks and recreation facilities with the rate of growth in the North Lake Communities Planning Area to ensure parks and recreation facilities are adequate to serve the local population.

NL-OS-6.3

Maintain a level of service standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents for parks.

NL-OS-6.4

Support the continued maintenance and improvement of existing recreational facilities and expansion of new recreational opportunities on County-owned lands, as outlined in the countywide Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, and on State- and federally-owned lands.

NL-OS-6.5

When constructing new County parks, use the following guidelines:

- Locate the park to promote an equitable distribution of facilities within the Planning Area and across the county.
- Locate the park centrally to serve as much of the population base as possible.
- Locate the park at the intersection of major and/or minor collectors to facilitate access.
- Locate the park along designated bicycle routes to facilitate access by bicyclists.
- Locate the park in close proximity to shopping areas, cultural facilities, such as libraries or museums, schools, and employment centers.
- Develop community parks to be appropriately sized.
- Provide night lighting when feasible to reduce vandalism and extend the use of the facility.
- Locate the park on sites that do not contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, unless adequate clean cover material and other effective controls, as determined by the Lake County Air Quality Management District, are incorporated to minimize public exposure to asbestos dust.

NL-OS-6.6

Expand access to diverse, high-quality parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, trails, and natural environments for Equity Priority Populations and residents of Equity Priority Areas, including by facilitating multiple transportation modes. Design and maintain these facilities to offer a safe and comfortable environment for users of all ages and abilities.

NL-OS-6.7

Encourage and support efforts to transform the old Marina into a public boardwalk.

~~NL-OS-6.7~~NL-OS-6.8

Strengthen the role of County parks as community focal points by constructing meeting halls and recreational buildings on existing parks where feasible.

~~NL-OS-6.8~~NL-OS-6.9

Prioritize and promote recreational activity programs and opportunities in Equity Priority Areas.

~~NL-OS-6.9~~NL-OS-6.10

Support expanded access to indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities by working with other agencies to co-locate recreation spaces, parks, and trails with public facilities, such as schools and utility easements, prioritizing Equity Priority Areas.

~~NL-OS-6.10~~NL-OS-6.11

Require large development projects to construct and maintain parks within the development, when appropriate.

~~NL-OS-6.11~~NL-OS-6.12

Support partnerships with local Tribal governments for joint management and interpretation of parks, trails, and open space areas to reflect and honor the tribes' enduring connection to the land.

~~NL-OS-6.12~~NL-OS-6.13

Involve community members in the design and development of all park and recreation facilities, with special emphasis on engaging Equity Priority Populations and residents of Equity Priority Areas.

~~NL-OS-6.13~~NL-OS-6.14

When building parks and recreational facilities in areas with sensitive habitat, preserve habitat areas and design the space to avoid potential impacts on the habitat from park users.

~~NL-OS-6.14~~NL-OS-6.15

Promote passive recreation in flood-prone areas to absorb floodwater and protect developed areas.

NL-OS-6.16

Seek opportunities to install bird watching amenities in the County parks.

~~NL-OS-6.15~~NL-OS-6.17

Allow vendors in public parks, as appropriate, to encourage new, private recreation and leisure programming and facilities.

Actions

NL-OS-6.a

Implement and periodically update, as needed, the countywide Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.

NL-OS-6.b

Seek funding to implement the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan and to keep parks safe, attractive, and responsive to community needs, including funding for park acquisition, planning, capital improvements, lifecycle replacement of amenities, recreation programming, recreation centers, and maintenance operations.

NL-OS-6.c

Identify public lands suitable for off-road recreation and explore opportunities to develop these uses.

NL-OS-6.d

Investigate the feasibility of developing a park expansion and improvement program that includes a combination of one or more of the following: impact fees for new homes, special assessment districts, and county service areas.

NL-OS-6.e

Work to ensure parks and recreation spaces are kept clean and free of litter and hazardous materials.

NL-OS-6.f

Enforce prohibitions of drug use and overnight and/or long-term camping in parks, recreation, and open space areas.

Goal NL-OS-7

Public access to and opportunities for community enjoyment of Clear Lake.

Policies

NL-OS-7.1

Provide trails, turnouts, and public open spaces wherever possible along the lakeshore.

NL-OS-7.2

Manage County-owned land near Clear Lake in a manner that maximizes public enjoyment of the lake, including by:

- Retaining vacant County-owned lakefront properties and making improvements, as needed, to expand opportunities for public access to and use of Clear Lake, unless a land swap, as described below, would result in better public access;
- Considering land swaps with private lakefront property owners that would enable consolidation of County properties into more useable parcels;
- Acquiring surplus lakefront lands from other public agencies and retaining them for public lake access;
- Prioritizing expansion of lakefront lands for public access adjacent to existing lakefront recreational lands to foster an integrated lakefront recreation network; and
- Utilizing public streets that dead-end at the lake for public access to the lake.

NL-OS-7.3

Continue to support efforts to improve and increase public access to Clear Lake, prioritizing sites in established communities and near existing resort development.

NL-OS-7.4

Require new commercial development along the shoreline of Clear Lake to provide public lake access, including docks, as appropriate.

NL-OS-7.5
Support water-related uses and facilities on vacant or redeveloped lakefront lands, provided the uses and/or facilities will not negatively impact the environment or preclude public access to the lake.

Water-related uses and facilities are those whose primary purpose is to provide for public access to and use of the lake, such as fishing, boating, swimming, water skiing, viewing, and commercial uses that derive major economic benefits from their immediate proximity to the lake.

NL-OS-7.6
Discourage conversion of privately owned lakefront lots that provide public access to the lake to uses that would preclude future public use.

NL-OS-7.7
Prioritize maintenance and improvement of public lakefront lands in the County's budget to help maximize the recreation, aesthetic, and economic benefits derived from public view and use of the lakefront.

NL-OS-7.8
Maintain a safe boating environment on the County's waterways.

NL-OS-7.9
Maintain and expand County boat launch facilities to ensure adequate and convenient access to Clear Lake.

Actions

NL-OS-7.a
Continue to maintain the Clear Lake public launch and marina facilities to ensure easy and safe access by the public.

NL-OS-7.b
Investigate development of dock maintenance regulations.

~~NL-OS-7.b~~NL-OS-7.c
Install and maintain signage identifying areas open to public access along the lake.

~~NL-OS-7.c~~NL-OS-7.d
Explore innovative programs that would expand public lake access in residential areas along the lake.

~~NL-OS-7.d~~NL-OS-7.e
Explore the feasibility of developing additional boat launch facilities at streets that dead-end at the lake.

~~NL-OS-7.e~~NL-OS-7.f
Establish temporary docking areas for boats used in commuting across Clear Lake in locations where the County maintains dock facilities.

~~NL-OS-7.f~~NL-OS-7.g

Establish no-wake zones in ecologically sensitive resource areas and areas primarily used for nonmotorized recreation, such as swimming, kayaking, and bird watching.

Goal NL-OS-8

An interconnected multiuse trail system that serves a variety of recreational needs in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Policies

Infrastructure to support walking and biking, including trails, is also addressed in the Circulation Element.

NL-OS-8.1

Encourage and support efforts to develop a multiuse ridgeline trail system, particularly at the Middle Creek ~~Trails~~Restoration lands, and a multiuse shoreline water trail~~n~~ system along the north shore of Clear Lake~~new trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian use, including efforts to expand or build connections between existing trails and to support access to the Lake~~.

NL-OS-8.2

Encourage landowners to create easements along waterways or across lands that would connect existing and proposed trails.

NL-OS-8.3

Provide safe access to existing and new parks for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. Support development of improved and additional safe access for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians on State and federal lands.

NL-OS-8.4

Continue to support equestrian activities in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, including through land use regulations that support horse ownership and stewardship.

NL-OS-8.5

Increase public awareness and support for county trails through promotions, interpretive programs, exhibits, publication, maps, and the County's website.

NL-OS-8.6

Provide water and shade structures at trail heads and county parks, where feasible, to support their use and decrease adverse health impacts from recreation during extreme heat days.

Actions

NL-OS-8.a

Develop incentives to encourage dedication of trails.

NL-OS-8.b

Develop trails consistent with the County Bikeway Plan and the Konocti Regional Trails Plan for hiking, bicycling, and riding.

NL-OS-8.c

Investigate opportunities to develop a trail system along existing public levee banks.

Goal NL-OS-9

Preserved and enhanced scenic resources and viewsheds in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Policies

NL-OS-9.1 *

In rural areas outside of Community Growth Boundaries, require structures built in the immediate foreground view of a scenic route to be sited a sufficient distance from the roadway edge to minimize intrusion on the natural features and backdrops as viewed from the roadway or adjacent residences. In rural and urbanized areas, require structures built in the immediate foreground of a scenic route to minimize obstruction of views of significant natural features. Require development on hillsides to blend in with the surroundings through exterior color choices and maximum height restrictions.

NL-OS-9.2

Develop and maintain roads and highways in a manner that protects natural and scenic resources.

NL-OS-9.3

Develop access to scenic viewpoints along SR 20, County roadways, and multiuse trails. Provide interpretive information at these access points to inform visitors and residents of the natural and cultural history of the North Lake Communities Planning Area and region and encourage the provision of public restrooms, water fountains, and other amenities at these locations.

NL-OS-9.4

Encourage utility companies and service providers to choose the least conspicuous locations for distribution lines, towers, and fuel breaks to avoid impacts to viewsheds where possible.

NL-OS-9.5

Use native and drought tolerant landscaping to frame and direct attention to major views and away from unattractive developments to the extent practical. Permit selective cutting and pruning to enable establishment or improvement of roadway views. Discourage the use of herbicides wherever possible.

NL-OS-9.6

Ensure light does not impact the dark skies of Lake County.

Actions

NL-OS-9.a *

Develop an ordinance that regulates development on or near ridgelines and hilltops to minimize impacts to scenic viewsheds.

NL-OS-9.b

Amend the Scenic Combining District to include ridgelines, hilltops, and the Clear Lake shoreline working in consultation with Tribal governments.

NL-OS-9.c

Amend the Scenic Combining District regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit billboard signage on commercial properties.

NL-OS-9.d

Work with local Tribal governments to establish a sacred viewshed preservation policy, balanced with economic development and private property rights.

Goal NL-OS-10

Preserved and enhanced visual quality within community areas.

Policies

NL-OS-10.1

Require new development to screen mechanical equipment and trash storage facilities from public view.

NL-OS-10.2

Require appropriate visual screening and roadway setbacks for industrial and service commercial uses, including through the use of native vegetation for screening.

NL-OS-10.3 *

Require the use of lighting that enhances visibility, convenience, and public safety without creating glare or light pollution.

NL-OS-10.4 *

Require the use of low-glare building materials for new buildings constructed within the Planning Area.

NL-OS-10.5

Require new commercial development to install street trees in accordance with an adopted streetscape plan and with fire-safe landscaping requirements.

NL-OS-10.6

Encourage undergrounding existing and future utilities along the entire length of Main Street in Upper Lake and along SR 20 and 29 where they pass through the communities of Blue Lakes, Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake.

Actions

NL-OS-10.a *

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to regulate outdoor lighting in a way that minimizes light pollution that disrupts dark skies while providing for safety and reasonable use.

NL-OS-10.b

Establish a coordinated roadway signage program for the North Lake Communities Planning Area that identifies routes and major destinations, provides traffic information, and provides directional information to major destinations and public access areas while supporting the visual character of the region.

NL-OS-10.c

Maintain Code Enforcement services to support the visual quality of the community.

NL-OS-10.d

Work with PG&E to form an underground utilities district along the entire length of Main Street in Upper Lake and along SR 20 and SR 29 where they pass through the communities of Blue Lakes, Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake.

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Environmental Justice

In 2016, the California State legislature passed SB 1000, making the topic of environmental justice a required element in General Plans. This new Environmental Justice Element for the North Lake Communities Planning Area accomplishes the following:

- Introduces the concept of environmental justice.
- Summarizes the process used to identify communities in the North Lake Communities Planning Area impacted by environmental justice issues (termed Equity Priority Areas and Equity Priority Populations).
- Identifies environmental justice issues in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, which include pollution exposure, access to public facilities and services, food security, availability of healthy living spaces, abandoned properties and illegal dumping issues, access to healthcare, access to recreation, and opportunities for community engagement.
- Establishes goals, policies, and actions to address these issues and the needs of impacted communities. As noted in the Introduction, because environmental justice touches all aspects of the community, some of these policies and actions are in other North Lake Communities Planning Area Elements.

Environmental Justice Definition

Environmental justice is defined as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies...and includes, but is not limited to all of the following:

The availability of a healthy environment for all people.

The deterrence, reduction, and elimination of pollution burdens for populations and communities experiencing the adverse effects of that pollution, so that the effects of the pollution are not disproportionately borne by those populations and communities.

Governmental entities engaging and providing technical assistance to populations and communities most impacted by pollution to promote their meaningful participation in all phases of the environmental and land use decision making process.

At a minimum, the meaningful consideration of recommendations from populations and communities most impacted by pollution into environmental and land use decisions."

- California Government Code Section 65040.12(e)(1).

The concept of environmental justice recognizes that low-income residents, communities of color, indigenous peoples, and tribal nations are disproportionately exposed to environmental health hazards like soil and water contamination and that this inequity is the result of many factors that have occurred throughout history and are still occurring today. Some of these factors include inappropriate zoning and negligent land use planning, intersecting structural inequalities, deed restrictions and other discriminatory housing and lending practices, limited political and economic power among these demographic groups, the prioritization of business interests over public health, development patterns that tend to concentrate pollution and environmental hazards in these communities, and the placement of economic and environmental benefits in other communities. As a

result, these impacted communities continue to face significant barriers to their overall health, livelihood, and sustainability.

Equity Priority Areas and Populations

Among the requirements to comply with SB 1000, jurisdictions must identify environmental justice-impacted communities; in Lake County, these are termed Equity Priority Areas. State law allows jurisdictions to use discretion in identifying Equity Priority Areas, though the State provides several possible thresholds and data sources to inform the designation. Guidance from the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) suggests including federally recognized tribal lands among the Equity Priority Areas, in addition to areas that have certain social characteristics, such as a concentration of low-income households, and that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards. The inclusion of tribal areas in this definition reflects an understanding of the ongoing and generational impacts of colonization, displacement, and marginalization affecting indigenous peoples today, evidenced by disproportionately negative economic and public health outcomes in tribal communities.

Following this guidance, Rancherias of the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake and the Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California are identified as Equity Priority Areas by this element.

The County also consulted income data to identify the most economically disadvantaged areas of the Planning Area as Equity Priority Areas. Specifically, the County identified census block groups where the median income is 80 percent or less of the countywide area median income. These areas were then trimmed to only include populated areas and exclude open spaces. Based on this approach, the communities of Blue Lakes, Lucerne, and Nice were identified as Equity Priority Areas.

Tribal and income-based Equity Priority Areas are shown in **Figures NL-12** (countywide) and **NL-13** (North Lake Communities Planning Area).

In addition to these designated Equity Priority Areas, the County recognizes that there are community members throughout the county who may be acutely vulnerable to being underserved in a variety of areas, including environmental justice, health, and safety. The General Plan terms these Equity Priority Populations, which include the following groups of people:

- Older adults
- Individuals with disabilities
- Farmworkers and other outdoor workers
- Non-English speakers
- People of color and immigrant communities
- Tribal communities
- Low-income individuals and households
- Unhoused people

Figure NL-12 Countywide Equity Priority Areas

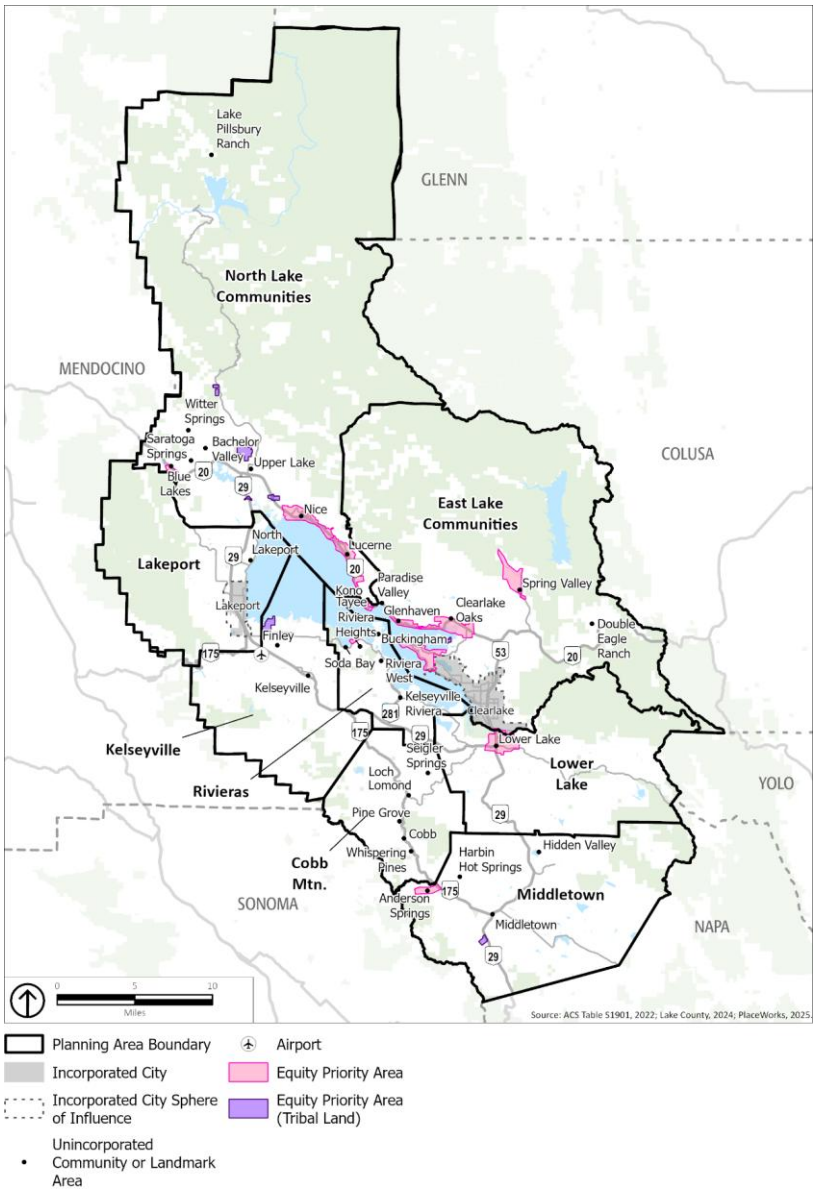
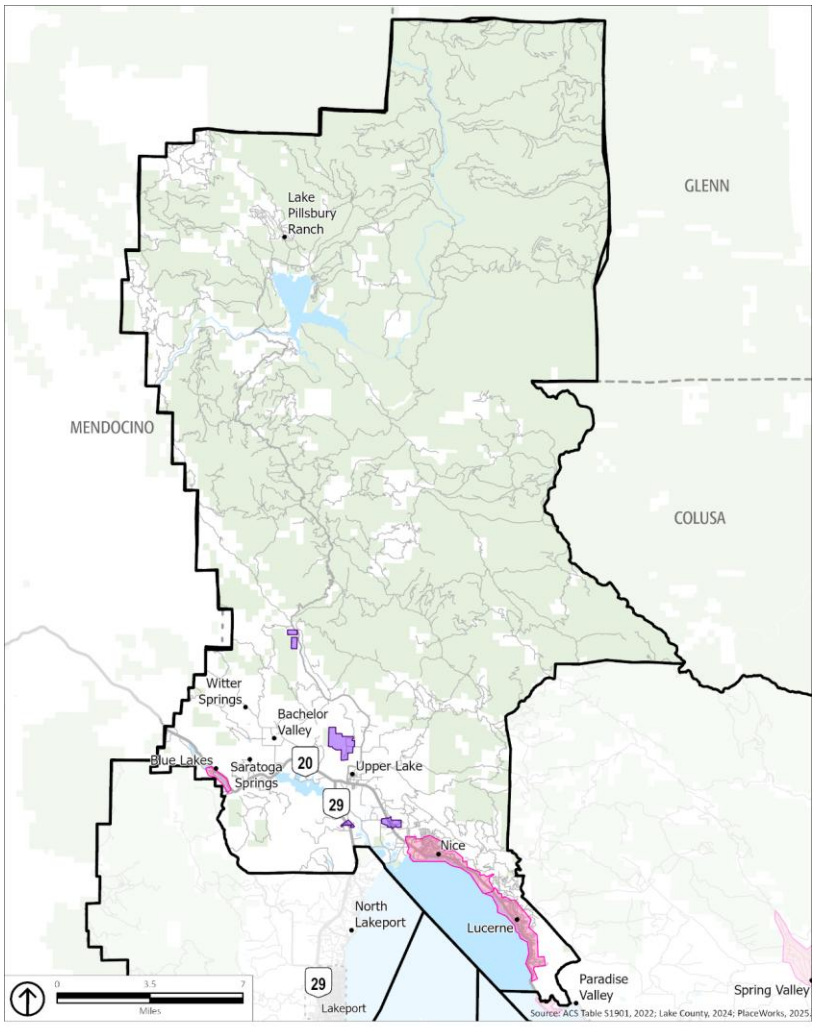


Figure NL-13 North Lake Communities Area Equity Priority Areas



Policies and actions in this General Plan to address environmental justice issues that are place-specific, such as the clean-up of abandoned lots, may apply to the entire Planning Area or county but include language to first prioritize addressing the needs of Equity Priority Areas. Similarly, policies and actions that are not necessarily tied to a geographic location but do address an environmental justice issue may include references to Equity Priority Populations. Some policies and actions focus on both Equity Priority Areas and Equity Priority Populations.

Environmental Justice Issues in the North Lake Communities Area

This section describes environmental justice issues identified in the North Lake Communities Planning Area based on State data and conversations with community members, including tribal communities.

State Data

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), which is part of CalEPA, developed and maintains a tool called CalEnviroScreen, which measures pollution and population characteristics using 21 indicators related to environmental justice (see **Table NL-5**). CalEnviroScreen ranks each census tract in the state for each indicator, with higher scores indicating the census tract fares worse for that issue than census tracts with lower scores. For example, a ranked score of 75 indicates that the census tract is more impacted for that indicator compared to 75 percent of all other census tracts in the state. Higher scores always indicate a higher burden or negative impact. **Figure NL-14** shows the census tracts encompassing the populated North Lake Communities Planning Area used to evaluate environmental justice-related data from CalEnviroScreen.

Figure NL-14 North Lake Communities Area Census Tracts and Block Groups

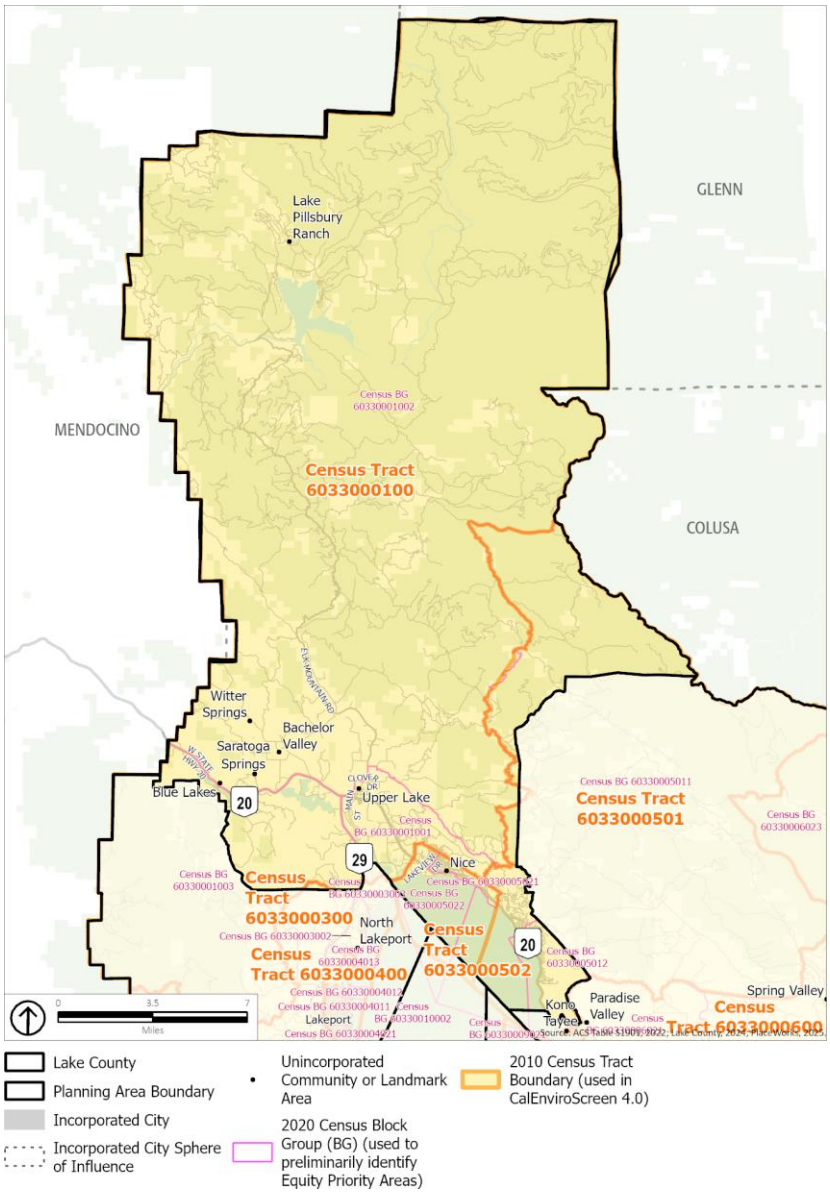


Table NL-5 CalEnviroScreen Scores for North Lake Communities Planning Area

Indicator	Census Tract 6033000100 Score	Census Tract 6033000501 Score	Census Tract 6033000502 Score
(higher scores indicate higher impact or burden)			
Cumulative CalEnviroScreen Percentile Score (all indicators combined)	35	30	27
Air Quality: Ozone Concentration	25	15	15
Air Quality: Particulate Matter Concentration	0	0	1
Diesel Particulate Matter Emissions	3	3	26
Pesticide Use	60	26	33
Concentration of Toxic Releases	0	1	0
Traffic Density	1	0	3
Concentration of Drinking Water Contaminants	5	25	43
Children's Lead Risk from Housing	47	55	28
Concentration of Cleanup Sites	75	69	69
Susceptibility to Groundwater Threats	71	0	0
Density of Hazardous Waste Facilities	4	0	0
Proximity to Impaired Water Bodies	51	24	24
Proximity to Solid Waste Sites	87	53	53
Asthma-Induced Emergency Room Visits	66	82	88
Low Birth Weight Infants	16	96	68
Heart Attack-Induced Emergency Room Visits	47	57	55
Population Without a High School Degree	48	67	28
Limited English-Speaking Households	13	33	0
Poverty	67	75	85
Relative Unemployment	95	20	11
Housing Burdened Low-Income Households	48	78	78

Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0; California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, updated 2021.

As shown in **Table NL-5**, census tract 6033000100, which encompasses the Rancherias and Blue Lakes Equity Priority Areas, scores above the 50th percentile for 8 of the 21 indicators; its worst burdens are concentration of cleanup sites (75th percentile), proximity to solid waste sites (87th percentile), and unemployment (95th percentile). Census tract 6033000501, which encompasses the Lucerne Equity Priority Area, scores above the 50th percentile for 9 of the 21 indicators, with the following worst burdens: poverty (75th percentile), housing burdened low-income households (78th percentile), asthma-induced emergency room visits (82nd percentile), and low birth weight infants (96th percentile). Census tract

6033000502, which encompasses the Nice Equity Priority Area, scores above the 50th percentile for 7 of the 21 indicators; its worst burdens are housing burdened low-income households (78th percentile), poverty (85th percentile), and asthma-induced emergency room visits (88th percentile).

Environmental Indicators: Cleanup Sites, Solid Waste Sites

The score for concentration of cleanup sites is measured by the number of places that are contaminated with hazardous chemicals and require clean up by the property owners or government. Chemicals at cleanup sites can move through the air or groundwater and people living near these sites have greater potential to be exposed to chemicals from the sites than people living further away. There are three cleanup sites within the census tract 6033000100, which encompasses the Rancherias and Blue Lakes Equity Priority Areas: two formerly used defense sites (properties that were previously used by the U.S. Department of Defense but have since transferred control) and Last Mile Auto Dismantlers, a junkyard and metal reclamation and recycling facility where hazardous substances such as copper, lead, and motor oil were improperly handled. While no potential hazards related to past uses or activities have been identified at formerly used defense sites and they have received "No Further Action" recommendations, the Last Mile Auto site has documented groundwater, surface water, soils, and sediment contamination requiring additional remediation.

The proximity to solid waste score is measured based on the proximity of residential households to facilities that process solid waste, like dump sites, recycling facilities, and composting facilities. The high score for proximity to solid waste disposal sites in the same census tract 6033000100 is based on the presence of several closed facilities within Mendocino National Forest and a resort solid waste facility near Blue Lakes. Other solid waste facilities in the Planning Area include the closed Nice Dump site northwest of Nice and Morrison Creek Dump, an unpermitted dump site located north of Lucerne.

Health Outcome Indicators: Asthma, Low Birth Weight Infants

In CalEnviroScreen 4.0, the asthma-induced emergency room visits indicator is measured by the number of emergency department visits between 2015 and 2017 for asthma attacks. Similarly, the low birthweight indicator is measured by the rates of infants born with low birth weights in the same period. Poor health outcomes like asthma and infants born with low birth weights are very closely linked with high poverty rates; low-income households are less likely to be able to physically access and afford healthy foods and health care, particularly pre-natal and pediatric healthcare, and have more limited opportunities for outdoor recreation and opportunities for active transportation, like walking and biking. Asthma rates are also linked to the prevalence of toxic building materials common in older housing units, like mold and asbestos, as well as high rates of pesticide use from agricultural activities. The census tracts ending in 501 and 502, which encompass the Lucerne and Nice Equity Priority Areas, score above 75 percent for the asthma indicator. Only the Lucerne Equity Priority Area's census tract scores above 75 percent for the low-birth-weight indicator; it has a high score of 96, meaning that there are more low-birth-weight infants born in this census tract than 98 percent of the census tracts in the state.

Socioeconomic Indicators: Poverty, Unemployment, Housing Burden

CalEnviroScreen measures poverty based on U.S. Census data and the Federal Poverty Line income threshold, which is calculated regularly based on inflation and is used to qualify households for federal assistance programs. According to CalEnviroScreen, there are more residents in the two census tracts encompassing the Lucerne and Nice Equity Priority Areas living at or below the Federal Poverty Line than at least 75 percent of all other census tracts in California. Low-income households face extreme challenges due to the gap between household income and rising costs of living, particularly in California where both income and sales taxes are relatively high compared to other states.

The score for relative unemployment is measured by the percentage of the population over the age of 16 that is unemployed and eligible for the labor force, excluding retirees, students, military personnel on active duty, and those not looking for work. Unemployment is highly correlated with generational poverty and has a wide range of effects on physical and mental health that can further compound other burdens faced by vulnerable communities. This is a particular issue in the census tract ending in 100, which encompasses the Rancherias and Blue Lakes Equity Priority Areas and has a score of 95 for this indicator.

Housing burden refers to the percentage of total household income spent on housing costs. This indicator measures the percentage of low-income households (i.e., households making less than 80 percent of the county family median income) that are severely burdened by housing costs (i.e., paying over 50 percent of their income on rent or mortgage). This is a particular issue for residents in the census tracts ending in 501 and 502, which encompass the Lucerne and Nice Equity Priority Areas, meaning that residents there have limited income remaining after paying their rent or mortgage to pay for other basic needs, like food and health care. This can lead to poor health outcomes and housing instability.

Community-Identified Issues

The CalEnviroScreen indicators provide a general high-level snapshot of potential environmental justice issues in the area, but the data must be 'ground-truthed' or used in concert with community engagement to develop a complete understanding of environmental justice and public health issues specific to each community. Therefore, this section summarizes public health and environmental justice issues raised by community members and public health advocates during the General Plan 2050 engagement process. It also describes environmental issues faced by tribal communities based on tribal consultation.

Pollution Exposure

Air quality is very good overall in Lake County and in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, as detailed by the related CalEnviroScreen indicators in **Table NL-5**. However, the Planning Area occasionally experiences poor air dispersion, leading to temporarily poorer air quality, due to its topography. Steep hills, ridges, valleys, and canyons in the Planning Area and the greater Clear Lake Basin itself can prevent dispersion of pollutants. This effect is especially pronounced during inversion periods, when cold air is trapped near the ground beneath a layer of warm air, preventing contaminated air from rising and being carried away and instead causing it to be spread horizontally. Smoke is a frequent air quality hazard in the

Planning Area and throughout Lake County. Sources of outdoor air pollution from smoke include residential burning, prescribed vegetation burning, agricultural burning, and wildfires.

Air pollution is not an issue exclusive to the identified Equity Priority Areas; Equity Priority Populations who may reside throughout the Planning Area may be more vulnerable to health impacts from poor air quality due to preexisting health conditions, excess exposure (e.g., outdoor farmworkers), limited incomes, and other constraints, like access to quality healthcare. Policies and actions addressing air quality are included in the Health and Safety Element.

Water pollution from agricultural activity, including illegal cannabis cultivation, as well as from high concentrations of septic tank usage, creek stabilization activities, and wetlands loss and degradation, is also a concern across the county, including in the North Lake Communities Planning Area. The Agricultural Resources; Water Resources; and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Elements discuss these issues in more detail and provide policies and actions to address this concern.

Access to Public Facilities and Services

Due to the North Lake Communities Planning Area's remote location and rural setting, access to vital public services is sometimes limited, which can be exacerbated for Equity Priority Areas and Populations that face economic constraints. Specific issues facing the North Lake Communities Planning Area's Equity Priority Areas and Populations include long response times for emergency services, like police, fire, and ambulance services; access to reliable power (an acute issue for those with power-dependent medical needs); and affordable garbage collection and disposal services. Some households in the Planning Area lack adequate water and sewer service and infrastructure.

The Health and Safety Element provides policies and actions addressing standards for emergency response times and power shutoffs. The Public Facilities and Services Element provides actions addressing water, sewer, and solid waste disposal services.

Food Security

Equity Priority Areas and Populations both face barriers in accessing healthy food, including fresh produce and minimally processed foods. The location and distribution of retail outlets selling these foods, transit accessibility to existing locations, and cost are all key determinants in whether the food is truly accessible. In addition to increasing access to healthy food, community members are also interested in educational and economic opportunities related to local agriculture that could empower communities to grow and/or sell their own food.

Healthy food in this General Plan refers to foods containing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and/or healthy fats and limited amounts of saturated fat, sodium, or added sugar.

In addition to the goals, policies, and actions in this element addressing food access, the Land Use Element includes strategies to develop new grocery stores and other fresh food outlets, and the Circulation Element includes policy guidance to optimize transit options to key destinations.

Healthy Living Spaces

Housing affordability is an issue throughout the state. In Lake County, overcrowding is prevalent due to high housing costs and has the potential to pose mental and physical health risks for Equity Priority Areas and Populations, including spreading communicable disease.

Older homes often have a greater risk of having lead-based paint, asbestos, and/or mold, which can all pose risks to human health. Local public health advocates have also identified exposure to toxins, such as aerosols and tobacco smoke, in multifamily housing as an environmental justice issue throughout the county, in addition to tobacco use generally as a health hazard. The issue of toxins in multifamily housing is especially acute for children and other sensitive residents living in multifamily residential buildings where "third-hand" smoke can seep through walls, vents, and plumbing. Low-income residents with less access to healthcare and other resources are particularly vulnerable to health risks from smoking and from exposure to second- and third-hand smoke and aerosols.

Abandoned Properties and Illegal Dumping Issues

Along the shoreline of Clear Lake, there are informal and dilapidated structures that not only impact the area's scenic and aesthetic value, but also pose public health concerns. Illegal dumping is also an issue in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, warranting policies that provide incentives for junk removal and structure improvements. Policy guidance related to scenic impacts is provided in the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element, while the Land Use Element and Public Facilities and Services Element include policy guidance related to code enforcement and illegal dumping.

Access to Healthcare

Healthcare access is limited and an increasing need in the North Lake Communities Planning Area as the population ages. Lack of access to medical professionals, clinics, hospitals, and in-home care, along with having to drive long distances for medical services, poses difficulties for residents. This is of particular concern for Equity Priority Populations, especially older residents living on fixed incomes and/or with disabilities who may have limited mobility options but need more frequent access to medical services.

Access to Recreation

Residents in the North Lake Communities Planning Area need more active recreation opportunities, especially for youth. While community members support expanded recreation opportunities for all residents, public recreation facilities and after-school programs are particularly important for Equity Priority Areas, whose residents often lack resources to pay for private extracurricular activities and may have limited mobility options to access recreation opportunities more than a short distance away.

The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element provides information and policy guidance on multipurpose trail development, expansion of the park system, community participation in park design, and the broadening of recreation opportunities in the Planning Area.

Opportunities for Community Engagement

Low-income residents and other Equity Priority Populations face difficulties engaging in civic processes, such as the General Plan Update or an individual development proposal, due to barriers like transportation, technological literacy, and internet access, and having time available to be involved. Community members who do not speak English or those with limited English proficiency are often precluded from engaging in civic processes when translation services are not available.

In addition to the community engagement policies addressed in this element, the Public Facilities and Services Element also includes policy guidance to create a more informed citizenry by improving telecommunications services.

Environmental Justice Issues in Tribal Communities

Environmental justice for tribal communities requires recognition of the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, displacement, and land-use inequities that continue to affect tribal communities. While Tribal communities continue to live in, steward, and preserve sacred cultural resources and practices in the region, they also continue to face disproportionate barriers and impacts with respect to the Community-Identified Issues discussed in the above subsections, and additionally with respect to Tribal sovereignty and access to Tribal Cultural Resources and ancestral land. For example, in addition to posing risks to human health, environmental degradation and pollution also pose risks to Tribal Cultural Resources such as sacred sites, traditional plant gathering areas, and waterways used for cultural practices and livelihoods. Similarly, investments, infrastructure improvements, development of parks and recreation facilities, and other measures to address the Environmental Justice issues described above must be planned and implemented in collaboration with Tribal governments and the broader community in a way that upholds Tribal sovereignty and avoids disturbances to culturally significant landscapes. Environmental justice for tribal communities includes the protection of Tribal Cultural Resources and ancestral lands as a fundamental component of community health, identity, and environmental balance, in addition to supporting tribal community health and access to clean air and water, healthcare, economic opportunity, and safe homes. This involves prioritizing environmental restoration and contamination cleanup in areas of cultural significance or ancestral use, ensuring Tribal participation throughout the planning and policy process particularly in aspects that affect culturally important lands and resources, and promoting tribal-led environmental stewardship programs and access to funding for sustainable land management and habitat restoration practices. Ongoing collaboration with Tribal governments supports a just and inclusive approach to planning that recognizes cultural survival, environmental stewardship, and tribal self-determination as fundamental components of community well-being. Related goals, policies, and actions addressing these concerns are included in the Agricultural Resources, Water Resources, Health and Safety, and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Elements.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-EJ-1

Communities that promote high quality of life and good health outcomes for everyone, including Equity Priority Populations.

Policies

NL-EJ-1.1
Promote efforts to improve community health outcomes and ensure that County investments support community health goals whenever possible.

Refer to the Health and Safety Element for additional policies pertaining to community health.

NL-EJ-1.2
Limit exposure to secondhand smoke, including from electronic smoking devices, tobacco smoke, and cannabis smoke, and enforce State and local laws and regulations pertaining to prohibitions of tobacco and cannabis use in specified locations and selling tobacco and cannabis to minors.

NL-EJ-1.3
Lead and support activities to facilitate affordable access to health care, including addressing infrastructure and service barriers to broadband access for telehealth and multimodal access to clinics.

NL-EJ-1.4
Encourage and support the expansion of medical and senior care facilities, such as medical clinics, urgent care, emergency care, behavioral health facilities, and pharmacies, prioritizing areas that lack access to healthcare. Strategies could include incentives or streamlining efforts.

NL-EJ-1.5
Support facilities enhancements to optimize libraries and other public spaces to support telemedicine appointments.

NL-EJ-1.6
Support efforts to attract medical professionals to the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

NL-EJ-1.7
Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to assess and address issues related to capacity and access to emergency, acute, and preventative/primary healthcare services.

NL-EJ-1.8
Encourage and support efforts to expand access to community health workers, ~~promotores~~promoters, peer navigators and support specialists, and neighborhood-based mutual aid networks that reduce social isolation; strengthen community connections; and connect residents to services, benefits, food resources, telehealth, and civic processes before challenges escalate into crises.

~~NL-EJ-1.8~~NL-EJ-1.9

Design and improve County facilities and programs to meet the needs of older adults and other Equity Priority Populations.

~~NL-EJ-1.9~~NL-EJ-1.10

Work with local Tribal governments and local community organizations on mitigation strategies for asthma-related environmental hazards.

Actions

NL-EJ-1.a

Establish a process for assisting community-based organizations and public-private partners with obtaining financing (e.g., grants) to implement physical improvements and beautification projects such as public art, fire-resilient vegetative buffers, and planting strips in Equity Priority Areas.

NL-EJ-1.b

Consider adopting a tobacco and cannabis retail licensing fee that earmarks a portion of the fee for enforcement of tobacco- and smoking-related policies.

NL-EJ-1.c

Consider adopting an ordinance prohibiting smoking (including vaping, electronic cigarettes, tobacco, and cannabis) in specific areas, such as:

- Inside and near doors and windows of multifamily housing units to limit residents' exposure to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.
- At worksites, including in and near unenclosed spaces of employment, outdoor dining areas, and unenclosed waiting areas.
- On public property, including in public parks and trails, and at public events, such as farmers' markets and community fairs.

NL-EJ-1.d

Consider adopting an ordinance aimed at reducing instances of youth using tobacco products that might include prohibiting the location of tobacco retailers near schools and other youth-serving facilities and/or establishing restrictions on the placement and promotion of tobacco products so they are not easily accessible to youth.

NL-EJ-1.e

Establish a Commission on Aging and Adult Services to review and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on specific issues, policy questions, and funding resources relating to older adults, including senior centers and senior service provider organizations, among others.

NL-EJ-1.f

Work with the newly formed Commission on Aging to prepare a new Chapter of the County's Code of Ordinances for "Community Services" to detail services available in the county, including support services for older adults.

NL-EJ-1.g

Explore adoption of an elder income index and/or other mechanisms to provide cost relief for older adult residents in the county.

NL-EJ-1.h

Work with North Coast Opportunities (NCO) to activate the AmeriCorps/Senior Corps Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) program to collect volunteer hours and use those as in-kind monetized matching funds, as allowed by the State and federal RSVP programs, to maximize funding for needed community services.

Goal NL-EJ-2

Access to living spaces that are safe, clean, and healthy for all North Lake Communities Planning Area residents.

Policies

NL-EJ-2.1

Ensure housing in the North Lake Communities Planning Area provides safe and sanitary environments for residents.

NL-EJ-2.2

Ensure that future improvements in Equity Priority Areas will not result in a net loss of subsidized affordable housing or significant preventable displacement of residents.

NL-EJ-2.3

Ensure adequate living conditions for tenants through ongoing and effective code enforcement, with priority given to housing in Equity Priority Areas.

NL-EJ-2.4

Work with and support agencies and organizations providing supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness, including efforts to secure temporary and long-term housing for unhoused community members.

Actions

NL-EJ-2.a

Pursue all available federal and State funds to assist with housing preservation and rehabilitation, with a focus on identifying funding to remediate health and safety issues for housing in Equity Priority Areas and housing units occupied by Equity Priority Populations.

NL-EJ-2.b

Review and update the Zoning Ordinance to remove unnecessary barriers to the development of farmworker housing.

NL-EJ-2.c

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to adopt development and maintenance standards for farmworker housing.

NL-EJ-2.d

Create an assistance program for homeowners and landlords to bring older properties up to code and improve their livability, with priority given to homes in Equity Priority Areas and those housing Equity Priority Populations.

NL-EJ-2.e

Develop a system or other mechanism to inventory rental housing in the county by address, both to track the stock of rental housing and to develop a mailing list to reach rental housing occupants. Additional details in the inventory may also include property owner contact information.

NL-EJ-2.f

Conduct periodic outreach in Equity Priority Areas and to Equity Priority Populations to inform tenants of their rights and responsibilities. Written outreach efforts should be provided in English and Spanish.

NL-EJ-2.g

Explore the feasibility of developing a homeless shelter in the Planning Area.

NL-EJ-2.h

Work to identify appropriate camping options for unhoused individuals and eliminate camping where prohibited.

Goal NL-EJ-3

Convenient and affordable access to healthy food for all North Lake Communities Planning Area residents.

Policies

NL-EJ-3.1

Support efforts to establish and/or expand programs and other activities to improve food security and eliminate hunger, including food assistance programs, community gardens, Tribal food gardens, and school lunch access.

NL-EJ-3.2

Support transit route changes or expansions and active transportation network improvements that link Equity Priority Areas to healthy food sources, including grocery stores. In addition, encourage new healthy food retailers near existing transit connections.

NL-EJ-3.3

Expand local food access and agriculture by supporting and encouraging certified farmers' markets, urban farming, community gardening, and other similar activities.

NL-EJ-3.4

Encourage new development projects to incorporate community gardens into the project design, as appropriate.

Actions

NL-EJ-3.a

Develop incentives to encourage the establishment of grocery stores and other venues selling healthy foods, preferably locally grown or produced, in areas with limited access to healthy food, prioritizing locations in or near Equity Priority Areas.

NL-EJ-3.b

Work with certified farmers' markets to support acceptance of payment via EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) to maximize access, prioritizing markets in or near Equity Priority Areas.

NL-EJ-3.c

Inventory and map food deserts in the North Lake Communities Planning Area to inform future policy and decision making to address food access barriers.

NL-EJ-3.d

Streamline permitting processes for grocery stores and markets in Equity Priority Areas and food deserts.

Goal NL-EJ-4

Effective decision making that seeks and incorporates the voices of North Lake Communities Planning Area residents, including from Equity Priority Populations and those living in Equity Priority Communities.

Policies

NL-EJ-4.1

Empower all residents to participate in local decision making and ensure meaningful public engagement processes and events that make it possible for everyone—especially Equity Priority Populations and those living in Equity Priority Areas—to participate and influence outcomes.

NL-EJ-4.2

Use multiple channels—including digital and print media, County websites, local radio, and cable TV—to share publicly important information and publicize opportunities for community engagement to ensure access for everyone, including those without home computers or internet.

NL-EJ-4.3

Provide interpretation and translation services for community announcements, community meetings, services, and programs, to ensure accessibility for all community members, as appropriate.

NL-EJ-4.4

Encourage sponsors of major development projects to have early and frequent communication, in the appropriate language(s), with affected residents and interested parties.

NL-EJ-4.5

Strive for more diverse representation on boards, commissions, committees, and similar bodies to better reflect the demographics and varying viewpoints of North Lake Communities Area residents, including representatives of Equity Priority Populations and/or other underrepresented groups, as appropriate.

NL-EJ-4.6

Engage young people in long-range planning processes and other County-administered programs and processes through outreach and partnerships with libraries, schools, and local youth organizations when possible.

Actions

NL-EJ-4.a

Hold periodic public meetings in each Equity Priority Area to hear from residents of these communities about issues impacting their quality-of-life outcomes and use that input to inform the County's annual budgeting process.

NL-EJ-4.b

Support Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs) to develop best practice guidelines to support all County departments with conducting effective outreach in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, such as how to identify appropriate engagement activities and practices based on the project or issue type and stakeholders involved, a list of stakeholders and/or community leaders in the area, and language interpretation or translation services to offer.

NL-EJ-4.c

Explore options and seek funding to transition to accessible outreach materials for those with sensory disabilities (e.g., visually impaired and/or deaf or hard of hearing).

NL-EJ-4.d

To inform existing and potential future Municipal Advisory Councils, adopt a policy detailing the process for forming a MAC and the roles, responsibilities, and authority of a MAC, which may take inspiration from the Mendocino County Policy #51, "Formation/Operation of Municipal Advisory Councils."

NL-EJ-4.e

Periodically update Equity Priority Area maps, including the Tribal Lands boundaries as updated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to ensure that the appropriate communities are prioritized as part of the County's work to implement the Environmental Justice Element.

Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities are buildings, pipes, pumps, roadways, and other infrastructure that support community living. Public services include fire protection, law enforcement, waste collection, education, and other vital services the County and other public agencies provide to residents. Access to public facilities and services is a major ongoing priority and key issue in the North Lake Communities Planning Area. Aging infrastructure, especially aging water infrastructure, is of particular concern. This element prioritizes the provision of a healthy and high quality of life for the Planning Area's residents by enhancing public services, improving infrastructure, and improving access to and affordability of these utilities and services.

The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses the publicly provided facilities and services in the North Lake Communities Planning Area and presents information and policy guidance to maintain and, when possible and appropriate, enhance the Planning Area's facilities and services. The following topics are covered:

- Fire Protection and Law Enforcement Service
- Water and Wastewater Service
- Stormwater Management
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Communications Systems
- Educational Facilities and Services
- Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Northshore Fire Protection District operates 3 stations in the Planning Area.

These topics are an integral part of the County's planning strategy and an important consideration when considering growth and development in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Many services are provided by agencies and organizations not under the purview of the County, so Lake County has limited direct control over their services, though this element includes Goals, Policies, and Actions to guide the County's collaboration with external entities and other efforts aimed at making sustainable, high-quality services available to the community.

This element also considers public facility and service needs and deficiencies in low-income areas considered to be disadvantaged unincorporated communities based on State guidance.

Fire Protection and Law Enforcement Service

Fire protection and emergency medical service for the North Lake Communities Planning Area is provided by the Northshore Fire Protection District (FPD). Their Lucerne station, unmanned at the time of this update, ~~serves as the District Headquarters and~~ is normally staffed 24/7 with two firefighters/emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or firefighters/paramedics whose positions are funded by CAL FIRE, along with administrative staff. The Northshore FPD operates two other stations in the Planning Area: the Nice station is staffed 24/7 by one firefighter/EMT and one firefighter/paramedic and the Upper Lake station does not employ daily on-site staff~~is staffed daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with one firefighter/EMT~~. The Northshore FPD also operates a station in Clearlake Oaks in the neighboring East Lake Communities Planning Area. Mutual-aid agreements are also in place between the Northshore FPD, CAL FIRE, and the surrounding fire districts.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement, patrol, and coroner services to the North Lake Communities Planning Area. Their closest active substation is in Lakeport, about 10 miles away from the western edge of the Planning Area. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) also serves the North Lake Communities Planning Area, providing traffic control, accident investigation, and vehicle licensing for State highways. CHP collaborates with the Sheriff's Office when requested during joint operations and emergencies.

The Health and Safety Element provides more details and policy guidance related to wildfire hazards and emergency response.

Water and Wastewater Service

There are 18 public water systems in the Planning Area that are regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. These systems fall within one of two designation types:

- **Community water systems** have at least 15 service connections used by yearlong residents or regularly serve at least 25 or more yearlong residents, including subdivisions, mutual water companies, manufactured home parks, and similar residential areas.
- **Transient, non-community (TNC) water systems** regularly serve less than 25 of the same people for six or more months of the year, including restaurants, motels, campgrounds, small grocery and other retail stores, and other nonresidential uses.

The water systems in the North Lake Communities Planning Area are:

- **Blue Lakes Improvement Club**, a community water system that sources water from a groundwater well and serves a residential area in the Blue Lakes community.
- **Blue Lakes Mobile Home Park**, a community water system with one groundwater well that provides service to a manufactured home park.
- **Blue Lakes Village**, a community water system that relies on one groundwater well serving a recreational vehicle (RV) park.

- **Cal 20 Village and Meadow Pointe Park**, a community water system that sources water from two groundwater wells and serves a manufactured home park.
- **Nice Mutual Water Company**, a community water system that obtains water from Clear Lake and provides service to most of the community of Nice and the surrounding area along Clear Lake's north shore.
- **Upper Lake County Water District**, a community water system that provides potable water to the Upper Lake community from two groundwater wells within the Upper Lake Groundwater Basin.
- **Villa Blue Estates Water District**, a community water system serving residences in areas to the north and south of Blue Lakes Improvement Club's service area.
- **Lake Pillsbury Ranch Water Company**, a TNC system serving the Lake Pillsbury Ranch subdivision that sources potable water from an intake on Mill Creek.
- **Lake Pillsbury Resort and Marina,** a TNC system with an intake on Lake Pillsbury that serves multiple cabin, campsite, and commercial connections.
- **Le Trianon Resort**, a TNC system sourcing from two groundwater wells that serves both a transient and small permanent population.
- **Lodge at Blue Lakes**, a TNC system relying on one groundwater well that serves a hotel as well as multiple residential and commercial connections**.**
- **Narrows Family Resort**, a TNC system relying on two groundwater wells that serves a campground with yurts, cabins, residential, and commercial connections.
- **Pine Acres Blue Lake Resort**, a TNC system that relies on one groundwater well to serve cottages, motel rooms, RV sites, and commercial connections.
- **Saratoga Springs Retreat Center**, a TNC system sourcing from three groundwater wells and serving a retreat center with multiple cabin, campground, residential, and commercial connections.
- **Three Brothers Travel Plaza**, a TNC system that sources from one groundwater well and serves a truck stop with a gasoline station and fast-food restaurants.
- **USFS Oak Flat Water System** and **USFS Sunset Point Campground**, TNC systems serving commercial connections at various campgrounds in the Planning Area. Each sources from a groundwater well.
- **USGS Middle Creek Campground**, a TNC system that serves the Upper Lake Ranger Station campsites and multiple commercial connections. The water supply source is surface water from local springs.

The Lake County Environmental Health Department (EH) issues permits for all groundwater wells in the county and regulates State Small Water Systems, which have between 5 and 14 connections. EH also inspects and permits water systems that serve food establishments with private water systems, such as bed-and-breakfast facilities.

The Planning Area's agricultural production primarily occurs in the area north of Upper Lake, in Middle Creek Valley, and in Bachelor Valley. Most agricultural activity in the Planning Area is dedicated to walnut orchards. Other operations include pasture, grain and hay, vineyards, and pears. Water supply sources include surface water and groundwater from private domestic and irrigation wells.

In the North Lake Communities Planning Area, Northwest Regional Wastewater System, managed by Lake County Special Districts, provides wastewater treatment for the communities of Nice, Upper Lake, and other areas north of Lakeport. The Basin 2000 project proposes a connection between the Northwest Treatment Facility and a nearby effluent (i.e., liquid waste) pipeline that would pipe treated wastewater to The Geysers geothermal power plant for the purpose of generating geothermal power. The effluent would be injected into the geothermal steam fields to help continuously maintain the pressure needed to generate steam. Lake County Sanitation District first published the Full Circle Effluent Pipeline Preliminary Design Report in 2004. A Request for Proposals for updates to the report was issued in February 2024, indicating continued project interest.

The remainder of the North Lake Communities Planning Area relies on on-site wastewater treatment systems, commonly known as septic or leach field systems. These systems require permits from EH, who conduct site evaluations to determine whether each site is appropriate for the installation of a new septic system and the type of system needed.

Stormwater Management

The North Lake Communities Planning Area, like the rest of the county, has areas prone to flood risk. These risks are described and addressed in the countywide Health and Safety Element; however, this element addresses the related issue of stormwater management or the public policies, activities, and infrastructure employed to regulate the rate, volume, and quality of runoff. Lake County uses a variety of facilities and methods to manage stormwater, including:

- **Levees,** or high ridges along waterways and reservoirs to provide flood control.
- **Stormwater detention facilities,** which are designed for the temporary storage of stormwater, working to attenuate peak runoff and provide water quality treatment benefits by allowing particulates to settle in the basin.
- **Groundwater recharge facilities**, which move water from the ground's surface into aquifers, which can occur naturally or through human-controlled methods.
- **Stormwater retention**, the process of collecting and storing rainwater, snowmelt, and other storm runoff to prevent flooding.

Low-impact development refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. **Green infrastructure** refers to the management of wet-weather flows that use these processes, and the patchwork of natural areas that provide habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. At both the site and regional scale, low-impact development/green infrastructure practices aim to preserve, restore, and create green space using soils, vegetation, and rainwater harvest techniques. Examples of green infrastructure include rain harvesting systems, bioswales (channels that provide stormwater treatment and retention), permeable pavements, green roofs, and urban tree canopies.

- United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2024

Traditional development involving removing vegetation and soil and installing impermeable surfaces (like asphalt and concrete) increase stormwater runoff and can exacerbate flood risk, so the General Plan encourages low-impact development and green infrastructure.

Solid Waste Disposal

The North Lake Communities Planning Area is serviced by Lake County Waste Solutions, which transports garbage, recycling, and green waste to the Lake County Transfer Station south of Lakeport. Compostable material and construction debris are transferred to the Quackenbush Mountain Resource Recovery and Compost Facility east of Clearlake. Solid waste is transported to the Eastlake Sanitary Landfill adjacent to the Quackenbush site, and waste tires are transported off-site to a location in Ukiah (Mendocino County). There are two dump sites in the Planning Area: the Nice dump site, which is now closed, and the unpermitted Morrisson Creek dump in Lucerne. Lake County and CalRecycle have monitored the Morisson Creek Dump since 2008. Illegal dumping is a major concern in parts of the Planning Area. The County has launched community clean-up programs, free dumping days, and public outreach campaigns to combat this issue.

The County's efforts are guided by the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP), mandated by State law under AB 939. The CIWMP outlines local waste diversion and disposal conditions while establishing programs to meet state waste diversion goals. The CIWMP serves as the County's primary tool for developing countywide waste reduction programs and addressing landfill needs.

In alignment with the CIWMP, the County's Solid Waste Management Plan outlines additional strategies to increase diversion rates, expand green waste composting programs, and comply with State recycling mandates. Despite these initiatives, unincorporated areas of Lake County, including the North Lake Communities Planning Area, face challenges in meeting waste diversion goals, as reflected in CalRecycle data. However, ongoing education, enforcement, and expanded services aim to address these gaps and foster more sustainable waste practices in the region.

Communications Systems

Telephone services in the North Lake Communities Planning Area are available from numerous providers. Cellular service is provided by major carriers like Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile. Landline services are available through providers like Spectrum and AT&T. Internet providers serving the Planning Area include AT&T, Mediacom, and satellite-based providers like HughesNet and Viasat. Mediacom's system is equipped with fiber optic cable, providing both internet uses and subscription-based cable television.

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) National Broadband Map, high-speed internet access (i.e., with download/upload speeds at or above 25/3 megabytes-per-second) is limited to the more populated areas immediately surrounding SR 20 and SR 29 in the southern portion of the Planning Area. The northern and eastern portions of the Planning Area are largely without broadband coverage. Many North Lake Communities Planning Area residents are concerned about limited cell phone and high-speed internet service.

Educational Facilities and Services

Youth living in the Planning Area are primarily served by the Upper Lake Unified School District. There are four school sites in the District: Upper Lake Elementary School, Upper Lake Middle School, Upper Lake High School, and Clover Valley High School. Lakeport Unified School District and Lucerne Elementary School District encompass small portions of the southern part of the Planning Area. The Lucerne Elementary School District's one elementary school is in Lucerne. Schools in the Lakeport Unified School District are situated in the Lakeport and Kelseyville Planning Areas. School locations are depicted in **Figures NL-15** (countywide) and **NL-16** (North Lake Communities Planning Area).

There are currently no institutions of higher education in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

The Planning Area is served by the Upper Lake Branch Library, an 800-square-foot historic library featuring over 10,000 books, DVDs, audiobooks, and other resources. In addition, the Bookmobile stops in Lucerne at the Lucerne Lakeview Supermarket and Nice at Mar-Val's Sentry Market on Wednesdays. The Bookmobile is a 24-foot mobile library that has operated since 2023. It features about 1,000 books, DVDs, and other resources. Both the Library and the Bookmobile are equipped with free public Wi-Fi and access to computers.

The Upper Lake Senior Support Services in Upper Lake operates a food bank and activity programs for older adults and offers several community meeting rooms. The Lucerne Alpine Senior Center also offers programming for older adults and public meeting space.

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Through SB 244, State law requires that General Plans address the needs of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs), which are unincorporated communities with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income and either within an incorporated jurisdiction's sphere of influence (SOI), an island within an incorporated jurisdiction's boundary, or geographically isolated and has existed for at least 50 years—these are known as legacy communities. DUCs often lack adequate infrastructure to sustain public health and safety, which can foster economic, social, and educational inequality. Therefore, the law requires that counties and cities identify DUCs, analyze infrastructure and fire service needs and deficiencies, and assess potential funding mechanisms for needed expansions of services and facilities. Counties are responsible for conducting these analyses and planning for the needs of legacy community DUCs, while cities are responsible for addressing these requirements for DUCs in their SOIs. With each update to the County's Housing Element, the County is required to identify DUCs, evaluate their infrastructure and service deficiencies, and assess potential funding mechanisms to address those deficiencies.

Figure NL-15 Countywide Schools

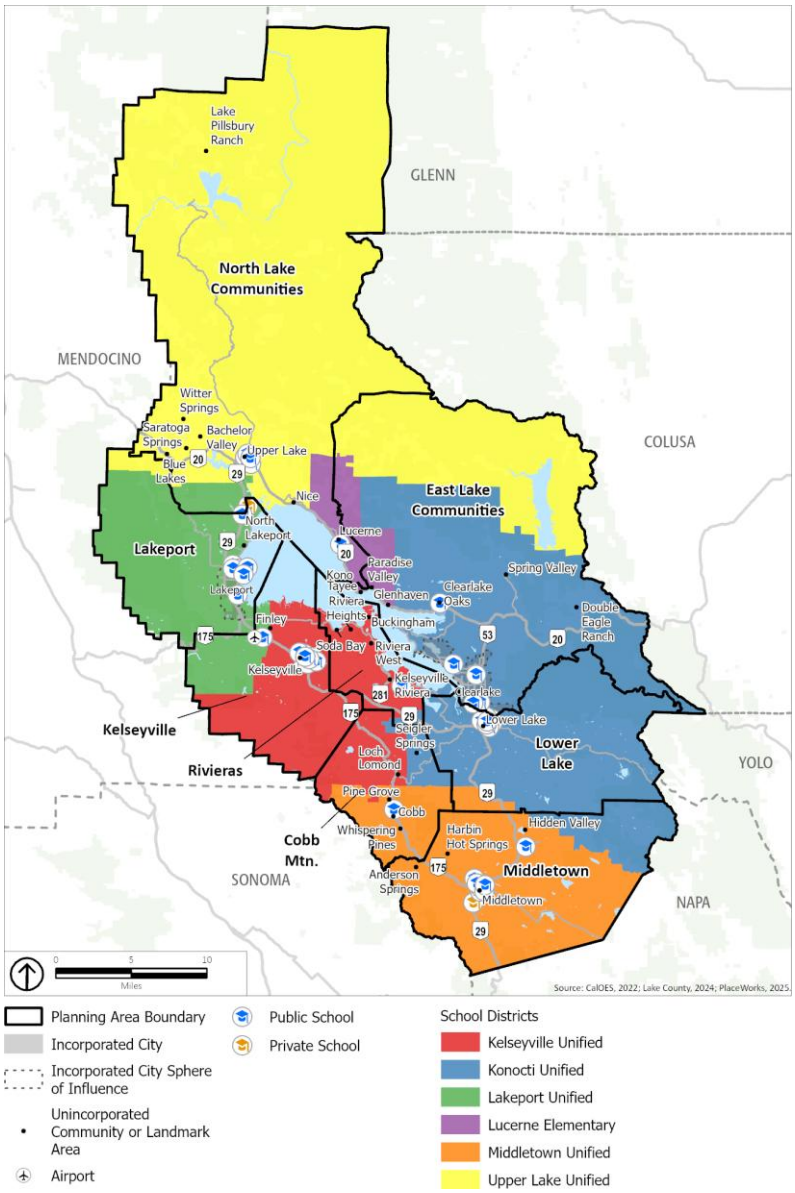
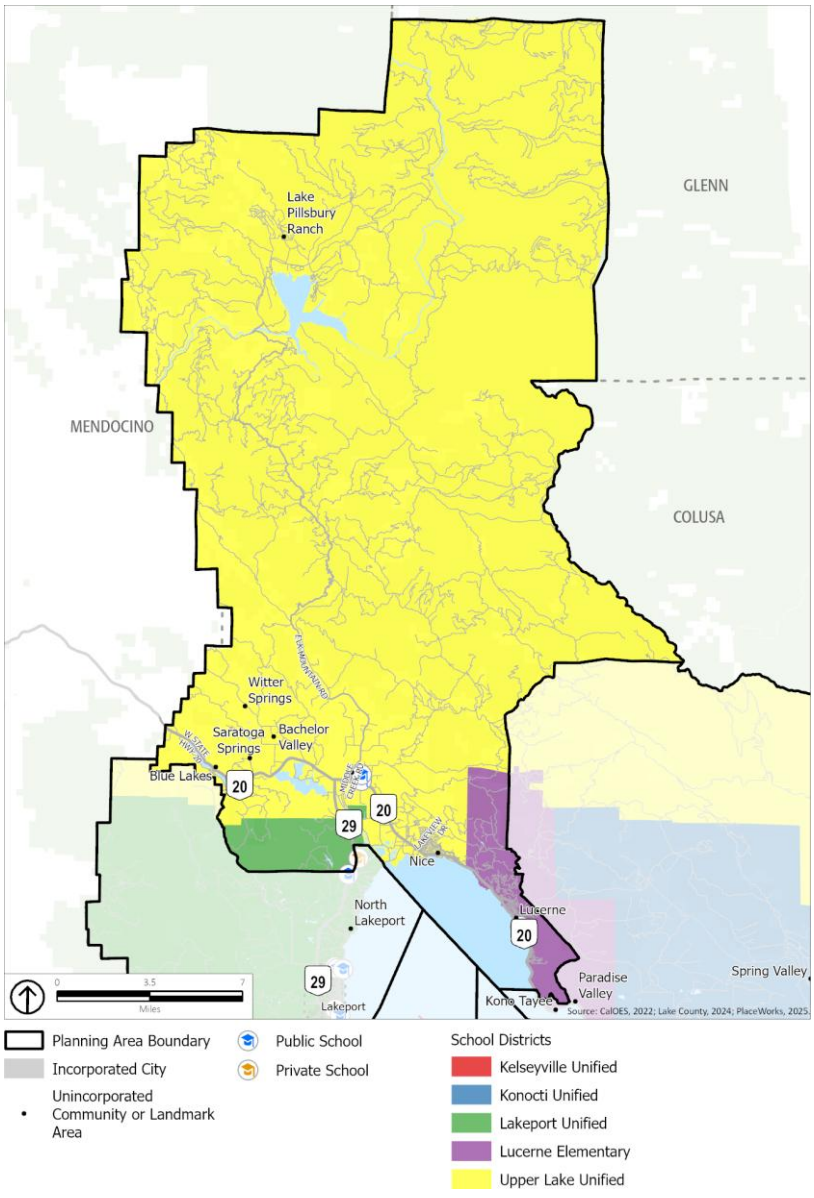


Figure NL-16 North Lake Communities Planning Area Schools



Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-PF-1

Resilient and well-maintained public facilities and services that meet the needs of all community members, are adequately funded, and enhance quality of life in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Policies

NL-PF-1.1

Ensure that all neighborhoods have access to safe, well-maintained public facilities, utilities, and services that meet community needs now and as the community grows.

NL-PF-1.2

Prioritize County expenditures on infrastructure, public facilities, services, recreation and open space amenities, and environmental enhancements that benefit and respond to the needs of Equity Priority Populations and residents of Equity Priority Areas.

NL-PF-1.3

Work with local special districts and local Tribal governments and local community organizations to coordinate public service improvements in the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

NL-PF-1.4

Continue to assess existing and future needs for public facilities and services, such as internet access, meeting rooms, and libraries, and work to develop, retrofit, or expand facilities and services, as necessary, to meet those needs, prioritizing the needs of Equity Priority Populations and residents of Equity Priority Areas.

NL-PF-1.5

Work with utility service providers to ensure service and program offerings align with existing and planned development patterns to meet current and future community needs.

NL-PF-1.6

Coordinate with public utility providers to acquire adequate rights-of-way and co-location to facilitate expansion of services in a timely manner.

NL-PF-1.7

Require new subdivisions in the Community Growth Boundary to include dark sky compliant streetlights.

NL-PF-1.8 *

Require new development projects to provide their own infrastructure, tie into existing infrastructure, or be required to provide infrastructure that will tie into future infrastructure, as determined by the County and other affected agencies.

NL-PF-1.9 *

Prior to project approval, ensure that new development projects will not create significant adverse impacts on existing infrastructure by implementing County-approved mitigation measures to reduce the impact.

NL-PF-1.10

Ensure new development projects pay their fair share of public improvement costs for infrastructure, facilities, and services.

NL-PF-1.11

Require a cost/benefit analysis for major developments to determine the fiscal impact of projects on public services and other community infrastructure.

NL-PF-1.12

Continue to support the Department of Animal Care and Control in its efforts to minimize pet overpopulation and abuse.

Actions

NL-PF-1.a

Upon each update to the Housing Element, perform an analysis of infrastructure needs and deficiencies in disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs), explore funding mechanisms that could make extension of needed services and facilities feasible, and update the associated information, policies, and actions of the General Plan as needed to reflect new conditions.

NL-PF-1.b

In cooperation with other service providers as appropriate, develop long-range facility master plans for relevant public services.

NL-PF-1.c

Consider the creation of additional assessment districts, county service areas, and/or special districts to fund and manage new and improved infrastructure, where needed.

NL-PF-1.d

Update and maintain policies and procedures that govern the County's use of artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure the County's and community's data is protected, appropriate oversight of any AI-generated products or activities, and that the use of AI does not conflict with the best interest of the County or its constituents.

Goal NL-PF-2

Public facilities that are designed to provide quality service while minimizing impacts on the environment.

Policies

NL-PF-2.1

Require public facilities installations and extensions to be sited and designed to minimize or avoid potential adverse impacts to the community and environment.

NL-PF-2.2

When infrastructure, such as sewer, water, and transmission lines, must cross agricultural lands, locate the infrastructure in the public right-of-way or along lot lines whenever possible.

NL-PF-2.3

Coordinate with utility companies to minimize the visual and cultural impact of new or expanded facilities through appropriate facility sizing, design, and placement on the landscape. Generally encourage utility lines to follow property lines and avoid residential areas, ridgetops, open space, and other sensitive areas.

NL-PF-2.4

Require mitigation for inter-county regional transportation facilities, high-voltage electrical transmission lines, and energy or water pipelines that do not serve the local population and provide little or no long-term benefit to the local affected area.

NL-PF-2.5

Minimize vulnerability of public service facilities to natural and human-caused hazards and threats.

NL-PF-2.6

Encourage public and other facilities designed for direct public use, such as libraries, to be located along major thoroughfares and/or near the center of general community activities.

NL-PF-2.7

Design new or redeveloped governmental and civic facilities to accommodate multiple community uses, such as recreation and community gathering spaces, and to be accessible to all users, regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender identity, or economic status.

NL-PF-2.8

Encourage the development of joint school facilities, recreational facilities, and educational and service programs between school districts and other public and non-profit agencies.

NL-PF-2.9

Encourage joint use of existing right-of-way corridors and utility easements.

NL-PF-2.10

Ensure that County-managed spaces and facilities support a feeling of safety for users and require new development projects to provide adequate lighting, clearly marked crosswalks, and other safety-promoting features in public spaces, as appropriate.

Goal NL-PF-3

Fire protection and law enforcement services that protect community members and property.

Policies

NL-PF-3.1 *

Work with the Sheriff's Office, Northshore Fire Protection District, and CAL FIRE to support each agency's ability to maintain adequate staffing and incident response times in accordance with State and federal guidelines.

Emergency preparedness and response is further addressed in the Health and Safety Element.

NL-PF-3.2

Locate new fire and police stations to minimize response times to the North Lake Communities Planning Area, while prioritizing effective use of existing facilities.

NL-PF-3.3

Support efforts to expand fire protection service to continue to meet the needs of the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

NL-PF-3.4

Continue to promote cooperative fire protection agreements with CAL FIRE to provide adequate fire protection throughout the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

NL-PF-3.5

Consult with the Northshore Fire Protection District when reviewing new development proposals to identify any facility, infrastructure, or equipment upgrades needed to support the development and ensure the development pays for any identified upgrades.

NL-PF-3.6

Support development of local firewise communities and fire safe councils and work collaboratively to manage hazardous vegetation on private properties.

NL-PF-3.7

Promote environmental stewardship employment opportunities for local and Tribal communities that support forest health, prescribed burns, defensible space, watershed restoration, trail stewardship, ecological monitoring, native plant restoration, and cultural interpretation activities.

~~NL-PF-3.7~~NL-PF-3.8 *

Require that new development demonstrates adequate water supply and service for effective fire protection and that all infrastructure meets the fire protection standards of Lake County or the responsible agency.

~~NL-PF-3.8~~NL-PF-3.9

Promote public safety programs and activities, including neighborhood watch programs~~, child identification kits~~, fire hazard prevention and awareness, and other public education efforts.

Goal NL-PF-4

Affordable, reliable, and safe water and wastewater service that meets existing and future community needs.

Policies

NL-PF-4.1

Discourage extension of water and sanitary sewer lines into areas outside of Community Growth Boundaries, except to serve public and semi-public uses that are not growth inducing, or when such extension is necessary to address a declared public health emergency.

The related issue of water supply is addressed in the countywide Water Resources Element.

NL-PF-4.2

Encourage and support efforts to extend sewer service to existing communities.

~~NL-PF-4.2~~NL-PF-4.3

Coordinate with Lake County LAFCO in the preliminary stages of development proposal entitlement application reviews for projects that may require an expansion of current service district boundaries to determine whether LAFCO will have a role in the approval process.

~~NL-PF-4.3~~NL-PF-4.4 *

Require new development to demonstrate the availability of a safe, sanitary, and environmentally sound water delivery system with adequate capacity, including by securing a will-serve letter from the water purveyor within the service area prior to the issuance of construction permits, to ensure that the water purveyor has the capacity to supply water to the project. Have water purveyor delineate if interior fire sprinklers can be connected to the system.

~~NL-PF-4.4~~NL-PF-4.5

Prioritize water conservation measures over the development of new water sources like dams and reservoirs.

~~NL-PF-4.5~~NL-PF-4.6

Discourage the formation of new water distribution systems unless long-term fiscal and technical feasibility can be demonstrated prior to approval.

~~NL-PF-4.6~~NL-PF-4.7

Encourage efforts to consolidate small water distribution systems to improve service and financial stability, in alignment with the County's Drought Resilience Program.

~~NL-PF-4.7~~NL-PF-4.8

Partner with water service providers to ensure that low-income households maintain continuity of service and are offered financial relief if prices rise.

~~NL-PF-4.8~~NL-PF-4.9

Promote the development of and connection to municipal wastewater systems where failing septic tanks, leach fields, and package systems constitute a threat to water quality and public health that cannot be remedied otherwise.

~~NL-PF-4.9~~NL-PF-4.10

Prioritize areas identified as having a high water table for connection to municipal wastewater systems and discourage additional development in those areas unless or until the area is connected to a municipal wastewater system.

~~NL-PF-4.10~~NL-PF-4.11

Require new development subject to discretionary review and in areas identified as having a high water table to connect to municipal wastewater systems as a condition of approval.

~~NL-PF-4.11~~NL-PF-4.12

Encourage the formation of septic maintenance districts as an interim management practice if on-site septic systems have been documented as contributing to violations of water quality standards.

~~NL-PF-4.12~~NL-PF-4.13

Promote and support programs to educate homeowners on the care and maintenance of septic systems.

~~NL-PF-4.13~~NL-PF-4.14

Prior to the approval of a building permit with a proposed addition/modification to an existing structure that would impose an additional burden on an existing system by increasing the waste flow, the buyer or project applicant shall demonstrate to the Lake County Environmental Health Department that the onsite wastewater treatment system is operating properly.

Actions

NL-PF-4.a

Pursue all available State and federal funding sources to upgrade publicly managed community water systems.

NL-PF-4.b

Work with water service providers to upgrade substandard water systems to ensure adequate fire flows and backup power sources.

NL-PF-4.c

Update the County Code of Ordinances to comply with water quality regulations.

~~NL-PF-4.c~~NL-PF-4.d *

Periodically review standards for septic tanks to ensure they continue to protect water quality and public health, consistent with current best practices.

~~NL-PF-4.d~~NL-PF-4.e

Explore rural wastewater systems that can serve as alternatives to conventional systems and develop standards and guidelines for their use in new development, as appropriate.

~~NL-PF-4.e~~NL-PF-4.f

Identify and map areas with a high water table.

~~NL-PF-4.f~~NL-PF-4.g

Update the Lake County Code of Ordinances to prohibit use of septic on lakefront lots that are within reasonable distance to a municipal wastewater system.

~~NL-PF-4.g~~NL-PF-4.h

Develop a program to periodically test waterways, groundwater, and/or select private wells, as applicable, for contamination in areas where on-site septic system densities are greater than one dwelling unit per acre.

~~NL-PF-4.h~~NL-PF-4.i

Conduct water pollution investigations in areas suspected of having a significant number of failing on-site sewage disposal systems.

~~NL-PF-4.i~~NL-PF-4.j *

In water districts where there is insufficient water to serve new development, require new developments to offset demand so that there is no net increase in demand through measures such as the installation of low-flow water fixtures, water conservation efforts, or the retrofit of existing uses to offset increased demand. These measures shall be achieved in partnership with the applicable water district.

~~NL-PF-4.j~~NL-PF-4.k *

Require renovations requiring a building permit to install low-flow water fixtures to reduce the amount of water usage.

~~NL-PF-4.k~~NL-PF-4.l *

Require new development projects to obtain a will-serve letter from the water and wastewater agenc~~y~~ies within the project's service area prior to project approval to ensure that the wastewater agency has the capacity to accept wastewater from the project and that the water agency has capacity to provide water for interior sprinkler systems.

Goal NL-PF-5

Stormwater facilities that protect people, property, and the environment.

Policies

NL-PF-5.1

Ensure stormwater collection and drainage facilities are properly designed and sited to protect people and property while conserving water resources, supporting groundwater recharge, protecting water quality, and minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources.

The Water Resources Element contains additional strategies to address runoff, supporting both stormwater management groundwater recharge. The issue of flooding is addressed in the Health and Safety Element.

NL-PF-5.2

Require curbs and gutters for new development within Community Growth Boundaries to direct storm drainage in a way that is consistent with the overall drainage system.

NL-PF-5.3

Require development projects to use green infrastructure and low-impact development designs to prevent off-site drainage impacts and support groundwater recharge.

NL-PF-5.4

Require on-site stormwater detention facilities and velocity reducers when necessary to maintain existing storm flows and velocities in natural drainage systems.

NL-PF-5.5

Encourage project designs that minimize drainage concentrations and impervious coverage, complement groundwater recharge, and where feasible, provide a natural watercourse appearance and maintain natural watershed functions.

NL-PF-5.6

Integrate green infrastructure, such as permeable paving surfaces, bioswales, and rain gardens, into County infrastructure projects, including road improvements and parks.

NL-PF-5.7

Encourage designs for stormwater detention basins that provide temporary or permanent wildlife habitat and/or recreational opportunities, where appropriate.

NL-PF-5.8

Reduce the flow of stormwater drainage into sewer cleanouts and other similar mechanisms that have the ability to inundate the local sewer collection system, including by enforcing penalties for violators purposely directing stormwater into sewer cleanouts and educating the community about how stormwater drainage can impact the local sewer collection system.

NL-PF-5.9

Prioritize maintenance and repair of drainage facilities in known flood-prone areas.

NL-PF-5.10

Encourage green infrastructure, Tribal Ecological Knowledge integration, wildlife habitat integration, and protection of culturally sensitive areas.

Actions

NL-PF-5.a

Identify damaged and/or deficient storm drainage facilities and acquire funding to restore or upgrade the facilities.

NL-PF-5.b

Work with appropriate agencies to develop stormwater retention/detention and recharge facilities to enhance flood protection and improve groundwater recharge.

NL-PF-5.c

Work with appropriate agencies to develop stormwater facility maintenance programs establishing timelines for regularly cleaning and maintaining storm drain systems.

Goal NL-PF-6

Accessible, affordable, safe, and efficient disposal or recycling of solid waste.

Policies

NL-PF-6.1

Ensure efficient and affordable solid waste disposal options are available for all, including unhoused populations, low-income households, and other Equity Priority Populations.

NL-PF-6.2 *

Prior to project approval require development proposals to demonstrate capacity within the solid waste system for the processing, recycling, transmission, and disposal of solid waste, and ensure that the development provides adequate solid waste storage, handling, and collection accommodations.

NL-PF-6.3

Encourage and support establishment of adequate sites for collection of household hazardous waste, unused pharmaceuticals, and universal wastes (commonly produced hazardous wastes, such as batteries and electronics), along with provisions for residents who are physically unable to deliver materials to a collection site.

NL-PF-6.4

Protect solid waste facility sites from the encroachment of sensitive and/or incompatible land uses and convert abandoned solid waste facilities to open space use.

NL-PF-6.5

Promote the maximum feasible solid waste reduction and diversion through recycling and composting. Strive to continually reduce commercial and industrial waste on an annual basis and pursue a financing mechanism for solid waste reduction programs to meet reduction and diversion goals.

NL-PF-6.6

Use recycled materials and products when available and economically feasible.

NL-PF-6.7

Enforce prohibitions and fines against illegal dumping, abandoned property and vehicles, and outdoor storage, and prioritize clean-up of illegal dumping on County-owned land in community centers and in Equity Priority Areas.

NL-PF-6.8

Support cleanup efforts by private property owners to remove garbage and refuse from their properties, and obtain grant funding to assist in removing the refuse at no-cost waste disposal events.

Actions

NL-PF-6.a

Seek funding to support low- or no-cost waste disposal programs for unhoused populations, low-income households, and other Equity Priority Populations.

NL-PF-6.b

Promote community education about responsible waste disposal, including by distributing informational resources promoting alternatives to sending waste to landfills or burning green waste, such as recycling, composting, and chipping, and by supporting educational programs to teach youth about composting.~~.~~

NL-PF-6.c

Continue to support community chipping and portable chipping programs.

NL-PF-6.d

Install signage regarding the prohibition of dumping at locations with recurring issues and increase education, monitoring, and rapid cleanup to discourage future illegal dumping.

NL-PF-6.e

Partner with community organizations to host community clean-up days, as needed, prioritizing events in downtown areas and Equity Priority Areas.

NL-PF-6.f

Continue existing abatement programs that assist private property owners with removal of unsightly trailers, signage, and trash, prioritizing clean-up in Equity Priority Areas.

NL-PF-6.g

Seek additional funding for the ongoing operation of the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement (AVA) program.

Goal NL-PF-7

Internet, cellular, and landline communications services that are accessible and reliable throughout the North Lake Communities Planning Area.

Policies

NL-PF-7.1

Encourage and support efforts to expand and enhance internet and broadband service throughout the North Lake Communities Planning Area and encourage co-location of infrastructure and marketplace competition from multiple service providers, while minimizing visual and cultural impacts.

NL-PF-7.2

Encourage and support efforts to improve cellular phone coverage and reliability, especially during extreme weather and hazard events.

NL-PF-7.3

Require new or updated cellular towers to be designed to minimize their visual impact.

Actions

NL-PF-7.a

Work with the California State Association of Counties and others to lobby the State to require continued access to landline telephones.

NL-PF-7.b

Identify and implement strategies to streamline the permitting process for cellular tower installations while ensuring quality design and mitigation of potential impacts.

Goal NL-PF-8

High-quality schools and educational facilities that serve the needs of local students.

Policies

NL-PF-8.1

Collaborate with Upper Lake Unified School District, Lakeport Unified School District, and Lucerne Elementary School District to plan for future growth.

NL-PF-8.2

Work with Upper Lake Unified School District, Lakeport Unified School District, and Lucerne Elementary School District to ensure any new schools that are developed in the Planning Area incorporate bicycle and pedestrian access, are close to the residential areas that the school serves, and avoid hazards.

NL-PF-8.3

Support efforts to retrofit and/or upgrade existing educational facilities to ensure safety and comfort of students and educators, including through expedited permitting reviews and fee waivers, where feasible.

NL-PF-8.4

Encourage and support efforts to enhance and expand access to higher education, including by working with Woodland Community College Lake Center and Mendocino College Lake Center to increase access to transferable general education and major preparation courses in alignment with the University of California and California State University transfer pathways and articulation agreements.

NL-PF-8.5

Encourage and support efforts to incorporate tribal cultural education and awareness in school curriculums.

Action

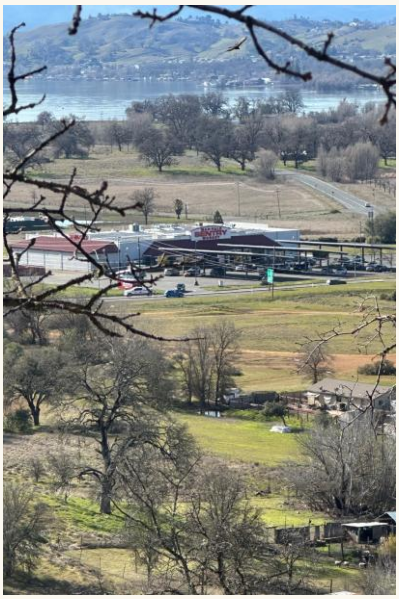
NL-PF-8.a

Coordinate residential development proposal reviews with Upper Lake Unified School District, Lakeport Unified School District, and Lucerne Elementary School District to inform future enrollment estimates and ensure adequate capacity for the development project.

Economic Development

A healthy local economy is an important aspect of community life. It can affect whether there are jobs that pay living wages available in the community, in turn affecting household incomes. Successful local businesses and families earning living wages affect how well they maintain their properties and their ability to contribute to local taxes that sustain public facilities and services. A healthy local economy can also support small-scale commercial development that attracts visitors and brings the community together.

This element works to promote economic development in the North Lake Communities Planning Area, emphasizing support for small- and home-businesses, bolstering tourism compatible with the character of the Planning Area, generating a wide range of job and workforce development opportunities, and creating and maintaining a circular, local economy.



Local grocery stores provide critical goods and services to the community while shaping the small-town character of the area.

Local Economy

Agriculture and tourism have been longstanding industries in the North Lake Communities Planning Area and remain its dominant economic forces today. Canning, alfalfa farming, and cattle raising were pillars of the Planning Area's early economy. In the late nineteenth century, the areas surrounding what is now Upper Lake became notable for their viticulture, though prohibition caused the industry to largely collapse in the 1920s. Many of the Planning Area's vineyards were abandoned or replanted, mostly with walnut orchards, which are still a major crop in the area. In the 1970s, farmers began to replant vineyards and revitalize the local wine industry. In 2022, the Upper Lake Valley was designated as an American Viticultural Area (AVA) by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). Wines made from grapes grown in an AVA have an official appellation on their bottles, identifying them as being grown in a region with specific geographic or climatic features. The Upper Lake Valley AVA encompasses 17,360 total acres.

Like other Planning Areas in Lake County, resorts were also instrumental in the early economic development of the North Lake Communities Planning Area, seasonally drawing visitors from as far away as San Francisco. One of these, Saratoga Springs, was established in the 1870s, four miles west of Upper Lake. At its peak, it could accommodate 350 guests and featured a stagecoach stop, post office, restaurant, and dance hall. The Blue Lakes Lodge, Laurel Dell Resort, and Tallman Hotel were other popular destinations during the early period of resort development beginning in the late 1800's. In the 1920s, construction of the impressive Lucerne Castle began, although the Great Depression and other

setbacks delayed completion of the hotel until 1938. Several historic lodging establishments in the Planning Area have been rehabilitated and accommodate visitors today.

Upper Lake's Main Street is a center of commercial activity and events, including an annual ~~Wild West~~Summer Days celebration and Blues Festival. There are also a variety of lake- and land-based recreation opportunities in the Planning Area. Popular attractions and events include the Mendocino National Forest, Running Creek Casino, Clarke's Collectibles and Lunchbox Museum, and many local business along SR 20. These attractions help shape the Planning Area's identity as a tourist destination for visitors seeking recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Since its approval in 2011, the Lake County Economic Development Strategic Marketing Plan has helped increase visitation, attract tourism investment, and increase the economic impact of the tourism industry countywide, including in the North Lake Communities Planning Area. Local tourism industry stakeholders, including lodging establishments, restaurants, caterers, retailers, wineries and tasting rooms, events and attractions, tribal gaming, event venues, and local business associations, collaborated with a Strategic Advisory Group to prepare the plan.

The Northshore Business Association, which has over 60 members, is dedicated to supporting the Planning Area's local economy and promoting its local businesses. The organization brings together businesses, professionals, neighbors, and government representatives.

Employment

According to the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey administered by the U.S. Census, there were over 1,400 employed residents in the North Lake Communities Planning Area as of 2022, the latest year for which LEHD data is available. Employers in the Planning Area span many industries, including arts, entertainment, and recreation (26 percent); healthcare and social assistance (13 percent); retail (9 percent); agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (9 percent); transportation and warehousing (9 percent), and accommodation and food services (8 percent). Data provided by the State of California's Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division shows that the unemployment rate of the Planning Area was 4.2 percent as of April 2025.

Based on the same 2022 LEHD survey, roughly 20 percent of residents in the North Lake Communities Planning Area work in the Planning Area; an additional 14 percent work elsewhere in Lake County, primarily in the City of Lakeport (10 percent). Another 9 percent of residents in the Planning Area commute to the City of Ukiah in Mendocino County and 3 percent commute to Santa Rosa in Sonoma County. The remaining 54 percent commute to other cities in Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Marin, or Solano Counties.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-ED-1

A strong, diverse, and resilient economy that supports local employment opportunities.

Policies

NL-ED-1.1

Continue to develop a diversified economic base for the North Lake Communities Area by promoting Lucerne as the gateway to Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, and the Planning Area's agriculture, equestrian opportunities, recreation services, and commerce and by expanding efforts to encourage industrial and non-industrial corporate uses and geothermal resource development.

NL-ED-1.2

Support economic development strategies that promote local procurement, strengthen business resilience to power shutoffs, encourage the adaptive reuse and site improvements of existing buildings, and expand environmental stewardship employment opportunities.

NL-ED-1.3

Establish incentives that encourage local ownership, investment, and development by Lake County residents.

NL-ED-1.4

Encourage and support local education and job opportunities for careers in health care and law enforcement.

~~**NL-ED-1.2**~~**NL-ED-1.5**

Prioritize business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts that strengthen the local economy, generate local tax revenue, and/or offer jobs in alignment with local skills.

~~**NL-ED-1.3**~~**NL-ED-1.6**

Purchase products and services for County operations from locally owned businesses whenever possible.

NL-ED-1.7

Work with local stakeholders to define a "creative economy" and develop strategies to cultivate a creative economy through support for artist studios, galleries, and live/work spaces.

~~**NL-ED-1.4**~~**NL-ED-1.8**

Consult with local Tribal governments in the design of economic recovery and job creation strategies to ensure culturally appropriate, place-based employment opportunities.

~~NL-ED-1.5~~NL-ED-1.9

Acknowledge local tribal communities as an economic stakeholder and encourage opportunities for tribal enterprises that align with cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and community character.

~~NL-ED-1.6~~NL-ED-1.10

Support workforce-development partnerships benefiting tribal citizens and incorporating ~~Traditional~~Tribal Ecological Knowledge, protecting Tribal Cultural Resources, and/or promoting sustainable land stewardship, where appropriate.

NL-ED-1.11

Support broadband-enabled economic development activities, including remote work, telework hubs, coworking space, digital entrepreneurship, and online business support.

Actions

NL-ED-1.a

Coordinate efforts with local business associations and stakeholders to attract clean industries to the area. Ensure new clean industries are located and designed to avoid Tribal Cultural Resources.

NL-ED-1.b

Partner with private and non-profit agencies to provide business incubation and workforce training to help economic vitality and foster employment, including tribal workforce partnerships and training for tribal citizens in cultural resource protection, environmental restoration, and sustainable economic practices.

NL-ED-1.c

Establish incentives that encourage local ownership, investment, and development by Lake County residents.

~~NL-ED-1.c~~NL-ED-1.d

Identify or develop programs to expand economic opportunities to Equity Priority Populations, including through outreach efforts and incentives for local small business owners and tribal citizens and enterprises.

~~NL-ED-1.d~~NL-ED-1.e

Work with stakeholders in the area to explore development of a transitional employment program that integrates unhoused individuals into public or private sector work focused on neighborhood beautification and maintenance, prioritizing central commercial areas and other locations.

~~NL-ED-1.e~~NL-ED-1.f

Explore options to offer development impact fee discounts or exemptions or other incentives when applicants can demonstrate economic benefits for the community.

~~NL-ED-1.f~~NL-ED-1.g

Investigate the benefits of establishing a business license program.

~~NL-ED-1.g~~NL-ED-1.h

Expand County support for business growth and development, including by partnering with outside agencies and associations working in economic development.

~~NL-ED-1.h~~NL-ED-1.i

Identify and eliminate barriers to supporting home-based business as part of the local, circular economy.

~~NL-ED-1.i~~NL-ED-1.j

Develop strategies to encourage shopping at locally owned businesses whenever possible.

NL-ED-1.k

Investigate the benefits of establishing a cannabis retail license for oversight.

Goal NL-ED-2

A strong and resilient tourism sector that contributes to the local economy while balancing community and visitor needs and priorities.

Policies

NL-ED-2.1

Reestablish the North Lake Communities Planning Area as a premier vacation destination by growing local attractions, including resorts, hotels, camping, hot springs, entertainment venues, wineries, and visitor activities.

NL-ED-2.2

Encourage and support a small-business and adaptive-reuse assistance program for older resorts, retreat centers, and underused commercial properties.

~~NL-ED-2.2~~NL-ED-2.3

Encourage and support development of wineries, microbreweries, distilleries, farm stands, U-pick operations, and other agri-tourism related uses, provided those uses do not negatively impact ongoing agricultural operations and they avoid disturbance of known or potential Tribal Cultural Resources.

~~NL-ED-2.3~~NL-ED-2.4

Encourage restoration, rather than replacement, of unique and historic resorts and related facilities, when practical.

~~NL-ED-2.4~~NL-ED-2.5

Consider approval of proposals for mixed-use resorts requesting increased residential density outside of Community Growth Boundaries when such densities are needed to make the project economically feasible and the resort will provide important public benefits, including advancing the County's tourism objectives and providing recreational facilities to the public.

~~NL-ED-2.5~~NL-ED-2.6

Encourage and support efforts to improve water quality in Clear Lake to boost the tourism economy and improve quality of life for residents.

~~NL-ED-2.6~~NL-ED-2.7

Encourage tourism initiatives that interpret, respect, and help protect tribal cultural heritage.

~~NL-ED-2.7~~NL-ED-2.8

Support the development of tribal-led or tribal-partnered cultural education programs, guided tours, and visitor materials—where appropriate and approved by the tribes—ensuring protection of sensitive locations.

Actions

NL-ED-2.a

Partner with other interested parties to leverage and expand promotional efforts to attract visitors, especially multiday visitors, to the county's diverse attractions, including agri-tourism, ecotourism, outdoor recreation such as the Mendocino National Forest and Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, and various lodging options. Require all promotional materials referencing tribal history or cultural sites to be reviewed by the affiliated tribes to ensure accuracy and to avoid disclosing sensitive locations.

NL-ED-2.b

Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow farm-stay development, which would allow volunteers to stay at farms with compensation in exchange for their work on the farm as an apprenticeship, on appropriate agricultural sites.

NL-ED-2.c

Partner with local groups and agencies to develop and distribute resources for tourists to identify and access the many opportunities to experience Lake County, such as self-guided tour maps, farm trail maps, and/or informational kiosk installations. Exclude sensitive Tribal Cultural Resources from public maps and develop tribal-approved interpretive content, where appropriate.

NL-ED-2.d

Identify incentives and other opportunities to encourage and support development, redevelopment, and expansion of lodging spaces to serve a broad range of visitors, including luxury boutique hotels and resorts, retreat venues, conference centers, family-oriented motels, hot springs, and camping areas. Ensure that any new or expanded uses are compatible with the surrounding environment, wastewater capacity, and account for emergency ingress/egress and emergency needs.

NL-ED-2.e

Amend the Zoning Code to establish requirements for mixed-use resorts that request increased density outside of Community Growth Boundaries. Requirements should ensure the following:

1. The project will advance the County's tourism objectives.
2. The resort provides substantial resort and recreational facilities that will be available to the public.
3. The developer demonstrates that the additional residential units are necessary to support the infrastructure and public resort amenity costs for the overall project and the overall project is economically infeasible without the additional residential units.
4. The primary scope of the project is resort commercial.
5. The residential component is secondary and subordinate.
6. There are fewer residential units than resort units, unless the project is adjacent to a CBG and public water, wastewater, and school services are available to serve the development, in which case the ratio of residential units to resort units must not exceed 2:1.
7. Residential densities are less than one residential unit per gross acre.
8. Applications are submitted as Planned Developments to determine the appropriate number of residential units allowed.

NL-ED-2.f

Explore options to dedicate a portion of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax revenue to efforts to conserve natural resources to maintain and enhance the county's natural beauty.

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Special Study Areas and Design Guidelines

There are three Special Study Areas in the North Lake Communities Planning Area—Blue Lakes Special Study Area, "The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area, and "The Strand" Lucerne Special Study Area. These special study areas are places where the community has a more detailed vision for future development; to reflect the community's vision, this General Plan provides customized policy and design guidance for those areas. This section details the vision and supporting goals, policies, actions for each of these Special Study Areas.

While not an identified Special Study Area, the original Nice Community Design Guidelines include actions and priorities for future development, offering guidance for the community's development that is separate from the Design Guidelines; these actions and priorities are also presented in this section.

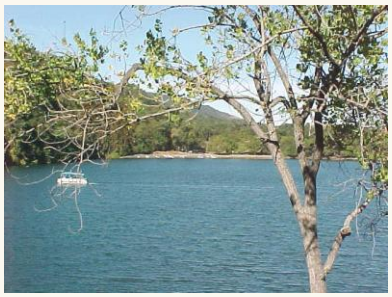
Finally, this section includes four sets of design guidelines: consolidated design guidelines for the communities of Upper Lake, Nice, and Lucerne; additional community-specific guidelines for the communities of Lucerne and Upper Lake; and Planning Area-wide guidelines for commercial and industrial development. The design guidelines serve to ensure new development and redevelopment complement the existing built and natural environments and foster attractive buildings and landscaping that maintain each community's uniqueness, enhance its visual character, and support business attraction efforts. The guidelines address such topics as historic preservation, design compatibility, neighborhood distinctiveness, streetscape continuity, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets, screening, and parking. Guidelines are intended as recommendations to consider in the project planning process while maintaining flexibility to allow for variety and diversity, which the community encourages. The design guidelines are used by County staff and the Planning Commission in evaluating changes to existing properties and new construction.

Blue Lakes Special Study Area

Note: The Blue Lakes Special Study Area was originally prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.d.

Blue Lakes is made up of two lakes located in a narrow valley near Lake County's border with Mendocino County. This area is primarily devoted to tourist-related activities and services, although there is a residential subdivision between the lakes. Upper Blue Lake is known for good trout fishing and its annual fishing derby.

The priority of the Blue Lakes area is to preserve and enhance the existing recreational opportunities, including fishing, swimming, boating, and lodging.



Blue Lakes attract tourists for fishing, swimming, and other recreation activities.

The County's goal for the Blue Lakes Special Study Area is to preserve existing resort development while providing opportunities for expansion, and to protect areas with limited access and steep slopes from substantial development. This goal is supported by the land use designations within this area, which are shown on **Figure NL-3.**

"The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area

Note: "The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area was originally prepared in 2009 and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.d.

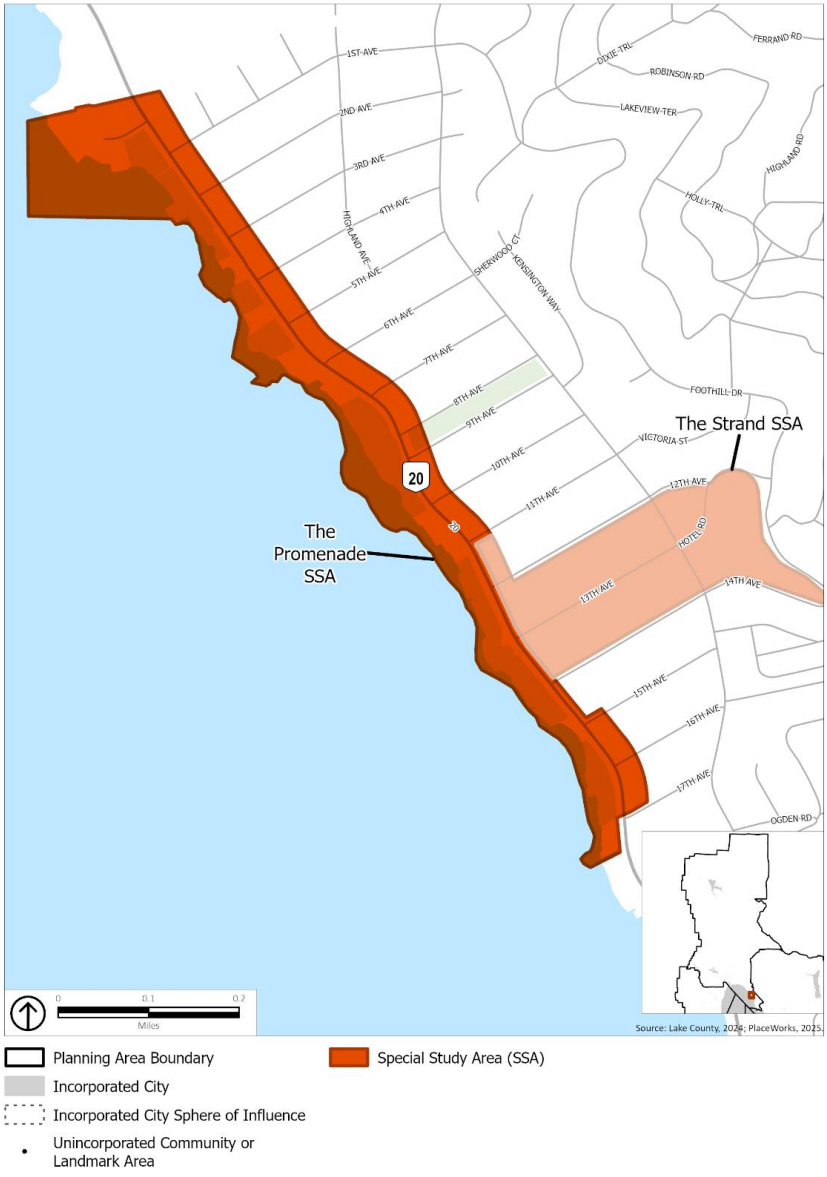
The community of Lucerne, originally planned in the 1880s, had a focus on the development of the waterfront or "promenade" stretching across the community along SR 20. In 2005, the now defunct Redevelopment Agency, with the assistance of local residents, adopted the *Lucerne Promenade Master Plan*. The enhancement and increase of the waterfront in Lucerne for the enjoyment of Clear Lake is the main focus of the Master Plan. The goals of the Master Plan include development of usable waterfront access, support for business, links to the community, creation of gathering places, and the establishment of traffic-calming measures. This Special Study Area is designed to implement the basic land use designations for the flexible and incremental development of the Promenade consistent with the goals and policies adopted by the residents of Lucerne.

As shown in **Figure NL-17**, the Promenade consists of property stretching from the West Gateway (located on shoreline side of SR 20 near Foothill Drive) to the Eastern Gateway (located along the shoreline between 16th and 7th Avenue). This area includes both the lots located along the shoreline and those properties directly fronting SR 20. Highway traffic calming improvements and beautification measures in this identified zone are also part of the Lucerne Promenade Master Plan.

According to the Master Plan, the Promenade will incorporate a mix of uses. Commercial resort type uses are encouraged throughout the area but mainly directed along the West and East Gateway. The shoreline should include multiple public gathering spaces and a plethora of public lake access. The shoreline should also include a mix of retail, parking, and public marinas. The focus of commercial use in this area should be near "The Strand" Special Study Area at the end of 13th Street and be designed to include restaurants and mixed retail. The Master Plan seeks to focus commercial services closer together rather than continuing to sprawl out along the highway corridor. Land use designations encourage higher-density residential to occur along the north side of SR 20. The incorporation of a comprehensive parking plan is essential to the viability of this development.

Due to the undersized nature of many of the existing lots in this area, alternative setbacks and residential performance standards should be considered to promote creative designs aimed at maximizing available use areas. Appropriate residential designs would incorporate elements consistent with smart growth principles. Where necessary, lots should be merged to facilitate the best use of available space.

Figure NL-17 "The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area



Streetscape and building design and location should promote a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere through the promotion of complete streets and walkable community principles. All new construction and signage should meet the design guidelines set forth later in this section.

Goal, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-SSA-1

A mix of retail, dining, resort commercial, multifamily residential and open space along the shoreline (Promenade) of Clear Lake in Lucerne.

Policies

NL-SSA-1.1

Enhance community identity and bolster the local economy of Lucerne through the promotion and improvement of public access to Clear Lake and the clustering of commercial development in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

NL-SSA-1.2

Promote the conversion of existing single-family residential uses to higher-density residential uses that take advantage of the pedestrian-oriented nature of the Promenade.

NL-SSA-1.3

Encourage the development of multifamily residential units along the north side of SR 20 that promote views of the lake and community gathering areas.

NL-SSA-1.4

Promote the clustering of commercial development along the Promenade towards “The Strand.”

Actions

NL-SSA-1.a

Continue to implement elements of the Lucerne Promenade Master Plan aimed at creating accessible and clustered community commercial uses along the waterfront in Lucerne.

NL-SSA-1.b

Develop a comprehensive parking plan for the Promenade.

NL-SSA-1.c

Develop a special fund paid into by new commercial development for the acquisition and establishment of public parking. Encourage the development of public parking lots throughout the vicinity to better facilitate pedestrian use and maximize the usable area of parcels for commercial and public lake access use.

NL-SSA-1.d

Implement revised design and performance standards for multifamily residential units to encourage the maximum use of small lots and allow for the utilization of public open space and parking in lieu of on-site requirements.

"The Strand" Lucerne Special Study Area

Note: "The Strand" Lucerne Special Study Area was originally prepared in 2009 and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.d.

As noted in "The Promenade" Lucerne Special Study Area section, the community of Lucerne had a focus on the development of the waterfront or promenade stretching across the community along SR 20. The central focus for commercial development within the Promenade Master Plan is the redevelopment of 13th Avenue, known as "The Strand," into a viable town center with a mix of retail, dining, essential services, and some residential above and behind shop fronts.

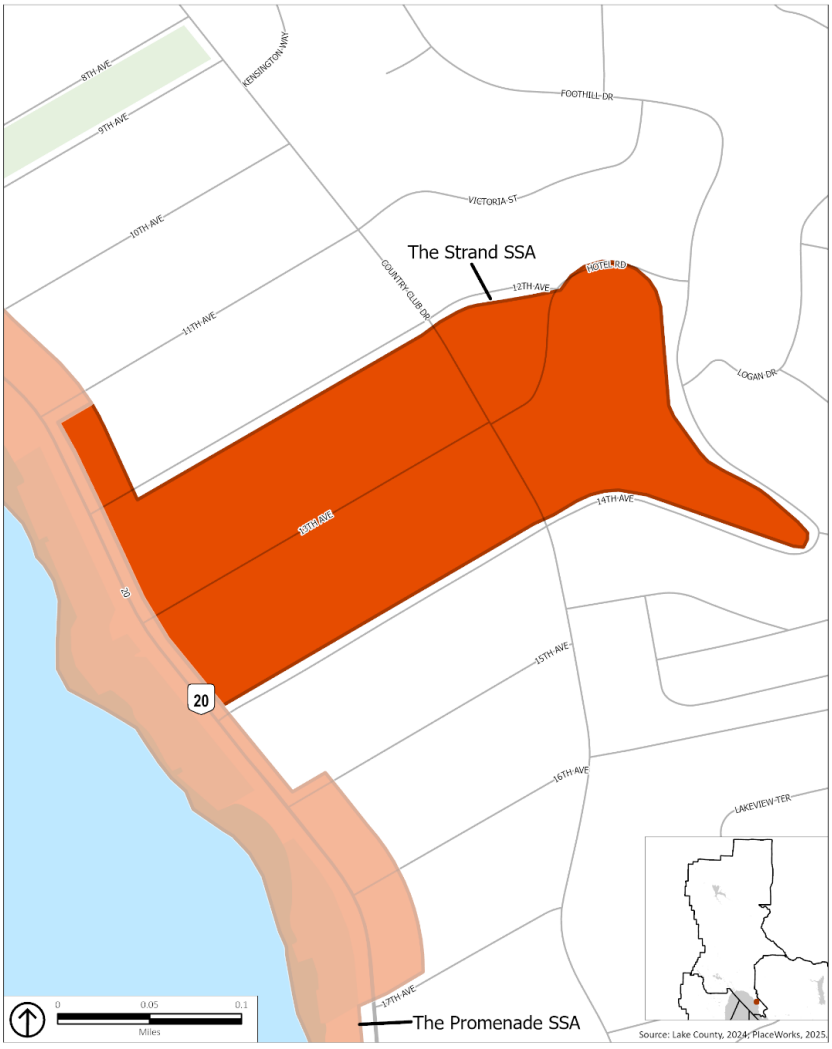
As shown in **Figure NL-18**, "The Strand" consists of all property situated to the east of 12th Avenue and west of 14th Avenue, between SR 20 and the outline created by Hotel Road, Foothill Drive, and 14th Avenue. The area also consists of those lots fronting the north side of SR 20 from the east side of 11th Avenue.

"The Strand" is envisioned to act as a natural transition zone between the residential uses to the north and commercial uses to the south and support a diverse variety of commercial activities aimed at serving both tourists and local residents. Supported uses include retail, dining, professional and personal services, banks, and other similar uses. Limited residential uses should be encouraged above and behind shops consistent with "smart growth" principles.

The area in "The Strand" northeast of Country Club Drive is occupied by "The Castle." The site is ideally suited for a diverse mix of uses. Support uses for the Castle include educational, conference facility, professional office, art studio, limited retail, and residential uses, including lodging and/or senior housing.

Streetscape and building design and location should promote a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere through the promotion of complete streets and walkable community principles. A comprehensive parking plan should be developed for the entire area to encourage people to leave their vehicles and promote storefront foot traffic. Special attention should be paid to ensure comfortable pedestrian access is achieved from "The Castle" area to the town center core of "The Strand." Parking areas should be tastefully landscaped and maintained to complement the town center atmosphere without detracting from nearby residences. A comprehensive landscaping plan for "The Strand" should include preferred street trees, planter areas, sidewalks, lighting, frequent benches, and areas for gathering.

Figure NL-18 "The Strand" Lucerne Special Study Area



Goal, Policies, and Actions

Goal NL-SSA-2

Development of a concentrated, vibrant town center in Lucerne along 13th Avenue ("The Strand") that provides services to local residents and tourists.

Policies

NL-SSA-2.1

Provide a framework for a mix of commercial services and high-density residential uses to create a vibrant town center.

NL-SSA-2.2

Work closely with potential developers of "The Castle" to ensure the highest and best use of the property.

Actions

NL-SSA-2.a

Continue to implement elements of the Lucerne Promenade Master Plan. Promote retail, dining, professional and personal services, banks, and other similar uses. Encourage compatible residential uses above storefronts. Development along "The Strand" should transition from higher-intensity uses to local commercial-oriented uses in areas near single-family homes.

NL-SSA-2.b

Encourage a diverse mix of uses to be developed on "The Castle" site. Promote educational, conference facility, professional office, art studio, limited retail, and residential uses, including lodging and/or senior housing.

NL-SSA-2.c

Develop a comprehensive parking plan for "The Strand." The parking plan should complement and tie into the Promenade Master Plan.

NL-SSA-2.d

Develop a special fund paid into by new commercial development for the acquisition and establishment of public parking. Incorporate the use of the "P" Parking Combining District. Encourage the development of public parking lots throughout the vicinity to better facilitate pedestrian use and maximize the usability of parcels for commercial use.

NL-SSA-2.e

Devise a set of sample commercial building plans and elevations for prospective developers in "The Strand" that incorporate desired design characteristics and address common building constraints.

Nice Future Growth Possibilities, Action, and Priorities

Note: This content originated in the Nice Design Guidelines prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.c.

Revitalization of the Northshore Communities is a process that is underway and will occur over time. The core strategies for this process center on the basic concept that growth and change in these communities should occur in a planned way.

The first strategy is that an overall master plan for community growth and health should be developed. The master plan would provide a look forward in time to the possibilities of new commercial growth in the community. It would identify the potential sites for such growth and illustrate how new buildings would fit in with the existing fabric of the downtown.

The second strategy is to provide design recommendations for individual existing building façade improvements. One of the fundamental ways of improving a downtown is to begin by improving its buildings. This approach by nature is incremental, and as such stands a good chance of being implemented as the improvements occur both over time and by modest amounts. However, the overall effect, once achieved, is that the downtown will be much more conducive to commerce.

The third strategy is to provide public-sector improvements that will both enhance and encourage private-sector improvements. These revitalization elements take the form of streetscape improvements: new tree plantings, sidewalks, curb and gutter construction, undergrounding utilities, and streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, and community signage. Public-sector improvements are recommended as a key part of the overall process; they set the tone for other improvements and will be crucial in tying the entire commercial zone together visually.

Revitalization efforts should contain the following components:

- A future development master plan
- Existing building photographs
- New building façade
- Recommendations for landscape/streetscape improvements
- A catalyst project design
- Conceptual cost estimates of selected facades guidelines for commercial infill
- A priorities/action plan

Future Growth Possibilities

Existing Development

With few exceptions, most of the buildings in downtown Nice are located with substantial space between the buildings. Unlike a traditional small downtown, in which all or most of the buildings adjoin each other and front uniformly upon a front property line, the downtown buildings in Nice are set back further from the street edge and are not uniform in setback. In addition, some of the buildings are not parallel to the road, creating an even more haphazard appearance.

Trees

Trees should be placed directly at the road edge, giving a more urban and dense setting than the existing buildings provide, with their varied setbacks.

The recommended trees in the downtown are Eastern Oak, Pin Oak, Red Oak, Redbud (accent tree), and Sycamore (London Plane).

Catalyst Project

A triangle-shaped area bordering SR 20 is informally called Triangle Park. The community wishes to develop this vacant parcel as a feature landscaped park area. The park would have a small fountain, a large Christmas tree, a single pathway, and plantings. Along the rear of the site, a low stone or masonry wall is suggested, upon which the word NICE could be placed in metal letters, and perhaps illuminated.

This small landscape project would be ideal to continue the revitalization process in Nice. It is achievable due to its modest size and design and would give the community inspiration towards other achievements.

New Development Potential

To provide a healthier business climate for the downtown, tourist business should be actively pursued. To capture some of the tourist trade, Nice will need to build additional retail beyond its existing stock of buildings. Spacing buildings close to each other would provide a perceived concentration of shops, which is very conducive to retail.

Three locations for new commercial development have been planned in prior community planning efforts:

Plaza Site

Located directly across from Triangle Park, this site backs up to the Nice marina. Currently, an ice cream stand and an abandoned gas station occupy the site, with the remaining portion of the site as vacant. There are two buildings planned on this site, forming a plaza that faces towards the highway and Triangle Park. The buildings are envisioned as one or two stories with a series of small storefront bay windows and recessed entries for each small shop. The plaza area could have a fountain (aligned with the Triangle Park fountain) and a free-standing gazebo shop. Parking is planned to the north of the site. In addition, there is

the opportunity to provide a similarly shaped triangle park area flanking the highway, as a companion to the original park. This second park would reinforce the visual impact of the first one.

Town Square Site

In the location of the existing Hinman Park, located to the north end of the downtown, there is a large area of property which could be developed for tourist-serving commercial uses. Of the three sites, this site offers the most potential for growth in terms of being able to provide the largest amount of buildable land.

This site is envisioned as a series of larger commercial buildings surrounding a formal town square. The streets adjoining the existing park, which run perpendicular to SR 20, would be closed off and the town square shifted to the south of its current location. The square could feature a ring of trees, lawn and pathways, a central fountain, and a clock located along the highway. Parking would be located to the north and behind the site.

Highway Site

Directly across from the Town Square site, a series of smaller buildings are planned flanking SR 20. This site offers the least potential for creating a sense of place, as there is not a strong spatial relationship linking this site to the remainder of the downtown. It could, however, be developed as additional expansion space to the Town Square site.

Infill Development Plan

The community has previously prepared an infill development plan, focused on infill development throughout the core area, with anticipation of future growth flanking the marina. This plan demonstrates that there are a variety of viable designs which could enhance the downtown.

Town Square

The town square in this plan differs from the previous plan in two major ways.

First, the open space square is position in the current location of Hinman Park, rather than shifting the square to the east. Secondly, the streets flanking all sides of the park would remain, with the intent that parking for the future retail spaces could occur surrounding the park

Highway Site

This additional potential development site, as described similarly in the previous plan, flanks SR 20. Its design differs in two ways from the prior plan:

First, a continuous (or nearly so) band of building is depicted, in lieu of a series of smaller infill buildings shown in the prior plan. This continuous band, if developed in total by one developer, could create a remarkably urban setting, as the facade facing the have been being constructed.

Secondly, the highway site includes a strip of parking that would be separated from the highway by a landscape band.

Plaza Site

The building located at this site would be oriented differently from the prior plan. Instead of facing the highway, the building and its adjacent plaza are turned to face the marina.

Parking for this development would be located at the corner, opposite the existing market. In doing so, a large view corridor visually linking the highway and the marina would be created. The cars should be screened from the highway by a low wall or landscaped berm.

Other Potential Developments

The two areas flanking the east and west sides of the marina hold great future potential for development. These two areas offer adjacency to the marina and views of the lake. In particular, the site east of the marina, which is located between the marina and the Worldmark development, has strong potential for development that could take advantage of the Worldmark trade and access to the marina.

Actions & Priorities

Actions

The community of Nice has begun the process of redevelopment and revitalization of its downtown core through participation in community workshops and by providing valuable guidance to these design guidelines.

There are a number of important efforts that volunteer community groups can engage in, using the County's assistance wherever possible:

- Organizing of the community & spreading the word about its future
- Organizing focus committees to guide and facilitate implementation of these design guidelines
- Meeting with Caltrans and other organizations to facilitate tree planting and undergrounding.
- Developing more precise locations for street trees.
- Determining the issues associated with each tree's site, which may include:
  - Caltrans right-of-way encroachment and conflicts with overhead wires.
  - Gaining permission from property owners who may object to tree planting in front of their property.
  - Coordination with the County about curb, gutter, and sidewalk locations versus tree locations.
  - Developing a street lighting plan, particularly if decorative street lights are desired.
  - Coordinating with the County about the public restroom location and design at Hinman Park.
  - Providing volunteer building efforts for the catalyst project.

Priorities

Based on prior community workshop discussions, project priorities are as follows:

1. Catalyst Project
2. Facade Rehabilitation
3. Street tree installation (where overhead wires are missing)
4. Undergrounding of utilities / streetlight installation
5. Curb, gutter, and sidewalk installation
6. Street tree installation (where overhead wires occur)
7. New building at infill sites

General Community Design Guidelines

Note: These design guidelines consolidate the original guidelines prepared for the Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake communities, where the guidelines were generally consistent. The individual guidelines were originally prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.c.

Applicability

These design guidelines are applicable to the communities of Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake.

Height

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Predominantly one-story structures, with limited two-story buildings in the Promenade area, including the Visitor's Center and Tower Mart.
- Nice: Core area is almost entirely one-story, with a single two-story building set back from the highway.
- Upper Lake: Downtown is almost entirely uniform in height, predominated by one-story structures.

Guidelines

- New buildings should respect the predominant height of surrounding buildings and generally match (or nearly so) the height of adjacent structures where setbacks are similar.
- Taller structures may be acceptable if the taller portion is set back appropriately.
- In the Strand Area of Lucerne, two-story buildings should be encouraged to create a strong urban character.

Width

The width of a building lot facing the street is a very strong design feature and, in many communities, this lot width is relatively uniform.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Lot widths vary widely, with no strong rhythm due to vacant lots and multi-lot structures.
- Nice: Pockets of uniformity exist, but most lot widths vary.
- Upper Lake: West Main Street has nearly uniform lot widths, while the east side varies considerably.

Guidelines

- Where there is a strong rhythm of lot width, new construction should follow it.
- When a building spans multiple lots, the façade should be divided to repeat the widths of its neighbors, if possible.
- Where new buildings are placed on empty lots between existing buildings that have differing widths, the new buildings should be rhythmically divided to repeat their predominant neighbor.

Setback

Setback distance is measured from the property line to the building. Side setbacks may also need to be considered where there is a uniform pattern near the location of a new building.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Typical setbacks of 10-20 feet.
- Nice: Typical setbacks of about 10-20 feet. Marina Shopping Center and Ed's Market have inconsistent setbacks.
- Upper Lake: West Main Street maintains a uniform setback with façades aligned to the front lot line; the east side varies significantly.

Guidelines

- Where setbacks are uniform and discernible, new construction should follow the established pattern.
- In areas without uniformity, setbacks should be evaluated based on visual impact, building use, scale, width, and height.
- In the Strand Area of Lucerne, zero setback from the front property line is encouraged to create an urban character.

Windows and Doors

There are two design issues related to the openings in a building's façade. The first is the overall proportion, spacing, size, and shape of these openings. The second is the level of detail or division within the openings, particularly with regard to commercial storefront display windows.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Façades have varied opening sizes, mostly horizontal. Very few include detailed divisions—that is, division of the glazed areas into smaller panes of glass, or division of doors with multiple solid or glazed panels, or by trim pieces.
- Nice: Openings vary in size and proportion, mostly horizontal; very limited detailed divisions.
- Upper Lake: Storefronts vary in size, all rectangular; very limited detailed divisions.

Guidelines

- Openings should generally be rectangular and horizontal in one-story buildings.
- Round, triangular, or irregular openings should be discouraged.
- When appropriate, retail windows should be divided into smaller panes by mullions.
- False mullions should be discouraged. True divided light glazing is preferred, compared to snap-on interior mullions or thin mullion strips sandwiched between layers of glass.
- New buildings should include window and door openings that maintain the predominant proportion and spacing of openings of existing buildings.

Horizontal Rhythms

This design element describes the use of horizontal bands on facades, such as cornices, awnings, or projecting bands that divide the first floor from the second.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: No predominant horizontal façade elements, but individual buildings have them.
- Nice: No predominant horizontal façade elements.
- Upper Lake: West Main Street façades are overshadowed by a continuous wood awning that obscures storefront individuality.

Guidelines

- New construction and remodels should respect horizontal elements of neighboring buildings if they are original.
- Infill buildings should include horizontal bands, such as string courses, parapet cornices, and top friezes aligned with adjacent structures.

Roof Shape

Commercial buildings tend to have horizontal roof lines. Sloping, hipped, or gable end roofs are common in residential structures. The shape of the roof, its parapet line, and its decorative details are all important in defining the characteristics of a district.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Variety of roof forms, including horizontal, sloping, and mansard.
- Nice: Wide variety of roof forms, from horizontal to mansard and sloping residential styles.
- Upper Lake: Predominantly horizontal parapet lines, generally uniform, with some stepped parapets.

Guidelines

- Commercial buildings should have roof forms appropriate to their nature, generally horizontal.
- Sloping, exposed hip roofs facing the street are discouraged. An exception would be to create a gabled or hipped roof for a portion of the building, where that portion signified something important about its location, such as at an entry point to the building.
- Mansard roofs should be avoided. This roof type is generally associated with national commercial chains and is not in keeping with the unique characteristics of these communities.
- Sloping parapets may be used to add variation to areas with predominantly horizontal roof forms.
- A gabled or hipped roof may be acceptable for a portion of the building, where that portion signified something important about its location, such as at an entry point to the building.

Awnings & Canopies

Horizontal, projecting awnings and canopies can be very effective design elements. They can also predominate a façade in a way that detracts from the façade's unique character. Awnings and canopies are a good location for signage, stenciled on the front edge of the awning.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Few awnings; roof overhangs are more common.
- Nice: Few awnings; roof overhangs are somewhat prevalent.
- Upper Lake: Strong horizontal wood awnings dominate façades on the west side of Main Street.

Guidelines

- Cloth awnings and canopies should be encouraged as they add pedestrian scale, color, and signage opportunities.
- Wood or metal awnings should only be used if integral to the design.

Materials

This guideline concerns the choice of material that will predominate the façade. In many instances, the façade material becomes a strong character-defining element.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Stucco, wood, and brick façades, with no single material predominating.
- Nice: Stucco, wood, and brick façades, with no single material predominating.
- Upper Lake: Predominantly stucco façades; wood cladding is rare.

Guidelines

- Where a material is predominant on one façade, the use of that same material for new adjacent buildings should be strongly encouraged.
- High-quality natural materials should be used. Fake materials (plastic rock, fake brick, etc.) should be discouraged.
- Glazing should be clear or lightly tinted, not reflective.
- Painted wood is preferred over natural-stained wood.
- Brick and stone are acceptable where no predominant material exists.

Color

Often the source of heated community debate, color guidelines are definable.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Predominantly light-colored façades with dark roof edges.
- Nice: Light-colored façades predominate, with dark roof edges.
- Upper Lake: Predominantly light-colored buildings, typical of similar districts.

Guidelines

- Bright primary colors, often associated with chain stores, should be discouraged.
- Warm colors related to natural materials are encouraged.
- More intense, contrasting colors should be limited to details.
- Buildings should coordinate, not match, their neighbors.
- Color pallets on facades should be kept simple. Two to three colors are sufficient for variety and detail.

Signs

Signs can strengthen building appearance or easily detract from it.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Generally poor signage: too large, too high, often out of scale from the building.
- Nice: Generally poor signage: too large, too high, often out of scale from the building.
- Upper Lake: Mix of flush-mounted and projecting signs; very few hanging signs under awnings.

Guidelines

- Signs should be scaled to the building and not obscure architectural features.
- Flush-mounted signs below parapets, small window signs, and signs on cloth canopies are encouraged.
- Hanging signs in pedestrian-oriented areas should be used wherever possible.
- Highly graphic or symbolic signs (such as donut for a bakery or a book for a bookstore) are encouraged.
- Plastic-faced, backlit, roof-mounted, oversized, or tall signs should be discouraged.
- Externally lit signs are acceptable.

Landscaping

The use of plant and hardscape materials in front of a building is an important design element.

Existing Conditions

- Lucerne: Undeveloped strips of paving or dirt in front of businesses, mostly in Caltrans right-of-way.
- Nice: Undeveloped strips of paving or dirt in front of most businesses.
- Upper Lake: Concrete sidewalks dominate downtown; few or no trees.

Guidelines

- Decorative paving is encouraged.
- Plant materials should be coordinated with a community tree planting program to complement and not compete with community tree selections.
- Low-maintenance native species should be used and non-native plants should be discouraged.
- Street furnishings (benches, light poles, trash receptacles, etc.), if provided by individual property owners, should be coordinated with the efforts of other property owners to minimize a scattered, hodgepodge appearance.
- Fencing may be used to block unsightly areas and should coordinate with building materials.

Lucerne Community Area Additional Design Guidelines

Note: The Lucerne Area Design Guidelines were originally prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.c.

The growth of commercial services in the community center of Lucerne is expected to continue over time. A majority of development in the town center will take the form of infill on vacant property or replacement of existing structures. The following additional design guidelines are a series of recommendations aimed at helping Lucerne retain its uniqueness and discourage incompatible construction. The following elements are written to help the commercial areas with new infill, renovation, and replacement building type projects.

Applicability

In addition to the general community design guidelines, these additional guidelines are applicable to developments in the Lucerne community.

Façade Improvements

Lucerne has advertised itself as "the Switzerland of America." This moniker implies a Bavarian or northern Italian architectural style, in keeping with the Swiss theme. Creating a false sense of style for new buildings and façade makeovers that would pick up on the Swiss themes runs the risk of becoming kitschy and tacky. New infill buildings and renovated facades should respond to the context in which they exist and reflect the styles that are prevalent for their place in time and region. It is recommended that façade revitalization designs use more subtle references to "Switzerland" via several techniques:

- Consistent use of certain materials, such as stone facing, smaller paned windows, and restrained half-timbering of facades would be effective.
- Creation of towers and gabled roof shapes that recall northern Italian styles are appropriate.
- Color treatment throughout the commercial district should shift from current blue-grey palette to warmer tones, as is typical of Switzerland and northern Italy.

Façade treatments do not need to be elaborate to provide a positive image for the community. Often just the removal of poorly designed, out-of-scale signs and repainting of the façade is sufficient to accomplish a remarkable makeover.

Upper Lake Revitalization Planning and Additional Design Guidelines

Note: The Upper Lake Design Guidelines were originally prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.c.

Revitalization of the Northshore Communities is a process that is underway and will continue to occur over time. The core strategies for this process center on the basic concept that growth and change in these communities should occur in a planned way.

The first strategy is to provide design recommendations for individual existing building façade improvements. One of the fundamental ways of improving a downtown is to begin by improving its buildings. This approach by nature is incremental, and as such stands a good chance of being implemented as the improvements occur both over time and by modest amounts. However, the overall effect, once achieved, is that the downtown be much more conducive to commerce.

The second strategy is to provide public-sector improvements that will both enhance and encourage private-sector improvements. These revitalization elements take the form of streetscape improvements: new tree plantings, sidewalks, curb and gutter construction, under-grounding of utilities, and streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, and community signage. Public-sector improvements are recommended as a key part of the overall process - they set the tone for other improvements and will be crucial in tying the entire commercial zone together visually. Revitalization efforts should contain the following components:

- A landscape/streetscape improvements master plan
- Existing building photographs
- New building facade recommendations
- Conceptual cost estimates of selected facades
- A catalyst project design
- A priorities/action plan
- Guidelines for commercial infill

To support tourism, which is important to the local economy, the look and feel of the community is important. Things that detract from this include:

- Poor, unsightly entries and gateways into communities.
- Dark, cave-like appearance of storefronts, which can be created by heavy wood awnings.
- A lack of sufficient businesses in downtown/core areas to attract tourists.

To effectively capture the tourist trade from SR 20, the design of the entry to downtown Upper Lake and along the Main Street facades is important. Together with the general community design guidelines, the following design guidelines support cohesive development that boosts tourism and the local economy.

Design Guidelines for Public Sector Improvements

There are two basic streetscape improvements that would provide a very attractive look for the downtown.

Applicability

In addition to the general community design guidelines, these additional guidelines are applicable to new development and redevelopment in the Upper Lake community.

Street Trees and Lighting

Planting of street trees along both sides of the street would provide a strong softening effect against the overbearing existing wood awning. Decorative streetlights should be interspersed between the trees at a wider spacing.

Planting of street trees would require a widening of the existing sidewalk for the trees to clear the existing canopy. By moving the trees outboard of the existing curb line by approximately 2 1/2 feet, the existing wood awning could remain or its fabric replacements of the same depth could be installed.

The tree position would allow planting to occur independently of any wood awning replacements. Given the width of the existing street, and by placing the trees at a regular spacing at the triangular ends of the diagonal parking stalls, the sidewalk widening can be readily accommodated. A regular tree and light spacing would also provide a strong rhythm to the street, which is normally provided by the building facades.

The 3- or 4-foot-wide band of sidewalk between the street trees, inboard of the new curb, could be paved with brick or decorative concrete pavers. This treatment would add a great deal to the appearance of the street, providing an upscale feel that is very much needed at present.

Visitor Parking

A large parking lot at the entry to Main Street, at the fruit truck staging area, is planned. This lot would accommodate approximately 30 to 35 cars. Located at the gateway area to Main Street, it would be readily visible and accessible to visitors who are unfamiliar with the downtown.

The parking lot would be partially visually screened from Main Street by the construction of a low wall, bordering the street. Trees should be planted in the parking area, both for shade and to provide a softening of an otherwise large expanse of cars.

Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development

Note: These design guidelines were originally prepared more than 25 years ago and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action NL-LU-3.c.

Attractive buildings and landscaping reflect the values of a community, enhance its visual character, attract business activity, and project community pride. Retail and tourist trade in communities such as Lucerne, Upper Lake, and Nice can be greatly enhanced by the projection of a positive community image to the traveler. The community welcomes well-designed projects and County staff is ready to assist developers and builders in making them successful.

Applicability

These design guidelines are applicable to all areas of the North Lake Communities Planning Area. Some guidelines are general and apply to all types of development, while others are specific to commercial and/or industrial development, as specified herein.

Area Wide Goals and Guidelines

Goals

1. To encourage attractive buildings and landscaping which reflect the values of the communities.
2. To project a positive "Small Town" image to the traveling public.
3. To promote architectural diversity and creative, cost-effective design solutions that are compatible with the unique environment of the North Lake Communities Planning Area.
4. To provide safe and efficient access and parking while minimizing conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
5. To protect Clear Lake from further pollution from inadequate storm drainage facilities and poorly designed industrial disposal systems.

Guidelines

Desirable Characteristics:

1. Attractive color schemes
2. Interesting surface and textures
3. Compatible size and style of buildings
4. Natural materials such as wood or stone
5. Façades with varying depths and corners
6. Prominent entries and windows

Undesirable Characteristics:

1. Highly reflective surfaces
2. Large blank monotonous exteriors
3. Unpainted concrete or corrugated metal siding
4. Square, box-like buildings
5. Mix of unrelated styles
6. Unscreened storage and loading areas

Commercial and Industrial Guidelines

General Guidelines

- Building designs should foster the "Small Town" image.
- New buildings should be largely consistent with local development in terms of scale, height, and setbacks.
- While no particular color schemes are recommended, in general earth tones on large expanses are encouraged, along with contrasting colors that accent architectural details such as trim, windows, and entrances.
- Complementary color schemes and routine maintenance should be encouraged for existing older buildings with interesting architectural features.
- Roof-mounted equipment and/or ductwork should be screened from view.

Shopping Center Guidelines

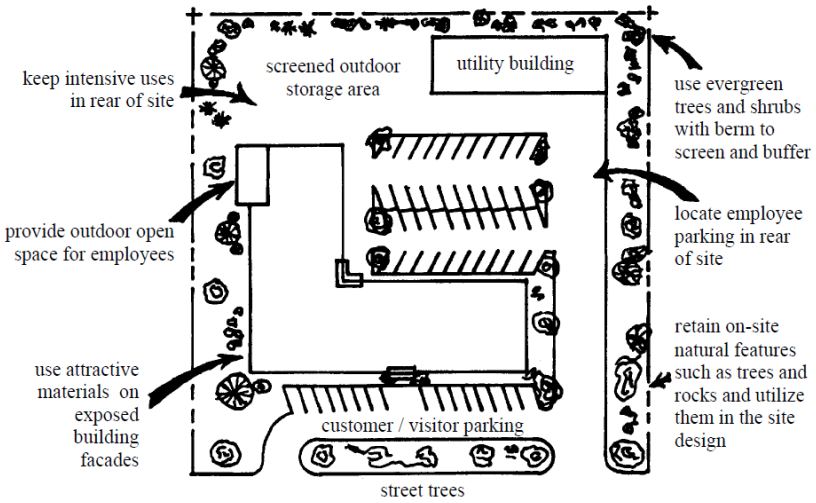
- Shopping centers should be designed for public view from at least three sides.
- The entire exterior should be consistent with regard to texture, colors, scale, and overall design.
- Where rooftops are visible from adjacent properties or roads, rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from view.
- Loading and unloading facilities should be located away from public view.

Heavy Commercial/Light Industrial Guidelines

- Storage, loading, overhead doors, and garages should be oriented away from major streets and highways.
- Entries should portray a quality office or storefront appearance.
- Modern metal buildings may be used that incorporate attractive factory-applied color coating or roof and sliding that are designed to look like wood, masonry, tiles, shakes, shingles, or similar materials.
- Rooftop mechanical equipment and/or ductwork should be painted consistent with the color scheme of the building.

- Where site plans have customer/visitor parking in front of the buildings, as indicated in **Figure NL-19,** the planter shall be at least 10 feet wide and shall contain screening shrubbery in addition to the indicated trees. Other screens such as mounded earth with low groundcover plus trees will be considered.

Figure NL-19 Heavy Commercial/Industrial Concept Sketch



Signs

- Signs with a brief, succinct message are usually more attractive, simpler, and easier to read. Cluttered, hard-to-read signs are discouraged.
- Signs should be a harmonious element of the overall building design, using complementary building materials and colors. Signs should not dominate building architecture through inappropriate sizes, colors, or designs.
- Additional sign standards are found in Article 45 of the Lake County Zoning Code.
- Free standing signs should not be greater in height than the principal structure.

Landscaping

- Existing trees and native vegetation should be retained to the greatest extent feasible.
- Landscaping should consist largely of plants native or well-adapted to the Lake County area. Drought-resistant vegetation is encouraged.
- Parking areas should be landscaped as topography allows.

- Trash and recycling bins should be screened from public view to the greatest extent possible.
- Additional landscaping standards are found in Section 41.9 of the Lake County Zoning Code.

Circulation and Parking

- Parking areas should be clearly separated from street frontages by landscaping and/or curbs as existing topography permits.
- Parking lot circulation should be clearly marked. Parking areas should be designed with clearly defined ingress and egress.
- Additional parking standards are found in Article 46 of the Lake County Zoning Code.

Site Preparation

- Site grading should minimize disturbance to existing terrain and drainage patterns.
- Balancing of cuts and fills is encouraged.
- Large cut slopes and abrupt transitions should be avoided.
- Fills should be contoured and site designs that retain existing trees are encouraged.
- Revegetation of disturbed areas should be completed as quickly as possible.

Utility and Lighting

- Where feasible, utilities should be constructed underground.
- Trash bins should be screened from public view to the greatest extent possible.
- Lighting should be hooded, subdued, and compatible with surrounding development. Sign lighting should be indirect rather than internally illuminated.

Energy Conservation

- Buildings should be designed for energy efficiency consistent with an attractive public appearance.
- When solar panels are proposed, it is encouraged that they be integrated into the roof design, flush with the roof slope. Frames should match the roof color. Support solar equipment should be enclosed and screened from view.

Environmental

- Paved surfaces should be kept to a minimum to reduce runoff and lake pollution.
- Storm drainage facilities should be designed to minimize blockage so storm runoff is not diverted to less desirable channels.
- Industrial disposal systems should be designed to minimize chances for accidental leeks and spills because of the proximity of the lake.

- Wetland areas should not be filled or degraded. Wetland restoration projects should be encouraged.
- Floodplain development should be avoided or minimized. Hazardous materials should be stored at least one foot above 100-year floodplain level.

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