

Lake County 2050 Round 1 Local Area Plan (LAP) Workshop Series Cobb Workshop Summary

In-Person Workshop
Thursday, April 18, 2024

Workshop Series Overview

In April 2024, Lake County hosted the first round of community workshops kicking off the Local Area Plan (LAP) updates as part of Lake County 2050, the comprehensive update to Lake County's General Plan. The County hosted in-person workshops in each of the eight LAP areas. Each workshop was held as part of a meeting of the established advisory body for the LAP area.

Cobb Workshop Introduction

The Cobb Round 1 LAP Workshop, hosted by the Cobb Area Council (CAC) and the County, with support from AmeriCorps, was held on April 18, 2024, from 6:00PM to 8:00PM at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Cobb and as a hybrid virtual meeting via Zoom.

The workshop introduced community members to the project and gathered initial input to inform the updates to the Cobb LAP.

The County's Community Development Director, Mireya Turner, opened the meeting by thanking attendees, CAC members, and project staff, and emphasizing the importance of community involvement in the Lake County 2050 General Plan project. County staff then presented an overview of the General Plan Update process, which includes updates to all eight LAPs and preparation of the General Plan EIR. The presentation included information about State requirements for the General Plan, the organization of the General Plan with countywide elements and LAP topics, the project timeline, and ongoing opportunities to participate. Following the presentation, the project team held a question-and-answer session before considering the discussion questions.

For the meeting slides, a recording of the meeting, and more information about the project, visit <https://lakecounty2050.org/past-meetings-materials/>.

Workshop Attendees

CAC Chair Cathy McCarthy, Vice Chair Jake Strickler, Vice Chair Joe Schneider, Treasurer Chris Nettles, Secretary Darlene Warner, Member Jake Strickler, and Alternate Mel McMurrin attended the meeting as well as Lake County Supervisor Pyska (District 5) and CalFire Division Chief and South Lake County Volunteer Fire Fighters Association Chief Paul Duncan. Twenty additional members of the public attended the meeting in-person and 3 people attended the meeting virtually.

Small Group Discussion

Following the presentation, project staff answered questions from participants and then introduced the four discussion questions, which participants broke into small groups to discuss while project staff facilitated and recorded answers.

Small Group Discussion Summary

Working in small groups, each with a staff facilitator and note-taker, workshop participants discussed four questions about the future of the Cobb area. Participants were encouraged to collaborate and discuss their perspectives and emerging ideas in response to each question while notetakers recorded responses on large flip-chart paper.

The four questions are presented below, each followed by a bulleted list of ideas community members shared in their responses.

What do you like most about the Cobb area? What would you like to see supported, preserved, or enhanced as part of this planning effort?

- Land Use and Community Character
 - Protect and preserve the quiet, small-town atmosphere with small neighborhoods and few people, including the Italian Village and small vacation cabins.
 - Preserve the tight-knit, friendly, engaged, and active community, where neighbors know and help each other. This includes supporting organizations and community gathering places like Friends of Boggs Mountain, Cobb Alert Net, Cobb Watershed Education and Restoration Program, Firewise Communities, Mountain High Coffee, Cobb Mountain Lions Club, and the old Hoberg's golf course. This also includes supporting caring local businesses and spiritual organizations like Hardester's Market, Mandala Springs, Mountain of Attention Sanctuary, Whispering Pines, Pine Grove, Adams Springs, Italian Village, Mountain High Coffee, Pizza Mountain Meadow, Adam Springs, and Harbin Hot Springs.
 - Preserve and enhance arts and events within the community, including Cobbler Fest, fine art exhibits, open mic nights, and public concerts.
 - Continue to be a community that is friendly to seniors.
 - Maintain the vacation-oriented community and way of life, including vacation homes that are owned by a seasonal population, rather than short-term rentals.
 - Preserve the scenic roadways.
 - Protect and preserve the viewshed and dark skies.
 - Preserve and enhance the ability to grow fresh food.
- Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Celebrate the area's history and continue to preserve historic landmarks in the area.
 - Recognize and celebrate the rich history of indigenous peoples living here, who are still very much present.
 - Recognize the traumas of past colonial history and make conscious efforts to restore true partnership here with the First Peoples of this place.
- Economy
 - Preserve and enhance local coffee shops, local grocery stores, and other local businesses; prohibit big-box stores.
 - Enhance efforts to keep business spaces filled.

- Support a tourism economy.
- Continue to provide a mix of home uses/occupations, including vacation homes for tourists.
- Environment
 - Protect the natural ecosystems, including the mountainous landscape with its many unique mini-biomes, as well as waters, forests and trees (including oak woodlands), native vegetation, wildlife, and places like Boggs Forest, Boggs Lake, and Kelsey Creek.
 - Preserve clean air, the clean lake, and springs/groundwater.
- Parks and Recreation
 - Maintain access to recreational opportunities, like swimming, golf, hiking, and biking.
 - Preserve and enhance hiking trails and continue to develop new trails to improve trail connectivity.
- Transportation
 - Maintain low levels of traffic in the area.
- Infrastructure and Public Services
 - Preserve and enhance the sense of safety in the community.
 - Continue to support firefighting services and infrastructure, including the Loch Lomond fire base for helicopters during fire season.
 - Maintain small school sizes. Support the Cobb School.

What are the challenges facing the Cobb area? What would you like to see changed to make it a better place to live and work?

- Land Use and Community Character
 - Some lots are too small. Facilitate easy and low-cost methods to join or split parcels in the area.
 - Ensure all development is planned at a walkable, neighborhood scale.
 - Maintain accessibility for an aging community.
 - Rehabilitate and encourage creative reuse of old commercial buildings.
 - Maintain view sheds by maintaining low building profiles.
 - Provide assistance to homeowners who have overgrown lots to remove scotch broom and dead trees.
 - Address property maintenance issues with absentee property owners.
 - Increase enforcement against squatters in vacation homes.
 - Increase enforcement of illegal cannabis grows. Reduce noise from cannabis grows.
 - Provide educational resources for new residents and homeowners.
 - Support family-oriented community events like a seasonal pumpkin patch and Christmas tree lighting community event. Consider planting a Christmas tree somewhere in the center of the Cobb community for the tree lighting community event. Continue trick or treating in Loch Lomond.
 - Schools are used for sports and activities throughout the year. Provide better community spaces to support events and sports activities, including indoor community spaces that are large, in good condition, and sound-proof. Construct structures (e.g., an amphitheater) that support summer events, like concerts and plays.
 - Establish a community vision that will support access to grant funding sources.

- Enhance and emphasize the importance of civic engagement and community participation in local government. Encourage greater participation in the Cobb Area Council and its committees.
- Explicitly recognize the complex systems dynamics of the community, including how development, regulatory, and governing decisions and programs (including emergency management) affect the local environment, economy, and social and cultural sectors. Describe the area's complex systems in the LAP and identify metrics related to key priorities and goals.
- **Housing**
 - Provide more housing at all economic levels, including affordable housing, mixed-use housing, and multi-family housing. Allow tiny homes and accessory dwelling units in residential areas.
 - Increase housing to achieve population levels that support local businesses and resorts.
 - Provide housing for homeless people.
 - Support access to affordable homeowners' insurance.
- **Economy**
 - Businesses have a hard time succeeding in the area. Build a robust local economy that can support working families through business development support, such as business planning and access to financing.
 - Encourage more refined retail types and promote small local businesses. Prohibit big box stores.
 - Promote local small-scale forest-based industries and jobs related to local food security.
 - Encourage greater integration and more active participation in community affairs by Calpine Geothermal.
 - Promote tourism, including by establishing a strong town center. Cooperatively market resort and retreat venues. Encourage development of a campground. Attract more restaurants. Provide more activities for locals and visitors.
 - Improve access to banking.
- **Environment and Environmental Health**
 - Restore and improve resiliency of the native landscape, including by restoring historic tree mixes and densities. Remove invasive species (e.g., scotch broom and star thistle) and restore native forest and riparian species.
 - Carefully analyze of how land use and development, including housing, commercial, and agriculture (including vineyards and cannabis), affect the overall ecosystem.
 - Provide targeted funding for priority forest management at a micro-scale.
 - Restore historic burning practices.
 - Conduct detailed analysis and monitoring of the complex local watershed, especially under drought conditions.
 - Monitor drought conditions and enforce drought plans.
 - Promote water-wise landscapes and drought-resistant plants.
 - Address contaminated water, both surface water like Loch Lomond and groundwater/geothermal.
 - Restore all local waterways, including Kelsey, Cole, Seigler and Adobe Creeks and their tributaries in the Cache Creek watershed, as well as Big Canyon and Anderson Creeks in the Putah Creek watershed. Restore fish passages.
- **Parks and Recreation**

- Construct more neighborhood parks, dog parks, and parks with walking trails. Provide trail access to the summit of Cobb Mountain. Create an exercise circuit park (like in Spring Lake, Santa Rosa). Plan for recreation infrastructure that connects residential and commercial areas.
- Maintain funding for existing public services like parks and community centers.
- Enhance the existing community center, including to expand its limited operating hours. Expand the volunteer program or secure funding to increase hours of operation. Pursue grants for parks and community center upgrades.
- Increase access to youth activities. Provide more children's summer camps and Outward Bound-type programs.
- Attract a gym in Cobb.
- Establish areas for off road recreation, including bikes, quads, and motocross.
- **Safety**
 - Provide more local law enforcement and quicker response times from first responders, especially during summer and in Loch Lomond.
 - Support establishment of a humane society in Cobb or Middletown for abandoned animals. Many animals are abandoned in Loch Lomond.
 - Improve safety of the Spring Valley community.
 - Address sink holes in Loch Lomond – Sycamore and provide information to community members about how they can get assistance.
 - Build local climate change-resilient relationships and systems for watershed management, local power generation, and food production.
 - Upgrade aging structures for fire and earthquake risk. Ensure homes are fireproofed.
 - There are too many dead trees resulting from the Valley Fire that are still standing and posing a danger. Improve progress on post-fire clean-up.
 - Undergo a transformation to a truly fire-adapted community through ongoing maintenance of forest lands, a conscious relationship with the watershed and a living relationship with regular "good fire."
 - Mitigate wildfire risk through ongoing fuel cleanup and removal. Make it easier to remove dead and dying trees, including by expanding green waste disposal options.
 - Mitigate fire hazards from undeveloped lots.
 - Involve code enforcement operations in fire safety.
 - Maintain key local data about fire safety, as detailed in the 2022 Cobb Mountain Strategy.
 - Increase education about fire safety. Support fire-wise community events and fun ways to educate the community about emergency planning.
 - Establish programs to assist community members during power outages in fire season, including access to cell networks, charging stations, hot coffee, and other needs.
 - Expand ingress and egress options.
- **Transportation**
 - The area is not walkable. Plan for sidewalks, walking paths, and trails that connect subdivisions to parks and commercial centers. Install pedestrian improvements, including a lighted crosswalk by the Cobb Mountain gas station and at the T intersection at Highway 175 and Bottle Rock Road, a crosswalk and flashing beacon by Cobb Elementary School, and a pedestrian bridge.
 - Implement safe routes to schools. Install a very large and well-lit sign near Highway 175 directing drivers to slow down at the Cobb Elementary School.

- Install traffic calming improvements on Highway 175 and Bottle Rock Road to reduce speeding.
- Improve transit access. Establish a shuttle service to the Sacramento Airport.
- Improve roadway conditions. Convert private roads to be maintained by the County.
- Install electric vehicle charging stations.
- Improve roadway design, including by expanding the use of one-way roads and ensuring center turn lanes are used appropriately, such as by installing barriers.
- Improve traffic signage throughout the area and add signage for non-through roads.
- Construct a secondary access road for Spring Valley.
- Infrastructure and Public Services
 - Increase access to healthcare, such as by attracting a medical clinic.
 - Support transition of the Loch Lomond area into the Middletown Unified School District.
 - Enforce prohibitions against illegal dumping.
 - Support the consolidation of water districts with community association input.
 - Provide adequate water infrastructure and watershed management.
 - Prohibit the export of water for commercial purposes.
 - Improve access to broadband and better high-speed internet to support home-based businesses and the general community.
 - Address the unstable power grid. Establish sustainable, local community power.
 - Support access to affordable utilities.

Do you think changes are needed to the planned land uses shown in the General Plan land use map? If so, what changes are needed?

- Establish land use designations that avoid displacement of wildlife and ensure there are wildlife migration corridors.
- Balance the need for agriculture and housing, as well as the water demands for each type of use.
- Allow denser development in more centralized areas, including to support a town center/square.
- There are not enough residents to support local business growth and there is a need for affordable housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Designate more land for residential uses, including higher densities like senior garden apartments and tiny homes.
- Increase the allowed density around commercial areas. Provide creative and flexible zoning to allow multi-family housing and small, walkable, neighborhood-scale commercial (e.g., "Rural Hamlet" zoning overlay).
- Increase opportunities for service/retail commercial development, including a nursery.
- Designate land for a community garden. Redesignate the Adam's/Harrington site to allow a gallery.
- Redesignate the old Hoberg's resort and other resort properties to support reuse, including to allow for mixed use.
- Increase opportunities for resort development.
- Revisit the 80-acre "planned development" zone west of Glenbrook and areas like it to confirm whether it is the appropriate designation if it hasn't been developed as planned.
- Review industrial designations to identify potentially underutilized areas. Designate areas to support light industrial uses that create craftsperson jobs, industrial processing uses, and development of a biomass facility.

Do you think changes are needed to the Local Area Plan boundary? If so, what changes are needed?

- Conform the LAP boundary to the Cobb Area Council boundary, including expanding the boundary to include the area around Seigler Springs and to extend to Socrates Mine Road.
- The Cobb Area County Water District services extend into Seigler Canyon, which is not in the LAP. The LAP boundary should align with municipal service boundaries.
- Extend the LAP boundary eastward to include Bonanza Springs and southward to the southern slope of the mountain, just north of Anderson Springs (see image).