



Lake County 2050
Environmental Justice (EJ) Stakeholder Focus Group Summary
Virtual Meeting
Monday, May 20, 2024

Workshop Series Overview

Lake County hosted an Environmental Justice Stakeholder Focus Group meeting the evening of Monday, May 20 from 6:00pm until 8:00pm as part of Lake County 2050, the comprehensive update to Lake County's General Plan. The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom and hosted by Lake County with support from the consultant team, PlaceWorks.

Attendees

Stakeholders: Liberty Francis, Director, Tobacco Education Program, Lake County Public Health Department; Pastor Shannon Kimbell, Pastor and Homeless Advocate; Gina Lyn-Griffin, Project Liaison, Health and Social Policy Institute; Amber Wier, Project Director, NorCal 4 Health; Stephanie Porrazzo, Community Engagement Coordinator, NorCal 4 Health; Merry Jo Velasquez, Vice President Lake County Land Trust and Board of Directors for Resource Conservation District; JoAnn Saccato, RISE (Rural Initiatives Strengthening Equity) and Community Engagement Coordinator, NorCal 4 Health.

County Staff: Mireya Turner, Community Development Director; Shannon Walker-Smith, Deputy Community Development Administrator; Lisa Judd, Deputy County Administrative Officer of Housing.

PlaceWorks: Tanya Sundberg, Principal; Andrea Howard, Project Manager; Allison Giffin, Assistant Project Manager; Corinne Odom, Project Staff; Amy Sinsheimer, Housing Action & Implementation Plan.

EJ Stakeholder Focus Group Introduction

The meeting began with opening remarks from Lake County Community Development Director, Mireya Turner, who thanked participants for coming, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in the Lake County 2050 General Plan, especially on the topic of environmental justice. Director Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

PlaceWorks project consultants then presented an overview of Lake County 2050, including the process to prepare the General Plan, the organization of countywide elements and Local Area Plan topics, and requirements of the Environmental Justice Element. For the meeting slides, visit <https://lakecounty2050.org/past-meetings-materials/>.

Question-and-Answer Session

Following the presentation, Director Turner facilitated a question-and-answer session. Questions and responses are summarized below:

- Will harmful algae blooms (HABs) be discussed in the General Plan?
 - HABs will be considered in the General Plan.
- Are Lakeport and Clearlake included in the Lake County General Plan?
 - No. The incorporated Cities have their own General Plans, though the County is coordinating with the Cities on some topics.
- Is there a minimum population size for areas that are considered disadvantaged communities?
 - Not necessarily. The General Plan can include policies targeting specific neighborhoods, blocks, or a specific housing development or complex.
- Participants also noted other health-related issues during this session, which are captured in the Group Discussion section below.

Group Discussion

Director Turner presented four discussion questions to participants and facilitated the group discussion for the remainder of the meeting. During the discussion, the project team shared a screen with live meeting notes for questions 1, 3, and 4; for question 2, the draft map of disadvantaged communities was shared. The four questions are presented below, followed by a bulleted list of participants' insights.

What do you see as the key issues related to these six topics in Lake County? Are there other aspects to environmental justice you would like to see the General Plan address?

- Pollution exposure and air quality
 - Consider oxygen-dependent people in the event of wildfires and power cutoffs.
 - Respiratory health is poor. Despite clean air, rates of asthma, lung cancer, and other respiratory issues are high.
 - Second-hand smoke, adult smokers, and youth vaping is an issue. Tobacco producers target rural, lower income areas like Lake County, making products cheaper there to get people (particularly youth) addicted.
 - Proper disposal of tobacco product waste and e-cigarette waste is a key issue.
 - Some residents cannot afford garbage service, dumping or hoarding at home which creates environmental hazards for humans and animals.
- Public facilities and services
 - There is a need for access to hygiene resources and exposure to unsanitary conditions for the unhoused and those in temporary housing.
 - Expand the County's mobile shower trailers (Adventist Health, Senior Center). The shower trailer has consistent usage at Big Oak Peer Support Center in Clearlake Oaks and there is high need in the area.
- Food access
 - The North Shore area is a food desert.
 - There are outlying areas without transportation to supermarkets.
 - Need more farmers markets, produce giveaways, and community gardens.
 - There are existing efforts in Lake County (CHARM, Food Policy Council) that should be expanded and utilized to reach hard-to-reach communities in the GP process.
- Safe and sanitary homes
 - Children are especially impacted by toxic exposure, sometimes outside of their homes, due to second- and third-hand smoke and aerosol exposure in shared-wall housing through ducts and pipes.

- Lack of housing inventory and high rental costs lead to overcrowding.
- Home rehabilitation and repair is unaffordable for many people.
- Consider expanding the housing voucher system.
- Physical activity
 - Improve access to safe green spaces.
 - Access to indoor physical activity spaces is important, especially given extreme heat impacts. Many recreation options in Lake County have closed.
 - There is a shortage of publicly accessible pools. Look at the model for the Middletown free pool access program for kids and implement something like that in other parts of the county, like the North Shore.
- Community engagement
 - Internet access is a barrier for many residents.
 - Geographical barriers such as the lake, lack of transportation/walkability, and the rural nature of the county impact access to engagement and participation.
- Public health
 - There is a lack of access to quality health care and health care specialists.
 - Harmful algae blooms (HABs) are a key issue.
 - Air quality spikes very high in Lake County during wildfire season due to drift smoke.
- Environmental justice, generational poverty, and civil rights
 - The General Plan needs to consider racial inequity and generational poverty.
 - Public engagement efforts should seek to meet Tribal communities, farmworker communities, Spanish-speaking communities, and communities of color where they are (e.g., through community events and Tribal meetings) and ensure these voices are represented in the General Plan, and that General Plan policies are responsive to the needs directly articulated by members of these communities in Lake County.
- Other
 - The Lake County population is too small to sustain businesses.

See the preliminary draft map of disadvantaged communities that is based on available data (attached to this summary). Does this map look right to you? Are communities missing or should any be removed?

- Areas/locations to consider including:
 - Corridor on Route 29 north of Lakeport, approaching Upper Lake, there is an area with lower quality and older mobile homes. It is potentially Tribal land.
 - Income-restricted farm-worker housing developments in Kelseyville (one is by the post office, and one is by the County park). Kelseyville has a large migrant farmworker population.
 - Low-income apartments located across from Minnie Cannon Elementary school in Middletown.
 - Try to capture low-income families in the Middletown school district or just include Middletown (Middletown school districts have a large number of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch). Consider reaching out to the Office of Education for more information.
 - Apartment complex and mobile home parks on Cruickshank Rd.
- Communities to consider including:
 - Those who have been displaced by wildfire in Cobb.

- Aging residents without access to resources.

In addition to these geographically located groups, are there any other general populations vulnerable to environmental issues in Lake County that you would like to see special policy considerations for?

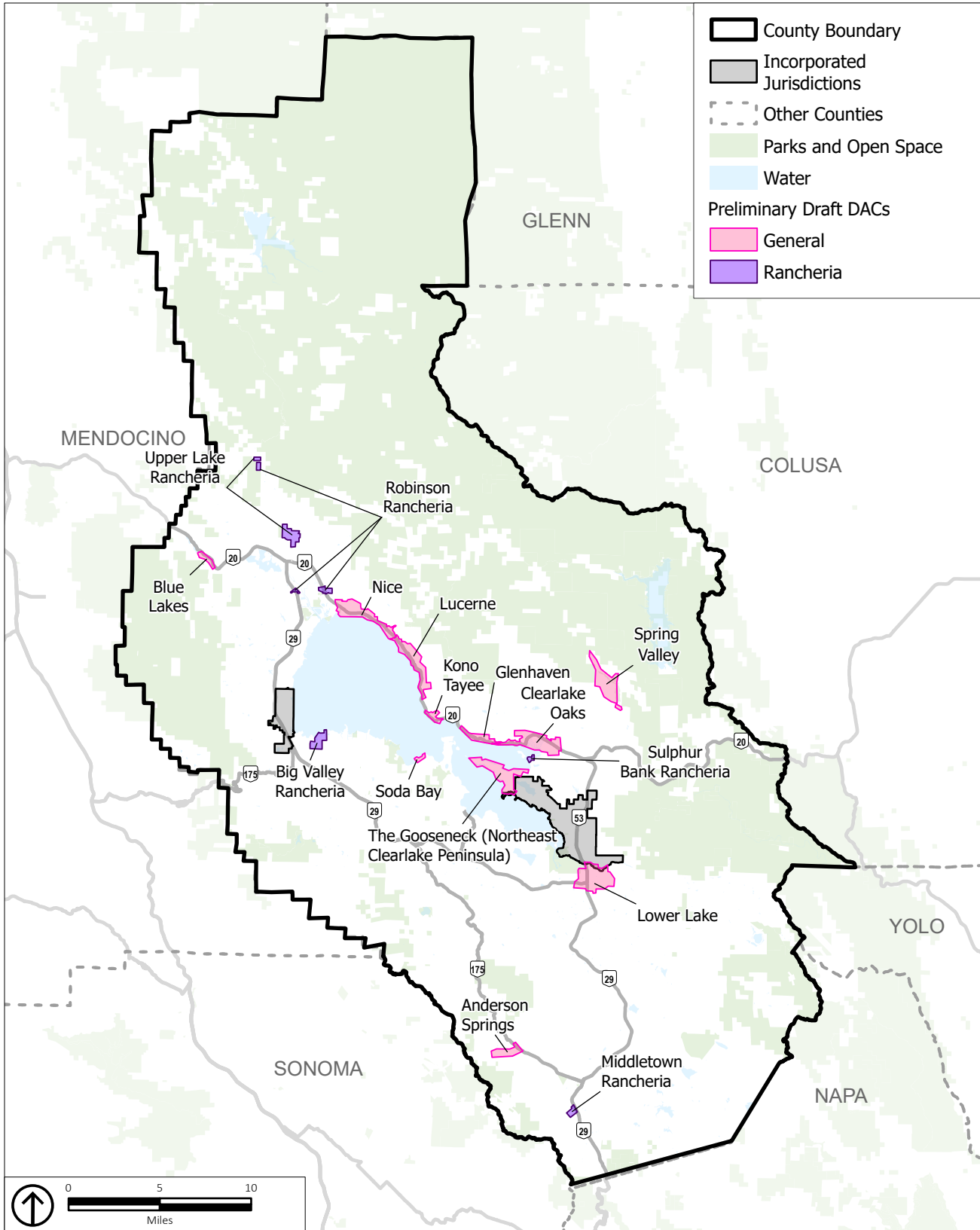
- Seniors, especially those who are electricity-dependent and don't have transportation.
- Wheelchair bound individuals (at-home access, ramps, etc.).
- Those with chronic health conditions.
- Individuals recovering from large-scale disasters (without resources to rebuild, insurance costs, access). Reach out to the Cobb Area Council for the people who have been displaced by wildfire.
- Homeowners without insurance.
- People experiencing homelessness.
- Migrant worker populations.
- Residents living in multi-unit housing, especially youth.
 - Areas without second-hand smoke protections and complexes without HUD funding.
- Youth and families living in overcrowded conditions in dwellings intended for one family.
- People with behavioral health and substance abuse challenges.
- Tribal communities.
- Populations that have been impacted by generational poverty in Lake County.
- Low-income populations.
- Racial minorities, particularly residents who are Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and non-White Hispanic and Latino.
- LGBTQIA+ residents.
- Limited-English proficient and non-English speaking residents.
- Undocumented persons.
- Rural communities.
- Those without clear title to their house.
- People who are justice-involved.
- Consider populations who are vulnerable based on physical attributes (disabilities, age), versus those who have been historically excluded, discriminated against, and marginalized, like Tribal communities and communities of color, and the intersection of these.

What are the best ways to engage disadvantaged communities in Lake County as part of the General Plan Update? And should we consider using a different term to characterize these communities? If so, what term would you suggest?

- How to Engage
 - Provide food at engagement events as an incentive to attend.
 - Make use of surveys, collect zip codes, raise awareness via social media.
 - See community engagement strategies from Redwood Regional Rise, CHARM, Resilience Center Group of the COAD.
 - Must physically go to communities where they are already congregating, such as senior centers and food distribution events.
 - Additional community groups, organizations, events:
 - Cobb Area Council
 - Homeless shelters

- ELAC meeting
 - Peers Center
 - Tribal Health (consult Tribal Chairman)
 - Food giveaways
 - Local NAACP
 - Faith communities and places of worship
- Terms
 - Use the term “unhoused” rather than “homeless”.
 - Suggested terms to replace ‘Disadvantaged Communities (DACs):’
 - Historically and currently marginalized communities/populations/residents
 - Historically and currently underserved communities/populations/residents
 - Communities/Populations/Residents facing barriers
 - Impacted communities/residents/populations
 - Under-resourced Communities/Populations/Residents.

DRAFT PRELIMINARY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES (DACs)



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2022, Lake County 2024, PlaceWorks 2024