



# LAKE COUNTY

## GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2 June 28, 2024

1:30 PM to 3:30PM

Lake County Board Chambers

255 N Forbes Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Lakeport, CA 95453

Or Participate via Zoom:

<https://lakecounty.zoom.us/j/81594325360?pwd=sSUhbOYlGnp71RKkevGIHDjHBPG1i1.1>

Passcode: 095823

Or One tap mobile:

+16699006833,,81594325360#,,,,\*095823# US (San Jose)

### Agenda

1:30 Welcome and Agenda Review

1:35 Project Updates since GPAC Meeting 1

1:40 Review General Plan Overview Document

1:45 *Questions from the GPAC*

1:55 *Questions from the Public*

2:05 *GPAC Discussion and Comments*

2:15 Key Countywide Elements Policy Issues Review

2:20 *Questions from the GPAC*

2:30 *Questions and Comments from the Public*

2:40 *GPAC Discussion and Comments*

#### Discussion Questions

1. *Considering the initial list of key issues to be addressed in the countywide elements, what is missing? Are there any issues that should be changed?*

2. *How would you like to see these issues addressed by the General Plan?*

3:25 Next Steps

3:30 Adjourn



# General Plan Overview

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**Development of General Plan 2050**

## **GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Lake County, situated in inland northern California, is known for its charming small towns and majestic landscapes. The county is named after its most prominent geographic feature, Clear Lake, which has approximately 100 miles of shoreline and covers five percent of the county. The communities nestled along and near the shores of Clear Lake and amid the vast wild lands of Lake County provide an unhurried and friendly atmosphere, enjoy a wealth of scenic views, and support a longstanding tourism industry. The county's open lands and natural resources foster a thriving agricultural base, characterized by small farms producing a variety of specialty crops. Lake County's rural charm, outdoor recreation, and strong sense of community make it a coveted home for residents and destination for visitors. The Lake County 2050 General Plan will be a long-range policy document that will work to preserve and restore these special features and promote a superior quality of life for the entire community for generations to come.

This chapter includes background information about Lake County and its history, introduces the legal requirements of general plans in California, discusses the County's past use of Local Area Plans, and reviews the organization and planned contents of the Lake County 2050 General Plan. In a later phase of the Lake County 2050 process, this chapter will be expanded to include an overview of the process to develop the Plan, including engagement of the Lake County community.

### **Background**

#### **Setting**

Lake County lies within the Pacific Coastal ranges approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco, 90 miles northwest of Sacramento, and 35 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. The region is accessible by major roadways that traverse the county: State Route 20, which connects to Highway 101 and Interstate 5, and State Routes 29, 53, and 175. Its namesake, Clear Lake, is the most dominant geographic feature in the county and is the largest natural lake entirely within California, with a surface area of 68 square miles.

#### **Tribal History**

Lake County has been inhabited by Native American peoples, including the Pomo, Wappo, and Miwok, for over 11,000 years. At their peak, the Pomos were the largest group of Native Americans in the area, with a population of approximately 3,000 individuals before European colonization. They spoke three distinct languages and were skilled fishers and hunters; they were renowned for their intricate basketry crafted from lakeshore tule grass, native plants, and feathers.



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The mid-19th century brought significant changes to the region with the arrival of Russians on the Pacific coast and the influx of Spanish missionaries and European-American colonists following the discovery of gold in the region. This period marked the beginning of profound disruption for the Pomo people. They were subjected to systematic enslavement, forced relocation, genocide, and diseases introduced by the colonists, leading to a dramatic decline in their population. By 1900, only 450 Pomos survived.

Lake County Pomo Indians are direct descendants of the Pomos who have stewarded this land as knowledge keepers for over 11,000 years. Today, seven federally recognized Pomo tribes reside in their ancestral territories in the Lake County area: Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Elem Indian Colony, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, Koi Nation of Northern California, Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians, and Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians. They exercise self-governance with inherent sovereignty, some overseeing re-established lands and others forming member organizations to continue their traditions. The Pomo tribes have also developed economic ventures to achieve self-sufficiency and prosperity. Notably, the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians operates the Konocti Vista Casino Resort, the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake operate Running Creek Casino, Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians operate the Robinson Rancheria Resort and Casino, and the Koi Nation has plans to establish a destination retreat with hotel and entertainment. In addition, Lake County Tribal Health, operated by a consortium of all seven federally-recognized Tribes, provides general and specialty medical services to tribal and non-tribal community members.

## County History

Lake County was incorporated in 1861. European-American settlers developed the region's economy through mining operations for quicksilver, gold, and borax, as well as by establishing orchards, cattle ranches, and farms. The construction of roads facilitated the establishment of churches, banks, and businesses, bringing more people to the area. The population remained relatively small until the 1870's and 1880's, when the introduction of viticulture, steamboat services, and luxury resorts built around mineral springs spurred growth, though that growth was disrupted by the 1906 earthquake that disturbed the region's hot springs. In 1888, the County seat, Lakeport, was incorporated, nearly 100 years before the county's other incorporated city, Clearlake (incorporated in 1980).



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In the 1970’s, a surge in the wine industry led to an 86-percent population increase countywide over the next decade, from 19,600 in 1970 to 36,400 in 1980. By 2000, the population had reached 58,300 countywide and 40,400 in the unincorporated county. Between 2000 and 2020, Lake County experienced steady growth and, by 2020, the population had risen to 68,200 countywide and 46,300 in the unincorporated county. However, since 2020, the population has been shrinking; as of 2024, the county is home to 67,000 residents, 45,600 of whom reside in the unincorporated county.

## General Plan Overview

Lake County initiated the process of updating its General Plan in late 2023. Since adoption of the current General Plan in 2008 and the Local Area Plans between 1989 and 2010, State planning laws have significantly changed, as have the county and local communities due to the impacts of growth and change over time, compounded by the effects of climate change, record droughts, and catastrophic wildfires. This updated General Plan will respond to these changing policy, social, and, physical landscapes with the guidance of the Lake County community.

Upon its adoption, the 2050 General Plan (including the eight Local Area Plans) will become the County’s primary policy tool to guide physical changes in the unincorporated areas of the county. This General Plan will look over 20 years into the future, establishing goals for community development and stewardship of the natural environment and setting policies and actions to implement these goals. It will be aspirational and long-range, but also practical, providing a useful, everyday guide for community planning.

### Local Area Plans

- Cobb Mountain Area Plan
- Kelseyville Area Plan
- Lakeport Area Plan
- Lower Lake Area Plan
- Middletown Area Plan
- Rivieras Area Plan
- Shoreline Communities Area Plan
- Upper Lake – Nice Area Plan

## California Planning Law

As outlined in State law, the general plan is a comprehensive document that provides a policy framework to guide decision making related to land use, safety, natural resources, mobility, public facilities and services, and more. California law requires every county and city/town in the state to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgement bears relation to its planning.” The general plan is sometimes referred to as a community’s “constitution,” because all other county policies and decision-making must be consistent with the general plan.

State law specifies eight topics or “elements” that must be addressed in every jurisdiction’s general plan: safety, noise, housing, land use, circulation (or transportation), open space, conservation, and environmental justice. Jurisdictions may also choose to include additional elements in the general plan. Once adopted, optional elements have the same policy weight as required elements. While the law stipulates various requirements of general plans, it is flexible on how each jurisdiction’s plan is organized and presented.

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## Local Area Plans (LAPs)

In 1988, the Lake County Board of Supervisors adopted the Lower Lake Area Plan. As described in the Plan document, “the Lower Lake Area Plan was derived from the issues and values expressed by the people living or working within its boundaries.” The Plan was developed by community members wishing to “preserve their own identity,” distinct from those of other areas in Lake County. Over the next two decades, the rest of the county followed the lead of Lower Lake and seven more LAPs were prepared, culminating with the 2010 adoption of the Middletown Area Plan. Though they are not part of the current General Plan, the current LAPs are complementary supplements to the County’s General Plan. LAPs address some topics that overlap with the General Plan, such as Land Use and Safety, and some topics unique to the LAPs, such as Economic Development. Some LAPs also include detailed policy and design guidance for identified “Special Study Areas,” which are select sub-areas of the LAP. The boundaries of each local planning area addressed by the eight LAPs are shown in **Figure GP-1**.<sup>1</sup>

## Lake County 2050 General Plan

Building from the foundation of the current General Plan and supplemental LAPs, the 2050 General Plan will follow a hybrid format to planning that addresses some topics at a countywide scale and others at a community level for its eight LAP areas. Unlike the current General Plan, there will not be overlapping topics in the countywide and LAP chapters and the LAPs will be fully integrated components of the General Plan. This approach allows efficient, regional planning for issues and topics that have a countywide reach and application, while facilitating locally tailored planning for issues that are more nuanced between communities; it also avoids redundancies and the need to consult multiple plans. Therefore, while there will be countywide collaboration, each LAP will continue to reflect the “issues and values expressed by the people living or working within its boundaries” and local planning areas will still work to “preserve their own identity.”

With this integrated approach, there are issues covered in the countywide elements that have unique impacts in different geographies and, similarly, there are some aspects of the elements addressed in the LAPs that have similar applications countywide. Therefore, countywide elements will include some background information, goals, policies, and/or actions that are specific to certain sub-areas of the county and the LAP elements may include some of the same or similar background details, goals, policies, and/or actions from one LAP to the next. **Figure GP-2** illustrates the Plan’s organization and identifies required versus optional elements under State law.

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<sup>1</sup> The LAP boundaries are subject to change through the Lake County 2050 process. Any changes will be reflected in an updated map included in the final version of this General Plan Overview document.

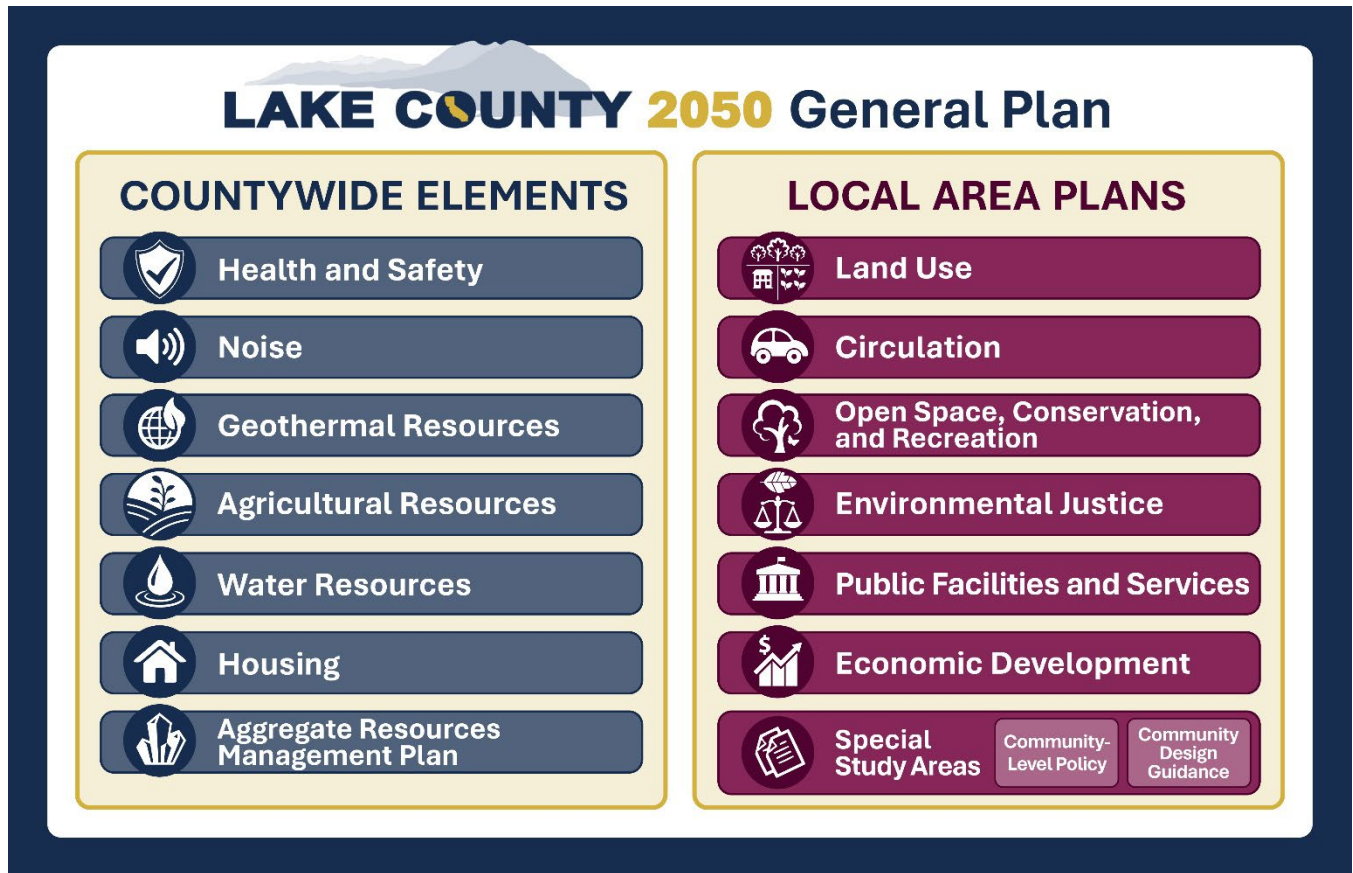
**Figure GP-1 Local Area Plan Boundaries**



Source: Lake County 2024, PlaceWorks 2024



Figure GP-2 Lake County 2050 Organization



The 2050 General Plan will address the State-mandated topics of Safety, Noise, and Housing in countywide elements, while the required topics of Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, and Environmental Justice will be addressed in each LAP. In addition to the required elements, the 2050 General Plan will include Health (combined with Safety), Geothermal Resources, Agricultural Resources, Water Resources, and an Aggregate Resources Management Plan among the countywide elements. In the LAPs, the following optional elements are included: Recreation (combined with the required topics of Open Space and Conservation), Public Facilities and Services, and Economic Development, along with additional policy and design guidance for identified “Special Study Areas.”

Following is a description of the core components of each element.

- **Health and Safety** provides policies to protect the people and resources of the county from risks associated with natural and human-made hazards such as seismic, geologic, flooding, and wildfire. The chapter addresses the needs for hazard mitigation, including resilience to climate change hazards, to minimize risks to property, the natural environment, and human life.
- **Noise** identifies major noise sources and contains policies intended to protect the community from exposure to excessive noise levels.



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- **Geothermal Resources** provides policy guidance to support the efficient, sustainable, and safe use of the county’s geothermal resources.
  - **Agricultural Resources** sets policies to protect and sustain local agriculture as an economic driver, food source, and core component of Lake County’s identity.
  - **Water Resources** features policy guidance to preserve and regenerate the ecological integrity and sustainability of the county’s watershed, including all groundwater and surface water.
  - **Housing**<sup>2</sup> includes a comprehensive assessment of current and future housing needs for all segments of the community and a program for meeting those needs.
  - **Aggregate Resources Management Plan**<sup>3</sup> identifies the location of aggregate resources (i.e., sand and gravel), the types of mining operations in the county, and management policies for aggregate mining activities.
  - **Land Use** designates the general distribution, intensity, and ranges of appropriate land uses in the county.
  - **Circulation** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed transportation facilities, supporting all modes of travel, including walking, biking, and driving, for a more sustainable and connected Lake County.
  - **Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation** addresses the integrated planning, management, conservation, and sustainable utilization and stewardship of open space, natural lands, and cultural resources. This element also provides for public recreation and enjoyment of the county’s natural beauty.
  - **Environmental Justice** identifies Lake County communities facing acute burdens from environmental factors, such as limited access to resources and services and engagement in community decision-making processes, and establishes a framework of policies and programs to address these burdens in impacted communities.
  - **Public Facilities and Services** works to maintain and enhance service delivery for water, solid waste, wastewater, electricity and gas, fire protection, and law enforcement. This chapter also supports effective communication systems and the siting of educational and community facilities to meet local needs.
  - **Economic Development** supports the fiscal health of the Lake County community, prioritizing a local, circular economy comprised of complementary commercial and industrial enterprises.
  - **Special Study Areas** provide detailed policy and design guidance for selected Special Study Areas in each LAP.

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<sup>2</sup> State law requires the Housing Element to be updated every eight years; the current Element covers the planning period of 2019 to 2027. Therefore, the next Housing Element will be developed under a separate process.

<sup>3</sup> The Aggregate Resources Management Plan will be updated under a separate process and is not part of Lake County 2050.

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## **Development of General Plan 2050**

Upon completion of the General Plan 2050, details on the engagement activities conducted and the role of the community in preparing the Plan will be summarized in this section.



## Lake County 2050

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE** June 21, 2024  
**TO** General Plan Advisory Committee  
**FROM** Lake County 2050 Project Team  
**SUBJECT** General Plan Countywide Topics Key Issues

### BACKGROUND

The Lake County 2050 General Plan will be composed of a mix of elements prepared at the countywide and Local Area Plan levels. The countywide elements are Health and Safety, Noise, Geothermal Resources, Agricultural Resources, Water Resources, Housing, and Aggregate Resources Management Plan.<sup>1</sup> The Local Area Plans will include the following elements: Land Use; Circulation; Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation; Environmental Justice; Public Facilities and Services; Economic Development; and more detailed policy and design guidance for designated Special Study Areas.

In April and May 2024, the Lake County 2050 project team conducted a survey to gather community input on the General Plan and held a series of community meetings to discuss priorities for the Local Area Plans. Based on this community input, the project team is assembling a comprehensive list of key issues to be addressed in the General Plan. In the next phase of community outreach, the project team will seek input on policy approaches to address these key issues.

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<sup>1</sup>The Housing Element and Aggregate Resources Management Plan will not be updated as part of Lake County 2050.

At the upcoming meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) on June 28, 2024, the project team will seek input from the GPAC on countywide key issues and policy options to address these issues. The discussion will focus on key issues for the Health and Safety, Water Resources, and Agricultural Resources Elements, as these are topics of concern raised by community members. GPAC members are welcome to share input on issues and/or policy approaches for the Noise and Geothermal Resources Elements to the project team by emailing County staff at [LakeCounty2050@lakecountycalifornia.gov](mailto:LakeCounty2050@lakecountycalifornia.gov).

To prepare for this discussion, please review the initial list of countywide key issues below, and consider the following questions that will be used to guide the GPAC discussion during the meeting:

1. Considering the initial list of key issues to be addressed in the countywide elements, what is missing? Are there any issues that should be changed?
2. How would you like to see these issues addressed by the General Plan?

GPAC input will be used to refine the list of countywide key issues and identify policy approaches to discuss with the community during the next round of outreach. The GPAC and community input will ultimately form the basis for policy guidance in the countywide elements.

## Initial List of Key Issues for Countywide General Plan Elements

The following is a list of the initially identified key issues to be addressed by the countywide General Plan Elements.

### Health and Safety

- Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery
  - Aging infrastructure (i.e. roadways, water lines, community buildings)
  - Power outage affecting those with electricity-dependent needs
  - Access and signage to evacuation routes
  - Lack of redundant communication facilities
  - Capacity and safety of evacuation routes
  - Evacuation awareness and education
  - Lack of resilience centers and community meeting spaces for each local area
- Extreme Temperatures
  - Lack of cooling centers in local areas
- Wildfire
  - Historic and cultural burning and vegetation management practices
  - Hardened homes with defensible space in high fire risk area, including the wildland urban interface (WUI)



- Education about wildfire risks, wildfire safety, and fire inspections
- Low-income and elderly homeowners' inability to comply with home hardening and defensible space requirements
- Brush abatement, community firebreaks, wildfire prevention, roadside vegetation clearing programs on public and private land
- Access to affordable homeowners' insurance
- Vegetation maintenance on vacant property
- Maintenance fuel breaks between federal lands and community areas
- Climate Change Adaptation
  - Resilient and sustainable power generation systems
  - The agricultural industry, including outdoor worker health and safety
  - Resilient watershed management
  - Potable water supply levels and resilient future supplies
  - Clear Lake water quality and quantity
  - Water-wise and drought-resilient plans
  - Regenerative agricultural practices
  - Soil conservation
  - Tree management and protection
  - Green stormwater infrastructure
  - Extreme heat reducing features at County operated facilities

## Water Resources

Note: some Water Resources topics are covered under the Climate Change Adaptation section of the Health and Safety list above.

- Groundwater management
  - Groundwater Sustainability Plans
  - Groundwater recharge
  - Groundwater quality
  - Groundwater water supply

## Agricultural Resources

Note: some Agricultural Resources topics are covered under the Climate Change Adaptation section of the Health and Safety list above.

- Agricultural land preservation
  - Agricultural soils
  - Protection from agricultural land conversion
  - Right to farm
  - Williamson Act contracts
- Range of agricultural operations
  - Small agricultural operations
  - Specialty agriculture

- Wineries and distilleries
  - Cannabis operations
  - Local food/food processing
- Agricultural economy
  - Diversified agricultural base
  - Infrastructure to support agriculture
  - Farmworker housing