Middletown Planning Area Elements

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

This page intentionally left blank.

MIDDLETOWN PLANNING AREA ELEMENTS

MIDDLETOWN AREA ELEMENTS CONTENTS

Introduction
Land Use
Circulation
Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation
Environmental Justice
Public Facilities and Services
Economic Development
Special Study Areas and Design Guidelines

Introduction

This chapter presents the General Plan elements specific to the Middletown 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 that offer more detailed policy and design guidance for three subareas in the Planning Area.

This chapter, combined with the countywide elements, make up the General Plan for the Middletown 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 Wappo, Lake Miwok, and Patwin Wintun people native to the Middletown 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 ~~e~~Ecological ~~k~~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 Middletown area requires honoring the cultural continuity, environmental stewardship, and historical resilience of the Wappo, Lake Miwok, and Patwin Wintun people indigenous to the land.

Location and Setting

The Middletown Planning Area (sometimes referred to as the Middletown Area or the Planning Area) is the southern gateway into Lake County from neighboring Napa County. As the southernmost Planning Area in Lake County, its lower boundary borders Sonoma County to the west and Napa County to the south and southeast. Its northern boundary touches both the Cobb and Lower Lake Planning Areas. Encompassing 148 square miles, the Middletown Planning Area makes up 11 percent of the county's land area and is mid-size in comparison to the seven other planning areas. **Figure M-1** illustrates the location of the Middletown Planning Area in relation to the other seven planning areas in Lake County.

Situated within the upper Putah Creek drainage basin, the Middletown Planning Area is characterized by steep mountains and low valleys. The elevation ranges from approximately 660 feet above sea level where Putah Creek crosses the eastern Lake County boundary to 4,300 feet at the summit of Mount Saint Helena along the southern border shared with Napa County.

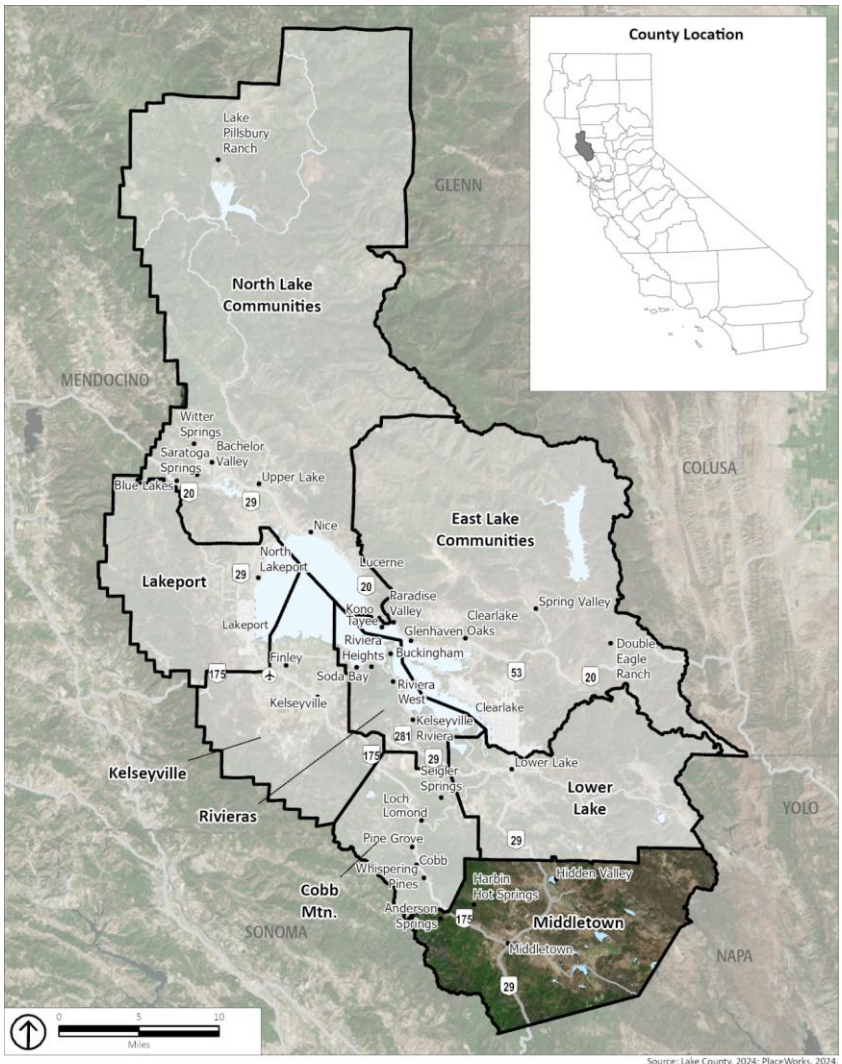
The Middletown Planning Area experiences a Mediterranean climate. Summers are dry and warm to hot, with temperatures frequently exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are cool and wet with some frost and snowfall at higher elevations. The western and rural mountainous parts of the Planning Area receive the highest rainfall, with precipitation decreasing eastward.

The Planning Area includes the following communities:

- **Middletown**, a hub of economic and social activity in the Callayomi Valley, which is the Planning Area's geographic center.
- **Anderson Springs**, approximately five miles west of the Middletown community on State Route (SR) 175, a community that was historically developed around the local resort economy but was largely destroyed in the 2015 Valley Fire.
- **Hidden Valley**, four miles north of the Middletown community in Coyote Valley, east of SR 29, an area that experienced rapid residential growth between 2000 and 2010 and encompasses the developing Coyote Valley Town Center discussed in the Special Study Area section, as well as the Valley Oaks commercial center that is currently under development.

Western style buildings are a core component of the Middletown community's identity.

Figure M-1 Middletown Planning Area Regional Setting



Outside of these communities, the Planning Area is primarily made up of agricultural, rural, and resource conservation land. The major roadways accessible to the Planning Area include SR 175/Main Street and SR 29/Calistoga Road. Circulation in the Planning Area is highly dependent on highway transportation.

The 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the U.S. Census estimates that the population in the Middletown Planning Area is approximately 8,000 residents, primarily in the Middletown (1,700) and Hidden Valley (5,900) communities. According to America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) Employer Database, as of 2024, the Middletown Planning Area's major employers are Calpine, a geothermal energy production company; Hardester's Markets, a local grocery and hardware store chain; the Middletown School District Office; and the Twin Pine Casino and Hotel. [1]

Commented [AG1]: LU 17, LU 38, ED 8

Footnote with data source added

Commented [AG2R1]: Amanda: please add this footnote and data source to the Lower Lake, Middletown, North Lake, and Rivieras documents (I have done it for this one, Cobb, K'ville, and Lakeport)

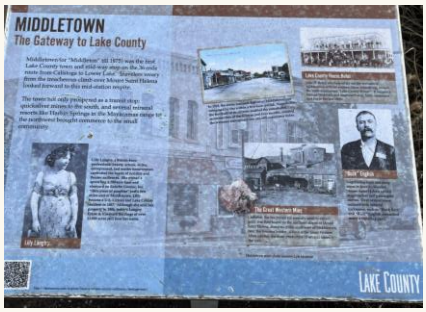
The Middletown Planning Area is a destination for wineries and hot springs getaways. The Middletown community features a historic small-scale commercial downtown area with restaurants, local retail, and Middletown Square Park at the Middletown Senior Center and Library. Middletown Square Park features weekly community events like the farmers market and free movies in the park. Art gallery shows, civic meetings, and classes are often held in the adjacent Middletown Senior Center and in the surrounding commercial district.

North of the Middletown community is Harbin Hot Springs, a natural geothermal spring system. Known for their therapeutic properties, the mineral-rich springs were traditionally on Lake Miwok lands but were used by other indigenous Tribal peoples, including the Pomo, for healing and ceremonial purposes. In the 1850s, the area was colonized, and by 1870, James M. Harbin purchased the land and developed it into the Harbin Springs Health and Pleasure Resort, which featured a hotel, spa, and recreational amenities. By the early twentieth century, the resort was a popular tourist destination.

The springs continue to hold cultural and historical significance, with their geothermal properties drawing interest from tourists and researchers. Visitors to what is now known as the Harbin Hot Springs Retreat Center have historically been steady. However, the 2015 Valley Fire impacted the environmental quality of the area and destroyed nearly all of the Retreat Center facilities. The center was partially reopened in 2019 and continues to bring tourists to the Planning Area. As of July 2025, construction of their new restaurant is almost complete and is anticipated to open by fall 2025, and their first three-story hotel structure has been constructed and is expected to open to overnight guests by early 2026. Harbin Hot Springs enhances Lake County's and the Middletown Planning Area's reputation as a hub for wellness and eco-tourism, attracting visitors who, in turn, support local businesses, including restaurants, lodging facilities, and retail shops.

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

History and Planning Context



Interpretive signage installations help to celebrate the area's history.

The Wappo, Lake Miwok, and Patwin Native American tribes are the historic inhabitants and original stewards of the area. Part of the Wappo territory encompassed the south, central, and western portion of what is now the Middletown Planning Area. The Lake Miwok had 17 villages throughout the area and the Patwin inhabited the easternmost portion of the Planning Area prior to European colonization. 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. The 2020 U.S. census reported 1,353 Native Americans residing in Lake County, making up 3 percent of the total Lake County population.

In 1844, Manuel Micheltorena, the Governor of California under Mexican rule, gave the 13,314-acre Callayomi Land Grant, encompassing the area of the present-day Middletown community and surrounding areas, to Robert T. Ridley, a sailor and the captain of the Port of San Francisco. The Callayomi Land Grant was originally within the Napa County boundary. In 1861, Lake County was established, absorbing parts of Napa, Colusa, and Mendocino Counties, including the area of the Callayomi Land Grant. The site of the Middletown community was surveyed and plotted in 1874 and recorded as a mapped town in 1878. The community of Middletown was named for its location between Lower Lake and Calistoga. The village of Guenoc, located four miles north of the Middletown community near Hidden Valley Lake, dates back to the 1850s and was the first community in the Middletown Planning Area. Around 1870 when the community of Middletown began to grow, residents of Guenoc moved to a new community in the Loconomi Valley. In 1880, when the village of Guenoc's post office closed, residents and several buildings were moved to the Middletown community, which was proving to be a more prosperous place.

Mercury mines south of the Middletown community served as its economic base starting in 1873 until after World War II, when the demand for mercury started to decline. The carp (fish) industry grew in the 1880s and many ponds were located northwest of the Middletown community near what is now Anderson Springs. The mineral springs industry was at its peak beginning in the 1880s and the area was a destination for visitors to hot springs resorts. Construction of highways in the 1920s further increased tourism but many early resorts closed in the late 1940s as interest in hot springs resorts dwindled while interest in "auto camps," early forms of recreational vehicle parks, increased. Following the decline of the mining industry, there was a resurgence in resort and spa interest that waned again in the 1960s as facilities aged or were lost to fire, and newer destinations opened closer to the Bay Area.

The development of geothermal steam fields in the neighboring Cobb Mountain area also generated economic stimulus and population growth in the Planning Area. In 1960, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) established the first modern geothermal electricity plant at the geothermal field known as "The Geysers." The Geysers is now owned and operated by Calpine, employing a large percentage of Middletown Planning Area residents. In 2003, in partnership with Lake and Sonoma Counties, Calpine constructed two pipelines to collect treated wastewater from nearby communities in the two counties and inject it into The Geysers reservoir, so that the reservoir maintains pressure and continually generates steam. The Geysers continue to produce clean electrical power serving parts of Lake, Sonoma, and Napa Counties and customers further south. The Geothermal Resources Element provides more detail about The Geysers geothermal power plants.

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 M-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 M-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.

Land Use

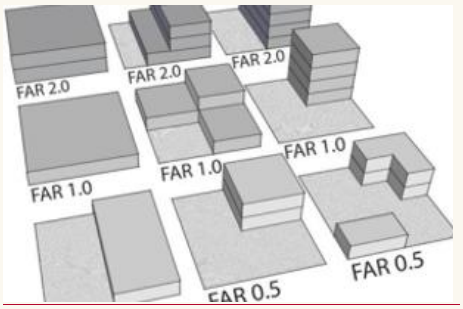
Land use patterns and related policies play an important role in defining local character. The scale, location, and type of development influence the sense of community or feeling of being in nature. Street trees and local art enhance the sense of place, while vacant lots with overgrown vegetation and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

County land use designations help ensure new development is compatible with surrounding uses.

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 Middletown Planning Area and works to conserve and enhance livability and quality of life for residents. The element also supports the protection of cultural and sacred sites, traditional gathering areas, and landscapes of ongoing tribal significance as well as the incorporation of ~~traditional~~ Tribal ~~e~~Ecological ~~k~~Knowledge (TEK) in land management, conservation, and fire recovery practices to enhance environmental resilience and uphold the cultural heritage of the area. 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 M-2** (countywide) and **M-3** (Middletown 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 M-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.

Commented [AG3]: LU 23.

Amanda: please add this sentence to all 7 other PAs

Commented [AG4R3]: AG added to Cobb and K'ville

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.

Commented [AL5]: Lu 25

Amanda: Please add this new callout box with the FAR graphic and caption to all 7 other Planning Areas. The image is saved here: "\\PW103\GIS-Data\mend_l\COLK-01.0\04_GIS\PlaceWorks_GIS\Exports\Export_graphics\LAP Element Figures\1_Land Use\FAR_Graphic.png"

Community Growth Boundaries

Figures M-2 and **M-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 Middletown Planning Area includes two CGBs: Middletown and Coyote Valley.

- The **Middletown CGB** is in the central-western portion of the Planning Area in the Callayomi Valley and is designed to have the downtown Middletown community serve as its focus of commercial activity.
- The **Coyote Valley CGB** is to the northern-central part of the Planning Area. Its greatest concentration of residential development is in Hidden Valley Lake. Areas along Hartmann and Coyote Valley Roads are geographically central commercial destinations in the CGB. The Coyote Valley Town Center Special Study Area is proposed to be a future hub in the CGB.

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.

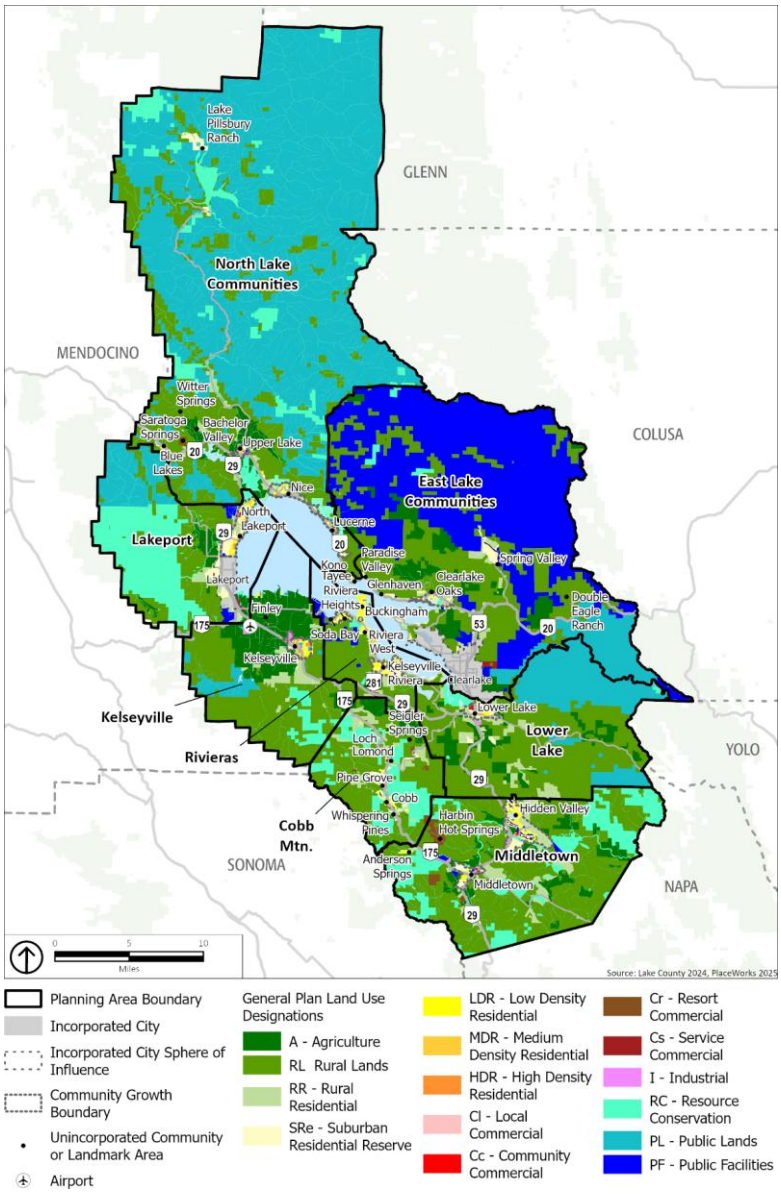
Commented [AH6]: Global per 6/25 discussion w/ staff

Commented [AH7R6]: added to Cobb, Kville, and lakeport

Density/Intensity: 1 DU/40 acres

Figure M-2 Countywide Land Use Map

Commented [AG8]: This figure has been updated



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

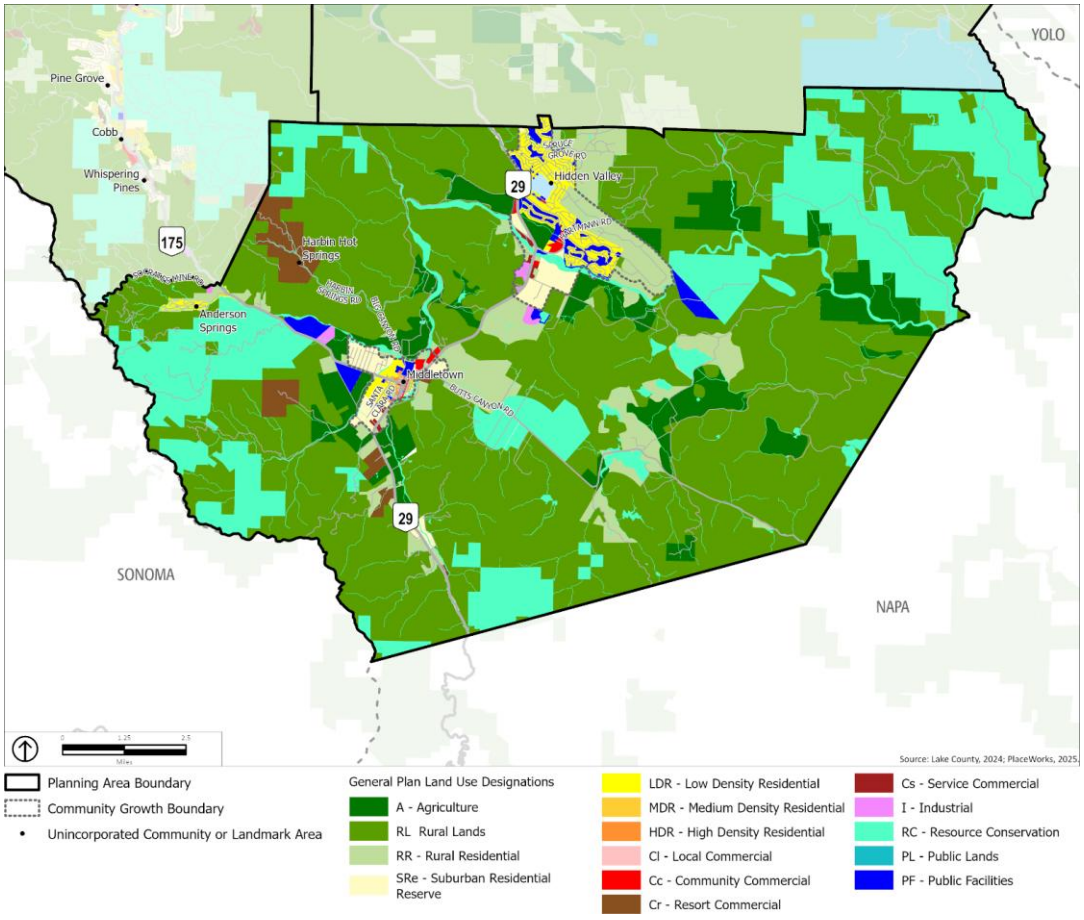
The maximum density in the Rural Lands designation may be reduced based on factors related to wildland fire/fuel loading, landslide hazards, and distance to the nearest fire station, as enumerated in the Zoning Ordinance.

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.

Figure M-3 Middletown Planning Area Land Use Map

Commented [AG9]: This figure has been updated



This page intentionally left blank.

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 M-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.

Commented [AL10]: Global. N/A for Cobb

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.

Commented [AG11]: Amanda: please change this in all other Planning Areas (Should be 1-6, not 1-7)

Commented [AG12]: Amanda: please change this in all other Planning Areas (Should be 7-9, not 6-9)

Commented [AG13]: Amanda: please add this sentence here for all 7 other Planning Areas

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/~~.

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

Commented [MT14]: Middletown LAPAC made me realize that we have to allow for just one or two du's, so I changed the density to start at 1. PW folks, let me know if you disagree.

Commented [TS15]: Apply edits to all areas

Commented [MT16R15]: Except for the Rivieras. They do not want HDR in Cc, but are ok with MDR in Cc.

Commented [AG17R15]: Amanda: I have already made the correct change to Rivieras, so please just copy this edit into the remaining 6 other Planning Areas and ignore Mireya's comment

Commented [MT18]: Same change here as Local Commercial

Commented [AH19]: Apply edits to all areas

Commented [AG20R19]: Amanda: Please make this same change in all remaining Planning Areas EXCEPT Rivieras. I already made the appropriate change in the Rivieras document

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

Commented [AH21]: global

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 M-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
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.~~

Commented [TS22]: Apply edits to all areas

Commented [TS23]: Apply edits to all areas

Commented [MT24R23]: Same as previous page. Rivieras only wants MDR in Cc.

Commented [AH25R23]: AG addressed this in Riv

Commented [AH26]: global

Commented [AH27]: Remove globally

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-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

M-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.

M-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.

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

M-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.

M-LU-1.4

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

~~M-LU-1.3~~M-LU-1.5

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

~~M-LU-1.4~~M-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.

~~M-LU-1.5~~

~~Require all new residential and commercial development to have at least two access routes to an existing publicly maintained road or a new road meeting current County standards.~~

Commented [AH28]: Add policy globally.

Added based on staff direx to LU Row 149.

Staff provided text: Add policy: Development within designated Community Growth Boundaries served by special service districts shall demonstrate capacity to sustain growth.

Commented [AH29]: Add policy globally.

staff drafted policy in response to comment, LU Row 35

Commented [AH30]: Remove from all areas. Should have been removed from all previously, but at least this one was missed. It is not in East Lake or Cobb anymore. Please double check all other areas.

~~M-LU-1.6~~M-LU-1.7

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

M-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.

~~M-LU-1.7~~M-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.

~~M-LU-1.8~~M-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.

~~M-LU-1.9~~M-LU-1.11

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

~~M-LU-1.10~~M-LU-1.12

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

Commented [AH31]: Global LU 148

Commented [AH32]: County staff, when we discussed this policy addition responding to a comment from LAFCO, we noted the following concern, but did not receive a response. please consider. If we are only encouraging this and not requiring it, we could consider applying it to densities as low as 1 unit/3 acres or 1 unit/5 acres as originally requested

Commented [MT33R32]: Yes, Encourage and your recommended densities are good.

Commented [AH34R32]: ok! since you did not specify which recommended density, we added 1 unit/3 acres sine that is the middle ground of where we started.

Action

M-LU-1.a

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.

M-LU-1.b

Evaluate water availability on parcels ~~located~~ south of the Middletown community with the Agriculture land use designation~~s~~ and consider land use designation changes where water limitations preclude agricultural activities.

M-LU-1.c

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

M-LU-1.d

Develop educational materials regarding Tribal Ecological Knowledge practices.

Goal M-LU-2

Development patterns that support a sustainable lifestyle.

Policies

M-LU-2.1

Promote and practice the principles of smart growth.

M-LU-2.2

Encourage infill development.

M-LU-2.3

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

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

Commented [AH35]: LUD 21
County Staff, please review the action to confirm the geography is appropriately described

Comment: Lack of water in all Ag parcels south of town - change the LUD?

Staff direction: Instead of changing LUD, please add an action in the Middletown element to review access to water in this region with the purpose of modifying LUD in a future General Plan update.

Commented [AH36]: Apply globally

Comment in Cobb Markup from County

Commented [AH37]: Add globally

Comment LU Row 155

M-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.

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

M-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

M-LU-2.a

Develop incentives to promote infill development.

~~**M-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.~~

~~**M-LU-2.c**~~**M-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 M-LU-3

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

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

~~M-LU-3.4~~M-LU-3.5

Promote the creation of community focal points and gathering places in Anderson Springs.

~~M-LU-3.5~~M-LU-3.6

Encourage and support the arts in Middletown with music and art installations, public art, and programming throughout the community, prioritizing areas that lack them.

~~M-LU-3.6~~M-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.

~~M-LU-3.7~~M-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

~~M-LU-3.8~~M-LU-3.9

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

~~M-LU-3.9~~M-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.

~~M-LU-3.10~~M-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.

Commented [AH38]: Add globally.
Added based on specific language provided by staff, LU row 144

~~M-LU-3.11~~M-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.

~~M-LU-3.12~~M-LU-3.13

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

~~M-LU-3.13~~M-LU-3.14

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

M-LU-3.15

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

Actions

M-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 downtown Middletown and the Coyote Valley Town Center to support the areas' 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.

M-LU-3.b

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

~~M-LU-3.b~~M-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 M-LU-3.~~8~~ 9** to ensure compatibility with the Middletown Area Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, and revisions to Article 54, Design Review Permit, as needed.

~~M-LU-3.c~~M-LU-3.d

Establish a Design Review Committee with local representation to ensure new development respects and enhances the small-town rural character and natural environment of the Middletown Area. This may be a function of the Middletown Area Town Hall (MATH), the Municipal Advisory Committee for the Middletown Area.

M-LU-3.e

Develop and implement a tree preservation ordinance.

Commented [AH39]: Apply globally.
staff directed addition. Comment LU Row 89

Commented [AH40]: Apply globally.
LU Row 143

Commented [AH41]: Add globally. Ensure Action # reference is updated appropriately.

Comment LU Row 160

Commented [AH42]: Add this action globally

Language came direction from staff in LU Row 116.

~~M-LU-3.d~~M-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.

~~M-LU-3.e~~M-LU-3.g

Work with the community to update the Middletown Area Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, the Middletown Community Downtown Design Guidelines, and the Coyote Valley Design Guidelines to reflect current values and priorities.

~~M-LU-3.f~~M-LU-3.h

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

~~M-LU-3.g~~M-LU-3.i

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

~~M-LU-3.h~~M-LU-3.j

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

Goal M-LU-4

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

Policies

M-LU-4.1

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

M-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.

M-LU-4.3

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

M-LU-4.4

The General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) assumes the following maximum development projections 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.

M-LU-4.5

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

M-LU-4.6

Promote co-management of public lands with Tribal governments.

~~M-LU-4.5~~M-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

M-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.

M-LU-4.b

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

M-LU-4.c

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

~~M-LU-4.c~~M-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.

~~M-LU-4.d~~M-LU-4.e

Update the Zoning Map to implement the land use map established in this General Plan.

~~M-LU-4.e~~M-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.

Commented [AH43]: Add globally.

Comment ED row 48

Commented [AH44]: Add policy globally.

Based on direction in LU Row 151

Commented [AH45]: Add globally.

Comment ED Row 48

Goal M-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.

M-LU-5.1
Plan for and encourage a variety of housing types with a full range of affordability.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

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

Commented [AH46]: Add globally
LU Row 117

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-LU-5.10

Encourage innovative, nontraditional housing designs and layouts in response to evolving housing trends and needs.

Actions

M-LU-5.a

Continue to support construction of affordable housing, including by pursuing State and federal funding for affordable housing development.

M-LU-5.b

Develop incentives for affordable housing, in addition to density bonuses, to further encourage its development.

M-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.

M-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.

M-LU-5.e

Consider updating the density bonus process to minimize government obstacles to housing development, consistent with State law.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

Goal M-LU-6

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

Policies

M-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.

M-LU-6.2

Encourage mixed-use development with commercial and residential components in downtown commercial areas when adequate infrastructure is available or can be made available.

M-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.

M-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.

M-LU-6.5

Encourage and support the establishment of more restaurants, retail, and other commercial services.

M-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.

M-LU-6.7

Encourage development of larger regional commercial centers within Community Growth Boundaries 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.

M-LU-6.8

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.~~

M-LU-6.12

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

Actions

M-LU-6.a

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

M-LU-6.b

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

Commented [AH47]: make change globally.

Edit directly from staff LU Row 119

Commented [AH48]: LU 127

Commented [AL49]: Make change globally

LU Row 122

Commented [AH50]: Add globally
Staff direction LU Row 146

~~M-LU-6.b~~M-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.

~~M-LU-6.c~~M-LU-6.d

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

Goal M-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.

M-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.

M-LU-7.2

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

M-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.

M-LU-7.4

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-LU-7.8

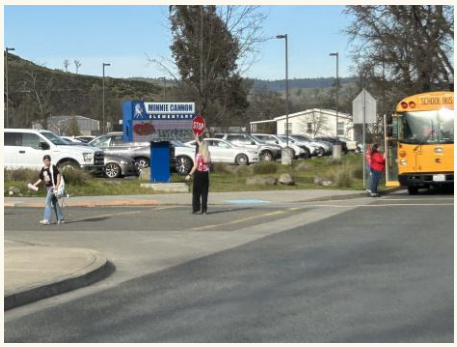
Consider including a requirement for consultation with Tribal governments to include Tribal Cultural Resource analysis within the Cultural Resource Reports for discretionary projects.

This page intentionally left blank.

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, biking, equestrian travel, and access to food, healthcare, public services, tribal community centers, and traditional gathering areas.
- **Safety** in terms of how efficiently community members are able to 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 charging infrastructure or other amenities to support the use of active transportation and high occupancy vehicles.



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

This Circulation Element aims to provide a transportation network that moves people and goods in and around the Middletown Planning Area conveniently and with minimal risk of injury. The Middletown 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 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 Middletown Planning Area circulation network features local roads and streets, collectors, and arterials depicted in **Figures M-4** (countywide) and **M-5** (Middl*e*town Planning Area). **Table M-2** describes major roadways in the Middletown Planning Area by their functional classification and **Table M-3** shows Lake County Road Standards by functional classification.

Two primary arterials underpin Middletown Planning Area's roadway system, SR 29 and SR 175. SR 29 is a two-lane principal arterial providing north-south access to the Middletown Planning Area from Calistoga to the south and Lower Lake to the north. SR 175 is a two-lane minor arterial that connects the Middletown community and Anderson Springs to Cobb Mountain and Kelseyville to the northwest. Within the community of Middletown, the local names of SR 29 and SR 175 are Calistoga Road and Main Street, respectively. Major collectors in the Planning Area include Butts Canyon Road, which runs east-west and joins SR 29 north of the Middletown community, and Hartmann Road, which runs east-west and connects the Hidden Valley Lake subdivision to SR 29. Other roadways in the Planning Area are collectors and local County-maintained roads (also called County roads or CRs). Some streets are internal to subdivisions, such as Hidden Valley Lake and Anderson Springs. These streets are funded by landowners in the subdivision through homeowners' associations, private road maintenance agreements, or County Zones of Benefit.

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 M-4 Existing Countywide Roadway Functional Classifications

Commented [AG51]: This figure has been updated

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

Function	Number	Name	Limits
Principal Arterial	SR 29	SR 29/ Calistoga Road	Spruce Grove Road (Hidden Valley Lake) to Napa County Line
Minor Arterial	SR 175	SR 175/ Main Street	SR 29 (Middletown to Socrates Mine Road Cobb
Major Collector	CR 101	Butts Canyon Road	SR 29 (Middletown) to Napa County Line
Major Collector	CR 104	Hartmann Road	SR 29 to Stinson Road (Hidden Valley Lake)
Minor Collector	CR 107	Big Canyon Road/Barnes Street	SR 175 to Harbin Springs Road
Minor Collector	CR 113	Dry Creek Cutoff	SR 29 to Dry Creek Road (Middletown)
Minor Collector	CR 117G	Santa Clara Road	SR 175 to SR 29 (Middletown)
Local	Not Applicable (NA)	Wardlaw Street	Big Canyon Road to St. Helena Creek Road
Minor Collector	NA	Socrates Mine Road	SR 175 to Road 8025
Minor Collector	NA	Spruce Grove Road	SR 29 (Middletown) to SR 29 (Lower Lake)
Minor Collector	NA	Western Mine Road	SR 175 to County Line

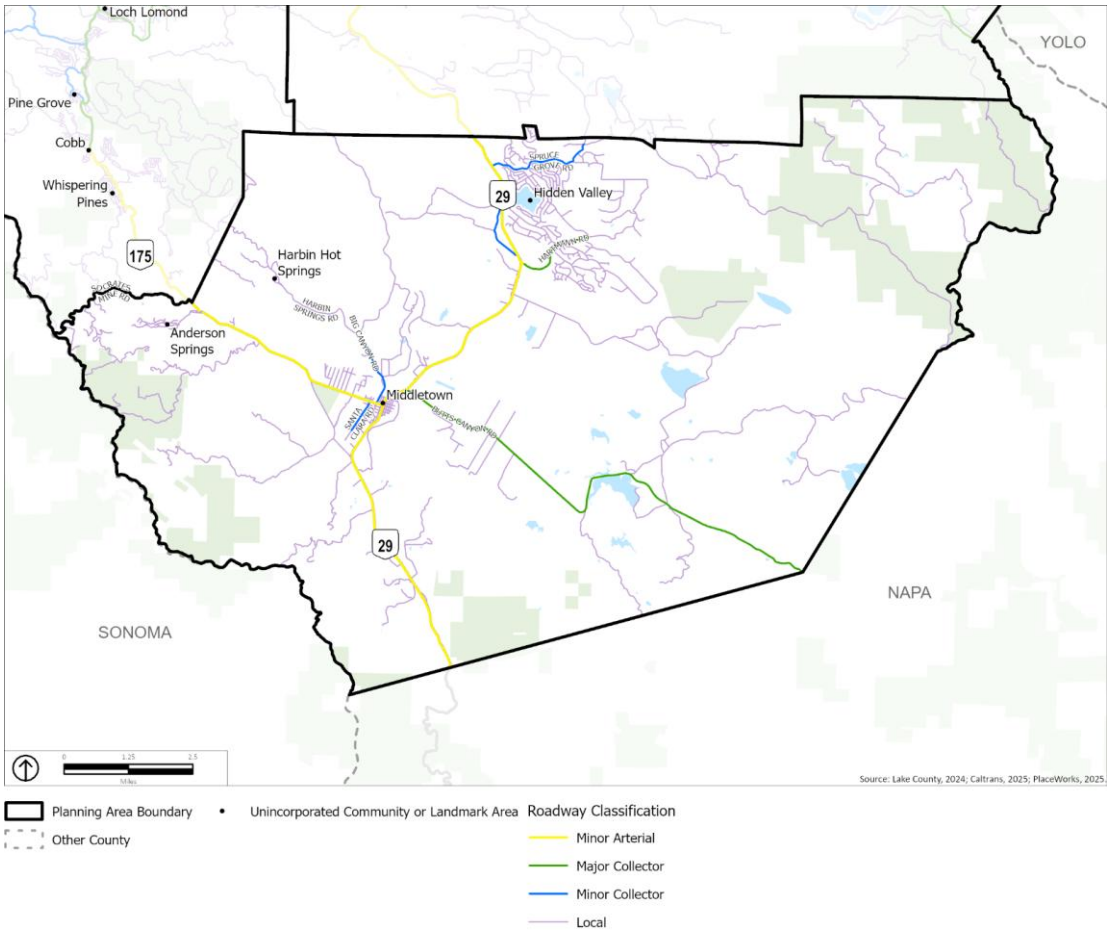
CR = County road; SR = State Route; NA = Not Applicable

Table M-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

Figure M-5 Existing Middletown Planning Area Roadway Functional Classifications



Commented [AG52]: This figure has been updated

This page intentionally left blank.

Level of Service

Traffic in Lake County fluctuates significantly by season due to the influx of tourists to the area in the summer months. While State facilities accommodate the highest volumes of traffic, several county roads in the Planning Area, including Hartmann Road and Butts Canyon Road become busier during the summer.

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 severe restriction in 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 Manual 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. Of County-owned roadways studied, all operate at an LOS of C or better on a daily basis. However, several State-owned and operated facilities, including SR 29 through the Middletown community, have an LOS of D.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

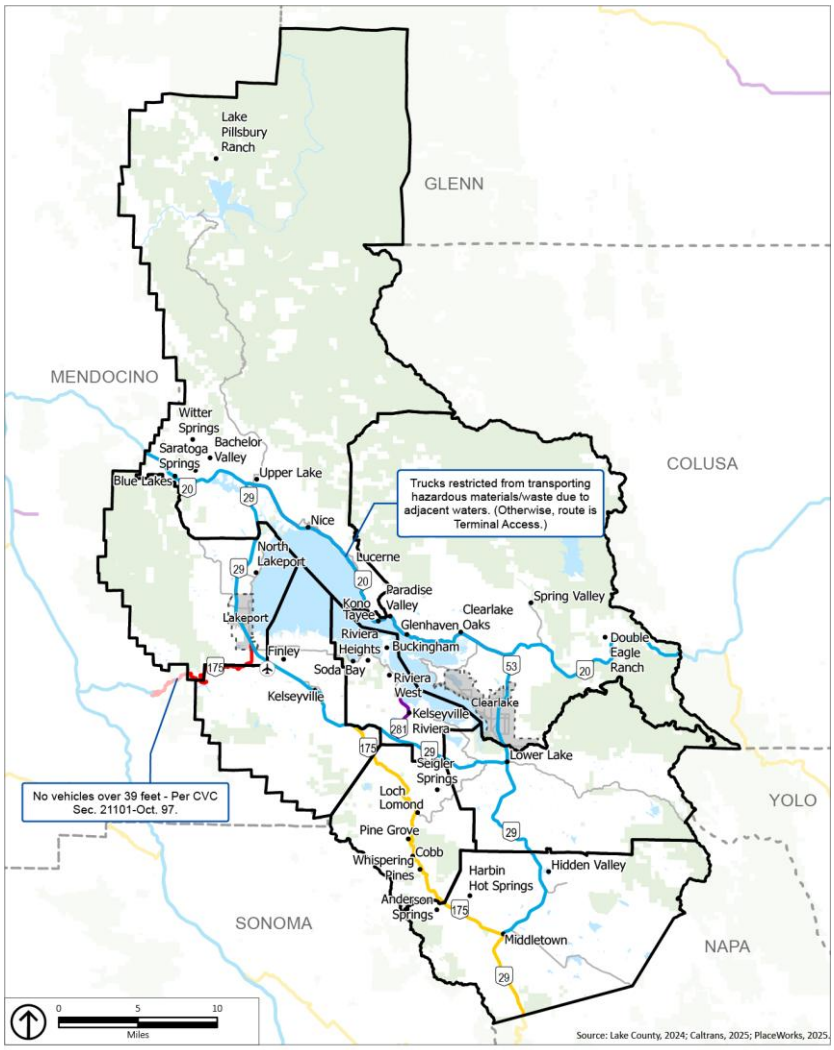
If the number of residents, workers, and visitors increase in the county over time, more driving will occur. While some driving in and through the county is inevitable given the long distances between destinations in the county, the County and other agencies can take actions to concentrate growth within 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 M-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 Middletown Planning Area rely on goods movement for deliveries and importing or exporting products. The movement of goods in the Middletown Planning Area typically occurs on SR 29 and SR 175. **Figure M-6** shows the County's designated truck routes to accommodate large vehicles, including for goods movement.

Figure M-6 Countywide Designated Truck Routes



Planned Roadway Network Improvements

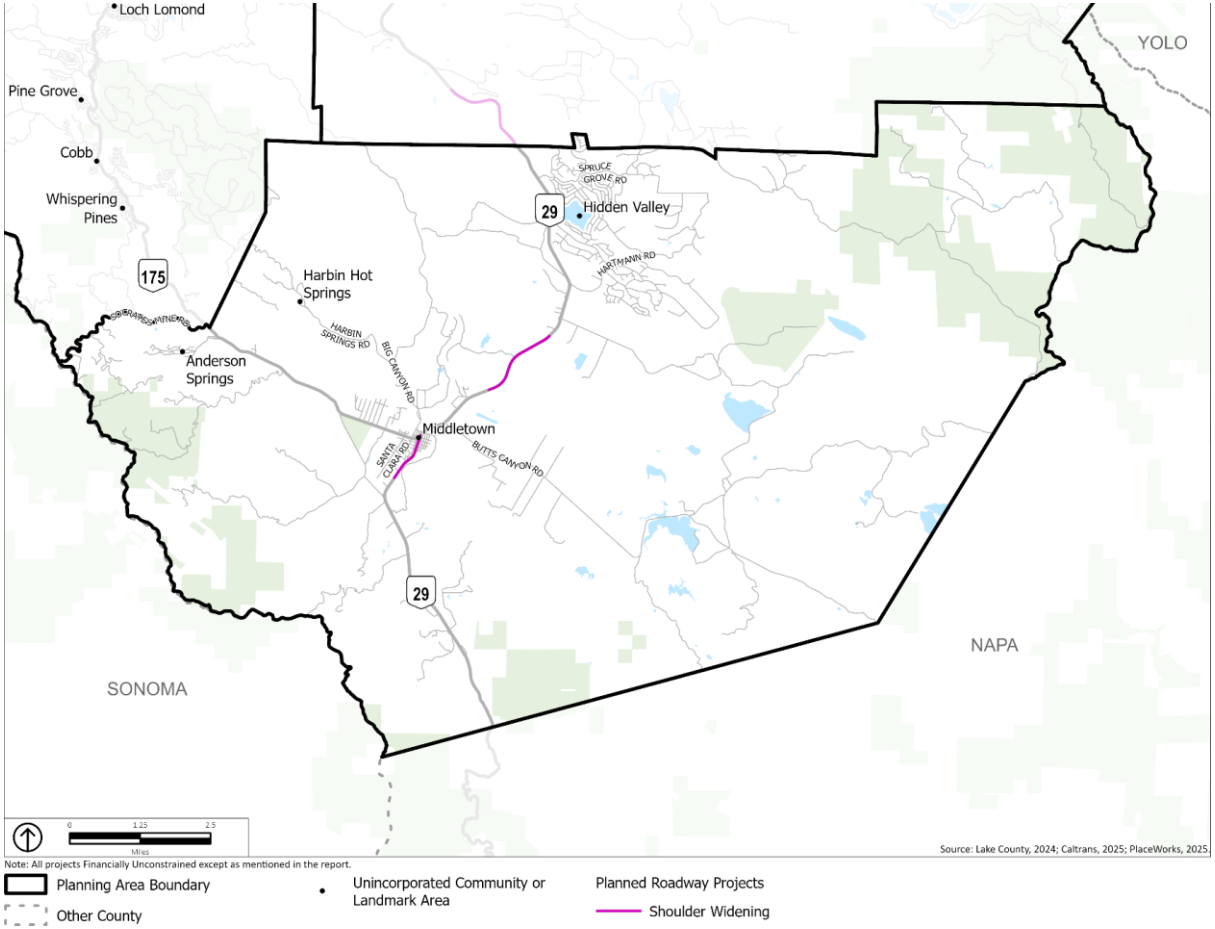
The 2022 Lake County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a State and federally mandated plan for transportation improvements in the county. The RTP is updated every four years by the Lake Area Planning Council for Lake County. The RTP is required to include a list of prioritized transportation improvement 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.

There are several planned roadway projects in the Middletown Planning Area discussed in the 2022 RTP and more recently updated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). These are depicted in **Figure M-7** and involve the following details:

- In the community of Middletown, on SR 29 from north of Young Street to south of Central Park Road, widen roadway shoulders, add left-turn lanes, and enhanced accommodations for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. This project is financially constrained and slated for construction in 2027 and 2028.
- North of the community of Middletown, on SR 29 from south of Grange Road to north of Butts Canyon Road, widen roadway shoulders and install rumble strips. This project is financially constrained and slated to be under construction between 2028 and 2030.

Figure M-7 Middletown Planning Area Planned Roadway Network



This page intentionally left blank.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is defined as the transport of people or goods through non-motorized means, based around human physical activity. Most of the Middletown Area lacks active transportation facilities, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes, though there are several exceptions, as noted below. Please see the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element for information about recreational trails.

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

The downtown commercial center of the Middletown community has sidewalks and marked crosswalks along SR 29, Wardlaw Street, and Barnes Street, among others. However, sidewalks and crosswalks do not exist along the neighborhoods connecting to the downtown Middletown area. Similarly, the Hidden Valley Lake community does not have sidewalks.

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 or are planned in the Middletown Area.

The Planning Area has few existing bike facilities. They include Class II bike lanes on Hartmann Road from SR 29 to Hidden Valley Road and Calistoga Road from Young Street to Hill Avenue in downtown Middletown. In addition, a multiuse (Class I) trail on SR 29 between Central Park Road and Rancheria Road (described in the 2022 RTP) was completed in 2025. While no Class III bike facilities exist in the Planning Area, they are planned, as described in the later subsection discussing planned active transportation improvements.

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.

Existing Equestrian Facilities

Equestrian use is common in the Planning Area. Informal trails have traditionally been used along highway crossings, local roads, and private lands. However, these routes have become less safe as traffic volumes have continued to grow.

Planned Active Transportation Improvements

There are four near-term (1 to 10 years) Class I (shared bike/pedestrian) facilities planned in the County's 2022 Active Transportation Plan (the County's guide to improve walking, biking, and other active forms of transportation in the community) and listed in **Table M-4**. The following long-term (10 to 20 years) pedestrian improvement projects are also listed in the 2022 RTP:

- Middletown north of SR 175
- Middletown south of SR 175
- Bush Street/Pine Streets in Middletown
- SR 29 (Calistoga Road) in Middletown
- SR 175 (Main Street) in Middletown

Table M-4 lists the planned bicycle facilities in the Middletown Area from the County's 2022 Active Transportation Plan. All planned bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Planning Area are financially unconstrained, meaning funding has not been earmarked and there is no specific timeline for implementation. The County or other responsible agencies are actively seeking funding, but if none is identified, the project may not be developed.

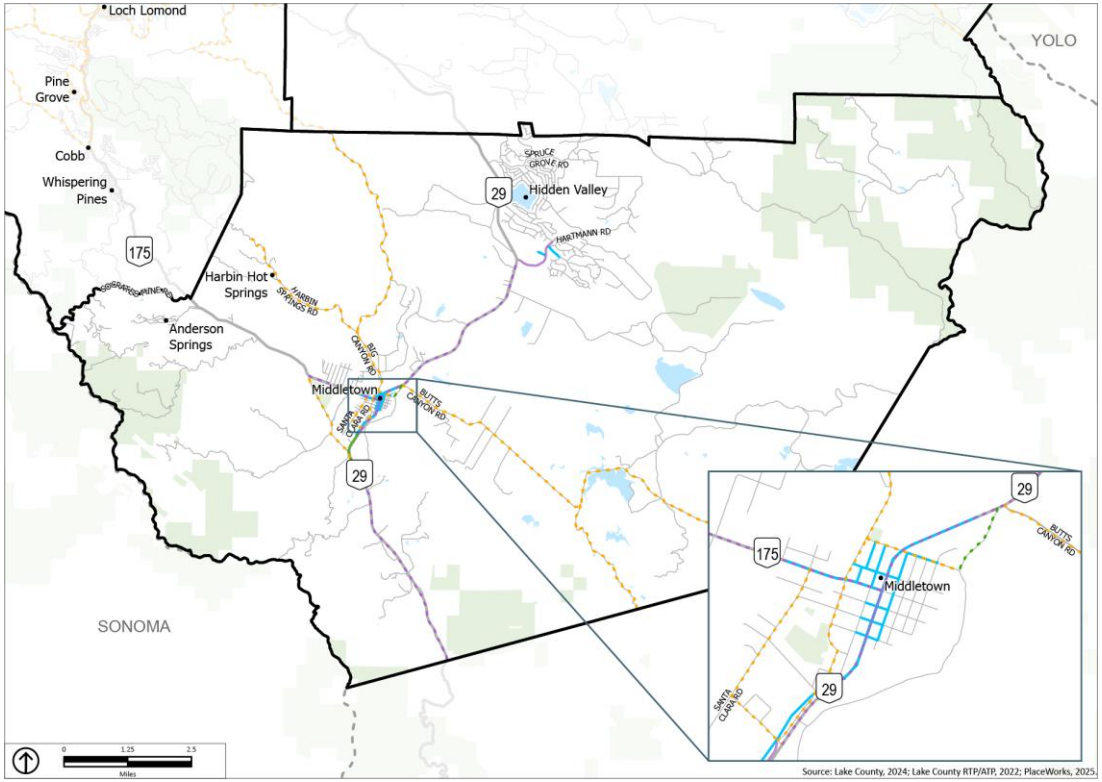
Table M-4 Planned Bicycle Facilities

Class	Roadway	From	To	Length (Miles)
I	SR 175	Dry Creek Cutoff	SR 29	1.47
I	SR 29	Hartman Rd	SR 175/Main St	4
I	SR 29	SR 175/Main St	Central Park Rd	1.43
I	St Helena Creek Rd	Wardlaw St	SR 29	0.27
III	Barnes St	SR 175	Wardlaw St	0.17
III	Big Canyon Rd	Wardlaw St	Seigler Canyon Rd	12.66
III	Butts Canyon Rd	SR 29	County Line	9.76
III	Central Park Rd	SR 29	Santa Clara Rd	0.25
III	Dry Creek Cutoff	SR 29	SR 175	1.85
III	Harbin Springs Rd	Big Canyon Rd	End	3.29
III	SR 29	Rancheria Rd	County Line/Robert Louis Stevenson State Park	4.14
III	Oat Hill Rd	Butts Canyon Rd	County Line	2.8
III	Pine St	Central Park Rd	Stewart St	0.25
III	Santa Clara Rd	Sentral Park Rd	SR 175	0.54
III	Stewart St	Bush St	SR 175	0.43
III	Wardlaw St	Big Canyon Rd/Barnes St	St Helena Creek Rd	0.35

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

Future bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements planned in the Middletown Planning Area are shown in **Figure M-8**.

Figure M-8 Middletown Area Existing and Planned Active Transportation Facilities



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

This page intentionally left blank.

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. In the Middletown Planning Area, LTA operates two routes, Route 2 along SR 175 and Route 3 along SR 29, as shown in **Figure M-9**. Route 2 starts at the Riviera shopping center and runs along SR 175, connecting Middletown to the Rivieras and Cobb Mountain Planning Areas. Route 2 operates two roundtrips Monday through Friday. Route 3 starts at the Walmart shopping center in Clearlake and runs south along SR 29, circling around the downtown area, and continues south to Napa County, where it ends at Adventist Health St. Helena Hospital in Deer Park. Route 3 runs four daily roundtrips Monday through Friday, with limited trips on the weekends.

In addition to the two fixed routes, LTA offers Dial-a-Ride and Medi-Links services, though these are currently only available in Clearlake/Lower Lake and Lakeport. However, LTA offers Flex Stop service in areas not served by Dial-a-Ride where the bus will travel up to one mile beyond its regular route to provide Flex Stop service at the curb, meaning residents in the Planning Area near an LTA line can use this service.

Medi-Links 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 to better serve Lake County communities. As noted, the Middletown Area is currently served by two fixed routes, Route 2 and Route 3, along with the Flex Stop service. Because Route 2 carried a low volume of passengers, the Transit Development Plan recommends reducing Route 2 service from five to three days per week. No improvements are planned for transit service in the Planning Area in the 2023 Transit Development Plan.

Aviation

There are no public airports in the Middletown Planning Area but there are several private airfields. The nearest public airports are Angwin-Parrett Field in Napa County and Lampson Field in Lake County, located between Lakeport and Kelseyville. ~~The community has voiced interest in developing a public airport in the Middletown Planning Area to provide opportunities for commercial and industrial development, access to air transportation in the event of emergencies, and access for tourists and recreational pilots in the southern portion of the county.~~

Commented [TS53]: ED 24 (text no longer appropriate given that we removed the policy and action to support a new airport here).

Emerging Trends

Technology 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 (EV) (e.g., cars, bikes, and scooters)

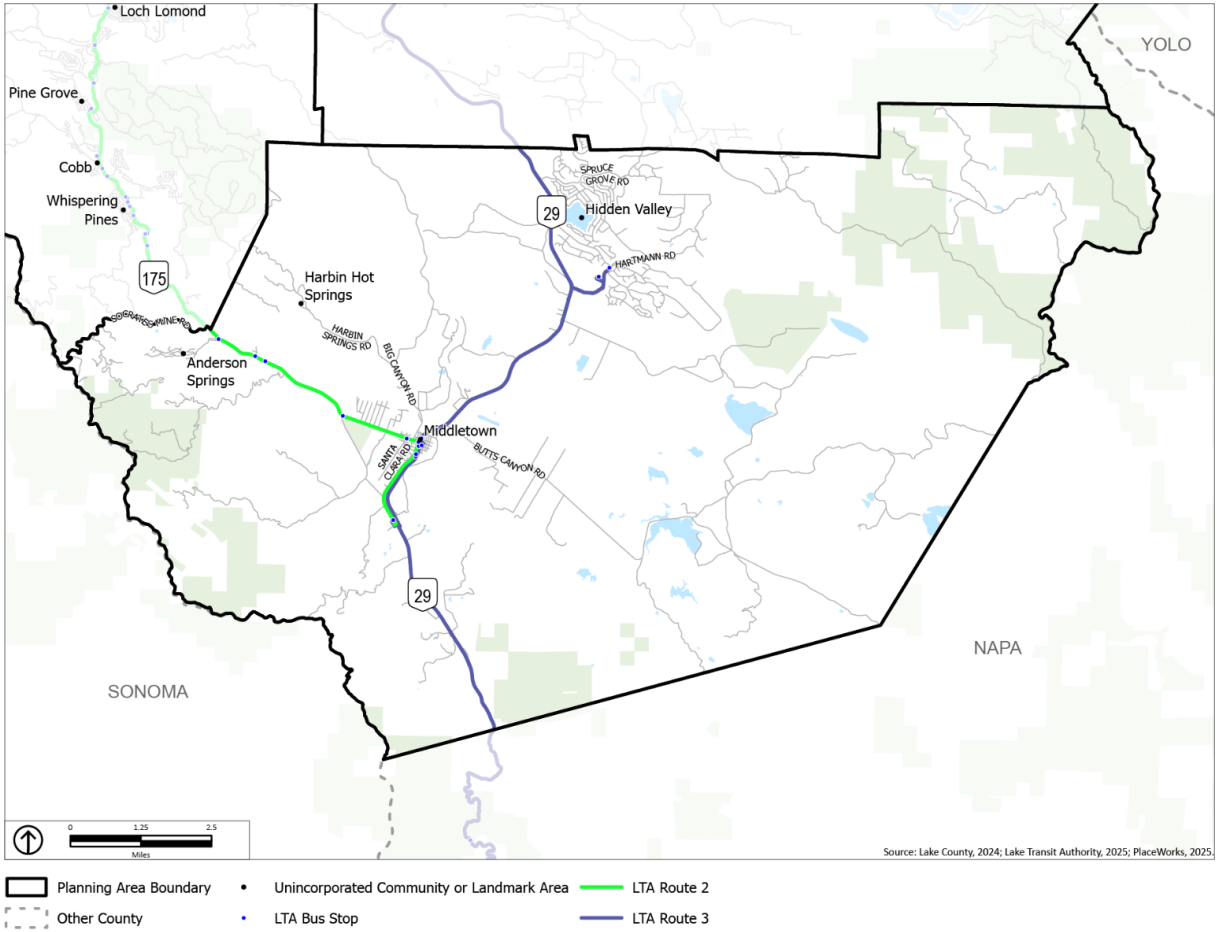
Ride-sharing services offer residents, workers, visitors, and students the choice to travel by automobile to their desired destinations. Given the distances between origins and destinations in Lake County, this service offers one of the fastest travel time options in the county for those that do not 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.

Electric vehicles help reduce GHG emissions but they still contribute to vehicle congestion and delay. Currently, three locations in and near the community of Middletown offer public electric vehicle charging. This Circulation Element includes policies that support installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure as feasible.

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.

Figure M-9 Middletown Area Transit Service and Facilities



This page intentionally left blank.

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 M-C-1

Effective intergovernmental communication and cooperation on transportation issues.

Policies

M-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.

M-C-1.2

Maintain a cooperative relationship with Caltrans to provide maintenance and safety improvements on State highways.

Actions

M-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.

M-C-1.b

Work with local agencies to identify road improvement opportunities.

M-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.

M-C-1.d

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

M-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.

Goal M-C-2

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

Policies

M-C-2.1

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

M-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.

M-C-2.3

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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 Caltrans ~~with~~and the County.

M-C-2.7

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

M-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.

M-C-2.9

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

M-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

M-C-2.a

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

Commented [TS54]: Global

Circ 40 - Caltrans comment.

Commented [AH55]: Global

Circ 40 - Caltrans comment. changed “However” to “though”

Commented [AH56]: Circulation 49

M-C-2.b

Improve and construct roads to the Lake County Road Standards, as shown in **Table M-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.

M-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.

M-C-2.d

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

M-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.

M-C-2.f

Consult local Tribal governments when reviewing capital improvements for Tribal Cultural Resource impacts.

M-C-2.g

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

M-C-2.h

Work collaboratively with the Middletown unified School District on development of an alternate student drop off at SR 29 and Wardlaw Streets.

Commented [AH57]: Circ 79

Goal M-C-3

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

Policies

M-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

M-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, prioritizing the downtown Middletown community and Coyote Valley Town Center areas.

M-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.

M-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).

M-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.

M-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.

M-C-3.7

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

M-C-3.8

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

M-C-3.9

Install environmentally preferable road surface materials, including permeable paving and other low-impact surfacing treatments, where feasible and appropriate.

Commented [AH58]: Circ 80

~~M-C-3.9~~M-C-3.10

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.

Actions

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-C-3.d

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

M-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).

M-C-3.f

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

M-C-3.g

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

Commented [AG59]: GPO 19

Amanda: Please add the same footnote to the first GPA asterisk for the Lower Lake, Middletown, North Lake, and Rivieras docs (it's the same Action C-3.a in all of them where the asterisk first appears; I did it for EL, Cobb, K'ville and Lakeport). **Please also do the same in the Countywide Elements by doing search for the first asterisk that appears after a policy or action and adding the footnote there.-**

Commented [AH60]: Add globally.

Comment Circulation Row 47

[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 M-C-4

A transportation system that protects human life.

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

Commented [AH61]: Add globally Comment Circulation Row 50

Commented [MT62R61]: I added "best practices" for global addition also.

M-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."

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

~~**M-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.~~

Commented [AH63]: Circ 51

~~**M-C-4.9**~~**M-C-4.8**

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

Commented [AH64]: Add globally. Comment Circulation Row 47

Actions

M-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)

M-C-4.b

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

Goal M-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

M-C-5.1

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-C-5.5

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

M-C-5.6

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

M-C-5.7

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

Commented [AH65]: add globally

Comment Circulation Row 47

Actions

M-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.

M-C-5.b

Actively pursue the conversion and improvement of the Caltrans park-and-ride facility on SR 175 to a public parking lot by means of acquisition, joint-use agreements, or other methods available.

M-C-5.c

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.

M-C-5.d

Update the Transit Development Plan with input from local Tribal governments to include tribal community needs.

Goal M-C-6

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

Policies

M-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.

M-C-6.2

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

M-C-6.3

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.

M-C-6.4

~~Require~~ Encourage 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.

M-C-6.5

Require new residential and commercial development to incorporate bike lanes and sidewalks, as appropriate.

M-C-6.6

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.

M-C-6.7

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

M-C-6.8

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.

M-C-6.9

Encourage and support the use of equestrian-friendly surfacing materials and treatments on trails and other appropriate roadways.

~~M-C-6.9~~M-C-6.10

Prioritize active transportation improvements benefitting ~~tribal communities and~~ Equity Priority Areas.

~~M-C-6.10~~M-C-6.11

Incorporate ~~Traditional~~ Tribal Ecological Knowledge in the design of active transportation improvements.

Commented [AH66]: Circ 57

Commented [AH67]: County staff, on a global markup to this policy in East Lake, Mireya commented "Do not add to Middletown. They value their rural character and do not want the additional regulation."
Given that this policy is already here and there were comments on it, but none directing the policy's removal, I think it should stay, but want to confirm that with you. The global edit was to replace the highlighted text with "within Community Growth Boundaries."
Please confirm any additional edits that should be made to this policy in Middletown or if it should be deleted.

Commented [MT68R67]: Within CGB is fine

Commented [AL69R67]: Replaced with CGB text replacement here based on response above.

Commented [AH70]: Circ 80

Commented [AH71]: Circ 58

~~M-C-6.11~~M-C-6.12

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

Actions

M-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 Middletown Planning Area are met.

M-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.

M-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.

This page intentionally left blank.

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 Middletown 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.

Access to parks and open spaces support quality of life for residents of all ages.

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 Middletown 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 Middletown Planning Area host a variety of wildlife species and support important processes such as carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, erosion control, and recreation. Vegetation is dominated by a mix of chaparral (dense, low shrubs), woodlands (trees), and grasslands. Generally, woodland areas give way to lower-growing bush and chaparral in the east and northeast parts of the Planning Area. At lower elevations, evergreen (conifer) trees, like firs and pines, mix with deciduous trees that lose their leaves in the winter. Deciduous northern oak woodlands dominate the central and western portions of the Middletown Planning Area and can also be found at lower elevations. Montane hardwood forests, which grow in high elevations and contain both evergreen and deciduous trees, are primarily found on the north- and east-facing slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains, which form the western edge of the Planning Area. Butts Canyon Knoll, Callayomi Valley, Coyote Valley, and Long Valley host grassland communities, which typically occur in lowland and upland areas. Past overgrazing has resulted in the erosion and destruction of grassland vegetation, loss of wildlife habitat, and localized flooding and stream sediment.

The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element recognizes the ecological and cultural importance of the Middletown 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. In particular, St. Helena Creek and Putah Creek support a vibrant stream ecology in their respective riparian corridors. Wetlands, one of the most important habitat resources not only in the Middletown Planning Area but countywide, perform important functions including flood and storm surge protection, erosion reduction, and runoff interception and filtration. Wetland areas are primarily adjacent to the Middletown Planning Area's major surface water bodies, like Detert Reservoir, as well as near Butts Canyon Road and along stream banks.

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. While not comprehensive, ecologically sensitive resource areas in the Middletown Planning Area are described below.

Big Rock Orchids

This riparian area is on private property approximately three miles southwest of the Middletown Community on Dry Creek. Big Rock Orchids is noteworthy for its abundance of *Spiranthes porrifolia* (Ladies' Tresses). Though the surrounding lands are agricultural, the area itself is relatively undisturbed.

Butts Canyon Vicinity

Located on private and public property at the eastern edge of the Planning Area, the Butts Canyon Vicinity is oak-pine woodland with moderately to steeply sloping terrain. The canyon is approximately two miles long and four miles north of the point where Butts Creek enters Lake Berryessa. The public portion is used for research, education, and observation. Most of the area is undisturbed except for Butts Canyon Road and some buildings along the creek bottom. Butts Canyon Vicinity hosts a mix of serpentine flora with several endemics, including Cleveland's spineflower (*Chorizanthe clevelandii)*, swamp larkspur *(Delphinium ulginosum)*, and Cleveland's milk vetch *(Astragalus clevelandii)*. The dry riparian community consists largely of willow (*Salix* spp.) and cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), while the oak-pine woodland has dominant species including oak (*Quercus* spp.) and foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*). Rare species in the area include Butte County fritillary (*Fritillaria eastwoodiae),* St. Helena fawn lily *(Erythronium helenae)*, and two-carpellate western flax (*Hesperolinon bicarpellatum*).

Butts Canyon Knoll

Butts Canyon Knoll is on private property at the southern mouth of Butts Canyon on a small serpentine knoll covered with grasslands and blue oaks near the Detert Reservoir. The dominant vegetation includes grasslands and blue oaks (*Quercus douglasii*) and the rare Purdy's fritillary (*Fritillaria purdyi)* occurs here. In addition, the area supports a wealth of animal life and is relatively undisturbed.

Chamise Lily Hill and Dead Horse Flat

This area is in the Deadhorse Flat-Chamise Lily Hill area across St. Helena Creek east of the Middletown Planning Area. It is private and has been disturbed by roads through the area and past grazing activities. The area supports an abundance of California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivium*); however, the dominant vegetation is a mixed chaparral community with chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum, Arctostaphylos manzanita*, and A. sp., *Ceanothus* sp., toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), coffeeberry (*Rhamus californica*), and leather oak (*Quercus durata*). Associated with the area's serpentine soils are the rare plants Purdy's fritillary and St. Helena fawn lily. There is periodically an outstanding display of the Chamis lily (*Erythronim californicum*). Grasses include *Brodiaea lugens* and *Delphinium uliginosum*. An intermittent stream flows through the meadow at the base of the slopes and there are small seasonal wetlands during the winter and spring.

Hells Half Acre, Geologic Feature, Chaparral

This geologic feature is approximately two miles east of Coyote Valley, where Putah Creek has cut a 650-foot gorge through the surrounding Pleistocene pyroclastic volcanic rocks. The area, which is privately owned, supports diverse fauna, such as the golden eagle (*Aguila chrysaetos*), and is virtually undisturbed, although a military reservation borders the area to the south. Vegetation communities include chaparral, grasslands, and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*). Noteworthy plants include stream orchid (*Epipactus gigantean*), yellow mariposa lily (*Calochortus luteus),* leopard lily (*Lilium pardalinum),* and checker lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata).*

Robert Louis Stevenson State Park

A small portion of Robert Louis Stevenson State Park is in the southwestern part of the Middletown Planning Area. The area consists of chaparral, mixed evergreen, oak woodland, Douglas fir, and redwood. Portions of the park are developed for research, education, and observation facilities. In addition, the Silverado Mine, producer of gold and silver, is in the park. The area contains eight species of manzanita (*Arctostaphylos),* seven of *Ceanothus*, six of oaks (*Quercus),* redwoods (*Sequoia sepervirens*), California nutmeg (*Torreya californica*), and pine trees, including *Pinus attenuata*, *P. ponderosa*, *P. sabiniana*, and *P. lambertiana*. Within the park, four species of rare plants occur, including *Eriogonum caninum*, *Erythronium helenae*, *Fritillaria purdyi*, and *Lupinus sericatus*.

White Point

This area is on undisturbed private property approximately one mile east of SR 29 at the Napa County boundary and includes one rare plant species, the three peaks jewel flower (*Streptanthus morrisonii* ssp*. elatus*).

Rabbit Hill

Rabbit Hill is a large hill made up of serpentine deposits, which create a unique environment that supports several rare and endangered plant species. Located in the southwest residential section of downtown Middletown community, the area is managed by the Lake County Land Trust.

In addition to the areas of special environmental significance described previously, localized natural areas exist throughout the Planning Area and are associated with stream corridors, standing bodies of water, and woodlands. Many contain threatened and endangered species.

Cultural Resources

Archaeological sites and buildings in the Middletown Planning Area convey the area's vast history. The Planning Area has been inhabited for thousands of years, and its remaining historic sites and structures are significant to the community. 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 protection, study, and enhancement of cultural resources also 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

Though less than 2 percent of the Middletown Planning Area has been formally surveyed to locate archaeological resources, the Planning Area has high densities of prehistoric sites and is considered an extremely sensitive area. In particular, there are high levels of sensitivity at the confluence of creeks, along creeks, or where creeks begin to flow into a valley. Surveys in the vicinity of creeks, including a large survey in the eastern portion of the Planning Area along St. Helena Creek, have revealed archaeological sites.

Historic structures and locations are plentiful in the Planning Area and include the Gibson Museum and Cultural Center, resorts and spas, and former residences. Several sites and structures in the Middletown Planning Area have received official designations given their historical significance. There are two State Historical Landmarks in the Planning Area:

- The Stone House, which is the oldest building in Lake County and was registered as a built environment resource in 1949. The Stone House was built in 1853 by Captain R. Steele and Robert Sterling. The Stone House was converted to a store in 1860 and then to a post office by 1867. Today, it is a museum.
- The St. Helena Toll Road and Bull Trail, which led from Napa Valley to Middletown, was registered as a historical archaeological resource in 1950. The Bull Trail was built by volunteers in the 1850s. In 1861, it became an official road but was abandoned in 1868. The St. Helena Toll Road was constructed in 1868 to run between the same points. The State later purchased the toll road in 1925.

In addition, Butts Canyon Road in the Planning Area features a bronze cast monument commemorating the construction of the road by Lake and Napa Counties between 1860 and 1862.

Tribes and Tribal Cultural Resources

Prior to European colonization, three ethnographic groups inhabited the areas surrounding the Middletown Planning Area: the Wappo, Lake Miwok, and Patwin. The Wappo territory was divided into two areas. The larger of the two areas encompassed the south, central, and western portion of the Planning Area. The village of "lok-noma" was northeast of today's Middletown community. The Lake Miwok people were

hunters and gatherers living in 17 villages scattered throughout the Middletown Planning Area, primarily along creek drainages and stream valleys south of Clear Lake. The Patwin inhabited the easternmost portion of the Planning Area.

Descendants of these tribes maintain a living presence in the area, continuing traditional practices and stewardship of ancestral lands. The Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California, established in 1910, is headquartered in the Middletown Planning Area. The mission of the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians is:

> *"We as members of the Middletown Rancheria, established our own Constitution as an exercise of our sovereign power in order to organize for our common good, to govern ourselves pursuant to our own laws, to preserve and protect our common and natural resources, to provide for the welfare and prosperity of our people."*

In addition to organizing events throughout the year, the Middletown Rancheria has multiple government departments (Tribal Administration, Tribal Committees, Tribal Council), economic operations (Twin Pine Casino & Hotel, Uncle Buddy's Pumps), and a medical clinic open to Rancheria Tribal Members, other Native Americans, and non-native people.

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; in the Middletown Planning Area, views of Mount Konocti are an important resource to several tribes.

Because Tribal Cultural Resources can include a vast range of objects, places, viewsheds, and other features, consultation with culturally affiliated indigenous Tribes to identify Tribal cultural resources is an essential part of any development project. Tribal consultation during a project's environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a core requirement of Assembly Bill (AB) 52. AB 52 also requires evaluation and mitigation, to the extent feasible, of a project's potential impacts to Tribal cultural resources. A separate but related State law, Senate Bill (SB) 18 requires that the County notify and consult with local Tribal governments when amending its General Plan. In accordance with both AB 52 and SB 18, the County consulted with local Tribes as part of the process to prepare this General Plan. The policies and actions in this element reflect that Tribal consultation and commit the County to sustaining a collaborative relationship with local Tribal communities through implementation of this General Plan.

Energy Resources

The Middletown Planning Area's communities, which include Anderson Springs, Hidden Valley, and Middletown communities, have a total population of approximately 8,000 people. The highest energy demand is from hotel and resort, residential, agriculture, commercial, and recreational uses. Affordable and reliable energy is an ongoing, high-priority issue for Planning Area residents.

Most of the Planning Area's electricity is supplied from the statewide electrical grid operated by 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. The Planning Area's power grid is also supplied in part by Calpine with geothermal energy generated at the Geysers. Calpine operates 10 geothermal power plants in Sonoma County and 3 in Lake County. In 2022, the system-wide power generation was over 5.5 million net megawatt hours. For more information about the Geysers, see the Geothermal Resources Element.

Electricity utilities 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 power lines being damaged and starting 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. However, the California Geological Survey has mapped mine locations in the county, including in the Middletown Planning Area. Two quarries in the Area, Diamond J Ranch and DNA River Rock, produce sand and gravel. There are also two streambed or gravel bar skimming and pitting operations: Diamond J Ranch: Gravel Bar, which produces rock, and Luchetti Ranch Gravel Bar, which produces sand and gravel.

Mining activities in the Middletown Planning Area include surface mining and gravel extraction, which occur primarily along waterways where gravel and sand resources have accumulated over time in creeks (e.g., Putah Creek), streambeds, and river deposits. These areas are where mining operations such as the Diamond J Ranch, DNA River Rock, and Luchetti Ranch Gravel Bar are located. Historically, mining in the Planning Area has been associated with gravel extraction, though smaller-scale gravel and sand extraction operations remain, present-day mining largely involves surface extraction.

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. It identifies the Jerusalem Grade South as a potential quarry site in the Planning Area. The site is not far from the northern boundary of the Planning Area and is approximately 700 acres, 1.5 miles in length, and one mile long. The site's northern edge is underlain by volcanic cinders and included blocks, but it consists primarily of basalt-andesite flows that vary in thickness.

Open Space and Recreation

Open space and recreation areas are depicted in **Figures M-10** (countywide) and **M-11** (Middletown Planning Area).

Mature trees and structures provide much needed shade to enjoy parks in the summer months.

The Middletown Planning Area has three public recreation areas totaling approximately 110 acres. The largest of these is Middletown Trailside Park, a community open space area with nature trails, constituting most of the Planning Area's park acreage at about 107 acres. Middletown Pool and Park is a community park featuring a playground, tennis courts, and community pool. Middletown Square Park is adjacent to the Middletown Library and Senior Center and features a lawn and gazebo where community events are held like farmer's markets and movies in the park. In addition to these public parks, Central Park, a five-acre park owned by the Middletown Central Park Association and open to the public, features an equestrian facility and the Middletown Lions Club building where the Middletown Central Park Association holds popular community events. Several sports facilities, including baseball and football fields, are also available to the public through the Middletown Unified School District. Planning is underway for a potential 'parklet'—a small gathering or recreating area alongside a sidewalk, typically in a former parking space—in downtown Middletown.

Hidden Valley Lake provides private recreational facilities for its residents and guests, including lake access, horse stables, tennis facilities, a clubhouse, campgrounds, and parks and open space areas. Some facilities, like the 18-hole golf course, restaurant, and clubhouse, are open to the public.

State and federal lands in and around the Middletown Planning Area offer recreational use, such as Boggs Mountain Demonstration Forest State Preserve in the adjacent Cobb Planning Area, Robert Louis Stevenson State Park operated by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, and public lands owned by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the California State Lands Commission (SLC). In addition, while they do not have official designations, there are several other significant open space corridors in the Planning Area along the following roadways:

- SR 29 from the Napa County line to the intersection of Calistoga Road and Young Street and from the "mansion" (20650 S. SR 29) to Spruce Grove Road
- SR 175 from the South Lake County Fire District headquarters to Anderson Springs Road
- Butts Canyon Road from the Middletown Cemetery to the county line

Parts of the Middletown Planning Area are traversed by loop trail systems that are popular with cyclists; these include Big Canyon Loop, Middletown/Pope Valley Loop, and Tri-County Century. Furthermore, 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 non-motorized trails for activities like hiking, biking, and horseback riding while preserving natural and cultural resources. The County Parks, Recreation, and Trails Plan includes a series of policies and maps to guide where and how trails will be developed and includes input from local residents, agencies, and environmental organizations. Within the Middletown Planning Area, there are proposed bike trails along Butts Canyon Road, through the Middletown community, and continuing north along Harbin Springs Road and Big Canyon Road. Implementation of the plan is not complete. Several trail projects remain in the planning, permitting, or funding stages.

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

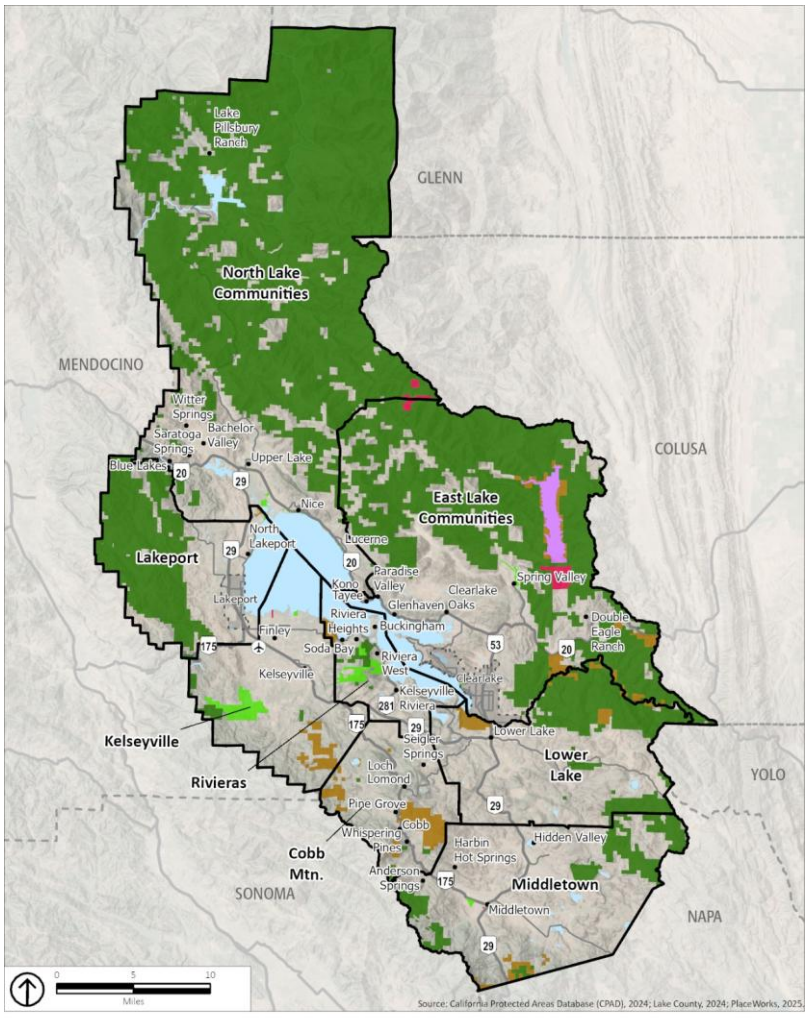
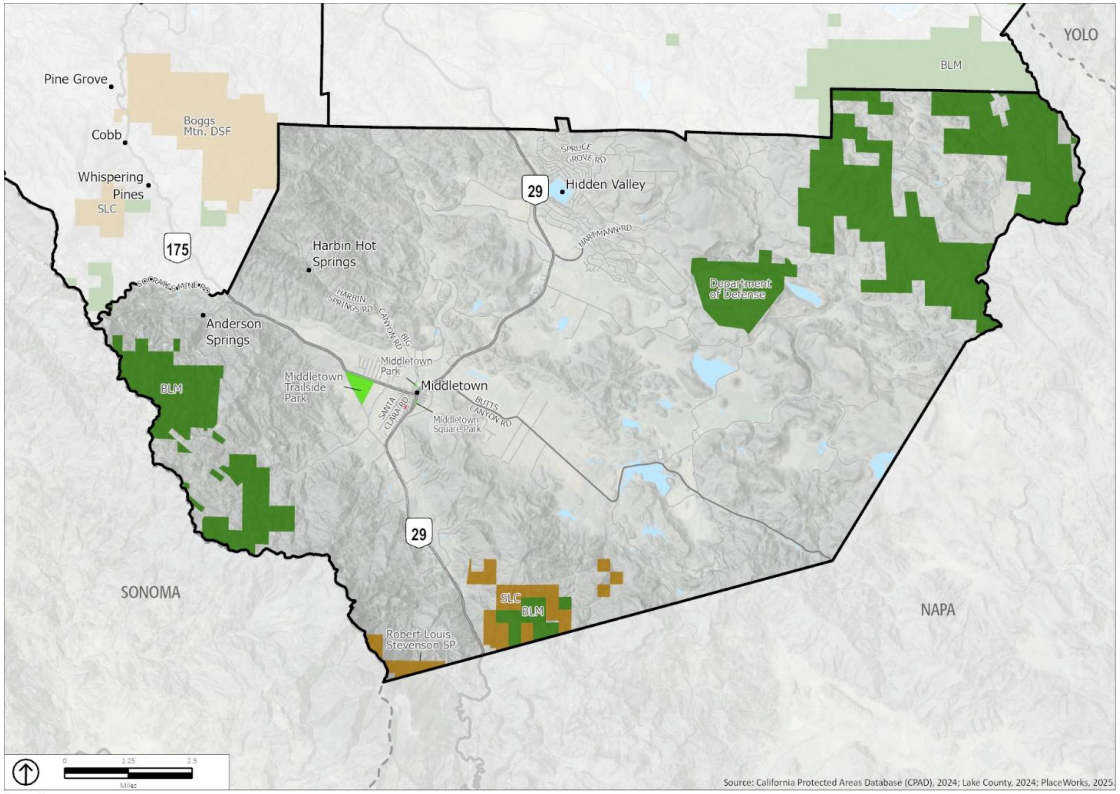


Figure M-11 Middletown Planning Area Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Areas



This page intentionally left blank.

Scenic Resources

The Middletown 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 in the Middletown Planning Area is eligible to be designated as a State Scenic Highway. This roadway's viewshed offers vistas of the surrounding mountains and rolling hills including Mt. St. Helena, the Callayomi and Coyote Valleys, and the riparian vegetation associated with St. Helena Creek. In addition to natural features, the landscape includes grazing lands, walnut orchards, and vineyards that provide scenic vistas for the traveling public, including those using SR 29 as a gateway between Lake County and the Bay Area.

The Planning Area also has several areas that have previously been identified as open space corridors of significance. These include:

- SR 29 from the Napa County line to the intersection of Calistoga Road and Young Street
- SR 29 from Butts Canyon Road to Spruce Grove Road, excluding commercial and industrial zones
- SR 175 from the South Lake County Fire District headquarters to Anderson Springs Road
- Butts Canyon Road from the Middletown Cemetery to the county line

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

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-OS-1

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

Policies

M-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.

M-OS-1.2

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

Commented [AH72]: apply globally

OS Row 29

M-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.

M-OS-1.14 *

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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 and decontaminating equipment; and using native, noninvasive, drought-resistant species in erosion-control plantings.

M-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.

M-OS-1.20

Discourage use of fencing that poses risks to wildlife.

M-OS-1.21

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

M-OS-1.22

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

M-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.

M-OS-1.24

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

Commented [AH73]: revise globally

OS Row 29

Actions

M-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.

M-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.

M-OS-1.c *

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

M-OS-1.d

Improve County roads, where needed, to prevent vehicular travel in streambeds to minimize sedimentation and protect overall water quality.

M-OS-1.e

Develop educational materials regarding the impacts that off-highway vehicle travel in streambeds has on sedimentation and water quality, prioritizing distribution to landowners with riparian areas on their property.

M-OS-1.f

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

~~M-OS-1.f~~M-OS-1.g

Develop and implement a Countywide Wildlife Migration Corridor Preservation Plan.

~~M-OS-1.g~~M-OS-1.h

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 M-OS-2

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

Policies

M-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.

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.

M-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

M-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 Planning Commission prior to resuming site development work.

M-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.

M-OS-2.5 *

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

M-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.

M-OS-2.7

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

M-OS-2.8

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

M-OS-2.9

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

M-OS-2.10

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

M-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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-OS-2.d

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

M-OS-2.e

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

M-OS-2.f

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

M-OS-2.g

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

Goal M-OS-3

Celebrated, amplified, and preserved tribal influences and Tribal Cultural Resources throughout the Middletown Area.

Policies

M-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.

M-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 Middletown Area, and how the County's relationship with local Tribal governments has evolved.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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

M-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.

M-OS-3.b

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

M-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 M-OS-4

Conserved energy resources.

Policies

M-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.

M-OS-4.2

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

M-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.

M-OS-4.4

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

M-OS-4.5

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

M-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.

M-OS-4.7

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

M-OS-4.8

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

Actions

M-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.

M-OS-4.b

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

~~M-OS-4.a~~M-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.

~~M-OS-4.b~~M-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.

~~M-OS-4.c~~M-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.

~~M-OS-4.d~~M-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 M-OS-5

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

Policies

M-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.

Commented [AH74]: added in response to direction in GR Row 14.
Staff comment: Yes, let's add a policy to create an energy element

Commented [TS75R74]: Included as an implementation action rather than policy.

Commented [AH76]: Add globally

Commented [AH77]: Added in response to staff direx in GR Row 67: "reference finance and governance in new policy on developmen tof energy policy/element "

Commented [AH78]: add globally.

Comment ED Row 51 "Investigate application of Community Benefit Agreements to new power generation developments. "

M-OS-5.2

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

M-OS-5.3

Ensure that all mining operations are performed in compliance with the policies and implementation measures included in the 1992 Lake County Aggregate Resources Management Plan (**Appendix A** to this General Plan).

M-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.

M-OS-5.5

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

M-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 M-OS-6

A parks, recreation, and open space system that serves the recreational needs of Middletown Area residents and visitors.

Policies

M-OS-6.1

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

M-OS-6.2

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

M-OS-6.3

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-OS-6.7

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

M-OS-6.8

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

M-OS-6.9

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.

M-OS-6.10

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

M-OS-6.11
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.

M-OS-6.12
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.

M-OS-6.13
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.

M-OS-6.14
Promote passive recreation in flood-prone areas to absorb floodwater and protect developed areas.

M-OS-6.15
Seek opportunities to install bird watching amenities in the County parks.

Commented [AH79]: Add globally except to Lower Lake which doesn't have a county park. (MGT commented that Cobb is getting a park and should be included)

Based on comment in OS Row 15

Actions

M-OS-6.a
Implement and periodically update, as needed, the countywide Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.

M-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.

M-OS-6.c
Identify public lands suitable for off-road recreation and explore opportunities to develop these uses.

M-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.

M-OS-6.e
Work to ensure parks and recreation spaces are kept clean and free of litter and hazardous materials.

M-OS-6.f
Enforce prohibitions of drug use and overnight and/or long-term camping in parks, recreation, and open space areas.

M-OS-6.g

Develop an outdoor recreation facility at the confluence of Dry and ~~St. Helena~~Putah Creeks on property owned by the water district at the Big Canyon Bridge.

Commented [AH80]: OS 31

Goal M-OS-7

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

Policies

M-OS-7.1

Encourage and support efforts to develop a multiuse path connecting the Middletown community with the Coyote Valley Town Center.

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

M-OS-7.2

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

M-OS-7.3

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.

M-OS-7.4

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

M-OS-7.5

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

M-OS-7.6

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

M-OS-7.a

Develop incentives to encourage dedication of trails.

M-OS-7.b

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

Goal M-OS-8

Preserved and enhanced scenic resources and viewsheds in the Middletown Area.

Policies

M-OS-8.1 *

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.

M-OS-8.2

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

M-OS-8.3

Develop access to scenic viewpoints along 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 Middletown Area and region.

~~**M-OS-1.1**~~

~~Work collaboratively with the community to identify valued viewsheds for future protection measures.~~

Commented [AH81]: OS 49

M-OS-8.4

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.

M-OS-8.5

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.

Commented [AH82]: add globally.

Comment OS Row 32

M-OS-8.6

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

Commented [AH83]: Add globally to all areas. Already added to Middletown.

Added based on exact language provided by County LU Row 142

Actions

M-OS-8.a *

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

M-OS-8.b

Amend the Scenic Combining District to include ridgelines, working in consultation with Tribal governments.

M-OS-8.c

Update Article 45, Signs and Billboards, of the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit billboards in the Middletown Planning Area.

M-OS-8.d

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

M-OS-8.e

Work collaboratively with the community to identify valued viewsheds for future protection measures.

Commented [AH84]: OS 49

Goal M-OS-9

Preserved and enhanced visual quality within community areas.

Policies

M-OS-9.1

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

M-OS-9.2

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

M-OS-9.3

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

Commented [AH85]: LU 142

~~M-OS-9.3~~M-OS-9.4 *

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

~~M-OS-9.4~~M-OS-9.5 *

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

~~M-OS-9.5~~M-OS-9.6

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

Actions

M-OS-9.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.

M-OS-9.b

Establish a coordinated roadway signage program for the Middletown Area that identifies routes and major destinations, provides traffic information, and provides directional information to major destinations while supporting the visual character of the region.

M-OS-9.c

Work with PG&E to form an underground utilities district along Calistoga Street and Main Street/~~Highway~~SR 175 in the Middletown community.

Commented [AH86]: OS 33

M-OS-9.d

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

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 Middletown Planning Area accomplishes the following:

- Introduces the concept of environmental justice.
- Summarizes the process used to identify communities in the Middletown Planning Area impacted by environmental justice issues (termed Equity Priority Areas).
- Identifies environmental justice issues in the Middletown Planning Area, which include pollution exposure, access to public facilities and services, food security, availability of healthy living spaces, 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 located in other Middletown 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, the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians, situated in the southwest part of the Middletown Planning Area along SR 29, is identified as an Equity Priority Area 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, Anderson Springs was identified as an Equity Priority Area. Many homes in this community are older, generationally owned structures that were built historically as summer cabins, and many were lost in the 2015 Valley Fire. Access to utilities is also limited and remains a high need in the area. As of 2024, County Special Districts is now delivering some sewer infrastructure to this area as part of a post-fire rebuild effort.

Tribal and income-based Equity Priority Areas are shown in **Figures M-12** (countywide), **M-13** (Middletown Planning Area). **Figure M-14** shows the Census boundaries used to identify and obtain data for the Equity Priority Areas in Middletown.

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

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 Middletown Planning Area

This section describes environmental justice issues identified in the Middletown 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 M-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 M-14** shows the census tract encompassing the populated Middletown Planning Area used to evaluate Environmental Justice-related data from CalEnviroScreen.

Figure M-12 Countywide Equity Priority Areas

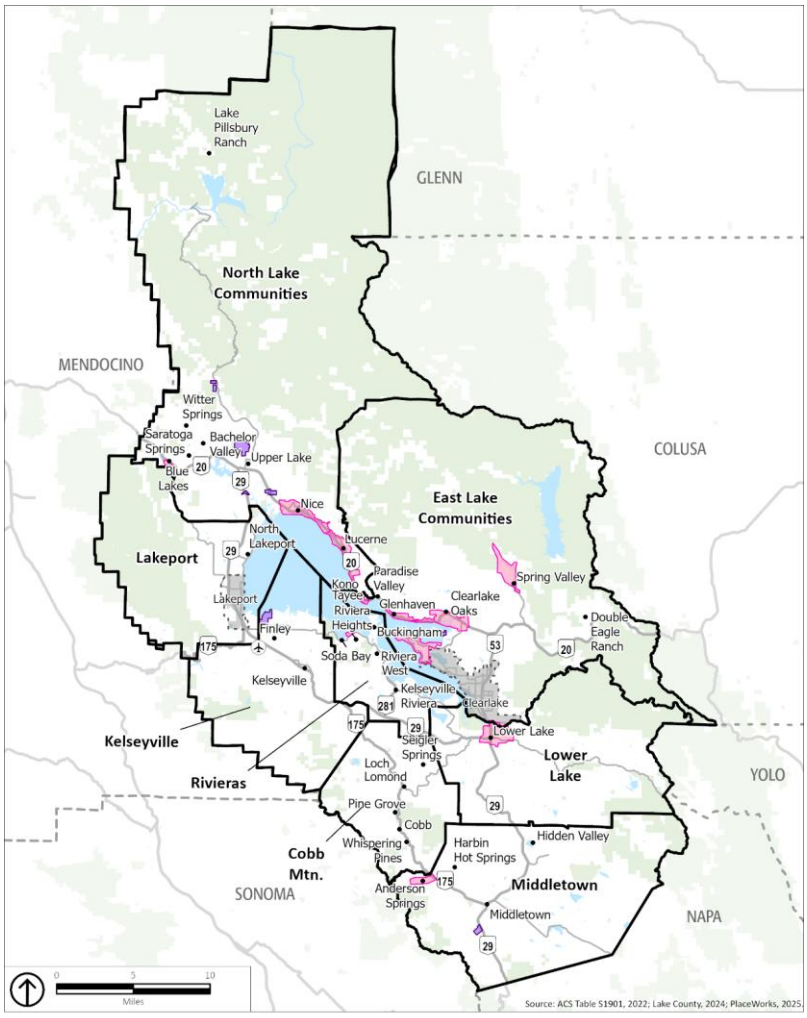
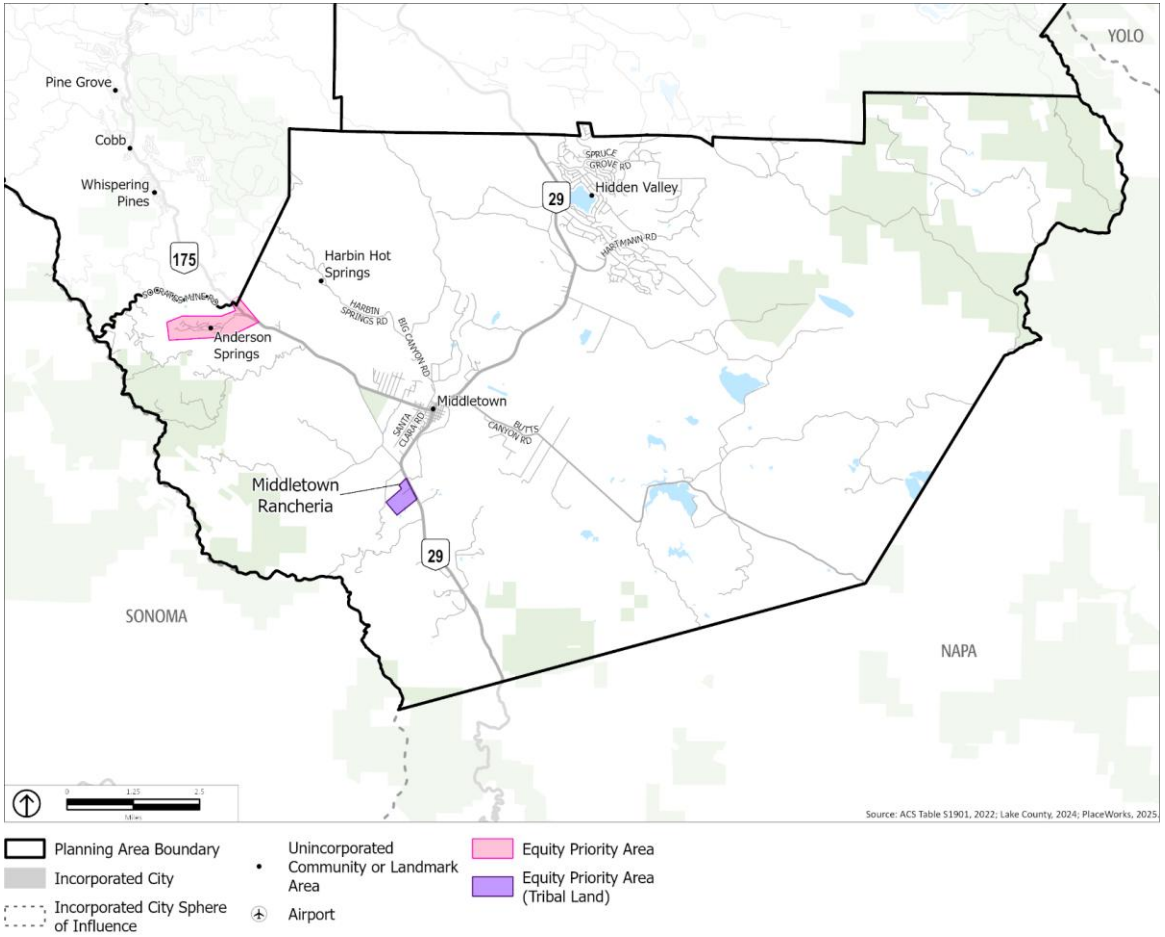
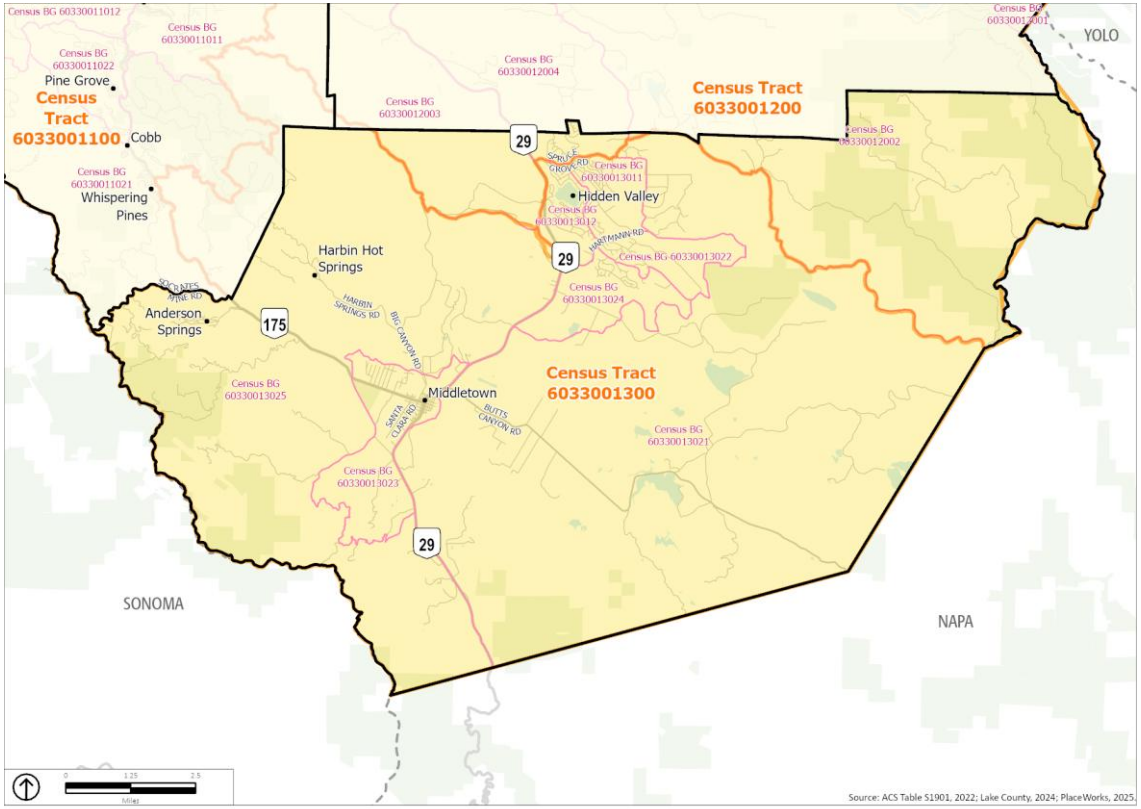


Figure M-13 Middletown Planning Area Equity Priority Areas



This page intentionally left blank.

Figure M-14 Middletown Planning Area Census Tracts and Block Groups



This page intentionally left blank.

Table M-5 CalEnviroScreen Scores for Middletown Planning Area

Indicator	Census Tract 6033001300 Score (higher scores indicate higher impact or burden)
Cumulative CalEnviroScreen Percentile Score (all indicators combined)	27
Air Quality: Ozone Concentration	15
Air Quality: Particulate Matter Concentration	0
Diesel Particulate Matter Emissions	5
Pesticide Use	68
Concentration of Toxic Releases	0
Traffic Density	4
Concentration of Drinking Water Contaminants	36
Children's Lead Risk from Housing	25
Concentration of Cleanup Sites	58
Susceptibility to Groundwater Threats	38
Density of Hazardous Waste Facilities	17
Proximity to Impaired Water Bodies	59
Proximity to Solid Waste Sites	83
Asthma-Induced Emergency Room Visits	57
Low Birth Weight Infants	43
Heart Attack-Induced Emergency Room Visits	44
Population Without a High School Degree	50
Limited English-Speaking Households	33
Poverty	34
Relative Unemployment	12
Housing Burdened Low-Income Households	46

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

As shown in **Table M-5**, the census tract encompassing the populated parts of the Middletown Planning Area scores above the 50th percentile for 5 of the 21 indicators, and at the 83rd percentile for solid waste disposal sites. The score for proximity to solid waste disposal sites is based on the presence of the current PG&E geothermal waste site, the former Middletown Dump site, and the former PG&E geothermal landfill site in the community of Middletown.

Community-Identified Issues

The CalEnviroScreen indicators described 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.

2015 Valley Fire

The catastrophic Valley Fire of 2015 started in the Cobb Mountain Planning Area and spread rapidly into the Middletown Planning Area. The fire burned over 76,000 acres, killed four people, and destroyed nearly 2,000 buildings, including 1,280 homes across the two Planning Areas. Recovery efforts from the fire are ongoing. Many homes and other structures lacked adequate fire insurance to cover the cost to rebuild the original structures and more stringent building requirements (aimed at minimizing future losses) have added to those costs. Many displaced residents have returned to their properties but are living out of recreational vehicles or other temporary structures. As of 2025, only 30 percent of structures destroyed in the Valley Fire have been replaced. The community members who remain and those who have returned lost neighbors and other facets of their community. While they may have been physically unharmed, catastrophic events like the Valley Fire can cause lasting impacts to survivors' mental health. Additionally, the burn scar area (shown in **Figure HS-5** of the Health and Safety Element) may have left toxic debris that can impact environmental health, including water quality. Areas impacted by wildfire also have an increased risk of flooding due to the soil's reduced ability to absorb water.

The Health and Safety Element includes policies addressing both wildfire and flood risks as well as populations that are particularly vulnerable to potential hazards and that may face barriers to evacuation.

Pollution Exposure

Air quality is very good overall in Lake County and in the Middletown Planning Area, as detailed by the related CalEnviroScreen indicators in **Table M-5**. However, the Middletown Planning Area occasionally experiences poor air dispersion, leading to temporarily poorer air quality, due to its location in a valley. Pollutants from both remote industrial sources and local sources can become trapped in the Callayomi Valley.

Local air pollution can come from geothermal activity, vehicle travel along SR 175 and SR 29 (where commercial uses in the Middletown Planning Area are centered), agricultural tillage, and agricultural applications of fertilizers and sprays. Smoke is also 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.

While air pollution from agricultural, geothermal, and/or industrial activity in the Middletown Planning Area is not an issue exclusive to Anderson Springs, the identified Equity Priority Area, Equity Priority Populations 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.

Water pollution from agricultural activity, including pesticide use and 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 Middletown Planning Area. The Water Resources and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Elements discuss these issues in more detail and provide policies and actions to address this concern.

Policies and actions addressing air quality are included in the Health and Safety Element.

Access to Public Facilities and Services

Due to the Middletown 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, and for residents impacted by the Valley Fire who may still be living on properties not adequately connected to services and/or in temporary structures not properly connected to services. Specific issues facing the Middletown 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.

Policies and actions addressing standards for emergency response times and power shutoffs are found in the Health and Safety Element. Policies and actions addressing water, sewer, and solid waste disposal services are found in the Public Facilities and Services Element.

Food Security

Equity Priority Areas and Populations both face barriers 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.

Access to Healthcare

Healthcare access is limited and an increasing need in the Middletown 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

Middletown Planning Area residents need more active recreation opportunities, especially for youth. While community members support expanded recreation opportunities for all Middletown Planning Area 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.

See the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element for information and policy guidance discussing development of multipurpose trails, park system expansion, community participation in park design, and 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 M-EJ-1

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

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-EJ-1.5
Support efforts to establish satellite medical offices and clinics in the Planning A~~a~~rea.

Commented [AH87]: Add to following areas: NL, Lakeport, Kelseyville, LL, Middletown, Riv

Comment EJ row 36

~~M-EJ-1.5~~M-EJ-1.6
Support facilities enhancements to optimize libraries and other public spaces to support telemedicine appointments.

~~M-EJ-1.6~~M-EJ-1.7
Support efforts to attract medical professionals to the Middletown Area.

~~M-EJ-1.7~~M-EJ-1.8
Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to assess and address issues related to capacity and access to emergency, acute, and preventative/primary healthcare services.

~~M-EJ-1.9~~

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.

~~M-EJ-1.8~~M-EJ-1.10

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

~~M-EJ-1.9~~M-EJ-1.11

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

Actions

M-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.

M-EJ-1.b

Plan for and develop well-located, tourist-friendly public restrooms in the downtown commercial areas of Coyote Valley.

M-EJ-1.c

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

M-EJ-1.d

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.

M-EJ-1.e

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.

Commented [AH88]: Global

Added based on email from TLS re comments from HSE on other elements (6/11/26) and additional comment in EJ row 34

Commented [AH89]: add globally

Comment Circulation Row 47

M-EJ-1.f

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.

M-EJ-1.g

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.

M-EJ-1.h

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

M-EJ-1.i

Work with North Coast Opportunities (NCO) to activate the AmericCorps/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 M-EJ-2

Access to living spaces that are safe, clean, and healthy for all Middletown Area residents.

Policies

M-EJ-2.1

Ensure housing in the Middletown Area provides safe and sanitary environments for residents.

M-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.

M-EJ-2.3

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

M-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

M-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.

M-EJ-2.b

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

M-EJ-2.c

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-EJ-2.g

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

Goal M-EJ-3

Convenient and affordable access to healthy food for all Middletown Area residents.

Policies

M-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.

Commented [AH90]: apply edit to all areas
Added in response to comment in row 88 of Ag Resources Element file.

Comment: 4) support for community gardens, Tribal food gardens, and land access for small growers;

Staff direction: Consider adding a policy

M-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.

M-EJ-3.3

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

M-EJ-3.4

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

Actions

M-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.

M-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.

M-EJ-3.c

Inventory and map food deserts in the Middletown Area to inform future policy and decision making to address food access barriers.

M-EJ-3.d

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

Goal M-EJ-4

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

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-EJ-4.5

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

M-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

M-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.

M-EJ-4.b

Evaluate the feasibility of installing an outdoor electronic community bulletin board to support public communication.

Commented [AH91]: EJ 54.
Add policy: Investigate options to locate outdoor, electronic community bulletin board.

~~M-EJ-4.b~~M-EJ-4.c

Support Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs) to develop best practice guidelines to support all County departments with conducting effective outreach in the Middletown 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.

~~M-EJ-4.c~~M-EJ-4.d

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).

~~M-EJ-4.d~~M-EJ-4.e

To inform existing and potential future Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs), 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."

~~M-EJ-4.e~~M-EJ-4.f

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 Middletown Planning Area. Aging infrastructure, especially aging water infrastructure, is of particular concern. This element prioritizes the provision of a high and healthy 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.

Commented [AG92]: PF&S 10

Amanda please add this to all Planning Areas

The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses the publicly provided facilities and services in the Middletown 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

These topics are an integral part of the County's planning strategy and an important consideration when considering growth and development in the Middletown 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.

The County and other agencies provide a variety of public facilities and services.

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 Middletown Planning Area is provided by the South Lake County Fire Protection District, which maintains four fire stations and is headquartered on SR 175 in the community of Middletown. The station serving as the District Headquarters is staffed with two office personnel; one of those positions is funded by CAL FIRE. The other three fire stations in the South Lake County Fire Protection District are in Cobb, Hidden Valley, and Loch Lomond, providing broader coverage for emergency services. The Cobb and Hidden Valley Stations are each staffed with two personnel, including one paramedic. The South Lake County Fire Protection District also partners with Fire Sirens, an auxiliary organization that supports programs for the District's operations. Additionally, there is a volunteer firefighter association with 35 volunteers that is housed under the South Lake County Fire Protection District, and which oversees its training and deployment. Mutual-aid agreements are also in place between the South Lake County Fire Protection District, CAL FIRE, and the surrounding fire districts.

An infrastructure initiative by the Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District called Fire main-Linked Auxiliary Supply/Hydraulic Energy Storage, or FLASHES, increases the Planning Area's resilience to wildfires while providing low-impact hydropower. The FLASHES project uses closed-loop pumped storage hydropower (PSH) technology, which is a method of producing reliable hydroelectricity that is stored like a battery, and with a significantly lower ecological impact and lower rates of water evaporation compared to traditional hydroelectric dams. Closed-loop PSH uses two water tanks at different elevations that generate power as water moves from the higher tank to the lower tank while passing through an energy-generating turbine. PSH acts similarly to a giant battery because it can store power and then release it when needed. The FLASHES project also connects the PSH system to local fire mains, providing water for wildfire emergencies and reliable hydroelectricity to protect the community in the event of public safety power shutoffs.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement, patrol, and coroner services to the Middletown Planning Area. Their closest active substation is in Lakeport, approximately 29 miles away from the downtown Middletown community. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) also serves the Middletown 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.

See also the Health and Safety Element for more details and policy guidance related to wildfire hazards and emergency response.

Water and Wastewater Service

There are seven public water systems in the Middletown Planning Area that are regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. These systems fall within one of three 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 homes, and similar residential areas.

- **Non-transient, non-community (NTNC) water systems** regularly serve 25 or more of the same people for six or more months of the year, such as schools or office buildings.
- **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 Middletown Planning Area are:

- **Anderson Springs Community Services District**, a community water system that provides potable water to the Anderson Springs community.
- **Callayomi County Waterworks District #1**, a community water system that provides potable water to the community of Middletown and the Middletown Rancheria.
- **Harbin Hot Springs**, an NTNC water system providing spring-fed hot water and potable water to a non-profit retreat center.
- **Hidden Valley Food Mart and Shell Gasoline Station**, a TNC system that provides potable water to customers using this facility.
- **Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District**, a community water system that serves the Hidden Valley Lake subdivision and various commercial and institutional facilities in Coyote Valley and provides irrigation water to the Hidden Valley golf course and parks.
- **Lazy S Mobile Ranch**, a community water system that provides potable water to a mobile home community in the southernmost portion of the Middletown Planning Area.
- **Langtry Farms**, a TNC water system providing water for winery production, a wine tasting facility, and permanent residents.

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 rural portions of the Middletown Planning Area are served by private domestic wells and irrigation wells for agricultural uses. Water quality in private domestic wells is not regulated by any agency. In general, it is of relatively good quality but may contain high total dissolved solids (e.g. “hard water”), which are generally not harmful to human health, or nitrates due to fertilizers from agricultural activities or on-site septic systems, which are considered safe at low levels, but can be harmful in high amounts. In addition to serving residents and visitors, water is a vital need for local agriculture, which sources water from a combination of surface water and groundwater from private irrigation wells. Additional information on water sources is included in the Water Resources Element.

Wastewater service consists of transmission of wastewater to a treatment facility, treatment, and then disposal of the wastewater and residual waste solids. There are two large wastewater collection and treatment systems in the Middletown Planning Area:

- The Lake County Sanitation District (LACOSAN) provides sewer collection to the community of Middletown and the Harbin Springs Resort. The collected wastewater is directed to the Middletown Wastewater Treatment Plant and treated liquid waste, termed "effluent," is discharged to the Southeast Geyser Effluent Pipeline, where it is injected into the Geysers steam field for power production. Due to chronic wastewater pollution problems in the Anderson Springs area, LACOSAN connected Anderson Springs to the LACOSAN system between 2019 and 2021.
- The Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District (CSD) provides wastewater collection and treatment services to the Hidden Valley Lake and Coyote Valley communities. Collected wastewater is treated at the Hidden Valley Lake CSD Regional Water Reclamation Facility, then the treated effluent is discharged to a storage pond where it is used for golf course irrigation.

The remainder of the Middletown Planning Area relies on on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), 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 OWTS and the type of system needed.

Stormwater Management

The Middletown 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.

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

- **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.

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

Solid Waste Disposal

Most of the Middletown Planning Area is serviced by Lake County Waste Solutions, which provides curbside pickup of solid waste, yard waste, and single-stream recyclables. Residents who do not pay for curbside pickup often use the Eastlake Sanitary Landfill or the Lakeport Transfer Station in the Middletown Planning Area, which accepts municipal solid waste, recyclables, and green waste for a fee. In addition to the transfer station, Middletown's historic landfill site, now closed, is monitored regularly by Lake County EH for environmental safety and compliance. Illegal dumping remains a concern in rural and agricultural areas around Middletown, including hotspots such as Morrison Creek. 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 Middletown 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 Middletown 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 in the Middletown Planning Area through providers like Spectrum and AT&T. Three cell tower facilities are in the Planning Area itself, one southeast of the intersection of Butts Canyon Road and SR 29, one northeast of Spruce Grove Road and SR 29, and a third near the intersection of SR 175 and Berry Street in the community of Middletown. However, they provide limited cell phone coverage to the area. Internet providers serving the Middletown Planning Area include AT&T, Mediacom, and satellite-based providers like HughesNet, Starlink, and Viasat. However, limited high-speed internet service (with download/upload speeds at or above 25/3 megabytes-per-second) is available outside of Hidden Valley Lake and the

Middletown community. High speed internet coverage is being expanded in the Planning Area, with some high speed service now in the Anderson Springs community as of 2025 according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) National Broadband Map. Many Middletown Planning Area residents are concerned about limited cell phone and high-speed internet service.

Educational Facilities and Services

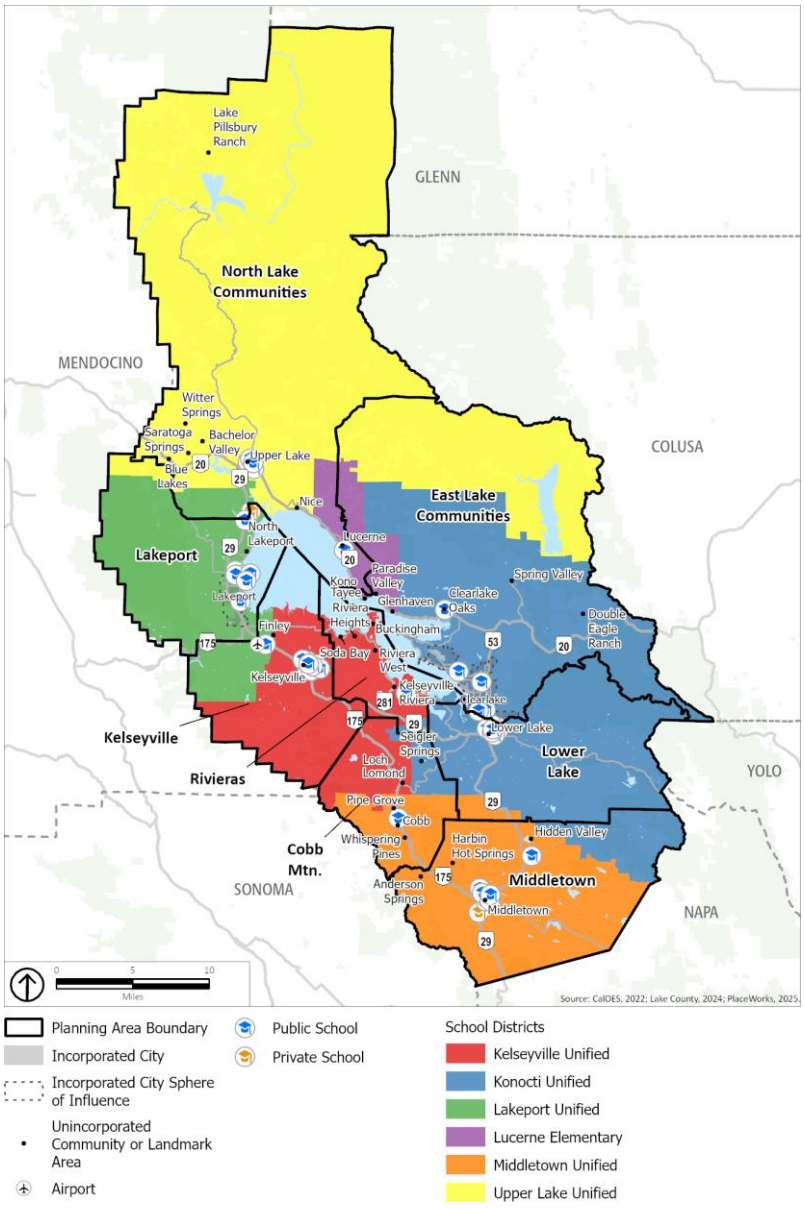
The Middletown Planning Area is served by two school districts: the Middletown Unified School District and the Konocti School District. While most of the Planning Area is within Middletown Unified School District, the minimally populated eastern portion is served by the Konocti School District (although the schools themselves in that district are located in the Lower Lake Planning Area). The Middletown Unified School District has six school sites: Cobb Elementary, Minnie Cannon Elementary, Coyote Valley Elementary, Middletown Middle, Middletown High, and Loconomi Valley High. Of these, all but the Cobb Elementary School are within the boundaries of the Planning Area. There are no Konocti School District schools in the Middletown Planning Area. School locations are depicted in **Figures M-15** (countywide) and **M-16** (Middletown Planning Area).

There are currently no institutions of higher education in the Middletown Planning Area.

The Middletown Library, Senior Center, and Middletown Square Park were constructed in 2013 in the same location as the prior library on Washington Street in the downtown Middletown community. The Middletown Library is 5,500 square feet in size and features wi-fi, eight internet-connected computers, a printer, and a copy machine that are all free and available for public use. The library provides access to approximately 20,000 items, including books, DVDs, and audio books, and allows residents to access digital resources. Library programming includes a variety of social and support services, such as kid's craft activities and tech support for personal devices. The library is also home to the Middletown Seed Lending Library, which provides free seeds to gardeners.

The Senior Center features food and activity programs for older adults as well as several community meeting rooms.

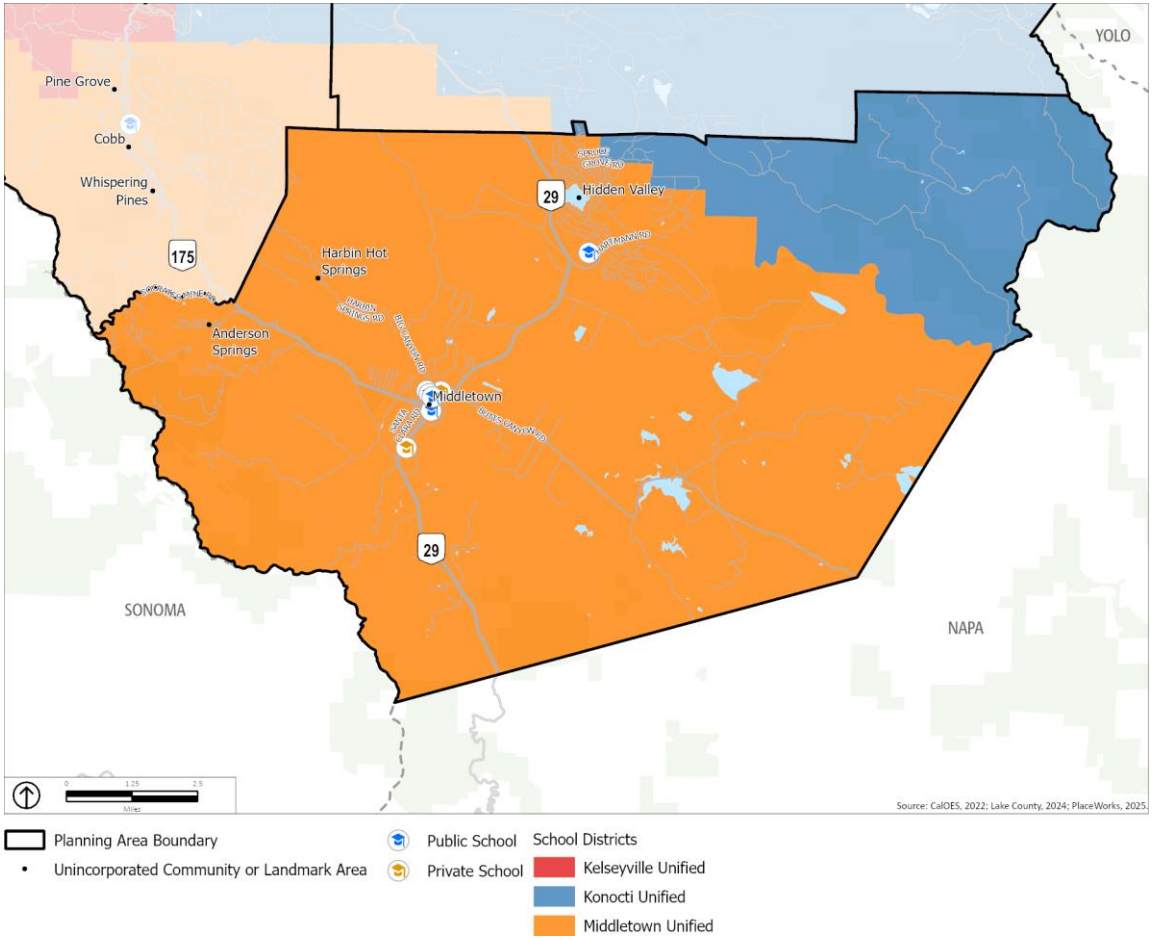
Figure M-15 Countywide Schools



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 M-16 Middletown Planning Area Schools



This page intentionally left blank.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-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 Middletown Area.

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-1.3

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

Commented [AH93]: add globally

Comment Circulation Row 47

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-1.7

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-1.10

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

M-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.

M-PF-1.12

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

Actions

M-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.

M-PF-1.b

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

M-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.

M-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 M-PF-2

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

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-2.5

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

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-2.9

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

M-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 M-PF-3

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

Policies

M-PF-3.1 *

Work with the Sheriff's Office, South Lake County 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.

M-PF-3.2

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

M-PF-3.3

Use the Middletown Sheriff's substation for law enforcement or expanded services, when feasible.

M-PF-3.4

Support efforts to expand fire protection service to continue to meet the needs of the Middletown Area.

M-PF-3.5

Continue to promote cooperative fire protection agreements with CAL FIRE to provide adequate fire protection throughout the Middletown Area.

M-PF-3.6

Consult with the South Lake County 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.

M-PF-3.7

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

M-PF-3.8

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.

Commented [AH94]: add globally

Comment ED Row 42.
Staff direx: Add policy: Support and encourage stewardship-economy/resilience-jobs program that supports local and Tribal employment in forest health, prescribed fire support, watershed restoration, trail stewardship, ecological monitoring, native plant work, and cultural interpretation.

defensible space added from PF row 28

~~M-PF-3.8~~M-PF-3.9 *

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.

~~M-PF-3.9~~M-PF-3.10

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

Commented [MT95]: Apply this globally, please.

Goal M-PF-4

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

Policies

M-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.

M-PF-4.2

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

Commented [AH96]: PF 14

~~M-PF-4.2~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.3~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.4~~M-PF-4.5

Prioritize water conservation measures over the development of new water sources like dams and reservoirs.

~~M-PF-4.5~~M-PF-4.6

Discourage the formation of new water distribution systems unless long-term fiscal and technical feasibility can be demonstrated prior to approval.

~~M-PF-4.6~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.7~~M-PF-4.8

Partner with water service providers to ensure that low-income households and other Equity Priority Populations maintain continuity of service and are offered financial relief if prices rise due to drought.

~~M-PF-4.8~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.9~~M-PF-4.10

Promote and support programs to educate homeowners on the care and maintenance of septic systems.

~~M-PF-4.10~~M-PF-4.11

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

M-PF-4.a

Pursue all available State and federal funding sources to upgrade publicly managed community water systems.

M-PF-4.b

Work with water service providers to upgrade substandard water systems to ensure adequate fire flows and backup power sources.

M-PF-4.c

Update the County Code of Ordinances to comply with water quality regulations.

Commented [AH97]: Add globally

WR row 17

~~M-PF-4.c~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.d~~M-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.

M-PF-4.f

Explore the development of regulations to allow composting toilets where appropriate and consistent with public health and environmental standards.

~~M-PF-4.e~~M-PF-4.g

Establish a groundwater recharge basin on County-owned land along SR 175, and acquire land and establish a groundwater recharge basin on Grange Road.

~~M-PF-4.f~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.g~~M-PF-4.i

Conduct water pollution investigations in areas suspected of having a significant number of failing on-site sewage disposal systems.

~~M-PF-4.h~~M-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.

~~M-PF-4.i~~M-PF-4.k *

Require renovations requiring a building permit to install low-flow water fixtures to reduce the amount of water usage.

~~M-PF-4.j~~M-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.

Commented [AH98]: PF 79

Commented [AH99]: Apply globally

PF row 51

Commented [TS100]: Apply globally

PF row 51

Goal M-PF-5

Stormwater facilities that protect people, property, and the environment.

Policies

M-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 issue of flooding is addressed in the Health and Safety Element.

M-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.

M-PF-5.3

Require development projects to use green infrastructure and low-impact development designs to prevent off-site drainage impacts.

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-5.6

Integrate green infrastructure, such as permeable paving surfaces, bioswales, and rain gardens, into County infrastructure projects, including road improvements and parks.

M-PF-5.7

Encourage designs for stormwater detention basins that provide temporary or permanent wildlife habitat and/or recreational opportunities, where appropriate.

M-PF-5.8

Reduce the flow of stormwater drainage into sewer cleanouts and other similar mechanisms that could 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.

M-PF-5.9

Encourage green infrastructure, ~~Traditional~~ Tribal Ecological Knowledge practices, wildlife habitat integration, and protection of culturally sensitive areas.

Actions

M-PF-5.a

Identify damaged and/or deficient storm drainage facilities and acquire funding to restore or upgrade the facilities.

M-PF-5.b

Work with appropriate agencies to develop stormwater retention/detention and recharge facilities to enhance flood protection and improve groundwater recharge.

M-PF-5.c

Work with appropriate agencies to develop stormwater facility maintenance programs establishing timelines for regularly cleaning and maintaining storm drain systems.

Goal M-PF-6

Accessible, affordable, safe, and efficient disposal or recycling of solid waste.

Policies

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-6.6

Use recycled materials and products when available and economically feasible.

M-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.

M-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

M-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.

M-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.

M-PF-6.c

Continue to support community chipping and portable chipping programs.

M-PF-6.d

Install signage and cameras regarding the prohibition of dumping at locations with recurring issues and increase education, monitoring, and rapid cleanup to discourage future illegal dumping, prioritizing locations of chronic dumping.

M-PF-6.e

Partner with community organizations to host community clean-up days, as needed, prioritizing events in downtown areas and Equity Priority Areas.

M-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.

M-PF-6.g

Seek additional funding for the ongoing operation of the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement (AVA) program.

Goal M-PF-7

Internet, cellular, and landline communications services that are accessible and reliable throughout the Middletown Area.

Policies

M-PF-7.1

Encourage and support efforts to expand and enhance internet and broadband service throughout the Middletown Area and encourage co-location of infrastructure and marketplace competition from multiple service providers, while minimizing visual and cultural impacts.

M-PF-7.2

Encourage and support efforts to improve cellular phone coverage and reliability, especially during extreme weather and hazard events.

Commented [AH101]: Apply to all areas.

Added in response to comment in Row 103 of Ag resources and staff direction: Let's add a Policy: Encourage and support educational programs to teach youth about composting.

Commented [AH102]: PF 61

Commented [AH103]: PF 61

M-PF-7.3
Require new or updated cellular towers to be designed to minimize their visual impact.

Actions

M-PF-7.a
Work with the California State Association of Counties and others to lobby the State to require continued access to landline telephones.

M-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 M-PF-8

High-quality schools and educational facilities that serve the needs of local students.

Policies

M-PF-8.1
Collaborate with the Middletown Unified School District to plan for future growth.

M-PF-8.2
Work with the Middletown Unified 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.

M-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.

M-PF-8.4
Encourage and support efforts to enhance and expand access to higher education, including by attracting a college or university to the Middletown Area, and by working with Woodland Community College Lake County Campus 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.

M-PF-8.5
Encourage and support efforts to incorporate tribal cultural education and awareness in school curriculums.

Action

M-PF-8.a

Coordinate residential development proposal reviews with the Middletown Unified 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.

The Middletown Area is a destination for wine-related tourism.

This element works to promote economic development in the Middletown 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 Economy

Mercury mining, which began in the 1870s, was the driving economic force behind the early development of the Planning Area. Though smaller, the carp fishing industry grew in the 1880s, with ponds near present-day Anderson Springs. The mining industry continued until after World War II when the demand for mercury started to fall. Subsequently, the Middletown Area experienced a resurgence of interest in resorts and spas. Their popularity waned somewhat in the 1960s, likely due to the age of the resorts and expansion of the highway system and subsequent proliferation of other resort destinations in the state. However, hot spring spa resorts and outdoor camping and recreation opportunities still proliferate the Planning Area today, shaping the area as a destination for tranquil, eco-friendly getaways integrated with nature.

Agriculture, particularly viniculture, has also played a role in the Middletown Planning Area's past. British stage actress Lillie Langtry owned and operated a vineyard near the Planning Area. Today the land owned by Langtry is recognized as Guenoc Valley and a large winery is located at the site. Additional agricultural endeavors in the Middletown Planning Area have included cattle ranching, walnut orchards, and a limited number of pear orchards.

The Planning Area's most significant economic stimulus began in the 1970s, when PG&E began to further develop The Geysers geothermal steam fields in the adjacent Cobb Mountain area, leading to a significant in-migration of geothermal employees. The Geysers geothermal power plant is now operated by Calpine, who in 2003 coordinated with the governments of Napa and Sonoma Counties to construct two pipelines

delivering treated wastewater to The Geysers for the purposes of continuously maintaining pressure needed to create steam. The pipelines increased the Geysers' capacity to produce environmentally friendly power, although community members have expressed concern about localized ecological impacts. The geothermal industry remains the top employment industry among residents in the Planning Area and a significant driver of economic activity countywide.

Today, Middletown's character and economy are largely formed around outdoor recreation and eco-tourism, with campgrounds, hot spring resorts, wineries, and farm stays. The area features two golf courses. One of these, The Brambles, also includes a private airstrip for members and employs a land stewardship model to maintain the green with a working herd of sheep. The facility also acts as a fire break for the community of Middletown and has plans to develop amenities like restaurants and accommodations in the future.

The community of Middletown is a local and regional commercial hub with restaurants, galleries, and other retail along Main Street. Throughout the Planning Area, there are a variety of recreation and tourism opportunities that promote the region's agricultural products and unique geothermal resources, which not only provide energy but also feed the area's natural hot springs and other attractions.

Popular attractions and events specific to the Middletown Planning Area include the Hidden Valley Lake Golf Course and Country Club, Crazy Creek Air Adventures Gliderport, Trailside Park & Eco-Arts, Harbin Hot Springs, wine tasting rooms at Langtry Farms and Beaver Creek Vineyards, Twin Pines Casino and Hotel, and Middletown Days, an equestrian event. These attractions help shape the Middletown Planning Area's identity as a gateway to Lake County with a strong agricultural, equestrian, and viticultural identity and where residents and visitors can enjoy relaxing geothermal hot springs. 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 Middletown 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.

There are several other organizations dedicated to supporting the local economy. The Middletown Planning Area Merchants Association, which works to "unite businesses in Cobb, Middletown, and Hidden Valley," is active in the Planning Area, providing networking opportunities; promoting, connecting, and strengthening member businesses; and representing local businesses and community interests.

Employment

According to the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey administered by the U.S. Census, there were over 3,000 employed residents in the Middletown Planning Area as of 2022, the latest year for which LEHD data is available. As detailed in the Introduction, employers in the Middletown Planning Area span several industries, including utilities, retail, government, and entertainment. 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 7.4 percent as of December 2024.

Based on this same 2022 LEHD survey, roughly 18 percent of residents in the Middletown Planning Area work in the Planning Area, an additional 12 percent work elsewhere in Lake County, and the remaining 70 percent work outside the county, primarily in Santa Rosa in Sonoma County (9 percent), or in Calistoga (5 percent) and St. Helena (3 percent) in Napa County. The remaining 53 percent commute to other cities in Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Marin, or Solano Counties and as far as San Francisco (1.5 percent).

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-ED-1

A strong, diverse, and resilient economy that supports local employment opportunities.

Policies

M-ED-1.1

Continue to develop a diversified economic base for the Middletown Area by promoting agriculture, equestrian opportunities, recreation services, and commerce and by expanding efforts to encourage small industrial and non-industrial corporate uses and geothermal resource development.

M-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.

M-ED-1.3

Establish incentives that encourage local ownership, investment, and development by Lake County residents.

M-ED-1.4

Encourage and support local education and job opportunities for careers in health care and law enforcement.

~~M-ED-1.2~~M-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.

~~M-ED-1.3~~M-ED-1.6

Purchase products and services for County operations from locally owned businesses ~~whenever~~ as much as possible.

M-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.

Commented [AH104]: ED 21

Commented [AH105]: Add globally

Comment from ED Row 12. Revised staff language for clarity.
staff direx: Add Policy: Encourage and support local procurement, business resilience to power shutoffs, adaptive reuse of existing property improvements, and stewardship-based employment.

Final item is somewhat redundant with next new item. Tanya consider if you would like to delete here, though I think this is somewhat more all -encompassing.

Commented [AH106]: Add globally

ED Row 47

Commented [AH107]: Added in response to comment from Countywide/Misc/Row 24.
Staff direx: Should we conisder adding a Policy around "encouraging higher educations instituions to consider locating campuses or satelites in Lake County?' **Where we discuss workforce development, we could specify nursing and law enforcement?**

MGT: These are great ideas. Perhaps add them in Economic Development?

broader higher learning addressed in existing policy in PFS Element

Commented [AH108]: Add globally

Countywide/Misc/Row 24.

Commented [AH109]: ED 22

Commented [AH110]: Add globally

Comment from ED row 36.
Staff direx: Please add a policy: Define and develop a creative economy sector, including support for artist studios, galleries, and live/work spaces.

~~M-ED-1.4~~M-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.

~~M-ED-1.5~~M-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.

~~M-ED-1.6~~M-ED-1.10

Support workforce-development partnerships benefiting tribal citizens and incorporating ~~traditional~~ Tribal ~~e~~Ecological K~~k~~nowledge, protecting Tribal Cultural Resources, and/or promoting sustainable land stewardship, where appropriate.

M-ED-1.11

Support broadband-enabled economic development activities, including remote work, telework hubs, coworking space, digital entrepreneurship, and online business support.

Commented [AH111]: Add globally

Comment ED Row 44

~~M-ED-1.7~~

~~Encourage and support efforts to develop a South County airport business park, as a complement to a new potential airport, which could potentially include a fly-in residential subdivision. Support could include facilitation of appropriate changes to zoning and land use designations.~~

~~Refer to the Circulation Element for background information on existing airport facilities in the county.~~

Commented [AH112]: ED 24

Actions

M-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.

M-ED-1.b

Prepare and implement an economic development strategy for the Middletown Area that emphasizes advantages associated with the geothermal, agriculture, equestrian, and tourism industries, along with the area's natural setting. The strategy should address recruitment of new businesses that promote a balance between local and visitor-serving uses, use the area's existing labor pool, create living-wage jobs and career advancement opportunities, support a circular economy in which local dollars are spent locally and reinvested in the community, and minimize environmental degradation.

M-ED-1.c

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.

M-ED-1.d

Establish incentives that encourage local ownership, investment, and development by Lake County residents.

~~M-ED-1.d~~M-ED-1.e

Identify or develop programs to expand economic opportunities to Equity Priority Populations, including through outreach efforts and incentives for local small business owners, including tribal citizens and their enterprises. ~~and tribal citizens and enterprises~~.

~~M-ED-1.e~~M-ED-1.f

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.

~~M-ED-1.f~~M-ED-1.g

Explore options to offer development impact fee discounts or exemptions or other incentives when applicants can demonstrate economic benefits for the community.

~~M-ED-1.g~~M-ED-1.h

Investigate the benefits of establishing a business license program.

~~M-ED-1.h~~M-ED-1.i

Expand County support for business growth and development, including by partnering with outside agencies and associations working in economic development.

~~M-ED-1.i~~M-ED-1.j

Continue to solicit input from and involve the Middletown Advisory Town Hall and Middletown Merchants Association in local economic development efforts and reviews of new development projects.

~~M-ED-1.j~~M-ED-1.k

Identify and eliminate barriers to supporting home-based business, including home kitchens, as part of the local, circular economy.

~~M-ED-1.k~~M-ED-1.l

Develop strategies to encourage shopping at locally owned businesses whenever possible.

M-ED-1.m

Investigate the benefits of establishing a cannabis retail license for oversight.

~~M-ED-1.l~~

~~Consider the feasibility of constructing a new public airport in the Middletown Area, such as in the Butts Canyon area, to provide economic development opportunities and improve emergency access in the southern portion of the county.~~

Commented [AH113]: Add globally

ED Row 47

Commented [AH114]: ED 25

Commented [MT115R114]: I remember the purpose of this comment, but think it should just be reworded.

Commented [AH116]: EJ 27

Commented [AH117]: Add globally

Comment ED Row 49

Commented [AH118]: ED 28

Goal M-ED-2

A strong and resilient tourism sector that contributes to the local economy while balancing community and visitor needs and priorities.

Policies

M-ED-2.1

Reestablish the Middletown Area as a premier vacation destination by growing local attractions, including resorts, hotels, entertainment venues, wineries, and visitor activities.

M-ED-2.2

Encourage and support a small-business and adaptive-reuse assistance program for older resorts, retreat centers, and underused commercial properties.

~~M-ED-2.2~~M-ED-2.3

Encourage and support development of wineries 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.

~~M-ED-2.3~~M-ED-2.4

Encourage restoration, rather than replacement, of unique and historic resorts and related facilities, when practical.

~~M-ED-2.4~~M-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.

~~M-ED-2.5~~M-ED-2.6

Continue to improve visitor services in the Middletown Area.

~~M-ED-2.6~~M-ED-2.7

Encourage tourism initiatives that interpret, respect, and help protect tribal and historic cultural heritage.

~~M-ED-2.7~~M-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.

Commented [AH119]: Add globally.

Comment ED Row 41
Encourage and support a small-business and adaptive-reuse assistance program for older resorts, retreat centers, and underused commercial properties.

Commented [AH120]: ED 29

Actions

M-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 agritourism, ecotourism, outdoor recreation, 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.

~~**M-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.~~

Commented [AH121]: ED 30

~~M-ED-2.c~~M-ED-2.b

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.

~~M-ED-2.d~~M-ED-2.c

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.

Commented [AH122]: Apply to all areas.

Comment ED Row 16

~~M-ED-2.e~~M-ED-2.d

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.

~~M-ED-2.f~~M-ED-2.e

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.

~~M-ED-2.g~~M-ED-2.f

Investigate the feasibility of developing a visitor center in the Middletown Planning Area, including through a potential joint-use agreement with Calpine's visitor center.

Special Study Areas and Design Guidelines

There are two Special Study Areas in the Middletown Planning Area—the Middletown Community Downtown and Coyote Valley Town Center/SR 29 Corridor. 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, and design guidelines for each of these special study areas as well as design guidelines for the entire Middletown Planning Area.

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.

Middletown Area Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines

Note: These design guidelines were originally prepared in 2010 and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action M-LU-3.e.

The Middletown Area has developed a unique character and ambiance over more than a century of existence. The community's residential and commercial structures, combined with the natural setting of topography and landscape, have defined an overall character which is cherished by its residents and recognized by its visitors. The established character reflects a "western-style" design theme that has been continued intermittently through the years. The design principles defined below are applicable to all commercial and industrial development in the Planning Area and are augmented by the more detailed design guidelines for the Middletown Community Downtown and Coyote Valley Special Study Areas that follow.

The design principles listed below should be consulted for general direction in planning new construction or renovations in all commercial and industrial zones and other districts requiring design review.

Applicability

These design principles are applicable to all commercial and industrial development in the Middletown Planning Area.

Middletown Area Design Principles

- Projects should possess a "village" scale and character which is sensitive to the scale and livability of any adjacent residential areas.
- Commercial buildings should be designed with a small scale massing and complexity that is appropriate to the context of the transportation system of the area. The Local and Community Commercial zones should be oriented for low speed automobile traffic and a pedestrian nature.
- Street front functionality and visual continuity should be maintained, and all projects should be sympathetic in form, scale, and height to adjacent structures. Uniform front setbacks should be maintained as much as possible to create the ideal pedestrian corridor.
- Landscaping should be used to soften the appearance of buildings and to integrate new construction into the surrounding neighborhood. Where space is inadequate for in-ground planting, use container or sidewalk plantings.
- The physical and visual impact of parking lots should be minimized.
- Structures over one story in height should be designed to minimize their visual bulk and to relate to the visual scale of pedestrians.
- Multi-tenant developments should be designed to emphasize an overall sense of project and place, rather than the prominence of individual tenants.

Middletown Community Downtown Special Study Area and Design Guidelines

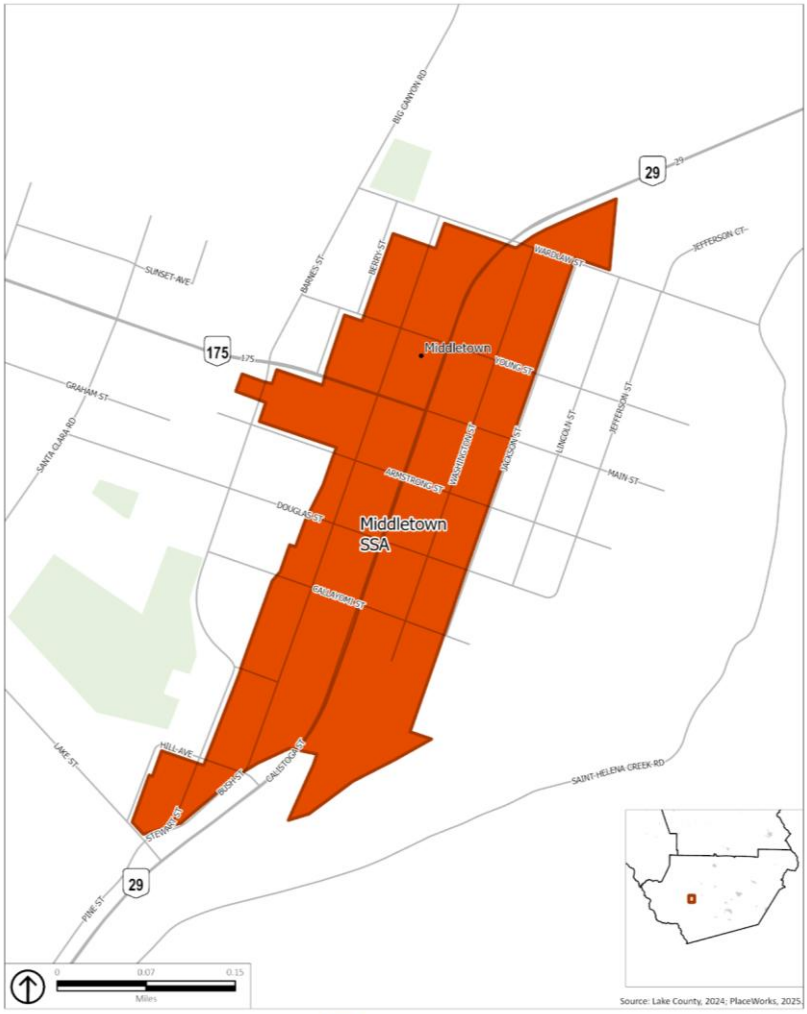
The community of Middletown was established in 1871 with the opening of a post office. A majority of business enterprises moved from the nearby village of Guenoc after the business owners correctly assumed that Middletown would be a more prosperous location. The Middletown community serves as a commerce and service center for the surrounding communities of Anderson Springs and Hidden Valley, along with rural areas to the south and east of the Middletown community. Similar to other communities in the Lake County area, the Middletown community features a State Highway (SR 29) running through its downtown core; in addition, SR 175 terminates at the intersection of SR 29 in the downtown core. These two major arterial roadways serve as a main conduit for residential commuter paths for Lake County residents along with being major ingress/egress routes for travelers to and through Lake County.

The community of Middletown serves as a destination for residents and visitors alike. Downtown Middletown, shown in **Figure M-17**, is well positioned to play an increasingly important role as a tourism and hospitality hub for the south county and should expand its retail offerings to serve both residents and visitors. Existing businesses include a mix of establishments such as retail shops, a bar, restaurants, a small supermarket, small coffee shops, and limited office uses. The Library, Senior Center, and Middletown Square Park act as an anchor for the south end of downtown Middletown and encourage visitors to stop and enjoy Middletown. The underutilized sites in the downtown core area offer several good opportunities to intensify development without changing the area's overall character or scale. New office businesses can take advantage of the small-scale downtown by locating in existing mixed-use buildings.

Commented [AH123]: County staff:
There is a comment in row 12 in the SSA tab of the Planning Area comment matrix/spreadsheet that says 'pull in the description of the Middletown downtown Area from Current Plan". This existing content is largely pulled verbatim from the current SSA. Other content in the existing SSA that discusses the downtown was not as clearly still relevant. If you would like to make additions, please make edits here directly.

Commented [MT124R123]: No need for additional edits.

Figure M-17 Middletown Community Downtown Special Study Area



There are also opportunities to expand the community's offerings of professional services, medical offices, and non-visitor-oriented retail at the edge of the downtown, and as second-story uses in multistory buildings at the intersection of Highways 29 and 175. Downtown is also well suited for additional mixed-use and residential development, which would be needed to support new commercial growth.

While the downtown is intended to be the focus of commercial activity in Middletown, there are some opportunities for new or expanded commercial development elsewhere, including to the west of downtown and fronting along Highway 175 where there are limited commercial and office developments. This area could possibly be expanded or updated architecturally to complement the downtown core.

Architecture of the downtown area is an eclectic mix of old and new. North of the SR 29 and 175 intersection, new construction is evident with few features tying new buildings together with the historical architecture of downtown. South of the intersection of SR 29 and SR 175, historic, multistory brick buildings on the east and west sides of SR 29 and SR 175 are mixed with single-story false façade buildings and newer construction. As the community has developed, it has retained its western look and should continue to do so.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-SSA-1

Growth in economic activity while building on the community's strengths and reinforcing its small-town character.

Policies

M-SSA-1.1

Reinforce downtown Middletown as the commercial and cultural center of southern Lake County for both tourists and residents, including by enhancing public areas and amenities in downtown.

M-SSA-1.2

Promote a balance between local and visitor-serving economic development.

M-SSA-1.3

Encourage small-scale neighborhood businesses serving commercial developments.

Actions

M-SSA-1.a

Prepare an economic development strategy to recruit new businesses and mixed-use development to downtown Middletown that promote a balance between local and visitor-serving commercial uses while also boosting the housing supply to support commercial growth. This could be a stand-alone document or a section in the Middletown Planning Area economic development strategy described in **Action M-ED-1.a**, and should take the following strategies and opportunities into consideration:

- Focus on downtown Middletown's strengths, including its small-town character and lifestyle, compact pedestrian scale, and affordable housing stock.
- Recognize assets while embracing opportunities for diversification.
- Transition the highly visible, street-level commercial spaces along SR 29/Calistoga Street to small retailers to create a solid identity for Middletown's downtown while also maximizing the amount of space dedicated to commercial activities around the downtown core.
- Further densify and diversify businesses and mixed-use development in the downtown to bring more foot traffic onto SR 29/Calistoga Street and increase its desirability as a place to congregate, socialize, and spend money.

M-SSA-1.b

Develop and distribute marketing materials that promote Middletown as a vibrant community with many business opportunities, highlighting the economic opportunities offered by the area.

M-SSA-1.c

Work with local developers to encourage the establishment of new businesses with local interests.

Goal M-SSA-2

Infill development in downtown Middletown that supports a mix of uses and enhances the pedestrian-oriented scale of the community.

Policies

M-SSA-2.1

Encourage appropriate infill development throughout downtown Middletown.

M-SSA-2.2

Consider permit streamlining, fee waivers, and other means to facilitate infill development within the downtown Middletown core area.

Action

M-SSA-2.a

Explore the possibility of establishing regulations specifically for the downtown Middletown core that allow for flexibility in the permitting process.

Goal M-SSA-3

A vibrant, healthy, pedestrian-oriented downtown commercial district that functions as the heart of the community.

Policies

M-SSA-3.1

Work to locate new entertainment and retail facilities in the downtown area through public/private partnerships and other development tools.

M-SSA-3.2

Review commercial and industrial development to ensure compatibility with the Middletown Community Downtown Design Guidelines, consistent with Article 54, Design Review Permit, of the Zoning Ordinance.

M-SSA-3.3

Support efforts to install a roundabout on Wardlaw Street to address congestion associated with Middletown High School.

Actions

M-SSA-3.a

Develop and implement programs, such as façade improvement programs, that will maintain and enhance downtown Middletown's historic character and commercial vitality and retain the small-town character and pedestrian scale of the downtown area.

M-SSA-3.b

Identify existing buildings or sites that would be conducive to retail or entertainment business enterprises and market the identified parcels or buildings as such.

M-SSA-3.c

Work with the community to identify funding and/or volunteer options to implement beautification projects and other enhancements to the downtown core, including providing amenities, such as lighting, shade trees, and benches, to make the area more inviting and support its role as the focal point of the community.

Goal M-SSA-4

Cohesive and uniform signage in the downtown Middletown core.

Policies

M-SSA-4.1

Clearly define the points of entry to Middletown through use of distinctive signs that are lighted and placed in a landscaped area, along with street lighting and street trees.

Action

M-SSA-4.a

Install lighted signage that prominently identifies the north and south boundaries of the community when traveling along SR 29.

Design Guidelines

Note: These design guidelines were originally prepared in 2010 and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action M-LU-3.e.

The growth of commercial services in the downtown center of Middletown is expected and encouraged to continue over time. The community has developed a unique character and ambiance over more than a century of existence. The community's residential and commercial structures, combined with the natural setting of topography and landscape, have defined an overall character that is cherished by its residents and recognized by its visitors. The established character reflects a "western-style" design theme that has been continued intermittently through the years. A majority of development in the town's center will take the form of infill on vacant properties or replacement of existing structures. The current "core" of the downtown area has been defined as the blocks facing SR 29/Calistoga Street from Wardlaw Street, south to Callayomi Street. The design guidelines presented in this section are a series of recommendations that are aimed at helping Middletown retain its uniqueness and discouraging incompatible construction.

These guidelines contain a statement of community expectations to assist property and business owners in understanding the commercial development features which assist in defining the overall ambiance and sense of place that contribute to the livability and continued economic vitality of downtown Middletown. The guidelines are intended to establish a balance that preserves and enhances the community's uniqueness and livability while supporting the economic vitality that provides resources for community services.

Applicability

These guidelines are applicable to all types of permitted commercial development activities in the Middletown Community Downtown Special Study Area, including sign permits, building permits, and architecture and site improvements.

Purpose

These guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide guidance to property owners and their design professionals in planning and designing new buildings and remodeling existing structures.
- Provide a greater degree of project review and approval predictability.
- Ensure that new development reinforces and supports the special qualities of downtown Middletown.
- Establish a high level of design quality.
- Maintain a building scale that is consistent with downtown Middletown's small-scale image.
- Provide information to allow for the adaptation of corporate and franchise designs to the unique character of downtown Middletown.
- Reinforce the special qualities of downtown Middletown's visual character, including the western style.
- Protect property owner investments by discouraging inappropriate adjacent development.
- Enhance the economic vitality of downtown Middletown through quality design.
- Streamline the development review process by more clearly communicating community expectations to property owners and developers.
- Provide visual continuity along street frontages.
- Encourage signage that is in scale and harmony with the architecture and character of downtown Middletown.

Design Guidelines

Building/Site Design

1. **Design to maintain and reinforce the unique scale and character of Middletown**
   - Design with respect for nearby historic buildings and unique neighborhoods of Middletown.
   - Avoid design consisting largely of box-like structures with applied design elements.
   - Avoid canvas or vinyl "awning architecture" where large awnings dominate the building frontages (see photo).
   - Provide varied building and parapet heights except in locations where flat parapets are common.
   - Place awnings and canopies at elevations that relate to the scale of pedestrians and provide a sense of shelter.
   - Use awnings appropriate to the building style.
   - Break façade segments into modules that reflect those common along nearby building frontages. For façades along streets that include a number of single-family residences, break larger building elements into modules that are sympathetic to the smaller scale of those houses.

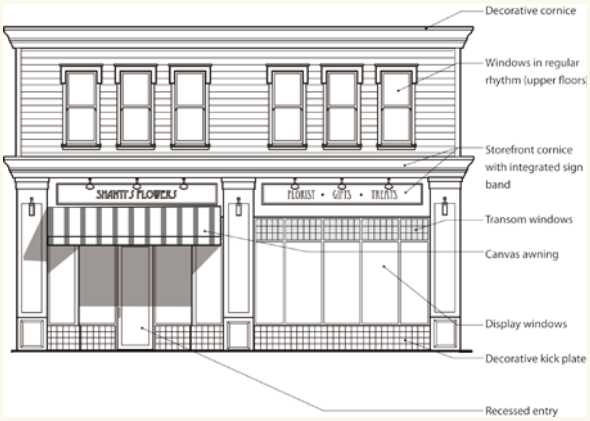
2. **Orient building fronts toward primary corridors**
   - Building frontages should be focused toward the main roadway/sidewalk.
   - Parking should be avoided between building fronts and roadways.
   - Sidewalks or other pedestrian improvements should be added along all street frontages.
   - Emphasis should be placed on creating a safe, accessible pedestrian environment and a "town center" style of commercial area as opposed to "strip mall" style commercial areas.

The photo on the left is an example of the recommended "town center" style development. The second photo shows a "strip mall" style development. The strip mall incorporates many elements of recommended design, but the side design still fails to create a pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

3. **Break larger building façades into smaller segments**
   - Treat commercial street-facing façades that exceed 50 feet in length as though they were constructed no wider than 50 feet.
   - For projects on corner lots, special attention should be given to the following:
     - Breaking building forms into modules that are similar to those seen in residential neighborhoods.
     - Providing landscaping and landscape elements (e.g., fencing) that would be consistent with those used in neighboring areas (particularly residential areas).
     - Screening any parking areas with low walls and landscaping.

4. **Avoid visually bulky buildings**
   - Provide horizontal wall plane changes along street frontages and areas easily viewed from residential properties to provide some building articulation.
   - Inset windows as much as possible from wall faces to provide some visual depth to façades. Where interior uses make this difficult, provide exterior trim around windows to achieve some façade depth.
   - For any structure over two stories in height, set back upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet from the lower-floor façades to minimize scale and bulk changes that would stand out significantly from the norm along the adjacent streetscape.
   - Use a mix of materials that have a smaller scale (e.g., stone, brick, wood siding, and shingles). Avoid concrete block and metal siding or panels.

Street façade scaling example



Building design example

5. **Provide a unified design around all sides of buildings**
   - Maintain continuity of design, materials, color, form, and architectural detail for all elevations of a building that are visible from public areas or adjacent residences.
   - Where continuity of design is difficult to achieve, substantial landscaping should be provided to screen the area.

6. **Avoid blank walls and service areas that are visible from adjacent streets and projects**
   - Orient buildings to avoid blank walls and service areas that are visible to the public.
   - When blank walls are unavoidable, add pilasters, trellises, and/or lattices along with landscaping to make façades more attractive.

7. **Use solid building forms with "punched" window openings**
   - Avoid ribbon windows and other types of large window areas.
   - Limit the amount of typical commercial storefront treatment in favor of smaller window openings.

8. **Provide architectural elements, detailing, and ornamentation to add richness and variety to building façades**
   - Design with a scale consistent with neighboring character, particularly when neighboring residential uses.

9. **Provide a richness of architectural façade depth and detail**
   - Express columns and beams on the building's exterior.
   - Provide a number of façade layers (e.g., front of columns or pilasters, wall plan, window frame, window glass).
   - Finish wall tops with overhangs, projecting cornices, and column caps that provide a strong visual terminus to the structure.
   - Use applied and integrated design elements (e.g., exposed rafter tails on sloped roofs, cornice moldings, applied medallions).

10. **Use high-quality building materials and details**
    - The use of exposed concrete block is strongly discouraged in favor of wood, stucco, stone, or brick.
    - Avoid plywood wall facings.
    - Avoid plastic or reflective metal materials and finishes.

11. **Use colors that are appropriate to the use and the surrounding area**
    - Muted tones are generally preferred with stronger accent colors limited to smaller areas of trim. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the selection of color hues. Consider muted tones of blues, yellows, tans, grays, and other hues rather than selecting non-distinctive beiges and browns.
    - In most cases, a range of analogous or complementary colors is preferred over painting all wall surfaces with the same paint color and shade.
    - Strong building colors that are used for branding or advertising purposes may not be approved.
    - Uses that might make a case for stronger colors will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis based on the design and the context of surrounding buildings and uses.
    - Creativity and individual identity are encouraged as long as the colors and style do not detract from the surrounding area as a whole.

12. **Maintain a high degree of transparency at all window areas**
    - Avoid dark or highly reflective glazing.
    - Neon signs should be discouraged.

13. **Respect the privacy of neighboring residents**
    - Avoid windows that would provide views into residential private-yard spaces.
    - Keep window sizes smaller on façades facing residences where windows can be seen to minimize lighting intrusion.
    - Provide shielding for any exterior lighting visible from neighboring residential uses.

Pedestrian Corridor

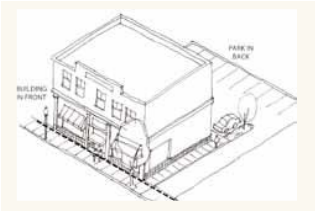
1. **Enhance front sidewalk and plaza paving**
    - The use of brick banding along with concrete is encouraged for commercial street sidewalks.
    - A change of pattern and/or material for paved areas within the front setback is strongly encouraged to set them apart from the sidewalks.
    - Where paved plaza areas or outdoor dining areas are adjacent to sidewalks, provide a positive separation between the two with landscaping, walls, and/or raised planters.
    - A "western-style" boardwalk or concrete faux boardwalk could be supported in the downtown area in appropriate locations.

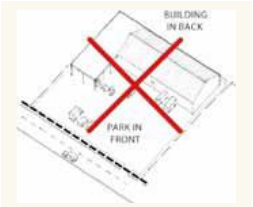
2. **Encourage porches/awnings that use a "western-style" theme and stretch from the building front to the street edge of the sidewalk**

3. **Encourage pedestrian amenities in front setback areas**
    - Benches
    - Planters and other landscaping
    - Trash receptacles
    - Street trees

Parking

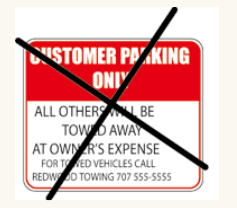
1. **Place parking behind buildings whenever possible**
    - If placement behind buildings is not possible or practical, the preferred parking placement is adjacent to the structures to maintain the presence of active uses and greatest density along the street frontage (particularly Calistoga Street/SR 29).
    - If the only possible parking location is between the buildings, parking along frontages should be screened and landscaped.
    - For any parking that fronts along a public street, provide low walls or hedges along with landscaping to soften the impact of the parking lot on the pedestrian experience.





2. **Minimize the visual impact of parking lot lighting**
   - Limit light pole height to decrease light pollution.
   - Use luminaries with shielding to direct light downward and avoid glare.

3. **Subordinate parking to the buildings**
   - Avoid parking lots in locations that interrupt retail and/or structural continuity near front property lines.
   - Divide larger parking areas into smaller segments with blocks of landscaping.
   - Provide low walls and landscaping at parking lot edges adjacent to public streets.



4. **Discourage restricted parking lots**
   - Business should be encouraged to allow open or shared parking in lots to promote a "park once" environment that allows customers to park and use the walkability of the area and visit other businesses.

Landscaping

1. **Provide landscaping for all projects**
   - Landscaping should relate to existing landscape treatments along the adjacent street fronts.
   - Smaller landscaping (e.g., planter pots, window boxes) are used often in the downtown to create a smaller, pedestrian scale and should be included within commercial projects whenever possible.
   - Landscaping should have form and substance to define edges and paths, to provide visual focal points and to buffer less desirable views (e.g., less finished façades facing public ways or residences).

2. **Provide substantial landscaping along street frontages (particularly Calistoga Street/SR 29)**
   - Avoid large amounts of paving between structures and the street sidewalk. If there is a substantial setback, and the area is not used for outdoor dining, over 50 percent of the front setback should be devoted to green landscaping.
   - Flowering annual plants are strongly encouraged.

3. **Provide greater landscape buffering adjacent to residential parcels**
   - Trees and other landscaping should be used increasingly as the density changes from Community Commercial to Local Commercial and then to Residential Districts as a way to soften the noise and activity of the more intense uses.

Peripherals (e.g., solar panels, mechanical equipment, etc.)

1. **Provide visual buffering of on-site utility elements**
   - Locate transformers, valves, and similar elements where they will be least visible from the public rights-of-way. If not possible, these elements should be placed underground or, at a minimum, screened from view with walls and landscaping that relate to the remainder of the project.
   - Use landscaping and/or walls to screen transformers and other utility elements if they must be located in close proximity to the public right-of-way.
   - Applicants will be required to submit a site plan at the time of submittal for review and approval to show the location, type, and size, including height, of all utility elements to be located on the parcel.

2. **Integrate the screening for all trash and service areas into the design of the buildings**
   - Avoid walls that appear to be tacked onto the main structure in favor of walls that integrate the service walls into the overall design of the building complex.
   - Match wall materials to that of the building.
   - Where screen walls are prominently visible, provide additional detail appropriate to the design of the main structure (e.g., wall caps similar to those on a primary structure.
   - In many cases, the use of lattice work with dense, flowering vines may be used. In those cases, a lesser building material (e.g., concrete block) may be used if the lattice work will provide a strong texture while the landscaping is growing to maturity, and if it can be demonstrated that the landscaping selected will provide a green screening of the walls within two years of installation.

3. **Screen all roof equipment**
   - All roof equipment must be screened to minimize its visual impact on views from public rights-of-way.
   - Locate equipment in recessed roof wells or hide equipment behind parapet walls so that it cannot be seen.
   - Roof screens should be constructed from materials as similar to the building walls as possible and should be designed to appear as an architecturally integrated part of the building rather than an added-on element.
     - In cases where mechanical wells or parapets of sufficient height to screen equipment are not possible, equipment should be clustered and placed as far as possible from building edges. The visible equipment should be painted a color that will blend the equipment visually with the backdrop (e.g., pale blue for objects seen against the sky).
     - Submit a roof plan at the time of submittal for review and approval. The plan should show the location, type, and size, including height, of all roof-mounted equipment. The application elevation and section drawings should show the location and size of all roof-mounted equipment.

4. **Integrate solar panels**
   - Seek to minimize any negative visual impacts on downtown character. A less than optimal efficiency slope for the panels may be required to minimize their visual impact if such a condition would not decrease the efficiency of the panels by more than 20 percent. Alternatively, other visually neutral methods to achieve similar energy efficiencies may be required (e.g., insulation, efficient windows, solar screening of windows, energy efficient HVAC systems, etc.).
   - Hide solar panels, if possible, or integrate panels into the architectural forms and character of the building if it is not possible to hide them.
   - Avoid a "tacked on" look.
   - Operable windows are encouraged in recognition of the area's temperate climate and the typically small scale of commercial structures.

Signage Guidelines

1. **Prohibit the following signage types:**
   - Lighted and/or neon signs that flash on and off, fluctuate, or appear to move.
   - Moving signs that rotate or move in any fashion except barber poles.
   - Attraction Boards and Movable Letter signs (except for churches, cinemas, performing arts facilities, or similar uses that have frequently changing events or showings).
   - Off-site signs.
   - Electronic signs.
   - Projected light signs that are flashed or projected onto walls or other structures by means of a projector or other device.
   - Roof-mounted signs (except where other types of signage cannot be effectively used).
   - Billboards.
   - Cloth, paper, or fabric signs hung from the building or placed in windows except for temporary signs allowed under the Zoning Ordinance.
   - Any signs not specifically allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

2. **Avoid excessive wording and advertising messages**
   - Signs are most effective when their messages can be grasped quickly. Too many words or images compete for attention and reduce the readability of the sign.

3. **Use no more than two letter font types per sign**
   - The primary purpose of a sign is to quickly convey information to passing pedestrians and motorists. More than two letter styles make readability more difficult. A simple logo with an additional type style may also be considered.

4. **Keep the size of letters and graphics in proportion to overall sign area**
   - Text and graphics are difficult to read if they crowd the borders of the sign. Smaller letters with space around them will have more impact than larger letters with limited space around them.
   - Generally limit the width and height of lettering and graphics to 85 percent of the overall sign width and 65 percent of the height of the sign area. Information, such as graphic logos, may be closer to borders if a significant amount of background is provided for the sign as a whole. A good rule of thumb is to limit the amount of sign information to no more than 50 to 55 percent of the overall sign area.

5. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Appropriate materials include finished wood, metal, and for projecting banner signs, woven fabric. Plastic sign materials and signs painted directly onto building surfaces should not be allowed.
   - The sign materials and design should be related to those of the building on which it is mounted, and all sign edges must be cleanly defined and finished.

6. **Use simple and symmetrical sign shapes**
   - Geometric shapes, such as rectangles, squares, circles, ovals, and triangles are visually stable shapes that help focus attention on the sign message. These should be used in most cases. Combinations of geometric shapes will also generally produce a good sign shape.

7. **Relate sign colors to building colors**
   - Select wall sign colors to blend with the building and storefront colors. Select from color ranges that are analogous and complementary to them.
   - Corporate branding colors will be considered but will not be automatically approved if they are considered out of place with the building or the surrounding environment. The use of tone-down colors in the same hue family may be required in place of brighter standard corporate colors.

Guidelines by Signage Type

Wall Signs

Wall signs are panels or individual letters mounted flat against and parallel to a building wall or roof fascia.

1. **Limit sign information**
   - Generally limit sign information to the business name. Graphic logos, date of building construction, address, and other elements may be allowed at the discretion of the County.

2. **Place signs in a clean Signable Area**
   - The Signable Area should:
     - Be relatively flat
     - Not contain doors or windows
     - Not include projecting molding or trim
     - Be in reasonable proportion to the overall façade (should not exceed 15% of the building façade)
   - If a building does not have a good location for a wall sign, use other allowed types, such as an awning, window, or projecting signs.

3. **Use sign materials that project slightly from the face of the building**
   - Use either individually applied letters to the face of the wall or apply sign letters to a board or panel mounted on the face.
   - Avoid painted signs directly on wall surfaces.

4. **Provide sign illumination appropriate to the area**
   - Interior illuminated can signs that include multiple letters within a single sign enclosure will not be allowed for any wall sign.
   - Interior illuminated individual letters may be used.
   - Exterior illumination with shielded spotlights can be used for wall signs.
   - Neon wall signs may be allowed but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
   - All sign and sign lighting raceways and electrical connections should be concealed.

Awning Signs

Awning signs consist of letters and graphics applied directly to the face or valance of awnings. Awning signs are often used effectively in combination with window signs.

1. **Place signs for easy visibility**
   - Apply signs to awning front valences (i.e., the flat vertical surface of awnings) or to sloped awning faces with a slope of at least two to one.

2. **Limit the signage information on awnings**
   - Since awning signs will often be viewed from passing vehicles, the amount of information that can be effectively conveyed is limited. Keeping sign text short will allow viewers to better comprehend and remember the message.
     - Generally limit awning signs to the business name, business logo, services, or type of business (e.g., French Cuisine), and/or the business address number.
     - Limit the size of logos or text placed on awning sloped faces to a maximum of 15 percent of the sloped surface areas.
     - Limit sign width on awning valences to a maximum of 85 percent of the awning width. Limit the letter height to a maximum of 80 percent of the valance height.

3. **Avoid interior illuminated awnings**
   - Backlight awnings that make the entire awning a large sign should not be allowed. Signage on the awning's sloped face may be illuminated by shielded and attractive directional spotlights.

Window Signs

Window signs are primarily oriented to passing pedestrians and are generally applied to the inside of display windows.

1. **Limit the amount of signage used**
   - Window signs should be limited to a maximum of 25 percent of any individual window, and an aggregate area of no more than 10 percent of all ~~g~~ground floor windows on any building face.

2. **Limit the size of the lettering**
   - The maximum height of letters should be 10 inches. Exceptions can be granted for the leading capital letter of text.

3. **Consider the use of logos and creative sign type**
   - Graphic logos and images along with special text formats can add personality and interest to window signs.

4. **Use high-quality materials and application methods**
   - Limit window sign materials to the following:
     - Paint or vinyl film applied directly to the inside face of the window
     - Tubular neon suspended behind the window glass
     - Wood or metal panels with applied lettering
     - Paper signs placed in windows are discouraged

Projecting Signs

Projecting signs are relatively flat, two-sided solid panels attached to the brackets which are mounted perpendicular to the face of buildings and storefronts. They often include graphic images, in addition to text, and express the unique personality of an individual business.

1. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Use wood, metal, or non-glossy fabrics. Avoid plastics.
2. **Limit the number and size of projecting signs**
   - Use no more than one projecting sign per business frontage.
   - Limit the size of any projecting sign to five square feet.
   - Project signs no more than 36 inches from the building face, and provide at least 6 inches between the inside edge of the sign and the building.
3. **Relate the design of projecting signs and supports to the character of the building**
   - Simple round or square horizontal supports with capped ends, painted black or white, are generally acceptable. However, more decorative approaches may be desirable when appropriate to the sign and/or architectural character of the building.
4. **Position projecting signs to complement the building's architectural details**
   - Locate solid panel signs below the first-floor ceiling line, or no more than 14 feet above the sidewalk, whichever is less. Provide at least 9 feet from the bottom of projecting signs to the ground in pedestrian areas and 14 feet in areas with vehicular traffic.

5. **Provide sign lighting only with shielded spotlights**
   - Use high-quality fixtures such as cylinder spots or decorative fixtures. Avoid exposed standard spot and flood bulbs.
   - Design light supports to complement the design of the sign and building façade.

Hanging Signs

Hanging signs are relatively flat panels, generally two-sided, which are similar to projecting signs, but are smaller and suspended below awnings, bay windows, balconies, and similar projections. They are intended primarily for business identification to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. They are commonly used as a type of western-style signage.

1. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Use wood or metal and avoid shiny plastic or fabric. Finish all exposed edges. Suspend signs with metal rods, small-scale chain, cable, or hooks.

2. **Limit the number and size of hanging signs**
   - Use no more than one hanging sign per business. Limit the maximum sign size to three square feet. Mount signs to provide a minimum of nine feet of clearance between the sign and the sidewalk.

3. **Orient hanging signs to pedestrian traffic**
   - Mount signs under awnings, bay windows, or other projections with their orientation perpendicular to the building face so that they will be visible to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. If multiple hanging signs are placed along a business frontage, they should all be mounted with their bottom edge the same distance above the sidewalk and should be of similar size and shape.

Plaque Signs

Plaque signs are pedestrian-oriented flat panels mounted to wall surfaces near the entry to a business. They include signs that identify a specific business, directory signs for multiple businesses, and menu boxed for restaurants.

1. **Limit the location and size of plaque signs**
   - Locate signs on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries or entry passageways to off-street courtyards. Signs identifying a single business should be limited to an area of four square feet. Directory signs for the identification of multiple second-floor or courtyard tenants may be larger, but no more than eight square feet.

2. **Use plaque signs for the display of restaurant menus**
   - A restaurant district is enhanced when a variety of restaurants share the area and customers are able to walk from one to the next to compare menus and prices. Attractive menu signs or boxes should not exceed six square feet in area and should have internal indirect lighting (e.g., bulbs located in the frame to cast direct light over the menu surface) or direct lighting using decorative fixtures.

Ground Signs

Primary ground signs are low signs that assist motorists in finding businesses along auto-oriented streets where businesses are separated from the street front by parking or large landscaped setbacks. Informational and directional ground signs are smaller signs that assist motorists in safely exiting from moving traffic lanes to on-site uses in projects with multiple lanes.

1. **Ground signs are not generally encouraged in the downtown Middletown area, but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.**
2. **Limit the information on each sign**
   - Ground signs should generally be limited to the following information:
     - Project or primary business identification name and/or logo.
     - Address number (strongly encouraged)

   - Multitenant ground signs are strongly discouraged. However, the display of up to three tenants may be considered for small ground signs so long as the sign and background color is common throughout, and the type, style, and logo colors of each tenant are the same.
   - The inclusion of services and products offered should not be included on ground signs.

3. **Locate signs for easy visibility from passing vehicles**
   - Locate signs within 10 feet of the front property line.
   - Avoid blocking any vehicular or pedestrian sight lines that might result in safety problems.

4. **Limit the number, type, and size of ground signs**
   - Only one project or tenant identification sign is allowed for each development parcel street frontage.
   - The height and sign area per face for primary ground signs should be appropriate to the surrounding environment.
   - Directional signs are limited to a maximum area of six square feet and only allowed on arterial streets. One per entrance or exit will be allowed.

5. **Lighting**
   - Lighting for ground signs must be by direct spotlight illumination from fixtures mounted either at the top of the sign or on the ground below the sign. Fixtures must be shielded to avoid direct view of the bulbs.

6. **Material**
   - All ground signs, including price signs for service stations, should be constructed of matte finish non-reflective materials.

Freestanding Signs

Freestanding signs are ground-mounted signs that emphasize business brand identity.

1. **Use Limitations**
   - Freestanding signs should be strongly discouraged in the downtown Middletown area.

Billboard Signs

Billboard signs are freestanding, outdoor advertising signs that are larger than 32 square feet.

Flag Signs

Flags, pennants, banners, streamers, and similar signs are temporary advertising devices used to designate special events or vehicle entry/pedestrian entry.

1. **Use Limitations**
   - Flag signs should not be allowed as permanent signage (with the exception of the American flag and other related flags, as described in the Lake County Zoning Ordinance).
   - Flag signs are appropriate for designation of vehicle or pedestrian entryways for wineries and other similar uses during special events.

2. **Material**
   - All flags, pennants, banners, streamers, etc. should be constructed of matte finish and nonreflective materials.

Coyote Valley Special Study Area and Design Guidelines

Coyote Valley includes Hidden Valley Lake, the Ranchos, and surrounding commercial and rural lands. This special study area focuses on the commercial areas that make up the SR 29 corridor and the proposed "town center" in the Coyote Valley area, as shown on **Figure M-18.**

In 2000, a survey of 671 area residents was completed by the Hidden Valley Lake Homeowner's Association and a citizen's advisory committee was created to develop a Coyote Valley/Hidden Valley Lake Strategic Economic Development Plan. The community survey and plan indicated the community favors slow and steady growth, development of additional commercial/retail shopping and services, medical facilities, shopping, and restaurants. Major issues identified in the survey were inadequate transportation services and the lack of local employment opportunities, lodging units, restaurants, shopping, and medical facilities. The Strategic Economic Development Plan was never adopted but many of its elements have been incorporated into the policy guidance for this special study area. The Special Study Area policy guidance seeks to promote economic development while at the same time protecting the small town, rural atmosphere valued by the community. Simultaneously, the Special Study Area works to preserve the Putah Creek riparian corridor between Hartmann Road and Putah Creek, which has little development potential due to the sensitive habitat, erosion, and flood potential.

Commented [AH125]: County staff: There is a comment in row 13 in the SSA tab of the Planning Area comment matrix/spreadsheet that says 'Coyote Valley SSA - add a line about protection of the riparian corridor of Putah Creek and other water courses.". We found this existing content already here. If you would like more details, please edit directly in the file here.

The lack of commercial and retail services in the area results in many residents needing to travel out of the Middletown Planning Area to obtain needed services, burdening residents with longer travel times and costs to reach services and losing the opportunity to support the local economy. The creation of basic consumer services at the local level would strengthen the overall economic base of the Planning Area and would be especially convenient for Hidden Valley Lake and other nearby residents.

Town Center Area

The commercial area along Hartmann Road and Coyote Valley Road provides a geographically central commercial core. The policy guidance for the Coyote Valley special study area promotes the formation of a town center in this area that reflects the rural nature of the valley and encourages development of commercial and service facilities primarily for the use of local residents.

The demand for single-family residential development in and around the Coyote Valley special study area can be accommodated on vacant lots in Hidden Valley Lake, while the town center area is conducive to and should be used to support development of medium- and high-density residential uses and affordable senior housing.

Potential commercial and service facilities to be considered should include a business park, local and highway commercial services, an education or medical center, and public spaces. Community halls and fraternal organizations should also be encouraged in this area. Retail commercial facilities should be promoted to locate in the town center, as opposed to the SR 29 corridor.

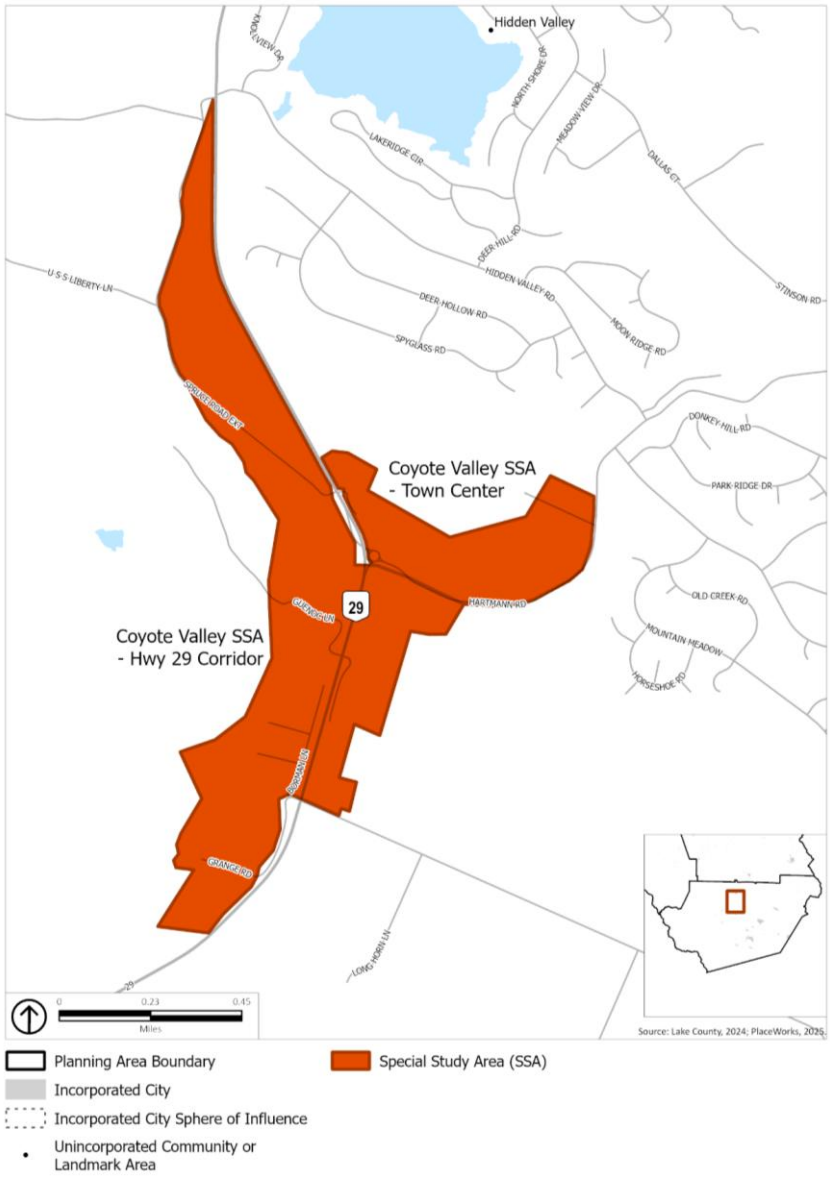
New development in the area should be thoughtfully designed. Landscaping and building design should tie spaces together rather than give the feeling of moving from one strip development to the next. The town center should be pedestrian friendly both functionally and aesthetically. The community also desires the area to be accessible for golf cart use on connecting public roads.

SR 29 Corridor

The SR 29 corridor is well suited to accommodate larger commercial and industrial establishments. New development should preserve the small-town, rural character of the Planning Area and be encouraged to enhance the visual resources along the scenic corridor of SR 29. Building design should include architectural themes and colors that promote a rural atmosphere. Large metal buildings should be avoided. Paved areas should be broken up with heavy landscaping that blends with the natural backdrop of the valley. Refer to the Design Guidelines for comprehensive guidance on the design of future development.

New service-oriented retail business should reflect the values and make-up of the existing communities and promote local employment opportunities. Business size should adequately reflect the needs of the community area.

Figure M-18 Coyote Valley Town Center/SR 29 Corridor Special Study Area



Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal M-SSA-5

A concentrated, vibrant town center in Coyote Valley.

Policies

M-SSA-5.1

Promote appropriately scaled retail and commercial services.

M-SSA-5.2

Discourage strip mall type developments.

M-SSA-5.3

Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment through appropriate streetscapes, building siting and design, signage, and landscaping.

~~**M-SSA-5.4**~~

~~Encourage project designs that include sidewalks, crosswalks, curb bulb outs, traffic safety signage, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities.~~

~~**M-SSA-5.5**~~**M-SSA-5.4**

Encourage and support roadway beautification projects, focusing on Hartmann Road in the town center and visual enhancement to the public right-of-way and immediate surroundings. Beautification projects could include street tree plantings and under-grounding of utilities.

~~**M-SSA-5.6**~~**M-SSA-5.5**

Encourage applicants for new development to provide visual renderings so that the community can understand potential visual impacts to scenic resources.

~~**M-SSA-5.7**~~**M-SSA-5.6**

Review commercial and industrial development to ensure compatibility with the Coyote Valley Design Guidelines, consistent with Article 54, Design Review Permit, of the Zoning Ordinance.

Actions

M-SSA-5.a

Prepare and implement a parking strategy that facilitates better access to local businesses, welcomes visitors, and encourages visitors to "park once," allowing them to park at one site and walk to multiple shops and store fronts. The strategy should consider establishing a funding mechanism for developing public parking, such as a fee paid by new commercial development, and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to allow opportunities for shared parking agreements and use of public parking areas.

Commented [AH126]: SSA row 15.

Note direction included to delete and "add protect dark sky compliant lighting" but since dark skies are addressed in OSCR, this is not necessary here

M-SSA-5.b

Identify and implement improvements to the road and trail network to make the town center accessible and safe for golf cart use on connecting public roads and trails.

M-SSA-5.c

Work with public and private parties to assist in the development of a community park and system of walking trails along Putah Creek south of Hartmann Road near the town center.

Goal M-SSA-6

Heavy commercial and industrial uses in Coyote Valley that are concentrated along the SR 29 corridor and minimize impacts to surrounding areas.

Policies

M-SSA-6.1

Encourage heavy commercial and industrial uses to locate along the SR 29 corridor.

M-SSA-6.2

Promote the creation of industrial parks and heavier commercial uses along SR 29 where access to public water and sewer can be made available.

M-SSA-6.3

Require heavy commercial and industrial development projects to submit detailed landscaping and building elevation plans that demonstrate mitigation of impacts to the natural viewshed.

M-SSA-6.4

Encourage colors and building types that blend with and complement natural surroundings.

M-SSA-6.5

Encourage parking areas to be heavily landscaped with vegetation that enhances the natural surrounding and disguises paved areas.

M-SSA-6.6

Encourage compatible residential uses above commercial storefronts in mixed-use areas.

M-SSA-6.7

Encourage new development to be designed to be accessible from frontage roads, such as Borman Lane and Spruce Grove Extension, where possible, and discourage access directly off SR 29.

Goal M-SSA-7

A healthy riparian corridor along Putah Creek.

Policies

M-SSA-7.1

~~Pursue acquisition, or e~~Encourage offers of dedication~~,~~ of additional vacant land along the riparian corridor of Putah Creek in Coyote Valley to preserve the corridor.

Commented [AH127]: SSA row 17

M-SSA-7.2

Encourage property owners along Putah Creek to install barriers to motorized vehicle access, whenever feasible, to discourage use by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), which can cause erosion and sedimentation in the creek, habitat damage, and noise nuisances to local residents and businesses.

Goal M-SSA-8

A mix of commercial services and high-density residential uses create a vibrant town center.

Policies

M-SSA-8.1

Encourage a mix of high-density residential uses above commercial store fronts and adjacent to commercial areas in the town center.

M-SSA-8.2

Encourage senior housing and assisted living developments near the town center and available public transportation services.

Design Guidelines

Note: These design guidelines were originally prepared in 2010 and will be updated through a community-driven process through the implementation of this General Plan, in accordance with Action M-LU-3.e.

Coyote Valley has developed without a concentrated downtown commercial area. A number of strip mall-type developments have been created but have failed to create a centralized business district. The Coyote Valley Special Study Area attempts to address this deficiency. The current commercial areas in the Coyote Valley Special Study Area near the Hidden Valley Lake community contain some common design themes but are not similar enough to form a consistent style. These guidelines are tools to create and maintain a consistent design style that is unique to the area. The similar themes are pitched roofs with wide, sweeping eaves; large windows; large canopy trees providing a rural shaded atmosphere; and a variety of color tones ranging from burnt reds to muted greens to soft tans. These guidelines are intended to establish a balance that preserves and enhances Coyote Valley's uniqueness and livability while supporting the economic vitality that provides resources for community services.

Applicability

These guidelines are applicable to all types of permitted commercial development activities in the Coyote Valley Special Study Area, including sign permits, building permits, and architecture and site improvements.

Purpose

These guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide guidance to property owners and their design professionals in planning and designing new buildings and remodeling existing structures.
- Provide a greater degree of project review and approval predictability.
- Ensure that new development reinforces and supports the special qualities of Coyote Valley.
- Establish a high level of design quality.
- Maintain a building scale that is consistent with Coyote Valley's rural image.
- Provide information to allow for the adaptation of corporate and franchise designs to the unique character of Coyote Valley.
- Reinforce the special qualities of Coyote Valley's visual character.
- Protect property owner investments by discouraging inappropriate adjacent development.
- Enhance the economic vitality of Coyote Valley through quality design.
- Streamline the development review process by more clearly communicating community expectations to property owners and developers.
- Provide visual continuity along street frontages.

Design Guidelines

Building/Site Design

1. **Design to maintain and reinforce the unique scale and character of Coyote Valley**

   - Design with respect for the rural character and unique neighborhoods of Coyote Valley.
   - Avoid design that consists largely of boxes with applied design elements.
   - Avoid canvas or vinyl "awning architecture" where large awnings dominate the building frontages (see photo).
   - Provide varied building and parapet heights except in locations where flat parapets are common.
   - Place awnings and canopies at elevations that relate to the scale of pedestrians and provide a sense of shelter. Use awnings appropriate to the building style.

- Break façade segments into modules that reflect those common along nearby building frontages. For façades along streets that are closely related to nearby residences, break larger building elements into modules that are sympathetic to the smaller scale of those houses.
- Encourage pitched roofs with large overhangs to create a relaxed, "prairie-style" character.

2. **Orient building fronts toward primary corridors**
   - Building frontages should be focused toward the main roadway/sidewalk.
   - Parking should not be allowed between building fronts and roadways.
   - Sidewalks or other pedestrian improvements should be added along all street frontages.
   - Emphasis should be placed on creating a safe, accessible pedestrian environment and a "town center" style of commercial area, as opposed to "strip mall" style commercial areas.

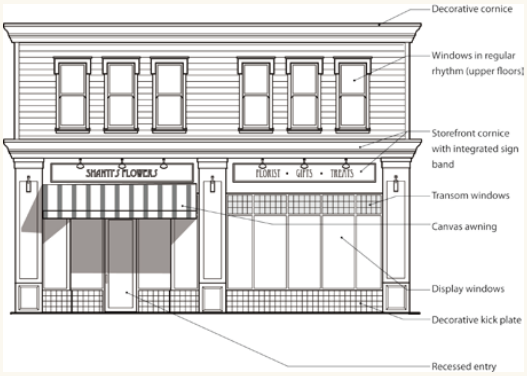
The photo on the left is an example of the recommended "town center" style development. The second photo shows a "strip mall" style development. The strip mall incorporates many elements of recommended design, but the site design still fails to create a pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

3. **Break larger building façades into smaller segments**
   - Treat commercial street-facing façades, which exceed 50 feet in length, as though they were constructed no wider than 50 feet.
   - For projects on corner lots, special attention should be given to the following:
   - Breaking building forms into modules that are similar to those in the residential neighborhoods.
   - Providing landscaping and landscape elements (e.g., fencing) that would be consistent with those used in neighboring areas (particularly residential areas).
   - Screening any parking areas with low walls and landscaping.

4. **Avoid visually bulky buildings**
   - Provide horizontal wall plane changes along street frontages and areas easily viewed from residential properties to provide some building articulation.
   - Inset windows as much as possible from wall faces to provide some visual depth to façades. Where interior uses make this difficult, provide exterior trim around windows to achieve some façade depth.
   - For any structure over two stories in height, set back upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet from the lower-floor façades to minimize scale and bulk changes that would stand out significantly from the norm along the adjacent streetscape.

- Use a mix of materials that have a smaller scale (e.g., stone, brick, wood siding, and shingles). Avoid concrete block and metal siding or panels.

Street façade scaling example



Building design example

5. **Provide a unified design around all sides of buildings**
   - Maintain continuity of design, materials, color, form, and architectural detail for all elevations of a building that are visible from public areas or adjacent residences.
   - Where continuity of design is difficult to achieve, substantial landscaping should be provided to screen the area.
6. **Avoid blank walls and service areas that are visible from adjacent streets and projects**
   - Orient buildings to avoid blank walls and service areas that are visible.
   - When blank walls are unavoidable, add pilasters, trellises, and/or lattices along with landscaping to make façades more attractive.

7. **Use solid building forms with "punched" window openings**
   - Avoid ribbon windows and other types of large window areas.
   - Limit the amount of typical commercial storefront treatment in favor of smaller window openings.
8. **Provide architectural elements, detailing, and ornamental features to add richness and variety to building façades**
   - Design with a scale consistent with neighboring character, particularly when neighboring residential uses.
9. **Provide a richness of architectural façade depth and detail**
   - Express columns and beams on the building's exterior.
   - Provide a number of façade layers (e.g., front of columns or pilasters, wall plan, window frame, window glass).
   - Finish wall tops with overhangs, projecting cornices, and column caps that provide a strong visual terminus to the structure.
   - Use applied and integrated design elements (e.g., exposed rafter tails on sloped roofs, cornice moldings, applied medallions).
10. **Use high-quality building materials and details**
    - The use of exposed concrete block is strongly discouraged in favor of wood, stucco, stone, or brick. Use of "dry stack" stone is encouraged.
    - Avoid plywood wall facings.
    - Avoid plastic or reflective metal materials and finishes.
11. **Use colors that are appropriate to the use and the surrounding area**
    - Muted tones are generally preferred with stronger accent colors limited to smaller areas of trim. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the selection of color hues. Consider muted tones of reds, greens, tans, grays, and other hues rather than selecting nondistinctive beiges and browns.
    - In most cases, a range of analogous or complementary colors is preferred over painting all wall surfaces with the same paint color and shade.
    - Strong building colors that are used for branding or advertising purposes may not be approved.
    - Uses that might make a case for stronger colors will be evaluated on a case-by-case based on the design and the context of surrounding buildings and uses.
    - Creativity and individual identity are encouraged as long as the colors and style do not detract from the surrounding area as a whole.
12. **Maintain a high degree of transparency at all window areas**
    - Avoid dark or highly reflective glazing.

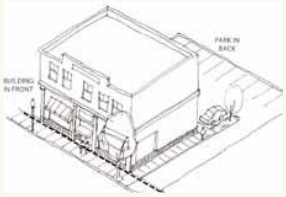
13. **Respect the privacy of neighboring residents**
    - Avoid windows that would provide views into residential private-yard spaces.
    - Keep window sizes smaller on façades facing residences where windows can be seen to minimize lighting intrusion
    - Provide shielding for any exterior lighting visible from neighboring residential uses.

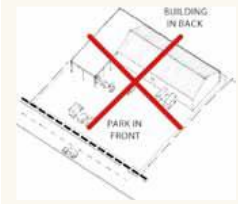
Pedestrian Corridor

1. **Enhance front sidewalk and plaza paving**
    - The use of brick banding along with concrete is encouraged for commercial street sidewalks.
    - A change of pattern and/or material for paved areas within the front setback is strongly encouraged to set them apart from the sidewalks.
    - Where paved plaza areas or outdoor dining areas are adjacent to sidewalks, provide a positive separation between the two with landscaping, walls, and/or raised planters.
    - A "western-style" boardwalk or concrete faux boardwalk should be encouraged in the downtown area if applicable.
2. **Encourage pedestrian amenities in front setback areas**
    - Benches
    - Planters and other landscaping (the growth of large canopy trees should be encouraged to accentuate a rural, prairie style, particularly in developments not facing a primary street frontage)
    - Trash receptacles
    - Street trees

Parking

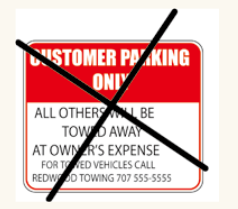
1. **Place parking behind buildings whenever possible**
    - If placement behind buildings is not possible or practical, the preferred parking placement is adjacent to the structures to maintain the presence of active uses and greatest density along the primary street frontage.
    - If the only possible parking location is between the buildings, parking along frontages should be screened and landscaped.
    - For any parking that fronts along a public street, provide low walls or hedges along with landscaping to soften the impact of the parking lot on the pedestrian experience.





2. **Minimize the visual impact of parking lot lighting**
    - Limit light pole height to decrease light pollution.
    - Use luminaries with shielding to direct light downward and avoid glare.

3. **Subordinate parking to the buildings**
   - Avoid parking lots in locations that interrupt retail and/or structural continuity near front property lines.
   - Divide larger parking areas into smaller segments with blocks of landscaping.
   - Provide low walls and landscaping at parking lot edges adjacent to public streets.



4. **Discourage restricted parking lots**
   - Business should be encouraged to allow open or shared parking in lots to promote a "park once" environment that allows customers to park and use the walkability of the area and visit other businesses.

Landscaping

1. **Provide landscaping for all projects**
   - Landscaping should relate to existing landscape treatments along the adjacent street fronts.
   - Smaller landscaping (e.g., planter pots, window boxes) are used often within the downtown to create a smaller, pedestrian scale and should be included within commercial projects whenever possible.
   - Landscaping should have form and substance to define edges and paths, to provide visual focal points, and to buffer less-desirable views (e.g., less finished façades facing public ways or residences.)
2. **Provide substantial landscaping along street frontages (particularly SR 29 and any future developed streets north of Hartman Road)**
   - Avoid large amounts of paving between structures and the street sidewalk. If there is a substantial setback, and the area is not used for outdoor dining, over 50 percent of the front setback should be devoted to green landscaping.
   - Flowering annual plants are strongly encouraged.
3. **Provide greater landscape buffering adjacent to residential parcels**
   - Trees and other landscaping should be used increasingly as the density changes from Community Commercial to Local Commercial and then to Residential Districts as a way to soften the noise and activity of the more intense uses.

Peripherals (e.g., solar panels, mechanical equipment)

1. **Provide visual buffering of on-site utility elements**
   - Locate transformers, valves, and similar elements where they will be least visible from the public rights-of-way. If not possible, these elements should be placed underground or, at a minimum, screened from view with walls and landscaping that relate to the remainder of the project.
   - Utilize landscaping and/or walls to screen transformers and other utility elements if they must be located in close proximity to the public right-of-way.

- Applicants will be required to submit a site plan at the time of submittal for review and approval to show the location, type and size, including height, of all utility elements to be located on the parcel.

2. **Integrate the screening for all trash and service areas into the design of the buildings**
   - Avoid walls that appear to be tacked onto the main structure in favor of walls that integrate the service walls into the overall design of the building complex.
   - Match wall materials to that of the building.
   - Where screen walls are prominently visible, provide additional detail appropriate to the design of the main structure (e.g., wall caps similar to those on a primary structure).
   - In many cases, the use of lattice work with dense, flowering vines may be used. In those cases, a lesser building material (e.g., concrete block) may be used if the lattice work will provide a strong texture while the landscaping is growing to maturity, and if it can be demonstrated that the landscaping selected will provide a green screening of the walls within two years of installation.
3. **Screen all roof equipment**
   - All roof equipment must be screened to minimize its visual impact on views from public rights-of-way.
   - Locate equipment in recessed roof wells or hide equipment behind parapet walls so that it cannot be seen.
   - Roof screens should be constructed from materials as similar to the building walls as possible and should be designed to appear as an architecturally integrated part of the building rather than an added-on element.
   - In cases where mechanical wells or parapets of sufficient height to screen equipment are not possible, equipment should be clustered and placed as far as possible from building edges. The visible equipment should be painted a color that will blend the equipment visually with the backdrop (e.g., pale blue for objects seen against the sky).
   - Submit a roof plan at the time of submittal for review and approval. The plan should show the location, type, and size, including height, of all roof-mounted equipment. The application elevation and section drawings should show the location and size of all roof-mounted equipment.
4. **Integrate solar panels**
   - Seek to minimize any negative visual impacts on downtown character. A less than optimal efficiency slope for the panels may be required to minimize their visual impact if such a condition would not decrease the efficiency of the panels by more than 20 percent. Alternatively, other visually neutral methods to achieve similar energy efficiencies may be required (e.g., insulation, efficient windows, solar screening of windows, energy efficient HVAC systems, etc.).
   - Hide solar panels, if possible, or integrate panels into the architectural forms and character of the building if it is not possible to hide them.
   - Avoid a “tacked on” look.
   - Operable windows are encouraged in recognition of the area’s temperate climate and the typically small scale of commercial structures.

Signage Guidelines

1. **Prohibit the following signage types**
   - Lighted signs that flash on and off, fluctuate, or appear to move.
   - Moving signs that rotate or move in any fashion except barber poles.
   - Attraction Boards and Movable Letter signs (except for churches, cinemas, performing arts facilities, or similar uses that have frequently changing events or showings).
   - Off-site signs.
   - Electronic signs.
   - Projected light signs that are flashed or projected onto walls or other structures by means of a projector or other device.
   - Roof-mounted signs (except where other types of signage cannot be effectively used).
   - Billboards.
   - Cloth, paper, or fabric signs hung from the building or placed in windows except for temporary signs allowed under the Zoning Ordinance.
   - Any signs not specifically allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.
2. **Avoid excessive wording and advertising messages**
   - Signs are most effective when their messages can be grasped quickly. Too many words or images compete for attention and reduce the readability of the sign.
3. **Use no more than two letter-font types per sign**
   - The primary purpose of a sign is to quickly convey information to passing pedestrians and motorists. More than two letter styles make readability more difficult. A simple logo with an additional type style may also be considered.
4. **Keep the size of letters and graphics in proportion to overall sign area**
   - Text and graphics are difficult to read if they crowd the borders of the sign. Smaller letters with space around them will have more impact than larger letters with limited space around them.
   - Generally limit the width and height of lettering and graphics to 85 percent of the overall sign width and 65 percent of the height of the sign area. Information, such as graphic logos, may be closer to borders if a significant amount of background is provided for the sign as a whole. A good rule of thumb is to limit the amount of sign information to no more than 50 to 55 percent of the overall sign area.
5. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Appropriate materials include finished wood, metal, and for projecting banner signs, woven fabric. Plastic sign materials and signs painted directly onto building surfaces will not be allowed.
   - The sign materials and design should be related to those of the building on which it is mounted, and all sign edges must be cleanly defined and finished.

6. **Use simple and symmetrical sign shapes**
   - Geometric shapes such as rectangles, squares, circles, ovals, and triangles are visually stable shapes that help focus attention on the sign message. These should be used in most cases. Combinations of geometric shapes will also generally produce a good sign shape.
7. **Relate sign colors to building colors**
   - Select wall sign colors to blend with the building and storefront colors. Select from color ranges that are analogous and complementary to them.
   - Corporate branding colors will be considered but will not be automatically approved if they are considered out of place with the building or the surrounding environment. The use of tone-down colors in the same hue family may be required in place of brighter standard corporate colors.

Guidelines by Signage Type

Wall Signs

Wall signs are panels or individual letters mounted flat against and parallel to a building wall or roof fascia.

1. **Limit sign information**
   - Generally, limit sign information to the business name. Graphic logos, date of building construction, address, and other elements may be allowed at the discretion of the County.
2. **Place signs within a clean Signable Area**
   - The Signable Area should:
   - Be relatively flat
   - Not contain doors or windows
   - Not include projecting molding or trim
   - Be in reasonable proportion to the overall façade (the Signable Area should not exceed 15 percent of the building façade)
   - If a building does not have a good location for a wall sign, use other allowed types, such as an awning, window, or projecting signs.

3. **Use sign materials that project slightly from the face of the building**
   - Use either individually applied letters to the face of the wall or apply sign letters to a board or panel mounted on the face.
   - Do not paint signs directly on wall surfaces.
4. **Provide sign illumination appropriate to the area**
   - Interior illuminated can signs that include multiple letters within a single sign enclosure will not be allowed for any wall sign
   - Interior illuminated individual letters may be used.
   - Exterior illumination with shielded spotlights can be used for wall signs

- Neon wall signs may be allowed but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- All sign and sign lighting raceways and electrical connections should be concealed.

Awning Signs

Awning signs consist of letters and graphics applied directly to the face or valance of awnings. Awning signs are often used effectively in combination with window signs.

1. **Place signs for easy visibility**

   - Apply signs to awning front valences (i.e., the flat vertical surface of awnings) or to sloped awning faces with a slope of at least two to one.
   - Limit the signage information on awnings
   - Since awning signs will often be viewed from passing vehicles, the amount of information that can be effectively conveyed is limited. Keeping sign text short will allow viewers to better comprehend and remember the message.
   - Generally limit awning signs to the business name, business logo, services or type of business (e.g., French Cuisine), and/or the business address number.
   - Limit the size of logos or text placed on awning sloped faces to a maximum of 15 percent of the sloped surface areas.
   - Limit sign width on awning valences to a maximum of 85 percent of the awning width. Limit the letter height to a maximum of 80 percent of the valance height.

2. **Avoid interior illuminated awnings**
   - Backlight awnings that make the entire awning a large sign will not be allowed. Signage on the awning's sloped face may be illuminated by shielded and attractive directional spotlights.

Window Signs

Window signs are primarily oriented to passing pedestrians and are generally applied to the inside of display windows.

1. **Limit the amount of signage used**
   - Window signs should be limited to a maximum of 25 percent of any individual window, and an aggregate area of no more than 10 percent of all ground-floor windows on any building face.
2. **Limit the size of the lettering**
   - The maximum height of letters should be 10 inches. Exceptions can be granted for the leading capital letter of text.
3. **Consider the use of logos and creative sign type**
   - Graphic logos and images along with special text formats can add personality and interest to window signs.

4. **Use high-quality materials and application methods**

Limit window sign materials to the following:

- Paint or vinyl film applied directly to the inside face of the window.
- Tubular neon suspended behind the window glass
- Wood or metal panels with applied lettering
- Paper signs placed in windows are not allowed.

Projecting Signs

Projecting signs are relatively flat, two-sided solid panels attached to brackets that are mounted perpendicular to the face of buildings and storefronts. They often include graphic images in addition to text and express the unique personality of an individual business.

1. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Use wood, metal, or non-glossy fabrics. Avoid plastics.
2. **Limit the number and size of projecting signs**

   - Use no more than one projecting sign per business frontage.
   - Limit the size of any projecting sign to five square feet.
   - Project signs no more than 36 inches from the building face and provide at least 6 inches between the inside edge of the sign and the building.
3. **Relate the design of projecting signs and supports to the character of the building**
   - Simple round or square horizontal supports with capped ends, painted black or white, are generally acceptable. However, more decorative approaches may be desirable when appropriate to the sign and/or architectural character of the building.
4. **Position projecting signs to complement the building's architectural details**
   - Locate solid panel signs below the first-floor ceiling line, or no more than 14 feet above the sidewalk, whichever is less. Provide at least 9 feet from the bottom of projecting signs to the ground in pedestrian areas and 14 feet in areas with vehicular traffic.
5. **Provide sign lighting only with shielded spotlights**
   - Utilize high-quality fixtures such as cylinder spots or decorative fixtures. Avoid exposed standard spot and flood bulbs.
   - Design light supports to complement the design of the sign and building façade.

Hanging Signs

Hanging signs are relatively flat panels, generally two-sided, which are similar to projecting signs, but are smaller and suspended below awnings, bay windows, balconies, and similar projections. They are intended primarily for business identification to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. They are commonly used as a type of western-style signage.

1. **Use high-quality materials**
   - Use wood or metal and avoid shiny plastic or fabric. Finish all exposed edges. Suspend signs with metal rods, small scale chain, cable, or hooks.
2. **Limit the number and size of hanging signs**
   - Use no more than one hanging sign per business. Limit the maximum sign size to three square feet. Mount signs to provide a minimum of nine feet of clearance between the sign and the sidewalk.

3. **Orient hanging signs to pedestrian traffic**
   - Mount signs under awnings, bay windows, or other projections with their orientation perpendicular to the building face so that they will be visible to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. If multiple hanging signs are placed along a business frontage, they should all be mounted with their bottom edge the same distance above the sidewalk and should be of similar size and shape.

Plaque Signs

Plaque signs are pedestrian-oriented flat panels mounted to wall surfaces near the entry to a business. They include signs that identify a specific business, directory signs for multiple businesses, and menu boxes for restaurants.

1. **Limit the location and size of plaque signs**
   - Locate signs on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries or entry passageways to off-street courtyards. Signs identifying a single business should be limited to an area of four square feet. Directory signs for the identification of multiple second floor or courtyard tenants may be larger, but no more than eight square feet.

2. **Use plaque signs for the display of restaurant menus**
   - A restaurant district is enhanced when a variety of restaurants share the area and customers are able to walk from one to the next to compare menus and prices. Attractive menu signs or boxes should not exceed six square feet in area and should have internal indirect lighting (e.g., bulbs located in the frame to cast direct light over the menu surface) or direct lighting using decorative fixtures.

Ground Signs

Primary ground signs are low signs that assist motorists in finding businesses along auto-oriented streets where businesses are separated from the street front by parking or large landscaped setbacks. Informational and directional ground signs are smaller signs that assist motorists in safely existing from moving traffic lanes to on-site uses in projects with multiple lanes.

1. **Ground signs are not generally encouraged in the Downtown Coyote Valley Area, but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.**
2. **Limit the information on each sign**
   - Ground signs should generally be limited to the following information:
   - Project or primary business identification name and/or logo.
   - Address number (strongly encouraged)
   - Multitenant ground signs are strongly discouraged. However, the display of up to three tenants may be considered for small ground signs so long as the sign and background color is common throughout, and the type style and logo colors of each tenant are the same.
   - The inclusion of services and products offered should not be included on ground signs.

3. **Locate signs for easy visibility from passing vehicles**
   - Locate signs within 10 feet of the front property line
   - Avoid blocking any vehicular or pedestrian sight lines that might result in safety problems.
4. **Limit the number, type, and size of ground signs**
   - Only one project or tenant identification sign is allowed for each development parcel street frontage.
   - The height and sign area per face for primary ground signs should be appropriate to the surrounding environment.
   - Directional signs are limited to a maximum area of six square feet, and only allowed on arterial streets. One per entrance or exit will be allowed.
5. **Lighting**
   - Lighting for ground signs must be by direct spotlight illumination from fixtures mounted either at the top of the sign or on the ground below the sign. Fixtures must be shielded to avoid direct view of the bulbs.
6. **Material**
   - All ground signs, including price signs for service stations, should be constructed of matte finish nonreflective materials.

Freestanding Signs

Freestanding signs are ground-mounted signs that emphasize business brand identity.

1. **Use limitations**
   - Freestanding signs should be strongly discouraged in the Coyote Valley area

Flag Signs

Flags, pennants, banners, streamers, and similar signs are temporary advertising devices used to designate special events or vehicle entry/pedestrian entry.

1. **Use limitations**
   - Should not be allowed as permanent signage (with the exception of the American flag and other related flags as described in the Lake County Zoning Ordinance).
   - Appropriate for designation of vehicle or pedestrian entryways for wineries and other similar uses during special events.
2. **Material**
   - All flags, pennants, banners, streamers, etc. should be constructed of matte finish and nonreflective material.

This page intentionally left blank.