

MIDDLETOWN AREA PLAN

Special Study Area Langtry Farms, LLC

This Special Study Area includes the lands comprising Langtry Farms, LLC ~~FKA Guenoc Winery, Inc.~~ located southeast of Middletown along Butts Canyon Road and about 15 miles north of Calistoga in the Guenoc Valley. Figure 6-3 is a map of this Special Study Area. It defines the vision for future development of the Langtry property in more detail with a goal of allowing the flexibility to create an economically diverse job base, innovative resort/residential communities, agritourism opportunities and resort-related uses while at the same time protecting significant agricultural lands, open space and natural resources of the area.

Guenoc Valley Existing Conditions

Guenoc Valley is a small inland valley of about 1,200 acres, near the south end of Lake County and northern Napa County. It is comprised of an alluvial fan isolated from surrounding areas by rocky ridges. The geographical location affects the climate. Guenoc Valley receives approximately 45 inches to 50 inches of rain per year compared to Middletown which receives approximately 60 inches per year. Guenoc Valley also experiences slightly greater seasonal temperature extremes, and fog is generally less severe than in Middletown.

These geographical features distinguish the area viticulturally. Guenoc Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) was the first American Viticultural Area designation granted to a single winery. The wine appellation is defined by the rocky ridge surrounding it and is entirely contained within the boundaries of Lake County. The Langtry vineyards sit generally at 1,000 feet elevation. These vineyards are the first in the area to be harvested, as extremely hot days are common and over-ripening is a concern. The area also has very cool nights, preserving acidity and producing rich wines with elegant structure.

As of 2026, there were approximately 20 acres of vines within Langtry's Guenoc Valley Vineyards. The winery grows Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Petite Sirah, and Cabernet.

Langtry Farms was established by the world famous actress Lillie Langtry in 1888, the vineyard and winery uses function as a balance of agricultural uses with agricultural-based businesses. The site also functions as a tourist destination, attracting visitors to the area. The site is characterized by rolling hills, oak woodlands, open spaces and meadows. The site is presently improved with a large winery, vineyards, outbuildings, and several reservoirs.

Future Development

The concept for future development of Langtry is to utilize the property for a wide range of interconnected and mutually beneficial land uses that ultimately support long-term agricultural operations and development, winery uses, and businesses related to a golf course, resort commercial operations, and supporting residential development.

New uses should create jobs for local residents and bring expanded economic development opportunities to the Planning Area while reducing any potentially significant traffic and air quality impacts. A true mix of land uses should be represented, including:

- Sustainable agricultural operations. This will include a focused effort on agricultural-based tourism and a diversified crop base.
- Sustainable wine production operations.

- Golf course and other outdoor recreational activities.
- Expansion of the visitor accommodations at the site, migrating towards a resort commercial use.
- Residential uses that will support the full range of proposed uses.

Future uses should be guided by the formal Planned Development process with the County, and will need to be designed to maintain consistency with adopted plans and ordinances, notably those goals in the General Plan and Area Plan that tie jobs to housing, promote sustainability and Smart Growth practices and emphasize the importance of agriculture and open space resources. The Lake County Economic Development Plan further identifies a need for more tourist destinations, agritourism activities, lodging units and luxury accommodations in the South County. The following objectives and concepts should be used to guide future development on the Langtry property, which is uniquely positioned to become a major tourist destination in the South County and one of the key agriculturally oriented destination resorts on the North Coast.

Agriculture

Future agricultural land uses on the property should contribute to the sustainability of production and winery operations. The goal of enhancing and developing the agricultural and vineyard uses is to ensure the continuation and viability of agricultural operations, and invigoration of the local economy. Agricultural operations should be designed to protect scenic views, make use of natural contours and practice sustainable use of water and other natural resources.

Lands designated for agricultural purposes, when developed or expanded, should be developed with agricultural uses and compatible agritourism uses. Future agritourism uses should be compatible with existing agricultural use in the area and not adversely impact agricultural operations. Agritourism land uses should provide visitors with a visually pleasing setting, and include options for “hands on” agricultural experiences. Marketing of products grown or derived from Lake County and Guenoc Valley should be a priority.

Commercial

Commercial resort uses should act to successfully diversify the agricultural operations and promote economic development of the property and employment base in the Middletown and surrounding South County area. As part of this vision, the estate is expected to continue its winery production and expand market commercial uses related to agriculture.

Commercial resort use should be designed, built and operated such that it will attract visitors, and promote multi-day stopovers in the County. Further, any commercial resort use should fulfill and comply with policies that promote Lake County economic development and the economic development of Langtry agricultural lands. Future hotel and resort uses should be high quality developments and may be designed for a variety of travelers from family lodgings to luxury resorts, with an emphasis on upscale resort uses.

Future resort/retreat related uses should be tied to the breadth of recreational opportunities at the site, including all outdoor pursuits, vineyard tours, hiking, mountain, biking, kayaking, boarding, wine tasting and golfing. They may be mixed-use in nature, which incorporate visitor-serving uses and secondary retail and subordinate residential uses consistent with policies of the General Plan. Resorts should seek to utilize products that are locally grown or derived from Lake County products. The following resort uses and other resort uses that are similar in nature should be considered:

- Continued operation of existing guest accommodations in concert with golf course operations and agricultural uses and outdoor pursuits
- Boutique resort

- High-end resort and/or retreat center
- Bed and breakfast inns
- Active adult resort
- Residential uses needed to support resort development may be considered, consistent with policies of the Lake County General Plan.

Applications for new agricultural related commercial uses should include a marketing and sales program promoting agricultural products grown or derived from Lake County and Guenoc Valley to visitors and Lake County businesses. Commercial uses should be encouraged to carry merchandise from Guenoc Valley such as produce and wines, as well as other local products. Retail establishments should be primarily visitor oriented.

Residential

Future residential development should complement the agricultural and resort operations through implementation of appropriate design guidelines, site planning, creation of public gathering spaces and similar measures. Full service, walkable communities and energy-efficient developments are encouraged. Clustering of residential density, beyond what is allowed by the current land use designations and configuration without clustering, should only be considered if it is designed and scaled to be a subordinate use to a primary resort development, consistent with resort and business park development policies of the Lake County General Plan.

The General Plan supports innovative and creative residential projects that allow the transfer and clustering of residential density from areas with known constraints to areas that are more suitable for development. This allows lands with prime agricultural soil or areas with known natural constraints (serpentine soil, wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, etc.) to be preserved.

Future residential units developed on the property would provide critical economic support to the planned resort and commercial development, winery, vineyards and ranchlands, golf course and other recreational uses onsite. These commercial, agricultural, and recreational uses would drive jobs creation necessary to improve the jobs/housing imbalance that currently exists in the Planning Area, provided that the number of dwellings is limited, and less than is needed to accommodate the number of jobs created by the project. Future residential development at this site should occur through the Planned Development process. Development clustering is promoted for this Special Study Area with remaining undeveloped areas being presented through policies outlined in the Lake County General Plan and as implemented in the Lake County Zoning Ordinance.

If it is found that the jobs creation at Langtry outpaces the local available housing stock within the Middletown Planning Area, employee and market rate housing should also be considered for the property. Employee-based housing developments should provide a mix of housing types that will also extend affordability to employees/homebuyers.

The general objective for residential uses on site is for development in accordance with smart growth principles, including but not limited to:

- Walkable communities
- Creating community identity
- Preserving open space and agricultural land
- Employing compact building design.
- Supporting on-site resort commercial and agricultural uses.

- Clustering new residential development should be considered to preserve significant agricultural operations, support sustainable growth patterns, reduce impacts to hillside terrain, natural resources, traffic and air-quality and to retain the natural landscape that primarily defines the property.
- Determination of appropriate residential densities will be based on consistency with underlying General Plan goals and policies and considered as part of a Planned Development process by the County.

Farm Architecture

This section addresses and guides the future architectural styles and themes of development on the Langtry property. Future development should capture, enhance, and evoke an overall “farm architecture.” Existing development already has strong farm architectural themes, including the historic Langtry residence, the hunting lodge, offices, barns and other structures. These structures are attractive to the observer because of their attention to detail, intricacy and understated elegance that is based on the natural setting of the Guenoc Valley and historic agricultural uses on the Langtry property. Future development should continue this expression through the use of designs that provide a visually appealing palate of textures, shading and intricacy of design that are complementary to each other and the “farm architecture” theme established on the Langtry property. Architectural guidelines and design pattern books should be developed and incorporated into any Planned Development application submittal to the County.

Outdoor Pursuits

Recreational pursuits should primarily be comprised of outdoor pursuits that complement and enhance the natural setting. Langtry is in a position to become a get-away destination that offers visitors the opportunity to relax, play, and enjoy life by experiencing the surrounding natural environment. The following principles should guide recreation opportunities on the Langtry property:

- Langtry should continue to promote agricultural and winery uses, along with golfing, as an attraction for wine industry customers and visitors alike.
- Langtry should provide opportunities for hunting and fishing on its ranchlands, consistent with County policies and the appropriate regulations of the California Fish and Game Code.
- Langtry should utilize, promote and enhance new and existing trails for diverse user experiences, including, but not limited to, nature viewing, and hiking.
- Langtry should create trail linkages for hiking and biking to other uses on the property, particularly to the winery, guest accommodations/resort areas, and ranch center buildings.
- Langtry should implement special recreational events, including winemaking. This should also include use of the golf course and club house for specified community events, consistent with County approvals.
- Langtry should promote stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, and use of pools for outdoor recreation.

Natural Resources Conservation

Future development at the site should take measures to protect water quality and supply, as well as other natural resources. Any development of the site should employ resource conservation techniques, including site planning, building design and infrastructure planning, that protects the surrounding natural environment. Accordingly, any future development should avoid creation of significant impacts upon environmentally

sensitive areas such as streams, lakes, woodlands, vineyards, key viewsheds, and important plant and wildlife habitats.

Land Use

There are three existing land use designations applicable to Langtry: Rural Lands, Rural Residential, and Agriculture. If developed with residences in the future, the site should be developed through the planned development process to limit impacts on agriculture, traffic, open space and air quality. Under these circumstances, amendments to the General Plan land use and zoning designations may be considered in order to facilitate appropriate, substantial resort development. Density transfers from one parcel to another within the Langtry property should be encouraged as part of planned development residential projects if they facilitate clustered residential development and preserve viable agricultural lands. Development should be clustered in areas of mitigated risk for natural hazards.

Future development will be guided by the Planned Development process in which all aspects of a project will be reviewed based on consistency with the goals and objectives of this section for development of the Guenoc Valley.

Objectives and Policies

Sustainably develop agricultural uses and promote agricultural products and agricultural tourism.

Policy

The County should continue to support efforts by Langtry to diversify its agricultural base, and proposals that result in value added agricultural opportunities should be encouraged and supported.

The County shall consider developing an Agricultural Planned Development zoning district which accommodates wine country style development with lodging components.

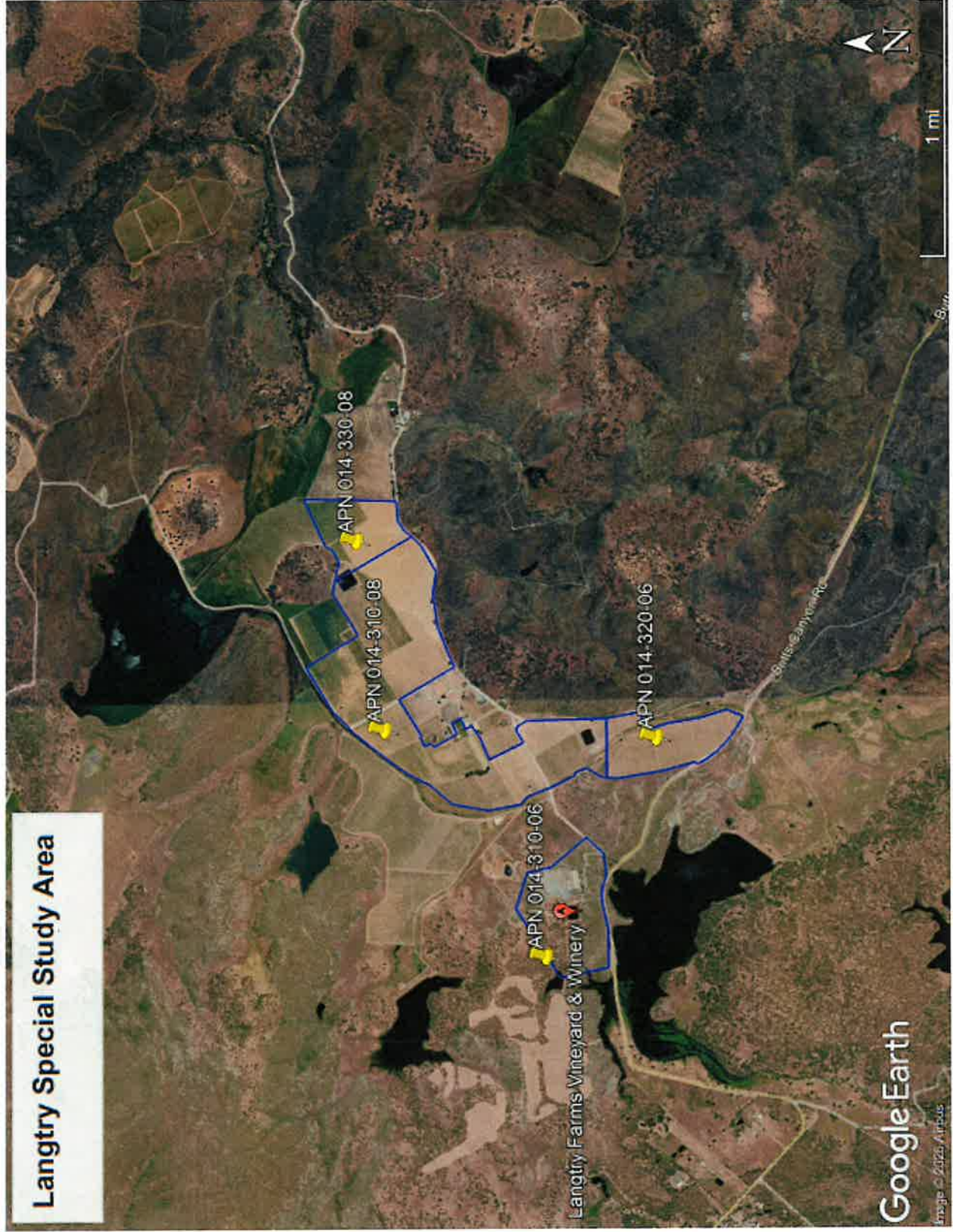
Future development should be high quality and low-impact planned development that includes mixed uses complementary to agricultural operations in the Guenoc Valley.

Policies

A mixed-use destination resort with connectivity to Langtry's history and agricultural uses, while capitalizing on its varied recreational opportunities, should be encouraged and supported.

Future commercial and/or residential development proposal applications shall be processed through the "PD", Planned Development process. Only innovative, diverse projects founded in smart growth principles should be considered.

Langtry Special Study Area



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- High-end resort and/or retreat center
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- Active adult resort
- **Subordinate r**Residential uses needed to support resort development may be considered, consistent with policies of the Lake County General Plan.

Applications for new ~~agricultural-agricultural~~-related commercial uses should include a marketing and sales program promoting agricultural products grown or derived from Lake County and Guenoc Valley to visitors and Lake County businesses. Commercial uses should be encouraged to carry merchandise from Guenoc Valley such as produce and wines, as well as other local products. Retail establishments should be primarily ~~visitor~~ visitor-oriented.

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- Employing compact building design.

- Supporting on-site resort commercial and agricultural uses.
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- Langtry should utilize, promote and enhance new and existing trails for diverse user experiences, including, but not limited to, nature viewing, and hiking.
- Langtry should create trail linkages for hiking and biking to other uses on the property, particularly to the winery, guest accommodations/resort areas, and ranch center buildings.
- Langtry should implement special recreational events, including winemaking. This should also include use of the golf course and club-house for specified community events, consistent with County approvals.
- Langtry should ~~promote~~ provide or promote a variety of stand-up water sports and activities including but not limited to stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, and other use of pools for outdoor water-related recreation. (or something like this that is less specific and open to new, innovative water sports)

Natural Resources Conservation

Future development at the site should take measures to protect water quality and supply, as well as other natural resources. Any development of the site should employ resource conservation techniques, including site planning, building design and infrastructure planning, that protects the surrounding natural environment. Accordingly, any future development should avoid creation of significant impacts upon environmentally sensitive areas such as streams, lakes, woodlands, vineyards, key viewsheds, and important plant and wildlife habitats.

Land Use

There are three existing land use designations applicable to Langtry: Rural Lands, Rural Residential, and Agriculture. If developed with residences in the future, the site should be developed through the planned development process to limit impacts on agriculture, traffic, open space and air quality. Any future increase in overall density should only be considered if it is necessary to support tourist-related development, consistent with General Plan policies, and in such cases, the residential development would need to be subordinate to a primary commercial development. Under these circumstances, amendments to the General Plan land use and zoning designations may be considered in order to facilitate appropriate, substantial resort development. Density transfers from one parcel to another within the Langtry property should be encouraged as part of planned development residential projects if they facilitate clustered residential development and preserve viable agricultural lands. Development should be clustered in areas of mitigated risk for natural hazards.

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Policy

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Future development should be high-~~quality and quality~~, low-impact planned development that includes mixed uses complementary to agricultural operations in the Guenoc Valley.

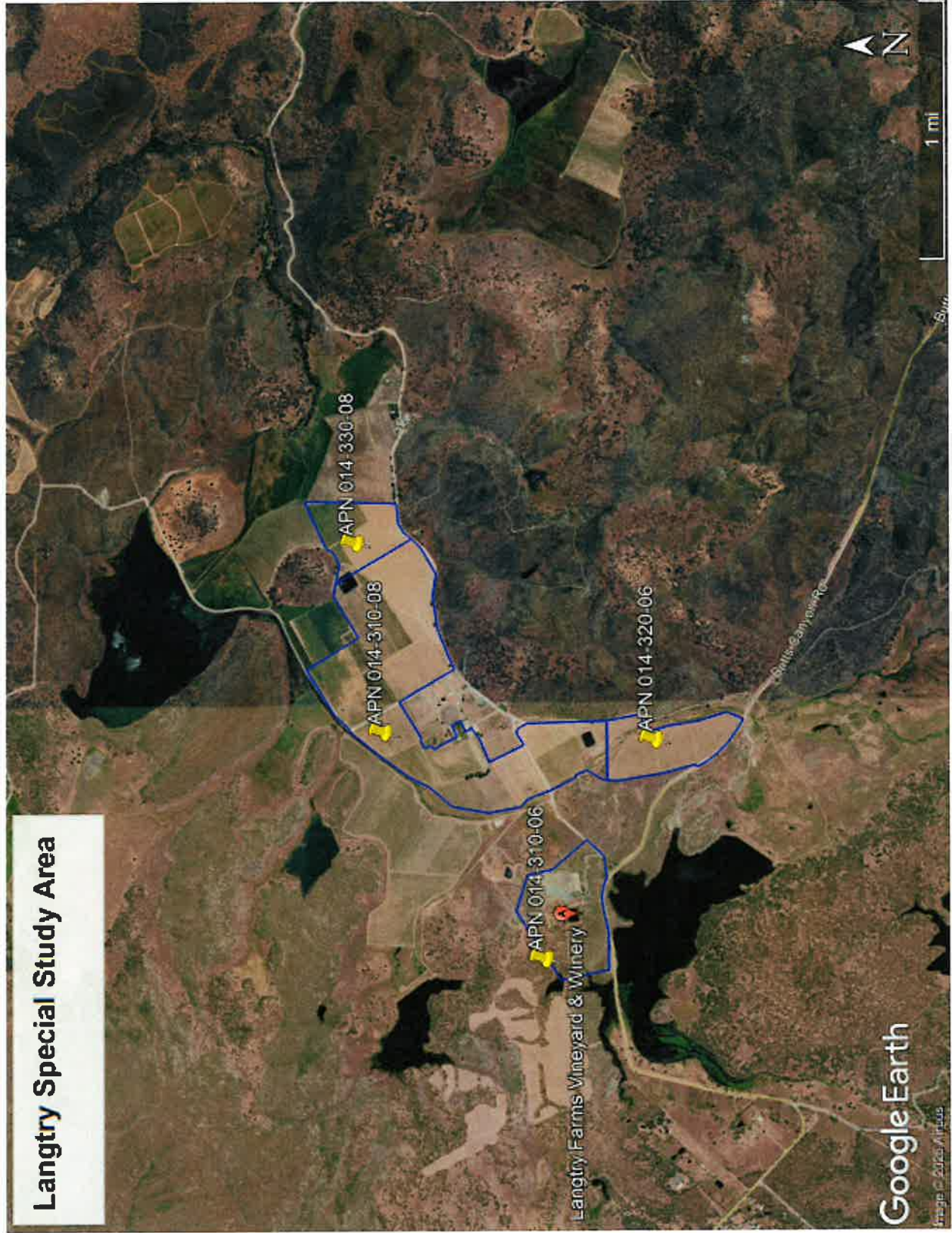
Policies

Policy 6.3.2a should be added back in. The policy speaks to density transers through the Planned Developmnet process, encouraging clustering of residential and preservation of agriculture and open space. Also that any development including residential should be a resort development with residential being subordinate to the resort.

A mixed-use destination resort with connectivity to Langtry's history and agricultural uses, while capitalizing on its varied recreational opportunities, should be encouraged and supported.

Future commercial and/or residential development proposal applications shall be processed through the "PD", Planned Development process. Only innovative, diverse projects founded in smart growth principles should be considered.

Langtry Special Study Area





Dedicated to preserving Lake County's natural resources through education, cooperation, restoration and conservation.

Officers

President: Merry Jo Velasquez
Vice Pres.: Valerie Nixon
Treasurer: Bernie Butcher
Secretary Roberta Lyons

Executive Director

Angela De Palma-Dow

PO Box 1017
Lakeport, CA 95453
707.262.0707

LCLT@LakeCountyLandTrust.org
www.LakeCountyLandTrust.org

July 28, 2026

TO: Mireya G. Turner, Director Community Development Department,
County of Lake

Re: rezoning the Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve

Dear Director Turner;

We are requesting an amendment to change the zoning of the Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve to Open Space ("O").

The preserve consists of the following parcels:

APN	Address	Acreage
008-003-09	2350 S Main St, Lakeport	52.4
008-003-10	982 Soda Bay Rd, Lakeport	33.8
008-002-02	950 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport	46.6
008-006-16	982 Soda Bay Rd, Lakeport	150.3
008-001-22	440 Soda Bay Rd, Lakeport	1.8
008-001-23	446 Soda Bay Rd, Lakeport	2.1
008-001-31	26 Soda Bay Rd, Lakeport	8.2

We request that this amendment be included in the Lake County 2050 Project.

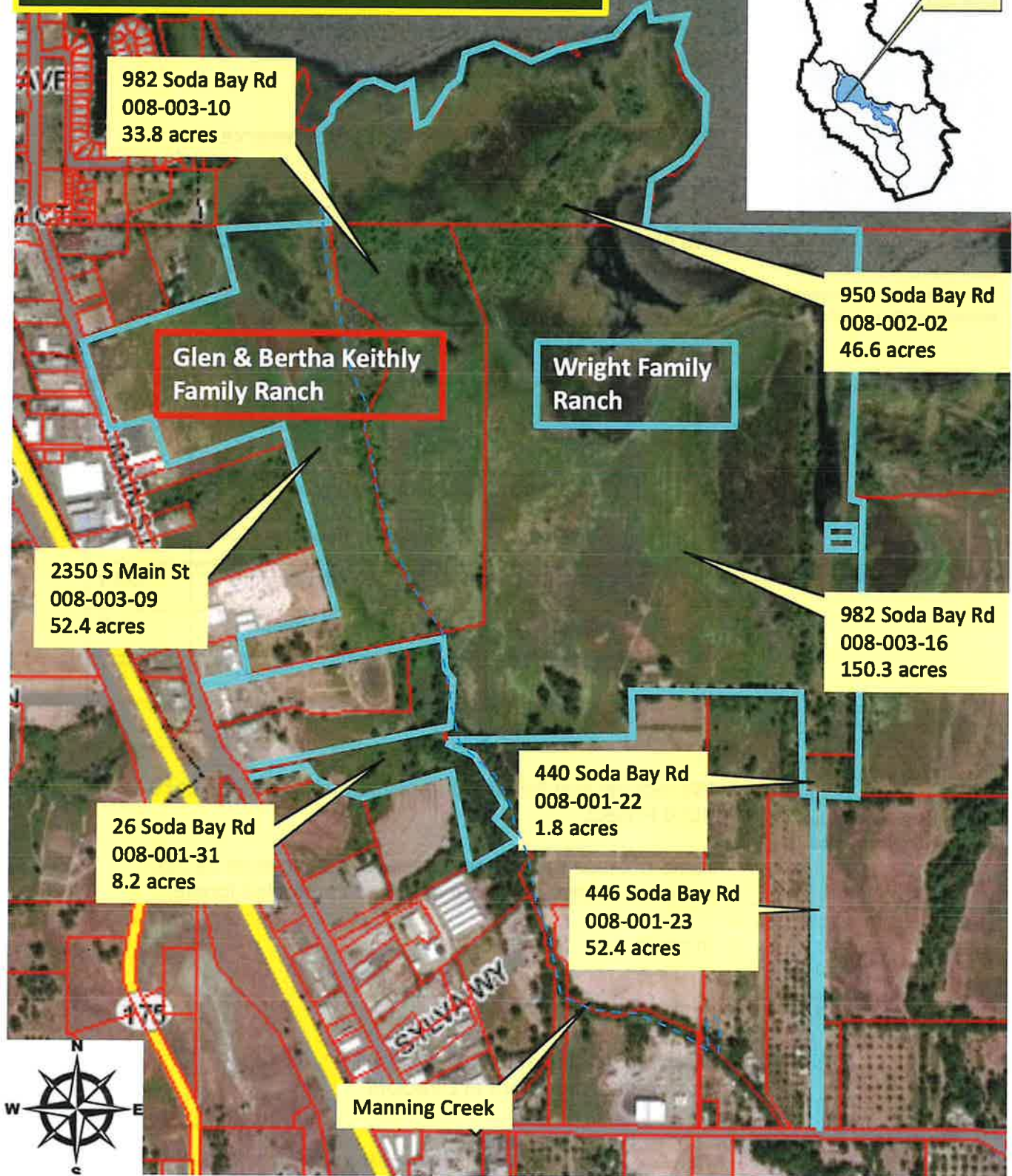
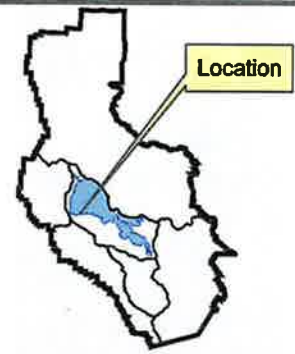
None of these parcels are or will be in agriculture as they compose a wetland preserve and are protected forever.

In gratitude,

Merry Jo Velasquez
President of the Board of Directors

*The Lake County Land Trust is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization.
Our Federal Tax ID Number is 68-0332712.*

Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve



Mireya Turner

From: Kate Schmidt-Hopper <wiseacre1farm@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 3:06 PM
To: Mireya Turner
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Lake County 2050 Update

Good Afternoon Mireya,

I have been reading through the General Plan, and the Middletown Area Plan. A few observations:

1). Hidden Valley Lake is variously referred to also as Hidden Valley. There is even a green sign on Hwy 29 at Spruce Grove Rd reading Hidden Valley. However, there is a Hidden Valley in Ventura Co. in the Santa Monica Mts. Does CA allow two areas with the same names? This is especially problematic on the various maps provided in many of the elements of both documents. My understanding is the area is properly known as Hidden Valley Lake.

2). I believe Middletown Square Park has been renamed Middletown Gateway Park by MATH vote. Please confirm with them

3) M LU 3.4 refers to a Municipal Advisory Council. Is this what MATH is? The configuration of MATH allows one "at Large" Board member from Hidden Valley Lake. I am aware the HVL has their own homeowner's association which I'm sure is in contact with County government. However, this leaves quite a lot of the Middletown Area Plan which is not actually represented by a Municipal Advisory Council. Just an observation; perhaps Fire Safe Community (ies) could perform that task, should those areas of Coyote Valley, Jerusalem Valley, Anderson Springs, Ranchos, etc. want to have greater representation.

4)pg 69 (Middletown area plan). Mixed Chaparral community sentence missing close parenthesis so plant designations are muddled

5) an area called 'Hell's Half Acre' is noted as being adjacent to a military installation. Is there still military there? Is this the old Coast Guard station?

6) M-0s-1.10. Change CA Fish and (Game to Wildlife)

7) M-OS-1.23 , OS-6.5., M-SSA-4.a, M pg 159 2. Parking lot lighting (4):
Please add reference to Dark Skies best practices/ ordinances/

8). page 175. are photos referenced reversed? Looks like strip mail without large sidewalk and trees is on left

9) page 178 CV element--again Dark Skies compliant

10) HR 5.18. change "traditional" to Tribal

2) in Public Safety element/ Wildfires; should there be reference to private drone usage during wildfires? Can we add an action to prohibit private drone use during wildfires or other emergencies?

I did not see any reference to "grey water" diversions in any of the elements I read, whether in the Middletown Plan or the General Plan. Did I look in the wrong place?

Thank you for all you do, Kate Schmidt-Hopper

On Mon, Aug 3, 2026 at 4:33 PM Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov> wrote:

Hello LAPAC and GPAC'ers,

This is an update on the General Plan update process. The draft documents and the public comment inventory have been made available on the [Lake County 2050 website](https://www.lakecountyca.gov/2050). We welcome your review and comments. The draft documents will go before the Planning Commission on 8/13/26 in a workshop format and 8/27/26 for review and consideration of recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will consider the documents at a Special Meeting in September (date yet to be determined). In between, there will be a hearing before the Airport Land Use Commission on 9/3/26 to determine compatibility of the update with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Please feel free to view the agendas when they are posted at <https://countyoflake.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Your comments on the documents are most welcome, and can be submitted either via email directly to me, or alternatively, once the PC and/or BOS agendas have been posted, via the e-comment link found at the agenda site. Comments submitted via the e-comment option are automatically forwarded to the deciding body of that meeting, as well as to the department.

Comments sent in will be collected and presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as Public Input. Please note, all input submitted is considered public and will be forwarded to the PC/BOS without redaction.

Thank you again for your participation throughout the General Plan update process. Your input is valuable and crucial to making this community visioning process worthwhile.

Cordially,



Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director

Community Development

April 28, 2026

To: Community Development Director Mireya Turner

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the draft General Plan and East Lake Area Plan.

The Eastern Regional Town Hall (ERTH) is a municipal advisory committee appointed by the Lake County Board of Supervisors. The focus of ERTH is to seek relevant information, perform outreach, participate with and make recommendations on issues and decisions affecting the residents of the East Region of District 3.

The ERTH region is part of the East Lake Area Plan, representing the communities of Clearlake Oaks, Spring Valley, Glenhaven, Double Eagle Ranch and the Southern border of the District 3 near Sulphur Bank Mine and North Dr areas, over to the Colusa/Yolo county borders.

Members of the ERTH council have actively participated in reviewing both plans in detail, and ERTH is submitting the following general comments on the plans from other members of the council – this is in addition to all comments submitted at the East Lake Area Plan meetings held over the past month.

- We take issue with the new format in the General Plan. Major countywide elements - such as Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation/Recreation and Environmental justice - have been reallocated to the Local Area Plans when they should have their overarching elements in the General Plan. Because these overarching elements have been relegated to the Area Plans, all the area plans are nearly identical.
- Baseline information and demographics which should be included in the plans - particularly the local area plans - appear to be mostly in the EIR. As the General and Local Area Plans are referred to during project development - and not the EIR - this information should be put into the actual plans.
- We are concerned about losing historical knowledge found in the current Shoreline Area Plan. We would like the inclusion/update of baseline demographics, historical references, information and descriptive text carried over from the Shoreline Area Plan to the East Lake Plan.
- We support the addition of a Clear Lake Element, which should include watershed-scale frameworks for Clear Lake and its tributaries. It should also include a discussion on the Blue Ribbon committee role, projects and an alignment with existing funded restoration and monitoring efforts, as well as inclusion of the Middle Creek Restoration Area and other rehabilitation projects.
- We support the addition of an Energy Element to the General Plan.
- We would like an investigation into a Renewable Energy Ordinance and Renewable Energy Zoning Overlay.

We would like to see action plans on the following:

- Update geothermal development and design criteria that protects sensitive resources, ensures neighborhood compatibility outside of the geothermal setback zone, and provides tangible benefits to the communities. This should also be expanded to all Renewable Energy.
- Coordinate with Yolo County to Monitor the Indian Valley Reservoir Dam on a regular basis, to ensure the residents of Spring Valley are protected.
- Develop an alternate evacuation route in Spring Valley.
- Develop and implement a strong oak tree and heritage tree ordinance which also addresses issues with pests and invasive species.
- Support participation with the Clearlake Oaks Revitalization Initiative in development and implementation of the long-term conservation, monitoring and maintenance plan for the Clearlake Oaks Keys and Schindler Creek areas.
- Support participation with Blue Ribbon Committee water rehabilitation projects in the East Lake region, such as the Hypolimnetic Oxygenation project.

The specific comments submitted by the other council members are attached.

Thank you,

East Region Town Hall Council

Energy Policy – Required Addition to General Plan 2050

2008 vs 2050 Comparison

The 2008 General Plan did not include a formal Energy Policy. The 2050 General Plan encourages geothermal and clean energy development but does not establish enforceable standards for community protection, economic benefit, or long-term accountability.

California Planning Law & Authority

Under California Government Code Section 65302 and Section 65303, counties are authorized to adopt policies within the General Plan to guide land use, conservation, safety, and optional elements such as energy. Under California planning law, the General Plan functions as the "constitution for land use decisions." All local land use decisions must be consistent with it.

State Pressure & Timing

State policy encouraging geothermal and renewable energy development increases pressure on Lake County to accommodate such projects. Because the General Plan is the County's primary policy document, protections must be defined before projects are proposed and reviewed.

Active Geothermal Development Pressure (EGX)

Lake County is currently experiencing active geothermal planning and proposals, including projects associated with EGX. Geothermal development is already being explored and discussed locally, demonstrating that this issue is immediate and not theoretical. Because projects are already being considered, the General Plan must establish clear Energy Policy protections before those projects move forward. Without these protections, projects may advance without defined local standards, reducing the County's leverage and ability to ensure community benefit and safety.

Why This Must Be Added

Without a formal Energy Policy, geothermal development may proceed without clear local protections, economic benefits, or accountability measures. This places environmental, financial, and public safety risks on County residents.

Required Energy Policy Provisions

- 1 Require a defined percentage of royalties from geothermal production to be paid to Lake County.
- 2 Require discounted energy rates for all Lake County residents.
- 3 Require full financial transparency, including project costs, revenue, ownership, and transfers.
- 4 Require binding agreements ensuring all obligations remain in effect if the project is sold or transferred.
- 5 Require that the County receives a percentage of increased market value if the project is sold.

- 6 Require comprehensive insurance coverage for seismic activity, explosions, contamination, and system failures.
- 7 Require guaranteed compensation for County residents for damages, health impacts, or displacement caused by geothermal operations.
- 8 Require independent monitoring and public reporting of environmental and health impacts.
- 9 Require strict compliance with land use, water, and safety protections defined in the General Plan.
- 10 Prohibit high-risk extraction methods including hydraulic fracturing or similar stimulation techniques.

Key Policy Statement

Energy development in Lake County must provide measurable economic benefit, protect public health and safety, and ensure long-term accountability through enforceable agreements that remain binding regardless of ownership changes.

This comment is submitted for inclusion in the administrative record and requires a separate and specific response.

Submitted by: Sterling Wellman

Geothermal Element – Comprehensive Protections, Setbacks & Controls

2008 vs 2050 Comparison

The 2008 General Plan recognized geothermal development and included general language regarding mitigation, monitoring, geotechnical review, erosion control, seismic concerns, and protection of water needed for other beneficial uses. However, those protections were largely broad and discretionary. The 2050 General Plan moves forward at a time when geothermal development pressure is significantly higher, but still needs much stronger, more enforceable geothermal-specific standards to protect water, infrastructure, contaminated areas, shoreline systems, and communities before projects move forward.

Why This Must Be Added

Lake County is no longer planning for a distant possibility. Geothermal development is already being actively considered in the County. That means the Geothermal Element must move beyond general guidance and establish clear enforceable protections now. Without specific standards in the General Plan, projects may be proposed before the County has clearly defined local rules for setbacks, water use, subsurface reach, community benefit, infrastructure protection, and long-term accountability.

Required Policy Additions

- Require strict geothermal setbacks from shoreline areas, including Clear Lake and shoreline-connected systems in District 3 and the Eastern Town Hall region.
- Require strict geothermal setbacks from residential areas, city limits, and existing communities to reduce public safety, noise, and industrial-use conflicts.
- Require strict setbacks from critical infrastructure, including wastewater treatment plants, wastewater lines, force mains, water treatment plants, water mains, reservoirs, and community water systems.
- Require expanded setbacks and exclusion zones around contaminated areas, including the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund site and historic mercury mining areas such as Chalk Mountain and Walker Ridge.
- Require geothermal setbacks from major fault systems and geologically sensitive areas, including the Bartlett Springs Fault Zone, Big Valley Fault, and Collayomi Fault.
- Require that geothermal siting decisions be based on regional geology, not just surface location, because subsurface conditions, faults, and groundwater pathways are interconnected.
- Require full evaluation of subsurface reach, including directional and horizontal drilling, and require analysis of impacts beyond the immediate project footprint.
- Require full disclosure of well locations, surface facilities, subsurface pathways, and any associated off-site infrastructure before project approval.
- Require projects to identify all water sources, including any use of recycled water, wastewater systems, or pipeline infrastructure, and prove those systems can safely support geothermal demand.
- Require baseline and long-term monitoring of groundwater levels, groundwater quality, surface water quality, temperature changes, and flow conditions before and after project

approval.

- Require a no-net-harm standard demonstrating no reduction in groundwater availability, no increased contamination risk, and no degradation of watershed health.
- Require analysis of induced seismicity, subsidence, pressure changes, groundwater pathway changes, and contaminant mobilization risks before any approval is granted.
- Prohibit hydraulic fracturing, fracking, and other high-risk subsurface stimulation methods associated with geothermal extraction.
- Require full transparency, including public disclosure of project design, project phases, infrastructure use, environmental risks, and any transfer or sale of project ownership.
- Require community benefit agreements, including a defined royalty percentage returned to Lake County and discounted energy costs for County residents.
- Require that all protections, royalties, discounts, and community benefit obligations remain binding if a project is sold, transferred, or assigned to a new company or entity.
- Prohibit geothermal development where shoreline proximity, contamination, subsurface reach, fault systems, residential areas, and infrastructure overlap create elevated and cumulative risk.
- Require independent third-party review of geology, hydrology, contamination risk, and infrastructure safety for any large-scale geothermal proposal.
- Require emergency response and failure planning for blowouts, pipeline failures, induced seismic events, water contamination, and infrastructure disruption.
- Require that geothermal development not be approved in evacuation-constrained or multi-hazard areas unless the County first demonstrates that public safety and emergency access are protected.

AB 531, Local Control & Timing

State law encouraging geothermal development increases pressure on Lake County to define its protections now, not later. Under California planning law, the General Plan functions as the constitution for future land use decisions. If geothermal protections are clearly written into the General Plan before adoption, they become part of the County's policy framework for project review. If they are not included, the County has less local guidance and less leverage when projects move into later review stages.

Key Policy Statement

Geothermal development must not be allowed in locations where subsurface disturbance, water use, contamination risk, fault systems, critical infrastructure, shoreline proximity, or community safety concerns create unacceptable long-term environmental or public safety impacts.

This comment is submitted for inclusion in the administrative record and requires a separate and specific response.

Submitted by: Sterling Wellman

Comments for General Plan 3/30/2026 Donna Mackiewicz to share at EARTH

Countywide Framework, Missing Elements, and Alignment with Ongoing Restoration Work

Please consider the following comments to help ensure the Plan reflects real conditions on the ground and the significant work already underway to protect and restore Clear Lake and its watershed.

Core Structural Concern

The current Draft to the General Plan is weak and leaves a lot open to interpretation. Several foundational elements appear to be shifted into Local Area Plans instead of clearly established at the countywide level:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Conservation & Recreation
- Environmental Justice

Key Red Flags

Without strong countywide direction, there is risk of inconsistency, fragmentation, and weakened protections across the county.

Missing Integration of Existing Work

The Plan does not clearly integrate ongoing work from the Blue Ribbon Committee and CNRA-funded efforts. Example is HOS (hypolimnetic oxygenation system) placement in the Lower Oaks Arm.

The Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake has secured over \$46 million in state funding for projects addressing water quality, ecosystem health, and community revitalization. Key funded initiatives, often led by UC Davis research and local partners, include harmful algal bloom (HAB) mitigation, invasive species control, wetland restoration, and economic development. These projects are selected by the Committees (appointed Lake County residents serve on the Technical and Socio-economic Committees)

composed of local, tribal, and state stakeholders to specifically address the decline in water quality and support the local economy.

CEQA Consistency and Structural Considerations

The current draft General Plan would benefit from a more integrated and consistent framework to support effective implementation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

As currently organized, a fragmented structure across elements (Land Use, Conservation, Open Space, Environmental Justice) may create challenges for consistent application of CEQA requirements particularly in the areas of environmental baseline, significance determinations, and cumulative impact analysis.

Examples...Environmental Baseline (CEQA Guidelines 15125) CEQA Guidelines Section 15125 emphasizes the importance of clearly defining the environmental setting as the baseline against which impacts are measured. While lead agencies have discretion to adjust baseline approaches in appropriate circumstances, this flexibility works best when supported by a cohesive, countywide framework. A more integrated General Plan would help ensure that baseline conditions, especially for sensitive resources such as wetlands, oak woodlands, and watershed systems are consistently defined and applied across projects.

Significance Determinations (CEQA Guidelines 15064) Section 15064 provides the framework for determining whether a project may result in a significant environmental effect. A General Plan that clearly aligns policies, thresholds, and resource protections across elements will strengthen the County's ability to make defensible, consistent significance determinations, particularly for biological resources, hydrology, and climate-related impacts.

Cumulative Impacts (CEQA Guidelines 15064(h) and 15130) Cumulative impact analysis is a key area where consistency is especially important. Section 15064(h) and Section 15130 require evaluation of whether a project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning significant when viewed in connection with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

A more unified General Plan structure would improve the County's ability to evaluate watershed-scale and regional impacts (e.g., to Clear Lake, tributaries, and

restoration areas such as Schindler Creek), support consistent use of thresholds and mitigation strategies across projects and help ensure that incremental impacts are not underestimated when considered collectively.

Additionally, Section 15064(h)(3) allows a lead agency to rely on compliance with an adopted plan or mitigation program (such as a Climate Action Plan or resource management framework) to determine that impacts are not cumulatively considerable. **This underscores the importance of having a clear, internally consistent General Plan with measurable standards and enforceable protection.**

Fair Argument Standard and Disagreement Among Experts

CEQA also requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Report when there is substantial evidence supporting a “fair argument” that a project may have a significant effect, even if other experts disagree. A well-structured General Plan with clear policies and up-to-date resource data can help reduce uncertainty and conflicting interpretations, while ensuring that environmental review remains robust and legally defensible.

To support CEQA consistency and long-term environmental protection,

Strengthening integration across General Plan elements to ensure shared definitions, baselines, and thresholds,

Incorporating watershed-scale and ecosystem-based frameworks (particularly for Clear Lake and its tributaries),

Aligning policies with existing funded restoration and monitoring efforts (e.g., Blue Ribbon Committee projects), and

Providing clear, measurable standards that can be consistently applied during CEQA review.

What Else Needs to Be Reinforced

Countywide Land Use framework

Countywide Circulation framework

Open Space system

Conservation & Recreation

Environmental Justice

Integration of ongoing science and funding
Watershed-based planning

Oak Woodlands, Tree Protection, and Long-Term Mitigation

Oaks are a foundational part of Lake County's landscape. They support wildlife, protect soil and water quality, and play a key role in watershed health. Because they take decades to mature, their loss cannot be quickly replaced.

May 2, 2022, and every month since, the Board of Supervisors declares a tree mortality emergency.

While mitigation often relies on replacement planting, it is important to recognize that:

- Newly planted trees do not replicate the ecological function of mature oaks for many decades
- Survival rates can vary under drought and climate conditions
- Habitat value and canopy structure are not immediately restored and spread of invasive pests goes uncontrolled.

The General Plan could address Oak Borer Prevention and Management: Chipping infested wood to one inch is an effective control. You do not have to chip and burn. Burning is effective if you cannot chip the material. Chipped infested material can be used onsite, but in general we do not recommend moving the wood chips long distances. And Oak Borer Identification and Reporting: Community outreach to identify pests should be a part of all projects. An on-going reporting system should be in place to monitor the spread of oak pests such as Mediterranean Oak Borer, Gold-spotted Oak Borer (GSOB), or invasive Shothole Borer (ISHB). Example: Chipping infested wood to one inch is an effective control. You do not have to chip and burn. Burning is effective if you cannot chip the material. Chipped infested material can be used onsite, but in general we do not recommend moving the wood chips long distances.

For these reasons, mitigation does not fully offset long-term loss.

The General Plan should ensure:

- Avoidance and minimization of tree removal
- Accurate tree inventories including species and DBH

- Use of native, site-appropriate species
- Avoidance of invasive species in mitigation
- Long-term monitoring and success criteria

Strengthening these policies will ensure oak woodlands are treated as long-term resources.

Adding the elements removed from the 2008 plans (especially Land Use – conservation and open space) should be put back into General Plan design. Strengthening these elements at the General Plan level will improve consistency, support CEQA, and align future decisions with ongoing restoration work and the county-wide strong oak-tree, heritage trees registry and strong tree protection is most important with the amount of trees we are losing.

Date: 7/27/26

To Mireya Turner, Director of Community Development Department:

I am against rezoning to a commercial zone in the proposed area near Orchard Shores in Clearlake Oaks. Parcels 006-510-31 or 035-435-13, 035-435-14, 035-435-15. Richard Kuehn's Property. We have single family zones in Orchard Shores, and we would like to keep it that way and encourage more development of family homes with people who want to invest in our community.

If the property is rezoned to commercial, the owner could sell the property. Then we really don't know what type of business would occupy the area. It could increase traffic and noise in the area. Which means it could impact our property values in a negative way. It could also increase our homeowner's insurance. I do not want the area to be rezoned too commercial.

14124 chestnut lane, Clearlake Oaks

Address

Yolanda Chavez

Print Name:

Yolanda A. Chavez

Signature Date 7/27/26

Mireya Turner

From: Hank1994 <Hank1994@proton.me>
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2026 1:49 PM
To: Mireya Turner
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Request for Corrections and Specific Protections in the General Plan 2050

One quick follow-up to my previous email: the original meeting notes show that High Valley was specifically raised during public input. Page A-21 requests creation of a Special Study Area extending east to include the High Valley Road area, and the accompanying map near the end of Appendix A circles High Valley as part of that proposed area.

I wanted to provide this reference because it confirms that both High Valley and its inclusion in a Special Study Area were brought forward during the public process.

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

On Thursday, July 23rd, 2026 at 1:32 PM, Hank1994 <Hank1994@proton.me> wrote:

Thank you for explaining that High Valley's omission was not intentional and that there was not enough time to complete new Special Study Areas during this update.

However, High Valley was already recognized in the adopted Shoreline Communities Area Plan, including its distinct agricultural character and the High Valley Viticultural Area. High Valley was also raised during this planning process in two separate ways. The original public meeting notes identify "High Valley rd improvement" as a community concern, and the February 2026 draft identifies High Valley as an area with unique needs that may warrant a Special Study Area.

Residents should not have been required to notice that an already recognized community and viticultural area had been left off the new community list and maps. The County and its consultants were updating an existing plan, and High Valley's continued recognition should not have depended solely on someone specifically pointing out its omission.

High Valley has only one practical public road in and out. High Valley Road is narrow and steep in places, has limited shoulders and pullouts, and has repeatedly been blocked by large vehicles. It serves residents, Eastlake Elementary School, agricultural properties, vineyards, a winery, cannabis operations and other development. These conditions raise serious concerns involving wildfire, evacuation, emergency access, additional traffic and protection of High Valley's rural and agricultural character.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that High Valley be designated as a Special Study Area in the current General Plan update. I understand that the detailed policies and community process may need to be completed afterward, but the designation itself should not be postponed indefinitely.

I also ask that High Valley be added to the East Lake community list, the East Lake map and the countywide General Plan map. The plan should recognize High Valley's viticultural and agricultural importance, rural character, single-access road and evacuation limitations.

Please also include a clear timeline and identify which County department will be responsible for completing the High Valley Special Study Area. Until that work is completed, the plan should require High Valley Road capacity, emergency access, evacuation limitations and cumulative traffic impacts to be considered when reviewing new development in the area.

High Valley's unique needs have already been identified and should be addressed in a plan intended to guide development for many years.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

On Thursday, July 23rd, 2026 at 12:02 PM, Mireya Turner
<Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov> wrote:

Hi Hank,

If High Valley is not listed, it is not an intentional matter. Likely, it was not listed in the last two periods of public input, and no one said anything about it. If there is a policy to establish a Special Study Area for High Valley included in the General Plan, it is because there was not time allowed to create one during this process. No new SSAs were created during the General Plan update, but there are a few policies/actions to work with the community to establish them in the future.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.



Cordially,

Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director

Community Development

255 N. Forbes St.

Lakeport, CA 95453

Phone: (707) 263-2221

Fax: (707) 263-2225

Mireya Turner

From: Hank1994 <Hank1994@proton.me>
Sent: Saturday, July 18, 2026 4:59 PM
To: Mireya Turner; Eddie Crandell; Lake County CDD - LakeCounty2050; Lars Ewing
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Request for Corrections and Specific Protections in the General Plan 2050

Good afternoon,

Thank you for confirming that my email will be included in the public record for the August 13 Planning Commission hearing.

After reviewing the document history and Comment Inventory, I understand that the Summer redline revises the February 2026 Public Review Draft. However, I am still requesting answers now to several specific questions.

Please explain why High Valley was omitted from both the community list and the Countywide General Plan map, even though the documents recognize High Valley as a distinct area and possible Special Study Area.

Please also explain why geothermal Action GR-4.d was deleted after the public request to strengthen it was marked "Accepted," whether GR-4.12 was intended to replace it, and why several other substantive geothermal recommendations were declined with only the explanation that the draft language would remain the same.

The Comment Inventory shows that GPAC members repeatedly requested clear implementation accountability, including identification of the responsible departments, agencies, partners, and timeframes for carrying out General Plan actions. The County stated that an appendix containing this information would be provided. However, I have not found that appendix in the Summer 2026 General Plan documents. Please identify where the implementation appendix is located or provide me with a copy.

I would also like to know who directed or approved these revisions and whether the completed Summer redline was presented or discussed at any public meeting before it was posted as the revised draft for the August 13 Planning Commission hearing.

I respectfully request a written response before the August 13 hearing. These are factual questions about the preparation and revision of the General Plan, not simply comments for the hearing record.

Please also confirm whether staff intends to correct these issues before the hearing and that my complete earlier email, rather than a summary, will be provided to each Planning Commissioner.

Thank you.

Hank

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

On Saturday, July 18th, 2026 at 9:19 AM, Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov> wrote:

Dear Hank,

The LC2050 team spent many hours over many weeks going over every bit of public input received during the last public review period. Now that the final draft documents are ready, please feel free to submit your comments. However, at this time, comments are considered public input for the Planning Commission hearing, scheduled for 8/13. Your email will be saved as public input and presented as an attachment for that hearing.

Cordially,

Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director, Community Development
County of Lake

On Jul 17, 2026, at 16:15, Hank1994 <Hank1994@proton.me> wrote:

Good afternoon Director Turner,

I am including the District 3 Supervisor and Public Works because several High Valley concerns were raised during the General Plan process and appear in the County's own Comment Inventory, yet they were either declined, only partially addressed, or left out of the revised documents. The concerns raised by the General Plan 2050 documents involve land-use planning, roads, evacuation, water, public safety, and future development decisions. Because these issues cross departmental responsibilities, I believe input and clarification are needed from both the Supervisor and Public Works, not Community Development alone.

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report, General Plan Overview, East Lake Communities Planning Area Element, Health and Safety Element, Evacuation Study, Water Resources Element, Noise Element, Agricultural Resources Element, Geothermal Resources Element, tracked changes, and the County's Comment Inventory.

The General Plan states that it was prepared with community input. However, the current drafts do not clearly show how several important concerns involving High Valley or many of the countywide geothermal recommendations were meaningfully addressed.

Because the Draft EIR is a Program EIR that may later be relied upon when reviewing individual projects, these issues should be fully documented and addressed now rather than left for residents to raise separately each time another project is proposed.

High Valley was left out of the community description

The East Lake Communities Planning Area Element lists Clearlake Oaks, Clearlake Park, Double Eagle Ranch, Glenhaven, Kono Tayee, Paradise Valley, Spring Valley, and Windflower Point as communities within the planning area.

High Valley is not included in that list, even though it is mentioned elsewhere in the General Plan documents. Alta Vista and Cerrito Drive are also not identified.

This appears inconsistent because the documents separately recognize High Valley Road, the High Valley Groundwater Basin, agricultural production in High Valley, and High Valley as a possible Special Study Area.

High Valley is not simply undeveloped agricultural land. It includes long-established residences, Eastlake School, agricultural properties, a winery, cannabis operations, businesses on Cerrito Drive, and other uses that depend on the same road, groundwater basin, and emergency-response system.

Please explain the criteria used to determine which places were identified as communities in the East Lake Communities Planning Area. Was High Valley intentionally classified only as agricultural or rural land rather than as an existing community? If so, who made that determination, what information supported it, and

how were High Valley's residences, school, roads, businesses, and other existing community features considered?

I respectfully request that High Valley, Alta Vista, and Cerrito Drive be identified by name in the East Lake Communities Planning Area description and shown clearly on all applicable maps.

The proposed High Valley Special Study Area language is too weak

Action EL-LU-3.f states that the County will:

"Conduct a public engagement process to explore interest in preparing Special Study Areas" for Double Eagle, High Valley, and/or Spring Valley.

This does not require the County to actually prepare a High Valley Special Study Area. It does not identify what would be studied, which departments would participate, when the process would begin, or when it would be completed.

High Valley has a combination of conditions that justify more than an optional future discussion:

- One practical public road in and out
- Steep and winding terrain
- Narrow road sections and limited shoulders
- Limited sight distance
- Eastlake School traffic
- Heavy agricultural and commercial vehicles
- Existing and approved cannabis operations
- A winery and other businesses
- Wildfire and evacuation concerns
- Dependence on a small groundwater basin
- Noise and nighttime-lighting concerns
- Cumulative impacts from existing, approved, and future development

I request that EL-LU-3.f be strengthened to require preparation of a **High Valley Special Study Area**, with a defined scope, meaningful public participation, coordinated County review, a responsible lead department, and a reasonable completion date.

High Valley Road and school-safety concerns were received but declined

The County's Comment Inventory records the following concern:

"Our school zones are so very dangerous... For years and years High Valley Road problems have been talked about..."

The County's response was:

"Declined: No specific change is recommended."

That response does not explain whether Public Works investigated the concern, inspected the road, reviewed collision or traffic information, evaluated the school area, or determined why no policy change or further study was necessary.

A separate comment noting that High Valley Road was missing from the roadway classifications was accepted. However, the revised document appears to address that concern only by adding High Valley Road as an example of a local County-maintained road.

Adding the road's name does not address its actual condition, capacity, safety, or ability to support present and future traffic.

High Valley Road is narrow and steep in places, has limited sight distance and little or no shoulder, and carries residential, school, agricultural, commercial, winery, cannabis, construction, and emergency traffic. It also includes known problem locations such as Horseshoe Bend, where a large or disabled vehicle can interfere with or completely block travel.

A blockage would not only prevent residents from leaving. It could also prevent fire engines, ambulances, law enforcement, utility crews, school vehicles, and other responders from entering.

I am not asking the County to automatically widen or reconstruct the road. I am asking the County to complete an actual engineering and safety review to determine what the existing road can safely support and what reasonable limits or mitigation measures are necessary.

That review should address:

- Road and lane widths
- Grades, curves, and sight distance
- Shoulder availability
- Drainage and pavement condition
- Existing and appropriate vehicle speeds
- Eastlake School traffic and pedestrian safety
- Horseshoe Bend and other bottlenecks
- Heavy trucks and agricultural equipment
- Commercial, winery, cannabis, and construction traffic
- Emergency-vehicle access
- Locations where two large vehicles cannot safely pass
- Cumulative traffic from existing, approved, and foreseeable projects
- Whether two-way travel could be maintained during an evacuation

Action HS-10.f should be specifically applied to High Valley Road

The Health and Safety Element already contains Action HS-10.f, which directs the County to evaluate road conditions for compliance with Public Resources Code sections 4290 and 4291, including roadway width, surface condition, and emergency accessibility.

It also calls for identifying roads that may be designated as two-lane but function as one-lane or one-way during emergency conditions.

This language closely matches the concerns involving High Valley Road. High Valley Road should be expressly identified as a priority for the evaluation required by Action HS-10.f.

Please state whether Public Works has already evaluated High Valley Road under the standards described in HS-10.f. If so, please provide the findings. If not, please explain when the evaluation will occur and how the results will be incorporated into the General Plan, the High Valley Special Study Area, and future project review.

Eastlake School should be evaluated as a critical facility

The Health and Safety Element identifies schools as critical facilities because of their importance to community health, safety, and emergency response.

Eastlake School should therefore be evaluated not only as a traffic concern, but also as a critical facility that depends on High Valley Road for school buses, student transportation, emergency response, evacuation, and family reunification during a disaster.

Please explain whether Eastlake School was specifically evaluated in the Evacuation Study, Health and Safety Element, or any Public Works review.

The County should examine how students, staff, parents, buses, residents, bicyclists, large trucks, and emergency responders would safely use the same constrained road during an evacuation or roadway blockage.

The proposed bicycle route requires a documented safety review

The East Lake Communities Element proposes a 4.2-mile Class III bicycle route on High Valley Road between the Mendocino National Forest area and Foothill Boulevard.

The document describes Class III routes as roads where bicyclists share the lane or shoulder with motor vehicles and indicates that these routes are generally used on low-speed and low-volume streets.

Before High Valley Road is designated or promoted as a bicycle route, the County should disclose the engineering and safety basis for finding it suitable.

The review should address road width, grades, curves, shoulder availability, sight distance, pavement condition, vehicle speeds, school traffic, large trucks, agricultural equipment, emergency vehicles, and locations where a bicycle and vehicle cannot safely pass.

The Comment Inventory also records a concern that the stated 4.2-mile route did not appear to correspond accurately with High Valley Road. Although that comment was accepted, the proposed route remains unclear. The exact alignment should be shown on a detailed and readable map.

The truck-route response does not address actual truck use

A public comment asked whether High Valley Road was excluded as a truck route. The County responded:

"Declined: According to CalTrans, High Valley Road is not a truck route."

High Valley Road is a County-maintained road, and large trucks and heavy vehicles use it to reach agricultural properties, cannabis operations, the winery, businesses, residences, and construction sites.

The response does not explain:

- Whether heavy commercial trucks are prohibited or the road is simply not formally designated as a truck route
- Whether any weight, length, or vehicle restrictions apply
- Why Caltrans was relied upon regarding a County-maintained road
- Whether Public Works reviewed actual heavy-vehicle use
- Whether the road can safely accommodate opposing trucks, school traffic, residents, bicyclists, and emergency vehicles
- Whether weight or vehicle restrictions near Eastlake School and residential areas were considered

The plan calls for truck traffic to use designated routes and for consideration of weight restrictions near schools and residential areas. Public Works should explain how those policies will apply to High Valley Road.

The Evacuation Study does not adequately explain High Valley's conditions

The Evacuation Study identifies properties with fewer than two access routes and recognizes that steep terrain, winding roads, limited connectivity, bottlenecks, and roadway blockages can create serious evacuation problems.

High Valley appears to meet those conditions, yet I have not found a comparable written discussion of High Valley in the study's findings.

High Valley Road is also not clearly identified among the County's potential evacuation routes, even though it is the route residents must use to reach Clearlake Oaks and Highway 20.

The countywide maps are not detailed enough for residents to determine whether High Valley, Alta Vista, and Cerrito Drive were fully included in the evacuation-constrained parcel analysis.

I request:

1. A clear explanation of whether High Valley parcels were classified as evacuation-constrained.
2. A detailed map showing the findings for High Valley, Alta Vista, and Cerrito Drive.
3. A High Valley-specific analysis of the single-access road, Horseshoe Bend, Eastlake School, heavy vehicles, wildfire exposure, emergency access, and lack of a practical alternate route.
4. A route-specific analysis of evacuation capacity and bottlenecks.
5. An evaluation of what would occur if High Valley Road were blocked by fire, a collision, disabled equipment, a fallen tree, washout, landslide, or other event.
6. Consideration of communication limitations during outages, when internet-dependent telephone service may be unavailable.

7. Consideration of the fact that many residents also lose water during power outages because their wells depend on electric pumps.

The Health and Safety Element identifies possible improvements such as vehicle pullouts, parking restrictions, easements, trails, and emergency roads. However, it does not establish a specific solution, timetable, or interim protection for an existing community where no realistic secondary route has been identified.

The High Valley Groundwater Basin needs specific protection

The Draft EIR identifies the High Valley Groundwater Basin and recognizes agricultural production and groundwater use within the High Valley area.

However, the Water Resources Element relies primarily on general countywide groundwater policies and does not establish High Valley-specific monitoring, measurable thresholds, a water budget, or a cumulative water-demand analysis.

A “very low priority” classification under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act is not proof that the High Valley Basin has an unlimited or adequately documented water supply.

The plan contains general actions calling for groundwater monitoring, collection of local well-depth and yield information, summer and fall testing, and additional monitoring wells in areas with high demand or data gaps. However, it does not identify when High Valley will be studied or how the results will affect future project approvals.

I request that the High Valley Groundwater Basin be specifically prioritized for:

- Baseline and continuing groundwater-level monitoring
- Identification of representative domestic and agricultural wells
- Summer and fall groundwater testing
- Recharge and water-budget analysis
- Public reporting of groundwater levels, well yields, and water-quality trends
- Evaluation of impacts on neighboring domestic wells
- Cumulative accounting of residential, vineyard, winery, cannabis, commercial, and other pumping
- Drought-response thresholds
- Project-specific proof of an adequate and sustainable water supply
- Protective action when declining groundwater levels or well impacts are documented

Agriculture, cannabis, noise, lighting, and compatibility with existing residents

The Agricultural Resources Element states that people near agricultural land should expect operations during the day and night, hauling at various hours, heavy equipment, tractor-trailer traffic, pumping, noise, odors, smoke, and lighting.

The right to farm is important, but it should not be used to excuse every intensive or commercial impact or replace meaningful review of compatibility with existing homes and schools.

Ordinary agricultural activity should be distinguished from intensive operations involving large hoop-house complexes, continuous or nighttime lighting, industrial

fans, heaters, generators, processing equipment, frequent heavy trucks, and substantial groundwater pumping.

The Noise Element recognizes that rural communities, homes, and schools are particularly sensitive to noise and that protecting Lake County's quiet rural character is an important community value.

The General Plan should include clear and enforceable standards for intensive agricultural, cannabis, commercial, and industrial uses near existing homes and schools, including:

- Setbacks from homes, property lines, and Eastlake School
- Nighttime noise limits
- Limits on generators, fans, pumps, heaters, refrigeration, and processing equipment
- Dark-sky-compliant lighting requirements
- Control of light escaping from hoop houses and other structures
- Reasonable hours for trucking, loading, processing, and other intensive activities
- Delivery and access locations placed as far as practical from homes
- Cumulative review of multiple operations using the same road and groundwater basin
- Clear inspection and enforcement procedures

Right-to-farm protections should not replace compliance with use permits, conditions of approval, noise standards, lighting requirements, building and electrical requirements, road restrictions, or other County regulations.

Countywide geothermal concerns and the County's response to community recommendations

The geothermal concerns are not limited to High Valley.

The County's Comment Inventory shows that community members and GPAC members raised substantial countywide concerns regarding the direction of the Geothermal Resources Element.

The public requested that the County:

- Clearly identify where new geothermal development is and is not appropriate
- Disclose areas where new geothermal development may be considered
- Protect residential communities, schools, drinking-water supplies, groundwater basins, Clear Lake, Tribal Cultural Resources, and other sensitive areas
- Avoid significant impacts where possible rather than relying primarily on mitigation
- Evaluate cumulative impacts across geothermal fields, watersheds, groundwater basins, road systems, and communities
- Provide a meaningful Tribal role in monitoring, oversight, and decision-making
- Require early public notice, community meetings, and accessible project and monitoring information
- Establish enforceable standards for groundwater contamination, induced seismicity, air emissions, naturally occurring asbestos, noise, roads, emergency response, and injected materials
- Preserve or strengthen protections in the 2008 General Plan

- Use mandatory language such as “require,” “shall,” and “avoid” when public health and environmental protection are involved
- Explain who will pay for road construction, damage, maintenance, and emergency improvements created by geothermal development

The County accepted some changes, including acknowledging increased geothermal interest outside the historically developed area, revising certain setback language, adding cumulative-impact language, strengthening some induced-seismicity provisions, and improving certain public-notification provisions.

However, many substantive recommendations were declined with responses stating:

“Declined: Draft language has been reviewed and will remain the same.”

Other recommendations were deferred to a future Zoning Ordinance update, a possible Energy Element, or project-level CEQA review.

Those responses do not explain why the requested protections were unnecessary, what information was reviewed, or how the existing language adequately addresses the concerns.

The revised Geothermal Resources Element continues to support new technologies, direct-use systems, closed-loop development, expanded geothermal potential, future setback changes, and maps identifying possible direct-use and new-technology areas.

The issue is not whether geothermal energy should exist in Lake County. The issue is whether the General Plan clearly establishes where different types of geothermal development may occur, what locations must be avoided, what enforceable standards apply, and how residents will be notified and protected before expansion occurs.

Before adoption, the County should provide:

1. A comparison of the 2008 and proposed 2050 geothermal policies identifying every protection that was retained, strengthened, weakened, or removed.
2. A list showing which community and GPAC recommendations were accepted, partially accepted, declined, or deferred.
3. A meaningful explanation for recommendations declined only because the draft language would remain unchanged.
4. A clear identification of areas where the County expects or is considering future geothermal development.
5. An explanation of whether direct-use, closed-loop, directional-drilling, battery-related, or other geothermal technologies could be permitted outside the currently mapped Primary Geothermal Resource Area.
6. A required public process before geothermal setback maps, setback distances, direct-use maps, or new-technology areas are adopted or changed.
7. Direct notice to affected residents, Tribal governments, Municipal Advisory Councils, fire districts, water agencies, and other local organizations.
8. Objective standards identifying when a geothermal project must be denied rather than allowed to proceed through mitigation.
9. An explanation of who will pay for road studies, improvements, emergency-access needs, repairs, and long-term maintenance when geothermal projects use rural County roads.

10. A requirement for cumulative analysis across the affected geothermal field, watershed, groundwater basin, road network, and community.

Any expansion into a new community, planning area, watershed, or groundwater basin should require a public, area-specific assessment of water supply and quality, seismic and geologic conditions, air emissions, roads, evacuation, noise, lighting, emergency response, Tribal Cultural Resources, and cumulative impacts.

Policies intended to protect public health, drinking water, residential communities, and sensitive resources should state what developers **must** do and what impacts **must be avoided**, rather than relying mainly on encouragement, future studies, or mitigation determined after a project has already been proposed.

Implementation, responsibility, deadlines, and public accountability

Many of the proposed General Plan actions do not identify a responsible department, funding source, start date, completion date, or required public progress report.

Without those requirements, actions such as the High Valley Special Study Area, road evaluation, groundwater monitoring, and future geothermal protections could remain unfinished for years.

For major actions addressing road safety, evacuation, groundwater, geothermal development, public outreach, and Special Study Areas, the final General Plan should include an implementation table identifying:

- The lead department and participating agencies
- The anticipated start and completion dates
- The funding source or funding strategy
- The required public-engagement process
- How progress will be measured and reported
- What interim protections will apply until the action is completed

Adopting an action without identifying who will carry it out, when it will occur, or what happens in the meantime does not provide meaningful protection to affected communities.

The public needs clean and understandable documents

Several current drafts contain tracked changes, duplicated numbering, unresolved editing marks, overlapping words, and conflicting titles such as “February Summer 2026” and “JuneFebruary 2026.”

Before public hearings or final action, the County should release clean, corrected versions and provide enough time for the public to understand what language is actually being proposed.

The County should also provide a clear comparison showing:

- Changes from the existing General Plan and East Lake Area Plan
- Changes between the February and Summer 2026 drafts
- Accepted, partially accepted, declined, and deferred public comments
- Land-use designation and map changes
- Changes to geothermal policies and maps

- The boundaries used for High Valley and any proposed Special Study Area

Requested action

Before the General Plan 2050 documents are finalized, I respectfully request that the County:

1. Add High Valley, Alta Vista, and Cerrito Drive to the East Lake Communities Planning Area description and applicable maps.
2. Explain why High Valley was omitted from the list of communities and whether it was classified only as agricultural or rural land.
3. Replace the optional High Valley Special Study Area language with a firm commitment, defined scope, responsible department, public process, and completion schedule.
4. Conduct a High Valley Road engineering, traffic, school-safety, bicycle-safety, heavy-vehicle, and evacuation study.
5. Explain why the documented High Valley Road and school-safety concern was declined without a specific change.
6. Identify High Valley Road as a priority for the evaluation required by Action HS-10.f and provide Public Works' findings concerning roadway width, condition, accessibility, and locations that may function as one lane during an emergency.
7. Evaluate Eastlake School as a critical facility and provide a school-specific analysis of emergency access, evacuation, student transportation, pedestrian safety, and reunification needs.
8. Clarify the legal and practical truck-route status of High Valley Road.
9. Provide the engineering basis and exact alignment for the proposed Class III bicycle route.
10. Provide detailed evacuation-constraint information and a High Valley-specific evacuation analysis.
11. Prioritize the High Valley Groundwater Basin for monitoring, water-budget review, and cumulative-demand analysis.
12. Add enforceable protections addressing intensive agriculture, cannabis, nighttime lighting, noise, equipment, trucking, groundwater use, and compatibility with homes and Eastlake School.
13. Provide a public comparison of the 2008 and proposed 2050 geothermal policies.
14. Revise the Geothermal Resources Element to address the substantive countywide community and GPAC recommendations.
15. Require public and area-specific review before geothermal boundaries, setbacks, direct-use maps, or new-technology areas are established or expanded.
16. Establish objective conditions under which geothermal development must be denied rather than merely mitigated.
17. Release clean, corrected documents and clearly identify all policy and map changes.
18. Add an implementation and accountability table identifying the responsible department, funding strategy, public process, start date, completion date, interim protections, and public progress-reporting requirements for major General Plan actions.
19. Require coordinated review by CDD, Public Works, emergency services, the applicable fire district, Environmental Health, and other appropriate agencies for projects adding meaningful traffic, heavy vehicles, evacuation demand, groundwater pumping, noise, lighting, or other cumulative impacts.

For future discretionary projects that would add meaningful traffic, heavy vehicles, water demand, noise, lighting, or evacuation demand, the County should require

specific findings showing that the existing road, water supply, emergency-response system, and surrounding community can safely support the project and that cumulative impacts have been fully considered.

Please provide a written, point-by-point response identifying which requested corrections will be made, which will not be made, and the factual basis for each decision. Please also identify which County department is responsible for each item.

Public Works should specifically explain what road, traffic, engineering, school-safety, bicycle, truck, and evacuation information it reviewed when determining that the current General Plan language is adequate for High Valley.

High Valley's limitations and the countywide geothermal concerns are already part of the public record. They should be accurately documented and addressed now rather than left for residents to raise again after the General Plan is adopted or each time another project is proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tristan Hank

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.