

Notice of Preparation

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DAVID FLORES

To: CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
ENERGY FACILITIES SITING &
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION
1516 9TH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512

DOCKET

79-AFC-4C

DATE OCT 14 2009

RECD. OCT 19 2009

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency: Lake County Community Development Department
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

Contact: Kevin M. Ingram, Senior Planner

The Lake County Community Development Department will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice. Please send your response to Kevin M. Ingram at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

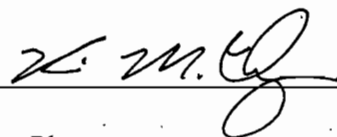
Project Title: Middletown Area Plan Update

Project Location: Primarily within portions of Whispering Pines, Middletown, Jericho Valley, Mount St. Helena, Detert Reservoir and Aetna Springs U.S.G.S. quads, also within a tiny portion of the Knoxville Quad (map enclosed)

Project Description: (brief) Preparation of a 20-year planning and zoning document for the Middletown planning area, as required by the Lake County General Plan. The plan will address natural resources, public safety and community development and include policies and implementation measures regarding future development within the planning area. This Plan updates and replaces the previous Middletown Area Plan adopted in 1989. The Middletown Planning Area is one of the eight designated planning areas in the Lake County General Plan. The planning area covers approximately 150 square miles located in the unincorporated area of Lake County. The project area includes a small portion of Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, State Highways 29 & 175, and the communities of Middletown, Hidden Valley Lake, Anderson Springs and the Middletown Rancheria.

Date October 14, 2009

Signature



Title: Senior Planner

Telephone: (707) 263-2221

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Middletown Area Plan is a guide for long-term growth and development in the planning area and is a complement to the Lake County General Plan. It is a planning tool that will facilitate refined planning decisions based on community values and priorities of the residents of the planning area. The relationship between the General Plan and an area plan must be mutually complementary and consistent. Policies in the area plan should supplement general plan policies, yet more precisely reflect the characteristics found in the planning area. The higher level of policy accountability for this plan ensures the residents of the future that the vision of the citizens in 2009 is carried out as adopted. County landowners and residents seek assurances that the use of a neighbor's property will be compatible with the health, safety, welfare and preservation of property values, the economy and the County's rural character. Therefore, facilitating land development and land use must balance a property owner's right of reasonable use and the impact of that use on neighboring property owners.

A long-range plan should provide adequate land use allocations to meet the community's needs while also protecting vital natural resources. This plan includes three special study areas (Middletown, Coyote Valley and Guenoc Valley). Land use designations have been amended where necessary to reduce potential land use impacts. Environmental concerns have been identified and policies developed to protect the unique natural features of the area. Several of the benefits of this plan are as follows:

- Promotion of a diversified economic base by continuing to promote agriculture, recreation services, and commerce. Provides adequate land uses to encourage industrial and non-industrial corporate development, and the development of geothermal resources.
- Protection of prime agricultural areas and the promotion of agricultural uses including: value-added agriculture, agricultural tourism and conservation easements and buffers.
- Provides for land use foundation to accommodate a diverse number of housing types. Encourage the use infill development on appropriate sites in existing neighborhoods with access to important public services.
- Future development will be directed away from areas of known environmental concern through the use of low land use densities. Properties in areas with safety and environmental constraints, including landslide areas, steep slopes and areas of high erosion potential have been designated "RR", Rural Residential or "RL", Rural Lands to limit development to lower densities in these potentially hazardous areas.
- Community Growth Boundaries have been developed within which more intensive residential and retail and service oriented commercial development is appropriate. Higher density residential development outside of the Community Growth Boundaries is not appropriate due to existing infrastructure and safety constraints, or long range land use goals of the General Plan.
- This plan establishes general design guidelines for commercial development aimed at preserving established community character and scale, including their heritage and historic character.
- Promotes the establishment of a comprehensive parking plan for commercial business districts.
- Encourages the design of Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Streets.

- Ensures that adequate and efficient public utilities and services are provided to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the planning area
- Policy and implementation measures include wildfire protection measures.
- Plan policies and guidelines provide opportunities for the protection of use of existing resort and recreational.
- Wetlands and riparian corridors along existing creeks will be protected from the impacts of future development through the use of the “W” Wetlands, “FF”, Floodway Fringe and “WW”, Waterway combining districts.
- Addresses the preservation and protection of scenic resources in the planning area.
- Promotes the establishment of an interconnected diverse trial system.

To the extent possible, parcels containing land uses inconsistent with existing zoning districts have been rezoned to be consistent with the land use. The major recommendations within the three special study areas are:

Middletown Special Study Area – Measures should be taken to enhance the economic viability of the area while preserving the unique historical qualities of the downtown area. Commercial development should be diversified in this area. Mixed use development, with residences above the commercial uses should be considered. The development of a comprehensive parking plan is critical to the health of the local business community. Design guidelines are detailed in Section 7 of this plan.

Coyote Valley Special Study Area – Commercial development should be diversified in this area to provide retail and entertainment services to the region while at the same time encouraging the development of new job opportunities in areas other than the retail service sector. Mixed use development, with residences above the commercial uses should be considered. Focus is centered on the establishment of a Town Center on the north side of Hartman Road between State Highway 29 and Coyote Valley Road. Design guidelines are detailed in Section 7 of this plan.

Guenoc Valley Special Study Area – Contains the vision for future development of the 16,000-acre 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.

The recommendations in each of the basic land uses are as follows:

Commercial – All new commercial development should be subject to the Design Review Guidelines in Chapter 7 of this area plan. The Special Study Areas contain in Chapter 6 of this plan for the Middletown, Coyote Valley and Guenoc should be utilized for new commercial development projects proposed in these areas. Community Commercial uses should be encouraged within the established community centers and encourage the development of pedestrian friendly features to encourage shoppers to leave their vehicles while traveling between multiple store fronts. Service Commercial should be directed away

from town centers. The Resort Commercial designation has been applied to existing resorts and lodging facilities.

Industrial – Future light industrial and manufacturing development should be directed to the industrial designated properties in the South end of Coyote Valley and the West end of Middletown near the sewer treatment facility. Future industrial development is encouraged to utilize the “PDC” Planned Development Commercial process and be subject to the Design Guideline provisions outlined in Chapter 7 of this area plan. Other areas of the planning area may be considered for industrial uses but should only be allowed to occur in areas that have access to both public water and sewer.

Residential – Future residential development should be directed to infill sites within the existing subdivisions and Community Growth Boundaries. Adequate land use has been provided to meet the diverse housing needs of the planning area. Higher density residential developments should be encouraged near the town centers where better access to public transit and other public services are readily available. New large residential subdivisions should be encouraged to utilize the planned development process to allow for flexibility in design and integrated open space. Combining districts have been incorporated together with base zoning districts to protect sensitive and hazardous areas from encroaching development in the rural portions of the planning area. Small subdivisions on large acreage in the rural areas should be encouraged to utilize the “B5” density transfer combining district to encourage the clustering of development and preservation of rural areas. Pedestrian walkways and trails that connect residential areas with commercial areas and with the public schools should be encouraged.

Agriculture – The primary areas within the planning area designated as Agriculture include the Guenoc region along Butts Canyon Road, large acreage properties surrounding the Middletown community area, lands between Grange Road and the Hidden Valley Lake Subdivision and properties with Active Williamson Act (Agricultural Preserve) contracts. These areas typically contain prime agricultural soils (Class I-IV). Lands that have limitations, including steep slopes or non-prime soils have been designated Rural Residential or Rural Lands. Crops of Mediterranean origin, such as wine grapes, grow very well within the planning area on lands that are not identified as “prime.” Lands that are currently developed with vineyards or are used for grazing, but do not contain prime soils, are typically zoned and designated Rural Lands in order to allow their continued agricultural use without encroachment of incompatible uses. Agricultural resources are discussed further in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

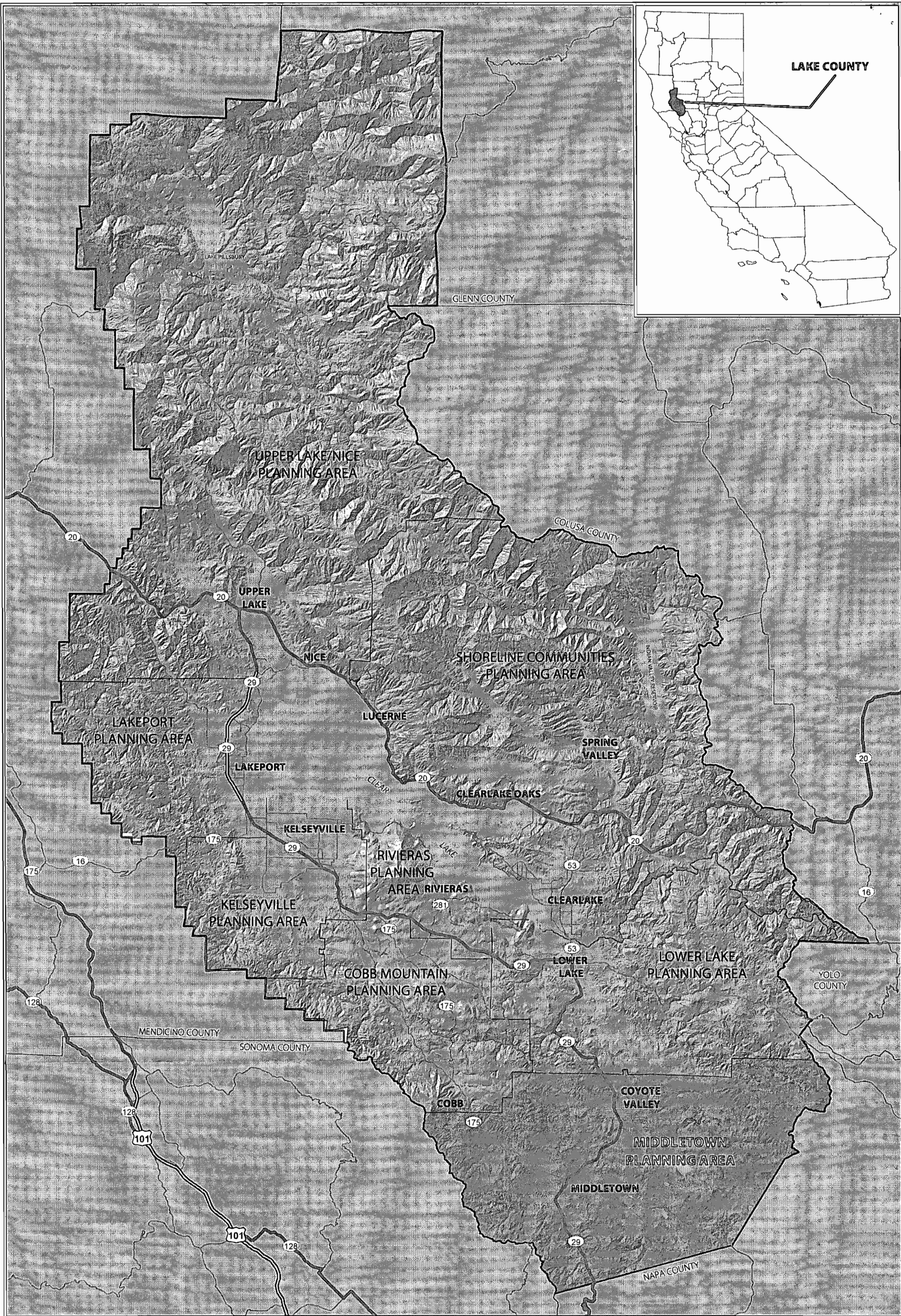
Open Space/Resource Conservation/Public Facilities – All publicly owned land has been designated as Resource Conservation or Public Facilities and zoned Open Space. Lands designated Resource Conservation includes the lands of the BLM, State and County. Watercourses and wetlands have also been included within the Resource Conservation designation. Lands designated Public Facilities includes the lands of schools, fire districts and those that contain water treatment plants.

Environmental Impacts

The potential significant effects of the Middletown Area Plan identified by the Environmental Impact Report prepared for this plan are:

The area plan provides mitigation for potential impacts from future development through use of policies and implementation measures.

Both residents and visitors value the county's varied landscape. Both the county's character and economy fundamentally depend on the land, air, water, soil and physical and ecological processes that together sustain the County's human, plant and animal communities. Therefore, land stewardship is the basis of both conservation and development. Accepted practices of stewardship vary among different land uses. Whether these are agricultural uses, residential developments, timber harvesting, mining, wildlife habitat protection or recreational uses, stewardship is an important aspect of land use and protection. With proper attention to environmental concerns and impacts, the growth that is expected over the next twenty years can enhance the quality of life in the county without degrading the natural environment. The Middletown Area Plan provides a guide for this growth that will help ensure that the quality of life experienced by area residents will not be compromised.



REGIONAL & LOCATION MAP
FIGURE 2-1

0 1 2 3 4 Miles

