



1.1 Lake County

Lake County lies within the Pacific Coastal ranges approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco, 90 miles northwest of Sacramento, and 35 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Lake County is bounded by Mendocino County to the west, Yolo, Colusa, and Glenn Counties to the east, and Sonoma and Napa counties to the south. The major roadways that traverse the County include State Route 20, which joins up with Highway 101 and Interstate 5, and State Routes 29, 53, and 175 (see Figure 1-1 for location details). There are three major watersheds in the County: Cache Creek, Putah Creek and Eel River. Additionally, Clear Lake, the largest natural lake entirely within California, is located completely within Lake County.

1.2 General Plans in California

State law requires each county and city to prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range general plan for its physical development (Government Code Section 65300). This general plan must address the seven topics (referred to as “elements”) of land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise as identified in state law (Government Code Section 65302), to the extent that the topics are locally relevant. It may also include other topics of local interest, as chosen by the jurisdiction (Government Code Section 65303).



Figure 1-1 Lake County Map

Together, the seven mandated elements of a general plan form a comprehensive set of planning policies. In general terms, the state mandated elements accomplish the following:

- The **land use element** designates the general distribution, intensity, and ranges of appropriate land uses within the Planning Area.
- The **circulation element** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed transportation facilities and utilities.
- The **housing element** is a comprehensive assessment of current and future housing needs for all segments of the County population, as well as a program for meeting those needs.
- The **open-space element** describes measures for the preservation of open space for the protection of natural resources, the integrated management of natural resources and for public health and safety.
- The **conservation element** addresses the integrated planning, management, conservation, and sustainable utilization of natural resources.
- The **safety element** establishes policies to protect the people and resources of the County from risks associated with natural and man-made hazards such as seismic, geologic, flooding, wildfire hazards, acts of terrorism, and air quality threats.
- The **noise element** identifies major noise sources and contains policies intended to protect the community from exposure to excessive noise levels.

A comprehensive general plan provides the County with a consistent framework for the sustainable management of natural and man made infrastructure, as well as decision making associated with those resources and land use. The general plan has been called the “constitution” for land use development and management to emphasize its importance to land use decisions. Once a general plan is adopted, its maps, diagrams, and policies form the basis for County zoning, discretionary entitlements, subdivision, resource management, and public works actions. Under California law, no area plan, zoning, subdivision map, nor public works project may be approved unless the County finds that it is consistent with the adopted General Plan.

The County may adopt a general plan in the format that best fits its unique circumstances (Government Code Section 65300.5). In doing so, the County must ensure that the general plan and its component parts comprise an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of development and resource management policies. Lake County has chosen to adopt a General Plan that consolidates some of the mandatory elements; adds optional elements to address the unique needs of the County; and integrates background information, goals and policies, and environmental analysis, as described below.

1.3 Lake County General Plan

General Plan Documents

The Lake County General Plan update included the preparation of a number of major documents. These documents can be divided into two sets: Adopted General Plan documents and General Plan supporting documents.

Adopted General Plan Document

The General Plan contains the goals and policies that will guide future development and resource utilization and protection within the county. It also identifies a full set of implementation measures that will ensure the policies of the General Plan are carried out. This document is the primary document adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

General Plan Supporting Documents

General Plan Supporting Documents are used to assist in the decision making process, and are part of the adopted General Plan. There are three key documents prepared as part of the General Plan program that support the planning effort.

- **Background Report.** The Background Report provides a detailed description of the conditions that existed within the Planning Area prior to adoption of the General Plan. A draft of this document was circulated early in the development of the General Plan for public review and was revised as part of the final General Plan package.
- **Issues and Alternatives Report.** This report discussed the major planning issues facing the County and alternative approaches to address these issues. The report distills the input of advisory committees, members of the Lake County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, County staff, and the public.
- **Environmental Impact Report.** The environmental impact report (EIR) prepared for the General Plan meets the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors used the EIR during the process of considering the draft General Plan in order to understand the potential environmental implications associated with implementation of the new General Plan.

Elements Included in the Lake County General Plan

The Lake County General Plan contains eleven elements. The following paragraphs display the name of each element, the section that the element can be found in this General Plan and a discussion on the contents and purpose of each element.

In each element, goals and policies are numbered according to the topic they address. In the following discussion, a one-, two-, or three-letter acronym was given to each element. This acronym is used to identify all goals and policies in a given element, and is used to identify which policy and implementation measures go together. For example, goals and policies for Land Use have the acronym “LU”.

LU	Land Use Element Section 3	This element establishes goals, policies, and implementation measures for residential, commercial, industrial, and other land uses in the County.
HE	Housing Element Section 4	This element complies with the Housing Element requirements of state law in identifying housing needs and providing programs to meet these needs.
PFS	Public Facilities and Services Element Section 5	This element presents the goals, policies, and implementation measures as they apply to water, solid waste, wastewater, electricity and gas, fire protection, communications, law enforcement, and schools.
T	Transportation and Circulation Element Section 6	This element identifies the goals, policies, and implementation measures needed to ensure an adequate and functional transportation and circulation system. This element addresses automobile travel (roads and highways), public transit, aviation, and trails for bicyclists and pedestrians.
HS	Health and Safety Element Section 7	This element identifies the goals, policies, and implementation measures needed to ensure the public health, safety, and welfare related to both natural and man-made hazards.
N	Noise Element Section 8	This element identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for distributing new noise-sensitive land uses.
OSC	Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element Section 9	This element identifies the goals, policies, and implementation measures needed to ensure the appropriate use, enjoyment, and protection of natural resources within the County.

GR	Geothermal Resources Element Section 10	This element identifies the goals, policies and implementation programs for the use, protection, public promotion and education pertaining to geothermal resources within the County.
WR	Water Resources Element Section 11	The Water Resources Element addresses the integrated planning, management, conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.
AR	Agricultural Resources Element Section 12	The Agricultural Resources Element identifies the goals, policies and implementation programs for the protection and enhancement of agricultural resources within Lake County, and further, promotes agricultural tourism on appropriate sites.
	Aggregate Resources Management Element Appendix	This element provides direction on the use, protection and enhancement of aggregate resources within Lake County. This element, adopted in 1993, was found to be adequate as adopted, and was not updated as part of the 2008 General Plan. It remains in effect as part of the County's adopted General Plan.

Table 1-1 illustrates how the elements of the Lake County General Plan relate to the seven mandatory elements set out in state law. A solid square (■) indicates that the issues identified in a state-mandated element are covered in the County element identified in the left column.

Table 1-1. Relationship Between Lake County General Plan Elements and the State-Mandated Elements

	State-Mandated Elements						
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety
Land Use	■						
Housing			■				
Public Facilities and Services		■					
Transportation and Circulation		■					
Health and Safety							■
Noise						■	
Open Space and Conservation				■	■		■
Geothermal Resources				■			
Water Resources				■			
Agricultural Resources	■			■	■		
Mineral Resources Management				■			

1.4 Environmental Analysis

As required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.), the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors reviewed and considered the environmental impact report (EIR) prior to adopting the General Plan. In order to minimize redundancy, the General Plan and EIR were prepared as a combined document, as allowed under Section 15166 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Linking the General Plan documents using a common organization and section numbering carried over to the EIR as well (using similar section numbering). The General Plan documents, when taken together, meet the CEQA requirements for EIR content and analysis.

- The Background Report provides the environmental setting.
- The General Plan embodies the project description and environmental mitigation.
- The EIR includes the remaining components required by CEQA.

All mitigation measures recommended to reduce the potential environmental impacts of the General Plan below a level of significance were integrated into the policies of the General Plan. Mitigation monitoring, as required under CEQA, will be done by compliance with the General Plan and through annual reports to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on the status of General Plan implementation.

In considering proposals to amend the General Plan, the County shall keep in mind that the General Plan is a policy document and should not be revised to reflect the personal interests of any one individual or group. Plan amendments should be in the public interest and supported by the broad consensus. An environmental document, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, must be prepared for General Plan Amendments. Thus, the proposed revisions will be evaluated in terms of public support, consistency with the rest of the General Plan, and its environmental implications.

1.5 Using The General Plan

As stated above, this General Plan includes eleven elements (including the adopted Aggregate Resources Management Element), many of which are further divided into related topic areas. To make the elements easier to use and reference, each updated element (Sections 3 – 12) is set up with the same structure.

Goal

Each element contains the goals and policies that will be used by the County to guide future land use decisions, local and regional resource management decisions, and input into other appropriate venues. In general terms, a goal is a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or “end” state. A goal serves as a general direction-setter.

In this General Plan, goal statements will be formatted like the following example. In the black box is the goal’s reference number: “PFS” refers to the Public Facilities and Services Element and the “1” means this is the first goal. Each topic area in an element will have one or more goals.

Example

Goal PFS-1	To establish and maintain sustainable and safe levels of service, minimize costs, and provide criteria for determining the location, capacity and timing of future public facilities and services.
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For each goal, the information in the brackets shows if this goal is a modification of a goal from the existing General Plan or if this is a new goal.

Policy

A policy is a statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to use to achieve a desired goal. A policy must be clear and unambiguous; it indicates a commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action.

The example below shows what a policy statement looks like. In this General Plan, every goal has one or more policies associated with it. The letters and first number (e.g., “PFS-1”) shows what goal this policy supports. The final number in the identifier (e.g., “.5”) shows that this is the fifth policy that supports Goal PFS-1.

Example

Policy PFS-1.5 Long Range Facilities Plan

The County, in cooperation with other service providing agencies, shall develop long-range facility master plans for public services including water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal, solid waste, storm drainage, schools, fire protection, law enforcement, and other related public services.

Implementation Measures


In order to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to implement the General Plan, a set of implementation measures are provided. An implementation measure is a specific measure, program, procedure, or technique that carries out plan policies. Following the presentation of goals and policies for each element, a table is provided that shows the implementation measures for that element. This table lists the implementation, states which policy(ies) this implementation supports, states what County departments or outside agencies are responsible to see this implementation is carried out, and provides a timeline for when this implementation will be done.

Example

Table 5-1. Public Facilities and Services Implementation Measures

Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe				
			2007-2008	2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2024	On-going
1.0 Establish a mechanism, either through formal agreement or contract, to coordinate a long-term planning process with private utility providers regarding the location and types of delivery facilities, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undergrounding of utilities; ▪ Reservation of right-of-way; ▪ Use of transmission line corridors for open space/greenbelt and recreational purposes; and, ▪ Siting for compatibility with existing and proposed land uses. 	PFS-1.5 PFS-6.1 PFS-7.1 PFS-9.1	Public Works Department, Board of Supervisors					▪

For More Information

Within the General Plan, reader’s will see text highlighted with an  symbol, like the example below. These symbols highlight a cross-reference to another part of the General Plan that contains policies relevant to the topic being discussed.

Example



See also Goal GR-2 in the Geothermal Resources Element, Section 10

Please see the next page.