

I. INTRODUCTION

The Lakeport General Plan is the official document used by decision makers and citizens to guide and interpret the City's long range plans for development of land and conservation of resources. All California cities and counties are required by State law to have a general plan that addresses seven specific topics, called elements, which include: Land Use; Transportation; Housing; Open Space; Conservation; Safety and Noise. General Plans may also include optional elements dealing, for example, with design and community identity. The Lakeport General Plan includes the seven mandatory Elements as well as three optional Elements including an Urban Boundary Element, Community Design Element and Economic Development Element.

The General Plan must contain a land use map that describes the location and boundaries of each land use designation, such as Industrial, Single Family Residential, or Park, and the specific restrictions that apply to each designation. In addition, the Plan contains policies and supporting information adequate to make informed decisions concerning the future of the community. The Plan identifies methods for improving public facilities and services to meet the anticipated growth, and establishes a framework for the implementation of the City's zoning, subdivision and other land use regulations.

The General Plan represents an agreement among the residents of Lakeport on basic community values, ideals, and aspirations to govern a shared environment. The Plan has a long-term horizon, addressing a 20-year time frame. At the same time, it brings a deliberate, overall direction to the day-to-day decisions of the City Council, Planning Commission, and city staff.

Public Participation

In 2004, the City decided to update its General Plan to provide the public decision-makers and private developers with clearer and more effective policy guidance. A General Plan Advisory Committee was established by the City and met a total of seven times in public sessions to review and fine-tune each element of the Draft General Plan.

The result of this effort is a General Plan built upon the ideas of Lakeport residents—a guide in text and maps to the opportunities and conditions for new development based on a balance among the social, environmental and economic needs of the community.

The Planning Area

The General Plan applies to both public and privately owned land within the City's boundaries and its Sphere of Influence (SOI). The SOI is unincorporated land representing the ultimate future boundaries of the City. This area is currently under County jurisdiction, and regulated by Lake County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. State law permits the City to plan for areas outside of its boundaries, if those areas have a direct relationship to the City's planning needs. Although the County is not bound by Lakeport's General Plan, the City will work with the County to assure that County land use decisions within the Lakeport SOI are compatible with this General Plan.

How to Use this General Plan

The General Plan will be used by the City Council and the Planning Commission to guide land use and planning-related decisions. The City's staff will use the Plan on a day-to-day basis to administer and regulate land use and development activity. The public can use this Plan to understand Lakeport's approach to land use planning and the community's standards with regard to urban design, conserving natural resources, future development and neighborhood conservation. The development community can use the Plan to analyze potential development patterns for proposed projects.

The General Plan is divided into chapters corresponding to the following plan elements: Land Use; Urban Boundary; Transportation; Community Design; Economic Development; Conservation; Open Space, Parks and Recreation; Noise; and Safety. The Housing Element was previously adopted in July, 2004 and certified by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Each chapter starts with a discussion of purpose, existing and future conditions and the goals of the City as they related to the chapter. These are followed by a brief overview and analysis of the major factors related to the issues and goals. At the end of each chapter are policies and implementation programs that will guide the City's actions during the life of the Plan. Goals, policies, implementation programs and standards are defined below:

- **Goal:** a general expression of community values. It indicates, in a general manner, an ideal future or condition to which planning efforts are directed.
- **Policy:** a specific statement that guides decision making and how a goal will be implemented and may include standards, objectives, maps or a combination of these components. It indicates a clear commitment by the City Council.
- **Implementation Program:** a specific action, procedure or technique to carry out policies of the General Plan.
- **Standards:** policy statements which include a specific quantitative measure of performance.

The text of the Plan should be considered in relation to the Land Use Map. The boundaries of land use designations shown on this map are based on existing land use patterns and natural and man-made features. They are not precise legal boundaries. The Zoning Map provides the precise legal boundaries of the Zoning Districts that are consistent with the underlying General Plan Land Use designations.

The Organization and different topics covered by the General Plan are indicated in the Table of Contents. Many of the technical terms used in the Plan are defined in the Glossary (see Appendix A). Separate technical documents (bound separately) include the Background Report and the Environmental Impact Report.

Intent of the Plan

The General Plan takes a long range and comprehensive perspective to the year 2025. It also addresses immediate land-use related problems.

New and significant policies contained in the updated General Plan include the following:

- A proposed modification to the SOI that includes the proposed Specific Plan Area south of the current SOI, elimination of the area immediately north of the city, and minor modifications to the southwestern portion of the sphere to remove agricultural areas.
- Combining the low and medium density residential designations to allow for greater flexibility in considering re-zoning requests.
- General guidelines for how the proposed Specific Plan Area should be developed.
- An Economic Development Element.
- Significant revisions to the Community Design Element.
- New policies on human services and human care facilities such as child care centers and elderly care facilities.
- A change to the Land Use designation from major retail to office for several parcels located north of Eleventh Street adjacent to Hwy 29.
- Policies related to the use of Best Management Practices.
- An annexation to the south side of the city to the west of State Highway 29 that encompasses approximately 121 acres.

Administering the General Plan

Once adopted, the General Plan does not remain static. State law permits up to four General Plan Amendments per year (Government Code Section 65358). Most amendments propose a change in land use designation of a particular property. As time goes on, the City may determine that it is also necessary to revise portions of the text to reflect changing circumstances or philosophy.

State law provides direction on how Lakeport can maintain the plan as a contemporary policy guide: It requires the City's Community Development Department to report annually to the City Council on the "status of the plan and its implementation" (Government Code Section 65400[b]). In addition, the City should comprehensively review the Plan every five years to determine whether or not it is still in step with community values and conditions.

State law requires that any decision to amend the General Plan be based on factual information and analysis, termed "findings of fact." These findings are the rationale for making a decision

either to approve or deny a project. The following minimum findings should be made for each General Plan Amendment:

1. The proposed General Plan Amendment is deemed to be in the public interest.
2. The proposed General Plan Amendment is consistent and compatible with the rest of the General Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.
3. The potential impacts of the proposed General Plan Amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.
4. The proposed General Plan Amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

City initiated amendments, as well as amendments requested by other public agencies, are subject to the same basic processes and requirements described above to ensure compatibility and consistency with the General Plan. This includes appropriate environmental review, public notice, and public hearings leading to an official action by a resolution of the City Council.