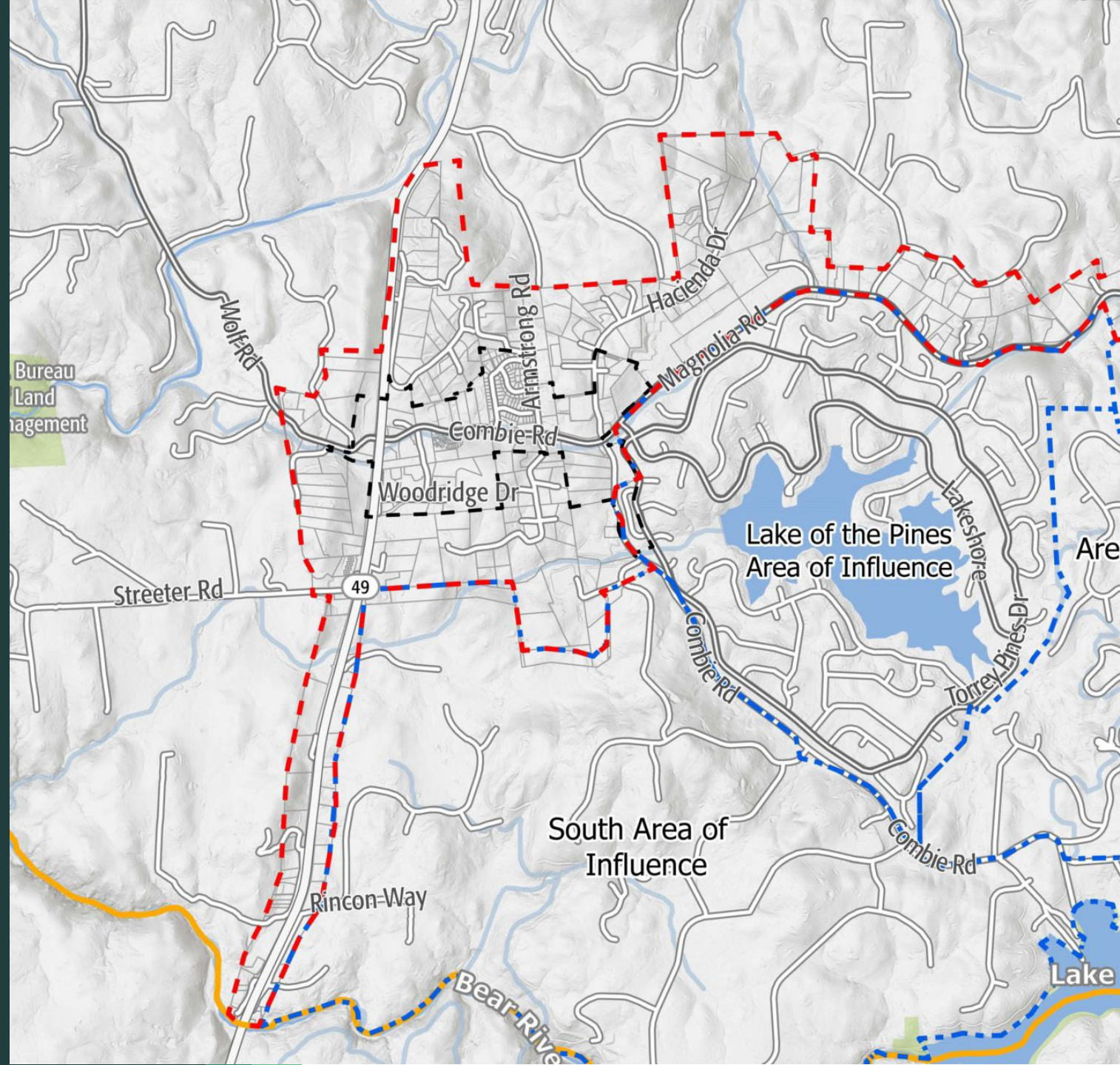


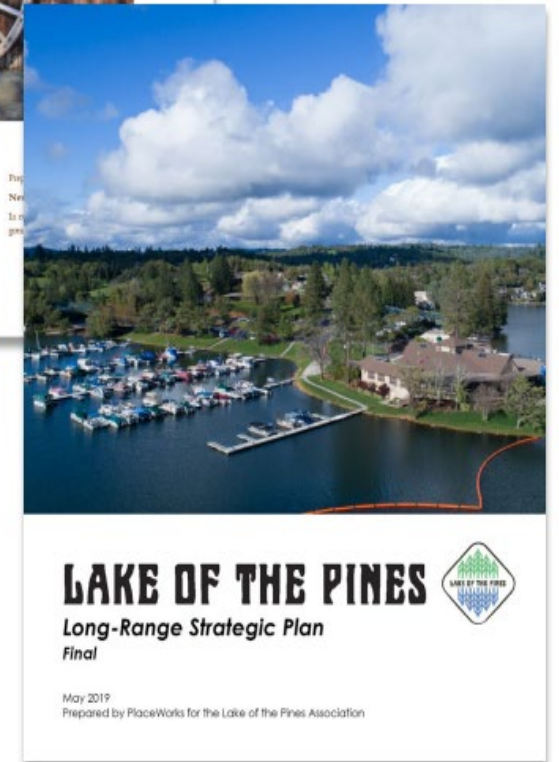
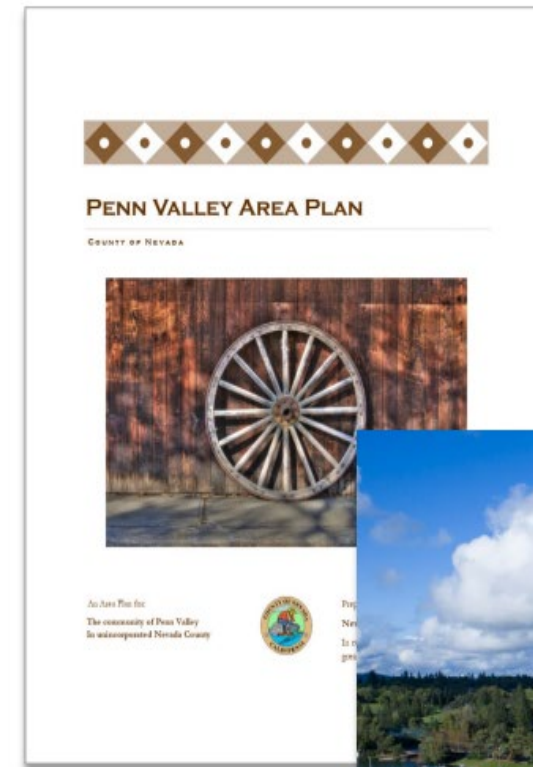
Greater Higgins Area Plan

Board of Supervisors
March 14, 2023



Planning Background

- Higgins Area Plan last updated in 2000
- Other recent plans serve as models:
 - Penn Valley Area Plan (2020)
 - Soda Springs Area Plan (2016)
- Project funded through a Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant award from HCD
 - Contracted with PlaceWorks, Inc.



Project Purpose

- **Establish a comprehensive future vision integrating housing, commerce and culture.**
- **Serve as a blueprint for future development**
 - Land Use
 - Economic Development
 - Public Facilities and Services
 - Design Goals, Guidelines and Standards
- **Engage the community in an inclusive visioning process**

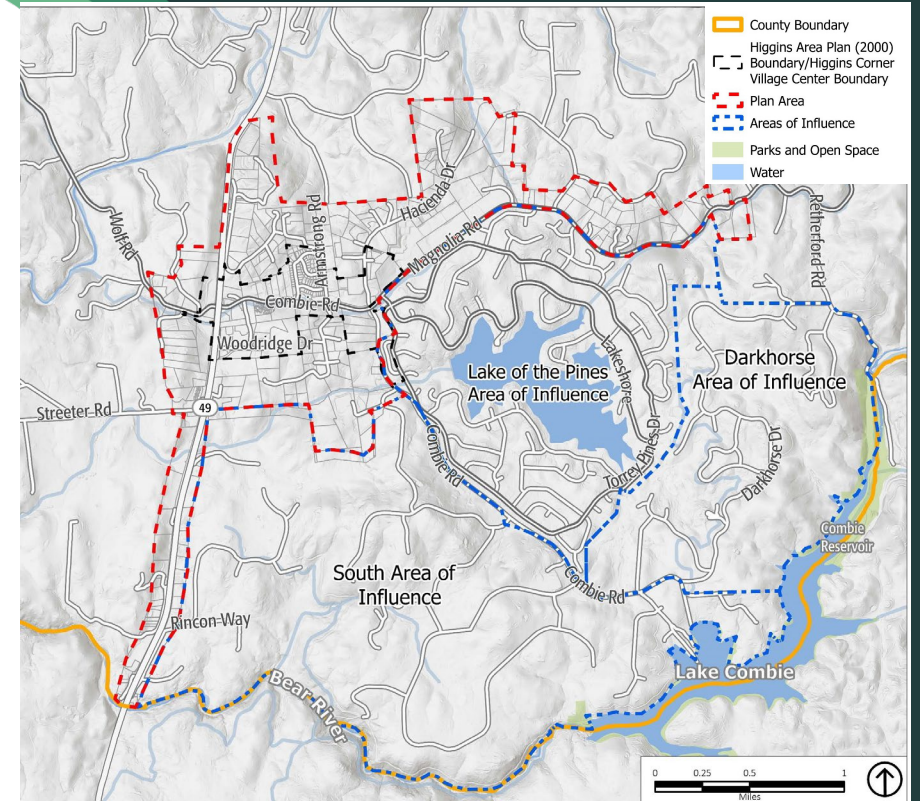


Project Partner

- **South County Municipal Advisory Council (SCMAC)**
 - Helps engage all aspects of the community
 - Advises and informs on issues in and around the Higgins Corner/Lake of the Pines area.
 - Advises the project team to ensure an inclusive participatory process and a final plan that promotes the community's vision.
 - Hold SCMAC meetings to solicit input and discuss plan development

Plan Area

- **Expanded from the previously adopted Higgins Corner Area Plan**
 - Includes areas of high development potential
 - Focus area for policies and recommendations
- **Engage residents from inside and outside the Plan Area**
 - Areas of Influence residents would also be served by Plan Area development
- **Focus on areas that have potential for change, to guide future growth that contributes to community vitality**
 - Identified Opportunity Sites clustered within Design Districts

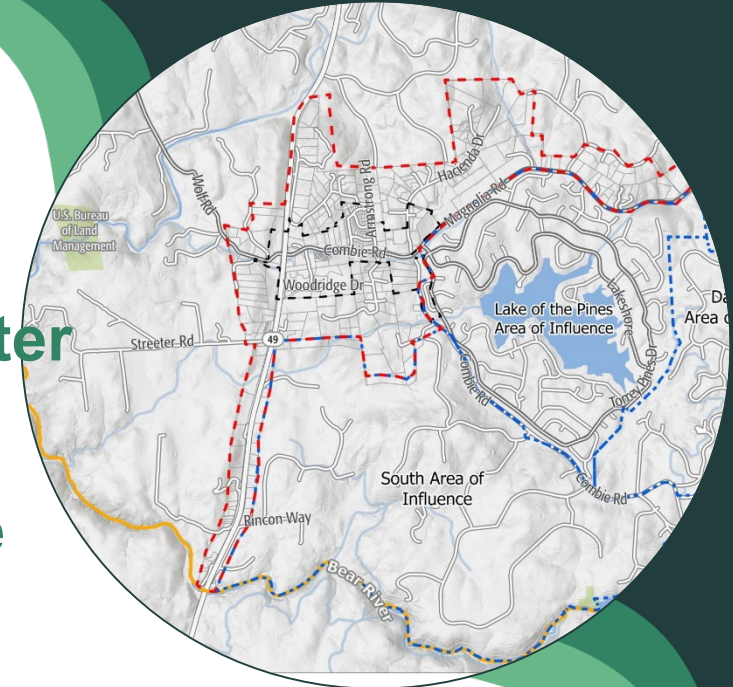


Community Engagement

- **Stakeholder interviews**
 - Businesses, property owners, agencies and organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, emergency responders, and County staff
- **Four community workshops**
 - Workshop 1: Introduction and Visioning
 - Workshop 2: Existing Conditions and Opportunities
 - Workshop 3: Plan and Development Concept Options
 - Workshop 4: Draft Area Plan
- **Regular meetings with the SCMAC**
- **Outreach via project website, email blasts, social media, direct engagement, and flyering at community spaces & high traffic areas**
- **Planning Commission Hearing**

Plan Organization

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – Land Use and Community Character
- Chapter 3 – Economic Development
- Chapter 4 – Public Services and Infrastructure
- Chapter 5 – Recreation and Trails
- Chapter 6 – Historical, Cultural, Natural, and Scenic Resources
- Chapter 7 – Implementation
- Appendix – Design Guidelines



Chapter 1: Introduction

- **Plan document organization**
- **Context and Plan Area**
- **Vision and Guiding Principles**
- **Relationship to the Nevada County General Plan**

VISION STATEMENT

“Retain the rural, small-town character of the Greater Higgins area, while serving the basic needs of the surrounding community and providing a gateway to those entering western County of Nevada. As it develops, the Plan Area will continue to function as the crossroads of southwestern county and as a gateway to the county from the Sacramento Valley.”

Opportunity Sites

13 Identified Opportunity Sites

- Vacant or Underutilized Parcels
- General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations:
 - Commercial
 - Office Professional
 - High Density Residential
- Concentrated in Design Districts
 - Higgins Corner
 - Lake Center

	Site #	APN	Planned Development	Size (Acreage)	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning and Combining Districts
Higgins Corner Design District	1	057-141-029	Cameo Affordable housing	5.0	Urban High Density Residential	R3-RH-SC-SP
	2	057-260-006	-	2.8	Community Commercial	C2-SC-SP
	3	057-141-032	-	3.9	Community Commercial	C2-SC-SP
	4	057-260-021	-	0.8	Office & Professional	OP-SC-SP
	5	057-270-002	-	5.0	Urban High Density Residential	R3-RH-SC-SP
	6	057-270-003	-	18.2	Urban High Density Residential	R3-RH-SC-SP
	7	057-260-008	-	3.01	Community Commercial	C2-SC-SP, RA-3
	8	057-260-026	-	3.09	Business Park	BP-SC-SP
Lake Center Design District	9	021-730-087	CAL FIRE Station	7.1	Neighborhood Commercial	C1-SC-SP-PD, R3-SC-SP-PD, OS-SC-SP
	10	021-730-051	-	4.2	Office & Professional	OP-SC-SP, OS-SC-SP
	11	021-730-083	-	9.6	Office & Professional	OS-SC-SP, OP-SC-SP
	12 (Lake Center)	021-010-025	Bear River Library (tenant improvement)	5.3	Neighborhood Commercial	C1-SC-SP
	13	057-200-007, 057-200-008 (County Sanitation District)	-	22.53	Public	P

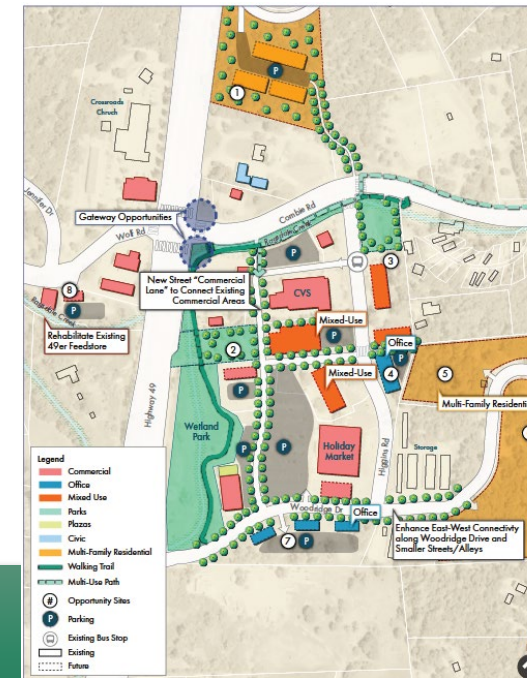


Figure 2.8: Conceptual Diagram of Potential Development of Higgins Corner Design District

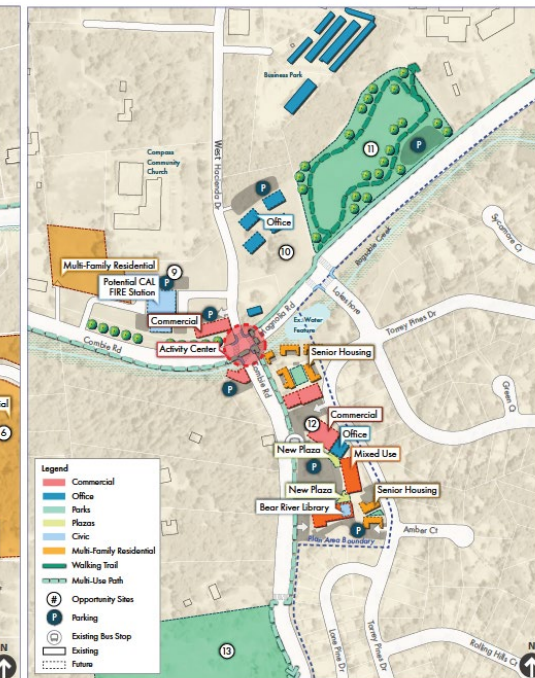


Figure 2.10: Conceptual Diagram of Potential Development of Lake Center Design District

Chapter 2: Land Use and Community Character

- Existing land use and built conditions
- Community Design Districts
 - Higgins Corner Design District
 - Lake Center Design District
- Key goals and policies
 - Concentrated growth
 - Multi-family housing
 - Single-family housing
 - Experience-oriented commercial areas
 - Design consistency

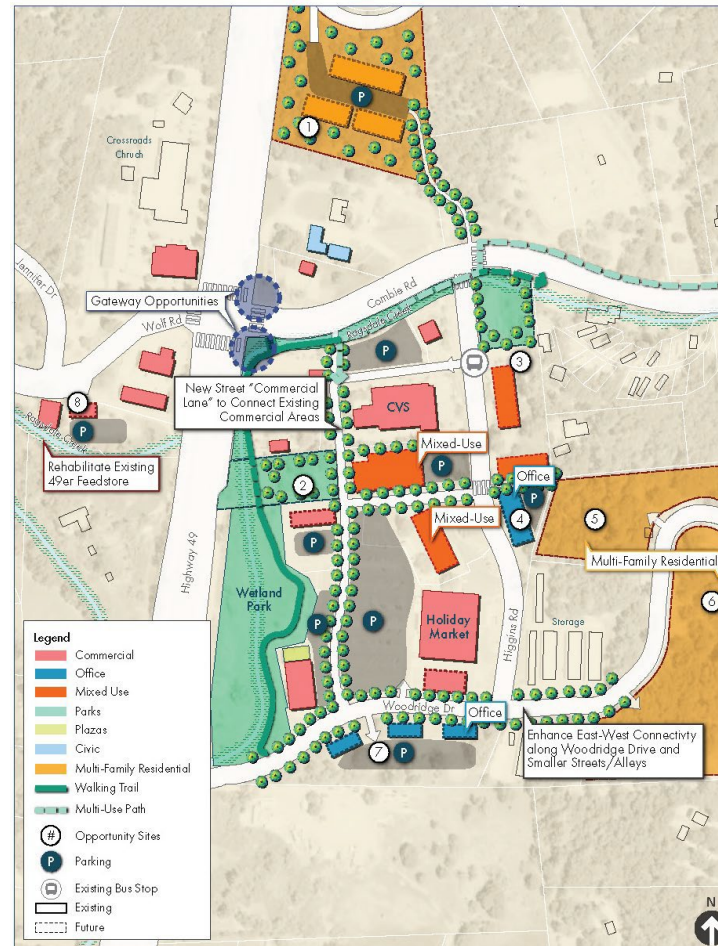


Figure 2.8: Conceptual Diagram of Potential Development of Higgins Corner Design District

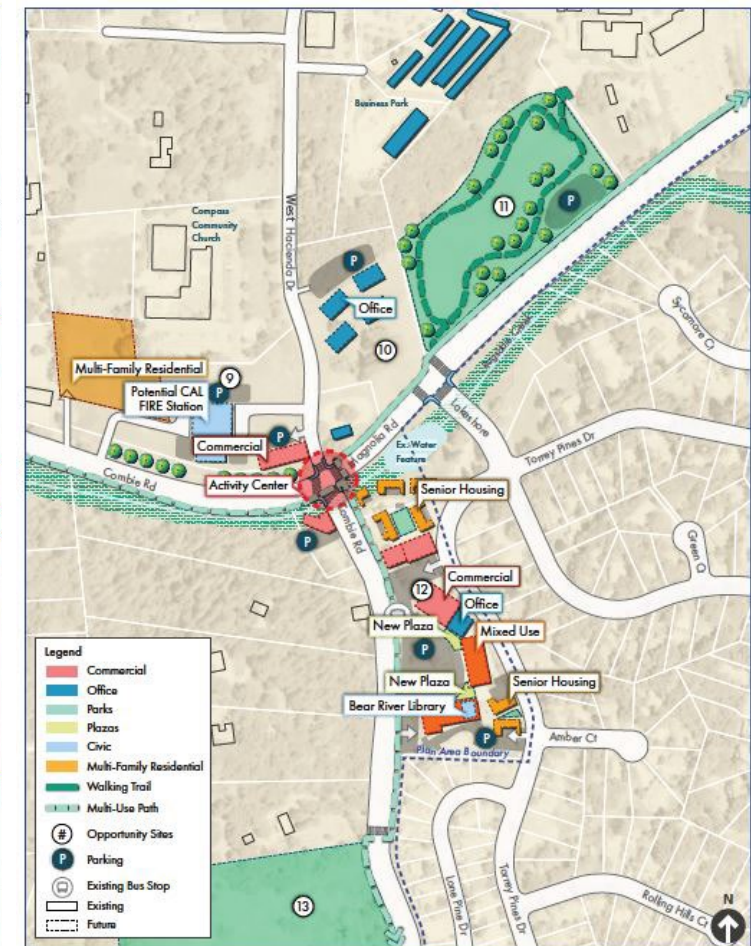


Figure 2.10: Conceptual Diagram of Potential Development of Lake Center Design District

Chapter 3: Economic Development

- Existing economic conditions
- Market potential for residential and non-residential uses
- Key goals and policies
 - Business development
 - Marketing and organizational

Table 4.3: Market Potential for Non-Residential Use (excluding Retail) in Square Feet of Building Area; 2022–2042

	Low-Range Projection (s.f.)	High-Range Projection (s.f.)
Other Commercial	4,700	8,630
Office	9,610	17,640
Light Industrial	6,570	12,060
Total	20,900	38,300

Source: PlaceWorks, 2022.

potential for nonresidential uses (excluding retail which was discussed in the previous section). The other commercial uses in Table 4.3 would likely be developed as part of new retail development. It is worth noting that the Plan Area need not accommodate the demand for office and light industrial uses as these businesses could easily serve households within the Plan Area and Areas of Influence even if developed in more urban areas, such as Grass Valley or North Auburn.

The analysis estimates that projected household growth in and around the Plan Area could support the development of 4,700 to 8,630 square feet of building space for other commercial uses, which might include arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and personal services.

The analysis estimates that projected household growth could support the development of 9,610 to 17,640 square feet of building space for



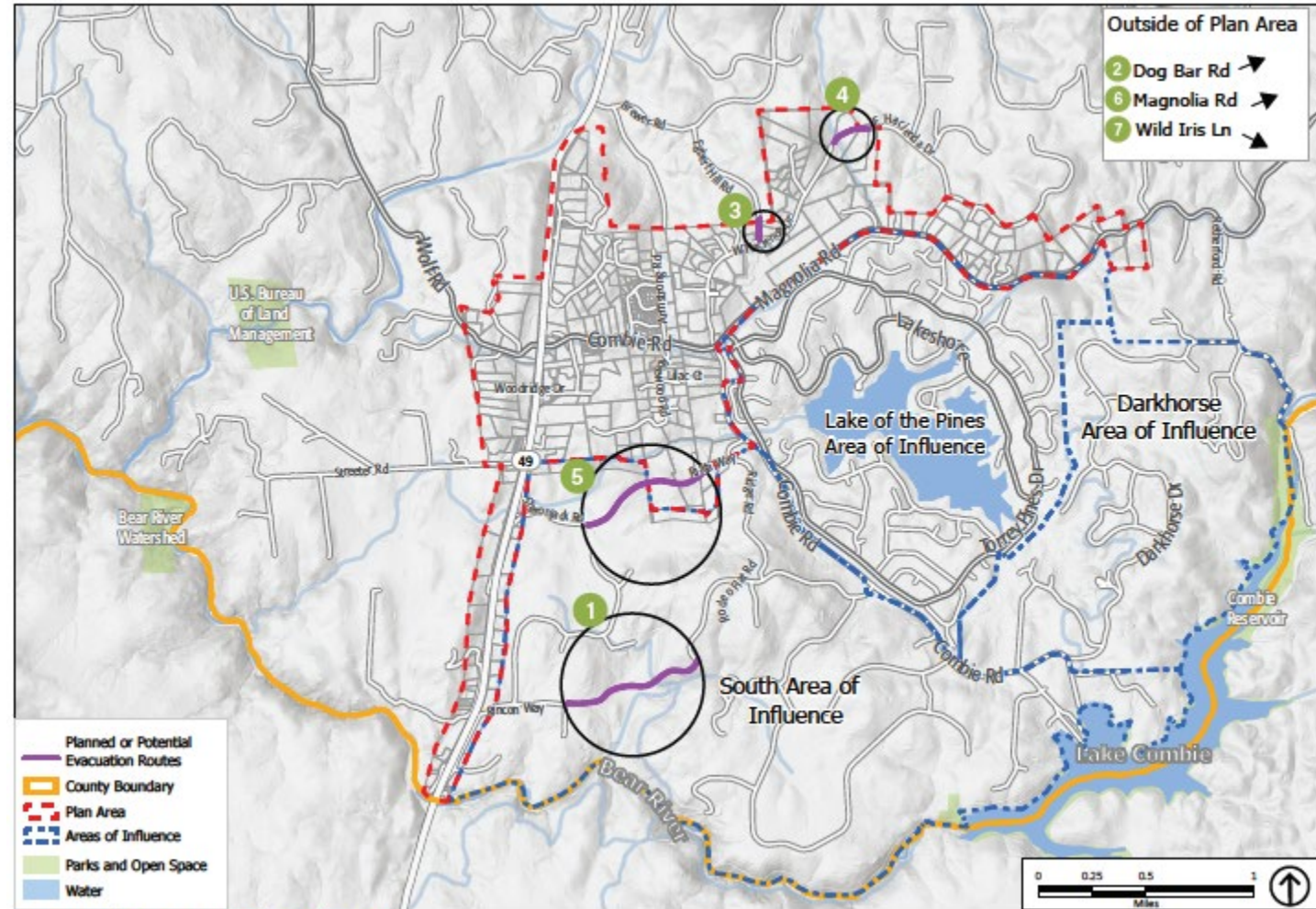
Example of dining restaurant with outdoor seating.

office, which could include professional offices but is mostly medical office. The office uses could also be developed as part of retail development or could be developed as stand-alone office buildings.

Finally, the analysis estimates that projected household growth could support 6,570 to 12,060 square feet of light industrial building space, which could include auto repair and service, construction businesses, and other light industrial types of businesses.

Chapter 4: Public Services and Infrastructure

- Vehicular network
- Potential evacuation routes
- Potential transit improvements
- Utility infrastructure
- Public services
- Key goals and policies
 - Balanced circulation network
 - Evacuation route network
 - Public services
 - Utility infrastructure



Source: Nevada County, 2021; PlaceWorks, Inc. 2021.

Chapter 5: Recreation and Trails

- Existing facilities
- Trail recommendations
- Parks recommendations
- Key goals and policies
 - Expanded multi-use path network
 - Multi-use path design and management measures
 - Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - New parks

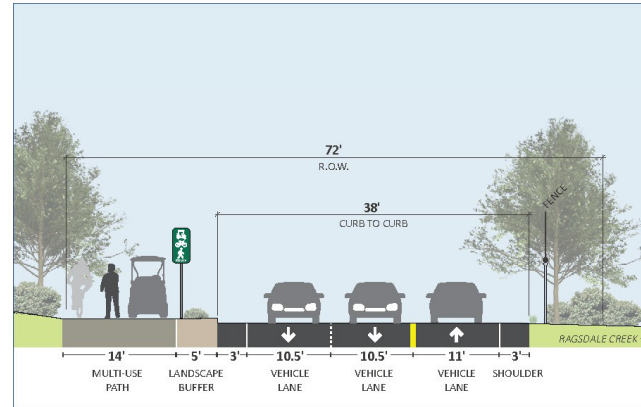


Figure 5.4: Proposed Street Section of Combie Road with New Multi-use Path (looking east)

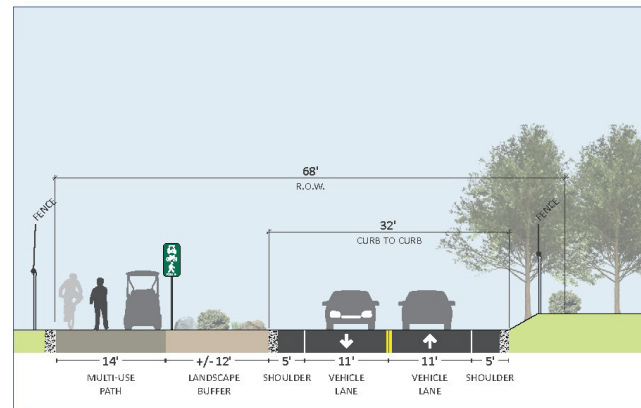
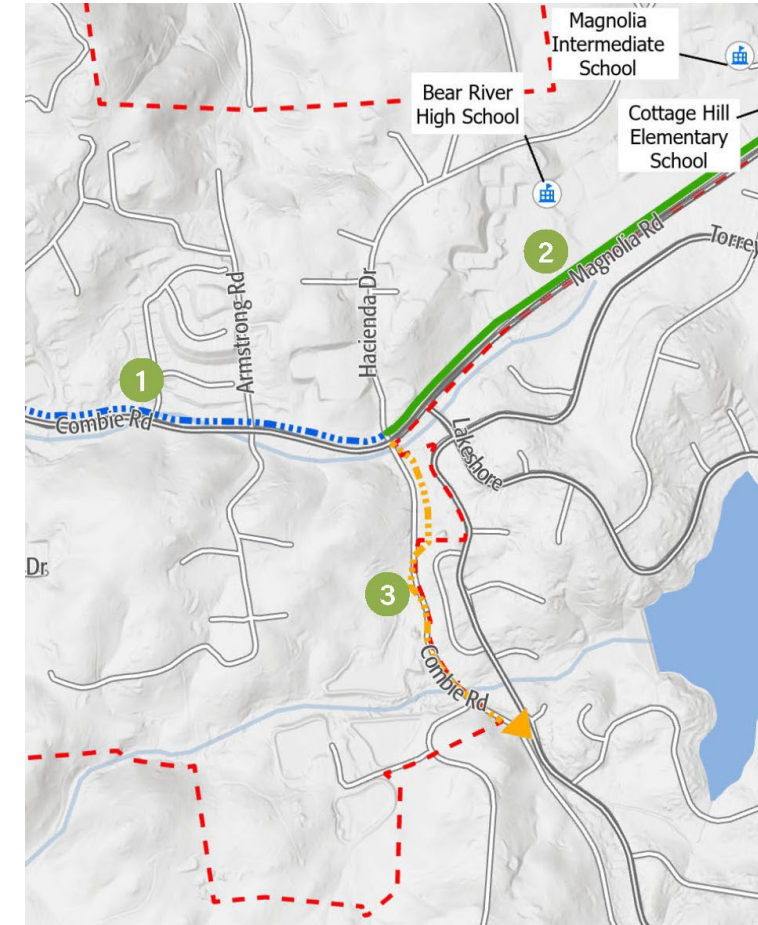


Figure 5.6: Proposed Street Section of Magnolia Road with Widened Multi-use Path (looking east)



Chapter 6: Historic, Cultural, Natural, and Scenic Resources

- Existing resources
 - Indigenous land acknowledgment
 - Ragsdale Creek
 - Highway 49 and Combie Road
- Key goals and policies
 - Scenic resource preservation
 - Ragsdale Creek protection

Scenic Resources

Highway 49

Highway 49 is nestled into a broad depression between low hills. The character of the highway is generally open to the surrounding lands which are handsome open spaces that show evidence of agricultural activity and change with the seasons. It is a lovely gateway into Nevada County from the south. Highway 49 is a County-designated Scenic Corridor in the Greater Higgins Plan Area.

The scenic corridor designation generally covers a distance of 200 feet from the right-of way of Highway 49 on both sides, from the southern county line up to Combie Road. It is governed by the suffix “-SC” in the zoning map, for example AG-5-SC, M1-SC, and RA-3-SC, and is therefore a “combining district.” Any changes or new development shall adhere to County standards and guidelines in Section L-II 2.7.7 Scenic Corridor (SC) Combining District of the Nevada County Code. In addition to the existing County standards and guidelines, additional standards and guidelines for Scenic and Natural Resources in Appendix A, Design Guidelines should be followed for Scenic Corridor Combining Districts within the Plan Area.

Highway 49 is also part of the State Scenic Highways Master Plan and is eligible for official designation as an “Official Scenic Highway” by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). To become officially designated, the County would need to apply to Caltrans for scenic highway approval and adopt a Corridor Protection Program. As part of the Corridor Protection Program, the County would be required to “protect the scenic appearance of the scenic corridor; the band of land generally adjacent to the highway right-of-way, including, but not limited to, (1) regulation of land use and intensity (density) of development;



Entry monument along Highway 49.

(2) detailed land and site planning; (3) control of outdoor advertising; (4) careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping; and (5) the design and appearance of structures and equipment.”

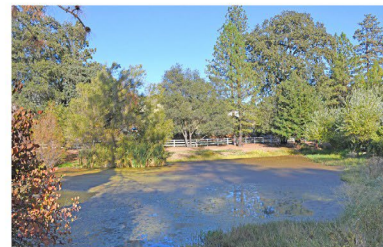
Combie Road

Combie Road, from east of Highway 49 at Jennifer Drive to just east of Bear River High School, is also considered a scenic corridor and part of the SC Combining District. The scenic corridor designation covers properties abutting the right-of way of Combie Road on both sides, with additional parcels behind that are visible from Combie Road. See Figure 2.5, Plan Area Combining Zoning Districts Map, for a map showing the scenic corridor area along Combie Road. As previously described, any changes or new development for these parcels shall adhere to County standards and guidelines in Section L-II 2.7.7 Scenic Corridor



Hillside and tree cover in the Greater Higgins area.

Ragsdale Creek riparian corridor, providing cover, foraging, and breeding habitat for an array of wildlife species. The area along the riparian corridor contains suitable habitat for special-status species. However, no species of concern were identified during preparation of the Ragsdale Creek Development Setback Study, completed in conjunction with the 2000 Higgins Area Plan.



Ragsdale Creek along Combie Road in front of Cascade Crossing Residential Development.

Chapter 7: Implementation

• Prioritization of goals, policies, and actions

- Lead Agency
- Timeframe
- Implementation Actions

• Funding mechanisms to implement Plan improvements,

- **Recreation:** Nevada County Recreational Trails Master Plan; Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan (forthcoming); and Bear River Recreation District (BRRPD) Master Plan.

Development and Infrastructure

Federal Funding Sources

Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds community development projects and services to build stronger and more resilient communities. Projects may address needs such as infrastructure, economic development projects, public facilities installation, community centers, housing rehabilitation, public services, homeowner assistance, etc.

USDA Rural Broadband Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers loan and grant programs, including the ReConnect Loan and Grant Program and the Farm Bill Broadband Program, that help provide funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas. The ReConnect Program has invested over \$1 billion to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure in unserved rural areas and tribal lands.

State Funding Sources

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program

The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) Program is a joint effort by the Strategic Growth Council and California Department of Housing and Community Development. The Program

Other Types of Funding

Developer-Constructed/Funded Improvements

For public facilities and infrastructure on or adjacent to a site proposed for development or new construction, the preferred method to pay for the improvements is for the developer to construct or pay for the improvement as a condition of approval.

In some cases, the development of one or more parcels in the Plan Area may require the construction of off-site infrastructure improvements, the size of which may be larger than what is needed to serve just the proposed development. In such cases, if the County does not have the funds available to pay for the additional infrastructure capacity, the property owner or developer may agree, through a development agreement, to pay for the full cost of the off-site infrastructure improvement and to be repaid as additional development occurs.

The development agreement would stipulate the terms of such repayment. If the cost of infrastructure improvements is to be repaid to a property owner, developer, or other entity that paid the upfront cost, the County may prohibit other development under the Plan until the project applicant has paid the required infrastructure cost repayment fee in accordance with the terms of the development agreement.

Development Impact Fees

Development impact fees (DIFs) are a one-time charge to new development imposed under the Mitigation Fee Act (California Government Code, Section 66000, et seq.). These fees are charged to new development to mitigate impacts resulting from the development activity and cannot be used to fund existing deficiencies. This means that new development can only pay for part of the improvement cost for projects that

benefit existing uses as well as new development and the County must find another funding source to cover the costs for the improvements that benefit the existing uses. Impact fees must be adopted based on findings of reasonable relationships between the development paying the fee, the need for the fee, and the use of fee revenues.

Because each development pays only for its fair share of a public facility or infrastructure improvement, the County may not have the necessary funding to pay for improvements until other developments are approved and constructed. If the County has funds available, it can construct the improvements and get repaid over time. If the County does not have funds available, it might be the case that a community facilities district, which can bond against future revenue, would be a better funding mechanism than a DIF.

County Service Areas

A County Service Area (CSA) is a type of dependent special district governed by the County. CSAs are established as a mechanism for counties to furnish municipal-type services to unincorporated areas beyond those uniformly provided countywide. The CSA does not provide new revenue, and is a vehicle through which the County's general fund can be segregated and used for bond repayment for infrastructure and to pay for enhanced levels of service in the defined area. Currently, Nevada County provides enhanced road operation and maintenance services within ten CSAs. Several of the CSAs are also authorized by Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to provide auxiliary services like vegetation management and street lighting.

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts

An Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs) diverts local property tax revenues through tax-increment financing) to either pay

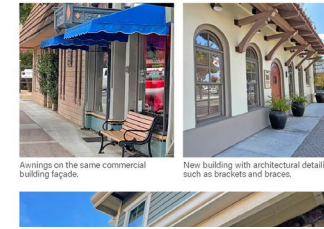
other year, with the next grant cycle anticipated for Spring 2024.

Local Streets and Roads Program

SB 1 dedicates approximately \$1.5 billion per year in new formula revenues to cities and counties for basic road maintenance, rehabilitation, and critical safety projects on the local streets and roads system. To be eligible for funding, cities and counties must submit a list of proposed projects to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) by May 1st of each year, with the CTC adopting a list of eligible projects by August 1st of each year. Local Streets and Roads Program (LSRP) funding is available for road maintenance and rehabilitation, safety projects, Complete Streets components (including active transportation purposes, pedestrian and bicycle safety projects, and multi-modal transit facilities in conjunction with any other allowable project), and traffic control devices.

Appendix: Design Guidelines

- Scenic and Natural Resources
- Design Districts
- Site Planning
- Building Design
- Landscaping
- Public Art
- Lighting
- Signage
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Multi-family Residential Development



Signage

Nicely designed signage can lend a feeling of quality to a development, while garish or oversized signage often gives a negative message. These guidelines will ensure signage doesn't overwhelm the character of the development.

- » **S-1:** Every non-residential project shall submit a preliminary sign plan for review as part of any development permit application. Any plans for temporary signage shall be included. Plans shall depict the overall sign design for all temporary and permanent signs. The sizes, color scheme, lighting detail, and location proposed for each sign shall be submitted with a final comprehensive sign plan at the building permit stage.

- » **S-2:** Sign colors and materials should reflect the overall character of the Higgins Area and complement the design of each site's development.
- » **S-3:** Wall signs shall be positioned on the building to complement the style and proportion of the entire building facade. Signs shall not extend above the roof fascia.



Attractive signage for a retail store on a building facade.

Cottage Drives

These are cottage homes arranged along a small private street with front doors facing the street. Like single family subdivisions but on a smaller scale, they would be more affordable than typical single-family residences due to the smaller size and being on a single property. The character of the street is important; it should feel like a real street with curbs and gutters on both sides and street lighting. To meet fire code the drive may need to have a turnaround, or loop back to the public street.

- » **MF-11:** Front doors of cottages should face onto the private drive. Cottages are close to the drive and dooryards are usually quite small. The dooryard may be fenced with a 42" high fence maximum, which should be visually permeable. Although the cottages have a private rear yard, a small gathering space the size of a cottage lot should be provided as a gathering space and play area for kids.
- » **MF-12:** Cottages should be one or two stories.
- » **MF-13:** Vehicle access should be from the private drive. Parking access is from the drive for each cottage. Parking should be provided behind the front line of the house. Parking can be an open space, in a carport, or a garage. Single width tandem parking is encouraged with 12' driveways. This is a more efficient use of the property, and the narrow driveways allow curb space for ample on-street parking.
- » **MF-14:** Cottages should face the street or private drive with windows, a front door, and a porch.



Cottage drive homes arranged along a small street with front doors facing the street.



Illustration from Rincon del Rio showing cottage with windows, door, and porch facing drive.
Image Credit: Michael Kent Murphy Architects.

Project Components

- **General Plan Text Amendment (GPA22-0002):**
 - To Adopt the Greater Higgins Area Plan and correct references.
- **Zoning Map Amendment (RZN22-0002):**
 - Parcel rezoning to correspond with the proposed expansion of the Area Plan boundaries to add the Site Performance (SP) Combining District zoning to specific parcels to reflect the applicability of the Area Plan (479-parcels).
- **Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ORD22-3):**
 - Amending Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to add a reference to the proposed Greater Higgins Area Plan design guidelines and standards.

Environmental Review

- **Project subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**
 - Nevada County is Lead Agency
 - 35-day Public Review Period (November 29, 2022 to January 3, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.)
- **Comments received from multiple individuals during and following the review period.**
 - No substantial revisions required that would require recirculation pursuant to CEQA and Guidelines
- **Area Plan would not result in a negative environmental impact**
 - The project does not issue any entitlements or authorize physical disturbance of the environment.
 - Future project-level environmental review within the Plan boundaries would be based on consistency with the County General Plan, Land Use and Development Code, and the Greater Higgins Area Plan.

General Plan and Zoning Consistency

- **The Greater Higgins Area Plan supports, furthers and augments the Nevada County General Plan.**
 - It is drafted to help support the economic and social well-being of the Greater Higgins Area and surrounding community as it grows overtime.
 - It is intended to act as a policy guide for which future development projects will be tested for consistency with the Area Plan goals and policies.
- **Proposed amendments are a part of the project to ensure internal consistency within the General Plan and LUDC.**
 - Remove reference to 2000 Area Plan in General Plan And LUDC
 - Minor textual changes to reflect Greater Higgins Area Plan

Planning Commission Recommendation

- **January 12, 2023 Hearing: 4-0 vote (1 absent)**
 - Comments received by MAC Chair, MAC Members, Plan Area Resident
- **Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors**
 - Adopt Resolution for the Negative Declaration (EIS22-0014)
 - Adopt Resolution for the General Plan Text Amendment (GPA22-0002)
 - Approve Ordinance for the amendments to Zoning District Map (RZN22-0002)
 - Approve Ordinance for the amendments to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code (ORD22-3).