



RESOLUTION NO. 16-519

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

RESOLUTION AMENDING THE NEVADA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CHAPTER 1: LAND USE ELEMENT SUPPORTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND POLICY 1.3.13 TO ADOPT THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN (GP14-003)

WHEREAS, on November 14, 1995, the County of Nevada adopted a General Plan for the County of Nevada, through Resolution 95-530; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan Chapter 1: Land Use Elements identifies Soda Springs as a likely candidate for an Area Plan, and Program 1.2.1.b of Policy 1.2.1 directs review and analysis of the current distribution, effectiveness and appropriateness of the Highway Commercial (HC) land use designation; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2014, the Board of Supervisors issued Board Order BO-14-02 directing the Advance Planning Division work program priorities for Phase II of the General Plan Land Use Element. The work plan calls for a new Area Plan for the community of Soda Springs; and

WHEREAS, 51 parcels have been deemed most suitable for land-use re-designation, which requires a General Plan Land Use Map amendment to ensure consistency with the various proposed land use designations for those parcels; and

WHEREAS, this project includes the associated rezoning of those parcels, including adding the RC (Rural Center) Combining District to 77 parcels and SP (Site Performance) Combining District to 194 parcels; and

WHEREAS, the County prepared a project specific Initial Study and Negative Declaration (IS/ND) and circulated it for review by responsible and trustee agencies, and the public, and submitted it to the State Clearinghouse (EIS14-004/SCH#2016-072059) for a review and comment period by State agencies between July 22, 2016, and August 22, 2016 (32-days); and

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2016, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed General Plan text amendments (GP14-003), the General Plan Land Use Map amendments (GP16-004), the corresponding Zoning District Map amendments which include parcel specific RC (Rural Center) and SP (Site Performance) Combining Districts (Z16-005), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendments (ORD14-002) (collectively "Project") in which the Commission reviewed the proposed Initial Study and Negative Declaration together with all comments received during the public review period, and recommended adoption of this same Initial Study before making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the proposed Project; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing and considering the proposed Project, the Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed Resolution to amend the General Plan text (GP14-003) as shown and described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part of this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2016, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, held a duly noticed public hearing on the Project, which includes the proposed text amendments to the General Plan; and

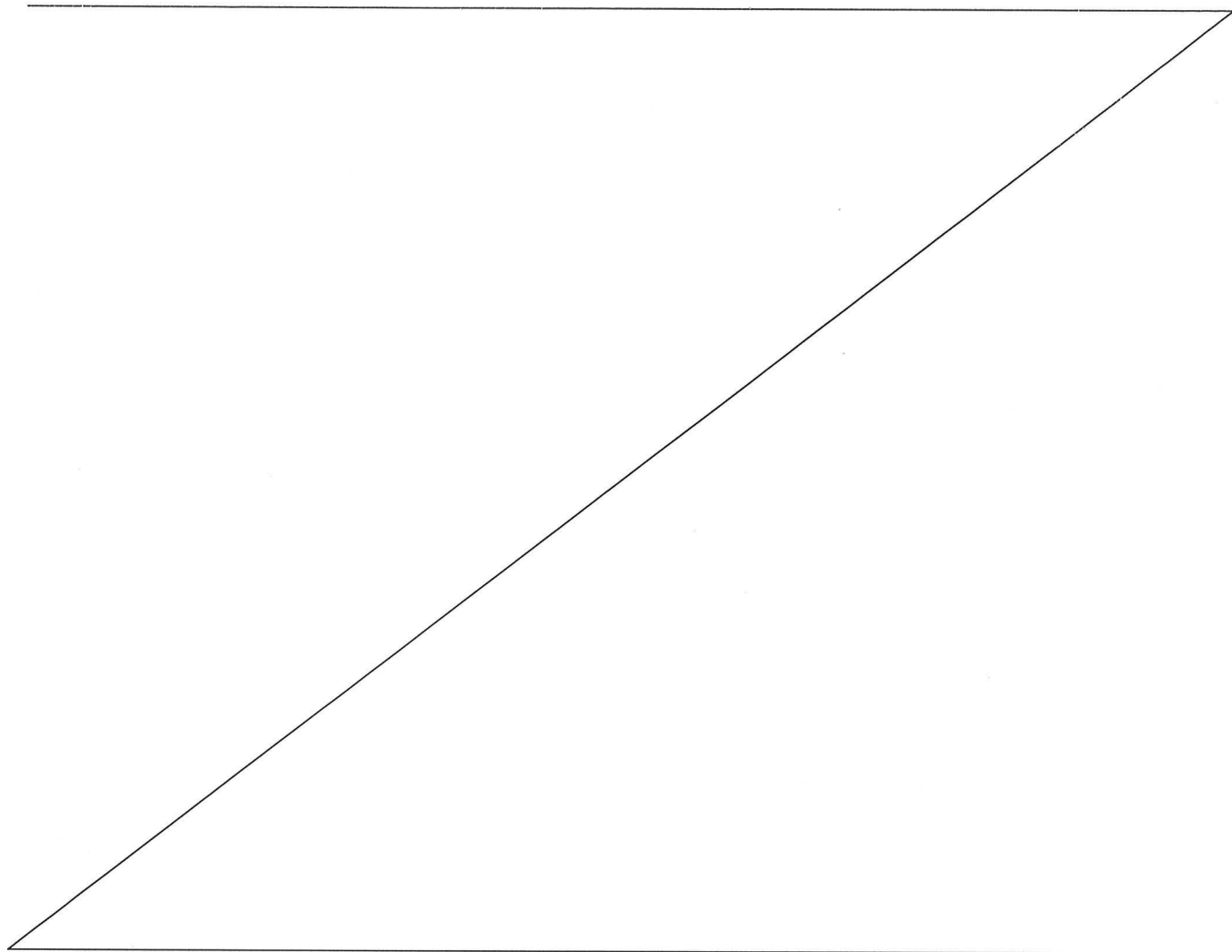
WHEREAS, a separate Resolution of the Board of Supervisors adopted the Project's Initial Study/Negative Declaration (EIS14-004), a separate Resolution of the Board of Supervisors adopted the General Plan Land Use Map amendments (GP16-004), a separate Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors adopted site specific rezoning associated with the Project (Z16-005), and an Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors adopted Zoning Ordinance text amendments (ORD14-002); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors, after reviewing and considering the recommendations of the Nevada County Planning Commission regarding the proposed text amendments to the Nevada County General Plan, all information and evidence submitted in favor and against the proposed amendments, and the complete record before it, has determined that an amendment to the County's General Plan is now warranted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors for the County of Nevada hereby finds and determines:

1. That the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan and provisions of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code Chapter II Zoning Regulations, specifically Program 1.2.1.b and those policies of the County General Plan focused on land use and sustainable economic development opportunities including those locations currently zoned Highway Commercial; and
2. That the proposed amendments will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the County, because the site development standards of the County's Zoning Code will ensure future projects conform to applicable regulations to ensure that the sites will be compatible with surrounding development. In addition to site development standards, future project specific conditions and mitigation measures will ensure that adequate infrastructure, including sewer, water, access and emergency services will be available to serve the sites at the time of development; and
3. That the Project sites are physically suitable for the various proposed General Plan land use designations, in that the sites do not contain significant areas of excessively steep slopes or sensitive environmental resources, which cannot be avoided through appropriate site planning. The sites have good to adequate access to County maintained roads or can establish access to County maintained roads that will accommodate the anticipated future development of the various proposed primary uses; and
4. That the sites are physically suitable for the proposed land use designations, as reviewed by the Initial Study and Negative Declaration (EIS14-004/SCH#2016-072059). The various designations are consistent with uses surrounding each of the various locations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based on the foregoing findings, and the entire record before it, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors does hereby approve and adopt the text amendments to the Nevada County General Plan set forth in Exhibits "A" and "B".



PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada at a special meeting of said Board, held on the 25th day of October, 2016, by the following vote of said Board:

- Ayes: Supervisors Nathan H. Beason, Edward Scofield, Dan Miller, Hank Weston and Richard Anderson.
- Noes: None.
- Absent: None.
- Abstain: None.

ATTEST:

JULIE PATTERSON HUNTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: 


Dan Miller, Chair

Exhibit A

“Chapter 1: Land Use – Supporting Planning Documents

* * * *

- Area Plans

Area Plans are supporting land use policy documents that compliment and assist in the further implementation of the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan. The five adopted Area Plans are: Penn Valley Village Area Plan (1999), Higgins Corner Area Plan (2000), Loma Rica Industrial Area Plan (2006), North San Juan Area Plan (2010), and the Soda Springs Area Plan (2016). The following communities have been recognized as likely candidates for Area Plans: Washington, Chicago Park, Cedar Ridge, Alta Sierra, and Rough and Ready.”

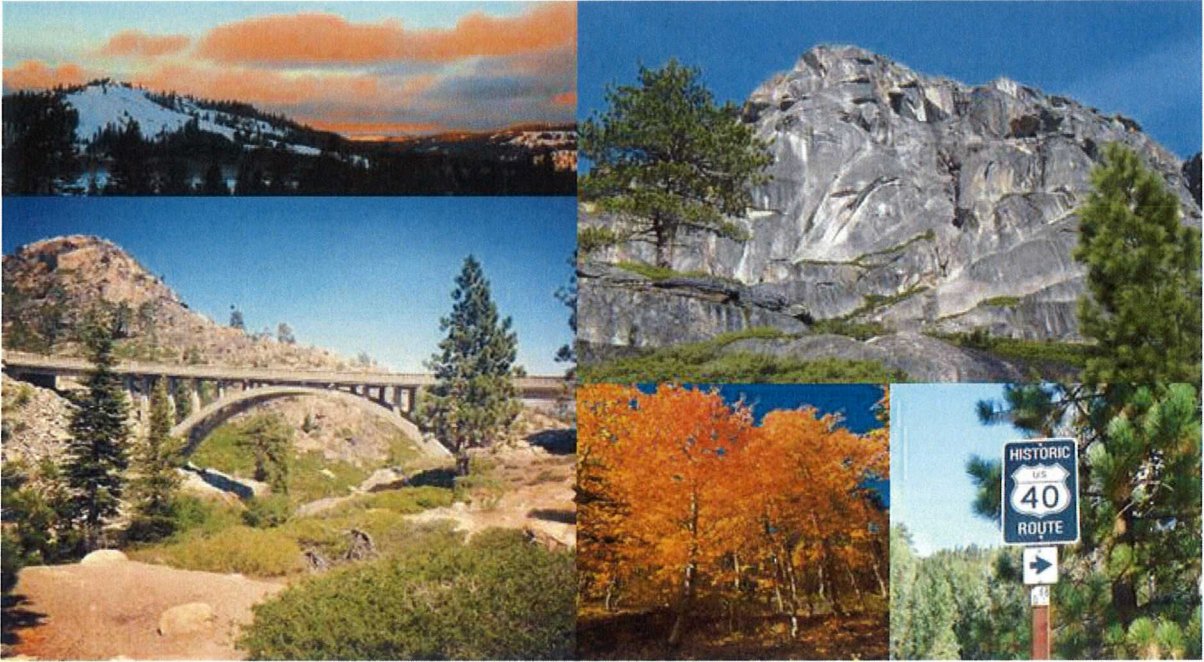
Exhibit B

“Policy 1.3.13

* * * *

Rural Region Area Plans are an optional planning tool whose purpose is to allow a more specific treatment of a *Rural Region* area, especially its unique characteristics. Each *Rural Region* Area Plan must contain at least one *Rural Place* and related territories based upon topographical and watershed boundaries. *Rural Region* Area Plans are to complement and assist in the further implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

The North San Juan Rural Center Area Plan was adopted in 2010, and the Soda Springs Area Plan was adopted in 2016, and are the only *Rural Region* Area Plans”



Soda Springs Area Plan



Prepared by:
Nevada County Planning Department
in coordination with the
Donner Summit Area Association



SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN

Nevada County

**Adopted October 25, 2016
County Resolution 16-519**



Acknowledgements

Nevada County would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this Area Plan.

Nevada County Board of Supervisors

Dan Miller, Chair – Supervisor District III
Hank Weston, Vice Chair – Supervisor District IV
Nate Beason – Supervisor District I
Ed Scofield – Supervisor District II
Richard Anderson – Supervisor District V

Nevada County Planning Commission

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Laura Duncan, Vice Chair – Commissioner District IV
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of the Area Plan

The Soda Springs Area Plan (Area Plan) serves as the comprehensive land use and zoning plan for the Donner Summit region and community of Soda Spring and embodies the expressed goals of residents, business owners, and elected officials and establishes concrete and achievable actions. The drafting of the Soda Springs Area Plan is a tool to advance the goals and policies for the Nevada County General Plan while benefitting the local community. The Area Plan provides long-term guidance that is intended to improve the prosperity of Donner Summit in a way that supports a healthy economy, environment, and social fabric for the residents and general public.

Plan Preparation

Nevada County has prepared this Area Plan with collaboration from the Donner Summit Area Association. Local efforts to inform long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade and the foundation of this plan is based on a 2004 comprehensive economic development study conducted for the Donner Summit area. To help guide development in Soda Springs and surrounding Donner Summit area the Advance Planning Division of the Nevada County Planning Department held nine public workshops between September 2014 and August 2016 and recommended key strategies to be implemented to encourage investment and to achieve environmental, physical, and sustainable economic improvements.

Background and Context

The Area Plan seeks to provide a blueprint for the ultimate development of the area derived from an assessment of current land use issues and potential solutions drawn from collaborative discussions and a careful analysis of what is needed to preserve and improve the functionality of the area. The current strict Highway Commercial zoning through much of the Soda Springs Rural Center has limited commercial development and the existing built environment has languished. With this deterioration there are troubling socioeconomic trends such as unaffordable housing along with reduced housing occupancy, business closures, and declining population and workforce. Compounding these problems is the multitude of political jurisdictions and districts and divided community perceived needs that have resulted in not capitalizing on opportunities that exist in the area. Adding to the challenge, consecutive drought years have resulted in early ski resort closures and reduced winter tourism resulting in an economic downturn.

The commercial area of the Soda Springs Rural Center was zoned for highway traveler business, but is not functioning well with this zoning designation. Interstate 80 allows potential visitors to pass by enroute to nearby Truckee, Reno, and Lake Tahoe, oblivious to the experiences they might enjoy on Donner Summit. Additionally, time has passed on while the area has been

hindered in its economic promotion by the lack of investment and the consequent impacts of some areas of blight in the built environment. Many nearby competing recreational areas have better organized and promoted year-round attractions resulting in Donner Summit being comparatively less competitive for tourist dollars needed to support economic viability.

It is the desire of the community to capitalize on the abundant natural and recreational opportunities that are in the area. It desires to be a recreation and nature-centered destination, but it currently lacks the tourism infrastructure like lodging and restaurants to fully support this desire. The benefits of being a destination area are many and yet there are significant constraints to development of the area as a tourist destination. Some of the constraints are stiff competition and nearly total dependence on the winter recreation tourism trade, the hazards of weather and road conditions, the heavy reliance on weekend and holiday visitors, the preponderance of second home residents, funding limitations, and the complexities resulting from multiple jurisdictions. Nevada and Placer Counties, and the Tahoe National Forest are the principal jurisdictional entities. In addition to all of these constraints, there currently is not a coherent and effective promotion of the area's natural features and abundant passive recreation opportunities. And lastly, there is not a comprehensive long range development plan that provides a vision for the community character and sustainability of the area's natural and economic viability. The completion of the Soda Springs Area Plan will outline a means to attend to these deficiencies. Concerted efforts by multiple groups and governmental entities to overcome these constraints will be needed to attract investment in the area.

While scientists agree that our planet's climate is changing, the effects of climate change vary from region to region. Probable scenarios for California and for the Sierra Nevada Range in particular include drought, heat waves, diminished mountain snowpack, earlier snowmelt, catastrophic wildfires, and other disruptions to natural processes and wildlife habitat. Climate change also creates uncertainties for the State and local economy which is heavily dependent upon snowfall. When the ski season is shortened, the impact on the tourism industry and local economy is heavily felt. Development of the Donner Summit area must be mindful of the effects of climate change and plan accordingly.

Legal Authority

The Soda Springs Area Plan is designed to meet State of California requirements for specific plans and to facilitate the implementation of development goals and policies by establishing zoning districts, standards and criteria for development, and to set the distribution, location and extent of planned land uses consistent with the adopted Nevada County General Plan. The authority for preparing Area Plans is founded in California Government Code §65301(b) which allows the general plan to be adopted as a single document or as a group of documents relating to subjects or geographic segments of the planning area, and in Government Code §65303 which allows the general plan to include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county. Local authority is founded in the goals and policies of the 1995 Nevada County General Plan. Direction to prepare the Soda Springs Area Plan is provided by County Board of Supervisors Board Order 14-03, directing preparation of an Area Plan for the Soda Springs Rural Center.

The Soda Springs Area Plan was developed consistent with California State law which permits cities and counties to adopt specific plans for the “systematic implementation of the general plan” (Government Code Section 65450 et. Seq.). The law requires the following:

- A specific plan shall include a text and diagram or diagrams which specify all the following in detail:
 - The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
 - The proposed distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
 - Standards and criteria by which development will proceed and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources where applicable.
 - A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the above referenced requirements.

- The specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan.

California Government Code Section 65452 provides that the specific plan may address any other subjects which in the judgment of the planning agency are necessary or desirable for the implementation of the general plan.

Relationship to the General Plan

As a policy document, the Soda Springs Area Plan supplements and becomes part of the General Plan, providing a comprehensive framework for making land use decisions within the Soda Springs Rural Center and influencing decisions in the surrounding Donner Summit geographic area. The goals, policies and design and site development standards contained within this plan reflect Soda Springs unique characteristics, support the local community’s vision, and are consistent with the overall themes and goals of the General Plan. The County’s General Plan identifies Soda Springs as a Rural Center which is intended to provide for a mix of primary uses grouped together and interrelated to form a functional and cultural center, and to create a visual identity related to the historic mountain character for the surrounding Donner Summit rural communities. The Soda Springs Rural Center currently includes four separate General Plan Land Use Designations; HC (Highway Commercial), USF (Urban Single Family Residential), UMD (Urban Medium Density), and Recreation (REC), and five corresponding separate Zoning Districts; CH (Commercial Highway), R1 (Single Family), R2 (Multi-Family Medium Density), R2-PD (Multi-Family Medium Density-Planned Development), and REC (Recreation). The Area Plan, once adopted, will revise the applicable official General Plan Land Use Maps and Zoning District Maps of Nevada County as identified in Chapter 2.

The Nevada County General Plan includes the following goals, policies and programs that are directly applicable to the Soda Springs Rural Center:

Policy 1.1.2 describes how growth within Rural Regions is limited to those types of densities of development which are consistent with the open, rural lifestyle, pastoral character and natural setting and surrounding land use patterns which exist in these areas.

Goal 1.3 calls for protection and enhancement of community character, land use patterns, rural lifestyle, and economy of Rural Regions in their natural setting.

Policy 1.3.7 directs the County to internally integrate sidewalks, multi-purpose pathways, bikeways, greenways and recreational trails within Rural Centers, and also provide connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and regional non-motorized trail systems.

Policy 1.3.8 describes an appropriate mix of uses within Rural Centers to provide opportunity for mutually supporting development in a focused center, that provides goods, services, and employment for rural residents and efficient use of public services.

Policy 1.3.10 encourages future improvements of public and private facilities and services that will enhance the specific character and lifestyle of Rural Regions.

Policy 1.3.13 identifies Rural Region Area Plans as a more specific planning tool to complement and assist further implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

Program 1.3.1 directs the County to identify potential communities for Area Plans including the Soda Springs Rural Center.

Policy 1.9.2 identifies development constraints imposed by the Highway Commercial (HC) land use designation within the Soda Springs Rural Center Legacy Community.

Program 1.9.1 directs the County to periodically review demographic, infrastructure and service information for Legacy Communities.

Policy 6.5 directs the County to provide for urban open space within Rural Centers. The development of the Soda Springs Area Plan is intended to meet the directive of the General Plan policies outlined above.

Organization of the Area Plan

The Area Plan is organized into seven chapters, with three attachments. Each chapter and attachment is summarized below.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Introduction summarizes the Area Plan's purpose, preparation, legal authority, relationship to the General Plan, organization, description of the plan area, and the plan's vision and guiding principles.

Chapter 2 – Land Use

The Land Use goals and policies balance the preservation and enhancement of Soda Spring’s natural environment and appropriate development. This chapter includes the Area Plan Goals and Policies related to land use and community design, and establishes land use and zoning regulations for the Soda Springs Rural Center.

Chapter 3 – Economic Development

The Economic Development chapter includes the plan’s Goals and Policies for economic prosperity and sustainability of the local economy.

Chapter 4 – Public Services

The Public Services chapter describes the public services and facilities that serve Donner Summit’s communities.

Chapter 5 – Recreation

The Recreation chapter includes a framework and strategy to improve existing facilities and develop new facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Chapter 6 – Natural and Cultural Resources

This Natural and Cultural Resources chapter sets forth goals and policies for the Area Plan and lists strategies to achieve environmental improvements in the area’s diverse natural and cultural resources that promote public enjoyment of the area.

Chapter 7 – Implementation

The Implementation chapter describes the Goals & Policies to incrementally implement the Area Plan objectives.

Attachment A – Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design Standards

Attachment B – Assessor’s Parcel Numbers Listed by Zoning District

Attachment C – Area Plan References

Description of the Plan Area

Connected by historic Old Highway 40 and lying in both Placer and Nevada Counties, Donner Summit includes an array of ecosystems ranging in elevation from about 6,500 to 8,000 feet, characterized ecologically as upper montane forests and meadows transitioning to subalpine in the highest elevations. For centuries Donner Summit has been a crossroads of the Sierra and today Soda Springs provides limited local services in addition to partially meeting seasonal tourist based needs. The Soda Springs Area Plan however isn’t just limited to the areas within the designated Rural Center community boundaries, its description of resources and assets, and identified ways to promote the area are applicable across the Donner Summit sphere of influence which includes those areas and communities from Cisco Grove to the Donner Memorial Bridge (also known as the Rainbow Bridge), in both Nevada and Placer Counties. All of the Donner Summit communities connected by Old Highway 40 directly affect one another and when Soda

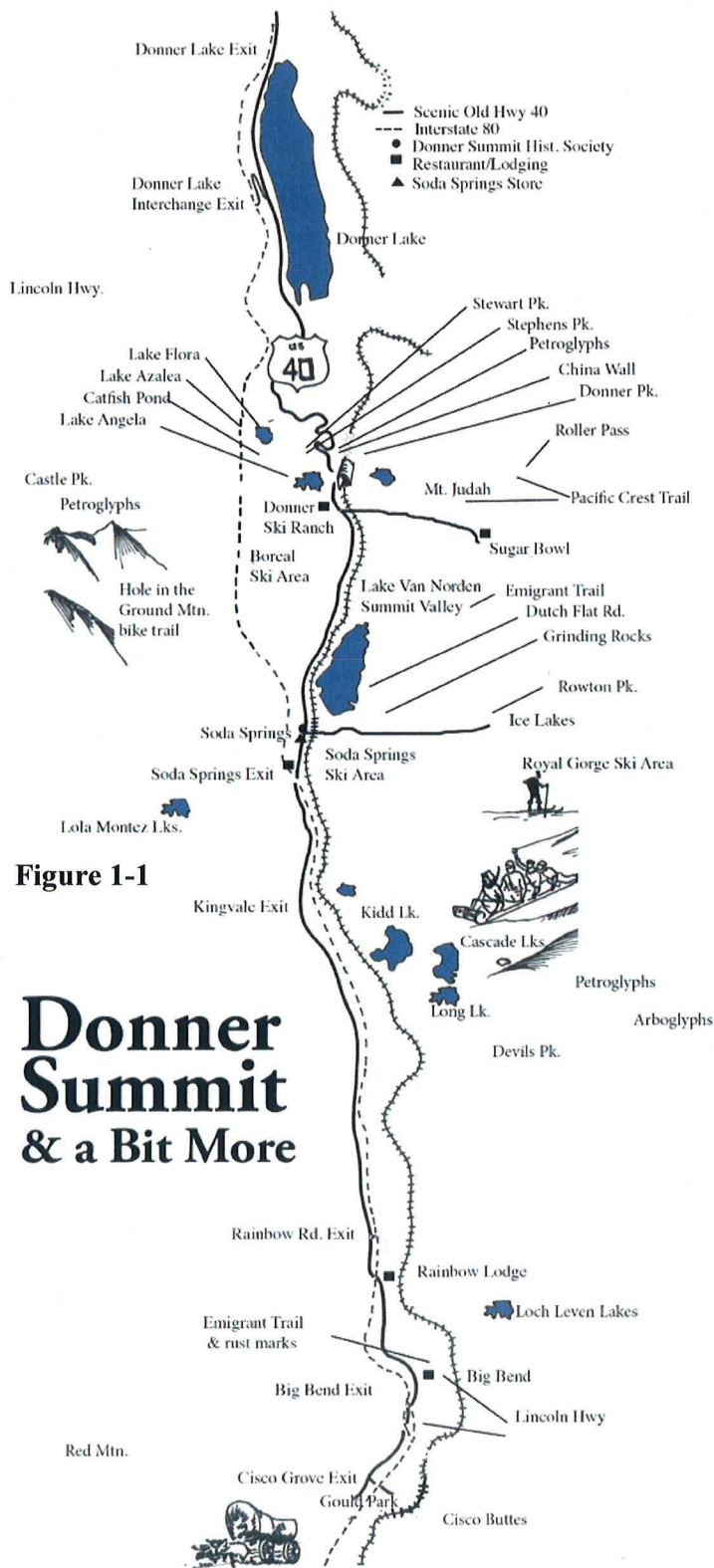


Figure 1-1

Donner Summit & a Bit More

Springs benefits, so do other surrounding communities and attractions.

The specific site development standards and zoning amendments are limited to the 148-acre Soda Springs Rural Center located on historic Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40) directly off Highway 80 in eastern Nevada County. The town of Soda Springs is mapped within Township 23N, Range 17E, Section 14, M.D.B. & M. County Assessor's maps identify 271 separate parcels, or portions of parcels, within the Rural Center. The Rural Center boundaries extend for 1.2 miles along the north and south sides of Donner Pass Road from the Interstate 80 interchange in the west, to Bunny Hill Road in the east. The plan area includes the following residential streets; Portia Way, Donner Drive, Sierra Drive, Castle Drive, Hill Road, Lola Montez Lane, T-Bar Court, T-Bar Drive, Yuba Trail, Poma Lane, and Lotta Crabtree Terrace.

Today Soda Springs is relatively quiet with a small population of around 81 year-round residents. Just ½ mile south is the Serene Lakes residential community, the largest development on Donner Summit consisting of approximately 1,000 residential lots. Donner Pass Road offers breathtaking panoramic vistas of alpine peaks and Donner Lake. The rock climbing routes and hiking and biking trails surrounding the area provide access to some of the region's best

recreational resources. Currently, however, there is little signage or other indication of how to explore these resources while visiting the area.

Presently, much of the Soda Springs Rural Center is designated by the County General Plan as Highway Commercial. This land use designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the area. Unfortunately, there is an overall lack of coherence in how buildings in the community are designed and how they address the streets which undermines a strong sense of place. Landscaping along the Donner Pass Road is minimal or non-existent, making it less inviting to potential visitors. In addition, vehicle speeds and snow storage along Donner Pass Road provide barriers to safe pedestrian circulation and the visibility of commercial establishments.

The Rural Center is currently divided into four separate zoning districts. Of these, approximately 19 acres are designated as Highway Commercial lands, 79 acres Single Family Residential, 6 acres Medium Density Residential, and 37 acres Recreation. Within the Highway Commercial lands, there are 42 privately owned parcels, of which 26 are developed and 16 are vacant. Within the Residential lands, there are 223 privately owned parcels, of which 131 are developed and 92 are vacant. The Recreation lands include the Lake Van Norden parking area and Soda Springs Ski Resort lodge and parking lot.

Vision and Guiding Principles for Prosperity and Sustainability

The Donner Summit community has taken the lead in collaborating on a vision for the area. The Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA), Donner Summit Historical Society, and Sierra Watch have invested time and energy in developing planning principles for future development. The Area Plan can build upon the principles and values presented in their work products. The County's General Plan comports with many of the values of the Soda Springs area, but a community plan for the area does not exist and portions of the County's plan for the area are woefully out-of-date.

Planning Actions for Prosperity and Sustainability for the Donner Summit Region* As Promoted in the Soda Springs Area Plan

- Desirable Economy Developed
- Historical and Rural Values Protected
- Quality Affordable Housing and Lodging Provided
 - Public Gathering Places Created
- Neighborhood Connecting Trails Developed
 - Gateway Signage and Branding Created
 - Vehicle and Pedestrian Safety Provided
 - Resident and Visitor Services Expanded

*Note: The vision of benefits for all of the communities and attractions connected by Old Highway 40 are positively affected by targeting development standards and zoning amendments to the Soda Springs Rural Center.

Vision Statement

The Donner Summit area and particularly the Soda Springs community looks to this Area Plan to create physical, social, and economic links and policies that will improve the Summit's vitality and sustainability. The Area Plan seeks to guide development that embraces outdoor enthusiasts while providing a healthy balance of commerce, employment, recreation, and livability. Envisioned is the use of environmentally conscious private and public development, standards for design elements to ensure aesthetic improvements and environmental restoration while preserving the natural splendor and rural mountain lifestyle valued by residents and visitors alike. The vision can best be realized by the following eight Area Plan guiding principles.

Guiding Principles

Nevada County, in response to key issues affecting the quality of life on the Summit, has established the following central guiding principles which provide the foundation for a more sustainable, economically prosperous, communal and environment-friendly future for Donner Summit:

- Establish a land use plan and policy framework that will guide future development and redevelopment in the Soda Springs Rural Center toward land uses that will support community character and economic development;
- Develop and implement design standards for structures that are compatible with the community character and values;
- Ensure housing and lodging choices and affordability;
- Create a public plaza and gathering spaces suitable for special events and public gatherings to promote a lively commercial center;
- Develop a non-motorized trails plan to connect Soda Springs with adjacent residential neighborhoods and nearby recreation areas;
- Create a desirable first impression with attractive, welcoming gateway signs or monuments that reinforce the historic small town character;
- Implement transportation improvement that provides for both vehicular calming and improved pedestrian circulation; and
- Make Donner Summit a better place to live by providing more services for local residents.

These principles articulate the vision for Donner Summit and are the standard by which the appropriateness of the Area Plan's goals, objectives and policies are tested.

Figure 1-2: Soda Springs Area Plan and Vicinity

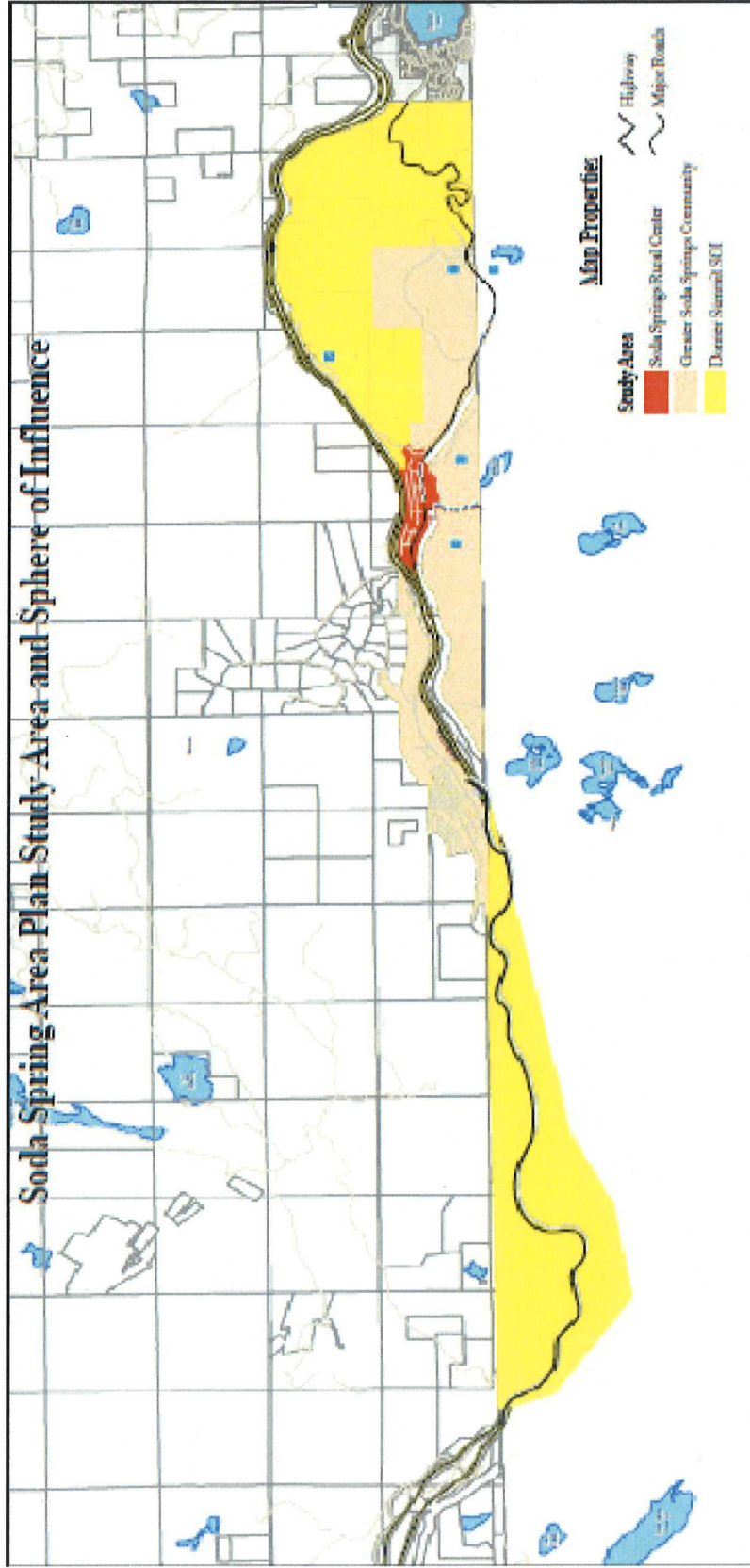


Figure 1-3: Aerial Photograph

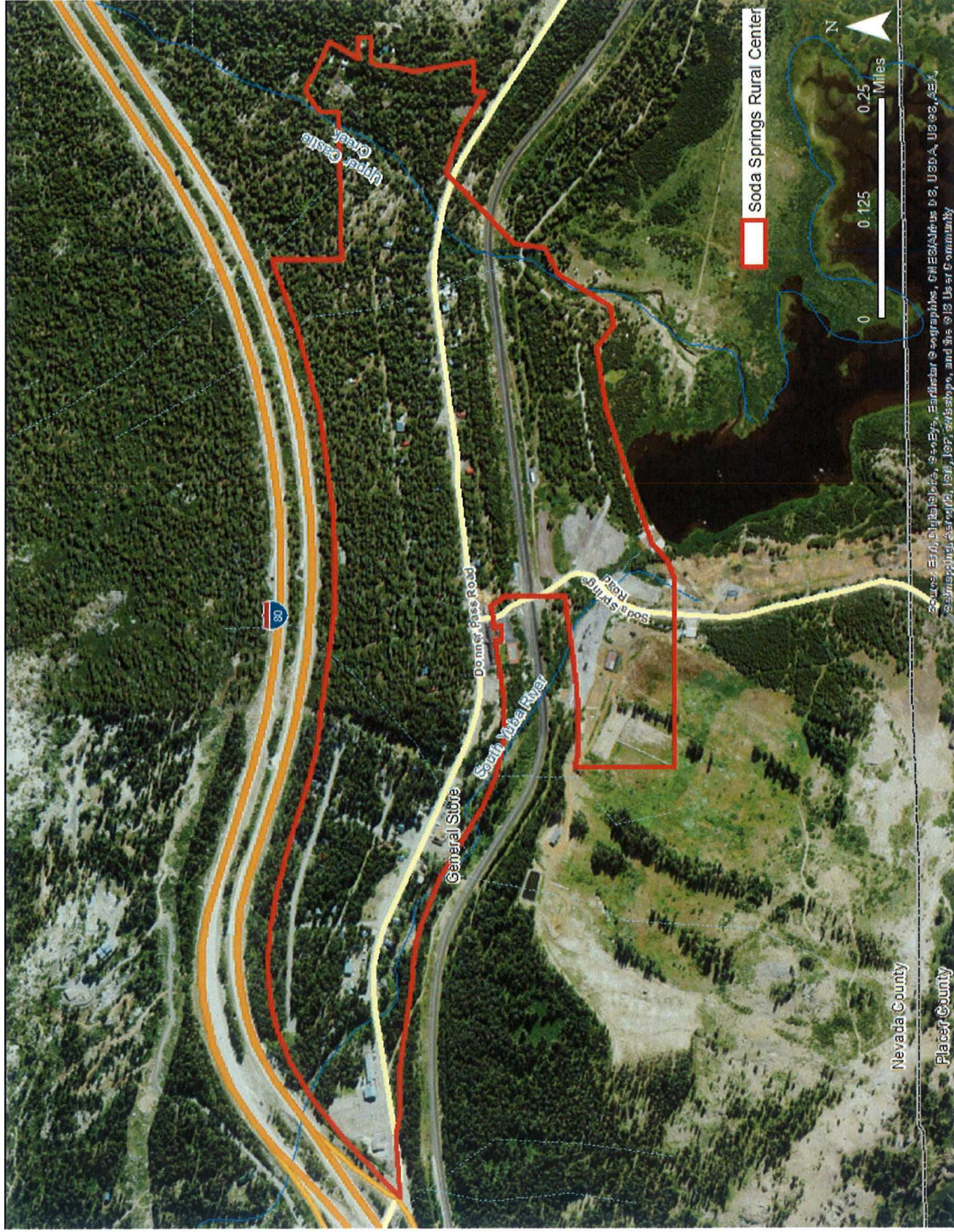


Figure 1-4: General Plan Land Use Designations

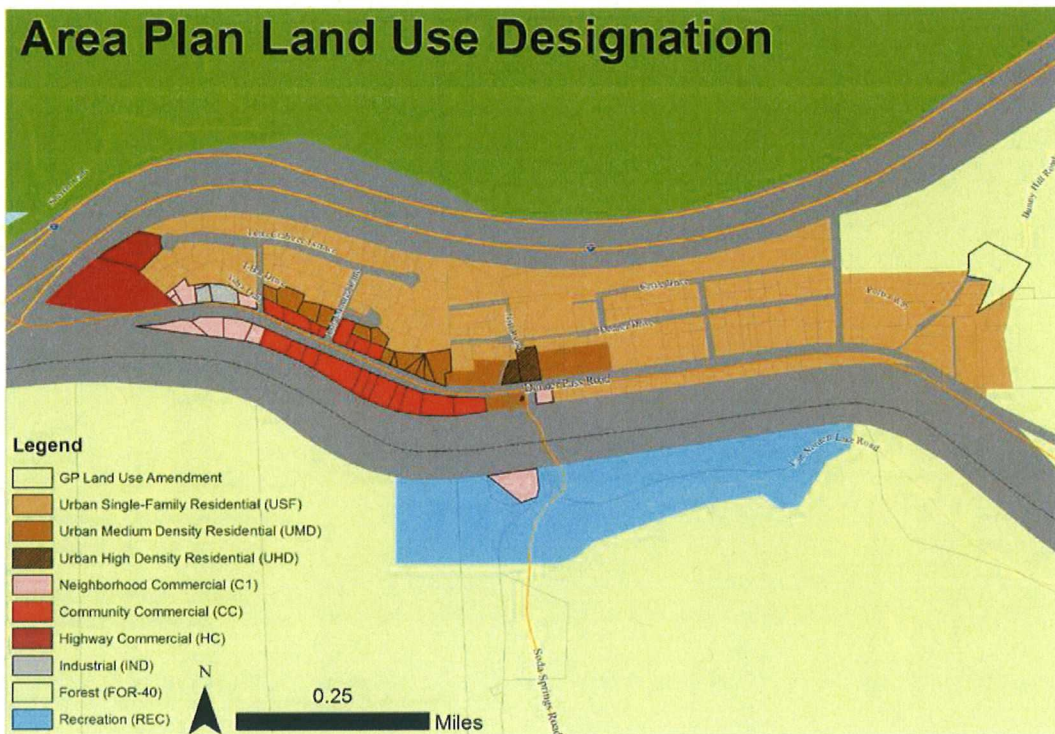
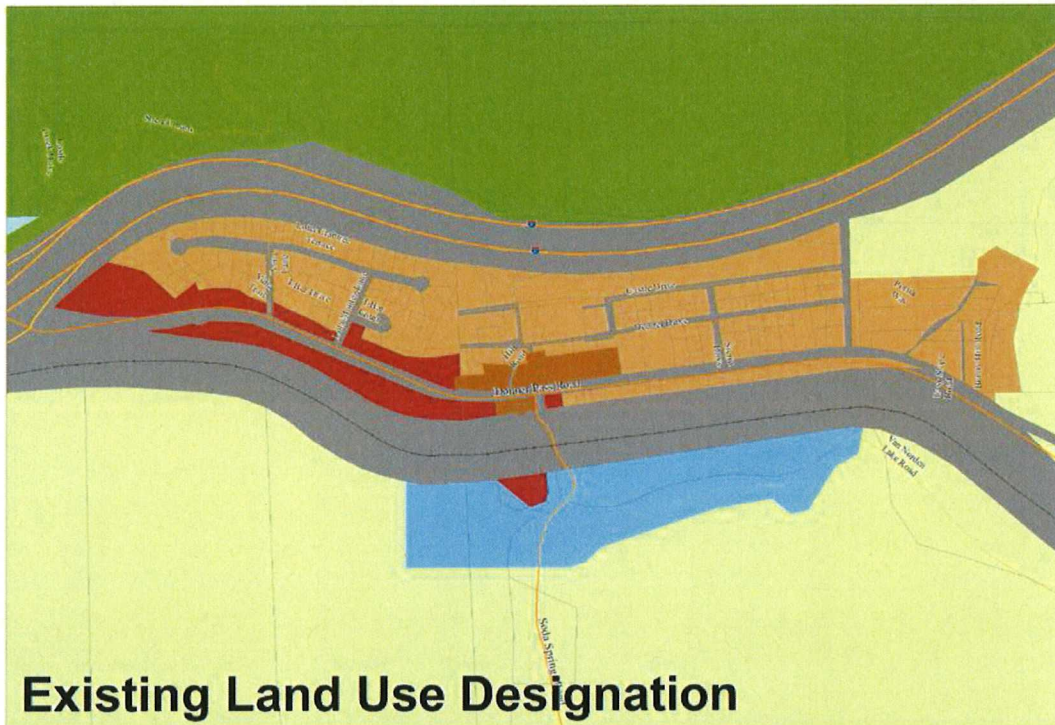
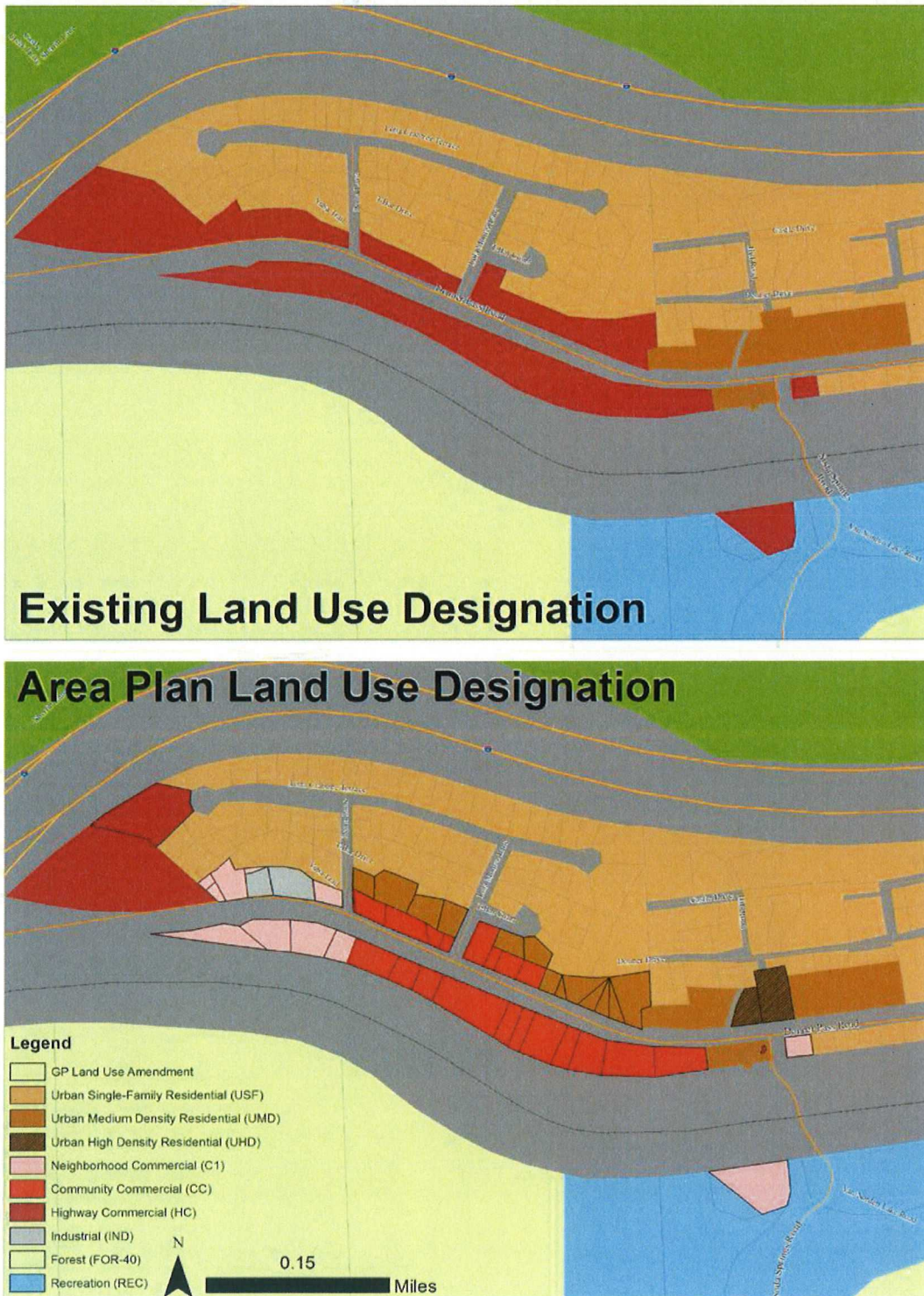


Figure 1-5: General Plan Land Use Designations Enlarged View



Chapter 2

Land Use

Native Americans occupied the areas around Donner Lake and Donner Summit for thousands of years before wagon trains first crossed the Summit beginning in 1844. The Transcontinental Railroad followed in the 1860s, and the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway, came in 1913. Construction of Interstate 80 in the 1960's changed the face of the Summit. Old Highway 40 was no longer the main route and most of the little towns, the stores, shops, lodges, and inns, the restaurants and service stations and the small ski areas disappeared along with a slower way of life. Large portions of Old Highway 40 still remain and the section from Cisco Grove to the Rainbow Bridge is considered one of the most scenic pieces of highway in the country. Winding along the Yuba River each community is unique. The gas stations at Cisco Grove and Kingvale cater to Interstate 80 motorists, however passing through the communities along Old Highway 40 (Donner Pass Road.) transport travelers back to a simpler time. From the riverfront campgrounds at Big Bend to the rustic accommodations and hearty meals at the Rainbow Lodge to the large residential subdivisions of Pla-Vada Woodlands and Serene Lakes, communities identifying themselves as part of Donner Summit stretch for miles along Old Highway 40. Today, just like the past, Soda Springs functions as the center of these rural communities that make up Donner Summit. Whether working at one of the ski resorts, picking up groceries at the General Store, eating out at the Summit Restaurant, or getting mail at the post office, many residents of these nearby communities along Old 40 usually make a point to stop in Soda Springs every day. The Area Plan recognizes Soda Springs' role as the hub of a much larger community that includes the residential, recreation and forest lands of Donner Summit.

Like their predecessors, the local population values its self-reliance and its individualism. Census data for the 95728 Zip Code (Boreal, Soda Springs and Norden) indicated year-round population of 81 in 2010. The diverse mix of residents within Soda Springs and the larger community that it serves value the small town ambiance and feels strongly about preserving its natural setting, historic roots and slower lifestyle. The community has expressed, with strong consensus, its desire to avoid haphazard urban development and a generic look. A key objective of this Area Plan is providing flexibility and a coherent character of future emerging businesses and the established commercial buildings.

There is a strong seasonality to the businesses and many have not been sustainable long term in the area due to the modest amount of tourism in the non-winter months. Situated along Donner Pass Road directly off U.S. Interstate 80, there is a tremendous number of potential customers passing nearby, however, the community's close proximity to the population and tourist center of the town of Truckee means that motorists are less likely to stop in Soda Springs as they enter or leave the region for their retail and service needs. As a result of the construction of Interstate 80 Soda Springs has become more of a drive-by community than a stop by, or destination itself.

Buildings such as the Summit Station and General Store in Soda Springs contribute positively to the character of the community and reflect the community vision. Unfortunately, there is an overall lack of coherence in how many of the buildings in the community are designed and how they address the streets, which undermines a strong sense of place. The meandering headwaters of the Yuba River, and wide Donner Pass Road and railroad rights-of-way further exacerbates site design issues by forcing development to be uneven distances from the roadway, creating a haphazard appearance and effectively hindering pedestrian circulation between the opposite sides of Donner Pass Road. In addition, vehicle speeds and winter snow berms along Donner Pass Road provide barriers to pedestrian circulation and limited visibility of residential driveways and commercial establishments.

The land use strategy described in this chapter focuses on zoning changes, specific opportunity sites and design standards to create a sustainable center of activity and commerce. Currently, much of the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial area is designated by the County General Plan as Highway Commercial because of its historical role as a service center for travelling motorists. This land use designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the area's residents. Most of the commercial zoned parcels on the south side of Donner Pass Road are constrained by small lot sizes, the meandering Yuba River and the railroad tracks, that restrict even modest development. Several of those parcels are developed with single family residences constructed decades ago, as a result there are a number of non-conforming residential structures within the commercial zone.

A conscious directed change in the intensity and type of land uses in the Soda Springs commercial district will be the primary method by which positive community values and strengths can be preserved and enhanced. By the County government removing development constraints that inhibit desired economic growth we will create a stronger community for the local residents. It is vitally important (and possible) to do so, while maintaining the rural natural setting.

The summit's economic success and improved quality of life is tied to its ability to transform itself into a full time residential enclave with available and affordable housing that accommodates tourist visits (residential 1st, tourists 2nd). The current CH (Commercial Highway) zone represents the opposite of this direction as it ties the Summit's success to car-centered seasonal tourist activity which is not sustainable given the nature of climate change and implied impacts on the winter recreation season.

This chapter establishes a framework of policies and guidelines that will encourage and facilitate future development consistent with the goals of the community. The residents of Soda Springs and the surrounding Donner Summit rural community want to ensure that the town remains a desirable place to live as it develops and re-develops. To achieve that goal the Area Plan seeks to retain the function of the Rural Center as the focal point of the larger community. In addition to providing commercial services to the community, the Rural Center will revive its historic role as a gathering place for social functions, and community meetings. Future growth within Soda Springs should reflect an awareness of and consistency with this vision.

A. Land Use Regulations

All lands within the Soda Springs Rural Center are assigned to a general land use category. Four separate land use designations are currently located in the Rural Center (See Table 2-1), and five additional land use designations are included in the Area Plan update (See Table 2-2). Each district is intended to serve a specific purpose, has a defined land use theme, permits specific land uses, and has specific development standards. Only those uses listed in the Zoning Ordinance shall be permitted by right or by conditional permit within the Zones specified. Accessory uses may be permitted per Nevada County Zoning Ordinance. Section L-II 6.1, *Definitions*, of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance is adopted by reference for the uses listed in the Area Plan.

Table 2-1: Current Land Use Designations and Zoning				
General Plan Designation	Zoning	Number of APNs	Acres	Percent of Rural Center
Urban Single Family	R1	196	79.18	56%
Urban Medium Density	R2 or R2-PD	28	5.78	4%
Highway Commercial	CH	42	19.25	14%
Recreation	REC	5	36.79	26%
TOTAL		271	141	100%

Current Land Use Zoning Districts



R1 (Single Family Residential) - The R1 District implements the General Plan's Urban Single Family designation and provides a quiet mix of residential uses. It is intended to provide for single-family dwellings, as well as other dwelling unit types, at densities of up to 4 dwelling units per acre. There are 195 parcels currently zoned R1 within the Soda Springs Rural Center and 87 of those parcels are vacant.



R2 (Medium Density Residential) - The R2 District implements the General Plan's Urban Medium Density Designation and provides for moderate density multiple-family housing, as well as other dwelling unit types. Densities of up to 6 dwelling units per acres are permitted. This District is appropriate for the development of affordable housing through clustering of residences or other design techniques. This district provides an appealing and convenient place for residential accommodation within walking distance of the Soda Springs General Store and nearby recreation facilities. The Rural Center includes 28 parcels currently zoned R2, of which twenty are part of a multi-family complex known as the Soda Springs Station. Of the remaining eight parcels currently zoned R2 three are developed with single family residences and five of the parcels are vacant.



CH (Highway Commercial) - The CH District provides commercial locations for highway-related and tourist services along State highways. Development within this District should be grouped as a contiguous center to preclude strip development, with convenient, controlled access to Interstate, freeway, or primary arterial routes. Such facilities should be designed and located to provide a broad range of services to the traveler and not to impede traffic. There are 42 parcels currently located in the Commercial Highway district, several of which are developed with legacy single family dwellings and 16 of which are vacant.



REC (Recreation) - There are five parcels, or portions thereof, within the REC District and includes the lower slopes of Soda Springs Ski Resort, as well as a parking lot and shoreline along the western edge of the Van Norden meadow. This district provides for a wide range of active and passive recreation uses and supporting services for residents and visitors within walking distance of commercial and residential uses. The area is managed primarily for environmental values including watershed functions, conservation, and wildlife habitat connectivity. Prior to any recreation development, a Comprehensive Master Plan for the entire site is required to be approved by the planning agency.

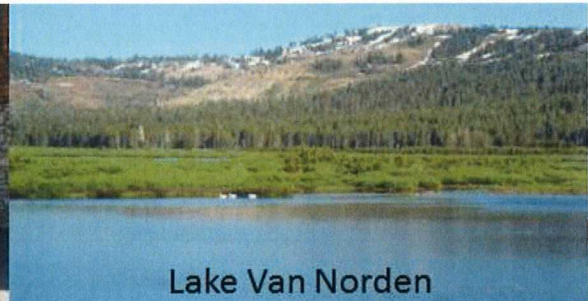
Concerns and Challenges

As noted there are many outstanding assets for Soda Springs such as its natural beauty, diverse flora and fauna, rich history, critically significant headwaters, seasonal recreation opportunities and most importantly, a friendly and concerned community of people who want to turn an economically struggling Soda Springs into a more vibrant and sustainable community it was prior to the construction of Highway 80 in the 1960's. At community meetings to develop the Area Plan and through Nevada County Planning Department surveys residents have raised many concerns while also expressing the hopes and aspirations they have for their community. Without signage along Interstate 80 and additional amenities that entice visitors to stop, spend and stay, potential visitors will continue to pass Soda Springs by. Many residents desire to reduce economic dependence on tourism and encourage live/work residences attracting home-based office and other trade businesses that operate year round and provide non-seasonal employment and which pay higher wages to build economic stability. The commercial wood cutting yards, outside storage of heavy snow removal equipment, and shipping container storage are necessary elements of mountain living for some, yet these operations are eyesores to many. There is currently no defined center of town in Soda Springs and residents desire a community center or park with public restrooms for people to gather for special events and festivals. Ensuring the Lake Van Norden area, whether impoundment or meadow, remains an attractive place that draws visitors is an issue that affects local economic activity as well as the desirability of Soda Springs as a community to move to or own a second home in. The most frequent concern voiced from residents is drivers regularly ignore posted limits and dangerous driving speeds are commonplace on Donner Pass Road.

Figure 2-2: Existing Conditions



Donner Summit Historical Society



Lake Van Norden



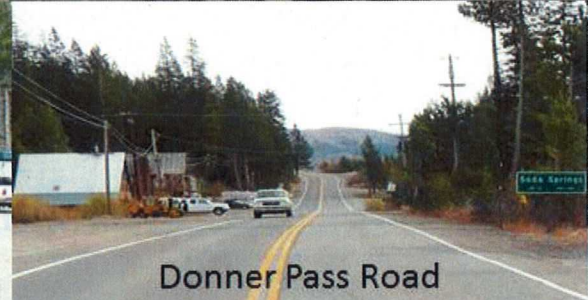
Railroad Tracks



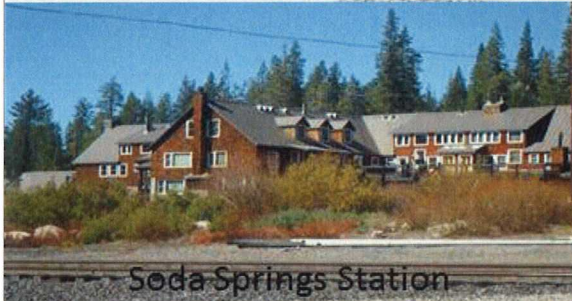
Industrial Site



General Store/Post Office Building



Donner Pass Road



Soda Springs Station



Restaurant and Seasonal Housing



Firewood Lot



Shipping Container Storage

Land Use Update and Community Character

In June of 2004, Nevada County contracted a comprehensive Economic Development Study for Donner Summit. A careful review of this study funded by State Community Development Block Grant Funds serves as a framework that is here updated and revised in the context of current conditions and circumstances. It is noteworthy that in the past twelve years since the Donner Summit study little, if any, progress can be shown in fulfilling the economic development goals recommended. The passage of time with consequent deterioration of buildings and infrastructures, the national economic downturn and the impacts of global climate change present even greater challenges to economic development of the Soda Springs than was the case a decade ago. Nevada County is committed to supporting the efforts to proceed with actions to expedite economic development in spite of the many challenges.

Based on the analysis of conditions described above, two broad strategies will help to implement the community development vision for the area to improve the aesthetic quality of the built environment, promote a sense of place, and create economic sustainability. Each approach has specific tasks providing actionable recommendations that support achievement of the strategy.

Strategy #1: Land Use Designation and Zoning Changes

A conscious, directed change in the intensity and type of land uses in the Soda Springs commercial area will be the primary method by which positive community values and strengths can be preserved and the area's potential realized. It appears that without change the Soda Springs commercial area will continue to decrease its viability and the limited variety of goods and services will continue to shrink, any remaining sense of community will vanish, and the area will be reduced to a pass through only resulting in further economic decline. The strategy of inducing land use changes is to create a stronger community for the local residents. It is important to do so while maintaining the rural natural setting of the area.

Housing

Mixed-use development refers to the combining of residential and non-residential uses within a single building or on a single site where the uses are functionally and visually connected in a coherent physical design. Where mixed-use is designed to accommodate commercial on the first floor and residential uses on the second or third floor, housing is more affordable because the land is efficiently used and buildings will be cheaper to heat and maintain. Mixed-use development in Soda Springs has two major benefits. First the additional housing will increase the critical mass of the community, imparting a sense of scale and density that establishes the market center as the focal point for the entire community. Secondly, inhabitants of the housing portion of the site form a ready market for the goods and services offered by the market which, in turn, increases merchant's economic viability.

Because of the small lots in Soda Springs and the typical Summit workforce household size and predominately low income from the recreation and service industries, increased residential density in close proximity the commercial area is a primary component to the Soda Springs recovery. Furthermore, because of the high cost of sewer hookups the potential income from additional units is a way to make investment financially feasible. For these

reasons, within the Commercial Base District the maximum residential density allowed for mixed-use developments has been increased from four units per acre to six units per acre, and all of the parcels zoned R2-RC (medium density residential) are eligible for density of at least a duplex (two units), pursuant to zoning compliance.

Commercial Development

Changing the current Commercial Highway zoning to Neighborhood and Community Commercial zone districts provides greater flexibility for local commercial businesses. As noted earlier, the area around the Soda Springs General Store and Tinker's Station should be the town center for commercial uses.

Identified Opportunity Sites

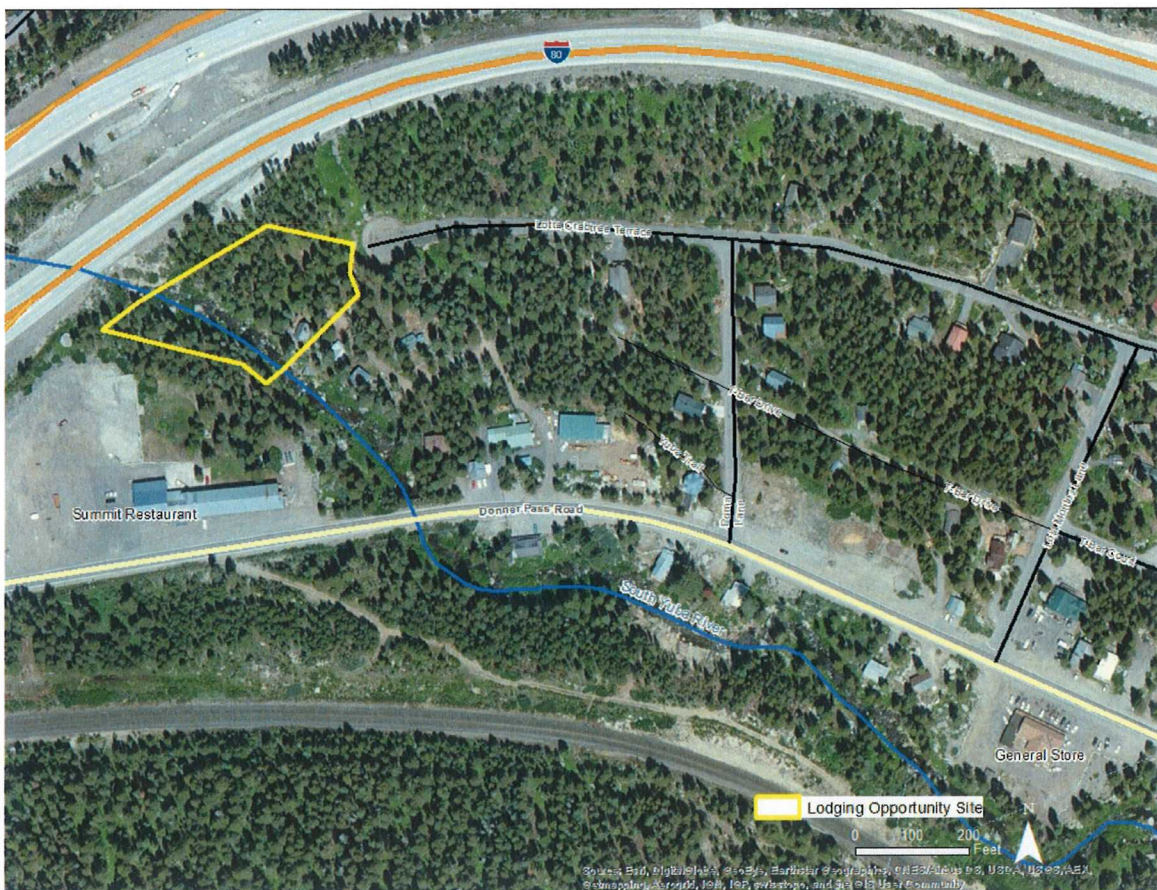
The greatest potential to add to and enhance the commercial center is in the four parcels highlighted as opportunity sites below. The advantages of these parcels are:

- They are vacant and large enough to accommodate a reasonably sized commercial use;
- They are less constrained by the alignment of Donner Pass Road and the Yuba River;
- They are adjacent to the main road and thus highly visible; and
- They are centrally located to services within the community.



Lodging

Most of the existing lodging opportunities are associated with ski clubs and provide a dorm-like setting. Traditional motel development does not seem viable in Soda Springs at this time, however simple and affordable hostel style lodging with individual private rooms appears to be potentially viable. As part of the land use changes with this Area Plan a one acre parcel located within the existing road and residential lot platting has been rezoned to (CH) Highway Commercial to allow possible future lodge construction flanked by the Yuba River and Interstate 80, behind the Donner Summit Lodge. This site would be accessed via the existing roads that serve a sparsely developed area of the subdivision. Given the low impact usage and minimal traffic that an off-season lodge would produce this site appears compatible with the surroundings and would act as a buffer between the residential lots and Interstate 80.



Public Spaces

The Donner Summit community desires a town square or plaza in Soda Springs to serve as a community-gathering place, accommodating local events, farmers markets and daily encounters with neighbors. Such a space would enable sponsored events that would increase travelers' patronage. As an amenity typical to mixed-use development, a town plaza would create opportunities for attracting community interaction while adding visual quality to the Rural Center.

Industrial Sites

The extreme weather conditions and self-reliant approach to life of residents requires there be industrial areas. Heavy equipment is scattered throughout the community often giving commercial sites the feel of an industrial site. This plan designates two parcels for light industrial uses near the western end of town in recognition of the current industrial snow removal and telecommunication functions on the sites.

Strategy #2: Community Character

The overall impression of the Soda Springs area is that the community appears worn out and run down, a view shared by most residents. Blighted areas have difficulty attracting visitors and cannot readily entice new businesses to locate within their boundaries. Soda Springs will, like many other communities, have a long struggle to overcome lack of new business interest and existing business viability if it fails to improve its current public image. In order to regain its economic health, the physical appearance of Soda Springs' commercial area must be revitalized as part of the Area Plans integrated strategy of land use changes, community image enhancement and opportunity site development. The primary methods of implementing physical revitalization for the area are:

Development and Design Standards

All projects within the Soda Springs Rural Center boundaries shall meet the development and design standards in Attachment A. The standards are intended to improve the scenic quality of the built environment, promote a sense of place, and support the community's desired community character. Should a conflict occur between County-wide Design Standards and the Eastern County Design Guidelines, the standards of the Area Plan shall apply.

Landscaping

One of the most noticeable aspects of Donner Pass Road as it runs through Soda Springs is that the scene along the edges of the road are chaotic and unsightly, with a wide variety of building types, no particular pattern of development and ill-defined roadside edges. Landscaping improvements along the road must be able to survive the harsh winter conditions and abuse wrought by snowplowing operations.

Pedestrian Access

There's a need to provide pedestrian pathways because currently there are no safe or defined walking routes in the Soda Springs area. Safe pedestrian pathways linking the commercial areas would encourage tourist patronage of the area and increase number of visits and visitation time, thus increasing sales.

Community Identification

Signage or monuments that establish a powerful gateway that attracts, welcomes, and orients the highway visitor is strongly recommended. Currently signs are missing where they could benefit the tourist, providing virtually no information as to what is available in terms of natural attractions or of commercial interest. Interesting and attractive signage is a cost effective strategy that will provide significant community image enhancement.

Facade Improvements

Often when one or two individual property owners begin to fix up their buildings other property owners see the positive results that can be achieved. This effort is an important element that helps assure that the overall community image is upgraded.

Additional Land Use Zoning Districts



R3 (High Density) - The R3 District implements the General Plan's Urban High Density Designation and provides for high-density multiple family housing, as well as other dwelling unity types. Densities of up to 20 dwelling units per acre within incorporated area's spheres of influence and 15 units per acre elsewhere are permitted unless otherwise designated on the official zoning map. There are two parcels on the north side of the intersection of Donner Pass Road and Soda Springs Road being rezoned from R2 (Medium Density Residential) to R3 (High Density Residential).



C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) - The C1 District is intended to provide for the retail and service needs of nearby neighborhoods, and to provide limited mixed use employment opportunities. Development is intended to be grouped as a clustered and contiguous center to counter strip development. Located on the western, eastern, and southern gateways of the Soda Springs commercial area, eleven parcels have been rezoned from CH (Highway Commercial) to C1 (Neighborhood Commercial).



C2 (Community Commercial) - The C2 District is intended to provide a wide range of retail and service uses that serve the varied needs of large geographic areas. As part of this Area Plan there are twenty-one parcels that have been rezoned from CH (Highway Commercial) to C2 (Community Commercial).



M1 (Light Industrial) - The M1 District provides areas for the production, repairing, distribution, and warehousing of goods and equipment, along with supporting businesses and services. Uses should provide for buffering from adjacent land uses to minimize incompatibility and should have convenient, controlled access to arterial or major collector roads without passing through residential areas. Two parcels previously zoned CH (Commercial Highway) have been rezoned to M1 (Light Industrial) in recognition of the existing uses on said parcels.



FR (Forest) - The FR District provides areas for the protection, production and management of timber and support uses, including but not limited to equipment storage and temporary offices, low intensity recreational uses, and open space. In the northeastern most corner of the Rural Center along Bunny Hill Road is a 2.85 acre parcel owned by the U.S. Forest Service being re-zoned from R1 (Single-Family Residential) to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.), consistent with the zoning of surrounding Tahoe National Forest parcels.

Table 2-2: Area Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning

General Plan Designation	Zoning	Number of APNs	Acres	Percent of Rural Center
Urban Single Family	R1-SP	188	73.54	52%
Urban Medium Density	R2-RC or R2-PD-RC	38	8.17	6%
Urban High Density	R3-RC	2	1.13	1%
Neighborhood Commercial	C1-RC	11	4.07	3%
Community Commercial	C2-RC	21	7.55	5%
Highway Commercial	CH-RC	3	6.12	4%
Industrial	M1-RC	2	0.78	1%
Forest	FOR-40-SP	1	2.85	2%
Recreation	REC-SP	5	36.79	26%
TOTAL		271	141	100%

Rural Center Overlay

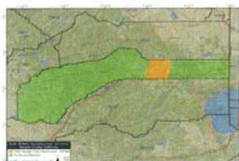


RC (Rural Center Overlay) - The Rural Center (RC) Combining District applies to the seventy-seven parcels zoned either Commercial, Multi-family residential or Industrial, and provides flexible development standards that promote the efficient use of land for achieving the following Area Plan goals:

1. Mixed use, incorporating one or more residential units into commercial projects.
2. Public spaces, such as a town plaza.
3. Provide a scenic, rural feeling, and pedestrian friendly mix of commercial, public service, tourist and residential uses.

The Rural Center Combining District does not overlay the R1 (Single Family Residential), FOR (Forest), and REC (Recreation) zoning districts.

Military Operation Area



The western portion of the Soda Springs Rural Center lies along the eastern edge of a designated Department of Defense Military Operation Area (MOA) which is used by military aircraft to practice high- and low-altitude training exercises and to traverse between military installations in support of national defense. Any development or new construction that seriously impacts or hinders the function and viability of the MOA fly zone is considered an incompatible use. As Nevada County’s population and economic activity grow in the future, public safety within the MOA shall be coordinated with the military through compatible use planning in accordance with the California Government Code.

Figure 2-1: Existing and Proposed Zoning Districts

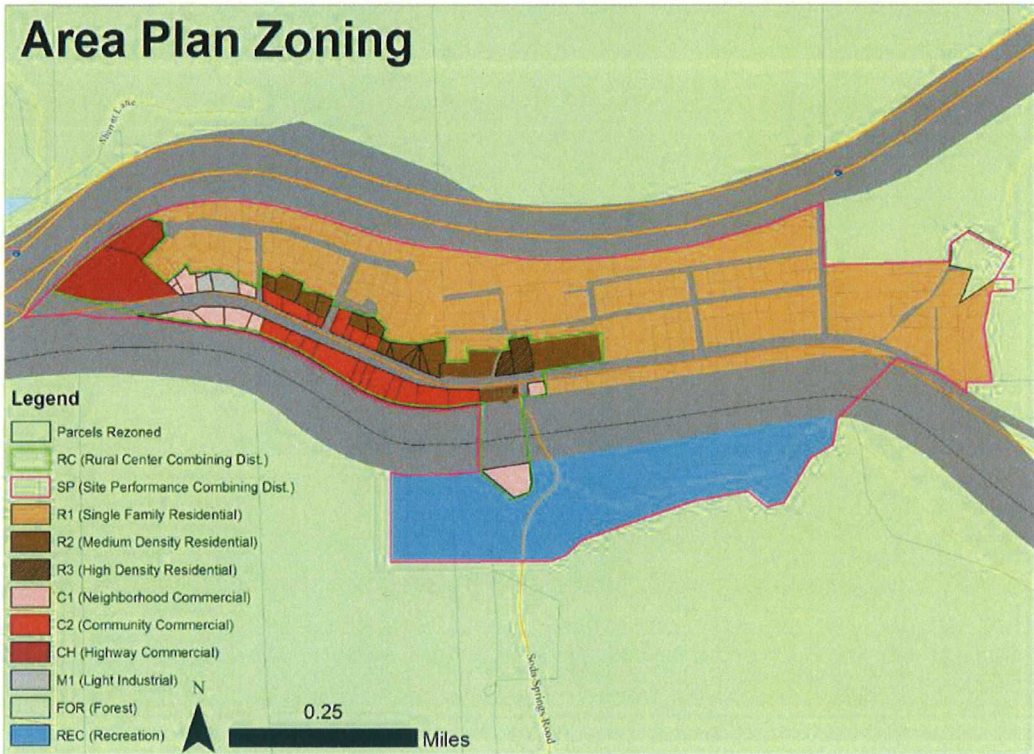
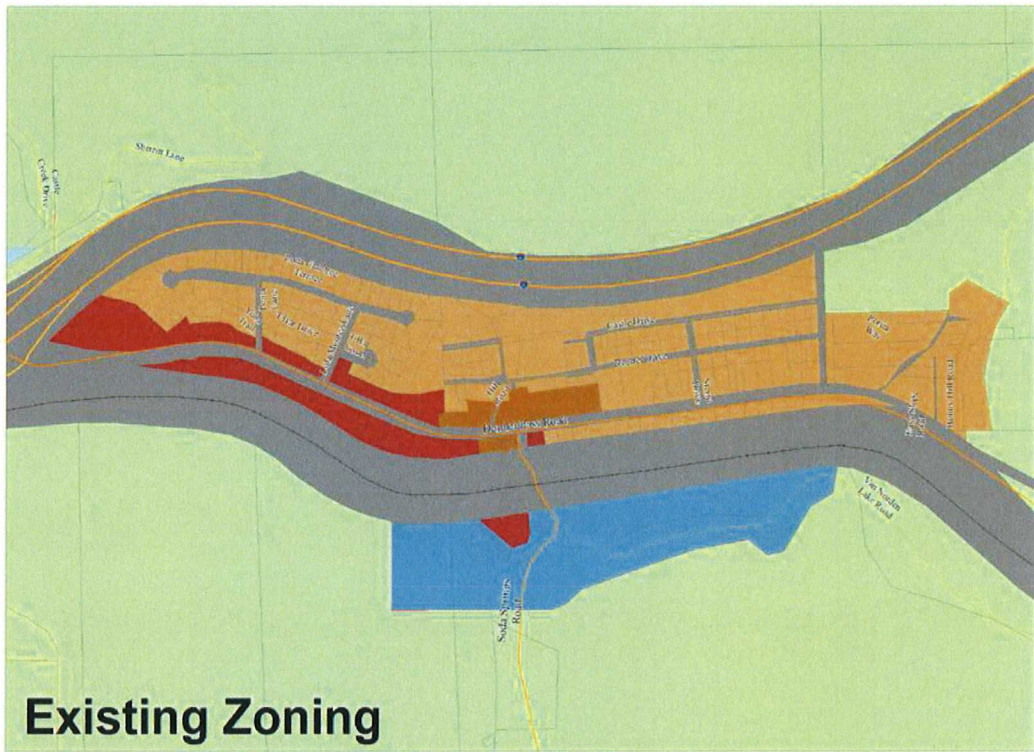
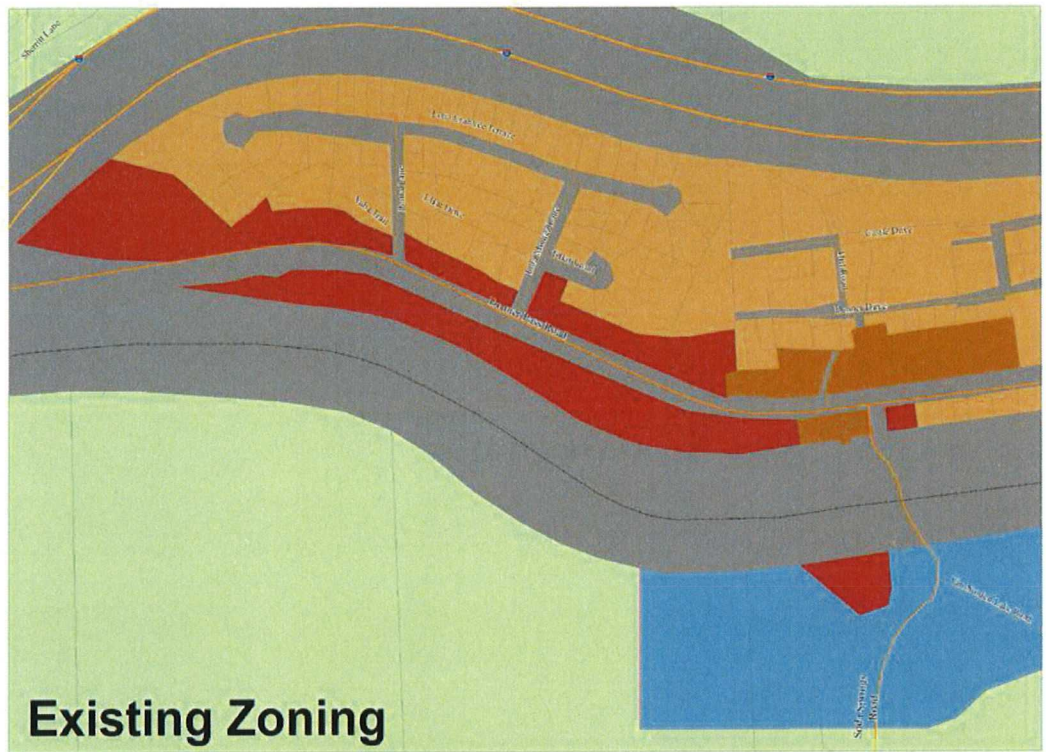
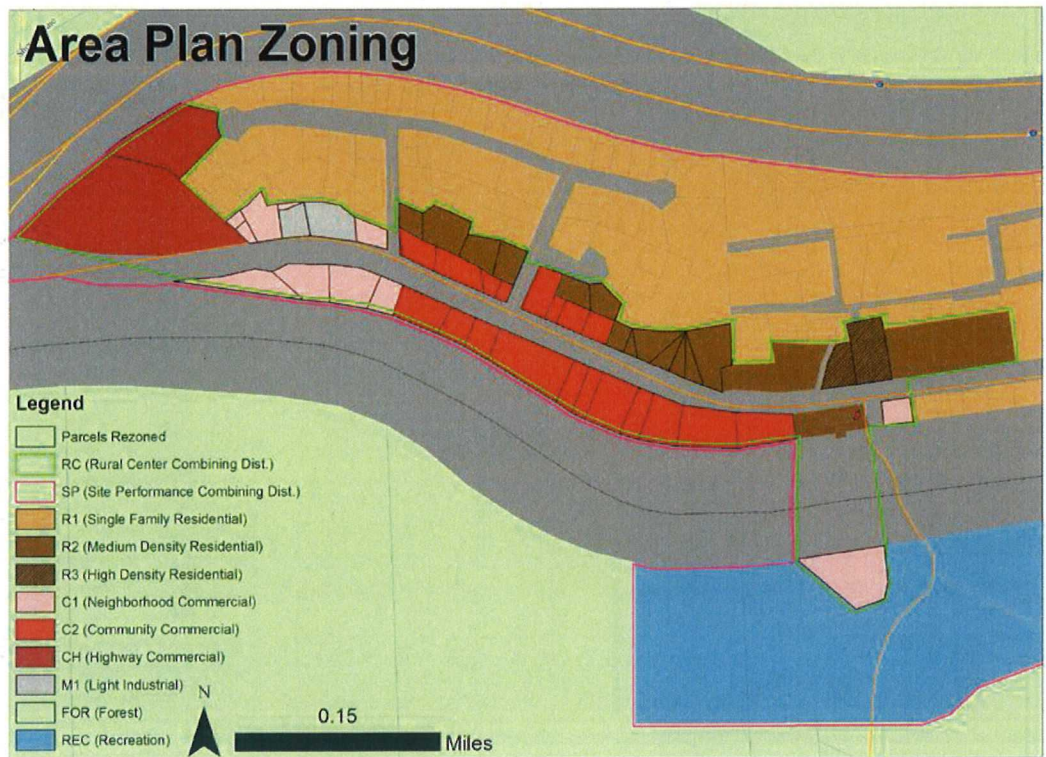


Figure 2-2: Rural Center Combining District Enlarged View



Existing Zoning



Area Plan Zoning

B. Land Use Goals & Policies

Soda Springs Community Vision

Soda Springs is envisioned as a destination that provides full services for residents and visitors, and offers unique year-round attractions as a sustainable outdoor tourism recreation destination. The top priorities of the community are to:

1. Make Donner Summit a better place to live by providing more services for local residents;
2. Retain and expand businesses, particularly those that offset the current seasonality of the area;
3. Provide additional affordable housing alternatives for the area;
4. Improve the built environment and reinforce the unique character and small town atmosphere of Donner Summit; and
5. Capture a larger share of the retail and tourist expenditures in the area.

Goal LU-1: To create a sustainable economic, social, and natural environment for Soda Springs, for this and future generations.

Policy LU-1.1: Rural Center

Nevada County shall reinforce Soda Springs as the primary visitor and tourist destination on Donner Summit by encouraging indoor and outdoor recreation, a community market, a community meeting facility, a full-service post office, affordable visitor lodging, and other retail/service commercial uses that serve the population working and residing in close proximity to Soda Springs, while also drawing business from Highway 80 traffic.

Policy LU-1.2: Donner Summit Legacy

Recognize Donner Summit as a region of local, state, and national significance, which must be protected for future generations.

Goal LU-2: Transform the Soda Springs commercial service district into the primary hub of Donner Summit that provides both residents and visitors access to high quality commercial uses and recreation experiences.

Policy LU-2.1: Work and Play

Foster live-work opportunities in commercial areas with a diversity of jobs to provide greater economic stability and new opportunities for employment in Soda Springs.

Policy LU-2.2: Mixed Uses

Focus new commercial development along Donner Pass Road in Soda Springs. Encourage a mix of uses that promotes convenience, economic vitality, and a good quality of life that improves access to a greater range of facilities and services for residents and visitors.

Policy LU-2.3: Shop Local

Support locally-owned, independent businesses that reflect the core values of Soda Springs and the Donner Summit experience.

Policy LU-2.4: Outdoor Retail Display

Outdoor retail and rental equipment display can be visually distracting and present a cluttered image of Soda Springs and are discouraged. Outdoor displays of retail and/or rental merchandise should be minimal and easy to comprehend when viewed from the Donner Pass Road.

Policy LU-2.5: Parking

Shared or area-wide parking strategies are encouraged to make more efficient use of land for parking and pedestrian uses.

Policy LU-2.6: Storage

Screening of storage containers, snow removal equipment and other service/maintenance yards and outdoor storage is important to enhancing the community's image and should be accomplished by the use of walls, fencing, landscape plantings, or some combination thereof. Screening should be effective in both winter and summer.

Goal LU-3: Ensure that new development improves the community character through appropriate site and building design standards promoting a high quality built environment that establishes a distinct sense of place.

Policy LU-3.1: Community Design

Promote the use of architectural themes in new development and redevelopment that complement the surrounding natural beauty and create positive interest. Encourage the use of pitched roofs, earhtone colors, and natural exterior building materials such as rock and wood.

Policy LU-3.2: Design and Massing

Ensure that the design of new development and significant remodel projects improve the community character of the Soda Springs Rural Center through appropriate site and building design standards promoting a high quality built environment that establishes a distinct sense of place.

Policy LU-3.3: Site Development

Encourage physical change and economic development within the Soda Springs area by promoting infill development along Donner Pass Road and redevelopment and revitalization on underutilized parcels with existing infrastructure. Avoid scattered or leapfrog development that may not be able to be connected.

Policy LU-3.4: Gathering Spaces

Create a more walkable and interesting place with an attractive community center. Provide opportunities for public spaces including a town plaza or town square with a seasonal snow play area, public art, street vendors, and sidewalk cafes that safely

promote pedestrian activity and local history. Optimize interconnectivity of non-motorized connections between commercial areas and surrounding recreation areas.

Policy LU-3.5: Snow Storage

New development shall include snow storage provisions.

Policy LU-3.6: Landscaping

New commercial development fronting historic Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40) shall implement practical landscape improvements fronting its project area.

Policy LU-3.7: Water Conservation

Size Soda Springs' developments to existing water sources and recognize the challenging climate on Donner Summit and the impact of climate change on the region's landscape and resources. Incorporate water conservation components into the design, construction, and operation of new construction and major renovations.

Policy LU-3.8: Military Operation Area

Ensure notification and coordination with the military for any proposed discretionary development project in the Rural Center that exceeds 100 feet above ground level or that could be incompatible with the Military Operation Area (MOA).

Goal LU-4: Ensure housing choices and affordability.

Policy LU-4.1: Housing Inventory

Increase the availability and affordability of quality housing opportunities and associated services for the workforce of Donner Summit by encouraging mixed-use dwelling units on commercial properties, and focusing increased residential capacity in targeted areas near the commercial center.

Policy LU-4.2: Mixed-Use

Locate quality higher density residential and mixed-use development within the Rural Center (RC) Combining District.

C. Land Use Implementation

The following actions will accelerate implementation of the goals and policies listed above.

1. Establish a Rural Center (RC) Combining District within the Soda Springs Rural Center to:
 - A. Revitalize the economic vitality of the greater Donner Summit by:
 - Stemming the steady decline and instability of many businesses;
 - Encouraging full service businesses that support a stable year-round occupancy by residents and provide the needs of visitors to the area;
 - Providing more job opportunities with workforce wages;
 - Focusing increased residential density and capacity;
 - Capitalizing on natural resources by branding the area as a tourist full-stop

- destination;
 - Enticing more Highway 80 travelers to take area exits to spend dollars for supplies and services; and
 - Stimulating increased property values.
- B. Remove unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development intended to support and enhance the valued rural and nature-centered lifestyle by:
- Actions of the Nevada County Planning Department and Board of Supervisors to revise zoning;
 - Taking steps to reduce visual blight and enhance the scenic values of the area.
 - Encouraging community consensus and commitment to planned development consistent with articulated community values; and
 - Assisting with infrastructure improvements that create a safer and more aesthetically pleasing experience for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.
2. Rezone areas of the Soda Springs Rural Center to add a Rural Center (RC) Combining District that identifies flexible development standards as incentives for achieving the following Area Plan goals:
 - Mixed use, incorporating one or more residential units into commercial projects;
 - Increased density in specific residential zone districts;
 - Allow a broader range of commercial uses;
 - Pedestrian improvements along road frontage;
 - Shared parking opportunities; and
 - Creation of public gathering spaces.
 3. Amend the General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning District Maps of specific parcels consistent with the community's land use vision.
 4. Preserve and enhance the visual and historic assets of the Soda Springs Rural Center by implementing area-specific design standards to supplement the Eastern Nevada County Design Guidelines.
 5. Encourage commercial activities within the Rural Center by allowing limited commercial services within existing, legal non-conforming residences within the Commercial Districts.
 6. Nevada County shall regularly review its policies and regulations to remove identified barriers preventing the construction of necessary affordable housing on Donner Summit.

Design Review

Design Review for all discretionary development projects within the Rural Center Combining District zone shall be required. Proposed plans shall include project details that demonstrate visual compatibility with the community in conformance with the County's stated design goals, as reflected in the General Plan and this Area Plan. The Eastern County

Design Standards are included by reference and supplement the site and building design standards specific to Soda Springs Rural Center, as described above.

Non-Conforming Uses and Structures

Land uses and structures that were established in compliance with zoning regulations, but which do not conform to the standards, are defined by Zoning Regulations as “legal non-conforming.” Non-conforming uses are those uses not allowed within a specific zoning district, which do not meet current development standards, or which have not been authorized by a land use permit. Non-conforming structures are those which encroach into property line setbacks or exceed height limits, and which, where partially destroyed by natural disaster, may be repaired but with limitations. The intent of non-conforming regulations is to minimize and reduce non-conformities and eventually bring the uses and structures into conformity with current development standards, or to eliminate them through abandonment, obsolescence, or destruction, rather than to perpetuate them. Legally established nonconforming structures may be repaired, altered, or reconstructed as approved by the Nevada County.

Exceptions

In some cases, the Planning Director may vary from these standards and guidelines if warranted by unusual or unique circumstances. This may result in variation from the strict interpretation of this section and may be granted by the Planning Director.

Chapter 3

Economic Development

Donner Summit currently lacks adequate infrastructure and broad-based community support for significant development. The community desires to build upon local assets and revitalize the economic and social infrastructure of the Old Highway 40 corridor through Soda Springs without sacrificing shared values. There is a clear need to revitalize the physical appearance and accessibility of the area to increase economic activity. With a thoughtful Area Plan and imaginative local support the area is in a unique position to capture more local-resident-serving commercial sales, as well as capture more tourist sales. Soda Springs is developed by disconnected strip commercial development stretching along Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40). Shortcomings of this type of development include the area's irregular building frontage, relatively small and fragmented parcels, stand-alone structures, older businesses struggling to be profitable, and lack of landscaping and aesthetic design.

Economic development is described as the process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, financial, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services. Through comprehensive strategic planning, it is possible to maximize utilization of local resources while minimizing local constraints in order to achieve a healthier local economy. Simply put, economic development is preserving, creating and attracting jobs and associated public services.

There is a reason why small, isolated mountain communities are often not prosperous. Even if a community is blessed with unique natural amenities, it requires ingenuity, a will and wherewithal to introduce economic vitality into the local economy. The most difficult facts that secluded mountain communities have to accept are that economic vitality involves the loss of some privacy, that economic prosperity may reduce tranquility, a secluded lifestyle, and that economic success typically requires strategic use of all available resources. With sensitive and thoughtful planning, negative consequences of development can be mitigated.

The economy of Soda Springs Rural Center is largely dependent upon tourism, which fluctuates seasonally. Soda Springs' seasonal economy is based on heavy day and especially weekend traffic during the winter and a lighter presence of summer vacationers. Accordingly local employment is seasonal with the exception of machine operators, mostly young, unskilled "migrant" people who support the ski areas. After the snow is gone, construction jobs provide employment to some winter recreation workers. Additionally, the improvement of the economic climate depends upon the availability of adequate and affordable housing for those workers.

The seasonality of the economy raises the question: Are there any viable alternatives for greater economic stability and sustainability? Soda Springs' businesses suffer from wildly fluctuating revenues as the number of customers they serve rises and falls with the seasons. Individual businesses do not have the resources to mount comprehensive marketing campaigns or the time and knowledge needed to ally with others in order to take a collective approach to overcoming

their seasonal tourism challenge. This fluctuation in business revenues has a dramatic ripple effect on employment that is especially severe on low-wage seasonal workers. Correspondingly, the flight of workers to areas with more stable employment and/or more affordable housing make it difficult for businesses to hire new workers for the next high season. As part of the larger strategy to promote revitalization, the Area Plan must address numerous challenges inherent in the current conditions and shortcomings of the area. Soda Springs must address the need for comprehensive marketing and promotion of all of Donner Summit for year-round tourism, seek opportunities for mutually-supportive marketing of the area, and provide assistance as needed to ensure the availability of an adequate, well-trained and well-paid workforce. These basic concerns are complicated by the overlapping web of primary and second homeowners, an array of environmental groups, seasonal ski resorts, multi-jurisdictional water districts and the two separate county governments which all must coexist. Add the fact that Donner Summit feeds into three major California watersheds and local development must not compromise this essential water source for state needs.

Economic viability necessitates a concerted and ongoing promotional campaign that uses advertising, signage and special events to draw people with diverse interests to the area. Festivals, competitions and community celebrations that feature unique attractions of the area are recommended. These off-season public events could draw history buffs, bird watchers, butterfly enthusiasts, rock climbers, hikers and others with diverse interests. A venue for such special events for the spring and summer months would require a central public gathering location, park or plaza that engenders a sense of place. The public gathering place would need nearby lodging facilities well-designed for the alpine character of the area. Campground sites, public restrooms, off-street parking, park and picnic areas to accommodate public gatherings would be desirable amenities. Signage identifying the many recreational opportunities the area affords would be helpful in branding the area. Such infrastructure would give the area an identifiable center and provide a sense of place – “a there there.” Zoning changes will enable creation of a variety of commercial uses needed to support a more stable residential population year round. A key element for economic development would be signage along Interstate 80 that identifies the Soda Springs exit onto Old Highway 40 as an alternate scenic corridor enroute to Truckee. Many would choose the alternate road if they knew the additional distance and time involved was not significant. Additional travelers would enhance the economic prospects of tourist businesses. Promoting year-round occupancy of residential housing and businesses that support residents and travelers (i.e., grocery store, recreational equipment rental/sales, laundromat, restaurants, community cultural center, etc.) would provide greater prosperity for the area.

With major investment in visitor-serving facilities and the skills of welcoming and serving visitors, the community should look for means that would help to change Soda Springs from a seasonal to a year-round destination. This would justify adding more overnight accommodations and facilities that would attract overnight guests for longer stays and would reduce the need for closing businesses after the “season”. A welcome-center could provide much-needed public restrooms and information about local attractions and businesses.

Natural resources play a key role in potential economic development. Visitors come to the area to experience natural beauty and the many recreational amenities that the natural setting offers. From the vast views of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, to the diversity of high quality recreation,

it is an essential part of what attracts visitors, which in turn, promotes economic stability.

A. Existing Economic Conditions

Infrastructure Assessment



Housing conditions and costs vary greatly throughout Soda Springs. The area is relatively affordable considering its proximity to the number of nearby ski resorts, with the median housing value in Soda Springs around \$200,000 compared Truckee's median housing value which is closer to \$500,000.



offered as vacation rentals.

Lodging on Donner Summit is rustic. There are a number of basic lodges that offer simple dormitory accommodations with convenient access to some of the best destinations for outdoor recreation in America. Nearby options include the Cal Lodge, Clair Tappaan Lodge, Sugar Bowl Lodge, Schull Lodge, Kingvale Lodge, OSC Donner Lodge, and numerous homes



Commercial activity within Soda Springs is very specifically geared toward serving the small resident population and winter skier tourist trade. The gas station, Summit Restaurant, ski equipment rental and sales, general store, and vacation rental real estate office all front Donner Pass Road.

Economic Strengths and Challenges

Soda Springs' area has some aspects that favor economic development including excellent highway access, located within reasonable travel distance of a population base of over 10 million people, beautiful scenic setting, extensive and excellent outdoor recreation, a historically rich identity and colorful community character. A plan and program for economic viability and prosperity will require branding and a stronger physical presence and district identity that draws travelers to exit Interstate 80 onto Old Highway 40 as a must-visit destination. Key local champions and leaders will need to spearhead strategic planning and a business plan to attract investment in improvements to the area.



Rustic small town atmosphere, recreation and natural beauty are the primary draws to Donner Summit. Most residents and visitors appreciate that the area has avoided over-development. The natural setting, with an abundance of wildflowers and mountains and hiking and biking trails provide recreational amenities for visitors throughout the year.

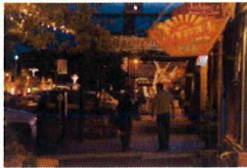


Historical name recognition of the events surrounding the Donner Party creates an instant identity for most Californians. Despite this identity the area does not have a clear and appealing image in the mind of the public. To a large extent this can be solved with an appropriate level of signage,

including signage along I-80.



Proximity to Highway 80, five major day-ski resorts, and Amtrak railways offers substantial potential to capture more visitors driving the primary inter-state traffic route in northern California. The ability to capitalize on this opportunity is currently hindered by a lack of promotion and organization.



Nearby markets like Truckee, Lake Tahoe, and Reno are major employment centers that provide services including restaurants, general merchandise, apparel, home furnishings and appliance stores, and building supply stores which primarily (but not exclusively) serve local residents. Particularly the extensive services provided in nearby Truckee provide a competitive challenge that commercial investors and developers must fully consider.



Access to public restrooms will improve the visitor experience. Being able to access a toilet is a fundamental aspect of community development because it ensures that all people can move freely throughout town and enjoy the natural outdoors and built environment.

B. Economic Development Goals & Policies

Economic Development Vision

To create a residential, commercial, and recreation year-round economy to provide a broad range of economic opportunities for all Donner Summit residents and visitors.

Goal ED-1: Make Soda Springs a better place to live by providing more jobs and services for local residents.

Policy ED-1.1: Local Services

Retain and expand existing businesses that serve the needs of Donner Summit residents, particularly those that offset the current seasonality of the area.

Policy ED-1.2: Sustainability

Encourage sustainable businesses that support development of recreational facilities that complement the natural landscape and natural resources on Donner Summit. Promote economic diversity and prosperity for residents.

Policy ED-1.3: Character

Build the local economy on Soda Springs' strengths and uniqueness. Achieve a more diversified economy and employment base consistent with community character.

Goal ED-2: Create economic development achieve sustainable tourism by building on the area's natural beauty, recreational, cultural, and historic assets.

Policy ED-2.1: Center

Provide incentives and remove barriers to help redevelop Soda Springs into the key focal place of Donner Summit. Focus uses toward commercial retail, dining, groceries, professional offices and outdoor recreational uses.

Policy ED-2.2: Mixed-Use

Remove barriers to help redevelop Soda Springs' into a mixed-use, commercial, and residential corridor.

Policy ED-2.3: Broadband

Encourage broadband internet availability throughout Soda Springs. Seek funding sources and innovative approaches to extending communications systems throughout Donner Summit.

Policy ED-2.4: Regional Collaboration

Work collaboratively to promote regional economic development strategies to establish and implement a clear economic strategy. Leverage Donner Summit's "natural capital" in implementing economic development strategies and increase participation and coordination of local agencies.

Policy ED-2.5: Funding

Utilize and leverage funding from a variety of public and private services.

Policy ED-2.6: Create Interest

Create public plazas, gathering spaces, and active streetscapes to promote a lively market.

Policy ED-2.7: Special Events

Promote the development of additional festivals and cultural events with emphasis on producing multi-day events with particular attention to midweek and shoulder seasons.

Policy ED-2.8: Visitor Experience

Improve the visitor experience by creating community gateways, establishing signage to identify the community, and creating a year-round economy through expanded use of the railroad and home businesses. Promote and enhance Soda Springs' role as a sustainable year-round tourist destination.

Policy ED-2.9: Stay and Play

Encourage the development of tourist accommodations in the Rural Center by removing barriers to hotel, hostel, and other types of lodging development.

C. Economic Development Implementation

The following actions will accelerate implementation of the goals and policies listed above.

1. Collaborate with the Sierra Business Council and the Nevada County Economic Resource Council in grant proposals to fund collaborative economic development projects.
2. Work with the Donner Summit Legacy group and volunteers to develop and provide gateway-style information (maps, signage, wayfinding) for visitors on how to access key natural resource and cultural amenities. Identify the elements needed to link existing assets and attract more travelers to stop in Soda Springs and access commercial services.
3. Utilize the Economic Resource Council to enhance the marketing visibility of Donner Summit.
4. Research funding resources, develop funding strategies, and provide grant assistance to local jurisdictions for economic development projects, infrastructure needs and historical building renovation.
5. Develop and leverage economic development partnerships. Coordinate regional economic development activities by maintaining working relationships with local economic development entities such as the Sierra Business Council, the Nevada County Economic Resource Council and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce.
6. Develop and implement urban design standards for buildings and structures that reflect Donner Summit's rural mountain identity.
7. Explore opportunities to develop a clean, safe and well-maintained public restroom facility in a convenient location that is accessible to visitors, paying attention to both current and future needs.

Chapter 4

Public Services

Existing residential, commercial, industrial, and other development on Donner Summit requires supporting infrastructure including water, sewer, and public health and safety programs. The Public Services chapter describes the transportation and circulation system, and the public and quasi-public facilities and services located in and around the Soda Springs Rural Center. Planned capital improvements to Donner Pass Road and necessary implementation actions are described at the end of the chapter.

A. Existing Public Services

Roadways



Donner Pass Road is the major east-west roadway through Soda Springs, connecting communities like Cisco Grove and Kingvale to the Summit and Donner Lake and Truckee. Soda Springs Road heads south from the middle of the Rural Center to the nearby Serene Lakes community and Royal Gorge resort. Local streets serve the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Donner Pass Road is the only way through town and the high winter weekend traffic volumes emphasizes the importance of a well-functioning transportation system. Traffic backups of six or more miles long create gridlock on peak ski days. Many residents would like to see the speed limit along Donner Pass Road reduced from 35 MPH to 25 MPH. Strategically placed flashing speed limit signs could be a good deterrent for speeding drivers. Future development may require project level traffic analysis of the local roadways and the Interstate 80/Soda Springs interchange, and could require a traffic study that could identify specific mitigation measures such as a two-way left turn lane, bike lanes, and other intersection upgrades on Donner Pass Road to improve local circulation.

Transit Service



During the winter season (mid-December through mid-March) the Town of Truckee provides public transit to and from Donner Summit, with stops at Boreal, Sugar Bowl, Donner Ski Ranch, and Soda Springs ski resorts. Direct transfers to Placer County's Tahoe Area Rapid Transit (TART) are available for trips to Lake Tahoe's north and west shores. During the non-winter season public transportation is not provided on Donner Summit.

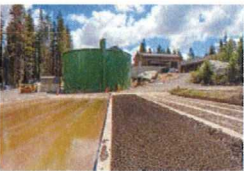
Pedestrian Improvements



County Zoning Regulations encourage the development of pedestrian walkways to link adjacent uses in Rural Centers. The Eastern Nevada County Design Guidelines also encourage development that supports walkability in Rural Centers, encouraging streets to accommodate pedestrians as well as automobiles by providing safe sidewalks. The lack of non-motorized pedestrian facilities within the Rural Center is a key concern for many area residents; however, funding opportunities for pedestrian improvements in rural, non-incorporated areas is limited, at both the State and County government level.

Community-identified solutions to improve pedestrian safety and reduce speed include gateway signage or monuments and pedestrian improvements which can send a message to motorists that they are entering an active commercial or neighborhood community and that they are expected to slow to an appropriate speed.

Sewage Disposal/Wastewater



The Donner Summit Public Utility District is a bi-county special district formed in Nevada and Placer counties in 1948. In June of 2015, the Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) completed a 24 million dollar project upgrading and expanding its wastewater treatment process from a chlorine gas disinfection process to a UV (ultraviolet) disinfection process. The primary changes to the plant include replacing chlorine gas disinfection with UV (ultraviolet) disinfection and tertiary treatment with membrane bio reactors (MBR). The new process will have a substantial positive effect on the environment by eliminating the presence of chlorine by products. In addition, 10 acres of land was added to the existing spray irrigation system to allow for effluent discharge in the spring and summer. Fall and winter discharges go to the Yuba River. Funding for the upgrades was provided by the Clean Water Revolving Fund and the USDA. The facility was constructed with a focus on lowering effluent ammonia and nitrate concentrations to meet California quality requirements for recycled water. Tertiary treatment with membrane bioreactors are used to filter and treat the waste water before discharging the treated recycled water into the South Yuba River or providing water for snowmaking services at Soda Springs Ski Resort.

Water Supply



Lake Angela, a DSPUD District-owned lake and dam is the water source for Soda Springs. Water is processed through the nearby state-of-the-art treatment plant. From the treatment plant, distribution lines run west serving a portion of Sugar Bowl, then west along Donner Pass Road serving Soda Springs. Additionally, the District provides water distribution parallel to Interstate 80, between Soda Springs and the Donner Summit rest area. Donner Summit Public Utility District treats and distributes water to approximately 243 customers including residential, commercial, lodging, and resort uses. There is enough capacity in the water treatment and distribution system to roughly double the number of services. All water service is metered.

Solid Waste



Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal provides for the collection and transportation of solid waste to the dump/transfer station located at Highway 89 and Cabin Creek Road in Truckee. This includes waste from all residential, commercial, and industrial properties, including recycling material.

Soda Springs Post Office



Soda Springs Post Office provides post office boxes for the 95728 zip code and full postal services to customers. The Post Office space is rented out of the same privately owned building which has the General Store. The Post Office is the primary reason residents from communities all around Donner Summit visit Soda Springs daily.

Emergency Services



Soda Springs Fire Station #97 is located next to the Donner Summit Wastewater treatment plant and is staffed by a full-time captain and a firefighter/paramedic. Station 97 provides service to the Donner Summit subdivisions and the Interstate 80 corridor to the western boundary of the Fire District at Blue Canyon.

Electricity and Propane



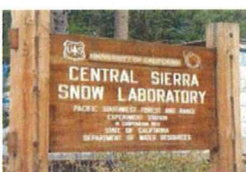
Electricity is provided by Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E). Electrical service is primarily transmitted over existing overhead lines along collector and local streets and gas lines are buried underground. Propane is supplied by multiple providers.

Schools



Donner Trail Elementary School (K-5) is a small magnet school within the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District nestled adjacent to the Yuba River in Kingvale. Other local schools are located in Truckee and include Alder Creek Middle School (grades 6-8), Truckee High School (grades 9-12), and the Truckee campus of Sierra Community College.

Central Sierra Snow Lab



Located just south of Soda Springs at Royal Gorge Resort the Central Sierra Snow Laboratory (CSSL) is a research field station of UC Berkeley specializing in snow physics, snow hydrology, meteorology, climatology, and instrument design. Built in 1946 by the (then) U.S. Weather Bureau

and Army Corps of Engineers, it is administered by UC Berkeley's California Biodiversity Center.

CSSL has a fairly complete and consistent record of precipitation, snowfall, snow depth, and air temperature for the periods of 1946-1952 and 1957-present. The Lab also has long-term data sets on wind speed and direction, solar radiation, snow temperature, relative humidity, and soil moisture. In addition, precipitation and air temperature records from other sites on Donner Summit (dating back to the turn of the century) are available.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant



Nevada County was recently awarded nearly ten million dollars in grant funding from the California Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). The grant is for roadway improvements on 6.5 miles of Donner Pass Road from Interstate 80 to the Truckee Town limits. The project will span both Nevada and Placer Counties and will include Class II bicycle lanes, parking improvements and comprehensive pavement rehabilitation.

The improvements will remedy several ongoing challenges with regard to this segment of Donner Pass Road: 1) moderate to severe roadway degradation that occurs as a result of extreme weather conditions in this high altitude pass, and that necessitates frequent maintenance; 2) safety issues for bicyclists and motorists due to lack of bicycle lanes, shoulders, and recovery zone; and 3) lack of access to trails and other recreational and historic sites in or near the Tahoe National Forest. The project will reduce the amount of maintenance required on the road, while also providing a safer bicycling route and better access to trails that connect to other recreational amenities to the north and south. The project is expected to begin design in 2016 and is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2019.

B. Public Services Goals & Policies

Public Services and Facilities Vision:

To promote sustainable public services and infrastructure that minimizes the strain on the region's resources and the environment, while contributing to healthy and prosperous Donner Summit.

Goal PS-1: Public services and facilities should be allowed to upgrade and expand to support existing and new development consistent with the General Plan and Area Plan.

Policy PS-1.1: Additional Development

Consider the existence of adequate and reliable public services and facilities in approving new development in the Soda Springs Rural Center.

Policy PS-1.2: Broadband

Promote high-speed broadband availability and affordably throughout Donner Summit.

Goal PS-2: Upgrade Donner Pass Road to reduce the amount of maintenance required on the road, while also providing a safer bicycling route and better access to regional trails and other recreation amenities.

Policy PS-2.1: FLAP Grant

Engage the Department of Public Works, Federal Highway Commission, and Placer County to ensure that the Donner Pass Road improvement projects include the installation of bike lanes and other pedestrian amenities.

Policy PS-2.2: Way-Finding Signage

Support installation of a way-finding and directional signage program in the Rural Center that directs visitors to recreation and commercial facilities and other points of interest.

Policy PS-2.3: Economic Vitality

Enhance the economic vitality of Donner Summit by efficiently connecting people to jobs, goods, services, and other communities.

Policy PS-2.4: Vehicle Speed

Identify opportunities to reduce traffic speeds along Donner Pass Road without adversely affecting vehicle circulation. Consider using right-of-way improvements and traffic controls to achieve this objective.

C. Public Services Implementation

1. Implement traffic calming measures to encourage reduced vehicle speeds along Donner Pass Road through Soda Springs, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
2. Develop and implement improvements to snow removal and storage along Donner Pass Road to improve the visibility of businesses and pedestrian safety.
3. Support efforts to explore the feasibility of establishing a Union Pacific Quiet Zone at the Soda Springs Road railroad crossing.
4. Encourage public restroom facilities to be incorporated into the design of commercial development or stand-alone facilities, and close to public places.

Chapter 5

Recreation

The Recreation chapter identifies existing recreation activities and provides guidance for the preservation and enhancement of high quality recreation experiences around Donner Summit. The natural splendor of the Sierra wilderness is a draw to day hikers, cyclists, backpackers and skiers. The no-frills ski resorts provide authentic pure winter sport and the outdoor experience for recreationists is valued more than commercial amenities. Access to public lands, trails, beaches, and parks are a significant asset for the community and directly linked to local economy, sense of identity, and quality of life. The Area Plan promotes wheelchair accessible public access to recreation, and clearly visibly and recognizable trailheads and access points. Recreation trails should enhance the visitors experience by providing educational and interpretative signage and displays.

Residents value the natural setting for its diverse recreational opportunities. Access to nature improves residents' connection to the environment, promotes health and well-being, and creates an abundance of recreational opportunities. Opportunities to expand pedestrian facilities and amenities along Donner Pass Road are important considerations in any future development. Mixed uses that include recreation concessionaires and services should promote the Soda Springs Rural Center as a recreation hub. In addition to recreational uses and access to public lands, private land owners are encouraged to develop improvements including sponsoring community event areas and providing retail space for sale or rental of recreation equipment.

The continued expansion of trails for downhill skiing, cross country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding would elevate the area's appeal to visitors and residents alike. The area has become a lifestyle community in which residents make a choice to live here for the quality of life, especially outdoor recreation. To optimize development of public lands for recreational activities the Area Plan must build partnerships that foster cooperation with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, Forest Service, and Placer County. Connecting open spaces and integrating unique settings and isolated habitats is needed to support and broaden recreational experiences.

Non-winter active recreation on the Summit has not been fully utilized, developed or promoted. It would be prudent to expand on opportunities for year round ecotourism. Attractions such as zip lines, ropes courses, and special events like obstacle racing, and Boreal Resort's Woodward Tahoe are tourism attractions that promote a more diverse sustainable year-round economy. Temporary events such as festivals, races, and competitions should appeal to a rich variety of recreationists that will increase economic activity. Non-winter annual attractions that feature resources unique to the area might include cycling, horseback riding, hiking, bird watching, wild-flower and butterfly festivals, rock-climbing and athletic competitions that could enhance the recreational experience of visitors. Lake Van Norden, a man-made impoundment, has in the past provided for summer recreation activities such as waterskiing and kayaking. Given the uncertain future of the impoundment, however, new non-winter recreation opportunities could be

developed if the Lake Van Norden property is restored to a high-quality mountain meadow and stream. Infrastructure in the form of campgrounds, and areas that connect commercial and pedestrian areas, provide bicycle linkage should be key considerations in the development of the area as a destination.

As noted in Chapter 1, Background and Context, the economic viability of the area is confronted with significant challenges. Visitors to the area are not motivated to leave Interstate 80 because there's little that is known by them in the way of attractions that would motivate them to exit the highway. In addition there are many nearby competing areas that have more amenities and infrastructure for visitors. This lack of awareness by highway passerby is compounded with the absence of a chamber of commerce or tourism board to promote special events and take advantage of branding the area's rich history. There are unique features of the area not known to the public, and the County's General Plan that's in place does not address the specific issues of the community. The freeway has bypassed this area and time has left it behind resulting in areas of blight as a consequence of lack of investment in the built environment. Soda Springs needs to develop a sense of place and exploration of potential opportunities for creating and maintaining accessible public spaces, including a town center and/or park. In spite of significant challenges the potential for economic development and sustainability to create a vibrant local economy is great.

A. Existing Recreation Activities

Trails

There are numerous non-motorized recreation trails on Donner Summit that exist primarily on public land. A brief description of the most popular trails is given below.



Donner Summit Canyon and the Donner Lake Rim Trail are part of the Truckee-Donner Land Trust trail system network connecting the Summit to Donner Lake and Truckee.



Royal Gorge Area Trails are some of the best trails on the summit and include loops to Lyle's Lookout, Rowton Peak, around Summit Valley, and the Point Mariah Trail.



Hole in the Ground Trail is probably the best known mountain bike ride in the Donner Summit area. One of the best single track rides in the Sierra, the 13.5 mile loop trail challenges riders with steep climbs and technical downhill sections.



The Pacific Crest Trail is the iconic west coast National Scenic Trail that crosses Donner Summit along the trail route that runs from Mexico to Canada. The PCT is open to hikers and horseback riding, but not bicyclists.



Horseback riding enthusiasts have an abundance of trails to choose from. Popular equestrian trails around Donner Summit include the Pacific Crest Trail, Royal Gorge Trails, Donner Lake Rim Trail, Mt. Judah Loop, Mt. Lola Trail, and Painted Rock Trail.

Developed Facilities

A variety of developed recreation facilities exist around Soda Springs. The location of these recreation facilities is shown on Figure 5-1, and includes the following:



Boreal Mountain Resort, Soda Springs Mountain Resort, Sugar Bowl Resort, Donner Ski Ranch, and Royal Gorge cater to all types of downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding and snow tubing in the winter and early spring.



Woodward Tahoe is a year-round action sports camp with indoor training facilities for skiing and snowboarding in the winter, and skateboarding, BMX, mountain biking, and cheerleading in the summer.



West End Beach is a 10 acre beach park offering a wide range of water activities with day use picnic and barbecue facilities on Donner Lake, operated by the Truckee Donner Parks and Recreation District.

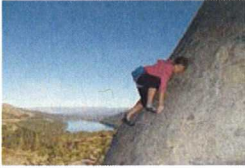


Donner Lake Memorial State Park is a state park of California preserving the site of the Donner Camp where the ill-fated Donner Party was trapped by weather during the winter of 1846-1847. The park is a national historic landmark with hiking trails, campgrounds, and the Emigrant Trail Museum.

Dispersed Recreation

Numerous opportunities for dispersed outdoor recreation exist on public lands surrounding Soda Springs. Popular activities include backcountry skiing and snowboarding, camping, world-class rock climbing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, dog walking, wildlife viewing, and simply

enjoying solitude and the beauty of nature. Public lands supporting dispersed recreation are primarily managed by the USFS and the Truckee Donner Land Trust.



Rock climbing the massive granite slabs that form the walls of Donner Pass are a climber's dream. The quality of the rock wall is excellent and makes for world-class crack and wall climbing.



Simply enjoying the beauty of nature and taking a break from the fast-paced modern world attracts people to the area.



Miles of equestrian trails wind through the Sierra on both sides of Donner Summit. Horses are allowed virtually anywhere hikers can go. The Pacific Crest Trail offers many miles of riding on a well maintained route. Along the western slope paralleling Highway 20, the 25-mile long Pioneer Trail offers excellent horseback riding areas and convenient access from many places along its course.



Off-road riding the old unpaved logging roads in the Donner Summit area offer enthusiasts' miles of roads to explore.



Road biking on the summit is spectacular and can be as challenging as you wish to make it. It is, however, limited to the single paved road that runs through the summit, Donner Pass Road which is Old Highway 40.



Back-country skiing in the spring is popular because of the easy access and quality terrain. Donner Summit is the closest backcountry location for skiers coming from the Bay Area, with short but sweet descents and nearby Forest Service huts represents one of the region's most popular backcountry destinations.

B. Recreation Goals & Policies

Recreation Vision

Encourage and accommodate year-round active and passive recreational activities, expand and connect recreational opportunities to the community, and improve access and signage to nearby

recreation.

Goal REC-1: Maintain the quality of and expand access to year-round dispersed recreation opportunities on Donner Summit where it is consistent with it is consistent with environmental values and protection of natural resources.

Policy REC-1.1: Connected Trail System

Encourage the sustainable development of recreational facilities that complement the mountain landscape and natural resources on Donner Summit. Multi-use trail systems shall be expanded to connect the Rural Center to mountain recreation opportunities, and provide a link to major regional or interstate trails. Biking trails should serve both mountain bikers and road cyclists, providing links to neighborhoods and adjacent areas.

Policy REC-1.2: Open Space

Support a broad range of enjoyable recreational experiences by integrating a variety of unique settings and isolated habitats and providing connection to regional open space lands.

Policy REC-1.3: Accessibility

All non-motorized facilities in the Soda Springs Rural Center, including walkways, sidewalks, crosswalks, paths, pedestrianized streets, pedestrian plazas, bike lanes and highway shoulders, shall be designed to accommodate wheelchair accessibility where feasible, and once established, shall provide for appropriate management and maintenance programs.

Policy REC-1.4: Partnerships

Cooperate with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Placer County to optimize the use of public lands and facilities for public use and recreation.

Policy REC-1.5: Compatibility

Ensure that non-motorized facility design is consistent with the character of the surrounding lands and the expected volume of use, and does not conflict with established recreation uses or the intended and varying needs or users.

Policy REC-1.6: Campgrounds

Provide opportunities to expand public day use and overnight camping. Locate new campground facilities within the Recreation Zone District in non-sensitive areas and in proximity to necessary infrastructure.

Policy REC-1.7: Temporary and Annual Events

Encourage recreation related temporary events within the Rural Center to increase pedestrian and economic activity. Promote activities such as obstacle course races, triathlons, bicycle races, rock climbing competitions, or similar special events that increase local economic activity and enhance the visitor recreation experience.

Policy REC-1.8: Impact Fees

Actively support efforts to direct the use of Truckee Donner Recreation District impact fees to provide additional recreation related facilities on Donner Summit.

Policy REC-1.9: Recreation

Enhance the recreation uses with improved trailhead parking, equestrian staging areas, picnic areas, and camping on recreation zoned parcels.

Goal REC-2: Provide non-motorized improvements that connect Soda Springs with residential neighborhoods, recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Policy REC-2.1: Pedestrian Amenities

All proposed discretionary projects within the Soda Springs Rural Center shall be reviewed for opportunities to contribute to pedestrian amenities along Donner Pass Road, including continuous sidewalks, walkways, pathways, and/or trails.

Policy REC-2.2: Recreation Destination

Promote the Soda Springs Rural Center as a hub for recreation by allowing a mix of uses that promote outdoor recreation concessionaires, recreation based commercial services, and temporary activities. Connect the Rural Center to recreation opportunities by upgrading existing bike, equestrian, and pedestrian trails, constructing new connections, and increasing transit service. Provide both passive and active opportunities within the natural setting.

Policy REC-2.3: Public Land

Promote recreational trails on existing public lands, public easements, and other public rights-of-way. Identify facilities and implementation measures to enhance pedestrian, bicycling, equestrian, and transit opportunities along with other opportunities to reduce automobile dependency.

Policy REC-2.4: Private Land

Encourage the private sector to develop recreational improvements on their land. Improvements may include establishing community event areas and establishing appropriate space for the outdoor display of recreation equipment for sale or rent.

Policy REC-2.5: Identification

Provide highly visible, recognizable, and safe, trailheads, equestrian staging areas and access points into the trail system.

Policy REC-2.5: Learning

Encourage recreational trails that provide educational and interpretive opportunities.

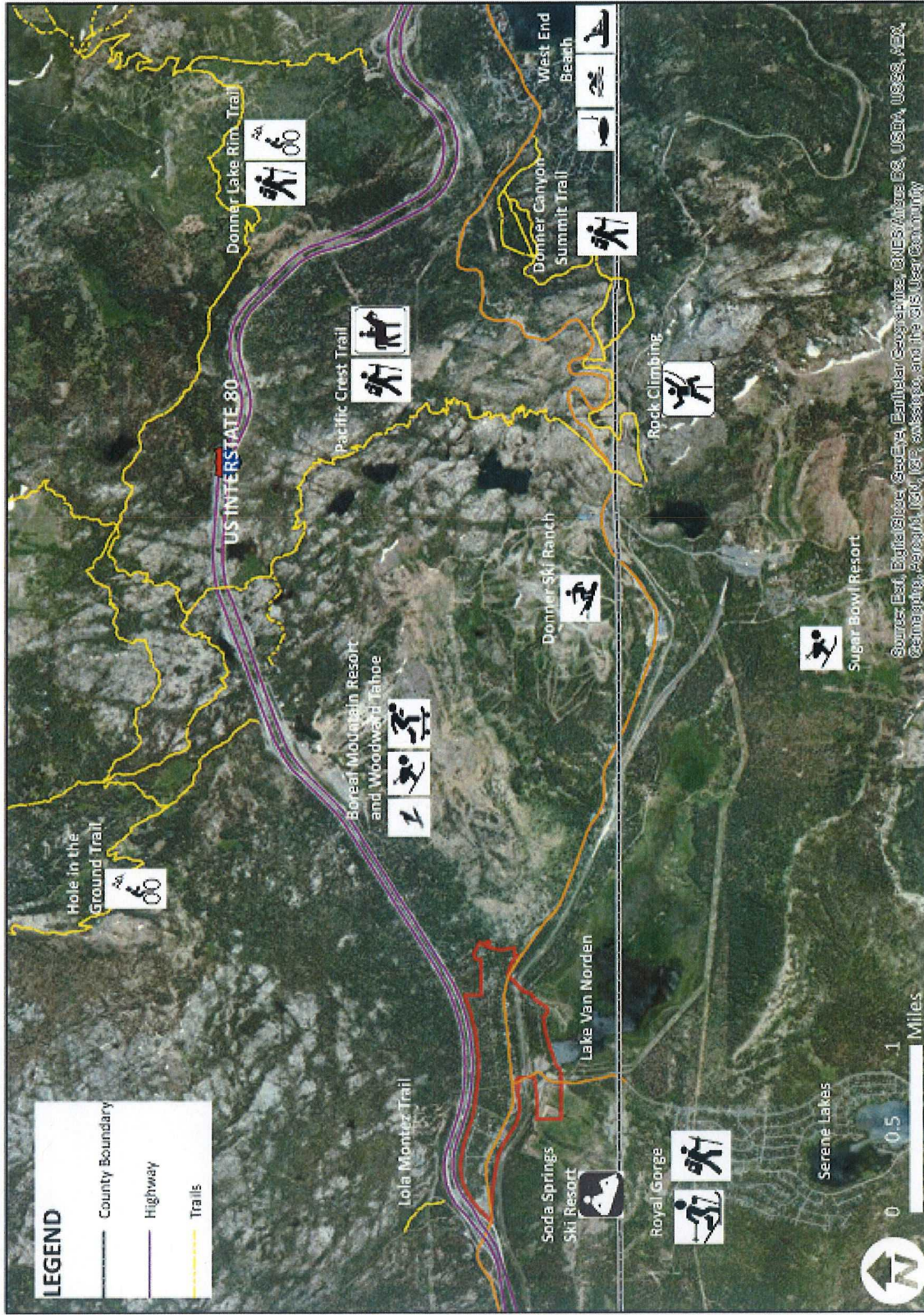
Goal REC-3: Encourage recreation uses in and around the Area Plan to which local business can provide support goods and services.

C. Recreation Implementation Actions

The following action will accelerate implementation of the goals and policies listed above.

1. Coordinate with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and successors in interest of the Van Norden Lake and meadow, to improve public recreation opportunities in the Summit Valley.
2. Inventory the existing network of informal trails surrounding Soda Springs and coordinate with landowners to preserve and enhance trails that provide non-motorized connections to the Rural Center.
3. Support development of a Donner Summit Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with trail connections between the Soda Springs Rural Center and Boreal Ski Resort, Castle Valley, Kidd Lake, and between the western and eastern Soda Springs's neighborhoods on the north side of Donner Pass Road.

Figure 5-1: Donner Summit Recreation Map



Chapter 6

Natural & Cultural Resources

Donner Summit has a rich historical background and stunning scenery on the crest of the Sierra. The natural environment is identified as one of the main reasons most residents have chosen to live and work in the Donner Summit area. One of the central themes expressed throughout the public visioning meetings is the community's core value to preserve the environment's natural and cultural resources. There is a commitment to open space, sustainability, green building practices, balanced growth and wildlife preservation. Planning for air quality, water quality, and wildlife is imperative to provide the quality of life for future generations.

The treasured landscape hosts an incredible array of wildlife habitat, including creeks and lakes, mountain meadows, old growth forests, and important wildlife corridors. The area's high elevation (6500 ft. – 8000 ft.) is characterized by its upper mountain forests and meadows transitioning to subalpine at its highest elevations. The scenic lakes, streams, meadows, and old growth forests are framed under the mountain peaks of Mt. Lincoln, Mt. Disney, Devil's Peak, Donner Peak, Castle Peak and Mt. Judah. The area's landscape is habitat for an incredible array of wildlife and plant species. Protection of this habitat must include work to eradicate and prevent the spread of invasive species. The Area Plan must maintain habitats for all indigenous species and give particular attention to protect the wetlands and meadows of Donner Summit. Any development must protect the environmentally sensitive Lake Van Norden area. The high mountain meadows and wetlands play a vital role in the region's hydrologic processes, providing water quality protection, flood regulation and a biodiverse species habitat. Any development must improve and maintain the river watershed and water quality of Donner Summit's lakes, creeks and rivers.

The Donner Summit community has made a significant financial commitment to conservation through grass roots fundraising campaigns including the recent public acquisition of Royal Gorge's nearly 3000 acres which previously was slated for a massive residential and commercial development. In addition Billy Mack Canyon above Donner Lake and Johnson Canyon across the highway in the Castle Peak Wilderness are permanently protected with conservation easements. This land combined with public forest lands will ensure preservation of over 6000 acres of contiguous open space on the summit. Preservation of the natural resources with open space is a key factor in enhancing the experiences for locals and visitors. Development in the area must employ best management practices for forest health including thinning dense timber and reduction of hazardous fuels. The quality of life and visitors' experience is enriched by the aesthetic and scenic values of the landscape and prominent ridgelines that must be protected. Development must provide a buffer of open space protecting sensitive habitats and species while minimizing the removal of native vegetation.

Climate change is appropriately a great concern for the community. The impact of climate changes in the coming decades on precipitation patterns on Donner Summit will impact water supply, sewage treatment options and catastrophic wildfire frequency and destabilization of the ski economy. The importance of this area to downstream communities is underscored as being the headwaters and watershed for the Truckee River, the North Fork of the American River, and the South Yuba Rivers which are critical to California's water supply, and is recognized by state and federal laws protecting them under Wild and Scenic status. Any new development must not impact the flow of the South Yuba River as regulated by the flood management ordinance. Healthy environmental conditions on Donner Summit affect the whole State's water system. The incremental temperature increases have led to several years of drought conditions with profound side effects to the State's economy. The snowpack, a major contributor to the local and State economy, is projected to decrease, resulting in shorter ski seasons. Concern for climate change must also include limiting greenhouse gas emissions created by new development projects by encouraging active transportation (walking and bicycling), public transportation, passive solar design, and promotion of green building design and construction.

Future land use decisions on Donner Summit should consider how they will influence climate change and resiliency. It is important to recognize the challenges and encourage conservation efforts to protect the area from the hazardous impacts of climate change. Greater environmental stewardship might involve, resort operators providing employee shuttles, employee housing onsite or on adjacent properties (Sugar Bowl is currently the only resort that provides employee housing), water efficiency programs, and preventing fragmentation of open space to support ecosystem health, wildlife corridors, and recreational opportunities. Preserving connected open space is essential to maintaining the Donner Summit experience for locals, tourists, and the diversity of species along the crest of the Sierra Nevada. Along with ecosystem health, conserving a meaningful network of open space also supports the active lifestyle of residents and visitors, a win-win for all.

Donner Summit's historic landmarks are valuable features of the area's past and should be preserved and promoted. Informational signage for historical and cultural resources is encouraged. The Donner Summit Historical Society recommends preservation and restoration of historical, archeological, and culturally significant landmarks. Where possible the County will allow flexibility of development standards for remodeling of historic buildings to maintain the character of the Soda Springs community. Property owners should understand the value of restoration, as opposed to new construction. In addition to the recreation activities visitors may be drawn to the area by the unique cultural features such as Martis Tribe petroglyphs and grinding stones, historical connection to the Donner Party story, wagon ruts along the Emigrant Trail, the China Wall and other transcontinental railroad wonders, the world's first vehicle underpass and first transcontinental telegraph. Signage, special events and promotional publicity could help the community to capitalize on these unique cultural and historical resources.

A. Existing Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural Resources



Biological Resources

documented in North America.

Sixteen species of amphibians, 20 species of mammals, and at least 100 species of birds are known to inhabit Donner Summit. Home to more than one third of all plant families in California, the area's diverse flowering plant population provides habitat for one of the richest butterfly faunas



Wetlands and Meadows

high elevation wetland in the County. The clear seasonal streams and subalpine lakes of Donner Summit are some of its most appreciated resources.

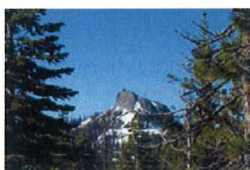
The high mountain meadows of Donner Summit play an important role in the region's complex system of hydrologic processes, and species habitat. Donner Summit is the headwaters for the Yuba, American, and Truckee Rivers. Van Norden Lake was drained in 1977; the meadow is the largest



Forests

Sierra, they provide essential habitat for important species such as the California Spotted Owl, Northern Goshawk, and Pine Marten.

Outside of National Parks, one of the only remaining large stands of virgin, old-growth forests in California is found in the Donner Summit region. These forests have developed over centuries to include large-diameter, old-growth trees, snags, and downed logs. Increasingly rare in the northern



Mountains

The high mountain peaks – Mt. Lincoln, Mt. Disney, Castle Peak, Donner Peak, Mt. Judah, and Devil's Peak – provide a magnificent backdrop to the lakes, streams, meadows, and forests.



Van Norden

Van Norden Lake is the result of man-made Van Norden dam which is over 100 years old and in poor condition. In 2011 the land on which Van Norden Lake and dam are located was acquired by the Truckee Donner Land Trust and heralded as one of the most significant Sierra conservation victories in years, with the goal of ultimately transferring the property to the U.S. Forest Service for long-term management. Obstacles affecting transfer of the Van Norden property to the Forest Service revolve around water rights, the safety of the existing dam, and the long-term maintenance of any impoundment structure. The Land Trust is currently working to resolve concerns raised by the State of California and the Forest Service.

Cultural Resources and Landmarks



Native Americans

Native Americans left evidence of their crossings in the form of petroglyphs and grinding stones. Historically part of the Washoe tribe territory, Donner Pass was a trading route for many Native American tribes for thousands of years.



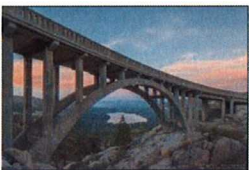
Emigrants

The first emigrants to arrive in California with wagons came over Donner Summit, and events surrounding the Donner party represent one of the best-known events in California history.



Chinese Laborers

The China Wall stands 75-feet and was hand built by Chinese laborers during construction of the transcontinental railroad. The wall contains no mortar and is still standing over a century later.



Rainbow Bridge

One of the most beautiful bridges in California, the Rainbow Bridge overlooks Donner Lake along Old Highway 40. The 240-foot-long bridge was completed in 1926 and was the first bridge built with a grade and a compound curve.

B. Natural and Cultural Resources Goals & Policies

Natural and Cultural Resources Vision

To protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Donner Summit for the enjoyment and education of future generations. A Native American proverb says “we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.” In order to ensure that future generations are able to live, work and play on Donner Summit, there must be a community-wide commitment to protect the Summit’s natural and cultural resources.

Goal NCR-1: Encourage the continued diversity of natural resources including timber, ecosystems, watersheds, viewsheds, and air quality on Donner Summit.

Policy NCR-1.1: Water

Improve and maintain the water quality of Donner Summit’s lakes, creeks, and rivers. Protect and enhance the South Yuba River watershed and tributaries to the Truckee River and the North Fork American River watersheds in the Donner Summit area.

Policy NCR-1.2: Forest

Employ best management practices for forest health including regular thinning of dense

timber stands and removal of understory vegetation in order to reduce the intensity of naturally occurring wildfire and prevent catastrophic wildfire. Expand permanent protection of Donner Summit forest resources.

Policy NCR-1.3: Wildlife Habitat

Maintain suitable habitats for all indigenous species of wildlife through maintenance, improvement and protection of habitat diversity. Protect endangered, threatened, or rare species, buffer from conflicting land uses, and increase habitat connectivity. Protect the wide array of habitat and the incredible range of biodiversity on Donner Summit.

Policy NCR-1.4: Open Space

Cooperate with Local, State and Federal agencies and other public and quasi-public organizations and agencies in the acquisition, restoration and maintenance of open space for natural resource protection and enhancement.

Policy NCR-1.5: Climate

Recognize the challenging climate on Donner Summit and the impact of climate change on the region's landscape and resources. Encourage conservation efforts to protect the region from the impacts of climate change.

Policy NCR-1.6: Invasive Species

Support public and private efforts to prevent, manage, or eradicate invasive species especially at the headwaters and along water courses, and in sensitive habitat areas, along public roadways, and public spaces.

Policy NCR-1.7: Van Norden

Protect from development the environmentally sensitive and regionally significant Van Norden meadow and wetlands, also known as Summit Valley.

Policy NCR-1.8: Places of Interest

Encourage informational signage for the Lake Van Norden/Summit Valley area for educational purposes regarding the natural and historical importance of the area.

Policy NCR-1.9: Headwaters

Recognize the importance of the Donner Summit region to the broader Central Sierra and downstream ecosystems.

Policy NCR-1.10: Commitment to Conservation

Provide for the protection, maintenance and restoration of such unique eco-systems as wetlands, meadows, and riparian and other native vegetation. Promote use of native, water-efficient, nutrient-efficient, fire-resistant and non-invasive vegetation in the plan area.

Goal NCR-2: Ensure the built environment does not adversely affect natural resources in the Donner Summit area.

Policy NCR-2.1: Scenic Protection

Preserve the extraordinary aesthetic quality and scenic values of the Donner Summit area, including the following prominent ridgelines in Nevada County: Castle Peak, Beacon Hill, Boreal Ridge, and Signal Hill. Request consultation with Placer County when development is proposed on the following prominent ridgelines in Placer County: Donner Peak, Mount Judah, Mount Lincoln, Crow's Nest, Rowton Peak, and Devil's Peak. Examine impacts to the identified landscape views from roadways, bike paths, and public areas for all proposed development.

Policy NCR-2.2: Flood Management

Ensure new development does not impact the flow of the South Yuba River consistent with the Flood Management Ordinance.

Policy NCR-2.3: Environmental Protection

Ensure new development complies with resource protection standards such as permanent open space and buffers to natural resources to protect environmentally sensitive habitats and species.

Policy NCR-2.4: Vegetation

Minimize the removal of native vegetation.

Policy NCR-2.5: Air Quality

Maintain and improve regional air quality and limit greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the following types of features for new development projects in the Donner Summit area: public transportation, alternative transportation, reduced parking standards, and south facing buildings.

Policy NCR-2.6: Energy Efficiency

Encourage energy efficiency in new development projects and in remodel projects to comply with the highest standards for green building design and construction.

Policy NCR-2.7: Stream Zones

Protect the wetlands and meadows of Donner Summit.

Goal NCR-3: Increase public awareness and understanding of the culture and history of Donner Summit and its importance to the economic vitality of Soda Springs.

Policy NCR-3.1: Stewardship

Foster a community sense of stewardship and personal responsibility for all historic and cultural resources.

Policy NCR-3.2: Public Visitation

Whenever possible, encourage public accessibility of historically eligible structures and sites, even if only for temporary or special events.

Policy NCR-3.3: Partnerships

Cooperate with the Donner Summit Historical Society, other local historical organizations, and historians to identify significant historical and cultural resources, and to educate the public on the positive benefits of historic preservation.

Goal NCR-4: Identify, protect, enhance, and where feasible restore significant archeological, cultural, and historical resources on Donner Summit including historic landscapes, sites, buildings, features and artifacts.

Policy NCR-4.1: Historic Register

Encourage the inclusion of significant archaeological and cultural resources in the Federal or State Historical Register based on the recommendation of the local historical society or a qualified professional.

Policy NCR-4.2: Signage

Encourage consistent interpretive signage for historical and cultural resources such as the Donner Summit Historical Society's 20 mile museum.

Policy NCR-4.3: Preserve

Preserve the history and scenery of Donner Summit as the portal to California and as a primary recreational and economic resource. Encourage innovative techniques to preserve archaeological and historic sites by gift, private conservancies and easements.

Policy NCR-4.4: Archeological Investigations

Nevada County shall require archeological investigations for all applicable discretionary projects, in accordance with CEQA regulations, for areas not previously surveyed and/or that are determined sensitive for cultural resources. The County shall require the preservation of discovered archeologically significant resources (as determined based on local, State, and Federal standards by a qualified professional) in place if feasible, or provide mitigation (avoidance, excavation, documentation, curation, data recovery, or other appropriate measures) prior to further disturbance.

C. Natural and Cultural Resource Strategies

The following actions or improvements are necessary to implement the goals and policies listed above.

1. Identify areas for wildlife observation and nature appreciation with supporting improvements such as viewing platforms and trails.

Chapter 7

Implementation

Implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan depends upon the success of both public and private participants. The Soda Springs' community and surrounding Donner Summit area holds substantive promise of greater economic health and enhancement of a sustainable high quality of life. This optimism is founded on the community acknowledging that economic decline will continue unless a concerted and comprehensive effort and focused development plan are implemented. Residents have led a resurgence of local concern and commitment to reverse negative trends which is being supported by Nevada County.

This project set out to outline a comprehensive development plan that encourages local initiative and coherence of community spirit to revitalize development consistent with strongly held rural values. A brighter future for the area is dependent on rebranding the region as a destination with full services, aesthetic improvements and promotion of year-round activities that more fully optimize the recreational opportunities provided by the rich natural resources of the area. This Area Plan outlines a comprehensive and consensus-built development plan involving all stakeholders with a central focus to attracting more visitors and investment in infrastructure while honoring residents' values and protecting the bountiful natural environment.

Some have voiced concern that the cherished legacy of a quiet, rural and nature-centered lifestyle could be spoiled by development. They have expressed fears of heavy traffic impacts and environmental degradation resulting from an increase of tourists and other recreation visitors. A counter argument is that to reverse the downward trending economic and social fabric problems of the past few decades, well-planned and comprehensive development is necessary and beneficial. Thoughtful development that is sensitive to protecting the natural resources, that involves all stakeholders, that enhances the public access and enjoyment of this unique region and that protects the quality of life of residents are critical provisions of this planning effort. The combined efforts of helpful government action and local initiative will likely provide Soda Springs and the Donner Summit area with increased resident occupancy, improved aesthetics, a healthier business environment, greater public access and recreation opportunities and expanded services to residents and visitors alike.

There are many challenges to revitalizing a small, unincorporated town, including the identification of funding for infrastructure improvements, phasing of improvements, the coordination of multiple responsible agencies, public expectations vary, and there are often competing interests. Community building occurs one step at a time and adoption of this Area Plan will not result in immediate change. Significant and lasting change will occur over time through the implementation of this Area Plan, both with immediate actions, through the application of flexible standards, and through community support. Long range planning for Soda Springs and Donner Summit does not end with the adoption of this document and it is important to continue with the steps necessary to bring about the vision of the Plan. As the policies of this Area Plan are implemented, the impact on landowners must be carefully considered to ensure

landowners will not be deprived of the reasonable use of their land. The County will set priorities for implementation and will periodically reexamine Area Plan goals; this Area Plan is intended to be a living document that can be changed and updated as local conditions change.

A. Implementation Goals & Policies

Implementation Vision

Implement regular improvements to incrementally achieve the Area Plan Goals and Policies.

Goal I-1: The Nevada County Board of Supervisors or their designee will have the responsibility guide the plan's implementation.

Policy I-1.1: Lead Agency

Nevada County shall assume primary responsibility for project review and approval consistent with this plan and the County's General Plan pursuant to the conditions and limitations outlined in the Land Use chapter of this plan.

Policy I-1.2: General Plan Consistency

No project may be approved unless it is found to comply with the General Plan, and with any ordinances, rules, and regulations enacted to effectuate the General Plan and Area Plan.

Goal I-2: Fund public sector improvement projects, and planning and coordination activities through a variety of funding sources.

Policy I-2.1: Funding

Actively pursue funding to implement this plan from federal, state, and local grant sources, and public/private partnerships.

Goal I-3: Continuously review and update this Area Plan to reflect current technology, regulation, policy, community direction, and the environment.

Policy I-3.1: Plan Revisions

Revisions to this Area Plan shall be approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Goal I-4: Fulfill the specific implementation actions identified at the end of each of the individual Area Plan chapters.

ATTACHMENT A

SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN FLEXIBLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following site development standards, allowed uses and permitting requirements may be incorporated into land use projects in the Soda Springs Area Plan.

New Construction Standards: To ensure attractive and compatible development, all new construction on vacant lots within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District shall consider, at minimum, the following site design standards.

1. Existing natural features outside of the building site shall be retained and incorporated into the site design to the greatest extent feasible. Projects shall be designed to avoid disturbance to rock outcrops and stream zones and to minimize vegetation removal and maintain the natural slope of the project site.
2. Roofs, including mechanical equipment and skylights, and other exterior materials should be constructed of non-glare finishes and earthtone colors that minimize reflectivity. Materials that blend with the site's natural surroundings (e.g., wood, stone or corten steel) are encouraged. Solar panels or other alternative energy equipment may be exempted from this standard if a project level assessment demonstrates that scenic conditions from public viewpoints will not be adversely impacted.
3. Commercial, industrial, mixed-use, public service, recreation and multi-residential projects shall provide, within the project area, snow storage areas of a size adequate to store snow removed from parking, driveway and pedestrian access areas or have arrangements by means of recorded easements or equivalent arrangements to remove and store accumulated snow offsite.
4. Native vegetation shall be utilized whenever possible, consistent with Fire Defensible Space Requirements. The use of native and adapted plant materials is recommended to minimize fertilizer and irrigation requirements; however, a temporary irrigation system may be used to assist in establishing a new landscape.
5. Viewsheds shall be considered in all new construction, with emphasis placed on preserving and enhancing mountain, forest and meadow public views from Donner Pass Rd. where feasible.
6. Building placement and design shall be compatible with adjacent properties and design in consideration of solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection, and privacy.
7. The following appliances and fixtures shall be installed in new facilities or when replaced in existing facilities: low-flow flush toilets; low-flow showerheads (3 gpm rated max. flow); faucet aerators; and water-efficient appliances (e.g., washing machine and dishwashers).

Community Development Standards: The Soda Springs design vision is for an attractive, well-designed and organized community which takes advantage of its outstanding natural setting. In order to be responsive to the unique circumstances of Soda Springs the following community development standards apply throughout the Area Plan.

1. Required permanent open space may be reduced for non-residential sites less than 1-acre in size if all required landscaping is provided onsite and if a residential unit is attached to a commercial space.
2. The development of gateway signage or features at the western and eastern entrances to Soda Springs along Donner Pass Rd. should complement the natural setting and history of Donner Summit.
3. The number of parking stalls required for a specific use may be modified if a Parking Study, submitted by a project applicant and prepared by a Registered Professional Engineer/Traffic Engineer, substantiates that the number of stalls needed for the proposed use is significantly different than required by the code.

A maximum 50 percent of required parking may be provided off-site within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District provided that the site accommodating the off-site parking has been approved for shared parking, or as an off-site parking lot.

4. Placement of metal shipping containers shall be subject to the following limitations:
 - a. Metal shipping containers shall not be allowed as a principal use in any zone.
 - b. Metal shipping containers shall be allowed in all zones within the Soda Springs Rural Center on a temporary basis when utilized during construction or grading operations for the site where located and when utilized solely for the storage of supplies and equipment that are used for construction or grading on that site.
 - c. In all zones placement of metal shipping containers is allowed as an accessory use subject to the following development standards:
 - i. The placement has been approved as part of an approved plot plan, development permit or conditional use permit.
 - ii. No more than one metal shipping container shall be permitted on any parcel.
 - iii. The container's setback from all property lines shall be a minimum of thirty feet.
 - iv. Preferred container placement shall be on a case-by-case basis but generally to the rear half of the property.
 - v. The metal shipping container shall be fully screened by an opaque fence or fast-growing landscaping.
 - vi. The metal shipping container shall be painted a non-reflective earthtone color.
5. Trash and garbage facilities shall be secure from bears and other wildlife.
6. Limited office uses, arts and crafts fabrication, and tutoring or classes, and similar commercial activities may be conducted within existing, legal non-conforming residences within any of the Commercial Districts, provided a Home Business Permit is obtained and that the business complies with all Home Business standards provided by Sec. L-II 3.11 of County Zoning Regulations.

7. Nevada County recognizes that the removal of snow and firewood operations, or similar, are essential community activities necessary for economic viability and public health and safety. To protect the character of neighborhoods, minimize the visibility and incompatibility from adjoining parcels and roadways, while allowing for the storage of snow removal and firewood equipment and materials, or similar, the following standards apply:

Residential Uses

- a. Snow removal equipment storage cannot be a primary use of a residential zoned property and must be incidental to a residential use already established onsite.
- b. Outdoor storage of snow removal equipment on a residential zoned property shall be accessory to the principal residential use of the property only and shall not be related to any off-site commercial business or activity, unless otherwise County approved through a Home Occupation Permit.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

- a. Activities that normally require extensive storage areas including, but not limited, to snow removal equipment and firewood operations are preferred in the M1 (Light Industrial) District, but may be approved as a primary land use in any Commercial Zone District within the Soda Springs Rural Center subject to the following conditions.

Zone District	Max. # of Outdoor Snow Removal Vehicles	Land Use Permit	Minimum Lot Area	Off-Street Parking Required
C1 (Neighborhood Commercial)	1	None*	10,000 sq. ft.	1 space per vehicle
	2 or more	Conditional Use Permit	None	1 space per vehicle
C2 (Community Commercial)	1	None*	10,000 sq. ft.	1 space per vehicle
	2 or more	Conditional Use Permit	None	1 space per vehicle
CH (Commercial Highway)	1	None*	10,000 sq. ft.	1 space per vehicle
	2 or more	Conditional Use Permit	None	1 space per vehicle
M1 (Light Industrial)	3	None*	None	1 space per vehicle
	4 or more	Conditional Use Permit	None	1 space per vehicle

* Note: Allowed subject to zoning compliance.

- b. In addition to the snow removal vehicle storage allowance above (e.g., snowplow is exempt from visible area calculation), where the principal use of a site is other than storage, and storage accessory to that use is also located on the site, the outside unscreened accessory storage area is subject to the limitations of this section.

Lot Size	Max. Total Area of Unscreened Accessory Commercial/Industrial Storage
<5,000	100 sq. ft.
5,000 sq. ft. to <10,000 sq. ft.	200 sq. ft.
10,000 sq. ft. to <15,000 sq. ft.	300 sq. ft.
15,000 sq. ft.<	400sq. ft.

- c. All outdoor commercial/industrial material storage areas in excess of those limits identified above shall be required to be screened with a solid fence, landscaping, structures or other visible barriers that substantially screen the storage area/yard from adjacent properties and from primary roadways.
- d. All such equipment and materials referenced above must be situated in a manner such that they meet the required structural setbacks for the zone district in which they are located.

Housing Density Standards: To promote the construction of a variety of high quality housing to promote live/work opportunities in close proximity to the Soda Springs commercial area the following residential density standard may be incorporated into projects within the Rural Center (RC) Zone Combining District.

1. Maximum residential density for mixed-use projects in the C1 and C2 base zoning district shall be six (6) units per acre.
2. The minimum density allowance for construction of multi-family structure(s) on parcels zoned R2-RC is two (2) units regardless of parcel size, subject to zoning compliance.

Agricultural Uses: To encourage agriculture and community gathering, and to promote non-winter local activity and economy, agricultural uses such as, but not limited to, Farm Stands and Growers' Markets, may be permitted within the Rural Center (RC) Zone Combining District, in accordance with the requirements and limitations set forth in as in Section L-II 3.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance.

Exceptions: If approved by the Planning Director, modifications or reductions to the above standards that are supported by a qualified professional(s) may be considered for any project that provides opportunities for public spaces, including a town plaza or town square.

ATTACHMENT B

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS LISTED BY ZONING DISTRICT

RI-SP (SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL-SITE PERFORMANCE)

47-040-01	47-070-05	47-071-13	47-090-05	47-410-07	47-440-10*
47-040-02*	47-070-06	47-071-14	47-090-06	47-410-08	47-440-11*
47-040-04	47-070-11	47-080-02	47-090-07	47-410-11	47-440-14
47-040-06	47-070-12	47-080-03	47-090-08	47-410-14	
47-040-08	47-070-15	47-080-04	47-090-09	47-410-15	
47-040-09	47-070-16	47-080-05	47-090-10	47-410-16	
47-040-10	47-070-17	47-080-06	47-090-11	47-410-17	
47-040-11	47-070-19	47-080-07	47-090-12	47-410-18	
47-040-12	47-070-20	47-080-08	47-090-13	47-410-19	
47-040-13	47-070-22	47-080-09	47-090-14	47-410-20	
47-040-14	47-070-23	47-080-10	47-090-15	47-410-21	
47-040-17	47-070-25	47-080-11	47-090-16	47-410-22	
47-051-01	47-070-26	47-080-12	47-090-17	47-410-23	
47-051-02	47-070-27	47-080-13	47-090-18	47-410-24	
47-052-01	47-070-28	47-080-14	47-090-19	47-410-25	
47-052-02	47-070-29	47-080-15	47-090-20	47-420-01	
47-052-03	47-070-30	47-080-16	47-090-21	47-420-02	
47-053-01	47-070-31	47-080-18	47-090-25	47-420-03	
47-053-03	47-070-32	47-080-20	47-090-26	47-420-04	
47-053-04	47-070-33	47-080-21	47-101-06	47-420-05	
47-053-05	47-070-34	47-080-23	47-101-07	47-420-06	
47-053-06	47-070-35	47-080-25	47-101-08	47-420-07	
47-053-07	47-070-36	47-080-26	47-101-09	47-420-08	
47-053-08	47-070-37	47-080-29	47-101-48	47-420-09	
47-053-09	47-070-38	47-080-30	47-390-01	47-420-10	
47-053-10	47-070-39	47-080-31	47-390-02	47-420-11	
47-053-11	47-071-01	47-080-36	47-390-04	47-420-12	
47-053-12	47-071-02	47-080-37	47-390-05	47-420-13	
47-053-13	47-071-03	47-080-38	47-390-06	47-420-14	
47-053-14	47-071-04	47-080-39	47-390-07	47-420-15	
47-060-02	47-071-05	47-080-40	47-390-08	47-420-16	
47-060-03	47-071-07	47-080-41	47-410-01	47-420-17	
47-060-04	47-071-08	47-080-42	47-410-02	47-420-18	
47-060-05	47-071-09	47-090-01	47-410-03	47-420-19	
47-070-01	47-071-10	47-090-02	47-410-04	47-420-20	
47-070-02	47-071-11	47-090-03	47-410-05	47-420-21	
47-070-03	47-071-12	47-090-04	47-410-06	47-420-22	

R2- RC (URBAN MEDIUM DENSITY-RURAL CENTER)

47-080-17	47-090-22	47-101-28	47-101-36
47-080-19	47-090-23	47-101-32	47-101-38
47-080-22	47-101-15	47-101-33	47-101-47
47-080-28	47-101-21	47-101-34	47-420-24
47-080-32	47-101-22	47-101-35	

R2-PD-RC (URBAN MEDIUM DENSITY-PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-RURAL CENTER)

47-080-34	47-380-05	47-380-10	47-380-15
47-380-01	47-380-06	47-380-11	47-380-16
47-380-02	47-380-07	47-380-12	47-380-17
47-380-03	47-380-08	47-380-13	47-380-18
47-380-04	47-380-09	47-380-14	

R3-RC (URBAN HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL-RURAL CENTER)

47-080-24
47-080-27

C1-RC (NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)

47-440-16	47-102-01	47-410-13
47-080-35	47-102-17	
47-101-10	47-102-18	
47-101-13	47-102-19	
47-101-37	47-410-12	

C2-RC (COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)

47-080-33	47-101-26	47-102-04	47-102-14	47-420-23
47-090-24	47-101-27	47-102-05	47-102-15	
47-101-17	47-101-41	47-102-16	47-102-21	
47-101-19	47-101-42	47-102-06	47-102-22	
47-101-25	47-102-03	47-102-13	47-380-19	

CH-RC (HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)

47-101-39
47-101-46
47-410-09

M1-RC (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL-RURAL CENTER)

47-101-11
47-101-12

REC-SP (RECREATION-SITE PERFORMANCE)

47-021-71*

47-440-15

47-440-17

47-440-18*

47-440-20*

FR-40-SP (FOREST 40 ACRE MIN.-SITE PERFORMANCE)

47-390-03

* Denotes zoning for that portion of the parcel within the Soda Springs Area Plan

ATTACHMENT C

AREA PLAN REFERENCES

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