



## **Westwood / Clear Creek Area Plan**

**November, 2002**

**Prepared for the  
Lassen County Planning Commission  
and the  
Lassen County Board of Supervisors**

**Prepared by the  
Lassen County Department of Community Development  
Robert K. Sorvaag, Director**

**and**

**Merle Anderson, AICP**

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-082**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN.**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lassen, as follows:

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65300, et seq. and related provisions of California law, require that each planning agency prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city; and

WHEREAS, the California Supreme Court has ruled that the general plan is the “constitution for all future developments” in cities and counties; and

WHEREAS, the County of Lassen adopted a Westwood Plan 1968 with the intention that that General Plan would serve the County until 1990; and

WHEREAS, California law maintains that local agencies must periodically review and revise their general plans as circumstances warrant; and

WHEREAS, Since 1999 the County of Lassen has dedicated itself in the endeavor to revise its Westwood Plan to meet the present requirements of state law and to reformat and reenforce the policies of the General Plan - 2000; and

WHEREAS, The County contracted the services of Merle Anderson, AICP, for the preparation of a preliminary draft of a revised Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Lassen County Planning Commission reviewed the Preliminary Draft Area Plan and held three (3) public workshops and received comments regarding this draft and, following this review, made recommendations to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors regarding the form and content of the Draft Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2001, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors received the Planning Commission’s recommendations in review of the preliminary draft and public comments thereon and directed staff to begin the process of preparing a Draft Area Plan and a project Environmental Impact Report (EIR); and

WHEREAS, The County contracted the services of Merle Anderson, AICP, for the preparation of a Draft Area Plan based on the Preliminary Draft Area Plan and the directions of the Board of Supervisors following review of said Preliminary Draft; and

WHEREAS, The firm of Pacific Municipal Consultants was contracted to assist the County in preparation of a Draft EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and

WHEREAS, The directions of the Board of Supervisors concerning modification of the Preliminary Draft Area Plan, including the approved recommendations of the Planning Commission, were used to prepare a Draft Area Plan dated November, 2002; and

WHEREAS, A Draft EIR dated April 2002 was prepared to assist the County in review of the Draft Area Plan and potential environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, Said Draft Area Plan revision and Draft EIR were circulated for public review; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission held a public hearing and workshops to review and consider public comments and comments of various agencies and organizations which were submitted in consideration of the Draft Area Plan and Draft EIR; and

WHEREAS, Following evaluation of the Draft Area Plan and Draft EIR and review of submitted comments, the Commission developed a list of recommended revisions which it determined should be incorporated into or otherwise made to the draft and this list of recommendations was presented to the Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, On September 24, 2002, this Board held a public hearing and considered the recommendations of the Planning Commission and received additional public comment on the proposed revision of the Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, On September 24, 2002, this Board closed the public hearing and provided direction to staff for: completion of the proposed Area Plan revision as represented by the Draft Area Plan and further modifications as were recommended by the Planning Commission and/or which were proposed by this Board; completion of the Final EIR pursuant to CEQA; and preparation of related findings; and

WHEREAS, This Board has certified that the Final EIR for the proposed project has been completed in compliance with CEQA and that the Final EIR was presented to this Board as the lead agency for the proposed project and that this Board has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the project; and

WHEREAS, this Board has adopted related findings pursuant to CEQA, including CEQA Guidelines Section 15091, in consideration of potential significant environmental effects which may result from approval of the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, this Board has considered the benefits of the project against its unavoidable environmental risks and has made findings of overriding considerations finding that the remaining significant and unavoidable impacts of the Area Plan are acceptable in light of the economic, fiscal, social, environmental, land-use and other considerations set forth therein because the benefits of the Area Plan outweigh such significant and unavoidable or irreversible adverse environmental impacts of the Project; and

WHEREAS, This Board has been presented with a revised draft of the Area Plan, now entitled *Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan* dated November, 2002, and said revision incorporates the changes which were approved and directed to be made to the draft pursuant to the directions of this Board given on September 24, 2002.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LASSEN AS FOLLOWS:

1. This Board hereby approves amendment of the Lassen County General Plan as constituted in the document entitled *Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*, dated November, 2002.
2. It is the initial intent of the County upon adoption of this General Plan Amendment that it shall serve as the fundamental plan for the Westwood and Clear Creek areas of Lassen County until the year 2020, subject to periodic amendments and supplementation which may be warranted in the judgement of the Board of Supervisors.

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lassen, State of California, held on the 26th of November, 2002, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Dahle, Pyle, Chapman, Keefer, McCain  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

Brian Valle  
Chairman, Lassen County Board  
of Supervisors

ATTEST: Theresa Nagel  
County Clerk

I, THERESA NAGEL, County Clerk of the County of Lassen, State of California, and ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors thereof, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by said Board of Supervisors at a regular meeting held on Nov. 26, 2002.

Theresa Nagel  
Theresa Nagel, Lassen County Clerk,  
ex-officio Clerk to the Board of  
Supervisors.

# WESTWOOD / CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN

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# WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN

## PREFACE

The Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan has been adopted by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors as an amendment to and component of the Lassen County General Plan. This area plan replaces the Westwood Plan that was adopted in 1968.

The *Master Environmental Assessment for the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area*, dated December 1999, was prepared by the Lassen County Department of Community Development to facilitate formulation of the area plan and preparation of the environmental impact report that would be required for adoption of the plan.

A preliminary draft of the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan was completed in October 2000. The preliminary draft was circulated for review by the public and the Planning Commission over the following months. The Planning Commission completed its review of the preliminary draft and related public comments in June 2001 and forwarded its recommendations for proposed revisions to the Board of Supervisors. On June 26, 2001, the Board reviewed the Planning Commission's recommendations and directed staff to proceed with preparation of the draft area plan by incorporating and responding to the Commission's recommendations.

Revision of the Preliminary Draft Area Plan (including extraction of the Dyer Mountain area from the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area pursuant to passage of Measure V in November 2000), resulted in the Draft Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan, dated January 2002. A draft environmental impact report (EIR) was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to review the potential environmental impacts that could result from adoption of the area plan.

The Planning Commission opened its public hearing in review of the draft area plan and draft EIR on March 6, 2002. On September 4, 2002, the Commission adopted a resolution that incorporated its final recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for completion of the area plan.

The Board of Supervisors held its public hearing in review of the draft area plan and draft EIR on September 24, 2002. Following consideration of the draft EIR, the Planning Commission's recommendations and public comment, the Board closed the public hearing and directed staff to complete the area plan and EIR and bring the final documents back to the Board with the appropriate resolutions for adoption.

**WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN  
AREA PLAN PROCESS**

*The following outline describes the general process that was used by Lassen County to prepare and adopt the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan:*

1. Prepared a Preliminary Draft Area Plan.
2. Printed copies for public review and circulated.
3. Public review of the Preliminary Draft.

Planning Commission held public review workshops and prepared recommendations for the Board of Supervisors. Also conducted scoping for potential environmental impacts to be addressed in the environmental impact report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Board of Supervisors reviewed comments and provided directions to proceed.

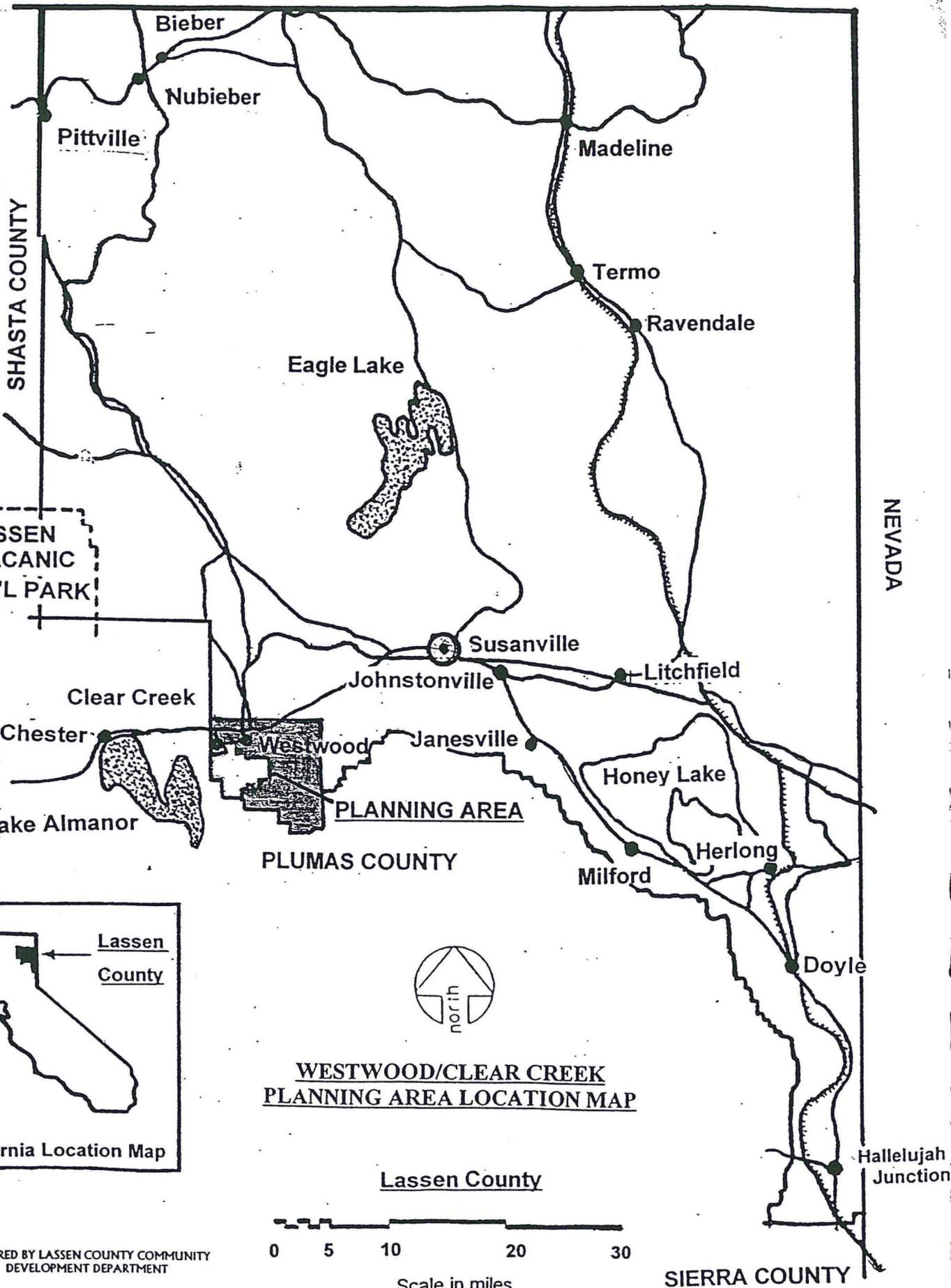
4. Prepared a Draft Area Plan.
5. Prepared a Draft EIR based on the Draft Plan.
6. Printed copies for public review and circulated.
7. Public review of the Draft Plan and EIR.

Planning Commission held a public hearing and prepared recommendations for the Board of Supervisors.

Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and provided directions to complete the final documents.

8. Completed the Final EIR with responses to comments on the Draft EIR.
9. Completed the Final Plan and CEQA findings.
10. The Board of Supervisors certified completion of the Final EIR and adopted the Area Plan.

MODOC COUNTY



NEVADA

LASSEN VOLCANIC NAT'L PARK

SHASTA COUNTY

PLUMAS COUNTY

SIERRA COUNTY



Lassen County



WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK PLANNING AREA LOCATION MAP

Lassen County



Scale in miles

PREPARED BY LASSEN COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FIGURE 1

# WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

The Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan is an essential part of the Lassen County General Plan as it applies to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area. This relationship is discussed in more detail below. However, it should be stated for clarification that all applicable provisions of the General Plan (i.e., goals, policies, implementation measures) apply to the planning area except to the extent that those provisions are more specifically addressed, modified and applied to the planning area in the area plan. The area plan also has minimal duplication of material from the County General Plan with the exception of quoting policies and other provisions of the General Plan that are especially relevant to particular issues being addressed in the area plan. Although the area plan may quote or refer to specific goals, etc., of the General Plan to emphasize or clarify various points, the area plan does not reiterate all of the provisions of the General Plan that relate to the planning area. It should not be presumed, however, that because certain general plan provisions are not referenced in the area plan that those provisions do not also apply to the planning area.

The County intended that the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan would be a relatively concise and focused planning document. This area plan relies upon the Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) that was prepared for the planning area by the County Department of Community Development for background information. This area plan includes little reiteration of material from that MEA.

### 1. PLANNING AREA SETTING AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The Westwood/Clear Creek planning area is located in the southwest corner of Lassen County. The unincorporated town of Westwood is approximately 21 miles southwest of Susanville via State Highway 36. The unincorporated community of Clear Creek is located about two miles west of Westwood between Westwood and Lake Almanor.

The planning area is surrounded by some of the most northerly peaks of the Sierra Nevada range and the southern edge of the Cascade range. Dyer Mountain rises immediately south of the communities of Westwood and Clear Creek to an elevation of 7,475 feet. The town of Westwood lies at an elevation of around 5,100 feet and Clear Creek at 4,960 feet. The 1968 Westwood Plan described the climate as “rigorous” in winter with occasional below-zero temperatures and snow packs from twelve inches to over six feet between December and March. Summer months are pleasant with warm days (average maximum temperatures around 85 degrees) and cool nights.

## *Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*

### *Introduction*

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Timber stands in the area consist of mixed conifer forests including white fir and ponderosa pine. A distinctive feature of the planning area is the broad valley and meadows known as "Mountain Meadows" around Walker Lake (which is also often referred to as Mountain Meadows Reservoir) to the south and southeast of Westwood. Walker Lake is located on Hamilton Branch, a tributary in the Feather River watershed.

The community of Westwood was founded by The Red River Lumber Company in 1912. Westwood was developed as a true mill town owned and operated by "Red River", which acquired more than three-quarters of a million acres of company-owned timberland in Lassen County and neighboring counties in northeastern California. A small mill was first built and, as the big mill was being developed, housing, schools, churches, shops and community facilities were constructed. Common housing was built according to several basic house plans. There were also a few custom executive mansions. Approximately 650 houses were eventually built to begin the community of Westwood. The houses were generally left unpainted with natural wood siding. A water and sewer system was installed and every house had indoor plumbing. Housing for single men was provided in large dormitory buildings.

The railroad was extended to Westwood in 1914. By 1915 the mill had reached full production with 1,400 men on the payroll. By 1924, total employment exceeded 3,000 at what has been described as "the largest mill in the world" at that time. Indian Ole Dam and Mountain Meadows Reservoir were constructed on Hamilton Branch in 1921 and have been owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company since 1945.

The Depression and the decade of the 1930's brought a number of financial problems and labor disputes to The Red River Lumber Company operation in Westwood. Much of the best timber on Red River land had been heavily logged and the large mill could not be operated efficiently at reduced volumes. The Red River Lumber Company sold the Westwood mill to Fruit Growers Supply Company in 1944. Production continued to decline and in 1955 Fruit Growers decided to close the mill.

It has been reported that the 1950 census indicated a population of 3,618 in Westwood but that by 1956 only 200 men were on the mill's payroll. In the decade following 1950, Westwood lost over half its population. The 1968 Westwood Plan reported that six thousand people lived in Westwood when the mill was at its peak but that, after the mill closed, the population declined to a low of 1,209 persons in 1960.

Most of the Westwood mill burned to the ground in November 1956. Many of the original commercial buildings on the east side of town were also lost to fire at that time.

Individual parcels in Westwood were eventually auctioned off, many of them through a company called Greater Westwood, Inc., of Los Angeles. The water system serving Westwood and Pinetown

## ***Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan***

### ***Introduction***

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and the sewer system serving Westwood were operated by the Northern Counties Utilities Company until a community services district was formed and assumed management of these systems.

The small community of Clear Creek, located beside State Route 147 along a spring-fed stream with a large pond, has a quiet village character that many would describe as “quaint”. This area is reported to have had a fish hatchery and campground as early as the late 1870's. In 1947 The Red River Lumber Company filed a subdivision map for the Clear Creek Subdivision to establish the community of Clear Creek. Nearly all of Clear Creek was developed for residential use. The 1968 Westwood Plan reported that approximately 250 lots had been subdivided with commercial uses on only seven lots along the highway. This land use pattern has not changed significantly since 1968.

Clear Creek has its own community service district. Water is supplied from a spring located north of the community. All lots in Clear Creek are served by individual septic tank systems.

The 1990 Census reported that 2,279 people lived in the area which Lassen County is addressing as the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area.

## **2. RELATION OF THE AREA PLAN TO THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

The Lassen County General Plan reflects the concerns and efforts of the County of Lassen as the local governmental entity having jurisdictional authority and responsibility for planning and development decisions in the unincorporated area of the county. It is intended to efficiently and equitably address a wide range of development issues that confront residents, property owners, and business operators in Lassen County. Many of these issues also challenge organizations and agencies concerned with the management of land and resources and the provision of community services.

The Lassen County General Plan constitutes Lassen County's comprehensive plan for the development of the county. It was adopted by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors to address the requirements of California Government Code Section 65300 et seq, and related provisions of California law pertaining to general plans.

Lassen County adopted its first comprehensive General Plan in 1968. In 1999, the County completed and adopted a major revision of the 1968 General Plan. This general plan revision is often referred to as the “General Plan-2000”. An important objective in the revised General Plan was the need to more clearly and comprehensively reference and incorporate area plans and the area plan process into the overall general plan process and format. It was not the intent of the County to amend any of the area plans in the process of revising the overall Land Use Element or any of the other elements of the General Plan. Rather, the Land Use Element clarified that area plans are and will continue to be vital and effective elements of the County's General Plan.

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*Introduction*

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The 1968 General Plan included detailed planning policies for the areas of Westwood and Eagle Lake. These "area plans" were the prototypes of the County's use of area plans to address planning issues in defined planning areas. Additional area plans have been adopted and are recognized by Lassen County as amendments of the General Plan relating not only to the Land Use Element but to other general plan elements as well. They contain the maps and land use designations that apply to lands within each identified planning area. These area plans also contain policies and planning provisions concerning management of natural resources and other community concerns.

The Land Use Element of the Lassen County General Plan-2000 contains the following goals, policies and implementation measures pertaining directly to area plans:

GOAL L-2: Recognition and clarification of the applicability of area plans as operative components of the General Plan and clarification of their relationship to the General Plan Land Use Element. (The term "area plan" in this context includes "resource plans" such as the *Hayden Hill Resource Plan*.)

LU-2 POLICY: Adopted area plans contain general plan policies which apply, as relevant, to lands within particular planning areas. Because of the greater level of detail achieved in area plans, their land use designations, policies and related provisions are more specific than set forth in the Land Use Element and other elements of the General Plan. Wherever a goal, objective, policy, land use designation, and/or implementation measure of an area plan may be more specific or detailed than a corresponding provision of the General Plan, including any within the Land Use Element, such a provision of the area plan shall be deemed to be a refinement of the General Plan pertaining to the particular planning area.

LU-3 POLICY: In the event that area plans are adopted as general plan amendments for areas of the County which are not indicated in this Element as having an adopted area plan, the newly adopted area plan will void and supersede those land use designations of this Land Use Element which are overlapped by the area plan with more specific designations and policies.

Implementation Measures:

LU-D The County recognizes and shall continue to implement relevant policies of adopted area plans in making land use decisions regarding lands within specific planning areas.

LU-E The County will consider the need for recognition of new planning areas and the adoption of new area plans and resource plans for areas where the complexity and controversy of land use issues may necessitate the adoption

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of land use designations and policies of greater detail than provided in this Land Use Element.

### **3. GENERAL PLAN TERMINOLOGY**

A short explanation from the County General Plan may be helpful in understanding the terms "goals", "policies", and "implementation measures" as used in this area plan.

“Goals” establish the overall direction for addressing a particular issue. They are intended to be expressed as ideal future results or conditions for which policies will be proposed. According to the *California General Plan Guidelines*, a "goal" is a general expression of community values and is therefore abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable, time-dependent or suggestive of specific actions for its achievement. Examples of goal statements are, "A diversified economic base", or, "Quiet residential streets".

A “policy”, in general plan terminology, is a specific statement that guides decision making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body.

Regarding “implementation measures”, the *General Plan Guidelines* state:

A community's commitment to its adopted goals, objectives and policies can be determined by the manner in which they are implemented. The selection of implementation measures should be considered throughout the general plan preparation process. Not only must these measures follow logically from adopted policies, they should also be attainable by the local government.

The implementation measures included in the General Plan and in this area plan are proposed as initial actions which could help achieve the goals and support the policies of the County’s plans. These measures are not, however, intended to be exclusive. Future projects, programs and general opportunities will arise which may also be helpful in the attainment of particular goals. The fact that certain implementation measures may not have been anticipated and specified in this plan does not constrain the County from taking or supporting additional measures when appropriate and necessary, provided that such actions are consistent with the policies of the General Plan and this area plan.

To differentiate from introductory material as well as commentary and background narrative, the goals, policies and implementation measures of this area plan are, as in the General Plan, presented in "Arial" font. Policies are denoted with the initials of the element (e.g., LU for Land Use) and are numbered consecutively within the particular plan element. Implementation measures are denoted with the element's initials and with consecutive letters within each element.

However, to avoid confusion between provisions (i.e., goals, policies and implementation measures)

*Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*  
*Introduction*

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of the County General Plan that are quoted in this area plan with provisions of the area plan itself, general plan provisions when quoted for background or reference purposes in this area plan are not printed in “Arial” font but rather are printed in “Times New Roman” font as is other commentary and background information.

It should also be noted that an extensive glossary was included in the Lassen County General Plan to define and explain many terms that are used in the County’s planning program. Although not reproduced in the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan, that glossary will be helpful in understanding certain planning terms and concepts used in the area plan and in the interpretation of policies and other provisions of the General Plan and this area plan.

**4. FORMAT OF THE AREA PLAN**

The Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan indicates how land and community resources can be used to accommodate the needs of local residents and visitors to the area. There is a close relationship among all elements of the area plan as well as between the area plan and the County General Plan. Each depends on and influences the others. Although elements and different components of these plans may be addressed separately, these interrelationships must be kept in mind. The elements of the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan are described below:

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element indicates the proposed extent, distribution and location of land for residential, commercial, recreation and other categories of private and public land use. Although the 1968 Westwood Plan had a separate “public facilities element”, the revised plan has incorporated public facilities into the land use element.

A major component of a land use element consists of the land use designations which are used to describe categories of land uses and the general distribution, location and extent of those uses. These designations are indicated on land use maps which are part of the element and which indicate the geographic distribution of designated land uses. Three land use maps are incorporated in this element; one for the planning area in general and one each as detailed land use maps for the communities of Westwood and Clear Creek.

Natural Resources and Open Space Element

This area plan addresses conservation and related natural resource issues including open space in a combined Natural Resources and Open Space Element. Open space in this context includes open space for the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation and public health and safety. As applied to the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area, this element includes and serves as both the “conservation element” and “open space element” components of the

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area plan.

Circulation Element

The circulation element identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other major public utilities and facilities. It serves as a plan for infrastructure and is correlated with the land use element. A circulation map is included as part of this element.

Community Character Element

Several issues relating to the unique character and community values of Clear Creek and Westwood, as well as other general community concerns, are addressed in the Community Character Element. These issues include: a discussion of the Westwood Community Action Plan; scenic resources and design standards; and provisions regarding the area's Night Sky. Conceptual design guidelines are discussed for both Westwood and Clear Creek to help formulate community guidelines, but actual guidelines will be considered for adoption as a separate document from the area plan.

The Community Character Element also includes a discussion of ways in which important cultural resources in the planning area will be identified and protected.

## WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

As explained in the Lassen County General Plan-2000, the land use element designates the proposed general distribution and intensity of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, natural resources, public facilities, and other categories of public and private uses. The land use element correlates land use issues into a set of coherent development policies and serves as the central framework for the entire general plan or, as addressed here, for an area plan.

An important objective for this revision of the 1968 Westwood Plan is to clarify and, where warranted, expand upon the County's land use policies as they apply to the planning area. In addition to the need to comply with provisions of state law, a revision of a land use element is an excellent opportunity to address and formulate goals and policies to resolve local development and land use issues.

The 1968 Westwood Plan included the following introductory statement which will continue to apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan:

The Plan indicates in general terms a desirable growth pattern for the Westwood Area, recognizing the scenic beauty and recreational potential of the area and facing the realistic prospects for economic and population growth. The Plan should not be considered a precise document, complete and final in all its details. This is not its purpose. It is not possible or indeed desirable to make rigid plans for an area of multiple ownerships over a period of twenty years. This Plan should be used as a guide to general policies and locations for physical development.

### 1. GENERAL LAND USE

GOAL L-1: Compatibility between land use types in the planning area by providing for efficient and complimentary patterns and mixtures of land uses.

POLICY LU-1: A land use map for the planning area with detailed land use maps for communities of Westwood and Clear Creek and the immediate vicinity of those communities are included in this area plan to indicate the land use designations of this land use element.

POLICY LU-2: The land use designations provided in this area plan shall, when

*Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*  
*Land Use Element*

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adopted by the County Board of Supervisors, void and supersede all land use designations previously adopted by the County for lands within the boundaries of the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.

POLICY LU-3: Descriptions of the land use designations used in the land use maps of this area plan, and descriptions of the related prescribed density and intensity of uses within those designations, are included in Section Three of the Lassen County General Plan Land Use Element.

POLICY LU-4: The County will develop and utilize zoning ordinance regulations that accurately reflect and support the policies of this area plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-A: The County shall utilize the zoning provisions of the Lassen County Code to establish and enforce zoning districts which correspond to the land use designations of this area plan and to consider the approval of related use permits, land divisions and development proposals for consistency with the policies, land uses and programs specified in this area plan land use element.

MEASURE LU-B: The County will review and amend relevant zoning ordinances to effectively implement the land use policies set forth in this area plan.

**Background:**

The land use maps in this area plan indicate the land use designations for Westwood and Clear Creek and the areas surrounding these communities. These maps replace the map and land use designations of the 1968 Westwood Plan as well as any general plan amendments since 1968 that indicated land use designations within the planning area.

Although Westwood and Clear Creek are not large communities, they have an interesting and sometimes complex blend of land use types and patterns. The land use maps in this areas plan are much more detailed than the 1968 Westwood Plan map which provided much of its direction for land use in these communities with their designations as “Town Centers”. Westwood and Clear Creek will continue to be regarded as Town Centers, but the new land use maps provide more specific designations for land uses in these communities. (Please note that at the end of the Land Use Element is a special section for land use issues in and around Clear Creek.)

**2. NEW DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL L-2: New development compliments and builds upon the positive characteristics of

*Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*  
*Land Use Element*

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the community and does not cause significant adverse impacts to local natural and community resources.

POLICY LU-5: New development should not have significant adverse impacts on important wildlife habitat.

POLICY LU-6: Residential development and other urban-type development must be located within a community service district or special district that will provide, at a minimum, structural fire protection.

POLICY LU-7: New development that requires the installation of new septic tanks in the planning area shall be minimized. Such systems should only be considered for occasional special use when, due to necessary site selection, the use can not be connected to a community sewage system. (This policy does not apply to the replacement of existing septic systems when a new system will improve system performance.)

POLICY LU-8: Tree cutting within communities for the purpose of clearing land for development should be minimized, compatible with the setting, and limited to areas needed for structures, installation and operation of facilities, safety, fire protection, and visual enhancement. (This policy does not apply to clearing for agricultural uses including approved logging and timber thinning operations.)

POLICY LU-9: The County encourages the undergrounding of utilities in the planning area, especially for new construction.

POLICY LU-10: The land use designation of “urban reserve” is used as an overlay designation to indicate areas where urban-type uses may be considered in the future.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-C: The County will require developers of proposed new projects, especially projects that propose to develop large areas of land, to evaluate and map areas of notable natural resource value on and near the development site and to incorporate provisions into their development plans that will protect and/or mitigate significant adverse impacts to those resources (e.g. utilize “conservation subdivision” design procedures or similar planning methodology).

MEASURE LU-D: The County shall continue to utilize the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, when applicable, to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed changes in land uses and require appropriate mitigation measures when

*Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*  
*Land Use Element*

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needed.

MEASURE LU-E: The County will develop a program to encourage and support the undergrounding of power lines and other utility lines.

Background:

It should be noted that the Lassen County General Plan already contains the following land use goal and policies which, as for the whole county, apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area:

GOAL L-5: Orderly, contiguous growth and appropriate land-conserving densities as an alternative to sprawl and "leap-frog" development.

LU-8 POLICY: Future residential development should consist of the expansion of, or be located adjacent to, existing communities, designated residential centers, and established residential areas. An increasing number of small, isolated housing tracts in outlying areas shall be discouraged since they are difficult to provide with urban services and they tend to disrupt the surrounding rural and productive activity of ranches, forests and farms.

LU-9 POLICY: County zoning and subdivision regulations shall protect agricultural and open space lands, including grazing lands and wildlife habitat, by not allowing land divisions intended for residential use to be developed in areas which are not specifically designated in the General Plan or an area plan for community development land use (e.g., rural residential or agricultural residential) and zoned accordingly.

The Urban Reserve designation is used as an overlay designation to indicate areas where the development of urban-type uses will be directed in the future. Interim land use designations (e.g., Extensive Agriculture) are used as underlying designations for these areas and will apply until a new, more specific land use designation is adopted to confirm the appropriate types of land uses which may be developed in that urban reserve area.

The glossary of the Lassen County General Plan defines a "conservation subdivision" as a form of land division that encourages clustering of development in order to protect and conserve identified areas having significant natural resource values. As described in the booklet *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Codes* (Natural Lands Trust, 1997), the conservation subdivision planning process includes preliminary steps where the developer performs a site analysis to locate features to be conserved including "primary conservation areas" consisting of areas with substantial building constraints (e.g., wetlands, floodprone or steep areas, etc.), and "secondary conservation areas" containing noteworthy natural or cultural features such as stream corridors, important wildlife habitat and travel corridors, attractive trees and woodland stands, scenic viewsheds, etc. These conservation areas are eventually "greenlined" and the remaining area of the site becomes the

“potential development area”.

The number of houses or the size of other forms of development allowed on the recognized development area is a function of the density permitted within the zoning district or as may be specified in other development agreements. The conservation areas are considered for protection and management under an appropriate mechanism depending on the circumstances, but typically permanent conservation easements are utilized. Such a planning process is an excellent means of addressing the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act in terms of avoiding and mitigating significant environmental impacts.

### **3. NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY**

GOAL L-3: Neighborhoods which offer safe and pleasant living environments for residents of the planning area.

POLICY LU-11: The County supports the need to maintain safe and pleasant living environments and, in consideration of related land use decisions, shall require mitigation of impacts which significantly threaten such qualities.

IMPLEMENTATION:

MEASURE LU-F: In the course of reviewing development proposals, the County will consider how proposed development will relate to and affect the quality of neighborhoods in the vicinity and will consider mitigation measures, conditions of approval, and other means to protect the safety and quality of life in those neighborhoods.

### **4. WESTWOOD CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA AND NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE AREA**

#### **Westwood Central Business Area**

GOAL L-4: A thriving and pedestrian-friendly central business area in Westwood with an interesting and complimentary blend of commercial, service and community activities.

POLICY LU-12: The area plan designates a special central business area in Westwood that is primarily commercial in character but which also accommodates community and institutional services.

POLICY LU-13: The County supports special planning efforts and projects to encourage revitalization and enhancement of the Westwood central business area.

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**IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE LU-G:** Parcels in the central business area will be zoned with a modified C-G, General Commercial District, to support uses and development standards that are compatible with the character of this area. Current zoning district regulations will be modified with new provisions to address particular land use and development issues in this area.

**MEASURE LU-H:** The County will seek funding resources to help encourage and plan revitalization and enhancement projects for the central business area.

(Note: Refer to the Community Character Element below for additional provisions pertaining to the character of the Westwood Central Business Area, the Westwood Revitalization Plan and related design issues.)

**Westwood Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area**

**GOAL L-5:** A pleasant and renovated town center in Westwood around the central business area where residential, commercial and community uses are compatible and complimentary in a neighborhood environment.

**POLICY LU-14:** The area plan designates a “Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area” around the central business area of Westwood as an area that allows limited light commercial uses intermingled with residential uses, churches and other community services.

**POLICY LU-15:** The County supports special planning efforts and projects to encourage renovation and redevelopment within the Westwood town center and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE LU-I:** The County will develop and establish a special zoning district or districts for the Westwood Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area that will provide for the development and operation of limited commercial and community service uses with standards that support the compatibility of such uses in relation to residential neighborhoods and other sensitive land uses.

**MEASURE LU-J:** The County will seek funding resources to help plan and support enhancement of and, where necessary, redevelopment within the town center and the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area.

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Background:

Westwood has a fairly definable town center within the general layout of the community. This area consists of commercial and community service uses mixed with residential and a variety of other uses (e.g., churches). Furthermore, within this town center is an area that can further be described and addressed as the “central business area”. This area is the historic commercial core of the town center although service, institutional and other uses coexist with retail and other businesses. Both the central business area and the town center around it, which is addressed here as the “Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area”, have special characteristics, needs and opportunities that warrant consideration in this area plan.

*Planning for Prosperity: Building Successful Communities in the Sierra Nevada*, published by the Sierra Business Council (1997), provides the following comments about the value of continued reinvestment in existing town centers:

History has taught us that the most successful towns and cities are those that maintain and enhance their centers through thoughtful, ongoing public and private reinvestment. In addition to reducing public and private costs through more efficient use of existing infrastructure, reinvestment in town cores raises property values throughout the community by increasing the economic and social vitality of the town.

Westwood Central Business Area

The area plan identifies an area in Westwood within the town center as the “Central Business Area”. This area is defined from the rest of the town center because there is need for special development standards and policies to support and enhance the compact character and vitality of this business area.

The 1968 Westwood Plan proposed that Westwood’s commercial town center be consolidated on Birch and Ash between Third and Fourth Streets to serve as the shopping and business center of town. This town center was intended to cluster commercial development in this area and provide a compact shopping, business and service center and a focus for social, cultural and governmental activity. In the 1968 plan, further commercial expansion of this area was recommended where most of the town’s retail establishments and many of its services were already located. It was encouraged that Westwood focus on expanding and enhancing its established commercial area for maximum benefits to both customers and merchants by creating a compact, interesting town center that will be increasingly important to residents and vacationing visitors alike.

The revised area plan continues to support the concept of a thriving, pedestrian-friendly business center in Westwood which will provide a compact shopping, business and service center and a focus for social and governmental services. The area plan also supports proposals that the character of this

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area should reflect the historic mill town atmosphere of Westwood while encouraging new development and invigorated commercial activity within the changing climate of the area's economic environment.

In the year 2001, the Lassen County Department of Community Development proposed preparation of a "Downtown Revitalization Plan" in cooperation with the Westwood Area Chamber of Commerce. A Community Development Block Grant was obtained to fund the project. An objective of the revitalization plan was to evaluate and recommend ways by which the central business area of Westwood can be enhanced to bolster the economic and social vitality of this area. Findings and recommendations from the revitalization plan are discussed in the Community Character Element of this area plan.

Westwood Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area

The area plan designates a special area within the community of Westwood which is identified as the "Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area". This area largely encircles the central business area described above on that business area's south, west and north sides. Land use in this mixed-use area is predominately residential but also includes combinations of commercial, service, cultural and other uses. This area also includes a number of parcels that are now vacant or occupied with old houses and structures that are badly dilapidated. Much of the area may, in fact, meet the definition of the term "blighted" as used to describe areas in need of substantial structural and economic redevelopment.

Recognizing that this area already has a considerable mixture of land uses as well as many structures and parcels in need of substantial rehabilitation, the area plan proposes that parcels in this area be given opportunities for renovation and more productive combinations of uses than would otherwise be possible in a strictly "residential" district. There is potential for additional commercial development within this mixed-use area of the town center in much the same manner that commercial uses have development in Westwood. The revised area plan proposes that this area be considered as a special "opportunity" area for mixed-uses including a blend of light commercial and service uses compatible with continued residential use. One of the reasons, in fact, for expanding the town center in this manner is that commercial development may be one of the most effective tools to support redevelopment of some lots currently occupied by dilapidated buildings or lots where all buildings have been demolished. It is intended that encouraging and allowing a mixture of land uses including new commercial activity will provide a catalyst to support redevelopment of this area.

One reason to allow an extension of commercial uses along the east side of Ash Street (an area that has been zoned for limited multiple-family residential use) is to acknowledge that commercial uses are appropriate and preferred in this busy traffic area that includes Ash Street and the railroad. Continued residential use in this area will be allowed, but a transition to commercial use will also be permitted and encouraged.

Residential uses, including the renovation of existing housing, will continue to be supported in the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area. It is important that the County regulate the development of commercial and other non-residential uses to support the compatibility of all uses in this area. For example, it is important that parking spaces needed for commercial uses not significantly interfere with residential lots. The development of small parking lots may be needed to accommodate the future need for off-street parking.

## **5. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL L-6: An adequate amount of housing and diversified residential opportunities, including affordable housing, which are located with consideration to the availability of support services and infrastructure, avoidance of conflicting land uses, and the minimization of development impacts.

GOAL L-7: Accommodate modest population growth by filling in existing vacant lots and adding to existing communities.

GOAL L-8: Locate multi-family dwellings and mobile home parks at appropriate sites as needed.

POLICY LU-16: The area plan land use maps provide specific residential land use designations for areas in which residential uses of various types and densities should be developed.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-K: The County will refer to the Lassen County Housing Element for applicable policies pertaining to the development of housing in the planning area.

MEASURE LU-L: The County will continue to utilize building and development codes to regulate new residential development projects.

### **Background:**

The area plan favors in-fill of vacant lots and rehabilitation or replacement of old homes as the primary development pattern for residential development in Westwood. The area plan also indicates areas for possible expansion of residential uses adjacent to Westwood and Clear Creek in accord with the principles of planned unit development and clustering rather than random dispersion of homes. In an area of great scenic beauty and relative openness, haphazard groups of houses spread over the countryside can rapidly destroy scenic values. Several types of housing are appropriate for local communities in the planning area. These types are discussed below:

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Town Residence: First priority for residential development in the planning area should be given to the in-fill and enhancement of the existing town pattern. The typical pattern of residential development in historic Westwood consists of small lots arranged in a regular street grid. This is designated and referred to in the revised area plan as “Urban Residential, Low Density” development. The area plan supports the maintenance of this pattern in previously subdivided areas of Westwood and Clear Creek. Vacant lots should be redeveloped. Rehabilitation of sound old structures and replacement of dilapidated houses should be encouraged and supported. This will provide historic continuity to a pleasant small town environment.

Multi-family Residential: Limited land in the planning area should be devoted to well-planned, aesthetic multi-family housing. As a land use designation, this is addressed as “Urban Residential, High Density” land use in the revised area plan. This type of housing will be appropriate for some retired persons and new families. Housing types could include duplex units, garden apartments, condominiums and townhouses. The location of multi-family units needs to consider proximity to shopping and services to reduce automobile traffic and long pedestrian and bicycle distances and street crossings. It also needs to respect the historic character of existing single-family housing districts.

Mobile Home Parks: California Government Code Section 65852.7 states that mobilehome parks, as defined in Section 18214 of the Health and Safety Code, shall be deemed a permitted land use on all land planned and zoned for residential land use as designated by the applicable general plan; provided, however, that a use permit may be required. Mobilehome parks may, in this context, be proposed as “mobilehome planned unit developments”. However, there needs to be a careful distinction between mobilehome parks for long-term residential use and the short-term, transient usage of recreation vehicle and trailer parks. Whereas a mobilehome park is a residential land use, RV/trailer parks are and need to be considered as commercial campgrounds.

Planned Development Residential: The 1968 plan indicated areas for recreation estates with lots one-acre in size and larger. This type and density of development was considered appropriate to certain wooded areas to minimize tree cutting and grading, and to allow for houses on the edge of meadows that could take advantage of terrain features. In the revised area plan the concept of recreation estates has evolved into the concept of Planned Development Residential areas adjacent to Westwood and Clear Creek. These areas, with the development of necessary infrastructure, can accommodate residential development and incorporate conservation subdivision features.

Typically, the corresponding zoning district for the Planned Development Residential land use designation is "PUD", Planned Unit Development District. Other zoning districts may be used, however, including the “P-C”, Planned Community District, if established prior to January 31, 1984, consistent with a specific project’s development plan. Average building intensity should not exceed four dwelling units per acre over the entire development area and it is expected that density options

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and clustering will be used to maximize effective development configurations and use of open space and to reduce development costs. Population density would average 12 people per acre. However, more specific building intensities and population densities may be considered under project-specific circumstances.

At some point in the future, the County may adopt more particular development standards for Planned Development Residential areas. In the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area, proposed development in these areas should be especially cognizant of policies and provisions for “new development” as outlined earlier in this area plan. This includes Implementation Measure LU-C, stating: The County will require planners and developers of proposed new projects, especially projects that propose to develop large areas of land, to evaluate and map areas of notable natural resource value on and near the development site and to incorporate provisions into their development plans that will protect and/or mitigate significant adverse impacts to those resources (e.g. utilize “conservation subdivision” design procedures or similar planning methodology).

## **6. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL L-9: Increased community wealth, job opportunities and the provision of needed commercial services through economic growth and diversification by supporting the expansion of existing commercial operations and by encouraging new commercial ventures in appropriate locations.

GOAL L-10: New commercial development in designated areas that are designed and operated to compliment and enhance the community.

POLICY LU-17: The area plan land use maps provide specific land use designations for areas in which commercial uses should be developed and includes special provisions for commercial uses within the designated Westwood Central Business Area and the Westwood Town Center, including the Neighborhood Mixed-Use area.

POLICY LU-18: The County supports the economic viability of existing communities and will minimize the development of scattered commercial uses by directing commercial uses to town centers and commercial areas or the orderly expansion of such areas, with limited exceptions including home occupations, agricultural-related sales, and specially-considered local convenience and highway commercial sites.

POLICY LU-19: The County encourages entrepreneurship through locally-owned small businesses including light-industry, research, consulting, and e-commerce.

POLICY LU-20: The County supports home occupations as an accessory use to residential uses provided such uses are consistent with the definition of home

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occupations set forth in the County Zoning Code and the uses will not be objectionable or detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood.

POLICY LU-21: The County supports a clean-up program and redevelopment effort to improve the mixture and appearance of highway commercial uses along Highway 36 in Westwood.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-M: Zoning for commercial uses will be limited to areas designated for commercial land uses as indicated in the area plan land use maps.

MEASURE LU-N: The County will clarify and strengthen design review and code compliance provisions applicable to commercial districts in the planning area.

**Background:**

The Westwood town center (and especially the Central Business Area of the town center as designated in the revised area plan) is the primary shopping, business and service center for the surrounding area as well as a focus for social, cultural and governmental activity. (Refer to the discussion of the Westwood Town Center and Central Business Area above.)

The concept of a compact recreation service center on Route 36, as proposed in the 1968 Plan, has been modified to adjust for the zoning and uses that have evolved in that area. The revised Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan favors a "Highway Commercial" district along Highway 36 where parcels are largely zoned already for commercial use. However, an assertive effort is needed to rehabilitate this commercial strip and to encourage development of more appropriate highway commercial uses. This may be done with development standards and design criteria that will encourage compatibility of uses and protect this visually sensitive gateway to Westwood and Lassen County from unattractive development and unsightly uses that reflect poorly on the community as a whole. This issue is addressed in more detail in the Community Character Element.

**7. INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL L-11: Improvement, expansion and diversification of the planning area's industrial base and generation of related employment opportunities.

GOAL L-12: Create and develop employment centers with clean, light industry on the existing business park in Westwood and other carefully selected areas with an emphasis on attracting and supporting a variety of small, diversified industries.

POLICY LU-22: The area plan land use maps provide specific "Industrial"

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designations for areas where industrial uses should be developed and designate a “Planned Development” area, primarily on the old Westwood Mill Site, where business park and industrial uses may be considered with special permitting provisions.

POLICY LU-23: The County encourages and will facilitate the development of new, environmentally responsible industrial projects in areas designated for industrial uses when such projects compliment the character of the planning area and provide economic benefits for people living in the area.

POLICY LU-24: In considering proposals for new industrial sites including amendments of the area plan and related rezoning, the County will address the compatibility of the proposed use and site with established land use patterns, the adequacy of infrastructure and services, and the consistency of proposed development with policies related to the protection of natural resources as addressed in the area plan and relevant sections of the County General Plan.

POLICY LU-25: The County supports continued development and use of the Westwood Business Park and Business Incubator in ways that benefit and compliment the community.

POLICY LU-26: The County will consider proposals for business park and industrial uses on portions of the old mill site in Westwood that are designated for “Planned Development” and “Industrial” land uses, consistent with related provisions for mill site reuse and natural resources outlined in this area plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-O: The County will utilize zoning ordinances to establish industrial zoning districts in areas designated for industrial land uses as indicated in the area plan land use maps. Corresponding zoning districts may include, but are not limited to: M-1, Light Industrial District; M-2, Heavy Industrial District; M-L, Limited Industrial District; B-P, Business Park District; or a special “mixed-use” planned development district, to be formulated as a component of the mill site reuse planning project, that will allow industrial uses in specified areas.

MEASURE LU-P: The County will establish and apply high standards for design and maintenance of industrial development in the planning area, especially when located in visually sensitive areas.

MEASURE LU-Q: The County will seek resources to plan and support continued improvement of the Westwood Business Park and Business Incubator.

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Background:

In considering the potential for industrial development in the Westwood area, the 1968 Plan observed that it was impossible to predict the exact nature of new manufacturing uses. The market for a particular product, competition, capital investment required and many other factors will determine the type and timing of the establishment of new enterprises. Guiding assumptions expressed in the 1968 Plan for industrial development were:

The choice and size of new industries will be curtailed by market factors prevailing throughout northeastern California and by the area's distance from major markets.

A small number of industries can be found to locate in the Westwood area perhaps for non-economic reasons, i.e., the owner likes the way of life and wants to live there and distance to market is not crucial.

The prime industries to investigate will be those that offer unique products that are not in direct competition with large centrally located plants in the region.

These assumptions are still generally valid. Even though continued changes in the timber industry make related industrial development all the more challenging in relatively remote areas like the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area, other technological changes and innovations including improved telecommunications and internet marketing, as well as the expanding appreciation in today's society for the recreation and life-style benefits of rural communities, are helping to encourage and make business development more feasible in such areas.

There is in the planning area, as in many communities, considerable concern over and general opposition to industrial development that would generate pollution or otherwise cause significant disruption to the area. Many local residents would welcome, or at least be willing to consider, new industrial development proposals that offer high-quality employment and that are low impact, environmentally friendly and that would generate minimal if any pollutants (including noise, light, air, water, dust, etc.).

The revised area plan also supports the County's continuing program for development of the Westwood Business Park. This project began with purchase of the site by the County in 1992.

The 1968 Westwood Plan also included a statement that will continue to ring true for the term of this revised area plan:

The principal factor in future employment growth in Westwood will be individual entrepreneurs, as yet unknown, who have economically feasible ideas, energy and sufficient

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capital to start and maintain new industries. The citizens of Westwood, the Lassen County Economic Development Group, the County and the Chamber of Commerce will have to really work for industrial development and cooperate with one another and prospective developers to obtain worthwhile development.

## **8. MILL SITE REUSE**

**GOAL L-13:** Well-planned reuse proposals and projects for the old Westwood mill site with compatible relationships between habitat and open space resources, business park and light industrial development, and other possible land uses.

**POLICY LU-27:** A land use designation of “Planned Development” has been placed on much of the old mill site in Westwood in order to provide opportunities to consider a variety of possible uses that may be proposed with strategic development plans. The County supports the preparation of feasibility studies and careful site planning to consider appropriate uses for this site, including the potential development of an innovative light-industry/business technology park. Such uses will need to be compatible with and incorporate the amenities of natural resources in the area including ponds, wetlands and open space.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE LU-R:** The County, in cooperation with private land owners, will seek resources to help plan and support reuse of portions of the old mill site in Westwood to help create new employment opportunities and serve other public purposes.

**MEASURE LU-S:** The County will make the *Westwood Mill Site Reuse Analysis* available for consideration in planning and proposing projects in this area.

(Note: Refer also to the “Westwood Mill Pond” provisions of this area plan’s Natural Resources and Open Space Element.)

### **Background:**

The 1968 Westwood Plan proposed that an “employment center” of approximately 50 acres be developed in the former mill area in Westwood. It was proposed that the balance of the unused former mill area be planted with seedlings and developed as an open space and recreation reserve.

Historical development of industrial sites and uses around Westwood since 1968 deviated from the vision of an “employment center” on the former mill site. A number of industrial uses have been

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established in various locations around Westwood including some along Highway 36. Perhaps the most significant industrial facility in the area, the Mount Lassen Power biomass power plant, was developed on the west side of Westwood and not at the proposed “employment center”.

The revised area plan extends and updates the concept of an “employment center” at the old mill site in Westwood in the context of the “Planned Development” land use designation by proposing an innovative mill site reuse planning project to examine the feasibility of a light-industry and technology business park on a portion of the site. Other compatible uses should also be considered. The Natural Resources and Open Space Element of this area plan notes related natural resource issues and provisions including those concerning the old mill pond and other wetland areas of the site.

There are a number of recognized constraints and challenges for development and reuse of the old mill site. In 2001, Lassen County received assistance from the Superior California Economic Development District (SCEDD) through its Northern California Mill Site Reuse Program to prepare a report entitled *Westwood Mill Site Reuse Analysis*. Lassen County contracted with Pacific Municipal Consultants to prepare this report with funding provided by SCEDD from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The analysis evaluated the opportunities and constraints for potential development within a 380-acre study area, most of which is comprised of property known as the Westwood Mill Site. The incentive for preparation of the *Westwood Mill Site Reuse Analysis* was that much of the study area had been proposed to be designated “Planned Development” in the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan with special consideration given to possible development of a business park and light industrial uses on appropriate portions of the site.

Several significant constraints to development of the old mill site were recognized and evaluated in the reuse analysis. Following are some of the recognized constraints and findings of the report (the *Westwood Mill Site Reuse Analysis* should be consulted for further details):

Fractured property ownership - Despite the title of “mill site”, the property is actually divided into a number of parcels with different owners. This ownership pattern is not conducive to preparation of a comprehensive reuse plan for the whole site.

Habitat - A large portion of the site is considered to be habitat for the Willow Flycatcher, a threatened species. This habitat is considered by the California Department of Fish and Game to have significant natural resource values that will constrain future development on the site.

Flood Zone - The drainage pattern through the site and the condition of the levee around the old mill pond is such that much of the study area is considered to be in a flood zone. This significantly restricts the types of, and adds cost to, development in this area. Because of the

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sensitive habitat issues, improvements in the drainage and condition of the ponds would need to be coordinated with conservation agencies.

Utilities - The Westwood Community Services District has the ability to provide service to the site, but the needed extension of infrastructure is expected to be expensive. A lift station would be needed to connect to sewer mains and fire flow would require looping of the waterline.

Access - Road access to the properties would need to be significantly improved. In addition to the rail crossing from Third Street, a southerly extension of Delwood Street would need significant engineering due to Robbers Creek.

Lack of information concerning possible contamination - There is little information regarding the existing character of contaminants, if any, on the site. This lack of information could deter future development. A Phase I Site Assessment, and possibly a Phase II Assessment with soil testing, would be needed to fully determine the existence, character and extent of possible contamination.

The constraints identified in the reuse analysis and the recommendations of that report will need to be taken into consideration by property owners proposing to develop portions of the property, especially those portions of the area designated and zoned for Planned Development.

Recognizing the natural resource issues and amenities of the site, including wetlands and wildlife habitat at the old ponds, it is noted that a project or projects proposing business park and/or light industrial development will need to be carefully planned and developed to mitigate impacts on those resources and will need to integrate those amenities into site development. Natural resources on and near the site can add uniqueness and special attractiveness to a well-planned commerce park with light-industry and technology-focused businesses or other planned development. Development in the area may also be able to help finance restoration projects for areas that should be managed for open space values and may help develop trails and recreation uses in appropriate areas. (Additional discussion concerning the mill ponds in this area is provided in the Natural Resources and Open Space Element below.)

## **9. DYER MOUNTAIN**

GOAL L-14: Multiple economic and social benefits for nearby communities, the county and the region related to development of the proposed Dyer Mountain project adjacent to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area while realizing minimal significant adverse impacts to lands and resources within the area plan planning area.

POLICY LU-28: The County will consider and support appropriate ways by which

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the economic and social benefits that may be stimulated by development and operation of the Dyer Mountain project can be optimized in communities within the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.

POLICY LU-29: The County recognizes that development of a resort project at Dyer Mountain could have impacts on lands and resources located within the adjacent Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area and will work with project developers to minimize or compensate for those impacts.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-T: The County will implement the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act to evaluate potential environmental impacts and the need for related mitigation measures in consideration of potential impacts that development of the Dyer Mountain project may have on land and resources in the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.

**Background:**

The 1968 Westwood Plan included designation of a winter sports area on the northeast slope of Dyer Mountain and south of Walker Lake. As described on page 10 of the 1968 Plan:

This center could provide for skiing, tobogganing and snow play with ski lifts to a lodge and a snack bar. Adjacent rental or seasonal chalets would be appropriate. This proposal should be carefully examined for physical and economic feasibility with regard to snow conditions, costs of development winter and summer, market for the project and appropriate scale of development.

On November 7, 2000, voters in Lassen County approved Measure V, a ballot initiative formulated by supporters of a proposed major resort project at Dyer Mountain to clarify support for the project in the county and to institute development provisions for such a project. The stated purpose of the initiative was to make changes to the County General Plan, including the Westwood Plan, and the County Zoning Ordinance to allow a four-season mountain resort in the vicinity of Dyer Mountain and Mountain Meadows Reservoir (AKA, Walker Lake). As described in the initiative:

These changes will create the opportunity for golf, skiing, fishing, trails and other resort type recreational facilities, shops, lodges, condominiums, single-family and other residential uses, and commercial facilities such as conference facilities and restaurants, centered around a village and neighborhoods. The four-season mountain resort will serve local day users, overnight visitors and permanent residents.

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Approval of Measure V enacted several provisions related to proposed development of a project at Dyer Mountain that would be considerably larger and different in scope and character from the winter sports area that was contemplated in 1968. The initiative made related general plan changes that, consequently, affected preparation of the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan. In fact, the measure states that the Board of Supervisors may amend the Westwood Area Plan as long as the amendments do not apply to that area included within the Dyer Mountain project area.

Measure V amended the 1968 Westwood Plan by modifying existing plan language and by delineating a new planning boundary between Dyer Mountain and the Westwood and Clear Creek areas. Consequently, the Dyer Mountain project area was extracted from the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area as was originally considered in the master environmental assessment and the preliminary draft of the area plan.

Measure V amended the County General Plan to add a new land use category of “Mountain Resort” (MR) and applied that designation to specified property in the vicinity of Dyer Mountain. The initiative also amended the County Zoning Ordinance to add a new zoning classification of “Mountain Resort” (MR), which enumerated the specific land uses allowed, and made corresponding changes elsewhere in the zoning code to help implement the addition of the MR ordinance and MR general plan designation. Furthermore, the initiative amended the County zoning map to specifically designate the vicinity of Dyer Mountain and the southwestern portion of Mountain Meadows Reservoir as “Mountain Resort” (MR). Since part of the proposed project area was zoned Timber Production Zone (TPZ), the initiative also included provisions to amend the zoning ordinance to modify the list of allowed uses permitted within the TPZ zoning district.

Lastly, Measure V included the establishment of a Lassen County “policy” to direct that the County shall take such actions as are reasonably necessary to provide for the implementation of the initiative. This provision pertains to the processing of related development permits and administration by the County of the environmental review process. Measure V should be consulted for specific language and a more complete understanding of its provisions.

At the time that this Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan was adopted, Lassen County was working with Dyer Mountain Associates to process project applications and to prepare an environmental impact report for the proposed project. A tentative description for the Dyer Mountain project proposed that it would be a four-season resort with a full range of winter and summer recreational facilities including skiing/snowboarding and golf. It would include residential uses with a mixture of single family, town homes, condominiums and hotel uses with a total unit count at full build-out of approximately 3000 equivalent dwelling units. Commercial construction had been proposed to total up to 300,000 square feet of retail and support facilities. It was anticipated that full build-out, especially of the residential components of the project, may take 20 years or more to complete. The project area is approximately 6200 acres in size, of which approximately 2800 acres is comprised of leased land within the ski area. It was proposed that the leased land and open space areas would

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continue to be managed for timber production.

Although the Dyer Mountain project area was extracted from the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area due to passage of Measure V, it is understood that development and build out of that project would have a variety of impacts on the planning area including increases in traffic and the need for support housing and related development in Westwood and Clear Creek. It is expected that the project will provide a significant stimulus for commercial development in the area plan planning area as well as generate new job opportunities for area residents in nearby communities and at Dyer Mountain itself.

## **10. RECREATION DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL L-15: Well-planned and developed recreation resources to serve area residents and to attract and serve visitors and stimulate economic vitality in the planning area.

### **10-A. Camping Facilities**

GOAL L-16: A variety of camping facilities including campgrounds, summer camps, and recreational vehicle parks that will attract and accommodate visitors in the Westwood/Clear Creek area.

POLICY LU-30: Commensurate with the County Open Space Element, the County encourages the development of suitable public and commercial campgrounds and recreation areas in the planning area subject to the determination of the appropriateness and adequacy of specific sites and the mitigation of land use conflicts and significant environmental impacts.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-U: Subject to the provisions of particular zoning districts as they apply to proposed camping facilities within the County's jurisdiction, the County will consider individual permit applications for such facilities.

#### **Background:**

The 1999 Westwood Community Action Plan identified the lack of accommodations or "housing" for tourists in the Westwood area as one of the priority issues of the action plan. This concern included the issue of overnight camping facilities. One of the objectives proposed in the action plan was to, "Encourage development of summer camps and campgrounds." The action plan proposed that the community support revision of the 1968 Westwood Plan with a new plan which will promote the development of activities and accommodations for tourists and visitors while respecting the

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existing character of Westwood and the surrounding setting.

The County's General Plan Open Space Element includes Policy OS-10 which reads: The County encourages the development of suitable public and commercial campgrounds and recreation areas, subject to the determination of the appropriateness and adequacy of the specific sites and the mitigation of land use conflicts and significant environmental impacts.

The 1968 Westwood Plan included designations for several campgrounds. Those specific designations are not included in the revised area plan. The County will work with land owners and agencies to consider specific sites that should be proposed for development of future campgrounds. Campgrounds on private lands are limited to certain zoning districts (e.g., U-C-2, Upland Conservation/Resource Management District) and, when allowed, typically require an approved conditional use permit from the County. The County may make a finding at the time of approval that the proposed campground is consistent with a land use designation (e.g., Extensive Agriculture) even though the campground is not specifically identified in the area plan.

Recreational vehicle (RV) parks, in terms of land use character, are considered to be commercial recreation campgrounds. Due to the typical transient character of RV's and campers, the location of parks for them should be treated as commercial campgrounds and not mixed with long-term residential land use. Furthermore, as discussed in the 1968 Plan, trailers and RV's are by design conspicuously man-made objects and, like groups of parked cars, must not be allowed to intrude upon significant views. Sunlight glaring from the tops of half-hidden trailers can spoil the view. Therefore, the screening of parking areas should be complete. With proper choice of site, provision of adequate maneuvering room, sanitary facilities, natural camouflage and proper screening, trailer and RV parks can fulfill their functions with minimum disruption of the natural setting and residential neighborhoods.

**10-B. Golf Courses**

Goal L-17: At least one public golf course in the planning area to expand local recreation and tourism resources.

POLICY LU-31: The County encourages the development of at least one well-planned public golf course in the planning area to be developed at an appropriate site and in such a way that the project will be environmentally sound and a beneficial resource for recreation and tourism.

IMPLEMENTATION:

MEASURE LU-V: Although no specific site is designated for a golf course in this area plan, the County encourages consideration of such development at

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appropriate sites and will be prepared to assist developers with the planning and permitting process for a golf course development project.

Background:

The 1968 Plan proposed that the (at that time) existing nine hole golf course near Pinetown be expanded to 18 holes. That site, which is no longer used or maintained as a golf course, is reported to have been a Rotary Club project which featured sand greens. It may no longer be feasible to restore the old course or to develop a new and larger golf course at that location, nor does there appear to be much interest in such a project at that site. The area of the old golf course does, however, serve as a community picnic area at this time.

The revised area plan supports the development of at least one and possibly more well-planned public golf courses at appropriate sites in the planning area. One possible site that may have attributes to compliment development of a golf course is south of Westwood near the north shore of Walker Lake (in section 17). This area is within the Westwood Community Services District and is designated "Urban Reserve" in the area plan. Other sites in the planning area may also be feasible. It may be noted that proposed golf course development near the planning area as part of the Dyer Mountain project could alleviate the need or demand for a golf course in the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.

**10-C. Community Recreation Facilities**

GOAL L-18: Community recreation facilities that are well-maintained and that meet the needs of local residents.

POLICY LU-32: The County encourages and supports local programs including those of the Westwood CSD to provide and maintain quality public recreation facilities.

Background:

The Westwood Community Park is one of the most complete and widely used parks in Lassen County. Development of the park began in 1976 at the insistence of Milo Sands, a long-time resident of Westwood. Mr. Sands spearheaded efforts to obtain 20 acres from the Westwood School District and initiated preparation of the first master plan for the park. The park was developed during the 1980's through the cooperation and support of many volunteers and agencies including Lassen County, the State Department of Parks and Recreation and, especially, the Westwood CSD Board of Directors and staff.

The Westwood Community Park offers a variety of recreational features including: fields for

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softball, Little League, and soccer; tennis courts; a multi-purpose court; playground areas; a barbeque/picnic area; restrooms; parking and open space area. Westwood is very proud of the park and the development and upkeep of the park is a classic example of a community working together for a common cause.

(Clear Creek Park is addressed in the Clear Creek section of this land use element below.)

**Other Recreation Issues:**

Refer to the Natural Resources and Open Space Element for recreation-related policies and provisions concerning Walker Lake and Mountain Meadows.

**11. PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**11-A. Sewage Treatment**

GOAL L-19: Efficient sewage treatment systems that protect water quality and public health.

POLICY LU-33: The County supports the installation of well-designed sewage treatment systems and the improvement of existing systems and treatment facilities.

**11-B. Community Water Systems**

GOAL L-20: Community water systems that provide safe water of high quality.

POLICY LU-34: The County supports improvements to and expansion of community water systems in the planning area as may be determined to be needed and proposed by the operators of those systems.

POLICY LU-35: The County recognizes protection zones around Clear Creek Springs and Walker Springs consistent with California Department of Health Services protection zone criteria and will, within the extent of its authority, regulate land uses in those zones that have the potential to diminish the quality of those community water sources or have the potential to contaminate those sources with biological or chemical contaminants.

POLICY LU-36: The County encourages the community service districts to enter into protective easement agreements with property owners to control potentially threatening uses within spring protection zones.

IMPLEMENTATION:

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MEASURE LU-W: The County will encourage and facilitate the preparation and use of capital improvement plans by service districts to anticipate future facility needs. The County will continue to encourage districts and non-profit organizations to apply for state and Federal grants to help improve and expand community infrastructure as needed.

MEASURE LU-X: The County will require a use permit or certificate of conditional use within adopted safety zones around Clear Creek Springs and Walker Springs for any use that 1) proposes to drill a new well within the protection zones; 2) involves the use or storage of substantial amounts of potential biological or chemical contaminants within the protection zones, or 3) proposes a new septic system or other sewage disposal facility (except replacement of an existing septic system), in Zone A of the protection zones or above the topographic contour of the spring that is lowest in elevation.

Background:

The water sources for both Westwood and Clear Creek are springs located immediately east of the community of Clear Creek at the toe of a 20-foot high bluff. Walker Spring, which serves the community of Westwood, produces approximately 18,000 gallons per minute (g.p.m.), of which the Westwood CSD has a water right of 2000 g.p.m. The Westwood CSD pumps water from Walker Springs a distance of five miles to a 500,000 gallon water storage tank located north of Westwood before the water is distributed to the community.

Clear Creek Spring, located approximately 1000 feet north of Walker Spring, produces an estimated 2,000 g.p.m. The Clear Creek CSD has a water right of 450 g.p.m. from this spring. Both communities presently use almost all of their water right entitlements.

The chemical constituency and quality of the water from these two water sources are identical and are believed to originate from the same underground aquifer which is fed by a shallow (approximately 30 feet deep) underground stream or lava tube.

Both the Westwood and Clear Creek CSD's have stressed the importance of protecting the water sources of Westwood and Clear Creek. They have stated that it is imperative that no activities be permitted in the vicinity of these spring outlets that would have the potential of spreading contaminants or disrupting the ground in ways that may cause the springs to have reduced flows or become contaminated. The CSD's called upon the County to consider zoning measures, permitting or other means to help insure that drinking water is protected from contamination. Reference was made to publications by the Department of Health Services (Drinking Water Source Assessment and Protection Program, Section 12, January 1999) that outline criteria for protection zones.

**11-C. Educational Facilities**

GOAL L-21: School facilities that support high-quality education.

POLICY LU-37: The County supports the provision of adequate school facilities, the selection of sites for new or expanded school facilities which will be compatible with existing and future land uses in the vicinity, and the use by school districts of capital improvement plans to anticipate and prepare for future growth.

IMPLEMENTATION:

MEASURE LU-Y: The County supports efforts that the Westwood Unified School District and Lassen Community College may make to expand school facilities and services in the area and will work with those districts to address related land use issues.

**11-D. Library Services**

GOAL L-22: Improved library services and facilities.

POLICY LU-38: The County supports community-based efforts to improve library facilities and services to provide a modern, technologically current and user-friendly facility in the planning area.

**11-E. Community Museum**

GOAL L-23: A permanent, well-maintained community museum.

POLICY LU-39: The County supports community-based efforts to develop a permanent, well-maintained museum to display the history of the Westwood area.

**11-F. Medical and Emergency Services**

GOAL L-24: Medical and emergency services that meet community needs in the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area.

POLICY LU-40: The County encourages and supports efforts to determine the feasibility of expanding medical care facilities and services in the planning area and, when demonstrated to be feasible, shall support the development of such facilities and services.

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POLICY LU-41: The County supports local projects for the development of new fire and ambulance facilities for emergency response when determined by the operating agency or organization to be needed for community service and when such facilities are financially feasible.

**12. UTILITIES**

GOAL L-25: Utility facilities that effectively serve the public with minimal disturbance to local communities and surrounding land uses.

POLICY LU-42: The County encourages the consolidation and relocation of electrical substations to minimize community impacts and to improve compatibility with adjacent land uses.

**13. REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

GOAL L-26: All buildings in the planning area should be sound, safe and pleasant in appearance and the condition and appearance of property should not be detrimental to the character and value of the neighborhood.

POLICY LU-43: The County supports progressive efforts and redevelopment programs to rehabilitate dilapidated structures and properties in the planning area or replace dilapidated structures with buildings that are sound, safe and pleasant in appearance.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-Z: A strategic community improvement and redevelopment effort will be planned and initiated as funding mechanisms are developed. This may or may not include a redevelopment program pursuant to California Community Redevelopment Law.

**Background:**

Many buildings in Westwood are in need of major renovation or replacement. In some areas (e.g., the vicinity of Second Street and Delwood) the number of buildings and lots that are in need of renovation or replacement warrant a strategic and progressive redevelopment program with the cooperation and funding support of state and Federal resources. Such a redevelopment program could be proposed pursuant to California Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code, 33300 *et seq.*). This process would include preparation of a redevelopment plan that would conform

to the general plan.

It is not a determination of this area plan that a redevelopment program pursuant to the Community Redevelopment Law needs to be or should be initiated, or that such a program would be in the best interest of all parties that would be affected by such a program. This plan recognizes, however, that the preparation of a redevelopment plan that conforms to the area plan and implementation of such a plan pursuant to redevelopment law can be an effective tool to address the need for rehabilitation of many parcels in the planning area. If a redevelopment program pursuant to the provisions of the Community Redevelopment Law is not initiated, a concerted effort and progressive program of another form is warranted to encourage and help rehabilitate structures in the planning area.

## **CLEAR CREEK**

The 1968 “Westwood Plan” included the community of Clear Creek within its planning area. Clear Creek and Westwood are, however, two distinct communities. Therefore, the revised Westwood Plan has been renamed the “Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan”. Unless specifically directed to a particular issue obviously outside of Clear Creek (e.g., the Westwood Central Business Area), the policies and other provisions of this area plan pertain to Clear Creek and the area around it as well as to Westwood and the remainder of the planning area. In addition, there are several planning issues that are specific to Clear Creek and these issues and related policies are best addressed in a distinct section of this area plan devoted to that community.

### **2-1. Land Use**

**GOAL L-27:** Compatibility between land use types in Clear Creek by providing for efficient and complimentary patterns and mixtures of land uses.

**POLICY LU-44:** A detailed area plan land use map for Clear Creek is included in this area plan to indicate land use designations in and around the community.

**POLICY LU-45:** Development in Clear Creek will be subject to design review criteria that will minimize adverse impacts to residential districts and community open space and that will compliment Clear Creek’s “mountain village” character.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE LU-AA:** Designated land uses shall be implemented through the County’s zoning and development code program.

**MEASURE LU-BB:** Design guidelines shall be developed to clarify and support the intent of Clear Creek’s design goals and standards.

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Background:

The land use designations for the existing community of Clear Creek in this area plan do not propose substantial changes from the zoning that has evolved since adoption of the 1968 Westwood Plan. This primarily consists of low density residential uses, commercial uses along Highway 147, and continued use of Clear Creek Park and the facilities of the Clear Creek Community Services District (CSD) as institutional uses. These uses are located within the Clear Creek CSD.

Due to the compact size of the community of Clear Creek and its location on Highway 147, commercial uses should emphasize local convenience and highway commercial services including those that are substantially tourism-oriented. The design and operation of commercial and other non-residential development needs to minimize impacts on residential areas in the vicinity. A section of the Community Character Element of this area plan is devoted to discussing community design issues in Clear Creek.

An area adjacent to the existing community of Clear Creek is designated “Planned Development Residential” as indicated on the Clear Creek Land Use Map. In 1976, an area approximately 270 acres in size adjacent to the community of Clear Creek was zoned P-C, Planned Community District. The parcels in this area are currently outside the Clear Creek CSD and they are located outside the Sphere of Influence of that district. It has been proposed that these parcels will continue to be zoned “P-C”, Planned Community District. If land owners in this area propose a development project in the future, they will need to comply with the requirements of the P-C District and it is expected that any new development would need to be annexed to the CSD to obtain community services or that a new service district would need to be formed adjacent to the existing CSD.

**2-2. Clear Creek Park**

GOAL L-28: Continued management of the Clear Creek Park as a pleasant, well-maintained day-use park facility.

POLICY LU-46: The park at Clear Creek will continue to be maintained in cooperation with the community and will be limited to day-use with no significant expansion of the facility.

IMPLEMENTATION:

MEASURE LU-CC: The County will continue to work with the community of Clear Creek to manage and maintain the park.

Background:

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The 1968 Plan for the Westwood area proposed that Clear Creek Park be expanded to include the meadow and pond to the north with overnight camping facilities and possibly a trailer park to be developed “in” the park. The area that was proposed for this expansion was never acquired by the County and there has been no expressed local support for expansion of the park as proposed in 1968. Furthermore, there appears to be a general opinion in the community that the park should only be used for day-use activities with no “trailer park” or overnight facilities as proposed in the 1968 Plan.

Future improvements to the park may include improvements to restroom facilities and expansion of the children’s play area. A stage area may be developed for concerts and plays and a gazebo may be developed near the water’s edge. An addition to the fire hall may be proposed to include a kitchen and a deck for community and special events. Otherwise, major construction of new facilities in the park has been discouraged by the community. Proposals for improvements of the park should be considered in the future when more specific facility planning is undertaken.

### **2-3. Water Quality**

GOAL L-29: Continued provision of high-quality water for community use.

POLICY LU-47: The County will, within the extent of its jurisdiction, protect the quality of water resources serving the community of Clear Creek from development that would diminish the quality of those resources.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE LU-DD: The County will utilize the California Environmental Quality Act when applicable to review proposed projects in the vicinity of the spring to help insure that development will not present a significant threat to Clear Creek’s water supply.

(Note: See Policies LU-35 and LU-36 and Implementation Measure LU-X above.)

#### **Background:**

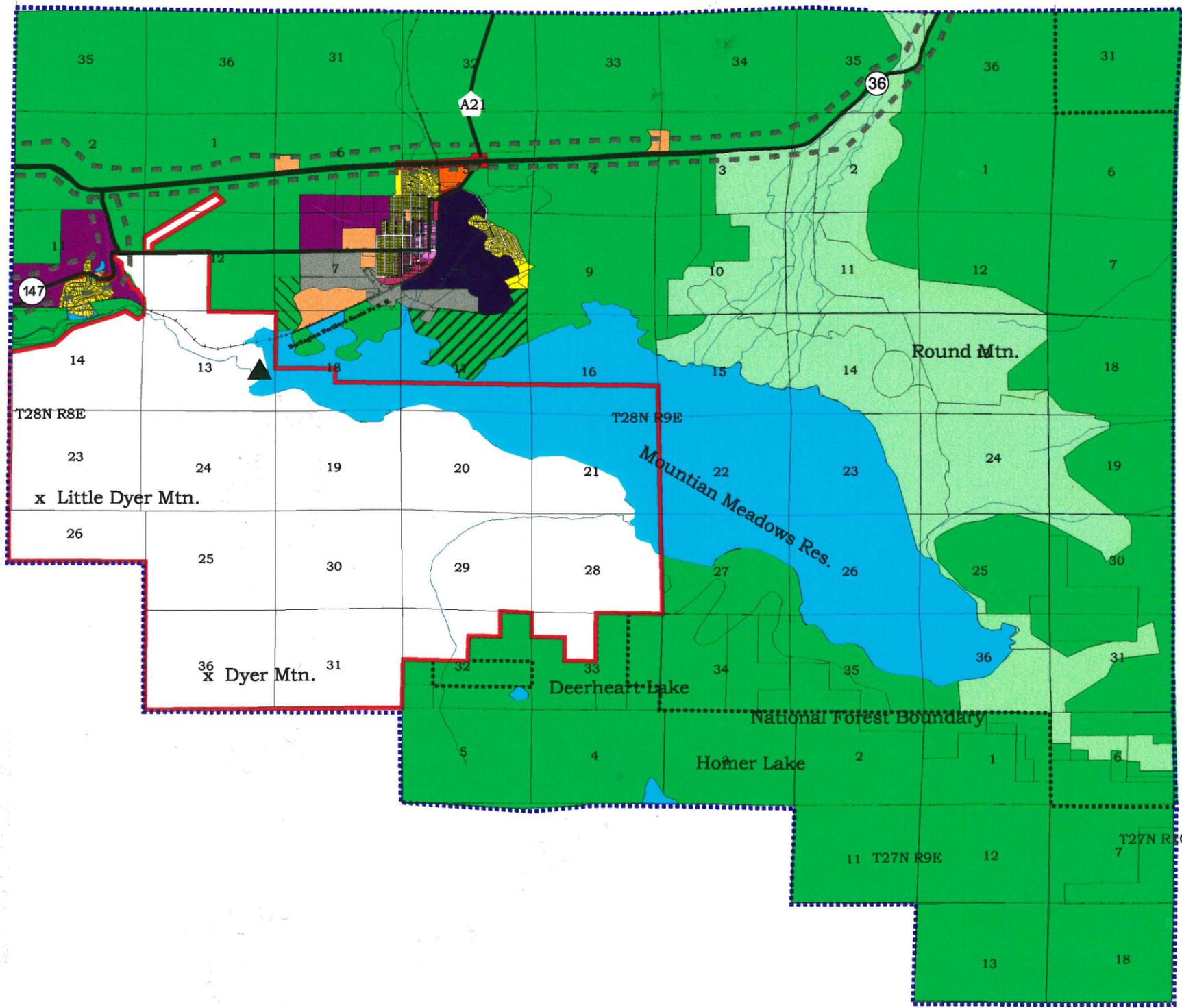
As discussed earlier in this land use element, the water that is provided to the community of Clear Creek by the Clear Creek Community Services District comes from a natural spring located at the base of a lava escarpment. Water flows through pipes to a pump station and then through a network of pipes to homes and businesses. The water is not treated and no treatment facility is proposed at this time, although capacity and service improvements to the pipe system are underway. The

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residents of Clear Creek greatly value the quality of their water supply. Concern has been expressed that potential development above the spring could jeopardize the quality of the water supply by causing pollutants to seep into the supply through fractures in the rock. Such contamination would threaten community health and require the installation of an expensive water treatment system.

This land use element includes policies and implementation measures that are intended to help protect the quality of Clear Creek's water supply. For example, Policy LU-35 states: "The County recognizes protection zones around Clear Creek Springs and Walker Springs consistent with California Department of Health Services protection zone criteria and will, within the extent of its authority, regulate land uses in those zones that have the potential to diminish the quality of those community water sources or have the potential to contaminate those sources with biological or chemical contaminants." Furthermore, Implementation Measure LU-X states: "The County will require a use permit or certificate of conditional use within adopted safety zones around Clear Creek Springs and Walker Springs for any use that 1) proposes to drill a new well within the protection zones; 2) involves the use or storage of substantial amounts of potential biological or chemical contaminants within the protection zones, or 3) proposes a new septic system or other sewage disposal facility (except replacement of an existing septic system), in Zone A of the protection zones or above the topographic contour of the spring that is lowest in elevation."



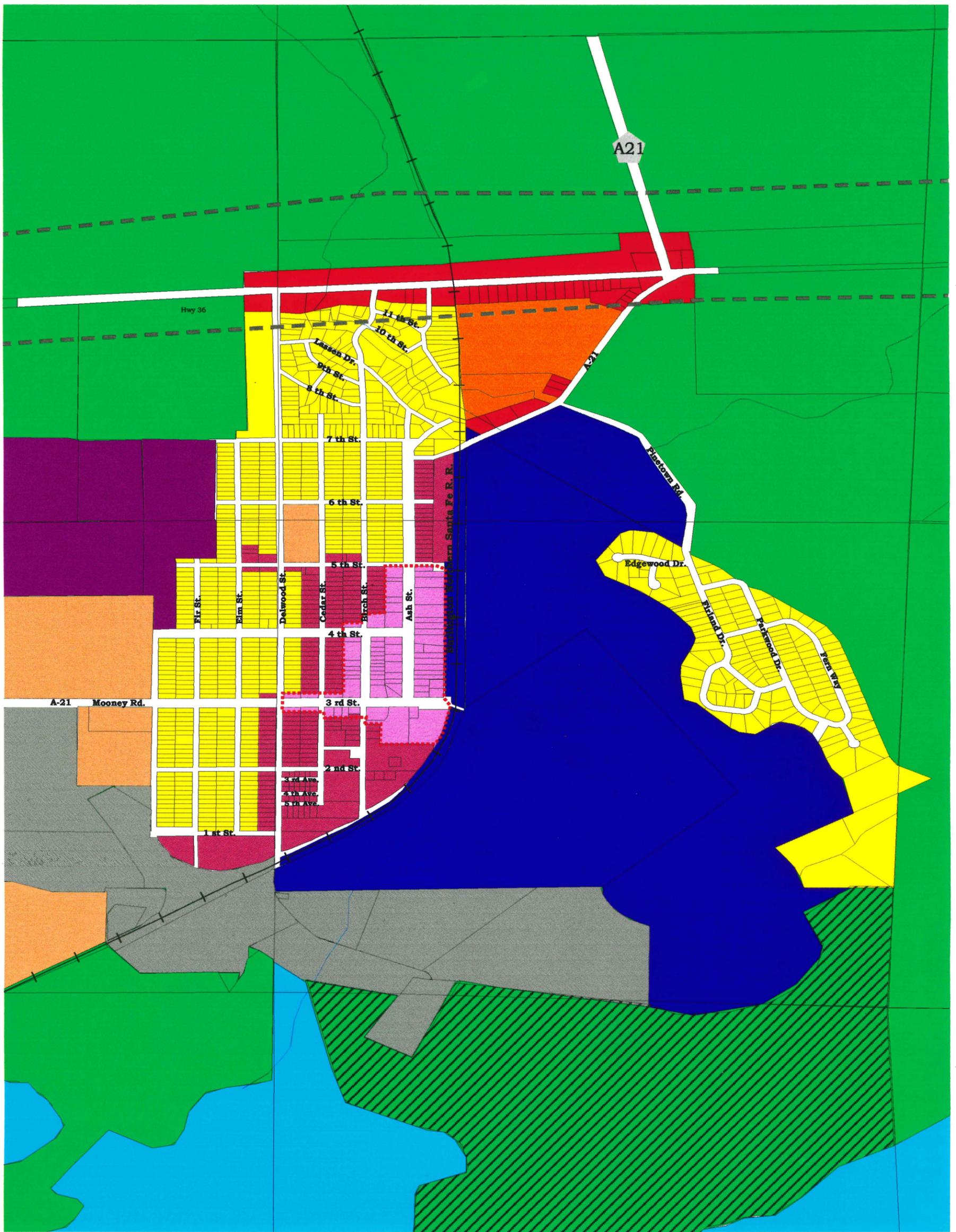
**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

- Urban Residential, Low Density
- Urban Residential, High Density
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Planned Development
- Industrial
- Planned Development Residential
- Intensive Agriculture
- Extensive Agriculture
- Central Business District
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use
- Urban Reserve Overlay
- Urban Reserve Overlay (Industrial)
- Dyer Mtn. Project Area
- Scenic Highway Corridor
- Boat Ramp
- Planning Area Boundary



Westwood / Clear Creek Area Plan  
Land Use Map

Figure 2



**Land Use Designations**

- Urban Residential, Low Density
- Urban Residential, High Density
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Planned Development Residential
- Industrial
- Intensive Agriculture
- Extensive Agriculture
- Central Business District
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use
- Scenic Highway Corridor
- Urban Reserve Overlay



2000 0 Feet 2000 4000

**Westwood / Clear Creek Area Plan  
Westwood Land Use Map (Detail)**

Figure 3



**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

- Urban Residential, Low Density
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Planned Development Residential
- Extensive Agriculture
- Scenic Highway Corridor
- Dyer Mtn. Project Area



Feet



Westwood / Clear Creek Area Plan  
Clear Creek Land Use Map ( Detail)

Figure 4

## WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

In the Lassen County General Plan-2000, the new "Natural Resources Element" was a revision of and replaced the 1968 Natural Resources Conservation Element. This revision was prepared to comply with the requirements of and to serve as the General Plan's "conservation element." The title "Natural Resources Element" was used in the General Plan instead of the term "conservation element" because the County wanted to consider a range of natural resource management issues that it did not believe was limited to the term "conservation". The County General Plan-2000 also includes an Agriculture Element and a Wildlife Element as extensions of the Natural Resources Element.

The County's Open Space Element, which was also revised by the General Plan-2000, sets forth the policies of Lassen County pertaining to open space lands and other lands having open space resources, character and values. Because the concept of "open space" is so closely related to the natural resources of the land, Lassen County's Open Space Element is intended to be used in conjunction with the Natural Resources Element. The Natural Resources Element addresses in greater detail issues and policies pertaining to resources found in areas that have substantial open space character.

Agencies may consolidate elements of their general plans to, among other purposes, avoid redundancy and inconsistencies. In this Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan, the provisions for "conservation elements", to the extent that additional provisions are needed to support the policies of the General Plan, are considered under the heading of "Natural Resources Element" as it is in the County General Plan. Furthermore, the Natural Resources Element is combined in this area plan with an Open Space Element.

A conservation element, and a natural resources element as contained in this format, is intended to address the conservation, development and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, wildlife, forage, minerals and other natural resources.

Concerning open space elements, the California Government Code describes "open space land" as being any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use and which is designated on a local, regional or state open-space plan. The categories of open space are generally:

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- (1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species, rivers, streams, lakeshores, watershed lands, etc.
- (2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands, areas required for recharge of ground water basins, and areas containing major mineral deposits, etc.
- (3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to: areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes; recreational trails, etc.
- (4) Open space for public health and safety including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, flood plains, areas presenting high fire risks, and areas required for the protection of water quality, etc.

Lassen County makes an important distinction in the General Plan with respect to the term "open space". The General Plan states:

Lassen County contains an extensive amount of private and public lands which are substantially undeveloped and which are rich with a variety of natural resources. Many areas are used for rangeland, timber, agriculture and a number of natural resource production uses. These lands have many important open space values and resources. However, these areas are not considered by the County to be strictly "open space" in classification since that term has been interpreted by some to be synonymous with "wilderness" and by others as implying that open space lands should not have any use other than to retain their "natural" ecosystem values.

Although the County recognizes and appreciates the need to carefully manage natural resources and to protect ecosystems from severe damage, and is dedicated to addressing those needs within the context of the many social and economic needs which the County must address on behalf of its citizens, the County contends that many resource issues are too complex and interwoven with those social and economic needs and issues to support a general, simplistic "open space" designation.

In recognizing and considering the open space character and values of many areas, the County is not implying or supporting contention that limited development (including the issuance of individual building permits), and resource production and management practices (including agriculture, livestock grazing, and timber management) which may be allowed by the County subject to the adopted zoning of those areas and the lawful exercise of the

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County's land use authority, are necessarily contrary to the concept of open space as used in this Element.

The Natural Resources Element, Agriculture Element, Wildlife Element and the Open Space Element of the County General Plan established policies and provisions for the maintenance and protection of open space values in balance with the responsible management and use of natural resources. Where and when areas having unique or especially sensitive open space resources are identified, and the need for more restrictive provisions is clearly demonstrated to the County, the General Plan contains policies and provisions by which the County will work with resource agencies and private land owners to identify, protect and, when warranted, preserve those resources.

In the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan, the Natural Resources and Open Space Element compliments and expands upon the County General Plan's related elements by addressing special resource issues within the planning area. The provisions of the County General Plan are applicable to natural resource and open space issues within the planning area, subject to the more-specific modifications included in this area plan. Consideration of these issues is also correlated in the Area Plan with the Land Use Element.

The following issues are considered to be special natural resource and/or open space issues in the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area. Some of these issues are closely related to issues that are addressed in the Land Use Element and may involve related policies and provisions in the Land Use Element and/or in other sections of this area plan.

## **1. WATER QAULITY**

**GOAL N-1:** Good water resource quality in the planning area.

**POLICY NR-1:** The County recognizes the critical importance and future value of water resources in the planning area and supports the protection of water quality through the avoidance or mitigation of impacts that would significantly diminish the quality of these waters.

**POLICY NR-2:** The County will, within the extent of its jurisdiction, protect the quality of water resources serving the communities of Clear Creek and Westwood from development that would diminish the quality of those resources.

(See also related Land Use Element policies including Policies LU-35 and LU-36)

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE NR-A:** The County will continue to utilize the CEQA process when applicable to evaluate the potential impacts to water quality that may result from

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proposed projects within the County's jurisdiction and shall require appropriate mitigation measures when needed.

(See also related Land Use Element implementation measures including Measure LU-X.)

**2. WALKER LAKE (MOUNTAIN MEADOWS RESERVOIR)**

**GOAL N-2: Protect and enhance the resource values of Walker Lake.**

**POLICY NR-3:** The County encourages and supports policies and practices on the part of the owners and operators of Walker Lake to manage the reservoir to sustain water levels that are as high as feasible throughout the year (with consideration to management and related resource mitigation objectives).

**POLICY NR-4:** The County encourages planning and management policies on the part of the owners and operators of Walker Lake and other landowners in the area to protect and enhance wildlife and recreation resources in and around Walker Lake.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE NR-B:** The County will monitor ownership and management issues pertaining to Walker Lake and will respond when appropriate to support management practices that will maintain water levels that are as high as feasible pursuant to the water level policy above, and that protect and enhance resource values in, on and around the lake.

**GOAL N-3: Continued and improved public access to and use of Walker Lake.**

**POLICY NR-5:** The County supports the maintenance and enhancement of access for public use of Walker Lake.

**POLICY NR-6:** The scale and character of uses on and around Walker Lake need to be appropriate and not significantly detrimental to the value of natural resources in the area.

**POLICY NR-7:** In order to promote safe boating and multiple uses that are appropriate for the size and character of Walker Lake and surrounding lands, the County supports the regulation of speed limits for motorized boats on the lake.

**POLICY NR-8:** An improved public access recreation facility, to include a boat ramp

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and day-use picnic area, is proposed on the north shore of Walker Lake south of Westwood (generally in section 17). The most appropriate and feasible site for this use in that vicinity needs to be determined.

POLICY NR-9: The County supports continued and enhanced public use of the existing boat launch at the north end of Indian Ole Dam.

IMPLEMENTATION:

MEASURE NR-C: The County will monitor and, when appropriate, support efforts to insure that public access to Walker Lake is allowed to continue and is enhanced where feasible.

MEASURE NR-D: The County will encourage and support cooperative efforts by private land owners, agencies, and community organizations to improve public access to Walker Lake including but not limited to development of a new boat launch and day-use picnic area on the north shore and continued use of the existing boat launch at Indian Ole Dam.

Background:

Walker Lake is a very attractive and valuable resource in the planning area that provides wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities in addition to its hydro-electric function. It is surrounded by lands having additional wildlife habitat and agricultural uses (e.g., grazing, timber production).

Water from Hamilton Branch, a tributary of the North Fork of the Feather River, has been diverted for storage behind Indian Ole Dam since 1924. The reservoir and associated facilities have been owned by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) since 1945. The water is used to generate hydroelectric power, being diverted downstream of the dam to the Hamilton Branch Powerhouse located on the northeast shore of Lake Almanor in Plumas County.

Mountain Meadows Reservoir (Walker Lake) has a storage capacity of 23,952 acre-feet and a water surface area of 5,772 acres when full. The scenic setting of the area includes the lake and surrounding wetlands and grassy meadows. The reservoir contains a variety of fish including largemouth bass, brown bullhead, sunfish, trout and other species. The largemouth bass provide a popular sport fishery. There is a small, basically undeveloped boat launch located near the north end of the dam.

Prior to 1989, no minimum pool for the reservoir had been established and regulated and the reservoir had at times been virtually drained. In 1989, the California Department of Fish and Game and PG&E negotiated an agreement which specified terms and conditions for drafting water from the reservoir and mitigating impacts from the fluctuation of water levels in the reservoir as well as

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downstream in Hamilton Branch. These terms and conditions were further reinforced and refined in a decision by the State Water Resources Control Board in 1990 relating to a permit for PG&E to appropriate water from Hamilton Branch. Included in these terms are provisions which generally insure storage capacity in the reservoir and minimum flows in Hamilton Branch to protect and support wildlife and fishery resources.

PG&E has historically allowed public access to the reservoir for recreational use. However, concern has been expressed that PG&E may change its policies or that future land owners in the area may not continue to accommodate public use of the lake. Furthermore, agreements for the management of the lake level may change in the future. The policies of this section of the area plan indicate the County's support for continued and enhanced public use of the lake and maintenance of lake levels that protect this valuable resource. Along with continued and improved access at Indian Ole Dam, the area plan proposes public access with a boat launch and day-use picnic area at a new location on the north shore of Walker Lake.

### **3. MOUNTAIN MEADOWS**

**GOAL N-4:** The open space character of the meadows around Walker Lake will be maintained to support wildlife resources and continued agricultural uses including grazing.

**POLICY NR-10:** The area plan provides agricultural land use designations (Extensive Agriculture and Intensive Agriculture) for the meadowlands and pastureland around Walker Lake.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE NR-E:** The County will protect the open space character of the fields and meadows around Walker Lake with zoning districts that support continued agricultural use and management of wildlife habitat.

**Background:**

This area plan does not propose that the shore and meadows around Walker Lake be considered for designation as a "State Park" as described in the 1968 Plan. As an alternative to the concept of a state park, the shoreline and possibly the lake itself (e.g., PG&E's holdings) could be considered for acquisition by public agencies and/or appropriate organizations to maintain, manage and enhance public access and use of this area. The Lassen County General Plan has policies (see Wildlife Element Policy WE-8) that provide criteria for the County's consideration of support for acquisition of land for State wildlife areas if such acquisition is proposed.

The area plan has also reconsidered and does not include provisions for a public trail around the lake because of concerns that such a trail would be difficult to construct and maintain without disturbing

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wetlands, drainage patterns, wildlife habitat and agricultural uses along the north and east shores of the lake.

#### **4. WESTWOOD MILL POND**

GOAL N-5: Improvement in the condition and resource value of the old mill pond, in whole or part.

GOAL N-6: Enhancement of wildlife habitat resources in the area of the old mill pond.

GOAL N-7: Provision of a trail or trails in the vicinity of the old mill pond and connected to the Bizz Johnson Trail and the trailhead visitor center.

POLICY NR-11: The County recognizes both the wildlife and potential recreation value of the area of the old mill pond as well as the value of the pond area as an amenity for development on other areas of the old mill site and for Westwood as a whole.

POLICY NR-12: The County encourages restoration, in whole or part, of the area of the old mill pond to enhance the condition and value of related resources.

POLICY NR-13: The area of the old mill pond is included in the mill site area which is designated "Planned Development". Development plans for this area are needed to consider multiple objectives including wildlife habitat management, creation of public trails, and the potential for development in the vicinity including a possible light-industry/commerce park and other urban-type uses on portions of the old mill site.

POLICY NR-14: The County may consider plans and project proposals for enhancement of this area including but not limited to improvement of ponds, habitat enhancement and the development of trails without requiring submission of a comprehensive development plan for the property.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE NR-F: Pursuant to the land use designation of "Planned Development", the area will be zoned "PUD, Planned Unit Development District", or a similar zoning district that requires a planned development application and permitting process but which has less emphasis on residential development and more emphasis on multiple uses.

MEASURE NR-G: The County will work with the owners of the old mill pond and mill

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site and with concerned agencies and community organizations to consider development plans that address ways in which this area may be used to achieve a variety of land use and resource management objectives including those identified in the policy section above.

Background:

When the 1968 Westwood Plan was prepared it was estimated that the former mill pond occupied 92 acres of the 200-acre site that was once the mill. At that time the company of Greater Westwood, Inc. owned the area of "Old Town" (now called "Pinetown") and proposed to dredge the old pond, rebuild the dam at the south end and refill the pond as a recreational resource for Westwood and the Pinetown subdivision. This project, to be called "Pine Lake", was never completed as proposed.

Much of the area of the old pond, which is now owned by several private owners, is now wetland and wet meadow primarily fed by Robbers Creek. The site has thick stands of willows and other riparian vegetation and has been identified by the California Department of Fish and Game as containing habitat for a variety of species including important nesting habitat for the willow flycatcher. The willow flycatcher is identified in the Lassen County General Plan as a California-listed endangered species. Consequently, the area of the old pond may qualify for consideration as an "area of significant wildlife value" pursuant to County General Plan Wildlife Element policy WE-2. (See the "Wildlife Habitat Resources" section below.)

Future development and/or use of the old pond area will require mitigation of significant impacts to important wildlife habitat. Proposed public uses including small lakes and public trails will require special development agreements with private land owners and/or acquisition by one or more public agencies or organizations.

It should be noted that the "Planned Development" designation as used in the context of the policies above is not intended to imply that the primary use should be residential as is typically associated with this designation. Rather, it is intended to indicate that comprehensive plans for development are needed to address multiple concerns and objectives for this area. (See also the related "Mill Site Reuse" provisions and discussion in the land use element of this area plan regarding proposed industrial/business park development at the old mill site.)

## **5. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Areas designated as "Intensive Agriculture" or "Extensive Agriculture" in the land use maps of this area plan are expected to be used to some extent for management of agricultural resources or to have the potential for agricultural production. This may include timber, cattle grazing, or the growing of hay and other crops. The County General Plan-2000 Agriculture Element observes:

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Agriculture is important to Lassen County in many ways and on many levels, including economic, general land use, conservation, and the social and cultural character and values which the agricultural community imparts to and shares with the County's overall social environment. Agricultural lands also provide general open space values to the landscape and can provide substantial benefits to wildlife resources depending on a number of factors including resource management practices.

The primary goal of the County Agriculture Element concerning agriculture is expressed as follows:

GOAL A-1: Conservation of productive agricultural lands and lands having substantial physical potential for productive agricultural use, and the protection of such lands from unwarranted intrusion of incompatible land uses and conversion to uses which may obstruct or constrain agricultural use and value.

Principal policies contained in the Agriculture Element, which apply as well to the Westwood/ Clear Creek Planning Area, include:

AG-1 POLICY: The County recognizes that land having the physical characteristics (e.g., soil) for production of agricultural crops and livestock is a resource of significant value which needs to be protected for its economic value, its contribution to the character of the community, and its environmental and scenic values.

AG-2 POLICY: Agriculture and livestock management, and related activities consistent with the zoning regulations established by the County, are considered by the County to be compatible activities in areas identified as "open space". Exceptions to this policy may be made in cases where the Board of Supervisors or the Planning Commission determines, in consideration of specific resource issues and management objectives in specified areas, that certain agricultural activities are not compatible and should be excluded. The recognition and consideration of the open space character and values of agricultural and rangeland areas shall not be construed to be contrary to resource production and management practices (including agriculture and livestock grazing) which may be allowed by the County subject to the adopted zoning of those areas and the lawful exercise of the County's land use authority.

AG-3 POLICY: Residential development in agricultural areas shall be discouraged because it disrupts the surrounding productive activity of ranches and agricultural operations. Future residential development, with the exception of building permits on an individual basis, should be relegated to the expansion of existing communities and residential areas, including areas designated as "residential" by the County in the General Plan or an area plan even though those areas may not yet be developed.

AG-4 POLICY: In order to support the existing and future economic value and viability of

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agricultural lands, including grazing lands, such lands should remain in relatively large units. Except in limited circumstances pursuant to the County's zoning ordinance (e.g., segregation of homesites, use permits, etc.), County zoning and subdivision regulations shall protect agricultural lands by not allowing isolated subdivisions intended primarily for residential use to be developed in areas which are not specifically designated in the General Plan or an area plan for a community development land use (e.g., rural residential) and zoned accordingly.

(Note: Refer also to the Lassen County General Plan, especially the Agriculture Element, for related policies and provisions that also apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.)

## **6. TIMBER RESOURCES**

The Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area is located in an area having significant timber resource value. Portions of the planning area that are designated for "Extensive Agriculture" on the land use maps that are part of this area plan, as well as many parcels within other land use designations, have timber resources of considerable economic value. In fact, most of the acreage of the planning area is owned by several different timber management companies including Shasta Forests and Red River Forests Partnership (both of whose lands are administered by W. M. Beaty and Associates), Roseburg Resources, and others.

Timber resources are addressed in the County General Plan Natural Resources Element with the following principal goal and policies:

**GOAL N-11:** Healthy forest environments which will continue to provide resources for multiple uses and timber production in sustainable quantities which will benefit the local economy.

**NR31 POLICY:** It is recognized by the County that the timber industry has historically been and continues to be a major economic and social component of Lassen County and therefore represents a vital factor in the fundamental culture and customs of the community.

**NR32 POLICY:** The County supports the conservation and management of timber production areas for the production of timber and shall, within the County's authority, protect them from land uses (e.g., residential development) and factors which would significantly restrict their capacity for production.

(Note: Refer to the Lassen County General Plan, especially the Natural Resources Element, for related policies and provisions that also apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.)

## **7. WILDLIFE HABITAT RESOURCES**

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(Note: Refer to related policies in the Land Use Element of this Area Plan. Refer also to the Lassen County General Plan, especially the Wildlife Element, for related policies and provisions that also apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area.)

Due to the range and significance of wildlife issues in Lassen County, wildlife issues are emphasized in the General Plan-2000 with a "Wildlife Element". The Wildlife Element is an extension of the General Plan Natural Resources Element and is intended to be used in conjunction with the related elements of the County General Plan. One of the primary goals of the County Wildlife Element and two of its principal policies are quoted below:

GOAL W-1: To protect and enhance the overall health of wildlife habitats and special resource areas to maintain healthy, abundant and diverse wildlife populations.

WE-1 POLICY: The County supports the management of wildlife resources in ways that enhance the health and abundance of wildlife populations and the diversity of species and their habitats and which, at the same time, balance management policies and program objectives with the range of social and economic needs for which the County is also responsible.

WE-2 POLICY: The County supports the cooperative identification of "areas of significant wildlife value" or similar designations for areas where it is demonstrated by sound biological science that the habitat values are of significant importance to the health and/or survival of one or more species of wildlife. The County may apply a special designation to these areas, and/or agree to support specific resource management objectives, policies and voluntary programs to protect wildlife resources within these areas.

Wildlife resources related to Walker Lake and the meadowlands around it, as well as wildlife resources related to the old mill pond in Westwood, are addressed above in this area plan. The planning area does have additional areas with wildlife habitat values including Hamilton Branch, Robbers Creek, Forest Service lands, and other areas. The provisions of the County General Plan, especially the Wildlife Element, shall be used to consider the need and means for general protection and management of wildlife habitat resources in the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area, reinforced by the provisions of this area plan where applicable.

## **8. FOREST SERVICE LANDS**

The Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area, according to the MEA, includes over 7,750 acres of Federal land managed by the Lassen National Forest. Planning policies for these lands are provided by the Forest's *Land and Resource Management Plan*. That plan recognizes various "management areas" in the Lassen National Forest, two of which include land within the County's Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area. These are the Hamilton Management Area and the Keddie Management Area.

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Directions for implementing the plan for each management area is provided through stated goals, objectives, standards, guidelines and “management prescriptions” for resources within the area. The *Land and Resource Management Plan* of the Lassen National Forest also recognizes approximately 1,480 acres in the Keddie Management Area as the “Homer/Deerheart Scenic Special Interest Area” in recognition of the “significant cultural and recreational values” in the vicinity of Homer Lake, Hidden Lake and Deerheart Lake.

## **9. TRAILS**

The California General Plan Guidelines state that Open Space Elements are expected to address certain issues relating to trails and open space and includes references to related Public Resource Code provisions. These trail issues include demands for trail-oriented recreational use, retention of publicly-owned corridors (e.g., abandoned rail lines, utility corridors or easements) for future use, and the feasibility of integrating city and county trail routes with appropriate segments of the California Recreational Trails System.

In this area plan the issue of trails in the planning area is addressed in the Circulation Element. Those provisions are incorporated by reference into this area plan’s “Open Space Element” as is comprised within this “Natural Resources and Open Space Element”.

## **10. OPEN SPACE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY**

**GOAL N-8:** Support public safety and resource protection in the planning area related to natural hazards including the maintenance of open space areas that contribute to improved safety.

### **Fire Hazard Areas**

**POLICY NR-15:** The County shall continue to make protection from fire hazards a consideration in planning, land use and zoning decisions, environmental review, and project review with special concern for areas of "high" and "extreme" fire hazard.

**POLICY NR-16:** The County supports recognition and maintenance of fire safety zones, fuel break corridors and “defensible space” around development to protect people and property from wildfires and to protect forests and open space areas from development-related fire sources.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**MEASURE NR-H:** The County will continue to work with the California Department

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of Forestry and Fire Protection and other agencies of jurisdiction in identifying and mapping areas of special fire hazard and in adopting development criteria to assist in protection from fire hazards.

MEASURE NR-I: The County will encourage development and implementation of "fire safety plans" for communities and lands in high fire hazard areas.

MEASURE NR-J: The County will support the on-going efforts of private timberland owners and public land management agencies to incorporate fire safety objectives in their land and resource management plans, especially in areas having high fire hazard ratings.

**Flood Hazard Areas**

POLICY NR-17: The Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Lassen County adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as said maps pertain to and identify flood hazard areas in the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area, are hereby incorporated by reference into this area plan, including all official revisions that may be made to said maps in the future.

POLICY NR-18: The County shall discourage inappropriate development in areas subject to flooding as indicated in the effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

POLICY NR-19: Land within the 100-year flood hazard areas should be zoned for agricultural use or other low-intensity uses including recreational uses that can sustain periodic flooding.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE NR-K: The County shall comply with and enforce the flood plain management regulations of its Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. This shall include review by the County of proposed project and building permit sites with consideration to designated flood hazard areas.

(Note: The Lassen County General Plan Open Space Element contains additional provisions pertaining to open space and related public health and safety issues.)

## WESTWOOD/CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Government Code Section 65302(b) states that the general plan shall include a circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.

The provisions of a circulation element relate to and affect a community's physical, social and economic environment in several ways. The circulation system has a major physical influence on land use development patterns. Socially, circulation systems have a major impact on the areas and people they serve. Safe, efficient circulation facilities and systems need to be accessible to all segments of the population including the young, the poor, the elderly and the handicapped.

As is true for all issues considered in the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan, the Lassen County General Plan-2000 contains goals and policies for circulation issues that pertain to the planning area, subject to the modifications and more specific provisions included in this area plan. This area plan does not reiterate all of the provisions of the General Plan that apply to circulation issues in the planning area.

The following provisions address circulation issues that are specific to the planning area:

**GOAL C-1:** A comprehensive, efficient and safe transportation system in the planning area.

**POLICY CE-1:** Major circulation routes are indicated and designated on the Area Plan Circulation Map. This map has been prepared after consideration of and in correlation with the land use and related policies of this area plan. Not all local roads are indicated on this map.

**POLICY CE-2:** Through truck traffic should be routed to avoid the town center of Westwood whenever possible.

**POLICY CE-3:** The County supports the development of a heliport for emergency services at an appropriate site in the planning area.

**POLICY CE-4:** The County supports the provision of Amtrak service to the area.

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POLICY CE-5: The County supports the development and operation of a tourist-oriented scenic train in the area.

POLICY CE-6: The County encourages the avoidance of traffic delays caused by railroad operations that result from the blockage of State Route 36, County Route A-21 and other important arterials and collectors in the planning area.

POLICY CE-7: The County supports the continuation of public access on public roads.

POLICY CE-8: The County shall continue to review and, when warranted, formulate improved standards for the necessary improvement and maintenance of roads serving new development including standards for the incremental improvement or development of public roads.

POLICY CE-9: The County supports the maintenance of open and uncluttered alleys in Westwood for public health and safety, and encourages property owners, the Westwood Community Services District, utility companies, and other affected parties to develop and maintain an effective program to promote and improve alleyway accessibility.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE CE-A: The County will work with the local transportation planning agency in the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan and consideration of circulation needs in the planning area.

MEASURE CE-B: The County will encourage cooperative efforts with property owners, the Westwood CSD and other affected parties to keep alleys open and accessible.

(Note: Please refer to related provisions in the Circulation Element of the Lassen County General Plan.)

**Background:**

The terminology and designation of highways and roads in the planning area as used in the 1968 Westwood Plan have been updated in this area plan to be consistent with the County General Plan. State Routes 36 and 147 are indicated as minor arterials. County Route A-21 is shown as a major collector.

Improved traffic circulation is needed in Westwood, especially to provide alternative routes for

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emergency vehicles and other traffic when trains block local streets. The 1968 Westwood Plan proposed a new loop road to the southeast of Westwood. This road would have also served a proposed recreation center on the north shore of Walker Lake. Although the scope of the recreation center and related development proposals as described in the 1968 Plan has been reduced in the revised area plan, the concept of a loop road has been retained to support the development of improved access and circulation in that part of the planning area.

Improved access to the old mill site and the site of the proposed light industry business park should be considered along the east side of the railroad tracks from County Route A-21.

The area plan also proposes development of a public roadway on the west side of the Westwood CSD to provide improved access to the west and south sides of Westwood from State Route 36 and County Route A-21. This route may be able, at least in part, to utilize existing haul roads in that area. This westside loop road could connect to the designated eastside loop road, and/or connect with the proposed road on the east side of the railroad tracks, thereby reducing impacts on the town center of Westwood resulting from truck and other traffic generated by industrial and other future uses at the south end of town.

A new major collector extending south from Route A-21 west of Westwood was proposed and approved in Measure V to serve future development in the Dyer Mountain area.

The 1968 Westwood Plan proposed that the airstrip between Westwood and Clear Creek be relocated to provide a 5,000 foot runway and a small flight service facility north of Route 36. The old airstrip was abandoned but a new airstrip was never developed as proposed. There is no specific proposal at this time to restore the old airstrip or to develop a new airstrip in the planning area. The feasibility of and overall need for a new public airstrip in the planning area does not appear to warrant inclusion of such a facility in the area plan at this time, largely because of the proximity (approximately 10 miles east) of the airport in Chester. Therefore, no public airstrip in the planning area is indicated in the revised area plan.

Need has been expressed for an improved helipad in the Westwood area, primarily for service in medical and other emergencies. Although such a facility appears to be warranted, a specific site is not indicated at this time. A strategic location should be identified and surrounding land use issues considered and managed to maintain safety and the compatibility of uses around a helipad site.

As addressed in the County General Plan, an adequate, well-maintained system of streets and highways is an essential component of Lassen County's transportation program. Although the expansion of highway and local road systems is desirable, maintenance of existing systems is mandatory. Delays in road maintenance can result in greater deterioration of roads and increased repair costs. Without adequate maintenance, the County faces the costly prospect of having to completely rebuild sections of roadways. Policies of the Regional Transportation Plan reflect the

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County's objectives to maintain its streets and roads as adequately as possible with the funds available.

**Non-motorized Transportation**

GOAL C-2: Improved off-highway trail systems to provide better circulation and recreation opportunities in the planning area for non-motorized transportation.

POLICY CE-10: The conceptual location of some but not all trails that may be developed in the planning area are indicated on the Area Plan Circulation Map.

POLICY CE-11: The County supports the improvement of the trail system in the planning area to connect with and enhance the Bizz Johnson Trail and related facilities in the Westwood area, including the Westwood Visitor Center, and to connect with recreation resources in the region including Lake Almanor.

POLICY CE-12: The County encourages cooperation between private land owners, public agencies and advocacy organizations in planning and developing public trails in the planning area.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE CE-B: Trails and related facilities will be more precisely proposed, planned and developed by appropriate agencies and organizations in cooperation with private land owners. The County may support and be involved in these proposals through the regional transportation planning process and other development projects including development of the Westwood Visitors Center.

**Background:**

Strong local support has been expressed concerning the need and desire for expansion of recreation trails and related facilities for hiking, biking and horseback riding in the planning area.

The Bizz Johnson Trail is a unique recreation trail project that provides opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding and cross country skiing. This trail extends approximately 25 miles on an abandoned railroad grade between Susanville and Mason Station, five miles north of Westwood. The sections of the trail within the Lassen National Forest are managed by the Forest Service. The sections of the trail outside the National Forest are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. In 1997, the Bureau of Land Management projected recent annual visitation to be 45,950 visits per year on the trail itself.

One of the objectives of the Westwood Visitor Center, constructed in 2002 at the east end of Third

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Street, is to serve as a key public gathering place for recreation uses in the area such as the Bizz Johnson Trail. It is important that trail systems in the planning area, in one way or another, connect to the Bizz Johnson trail. This plan indicates the intention of extending a trail corridor along Route A-21. The most feasible form and alignment of this extended trail is yet to be determined. It may consist of a Class I bikeway adjacent to but separate from sections of A-21, shared road easements with County streets and roads as a Class III bikeway, and/or include other rights-of-way and design elements.

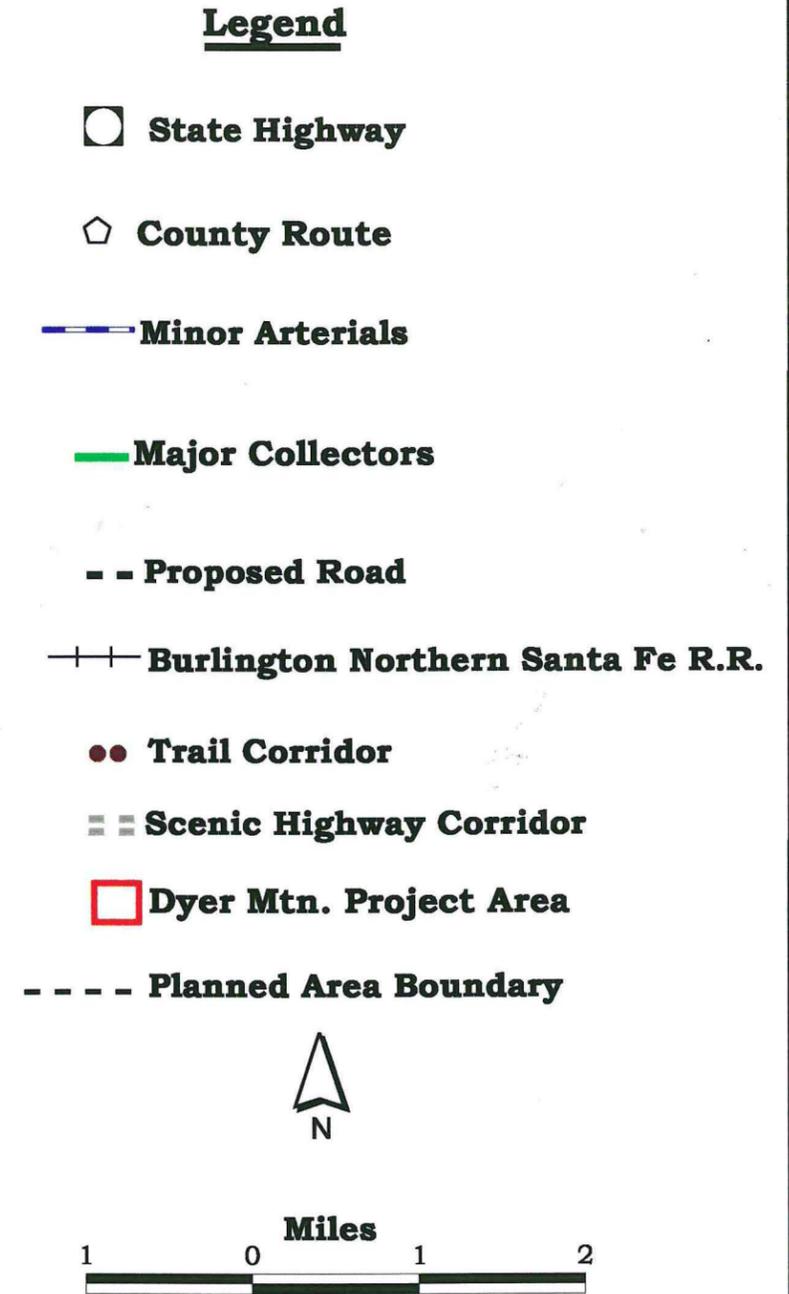
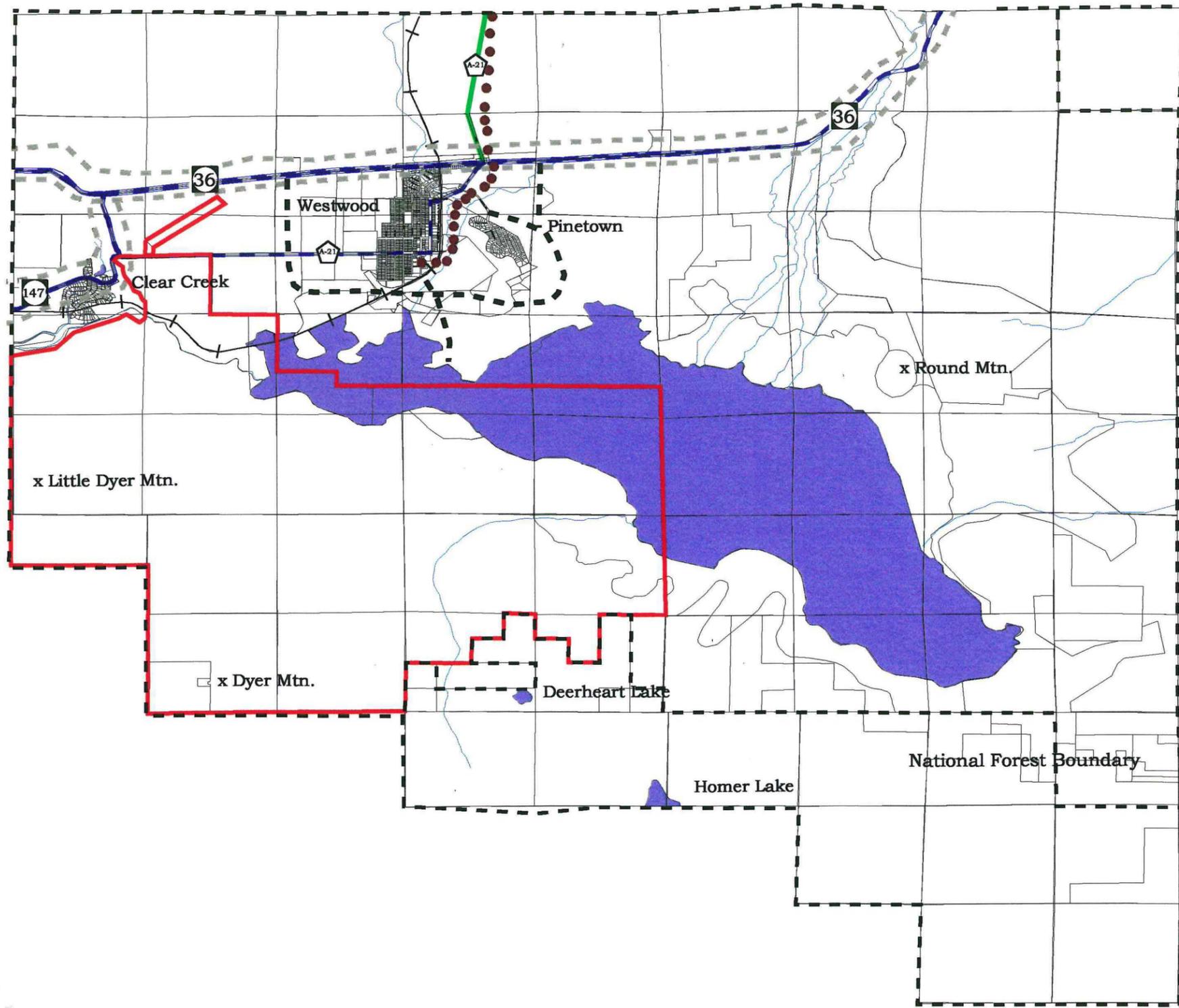
Although not indicated on the Circulation Route, this area plan also proposes a trail corridor extending west from Westwood with the intention of connecting Westwood by a non-motorized trail to Clear Creek and, regionally, to Lake Almanor. At this time this conceptual trail corridor is expected to extend along County Route A-21, State Route 147 through Clear Creek, and/or along the course of Hamilton Branch. Potential routes need to be examined further and other opportunities and related issues evaluated in cooperation with private land owners in order to propose the most feasible, safest and most pleasant trail alignment.

A nature and recreation trail in the area of the old mill pond is also proposed in concept. Such a trail needs to be planned with consideration to the planned development and future land use in this area and the need to mitigate related environmental impacts including disturbance of wildlife.

The County General Plan Open Space Element contains the following policy among others that apply to consideration of new routes for public trails in the planning area:

**POLICY OS-11:** The County supports the development of trails and bicycle routes and the integration of those trails and routes into regional and state systems provided that such uses are planned and developed with the cooperation and agreement of adjacent land owners and affected agencies, utilize public right-of-ways and negotiated easements, satisfactorily mitigate potential trespass and liability issues to the satisfaction of affected private property owners, resolve potential resource management conflicts with affected agricultural and timber production land uses, and must have resolved the legal question as to who has the reversionary interest in the property.

The desire for staging areas and planned trails for off-road motorized vehicles including snowmobiles has been expressed by some individuals. No specific facilities for these uses are proposed in this area plan.



Westwood / Clear Creek Area Plan  
Circulation Map

Figure 5

## WESTWOOD / CLEAR CREEK AREA PLAN COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The 1968 Westwood Plan addressed several issues that pertained as much to the general character of Westwood and Clear Creek as to planning issues such as land use and circulation. Certainly, issues and proposals made under the subjects of land use, circulation, open space and other topics affect the overall visual and social character of a community. For example, the 1968 Westwood Plan noted that expansion of residential areas in accord with the principles of clustering rather than random dispersion was important to protect the “great scenic beauty and relative openness” of the countryside that haphazard groups of houses could rapidly destroy.

The purpose of this Community Character Element is to address planning issues that pertain or directly relate to the visual and cultural character of the community.

One of the fundamental issues concerning the community character of the Westwood and Clear Creek area is the need to improve the economic vitality of the area without sacrificing what many feel are “quality of life” values in these communities. These values include the natural setting and “small town” community environment. This dilemma is not unique to this planning area. In many respects, Westwood and Clear Creek have the characteristics of what are sometimes described as “gateway communities”. Gateway communities are situated in vital locations near or within parks, forests and major recreation areas. In varying degrees, these communities serve the needs of people visiting and working in these attractive and popular resource areas by providing living and visitor accommodations, food service, fuel and other services.

Moreover, gateway communities themselves are often pleasant small towns to where people are attracted and inspired to relocate. As described in the book *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*, produced by The Conservation Fund and the Sonoran Institute (1997), “With their scenic beauty and high quality of life, gateway communities have become a magnet for millions of Americans looking to escape the congestion, banality and faster tempo of life in the suburbs and cities.” *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities* summarized its findings regarding the land use patterns, quality of life and economic forces that shape gateway communities as follows:

1. Many gateway communities are overwhelmed by rapid growth that fails to meet local needs and aspirations.

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2. The vast majority of residents in gateway communities, both longtime residents and newcomers, feel a strong attachment to the landscape and character of their town. They want a healthy local economy, but not at the expense of their natural surroundings or community character.
3. Many residents of gateway communities lack information about the land-use and economic-development options available to them. While reams of data and case studies have been produced for planners and landscape architects, there is an acute shortage of such information available to the laypeople making the day-to-day decisions about the future of their communities.
4. Perhaps most important, a number of gateway communities have already implemented successful initiatives that deal with growth in a manner that protects the community's identity while stimulating a healthy economy and safeguarding natural and historic areas. Throughout the country, dozens of communities have proved that economic prosperity doesn't have to rob them of character, degrade their natural surroundings, or transform them into tourist traps.

In 1998, Lassen County proposed a community outreach project to assist six selected communities in Lassen County, including the community of Westwood, in the development of community action plans. A "community action plan" is an informal but strategic planning process whereby people in a community work together in a focused effort to express what they like about their community and what characteristics and resources they want it to have in the future. The process helps identify important local concerns and assists in formulating specific strategies to address priority issues. In short, a community action plan encourages and provides a community with a planning tool to help it work constructively and progressively in shaping its future.

Local community leaders and organizations were contacted and asked to participate in the action plan process. The action plan program was coordinated by the Lassen County Department of Community Development as a community outreach service with the assistance of a project consultant. However, it was emphasized that the action plans would be prepared by and for each community and would not be considered as county planning documents or as components of the General Plan. In Westwood the action plan process began with the first workshop on July 28, 1999. The second workshop was held on August 19 and the third workshop on September 2. Notes from the workshops were consolidated and used to draft the Westwood Community Action Plan.

At the action plan workshop held on July 28, 1999, participants were asked to comment on resources and characteristics that they feel Westwood should have in five to ten years to enhance what they already have and to make it an even better place in which to live. The purpose of the session was to begin to describe a "vision" or goal of what the participants wanted the Westwood area to be in the future. The following list of resources and characteristics said to be wanted in the future was

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compiled from comments made during the workshop. (The order of comments was not intended to indicate priority.)

- More jobs.
- There will be continued access to local resources such as Robbers Creek and Walker Lake.
- The Bizz Johnson Trail would be extended with a trail head visitor center in Westwood.
- The appearance of the frontage along Highway 36 would be improved.
- A beautiful new sign for Westwood.
- More local skiing facilities would be developed.
- There would be an ice skating rink in the winter and a roller rink in summer (maybe could combine). Also a skateboard park.
- There would be a dinner train and/or excursion train in the area.
- Community theater building and cinema.
- A good, big public library.
- Old-style street lights.
- A visitor center.
- The natural setting will be preserved.
- Surrounding forests kept in good condition.
- Pine Lake would be restored with fishing. No power boats.
- Keep agriculture and cattle (but cows would be kept out of town).
- There would be a homeowners association.
- An assisted living center for seniors would be developed.
- A recycling program.
- A community swimming pool.
- The community center would be updated, upgraded, beautified, and landscaped.

Issues which were selected as short-term priorities for the Westwood Community Action Plan, and for which action plan strategies were developed, consisted of the following:

1. Beautification and community improvements: Concern was expressed about the appearance of the community along Highway 36 and the less-than-attractive image the highway frontage gives to Westwood as a whole. Also, many yards have a lot of trash and houses are not well maintained throughout town. Alleys are often filled with weeds, junk and abandoned cars. Need better code enforcement. The condition of housing and other buildings in some areas needs to be re-vamped for appearance as well as for improved safety and health. Seniors need help in cleaning-up and taking care of their places. Absentee landlords who may not care about the community are part of the problem. There is also a general attitude and lack of cooperation throughout town. Need pride of ownership. Westwood would be more pleasant and would have more tourism appeal if it was cleaned up.

2. Accommodations for tourism: The lack of accommodations or “housing” for tourists in the Westwood area, including R.V. parks, motels and bed and breakfast lodges, is a weakness and does not capitalize economically on the potential of the area’s natural resources. There are few places for visitors to stay in the community which also reduces spending at local restaurants and other service businesses. Visitors to the area mostly stay in Chester, Susanville and other areas where there are accommodations. There was discussion about the balance of local “attractions” (recreation, etc.) to draw people to the area and the services and accommodations that are needed to serve visitors and encourage them in all four seasons to stay in Westwood for longer visits. Local attractions include the Bizz Johnson Trail, the proposed visitors center, and Mountain Meadows (Walker) Lake. There should be more opportunities for bed-and-breakfast lodging.

3. Formation of a Community Advisory Committee: Concern was expressed over the lack of “self-governance” in the unincorporated community of Westwood and the need for a stronger representational and/or advisory organization to advise the County and other agencies and otherwise influence decisions and the provision of public services which affect the community.

It was noted in the community action plan process that action plans should be reviewed and revised periodically to keep them current and meaningful in addressing and responding to changing circumstances, issues and community priorities. (The Westwood Community Action Plan, dated September 1999, should be referred to for more information about these issues and related proposed strategies.)

## **1. SCENIC RESOURCES AND DESIGN STANDARDS**

GOAL CC-1: A pleasant rural setting where architecture and development features compliment the visual quality of the landscape and do not significantly detract from it. Buildings are designed and maintained to compliment the forest and mountain character of the local landscape.

GOAL CC-2: Buildings and property are maintained to present a well-kept, pleasant appearance that compliments and does not detract from the appearance of neighboring property and the community as a whole.

GOAL CC-3: In Westwood the appearance of buildings in the town center compliment and do not significantly detract from the historic heritage of the community and most buildings incorporate design elements from early mill town architecture.

GOAL CC-4: In Clear Creek, development respects and is compatible with the quiet

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“village” character of the community.

POLICY CCE-1: A County “Scenic Corridor” is designated on the area plan land use map along State Routes 36 and 147. Development within scenic corridors will be managed and regulated to protect and improve the scenic character of the area. Development, in this context, does not include silvicultural or agricultural practices unless a building permit or a conditional use permit is required by the County for construction of related structures.

POLICY CCE-2: The Area Plan includes land use designations for which the zoning will require design review of new structures. Design review procedures shall encourage that the appearance of structures will support the visual resource goals of the area and ensure that buildings, signs and other development within these areas are designed and constructed so as not to be of unsightly, undesirable or obnoxious appearance to the extent that they will hinder the orderly and harmonious development and appearance of the neighborhood.

POLICY CCE-3: The County recognizes a special community need to encourage and facilitate the improvement of the visual appearance of the area of Westwood fronting State Route 36 as an important entry point to Westwood and the rest of Lassen County.

POLICY CCE-4: The County supports the undergrounding of utilities in the planning area.

POLICY CCE-5: Development of land adjacent to Westwood and Clear Creek should be subject to design guidelines that are compatible with the guidelines of the adjacent community.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

MEASURE CCE-A: The County will develop and enforce policies and regulations to protect areas within scenic corridors from unjustified levels of visual deterioration and to support the repair of existing cases of significant visual distraction.

MEASURE CCE-B: Development within all commercial and industrial zoning districts and planned development districts will be subject to design review procedures and some areas not otherwise subject to design review procedures will be zoned with a “D, Design Combining District”.

MEASURE CCE-C: Specific design review standards and guidelines, customized for particular areas (e.g., Clear Creek, the Westwood central business area, the

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Highway 36 frontage, etc.), will be prepared to help developers, builders, and the public in general understand, appreciate, and fulfill the design qualities and objectives being encouraged in the planning area. The recommendations of the Goals and Policies section of the Westwood Revitalization Plan will be considered in the formulation and application of design standards for the community of Westwood.

MEASURE CCE-D: The County will encourage and assist the Community of Westwood to enhance the town center and the “Y” with consideration to implementing recommendations of the Westwood Revitalization Plan.

MEASURE CCE-E: The County should revise the zoning code, as it applies to commercial districts in Westwood and Clear Creek, to require a conditional use permit for proposed commercial structures greater than 10,000 square feet in size. During review of the use permit, the County should evaluate if the large structure and use is compatible with the character of the proposed project area and whether the impacts of the proposed new use will be significantly adverse to existing patterns of commercial and other land uses in the area.

MEASURE CCE-F: In the modification of commercial zoning districts for the communities of Westwood and Clear Creek with consideration to this area plan, the County will review the provisions for allowed uses in those commercial districts to determine if certain allowed uses (e.g., storage garages, car wash facilities, auto sales, etc.) are inconsistent with the character of certain commercial areas and may eliminate, or require conditional use permits if not otherwise required for, those uses.

MEASURE CCE-G: The County will provide strict code enforcement to encourage uncluttered street fronts and prevent the accumulation of garbage and junk, and will support programs to encourage the removal of abandoned vehicles.

MEASURE CCE-H: The use of adequate and visually attractive fencing and natural screening will be encouraged to screen outdoor storage and visual intrusions that are allowed under established zoning provisions.

MEASURE CCE-I: In the review of development projects in the planning area, utility lines will be required to be installed underground unless there are substantial reasons to demonstrate that undergrounding of certain utility lines is not feasible.

Background:

As acknowledged throughout this area plan, the area of Clear Creek and Westwood is recognized and

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well-noted for its scenic attractiveness. The 1968 Westwood Plan included a County “Scenic Highway Corridor” designation along Highways 36 and 147 and stated that development along these routes within view of the road should be carefully controlled to preserve the scenic character of the Westwood area.

Scenic and visual resources can be considered in two categories: 1) the natural environment and 2) the built environment that consists of architecture, signs, and other man-made structures as well as equipment and materials stored on property. The goal of protecting scenic resources and the visual attractiveness of communities is important for reasons beyond cosmetic appearance. Visual attractiveness is an integral component of an area’s economic resources, especially for communities where tourism and recreation have or could have important roles in the local economy.

Highways 36 and 147 are both identified as segments of the Lassen Scenic Byway through the planning area. This classification is awarded and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. There are no "State Scenic Highways" designated by the State of California in Lassen County and there are also no official "County Scenic Highways" as recognized by the state.

The Lassen County General Plan-2000 contains several provisions that address scenic resources. These provisions recognize and propose protection of scenic corridors and address the need for design review processes and guidelines in certain communities. Goal N-23 of the General Plan expresses the goal of maintaining scenic resources of high quality which will continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors and which will continue to be an asset to the reputation and economic resources of Lassen County. This goal is supported by the following policies in the general plan. These provisions apply to the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area:

Policy LU23: The County will continue to utilize design review districts in selected areas in order to ensure that buildings and other substantial developments are designed and constructed so as not to be of unsightly, undesirable or obnoxious appearance to the extent that they will hinder the orderly and harmonious development and appearance of the neighborhood.

Policy NR78: The County has identified areas of scenic importance and sensitivity along state highways and major County roads and has designated those areas as “Scenic Corridors”. (Refer to the General Plan land use map and related designations in various area plans, which may also be regarded as “scenic highway corridors”.) The County will develop and enforce policies and regulations to protect areas designated as scenic corridors from unjustified levels of visual deterioration.

Policy NR79: The County shall continue to use "Design Review Combining Districts" to review the visual impacts of development in designated areas to minimize significant adverse impacts.

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Policy NR80: In the course of adopting policies pertaining to scenic resources in other general plan elements and area plans, the County may consider additional and more particular policies and measures to protect scenic resources and prevent or reduce the adverse visual impacts of development in visually sensitive areas.

The County General Plan also includes the following implementation measures to support the policies quoted above:

Measure NR-U: The County shall adopt policies to minimize adverse impacts which will significantly deteriorate the scenic qualities of visually sensitive areas.

Measure NR-V: Areas designated and zoned for development in scenic corridors shall be zoned as "Design Review Combining Districts" or otherwise regulated to require review and management by the County of the visual impacts of proposed development.

Measure NR-W: The County shall adopt design and development standards for use in "Design Review" areas and scenic corridors to guide the consideration and management of potential significant impacts to scenic resources.

Chapter 18.86 of the Lassen County Code contains regulations for the "D, Design Combining District". The intent of the design combining district is to ensure that buildings, structures, fences and other substantial external improvements in designated areas shall be designed and constructed so as not to be of unsightly, undesirable, or obnoxious appearance to the extent that they will hinder the orderly and harmonious development of the neighborhood or of the county in general, or otherwise affect the general prosperity and welfare.

In any district with which is combined a "D" combining district, new structures require design review approval pursuant to the requirements contained in Chapter 18.118 of the County Code. In Lassen County, design approval is also generally required for proposed structures in all commercial and industrial zones and may be required as a condition of a use permit or planned development permit.

Although it is not within the scope of this area plan to contain detailed design guidelines that are proposed to implement and support area plan policies pertaining to design and visual resource goals, this plan offers comments on and directions for the development of goals and objectives for such guidelines. (Note: It is recommended that design guidelines not be adopted as part of the area plan so that such guidelines may retain greater flexibility in use and revision as needed. They may and should, however, be adopted concurrently with the area plan if possible.)

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It is acknowledged that design expectations and criteria can be very subjective and a matter of personal judgment. However, community values and expectations concerning architectural appearance can and should be articulated in ways that support related objectives, help make developers aware of the elements that will be considered in the review of projects, and provide guidelines that give direction in the evaluation of project proposals when structural design is subject to administrative review and approval processes. A final but perhaps foremost objective for design guidelines should be that they will inspire and encourage land owners, architects and developers to willingly and thoughtfully, and as early in the planning process as possible, design and propose structures that will be attractive and compliment the building sites and the historic and scenic qualities of the area surrounding those sites.

**Westwood**

Protection of the area's scenic quality and the need for improvements, especially along Highway 36 in Westwood, has been recognized as a problem and an ongoing issue as reflected in the 1999 Westwood Community Action Plan. For many visitors to the area, much of their image and impression of Westwood as a community is drawn from what they observe along Highway 36. Whereas some property owners may feel that the junk-strewn appearance of their property is a symbol of independence and property rights, the general public sees it as indicating a lack of pride in the community and a lack of consideration for neighbors and the community in general.

There are several subjects of concern regarding design guidelines for the planning area. One is the historic character of the central Westwood commercial area. This area is strongly connected historically and, in many respects, culturally to the heritage of Westwood as a milltown. The need and intent to preserve or otherwise maintain and enhance the continuity of this architectural heritage has been recognized and may need to be addressed as an "historic design area". This is demonstrated to be the case when another subject of concern is considered, namely design standards that are needed for newer commercial and industrial areas including the Highway 36 corridor. Whereas these areas might not be expected to reflect as much of the milltown architectural heritage as the central business area of Westwood, design guidelines in all areas should encourage and require the skillful incorporation of structural styles with substantial use of natural-appearing materials, earth-tone or non-obtrusive colors (except occasionally for trim), and use of other design features in ways that are compatible with and compliment the surrounding forest setting.

Another topic of concern to Westwood as well as to the community of Clear Creek involves the character of residential areas and the interface of residential districts with commercial and industrial districts. It is important to consider how the development and application of design standards relate to and affect the well-being and harmony of neighborhoods. Design standards as well as compatible adjoining land uses are needed to protect and maintain the well-being and neighborhood characteristics of residential areas.

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Many of the following comments and observations pertaining to development and implementation of design guidelines for Westwood are distilled from notes generated almost ten years ago by a committee comprised of members of the Westwood Chamber of Commerce and the Westwood Planning Committee. Town hall meetings were held by that committee to discuss design issues. The concept of a design review process that would preserve and enhance the historic milltown character of downtown Westwood was supported. The following comments are only a summary of findings and recommendations from that process which, it was recognized, were largely adapted from the design manual of the Truckee Historic Preservation District.

The Westwood design committee observed that the design review process should be flexible with the following goals:

- To re-create the historic old-town character of Westwood.
- To create a walk-about downtown that is “people oriented” rather than “vehicle oriented”.
- To create a downtown commercial district that caters to both local shoppers and visitors.
- To preserve the character of the town center and maintain compatibility among building facades.

As stated above, it was found that the purpose of the design manual should be to provide guidelines that require new uses and alterations to existing uses in commercial districts to be designed with consideration for preserving and enhancing the historic milltown character of Westwood. A design manual, therefore, was felt to be needed to help assess proposals that impact that design theme. It was proposed that such a design manual would include the following objectives:

- Provide design criteria for determining the character and design of structures within the commercial districts.
- Establish guidelines for the review and approval process for proposed projects in commercial districts.
- Encourage imaginative and efficient design compatible with the theme.

It was determined that a variety of design elements or themes should be addressed in design guidelines for this area. The following design elements and the “intent” of related guidelines were recommended by the design committee. (Only a representative sample of the committee’s guideline recommendations are summarized below.)

**Building Height:** The height of a new or improved structure should relate to the height of surrounding structures. Varied heights can enhance visual and aesthetic appeal but new development should be compatible with existing heights.

**Building Proportions:** Building proportions should be in harmony with one another. The proportional relationship of the buildings in the commercial district is already established and

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would be disrupted by new buildings of disproportionate dimensions.

**Color and Tone:** The goal is to achieve an area-wide complimentary blend of background colors combined with selected use of primary and focal colors for trim. Materials used in exterior construction should look natural.

**Texture:** Textures can contrast or conform with neighboring buildings. Avoid shiny materials such as steel and large windows.

**Construction Material:** Traditional construction materials and techniques are to be emphasized. Historically correct building methods [and materials] are to be encouraged, as is restoration of the original appearance if feasible.

**Building Projections:** New or improved structures should feature similar architectural projections where appropriate and their detail design should respect existing patterns. Avoid flat and monotonous facades.

**Roofs:** A harmony of roof and parapet forms should be maintained. Maintain general consistency in roof pitch and shape.

**Lighting:** Lighting should be functional and in harmony with nearby building lighting. It should not attract unnecessary attention. Use indirect lighting whenever possible.

**Signage:** Signs should be located so that they do not dominate the building and should conform to each other in scale, design, texture, color, material and location. (Selecting a sign concept is an important design decision for a business because it is such a prominent part of the business image.)

**Building Canopies:** Canopies cover walkways and provide weather protection. Use single-story canopy along street frontages and provide continuity between adjacent canopies.

**Landscaping:** Use hardy plants to accent buildings, pedestrian areas, parking facilities and to provide shade.

**Architectural Details:** Architectural detailing enhances the effect of historic buildings which still exhibit a unique local character based on construction methods and materials common in the early 1900's.

**Windows:** To maintain the historic character of buildings, preserve the proportional, functional and decorative features of windows. Replacement with original historic design is encouraged and original materials should be used if feasible.

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Fencing: Fencing in the commercial district should complement and not detract from historic buildings and sites. The design of fencing, gates, retaining walls and similar site features should relate to the architecture and site topography.

Demolition: The first choice between demolition and renovation of existing structures should be renovation whenever feasible. A replacement structure should resemble the historic building it is replacing in overall effect.

It should again be noted that the above recommendations were intended to apply to “downtown” Westwood and its historic commercial and service center. These provisions may or may not pertain to other areas of the planning area that should also be addressed with design guidelines. The outlined provisions, however, generally sum up the factors which should be considered in a design review process. Recommendations for implementation of design review guidelines were also proposed. These included the following:

Implementation: Design review guidelines should be available at the Planning Department for review in the planning stage of any project in the commercial district. The Planning Department should review all plans submitted for projects in the commercial district and consider:

- The height and area of the building and setbacks.
- Colors, textures and materials of exterior walls.
- The type, pitch and material of roofs.
- The type, size and location of signs.
- Landscaping and parking layout.
- The relationship to other buildings or uses in the area.
- The architecture as related to nearby historic buildings.
- The treatment of the site as related to its natural setting, including grading and preservation of trees and natural ground cover.

Westwood Revitalization Plan, 2001

The County initiated preparation of a revitalization plan in cooperation with the Westwood Chamber of Commerce in 2001. Preparation of the plan was funded in part by a Community Development Block Grant. The plan was prepared by a team comprised of Pacific Municipal Consultants and landscape architect Alan Pardee. The Chamber formed a Westwood Revitalization Committee to participate in and guide the planning process.

The purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Plan was to outline community goals for revitalization and to present ideas and proposed development standards to help realize those goals over time. The

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identified planning area was the Central Business Area and the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area of Westwood as was proposed in the preliminary draft of the Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan. The plan also provided recommendations concerning the “Y” on Highway 36, which is recognized as a main entry into the town center.

The Revitalization Plan includes an “improvement plan” that was recommended to be implemented in stages and in small pieces. The improvement plan was included to propose improvements and basic design features and to encourage the addition of new structures and businesses that will compliment and add to the attractions of the community. It was noted in the plan that:

Small improvements over time can begin to have an immediate change on the appearance of the community. More importantly, small changes can affect the attitude of residents and create a positive atmosphere. . . It is important that the existing businesses be supported and encouraged to expand, and that new businesses be shown what is needed and wanted in the community.

The proposed improvement plan included recommendations for streetscape and building requirements that will address new development. This plan was developed to indicate one method of how the Central Business Area and the “Y” could be developed and enhanced. The plan is intended to recommend basic design features and encourage the thoughtful addition of new structures and businesses in Westwood. The Revitalization Plan suggested architectural features that can be incorporated into new homes and structures in Westwood’s town center and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Area.

Several changes in zoning provisions were recommended in the Revitalization Plan. The Plan notes that subsequent zoning revisions to help implement the design plan should retain flexibility and allow property owners and the County opportunities to consider proposed projects on their merits while using the plan as a gauge to determine whether the proposed building or the use is compatible with Westwood. The plan noted that there are no size restrictions for commercial structures in the Central Business Area and conveyed the concern that has been expressed in the community regarding large commercial uses (e.g., big box stores) that could have an adverse impact on existing businesses. Therefore, the Revitalization Plan recommended that a conditional use permit should be required for commercial structures greater than 10,000 square feet in size. The plan also noted that the current commercial zoning districts could allow uses (e.g., storage garages, outside sales of materials, etc.) that may not be compatible with the preferred “visitor-oriented” character of the central business area.

The Westwood Revitalization Plan concluded with a “Goals and Policies” section. This section was intended to summarize the recommendations of the plan and the community and to propose policies and design standards in a format that the County could use when reviewing requests for new projects and building permits. This section noted that the intent of the plan is to encourage appropriate

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growth, not to stifle new investment.

**Clear Creek**

Whereas Westwood was developed as a full-service mill town, the community of Clear Creek was developed almost exclusively as a residential community with limited commercial development along Highway 147. The overall character of the community is often described as a “mountain village” and, based on comments from residents and the Clear Creek Property Owners Association during preparation of the area plan, there is strong local sentiment that the community desires to retain that character. A spokesperson for the Clear Creek Community Services District, in addressing the community character resources of the area, wrote, “The qualities most valued are the quiet peacefulness and beauty of our community. What gives Clear Creek these qualities are the mature trees, clear clean running water, open meadow areas, and wildlife that are attracted to the area and surrounding forest.”

Several recommendations were made by the Clear Creek CSD and the Clear Creek Property Owners Association concerning community character issues in and around the community. The comments of the Clear Creek CSD and the Clear Creek Property Owners Association express concern not only for future development and the need for design guidelines in the community of Clear Creek itself but also concern for the quality of development that may be undertaken adjacent to the community (e.g., in areas that are to be designated “Planned Development Residential”). Comments intended to “help enhance and maintain Clear Creek’s mountain village charm” have included:

- Design of buildings should enhance the woodland setting. The trend of “cottage-style” homes should be encouraged. Reflective roofing and building materials should not be allowed.
- Roads within the community meander with gentle curves and that design theme should be continued for new development.
- Design of the entire commercial district should encourage pedestrian traffic and include mandatory landscaping. If possible, development should include covered porches or walkways.
- Bicycle and pedestrian walkways and crosswalks should be established.
- If there are new residential areas adjacent to Clear Creek, changes need to blend into the area and not “stand out like a sore thumb”. Development of land adjacent to local communities should be subject to design guidelines that are compatible with the communities.
- Single-family dwellings should include off-street parking and a garage or carport because of snow removal objectives.

Because commercial land uses largely front Highway 147, local concern has been expressed about how the type and character of commercial development will affect the overall character of the community. An important consideration is concern that the commercial district should provide for

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the needs of the community and encourage tourism without detracting from the beautiful setting. It has been expressed that Clear Creek would like to maintain the mountain village character by encouraging retail business with “quaint, small-to-medium size merchandising spaces”.

Clear Creek Park is an important resource for the community and contributes much to the visual character of the area. As addressed in the Land Use Element of this area plan, the 1968 Plan for the Westwood area proposed that Clear Creek Park be expanded to include the meadow and pond to the north of the park with overnight camping facilities and possibly a trailer park. However, there appears to be a general opinion in the community that the park should only be used for day-use activities with no “trailer park” or overnight facilities. Major construction of new facilities in the park has been discouraged by the community. Future improvements to the park could include improvements to restroom facilities and expansion of the children’s play area, a stage area for concerts and plays, and a gazebo near the water’s edge. Other limited improvements might include adding a kitchen to the fire hall and a deck for community and special events.

Another community character and safety issue of concern to the community is traffic flow and the need for speed control on Highway 147 through Clear Creek. In a letter dated June 4, 2002, the Clear Creek CSD suggested that alternate routes from State Route 147 to State Route 36 to bypass Clear Creek should be investigated because current traffic flow and speed present safety concerns for families and children crossing the Highway 147 to the park. This concern demonstrates that traffic and circulation issues are often closely related to and impact community character issues.

## **2. NIGHT SKY**

The night sky of the planning area and Lassen County in general is felt by many people to be an important and sensitive resource. With the introduction and expansion of development projects in rural areas there is increasing concern over the adverse effects that extensive lighting has on the scenic and restful qualities of the night sky. The glare of lighting from large developments can sometimes be seen for miles around and fades the brilliance of the moon and stars.

Concerns have also been expressed that lighting which extends beyond the site being lighted is an intrusion on the peace and privacy of affected people in the vicinity and sometimes of people miles away. The County recognizes that well-lighted areas are often important for safety and security. The County has, however, frequently imposed conditions of approval on projects to require shielding of lights and other control measures to provide that lighting is, as much as possible, directed to the areas where it is needed and that the adverse effects on the surrounding area is reduced.

The County General Plan includes the following goal and policies pertaining to the scenic resources of the night sky. These provisions apply as well to the Westwood/Clear Creek planning area.

Goal N-24: Protection of the scenic qualities of the county's night sky.

Policy NR81: The County shall maintain and enforce policies, development standards and mitigation measures to control lighting generated by development and to minimize the unnecessary adverse impacts of such lighting in the vicinity of the development and on the general scenic qualities of the night sky in the area.

Policy NR82: The County will encourage projects within Lassen County but outside the County's jurisdictional authority to include provisions to minimize the adverse intrusion of lighting on the surrounding area and the night sky in general.

### **3. CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Representatives of the Honey Lake Maidu Tribe have indicated that the Westwood/Clear Creek Planning Area contains many culturally significant gathering and burial sites. According to the planning area's Master Environmental Assessment, the California Archaeological Center at California State University, Chico, indicated in January 2000 that there were 46 known ethnographic sites within the Planning Area (which at that time included the Dyer Mountain project area).

Archaeological and cultural resources are considered to be a part of the environment. Federal and state laws usually require some form of assessment of environmental impacts for projects that may affect environmental and cultural resources. For projects involving federal lands or resources, the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, is applicable. Section 106 of this Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects that their projects may have on historic properties and cultural resources and they must allow a reasonable time period for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to comment.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which is applicable to state agencies and county governments in consideration of projects on private lands within their land use regulatory jurisdiction, outlines a project-by-project review process for cultural resources similar to the Federal Section 106 process.

According to the California Native American Heritage Commission, Native American cultural resources may be divided into four general categories: 1. Skeletal remains and grave-related artifacts; 2. Traditional cultural sites; 3. Religious or spiritual sites and; 4. Artifacts

California state law regulates the treatment and disposition of human remains encountered during archaeological excavation or project grading and construction.

Areas of traditional cultural significance are areas that have been, and often continue to be, of religious and/or economic significance. They include Native American sacred areas where religious

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ceremonies are practiced or which are otherwise culturally significant. They also include areas where Native Americans gather plants for food, medicinal and/or economic purposes. A certain measure of protection is provided for such resources by California State Law.

CEQA Section 15064.5 encourages county planning agencies to formulate provisions for the protection of cultural resources. There are three basic phases for evaluating potential impacts to cultural resources under CEQA, all of which should be implemented by a qualified professional archaeologist:

Phase I - Inventory of Cultural Resources

Phase II - Determination of Resource "Significance"

Phase III - Treatment of Impacted, Significant Cultural Resources

Phase I generally involves: 1) a records search, 2) a field survey and, 3) a written report. A records search can be conducted by the appropriate regional Archaeological Information Center. If cultural resources are identified they must be properly recorded on official forms and a report must be prepared to describe how the survey was conducted with recommendations for further work if needed. This phase also typically involves consultation with local Native Americans. A listing of appropriate tribes, groups and individuals can be obtained by contacting the Native American Heritage Commission.

The purpose of Phase II of the evaluation process is to determine whether a cultural resource is "important" or significant. This determination is typically made with consideration to criteria outlined in Section 15064.5 of CEQA. Generally, a resource will be considered to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Public Resources Code 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852). This criteria includes sites that are:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;  
or
- D. Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

If the resource is not determined to be important there will, by definition, be no significant

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environmental effect and no further work will be needed. If the resource is determined to be “important”, impacts to the resource will need to be avoided or mitigated.

Phase III of the assessment and remediation process, if needed, includes the treatment and mitigation of resources that have been determined to have “important” cultural value. These measures may include avoidance, site capping, creation of cultural easements, and/or data recovery.

Lassen County utilizes the processes of the California Environmental Quality Act to consider and to respond to potential impacts on cultural resources that may result from projects that are subject to the County’s regulatory authority. Prior to discretionary approval of proposed development projects on undeveloped land, the County determines if a significant cultural resource exists on the site and if it may be impacted by the project. If a cultural resource is suspected or identified on the site, a qualified archaeologist is called in to evaluate the site, prepare a report describing the significance of the resource and make recommendations concerning avoidance or mitigation. The County then considers the recommendations of the report in determining how it will respond to the issue in the overall process of project review and permitting.

It is recommended that project developers complete a Phase I inventory of their project sites as early in the project design stage as possible if it appears that there may be cultural resources on the site. If cultural resource constraints are identified in the beginning, a project can often be designed to avoid or mitigate impacts to important cultural resources.

*Westwood/Clear Creek Area Plan*  
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