MEETING DATE: October 25, 2016

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Nevada County Planning Department

SUBJECT: Consideration of the Nevada County Planning Commission’s August 25, 2016, 4-0 (1 absent) recommendation to approve the Soda Springs Area Plan, including: 1) adopt a Negative Declaration for the Area Plan (EIS14-004); 2) approve a General Plan Amendment to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan (GP14-003); 3) approve a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment to change the base land use designation of 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center (GP16-004); 4) approve a Zoning District Map amendment to rezone parcels consistent with the proposed General Plan land use designation amendments, including adding the Rural Center (RC) and Site Performance (SP) Combining District zoning overlays to specific parcels (Z16-005); and 5) amending Sec. L-II 4.2.3, Article 1, Chapter II of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to approve the Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards (ORD14-002) (District V).

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

I. Approve the attached Resolution (EIS14-004) for a Negative Declaration for the Soda Springs Area Plan, pursuant to Section 15074 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines based on the findings contained in the Resolution (Attachment 1).

II. Approve the attached Resolution (GP14-003) for the proposed General Plan text amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan based on the findings contained in the Resolution (Attachment 2).
III. Approve the attached Resolution (GP16-004) for the General Plan Land Use Map amendments to change the land use designations of 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center based on the findings contained in the Resolution (Attachment 3).

IV. Adopt the attached Ordinance (Z16-005) amending Zoning District Maps (ZDM) #114 and #119 to coincide the rezoning of 51 parcels to be consistent with the amended General Plan Land Use Map, and to add the Rural Center (RC) Combining District to 77 parcels, and the Site Performance (SP) Combining District to 194 parcels, based on the findings contained within the Ordinance (Attachment 4).

V. Approve the attached Ordinance (ORD14-002) amending Section L-II 4.2.3, Article 1, Chapter II of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to approve the Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards based on the findings contained within the Ordinance (Attachment 5).

VI. Close Board Order BO-14-02

FUNDING: No budget amendments are required.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Resolution: Initial Study/Proposed Negative Declaration (EIS14-004)
2. Resolution: General Plan Text Amendments (GP14-003)
3. Resolution: General Plan Land Use Map Amendments (GP16-004)
4. Ordinance: Zoning District Map Amendments (Z16-005)
5. Ordinance: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments (ORD14-002)
6. Draft Soda Springs Area Plan
7. Planning Commission Staff Report w/ duplicate attachments removed

BACKGROUND:
On March 25, 2014, the Board of Supervisors issued Board Order BO-14-02 to direct the Advance Planning Division work program for Phase II of the General Plan Land Use Element Update. The directive called for a new Area Plan for the Soda Springs community in accordance with Program 1.2.1.b of the General Plan Land Use Element.

Local efforts to provide input for long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade. There has been consistent and strong community support, particularly from the Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA) for coordinated planning efforts on Donner Summit. Those efforts have resulted in the Donner Summit Economic Study (2004), the Donner Summit Visioning and Planning Resident Survey
(2007), and the Community Prosperity Summit (2008), all of which provide the foundation of the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan.

As a result of the construction of Highway 80 in 1964, Soda Springs has become a drive-by community rather than a stop by, or destination itself. Interstate 80 allows potential visitors to pass by enroute to nearby Truckee, Reno, and Lake Tahoe, oblivious to the experiences they might enjoy on Donner Summit. Additionally, time has passed on while the area has been hindered in its economic development by the lack of investment and the consequent impacts of areas of blight in the built environment. Furthermore, many competing recreational areas further east have better organized and promoted attractions for year-round recreation resulting in Donner Summit being comparatively less competitive for tourist dollars needed to support economic viability.

The current Highway Commercial Land Use Designation throughout much of the commercial district is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the area, and there is a clear need to revitalize the physical appearance in some areas of town to increase economic activity. Healthy economic activity is vital to a healthy social fabric and creating conditions to protect and enhance the natural environment. Compounding this problem of the restrictive land use designation is the multitude of political jurisdictions and divided community needs that have resulted in not capitalizing on opportunities that exist in the area such as non-winter uses. Adding to the challenge, consecutive drought years and projected climate changes create uncertainties for the local economy which is historically heavily dependent upon snow fall. The passage of time with consequent deterioration of buildings and infrastructures, the national economic downturn and the impacts of increasingly less snow fall during the winter season present even greater challenges to economic development of the Soda Springs area than was the case a decade ago.

**PLAN PREPARATION:**
Local efforts to inform long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade and the foundation of this Area Plan is based on a 2004 comprehensive economic development study conducted for the Donner Summit area. To help guide development in Soda Springs and surrounding Donner Summit area the Advance Planning Division of the Nevada County Planning Department held nine public workshops between September 2014 and August 2016, and gave Area Plan presentations to the Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA) and Placer County Donner Summit Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC). At each of the public meetings important strategies were recommended to be implemented to encourage investment and to achieve environmental, physical, and sustainable economic improvements. Public input was incorporated into draft Area Plan Chapters which would then be available for public review prior to the next Area Plan meeting. At that next meeting the draft chapters would be discussed and any feedback on the draft chapters would be incorporated into a revised draft chapter that would be posted on the County’s website. This sequence of making draft Area Plan chapters available in advance of upcoming community meetings, reviewing the chapters at the following meeting, and receiving feedback which was then
incorporated into revised draft chapters which were posted for public review continued until the draft Area Plan was completed. The complete draft of the Area Plan has been available and posted on the County website since March, 2016. Completion of the draft Area Plan would not have been possible without the extensive public participation and community engagement this project received.

AREA PLAN LOCATION:
The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan covers those Donner Summit communities connected along Donner Pass Road (historic Old Hwy. 40) between Cisco Grove and the Donner Memorial Bridge in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan’s focus is the 141-acre community of Soda Springs which the County has designated as a Rural Center for the surrounding rural areas. The Soda Springs Rural Center covers an area approximately 1.2 miles along Donner Pass Rd. from the Soda Springs/Norden Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Road. The predominant theme of the land use pattern is commercial and residential, and the area functions as the primary visitor and tourist area on Donner Summit.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The proposed project is an Area Plan that promotes revitalization of the Donner Summit area to be consistent with community values and the County’s General Plan, with specific land use regulations and zoning changes focused on the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial zoning district and adjacent properties. The Soda Springs Area Plan establishes goals, policies and implementation strategies for providing specific land use guidance for the Donner Summit area. The Area Plan will help achieve the vision of the community by implementing its guiding principles through rezoning land use designations, and development of community design standards. The Area Plan proposes to achieve this through more intensive concentrated mixed-use development and flexible design standards in the commercial area to promote the area’s revitalization, improve aging infrastructure, better identify recreation access, and diversify commercial retail opportunities for visitors and residents.

The Area Plan is organized into seven chapters and three attachments. Chapter 1 introduces the Area Plan and summarizes the plan’s vision for the future and guiding principles for prosperity and sustainability. Chapters 2 through 7 provide an overview of the Area Plan’s existing conditions, opportunities and constraints for development and conservation, and outline the policy direction for the plan, with individual sections for the following plan elements: Land Use; Economic Development; Public Services; Recreation; Natural and Cultural Resources; and Area Plan Implementation. Attachment A establishes specific development standards, design standards and permissible uses that are intended to improve the scenic quality of the built environment, promote a sense of place, and support the community’s desired community character. Attachment B lists Assessor’s Parcel Numbers within the plan area by zoning district, and Attachment C includes the Area Plan references.
MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN:
The Soda Springs Area Plan includes revised design standards, revisions to permissible use and development standards, and other strategies to facilitate desirable economic development and expand resident and visitor services for improved prosperity and sustainability of the Donner Summit region.

The following are significant components of the proposed Plan:

Goals and Policies: Donner Summit specific Goals and Policies are included in all elements of the Area Plan to implement the vision and desired improvements identified in the Plan. This vision includes protection of rural lifestyle values and character, quality affordable housing and lodging availability, and trail connections within and around the Rural Center. Community desired improvements include creation of in-town public places, construction of gateway signage and community branding, and improved vehicle and pedestrian safety.

Land Use/Zoning District Map Amendments: No new structures are proposed with the Area Plan, however there are five new zoning districts proposed that are not currently present within the Rural Center; R3 (High Density Residential), C1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C2 (Community Commercial), M1 (Light Industrial), and FR-40 (Forest-40 acre minimum). These land use designation/zoning district changes are part of the Area Plan’s larger strategy to facilitate a compact land use pattern and focus additional residential capacity to establish the commercial center as the focal point for the entire community, to provide greater flexibility for local commercial businesses, and to recognize the historical or intended use of several parcels.

Rural Center (RC) Combining District: The Area Plan seeks to focus economic development and community improvements within and adjacent to the commercial/multi-family zone districts with the addition of the Rural Center (RC) Combining District which allows for more flexible development standards and permissible uses which are summarized below:

- New construction standards on vacant lands:
  - Protect exiting natural features outside of the building site
  - Utilize earthtone exterior colors and building materials
  - Provide adequate snow storage
  - Plant native vegetation for landscaping
  - Preserve mountain, forest and meadow public views from Donner Pass Rd., if feasible
  - Consider solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection, and privacy when designing the site layout, and
  - Install water efficient appliances

- Community development standards:
- Open space reduction for mixed-use buildings with landscaping
- Allows for up to 50% offsite parking
- Establishes shipping container storage limits
- Requires garbage facilities that are secure from wildlife
- Allows limited commercial activities within legal non-conforming residences
- Establishes snow removal equipment and screening requirements for outside storage

- Housing density standards:
  - Mixed-use projects with C1 or C2 zoning may utilize a maximum residential density of 6 units/acre
  - Multi-family projects with R2 zoning may utilize a two-unit minimum density allowance, subject to zoning compliance

- Agricultural Uses such as farmer’s markets and farm stands are permissible subject to approval pursuant to Sec. L-II 3.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance

Site Performance (SP) Combining District: With the addition of the Site Performance (SP) Combining District for the single-family residential, forest, and recreation zoning districts, the Area Plan seeks to protect community character and neighborhood compatibility with development standards summarized below:

- Community development standards:
  - Establishes shipping container storage limits
  - Requires garbage facilities that are secure from wildlife
  - Establishes snow removal equipment limits

**ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:**
As a policy document, the Soda Springs Area Plan supplements and becomes part of the General Plan, providing a comprehensive framework for making land use decisions within the Soda Springs Rural Center and influencing decisions in the surrounding Donner Summit geographic area. The goals, policies and design and site development standards contained within this plan reflect Soda Springs unique characteristics, support the local community’s vision, and are consistent with the overall themes and goals of the General Plan. The County’s General Plan identifies Soda Springs as a Rural Center which is intended to provide for a mix of primary uses grouped together and interrelated to form a functional and community center, and to create a visual identity related to the historic mountain character for the surrounding Donner Summit rural communities.

The Area Plan is consistent with applicable General Plan policies and regulations, including; General Plan Goal 1.3 which calls for the protection and enhancement of community character, land use patterns, rural lifestyle, and economy of Rural Regions in
their natural setting. Also General Plan Policy 1.3.13 identifies Rural Region Area Plans as a more specific planning tool to complement and assist further implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan. Additionally, General Plan Policy 1.9.2 identifies current development constraints imposed by the Highway Commercial (HC) land use designation within the Soda Springs Rural Center.

The Area Plan is also consistent with the purpose and regulations Nevada County Zoning Ordinance including Section L-II 4.2.3 Design Guidelines, and Section L-II 2.7 Combining Districts which is established to provide specialized consideration of unique areas and allow for more or less restrictive regulations than those contained elsewhere within Chapter II of the Zoning Ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (EIS16-004):
The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan is a policy and design plan, and does not propose any specific development projects. The commitment to preserving the cultural and natural resources and the environment is broadly supported by stakeholders and is seen as a positive step for a brighter future for the area. Because the Area Plan only strengthens policies regarding water quality, special status plant or animal communities, and cultural, historical, and archeological resources, and because federal, state, and County environmental protections are already in place, implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would result in less than significant degradation of these resources.

The draft initial study/proposed Negative Declaration was circulated for public comment between July 22 and August 22, 2016. The Notice of Availability/Notice of Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration was sent to several local and state responsible agencies as well as applicable property or home owners associations. No comments were received regarding the adequacy of the Initial Study. Since this Area Plan will not result in any physical disturbance to the environment staff determined that a Negative Declaration is the appropriate document for this project.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:
On August 25, 2016, the Nevada County Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to consider the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan. Planning Commissioners agreed the Area Plan will help to remove development constraints that inhibit desired economic growth in order to help revitalize the area and create a stronger community for local residents, although Commissioners asked for more discussion regarding three topic areas: 1) the nexus between public restrooms and economic development; 2) equestrian opportunities on Donner Summit; and 3) the uncertain future of Lake Van Norden and whether it remains as an impoundment or restored to a high-quality mountain meadow and stream. Commissioners also wanted to ensure that single-family residential property owners weren’t going to be over-regulated when future projects are reviewed under the Area Plan. Public testimony was also provided from a few members of the public and supported the County’s attention given to the Donner Summit area and raised concerns ranging from: the proposed upzoning of two vacant parcels currently zoned R2 (medium density residential) to R3 (high density residential); concern expressed regarding Sugar
Bowl Mountain Resort’s seasonal employee lodging in a former hotel; as well as the abundance of snow removal equipment, shipping containers and other material and equipment being stored throughout the community.

Regarding the two parcels proposed to be rezoned from R2 (medium density residential) to R3 (high density residential), neighbors expressed concern about the amount of excavation and site disturbance and potential traffic congestion that would be required for a multi-family project, and some even voiced a desire to see the property downzoned to R1 (single family residential). The proposed change to rezone the two parcels from R2 to R3 is part of a larger strategy to focus additional residential capacity near the commercial center of town and increase the critical mass of the community, imparting a sense of scale and density that establishes the Soda Springs commercial center as the focal point for Donner Summit. Furthermore, the easternmost existing R2 zoned parcel, which is developed with the Mt. Diablo ski club, is functioning as a multi-family property and downzoning the vacant (existing R2) properties to the west would create a break in the multi-family zoning (e.g., leapfrog development). A conscious decision made during the development of the Area Plan was to focus the more intense commercial and multi-family zoning in the town center, and provide maximum flexibility to those properties within the Rural Center (RC) Combining District Zone to stem the community’s steady decline. Quality affordable housing and lodging is in short supply and high demand on Donner Summit which is why the Area Plan proposes targeted increases in density and residential capacity within walking distance of goods and services, reducing the need to reside and travel from more distant communities like Truckee.

Staff is aware of the unique issues of the area, including the seemingly recent proliferation of snow removal equipment and other outside storage of material and equipment being stored throughout Soda Springs. The Area Plan seeks to strike a balance between recognizing and planning for life in snow country and protecting the rural community character with the proposed design guidelines and standards aimed at aesthetic improvements and preserving neighborhood compatibility.

The Planning Commission on a 4-0 (1 absent) vote recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan with the additional language added to the Area Plan regarding the need for public restrooms, equestrian opportunities, and the current situation with the Van Norden Lake and meadow.

**SUMMARY:**
This Area Plan outlines a comprehensive development plan that encourages local initiative and coherence of community spirit to revitalize development consistent with strongly held rural values. A brighter future for the area is dependent on rebranding the region as a destination with full services, aesthetic improvements and promotion of year-round activities that more fully optimize the recreational opportunities provided by the rich natural resources of the area. The Area Plan is a consensus built policy, design, and development plan with a central focus to attract more visitors and investment in
infrastructure while honoring resident’s values and protecting the bountiful natural environment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

I. Approve the attached Resolution (EIS14-004) for a Negative Declaration for the Soda Springs Area Plan, pursuant to Section 15074 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines based on the findings contained in the Resolution (*Attachment 1*).

II. Approve the attached Resolution (GP14-003) for the proposed General Plan text amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan based on the findings contained in the Resolution (*Attachment 2*).

III. Approve the attached Resolution (GP16-004) for the General Plan Land Use Map amendments to change the land use designations of 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center based on the findings contained in the Resolution (*Attachment 3*).

IV. Adopt the attached Ordinance (Z16-005) amending Zoning District Maps (ZDM) #114 and #119 to coincide the rezoning of 51 parcels to be consistent with the amended General Plan Land Use Map, and to add the Rural Center (RC) Combining District to 77 parcels, and the Site Performance (SP) Combining District to 194 parcels, based on the findings contained within the Ordinance (*Attachment 4*).

V. Approve the attached Ordinance (ORD14-002) amending Section L-II 4.2.3, of Article 1, Chapter II of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to approve the Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards based on the findings contained within the Ordinance (*Attachment 5*).

VI. Close Board Order BO-14-02

**Item Initiated by:** Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

**Approved by:** Brian Foss, Director of Planning
RESOLUTION NO. __________

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION (EIS14-004) FOR THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN WHICH INCLUDES GENERAL PLAN TEXT AMENDMENTS (GP14-003), GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP AMENDMENTS (GP16-004), ZONING DISTRICT MAP AMENDMENTS (Z16-005), AND A ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (ORD14-002).

WHEREAS, On March 25, 2014, the Board of Supervisors issued Board Order BO-14-02 directing the Advance Planning Division work program priorities for Phase II of the General Plan Land Use Element. The work plan calls for a new Area Plan for the Soda Springs community in accordance with the Supporting Planning Documents and Program 1.2.1.b of the General Plan Land Use Element; and

WHEREAS, Nevada County is proposing General Plan amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan including land use designation changes to 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center, and corresponding Zoning Ordinance text and map amendments, including adding the “RC” (Rural Center) Combining District to 77 specific parcels and “SP” (Site Performance) Combining District to 194 specific parcels, to revitalize the economic vitality of Donner Summit and remove unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development and support and the valued rural community character (Project); and

WHEREAS, on July 22, 2016, the Planning Department staff prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration (IS/ND) for the Project (EIS14-004), a copy of which is attached to this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, the IS/ND was submitted directly to affected local, regional and state agencies, and was released for a 32-day public review period, commencing on July 22, 2016 and ending August 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the IS/ND analyzes all of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project and found that no significant impacts would result from the approval of the Project; and
WHEREAS, on August 25, 2016, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Project in which the Commission reviewed the proposed IS/ND together with all comments received during the public review period, and recommended adoption of this same Negative Declaration before making a recommendation to the Board on the proposed Project; and

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2016, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on the proposed Project in which the Board reviewed the proposed IS/ND together with all comments received during the public review period, and adopted this same Negative Declaration before taking final action on the proposed Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Nevada County Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the recommendation of the Planning Commission and has independently reviewed the Initial Study and proposed Negative Declaration (EIS14-004), together with all comments received during the public review period, and hereby finds and determines as follows:

A. The above recitals are true and correct.

B. On the basis of the whole record before the Board of Supervisors, there is no substantial evidence that the proposed Project will have a significant effect on the environment.

C. The IS/ND reflects the Board’s independent judgment and analysis.

D. The documents and materials constituting the record of the proceedings on which this decision is based are located and in the custody of the Nevada County Planning Department at 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City, California.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the Negative Declaration (EIS14-004) for the General Plan text amendments (GP14-003), the General Plan Land Use Map amendments (GP16-004), the Zoning District Map amendments (Z16-005), and Zoning Ordinance text amendment (ORD14-002).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board is directed to file a Notice of Determination pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15075 within five working after adoption of this resolution and approval of the proposed Project.
NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC REVIEW AND
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION
FOR THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN
GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004

To: Nevada County Building Dept., Nevada County Department of Public Works, County Fire Protection Planner, Truckee Fire District, Placer County Planning Department, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Defense, Native American Heritage Commission, United Auburn Indian Community, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, T’si-Akim Maidu, Central Valley Water Quality Control Board, Caltrans, Board of Realtors, Sierra Club, Sierra Watch, S.Y.R.C.L., Donner Summit Area Association, Donner Summit Historical Society, Donner Summit Public Utility District, Hirschdale Property Owners, Mountain Area Preservation Foundation, Bill Oudegeest, The Palisades, Pla-Vada Community Association, Save Van Norden Lake, SLOPA, Serene Lakes/Donner Summit Conservation Assn., Sierra Lakes County Water District, Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce, County Counsel*, Nevada County Principal Planner, Nevada County Board of Supervisors, State Clearinghouse*

* Note: All others NOA only

Project Title: Soda Springs Area Plan

File Numbers: GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004

Assessor’s Parcel Numbers: See Initial Study listing of “Owners”

Applicant: Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-1222

Project Location: The Area Plan is located on Donner Summit in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan covers an area of approximately 141 acres running 1.2 miles along Donner Pass Rd. (historic Old Highway 40) from the Soda Springs/Norden Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Road.

Project Description: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT (GP14-003), GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT (GP16-004), REZONE (Z16-005), ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT (ORD14-002), and ADOPTION of the NEGATIVE DECLARATION for the PROJECT (EIS14-004). The “project” is a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to adopt an Area Plan for the Donner Summit area. The Soda Springs Area Plan is a focused policy and design plan that includes land use designation and zoning changes, as well as specific development guidelines and standards, and would serve as the comprehensive land use and zoning plan for the Soda Springs Rural Center. For the Soda Springs Area Plan to be adopted the following legislative actions are required: 1) a General Plan Amendment to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan; 2) General Plan Land Use Map Amendments to change the land use designation of specific parcels as follows:
1.03 acres currently designated USF (Urban Single Family Residential) re-designated to HC (Highway Commercial)

2.85 acres currently designated USF (Urban Single Family Residential) re-designated to FOR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.)

1.76 acres currently designated USF (Urban Single Family Residential) re-designated to UMD (Urban Medium Density Residential)

1.13 acres currently designated UMD (Urban Medium Density Residential) re-designated to UHD (Urban High Density Residential)

1.8 acres currently designated HC (Highway Commercial) re-designated to UMD (Urban Medium Density Residential)

4.07 acres currently designated HC (Highway Commercial) re-designated to NC (Neighborhood Commercial)

7.55 acres currently designated HC (Highway Commercial) re-designated to CC (Community Commercial)

0.78 acres currently designated HC (Highway Commercial) re-designated to IND (Industrial);

3) Parcel rezoning that corresponds with the proposed Land Use Map designation changes described above including adding SP (Site Performance) and RC (Rural Center) Combining District zoning to specific parcels; and 4) an amendment to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to add a reference to the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards.

This Notice of Availability serves as public notice that the County of Nevada has prepared a Negative Declaration for the project identified above. As mandated by Public Resources Code § 21091, the minimum public review period for this document is 30 days. The public review period for the proposed project is from July 22, 2016 to August 22, 2016. Comments must be received by 5 p.m. on the last day of the comment period, August 22, 2016. Send comments to Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner, via email, mail, or phone at:

Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-1423
Patrick.Dobbs@co.nevada.ca.us

Prior to approval of the project, the Board of Supervisors will consider comments received on this Initial Study. The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing before it considers certification of the Initial Study and approval of the proposed project.

The Initial Study prepared for this project and the documents used in preparation of this Study can be reviewed online at http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/cda/planning/Pages/Soda-Springs-Area-Plan.aspx or at the Nevada County Planning Department, 950 Maidu Ave., Nevada City, California. Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code and the “Guidelines
for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended to date, a Draft Negative Declaration has been prepared because no substantial evidence exists, as indicated in the attached Initial Study, that the proposed project may have a significant environmental effect.

Prepared by:  

Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner  

Date  

7/21/2016
NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
INITIAL STUDY

To: Nevada County Building Dept., Nevada County Department of Public Works, County Fire Protection Planner, Truckee Fire District, Placer County Planning Department, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Defense, Native American Heritage Commission, United Auburn Indian Community, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, T’si-Akim Maidu, Central Valley Water Quality Control Board, Caltrans, Board of Realtors, Sierra Club, Sierra Watch, S.Y.R.C.L., Donner Summit Area Association, Donner Summit Historical Society, Donner Summit Public Utility District, Hirschdale Property Owners, Mountain Area Preservation Foundation, Bill Oudegeest, The Palisades, Pla-Vada Community Association, Save Van Norden Lake, SLOPA, Serene Lakes/Donner Summit Conservation Assn., Sierra Lakes County Water District, Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce, County Counsel*, Nevada County Principal Planner, Nevada County Board of Supervisors, State Clearinghouse*
* Note: All others NOA only

Date: July 22, 2016

Prepared by: Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-1423/Patrick.Dobbs@co.nevada.ca.us

File Number(s): GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004

Assessor’s Parcel Numbers: See listing under “Owners and Situs Addresses” below

Applicant: County of Nevada, Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

Owners and Situs Addresses:

| APN 47-040-01 | Mehl Claudine A 10138 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-02 | Heckendorn Clark & Regina 10125 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-04 | Heckendorn Clark & Regina 10051 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-06 | Heckendorn Clark & Regina 10060 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-08 | Heckendorn Clark & Regina 20954 Donner Pass Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-09 | Lux David & Jennifer 10078 Easy Slope Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-10 | Nagao Henry & Christine 10110 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-11 | Wagenet John & Yvonne 10092 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-12 | Marcus Jeffrey & Linda 10124 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-13 | Lux David & Jennifer 10064 Easy Slope Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-14 | Heckendorn Clark & Regina 20874 Donner Pass Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-040-17 | Griffin Mark & Amy 10109 Bunny Hill Road Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-051-01 | Jones Nan | 21218 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-051-02 | California State Of Division of Highways Unknown address | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-052-01 | Lehtin Terrell | 21037 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-052-02 | Ibarria Desree | 21281 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-052-03 | Liebendorfer Eric | 10096 Sierra Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-01 | Tanhoff Trevor & Elizabeth | 10097 Sierra Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-03 | Roberts Joseph & Janis | 21134 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-04 | Merrill Parley | 21092 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-03 | Vatistas Paul & Kerry | 21194 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-06 | Tallman Michelle S | 21119 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-07 | Boncella Patricia A | 21095 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-08 | Holland Mildred T | 21217 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-09 | Esswein Carolyn | 21197 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-10 | Jelh Jacklyn | 21116 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-11 | Sullivan Jack & Mary | 21154 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-12 | Sullivan Jack & Mary | 21157 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-13 | Vatistas Paul & Kerry | 21175 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-14 | Monroe Gary & Karen | 21174 Donner Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-15 | Jones Nan | 21500 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-053-16 | Jones Nan | 21420 Castle Drive | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
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| APN 47-090-12 | Penman Hugh  
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Cynthia  
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21821 T-Bar Drive  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| R2-PD-RC (Urban Medium Density-Planned Dev.-Rural Center Combining Dist.) | | | |
| APN 47-080-34 | Common Area  
21501 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-01 | Nunn Marvin & Kallen  
21501 #1 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-02 | Herkt Melissa  
21501 #2 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-03 | Morrison James  
21501 #3 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-04 | Mintz Randolph  
21501 #4 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-05 | Pierce Frank  
21501 #5 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-06 | Heffernon Jeffrey & Ursula  
21501 #6 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-07 | Ullom James  
21501 #7 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-08 | Lantz Mark & Rena  
21501 #8 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-09 | Trabchensch Carl III  
21501 #9 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-10 | Sison Joseph  
21501 #10 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-380-11 | Zurina Luis & Suzanne  
21501 #11 Donner Pass Road  
Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-12 | Theis Aaron & Tara | 21501 #12 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-13 | Underwood John & Monica | 21501 #13 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-14 | Elles Orlo III & Marilyn | 21501 #14 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-15 | Garzon Hernando | 21501 #15 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

**R3-RC (Urban High Density-Rural Center Combining District)**

| APN 47-380-16 | Young Stephen & Sandra | 21501 #16 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-17 | Kansas Peter | 21501 #17 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-18 | Rouzier Robert & Carolyn | 21501 #18 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-380-24 | Zapotocky Maryann | 21466 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-380-27 | Hurley Starr | 21490 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

**C1-RC (Neighborhood Commercial-Rural Center Combining District)**

| APN 47-380-24 | Dillon Rick and Jamie | 10108 Soda Springs Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-080-35 | Sayler Norman | 21455 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-10 | Calfee David | 21926 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-13 | Strele Jean | 21854 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-102-19 | Lenihan Sean | 21865 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-410-12 | Calfee David | Unknown Address | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-410-13 | Calfee David | 21964 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

**C2-RC (Community Commercial-Rural Center Combining District)**

| APN 47-080-33 | Maria Howe | 21547 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-090-24 | Wells Fargo Bank | 21728 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-17 | Gates David & Cynthia | 21816 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-19 | Hoyt Carrie | 21784 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-101-25 | Bell Christopher & Michelle | 21714 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-26 | Flaherty Loretta | 21700 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-27 | Cascade Snow Removal Inc. | 21674 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-101-41 | Preis Cathy | 21760 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-101-42 | Hollinger Stephen | 21752 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-03 | Flint Ayame | 21801 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-04 | Flint Ayame | 21775 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-101-05 | Mazoo John & Melinda | 21757 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-16 | Makal Venkat & Blanca | 21653 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-06 | Yuba River Holdings LLC | 21719 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-13 | Shatterhand Holding Co. | 21685 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-102-14 | Fox Maurice and Margaret | 21673 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-15 | Larson Adele | 21629 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-21 | Ben’s Truck & Equipment | 21615 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-102-22 | Ben’s Truck & Equipment | 21581 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

| APN 47-380-19 | Donner Spitz Inn Inc | 21501 #19 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
| APN 47-420-23 | Gates David & Cynthia | 10049 Poma Lane | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |
### Project Location:
The Soda Springs Area Plan (SSAP) covers those Donner Summit communities connected along Donner Pass Rd. (old Hwy. 40) between Cisco Grove and the Donner Memorial Bridge. Although some of those areas are in Placer County, and the SSAP is only specifically applicable to those areas in Nevada County, the connection between these communities should not be ignored because of jurisdictional boundaries. The primary focus of the SSAP is the 141-acre designated Soda Springs Rural Center located atop Donner Summit, approximately 12 miles west of the town of Truckee, California.

### Document Preparation:
This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared to address the potential environmental effects of the Soda Springs Area Plan located in Nevada County. The IS contains a project description, description of the existing environmental setting, identification and explanation of environmental effects, and evaluation of the Area Plan’s consistency with and divergence from existing applicable land use regulations.

This Initial Study IS/ND has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, Cal. Pub. Res. Code §2100 et seq. The CEQA lead agency for this project is the County of Nevada.

### Project Summary
The proposed project is an Area Plan for the Donner Summit area, with land use regulations and zoning focused on the Soda Springs Rural Center. The Soda Springs Area Plan (Area Plan) is a focused policy and design document that supplements the Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance that serves as the comprehensive land use and zoning plan for the community of Soda Springs and embodies the expressed goals of residents and business owners, and
establishes concrete and achievable actions. The Area Plan is a tool to advance the goals and policies for the Nevada County General Plan while benefitting the local community. The Area Plan provides long-term guidance that is intended to improve the prosperity of Soda Springs and environs in a way that supports a healthy economy, environment, and social fabric for the residents and general public.

Action is needed at this time to focus revitalization efforts to promote economic activity, community sustainability, and capitalize on the non-winter seasons and activities. A conscious directed change in the intensity and types of year round land uses in the Soda Springs commercial area and community enhancement design standards will be the primary method by which positive community values and strengths can be preserved and enhanced. It is vitally important (and possible) to do so, while maintaining the rural natural setting.

The Soda Springs Area Plan is comprised of the following plan components and discretionary actions:

- General Plan Amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan,
- General Plan Land Use Map Designation Amendments to 51 parcels,
- Parcel rezoning to correspond with the proposed Land Use Map Designation changes, including adding SP (Site Performance) and RC (Rural Center) Combining District zoning to specific parcels, and
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to add a reference to the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards.

**Project Location and Surrounding Land Uses**

This Area Plan is located on Donner Summit in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan covers an area approximately 1.2 miles along Donner Pass Rd. (historic Old Highway 40) from the Soda Springs/Norden Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Rd. The area functions as the primary visitor and tourist area on Donner Summit and provides direct access to developed and passive recreation opportunities. The Area Plan’s focus is the community of Soda Springs which the County has designated a Rural Center for the surrounding rural area. The Soda Springs Rural Center is approximately 141 acres in size (excluding roadway and railroad rights of way) and the predominant theme of the land use pattern is commercial and residential.

The commercially zoned area of the Soda Springs Rural Center has three primary nodes: on the western edge is the gas station, in the middle is the General Store building, and the eastern edge is the Soda Springs Station condominiums at the flashing light intersection with Soda Springs Rd. The gas station area includes the Sugar Bowl Ski Resort operated Donner Summit Lodge, and Summit Restaurant. The General Store area includes the Soda Springs Post Office, real estate offices and the currently closed Tinker’s Station mixed-use building. The Soda Springs Lodge area is primarily residential although it does include some commercial businesses and the Donner Summit Historical Museum. These uses occupy structures ranging in height, age and physical conditions. Most of the buildings are quite old, with many constructed between 1930 and 1950. The Soda Springs Rural Center is bordered to the north by Interstate 80 and lands owned by Auburn Ski Club associated with Boreal Ski Resort. To the south, the Area Plan is bordered by the Soda Springs Ski Resort and 1,000 lot residential community of Serene Lakes just beyond.
Directly west of the Area Plan across the Interstate 80 overpass are the Donner Summit Public Utility District facilities and a few miles down Donner Pass Road is the residential community of Pla-Vada near the town of Kingvale. To the east of the Area Plan is Tahoe National Forest before arriving at Donner Ski Ranch and Sugar Bowl Ski Resort.

Background
On March 25, 2014, the Board of Supervisors issued Board Order BO-14-02 directing the Advance Planning Division work program priorities for Phase II of the General Plan Land Use Element. The work plan calls for a new Area Plan for the Soda Springs community in accordance with Program 1.2.1.b of the General Plan Land Use Element.

Local efforts to provide input for long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade. There has been consistent and strong support in the Soda Springs community for a coordinated planning effort between Nevada and Placer County and by the Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA). With support from Nevada County and other organizations, the ongoing efforts of the DSAA to establish a vision for Donner Summit has been the groundwork for an Area Plan for Soda Springs. Those efforts have resulted in the Donner Summit Economic Study (2004), the Donner Summit Visioning and Planning Resident Survey (2007), and the Community Prosperity Summit (2008), which provides a base foundation of the Soda Springs Area Plan.

As a result of the construction of Highway 80 in 1964, Soda Springs has become more of a drive-by community than a stop by, or destination itself. Interstate 80 allows potential visitors to pass by enroute to nearby Truckee, Reno, and Lake Tahoe, oblivious to the experiences they might enjoy on Donner Summit. Additionally, time has passed on while the area has been hindered in its economic promotion by the lack of investment and the consequent impacts of some areas of blight in the built environment. Many competing recreational areas further east have better organized and promoted attractions for year-round recreation resulting in Donner Summit being comparatively less competitive for tourist dollars needed to support economic viability.

The current Highway Commercial Land Use Designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the commercial area and there is a clear need to revitalize the physical appearance and promote the accessibility of the area to increase economic activity. Healthy economic activity, in turn, is key to a healthy social fabric and the conditions to enhance and protect the natural environment. Compounding this problem of the restrictive land use designation is the multitude of political jurisdictions and divided community needs that have resulted in not capitalizing on opportunities that exist in the area such as non-winter uses. Adding to the challenge, consecutive drought years and projected climate changes create uncertainties for the local economy which is historically heavily dependent upon snow fall. The passage of time with consequent deterioration of buildings and infrastructures, the national economic downturn and the impacts of global climate change present even greater challenges to economic development of the Soda Springs area than was the case a decade ago.

Project Description
The proposed project is an Area Plan that promotes revitalization of the Donner Summit area to be consistent with community values and the County’s General Plan, with specific land use regulations and zoning changes focused on the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial zoning.
The Soda Springs Area Plan establishes goals, policies and implementation strategies for providing specific land use guidance for the Donner Summit area. The Area Plan will help achieve the vision of the community by implementing its guiding principles through rezoning land use designations, and development of community design standards. The Area Plan proposes to achieve this through more intensive concentrated mixed use development in the commercial area and flexible design standards to promote revitalization to improve its aging infrastructure, provide for improved recreation access, and diversify commercial retail needs for visitors and residents. The area is envisioned as a regional destination that provides full services for visitors and permanent residents and offers unique experiences related to the many outdoor recreation and natural experience possibilities that abound on Donner Summit. The revitalization of Soda Springs will catalyze the transformation from seasonal winter recreation economy into a sustainable year-round community and outdoor tourism recreational destination with a diversified business base.

The Soda Springs Area Plan defines land use regulations and guidelines for planning decisions. It does this by presenting principles, goals, policies and implementation strategies developed by Nevada County and stakeholders to support a sustainable community that puts its residents first with expanded commercial goods and services, improved trail connections to surrounding recreation areas, support for public areas and facilities, and promotion of the area in the Spring, Summer and Fall. The County also intends to provide direction to property owners, community groups, and interested individuals planning and promoting the area. The proposed plan is intended to provide for mixed-use and concentrated development conditions that provide local commercial needs as well as provide a sense of community and a sense of a stronger place by encouraging public gathering places and locations for community events.

The County and community’s basic objectives for the proposed project are provided below.

1. Establish a land use plan and policy framework that will guide future development and redevelopment in the Soda Springs Rural Center toward land uses that focus economic development and create a community and recreation destination that provides a diversity and concentration of resident servicing shops as well as services that also appeal to visitors;

2. Improve trail connectivity between the Soda Springs Rural Center and existing adjacent residential and recreation areas;

3. Develop and implement design standards that reflect Donner Summit’s historic mountain identity while promoting trail connectivity and public plazas, in order to activate the pedestrian streetscape and improve roadway perimeters for both pedestrian and vehicular safety;

4. Create a desirable first impression with attractive, welcoming gateway signs or monuments that reinforce the historic small town character;

5. Locate multi-family residential development within close proximity to the Soda Springs commercial area; and

6. Promote non-winter special events and recreational opportunities.
7. Set standards that will protect and restore the natural environment.

### Table 1: Elements of the Soda Springs Area Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soda Springs Area Plan Element</th>
<th>Proposed Change from Existing Plans, Maps, and Ordinances</th>
<th>Summary Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Goals and Policies: All Elements** | Adds Goals and Policies specific to Donner Summit | Adds goals and policies to implement the vision and capital improvements identified in the Area Plan, resulting in:  
  - desirable economic development  
  - protection of rural lifestyle values and character  
  - more services for local residents  
  - quality affordable housing and lodging  
  - creation of in-town public places  
  - trail connections within and around the Rural Center  
  - construction of gateway signage and branding  
  - improved vehicle and pedestrian safety, and  
  - expanded residential and visitor services |
| **Land Use: Map Amendments** | Expand and modify existing Land Use/Zoning District boundaries by removing outdated and unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development | A conscious, directed change in the intensity and type of land uses in the Soda Springs commercial area will be the primary method by which positive community values and strengths can be preserved and the area’s potential realized. Proposed zoning changes include:  
  - 1.03 acres currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to CH (highway commercial)  
  - 2.85 acres currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.)  
  - 1.76 acres currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to R2 (medium density residential)  
  - 1.13 acres currently zoned R2 (medium density residential) rezoned to R3 (high density residential)  
  - 1.8 acres currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to R2 (medium density residential)  
  - 4.07 acres currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to C1 (neighborhood commercial)  
  - 7.55 acres currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to C2 (community commercial)  
  - 0.78 acres currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to M1 (light industrial) |
### Table 1: Elements of the Soda Springs Area Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soda Springs Area Plan Element</th>
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<th>Summary Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Land Use: Rural Center (RC) and Site Performance (SP) Combining Zone Districts | Adds the Rural Center (RC) Combining District to the Commercial Area and Adjacent Surroundings, and adds the Site Performance (SP) Combining District to the remainder (e.g., Residential, Recreation, Forest) | Focus economic development and improvements in and around the Soda Springs commercial area with the addition of the Rural Center (RC) Combining District which allows for more flexible development standards and permissible uses summarized below.  
- New construction standards on vacant lands:  
  - Protect existing natural features  
  - Earthtone exterior building colors and materials  
  - Provide adequate snow storage area  
  - Utilize native vegetation  
  - Preserve mountain, forest, and meadow public views from Donner Pass Road  
  - Site design consideration of solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection and privacy  
  - Water-efficient appliances  
- Community Development Flexible Design Standards:  
  - Open space reduction for mixed-use building with required landscaping  
  - Encourage gateway signage that complements natural setting and Donner Summit history  
  - Allows for up to 50% offsite parking  
  - Establishes metal shipping container storage standards (also applies to SP Combining District)  
  - Wildlife secure garbage facilities  
  - Allows limited commercial activities within legal non-conforming residences  
  - Establishes snow removal equipment and outdoor storage screening requirements (also applies to SP Combining District)  
- Housing Density Standards:  
  - Mixed-use projects in the C1 and C2 zone district may utilize a maximum residential density of 6 units/acre.  
  - Multi-family residential projects may utilize a two unit (duplex) minimum density allowance for parcels zoned R2-RC, subject to zoning compliance.  
- Agricultural Uses such as farmer’s markets and produce stands are permissible subject to approval pursuant to Sec. L-II 3.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance.
Relationship to Other Projects
There are no pending project applications submitted for any property within the planning area. As discussed below, the public Donner Summit Road Improvement Project is funded and beginning design stages, with construction scheduled for 2019.

Other Permits Which May Be Necessary:
This IS/ND is intended to provide a program-level review of the Soda Springs Area Plan. Future project-level environmental review within the Soda Springs Rural Center would be based on consistency with the Soda Springs Area Plan. No specific development projects are proposed at this time or analyzed herein.

All future projects within the Soda Springs Rural Center and any parcel affected with the proposed amendments would be subject to project-level environmental review and permitting by Nevada County. Project-level environmental documents would require identification of, and mitigation for any potentially significant environmental impacts.

Other potential permits and/or approvals that may be required for development of the project could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- County Road Encroachment Permits (Nevada County Department of Public Works)
- Grading and Building permits (Nevada County Building Department)
- Sewer and Water Connection Permits (Donner Summit Public Utility District)
- Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board)
- Dust Control and Operations Permits (Northern Sierra Air Quality Control District)
- Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement and obtaining permits associated with take and loss of habitat for California special status species (CA Department of Fish and Game)
- Biological Opinion and permits associated with take of federal special-status species (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services)
- Section 404 permit (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS and PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected: All of the following environmental factors have been considered. There are no environmental factors with impacts that require additional mitigation as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Aesthetics</th>
<th>2. Agriculture / Forestry Resources</th>
<th>3. Air Quality</th>
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INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

Introduction
This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires a brief explanation for answers to the Appendix G: Environmental Checklist except “No Impact” responses that are adequately supported by noted information sources. Answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts. This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

- **No Impact**: An impact that would result in no adverse changes to the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact**: An impact that is potentially adverse but does not exceed the thresholds of significance as identified in the impact discussions. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation**: An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment without mitigation, but which is reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation identified in the Initial Study.
- **Potentially Significant Impact**: An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; either additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the significance determination, or the impact would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. A finding of a potentially significant impact would result in the determination to prepare an EIR.
1. **AESTHETICS**

**Existing Setting:**
The general aesthetic quality of the area consists of rural forested areas, hills, and mountains. Paved and dirt roads, native vegetation, and forests surround the project sites. The area includes the headwaters of the South Yuba River, which contains sensitive aquatic and riparian habitats. Soda Springs Ski Area is a privately owned and operated ski area with several chairlifts and open terrain with scattered trees for skiers.

Nevada County’s scenic preservation is accomplished by such measures as designating scenic highways, establishment of permanent open spaces, public forests, conservation areas clustering development, and agricultural zoning. Urban design quality is accomplished by architectural controls, historic preservation ordinances and land use patterns. There are no State designated scenic highways in eastern Nevada County, nor are there any County designated scenic resources within the project area.

The overall impression of the Soda Springs area is that the community appears worn out and run down. Visually Soda Springs reflects a community with a lively past, but whose economic core has been neglected for many years. Soda Springs is developed by disconnected strip commercial development stretching along Donner Pass Road. The overall lack of coherence in how buildings in the community are designed and how they address Donner Pass Road undermines a strong sense of place. Landscaping along the Donner Pass Road is minimal or non-existent. Commercial wood cutting yards, outside storage of heavy snow removal equipment, and shipping container storage are typical elements of mountain living, yet these operations sprawl throughout the community and are viewed as eyesores to many.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEQA Environmental Checklist Item</th>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Reference Source (Appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Result in demonstrable, negative, aesthetic effects on scenic vistas or views open to the public?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>A, 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Create a visually incompatible structure within a designated historic district?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17, 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.a. Would the Project result in demonstrable, negative aesthetic effects on scenic vistas or views open to the public?

Impact Discussion 1a: Adoption of the Soda Springs Area Plan would allow for changes in the built environment that would be visible from Interstate 80 and Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40) scenic roadway corridors. While development often results in improvement in the scenic quality of scenic roadway corridors, changes in the built environment could have undesirable consequences on scenic quality if they adversely affect views or vistas, damage or remove scenic resources, or result in development that is incompatible with the scenic values of the region. The Soda Springs Area Plan would result in the implementation of specific standards for site, building, equipment and material storage, and development that are intended to preserve the community scenic resources and enhance the built environment. Subsequent development under the Soda Springs Area Plan would be subject to the updated standards and would alter the overall built environment to be consistent with the vision and principles of the Soda Springs Area Plan and improve scenic quality of the community.

While this project will not directly result in new development, policies to facilitate development are recommended which include scenic protection measures to preserve the extraordinary aesthetic quality of Donner Summit (Policy NCR 2.1), and community design standards to integrate development with the natural setting (Policy LU-3.1).

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact. Required Mitigation: None.

1.b. Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Impact Discussion 1b: Interstate 80 is eligible as a state scenic highway, but not officially designated as a California Scenic Highway by the California Department of Transportation (California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Department of Transportation, 2007). Although Caltrans has not designated the Soda Springs/Norden section of Interstate 80 part of the State Scenic Highway System areas within the Area Plan are visible from Interstate 80, however those areas visible from the Interstate do not contain any trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings that are unique or contribute to the visual resources of the area.

The Soda Springs Area Plan design and development standards would improve the scenic quality consistent with the desired community character by establishing standards to reduce blight, such as the proposed limitations for metal shipping containers and unscreened accessory storage.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact. Required Mitigation: None.

1.c. Would the Project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Impact Discussion 1c: The Area Plan includes detailed design standards that are intended to ensure that the built environment complements the natural appearing landscape on Donner
Summit. The Area Plan specifically regulates building form, materials and colors and includes the following site development and building design standards:

- Existing natural features outside of the building site shall be retained and incorporated into the site design to the greatest extent feasible. Projects shall be designed to avoid disturbance to rock outcrops and stream zones and to minimize vegetation removal and maintain the natural slope of the project site;

- Roofs, including mechanical equipment and skylights, and other exterior materials should be constructed of non-glare finishes and earthtone colors that minimize reflectivity. Materials that blend with the site’s natural surroundings (e.g., wood, stone or corten steel) are encouraged. Solar panels or other alternative energy equipment may be exempted from this standard if a project level assessment demonstrates that scenic conditions from public viewpoints will not be adversely impacted. Colors shall be within a range of natural colors that blend, rather than contrast, with the existing backdrop vegetation and soils color and earthtone colors shall be medium to dark;

- Viewsheds shall be considered in all new construction, with emphasis placed on preserving and enhancing mountain, forest and meadow public views from Donner Pass Road where feasible;

- The development of gateway signage or branding features at the western and eastern entrances to Soda Springs along Donner Pass Road should complement the natural setting and history of Donner Summit.

Although the Area Plan promotes a more dense land use pattern to promote economic and pedestrian-oriented the changes are expected to improve the visual character or quality of the Soda Springs Rural Center as a result of the proposed design standards discussed above. These detailed standards, and others scenic protections not specifically discussed here, are intended to ensure the built environment integrates and complements the natural landscape and character of Donner Summit.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

1.d. **Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the areas?**

**Impact Discussion 1d:** Consistent with existing conditions, implementation of the Area Plan would allow for construction of new development and redevelopment projects. These projects would likely include new or modified sources of exterior lighting. However, the lighting standards (LUDC L-II 4.2.8) provide criteria for the range of lighting that is necessary to provide safety and security, protect against misdirected or excessive lighting as well as provide, in limited areas, the ambient lighting that would allow for a festive atmosphere to enhance the qualities of an active civic place. Moreover, Policy 18.11 requires all New Commercial, Industrial and Multiple Family development to utilize fixtures and light sources that minimize night time light pollution (Chapter 18 Aesthetics, Volume 1, Nevada County General Plan, 1995). Additionally, the lights from nearby
sources such as Interstate 80 are cumulatively much brighter in comparison with respect to nighttime views. The existing standards for exterior lighting are designed to provide for efficient, safe and attractive outdoor lighting while minimizing nighttime light pollution and energy waste. New development requires the use of variety of natural-appearing material and colors that complement the natural setting and prohibits the use of flood lighting and reflective materials to minimize reflectivity and glare. No changes to the County’s already effective lighting standards are proposed and any resulting light sources would not be substantial.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**Would the Project create a visually incompatible structure within a designated historical district?**

*Impact Discussion 1e:* There are no designated historic districts within the nearby vicinity of the Area Plan. There are three designated historic districts in Nevada County and the Commercial Row-Brickelltown Historic District in downtown Truckee is the nearest historic district located approximately twelve miles away.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

2. **AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** Eastern Nevada County is not within an area mapped by the Important Farmland Mapping program of the California Department of Conservation. The Soda Springs Rural Center is primarily built up and urbanized land surrounded by forest land, and no existing agricultural uses or operations exist in the project’s vicinity. Additionally, the area is designated as ‘non-enrolled land’ according to the 2006 Williamson Act Maps for Nevada County (CDC, 2006) and contains neither Williamson Act contracts nor land zoned for agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Reference Source (Appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation’s Division of Land Resource Protection, to non-agricultural use?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, D, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32  Attachment 1
2a. Would the Project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation’s Division of Land Resource Protection, to non-agricultural use?

*Impact Discussion 2a:* Donner Summit is a high elevation mountain pass with extreme weather conditions and does not contain any current or known historic agricultural uses and is not located within an area that this mapped by the USDA Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Lands in the project vicinity do not produce crops or livestock and are not considered important to the local economy due to their farming productivity or value. Because there are no identified important farmlands in the project’s vicinity the proposed Area Plan would not convert important farmlands to a non-agricultural use and subsequently there would be no impact to farmlands from the proposed project.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

2.b. Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a William Act contract?

*Impact Discussion 2b:* The Soda Springs Area Plan does not propose any changes to land use regulations related to agricultural uses, and creates no conflicts with zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract because no contracts exist within the project area.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

2.c. Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland zoned Timberland Production Zone (per Section L-II 2.3.C of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Reference Source (Appendix A)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland zoned Timberland Production Zone (per Section L-II 2.3.C of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact Discussion 2c: The Soda Springs Area Plan conflicts with no zoning of, and causes no rezoning of existing Forest land, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. In the northeastern most corner of the Rural Center along Bunny Hill Road is a 2.85 acre parcels owned by the U.S. Forest Service that is being re-zoned from R1 (Single-Family Residential) to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.), consistent with the zoning and U.S.F.S. management of surrounding Tahoe National Forest parcels. Otherwise no rezoning of forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production, will result.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

2.d. Would the Project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Impact Discussion 2d: See analysis for Question 2.c. above which concludes no impacts to forest land are anticipated with implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

2.e. Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Impact Discussion 2e: See analyses for Questions 2.b. through 2.d., above which concludes no impacts to farmlands and forest land within the project area and vicinity.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

3. AIR QUALITY

Existing Setting:
Donner Summit is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin which is within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). Air quality problems in the County are primarily related to commuting in motor vehicles to and from the Sacramento area. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the Mountain Counties “Air Basin violates the State ozone standard due to transport from the Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin, and San Francisco Bay area air basins. Eastward flowing surface winds can move air pollution from these adjoining air basins up the mountain valley during the daytime, and back down at night” (CARB, 2010).

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) is responsible for the management of air quality in Nevada, Plumas, and Sierra counties. According to the NSAQMD, the pollutants of greatest concern are ozone, particulate matter, and air toxins.
The overall air quality in Nevada County has improved over the past decade, largely due to vehicles fuels and engines running cleaner. State and Federal air quality standards have been established for specific “criteria” air pollutants including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. In addition, there are State standards for visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride. State standards are called California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and federal standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). NAAQS are composed of health-based primary standards and welfare-based secondary standards (NSAQMD). Table 3-1 below describes Nevada County Area designations for State and National Ambient Air Quality (CARB, 2010).

### Table 3-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Pollutants</th>
<th>State Designation</th>
<th>National Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-hour Ozone</td>
<td>Non-attainment</td>
<td>See footnote a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-hour Ozone</td>
<td>Non-attainment</td>
<td>Non-Attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM_{10}</td>
<td>Non-attainment</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM_{2.5}</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>Unclassified / Attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Monoxide</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>Unclassified / Attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen Dioxide</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulfur Dioxide</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulfates</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
<td>Attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrogen Sulfide</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility Reducing Particles</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The National 1-Hour Ozone Standard was revoked in June 2005 and replaced with an 8-hour standard. (Source: CARB, 2010)

Ozone is created by the interaction of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases (also known as Volatile Organic Compounds) in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. Ozone is mainly a summertime problem, with the highest concentrations generally observed in July and August, especially in the late afternoon and evening hours.

Nevada County is also Nonattainment for the Particulate Matter (PM) 10 CAAQS, but Unclassified for the PM10 NAAQS due to lack of available recent data. The number after “PM” refers to maximum particle size in microns. PM10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke) and aerosols, whereas PM2.5 is mostly smoke and aerosol particles. PM2.5 sources include woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires and open burning. PM10 sources include the PM2.5 plus dust, such as from surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers. Some pollen and mold spores are also included in PM10, but most are larger than 10 microns. All of Nevada County is Unclassifiable/Attainment for the PM2.5 NAAQS and Unclassified for the PM2.5 CAAQS.
3.a. Would the Project result in substantial air pollutant emissions or deterioration of ambient air quality?

*Impact Discussion 3a: See analysis and discussion in Questions 3.b. through 3.g., below.*

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.b. Would the Project violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?

*Impact Discussion 3b: The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan does not alter, revise, conflict or obstruct the regulations pertaining to air quality. Consistent with existing conditions, subsequent projects that could occur under the Soda Springs Area Plan would be subject to subsequent environmental review and permitting, and would be required to comply with emission standards regulated by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District.*

This project proposes action plans and policies, zoning changes that allow new land uses such as community meeting facilities, expanded retail/service facilities and farmer’s markets, as well as modest density increases that are expected to improve air quality because they would reduce the necessity of longer travel to surrounding markets like Truckee to obtain goods and services, and housing. Policy NCR-2.5 seeks to maintain and improve regional air quality and limit greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging new development projects to include transportation alternatives and utilize passive solar design.

As required for all future development, site-specific impacts resulting from physical development will be evaluated on a project-by-project basis in compliance with State and local regulations. To assure public health and safety in the region, air quality impacts are assessed by the Northern
Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSQAMD), on a project-by-project basis. No significant air quality impacts are anticipated to occur as a result from the implementation of this project.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.c. **Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

*Impact Discussion 3c:* Typical sensitive receptors include residences, hospitals, and schools. While there are many residences within the project area, there are no hospitals or schools. Subsequent development projects that could occur on sites within the Soda Springs Rural Center would involve construction and construction emissions. Construction emissions are described as short-term or temporary in duration and primarily associated with gas and diesel equipment exhaust and the application of architectural coatings. Long-term operational emissions from development projects could affect regional air quality and could create localized exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) emissions, however as stated before, any future project will be subject to particulate matter and odor regulations prior to approval.

The (M1) Light Industrial Zone District allows for more uses with odor creating potential than the BP District, including auto-painting, farm supply, kennels, and bio-mass facilities. The proposed Area Plan is a legislative action that includes re-designation of two parcels from CH (Highway Commercial) to M1 (Light Industrial) because of the existing and historical uses of the properties as a telecommunications facility and snow removal business. The more intense types of uses allowed in the M1 (Light Industrial) district would still require discretionary approval and would be subject to site specific air quality review (including odors) in accordance with Chapter 14 of the General Plan. Additional discussion on the proposed land use/zoning re-designation is provided in Section 10: Land Use.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.d. **Would the Project create objectionable smoke, ash, or odors?**

*Impact Discussion 3d:* See analysis and discussion in Question 3.c., above. The occurrence and severity of odor effects depend on the nature, frequency, and intensity of the odor source, wind speed and direction, and the presence of sensitive receptors. Offensive odors rarely cause physical harm, but odors can be unpleasant and generate citizen complaints to regulatory agencies and local governments.

As a general matter, the types of land use development that pose potential odor problems include wastewater treatment plants, refineries, landfills, composting facilities and transfer stations. No such uses currently occupy the project area and are not characteristic of the types of uses that would result.

In the short-term, odor impacts occur from the use of diesel engines and asphalt concrete paving during construction. These odors are both temporary and localized, affecting only the area immediately adjacent to the active construction area. Diesel exhaust emissions and asphalt
concrete paving odors dissipate rapidly away from the source and cease upon completion of construction activities. Thus, the implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan does not result in substantial direct or indirect exposure to smoke, ash or offensive odors.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.e. Would the Project generate dust?

**Impact Discussion 3e:** Fugitive dust emissions must be controlled in accordance with GP Policy 14.4, and are primarily associated with site preparation and vary as a function of such parameters as soil silt content, soil moisture, wind speed, acreage or disturbance area, and vehicle travel by construction vehicles on- and off-site.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.f. Would the Project exceed any potentially significant thresholds adopted in County Plans and Goals?

**Impact Discussion 3f:** Nevada County’s 1995 General Plan, Chapter 14 Air Quality Element, contains numerous policies to protect air quality in Nevada County and no changes to air quality and emission regulations are proposed, therefore any impacts to air quality resulting from implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

3.g. Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under applicable federal or state ambient air quality standards (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

**Impact Discussion 3g:** The Mountain Counties Are Basin is designated non-attainment for ozone and non-attainment for PM$_{10}$, as presented in Table 3-1. A significant cumulative impact results if the Project causes a considerable increase in PM$_{10}$ and Ozone.

On Donner Summit these pollutants relate to automobile use and potential impacts measured with vehicle miles travelled (VMT) calculations. No single project is likely to, by itself, result in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project’s individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts.

With respect to ozone precursors and PM$_{10}$, consistent with the General Plan, subsequent projects that may occur under the Soda Springs Area Plan may include development and redevelopment projects that could generate long-term operational emissions, including mobile and area source emissions. Based on vehicle emission trends, emissions of ozone precursors would be expected to decrease substantially over the coming decades. This can be explained by the fact that vehicle
emissions standards would be improved substantially over the next 20 years. Any additional population growth and associated increase in operational ozone precursor emissions in the project area would be more than offset by more stringent vehicle emissions standards, fuel economy standards, and truck and bus emission rules.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.** Required Mitigation: **None.**

### 4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

**Existing Setting:** The landscape of Donner Summit hosts an incredible array of wildlife habitat, including creeks and lakes, mountain meadows, old growth forests, and important wildlife corridors. No known complete field study exists for Donner Summit, but initial assessments reveal the area is home to a wealth of Sierra wildlife including at least sixteen species of amphibians, 20 species of mammals, at least 100 species of birds, and over 100 species of butterflies.

Important species of birds include Northern Goshawks, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and Spotted Owls. Notable, the native willows and meadows of the Summit Valley and along McKay Creek, in the heart of Donner Summit, provide habitat for the state-listed endangered willow flycatcher. Other special-status animals that are known to occur in the Donner Summit region include: Harlequin Duck, Black Swift, Yellow Warbler, and probably Wolverine, Pacific Fisher, and Sierra Nevada Red Fox.

A variety of vegetation communities including montane meadows, riparian habitats, montane chaparral, Sierran mixed conifer forest, lodge pole pine forest, white fir forest, and red fir forest occur at the Summit. Diverse flowering perennials, many of which are considered sensitive, can be found scattered through these habitats, particularly in open areas. More than 500 species of vascular plants, representing more than one third of all plant families in California, are known to occur in the Donner Summit region. At least sixteen special-status plants species thrive on Donner Summit, including the starved daisy, long-petaled lewisia, and the Donner Pass buckwheat.

The high mountain meadows of Donner Summit play an important role in the region’s complex system of hydrologic processes, providing water quality protection, flood regulation, and species habitat. An incredible resource in itself, Van Norden Meadow is the largest wetland above an elevation of 6,700 feet in Nevada or Placer counties. Lake Van Norden was created originally by damming the headwaters of the South Yuba River about 100 years ago. The dam was breached in 1972 (Beedy and Brussard 2002, Jones & Stokes 2004), and it now consists of a notched concrete spillway that holds water in the reservoir at a depth of less than 10 ft. Also known as Summit Valley, it supports one of the largest wetlands in the Sierra, covering over 200 acres of lacustrine and wet meadow habitat, with emergent vegetation around its shores. Migratory waterfowl, songbirds, wading birds, and shore birds use the lake and its willow-lined shoreline as wintering areas or temporary stopover resting and foraging sites during migration.
Outside our National Parks, one of the only remaining large stands of virgin, old-growth forests in California are found in the Donner Summit region. Lodge pole pines are the dominant trees in moist areas along meadows, as well as rocky areas, while the other conifers such as red-firs, white firs, and ponderosa pines are typically found on deeper well-drained soils. These forest communities provide nesting and roosting sites for birds, cover and shelter, and food sources for a diversity of animals. The downed logs and woody debris support insects and smaller mammals that are a source of food for larger animals, and snags of dead trees provide nesting cavities for owls and woodpeckers.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Result in a substantial reduction in the extent, diversity, or quality of native vegetation, including brush removal for fire prevention and flood control improvements?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Introduce any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence and/or domestic animals), which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.a. Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
Impact Discussion 4a: The Soda Springs Area Plan would not alter or revise any regulations that adversely affect any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Consistent with existing conditions, development projects associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan could affect unique, rare, or endangered species depending on the type, timing, and specific nature of proposed actions. However, any such projects would be subject to subsequent project-level environmental review and permitting at which time they would be required to demonstrate compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the protection of animal species. At a project-level, potential effects on animal species would be determined based on the species’ distribution and known occurrences relative to the project area, the presence of suitable habitat for the species in or near the project area, and preconstruction surveys. Nevada County existing policies and Code provisions address potential impacts to special-status species by requiring development and implementation of project-specific measures to avoid or minimize impacts through the design process, and require compensatory or other mitigation for any adverse effects on special-status species as a condition of project approval (Section L-II 4.3.12 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance).

As a policy document, the proposed Area Plan will facilitate use of sites by identifying the development constraints and applicable design standards for the Soda Springs Rural Center. This project will not result in a significant increase in the amount of development anticipated by the General Plan for this area and will not directly or indirectly result in physical changes to the environment, including biological resources. No significant adverse impacts to biological resources are expected to occur as a result of this project.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

4.b. Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

Impact Discussion 4b: The Soda Springs Area Plan would not alter or revise the regulations pertaining to existing fish or wildlife habitat quantity or quality or to resource protection measures for wetlands which encompasses riparian habitat. Consistent with existing conditions, development projects associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan could affect riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community depending on the type, timing, and specific nature of proposed actions. However, any such projects would be subject to subsequent project-level environmental review and permitting at which time they would be required to demonstrate compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the protection of riparian areas. Section L-II 4.3.17 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance includes provision for protecting riparian vegetation. Project-level planning and environmental analysis would identify potentially significant effects, avoid or minimize those impacts through the design process, and require mitigation for any significant effects as a condition of project approval. Implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would not result in the deterioration of riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations.
The Area Plan’s broad strategies to implement the community development vision for the area and create economic sustainability focus on rezoning and site development standards. Generally, the permissible uses and intensity allowed within the proposed commercial and industrial zoning are similar to the uses and intensity allowed in the current CH (Highway Commercial) zoned parcels. Other Area Plan elements such as the proposed residential density increase within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District, and proposed development standards for things like shipping containers used for storage would not impact biological resources.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

4.c. **Would the Project result in a substantial reduction in the extent, diversity, or quality of native vegetation, including brush removal for fire prevention and flood control improvements?**

*Impact Discussion 4c:* Development of any site within the Soda Springs Rural Center will be subject to existing vegetation protections, defensible space requirements and flood control improvements. Several policies are proposed to ensure protection of Donner Summit’s natural resources such as Policies NCR-2.2 and NCR-2.4, which focus on flood management of the South Yuba River and native vegetation preservation.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

4.d. **Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

*Impact Discussion 4d:* Consistent with existing conditions, development projects associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan are required to comply with all provisions of the Resource Management and Protection regulations for watercourses, wetlands, and riparian areas found in Sections L-II 4.3.17 of the County Zoning Ordinance. Proposed Policy NCR-2.7 directs protection of the wetlands and meadows of Donner Summit.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

4.e. **Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**

*Impact Discussion 4e:* The proposed Area Plan would not alter or revise the regulations pertaining to the migration or movement of animals. Consistent with existing conditions, development projects associated with any of the sites could result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals depending on the type, timing, and specific nature of proposed actions. However, any such projects would be subject to subsequent project-level environmental review.
and permitting at which time they would be required to demonstrate compliance with all federal, state, and County regulations including LUDC Sec. L-II 4.3.7 which protects major deer migration corridors. Proposed Policies NCR-1.3 and NCR-2.3 protect wildlife habitat from conflicting land uses.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

4.f. Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Impact Discussion 4f: The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan will not amend regulations pertaining to the protection of biological resources such as tree preservation policies. Consistent with existing conditions, development projects within the Area Plan could result in removal of trees and vegetation depending on the type, timing, and specific nature of proposed actions. However, any such projects would be subject to subsequent project-level environmental review and permitting at which time they would be required to demonstrate compliance with all federal, state, and County regulations in Chapter 13 of the General Plan and LUDC Sec. L-II 4.3.14 and 15.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

4.g. Would the Project introduce any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence and/or domestic animals), which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?

Impact Discussion 4g: Implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would not alter or revise the regulations protecting normal wildlife activities. As with the existing conditions, development of these sites could introduce light sources, fences, and other human presence that could affect wildlife activity, however the reason for the County’s Rural Center designation is that the properties within the project area have higher intensity development and uses and are not particularly known for wildlife activity.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

5. Cultural Resources

Environmental Setting: Donner Summit is culturally rich and marks an area of significant prehistoric and historic human occupation. Native Americans travelled the Summit thousands of years ago leaving evidence of their presence in petroglyphs and grindings rocks. In broadest terms, the archaeological signature of the Donner Pass area marks a trend from hunting-based societies in earlier times to populations that were increasingly reliant upon diverse resources by the time of historic contact (Elston 1982, 1986). The Soda Springs vicinity has been variously described as totally within Hill Nisenan territory (Wilson and Towne 1978), as a “no man’s land” between the Nisenan and the Washoe (Littlejohn 1928), or as Washoe peripheral territory (Price
1980). Although Donner Pass is consistently reported in ethnographies as inside Washoe territory and trading routes, use by neighboring Maidu, Miwok, and Northern Paiute is not ruled out. D’Azevedo (1984:23) pointed out that much of the Washoe Range, including the core territory, was used jointly by adjacent non-Washoe peoples.

Events around Donner Summit are tied to the history of the community of Truckee. Some of the first Euroamerican travelers over Donner Pass were members of the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend who ascended the Truckee River in mid-November of 1844. Hundreds of emigrant trains soon followed, the most notable being the ill-fated Donner Party, whom gave its name to the pass after it was trapped at the lake below during the winter of 1846-47. Their route, later designated as the Truckee Route of the Emigrant Trail, and may have passed along the Donner Pass Road.

The nation’s first transcontinental railroad crossed over Donner Summit in 1867 which gave rise to other developments in transportation, lumbering, ice harvesting, charcoal production, agriculture, dairying and tourism activities, which became the essential economic base for the area. In 1913 the old Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road was designated as a link in the Lincoln Highway, the nation’s first transcontinental highway.

By the mid 1920’s the Summit’s economy transitioned from predominately being industrial, into a recreational based economy. In 1937 Charles Van Evera leased Beacon Hill (now Soda Springs Ski Hill) and put up the first commercial rope tow in the country. In 1960 nearby Squaw Valley Ski Resort hosted the Winter Olympics, which secured the region’s position as a center point for year-round recreation and still serves as focal point of the areas identity today (Lindstöm 2013).

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<tr>
<td>a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

5a. Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?

Impact Discussion 5a: As a policy document, the proposed Area Plan will not result in a substantial increase in the amount of development anticipated by the General Plan and will not directly or indirectly result in physical changes to the environment, including disturbance of potential cultural resource sites. No change to existing regulations that protect historical and cultural resources will occur as a result of this project. Site-specific impacts resulting from
proposed development will continue to be evaluated on a project-by-project basis, in compliance with local, State and Federal regulations.

The Soda Springs Area Plan would accommodate development, which could occur on properties that include known historical or archaeological resources; are associated with historically significant events or individuals; or result in adverse physical or aesthetic effects to a significant historical or archaeological site, structure, object, or building. However, federal and state regulations and the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance (Sec. L-II 4.3.6) address protection of these resources and provide processes to avoid or minimize impacts to historic and archaeological resources. Furthermore, proposed Area Plan Goal NCR-4 and its underlying Policies direct protection and enhancement of significant archeological, cultural and historic resources on Donner Summit such as the Native American petroglyphs and grinding stones; wagon ruts along the Emigrant Trail from the westward gold rush migration of the 1850’s; and the China Wall and other remains from the transcontinental railroad.

Because any new development associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan would be required to comply with federal and state regulations, and the Nevada County Code, consistent with existing practices, it would not alter or adversely affect archeological or historical resources, therefore no adverse significant impacts to cultural resources will occur as a result of this project.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

5.b. Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?
Impact Discussion 5b: See analysis and discussion in Question 5.a., above.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

5.c. Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Impact Discussion 5c: The project area contains no known unique paleontological resources or geologic features. It is possible but unlikely that unknown paleontological resources may be located in the area. To ensure the protection of unique natural, paleontological, archaeological, historical, architectural, and resources that may be discovered during construction, the County’s Zoning Ordinance (Sec. L-II 4.3.6) requires a North Central Information Center (NCIC) records search and for all applicable projects a cultural resources study by a qualified professional that documents the presence or likelihood of potentially significant cultural resources (including unique paleontological or unique geologic features) and encourages the avoidance and protection of said resources. Because any development associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan would be required to comply with these requirements during project specific review and construction activity, it would not alter or adversely affect unique paleontological resources or sites, or unique geologic features.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
5.d. Would the Project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Impact Discussion 5d: Area Plan Policy NCR-4.4 requires archeological investigations for all applicable discretionary projects, in accordance with CEQA regulations, for areas not previously surveyed and/or that are determined sensitive for cultural resources. Furthermore, Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097.98 of the State Public Resources Code specify protocol when human remains are discovered. If human remains are discovered, the Codes require work to cease within the immediate area and notification of the County Coroner. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in CEQA Section 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. Because any development associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan would be required to comply with these requirements during ground-disturbance activities if human remains are discovered they would be protected from further disturbance, thus limiting potential impacts human remains and their associated ethnic and cultural values.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

6. GEOLOGY / SOILS

Existing Setting: The regional geology of the project area consists of granitic (granite and granodiorite) bedrock overlain by Pliocene and Miocene volcanic rocks that was subjected to Quaternary glaciation (Saucedo and Wagner, 1992). The volcanic rocks occur in a sequence of a basal unit of rhyolite/dacite tuffs, overlain by andesitic flows and agglomerates, capped by basaltic flows and breccias that are usually only preserved along ridge tops. Because of erosion, faulting and the uneven granitic surface onto which the volcanic rocks were deposited, this sequence of volcanic rocks may be locally absent or incomplete. Additionally, in some areas erosion and glaciation have exposed the underlying granitic bedrock, while other areas have quaternary glacial deposits, including till and outwash, overlying the bedrock.

There are no principal faults in the area that are identified and mapped pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zoning Act. Moreover, ground shaking due to an earthquake is estimated to be somewhat low (0.24 to 0.30 times gravity) (California Geologic Survey, 2010).

According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) the northern side of Donner Pass Rd. represents the primary mapped soil type beneath the Soda Springs Rural Center as Tinker-Rock outcrop, granitic-Cryumbrepts, wet complex 2 to 30 percent slopes (TIE). This soil type consists of cobbly loam and is a moderately deep, well drained soil that developed in glacial deposits of granitic origin. A root and moisture restricting weakly cemented and/or compacted pan occurs at a depth of 20 to 40 inches resulting in a very low to moderately low (0.00 to 0.06 in/hr) saturated hydraulic conductivity (Ksat). The erosion hazard of the Tinker components of these complexes
is moderate. On the north side of the Van Norden meadow and following west along the the South Yuba River the mapped soil type is Aquolls and Borolls (AQB) with 0 to 5% slopes, slow soil permeability and high erosion hazard. On the southern side of the South Yuba River along the railroad track and the lower portions of Soda Springs Ski Resort the mapped soil types are Tallac-Cryumbrepts wet complex with 2 to 30 percent slopes (TBE) and 30 to 50 percent slopes (TBF). These soils have moderately rapid (subsoil depth 22 to 41 inches) to very slow (subsoil depth over 41 inches) soil permeability and are very highly erodable.

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<tr>
<td>a. Result in exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, soil creep, mudslides, ground failure (including expansive, compressible, collapsible soils), or similar hazards?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Result in disruption, displacement, compaction, or over-covering of the soil by cuts, fills, or extensive grading?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, D</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
6.a. Would the Project result in exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, soil creep, mudslides, ground failure (including expansive, compressible, collapsible soils), or similar hazards?

Impact Discussion 6a: The topography on Donner Summit makes many areas susceptible to landslide hazards. The main hazards are associated with alpine granitic terrains are rock falls on steep slopes of massive granite and erosion of decomposed on both gentle and steep slope. However, the Rural Center is relatively flat and bisected by Donner Pass Rd. and the Yuba River, and not representative of the higher hazard surrounding ridgeline areas. There is no mapped Potential Snow Avalanche Areas (PSAA) within the Area Plan boundaries.

The project area is not located in a fault zone delineated on the California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning map (CGS, 2010). The nearest active fault is over 20 miles east of the project site and east of the Crest of the Sierra Nevada near the town of Genoa, Nevada. Nevada County has adopted the California Building Code and all structures associated with development in the Soda Springs Area Plan would be designed and constructed accordingly to minimize the risks associated with seismic ground shaking and ground failure. The project would not subject people or structures to adverse effects due to rupture of a known fault because there are no known active faults in the project area, based on information provided by the California Geological Survey maps (CGS, 2010).

Soils underlying Soda Springs are generally shallow to bedrock, very coarse textured, moderately drained and not likely susceptible to liquefaction. Future development projects within the Area Plan will likely require geotechnical reports to address site specific soil stability.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

6.b. Would the Project result in disruption, displacement, compaction, or over-covering of the soil by cuts, fills, or extensive grading?

Impact Discussion 6b: The Nevada County General Plan contains elements to control erosion, including Goal 12.1 “Minimize adverse impacts of grading activities, loss of soils and soil productivity.” Specifically, the county enforces a Grading Code (Section L-V Article 19 of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code) with the scope of “…sets forth rules and...
regulations to control excavation, grading and earthwork construction, including fills and embankments; establishes standards of required performance in preventing or minimizing water quality impacts from storm water runoff; establishes the administrative procedure for issuance of permits; and provides for approval of plans and inspection of grading construction, drainage, and erosion and sediment controls at construction sites” (Sec L-V 19.2A). Section L-V 19.14 establishes standards for erosion control, including the requirements for preparing erosion control plans. Any future projects would comport with the Nevada County Grading Code.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**6.c. Would the Project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?**

*Impact Discussion 6c:* See analysis and discussion in Question 6.a., above.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**6.d. Would the Project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?**

*Impact Discussion 6:* In June of 2015, the Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) completed a $24 million wastewater treatment plant renovation project which can now process a wastewater volume of up to 1.27 MGD on a peak day and in all weather conditions. With the new improvements, DSPUD currently has sufficient capacity for the next 25 years of anticipated growth with 365 available equivalent dwelling units (EDU’s) All of the Soda Springs Rural Center falls within the DSPUD service area and additional sewer hookups are available.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**6.e. Would the Project result in any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, on or off the site?**

*Impact Discussion 6e:* Future construction activities on property within the Soda Springs Area Plan may necessitate minor grading to accommodate the construction of the building pad, and utilities. Excavation may also be required to facilitate surface drainage, trenching for the installation and connection of underground utilities, and other subsurface disturbances. Existing dust and erosion control measure regulations will reduce these impacts to less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**
6.f. Would the Project result in changes in siltation, deposition or erosion, which may modify the channel of a river, or stream, or the bed any bay, inlet or lake?

*Impact Discussion 6f:* In addition to the existing erosion control Best Management Practices described in this section Nevada County’s Code requires 100 foot setbacks from high water marks of perennial streams and watercourses, unless an approved management plan can demonstrate a reduced setback will protect those resources from impacts including changes in siltation, and deposition or erosion.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

6.g. Would the Project result in excessive grading on slopes over 30 percent?

*Impact Discussion 6g:* Natural slopes of 30 percent or more are protected limited-disturbance zones pursuant to existing regulations (LUDC Sec. L-II 4.3.13). Future development projects are required to avoid areas of steep slopes, unless a management plan is approved by the appropriate decision making body. Future projects will be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure a project does not result in grading on slopes that are 30% or greater, therefore high erosion potential impacts associated with disturbance of steep slopes will be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

7. **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

*Environmental Setting:* Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are those gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs are emitted by natural and industrial processes, and the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth’s temperature. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or EPA are carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrous oxide (NO2). CO2 emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion. In California, approximately 43 percent of the CO2 emissions come from cars and trucks. Electricity generation is another important source of CO2 emissions. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO2, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO2. The adverse impacts of global warming include impacts to air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and an increase in health related problems.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act, was adopted in September 2006 and requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. This reduction would be accomplished through regulations to reduce emissions from stationary sources and from vehicles. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) is the State agency responsible for developing rules and regulations to cap and reduce GHG emissions. In
addition, the Governor signed Senate Bill 97 in 2007 directing the California Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines for the analysis and mitigation of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and mandating that GHG impacts be evaluated in CEQA documents. *CEQA Guidelines Amendments for GHG Emissions* were adopted by OPR on December 30, 2009. The NSAQMD has also prepared a guidance document that includes mitigations for general air quality impacts that can be used to mitigate GHG emissions, *Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects*. Therefore, in order to satisfy CEQA requirements, projects should make a reasonable attempt to quantify, minimize and mitigate GHG emissions as feasible.

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<td>a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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7a. **Would the Project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?**

*Impact Discussion 7a:* Implementation of the Area Plan will result in some level of development and population growth. Construction-related emissions would primarily be associated with heavy-duty construction equipment and truck and vehicle exhaust associated with subsequent project development. Long-term operational sources of GHG emissions associated with subsequent projects would include area sources (e.g., landscaping equipment, wood-burning appliances), mobile sources (e.g., vehicle exhaust), energy consumption (e.g., electricity and natural gas), solid waste (e.g., emissions that would occur at a landfill associated with solid waste decomposition), and water consumption (e.g., electricity used to deliver and treat water to serve those sites).

Future projects will often require GHG modeling and traffic studies based on the proposed size, use, and design. Best practices to reduce construction related GHG emissions include: limit equipment idling time; recycle or reuse construction waste and demolition material to the maximum extent feasible; use electrified or alternative-fueled construction equipment to the maximum extent feasible; and use local and sustainable building materials to the extent possible. Strategies to reduce operation-related GHG emissions may include: using on-site renewable energy such as photovoltaic systems; exceeding building code standards for energy efficiency; install energy efficient appliances and equipment in buildings; passive solar design standards for buildings; expanded recycling opportunities including food waste composting; and water conservation standards. Project-level implementation of those measures will ensure implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan will have less than significant impacts to GHG emissions.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**
7.b. Would the Project conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Impact Discussion 7b: See analysis and discussion in Question 7.a., above. Many of the sustainability and conservation-oriented policies and strategies of the Area Plan would reduce vehicle dependence and encourage redevelopment that would improve energy efficiency, thereby reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. The Soda Springs Area Plan is a policy and design document that does not propose changes that would significantly increase development potential.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

8. **HAZARDS / HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

**Existing Setting:** The property is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (*Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor Database, 2016*). The nearest voluntary clean-up sites are over 12 miles from Soda Springs, in the Town of Truckee. The Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) wastewater treatment plant, just west of the Soda Springs Rural Center does store and use hazardous materials for wastewater treatment operations. The Nevada County Department of Environmental Health is the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) that manages programs for hazardous materials storage and hazardous waste disposal. No other known hazardous materials sites or other known hazards are located in the vicinity of the project site. The project area is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Area for wildland fire (*CalFire 2014*).

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<tr>
<td>a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>B, 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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### 8.a. Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

**Impact Discussion 8a:** Development and redevelopment within Soda Springs could result in increased transport, storage, use and/or disposal of hazardous materials as a result of normal construction and operation of land uses and improvements. However all development would be temporary and required to adhere to federal, state, and local regulations regarding the handling, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Transportation of hazardous materials on area roadways is regulated by the California Highway Patrol, US Department of Transportation, and Caltrans. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act give the USEPA the authority to control the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The Nevada County Department of Environmental Health is responsible for consolidating, coordinating and making consistent the administration requirements, permits, inspection, and enforcement activities of state standards regarding the transportation, use, and disposal of hazardous materials in the county. Policies HM-10.5.1 through HM-10.5.4 of the General Plan’s Safety Element protect public health, safety, natural resources, and property through regulation of use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.

All existing and new development in the County would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations regarding the handling and transportation, disposal, and cleanup of hazardous materials. There are no changes proposed in the Area Plan that would increase the potential for hazardous materials.

**Environmental Analysis:** Less than Significant Impact.

**Required Mitigation:** None.
8.b. Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Impact Discussion 8b: See analysis and discussion in Question 8.a., above.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

8.c. Would the Project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Impact Discussion 8c: The project area is not located within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school. The nearest school to the project area is Donner trail Elementary School, which is approximately 8.3 miles west of Soda Springs. Therefore, project construction would not result in emission of or handling of hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

8.d. Would the Project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Impact Discussion 8d: None of the sites within the Area Plan or vicinity are included on a USEPA list of hazardous materials sites (USEPA, 2010).

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

8.e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Impact Discussion 8e: The closest public airport to the Soda Springs Rural Center, the Truckee-Tahoe Airport, is over 12 miles away. The project area is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

8.f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Impact Discussion 8f: There is one private airstrip in the area, Totem Pole Ranch Airport; however the airstrip is over 22 miles away from Soda Springs. Since the private airstrip is not
located in the project vicinity there will be no safety hazard to residents or workers on Donner Summit.

Environmental Analysis:  **No Impact.**  
Required Mitigation: **None.**

8.g. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

**Impact Discussion 8g:** The County has adopted an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) to ensure that communities in Nevada County are prepared for natural and human caused disasters. The proposed Area Plan will not interfere with an adopted emergency plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Environmental Analysis:  **No Impact.**  
Required Mitigation: **None.**

8.h. Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

**Impact Discussion 8h:** Development and redevelopment within the Soda Springs Rural Center could expose people and structures to hazards involving wildland fires in wildland-urban interface areas. However, any new development or redevelopment is required to be consistent with and will implement federal, state, and local regulations designed to reduce the risk of wildfire. All new structures are required to comply with the California Fire Code, which establishes minimum standards for materials and material assemblies to provide a reasonable level of exterior wildfire exposure protection for buildings in wildland-urban interface areas. Chapter 10 of the General Plan contains fire safety goals and policies to safeguard life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion. Property owners are responsible to implement fire prevention standards outlined in LUDC Sec. L-II 4.3.18 for their existing facility. Prior to future additional development within the “very high” hazard zone, discretionary projects will be required to submit a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) for the project area pursuant to LUDC Section L-II 4.3.18.C.4. Regardless of the perceived fire threat, the CalFire office of the Fire Marshall will review individual projects to ensure fire safety standards are being met. Implementation of these policies, in conjunction with the existing California Fire Code and Nevada County Code requirements would reduce impacts associated with wildland fires to less than significant levels.

The Soda Springs Area Plan does not propose changes that would significantly increase risk associated with wildland fires and proposed policies that encourage fuel reduction strategies for forest health and public safety (Policy NCR-1.2).

Environmental Analysis:  **Less than Significant Impact.**  
Required Mitigation: **None.**
9. HYDROLOGY / WATER QUALITY

Existing Setting: At the top of the multi-layered regulatory framework for water quality is the federal Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which regulates the water quality of all discharges into waters of the United States including wetlands and intermittent stream channels. California’s Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (western county) and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (eastern county) enforce State of California statutes equivalent to or more stringent than the federal statutes in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (Permit) System and Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act which regulates municipal and industrial discharge to surface waters and non-point source pollution. Nevada County is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program, a federal program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Soda Springs is located within the Mountain Counties area of the Sacramento River Hydrologic Region and specifically within the Lake Van Norden Planning Watershed (PWS); of the Soda Springs Super Planning Watershed (SPWS); of the Lake Spaulding Hydrologic Sub-area (HAS); of the South Yuba River Hydrologic Area (HA) of the Yuba River Hydrologic Unit (HU) (CA Dept. of Conservation, 2011).

Bisecting the project area the South Yuba River is seasonal, with flows derived from precipitation events and snow melt. Average annual precipitation is about 52 inches with the majority occurring between November through March as snow (DSPUD Wastewater Facilities Plan, May 2010). Peak river flows are generally associated with runoff derived from snow melt and generally occur annually sometime between April and June. Peak flows in the South Yuba River near Cisco (the nearest gauging station) typically exceed 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) (ECO:LOGIC, 2009). The nearest 100-year floodplain, as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) occurs along Lake Van Norden east of Soda Springs Road and south of Donner Summit Road.

The DSPUD discharges effluent to the South Yuba River during wet periods in accordance with orders issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board). During August and September, the DSPUD is required to discharge to land to an effluent irrigation area located in the Soda Springs Ski Resort area.

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, B, G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level, which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CEQA Environmental Checklist Item</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, D, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner, which would result in flooding on- or off-site?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, D, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Create or contribute to runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, B, C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Create inundation by mudflow?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.a. Would the Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

**Impact Discussion 9a:** The proposed Area Plan does not include a proposal for the development on any parcel nor issue any entitlements for future development within the Rural Center affecting water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. It is anticipated that any future discretionary development of property within Soda Springs will be considered a project pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines requiring environmental review, therefore the proposed Area Plan would have no impact on these requirements.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.b. Would the Project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level, which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?
Impact Discussion 9b: The presence of groundwater is highly variable in Soda Springs and largely confined to fractures in bedrock. Subsequent development of sites within the Area Plan could result in interception of the groundwater table from construction activities and/or alteration of groundwater quality from infiltration of surface water. The Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) provides treated water to Soda Springs and given the scale of the small parcels and existing reliance of surface waters and not ground water within the Area Plan it is infeasible that subsequent development of those sites will substantially deplete groundwater supply and recharge.

This project is a policy document with some increase in permissible commercial land uses and residential density. The policies set forth echo the community-wide commitment to protect water quality and the watersheds of which the headwaters originate on Donner Summit. Policy NCR-1.1 requires that proposed changes and future development by reviewed with the aim to improve and maintain the water quality of Donner Summit’s lakes, creeks, and rivers, in addition to protecting and enhancing the South Yuba River and American River watersheds.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.  
Required Mitigation: None.

9.c. Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Impact Discussion 9c: See analysis and discussion in Questions 6.f., and 9.a., above. The “Project” is an Area Plan policy document that does not propose any specific development.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.  
Required Mitigation: None.

9.d. Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner, which would result in flooding on- or off-site?


Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.  
Required Mitigation: None.

9.e. Would the Project create or contribute to runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Impact Discussion 9e: There is no existing or planned stormwater drainage system in Soda Springs. During construction activities an erosion control plan, or stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) for disturbance over one acre, will be implemented to minimize the risk of stormwater pollution from construction materials and exposed sediment. Impacts to stormwater drainage quantity and pollutant loading are judged less than significant.
Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.f. **Would the Project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?**

*Impact Discussion 9f:* Because all existing state and local protections for surface water would remain in place, and water quality BMPs would continue to be required for all grading projects, the proposed Business Park amendments themselves would not result in discharges to surface waters or alteration of surface water quality and existing regulations will ensure future project impacts to water quality standards and discharge limits will be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.g. **Would the Project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?**

*Impact Discussion 9g:* Existing County Policies 11.9.A, 11.9B, and 11.9.C protect development proposals from flood hazards and limit uses within the 100-year flood plain to essential public health therefore, there would be no impact associated with placement of housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map. The Soda Springs Area Plan is a policy and design document and no significant new development or uses would be created as a result of the project.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.h. **Would the Project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?**

*Impact Discussion 9h:* See analysis and discussion in Question 9.g., above.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.i. **Would the Project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?**

*Impact Discussion 9i:* See analysis and discussion in Question 9.g., above.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

9.j. **Would the Project create inundation by mudflow?**
Impact Discussion 9j: See analysis and discussion in Question 9.g., above.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

10. LAND USE / PLANNING

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

The current strict Highway Commercial zoning through much of the Soda Springs Rural Center has limited commercial development and the existing built environment has languished. With this deterioration there are troubling socioeconomic trends such as unaffordable housing along with reduced housing occupancy, business closures, and declining population and workforce. Compounding these problems is the multitude of political jurisdictions and districts and divided community perceived needs that have resulted in not capitalizing on opportunities that exist in the area. And lastly, there is not a comprehensive long range development plan that provides a vision for the community character and sustainability of the area’s natural and economic viability.

Buildings such as the Summit Station and General Store in Soda Springs contribute positively to the character of the community and reflect the community vision. Unfortunately, there is an overall lack of coherence in how many of the buildings in the community are designed and how they address the streets, which undermines a strong sense of place. The meandering headwaters of the Yuba River, and wide Donner Pass Rd. and railroad right-of-way further exacerbates site design issues by forcing development to be uneven distances from the roadway, creating a haphazard appearance and effectively hindering pedestrian circulation between the opposite sides of Donner Pass Road. The overall impression of the Soda Springs area is that the community appears worn out and run down, a view shared by most residents.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Result in structures and/or land uses incompatible with existing land uses?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The induction of growth or concentration of population?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The extension of sewer trunk lines or access roads with capacity to serve new development beyond this proposed project?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Result in the loss of open space?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>A, 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attachment 1
10.a. Would the Project result in structures and/or land uses incompatible with existing land uses?

*Impact Discussion 10a:* No new structures are proposed with the Area Plan, although there are five new zoning districts proposed that are not currently present within the Rural Center; R3 (High Density Residential), C1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C2 (Community Commercial), M1 (Light Industrial), and FR-40 (Forest-40 acre minimum). See the existing and proposed zoning districts in the map below. These additional land use zoning districts included within the Soda Springs Area Plan and rationale of why impacts of related to land use incompatibility are less than significant are further discussed below.

**R3 (High Density)**

There are two vacant parcels on the north side of the intersection of Donner Pass Rd. and Soda Springs Rd. being rezoned from R2 (Medium Density Residential) to R3 (High Density Residential). This change is part of a larger strategy to focus additional residential capacity near the commercial center of town to increase the critical mass of the community, imparting a sense of scale and density that establishes the market center as the focal point for the entire community. The parcels are currently zoned for residential development and will remain zoned for residential development.

**C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) and C2 (Community Commercial)**

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

Located on the western, eastern, and southern gateways of the Soda Springs commercial area, eleven parcels have been rezoned from CH (Highway Commercial) to C1 (Neighborhood Commercial). As mentioned throughout this section, much of the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial area is currently designated by the County General Plan as Highway Commercial because of its historical role as a service center for travelling motorists. This land use designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the area’s residents.

The Area Plan proposed to rezone twenty-one parcels from CH (Highway Commercial) to C2 (Community Commercial). Changing the current Commercial Highway zoning to Neighborhood
and Community Commercial zone districts provides greater flexibility for local commercial businesses. Unlike the current CH zoning, the C1 and C2 zone districts allow for uses like offices and museums which currently exist as non-conforming uses, and community meeting and social event facilities which are strongly desired by the community.

**M1 (Light Industrial)**
The extreme weather conditions and self-reliant approach to life of residents requires there be industrial areas. Heavy equipment is scattered throughout the community often giving commercial sites the feel of an industrial site. This plan designates two parcels for light industrial uses near the western end of town in recognition of the current industrial snow removal and telecommunication functions on the sites. Through the use of landscaping and fences (Section L-II 4.2.7.E.2.f.) and more restrictive noise standards (Section L-II 4.1.7.D.4.) Nevada County’s Zoning Ordinance includes protections to preserve the quality of life when non-residential development abuts residentially-zoned properties.

**FR-40 (Forest-40 acre minimum)**
In the northeastern most corner of the Rural Center along Bunny Hill Road is a 2.85 acre parcel owned by the U.S. Forest Service that is proposed to be re-zoned from R1 (Single-Family Residential) to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.), consistent with the zoning of surrounding Tahoe National Forest parcels.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**
10.b. Would the Project result in the induction of growth or concentration of population?

*Impact Discussion 10b:* The proposed Area Plan is a countermeasure to sprawl development and intentionally seeks to focus compatible development and higher intensity uses concentrated within and adjacent to the commercial center. Because of the small lots in Soda Springs and the typical Donner Summit workforce household size and predominately low income from the recreation and service industries, increased residential density in close proximity the commercial area is a primary component to the Soda Springs recovery. Furthermore, because of the high cost of sewer hookups the potential income from additional units is a way to make investment financially feasible. For these reasons, within the Commercial Base District the maximum residential density allowed for mixed-use developments has been increased from four units per acre to six units per acre, and all of the parcels zoned R2-RC (medium density residential) are eligible for density of at least a duplex (two units), pursuant to zoning compliance.

As stated throughout this Initial Study, the Area Plan policy document that does not propose any specific development. Community compatibility and neighborhood protections such as building setbacks and lot coverage remain unchanged.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

10.c. Would the Project result in the extension of sewer trunk lines or access roads with capacity to serve new development beyond this proposed project?

*Impact Discussion 10c:* The current commercial strip development in Soda Springs can be characterized as sprawl development. The Soda Springs Area Plan has a primary focus for compatible development with a compact development model planning approach with all of the additional new development capacity within or adjacent to the commercial center. The Area Plan provides a modest residential density increase in close proximity to the center where sufficient infrastructure exists which would lessen the prospect of any need for extension of sewer lines or access roads. No specific projects are proposed and future projects are unlikely to require extension of sewer trunk lines or access roads.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

10.d. Would the Project result in the loss of open space?

*Impact Discussion 10d:* The Soda Springs Area Plan does not alter the zoning of any Open Space land use designations. There are numerous policies throughout the Area Plan that support the preservation of open space to broaden recreational experiences and for natural resource and environmental protection.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**
10.e. Would the Project substantially alter the present or planned land use of an area, or conflict with a general plan designation or zoning district?

Impact Discussion 10e: The Soda Springs Area Plan proposes modest changes to the existing General Plan land use designations and zoning districts to revive the function of the Rural Center as the focal point of the larger rural community. The residents of Soda Springs and the surrounding Donner Summit environs want to ensure that the town remains a desirable place to live and not proposing some changes represents the opposite of this direction as it ties the Summit's success to car-centered seasonal tourist activity which is not sustainable given the nature of climate change and implied impacts on the winter recreation season.

The Area Plan allows mixed land uses within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District that promote convenience, economic vitality, and improved access to a more extensive range of facilities and services of residents and visitors. The project’s focus on new commercial development will transform the Soda Springs Rural Center into the primary hub of Donner Summit and provide the area with a higher quality of life for residents and visitors. Specifically all of Donner Summit would benefit from a community farmer’s market, public meeting facilities, retaining their full service post office, providing updated visitor lodging and expanded retail and service facilities. These new uses provide greater opportunity for economic viability and sustainability as a community which are central themes promoted throughout Nevada County’s General Plan.

Environmental Analysis: Less than Significant Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.

10.f. Would the Project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Impact Discussion 10f: The drafting of the Soda Springs Area Plan is a tool to advance the goals and policies for the Nevada County General Plan while benefitting the local community. The Area Plan provides long-term guidance that is intended to improve the prosperity of Donner Summit in a way that supports a healthy economy, environment, and social fabric for the residents and general public. The Area Plan conforms to the General Plan and incorporates applicable policies and regulations of both plans to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect.

Development within the Soda Springs Rural Center, as noted in Question 10.e above, provides greater flexibility with the proposed changes to zoning and development standards. The changes remove some of the unnecessary restrictions that have proven counter to a healthy environment and sustainable economy for the area. The current CH (Highway Commercial) zoning prohibits a farmer’s market as one example. This land use restriction works in direct opposition to the desired result of building a sense of community.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None.
10.g. Would the Project disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community, including a low-income or minority community?

Impact Discussion 10g: The Soda Springs Area Plan is an established tourist, commercial, and recreation center that caters to visitors and resident alike. The intent of the Area Plan is to promote the land patterns that further enhance this area of Donner Summit as a destination and recreation center. Furthermore, the Area Plan calls for implementation of recreation connections between the neighborhoods within the Rural Center to remove the existing physical divisions that currently exist within the community.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact. 
Required Mitigation: None.

11. MINERAL RESOURCES

Existing Setting: Nevada County has significant mineral resources, including gold, which have played a major role regionally, across the State, and nationally. Gold was discovered in California during 1848, and the “Gold Rush” and subsequent mining activities largely shaped the development of Nevada County. Several rich deposits were found in Nevada County, and the major urban centers have developed around these deposits. Additionally, mining has left its mark on the landscape as well with tailings deposits, steep cliffs from placer mining, and remnants of old canals. Most gold was found at and below the town of Washington on the South Yuba River, and mining and mineral resources, as well as urban development, were largely concentrated in the western portion of the County.

Significant mineral resources in the County include gold (in various forms), silver, copper, zinc, lead, chromite, tungsten, manganese, barite, quartz, limestone, asbestos, clay, mineral paint, sand, gravel, and rock (NCGP, 1995). The mineral resources are most concentrated in the western part of the County, and there are few areas of significant mineral resources in the eastern part of the County.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>A, 1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

11.a. Would the Project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

Impact Discussion 11a: There are no known mineral resources of local importance within the Soda Springs vicinity. The proposed Area Plan does not include a proposal for the development on any parcel, nor does it issue any mining entitlements for future development on the project.
parcels. Future development proposals involving structural work will require project specific Geotechnical Engineering Reports and/or supplements to any existing reports to determine if future projects will result in potential impacts to mineral resources.

The proposed Area Plan does not affect mineral resources, nor does the Plan proposed changes to any applicable local, state, and federal requirements for addressing past or future mining activities. It is anticipated that future discretionary development of property within Soda Springs will be considered a project pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines requiring environmental review, therefore the proposed Area Plan would not cause the loss of availability of locally important minerals and no impacts would occur. It is anticipated to have no impact to mineral resources in this area of western Nevada County.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact. Required Mitigation: None.

11.b. Would the Project Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

Impact Discussion 11b: See analysis in Question 11.a., above.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact. Required Mitigation: None.

12. **NOISE**

Existing Setting: The greatest noise generators in and around Soda Springs are vehicular and truck traffic on Interstate 80 and Donner Pass Rd., and trains along the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks. These noise sources generally have noise levels in the range of 55 to 75 dbA (Chapter 9: Noise, Volume 1, Nevada County General Plan, 1995). The nearest noise receptors in the vicinity are the houses and businesses in Soda Springs. Future long term noise problems in Soda Springs are predicted to continue to be transportation related.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of the County’s adopted standards established in the General Plan and Land Use and Development Code?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels (e.g., blasting)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**12.a. Would the Project expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of the County’s adopted standards established in the General Plan and Land Use and Development Code?**

*Impact Discussion 12a:* Table 12-1 from the Nevada County General Plan, lists the County’s exterior noise limits according to land use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12-1 Nevada County Exterior Noise Limits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use Category</strong></td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential and Public</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial and Recreation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Park</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
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</table>

The noise environment in Soda Springs is influenced by multiple noise sources, including highways and roadways; transit vehicles; delivery trucks serving commercial establishments; light industrial uses; and snow making equipment.

Aside from short-term construction-related noise increases, development associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan could result in a long-term increase in existing noise levels if it were to result in the introduction of new noise-generating land uses, increased traffic that could increase roadside noise levels, or if it were to create noise/land use compatibility conflicts, as discussed below.

The potential for noise conflicts from development, including construction of industrial, commercial, residential, and infrastructure such as roadway improvements, that is expected to
occur at these sites, may include conflicts as a result of adjacent land uses and their operational aspects. The General Plan addresses these conflicts through the land use designation, zoning identification, and development standard process. Although the potential exists for some development allowed under the recommended land use designations and zoning to have operational aspects that could create noise impacts on other adjacent land uses. The proposed land use pattern and rezoning are designed to locate uses associated with higher noise potential together through the use of districts, which clusters similar noise-producing uses together. Similarly districts with lower potential noise levels are clustered together. Therefore, the placement and layout of the districts along with the permissible uses limited to each district prevent land use conflict associated with noise.

Nevada County’s General Plan noise policies would provide expanded protection from noise by requiring noise analysis and mitigation when proposed uses are likely to exceed established noise limits (General Plan Policy 9.1.13). The analysis will address the potential for adverse noise levels based on the criteria contained in Table 12-1 above and integrate mitigation into project design as needed. All new residential units constructed in the Area Plan would achieve an acceptable interior noise level as required by the California Building Code. Further, the County would only approve projects that can demonstrate compliance with the applicable noise standards, therefore any noise compatibility impacts would be less than significant.

The Area Plan proposes policies that would lessen traffic noise such as reducing the speed on Donner Pass Road (Policy PS-2.4), and providing more pedestrian amenities that include non-motorized transportation alternatives connecting Soda Springs with recreational and other destinations (Policy REC-2.1).

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**  
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**12.b. Would the Project expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels (e.g., blasting)?**

*Impact Discussion 12b:* As is the case under existing conditions, construction activities associated with implementing projects under the General Plan could potentially expose noise-sensitive receptors to levels that exceed County noise standards and/or expose noise-sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels. Construction activities associated with development could include site preparation (e.g., demolition, clearing, excavation, grading), foundation work, paving, building construction, utility installation, finishing, and cleanup. These activities typically involve the use of noise-generating equipment such as excavators, dozers, graders, dump trucks, generators, backhoes, compactors, and loaders. Noise levels associated with these types of equipment are typically between 70 and 85 dBA Lmax at 50 feet. In unique circumstances, specialized construction equipment (such as pile drivers) or techniques (such as blasting) that are inherently louder than typical construction equipment (typically between 94 and 101 dBA Lmax at 50 feet) may be required. During construction, nearby residences and other noise-sensitive receptors could be exposed to excessive or severe noise levels. Temporary construction noise from projects can be mitigated by best construction practices required in building permits issued by the County such as restrictions and limitations on allowed construction days/hours.
Nevada County’s General Plan noise policies provide compatibility protections from noise. Any project with potentially significant impacts would be required to complete a noise analysis and mitigation when proposed uses are likely to exceed established noise limits. The analysis will address the potential for adverse noise levels based on the criteria contained in Table 12-1 and integrate mitigation into project design as needed, therefore any impacts resulting from vibration or ground borne noise would be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**12.c. Would the Project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

*Impact Discussion 12c:* See analysis and discussion in Question 12.a. above.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**12.d. Would the Project result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

*Impact Discussion 12d:* See analysis and discussion in Question 12.b. above.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**12.e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

*Impact Discussion 12e:* See response in Question 8.e. above. Donner Summit is not located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport and therefore will not expose people working in the project area to excessive noise levels from aircraft. Further there are no changes, new uses or proposed development that would interfere with an airport.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**12.f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

*Impact Discussion 12f:* See response in Question 8.f above. Donner Summit is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip and therefore will not expose people working in the project area to excessive noise levels from aircraft.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None**
13. **POPULATION / HOUSING**

**Existing Setting:** Census data for the 95728 Zip Code (Boreal, Soda Springs and Norden) indicated year-round population of 81 in 2010. Housing conditions and costs vary greatly throughout Soda Springs and all of Donner Summit. Many of the homes are vacation homes that sit vacant the majority of the year and yet there are very few options for employees who work on the Summit, most of whom live in the Town of Truckee.

There are currently two residential Land Use Designations within the Rural Center; R1 (Single Family Residential) and R2 (Medium Density Residential). The Area Plan currently includes 195 parcels currently zoned R1 of which 87 are vacant, and 28 parcels currently zoned R2 of which twenty parcels are part of a multi-family complex known as the Soda Springs Station. Of the remaining eight parcels currently zoned R2 three are developed with single family residences and five of the parcels are vacant.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**13.a. Would the Project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

*Impact Discussion 13a:* The Soda Springs Area Plan would implement the mixed-use zoning concept into the commercial area of the community. The proposed changes to land use zoning and development patterns associated with the Soda Springs Area Plan would focus higher residential densities adjacent to existing commercial services as part of the Area Plan’s sustainable community strategy. The allowance for mixed-use projects to have a maximum residential density of 6 units/acre and allowance that any proposed zoned R2-RC is eligible for at least a duplex is in response to the small parcel sizes in Soda Springs and would not induce substantial direct or indirect population growth.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None**

**13.b. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**
Impact Discussion 13b: The Project does not displace housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere but rather promotes residential uses within and adjacent to the mixed-use commercial center of the Area Plan to promote additional housing opportunities within a walkable distance of services. There are no changes of existing residentially zoned property to a non-residential zoning district.

Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None

13.c. Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?


Environmental Analysis: No Impact.
Required Mitigation: None

14. PUBLIC SERVICES

Existing Setting: The following public services are provided within Soda Springs:
Fire: The Truckee Fire District provides fire protection services.
Police: The Nevada County Sheriff provides law enforcement services.
Water & Sewer: The Donner Summit Public Utility District provides public water and sewer service.
Schools: The Tahoe/Truckee Unified School District provides school services.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following the public services:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fire protection?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Police protection?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Parks?</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Other public services or facilities?</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

14a. (1-5) Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the
following the public services: Fire Protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?

**Impact Discussion 14a (1-5):** The Soda Springs Area Plan would facilitate the compact land use pattern, localized increases in density, and the types of development envisioned by the General Plan. The proposed Project does not include any development proposals or infrastructure upgrades that would result in population growth or any other direct or indirect substantial adverse impacts requiring increased public services. Any future development proposals such as tentative maps would undergo environmental review to evaluate impacts related to public services. Therefore, the proposed Area Plan would have little effect on service ratios, response times, or other service objectives of public services.

Truckee Fire Protection District – Station 97 is just across Highway 80, approximately 1,000 feet west of the Soda Springs Rural Center. There would not be a need for new or altered fire protection facilities resulting from this project. The resulting changes in population density would be minimal and not have an appreciable effect on the Donner Summit Public Utility District’s ability to serve new projects. Expanded trails and parks would require some additional maintenance and policing but would not significantly place a burden on agencies providing this public service.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None**

15. **RECREATION**

**Existing Setting:** Eastern Nevada County has one recreation and park district which is the Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD). The TDRPD operates a number of park and recreational facilities mostly within the Town of Truckee (Nevada County General Plan, 1995); with the closest being West End Beach Park on the western shore of Donner Lake. There are also vast amounts of national forest lands and several state parks in the Tahoe-Truckee area, as well as public and privately owned recreation areas. There are several recreational trails and waterways nearby, such as the South Yuba River and Lower Lola Montez Lake and Trail; and the Serene Lakes Recreational Area and Soda Springs Ski Area. Recreational activities in eastern Nevada County are abundant and range from hiking, biking, horseback riding, skiing, camping, fishing, etc. Access to nearby recreational facilities, such as hiking trails, waterways and ski areas are currently not well marked.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
```
15.a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Impact Discussion 15a: The Area Plan anticipates increases in visitors and recreationists. The resulting economic prosperity in the area expected from implementation of the Area Plan will help create conditions that would be attractive to developers prepared to invest resources in the maintenance and improvement of recreational facilities. Existing recreation opportunities are numerous and are anticipated to meet that potential increase in demand within and in the immediate vicinity of the Soda Springs Area Plan (i.e., Soda Springs, Boreal, Donner Ski Ranch, and Sugar Bowl Ski Resorts, Royal Gorge, Van Norden meadow, Donner Summit rock climbing, Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and other bike paths, hiking and mountain bicycle trails). Furthermore, the Soda Springs Area Plan proposes policies and implementing strategies to enhance biking and pedestrian linkages to recreation uses within and beyond the boundaries of the Soda Springs Area Plan. By providing access to a wider range of public recreation opportunities within and outside the boundary will limit the disproportional effect on any one recreation site or activity. Furthermore, Policy REC-1.8 of the Area Plan supports efforts to direct the use of recreation impact fees to provide additional recreation related facilities on Donner Summit.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

15.b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Impact Discussion 15b: It is anticipated that development within the Soda Springs Area Plan could improve way-finding and public access to surrounding recreation opportunities. Policy REC-1.9 of the Area Plan supports the enhancement of recreation uses such as improved trailhead parking, picnic areas, and camping on recreation zoned property within the project area. In addition, recreation demand would be considered at a project-level during subsequent environmental review and permitting of individual proposed projects.

The Area Plan supports the development of new recreational opportunities (which constitutes additional recreation capacity) such as a Donner Summit Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with trail connections between the Soda Springs Rural Center and Boreal Ski Resort, Castle Valley, Kidd Lake, and between the western and eastern Soda Springs’s neighborhoods on the north side of Donner Pass Rd.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

**15.c. Would the project conflict with established recreation uses of the area, including biking, equestrian and/or hiking trails?**

*Impact Discussion 15c: The project is intended to expand the access and appeal to the public and recreation users of the natural wonders of Donner Summit by connecting non-motorized trails to recreation areas and branding of the area as a desirable destination with full service facilities for visitors. The support for a welcoming community meeting facility will afford more opportunities for festivals, farmer’s markets, and nature-related special events to attract. In short, the Area Plan will enhance and not conflict with recreational uses of the area. Policy REC-1.5 of the Soda Springs Area Plan specifically addresses incompatibility of recreational uses which would preclude any conflicts between existing or proposed recreational uses.*

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

**16. TRANSPORTATION / CIRCULATION**

**Existing Setting:** Access to Soda Springs is via Donner Pass Road and Interstate 80. Donner Pass Road is a west-east roadway that was originally named Highway 40, now known as Old Highway 40. It extends west from Interstate 80 to Big Bend, and extends east from Interstate 80, over the summit, into the Town of Truckee. Donner Pass Road is a two lane county maintained major collector road primarily used to access private residences and small businesses located in Soda Springs and Norden, as a scenic bypass over Donner Summit in the dry season, and receives heavy weekend traffic volumes to access ski resorts in the winter ski season. The most frequent concern voiced from residents is drivers regularly ignore posted limits and dangerous driving speeds are commonplace on Donner Pass Road. West of the intersection with Soda Springs Road Donner Pass Road receives 1,020 trips daily vehicle trips, and east of the Soda Springs Road intersection Donner Pass Road receives 552 daily vehicle trips. Soda Springs Road intersects with Donner Pass Road on the eastern edge of the Area Plan’s commercial district and is classified as a minor collector road with 659 daily vehicle trips, primarily used to access the Soda Springs Ski Area, Royal Gorge Cross Country Resort, and residential properties in the Serene Lakes community located south of the Area Plan in Placer County. The Area Plan also includes the following local residential streets; Portia Way, Donner Drive, Sierra Drive, Castle Drive, Hill Road, Lola Montez Lane, T-Bar Court, T-Bar Drive, Yuba Trail, Poma Lane, Lotta Crabtree Terrace, and Bunny Hill Road.

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

Following the west-east alignment of Donner Pass Road, the Union Pacific Railroad no longer has a train stop in Soda Springs.
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<tr>
<td>a. Result in an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Result in a need for private or public road maintenance, or new roads?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Result in effects on existing parking facilities, or demand for new parking?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Result in a substantial impact upon existing transit systems (e.g., bus service) or alteration of present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Result in an alteration of waterborne, rail, or air traffic patterns or levels?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, H</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Result in inconsistency with adopted policies supporting the provision of transit alternatives to automobile transportation on an equitable basis with roadway improvements, e.g. clustered development, commuter-oriented transit, bus turnouts, sidewalks, paths, and bicycle racks?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, H</td>
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</table>

16.a. Would the Project result in an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?

*Impact Discussion 16a:* The Soda Springs Area Plan does not alter, revise or conflict with applicable plans, ordinances or policies establishing the measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. Consistent with the General Plan, development and redevelopment associated with the Area Plan evaluated as a whole, and individual projects therein, that would generate a significant net increase of daily vehicle trips or more would be required to prepare a project-level traffic analyses. For any new trips that are generated, Nevada County requires an applicant to offset the potential regional traffic and air quality effects of the new trips by requiring an applicant contribute to traffic mitigation fees to the Air Quality
Mitigation Fund and all individual projects would be required to meet all applicable LOS standards for roadways and standards.

Any additional vehicle trips with residents coming from adjacent communities to receive goods and services provided in Soda Springs will be more than off-set by a corresponding reduction of travel to Truckee to meet those needs. Similarly, the increase to residential capacity within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District will provide affordable work force housing choices thereby reducing the need to reside and travel from more distant communities like Truckee. Making Soda Springs a full service destination will largely offset any new trips generated by additional visitors resulting from Area Plan implementation. The circulation system is currently in disrepair and the proposed changes resulting from the Area Plan provide a safer definition of the roadway and safer separation of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Future construction and operational impacts within the project area would be evaluated during project-specific environmental review that may be proposed for a specific site. At that time, construction staging areas would be evaluated and impacts from transport of heavy equipment to and from the project area, if applicable, would be evaluated. For those sites where projects could impacts State Highways, Caltrans District 3 would review future projects to determine if any access improvements are appropriate at that time. Additionally, the Department of Public Works would likely have project-specific conditions of approval that could include road improvements (width and shoulders) to Local Class Road standards, secondary access, improvement plans for road improvements, right-of-way dedication, and a road maintenance agreements. Applicants would also be responsible for acquisition of any necessary offsite easements. Impacts related to transit services and parking would be evaluated as well with future project-specific tentative map applications. Parking would be required to be provided at the ratios required by the County’s Parking Ordinance.

As discussed above the additional vehicle trips generated by promotion of the area will be negligible given the corresponding reduction in trips afforded by the plan’s optional means of about. Creating the conditions for more people to reside in the area rather than commute and expanding non-motorized trails will ensure that additional traffic volume will not be substantially greater than what currently exists. The area suffers from ski traffic in the winter and the Area Plan would not exacerbate this problem because the increases in vehicle traffic are more likely in the non-winter months.

For those reasons described above, the proposed Area Plan would have less than significant impacts related to an increase in traffic, traffic hazards, excess of level of service standards, and incompatible uses on project area roadways.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**

Required Mitigation: **None.**

16.b. **Would the Project result in a need for private or public road maintenance, or new roads?**

*Impact Discussion 16b:* The Donner Pass Road improvement project, which is currently in the design phase, is funded and scheduled for construction in 2019, independent of the Area Plan. The road upgrades will be designed to reduce the amount of road maintenance required as noted
in Goal PS-2. The policies that support this goal (PS-2.1 - PS-2.4) support coordination with the Federal Highway Administration and reduced vehicle speeds.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

16.c. **Would the Project result in effects on existing parking facilities, or demand for new parking?**

Area Plan Policy LU-2.5 encourages shared or area wide parking strategies to make more efficient use of the land for parking and pedestrian use. This is implemented by providing more flexible parking standards or off-site parking within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District. Within the RC District there are allowances for parking reductions if supported by a registered professional engineer/traffic engineer.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

16.d. **Would the Project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

*Impact Discussion 16d:* See analysis in Question 16.a. above. The overall transportation strategy of the Area Plan is to increase public safety. Policy PS-2.4 seeks to reduce traffic speeds within adversely affecting vehicle circulation.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

16.e. **Would the Project result in a substantial impact upon existing transit systems (e.g., bus service) or alteration of present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?**

*Impact Discussion 16e:* Public transit systems (i.e., TART) may be enticed by the anticipated success of Soda Springs and benefit from increased potential ridership. Ski resorts would find it more feasible to provide employee shuttles to work if more employees are able to reside in local housing resulting from the plan’s implementation.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

16.f. **Would the Project result in an alteration of waterborne, rail, or air traffic patterns or levels?**

*Impact Discussion 16f:* The Area Plan would not result in an alteration of waterborne, rail, or air traffic patterns or levels. The Area Plan’s Public Service Chapter does support efforts to explore
the feasibility of establishing a Union Pacific Quiet Zone at the Soda Springs Road railroad crossing.

Environmental Analysis:  **No Impact.**  
Required Mitigation:  **None.**

16.g. Would the Project result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?

*Impact Discussion 16g:*  See analysis in Question 16.a. above. Implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan is expected to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. Policy PS-2.1 of the Area Plan’s Public Service Chapter encourages engagement with the Nevada County Department of Public Works, Federal Highway Commission, and Placer County to ensure that the Donner Pass Rd. road improvement project scheduled for construction in 2019 includes the installation of bike lanes and other pedestrian amenities.

Environmental Analysis:  **Less than Significant Impact.**  
Required Mitigation:  **None.**

16.h. Would the Project Result in inadequate:  
Sight distance?  
Ingress/egress?  
General road capacity?  
Emergency access (4290 Standard)?

*Impact Discussion 16h:*  See analysis in Question 16.a. above.

Environmental Analysis:  **Less than Significant Impact.**  
Required Mitigation:  **None.**

16.i. Would the Project result in inconsistency with adopted policies supporting the provision of transit alternatives to automobile transportation on an equitable basis with roadway improvements, e.g. clustered development, commuter-oriented transit, bus turnouts, sidewalks, paths, and bicycle racks?

*Impact Discussion 16i:*  See analysis in Question 16.a. above.

Environmental Analysis:  **Less than Significant Impact.**  
Required Mitigation:  **None.**

17. **UTILITIES / SERVICE SYSTEMS**

Existing Setting:  Soda Springs is served with public water and sewer from the Donner Summit Public Utility District. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electrical power to this site. Propane gas is provided by multiple providers including Amerigas. The Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal
provides for the collection and transportation of solid waste to the dump/transfer station located at Highway 89 and Cabin Creek Rd. in Truckee.

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<tr>
<td>a. Result in a need for the extension of electrical power or natural gas?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Be served by a landfill or transfer station with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Require a need for the extension of communication systems?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17.a. Would the Project result in a need for the extension of electrical power or natural gas?

**Impact Discussion 17a:** Development within the Soda Springs Area plan would utilize those existing utility services that are available in the area and would not require the extension or expansion of any other utility services that are off site. Soda Springs is currently is served by the utilities described above in Existing Setting, and no specific development project is proposed as part of the Area Plan.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.b. Would the Project require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

**Impact Discussion 17b:** The focused increased residential density (capacity) would not be so appreciable as to necessitate expansion of water and waste water infrastructure. The Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD) has recently expanded its waste water treatment facility and they have enough water to double their treated water customer base. No additional infrastructure for this purpose will be required derived from implementation of the Area Plan.
Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.c. **Would the Project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

*Impact Discussion 17c:* Future development within the Area Plan will connect to the Donner Summit Public Utility Districts (DSPUD) wastewater treatment facility. DSPUD’s recent wastewater facility upgrade was necessary to bring the District into compliance with the Regional Water Quality Control Board discharge requirements. The DSPUD is required to maintain compliance with federal and state wastewater discharge standards regulated by the Regional Water Board and Nevada County’s Environmental Health Department, therefore additional development permitted under the Area Plan would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.d. **Would the Project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?**

*Impact Discussion 17d:* Future development within the Area Plan would result in some increased demand for water supply for new residential units, industrial, commercial and recreation facilities. However, any future development permitted within the Area Plan would be required to comply with existing County policies which require a project applicant demonstrate the availability of adequate water quantity and quality for both domestic consumption and fire protection prior to project approval. This is demonstrated at a project-level through the acquisition of a Will Serve Letter from the Donner Summit Public Utility District. Therefore the Area Plan would not create water use in excess of the maximum available from the service provider.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.e. **Would the Project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

*Impact Discussion 17e:* No curb and gutter or similar drainage facilities are known to exist or are proposed within the Rural Center. Future development within the Area Plan is required to meet County stormwater infiltration requirements which include installation of temporary and permanent best management practices to reduce runoff and pollutant loading from impervious cover so that the site does not exceed runoff from pre-project conditions, pursuant to Public 11.A of the General Plan.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**
17.f. Would the Project be served by a landfill or transfer station with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs?

*Impact Discussion 17f:* It is anticipated that the Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal service has sufficient capacity at their transfer station to accommodate additional solid waste resulting from future development within Soda Springs.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.g. Will the Project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

*Impact Discussion 17g:* Future development within the Area Plan would increase the overall solid waste generated on Donner Summit. The Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal collects, hauls and processes solid waste from Soda Springs to the Eastern Regional Landfill Recovery Facility and Transfer Station which should have sufficient capacity based on previous project studies in the Donner Summit vicinity.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

17.h. Will the Project require a need for the extension of communication systems?

*Impact Discussion 17h:* Standard communication services are available within the Area Plan. Broadband communications are available but bandwidth could be improved to support home business and telecommuting, otherwise there is no need to extend communication infrastructure.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

18. **MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEQA Environmental Checklist Item</th>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Reference Source (Appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California’s history or prehistory?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Attachment 1**
CEQA Environmental Checklist Item | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact | Reference Source (Appendix A)
---|---|---|---|---|---
b. Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of the project are considered when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.) | | ✓ | | | A

c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | | ✓ | | | A

d. Does the project require the discussion and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project? | | | ✓ | | A

18.a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California's history or prehistory?

*Impact Discussion 18a:*. The Soda Springs Area Plan would not alter or revise any County policies pertaining to watercourses, wetlands and riparian areas, management of aquatic resources, or permitting of projects affecting these habitats. Development permitted under the Area Plan would be subject to Nevada County’s existing regulations requiring project-specific environmental review and development and implementation of project-specific measures for any significant effects on fish habitat as a condition of project approval. Construction activities could result in temporary increases in sedimentation, small amounts of fill placed in aquatic habitats, and the release and exposure of construction-related contaminants. As with existing conditions, these impacts would be minimized and mitigated through construction BMPs and compensatory mitigation requirements as specified in County policies and code provisions, and other applicable federal and state regulations.

Likewise, proposed amendments would not alter or revise policies regarding the protection of rare, endangered, or sensitive plant and animal communities in compliance with all provisions of the resource standards and regulations found in Article 4.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Development of sites within the Area Plan that could affect sensitive plant or animal communities would be subject to existing County regulations requiring project-specific environmental review and development and implementation of project-specific measures for any significant effects on fish habitat as a condition of project approval. During project-level environmental review, potential impacts to protected plant or animal communities would be identified and minimized through the design process and/or through compensatory mitigation, as required under County and applicable federal and state regulations.
Nor would the proposed Area Plan alter or revise existing policies regarding the protection of cultural, historical, or archeological resources. In addition, federal and state regulations address protection of these resources and provide mechanisms to minimize impacts. Development and redevelopment of these sites would only be permitted in accordance with the Area Plan and General Plan, some of which could occur on properties with known or unknown cultural, historical, or archeological resources. During project-level environmental review, cultural, historical, and archeological resources specific to the site would be identified, significance determined, and appropriate mitigation implemented in accordance with federal, state, and County regulations.

The Soda Springs Area Plan proposes action plans and policies in addition to zoning changes, increased residential density, and design standards. The proposed rezoning of parcels will provide opportunities for additional land uses such as community meeting facilities, farmer’s markets, and expanded retail and services that promote convenient economic vitality, and improve access to a more extensive range of facilities and services of residents and visitors, and will not adversely affect the ecology or wildlife habitat on Donner Summit. Policies NCR-1.1 through NCR-1.10 all encourage the preservation and support continued diversity of the natural and cultural resources of Donner Summit. The commitment to preserving the cultural and natural resources and environmental is broadly supported by stakeholders and is seen as a positive step for a brighter future for the area.

Because the Area Plan proposes no changes to existing policies regarding aquatic habitats, special status plant or animal communities, or to cultural, historical, and archeological resources, and because federal, state, and County protections are already in place, implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would result in less than significant degradation of these resources.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

18.b. **Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable?** (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of the project are considered when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.)

*Impact Discussion 18b:* The Soda Springs Area Plan is a collection of goals, policies, and implementation actions designed to guide development within the community of Soda Springs and surrounding environs. Because these policies are implemented over the lifetime of the Plan and are applicable to other programs and projects over this period, they are inherently cumulative in nature. The consequences of doing nothing will result in continued environmental decline of the area. Cumulatively the changes in the plan are negligible in that the zoning changes are generally within the same primary land use category (i.e., from Highway Commercial to Community Commercial). Design standards regarding community specific issues such as metal shipping container storage and unscreened commercial storage of materials will enhance the communities character, thus it is anticipated that the cumulative impacts will be beneficial. Because the Area Plan is consistent with the General Plan and because no specific projects are proposed for which contributions to
cumulative impacts may be defined and assessed, any cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan would be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

18.c. **Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?**

*Impact Discussion 18c:* As described throughout this Initial Study, future projects within the Soda Springs Area Plan would require project-level environmental review and would be required to comply with all applicable County, federal, and state regulations, including protections for human health and safety. The proposed Area Plan does not significantly change the areas development potential, therefore, implementation of the Area Plan would not create a substantial direct or indirect adverse effect on human beings and negative impacts would be less than significant.

Environmental Analysis: **Less than Significant Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**

18.d. **Does the project require the discussion and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project?**

*Impact Discussion 18d:* Based on community and stakeholder input over the course of 14 months, different approaches and alternatives were considered to address key issues affecting the quality of life in Soda Springs and to provide a comprehensive foundation for a more sustainable, economically prosperous, communal and environmental future for Donner Summit. This project set out to outline a comprehensive development plan that encourages local initiative and coherence of community spirit to revitalize development consistent with strongly held rural values. A brighter future for the area is dependent on rebranding the region as a destination with full services, aesthetic improvements and promotion of year-round activities that more fully optimize the recreational opportunities provided by the rich natural resources of the area. This Area Plan outlines a comprehensive and consensus built development plan involving all stakeholders with a central focus to attracting more visitors and investment in infrastructure while honoring residents’ values and protecting the bountiful natural environment. No other areas have been identified that would serve to feasibly attain these basic objectives. This Initial Study/Negative Declaration concludes there will be no significant adverse environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan, therefore no alternatives analysis is needed.

Environmental Analysis: **No Impact.**
Required Mitigation: **None.**
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROJECT PLANNER

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

X  I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or a "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

[Signature]

Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

[Date]

7/22/2016
APPENDIX A – REFERENCE SOURCES

A. Planning Department
B. Environmental Health Department
C. Nevada Irrigation District
D. Nevada County Geographic Information Systems
E. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
F. California Department of Fish & Wildlife
G. Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Region)
H. Department of Public Works

3. State Department of Fish and Game. Natural Diversity Data Base Maps, as updated.
9. U.S.G.S, 7.5 Quadrangle Topographic Maps, as updated.
18. Nevada County Adopted Design Guidelines, enacted by Resolution and implemented pursuant to L-II 4.2.3 of Zoning Ordinance.
RESOLUTION NO. ________

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, after reviewing and considering the proposed Project, the Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed Resolution to amend the General Plan text (GP14-003) as shown and described in Exhibit “A” attached hereto and made a part of this Resolution; and
WHEREAS, on October 25, 2016, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, held a duly noticed public hearing on the Project, which includes the proposed text amendments to the General Plan; and

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

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

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

1. That the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan and provisions of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code Chapter II Zoning Regulations, specifically Program 1.2.1.b and those policies of the County General Plan focused on land use and sustainable economic development opportunities including those locations currently zoned Highway Commercial; and

2. That the proposed amendments will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the County, because the site development standards of the County’s Zoning Code will ensure future projects conform to applicable regulations to ensure that the sites will be compatible with surrounding development. In addition to site development standards, future project specific conditions and mitigation measures will ensure that adequate infrastructure, including sewer, water, access and emergency services will be available to serve the sites at the time of development; and

3. That the Project sites are physically suitable for the various proposed General Plan land use designations, in that the sites do not contain significant areas of excessively steep slopes or sensitive environmental resources, which cannot be avoided through appropriate site planning. The sites have good to adequate access to County maintained roads or can establish access to County maintained roads that will accommodate the anticipated future development of the various proposed primary uses; and

4. That the sites are physically suitable for the proposed land use designations, as reviewed by the Initial Study and Negative Declaration (EIS14-004/SCH#2016-072059). The various designations are consistent with uses surrounding each of the various locations.

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

Attachment 2
Exhibit A

“Chapter 1: Land Use – Supporting Planning Documents

* * * *

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

“Policy 1.3.13

* * * *

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

The North San Juan Rural Center Area Plan was adopted in 2010, and the Soda Springs Area Plan was adopted in 2016, and are the only *Rural Region Area Plans*”
RESOLUTION NO. _____

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE NEVADA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP DESIGNATIONS FOR THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN (GP16-004).

WHEREAS, the County of Nevada, acting by and through its Board of Supervisors, did, on the fourteenth day of November 1995, adopt a General Plan for the County of Nevada, as evidenced by Resolution 95-530, pursuant to the Provisions of Article 6, of Chapter 3 of Division 1 of Title 7, of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, Section 650301(b) of the Government Code of the State of California identifies the adoption of area plans as an amendment to the General Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has determined that amendments to the General Plan land use map are now warranted, consistent with General Plan policy; and

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

WHEREAS, after reviewing and considering the proposed Project, the Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed Resolution to amend the General Plan Land Use Map (GP16-004) as shown and described in Exhibit “A” attached hereto and made a part of this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2016, the Board of Supervisors, after giving required public notice, and having held a public hearing, heard evidence regarding the following amendments:

Application of the County of Nevada to amend the Nevada County General Plan in order to adopt an Area Plan for the Soda Springs Rural Center and to amend the General Plan land use map to change the land use designations of certain parcels set forth in Exhibit “A” attached hereto and made a part of this Resolution

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

1. That the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan and provisions of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code Chapter II Zoning Regulations, specifically Program 1.2.1.b and those policies of the County General Plan focused on land use and sustainable economic development opportunities including those locations currently zoned Highway Commercial; and

Attachment 3
2. That the proposed amendments will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the County, because the site development standards of the County’s Zoning Code will ensure future projects conform to applicable regulations to ensure that the sites will be compatible with surrounding development. In addition to site development standards, future project specific conditions and mitigation measures will ensure that adequate infrastructure, including sewer, water, access and emergency services will be available to serve the sites at the time of development; and

3. That the Project sites are physically suitable for the various proposed General Plan land use designations, in that the sites do not contain significant areas of excessively steep slopes or sensitive environmental resources, which cannot be avoided through appropriate site planning. The sites have good to adequate access to County maintained roads or can establish access to County maintained roads that will accommodate the anticipated future development of the various proposed primary uses; and

4. That the sites are physically suitable for the proposed land use designations, as reviewed by the Initial Study and Negative Declaration (EIS14-004/SCH#2016-072059). The various designations are consistent with uses surrounding each of the various locations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based on the foregoing findings, and the entire record before it, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors does hereby approve and adopt an amendment to the Nevada County General Plan Land Use Maps, re-designating those sites set forth in Exhibit “A”, consistent with boundaries of the Soda Springs Rural Center and said properties within.
Exhibit A
Soda Springs Area Plan
General Plan Land Use Map Amendments

Existing Land Use Designation

Area Plan Land Use Designation

Legend:
- GP Land Use Amendment
- Urban Single-Family Residential (USF)
- Urban Medium Density Residential (UMD)
- Urban High Density Residential (UHD)
- Neighborhood Commercial (C1)
- Community Commercial (CC)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Industrial (IND)
- Forest (FOR-40)
- Recreation (REC)

0.25 Miles
ORDINANCE NO.___________

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION L-II 1.3.D, ARTICLE 1, CHAPTER II, OF THE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA, TO AMEND ZONING DISTRICT MAPS #114 AND #119 FOR FIFTY-ONE SPECIFIC PARCELS WITHIN THE SODA SPRINGS RURAL CENTER TO VARIOUS OTHER ZONING DISTRICTS, AND TO ADD THE RURAL CENTER (RC) COMBINING DISTRICT TO SEVENTY-SEVEN PARCELS AND ADD THE SITE PERFORMANCE (SP) COMBINING DISTRICT TO ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FOUR PARCELS WITHIN THE SODA SPRINGS RURAL CENTER, AND IDENTIFYING THE SPECIFIC FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER PROTECTIONS APPLICABLE TO THE SODA SPRINGS RURAL CENTER (Z16-005).

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I:

Pursuant to Land Use and Development Code Section L-II 5.9.G, the Board of Supervisors hereby finds and determines as follows:

1. That the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan and provisions of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code Chapter II Zoning Regulations, specifically Program 1.2.1.b and those policies of the County General Plan focused on land use and sustainable economic development opportunities including those locations currently zoned Highway Commercial; and

2. That the proposed amendments will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the County, because the site development standards of the County’s Zoning Code will ensure future projects conform to applicable regulations to ensure that the sites will be compatible with surrounding development. In addition to site development standards, future project specific conditions and mitigation measures will ensure that adequate infrastructure, including sewer, water, access and emergency services will be available to serve the sites at the time of development; and

3. That the Project sites are physically suitable for the various proposed General Plan land use designations, in that the sites do not contain significant areas of excessively steep slopes or sensitive environmental resources, which cannot be avoided through appropriate site planning. The sites have good to adequate access to County maintained roads or can
establish access to County maintained roads that will accommodate the anticipated future development of the various proposed primary uses; and

4. That the sites are physically suitable for the proposed land use designations, as reviewed by the Initial Study and Negative Declaration (EIS14-004/SCH# 2016-072059). The various designations are consistent with uses surrounding each of the various locations.

SECTION II:

Section L-II 1.3.D, Article 1, of Chapter II, of the Land Use and Development Code of the County of Nevada, is hereby amended to provide as follows:

Section L-II 1.3.D Boundary Establishment by Description, by the adoption of an amendment to Zoning District Map Numbers 114 and 119, as shown on Exhibit "A" (map) and Exhibit “B” (APN, address, and proposed Zoning District) attached and made a part of this Ordinance. Said properties contain approximately 141 acres and are located within the Soda Springs Rural Center, as mapped on the General Plan land use map, in eastern Nevada County on Donner Summit.

All that certain territory shall be, and the same is hereby rezoned to establish the “R1-SP”, “R2-RC”, “R2-PD-RC”, “R3-RC”, “C1-RC”, “C2-RC”, “CH-RC”, “M1-RC”, “REC-SP”, and “FR-40-SP” zoning, as defined in Chapter II of the Land Use and Development Code, of the County of Nevada, California, as amended, and hereby becomes subject to the allowances and restrictions set forth in the Soda Springs Area Plan. Said amended zoning specifies use of the “RC” Rural Center Combining District and “SP” Site Performance Combining District as follows:

**Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards**

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

1. Existing natural features outside of the building site shall be retained and incorporated into the site design to the greatest extent feasible. Projects shall be designed to avoid disturbance to rock outcrops and stream zones and to minimize vegetation removal and maintain the natural slope of the project site.

2. Roofs, including mechanical equipment and skylights, and other exterior materials should be constructed of non-glare finishes and earthtone colors that minimize reflectivity. Materials that blend with the site’s natural surroundings (e.g., wood, stone or corten steel) are encouraged. Solar panels or other alternative energy equipment may be exempted from this standard if a project level assessment demonstrates that scenic conditions from public viewpoints will not be adversely impacted.

3. Commercial, industrial, mixed-use, public service, recreation and multi-residential projects shall provide, within the project area, snow storage areas of a size adequate to store snow removed from parking, driveway and pedestrian access areas or have arrangements by means of recorded easements or equivalent arrangements to remove and store accumulated snow offsite.

4. Native vegetation shall be utilized whenever possible, consistent with Fire Defensible Space Requirements. The use of native and adapted plant materials is recommended to minimize fertilizer and irrigation requirements; however, a temporary irrigation system may be used to assist in establishing a new landscape.
5. Viewsheds shall be considered in all new construction, with emphasis placed on preserving and enhancing mountain, forest and meadow public views from Donner Pass Rd. where feasible.

6. Building placement and design shall be compatible with adjacent properties and design in consideration of solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection, and privacy.

7. The following appliances and fixtures shall be installed in new facilities or when replaced in existing facilities: low-flow flush toilets; low-flow showerheads (3 gpm rated max. flow); faucet aerators; and water-efficient appliances (e.g., washing machine and dishwashers).

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

1. Required permanent open space may be reduced for non-residential sites less than 1-acre in size if all required landscaping is provided onsite and if a residential unit is attached to a commercial space.

2. The development of gateway signage or features at the western and eastern entrances to Soda Springs along Donner Pass Rd. should complement the natural setting and history of Donner Summit.

3. The number of parking stalls required for a specific use may be modified if a Parking Study, submitted by a project applicant and prepared by a Registered Professional Engineer/Traffic Engineer, substantiates that the number of stalls needed for the proposed use is significantly different than required by the code.

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

4. Placement of metal shipping containers shall be subject to the following limitations:
   a. Metal shipping containers shall not be allowed as a principal use in any zone.
   b. Metal shipping containers shall be allowed in all zones within the Soda Springs Rural Center on a temporary basis when utilized during construction or grading operations for the site where located and when utilized solely for the storage of supplies and equipment that are used for construction or grading on that site.
   c. In all zones placement of metal shipping containers is allowed as an accessory use subject to the following development standards:
      i. The placement has been approved as part of an approved plot plan, development permit or conditional use permit.
      ii. No more than one metal shipping container shall be permitted on any parcel.
      iii. The container’s setback from all property lines shall be a minimum of thirty feet.
      iv. Preferred container placement shall be on a case-by-case basis but generally to the rear half of the property.
      v. The metal shipping container shall be fully screened by an opaque fence or fast-growing landscaping.
      vi. The metal shipping container shall be painted a non-reflective earhtone color.
5. Trash and garbage facilities shall be secure from bears and other wildlife.

6. Limited office uses, arts and crafts fabrication, and tutoring or classes, and similar commercial activities may be conducted within existing, legal non-conforming residences within any of the Commercial Districts, provided a Home Business Permit is obtained and that the business complies with all Home Business standards provided by Sec. L-II 3.11 of County Zoning Regulations.

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

   **Residential Uses**
   a. Snow removal equipment storage cannot be a primary use of a residential zoned property and must be incidental to a residential use already established onsite.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone District</th>
<th>Max. # of Outdoor Snow Removal Vehicles</th>
<th>Land Use Permit</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Area</th>
<th>Off-Street Parking Required</th>
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<tr>
<td>C1 (Neighborhood Commercial)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None*</td>
<td>10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1 space per vehicle</td>
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<td>2 or more</td>
<td>Conditional Use Permit</td>
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<td>1 space per vehicle</td>
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<td>C2 (Community Commercial)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None*</td>
<td>10,000 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>None*</td>
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<td>2 or more</td>
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<td>1 space per vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>M1 (Light Industrial)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None*</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>Conditional Use Permit</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 space per vehicle</td>
</tr>
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* Note: Allowed subject to zoning compliance.
b. In addition to the snow removal vehicle storage allowance above (e.g., snowplow is exempt from visible area calculation), where the principle use of a site is other than storage, and storage accessory to that use is also located on the site, the outside unscreened accessory storage area is subject to the limitations of this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Max. Total Area of Unscreened Accessory Commercial/Industrial Storage</th>
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<td>&lt;5,000</td>
<td>100 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,000 sq. ft. to &lt;10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>200 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,000 sq. ft. to &lt;15,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>300 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15,000 sq. ft.&lt;</td>
<td>400 sq. ft.</td>
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</table>

c. All outdoor commercial/industrial material storage areas in excess of those limits identified above shall be required to be screened with a solid fence, landscaping, structures or other visible barriers that substantially screen the storage area/yard from adjacent properties and from primary roadways.

d. All such equipment and materials referenced above must be situated in a manner such that they meet the required structural setbacks for the zone district in which they are located.

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

1. Maximum residential density for mixed-use projects in the C1 and C2 base zoning district shall be six (6) units per acre.

2. The minimum density allowance for construction of multi-family structure(s) on parcels zoned R2-RC is two (2) units regardless of parcel size, subject to zoning compliance.

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

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

**SECTION III:**

If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and adopted this ordinance and each section, sentence, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.
SECTION IV:

This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force thirty (30) days from and after introduction and adoption, and it shall become operative on the 26th day of November, 2016, and before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after its passage it shall be published once, with the names of the Supervisors voting for and against same in the Union, a newspaper of general circulation printed and published in the County of Nevada.
Exhibit A
Soda Springs Area Plan
Zoning District Map Amendments
## Exhibit B

### Soda Springs Area Plan

**APN, Address, Proposed Zoning District**

<table>
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<th>APN</th>
<th>Address</th>
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**R2-RC (Urban Medium Density-Rural Center Combining District)**

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**R2-PD-RC (Urban Medium Density-Planned Dev.-Rural Center Combining Dist.)**

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**R3-RC (Urban High Density-Rural Center Combining District)**

| APN 47-080-24 | 21466 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-080-27 | 21490 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

**C1-RC (Neighborhood Commercial-Rural Center Combining District)**

| APN 47-102-19 | 21865 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-410-12 | Unknown Address | Soda Springs, CA 95728 | APN 47-410-13 | 21964 Donner Pass Road | Soda Springs, CA 95728 |

**C2-RC (Community Commercial-Rural Center Combining District)**

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<td>FOR-40-SP (Forest- 40 acre min.-Site Performance Combining District)</td>
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* Denotes zoning for that portion of the parcel within the Soda Springs Area Plan
ORDINANCE No. __________

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION L-II 4.2.3, ARTICLE 1, CHAPTER II, OF THE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA TO ADOPT THE SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN FLEXIBLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ORD14-002).

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I:

Pursuant to Land Use and Development Code Section L-II 5.9.G, the Board of Supervisors hereby finds and determines as follows:

1. That the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan and provisions of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code Chapter II Zoning Regulations, specifically Program 1.2.1.b and those policies of the County General Plan focused on land use and sustainable economic development opportunities including those locations currently zoned Highway Commercial; and

2. That the proposed amendments will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the County, because the site development standards of the County’s Zoning Code will ensure future projects conform to applicable regulations to ensure that the sites will be compatible with surrounding development. In addition to site development standards, future project specific conditions and mitigation measures will ensure that adequate infrastructure, including sewer, water, access and emergency services will be available to serve the sites at the time of development; and

3. That the Project sites are physically suitable for the various proposed General Plan land use designations, in that the sites do not contain significant areas of excessively steep slopes or sensitive environmental resources, which cannot be avoided through appropriate site planning. The sites have good to adequate access to County maintained roads or can establish access to County maintained roads that will accommodate the anticipated future development of the various proposed primary uses; and

4. That the sites are physically suitable for the proposed land use designations, as reviewed by the Initial Study and Negative Declaration (EIS14-004/SCH#2016-072059). The various designations are consistent with uses surrounding each of the various locations.

SECTION II:

Subsection L-II 4.2.3.6 of Article 2 of Chapter II of the Land Use and Development Code of the County of Nevada is hereby added to read as follows:

“The Soda Springs Area Plan, adopted on October 25, 2016, and as may be amended, which shall be considered in the review of all applicable development projects within the boundaries of the Soda Springs Rural Center, as mapped on the Nevada County General Plan.”
SECTION III:

This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force thirty (30) days from and after introduction and adoption, and it shall become operative on the 26th day of November, 2016, and before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after its passage it shall be published once, with the names of the Supervisors voting for and against same in the Union, a newspaper of general circulation printed and published in the County of Nevada.
Soda Springs Area Plan

Prepared by:
Nevada County Planning Department
in coordination with the
Donner Summit Area Association
SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN
Nevada County

Adopted October 25, 2016
County Resolution 16-XXX
Acknowledgements

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

**Nevada County Board of Supervisors**
Dan Miller, Chair – Supervisor District III
Hank Weston, Vice Chair – Supervisor District IV
Nate Beason – Supervisor District I
Ed Scofield – Supervisor District II
Richard Anderson – Supervisor District V

**Nevada County Planning Commission**
Paul Aguilar, Chair – Commissioner District III
Laura Duncan, Vice Chair – Commissioner District IV
Ruth Poulter – Commissioner District I
Ed James – Commissioner District IV
Bob Jensen – Commissioner V

**Nevada County Community Development Staff**
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Tyler Barrington – Principal Planner
Patrick Dobbs – Senior Planner

**Donner Summit Community Participants**
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Norm Saylor
Chris Parker
Shaydar Edelmann
Sue Busby
Cheryl Paduano
Mason Kirby
Valen Brost
George Lamson
Fran Sandwith
Bobby Sherwood
Charles Houtz
Niels Reimers
Fritz Schrichte
Ursula Heffernon
Mitzi Hodges
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Purpose of the Area Plan

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

Plan Preparation

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

Background and Context

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

The commercial area of the Soda Springs Rural Center was zoned for highway traveler business, but is not functioning well with this zoning designation. Interstate 80 allows potential visitors to pass by enroute to nearby Truckee, Reno, and Lake Tahoe, oblivious to the experiences they might enjoy on Donner Summit. Additionally, time has passed on while the area has been
hindered in its economic promotion by the lack of investment and the consequent impacts of some areas of blight in the built environment. Many nearby competing recreational areas have better organized and promoted year-round attractions resulting in Donner Summit being comparatively less competitive for tourist dollars needed to support economic viability.

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

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

Legal Authority

The Soda Springs Area Plan is designed to meet State of California requirements for specific plans and to facilitate the implementation of development goals and policies by establishing zoning districts, standards and criteria for development, and to set the distribution, location and extent of planned land uses consistent with the adopted Nevada County General Plan. The authority for preparing Area Plans is founded in California Government Code §65301(b) which allows the general plan to be adopted as a single document or as a group of documents relating to subjects or geographic segments of the planning area, and in Government Code §65303 which allows the general plan to include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county. Local authority is founded in the goals and policies of the 1995 Nevada County General Plan. Direction to prepare the Soda Springs Area Plan is provided by County Board of Supervisors Board Order 14-03, directing preparation of an Area Plan for the Soda Springs Rural Center.
The Soda Springs Area Plan was developed consistent with California State law which permits cities and counties to adopt specific plans for the “systematic implementation of the general plan” (Government Code Section 65450 et. Seq.). The law requires the following:

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

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

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

**Relationship to the General Plan**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Organization of the Area Plan**

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

**Chapter 1 – Introduction**

The Introduction summarizes the Area Plan’s purpose, preparation, legal authority, relationship to the General Plan, organization, description of the plan area, and the plan’s vision and guiding principles.
Chapter 2 – Land Use
The Land Use goals and policies balance the preservation and enhancement of Soda Spring’s natural environment and appropriate development. This chapter includes the Area Plan Goals and Policies related to land use and community design, and establishes land use and zoning regulations for the Soda Springs Rural Center.

Chapter 3 – Economic Development
The Economic Development chapter includes the plan’s Goals and Policies for economic prosperity and sustainability of the local economy.

Chapter 4 – Public Services
The Public Services chapter describes the public services and facilities that serve Donner Summit’s communities.

Chapter 5 – Recreation
The Recreation chapter includes a framework and strategy to improve existing facilities and develop new facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Chapter 6 – Natural and Cultural Resources
This Natural and Cultural Resources chapter sets forth goals and policies for the Area Plan and lists strategies to achieve environmental improvements in the area’s diverse natural and cultural resources that promote public enjoyment of the area.

Chapter 7 – Implementation
The Implementation chapter describes the Goals & Policies to incrementally implement the Area Plan objectives.

Attachment A – Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design Standards

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

Attachment C – Area Plan References

Description of the Plan Area

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

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

Today Soda Springs is relatively quiet with a small population of around 81 year-round residents. Just ½ mile south is the Serene Lakes residential community, the largest development on Donner Summit consisting of approximately 1,000 residential lots. Donner Pass Road offers breathtaking panoramic vistas of alpine peaks and Donner Lake. The rock climbing routes and hiking and biking trails surrounding the area provide access to some of the region’s best
recreational resources. Currently, however, there is little signage or other indication of how to explore these resources while visiting the area.

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

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

Vision and Guiding Principles for Prosperity and Sustainability

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

Planning Actions for Prosperity and Sustainability for the Donner Summit Region*

As Promoted in the Soda Springs Area Plan

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

*Note: The vision of benefits for all of the communities and attractions connected by Old Highway 40 are positively affected by targeting development standards and zoning amendments to the Soda Springs Rural Center.
Vision Statement
The Donner Summit area and particularly the Soda Springs community looks to this Area Plan to create physical, social, and economic links and policies that will improve the Summit’s vitality and sustainability. The Area Plan seeks to guide development that embraces outdoor enthusiasts while providing a healthy balance of commerce, employment, recreation, and livability. Envisioned is the use of environmentally conscious private and public development, standards for design elements to ensure aesthetic improvements and environmental restoration while preserving the natural splendor and rural mountain lifestyle valued by residents and visitors alike. The vision can best be realized by the following eight Area Plan guiding principles.

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

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

These principles articulate the vision for Donner Summit and are the standard by which the appropriateness of the Area Plan’s goals, objectives and policies are tested.
Figure 1-2: Soda Springs Area Plan and Vicinity
Figure 1-4: General Plan Land Use Designations

Existing Land Use Designation

Area Plan Land Use Designation

Legend
- GP Land Use Amendment
- Urban Single-Family Residential (USF)
- Urban Medium Density Residential (UMD)
- Urban High Density Residential (UHD)
- Neighborhood Commercial (C1)
- Community Commercial (CC)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Industrial (IND)
- Forest (FOR-40)
- Recreation (REC)

0.25 Miles
Figure 1-5: General Plan Land Use Designations Enlarged View
Native Americans occupied the areas around Donner Lake and Donner Summit for thousands of years before wagon trains first crossed the Summit beginning in 1844. The Transcontinental Railroad followed in the 1860s, and the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway, came in 1913. Construction of Interstate 80 in the 1960’s changed the face of the Summit. Old Highway 40 was no longer the main route and most of the little towns, the stores, shops, lodges, and inns, the restaurants and service stations and the small ski areas disappeared along with a slower way of life. Large portions of Old Highway 40 still remain and the section from Cisco Grove to the Rainbow Bridge is considered one of the most scenic pieces of highway in the country. Winding along the Yuba River each community is unique. The gas stations at Cisco Grove and Kingvale cater to Interstate 80 motorists, however passing through the communities along Old Highway 40 (Donner Pass Road.) transport travelers back to a simpler time. From the riverfront campgrounds at Big Bend to the rustic accommodations and hearty meals at the Rainbow Lodge to the large residential subdivisions of Pla-Vada Woodlands and Serene Lakes, communities identifying themselves as part of Donner Summit stretch for miles along Old Highway 40. Today, just like the past, Soda Springs functions as the center of these rural communities that make up Donner Summit. Whether working at one of the ski resorts, picking up groceries at the General Store, eating out at the Summit Restaurant, or getting mail at the post office, many residents of these nearby communities along Old 40 usually make a point to stop in Soda Springs every day. The Area Plan recognizes Soda Springs’ role as the hub of a much larger community that includes the residential, recreation and forest lands of Donner Summit.

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

There is a strong seasonality to the businesses and many have not been sustainable long term in the area due to the modest amount of tourism in the non-winter months. Situated along Donner Pass Road directly off U.S. Interstate 80, there is a tremendous number of potential customers passing nearby, however, the community’s close proximity to the population and tourist center of the town of Truckee means that motorists are less likely to stop in Soda Springs as they enter or leave the region for their retail and service needs. As a result of the construction of Interstate 80 Soda Springs has become more of a drive-by community than a stop by, or destination itself.
Buildings such as the Summit Station and General Store in Soda Springs contribute positively to the character of the community and reflect the community vision. Unfortunately, there is an overall lack of coherence in how many of the buildings in the community are designed and how they address the streets, which undermines a strong sense of place. The meandering headwaters of the Yuba River, and wide Donner Pass Road and railroad rights-of-way further exacerbates site design issues by forcing development to be uneven distances from the roadway, creating a haphazard appearance and effectively hindering pedestrian circulation between the opposite sides of Donner Pass Road. In addition, vehicle speeds and winter snow berms along Donner Pass Road provide barriers to pedestrian circulation and limited visibility of residential driveways and commercial establishments.

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

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Plan Designation</th>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>Number of APNs</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent of Rural Center</th>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Single Family</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>79.18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R2 or R2-PD</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Highway Commercial</td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>REC</td>
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<td>36.79</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>271</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Land Use Zoning Districts

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

**R2 (Medium Density Residential)** - The R2 District implements the General Plan's Urban Medium Density Designation and provides for moderate density multiple-family housing, as well as other dwelling unit types. Densities of up to 6 dwelling units per acres are permitted. This District is appropriate for the development of affordable housing through clustering of residences or other design techniques. This district provides an appealing and convenient place for residential accommodation within walking distance of the Soda Springs General Store and nearby recreation facilities. The Rural Center includes 28 parcels currently zoned R2, of which twenty are part of a multi-family complex known as the Soda Springs Station. Of the remaining eight parcels currently zoned R2 three are developed with single family residences and five of the parcels are vacant.
**CH (Highway Commercial)** - The CH District provides commercial locations for highway-related and tourist services along State highways. Development within this District should be grouped as a contiguous center to preclude strip development, with convenient, controlled access to Interstate, freeway, or primary arterial routes. Such facilities should be designed and located to provide a broad range of services to the traveler and not to impede traffic. There are 42 parcels currently located in the Commercial Highway district, several of which are developed with legacy single family dwellings and 16 of which are vacant.

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

**Concerns and Challenges**

As noted there are many outstanding assets for Soda Springs such as its natural beauty, diverse flora and fauna, rich history, critically significant headwaters, seasonal recreation opportunities and most importantly, a friendly and concerned community of people who want to turn an economically struggling Soda Springs into a more vibrant and sustainable community it was prior to the construction of Highway 80 in the 1960’s. At community meetings to develop the Area Plan and through Nevada County Planning Department surveys residents have raised many concerns while also expressing the hopes and aspirations they have for their community. Without signage along Interstate 80 and additional amenities that entice visitors to stop, spend and stay, potential visitors will continue to pass Soda Springs by. Many residents desire to reduce economic dependence on tourism and encourage live/work residences attracting home-based office and other trade businesses that operate year round and provide non-seasonal employment and which pay higher wages to build economic stability. The commercial wood cutting yards, outside storage of heavy snow removal equipment, and shipping container storage are necessary elements of mountain living for some, yet these operations are eyesores to many. There is currently no defined center of town in Soda Springs and residents desire a community center or park with public restrooms for people to gather for special events and festivals. Ensuring the Lake Van Norden area, whether impoundment or meadow, remains an attractive place that draws visitors is an issue that affects local economic activity as well as the desirability of Soda Springs as a community to move to or own a second home in. The most frequent concern voiced from residents is drivers regularly ignore posted limits and dangerous driving speeds are commonplace on Donner Pass Road.
Figure 2-2: Existing Conditions

Donner Summit Historical Society

Lake Van Norden

Railroad Tracks

Industrial Site

General Store/Post Office Building

Donner Pass Road

Soda Springs Station

Restaurant and Seasonal Housing

Firewood Lot

Shipping Container Storage
Land Use Update and Community Character

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

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

**Strategy #1: Land Use Designation and Zoning Changes**

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

**Housing**

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

Because of the small lots in Soda Springs and the typical Summit workforce household size and predominately low income from the recreation and service industries, increased residential density in close proximity the commercial area is a primary component to the Soda Springs recovery. Furthermore, because of the high cost of sewer hookups the potential income from additional units is a way to make investment financially feasible. For these
reasons, within the Commercial Base District the maximum residential density allowed for mixed-use developments has been increased from four units per acre to six units per acre, and all of the parcels zoned R2-RC (medium density residential) are eligible for density of at least a duplex (two units), pursuant to zoning compliance.

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

**Identified Opportunity Sites**
The greatest potential to add to and enhance the commercial center is in the four parcels highlighted as opportunity sites below. The advantages of these parcels are:
- They are vacant and large enough to accommodate a reasonably sized commercial use;
- They are less constrained by the alignment of Donner Pass Road and the Yuba River;
- They are adjacent to the main road and thus highly visible; and
- They are centrally located to services within the community.
Lodging
Most of the existing lodging opportunities are associated with ski clubs and provide a dorm-like setting. Traditional motel development does not seem viable in Soda Springs at this time, however simple and affordable hostel style lodging with individual private rooms appears to be potentially viable. As part of the land use changes with this Area Plan a one acre parcel located within the existing road and residential lot platting has been rezoned to (CH) Highway Commercial to allow possible future lodge construction flanked by the Yuba River and Interstate 80, behind the Donner Summit Lodge. This site would be accessed via the existing roads that serve a sparsely developed area of the subdivision. Given the low impact usage and minimal traffic that an off-season lodge would produce this site appears compatible with the surroundings and would act as a buffer between the residential lots and Interstate 80.

Public Spaces
The Donner Summit community desires a town square or plaza in Soda Springs to serve as a community-gathering place, accommodating local events, farmers markets and daily encounters with neighbors. Such a space would enable sponsored events that would increase travelers’ patronage. As an amenity typical to mixed-use development, a town plaza would create opportunities for attracting community interaction while adding visual quality to the Rural Center.
**Industrial Sites**
The extreme weather conditions and self-reliant approach to life of residents requires there be industrial areas. Heavy equipment is scattered throughout the community often giving commercial sites the feel of an industrial site. This plan designates two parcels for light industrial uses near the western end of town in recognition of the current industrial snow removal and telecommunication functions on the sites.

**Strategy #2: Community Character**
The overall impression of the Soda Springs area is that the community appears worn out and run down, a view shared by most residents. Blighted areas have difficulty attracting visitors and cannot readily entice new businesses to locate within their boundaries. Soda Springs will, like many other communities, have a long struggle to overcome lack of new business interest and existing business viability if it fails to improve its current public image. In order to regain its economic health, the physical appearance of Soda Springs' commercial area must be revitalized as part of the Area Plans integrated strategy of land use changes, community image enhancement and opportunity site development. The primary methods of implementing physical revitalization for the area are:

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

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

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

**Community Identification**
Signage or monuments that establish a powerful gateway that attracts, welcomes, and orients the highway visitor is strongly recommended. Currently signs are missing where they could benefit the tourist, providing virtually no information as to what is available in terms of natural attractions or of commercial interest. Interesting and attractive signage is a cost effective strategy that will provide significant community image enhancement.
Facade Improvements
Often when one or two individual property owners begin to fix up their buildings other property owners see the positive results that can be achieved. This effort is an important element that helps assure that the overall community image is upgraded.

Additional Land Use Zoning Districts

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

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

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

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

**FR (Forest)** - The FR District provides areas for the protection, production and management of timber and support uses, including but not limited to equipment storage and temporary offices, low intensity recreational uses, and open space. In the northeastern most corner of the Rural Center along Bunny Hill Road is a 2.85 acre parcel owned by the U.S. Forest Service being re-zoned from R1 (Single-Family Residential) to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.), consistent with the zoning of surrounding Tahoe National Forest parcels.
Table 2-2: Area Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Plan Designation</th>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>Number of APNs</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent of Rural Center</th>
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<td>Community Commercial</td>
<td>C2-RC</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Highway Commercial</td>
<td>CH-RC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
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<td>0.78</td>
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<tr>
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<td>FOR-40-SP</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>271</td>
<td>141</td>
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Rural Center Overlay

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

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

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

Military Operation Area

The western portion of the Soda Springs Rural Center lies along the eastern edge of a designated Department of Defense Military Operation Area (MOA) which is used by military aircraft to practice high- and low-altitude training exercises and to traverse between military installations in support of national defense. Any development or new construction that seriously impacts or hinders the function and viability of the MOA fly zone is considered an incompatible use. As Nevada County’s population and economic activity grow in the future, public safety within the MOA shall be coordinated with the military through compatible use planning in accordance with the California Government Code.
Figure 2-1: Existing and Proposed Zoning Districts
Figure 2-2: Rural Center Combining District Enlarged View

Existing Zoning

Area Plan Zoning

Legend
- Parcels Reserved
- RC (Rural Center Combining Dist.)
- SP (Site Performance Combining Dist.)
- R1 (Single Family Residential)
- R2 (Medium Density Residential)
- R3 (High Density Residential)
- C1 (Neighborhood Commercial)
- C2 (Community Commercial)
- CH (Highway Commercial)
- M1 (Light Industrial)
- FDR (Forest)
- REC (Recreation)
B. Land Use Goals & Policies

Soda Springs Community Vision

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

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

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

Policy LU-1.1: Rural Center
Nevada County shall reinforce Soda Springs as the primary visitor and tourist destination on Donner Summit by encouraging indoor and outdoor recreation, a community market, a community meeting facility, a full-service post office, affordable visitor lodging, and other retail/service commercial uses that serve the population working and residing in close proximity to Soda Springs, while also drawing business from Highway 80 traffic.

Policy LU-1.2: Donner Summit Legacy
Recognize Donner Summit as a region of local, state, and national significance, which must be protected for future generations.

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

Policy LU-2.1: Work and Play
Foster live-work opportunities in commercial areas with a diversity of jobs to provide greater economic stability and new opportunities for employment in Soda Springs.

Policy LU-2.2: Mixed Uses
Focus new commercial development along Donner Pass Road in Soda Springs. Encourage a mix of uses that promotes convenience, economic vitality, and a good quality of life that improves access to a greater range of facilities and services for residents and visitors.
**Policy LU-2.3: Shop Local**
Support locally-owned, independent businesses that reflect the core values of Soda Springs and the Donner Summit experience.

**Policy LU-2.4: Outdoor Retail Display**
Outdoor retail and rental equipment display can be visually distracting and present a cluttered image of Soda Springs and are discouraged. Outdoor displays of retail and/or rental merchandise should be minimal and easy to comprehend when viewed from the Donner Pass Road.

**Policy LU-2.5: Parking**
Shared or area-wide parking strategies are encouraged to make more efficient use of land for parking and pedestrian uses.

**Policy LU-2.6: Storage**
Screening of storage containers, snow removal equipment and other service/maintenance yards and outdoor storage is important to enhancing the community’s image and should be accomplished by the use of walls, fencing, landscape plantings, or some combination thereof. Screening should be effective in both winter and summer.

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

**Policy LU-3.1: Community Design**
Promote the use of architectural themes in new development and redevelopment that complement the surrounding natural beauty and create positive interest. Encourage the use of pitched roofs, earthtone colors, and natural exterior building materials such as rock and wood.

**Policy LU-3.2: Design and Massing**
Ensure that the design of new development and significant remodel projects improve the community character of the Soda Springs Rural Center through appropriate site and building design standards promoting a high quality built environment that establishes a distinct sense of place.

**Policy LU-3.3: Site Development**
Encourage physical change and economic development within the Soda Springs area by promoting infill development along Donner Pass Road and redevelopment and revitalization on underutilized parcels with existing infrastructure. Avoid scattered or leapfrog development that may not be able to be connected.

**Policy LU-3.4: Gathering Spaces**
Create a more walkable and interesting place with an attractive community center. Provide opportunities for public spaces including a town plaza or town square with a seasonal snow play area, public art, street vendors, and sidewalk cafes that safely
promote pedestrian activity and local history. Optimize interconnectivity of non-motorized connections between commercial areas and surrounding recreation areas.

**Policy LU-3.5: Snow Storage**
New development shall include snow storage provisions.

**Policy LU-3.6: Landscaping**
New commercial development fronting historic Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40) shall implement practical landscape improvements fronting its project area.

**Policy LU-3.7: Water Conservation**
Size Soda Springs’ developments to existing water sources and recognize the challenging climate on Donner Summit and the impact of climate change on the region’s landscape and resources. Incorporate water conservation components into the design, construction, and operation of new construction and major renovations.

**Policy LU-3.8: Military Operation Area**
Ensure notification and coordination with the military for any proposed discretionary development project in the Rural Center that exceeds 100 feet above ground level or that could be incompatible with the Military Operation Area (MOA).

**Goal LU-4: Ensure housing choices and affordability.**

**Policy LU-4.1: Housing Inventory**
Increase the availability and affordability of quality housing opportunities and associated services for the workforce of Donner Summit by encouraging mixed-use dwelling units on commercial properties, and focusing increased residential capacity in targeted areas near the commercial center.

**Policy LU-4.2: Mixed-Use**
Locate quality higher density residential and mixed-use development within the Rural Center (RC) Combining District.

**C. Land Use Implementation**

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

1. Establish a Rural Center (RC) Combining District within the Soda Springs Rural Center to:
   A. Revitalize the economic vitality of the greater Donner Summit by:
      ▪ Stemming the steady decline and instability of many businesses;
      ▪ Encouraging full service businesses that support a stable year-round occupancy by residents and provide the needs of visitors to the area;
      ▪ Providing more job opportunities with workforce wages;
      ▪ Focusing increased residential density and capacity;
      ▪ Capitalizing on natural resources by branding the area as a tourist full-stop
destination;
- Enticing more Highway 80 travelers to take area exits to spend dollars for supplies and services; and
- Stimulating increased property values.

B. Remove unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development intended to support and enhance the valued rural and nature-centered lifestyle by:
- Actions of the Nevada County Planning Department and Board of Supervisors to revise zoning;
- Taking steps to reduce visual blight and enhance the scenic values of the area.
- Encouraging community consensus and commitment to planned development consistent with articulated community values; and
- Assisting with infrastructure improvements that create a safer and more aesthetically pleasing experience for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

2. Rezone areas of the Soda Springs Rural Center to add a Rural Center (RC) Combining District that identifies flexible development standards as incentives for achieving the following Area Plan goals:
- Mixed use, incorporating one or more residential units into commercial projects;
- Increased density in specific residential zone districts;
- Allow a broader range of commercial uses;
- Pedestrian improvements along road frontage;
- Shared parking opportunities; and
- Creation of public gathering spaces.

3. Amend the General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning District Maps of specific parcels consistent with the community’s land use vision.

4. Preserve and enhance the visual and historic assets of the Soda Springs Rural Center by implementing area-specific design standards to supplement the Eastern Nevada County Design Guidelines.

5. Encourage commercial activities within the Rural Center by allowing limited commercial services within existing, legal non-conforming residences within the Commercial Districts.

6. Nevada County shall regularly review its policies and regulations to remove identified barriers preventing the construction of necessary affordable housing on Donner Summit.

Design Review

Design Review for all discretionary development projects within the Rural Center Combining District zone shall be required. Proposed plans shall include project details that demonstrate visual compatibility with the community in conformance with the County’s stated design goals, as reflected in the General Plan and this Area Plan. The Eastern County
Design Standards are included by reference and supplement the site and building design standards specific to Soda Springs Rural Center, as described above.

**Non-Conforming Uses and Structures**

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

**Exceptions**

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

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

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

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

The seasonality of the economy raises the question: Are there any viable alternatives for greater economic stability and sustainability? Soda Springs’ businesses suffer from wildly fluctuating revenues as the number of customers they serve rises and falls with the seasons. Individual businesses do not have the resources to mount comprehensive marketing campaigns or the time and knowledge needed to ally with others in order to take a collective approach to overcoming
their seasonal tourism challenge. This fluctuation in business revenues has a dramatic ripple effect on employment that is especially severe on low-wage seasonal workers. Correspondingly, the flight of workers to areas with more stable employment and/or more affordable housing make it difficult for businesses to hire new workers for the next high season. As part of the larger strategy to promote revitalization, the Area Plan must address numerous challenges inherent in the current conditions and shortcomings of the area. Soda Springs must address the need for comprehensive marketing and promotion of all of Donner Summit for year-round tourism, seek opportunities for mutually-supportive marketing of the area, and provide assistance as needed to ensure the availability of an adequate, well-trained and well-paid workforce. These basic concerns are complicated by the overlapping web of primary and second homeowners, an array of environmental groups, seasonal ski resorts, multi-jurisdictional water districts and the two separate county governments which all must coexist. Add the fact that Donner Summit feeds into three major California watersheds and local development must not compromise this essential water source for state needs.

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

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

Natural resources play a key role in potential economic development. Visitors come to the area to experience natural beauty and the many recreational amenities that the natural setting offers. From the vast views of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, to the diversity of high quality recreation,
it is an essential part of what attracts visitors, which in turn, promotes economic stability.

### A. Existing Economic Conditions

#### Infrastructure Assessment

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

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

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

#### Economic Strengths and Challenges

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

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

Historical name recognition of the events surrounding the Donner Party creates an instant identity for most Californians. Despite this identity the area does not have a clear and appealing image in the mind of the public. To a large extent this can be solved with an appropriate level of signage,
including signage along I-80.

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

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

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

**B. Economic Development Goals & Policies**

**Economic Development Vision**

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

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

**Policy ED-1.1: Local Services**

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

**Policy ED-1.2: Sustainability**

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

**Policy ED-1.3: Character**

*Build the local economy on Soda Springs’ strengths and uniqueness. Achieve a more diversified economy and employment base consistent with community character.*
Goal ED-2: Create economic development achieve sustainable tourism by building on the area’s natural beauty, recreational, cultural, and historic assets.

**Policy ED-2.1: Center**
Provide incentives and remove barriers to help redevelop Soda Springs into the key focal place of Donner Summit. Focus uses toward commercial retail, dining, groceries, professional offices and outdoor recreational uses.

**Policy ED-2.2: Mixed-Use**
Remove barriers to help redevelop Soda Springs’ into a mixed-use, commercial, and residential corridor.

**Policy ED-2.3: Broadband**
Encourage broadband internet availability throughout Soda Springs. Seek funding sources and innovative approaches to extending communications systems throughout Donner Summit.

**Policy ED-2.4: Regional Collaboration**
Work collaboratively to promote regional economic development strategies to establish and implement a clear economic strategy. Leverage Donner Summit’s “natural capital” in implementing economic development strategies and increase participation and coordination of local agencies.

**Policy ED-2.5: Funding**
Utilize and leverage funding from a variety of public and private services.

**Policy ED-2.6: Create Interest**
Create public plazas, gathering spaces, and active streetscapes to promote a lively market.

**Policy ED-2.7: Special Events**
Promote the development of additional festivals and cultural events with emphasis on producing multi-day events with particular attention to midweek and shoulder seasons.

**Policy ED-2.8: Visitor Experience**
Improve the visitor experience by creating community gateways, establishing signage to identify the community, and creating a year-round economy through expanded use of the railroad and home businesses. Promote and enhance Soda Springs' role as a sustainable year-round tourist destination.

**Policy ED-2.9: Stay and Play**
Encourage the development of tourist accommodations in the Rural Center by removing barriers to hotel, hostel, and other types of lodging development.
C. Economic Development Implementation

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

1. Collaborate with the Sierra Business Council and the Nevada County Economic Resource Council in grant proposals to fund collaborative economic development projects.

2. Work with the Donner Summit Legacy group and volunteers to develop and provide gateway-style information (maps, signage, wayfinding) for visitors on how to access key natural resource and cultural amenities. Identify the elements needed to link existing assets and attract more travelers to stop in Soda Springs and access commercial services.

3. Utilize the Economic Resource Council to enhance the marketing visibility of Donner Summit.

4. Research funding resources, develop funding strategies, and provide grant assistance to local jurisdictions for economic development projects, infrastructure needs and historical building renovation.

5. Develop and leverage economic development partnerships. Coordinate regional economic development activities by maintaining working relationships with local economic development entities such as the Sierra Business Council, the Nevada County Economic Resource Council and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce.

6. Develop and implement urban design standards for buildings and structures that reflect Donner Summit’s rural mountain identity.

7. Explore opportunities to develop a clean, safe and well-maintained public restroom facility in a convenient location that is accessible to visitors, paying attention to both current and future needs.
Chapter 4
Public Services

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

A. Existing Public Services

Roadways

Donner Pass Road is the major east-west roadway through Soda Springs, connecting communities like Cisco Grove and Kingvale to the Summit and Donner Lake and Truckee. Soda Springs Road heads south from the middle of the Rural Center to the nearby Serene Lakes community and Royal Gorge resort. Local streets serve the adjacent residential neighborhood. Donner Pass Road is the only way through town and the high winter weekend traffic volumes emphasizes the importance of a well-functioning transportation system. Traffic backups of six or more miles long create gridlock on peak ski days. Many residents would like to see the speed limit along Donner Pass Road reduced from 35 MPH to 25 MPH. Strategically placed flashing speed limit signs could be a good deterrent for speeding drivers. Future development may require project level traffic analysis of the local roadways and the Interstate 80/Soda Springs interchange, and could require a traffic study that could identify specific mitigation measures such as a two-way left turn lane, bike lanes, and other intersection upgrades on Donner Pass Road to improve local circulation.

Transit Service

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

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

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

Sewage Disposal/Wastewater

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

Water Supply

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

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

Soda Springs Post Office

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

Emergency Services

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

Electricity and Propane

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

Schools

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

Central Sierra Snow Lab

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

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

**Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant**

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

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

**B. Public Services Goals & Policies**

**Public Services and Facilities Vision:**

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

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

*Policy PS-1.1: Additional Development*

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

*Policy PS-1.2: Broadband*

*Promote high-speed broadband availability and affordably throughout Donner Summit.*
Goal PS-2: Upgrade Donner Pass Road to reduce the amount of maintenance required on the road, while also providing a safer bicycling route and better access to regional trails and other recreation amenities.

Policy PS-2.1: FLAP Grant
Engage the Department of Public Works, Federal Highway Commission, and Placer County to ensure that the Donner Pass Road improvement projects include the installation of bike lanes and other pedestrian amenities.

Policy PS-2.2: Way-Finding Signage
Support installation of a way-finding and directional signage program in the Rural Center that directs visitors to recreation and commercial facilities and other points of interest.

Policy PS-2.3: Economic Vitality
Enhance the economic vitality of Donner Summit by efficiently connecting people to jobs, goods, services, and other communities.

Policy PS-2.4: Vehicle Speed
Identify opportunities to reduce traffic speeds along Donner Pass Road without adversely affecting vehicle circulation. Consider using right-of-way improvements and traffic controls to achieve this objective.

C. Public Services Implementation

1. Implement traffic calming measures to encourage reduced vehicle speeds along Donner Pass Road through Soda Springs, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

2. Develop and implement improvements to snow removal and storage along Donner Pass Road to improve the visibility of businesses and pedestrian safety.

3. Support efforts to explore the feasibility of establishing a Union Pacific Quiet Zone at the Soda Springs Road railroad crossing.

4. Encourage public restroom facilities to be incorporated into the design of commercial development or stand-alone facilities, and close to public places.
Chapter 5
Recreation

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

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

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

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

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

A. Existing Recreation Activities

Trails

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

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

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

Hole in the Ground Trail is probably the best known mountain bike ride in the Donner Summit area. One of the best single track rides in the Sierra, the 13.5 mile loop trail challenges riders with steep climbs and technical downhill sections.
The Pacific Crest Trail is the iconic west coast National Scenic Trail that crosses Donner Summit along the trail route that runs from Mexico to Canada. The PCT is open to hikers and horseback riding, but not bicyclists.

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

**Developed Facilities**

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

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

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

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

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

**Dispersed Recreation**

Numerous opportunities for dispersed outdoor recreation exist on public lands surrounding Soda Springs. Popular activities include backcountry skiing and snowboarding, camping, world-class rock climbing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, dog walking, wildlife viewing, and simply
enjoying solitude and the beauty of nature. Public lands supporting dispersed recreation are primarily managed by the USFS and the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**B. Recreation Goals & Policies**

**Recreation Vision**

Encourage and accommodate year-round active and passive recreational activities, expand and connect recreational opportunities to the community, and improve access and signage to nearby
Goal REC-1: Maintain the quality of and expand access to year-round dispersed recreation opportunities on Donner Summit where it is consistent with it is consistent with environmental values and protection of natural resources.

**Policy REC-1.1: Connected Trail System**
Encourage the sustainable development of recreational facilities that complement the mountain landscape and natural resources on Donner Summit. Multi-use trail systems shall be expanded to connect the Rural Center to mountain recreation opportunities, and provide a link to major regional or interstate trails. Biking trails should serve both mountain bikers and road cyclists, providing links to neighborhoods and adjacent areas.

**Policy REC-1.2: Open Space**
Support a broad range of enjoyable recreational experiences by integrating a variety of unique settings and isolated habitats and providing connection to regional open space lands.

**Policy REC-1.3: Accessibility**
All non-motorized facilities in the Soda Springs Rural Center, including walkways, sidewalks, crosswalks, paths, pedestrianized streets, pedestrian plazas, bike lanes and highway shoulders, shall be designed to accommodate wheelchair accessibility where feasible, and once established, shall provide for appropriate management and maintenance programs.

**Policy REC-1.4: Partnerships**
Cooperate with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Placer County to optimize the use of public lands and facilities for public use and recreation.

**Policy REC-1.5: Compatibility**
Ensure that non-motorized facility design is consistent with the character of the surrounding lands and the expected volume of use, and does not conflict with established recreation uses or the intended and varying needs or users.

**Policy REC-1.6: Campgrounds**
Provide opportunities to expand public day use and overnight camping. Locate new campground facilities within the Recreation Zone District in non-sensitive areas and in proximity to necessary infrastructure.

**Policy REC-1.7: Temporary and Annual Events**
Encourage recreation related temporary events within the Rural Center to increase pedestrian and economic activity. Promote activities such as obstacle course races, triathlons, bicycle races, rock climbing competitions, or similar special events that increase local economic activity and enhance the visitor recreation experience.
**Policy REC-1.8: Impact Fees**
Actively support efforts to direct the use of Truckee Donner Recreation District impact fees to provide additional recreation related facilities on Donner Summit.

**Policy REC-1.9: Recreation**
Enhance the recreation uses with improved trailhead parking, equestrian staging areas, picnic areas, and camping on recreation zoned parcels.

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

**Policy REC-2.1: Pedestrian Amenities**
All proposed discretionary projects within the Soda Springs Rural Center shall be reviewed for opportunities to contribute to pedestrian amenities along Donner Pass Road, including continuous sidewalks, walkways, pathways, and/or trails.

**Policy REC-2.2: Recreation Destination**
Promote the Soda Springs Rural Center as a hub for recreation by allowing a mix of uses that promote outdoor recreation concessionaires, recreation based commercial services, and temporary activities. Connect the Rural Center to recreation opportunities by upgrading existing bike, equestrian, and pedestrian trails, constructing new connections, and increasing transit service. Provide both passive and active opportunities within the natural setting.

**Policy REC-2.3: Public Land**
Promote recreational trails on existing public lands, public easements, and other public rights-of-way. Identify facilities and implementation measures to enhance pedestrian, bicycling, equestrian, and transit opportunities along with other opportunities to reduce automobile dependency.

**Policy REC-2.4: Private Land**
Encourage the private sector to develop recreational improvements on their land. Improvements may include establishing community event areas and establishing appropriate space for the outdoor display of recreation equipment for sale or rent.

**Policy REC-2.5: Identification**
Provide highly visible, recognizable, and safe, trailheads, equestrian staging areas and access points into the trail system.

**Policy REC-2.5: Learning**
Encourage recreational trails that provide educational and interpretive opportunities.

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

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

1. Coordinate with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and successors in interest of the Van Norden Lake and meadow, to improve public recreation opportunities in the Summit Valley.

2. Inventory the existing network of informal trails surrounding Soda Springs and coordinate with landowners to preserve and enhance trails that provide non-motorized connections to the Rural Center.

3. Support development of a Donner Summit Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with trail connections between the Soda Springs Rural Center and Boreal Ski Resort, Castle Valley, Kidd Lake, and between the western and eastern Soda Springs’s neighborhoods on the north side of Donner Pass Road.
Figure 5-1: Donner Summit Recreation Map
Chapter 6
Natural & Cultural Resources

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

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

The Donner Summit community has made a significant financial commitment to conservation through grass roots fundraising campaigns including the recent public acquisition of Royal Gorge’s nearly 3000 acres which previously was slated for a massive residential and commercial development. In addition Billy Mack Canyon above Donner Lake and Johnson Canyon across the highway in the Castle Peak Wilderness are permanently protected with conservation easements. This land combined with public forest lands will ensure preservation of over 6000 acres of contiguous open space on the summit. Preservation of the natural resources with open space is a key factor in enhancing the experiences for locals and visitors. Development in the area must employ best management practices for forest health including thinning dense timber and reduction of hazardous fuels. The quality of life and visitors’ experience is enriched by the aesthetic and scenic values of the landscape and prominent ridgelines that must be protected. Development must provide a buffer of open space protecting sensitive habitats and species while minimizing the removal of native vegetation.
Climate change is appropriately a great concern for the community. The impact of climate changes in the coming decades on precipitation patterns on Donner Summit will impact water supply, sewage treatment options and catastrophic wildfire frequency and destabilization of the ski economy. The importance of this area to downstream communities is underscored as being the headwaters and watershed for the Truckee River, the North Fork of the American River, and the South Yuba Rivers which are critical to California’s water supply, and is recognized by state and federal laws protecting them under Wild and Scenic status. Any new development must not impact the flow of the South Yuba River as regulated by the flood management ordinance. Healthy environmental conditions on Donner Summit affect the whole State’s water system. The incremental temperature increases have led to several years of drought conditions with profound side effects to the State’s economy. The snowpack, a major contributor to the local and State economy, is projected to decrease, resulting in shorter ski seasons. Concern for climate change must also include limiting greenhouse gas emissions created by new development projects by encouraging active transportation (walking and bicycling), public transportation, passive solar design, and promotion of green building design and construction.

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

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

Natural Resources

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

Wetlands and Meadows
The high mountain meadows of Donner Summit play an important role in the region’s complex system of hydrologic processes, and species habitat. Donner Summit is the headwaters for the Yuba, American, and Truckee Rivers. Van Norden Lake was drained in 1977; the meadow is the largest high elevation wetland in the County. The clear seasonal streams and subalpine lakes of Donner Summit are some of its most appreciated resources.

Forests
Outside of National Parks, one of the only remaining large stands of virgin, old-growth forests in California is found in the Donner Summit region. These forests have developed over centuries to include large-diameter, old-growth trees, snags, and downed logs. Increasingly rare in the northern Sierra, they provide essential habitat for important species such as the California Spotted Owl, Northern Goshawk, and Pine Marten.

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. Natural and Cultural Resources Goals & Policies

Natural and Cultural Resources Vision

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

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

Policy NCR-1.1: Water
Improve and maintain the water quality of Donner Summit’s lakes, creeks, and rivers. Protect and enhance the South Yuba River watershed and tributaries to the Truckee River and the North Fork American River watersheds in the Donner Summit area.

Policy NCR-1.2: Forest
Employ best management practices for forest health including regular thinning of dense
timber stands and removal of understory vegetation in order to reduce the intensity of naturally occurring wildfire and prevent catastrophic wildfire. Expand permanent protection of Donner Summit forest resources.

**Policy NCR-1.3: Wildlife Habitat**
Maintain suitable habitats for all indigenous species of wildlife through maintenance, improvement and protection of habitat diversity. Protect endangered, threatened, or rare species, buffer from conflicting land uses, and increase habitat connectivity. Protect the wide array of habitat and the incredible range of biodiversity on Donner Summit.

**Policy NCR-1.4: Open Space**
Cooperate with Local, State and Federal agencies and other public and quasi-public organizations and agencies in the acquisition, restoration and maintenance of open space for natural resource protection and enhancement.

**Policy NCR-1.5: Climate**
Recognize the challenging climate on Donner Summit and the impact of climate change on the region’s landscape and resources. Encourage conservation efforts to protect the region from the impacts of climate change.

**Policy NCR-1.6: Invasive Species**
Support public and private efforts to prevent, manage, or eradicate invasive species especially at the headwaters and along water courses, and in sensitive habitat areas, along public roadways, and public spaces.

**Policy NCR-1.7: Van Norden**
Protect from development the environmentally sensitive and regionally significant Van Norden meadow and wetlands, also known as Summit Valley.

**Policy NCR-1.8: Places of Interest**
Encourage informational signage for the Lake Van Norden/Summit Valley area for educational purposes regarding the natural and historical importance of the area.

**Policy NCR-1.9: Headwaters**
Recognize the importance of the Donner Summit region to the broader Central Sierra and downstream ecosystems.

**Policy NCR-1.10: Commitment to Conservation**
Provide for the protection, maintenance and restoration of such unique eco-systems as wetlands, meadows, and riparian and other native vegetation. Promote use of native, water-efficient, nutrient-efficient, fire-resistant and non-invasive vegetation in the plan area.

**Goal NCR-2: Ensure the built environment does not adversely affect natural resources in the Donner Summit area.**
**Policy NCR-2.1: Scenic Protection**
Preserve the extraordinary aesthetic quality and scenic values of the Donner Summit area, including the following prominent ridgelines in Nevada County: Castle Peak, Beacon Hill, Boreal Ridge, and Signal Hill. Request consultation with Placer County when development is proposed on the following prominent ridgelines in Placer County: Donner Peak, Mount Judah, Mount Lincoln, Crow’s Nest, Rowton Peak, and Devil’s Peak. Examine impacts to the identified landscape views from roadways, bike paths, and public areas for all proposed development.

**Policy NCR-2.2: Flood Management**
Ensure new development does not impact the flow of the South Yuba River consistent with the Flood Management Ordinance.

**Policy NCR-2.3: Environmental Protection**
Ensure new development complies with resource protection standards such as permanent open space and buffers to natural resources to protect environmentally sensitive habitats and species.

**Policy NCR-2.4: Vegetation**
Minimize the removal of native vegetation.

**Policy NCR-2.5: Air Quality**
Maintain and improve regional air quality and limit greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the following types of features for new development projects in the Donner Summit area: public transportation, alternative transportation, reduced parking standards, and south facing buildings.

**Policy NCR-2.6: Energy Efficiency**
Encourage energy efficiency in new development projects and in remodel projects to comply with the highest standards for green building design and construction.

**Policy NCR-2.7: Stream Zones**
Protect the wetlands and meadows of Donner Summit.

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

**Policy NCR-3.1: Stewardship**
Foster a community sense of stewardship and personal responsibility for all historic and cultural resources.

**Policy NCR-3.2: Public Visitation**
Whenever possible, encourage public accessibility of historically eligible structures and sites, even if only for temporary or special events.
Policy NCR-3.3: Partnerships
Cooperate with the Donner Summit Historical Society, other local historical organizations, and historians to identify significant historical and cultural resources, and to educate the public on the positive benefits of historic preservation.

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

Policy NCR-4.1: Historic Register
Encourage the inclusion of significant archaeological and cultural resources in the Federal or State Historical Register based on the recommendation of the local historical society or a qualified professional.

Policy NCR-4.2: Signage
Encourage consistent interpretive signage for historical and cultural resources such as the Donner Summit Historical Society’s 20 mile museum.

Policy NCR-4.3: Preserve
Preserve the history and scenery of Donner Summit as the portal to California and as a primary recreational and economic resource. Encourage innovative techniques to preserve archaeological and historic sites by gift, private conservancies and easements.

Policy NCR-4.4: Archeological Investigations
Nevada County shall require archeological investigations for all applicable discretionary projects, in accordance with CEQA regulations, for areas not previously surveyed and/or that are determined sensitive for cultural resources. The County shall require the preservation of discovered archeologically significant resources (as determined based on local, State, and Federal standards by a qualified professional) in place if feasible, or provide mitigation (avoidance, excavation, documentation, curation, data recovery, or other appropriate measures) prior to further disturbance.

C. Natural and Cultural Resource Strategies

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

1. Identify areas for wildlife observation and nature appreciation with supporting improvements such as viewing platforms and trails.
Chapter 7
Implementation

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

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

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

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

A. Implementation Goals & Policies

Implementation Vision

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

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

Policy I-1.1: Lead Agency
Nevada County shall assume primary responsibility for project review and approval consistent with this plan and the County’s General Plan pursuant to the conditions and limitations outlined in the Land Use chapter of this plan.

Policy I-1.2: General Plan Consistency
No project may be approved unless it is found to comply with the General Plan, and with any ordinances, rules, and regulations enacted to effectuate the General Plan and Area Plan.

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

Policy I-2.1: Funding
Actively pursue funding to implement this plan from federal, state, and local grant sources, and public/private partnerships.

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

Policy I-3.1: Plan Revisions
Revisions to this Area Plan shall be approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Goal I-4: Fulfill the specific implementation actions identified at the end of each of the individual Area Plan chapters.
ATTACHMENT A
SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN FLEXIBLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

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

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

1. Existing natural features outside of the building site shall be retained and incorporated into the site design to the greatest extent feasible. Projects shall be designed to avoid disturbance to rock outcrops and stream zones and to minimize vegetation removal and maintain the natural slope of the project site.

2. Roofs, including mechanical equipment and skylights, and other exterior materials should be constructed of non-glare finishes and earthtone colors that minimize reflectivity. Materials that blend with the site’s natural surroundings (e.g., wood, stone or corten steel) are encouraged. Solar panels or other alternative energy equipment may be exempted from this standard if a project level assessment demonstrates that scenic conditions from public viewpoints will not be adversely impacted.

3. Commercial, industrial, mixed-use, public service, recreation and multi-residential projects shall provide, within the project area, snow storage areas of a size adequate to store snow removed from parking, driveway and pedestrian access areas or have arrangements by means of recorded easements or equivalent arrangements to remove and store accumulated snow offsite.

4. Native vegetation shall be utilized whenever possible, consistent with Fire Defensible Space Requirements. The use of native and adapted plant materials is recommended to minimize fertilizer and irrigation requirements; however, a temporary irrigation system may be used to assist in establishing a new landscape.

5. Viewsheds shall be considered in all new construction, with emphasis placed on preserving and enhancing mountain, forest and meadow public views from Donner Pass Rd. where feasible.

6. Building placement and design shall be compatible with adjacent properties and design in consideration of solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection, and privacy.

7. The following appliances and fixtures shall be installed in new facilities or when replaced in existing facilities: low-flow flush toilets; low-flow showerheads (3 gpm rated max. flow); faucet aerators; and water-efficient appliances (e.g., washing machine and dishwashers).
Community Development Standards: The Soda Springs design vision is for an attractive, well-designed and organized community which takes advantage of its outstanding natural setting. In order to be responsive to the unique circumstances of Soda Springs the following community development standards apply throughout the Area Plan.

1. Required permanent open space may be reduced for non-residential sites less than 1-acre in size if all required landscaping is provided onsite and if a residential unit is attached to a commercial space.

2. The development of gateway signage or features at the western and eastern entrances to Soda Springs along Donner Pass Rd. should complement the natural setting and history of Donner Summit.

3. The number of parking stalls required for a specific use may be modified if a Parking Study, submitted by a project applicant and prepared by a Registered Professional Engineer/Traffic Engineer, substantiates that the number of stalls needed for the proposed use is significantly different than required by the code.

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

4. Placement of metal shipping containers shall be subject to the following limitations:
   a. Metal shipping containers shall not be allowed as a principal use in any zone.
   b. Metal shipping containers shall be allowed in all zones within the Soda Springs Rural Center on a temporary basis when utilized during construction or grading operations for the site where located and when utilized solely for the storage of supplies and equipment that are used for construction or grading on that site.
   c. In all zones placement of metal shipping containers is allowed as an accessory use subject to the following development standards:
      i. The placement has been approved as part of an approved plot plan, development permit or conditional use permit.
      ii. No more than one metal shipping container shall be permitted on any parcel.
      iii. The container’s setback from all property lines shall be a minimum of thirty feet.
      iv. Preferred container placement shall be on a case-by-case basis but generally to the rear half of the property.
      v. The metal shipping container shall be fully screened by an opaque fence or fast-growing landscaping.
      vi. The metal shipping container shall be painted a non-reflective earthtone color.

5. Trash and garbage facilities shall be secure from bears and other wildlife.

6. Limited office uses, arts and crafts fabrication, and tutoring or classes, and similar commercial activities may be conducted within existing, legal non-conforming residences within any of the Commercial Districts, provided a Home Business Permit is obtained and that the business complies with all Home Business standards provided by Sec. L-II 3.11 of County Zoning Regulations.
7. Nevada County recognizes that the removal of snow and firewood operations, or similar, are essential community activities necessary for economic viability and public health and safety. To protect the character of neighborhoods, minimize the visibility and incompatibility from adjoining parcels and roadways, while allowing for the storage of snow removal and firewood equipment and materials, or similar, the following standards apply:

**Residential Uses**

a. Snow removal equipment storage cannot be a primary use of a residential zoned property and must be incidental to a residential use already established onsite.

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

**Commercial and Industrial Uses**

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

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

* Note: Allowed subject to zoning compliance.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Max. Total Area of Unscreened Accessory Commercial/Industrial Storage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>100 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 sq. ft. to &lt;10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>200 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 sq. ft. to &lt;15,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>300 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 sq. ft. to</td>
<td>400 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **c.** All outdoor commercial/industrial material storage areas in excess of those limits identified above shall be required to be screened with a solid fence, landscaping, structures or other visible barriers that substantially screen the storage area/yard from adjacent properties and from primary roadways.

- **d.** All such equipment and materials referenced above must be situated in a manner such that they meet the required structural setbacks for the zone district in which they are located.

### Housing Density Standards:

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

1. Maximum residential density for mixed-use projects in the C1 and C2 base zoning district shall be six (6) units per acre.

2. The minimum density allowance for construction of multi-family structure(s) on parcels zoned R2-RC is two (2) units regardless of parcel size, subject to zoning compliance.

### Agricultural Uses:

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

### Exceptions:

If approved by the Planning Director, modifications or reductions to the above standards that are supported by a qualified professional(s) may be considered for any project that provides opportunities for public spaces, including a town plaza or town square.
**ATTACHMENT B**
**ASSessor’s Parcel Numbers**
**Listed by Zoning District**

**R1-SP (Single Family Residential - Site Performance)**

| 47-040-01 | 47-070-05 | 47-071-13 | 47-090-05 | 47-410-07 | 47-440-10* |
| 47-040-02* | 47-070-06 | 47-071-14 | 47-090-06 | 47-410-08 | 47-440-11* |
| 47-040-04 | 47-070-11 | 47-080-02 | 47-090-07 | 47-410-11 | 47-440-14 |
| 47-040-06 | 47-070-12 | 47-080-03 | 47-090-08 | 47-410-14 |
| 47-040-08 | 47-070-15 | 47-080-04 | 47-090-09 | 47-410-15 |
| 47-040-09 | 47-070-16 | 47-080-05 | 47-090-10 | 47-410-16 |
| 47-040-10 | 47-070-17 | 47-080-06 | 47-090-11 | 47-410-17 |
| 47-040-11 | 47-070-19 | 47-080-07 | 47-090-12 | 47-410-18 |
| 47-040-12 | 47-070-20 | 47-080-08 | 47-090-13 | 47-410-19 |
| 47-040-13 | 47-070-22 | 47-080-09 | 47-090-14 | 47-410-20 |
| 47-040-14 | 47-070-23 | 47-080-10 | 47-090-15 | 47-410-21 |
| 47-040-17 | 47-070-25 | 47-080-11 | 47-090-16 | 47-410-22 |
| 47-051-01 | 47-070-26 | 47-080-12 | 47-090-17 | 47-410-23 |
| 47-051-02 | 47-070-27 | 47-080-13 | 47-090-18 | 47-410-24 |
| 47-052-01 | 47-070-28 | 47-080-14 | 47-090-19 | 47-410-25 |
| 47-052-02 | 47-070-29 | 47-080-15 | 47-090-20 | 47-420-01 |
| 47-052-03 | 47-070-30 | 47-080-16 | 47-090-21 | 47-420-02 |
| 47-053-01 | 47-070-31 | 47-080-18 | 47-090-25 | 47-420-03 |
| 47-053-03 | 47-070-32 | 47-080-20 | 47-090-26 | 47-420-04 |
| 47-053-04 | 47-070-33 | 47-080-21 | 47-101-06 | 47-420-05 |
| 47-053-05 | 47-070-34 | 47-080-23 | 47-101-07 | 47-420-06 |
| 47-053-06 | 47-070-35 | 47-080-25 | 47-101-08 | 47-420-07 |
| 47-053-07 | 47-070-36 | 47-080-26 | 47-101-09 | 47-420-08 |
| 47-053-08 | 47-070-37 | 47-080-29 | 47-101-48 | 47-420-09 |
| 47-053-09 | 47-070-38 | 47-080-30 | 47-390-01 | 47-420-10 |
| 47-053-10 | 47-070-39 | 47-080-31 | 47-390-02 | 47-420-11 |
| 47-053-11 | 47-070-41 | 47-080-36 | 47-390-04 | 47-420-12 |
| 47-053-12 | 47-070-42 | 47-080-37 | 47-390-05 | 47-420-13 |
| 47-053-13 | 47-070-43 | 47-080-38 | 47-390-06 | 47-420-14 |
| 47-053-14 | 47-070-44 | 47-080-39 | 47-390-07 | 47-420-15 |
| 47-060-02 | 47-071-01 | 47-080-40 | 47-390-08 | 47-420-16 |
| 47-060-03 | 47-071-07 | 47-080-41 | 47-410-01 | 47-420-17 |
| 47-060-04 | 47-071-08 | 47-080-42 | 47-410-02 | 47-420-18 |
| 47-060-05 | 47-071-09 | 47-090-01 | 47-410-03 | 47-420-19 |
| 47-070-01 | 47-071-10 | 47-090-02 | 47-410-04 | 47-420-20 |
| 47-070-02 | 47-071-11 | 47-090-03 | 47-410-05 | 47-420-21 |
| 47-070-03 | 47-071-12 | 47-090-04 | 47-410-06 | 47-420-22 |
R2- RC (URBAN MEDIUM DENSITY-RURAL CENTER)
47-080-17  47-090-22  47-101-28  47-101-36

R2-PD-RC (URBAN MEDIUM DENSITY-PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-RURAL CENTER)
47-080-34  47-380-05  47-380-10  47-380-15
47-380-01  47-380-06  47-380-11  47-380-16
47-380-02  47-380-07  47-380-12  47-380-17
47-380-03  47-380-08  47-380-13  47-380-18
47-380-04  47-380-09  47-380-14

R3-RC (URBAN HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL-RURAL CENTER)
47-080-24
47-080-27

C1-RC (NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)
47-440-16  47-102-01  47-410-13
47-080-35  47-102-17
47-101-10  47-102-18
47-101-13  47-102-19
47-101-37  47-410-12

C2-RC (COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)
47-080-33  47-101-26  47-102-04  47-102-14  47-420-23
47-101-17  47-101-41  47-102-16  47-102-21

CH-RC (HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL-RURAL CENTER)
47-101-39
47-101-46
47-410-09

M1-RC (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL-RURAL CENTER)
47-101-11
47-101-12
**REC-SP (RECREATION-SITE PERFORMANCE)**

47-021-71*
47-440-15
47-440-17
47-440-18*
47-440-20*

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

47-390-03

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


2007. Donner Summit Visioning and Planning Resident Survey


Community Action Plan prepared by McCammant and Durrett Architects, December 2006

Mixed Use Development Study, funded by CDG Funds accepted by County Resolution 05-479


Sierra Business Council, Planning for Prosperity
NEVADA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

APPLICANT: County of Nevada

HEARING DATE: August 25, 2016

FILE NOs: GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004

PROJECT: Public hearing to consider an Area Plan for the Donner Summit area, including:
1) adoption of the Negative Declaration for the project (EIS14-004); 2) a General Plan Amendment to
adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan (GP14-003); 3) a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment to
change the land use designation of 51 parcels to remove development constraints that inhibit desired
economic growth in order to create a stronger community for local residents (GP16-004); 4) the
Rezoning of parcels to align with the proposed General Plan land use designation amendments,
including adding the Site Performance (SP) and Rural Center (RC) Combining District zoning
overlays to specific parcels (Z16-005); and 5) amending Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning
Ordinance to add a reference to the Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards (ORD14-
002).

LOCATION: The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan covers those Donner Summit communities
connected along Donner Pass Road (old Hwy. 40) between Cisco Grove and the Donner
Memorial Bridge in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan’s focus is the 141-acre community of
Soda Springs which the County has designated as a Rural Center for the surrounding rural areas.

APNs, OWNERS, SITE ADDRESSES: See listing in Attachment 1- Initial Study.

PLANNER: Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

LOCATION: The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan (Area Plan) covers those Donner Summit
communities connected along Donner Pass Rd. (old Hwy. 40) between Cisco Grove and the
Donner Memorial Bridge on Donner Summit in eastern Nevada County, approximately 12 miles
west of the town of Truckee, California. The Area Plan covers an area extending approximately
1.2 miles along Donner Pass Rd. (historic Old Highway 40) from the Soda Springs/Norden
Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Rd. The Area Plan’s focus is the community of Soda Springs
which the County has designated a Rural Center for the surrounding rural area. The Soda Springs
Rural Center is approximately 141 acres in size (excluding roadway and railroad rights of way)
and the predominant theme of the land use pattern is commercial and residential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Plan:</th>
<th>USF, UMD, HC, REC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region/Center:</td>
<td>Soda Springs Rural Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning:</td>
<td>R1, R2, R2-PD, CH, REC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Map:</td>
<td>FEMA Panels #0500 &amp; 0525, Zone D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZDM No.:</td>
<td>114 &amp; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Area:</td>
<td>141 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water:</th>
<th>Donner Summit PUD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sewage:</td>
<td>Donner Summit PUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire:</td>
<td>Truckee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools:</td>
<td>Tahoe/Truckee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation:</td>
<td>Truckee Donner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sup. Dist.:</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

180
Attachment 7
ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Board Resolution for EIS14-004 Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration
2. Draft Board Resolution for GP14-003 General Plan Text Amendments
3. Draft Board Resolutions for GP16-004 General Plan Land Use Map Amendments
4. Draft Ordinance for Z16-005 Zoning District Map Amendments
5. Draft Ordinance for ORD14-002 Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments
6. Draft Soda Springs Area Plan
7. Zoning, Vicinity & Public Notice Map
8. Public Comments

BACKGROUND

On March 25, 2014, the Board of Supervisors issued Board Order BO-14-02 directing the Advance Planning Division work program priorities for Phase II of the General Plan Land Use Element. The work plan calls for a new Area Plan for the Soda Springs community in accordance with Program 1.2.1.b of the General Plan Land Use Element.

Local efforts to provide input for long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade. There has been consistent and strong support in the Soda Springs community for a coordinated planning effort between Nevada and Placer County and by the Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA). Those efforts have resulted in the Donner Summit Economic Study (2004), the Donner Summit Visioning and Planning Resident Survey (2007), and the Community Prosperity Summit (2008), which provides a base foundation of the Soda Springs Area Plan.

As a result of the construction of Highway 80 in 1964, Soda Springs has become more of a drive-by community than a stop by, or destination itself. Interstate 80 allows potential visitors to pass by enroute to nearby Truckee, Reno, and Lake Tahoe, oblivious to the experiences they might enjoy on Donner Summit. Additionally, time has passed on while the area has been hindered in its economic promotion by the lack of investment and the consequent impacts of some areas of blight in the built environment. Many competing recreational areas further east have better organized and promoted attractions for year-round recreation resulting in Donner Summit being comparatively less competitive for tourist dollars needed to support economic viability.

The current Highway Commercial Land Use Designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the commercial area and there is a clear need to revitalize the physical appearance and promote the accessibility of the area to increase economic activity. Healthy economic activity, in turn, is key to a healthy social fabric and the conditions to enhance and protect the natural environment. Compounding this problem of the restrictive land use designation is the multitude of political jurisdictions and divided community needs that have resulted in not capitalizing on opportunities that exist in the area such as non-winter uses. Adding to the challenge, consecutive drought years and projected climate changes create uncertainties for the local economy which is historically heavily dependent upon snow fall. The passage of time with consequent deterioration of buildings and infrastructures, the national economic downturn
and the impacts of global climate change present even greater challenges to economic development of the Soda Springs area than was the case a decade ago.

PURPOSE

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

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Area Plan covers an area approximately 1.2 miles along Donner Pass Rd. (historic Old Highway 40) from the Soda Springs/Norden Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Rd. on Donner Summit in eastern Nevada County. The area functions as the primary visitor and tourist area on Donner Summit and provides direct access to developed and passive recreation opportunities. The Area Plan’s focus is the community of Soda Springs which the County has designated a Rural Center for the surrounding rural area. The Soda Springs Rural Center is approximately 141 acres in size (excluding roadway and railroad rights of way) and the predominant theme of the land use pattern is commercial and residential.

The commercially zoned area of the Soda Springs Rural Center has three primary nodes: on the western edge is the gas station, in the middle is the General Store building, and the eastern edge is the Soda Springs Station condominiums at the flashing light intersection with Soda Springs Rd. The gas station area includes the Sugar Bowl Ski Resort operated Donner Summit Lodge, and Summit Restaurant. The General Store area includes the Soda Springs Post Office, real estate offices and the currently closed Tinker’s Station mixed-use building. The Soda Springs Lodge area is primarily residential although it does include some commercial businesses and the Donner Summit Historical Museum. These uses occupy structures ranging in height, age and physical conditions. Most of the buildings are quite old, with many constructed between 1930 and 1950.

The Soda Springs Rural Center is bordered to the north by Interstate 80 and lands owned by Auburn Ski Club associated with Boreal Ski Resort. To the south, the Area Plan is bordered by the Soda Springs Ski Resort and 1,000 lot residential community of Serene Lakes just beyond. Directly west of the Area Plan across the Interstate 80 overpass are the Donner Summit Public Utility District facilities and a few miles down Donner Pass Road is the residential community of Pla-Vada near the town of Kingvale. To the east of the Area Plan is Tahoe National Forest towards Donner Ski Ranch and Sugar Bowl Ski Resort.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is an Area Plan that promotes revitalization of the Donner Summit area to be consistent with community values and the County’s General Plan, with specific land use
regulations and zoning changes focused on the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial zoning. The Soda Springs Area Plan establishes goals, policies and implementation strategies for providing specific land use guidance for the Donner Summit area. The Area Plan will help achieve the vision of the community by implementing its guiding principles through rezoning land use designations, and development of community design standards. The Area Plan proposes to achieve this through more intensive concentrated mixed use development in the commercial area and flexible design standards to promote revitalization to improve its aging infrastructure, provide for improved recreation access, and diversify commercial retail needs for visitors and residents. The area is envisioned as a regional destination that provides full services for visitors and permanent residents and offers unique experiences related to the many outdoor recreation and natural experience possibilities that abound on Donner Summit. The revitalization of Soda Springs will catalyze the transformation from seasonal winter recreation economy into a sustainable year-round community and outdoor tourism recreational destination with a diversified business base.

The Soda Springs Area Plan defines land use regulations and guidelines for planning decisions. It does this by presenting principles, goals, policies and implementation strategies developed by Nevada County and stakeholders to support a sustainable community that puts its residents first with expanded commercial goods and services, improved trail connections to surrounding recreation areas, support for public areas and facilities, and promotion of the area in the Spring, Summer and Fall. The County also intends to provide direction to property owners, community groups, and interested individuals planning and promoting the area. The proposed plan is intended to provide for mixed-use and concentrated development conditions that provide local commercial needs as well as provide a sense of community and a sense of a stronger place by encouraging public gathering places and locations for community events.

The Area Plan is organized into seven chapters and three attachments. Chapter 1 introduces the Area Plan and summarizes the plan’s vision for the future and guiding principles for prosperity and sustainability. Chapters 2 through 7 provide an overview of the Area Plan’s existing conditions, opportunities and constraints for development and conservation, and outline the policy direction for the plan, with individual sections for the following plan elements: Land Use; Economic Development; Public Services; Recreation; Natural and Cultural Resources; and Area Plan Implementation. Attachment A establishes specific development standards, design standards and permissible uses that are intended to improve the scenic quality of the built environment, promote a sense of place, and support the community’s desired community character. Attachment B lists Assessor’s Parcel Numbers within the plan area by zoning district, and Attachment C includes the Area Plan references.

To facilitate desirable economic development, protect historical and rural values, provide quality affordable housing and lodging, create public gathering places, develop neighborhood connecting trails, create gateway signage and branding, provide enhanced vehicle and pedestrian safety, and expand resident and visitor services for improved prosperity and sustainability of the Donner Summit region, Table 1, below, summarizes the beneficial components of the proposed Area Plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soda Springs Area Plan Element</th>
<th>Proposed Change from Existing Plans, Maps, and Ordinances</th>
<th>Summary Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Goals and Policies: All Elements | Adds Goals and Policies specific to Donner Summit | Adds goals and policies to implement the vision and capital improvements identified in the Area Plan, resulting in:  
  - desirable economic development  
  - protection of rural lifestyle values and character  
  - more services for local residents  
  - quality affordable housing and lodging  
  - creation of in-town public places  
  - trail connections within and around the Rural Center  
  - construction of gateway signage and branding  
  - improved vehicle and pedestrian safety, and  
  - expanded residential and visitor services |
| Land Use: Map Amendments | Expand and modify existing Land Use/Zoning District boundaries by removing outdated and unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development | A conscious, directed change in the intensity and type of land uses in the Soda Springs commercial area will be the primary method by which positive community values and strengths can be preserved and the area’s potential realized. Proposed zoning changes include:  
  - 1.03 ac. currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to CH (highway commercial)  
  - 2.85 ac. currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to FR-40 (Forest-40 ac. min.)  
  - 1.76 ac. currently zoned R1 (single family residential) rezoned to R2 (medium density residential)  
  - 1.13 ac. currently zoned R2 (medium density residential) rezoned to R3 (high density residential)  
  - 1.8 ac. currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to R2 (medium density residential)  
  - 4.07 ac. currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to C1 (neighborhood commercial)  
  - 7.55 ac. currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to C2 (community commercial)  
  - 0.78 ac. currently zoned CH (highway commercial) rezoned to M1 (light industrial) |
| Land Use: Rural Center (RC) and Site Performance (SP) Combining Zone Districts | Adds the Rural Center (RC) Combining District to the Commercial Area and Adjacent Surroundings and adds the Site Performance (SP) Combining District to the remainder (e.g., Res., Rec., For.) | Focus economic development and improvements in and around the Soda Springs commercial area with the addition of the Rural Center (RC) Combining District which allows for more flexible development standards and permissible uses summarized below.  
  - New construction standards on vacant lands:  
    - Protect existing natural features  
    - Earthtone exterior building colors and materials  
    - Provide adequate snow storage area  
    - Utilize native vegetation  
    - Preserve mountain, forest, and meadow public views from Donner Pass Road  
    - Site design consideration of solar exposure, climate, noise, safety, fire protection and privacy  
    - Water-efficient appliances  
  - Community Development Flexible Design Standards:  
    - Open space reduction for mixed-use building with required landscaping  
    - Encourage gateway signage that complements natural setting and Donner Summit history  
    - Allows for up to 50 % offsite parking  
    - Establishes metal shipping container storage standards (also applies to SP Combining District)  
    - Wildlife secure garbage facilities  
    - Allows limited commercial activities within legal non-conforming residences  
    - Establishes snow removal equipment and outdoor storage screening requirements (also applies to SP Combining District)  
  - Housing Density Standards:  
    - Mixed-use projects in the C1 and C2 zone district may utilize a maximum residential density of 6 units/acre.  
    - Multi-family residential projects may utilize a two unit (duplex) minimum density allowance for parcels zoned R2-RC, subject to zoning compliance.  
  - Agricultural Uses such as farmer’s markets and produce stands are permissible subject to approval pursuant to Sec. L-II 3.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance. |
Adoption of the Soda Springs Area Plan includes the following General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments:

**General Plan Text Amendments (GP14-003)**
General Plan Amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan and policy framework that will guide future development and redevelopment in the Soda Springs Rural Center toward land uses that focus economic development and create a community and recreation destination that provides a diversity and concentration of resident servicing shops as well as services that also appeal to visitors.

**General Plan Land Use Map Amendments (GP16-004)**
General Plan Land Use Map Designation Amendments to 51 parcels to remove development constraints that inhibit desired economic growth and create a stronger community for the local residents.

**Zoning District Map Amendments (Z16-005)**
Parcel rezoning to correspond with the proposed Land Use Map Designation changes; including adding SP (Site Performance) and RC (Rural Center) Combining District zoning to specific parcels.

**Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments (ORD14-002)**
Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to add a reference to the proposed Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards that reflect Donner Summit’s historic mountain identity while promoting trail connectivity and public plazas, in order to activate the pedestrian streetscape and improve roadway perimeters for both pedestrian and vehicular safety.

**PROJECT ANALYSIS**

**Public Services and Facilities**
The Soda Springs Area Plan would facilitate a compact land use pattern, with localized increases in density, and the types of development envisioned by the General Plan. The proposed Area Plan does not include any development proposals or infrastructure upgrades that would result in population growth or any other direct or indirect substantial adverse impacts requiring increased public services. Any future development proposals such as tentative maps would undergo environmental review to evaluate impacts related to public services. Therefore, the proposed Area Plan would have little effect on service ratios, response times, or other service objectives of public services.

Truckee Fire Protection District – Station 97 is across Highway 80, approximately 1,000 feet west of the Soda Springs Rural Center. There would not be a need for new or altered fire protection facilities resulting from this project. The resulting changes in population density would be minimal and not have an appreciable effect on the Donner Summit Public Utility District’s ability to serve new projects. Expanded trails and parks would require some additional maintenance and policing but would not significantly place a burden on agencies providing this public service.
Transportation/Circulation
The Soda Springs Area Plan does not alter, revise or conflict with applicable plans, ordinances or policies establishing the measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. Consistent with the General Plan, development and redevelopment associated with the Area Plan evaluated as a whole, and individual projects therein, that would generate a significant net increase of daily vehicle trips or more would be required to prepare a project-level traffic analyses. For any new trips that are generated, Nevada County requires an applicant to offset the potential regional traffic and air quality effects of the new trips by requiring an applicant contribute to traffic mitigation fees to the Air Quality Mitigation Fund and all individual projects would be required to meet all applicable LOS standards for roadways and standards.

Any additional vehicle trips with residents coming from adjacent communities to receive goods and services provided in Soda Springs will be more than offset by a corresponding reduction of travel to Truckee to meet those needs. Similarly, the increase to residential capacity within the Rural Center (RC) Combining Zone District will provide affordable work force housing choices thereby reducing the need to reside and travel from more distant communities like Truckee.

Making Soda Springs a full service destination will largely offset any new trips generated by additional visitors resulting from Area Plan implementation. The circulation system is currently in disrepair and the proposed changes resulting from the Area Plan provide a safer definition of the roadway and safer separation of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Land Use
No new structures are proposed with the Area Plan, however there are five new zoning districts proposed that are not currently present within the Rural Center; R3 (High Density Residential), C1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C2 (Community Commercial), M1 (Light Industrial), and FR-40 (Forest-40 acre minimum). These additional land use zoning districts included within the Soda Springs Area Plan and rationale of why impacts of related to land use incompatibility are less than significant are further discussed below.

R3 (High Density)
There are two vacant parcels on the north side of the intersection of Donner Pass Rd. and Soda Springs Rd. being rezoned from R2 (Medium Density Residential) to R3 (High Density Residential). This change is part of a larger strategy to focus additional residential capacity near the commercial center of town to increase the critical mass of the community, imparting a sense of scale and density that establishes the market center as the focal point for the entire community.

Located on the western, eastern, and southern gateways of the Soda Springs commercial area, eleven parcels have been rezoned from CH (Highway Commercial) to C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) and C2 (Community Commercial)

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

Located on the western, eastern, and southern gateways of the Soda Springs commercial area, eleven parcels have been rezoned from CH (Highway Commercial) to C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) and C2 (Community Commercial).
Commercial). As mentioned throughout this section, much of the Soda Springs Rural Center commercial area is currently designated by the County General Plan as Highway Commercial because of its historical role as a service center for travelling motorists. This land use designation is outdated and too restrictive of local uses appropriate for the area’s residents.

The Area Plan proposed to rezone twenty-one parcels from CH (Highway Commercial) to C2 (Community Commercial). Changing the current Commercial Highway zoning to Neighborhood and Community Commercial zone districts provides greater flexibility for local commercial businesses. Unlike the current CH zoning, the C1 and C2 zone districts allow for uses like offices and museums which currently exist as non-conforming uses, and community meeting and social event facilities which are strongly desired by the community.

M1 (Light Industrial)
The extreme weather conditions and self-reliant approach to life of residents requires there be industrial areas. Heavy equipment is scattered throughout the community often giving commercial sites the feel of an industrial site. This plan designates two parcels for light industrial uses near the western end of town in recognition of the current industrial snow removal and telecommunication functions on the sites. Through the use of landscaping and fences (Section L-II 4.2.7.E.2.f.) and more restrictive noise standards (Section L-II 4.1.7.D.4.) Nevada County’s Zoning Ordinance includes protections to preserve the quality of life when non-residential development abuts residentially-zoned properties.

FR-40 (Forest-40 acre minimum)
In the northeastern most corner of the Rural Center along Bunny Hill Road is a 2.85 acre parcel owned by the U.S. Forest Service that is proposed to be re-zoned from R1 (Single-Family Residential) to FR-40 (Forest-40 acre min.), consistent with the zoning of surrounding Tahoe National Forest parcels.

RC (Rural Center) Combining District
The RC (Rural Center) Combining District zoning overlay provides more flexible development and design standards for the seventy-seven parcels within and adjacent to the Soda Springs commercial core area, that have a base zoning district that is either commercial, multi-family, or industrial. To revitalize the economic vitality of Donner Summit and remove unnecessary obstacles to well-planned development intended to support and valued rural community character, the RC Combining District identifies flexible standards that promote the efficient use of land with incentives for achieving a sustainable community the following Area Plan goals:

- Stem the steady decline and instability of many businesses by allowing a broader range of commercial uses;
- Encourage full service businesses that support a stable year-round occupancy by residents and provide the needs of visitors to the area;
- Provide more job opportunities with workforce wages;
- Focus increased residential density and capacity;
- Capitalize on natural resources by branding the area as a tourist full-stop destination;
- Entice more Highway 80 travelers to take area exits to spend dollars for supplies and services;
- Stimulate increased property values;
• Take steps to reduce visual blight and enhance the scenic values of the area by limiting the extent of outdoor storage of equipment (e.g., snow plows, metal shipping containers) and materials (e.g., commercial fire wood yards); and
• Creation of public gathering spaces, such as a town plaza

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Planning staff prepared an Initial Study for public review with the comment period beginning July 22 and ending August 22, 2016. The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan is a policy and design plan, and does not propose any specific construction projects. All environmental impacts would be less-than-significant, and staff is therefore recommending adoption of a Negative Declaration (ND).

The commitment to preserving the cultural and natural resources and the environment is broadly supported by stakeholders and is seen as a positive step for a brighter future for the area. Because the Area Plan proposes no changes to existing policies regarding aquatic habitats, special status plant or animal communities, or to cultural, historical, and archeological resources, and because federal, state, and County environmental protections are already in place, implementation of the Soda Springs Area Plan would result in less than significant degradation of these resources.

PUBLIC COORDINATION

Local efforts to inform long range planning on Donner Summit have been underway for more than a decade and the foundation of this plan is based on a 2004 comprehensive economic development study conducted for the Donner Summit area. To help guide development in Soda Springs and surrounding Donner Summit area the Advance Planning Division of the Nevada County Planning Department held nine public community workshop meetings between September 2014 and August 2016 and recommended key strategies to be implemented to encourage investment and to achieve environmental, physical, and sustainable economic improvements. Staff has also presented Area Plan updates to Placer County’s Donner Summit Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC), the Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA) and the Donner Summit Legacy organizations.

ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

As a policy document, the Soda Springs Area Plan supplements and becomes part of the General Plan, providing a comprehensive framework for making land use decisions within the Soda Springs Rural Center and influencing decisions in the surrounding Donner Summit geographic area. The goals, policies and design and site development standards contained within this plan reflect Soda Springs unique characteristics, support the local community’s vision, and are consistent with the overall themes and goals of the General Plan. The County’s General Plan identifies Soda Springs as a Rural Center which is intended to provide for a mix of primary uses grouped together and interrelated to form a functional and community center, and to create a visual identity related to the historic mountain character for the surrounding Donner Summit rural communities.
The Area Plan is consistent with applicable General Plan policies and regulations, including; General Plan Goal 1.3 which calls for the protection and enhancement of community character, land use patterns, rural lifestyle, and economy of Rural Regions in their natural setting. Also General Plan Policy 1.3.13 identifies Rural Region Area Plans as a more specific planning tool to complement and assist further implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan. Additionally, General Plan Policy 1.9.2 identifies current development constraints imposed by the Highway Commercial (HC) land use designation within the Soda Springs Rural Center Legacy Community.

SUMMARY

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

I. Environmental Action: Recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the attached Resolution for the Negative Declaration (EIS14-004) for the proposed General Plan amendments (GP14-003), General Plan Land Use Map amendments (GP16-004), Zoning District Map amendments and Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards (Z16-005), and Zoning Ordinance text amendments (ORD14-002), pursuant to Section 15074 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines based on findings A-D contained within the Draft Resolution (Attachment 1).

II. Project Actions:

1. Recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the General Plan text amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan (Attachment 2).

2. Recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the General Plan Land Use Map amendments to amend the land use map by changing the designation of 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center (Attachment 3).

3. Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments to Zoning District Maps (ZDM) #114 and #119 to coincide the rezoning of 51 parcels to be consistent with the amended General Plan land use map, and to add the “RC” Rural Center Combining...
District to 77 parcels, and the “SP” Site Performance Combining District to 193 parcels (*Attachment 4*).

4. Recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the amendments to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to reference the applicability of the Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards (*Attachment 5*).

Respectfully submitted,

[Brian Foss signature]

BRIAN FOSS
Planning Director
Soda Springs Area Plan
GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004
Zoning, Vicinity and Public Notice Map

Soda Springs Rural Center
500' Hearing Notification Parcels
County Boundary

FR-160
TPZ-160
FR-160
TPZ-160
FR-160
FR-X
FR-40
FR-40
FR-40-PSAA
P
CH
R2
R1
REC

Attachment 7

Soda Springs Rural Center
500' Hearing Notification Parcels
County Boundary

Mile
191
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

15 August 2016

Patrick Dobbs
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC REVIEW AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION, SODA SPRINGS AREA PLAN - GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004 PROJECT, NEVADA COUNTY

Pursuant to the Nevada County Planning Department’s 22 July 2016 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the Request for Review for the Notice of Availability of Public Review and Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for the Soda Springs Area Plan – GP14-003, GP16-044, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004 Project, located in Nevada County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan
The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State’s water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan...
amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues.

For more information on the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins, please visit our website:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/.

Antidegradation Considerations

All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Policy is available on page IV-15.01 at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalleywater_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr.pdf

In part it states:

*Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.*

*This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.*

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

**Construction Storm Water General Permit**

Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities (Construction General Permit). Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to
restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

**Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits**
The Phase I and II MS4 permits require the Permittees reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development and redevelopment using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). MS4 Permittees have their own development standards, also known as Low Impact Development (LID)/post-construction standards that include a hydromodification component. The MS4 permits also require specific design concepts for LID/post-construction BMPs in the early stages of a project during the entitlement and CEQA process and the development plan review process.

For more information on which Phase I MS4 Permit this project applies to, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

For more information on the Phase II MS4 permit and who it applies to, visit the State Water Resources Control Board at:

**Industrial Storm Water General Permit**
Storm water discharges associated with industrial sites must comply with the regulations contained in the Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ.

For more information on the Industrial Storm Water General Permit, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

**Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit**
If the project will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the

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1 Municipal Permits = The Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Water System (MS4) Permit covers medium sized Municipalities (serving between 100,000 and 250,000 people) and large sized municipalities (serving over 250,000 people). The Phase II MS4 provides coverage for small municipalities, including non-traditional Small MS4s, which include military bases, public campuses, prisons and hospitals.
United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACOE, the Central Valley Water Board will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards. If the project requires surface water drainage realignment, the applicant is advised to contact the Department of Fish and Game for information on Streambed Alteration Permit requirements.

If you have any questions regarding the Clean Water Act Section 404 permits, please contact the Regulatory Division of the Sacramento District of USACOE at (916) 557-5250.

**Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification**

If an USACOE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit. Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central Valley Water Board prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications.

**Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State**

If USACOE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., “non-federal” waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by Central Valley Water Board. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation.

For more information on the Water Quality Certification and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/business_help/permit2.shtml.

**Dewatering Permit**

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Risk General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Risk Waiver) R5-2013-0145. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

For more information regarding the Low Risk General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

For more information regarding the Low Risk Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:


**Regulatory Compliance for Commercially Irrigated Agriculture**

If the property will be used for commercial irrigated agricultural, the discharger will be required to obtain regulatory coverage under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. There are two options to comply:

1. **Obtain Coverage Under a Coalition Group.** Join the local Coalition Group that supports land owners with the implementation of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. The Coalition Group conducts water quality monitoring and reporting to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of its growers. The Coalition Groups charge an annual membership fee, which varies by Coalition Group. To find the Coalition Group in your area, visit the Central Valley Water Board's website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/app_approval/index.shtml; or contact water board staff at (916) 464-4611 or via email at IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov.

2. **Obtain Coverage Under the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Individual Growers, General Order R5-2013-0100.** Dischargers not participating in a third-party group (Coalition) are regulated individually. Depending on the specific site conditions, growers may be required to monitor runoff from their property, install monitoring wells, and submit a notice of intent, farm plan, and other action plans regarding their actions to comply with their General Order. Yearly costs would include State administrative fees (for example, annual fees for farm sizes from 10-100 acres are currently $1,084 + $6.70/Acre); the cost to prepare annual monitoring reports; and water quality monitoring costs. To enroll as an Individual Discharger under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, call the Central Valley Water Board phone line at (916) 464-4611 or e-mail board staff at IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov.

**Low or Limited Threat General NPDES Permit**

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be
covered under the General Order for *Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters* (Low Threat General Order) or the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges of Treated/Untreated Groundwater from Cleanup Sites, Wastewater from Superchlorination Projects, and Other Limited Threat Wastewaters to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete application must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under these General NPDES permits.

For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:


For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:


**NPDES Permit**

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of the waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit.

For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:


If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4644 or Stephanie.Tadlock@waterboards.ca.gov.

Stephanie Tadlock
Environmental Scientist
August 22, 2016

Mr. Patrick Dobbs
Senior Planner
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

Soda Spring Area Plan

Dear Mr. Dobbs:

Thank you for including California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the Negative Declaration (ND) and Draft Soda Springs Area Plan. Caltrans’ new mission, vision, and goals signal a modernization of our approach to California’s transportation system. We review this local development for impacts to the State Highway System in keeping with our mission, vision and goals for sustainability/livability/economy, and safety/health. We provide these comments consistent with the state’s mobility goals that support a vibrant economy, and build communities, not sprawl.

The Area Plan is located on Donner Summit in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan covers an area of approximately 141 acres running 1.2 miles along Donner Pass Road, from Soda Springs/Norden Interstate 80 exit to Bunny Hill Road. The following comments are based on the ND and draft plan received:

Transportation & Circulation

The first topic in Chapter 4, Section A, is titled “Roadways.” Interstate 80 and the Soda Springs interchange should be addressed in this section. Any new trips added to the already-congested roadways during peak travel times must be addressed and mitigated when the time comes to perform a traffic study. A two-way left-turn lane in the Soda Springs commercial district may be needed to accommodate turning movements and minimize queuing onto the freeway to the interchange.

Within the same chapter and section as referenced above, the third topic is titled “Pedestrian Improvements.” Information regarding wayfinding, which can help supplement the topic, can be found in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Section 2D.50—Community Wayfinding Signs. The document can be found at:
http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/camuted

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability."
Mr. Patrick Dobbs  
August 22, 2016  
Page 2

Please provide our office with copies of any further actions regarding this project. We would appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on any changes related to this development.

If you have any question regarding these comments or require additional information, please contact Jennifer Jacobson, Intergovernmental Review Coordinator for Nevada County, by phone (530) 741-5435 or via email to jennifer.jacobson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Kevin Yount

KEVIN YOUNT, (Acting) Branch Chief  
Office of Transportation Planning  
Regional Planning Branch—North

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"
Chapter 4
Public Services

A. EXISTING PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES

ROADWAYS

Donner Pass Rd. is the major east-west roadway through Soda Springs, connecting communities like Cisco Grove and Kingvale to the Summit and Donner Lake and Truckee. Soda Springs Road heads south from the middle of the Rural Center to the nearby Serene Lakes community and Royal Gorge resort. Local streets serve the adjacent residential neighborhood. Donner Pass Road is the only way through town and the high winter weekend traffic volumes emphasizes the importance of a well-functioning transportation system. Traffic backups of six or more miles long create gridlock on peak ski days. Many residents would like to see the speed limit along Donner Pass Rd. reduced from 35 MPH to 25 MPH. Strategically placed flashing speed limit signs could be a good deterrent for speeding drivers. Future development may require project level traffic analysis of the local roadways and the Interstate 80 and Soda Springs interchange, and could require a traffic study that could identify specific mitigation measures such as a two-way left turn lane, bike lanes, and other intersection upgrades on Donner Pass Road to improve local circulation.
Patrick Dobbs

From: Patrick Dobbs
to: [redacted]
subject: Soda Springs Area Plan

Dear [redacted],

Thanks for the response. I sent comments from the Caltrans Highway Operations perspective to Jennifer Jacobson last week. I noticed she incorporated my concerns about the mentioning the Soda Springs interchange into the official comments.

I have been reviewing a variety of documents related to development and redevelopment for over a decade. Whoever wrote the Soda Springs Area Plan did an outstanding job. It's the perfect combination of optimism and hope for the future, concern for the existing residents and their way of life, a reasonable perspective on the proper scale and type of proposed development, and concern for the existing environmental resources. It was a pleasure to read, and I hope the residents of the Soda Springs area see an economic revival. Attached is a copy of the Plan with a few editorial comments. I normally don't go to this level of detail, but I can tell the writer was striving for excellence, so I wanted to help achieve it. These are not official Caltrans comments; they are from me, a Nevada County resident. Or preferably, from an anonymous Nevada County resident.

Regards,

Patrick Dobbs

From: Patrick Dobbs
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 8:47 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: LD-IGR GTS# 03-NEV-2016-00003

Mr. [redacted]
Attached is a copy of the Area Plan. Let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks,

Patrick Dobbs
Senior Planner

Planning Department
County of Nevada
Community Development Agency

950 Maidu Ave, Suite 120
Nevada City, CA 95959

Office 530.265.4121 Fax 530.265.9861
http://www.mynevadacounty.com /nc/ceda/planning/Pages/Home.aspx
August 8, 2016

Patrick Dobbs
Senior Planner
County of Nevada
950 Maidu Ave
Nevada City, CA 95959

RE: AB 52 Consultation Request for Proposed Soda Springs Area Plan Project (GP14-003, GP16-005, Z16-005, ORD14-002, & EIS14-004) Project, Nevada County, CA

Dear Senior Planner Patrick Dobbs,

The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) received a letter from County of Nevada dated 7/22/2016, formally notifying us of a proposed project, the Soda Springs Area Plan Project (GP14-003, GP16-005, Z16-005, ORD14-002, & EIS14-004) Project in Nevada County, and an opportunity to consult under AB 52. This letter is notice that UAIC would like to initiate consultation under AB 52.

We would like to discuss the topics listed in Cal. Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2(a), including the type of environmental review to be conducted for the project; project alternatives; the project’s significant effects; and mitigation measures for any direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts the project may cause to tribal cultural resources. As consultation progresses, we may also wish to discuss design options that would avoid impacts to tribal cultural resources; the scope of any environmental document that is prepared for the project; pre-project surveys; and tribal cultural resource identification, significance evaluations and culturally-appropriate treatment.

This letter is also a formal request to allow UAIC tribal representatives to observe and participate in all cultural resource surveys, including initial pedestrian surveys for the project. Please send us all existing cultural resource assessments, as well as requests for, and the results of, any records searches that may have been conducted prior to our first consultation meeting. If tribal cultural resources are identified within the project area, it is UAIC’s policy that tribal monitors must be present for all ground disturbing activities. Finally, please be advised that UAIC’s strong preference is to preserve tribal cultural resources in place and avoid them whenever possible. Subsurface testing and data recovery must not occur without first consulting with UAIC and receiving UAIC’s written consent.

In the letter Senior Planner Patrick Dobbs is identified as the lead contact person for consultation on the proposed project. Marcos Guerrero, our Cultural Resources Manager, will be UAIC’s point of contact for this consultation. Please contact Mr. Guerrero by phone at (530) 883-2364 or email at mguerrero@auburnrancheria.com to begin the consultation process.
Thank you for involving UAIC in the planning process at an early stage. We ask that you make this letter a part of the project record and we look forward to working with you to ensure that tribal cultural resources are protected.

Sincerely,

Gene Whitehouse,
Chairman

CC: Mathew Moore, UAIC Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Marcos Guerrero, UAIC Cultural Resources Manager
August 23, 2016

Patrick Dobbs
Nevada County
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

Subject: Soda Springs Area Plan (File No. GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004)
SCH#: 2016072059

Dear Patrick Dobbs:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on August 22, 2016, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse
## Document Details Report

**State Clearinghouse Data Base**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCH#</th>
<th>2016072059</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>Soda Springs Area Plan (File No. GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 &amp; EIS14-004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead Agency</strong></td>
<td>Nevada County</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- **Type**: Neg  Negative Declaration
- **Description**: The project is a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to adopt an Area Plan for the Donner Summit Area. The Soda Springs Area Plan is a focused policy and design plan that includes land use designation and zoning changes, as well as specific development guidelines and standards, and would serve as the comprehensive land use and zoning plan for the Soda Springs Rural Center.

### Lead Agency Contact

- **Name**: Patrick Dobbs
- **Agency**: Nevada County
- **Phone**: (530) 265-1423
- **Fax**
- **Address**: 950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
- **City**: Nevada City
- **State**: CA
- **Zip**: 95659

### Project Location

- **County**: Nevada
- **City**: Truckee
- **Region**
- **Lat / Long**: 39° 19' 24" N / 120° 22' 45" W
- **Cross Streets**: Donner Pass Rd (1.4 mi from Soda Springs exit on I 80 E to Bunny Hill Rd)

### Parcel No.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Base</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17N</td>
<td>14E</td>
<td>21/22</td>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proximity to:

- **Highways**: 80
- **Airports**: UPRR
- **Railways**: UPRR
- **Waterways**: South Yuba River
- **Schools**: Urban single family, urban medium density, highway commercial, recreation

### Project Issues

- Aesthetic/Visual; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Economics/Jobs; Flood Plain/Flooding; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Sewer Capacity; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian; Growth Inducing; Landuse; Cumulative Effects

### Reviewing Agencies

- Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 3 N; Regional Water Quality Control Bd., Region 6 (So Lake Tahoe); Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission

### Dates

- **Date Received**: 07/22/2016
- **Start of Review**: 07/22/2016
- **End of Review**: 08/22/2016

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*Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.*
August 21, 2016

To: Members of the Nevada County Planning Commission, the Employees of Nevada County, and the Public-At-Large

Take a moment to imagine Donner Summit as a gorgeous face framed by flowing hair of dense alpine green of healthy trees, a beautiful nose of your favorite mountain, curving brows of ridge tops, earth-skin freckled with the amazing biodiversity of wildlife, blushed by gorgeous seasonal blooms framing wide spread smiling lips of a high dam front holding in the life-giving-waters of many creeks forming the headwaters of the rushing South Fork of the Yuba River (SFYR) flowing deep into the body and heart of the Soda Springs community.

However, the most beautiful and precious of all are the deep set and radiant crystal clear blue eyes of Lake Van Norden and long lashes of wetlands reflecting the soul of the Summit now crying for its impending lost beauty as the heavy lids close upon the end of a bright future of life. The soul begins to feel the menacing dryness, the elevated temperatures, the drop in humidity, the future scorching heat of wildfire flames, the lost joy of tickling Western toads by the millions, and the lack of summer waters to refresh the mind, the body, and the soul of every individual passing through. Beseeched hair of bark beetle brown and burned snags, over plucked ridge tops, chaffed skin of invasive plant growth with wrinkles of eroded streambeds, gaping mouth, and dimmed puddles of murky waters no longer able to cry and nourish the body of the community or the desperate needs of resident or migratory wildlife.

Why even bother to pretty the face of a nearly dead body? Would it not make more sense to scrape the flesh of the entire community body off the map and return it to the rock, rough pathways, rutted roadbeds, and wilds it was some 175 years ago?

Yet with the will and synergism of individuals, agencies, non-profits, and others, monies can be found like previously when some $15 million was raised not long ago, to revitalize, sustain, and bring back the life-giving-waters of Donner Summit’s precious Lake Van Norden, Dam AND meadow. Modern mechanisms of instrumentation can regulate and control the flows of SFYR to our other watershed reservoirs, while maintaining a substantial lake AND dry meadow acreage for a few months out of the year behind a renovated, jurisdictional dam meeting the needed safety standards. Let us join together to make this happen now, or forever carry the guilt of the scarring and death of Lake Van Norden whose shadow will only remain on many maps for future generations to wonder, “Where has this once gorgeous, huge lake and abundance of wildlife disappeared to and why?”.

Please accept my written comments and questions to review and consider deeply. Our Summit community of Soda Springs and surrounding townships, need to include Lake Van Norden, Dam and meadow as an essential and vital aspect of this area in planning. Please do not let it disappear or be ignored.

Respectively submitted,

Ursula Heffernon, Vice President of the Soda Springs Station Homeowners Association
uheffernon@me.com
530-304-6538
August 22, 2016

To: Nevada County Planning Commission  
   Mr. Brian Foss, Ex-Officio Secretary  
   Ms. Tine Mathiasen, Clerk to the Planning Commission  
   Mr. Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

Response to NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING, scheduled for Thursday, August 25, 2016, 1:30 pm at the Truckee Town Hall Council Chambers, Truckee, CA, the Nevada County Planning Commission pertaining to the consideration of the Rural Area Plan for the Donner Summit Area, File No’s: GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002 & EIS14-004

Upon reviewing the Draft Soda Springs Area Plan, Initial Study/Negative Declaration, etc. on the Nevada County website, I am expressing my following observations, comments and questions:


P. 5 Table 1: Land Use: Rural Center (RC), etc. paragraph: It expresses “Preserve mountain, forest, and meadow public views from Donner Pass Road”. It should include views of Lake Van Norden.

Additionally:
- There is no mention of forest fire suppression or defensible space requirements.
- Wildlife secure garbage facilities should be mandatory for residential, commercial, and all public places.
- There is no mentioning of how the intersection at Donner Pass Road and Soda Springs Road will be improved. Will there be any eminent domain action to the properties on any side of the intersection?
- With rezoning of two parcels on the north side of the intersection to “high density R3”, will trailers/trailer parks be allowed? Or would this type of housing be considered “commercial” particularly if it were used for affordable housing?

P. 7: Defining High Density on two lots being rezoned from R2 to R3 at an already unsafe and heavily trafficked area seems impractical with the additional traffic volume it would generate at the intersection. These lots would better serve the community as snow storage areas in winter, and additional township parking in the summer. Or be rezoned as R1. Remember too, how many times per day, long trains impact the traffic flow creating traffic jams at the intersection particularly in the winter months with high ski traffic volumes.

Additionally, it would better suit the community to establish affordable housing next to existing affordable housing, i.e., the Summit Lodge owned by Sugar Bowl or to have Sugar Bowl or other ski resort owners build employee housing on their own property rather than at an unsafe intersection and for practical community/public transportation options.
There is no mention of Unit#19 at 21501 Donner Pass Road owned by Norm Sayler under residential. His unit/parcel is mentioned under C2-RC (Commercial Rural Center Combined). Is his unit residential or commercial? Additionally, should it read “Donner Spitz, Inc.” instead of “Donner Spitz Inn Inc.” in second to last box on p. 22?

P. 24: Relationship to Other Projects
In regards to “There are no pending project applications submitted...” excludes the Truckee Donner Land Trust Lake Van Norden and Dam project that is underway which affects this community immensely. This should be included in these Rural Area Center improvements and documents.

P. 30 & 32: Environmental Factors Potentially Affected Chart:
#1: Aesthetics: Here it is mentioned the “sensitive aquatic and riparian habitats” of the headwaters [Lake Van Norden] of the S. Yuba River, which has been drained and has essentially wiped out the established habitats except for dry meadow and mud flat. A substantial dam and lake is needed to bring back and sustain the aquatic and riparian habitats not only for the sake of wildlife but also for the community scenic vistas and aesthetics. Potential Significant Impact-Not Less or No Impact.

#12: Noise: Substantial noise at railroad crossing should be included—it’s a significant impact if the county(s) do not work with the community to suppress train whistles between 10pm and 6 am. What are the decibels of the prolonged whistle blasts? Potential Significant Impact-Not Less or No Impact.

#15: Recreation: If the community loses a substantial Lake Van Norden (LVN) there will be no opportunity for any aquatic recreation, which will impact the communities economic base. Potential Significant Impact-Not Less or No Impact.

P. 32: 1.b. Why is the discussion referring to Interstate 80 when our community is on Highway 40 and not on I-80? Blight should also include buildings that are in disrepair, i.e., needing paint, new roofs, refurbished siding, etc. not just metal containers, equipment, etc. How are owners going to be motivated by the county to aesthetically improve their properties?
4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
Where do you think these species will go when Lake Van Norden is permanently drained? The established flora and fauna will not survive without ample water supply; succession will occur which means dry meadows being overgrown by trees in a couple of decades and the loss of the current high level of biodiversity. One of the most crucial species to be lost is the California Western Toad population along with the last of the largest high alpine wetlands that have been established over the last 100 years.
Note: Meadow does not equal wetlands. Lakes and wide flowing creeks and rivers create and sustain wetlands, not dry meadows with nearly no-flow creeks in it. The CEQA Environmental Checklist should be rewritten to reflect Potential Significant Impact-Not Less or No Impact with the loss of Lake Van Norden. When will its “project-level environmental review and permitting” going to take place?

Impact Discussion 4c: NCR2.2 and NCR 2.4-how will flood management of the S. Yuba River be secured without a dam? Protect BOTH native vegetation (how will invasive species be handled?) and native fauna?

f. There is a potentially significant impact on properties edging the S. Yuba River if the river channel is changed causing substantial erosion when there is no dam to control the outflow of water when significant monsoon rains and fast snow meltdown periods hit.

h. There is a potentially significant impact from wildland fires if there is no water in Lake Van Norden lakebed and the uncontrolled encroachment of dense forests continues, both in the lakebed, surrounding community properties and structures.

b. Without LVN the recharge will be far less, especially to wells downstream from central Soda Springs. Potential Significant Impact.

c) Altering the streambed with an increased rate of water flow without the dam regulating the flow will have a Potential Significant Impact.

f) Plus an increase in siltation of the river with uncontrolled water flows.

i) Increased flooding potential for people and structures with uncontrolled water flows.

g) The 100-year floodplain is determined with the dam in situ and valve regulating flow at crucial times.

Converting parcels #47-380-24 and #47-380-27 from R1 to R3 at the hazardous intersection of Donner Pass and Soda Springs Roads would potentially impact traffic flow substantially, particularly in the winter months with high volume ski traffic, roadside snow removal equipment, and icy roads. Access and egress to high-density housing would be hazardous. Additionally, these two parcels are located right next
to electrical power lines, which would add an additional hazard. R3 zoning should be located only in vicinity of existing high-density housing or on the properties of ski resorts.

P. 74 & 75: 15a) Various recreational opportunities are mentioned but not Lake Van Norden opportunities (scenic, swimming, boating, fishing, etc.) which implies that the lake and dam have already been eliminated.

P. 76: Old Hwy 40 extends to Cisco Grove not just to Big Bend. A simple street/road signage solution would clarify this - a triple sign on a pole installed where needed:

II
Donner Pass Road
 II
Old Hwy 40
 II
Hampshire Road
 II
 II
 II
 II
 pole

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ ground

Will Truckee still provide public transportation around the Summit in winter? Will there be an expansion of the schedule particularly with events to get more visitors up to the Summit?

P. 161 - 164

Goal NCR-1- 4:
What about retaining and refurbishing Lake Van Norden and Dam to meet these goals/policies? LVN is just as historic and part of the Summit as wagon train trails & passes, the China Wall, railroad tunnels, etc. are. It needs to be focused on, cared for, and retained by our community for the betterment of our rural community and our watershed. Otherwise, why have a community at the Summit at all?

Additionally, in these plans, there is no mention of introducing a modern communication system such as high speed internet or the possibility of underground utilities which would enhance the township and promote desirability for businesses and individuals to locate here.

Respectively submitted,

Ursula Heffernon
uheffernon@me.com
530-304-6538
MINUTES of the meeting of August 25, 2016, 1:30 PM, Truckee Town Hall Council Chambers, 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, California

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Aguilar and Commissioners Duncan, James and Jensen present.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Poulter absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director, Brian Foss; Principal Planner, Tyler Barrington; Senior Planner, Patrick Dobbs; Deputy County Counsel, Rhetta VanderPlaag; Administrative Assistant, Tine Mathiasen.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Soda Springs Area Plan
   GP14-003, GP14-004, Z16-005, ORD14-002, EIS14-004

STANDING ORDERS: Salute to the Flag - Roll Call - Corrections to Agenda.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public shall be allowed to address the Commission on items not appearing on the agenda which are of interest to the public and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Planning Commission, provided that no action shall be taken unless otherwise authorized by Subdivision (6) of Section 54954.2 of the Government Code. None.

COMMISSION BUSINESS: None.

CONSENT ITEMS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING:

GP14-003; GP16-004; Z16-005; ORD14-002; EIS14-004: Public hearing to consider an Area Plan for the Donner Summit area, including: 1) adoption of the Negative Declaration for the project (EIS14-004); 2) a General Plan amendment to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan (GP14-003); 3) a General Plan land use map amendment to change the land use designation of 51 parcels to remove development constraints that inhibit desired economic growth in order to create a stronger community for local residents (GP16-004); 4) the rezoning of parcels to align with the proposed General Plan land use designation amendments, including adding the “SP” Site Performance Combining District and “RC” Rural Center Combining District zoning overlays to specific parcels (Z16-005); and 5) amending Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to add a reference to the Soda Springs Area Plan design guidelines and standards (ORD14-002).
LOCATION: The proposed Soda Springs Area Plan covers those Donner Summit communities connected along Donner Pass Road (old Hwy. 40) between Cisco Grove and the Donner Memorial Bridge in eastern Nevada County. The Area Plan’s focus is the 141-acre community of Soda Springs which the County has designated as a Rural Center for the surrounding rural areas.

RECOMMENDED ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Negative Declaration.

PLANNER: Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner.

Planner Patrick Dobbs introduced himself and gave a background to the project. The Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to develop an Area Plan for the Soda Springs community, and the Plan has received strong support from the community. The vision of the Plan is to revitalize the community, create economic opportunity and protect rural values. Current issues the area faces are the restrictiveness of current zoning designations, the drive-by nature of the Summit and the presence of competing recreation areas to the east of Donner Summit. The multiple political jurisdictions, predictions of climate change, consecutive drought years and the economic recession also brought challenges to the community. The Area Plan discusses and promotes all of Donner Summit but the focus is on the Soda Springs Rural Center. The Soda Springs Area Plan was created through a process of community meetings, letters to property owners and presentations to community groups. During this process, the community’s top priorities were identified and are reflected in the Plan. Planner Dobbs then explained the framework and content of the document. There is no construction proposed in the Area Plan, as it is primarily a design and policy document. The primary method to realize the goals of the Plan is through land use and rezoning. Planner Dobbs then explained the proposed zoning changes and the meanings and applicability of the Site Performance and Rural Center Combining District overlays. The Area Plan is consistent with Eastern Nevada County’s design guidelines. Planner Dobbs then discussed the environmental review process and the public and agency comments that were received. He then asked the Commission to recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt EIS14-004 and approve GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005 and ORD14-002.

Chair Aguilar asked if there were any questions of staff.

Commissioner Duncan said that in the Staff Report, there was a lack of talk about recreation and equestrian activities specifically. She pointed to the historic and current equestrian recreation in the area and noted the economic benefits of welcoming equestrian uses. The Area Plan overwhelmingly addressed pedestrian and mountain biking recreation with little regard for equestrian. She suggested more focus be paid to equestrian uses in order to present a clear picture of the types of recreation that are welcomed and encouraged in the area.

Chair Aguilar said the Plan mentioned there will be a categorization of informal trails in the area and asked how that will be done.

Planner Dobbs said there is a lot of interest in trail planning by various interest groups and organizations, and informal trail planning will piggyback on those efforts.

Chair Aguilar asked who the lead would be in that effort.

Planner Dobbs said at this point, no one group is alone in the effort. There is follow up work to be done and he plans to participate in it.

Chair Aguilar asked how that happens.
Planner Dobbs said there will be meetings and workshops held with various groups and stakeholders.

Chair Aguilar said there should be language in the area plan to incorporate the equestrian aspect. Planner Dobbs said he understood.

Chair Aguilar asked Commissioner Jensen to comment.

Commissioner Jensen asked why two recent projects, an RV Park and a ski school, were approved but never built.

Director Foss said he was not sure why the RV Park was not built and that Sugar Bowl developed elsewhere within Placer County.

Commissioner Jensen said that when he read the report, he got the impression that things necessary to live in the area were being attacked, including snow removal equipment, wood splitting and storage containers. The North San Juan plan did not put a site specific plan on residential parcels but this Area Plan is putting it on every residential site in the area.

Planner Dobbs said there is a proliferation of snow equipment storage and the Plan strives to strike a balance so the equipment is not blight or an eyesore. Residential wood splitting for private use is no problem; it is commercial activity on residential lots that can be a nuisance. Shipping containers need to meet setback and screening requirements.

Commissioner Jensen said homeowners are not the ones defacing shipping containers.

Planner Dobbs said if the containers are further back from roadways and are screened, vandalism would be less of a temptation. Like other jurisdictions, Nevada County hopes to put limitations on them.

Director Foss said the limitations were created as a result of public comments. Staff tried to strike a balance between the residents who utilized snow removal equipment, wood cutting and shipping containers, and residents who didn’t want to view them.

Chair Aguilar spoke to the need for balance. He then asked whether the residential parcels shown in Attachment 6 were built out.

Planner Dobbs said some of them are, depending on the location and their buffer from the freeway.

Chair Aguilar asked if they are actually going to be developed because the freeway is so close.

Planner Dobbs discussed one particular parcel that is unlikely to be developed as a residence and used it as an example of the need to rezone. He spoke about checkerboard zoning and the character of the area.
Chair Aguilar asked if it would make more sense to keep some parcels as Commercial if they were not going to be developed as Residential.

Planner Dobbs said he may have misunderstood and thought the Chair was talking about residences along Interstate 80.

Chair Aguilar said he was.

Planner Dobbs said those lots are not currently Commercial.

Chair Aguilar said there are residences.

Planner Dobbs said there are some, and to introduce commercial zoning within the residential neighborhood would be met with some resistance from the community.

Chair Aguilar opened the public hearing at 2:07 p.m.

Sara Schrichte (21572 Donner Pass Road) introduced herself as a full-time resident of Soda Springs. She spoke to the poor representation of certain areas and communities in the Area Plan. She commented on employee housing being called a hotel and condos being called a lodge. She also addressed the proliferation of snow removal and woodcutting equipment and storage containers, and spoke about sewer costs. Ms. Schrichte asked the Commissioner to direct staff to consider other economic drivers of the community and whether the Plan addresses the needs of residents, including sewer and water costs, housing, schools and roads. She asked how this Plan does more than common sense and enforcing existing codes and laws would.

Norm Sayler introduced himself as a resident of Soda Springs Norden. He spoke about his woodyard, snowplow business and diesel tank. Mr. Sayler then addressed Lake Van Norden, the South Fork of the Yuba River and the Donner Truckee Land Trust. He attested to the services he provides for the community.

Charles Goldman introduced himself as a professor of limnology. He spoke of his accomplishments in the Tahoe area. He then spoke extensively about Lake Van Norden and said the lake needs to be further addressed in the Area Plan as it is an attractant and an important feature in the area.

Tom Appelbaum (21359 Donner Pass Road) introduced himself as president of the Donner Summit Area Association. He commented on the horse issues and said there should be more language regarding equestrian activities. The Area Association is supportive of the area plan in its contribution to economic development. As a resident, Mr. Appelbaum discussed higher density residential zoning asked that certain parcels be made R1 for better continuity. He then addressed the Lake Van Norden controversy.

Chair Aguilar asked members of the public to address their comments to the Commission instead of individuals in the audience.

Counsel VanderPloeg noted that the Van Norden issue is not on the day’s agenda. She asked the public to be respectful of what the Planning Commission has in front of them today.
Brenden Compton introduced himself as a member of the Mount Diablo Ski Club. He addressed
the proposed high density residential zoning and asked to see a particular lot next to the ski club
be zoned R1. He then noted the sewer costs.

Commissioner Jensen asked if there are 38 members on one R1 zoned property.

Mr. Compton said it is a ski club.

Commissioner Jensen asked how many other clubs there are in the area.

Mr. Compton listed several clubs and noted the number of people who use the site at any one
time for a weekend getaway.

Commissioner Jensen asked if it is used year round.

Ursula Heffernon (21501 Donner Pass Road) introduced herself as Vice President of the Soda
Springs Station. She discussed the proposed high density lots and commented on the access and
traffic issues they might create. She suggested the county purchase the lots for snow storage, as
snow storage is not well addressed in the Area Plan. She also called for a particular intersection
as well as employee housing be better addressed. She the discussed sewer rates and property
values. Ms. Heffernon noted that the Staff Report did not discuss underground utilities or modern
communications such as high speed internet. She also asked that the Staff Report address the
need for public restrooms. She then discussed Lake Van Norden and its dam.

Chair Aguilar closed the public hearing at 2:42 p.m.

Commissioner Duncan said economic development is intertwined with recreational
opportunities. She discussed the importance of having a water feature nearby and the necessity of
interested citizens and a united vision. She noted that the Commission’s task is to approve the
environmental review. Zoning is critical, plans are a guideline, and both can be changed.

Commissioner James asked why Lake Van Norden and the dam will be addressed separately.

Director Foss said any activity undertaken by the Land Trust requires permits and environmental
review. Currently, the county is reviewing Use Permit and Management Plan applications for the
Van Norden project, which may come before the Commission. In contrast, the Area Plan is a
visioning policy document driven by new development that does not encompass particular
projects or improvements. The Area Plan is a high level document whereas individual projects
will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Commissioner James said the Area Plan is trying to promote economic development, which will
be impacted through tourism and development by the presence of a lake or meadow.

Director Foss said water rights, dam safety and other issues come into play in determining what
will happen to the dam, meadow and lake. The Area Plan will be put in place to encourage
economic development regardless of the status of the lake and meadow. The Area Plan focuses
on the Rural Center and, while the meadow and lake will have effects on future development and
the economy, the Area Plan is a policy level document that takes a neutral position on the issue.
Commissioner James said the Plan needs to recognize the Van Norden issue in terms of what’s there, what could happen, who controls it, what the County can and can’t do and the effect on future development.

Director Foss said he agrees. The Plan touches on the issue in the Natural and Cultural Resources section.

Planner Barrington noted that the Plan mentions Van Norden on page 162 of the Staff Report.

Director Foss said that staff can add language that further addresses the issue.

Commissioner James asked who the ultimate authority in on what will happen to the lake or meadow.

Director Foss listed the various agencies and groups involved and said it is still being worked out as it is a layered regulatory issue.

Commissioner Jensen asked what the driving force was for including residential areas in the Rural Center.

Director Foss said it is the existing Rural Center established by a 1995 General Plan.

Commissioner Jensen pointed out that a ski area on the Plan is not shown as Commercial.

Planner Dobbs said that area is zoned for recreation.

Commissioner Jensen said he is having a hard time adding the SP overlay to the residential area as it will be a hardship on the Soda Springs community. He gave the example of a homeowner having to bring their outside area up to the new rules even if they are only trying to improve their kitchen.

Planner Foss said that is not the intent. The burden is not on redeveloping residential; it is mostly on commercial development.

Planner Dobbs said there are some development standards included to preserve and protect community character, not to put additional regulation on improvement.

Chair Aguilar said maybe the Plan needs to say that more clearly. He asked if Commissioner Jensen had anything else.

Commissioner Jensen said no.

Chair Aguilar asked how staff decided to rezone a parcel as R2 and whether staff had discussed the rezone with the owners of the land. He also asked whether the owners of the land to be designated as R3 were in favor of this change.

Planner Dobbs noted that first of the parcels Chair Aguilar referred to is currently zoned R2 and this zoning would be left unchanged. Staff also reached out to the owners of the R3 property. While R3 zoning would allow for the building of 16 homes per acre, the property may not be
able accommodate that many, as discussed in public comment. It may work best for condominium, rather than large scale, development. By allowing for increased capacity and density, the high costs of sewer and water service can be spread across more residences.

Chair Aguilar asked if the owners of the land that would be rezoned as R3 were excited about the change.

Planner Dobbs said they are currently R2. Because they are vacant and larger lots, they were identified as potential higher density sites. They would be the only parcels zoned as such in the eastern part of the county.

Chair Aguilar asked about the traffic hazard concern.

Planner Dobbs said traffic is a project level impact that would be analyzed at the time development is proposed. There are condominiums located across the street so higher density projects may fit with the scale of development in that area.

Chair Aguilar mentioned the public comments on ski resort employee housing and high speed internet in the Plan.

Commissioner Jensen spoke to the importance of public bathrooms.

Chair Aguilar asked if there is a public area where restrooms can go in the future.

Planner Dobbs said the issue has been discussed at community meetings. There is not a good system in place and the Plan calls for additional facilities. Inadequate public restrooms are an existing identified problem. Planner Dobbs discussed the General Store space and a road improvement project, and their potentials for addressing the issue. He noted that staff can further address public restrooms in the Plan if the Commission so desires.

Chair Aguilar said he would like to see the Plan expand on the issue. Public facilities and signage would boost the economy. He also asked how the property for the facilities would be acquired.

Planner Dobbs said there have been property owners who have expressed interest in accommodating public restrooms. There is also the question of who is going to maintain the facilities. He agreed with Chair Aguilar that something as simple as a bathroom can bring people off the highway, which is what the Plan is trying to accomplish.

Commissioner Duncan said this could be part of the economic development strategy as an attractant to the area and a desired stop along the highway. Public restrooms are critical. The County should take a leadership role and make something happen. There are funding opportunities through economic development grants.

Chair Aguilar agreed.

Planner Dobbs read a section of the Plan that addresses public restrooms.

Commissioner Duncan asked the Plan to address the strategies to develop the restrooms.
Planner Dobbs said it will take a public-private partnership. It will likely be on private land.

Chair Aguilar asked about snow removal and whether snow storage is addressed during project review.

Director Foss said there has been consideration of the issue on a case-by-case basis and explained factors that are used to determine how much space is needed.

Planner Dobbs referenced Attachment A and read a section of the Plan that addresses snow storage for commercial sites. He noted that snow storage is not called as a requirement for single family residences.

Chair Aguilar noted the need for the further language addressing the following issues: equestrian uses, not over-restricting residential remodels, public restrooms and Van Norden Lake. He asked if the R2 property the public commented could be switched to R1.

Planner Dobbs said the focus of the Plan is to keep continuity in zoning. The Mount Diablo Ski Club property is functioning as a multi-family facility and property to the other side of the parcel is zoned for multi-family use as well. To rezone one parcel as R1 would go against Plan principles and create a leap frog zoning pattern.

Commissioner Duncan asked if the discussed property is currently zoned R2.

Planner Barrington said correct.

Chair Aguilar said sometimes mixing up the zoning is not a bad thing but he thinks the Commission should leave it as it is.

Commissioner Jensen asked whether the Commission was making a motion.

Director Foss clarified that the residential properties would only receive the SP overlay, which would indicate that there is an Area Plan in play. Commercial areas would get the RC overlay, which would tie them to development standards. The RC standards would not apply to the residential properties so the residential properties would not be subject to Commercial standards. Donner Pass Road commercial lots would have both the RC and SP overlays, indicating that there is an Area Plan and that there are special standards applied to the properties. Residential properties would only have the SP overlay, indicating that there is an Area Plan, and would not be subject to the RC standards.

Commissioner Jensen said if he were living in an R1 area, he wouldn’t want the SP overlay as it is another layer of rules and regulations to live under.

Director Foss spoke about other Area Plans in Nevada County and said he understands the concerns.

Chair Aguilar asked if Commissioner Jensen is satisfied.

Commissioner Jensen said if the SP overlay stays on R1 areas, he will vote no.
Chair Aguilar asked staff if there is a way to remove the SP overlay.

Planner Dobbs asked for time.

Commissioner Jensen said the SP overlay should apply to Donner Pass Road but not to residences three streets back.

Chair Aguilar granted a break at 3:14 p.m. and reconvened the hearing at 3:22 p.m.

Director Foss said the SP overlay addresses three issues in residential zones: metal shipping containers, the requirement for trash and garbage to be secure from wildlife, and the elimination of snow removal equipment storage as the primary use of residential sites. The intent is to protect residential neighborhoods from the proliferation of commercial activities. The removal of the SP overlay would result in there being no protections for these residential lots. The restrictions were put together with input from residents and tie back to public comments regarding the desire for the Area Plan to address residents and their needs, and not just commercial businesses. It is within the Commission’s purview to remove the overlay, but there was an expectation that residential properties would have attention paid to them as well.

Commissioner Jensen clarified that an R1 parcel could still have tractor for snow removal.

Director Foss said correct.

Commissioner Jensen said as long as it is not a commercial operation.

Director Foss said as long as the storage is not the primary use of the site. It must be accessory to the principal residential use of the property and not related to an offsite business or activity.

Commissioner Jensen said that would be the same for woodcutting.

Director Foss said correct.

A member of the public asked to comment.

Chair Aguilar said the public hearing was closed but there will be an opportunity at the Board of Supervisors hearing to comment. He then asked if Commissioner Jensen wanted to remove the SP or not.

Commissioner Jensen answered that if the SP does not restrict R1 lots from doing their own wood splitting and keeping their own snow removal equipment, he is not opposed to it. Bear boxes are good as well.

Chair Aguilar asked staff if the bear boxes need to be removed with the addition of the SP overlay.

Director Foss said if the SP overlay is removed, they would no longer be a requirement.

Chair Aguilar clarified that if the SP stays, the bear boxes stay.
Director Foss said correct.

Chair Aguilar noted that the Plan concerns Commissioner Jensen’s district.

Commissioner Jensen asked about the language addressing public bathrooms.

Director Foss said staff’s direction was to augment the language addressing restrooms. The new language, along with language about the other issues decided upon earlier, would be included in the revised version of the Plan that would go to the Board.

Commissioner Jensen sought clarification on how to word the amended recommendations as well as on the number of motions.

Commissioner Duncan said there are two motions.

Planner Dobbs said there are a total of five actions.

**Motion by Commissioner Jensen** to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the attached Resolution for the Negative Declaration for GP14-003, GP16-004, Z16-005 and ORD14-002 (EIS14-004), pursuant to Section 15074 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines based on findings A-D contained within the Draft Resolution; **second by Commissioner James. Motion carried on a voice vote 4/0.**

Director Foss gave direction on how the word the following motion.

**Motion by Commissioner Jensen** to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the General Plan text amendments to adopt the Soda Springs Area Plan as amended at this meeting; **second by Commissioner James. Motion carried on a voice vote 4/0.**

**Motion by Commissioner Jensen** recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the General Plan Land Use Map amendments to amend the land use map by changing the designation of 51 parcels within the Soda Springs Rural Center; **second by Commissioner James. Motion carried on a voice vote 4/0.**

**Motion by Commissioner Jensen** recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments to Zoning District Maps (ZDM) # 114 and #119 to coincide the rezoning of 51 parcels to be consistent with the amended General Plan land use map, and to add the “RC” Rural Center Combining District to 77 parcels, and the “SP” Site Performance Combining District to 193 parcels; **second by Commissioner James. Motion carried on a voice vote 4/0.**

**Motion by Commissioner Jensen** recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the amendments to Sec. L-II 4.2.3 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance to reference the applicability of the Soda Springs Area Plan Flexible Design and Development Standards; **second by Commissioner James. Motion carried on a voice vote 4/0.**

Chair Aguilar noted that there is no ten day appeal period as it is a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Director Foss noted that it will come before the Board on October 25th.
Discussion ensued regarding upcoming Commission meetings.

Motion by Commissioner Duncan; second by Commissioners Jensen and James to adjourn. Motion carried on voice vote 4/0.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m. to the next meeting tentatively scheduled for September 22, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City.

Passed and accepted this day of , 2016.

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Brian Foss, Ex-Officio Secretary