

# General Plan Update Process

## History of the Yuba County General Plan

In 1927, the California Legislature authorized cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plans. However, it wasn't until 1955 that the Legislature required general plans to include mandated elements. The first two required elements were land use and circulation. Yuba County, through an urban planning grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), prepared its first General Plan which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 21, 1969 (Exhibit Process-1).

The 1969 General Plan for Yuba County was based upon the following broad and fundamental objectives:

- To develop the most suitable uses for the County's natural resources so that their full potential is realized.
- To arrange the urban and agricultural uses in such a way as to maximize productive efficiencies and promote environmental quality.
- To establish the major growth areas expected to occur within the planning period.
- To promote the economic advancement of the County.

As evidenced by the County's 2009 Strategic Plan and primary objectives of the 2030 General Plan, protection of our agricultural/natural resource lands and related industries as well as economic independence continue to be high priorities.

Over the years the State Legislature has added the following mandated elements, which Yuba County added to its General Plan:

- 1967 Housing Element (effective 1969)
- 1970 Conservation & Open Space Elements (effective 1973)
- 1971 Safety/Seismic Safety & Noise

While the California Government Code establishes required elements and information to be contained within a General Plan, with the exception of the Housing Element it does not mandate how often a General Plan should be updated. The County's Housing Element (originally adopted in 1972) has been updated the most frequently with updates adopted in 1980, 1985, 1991, 2004, and 2009. With the exception of the Noise and Safety Elements which were adopted in 1980, other sections of the General Plan have periodically been updated to address changes in the County's character and vision for the future. The last major General Plan update was the 1996 General Plan which included updates to the Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, and Conservation Elements.

This General Plan Update (2030 General Plan) will be the first time that the County has done a comprehensive update of all seven mandated elements. By updating all seven elements the County will not only be able to ensure consistency between elements, but also ensure that each element reflects the current character and future vision of the County through the year 2030. Updating all seven elements also provides the County the ability to utilize a more holistic approach in achieving the County's overall vision, in contrast to fulfilling the requirements of the seven individual mandated elements. While the 2030 General Plan addresses all of the mandatory components and elements of the Government Code, this General Plan has been organized into three broad elements which address the built environment (Community Development Element), Natural Resources, and Public Health & Safety.



# YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

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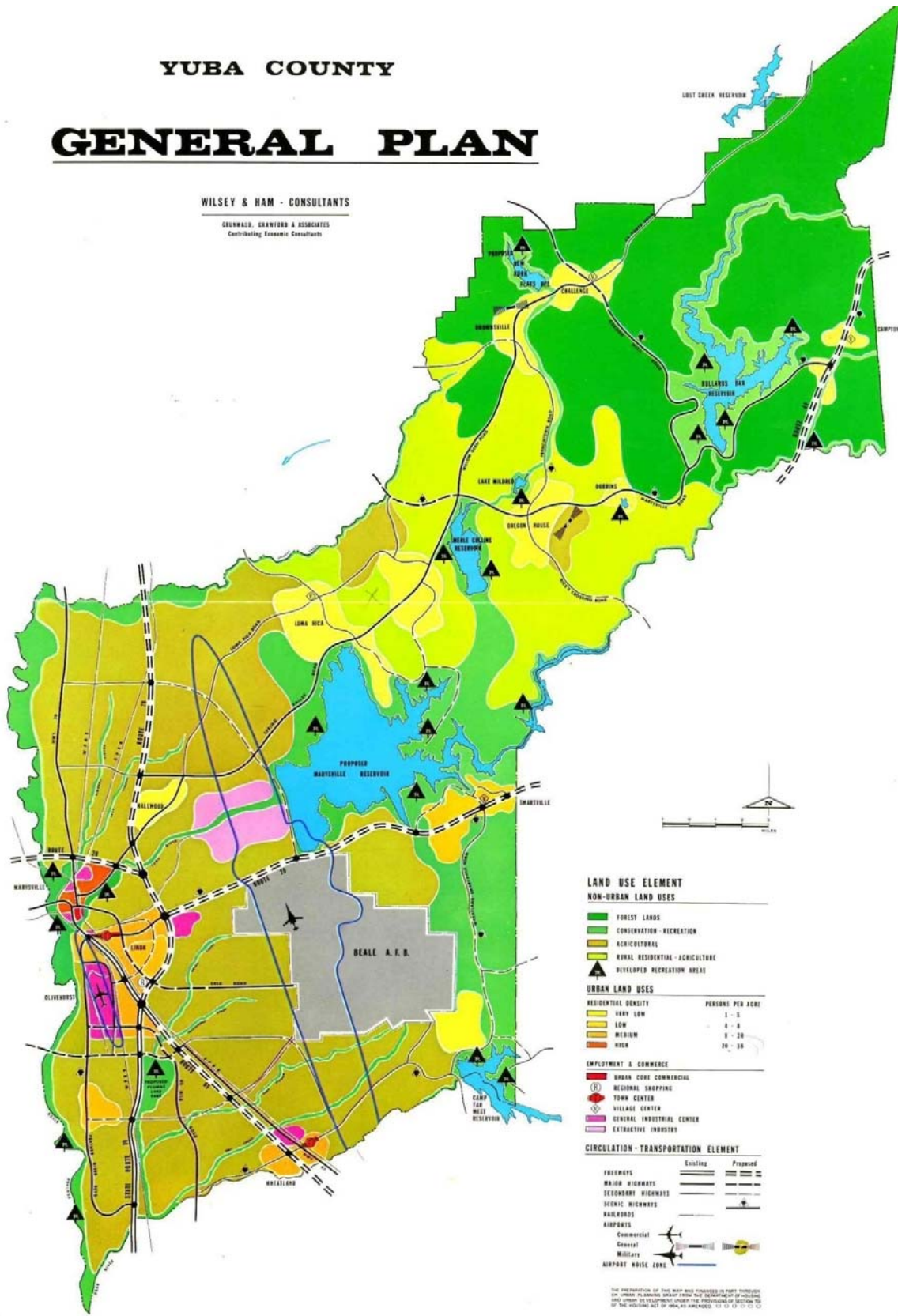


Exhibit Process-1. 1969 Yuba County General Plan Land Use Diagram



## 2030 General Plan Update

The Yuba County Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare an update to the General Plan to achieve what the County desires for the next 20 years and beyond. County staff circulated a request for proposals to assist with the General Plan Update in November of 2006. In this request for proposals, the County included a list of issues that would be important for the General Plan Update process. These areas of focus, which are highlighted below, are helpful for understanding the 2030 General Plan.

### Process

- The County will insist upon a General Plan Update process that is efficient, cost effective, and open.
- The General Plan Update must address all mandatory elements of a General Plan. The elements of greatest concern and impact will be the Land Use and Circulation elements.
- The process must consider and address the interests of a number of outside agencies such as Beale Air Force Base, Caltrans, the cities, utility districts, etc.
- The process must include an "Issues and Options" step, whereby the Board of Supervisors provides direction and guidance to the continuing effort to shape the General Plan Update and avoid unnecessary time and energy being wasted on alternatives for which there is not support.
- The Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission must be kept informed of the progress of the Plan and consulted periodically to confirm that the approach is on track and consistent with their thoughts and vision.
- A public outreach component must provide information and opportunities so that citizens know when and how to voice their concerns and present their ideas for consideration.

### Environmental Impact Report

- The General Plan EIR must assess potential impacts from development occurring consistent with the General Plan and must utilize the General Plan policies as mitigation measures for such impacts.
- The EIR must undergo a thorough public review process and reflect changes resulting from the process.
- The EIR must be prepared in such a way as to be useful, both practically and legally, as the environmental document for a number of future actions, including but not limited to: adoption of implementing ordinances, approval of infrastructure plans, and changes in land use consistent with the plan.
- The EIR should serve as the "program" EIR, upon which new specific plans or similar projects are based.

### The General Plan Document

#### Land Use

- The General Plan Update must emphasize the need for creating a jobs/housing balance in the County. Recent residential growth has not been offset with an adequate amount of job growth.
- Similarly, the recent residential growth has not brought the economic growth in commercial and industrial land uses that will be necessary for the long-term economic health of the County.



## YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

- A number of specific Plans have been approved by the County and must be incorporated into the updated General Plan. Still other large specific plans are being considered by the County and must be considered concurrently with the update of the General Plan. During the General Plan Update process, large development proposals are likely to be brought forward and will also need to be considered.
- The Highway 65 corridor, between Linda and Wheatland, has been identified as a key area of consideration.
- The Spheres of Influence of Wheatland and Marysville are currently much larger than the existing city limits. The cities may have an interest in expanding and accommodating development within those spheres or even into areas that could be added to their spheres in the future. Or, the unincorporated communities of Olivehurst, Linda or Plumas Lake, may desire to incorporate.
- Revitalization, redevelopment, and community improvements in the Linda and Olivehurst areas will need attention in the General Plan Update.
- Possible expansion of the Plumas Lake Specific Plan area will be an issue for the Update to address.
- The foothill communities of Loma Rica, Browns Valley, Dobbins, Oregon House, and others, have developed with low density, rural residential uses due to the terrain, lack of services, and desire of the residents. It is not anticipated that significant changes in this pattern of development will occur and any growth would take place by way of infill at comparable densities.
- The County contains large areas of commercial agricultural uses that are expected to be viable over the long term. The protection of these uses in suitable areas will be addressed as part of the General Plan Update.
- The land use discussion in the General Plan Update must also address the public facilities and infrastructure necessary to support not only the new residential growth proposed but the commercial, industrial and institutional land uses necessary over the long-term to balance the County's economy and allow specific key areas (such as the Hwy. 65 corridor) to develop appropriately and in a timely fashion.

### **Circulation**

- The circulation element will need to address new routes that have been planned for sometime but not yet constructed. These will include the Highway 65 bypass of Wheatland ( included in the new Wheatland General Plan), the Goldfields Parkway (a connection between Highway 65 south of Olivehurst and Highway 20 east of Marysville), and a connector between Highway 65 and Highway 70 through the Plumas Lake area.
- The Plan must also address the need for major new arterials to serve new growth areas.
- A determination of the current and future projected traffic conditions will be necessary.

### **Housing**

- The County's Affordable Housing Task Force is currently working on implementation of the Housing Element, including identification of new sites for high-density housing, funding mechanisms for new or expanded programs, and ordinance changes to address affordable housing issues.
- The continuation of existing programs is expected and the main focus of the new Housing Element will be on addressing the new regional housing allocation numbers.



## Conservation and Open Space

- The County is involved in a joint effort with Sutter County and the State Department of Fish and Game in the preparation of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan that will address species habitat in the valley portion of the County. Much of the information being developed for this effort will be applicable to the General Plan Update and EIR.
- The County contains significant State Wildlife areas such as Spenceville and Daugherty, which will provide permanently protected habitat in the foothill areas.
- River corridors, floodplains, and agricultural lands will provide open space lands in the future as they have in the past.

## Safety

- Flooding and fire are the most significant natural hazards affecting Yuba County residents. Significant progress in improving flood protection provided by the extensive levee system in the County has been made and must be recognized in the General Plan Update.
- The County's Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plan for the County will be directly applicable to the new Safety Element of the General Plan.
- Overflight zones for the County's airports, including Beale Air Force Base, have been identified and will be addressed in the General Plan Update. In the case of Beale Air Force Base, the Joint Land Use Study will provide important new data for the Safety Element.

## Noise

- New noise contours for Beale Air Force Base will be available for the General Plan Update.
- New data will be necessary for other noise generators including railroads, highways, and airports.

Between 2007 and 2010, the Board of Supervisors and staff have been engaged in the development of a comprehensive update to all the Plan's elements (a comprehensive update of all elements has never occurred since the County's first General Plan was adopted in the 1960's). Adoption of a comprehensive update will provide for consistency and cohesiveness of all the elements and a "road-map" towards achieving the County's vision for our future.

Through the update process an abundance of information was gathered from both technical studies as well as the input mentioned previously. The County prepared a series of General Plan Update Background Reports (under separate cover) to summarize existing conditions and trends.

## Alternatives

A fundamental part of the process of preparing or updating a general plan is the selection of a possible course of action for future growth, development, conservation, and reinvestment in a community. According to California general plan guidelines, alternative concepts for the future of the community should be developed and examined before writing the general plan. This process enables the community to weigh the pros and cons of a variety of possible directions for the future.

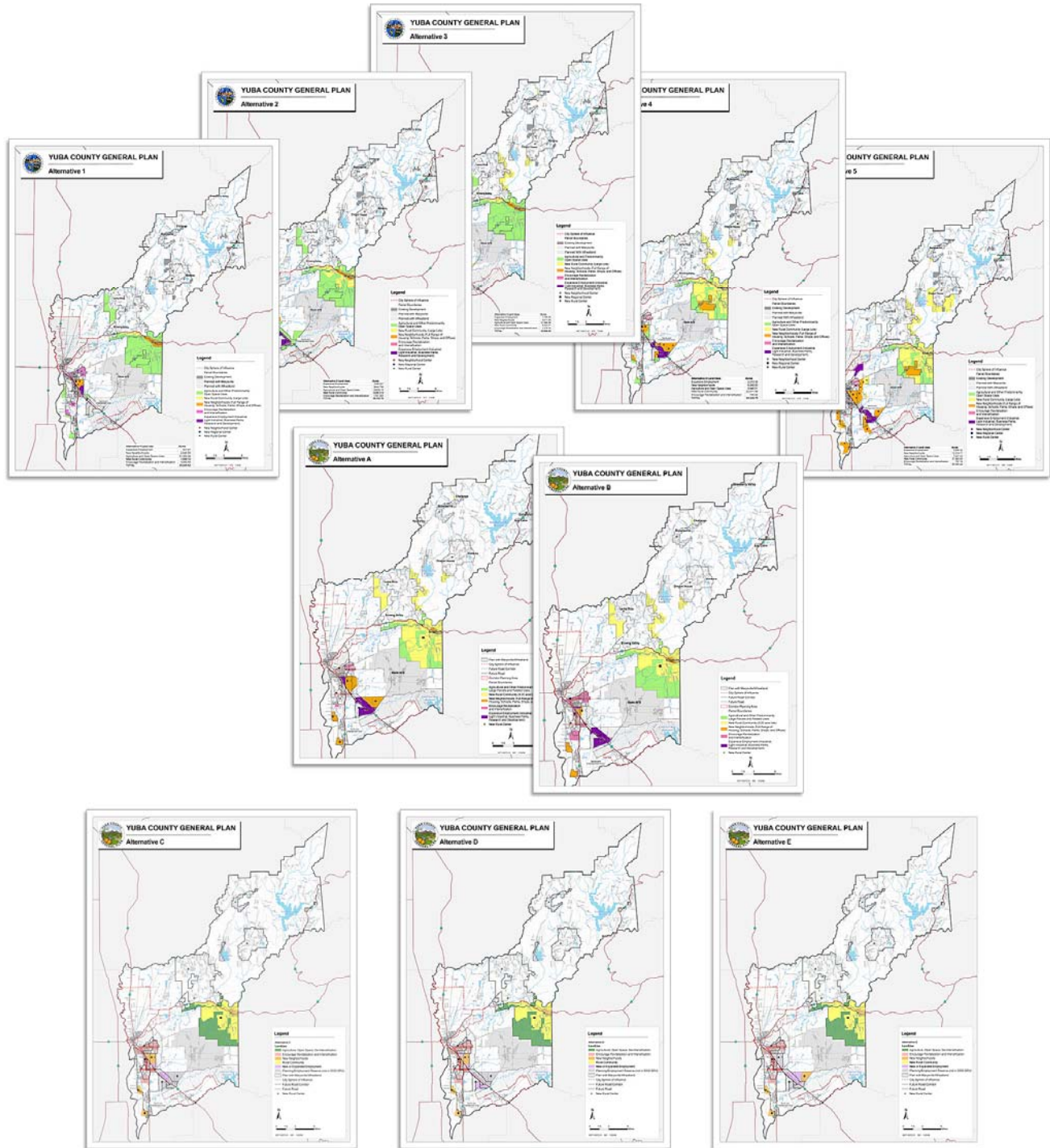
The County considered several diverse land use and circulation alternatives. These alternatives represented distinct approaches to achieving long-range planning and environmental goals, as defined through decision maker and public input.





### Preferred Alternative

A Preferred Alternative was approved by the Board of Supervisors in August and October of 2009. The Preferred Alternative included narrative guidance in a document entitled *Yuba County General Plan Update Vision, Goals & Strategies* and a diagram called *Sustainable Yuba County: Economy, People & Natural Resources* (Exhibit Process-2). Please refer to the "Vision for the 2030 General Plan" chapter for more details.



10 land use and circulation alternatives were analyzed and discussed prior to selecting the Preferred Alternative.

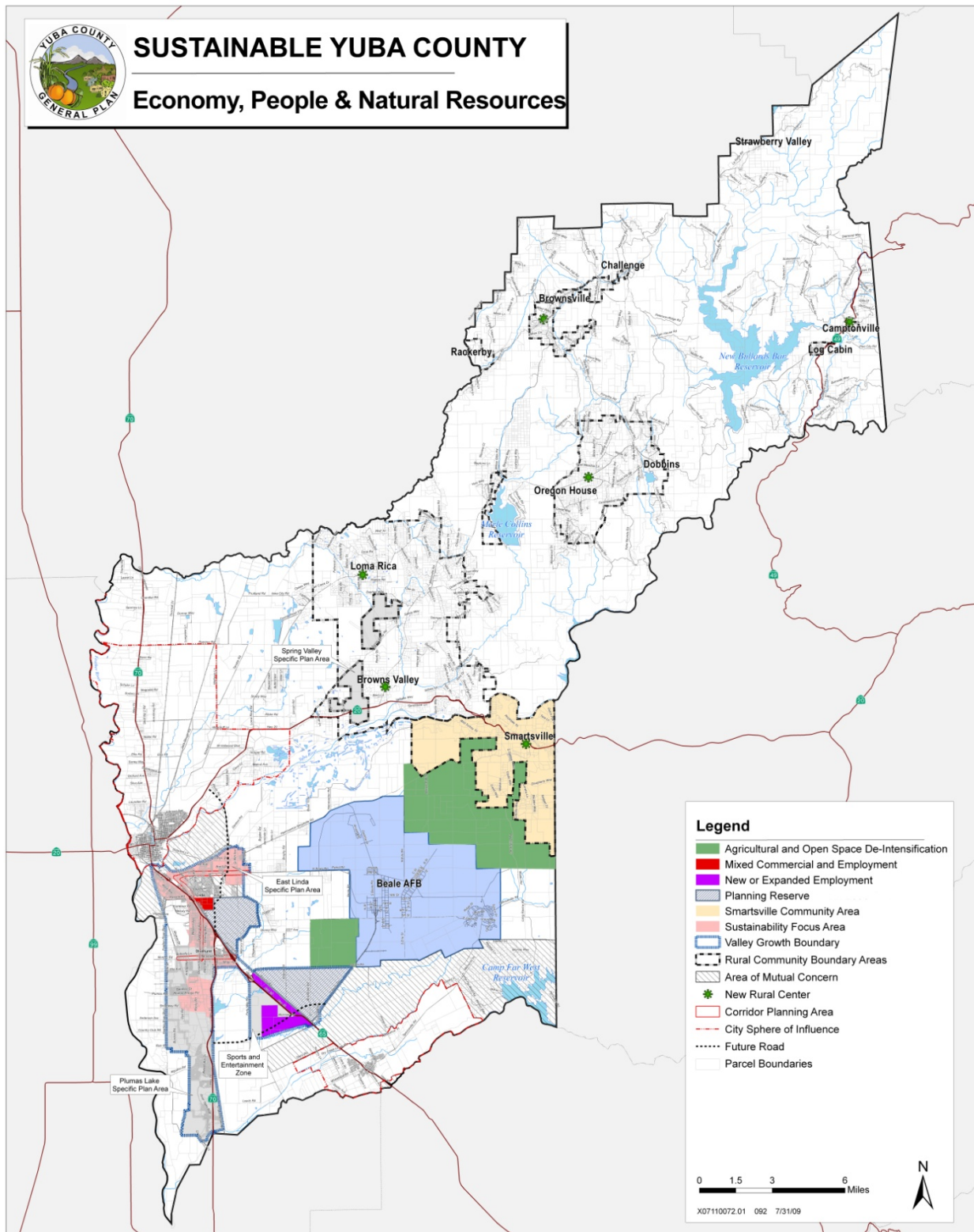


Exhibit Process-2. Sustainable Yuba County, the General Plan Preferred Alternative



# YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

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