DRAFT

Initial Study/Negative Declaration

Lassen County General Plan Safety Element Update

NOVEMBER 2022

Prepared for:

LASSEN COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES
707 Nevada Street, Suite 5
Susanville, California 96130
Contact: Gaylon Norwood

Prepared by:

DUDEK

853 Lincoln Way, Suite 208
Auburn, California 95603
Contact: Katherine Waugh

Printed on 30% post-consumer recycled material.

Table of Contents

SECTION **PAGE**

Acronyms and Abbreviations iii

1 Introduction 1
- 1.1 Project Overview 1
- 1.2 California Environmental Quality Act Compliance 1
- 1.3 Initial Study Checklist Overview 1

2 Project Description 3
- 2.1 Project Location 3
- 2.2 Environmental Setting 3
- 2.3 Safety Element Update 5

3 Initial Study Checklist 9
- 3.1 Aesthetics 13
- 3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources 14
- 3.3 Air Quality 15
- 3.4 Biological Resources 17
- 3.5 Cultural Resources 18
- 3.6 Energy 20
- 3.7 Geology and Soils 21
- 3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions 23
- 3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials 25
- 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality 27
- 3.11 Land Use and Planning 29
- 3.12 Mineral Resources 30
- 3.13 Noise 31
- 3.14 Population and Housing 32
- 3.15 Public Services 33
- 3.16 Recreation 34
- 3.17 Transportation 35
- 3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources 36
- 3.19 Utilities and Service Systems 37
- 3.20 Wildfire 38
- 3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance 40

4 References and Preparers 41
- 4.1 References Cited 41
- 4.2 List of Preparers 42

FIGURES

1 Project Location 43
2 Earthquake Hazards in Lassen County 45
3 Flood Zones in Lassen County 47
4 Wildfire Hazard Severity Zones in Lassen County 49
5 Historic Wildfires in Lassen County 51
6 Fire Protection Responsibility 53

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
AB	Assembly Bill
APCD	Air Pollution Control District
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
County	County of Lassen
GHG	greenhouse gas
HMP	hazard mitigation plan
LMUD	Lassen Municipal Utility District
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
PSREA	Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative
SB	Senate Bill
SRA	State Responsibility Area
VHWFSZ	Very High Wildfire Hazard Severity Zone

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The proposed project is a comprehensive update to the Safety Element of the Lassen County General Plan. The Lassen County General Plan, which serves as a "blueprint" for development within Lassen County, was first adopted in 1968 and consists of the following elements: (1) Land Use, (2) Natural Resources, (3) Agriculture, (4) Wildlife, (5) Open Space, (6) Circulation, (7) Safety and Seismic Safety, (8) Noise, (9) Housing, and (10) Energy (County of Lassen 1999). In June 2020, the Safety Element was amended to incorporate the then-current Hazard Mitigation Plan. The proposed project would include a full update to the current General Plan Safety Element in accordance with Section 65302 of the California Government Code to reflect current conditions and County of Lassen (County) policies and to incorporate the current Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

1.2 California Environmental Quality Act Compliance

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a statewide environmental law described in California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000–21177, applies to most public agency decisions to carry out, authorize, or approve actions that have the potential to adversely affect the environment. The overarching goal of CEQA is to protect the physical environment. To achieve that goal, CEQA requires that public agencies identify the environmental consequences of their discretionary actions and consider alternatives and mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce significant adverse impacts when avoidance or reduction is feasible. It also gives other public agencies and the public an opportunity to comment on the information. If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, reduced, or mitigated to below a level of significance, the public agency is required to prepare an environmental impact report and balance the project's environmental concerns with other goals and benefits in a statement of overriding considerations.

The County's Department of Planning and Building Services directed and supervised the preparation of this Initial Study (IS)/Negative Declaration (ND). Although prepared with assistance from the consulting firm Dudek, the content contained within, and the conclusions drawn by this IS/ND reflect the independent judgment of the County.

1.3 Initial Study Checklist Overview

Dudek, under the County's guidance, prepared the Safety Element update's Environmental Checklist (i.e., IS) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063–15065. The CEQA Guidelines include a suggested checklist to indicate whether a project would have an adverse impact on the environment. The checklist is found in Section 3 of this document. Following the Environmental Checklist, Sections 3.1 through 3.21 include an explanation and discussion of each significance determination made in the checklist for the Safety Element update.

For this IS/ND, the following four possible responses to each individual environmental issue area are included in the checklist:

1. Potentially Significant Impact
2. Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated
3. Less-than-Significant Impact
4. No Impact

The checklist and accompanying explanation of checklist responses provide the information and analysis necessary to assess relative environmental impacts of the Safety Element update. In doing so, the County will determine the extent of additional environmental review, if any, for the Safety Element update.

2 Project Description

The project proposes a comprehensive update to the Safety Element of the Lassen County General Plan. The Lassen County General Plan, which serves as a "blueprint" for development within Lassen County, was first adopted in 1968 and consists of the following elements: (1) Land Use, (2) Natural Resources, (3) Agriculture, (4) Wildlife, (5) Open Space, (6) Circulation, (7) Safety and Seismic Safety, (8) Noise, (9) Housing, and (10) Energy. In June 2020, the Safety Element was amended to incorporate the then-current Hazard Mitigation Plan. The proposed project would include a full update to the current General Plan Safety Element in accordance with Section 65302 of the California Government Code to reflect current conditions and County policies and to incorporate the current Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

2.1 Project Location

Lassen County is located in Northeast California and bordered on the north by Modoc County, on the south by Plumas and Sierra Counties, on the west by Shasta County, and on the east by the State of Nevada (See Figure 1, Project Location). Lassen County is approximately 2,910,080 acres and over 63% of the land within the County is public land managed by federal, state, and other governmental agencies (County of Lassen 1999). The City of Susanville is the County seat and only incorporated city in Lassen County. Countywide land uses include residential, commercial, agriculture, open space, timberland, institutional, public/semi-public, and industrial.

2.2 Environmental Setting

Known Hazards

The following details the existing known hazards in Lassen County.

Earthquakes and Geologic Hazards

Earthquakes are sudden ground-shaking events caused by the release of pressure in the earth. This quick release of pressure poses a safety risk to both people and structures due to the unpredictability of magnitude and timing. Earthquakes can occur without warning. There are no U.S. Geological Survey–approved methods of predicting a major earthquake before the event occurs, and therefore, earthquake events pose a major threat to structures and people. It is currently only possible to calculate the probability that a major earthquake event will occur in an area within a given number of years, making long-term earthquake forecasts unreliable and often incorrect (USGS 2020).

Active faults are identified by the U.S. Department of Conservation, and construction of new development is prohibited in areas around them to prevent repetitive loss of structures and threats to the safety of occupants. These unsafe areas around active faults, generally 50 feet, are regulatory zones referred to as Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones. Three communities (Milford, Herlong, and Doyle) in Lassen County have Alquist-Priolo zones (see Figure 2, Earthquake Hazards in Lassen County).

In addition to earthquakes, building on steep slopes, expansive soils, and other unstable areas can lead to structures at risk of damage from landslides or liquefaction.

Energy Shortages and Outages

Energy shortages and outages can impact various systems, including electricity, potable water, wastewater, natural gas, communications, and more. These shortages and outages can occur on their own, or be triggered by hazards like wildfires, floods, or severe weather. Shortages and outages can also be human induced. For example, during an extreme heat event, energy companies may conduct planned power outages to reduce wildfire risk, or shortages may occur if the community requires too much energy at any one time and overloads the distribution network.

The Lassen Municipal Utility District (LMUD) and Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (PSREA) supply power to Lassen County (County of Lassen, City of Susanville, and Susanville Indian Rancheria 2019). Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) provides LMUD with electricity through two PG&E-owned transmission lines. The Caribou line is the primary line and the Hat Creek line is the secondary line. The Hat Creek line is only used as a backup if the Caribou line were to go out; however, the use of the Hat Creek line would cause rolling blackouts across Lassen County.

Climate change will impact energy demand. Energy-intensive equipment, such as air conditioning, could create significant spikes in energy demand at times. Climate change will also increase the frequency and intensity of many hazards, including more intense or frequent severe storms, flooding, and wildfires, which could cause transmission line failures.

Extreme Heat

Extreme heat events are hot days, warm nights, or heat waves that can result in heat-related illness and hospitalization. Extreme heat is measured locally as communities are acclimatized to their historic environment. An extreme heat day is one that is in the hottest 2% of days observed between 1960 and 1990. In Lassen County, an extreme heat event is a day above 89.2°F (UC Berkeley 2021).

Extreme heat occurs in the summer in Lassen County. Climate change is expected to increase the average temperature year-round, including the frequency of extreme heat days. Historically, Lassen County had four extreme heat days per year and is projected to experience 15 extreme heat days per year by 2050. Historically, heat waves last 2.8 days and are projected to increase to 8.2 days between 2020 and 2050 (UC Berkeley 2021).

Flooding

Flooding is caused by increased rain, causing rivers and urban drainage basins to fill and overflow. Increased flooding occurs when rain occurs over a shorter time period, even if there is less overall rain, because the soil does not have enough time to absorb the rainfall. Flooding occurs in low-lying areas near lakes and other waterways. Generally, the floodplain most often refers to the area that would be inundated by a 100-year flood, or the flood that has a 1% chance of occurring in any year (USGS 2021). To further illustrate, a property in the floodplain has a 26% chance of being flooded at least once over the course of a 30-year mortgage. Due to this high risk, property owners in the 100-year flood plain are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to purchase flood insurance. The 500-year floodplain is the area that has a 0.2% chance of being flooded on annual basis. Flood insurance is not required in the 500-year flood zone. Flooding occurs in the winter months when Lassen County receives the most rain. Climate change is predicted to increase the number of extreme rain events, when large amounts of rain fall over a short period of time, which does not allow it to infiltrate into the ground. There are floodplains throughout Lassen County (see Figure 3, Flood Zones in Lassen County). In addition to regular flooding from precipitation, dam failures can cause a form of flooding called dam inundation. Only specific communities are downstream from dams in Lassen County.

Wildfire

Wildfires are most commonly caused by lightning or humans through the use of electrical equipment and vehicles, and often start unnoticed. They are known to spread more quickly on dry, windy days and move more easily in an uphill direction and in areas with higher-density vegetation. Wildfires are a natural and important part of the ecosystem, but can become more intense and dangerous as a result of climate change and inadequate land management. Climate change is likely to increase the number of large fires in the region, which are more difficult to control and can pose serious threats to rural communities with limited evacuation routes. When analyzing wildfire risks, State law requires the identification of critical assets, developed areas, and planned uses in Very High Wildfire Hazard Severity Zones (VHWFSZs) and State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) (see Figure 4, Wildfire Hazard Severity Zones in Lassen County). Wildfire severity zones serve to prioritize the most at-risk areas and outline the policies in areas where the state is financially responsible for wildfire. In addition to mapping VHWFSZs and SRAs, State law requires that historical wildfires are mapped to provide a historical context (see Figure 5, Historic Wildfires in Lassen County). Depending on the location of the fire, local, state, or federal firefighting agencies can hold jurisdiction. The majority of Lassen County is covered by state and federal jurisdiction, but some subsets of the County are covered by local fire departments (see Figure 6, Fire Protection Responsibility). In addition, 16 communities in Lassen County have their own recognized fire districts with various levels of full time and volunteer fire fighters.

2.3 Safety Element Update

Background

The Safety Element is one of the seven General Plan elements required by Section 65302 of the California Government Code. This Element addresses the natural and human-made hazards in Lassen County and the potential short- and long-term risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from hazard events. The purpose of the County's Safety Element is to outline how the County minimizes, prepares for, responds to, and recovers from hazard events. This includes identifying safe places to build, populations that may need extra help responding to hazards, and how to ensure residents are prepared for hazards (County of Lassen 2021).

The Safety and Seismic Element was originally adopted in 1974 via Resolution #2552 and is part of the County's General Plan. On December 7, 2018, The Lassen County Board of Supervisors adopted a Multi-Jurisdictional, Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan through Resolution #18-077 with the Federal Emergency Management Agency approving the Plan HMP on January 15, 2019. On June 16, 2020, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors approved Resolution #20-028, which incorporated the HMP into the Safety Element. No other changes to the 1974 version have been made (Lassen County 1974).

Regulatory Setting

The 2018 amendment incorporated the County's updated multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan; however, in Resolution #20-028, the Board of Supervisors acknowledged at the time that the Safety and Seismic Element was still not full in compliance with state law. According to California Governors' Office of Planning and Research, for those jurisdictions that have an adopted hazard mitigation plan (HMP), the next update of their HMP triggers an update to the Safety Element of the General Plan to address climate adaptation and resilience. The January 2019 Multi-Jurisdictional, Multi-HMP was consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 379.

The 2019 HMP was used to create this Safety Element update that is consistent with the 2017 California Governors' Office of Planning and Research Guidelines, as well as Assembly Bill (AB) 747 and SB 99, require local governments to identify evacuation routes and evaluate their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios; and requires local governments to identify residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes. SB 79 requires local governments to assess community vulnerability to climate change and develop adaptation goals, policies, and implementation measures. This requirement is tied to the HMP updates.

2022 Safety and Element Update

The goal of the updating the Safety Element is to provide an easy-to-use document that can be quickly understood by County staff and the general public and protects all thing that the residents of Lassen County hold dear. The proposed Safety Element update incorporates recently adopted State laws that require the following to be performed, updated, and included in a Safety Element:

a) Identify and update information related to:
   - Earthquakes
   - Energy Shortages and Outages
   - Extreme Heat
   - Flooding
   - Wildfire

b) Prepare a Hazard Assessment for the five hazards listed above and calculate a hazard ranking for each community in Lassen County based on 1) the potential for the hazard impact to occur, and 2) the adaptive capacity of the community's capacity to address a hazard.

c) Establish goals related to emergency response, fire safety, and power outages and policies that include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery components related to natural hazards and human caused hazards that have the potential to occur in Lassen County.

In accordance with state law (Government Code Section 65302), the County has prepared an update to its Safety Element. The proposed Safety Element update includes the addition of four new Goals, as detailed below. Detailed under each Goal are the associated Policies and Actions necessary for implementation by Lassen County.

Goal 1: Minimize risks, such as loss of life, injury, property damage, and natural resource destruction, from natural hazards.

Goal 2: Coordinate preparedness across government agencies, the private sector, and the general public.

Goal 3: Maintain adequate emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Goal 4: Build Back Stronger.

The proposed Safety Element update is available at: https://www.lassencounty.org/dept/planning-and-building-services/environmental-documents-noticing-and-attachments

Community Outreach Events

On May 20, 2021, the Lassen County Planning and Building Services Department held a Safety Element update Community Outreach Event. The purpose of this event was to involve all interested parties to participate in the update process and to assist with identifying goals to the meet the vision of the Safety Element update for the County. The event was promoted in four local newspapers, and on the County website. It was held both virtually and in-person. No interested parties participated.

On October 11, 2022, the Safety Element update was brought to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors. The purpose of this event was to solicit feedback from members of the public and elected officials prior to state agency review and public review. The meeting was promoted in local newspapers, and on the County website. The meeting was noticed and open to the public in accordance with the Brown Act. Supervisors and one member of the public provided feedback which has been incorporated into the element.

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

3 Initial Study Checklist

1. **Project title:**

   Lassen County General Plan Safety Element update

2. **Lead agency name and address:**

   Lassen County, Department of Planning & Building Services
   707 Nevada Street, Suite 5
   Susanville, California 96130

3. **Contact person and phone number:**

   Gaylon Norwood: 530.251.8269

4. **Project location:**

   Countywide

5. **Project sponsor's name and address:**

   Lassen County, Department of Planning & Building Services
   707 Nevada Street, Suite 5
   Susanville, California 96130

6. **General plan designation:**

   N/A for General Plan Safety Element update

7. **Zoning:**

   N/A for General Plan Safety Element update

8. **Description of project. (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary):**

   Proposed General Plan Amendment to amend the Lassen County General Plan Safety Element.

9. **Surrounding land uses and setting (Briefly describe the project's surroundings):**

   Lassen County is located in Northeast California and bordered on the north by Modoc County, on the south by Plumas and Sierra Counties, on the west by Shasta County, and on the east by the State of Nevada. The City of Susanville is the County seat and only incorporated city in Lassen County. Countywide land uses include residential, commercial, agriculture, open space, timberland, institutional, public/semi-public, and industrial.

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):**

The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for Lassen County are the decision-making bodies for potential adoption of the Safety Element update. No approval would be required from agencies outside of the Lassen County Planning and Building Services Department.

The Safety Element update requires review from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Resource Protection Committee, and consultation with the California Department of Conservation: Geological Survey.

11. **Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?**

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada has requested notification pursuant to AB 52 and were notified and invited to consult via mail on October 22, 2021. In addition, on July 30, 2021, the following tribes were invited to consult via mail as part of the SB 18 consultation process: Greenville Rancheria, Honey Lake Maidu, Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians, Pit River Tribe of California - Atwamsini, Hammawi, and Kosealekte Bands, Susanville Indian Rancheria, Tsi Akim Maidu, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. No responses have been received to date.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology and Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

Determination (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☒ 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 "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 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature Date

Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All 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.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a. Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a. The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b. The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

3.1 Aesthetics

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting

The aesthetic character of Lassen County is generally composed of natural landscapes, with low density rural development in areas of the County outside of incorporated Susanville. Important aesthetic resources in the County include natural forms, such as lakes and rivers, mountains, hills, meadows, geologic formations, and native vegetation.

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-d: No Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in impacts to aesthetic resources. The Actions related to Policies 1.5 and 1.6 of the Element would protect and preserve existing natural resources and promote a new habitat conservation. Implementation of the listed Actions under these Policies would preserve the existing aesthetics of the County.

In summary, the Safety Element does not propose actual development or construction, nor does it provide any design guidelines for structures. The proposed Element update will not change or affect the way projects are designed and will not provide any goals, policies, or programs that would significantly degrade

the scenic quality of the County. Existing development standards and design guidelines will remain in place after certification of the Safety Element. Therefore, there would be no impact relative to aesthetics.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES – In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project				
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 Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting

Most of Lassen County has scant rainfall, a short growing season, and severe winters. Other resource limitations which challenge agricultural production in various parts of Lassen County include soil quality and the availability and quality of water resources. Field crops, grain production, and livestock raising are important components of the County's agriculture economy (County of Lassen 1999). Ranked in terms of revenue generated for various

agriculture-related activities, timber harvest was the highest revenue, followed by field crops, fruits/seeds/ vegetables, and then livestock (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-e: No Impact.

The southern portion of the County has been mapped on the Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Finder; however, land is designated as grazing land, Other Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Farmland of Local Importance. There are no lands within the County that is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Important Farmland map (DOC 2016). The Lassen County General Plan's Agricultural Element contains land use policies and implementation measures related to agricultural. No changes are proposed to the Agricultural Element of the Lassen County General Plan and the Safety Element Amendment would not alter the County's current policies related agriculture resources.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes Policy 1.4, Economic and Recreational Resources Protection, which minimizes the economic loss and disruption to agriculture and recreation resources from natural and human-caused hazards. Actions related to this Policy include fuel management and weed abatement. The inclusion of Policy 1.4 and its associated Actions would not result in impacts to agricultural and forestry resources and therefore, the Safety Element update would have no impact on agricultural and forestry resources.

3.3 Air Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting

Lassen County is located in the Northeast Plateau Air Basin. In general, air emission sources in Lassen County are associated with motor vehicles, wood-burning stoves, wildfires, prescribed fires, and fugitive dust from unimproved roads and sparsely vegetated or unvegetated lands, including dry lakebeds. Periodic emissions occur from agricultural activities, such as discing and agricultural waste burning (Lassen County 1999).

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.

The Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has regulatory jurisdiction over the County's air quality permitting process. The District's air pollution regulations comply with the standards established by Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines (County of Lassen APCD 2021).

The APCD, through the Air Pollution Control Officer and with technical assistance from the California Air Resources Control Board, reviews proposals and plans to ensure that air quality standards are met. Projects that may emit pollutants from a stationary source must obtain an Authority to Construct Permit from the APCD prior to construction. After construction of the facility is completed and the project can demonstrate that it can operate in compliance with emission requirements set forth in the Authority to Construct, a Permit to Operate must be obtained (County of Lassen APCD 2021).

The overall air quality of Lassen County is considered adequate by the APCD. The Air Quality Index in Lassen County is classified as “Good” the majority of the year. Wildfires and inversion layers during the winter can periodically degrade the air quality in the County (County of Lassen APCD 2021). Under the state air quality standards, the basin is in attainment for nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, and lead. It is unclassified for PM_{10} (CARB 2017). An air basin is unclassified for a criteria pollutant when the available data is insufficient to determine attainment status. Unclassified areas are treated as attainment areas until proven otherwise (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-d: No Impact.

The Lassen County General Plan’s Natural Resources Element Section 10 contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to air quality. No changes are proposed to the Natural Resources Element of the Lassen County General Plan the Safety Element Amendment would not alter the County’s current policies related to air quality.

The Safety and Seismic Element is a policy document that establishes the County’s goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current Safety and Seismic Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in impacts to air quality; therefore, there would be no impacts.

3.4 Biological Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting

Lassen County contains extensive natural open space that supports diverse plant communities and wildlife that depend upon these habitats. At elevations below 6,500 feet the dominant native vegetation community is the mixed conifer forest. Ponderosa and Jeffrey pines, sugar pine, and white fir occur in this natural plant community. Above the mixed conifer forest, at elevations between 6,500 and 8,000 feet, the major natural plant community is the red fir forest, characterized by western white pine, mountain hemlock, and lodgepole pine. From 8,000 feet to tree line, plants are fewer in overall number with exposed patches of bare ground providing a harsh environment. Rock

spirea, lupine, Indian paintbrush, and penstemon are a few of the rugged members of this community (County of Lassen 1999). Important wildlife mammal species found in Lassen County include black bear, mountain lion, red fox, and deer. Avian species include rough-legged hawk, great gray owl, osprey, grouse, and hummingbirds (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-f: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Lassen County General Plan contains the Land Use Element and the Natural Resources Element, which include discussions and policies related to biological resources. The Wildlife Element is an extension of the Natural Resources Element and contains additional goals, policies, and implementation measures related to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes policies and actions under Goal 1 related to protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources, in addition to those already in the Land Use, Natural Resources, and Wildlife Elements.

The update to the Safety Element does not alter any local, regional, state, or federal biological protection standards, nor would it alter the County's existing general plan policies related to protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources. The proposed Safety Element update does not encourage development to be located in stream corridors, wetlands, riparian areas, or any other type of habitats for endangered or threatened species. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have a less-than-significant impact on biological resources.

3.5 Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting

The Lassen area was a gathering place for at least four American Indian groups: Atsugewi, Yana, Yahi, and Maidu. Because of its weather and snow conditions, generally high elevation, and seasonally mobile deer populations, the Lassen area was not conducive to year-round living. These Native American groups camped here in warmer months for hunting and gathering, leaving behind evidence that has been recorded as archaeological resources (NPS 2021). The California Office of Historic Preservation lists a number of emigrant trails and two historic fort locations in Lassen County (OHP 2021).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-c: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Lassen County General Plan contains the Natural Resources Element that includes discussions and policies related to cultural and historic resources. The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts.

The Lassen County General Plan (1999) contains policies for the protection of cultural and historic resources and all new development must be consistent with these policies. Additionally, Chapter 12.29 (Historic Building Preservation Ordinance) of the Lassen County Code focuses on the identification and designation of historic resources. AB 52 and SB 18 require early consultation with culturally affiliated tribes in the area. As future projects are planned and developed, they must adhere to these General Plan policies, Municipal Code regulations, and AB 52 and SB 18 Tribal consultations as they pertain to historical and culturally sensitive resources.

It is not expected that human remains would be disturbed as a result of implementation of the Safety Element update, and no ground-disturbing activities are proposed. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered, then the provisions set forth in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and state Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 would be implemented in consultation with the assigned Most Likely Descendant as identified by the NAHC. No further construction activities would be permitted until the coroner is contacted, as well as any applicable Native American tribes. The County shall be required to comply with the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (2001), the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), as well as AB 52 and SB 18 early consultation requirements. As regulations are in place to treat any inadvertent uncovering of human remains during grading, impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

The Safety Element update would not change or alter policies to protect and/or review cultural resources. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

3.6 Energy

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy – Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

Lassen County produces electricity from two main sources: Honey Lake power plant, a hybrid facility using biomass and geothermal resources; and Muck Valley, a hydroelectric facility on the Pit River. Cogeneration units fueled with wood waste from lumber mills has been a secondary source of electrical power generation. Geothermal power production in the County has included two power plants, Wineagle and Amedee. Both plants are located on the northern shore of Honey Lake, near Wendel (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-b: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Lassen County General Plan's Energy Element contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to energy related-utility issues. No changes are proposed to the Energy Element of the Lassen County General Plan and the Safety Element update would not alter the County's current policies related to energy utilization.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes policies and actions listed under Goal 1 and Goal 2 related to efficient and sustainable energy utilization, in addition to those already in the Energy Element. Therefore, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with energy.

3.7 Geology and Soils

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

Lassen County lies at the intersection of four major physiographic provinces: the Sierra Nevada, the Cascade Range, the Modoc Plateau, and the Basin and Range Province. These physiographic provinces are determined by their geologic structure and formation (County of Lassen 1999).

The rocks of the Sierra Nevada are essentially the exposed granite of the Sierra Batholith and associated sedimentary and contact metamorphic rocks with some late Tertiary volcanics. Although there are some granitic features north of Susanville, the Diamond Mountains are commonly regarded as the northern-most part of the Sierra Nevada Range (County of Lassen 1999).

The Cascade Range extends from the northern end of the Sierra Nevada to the Canadian border and is especially noted for the many great and recently active volcanoes scattered along its entire length. The exposed rocks of the California Cascades are predominantly volcanics of great variety and form (County of Lassen 1999).

The Modoc Plateau is an undulating platform composed of various volcanic materials, principally Miocene to recent basaltic lava flows with some sedimentary and tuffaceous interbeds. The average elevation of the area is 4,500 feet above sea level, but many peaks exceed this level. The Modoc Plateau consists of a series of northwest to north-trending block faulted ranges and deposits resulting from the disruption of drainage by faulting or volcanism. The geologic history of the Modoc Plateau is closely connected to that of the Cascade Range and Basin and Range Provinces. Quaternary volcanic flows of the Cascade Range overlap the western boundary of the Modoc Plateau (County of Lassen 1999).

The Basin and Range Province consist typically of north-south trending fault-block mountains separated by valleys, many of which are closed basins. Most of the province is located in neighboring Nevada. The sharply defined structure of the Honey Lake Valley, formed by the presence of fault zones along its borders, is characteristic of the Basin and Range Province. Interior drainage, resulting in playas such as Honey Lake, is also a common characteristic of basins in this province. North-trending normal faults bound basins and ranges throughout much of this province. Prominent right-lateral faults in the western Basin and Range constitute a generally northwest trending zone known as the Walker Lane belt (County of Lassen 1999).

In general, the soils in the County can be separated into two broad groups: (1) residual soils that have developed in place, and (2) transported soils formed by sediments deposited by wind, water, or ice. The formation and distribution of soils on the landscape are influenced by the parent geology and the material, climate, topography, and vegetation present in the soil-forming environment (County of Lassen 1999)

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–f: Less than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts.

a: Lassen County lies within a region known to be seismically active, the potential exists for people and structures associated with new residential projects to be exposed to strong ground shaking, ground failure, and soil instability. The communities of Milford, Herlong, and Doyle have Alquist-Priolo fault zones as shown on Figure 2. The Lassen County General Plan contains land use policies and implementation measures related to seismic hazards and development requirements. The current update to the Safety Element includes policies and actions listed under Goal 1 and Goal 2 related to the construction with an Alquist-Priolo fault zone and the protection of critical infrastructure from seismic events, in addition to those already in the General Plan.

Additionally, the potential for significant adverse impacts to result from these phenomena would be substantially reduced through adherence to requirements specified in the Alquist–Priolo Act, the Uniform Building Code, Title 24 of the California Building Code, and all development regulations of the County. Compliance with these building standards and the incorporation on the updated policies and actions would minimize impacts associated with seismic hazards.

b–e: Most lowland areas with relatively level ground surface are not prone to landslides. Other forms of slope instability are also unlikely to occur, except along stream banks and terrace margins. Highland and mountainous areas are more susceptible to slope instability. The strong ground motion that occurs during earthquakes is capable of inducing landslides and debris flow (mudslides). These types of failure generally occur where unstable slope conditions already exist.

The Lassen County General Plan contains the Geologic and Soil Resources section of the Natural Resources Element and includes goals, policies, and implementation measures related to soil resources. According to the General Plan, soil issues are of concern to many areas within Lassen County, including irrigated cropland, where problems include wind erosion, streambank erosion, sedimentation, salinity, high water table and urban encroachment. Wind erosion is a problem in many areas, especially agricultural areas having sandy soils. The County has geologic review procedures to address these issues for new development and all new development is required to be consistent with these regulations.

f: Depending on the location, future development in the County has the potential to directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. The update to the Safety Element would not change existing policies for the protection of paleontological resources and all new development would be required to be consistent with these policies.

In conclusion, the Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update proposes updated goals, policies, and actions that support the reduction of impacts related to natural hazards (e.g., ground shaking and liquefaction), specifically those listed in Section 2 of the Natural Resources Element. Based on the above, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with geology and soils.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing 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 the Environmental Protection Agency are carbon dioxide, methane, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrous oxide. Carbon dioxide emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion. In California, approximately 43% of the carbon dioxide emissions come from cars and trucks. Electricity generation is another important source of carbon dioxide emissions. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and nitrous oxide, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most hydrofluorocarbon emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods, and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to carbon dioxide. Global warming's adverse impacts include impacts to air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and an increase in health-related problems.

AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act, was adopted in September 2006 and required that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. This reduction will be accomplished through regulations to reduce emissions from stationary sources and from vehicles. The California Air Resources Board is the state agency responsible for developing rules and regulations to cap and reduce GHG emissions. In addition, the Governor signed SB 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 the California Governors' Office of Planning and Research on December 30, 2009.

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–b: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in impacts to greenhouse gas emissions.

The Safety Element update would have a less-than-significant impact on GHG emissions.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

The interface of the natural and manmade environments within Lassen County and the presence of industries that employ materials classified as hazardous pose potential safety hazards associated with wildfires and risk of upset. Other potential safety hazards include naturally occurring asbestos, past mining operations, and airport operations.

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

e: No Impact. a-d and f-g: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts.

a–d: The current update includes goals, policies, and actions related to hazardous material uses, siting, management, and disposal, in addition to those already in the Lassen County General Plan. Pertinent policies and actions related to hazardous material transport, handling, disposal, and siting listed under Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the update.

In addition to the above policies and actions, any future development would be evaluated using appropriate databases including the California Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database that, pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, lists Federal Superfund, State Response, Voluntary Cleanup, School Cleanup, Hazardous Waste Permit, and Hazardous Waste Corrective Action sites. The potential impacts related to any listed hazardous materials sites associated with any specific future projects will be assessed at the time the projects are proposed. Mitigation measures would then be adopted as necessary, in conformance with CEQA.

e: The current update would not impact people residing or working within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. The proposed update includes a Policy and Action related to airport compatibility under Goal 1, which encourages the Airport Land Use Commission to review the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan at least every 5 years to ensure that the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan accurately defines planning areas around airports and establish land use policies and standards appropriate for the public safety and protection of airport operations.

f-g: The current update includes goals, policies, and actions related to emergency evacuation and response plans and wildfire risks, in addition to those already in the Lassen County General Plan. Pertinent policies and actions related to implementation of emergency response plans, and loss, injury, or death due to wildfires are listed under Goal 1, Goal 2, and Goal 3 of the update.

In conclusion, the Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update proposes updated goals, policies, and actions that support the reduction of impacts related to the transport, disposal, and accident conditions of hazardous materials, implementation of emergency response plans, and loss, injury, or death due to wildfires. Based on the above, the Safety Element update would result in less than significant impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

Lassen County encompasses 4,547 square miles (2,910,080 acres) of varied topography. The highest point in Lassen County is 8,737 feet above mean sea level at Hat Peak in the northeast, and the lowest elevation is 3,270 feet above mean sea level, where the Pit River exits the county to the west (County of Lassen 2007). Temperature and precipitation follow noticeable patterns for various regions in Lassen County. Lower elevations generally experience warmer temperatures with lesser amounts of annual rainfall, in contrast to higher elevations that experience cooler temperatures throughout the year and greater amounts of annual snowfall (County of Lassen 2007).

The mountains within Lassen County influence precipitation; greater precipitation typically occurs in the county's western portion at higher elevations. Precipitation is caused by orographic uplift, as air temperatures cool as the air mass rises over the mountains, resulting in condensation that falls as precipitation (County of Lassen 2007).

Lassen County's rivers and streams' hydrologic characteristics vary depending on the watershed of origin, area-elevation relationships, and snowfall accumulation patterns. This section describes flows on three of Lassen County's rivers and creeks: the Pit River, the Susan River, and Long Valley Creek (County of Lassen 2007).

There are seven watersheds in Lassen County, including Duck Flat, Feather River, Madeline Plains, Pit River, Smoke Creek, Surprise Valley, and Susan River. The Pit River flows through the northwestern portion of the County, draining to the west. The Susan River flows easterly to Honey Lake in the central portion of the County. Long Valley Creek flows from Upper Long Valley north into Honey Lake. Honey Lake, the largest lake in Lassen County, receives water from the Susan River, Long Valley Creek, Baxter Creek, and Willow Creek (County of Lassen 2007).

There are 24 groundwater basins in Lassen County, including four priority basins: Big Valley, Willow Creek Valley, Long Valley, and Honey Lake Valley. Priority basins were identified from stakeholder input, land use, water source patterns, and existing groundwater well infrastructure. The majority of groundwater monitoring also occurs in the priority basins. Less information is available for the other groundwater basins in Lassen County (County of Lassen 2007).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–f: Less than Significant Impact.

Lassen County General Plan's Land Use Element and Natural Resources Element contain goals, policies, and implementation measures related to hydrology and water quality issues. No changes are proposed to

these Elements of the Lassen County General Plan are proposed and the Safety Element update would not alter the County's current policies related to hydrology and water quality.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes policies and actions listed under Goal 1 and Goal 2 related to water quality, water usage, and groundwater sustainability, in addition to those already in the Land Use Element and Natural Resources Element. Therefore, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with hydrology and water quality.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

The need to achieve and maintain compatibility between adjacent land uses has long been a primary goal in land use planning in Lassen County. Compatibility is needed not only to protect property values and land use opportunities but also to preserve the general harmony, peace of mind, and perceived quality of people in the County (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a: No Impact. b: Less than Significant.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in physically dividing an existing community. Additionally, the current Safety Element update would not conflict with Lassen County General Plan policy, ordinances, codes, or regulations, adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The update would not conflict with any approved habitat conservation or natural community's conservation plans. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.12 Mineral Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting:

The discovery of gold along the base of Diamond Mountain in 1856 and at Hayden Hill in 1870 fostered the settlement of the northern sectors of Lassen County. From around 1980 to 1989, the Hayden Hill area experienced a resurgence of interest and speculation in precious metals mining (County of Lassen 1999).

In 1989, Lassen Gold Mining Inc. made applications to the County of Lassen and the Bureau of Land Management for a new open pit mine with heap leach and mill processing facilities. The project was approved for development in September 1991. The Hayden Hill mining operation was constructed in the spring of 1992 and poured its first bar of Dore (gold and silver) on June 15, 1992. At the end of 1997, active mining at Hayden Hill was terminated (County of Lassen 1999).

Although the Diamond Mountain and Hayden Hill areas have been the predominate precious metal producers in Lassen County, there have been more modest discoveries and mining of gold and silver in other locations in Lassen County, including Round Valley and Skedaddle Mountain. Reports of high grade deposits of iron ore and copper have been made in the Mountain Meadows area, but these reports have never been verified or the resource developed (County of Lassen 1999).

Rhyolite tuff has been quarried at the west end of Susanville and in the Wendel area; this quarry stone was used extensively in Susanville's business district and also exported for a number of buildings in Alturas. Clay deposits in the Honey Lake Valley led to brick kiln operations from the late 1800's through about 1930. Deposits of gravel and cinders have been mined for base materials for railroads and road construction. (County of Lassen 1999).

Significant deposits of commercial grade pozzolan, known locally as lassenite, occur in Long Valley as lacustrine sediments and diatomaceous shale of Mio-Pliocene age. Pozzolan is a light, porous ash-sized siltstone composed of partially hydrated rhyloitic glass ash with some pumiceous and diatomaceous material. Pozzolanic material is used as an additive to (or blended with) cement, contributing strength and water tightness to produce superior concretes (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a and b: No Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. Section 7 of the Lassen County General Plan's Natural Resource Element contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to mineral resource issues. No changes are proposed to the Natural Resources Element of the Lassen County General Plan regarding mineral resources. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

3.13 Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. NOISE – Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting:

Lassen County is characterized primarily by undeveloped natural open space with small, interspersed towns or villages, and one incorporated city (County of Lassen 1999). Primary noise sources in the County include highways and major roadways, airports, and major stationary sources associated with commercial or industrial enterprises; minor noise sources can be found in individual communities, generally associated with commercial businesses and local roadways.

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–c: No Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The Lassen County General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to noise issues. No changes are proposed to the Lassen County General Plan related to noise. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

3.14 Population and Housing

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned 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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting:

The 2019 General Plan Housing Element update (County of Lassen 2019) indicated implementation of the proposed Housing Element update would have the potential to increase the County's population by approximately 186 if all of the projected 77 units were new to the County, and all of the residents were also new to the County. If all new units are occupied by new residents, the change in population represents 1.17% of the 2018 population of the County, which was 15,957 people. The population of the County is projected to decline to 15,946 in 2020, which represents a decrease of 0.07% from the 2018 population. By 2050, the population is expected to decline to 14,548 which is a decrease of 8.82% from the 2018 population (County of Lassen 2019).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a and b: No Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce

environmental impacts. The Housing Element of the Lassen County General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to population and housing. The current Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in impacts related to population and housing. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

3.15 Public Services

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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 public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

Public services within the unincorporated County are provided by the County of Lassen, state and federal agencies, and numerous special districts, including fire protection districts, school districts, park and recreation districts, and an irrigation district.

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-b: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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 public services.

The Safety Element update would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities or the 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 public services listed above. These general plan update would not change or impact standards, policies, programs, and regulations in place that ensure adequate provision of public services.

Based on the above, the Safety Element update would have a less-than-significant impact on public services.

3.16 Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. RECREATION				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Existing Setting:

Recreational opportunities within Lassen County are varied, ranging from parks, campgrounds, a downhill ski park, boat ramps and public swimming areas. Many natural resource areas offer unique resources that support the potential for the development of recreation facilities. This is true in the case of the County's Susanville Ranch park property northwest of Susanville. It may also be true for areas having potential for downhill ski areas, golf courses, RV parks, or other recreation-related development projects (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-b: No Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update does not propose any policies or actions that would result in impacts related to recreation.

Based on the above, the Safety and Seismic Element update would have no impact on recreation.

3.17 Transportation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. TRANSPORTATION – Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

Lassen County is served by one federal highway and six state highways. These highways provide the main regional transportation routes for automobiles and trucks. The highway network includes U.S. Highway 395 and State Routes 36, 44, 70, 139, 147, and 299 (Lassen County 2000). The Lassen County transportation system also includes a county road network consisting of approximately 905 miles of roadway. Within the City of Susanville is a municipal street system of approximately 39 miles (County of Lassen 1999).

There is also within Lassen County a significant number and mileage of roads on federal lands, including lands managed by the National Park Service, Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. These roads and the other highways and roads which cross federal lands provide access for the use and enjoyment of the public. For example, the 1992 Land and Resource Management Plan of the Lassen National Forest reported that the Forest contained 3,472 miles of "forest development roads" (not all of which are in Lassen County). There are also approximately 1,200 miles of roads on Bureau of Land Management administered lands (County of Lassen 1999).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-d: Less Than Significant Impact.

Lassen County General Plan's Circulation Element contain goals, policies, and implementation measures related to transportation and traffic within the County. No changes are proposed to the Circulation Element of the Lassen County General Plan are proposed and the Safety Element update would not alter the County's current policies related to transportation and traffic.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes policies and actions listed under Goal 1 and Goal 2 related to the use and improvement of evacuation routes during emergency situations, in addition to those already in the Circulation Element. The Safety Element update would not increase hazards due to a design feature, result in inadequate emergency access, or conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation. Therefore, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with transportation and traffic.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES				
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Existing Setting:

The Lassen area was a gathering place for at least four American Indian groups: Atsugewi, Yana, Yahi, and Maidu. Because of its weather and snow conditions, generally high elevation, and seasonally mobile deer populations, the Lassen area was not conducive to year-round living. These Native American groups camped here in warmer months for hunting and gathering, leaving behind evidence that has been recorded as archaeological resources (NPS 2021). The California Office of Historic Preservation lists a number of emigrant trails and two historic fort locations in Lassen County (OHP 2021).

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–b: Less than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. The current Safety Element update would not change or alter policies to protect tribal cultural resources. No development is proposed as part of this Safety Element update.

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada has requested notification pursuant to AB 52 and were notified and invited to consult via mail on October 22, 2021. In addition, on July 30, 2021, the following tribes were invited to consult via mail as part of the SB 18 consultation process: Greenville Rancheria, Honey Lake Maidu, Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians, Pit River Tribe of California - Atwamsini, Hammawi, and Kosealekte Bands, Susanville Indian Rancheria, Tsi Akim Maidu, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. No responses have been received to date.

Based on the above, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts to tribal cultural resources.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-b: Less Than Significant Impact; c-e: No Impact.

Lassen County General Plan's Circulation Element contain goals, policies, and implementation measures related to utility and service system issues. No changes are proposed to the Circulation Element of the Lassen County General Plan and the Safety Element update would not alter the County's current policies related to utilities and service systems.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes the County's goals, policies and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The current update includes policies and actions listed under Goal 1 related to utilities and service systems, in addition to those already in the Circulation Element. The proposed update would not result in the need for the expansion of existing systems or the construction of new systems, in compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, nor would it result in the production of excess solid wastes. Therefore, the Safety Element update would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with utilities and service systems.

3.20 Wildfire

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a-d: Less Than Significant Impact.

The Safety Element is a policy document that establishes Lassen County's goals, policies, and actions related to the natural and human-caused hazards and the risk to human life, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from hazard events within the County. Therefore, its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts.

Lassen County General Plan's Natural Resource Element, Wildlife Element, Open Space Element, and Safety Element all contain goals, policies, and implementation measures related to wildfire hazards. No changes are proposed to the Natural Resources Element, Wildlife Element, and Open Space Element of the Lassen County General Plan. The current Safety Element update does propose updated goals, policies and actions that support the reduction of impacts related to wildfire. While many of the fire related actions are a continuation of current County policies that align with State regulations, many include refinements that prioritize or increase the specificity of the actions being undertaken. Actions span the topics of vegetation management, water availability, critical facility siting, development code specific to fire hazard severity zones, fire response, evacuation, shelters, outreach specific to fire mitigation, fire hazard assessments, and post-disaster reconstruction. Those policies and actions associated with Goal 1, Goal 2, Goal 3, and Goal 4 would be implemented to mitigate wildfire risk in high wildfire hazard severity zones and wildfire prone areas. Therefore, based on the above, the Safety Element update would have a less-than-significant impact on wildfire.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Explanation of Checklist Judgments:

a–f: Less than Significant Impact.

As discussed throughout the Initial Study Checklist, the Safety Element update is a policy document and adoption of this Element alone would not produce environmental impacts. The Safety Element update would not identify, describe, promote, entitle, or permit any particular development projects. The act of adopting the Safety Element update does not, therefore, have the potential to result in environmental impacts, either limited or cumulative, affecting habitat, plant or animal communities, protected species, historic resources, or human beings.

4 References and Preparers

4.1 References Cited

CARB (California Air Resources Board). 2017. *Proposed Amendments to Area Designations for State Ambient Air Quality Standards*. Accessed October 29, 2021. https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/barcu/regact/2018/area18/isor.pdf.

DOC (California Department of Conservation). 2016. California Important Farmland Finder. Accessed October 4, 2021. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/.

County of Lassen APCD (Air Pollution Control District). 2021. Lassen County APCD Web Page. Accessed October 4, 2021. http://lassenair.org/.

County of Lassen, City of Susanville, and Susanville Indian Rancheria. 2019. *Hazard Mitigation Plan*. January 2019. Accessed: October 28, 2021. http://www.lassencounty.org/sites/default/files/departments/office_of_emergency_services/Lassen%20County%20LHMP%20approved_1%2015%202019.pdf.

County of Lassen. 1974. *Lassen County General Plan: Safety Element (as amended June 16, 2020).* Accessed October 4, 2021. http://www.lassencounty.org/sites/default/files/departments/planning_and_building_services/Safety%20Element%20with%20resolution%20-%20June%2016%2C%202020_0.pdf.

County of Lassen. 1999. *Lassen County General Plan 2000*. Accessed October 4, 2021. http://www.lassencounty.org/sites/default/files/departments/planning_and_building_services/Lassen%20County%20General%20Plan%202000.pdf.

County of Lassen. 2007. *Final Groundwater Management Plan*. Prepared by Brown and Caldwell. Accessed October 29, 2021. https://celassen.ucanr.edu//files/49957.pdf.

County of Lassen. 2019. *Lassen County 2019–2024 Housing Element: Adopted August 27, 2019, Resolution No. 19-043*. Accessed October 29, 2021. http://www.lassencounty.org/sites/default/files/departments/planning_and_building_services/Adopted%20Lassen%20Co%20Housing%20Element%202019-2024.pdf.

County of Lassen. 2021. *Public Announcement of Safety Element Update*. Accessed October 4, 2021. http://www.co.lassen.ca.us/government/news/planning-and-building-services/20210511-lassen-county-safety-element-update.

NPS (National Park Service). 2021. *Lassen Volcanic National Park: American Indian Heritage.* Accessed October 29, 2021. https://www.nps.gov/lavo/learn/tribes.htm.

OHP (California Office of Historic Preservation). 2021. California Historic Landmarks by County: Lassen. Accessed October 29, 2021. https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21426.

UC Berkeley (University of California). 2021. Geospatial Innovation Facility: Cal-Adapt. Accessed: October 28, 2021. https://cal-adapt.org/tools/extreme-heat/.

USGS (U.S. Geological Survey). 2020. “Can You Predict Earthquakes?” Accessed October 28, 2021. https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/can-you-predict-earthquakes?.

USGS. 2021. Floods: Recurrence intervals and 100-year floods. Accessed October 29, 2021. https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nj-water/science/floods-recurrence-intervals-and-100-year-floods?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects.

4.2 List of Preparers

Lassen County Planning and Building Services

Gaylon Norwood, Deputy Director
Nancy McAllister, Senior Planner

Dudek

Rose Newberry, AICP, Senior Climate and Environmental Justice Planner
Henry Eckold, Planner II
Ronelle Candia, Senior CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

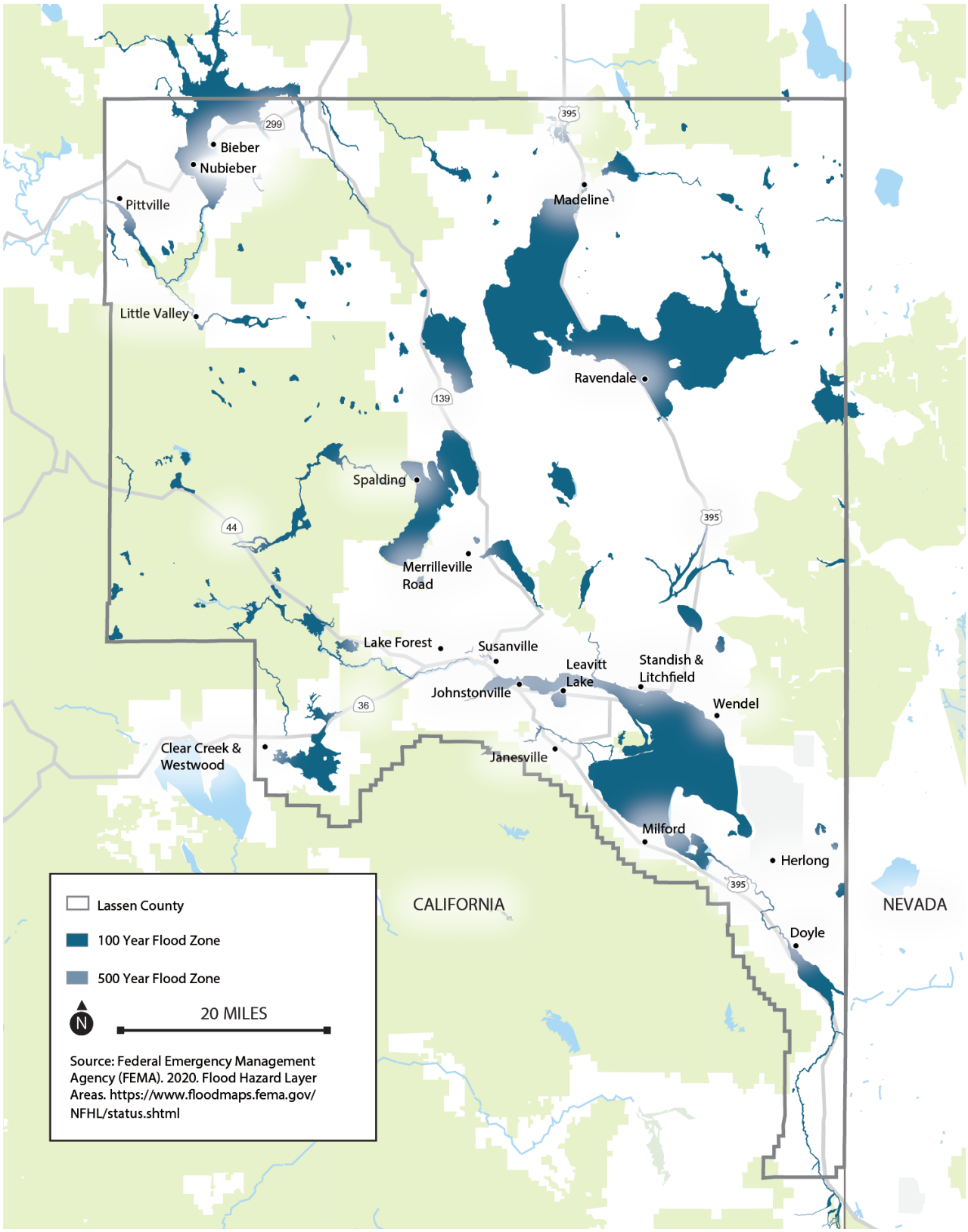
Figure 1 Project Location

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Figure 2 Earthquake Hazards in Lassen County

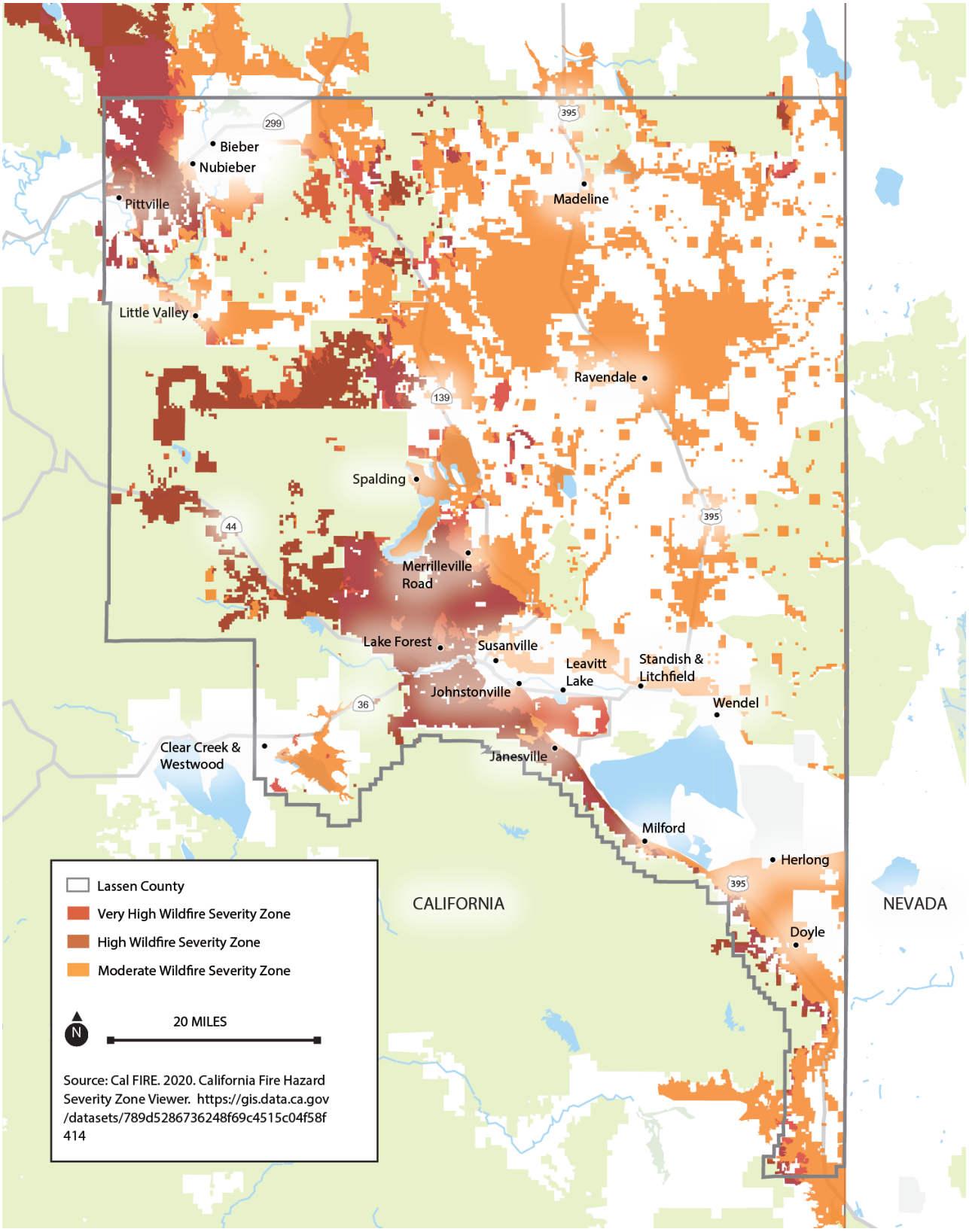
INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Figure 3 Flood Zones in Lassen County



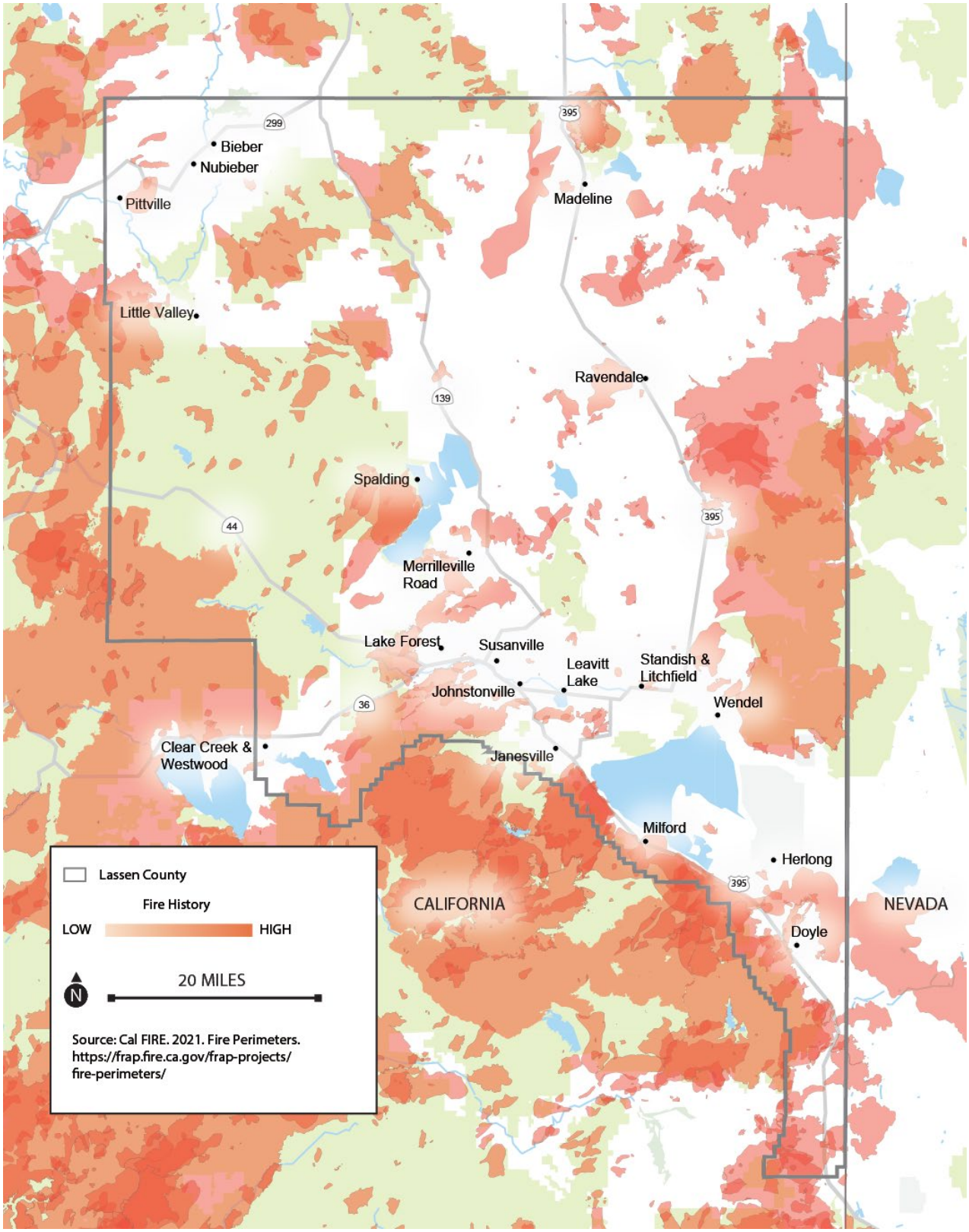
INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Figure 4 Wildfire Hazard Severity Zones in Lassen County



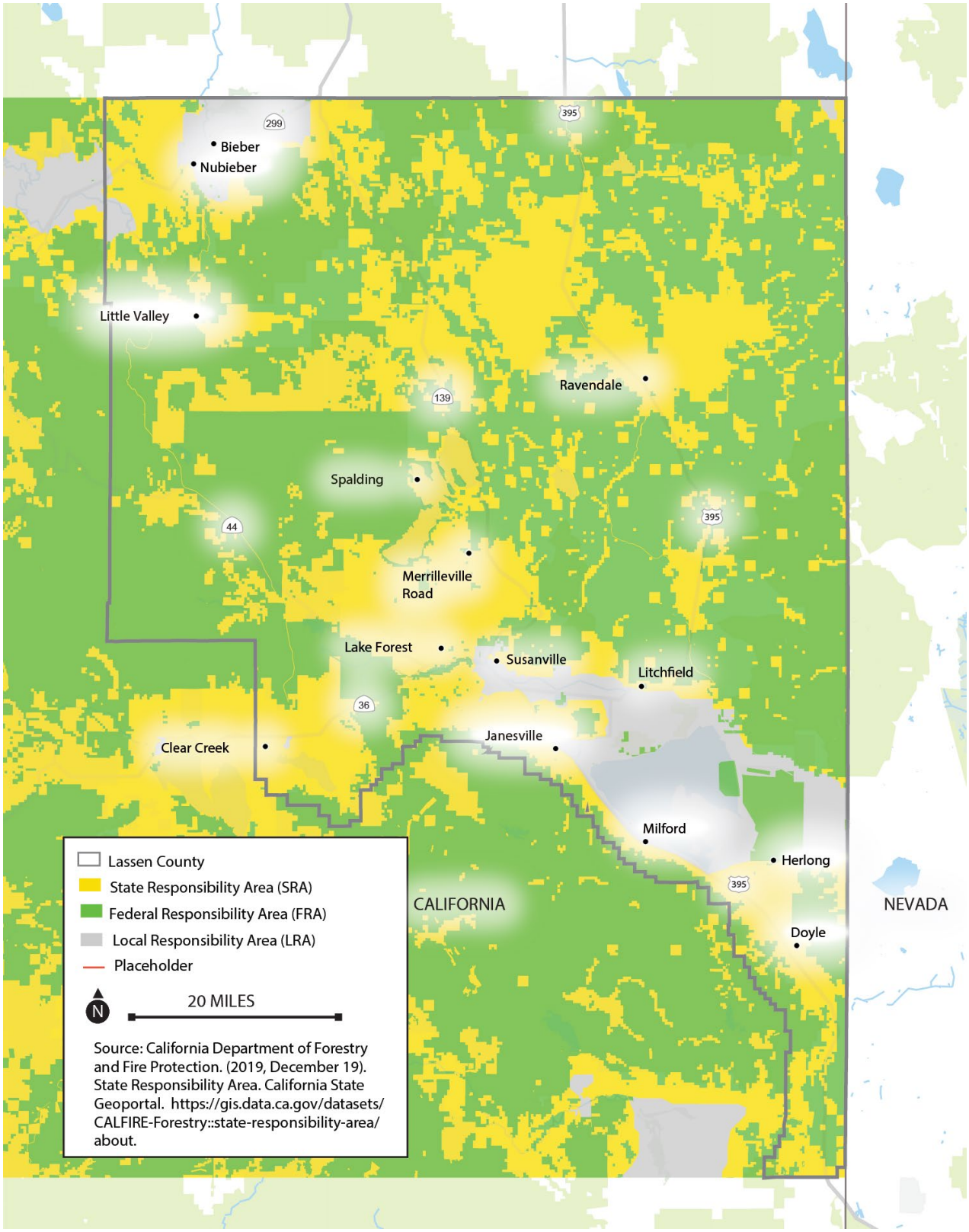
INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Figure 5 Historic Wildfires in Lassen County



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Figure 6 Fire Protection Responsibility



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK