

2023 City of Susanville

Initial Study/Negative Declaration



Report Prepared For:
City of Susanville
66 N Lassen Street
Susanville, CA 96130

Report Prepared By:



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0. Introduction

I. PROJECT TITLE

City of Susanville General Plan Update 2023

II. LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS

City of Susanville Planning & Development

66 N Lassen Street

Susanville, CA 96130

III. CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER

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IV. PROJECT SPONSOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS

City of Susanville Planning & Development

66 N Lassen Street


Susanville, CA 96130

V. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

This Initial Study has been prepared to identify and assess the anticipated environmental impacts of the City of Susanville's 2023 General Plan Update. The Initial Study is also intended to assess whether any environmental effects of the project are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or by other means (§ 15152(b)(2) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines). If such revisions, conditions, or other means are identified, they will be identified as mitigation measures.

This Initial Study relies on State CEQA Guidelines §§ 15064 and 15064.4 in its determination of the significance of environmental effects. According to §15064, the finding as to whether a project may have one or more significant effects shall be based on substantial evidence in the record, and that controversy alone, without substantial evidence of a significant effect, does not trigger the need for an EIR.

The project area consists of the entire city of Susanville. Susanville is in the northeastern portion of California, located in Lassen County. Known for its proximity to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Susanville offers a mix of high desert landscapes and alpine environments. The



city is located at the head of Honey Lake Valley and sits at an elevation of about 4,186 feet. With the Susan River running through it, Susanville provides a mix of river valleys, pine forests, and mountainous terrain.

According to the 2000 Census, Lassen County has a total area of 4,720 square miles, of which Susanville occupies a small but significant portion. Susanville is the only incorporated city in Lassen County. The city's nearby communities include Johnstonville, Milford, and Janesville. Lassen County is bordered by the following counties: Plumas County on the south, Shasta County on the west, Modoc County on the north, and the state of Nevada on the east. The largest city in Lassen County is Susanville itself. Major highways running through Susanville include U.S. Route 395 and State Route 36.

Lassen County is home to parts of the Lassen National Forest (1,700 square miles) and the Lassen Volcanic National Park (106 square miles), offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The county also contains multiple state parks and wildlife areas.

Susanville is served by the Susanville Municipal Airport, providing general aviation services to the local community. The city's proximity to natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities makes it a desirable location for residents and visitors alike.

VIII. PROJECT BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION


Susanville California State law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the County or City, and land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (Gov. Code 65300). The General Plan has seven mandated elements which include Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety.

The Susanville General Plan details the community’s long-term vision and policy framework enabling the city to develop according to its stated goals. This plan identifies the way the city is intending to grow, where it should (and should not) develop, requirements for improvements to public infrastructure, and provisions needed to protect and strengthen the unique community character that has defined Susanville since its inception.

The adoption of the Updated General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements requires that the Susanville City Council approve and adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration through a public hearing with proper notification. The Susanville General Plan is intended to establish the policy framework for future growth and redevelopment of the City over the next 20 years. The plan’s focus is on preserving the rural agriculture character of the community. The preservation of the open space within and surrounding the city is of significant concern to the community.

After adoption, the General Plan becomes an official policy document that is intended to substantially influence subsequent decisions regarding capital expenditures, approvals of land-use or intensity changes, zoning regulation amendments, and similar legislative or administrative actions pertaining to the growth and redevelopment of the community.

The proposed project consists of an update to the City of Susanville General Plan. The project includes updates to the Land use and Circulation elements. Both the Safety and Housing Elements were updated and approved separately. They have been incorporated into this General Plan update for the purpose of maintaining consistency.



This update to the current General Plan is used as a baseline for any additional environmental impacts as a result of this new General Plan Update. Very minor changes have been made since the last General Plan Update and this 2023 General Plan Update primarily consists of more recent information and compliance with more recent State planning laws. The city has experienced a decline in population over the past two decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Susanville was approximately 17,974 in 2000 and had declined to around 15,247 by 2010. Given past trends, there is uncertainty regarding significant growth for Susanville over the next 20 years.

The developable areas described in the previous General Plan remain as the available developable land in the 2023 update. The 2023 update is primarily a technical update to ensure consistency between General Plan elements and reformatting elements into an aesthetically pleasing format to be used for years to come.

VIII. PURPOSE OF THE INITIAL STUDY

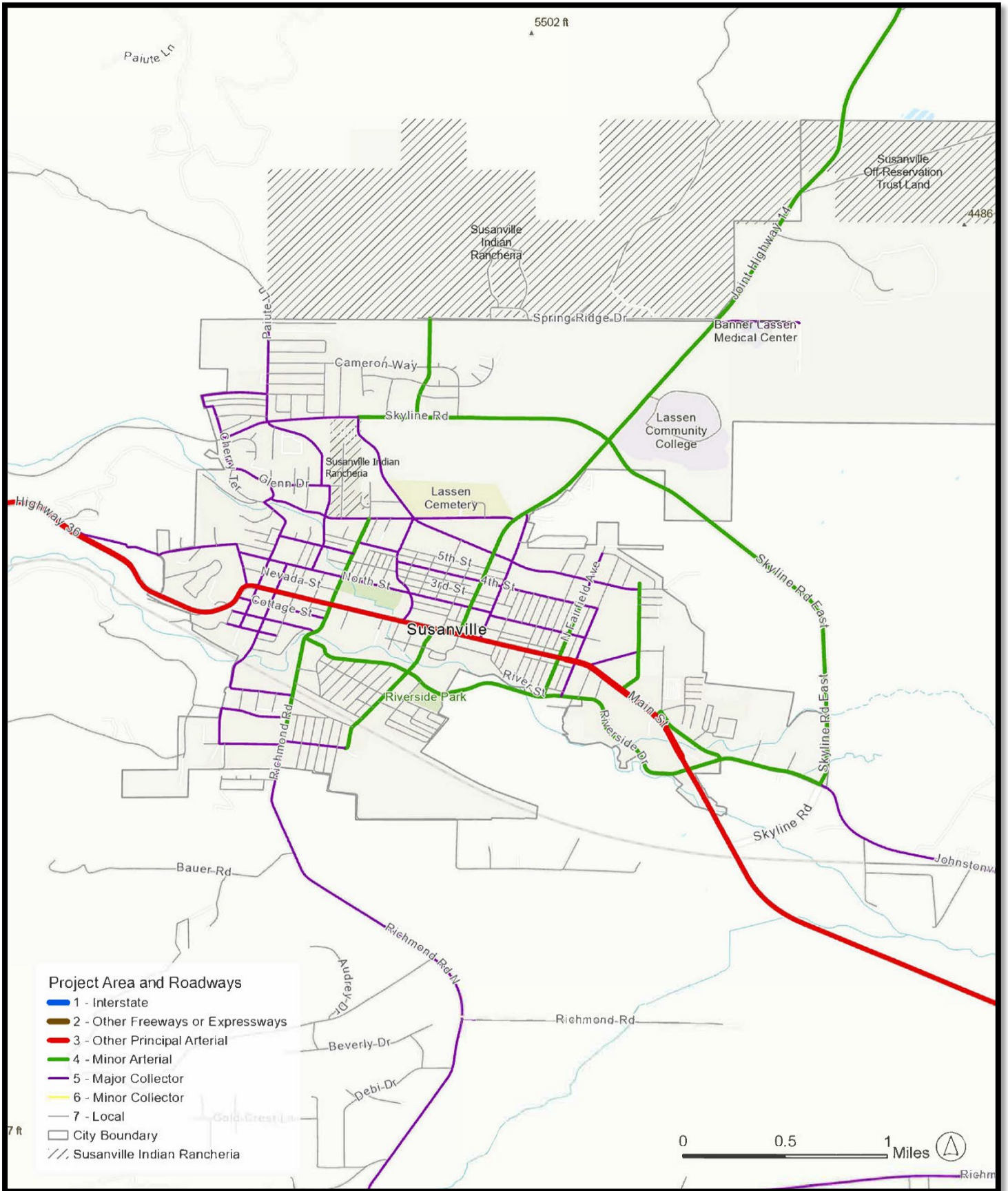
The purpose of the Initial Study is to conduct an environmental review for the 2023 General Plan Update in accordance with §15120 et seq. of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.



VIII. OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL MAY BE REQUIRED

The City of Susanville is the Lead Agency for the proposed project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15050. No specific permits are required to approve the proposed project. Future permit approvals vary among projects and may include, but are not necessarily limited to: Caltrans, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Lassen County, and the California Transportation Commission.

VIII. LOCATION MAP



1. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

None of the environmental factors listed below would be potentially affected by this project, as described on the following pages.

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

Discussion

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

X	I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
	I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____, Executive Secretary, _____ (Date)



2. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

In each area of potential impacts listed in this section, there are one or more questions which assess the degree of potential environmental effects. A response is provided to each question using one of the four impact evaluation criteria described below. A discussion of the response is also included.

- ❖ **Potentially Significant Impact.** This response is appropriate when there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries, upon completion of the Initial Study, an EIR is required.
- ❖ **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** This response applies when 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.
- ❖ **Less than Significant Impact.** A less than significant impact is one which is deemed to have little or no adverse effect on the environment. Mitigation measures are, therefore, not necessary, although they may be recommended to further reduce a minor impact.
- ❖ **No Impact.** This response indicates that either there will be no impact on the environment, or the topic is not relevant to the Project.

3. Environmental Checklist

Responses to the following questions and related discussion indicate if the proposed project will or will potentially have a significant adverse impact on the environment, either individually or cumulatively with other projects. All phases of project planning, implementation, and operation are considered.


I. AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X

Discussion

Susanville is characterized by its picturesque landscapes, encompassing both mountainous terrains and expansive forests. Located near the southern edge of the Cascade Range, Susanville offers stunning views of the nearby mountains, dense forests, and scenic vistas. These views can be enjoyed from various vantage points within the city and its surrounding areas. The local economy benefits significantly from visitors drawn to Susanville's natural beauty and recreational opportunities. This appeal is also a primary reason many individuals choose to call Susanville home.

The Susanville General Plan prioritizes the conservation of open spaces over development. Consistently, transportation strategies are geared towards enhancing the existing system rather than expansive growth. The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, result in aesthetic impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, or visual character, and will not create sources of substantial light or glare which adversely affects views. All future development will require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.



Response to questions a through d): Less than Significant.

Susanville is serviced by California State Routes, local roadways, and other designated paths that showcase the city's natural beauty. These routes offer captivating views of the surrounding landscapes, including nearby mountain ranges, forests, and other scenic landmarks that define Susanville's character. The proposed project does not prescribe, suggest, or mandate the construction of new roadways in any of these regions.

The proposed project encompasses a series of roadway enhancement initiatives, largely focusing on roadway rehabilitation and the enhancement of roadway safety. These improvements will be applied to both State Highways and local routes, ensuring that the city's aesthetic appeal remains undisturbed. Furthermore, there would be no significant alteration leading to indirect population growth due to access enhancements to currently undeveloped areas. The proposed project does not propose the creation of new roads; hence the project would not trigger indirect population growth by improving access to undeveloped zones.

The proposed project outlines the priorities for funding roadway and multimodal transportation improvements that are planned for the next two decades. Implementing the proposed project would not bring about any significant or adverse alterations to Susanville's visual allure. Moreover, there would be no introduction of increased nighttime lighting or daytime glare. This impact is considered minimal, and no mitigation is deemed necessary.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non- agricultural use?				X


Discussion

The General Plan Land Use Element does not identify any additional sites for residential development or changes in density standards. The project will not result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. A goal of this project is to retain the rural and agricultural character that exists in the city of Susanville.

The General Plan will not, in and of itself, result in impacts on farmland, forestland, Williamson Act contracts, timberland, or timberland-zoned Timberland Production. All future development will require project-specific environmental evaluation to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. At such a time that a development proposal is considered that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact. Future development projects will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine if there is any impact on agricultural resources.

Response to question a): No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would allow for roadway and multimodal transportation improvements throughout the City over the next 20 years. The proposed project would not result in the conversion of any agricultural lands to non- agricultural uses, and as such, would have no impact on any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance. There is no impact, and no mitigation is required.

Response to question b): No Impact. The proposed project does not propose any changes to General Plan land use designations or zoning districts and would have no impact on zoning for agricultural use. The proposed project would not result in conflicts with any Williamson Act contracts, nor would it result



in the cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts. Implementation of the proposed project will have no impact on a Williamson Act contract, and no mitigation is required.

Response to question c): No Impact. See responses a) and b) above. The proposed project will have no impact on agricultural lands or operations.

III. AIR QUALITY


	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				X
c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				X
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X

Discussion

Ambient air quality is described in terms of compliance with State and Federal standards, and the levels of air pollutant concentrations considered safe, to protect the public health and welfare. These standards are designed to protect people most sensitive to respiratory distress, such as the elderly, very young children, persons with asthma or other illnesses, and persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise. The EPA has established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for seven air pollution constituents. As permitted by the Clean Air Act, California has adopted more stringent air emissions standards (SAAQS) and expanded the number of regulated air constituents.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is required to designate areas of the state as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for any State standard. An “attainment” designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations do not violate the standard for that pollutant in that area. A “nonattainment” designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once.

Circulation elements in a general plan should estimate air quality impacts associated with changes in land use and projected vehicle trips and speeds. Land use in Susanville is not expected to change notably due to various local factors; therefore, land use is not expected to impact air quality. However,



increases in local traffic and through-traffic, especially of heavy truck traffic along the primary routes, could impact air quality in the community. Air quality impacts resulting from increases in through-traffic were not modeled for this General Plan and should be addressed in the future, but emissions of local traffic have been modeled in the past. The results indicated that emissions for reactive organic gases, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides are expected to decrease through replacement of older vehicles with new, more efficient ones. Particulate levels are expected to stay about the same. Since Lassen County, where Susanville is located, is in attainment area with the air quality standards for several pollutants, maintaining current emissions levels or a decrease in emissions will not affect the county's attainment status. Such a decrease could help offset emissions resulting from through-traffic emissions increases; however, emissions from heavy truck traffic traveling through the community is still of concern. As such, the General Plan update offers several policies aimed at decreasing truck traffic within the city limits, in addition to increasing use of alternative, low-emissions forms of transportation.

The General Plan update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to air quality or plans for air quality or produce pollutants or odors. At such a time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
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?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
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?				X



Discussion

The General Plan Update is a high-level policy document and will not directly result in impacts to wetlands, fish, wildlife, or conflict with existing habitat conservation plans and policies. Individual development proposals will be subject to Susanville's adopted development guidelines and standards. Each development proposal will undergo a specific environmental assessment in accordance with CEQA to identify any potential ecological impacts. Targeted mitigation measures will be developed and implemented to address any identified impacts, ensuring compliance with CEQA requirements.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X

Discussion

This section evaluates the proposed Project's potential impacts on archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources. Resources of concern include, but are not limited to, prehistoric and historic artifacts, burials, sites of religious or cultural significance to Native American groups, and historic structures.

The General Plan update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to cultural resources, including historic, archeological, and paleontological resources. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

VI. ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?				X
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X

Discussion

The General Plan Update sets forth policies promoting energy conservation and energy efficiency. Adoption and implementation of the General Plan would not involve wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy use or conflict with a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

The General Plan update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to energy resources or renewable energy or energy efficiency planning; impacts due to the project are less than significant. All future development will require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				X
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.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
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?				X
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				X



Discussion

The city of Susanville is not in a seismically active region, and there is low potential that the area will be subject to at least moderate earthquakes one or more times over the next century. Throughout recorded history, no major earthquakes have been recorded in Susanville. There are no faults in, around, or near the city of Susanville and the closest identified potentially active fault is situated significantly away from the city's borders.

The city of Susanville is located in the northeastern part of California. Soils in the area provide a foundation for the city's varied terrain. While some areas might experience minor slope failure and erosion during heavy rainfall, due to the region's general landscape, landslides are not a major concern in Susanville.

The General Plan area encompasses a region that may use septic tank systems and might not connect to a public municipal wastewater disposal system. While the General Plan update is a policy-level document and does not prescribe any specific development, any future project involving a septic system must adhere to local environmental health standards. As a result, no significant impacts from sewage disposal are anticipated.

The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to soil resources or from earthquakes, landslides, or other seismic events, so any impacts are less than significant. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact."

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?				X
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				X

Discussion

GHG emissions produced by the residential sector are the result of natural gas and other fossil fuel consumption used for heating and cooking applications. Electricity usage by buildings results in GHG emissions that occur at the power plants and transmission lines used to provide that energy, which may or may not be located within the City limits. All residential development in the city of Susanville must comply with the standards in Title 20, Energy Building Regulation, and Title 24, Energy Conservation Standards of the California Code of Regulations, including CALGreen, to reduce GHG emissions in new construction.

The General Plan Land Use Element does not identify any additional sites for residential development or changing density standards. Development of more than one unit could occur throughout the City on existing lots due to the enactment of SB 91, but due to site restrictions and other local considerations, the City anticipates a limited number of new housing units in future developments. Similarly, the General Plan contains policies and programs intended to further the goals of reducing GHG emissions resulting from new development.

The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to greenhouse gas emissions, climate change impacts, or any applicable plan, policy, or regulation reducing those impacts. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
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?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X



h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				X
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Discussion

The Land Use Element of the General Plan identifies sites designated for residential development. The Land Use Element does not identify any additional sites for residential development or changing density standards. Development of more than one unit could occur throughout the city on existing lots due to the enactment of SB 9, but due to site restrictions and other local considerations, the City anticipates a limited number of new housing units in future developments, consistent with the build-out analysis.

None of the Planning Area is known to contain contaminants and/or hazardous waste. The project is not located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment (Envirostar-California Department of Toxic and Substance Control).

Although the City of Susanville is not located within the boundaries of an airport land use plan, it is in proximity to the Susanville Airport located just outside the city limits. The General Plan has accounted for this by adhering to federal and state regulations and guidelines associated with airports, ensuring minimal impact from hazardous materials and aviation-related activities.

The General Plan will not, in and of itself, result in impacts from hazardous materials, airports, toxic emissions, wildfires, and other emergencies. At the time of development, all existing roads will be required to remain open during the construction period, ensuring that there will be no interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

To maintain a high level of fire safety, the City strictly enforces a weed abatement ordinance. Additionally, the future development of various sites throughout the city will address and mitigate existing open fields which pose a potential fire hazard during the warmer months. At such time that a development proposal is considered, that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards, and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?				X
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				X
e) 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?				X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?				X
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

Discussion

The water system within the Susanville is a public system owned by the City of Susanville. Susanville’s water supply sources have been consistently found to be of excellent quality and without record of contamination. Local soil properties and the City’s water treatment practices ensure that any potential contaminants are effectively managed. Furthermore, septic systems and leach fields within the city’s bounds are known to be reliable and generally pose no threat to the community’s water system. As such, the likelihood of groundwater contamination within Susanville is minimal. Based on the availability and quality of groundwater for municipal use, the capacity to serve the community now and into the future is deemed sufficient.

The City regulates many aspects of construction and development through requirements and ordinances established in the Susanville City Code. Implementation of the General Plan will not increase impacts on water resources. Growth is largely determined by the availability of existing vacant sites. As with many cities, Susanville might see additional housing units constructed on available vacant sites. The Residential zone in the city permits one single-family structure per lot. Development of more than one unit could occur on available vacant sites due to the passing of SB 9, but there are natural and environmental constraints to development. Any new developments will need to adhere to specific construction standards to mitigate potential environmental risks. The City anticipates a limited number of new housing units in future developments.

Adequate public services and facilities are available for all vacant land within the City of Susanville. As with any development, the City will comply with local and county environmental and safety guidelines to ensure the health and safety of its residents. Flooding potential exists in certain areas of Susanville, and any development in these areas would need to take this into account.

The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to drainage, runoff, erosion, flooding, or natural disasters. All future development will require a project-specific environmental evaluation to ensure potential impacts are managed appropriately. While potential impacts to hydrology and water quality are location-specific and cannot be fully assessed until the location of a project site is known, standard practices are in place to manage and mitigate these impacts. Future development will inevitably result in the addition of new impervious surfaces, but this is a normal consequence of development. When a development proposal is considered in the future, it will be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards, and any impacts identified will be addressed with appropriate mitigation measures.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

Discussion

The General Plan for Susanville will not, in and of itself, physically divide a community or conflict with any land use or habitat conservation plans. All future development within Susanville will require a project-specific environmental evaluation to ensure that the implementation of that specific project does not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plans or natural communities' conservation plans, and to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. When a development proposal is considered in the future, it will be subject to Susanville's adopted development guidelines/standards, and any impacts identified will be addressed with appropriate mitigation measures specific to the impact.


XII. NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X

Discussion

In general, the City of Susanville enjoys a relatively quiet environment, with only a few dominant noise sources present within or around the city. While the city does experience a steady flow of traffic, the noise from this traffic tends to be most noticeable during daytime hours. Major thoroughfares such as Main Street/State Route 36, Ash Street, and Skyline Road do not register noise levels that exceed residential noise standards during peak hours. At present, there are no immediate plans in place for noise mitigation specifically targeting these corridors.

As roadways are improved in the future, the city, Caltrans, and Lassen County will undertake a comprehensive noise analysis in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations. This analysis would involve detailed noise monitoring, modeling, and impact assessments. The results



would inform the design of targeted noise mitigation strategies, such as the potential installation of sound barriers or implementation of traffic-calming measures, as part of the overall environmental evaluation.

Rail lines in Susanville currently do not impact the well-being of residents in terms of noise levels. Should there be a future increase in train frequencies, the City will consider implementing noise mitigation or reduction measures at that time.

While Susanville is not in the immediate vicinity of a major airport, it does have a city airport. The operations of this airport do not significantly contribute to the city's noise profile. Importantly, Susanville does not fall within the influence zone of any major airport. Looking forward, the General Plan Update will not introduce any major noise-related impacts. Every future development in Susanville will undergo a specific environmental assessment to gauge and manage potential noise impacts. Any future development proposals will align with Susanville's established development guidelines, and any identified impacts of future projects will be analyzed through CEQA guidelines and the appropriate mitigations or project modifications will be addressed at that time.

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X


Discussion

Significant population growth in Susanville is not anticipated over the next 20 years. The city's growth potential is influenced by the availability of existing vacant sites across various zones, including Residential, Commercial, and Industrial. While the Residential zone traditionally allows for one single-family structure per lot, legislative changes such as SB 9 have opened the possibility for increased housing density. Similarly, economic development initiatives and land-use policies are continually evolving to encourage multi-use and commercial developments. These collective efforts aim to create a balanced, sustainable, and economically vibrant community. Yet, certain environmental constraints, like floodplain locations and the requisite lot area for septic systems, pose challenges to such developments. Consequently, any constructions on these residential lots will necessitate specific measures, such as elevating buildings above the base flood elevation.

Susanville's General Plan Update is designed to address multiple facets of urban development, including residential housing, economic development, and transportation. While specific allocations for new residential units remain in line with the needs of various income groups, the update also emphasizes circulation and multi-modal transportation options. It aims to enhance the efficiency of existing transportation networks, prioritize sustainable travel modes like walking and biking, and integrate these into land-use planning.

The development standards in Susanville encompass residential zoning and balanced commercial and industrial zones that complement the existing built environment. Through this approach, the General Plan Update ensures not only housing adequacy but also economic vibrancy and transportation efficiency.

The General Plan Update introduces programs and policies that promote a range of land uses, including but not limited to housing conservation, potential annexation, economic development, and circulation. The update to the General Plan does not, by itself, introduce significant population, housing, or



transportation impacts. All future developments will undergo specific environmental assessments, and any identified impacts will be managed through appropriate mitigation measures. Proposed developments will align with Susanville's broader planning goals, ensuring that they meet both current and future needs efficiently.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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:				X
Fire protection?				X
Police protection?				X
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X

Discussion

The City of Susanville contracts with Lassen County for police and fire service. Adequate levels of police and fire protection service will be maintained as the city continues to develop over the current and future planning periods. The projected housing production in Susanville is not expected to strain the delivery of these essential services to its residents. By continuously overseeing new developments, any required improvements to maintain service levels can be promptly identified and implemented. As such, police and fire protection do not present limitations to the city's growth.

Susanville is served by the Susanville School District, with several educational facilities catering to the needs of its residents. Currently, there are various educational institutions within the city that cater to different age groups and educational needs.

The General Plan Update for Susanville will not, by itself, affect the provision of public services, which includes fire and police protection, schools, and parks. Future developments in the city will be subject to impact fees designed to offset potential burdens on public services. These fees also ensure that developments meet fire-flow requirements and provide suitable access for fire and police vehicles. Every future development in Susanville will undergo a specific environmental assessment to ensure potential impacts are managed appropriately. Whenever a development proposal arises, it will adhere to Susanville's established development guidelines, and any identified impacts will be addressed with

tailored mitigation measures.

XV. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

Discussion

The City of Susanville is a hub for various parks and recreational facilities, designated as Parks and Open Space. Memorial Park, nestled in the heart of the city, serves as a focal point for community events and boasts playground equipment, picnic spots, and a skate park. Riverside Park, perched alongside the Susan River, provides a peaceful setting complete with walking trails, picnic areas, and fishing opportunities. Susanville Ranch Park, positioned on the city's outskirts, is celebrated for its extensive trail system, accommodating hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrian enthusiasts. Among the prominent trails in Susanville is the Biz Johnson Trail, a popular path for hiking, walking, horse riding, and mountain biking, offering splendid views of the region's natural beauty. Additionally, the Susanville Disc Golf Course stands as a favorite destination for both locals and visitors, presenting a challenging course enveloped by Susanville's picturesque landscape.

Implementing the proposed General Plan update for Susanville will not directly impact any existing recreational facilities. The plan neither predicts a surge in the usage of these facilities nor foresees the construction or expansion of additional ones. Every prospective development in Susanville will undergo a thorough environmental evaluation to ascertain minimal impacts. Developers will be mandated to contribute impact fees, crafted to counterbalance potential burdens on public services. Whenever a development proposal is presented, it will align with Susanville's established development guidelines, ensuring any identified impacts are adeptly managed through tailored mitigation measures.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?				X
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?				X

Discussion

Susanville's General Plan offers a comprehensive framework that addresses various aspects of urban development. While it neither identifies new sites for residential, commercial, or industrial development within current city limits, nor alters existing density standards, it includes important additional dimensions. These encompass improvements in multi-modal transportation networks, circulation efficiency, and land-use policies that emphasize walking and biking infrastructure. The plan maintains the existing road functional classification within the city, aligning it with both present and future transportation needs.

The General Plan also contemplates the potential for annexing land to the east of the existing city limit. Should this annexation occur, a CEQA assessment will be undertaken to rigorously evaluate potential land-use impacts, including considerations related to transportation, housing, and the natural environment. This will ensure alignment with the city's broader planning objectives while providing appropriate environmental mitigation.

A noteworthy addition to the General Plan Circulation Element is the incorporation of SB 743, which took effect on July 1, 2020. SB 743 was enacted to shift the focus of transportation impact analysis from Level of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews. The primary intent behind SB 743 is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage the development of a multimodal transportation network, and streamline the approval process for infill and transit-oriented developments. By focusing on VMT, the goal is to promote more sustainable land use patterns and transportation solutions that minimize environmental impacts.

The General Plan, by its nature, will not directly affect the circulation system, congestion management, air traffic, or the safety of design features. It also aligns with various policies, plans, and programs related to transportation. Every future development in Susanville will require a detailed environmental evaluation to ascertain that potential impacts remain minimal.

Impacts related to transportation and traffic are highly dependent on the specific location. Factors like traffic congestion and associated impacts are determined based on the intensity of development at a particular site. When a development proposal comes forward, it will adhere to Susanville's established development guidelines. Any identified impacts from the project will be mitigated based on the specific situation. For each project, a new traffic analysis will be conducted, recommending mitigation measures to ensure impacts remain below significant levels.

Additional details of no impact findings are as follows:

Consistency with Transportation Plans: The General Plan Update is consistent with the Lassen County Regional Transportation Plan and the goals set by the City of Susanville. The Update aligns with the objective of shifting travel modes to more sustainable options.

Traffic Flow and Congestion: There are no proposed development and land use changes under the General Plan Update and no anticipated creation of significant impacts on traffic congestion or reduction of the levels of service below the established thresholds.

Promotion of Sustainable Modes: The Update introduces enhanced provisions for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, ensuring safer and more efficient travel routes. Such provisions are anticipated to promote a shift towards walking and biking, leading to healthier lifestyle choices and reduced



vehicular traffic.

Safety: The proposed infrastructure and design standards integrated within the General Plan Update prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. No negative impacts on transportation safety are anticipated.

Public Transit: While the focus is on promoting walking and biking, the Susanville General Plan Update also considers connectivity with public transit, ensuring that the transportation network remains cohesive and comprehensive.

Upon comprehensive evaluation and assessment conducted in accordance with CEQA guidelines, it is determined that the General Plan Update poses no significant adverse impacts on the transportation and traffic elements within the City of Susanville and its potential annexed areas. The Update not only aligns with the broader objectives of the city and county but also supports a noteworthy shift towards more sustainable, non-motorized modes of transport, such as walking and biking. These measures are expected to contribute positively to community well-being, overall public health, and a reduction in VMT. For any future developments and any potential annexation of land situated to the east of the existing city limits, a detailed CEQA assessment will be rigorously conducted to scrutinize, evaluate, and if necessary, mitigate impacts related to transportation, housing, and the natural environment. As such, a Negative Declaration for this section is found to be warranted.

XVII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 the Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or				X
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.				X

Discussion

In accordance with AB 52 (specifically PRC 21080.3.1), Native American consultation is required upon request by a California Native American tribe that has previously requested that the City provide it with notice of such projects. Pursuant to provisions of AB 52, the City of Susanville contacted all tribes referenced from the Native American Heritage Commission Tribe list for Susanville to see if any were interested in consultation regarding this project. Among the vital communities in Susanville is the Susanville Indian Rancheria. Their tribal reservation abuts the northern city limits, and their presence and input in the community are indispensable. The tribe holds sacred lands that have immense cultural and historical significance. Furthermore, the tribe operates a casino that attracts numerous tourists to the area, further emphasizing their importance to the local economy and culture.

Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014 (i.e., AB 52), requires Lead Agencies to evaluate a project’s potential to impact “tribal cultural resources.” Such resources include “sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that are eligible for



inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources.” AB 52 also gives Lead Agencies the discretion to determine, supported by substantial evidence, whether a resource qualifies as a “tribal cultural resource.”

The General Plan Update consists of a long-term policy program for the community’s future development. The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, result in impacts to tribal resources. All future projects will require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant.

XVIII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?				X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

Discussion

The General Plan Update consists of a long-term policy program for the community's future development. Currently, all vacant land within the city limits of Susanville, designated for residential, commercial, and industrial uses, is situated near essential infrastructure systems such as streets, water, gas, and electrical distribution networks. This existing infrastructure also supports an efficient circulation system for all road users. Given this robust infrastructure framework, there are no significant constraints to the development of housing, commercial spaces, or industrial zones within the current city limits. Additionally, the infrastructure is adequately designed to serve potential buildout scenarios



specified in the General Plan Update, including anticipated improvements in multi-modal transportation and municipal infrastructure.

The Lassen County Solid Waste Management Agency provides solid waste management oversight, and solid waste reduction and recycling program services for the city of Susanville and the surrounding unincorporated areas of Lassen County. They own a recycling facility and landfill in the county. The landfill license with the state has the capacity to meet the demands of the city and the surrounding region. It has adequate solid waste capacity to meet demand for all future development projects in Susanville.

The General Plan Update will not, in and of itself, impact public utilities service for communication, water, sewer, solid waste disposal, and storm drainage. All future development will require project-specific environmental evaluation to determine that any potential impacts are less than significant. At such time that a development proposal is considered that project will be subject to adopted development guidelines and standards and any impacts identified with the development project will be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact.

XIX. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?				X
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)?				X
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				X

Discussion

Implementation of the Susanville General Plan will not create any significant or adverse impacts. Potential site-specific impacts that cannot be known at this time will be addressed in conjunction with any development proposal submitted for the individual project sites in Susanville. No new impacts are anticipated as a result of the Susanville General Plan Update.



4. References

- California Air Resources Board (CARB), Air Quality Standards and Area Designations (2018).
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- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), Cortese List Data Resources (2022).
- California Transportation Commission, 2021 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (2021).
- California Data Exchange Center, Department of Water Resources (2021-2022).
- Lassen County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures.
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