

# Key Choices for Planning Areas Overview

## The Planning Effort

Lassen County is working with communities in the southeastern portion of the county to update the area's plan for the future. The effort is called the Lassen County Area Plan Update.

A series of committee and communities in April 2009 helped identify key issues and opportunities in the planning areas. Using the feedback received at those meetings the planning team has prepared draft vision statements and key choices for each of the planning areas. Your input on the vision and key choices is critical to ensure the plan reflects your values and desired future.

Feedback received on the key choices and vision statements, will be used to develop a preferred future scenario for each planning area. The preferred scenarios will be combined to help shape the draft Area Plan.

The project website contains helpful background information, maps, and summaries from previous committee work and public meetings. Please check the website often to view the latest draft work products and meeting results.

## Polling Options

This information is intended to summarize the information presented at community meetings in June 2009, where we will conduct a live key-pad polling exercise with meeting participants. For those unable to attend the community meetings, this information corresponds to an on-line survey that will be made available on the project website.

## Purpose and Intent of Key Choices

The study area covers a large and diverse area, stretching from Susanville to the Nevada state line. Within the study area, the individual communities are different and face unique issues and opportunities. In addition, the future desired by residents in each of these different areas may be just as diverse.

In order to understand the desired direction for each community, the planning team has prepared a series of key choices to illustrate different alternatives for future land use and conservation patterns in each of the planning areas. These key choices present different options for the communities' futures, and also reflect current patterns and trends. They take into account the different ideas and values that the community has expressed so far, offer distinct choices for each planning area, and identify required actions to make each choice a reality.

Choices represent "big picture" concepts and alternatives, and are not necessarily property-specific. As the planning process moves towards a preferred plan, the maps will be refined and more specific (especially in Town Centers).

## Why do Land Use Patterns Matter?

The key choices ask about land use and growth patterns at a broad level, and explore concepts such as whether new growth should be concentrated in town center and/or already developed areas, or if it should be dispersed. An area's land use patterns have the potential to influence a number of factors, including:

- **Environment and Agriculture Conservation** – With dispersed or unplanned development patterns, the quantity and quality of prime agricultural lands, open spaces, and natural resources (such as water and air, wildlife habitat, and scenic views) may be diminished.
- **Community Services and Infrastructure** – Planned or concentrated patterns lend themselves to potential development of community water and/or sewer systems, and improved services and infrastructure such as the transportation network, and fire protection and accessibility. Unplanned development patterns may put unexpected strain on existing infrastructure such as individual wells and roads.
- **Fiscal and Economic Wellbeing** – The cost of providing services (such as fire protection, roads, and law enforcement) is greater when new residents and development are dispersed. Existing residents and property owners should not have to shoulder the costs of new growth or development, and cost savings and efficiencies are most likely to occur when land uses are coordinated and planned.
- **Community Compatibility and Character** – Planned development patterns reduce the potential for conflicts between uses (such as residential development near agricultural operations), and also helps to establish a desired character or distinct “sense of place” for residents.

## Key Choices

As you answer the key choices questions, please keep in mind your desired vision for your community, as well as the impacts that land use and growth patterns have on that desired future.