

# CITY OF CLEARLAKE



## Background Report

### CITY OF CLEARLAKE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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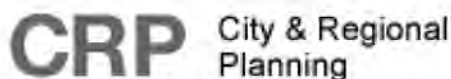
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# City of Clearlake Background Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Introduction

This Background Report is a guide for the development of the City of Clearlake’s 2013 General Plan. The Background Report covers the planning and outreach process, demographics, and community outlook in Clearlake, California. The Report is an overview of existing conditions and emerging directions, regarding:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety
- Economic Development
- Public Facilities
- Community Design
- Health
- Economic Development
- Circulation
- Conservation
- Housing

A thorough assessment of these elements is important in understanding the City's needs and mapping the future. The objective of the Report is to inform appropriate goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the City of Clearlake's General Plan.

California law requires cities and counties to adopt a General Plan to guide future development. The General Plan is the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based (California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), 2003).

This report was produced by graduate students in the City and Regional Planning Department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo under the supervision of a faculty member. Students collected information from existing documents and meetings held with City officials and community members. The Report was completed in December 2012.

The following section briefly summarizes the Report's chapters by element.

## **Element Summaries**

### **Land Use**

According to the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the Land Use Element of the General Plan must include a diagram of all land uses within city limits. The major types of land uses included in the Land Use Chapter are residential, commercial, mixed-use, industrial, open space, public-institutional facilities, and vacant. The type, intensity, and density are identified on each of Clearlake's 14,518 parcels, according to the 2012 land use inventory. Additionally, potential specific plan areas, according to the 2007 Vision Task Force Report, are identified. The Land Use Chapter identifies potential areas for future growth along Lakeshore Drive, as well as the undeveloped acreage in Clearlake.

### **Circulation**

The Circulation Element details the existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public facilities in the City of Clearlake. It provides an overview of resident's travel behavior, existing roadways, transit system, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian facilities and emerging directions for transportation infrastructure.

### **Housing**

The Housing Element, which is required by state law, reports on the City of Clearlake's ability to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The chapter describes the existing conditions of Clearlake's housing stock based on information gathered in the 2012 Land Use Inventory and from the 2010 Census. From analysis of this information, it was found that Clearlake has 8,487 housing units of which single-family, modular and mobile housing structures account for a majority of the housing stock. According to community input and current trends, improving the quality of housing, more housing for all

income levels and more affordable housing carry the heaviest demand for Clearlake’s housing needs.

## **Conservation**

The Conservation chapter of the background report discusses the natural resources within the City of Clearlake and surrounding areas of Lake County and the Clear Lake watershed. Topics of discussion include geology and minerals, soil, water resources, water quality, air quality, and biological resources. The chapter discusses the condition of the natural resources as well as federal, state, and local regulations governing resource conservation and management. The largest natural resource in Lake County is Clear Lake, which is undergoing cleanup for pollution and mercury contamination. This chapter concludes with emerging directions for resource management which will shape General Plan policies and programs. Community input and legal regulations provide the information in the development of emerging directions, including water quality management, habitat and wildlife preservation, and air quality control.

## **Open Space**

The Open Space Element presents information on two types of open space within the City of Clearlake, including parks and open space for natural resource management. Clearlake currently has 36 acres of park space, which equates to 2.36 acres per 1,000 residents and meets the National Recreation and Parks Association standard for 2 acres of city parks per 1,000 people. Although meeting national standards, parks within Clearlake are not sufficiently distributed throughout the city. Bordering the City of Clearlake lays Anderson Marsh Historic State Park as well as McVicar Wildlife Sanctuary. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, consists of more than 1,065 acres of land which was home to the historic Pomo Indians. The Historic Park contains ample riparian, grassland, oak woodland, and Tule marsh habitats. McVicar Wildlife Sanctuary is a nature preserve that protects hundreds of acres of valuable wildlife habitat and Tule marsh.

## **Noise**

The Noise Element identifies both sources and sensitive receptors of noise. The chapter is intended to inform goals, objectives, policies, and programs in the General Plan to alleviate unwanted sound produced within Clearlake. The major sources of noise are traffic on ST 53 and Lakeshore Drive as well as animal nuisances and lake activities. Potential policies reflect the desired allowable level of noise intrusion. With future development plans, the impact of traffic and construction noise ought to reflect courtesy to residents and mitigation measures should be put in place by local, state, and federal agencies.

## **Safety**

The Safety Element identifies potential natural and manmade hazards in Clearlake to ensure that the City takes adequate mitigation measures when possible, so that public health and safety are not compromised. The goal is to reduce risks of injury, death, and property damage as a result of hazards such as fire, flooding, and earthquakes. Clearlake’s location between wildland foothills and Clear Lake exposes the City to fire and flooding hazards. Seismic events

are another potential hazard in the City, and could cause damage from shaking, liquefaction, landslide, or a seiche. The City acknowledges that planning for safety from various hazards requires cooperation from several federal, state, and local agencies, and is working diligently to ensure it meets all standards.

## **Economic Development**

The Economic Development Element is an optional element in the General Plan. This chapter provides the background information for development of General Plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs to improve and enhance the City economy. The chapter details the economic conditions within the City of Clearlake and describes location and distribution of commercial areas, labor force and employment statistics, and introduces economic performance indicators. Commercial space in the City is limited, with Lakeshore Drive operating as the main commercial corridor. Other highlights of the economic conditions of The City indicate a large available labor force, yet high rates of unemployment and outsourcing for local jobs. The housing to jobs ratio indicates a need for job training to improve the skill level of the local workforce as well as a need to improve the housing stock to match the needs of workers who live outside of the City. The outlook for economic conditions in the future point to a need to increase availability of local jobs, provide additional business and retail opportunities, and attract tourists to the City. The City has plenty of opportunities to improve local conditions.

## **Public Facilities**

The Public Facilities Element describes the existing services as provided by the City and local utilities, and identifies deficiencies or inadequacies to meet the needs of the City. The City's public facilities should serve all residents within the city limits and include public infrastructure and important services. The items covered in this chapter include utility services, health and safety services, police and fire services, as well as education services. The emerging directions section of this chapter identifies key areas in which to develop policies, set goals, and establish programs for the City of Clearlake. These directions include a focus on child development, waste, health and safety services, as well as water infrastructure.

## **Community Design**

Community design and sense of place refer to the unique character and features of a city's built environment and natural landscape. The Community Design Element of the General Plan has two main roles; it identifies existing conditions of Clearlake's built environment and provides ways to preserve or enhance desirable community attributes. This element provides additional direction for the prescriptions ascribed to uses in the Land Use Element. This additional direction includes not only the identification of Clearlake's development pattern, form, and structure, but also, the unique characteristics of the City that together form its sense of place. This chapter of the Background Report identifies key areas of interest for community design in Clearlake, including streetscape; signage and wayfinding; and building design and quality.

## Health

The Health Element identifies measures of physical and mental wellness in the community. Community objectives include access to recreation and open space, access to healthy foods, access to medical services, access to public transit and safe active transportation, access to quality housing, access to economic opportunities, safe neighborhoods and public spaces, and environmental quality. In association with Lake County, Clearlake is at a higher risk for asthma, heart disease, obesity, all cancers, coronary heart disease, liver disease, cirrhosis, inadequate prenatal care, teen pregnancy, adult arrests for DUI, alcohol-related motor accidents, under-age alcohol usage, and adult smoking than the State of California (2011 Lake County Community Health Assessment). With a growing senior population, access to transportation, health care, and recreation will become increasingly important.





# 1. INTRODUCTION

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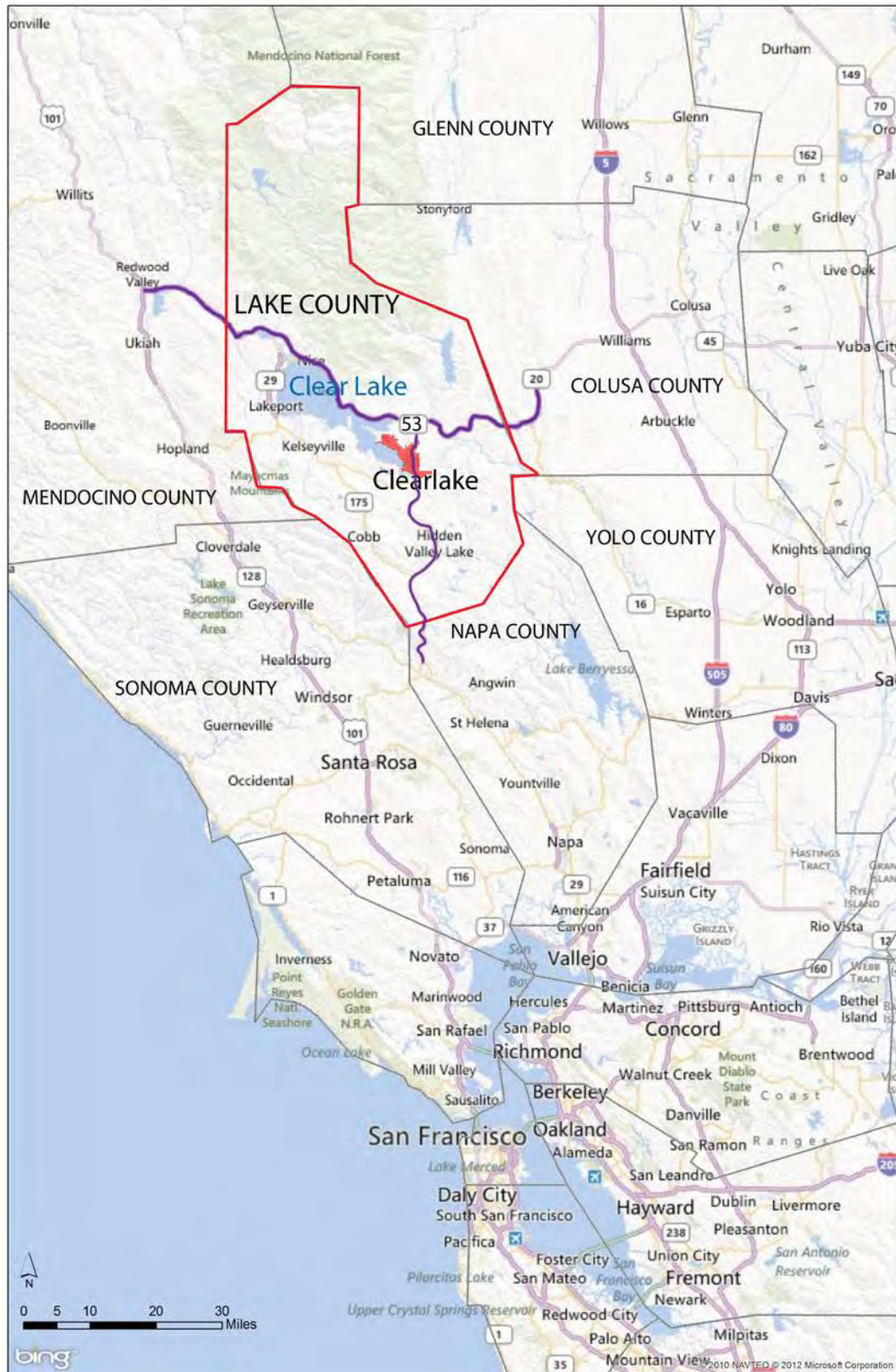
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## A. SETTING

### 1. Location

The City of Clearlake is located in Northern California, approximately 80 miles north of San Francisco. It is situated in rural Lake County, bordered by Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Colusa and Glenn Counties. The City is 10.8 square miles and sits on the southern shore of Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake entirely within the State. Clearlake is bisected by Highway 53, a major connector between Highways 20 and 29, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Locator Map



## 2. Setting

The dramatic landscape surrounding the City was formed by the collision of the Pacific and North American plates over one million years ago. This tectonic activity formed Mount Konocti, a dormant volcano rising 4,300 feet above sea level. Situated to the west, across the Lake from the City of Clearlake, Konocti dominates scenic viewpoints from various locations in the City. Clear Lake is estimated to have formed approximately 2.5 million years ago, making it possibly the oldest lake in North America.

Clear Lake is a major life force for the City of Clearlake. The Lake is renowned for its abundant fish stock, rare and migratory birds, and a host of other wildlife living in Clearlake's surrounding wetlands, grasslands and oak woodlands. Residents and visitors are attracted to the area for its natural beauty and recreational activities like boating, fishing, camping, and bird watching. However, odorous algal blooms are an ongoing challenge for Clear Lake and the surrounding communities.

Clearlake is easily characterized as a rural, small town. Residents and visitors value the slow-pace of life and laid-back atmosphere of the community. The majority of land within City boundaries is characterized as open space or vacant. The building stock is predominantly residential housing. Commercial areas are concentrated along Lakeshore Drive and around the Safeway and Wal-mart shopping centers. A high percentage of Clearlake roads remain unpaved, contributing to access challenges for waste management and emergency services.

## 3. Climate

The City of Clearlake enjoys a moderate, Mediterranean-like climate. Summers are generally dry and warm, while winters are wet. Winter temperatures average between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Summer temperatures can exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but can also drop below 50 degrees at night. Year round winds blow generally from the west and the northwest. Average yearly rainfall varies annually around 25 to 30 inches.

## B. HISTORY

The area that would become the City of Clearlake was home to one of the largest groups of people in prehistoric California, the Southeastern Pomo Indians. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, located just southeast of the City, protects 10,000 year old archeological sites and rich habitats that supported the Pomo people.

In the 19th century, American pioneers and European families began to settle in the area and take over the land for agricultural and mining purposes. Towards the end of the 19th century, luxury resorts and hot springs around the Lake became a destination for wealthy vacationers. The City of Clearlake grew slowly outward from the first resorts established on the shores of Clear Lake during this era.

In 1980, Clearlake was incorporated as an independent city within Lake County with a total population of less than 10,000 people. Over the last thirty years, Clearlake has experienced slow but steady growth. With just over 15,000 residents, Clearlake still encompasses a rural character and small town atmosphere.

## C. LONG RANGE PLANNING

California law requires both cities and counties to adopt a General Plan to guide future development (Government Code Sections 65300 et seq.). The General Plan outlines goals and policies to guide long-range planning within a city or county, and it is to “act as a 'constitution' for development, the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based” (California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research [OPR], 2003). According to the OPR guidelines, the General Plan “expresses community development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land use, both public and private” (OPR, 2003).

California law mandates that a General Plan cover seven elements, Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. Four additional elements are included in this plan enhancement for depth: Public Facilities, Health, Community Design, and Economic Development.

Clearlake’s most current General Plan was completed in 1983 after the City was first incorporated. This background report will help guide the General Plan Project, the enhancement and update of the nearly 30-year-old document. In collaboration with the City of Clearlake, this background report is the work of the planning team of second-year graduate students and a faculty supervisor in the City and Regional Planning Program at the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

## D. PLANNING BOUNDARIES

A general plan must cover the territory within the boundaries of the adopting city as well as any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning (§65300; OPR, 2003). This section describes the planning area for the City of Clearlake addressed in this background report.

### 1. City Limit

The city limit encompasses incorporated territory where land use is controlled by the city (OPR, 2003). Clearlake’s city limit encompasses an area of about 6,910 acres. Land use within Clearlake’s city limit includes urban land use patterns of residential, commercial, agricultural and vacant land (Lake LAFCO, 1987).

## 2. Sphere of Influence (SOI)

A city's Sphere of Influence (SOI), is adopted by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory that is the city's ultimate service area (OPR, 2003). In 1987, Lake LAFCO adopted an SOI for Clearlake to include approximately 7,310 acres of unincorporated land (Lake LAFCO, 1987). In 1989, this area was amended to include properties owned by the Clearlake Hotel and Resort Co. located within the Clearlake Oaks Fire Protection District.

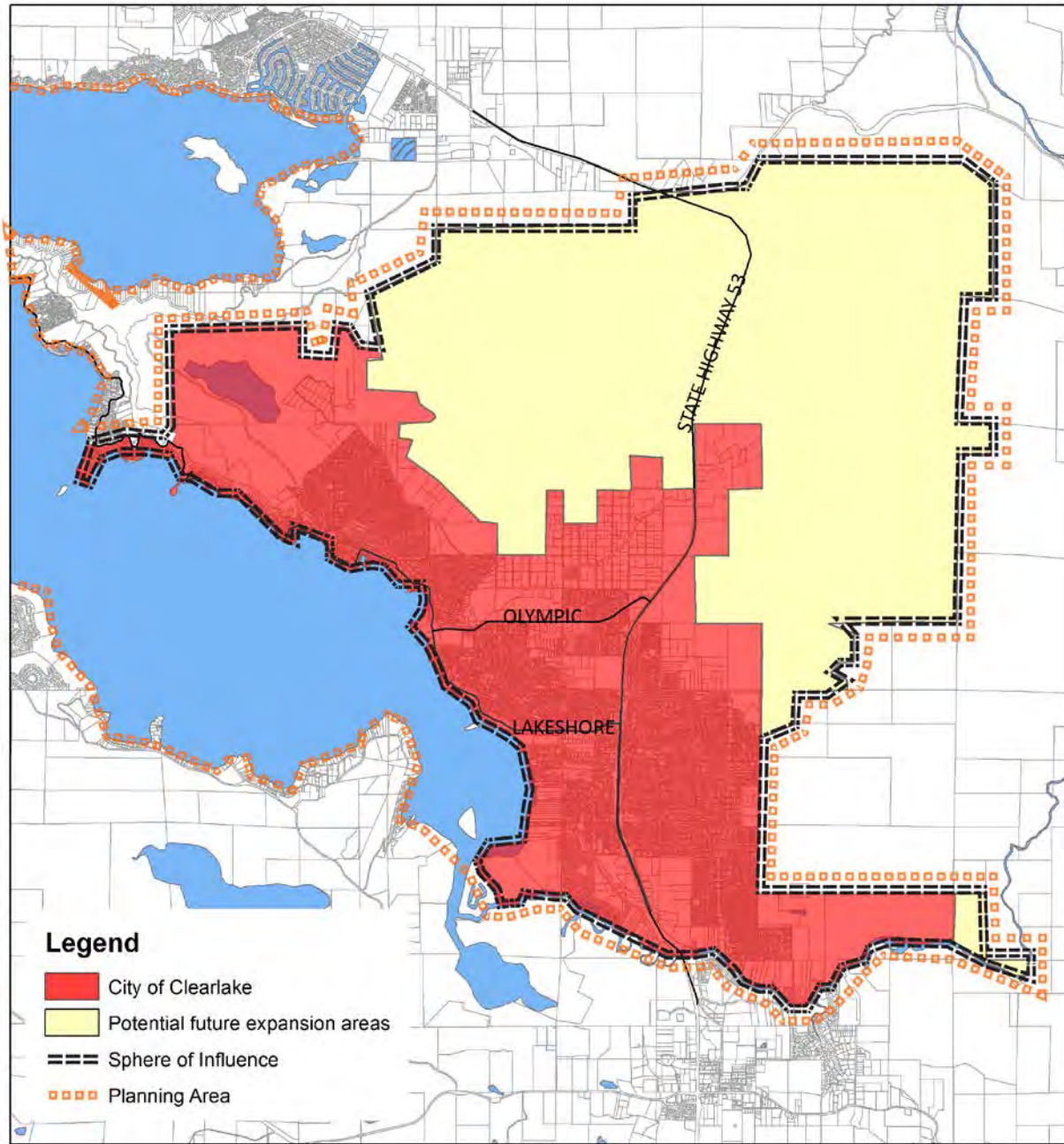
Clearlake's SOI follows logical divisions between communities and centers of growth extending eastward (Lake LAFCO, 1987). Land uses within the unincorporated area of the SOI are predominately undeveloped, vacant and open space lands (Lake LAFCO, 1987). Public facilities including police, fire, street, water, sewer, and administrative services are required to accommodate the area within the City of Clearlake's Sphere of Influence.

## 3. Planning Area

A City's planning area boundary encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory bearing a relation to the City's planning. The planning area may extend beyond the Sphere of Influence (OPR, 2003). In Clearlake's case, the Lake plays a significant role in planning for the City; therefore, it is included in the planning area.



Figure 1.2 Sphere of Influence and Planning Area



Lake County LAFCO, 1989

## E. REFERENCES

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