

# GREATER HIGGINS AREA PLAN

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are answers to questions asked during the first community workshop on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. There was not an opportunity during the meeting to answer every question, so all questions asked by community members are included in this FAQ.

- ***What is an Area Plan?***  
Area Plans are informational policy documents that are used to address specific issues within a community to provide long-term guidance and stability in implementing identified County and community goals. See the Nevada County Planning webpage at: <https://mynevadacounty.com/1098/Area-Plans>
- ***Will this plan cover all aspects of development such as residential, commercial, and recreational?***  
Yes, the intention of this plan is to cover all the uses mentioned: commercial, residential including multifamily, opportunities for recreation uses. However, it will be a high-level policy document.
- ***Will the plan address existing uses and zoning?***  
The project team is undergoing an existing conditions analysis to study existing uses and zoning in the area. Recommendations may be made in the Plan regarding desired future uses, but the Plan will not make any changes to the zoning ordinance.
- ***Where can we get more information about the area's zoning?***  
The County website and the Greater Higgins Area Plan website have links to an interactive map.
- ***It does not look like there are areas where recreational use can be fostered, things like walking trails, dog parks, skate parks, etc. For those who do not have LOP access, there are not community building areas for residents to use. Are there areas being planned like these?***  
The Greater Higgins Area Plan will make recommendations regarding recreational uses. By listening to the community and learning their objectives and priorities regarding recreation, we will make recommendations in the Plan.
- ***Can the existing trail on Combie Road be expanded to allow golf carts to allow access to commercial services eliminated by the movement of businesses to the Higgins Corner?***  
Ways to travel to Higgins Corner by alternatives means such as walking, biking, and using golf carts was a common objective of community members who attended the workshop. The Plan will develop recommendations to improve safe travel options and convenient connections for people traveling by means other than motor vehicles
- ***Is there a plan for traffic to be diverted to bypass Auburn?***  
There are no current plans for a bypass diversion for State Route 49 through Auburn. Previous studies found that a bypass is unfeasible. In any case, changes to SR 49 are not part of the Greater Higgins Area Plan focus.
- ***If the plan includes multi-family houses, commercial, etc, what is the plan for mitigating traffic issues, which are already an issue in this particular area, along with Hwy 49?***  
The Plan will assess existing traffic impacts in the Plan Area. These findings will be used to help guide decision-making on what future types and amounts of development are desired for the Area Plan.

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- ***Have fire evacuation routes been discussed if there is further housing development?***  
 Safe evacuation during emergency events is an issue brought up by many Greater Higgins Area residents. The Plan will seek to incorporate guidance regarding evacuation as part of its recommendations on transportation and circulation.
- ***Is the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) from about 4-5 years ago being included in the area plan?***  
 The County Housing Element 2019-2027 process resulted in the rezoning of three properties to accommodate higher density housing in Plan Area. Environmental Review was done on the Housing Element including these parcels. Findings from the environmental review document will be reviewed during the development of the Area Plan.
- ***Is the Area Plan integrated or coordinated to transportation plans for the greater area?***  
 The analysis of existing transportation conditions to be done by the Project Team will include a review of General Plan and other relevant documents pertaining to transportation. That understanding will inform any recommendations in the Area Plan.
- ***Does the new plan in any way encourage mixed-use development?***  
 The planning process for the Area Plan has only just begun. It is anticipated that mixed-use development will be a consideration as land use recommendations are developed for the Plan.
- ***Does SB9 or SB10 impact the plan?***  
 California Senate bills SB9 and SB10 were signed into law on September 16, 2021.

SB9 allows owners to subdivide an existing single family residential lot to create a duplex and/or allow for new infill construction, subject to certain constraints. The constraints include that the parcel lie within the boundaries of an urbanized area as designated by the US Census Bureau. Part of the Greater Higgins plan area is within a designated urbanized area, so this law does allow subdivision or infill structure on those sites subject to all other constraints in the law. Although SB9 allows change to existing single family residential parcels within the Greater Higgins plan area (and all similar urbanized areas within the state) it is not likely to affect the policies and actions in the Area Plan as the number of property owners taking advantage of this opportunity in this area is anticipated to be limited.

SB10 allows jurisdictions to upzone parcels to allow up to 10 units per acre in a transit-rich area or an urban infill site. Parcels in the Higgins area are unlikely to qualify under SB10, because the jurisdiction (Nevada County) would need to “opt-in” to include the area, and because the area is unlikely to qualify as a transit-rich area or an urban infill site.