

GREATER HIGGINS AREA PLAN

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Workshop #2: Existing Conditions and Opportunities

Date/Time of Meeting: Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 6:00-7:30 pm

Format: Virtual (Zoom)

OVERVIEW

The second community workshop for the Greater Higgins Area Plan was attended by approximately 75 community members. It took place in an online format via Zoom.

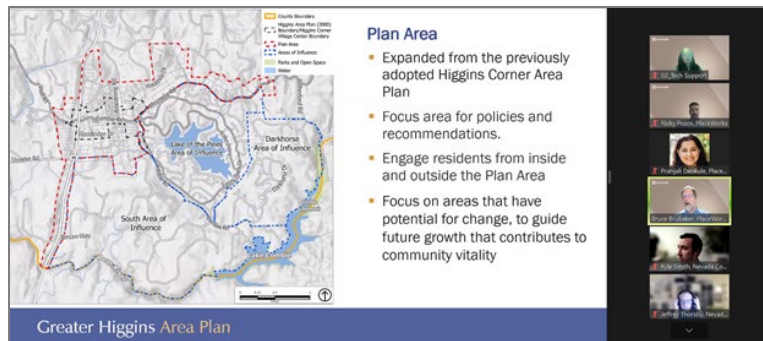
The meeting began with a welcome greeting from Nevada County Supervisor Ed Scofield (District 2), followed by a PowerPoint presentation led by PlaceWorks (project consultant) that included project/planning background and timeline, purpose and objectives of the Area Plan, Plan Area boundary, feedback received from the first workshop, and an overview of the completed existing conditions analyses. A brief Q&A session followed the presentation.

At the beginning of the meeting, the project team launched a Zoom icebreaker poll to get a sense of who was joining the meeting. Most of the participants were residents of the Greater Higgins area or Lake of the Pines. There was also a number of people in attendance who lived outside of the Plan Area and Areas of Influence.

Attendees participated in “breakout room” focus group exercise in four randomized groups of 13-16 community members each. Each group discussed a series of three questions about new development, new housing, and mobility, with Google Jamboard maps of the Plan Area screen-shared by the facilitator to help guide discussion (located at the end of this report). Each Jamboard also had graphic icons representing different types of improvements that could be moved onto the map by the facilitator based on comments made by community participants. “Sticky notes” for more open-ended comments could also be added to the Jamboard. The topics/guiding questions and some takeaways are described in the next section of this summary.

Following the focus group discussions, facilitators for each group reported back to the entire workshop, highlighting key items and themes from their group.

At the end of the meeting, PlaceWorks described the project’s next steps/project timeline and shared a link to the project website www.GreaterHigginsAreaPlan.com and means to contact Nevada County staff with any follow-up questions: Kyle Smith, Associate Planner, at Kyle.Smith@co.nevada.ca.us.



Icebreaker Poll

1. Tell us about yourself (select all that apply) (Multiple Choice)

100% answered

I am a resident of the Greater Higgins area	33%
I am a resident of Lake of the Pines	43%
I am a resident of Darkhorse	6%
I am a resident of Lake of the Pines Ranchos	4%
I live outside the aforementioned areas	22%
I work in the Greater Higgins area	9%
I am a student or am the parent of a student at a school in the Greater...	2%

FOCUS GROUPS – KEY TAKEAWAYS

This section summarizes key themes and takeaways from the focus group discussions. The Google Jamboards for all four focus groups are attached at the end of this summary.

Question 1: Where should change happen in Greater Higgins?

Key Takeaways

- Strong desire for more dining options (i.e., finer dining, fast casual, and healthy options) in the Higgins Corner, Sites 3/4/5, and Lake Center areas.
- Create a plaza at Holiday Center with seating areas and activities.
- Potential park(s) could be sited in the areas zoned high-density residential in Sites 5/6, along Combie Road, or at the intersection of Combie Road/Magnolia Road.
- There were many ideas for change at the Lake Center but some participants said future development needs to be coordinated with the Lake of the Pines Board, who is reportedly interested in acquiring the property. Ideas for improvements include:
 - Entertainment (e.g., bowling alley)
 - Meeting spaces
 - Retail/office spaces
 - Ace Hardware is an important amenity and should remain
 - Mixed use development with retail and senior housing
- Lodging like a small hotel is needed and could be located at the intersection of Combie Road/Magnolia Road.
- Consider fire hazards and evacuation routes for any new development.
- New shopping areas should be walkable for seniors.
- Desire for a recreational indoor swimming pool.
- If there is new development, it should be in character with the rural setting of the Greater Higgins area and not like urbanized places.

Question 2: Where should there be housing in Greater Higgins?

Key Takeaways

- There is strong desire and need for senior housing with a plaza or mixed use, potentially in Site 6 or Lake Center (Site 10).
- Affordable housing should be targeted to attract young families and be sited near the existing schools. Housing types could include duplexes and townhomes.
- Multifamily complex development could be appropriate in Site 1 (north of Higgins Corner).
- Sites 5 and 6 (zoned high-density residential) are more appropriate for multifamily housing and affordable housing.
 - There was a range of residential housing types mentioned for Site 6.
- Residential development is generally not appropriate along Highway 49.

- New multifamily development should be away from Lake of the Pines and close to Highway 49 access to avoid potential traffic congestion along Combie Road.
- New streets should be part of new housing developments.
- Consider that there is future senior housing underway at Rincon del Rio (further south and outside of Plan Area, in the South Area of Influence).

Question 3: Where should there be mobility improvements in Greater Higgins?

Key Takeaways

- Improve access for bikes, pedestrians, golf carts, and potentially horses along Combie Road and Magnolia Road, connecting to Holiday Center, residential areas, and schools.
 - This includes extending the multi-use path along Magnolia Road to Combie Road and down south Combie Road to create better access for the Darkhorse residential community.
- Create more off-street trails connecting residential to shopping areas.
- Bike facilities should not be along or near Highway 49 due to safety concerns.
- Locations for potential new public bus stops include:
 - At the schools along Magnolia Road.
 - Wolf Road to connect to the Holiday Center (but there should also be consideration of the rural nature of this area).
- Provide new sidewalks along Combie Road, Magnolia Road, and south Combie Road.
- Prioritize roadway infrastructure improvements for the existing community before expanding development.
- All new development should provide sidewalks.