

CHAPTER 2.0

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan area is located within the County of Placer, California, as shown in Figure 2-1. The Plan area comprises approximately 109 square miles located in the foothills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, as shown in Figure 2-2. The Plan area is generally bounded by:

- North Fork of the American River, Shirttail Canyon, the watershed of Sugar Pine Reservoir, and Elliott Ranch Road on the west and north.
- West branch of El Dorado Canyon on the east.
- North Fork of the Middle Fork American River and the Middle Fork American River on the south.

The Foresthill Divide is a large ridge located within the American River Watershed that supports numerous small, rural communities. These communities include establishments that are remnants of the Gold Rush era, and are of unique historical and cultural value. As the communities have continued to grow, new developments have been introduced. While the Plan area remains predominantly rural in character, along with other unincorporated areas of the county, the Foresthill Divide has absorbed some of the growth in Placer County. This has resulted in the subdivision of land and the introduction of modern patterns of development characterized by large-lot residential development, development that occurs away from the core of the community, and automobile-oriented development. Development of the Plan area has also resulted in opportunities for re-use of existing structures and sites.

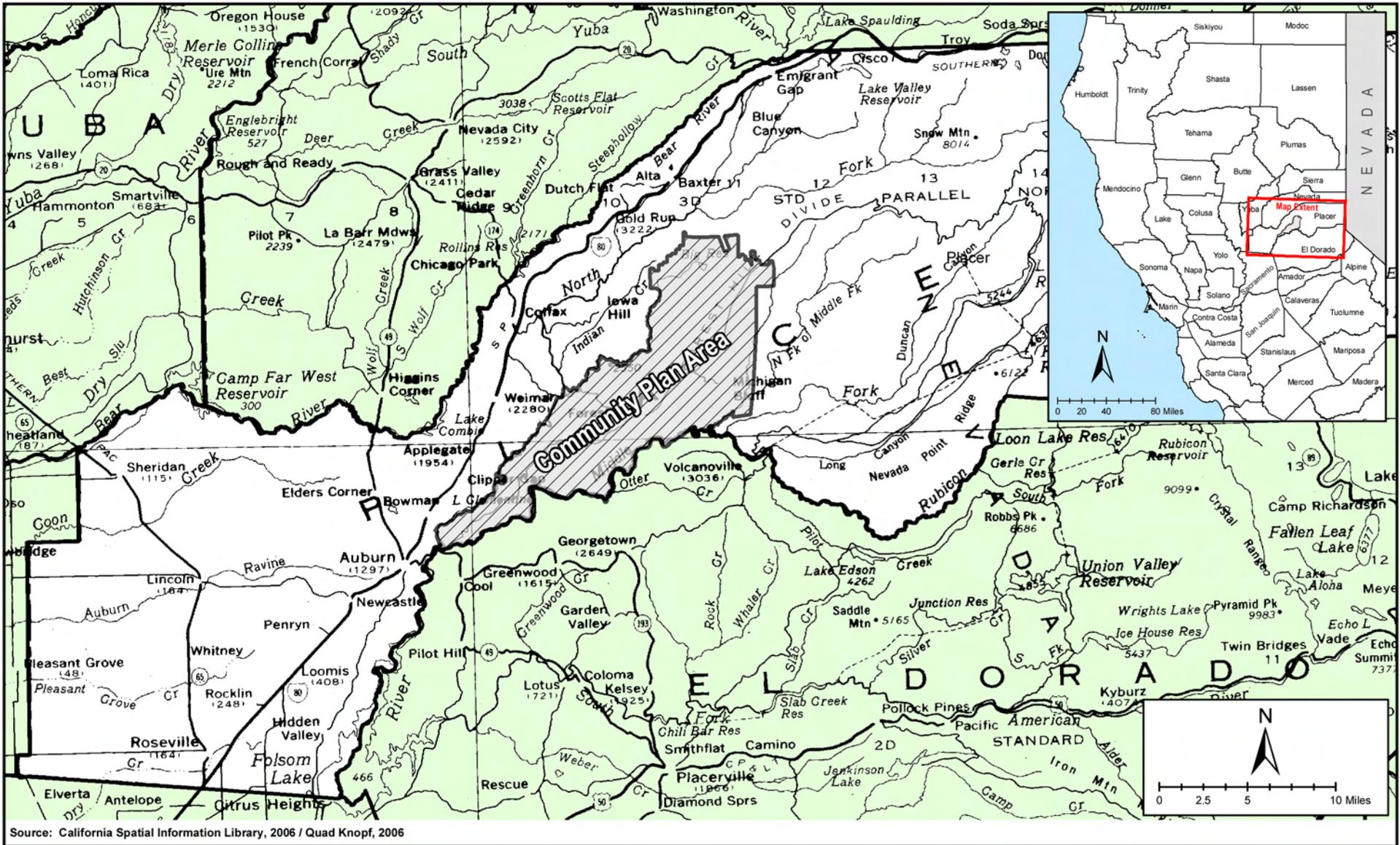
2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan is a joint effort by staff of the Placer County Planning Department and the Foresthill Divide Community Plan Team (FDCP Team), a working group of seven local residents appointed by the Placer County Board of Supervisors who spent hundreds of hours developing Plan Assumptions, a Vision Statement, General Goals, Goals and Policies, and the Land Use Map. The FDCP Team conducted a detailed survey of the residents and property owners on the Divide (Foresthill Community Survey, included as Appendix A to the FDCP), and held a series of Town Hall meetings to give residents of the Divide the opportunity to express their views. All meetings of the FDCP Team were open to the public, and public comment was invited. Subcommittees of the FDCP Team met and prepared reports on such topics as community design, public facilities, economic development, natural resources, public safety, recreation, schools, and traffic and circulation. Four newsletters were published and distributed summarizing progress on the Community Plan. Community Plan adoption will

follow public hearings before both the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

The following General Community Goals were developed based on the results of the Community Survey and comments provided by residents and property owners who attended Town Hall meetings. Along with the Vision Statement, they provide the overall structure or framework for the individual elements of the Foresthill Divide Community Plan. More specific goals and policies for each element are included in the FDCP.

- To develop an interconnected trail system for hiking, biking and equestrian uses extending from the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River easterly to Sugar Pine Reservoir.
- To preserve the community's outstanding visual and aesthetic features, including significant vistas, woodlands, stream and riparian zones, ponds and lakes, and important wildlife habitat areas.
- To protect the community against wildland fires, erosion, water quality degradation and localized flooding.
- To conserve and protect as valuable community assets the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Plan area.
- To encourage mixed-use development within the principal commercial district (i.e., from the Foresthill Divide Middle School easterly along Foresthill Road to the Foresthill Elementary School) and within the historic downtown area.
- To manage the land within the Plan boundaries as a limited and protected resource so that its future uses will be beneficial to the entire community.
- To insure that future development on the Divide will reflect and maintain the forested residential character of the community.
- To provide public facilities in a location that is central to the concentrations of population on the Divide to encourage the interaction of residents and a strong sense of community.
- To provide residential development which is reasonably integrated into the community rather than being physically isolated.
- To ensure that public services and facilities are available to serve the needs created by both existing and future residents and visitors to the Divide.
- To respect and protect existing agricultural uses and timberlands from residential encroachment.
- To encourage and maintain access to public lands, and to protect the boundaries of public lands from residential encroachment.

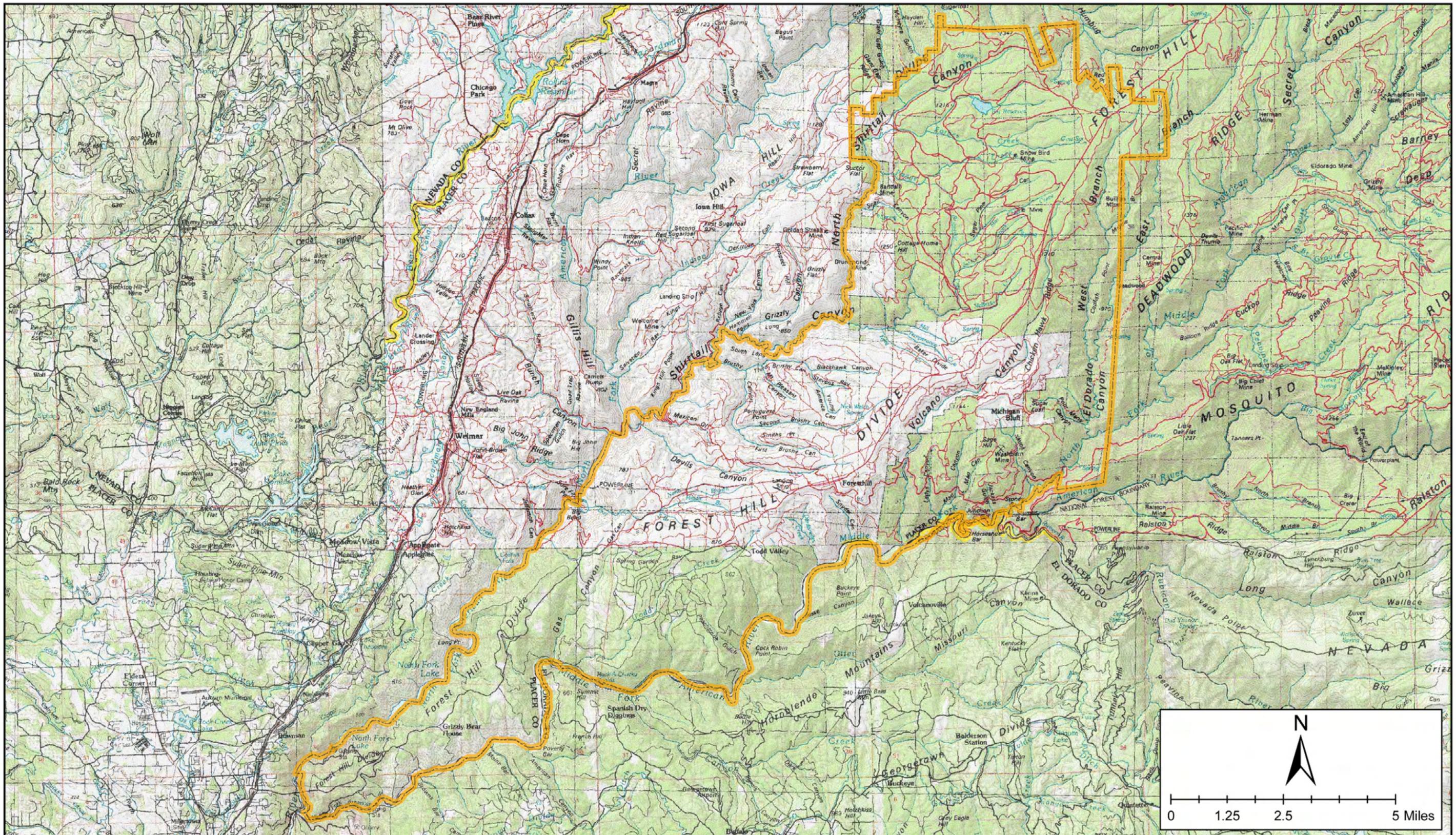


Source: California Spatial Information Library, 2006 / Quad Knopf, 2006



FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN EIR LOCATION AND VICINITY MAP

Figure 2-1



Source: California Spatial Information Library, 2006 / Quad Knopf, 2006



FOREST HILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN EIR COMMUNITY PLAN AREA

Figure 2-2

- To establish as a high priority for the community and the County the development of new employment opportunities and appropriate economic development.
- To recognize that amendments to the Foresthill Divide Community Plan should be minimal until and unless circumstances in the area have changed so significantly that an update of the Plan is necessary; piecemeal amendments to the Plan should be discouraged.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project initiated by the County of Placer is referred to as the proposed “Foresthill Divide Community Plan” and is intended to supersede the 1981 Foresthill General Plan. The FDCP provides an opportunity to comprehensively address issues facing the community and to responsibly and proactively plan for the next 20 years. The FDCP has been developed as a joint effort of the FDCP Team and County Planning Department staff. Excerpts from the Vision Statement developed for the community planning process describe some of the unique attributes of Foresthill and help to clarify the overall purpose and direction of planning efforts, as follows:

The community of Foresthill is located in a special position; between the outer edges of the rapidly-growing population centers in the Sacramento Valley and public forests and park lands. The community rests atop a broad, relatively flat ridge between the two deep river canyons of the North Fork American River and the Middle Fork American River. Foresthill also serves as a primary entry point into the western central Sierra Nevada mountains...Creating more local employment opportunities without substantially degrading the scenic, forested environment of the Divide will be an on-going challenge for the residents of the Plan area...The Foresthill Divide will likely not have a future population large enough to support major new commercial enterprises. Small retail stores, personal services businesses, professional offices, restaurants and similar uses can be expected to be developed within the downtown area which will continue to provide for the daily needs of the residents and visitors while expanding upon the original small town character of the historic area. The historic downtown district will remain as a cherished focal point of the Plan area and will be a source of pride for the community. The traditionally industrial areas near the historical Foresthill townsite will be redeveloped to provide new employment opportunities for residents of the Divide. Expanded tourist and outdoor recreation-oriented businesses will continue to develop as a consequence of the community’s unique location and proximity to public lands. The increased emphasis on outdoor recreation on the public lands surrounding the Foresthill community and the increasing population growth west of the Divide will have substantial effects on the residents of the Plan area. Future growth on the Foresthill Divide should reflect an awareness of and consistency with this vision.

The current Foresthill General Plan (1981) would allow for 14,400± residents on the Divide if every available parcel of land were to be subdivided to the maximum number of lots allowed. It should be noted that the proposed FDCP boundary is considerably larger (almost twice as large) than the 1981 Foresthill General Plan boundary. The FDCP, Land Use Map and proposed

zoning are based on the Vision Statement and General Goals presented above, the results of the Foresthill Community Survey, consideration of specific requests from a number of property owners, and comments furnished by residents and property owners who attended Town Hall meetings sponsored by the FDCP Team and Placer County.

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan, in combination with the Placer County General Plan, is the official statement of Placer County setting forth goals, policies, assumptions, guidelines, standards and implementation measures that will guide the physical, social and economic development of the Foresthill Divide Community Plan area for approximately 20 years. The Plan will provide overall direction for future growth in the Foresthill Divide. The Community Plan, in combination with the Placer County General Plan, satisfies the requirements of California Planning and Zoning Law. The FDCP is organized into the following elements and sections:

- Community Development Element, including Population and Housing, Land Use, Community Design, Public Facilities, and Parks and Recreation
- Resource Management Element, including Natural Resources/Conservation/Open Space, Cultural Resources, and Air Quality
- Transportation and Circulation Element

The goals, policies and implementation measures for each section are described in detail in the corresponding section of Chapter 3 of this EIR, Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

The final chapter of the FDCP, entitled Implementation, summarizes the implementation measures presented throughout the FDCP, and describes how the FDCP will be implemented through zoning and other methods.

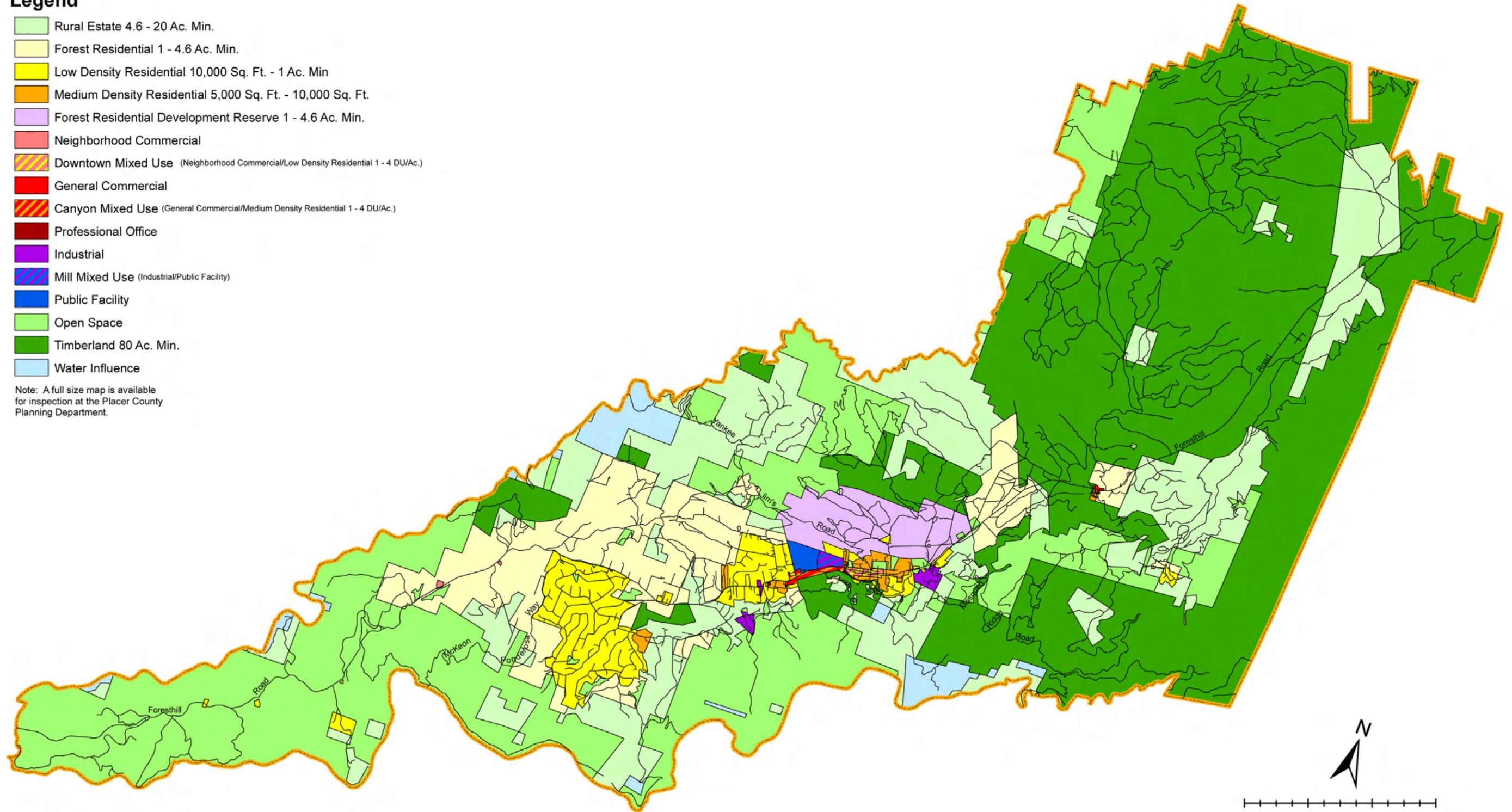
The FDCP also includes a land use and circulation plan for the Plan area. It assigns the following land use designations, as shown on Figure 2-3:

- Rural Estate (4.6 – 20 acre minimum)
- Forest Residential (1 – 4.6 acre minimum)
- Low Density Residential (10,000 sq. ft. – 1 acre minimum)
- Medium Density Residential (5,000 sq. ft. or 8 dwelling units/acre - 10,000 sq. ft. or 4 dwelling units/acre)
- Forest Residential Development Reserve (1 – 4.6 acre minimum)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Professional Office

Legend

- Rural Estate 4.6 - 20 Ac. Min.
- Forest Residential 1 - 4.6 Ac. Min.
- Low Density Residential 10,000 Sq. Ft. - 1 Ac. Min
- Medium Density Residential 5,000 Sq. Ft. - 10,000 Sq. Ft.
- Forest Residential Development Reserve 1 - 4.6 Ac. Min.
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use (Neighborhood Commercial/Low Density Residential 1 - 4 DU/Ac.)
- General Commercial
- Canyon Mixed Use (General Commercial/Medium Density Residential 1 - 4 DU/Ac.)
- Professional Office
- Industrial
- Mill Mixed Use (Industrial/Public Facility)
- Public Facility
- Open Space
- Timberland 80 Ac. Min.
- Water Influence

Note: A full size map is available for inspection at the Placer County Planning Department.



Source: Placer County Planning Dept, 2006 / Quad Knopf, 2007



FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN EIR PROPOSED LAND USE DIAGRAM

Figure 2-3

- Mixed-Use Areas
 - Historic Downtown Mixed-Use Area [Neighborhood Commercial/Low Density Residential (1 – 4 dwelling units/acre)]
 - Canyon Mixed-Use Area [General Commercial/Medium Density Residential (1 – 15 dwelling units/acre)]
- Mill Mixed –Use Area [Industrial Park/Design Scenic Corridor]Industrial
- Public Facility
- Open Space
- Timberland (80 acre minimum)
- Water Influence

Proposed land use designations for the Forest Ranch site include Forest Residential Development Reserve (1 – 4.6 acre minimum), Timberland (80 acre minimum), Rural Estate (4.6 – 20 acre minimum), and Low Density Residential (10,000 sq. ft. – 1 acre minimum) unless the Forest Ranch Concept Plan is adopted as a component of the FDCP as described below in Section 2.6.

An important new feature of the FDCP is the creation of several mixed-use districts which will allow for many different activities to occur. The purpose of the Historic Downtown Mixed-Use Area is to provide a resident population in the downtown area. Retail commercial uses, offices, public service buildings, and other traditional downtown businesses would be mixed with single-family and multiple-family residential uses (perhaps even within the same building). The Canyon Mixed-Use Area extends from the Foresthill Road/Mosquito Ridge Road “Y” west to the medical building on the south side of Foresthill Road from the church west to the Starlite Café on the north side of Foresthill Road. This district will provide for retail commercial, tourist commercial, single and multiple-family residential, and other uses. These mixed-use districts are one way to accomplish one of the primary goals of the FDCP: residential densities should be located near the core of the community. The FDCP also concentrates additional residential densities east of the Historic Downtown district to provide local traffic circulation throughout the downtown or “Core” area. The Circulation Diagram is shown in Figure 2-4.

The proposed project also includes rezoning of properties within the Plan area as necessary and required to achieve consistency with the proposed FDCP land use designations. Proposed zoning is shown in Figure 2-5. Consistent with the land use designations of the FDCP, the Plan area is subject to the following zoning designations of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance:

Primary Zone Districts:

- IN =Industrial
- INP= Industrial Park
- C1= Neighborhood Commercial
- C2 = General Commercial
- F = Farm
- FOR= Forestry
- O = Open Space
- OP = Office and Professional
- RA = Residential Agricultural