

General Plan Amendment 2023-01 Zone Reclassification 2023-01 Vacant Lands and Housing Opportunity

Inyo County Board of Supervisors

May 2, 2023



Introductions

Inyo County Planning Department

- Cathreen Richards, Planning Director

HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc.

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- Tom Kear, PhD, PE, President

Funding Sources: Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) and SB2 Grants from the California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD).



Background

Staff applied for the SB 2 grant funding to address the current shortage of family-wage and other affordable housing opportunities in the County. There are many factors that contribute to this including:

- A lack of available private property for development;
- Difficulties in the provision of infrastructure and services;
- Little interest from builders to provide “family-wage” and/or “affordable” housing choices;
- State subdivision regulations that prohibit subdivision of areas outside Community Service District Boundaries (Fire); and,
- Outdated zoning and General Plan designations and regulations.



Project Strategy

- Conduct a vacant lands inventory and General Plan/zoning designations review of private properties located throughout the County (GIS exercise with set criteria).
- The information was also to be used to help identify parcels of land for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the Housing Element update and State RHNA criteria was used.
- Identify land that may be appropriate for designation changes to promote housing opportunities, primarily by increasing allowable residential density.



Project Strategy

- Evaluate an increase to the amount of multi-family zoning available in the County and changing zoning allowances in some designations to allow for principal permitting of mobile home parks.
- Review of the County's current zoning with a focus on commercial zones for opportunities for infill (residential) development, as well as, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).
- Give preference to areas near public transportation and other services.



GIS Analysis

- Systematic identification of privately owned parcels Countywide for the purposes of identifying potential land use designation changes to increase the opportunities for housing development.
- Used assessor parcel data with overlays to determine the best fit for County purposes, starting with Countywide parcel dataset, the following parameters were used to identify parcels:
 1. Classified as private, vacant, property or DWP Tier 1 Divestment.
 2. Located within a local fire protection district.
 3. Located within or adjacent to a water and/or sewer sanitary service district.



GIS Analysis

5. Located in areas without high environmental concerns e.g. earthquake, high fire danger, flooding.
6. Identify parcels residentially zoned that were greater than 0.5 acres, and parcels in the Central Business zone.
7. Compiled a list of parcels that met initial criteria; added parcels that were identified as priorities in the current Housing Element; additional DWP Divestment properties (not Tier 1) and County owned.
8. For each parcel included in the recommendation list, the current and the possible minimum and maximum number of dwelling units was evaluated.

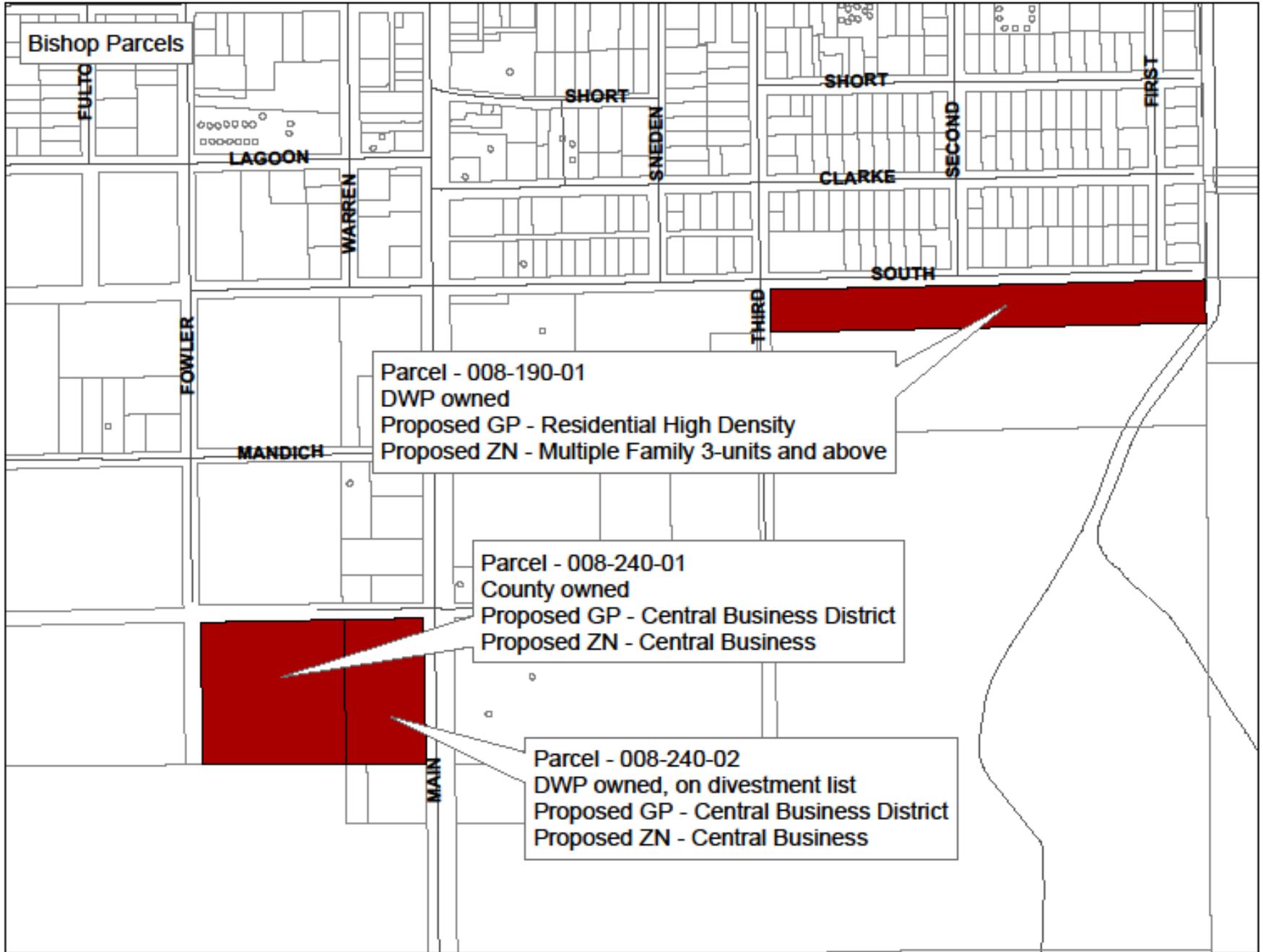


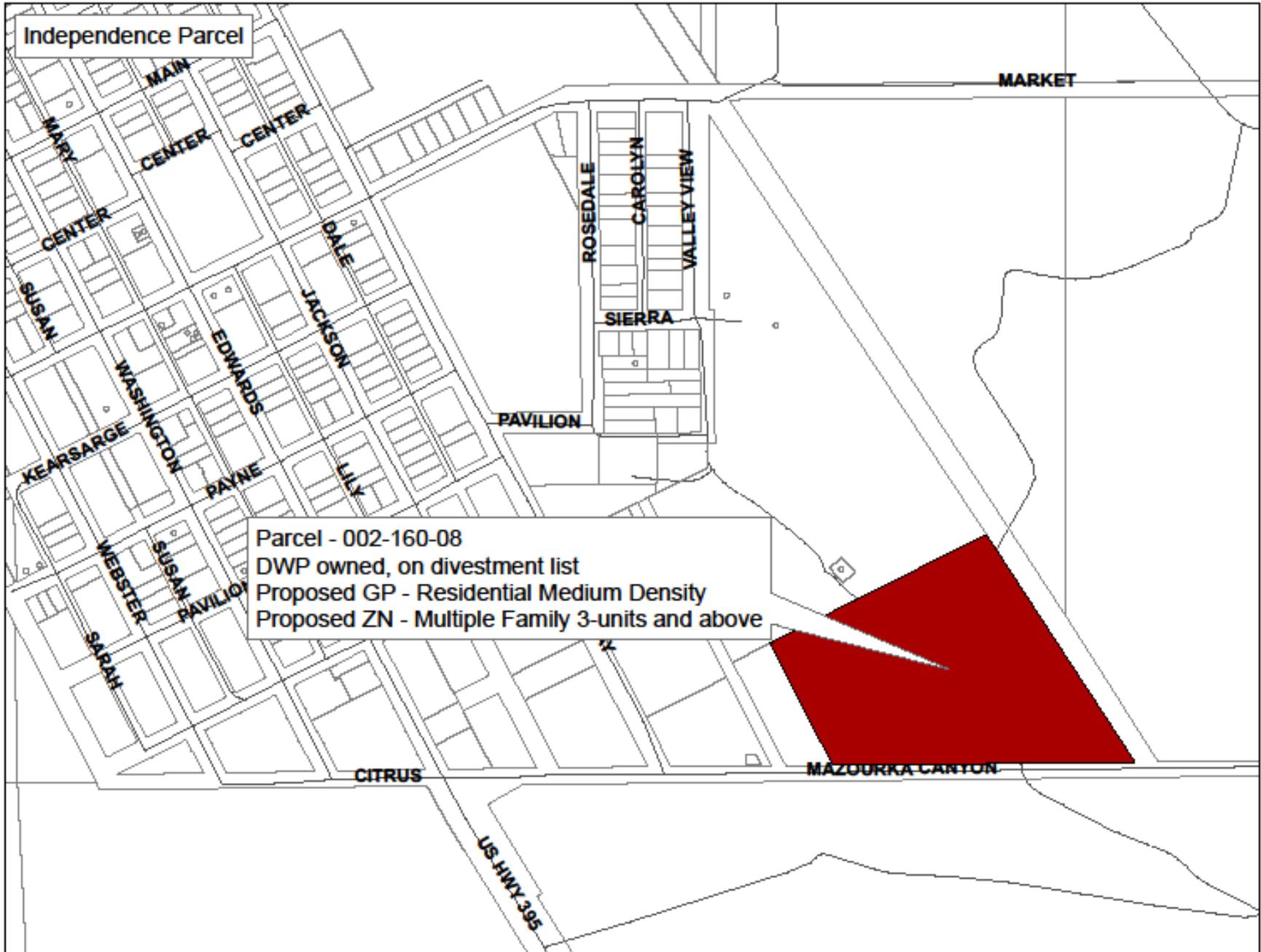
GIS Analysis

- Preliminary Results: Approximately 41 parcels were identified, 27 of these were located in the Central Business zone and 14 were in other various zones.
- This was further refined based on scoping comments, which included adding DWP parcels not on the Tier 1 Divestment list and County owned parcels and removing parcels based on the City of Bishop's Land Constraints Report.
- Eight total parcels were identified for General Plan and Zone Change CEQA review.

* None are privately owned.







Independence Parcel

MARKET

Parcel - 002-160-08
DWP owned, on divestment list
Proposed GP - Residential Medium Density
Proposed ZN - Multiple Family 3-units and above

CITRUS

MAZOURKA CANYON

U.S. HWY 395

Lone Pine Parcels

WILLOW

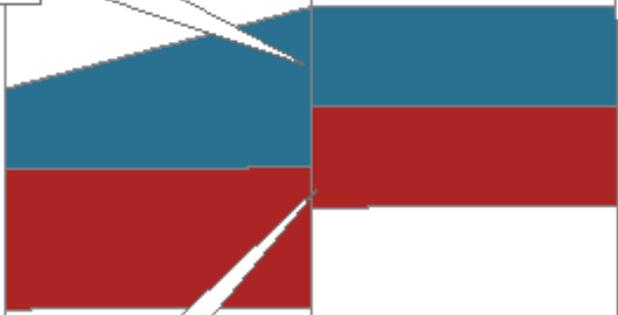
Parcel - 005-072-30
Parcel - 005-072-07
DWP owned
Proposed GP - Residential High Density
Proposed ZN - Multiple Family 3-units and above

HAY

MCELROY

BUSH

Parcel - 005-072-07
Parcel - 005-072-24
County owned
Proposed GP - Residential High Density
Proposed ZN - Multiple Family 3-units and above



MOUNTAIN VIEW

Vacant Lands EIR

- The 8 parcels were then evaluated pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the County's proposal to amend General Plan and zoning designations to promote housing opportunities.

Project objectives drafted per Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines:

- Provide for increased housing opportunities in Inyo County primarily through increasing allowable residential density within existing and established communities.



Vacant Lands EIR

- Focus future housing opportunities to vacant land located adjacent to existing public transit stops and public utilities/services.
- Minimize direct and indirect impact from increased housing opportunities on the physical, biological, cultural, political, and socioeconomic environments.
- Identify zone changes to be consistent with General Plan land use designations to maximize density.



Vacant Lands EIR

Project alternatives for the EIR per Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines include:

1. Proposed Project: Increased housing opportunities resulting in a net increase of approximately 219-492 Dwelling Units.
2. No Project Alternative: No change to General Plan land use designations or zoning ordinance.
3. Reduced Housing Opportunity Alternative – This alternative would eliminate the Independence parcel and evaluate up to 364 additional dwelling units.



Vacant Lands EIR

For this EIR staff also applied for an additional state grant (Regional Early Action Planning Grant) or REAP. This grant was used to provide a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) study and recommendations report to enhance the EIR.



VMT Assessment

- EIR includes a regional Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) assessment and a goals/programs component for lowering VMT.
- Lowering VMT is a State goal; Affordable housing is an important factor in VMT reduction.
- The VMT strategies/goals help the County better identify areas where affordable housing is most appropriate especially with regard to transportation opportunities, and areas that are not as well suited due to VMT constraints.



VMT Assessment

- The VMT feasibility study determined baseline per capita VMT conditions across the County using an evaluation rubric that included:
 - vacant land availability;
 - 5D VMT elasticities (density; design, destination access; distance to transit; and land use diversity);
 - active transportation options.
 - VMT outputs from state modeling tools.
- The result of the feasibility study are VMT reduction strategies/goals aimed at promoting:
 - State's mandates on equitable housing solutions and environmental justice;
 - Mitigating/reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
 - promoting housing opportunities across the socioeconomic spectrum.



VMT Approach

- Travel demand models are used to estimate regional VMT and anticipate effects from programmatic land use plans.
- Inyo County does not have its own travel demand model, and this study relied on the California Statewide Freight Forecasting and Travel Demand Model (CSF2TDM) for VMT estimates.
- Analysis included a base-year VMT estimate (2020) and a horizon-year VMT estimates (2040) with and without the land use changes anticipated by the Inyo County vacant lands inventory, rezoning, and General Plan review.



VMT Approach

- CSF2TDM was developed to forecast interregional freight and passenger movements. Its roadway networks and land use detail is relatively coarse in rural counties.
- The County and the City of Bishop each envision adding about 475 dwelling units by 2040, primarily through multifamily housing developments.
- Rather than amending CSF2TDM data to reflect the Plan, existing model results and changes to the land use forecast were used to estimate the Plan's impact on VMT and VMT per service population (residents plus employees).
- A quantitative “FRATAR” process will be used to post-process CSF2TDM results, combined with a more qualitative approach using VMT elasticities to account for interactions with the built environment (“5D elasticities”).



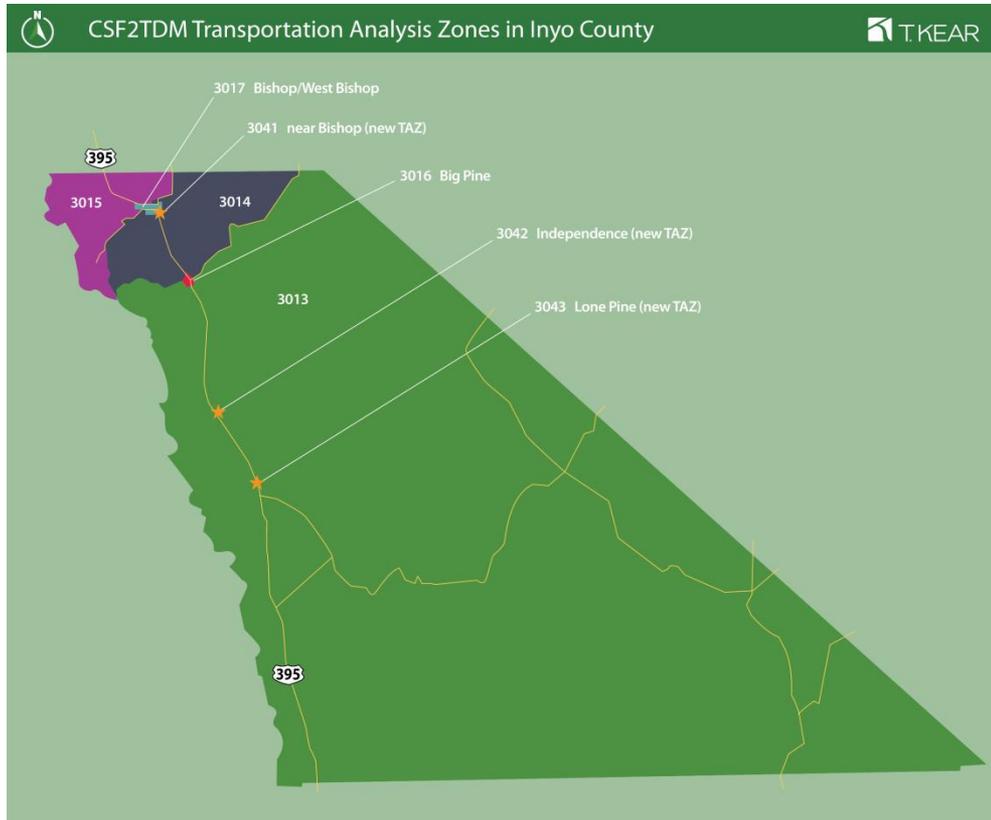
Outreach

- Two community workshops were held to solicit Stakeholder feedback:
 - Lone Pine – Wednesday July 27, 2022: Stratham Town Hall, 138 North Jackson Street, Lone Pine, CA 93545, and,
 - Bishop – Thursday July 28, 2022: City Hall, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514.
- The three principle take-aways from the community outreach sessions were:
 - While transit service along Highway 395 is limited, there is both transit and car pooling along the 395 corridor for commute trips;
 - Large shopping areas and supermarkets are limited in Inyo County, with most shopping occurring in the Bishop area, and in Ridgecrest;
 - Housing supply limits the choice of communities where people live, creating an observable AM peak and PM peak period commute between communities along Highway 395.



VMT Estimates

CSF2TDM Model Structure



TAZ	Description
3013	Inyo County south of Big Pine (including Homewood Canyon, Valley Wells, and Death Valley National Park)
3014	Inyo County, generally south and east of Bishop (Wilkerson, Paleta, etc.)
3015	Inyo County, generally north and west of Bishop (Round Valley, Mesa, etc.)
3016	Big Pine
3017	Bishop and West Bishop
3041 (new TAZ)	Unincorporated Inyo County near Bishop (split from TAZ 3017)
3042 (new TAZ)	Independence (split from TAZ 3013)
3043 (new TAZ)	Lone Pine (split from TAZ 3013)



VMT Estimates

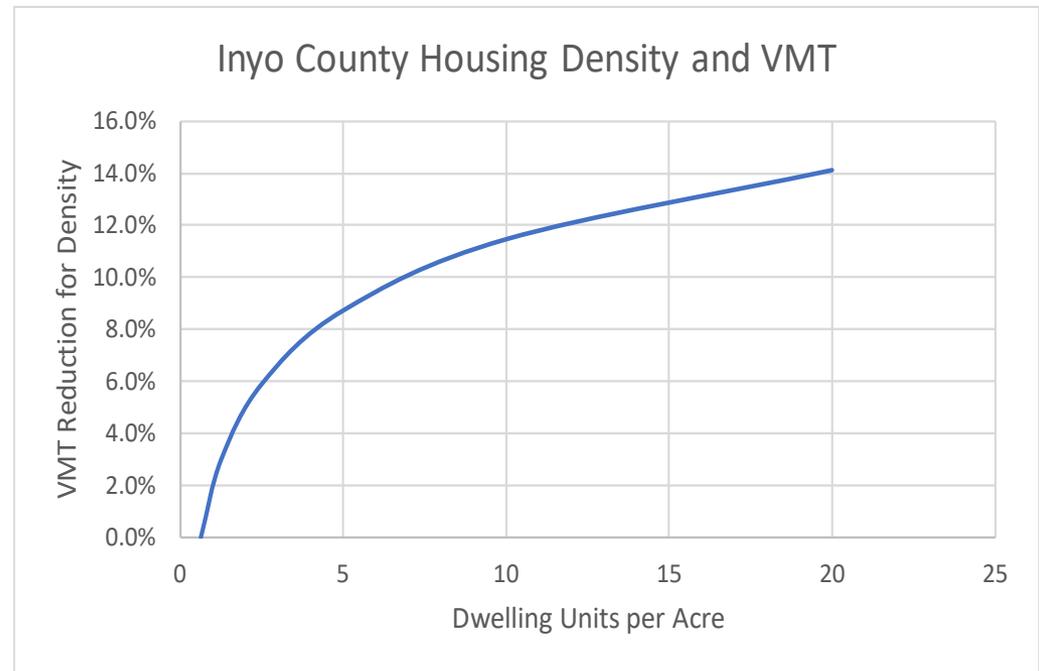


- Example bandwidth plot, VMT tracking in combination with service population estimates were done for:
 - 2020 community regions, without proposed additional housing
 - 2020 community regions, with proposed additional housing
 - 2020 all Inyo County TAZs, without proposed additional housing
 - 2020 all Inyo County TAZs, with proposed additional housing



VMT Estimates

- “5D” Adjustment for density (off model):
 - Travel demand models estimate travel for avg conditions across a region
 - Population weighted density in Inyo County is about 1.25 persons per acre
 - Doubling density decreases VMT per service population by 3.1%



VMT Findings & Recommendations

- County-wide average VMT per service population is estimated to be 36.4 in 2020 and 39.5 in 2040.
- VMT in the “community regions” along 395 is anticipated to be about 6.5% below the Inyo county average.
- Areas specifically effected by the proposed project of 492 additional housing units are anticipated to see an additional 8% reduction in VMT per service population.



VMT Findings & Recommendations

- That 8% additional reduction with the additional housing units translates to an assumed density of about 4 dwelling units per acre in zones affected by the project.
- Development at higher densities can assume a greater VMT reduction per service population.
- Reductions for increased density should not be taken until densities are at or above four dwelling units per Acre. (This avoids overlap with the 8% reduction/assumed density of 4 dwelling units per acre referenced above)



VMT Findings & Recommendations

- County-wide average VMT per service population is estimated to be 36.4 in 2020 and 39.5 in 2040.
- VMT per service population for the upzoned parcels is 14.5% below the Inyo County average.
- A 15% reduction is necessary to make a less-than-significant finding for VMT impacts under CEQA.
- Housing projects with a density > 5 dwelling units per acre along 395 are anticipated to have a less than significant VMT impact under CEQA.



VMT Use Beyond this EIR

- Findings of this study may be used to screen future projects for VMT impacts under CEQA.
- Residential projects in or adjacent to Bishop, Big Pine, Lone Pine, and Independence with a density of 5 or more dwelling units per acre may be assumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT under CEQA.



EIR

- The Draft EIR was prepared and posted on the State CEQA Clearinghouse; recorded with the County Clerk and advertised on November 30, 2022 for a 45-day review period ending on January 16, 2023. The County received one comment on January 17, 2023 from DWP.
- Potentially significant impacts were found for several elements in the EIR, avoidance and mitigation measures are included to reduce these to less than significant impacts.



Additional Food for Thought

- This project is for General Plan and Zoning Designation changes – there are no development proposals for any of these properties at this time. The ball may be filled with air, but it is not rolling.
- The changes do not guarantee development, they just make it possible.
- Any potential future development will be subject to all of the mitigation requirements and conditions set forth in the EIR and staff report for the project.



Additional Food for Thought

Housing Types and Affordability

Housing Element basic assumption: **Density = Affordability**

Above Moderate Income



Single Family (2-4 du/ac)

Moderate Income



Multifamily Low Density (7-12 du/ac)

Lower Income



Multifamily High Density (20-30 du/ac)



Single Family High Density (4-7 du/ac)



Multifamily Medium Density (12-20 du/ac)



Mixed Use (20-30 du/ac)



Recommendations

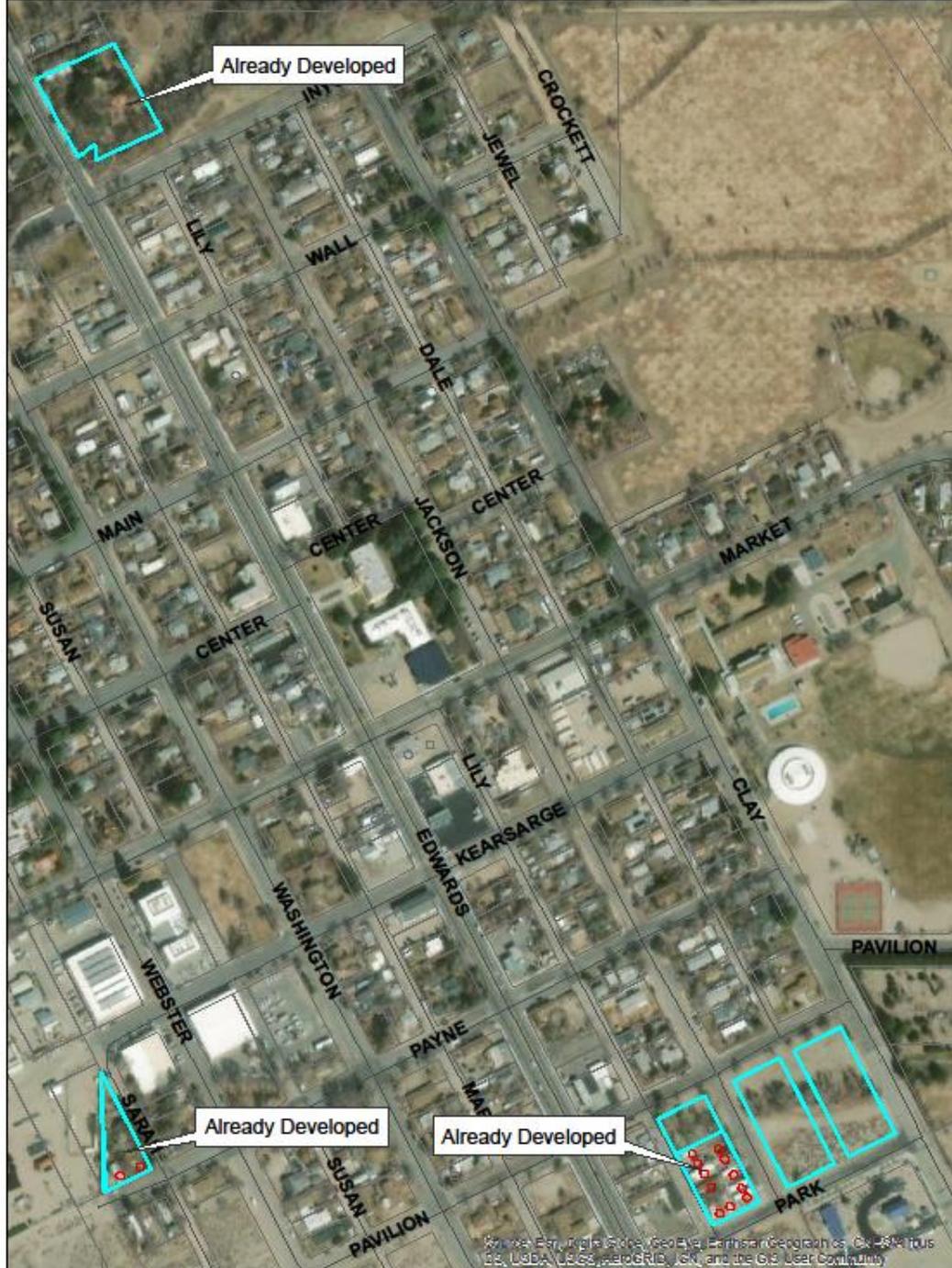
Planning Department staff is recommending: the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt a Resolution Approving General Plan Amendment 2023-01/Inyo County - Vacant lands and Housing Opportunity;
2. Adopt an Ordinance Approving Zone Reclassification 2023-01/Inyo County - Vacant lands and Housing Opportunity; and,
3. Approve and certify the EIR was prepared in compliance with CEQA.



Questions



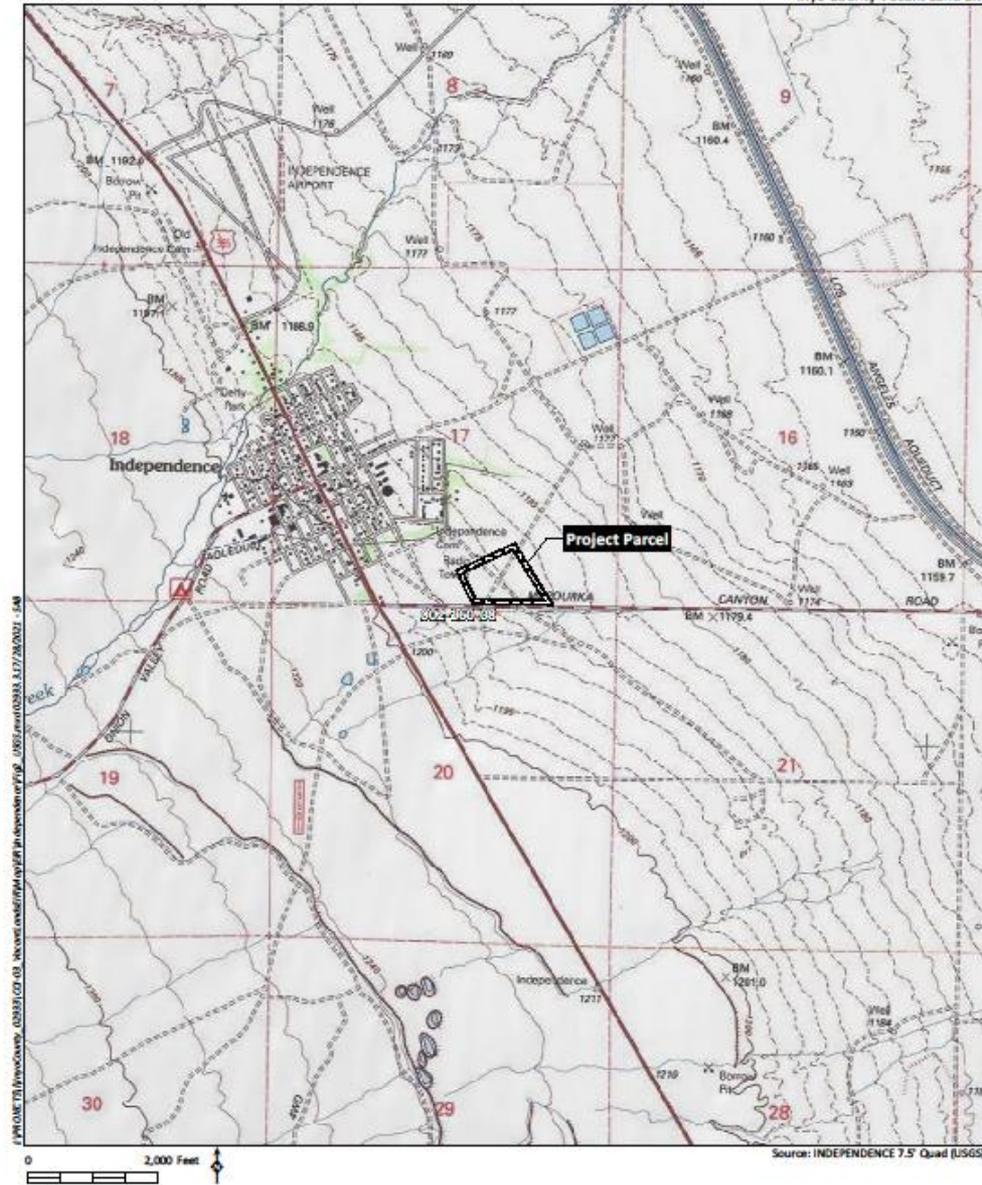




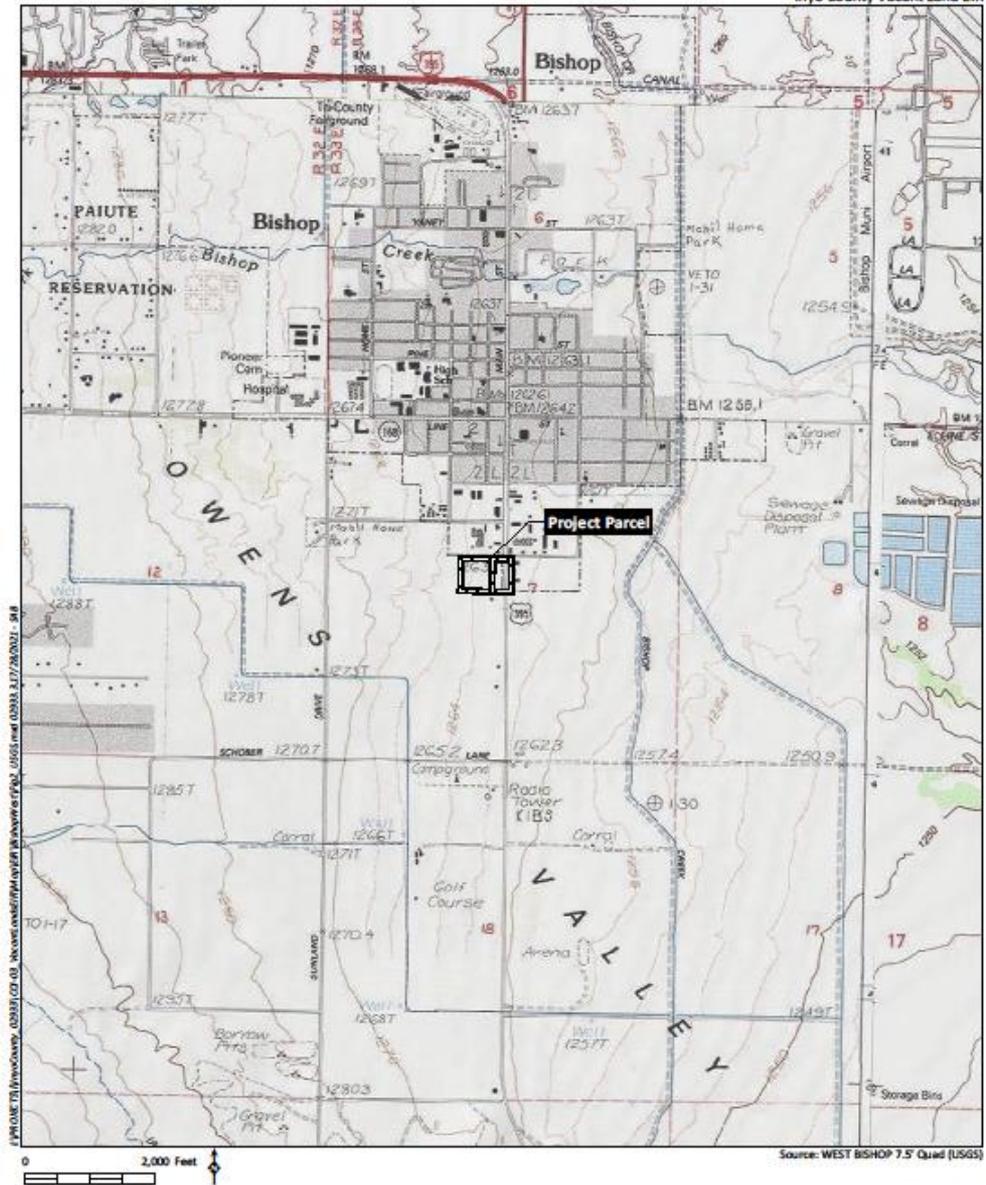






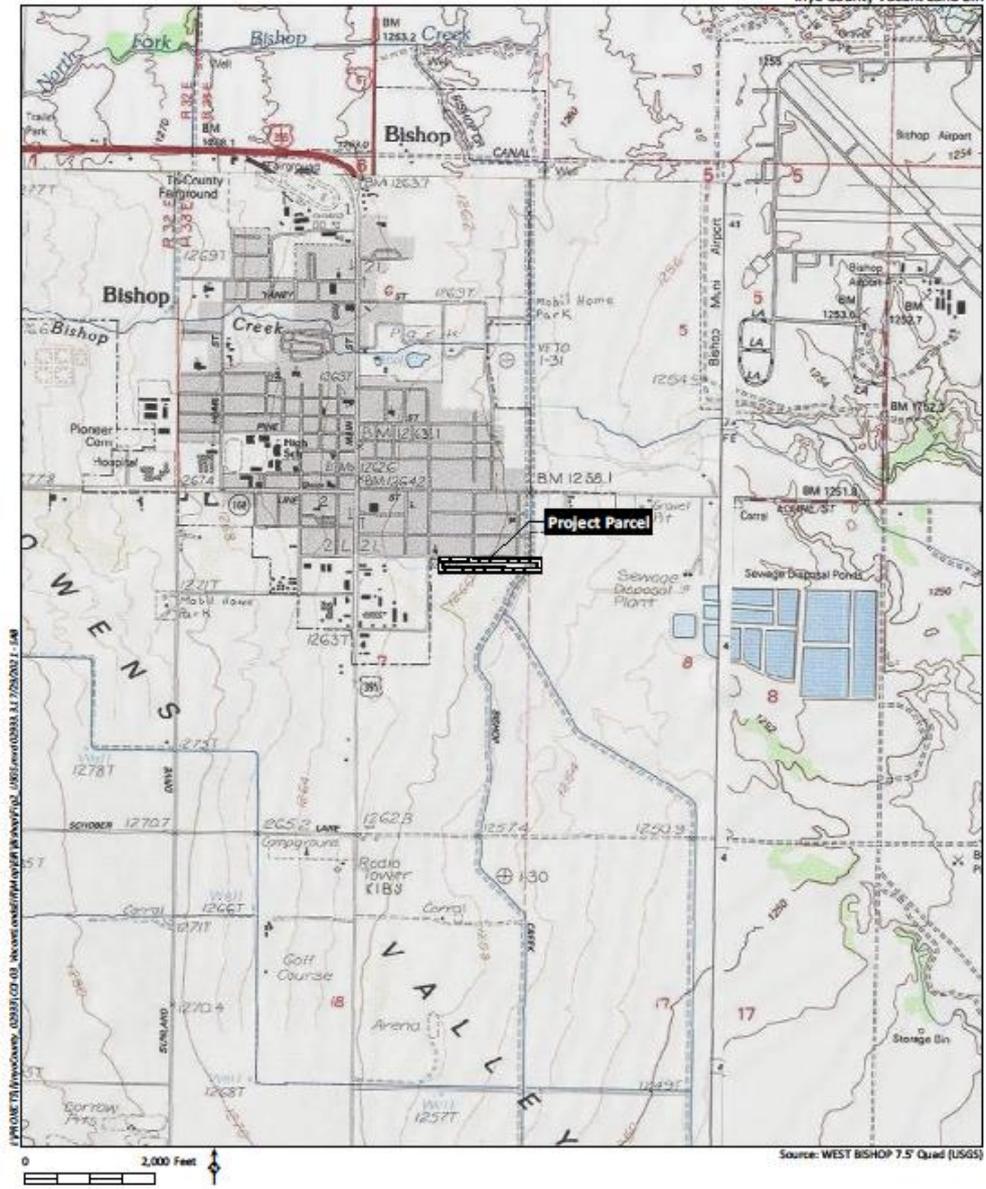


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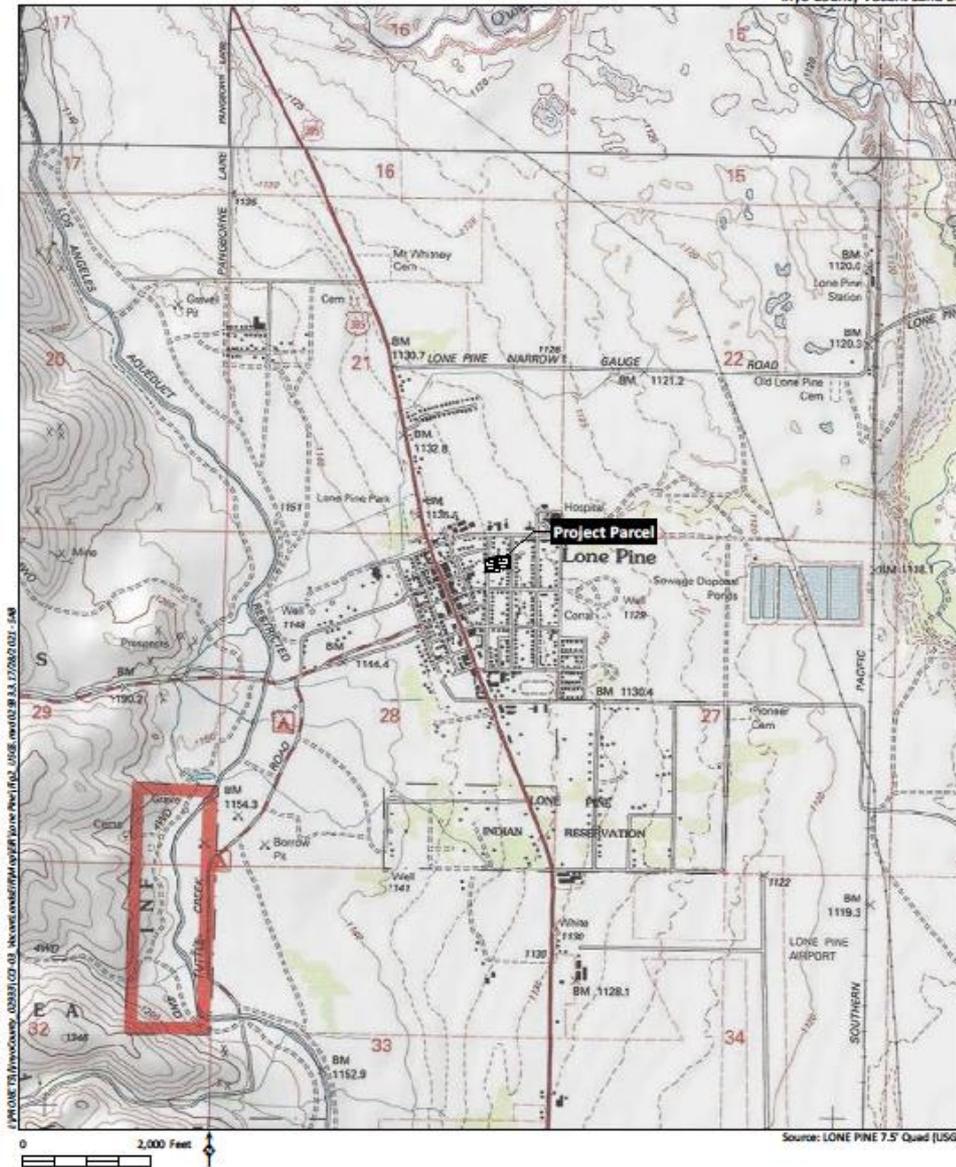
USGS Topography - Bishop (West)

Figure 2-6a



USGS Topography - Bishop (East)

Figure 2-6b



USGS Topography - Lone Pine

Figure 2-10