

**PROPOSED**  
**MARIPOSA COUNTY**  
**NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

**(Pursuant to California Administrative Code, Section 15070)**

**PROPONENT/PROJECT:**           **General Plan Amendment No. 2024-113; Midpines Community Plan. Mariposa County, proponent.**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project is the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan, which will be added to Volume II of the Mariposa County General Plan through the general plan amendment process. Midpines is one of 17 geographical areas in Mariposa County that the Mariposa County General Plan describes as Planning Areas. With the exception of the Yosemite National Park Management Plan, each area plan developed for a specific geographical area is part of the General Plan. The Midpines Community Plan is an area plan that was developed in accordance with all applicable standards of the General Plan. Area plans are tiered from the General Plan. The General Plan describes area plans as a mini-General Plans that are adopted to meet the needs of each town, community, or uniquely identified area of the County. The Midpines Community Plan was developed to meet the needs of the community of Midpines.

The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document. It reflects the desires of the residents in the community regarding how their community is to develop. The document lays the groundwork for the establishment of zoning standards that will implement the policies and standards of the Plan and will specifically guide development within the Planning Area boundaries.

The Community Plan has five major chapters: Introduction and Setting; Issues of Importance to Midpines Citizens; Guiding Principles; Midpines Community Plan Administration; and Goals and Policies of the Midpines Community Plan.

The Midpines Community Plan land use classifications are organized following the format of the General Plan as follows:

- Purpose;
- Extent of uses;
- Consistent zoning classifications;
- Population density standards;
- Building intensity standards; and
- Criteria for inclusion in the land use classification.

The Midpines Community Plan boundaries encompass 22.7 square miles; 14,544 acres. The Plan area is bounded by the Merced River to the north; Sweetwater and Snow creeks to the east; Snow Creek to the south; and Fremont Peak to the west.

**FINDINGS:** No significant effect is based on the following findings:

1. The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. The adoption of the Midpines Community Plan is just the initial step in the planning process for the community. Future development projects proposed in accordance with the policies and standards of the Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards will be subject to project specific environmental review.

2. This Initial Study prepared for the project did not find that adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a “significant” impact on the environmental checklist items discussed in the Initial Study. Roughly one-half of the issues discussed ended with the conclusion that Plan adoption would have no impact on those issues. These issues are those that are specifically addressed in the Mariposa County General Plan, the goals policies and implementation measures contained in the proposed Community Plan and/or the existing regulatory environment. A specific project’s impact on those issues will be reviewed under the existing regulatory and policy framework. Adoption of the Community Plan reinforces the existing regulatory and policy framework.

The environmental issues for which there is a conclusion of “less than significant” impact are those that will involve environmental impacts that are indeterminate at this point in the Planning process for Midpines. For instance, there could be a wide variety of biological resources and cultural resources potentially impacted as the community is built out by specific development projects in accordance with the standards of the Community Plan. The policies and standards of the Community Plan allow consideration of larger scale development projects when the planning process for Midpines is completed through the implementation of zoning standards. Potential impacts from all development projects for which a CEQA document is prepared will require determinations of significance and project specific mitigation to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Plan adoption on the issues of Population and Housing, Public Services and Recreation and the somewhat more subjective issue of Aesthetics also have conclusions of “less than significant” because the regulatory environment and governing policies and standards are less determinate on these types of issues. The discussion of these environmental issues reiterates that the adoption of the proposed Midpines Community Plan does not propose or consider any specific development projects.

The findings in this Initial Study are based on the fact that the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and just the initial step in the planning process for the community. As noted, future development projects proposed in accordance with the policies and standards of the Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards will be subject to project specific environmental review.

3. The Midpines Community Plan is self-mitigating from the perspective of potential environmental impacts resulting from Plan implementation. The standards for each land use classification and the goals, policies, and implementation measures in the Plan address maintenance of rural densities; parcel sizes for commercial and institutional uses that maintain rural character; implementation of existing Scenic Highway Overlay standards throughout the community; the integration of transportation and land use decisions to achieve the community’s managed growth objectives; the minimization of impacts and/or improvements to air quality; controlling and minimizing noise impacts within the Plan area; and the provision of adequate fire safety measures to protect residents within the Plan area.
4. The Midpines Community Plan identified the following issues, which serve as the basis of the Plan. These issues are addressed through the goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Midpines Community Plan.
  - Maintain rural character;

- Promote fire safety;
- Provide for commercial development at an appropriate scale;
- Provide areas for growing home-based business and rural home industries;  
and
- Ensure commercial development is compatible with existing character.

Based upon the environmental review conducted within the Initial Study, and the anticipated level of impact as a result of the project, a negative declaration is adopted for the project.

No significant effect is based on review procedures of the following County Departments or Divisions:

- |                                     |                     |                          |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Building Department | <input type="checkbox"/> | County Environmental Health Unit |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Planning Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Works Department          |

Other: Native American contacts on the list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission other County Departments (local agencies) note- to be updated prior to Board of Supervisors hearing date and adoption.

Initial Study was prepared by Skip Strathearn, Senior Planner, and is on file at Mariposa County Planning Department, 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, California 95338

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, Director  
Mariposa Planning

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Date