

Request For Qualifications (RFQ)

Lake Isabella Community Hub

Sierra Shared Spaces

April 27th, 2026

Introduction

Sierra Shared Spaces (SSS) invites qualified design teams (Design Teams) to respond to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to provide design services for the Lake Isabella Community Hub project located in Lake Isabella, California.

Sierra Shared Spaces is a community based 501(c)3 nonprofit operating in the Kern River Valley, and is responsible for the fundraising, design, development, management, and operations of the Community Hub, with support from our project partners and anchor tenants. The project is envisioned as a multi-use facility supporting entrepreneurship, workforce development, public gatherings & events, and outdoor recreation that will provide regional community and economic resilience for the Kern River Valley.

SSS seeks a Design Team capable of working with the organization and key stakeholders during the design and pre-construction phase of the project. The Design Team must be capable of working with key stakeholders during this planning and design phase to: refine the project objectives and interior space requirements, as needed; identify and respond to the project site's environmental constraints; and produce construction-ready documents and construction cost estimates for use during the construction phase of the project.

Since 2003, Sierra Shared Spaces has been working collaboratively with Ashley Proctor of Creative Blueprint to support the development of the proposed project. Creative Blueprint has been supporting an extensive community outreach and engagement program and spearheading the essential fundraising efforts, property acquisition, and pre-development activities.

The selected Design Team will enter an agreement with Sierra Shared Spaces, and will work in collaboration with Sierra Shared Spaces, Creative Blueprint, and a select group of our community stakeholders who have informed the Lake Isabella Community Hub facility project and will become anchor tenants in the space.

This phase of the project is funded by the California Jobs First Catalyst Fund, through the Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz). The successful firm will be expected to comply with California state law regarding contracts using public funds.

Schedule

Sierra Shared Spaces will conduct a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) review process to identify the Design Team best suited to deliver this phase of the Lake Isabella Community Hub project. The process is intended to identify a collaborative partner capable of advancing the project to construction-ready status.

The anticipated contract procurement process will include the following steps:

1. RFQ Release: **Monday, April 27th, 2026**

Sierra Shared Spaces will publicly release this RFQ inviting qualified Design Teams to submit responses.

2. Question and Clarifications Period: **April 27th - May 14th, 2026**

Design Teams may submit written questions regarding the RFQ during the designated question period. All questions must be submitted to **purchasing@sierrashared.space**. Responses will be issued via written addenda on the Sierra Shared Spaces website at <http://sierrashared.space/solicitations>.

3. Proposal Deadline: **5:00 PM PST on Friday, May 15th, 2026**

Responding Design Teams will submit their proposals as electronic file(s) in accordance with the requirements outlined in this RFQ.

4. Proposal Evaluation

Sierra Shared Spaces will evaluate and score submitted responses based on the qualifications, experience, and project approach of the responding Design Teams. Sierra Shared Spaces may shortlist responding Design Teams for further consideration based on the initial evaluation.

5. Interviews with Shortlisted Teams: **May 25 - June 5, 2026**

Shortlisted Design Teams will be invited to participate in interviews with the selection committee. Interviews will allow Design Teams to present their qualifications, project experience, approach, and scope of services for the proposed project and respond to questions from the evaluation panel. Interviews will not be compensated.

6. Selection of Design Team; Negotiation of Contract: **ASAP**

Following interviews and final evaluation, Sierra Shared Spaces will rank the Design Teams, and select a highest ranked Design Team.

Sierra Shared Spaces will enter negotiations with a highest ranked Design Team to finalize their detailed scope of services, cost budget, schedule, and deliverables. If unable to reach an agreement, Sierra Shared Spaces will terminate negotiations and resume the negotiations process with the second-ranked firm, and so forth.

Upon successful negotiation of contract terms and signature of contract by the appropriate parties, Sierra Shared Spaces will authorize the selected Design Team to proceed.

Submitting Responses

- Submitted materials must be in PDF format. There are no formatting or length restrictions.
- All submissions must be delivered to purchasing@sierrashared.space at or before the submission due date.
- It is the responsibility of the submitting Design Team to verify that Sierra Shared Spaces has successfully received the submission.
- Sierra Shared Spaces is not responsible for technical issues, transmission failures, or other delivery problems that prevent timely receipt of a submission.
- Each submission must be submitted by an authorized representative of the responding firm.

Required Content of RFQ

Submissions should clearly describe the qualifications, experience, and general approach of the proposing Design Team. The intent of this section is to allow Sierra Shared Spaces to evaluate the team's ability to collaborate effectively and deliver the Lake Isabella Community Hub project.

- Design Teams are not required to produce conceptual designs as part of their submission.
- Design Teams are encouraged to reference relevant prior projects and insights gained through review of available project information.
- Design Teams may submit responses of any length. However, responses should clearly address the topics listed below.

Team Qualifications and Organization

Submissions should include:

- Identification of the prime firm and all required core team members
- Resumes of all identified team members
- Description of the overall team structure that includes the roles and responsibilities of key personnel

Core team members include:

- Architect
- Civil Engineer
- Structural Engineer
- MEP Engineer
- Landscape Architect

Design Teams may identify additional team members. For team members or consultants not yet identified, Design Teams must describe their approach to selecting and integrating those elements.

Relevant Project Experience

Submissions should include:

- Description of projects of similar size, complexity, or delivery method. Provide work examples (electronic format) and references for prior projects.
- Experience with similar collaborative delivery models.
- Experience with rural projects or projects located in unincorporated Kern County or other geographically similar communities.

Approach to the Project

Design teams should describe their overall approach to delivering the project. This section should demonstrate the team's understanding of the project goals and outline the strategies they would employ to advance the project to construction-ready status.

This could include:

- Design Approach & Vision
 - Approach to developing a design that reflects the character of the Kern River Valley
 - Approach to integrating indoor and outdoor spaces
 - Approach to resilience, energy systems, and long-term sustainability
 - Approach to designing community-owned infrastructure with flexible design elements
- Approach to Management
 - Project management structure, and who the main point of contact will be
 - Internal coordination between design and technical teams
 - Approach to schedule, budget management, and quality assurance
- Collaboration with Sierra Shared Spaces and Community Partners
 - Approach to working collaboratively with Sierra Shared Spaces and Creative Blueprint
 - Approach to integrating input from anchor tenants & project partners during the design process
- Regional Knowledge & Approach to Serving Rural and Isolated Communities
 - Addressing logistical challenges
 - Addressing limited local subcontractor pools

Evaluation Criteria

Qualification submissions will be evaluated using a 100-point scoring framework based on qualifications, experience, and the proposed approach to delivering the work products for the Lake Isabella Community Hub project.

Selection will follow a Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process. Cost will not be used as an evaluation factor during this stage. The final budget will be negotiated with the selected Design Team.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to score proposals:

Evaluation Category	Points
Design Team Qualifications and Relevant Experience	25
Alignment with Project Objectives - Understanding of the Project	20
Design Approach and Vision	20
Local / Regional Knowledge or Experience Serving Rural & Geographically Isolated Communities	15
Approach to Collaboration with Sierra Shared Spaces and Community Hub Partners	10
Project Management and Delivery Approach	5
Design Team References and/or Reputation	5
Total	100

Design Team Qualifications and Relevant Experience (25 points)

Evaluation will consider the qualifications and experience of the proposed design team, including:

- Qualifications and experience of key team members
- Experience with collaborative design and community hub models
- Experience delivering projects of similar size and complexity
- Approach to selecting and integrating additional subcontractors and consultants
- Demonstrated ability to successfully complete comparable projects

Alignment with Project Objectives - Understanding of the Project (20 points)

Evaluation will consider the Design Team's understanding of the project and alignment with project objectives, including:

- Demonstrated understanding of project goals and community objectives
- Understanding of the existing site conditions and potential local challenges
- Design for resilience and emergency preparedness
- Commitment to local and social and procurement, and community resilience
- Collaborative design with SSS and community stakeholders
- Creating generational social & economic impact
- Approach to meeting the project goals and objectives

Design Approach and Vision (20 points)

Evaluation will consider the Design Team's design philosophy and approach, including:

- Approach to designing a flexible, complex, multi-use facility
- Ability to creating inspiring and functional community spaces
- Approach to resilience, energy systems, and long-term durability
- Integration of indoor and outdoor spaces
- Response to the rural character of the Kern River Valley

Local / Regional Knowledge or Experience Serving Rural or Geographically Isolated Communities (15 points)

Evaluation will consider the Design Team's experience working in rural or geographically isolated settings and the ability to address challenges such as:

- Limited local contractor pools
- Logistics and supply chain considerations
- Long-term facility durability and maintainability

Approach to Collaboration with Sierra Shared Spaces and Community Partners (10 points)

Evaluation will consider the Design Team's ability to work collaboratively with Sierra Shared Spaces, Creative Blueprint, and project stakeholders, including:

- Approach to collaborative design processes
- Strategies for incorporating stakeholder needs and existing community consultation input
- Communications and coordination approach

Project Management and Delivery Approach (5 points)

Evaluation will consider the Design Team's approach to managing the project, including:

- The project management structure
- Approach to advancing the project to construction-ready status
- Approach to cost control and schedule management
- Approach to quality control and quality assurance
- Approach to revisions
- Approach to managing risk and uncertainty during this phase

Design Team References and / or Reputation (5 points)

Evaluation will consider the references provided by the Design Team, as well as the general reputation of the team - including:

- Past client reviews
- Community Hub Project Partner feedback and direct experience
- Design Team awards, articles, honors, case studies, publications, or past projects

Project Overview

The Community Hub is intended to become a home base for many local organizations, entrepreneurs, and community groups who are all working independently on their unique missions within the Kern River Valley. This collaborative facility will be designed to serve as essential community infrastructure and support the co-location of a diverse collection of anchor tenants and programming partners. This model was inspired by projects such as 312 Main in Vancouver, BC.

Project Site

The project site is located in the Kern River Valley, an unincorporated rural area in Kern County centered around the Kern River and Isabella Lake Reservoir. The area has outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, but suffers from generational poverty, as well as a lack of historical investment, local elected representation, and community owned infrastructure. The Kern River Valley is geographically isolated and is heavily impacted by natural disasters, especially wildfire.

The town of Lake Isabella is centrally located to the communities of the Kern River Valley, and is the main population center of the region. This location was chosen based on the needs of the community and the impact that the project will have in this location.

The project site consists of 2.88 acres of land, which Sierra Shared Spaces has already secured, in the Lake Isabella Community. The project site location, characteristics, and constraints are discussed below.

Location:

3615 Suhre St, Lake Isabella, CA 93240 (APN: 485-043-12-00-3)



Approximate parcel location

Site Characteristics:

- Parcel Size: Approximately 2.88 acres
- Existing Conditions:
 - Approximately 2.7 acres of vacant land
 - Existing 4,000 square foot building (currently occupied by tenant, expected to be demolished)
 - Existing electrical and water service (may need to be upgraded/relocated)
 - Existing septic tank (likely inadequate for new facility)
 - Project site is not in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodplain
 - Kern County zoning: C-2 PD (General Commercial/Precise Development)
 - Assessor use code: 3100 - LIGHT MFG

- Kern County General Plan designations: 6.2/2.3 (General Commercial/Shallow Groundwater)

Known Site Constraints:

- High Fire Severity Zone
- Adjacent to nature preserve (Bob Powers Gateway Preserve)
- High potential for shallow groundwater conditions affecting septic design
- Dark skies ordinance constraining allowable outdoor lighting
- Strong afternoon winds are common, affecting outdoor gathering space
- Site access on Suhre st may be insufficient

Existing Third Party Studies:

The following historical studies will provide more context, and can be found on the Sierra Shared Spaces website <https://sierrashared.space/solicitations> along with this document

- US Army Corps of Engineers Supplemental Environmental Assessment (2021)
 - The Corps of Engineers considered the project site as an option for the new Lake Isabella USFS Visitor Center, and as a result included it in their Supplemental Environmental Assessment.
- Kern River Valley Specific Plan and Environmental report (2011)
 - These documents cover the entire Kern River Valley. The Specific Plan was never adopted, but these documents provide planning and environmental analyses and insights that are relevant to the project site and surrounding area. Additional documents can be found at: <https://kernplanning.com/environmental-doc/kern-river-valley-specific-plan/>
- Bob Powers Gateway Preserve Strategic Plan (2012)
 - The strategic plan includes options for building a visitor center on the subject property.
 - This strategic plan includes plans for a walking trail through the preserve that connects to the subject property. Ideally this will be incorporated into the design of the Community Hub landscape architecture.

Development of the Project Site

The development on the project site is proposed to consist of an approximately 20,000 - 25,000 sq. ft. of Class A office and event space including meeting rooms, coworking space, and classrooms. The space will also feature shared amenities such as lounges, restrooms, kitchens, and a shared lobby or reception area.

The hub is designed to also function as a Community Resilience Center, providing essential power, communications, air filtration, cooling, food distribution and other emergency infrastructure for the community residents in times of natural disasters.

The neighboring property (Bob Powers Gateway Nature Preserve) will be incorporated in our outdoor landscape planning, as we plan to extend walking trails and a small picnic area across property lines, with the support of the KRV Heritage Foundation who currently stewards the neighboring preserve.

We are planning for a shared commercial kitchen and café, a community garden, EV charging, and a shaded outdoor gathering space to support visiting school groups and outdoor events.

Applying firms are encouraged to review our existing project materials at <https://sierrashared.space/community-hub-overview> and <https://sierrashared.space/faqs/>

Project Scope

The intent for this phase of the Lake Isabella Community Hub project is to advance the project to a construction-ready condition, enabling Sierra Shared Spaces to engage contractors with a fully defined, permitted, and priced project.

Design and Pre-construction

This phase will include all work necessary to advance the project to a construction-ready condition. The selected design team will work collaboratively with Sierra Shared Spaces to refine the project design, develop cost certainty, and complete permitting.

Services ideally include, but are not limited to:

- Demolition planning for the existing structure
- Community Hub design program validation
- Architectural design
- Structural engineering
- Civil engineering
- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering
- Engineered septic system design and location
- Solar and battery infrastructure design
- Site analysis and planning
- Wayfinding strategy
- Landscape architecture
- Construction documents
- Construction cost estimating

- Precise Development Plan and permitting coordination
- Coordination with the CEQA/NEPA environmental review process

Services to be provided will be finalized during the contract negotiation phase with the selected applicant.

Cost Estimates

Sierra Shared Spaces requires preliminary construction cost estimates in the early stages of design for the purposes of securing construction funding. A comprehensive cost model will be required when the design is substantially complete.

Final Milestone

The goal of the project is to produce Issue For Construction (IFC) documents that will be utilized by the construction team.

Project Objectives

The Lake Isabella Community Hub project is guided by the following core objectives:

Community Identity and Local Context

- Create a design that is modern and inspiring, while still matching the character and charm of the outdoors and the rural communities of the Kern River Valley
- Design the facility to function as both an indoor community hub and an outdoor gathering place, with landscape design and outdoor programming considered core components of the project.
- Provide flexible interior spaces capable of meeting the needs of the community as they change over time - supporting coworking, training, meetings, events, and evolving community programming.

Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

- Build a facility and campus that demonstrates best practices in wildfire resilience
- Support community resilience by integrating backup power, communications capability, air filtration, cooling space, and other infrastructure necessary for disaster response and community support during emergencies.
- Integrate solar generation, battery storage, and microgrid-ready electrical infrastructure to support operations during disaster response.

Sustainable Community Infrastructure

- Create a durable, long-term facility that serves as shared infrastructure for generations of organizations, entrepreneurs, and community groups throughout the Kern River Valley.
- Build efficiency into the design, in order to reduce long-term operating costs. Investing in efficiency early on is essential to the long term operations model of the facility.

Collaborative Design Process

- Work collaboratively with Sierra Shared Spaces, Creative Blueprint, and community partners during the design process to refine the program and optimize the project for long-term community benefit.

Access

- Design a fully accessible facility, and property, intended for use by all ages and abilities.
- Create a facility that is accessible and welcoming to all members of our rural community, regardless of socioeconomic status or background - removing barriers to participation.

The core values of Sierra Shared Spaces can be found at <https://sierrashared.space/values>.

Site Visit

An in-person site visit is optional. The purpose of a site visit is to allow design teams to observe existing site conditions and better understand the project location and context.

Sierra Shared Spaces will not be available to support tours of the site, however design teams may visit the site if they wish to do so. Design teams do not need to schedule a site visit - they may visit at their own convenience.

Please do not disturb the existing tenant occupying the building on site. The state of the existing building is only relevant to our demolition plans.

PLEASE NOTE: By visiting the site, participants acknowledge that they assume responsibility for their own safety while on the property. Sierra Shared Spaces shall not be responsible for injuries or accidents that occur during any visit to the site.

Confidentiality

Sierra Shared Spaces does not intend to proactively publish submittals from Design Teams. However, submitted materials may be disclosed when required by law, requested by a funding agency or fiscal agent, required for audit or compliance purposes, or otherwise necessary to fulfill obligations associated with public or grant funding.

Design Teams are encouraged to avoid including proprietary or confidential information in their submissions whenever possible.

If confidential information must be submitted, it should be clearly labeled and, where feasible, provided separately from the main documents.

Sierra Shared Spaces will make reasonable efforts to respect such designations. However, Sierra Shared Spaces does not guarantee that materials marked confidential will be exempt from disclosure if disclosure is required by law, funding agreements, oversight authorities, or grant compliance requirements.

Rights of Sierra Shared Spaces

By issuing this RFQ, Sierra Shared Spaces does not commit to awarding a contract.

Sierra Shared Spaces reserves the right to:

- reject any or all submissions
- waive minor informalities or irregularities in submissions
- cancel, suspend, or modify the procurement at any time
- request clarification or additional information from Design Teams
- request revised submissions if necessary to better understand Design Team qualifications or approach
- shortlist design teams and conduct interviews, or waive the interview stage
- negotiate the scope, schedule, and terms of the agreement with the selected Design Team
- negotiate with one or more Design Teams if negotiations with the preferred team is unsuccessful
- issue addenda to modify the RFQ prior to receiving submissions
- determine, in its sole judgment, which submission is most advantageous to the project

Insurance Requirements

The selected design team will be required procure, furnish, and maintain for the duration of the contract the following types and limits of insurance:

- Commercial General Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence
- Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence (when applicable)

- Coverage for owned, non-owned and hired autos
- Workers' Compensation: as required by law
- Professional Liability / Errors and Omissions: \$1,000,000 per occurrence,
- Contain an additional insured endorsement in favor of Sierra Shared Spaces, its board, officers, agents, employees and volunteers.

Appendix A - Preliminary Building Program

Appendix B includes the preliminary building program for the proposed project.

Preliminary Building Program

The Lake Isabella Community Hub facility is anticipated to be approximately **20,000–25,000 square feet**. The Sierra Shared Spaces team has conducted extensive community outreach with the local community and stakeholders, and based on the feedback has compiled the following initial requirements. All of the size and quantities below are subject to refinement throughout the design phase.

The Community Hub Facility

Based on our extensive community engagement over the past 3 years, and consultation with over 120 community stakeholders, the facility program is expected to include a mix of the following components:

Reception/lounge ~1,000 sq. ft. [4%]

The main entrance to the Community Hub will feature a:

- Reception desk
- Public art installation (founding member / donor recognition)
- Casual waiting area with seating

Event Space ~5,000 sq. ft. [20%]

Our modern event space is the feature of the Hub.

The event space will be utilized by a wide variety of programming partners and should be able to accommodate the following uses - theatre, auditorium, gallery exhibition, and classroom.

- Room can be subdivided by a moveable acoustic wall to create 2 smaller spaces
- Public AND internal entrances - connected to reception / lounge
- Includes storage for folding tables and chairs, AV equipment, podium, etc.

Common Spaces ~ 3,750 sq. ft. [15%]

- Shared Hallways
- Shared Restrooms (public and for events)
- Storage space (locked)
- Janitorial storage (locked)
- Electrical / Equipment (locked)
- Servers (locked)

Classroom ~2,000 sq. ft. [8%]

- 2 x 1000 sq. ft. classroom spaces, built to spec for an anchor tenant (education partner)
- Private units, with internal entrances.

Coworking Space ~3,750 sq. ft. [15%]

The coworking space is an open floor plan with designated zones - including a quiet working zone, and a more social, active zone.

The coworking space includes;

- Large shared kitchen facilities
- Comfortable lounge, accessible by all Hub tenants and coworking members
- A nice view of the outdoors
- Potential for built in 'phone booths'
- Fob access, internal entrances to the coworking space (not public)

Acoustic treatments and a collaborative design are essential.

Meeting Rooms ~1,900 sq. ft. [8%]

- Small (4 x 100 sq. ft.)
- Medium (4 x 250 sq. ft.)
- Executive sized (1 x 500 sq. ft.)
- Shared rooms with internal entrances.

Private Offices ~2,250 sq. ft. [9%]

- Includes small (5 x 150 sq. ft.) and medium (3 x 500 sq. ft.) sized private offices.
- Private units, with internal entrances.

Anchor Tenant Spaces ~3,000 sq. ft. [12%]

- 3 x 1000 sq. ft. private office (shell) spaces for anchor tenants
- TI etc. TBD
- Private units, with internal entrances

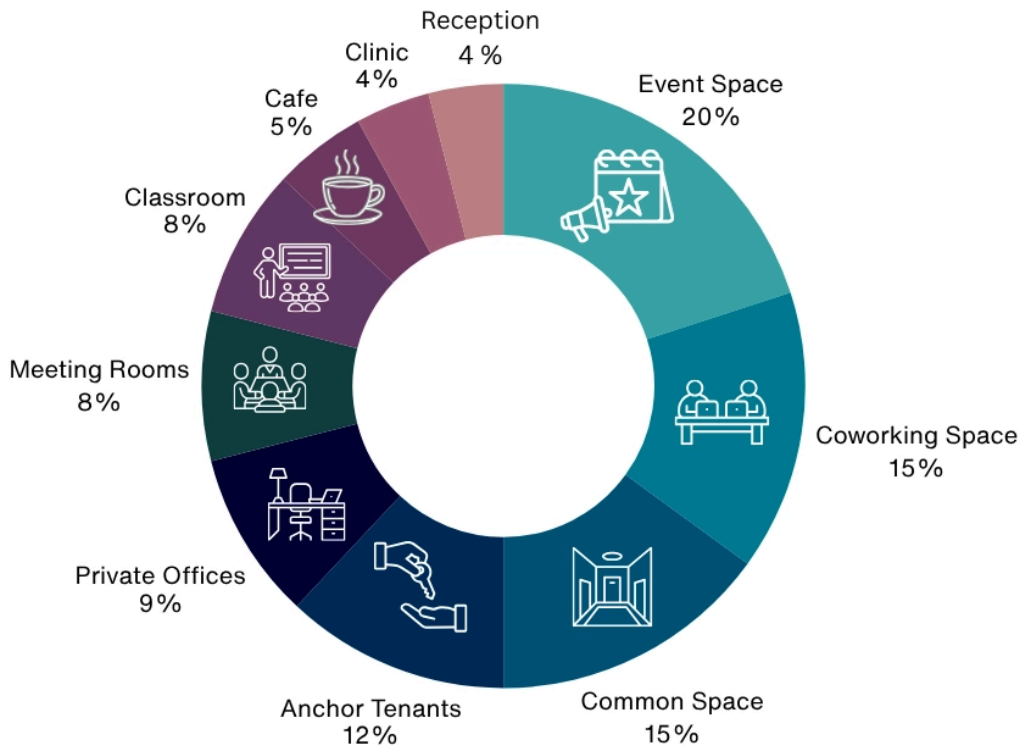
Anchor Tenant Space - Clinic ~1,000 sq. ft. [4%]

- Private exam rooms (2 x 150 sq. ft.)
- 1 x private ADA restroom
- Waiting room
- Admin space
- Private unit with external, private entrance only

Anchor Tenant Space - Cafe/light food/shared kitchen ~1,350 sq. ft. [5%]

- Kitchen is larger than normal to accommodate multiple food vendors
- Coffee and light food (breakfast / lunch / snacks)
- Reduced customer seating area to encourage people to utilize outdoor seating and / or to enter the Community Hub
- External, private entrance (with potential for internal connection to reception / lounge)

Lake Isabella Community Hub



Preliminary Outdoor Program

Outdoor space is a core component of the project. The Design Team must incorporate high-quality landscape and outdoor community space elements including:

- A shaded, wind-protected gathering space for outdoor events
- Public gathering space for sharing information in an emergency
- Informal picnic and eating areas
- Bike parking, outdoor restrooms, water bottle station
- Garbage, recycling, compost station
- Space and amenities for a community garden
- Exterior landscaping with native plants and rocks

- Interpretive and wayfinding signage
- Shaded parking (solar panels) and sidewalks
- EV charging stations
- Walking paths that will connect with the neighboring Bob Powers Gateway Preserve

Energy and Resilience Systems

The Lake Isabella Community Hub is intended to function as a community resilience asset capable of supporting essential services during emergencies and natural disasters. The Design Team shall integrate energy, electrical, and mechanical systems that support reliable operations during grid outages and other disruptions.

Resilience Functionality

The facility should be designed to support critical community functions during emergencies, including:

- Space capable of supporting community response activities such as resource distribution, or response coordination, and community meetings
- Backup electrical power for critical building systems during grid outages
- Communications infrastructure to support emergency coordination
- Air filtration, purification, and cooling capability for use during smoke events, extreme heat, or public health events

Solar and Energy Storage

The project shall incorporate design for:

- Solar photovoltaic generation
- Battery energy storage
- Backup generators as necessary
- Microgrid-ready electrical infrastructure

Solar and battery systems must be integrated into the building and site design. Other alternative energy sources should be explored.

Electric Vehicle Charging

The site design shall include infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging, including:

- Level 2 charging stations

- Level 3 / DC fast charging capability, including at least one pull-through charging site

Energy Efficiency

The Design Team is encouraged to incorporate high-performance building design strategies that improve energy efficiency and reduce long-term operating costs, including:

- High performance building envelope
- Efficient HVAC systems
- Lighting and electrical efficiency
- Smart electrical panels

Utility Coordination

The Design Team may be required to coordinate with the local electric utility (Southern California Edison) regarding:

- Solar interconnection
- Net energy metering
- Electrical service upgrades
- EV charging infrastructure

Energy system design should support long-term expansion and adaptation as additional energy infrastructure funding becomes available.