

3.

Social Capital

Essential Human Connections



“All my neighbors are fantastic. Every single one of them. I mean, on every side I've got a lot of guitar players around me. I don't know how that happened, but I like it. And it's a great mix of progressives, but also down-home folks. And I really like that mix. We wave at each other when we drive by.”

– *Local builder (and guitar player)*

The concept of social capital has been used for decades in the United States to refer to the goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among individuals, families and groups. Some writers refer to social capital as the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and to work together²⁸.

One common approach divides Social Capital into three main categories:

- **Bonding:** Connects to people based on a sense of common identity (“people like us”) – such as family, close friends and people who share our culture or ethnicity.
- **Bridging:** Links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity, for example to distant friends, colleagues and associates.
- **Linking:** Connects to people or groups outside someone’s usual economic or social sphere²⁹.

The potential benefits of social capital can be seen by looking at social bonds. Friends and families can help us in lots of ways – emotionally, socially and economically. For example, several studies support the common assumption that personal contacts are a significant factor for job searches and career advancement³⁰.

Connections with other elements

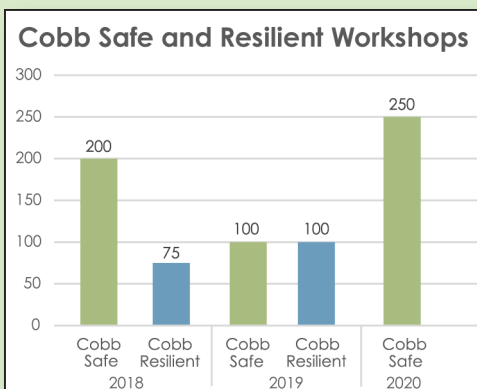
Social networks affect every area of life, including our ability to work and to participate in every dimension of community life. The reverse is also true and the state of each of the other six forms of community capital will have a strong effect on the strength of the community's social networks. Social Capital has a particularly strong connection to Cultural Capital because cultural traditions are primarily preserved and cultivated in social groups.

SOCIAL CAPITAL DATA

Although there is a large literature on the significance of Social Capital, it is also notoriously difficult to measure and analyze³¹. The Cobb Mountain community has some active groups that can be identified, but informal or family or neighborhood networks are inherently hard to quantify. Nonetheless, formal interviews and informal queries consistently report that the Cobb community is home to a dense web of social relationships.

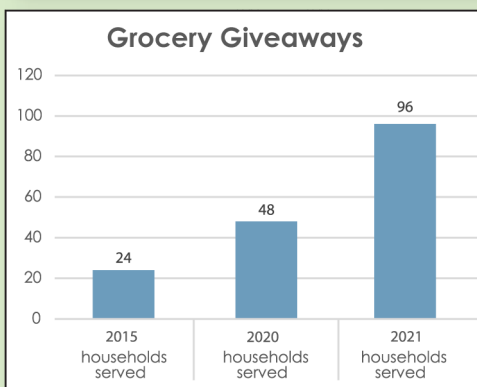
1. Cobb Safe and Resilient Workshops:

Following the Valley Fire, and prior to the Covid pandemic, the Cobb Area Council partnered with other community groups to offer two annual fire safety workshops and neighborhood organizing events. In the Spring, Cobb Safe focuses on preparing for the upcoming fire season and in the fall Cobb Resilient focuses on doing the necessary "wet season" work, such as controlled burns or home hardening.



2. Community food distribution:

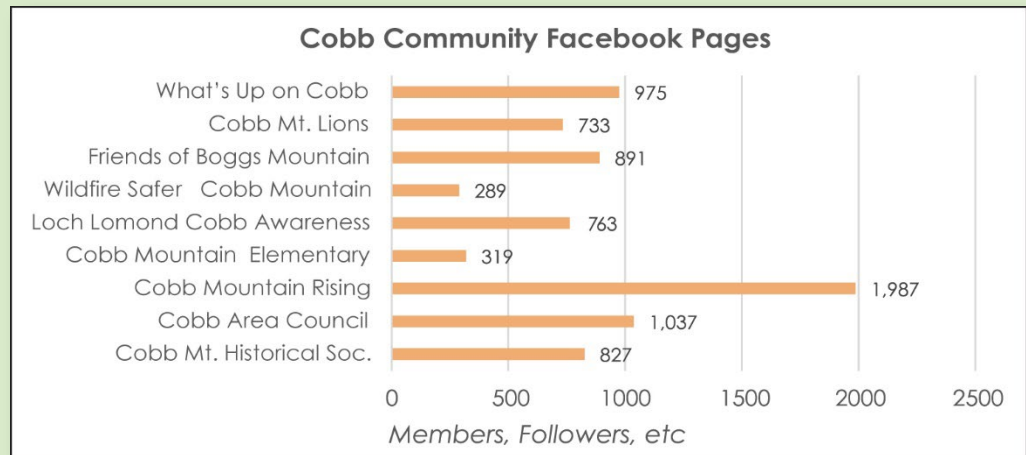
The Cobb Mountain Lions Club manages the Cobb Community Center as a community resource center and provides facilities and community service activities. The Cobb Community Center has been central to the Cobb area for decades. In addition to meeting space, the Cobb Community Center includes a commercial kitchen that has provided meals for residents during and after disasters. The club offers free grocery distribution twice each month, serving 48 households each time.



source: Cobb Mountain Lions Club

3. Blackberry Cobbler Festival:

In August 2019, the Cob Area Council Economic Development Committee put on the first annual Blackberry Cobbler Festival to celebrate local community character and resilience.



4. Social Media:

For many in the Cobb Mountain Community, social media has become an important place where community members can interact. Some of the most active Facebook pages are: (see graph)

5. Cobb Alert Net:

In 2018 the Cobb Area Council Communications Committee initiated a local radio connection network using inexpensive hand-held radios and anchored by experienced HAM operators. Over the first four years of operations the group has installed "repeater" stations that now allow all areas to communicate even if cell phone service is interrupted. The group holds weekly radio check-ins during fire season.

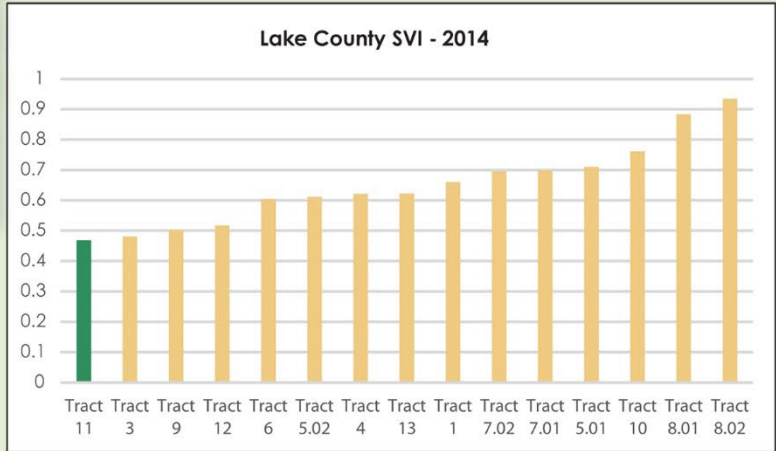
	Neighborhood Subnets	Members
2018	0	15
2019	5	48
2020	6	121
2021	9	198

6. Social Vulnerability Index³²:

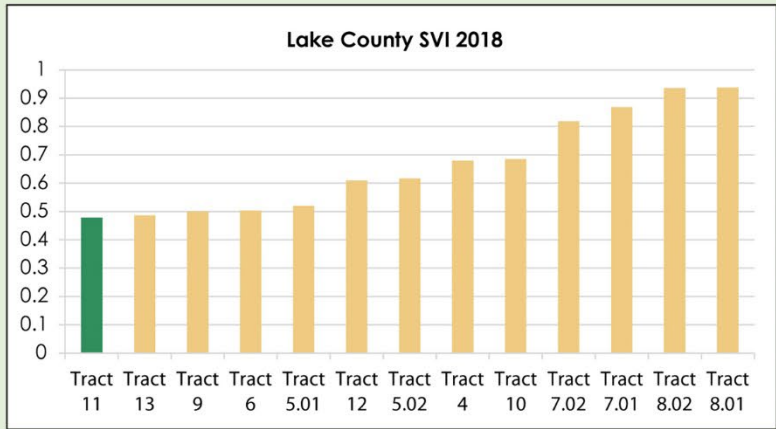
What is Social Vulnerability? Every community must prepare for and respond to hazardous events. The degree to which a community exhibits certain social conditions, including high poverty, low percentage of vehicle access, or crowded households, may affect that community's ability to prevent human suffering and financial loss in the event of disaster. These factors describe a community's social vulnerability. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to help public health officials and emergency response planners identify and map the communities that will most likely need support in the case of a hazardous event. The SVI indicates the relative vulnerability of every U.S. Census tract, ranks them on 15 social factors and further groups them into four related themes. Note that SVI is a relative index, so the county figures are in relation to all California counties and the census tract figures are in relation to all California census tracts. Thus, Lake County as a whole is significantly more vulnerable (score of .72) than California counties while the Cobb Mountain community (census tract 11) is slightly less vulnerable than all California census tracts (score of .48). Prior to the onset of major fires in 2015, Lake County SVI was still higher than most California counties (score of .70) and the Cobb Area was the least vulnerable Census tract in the County (score .47). See charts on next page.

Overall Vulnerability	Socioeconomic Status	Below Poverty
		Unemployed
		Income
		No High School Diploma
	Household Composition & Disability	Aged 65 or Older
		Aged 17 or Younger
		Civilian with a Disability
		Single-Parent Households
	Minority Status & Language	Minority
		Aged 5 or Older who Speaks English "Less than Well"
	Housing Type & Transportation	Multi-Unit Structures
		Mobile Homes
		Crowding
		No Vehicle
		Group Quarters

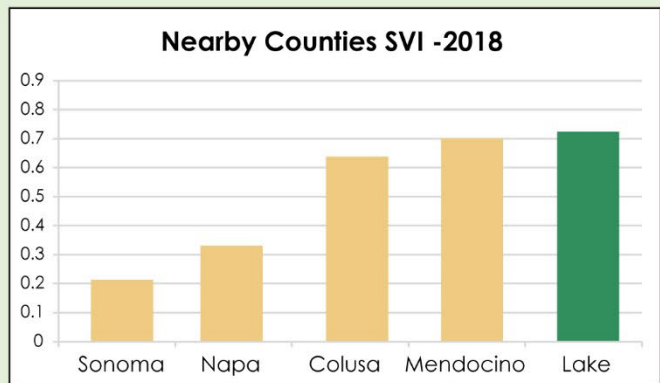
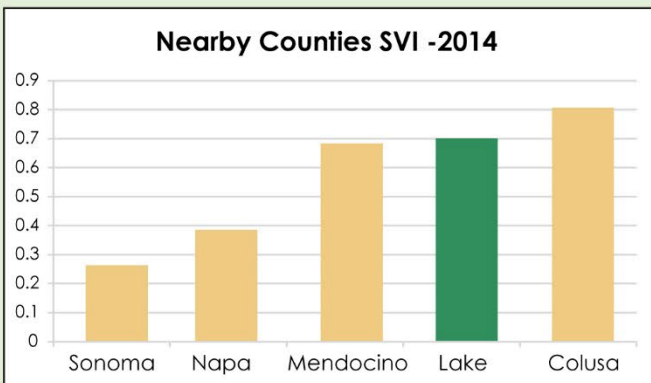
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LEFT:
Lake County SVI
Compared with other census tracts in Lake County, Cobb Mountain (Tract 11) has consistently had a lower Social Vulnerability Index³³



BELOW:
Nearby Counties SVI
Compared with neighboring counties, the Social Vulnerability of Lake County has increased since the 2015 Valley Fire



ADDITIONAL SOCIAL CAPITAL DATA WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE:

- More complete data on local social media activity – tracking activity on key sites
- Attendance at local community events: Cobb Night Out, Blackberry Cobbler Festival etc.

ANALYSIS

Although difficult to quantify, local sentiment (and anecdotal report) is that Cobb is rich in Social Capital, shown in multigenerational families, a family-oriented summer culture and, not least, the strong cooperative response after the Valley Fire. Although the community is predominantly white (see racial demographics, page XX), it is also politically, socially and economically diverse, a quality that seems to be valued by community members.



SOCIAL CAPITAL GOALS:

- Support a wide variety of gatherings throughout the community (with due respect for safety during the Covid pandemic)
- Bring different “identity” groups together

SOCIAL CAPITAL STRATEGIES:

- Promote events and gatherings (shared strategy with Human Capital)

