

## INTRODUCTION

### What is a guiding principle?

Guiding principles provide the framework and benchmarks to direct Chico's future consistent with community values and desires. They provide broad statements of purpose, intent and/or direction to achieve the community vision. The principles are used to guide the General Plan update, mapping and land use alternatives process. Additionally, the guiding principles establish a set of guidelines and benchmarks for the writing and implementation of General Plan goals, policies and actions.

### How are guiding principles incorporated in the current 1994 General Plan?

The 1994 General Plan includes 9 overall themes, 14 guiding principles (in the Community Design and Land Use Elements), and 134 key guiding policies. Collectively, these provisions identify both broad and specific statements of purpose, intent and direction for the General Plan. All of the nine elements of the existing General Plan include key guiding principles pertinent to the element topic that provide the basis for the implementing policies or specific actions to achieve the community vision. The Summary Chapter of the General Plan lists all 134 key guiding policies.

### What is the approach for these 2030 General Plan guiding principles?

The approach for the guiding principles in the 2030 General Plan Update is to build on past planning efforts, to ensure that key issues and priorities of Chicoans are addressed, and to focus on a few broad guiding principles for the Introduction Chapter of the General Plan. The guiding principles will set the overall tone/focus for the General Plan and each of the subsequent elements of the General Plan will further guide and plan for implementation of these guiding principles.

#### Introduction Chapter

- ❖ **Overall Vision for Chico in 2030**
- ❖ **General Plan Strategy of Sustainability**
- ❖ **Guiding Principles - Establishes objectives, framework, and/or benchmarks to guide/direct subsequent policies and actions consistent with the vision.**

#### Individual General Plan Elements (11 total)

- Vision Statement - Paints a picture of what Chico wants to be in 25 years relative to the element.
- Context - Element purpose, related plan, issues and considerations.
- Goals, Policies, and Actions - Goals are statements of community desires that will further refine and detail guiding principles. The policies serve as guides to the decision makers in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of the City. Actions are the implementation steps necessary to ensure the goals and policies are carried out.

## **CHICO 2030 VISION**

Chico will be a livable, energetic, healthy, and sustainable community in the year 2030. It will offer a high quality of life with a strong sense of community and place. Chico will maintain its small town character with opportunities for future generations to thrive. Government will be transparent and the politics open and engaging. The City will be characterized by a vibrant Downtown, a healthy economy, compact urban form, identifiable neighborhoods and housing choices, organic and sustainable farming practices, and a focus on alternative transportation and healthy lifestyles. Historic places and buildings will be prominent in the City's future. Chico will be celebrated for its diversity, culture, and access to the outdoors, recreational opportunities, and parks. It will be known as a leader in innovative technology and educational capital. The City will maintain its national recognition as a "Best Place in America" (Forbes Magazine), a "Best Place to Live" (Money.com), a "Healthy City" (Organic Style), a top-ranked bicycle-friendly city, and a community with one of the largest parks in the nation (Bidwell Park). Chico will also be renowned throughout California and the nation as a "Best Place to Visit" with diverse cultural activities and entertainment venues, as well as natural and manmade amenities and attractions. Above all, Chico will be "a place we'll all be proud to call home."

## **GENERAL PLAN STRATEGY OF SUSTAINABILITY**

The Guiding Strategy for the City of Chico's General Plan is to progress towards a Sustainable Chico. Chico is committed to minimizing the impact of human activity on the environment, while supporting economic progress and social equity. Chico will integrate sustainability principles into all decision-making, promoting a whole-systems approach. Our goal is to enhance each community system that supports each community need and ensure that they interact in a mutually reinforcing manner. Sustainability can be achieved when each system is working in an optimal state.

Definition: Sustainability in Chico means enhancing our natural resources, economic interests, and quality of life so that present and future generations can reach their greatest potential, promoting a culture of stewardship that distinguishes Chico as a sustainability leader.

### **The Three Systems of Sustainability: The Three-Legged Stool**

Sustainability promotes well-balanced communities by linking together three critical systems: environment, economy and society. These dimensions are inter-related and equally important for achieving a sustainable community. They can be visualized as a "three legged stool" that support and sustain healthy communities. If one leg of the stool is cut off the chair becomes unstable; similarly, if one dimension of sustainability is not considered the community becomes unstable. This model of sustainability addresses the most important vision concepts in Chico.

To achieve Sustainable Chico, the following systems must work together:

Environment

A healthy environment is critical to achieving long term economic sustainability and community strength. The priority is to value, restore and protect natural resources and ecosystem services and create quality environments.

Economy

A sustainable economy requires a diversified employment base and trained local workforce. The priority is to create a resilient and thriving local economy, accessible to local residents and responsive to local needs.

Society

A strong community improves the quality of the lives of Chico's residents. The priority is to respect and value each community member, and provide well-functioning social systems to promote access to opportunity and allow each resident to reach their greatest potential.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Draft Guiding Principles for the Chico 2030 General Plan are listed herein. While these principles consider the guiding principles from the 1994 General Plan, the main focus is to address the key issues, priorities, and vision as communicated by Chico residents and stakeholders to date, including but not limited to input from the statistically valid phone survey, the visioning workshops, stakeholder meetings, key issues workshops, GPAC meetings, and Downtown Ad Hoc Committee meetings.

1. **Planned and Balanced Growth and Conservation.** The General Plan establishes a citywide land use plan with a healthy balance and mix of land uses that is sustainable for the future of Chico and that maintains or enhances quality of life for Chico residents. The City will balance growth and conservation by reinforcing the City's compact urban form, establishing urban growth limits, and managing where and how growth and conservation will occur. Orderly development contiguous to existing developed areas that can be efficiently served by the extension of infrastructure and municipal services in a fiscally responsible manner is a priority for Chico.
2. **Healthy Environment with a Reduced Ecological Footprint.** Cities generally consume far more resources than are produced locally, and produce more wastes than can be assimilated into the local environment. Chico will actively strive to reduce our ecological footprint by using fewer natural resources, relying on locally produced goods and services, actively promoting the use of renewable versus non-renewable resources, and enhancing environmentally friendly strategies to locally assimilate wastes. The City strives to protect our air quality, climate, and human health by reducing all harmful emissions, including greenhouse gases. Chico will lead the way

to a healthy environment by providing local government support, partnerships, and innovation in sustainable design principles.

3. **Strong Local Economy with Diversified Employment Base and Reliance on Local Business.** The General Plan will actively promote an appropriate mix of local jobs suited for Chico's residents and local needs, such that future generations will remain in Chico because the City supports their desired lifestyle or career. Encouraging residents to support the local economy by buying locally produced goods and services will create a more robust local economy.
4. **Resource Protection and Enhancement.** The General Plan will conserve, enhance and protect viable agricultural resources, natural resources, and unique natural environments. This Plan outlines strategies for acquisition and preservation of sensitive habitats and creekside greenways and stipulates criteria for development in resource-sensitive areas. The City's open space resources and creeks are the framework for a vast and connected open space network. Historic and cultural resources will be protected and enhanced to serve as significant visible reminders of the City's social and architectural history.
5. **Enhance Chico's Character and Identity.** The General Plan will reinforce the unique identity and character of Chico as a thriving valley town in a natural landscape setting. Promote Chico as the civic, cultural, and economic hub of the region and the North Valley at the same time maintaining the City's small town charm. The General Plan emphasizes the role of Downtown as the heart of the community.
6. **Livable Neighborhoods as Community Foundation.** The General Plan will create and reinforce a pattern well designed and walkable neighborhood environments, from the traditional downtown core to integrated new communities, with places to gather, nearby services for daily shopping needs, and multi-modal access to recreation, jobs, and other community and regional services.
7. **Development Patterns that Offer Alternatives to Automobile Use.** Chico's level topography and mature landscape offer a pleasant environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. The General Plan integrates and locates land uses to reduce distances between uses with a renewed emphasis on traditional street patterns providing easy access for all residents, including bicyclists and pedestrians. The Plan emphasizes development of a balanced, integrated, multi-modal circulation system (streets, trails, sidewalks, bikeways) that is efficient and safe, connecting neighborhoods to jobs, shopping, schools, services, local attractions, and active and passive open space.
8. **Performance Based Service Standards and Resource Allocation for Sustainability.** Sustainability indicators provide guidance in meeting our goal for a Sustainable Chico. The development of sustainability indicators allow us to analyze our progress towards achieving a sustainable community. These indicators can guide future

decisions and program development, allowing for continual improvement and reallocation of resources to achieve community goals.

9. **Social Services and Systems for All Chico Residents.** The General Plan will create a community that fosters a strong sense of identity, public safety and the personal well-being of all of Chico's residents. The City will promote community engagement, lifelong learning opportunities and equal access to all community resources. Chico will provide a varied and diverse housing supply to support the needs of Chico's current and future residents.