

## 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 each element to communicate key ideas and direction, rather than dozens of key guiding policies. Overall guiding principles in the existing General Plan would be replaced by an overall community vision in the 2030 General Plan Introduction. Then, each of the Plan's 11 elements will include the following components:

- Vision Statement - Paints a picture of what Chico wants to be in 25 years relative to the element.
- **Guiding Principles - Establishes objectives, framework, and/or benchmarks to guide/direct subsequent policies and actions consistent with community desires.**
- Introduction and Purpose - Explains purpose and intent of element.
- Related Plans and Programs - Summarizes related plans and programs and identifies significance/relationship to element.
- Issues and Considerations - Identifies setting, outlines key issues, trade offs, and solutions for the element.
- 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.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES BY GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT**

Draft Guiding Principles for the Chico 2030 General Plan are listed herein for each of the City's 11 General Plan Elements. 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. Sustainability Element

*Note: Because the Sustainability Element is a new element, most of the guiding principles are new. However, sustainability concepts from the City's existing overall principles are incorporated. Guiding principles below relate to several other principles in the land use, housing, economic development, and environmental conservation elements.*

- ❖ Promote a culture of stewardship within our community to enhance our natural resources, economic interests, and quality of life for present and future generations in the City of Chico by collectively developing programs and initiatives which will distinguish Chico as a leader in sustainability efforts.
- ❖ Reduce the City's ecological footprint to promote a healthy environment 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.
- ❖ Protect our air quality, climate, and human health by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.
- ❖ Develop sustainability indicators to measure progress towards meeting community goals and to help guide future decisions and program development, allowing for continual improvement and reallocation of resources.
- ❖ Lead the way for local government support, partnerships, and innovation in green design principles.

### 2. Land Use Element

*Note: Guiding principles for land use incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, regional guiding principles, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Foster and encourage 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.
- ❖ Establish 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.
- ❖ Ensure that new development, infill, and redevelopment utilize sustainable development practices that provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses while preserving choices for future generations.
- ❖ Promote a diversity of 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 services.
- ❖ Focus higher density/intensity developments and mixed use projects in the Downtown, near job centers, near the University, along multi-modal transportation corridors/hubs, and other strategic opportunity areas throughout the City to ensure a long-term compact form.
- ❖ Partner with the County and other agencies on a cooperative planning approach to address border issues and seamlessly coordinate land use and infrastructure decisions within the Chico Planning Area.

### 3. Transportation Element

*Note: Guiding principles for circulation incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, regional guiding principles, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Develop 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.
- ❖ Create a hierarchical circulation system that accommodates future land uses at the City's desired level of service, protects residential areas from excessive traffic, is multi-modal, and contributes to the mobility and connectivity of the City's residential, commercial, office, and industrial areas.

- ❖ Establish trip reduction targets and performance measures that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile including walking, bicycling, and transit.
- ❖ Promote Chico as an exceptionally walkable and bike friendly community, accessible to the disabled, with well designed sidewalks, streets and trail systems throughout the community.
- ❖ Coordinate with BCAG to enhance and strengthen local and regional multi-modal transportation systems that ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through the region.

#### 4. Community Design Element

*Note: Guiding principles for community character incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Reinforce the unique identity and character of Chico as a thriving valley town set in a natural landscape with historic small town charm that is cherished by residents.
- ❖ Locate and design buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces that contribute to walkable neighborhoods and districts.
- ❖ Promote the development of complete neighborhoods both in infill and new growth areas that foster a sense of place with quality design at a human scale.
- ❖ Protect and replicate the pattern and character of Chico's unique and traditional neighborhoods and districts.
- ❖ Establish City gateways and signage systems for improved sense of arrival and wayfinding for residents and visitors throughout Chico.
- ❖ Continue to encourage and celebrate public art in a variety of ways throughout the community.

#### 5. Housing Element

*Note: Guiding principles for housing incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, regional guiding principles, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Provide a mix of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including an equitable distribution of affordable housing throughout the City.

- ❖ Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to promote a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels in order to promote stable neighborhoods.
- ❖ Ensure an adequate supply of land available to meet the City's existing and future housing needs.
- ❖ Encourage the improvement, rehabilitation, and revitalization/reinvestment of the City's existing residential neighborhoods.
- ❖ Pursue sustainable development and energy efficiency for new residential development and existing housing stock.
- ❖ Pursue public and private resources available to promote diverse housing opportunities, and particularly to assist in the creation of workforce housing and special needs housing.

#### 6. Downtown Element

*Note: Because the Downtown Element is a new element, most of the guiding principles are new. However, downtown concepts from the City's existing General Plan are incorporated and updated. Guiding principles below relate to several other principles in the land use, housing, and economic development elements.*

- ❖ Emphasize the role of Downtown as the historic, cultural, and commercial heart of the community.
- ❖ Encourage development of Downtown as a mixed-use activity center (24 hour City) with retail and visitor-oriented uses, entertainment uses, business and personal services, government and professional offices, civic uses, communications facilities, and higher density residential uses.
- ❖ Improve the economic well-being of the Downtown by encouraging infill development, intensification and reuse of currently underutilized sites, expansion south of Downtown, and strategic partnering with the University.
- ❖ Plan for necessary infrastructure to support economic revitalization of Downtown.
- ❖ Enhance the vitality and character of the Downtown by reinforcing the physical framework, enhancing the pedestrian-oriented streetscape and district features, highlighting the creeks as gateways, and ensuring quality design of new buildings/renovations.
- ❖ Celebrate the City's history by encouraging development patterns and architecture in keeping with the City's past and by preserving/enhancing buildings of special historic and/or architectural interest in the Downtown.

7. Economic Development Element

*Note: Guiding principles for economic development incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, regional guiding principles, recently adopted Economic Development Strategy, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Promote Chico as the civic, cultural, and economic hub of the region and the North Valley.
- ❖ Ensure an adequate supply of land to accommodate economic development and plan for infrastructure development to serve the needs of an expanding economy.
- ❖ Provide a positive business climate with a predictable, timely, and transparent government process.
- ❖ Collaborate with public and private interests to target business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts to retain graduates of local colleges and better match the skills of other local residents to jobs.
- ❖ Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and re-use throughout the community.
- ❖ Ensure a high quality of life that will be attractive to businesses as well as to residents.
- ❖ Improve the jobs-housing balance by locating housing near employment centers.
- ❖ Consider impacts to the City's fiscal health along with other planning criteria in land use and economic development decisions.

8. Parks, Public Facilities, and Services Element

*Note: Guiding principles for parks, public facilities and services incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Provide a full range of capital improvements, public services and facilities to meet community needs in a manner that ensures high quality of life for Chico residents as well as fiscal viability.
- ❖ Ensure the development of well-designed infrastructure to meet community needs at the time they are needed and ensure equitable cost recovery.
- ❖ Promote joint-use of public facilities to optimize the use of public funds.

- ❖ Promote transparent government systems and processes with emphasis on public participation and consistency in decision making with the right balance of certainty and flexibility in the public process.
- ❖ Provide innovative parks and recreational and sports facilities for all Chico's existing and new neighborhoods.
- ❖ Provide for neighborhood parks close to or within neighborhoods.
- ❖ Support high quality education and schools.

9. Open Space and Environmental Conservation Element

*Note: Guiding principles for open space and environmental conservation incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, regional guiding principles, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Conserve, enhance and protect viable agricultural resources, natural resources, and unique natural environments to maintain community identity.
- ❖ Ensure that future growth will be in harmony with Chico's natural setting through effective resource-based planning.
- ❖ Preserve and enhance the City's open space system to connect all parts of the community and utilize creeks as a framework for the open space network.
- ❖ Preserve and protect important historic and cultural resources that serve as significant visible reminders of the City's social and architectural history.
- ❖ Strive to improve air quality and encourage water provider to wisely use, conserve, retain water locally and preserve recharge areas to ensure a healthy community and region.
- ❖ Improve and expand the urban forest that contributes to the character and identity of Chico.

10. Safety and Safety Services Element

*Note: Guiding principles for safety incorporate concepts from the existing GP guiding principles and policies, best professional planning practices and innovations from other similar jurisdictions to address current community vision and key issues for the GP Update.*

- ❖ Promote safe neighborhoods through good community and environmental design.

- ❖ Improve coordination among residents, businesses, and City departments to address real and perceived security and safety issues.
- ❖ Minimize Chico's vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters and strengthen the City's emergency response capabilities.

11. Noise Element

*Note: Guiding principles for noise have not changed from the existing GP guiding principles and policies as they support the current community vision and key issues for the GP Update without modification or clarification.*

- ❖ Protect public health and welfare by eliminating existing noise problems where feasible, by establishing standards for acceptable indoor and outdoor noise, and by preventing significant increases in noise levels.
- ❖ Incorporate noise considerations into land use planning decisions, and guide the location and design of transportation facilities to minimize the effects of noise on adjacent land uses.