

Students give ideas for updating city General Plan

By JENN KLEIN - Staff Writer
Chico Enterprise-Record

Article Launched: 02/15/2008 12:00:00 AM PST

Parking and safety topped the list of concerns repeated by area students during a workshop aimed at gathering their likes and dislikes.

Chico State University and Butte College students, faculty and staff had a chance to weigh in on what they want for the future of Chico in a General Plan workshop held Wednesday.

Those at the meeting, most of whom identified themselves as Chico State undergraduate students or graduate planning students, were asked to list what they liked about Chico, what they wanted to improve or add and what would like the city to look like in the year 2030.

City Planning Director Steve Peterson said the city wanted to get an understanding of the interests of various groups, including students.

"It's your plan, your future," Peterson told the students. "Your opinion matters."

The General Plan is a master plan for the community that serves as a comprehensive, long-range policy document to guide physical development. The update to the plan, which is expected to take two years to complete, will include planning until the year 2030.

Chico State students Adam Tull, 23, and Kristofer Head, 29, said they both came to the meeting to hear what other people thought and for increased awareness.

"I think any of these meetings where the community can speak and the city actually listens to them is a good idea," Tull said while leaving the workshop.

Both left curious about the end result of their feedback. The said they were interested in seeing what the process produces as they wanted to know their opinion mattered and the workshop wasn't a waste of time for both the city and the students.

The workshop held specifically for students is one of several ongoing outreach efforts in the process of updating the city's General Plan. The general public was asked the same "visioning" questions as the students in December and the city is also wrapping up similar interviews with "stakeholder" groups, such as members of business or environmental groups.

Most repeated by the group during the workshop were concerns about the lack of parking around school. Following close behind were concerns about safety, whether it be the need for pedestrian lights on Nord Avenue or increased police scrutiny during the periods when students are out of town for breaks and thefts and break-ins occur.

The students also overwhelmingly expressed a desire to protect and increase open space and parks, with a few mentioning a wish to protect the character of older neighborhoods, the downtown area, and historic homes. Some mentioned tangible wishes — a dog park and a disc golf course — while others had more broad goals of addressing affordable housing and the homeless.

One recent Chico State graduate said she thought the city needed to give incentives to attract employers to the area because while it's easy to find minimum wage jobs, it's difficult to find a livable wage. She also said improved cell phone reception in the north Chico area is needed, as the lack of adequate reception means it's difficult to telecommunicate.

Kendall Flint with PMC, the city's General Plan consultant, told the group this is the time to lay everything out on the table. Later on in the process comes the more challenging process of balancing out all the possibilities, she said.

Staff writer Jenn Klein can be reached at 896-7767 or jklein@chicoer.com.

Close Window

Send To Printer