

City urges participation in General Plan key issues workshop

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Four public workshops planning officials call crucial to the process of updating the city's General Plan will begin Tuesday with a focus on development and economics.

Results of the first of the "key issue" workshops will impact where and how Chico develops, and what kind of jobs you or your children might have in the future, city planner Holly Keeler said.

"The General Plan is going to guide our development for the next 20 years and it's relevant to everybody. ... It's very important for people to participate," said Keeler.

Kendall Flint of PMC, the city's consultant for the update, said the plan is in a crucial place and the city is trying to involve as many people as possible to make sure the plan reflects what people want.

She said the city identified about 100 ideas or concerns from residents during a first round of meetings asking people to envision the future for Chico. Those ideas were grouped into four broader topics, starting with Tuesday's meeting on land use and economics.

Keeler recognizes it's hard to stay focused and devote time during the two-year process of updating the plan. But she said as the public outreach of the plan will wrap up at the end of this summer, it's easier to weigh in now with concerns instead waiting until the plan is written up.

Flint said when complete, the General Plan will impact everyone. She said the direct reflection of policies will influence everyone from property owners concerned about where new stores go and what types of architecture they will be, to students thinking about whether they can live in Chico after they graduate and what jobs they may have, to seniors concerned about what types of transportation are available and how to get around.

Flint said those who come to the workshops will not end up "sitting in a room with a bunch of planners talking at you" or watching a PowerPoint presentation. She said most of the time will be spent going through a series of small stations set up with exercises seeking what she said are critical opinions from residents on key issues.

One such station will ask residents where they absolutely don't want development, where they might consider development, and where they expect development to happen.

She said the city consistently hears that people feel there's a lack of good-paying jobs in the area, so Tuesday's meeting will also talk about opportunities for economic development, what kind of businesses the city should attract, and how businesses and Chico residents can work together.

Keeler promised the workshops would not drag out past two hours and would even have snacks.

The meetings will be:

Land Use and Local Economy — Tuesday

Environment and Sustainability — April 8

Circulation/Mobility and Public Services — May 13

Community Character and Neighborhoods — June

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All meetings are 6:30-8:30 p.m. at California Park Lakeside Pavilion, 2565 California Park Drive.

Flint said if residents are unable to make it to the workshops, they can find information and take surveys at chicogeneralplan.com. She residents can also provide input by calling the city at 879-6800 or writing a letter.

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