

## Up or Out? Tradeoffs come with each option for Chico's growth

By JENN KLEIN - Staff Writer

Article Launched: 08/04/2008 12:00:00 AM PDT

CHICO — One way Chico could grow would mean lots of room for jobs and homes with big backyards — and an increase in governmental costs and environmental losses.

Another option would protect the environment and agriculture and make sure people could walk to work — but make a new house more expensive and radically change the way Chico looks today.

City Planner Holly Keeler said now is the time residents should figure out if they have a preference in how the city grows — and to make that preference clear.

Elected officials will hear from the public Tuesday night during a joint meeting of the Chico City Council and Planning Commission.

City leaders will soon have to pick an option for how Chico grows, and that choice will impact the price of homes, what kind of jobs are in town, and even what the city looks and feels like.

However the city chooses to grow, it will come with some advantages — and some tradeoffs.

"No matter what you do, there is no perfect world," Keeler said. "What we're trying to do is balance social services with the economy ... with protecting the environment."

Keeler said the three choices laid out for how Chico could grow hinge on the question of "up" or "out."

"Option A" would expand the city's limits the farthest, providing the most land for houses and jobs.

But it goes into environmentally sensitive land in the east and crosses the agricultural border on the west. And because Chico is more spread out, the city would have to extend the sewer system, maintain more roads, and police officers and firefighters would take longer to respond to an emergency.

"Option C" would keep the city's boundaries the same, which would require buildings to be closer together and with more stories.

This option would require what city planners are calling a "paradigm shift" in the way the city is developed. While the "most sustainable" option, Chico would be different, with more multi-story buildings, people living above commercial development, and a change in how the city looks and feels. Option C would focus on filling in undeveloped land or redeveloping property to maximize its use.

"Option B" would use a combination of developing new areas outside the city and filling in undeveloped land within the city.

"It's not as extreme (as either Option A or C)," Keeler said. "It's attempt is to hit all the good points and mitigate the bad points as much as possible." But Keeler said while B appears to provide the best overall potential for job growth, it might be short on industrial land.

Keeler said none of the options are perfect and nobody will come away completely happy. Instead, it's about trying to find the best balance with something for everybody.

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

Ultimately, she said, it comes down to a choice in what residents want Chico to be.

"I don't know if you can get everything," Keeler said. "I think that what you want to try to do is get the most."

In September, the City Council will pick an option it likes best to study more. Picking an option for how to grow is part of the city's process of updating its General Plan, which serves as a blueprint for developing the community.

Staff writer Jenn Klein can be reached at 896-7767 or [jklein@chicoer.com](mailto:jklein@chicoer.com).

Public meeting

6:30 p.m. Tuesday

Chico City Council Chambers, 421 Main Street

On the Internet

To see detailed maps of each growth option, visit [chicogeneralplan.com](http://chicogeneralplan.com)

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™