CITY OF CHICO MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL (Mtg. of 1/25/05) DATE: January 18, 2005

FROM: CITY MANAGER (x4802) TL FILE: G-CP-2-1-19/PS-51-43/Chrono

SUBJECT: BIDWELL RANCH GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND REZONE TO OPEN SPACE

SUMMARY:

At the City Council meeting of October 5, 2004, the City Council took no action on the Planning Commission recommendation to designate and zone Bidwell Ranch to open space. After the vote was taken several of the Council members who voted to oppose the rezone indicated their desire to receive additional information and potentially revisit the issue. To date, questions have been received from Mayor Gruendl and Council member Herbert.

BACKGROUND:

Attached as Exhibit "A" is a copy of the memorandum dated September 24, 2004, which provides background information as to the General Plan and zoning changes as well as a summary of the Planning Commission's action of September 16, 2004. The Commission voted 5-1 to both rezone the property and to recommend the development of a Comprehensive Use and Management Plan.

Set forth below are staff's responses to questions received from Mayor Gruendl and Council member Herbert.

1. **Pros and cons related to open space versus park land.**

   The designation of the property as open space versus parkland is not a significant distinction. The implication is that open space would have a different level or type of management and access. Given the sensitive environmental resources on the Bidwell Ranch property, should the City Council determine it appropriate to designate an open space or park use, it would be appropriate to develop a management plan which would speak to the issues of access and utilization.

2. **Process that would be utilized to determine what level of public access there would be (perhaps an identification of what the scope of the management plan for the parcel would be.)**

   The level of public access would be determined by the development of a management plan. While the scope of such a plan would need to be determined, it clearly would include the location and identification of sensitive resources, the management of those resources including appropriate uses of control burns and grazing, and identification of the portion of the property which may be less sensitive and more appropriately open to more activity and access points. Given the location of the property it does not appear that there would be any

reason to treat it to dissimilarly from the adjoining portion of upper Bidwell Park which has very limited access (one to two trails through it) and is largely a passive open space.

3. Amount owed on the property, estimated time until completely paid and source of funding.

While seemingly a straight-forward question, there are a number of complications associated with it. The original purchase and payments on Bidwell Ranch have assumed the repurchase of the original sum capacity for 4,666 units. As of June 30, 2004, there is an outstanding principal balance of $1,052,432 on the north east Chico sewer bonds applicable to the property. These bonds would be paid off in 2011 for a total cost of $1,600,791. At the current sanitary sewer trunk line fees, the fee for these 4,666 units is $4,367,376. However, the City has completed a draft sanitary sewer master plan which will be in front of the Finance Committee within the next six months. Its initial proposal would include $1,440 per unit for trunk line fees or a total of $6,719,040 to buy the sanitary sewer trunk line capacity from Bidwell Ranch to use elsewhere.

The second issue involves wetland mitigation where the Redevelopment Agency purchased mitigation rights on Bidwell Ranch for $1.5 million. At this point in time it is simply not known whether or not with the designation of the property as open space, the Army Corps of Engineers would recognize mitigation value for the west side of the airport. It is certainly possible that we will not be able to utilize Bidwell Ranch and would have to repay these funds to the Agency.

In either case, should the Council decide to designate the property as open space, I would propose using the Bidwell Park land acquisition fee and adjusting it as necessary to pay for any outstanding costs of the property.

4. Potential for mitigation banking for both the airport master plan and for private developers.

While this is largely answered above, the City extended the 404 permit on the property until October 2005 and will be seeking an additional extension of time. It is simply unknown how the Corps will react should the property be designated as open space. Again, it is certainly possible that the property, since it would already be protected as open space, would lose its mitigation value. There is also discussion in the community as to whether or not the creation of wetland resources is appropriate on Bidwell Ranch in any case as opposed to simply using and protecting the existing wetlands for mitigation purposes.

5. If a sale of a portion of the land were to be considered, what is the estimated time and cost associated with making the land available.

If the City Council decided to sell a portion of Bidwell Ranch there are a number of alternative approaches: The first would include simply trying to market the property in an "as is" condition with no warranty as to ability to develop. Based upon very preliminary discussions with several developers, in my opinion it is extremely unlikely the City would receive any value above that for its capacity as grazing land. The second alternative would involve the City doing the necessary environmental review and land use studies to actually

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entitle the property. In my estimation, this would conservatively take 18-24 months to complete, and at least $500,000 in up-front costs. Should the property actually receive development entitlements then it would be in high demand, and have a high value.

6. If this remains open space, what does it become?

If the property remains open space, staff's recommendation would be to develop a master management plan. It would be my assumption that it would become largely passive open space with some limited access similar to major portions of Upper Park. However, this would be the subject of the management plan.

7. Who is responsible for maintenance (Park Department, Public Works)?

The City's Park Department would be responsible for maintenance, assisted by the Department of Public Works to attempt to prevent improper access by means such as four-wheel drive vehicles.

8. Access leads to many other issues–liability, protection, enforcement–how are these issues funded?

The access issues related to passive open space probably do not expose the City to a substantial liability, however there already are sizeable concerns regarding protection of the property and enforcement related to illegal activities damaging the environmental resources. These costs would need to be funded from the City's General Fund at the current time.

9. Do plans for leaving this open space allow for any recreational uses such as bike trails, equestrian, or golf course?

It would ultimately be a City Council decision and there are certainly portions of the property which are not environmentally sensitive and could be used for a variety of purposes. The management plan would help determine the appropriate uses, trails, and access to the site.

10. It would be helpful to see a map with various aspects of Bidwell Ranch, the existing wetland preserves, and possible boundary lines at 100, 200, 250 acre development.

Attached as Exhibit "B" is a map which shows the Meadowfoam and wetland areas as well as the developable portions of the site.

11. What configurations of development would allow for the greatest buffers from the entrance to the park (so many people responded to the petition stating that this was at the "entrance" to the park). At the various boundary lines listed above, what is the actual distance to the "entrance" to the park?

As you can see from the maps, the central portion of the site is the only area in which this development could occur based on the need to protect the environmental resources. The closest portion of potential development to the park is approximately three to four tenths of a mile.

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12. Under various development configurations, how contiguous would this be to existing development?

The central portion of the site, which was originally proposed for development, is in close proximity to both Foothill Park Unit #9 and areas of Cactus Avenue. Development would require the crossing of Sycamore Creek.

13. At what point will we be assured that we have exhausted all possibilities for FAA overflight?

The FAA policies regarding funding of additional clear zone have been consistently inconsistent. City staff was originally told that this was a high probability for funding using discretionary funds and staff would have expected funding to have occurred prior to now. However, with a significant change in staffing and with the aftermath of September 11, 2001, we are now being told it is improbable the FAA would ever provide funding for the acquisition of this property to ensure its use as a clear zone. Whether or not that opinion changes again is unknown.

In addition, the City has received a letter from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) which is requesting that the overflight area of Bidwell Ranch be maintained as open space. The letter is attached as Exhibit "C" along with a map staff has prepared illustrating the area the CDF letter discusses.

14. What is the current cost estimate for access over the diversion channel?

The cost for a bridge over the Sycamore Creek diversion channel is estimated to be $1 million to $1.5 million. I would caution that this is an extremely rough estimate at this time.

Attachments

- Exhibit A - Memorandum dated 9/24/04 from Planning staff.
- Exhibit B - Map identifying the Meadowfoam and wetland areas as well as the developable portions of the site.
- Exhibit C - Letter dated 10/28/04 from CDF and map depicting overflight area.

cc: City Clerk (19)
Senior Assistant City Manager
Assistant City Manager
City Attorney
Director of Public Works
Community Development Director
Planning Director
Butte Environmental Council, 116 W. 2nd Street, #3, Chico, CA 95928
Building Industry Association, 70 Declaration Drive, Suite 101, Chico, CA 95973
Bob Best, 1740 Estates Way, Chico, CA 95928
Save Bidwell Ranch, c/o Hilary Locke, 1122 Normal Avenue, Chico, CA 95928

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CITY OF CHICO MEMORANDUM

TO:	City Council (Mtg. 10/05/04)	**DATE:**	September 24, 2004
FROM:	Brendan Vieg, Senior Planner (895-4744) Ed Palmeri, Associate Planner (895-4795)	**FILE:**	GPA/RZ 04-04
RE:	Bidwell Ranch General Plan Amendment and Rezone to Open Space (GPA/RZ 04-04)		

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its January 27, 2004 meeting, the City Council voted (4 in favor and 3 opposed) on a motion to initiate an amendment to the existing General Plan and zoning of the Bidwell Ranch property to permanent open space. Based on that direction, the City is proposing to amend the General Plan land use designation and zoning for the Bidwell Ranch site to open space (**Attachment A**). The proposed land use amendment is from a mixed land use designation of *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety* and *Very Low Density Residential* to *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety*. The proposed zone change is from *PMU-RM-PD Planned Mixed Use-Resource Management-Planned Development overlay* to *OS1 Primary Open Space*. In addition, various General Plan text amendments are proposed in order to ensure internal consistency within the General Plan.

On September 16, 2004, the Planning Commission voted (5 in favor and 1 opposed) to recommend that the City Council:

1) ***Adopt a resolution adopting the Negative Declaration, approving amendments to General Plan designations for the subject parcels, and approving text amendments to the General Plan for internal consistency;***
2) ***Adopt the rezone ordinance (Attachment B) by the reading of the title only; and***
3) ***Provide guidance to staff on the development of comprehensive use and management plan for the Bidwell Ranch property.***

II. BACKGROUND

Project Setting

The Bidwell Ranch property consists of approximately 750± acres and is located northeast of the Sycamore Creek Diversion Channel and adjacent to the western edge of Upper Bidwell Park. The proposed General Plan amendment (GPA) and rezone will place the property into

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permanent open space. The properties are identified as Assessor's Parcel Nos. 016-230-010, 016-200-002, and 016-170-002.

Surrounding land uses include residential and park to the west, park to the south and southeast (Upper Bidwell Park), and open grassland areas to the east and north. The site contains large areas of environmentally-sensitive lands, including wetlands, vernal pools, arroyos, clay flats, several ephemeral drainage courses, and protected species.

Project History

The Bidwell Ranch site has been planned for residential development since adoption of a General Plan amendment in 1982, when the site was designated *Low Density Residential* (6 dwelling units per gross acre) and zoned *R-1 Single-Family Residential*. The current General Plan designation and zoning were put into place with adoption of the updated General Plan in 1994. The project site has been considered for multiple development proposals ranging in size from 4,668 to 1,500 residential units.

Projects proposed for the site have been the subject of much community debate, including a referendum, a lawsuit, and a settlement agreement. In January 1997, the City of Chico purchased the property from Crocker Development Company for $7.5 million utilizing predominantly monies from the Sewer Trunkline Capacity Fund ($5,608,204) and redevelopment funds ($1,500,000). At that time it was anticipated part of the property might eventually be used to mitigate wetlands impacts from a future airport expansion.

The current General Plan designation and zoning for the project site, as well as General Plan Land Use policy LU-I-70, allow for development of the area with up to 1,500 housing units and 4 to 6 acres of mixed-use neighborhood core.

Since acquiring the property, the City Council has had a number of discussions regarding alternative uses of the property. On January 27, 2004, the City Council voted to initiate an amendment to the existing General Plan designation and zoning of the Bidwell Ranch property to permanent open space. No specific direction regarding a General Plan designation or zoning classification beyond the motion was provided. Staff has developed a framework for the General Plan amendment and rezone, which staff believes best reflects the intent of the Council's motion and ensures sufficient long-term management of the property.

City-Initiated Amendments

The Planning Commission recommends that the following actions be taken to achieve the direction given by Council at its January 27, 2004 meeting:

1) Amend the General Plan Diagram to change the project site's mixed land use designation from *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety* and *Very Low Density Residential* to *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety* (Exhibit II to **Attachment C**);

2) Amend General Plan text and figures to ensure internal consistency within the General Plan (Exhibit III to **Attachment C**);

3) Rezone the project site from *PMU-RM-PD Planned Mixed Use-Resource Management-Planned Development* to *OS1 Primary Open Space* (Exhibit I to **Attachment B**); and

4) Provide guidance to staff on the development of comprehensive use and management plan for the Bidwell Ranch property.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An initial study has been prepared to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan amendment/rezone, which concluded that impacts resulting from the proposed action would be less than significant. No mitigation measures were identified. A negative declaration, therefore, is proposed for the project (Exhibit I to **Attachment C**). Please refer to the attached initial study (**Attachment D**) for a complete description of the environmental setting and a discussion of potential impacts. During the 20-day public review period, which ended on September 8, 2004, staff received two sets of comments related to the proposed negative declaration (see the first 2 letters found in **Attachment E**). Staff prepared responses to the comments specific to the environmental concerns raised, but did not address policy or economic considerations (**Attachment F**).

IV. GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND GOALS

The proposed General Plan amendment and rezone would meet many goals and policies of the Open Space and Land Use Elements of the General Plan. Applicable General Plan goals and policies are listed in the September 16, 2004, Planning Commission staff report (**Attachment G**). Below is a brief explanation of project consistency with General Plan goals and policies.

The proposed rezone of the Bidwell Ranch property to open space is consistent with General Plan goals and policies that call for the preservation of special status species and their habitats, provision of wildlife corridors, maintenance of open space and foothill viewsheds, and compatibility of land use development with airport operations. Upon adoption of the proposed General Plan text amendments, the General Plan would be internally consistent.

V. ANALYSIS

The Council provided staff direction to process a General Plan amendment and rezone of the Bidwell Ranch parcel to permanent open space. On September 16, 2004, the Planning Commission considered Council's direction and has subsequently forwarded a recommendation to Council on how best to achieve that direction. Below are discussions related to the proposed action, including consistency of the open space designation with the General Plan, potential effect on housing opportunities, current and future property use and management, and a summary of the Planning Commission meeting and correspondence received to date.

General Plan Land Use Designation Amendment and Rezone

The proposed *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety* General Plan designation is the more restrictive of two open space categories delineated in the General Plan, and is intended for areas with sensitive habitats or hazardous conditions, including oak and riparian woodlands, wetlands, creekways, riparian corridors, viewshed management areas, hillsides, and areas prone to floodiug. In addition, the Planning Commission recommends a zone change to *OS1 Primary Open Space,* which is consistent with the General Plan land use designation of *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety.* The *OS1* zoning district is usually applied to publicly-owned areas appropriate for permanent protection as open space because of sensitive environmental resources or potential hazards. As noted above, the General Plan amendment and rezone are consistent with goals and policies in the General Plan, in particular those goals and policies that call for the preservation of special status species and their habitats, provision of wildlife corridors, maintenance of open space and foothill viewsheds, and compatibility of land use development with airport operations.

General Plan Text/Figure Amendments

Planning staff has identified several General Plan text, table, and figure amendments (other than the General Plan Diagram) required to maintain internal consistency in the General Plan with the proposed General Plan amendment and rezone. The proposed text, table, and figure amendments are detailed in Exhibit III to **Attachment C**, and are further described in the Planning Commission staff report (**Attachment G**). **Attachment H** provides a strike-out version of the General Plan text, table, and figure amendments so that reader can easily track the proposed changes.

Housing Replacement

The General Plan currently designates the project site as suitable for the development of up to 1,500 residential units. In order to remove that designation, the City Council must conclude that sufficient land is available and appropriately zoned within the City's sphere to meet the City's fair share housing allocation as determined pursuant to Government Code Section 65584.

Government Code Section 65863, which became effective January 1, 2003, provides that no city or county may reduce the residential density for any parcel to a density lower than that utilized by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in determining that city or county's compliance with the housing element law, unless the city or county makes written findings supported by substantial evidence of both of the following:

1) The reduction is consistent with the adopted general plan, including the housing element; and

2) The remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need pursuant to Section 65584. [1]

If a reduction in density for any parcel would result in the remaining sites being inadequate to accommodate the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing needs, the jurisdiction may reduce the density on that parcel only if it identifies sufficient additional, adequate and available sites with an equal or greater residential density in the jurisdiction so that there is no net loss of residential unit capacity.

This rezone affects only property which would provide housing for moderate and above-moderate income households. After adoption of the rezone, acreage available within the City's Sphere of Influence will accommodate approximately 8,500 housing units affordable to moderate and above-moderate households. According to HCD, the regional housing need for moderate and above-moderate housing units is 4,588 units. Therefore, the City will still have adequate sites available to accommodate the housing needs for moderate and above moderate income households.

Although City staff is working with HCD to formulate future adjustments to the Housing Element in order to address what HCD has determined is a shortfall of land needed to support additional housing affordable to very low and low income households, the proposed rezone will not adversely affect that effort because the City's land inventory will currently accommodate a total of over 12,750 housing units, which is more than 3,250 housing units above the total regional housing goal of 9,479. Therefore, the City has sufficient land within its sphere to accommodate the City of Chico's share of the regional housing needs.

A more detailed description of this issue is provided in the Planning Commission staff report **(Attachment G)**.

Existing and Future Property Use and Management

Current City property management efforts on-site are minimal as there are no public improvements being maintained on the property and there is limited public use. Local non-profit organizations currently utilize the site, subject to certain City-imposed terms and conditions, to conduct seasonal educational tours focused on the vernal pool complex. Hikers and wildlife viewers occasionally utilize the site as well. In addition, the property has been fenced and signed, and is also patrolled intermittently based on past complaints of unauthorized off-road vehicle use.

Previously considered open space uses for the property include adding the property to Bidwell Park, use of the site as a vernal pool mitigation bank for airport expansion and private

[1]/ Although Section 65584 does not technically apply to charter cities, the City Attorney's office has advised that essentially the same findings are necessary anyway in order to make the required finding that the General Plan is internally consistent and to ensure that the Housing Element complies with housing element law.

development, expansion of the existing use of the site as a group educational opportunity, and simply retaining the status quo. Each of these options, whether viewed independently or in combination, as well as other use alternatives allowed by the proposed zoning, need to be considered more fully. Future plans for the site, anticipated operation and maintenance protocols, as well as long-term costs associated with management of the property, are undefined.

Future use and public accessibility was the subject of much discussion at the September 16, 2004, Planning Commission meeting. Several speakers suggested that there should be limited public access to the site, now and in the future, in order to protect the sensitive habitat on-site. Other speakers felt that public access should be maximized as the property is a public asset purchased with public money and owned by the City. Several Planning Commissioners weighed in that public access should be maximized, but that it was important to assess that access against the need to protect sensitive resources on the property.

The Planning Commission has forwarded a recommendation to Council that a comprehensive use and management plan for the Bidwell Ranch property be prepared, which considers future uses and addresses basic management and operation questions, including public access and protocols for ensuring the continued protection of sensitive biological resources. If guidance and funding are provided by Council, staff would be responsible for ensuring that a use and management plan is prepared and brought back to the Council for its consideration.

Planning Commission Meeting Summary and Correspondence

The Council chambers were full at the September 16, 2004, Planning Commission meeting, as this issue has historically generated significant community involvement (**Attachment I** is a draft of the meeting minutes from the Commission meeting). The Planning Commission heard significant public testimony. A majority of speakers spoke in favor of the proposed General Plan amendment and rezone, but others suggested that it was premature to consider the issue until a scientific community survey to be funded by the City and CARD is completed, which will gauge how the community would like to see its park system funded. Correspondence received prior to, and at, the Planning Commission meeting provides a good overview of the diverse points of view shared by members of the community on this issue (**Attachment E**). **Attachment E** also contains a petition signed by over 1,000 residents who oppose selling any portion of the Bidwell Ranch property for development.

Required Findings

Pursuant to Section 10.06.050 of the Chico Municipal Code, amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Map may be approved only if the following findings are made:

Environmental Findings

After considering the proposed negative declaration, all comments made in connection therewith, and the recommendations of the Planning Director thereon, the decision-making

body shall approve the negative declaration if it finds on the basis of the initial study, comments received and other information contained in the administrative record that:

1. *There is no substantial evidence of a fair argument that the project will have a significant effect on the environment;*

2. *The negative declaration reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the City of Chico; and*

3. *The document has been prepared in conformance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the Chico Municipal Code, Chapter 1.40 "Environmental Review Guidelines."*

Based upon a review of all information available, and utilizing independent judgment and analysis, it was determined that amending the General Plan and rezoning the Bidwell Ranch property to open space will not have a significant effect on the environment. Further, the negative declaration prepared for the project was done in conformance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the Chico Municipal Code, Chapter 1.40 "Environmental Review Guidelines;"

General Plan Amendment & Rezone

Pursuant to Chico Municipal Code Section 19.060.050 (A) and (B), an amendment to the General Plan and Zoning Map may be approved only if all the following findings are made:

1. *The proposed [General Plan] amendment is internally consistent with the General Plan*

The General Plan amendment is consistent with goals and policies in the General Plan, in particular those goals and policies that call for the preservation of special status species and their habitats, maintenance of open space and foothill viewsheds, and compatibility of land use development with airport operations. Also, proposed General Plan text and map amendments will ensure that the General Plan retains internal consistency with implementation of the proposed GPA/rezone.

2. *The proposed [Zoning Map] amendment is consistent with the General Plan.*

The proposed rezone to *OS1 Primary Open Space* is consistent with the proposed *Open Space for Environmental Conservation/Safety* General Plan designation in that the proposed zoning classification preserves the acreage and provides for uses contemplated in sensitive resource areas. Further, the proposed rezone is consistent with the same General Plan goals and policies summarized above.

3. *The subject sites are physically suitable, including but not limited to access, provision of utilities, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and absence of physical constraints, for the requested zoning designation and anticipated land use and development.*

The GPA and rezone would result in a highly reduced potential for development of the subject parcels. The parcels are physically suitable for open space uses allowed under the proposed *OS1* zoning designation.

Housing Findings Regarding Residential Density Reductions

Findings applicable to residential reductions to ensure General Plan internal consistency and compliance with Housing Element Law:

1. *The reduction is consistent with the adopted general plan, including the housing element; and*

2. *The remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need pursuant to Section 65584.*

This rezone affects only property which would provide housing for moderate and above-moderate income households. After adoption of the rezone, acreage available within the City's Sphere of Influence will accommodate approximately 8,500 housing units affordable to moderate and above-moderate households. According to HCD, the regional housing need for moderate and above-moderate housing units is 4,588 units. Therefore, the City will still have adequate sites available to accommodate the housing needs for moderate and above moderate income households.

Although City staff is working with HCD to formulate future adjustments to the Housing Element in order to address what HCD has determined is a shortfall of land needed to support additional housing affordable to very low and low income households, the proposed rezone will not adversely affect that effort because the City's land inventory will currently accommodate a total of over 12,750 housing units, which is more than 3,250 housing units above the total regional housing goal of 9,479. Therefore, the City has sufficient land within its sphere to accommodate the City of Chico's share of the regional housing needs.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council (1) adopt the resolution adopting the Negative Declaration, approving amendments to General Plan designations for the subject parcels, and approving text amendments to the General Plan for internal consistency; (2) adopt the rezone ordinance by the reading of the title only; and (3) provide guidance to staff on the development of a comprehensive use and management plan for the Bidwell Ranch property. If Council adopts a motion to develop a use and management plan for the site, staff will report back to the City Council for approval of the funding and process prior to commencing the project.

Proposed Motion:

I move that the City Council (1) adopt the resolution adopting the Negative Declaration, approving amendments to General Plan designations for the subject parcels, and approving text amendments to the General Plan for internal consistency; and (2) adopt the rezone ordinance by the reading of the title only.

I further move that the City Council direct staff to examine the funding needed to develop a comprehensive use and management plan for the Bidwell Ranch property, and to design an effective citizen participation process.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Project Location Map
B. Ordinance for Rezone (GPA/RZ 04-04)
   ~Exhibit I: Rezone Plat
C. Resolution Recommending Adoption of a Negative Declaration, Approval of General Plan Amendment/Rezone 04-04, and Development of a Use and Management Plan
   ~Exhibit I: Proposed Negative Declaration
   ~Exhibit II: General Plan Amendment Plat
   ~Exhibit III: Proposed General Plan Text Amendments
D. Initial Study
E. Information Received from the Public and Comments Provided on the Initial Study for the Bidwell Ranch General Plan Amendment/Rezone Project (GPA/RZ 04-04)
F. Response to Comments on the Initial Study Prepared for the Bidwell Ranch General Plan Amendment/Rezone Project (GPA/RZ 04-04)
G. Planning Commission Staff Report for the September 16, 2004, Meeting
H. Strike-out Version of the Proposed General Plan Text, Table, and Figure amendments
I. Draft Meeting Minutes - September 16, 2004 Planning Commission Meeting

cc: Save Bidwell Ranch Association, 870 Moss Avenue, Chico 95926
Hilary Locke, 1122 Normal Avenue, Chico 95928
Jane Coleman, 1162 Hillview Way, Chico 95926
Bob Best, 1740 Estates Way, Chico 95928
Marilyn Ey, PO Box 95927, Chico 95927
Butte Environmental Council

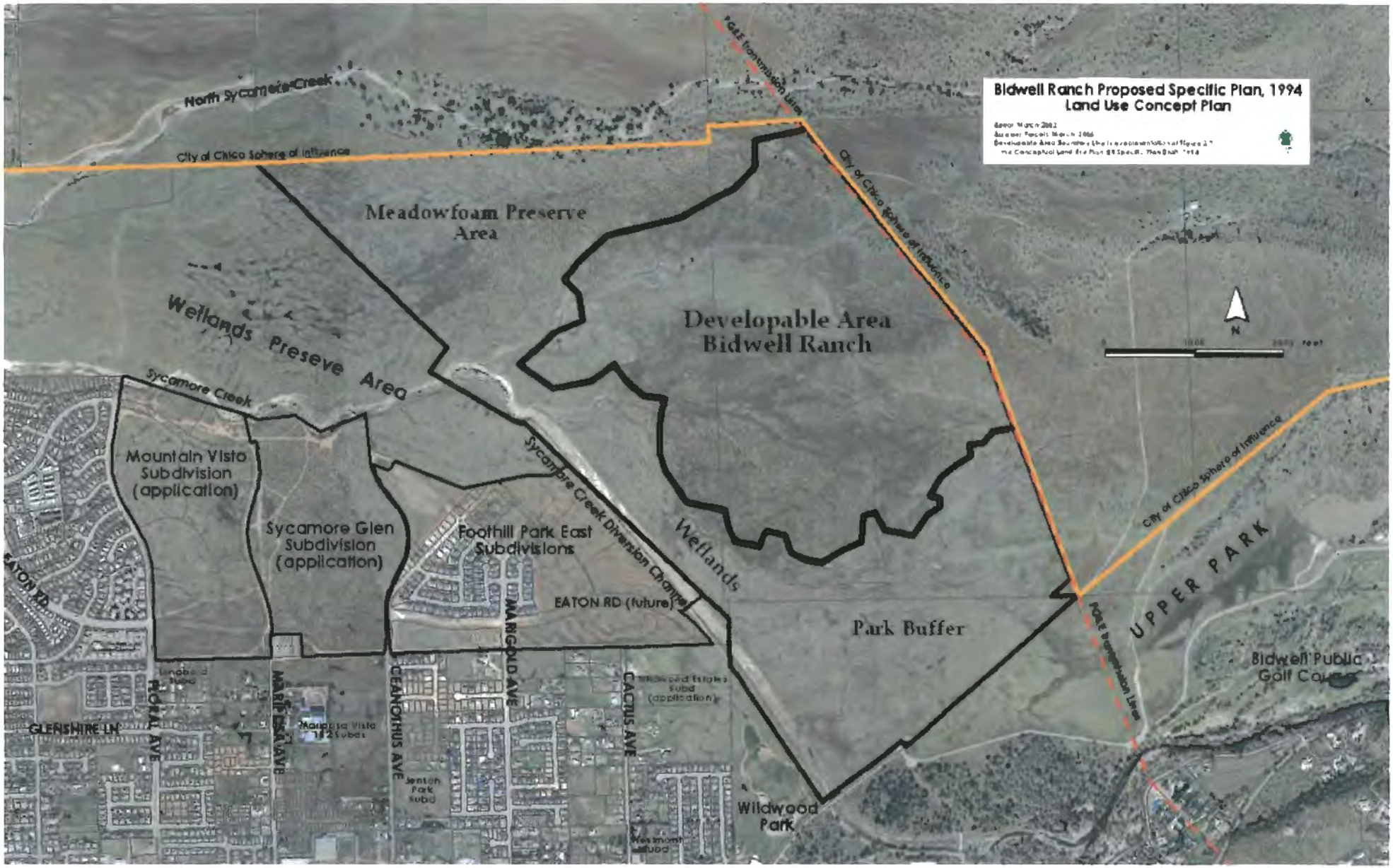

EXHIBIT "B"

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—THE RESOURCES AGENCY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
Butte Unit
176 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, California 95965
(530) 538-7111

October 28, 2004

Mary Anne Houx, Supervisor
Butte County Board of Supervisors
196 Memorial Way
Chico, CA 95926

Dear Supervisor Houx,

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is concerned with development of the Bidwell Ranch project resulting in residential development directly under the flight path of firefighting aircraft.

The CDF currently operates the Chico Air Attack Base from June 1 through October 15 each year from the Chico Municipal Airport. The air base operations include the initial attack dispatch of the CDF air attack and air tanker, as well as a reload base for major fires in the area.

There are operational and safety risks inherent in taking off and flying over residential neighborhoods. These risks are of even greater concern when dealing with firefighting aircraft. In the event of a mechanical problem, the airtanker may be required to jettison a load of retardant to recover maximum performance; dropping this retardant could result in personal injury as well as property damage. Serious mechanical problems could cause a forced landing in the proposed residential development.

CDF is not willing to assume the liabilities of a flight path directly over a residential development. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

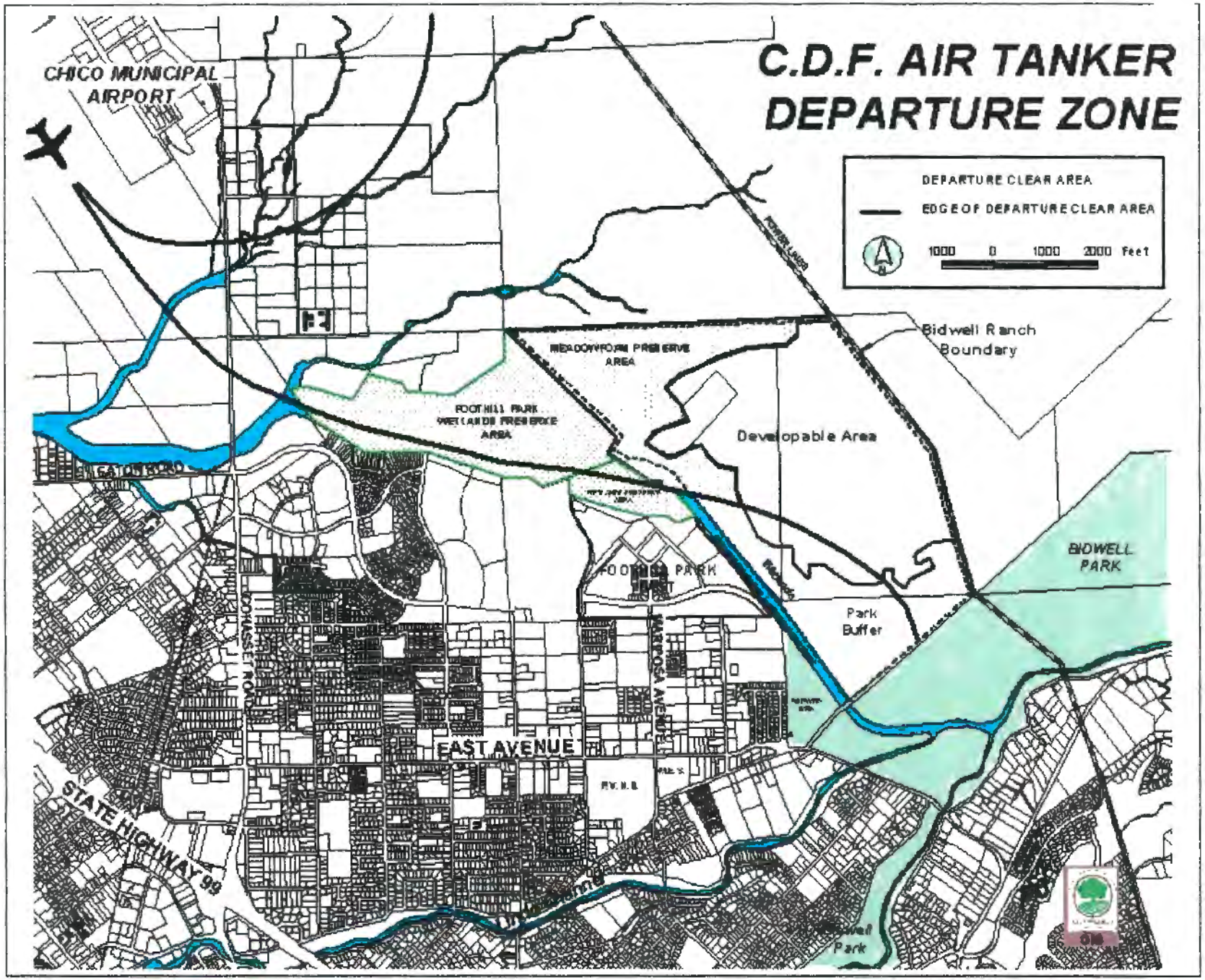
Thank you for requesting our input on this matter.

Sincerely,

Henri Brachais
Unit Chief

tp

cc: Bill Hoehman, Northern Region Chief
Bob Wallen, Division Chief



Prepared by the City of Chico Planning Division - 2000

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