# 11. CULTURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**VISION**

Chico reflects and retains its Native American roots, agricultural heritage, gold rush innovation, historic architecture, and identity as a valley town in the year 2030. Chico strikes the balance of honoring its past residents, both the more recent and the ancient, weaving their lasting character and physical expressions into the ever-changing fabric of the City.

## INTRODUCTION

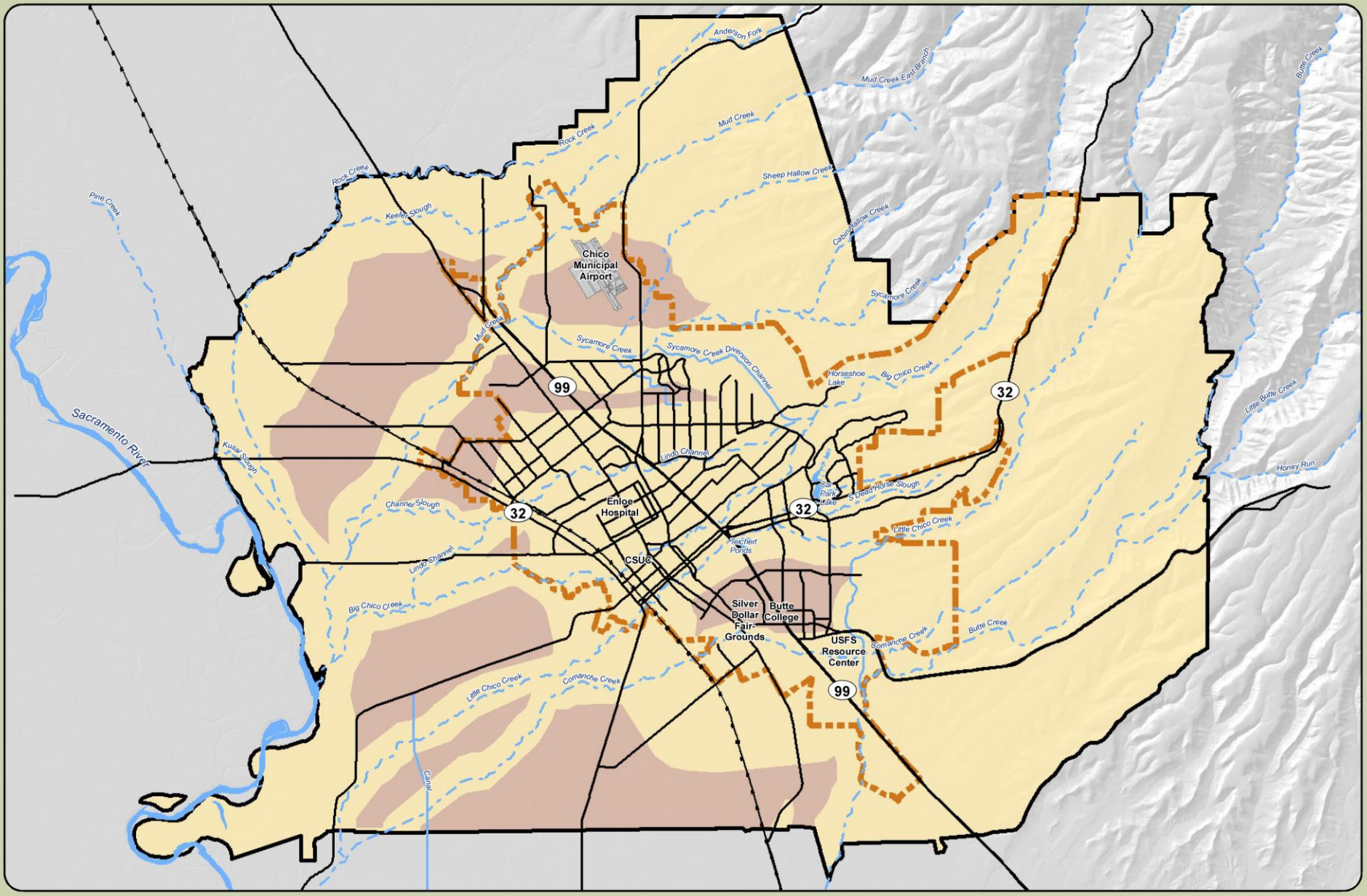
The Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Element identifies important local cultural, archaeological, and historic resources and establishes goals, policies, and actions for the protection and preservation of those resources.

The Chico area has been inhabited for at least 3,000 years. This rich heritage is part of Chico's unique culture and enriches its sense of place. The First People of the area are members of the federally recognized Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria. The Mechoopda people are part of the larger Northwestern Maidu Tribe and spoke a Konkow dialect prior to European-contact. Their subsistence activities included hunting, fishing, and gathering a variety of plant resources. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the first European-contact occurred as a result of Spanish military expeditions of exploration in the northern Sacramento Valley. Later, during the 1820s and 1830s, American and British Hudson Bay Company fur trappers (including Jedediah Smith) traversed the Sacramento Valley and established temporary contacts with local Native American tribes. The first arrival of permanent white settlers (such as Peter Lassen and Pierson Reading) came with the issuance of Mexican land grants in the Sacramento Valley during the early and mid-1840s. It was during this period that John Bidwell, then living at Sutter's Fort and working for John Sutter, made his first visits to the Chico area. The first gold strike on the Feather River that brought whites in large numbers to the area was made in July 1848 by John Bidwell and several partners. By 1850, there were already many white gold miners in what is now Butte County, and Bidwell himself had already purchased and settled upon Rancho del Arroyo Chico in 1849.

Chico was founded in 1860 by John Bidwell and incorporated as a city in 1872, quickly becoming an important regional economic hub. With the completion of regional roads and railroads, Chico was established as an important and convenient locale for the growth of industry, including wheat, flour and lumber milling. At this time, agriculture was also expanding, particularly the production of crops such as almonds and peaches.

The City has continued to grow and change in response to local economic forces. Through growth, Chico carried forward and preserved physical and cultural reminders of its past. **Figure CRHP-1** illustrates areas of archaeological sensitivity in the Chico area. As illustrated, areas of high archaeological sensitivity occupy much of the Chico area, even areas of existing development where archaeological resources are often discovered.

This element continues the tradition of preserving Chico's heritage through regulation, collaboration, and education. During the public outreach for this update, Chico historians expressed the desire to recognize the City's history as a continuum with additional historic resources being established with each passing year and to recognize the various components of the community's history throughout time. Recognizing the past is critical to the vitality of the community now and in the future. This element, along with the Community Design Element and Downtown Element, establishes policy guidance and actions to identify and carry forward the City's rich history. Specifically, this element protects archaeological, historical, and cultural resources through City programs, support for reuse of historic structures, and partnerships for historic and cultural preservation.




**PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY AREAS**

Medium Sensitivity

High Sensitivity

City of Chico Sphere of Influence Boundary

Chico Planning Area Boundary

0 0.5 1 Miles

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Source: Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria, 2009, City of Chico

**Figure CRHP-1**
**Archaeological Sensitivity**

CITY OF CHICO INC. 1872

CHICO 2030 GENERAL PLAN

# ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

This section of the element identifies and addresses primary cultural resource and historic preservation issues raised during the outreach efforts for the General Plan Update. Policy guidance is found in the goals, policies, and actions section of this element. An explanation of specialized terms can be found in the General Plan Glossary (**Appendix A**).

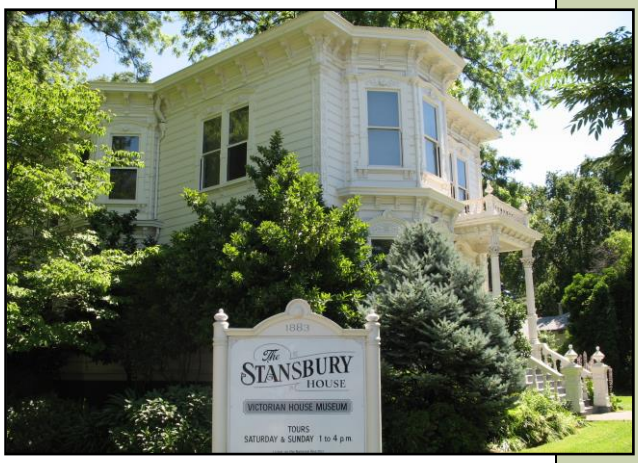
## TRIBAL CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

In June 2008, the City Council adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of the Chico Rancheria, committing to establish a protocol for consultation between the City and the Tribe. The MOU also directs the City to prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) which will detail the appropriate management of specific cultural resources. This element incorporates appropriate policies and actions in support of the MOU.

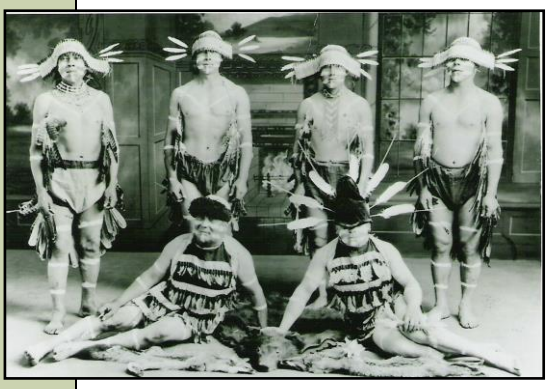
## HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

In recent years, cultural awareness and historic preservation has gained wider support by Chico residents and City officials. Direction by the City Council has resulted in establishing a comprehensive Historic Preservation Program which includes partnerships with the local Mechoopda Indian Tribe. This element establishes the policy guidance for the Historic Preservation Program.

The primary components of the City's Historic Preservation Program include: 1) the Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Element of the 2030 General Plan; 2) a Historic Preservation Ordinance; and 3) a Historic Preservation Board. These three components have qualified Chico to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) as determined by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The City Council has adopted an Historic Resources Inventory establishing an official survey of historically significant properties in Chico which serves as the basis of the historic preservation ordinance. Chico's Historic Preservation Program establishes the City's commitment to the preservation of its irreplaceable heritage. This element formalizes the City's commitment to be a CLG and to protect historic resources.



# REGULATORY CONTEXT



Local planning and preservation of cultural and historic resources requires coordination and compliance at the federal, state, and local levels. This section of the element identifies several laws, agencies, and documents that are important to understand as context for this element. Additional information about relevant regulations can be found in the 2030 General Plan Existing Conditions Report and Environmental Impact Report.

## FEDERAL REGULATIONS

### National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Congress made the Federal Government a leader in historic preservation when it adopted the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Congress recognized that national goals for historic preservation could best be achieved by the Federal Government's support of local preservation efforts. In the words of the Act, the Federal Government's role is to "provide leadership" for preservation, "contribute to" and "give maximum encouragement" to preservation, and "foster conditions under which our modern society and our prehistoric and historic resources can exist in productive harmony." This legislation is the umbrella document to most other federal regulations related to the preservation of historic resources.

### Federal Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings are intended to provide guidance to historic building owners and building managers, preservation consultants, architects, contractors, and project reviewers as they are preparing to work on a historic property or site. The standards apply to a wide variety of resource types, including buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. In California, someone altering or modifying the exterior of a resource listed on the California Register of Historical Resources, is required to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines. Interior alterations to registered public buildings are also subject to compliance with these guidelines.

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. The City of Chico is proud to recognize nine properties

currently listed on the National Register, including the South of Campus Neighborhood National Register District which contains 116 contributing properties.

## STATE REGULATIONS

### California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires an analysis and full disclosure of the environmental impacts of a project before it may be approved. If a project includes the demolition or alteration of any resource listed, or eligible for listing, in the National or California Register of Historical Resources, CEQA requires consideration of whether the project will significantly impact the resource's historic significance.

### California Native American Traditional Tribal Cultural Places (SB 18)

Senate Bill (SB) 18 provides California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage for the purpose of protecting or mitigating impacts to cultural places. SB 18 requires local governments to consult with tribes prior to making certain planning decisions, including the adoption and amendment of general plans.

### California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

The California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 2001 was enacted to ensure that all California Indian human remains and cultural items are treated with dignity and respect. Other provisions of California law address the discovery of human remains outside a dedicated cemetery and require consultation with appropriate Native American individuals for disposition of the remains. The Public Resources Code establishes the Native American Heritage Commission and the State's Sacred Places List.

### Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for California

The Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for California provides guidance to the Office of Historic Preservation and the preservation community for the identification, registration, protection, and preservation of important historic resources. It encourages both the consideration of historic preservation during planning activities at the local level and public and professional support for historic preservation.

### State Historic Building Code

Since current building codes often do not consider historic construction techniques and materials, the State Historic Building Cod provides alternative building code regulation s for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, relocation or reconstruction of buildings or structures designated as qualified historic buildings or properties. The City of Chico adopted the State Historic Building Code in 2007.

### California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources was established in 1992. It serves as an authoritative guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected from substantial adverse change. The City of Chico is proud to recognize 116 properties currently listed on the California Register.

## Local Regulations

### Historic Preservation Ordinance

A historic preservation ordinance of the Chico Municipal Code specifically affords protection for properties listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory and provides a mechanism to add historic properties to the Inventory through Landmark Overlay zoning districts. The ordinance also provides development incentives to owners of designated historic property and establishes a number of exempt activities such as ordinary maintenance and repair. Proposals to significantly alter or demolish structures listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory are reviewed by the City's five-member Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board. The Board also reviews nominations to the City's Inventory and forwards recommendations to the City Council for a final determination of listing.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

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|---|---|
| **Goal CRHP-1:** | **Protect and preserve archaeological, historical and other cultural resources to serve as significant reminders of the City's heritage and values.** |
| **Goal CRHP-2:** | **Reinvest in the archaeological, historical and other cultural resources that frame Chico's character and identity.** |
| **Goal CRHP-3:** | **Engage in and facilitate preservation efforts with local preservation and cultural entities.** |

- **Goal CRHP-1: Protect and preserve archaeological, historical and other cultural resources to serve as significant reminders of the City's heritage and values.**

  - **Policy CRHP-1.1 (Historic Preservation Program) – Maintain a comprehensive Historic Preservation Program that includes policies and regulations which protect and preserve the archaeological, historical and other cultural resources of Chico.**

    Cross reference DT-8.1

    - **Action CRHP-1.1.1 (Historic Preservation Ordinance) –** Maintain and update as necessary the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

    Cross reference DT-8.1.2

    - **Action CRHP-1.1.2 (Historic Resources Inventory) –** Maintain and update the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

    - **Action CRHP-1.1.3 (Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board)** Appoint members of a new Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board who meet the qualifications of a Certified Local Government and who serve a dual role in the architectural design review of new development and in the review of historic preservation decisions affecting the City's Historic Resources Inventory or new Landmark overlay zoning districts.

    - **Action CRHP-1.1.4 (Certified Local Government) –** Maintain the City's recognition by the State Historic Preservation Office as a Certified Local Government.

    - **Action CRHP-1.1.5 (Financial Assistance Programs) –** Pursue grant funding sources available to Certified Local Governments to establish and maintain a Cultural Resources Management Plan and to expand the City's Historic Preservation Program.

- **Action CRHP-1.1.6 (Best Management Practices)** – Update the City's Best Management Practices Manual to include environmental review protocol, communication with appropriate agencies, and standard conditions of approval for discretionary projects that protect cultural and paleontological resources.

- **Action CRHP-1.1.7 (Public Resources)** – Maintain all City-owned historic and cultural resources in a manner that is consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

- **Action CRHP-1.1.8 (Records Search)** – Continue to consult and require record searches for discretionary projects with the Northeast Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) located at CSU Chico.

- **Action CRHP-1.1.9 (Native American Consultation)** – Continue to consult with and distribute environmental review documents to the Native American Heritage Commission through the State Clearinghouse.

Cross reference CRHP-3.1.3

- **Action CRHP-1.1.10 (Architectural Historian Consultations)** – Use the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) Consultants List to identify qualified architectural historians for project consultation. Require consultants for City and private development projects to meet the minimum Professional Qualification Standards adopted by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historical Preservation.

- **Action CRHP-1.1.11 (Assistance Programs)** – Provide assistance to Chico residents who are restoring qualified historic properties by offering development incentives as identified in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance or additional federal and state support programs.

## Goal CRHP-2: Reinvest in the archaeological, historical and other cultural resources that frame Chico's character and identity.

- **Policy CRHP-2.1 (Infill and Historic Preservation) – Integrate the values of historic preservation with infill development and adaptive reuse.**

Cross reference DT-8.1

- **Action CRHP-2.1.1 (Guidelines for Redevelopment of Historic Resources)** – Utilize the City's Design Guidelines Manual for discretionary design review to address exterior alterations proposed to historic buildings in accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

- **Policy CRHP-2.2 (Adaptive Reuse) – Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings when the original use of the structure is no longer feasible.**

- **Action CRHP-2.2.1 (Exterior of Historic Structures) –** With discretionary actions or in compliance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance, restore or preserve the original exterior of historic structures at the time of a change in use, whenever feasible.

Cross reference CD-5.3.1

- **Policy CRHP-2.3 (Demolition as Last Resort) – Limit the demolition of historic resources to an act of last resort, to be permitted only if: 1) rehabilitation of the resource is not feasible; 2) demolition is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents; or 3) the public benefits outweigh the loss of the historic resource.**

- **Policy CRHP-2.4 (Public Awareness of Heritage Resources) – Encourage public awareness of the heritage resources that helped shape the history of Chico.**

  - **Action CRHP-2.4.1 – (Heritage Tourism) -** To both educate the public and stimulate the economy, work with public agencies, private organizations, property owners, and area businesses to develop and promote Heritage Tourism opportunities throughout Chico.

Cross reference ED-2.3

  - **Action CRHP-2.4.2 (Ceremonies and Events) –** Participate in the promotion of traditional ceremonies and events from the various cultures, ethnicities and nationalities that make up the Chico community.

Cross reference DT-1.5, ED 2.2, SUS-1.4, and PPFS-7.1.3

  - **Action CRHP-2.4.3 (Diversity Action Plan) –** Implement the Diversity Action Plan to support the various cultures, ethnicities and nationalities that make up the Chico community.

Cross reference SUS 1.4 and SUS1.4.2

  - **Action CRHP-2.4.4 (Community Awareness and Education) –** Participate in the promotion of public tours, viewing, and informational presentations at historic buildings and archaeological sites.

- **Policy CRHP-2.5 (Purchase of Historically Significant Buildings) - Explore grant funding, partnerships, and other opportunities to purchase historically significant buildings or sites that are eligible for State or National Registers as they become available.**

  - **Action CRHP-2.5.1 (Register Listings of City-owned Properties) –** Pursue the listing of City-owned historic properties on the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources.

- **Goal CRHP-3: Engage in and facilitate preservation efforts with local preservation and cultural entities.**

  - **Policy CRHP-3.1 (Partnerships to Preserve Heritage Resources) – Foster partnerships with interested parties to preserve heritage resources.**

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.1 (Mechoopda Consultation) –** Establish a Consultation Protocol and a Cultural Resources Management Plan with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.2 (Northeast Information Center) –** Maintain a Project Review Agreement with the Northeast Information Center (NEIC) and consult with the NEIC in preparation of a Cultural Resources Management Plan.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.3 (Archaeologist Consultation) –** Use the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) Consultants List to identify qualified archaeologists for project consultation. Require consultants for City and private development projects to meet the minimum Professional Qualification Standards adopted by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historical Preservation. Consult with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe prior to the selection of archaeologists for City projects.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.4 (Education for City Staff) –** Conduct City and Tribal-sponsored training programs that increase City staff awareness and respect for Tribal Ceremonial Places and artifacts on City-owned land.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.5 (Education for the Public) –** Conduct City and Tribal-sponsored training programs, in partnership with the Northeast Information Center, to educate property owners, land developers, and construction personnel about the importance of cultural resources and the legal framework for their protection.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.6 (Public/Private Partnerships) –** Explore public and private partnerships that support the City's historic preservation program. Continue to utilize the Chico Heritage Association as a resource for issues and projects.

    - **Action CRHP-3.1.7 (Educational Conferences) –** In partnership with the Office of State Historic Preservation, CSU, Chico, the Chico Heritage Association, and the Northeast Information Center, continue to support educational conferences on Historic Preservation and Native American Resource Protection.

Cross reference CRHP-1.1.10