INTRODUCTION

The Chico 2030 General Plan is a statement of community priorities to guide public decision-making. It provides a comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent policy framework for the growth and preservation of Chico. The Plan's guiding principles, goals, policies, and actions guide day-to-day decisions made by the City Council, boards, and commissions on the physical development of our city. Land use changes, budget decisions, and development proposals and projects will be considered against the backdrop of the General Plan. The policies of the Plan apply to all properties, both public and private, within the City limits. Although California State University (CSU) Chico, Chico Unified School District, and other state and county agencies with properties surrounded by the City are not obligated by law to comply with the Plan, their cooperation with its implementation will be important.

Given the broad scope of the General Plan, not all goals and policies are obviously complementary, and yet they all support the overarching vision for the City. When making decisions, goals and policies should be examined comprehensively, not individually. It is not the intent of the General Plan to predetermine decisions, but rather to help guide the decision-making process.

2030 VISION

This General Plan expresses a vision for the community. As part of the General Plan update process, the public participated in a visioning exercise that resulted in the 2030 Vision stated below. The 2030 Vision guided the development of the General Plan, particularly in the formulation of goals, policies, and actions.

OVERALL VISION FOR CHICO IN 2030

Chico, in the year 2030, is a livable, healthy, and sustainable community that offers a high quality of life with a strong sense of community and place. Chico maintains its small-town character while providing opportunities for future generations to thrive. Government is transparent and politics are open and engaging. The City is characterized by a vibrant Downtown, a healthy economy, compact urban form, identifiable neighborhoods with diverse housing choices, convenient access to locally-produced goods, and a focus on alternative transportation and healthy lifestyles. Historic places and buildings are prominent, and Chico is celebrated for its diversity, arts, culture, outdoor access, recreational opportunities, and parks. It is known as a leader in innovative technology and education. Above all, Chico is a place we're proud to call home.

GENERAL PLAN STRATEGY OF SUSTAINABILITY

Chico's 2030 General Plan reflects the community's commitment to meeting the challenge of creating and maintaining a sustainable community. Sustainability in Chico means maintaining a culture of stewardship to enhance our natural environment, economic strength, and quality of life for present and future generations. The General Plan's goals, policies and actions are intended to work together to achieve sustainability. The Plan recognizes that sustainability is an organizing principle, and that the City must consider the interdependent interests of protecting the environment, promoting social equity, and achieving a healthy economy in its actions and programs.

To establish a sustainable development trend for the community, the General Plan identifies and promotes certain development patterns, including compact urban development, infill development and redevelopment, mixed-use development, complete neighborhoods, and a variety of housing types. The Plan further seeks to preserve and enhance its older neighborhoods, promote economic development, protect sensitive environmental resources, and provide open space and parks. To achieve these sometimes competing goals, the General Plan addresses three distinct areas of the City: areas of stability, areas of potential change, and areas for new growth.

Areas of Stability - While the General Plan's underlying land use theme is a compact urban form, it also recognizes that not all areas are suited for significant new growth. Areas of stability are those parts of the City that are not anticipated to change substantially in character, land use or development intensity. These areas include most existing residential neighborhoods, environmentally sensitive lands, open spaces, and parks.

Areas of Potential Change - Areas of potential change are the 15 Opportunity Sites as identified on the Land Use Diagram. These strategic infill and redevelopment areas include underutilized transportation corridors, regional retail centers, areas in the City's core, and other residential, light industrial, and mixed use areas that can accommodate growth. To support increased density and intensification of uses at these locations, the City will need to invest resources, particularly to ensure that infrastructure can adequately support growth.

New Growth Areas - The General Plan identifies five new growth areas to help meet the City's future housing and job needs. These areas are designated as Special Planning Areas on the Land Use Diagram, and are to be developed as connected and complete neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, services, employment, and shopping opportunities, along with parks and open space.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The General Plan Guiding Principles were developed early in the General Plan Update process to capture ideas from the visioning process with the public, the General Plan Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. The Principles have been used to guide preparation of the General Plan by reflecting core community values and identifying desired outcomes. The goals, policies, and actions in this Plan originate from the Principles listed below.

1. **Planned and Balanced Growth and Conservation**. The General Plan balances growth and conservation by reinforcing the City's compact urban form, establishing urban growth limits, and managing where and how growth and conservation will occur. The Plan guides new development to areas contiguous to existing development, so it may be efficiently served by the extension of infrastructure and municipal services. Fiscally and environmentally responsible development is a priority.

2. **Healthy Environment and Resource Conservation**. The General Plan supports preservation of natural resources, local production of goods and services, the use of renewable versus nonrenewable resources, and new strategies to minimize waste and dispose of it locally. The City strives to improve and protect its air quality, climate, and human health by reducing harmful emissions, such as greenhouse gases. Chico will lead the way to a healthy environment by providing local government support, partnership, and innovation for sustainability.

3. **Strong Local Economy with a Diversified Employment Base**. The General Plan supports local businesses and seeks to strengthen Chico's role as a regional center for education, commerce, retail, medicine, and other professional services to ensure a mixture of professional local jobs for future generations. The Plan also supports locally produced goods and services.

4. **Resource Protection and Enhancement**. The General Plan calls for the conservation, enhancement, and protection of viable agricultural land, natural resources, and sensitive environments. Historic and cultural resources will be preserved as significant reminders of the City's rich history.

5. **Enhanced Character and Identity**. The General Plan reinforces the unique identity and character of Chico as a thriving North Valley college town in a unique natural setting. The Plan promotes Chico as the civic, cultural, and economic hub of the region while maintaining the City's small-town charm. The Plan emphasizes the role of Downtown as the heart of the community.

6. **Complete Neighborhoods as Community Foundation**. The General Plan fosters the creation and enhancement of complete, well-designed, and walkable neighborhoods, from the traditional Downtown core to infill projects and integrated new communities. Complete neighborhoods include places to gather, nearby retail and services for daily needs, and multimodal access to recreation, jobs, and other areas of the community.

7. **Development Patterns that Offer Alternatives to Automobile Use**. The General Plan reduces distances between complementary land uses and emphasizes a balanced, multimodal circulation system that is efficient and safe, connecting neighborhoods to jobs, shopping, schools, services, local attractions, and open space.

8. **Progress Towards Sustainability**. The City is committed to sustainability, and the General Plan guides the creation and maintenance of tools to analyze the City's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and its progress toward sustainability.

9. **Community Health and Well-Being**. The General Plan envisions a safe, healthy community with a strong sense of identity. The Plan facilitates quality public services and facilities, community engagement, learning opportunities, and equal access to community resources. The Plan also supports a varied and diverse housing supply that meets the needs of Chico's current and future residents. The Plan strives to protect all members of the community.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The City of Chico conducted an extensive public outreach process for the General Plan Update to gain an understanding of the needs, desires, and concerns of the community. Hundreds of people participated in the outreach process and review of the 2030 General Plan.

TYPES OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) - The City Council appointed 12 residents to serve on the GPAC to provide focused consideration of important General Plan issues. Over 15 meetings, the GPAC provided guidance and recommendations on key issues, guiding principles, land use alternatives, and policies for the General Plan.

Downtown Ad Hoc Committee (DAHC) - The City Council appointed 14 residents and business owners to serve on the DAHC with the task of providing input and recommendations on key issues, land uses, vision and policies for the Downtown Element of the General Plan. The DAHC held eight meetings and visited the downtown districts of two northern California cities, Petaluma and Davis.

Sustainability Task Force (STF) - The STF was established by the City Council in 2006 to make recommendations on how the City can implement the Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The STF provided input and guidance on key issues and policies for the General Plan's Sustainability Element.

Stakeholder Groups - The City identified 14 stakeholder groups (approximately 400 individuals) in the community with wide-ranging interests, and facilitated stakeholder group meetings and interviews in three separate phases of the Update to solicit input and ideas about a future vision, key issues, Downtown, land use alternatives, and policy solutions.

Community Workshops - For the community-at-large, the City held nine public workshops to provide information about the General Plan Update and to solicit input.

Public Meetings - The City noticed and invited public participation at over 30 public meetings with the City Council, Planning Commission or joint meetings. Topics for the meetings included the visioning results, guiding principles, land use alternatives, Housing Element, key policies, Public Facilities Assessment, draft General Plan, draft Environmental Impact Report, certification of the Environmental Impact Report, and adoption of the General Plan.

PHASES OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

The public participation process was organized into seven primary phases listed below and shown in **Figure I-1**.

FIGURE I-1
2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Phase 1: Understanding Chico - The purpose of this phase was to understand baseline conditions and create a snapshot of the community at the initiation of the General Plan Update. This phase involved background research and a phone survey of Chico residents. The conclusions of these efforts are documented in the Existing Conditions Report and the Phone Survey Results.

- **Existing Conditions Report** – The Existing Conditions Report describes the current conditions in the City and provided a baseline of information used in the preparation of the goals, policies and actions in the General Plan. The Existing Conditions Report also helped establish the environmental baseline for the General Plan's Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

- **General Plan Survey** – A statistically valid phone survey of 400 city residents was conducted in December 2007 to gather input on topics to be addressed in the General Plan Update. These topics included community needs and perceptions about land uses, development density and intensity, location and type of future growth, and City services. Survey responses aided in developing policy topics for additional discussion and were considered during policy development.

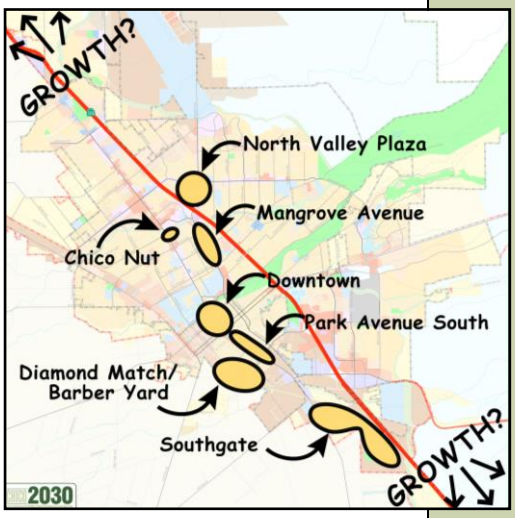
Phase 2: Community Vision - This phase involved solicitation of ideas about Chico's future without consideration of current constraints. The City facilitated two community-wide visioning workshops with live polling and small group discussions about how Chico should change, improve, or stay the same in 2030. The City also hosted 15 meetings with stakeholder groups to solicit visioning ideas. A separate visioning workshop was held for the Downtown, including a walking tour and a live polling survey. Results of the visioning phase are summarized in the *Imagine Chico 2030 Vision Book*.

- **Imagine Chico 2030 Vision Book** – The Vision Book summarizes the future ideas and visions of Chico residents captured during the initial public outreach effort of the General Plan Update process. The Vision Book also sets forth an overall vision for Chico in 2030 that was considered during the preparation of the General Plan.

Phase 3: Key Issues Consideration – During this phase, the information gathered in Phase 2 was reviewed to determine the critical issues identified by the community. The City facilitated three community workshops addressing the topics of land use, local economy, circulation, public services, community character, sustainability, and the environment. The City also facilitated six stakeholder meetings to discuss the special interests and concerns of the groups. The GPAC, DAHC, and STF provided input and recommendations on key issues during this phase. Results of the key issues phase are summarized in the Key Issues Report.

- **Key Issues Report** – At the conclusion of the initial public outreach process, the key issues identified were compiled into a report used by the City, stakeholder groups and advisory committees in considering draft policies for the Plan.

Phase 4: Land Use Alternatives - This phase involved the development of guiding principles, a market analysis, land use projections, consideration of property owner requests, and development and consideration of a range of land use alternatives. The City held a community workshop and 11 stakeholder meetings to solicit input on the land use concepts and range of alternatives, and also received input and recommendations from the GPAC, DAHC, and STF. The City held two joint City Council/Planning Commission meetings, three meetings with the Planning Commission, and three meetings with the City Council to discuss and identify a preferred land use alternative.



- **Land Use Alternatives Report** – The Land Use Alternatives Report synthesizes an abundance of information produced during Phase 4, including maps and development assumptions for each of the three original alternatives as well as the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Phase 5: Goals, Policies, and Actions - This phase involved the development of goals, policies, and corresponding actions for each of the General Plan elements. The City identified key policy topics of particular interest or controversy, and held GPAC, DAHC, STF, and stakeholder meetings, as well as a community workshop, to solicit ideas about policy solutions. Ultimately, recommendations on select policies were forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council at two joint study sessions that included public testimony and resulted in direction on the development of the General Plan.

Phase 6: Environmental Review and Plan Development - A program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to address impacts, identify potential measures to mitigate or reduce impacts, and consider alternatives associated with the General Plan Update project. The public and interested agencies were given an opportunity to identify issues, mitigations and alternatives to be included in the EIR through the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and a scoping meeting. Following completion of the Draft EIR, all interested parties were provided an opportunity to review the document and submit comments. A Final EIR was then prepared for Planning Commission and City Council consideration.

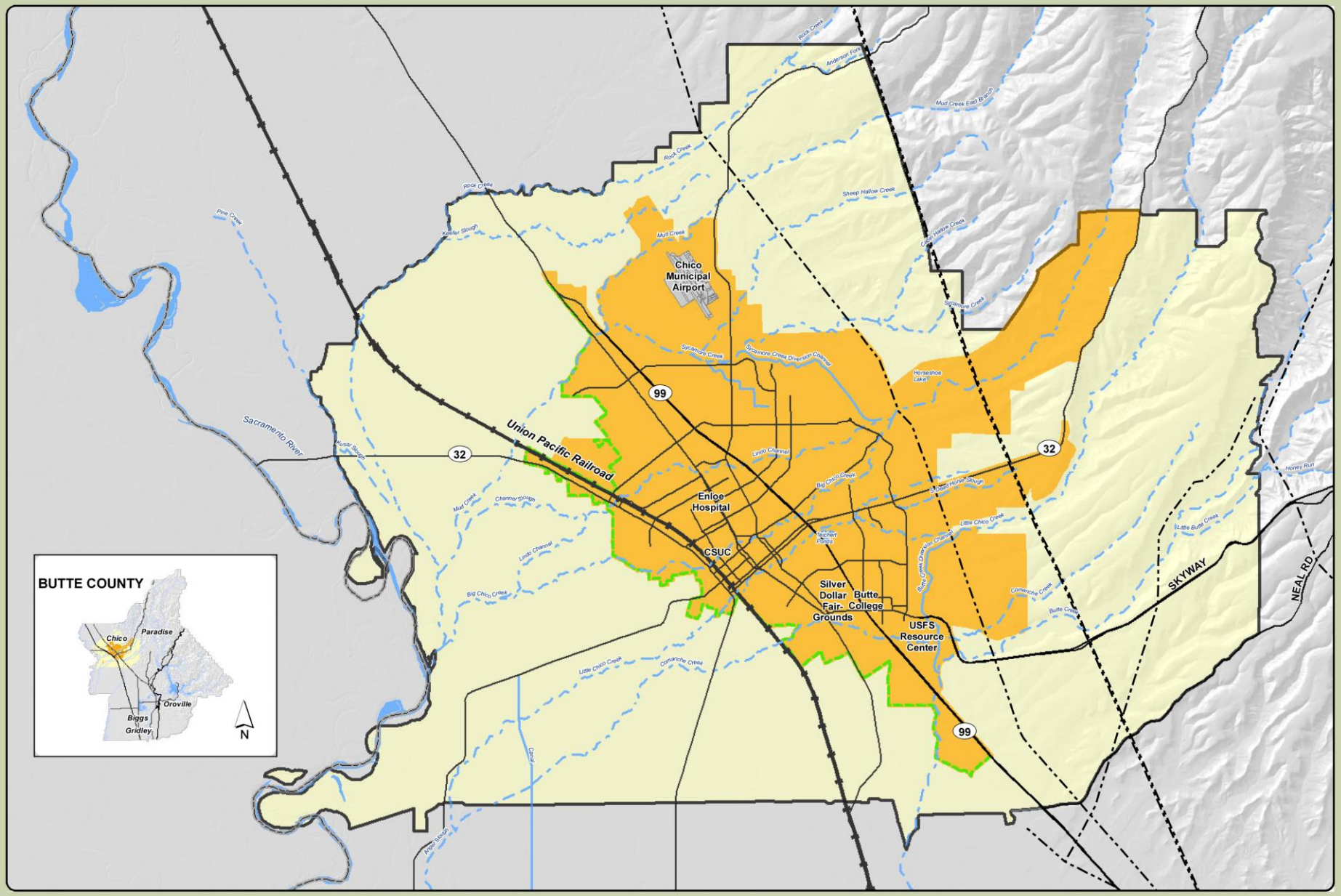
- **General Plan Environmental Impact Report** – The program-level EIR discloses and analyzes the potential environmental impacts of implementing the General Plan. The EIR serves as a companion document to the General Plan and will continue to be used by the City to identify and reduce potential impacts as a result from Plan implementation.

- **Public Facilities Assessment** – A key component of the General Plan Update is the Public Facilities Assessment (PFA). The PFA assesses the need for and estimates the cost of new and expanded municipal facilities such as wastewater collection and treatment, storm drainage, police and fire stations, roadways, and parks to accommodate the development resulting from build-out of the General Plan Land Use Diagram. The PFA provides baseline information for development of an impact fee program to cover the cost of expanding City services and facilities to meet the needs of new development. A sub-component of the PFA is the Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA), which forecasts the operating costs associated with providing municipal services to future development resulting from General Plan build-out. The FIA determines the recurring revenue and fiscal impacts, primarily to the City's General Fund, resulting from build-out of the Land Use Diagram.

Phase 7: EIR Certification and Plan Adoption - Following a series of joint City Council and Planning Commission hearings, the EIR and Plan were forwarded to the Council with the Commission's recommendation for action. The Council held additional hearings to receive public input on the EIR and the General Plan. After considering public input, as well as the Commission recommendation, the Council incorporated final revisions, certified the Final EIR, and adopted the Chico 2030 General Plan.

GENERAL PLAN PLANNING AREA

The State General Plan Guidelines call for the Chico General Plan to address all land within the City limits, land within the City's designated Sphere of Influence (SOI), and other land in unincorporated Butte County which relates to the City's planning efforts. This other land is referred to as the General Plan Planning Area and is illustrated in **Figure I-2**.



CITY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE & PLANNING AREA

- Powerlines
- Greenline
- Railroad
- City of Chico Sphere of Influence Boundary
- City of Chico Planning Area

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N

Data Source: City of Chico

Figure I-2
General Plan Planning Area

CHICO 2030 GENERAL PLAN

IMPLEMENTING THE GENERAL PLAN

The City Council, boards, commissions, and staff, as well as residents and business owners in the City, will all participate in implementation of the General Plan. Plan policies will be carried out through a variety of actions in which citizens will be invited to participate, including the adoption of ordinances and policies, decisions regarding annual budgets and capital improvement programs, and individual project applications. Future actions will be evaluated for consistency with the General Plan through a review of relevant General Plan goals, policies, and actions.

It is important to note that some policies and actions use an imperative verb tense which means they are mandatory, and must be followed strictly unless an exception clause is met. Other policies and actions are more flexible and intentionally allow for interpretation or discretion in their application.

The General Plan is intended to be a living document that may be amended to reflect changing conditions and community priorities. To ensure that the Plan reflects current City priorities, the City will conduct annual Plan reviews. Through these reviews, staff will report on the Plan's implementation status. Concurrently, the City will evaluate the sustainability indicators that measure progress toward meeting the City's sustainability goals.

A more comprehensive review of the General Plan will take place every five years. In addition to the standard content of an annual report, this review will include a summary of five-year growth trends and an assessment of the available land inventory's ability to meet future needs.

To reflect current community needs and priorities, the General Plan will from time to time need to be amended. Any such amendments will require public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council and will be subject to environmental review. Plan amendments, depending on their context, may also require revision of the Impact Fee Schedule.

GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

State law requires the General Plan to address the subjects of land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space. Additional topics (or "elements") may be covered at the discretion of the jurisdiction, provided that they are consistent with one another. Chico's General Plan includes the following optional elements: Sustainability; Downtown; Community Design; Economic Development; Parks, Public Facilities and Services; and Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation. The General Plan is organized so that users may easily locate topics of interest and quickly understand the City's policies on a given subject. Each of the Plan's 12 elements includes the following similar components:

- **Vision Statement** - A statement of the community's vision for the future state of the City relative to the element's topic.

- **Introduction** - This section provides background and context for the element and summarizes the element's intent.

- **Issues and Considerations** - This section outlines the significant issues facing the City related to the particular element.

- **Goals, Policies, and Actions** - The Plan sets forth: Goals as broad statements of community desires; Policies to guide the decision makers in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions; and Actions consisting of strategies, programs, or other acts to be carried out in order to help the City achieve its goals and implement its policies.

The General Plan also includes maps and tables to illustrate the vision, objectives, or key components of the Plan. The Glossary provides a list of abbreviations and definitions for technical terms used in the Plan. The Appendices includes supplemental information and materials that serve as supporting documents for the General Plan such as detailed information about the Special Planning Areas. The Implementation Guide is an accompanying document that provides a table identifying the responsible parties and time frame for implementing each action item in the General Plan.

RELATIONSHIP OF GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

As explained in the previous section, this General Plan includes all mandatory elements, along with six optional elements. By law, each element carries equal weight and must be internally consistent. This requirement means that the separate parts of the General Plan must be integrated and related. **Table I-1** shows the relationship among the 12 General Plan Elements. Where an "X" is listed in the table, the two corresponding elements share common or related topics and issues which are cross referenced in the Goals, Policies, and Actions section of each element.

TABLE I-1
GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT RELATIONSHIP

Chico General Plan Elements	Relationship to Other General Plan Elements											
	Sustainability	Land Use	Circulation	Community Design	Downtown	Economic Development	Housing	Parks, Public Facilities, & Services	Open Space & Environment	Cultural Resources/Historic Preservation	Safety	Noise
Sustainability		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Land Use	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Circulation	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Community Design	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
Downtown	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Economic Development	X	X	X		X		X	X				
Housing	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Parks, Public Facilities, & Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Open Space & Environment	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	
Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation	X	X		X	X		X					
Safety	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Noise	X	X	X				X	X				