



Introduction

Chapter I - Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

Adopted in 2011, and updated in 2017, the City of Chico 2030 General Plan (GP 2030) provides a comprehensive and long-range framework for the growth and preservation of Chico, California. The GP 2030'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 the City. To meet the City's future housing and employment needs GP 2030 identified five new growth areas, designated Special Planning Areas (SPAs), which 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.

Under California Government Code 65450-65456, a specific plan is a tool that articulates a vision for a particular area of a community and establishes a policy and regulatory framework from which to guide future development in a purposeful and comprehensive manner. The Valley's Edge Specific Plan (VESP) is the blueprint for the planning area within the 1,448 acres identified in the Chico General Plan as the Doe Mill/Honey Run Special Planning Area (SPA). The VESP implements the Chico General Plan by establishing a comprehensive framework for coherent, context sensitive growth and conservation in alignment with the characteristics of the site, the guiding principles, goals, and actions expressed in GP 2030.

1.2 Specific Plan Organization

The VESP is organized into the following 7 chapters and 5 appendices.

Chapter 1: *Introduction* - Provides an overview of the plan area setting, character, existing land uses and relationship to the City of Chico General Plan, along with historical and current context of Butte County, City of Chico and VESP area.

Chapter 2: *Guiding Principles, Goals & Actions* - Describes the guiding principles and goals and actions that were used to inform, inspire, and guide the preparation of the VESP.



Chapter 3: *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space* - Details the VESP approach for preserving, restoring and developing open space and parks, along with describing the seasonal creeks, riparian corridors, Oak Woodland protection.

Chapter 4: *Land Use* - Defines the location, type and intensity of land uses and identifies the land use designations, development standards for each zoning district, Foothill Development standards and Firewise Guidelines, Standards, and Vegetation Management Requirements, as well as workforce/attainable housing.

Chapter 5: *Circulation & Trails* - Describes the circulation network for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs), public transit, and trail network.

Chapter 6: *Infrastructure & Public Facilities Plan* - Provides an overview on the distribution, location and extent of major backbone infrastructure, as well as dry utilities and public facility improvements.

Chapter 7: *Administration and Implementation* - Describes facilities financing plan, specific plan flexibility and major/minor modifications, as well as infrastructure phasing.

Appendix A: *Design Guidelines* - Provides guidelines for the building design, lighting, parks, open space and the design of public and private landscape, architectural styles, residential and non-residential development design.

Appendix B: *Street Tree List* - Outlines permitted street trees in the VESP area.

Appendix C: *Permitted and Conditionally Permitted Uses* - Provides allowable and conditionally allowed uses organized by zoning district/land use, as outlined in Chapter 4.

Appendix D: *Valley's Edge Rock Wall Supplement* - Includes an inventory and description of on-site rock walls, as well as outlines implementation measures for protecting on-site rock walls.

Appendix E: *Valley's Edge Oak Woodland Mitigation and Management Plan* - Provides a framework for conservation, surveying, management, education, care and maintenance, replacement, and regeneration, in addition to defining the application for development projects to adhere to.

1.3 Plan Area Overview

Valley's Edge is characterized as a multi-generational, mixed-use, recreationally-oriented community offering a broad range of housing types, lifestyles and amenities framed by natural open space corridors and served by a vibrant Village Core providing the commercial services and social hub of the community.



1.3.1 Open Space and Public Land Uses

Open space is both the defining characteristic and predominant land use in Valley's Edge, encompassing nearly 700 acres, or roughly half of the total project dedicated to parks, recreation, preservation, and education. As directed by the General Plan, the VESP also provides land designated for public uses, specifically a community park and an elementary school. Development areas are planned around natural landscapes and features such as oak woodland corridors, seasonal creeks and pioneer-era rock walls.

Open space along the perimeter of the planning areas visually and physically buffers development areas from adjoining neighbors, roadways and vistas. Open space along the eastern boundary creates a permanent fire break and barrier to foothill encroachment. Open space corridors within the interior of the project protect and preserve riparian areas, Oak Woodland savanna(s), as well as important elements such as rock walls and portions of the old Doe Mill wagon road. Parks and open space along the western boundary visually soften foreground views, presenting a visible "green edge" to the planning area.

Open space elements also create an expansive framework for non-vehicular movement and connectivity, where park trails link residential, commercial, and public land uses promoting bicycle and pedestrian use. Beyond preservation and recreation, over 20 miles of open space frontage serves to define and aesthetically enhance the edges of the built environment. One hundred percent of the homes in Valley's Edge will be within 350 yards of an open space element.

1.3.2 Residential Uses

The residential component of Valley's Edge, comprising roughly 670 acres and representing about 45% of the overall site, includes both Multi-Generational Neighborhoods and Senior Neighborhoods. The Multi-Generational Neighborhoods create capacity for approximately 1,400 dwelling units, with housing types ranging from estate lots for custom built homes to production level single-family detached, single-family attached, and apartments. The 55+ Senior Neighborhoods create capacity for approximately 1,400 dwelling units across a range of densities customary and responsive to both traditional market demand and emerging trends in active adult and senior communities.

1.3.3 Commercial Uses

Commercial land uses within Valley's Edge, comprising roughly 60 acres, and are segmented into two designations; Village Core and Village Commercial. Land uses within the neighborhood scale Village Core include professional and medical office uses, small retail shops and services, and food and beverage. The Village Core is sized and located to support the broader needs of residents and visitors in Valley's Edge. The Village Core designation also allows social and recreational clubhouse amenities within both Multi-Generational and Senior Neighborhoods.

As a complement to the neighborhood scale Village Core, Village Commercial areas provide greater latitude on building size, scale and land use, including but not limited to horizontal mixed-use, medical and professional offices, apartments and workforce housing, day care, hospitality uses, residential care homes, assisted living facilities, and retail uses.



1.4 Historical Context

1.4.1 Regional History

During prehistoric times, with year-round creeks and an abundance of plant and animal resources, Native Americans populated and utilized lands in and around the Chico area. Small overhang shelters and caves formed under the hard lava cap east of Chico were utilized for seasonal habitation. Elsewhere, benches and flats flanking the Big Chico Creek, Little Chico Creek, Butte Creek and tributary streams were utilized for open-air camps and villages. The Konkow (Northwest Maidu, and the Mechoopda Tribe) were resident in the Chico area long before the time of Euro-American contact. By the mid-1820's, fur trappers were traversing the North Valley on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, some with devastating consequences for the local Maidu and other valley populations.

In the spring of 1843, a party of settlers including Peter Lassen and John Bidwell traveled north from Sutter's Fort headed for Oregon. Bidwell was impressed by the beauty of the region around Chico, and upon returning from Oregon he mapped the rivers, streams and the lay of the land. This map later formed the basis of several of the land grants made by the Mexican Governor of California, including the Rancho Arroyo Chico Grant of November 7, 1844 to William Dickey. Dickey settled on the north side of Big Chico Creek and later sold the ranch to John Bidwell. Bidwell managed approximately 22,200-acres, including lands now Bidwell Park, for many years from his home at Arroyo del Chico. In 1905, a tract of the most desirable land along Big Chico Creek comprising more than 1,900-acres was donated to the City of Chico by Annie Bidwell. This was the beginning of Bidwell Park.

The discovery of gold in 1848 caused tens of thousands of miners, merchants, and immigrants to descend into the region, establishing encampments known today as Bidwell Bar, Long Bar and Hamilton along the Feather River and Butte Creek. Mining camps established during the gold rush gradually developed into trading centers for mining, which later transitioned into lumbering and agricultural goods.



Existing site photo at sunset



Existing site photo along preserved creek



The Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria had a long relationship with early pioneer John Bidwell and his wife Annie. It has been the subject of controversy, and opinions about the relationship vary. The Bidwells prospered with the help of Native labor and the scene resembled that of a plantation to some. Yet, the Native residents of Rancho Arroyo Chico were provided work, homes, and some protection from hostile vigilantes. The rancho also became a refuge for individuals escaping government sponsored removals of Native people from Butte County.

During the late 1840s and early 1850s, Bidwell established the Chico area as an agricultural, transportation, and commercial center. By 1851, the first post office was established under Postmaster A.H. Barber. By 1860, the future City of Chico was thriving. Bidwell had purchased John Potter's ranch, a part of the Farwell Grant, and laid out plans for the town's future streets. As of 1860, Chico's population numbered roughly 500 residents.

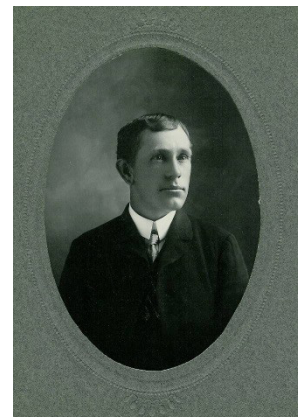
Agriculture and livestock along with mining in outlying communities continued to sustain Chico through the final decades of the 19th century. The California and Oregon railroad, which arrived in 1870, provided another economic boost to Chico, and facilitated the growth of the logging and lumbering industry in the nearby mountains.

One of the major developments in the cultural and economic history of Chico was the decision by the state legislature in 1887 to erect a "normal school" in Chico to train elementary school teachers. Chico Normal School accepted its first students for the fall term of 1889. Over the succeeding century, the school evolved into California State University, Chico.

I.4.2 Valley's Edge Land

Official record land ownership of the property begins with Sam Neal's Spanish-Mexican Land Grant in 1860. Between 1874 and 1883, ownership of the land and surrounding properties included notable pioneer era names such as Henshaw, Stanley, Potter, and eventually Stephens.

James T. Stephens was born in Tennessee in 1830. At age 19, while crossing the continent to the riches of California, James met his future wife, Malinda Foster, and the two were married in Grass Valley before moving to Chico in 1852. Being among Butte County's earliest settlers, James and Malinda began raising sheep on their first homestead, The Stone Ranch, known today as the Chico Seed Orchard located along Skyway. Over the next two and one-half decades, family ranching activities expanded and Stephens, through private party transactions and the Homestead Act, acquired 1,448-acres of land comprising the VESP area. James and Malinda had eleven children, among them Alvin "Nick" and Lyman Stephens, both of whom became involved in sheep ranching. James Stephens passed in 1899, willing the ranch to Malinda along with *"1,406 head of sheep, 1 cow and calf, 2 horses, buggy and harness, 1 farm wagon, 1 Spring wagon, 20 tiers of wood, 14 tons of loose hay, a sheep dipping trough and household furniture"*.





Malinda passed in 1912, willing the property to son Nick, then age 55. Nick continued ranching on the land and successfully bought and sold other properties in and around Chico, including the popular summer resort Jonesville, located in Butte Meadows. In 1917 Nick sold the ranch to brother Lyman Stephens. In 1943, Lyman transferred the ranch to his nephew Orville Stephens and his wife, Phoebe Stephens.

In 1973 the property was sold to Inter Pacific Company of Japan, an international land holding company. Over the next 30 years the land was leased out for winter cattle grazing. In 2005 the property was acquired by local Chico residents and current owners, transferred in 2018 to Chico Land Investment LLC, the applicant and master development entity for Valley's Edge.

Today, James and Malinda Stephens along with sons Nick and Lyman lay rest in the Chico Cemetery. The over 4.6 miles of rock walls existing on the property today are testament to a century long heritage of the Stephens family ranch.

1.5 Existing Context

1.5.1 Butte County

From the Sacramento River along its western boundary to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range along its eastern border, Butte County is recognized for its rich agricultural heritage, geographical diversity and an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Butte County encompasses over 1,600 square miles and is home to just over 224,000 residents, most of which reside within the 5 incorporated areas including Chico, Biggs, Gridley, Oroville, and Paradise. Butte County's Metropolitan Statistical Area (referred to as the Chico MSA) is the 14th largest MSA in California.

Agriculture is a cornerstone of the Butte County economy; both the County and the City of Chico's General Plans have sought to protect agricultural land by directing growth and development to non-prime agricultural soils generally east of State Highway 99, on what is referred to as 'grazing lands'.

1.5.2 City of Chico

The City of Chico is located about 20 miles east of Interstate 5, approximately 150 miles from the San Francisco Bay Area, and about 90 miles north of Sacramento. The majority of Chico's urban area exists on relatively level ground, with its easterly boundary stretching into the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Chico consistently ranks among the top of small communities across the nation for Quality of Life, Education, Best Places to Live, Best Bike Town, Best Outdoor Recreation, Best Place to Reboot, and Best Place to Retire, along with a host of other well-deserved awards and recognitions.

As of 2020, Chico's incorporated area population numbered around 110,300 residents. An estimated 46% of the jobs in Butte County are located within the Chico Urban Area, which captures over half of the County's retail sales. Today, Chico is widely regarded as the economic, educational, cultural, medical, social, and entertainment hub of the northern Sacramento Valley, from Sacramento to the Oregon border.



One of Chico's main employers is California State University Chico or "Chico State". Established in 1887, Chico State is among the top rated and most highly recruited of all 23 campuses within the California State University system. Chico State is known for its academic programs in engineering, science, computing, business, technology, environmental studies, theatre arts, and communication.

Another defining characteristic of Chico is Bidwell Park, extending from historic downtown eastward 11 miles into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. At over 3,670-acres, the "Jewel of Chico" is the 3rd largest municipal park in California, 26th largest urban park in the nation.

The landscape, natural resources, topography, and amenities in and around Chico have helped shape the community over time. Cycling is prominent in both urbanized and rural areas and within Bidwell Park as much of the Chico is accessible by a network of bike trails, including the Steve Harrison Memorial Bike Path located along Valley's Edge western boundary.

Chico's geographical setting and history, its beautiful natural character, vast recreational opportunities, idyllic college town atmosphere and vibrant social scene coupled with a diverse housing supply, strong retail, medical and institutional sectors all support its well-founded reputation as a highly desirable place to live, work, raise a family, and/or settle into retirement.

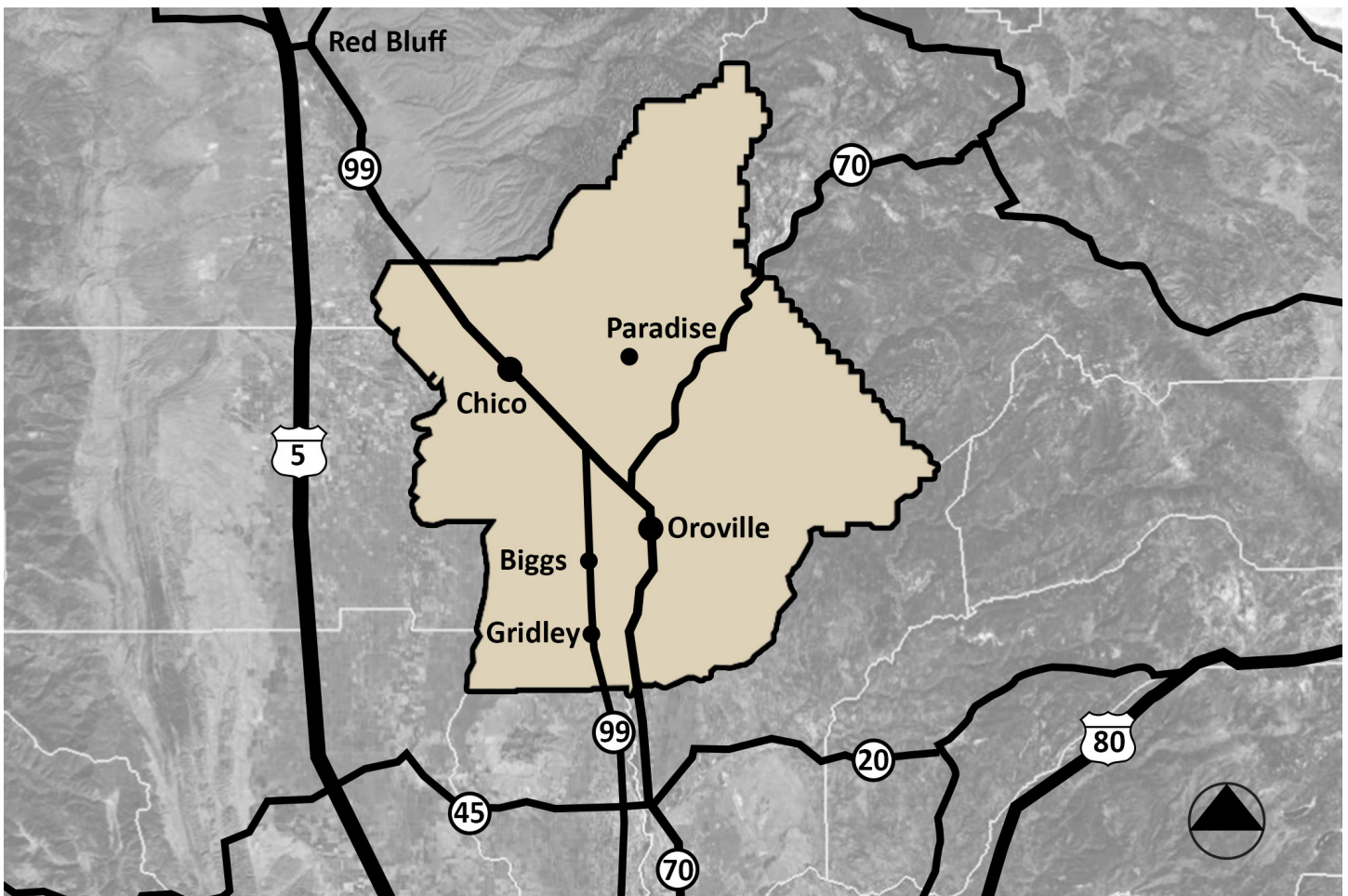


Figure 1-1: Butte County



1.5.3 Valley's Edge Specific Plan Area

The 1,448 acre Valley's Edge Specific Plan area is located within the City of Chico's Sphere of Influence at the transition of the valley floor and lower foothill region, roughly 1 mile east of Southeast Chico's major commercial and employment region. The aesthetic of Valley's Edge is defined by gentle valleys, seasonal streams, tree lined arroyos, oak woodlands, rock outcroppings and gently sloped grassland mesas with expansive views to the Sacramento Valley, the Buttes, and the Coastal Mountain range to the west.

As directed by the City's General Plan, the primary access to the property is from the south, off Skyway, a major arterial traveling between Chico and Paradise. The VESP area's secondary entry lies at the extension of East 20th Street. Both Skyway and East 20th Street are served by full freeway interchanges at State Highway 99, roughly 1.5 miles west of the Specific Plan area. The northern boundary of Valley's Edge is characterized by gradual to steep inclines into rural Stilson Canyon, a largely developed area comprised of estate lot single-family homes. The northwest corner of the project abuts existing City of Chico single-family development. The western boundary of the project abuts the Steve Harrison Memorial Bike Path (a Class I facility also known as Potter Road).

Immediately west of the bike path lies 136-acres designated as an environmental preserve, being a portion of the Stonegate Subdivision, a 313-acre mixed-use project comprising of open space, residential and commercial land uses.

The entire eastern boundary of the property is defined by a 1.5-mile rock wall separating the VESP area from vacant land zoned County AG-160 (160-acre minimum), historically used for winter cattle grazing. The southwest boundary of the Specific Plan borders the Skyway, leading easterly along Honey Run Road into Butte Creek Canyon. Land uses south of Skyway include an asphalt plant and an adjacent six-hole golf course, both designated for development in the Chico General Plan. The southeast boundary of the VESP area borders Honey Run Road. Land uses along the south side of Honey Run Road consist of primarily single-family homes on large parcels ranging from 1.6-acres to 15-acres, under the jurisdiction of Butte County.

EXISTING USES

The Valley's Edge Specific Plan area is identified in both the Butte County General Plan and the City of Chico General Plan as an area designated to accommodate residential and commercial growth. Existing use is vacant land leased out on a seasonal basis for winter cattle grazing. Agricultural wells, billboard structures, and various overhead utility lines are located on the property. Building structures include aged and abandoned metal storage sheds and an old wood frame barn, all in states of disrepair together with concrete slab remnants of a long since demolished residence. Recreational improvements exist on the property, including a network of private mountain biking, hiking and equestrian trails, and a private disc golf course.

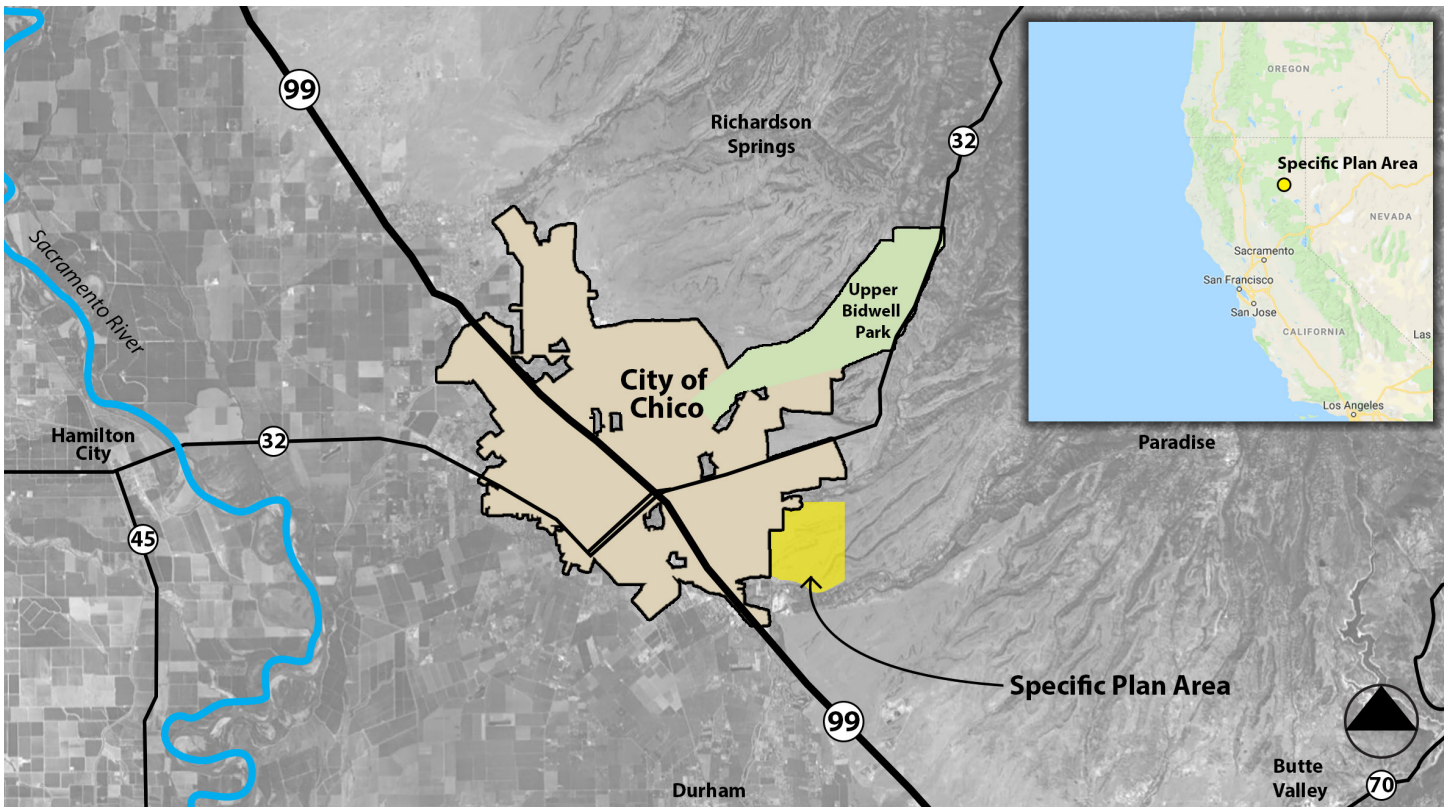
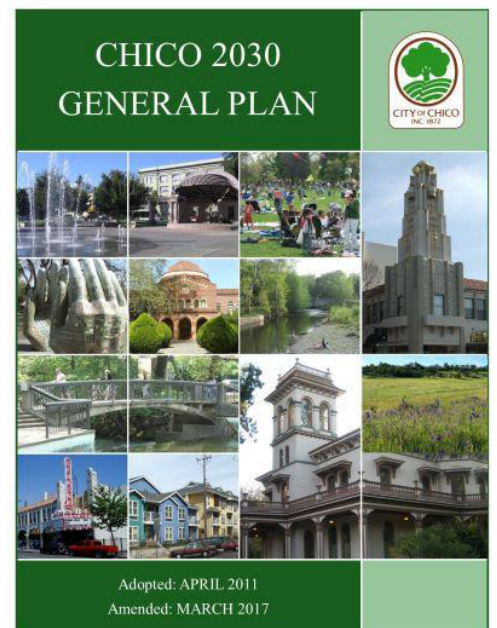


Figure 1-2: City of Chico

1.6 Relationship to the City of Chico General Plan

The Chico 2030 General Plan (GP 2030), adopted in 2011 and updated in March 2017, provides a comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent policy framework for the growth and preservation of Chico. The Land Use Element, one of the eight legally mandatory elements of Chico's General Plan, establishes the policy basis for decisions about where and how the City will grow and change over time.

The GP 2030 Land Use Element designated five Special Planning Areas (SPAs) based on strategic location, proximity to services, compatibility with surrounding land uses, environmental constraints, geologic features and the ability of any given SPA to advance and implement the goals of the General Plan. Together these planned growth areas total 2,265 acres, which according to the Chico General Plan provides capacity for about 6,681 dwelling units and roughly 3.2 million square feet of commercial space. Of these five SPAs, the VESP area, referred to in the General Plan as the 'Doe Mill/Honey Run' comprises nearly two thirds of the total acreage planned to accommodate Chico's growth, representing roughly one third of Chico's total future residential capacity in the SPAs.





GP 2030 Appendix C provides a written description of each SPA intended to guide more detailed planning and analysis at the project level, including features and land use concepts together with collage shape land use exhibits. The land use exhibits are not intended to imply proportions or locations of suitable land uses, but rather a graphic representation of the range of desirable land uses. For each SPA, findings for General Plan consistency rely on a determination of substantial compliance with the written description of land use concepts and development capacity.

1.6.1 Specific Plan Flexibility

GP 2030 encourages SPAs to retain flexibility in order to meet changing community housing and jobs needs (GP Policy LU 6.2). The VESP allows for such flexibility within defined parameters, such as the physical layout of open space, residential, commercial, and public land uses, the identification of major circulation and infrastructure elements, and the standards which guide subsequent development including allowable uses within each land use category. In this context the VESP's land use plan exhibits, master circulation plan and other illustrations are intended to guide rather than dictate planning and civil engineering design level details and decisions occurring at the development stage.

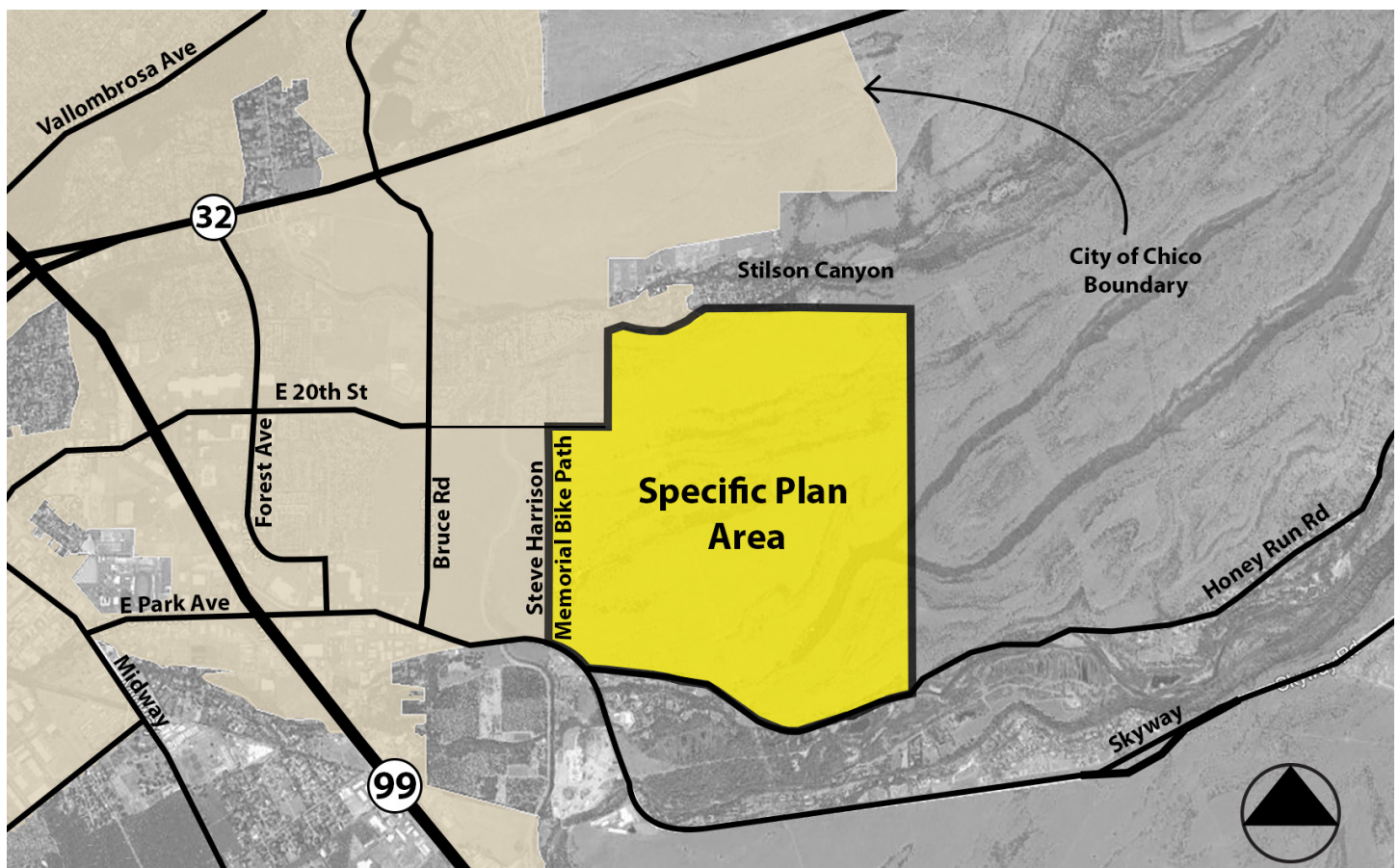


Figure 1-3: Valley's Edge Specific Plan Area



1.7 Community Outreach Process

The community outreach process for the Valley's Edge began in late 2007, around the same time as the City and County were formulating vision statements and guiding principles for their respective General Plans. Over the subsequent years, site tours were conducted to familiarize residents, interested groups, officials and agencies with the property, as well as to gather thoughts and ideas on potential future planning, development, and amenities. This outreach process has included but is not limited to consultation with the following individuals and groups:

- Chico residents and adjoining neighbors
- City of Chico and Butte County staff, administrators and elected and appointed officials
- LAFCO/BCAG board members and staff
- Local professionals, business owners, major employers and Chico Chamber of Commerce members
- Local environmental advocates and outdoor enthusiast
- Local building and landscape design professionals
- Chico Police and Fire Department
- Chico Unified School District (CUSD)
- California Department of Education
- Chico Area Recreation District (CARD)
- Utility providers such as PG&E, Cal Water, and AT&T
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

1.8 Community Inspired Influences

Over a 12-year period, public and community engagement and conversation yielded insight into the concerns and desires of local residents, groups and agencies. While the vision for Valley's Edge began with an appreciation for the land's natural characteristics, responsiveness to locally inspired ideas provided a clear framework for desired outcomes. Beyond guidance from the Chico General Plan, the principal influences shaping the Valley's Edge vision originated from the applicant's commitment to two simple things; first, create a project that complements hometown Chico, and second, listening:

- **To the land**, and respect its natural landscape and human heritage.
- **To the community**, and plan thoughtfully and gracefully
- **To kids**, and provide fun and safe outdoor places to play and explore
- **To parents**, and create a family safe environment
- **To neighbors**, and buffer their homes with open space



- **To retirees**, and provide amenities that fit and promote an active and relaxing lifestyle
- **To CUSD**, and facilitate joint-use planning of school-park elements
- **To CARD**, and endow the district with parkland for community wide enjoyment
- **To equestrians**, and provide wide open spaces to ride
- **To disc golfers**, and provide open spaces to play
- **To sensitive environmental habitat**, and preserve and maintain its integrity
- **To the users of Bidwell Park**, and provide like-kind amenities incrementally relieve its overuse
- **To hikers and bike enthusiasts**, and retain vast open space with an expansive network of trails
- **To residents of Butte Creek Canyon**, and preserve its rural character
- **To consumers**, and provide a range of housing densities, ownership and rental opportunities
- **To Chico's Police and Fire officials**, and integrate safe design principles into the planning area

1.9 Areas of Special Interest

Areas of Special Interest are meant to summarize how the VESP addresses various topics of likely interest to Chico's residents, along with references to where in the plan such topics are more fully described.

1.9.1 Sustainability

Sustainability, defined as “maintaining a culture of stewardship to enhance our natural environment, economic interests, and quality of life for present and future generations” is more than just a principle of the Valley's Edge Specific Plan.



Community workshop



Community workshop



From the organization of land uses and extent of natural resource conservation, to trails and multi-modal circulation systems which reduce dependence on automobiles, and intergenerational design principles which foster greater human interaction, Valley's Edge is purposefully positioned to become a model for sustainable development and advance principles and applicable goals, policies and actions expressed in Chico's General Plan.

While sustainable principles are evident throughout the VESP, Section 2.3.6 describes specific Goals and Actions which, along with Design Guidelines (Appendix A), serves as a toolkit to advance sustainability as the Planning area is developed over time.

1.9.2 Healthy Community and Intergenerational Living

Community planning and design can either promote or inhibit the physical and mental health of its residents. Positive alignment between land use, circulation, transportation, parks, open space, recreational amenities, and natural resources are integral to the success of healthy communities and the residents living within them.

The planning and design of Valley's Edge represents a purposeful drive towards quality of life and healthy community, where vibrant places such as clubhouse(s) encourage social interaction, where parks, recreational facilities and wide open spaces promote exercise and family-time, where community gardens provide opportunity to learn healthful habits, where intergenerational living creates and strengthens meaningful intergenerational relationships, and where bike and pedestrian trails connect residents and visitors of all ages throughout the planning area.

The VESP's plan and policies for intergenerational living provides the framework and facilities for integrating families with school age children, young adults, and seniors in social living environments that foster a community which creates dynamic social situations and interactions, as well as physical fitness. The VESP Land Use Plan (Figure 4-1) implements the concept of intergenerational living by locating housing typical to different demographics within the same community, as opposed to separately.

1.9.3 Wildland-Urban Interface

In Valley's Edge the prevalence of open space and natural landscapes interspersing with the built environment requires that care and consideration be given to the wildland-urban interface. The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) refers to a set of conditions such as slope, vegetation types and distribution, flammability of structures, weather patterns, topography, hydrology, road construction, and other variables.

The VESP provides a range of programs and practices for firefighter safety, community planning, landscaping, construction and maintenance to protect people, property, and natural resources from wildland fire. The VESP's firewise policies address wildfires from five distinct perspectives: Land Planning, Fire Fighting Capability, Fire Resistant Materials and Building Standards, Fuel Reduction Management, and Emergency Preparedness. Firewise guidelines and standards exist for builders and developers, architects, homeowners, residents and the HOA. Refer to Section 4.5 for the VESP Firewise Guidelines, Standards, and Vegetation Management Requirements.



I.9.4 Oak Woodland Management

A foundational element of the VESP vision is the preservation and protection of oak woodlands. Oak woodlands promote biodiversity, climate resiliency, soil stabilization, erosion prevention, water quality, pollination, and other critically important natural attributes. Oaks are also culturally important, both as a food source and medicinally to indigenous peoples. Community awareness and appreciation for oak trees, and community sponsored events and programs for acorn harvesting, planting, and proper care and maintenance are inherent parts of maintaining, and where possible enhancing, the natural oak woodland environment.

Conservation of oak woodlands in Valley's Edge extends beyond the City's Tree Preservation Regulations (Chico Municipal Code [CMC] Section 16.66). The VESP Oak Woodland Mitigation and Management Plan (Appendix E) describes and characterizes existing trees within various development and open space areas, which provides the framework for conservation, surveying, management, education, care and maintenance, replacement, and regeneration. In establishing these regulations, it is the VESP's intent to preserve as many trees as possible consistent with the reasonable use and enjoyment of private property, to provide for a healthy urban forest, and to absorb carbon dioxide to help reduce urban impacts on global warming.

As undeveloped ranch land, oak trees and woodlands within the 1,448-acre planning area are neither protected nor managed, and historical grazing has largely eliminated natural regeneration. Implementation of the Valley's Edge Specific Plan enables the creation of permanent open spaces which preserve and protect approximately 80 percent of the estimated 5,500 trees within the permanent open space. The remaining 20 percent of the existing trees, 'living environment trees', are accommodated in the VESP area by integrated into common areas, neighborhoods, and the built environment. The layering of City preservation regulations together with the VESP Oak Woodland Mitigation and Management Plan help ensure that the natural, cultural, environmental, and economic values of oak trees in Valley's Edge will not only be maintained, but enhanced.

Beyond preservation, interpretative signage will educate residents and visitors of the importance of oak trees. Informational panels will be located along walking trails, park spaces, multi-use paths, within public gathering areas, at focal points and other interest areas. The HOA will also provide guidance to residents on how to best live in and around oak trees. Refer to Appendix E for the VESP Oak Woodland Management Plan.

I.9.5 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas

The VESP area incorporates a variety of strategies to reduce impacts to air quality and long-term Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by promoting alternative forms of transportation, mix of land uses, energy efficiency and fuel switching strategies and sequestering carbon by enhancing the urban forest. The VESP land use designations provide a mix of complementary uses near one another, requiring fewer vehicle miles traveled, reducing traffic volumes, and reduced vehicle emissions. The Specific Plan area incorporates a hierarchy of connected roads, paths, and trails for vehicle and non-motorized modes of travel, such as bicycle and pedestrian travel, as well as Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV's)



accommodated on all roads within the project. Thousands of trees will be planted throughout the project along streets and in parks, parking lots, and private residences increasing Chico's urban forest and carbon dioxide uptake. Energy efficient building design, natural gas fuel switching capabilities, and renewable energy will all be employed to further reduce GHG emissions within the plan area.

1.9.6 Workforce/Attainable Housing

Valley's Edge will be responsive to market forces providing attainable ownership and rental housing for singles, empty nesters, families, Multi-Generational households, and seniors. The VESP land use plan provides opportunity for greater affordability using higher density "right-sized" housing types, such as cottages, courtyard, and patio homes. The VESP's Design Guidelines (Appendix A) and land use policies support both Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and livable designs to accommodate independent and multi-generational living.

In addition to the creation of market rate attainable homes and rental units, the master developer will work collaboratively with the City and below market housing providers to explore supplementary affordable housing opportunities utilizing governmental subsidies or other incentives. Refer to Chapter 4 (Land Use) for additional workforce/attainable housing information.

1.9.7 Stormwater Collection and Treatment

The VESP area includes several westward flowing seasonal drainage courses. These drainage courses, except for the northernmost ephemeral drainage located upslope from the Belvedere Heights subdivision will be preserved as open space. The northernmost ephemeral drainage will be direct to a combination of underground pipes and surface channels, permanently re-routing its stormwater around the Belvedere Heights development.

Stormwater runoff from development areas will be collected, treated, and retained or detained as necessary to avoid impacting downstream properties and facilities, including environmental preserves. Consistent with City and State storm water requirements, each project phase will be required to demonstrate no-net increase in site runoff rates through the use of on-site Low Impact Development (LID) measures. LID refers to a range of sustainable design features that benefit water supply and contributes to water quality protection. LID design features apply techniques to filter, store, infiltrate, evaporate, and/or detain stormwater runoff close to its source to maintain pre-development runoff rates. Common practices used to adhere to LID principles include, but are not limited to, the use of permeable pavement and bio-retention areas. Regional planning efforts, such as Valley's Edge, are required to develop and implement hydro-modification management procedures to limit post-project runoff to pre-project flow rates for the 2-year, 24-hour storm event. Refer to Chapter 6: Infrastructure and Public Facilities Plan for additional stormwater information and proposed infrastructure.