

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This Background Report supports the Tehama County General Plan. Its purpose is to provide the public, the County's decision-makers, and other agencies with a compendium of information about Tehama County. In this way, the Background Report provides the informational basis on which the goals, policies, and programs of the Tehama County General Plan are in part based. While the General Plan itself represents the official adopted goals and policies of Tehama County, this Background Report provides only information, including the plans and programs of other agencies. Therefore, this Background Report differs from the General Plan in two key ways:

- This Background Report does not include goals, policies, or programs
- This Background Report can be updated as needed by County staff to reflect changed or updated information, revisions to master plans adopted by other agencies, etc. These updates do not require the approval of a General Plan amendment.

1.2 LOCATION

Tehama County was created out of parts of Butte, Colusa, and Shasta Counties in 1856. The County is made up of 2,951 square miles and is located approximately 120 miles north of the City of Sacramento and roughly midway between Sacramento and the Oregon state border (See **Figure 1-2**). The west boundary of the county is the eastern side of the Pacific Coast Range and the east boundary is the ridgeline of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Surrounding counties include Shasta County to the North, Plumas and Butte counties to the east, Glenn County to the south, and Trinity and Mendocino counties to the west. Tehama County is bisected by the Sacramento River, which cuts a 20-mile-wide swath through the Central portion of the County.

The topography of Tehama County varies significantly from east to west (See **Figure 1-1**). The highest point is a section of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that rises to 8,200 feet above sea level in the eastern portion of the county. Moving west, the land cascades down the mountainside through foothills and rangeland until it eventually meets the fertile valley floor at 341 feet above sea level. Continuing westward, the land pattern rises in a virtual mirror image of the east side until it reaches the peak of the Coastal Range Mountains at 8,092 feet.

The climate of Tehama County varies significantly between the valley and mountain areas, depending primarily on elevation. The valley regions are generally characterized by hot, dry summers and temperate winters, while mountainous areas experience warm, dry summers and colder winters. In 2002, the average July maximum temperature was 97.8 in the valley city of Red Bluff and 80.8 in mountain town of Mineral. The average January maximum temperature was 54.7 in Red Bluff and 40.9 in Mineral. Average annual precipitation is 23.0 inches in Red Bluff, 55.1 inches in Mineral, and annual snowfall is 2.1 inches in Red bluff and 151.9 inches in Mineral (CED, 2004).

Tehama County's total population ranks 41st among the 58 counties in California. The majority of the population is located along the central valley area of the county, primarily adjacent to the north-south running Interstate 5 and Highway 99 (See **Figure 1-3**). The State Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit estimated Tehama County's population at 60,019 people in 2005, representing a 1 percent average annual growth rate over the last 10 years (54,200 people in 1995). It further estimated the County population to reach 62,442 people in 2010, representing a 0.8 percent average annual growth rate through the year 2010 (CED, 2004).

There are three incorporated cities within Tehama County: Red Bluff, Corning and the City of Tehama. Red Bluff, Tehama's County seat, was established in 1856. Its location along the Sacramento River had historically enabled it to serve as a transportation hub to export Tehama's agricultural and lumber products by steamships up and down the river. Corning, the county's second-largest city, was incorporated in 1907. It originally served as an agricultural hub for Tehama County, producing olives, plums, almonds, walnuts and peaches, as well as cattle and sheep ranching. The City is home to the Lindsey Olive Company and Bell Carter Foods. The City of Tehama, which was established in 1846, is both Tehama County's oldest and smallest incorporated city (approximately 0.8 square miles). The city was originally established as a trading center due to its proximity to the Sacramento River. Today, Tehama is almost entirely residential, with residents fulfilling commercial needs in the unincorporated, but larger town of Los Molinos, which is located approximately 1 mile to the east.

1.3 GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS/ PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND REPORT

California state law requires that every city and county in the state adopt a General Plan, which meets specific requirements. Some of the key points of the California Government Code that relate to the adoption and contents of General Plans are:

§65302. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

- (a) A **Land Use Element** that designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.
- (b) A **Circulation Element** consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, military airports and ports, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.
- (c) A **Housing Element** as provided in Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580).
- (d) A **Conservation Element** for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.
- (e) An **Open-Space Element** as provided in Article 10.5 (commencing with Section 65560).
- (f) A **Noise Element** that shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community.
- (g) A **Safety Element** for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically-induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence, liquefaction and other seismic hazards identified

1.0 INTRODUCTION

pursuant to charter 7.8 (commencing with §2690) of the PRC, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wild land and urban fires.

In addition to the seven mandatory elements, the general plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the county, relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction. For example, an energy element is not mandatory but may be useful in addressing specific energy-related issues. Also, the adoption of an agriculture element may allow an agency to focus on ag-related issues more effectively than it might in the overall conservation element. Once an optional element is adopted, it becomes part of the general plan with the same legal force and effect as one of the mandatory elements. The requirements for internal consistency among all general plan elements, and of consistency between the general plan and other land use decisions, apply equally to optional elements.

Although state law specifies the basic content of the general plan, it leaves the format of the plan to local discretion. Government Code Section 65301 (a) provides that the general plan may be adopted in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body. Jurisdictions may combine two or more elements.

Any land use project and decision, such as zoning or subdivision approval, must be consistent with a current and legally adequate general plan. An action, program or project is consistent with the general plan if, considering all aspects of the plan, it will further the objectives and policies of the general plan and not obstruct their attainment (*General Plan Guidelines*, p. 212).

1.4 CONTENTS OF THE BACKGROUND REPORT

The Tehama County Background Report shall consist of the following components:

2.0 - Land Use: This section presents a countywide overview of the existing land use conditions within Tehama County. It highlights the various communities throughout the County, as well as special planning areas, such as the areas outside of the three incorporated cities (Corning, Red Bluff, and Tehama) and the various unincorporated communities. This chapter also examines existing land use patterns and developments that have occurred since the inception of the previous General Plan.

3.0 - Economic Development: This section contains a discussion of socio-economic factors and issues within Tehama County.

4.0 - Existing Infrastructure, Demands and Opportunities: This section contains an analysis of the existing Infrastructure, including water and sewer demands and opportunities, within Tehama County.

5.0 - Transportation and Circulation: This section contains a discussion of the circulation system in Tehama County and related transportation issues.

6.0 - Recreation and Public Lands: This section contains an analysis of the location and types of recreation resources contained within Tehama County.

7.0 - Community Facilities and Services: This section contains a discussion of community facilities and services in Tehama County, including fire protection, law enforcement, solid waste management, library and school services.

8.0 - Natural Environment: This section contains a discussion of the environment of Tehama County, including the following sections:

- Noise
- Air Quality
- Historic/Cultural/Archeological Resources
- Biological Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Surface and Ground Water Resources
- Geologic Resources
- Forest Resources

9.0 - Hazards: This section contains a discussion of hazards that affect, or which could affect, people and property in Tehama County. The hazards addressed in this section are fire hazards, seismic hazards, flood hazards, other geologic hazards and hazardous materials.

10.0 - Population and Housing: This section analyzes the demographic, household, income, employment and housing stock characteristics for the unincorporated area of Tehama County.