

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 COUNTY OVERVIEW

CHARACTER

Tehama County's location in the upper Sacramento Valley has cultivated its development as an agrarian and rural community. As of January 2005, the County boasted a population of approximately 58,700 people, as estimated by the California Department of Finance, ranking it 41st among the 58 counties in California. A large part of the population, approximately 24 percent (14,059 persons according to the U.S. Census Bureau), resides in the City of Red Bluff with the remainder distributed throughout the Cities of Tehama and Corning, as well as several unincorporated communities and rural areas throughout the County.

Tehama County's strong agricultural background grew from the fertile valley lands along the Sacramento River and the expansive foothills where grazing activities are prevalent. Development and growth over the years were possible due to the ability to move goods up and down the Sacramento River and, in more recent times, Interstate 5. Recently, growth pressures from outlying counties have spurred new housing and commercial developments.

HISTORY

Tehama County was occupied by two tribal groups at the time of European-American contact. For approximately 4,500 years, archaeological records state that the Yana and their predecessors occupied the area from the Round Mountains near the Pit River in Shasta County, to Deer Creek in Tehama County. The Nomlaki (Central Wintun) were relative newcomers by comparison, having arrived from the north only 400 years ago. This tribe generally occupied the area spanning 10 miles east of the Sacramento River into the coastal range, in what is now Glenn and Tehama Counties.

The Mexican Land Grants of the mid-1800s brought many European-Americans to present-day Tehama County in 1844. The first major landowners in the area included Josiah Beldon, William George, Job F. Dye, Robert Hasty Thomes, Albert G. Toomes, and Peter Lassen. In honor of Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, Lassen laid out the original townsite of Benton City, located near today's community of Vina. However, due to the discovery of gold, most of the settlers were drawn to the hills, and the town of Benton City eventually folded.

When the Gold Rush commenced in the late 1840s, European-Americans began arriving in great numbers. The town of "Red Bluffs" was soon established as the head of river navigation on the Sacramento River. Steamboats brought provisions up the river to "Red Bluffs," where they were transferred to wagons and mules and carried overland to the Shasta and Trinity mining camps. "Red Bluffs" soon changed its name to Red Bluff.

Tehama County was formed April 9, 1856 from parts of the three surrounding counties (Butte, Colusa, and Shasta). The name "Tehama" was most likely derived from a local Native American word meaning "high water" or "low land"; probably referring to the Sacramento River.

There are three incorporated cities within Tehama County: Red Bluff, Corning, and the City of Tehama. In 1856, the City of Red Bluff was elected as the County seat. As stated above, its location along the Sacramento River had historically enabled it to serve as a





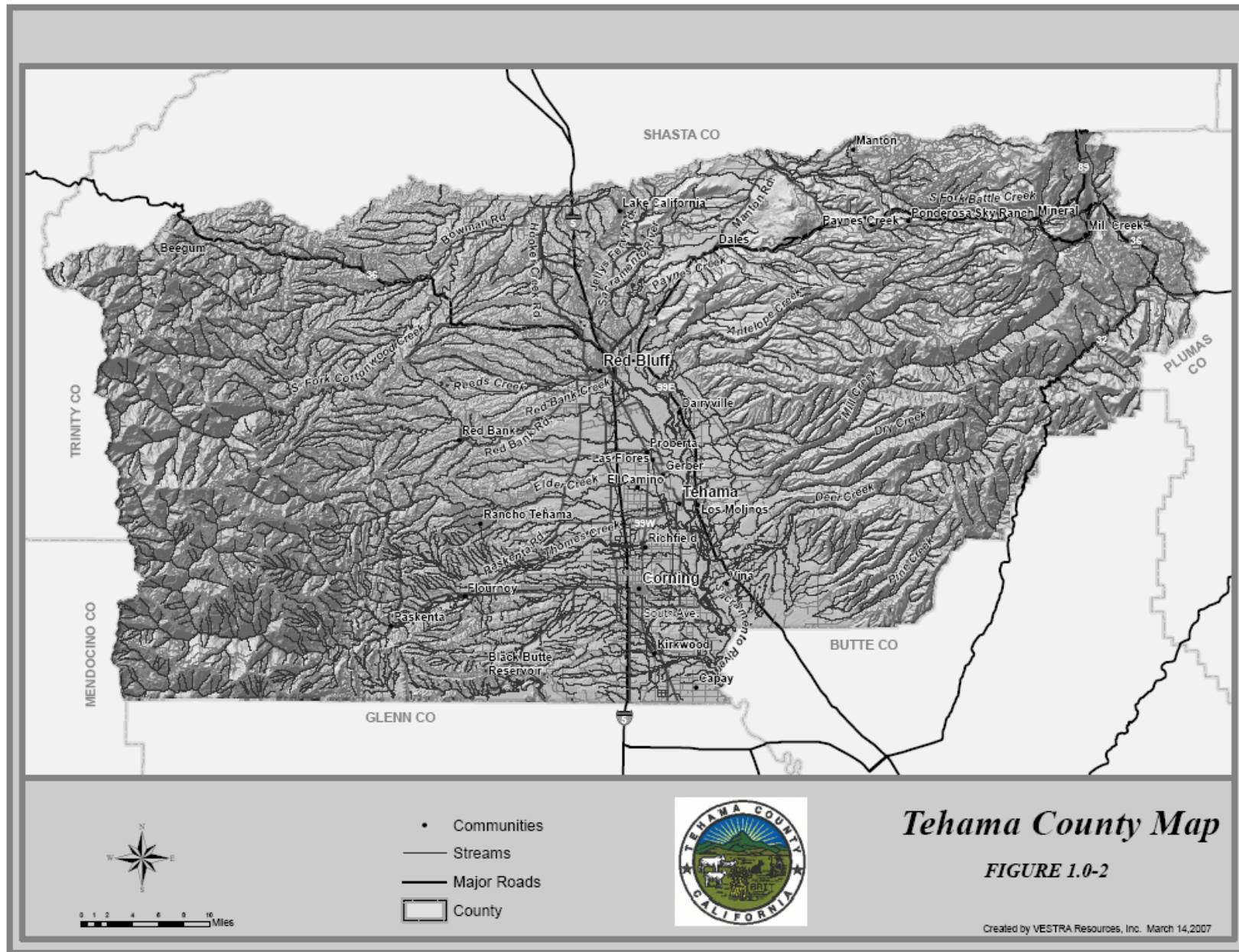
transportation hub to export Tehama's agricultural and lumber products by steamships up and down the river. Corning, the County's second largest city, was incorporated in 1907. It originally served as an agricultural hub for Tehama County, producing olives, plums, almonds, walnuts, and peaches, as well as cattle and sheep. Corning is home to the Lindsey Olive Company and Bell Carter Foods. The City of Tehama, which was established in 1846, is both Tehama's oldest and smallest incorporated city at approximately 0.8 square miles. The City was originally established as a trading hub due to its proximity to the Sacramento River.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Tehama County is located in the northern Sacramento Valley, approximately midway between the City of Sacramento and the Oregon state border. The western boundary of Tehama County is located in the Pacific Coast Range, and the eastern boundary is in the Cascade Mountains. The County is approximately 2,950 square miles and contains rolling foothills, fertile valleys, flat-topped buttes, and vast rangelands. 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 generally bisected by the Sacramento River Valley, which cuts a 20-mile-wide swath through the central portion of the County. Additionally, the County contains large amounts of National Forests in the hills and mountains to the east and west.

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



1.2 PURPOSE AND VISION

The purpose of the project to update the Tehama County General Plan is to review and revise the 1983 General Plan, to reflect upon changing conditions and issues, and to provide a direction for the future growth of the County in the next twenty years. The Tehama County General Plan is a comprehensive document that provides policies and guidelines for the future expansion and development of the community. The General Plan helps express how the citizens of Tehama County wish to see development in their community occur, and it serves as a planning guidebook to decision-makers, staff, and citizens. The General Plan serves as the foundation for various planning documents that help support and implement the General Plan including: the Tehama County Zoning Ordinance; the Tehama County Subdivision Ordinance; area plans; and other planning documents.

It is the intent of this document that agriculture remains one of the primary uses of land in Tehama County. This General Plan, as did the plans before it, emphasizes agriculture as a way of life and the foundation of the quality of life in Tehama County. Perhaps more than any other land use, agriculture depends on the land upon which it is sited, and relies on policies in documents such as this General Plan to protect it from incompatible land uses. Urban uses are encouraged in this plan, but only in areas with existing services, or where services can be provided efficiently.

1.3 LEGAL BASIS AND REQUIREMENTS

Every county and city in the State of California is required by law to adopt a general plan for the "physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning." (California Government Code Section 65300.) Called the "constitution for future development" by the California Supreme Court, the General Plan is a guideline for growth and policy decisions. The General Plan is intended to serve as a comprehensive, long-term document establishing land use and development policy for the next 10 to 20 years. This document will address the County's planning for the next 20 years and is an update to the County's 1983 General Plan.

State law requires that every General Plan be comprehensive in nature and cover the entire planning area, and that it address a broad range of issues associated with a jurisdiction's physical growth and development. Specific topics known as "elements" are required by law and are necessary to be included in every General Plan. These required elements include: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Additional or "optional" elements addressing specific issues of concern within the jurisdiction may also be included, as well as the combining of required



and optional elements where appropriate (e.g., combining the conservation and open space elements).

REQUIREMENTS AND SCOPE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a statement of the jurisdiction's long-term vision or ultimate physical form. Although the General Plan is mandated by the State of California, Government Code 65301(a) allows the jurisdiction to organize the required elements in any manner chosen, as long as all of the required topics are addressed.

All of the elements in the General Plan, whether required or optional, must have equal legal status. This means that no one element is superior to another. Additionally, all elements must be internally consistent with each other.

In addition to addressing all of the required elements, the General Plan must have the following functions:

Long-Term

The General Plan is intended to take a long-term perspective and to establish enduring policies that help guide the day-to-day decision-making for years to come. Time frames for various topics and policies differ throughout the General Plan with the Housing Element requiring update every five years. The General Plan considers goals, objectives, and policies that will impact the County for the next twenty years.

Comprehensive

The General Plan must incorporate all major components of the County's development and address all unincorporated areas. The County should consider the General Plans and relevant planning issues of every city as well as those planning and resource management issues that extend beyond the County's jurisdictional boundaries. Additionally, the plan must identify and address the broad range of issues associated with the County's physical development.

Internal Consistency

Policies within the General Plan are not allowed to conflict with other policies. There are five dimensions of consistency that must be addressed in order to meet the requirements of internal consistency, including:

- Equal status among elements
- Consistency between elements
- Consistency within elements
- Area plan consistency
- Text and diagram consistency

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General

Due to the broad scope and long-term perspective of this document, the general plan, as its name implies, must be general in nature. The purpose of this document is to provide a broad framework for the goals and policies for both public and private development.



USE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Tehama County General Plan is intended to serve as a tool to inform and assist citizens, developers, and decision-makers in formulating and implementing the County's rules that guide development and programs. As such, the Plan has four main objectives in achieving those outcomes. These objectives include the following:

1. To enable the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission to reach agreements on long-range development policies.
2. To provide a basis for judging whether private development proposals and public projects are consistent with County policies.
3. To allow other public agencies and private developers to design projects that are in harmony with County policies or to seek changes in those policies through the process of amending the General Plan.
4. To provide for agreements among different agencies concerning development in the unincorporated areas of Tehama County.

CONSISTENCY IN ACTION

The General Plan provides the basis for all of the County's regulations, polices and programs that relate to issues addressed in this Plan. In addition to requiring the General Plan to be internally consistent, the State also requires what may be called vertical consistency. An action, program, or project is consistent with the General Plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the General Plan and not obstruct their attainment. This requirement clarifies that consistency does not require all subsequent County actions to be specifically anticipated by the General Plan. Because the Plan is both broad and long-range, there are many circumstances where future County actions will be addressed only briefly in the Plan, or perhaps not specifically addressed at all. Nevertheless, the County can still weigh the consistency of those actions with the objectives and policies of the General Plan that relate to the action in general.

GENERAL PLAN SPECIAL STUDIES

The General Plan contains certain polices and programs that describe the need for further studies and plans. The preparation of these studies and plans is necessary to fully implement the General Plan and the community's vision of Tehama County for the next twenty years.

The General Plan by definition is a comprehensive and long-range guide to the County's physical, economic, and social development. It is expected that the actions set forth within the General Plan may be undertaken by the County at any time in the next twenty years. Therefore, it is impossible to establish a schedule or timeline for the preparation of particular studies and plans. The County will undertake proposed actions



and will provide both staff and financial resources to complete those actions as it deems necessary and feasible.

CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE ZONING ORDINANCE

One of the primary tools for implementing the General Plan is the County's zoning ordinance. A zoning ordinance regulates land use in a jurisdiction by dividing the community into specific districts or "zones". These districts specify the uses that are permitted, conditionally permitted, or prohibited within each zone. Consistency requirements between the General Plan and zoning ordinance are important and can be broken down into three components:

A. Uses and Standards

Land use classifications in the General Plan are not as specific as zoning ordinance classifications. For example, the Tehama County General Plan has five different categories for residential use, whereas the zoning ordinance has more than twelve. Multiple zoning districts may be consistent with a single General Plan land use classification, as long as the densities and unit types allowed within each zoning district are also permitted in the relevant General Plan category.

B. Spatial Patterns

The Zoning Map should reflect the general pattern of land use depicted on the General Plan Diagram. However, the two need not be identical. The boundaries of land use classifications represented on the Land Use Diagram are generalized; boundaries on the Zoning Map are usually more precise and parcel-specific.

C. Timing

California State law allows a "reasonable amount of time" for reconciling any inconsistencies between the Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan. (See Government Code Section 65860.)

1.4 TEHAMA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW

The Tehama County General Plan is organized into nine element chapters, which address all of the elements mandated by the State of California, as well as several optional elements applicable to Tehama County. The nine element chapters are discussed below, and the topics addressed in each section are highlighted.

Each chapter of the General Plan contains: an introduction; an overview summary of background information pertinent to the subject matter; and a section of goals, policies and implementation measures.

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Important terms to consider within this General Plan include:

GOAL

A broad statement describing a desired future condition or achievement reflecting a community's values and ideal future vision.

Policy

A clear and specific statement in the form of text or diagram that guides decision-making, in accordance with the General Plan.

Implementation Measure

An action, program, or procedure that carries out a General Plan policy. Implementation measures are specific actions that may be easily quantifiable. Each policy generally requires at least one implementation measure.

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Though State law specifies which topics are required to be addressed in the General Plan, each jurisdiction can determine the organization and structure within their plan based on the particular local conditions and needs of the community. The following descriptions of the elements contained in the Tehama County General Plan provide a brief overview of what is included in each section. These elements address significant issues concerning Tehama County and satisfy the legal requirements of the General Plan, as defined by California State law.

1.0 Introduction

This introduction provides a short overview of Tehama County and its physical setting, history, and character. General Plan requirements and structure are briefly reviewed with a description of the general format and elements included in this General Plan.

2.0 Land Use Element

Perhaps the broadest section of the General Plan, the Land Use Element functions as a guide to the physical form of the County. The Land Use Diagram is supported by descriptions of allowed uses and development densities for each land use designation. Additionally, the Land Use Diagram identifies those areas where Tehama County anticipates growth in the future, with the intent of avoiding incompatible land use changes involving cities within the County and neighboring agencies and jurisdictions.

3.0 Transportation and Circulation Element

The Transportation and Circulation Element provides a plan to guide the County's planning as it relates to the movement of people, goods, energy, and other commodities. Within the Tehama County General Plan, the Transportation and Circulation Element has a direct correlation and relationship to the Land Use, Public Services, Economic Development, Noise, and Housing Elements. Topics of discussion include roads and highways, public transit, non-motorized transit including bicycles and pedestrians, and rail, air, and movement of goods.





4.0 Public Services Element

The Public Services Element, which is an optional general plan element, addresses concerns associated with growth and development as it relates to public services and infrastructure including: schools, libraries, water supply, wastewater, solid waste disposal, and other services.

5.0 Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element, which is another optional general plan element, provides policy guidelines for the economic stability and development of the County. This section was primarily developed by the Tri-County Economic Development Corporation and addresses economic development issues through the advancement of policies aimed at economic development programs, economic development funding, employment, infrastructure, agriculture, and natural resource preservation.

6.0 Open Space and Conservation Element

The Tehama County General Plan combines the required Open Space Element and Conservation Element. The Open Space and Conservation Element provide guidance for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources and open space land within the County. Specifically included in this section are policies pertaining to agricultural lands, timber resources, water quality, wildlife resources, mineral resources, historic and archeological resources, visual resources, and open space resources in general.

7.0 Agriculture and Timber Element

In addition to the Open Space and Conservation Element, due to the importance of agricultural lands and timberlands in Tehama County, an Agriculture and Timber Element has been prepared to expand in more detail on those two resource topics.

8.0 Safety Element

The primary purpose of the Safety Element is to reduce the potential dangers and damages associated with fire, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. It is the intent of this section to craft programs and policies that reduce the risk of death, injury, property damage, and the economic and social dislocation related to the above hazards.

9.0 Noise Element

The Noise Element addresses potential noise-related issues within the County, as well as ways to limit noise exposure to the community. Programs and policies developed in the General Plan include protection of noise-sensitive land uses, consideration of noise-impacted areas, and noise associated with airports.

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10.0 Housing Element

As mandated by the State of California, the Housing Element is required to be updated at least every five years and must be approved by the State's Department of Housing and Community Development. The Housing Element includes: a section on the Summary of Needs and Constraints; a Housing Program with goals and policies; and a background report highlighting demographics, resources, and a review of the accomplishments in implementing the previous Housing Element. The Tehama County Housing Element has been completed as a separate process from the rest of the General Plan. It has been adopted by the County and approved by the State.



11.0 Glossary of Terms

In order to define specific terms related to this General Plan, a Glossary of Terms has been provided.

1.5 IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENT

A General Plan is not intended to be a static document, enduring time without change. Instead, the document should be regularly reviewed and amended as needed to meet the needs of the County. A number of the policies and implementation measures contained in this document may later be found to be unnecessary, or need strengthening to meet the associated goal. The County should not shy away from keeping the plan current and relevant to the citizens of Tehama County. The plan should be reviewed annually, and the review should be a public process open to everyone. All groups should be encouraged to participate, as should property owners, resource agencies, ranchers and residents.

State law requires that an amendment to the General Plan occur after public hearings before both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Notices for these hearings are published in a newspaper available to everyone. Policies in the Agricultural Element specifically suggest that some changes to the plan have additional notification procedures. The intent is not to make the process more difficult, but to ensure that the dialog is complete and that both the Planning Commission and the Board have complete information before they are asked to make related decisions.