

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



The City of Biggs seeks to create an economic development environment that values private investment, minimizes impediments to positive economic growth and facilitates the creation of a strong and diversified economy. The City actively seeks to diversify and expand the City's tax and employment base while actively working to retain existing businesses, expand the City's existing commercial and manufacturing resources and promote the opportunities provided by the City.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the efforts that the City will seek to make and the policies that the City will strive to implement to bring new primary industries, jobs, and other types of positive economic growth opportunities to the City while protecting and expanding the existing job base and economic health of the City. The principal focus of the City's economic development efforts focuses on expanding the City's existing tax and job base to provide increased employment options for City residents and seeks to expand the non-residential opportunities in the City to provide additional revenue and economic development options. Local government plays a key role in this process by creating conditions that foster and encourage investment and opportunity in the City and that provide a sense of welcome for those land uses providing positive economic development opportunities. This element seeks to advance these concepts through the establishment of an economic development vision for the City, supported by goals and policies that support it. However, achieving this outcome will require a combination of vision, foresight, practicality and constant attention over a sustained period of time.



The General Plans focus on economic development issues is important for many reasons. Economic diversification insulates the City budget against negative fluctuations in the economy and strengthens the ability of the City to provide a consistent level of service to City residents. Quality of life is enhanced through the opportunities presented by desirable employment, education, and housing opportunities combined with reduced commute distances that enhance opportunities for leisure, community and health-related activities. Additionally, a diversified economic base distributes costs over a wider group of users and reduces the overall burden of services on the community and its individual residents.



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## Overview

The Economic Development Element is an optional element of the General Plan. The authority for the element is provided by Section 65303 of the California Government Code which states that cities and counties can include in their General Plans elements beyond those legally required and which reflect issues of local concern or importance. The elements, as described above, seeks to establish an economic development vision for the City, communicate areas of issue and opportunity and establish a cohesive and effective set of goals, policies and programs to assist the city in moving towards its desired economic development vision.

## History

The economic development environment of the City of Biggs has been in a continual state of change since the City's incorporation in the early 1900's. Beginning prior to the time of its incorporation, the City of Biggs and the areas surrounding the City have been actively cultivated for various agricultural products. Starting with the establishment of citrus fruits in the late 1800's and transitioning to wheat and ultimately to rice, the City's economy has been driven by the strength of local agriculture. The strength of the City's agricultural base, and the personalities that resulted from its local operations, was reinforced by the City's location as the northern-most stop on the union pacific railroad line for a period of time in the early 1900's. As the northern-most destination accessible via rail, the City saw substantial growth and prosperity in the form of the establishment of lodging establishments, mercantile shops, lumber and wood product shipping, and skilled trades such a blacksmithing and agricultural implement production. However, with the extension of the railroad to the north and the growth of other regional cities in the County, the City's strategic importance began to diminish. The decline of the City's prosperity was further accelerated when State Route 99 was constructed east of the City thereby diverting traffic to locations outside of the City.

Despite changes to the local transportation system that once served to fuel the City's cycles of growth and prosperity, Biggs remains a City that is proud of its past and that looks forward to the opportunities that will once again provide the City with a strong economic base. The City continues to benefit from and support the areas local agricultural community and looks to new opportunities to strengthen its future.





## II. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the element identifies and addresses economic development issues identified during the outreach efforts for the General Plan Update and provides a summary overview of a range of topics of importance to the City relative to economic development. Policy guidance on specific issues and opportunities can be found in the goals, policies, and actions section of this element.

### Economic Diversification

The economy of the City of Biggs has traditionally centered on agriculture; however, changing agricultural practices—such as mechanization, industrialization, and the centralization of capital—have resulted in negative economic impacts for many of California’s agricultural communities. The cost of transporting agricultural goods to market and the need to consolidate agricultural processing activities have changed the way agriculture operations function. While Biggs continues to benefit from the presence of local agricultural processing operations and its location in the northern Sacramento valleys agricultural zone, the City’s industrial base has become dependent on the fortunes of the local agricultural community. As a result, the City seeks to diversify its industrial and commercial base to create additional jobs and provide expanded options for existing and future residents. The lack of significant economic growth over the past ten years highlights the City’s need to seek new economic and base-level employment options. This General Plan continues to support the City’s active agricultural activities while providing policies and programs that seek to diversify the City’s economic base.

### Aging Commercial Core and Changing Markets

The City’s Downtown core has continued to decline due to a lack of employment options, the expansion of regional commercial opportunities outside of the City and a lack of investment back into the City’s existing commercial businesses. As other Cities in south Butte County have seen growth over the past decades, commercial businesses that were once located in Biggs have



moved out of Biggs looking for larger markets and increased visibility on regional transportation routes. This movement out of the Biggs and into surrounding cities has impacted the City’s ability to retain existing businesses and entice new business opportunities. Additional factors to include a decline in the overall numbers of small businesses due to the growth of larger “chain stores”, the trend towards larger retail operations diversifying and centralizing operations to provide more products at lower price points, and the overall decline in the local, state and national economies have hurt the City’s



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commercial core as many local businesses have closed or moved out of the City which has led to a decline in the City's once bustling Downtown commercial core.

### **Land Availability and Configuration**

The City of Biggs has maintained its compact, low-density form since the time of its initial incorporation. While this has resulted in the retention of many of the key elements that make the City the special place it is for its residents, the lack of options for the location of new commercial and non-residential land uses may be a contributing factor to the declining health of the City economic base. Because the City has limited options for the location of business opportunities and because the land options that are located in the City may not be financially viable, readily available or configured to accommodate a changing market environment, new businesses have sought other locations where land costs, land availability and site suitability issues do not present the constraints that exist in the City today.

### **Utility and Infrastructure**

Historically, the City of Biggs has experienced various infrastructure constraints that have placed limitations on the potential for new business to locate in the City. Issues such as low water pressures and a constrained wastewater system have not provided an incentive for economic opportunity. Over the past decade, the City has successfully completed numerous major infrastructure improvement projects that have addressed these issues. These efforts have resulted in a changed condition of the City's infrastructure system which is now able to



support new demands and opportunities that may present themselves to the City. Additionally, the City is in a unique position of being a direct provider of electric power to City residents and businesses. The City should seek to leverage its ability to provide electric power and competitive market rates along with the recent improvements to the City's utility infrastructure to capture economic opportunities that were not available in years past.



## III. GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**Goal ED-1: Support the retention of existing commercial establishments and encourage new commercial and manufacturing development in the City.**

**Goal ED-2: Promote economic growth within the City of Biggs to ensure employment opportunities and goods and services are available within the community.**

**Goal ED-3: Build and nurture a positive economic climate that will attract highly quality base level employment opportunities.**

**Goal ED-4: Pursue the rehabilitation or removal of vacant non-residential development sites and work with property owners to foster opportunities to revitalize the city's commercial core.**

**Goal ED-5: Increase Biggs' visibility as a city by attracting regional public facilities.**

**Goal ED-6: Utilize the City's utility and infrastructure availability as a tool to entice new economic development opportunities and encourage existing employers to expand operations in the city.**

**GOAL ED-1: SUPPORT THE RETENTION OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND ENCOURAGE NEW COMMERCIAL AND MANUFACTURING DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY.**

**Policy ED-1.1 (Business Development) – Actively promote the retention, expansion and recruitment of businesses within the City.**

**Action ED-1.1.1 (Business Retention and Attraction) –** Following the adoption of the General Plan, prepare a Business Retention and Attraction Plan which:

- Defines incentives the City will consider utilizing, such as reduced electricity rates, to maintain existing businesses and attract new commercial and manufacturing development in the City.
- Identifies staff assignments and responsibilities for retaining and attracting new businesses.
- Identifies the specific types of businesses which Biggs shall seek to attract.



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- Defines projects which would be appropriate for funding through grant monies.

**Action ED-1.1.2 (Association Participation)** – Establish and maintain a presence with the California Trade and Commerce Agency to initiate all reasonable efforts to promote the economic development interests of the City of Biggs.

**Action ED-1.1.3 (Regional Relationships)** – Strengthen the City’s relationship with local and regional economic development corporations and service providers and leverage these relationships towards seeking new economic opportunities.

**Action ED-1.1.4 (Green Business)** – Pursue new clean technology, clean energy and agriculturally supportive commercial and industrial uses.

**GOAL ED-2: Promote economic growth within the City of Biggs to ensure employment opportunities and goods and services are available within the community.**

**Policy ED-2.1 (Business Support)** – Actively encourage and support the location of new employment and revenue generating businesses that support the City’s overall vision for its future.

**Action ED-2.1.1 (Zoning)** – Periodically review the industrial and commercial land use designations to ensure that there is an adequate mix of parcel sizes, zoning, and infrastructure to accommodate new development.

**Action ED-2.1.2 (Grant Funding)** – Continue to pursue and leverage State and Federal funding options for economic development activities and infrastructure improvements that promote economic growth opportunities.

**Action ED-2.1.3 (Economic Development Incentives)** – Consider the use of economic incentives and/or other direct benefits to businesses to encourage the development of new commercial and industrial enterprises in the City.

**Action ED-2.1.4 (Business Partnerships)** – Explore opportunities to partner with existing businesses in the City and region to provide expanded services and employment options.

**GOAL ED-3: Build and nurture a positive economic climate the will attract highly quality base-level employment opportunities.**

**Policy ED-3.1 (Business Environment)** – Maintain a business climate that supports the retention, expansion and recruitment of base-level economic development uses.

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**Action ED-3.1.1 (City Regulations)** – Periodically review the General Plan, zoning code and permit processing requirements to ensure that the City is not inadvertently limiting or delaying opportunities for new economic development.

**Action ED-3.1.2 (Annexation Policy)** – Actively explore options to annex land that would provide enhanced opportunities for economic development opportunities.

**Action ED-3.1.3 (Use of City Resources)** – As appropriate, commit the use of City resources to facilitate and support economic development opportunities that would strengthen the City's commercial and non-residential base.

**GOAL ED-4: Actively pursue the rehabilitation or removal of vacant and underutilized non-residential properties and work with property owners to foster opportunities to revitalize the city's commercial core.**

**Policy ED-4.1 (Use of Property)** – Aggressively pursue opportunities to revitalize, reuse or remove under-utilized properties in the City.

**Action ED-4.1.1 (Property Owner Engagement)** – Pro-actively engage local property owners in discussions regarding the use of existing commercial and industrial properties and actively encourage landowners to reinvest in the City.

**Action ED-4.1.2 (Working Partnerships)** – Partner with willing commercial and industrial land owners to actively market and promote available locations for business in the City.

**Action ED-4.1.3 (Under-utilized Property)** – Explore opportunities for the City to participate in efforts to remove dilapidated and obsolete structures to create new opportunities for non-residential growth and economic expansion on existing sites.

**Action ED-4.1.4 (Design Guidelines)** – Consider the development and implement of programs to include non-residential design guidelines, and property maintenance codes that encourage the productive use of under-utilized non-residential properties in the City.

**GOAL ED-5: Increase Biggs' visibility as a city by attracting regional public facilities.**

**Policy ED-5.1 (Community Facilities)** – Evaluate and encourage the location of appropriate community facilities (such as community college facilities, public health facilities and public safety services) in the City.



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**Action ED-5.1.1 (Site Preparedness)** – Identify and plan for suitable and desirable locations for appropriate public facilities through the development and implementation of a Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Development Program.

**Action ED-5.1.2 (Partnerships)** – Promote the City as being a willing partner for other local and regional government entities and services providers looking to expand services or establish new service delivery locations.

**GOAL ED-6: Goal ED-6: Utilize the City’s utility and infrastructure availability as a tool to entice new economic development opportunities and encourage existing employers to expand operations in the city.**

**Policy ED-6.1 Policy ED-6.1 (Infrastructure Support)** – Continue to seek opportunities to upgrade the City’s utility and infrastructure systems to support new business opportunities.

**Action ED-6.1.1 (City Promotion)** – Promote Biggs as a City that actively works to maintain and upgrade its utility and infrastructure systems to provide efficient, cost-effective and reliable services for its business partners.

**Action ED-6.1.2 (Electric Utility Opportunities)** – Leverage the City’s position as an electric power provider to encourage new commercial and industrial land uses that require reliable and cost-effective electric power.