

# INTRODUCTION



## I. GENERAL PLANS

Every city and county in the state of California is required to prepare and maintain a comprehensive, long-term general plan to guide its future (California Government Code, Section 65300). The general plan must cover a local jurisdiction's planning area and address the broad range of issues associated with the jurisdiction's development. The General Plan for the City of Biggs includes policies providing standards and guidance for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

## II. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

### Physical Location

The City is located in the fertile farmlands of the Sacramento Valley about an hour north of Sacramento. Known as the "heart of rice country," Biggs is approximately 25 miles south of the City of Chico and 25 miles north of Yuba City, just off State Route 99, at an elevation of 93 feet. Biggs is approximately four miles north of the City of Gridley.

### Community Character

The City of Biggs typifies the image of a rural, small American town. The population of approximately 1,700 persons allows most residents to know each other in passing and many residents have spent most or all of their lives in the City.

Among the most attractive qualities of Biggs is the relatively quiet and safe, the high quality of education offered through the Biggs Unified School District, and the affordability of homes within the community. The qualities of a safe and friendly community make Biggs a pleasant place for families and those seeking a peaceful place to live.

### History

Biggs is a primarily residential community located only one mile from Highway 99. The main entrance into town is lined with walnut groves, and passes several attractive homes and the classic architecture of the Biggs Unified School District Administration building. The mature shade trees lining the boulevard provide a wonderful canopy and set the relaxed tone for the community.

Located in the southwest portion of Butte County, the town was founded in 1871 by Mr. A. M. Pitts and Lewis Posey. It was named Biggs Station after Major Marion Biggs, a prominent local political leader. After two serious fires in the summer of 1878 a community water system was constructed. The town was rebuilt with brick stores and the word "Station" was dropped from the town name. By 1882 the town had 600 inhabitants and 280 registered voters.



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## Purpose

This document is the General Plan for the City of Biggs. It incorporates by reference the Housing Element (prepared and periodically updated separately), and any future elements to be adopted by the City as an element of the General Plan. The general plan affects current and future generations, which requires that the plan take a "long-term" perspective. Typically, general plans look 10 to 20 years into the future. This plan addresses planning through the year 2035.

The General Plan, is the City's "constitution" for development. It is an effort by the City to consider and respond in advance to the needs and expectations of its residents concerning future development. This "constitution" is framed within the legal framework established by the State and is based on knowledge of opportunities and constraints affecting the City of Biggs. The General Plan is implemented through a series of "goals", "policies", and "actions" designed to resolve and/or direct significant community issues.

The General Plan is also regularly referred to by individuals and businesses contemplating potential development activity within the community. The document explains what the community expects from new development and where development should occur. Goals in the General Plan also aid the City Council in seeking grants and other funding to address local issues and needs.

The General Plan has four main purposes:

- To enable the Planning Commission and City Council to reach agreement on long-range development policies.
- To provide a basis for judging whether specific private development proposals and public projects are in harmony with City policies.
- To allow other public agencies and private developers to design projects that are consistent with City policies, or to seek changes in those policies through the process of amending the General Plan.
- Provide an agreement between the City and outside agencies for development in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area.

## III. SCOPE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

### The City Limits

The General Plan is more effective on the lands over which the City of Biggs has jurisdiction: land within the city limits. The incorporated area of the community represents the boundaries of the City at the time the particular update of the General Plan is adopted. As annexations occur, land use designations in the City's General Plan land use for areas outside the city limits will apply. This plan adopts land use designations for land outside of the City, but which is expected to be annexed in the future.



## The Sphere of Influence

The Butte County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) has adopted a Sphere of Influence for the City of Biggs. A Sphere of Influence is established to represent a City's ultimate service limits and is the area in which the City has planning concerns related to the provision of community services and the management of related resources. To aid in future planning, the General Plan provides land use designations and policies for all of the land within the City's Sphere of Influence.

## IV. LEGAL BASIS & REQUIREMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

State law requires that the Plan be comprehensive and that specific subjects or "elements" be addressed in the Plan. The required elements as specified by Government Code §65302 (a) through (g) are:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Open Space
- Safety
- Circulation
- Conservation
- Noise

Some elements like the Open Space Element encompass a number of planning issues while others, such as the Noise Element, address a more specific topic. Because local conditions vary, the relevance and importance of each issue will differ from city to city. The General Plan needs only to address each required element to the extent that it is applicable to the City, as long as the minimum requirements of the law are satisfied.

State law also allows the local jurisdiction to include additional, or "optional" elements, to address specific issues of concern, as well as combining required and optional elements as deemed appropriate (Government Code §65303). This General Plan combines the open space and conservation elements into a single element, the Conservation and Recreation Element, and adds a Public Facilities Element, a Community Enhancement Element, and an Economic Development Element.

## Consistency with Other City Regulations

The General Plan provides the basis for all of the City's regulations, policies and programs that relate to issues addressed in the plan. In addition to requiring that the plan be internally consistent, the State requires vertical consistency. This means that the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances, and any other plans that address development must all be consistent with the General Plan. In addition, all development approvals and public projects must be consistent with the General Plan.



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The State's *General Plan Guidelines* provide the following rule for defining 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 rule clarifies that consistency does not require all subsequent City actions to be specifically anticipated by the general plan. Because the Plan is both broad and long-range, there are many circumstances where future City actions will be addressed only briefly in the Plan and refined by subsequent action. Due to the complexity of the General Plan, and the need for flexibility, interpretations of the goals, objectives and programs may result in the appearance of conflicts. The City Council is the interpreter of the General Plan.

## **V. GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

Each General Plan element contains: a brief discussion of the legal requirements; goals, policies and actions to address required topics; and, narrative text as necessary to provide understanding of the issues addressed. The following terms apply within this General Plan:

### **Goal:**

An achievement toward which an effort is directed. The Goal states an ideal resolution of the issue under consideration.

### **Policy:**

A specific statement in the form of text or diagram that helps clarify and define the goal statement.

### **Action:**

Actions are specific measures that are readily quantifiable and help move toward attainment of the goal.

Each goal is numbered to allow easy reference when using the General Plan. The numbering system does not imply a ranking or priority of the goals, policies, and actions.

While the topics that must be addressed within the general plan are clearly specified by State law, the organization of discussions is determined by each jurisdiction based upon the particular local conditions and issues of significance.

Following are descriptions of the sections of the Biggs General Plan and discussions of the topics, which are addressed within each section.

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## **Introduction**

This introduction provides a brief overview of the City of Biggs and its physical setting. The requirements and structure of General Plans are reviewed and a description of the format of this General Plan.

## **Land Use**

The Land Use element provides guidance for the physical form of the community. A land use diagram identifies the existing and proposed land uses within the City. 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 the City anticipates growth in the future, with the intent of avoiding incompatible land use changes by neighboring agencies and jurisdictions.

## **Circulation**

The Circulation element provides a framework to guide transportation planning throughout the City and its planning area. The Circulation Element is coordinated and consistent with portions of the Land Use, Community Enhancement, Public Facilities and Services, and Public Health and Safety Elements, which address topics directly related to circulation and transportation. Discussion topics include roadway network, road improvement standards guidelines, road maintenance, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, railroad, and public transit.

## **Housing**

The Housing element establishes policies in an effort to ensure all segments of the community are provided an opportunity for decent and affordable housing. As housing elements must be updated every five years per state law, this element was prepared and adopted separately in May 2010. The next update of the housing element will occur in 2014.

## **Open Space & Recreation**

Typically a broad ranging element, many Open Space and Recreation topics are addressed within other sections of the General Plan. This section addresses managed resource production (agriculture and mineral extraction), biological resources, air quality, and water resources. A description of natural resources within the vicinity of the City is provided.

## **Noise**

The primary purpose of the Noise element is to clarify policies and standards by which the local government can limit the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels. Technical data relating to mobile and fixed sources is collected into a set of noise control policies and programs. The policies of the element are to be used as a basis for land use decisions.



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## **Public Health & Safety**

Issues discussed within the Public Health and Safety element include emergency preparedness, flood hazard, fire and police protection, geologic hazards, hazardous materials and waste management, and rail service related hazards.

## **Public Facilities & Services – Optional Element**

The Public Facilities & Services element provides polices to address the community's need for infrastructure, sewer and wastewater systems, and other community services, as well as describing the status of public facilities and services within the planning area.

## **Economic Development – Optional Element**

The Economic Development element addresses efforts that the City will take to bring additional primary industries, jobs, and other types of industry to the City of Biggs, as well as efforts the City will take to protect existing jobs in the City.

## **VI. GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The City of Biggs must meet a broad range of challenges and obligations with limited financial resources. Many of the programs described within this General Plan address situations that have evolved over a number of years and will not be easily resolved.

Since financial limitations are the primary constraint in addressing many of the issues that face the City, it is imperative that the City seek economically feasible strategies for implementing General Plan programs. Such strategies will include seeking funding assistance through state and federal grant programs. Some issues will be more easily resolved by working in conjunction with other local agencies to achieve mutual goals.

## **VII. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS**

State law provides for up to four amendments to the general plan each year. An amendment may include several “changes” to the general plan. Amendments to the General Plan require compliance with the Government Code and environmental laws before they can proceed.