

**Working Draft Butte County General Plan 2030
Framework of Guiding Principles**

1. Principle: Agriculture

Agriculture is an important aspect of Butte County’s economy and lifestyle that must be maintained, protected, and promoted. Agriculture must be protected from urban encroachment and incompatible land uses. Rural development strategies should be used to transition between urban and commercial agricultural uses. One means of protecting Agriculture will be to promote higher density/mixed use development in the Spheres of Influence for each of the cities.

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2. Principle: Growth/Urban Development/Housing

The County will determine where growth can be accommodated to fulfill the variety of housing needs of the next 20 years. Urban growth strategies should be directed to, and be supportive of, the LAFCO recognized city Spheres of Influence. Infrastructure necessary to properly accommodate urban growth must be provided with funding mechanisms that ensure continued maintenance. Urban growth areas must complement the diverse goals of protecting agricultural resources, natural resources, and the environment, and be developed in a manner that supports city policies.

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3. Principle: Rural Development

The General Plan should identify areas suitable for rural development including a variety of lot sizes that meet the varying needs of rural lifestyles. Where possible, consideration should be given to the “conservation” subdivision approach that utilizes clustered development to minimize consumptive uses of land while protecting areas important for purposes of agriculture, grazing, and conservation. Rural development should be reasonably close to public services and schools when possible, but not interfering with future city growth. The feasibility of a regional sewage treatment and disposal facility in the unincorporated portion of the county must be considered. Rural growth areas must complement the diverse goals of maintaining the rural character of much of Butte County while protecting agricultural resources, natural resources, and the environment.

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4. Principle: Natural Resources and Environment

While growth must accommodate the housing needs of the next 20 years, Butte County will act to identify areas that must be conserved and protected, including important watersheds, deer ranges, forests, grasslands, mineral resources, wetlands/riparian areas, scenic resources, and other environmentally sensitive areas.

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5. Principle: Airport Land Use

Determine equitable ways that the General Plan can protect the 4 county airports in coordination with the 2000 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

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6. Principle: Recreational Opportunities and Protection of Cultural Resources

As Butte County’s population grows over the next 20 years, additional recreational facilities will be necessary to serve both local and regional needs. Cultural resources that are significant to Butte County’s history and past must be identified and protected under Butte County policy.

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7. Principle: Transportation

Butte County’s plan for regional and local transportation needs must be coordinated with the California Department of Transportation, the Butte County Association of Governments, the cities, and the County’s Capital Improvement Program. The Circulation Element must guide County Improvement Standards and take into account both rural and urban settings. County Improvement Standards within the identified Sphere of Influence for the County’s cities should, to the extent practicable, be consistent with the improvement standards of each city.

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8. Principle: Economic Development

The General Plan must seek to provide incentives and policies to maintain existing job centers and businesses and attract new high quality employment centers that will create opportunities at various levels with the goal of keeping Butte County generated revenues circulating within Butte County, and enhancing the County’s Jobs-housing Balance. Some of these opportunities shall be in the unincorporated parts of the County to provide reasonable future funding for county services. There shall be a tax sharing strategy between the cities/county to discourage the fiscalization of land use decisions in the Spheres of Influence.

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9. Principle: Public Health and Safety

The General Plan must include policies that address the public safety issues important to Butte County, including seismic and fire hazards, appropriate circulation for emergency vehicles and evacuation routes in mountainous areas, areas prone to flood, clean air and water, and all other aspects of public safety. The General Plan must be written in such a manner as to encourage the development of healthy communities, while protecting Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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10 Principle: Public Services

The General Plan must address where and how essential public services and/or facilities will be provided to the varied and dispersed geography of the County; such as schools, sewer and water service, road construction and maintenance, fire and police protection, and garbage collection, and general governmental services. Inherent in providing such services is establishing funding mechanisms to maintain appropriate levels of service. The General Plan must recognize that the Neal Road Landfill is a valuable public asset. According to current estimates this landfill will reach capacity in 2033. General Plan Policy must address how the landfill will be protected from future incompatible land uses and how additional land may be reserved to allow for future expansion.

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11. Principle: Cooperative Planning

Several of the incorporated city jurisdictions within Butte County are poised to begin General Plan updates at this time or in the near future. The General Plan must coordinate both regional and city planning, especially concerning development within designated Spheres of Influence for the incorporated cities. Butte County is open to General Plan proposals that include using a single consultant to jointly develop two or more different General Plan updates for the County and cooperating cities with the goal of applying consistent policies where needed.

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12. Principle: Sustainability

The General Plan must support the use of natural resources in a way that provides a secure future for Butte County’s residents. This shall include the exploration of alternative strategies for energy sources and conservation in agriculture, building, transportation and other appropriate areas. Development must maintain or enhance economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. General Plan policy must include a strategy to provide incentives and regulations to accomplish this Principle.

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