

The banner features a dark blue background with a white waterfall on the left. The text 'Butte County' is in a large, white, serif font, and 'General Plan 2030' is in a smaller, white, serif font below it. A circular seal with 'BUTTE COUNTY' and a mountain landscape is positioned between the text. Below the banner is a curved strip of images showing various rural and natural scenes: a field of sunflowers, a cow in a field, a mountain range, a hot air balloon, a green field, a row of trees, a lake, and a wooden barn.

Butte County

General Plan 2030

Butte County General Plan 2030

Meeting Series #5: Goals and Policies

Transportation Alternatives Handout

The Transportation Alternatives for General Plan 2030 represent different approaches to how transportation improvements might occur in Butte County under the General Plan. These alternatives are based on input received during Meeting Series #1, the Public Workshop and CAC meetings held in May 2007, and the series of Area-Wide Workshops and Community Meetings held between April and June 2007. They were also refined based on input from the Planning Commission, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and public, as well as final direction from the Board of Supervisors. These Alternatives were approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 27, 2007.

The Transportation Alternatives maps are attached to this handout. The Roadway Improvements map shows potential locations for major roadway improvements, such as roadway widening, new road construction, pedestrian improvements or improved intersections. The roadway improvement alternatives were developed to address a series of issues that were raised through the General Plan process to date. These issues are described in the Roadway Improvements section below, and the numbered alternatives to address these issues correspond to the numbers on the Roadway Improvements map. Minor road improvements, such as road maintenance and repaving, are not included in these alternatives; however, the Policy Alternatives address these needs in the Transportation category.

The Bicycle Improvements map displays potential improvements to bicycle facilities, including off-street bicycle paths (defined by the Caltrans Highway Design Manual as “Class I” facilities), on-street bicycle lanes (Class II facilities), and on-street shared bicycle routes (Class III facilities).

Although the roadway improvements and bicycle improvements are mapped separately, these improvements should be considered in tandem. There are opportunities to decrease costs, increase efficiency, and maximize the benefits of an improvement by sharing uses. For example, there may be future opportunities where proposed emergency vehicle, fire access, and evacuation routes can also serve as effective and enjoyable bike paths and multi-use trails. Similarly, certain bike path and multi-use trail facilities can be designed to also function as emergency access routes. During non-emergency situations, the route would be blocked to vehicular traffic, but during an emergency, these routes would be accessible to emergency and fire fighting equipment... Therefore, while reviewing the proposed roadway and bicycle improvement alternatives, it is worthwhile to consider opportunities for shared uses.

Roadway Improvements

The following transportation issues have been raised through the Butte County General Plan 2030 process to date. Options to address these issues are also provided, and these numbered alternatives correspond to the numbers on the attached Roadway Improvements map. During the October 16 meeting, the CAC was asked to recommend specific improvements for inclusion in the General Plan, as well as how to prioritize among them.

An important consideration with these roadway improvement alternatives is how they would be funded. With the exceptions of Alternatives 2 and 24, none of the alternatives are included in the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan, which allocates Butte County transportation funding through 2035. Therefore, the typical sources of transportation funds are not available for the majority of these projects. However, the County could consider alternative funding options, such as increasing transportation impact fees on new development in order to improve public safety or reduce traffic congestion through these roadway improvements. Such a program would require additional study by the County to determine the adequate fee structure. In addition to impact fees, the County could seek sources of grant funding; however, this would not be a standard source of transportation funding, in part due to the significant cost of transportation improvements. In addition, future RTPs could include some of the improvements included in General Plan 2030. The RTP is updated every 4 years, so the next update would be in 2012. By then, there may be additional funding sources that could be allocated to these projects.

Issue A: At the Stirling City Community Meeting, participants identified that the Skyway between Inskip and Butte Meadows is in need of improvements, including paving, to facilitate emergency access, evacuation, tourism and recreation.

Alternative 1: Improve the Skyway between Inskip and Butte Meadows for emergency access and evacuation only.

Alternative 2: Improve the Skyway between Inskip and Butte Meadows for full access. As noted above, this improvement is included in the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan.

[Public Works Note: The Skyway between Inskip and Butte Meadows would still only be a mountain pass closed for seasonal access due to winter snows and anticipated repairs to address rock falls, slides, and runoff erosion.]

CAC Recommendation: Support implementation of Alternative 2, which is already underway.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Support implementation of Alternative 2, and include a policy statement that among the possible improvement projects, the Forest Highway 171 (Skyway improvement from Inskip to Butte Meadows) project should be a top priority.

Issue B: At the Cohasset Community Meeting, participants noted that Cohasset Road is in need of improvements, including roadway widening, to facilitate emergency access and evacuation.

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Alternative 3: Improve Cohasset Road for emergency access and evacuation only.

Alternative 4: Improve Cohasset Road for full access.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

[Public Works Note: The majority of Cohasset Road from Chico to Cobasset is already improved for full access. The portion of Cohasset Road above Cobasset to the County Line is less improved and turns to gravel. The portion north of the County Line is beyond County control and may be a lower priority undertaking for Tehama County to improve for full access or as an emergency escape route.]

Issue C: At the Unincorporated Paradise Area-Wide Workshop, participants noted that alternate routes to facilitate emergency access and evacuation should be developed. General Plan 2030 could include improvements of up to four roadways or sets of roadways, by identifying one alternative from each of the following four pairs:

Doe Mill Road

- ◆ Alternative 5: Improve the Doe Mill Road connection between the Upper Ridge, Forest Ranch and Chico for emergency access and evacuation only.
- ◆ Alternative 6: Improve the Doe Mill Road connection between the Upper Ridge, Forest Ranch and Chico for full access.

Nimshew Road

- ◆ Alternative 7: Improve the Nimshew Road, Centerville Road and Honey Run Road connection between Paradise Pines and Chico for emergency access and evacuation only.
- ◆ Alternative 8: Improve the Nimshew Road, Centerville Road and Honey Run Road connection between Paradise Pines and Chico for full access.

Coutolenc Road

- ◆ Alternative 9: Improve the Coutolenc Road connection between eastern Magalia and the Upper Skyway for emergency access and evacuation only.
- ◆ Alternative 10: Improve the Coutolenc Road connection between eastern Magalia and the Upper Skyway for full access.

Jordan Hill Road

- ◆ Alternative 11: Improve the Jordan Hill Road connection between eastern Magalia and Highway 70 for emergency access and evacuation only.
 - ◆ Alternative 12: Improve the Jordan Hill Road connection between eastern Magalia and Highway 70 for full access.
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Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

[Public Works Note: The majority of all four of the above proposed alternate routes to facilitate emergency access and evacuation are old mountain access roads not currently under County control due in part to the extensive amount of work and expense to improve and maintain them in full access condition. In 1996, the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) commissioned the Skyway Improvement Program Feasibility Study (Heritage Partners and Northstar Engineering, 1996), which evaluated alternate routes and alignment alternatives for providing improved access to the Upper Ridge. The feasibility study acknowledged the need to widen Skyway to four lanes from South Park Drive in Paradise Pines to Pentz Road in the Town of Paradise to provide additional capacity and adequate emergency access off the Upper Ridge and identified the widening of Skyway as the only viable alternative. The findings were consistent with Butte County's General Plan and the Town of Paradise's General Plan, which both currently recognize the need and priority to widen Skyway. The final recommended alternative from the BCAG study is to widen Skyway to four lanes from Wagstaff Road to South Park Drive along the existing alignment. In 1998, the Butte County Board of Supervisors accepted and acted on the 1996 BCAG Feasibility Study recommendation by directing the Department of Public Works to proceed with a project study of possibly design alternatives for widening Skyway to four lanes between Pentz Road and South Park Drive. The County programmed \$500,000 in STIP funding for preliminary engineering, environmental review and documentation, and a project report for widening Skyway between Pentz Road and South Park Drive. In 2001, the Board approved a consultant agreement with Quincy Engineering to undertake the necessary studies. A joint Environmental Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Report (EA/DEIR). At the June 14, 2005 Board meeting the Board of Supervisors certified the EIR, approve; approved Alternative A2/B2 with the Major Fix Design as the proposed project; adopted the Findings of Fact, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring Program Concerning the Environmental Impacts under CEQA (County Reso. No. 05-080). Subsequent to this review, the FHWA adopted a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in regards to the Environmental Assessment (EA) under NEPA. Since then the project has been on hold due to lack of funding.]

Issue D: At the Concow/Yankee Hill/Jarbo Gap Community Meeting, participants identified that Concow Road is in need of improvements to enhance fire protection, public safety and circulation.

Alternative 13: Improve Concow Road and Oak Way for emergency access and evacuation only.

Alternative 14: Improve Concow Road and Oak Way for full access.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

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[Public Works Note: Public Works maintains Concow Road with the lower portion to Mountain Pine Road being surface-treated and the upper portion to Oak Way currently graveled. A lower segment of Jordan Hill Road is currently County maintained and surface-treated, but the upper portion of Jordan Hill Road and all of Oak Way are old mountain access roads not currently under County control due in part to the extensive amount of work and expense to improve and maintain them in full access condition.. None of these roads have been determined eligible for improvement under federal funding programs.]

Issue E: At the Cherokee Community Meeting, participants identified that Cherokee Road is in need of improvements to improve public safety and accommodate a wider range of traffic types.

- ◆ Alternative 15: Improve Cherokee Road for emergency access and evacuation only.
- ◆ Alternative 16: Improve Cherokee Road for full access.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

[Public Works Note: Cherokee Road from Table Mountain Blvd. to State Route 70 is an old foothill access road built in extremely rocky and steep terrain. It is currently maintained full length in accessible condition with minimum width paved and surface-treated segments. Further improvements represent an extremely costly undertaking which would also require further study to determine their feasibility and cost effectiveness.]

Issue F: At the Berry Creek/Brush Creek Community Meeting, participants identified that Bald Rock Road is in need of upgrades due to increases in traffic since the road was first constructed. According to County staff, this road is heavily populated and traveled, but does not meet design standards for a large portion of its length.

- ◆ Alternative 17: Improve Bald Rock Road for emergency access and evacuation only.
- ◆ Alternative 18: Improve Bald Rock Road for full access.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

[Public Works Note: The Bald Rock Road loop is an old mountain access that has a lower portion that was previously rehabilitated and paved, a middle portion that is a surface-treated portion of the old road, and an upper portion that was widened and surface treated within this last decade. It is currently maintained full length by the County in accessible condition with the middle segment still minimum width surface-treated and poorly aligned. Further improvements represent an expensive undertaking which would also require further study to determine alignment and right of way requirements.]

Issue G: At the Feather Falls/Forbestown/Clipper Mills Community Meeting, participants identified that Lumpkin Road, Ponderosa Way and Forbestown Road were all in need of improvements for public safety and circulation.

Alternative 19: Improve Lumpkin Road, Ponderosa Way and Forbestown Road for emergency access and evacuation only.

Alternative 20: Improve Lumpkin Road, Ponderosa Way and Forbestown Road for full access.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Work with federal funding sources to create a funding plan to implement improvements for emergency access, evacuation, fire protection, public safety, water quality protection, circulation and work with community wildlife protection plans to identify and prioritize projects.

[Public Works Note: The portions of Forbestown Road and Lumpkin Road indicated are County maintained minimum width surface treated roadways. Their present alignment reflects that of the original mountain access road. Further improvements represent an expensive undertaking which would also require further study to determine alignment and right of way requirements. Lumpkin may be eligible for possible federal funding someday if it retains a forest highway designation. Ponderosa Way is an older mountain access road that the forest service abandoned maintenance of many years ago. It is not a County maintained roadway and would require an extensive amount of work and expense to bring it to full access condition.]

Issue H: At the Lake Oroville Area-Wide Workshop, participants were concerned about congestion and safety along Highway 162 in the foothills east of Oroville.

Alternative 21: Improve Highway 162 between the Oroville city limits and Miners Ranch Road.

Alternative 22: Improve the Highway 162 intersections with the Oroville Quincy Highway and Miners Ranch Road.

Alternative 23: Develop an alternate route, including road improvements to Ophir Road, Lower Wyandotte Road and Miners Ranch Road.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Support all alternatives.

[Public Works Note: Highway 162 is a Caltrans maintained State Highway and lies entirely within their jurisdiction. Caltrans has performed conceptual designs and corridor studies that indicate future four lane improvements of Highway 162 eastward to Miners Ranch Road. The timetable for this is dependent upon Caltrans' highway improvement funding program. The same is true for improvements at the intersection of Highway 162, Oakvale Avenue, and the Oro-Quincy Highway east of the Oroville City Limits.]

Issue I: At the Biggs and Gridley Area-Wide Workshop, participants were concerned about congestion and safety issues along Highway 99.

Alternative 24: Widen Highway 99 through the Gridley area. This improvement would expand upon the current plans by Caltrans and the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) to establish passing lanes on Highway 99 in the Gridley area, as indicated in the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan.

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◆ Alternative 25: Construct a new road to bypass the slower traffic in Gridley. Caltrans has acquired land for a right-of-way for a Highway 99 bypass, but is not currently pursuing this project.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Defer decision until the City of Gridley addresses this through their General Plan Update.

Issue J: The Town of Paradise has identified a need for a northern connection between Neal Road and the Skyway to relieve traffic within the town limits.

◆ Alternative 26: Improve Indian Springs Road, located southwest of Paradise, and extend the road to connect to the Skyway.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Defer decision to Town of Paradise.

Issue K: The City of Chico has identified a need to connect the Skyway to Highway 99.

◆ Alternative 27: Connect the Skyway and Highway 99 southeast of Chico via the proposed Southgate interchange.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Defer decision to City of Chico.

[Public Works Note: In 2000, BCAG conducted the State Route 99/Southgate Avenue Interchange and Circulation Study (Febr & Peers Associates) to identify a preferred interchange design and to analyze alternative connections to the local circulation system and Skyway. On January 25, 2000, the County Board of Supervisors accepted this study and directed Development Services and the Public Works Department to begin the process for inclusion of the recommended alignments in the Circulation Element of the County's General Plan.]

Issue L: Congestion and safety issues along Highway 70, Palermo Honcut Highway and associated side roads have been identified.

◆ Alternative 28: Improve Dunstone Drive, La Porte Road and Lower Honcut Road for full access. This route is currently not viable as a regional access because it is unpaved; however, according to County staff, it has ample width, right-of-way and alignment to accommodate a paved roadway built to County standards.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: This should be considered as a longer-term project.

Issue M: During Meeting Series #1, participants identified a need for a better east-west connection to Interstate 5 than currently exists.

◆ Alternative 29: Improve Highway 162 west of the Thermalito Afterbay and Colusa Highway/East Gridley Road.

Planning Commission and CAC Recommendation: Follow policy recommendation made in response to Question 24: “Work with other agencies to improve access for the movement of goods and services to Interstate 5.”

Bicycle Improvements

The attached Bicycle Improvements map shows existing bicycle facilities in Butte County, as well as planned facilities under the proposed County Bikeway Master Plan for the Unincorporated Areas which is currently under review and facilities suggested by the public and County staff during the Butte County General Plan 2030 process to date. The original Countywide Bikeway Master Plan was developed by BCAG in 1998 to serve as a regional planning tool that included County and local agency master plans. Because all the local jurisdictions now maintain their own Bikeway Master Plans, the Butte County Department of Public Works has begun developing a revised Bikeway Master Plan for the Unincorporated Areas to address Bikeways within its own jurisdiction and connectivity to the planned bikeways of the local jurisdictions, State facilities, and local park and recreation districts. A draft copy of this plan was submitted to the CAC on October 16, 2008.

The CAC and Planning Commission have recommended that the General Plan support the County's master bicycle planning effort that is currently underway, as presented to the CAC on October 16.