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County makes a plan

Butte County makes history by adopting first complete general plan

Butte County employees were high-fiving and clapping Tuesday afternoon in the supervisors' chambers, following the board's historic vote to approve the county's new General Plan 2030. More than four years in the making, the 408-page plan and an even larger environmental-impact report constitute the only complete general plan in county history, and celebration was in order.

It's a remarkable document, a complex and sophisticated study that analyzes the county from every important angle—housing, recreation, circulation, land use, economy, water, agriculture and so on—and develops a vision of how it will grow sustainably over the next 20 years.

It is also noteworthy for the amount of public involvement that went into it. Development Services Director Tim Snellings and his crew held meetings in every nook and cranny of the county, and a 34-member Citizens Advisory Committee met frequently and provided oversight and recommendations. Both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors held public hearings and spent days listening to people's comments and going over every detail.

The plan's not perfect; no plan is. The board wisely has directed staff to include a provision for correcting mistakes and omissions in its action plan, which outlines the next phase in the process: implementation. As Snellings put it, "This closes the chapter on charting the course; now we travel the course."

For the time being, though, they deserve a rest—and congratulations on a job well done.