



## **Butte County General Plan Update 2040 Community Workshop #1**

Online and In-Person Workshop  
Tuesday, June 29, 2021

At this special meeting held on June 29, 2021, Butte County hosted Workshop #1 for the Butte County General Plan Update 2040. The hybrid workshop was hosted through the online conferencing platform Zoom and in-person at the County's Board of Supervisor Chambers. There were 38 attendees for the online option, and 19 people who attended in person. The workshop was designed to introduce community members to the project and gather initial input that will inform updated policies and actions in the General Plan. For a recording of the meeting and more information about the project, visit <https://www.buttecounty.net/dds/generalplanupdate>.

The County's Director of Development Services, Paula Daneluk, began by acknowledging the recent disasters within the county and emphasized the importance of achieving a more resilient future for all residents. Resilience is defined here as the ability of communities to withstand, recover, and learn from past disasters to strengthen future response and recovery efforts. Ms. Daneluk also acknowledged the traditional Native inhabitants of Butte County at the outset of the meeting.

County staff and consultants presented an overview of the Butte County General Plan Update 2040, including information about the Update's focus on community safety and resilience, housing, and environmental justice. Following the presentation, County staff and consultants held an open-ended question and answer session before breaking into small group discussions. At the end of the meeting, a spokesperson from each small group reported back to the full meeting group to share highlights of each discussion.

### **Small Group Discussion Summary**

Online participants were moved into five virtual "breakout rooms" and in-person participants gathered in two small groups. Each group discussed four questions regarding hazards and community resilience, housing, and environmental justice. Meeting participants were encouraged to collaborate and discuss their perspectives and emerging ideas in response to the specific questions. In online groups, note-takers captured comments in a shared Google Doc visible on the screen, while in-person facilitators took notes on flip-chart paper.

The four questions are presented below, followed by a bulleted list of community responses.

### ***What would Butte County look like in 2040 to achieve resilient, equitable, and healthy communities?***

- Community safety
  - Address ingress and egress accessibility issues in high fire risk areas.
  - Acknowledge there will continue to be a high fire threat for the foreseeable future.
  - Encourage the use of fire-resistant building materials for new construction.



- Engage neighborhoods located within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) in fire safe programs.
- Increase the community's involvement and participation with controlled burns.
- **Economy**
  - Promote tourism in the unincorporated area of the county.
  - Help attract private investment to enhance outdoor recreation, including parks, playgrounds, and sport fields.
  - Support businesses that create quality long-term jobs for young people.
- **Natural and cultural resources**
  - Recognize the important role that natural and cultural resources play in the quality of life in Butte County.
  - Draw and replenish the county's resources locally.
  - Preserve the tree canopy.
  - Reduce air pollution.
  - Provide opportunities for domestic crop cultivation within the county.
  - Build relationships with Indigenous communities.
  - Appoint an ombudsman to represent Indigenous interests.
- **Water use and quality**
  - Protect surface waters and groundwater aquifers from overuse and pollution.
  - Plan for continued drought with policies to promote drought resistance.
  - Preserve Big Chico Creek and Little Chico Creek.
  - Promote grey water reuse.
- **Health**
  - Improve walkability access to grocery stores and farmer markets.
  - Protect and enhance small and hobby farms, community gardens, and edible landscaping.
  - Increase the number of recreational activity facilities in the county.
  - Provide more open space areas that are accessible to people of all abilities.
  - Support physical activities that are focused on children to help them thrive.
  - Institute policies that help lower obesity and suicide rates.
  - Promote policies that encourage "blue zone" projects which are designed to improve the wellbeing of the community and create a healthier place to live, work, and play.
  - Provide music, art spaces, and trauma counselors to help people affected by the fires.
  - Address second and third hand smoke, especially within multifamily housing.
- **Housing**
  - Provide a range of housing types and affordability in the county.
  - Build new housing, especially affordable housing, in a sustainable way.
  - Explore alternative housing types that have a lower cost, such as tiny homes.
  - Promote flexible zoning and lower the permitting costs for new housing.
  - Remove impediments to housing production, including the use of CEQA to prevent housing projects from moving forward.
  - Locate housing near efficient public transportation.
  - Provide housing opportunities for the homeless community.
  - Consider how long it will take for Paradise to rebuild homes after the recent fires.
  - Instead of funding housing in communities that were not affected by fires, use funding to repair and restore the communities that were impacted.



- Land use, transportation, and infrastructure
  - Avoid building homes in fire-prone areas.
  - Provide incentives that encourage developers to build in areas with lower fire risks.
  - Develop commercial nodes along the Sacramento River and provide trails to access this area.
  - Locate housing near job opportunities to lower the cost of transportation.
  - Promote energy microgrids to allow more local control of energy resources.
  - Address infrastructure needs in the county and improve roads.
  - Create a seamless transportation network that allows for efficient travel within the county.
  - Evaluate how travel patterns have changed and develop strategies to reduce traffic.
  - Develop multi-purpose roads that can handle different modes of transportation including vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and horses.
  - Improve trail systems, sidewalks, and bicycle routes.
  - Provide better public transit connections between the unincorporated and incorporated routes.
  - Provide smaller buses on routes with low passenger demand.
  - Promote electric vehicle usage and install charging stations.
  - Ensure General Plan policies are feasible.

***What are the most pressing issues related to hazards and community resilience in your community? Are there additional issues you're aware of in the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?***

- Fire hazards
  - Encourage plantings of native and fire-resistant plants. Promote tree replanting to provide shade in previously burned areas.
  - Enforce defensible space regulations and vegetation management plans. Require absentee landowners to safely manage vegetation, and maintain vegetation on roadways to be fire safe.
  - Consider the high cost associated with keeping land fire safe and free of fuels, especially within the Upper Ridge communities. Consider clustered development to reduce fire risks (as opposed to dispersed development).
  - Require that new construction meets WUI standards.
- Flood hazards
  - Address localized flood risks, including along Honcut Creek.
  - Ensure the needed Oroville Dam improvements are completed.
- Extreme heat hazards
  - Provide cooling centers to help combat heat. Enhance communication and coordination between the County and cities to provide more cooling centers.
- Emergency notification and access
  - Construct emergency travel routes that provide efficient exits from disasters.
  - Consider 'small islands' like Thermalito to ensure they have emergency exit plans and routes in place during an emergency.
  - Establish an effective emergency notification system. Provide well placed loud sirens to gain the attention of people in the event of an emergency.



- Overall community resilience
  - Address the food deserts that exist in the rural areas of the county. Provide countywide food access and improve the food distribution process.
  - Invest in County employees and the community by providing training programs that are designed to help community members in crisis.
  - Improve access to childcare and mental health care services.
  - Promote “blue zone” policies to improve the health of the community.
  - Address the high cost of energy from Pacific Gas & Electric.
  - Decrease the permitting fees and ease the regulations for solar, wind and other alternative energy systems.
  - Increase agricultural resilience through use of surface water.
  - Protect agricultural land from development.
  - Ensure new development doesn’t create new or worsen existing hazards.
  - Encourage public engagement throughout the county’s processes.
- Economic resilience
  - Provide a balance of jobs to housing throughout the county.
  - Address the loss of jobs and companies within the county.
  - Offer training and educational opportunities to support upward mobility.
  - . Create a business-friendly environment and promote private investment opportunities in unincorporated parts of the county.
- Housing resiliency
  - Address the loss in housing units from the recent fires.
  - Increase the workforce that can support housing construction.
  - Shift the burden of the housing shortage away from the low-income populations.
  - Incorporate open space areas into all housing projects, especially in multi-family housing.
- Water resources resiliency
  - Conduct a survey and measure how much water is used by different types of users to understand where water waste may be occurring and inform policy direction on water usage.
  - Consider the high amount of water used by agriculture, and especially walnut orchards. Encourage row crops instead of orchards.
  - Set regulations on groundwater usage for property owners and agriculture uses.
  - Improve the infrastructure available for water storage.

***What are the most pressing issues related to housing in your community? Are there additional issues you’re aware of in the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?***

- Affordability
  - Adjust how affordability is defined. When based on area medium income, what is considered affordable is higher than what is truly affordable for local residents.
  - Address the lack of affordable rental units in the county.
  - Ban affordability covenants that restrict affordable housing units to a specific time period to ensure affordable housing units are not converted to market rate units in the future.
  - Promote good- paying jobs so that county residents can afford housing.
  - Address the displacement of fixed-income populations. Property management firms catering to university populations.



- Support Upper Ridge residents who moved there because it was affordable, and who are now unhoused.
- Provide accessible housing for homeless people and people with disabilities.
- Housing types
  - Provide more diversity in the types of housing types available in the county.
  - Provide affordable housing options that are larger in size such as duplexes to support county residents who need larger housing types.
- Housing production
  - Address the recent decline in housing production within the county.
  - Address issues related to the limited workforce that is available to build new housing and the soaring cost of materials to build new housing.
  - Address the loss in housing units from the recent fires and reduce the cost to rebuild.
  - Promote sustainable and net-zero carbon housing construction.
  - Streamline the development review process to encourage housing production, including by limiting the ability for people to use
    - CEQA as a tool to stop development projects from moving forward.
    - Streamline the process to encourage tiny homes and accessory dwelling units.
    - Expedite the tentative map process in areas designated for housing.
- Infrastructure and services
  - Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and services are in place for new housing projects.
  - Promote public-private partnerships to help address the need for infrastructure funding, especially within the Upper Ridge area.
  - Restore essential community services for homes that are rebuilt in Berry Creek.
- Development patterns
  - Encourage infill development and allow denser housing to be built in the county.
  - Concern with converting agricultural land for a residential use.
  - There is pressure from people that are moving from urban to rural areas.
  - Discourage growth and sprawling development patterns in the county.
  - Available housing stock is being used for short-term rentals which limits housing opportunities.

***What are the key environmental justice and/or health issues in your community? Are there additional issues you're aware of in the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?***

- Pollution exposure
  - Address pollution in Chapmantown from the nearby recycling center.
  - Consider impacts from illegal cannabis grows in the county.
- Public facilities and services
  - Improve services in disadvantaged communities.
  - Provide clean water and encourage gray water systems.
  - Provide convenient and affordable garbage disposal service.
  - Promote microgrids that connect homes and other buildings to a central power source that can be used to provide power during an outage and as a power source for rural and unhoused populations.
  - Improve broadband telecommunication networks, especially for school children.



- Food access
  - Address food insecurity within the county.
  - Improve access to healthy foods, especially for children, transient workers, and agricultural workers.
  - Use community gardens as a tool to enhance local food supply.
- Community health
  - Address the lack of health care providers within the county, especially for new patients using the Affordable Care Act.
  - Promote the development of a hospital to serve Paradise e.
  - Improve access to mental health services, especially related to the recent fires. Trauma faced by people impacted by the Camp and North Complex Fires is a major issue in the county.
- Physical activity
  - Consider preventative health policy measures and provide the recreational amenities needed for people to be physically active and play.
  - Provide affordable and accessible recreational opportunities that are well organized.
  - Use Explore Butte County to increase awareness of recreational opportunities.
  - Provide space for outdoor recreational activities for both county residents and tourists.
  - Improve access for people with disabilities to natural and recreational amenities.
  - Address the specific recreational needs of seniors (e.g., a pool).
  - Prioritize development of bicycle and hiking trails (e.g., the trail between Magalia and Paradise).
  - Promote sustainable public transportation that supports active transportation.
- Climate hazards
  - Address extreme heat and drought in the most vulnerable areas of the county. For example, the Chapmantown area experienced a power shut-off during 110+ degree heat.
  - Enhance accessibility to programs that can help during a power shut-off. Seniors need access to programs that help them purchase generators and other essential items.
  - Ensure clean-up efforts after major disasters support environmental health.
- Economy
  - Develop job centers that provide high paying jobs and ensure there are jobs that provide a living wage available for young people.
  - Protect small businesses and small agriculture enterprises.
  - Promote a jobs-housing balance and encourage mixed use or live work units where people can work and live.
  - Provide support for farmworkers and agriculture businesses.
  - Promote green jobs within the agriculture and forestry industry.
- Community engagement
  - Continue outreach to Hmong, Native American, and Latinx populations.
  - Engage young people in long-range planning processes.
  - Provide resources and materials to non-English speakers during an emergency.