



GLENN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE



OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS REPORT

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De Novo Planning Group

A Land Use Planning, Design, and Environmental Firm



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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

State law requires every city and county in California to prepare and maintain a planning document called a general plan. A general plan is a “constitution” or “blueprint” for the future physical development of a city or county. As part of the General Plan Update process, the Existing Conditions Report establishes a baseline of existing conditions in the County. This Opportunities and Constraints Report identifies the challenges facing the community and provides an opportunity for citizens and policymakers to come together in a process of developing a common vision for the future.

In March of 2019, Glenn County began a multi-year process to update the County’s General Plan, which was last comprehensively updated over 25 years ago. The General Plan is the overarching policy document that guides land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, community design, and other policy decisions throughout the unincorporated areas of Glenn County.

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the key component documents that are the building blocks of the Glenn County General Plan Update.

GENERAL PLAN POLICY DOCUMENT

The Policy Document is the essence of the General Plan. The General Plan must address at least seven issue categories or elements, to the extent that they are relevant locally: land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, noise, and safety. The County may also address other topics of community interest in the General Plan, such as economic development, agricultural resource preservation, resiliency, and/or environmental justice. The General Plan sets out the goals, policies, and action programs in each of these areas and serves as a policy guide for how the County will make key planning decisions in the future. It also identifies how the County will interact with the Cities of Willows and Orland, and other local, regional, State, and Federal agencies, and surrounding counties.

The Policy Document contains the goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the County. It also identifies action programs that will ensure the goals and policies in the General Plan are carried out. As part of the General Plan Update, the County and the consultant team will prepare several supporting documents that will serve as the building blocks for the Policy Document and analyze the environmental impacts associated with implementing the General Plan. A description of these reports is as follows:

Existing Conditions Report

To prepare a meaningful General Plan, existing conditions must be understood and documented. The Existing Conditions Report takes a “snapshot” of Glenn County’s current (2019) trends and conditions and identifies development patterns, natural resources, socioeconomic conditions, and environmental constraints in the County, and also identifies the regulatory environment for each topic. This report is a resource for the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), County staff, and the De Novo Planning Group team for the General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Existing Conditions Report makes extensive use of maps and graphics to help make it accessible to the general public. The Existing Conditions Report provides background data and serves as a technical framework, while the General Plan will focus on goals, policies, and action programs.

Opportunities and Constraints Report

Based on public input from community visioning workshops, information contained in the Existing Conditions Report, stakeholder interviews, and direction from County staff, this report identifies

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key issues and opportunities to be addressed in the General Plan and summarizes input provided by participants of the visioning workshops. This Opportunities and Constraints Report provides the GPAC, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors with tools and information for the development of the General Plan Policy Document and associated Land Use and Circulation Maps.

Land Use Alternatives Report

This report will present three different Land Use Map alternatives. An analysis of the land use, circulation, fiscal sustainability, economic development, and public services and infrastructure effects relative to each alternative will be provided. The report will be accompanied by a detailed fiscal analysis that will address long-range fiscal impacts in terms of the cost to provide services to projected land uses and growth versus the revenues generated under each alternative.

Environmental Impact Report

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) responds to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as set forth in Sections 15126, 15175, and 15176 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will use the EIR during the General Plan Update process in order to understand the potential environmental implications associated with implementing the General Plan. The EIR will be prepared concurrently with the Policy Document in order to facilitate the development of a General Plan that is largely self-mitigating. In other words, as environmental impacts associated with the new General Plan Land Use Map and Policy Document are identified, goals, policies, and action programs may be incorporated into the Policy Document in order to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS REPORT

The Opportunities and Constraints Report provides a means of focusing the community's attention on key issues and opportunities that have major policy implications as Glenn County considers how to accommodate growth over the next 20-30 years, while balancing the County's economic development and natural resource needs. The Opportunities and Constraints Report summarizes and proactively utilizes information derived from the community visioning workshops, stakeholder interviews, Existing Conditions Report, County staff observations, and input provided by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

This Opportunities and Constraints Report includes a summary of the input received from participants of the three visioning workshops held at the outset of the General Plan Update process. Workshop attendees participated in a range of activities and exercises to gather information on community priorities, values, and focus areas for the General Plan Update. A narrative summary of the results of these activities is provided in Chapter 2.0 of this report. Appendix A of this report includes tabulations of all of the comments received during the workshops. Visioning workshop participants also provided input on the County's Land Use and Circulation Maps. A summary of the mapping input received during the visioning workshops will be provided in the Land Use Alternatives Report.

The County anticipates that the Opportunities and Constraints Report will stimulate discussion and lead to confirmation and selection of courses of action to be reflected in the preferred Land Use Map and Policy Document, which will be prepared in collaboration with the General Plan Advisory Committee.

The report purposely does not reach conclusions or suggest the manner in which the County should proceed in the development of the General Plan. Rather, it provides a forum to facilitate discussion on important issues.

1.2 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

This report is divided into four chapters: Introduction, Vision and Guiding Principles, Constraints, and Issues and Opportunities.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Introduction chapter describes the key steps and building block documents included in the General Plan Update process, summarizes the purpose of this report, identifies how the Opportunities and Constraints were identified, and describes the key next steps in the General Plan Update process.

CHAPTER 2: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Vision and Guiding Principles chapter includes a summary of the public outreach and participation program that was carried out during the initial stages of the General Plan Update. This chapter provides a summary of the input that was received from the public during the three visioning workshops and an online survey, which will assist the County in identifying key community values and priorities that must be addressed during the General Plan Update.

CHAPTER 3: CONSTRAINTS

The Constraints chapter summarizes constraints related to safety, natural resources, and infrastructure.

CHAPTER 4: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The updated Glenn County General Plan will address a variety of issues. Many of these issues are defined by State law, while others reflect purely local concerns. Typically, in general plan update programs, the plan revolves around and is shaped by a handful of key issues or concerns. They most often concern growth, land use, economic development, transportation, or natural resource protection.

This report discusses issues and opportunities for five key topic areas. These topic areas are not intended to match the Existing Conditions Report chapters or the proposed Policy Document elements, but instead are based on the key points of discussion and areas of concern raised in the community visioning workshops. The topic areas are as follows:

- Sense of Community
- Quality of Life
- Successful Centers
- Economic Advancement
- Conservation and Recreation

Each topic area section begins with a brief description of background information and a summary of the issues identified by participants at the community visioning workshops. Each topic area section is then broken down into subsections that discuss specific issues and opportunities. Each issue and opportunity discussion concludes with a list of questions that frame the key policy considerations and choices. The key

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policy questions will be used to develop and evaluate General Plan alternatives and General Plan goals, policies, and action programs.

1.3 HOW KEY ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED

The issues and opportunities described in this report were compiled from a wide range of sources, including public input at the community visioning workshops that were conducted during the initial phases of the General Plan Update process, an online survey, County staff observations and input, key findings from the Existing Conditions Report, and input from members of the GPAC.

All of the issues and opportunities described in this report meet the following criteria: they can be influenced by the General Plan; they are subject to the legal authority of the County; the General Plan is an appropriate forum for addressing the issue; and they can be addressed as a policy issue. This report does not reach conclusions or decide the manner in which the County should proceed in the development of the General Plan. Rather, it provides a framework for future discussion of issues that are of key importance, and identifies opportunities that could help shape future growth.

The major information sources used to compile this report are summarized below:

PUBLIC INPUT AT THE COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOPS

In May and June 2019, the General Plan Update team held three public visioning workshops to help kick-off the General Plan Update process. County residents and stakeholders attended workshops at the City of Willows City Chambers, Hamilton High School Library, and the County Office of Education. The workshops provided an opportunity for the public to offer their thoughts on what they value about their community and the County, and what important issues should be addressed in updating the General Plan.

Each workshop included a presentation by the consultant team that explained the role of the General Plan, an overview of the General Plan Update process, and an opportunity for the workshop participants to ask questions and seek clarification on the process and the role of the community. Workshop participants completed activities and exercises that provide information to the General Plan Update team. Attendees were asked what they think are Glenn County's biggest assets and challenges, along with their vision for the future of Glenn County, and participated in a mapping activity to highlight areas that need special focused attention as part of the General Plan Update. A summary of the three visioning workshops is provided in Chapter 2.0 of this report.



ONLINE SURVEY

County staff and the consultant team developed an online survey to gather additional information from the public related to the General Plan Update. The survey was administered online via the General Plan Update website and the SurveyMonkey web platform and responses were collected from April 11, 2019 through August 31, 2019. The survey was developed to pose similar questions to those posed at the visioning workshops, and to gather additional details regarding County service levels, residential homeownership, employment locations, and economic development priorities. The survey included 19 specific questions, and received 227 responses primarily from demographics consisting of young families, homeowners, and older generations. Detailed survey results and responses are contained in the Outreach Summary Report, which is available on the project website (www.glenncounty.generalplan.org).

COUNTY STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND INPUT

County planning staff has provided the General Plan Update consultant team with an overview and summary of opportunities and constraints in Glenn County since the beginning of the update program. This input is based on County staff experience and observations through day-to-day work implementing the existing General Plan, discussions with the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission, and through the identification of key issues not addressed by current policy.

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

The Existing Conditions Report is one of several key supporting documents for this report and for the General Plan Update as a whole. The Existing Conditions Report provides information on a wide range of topics, including demographics and economics, fiscal conditions, land use, community health, housing, transportation, public facilities and utilities, natural resources, recreational and cultural resources, safety, and noise. The Existing Conditions Report does not contain policies; it is solely intended to provide a foundation or factual context for policy decisions. The Existing Conditions Report findings helped to identify key issues in the various aforementioned topical areas.

GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) consists of members from the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and the community at-large. The GPAC will coordinate with County staff and the General Plan Update consultant team throughout the development of the Policy Document. At the first meeting of the GPAC, members were asked to identify key issues and challenges that the County faces over the next 20-30 years, and which should be addressed in the General Plan Update. A summary of the input received from the GPAC is provided in Chapter 2.0.

1.4 NEXT STEPS IN THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

The General Plan Update team, in coordination with the General Plan Advisory Committee, will develop the goals, policies, and action programs for the General Plan Update Policy Document. The GPAC will meet approximately nine times during the General Plan Update. This series of meetings with the GPAC will address each of the elements, or broad topics, that will be included in the General Plan Update.

This Opportunities and Constraints Report will provide the GPAC with a summary of issues and opportunities that have been identified, as well as an overview of public comment received during the visioning process. It is anticipated that additional issues and opportunities will be identified throughout the GPAC meetings and that additional topics not raised in this report will be addressed in the General Plan Update. After the General Plan Update Policy Document and Land Use Alternatives have been reviewed by the GPAC, the Planning Commission will provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors with respect to goal and policy direction and the preferred Land Use Map.

The General Plan Update team will begin work on the EIR concurrent with the development of the Policy Document.

Updates on the status of the General Plan Update will be posted to the General Plan Update website periodically: www.GlennCounty.GeneralPlan.org

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2.0 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In May and June 2019, the General Plan Update team held three public visioning workshops to help kick-off the General Plan Update process. County residents and stakeholders attended workshops at the City of Willows City Chambers, Hamilton High School Library, and the County Office of Education. The workshops provided an opportunity for the public to offer their thoughts on what they value about their community and the County, and what important issues should be addressed in updating the General Plan.

The feedback provided by the community at the three visioning workshops and by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) provides the County with a broad overarching vision for the development of the General Plan Update, and identifies key community values and priorities that should be carefully addressed in the General Plan. The core guiding principles identified for the General Plan Update are:

- *Foster a strong sense of community that celebrates the County's unique identity, agricultural heritage, and rural way of life*
- *Provide a high standard of living for citizens through local programs, high quality services, public safety, local amenities, and educational opportunities that are accessible to all residents*
- *Improve the County's ability to be fiscally sustainable and proactively supportive of local businesses through the expansion of commercial activities, retention of existing successful commercial businesses, and redevelopment of underperforming commercial centers*
- *Support and encourage the expansion of a variety of businesses that provide high quality employment and opportunities for economic advancement and resiliency, while enhancing the County's reputation as a prime location for business growth*
- *Be an active steward of the County's vast natural resources in order to ensure that present and future generations have access to these resources for economic and recreational benefit*

The intent of the visioning workshops was to begin a dialogue with the community regarding its priorities for the next 20 years. Following a brief presentation and Q&A period on the General Plan Update, the consultant team conducted three activities to help facilitate this conversation. The following is a summary of the components of the workshops and the results of the community input that was received.

2.1 Activity #1: Opportunities, Challenges, and Assets

The first activity was an individual exercise. Participants were provided stacks of blank Post-It-Notes and asked to write down what they think are Glenn County's biggest assets and challenges, along with their vision for the future of Glenn County.

1. Vision

- What ideas do you have for the future of Glenn County?
- What would make your community better?



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- What three things would you like to see accomplished by 2040?

2. Assets

- What do you value most about Glenn County?
- What makes this a special place to live or work?

3. Challenges

- What issues are facing the County that need to be addressed in the General Plan?

The most common responses to these questions are listed below (in no particular order).

Vision

- Expanded, diversification of jobs
- Safe community
- Agricultural community
- Improved quality of life
- Better transportation routes
- Improved schools
- Public safety
- Improved broadband infrastructure
- Improved recreational opportunities
- Performance and entertainment venues
- Well-planned growth
- Small business support
- Develop downtown

Assets

- Small town feel
- Agriculture community
- Sense of community
- Proximity to I-5
- Low traffic
- Good public services
- Good schools
- Good public safety
- Proximity to nature

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- Natural resources
- Clean air
- Historic buildings
- Water resources
- Potential for growth

Challenges

- Population growth
- Lack of demographic diversity
- Lack of employment opportunities
- County vs. city interest
- Attracting new residents
- Poor circulation
- Roadways/truck routes
- Lack of water, irrigation
- Flood protection
- Strained infrastructure
- Funding
- Public safety
- Lack of recreational opportunities
- Lack of housing
- Lack of tax base
- Expanding into Sphere of Influence

2.2 Activity #2: Vision Statement



The second activity addressed the need to craft a long-term Vision Statement. The Vision Statement is a description of what Glenn County wants to become through the implementation of the General Plan. It provides a sense of purpose and mission for the General Plan, and sets the tone for the Plan's guiding principles to aid in the development of goals, policies, and actions that will guide development in the coming years. Participants were asked to draft a Vision Statement that best represents what they want their community to be.

Working in groups of 3-6, the following four vision statements were developed:

1. Glenn County has managed to maintain its small town feel while offering numerous activities to attract big city populations. Glenn County offers lakes, state parks and recreational benefits,

2.0: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

camping, water and snow skiing, fishing + hiking. In addition, we have a world-class race track and venues, as well as existing and developing manufacturing. This is a large farming community with Ag based activities such as 4-H, FFA, and a County Fair.

2. Glenn County is a welcoming community made up of residents who share a common goal of growth while maintaining a small community feel. It is comprised of small ranchettes, with larger ranches, light industrial and residential fit for all income types. Its two main cities are vibrant and flush with the services the county residents need. It honors the past, preserves nature and is an inviting and secure place to live. It offers employment, housing, education, recreation and proximity and access to all of California.
3. A vibrant place to live a healthy life.
4. A diverse economic environment with businesses that fit within the community meeting community needs. Support tourism for taxes to support growth. Good strong workforce for the community to prosper and to be fiscally sound. Maintain a strong agricultural county and development of recreational activity to bring in tourists.

2.3 Activity #3: Community Mapping Activity

The third activity of the Visioning Workshops asked participants to review large-scale maps of the County and developed communities, and highlight areas that need special focused attention as part of the General Plan Update, including areas that should be preserved and protected, and areas where land use change should be considered. The mapping activities will be summarized in the Land Use Alternatives Report.

Mapping Results (Common Themes):

- Opportunities for additional public facilities and park around Stony Gorge and Black Butte
- Opportunities for parks open space around Willows, Orland, Artois and Hamilton City
- Opportunities for commercial/office development near Willows, Orland and Artois, close to I-5
- Opportunities for commercial and open space along Hwy 32
- Opportunities for higher density residential, additional public facilities/parks, and open space near Hamilton City
- Opportunities for commercial, higher density residential and open space along CR 99, near Orland



2.4 General Plan Advisory Committee Priorities

At the first meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee, members were asked to identify why they chose to serve on the GPAC, and what they saw as the key issues and challenges facing the County over the next 20-30 years. A summary of the key issues to address in the General Plan Update, as identified by the GPAC, is provided below.

Vision

- Thriving businesses
- Expanded, diversification of jobs
- Well-planned growth
- Steady, smart population and housing growth
- More housing options; affordable housing
- Industrial park areas further developed
- Safe neighborhoods and roads
- Agricultural community
- Maintain small town feel, but offer enough to keep people in Glenn County
- Improved services, especially first responders (i.e. police, fire, EMS)
- Improved tourism – Glenn County could be destination for recreation and agriculture education
- “Green” communities within Glenn County
- Develop a Climate Action Plan
- Better community safety plan
- Greater collaboration between cities and County
- More community events
- Improved broadband infrastructure

Assets

- Great place to live with rural focus
- Small town feel
- Quiet, beautiful place to live
- Open space
- Safe community
- Agriculture community
- Sense of community
- Community involvement
- Affordable housing and land
- Proximity to I-5
- Low traffic; not overly congested
- Natural resources – mountains, waterways, lakes
- Strong County government

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- Historic resources

Challenges

- Need for economic development
- Short on retail choices; limited shopping
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of housing options
- How to attract new residents and compete against Chico without becoming a bedroom community to Chico
- Some locals do not want to see the County grow
- Roadways/traffic, especially within cities
- Maintenance of roadways and other infrastructure
- Need for better health services
- How to keep retired residents in the community
- Deteriorating buildings; need for better maintenance
- Potential for wildfire
- Protecting agricultural lands and commodities
- Lack of high-speed Internet
- Strained

3.0 CONSTRAINTS

This chapter summarizes various constraints related to the General Plan Update, including safety, resources, and infrastructure.

WHAT ARE CONSTRAINTS?

In the context of this report, a constraint either impedes or limits the potential for development. A constraint can be specific to a particular site or area, or can be a general condition that affects the type or amount of growth on a larger scale. Constraints are grouped into three categories: resource, safety, and infrastructure.

Resource Constraints. Resource constraints affect areas where significant natural or other resources are present. These include important farmlands, sensitive habitats, special-status species locations, and areas sensitive for cultural resources. Lands with resource constraints often have value in that they may provide habitat for endangered species, offer access to open spaces and views, or preserve historic resources.

Safety Constraints. These include areas where major safety risks such as flooding, wildfire, faults, and unstable soils are present. Safety constraints are among the most easily identifiable limitations to development. Federal, State, and local regulations often address safety constraints that could pose a threat to the safety and well-being of residents.

Infrastructure Constraints. Infrastructure constraints include, but are not limited to, roadway capacity, water supply, and wastewater treatment capacity.

The presence of a constraint does not mean that a parcel or area is absolutely undevelopable, but does mean that special consideration is necessary to determine the extent of development that may occur, address significant resources, and mitigate significant hazards. Based on local issues and concerns, General Plan policies provide consideration of how to address constraints in determining where development is preferred or allowed.

SECTION 3.0: CONSTRAINTS

3.1 RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

The following discussion addresses constraints related to farmland, biological resources, open space and conservation resources, and cultural and historic resources.

Farmland. Much of the undeveloped land within Glenn County is agricultural. For the purposes of this report, constrained agricultural lands include: lands designated as important farmlands by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, lands with Williamson Act contracts, and lands with agricultural easements. See [Figure 3-1](#) for the location of farmland constraints.

- *Important farmlands* include prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance, as designated by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. These farmlands are considered important due to the high soil quality, agricultural production potential, and economic value.
- *Williamson Act* contracts exist on parcels where the property owner has committed to not developing urban uses on agricultural land for a minimum of ten years. The property owner benefits from reduced property tax assessment.
- *Agricultural easements* generally reflect a permanent commitment of the parcel for agricultural use.

Sensitive Natural Communities. A sensitive natural community is a biological community that is regionally rare, provides important habitat opportunities for wildlife, is structurally complex, or is in other ways of special concern to local, State, or Federal agencies. Sensitive natural communities in the Glenn County area include fresh emergent wetland, valley foothill riparian, and riverine communities. Natural communities in the Glenn County area are described in detail in Chapter 5 of the Existing Conditions Report. See [Figure 3-1](#) for the location of sensitive natural communities.

Special-Status Species. Special-status species are those plants and animals that, because of their recognized rarity or vulnerability to various causes of habitat loss or population decline, are recognized by Federal, State, or other agencies. Some of these species receive specific protection that is defined by Federal or State endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as "sensitive" on the basis of adopted policies and expertise of State resource agencies or organizations with acknowledged expertise, or policies adopted by local governmental agencies such as counties, cities, and special districts to meet local conservation objectives. These species are referred to collectively as "special-status species" in this report. Special-status species with the potential to occur in the Glenn County area are described in detail in Chapter 5 of the Existing Conditions Report.

Conservation Easements. Conservation easements protect the availability of resources, such as open space and habitat for special-status species, in perpetuity. Urban development is typically prohibited in these areas. See [Figure 3-1](#) for the location of conservation easements.

Cultural and Historic Resources. Cultural and historic resources, including historic sites and Native American archaeological sites, have been found throughout Glenn County. Due to the prehistoric and historic activity in the region, the county is considered sensitive for historic resources. Since this sensitivity is not specific to a parcel or area, this constraint has not been mapped. The background and known occurrences of cultural and historic resources in the Glenn County area are described in detail in Chapter 5 of the Existing Conditions Report.

3.2 SAFETY CONSTRAINTS

The following discussion addresses constraints related to flooding, fire hazards, and geologic hazards.

Flood Zones. Flood zones in Glenn County are primarily areas adjacent to the Sacramento River and creek channels, including Stony Creek, Willow Creek, and Walker Creek. Areas within the 100-year flood zone are at risk of major flooding once every 100 years. Areas within the 100-year flood zone are shown on Figure 3-2. Flooding is discussed in detail in Section 4.4 of the Existing Conditions Report.

Fire Hazards. As depicted in Figure 3-2, the majority of the developed portions of Glenn County (east and west of the Interstate 5 corridor) have been determined by CalFire as not being in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). Beginning roughly 5 miles west of Interstate 5 and moving west through the foothill region, the Fire Hazard Severity Zones range from “Moderate” to “Very High”. This includes the community of Elk Creek. As evidenced by the recent Camp Fire in neighboring Butte County, the threat of destructive wildfires in the foothills and mountains of Glenn County does exist.

Geologic Hazards. Geologic hazards that typically present constraints to development include steep slopes, soils that may be prone to failure, and seismic faults.

- *Slopes.* Generally, Glenn County is a topographically flat, northwest-trending, structural trough (or basin) with no slopes in excess of 15 percent that pose a constraint to potential development. Soil characteristics are described in greater detail in Section 5.5 of the Existing Conditions Report.
- *Soil failure* hazards include areas with soils that have high and very high liquefaction potential, high shrink-swell potential, and high landslide potential. Soil characteristics are described in greater detail in Section 5.5 of the Existing Conditions Report.
- *Faults and seismic zones* may pose a safety hazard, depending on whether the fault is active. Faults and seismic zones located in the region that may potentially affect Glenn County and the surrounding area are described in Section 5.5 of the Existing Conditions Report.

3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

The following discussion addresses constraints and considerations related to infrastructure and public services. Infrastructure constraints are typically regulatory or policy-based and include water supply, water quality, wastewater treatment capacity, transportation access and capacity, and public services. The following provides a brief overview of these constraints and considerations. These constraints are unmapped, as many of these constraints are regulatory or policy-based and are not necessarily connected to a specific parcel or area.

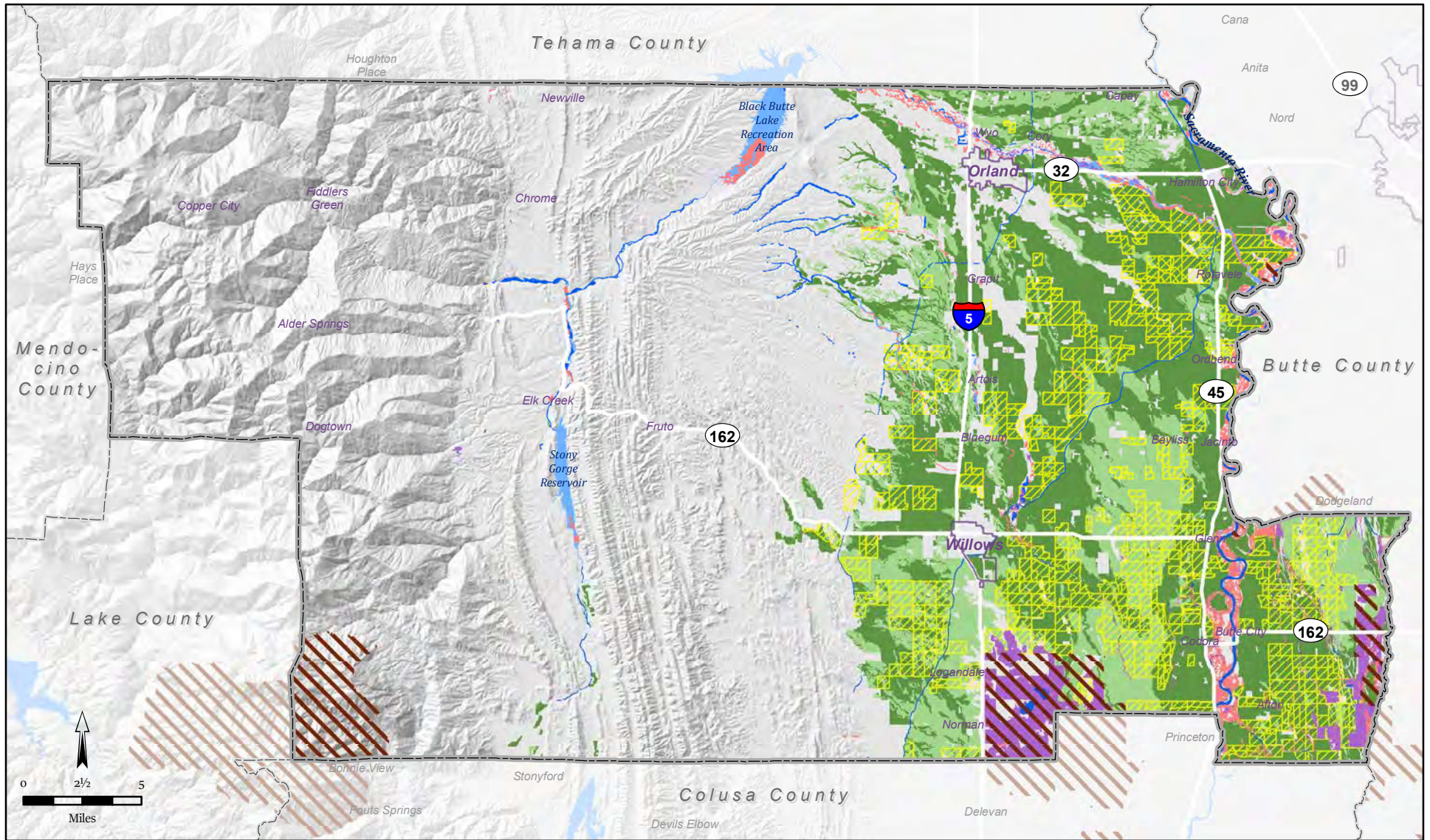
Infrastructure in undeveloped areas typically must be extended or expanded to serve new development. Utilities and community services, including water supply, wastewater, stormwater and drainage, solid waste, and electricity and natural gas are described in Section 3.0 of the Existing Conditions Report. Overall, the County provides quality and reliable public services and utilities services, and there are few constraints related to County infrastructure.

The circulation network and its capacity are described in Chapter 2.0 of the Existing Conditions Report. Glenn County is fortunate to have good backbone transportation infrastructure in Interstate 5 and State Route 32, with most critical roadway segments in the County operating at a Level of Service (LOS) of A or B. Currently, there are some congestion hot spots along SR 32 in the vicinities of Orland and Hamilton City.

SECTION 3.0: CONSTRAINTS

Public safety services, including fire protection and law enforcement, are described in Section 3.6 of the Existing Conditions Report. Parks and recreation services are described in Section 3.7 of the Existing Conditions Report.

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Sources: California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, Glenn County 2016; California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Glenn Co, FY 2015-16; FRAP Vegetation (FVEG15_1); CalFire FRAP, mgmtscap_v1, 2002. Map date: February 13, 2020.

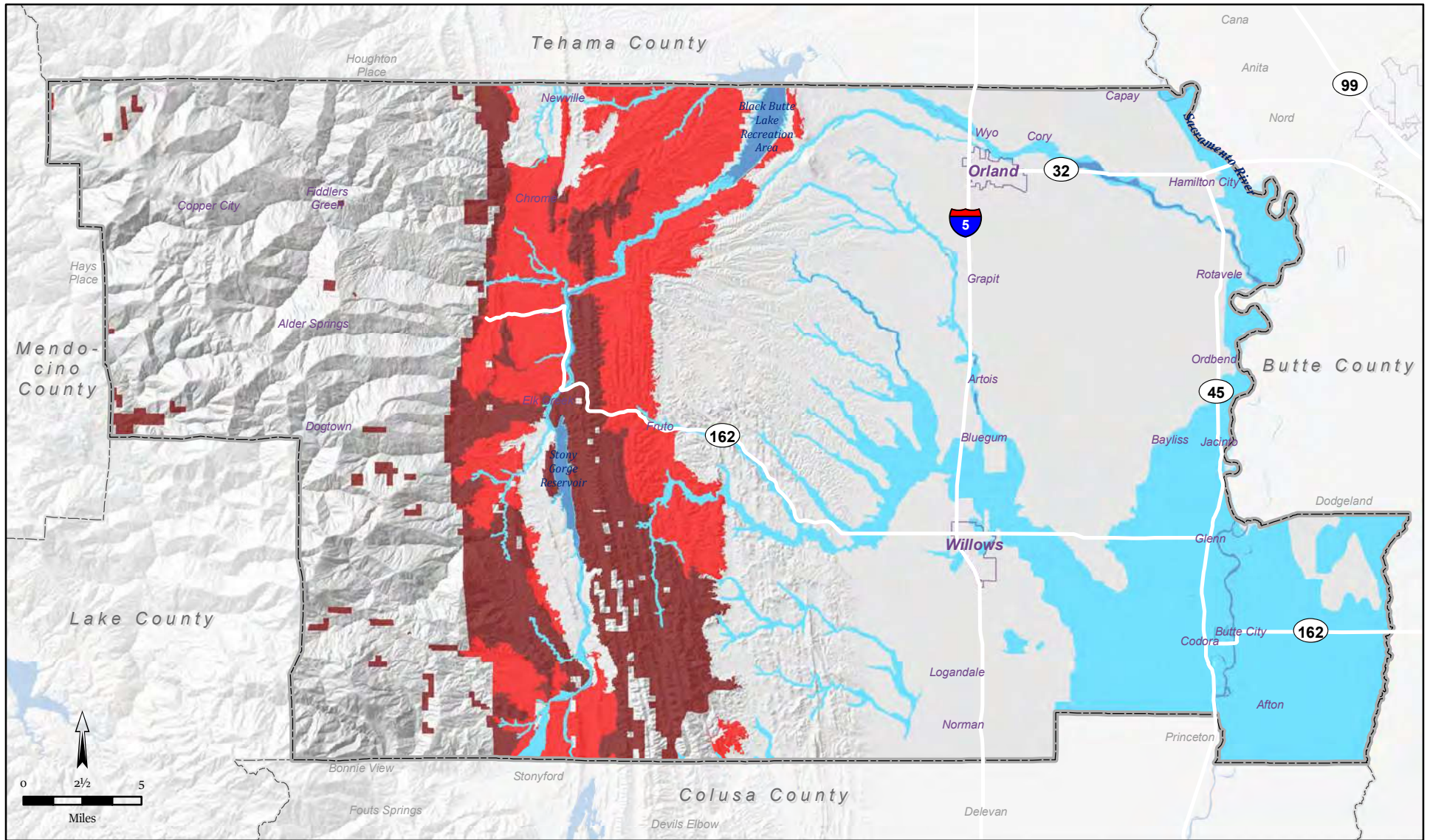
COUNTY OF GLENN, CALIFORNIA

FIGURE 3-1. RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Legend

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Williamson Act Lands
- Wildlife/Natural Lands Reserve
- Fresh Emergent Wetland
- Riverine
- Valley Foothill Riparian

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Sources: Cal Fire - FRAP, Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA, adopted 11-7-2007; FEMA Map Service Center, NFHL_06021C, latest study effective data 8/5/2010, latest LOMR effective data 1/11/2011. Map date: February 12, 2020.

Legend

Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas

- High
- Very High

FEMA Flood Zone Designation

- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

COUNTY OF GLENN, CALIFORNIA

FIGURE 3-2. SAFETY CONSTRAINTS

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4.0 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The General Plan Update will address an extensive set of issues and opportunities. Many of these issues and opportunities are defined by State law, while others reflect local concerns and desires.

Typically, in a general plan update program, the plan revolves around and is shaped by a handful of key issues and opportunities. Key issues in Glenn County frequently concern land use and community character, agricultural preservation, economic development, fiscal stability, transportation, community services and facilities, and conservation and recreation.

Despite the many challenges Glenn County may face, there are also opportunities to take advantage of over the timeframe of the General Plan. Opportunities include methods of enhancing the sense of community and preserving the County's rural heritage, supporting the centers of commercial activity, boosting the local economy, expanding services for County residents, strengthening the quality of life, and sustaining the County's vast natural resources. However, due to fiscal limitations and regulatory requirements, the County may not be able to address all of the issues and opportunities identified in this report. Therefore, the County and its leaders and residents will need to make important choices during the General Plan Update process as to which issues and opportunities are most important to shape the vision of Glenn County's future.

ISSUES

What is an Issue?

In the context of this report, an "Issue" is defined as an important condition or problem that needs to be addressed through the General Plan Update process.

Each issue is highlighted in a beige box. Following discussion of the issue, key policy questions associated with the issue are identified in italics.

OPPORTUNITIES

What is an Opportunity?

In the context of this report, an "Opportunity" is defined as a unique, favorable, or advantageous condition that the County can capitalize on through the General Plan Update process.

Each opportunity is highlighted in a teal box. Following discussion of the opportunity, key policy questions associated with the opportunity are identified in italics.

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Glenn County is an agricultural community in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, framed by the mountains of the Coast Range and the Mendocino Forest on the west and the Sacramento River on the east. The rural way of life, vast expanses of productive agricultural lands, small-town character, and strong sense of community are among the County's most valued assets. These characteristics provide a basis for the County's robust agriculture industry, extensive forest and wildlife habitat areas, and close-knit communities, which contribute to a quality of life that the County's residents treasure.

While land uses in the County are predominantly agricultural, higher intensities of residential and commercial development are located in and around the incorporated cities, Orland and Willows, and in the community of Hamilton City. The communities of Artois, Elk Creek, and Butte City are more rural developments with primarily single-family homes and limited community-serving commercial and public service uses.



Glenn County has experienced relatively little population or household growth since 2010. A total of approximately 28,000 people currently live within the County, with roughly half of the County's population residing in the unincorporated areas, while the other half lives in the cities of Orland (7,656 pop.) and Willows (6,041 pop.). Demographic data indicates that Glenn County residents are predominantly non-Hispanic White, with Hispanic households making up the largest minority ethnic group. The population in Glenn County is generally aging and the share of family households has been increasing as the Millennial Generation begins to start families. These trends all have important implications for land use and public service provision (e.g., EMS and K-12 schooling), as well as workforce and economic development.

The County is currently home to around 10,000 households. Reflecting its rural character, the housing market in Glenn County is generally oriented towards the detached single-family ownership market. The County also has an above-average prevalence of mobile homes and other non-traditional housing.

Land uses are guided by the General Plan Land Use Map. The County's Development Code (Title 15 of the Glenn County Code) provides a greater level of specificity in identifying permitted land uses and associated development standards. Existing land use conditions in Glenn County are described in detail in Chapter 1 of the Existing Conditions Report.

Participants in the Visioning Workshops identified the following as issues to address and points to consider with regard to land use and community character in developing a vision of the County's future:

- Rural lifestyle
- Small-town feel and sense of community
- Agricultural community

- Family-oriented community with good schools
- Low population growth and challenges attracting new residents
- Lack of demographic diversity
- Need for more housing options
- Well-planned growth necessary
- More business development, including new retail, manufacturing and other industrial
- Develop vibrant downtowns (Orland and Willows)
- Need for performance and entertainment venues
- Preserve historic buildings and structures
- Protect water and other natural resources
- Desire for more recreational opportunities

Issue: Location and Amount of Growth

Throughout the Visioning process, workshop participants consistently indicated that growth should be balanced and well-planned with a focus on commercial development along the Interstate 5 and Highway 32 corridors and within the incorporated cities and their Spheres of Influence (SOI), and that the rural and agricultural character of adjacent unincorporated land should be preserved.

Glenn County's development over the years has resulted in the cities of Orland and Willows becoming the primary employment centers of the County. Locating future and existing employment, retail, commercial/office areas, and civic uses in proximity to one another and to other supporting uses would allow for these types of uses to support one another, create synergies, and maximize market potential. Furthermore, concentrating these types of uses would help to preserve productive agricultural land.

The land use map concepts (see Opportunity: Guide Future Development) will be generally developed with the intent of focusing new growth areas within and adjacent to the incorporated cities and along the I-5 Freeway, and ensuring long-term agricultural and open space uses continue throughout the County. Determining the location and amount of growth, prioritizing infill and vacant lands within the city boundaries and their SOIs, and addressing the timing of outlying development will be necessary to ensure orderly and sustainable long-term growth.

It is anticipated that the General Plan will continue to include policies to discourage sprawl and leapfrog development. However, the location and amount of future residential, commercial, and other urban growth is an important consideration to ensure that growth does occur in a well-planned manner that focuses on existing communities while providing for a range of development types in order to support the larger Glenn County economy.

Issue: Location and Amount of Growth

Key Questions

- *As the County considers potential changes to the Land Use Map, where should new growth be located?*
- *If the County decides to convert more agricultural land to urban-type uses, which categories of land does the County need more of (low-density residential, high-density residential, commercial, industrial, etc.)?*

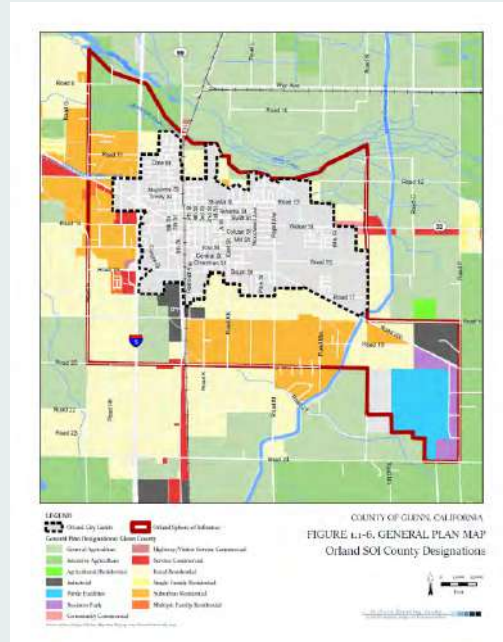
Opportunity: Guide Future Development

The location, type, and amount of future growth and development are key factors in attaining the vision for the County, as described through the Visioning process. The General Plan addresses growth and development throughout the various elements contained within it. The Land Use Map and corresponding land use designation definitions are vital components in determining how future development and development patterns occur.

INCORPORATED CITIES

The growth and development of Glenn County will depend in large part on the success of its two incorporated cities – Orland and Willows. The population in Orland grew by 16% between 2000 and 2010, making it the most populous and fastest growing urban center in Glenn County. Slow as population growth in Glenn County may be over the next 10-20 years, it can be anticipated that demand to develop residential units, including workforce housing, will primarily be felt in both Orland and Willows and in their Spheres of Influence (SOI).

The 1993 General Plan Land Use Map designates the majority of lands within each city’s SOI for urban level land uses (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial). In order to serve new residential subdivisions that are developed at urban densities, it will be necessary to provide public water and sewer service. This may be true of a number of commercial uses as well. However, outlying industrial uses can typically be served by an on-site well and on-site or community septic system, as demonstrated by industrial uses throughout the County.



If the County is designating lands for residential uses in an SOI, does the County want to be responsible for working with a developer to coordinate public water and sewer service for the project, or is it more appropriate for the developer to approach the city regarding annexation? This question demonstrates the need to consider whether lands planned for residential uses, and perhaps other uses, should be designated as “Urban Growth Areas” or another placeholder land use for future annexation.

FREEWAY-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL

Based on Glenn County’s historically limited population growth, commercial development will likely be driven in large part by freeway-oriented uses, such as fast food restaurants, gasoline stations, and hotels, which are able to capture a larger customer base due to visibility on the I-5. Glenn County is an attractive rest stop for travelers and truck drivers, which could provide a competitive advantage for future freeway-oriented development in Glenn County.

Additionally, the County may have an opportunity to capture spending from visitors to the Thunderhill Raceway Park, located east of Willows on Highway 162. Thunderhill Raceway offers two-, three-, and five-mile tracks, as well as skid pad space, for events and private use. The facility hosts around 750

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

events per year and attracts around 200,000 people to Glenn County annually. Although the track facilities are relatively self-contained, with a restaurant to serve patrons, as well as automobile storage and shop facilities, newer quality hotel developments could help serve the track's clientele, capture more overnight stays within the County, and stimulate additional spending in local stores.



VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND

There are many vacant and underutilized parcels within Glenn County that can accommodate a wide range of land uses. As of May 2019, there were approximately 493 acres of agricultural or vacant commercial land for sale around Glenn County. Vacant commercial properties accounted for 360 acres, while agricultural land accounted for 133 acres.

Infill: Prioritizing development of vacant and underutilized infill sites reduces the County's footprint and ensures orderly development. Infill sites can be used to complement existing uses and, depending on the nature of the development, can encourage revitalization of an area.

Revitalization: Underutilized parcels are often the best candidates for revitalization efforts. Some of the underutilized sites may be appropriate for revitalization, while others may be appropriate for revitalization with new land uses. As part of the General Plan Update, the County has the opportunity to create new land use designations, modify existing designations, and revise the land use map. Some underutilized parcels may be poorly maintained or have large undeveloped areas that are not serving a community need.

In considering the future development of infill and revitalization sites, there is also the potential to concentrate complementary uses, such as retail/commercial, in specific areas (e.g., Downtown Orland and Willows, I-5 corridor, or Hwy 32 corridor) to protect and reinforce the vitality of these areas.

URBAN LIMIT LINE/EXPANSION AREAS

The expansion of the incorporated and unincorporated (e.g., Hamilton City) communities is subject to both the Sphere of Influence (SOI) and Urban Limit Line (ULL) boundaries. SOIs determine provision of services; ULLs are all about growth management and preventing growth into agricultural areas. An Urban Limit Line is a politically determined boundary that is drawn around an urbanized area, outside of which new urban development is severely restricted or prohibited. Glenn County communities can request changes to these boundaries from LAFCO. LAFCO establishes specific requirements for modifying a ULL and approving development outside of a ULL. In general, expansion of the Urban Limit Lines may occur only once full urban services and infrastructure have been established and a property is contiguous to existing development.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The County's existing General Plan establishes a comprehensive set of land use designations: Open Space/Public Lands, Foothill Agriculture/Forestry, Intensive Agriculture, General Agriculture, Agriculture/Residential, Rural Residential, Suburban Residential, Single Family Residential, Multiple Family Residential, Local Commercial, Community Commercial, Service Commercial, Highway and Visitor Service Commercial, Industrial, Business Park, Public Facilities, and Recreation. The descriptions associated with each designation define the allowed types and, in some cases, density of uses. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity to create new land use designations, modify existing designations, and to refine the application of the designations.

As part of the development of the Land Use Alternatives, the land use designations will be evaluated carefully to determine whether they still meet the needs of the community, including whether the designations can accommodate the businesses the County wishes to attract, provide adequate opportunities for the types of residential development the community desires to see, and ensure existing and future neighborhoods have access to amenities such as parks, schools, and services.

- *The location, type, and amount of future development will be addressed in the Land Use Alternatives Report, which will present multiple land use alternatives and analyze the fiscal, economic development, circulation, and public services and infrastructure issues associated with each land use scenario. The Land Use Alternatives Report will reflect the land use vision and recommendations expressed during the Visioning process and address property owner land use change requests. Issues that were raised during the Visioning process, such as the location of future growth and expansion into the Spheres of Influence, will also be addressed in the Land Use Alternatives Report.*

Key Questions

- *Are there specific new land use categories or designations that should be added to the General Plan?*
- *Are there any specific changes to the existing Land Use designations that should be considered? For example, should industrial uses be allowed on agriculture-designated parcels?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Community Character

Some of the most frequently repeated priorities during the Visioning Workshops related to ensuring that Glenn County maintains its rural lifestyle, small-town atmosphere and charm, and strong sense of community. Each of the incorporated and unincorporated communities in Glenn County has a unique identity and attributes which set it apart, such as an historic town center or building(s), community-oriented parks and recreation opportunities, great schools, or river or mountain access. Visioning Workshop participants clearly stated that the future vision for Glenn County should continue to build on its small-town appeal and agricultural heritage and that an effort should be made to retain the small-town charm and characteristics that set Glenn County apart from other places. Glenn County's historical buildings and forms should be preserved and enhanced as growth occurs.

"Community character" has multiple meanings. Community character refers to the physical appearance of a place – whether Glenn County has a distinct physical identity or looks similar to other communities. Community character also refers to the design of the community, particularly residential areas. Designing neighborhoods to encourage social interaction, through walking and bicycling opportunities, as well as focal areas (e.g., parks and neighborhood shopping centers), supports social interaction and fosters a sense of community. The economic, social, and cultural aspects of a community, which represent the active participation of citizens and businesses in community affairs and activities, are another important part of community character.

Creating a *"sense of place"* for a community is a guiding principle in designing livable and high-quality built environments. Communities can work towards achieving this through recurring architectural and streetscape design elements, identified historic resources, and cultural amenities. These features that protect and promote community character also attract visitors and may generate some tourism. For the General Plan Update to ensure that Glenn County remains unique and retains its small-town appeal, those characteristics that distinguish Glenn County from other communities must be identified and, where appropriate, retained or incorporated into new development.

DOWNTOWN ORLAND AND WILLOWS

Downtown Orland and Downtown Willows have been the historic cores of those communities and vital destinations for Glenn County residents and visitors. Small downtowns have tremendous placemaking potential, particularly in communities with great social commitment. Participants in the Visioning process consistently expressed the importance of the downtowns as key assets and areas that should be revitalized, re-grown, and reinvented. Focusing on design standards for streets and other public areas, creating a walkable community, and offering amenities such as high-speed Internet can create an environment that is attractive to the 21st Century workforce.

Downtown specific plans can establish the vision for Downtown Orland and Downtown Willows, regulate growth and change in the downtowns, and identify the steps these communities will take to fulfill the vision for their downtowns. Ensuring that the pedestrian-scale and historic feel of the downtowns are continued in neighborhood, commercial, public, and possibly future mixed-use areas that connect to them will help preserve Glenn County's small-town feel and will support the distinct images of the downtowns.

EVENTS

Participants in the Visioning process expressed a desire for more and better community events and festivals. Opportunities for social interaction help to establish the character of a community and keep people feeling connected to it and to each other. Glenn County hosts a regular Farmers' Market in both

Opportunity: Community Character

Orland and Willows, as well as annual events such as the Glenn County Fair, Avenue of Lights, Lights Parade, Lamb Derby, Car & Bike Show, Levee Festival, and the Splendor in the Valley fundraiser. Glenn County can use community events to connect residents and keep old traditions alive, while making new ones as well. Community events can also help attract new visitors by showing off what makes Glenn County so unique, which can simultaneously help build a strong sense of pride for the community. In addition, community events may also bring in business from outside Glenn County, generating further revenue that supports the community.

CONNECTIVITY

The General Plan can enhance the sense of community in Glenn County by connecting neighborhoods and commercial areas to the community's key focal points, including Downtown Orland and Downtown Willows, community recreation facilities, schools, and other destinations, including the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Community design policies and decisions related to the circulation network can support improved connectivity and community character, as can encouraging buildings that are oriented and scaled to the pedestrian.

BUILDINGS

The design and quality of future development was important to Visioning participants. Comments were made indicating that newer development lacks distinctive architecture. It is important that key commercial and public use buildings include architectural elements and scale that will invoke a "legacy" feel.

GATEWAYS

The primary entrances to Glenn County can be enhanced with gateway signage to ensure a continued sense of place and identity for the community. Gateway signage along the I-5 corridor can also direct out-of-town visitors to the commercial centers and local destinations.



COMMUNITY DESIGN AND QUALITY

Strong community character and design are typically key features of livable and economically vibrant communities. As Glenn County grows, the quality of development that occurs will greatly influence the community's character. The General Plan can include a program to adopt design standards, which will help the greater community maintain its distinctive character. Often, rural communities are not interested in attracting new development to existing centers. However, new development can provide benefits beyond the additional housing or retail space that is constructed. With sufficient guidance from the General Plan Update, new development can also provide community gathering places like plazas, community centers, or parks, and new infrastructure.

Future land use policies should seek to make new development contribute to a more vibrant Glenn County. Design guideline provisions could incorporate elements that tie to the County's small-town character, local history, and agricultural background. Design guidelines could also encourage use of

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Community Character

elements from Glenn County’s historic buildings by identifying key historic building types and elements that are consistent with the County’s history.

Key Questions

- *Are there specific features or design elements that need to be incorporated into new and existing development or into a specific type of building?*
- *Should the General Plan include a program to adopt design guidelines to ensure that the architecture and character of new development enhances existing communities?*
- *What special places or buildings should be identified and celebrated in the County?*

4.2 AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION



Based on data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture, agricultural lands account for approximately 55% of the entire County's area. In 2019, the County Assessor's office identified that 553,603 acres (66%) of the unincorporated land area is used for agriculture or agricultural preserves.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture identified 1,173 farms comprising 466,734 acres in the County, which actually represented a 30% reduction in the amount of farmland acreage since 2012. While nearly one-quarter of farms (26%) had an annual sales volume of less than \$10,000, 44% of farms experienced sales of \$100,000 or more. One out of five farms reported annual sales in excess of \$500,000. Approximately 423,756 acres (*California Department of Conservation, 2014*) of the County's assessed agricultural land, is under some form of Williamson Act contract or agricultural preserve easement, indicating a long-term commitment to farming activities.

Farming and related agricultural industries (e.g., milling, processing, canning, drying, and storage) are the backbone of the County's economy. The County's production of crops and livestock was valued at approximately \$628.7 million in 2017, ranking Glenn County 17th in the state.

According to the Glenn County Annual Crop & Livestock Report for 2017, almonds have surpassed rice as the leading agricultural commodity, accounting for 26% of the County's total production value, followed by walnuts at 22%, and rice at 15%.

Primary concerns and opportunities regarding agriculture identified through the Visioning process include:

- Agricultural community
- Lack of water for irrigation
- Some crops are lowering the groundwater table
- Preservation of agricultural lands
- Maintain the County's agricultural heritage
- Grow industries related to agriculture (e.g., food processing, agritourism)
- Identify sectors for job and business growth that are compatible with agriculture

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

Agriculture has a long tradition in Glenn County. For more than a century, it has been a pillar of the economy and culture. Throughout the Visioning process, preservation of agricultural lands and farming activities was a strongly voiced concern. This discussion defines agricultural land as both agricultural cropland (irrigated and non-irrigated) and grazing lands. The median farm size in Glenn County is 398 acres, which is down 22% since 2012 (*2017 US Census of Agriculture*). Typically, efficiencies of scale (e.g., adequate acreage) are necessary to run a viable farming operation. Availability of water and appropriate soil types are also necessary to support farming activities.

CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

While farmlands account for 66% of total land in the unincorporated County, conversion of agricultural lands has occurred over the years and remains an existential threat. Typically, residential growth is seen as the primary culprit for the loss of agricultural lands. However, in addition to residential growth, a significant amount of agricultural lands have been converted to wetland and special-status species habitat preserves over the past few decades. Lands within the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge have converted from rice farming to wetlands, and various agricultural and grazing lands that had been in private ownership have converted to conservation lands, mainly wetlands that can be sold for credit to developers filling in wetlands and who purchase conservation easements to offset development impacts in Glenn County as well as other counties in the Northern California region. The California Department of Conservation has reported that irrigated farmland in California decreased by more than 91 square miles (58,587 acres) between 2010 to 2012, with prime farmland comprising 81% of the decrease (47,555 acres).

76% of farmland in the County is under a Williamson Act contract. The County does not have a local program requiring the preservation of farmlands through offsets (in-lieu fees or land easements) when farmland is developed or converted from agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses.

The 1993 General Plan and/or new land use alternatives could result in the conversion of prime and other farmlands as well as grazing lands to urban uses. However, new land use alternatives could also concentrate residential and commercial development within or around existing communities and not place residential subdivisions in the midst of lands designated for agricultural uses. While the buildout of the General Plan Update would not occur for 100 or more years, the designation of lands for urban development might indicate that the lands will be removed from agricultural production at some point in the future. The Land Use Alternatives Report will compare land use alternatives and identify the specific acreage of farmlands by category, grazing lands, and Williamson Act lands that could be impacted under each alternative.

Although Urban Limit Lines (ULL) have been established for the incorporated and unincorporated communities (see Opportunity: Guide Future Development), it may be appropriate to further protect agricultural lands by designating a “buffer” around each community that will prevent urban uses from encroaching into or beyond the buffer. The buffer could be created by applying the existing Agricultural/Residential land use designation, which is designed as a transition from urban uses to agricultural uses, around a community or by creating a new land use designation. As part of the General Plan Update process, the land use alternatives can be developed to provide adequate lands for both short-term and long-term future growth, so that all areas designated General Agriculture, Intensive Agriculture, and Foothill Agriculture/Forestry would remain in permanent agricultural use.

Issue: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

Apart from issues associated with designating lands for agricultural use in the General Plan, conversion of agricultural lands can occur when lands are developed with permitted non-agricultural uses allowed under the Development Code. For example, non-farming uses allowed with a conditional use permit in the Exclusive Agricultural Zone include: animal sales yards, agricultural processing plants and facilities, animal hospitals, kennels, mining and related processing activities, and recreation uses such as hunting clubs, RV facilities, and golf courses. While some of these uses are related to agricultural activities, all of these uses have the effect of either temporarily or permanently removing the land from agricultural production.

FRAGMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Parcelization of agricultural land has also occurred historically. This fragmentation of agricultural land typically occurs in two circumstances. The first is where large farmland parcels are split or subdivided for development with small “farms” or “ranchettes” to provide rural living opportunities. These smaller parcels are typically either not large enough to accommodate on-going intensive agricultural practices, or are purchased with the intent to live a rural lifestyle but not intensively farm the parcel. The other occurs when a farm or ranch is divided into multiple parcels to allow a farmer’s children and/or future generations to live on the land. This generational transfer may encourage continued family agriculture practices, but also will result in the fragmentation of a farm or ranch if some of the future generations are not interested in farming and sell their parcels. Conversion of a farm site to a residential use can result in increased water demand, introduction of domestic pets, and increased exposure to potentially conflicting land uses. These changes may have a negative effect on nearby agricultural operations.

The 1993 General Plan addresses this issue by setting a 40-acre lot size minimum for the Intensive Agriculture land use designation. However, the 40-acre lot size minimum would still allow for significant division of farmlands in the County and is well below the median size of active farms in the County. The 40-acre minimum lot size could also result in numerous owners and residences scattered throughout the County’s agricultural areas over time. Currently 3,834 parcels totaling 304,743 acres (36% of the unincorporated County) are included within the Intensive Agriculture land use designation.

AGRICULTURAL COMPATIBILITY

Under the General Plan Update, urban development may be allowed to expand the area of existing communities. As more urban development occurs and spreads into historically agricultural areas, individual projects may be placed adjacent to Williamson Act lands, lands designated for agricultural use, or agricultural operations, which could create conflicts between these land uses. Generally, residential uses generate the most conflicts with agricultural operations. Agriculture/urban conflicts vary depending on the type of agricultural use, but generally include, although are not limited to, the following:

- Inconveniences or discomforts associated with dust, smoke, noise, and odor from agricultural operations.
- Restrictions on agricultural operations (such as pesticide application) along interfaces with urban uses.
- Conflicts with farm equipment and vehicles using roadways.
- Trespassing and vandalism on active farmlands.

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

- Nuisances and crop loss from domestic pets.

As a result of the above-mentioned conflicts, there may be increased pressure to convert adjacent agricultural land to urban uses. An increase in property values associated with demand for developable land may also cause conversion of agricultural land to developed uses.

The County has adopted a Right-to-Farm Ordinance, which requires sellers of property in Glenn County to disclose that the property is located in a rural-agricultural county and that the property may be subject to inconveniences or discomforts associated with agricultural practices. The disclosure must also state that the County sets agricultural as a priority use of lands and that users of such property should be prepared to accept such inconvenience or discomfort as normal and necessary to farm operations. Building permits include a similar disclosure statement.

Key Questions

- *What additional steps can the County take to preserve and protect agricultural lands?*
- *Are there agricultural lands adjacent to the urban areas that are appropriate for conversion to non-agricultural uses?*
- *Should the General Plan provide for the establishment of overlay zones to accommodate development of alternative energy, recreational activities (e.g., off-road vehicle parks, hunting clubs, etc.), and/or habitat preservation in select agricultural areas where viable agricultural operations are constrained by existing conditions?*
- *Should a specific buffer be designated around each community that identifies the maximum extent of urban and non-agricultural development?*
- *How can the County allow appropriate agriculturally-related businesses in agricultural zones and be more restrictive on unrelated businesses?*
- *Should densities in the existing urban areas be increased to promote more infill development and help reduce any future conversion and loss of farmland?*

Opportunity: Agricultural-Related Industries

There are a number of industries that are offshoots of Glenn County’s agricultural activities (primarily fruit and nut crops, field crops, and livestock and poultry farming) that could be explored to further diversify the County’s economy and to enhance and solidify the County’s strong agricultural sector.

FOOD PROCESSING AND PACKING

Glenn County is already home to several food processors that play a key role in the local economy. These businesses use mostly local agricultural inputs and likely would not exist in Glenn County without the presence of the associated agricultural sector. Many processing facilities would not operate in Glenn County were it not for the abundant supply of nuts, fruit, and other raw agricultural products. Dairy products manufacturing is by far the largest sector. An estimated 50% of the local milk production is processed within the County. Multiple facilities process milk into butter, yogurt, and cheese, then package it for retail sales. Close proximity to raw materials – crops and agricultural products – along with a strong transportation infrastructure are factors that food processing and agri-business companies consider when opening or expanding.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

R&D is an important part of the overall agricultural economy. Seed companies are continuously researching and breeding plant species to select for specific characteristics (e.g., taste, yield, growing zone, frost conditions, pest resistance, longevity). Agricultural research operations can include extensive agricultural fields and greenhouses for planting of test crops, may primarily consist of office space for laboratory research, or could include a combination of the two. Some research facilities will contract with farmers, local and/or distant, depending on the growing conditions needed for research, to grow test crops. In this way, attracting new agricultural R&D uses can increase the demand for planted agricultural fields or active livestock operations and for professional office/research space.

LOCAL FOODS/ORGANIC FARMS



While not the same, the local and organic foods movements are both characterized by buyers that are interested in the origins of their food. These buyers want to know how their food was produced and where it comes from. These food choices are typically fresher, provide benefits to the local economy (buying directly from small farms and local businesses), reduce energy consumption for goods transport, and reduce pesticide application.

An organic farming operation is required to be certified as using practices consistent with the National Organic Program (NOP) standards. The standards require organic food to be produced without using most conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic farmers can face obstacles through the certification process, pesticide drift from other farms, and the need for a steady demand for organic produce. It typically takes three years for a farmer to transition to organic. During this time, the farmers do not use commercial fertilizer or pesticides and continue to sell their crop conventionally. Due to the need for

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

separate types of equipment and controlled application of pesticides, farmers have indicated that it makes more economic sense to focus on a single type of farming (organic or conventional).

Locally grown food programs include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations, farmers' markets, self-pick farms, food/farm cooperatives, and foods sold directly to local markets and grocers. Typically, foods or livestock originating within 100 miles are considered "local." Often, foods that are locally grown are not consumed locally. Supporting local foods encourages the establishment of smaller farms with an orientation toward sales in the general region. The County can demonstrate support for local foods by providing marketing assistance, increasing community awareness, and adopting zoning regulations that support small farms with a local market.

DEMONSTRATION CENTER

Demonstrating a command of new and advanced technologies typically attracts business growth to an area. The Glenn County Agriculture Department, Glenn Grows, or another entity could establish an agricultural demonstration center that focuses on growing methods and technologies, while showcasing crops that Glenn County is particularly well-suited for.

AGRICULTURAL BY-PRODUCT INDUSTRIES AND GREEN BUILDING MATERIALS

Pursuing industrial and other uses for agricultural products and by-products provides new opportunities for new industries and businesses to be established in the County and offers farmers an opportunity for market growth. Diversifying the industries related to agriculture in Glenn County will boost the local economy and also provide stability against any decline in crop values.

Building and construction materials can be manufactured from recycled agricultural straws, fibers, and other waste, including rice straw, wheat straw, and almond hulls. Particleboard, doors, and load-bearing walls can be produced using compressed straws. When construction is completed in Q1 2020, CalPlant I in Willows will be the world's first commercial-scale producer of rice straw-based medium density fiberboard (MDF), annually supplying approximately 140 million square feet of MDF to the building products industry. This project will be a tipping point in diversifying into another industry segment – green building materials.



The total U.S. agricultural plastics generation is estimated to be almost one billion pounds annually. This includes films used for mulch, greenhouse covers, and to wrap bales. It also includes nursery containers, pesticide containers, silage bags, storage covers, twine, etc. Efforts to develop products using agricultural plastic film wastes continue and technologies have been developed to create plastic pellets, plastic film, and molded plastics. Pursuing these options in Glenn County creates a saleable product and diverts plastics from landfills, being buried on-site, or being burned.

INDUSTRIAL HEMP

The California Industrial Hemp Farming Act went into effect on January 1, 2017, legalizing commercial production of hemp. Furthermore, per the 2018 Farm Bill, hemp is completely legal to grow and sell in the U.S., creating a billion dollar market that is expected to grow exponentially. The versatility of hemp

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

can be attributed to the fact that most parts of the plant can be extracted to make a product. Industrial hemp is grown for its grain, fiber, seeds, and oils. Hemp can be used to make textiles, building materials, livestock bedding, paper products, bioplastics, and more. It is stronger and more durable than cotton, yet requires less space and less water to grow, while producing a much higher yield. Hemp is also pest-resistant, minimizing the need for chemical pesticides, and the growth of hemp naturally aerates the soil with carbon-dioxide. It must be noted that the County currently has a temporary moratorium in effect on the cultivation of industrial hemp. The moratorium is set to expire on June 25, 2020, unless extended under Government Code Section 65858.

Key Questions

- *The overwhelming majority of Glenn County's raw agricultural products leaves the County for processing. What new policies, programs, and other initiatives could expand locally sourced, value-added food processing within Glenn County?*
- *How can the County capitalize on the emerging building products sector and supply chain, particularly with regard to "green" building products?*
- *What economic opportunities and risks does the production of industrial hemp present for Glenn County growers?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Between 2013 and 2017, Glenn County experienced positive changes in all economic indicators including Gross County Product, unemployment, and average wages. According to data from the Employment Development Department (EDD), there were approximately 9,100 jobs in Glenn County as of 2017. Nearly half of all jobs within Glenn County were in agriculture or government, which accounted for 24% and 23% of jobs, respectively. An additional 40% were employed in a services industry, which includes retail trade, wholesale trade, trucking, warehousing, and other services, while 7% were employed in the manufacturing industry. A review of the County's major employers indicates that a large percentage of employers are either directly or indirectly related to agriculture, reinforcing Glenn County's role as an agricultural hub.

From 2010 to 2017, Glenn County's population grew modestly at 2.2% (0.3% annually) from 28,122 to 28,730 persons. However, the County's labor force contracted during roughly the same period (2010-18), losing approximately 420 people or 3% of the labor force. The ratio of jobs per labor force is 0.52, which means that for every two of the County's residents in the labor force, there is approximately one job in the County. Approximately 65% of employed Glenn County residents work within the County, while the remaining 35% commute to workplaces outside of the County.

The median household incomes for both Glenn County and the incorporated cities are quite similar, at just over \$46,000 per year, which is equal to around 70% of the statewide median household income of \$60,883 per year. In nominal dollars, the median household income in Glenn County increased by around 7% since 2010; however, after adjusting for inflation, the estimates indicate that the spending power associated with the median household income has decreased by approximately 7% over the same period. Growth in the median income statewide was notably higher at 10%, with a lower real decline in spending power of around 5%. This means that not only is nominal income growth in Glenn County slower than elsewhere in California; the real spending power of Glenn County households declined more rapidly.

Based on taxable sales data from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA), taxable retail and food service sales in Glenn County totaled \$425 million in 2017, the most recent data for which taxable sales data are available. This includes sales that occurred at brick and mortar establishments, as well as among non-store retailers (e.g., online and catalogue sales). Taxable sales in the unincorporated County accounted for 22% (\$93.8 million) of the countywide total, indicating the majority of retail activity occurs in the incorporated cities.

Glenn County only accounts for around 8.5% of regional taxable sales receipts, indicating the County is not a major regional retail destination. However, despite lacking much in the way of destination retail, total per capita taxable retail spending figures indicate that Glenn County still generally captures its fair share of regional retail spending primarily due to one category: Gasoline Stations.

Since 2010, total taxable sales in Glenn County grew by \$103 million, or 32%, after adjusting for inflation. The data indicate that certain retail sectors are growing more quickly in Glenn County than elsewhere in the four-county region and state as a whole. Taxable sales at gasoline stations accounted for the largest absolute gain in Glenn County, increasing by nearly \$33 million. Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers also increased significantly in Glenn County over this period.

The commitment by County and City officials to work collaboratively has fostered a business-friendly environment in Glenn County that is highly supportive of new and existing businesses.

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Participants in the Visioning process identified the following issues and comments related to the County's economy:

- Potential for growth
- Need for well-planned growth
- Lack of employment opportunities and large employers
- Need for an expanded employment base; diversification of jobs
- Expand agriculture-based economy
- Lack of a solid tax base
- Small business support needed
- Develop vibrant downtowns in the incorporated cities (Orland and Willows)
- Enhance economic growth along I-5 and Hwy 32 corridors
- Bedroom community to City of Chico – sales tax leakage
- County has a trained workforce and backbone roadway/truck route infrastructure

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Limited Employment Opportunities

Glenn County experiences a net employment cross commute involving approximately 2,516 workers commuting in from homes outside of the County and 3,600 employed residents commuting out of the County to jobs located elsewhere. This equals a net out-commute of 1,084 persons. Many of the jobs in Glenn County are agriculture and service-oriented jobs, which typically have lower wages than professional and skilled jobs.

While it is anticipated that the General Plan Update will provide greater opportunities for businesses to expand or locate in Glenn County (see the following Opportunities discussions), this will not improve the quality of life of the County's residents unless the new jobs pay good wages and provide additional opportunities for skilled workers. In order for unemployment rates to trend downward and the ratio of jobs to labor force to trend upward, incentives for employers to locate in Glenn County are needed.

For the economy to grow and prosper, it is necessary to market Glenn County as a place to do business and to provide resources that meet the needs of retail uses and businesses that are aligned with, but diversified from, the agriculture industry and which Glenn County wishes to attract. Currently, the Orland and Willows Chambers of Commerce can provide support to interested businesses and can connect businesses with local realtors and leasing agents, and provide general economic and sales tax information. Furthermore, the recently established Glenn Grows Center (see Opportunity: Employment Generation and Business Attraction) can provide assistance with location search and siting, experience with incentives and special programs, regulatory navigation, funding and financing, and workforce recruiting. Nonetheless, more extensive and detailed materials (detailed market assessments, up-to-date workforce data, etc.) would identify market demands and industry sectors with heavy needs for interested businesses.

Key issues limiting Glenn County's employment and business growth include the following:

LIMITED ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Glenn County was built around one primary industry – agriculture – and has above average employment concentrations in agriculture and government. This limited economic diversification makes Glenn County especially vulnerable when economic shocks adversely affect agriculture. Across the United States, once vibrant rural communities are now struggling to survive because an anchor employer left town or are facing structural change in the industry forcing a dramatic reorganization of business practices.

While additional entrepreneurship can help bring economic diversity to Glenn County, entrepreneurship alone cannot solve the problem. Rather, the County should explore the use of federal tax credits, training programs, and grant funding designed for rural economic development.

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHIC REMOTENESS

Glenn County, like other rural communities, is separated from dense population centers other than perhaps Chico, located in Butte County. When individuals live closer together routine economic interactions are more frequent, carry lower costs, and lead to more economic activity. Rural communities are disadvantaged in this regard. Technological innovations that promise increased information and communications have the potential to bridge this divide. For example, efforts are underway to help rural communities take advantage of the instant communications facilitated by the

Internet, including through the use of telehealth programs, which bring patients and doctors together through smart phones and computers to provide immediate access to medical advice and care.

BUSINESS/MARKET SIZE

The irony of farm country is that although it feeds the rest of America, the local economies tend to be so small that they cannot support their own grocery stores. This is indicative of the wider problem in Glenn County which is that the low overall population (only 28,730) has not been large enough or concentrated enough to generate the local demand necessary to attract new business and new job opportunities. This has resulted in retail sales leakages to centers outside of Glenn County such as the City of Chico. What this is also reflective of is the correlation between population growth, housing production, the strength and size of the local market, and employment opportunities. In other words, job growth in Glenn County will hinge on attracting new residents, and therefore, new housing construction.

SKILLS GAP

In the 21st Century economy, a college education is increasingly necessary for achieving economic prosperity. Rural communities consistently lag behind urban communities in educational attainment, and this gap has increased in the new century. Even while the share of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased in both rural and urban communities, the gap between the two increased by 25 percent from 2000 to 2016.

The General Plan Update should support policies that ensure County residents receive preparation and have access to opportunities for post-secondary education.

INADEQUATE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Roughly 39% of rural Americans lack access to high-speed broadband, compared with just 4% of urban Americans, according to a report from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) using 2016 figures. The lack of access directly hampers their ability to take advantage of the educational and entrepreneurial opportunities available online. The Internet that rural Americans can access is slower and more expensive than it is for their urban counterparts.

Building networks in Glenn County can be difficult and expensive. The terrain can be a problem in areas like Elk Creek where the foothills can make it difficult to install fiber or other infrastructure. However, the biggest barrier to getting broadband in certain areas of the County is low population density. Broadband providers will not offer service if they cannot get enough customers to pay for it. In sparsely populated areas in rural America, residents may see Internet speeds of 5 megabits per second, a far cry from the 25 Mbps speeds the FCC defines as broadband.

The following Opportunities discussions identify methods to attract new businesses and to expand the base of industries to create more skilled and high-paying employment opportunities.

Key Questions

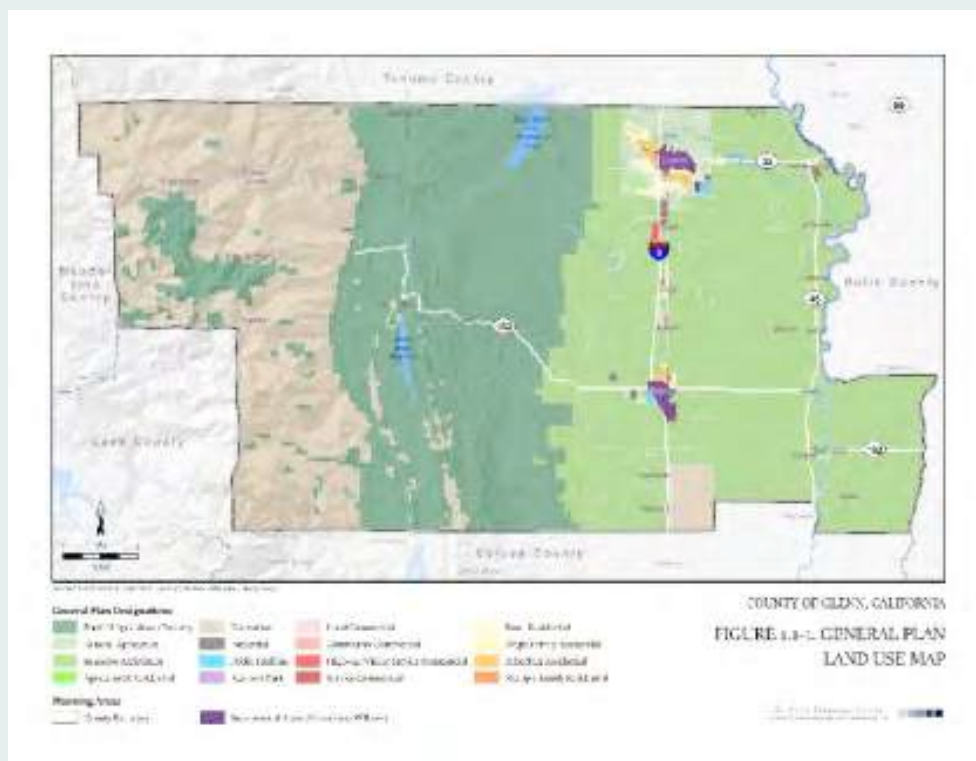
- *What policies and programs should the County consider to encourage the development of workforce housing in an effort to attract new residents to the existing communities?*
- *What policies and programs related to education should the County support that will benefit school-age children and improve academic outcomes for Glenn County students?*
- *How can the County encourage the expansion of broadband and telecommunications capacity?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Industry Diversification

The County's adopted 2019-2022 Economic Development Strategy lists as a priority for expanding business development, attracting businesses that are aligned with, but diversified from, the agriculture industry. The Economic Development Strategy also prioritizes attracting retail sales tax producers.

Participants in the Visioning process provided a consistent message that the community's economic base needs to be expanded through diversification of businesses, increased retail shopping opportunities, and by capitalizing on the County's small-town charm and rural/agricultural background. There are also a number of industries that are offshoots of the agriculture industry that could be explored to further diversify the economy while taking advantage of strong economic sectors in the region.



As shown in the figure above, Glenn County's commercial and industrial areas are concentrated in and around Orland and Willows, and along the I-5 corridor (note: a larger version of this map is available in Chapter 1 of the Existing Conditions Report). Historically, jobs-generating development in the unincorporated areas has been primarily related to the agriculture industry, services, and government sectors. Expansion into new sectors or diversifying within a sector can provide new opportunities for businesses and employees.

VERTICAL COORDINATION OF AGRICULTURE

As described under Opportunity: Agricultural-Related Industries, there are a number of industries that can function in concert with the County's active agricultural operations, such as food processing, cold storage, research and development, an agricultural demonstration center, and facilities that manufacture goods from agricultural by-products. Vertical coordination refers to the synchronization of the successive stages of a production and marketing system, in this case, agriculture. This

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coordination and integration of the agriculture industry has been evolving organically in Glenn County for decades. However, there is clearly more opportunity to capture the economic value of local food processing and the other direct and indirect effects that farm production creates in the local economy given the fact that much of the County's raw farm production is transported outside of the County for value-added processing.

AGRITOURISM

Agritourism is a field that is growing in popularity as producers try to diversify and increase profits. Agritourism links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner. Common examples of agritourism include winery tours and wine tasting, pumpkin picking patches, corn mazes, hay rides, dude ranches, demonstration farms, rural bed & breakfasts (or short-term rentals, i.e. Airbnb).

Agritourism could present Glenn County with a unique opportunity to combine aspects of the tourism and agriculture industries to provide a number of financial, educational, and social benefits to tourists, producers, and the community. Agritourism gives producers an opportunity to generate additional income and an avenue for direct marketing to consumers. It could enhance the County's tourism industry by increasing the volume of visitors to the area and the length of their stay. Agritourism could also provide Glenn County with the potential to increase the local tax base and new employment opportunities. Additionally, agritourism can provide educational opportunities to the public, help to preserve agricultural lands, and allow the County to develop business enterprises.

SMALL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Start-ups, home-based businesses, and micro-enterprise are important components of the local economy. These types of businesses accommodate a broad range of skill levels and interests. Home-based businesses typically do not require significant real estate investment, which reduces start-up costs. With the County's support of the Glenn Grows Center (see Opportunity: Employment Generation and Business Attraction), there is an exciting opportunity for the business incubator to assist small businesses to grow in Glenn County.

REGIONAL-SERVING RETAIL

Regional-serving retail can provide an important part to the local economy – offering amenities that attract key employers, supplying goods and services for local residents, and providing job opportunities to youth and other segments of the community that might not be qualified for higher paying jobs. Previous retail sales leakage analyses performed in the County (e.g., City of Orland) have indicated that a significant dollar amount in retail dollars is being lost to neighboring communities every year. Participants in the Visioning process identified a need for these types of retail establishments, which serve household shopping needs and often have affordable prices. While neighborhood shopping centers provide convenient access to goods and services, a regional-serving or “big box” store will serve a larger regional base and should be located in an area with characteristics attractive to developers, such as highway access and visibility.

MANUFACTURING

An interest in diversifying the economy by way of attracting new manufacturing uses was expressed during the Visioning process. Although only 7.4% of Glenn County jobs are represented by the manufacturing sector, this industry has experienced growth since 2010 and the County's top employer is Johns Manville, a manufacturer of insulation and commercial roofing materials, and which is also one

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of the region's largest employers. Furthermore, Glenn County has above average concentrations of employed residents working in production occupations, including manufacturing, which reflects a higher skilled workforce. Given the availability of underutilized properties along the I-5 corridor, access to major transportation routes, and the availability of skilled labor, there may be a prime opportunity to attract more manufacturing businesses to Glenn County in the future.

Expansion of the building products sector could be complemented by other manufacturing uses such as food processing and green technology manufacturing, including photovoltaic solar cells, solar panels, smart energy management systems for residential and commercial application, and other clean energy products.

CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Senate Bill (SB) 100 established a landmark policy requiring renewable energy and zero-carbon resources supply 100% of electric retail sales to end-use customers by 2045, speeding up the state's timeline for moving to carbon-free power sources. As the State works to achieve this goal, there will be opportunities for local jurisdictions to establish themselves as ideal areas to locate clean and renewable energy facilities due to adequate available land, sufficient local resources (e.g., sun, wind, agricultural by-products) for energy production, a business-friendly climate, and proximity to major transportation corridors.

The agricultural industry results in crop by-products and waste. Unused crops and food processing wastes are additional sources of biomass for energy generation. Rather than disposing of these wastes, they can be used to create energy through ethanol plants, biomass plants, and cogeneration facilities. There are approximately 28 biomass facilities producing electricity and steam in the state using a wide range of agricultural residues such as rice hulls and straw, almond shells, various pits from fruits, corn stalks, tree prunings, etc., as fuel sources.

The livestock industry also creates opportunities for energy production. Livestock manure, also known as feedlot biomass, can be put to practical use as a renewable energy source, with dry manure and liquid manure producing different types of energy, primarily ethanol and biogas. By processing the manure for energy rather than disposing of it on-site or off-site, a number of benefits can be realized, including cleaner water, improved air quality, reduced odor, and reduced transportation costs.

Due to its topography and climate, Glenn County has many areas that could produce solar energy. While solar energy is a renewable resource, it can require significant land area which could reduce the County's agricultural lands. The County can consider co-locating solar farms with large industrial uses or lands that are not conducive to active agricultural production.

Apart from the potential of reducing costs to local businesses and providing opportunities for skilled workers, a significant benefit of this industry is that it can complement the County's strong agricultural sector. However, renewable energy facilities such as biomass plants can result in air pollutants, noise, and increased truck traffic, so it is necessary to identify appropriate industrial sites that will not negatively impact residential and other sensitive uses.

Key Questions

- *What key industries does Glenn County wish to attract over the next 10 to 20 years?*
- *Are the vacant and underutilized lands in the County suitable for attracting the mix of businesses that Glenn County desires?*
- *Are adequate sites designated to accommodate a variety of new businesses, particularly if a business has specific siting needs?*
- *Are there additional steps the County can take to partner with local agricultural non-profit organizations to strengthen agricultural tourism in the area?*
- *How can the County partner with state and federal agencies, and with other stakeholders, on clean and renewable energy projects?*
- *How aggressive should the County be in trying to attract renewable energy projects?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Employment Generation and Business Attraction

While the County can designate sites for a variety of job-generating uses and can plan to provide a broad range of agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses as previously discussed, these plans are only meaningful if the County can attract new businesses and encourage existing businesses to expand.

Some of the key components of business generation include branding, marketing, visibility, and provision of adequate services.

BRANDING AND MARKETING



A detailed branding and marketing plan can help Glenn County shape its image as a desirable destination and leverage the agricultural, small-town, and community-oriented aspects that set Glenn County apart. Larger employers often look at the amenities of the community and the local workforce when considering new locations. The presence of quality of life factors (e.g., attractiveness of the area, cost of housing, quality of schools, entertainment venues, retail amenities, and variety of dining and drinking

establishments) may play a significant part in an employer locating in Glenn County. Developing a branding and marketing plan that highlights Glenn County's assets, including its skilled workforce, will assist in positioning the County for success when major employers are considering a location in the region.

The establishment of the Glenn Grows Center was a significant part of the County's Economic Development Strategy for the period 2013-2018. Glenn Grows is a business incubator structured to assist small businesses to grow by bringing in resources they might otherwise not be able to access. For businesses, the Glenn Grows Center provides assistance with location search and siting, experience with incentives and special programs, regulatory navigation, funding and financing, and community outreach. The center can also assist in recruiting a workforce and getting the workforce trained. The County can continue to build on the early successes of the center as an anchor and starting point for economic development business opportunities while branding and marketing Glenn County.

VISIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

People only visit businesses and shopping areas if they are aware that the business or shopping area exists. Glenn County could benefit from a wayfinding signage program, including gateway signage along the I-5 corridor, that directs out-of-town visitors to the commercial centers, Downtown Orland and Downtown Willows, civic centers, points of historical interest (e.g., the Carnegie Libraries), Thunderhill Raceway Park, and other local destinations.

IMPROVING BUSINESS AREAS

Many of the County's retail shopping areas in the vicinity of Interstate 5 are relatively new, with high-quality design and a modern layout (e.g., Walmart Supercenter, Pilot Travel Center). Older commercial uses in the downtown areas of Orland and Willows would benefit from revitalization within these districts. Maintaining a vibrant and attractive Downtown Orland and Downtown Willows will help to foster Glenn County's small-town image. Over time, continued maintenance and occasional design upgrades of retail areas will ensure that the County continues to attract a broad base of customers and tenants. While the County can facilitate the improvement of business areas, desired improvements can

only be achieved by conscientious investment on the part of the local property owners, as well as organization and partnership by the local merchant communities.

APPROPRIATE SPACE

Many of the research and development, clean technology/energy, and other newer and emerging industries discussed under Opportunity: Industry Diversification have different space needs than the typical commercial/office space. Laboratory, testing, maker, and other types of space and facilities are necessary to attract some of the newer industries.

Glenn County's existing building stock is mainly designed for smaller tenants in the 1,500 to 10,000 square foot range, but there is a need for larger, modern spaces to accommodate large-scale industrial and retail uses. Given that existing commercial/office and industrial properties are available elsewhere in the region (often at reduced prices), many businesses will be reluctant to go through the time, expense, uncertainty, and regulatory process required to have a new building constructed in Glenn County.

ENSURE ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE SERVICES

Commercial and industrial lands are typically more attractive to developers when essential services, such as water, sewage collection, and natural gas, are available and affordable. Infrastructure connection and other development costs heavily influence the decisions of large corporations in determining where to site new facilities. Local development fees can be an impediment to small-sized companies building their own facilities. The County's fee schedule assigns fees to non-residential uses based on square footage of structures. This approach may encourage lower-intensity uses that generate fewer jobs (e.g., truck yards, large warehouses, and distribution businesses) and place a greater burden on building-intensive uses, such as biotechnology, food and agricultural products processing, manufacturing, and retail. Site accessibility via a public road with all-weather crossings is also important.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The County participates in multiple partnerships (e.g., Glenn Grows, 3CORE, SBDC) in order to help improve Glenn County's visibility as a location for business and to address regional issues and opportunities for business attraction. The County also conducts outreach to various trade organizations in order to explore opportunities to match expanding companies with real estate opportunities in Glenn County.

Expanding upon the efforts of the Glenn Grows Center to focus on attracting and retaining target industry companies could accelerate the County's efforts to attract new business. Businesses and organizations that provide capital resources can be partnered with new companies and companies that wish to expand. This type of effort can direct "angel" or venture capital investments to promising companies competing for scarce capital investment.

SMALL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The most effective and desirable economic development strategy for many rural communities is small entrepreneurship – development based on locally-owned and owner-operated small businesses. Small entrepreneurship has been proven to work in rural areas that have not been successful in attracting manufacturers or other large employers from outside. People in rural areas tend to have an entrepreneurial bent. For example, in the Midwest, farming and ranching counties have long had two to three times the rate of self-employment as metropolitan counties. This works in part because of

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

deliberate efforts to cultivate small business development. Encouraging locally-owned small business ventures through the permitting and business license process as well as taking into account small business needs when considering office, technology, and industrial park developments can help the County attract a broader range of businesses.

BUSINESS RETENTION

The 2013-2018 Economic Development Strategy prioritized business retention and expansion first, then business attraction. The outreach to existing businesses during this period resulted in several expansions that were accelerated with new grant funding. Employment growth in Glenn County will likely come in large part from business expansion; therefore, it is critical for the County to maintain close business relationships with existing local companies, offer seminars and consulting for business owners, link businesses to various lending programs and financial services, assist with marketing of local businesses, and provide other key services to local businesses.

Key Questions

- *What programs should Glenn County prioritize to attract new businesses?*
- *What policies are appropriate in the General Plan to support an environment that is conducive to economic vitality and business growth?*

4.4 FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Glenn County adopts an annual operating budget that establishes the annual spending plan for each County department or division for each fiscal year (FY). In FY 2010-11, Glenn County's total revenues and appropriations were \$77,393,083. The General Fund activity was \$13,138,684, or 17% of the total. Funds restricted for specific purposes totaled \$64,254,399, or 83%. Since FY 2010-11, Glenn County has experienced strong revenue growth, corresponding with improvements in the regional and national economy. Total estimated revenues and appropriations are approximately **\$110,376,133 for FY 2019-20**. There is a decrease in the proportion of General Fund activity to 15%, offset by an increase in restricted special purpose activity to 85%. Even though the funding levels for both general purpose and restricted purpose activities have increased over time, the restricted purpose funding outpaces general purpose funding as the County increased its participation in programs funded by State and Federal sources. The FY 2019-20 budget is 4% larger than the previous year, which reflects an increase in Restricted Fund availability due to the current state of the economy at the local, State and Federal levels.

General Fund revenues are from Property Tax, Sales Tax, Vehicle License Fee (VLF) Adjustments, Development Impact Fees, Fines, Charges for Services, and Franchise Fees. The highest sources of revenues are Property Tax and Sales Tax, which combine for approximately 38% of total General Fund revenues. In recent years, General Fund revenues have been positively affected by appreciating property values.

General Fund expenditures include Police, Education, County Administration, Community Facilities, Legislative, and Debt Service costs. Overall, Public Protection and Safety comprise the majority of General Fund appropriations, representing approximately two-thirds (63%) of General Fund operating expenses (\$17.4 million). The second largest at 30% is for General Government, including the Board of Supervisors, CAO, and Assessor (\$8.2 million).

Services funded outside of the General Fund include Solid Waste and Water Resources, which are funded through individual Enterprise Funds (total FY 2019-20 budget of \$15.5 million) and other Special Revenue Funds (\$53,602,294), Capital Projects Funds (\$582,821), and Debt Service Funds (\$513,864).

Participants in the Visioning process identified the following issues and comments related to fiscal sustainability:

- Well-planned/sensible growth necessary
- Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth
- Outstanding public safety agencies (i.e. Police and Fire)
- Great schools
- Sales tax leakage to City of Chico

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Fiscal Sustainability of New Development

The General Plan Update establishes the County's vision for its future. Opportunities will be provided for significant amounts of new development and revitalization of existing development. Ensuring that future growth does not tax the County's resources is essential in maintaining a high quality of life for County residents, providing a strong economic environment for the County's businesses, and ensuring a well-functioning government that provides necessary services.

The Existing Conditions Report describes implications of the General Plan Update in terms of service standards and revenue sources, which are summarized in the following Opportunity discussions.

A Fiscal Analysis will be prepared by Bay Area Economics (BAE) that analyzes each of the Land Use Alternatives and considers factors such as the relative amounts of agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses within a given alternative, whether any alternative appears to call for development that might trigger extraordinary new service expenditures, and whether alternatives proposed support revenue generating land uses (such as retail or hotels). BAE will evaluate the alternatives and suggest fiscal strategies to help ensure the County's General Fund budget sustainability over the General Plan time horizon.

Key Questions

- *How will various General Plan land use alternatives or policies affect the long-term fiscal health of the County and its ability to effectively provide adequate public services and infrastructure?*
- *Should the County focus on any specific types of development or locations for development in order to generate increased revenues?*

Opportunity: Service Standards

The cost of providing County services is based primarily on the standard, or level, of service provided. As part of the existing General Plan, level of service standards have been established for public services, which are used to evaluate the impact of development on the various services and to evaluate distribution and expansion needs. The following discussion summarizes adopted and, where no service levels are adopted, current service levels for important County service functions.

POLICE

The existing General Plan stipulates that the County should maintain a police force level of at least one officer per 1,000 residents within the unincorporated area. The County's current officer-to-resident ratio in the unincorporated area is 2.2 per 1,000, reflecting a commitment from the County towards public safety. The Glenn County Sheriff's Department has 47 sworn officers and 20 support positions staffing three divisions: Operations, Support Services, and Jail. Level of service standards also include response times: 5 minutes inside urban limit lines; 15 minutes outside urban limit lines.

ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

Public roadways and related improvements (other than State highways) within the unincorporated County are owned, improved, and maintained by the County. Street maintenance includes street sweeping and catch basin/storm drain repairs to implement National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. The County's Public Works Road & Bridge Maintenance Department maintains over 860 miles of County roads and more than 200 bridges. This effort is funded by the State Highway User Tax.

PARKS

Parks, trails, and recreational facilities in Glenn County are managed and maintained by the County Parks Department and the U.S. Forest Service. The County Parks Department operates 10 parks encompassing approximately 290 acres. The existing General Plan sets a standard of 5.0 acres of developed parks for each 1,000 residents for the provision of parks and recreation services. Developers are required to either dedicate the parkland or to pay in-lieu fees. As of FY 2019-20, the County owns 23.79 acres of developed parkland, or 0.82 developed acres per 1,000 residents.

SCHOOLS

The County does not establish school standards or fees. Fees collected from new development are regulated by the State. However, the County can negotiate with developers to have land dedicated for a school site through a Development Agreement.

CHANGES TO LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Revising the County's level of service standards has implications for both new and existing development. An increased level of service standard will typically require that new development pay higher fees, and thus will indirectly increase the cost of housing for new residential development, and will make new commercial and industrial development more expensive. Apart from passing a new tax measure or having property owners elect to vote themselves into a special assessment district, there is not a mechanism for collecting fees from existing development to cover its fair-share of increased service standards. In order to achieve a County-wide increase in service standards, funds would have to come from the General Fund, which typically means that other services would be reduced commensurately.

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key Questions

- *Should any of the County's adopted level of service standards be updated?*
- *Should new service standards be established?*
- *Are there any new services or programs that the County should consider to better serve the needs of youth or seniors?*
- *Are there new policies or actions that the County should include in the General Plan to ensure that both new and existing development receive adequate services?*

Opportunity: Develop a Resilience Strategy

A city or county’s resilience is defined by the ability of the individuals, institutions, businesses, and systems within the community to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks it experiences. Like illnesses, there are chronic stresses – high unemployment, poor or overtaxed infrastructure, water shortages — that weaken cities and counties. Acute shocks are the devastating occurrences that often get conversations about resilience going: wildfires, earthquakes, floods, or disease outbreaks. A resilient city or county lives well in good times and bounces back quickly and strongly from hard times. Glenn County could build resilience to the social, economic, and physical challenges of the 21st Century by developing a strategy that is designed to advance the County’s resilience. A resilience strategy could identify long-term goals and make specific recommendations for short-term actions to help address some of Glenn County’s most pressing challenges.

Glenn County’s interconnected resilience challenges might include:

- **Wildfires** – As evidenced by the recent Camp Fire in neighboring Butte County, the region has a history of destructive wildfires in the foothills and mountains. The wildfire risk is very high for Elk Creek and the areas west of the I-5, a threat that is compounded by narrow roads and limited access and egress routes. If a fire burned in the Elk Creek area today, over 100 structures could be destroyed, including many single-family homes and small businesses. The risk of wildfire in Glenn County is aggravated by California’s cycle of severe and prolonged drought.
- **Earthquakes** – Although Central Valley geology makes Glenn County a relatively inactive seismic area that is not prone to major earthquakes, there are active faults around the valley, including the Cleveland Hills and Sierra Nevada Faults. According to the California Earthquake Authority, there is a 76% probability of one or more magnitude 7.0 earthquakes striking Northern California over a 30-year period beginning in 2014. Therefore, current Glenn County residents are likely to experience a major earthquake in their lifetime. In the event of a major earthquake, many housing units could be destroyed or damaged, displacing a number of households. Businesses could also be destroyed. And the energy and water infrastructure of the various utilities would likely be disrupted for several days or weeks. The economic impact in Glenn County could be in the millions of dollars.
- **Climate Change Impacts: Drought and Flooding** – Due to climate change, longer periods of drought are expected to be the new normal for the County, region, and state. Shortages in precipitation in the Sierra Nevadas and decreased groundwater levels can have a pronounced impact on water supply in Glenn County and the impacts of prolonged drought on the County’s



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agricultural-based economy could be devastating. Furthermore, drought leads to increased wildfire risk and puts significant stress on the County's forests and ecosystems.

On the other end of the spectrum, climate change can also cause more frequent and severe flooding. In fact, flooding is the most likely natural hazard to occur in the County. Many areas of Glenn County are vulnerable to flooding, especially property near drainage channels and along the County's creeks and the Sacramento River. Due to heavy seasonal rainfall, flat terrain, and the network of canal and levee systems, flooding issues can be difficult to overcome. A majority of County flood prone properties are specifically subject to inundation as a result of heavy rainfall and resulting stream and drainage canal overflows. Localized flooding associated with creek or stream overflow occurs in Glenn County when rainfall runoff volumes exceed the design capacity of drainage facilities, or a lack of flood control structures in place, or maintenance in drainage areas which causes pinch points in flood control structures. Heavy seasonal rainfall, which typically occurs during December through February, often results in stream overflows. Flood risk is intensified in reaches along the Sacramento River.

- **External Economic Crisis** – Glenn County is part of the North Sacramento Valley regional economy, which, like most local economies in the U.S., is prone to occasional recessions and contractions. The regional economy is particularly dependent on the agriculture sector, which is prone to dramatic boom-bust cycles. These economic crises have a tendency to impact the most vulnerable residents while simultaneously reducing County resources to serve those residents. The County and region are also vulnerable to shocks related to international trade (e.g., trade war with China). National economic contractions recur on approximately 7-year cycles. During economic downturns, the County's discretionary revenues are typically reduced, while the demands for County services may dramatically increase.
- **Aging Infrastructure** – Infrastructure is central to the daily lives of Glenn County residents – from the roads and pipes they use every day, to the larger systems, like food and housing that residents rely on as lifelines. Sometimes these systems continue to operate past their intended life span, and sometimes they are inadequate altogether to meet the needs of a growing and vibrant community.
- **Limited County Resources** – Despite prudent and conservative fiscal policies and steady economic growth, over the long term, without intervention, the County's expenditures could grow faster than revenues. The growth rate in revenues from taxes and fees tend to lag the growth rate of personnel, utility, fuel, and other costs. Simultaneously, the County will require significant new investments in capital and services to maintain current infrastructure and quality of life. These trends, when coupled with limitations on the ability of local governments in California to generate new sources of revenue, create continual pressure to reduce government services or continue deferring capital investments. In times of economic downturn, these limitations can lead to dramatic reductions in government services at precisely when those services are most needed by residents.

The above can be complex challenges that no one strategy can solve. But development and implementation of a resilience strategy is an opportunity to identify tangible steps that contribute to a solution and that emphasize an approach to resilience-building that can be further applied by the County and its community partners to other challenges moving forward. The approach that a resilience strategy should emphasize is to build community resilience by building stronger connections – stronger connections between neighbors; between public, private, nonprofit, and academic institutions; between departments within the County government; and between Glenn County and regional

governments. These connections not only can provide critical support and lifelines in the event of a disaster, but also lead to multi-stakeholder, multi-benefit problem-solving even under normal circumstances.

A resilience strategy is also an invitation for all residents and organizations in the County to partner with their government and other community leaders to build Glenn County's resilience together. There is no single action that can be taken that solves all of Glenn County's challenges, but the County can take coordinated, multi-disciplinary steps that address more than one challenge at once.

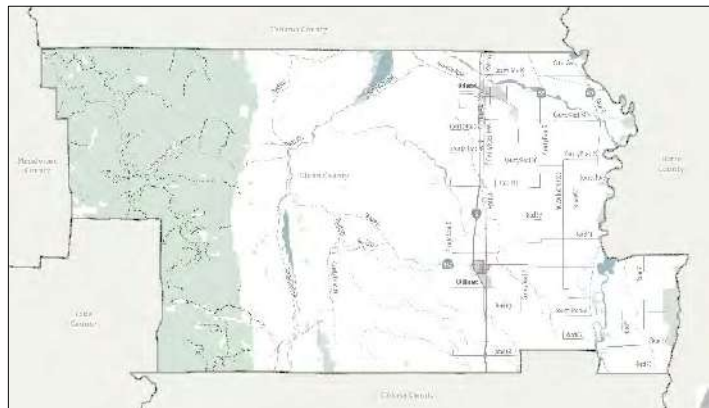
Key Questions

- *How can the consideration of climate impacts be integrated into land use planning and capital improvement planning?*
- *How can Glenn County accelerate access to reliable and clean energy?*
- *How effective are the County's existing disaster preparedness incentive programs?*
- *How can the County prepare for wildfires in the foothills and the Mendocino National Forest?*
- *Should new development within the 100-year floodplain be discouraged?*
- *How can the County collaborate with regional agencies, the Cities of Orland and Willows, neighboring counties, and others to identify regional resilience-building approaches?*

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4.5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Glenn County lies in the northern part of the Central Valley, midway between Redding and Sacramento. The County's agricultural history and geographical location have led to a preservation of agricultural land and concentration of development within the incorporated cities of Orland and Willows, which are effectively nodes along an axis – Interstate 5. The I-5 bisects Glenn County from north to south and acts as the County's backbone transportation corridor. Given the sparse population, most travel in Glenn County is by automobile.



The roadway network within the unincorporated parts of the County is rural in character, mainly serving small communities and agricultural uses. Along with Interstate 5, State Routes 32, 45, and 162 are the primary transportation corridors extending through the County and serve all of the County's major population centers, including Orland, Willows, Hamilton City, Artois, Elk Creek, and Butte City. Other County arterials and a network of local public and private roads constitute the remainder of the roadway system. Road care and maintenance is a constant struggle due to limited Federal and State funding for projects; deferred maintenance for rehabilitation; limited transit service; and a lack of interregional coordination.

The primary transit service within Glenn County is Glenn Ride, which provides seven round trips every weekday and three round trips on Saturday from Willows to Chico with service to Artois, Orland, and Hamilton City. Tehama Rural Area Express (TRAX) makes a connection in Orland with Glenn Ride, allowing transfers to destinations in Tehama County and for Tehama County residents to get to points in Glenn County or out to Chico in nearby Butte Co.

There are currently two short segments of Class II bicycle lanes in Glenn County: in Willows on SR 162, west of I-5, and in Orland on SR 32, east of Papst Avenue, but otherwise has no substantial bicycle facilities that provide either regional interconnection or local access, and pedestrian infrastructure is limited even in population centers. The Glenn County Active Transportation Plan, adopted June 20, 2019, proposes bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements in the communities of Orland, Willows, and Hamilton City.

Participants in the Visioning Workshops identified the following as issues to address and points to consider in developing a vision of the County's future with respect to transportation and circulation:

- Central location along I-5 corridor
- Relatively low traffic volumes
- Poor circulation within the County
- Need for better transportation routes to facilitate and grow business
- Close to Sacramento and Redding

Issue: Traffic Safety and Complete Streets

Between 2011 and 2015, there were 525 collisions involving injuries and fatalities in Glenn County, including twenty fatalities. The largest share of these collisions involved improper turning, which also accounted for the largest share of fatalities on the road network (eight out of the twenty). Unsafe speeds and driving or bicycling under the influence of alcohol or drugs made up the next most common causes of collisions and road fatalities.

While about 20 percent of these collisions and fatalities occurred on Interstate 5, the remaining 80 percent (and 85 percent of fatalities) took place on state, county, and local roads, which are mostly two lanes with high operating speeds. The combination of two-lane highways and high speeds creates conditions for certain types of collisions:

- Vehicles entering a two-lane highway from a side street may underestimate the speed of oncoming vehicles
- Vehicles may overestimate the speed of vehicles ahead of them and fail to slow when those vehicles turn off two-lane highways
- Narrow or nonexistent shoulders and a lack of turn lanes limit options for avoiding collisions

The County was recently awarded funds to complete a Local Road Safety Plan through Caltrans' Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). This planning process offers an opportunity to identify targeted crash types that can be mitigated with proven safety countermeasures to reduce crash risk.

Assembly Bill 1358, the Complete Streets Act, was signed into law in California in September 2008. The act requires all cities and counties to consider all users of city- and county-owned roads when they update their general transportation plans. In a rural County like Glenn, such consideration might give priority to adding visual separation on the roadway through center lines, fog lines, and paved shoulders.

The General Plan update and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding together provide an opportunity for the County to address safety issues and identify complete streets improvements to benefit all road users.

Key Questions

- *How can the County mitigate the risks of collision inherent in a roadway network of two-lane, high speed highways?*
- *Does right-of-way exist to create visually separated, paved shoulders or turn lanes at locations with a history or risk of collisions?*
- *Does the County want to prioritize increased enforcement of speed violations and/or sober driving to improve road safety?*

Issue: SB 743 Implementation

Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 743 in 2013. The legislation requires the state to change how transportation impacts on the environment are evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), with the intention of removing barriers to infill development, public transportation projects, and projects that increase walking and biking. The California Natural Resources Agency completed a comprehensive update of the CEQA guidelines, including incorporating SB 743. These guidelines became effective December 28, 2018 and the provisions apply statewide July 1, 2020. In addition, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has developed technical recommendations for implementation.

SB 743 focuses on accessibility rather than just mobility and changes the focus of transportation impact analysis from measuring impacts to drivers – using Level of Service (LOS), a measure of driver comfort and convenience – to measuring the impact of driving – using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), a measure of how much people drive.

Due to its rural nature, Glenn County has higher VMT per capita than California as a whole. Most of this VMT is accounted for by residents of the County's unincorporated areas. Residents of the Cities of Orland and Willows, by contrast, have access to a mix of land uses and destinations within close proximity. Their per capita VMT is more in line with the state as a whole.

OPR has recommended a threshold of 15 percent below baseline VMT for determining significant environmental impacts in CEQA analysis. The California Air Resources Board, meanwhile, has suggested that a 17 percent reduction may be necessary for the State to meet its emissions reduction goals.

In rural areas of non-MPO counties, OPR recognizes that fewer options may be available for reducing VMT, and significance thresholds may be best determined on a case-by-case basis. Glenn County can use a threshold other than these 15 and 17 percent numbers, but the decision will need to be supported by substantial evidence. Without a Travel Demand Model, Glenn County will need to consider other sources of data with which to evaluate VMT impacts.

Mitigation strategies for reducing VMT may include built environment changes, including land use mix adjustments, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies. TDM strategies provide alternatives to making a trip in the first place or provide alternatives or incentives to choose modes of travel other than driving alone. It is important to note that while SB 743 has changed environmental law, these changes do not affect planning law that governs the development of General Plans. If the County wants to retain LOS as a measure of transportation effects in determining whether or not to approve a new development, it may do so.

Key Questions

- *What form of VMT metric should the County use in CEQA analysis?*
- *What methodology should the County use in estimating and forecasting VMT?*
- *Using VMT, what significant impact threshold is appropriate for land use projects? What threshold is appropriate for transportation projects?*
- *What VMT reduction mitigation strategies are feasible?*

Issue: Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Routes

California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018, including the Camp fire, the State's most destructive wildfire to date, which devastated the Town of Paradise in neighboring Butte County. The Camp fire offers a cautionary tale for evacuation planning in communities with limited access roads. While most of Glenn County and its population centers have access to a broad grid of roads, providing multiple parallel routes in every cardinal direction, the communities of Elk Creek and Stonyford (in neighboring Colusa County) are located in more remote areas with high fire risk and limited roadway access.

Elk Creek is a community of around 160 people located approximately five miles east of the Mendocino National Forest in the western portion of Glenn County, near the junction of SR-162 and County Road 306 on the western bank of Elk Creek and just north of Stony Gorge Reservoir. SR-162 provides the only route east from the town within 20 miles.

Stonyford is a community of around 150 people located just across the County line in Colusa at the junction of County Road 306 and Lodoga Stonyford Road. It is northeast of the East Park Reservoir, which, along with the nearby foothills create a physical barrier to the east of Stonyford. County Road 306 (in Glenn County) and Lodoga Stonyford Road provide the only access into the valley, though neither provides access east within 20 miles.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) maps areas of very high fire hazard, based on relevant factors such as fuels, terrain, and weather, as well as expected fire behavior and burn probabilities. Based on this mapping, approximately one-third of Glenn County is designated as very high fire hazard severity zone, including the westernmost portion of the County and extending east to around Stony Gorge Reservoir and the foothills of the Mendocino National Forest. The communities of Elk Creek and Stonyford are both located in areas designated as very high fire hazard. An additional third of Glenn County – extending from the foothills east to the onset of agricultural lands west of Orland and Willows is designated as high or moderate fire hazard severity. Other pockets of moderate and high fire hazard exist throughout the easternmost portion of the County.

The threat of wildfires presents a challenge in planning evacuation routes for communities like Elk Creek and Stonyford. An assessment of evacuation routing across the County might include the following steps:

- Identify communities where roadway connectivity is lacking and could result in problems if a community-wide evacuation were necessary.
- Identify potential new evacuation routes corridors.
- Evaluate the feasibility of improving the potential new evacuation route corridors to desired conditions and roadway classifications, including consideration of physical and environmental constraints.
- Identify potential community evacuation routes based on route alignments and design requirements to classify the alignment as an evacuation route.

Key Questions

- *Is federal or State funding available for evacuation route planning and/or to implement transportation improvements needed for evacuation route planning?*

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Opportunity: Expanded Public Transportation Options

The primary transit service within Glenn County is Glenn Ride, which provides seven round trips every weekday and three round trips on Saturday from Willows to Chico with service to Artois, Orland, and Hamilton City. Glenn Ride buses are equipped with accessible lifts and bicycle racks. Glenn Ride is a deviated fixed route transit service: users may request deviations up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the fixed route to drop them closer to their destination.

Additional transportation assistance is provided to eligible residents through Dial-A-Ride and Volunteer Medical Transport. Seniors 60 years of age or older and those on Permanent Disability, or low income are eligible for Transit Service Cards to use these services.

Tehama Rural Area Express (TRAX) and the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency are planning to provide long-distance bus service between Redding and Sacramento in the near future.

A September staff report to the Glenn County Regional Transportation Committee notes that Glenn Ride ridership was up nearly 6 percent in fiscal year 2018/2019. Dial-A-Ride service had similarly increased nearly 6 percent in Orland but had declined by 2 percent in Willows. Volunteer Medical Transport had declined by over 20 percent.

As of January 1, 2020, the County extended Dial-A-Ride service from two 6-hour service days to three 6-hour service days (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) per week.

Key Questions

- *Should the County coordinate with transit service providers to expand transit services and transportation demand programs?*
- *What public transportation programs should the County prioritize (i.e., expand frequency on Glenn Ride, expand Dial-A-Ride service hours, consolidate services)?*

Opportunity: Shared Use Paths for Recreational Cycling and Tourism

The Outdoor Industry Association estimates that 48 million people bicycle recreationally every year and that bike tourism accounts for an estimated \$83 billion in annual trip-related spending (not including gear sales). Bicycle tourism can be a source of economic development in rural areas like Glenn County, where cyclists can find low-traffic, scenic rural roads. A study in Montana found that touring cyclists spent 40 percent more than tourists traveling by automobile. Another study reports \$365 million per year in economic spending from recreational bicyclists in Iowa, and \$17 million per year in spending from participants of the state's annual cross-state bicycling event.

To attract recreational bicyclists, Glenn County might consider both improvements to its existing transportation network to accommodate bicyclists more comfortably and expanding the network for multi-use trails specifically.

The County's 2019 Active Transportation Plan includes a preliminary assessment of two potential off-street bicycle routes that could increase options for active transportation and recreation in the County:

- Route A: Hamilton City to Willows via the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District Main Canal. This approximately 19-mile route would use canal roads to create a scenic off-street trail between two of Glenn County's largest population and destination centers. The County could market the route's scenic value, running exclusively through flat farmland, to visiting bicyclists from throughout the region and create economic development opportunities for restaurants and other businesses in Hamilton City and Willows.
- Route B: Hamilton City to Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park. This approximately 4.5-mile route would provide a shorter, more family-friendly ride to and from the State Park and Sacramento River.

Other facilities and on-street improvements that could provide better comfort for cyclists in the County include widened and paved shoulders, fog lines with or without plastic flex posts, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) signage to signify the presence of bicyclists, and sharrow symbols stamped on the pavement.

Key Questions

- *Are these conceptual routes feasible, given ownership and access, as well as implementation concerns?*
- *How can investments in recreational cycling infrastructure be leveraged for local economic development?*
- *Can existing right-of-way and pavement resurfacing schedules be leveraged to improve the existing network for recreational cycling?*
- *Does the County want to consider an annual bicycling event or other programming to attract recreational cyclists to the area?*

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4.6 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The provision of adequate utilities and community services is vital to maintaining a high quality of life in Glenn County. This section addresses the provision of utilities in the County, including water, wastewater (sewer), solid waste, police and fire, schools, and parks.

WATER

Water supplied to Glenn County comes from two sources: groundwater and surface water. Water for agriculture is provided by many surface water districts and from groundwater. Most water for municipal, domestic, and industrial purposes is obtained from groundwater. Since the economy of Glenn County is primarily based on irrigated agriculture, sustainable management of water is vital to the County. Numerous water companies and community services districts (CSDs) oversee the provision and delivery of water supplies for urban uses in Glenn County. These include the following



urban water purveyors: Cal Water (serving Willows), City of Orland, Black Butte Water District, Elk Creek CSD, Butte City CSD, and Artois CSD. There are also numerous private groundwater wells located throughout the County that serve individual parcels in the unincorporated areas of the County. The County does not directly provide any water services to residents or businesses. New development must either provide water from onsite sources, or connect to one of the existing district water systems.

WASTEWATER

Wastewater in Glenn County is treated and disposed of using one of several methods. The primary methods are onsite disposal (such as septic) and centralized disposal (such as wastewater treatment plants). There are five communities in the County served by centralized wastewater disposal systems: Orland, Willows, Hamilton City, Northeast Willows, and Parkway Estates. The areas served by onsite systems are generally more rural or agricultural in nature. Although most onsite systems serve an individual dwelling or commercial establishment, some serve groups of homes or businesses. The County does not directly provide any wastewater collection or treatment services to residents or businesses. New development must either provide wastewater treatment from onsite sources (septic), or connect to one of the existing district wastewater systems.

SOLID WASTE

Solid waste in Glenn County is collected by franchised haulers and taken to the Glenn County Landfill and Glenn County Transfer Station. In general, there are four types of solid waste generated in Glenn County: residential waste, commercial waste, industrial waste, and natural resource byproducts (agricultural). Most of the waste brought to landfills is residential waste. The Glenn County Landfill and Glenn County Transfer Station (for processing of recyclables) are owned and operated by Glenn County. The joint facility is located on County Road 33, west of Artois.

POLICE

The unincorporated areas of Glenn County receive general public safety and law enforcement services from the Glenn County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department also operates the County Jail, Dispatch, County Coroner, and the County Office of Emergency Services (OES). The Sheriff's Department

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operates out of its headquarters located at 543 W. Oak Street, Willows. The Sheriff's Department is responsible for all law enforcement patrol services throughout all areas of the unincorporated County. As of the latest Annual Report and Statistical Analysis of the Glenn County Sheriff's Office in 2013, the Sheriff's Department has 47 sworn officers. The City of Willows contracts law enforcement services through the Glenn County Sheriff's Department.

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection in Glenn County is provided by twelve individual fire districts (including the cities of Willows and Orland), the California Department of Forestry (CDF), and the U.S. Forest Service. On a seasonal basis, protection is also provided by the California Department of Forestry in the unincorporated foothill and rural areas. In the areas covered by the CDF that are also served by a fire district, both respond to fires during the fire season (typically May 1 to November 1). Fire departments in Glenn County may be staffed with paid professional firefighters, volunteers, or a combination of the two.

SCHOOLS

Glenn County is served by the Glenn County Office of Education and eight school districts, including Orland Unified School District and Willows Unified School District. Within the unincorporated County, there are four schools serving elementary age and middle school students (grades K-8), two K-6 schools, one 5-6 school, one high school (grades 9-12), two 7-12, and two vocational high schools (grades 10-12). Total enrollment for the 2018-19 school year was 1,507 students.

PARKS

The County Parks Department provides planning and coordination for County-wide events, recreation activities for youth, teen, adults, and seniors, and programming for the 10 parks that it operates. The County Facilities Department maintains the County's parks and open space, encompassing approximately 290 acres.

On a regional scale, there are currently 4 federal park facilities within the County, which are managed and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. These include the Mendocino National Forest, Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, Yolla Bolly Middle Eel Wilderness, and the Snow Mountain Wilderness.

Primary concerns and opportunities regarding community services and facilities identified through the Visioning process include:

- Lack of water, irrigation
- Some agriculture crops are lowering the groundwater table
- Strained infrastructure
- Need for improved broadband infrastructure
- Outstanding public safety agencies (i.e. Police and Fire)

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Issue: Infrastructure Capacity, Maintenance and Financing

Glenn County's water, wastewater, and energy infrastructure is owned and operated by water districts, sewer districts, and corporations such as PG&E and the California Water Service Company (Cal Water). Generally, existing wastewater systems in the County are in need of improvement to meet current State standards. Several areas of the County have limited capacity to meet the wastewater needs of future growth. New regulations, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits regarding surface water discharges, present big challenges to the County as many systems will not meet these new requirements and need to be replaced when funding and time allows.

Currently, municipal water and wastewater services in the Spheres of Influence (SOI) surrounding the Cities of Orland and Willows are largely unavailable. New development in these areas must either provide for onsite water and wastewater services, or request annexation into the cities, which allows new development to connect to city water and wastewater systems. Additionally, many of the water and wastewater systems in Glenn County are in need of upgrades and require more maintenance than what is currently provided. Typically, a lack of adequate funding is the greatest impediment to system upgrades and maintenance.

Many of the residential parcels in the areas of Artois, Hamilton City, Elk Creek, Butte City, and the SOI of Willows are currently designated Single Family Residential, which allows for the subdivision of land into parcels as small as one acre. Parcels of this size result in residential densities that are too great to support widespread use of septic systems. In practice, the subdivision of land into parcels smaller than two acres in size is not encouraged when connections to municipal wastewater systems are not available.

As previously mentioned, all sources of potable water in Glenn County come from groundwater sources. Additionally, many of the areas of the County dispose of wastewater through onsite septic systems. The discharge of wastewater into the ground through septic systems has the potential to greatly impact the quality of the groundwater, which is the source of potable water throughout the County.

Areas of the County can also experience periodic shortages of potable water supplies. Depending on the area of the County, these issues can be related to a lack of infrastructure or an overdraft of groundwater supplies.

Key Questions

- *How should water and wastewater capacity influence growth and land use decisions?*
- *Does the County need to work with utility districts to restructure infrastructure fees to better accommodate services and provide infrastructure?*
- *What land use patterns will provide the best watershed protection and prevent groundwater overdraft?*
- *How can the County better encourage the efficient use and re-use of water?*
- *Should Glenn County phase out septic systems and require sewer standards for residential and commercial development in the areas surrounding existing established communities?*
- *Where is it appropriate to allow for private water wells and septic systems?*
- *How can the County increase available surface water supplies for agricultural use?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Increased Intergovernmental Coordination

As part of the Visioning process, County, city, and other public agencies have been contacted for comment and invited to participate in the process. Available planning and policy documents from multiple agencies have been reviewed to identify relevant concerns and considerations.

As the General Plan Update moves forward, planned land uses in the Cities of Orland and Willows' Spheres of Influence will be reviewed in developing the Land Use Alternatives (see following discussion).

The Glenn County General Plan Update comes at an opportune time because of the concurrent planning efforts of local jurisdictions. The City of Willows is currently in the process of updating its General Plan. This provides a unique opportunity to coordinate policy development with an important partner in an effort to ensure policy consistency regarding urbanization issues and regional issues (e.g., transportation, housing, air quality, and utility service delivery). The County also has an opportunity to further engage representatives from public utility districts as the General Plan policy document is developed.

Key Questions

- *How can the County most effectively engage the Cities of Orland and Willows, as well as public utility districts during the General Plan Update?*
- *What are the primary issues that should be addressed during these coordination efforts? (For example, should a joint Cities/County Commission be created to plan for future growth within the Spheres of Influence?)*

4.7 CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

The rural atmosphere, wide open spaces, farm lands, wildlife refuge, lake, reservoir, river, and scenic vistas of Glenn County are some of the County's greatest assets. These assets provide a natural resource base for the agricultural and forestry industries, tourism and recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed storage and water quality protection, and a high quality of life for residents.

There is a relationship between the preservation of open space and community planning. Participants in the Visioning Workshops identified the need for protection of open space and well-planned growth as some of the major challenges facing the County. They identified the following key issues:

- Maintain rural character and lifestyle of the County
- Proximity to nature is a major asset; preserve open space
- Focus new development around existing communities and Interstate 5
- Active outdoor recreation
- Abundant natural resources



When asked to identify Glenn County's greatest assets, Visioning Workshop participants overwhelmingly listed rural lifestyle, open space, agricultural resources, and outdoor recreational opportunities. All of these existing assets can be maintained and enhanced by protecting the open space and natural resources of the County.

While most of Glenn County consists of productive cropland and grazing lands there are also significant areas of open space and recreation lands. The largest designated recreation area in Glenn County is the Mendocino National Forest, managed by the U.S. Forest Service. A variety of recreational opportunities exist within the forest: camping, hiking, backpacking, boating, fishing, nature study, photography, and off-highway vehicle travel. The forest is a "working forest," so activities such as logging and grazing do occur. The U.S. Forest Service seeks to manage the variety of uses to ensure conservation of the forest resources.

The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge is located in the southeastern portion of the County adjacent to Interstate 5. The wildlife refuge straddles both Glenn and Colusa Counties with approximately 8,555 acres being located in Glenn County. The facility provides a wintering area for migratory waterfowl and a destination for birding enthusiasts.

The vast expanse of agricultural lands throughout the area largely defines the visual character of Glenn County. Large open fields and orchards predominate to the eastern third of the County, which is where the population centers are primarily located. This open space conveys the rural, small-town character and charm of Glenn County.

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Protection of Open Space and Existing Landscapes

In many rural counties, weak regulations have allowed a sprawling pattern of land use that disperses houses along rural roads, fragments open space, and creates a nuisance for working landscapes. Rural residential development often creates conflicts with farms and ranches by introducing pests such as cats and dogs, restrictions on the use of agricultural chemicals, and complaints regarding noise and dust. While General Plan land use designations and zoning regulate the type, amount, and density of development, other techniques can be employed by the County to protect open space, working landscapes, and scenic vistas, and redirect development pressure. In particular, the General Plan Update can direct growth toward existing communities instead of allowing low density development in open space areas.

The terms open space, working landscapes, agricultural land, and rural are used interchangeably to describe the character of Glenn County's ranch land, farmland, and forests. For the purposes of this report "open space" is a broad category that includes: working landscapes (e.g., agriculture and forest); rural landscapes (e.g., undeveloped or sparsely developed lands); scenic vistas (e.g., scenic highways and oak woodland); natural resource lands (e.g., lakes, rivers, forests, oak woodlands, preserves); and recreational lands (e.g., reservoirs, parks, trails, hunting clubs, etc.). Also, in this report the term agricultural land broadly refers to land used to raise crops along with land used for ranching or grazing livestock.

Open space can perform multiple functions and benefits. For example, it can serve as wildlife habitat while buffering development (around communities, industrial areas, or airports) and providing recreational opportunities in the form of trails, hunting areas, and fishing opportunities. Agricultural lands are used primarily for food production but also can provide wildlife habitat, watershed recharge areas, local jobs and revenue, and add scenic value (e.g., greenbelts or transition zones). The loss of these benefits has broad implications. For example, the conversion of open space to other uses has hydrological implications because of impacts on the existing watershed and reductions to groundwater recharge rates. The loss of open space can also impact County agricultural operations, which may lead to a loss of jobs, the loss of local agricultural revenues and other residual agriculture-related economic impacts.

Fragmentation of open space, especially agricultural lands, increases the likelihood of conflicting uses and nuisances. For agricultural operations, conflicts with development can result in restrictions on the use of agricultural chemicals, complaints regarding noise and dust, trespass, vandalism, and damage from domestic animals such as cats and dogs. These conflicts may increase costs to the agricultural operations and combined with rising land values for residential development, encourage the further conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

Some Glenn County agricultural and forestry operations are facing an additional threat. Many of the family farms and ranches in the County are facing a generational change, with some families opting to sell or considering selling their land rather than continuing to farm or ranch upon the death or retirement of the primary owners. When this transition occurs, land can be divided into smaller parcels and converted to other uses, which contributes to fragmentation of agricultural land use patterns and impacts other agricultural operations.

Issue: Protection of Open Space and Existing Landscapes

Key Questions

- *How can the County work with farmers, ranchers, non-profit organizations, and other partners to preserve open space?*
- *What is the appropriate minimum parcel size in rural areas that will discourage sprawl and protect open space and working landscapes?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Tools and Techniques for Open Space Protection

Protection of rural landscapes, scenic vistas, natural resource lands, and recreational lands can be accomplished through a wide variety of tools and techniques. General Plan land use designations and development regulations afford a certain degree of protection for open space through regulation of land use, density, and infrastructure investments. Other tools and techniques can also be employed for the preservation of open space, such as:



- Partnering with state and federal agencies to develop habitat conservation plans or other strategies
- Protecting picturesque highway corridors with State Scenic Highway designations
- Collaborating with land trusts to identify priorities for protection
- Developing a land bank that purchases development rights (i.e. conservation easements) from agricultural and forestry lands to protect key parcels
- Developing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program
- Educating private landowners about the methods by which they can create voluntary conservation easements on lands with significant conservation value, such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and special-status plant and animal species habitats

Many of these tools and techniques can be institutionalized through General Plan Update policies and programs. For example, the General Plan can include policies and programs that promote coordination with state and federal agencies that manage resource lands. Through a combination of regulation and land conservation techniques the County can protect working and rural landscapes, scenic vistas, and recreation and natural resource lands.

Applying these tools to undertake riparian habitat restoration along the creeks and waterways within Glenn County would help improve natural flood control and water quality, and could increase public access to creeks and waterways through expanded bicycle and pedestrian paths and access points.

Key Questions

- *Should the County work with state and federal agencies to develop a Countywide Habitat Conservation Plan?*
- *Should the County explore policies to support the creation of additional conservation easements?*
- *Should the County consider a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to protect open space?*
- *What priorities should be established to increase recreational opportunities along the County's creeks and waterways?*
- *How can the County incorporate habitat restoration efforts along creeks and waterways into the County's water quality and stormwater planning needs?*
- *Are there additional areas in Glenn County that should be protected as public open space?*
- *Should the County establish a formal Open Space land use designation in the General Plan?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity: Develop a Countywide Climate Action Plan

In 2017, the California Department of Public Health prepared a *Climate Change and Health Profile* report for Glenn County that provided climate change projections for the County, and identified vulnerabilities and assets to support local adaptation planning for climate change. This effort was part of the larger strategy by the State to address the need for climate adaptation and “actions [that] should protect the state’s most vulnerable populations.” The report highlights the need for communities, such as Glenn County, to address climate change and reduce the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Glenn County could undertake a countywide campaign to reduce local GHG and air pollution emissions. A model program might include the following milestones:

1. Conduct a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast to determine the sources and quantity of greenhouse gas emissions in the County;
2. Establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target;
3. Develop a climate action plan consisting of both existing and future actions which, when implemented, will meet the local greenhouse gas reduction target;
4. Implement the action plan; and
5. Monitor and report progress.

The sources of GHG emissions include on-road transportation, off-road transportation and equipment, solid waste generation, wastewater treatment, water conveyance, building energy, and stationary sources. The General Plan Update will include a comprehensive strategy to promote multi-modal transportation options in Glenn County, including improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, increasing opportunities for access to transit services, and other strategies aimed at reducing auto dependence. These efforts to reduce vehicle trips represent the most effective strategy at reducing local GHG emissions associated with on-road transportation sources, which are typically the greatest contributor to local GHG emissions levels.

The most effective steps that the County can take to reduce emissions associated with building energy are to reduce energy consumption locally, and to utilize alternative sources of clean energy that have reduced (or zero) GHG emissions when compared to more traditional sources of energy. The use of alternative energy supplies is discussed under Opportunity: Industry Diversification (see Clean and Renewable Energy).

The preparation of a climate action plan that addresses communitywide sources of greenhouse gas emissions will allow the County to expand the focus and breadth of its climate change and sustainability planning efforts and develop new and specific programs to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also adapt to the effects of global climate change.

Climate action plans address a range of measures and steps that local jurisdictions can implement to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to a changing climate. These steps are usually related to increased opportunities for alternative transportation, energy reduction, waste reduction, and other conservation efforts. These conservation efforts will be addressed throughout many elements of the Glenn County General Plan Update.

Key Questions

- *To what degree should the County allocate funding and staff resources towards the implementation of a Climate Action Plan?*
- *How should climate action planning be addressed and coordinated with the General Plan Update?*
- *Are there specific steps the County should be taking to address climate change and reduce GHG emissions?*
- *Are there additional steps the County should take to respond and adapt to the ongoing and future effects of a changing climate?*

4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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