



THE CHICO GREEN NEW DEAL

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INTRODUCTION

It's no secret: The Green New Deal is a bold vision for the future of our communities and our world. The ultimate goal? Mitigate climate change, preserve our environment, adapt to the nature of a changing climate and the threats that come along with it, and nurture a better, more just, and greener economy for all.

READ "RECOGNIZING THE DUTY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CREATE A GREEN NEW DEAL" (H.R. 109) [HERE](#).

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Scientists agree: Climate change is real, it is heavily influenced by human behavior, and if we don't take bold action to address it, life as we know it will change, irreversibly, for the worse. If you intend on debating these facts, this is probably not the document for you. But, if you understand the value of this science or are even curious about what can be done in response to it, keep reading.

CATCH UP ON THE SCIENCE [HERE](#).

But what do cities have to do with such a monumental shift in the way we live? For that, we have to consider what drives social change, and we have to recognize that change is coming whether we like it or not.

It takes one. One person, one city, one state, one nation to start the conversation. That's when the seed is planted. That seed gets nurtured by those who see the potential for growth immediately. These are the brave leaders and organizations who are the first to stand in support and lay the course. These are the leaders and organizations that help us make sense of big ideas, how they affect us, and why they should matter to us.

Then, something starts to grow. More and more people and organizations stand up and join in. They normalize the conversation about taking **bold** climate action. They call their leaders to task. And once those roots take hold, it is up to all of us to lay the path forward.

The Green New Deal (H.R. 109) is not a set of policies addressing climate change, but a call for those policies. Cities and Counties are uniquely situated to apply the vision of the Green New Deal to sensible, tangible policy solutions that take into consideration the unique nature and strengths of each of our communities. The Chico Green New Deal is a strong step in that direction.

The City of Chico must be a part of the conversation. We must join cities throughout the world, and help plant those seeds – for our community to directly benefit from, and for other communities to replicate. We must model for the North State what it will take to reach climate neutrality and save our planet.



MAKE NO MISTAKE. WE ARE IN A CRISIS.

And it's up to all of us to solve it.

What it takes is the political will of your leaders to acknowledge the science, to agree that climate change is both a local and a global crisis, and to make a plan.

Every good plan starts with a goal. We've got three.

1 The City of Chico's grid will be powered with 100% clean electricity by 2030.

2 The City of Chico will be climate neutral by 2045.

3 Policy plans or actions for each of these initiatives will be in place by 2026.



EVERY GOOD PROGRAM HAS THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT IT.

We're building that, too.



We've Declared Climate Emergency

The first step that cities and nations throughout the world are taking is public recognition of the climate crisis through a climate emergency declaration. On April 2, 2019, the City of Chico joined hundreds of cities throughout the world in making that declaration, and committing to addressing climate change thoughtfully and strategically. This was a historic moment for our city that marked the start of a new conversation about sustainability that places a laser focus on mitigating and adapting to climate change.



We've Institutionalized a Climate Action Commission

The City Council's recent decision to form a Climate Action Commission lays the ground for tackling the climate crisis head on. This seven-member group of leaders will support the development of a Climate Action Plan that achieves state greenhouse gas emission targets, engage and educate the public on the local issues related to climate change, and collaborate with other City Departments, business leaders, and community organizations toward a greener future and economy.



We are Investing in the Chico Climate Action Plan 2.0

The City of Chico is making the investment in experts to support us in crafting a new Climate Action Plan that takes the urgency of now and our local context into account. The Climate Action Commission will work with other experts in the field to develop a roadmap to achieving state greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. This roadmap will take the unique assets and threats within our community in to consideration, and direct our efforts toward a comprehensive approach to achieving our climate goals.

We have more work to do.

In order to achieve climate neutrality, we cannot simply meet our state Greenhouse Gas reduction targets -- we have to surpass them completely. We also have to plan and prepare for the threats of climate change within our own community -- the one's that are already here, and the one's that scientists predict we will be facing.

Chico, we can. This is not a wishlist. It is a policy direction that is both bold and feasible. The Chico Green New Deal will help lay the path forward -- for a better, brighter, and greener future for all of us. It is up to all of us to support the policies that come from this document, and to strengthen it even further with our own creativity and expertise.

THE PLAN



The Chico Green New Deal contains seven critical policy areas for the City of Chico to focus on in the fight for climate neutrality. These policy priorities take into consideration our unique assets and existing efforts, the science behind climate change and what's needed to combat and adapt to it, and elements of sustainability that are at the core of our General Plan. This plan is designed to be strong on its own, but to evolve with community input and participation. With seven overarching policy directions, there is room for growth and further conversation. This is a plan that our community can take ownership of, and it can only become stronger with increased investment.

- 1. Maximize Clean Energy Opportunities**
- 2. Support a Safe and Sustainable Local Food Supply**
- 3. Create Good, Local, Green Jobs**
- 4. Develop Housing That People and the Planet Can Afford**
- 5. Invest in Low Income Communities**
- 6. Reuse Water, Reduce Waste**
- 7. Transition to Clean, 21st Century Transportation**



MAXIMIZE CLEAN ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES

Goal: Power the City of Chico with 100% Clean Electricity

One essential piece of climate action infrastructure currently being developed is a City-County partnership toward Community Choice Aggregation. Community Choice Aggregation provides participating communities with more autonomy over their energy consumption. While PG&E still transmits and distributes power to CCA communities, the program allows local governments to procure power on behalf of their communities. CCAs bring about cost savings for the consumer, which all of our wallets will thank us for. But, they also provide an opportunity for the City and County to take leadership in procuring clean energy to power our communities, and to encourage our citizens to do the same.

- **Procure 100% clean energy to power City facilities.** Walking the talk is one step toward creating a culture of climate action, and the City should lead in its effort to cultivate a green future for all of us. City leadership should utilize clean energy for its operations, wherever possible.
- **Automatically enroll CCA participants in clean energy portfolios.** Our job is to make it as easy as possible for our community members to choose the most climate-friendly CCA options. Automatically enrolling our citizens in to an energy portfolio that does good for our climate means that rather than having to “opt in,” all members have the opportunity to “opt out.” In other words, we can make it easy for our community to do the right thing. The vast majority of those who recognize they are doing the right thing will elect to stay enrolled in this program, which will make a significant impact on exceeding our city-wide GHG reductions in a much shorter time frame. If there was ever a key to getting there quickly and efficiently, this is it.
- **Create messaging campaigns that encourage clean energy participation.** The City should take a leading role in informing our residents and businesses about the benefits of a clean energy portfolio, and encourage them to stay enrolled in clean energy portfolios. When the City makes a concerted effort to communicate with its residents about their options and the benefits that come with them, we are creating a culture and community around sustainability and climate resilience.

Goal: Identify and Invest in Solar Energy Opportunities

Did you know that the City of Chico gets more sun in a year than Phoenix, Arizona?

We are an ideal City for solar power. Several City functions are already offset by solar energy, on both small and large scales. The City’s Wastewater Treatment Plant solar field offsets 50% of the plant’s energy costs, which allows us to stretch taxpayer dollars even farther. In addition to being a clean energy option, solar energy is an economic opportunity for our community. It is also a move toward greater autonomy from public utilities, and an investment in future efforts for Chico to operate its own clean electrical grid.

- **Utilize parking lots, airport, and other unused spaces for solar arrays.** There are already several viable sites within City limits to install additional solar panels. We just need the will and the resources to move forward on these projects. Parking lots, city land that is not viable for development or agriculture, and more can and should be home to new solar arrays throughout our city.
- **Install new types of farms on underutilized agricultural land.** Butte County has already developed a County-wide solar overlay zone, which includes miles of grazing land that is underutilized. The City should collaborate closely with County leadership and the agricultural community to implement solar opportunities in this underutilized space. In addition to putting the land to good use, these projects create a new source of income for our farmers and ranchers that will be spent locally.



SUPPORT A SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY

Climate change is already impacting food access, and scientists have confirmed that this threat will only become more severe. Living in an agricultural district means that we are well-prepared to ensure access to fresh, healthy foods for our communities, but the vast majority of products we produce locally are exported out of the region. Of all the food and beverage items produced/grown in the City of Chico, there are only three that we produce more of than we consume: Beer (thanks, Sierra Nevada!), Almonds, Walnuts, and Rice. Keeping more products local creates good jobs, and situates Chico even more as a central hub for agricultural commerce.

Goal: Preserve and expand farmer's markets

We are blessed to live in a community that values local business and feels closely connected to its farmers markets. However, past policy efforts have threatened the sustainability of some of our most beloved farmers market events, and there are opportunities to expand access to fresh, healthy, local foods within our community.

- **Ensure the long-term stability of our existing farmers markets, including the Thursday Night Market, Wednesday Farmers Market, and Saturday Farmers Market.** Keeping these assets firmly in place means we can depend on fresh, local foods and places to purchase them. It also means that our local farmers and ranchers have access points for keeping those foods at the tables of City residents and business owners. When we vote, we must vote to preserve and sustain our current farmers markets.
- **Support job creation by expanding opportunities for small farmers and ranchers to reach local markets.** The City should make a concerted effort to address barriers for local purveyors to reach our community with their products. We can create more access by removing permitting barriers for pop-up and other farmers markets, so farmers markets can take place more often and in broader geographical areas. This brings food resources straight to the source of our community, while also creating local jobs for small, local farmers and ranchers. Through flexible, tailored permitting processes and consultation with the Chico Certified Farmers Market (CCFM), the City of Chico can create more opportunity for the next generation of local agriculture.
- **Increase efforts to process and preserve agricultural products locally.** The City of Chico should take leadership on addressing gaps in the agricultural supply chain, like refrigeration and processing of agricultural products. When products are shipped away to be stored and processed, our economy loses out on revenue, additional greenhouse gases are emitted via transportation, and our local communities are less likely to benefit from keeping good, wholesome foods local.

Goal: Preserve, expand, and incentivize community gardens and CSAs

- **Preserve the City's limited agricultural lands for food production.** Living in the urban center of an agricultural region means that viable agricultural land within city limits is more scarce for us than it is for our regional counterparts. The City of Chico should be good stewards of its agricultural assets and ensure the long-term viability of these lands for local food production.
- **Encourage community gardens in empty lots and new development.** One of our City's greatest strengths is our capacity for being good neighbors and sharing community with one another. We maximize both local food production and neighborhood engagement by encouraging and promoting community gardens in empty lots and new housing development projects.
- **Collaborate with local organizations to create funding streams for local food projects.** The City can leverage its power to strengthen grant applications that fund local food programs. This is a critical way to prioritize local businesses, support young farmers, develop stronger neighbor-to-neighbor relationships, and ensure we are creating food sources right here in Chico, California.
- **Amplify and encourage existing efforts to generate local food production.** When the City stamp is on the good work being done in our beautiful City, our efforts can reach farther and wider. A low-cost way that the City can support a sustainable, local food supply is through collaborative marketing. We can partner to enhance the reach of local organizations that are doing to make our communities better.



CREATE GOOD, LOCAL, GREEN JOBS

The City of Chico has an award-winning economic development infrastructure, and strong partnerships with local job-creating organizations through the Team Chico initiative. Additionally, our area schools annually graduate thousands of young people eager to contribute to our community. As we move toward a more sustainable future for our community, leveraging these partnerships to create local green industry jobs is an essential component. The voice of our local business leaders will be critical in stewarding sustainability as a Chico value and an economic development tool. It leads to broader investment in green solutions, allows sustainability-focused businesses to share their expertise, and provides high quality job training for Chico's workforce.

Goal: Leverage the Team Chico Partnership to Make Green Industry a Central Priority

We get farther when we work together, and Team Chico is a partnership that can marry green industry and economic development for the future of our City. Team Chico is a public-private economic development partnership including representation from the City of Chico, Chico Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Chico Business Association, California State University, Chico, Butte College, 3CORE, and Alliance for Workforce Development. As part of meeting and exceeding the City of Chico's economic development goals, Team Chico is an ideal space to explore and expand green industry and create jobs throughout our region. The City of Chico should encourage and invite collaboration from the business sector to address climate action from an economic development lens.

**LEARN ABOUT THE AWARD-WINNING
TEAM CHICO PARTNERSHIP**

 [click to visit link](#)

Goal: Partner with Local Jobs Training Programs to Build a Green Workforce

When climate action and economic development overlap, the City of Chico can embrace any opportunity to invite greener investment in our region. Fortunately, there are already organizations that offer training to our local workforce in green industries, like Grid Alternatives and many of our local solar providers. Through new and existing partnerships, the City of Chico should make a concerted effort to build a green workforce that will invest their skills in to our local economy.

Goal: Collaborate with CSU, Chico and Butte College to Train a Green Workforce

California State University and Butte College are institutions committed to innovation, research, and local application of global issues through research, critical analysis, and skill-building. They are also cultivating and supplying a local workforce that is ready to be trained to make meaningful contributions to their community. Successful partnership with these economic drivers to our region means finding common values and identifying ways to reflect those values to all of our neighbors – not just campus community members. As we learn from our local colleges about honoring our own commitments to climate action and sustainability, the City of Chico should collaborate to identify opportunities to link green thinkers to green industry – through jobs training, research, public relations, and more.



DEVELOP HOUSING THAT PEOPLE AND THE PLANET CAN AFFORD

The impacts of the Camp Fire have exacerbated our housing crisis -- which is a local snapshot of a growing national problem. As the City of Chico grows to accommodate an increase in population due to climate-related disasters, our focus should be on smart, affordable, and sustainable growth that does not compromise our future for the sake of immediacy. Now is the time to create homes that the majority of those living and working in Chico can afford. This includes those displaced to our community, many of whom lived in Paradise due to its affordability. The added benefit is, this type of housing reduces the cost to our environment and fosters relationships and social engagement within our neighborhoods.

Goal: Reduce environmental impacts of housing development by promoting infill, mixed use development, and alternative housing

There has never been a more critical time to recommit to the City of Chico's General Plan, and the focus on housing that is affordable and creates the least amount of environmental impact. Fortunately, the City of Chico's General Plan lays the path forward clearly. What the City needs now is a firm commitment by its leaders to follow the 2030 General Plan -- to focus on housing development that is affordable to people living and working in our City, and does not threaten our natural environment. This type of development not only possible; it's necessary for the future of our communities. The City of Chico General Plan highlights several climate-friendly housing solutions that are also more affordable for our citizens, including: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and other infill development; mixed use development in the downtown corridor and other regions; denser, vertical development; opportunity sites; and more.

Goal: Work toward a development paradigm that is independent from fossil fuels

The City of Chico needs to commit to a change in the way we grow. If we continue to build infrastructure that is reliant on natural gas, we cannot transition away from it -- and we are chaining our community to an unsustainable, unsafe, and increasingly more expensive power supply. New housing and commercial development must be fossil fuel free, and must support greener decision-making.

Goal: Create opportunities for existing stock to be more climate-friendly

While looking toward the future of development in Chico is essential, much of our existing housing stock has not been updated to be energy efficient. The City should identify opportunities to bring existing housing stock to higher energy efficiency standards, saving on energy costs for property owners and helping us meet our climate goals together. Wherever possible, we should collaborate with low income communities to support these transitions in economically feasible ways.

**READ THE CHICO 2030
GENERAL PLAN**



click to visit link



INVEST IN LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES

The fewer resources people in our communities have, the more vulnerable they are to the impacts of climate change. What's more: As we make the transition to greener solutions and a greener economy, we must work to create opportunity for low income communities to participate. Fortunately, there are already organizations doing this work locally – Grid Alternatives, Community Action Agency – and nationally. The City of Chico should step up to support and bolster existing efforts that invest in low income communities and create more economic stability for low income families.

Goal: Invest in partnerships with organizations with a green focus on low income neighborhoods

The work to transform our communities and our economy is already being done at the ground level by incredible local organizations. One of those organizations, who has been active in our city since 2011, is Grid Alternatives. This local non-profit entity supports low income communities and green industry by installing solar panels on low income homes. They will even provide rehab to roofs so that they can sustain solar power. Finally, they offer job training for low income individuals, so workers can find good jobs in solar and contribute to a green economy. This is exactly the kind of good work that the City should support -- and that support does not have to be financial.

The City of Chico should leverage communication with its citizens to bolster efforts and initiatives that serve low income communities in cost-savings, jobs creation, and a just transition to cleaner energy. One of the easiest low-cost ways to do this is through recruitment and information-sharing with eligible residents. If the City made a dedicated effort to keeping its community informed about programs like solarization offered by Grid Alternatives, or weatherization and utility assistance offered by Community Action Agency of Butte County, more low income households will be served, lower income families will save money on energy costs, and our transition to clean energy will move even more quickly.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
GRID ALTERNATIVES**


click to visit link





RECYCLE WATER, REDUCE WASTE

Goal: Reclaim and reuse our water

As the climate crisis worsens, access to water is a growing threat for our region. When this happens, water will become more precious and therefore more expensive. The City of Chico must explore and invest in long-term solutions to water scarcity through innovation and science. Fortunately, we have a state-of-the-art piece of infrastructure that can help us get there: our Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The amazing work of this facility cannot be understated. It is on the cutting-edge of both sustainability and technology, processing waste efficiently and supplying clean water to the Sacramento River. But what if that clean water could be reused in ways that directly benefit the City of Chico?

With just one additional treatment to our wastewater (tertiary treatment), this water could be recirculated back to our city and supplied to our local greenways and more.

The City should begin planning for this transition. While it will be costly to facilitate, a strategic and incremental approach can make the reuse of water a reality. If we would be willing to pay to get our water back later, when it becomes more expensive, we need to look at the feasibility of this transition right now.

Goal: Find feasible alternatives to plastic packaging and single-use food containers

Due to regulations and constraints on local businesses, we are over-using plastic in the City of Chico. Cutting back on waste is central to a greener economy, and the City should facilitate efforts to reduce the amount of plastic packaging that is used locally.

This initiative will require a cooperative relationship with our local Health Department, to find better ways to package goods, especially for food vendors and other small businesses. Fortunately, local businesses throughout our City are eager to have greener options available, and the City can help create the path forward by starting those conversations – all while ensuring that health and safety is a number one priority.

Goal: Reduce contributions to our landfill

We are better able to reduce waste when we make alternatives accessible to our residents. Senate Bill 1383 will require local governments to get green waste, food waste, and other organics out of our landfills by January 1, 2022. Between now and that date, the City must plan and prepare the public for this shift, while building the necessary infrastructure to support it. By being proactive in addressing organic waste in our landfills, we can meet these requirements with ease and achieve our GHG reduction goals even sooner. The City should sign letters of support for projects working to achieve these goals, and pursue grant opportunities to educate our communities and support this green transition. An added benefit of expanding these services to our community is the creation of good, green jobs at composting and waste processing facilities.



TRANSITION TO CLEAN, 21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION

Local Transportation

Vehicles have arguably the greatest impact on the environment, and driving is one thing that municipalities have the most control over. Without transforming our transportation system, we cannot become climate neutral. But transforming this system requires strategic implementation of accessible alternatives to driving cars. The City of Chico should walk the walk of this change, and then take necessary action and advocacy steps to bring the rest of our community members along with us.

Goal: Transition the City fleet to 100% electric

The City of Chico has gradually phased in electric vehicles to its fleet, and is currently expanding electric charging stations to accommodate additional clean energy vehicles. By 2030, the entire City of Chico fleet should be transitioned to electric wherever possible.

Goal: Wire facilities to accommodate green transportation

- **City facilities.** Supplying clean energy transportation infrastructure means more accessibility for residents driving electric vehicles. As the City updates its facilities or builds new ones, infrastructure for green transportation should be included in those plans.
- **Commercial and residential facilities.** This effort cannot stop at the City level. New housing and commercial development must take in to consideration the future of our communities, and be wired for electric vehicles. New development should also integrate bus routes and walkability as viable transportation options for our residents.

Goal: Make public transportation fit the people -- and not the other way around

- **Enhance Chico's bus network.** We cannot expect a large number of Chico residents to utilize our public transportation system if it is inconvenient for their schedules. We need more convenient head times that fit the people living and working in our communities. Through advocacy efforts with the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG), we can bring our public transportation system - and our public transportation vehicles - into the 21st Century.
- **Collaborate with CSU, Chico to reduce the use of student vehicles.** In addition to enhancing our public transportation system to best meet the needs of students and community members alike, the City should work with our local university to reduce the presence and use of student vehicles.

Regional Transportation

Chico is an economic center with a dependency on the greater Sacramento market. Thousands commute, often in single-occupancy cars, on a daily basis to Sacramento. Our access to this market for business, medical, investment and jobs is important to our long-term economic success. Almost 800 people on an average day drive to the Sacramento airport, and about the same number commute to downtown Sacramento.

Goal: Enhance regional transportation system to reduce the impacts of single-occupancy vehicle travel.

- **Run the San Joaquin train system from the Sacramento area to the Oroville Depot.** The City of Chico should play a leading role in advocating for accessible rail service. Due to the disaster and its impact on our economy, both Oroville and Chico should make requests and take initiative to revise the State's Rail Plan to include train service to Oroville.
- **Enhance long range electric bus travel.** Long range electrically powered coach buses are now feasible, and grant funding for transportation innovations is available. A grant recently was made to the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) to operate electric buses from Redding to the Sacramento Airport in an effort to reduce carbon emissions. Chico should support Redding's initiative, and advocate to include routes through Chico to Sacramento.



ARE YOU READY FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL?

Here's how you can help.

In order for bold climate action to be at the center of local conversation, Chico citizens must come to the table and advocate for it. If you support the policy priorities outlined in the Chico Green New Deal, here are several important steps you can take to make them a reality.

- **Endorse the plan and tell your elected officials that you support it.** Email your City Councilmembers with letters of support for the Chico Green New Deal. Tell them why it matters to you and how climate change affects you. Remind your elected officials that this is the issue of our time, and that you are paying attention to it and how they show up to the conversation.
- **Share the plan, and invite the authors to present it to your group, class, event, neighborhood, or organization.** Help share these ideas far and wide with your social circles. Show it to someone new. Post one of the policy ideas in this document to social media and invite others to weigh in. Keep the conversation alive. Organize a group to hear more about the plan, and invite its authors to engage you in continued dialogue about it.
- **Participate in Council and Climate Action Commission meetings to voice support.** When policy issues related to this plan come to the Chico City Council and Climate Action Commission agenda, your voice matters. Show up to speak on items related to climate action. Tell your policymakers directly why this matters and how it affects you. Build community support for policy initiatives that help us reach our goals. Demand bold action.
- **Make the plan even stronger.** Now that you've read the plan, you may have your own ideas about making climate action a reality in Chico. Help strengthen this movement by sharing your insights, experience, and expertise related to the policy areas outlined in this plan. Keep connecting the ideas outlined in this document to local organizations, initiatives, and more.
- **Register to vote, and vote for green thinkers in 2020.** Progress is only possible with political will. Don't settle for candidates that are not committed to bold climate action. Register now, and vote in every single election, like this world depends on it. In order to create and implement the policies that move us forward in to and beyond 2026, green leaders need to be at the table.

REGISTER TO VOTE



click to visit link

QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with us to ask questions, share your perspective, and get involved.

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