



**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE**

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
CITY OF CHICO VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN
(SCH # 2020090170)**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Chico (the "City"), acting as lead agency, has prepared a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed City of Chico Vegetative Fuels Management Plan (VFMP or Plan)

The City of Chico has established a minimum 45-day public review for the Draft PEIR which begins on December 18, 2020 and ends on February 2, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Interested parties are invited to provide comments on the Draft EIR prior to the end of the public review period. **Comments on the Draft PEIR may be submitted to the City of Chico Parks Division, Attn: Park & Natural Resources Manager, PO Box 3420, Chico, CA 95927 or emailed to linda.herman@chicoca.gov.** If you have any questions or desire additional information, you may contact Park & Natural Resources Manager Linda Herman at (530) 896-7241.

PROJECT LOCATION: The areas included within the VFMP encompass City-owned parcels located within City limits (i.e., all City-owned parcels other than the City's water and sewage treatment plant). Specifically, as shown in attached **Figure 1**, the VFMP Area includes: 274 City-owned parcels, ranging in size from <0.1 acres to >1,000 acres and totaling about 6,400 acres. The main parks, recreational and open space areas discussed in the VFMP are as follows: Bidwell Park (Upper, Middle, Lower and Lost), Lindo Channel, Verbena Fields, Teichert Ponds, Airport Open Space, Bidwell Ranch, Foothill Preserve, various South Chico preserved properties, and the greenways along Little Chico Creek, Bidwell Avenue, Comanche Creek, Dead Horse Slough, and Butte Creek Diversion Channel. The VFMP does not address CARD-owned properties or the Chico urban forest (street trees).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City has determined that there are areas within Chico that are at high risk of wildfire, and that vegetation management/fuels reduction will significantly reduce destructive wildfire risk. The VFMP outlines a framework for managing fuel loads and vegetation on City-owned properties to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire. Implementation of the VFMP would involve thinning, pruning, grazing, prescribed burning, removal, herbicide use, and other modification of trees and vegetation within the VFMP area to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire occurring and to minimize/slow the spread of a wildfire should one occur. Appropriate vegetation management techniques to be employed at a specific site would be identified by the City during annual workplan development. These work plans would identify specific treatment types, area or properties to be treated, implementation timing, and other monitoring and tracking needs. To minimize or mitigate impacts to resources in City parklands and greenways, the VFMP identifies Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) to be implemented during vegetation management activities and sets standards for desired conditions in different vegetation types. The VFMP also identifies and describes in detail several priority projects at specific locations. These priority projects serve as examples of the kinds of vegetation management activities the City contemplates in the future.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft PEIR indicates that there would be potentially significant impacts related to Biological and Hydrology/Water Quality resources, but these impacts would be less than significant with proposed mitigation measures. Impacts on the remaining environmental resources or issue areas would be nonexistent or insignificant. The project will not affect any sites enumerated under Section 65962.5 (Hazardous Sites) of the Government Code.

DRAFT PEIR DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The Draft PEIR is available for public review at the following locations: 1) City of Chico Parks Division, 965 Fir Street by appointment only, call 530-896-7800 to schedule an appointment; and 2) Chico Branch of the Butte County Library, 1108 Sherman Avenue, open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 pm. An electronic version of the Draft PEIR is also available on the City's web page at the link below:

https://chico.ca.us/sites/main/files/file-attachments/draft_vfmp_peir_and_appendices_20_1208.pdf?1607717118

PUBLIC HEARING: As a result of the expanding outbreak of COVID-19 and restrictions placed on in-person gatherings, the City will host an online public session to receive comments on the Draft PEIR and the Draft Vegetative Fuels Management Plan (VFMP), rather than an in-person event. The online public session will be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. as part of the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission's Natural Resource Committee meeting.

To participate in the online public meeting, visit the city website at <https://chico.ca.us/post/2020-agendas> and click on the 1/20/21 Bidwell Park & Playground Commission Natural Resource Committee Meeting agenda for login information.

The meeting will begin with a project overview. Verbal and emailed comments on the Draft PEIR will also be accepted during the meeting. Staff will note general themes of verbal and emailed comments made and will address those in the Final PEIR, however, staff encourages the public to submit written comments to ensure that their specific comments are represented in the project record and addressed in the Final PEIR. Please be sure to include your name, address, email or telephone number with your comment.

Please send written comments to the following addresses:

Linda Herman, P&NRM
City of Chico Park Division
P.O. Box 3420
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