

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Open Space and Conservation Element combines the State requirements for an open space element (California Government Code, Sections 65302[e] and 65560 *et seq.*) and for a conservation element (California Government Code, Section 65302(d)), and adds a parks and recreation component into a one single comprehensive element.

The California Government Code mandates that an open space element address four basic areas: (1) open space for resource management including agricultural and mineral resources; (2) open space for outdoor recreation including parks and recreational facilities; (3) open space for public health and safety including flood prone areas and earthquake fault zones; and (4) open space for the preservation of natural resources, including natural plant communities, habitat for fish and wildlife, and water resources. Added to this, a conservation element is required by the California Government Code to address waterways, soil, wildlife preservation, natural and riparian habitats and the conservation of scenic, historical and cultural resources. Park and recreational topics addressed in this Element include neighborhood and community parks, and pedestrian and bicycle trails. Important aspects of each of these topics are also addressed through goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures in this Element as well as in other Elements of the 2040 General Plan. This Element groups the State requirements of the open space and conservation elements as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical / Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy and Energy Efficiency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Building/Low Impact Development/ LEED. | |

OPEN SPACE

Open space, as defined by the California Government Code, includes any parcel or area of land or waters which is essentially unimproved and designated for the preservation of natural resources, resource management, outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety. Several of the land use classifications defined in the Land Use

Element and identified on the Chowchilla 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram (refer to Figure LU-1) apply all or in part to open space lands. The four categories of open space and their relationship to the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram are described below.

Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

The riparian scrub and aquatic habitats of Ash and Berenda Sloughs and the Chowchilla River provide the only known natural biotic habitat of substantial size within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area or Sphere of Influence boundaries. The 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram designates Ash Slough and Berenda Slough as “Open Space” corridors.

Open Space for Resource Management

Resource management categories identified by the State include forest lands, agricultural resources, soil resources, groundwater recharge areas, water bodies important for commercial fisheries, and mineral resources. In the Chowchilla General Plan Planning Area, lands in agricultural production or with the potential for agricultural production are by far the most important of these categories of open space. No forest lands, water bodies or significant mineral resources are found in the Planning Area.

Agricultural lands planned for short-term production are designated as “Urban Reserve” and lands planned for long-term production are designated as “Agriculture” on the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram. The majority of these lands have been designated as Prime Farmland by the California Department of Conservation. Some of these lands are also subject to Williamson Act contracts encouraging the preservation of productive agricultural lands. Policies for the preservation and promotion of viable agricultural production in the Planning Area are found in this Element.

The Planning Area is dependent on groundwater for water used for all non-irrigated purposes as well as for some agricultural purposes. While irrigation practices associated with agriculture production does recharge groundwater in the vicinity of Chowchilla, no groundwater recharge area within the General Plan Planning Area has been definitively mapped by either local or state agencies. Surface irrigation water storage at Berenda Reservoir, and water carried in the Chowchilla River and in the Ash and Berenda Sloughs are presently the most effective groundwater recharge methods available. Both Ash and Berenda Sloughs are designated “Open Space” corridors.

The 2040 General Plan Planning Area is not identified by the California State Geologist as an area of significant mineral deposits. Nor is the General Plan Planning Area located within a State designated construction aggregate production-consumption region.

Open Space for Recreation

The 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram identifies existing public parks and the general location of planned public parks to serve and support the recreation needs of the community. Policies for dedication and development of future parks and linear recreation corridors along Ash and Berenda Sloughs are found in this Element. Facilities for pedestrian and bicycle circulation are addressed in this Element as well as in the Circulation Element of this General Plan.

Open Space for Public Health and Safety

Public health and safety categories identified by the State include geology and seismicity, slope stability, cliff erosion, flood-prone areas and wild land fire risk. In the Chowchilla General Plan Planning Area, only the categories of flood-prone areas and possible wild land fire risks apply. No known geologic faults or instability are found in the Planning Area. The extremely level topography of the Planning Area means the risks associated with slopes are negligible.

The two public health and safety categories that apply to the General Plan Planning Area – flood-prone areas and wildland fire risk – are limited to Chowchilla River, and to Ash and Berenda Sloughs. The Chowchilla River and Ash and Berenda Sloughs have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas prone to flooding. Given the riparian scrub habitats of the Chowchilla River and of Ash and Berenda Sloughs, the River and the Sloughs may be prone to wildland fires.

The City of Chowchilla is at risk of flooding in the event of the collapse of the Buchanan Dam. Buchanan Dam at Eastman Lake is an earth and rockfill structure designed to hold flood flows in the Chowchilla River. Eastman Lake on the Chowchilla River can hold up to 150,000 acre feet of water. In the event of the collapse of the Buchanan Dam, the entire 2040 General Plan Planning Area would be inundated.

While the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram does not designate any open space land exclusively for the public health and safety classification, the “Open Space” corridor designation applied to Ash Slough, Berenda Slough and to the Chowchilla River aid in reducing public exposure to potential wildland fires and flooding.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural land is Madera County's most important economic resource. The preservation of agricultural resources is important to the economic vitality of the City and the region. Additionally, agriculture and its associated open space are essential to preserving regional heritage and contribute to the quality of life for residents in the County. Nevertheless, urban expansion in the Central Valley almost inevitably results in conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses. The General Plan Land Use Diagram and policies define the long-term edge between urban and agricultural activities, and support continuing agricultural production in the region.

Important Farmlands

Virtually all farmland land outside the Chowchilla City Limits but within the General Plan Planning Area and Sphere of Influence boundaries is designated by the California Department of Conservation as “important farmlands”.¹ Important farmlands consist of farmland designated as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, unique farmland and farmland of local importance. Important farmlands mapped within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area and the City’s Sphere of Influence by the California Department of Conservation is shown on Figure OS - 1.

Prime Farmland

This category includes land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics able to sustain long-term production of crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustainable yields of crops when treated and managed. Such land must have been used at some time for the production of irrigated crops during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance

These lands have a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. To maintain this designation, such land must have been used at some time for the production of irrigated crops during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland

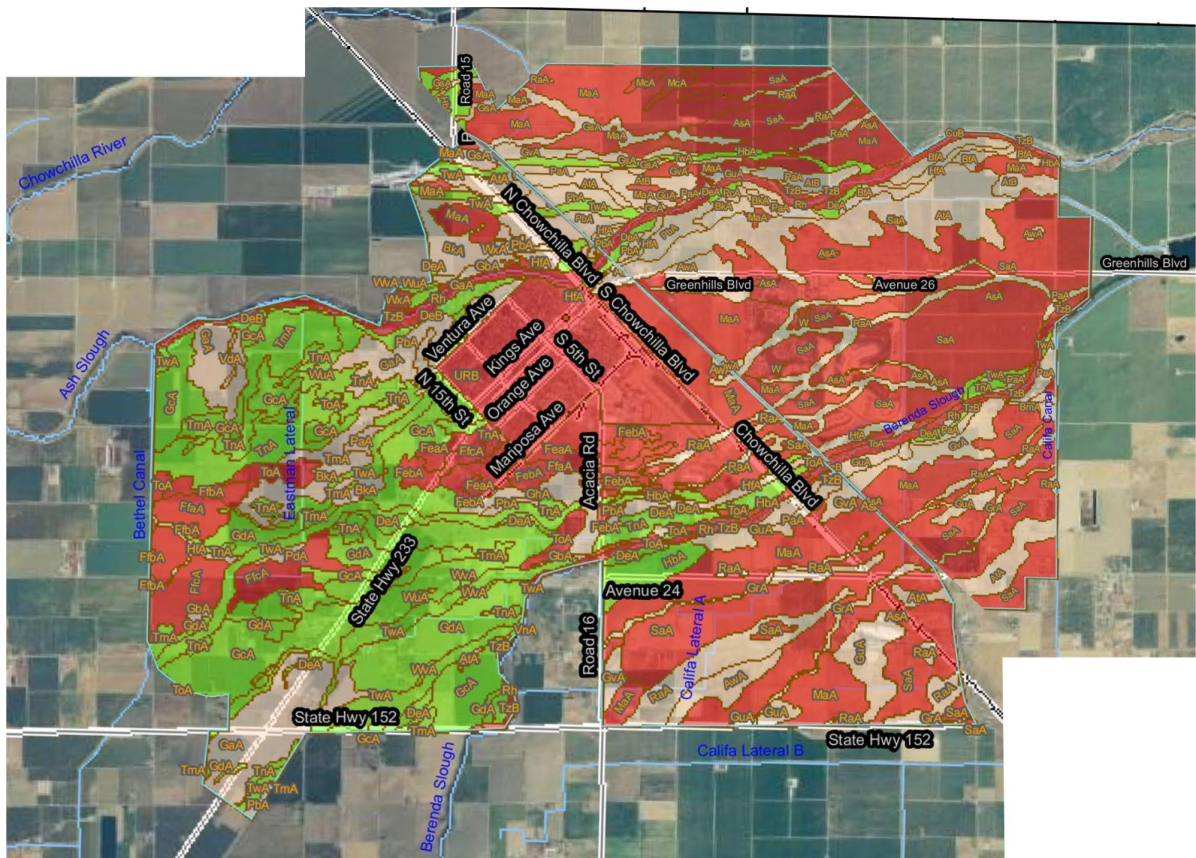
Unique farmland is land which consists of lesser quality soils used for the production of the states leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards, vineyards as found in some climate zones in California. Land must have been used at some time for crops during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance

These farmlands are non-irrigated properties that are either currently producing crops or have the capacity to be cultivated for row / field crop use.

¹ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resources Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, Rural Land Mapping Edition, Madera County Important Farmland 2006.

Figure OS - 1
Important Farmlands



MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)			
Area of Interest (AOI)	Prime farmland if subsoiled, completely removing the root inhibiting soil layer	US Routes	
Soils	Prime farmland if irrigated and the product of I (soil erodibility) x C (climate factor) does not exceed 60	Major Roads	
Soil Map Units	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium		
Soil Ratings	Farmland of statewide importance		
Not prime farmland	Farmland of local importance		
All areas are prime farmland	Farmland of unique importance		
Prime farmland if drained	Not rated or not available		
Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	Political Features		
Prime farmland if irrigated	Cities		
Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	Water Features		
Prime farmland if irrigated and drained	Oceans		
Prime farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	Streams and Canals		
	Transportation		
	Rails		
	Interstate Highways		

Williamson Act

Much of the agricultural land surrounding the City of Chowchilla is subject to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act. The Williamson Act was adopted as an incentive program to encourage the preservation of the state's agricultural lands. As a means to implement the Act, a land contract is established whereby a county or city stabilizes the taxes on qualifying lands in return for an owner's guarantee to keep the land in agricultural preserve status for a 10-year period. Each year, on the contract's anniversary date, the contract is automatically renewed for a 10-year period unless a notice of non-renewal is filed. In exchange for this guarantee, the property owner receives a property tax assessment that are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market (speculative) value. The local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the State via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971.²

As a general rule, land can be withdrawn from a Williamson Act contract only through a nine-year non-renewal process. If a property owner files a "notice of non-renewal" of the contract, the property taxes are gradually increased over a nine-year period. At the close of the non-renewal process, the property may be developed consistent with the property's General Plan land use designation and zoning classification subject to applicable project review and approval requirements.

If the property owner desires not to wait for the contract to expire over the nine-year non-renewable process, a "cancellation" must be filed by the property owner, a series of findings must be made and approved by the State, and a penalty equal to 12.5 percent of the assessed value of the land were it not under the contract must be paid to the State. The findings are virtually impossible for a County to make, but under certain circumstances, can be made by a City. Immediate termination via "cancellation" is reserved for "extraordinary" unforeseen situations. Non-renewal is the preferred approach to removing a parcel from a Williamson Act contract.

Williamson Act land has affected the growth pattern of many communities, and can often prevent annexations and / or the efficient provision of services. This is especially true when adjacent parcels may not be covered by the Act, or have different times left to run on the contract. Williamson Act preserve areas can be found within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area as well as within the City's Sphere of Influence boundaries. These preserve areas are under active contracts that were approved for initial 10-year term and are subject to an automatic annual review. Williamson Act preserve areas within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area and the City's Sphere of Influence are shown on Figure OS - 2 Williamson Act Preserves.

To address property subject to Williamson Act contracts within the General Plan Planning Area, the City has adopted guidelines for the cancellation of Williamson Act

² California Government Code, Section 51200 *et seq.*

contracts, including procedures, timelines, and requisite findings. The 2040 General Plan and the City's Zoning Ordinance includes an Agricultural land use designation and zoning district, respectively to allow for the logical expansions of City boundaries and for the expansion of City services.

Farmland Security Zones

In 1998, the Williamson Act's farmland security zone provisions were enacted with the passage of Senate Bill 1182.³ This program dubbed "Super Williamson Act" enables agricultural landowners to enter into contracts with a county for 20-year increments with an additional 35 percent tax benefit over and above the standard Williamson Act contract.

Annexation of farmland security zones is generally not allowed. Section 56749 of the California Government Code requires Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo) to reject plans that would result in the annexation of farmland security zone into cities. Nevertheless, annexation of farmland security zones is permissible under certain circumstances including voter approval, necessary public improvements, and landowner consent.

There are no farmland security zones within the City of Chowchilla 2040 General Plan Planning Area or Sphere of Influence boundaries. There are, however, farmland security zones adjacent to the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence boundaries (refer to Figure OS - 2).

WATER RESOURCES

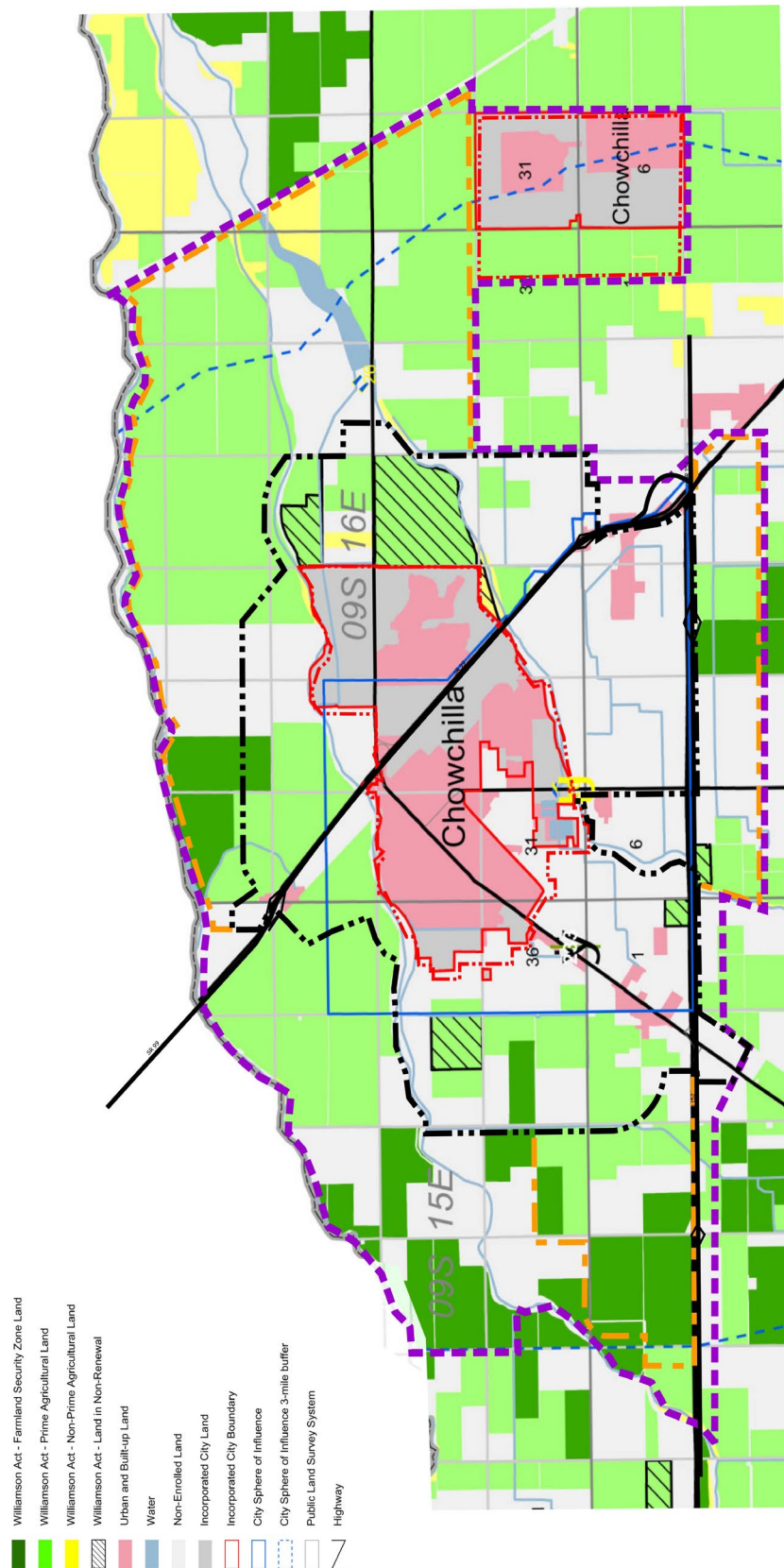
The City of Chowchilla is located in the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region and Groundwater Basin and extracts its groundwater from the Chowchilla Sub-basin. The 248 square mile Chowchilla Sub-basin includes lands in Madera and Merced Counties. The Chowchilla Sub-basin is bound by the San Joaquin River to the west, the Merced Sub-basin to the north, and the Columbia Canal Company Service Area to the east. The southern boundary from the west to its connection with the northern boundary runs along the southern boundary of Township 11 South, Ranges 14 East and 15 East, northerly along the eastern boundaries of Sections 9, 29, 27 and 33 of Township 11 South, Range 15 East, and northeasterly along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Chowchilla Water District, then northeasterly following Berenda Slough and Ash Slough to the Chowchilla River. Major rivers in the Sub-basin are the Chowchilla and Fresno Rivers.⁴

Figure OS - 2

³ California Government Code Section 51296-51297.4

⁴ California Department of Water Resources, DWR Bulletin 118 – Update 2003.

Williamson Act Preserves



Groundwater flow in this Sub-basin is generally in a southwesterly direction, but with groundwater mounds occurring at the Sub-basin center and pumping depressions in the western portion during 1999. Based on current and historical groundwater elevations maps, no groundwater barriers, with the exception of the Corcoran Clay or E-Clay (a lacustrine and marsh deposit), appear to exist in the Sub-basin. The E-Clay, which underlies most of the Sub-basin at depths ranging between 50 and 250 feet, restricts the vertical movement of groundwater and divides the water bearing deposits into confined and unconfined aquifers. The total storage capacity of the Chowchilla Sub-basin is estimated to be approximately 8,000,000 acre-feet to a depth of 300 feet and 13,900,000 acre-feet to the base of fresh groundwater.⁵

Annual urban and agricultural groundwater extractions are 6,000 acre-feet and 249,000 acre-feet, respectively. There are no other extractions, and subsurface outflows have not been determined.⁶

The San Joaquin River Groundwater Basin is not adjudicated. Therefore, there are no limitations placed on groundwater pumpage volumes. The San Joaquin River Basin and the Chowchilla Sub-basin have been in a state of overdraft for many years. The California Water Plan Bulletin 160-98 estimated the average overdraft in the San Joaquin River Basin to be 239,000 acre feet (AF) in 1995. The 2007 draft Madera County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) concluded that the current average annual overdraft in the Valley floor portion of Madera County is approximately 100,000 AF per year. The Valley floor area includes both the Madera and Chowchilla Sub-basins. According to the IRWMP 97% of water used in Madera County is for agriculture. All urban uses in Madera County (including cities and the unincorporated towns and homes on individual wells) account for 3% of total water use.

Water Supply

State planning law requires that general plan conservation elements address water resources in coordination with all water providers within the jurisdiction for which the general plan is prepared. Therefore, descriptions of agricultural water providers are included. A clear distinction exists between water service provided by the City for municipal use and water service provided by agricultural irrigation districts for agricultural use. According to the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, almost all urban water used in the county comes from wells. About three-fourths of agricultural use is from wells; the rest is from surface water.

Municipal Water Supply

The City of Chowchilla provides potable water service to the majority of residences, commercial and industrial business and institutions within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area. As noted above, the California Women's correctional facilities provide

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

their own potable water service. Residences in the unincorporated areas rely on individual private wells for their personal potable water supply.

The City of Chowchilla along with the residences in the unincorporated areas of the 2040 General Plan Planning Area, and the California Department of Corrections Central Valley Women's Facility and Valley State Prison water supplies are produced solely from groundwater wells within the Chowchilla Sub-basin. The City does not share water sources with other agencies other than indirectly through precipitation recharge and pumping from the same groundwater basin.

The 2040 General Plan Public Facilities Element addresses in detail the City's municipal water supply distribution and management.

Agriculture Water Supply

The City is surrounded by the Chowchilla Water District. The District contracts for and delivers to its agricultural customers Central Valley Project water along with other various surface waters for which it has entitlement to. The City of Chowchilla does not receive surface water deliveries from the District. The District's surface water supply is supplemented by groundwater pumped by District customers. Agricultural production is a major user of groundwater during dry years or when surface water irrigation supplies are not available. Some agricultural areas in Madera County rely completely on groundwater supplies in dry years. Agricultural groundwater wells pump from the upper unconfined aquifer and the lower confined aquifer.

Groundwater Level Trends

The San Joaquin River Groundwater Basin is not adjudicated. Therefore, there are no limitations placed on the quantity of groundwater extraction in the San Joaquin River Groundwater Basin. As a result, the San Joaquin River Groundwater Basin and the Chowchilla Sub-basin have been in a state of overdraft for many years.

On the average, the Chowchilla Sub-basin water level has declined nearly 40 feet from 1970 through 2000. The period between 1970 through 1978 showed steep declines totaling 30 feet. The nine year period from 1978 to 1987 saw stabilization and rebound of approximately 25 feet, taking the water levels close to where they were in 1970. The period between 1987 and 1996 again showed steep declines, bottoming out in 1996 at approximately 45 feet below 1970 levels. Groundwater levels rose approximately eight feet from 1996 to 2000.⁷

Groundwater level declines have been more severe in the eastern portion of the Sub-basin from 1980 to the present between the Cities of Chowchilla and Madera. The Valley floor includes both the Madera and Chowchilla Sub-basins. The overdraft in the area of the valley floor that primarily covers the Chowchilla Water District (CWD) and the Madera Irrigation District (MID) is approximately 20,000 acre-feet annually. The

⁷ Ibid.

current average annual overdraft in the Valley floor portion of Madera County is approximately 100,000 acre-feet annually. There are no available estimates as to the portion of the current overdraft attributable to the City groundwater pumping.⁸

Water Quality

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Health Services are the agencies responsible for establishing and enforcing water quality standards. These standards limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems.

The water in the Chowchilla Sub-basin is of a calcium-sodium bicarbonate type in the eastern part of the Sub-basin. This turns into calcium bicarbonate, sodium-calcium bicarbonate, and sodium chloride water types towards the western part of the Sub-basin. While there are local areas of high nitrate, hardness, iron and chloride in the Sub-basin, the California Department of Health Services, which monitors Title 22 water quality standards, reports water quality in public water supply wells sampled in this Sub-basin between 1994 and 2000 to below concentration level standards for inorganics, radiological, nitrates, pesticides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and SVOCs.⁹

The City of Chowchilla vigorously tests the quality of its drinking water to meet standards required by state and federal regulatory agencies. Quality of groundwater use for domestic supply in Chowchilla meets present state and federal water quality standards. Nevertheless, water quality standards have changed over the past several years and are expected to continue to change during the 2040 General Plan planning period. Thus, many cities, including Chowchilla, have opted to chlorinate the municipal water supply to avoid chemical test failures. The City of Chowchilla has embarked on a long-term process to identify potential causes of minute contamination from mechanical well equipment, routine testing programs, and potential cross connections between non-City water supplies, back flow prevention, and other potential causes.

Groundwater quality and water rights issues are managed by the California Department of Water Resources and the California Water Quality Control Board – Central Valley Region (RWQCB). The RWQCB is authorized to adopt regional water quality control plans, enforce waste discharge requirements for point and non-point sources established by state or federal Water Pollution Control Act, and to control groundwater quality through wastewater discharge requirements and well permitting.

The primary source of water pollution is urban runoff. Stormwater runoff from streets, parking lots, commercial and industrial businesses, private yards and agricultural land may contain oil, grease, pesticides and herbicides, heavy metals, paints, household chemicals, construction materials, sediment and eroded soil. These materials ultimately end up in storm drains and storm basins that directly or indirectly lead into Ash Slough

⁸ Madera County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, 2007 draft.

⁹ California Department of Water Resources, DWR Bulletin 118 – Update 2003.

or Berenda Slough and the Chowchilla River where they may cause water degradation and / or affect plant, wildlife and aquatic species that depend on Ash and Berenda Sloughs or the Chowchilla River habitat for survival.

The 2040 General Plan Public Facilities Element addresses in detail discharge and management of stormwater.

Groundwater Recharge

The groundwater basin has not shown significant potential for rapid groundwater recharge in the vicinity of Chowchilla – the most advantageous groundwater recharge area is found in the central portion of the San Joaquin Valley. Natural recharge of the Sub-basin is estimated to 87,000 acre-feet. Agricultural irrigation does recharge groundwater in the vicinity of Chowchilla. There are approximately 179,000 acre-feet of applied water recharge primarily from deep percolation of applied irrigation water. Water carried in the Chowchilla River, Ash Slough, Berenda Reservoir, and Berenda Slough is seen as the most effective recharge method for the Chowchilla Planning Area. Artificial recharge and subsurface inflow have not determined The City may consider purchasing agricultural water from irrigation districts to increase groundwater recharge efforts the City is already making.

Water Conservation

Water is a finite resource. To ensure adequate water supplies to meet both current and future demands, the City manages water supplies and cooperates with regional agencies to avoid extracting more water from the groundwater basin than percolates back into it. The City of Chowchilla is actively managing its water system and water use in an attempt to reduce or eliminate groundwater overdraft. The City of Chowchilla, Chowchilla Irrigation District and Madera Irrigation District all encourage water conservation.

Madera Irrigation District is planning to construct and operate a groundwater bank facility – Water Supply Enhancement Project. The Water Supply Enhancement Project is intended to help alleviate water supply storages and overdraft conditions in the Madera Sub-basin. Although still in the development stage, such a project may make opportunities available for the City of Chowchilla to participate in the project which may make various sources of water available for groundwater recharge within the City's service area through exchanges with other banking participants.

The Chowchilla Irrigation District is also evaluating the potential for water banking opportunities in the Chowchilla Irrigation District which may provide an opportunity for City of Chowchilla participation in the future. Potential opportunities may exist for the City and the Chowchilla Irrigation District to explore groundwater recharge programs wherein excess water allocated to the Chowchilla Irrigation District via the Central Valley Project or other surface waters for which the District has entitlement is carried out through impounding surface water within sinking basins and natural water courses such as Ash and Berenda Sloughs or Chowchilla River.

Reclaimed and treated effluent from local wastewater treatment plants represents a potential source of water for non-potable use in the City of Chowchilla. While the City has provided reclaimed water on a limited basis for agricultural irrigation, historically the costs of constructing parallel lines (“purple pipe”) to service new urban users and providing the resource have been higher than the costs of producing local groundwater. Nevertheless, the City is committed to evaluating and pursuing reclaimed water programs consistent with sound economic practices.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The 2040 General Plan Planning Area contains several biological communities and wildlife habitats that contribute to the overall recreational, educational and aesthetic values of the community. As the City expands outward, the need for preservation of the valuable diversity of these biological communities and wildlife habitats becomes increasingly important.

Plant and Wildlife Communities

Primary plant and wildlife communities within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area are urban and agricultural land with associated irrigation / drainage ditches / ponds. The only natural biotic habitat of substantial size within the General Plan Planning Area and Sphere of Influence is the riparian scrub and aquatic habitat associated with Ash and Berenda Sloughs and the Chowchilla River. While only one seasonal wetland (northern hardpan vernal pool) has been mapped within the City’s Sphere of Influence boundaries, there may be other small, isolated seasonal wetlands or other natural habitats such as non-native grassland given the soil types present in the Chowchilla area.

Urban

The majority of the General Plan Planning Area within the existing City limits consists of developed lands in the form of residences, or commercial and industrial uses. The biotic resources of the developed areas are extremely restricted due to their lack of naturally occurring biotic habitats and continual use and disturbance by humans. The majority of the vegetation in these areas consists of landscaped, ornamental species.

Agriculture

The majority of the General Plan Planning Area consists of agricultural lands. The agricultural fields and pastures of the General Plan Planning Area vary in consistency. Dry farming, orchards, vineyards, irrigated pastures and dry pastures all occur within the boundaries of the General Plan Planning Area. Some of these areas lie fallow for portions of the year, while others have not been farmed for a number of years. A number of irrigation / drainage ditches and catch basins run through the agricultural fields / pastures or along their boundaries.

Grass and forbs species grow in the fallow fields or along the boundaries of those areas actively farmed are generally limited to non-native annuals of European origin. The various ditches and basins range from supporting little to no vegetation to supporting a

diverse assemblage of wetland species. For the most part, trees and shrubs (with the exception of planted orchard trees and vines) are absent from the agricultural habitat.

Sloughs and River

Two sloughs traverse the General Plan Planning Area and one river forms a portion of the City's northern Sphere of Influence boundary. The two sloughs traversing the Planning Area and the river forming a portion of the City's northern Sphere of Influence boundary are:

- ☐ Ash Slough
- ☐ Berenda Slough
- ☐ Chowchilla River

The Chowchilla River, which originates in the easterly Sierra Nevada foothills of Madera County, forms the City's northerly most Sphere of Influence Boundary. The Chowchilla River also forms the boundary between Madera County and Merced County. The Chowchilla River primarily consists of a broad barren, sandy wash that remains dry much of the year with the flow depending mainly on water released Buchanan Dam (Eastman Reservoir). The Chowchilla River, which receives most of its water from rainfall runoff in the lower elevations of the Sierra Nevada foothills, is subject to short durations of substantial flows during winter storm events or in very wet winters. Seasonal flows in the Chowchilla River are sufficient to support riparian shrubs and trees. The bed and banks of Chowchilla River is vegetated with patchy riparian scrub vegetation with scattered trees.

Approximately seven miles downstream from Eastman Lake, the Chowchilla River's water is diverted into both the Berenda and Sloughs, with excess water continuing down the Chowchilla River channel. Both Ash Slough and Berenda Slough flow in a southwesterly direction through the Planning Area and eventually empty into the San Joaquin River. Similar to the Chowchilla River, the sloughs consist primarily of broad barren, sandy washes that remain dry much of the year, but are subject to short durations of substantial flows during winter storm events or in very wet winters. Seasonal flows in the Sloughs are controlled by upstream diversions (Buchanan and Hensley Dams). Berenda Reservoir located just east of the General Plan Planning Area on Berenda Slough is inundated for most of the year. A portion of Ash Slough is used for transporting irrigation water from Berenda Reservoir between the months of March and September. Seasonal flows of Ash and Berenda Sloughs are sufficient to support riparian shrubs and trees. The bed and banks of Ash and Berenda Sloughs are vegetated with patchy riparian scrub vegetation with scattered trees.

Ash Slough, Berenda Slough and the Chowchilla River are considered Waters of the United States and Waters of California. Ash Slough, Berenda Slough and the Chowchilla River are characterized as having defined bed and bank, and are hydrologically connected to other Waters of the United States, as they flow into the San Joaquin River before emptying into the San Francisco Bay. Ash and Berenda Sloughs, and the Chowchilla River are subject to the regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the

California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The limit of USACE jurisdiction, as well as that of the RWQCB would be the ordinary high water level of both of the Sloughs and of the Chowchilla River. The Sloughs and the Chowchilla River would also be subject to the jurisdiction of the CDFG up to the top of the bank or the edge of associated riparian vegetation, whichever is greater.

Open Water / Reservoir

Open water / reservoir habits are called lacustrine habitats and are characterized by inland depressions or dammed riverine channels containing standing water, including both the near-shore (limnetic) and deepwater habitat (littoral). Usually, to meet this criterion, each area must exceed 20 acres and be deeper than 6.6 feet. Berenda Reservoir, east of Highway 99 is classified as an open water / reservoir within the City's Sphere of Influence boundaries.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are generally found in grassland habitats. It is possible that small, isolated patches of historical vernal pool habitat may occur within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area. However, the majority of the land in and around Chowchilla has been converted to agricultural land uses and thus greatly diminishing the possibility of the presence of historical vernal pool habitat. Only one vernal pool, a northern hardpan vernal pool, has been mapped within the City's Sphere of Influence boundaries. None have been mapped within the General Plan Planning Area.

Special Status Species

Among the diverse plant and wildlife species within Chowchilla General Plan Planning Area, there is the possibility that some may have protected status under the Federal Endangered Species Act and / or under various California statutes. State and federal laws have provided the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with a mechanism for conserving and protecting the diversity of plant and animal species native to California. A sizable number of native plants and animals have been formally designated as threatened or endangered under state and federal endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as candidates for such listings. Still others have been designated as species of special concern by the CDFG. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has developed its own set of lists of native plants considered rare, threatened or endangered. Collectively, these plants and animals are referred to as "special status species".

A few special status species have the potential to occur within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area.¹⁰ These species include the lesser saltscare (*Atriplex minuscula*), a California Native Plant Society listing; conservancy fair shrimp (*Branchinecta conservation*), a federally endangered species; longhorn fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta*

¹⁰ California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Database, 2005 and California Native Plant Society Listing 2001.

longiantenna), a federally endangered species; vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), a federally threatened species; vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), a federally endangered species; valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), a federally threatened species; California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), a federal threatened and California species of concern; western spadefoot (*Scaphiopus hammondi*), a California species of concern; western pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*), a California species of concern; California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*), a California species of concern; Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), a California threatened species; northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), a California species of concern; Copper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), a California species of concern; western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a California species of concern; long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), a California species of concern; black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), a California species of concern; California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris acitia*), a California species of concern; loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a California species of concern; tri-colored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), a California species of concern; Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), a California species of concern; Townsend's western big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii*), a California species of concern; pallid bat (*Antrozous pallida*), a California species of concern; western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*), a California species of concern; and the American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), a California species of concern.

Of the special status species identified above, only the California tiger salamander has been observed within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area. The valley elderberry longhorn beetle and the lesser saltscale have been observed within the Sphere of Influence boundaries. A number of special status species listed above have been observed in the vicinity of 2040 General Plan Planning Area. Most of the special status species identified above are associated with the riparian scrub and aquatic habitats associated with Ash and Berenda Soughs and the Chowchilla River, or with seasonal wetland habitat. Site specific biotic studies would be necessary to ascertain the presence or absence of special status species within the 2040 General Plan Planning Area.

MINERAL RESOURCES

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires the California State Geologist to classifying lands into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) based on the known or inferred mineral resource potential of that land. The primary goal of mineral land classification is to ensure that the mineral resource potential of lands is recognized and considered in the land use planning process. The classification process is based solely on geology, without regard to land use or land ownership and identifies lands that contain economically significant mineral deposits. The classification process includes an assessment of the quantity, quality and extent of aggregate deposits in a study area. The loss of regionally significant mineral resource deposits to land uses that preclude mining activities is one of the main emphases of SMARA.

The MRZ categories are as follows:

MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.

MRZ-4: Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ.

The California Geological Survey (formerly the California Division of Mines and Geology) is responsible under SMARA for carrying out the classification phase. The California Mining and Geology Board is responsible for designating areas within a production-consumption region that contain significant deposits of Portland cement concrete-grade aggregate (valued for its versatility and its importance in construction) that may be needed to meet the region's future demand.

The 2040 General Plan Planning Area and the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence Area are designated MRZ-1. Neither the Chowchilla 2040 General Plan Planning Area, nor its Sphere of Influence Area is located within a State designated production-consumption region. The nearest State designated production-consumption region is the Fresno Production-Consumption Region which extends into the southern portion of Madera County along the San Joaquin River. The California Geological Survey's Special Report 158 and Open-File Report 99-02 provide the results of a classification of aggregate resources within the Fresno Production-Consumption Region.

CULTURAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Cultural and historic preservation is an important element in the planning of communities. The preservation of cultural resources is the preserving of tangible presence of the past. Historic preservation is the identification and protection of sites and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, or cultural significance. Historical sites and landmarks are unique reminders of the social, economic and political history of an area and their preservation includes many benefits.

The City of Chowchilla, which lies within a culturally rich Central Valley and provides a number of physical links with its ethnographic and historic past, is comparatively young when compared with other California communities. Being a comparatively young community, the City has an excellent opportunity to incorporate the protection of cultural and historic properties at an early point in its history. Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, objects or places of importance that may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural or scientific importance. Historic sites, buildings and objects are reminders of the City's unique heritage and its place in the development of the Central Valley and the State.

The economic benefits of historic preservation are many, including, but not limited to: 1) tourism; 2) an increase in rental and resale value of property; 3) lower replacement costs by recycling older buildings; and 4) increased tax revenues. Historic preservation can also be considered as a reinvestment in a neighborhood to stop its decline and reverse its downward spiral. The reuse of vacant or abandoned buildings and the reuse of existing infrastructure have evolved into a viable approach to revitalizing neighborhoods.

Native American

Prior to Euro-American settlement, most of the San Joaquin Valley and the bordering foothills of the Sierra Nevada and Diablo Range were inhabited by Native American tribes of the Valley Yokuts. The bulk of the Valley Yokuts lived on the eastern side of the San Joaquin Valley. The City of Chowchilla is located within the Cauchela (also known as Chowchilla) Yokuts territory. Chowchilla is derived from the Native American Yokuts tribelet which once lived in the area. The Cauchela, meaning lowlanders or westerners by the hill tribes, were formerly a populous tribe. The Cauchela occupied the valley plains along the several channels of the Chowchilla River. A Cauchela village site was located along the Chowchilla River at the eastern edge of the plains. A Cauchela village was also located on Berenda Slough.

Archaeological sites can yield information about the historic activities of man, evidence of earlier cultures that once inhabited the area, and sites having spiritual or cultural significance to living Native Americans. A number of small archaeological surveys have been conducted within the Chowchilla 2040 General Plan Planning Area. These surveys have resulted in a number of recorded archaeological sites within the City of Chowchilla, and its 2040 General Plan Planning Area and Sphere of Influence boundaries.¹¹ Given these discoveries, there is a possibility that additional archaeological resources may be present in the 2040 General Plan Planning Area and Sphere of Influence boundary. Because systematic archaeological surveys have not been conducted in the 2040 General Plan Planning Area, it is not possible to predict where sites may be located, or to determine the archaeological sensitivity of any specific property.

Archaeological sites, unlike other historic resources, are not publicized to minimize the potential risk of damage, vandalism or removal of artifacts from the site. Archaeologists recommend that such sites be left untouched until competent professional research can be undertaken. Site locations should be filed with the appropriate local archaeological society or institution, and locations should be identified only to qualified researchers or when projects may threaten the integrity of a site.

A typical condition of any construction or development permit issued by the City is that if a potential archaeological site is discovered, all work on the project shall be stopped

¹¹ The Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center at California State University, Bakersfield.

immediately, and a qualified archaeologist retained to evaluate the site and prepare a report. Only after the site has been evaluated, and appropriate agencies have made findings and recommendations, will work be allowed to continue.

Euro-American

While many of the towns and cities that developed along the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor (now the Union Pacific Railroad Company corridor) were founded by the railroad, Chowchilla was developed by Orlando Robertson using the colony farm system model found elsewhere in California and made popular in the 19th century. The colony system of development unlike the utopian communities of Kaweah in Tulare County or the Llano community of Los Angeles County – also known by some as colonies – were much like the housing developments of today.

Chowchilla dates back to 1912 when Orland Robertson purchased the Chowchilla Ranch from the California Pastoral & Agricultural Company LTD. Mr. Robertson parceled and developed the northeastern portion of the Ranch as the town site of Chowchilla. Robertson's development included the 12 mile palm lined Robertson Boulevard, 300 miles of county roads, streetlights and a town water system. The town site of Chowchilla was incorporated on February 7, 1923.

The City of Chowchilla gained some importance due to its location along the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor. A 12-mile railroad spur line (Chowchilla Pacific Railroad) off the Southern Pacific Railroad mainline corridor was constructed to serve the agricultural needs of the area. The 12-mile spur line was eventually absorbed by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

The City's largest population and housing construction boom began in the late 1980s and continued through the early 21st century. During this time, the majority of the housing construction has occurred west of the City and east of Highway 99. During this time, Chowchilla also experienced a number of other significant changes. The stretch of Highway 99 through Chowchilla was realigned further east of the present day Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) main rail corridor.

Overtime, the City's older buildings have slowly given way to newer structures or have undergone substantial remodel. The majority of the oldest buildings are located to the west of the intersection of Chowchilla and West Robertson Boulevards. The City block between Second and Third Streets contains the largest concentration of older buildings that remain in the City's downtown. Newer buildings can be found as infill and in the outer reaches of the City. Moving further west, south or east from the City's core, one can trace the progression of the City's growth through time.

Architectural Character

The Central Business District along West Robertson Boulevard includes one – and two – story commercial properties generally constructed with concrete block, red brick, or

steel or wood framed walls with flat or barrel roofs. Freestanding commercial buildings include gas stations, restaurants, offices and stores constructed with various materials.

Residential properties are generally modest one – story houses built in many styles of architecture and with wood frame, concrete block or brick wall construction. The various residential architectural styles include:

Craftsman Bungalows characterized by low pitched gable ends, and full length and partial porches supported by wood columns;

Tudor Revival characterized by its steeply pitched roofline, a dominant cross gable on the façade and narrow grouped window types;

Colonial Revival characterized by a simple footprint, front entry porches, symmetrical facades and double hung windows;

Mission Revival characterized by mission shaped parapets, wide overhanging eaves, and smooth surfaces;

Neoclassical characterized dominant porches, classical columns and symmetrical facades;

Art Moderne characterized by smooth stucco walls, flat roofs and curvilinear corners;

Minimal Traditional characterized by low pitched roofs with closed eaves with little or no overhang; and

Ranch characterized by one story symmetrical facades, low pitched roofs, rectangular footprints and wide eave overhangs.

The most abundant style of architecture represented could be considered Vernacular Architecture or Folk style homes built by contractors without a specific plan or knowledge of the more high styles of architecture. These structures often incorporate elements from different architectural styles and usually do not include all the character defining features of a specific building type.

Historic Preservation

The City of Chowchilla relies on the criteria of the National Register as a standard measure of the potential historic status of properties in the City. The criteria for inclusion in the Local Register of Historic Resources are found in the City of Chowchilla Municipal Code.¹²

¹² City of Chowchilla Municipal Code, Title 18, Chapter 18.55.

In 2003, the City of Chowchilla established a Heritage Preservation Commission to oversee the preservation of historic resources in the City. The seven member commission focuses on preserving resources from the 20th Century forward. The Heritage Preservation Commission is charged with making recommendations for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, conversion, or demolition of older structures in the City. The Commission also takes an active role in considering the scope and appropriateness of renovation, rehabilitation, and remodeling of buildings in the downtown as part of the Redevelopment Agency's effort to revive and perpetuate downtown as a retail and business center of the City.

The City Heritage Preservation Commission commissioned a Historical Resources Reconnaissance Survey in April 2007. The historical resources survey, which was completed in October 2008, identified and evaluated the historical resources within the City of Chowchilla. The survey resulted in the identification of 71 historical resources which have been evaluated as potentially significant and eligible for listing in the City of Chowchilla's Local Register of Historical Resources. In addition to the 71 potentially significant structures, a potential residential / social heritage district was identified around the downtown Chowchilla Park – Chowchilla Park Residential / Social Heritage District.¹³

The potential heritage district, which includes portions of Robertson Boulevard, North 6th and 7th Streets and a portion of South 6th Street, is composed of residences, public buildings and a public park. This potential heritage district includes a number of architectural styles that reflect both the social and residential evolution of the City between 1912 and 1941. Architectural styles that can be found in this area include Craftsman, Tudar Revival, Colonial Revival, Neo Classical, Works Progress Administration, Streamline Moderne and public - park design. Character defining features of this potential heritage district include public landscaping (Chowchilla Park), and features associated with various architectural styles that include different fenestration patterns and building materials, various façade arrangements and one to two story facades.

Historical Landmarks

The most identifiable landmark in the City is the palm – tree lined West Robertson Boulevard (Highway 233). The palm trees were planted at the direction of Orland Robertson, the founding father of Chowchilla. The palm tree lined thoroughfare is a link to the City's origin and past. The City of Chowchilla, Madera County and Caltrans consider the palm trees lining West Robertson Boulevard a historical resource.

West Robertson Boulevard is listed as a California Historical Landmark. Chowchilla Boulevard is part of the original routing of the former U.S. Route 99, often called the "Main Street of the West". U.S. Route 99 was an important route of travel until it was relegated to county road status with the opening of State Route 99 freeway to the east

¹³ Chowchilla Historical Resources Reconnaissance Survey Final Report, October 2008.

of the City center in the 1960s. Portions of U.S. Route 99 are recognized as part of the “National Park to Park Highway” or the “Pacific Highway (Valley Route Portion).”

A historical landmark is located at the intersection of Chowchilla and West Robertson Boulevards denoting the site of the original Chowchilla Arch.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks contribute to and enhance a city’s quality of life for its citizens in a number of ways. Parks reflect how a neighborhood and a city regard itself, and they can be objects of community pride. Parks also define city neighborhoods. Green spaces soften urban development and add visual enhancements to a city. Park facilities enable residents to be active and engage in a number of recreation activities and outdoor pursuits. Recreation programs provide a focus for youth activities. Community centers serve as focal points for neighborhood and community-wide events.

Parks, trails and open space areas can also add value to a city. For example, a park can add to the assessed value of adjacent and nearby properties by making the area a more desirable place to live. Visitation and tourism to city attractions directly add to the appeal of the city and provide venues for sporting activities and special events. Special purpose venues encourage people to visit, dine and stay in a community. These visitors generate revenue by dining and participating in other activities that support the local economy.

Caring for and preserving park and recreation resources, as well as adapting to the changing recreation needs of the community, is an essential component of Chowchilla’s future health and wealth. As the City changes and develops, the City looks to maintain a balance between the urban environment and landscaped oasis where citizens of Chowchilla can relax and recreate. The objectives and policies in the 2040 General Plan focus on the enhancement and appropriate use of Chowchilla’s park and recreational facilities and programs to meet the changing needs of Chowchilla’s diverse population.

Parks and Recreation Needs

Meeting the parks and recreation needs of the present and projected population of the Chowchilla area is a responsibility of both the public and private sectors. The public sector – city, county, and schools – typically addresses recreational needs through the provision of public parks, playgrounds, and neighborhood and community centers with various facilities (e.g., play equipment, ball fields and courts, swimming pools, passive play and picnic areas) and through a variety of organized recreational programs, instructional programs and special events conducted at neighborhood and community centers. The City of Chowchilla Park and Recreation Commission are responsible for the planning and oversight role for the recreation needs of the overall community. The City’s Parks and Recreation Department has the basic responsibility of carrying out recreation activities in the City.

The private sector addresses community recreational needs through the development of bowling alleys, roller skating rinks, movie theaters, private recreation and swimming pool associations, arcade centers and a variety of other businesses serving the leisure demand. The demand for major land intensive recreation activities, such as a golf course, could be addressed by either the public or private sector. Development of private golf courses are typically associated with integral housing development projects. Chowchilla's only golf course, a private membership golf course, is located east of Highway 99.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The City of Chowchilla has an adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan establishes long-range strategies for the development of public parks, open space, parkways, trails and other recreational facilities found in the 2040 General Plan Planning Area. The Master Plan includes detailed planning guidelines and design criteria, as well as development and improvement standards for public parkland, parkways, trails and recreation facilities in the City of Chowchilla.

Figure LU-1 the General Plan Land Use Map, identifies existing and future public parks, parkways, trails and open space areas. The location of future parks, parkways, trails and open space areas, which will be dedicated and constructed as the 2040 General Plan Planning Area is urbanized, represent a conceptual size and location. The exact size and location of future parks, parkways, trails and open space areas are to be determined at the master plan / specific plan stage of a development; or at the tentative subdivision map stage, if the development is not within one of the General Plan Growth Areas. Nonetheless, the actual size and location of future parks, parkways, trails and open space areas are to be consistent with the policies, standards and implementation measures of 2040 General Plan and that of the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Park Classifications

The City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies and categorizes several different types of parks to meet the park and recreational needs of the community. Each park classification includes a general description of the purpose and intent, recreational elements to be provided, location, and standards for park size and service area. The following park classifications define the various types of parks in the City.

Playlot

A playlot is a small area intended for children up to 6 or 7 years of age. A playlot is essentially a substitute or adjunct for a residential backyard and thus is normally provided in areas designated on the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram as Medium High Density Residential or High Density Residential. A playlot may range from 2,500 to 12,500 square feet, and typically is improved with play apparatus, paved areas for wheeled toys, benches, sand areas, or a small wading or spray pool, and landscape

treatment. Since a playlot is intended to serve as a playground for small children, they are to be located near the center of a residential neighborhood or complex and away from a major street (arterial, or minor or major collector) to promote the safety of children.

Due to the inefficiency inherent in the development and maintenance of such a small area, a playlot is a “non-credited” park and is only permitted when developed or improved with private funds and accompanied with a permanent funding mechanism for on-going maintenance of the facility. Rarely should the City consider developing a playlot in conjunction with its normal parks and recreation program. The City may consider playlots on an as needed basis, but does not encourage public playlots given the high maintenance expense and difficulty of monitoring playlot activities. Playlots identified in a subdivision map are to be designed and constructed as part of the subdivision improvements.

Pocket Park

Pocket parks are small open space areas that serve residential neighborhoods. A pocket park, which can range from 0.25 to 2.0 acres in size that is strategically located in a neighborhood, may provide recreational opportunities within a short walking distance from homes. A pocket park is generally limited to passive recreation or an esthetic amenity in a neighborhood. A pocket park may include a playlot for children, a seating area and / or a picnic area. A pocket park that includes a playlot for children, a seating area and / or a picnic area are not be located adjacent to a major street (arterial, or minor or major collector) and be a minimum of one net acre in size to ensure the safety of children.

Due to the inefficiency inherent in the development and maintenance of such a small area, a “neighborhood serving” pocket park is considered a “non-credited” park and is only permitted when developed or improved with private funds and accompanied with a permanent funding mechanism for on-going maintenance of the facility. Rarely should the City consider developing a “neighborhood serving” pocket park in conjunction with its normal parks and recreation program. Pocket parks identified in a subdivision map are to be designed and constructed as part of the subdivision improvements.

A pocket park may serve as a civic monument site, a public art site or as a beautification area in the City’s Downtown District or in a designated Mixed Use area in the City. A pocket park in the City’s Downtown District or designated Mixed Use area should be designed to serve the needs of shoppers or employees as places to rest or eat, or provide access to adjacent commercial streets or parking areas, or simply provide open space texture to an otherwise commercial storefront or mixed use block. The City encourages pocket parks in the Downtown District and in Mixed Use designed areas if they are a part of a planned development and are considered an integral element of the project’s design. If a pocket park is constructed as part of a planned development, a legally established maintenance district is required to provide funds for maintaining the facility.

Neighborhood Park

A neighborhood park is intended to serve as the neighborhood center for both physical and social activities. Neighborhood parks should provide a sense of place, while at the same time be tailored to reflect the surrounding neighborhood they represent. Each neighborhood park should be based on design elements that give the neighborhood it serves its own sense of place, and emphasize on providing both active and passive pre- and primary school-aged child facilities.

A neighborhood park should be 3 to 9 net acres in size, and developed primarily to serve the recreational needs of 1,000 to 3,000 residents living within a one-half (1/2) mile radius of the park. A neighborhood park service area should avoid the need for residents to cross natural or manmade barriers (i.e., expressway, arterial, major or minor collector, railroad corridor, canal, slough or industrial area) that inhibits the access to the park. It is desirable for a neighborhood park to be surrounded on all sides by local streets with residential units fronting the adjacent street for convenient access to the park as well as providing visibility onto the park for security purposes. A neighborhood park may be located adjacent to an elementary school to provide a greater range of activities at one site. A neighborhood park may also serve as a trailhead to the City-wide trail network.

Community Park

A community park generally provides passive and active recreational amenities oriented to both adults and children, often providing specialized facilities such as tennis courts, community centers, swimming pools, and sports fields such as baseball, softball or soccer. Community parks supplement neighborhood parks by providing for activities requiring more space, special facilities, and allow for more intensive uses that are not typically suitable or physically possible in a neighborhood park.

A community park should meet the park and recreational needs of those living or working within a two (2) mile radius of the park and serve as a trailhead to the City-wide trail network. To accomplish this, a community park should provide a direct connection to a City-wide trail. If a community park provides facilities required of a neighborhood park, the community park may serve as the neighborhood park for residences within one-half (1/2) mile radius of the community park.

Community parks must provide adequate parking within the park to support the intended uses of the park, as patrons of the park can be expected to drive to the park. To avoid the need to travel through residential neighborhoods or add substantial traffic to the local street network in the vicinity of the park, a community park requires two or more accesses from an arterial, and / or minor or major collector street. A community park may be located adjacent to a high school to provide a greater range of activities at one site. Since special facilities could be developed to allow for more intensive uses, care must be taken when designating a site for a community park to avoid potential conflicts with nearby residential or other noise or light sensitive land uses as these parks may have night lighting, and have recreational activities at night with attendant noise from spectators or public address systems.

Community parks may be designed and developed as dual-use facility capable of serving as seasonal stormwater drainage basin or serve as a City water well site. A community park that is intended to also serve as a seasonal storm drainage basin must be designed to avoid the appearance of a “perimeter park” or a “rectangular shaped depression” and all physical improvements (e.g., playground equipment, picnic areas, baseball or softball fields, hard court areas, swimming pool, parking facilities, equipment and storage facilities, restrooms, etc) must be placed in locations above the intended high-water elevation of the storm drainage basin. The use of curvilinear contours is strongly encouraged and the maximum side slopes of a dual-use facility may vary between 6:1 and 8:1.

There are two community park levels in the City – major and minor. A minor community park, generally 10 to 15 net acres in size, are typically designed to provide a diversity of passive and active recreation opportunities to meet the recreational needs and desires of the surrounding neighborhoods within a two mile radius of the park. A minor community park may also be designated and designed to serve a group of neighborhoods separated from the balance of the City by major transportation facilities or other forms of physical barriers or provide a specific set of recreational needs such as baseball, softball, swimming pool, or a community center or a performing arts theater.

A major community park is where most organized activities and league sports are intended to occur. To allow for organized activities and league sports, a major community park should 15 to 50 net acres in size and be based on a “focus” sport (e.g., soccer, baseball, softball, etc.) where at least one-third (1/3) of the active sports fields are for a focus sport. However, maintaining a diversity of recreation activities is still necessary. Thus, in addition to accommodating a focus sport, a major community park should reflect the recreational needs and desires of the City at large.

Regional Park – 50 Plus Acres

A regional park is typically a large natural or preservation area along a waterway, adjacent to a water-body or scenic area for the use by the general public. A regional park should offer a natural and relaxing environment for personal, family and group recreational activities such as trails for walking, hiking, jogging and cycling as oppose to the more intensely used neighborhood, or minor or major community park facility. A regional park may include wooded areas, varying topography and water features, picnic areas, boating and swimming, a nature center, day camps and some sports facilities on a less formal basis than provided in a minor or major community park.

A regional park should be a minimum of 50 acres in size, with 200 to 500 acres being a desirable size, and serve the recreational needs of approximately 50,000 residents living within a 30-minute drive of the park. The recommended standard for a regional park is 4 net acres per 1,000 residents. Berenda Slough Park has the potential to expand and evolve into a regional park for the City of Chowchilla.

Park Standards and Service Areas

Parkland standards provide a means of measurement for the allocation of recreational space and facilities for residents in a given area. Parkland standards can also be used to determine whether an existing developed area has an excess, or a deficiency of, recreational space and / or facilities. Finally, standards can be used to identify and establish programs to for improvements to meet the recreational needs of the community.

The City standard for developed parkland is 5 acres per 1,000 residents. As shown in Table OS - 1, this standard is further broken down to favor neighborhood parks, with 3 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents and 2 acres of community parkland per 1,000 residents. Based on adopted park classifications and standards, a neighborhood park should be located within a one-half mile radius of every residence. A community park should be located within a two-mile radius of every residence. Regional parks are not included City's standard for developed parkland requirements.

Table OS - 1
Parkland Standards

Park Type	Acres Per 1,000 Persons	Acres Per Park	Service Area
Neighborhood Park	3.0	3 to 9 Acres	1/2 mile radius
Community Park	2.0	10 to 50 Acres	2 miles radius

The City's Municipal Code provides specifics on parkland dedication requirements and in-lieu fees for development projects. Playlots and neighborhood pocket parks are considered "non-credited" parks and are not eligible for parkland dedication credit or parkland in-lieu fee credit.

Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

The City of Chowchilla presently operates and maintains 4 parks ranging in size from 2 to 18 acres. Of the 4 parks the City operates and maintains, 2 are designated as neighborhood parks and 2 are designated as community parks. The facilities at each park vary depending on the location, size and needs of the residents served by the park. All of the City's parks provide playground apparatus and family picnic areas. One of the major community parks the City operates and maintains is owned by the Chowchilla Irrigation District - Berenda Reservoir Park. Berenda Reservoir Park is located outside the 2040 General Plan Planning Area. Table OS - 2 lists the City's existing park and recreation facilities.

Table OS - 2
Existing Park and Recreation Facility Inventory

Park Name	Park Type and Acreage			Facilities Available
	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Joint Facility	

RC Wisner	4.5 Acres			Three ball fields, playground, batting cages, concession building.
Veterans Memorial	2.1 Acres			Restroom facilities, playground, horse shoe pits, two BBQ shelters.
Sports & Leisure ¹		18.0 Acres		Community center, two lighted ball fields, soccer fields, playground, BBQ shelter, horse shoe pits, basketball courts, handball courts, concession building and sand volleyball court, restroom facilities.
Dower Aquatic			0.25 Acre	Pool area, joint agreement with CUHSD, and Madera County Fairgrounds.
Community Sports Center			1.2 Acres	Gym, joint facility with CESD, Parks and Recreation Department.
Berenda Reservoir Park		6.0 Acres		Restroom facilities, BBQ shelter, scout island (picnic area), boat launch area, concession building, swimming beach area.
Total	6.6 Acres	24.0 Acres	1.45 Acres	

Notes:

¹Sports & Leisure Park is planned 24 acre community park. As of January 2008, only 18 acres of the Sports & Leisure Park site has been improved.

CUHSD = Chowchilla Union High School District

CESD = Chowchilla Elementary School District

Parkland and Recreational Needs

Table OS - 3 identifies the neighborhood and community parkland needs to serve the projected 2040 General Plan population growth. The City is deficient in meeting both the neighborhood parkland acreage and service area standards. As identified in Table OS - 2, only 2 neighborhood parks (RC Wisner and Veterans Memorial) with a combined total of 6.6 net acres existed in January 2008. Both existing neighborhood parks are located west of Highway 99. As a result of the existing parkland shortage, available parks and recreation facilities are often overused.

Table OS - 3
2040 General Plan Parkland Type and Acreage Needs

Year	Population ¹	Neighborhood Park Acres ²	Community Park Acres ³
2008	10,776	32.3	21.6
2015	15,469	46.4	31.0
2020	20,026	60.1	40.0

2025	25,926	77.8	51.8
2030	33,565	100.7	67.2
2035	43,453	130.4	87.0
2040	56,256	168.8	112.6

Notes:

¹Population forecast excludes the prison population housed at the Central Valley Women's Facility and the Valley State Prison for Women.

²Based on 3.0 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents.

³Based on 2.0 acres of community parkland per 1,000 residents.

The City is committed to alleviating the neighborhood parkland acreage shortage and providing neighborhood park facilities in underserved areas of the community. The City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan outlines measures to correcting the City's existing neighborhood park deficiencies.

Joint – Use Facilities

The City of Chowchilla has joint-use agreements with Chowchilla Irrigation District, Chowchilla Elementary School District (CESD) and Chowchilla Union High School District (CUHSD). The City has a long-term joint-use agreement with the Chowchilla Irrigation District for the use and operation of the Berenda Reservoir Park, which include a watercraft launch ramp, concessions, swimming area, family and group picnic areas, and restrooms (refer to Table OS - 2).

The school districts make considerable contributions to community recreation needs through use of on-site facilities and programs for athletics, and social and cultural activities. The City has long-term joint-use agreements with the Chowchilla Elementary School District and with the Chowchilla Union High School District for the use and operation of the Community Sports Center and Dower Aquatic Center, respectively. These centers include ball fields, a gymnasium and a swimming pool. The CUHSD campus facilities include a football stadium, play fields, tennis courts, and gymnasium. The school facilities most often used for recreation are play fields and various ball courts (i.e., basketball, tennis, volleyball). Interior facilities such as gymnasiums and multi-purpose rooms are also used, but are typically only available for organized activities. Table OS - 2 provides a current inventory of joint-use recreation facilities.

Joint Use Parks and Schools provide a valuable asset to the Community by coordinating the design, layout, and use in a way that creates economic advantages to both the City and the local school districts. By creating joint use facilities the school district can reduce the amount of land required for the school by allowing for the use of the park during school operations. During non-school operations the open space of the school property can be used in conjunction with the designated park area providing for greater open space and use of the combined property. In addition, the cost of maintenance can be shared in a way that is mutually agreed upon between the City and the school district thereby enhancing the utilization of financial resources. The City and

the local school districts are encouraged to formulate plans for future parks and schools that attain this intention, and to enter into appropriate agreement that would provide for the cooperative effort.

The City will continue to coordinate with the Chowchilla Elementary School District, Chowchilla High School District and with the Chowchilla Irrigation District in maintaining and operating joint-use or shared facilities.

Open Space Corridor Trails

Trails, while providing recreational opportunities, also serve as transportation corridors to key destinations throughout the City. Several existing watercourses (Ash Slough and Berenda Slough), an abandoned railroad right-of-way corridor and overhead utility corridors traversing the City provide excellent opportunities for trail corridors in the community.

The 2040 General Plan Land Use Map (refer to Figure LU - 1) designates multi-purpose recreational trails for bicycling and pedestrian use. Multi-purpose trails are designated along Ash Slough and Berenda Slough that would provide recreational opportunities along the banks of the Sloughs. The trails along the Sloughs are linked via a “Central City” pedestrian / bicycle trail corridor paralleling the UP mainline right-of-way. The multi-purpose recreational trails along Ash Slough, Berenda Slough, and the UP mainline right-of-way combined provides an City-wide linear parkway that also function as alternative transportation network that links neighborhoods, retail, employment, schools and recreation to one another.

Parkways and Paseos

Similar to trails, parkways function as transportation corridors and provide safe and aesthetically pleasing corridors for bicycling and pedestrian use. Parkway provide opportunities for linear connection between parks and open space corridors. A parkway may also lead from residential neighborhoods to places such as schools, community centers, commercial centers or business parks.

A parkway may be located adjacent to major transportation thoroughfares. Parkway provide an opportunity to soften the visual affects of a wall or other utilitarian feature, or attenuate noise. Although a parkway may have park-like attributes, they are not parks and therefore are not defined as part of any the above parkland categories. While there are no specific standards for dedication, design and development of a parkway, the minimum width of a parkway should be no less 100 feet with portions of the parkway being wider than 100 feet wide to encompass passive or active recreation facilities or amenities.

Paseos are provided to promote walking and bicycling by establishing connectivity between residences, parks, local businesses, City-wide trail system and / or other connections. Paseos are typically 75 to 150 feet wide depending on the intended use and location. Paseos should be open to the surrounding neighborhood by maintaining

at least one, but preferably two street frontages to ensure the paseo is not hidden and to allow for visibility and access by the residents and City for security purposes.

AIR AND AIR QUALITY

Both the state and federal governments set standards and monitor air quality based on the need to protect public health. The City of Chowchilla is located in the Central Valley where polluted air enters the region from local and surrounding areas and, due to the topography and prevalent wind conditions, becomes stagnant. These conditions expose residents and sensitive receptors to increased pollution related health risks. The three major pollutants of concern in the San Joaquin Valley are particulate matter, ozone, and carbon monoxide.

Particulate matter includes a wide range of solid and liquid particles, including smoke, dust, aerosols, and metallic oxides. Of specific concern are particles less than 10 microns in diameter, called PM 10. These particles can be more easily inhaled into lungs, and therefore can have more serious health impacts. Recently air quality standards have been established for particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter, or PM2.5.

Ozone is not directly emitted into the air, but is a product of chemical reactions between nitrogen oxides (NOx) and reactive organic gases (ROG) in sunlight and heat. These ozone precursors are caused by automobile emissions gasoline or diesel powered on and off-road equipment, and the evaporation of solvents, paints, and fuels. Exposure to ozone can cause eye irritation, aggravate respiratory diseases, and damage lung tissue, as well as damage vegetation and reduce visibility.

Carbon monoxide inhibits the blood's ability to carry oxygen to body tissues including vital organs such as the heart and brain.

Recent (2005 - 2007) air quality information for Chowchilla is shown below.

Table OS - 4
Air Quality Summary From Nearest Monitoring Station

Pollutant/Standard	2005	2006	2007
O ₃ (1-hour)			
Maximum Concentration ppm)	0.095	0.113	0.091
Days > CA Standard (0.09 ppm)	1	4	0
Days > US Standard (0.12 ppm)	0	0	0
O ₃ (8-hour)			
Maximum Concentration ppm)	0.081	0.095	0.084
Days > CA Standard (0.070 ppm)	19	35	12
Days > US Standard (0.08 ppm)	0	1	0
PM _{2.5} (24-hour)			
Maximum Concentration (µg/m ³)	86.0	88.1	104.0

Days > US Standard (65 µg/m ³)	10	1	11
PM ₁₀ (24-hour) ⁸			
Maximum Concentration (µg/m ³)	102.0	132.0	92.0
Days > CA Standard (50 µg/m ³)	19	16	10
Days > US Standard (150 µg/m ³)	0	0	0
CO (8-hour) ⁹			
Maximum Concentration (ppm)	2.33	3.31	2.37
Days > CA Standard (9.0 ppm)	0	0	0

Data derived from Madera County Madera Pump-Yard Monitoring Station.

Data derived from the San Joaquin Valley APCD Fresno-1st Street Monitoring Station.

Data derived from the San Joaquin Valley APCD Fresno-Drummond Street Monitoring Station.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has become an issue of increasing concern in California, the nation, and the world. Climate change is presently thought to be both naturally occurring and induced by increases in the amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the earth's atmosphere attributable to the burning of fossil fuels.

Greenhouse gases have become the subject of increasing attention worldwide in recent years. Evidence has been steadily growing that human activities have helped speed and magnify changes in the global climate. The burning of fossil fuels (mostly coal and oil) is the primary manmade cause of greenhouse gases, a fact that has led to calls for increased energy efficiency.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are known as "greenhouse gases". Four types of gas are generally considered to be the cause of most climate change:

Methane (CH₄) is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills.

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste.

Fluorinated Gases hydro fluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride are synthetic, powerful greenhouse gases that are emitted from a variety of industrial processes. These gases are typically emitted in smaller quantities, but because they are potent greenhouse gases, they are sometimes referred to as High Global Warming Potential gases.

State of California Action on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since 2005, there have been a number of legislative changes that cover greenhouse gas impacts from land use planning decisions.

Governor Schwarzenegger issued executive order **S-3-05** in June 2005, setting GHG emission targets for the state to meet, starting with a reduction to 2000 GHG emission

levels by 2010 and concluding with a reduction to 80% below 1990 numbers by 2030. This order directed the California EPA, Business Transportation and Housing Agency, California Air Resources Board (CARB), the California Energy Commission and the Public Utilities Commission to work together to develop a Climate Action Plan and report back on progress on meeting the statewide targets.

In 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed **AB 32**, which established the first set of limits on GHG emissions for the state of California and put into place the regulatory framework needed to reach those targets. AB 32 set the 1990 GHG emissions level as a target to be achieved by 2020. In order to meet this goal, CARB is required to develop greenhouse gas emissions reporting procedures and adopt rules and regulations for reducing emissions by January 1, 2011, enforceable by January 1, 2012.

In 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed **SB 375**, which sets out planning concepts intended to reduce vehicle travel by promoting more compact development (ideas which are incorporated in this General Plan). A goal of SB 375 is to help curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Taken together, both S-3-05 and AB 32 set the emission targets that Chowchilla will eventually be required to attain. While explicit thresholds and requirements have yet to be developed, various state agencies have begun to examine proposed land use plans and specific projects for their potential GHG impacts.

Addressing Climate Change

Two important steps in helping to reduce climate change impacts are the creation of an inventory of existing greenhouse gases and a plan to reduce these emissions.

Step 1: Greenhouse Gas Inventory

A Greenhouse Gas Inventory allows a city or community to understand the level of greenhouse gases they emit, where these emissions come from, and how they are projected to increase over time. To calculate the level of harmful pollutants a City or community emits within a given year, data on electricity use, natural gas consumption, waste production, and vehicle miles traveled is collected and converted into an equivalent of carbon dioxide. This provides a baseline against which a city can track its progress on lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, by taking into account population and job growth rates, a City can predict what its GHG emissions will be in the future if nothing is done to reduce GHG production.

Step 2: Climate Action Plan

A Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a guiding document to identify ways in which a city, county, or community can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change. A common goal for a CAP is a 15% reduction below 2005 levels by 2020. A CAP outlines transportation, land use, energy use, and waste production measures to achieve its target and proposes a timeline for implementation. CAPs are becoming increasingly popular as a way to spread

awareness of climate change, reduce an area's impact on the environment, and save money on energy bills. Additionally, when referenced in General Plans and environmental documents, CAPs signify a public agency's efforts to combat climate change. The use of compact growth, increased non-vehicle travel, energy efficiency, and other policies in this General Plan will help to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in Chowchilla.

ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In California, most of the energy used to power modern society comes from three sources: electricity, natural gas, and oil. To a lesser extent, energy is also derived from renewable sources (such as solar energy), nuclear, and other sources. In the Chowchilla Planning Area, two of the three major sources— electricity and natural gas—area supplied by Pacific Gas and Electricity (PG&E).

The other major source of energy in Chowchilla is oil, refined into gasoline and other fuels to power the cars and trucks used by residents and businesses. Some homes in the Planning Area rely on propane, delivered by truck to individual tanks. Although still a small part of the energy supply, solar power is gaining acceptance as a source of power in the Madera County area. One group exploring this alternative energy source is farmers, who use solar electricity for water pumps and other uses.

Green Building/Low Impact Development

“Green Building” is broadly defined as the construction or rehabilitation of buildings and homes in a manner that conserves resources. Green building can include numerous elements affecting virtually every aspect of the development and construction process of a building. Green building seeks to ensure that buildings are designed and operated as efficiently and appropriate for their surroundings as possible. Generally, it involves one or more of the following:

- Land planning and design techniques that preserve the natural environment and minimize disturbance of the land.
- Site development to reduce erosion, minimize paved surfaces and runoff and protect vegetation, especially trees.
- Water conservation indoors and outdoors.
- Energy efficiency in heating/cooling systems, appliances, lighting and the building envelope.
- Selection of materials based on recyclability, durability and the amount of energy used to create the material.
- Waste reduction, reuse and recycling during construction and throughout the life of the home.

Green building has a number of potential benefits:

- Reduced Material Consumption;

- Lower Energy Costs;
- Lower Water Bills;
- Low maintenance Due to Durability;
- Increased Home Value;
- Potential Lower Insurance Costs;
- Potential Tax Credits & Incentives.

Perhaps the most important aspect of green building is that it provides benefits even when it is used sparingly. Carefully selected and implemented, even modest measures can result in significant conservation of resources. Green building can also be tailored to match local conditions, including those in Chowchilla. Because climates, customs, availability of materials and preferences vary so much throughout the nation, green building measures that are essential in some areas may not be appropriate for others. Green building uses improvements from architects, construction management, engineering, planning, and other fields to create a more efficient, practical, and environmentally- friendly way to create and modify buildings.

“Low Impact Development” is an approach to land development that uses various land planning and design practices and technologies to simultaneously conserve and protect natural resource systems and reduce infrastructure costs. The focus of Low Impact Development focuses on three key issues:

- Storm water management;
- Wastewater treatment; and
- Circulation and site design.

Examples of Low Impact Development include:

- Reducing impervious surfaces to decrease runoff and aid in groundwater recharge—replacing impervious pathways with pervious ones, reducing the size of driveways, and including on-site water filtration systems such as bioswales and infiltration trenches.
- Incorporating natural features—such as trees and water features— into site design.
- Designing compact, walkable developments.

Goals and policies related to Green Building and Low Impact Development are included in this Conservation Element. These issues are also addressed in the Land Use and Circulation/Infrastructure Elements of the General Plan, which contain goals and policies related to compact development, walkability, and better site design. Also see the Public Facilities and Services Element for policies and implementation measures related to recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to local landfills.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goals

- ❖ **Designate, conserve and protect open space, peripheral agricultural areas, recreational, and historic / cultural resources in the Chowchilla Planning Area for current and future residents of the City.**
- ❖ **Air quality that meets or exceeds all state and federal standards.**
- ❖ **Meet or exceed all current and future state-mandated targets for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.**
- ❖ **To provide safe and reliable energy—including energy from renewable sources—to meet Chowchilla’s needs and enable continued economic growth.**
- ❖ **Integration of green building practices in public and private sector planning, design, construction, management, renovation, operations, and demolition of buildings.**
- ❖ **Establish a comprehensive system of public and private open space, including interconnected open space corridors that include Ash and Berenda Sloughs.**
- ❖ **Establish open space corridors in the City linking, parks, schools, and commercial and business centers together.**
- ❖ **Integrate passive recreational opportunities with the preservation and protection of biological resources.**
- ❖ **Provide adequate parkland, recreational facilities and programs within the City of Chowchilla through public and private resources.**
- ❖ **Provide City of Chowchilla residents with both active and passive recreational opportunities by maximizing the use of dedicated parklands and open space areas.**
- ❖ **Designate, provide and maintain park facilities for passive and / or active recreational opportunities for the citizens of Chowchilla.**

OPEN SPACE

Objective OS 1

Preserve a greenbelt / open space buffer around the perimeter of the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence boundary that provides a clear sense of identity for the City of Chowchilla.

Policy OS 1.1

Coordinate with Madera County in the creation of a greenbelt / open space buffer around the perimeter of the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence boundary.

Implementation Measure OS 1.1.A

The City of Chowchilla shall work with Madera County to preserve agricultural uses.

Policy OS 1.2

Use open space in new development at the edge of the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence boundary to create a greenbelt that delineates the edge of the City's urban area.

Policy OS 1.3

Coordinate with Madera County to maintain viable agricultural land on the periphery of the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence boundary for purpose of resource and view protection and establish standards that protect views of these lands.

Policy OS 1.4

Support preservation of existing agricultural lands at the periphery of the City of Chowchilla Sphere of Influence.

Implementation Measure OS 1.4.A

Low density residential and industrial land uses will be included in the land use plan to reduce density toward the edge of the Chowchilla Planning Area.

Implementation Measure OS 1.4.B

The sizing of sewer lines will be reduced as they approach the edge of urban development in the Planning Area to limit growth influences beyond the Planning Area.

Implementation Measure OS 1.4.C

The City of Chowchilla will continue to coordinate land use planning efforts with Madera County to ensure that agricultural land uses surrounding the Chowchilla Planning Area are maintained.

Implementation Measure OS 1.4.D

Landscape design requirements shall be required for new projects along the entryways to the City, in particular Highways 99, 152, and 233. Landscape design within required minimum 200 foot setback should promote a sense of transition from the surrounding agricultural area and urban setting. Utilization of trees to screen urban uses along these entryways is encouraged within the setback.

Objective OS 2

The City of Chowchilla may consider annexing and approving urban development on Williamson Act lands if such annexation is necessary to provide for logical urban development, provide connectivity to other new development, provide for low and moderate income housing, or the provision of municipal services within the Planning Area.

Policy OS 2.1

Prior to annexing any Williamson Act lands, the City shall adopt guidelines consistent with state laws that have specific criteria for agricultural conversion.

Policy OS 2.2

The City shall work with the County to preserve lands dedicated as “Agriculture” within and adjacent to the City Sphere of Influence boundaries.

Objective OS 3

Maximize public open space that requires minimum public management responsibilities.

Policy OS 3.1

Open Space dedications shall provide a plan for funding to ensure financing for long-term maintenance is provided.

Policy OS 3.2

Ownership and management responsibility of public open space shall be assigned to the agency / organization best suited to meeting this responsibility.

Policy OS 3.3

Adequate security of open space shall be provided to ensure that applicable laws and regulations are enforced.

Policy OS 3.4

Maintenance of pocket parks shall be born by a Landscape and Lighting District or other similar mechanism.

Objective OS 4

Maximize open space through appropriate acquisition mechanisms with willing sellers.

Policy OS 4.1

All future developments shall include appropriate mechanisms for acquisition, improvement, and maintenance of open space through the formation of special districts or other methods to provide for the cost of maintenance.

Policy OS 4.2

An equitable balance shall be sought between development density and open space to be preserved.

Implementation Measure OS 4.2. A

The City may require participation, directly or indirectly in the acquisition of land for the disposal of treated wastewater or storm drainage outside of the Chowchilla Planning Area. Such programs may be used as credit for the long-term preservation of agricultural or open space lands.

Implementation Measure OS 4.2. B

Require dedication of appropriate open space land as a condition of approval for proposed development projects. Establish a method for permanent maintenance of open space land through maintenance districts.

Objective OS 5

Generate funds within the community for acquisition, improvement, maintenance and management of open space lands.

Policy OS 5.1

The City shall actively pursue and use public and private funding sources that become available for land acquisition, facility construction, program development and maintenance of park and open space areas.

Implementation Measure 5.1. A

The City shall collect park impact fees as a part of its development approval process.

Implementation Measure 5.1. B

The City shall consider formation or annexation to existing districts that provide for the long term financing of parks and open space facilities.

Objective OS 6

Provide and maintain open space resources for outdoor recreation.

Policy OS 6.1

Utilize open space areas to provide neighborhood identity and to the extent feasible, insulate the neighborhood from conflicting land uses and noise generators.

Policy OS 6.2

Multi-family residential developments shall be encouraged to provide private open space areas.

Objective OS 7

Provide for landscaping features to be present in all major street and circulation improvements.

Policy OS 7.1

Arterials and major collector streets, where feasible, should be designed to include landscaping along the edges and medians to enhance these street systems as aesthetic open space corridors.

Implementation Measure OS 7.1.A

The City shall develop design guidelines and standards for the construction of landscaping and improvement of arterial and major collector streets which are to be landscaped.

Policy OS 7.2

Provide open space and landscape improvements along the Highway 99 and Highway 152 right-of-way to present an attractive entry to the City of Chowchilla.

Implementation Measure OS 7.2. A

Along Highways 99 and 152, buffer areas may be designated as open space or require property owners to landscape buffers along these routes. This land should be either acquired by the City or development conditions attached to the land which requires improvements and maintenance of the open space area.

Implementation Measure OS 7.2. B

Interchanges between state highways, and interchanges between state highways and City streets or roads shall be appropriately landscaped to standards established by the City.

AGRICULTURE

Objective OS 8

Protect agricultural lands and other open spaces used for the managed production of resources from premature urban development by guiding urban development toward vacant or under-used land within the urbanized area and direct new growth toward land adjacent to the urbanized area.

Policy OS 8.1

Existing agricultural areas in the Planning Area shall be retained in agricultural use until the time that such areas are needed for logical urban expansion.

Policy OS 8.2

Encourage the use of landscaped open space as a buffer between potentially non-compatible land uses.

Policy OS 8.3

Land designated Agricultural in the Planning Area may be converted to urban uses if the following findings are made:

- a. Conversion to urban use will not be detrimental to the long term agricultural use of neighboring properties.
- b. No other land within the Planning Area is readily available for urban development of the quality and intensity proposed by a development proposal.
- c. The extension of major infrastructure through the land is necessary for the efficient cost effective implementation of the City's General Plan.
- d. That the proposal is consistent with Land Use policies regarding conversion of Agricultural lands.

Objective OS 9

Preserve agricultural lands in recognition of their economic, historic and open space benefits and their importance to the character of the City of Chowchilla and to the Central Valley.

Policy OS 9.1

Identify land for the encouragement and retention of agricultural use outside the City's Sphere of Influence boundary based on the historic use, soil suitability, agricultural significance and prevailing parcel sizes of the land.

Policy OS 9.2

Establish an agriculture conservation program for the preservation of valuable agricultural land outside the City's Sphere of Influence from urban development through the use of appropriate development regulations and /or financial incentives.

Implementation Measure OS 9.2. A

The City shall explore the possibility of establishing a fee program for all new development in Chowchilla for the conservation and preservation of agricultural land.

Implementation Measure OS 9.2. B

The City shall evaluate proactive programs for agricultural conservation and preservation such as transfer of development rights, purchase lease back, public and / or private university purchase for research, etc.

Policy OS 9.3

Coordinate programs to preserve agricultural lands with other public, private and non-profit organizations where feasible.

WATER RESOURCES

Objective OS 10

Promote the conservation of water within the Chowchilla community.

Policy OS 10.1

Maintain ordinances as necessary within the Chowchilla Municipal Code which promotes water conservation.

Implementation Measure OS 10.1. A

Maintain permanent water conservation measures such as:

- 1. Continue enforcement of water waste ordinances*
- 2. Continue penalties for water waste offenders*
- 3. Enforce guidelines for drought tolerant landscapes*
- 4. Structure water rate schedules to encourage conservation*

Implementation Measure OS 10.1. B

Maintain water use limitations that could be enacted by the City Council in the event of severe drought. Measures could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Limit all domestic outdoor water usage to designated days*
- 2. Limitations on all auto washing by individuals, auto dealerships, and private and charitable car washes*
- 3. Prohibit domestic irrigation between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm*

4. *Designate specific types of landscape irrigation to be discontinued*

Policy OS 10.2

Explore use of alternative water sources within the Chowchilla Community.

Implementation Measure OS 10.2. A

Consider opportunities for usage of reclaimed waste water for open space or agricultural irrigation purposes in major developments where it is cost effective to develop a water reclamation facility and transport reclaimed water to the user. Development of such a system would require approval of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and meeting state and federal requirements.

Implementation Measure OS 10.2. B

Work with the Chowchilla Water District to reroute irrigation water to Ash Slough and Berenda Slough to promote groundwater recharge.

Policy OS 10.3

Minimize the use of water for landscape irrigation by requiring new and rehabilitated water conservation landscape plans for new development in the City.

Implementation Measure OS 10.3. A

Establish standards for landscape review which include preferred plants and sprinkler / irrigation criteria.

Implementation Measure OS 10.3. B

Apply conservation requirement to all landscapes within industrial, commercial, institutional, multi-family residential common areas, model homes and developer landscaped areas.

Implementation Measure OS 10.3. C

Require projects to submit planting plans, irrigation plans, irrigation schedules and water use estimates for City approval prior to issuance of building permits.

Policy OS 10.4

Encourage large scale industrial water users to develop internal water recycling programs during plan development and review processes.

Policy OS 10.5

Require installation of domestic water conserving devices for new residential, commercial and industrial remodels.

Policy OS 10.6

Pursue the removal of bamboo in Ash Slough and Berenda Slough to promote water conservation.

Objective OS 11

Ensure adequate groundwater reserves are maintained for present and future domestic, commercial, and industrial uses.

Policy OS 11.1

Require proponents of non-agricultural water intensive land uses, which will convert from usage of surface water to exclusive use of groundwater, to mitigate groundwater impacts.

Implementation Measure OS 11.1. A

Explore agreements with the Chowchilla Water District to provide for water recharge and ensure delivery of water for recharge during drought periods.

Policy OS 11.2

The potential for groundwater recharge basins should be explored and should they be feasible establish basins within and around the City of Chowchilla.

Implementation Measure OS 11.2. B

Coordinate flood control efforts within new development to promote establishment of detention basins which enhance local groundwater recharge.

Objective OS 12

Ensure groundwater quality is maintained at a satisfactory level for domestic water consumption.

Policy OS 12.1

Avoid degradation of groundwater reserves by domestic and industrial land uses.

Implementation Measure OS 12.1. A

Seek to connect unincorporated development within the urban fringe to the sewage treatment network.

Implementation Measure OS 12.1. B

Require proponents of industrial-oriented projects to submit proposals for water use. Encourage the reuse of water within industrial systems.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Objective OS 13

Encourage the provision of open space areas throughout the Planning Area through the preservation and enhancement of natural features or the joint use of other public facilities and / or rights-of-ways.

Policy OS 13.1

To the extent feasible, maintain sloughs and water courses within the Chowchilla Planning Area as components of a possible recreational trail system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of the sloughs or waterways shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource.

Implementation Measure OS 13.1. A

The City shall pursue the development of a recreation trail system along Ash Slough and Berenda Slough that connects the urban area and Berenda Reservoir (See City of Chowchilla Land Use Map located in pocket at end of document).

Policy OS 13.2

Utility easement corridors shall be designated for recreational open space unless an acceptable trail alternative is included in a development plan.

Policy OS 13.3

Where appropriate and feasible, establish permanent mechanisms to protect wetlands and riparian corridors.

Implementation Measure OS 13.3. A

The City shall preserve natural water courses, wetlands and riparian corridors through requirements of land dedication and open space improvement imposed during the land development process.

Implementation Measure OS 13.3. B

Establish programs in connection with environmental review processes to protect endangered wildlife and their habitats. Programs established to protect wildlife and their habitats may provide for the permanent protection or relocation of wildlife habitat areas.

Policy OS 13.4

Avoid the potential adverse impacts of increased human activity on sensitive habitat areas when establishing new recreational facilities or programs.

Policy OS 13.5

Promote the preservation of existing mature trees and encourage the planting of appropriate shade trees in new developments.

Implementation Measure OS 13.5.A

Develop and adopt standards that provide for the planting of shade trees in new residential and commercial developments.

Policy OS 13.6

The City of Chowchilla shall support the management of riparian scrub and aquatic environments of Ash Slough, Berenda Slough and of the Chowchilla River for passive recreation, groundwater recharge, and wildlife habitat. The riparian and aquatic environments of Ash and Berenda Sloughs, and the Chowchilla River shall be restored and expanded, where feasible and appropriate.

Policy OS 13.7

New and redevelopment projects adjacent to Ash Slough or Berenda Slough are to be carefully planned and, where possible, designed to avoid existing riparian scrub vegetation and aquatic wildlife habitat.

Policy OS 13.8

Lighting associated with new and redevelopment projects adjacent to Ash Slough or Berenda Slough shall be designed to prevent artificial lighting from illuminating adjacent natural areas at a level greater than one candle foot above ambient conditions.

Policy OS 13.9

Prior to approval of a project (i.e., specific plan, master plan, General Plan Amendment, pre- or re-zone, tentative map, etc.) the City of Chowchilla shall require a biological study to be prepared by a qualified biologist for the project site. Projects excluded from preparing a biological study prior to approval are projects within the Chowchilla City Limits that are more than 500 feet away from either Ash or Berenda Sloughs.

Policy OS 13.10

On development sites with the potential to contain wetland resources, a wetlands delineation shall be prepared by a qualified biologist using the protocol defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A report on the findings of the wetland delineation shall be submitted to the City of Chowchilla as part of the project application process.

Policy OS 13.11

The City of Chowchilla shall maintain a no net loss of wetlands on a project-by-project basis. For the purpose of identifying wetlands, the City will accept a map delineating wetlands which has been accepted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972. No net loss may include mitigation

implementation through participation in an off-site mitigation bank or similar mitigation mechanism acceptable to the City and permitting agencies.

CULTURAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Objective OS 14

To promote the City of Chowchilla's cultural resources as a means to enhance the City's identity as an important center of the Central Valley history.

Policy OS 14.1

Promote the preservation of cultural resources to ensure that citizens of Chowchilla have an opportunity to understand and appreciate the City's unique heritage.

Policy OS 14.2

Promote neighborhood / City identity and the role of historic preservation in community enhancement.

Implementation Measure OS 14.2. A

The City of Chowchilla shall actively pursue establishing the Chowchilla Park Residential / Social Heritage District to include portions of Robertson Boulevard, North 6th and 7th Streets and a portion of South 6th Street. This includes documenting and recording historic buildings, structures and sites in the confines of the Chowchilla Park Residential / Social Heritage District.

Policy OS 14.3

Promote an understanding of the significance of the City's cultural resources, the criteria for historic designation, historic design review processes, building permit requirements, and methods for rehabilitating and preserving historic buildings, sites and landscapes.

Implementation Measure OS 14.3. A

The City of Chowchilla shall provide information to citizens, and the building community about what to do upon discovery of archaeological, cultural or historical resources, as well as, the treatment and preservation of such resources.

Objective OS 15

Identify, preserve and enhance archaeological, cultural and historical resources.

Policy OS 15.1

Require archaeological studies by a certified archeologist / historian in areas determined by the City or by a state or federal agency to have potential archeological or historical significance prior to approval of development and redevelopment projects.

Implementation Measure OS 15.1. A

Prior to project approval, the City of Chowchilla shall require the project applicant to have a qualified professional archeologist / historian conduct the following activities: 1) a record research at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center at California State University, Bakersfield and other appropriate historical repositories to determine the extent of previously recorded sites and surveys within the project area; 2) a field survey to locate, map and record prehistoric and historic resources; and 3) prepare a cultural resource inventory and evaluation reports meeting California Office of Historic Preservation Standards to document the results of the record search and field survey, and to provide significance evaluations and management recommendations for any identified historical resources with the project area.

Implementation Measure OS 15.1. B

In the event that archaeological resources are discovered during ground disturbance activities, the City shall require that grading and construction work within 100 feet of the find shall be suspended until significance of the features can be determined by a qualified professional archaeologist. The City will require that qualified archeologist make recommendations for measures necessary to protect the find, or to undertake data recovery, excavation, analysis, and curation of archaeological materials, as appropriate.

Policy OS 15.2

Protect sites of archaeological significance and ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal cultural resources protection and management laws in its planning and project review process.

Implementation Measure OS 15.2.A

The City of Chowchilla shall restrict the circulation of archeological resource location information to prevent potential site vandalism.

Objective OS 16

To continue an active program of identifying, designating, protecting and enhancing the City's cultural and historical resources.

Policy OS 16.1

Promote the preservation and restoration of historical sites and structures within the City of Chowchilla of local, regional, state or national significance.

Implementation Measure OS 16.1. A

The City of Chowchilla shall actively pursue a comprehensive program of documenting historic buildings, structures, districts, sites, objects, landscape and natural resources.

Implementation Measure OS 16.1. B

The City of Chowchilla shall maintain a current database of cultural resources and use that database as a primary informational resource for protecting cultural resources.

Implementation Measure OS 16.1. C

The City of Chowchilla shall continually update the identification of registered cultural resources and cultural resources eligible for listing in local, state, and national registers.

Objective OS 17

To fully integrate the consideration of cultural resources an important element of the City of Chowchilla's planning, permitting and development activities.

Policy OS 17.1

Support public and private efforts to preserve, rehabilitate and continue the use of cultural and historic structures, sites and districts. Where applicable, preservation efforts shall confirm to the current state federal standards for the treatment of historic property guidelines for preserving rehabilitating, restoring and reconstructing historic buildings.

Policy OS 17.2

Promote and encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Consistent with health and safety, other basic considerations, the City shall be flexible in applying building and zoning standards to encourage continued use and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Implementation Measure OS 17.2. A

The City of Chowchilla shall establish construction standards for the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of cultural and historic resources.

Implementation Measure OS 17.2. B

The City of Chowchilla shall develop standards for monitoring of mitigation measures established for the preservation, rehabilitation or reuse of cultural or historic resources.

Implementation Measure OS 17.2. C

The City of Chowchilla shall apply the California State Historical Building Code to ensure that City building code requirements do not compromise the integrity of significant cultural resources, at the property owner's request.

Policy OS 17.3

Utilize historic preservation as a tool for encouraging and supporting mixed use development and redevelopment of the City's urban core and Downtown District.

Implementation Measure OS 17.3. A

The City of Chowchilla shall use its design and permit review process to encourage new construction and reconstruction projects to be compatible in scale and historic character of the City's downtown commercial districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Implementation Measure OS 17.2. B

The City of Chowchilla shall use its design and permit review process to encourage the compatibility of street design, public improvements, and utility infrastructure with cultural resources and historic character.

Policy OS 17.4

Buildings and other cultural resources that are not historically significant but have historical or architectural value should be preserved or relocated, wherever feasible. Where this is not feasible, the resource shall be documented and the information retained in a secure, but publicly accessible location.

Policy OS 17.5

Historically significant buildings shall not be modified in a way that affects their historic value or demolished except to protect public health and safety, or where saving the structure is infeasible.

Policy OS 17.6

The City of Chowchilla shall assume its responsibility for historic preservation by protecting and maintaining publicly owned cultural resources. Historic resources include, but are not limited to, buildings, monuments, landscapes, entry monuments, street lighting, street trees, and the scoring, dimensions, and patterns of sidewalks, driveways, curbs and gutters.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Objective OS 18

Maximize public value from open space for recreational uses.

Policy OS 18.1

Secure public access to open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy OS 18.2

Actively participate with other governmental entities (cities, county, state, and federal) or agencies in the acquisition, management, and use of recreational / open space lands and facilities of mutual interest.

Implementation Measure OS 18.2. A

Where a project involves potential open space, natural resource reserves, or recreational lands of interest to more than one entity, the City shall work cooperatively with the other involved agencies.

Implementation Measure OS 18.2. B

To the extent feasible, large storm drainage facilities shall be designed to accommodate community open space use.

Implementation Measure OS 18.2. C

The City shall work to identify and promote potential shared arrangements for owning, improving, and managing open space / conservation / recreational areas of mutual interest.

Implementation Measure OS 18.2. D

Provide access to public open space resources except to those areas determined by the City to be sensitive to human presence.

Implementation Measure OS 18.2. E

Take into account consideration of natural habitat areas in developing linkages and in preserving open space areas. Identify alternative sites or linkages where sensitive habitat areas have the potential to be adversely affected.

Objective OS 19

Develop public park lands at the local and community levels to meet the recreational needs of current and future residents of Chowchilla.

Policy OS 19.1

The City of Chowchilla will strive to have newly dedicated pocket parks and neighborhood parks constructed by residential developers in conjunction with their project, such that new residents have immediate access to park facilities.

Policy OS 19.2

Establish neighborhood parks at a ratio of three (3) acres of neighborhood park land / 1,000 residents.

Implementation Measure OS 19.2 A

Neighborhood parks shall be of an efficient size for operation and maintenance, generally between three (3) and nine (9) acres.

Implementation Measure OS 19.2 B

Neighborhood parks shall have a general service area of approximately one-half (1/2) mile radius, and to the extent possible located to avoid patrons having

to cross arterial and / or minor or major collector streets, railroad corridors or major waterways.

Implementation Measure OS 19.2. C

Neighborhood parks shall be designed to promote a safe and clean environment for recreation. The City will encourage neighborhood park development to avoid common rear and side yard property lines with residential uses. Design of the park shall allow visibility from the road.

Policy OS 19.3

Whenever possible, neighborhood parks shall be developed adjacent to elementary schools.

Policy OS 19.4

Locate parks adjacent to compatible use areas, such as residential uses, greenbelts, bicycle corridors, schools and natural waterways to optimize public access and to minimize the negative effects of adjacent land uses.

Policy OS 19.5

Develop standards to design park facilities and landscaping that enhances and preserve natural site characteristics as appropriate, to minimize maintenance demands and to incorporate xeriscape (low-water demand) principles where feasible.

Policy OS 19.6

Establish community parks at a ratio of two (2) acres of park land per 1,000 residents.

Implementation Measure OS 19.6. A

Minor community parks shall be of an efficient size for function, safety, operation and maintenance - generally between nine (9) and fifteen (15) acres. Smaller minor community parks may be developed where the need arises and such facilities are compatible with the land uses in the surrounding area.

Implementation Measure OS 19.6. B

Major community parks shall be of an efficient size for operation and maintenance, generally between fifteen (15) and fifty (50) acres.

Implementation Measure OS 19.6. C

Minor and major community parks shall have a general service area of approximately two (2) mile radius, and located to provide adequate access to arterial and / or minor or major collector streets.

Implementation Measure OS 19.6. D

Minor and major community parks shall be designed to promote a safe and clean environment for recreation. The City of Chowchilla will encourage

development to avoid common rear and side yard property lines with residential uses. Design of the park shall allow visibility from the road.

Implementation Measure OS 19.6. E

Whenever possible, parks shall be developed in conjunction with other non-conflicting uses such as storm drainage basins, water recharge, water production and noise attenuation measures.

Policy OS 19.7

Integrate public transportation routes when locating community parks and community centers.

Policy OS 19.8

Improve and create more connections and increase the safety of the bicycling and pedestrian trail system within the City of Chowchilla.

Policy OS 19.9

Discourage the development of neighborhood pocket parks in residential neighborhoods unless such parks are part of a planned development and the long-term maintenance of such facilities is guaranteed by a legally established maintenance district.

Implementation Measure OS 19.9. A

A pocket park in a residential neighborhood, if permitted as part of a planned development, shall be of an efficient size for safety, function, operation and maintenance, generally between one-quarter (0.25) to two (2) net acres in size.

Implementation Measure OS 19.9. B

A pocket park in a residential neighborhood, if permitted as part of pursuant to a planned development, shall have a general service area of approximately one-quarter (0.25) mile radius, and serve the specific interest of the planned residential neighborhood.

Implementation Measure OS 19.9. C

A residential neighborhood pocket park, if permitted as part of a planned development, shall be subject to a legally established maintenance district that addresses long-term operation and maintenance of the pocket park.

Implementation Measure OS 19.9. D

The City of Chowchilla shall not accept residential neighborhood pocket parks into its maintained park system; therefore access to the pocket park may be restricted to the residents of the planned development / or the maintenance district legally established for the pocket park.

Objective OS 20

Encourage the development of private recreational facilities for multifamily residential projects.

Policy OS 20.1

An essential element of a well planned Multi Family or Planned Unit Development shall be private recreation facilities including, but not limited to pools, gymnasiums, recreation rooms, and outdoor play space, etc.

Policy OS 20.2

Encourage private development of recreation facilities and complement and supplement the public recreational system.

Implementation Measure OS 20.2.A

Private recreational facilities shall be encouraged in multiple family residential developments of five (5) units in size in order to meet a portion of the open space and recreation needs generated by the specific development project.

Objective OS 21

Provide a diverse range of park and recreational facilities that are responsive to the needs of Chowchilla residents.

Policy OS 21.1

Private recreational facilities shall be encouraged in residential planned developments of over one (1) acre in size in order to meet a portion of the open space and recreation needs generated by the residential planned development.

Policy OS 21.2

Establish a City-wide primary City-wide trail loop that interconnects Ash Slough and Berenda Slough and the Chowchilla River.

Policy OS 21.3

Provide amenities at access points and trail hubs, including identification and directional signs, parking, water fountains for pedestrians and pets, restrooms, benches.

Policy OS 21.4

Pursue partnerships with Madera County to secure state and federal transportation funds for trail improvements.

Policy OS 21.5

The City of Chowchilla shall design trail corridors to meet the recreational needs of the community, while maximizing public safety and access. This includes locating trail corridors to ensure visibility along public roadways, where appropriate.

Policy OS 21.6

Work with adjacent jurisdictions to connect the City of Chowchilla with regional open space and trail systems, providing a network of open space and habitat resources, pathways to link nearby communities.

Policy OS 21.7

Require all new development to provide linkages to existing and planned open space corridors. Where such access cannot be provided through the dedication of open space connections, identify alternative linkages.

AIR QUALITY**Objective OS 22**

Implement feasible and reasonable programs to improve air quality in Chowchilla.

Policy OS 22.1

Residential development projects and projects categorized as sensitive receptors shall be located an adequate distance from existing and potential sources of toxic emissions such as freeways, major arterials, industrial sites, and hazardous material locations. "Adequate distance" will be based on site-specific conditions, on the types and amounts of potential toxic emissions, and other factors.

Policy OS 22.2

The City shall require new air pollution point sources (such as, but not limited to, industrial, manufacturing, and processing facilities) to be located an adequate distance from residential areas and other sensitive receptors. "Adequate distance" will be based on site-specific conditions, the type and location of sensitive receptors, on the types and amounts of potential toxic emissions, and other factors.

Policy OS 22.3

The creation of dust during construction/demolition activities should be reduced to the extent feasible.

Implementation Measure OS 22.3. A

Work with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to reduce particulate emissions from construction, grading, excavation, and demolition through standard and/or special conditions on these activities.

Implementation Measure OS 22.3. B

City seeks to reduce the urban heat island effect in the City, which causes increased temperatures and increases in ground level ozone formation through methods such as:

- *Increasing the amount of tree coverage in the city.*

- o *Green roofs and rooftop gardens.*
- o *The use of reflective treatments on roofs (such as those which qualify for the EPA/DOE's Energy Star rating).*
- o *The use of cool pavements such as permeable and light colored and reflective pavements.*

Implementation Measure OS 22.3. C

Develop and adopt a Tree Ordinance that protects existing trees in the public right of way and promotes the establishment of new tree resources in public areas. The tree ordinance could provide for the creation of a Master Tree Plan that would include an inventory of the City Forest including tree type, condition and size, and a City-approved tree planting list.

Policy OS 22.4

Where feasible, the City's vehicle fleet should include clean fuel, hybrid, electric, or other fuel-efficient vehicles, so long as their utility, durability, and cost meets the City's needs.

Implementation Measure OS 22.4.A

Update the City's procurement policies to include criteria for vehicle purchases that implement this policy.

Policy OS 22.5

The City shall encourage the development of fueling stations that distribute alternative fuels (such as methanol, ethanol, compressed natural gas, and biodiesel) to support alternative fuel vehicles.

Implementation Measure OS 22.5.A

Update the City's Building and Zoning codes as needed to provide for fueling stations for alternative fuels.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Objective OS 23

To Implement and enforce State and Regional regulations pertaining to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Policy OS 23.1

The City supports local, regional, and statewide efforts to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases linked to climate change.

Implementation Measure OS 23.1.A

Within one year of the adoption of this General Plan, the City will endeavor complete a Greenhouse Gas Inventory as a result of an acceptable methodology and available published data that provides an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions from manmade sources in the City.

Implementation Measure OS 23.1.B

Within one year of the completion of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, the City will prepare a Climate Action Plan (CAP) that identifies desired goals for reducing manmade greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, establishes resiliency and adaptation programs to prepare for potential impacts of climate change, and provides a phased implementation plan to achieve these goals. The CAP will establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 15% percent below 2007 levels by 2020, consistent with California Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB32) and the guidance provided in the associated California Air Resources Board Climate Change Scoping Plan approved in December 2008. The CAP will also outline a strategy to achieve 1990 GHG levels by 2020 and an 80% reduction from 1990 GHG levels by 2050 in accordance with California State Executive Order S-3-05.

Policy OS 23.2

To the extent resources and technology allow the City shall collaborate and coordinate with regional organizations and local jurisdictions within the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy OS 23.3

To the extent resources and technology allow the City shall partner with local agencies and organizations to coordinate outreach and education regarding the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

ENERGY CONSERVATION**Objective OS 24**

To ensure that public and private development practices integrate design, construction, and appliances.

Policy OS 24.1

All public and private development—including homes, commercial, and industrial should be designed to be energy-efficient.

Implementation Measure OS 24.1.A

Work with the local energy providers and developers on voluntary incentive based programs to encourage the use of energy efficient designs and equipment.

Implementation Measure OS 24.1.B

Promote enhanced energy conservation standards for new construction through informational handouts, outreach to the construction industry, or other methods.

Implementation Measure OS 24.1.C

City buildings and facilities will be operated in the most energy-efficient manner without endangering public health and safety and without reducing public safety or service levels.

Implementation Measure OS 24.1.D

To the extent practical, integrate appropriate renewable energy and clean generation technologies into existing City facilities, such as solar, wind, biofuel, cogeneration, and fuel cells to power City facilities.

GREEN BUILDING

Objective OS 25

To the extent economically feasible and technically practical integrate Green Building elements into new construction of private and public buildings.

Policy OS 25.1

The City supports the use of green building practices in the planning, design, construction, management, renovation, operations, and demolition of all private buildings and projects, including:

- o Land planning and design techniques that preserve the natural environment and minimize disturbance of the land.
- o Site development to reduce erosion, minimize paved surfaces and runoff and protect vegetation, especially trees.
- o Water conservation indoors and outdoors.
- o Energy efficiency in heating/cooling systems, appliances, lighting and the building envelope.
- o Selection of materials based on recyclability, durability and the amount of energy used to create the material.
- o Waste reduction, reuse and recycling during construction and throughout the life of the project.
- o Other new aspects of green design and construction included in LEED or other certification programs.

- o Control nighttime lighting to lower energy use, reduce glare, and prevent illumination of the night sky.

Implementation Measure OS 25.1.A

Develop a voluntary, market-driven Green Building Program that includes performance standards, guidelines, review criteria, incentives, and implementation schedules for private sector development, with criteria tailored to project types (i.e., residential, commercial, retail), size, and location.

Implementation Measure OS 25.1.B

Identify, evaluate, and provide incentives to encourage projects that incorporate green building practices and site design, including the potential for certification through the City's Building Department.

Implementation Measure OS 25.1.C

Facilitate the professional development and education of City staff to learn about green building practices and to have the tools to evaluate development proposals.

Implementation Measure OS 25.1.D

Offer information, technical assistance, and training to promote green building to property owners, building, design, and planning professionals, school districts, and special districts.

Policy OS 25.2

The City supports the use of green building practices in the planning, design, construction, management, renovation, operations, and demolition of all facilities constructed, owned, managed, or financed by the City.

Implementation Measure OS 25.1.A

Evaluate and update the City's procurement processes to provide incentives to bidders who propose the use of green building practices in the construction of City buildings and facilities.

PARKS AND PARK ACCESS

Objective OS 26

Construct and maintain parks and parks access to meet the needs of the City's population growth.

Policy OS 26.1

Update the City of Chowchilla Park and Recreation Master Plan approximately every ten years to keep up with population growth, expansion of the City 's boundaries, and ever-changing recreation trends with input from the community, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Policy OS 26.2

Work closely with local planning and transportation departments to build and maintain sidewalks, crosswalks, bike racks, bike paths, and shade trees, as well as routes within and between parks, trails, and other key destinations.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICIES FOR PARKS AND PARK ACCESS

Objective OS 27

Construct and maintain parks and parks access to meet the needs of the City's population growth of all members of the community regardless of race, color, physical ability, national origin, or income.

Policy OS 27.1

Promote equitable park programs and policies that make it safe and easy for residents to be physically active, regardless of their age, race, income, ability, or disability.

Policy OS 27.2

Increase access points to recreation areas and green spaces or locate them along public right-of-way so they are more accessible to all community members.

Policy OS 27.3

Ensure that investments in parks and recreation facilities are equitable and prioritize improvements to lower-income neighborhoods where residents may not have transportation to visit parks that are further away.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Objective OS 28

Promote energy conservation and efficiency and reduce energy demand throughout the City of Chowchilla.

Policy OS 28.1

Consider converting street lighting, water pumping, water treatment, and other energy-intensive operations to more efficient technologies.

Policy OS 28.2

Pursue State, regional, and federal funding programs designed to reduce energy demand through conservation and efficiency.

Policy OS 28.3

Identify and publicize information about financial mechanisms for private solar installations and provide over-the-counter permitting for solar installations meeting specified standards.

URBAN GREENING

Objective OS 29

Promote, maintain, and expand the concept of Urban Greening throughout the City of Chowchilla.

Policy OS 29.1

Identify, implement, and seek funding for specific green infrastructure projects in Chowchilla.

Policy OS 29.2

Maintain and continue to implement the City's Urban Forest Plan through new development projects, additions to Chowchilla's urban forest to delineate corridors and the boundaries of urban areas, and to provide tree canopy for bike lanes, sidewalks, parking lots, and trails, and install trees within parks, school sites, public rights-of-way and other city properties.

Policy OS 29.3

Adopt the Chowchilla Industrial Park Specific Plan Plant List as the official plant selection list for the City of Chowchilla.

URBAN AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICIES FOR OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

Urban agriculture is a means to improve community health and reduce health inequities. It encourages civic participation in food system governance and offers citizens opportunities to explore concepts of food sovereignty within an urban setting.

Objective OS 30

Improve community health and reduce health inequities.

Policy OS 30.1

Ensure that healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food is readily available to all members of the community.

AFFORDABLE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD POLICIES

Objective OS 31

Provide and promote access to healthy food and nutritional choices.

Policy OS 31.1

Encourage and simplify the process of developing community gardens within or adjacent to neighborhoods and housing development sites.

Policy OS 31.2

Through updated zoning regulations, allow community gardens as an amenity in required open space areas of new multifamily and mixed-use development projects.

Policy OS 31.3

Identify vacant lots and underutilized public land that can be used for neighborhood-run community gardens including coordination with Chowchilla Elementary Schools and Chowchilla Union High School District.

Policy OS 31.4

Educate the public on how to grow and maintain a private or community edible garden.