



**Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting
Willows General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report**

Date: April 6, 2022

To: State Clearinghouse, Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting for the Willows General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report

Scoping Meeting: **April 20, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**

Comment Period: **April 6, 2022 to May 9, 2022.**

The City of Willows (City) will serve as Lead Agency in the preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Willows General Plan Update (Plan).

The purpose of this notice is (1) to serve as a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, (2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the EIR to be prepared for the proposed project, and (3) to notice the public scoping meeting. The proposed project is a long-term General Plan consisting of policies that will guide future development activities and City actions. No specific development projects are proposed as part of the Plan. Information regarding the project description, project location, and topics to be addressed in the Draft EIR is provided below. Additional project documents and information (including the Proposed Draft General Plan) are available at the City of Willows, Community Development Department, Planning Division located at: City of Willows, 201 N Lassen Street, Willows, CA 95988, and on-line at:

<https://www.cityofwillows.org/dept/community-development-services-department/planning>

For questions regarding this notice, please contact Karen Mantele, Principal Planner at (530) 934-7041, or by email kmantele@cityofwillows.org.

Notice of Preparation 30-Day Comment Period

The City, as Lead Agency, requests that responsible and trustee agencies, and the Office of Planning and Research, respond in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4, responsible agencies, trustee agencies and the Office of Planning and Research must submit any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the NOP public review period will begin on April 6, 2022 and end on May 9, 2022.

In the event that the City does not receive a response from any Responsible or Trustee Agency by the end of the review period, the City may presume that the Responsible Agency or Trustee Agency has no response to make (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(2)). All Comments in response to this notice must be submitted in writing at the address below, or via email, by the close of the 30-day NOP review period, which is 5:00 PM on May 9, 2022:

Karen Mantele
Principal Planner
Community Development Department, Planning Division
City of Willows
201 N Lassen Street
Willows, CA 95988
kmantele@cityofwillows.org

Scoping Meeting

The City will hold a scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for agency representatives and the public to assist the City in determining the scope and content of the EIR.

The scoping meeting will be held on **April 20, 2022 at 6:00pm, at:**

City Hall Council Chambers
City of Willows
201 N Lassen Street
Willows, CA 95988

For comments before or after the meeting or additional information, please contact Karen Mantele, Principal Planner at (530) 934-7041, or by email kmantele@cityofwillows.org.

Project Location and Setting

The City of Willows is located within California's Central Valley in the southern portion of Glenn County. Interstate 5 (I-5) connects Willows to Redding to the north and Sacramento to the south. State Route (SR) 32 connects Willows to Chico to the east. SR 162 connects Willows to the Mendocino National Forest to the west.

The Planning Area is the geographic area for which the Willows General Plan provides a framework for long-term plans for growth, resource conservation, and the provision of public services. State law requires the General Plan to include all territory within Willows' incorporated area as well as "any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning" (California Government Code Section 65300). The Plan Area is in Glenn County. For the purposes of the General Plan, the Planning Area is defined as the Willows city limits and the surrounding Sphere of Influence (SOI), as defined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The General Plan boundary (Planning Area) is shown in Figure 1 (Proposed General Plan Land Use Map).

Project Description

The City of Willows is preparing a comprehensive update to its existing General Plan, which was adopted in 1974, and underwent partial updates in 1981 and 2010. The General Plan Update is expected to be completed in 2022.

The City's proposed General Plan includes a broad goal and policy framework that guides land use and planning decisions within the city. The overall purpose of the General Plan is to create a policy framework that articulates a vision for the City's long-term physical form and development, while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for residents and increasing opportunities for high-quality local job growth and housing options. The key components of the General Plan will include broad goals for the future of Willows, and specific policies and actions that will help implement the stated goals.

The updated General Plan will guide the City's development and conservation through land use objectives and policy guidance. The City will implement the Plan by requiring development, infrastructure improvements, and other projects to be consistent with its policies and by implementing the actions included in the Plan, including subsequent project-level environmental review, as required under CEQA.

State law requires the City to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of its planning area. The Plan must include land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety elements, as specified in Government Code Section 65302, to the extent that the issues identified by State law exist in the City's planning area.

The Willows General Plan includes a comprehensive set of goals, policies, and actions (implementation measures), as well as a revised Land Use Map (Figure 1).

- A **goal** is a description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of the General Plan.
- A **policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making as the City works to achieve its goals. Once adopted, policies represent statements of City regulations. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council in their review of land development projects, resource protection activities, infrastructure improvements, and other City actions. Policies are on-going and don't necessarily require specific action on behalf of the City.
- An **action** is an implementation measure, procedure, technique, or specific program to be undertaken by the City to help achieve a specified goal or implement an adopted policy. The City must take additional steps to implement each action in the General Plan. An action is something that can and will be completed.

The Willows General Plan includes all of the State-mandated topics and elements noted above, and addresses additional topics, such as Environmental Justice (in the Land Use Element) and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency (in the Safety Element).

The Plan has been prepared to address the requirements of State law and the relevant items addressed in Government Code Section 65300 et seq. The Willows General Plan is intended to reflect the desires and vision of residents, businesses, and City Council.

The following objectives are identified for the proposed update to the General Plan:

- Develop a long-term vision for the City of Willows
- Engage a broad spectrum of the community members
- Engage key stakeholders to perpetuate long-term involvement
- Establish greater connections between the General Plan and current planning issues
- Educate the public on the City’s existing conditions, and the General Plan update process

Growth Projections

While no specific development projects are proposed as part of the Willows General Plan Update, the General Plan will accommodate future growth in Willows, including new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, and new residential uses. The buildout analysis assumes an approximately 20-year horizon, and 2040 is assumed to be the buildout year of the General Plan.

Growth projections should not be considered a prediction for growth, as the actual amount of development that will occur throughout the planning horizon of the General Plan is based on many factors outside of the City’s control. Actual future development would depend on future real estate and labor market conditions, property owner preferences and decisions, site-specific constraints, and other factors. New development and growth are largely dictated by existing development conditions, market conditions, and land turnover rates. Very few communities in California actually develop to the full potential allowed in their respective General Plans during the planning horizon.

As shown in Table 1 and Table 2, buildout of the General Plan could yield a total of up to approximately 689 housing units and approximately 717,834 square feet of non-residential building square footage within the City Limits. These projections are likely an overstatement of the level of growth that will occur in the Willows community over the next 20 years, given that these growth levels exceed historical growth rates in Willows. However, for the purposes of the General Plan EIR, these are the levels of growth that will be analyzed, given that these growth levels are feasible based on the development potential provided in the proposed Land Use Map.

TABLE 1: GROWTH PROJECTIONS - BUILDOUT OF VACANT LAND IN WILLOWS CITY LIMITS

Land Use Designation	Vacant Acreages (acre)	FAR ¹	Residential Units per Acre		Non-Residential Buildout (sf)		South Willows Residential Community ²	Total New Residential Units	
			from	to	from	to		from	to
City	164.99							641	734
Non-residential Land Uses									
Commercial/Industrial Combining Use	72.72	0.25	-	-	395,966		-	-	-
General Commercial	21.55	0.25	-	-	117,361		-	-	-
General Industrial	13.34	0.25	-	-	72,644		-	-	-
Highway Commercial	16.61	0.25	-	-	90,468		-	-	-
Light Industrial	3.36	0.25	-	-	18,313		-	-	-
Office and Professional	4.24	0.25	-	-	23,083		-	-	-
Public Facilities and Services	13.57	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Residential Land Uses									
Low Density Residential	18.08	-	2	6	36	108	419	455	527
Multiple Family Residential	1.51	-	16	30	24	45	162	186	207
Notes:									
1- Assumes new non-residential development occurs at a FAR of 0.25 and is developed on 50% of the vacant parcels for each non-residential land use category.									
2- The South Willows Residential Community is an entitled project, and is assumed to be fully built-out by 2040									

SOURCES: CITY OF WILLOWS 2021; COUNTY OF GLENN 2021; PARCELQUEST PARCEL DATA 2022. DE NOVO PLANNING GROUP 2022.

TABLE 2: GROWTH PROJECTION – HOUSING UNITS IN WILLOWS CITY LIMITS

Total Buildout New Housing Units ¹	689
2020 Housing Units (existing)	2,458
2040 Housing Units (projected)	3,147
Mid-range Growth Projection (annual growth rate over 20 years)	1.40%

NOTES: 1- ASSUMES THAT ALL VACANT RESIDENTIAL PARCELS WILL DEVELOP AT THE MID-RANGE ALLOWED DENSITY

SOURCES: DE NOVO PLANNING GROUP 2022.

As shown in Table 3, buildout of the General Plan could yield a total of approximately 137 to 411 housing units and approximately 68,399 square feet of non-residential building square footage within the Willows SOI.

TABLE 3: GROWTH PROJECTIONS - BUILDOUT OF VACANT LAND IN WILLOWS SOI

Land Use Designation	Vacant Acreages (acre)	FAR*	Residential Units per Acre		Non-Residential Buildout (sq. ft)	Total New Residential Units	
			from	to		from	to
SOI	84.98	84.98				137	411
Non-residential Land Uses							
General Commercial	0.18	0.25	-		975	-	
General Industrial	1.95	0.25	-		10,637	-	
Highway Commercial	1.47	0.25	-		8,015	-	
Light Industrial	6.37	0.25	-		34,676	-	
Mixed Use	2.59	0.25	-		14,096	-	
Public Facilities and Services	3.94	-	-		-	-	
Residential Land Uses							
Low Density Residential	68.47	-	2	6	-	137	411
Note: *Assumes new non-residential development occurs at FAR of 0.25 is developed on 50% of the vacant parcels for each non-residential land use category.							

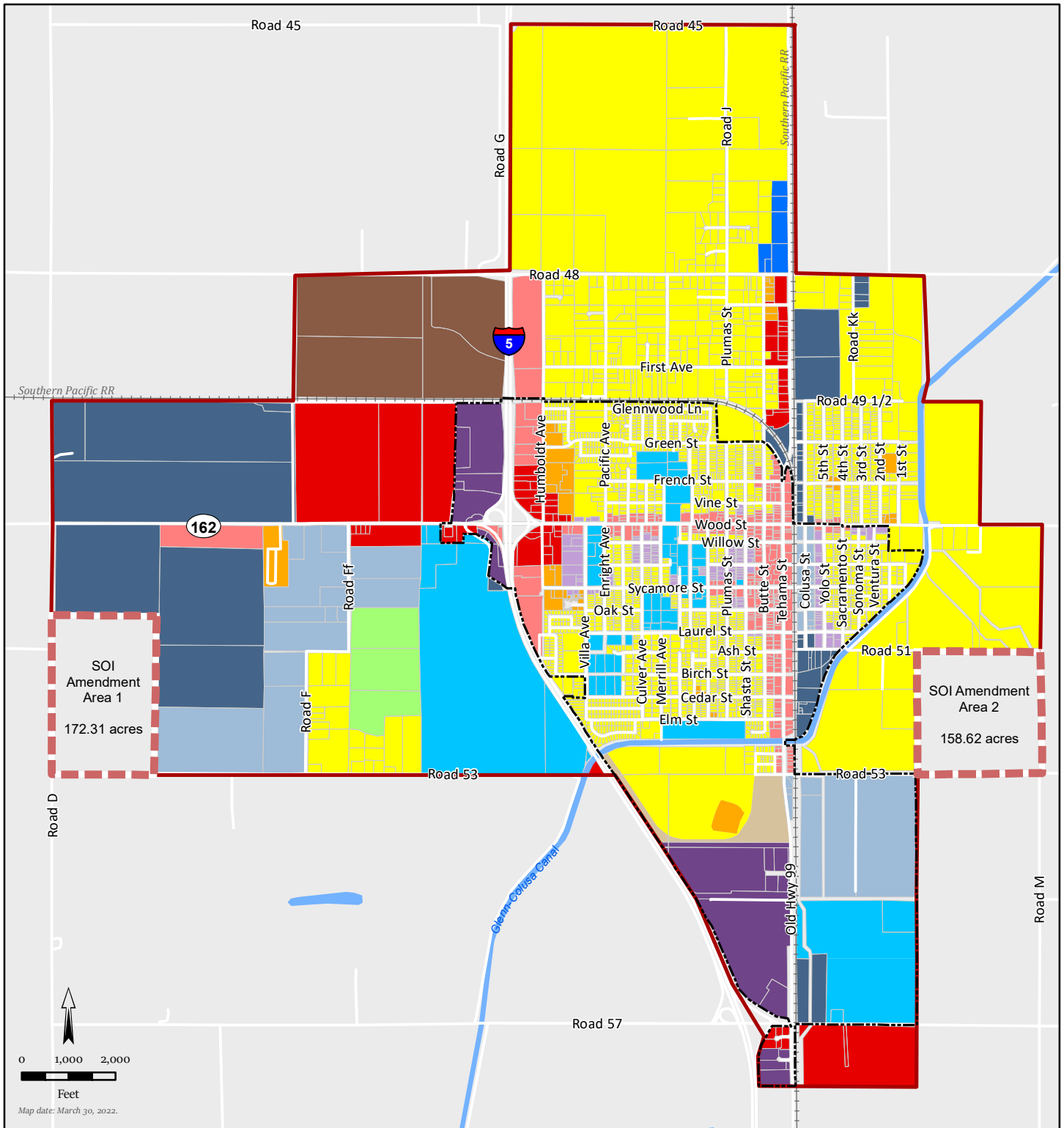
SOURCES: CITY OF WILLOWS 2021; COUNTY OF GLENN 2021; PARCELQUEST PARCEL DATA 2022. DE NOVO PLANNING GROUP 2022.

Program EIR Analysis

The City, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare a Program EIR for the Willows General Plan Update. The EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA, the CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines), relevant case law, and City procedures. No Initial Study will be prepared pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines.

The EIR will analyze potentially significant impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the General Plan. In particular, the EIR will focus on areas that have development potential. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guideline. At this time, the City anticipates that EIR sections will be organized in the following topical areas:

- Aesthetic Resources
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
- Greenhouse Gases, Climate Change, and Energy
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance/Cumulative Impacts
- Alternatives



Planning Areas
 City of Willows (dashed line) Willows Sphere of Influence (solid line) Proposed SOI Amendment Area (dashed red line)

General Plan Designations

Low Density Residential	General Industrial
Multiple Family Residential	Office and Professional
Urban Reserve	Open Space
General Commercial	Public Facilities and Services
Highway Commercial	Agricultural/Residential*
Commercial/Industrial Combining Use	Mixed Use*
Light Industrial	

*County designation. See Glenn County General Plan.

CITY OF WILLOWS

FIGURE 1:
 PROPOSED SOI AMENDMENT
 AREAS