

General Plan Annual Progress Report 2025

City of Colusa



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Introduction

Government Code Section 65400(a)(2) requires planning agencies to provide an annual report to the legislative body, the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on the status of their General Plan and progress in its implementation. The report must detail progress in meeting the jurisdiction’s share of the regional housing need and the local agency's efforts to remove governmental constraints on the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing.

The purpose of the Annual Progress Report is to: 1) assess how the General Plan is being implemented in accordance with adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures; 2) identify any necessary adjustments or modifications to the General Plan to improve local implementation; 3) provide a clear correlation between land use decisions that have been made during the 12-month reporting period and the goals, policies, and implementation measures contained in the General Plan; and 4) provide information regarding local agency progress in meeting its share of the regional housing need.

The current City of Colusa General Plan was originally adopted on October 30, 2007. At the time of its adoption, the General Plan contained the seven State-required elements. The State allows combining elements or adding new elements, as long as the required seven elements are present in some form. The Colusa General Plan contains the following eight elements:

- Land Use
- Community Character and Design (optional)
- Circulation
- Safety
- Parks, Recreation, and Resource Conservation (combined with Open Space and Conservation)
- Noise
- Municipal Facility and Services (optional)
- Housing Element (Cycle 2020-2028)

General Plan Background

The City of Colusa 2007 General Plan serves as a long-term policy guide for physical and economic growth and environmental sustainability. The General Plan is used to inform citizens, developers, agencies, interest groups, and others of the ground rules that will guide development-related decisions in the community. The General Plan provides a long-term vision for the community, and, through its goals, policies, and implementation programs, indicates how that vision may be achieved over time.

The City of Colusa General Plan addresses planning through the year 2025 with four stated fundamental purposes:

- To enable the Planning Commission and the City Council to make informed land use decisions that affect the City's quality of life.
- To inform the public of the City's policy approaches and to serve as a vehicle to invite public participation in the City's decision-making process.
- To provide a basis for evaluating whether private and public development proposals and public programs are in harmony with Colusa's short-term objectives and long-term vision.
- To provide private developers and public agencies with clear expectations of new development proposals to ensure their consistency with Colusa's development priorities.

The following represents the progress the City has made towards implementing the General Plan and Housing Element during the Calendar Year 2025 reporting period, which looks at the 2020-2028 6th Cycle Housing Element.

The information that follows is organized to correspond to the elements of the Colusa General Plan.

Elements

LAND USE

The broadest section of the General Plan is the Land Use Element. The Land Use Element provides the framework for community development and designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of land uses for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses. It is the guide to the City's physical form. The Land Use Element also guides coordination and planning with local agencies, including the County, Airport Land Use Commission, Colusa Unified School District, and the State.

The Land Use Element consists of nine Goals that address the maintenance of well-defined urban boundaries and the provision of buffers between the city and agricultural practices. The element goals discuss development in an efficient manner to minimize infrastructure extension, support infill development, and provide a comprehensive plan rather than a piecemeal approach. A common theme throughout the General Plan, not just the Land Use Element, is the provision of an economically vibrant Riverfront District that reflects the area's culture and history. This Element also discusses an expanding, increasingly diversified local economy that will meet residents' employment needs and strengthen the local tax base.

Amendments

State Law limits the number of times each mandatory element of the General Plan, such as the Land Use Element, can be amended to a maximum of four times per calendar year.

The Land Use Element of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during 2025.

Progress towards meeting Goals and Guiding Policies of the Land Use Element

Home Occupancy Ordinance – Approved

In October, an ordinance was enacted to amend the Colusa Municipal Code, specifically altering the regulations regarding Home Occupancy Permits (HOP). The amendment removes the discretionary requirements for these permits, allowing them to be issued by right in residential zoning districts if they comply with standards. The goal of this change is to promote home-based businesses while eliminating the expensive and subjective entitlement costs incurred at the local level.

Colusa Meat Processing Facility – Use Permit – Approved

Upon appeal, the City Council approved a Use Permit to allow the operation of a new 3,600 square foot, state-of-the-art meat processing facility. The US Department of Agriculture and California Department of Food and Agriculture have certified the facility as a slaughter and processing facility for cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats. The project received funding through the California Jobs First program, supported by We Prosper Together, a regional collaborative covering Colusa and seven other counties. The project is considered a “last mile” initiative aimed at improving local agricultural economic growth, creating jobs, and bridging the gap between local producers and consumers.

NextGrid Solar Field – Use Permit – Approved

A 27-acre site between the Colusa Municipal Airport and residential zone land that would be developed with approximately 13,156 modules (panels) and a Battery Energy Storage System that monitors the solar system, while adjusting voltage, temperature, and contains a fire warning. This passive land use on Industrial zoned land will act as a buffer between the airport and residential land uses to the north.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

Community Character refers to the physical characteristics that give the community shape, form, and identity. Concepts such as “small town,” “quality of life,” “living environment,” “neighborhood,” and “community” are, to a large extent, expressions of familiar physical characteristics – landmarks, streets, buildings, parks, and natural features that create a unique identity in every community. “Community design” or “urban design” refers to the architectural and engineering design principles that create the shape, form, and appearance of both new development and the redevelopment of existing districts and neighborhoods. The Community Character and Design Element is not a state-mandated element, as are others in this General Plan. Rather, it is an optional element that provides policy direction to guide community design as new development occurs.

The Community Character & Design Element consists of 17 Goals that ensure the preservation and enhancement of Colusa’s unique community character and vitality within its neighborhoods and business districts, while balancing growth with the natural environment. The element discusses creating a strong historic Downtown and Riverfront Districts, providing community-gathering locations in new developments and wayfinding and focal points at strategic locations. New development should reflect and enhance the character of Colusa, be well designed, and provide opportunities for multi-family projects.

Amendments

The Community Character & Design Element of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during 2025

Progress towards meeting the Goals and Guiding Policies of the Community Character & Design Element

Sidewalk Vending Ordinance – Approved

In October, an ordinance amending the Colusa Municipal Code to comply with SB 972 (2023) and SB 635 (2025) was passed, permitting sidewalk vending in the public right-of-way. The ordinance restricted vending in specific areas for safety reasons while permitting both mobile and stationary vending.

Colusa Levee Scenic Park – Stair Upgrade

In partnership with the Rotary Club of Colusa, the aging railroad ties used as stairs to access the top of the levee were replaced with concrete stairs.

CIRCULATION

The purpose of this Element is to provide an overview of the means of transport to, from, and within the City of Colusa and the City’s Planning Area, and to address how these different methods can complement each other to make the City’s circulation system work more efficiently and effectively.

The Circulation Element consists of nine goals that address providing a circulation system that serves all modes of travel and all individuals within the community. The Element desires adequate parking, connectivity, and attractive, efficient bicycle and pedestrian routes. While creating the waterfront as a regional destination for both recreational and commercial water transportation activities.

Colusa County 2025 Regional Transportation Plan

City leaders were involved in the development and adoption of the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan by Colusa County. This plan directs transportation investments, prioritizes projects, identifies funding sources, and schedules the implementation of future projects.

Wescott Road Realignment Project - Construction

Physical construction started on the Wescott Road Realignment Project at Westcott Road and Highway 20/45. The project includes new vehicle turning movements and signalization of the intersection.

Phase 2 - Road Repair & Re-pavement (Measure B) – Constructed

Measure B is a local initiative designed to support and enhance infrastructure and public safety within the City through a modest sales tax increase. City began street resurfacing as an ongoing effort to maintain and improve local roadways.

SAFETY

This Element includes police, fire, emergency response, and health services – all critical aspects of planning for the health, safety, and welfare of Colusa residents. Section also, although minimal given Colusa’s location, discusses seismic and geological goals and policies.

The Safety Element consists of eight goals that address minimizing injury and property damage from seismic, geological, fire, and flooding events. Ensure the community airport operations are sufficient, while police and emergency medical services are well-planned and cost-effective, and health care services are conveniently available to the population.

Amendments

The Safety Element of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during 2025

Progress towards meeting the Goals and Guiding Policies of the Safety Element

Purchase of Surplus Type 1 OES Engine (Measure B)

Measure B is a local initiative designed to support and enhance infrastructure and public safety within the City through a modest sales tax increase. Using these funds in May, the city acquired a new Type 1 OES Engine with both pumping and ladder capabilities, maintaining the current ISO rating of 3 and bringing the total Fire Department fleet to 5 vehicles.

New Police Station Preliminary Plan and Analysis

Through the summer, the City engaged a consulting firm to draft a preliminary site plan for a new police station on 3.66 acres of city-owned land along Highway 20/45. The plan provides sufficient design for the staff to begin the necessary initial planning and environmental analysis.

Colusa Police Department FLOCK Cameras (Measure B)

Measure B is a local initiative designed to support and enhance infrastructure and public safety within the City through a modest sales tax increase. Utilizing these funds, the city purchased a cloud-based camera system that provides real-time alerts and investigative leads, helping officers locate stolen vehicles, identify suspected vehicles in criminal investigations, and locate vehicles involved in violent crimes.

PARKS, RECREATION & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Parks, recreation, and resource conservation policies serve as an important tool that can help ensure that Colusa's quality of life continues to improve as new development occurs. Maintaining and expanding existing parklands and facilities, as well as acquiring new ones, is essential for improving the City's recreational programs and parks.

The Parks, Recreation & Resource Conservation Element consists of seven goals that address the preservation, protection, and enhancement of an interconnected system of significant open space. It also has a geographically distributed and well-maintained system of parks and recreational facilities for all city residents to participate in. The element discusses improving air quality as a health benefit and the role of natural resources.

Amendments

The Parks, Recreation & Resource Conservation of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during 2025

Progress towards meeting the Goals and Guiding Policies of the Parks, Recreation & Resource Conservation

C.D. Semple Park – Adaptive Play Structure

In March, through funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Measure B, an Adaptive Play Structure with Pour-in-Place Grounding was installed, creating a smooth, cushioned surface for safe, easy mobility and providing an inclusive play space designed for children of all abilities.

Tree Trimming and Maintenance (Measure B)

Measure B is a local initiative designed to support and enhance infrastructure and public safety within the City through a modest sales tax increase. City Public Works staff utilized Measure B funds to attend to the city's urban forest, which involved the trimming and maintenance of trees located in the public right-of-way.

Trees for Tomorrow

The Parks, Recreation, and Tree Commission, with support from the Colusa Rotary Club, purchased and planted trees for residents who requested new trees in mowed strips near their properties.

Recreation Department

The recreation department's strength continued throughout 2025, with a significant number of public activities, including spring and summer camps and after-school classes. The department also utilized existing city facilities and held swimming lessons, lifeguard training, pool movie nights, adult and public swims, pumpkin plunges, swim team, etc. The program also offered Tennis and Archery classes and partnered with Colusa High School to host its annual Cardboard Boat Regatta at the pool.

NOISE

The health effects of community noise can interfere with activities such as sleep, speech, recreation, and tasks that demand concentration or coordination. When community noise interferes with human activities, public tolerance for that noise source decreases. This decrease in acceptability and the threat to public health and welfare are the basis for land use planning policies that minimize or prevent exposure to excessive noise levels

The Noise Element consists of two goals: protecting noise-sensitive land uses from new noise-generating uses that would be incompatible with such sensitive receptors, and minimizing noise generated by construction activities.

Amendments

The Noise Element of the General Plan was not amended during CY 2025

Progress towards meeting the Goals and Guiding Policies of the Noise Element

No projects directly contributed to advancing the noise element. However, projects in the Land Use section (above) can be seen as related to advancing the noise element, such as the NextGrid Solar farm project on industrial property that can act as a buffer between Colusa Industrial Properties and residential land uses to the north. Similarly, the approval of the Colusa Meat Use Permit, which is approximately a mile from residential land uses, provides significant distance between the operation and residential areas to the north.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES & SERVICES

This Element concerns public infrastructure and facilities that support the community's growth. Operational and programmatic issues are considered, but this chapter primarily concerns the provision of capital facilities.

The Municipal Facilities & Services Element consists of nine goals that address ensuring a standard of living for existing residents and businesses, while maintaining and expanding upon public services and facilities; sewer, water, police and fire protection, and the library, to ensure they meet existing and future demands. Creating facilities that can be used for multiple purposes and shared with other agencies.

Amendments

The Municipal Facilities & Services of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during CY 2025

Progress towards meeting the Goals and Guiding Policies of the Municipal Facilities & Services

Well Project No. 9 Project – Construction

During the summer, construction started on the Well No. 9 Project, which would allow an additional 2,200 to 2,600 gallons per minute to be pumped and the water treated for both manganese and arsenic, as needed. This project also included additional treatment for iron and manganese, odor-control treatment for other City wells, and turning existing wells into backup wells, while ensuring all the wells are linked to the city’s supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system.

Private Well Acquisition

City staff are negotiating with a private entity that manages many industrial acres and owns two private wells. These wells are connected to the city system and have been used in emergencies. The city aims to acquire these wells, with negotiations ongoing to finalize the purchase by the end of 2026.

As discussed in greater detail in Safety (above), several projects and advancements can also be contributed to this section. Such as the purchase of a new Type 1 Fire Engine, the initiation of the design of the proposed Police Station and its analysis, as well as the purchase of FLOCK cameras.

HOUSING

The Housing Element of the General Plan was updated in 2020 to reflect the 2020-2028 planning period. Following the December 1, 2020, public hearing, the City Council adopted the Housing Element, which was then originally certified by HCD in 2021 and re-certified on March 14, 2025. Mandated by the State of California, housing elements must be updated more frequently than the other general plan elements.

The Housing Element consists of nine goals that address providing a continuing supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents across all income categories, as well as ensuring that adequately zoned lands are available for development. This element discusses the protection and conservation of the existing housing stock while ensuring that necessary health and safety requirements are met. Housing is provided for special-needs groups, including the elderly, physically disabled, developmentally disabled, large families, female heads of household, and farmworker households. While conserving existing affordable housing stock and ensuring energy and water conservation in new development.

Amendments

The Housing Element of the Colusa General Plan was not amended during CY 2025

Progress towards meeting Goals and Guiding Policies of the Housing Element

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65400, the City Council is required to prepare an annual report on the status and progress in implementing the City’s Housing Element using forms and definitions adopted by HCD.

As shown in Table 1, the City Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the applicable planning period is 379 residential units, broken down by income category. RHNA allocation was created by the Housing and Community Development (HCD), which allocated a region’s share of statewide housing need to Colusa County and the two incorporated jurisdictions of Williams and Colusa. Based on the Department of

Finance population projections and regional population forecasts used in preparing regional transportation plans

The City’s Housing Element must demonstrate how it will accommodate the production of these units; the City must show that there is adequate land properly zoned to accommodate its allocation of units and that barriers to the production of dwelling units are minimized or eliminated.

Table 1: Regional Housing Needs Allocation 2020-2028

Income Group	Number of Units
Extremely Low	38
Very Low	38
Low	64
Moderate	79
Above Moderate	160
Total	379

In 2025, the City issued building permits for 5 dwelling units.

Table 2: Colusa’s Progress in Meeting Regional Housing Needs

Income Limit	RHNA Allocation	2025 Permits Issued	2024 Permits Issued	2023 Permits Issued	Total Units To Date
Extremely Low	38	0	0	0	0
Very Low	38	0	0	0	0
Low	64	0	0	0	0
Moderate	79	0	1	4	5
Above Moderate	160	7	3	2	10
Totals	379	7	4	6	17

As required by state law, the City must zone land to accommodate the RHNA and develop programs and policies that promote an environment where housing construction is encouraged at all income levels

During the 2025 cycle, the city advanced several housing-related action items, including:

Program H-2 – By Right Housing – Approved

In January, an ordinance was passed that amended the Colusa Municipal Code to comply with AB 1397 (2017) and allow ministerial approval for housing projects where at least 20% of the units are affordable to lower-income households on parcels identified in the Inventory of Vacant Lands table in the Housing Element.

Program H-6 – Maintain Capital Improvement Program and Address Accessory Dwelling

In March, an ordinance was passed amending the Colusa Municipal Code to comply with recently adopted state laws addressing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs). The ordinance established development standards in line with state requirements.

Program H-2.b and Program H-2.c Accessory Dwelling Units

- The City developed four ADU plans for community members to use free of charge. City staff have made plans available at City Hall and on the City’s website, received local press coverage, and sent out monthly billing announcements to over 2,500 individual addresses.
- The Colusa Municipal Code was amended to include ADU standards and regulations that are based upon state requirements.
- The fee schedule was amended to include ADU-specific fees that are at a reduced rate in line with state requirements.

Program H-10 – Moderate and Above-Income Housing Production

All year, staff have continued to facilitate the buildout of Sunrise Landing through quick approvals, master plan checks, ongoing inspections, and direct communication with the Building Official.

Program H-12 - Downtown Plan

Through a competitive process, the City was awarded a grant from the American Planning Association Urban Design and Preservation Division to host the Design and Preservation Rapid Assistance Team (D-PRAT) who, through a series of workshops and outreach held in November 2025 created a Riverfront District that will include a series of suggestions on how to revitalize the historic downtown area, including suggestions on how to advance housing in the area.

Program H-29 – Assistance to the public regarding housing and housing discrimination and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Created an AFFH Plan that was approved by Housing and Community Development, which included additional public outreach and providing after-hours access to California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA).

Additionally, the following housing projects were entitled:

Rancho Colus Phase II – Approved

The Regional Housing Authority and Sage Housing Group, LLC propose to construct the Rancho Colus Phase 2 project, a 48-unit affordable apartment community on a 1.53-acre parcel at 1717 State Highway 20 (portion of APN 002-120-029). The project is the second phase of the Rancho Colus Apartments and will be developed on the west side of the overall 3.66-acre project site, adjacent to State Highway 20. The community will include one-, two-, and three-bedroom units in two residential buildings, along with outdoor amenity spaces. The overall design of the buildings will be like Rancho Colus Phase 1, which was completed in 2024. The project will add 28 Very Low and 20 Low-income units to the city. Permits for Phase I were issued in 2022 with occupancy occurring in 2025.

One ADU permit was issued in 2025.

Other notable housing projects commenced that did not involve the entitlement process, such as:

301 Jay Street – Constructed

Demolition of an inhabitable residential structure and replacement with a new duplex unit and a new residential structure, resulting in 2 net units. The project is centrally located in the “square” of Colusa and was able to take advantage of Infill Development incentives, which provide reduced impact fees on qualifying residential lots.

Conclusion

A general plan is the local jurisdiction's blueprint for meeting the community's long-term visions for the future. While no state law existing on the life of a plan, general plans are typically created with a “planning horizon” of 20 years. Elements within the plan may be updated from time to time, while state law requires the Housing Element to be updated every eight years.

The APR for the General Plan and Housing Element describes the progress of the City’s ongoing efforts to implement and assess identified goals, policies, and objectives in the General Plan and Housing Element. Demonstration of ongoing compliance with State-required reporting ensures that the City maintains eligibility and competitiveness for ongoing grant funding opportunities that may help to implement these goals and policies. City staff will continue their proactive efforts to assist property owners, developers, community groups, and residents in achieving project approvals and streamlining building permit issuance.

Since the initial adoption of Colusa’s general plan, several land use changes have occurred over the years, including annexations of urban growth areas and industrial zoning designations on East Clay Street. Housing regulations imposed by the state have resulted in more types being permitted in low-density land uses, such as duplexes in the R-1 Single Family zone and Accessory Dwelling Unit requirements. Further, state requirements have been updated to include a new element, Environmental Justice (SB 100), and new standards to address policies for climate resiliency, equitable access to open space, and rewilding opportunities (SB 1425) and climate change (SB 379). Safety items, including addressing evacuation routes and fire hazard impacts (SB 1241, AB 747, and SB 99), have also been updated by the state.

On the environmental front, new standards are in place for analyzing circulation-related items; Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT), which discusses total miles driven by vehicles within a specific region and time frame, rather than Level of Service (LOS), which measures roadway operations conditions, ranging from free-flow traffic (A) to severe congestion (F).

In short, the existing general plan has served the city well and should continue to do so in the short term, but with changes at the state level, the city should evaluate whether a comprehensive update is needed, or at least updates to specific elements that need more attention than others.