

CITY OF YUBA CITY
STAFF REPORT

Date: November 3, 2009
To: Honorable Mayor & Members of the City Council
From: Community Development Department
Presentation By: Aaron M. Busch, Community Development Director

Summary

Subject: Preferred Land Use Alternative for the Sutter County General Plan Update.
Recommendation: Provide staff with direction regarding the City Council's position on the preferred land use alternative for the Sutter County General Plan Update.
Fiscal Impact: None

Background:

Sutter County is currently in the process of updating their 1996 General Plan. As part of that effort, the County formed a *General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)* in February of 2008 and established a *Vision and Guiding Principles* to aid with their update process. Through the course of this process, three *Alternative Land Use Plans* were developed for review and consideration by the GPAC and Board of Supervisors. These are summarized below and maps of the alternatives will be provided as part of the presentation to Council.

Alternative 1 = Existing Sutter County General Plan

Alternative 2 = New Growth – Lower Intensity (new growth above Alt 1, but less than Alt 3)

- Proposed future expansion of Yuba City SOI
- 50% build-out of new industrial/commercial reserve uses located north and south of Yuba City SOI and other communities.
- New Estate Residential use south of Yuba City, west of Highway 99

Alternative 3 = New Growth – Higher Intensity (new growth, higher than Alt 2)

- Proposed future expansion of Yuba City SOI
- 100% (versus 50%) build-out of the new industrial/commercial reserve uses located north and south of the Yuba City SOI.
- Approximately 50% more new Estate Residential use south of Yuba City, west of Highway 99.

The GPAC reviewed and made recommendations on the Alternatives Analysis at their meetings of September 24, 2009, and October 5, 2009. Those recommendations from the GPAC were then forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for final action at their October 26th meeting with the County Planning Commission. After receiving testimony on the proposed update, including comments from City staff, the Board continued the item to November 9, 2009.

Once a preferred land use plan is selected, the County (and their consultants) will begin the year long EIR process for adoption of the planned General Plan Update.

Analysis:

The proposed land use alternatives have the potential to impact the future planned growth for Yuba City so it is important for Yuba City to actively participate in the County's General Plan Update process. City staff has sent two letters to Sutter County expressing our concerns with the proposed land use alternatives which are attached for your review and provide an overview of staff's issues. A more detailed presentation will be provided at the Council meeting. With Council's feedback on the proposed matter, the City will be able to provide the County with a unified position regarding their selection of a preferred land alternative at their upcoming Board meeting.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Recommendation:


Provide staff with direction regarding the City Council's position on the preferred land use alternative for the Sutter County General Plan Update.

Prepared By:



Aaron M. Busch
Community Development Director

Submitted By:



Steven R. Jepsen
City Manager

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

Other: (Name, Title)

Attachments

1. Letter dated September 24, 2009
2. Letter dated October 23, 2009

CITY
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1201 CIVIC CENTER BOULEVARD, YUBA CITY, CA 95993 • (530) 822-4700/822-4629 • FAX (530) 822-4694

September 24, 2009

Ms. Lisa Wilson, Planning Division Chief
Community Services Department
1130 Civic Center Boulevard
Yuba City, CA 95993

Subject: *Land Use Alternatives Analysis* for the Sutter County General Plan Update

Dear Ms. Wilson,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the *Land Use Alternatives Analysis* that was prepared for the Sutter County General Plan Update and is being presented to the *General Plan Advisory Committee* (GPAC) at their meeting tonight. City of Yuba City staff has reviewed the document and generally concurs with its Findings regarding the different land use options being discussed tonight. Some of the more critical Findings from the Executive Summary that address how the alternative land use plans may affect Yuba City are summarized below.

- Alternatives 2 and 3 that are located outside the cities (Yuba City and Live Oak) and other defined growth areas (Sutter Pointe aka "Measure M") would likely be more costly to serve, result in inefficient growth patterns and generally do not support the GPAC's *Guiding Principles*. Reducing in size or eliminating, or reconfiguring the industrial/commercial reserve (ICR) areas to be immediately adjacent to a city better support the GPAC principles.
- The amount of residential and non-residential land uses allocated within the Alternatives significantly exceed by 2.5 to 3 times the market projections for such growth through 2030. With the amount of residential and non-residential growth proposed under the Alternatives, it suggests that there is no need for the County to allocate significant new areas of residential or non-residential growth within the unincorporated area. (Note: the assumed land use figures do not include commercial or industrial land uses planned within the cities and their spheres of influence which will increase the overage of land even further.)
- It is preferable if utility services can be extended from an existing City to a new growth area, rather than developing new potable water, wastewater collection and treatment, and storm drainage systems. It should be noted that in order for a city to provide services, the development must be located within its boundaries through the annexation process.

Staff concurs that the amount of residential and non-residential land proposed for future development in Alternatives 2 and 3 is not feasible at this time and is not consistent with the County's *Guiding Principles* that were created for the General Plan Update process. For these reasons, City of Yuba City staff requests that the GPAC, the County Planning Commission, and the County Board of Supervisors select Alternative 1 as the preferred land use alternative for the General Plan Update. Should either Alternative 2 or 3 (or modification of thereof) be chosen as the preferred alternative, the City of Yuba City would

request that any new development planned outside and adjacent to the current (or planned) Sphere Of Influence be subject to the Specific Plan or Master Plan process to ensure that the future development is comprehensively planned.

Finally, the City of Yuba City would also request that as part of the Update process, the County will continue to evaluate measures that can be put in place to address our common goal of defining an appropriate rural/urban edge treatment that preserves and protects agricultural resources. Specifically, Yuba City staff would request that the issue of Ranchette development and non-residential spot-zoning and leap-frog development along (or nearby) shared borders be addressed.

The City appreciates the County's willingness to receive our comments on this important decision that will affect the Yuba City community. I look forward to working with you and your team on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Busch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "B".

Aaron Busch
Community Development Director

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1201 CIVIC CENTER BOULEVARD, YUBA CITY, CA 95993 • (530) 822-4700/822-4629 • FAX (530) 822-4694

October 23, 2009

Sutter County Board of Supervisors
1160 Civic Center Boulevard
Yuba City, CA 95993

Subject: *Land Use Alternatives Analysis* for the Sutter County General Plan Update

Dear Board Members,

As you move forward with the next critical step in your General Plan Update process, with the selection of a "preferred land use alternative", City of Yuba City staff would like to thank the Board and your staff for supporting our involvement in the process thus far. Efforts such as the joint City Council/Board of Supervisors meeting held earlier this year in March to discuss the County's General Plan Update process and a potential expansion to the City's Sphere Of Influence (SOI) have produced good dialogue regarding the future development of this region. This is an important moment in the planning of our region for both Sutter County and Yuba City as important land use decisions regarding the future of our respective communities are being developed.

Recently City staff provided our comments on the *Land Use Alternatives Analysis* that was prepared for the General Plan Update and presented to the *General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)* at their September 24th meeting. It is my understanding that a copy of those remarks is being included in your packet for the October 26th special joint meeting of the Board and the County Planning Commission so I will not address those comments. However, due to the importance of the impending decision(s) that you are being requested to make, I would like to highlight some of the more critical issues, especially in light of the recommendations made by the GPAC to the Board which differ slightly from the suggestions in our September 24th letter.

It is my understanding that the land use alternatives being considered were developed to support the *Vision Statement* and *Guiding Principles* that were adopted by the County to direct the General Plan Update process. According to the overview for the *Vision Statement*, the principles:

"help define how growth and conservation will occur in Sutter County, as well as provide guidance for the development of land use alternatives and updated General Plan policies."

Yuba City staff concurs with the values and aspirations that are presented in your *Vision Statement* and *Guiding Principles* and supports their use and implementation as part of the General Plan Update process. In that regard, however, there are some land use proposals included as part of the GPAC's recommendations that are contrary to some of the *Guiding Principles* that I would like to highlight for the Board. These are provided below.

Ensure Managed and Efficient Growth

- *Focus new urban growth to the County's cities and other clearly defined and comprehensively planned development areas.*
- *Promote efficient development patterns that promote orderly growth and discourage sprawl.*
- *Ensure new development is compatible with agricultural operations and open space preservation.*

Provide Adequate and Equitable Community Services and Infrastructure

- *Enhance water and sewer services within the County, and preserve existing water rights.*

Support a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy

- *Create a healthy and diverse economy by providing a regulatory climate that attracts new industries and a broad range of jobs with livable wages and opportunities for advancement.*
- *Maintain a viable agricultural industry by sustaining existing agricultural operations, diversifying the agricultural economy, and promoting agricultural businesses that utilize "cutting-edge" technology.*

Maintain a High Quality, Rural Lifestyle

- *Preserve the County's rural, small town character, high quality of life, and agricultural heritage including quality farmlands.*
- *Promote uses that support the economic, cultural and scenic values of agriculture.*

The GPAC's recommendations for reduced amounts of Industrial/Commercial Reserve (I/C Reserve) and Estate Residential (ER) land uses to be located just beyond the boundaries of the *Possible Future Yuba City SOI* limits is not consistent with the above *Guiding Principles*.

The above principles reaffirm the County's historical policy that urban growth should occur in the local cities. While there are likely multiple reasons behind this policy, one key component that surely contributes to this practice is the need for infrastructure. As noted in the *Land Use Alternatives Analysis*, "it is preferable if utility services can be extended from an existing City to a new growth area, rather than developing new potable water, wastewater collection and treatment, and storm drainage systems." As new development occurs in areas located further away from the County's cities (and other clearly defined growth areas), it becomes less efficient and more costly to provide urban level services and infrastructure.

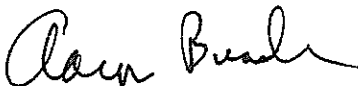
Even if the proposed I/C Reserve land use located along the east side of Highway 99 (or in any other similar location in the County) developed with industrial or commercial uses that did not require significant infrastructure improvements typically provided by cities, those uses would not likely be the desired types of businesses that promote large job growth as sought by the above principles. According to the Findings in the *Land Use Alternatives Analysis*, industrial and I/C Reserve uses typically require large amounts of water for industrial operations, and fire suppression systems which necessitate high water flows and significant storage. Such water resources are difficult to provide through individual private wells and the amount of water required could result in competing groundwater drafting with other industrial and nearby agricultural uses. Additionally, use of septic systems for large industrial water users is usually not feasible. Potential industries would be limited to "dry" industries such as warehouses and storage rental businesses. Wet industries that produce more jobs such as food processing plants could not use septic systems because of the large volumes of wastewater and high concentration of pollutants in the wastewater. For these reasons, as well as the fact that the *Land Use Alternatives Analysis* suggests that there is more than enough industrial land

use already located within the existing cities and the recently approved *Sutter Pointe* project, City staff does not support the proposal for I/C Reserve land use south of Yuba City.

The proposal for ER land use along the south edge of the City's limits near Bogue Road also does not meet the intent of the above *Guiding Principles* relating to the preservation of important agricultural land. City staff appreciates the proposed concept of eliminating future Ranchette development through the use of ER land use; however, the proposed location(s) have the potential to eliminate important agricultural land that could otherwise be preserved. While the County has historically "not planned land use" within the City's SOI, City staff believes that a more preferable alternative to that proposed would be to locate such residential land use within the southern area planned for the *Possible Future Yuba City SOI* limits, in the general area east of Highway 99 between Bogue Road and Barry Road. If the Board is agreeable to such an alternative, City staff would propose to incorporate this land use alternative as part of future SOI expansion discussions with our City Council. This potential alternative would address our common goal of defining an appropriate rural/urban edge treatment that preserves and protects agricultural resources along our shared borders.

City staff appreciates the County's willingness to receive our comments on this important decision that will affect the Yuba City community. I look forward to working with you and your staff on this project.

Sincerely,



Aaron Busch
Community Development Director

Cc: Larry Combs, County Administrator
City Council, City of Yuba City
Steven Jepsen, City Manager