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To: Dan Breedon

Fr: Ed Miller

Subj: Potential impact of singularities on the Butte County General Plan

Ref A: Thomas Friedman, Hot, Flat and Crowded, Thorndike Press, A part of Gale Cengage learning, 2008, Butte County Library LT 363.7 F

Background: I have been looking for a good overview of the green revolution. I can heartily recommend Ref A to all supervisors, planners, CAC members and the general public. Friedman is the pied piper of all generations with plenty of examples of dangers, glories and catchy phrases that drive initiatives. He takes on the problem of energy poverty that he believes has been neglected. He would have us innovate our way toward creating a renewable energy systems whose true cost would be less than ones using coal, oil, and gas. Gleaning out directly applicable ideas for the Butte County Plan is a challenge but here goes:

1. Develop a sense of stewardship or trusteeship at the earliest age possible.
2. Develop "green-collar" jobs for underprivileged young people.
3. Incentivize replacement of two stroke engines used with mobile vehicles like scooters and mopeds with electric scooters and bicycles.
4. Condition stakeholders to avoid kick reflex responses like NIMBY (Not in my backyard) and its more general cousin BANANA (Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything) and recognize the big stake tradeoffs.
5. Write the rules and negotiate impacts on power transmission lines to bring in clean/renewable power well before likely need.
6. Rising costs of energy, food and natural resources will force change and open up vast new opportunities for clean power and energy efficiency
7. Make sure that all passenger vehicles including SUVs procured by the County have an EPA highway mileage > 35 mph.
8. Recognize that the easy paths for real, sustainable solutions are all closed. We can expect pain and failures. We should not be afraid of documenting failures.
9. Friedman would have us view ourselves as the first generation of the Energy-Climate Era.
10. Strive for a zero carbon dwelling footprint.
11. Require or incentivize high level LEED ratings for new construction.
12. Require or incentivize electric power control/costing strategies that level and/or reduce system loading.

Biofuels research specialists

Ref B: <http://gcep.stanford.edu/about/investigators/biomass.html>

Background: Capitalizing on Butte County's biomass resources is a major research topic that needs to be emphasized. Ref B is a good example of the talent that is out there that addresses biomass an area of study to assess biological, ecological and economic limits to biofuels production under their study of the Climate-Protective Domain as part of their overarching global climate and energy project. The work is done under funding from the Carnegie Institute, Department of Biological Sciences, Chemical Engineering and environmental science/policy at Stanford. Planners and CAC members need at a minimum to develop a feel for bounds and limits for various technologies that would drive zoning and environmental impact mitigation. The goal of achieving a firesafe productive forest in a park like environment using evolving knowledge of biomass utilization would be a significant tool in the General Plan Tool Kit. For the moment, CAC members only need to be able to frame meaningful debate and develop a feel for likely development potential. Eventually we may want to encourage meaningful interaction between major players like Emerson, the Neal/Oroville biomass facility engineers, CDF and County Planners to proactively push for achieving overall goals of the General Plan.

Forest Ranch sphere of influence: There is an interest in interacting with the Butte County/DCS planners on the subject of zoning options and geographic boundaries as distinct from membership in the current Forest Ranch Community Association. I understand that Berry Creek has similar concerns. Hopefully the rules to the game will apply to virtually any non-incorporated community in Butte County. Models from other similar communities outside of the County but similar in character or geography would be of interest. Subdivision, ownership in common, cluster development and water/waste management constraints would be topics of interest.

Concerns about genetics, robotics, information and nano-technology (GRIN)

Ref C: Joel Garreau, Radical Evolution, Random House 2005

Ref C opens up a Pandora's box of concerns that may or may not need to be addressed by the Butte County General Plan but can be helpful in providing a philosophical underpinning or sensitivity to issues that may drive stakeholders looking for guidance and prioritization. I would judge that the "prevail scenario" articulated by Lanier embodies these principles:

1. Humans have an uncanny history of muddling through by forging unlikely paths to improbable futures in defiance of historical forces that seem certain and inevitable.
2. The wellspring of this muddling through, of this prevailing, is the ability of ordinary people facing overwhelming odds to rise to the occasion because it is the right thing.
3. Even if technology is advancing along an exponential curve, that doesn't mean humans cannot creatively shape the impact of human nature and society in largely unpredictable ways.

