

Butte County

General Plan 2030



BUTTE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2030 CITIZENS ADVISORY MEETING #2 NOTES DECEMBER 7, 2006

STAFF ATTENDEES

- ◆ Butte County – Tim Snellings, Pete Calarco, Chuck Thistlethwaite, Dan Breedon, Noel Carvalho, Mark Michelena, Chris Tolley, Meredith Williams and Chris Thomas.
- ◆ DC&E – Catherine Reilly, Michael Brilliot and Tanya Higgins.
- ◆ Fernando Marin, District 5 Planning Commissioner
- ◆ D.C. Jones, Resource Conservation District President
- ◆ Richard Price, Agriculture Commissioner

REVIEW OF LAST MEETING & OVERVIEW OF THE EVENING'S AGENDA

Tim Snellings presented; the slide show is available on line at <http://www.buttegeneralplan.net>.

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GROUPS TO DISCUSS HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

The Committee discussed their likes and dislikes of Butte County in groups of five to six. They also used the 256 photographs from their homework assignment during this discussion, each group choosing approximately twelve photos to display to the larger group during their presentation.

OVERVIEW OF BUTTE COUNTY'S DRAFT FRAMEWORK OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Dan Breedon presented; the slide show is available on line at <http://www.buttegeneralplan.net>.

REPORT BACK ON RESULTS OF BREAKOUT GROUPS DISCUSSION

One representative from each of the six groups reported back to the larger group the results of their group's discussion on their likes and dislikes of Butte County. They each also displayed approximately twelve of the photographs from the homework assignment to illustrate their points.

Michael Evans presented for Group 1:

- ◆ Photo 1 illustrated the recreational opportunities in Butte County (e.g. hiking, biking). Since 9/11/01, vehicles are no longer allowed along the dam; the group did not like that lack of access. They would like to see recreation as a key element in the General Plan, as it increases the quality of life and is a big reason people move to Butte County.

- ◆ Photo 2 demonstrated the open space between the towns and around the Spheres of Influence. They liked the sense of openness when traveling, but they did not like the sprawl also evident in the photo.
- ◆ Photo 3 showed two houses very close together with inconsistent architecture, which they did not like. They would like either consistent architecture or places with better densities.
- ◆ Photo 4 showed a vacant strip of land created by the development of a new roadway. The group stated that they do not like it when new development and roadways create unusable strips of land that are not likely to be publicly or privately maintained and do not have a viable economic use.
- ◆ Photo 5 showed Highway 70 into Oroville, where there is a lot of visual clutter, which the group did not like. Gateways into Oroville need to be improved aesthetically.
- ◆ Photo 6 demonstrated the fire hazards of Butte County. This area is prone to fire, and they need ways to manage this fire threat. The problem in the photo can be resolved by the homeowner cleaning the land; however, if property is vacant, property owners need a special permit.
- ◆ Photo 7 showed land that has not been cleaned and is a fire hazard.
- ◆ Photo 8 showed dense chaparral, a fire hazard.

Tony Rushing presented for Group 2:

- ◆ Photo 1 showed organic fruit, which represents Butte County agricultural economy, most notable its organic agriculture economy. Agriculture was noted as an asset in the County that should be preserved and enhanced.
- ◆ Photo 2 showed redevelopment at an old train station in Paradise, where there is a good mix of redevelopment and historic character.
- ◆ Photo 3 displayed a meadow with artifacts. Outside developers have bought this land, but the group said the land should not be developed because of a lack of water and sewer services and cultural resources.
- ◆ Photo 4 showed a “mom and pop” market. The group said that such small businesses are an asset to County residents.
- ◆ Photo 5 displayed the challenges associated with residential encroachment on industry.
- ◆ Photo 6 showed open space, including Table Mountain and the openness around Oroville. The group said they would like the area in the photo and similar areas retained as open space.
- ◆ Photo 7 displayed the new gym at Las Plumas High School adjacent to open space. The area is zoned residential. The group said that that development should occur within the existing City footprint on infill sites and that new development should not be allowed to develop on the edge of cities, in open space or agricultural areas, until the existing city footprint is built out.

- ◆ Photo 8 showed industrial uses around 5th Avenue in South Oroville. There is a lot of acreage zoned industrial here; they would like to see more aesthetically-pleasing industry.
- ◆ Photo 9 showed Lake Oroville. The group said that they would like to see accessibility to the lake improved.
- ◆ Photo 10 showed the view from Lake Oroville to the Valley, which the group said should be preserved.
- ◆ Photo 11 showed a bald eagle; the group stated that natural habitat and the environment should be preserved.
- ◆ The group also stated that new development in natural areas should be designed to be aesthetically integrated and compatible with the natural landscape. It was also stated that individuals who purchased property in the natural hill areas, who had the expectation that they could develop a home, should be allowed to build.

Steve Rodowick presented for Group 4:

- ◆ Photo 1 showed rural, uncluttered land, which was identified as an asset.
- ◆ Photo 2 displayed a site near photo 1 and demonstrated illegal dumping, which was identified as a dislike. The groups stated that the General Plan should address this issue.
- ◆ Photo 3 showed an attractive entry into Riverbend Park, Oroville, “Catch the Dream” gate.
- ◆ Photo 4 showed a negative entry into the city (on Highway 70 south of Oroville). The group indicated that the material displayed in the photograph should either be removed or fenced.
- ◆ Photo 5 showed a Class 1 bike lane. Class 1 bike lanes were identified as an asset. The group stated that they would like to see the development of more bike lanes because, without a motorized vehicle, it is hard to get between different parts of the county.
- ◆ Photo 6 showed a Valley Oak tree. The group indicated that these trees are an icon in Butte County and should be preserved, either through purchases or easements. They also said that rock walls are an icon.
- ◆ Photo 7 showed the new Chico downtown plaza, which works well as urban open space.
- ◆ Photo 8 was taken in the middle of Chico, and demonstrated a good example of urban open space.
- ◆ Photo 9 showed open space within 5 minutes of the urbanized portion of the City of Chico. The group stated that areas like these should be maintained and new ones created as the cities grow.
- ◆ Photo 10 displayed light pollution, which was identified as a problem in Butte County.
- ◆ Photo 11 showed a cemetery, which was identified as valuable open space.

Group 3:

- ◆ Photo 1 displayed usable open space in Chico. The group indicated that recreational opportunities are important to maintain.
- ◆ Photo 2 showed the Butte County General Plan Update webpage. The group liked that the county has the foresight to create this type of planning process, direct resources to it, and include citizen input.
- ◆ Photo 3 illustrated the history of Butte County, an important asset.
- ◆ Photo 4 showed open space at Butte Meadow and the topography of the county. The group liked the diversity of the open space in the county; one can go from the oaks to the pine forest within 20 minutes.
- ◆ Photo 5 showed a home in Chico. They liked that housing is diverse and not all cookie cutter.
- ◆ Photo 6 illustrated the peaceful nature of the county. The group indicated that the open oak savanna should be sustained.
- ◆ Photo 7 was taken in Oroville near the nature center where there is a lack of consistent architecture.
- ◆ Photo 8 showed a property that is owned by an absentee landlord, illustrating the poor maintenance issues associated with absent landowners.
- ◆ Photo 9 showed the diversity and topography of the landscape.
- ◆ Photos 10 and 11 showed inconsistent infrastructure in the county, as the structure in photo 10 is protected by a fence, but the one in photo 11 has no fence.
- ◆ Photo 12 was a photo of a neighborhood tot lot. This photo illustrated the sense of community and a commitment to community in Oroville.

Jeff Carter presented for Group 5:

- ◆ Photo 1 showed the road to Upper Ridge, which is the only access to that community. The group disliked the safety concerns associated with this access. The photo also showed the region's beauty and why it attracts people here.
- ◆ Photo 2 showed Upper Ridge, an asset. The group expressed concern that this rural nature could be lost without proper planning.
- ◆ Photo 3 illustrated recreation and open space, assets that attract people to Butte county.
- ◆ Photo 4 also showed Upper Ridge; the group would like the rural lifestyle here to be protected.
- ◆ Photo 5 also showed a rural lifestyle.

- ◆ Photo 6 was a photo of the “Catch the Dream” gate at Riverbend Park on the Feather River. The group identified this as an example of an attractive gateway. The photo also illustrated an example of a recreational opportunity in Butte County.
- ◆ Photo 7 was a photo of the Oroville Chinese Temple. This photo illustrated the region’s history, which the group indicated should be protected and enhanced.
- ◆ Photo 8 illustrated the rural atmosphere, which was presented as an asset.
- ◆ Photo 9 displayed an open viewshed, presented as an asset that needs to be protected.
- ◆ Photo 10 was taken in Chico, along Little Chico Creek. The group expressed concern that some watersheds are not protected, but that there is an opportunity to protect them.
- ◆ Photo 11 was a photo of California Park, where natural features are enhanced, a new opportunity for open space. The group said that the County should adopt policies to encourage development to do this type of enhancement through incentives.
- ◆ Photo 12 showed the diversity of neighborhoods. The group expressed a need for architectural control to protect the beauty of these older neighborhoods.
- ◆ Photo 13 displayed natural features that were enhanced by development. The group would like the County to offer incentives to developers to include this type of open space in planned developments.
- ◆ Photo 14 was taken in downtown San Francisco, a good example of urban planning.

Pia Sevelius presented for Group 6

- ◆ Photo 1 showed the importance of agriculture and open space. The group also mentioned support industries that are important, such as bee hives, for pollination.
- ◆ Photo 2 showed a dying downtown (Biggs), caused by different shopping patterns. The group would like these downtowns to be revitalized.
- ◆ Photo 3 showed a meth lab, which causes public safety and economic problems for everyone.
- ◆ Photo 4 showed the Afterbay, which provides recreational opportunities and helps agriculture.
- ◆ Photo 5 displayed erosion, a water quality issue, and how hard it is to keep our creeks healthy.
- ◆ Photo 6 showed a Durham sign that illustrates how community volunteerism is supported and important.
- ◆ Photo 7 showed a tree-lined street and bike path, which are assets.
- ◆ Photo 8 showed a bike path and trees on the midway.
- ◆ Photo 9 showed Lake Oroville, providing water and recreational opportunities.
- ◆ Photo 10 showed illegal dumping, disliked by the group.

- ◆ Photo 11 showed another dying downtown in Oroville. The group expressed a need to find solutions for redevelopment.
- ◆ Photo 12 showed historic value, a stamp mill.

Following the group presentations, Committee members raised a few comments:

- ◆ R. John Anderson noted that the Committee mostly displayed pictures of older downtowns and natural landscapes. There were no pictures of anything built within last 50 years, which he found interesting. Nobody called out recent development to say that they did not like it, but it also did not inspire anyone to say that they want more.
- ◆ Michael Evans suggested that the Committee do this again in a year to see how people have grown and changed.

DISCUSSION AND INPUT ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Tim Snellings led a discussion on the draft guiding principles. The Committee first discussed the general process and framework for these principles.

- ◆ The Committee discussed the appropriate level of specificity and ambiguity for these principles, including how sensitive or blunt the principles should be.
- ◆ The Committee discussed the meaning of the terms: *will*, *shall* and *must*.

In general, the Committee reached general agreement regarding the text for the principles, which is reflected in the final revisions recorded by Tim Snellings.

- ◆ Throughout the principles, the Committee decided to include the phrase, “The Butte County General Plan will address...” where appropriate.
- ◆ Principle 1 (Cooperative Planning) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - How the county will work with the cities.
 - What are mutually important planning issues.
 - The role of unincorporated communities and whether to acknowledge them here.
 - Whether to include other agencies under the goal of cooperative planning.
- ◆ Principle 2 (Circulation) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Whether all of the principles should include action verbs.
- ◆ Principle 3 (Growth/Urban Development/Housing) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Whether to call out housing in the text of this principle or to make it its own principle.
 - Whether to call out housing for all income levels or housing needs.

- The term *urban* and whether to also call out rural development. Principle 9 addresses rural development, but it does not specifically call out the need for planning there, which is stated in this principle.
- ◆ Principle 4 (Airport Land Use Planning) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - The meaning of the word *compatibility*.
 - Whether to include the need to identify and protect agricultural airports.
 - The possible replacement of the word *protect* with *enhance*.
 - ◆ Principle 5 (Natural Resources and Environment) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Whether to remove the word *constraints* because of a negative connotation, and whether to include the word *protect*. Some members felt that constraints is appropriate because of the constraints faced by developers from environmental regulations. The term *utilization* was acceptable for both arguments.
 - ◆ Principle 7 (Economic Development) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Replacing the word *critical* with *positive* and including *sustainable* before economic.
 - ◆ Principle 8 (Agriculture) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - The possible addition of the word *protected*.
 - Whether to include reference to watershed lands and aquifers. The Committee decided to create a new principle for that topic.
 - The meaning of the term *important*.
 - The term *lifestyle*.
 - ◆ Principle 9 (Rural Development) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - How agriculture and the environment can complement each other, and how all of the principles should work together and not be in conflict.
 - Rural development and how the county should push development into urban areas, but recognizing that it will occur in certain areas.
 - What this principle means, as *growth* is a weighted term.
 - Differing opinions about whether principle #3 already addresses this principle.
 - ◆ Principle 11 (Sustainability)- The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Adding the words *promote* and *identify*, and removing *restore*.
 - Adding the word *viability* to the phrase *economic opportunity*.
 - Whether people depend on natural resources and whether to remove that phrase.
 - ◆ Principle 13 (Water Resources, new principle) - The topics discussed by the Committee included:
 - Whether to cover both surface and groundwater; some felt that it was very important to call out groundwater.
 - Whether the principle should include only the word *protection* or also *enhance* and *promote*.