

The banner features a dark blue background with a white waterfall on the left. The text 'Butte County' is written in a large, white, serif font at the top, and 'General Plan 2030' is written in a smaller, white, serif font below it. To the left of the text is the Butte County seal, which is circular and contains a landscape scene with mountains and a river. Below the banner is a curved strip of images showing various rural and natural scenes: a field of yellow flowers, a cow in a green field, a mountain range, a waterfall, a green field, a row of trees, a lake, and a wooden barn.

Butte County

General Plan 2030

Butte County General Plan 2030
Biggs/Butte County Meeting – Summary Notes
March 29, 2007, 12:00 PM

Attendees

- ◆ John Busch, City of Biggs Mayor
- ◆ Roger Frith, City of Biggs Vice Mayor
- ◆ Bill Connelly, Butte County Board of Supervisors
- ◆ Curt Josiassen, Butte County Board of Supervisors
- ◆ Greg Iturria, County of Butte CAO
- ◆ Tim Snellings, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Chuck Thistlethwaite, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Dan Breedon, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Pete Carr, City of Biggs Administration
- ◆ Scott Friend, City of Biggs Planning
- ◆ Stephen Lucas, Butte LAFCO
- ◆ Stephen Betts, Butte LAFCO
- ◆ Jon Clark, BCAG
- ◆ David Early, DC&E
- ◆ Tanya Higgins, DC&E
- ◆ Tom Lando, Lando & Associates
- ◆ Mike Hall, City of Biggs Planning Commission

1. Introductions and Meeting Overview

Tim Snellings described the goals of this meeting, highlighting the City/County Summit, issues that were raised at that meeting, the Guiding Principles, and the Existing Conditions Briefing Book.

2. Butte County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan

Jon Clark presented a summary of the Butte County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP), including the project status, plan area, GIS database, stakeholders, preliminary covered species list, the draft ecological baseline

report, and the project schedule and phases. Although the project is not expected to be complete until March 2010, BCAG will share administrative drafts of information with the Cities and the County so that they can coordinate their conservation elements. Information about the HCP/NCCP is available at www.buttehcp.com.

3. Local Agency Formation Commission Presentation

Steve Lucas provided an overview of the Butte Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The Commission has a deadline to review existing Sphere of Influence (SOI) plans by January 1, 2008. However, because each of the municipalities is undergoing a General Plan update, the Commission acknowledges that this deadline will not be met. In the meantime, LAFCO will defer all annexation and amendment requests until the SOI reviews are complete, due to possible litigation if they proceed. The Commission strongly encourages each City to include sphere projections in its General Plan, allowing one EIR to cover the General Plan update and the Sphere amendment. LAFCO would like to work cooperatively with the Cities and the County to ensure General Plan consistency with LAFCO goals.

In response to follow-up questions from City and County representatives, LAFCO clarified the following:

- ◆ The Commission's decision to defer annexation and amendment requests applies to both the Cities and the special district boundaries, but LAFCO is already working with some of these other districts on their updates.
- ◆ The Commission made this decision at its December 2006 meeting.
- ◆ LAFCO is not actively reviewing consolidation of old districts.

4. Discussion on Biggs' SOI Boundary and Areas of Anticipated Growth

David Early introduced the four main issues listed on the agenda, which were raised at the City/County Summit and include: land use and development, agricultural preservation and buffers, transportation, and funding for government services. He also asked if there were any additional issues that should be included in the discussion; no additional issues were raised.

A. Biggs' SOI Boundary and the Area of Concern (AOC)

- ◆ Scott Friend provided an overview of the City's position on the AOC, growth and the General Plan update process. The City was contacted by large property owners who were interested in developing their properties and/or becoming annexed by the City of Biggs. The City has been attempting to work with Gridley to determine a southern boundary. There is not much vacant land within the Biggs city limits or SOI, so future growth opportunities exist predominantly outside of the current SOI boundary. Therefore, when

the City was approached by these large property owners, it began the process of updating the General Plan.

- ◆ Tom Lando explained the reasoning for the boundaries of the Biggs Planning Area. The Planning Area wraps around the current city limits primarily to facilitate the logical extension of services. They are considering some allowing for some growth to the west, but there is a need to buffer agricultural uses. The City also needs to protect large employers, so they need industrial buffers as well. The “Dakotas” region to the southeast of the city is constrained, particularly by the high water table.
- ◆ The City wants to work with Gridley regarding their southern boundary. The Biggs City Council recently unanimously decided to pursue agreement with Gridley on a previous proposal, and has requested a meeting with Gridley to discuss these options. City representatives are optimistic that they can reach an agreement with Gridley regarding a planning area, if Gridley is willing to discuss it.
- ◆ The City stressed that their proposed planning area extends beyond the existing city limits in every direction; there are property owners to the north that would like to be annexed. This is in part influenced by major out-of-town developers who have purchased or optioned properties around the city. One of the reasons they are considering an expansion so far to the south is because the landowners there had requested annexation by Gridley, but the City of Gridley was not interested in those proposals. Also, the interested parties in the area do not desire to have portions of their projects/properties straddle two cities.
- ◆ The City and Gridley have not had detailed discussions regarding possible buffers or greenbelts at the future City-to-City interface. The primary goal for now is to understand where the general boundaries will be with design issues such as buffers being an item for future discussion. Biggs City Council members at the meeting indicated that they believed that it is important to maintain a distinction between Biggs and Gridley, but not necessarily a buffer, to reach that goal.
- ◆ Although the City of Biggs sells electricity to its residents, and therefore has a different set of fiscal issues surrounding housing, the City will still seek a full mix of land uses in order to grow employment and sales tax revenue.
- ◆ The City intends to protect its industrial uses and to mitigate any issues with adjacent residential uses. However, City and County representatives recognize the changing opinions and needs of newer residents which may result in increasing conflicts and compatibility issues with the industrial users.
- ◆ The City strongly identifies its downtown as an anchor of identification for the community, and one City Council member expressed concern that some types of highway retail could hurt downtown merchants. The City expressed the desire to work on development and design standards to maintain and build their community character. The

Council members present indicated that they did not want to create typical cul-de-sac subdivisions.

- ◆ City representatives would like to work with Gridley on the issues in the AOC; they do not think that a third party is appropriate to mediate this discussion. Supervisor Bill Connelly cautioned the City about conflicts between residential and industrial uses, suggesting instead that they locate commercial and industrial uses along the railroad.
- ◆ Although the City is in the process of contracting with a General Plan consultant, they have not yet secured the necessary funding to officially begin the project.

B. Highway 99/Highway 99 Bypass Corridor

- ◆ The City currently has no immediate plans to develop Highway 99 with commercial uses, but may be open to this in the future in order to stimulate tax revenue growth. The existing Biggs General Plan suggests culturally attractive commercial uses of the 99/B Street “gateway.” The City indicated a desire to balance commercial uses in ways that strengthen the existing downtown. The downtown area may also benefit from development to the west of the City that would necessitate the movement of traffic through the downtown in order to reach Highway 99. A railroad overpass would assist with such westerly growth, which would also alleviate some traffic problems on Highway 99. The City had discussed with Gridley in the past opportunities for cost-sharing for an overpass.
- ◆ Prior development interests have submitted concept plans for the Highway 99/B Street area, but the City indicated that it is not going to process any requests until the General Plan is updated.
- ◆ The City sees Highway 99 as important for circulation. The City does not oppose the City of Gridley in their plans to build a Highway 99 bypass.
- ◆ Although BCAG is aware of the development pressures on Highway 99, Jon Clark expressed that they and Caltrans are more focused on Highway 70.

C. Development Standards

- ◆ The group discussed whether there was a need for development standards in the Dakotas region. There was consensus that the lack of infrastructure there will impede development, but concern that technological advances may remove those constraints in the future. The County advised that their General Plan update process will evaluate potential development in this area, considering public input regarding this issue.
- ◆ Scott Friend highlighted the importance of ongoing discussions between the County and City regarding the extension of services.

D. Agricultural Preservation and Buffers

- ◆ The City is will be exploring agricultural protection mechanisms that may include right-to-farm ordinances and agricultural setbacks as part of the General Plan update.
- ◆ Agriculture is a major part of Biggs' identity, but any growth will affect agriculture. Tom Lando expressed interest in defining a buffer on the west side of the City. Mayor John Busch expressed a need to clearly define agricultural boundaries and definitions (i.e., 5-acre ranchettes a problem), while protecting property rights.
- ◆ Curt Josiassen expressed a desire to enhance agriculture as well as taking steps to maintain and protect it.
- ◆ John Busch emphasized the need for the population to grow to support the Biggs-Gridley hospital, and discussed how that growth could affect agriculture. Supervisor Curt Josiassen emphasized the need for legitimate job growth.

E. Transportation Issues

- ◆ Bill Connelly stated that Highway 162 is the most logical route to Interstate 5, partly because there are not many existing obstacles to a right-of-way. There is a restriction along Highway 162 in Glenn County prohibiting trucks over 50 feet in length, which increases such traffic on Highway 99.
- ◆ The City of Biggs updated and readopted a Bicycle Plan last year. They will investigate linkages with County facilities through the General Plan update process, and will send a copy of their Bicycle Plan to the County.
- ◆ Bill Connelly asked whether Biggs has any plans for expanding recreational opportunities through a trail expansion to the Afterbay. John Busch responded that although there are no specific plans, there is interest in such an expansion. John would like to pave the levee of the Feather River all the way to Live Oak for a bike path.

F. Funding of Government Services

- ◆ Tim Snellings described revenue sharing agreements, which would prevent competition between the County and City. Greg Iturria explained how County services benefit City residents, and how fiscalization should not drive the land use process.
- ◆ Tom Lando stated that the City of Biggs will be cooperative and that they recognize the County services benefiting their residents.
- ◆ The County is conducting a fiscal assessment of the General Plan and implementation strategy. Although the County has not yet defined the elements of the General Plan, there will be economic development policies included.

G. Additional Issues

- ◆ Tim Snellings provided an overview of the upcoming General Plan 2030 schedule.

- ◆ Bill Connelly asked whether Biggs is planning to change the school district boundary relative to the boundary of their Planning Area. Roger Frith responded that the City has no jurisdiction over the school districts.

5. Next Steps

The County is holding an Area-Wide Workshop at the Gridley-Biggs Hospital on May 7th. There may be a need for additional City/County meetings in the future. The County is hoping to hear of some resolution to the AOC issue within the next 30 to 60 days. If that doesn't happen, they may need to determine how the County can update its General Plan without an agreement between the two Cities on planning for this area.