

The banner features a dark blue background with the text "Butte County" in a large, white, serif font at the top left. Below it is the circular seal of Butte County, which depicts a mountain range and a river. To the right of the seal, the text "General Plan 2030" is written in a white, serif font. The banner is decorated with a collage of images: a waterfall on the left, a cow in a field, a sunset over hills, a hot air balloon, a green field, a row of trees, a lake, and a wooden barn on the right.

Butte County

General Plan 2030

Butte County General Plan 2030 Board of Supervisors Study Session Summary, Meeting Series 2/3-4

I. Introduction

The Board of Supervisors Study Session for Meeting Series #2/3 of the Butte County General Plan 2030 was held on November 27, 2007. The focus of this meeting was the finalization of Land Use, Transportation and Policy Alternatives for General Plan 2030. All five of the Supervisors were present for the meeting. Butte County Development Services staff Tim Snellings, Pete Calarco, Chuck Thistlethwaite, Dan Breedon and Claudia Stuart attended, as well as David Early, Joanna Jansen and Tanya Sundberg of Design, Community & Environment, the lead General Plan consultant. In addition, members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the public were in attendance.

II. General Plan 2030 Progress and Process

At the outset of the meeting, Tim Snellings introduced the Session, as well as staff. He continued by presenting an overview of the General Plan 2030 process to date, including the Guiding Principles, Meeting Series #1 and #2/3, Economic Summit, existing conditions analysis, and city/county coordination. CAC member Bruce McClintock was recognized for having traveled over 1800 miles to attend all 19 public meetings that have been held thus far in the General Plan 2030 process. In addition, Mr. Snellings described the next steps to occur during the Alternatives Evaluation phase and Meeting Series #4.

David Early then discussed the overall General Plan 2030 process, highlighting how this Study Session is intended to set the table for a public debate about what will happen in the county. This Session is not intended to result in decisions about where development and conservation should occur. Rather, the outcome of this Session will be direction for the Alternatives Evaluation phase to prepare for Meeting Series #4.

Supervisor Kirk was concerned that it could be inefficient and wasteful to study some study areas where it is already known that development is inappropriate. Mr. Early responded that the Board may remove study areas that they believe will not change. The 43 study areas that were presented to the Board during this Session include areas where different alternatives for land uses have been suggested, and that are of countywide significance. In response to a question from Chair Dolan regarding the definition of countywide significance, Mr. Early stated that the term refers to areas that are of importance to a significant portion of Butte

County's population. However, the Board may choose to study areas that do not meet this criterion if they think that such areas are important to study.

Chair Dolan suggested that there is a perception among participants that the designation of a study area gives entitlement for development at that site. Supervisors Josiassen, Yamaguchi and Connelly felt that the process has been inclusive, which has in part led to this problem, but that it is more important to be inclusive. Chair Dolan responded that an understanding of the Guiding Principles and Butte County's assets would have eliminated some of the study areas. Mr. Early clarified to the Board that staff and consultants have understood their role to present the study area requests to the Board, so that they can make the final decisions. He added that whether or not an area is identified as a "study area" should in no way create an entitlement, obligation, or an expectation on the part of either the public or the Supervisors. Supervisor Yamaguchi highlighted that each study area has a "no change" alternative. Supervisor Connelly stated that he would prefer to hear all requests, even if it means he has to disappoint some people by saying no to their request.

Mr. Early continued his presentation, discussing the process for establishing the study areas, and the order of selecting a preferred land use alternative prior to developing the goals and policies. Through Mr. Early's experience with other general plan updates, he has found that it is helpful to have had concrete discussions about questions posed by specific land use decisions prior to the goals and policies development. Mr. Early highlighted his experience in Yolo County, which followed a very similar process, as an example.

III. Overview of Study Session

Mr. Early then presented an overview of the agenda items for this Study Session, beginning with the Policy Alternatives review, followed by Land Use and Transportation Alternatives reviews.

IV. Policy Alternatives Review

Mr. Early presented an overview of the Policy Alternatives. The Board provided the following direction regarding changes to the Policy Alternatives.

Greenlines and Buffers

- ◆ Topic heading will be changed from "Greenlines and Buffers" to "Urban Growth Boundaries and Community Separators."
- ◆ In Question 1, all references to "greenlines" aside from the "Chico Greenline" will be changed to "urban growth boundaries."
- ◆ In Question 1, bullet 6, the reference to "open space buffer" will be changed to "community separator."
- ◆ Question 1 will include a policy to work with unincorporated communities to develop urban growth boundaries.

- ◆ A separate policy question will be established pertaining to the Neal Road Landfill. The policy options will include land use types that are appropriate near the Landfill, and will include an option that states: “Investigate opportunities for the Neal Road Landfill to improve and expand as necessary.”
- ◆ Question 1 will include a policy option to address urban growth boundaries around unincorporated communities.

New Development and Housing

- ◆ Question 3, bullet 5 will be modified to include both regional arterials and highway frontages.
- ◆ Question 4 will include a policy option that the County work with both cities and unincorporated communities to ensure a balance of affordable and market rate housing types throughout the county.
- ◆ Question 4 will also include a policy option to ensure that housing is convenient for transit, health care and other services.

Agriculture

- ◆ Question 6 and 7 will be revised to match the language in the Guiding Principles: “protect, maintain, promote and enhance agricultural uses/resources.”
- ◆ Question 7 will include an option to develop a watershed management plan for Butte County.
- ◆ Question 7, bullets 1 and 2 will be removed and used in a separate policy question regarding timber resources.
- ◆ Question 7 will include a policy option that encourages City/County cooperation to establish and collect mitigation fees for farmland conversion.
- ◆ Question 7, bullet 4 will be revised to include regional cooperation to develop a transfer of development rights program.
- ◆ Question 7, bullet 5 will be revised to specify that conservation easements include ongoing payments rather than a one-time payment.
- ◆ Question 8 will include a policy option that says agricultural support uses, such as processing facilities or outbuildings, should be allowed on small parcels that are designated for agricultural uses, even if those parcels are no longer viable for active cultivation.

Scenic Highways

- ◆ Question 11, bullet 3 will be revised to include references to specific tools for design guidelines, including building setbacks, heights and footprints, as well as landscaping standards.

- ◆ Question 11 will include a policy option to provide flexibility regarding the size and shape of the scenic highway zone.
- ◆ Question 11 will include a policy option that acknowledges the need to protect private property rights.

Trails

- ◆ Question 12 will be revised to include off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails.

Natural Resources and Habitat

- ◆ Question 13 will include a policy regarding use of the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Scientific Panel’s studies regarding habitat corridors.
- ◆ Question 13 will include a policy regarding coordination with federal and State agencies, as well as private landowners, to promote fuel/fire management and watershed management.
- ◆ Question 13, bullet 5 will be revised to specify “special status species.”
- ◆ Question 13, bullet 12 will be revised to define that the “resource depletion surcharge” could be used to fund habitat restoration elsewhere in the County, in contrast to the established Reclamation Plan, which covers on-site restoration only.

Water Resources

- ◆ All policy options under this topic will be reviewed to ensure that they relate to how land use and policy decisions affect water resources.
- ◆ Question 14, bullet 4 will be revised to refer to constructed impermeable surfaces, rather than natural impermeable surfaces.
- ◆ Question 14, bullet 4 will be revised to include the establishment of Recharge Zones that include continuous monitoring efforts.
- ◆ Question 14, bullet 7 will be removed.
- ◆ Question 15 will include a reference to the Butte County Water Commission.
- ◆ Question 15 will include a policy option that recognizes Butte County’s State Water Project allocation, and directs the County to continue to work to use it in its highest and best manner.
- ◆ Question 15, bullet 1 will be removed because a water budget has already been established.
- ◆ Question 15, bullet 2 will be revised to reference the voter-established Chapter 33 of the Development Code, which restricts what the County can do with water exports.
- ◆ Question 16, bullet 3 will be revised to refer only to urban uses and to acknowledge that agricultural uses are already regulated.

- ◆ Question 16, bullet 6 will be revised to clarify that testing should be conducted as new wells are drilled.

Transportation

- ◆ Question 17, bullet 2 will be revised to also protect existing funding.
- ◆ Question 17, bullet 6 will be deleted.
- ◆ Question 18, bullet 6 will refer to bicycle lanes rather than bicycle routes, and clarify that they are to be demarcated from the road, not separated from the roadway.
- ◆ Question 19 will include a policy to provide sidewalks in urban areas.
- ◆ Question 19 will include a policy to encourage carpooling among County employees.

Utilities and Public Services

- ◆ Question 21, bullet 1 will be revised to remove the first section regarding no changes to the levels of police and fire services. The second part, regarding the realities of rural living, will be rephrased.
- ◆ Question 21, bullet 2 will be revised to state: “Explore additional funding opportunities...” rather than increasing taxes, and will specify that this funding should be for maintenance as well as initial construction.
- ◆ Question 22, bullet 2 will be revised to state: “Pursue funding for improvements to safe routes to schools where there are existing problems.”
- ◆ Question 22 will include a policy option that requires private development to locate schools such that safe routes to school are possible, and constructing those safe routes to school when constructing new roadways and sidewalks.

Parks and Recreation

- ◆ Question 23, bullet 5 will be revised to state that the County should encourage parks and recreation districts to “evaluate possibilities for collecting” impact fees for park facilities.

Economic Development

- ◆ Question 25, bullet 3 will be revised to refer to all of Butte County’s best and brightest, rather than limiting the policy to Butte College and Chico State.
- ◆ Question 25 will include a policy option to create a County-level Economic Development function.

Green Building and Sustainability

- ◆ Question 26, bullet 10 will be revised to state “concrete *or* asphalt” (to correct the typographical error referring to “concrete on asphalt.”)

- ◆ Question 27, bullets 1, 2, and 3 referring to “tax incentives” will be revised to refer to fee exemptions, subsidized fees or other incentives.

V. Public Comment

The public attendees were invited to raise questions, comments and concerns. This input is summarized below.

Ernesto Alvarado, a farmer from Durham, described his past attempts to develop his 10-acre parcel. He requested that his parcel be added to the Durham Study Area. Mr. Alvarado also requested that, if any new bicycle paths are constructed, they not be placed in locations that would encourage trespassing onto private property, such as along backyards, gardens or orchards.

Donna Cook discussed safe routes to schools, and requested that roads that serve as routes to school be limited to 20 to 25 mile per hour speed limits. Ms. Cook also requested that traffic laws be enforced, especially in areas that do not have access to bus lines and in residential areas. Ms. Cook also pointed out that the Briefing Book discusses walking and bicycling as alternative modes of transportation; however, they should be considered as any other form of transportation. Finally, Ms. Cook noted that there are local vehicle registration fees, and suggested that the amount of the fee should be tied to the amount of damage the vehicle causes to roadways.

John Anderson, a CAC member, discussed the Land Use Alternatives themes, and felt that there is not a smart growth alternative provided. Alternatives 1 and 3 provide opposite ends of the spectrum, but Alternative 2 is not distinct enough from Alternative 3, indicating that it does not effectively direct growth to the cities. He was also concerned with the openness of the process thus far, which has allowed equal credence between infeasible and unrealistic suggestions and more feasible suggestions, and that considering infeasible and unrealistic suggestions is not useful.

Tovey Giezentanner, a CAC member, expressed concern about the alternatives development process. The CAC were not asked for input on the alternatives themes, and Alternative 3 represents sprawl development that is inappropriate for Butte County. Furthermore, Alternatives 2 and 3 would diminish prime farmland, especially west of the Chico Greenline, and deplete water and environmental resources. The Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) should be allowed to move forward ahead of the General Plan process so that it may inform the General Plan process. Mr. Giezentanner recommended that even if the process takes additional time, it can and should be better. Mr. Giezentanner additionally submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors.

Tom Lando, a representative of the Eagle Creek development project, stated that the General Plan 2030 process is messy and time-consuming, but a good process. He suggested that the General Plan should be a grand vision for more than 20 years. He stated that the Eagle Creek project adds value to Butte County with its 200-acre research park core. In addition, this project is supported by local colleges. Mr. Lando clarified that this is a

landowner's project, rather than a developer's project; this landowner has the funding necessary for this project, and has a vision for the future. The project has considered a community finance district, sewage, and paying for County services. Mr. Lando does not feel that this project contributes to sprawl because it is directly adjacent to Butte College and a freeway. It also has a development agreement for 52 acres of industrial use. The project deserves detailed study, and should be designated as a specific plan.

Tony St. Amant has been attending the CAC and Planning Commission meetings of Meeting Series #2/3, and supports the CAC. Mr. St. Amant feels that the process does not use the CAC as effectively as it could, and that staff needs to move communication more effectively from the CAC to the Board of Supervisors. The CAC members should not need to attend the Planning Commission and Board meetings; instead, the major comments from the CAC should be clearly presented to these entities.

Bonnie Masarick, from Yankee Hill, recommended that the County proceed with Alternative 3. She noted that her neighborhood is limited to 10-acre parcels, which prohibits any lot splits. Meanwhile, there is a store, gas station and two rental houses close to each other on FR-10 zoned land at the end of her road. Ms. Masarick felt that 10-acre parcels are not viable for agriculture, but are wasteful for residential. Ms. Masarick requested that Yankee Hill be considered for change.

David Masarick, from Yankee Hill, agreed with Ms. Masarick, and clarified that the preferred alternative may be a mix of Alternatives 1, 2 and 3. Mr. Masarick noted the environmental constraints in Yankee Hill, and suggested that the constraints dictate growth rather than the zoning. Some parcels may be split without increasing environmental hazards, while other cannot.

Bruce McClintock, a CAC member, described his experience attending the community workshops and area-wide meetings throughout the county. In general, these communities do not support additional growth or change within their area. He noted a common concern that infrastructure should be in place prior to new development. Mr. McClintock feels that some of the study areas should be removed, and he suggested that the County direct growth to the future spheres of influences of the five incorporated cities. He does not support placing development where there are no services, and he suggested that some of the study areas would contribute to leapfrog development. Mr. McClintock also supported adjustments to the Citizens Advisory Committee process and meeting format.

Todd Hall, a CAC member, suggested the Board consider changing the General Plan process in order to develop policies before selecting a preferred land use alternative. In addition, Mr. Hall felt that he had not been well-informed of the process overall.

A letter from Jana Wilson, Program Manager and Community Developer with the Community Health Alliance of Oroville, (CHAO) Butte County Office of Education, was submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

A letter from Jim Brobeck, Water and Resource Policy Analyst, Butte Environmental Council was submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

VI. Land Use Alternatives Review

Mr. Early presented an overview of the Land Use Alternatives. Chair Dolan asked for clarification regarding the process of developing the study areas based on staff analysis and input from the meetings, as well as from development requests.

Supervisor Kirk was concerned that Alternative 3 promotes sprawl. She also requested more detailed maps of the study areas, and noted her concern that the process is backwards because the preferred land use alternative will be selected prior to developing goals and policies.

Chair Dolan noted her concern that the Board packet was delivered late, and that it was not clear that alternatives would be selected for study areas rather than the entire county. She indicated input from the community meetings included opposition to sprawl, while one of the alternatives themes promotes sprawl.

Mr. Early responded that the consultant and County staff are willing to modify Alternative 3, remove certain study areas from consideration, or alter the General Plan 2030 process if so directed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors. However, he added that based on his experience, this is the best process for updating the General Plan, and that it will include compromises along the way. This process has attempted to be as inclusive as possible. Mr. Early stated that he did not feel it would have been appropriate to disallow or remove certain study areas before the Board had been given the opportunity to review and consider them.

Supervisor Josiassen referred to the Board's discussion about directing growth to the cities; however, he also felt that the County's fiscal health should be considered. If there are specific study areas that Supervisors would like removed, they will be discussed during this Session.

Supervisor Kirk indicated that there was a lack of discussion on the range of alternatives and that Alternative 3 was not acceptable. Supervisor Kirk noted that she felt the process was going in the wrong direction.

Mr. Early apologized for the small size of the maps provided to the Board of Supervisors and assured the Supervisors that more readable maps will be provided in the future. He also explained that it is ok to "mix and match" alternatives and to create a preferred alternative that is something between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, for example.

Mr. Early described proposed changes to the CAC meeting process. CAC meetings will be distinct from the Public Workshops by focusing on CAC member input; these meetings will include a separate public comment period. Meanwhile, the public will be encouraged to voice their views primarily during the Public Workshop. This revised meeting process will provide the Board with a better understanding of the CAC's views.

Supervisor Connelly suggested that, although the final decisions should still lie with the Board, staff and consultants should bring forward more strong recommendations. He also

suggested that parts of Alternative 3 may be the best fit for his community, so he did not want to drop Alternative 3 altogether.

The Board also discussed the Butte County Association of Government's growth projections and how they relate to the land use alternative buildout figures. The land use alternative buildout figures range from 70,000 to 87,000 new units, including development in the incorporated cities, while the BCAG projections total 43,000 new units over the next 20 years.

Tanya Sundberg presented the study areas and alternatives in five groups, including the Biggs and Gridley, Oroville, Paradise, Chico and Unincorporated County regions. The Board provided the following direction regarding changes to the Land Use Alternatives.

Biggs and Gridley Region

- ◆ Study Area 21 (South of Biggs) will include an industrial designation adjacent to the mill, on the north end of the study area. This study area will also include a commercial/industrial corridor along the railroad tracks. The description of this study area will be revised to fix a typographical error referring to "west" instead of "east."

Oroville Region

- ◆ Study Areas 16 (Stringtown Mountain Specific Plan) and E (Stringtown Mountain Specific Plan Extension) will be combined into one study area, and the existing Stringtown Mountain Specific Plan Area will be used as the land use designation in all alternatives.

Paradise Region

- ◆ The Board approved the Planning Commission recommendation to add Study Area J (Skyway/Neal Road), although there were concerns about wastewater disposal for this area.

Chico Region

- ◆ Study Area 2 (North Chico Specific Plan) will include more commercial and higher residential densities within the village core. Alternatives 2 and 3 will be revised so that the area outside of the village core maintains the Alternative 1 designations. In addition, land use and/or policies will support the full-build out of the North Chico Specific Plan.
- ◆ Study Area A (North Chico Highway 99) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area B (North Chico) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area 3 (Bell Muir), Alternative 1 will be revised to match the Agricultural Residential designation of the existing General Plan.
- ◆ Study Area 4 (Chico Growth Area 1) will be removed.

- ◆ Study Area 5 (Chico Growth Area 2) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area 6 (Chico Growth Area 3) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area 7 (Doe Mill/Honey Run), Alternative 3 will include 30 acres of commercial along the Skyway, and will increase the residential acreage to 750 acres.
- ◆ Study Area 8 (Nance Canyon/SR-99), Alternative 3 will be revised by removing all residential and replacing it with industrial. In addition, the language will be revised to state that development will be consistent with needs of the Neal Road Landfill, for example, by requiring that development is out of sight of the landfill. Alternatives 2 and 3 will clarify that full urban services will be required.
- ◆ Study Area 9 (Oroville Chico Highway/SR-99), Alternative 3 will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area 10 (Hamlin Canyon/SR-99) will be revised to state that development will be consistent with the needs of the Neal Road Landfill, for example, by requiring that development is out of sight of the landfill. In addition, the language will be revised to clarify that, although a study has not been conducted, it is probable that a portion of the site is constrained. Alternatives 2 and 3 will clarify that full urban services will be required. As recommended by the Planning Commission, Alternative 2 will be revised to increase the number of allowed units to 9,000. This increase in units will be accommodated by increasing the residential densities rather than increasing the acreage of residential uses. The Board did not move forward with the developer's plan as outlined in a letter to the Board dated November 14, 2007.
- ◆ Study Area 11 (Mid-Skyway) will indicate that there is a significant constraint to residential uses due to the adjacent Rod and Gun Club.

Unincorporated County Region

- ◆ Study Area 30 (Berry Creek) will not expand as recommended by the Planning Commission.
- ◆ Study Area C (Upper Stilson Canyon) will not expand as recommended by the Planning Commission.
- ◆ Study Area D (North Butte Valley) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area 31 (SR-191 (Clark Road)/SR-99) will be expanded as recommended by the Planning Commission.
- ◆ Study Area 32 (Durham) will not expand as recommended by the Planning Commission. In addition, Alternative 3 will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area F (Bangor Extension) will be removed.
- ◆ Study Area I (East Gridley Road) will be removed.

VI. Public Comment

The public attendees were again invited to raise questions, comments and concerns. This input is summarized below.

Mr. Kromer, from the Bell Muir neighborhood, asked for clarification regarding the boundaries of the Bell Muir neighborhood.

Mike Evans, a CAC member from Oroville, supported the process thus far, recognizing that participants are frustrated because they cannot choose a preferred alternative now. He felt that the “bookend” concept (which, as explained at previous Citizens Advisory Committee meetings, provides 3 Alternatives for each of the Study Areas) is helpful to the process. His experience with the Oroville General Plan update has also given him confidence in this process. Mr. Evans also supported the Board’s decision to keep the existing Stringtown Mountain Specific Plan area designations in all alternatives. In addition, Mr. Evans suggested that city/county meetings be open to the public, and encouraged that this coordination continue.

Steve Shuster, a representative of the development proposal within Study Area 7 (Doe Mill/Honey Run) requested that an alternative provide a commercial designation along the Skyway frontage, and that the acreage of the residential designation increase to 750 acres.

VI. Transportation Alternatives Review

The Board approved the Transportation Alternatives with no changes.