

**Butte County General Plan 2030 Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary (Paradise Area)
April 10, 2008**

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) held its meeting #4-2A on Thursday, April 10, 2008, the first of three (later updated to include two additional meetings) CAC meetings in Meeting Series #4 (Selection of a Preferred Alternative). The meeting was held at the Paradise High School multi-purpose room in Paradise. County staff counted more than 70 people in attendance. Of the 59 attendees who signed in at the meeting, 24 were representatives of the Citizens Advisory Committee and 35 were members of the public.

This first CAC meeting in this series focused on two main topics: discussion of overall “principles for a preferred alternative” and identification of a preferred land use alternative for the following Study Areas:

- 5 Magalia/Paradise Pines
- 7 Concow
- 10 Skyway/Neal Road
- 11 Paradise Urban Reserve
- 12 Southeast Paradise Specific Plan
- 13 South Paradise/Pentz Road
- 20 Highway-191 (Clark Road)/Durham Pentz

CAC members were presented with commentary collected at the March 27 public workshop, letters and reports submitted to the County by residents and landowners, and feedback from the General Plan 2030 web forum to assist their discussion and selection of a preferred alternative for each study area.

Introduction

Tim Snellings, Butte County Development Services Director, welcomed members of the CAC and the public to the meeting. He introduced Development Services staff and the consultant, Design, Community & Environment (DC&E). Mr. Snellings provided an overview of the General Plan 2030 process, including a list of the major products to date, a list of the CAC meetings and Area-Wide workshops to date, and provided a preview of the important dates upcoming in Meeting Series #4. Mr. Snellings announced that the recently published Alternatives Evaluation Report will be used to assist discussion during this meeting.

Presentations: Meeting Overview, Alternatives Evaluation Process, March 27 Public Workshop

After Mr. Snelling’s introduction, DC&E provided a meeting overview, and an explanation of the alternatives evaluation process and the previous public workshop. David Early, Founding Principal of DC&E, announced the meeting agenda items and reviewed the meeting materials that were provided as handouts to the CAC and the public. Mr. Early clarified that the intention of tonight’s meeting was primarily for CAC discussion, as requested by CAC members.

The Alternatives Evaluation process was explained by Joanna Jansen, Senior Associate at DC&E. DC&E created the Alternatives Evaluation Report in cooperation with a number of technical subconsultants, and with extensive review by a number of Butte County Departments

and other regional agencies. The Alternatives Evaluation Report (available at www.buttegeneralplan.net) compares the potential effects of each of the three land use alternatives on environmental and economic conditions in each Study Area.

Ms. Jansen then presented an overview of the March 27 public workshop that launched Meeting Series #4. The March 27 General Plan 2030 public workshop included three main components: an Open House, during which participants visited Issue Stations and Study Area Stations; a presentation explaining the General Plan process as a whole and the Alternatives Evaluation process in particular; and a Town Hall Discussion in which participants shared ideas about policy issues that should be considered, resources that should be protected, and specific study areas. The workshop overview concluded with a set of slides providing a summary of the input received relevant to specific study areas.

CAC Question and Answer Period

The presentations were followed by time for questions from CAC members. The following is a summary of the information provided in response to these questions:

The fiscal impacts analysis methodology, as explained in Appendix B of the Alternatives Evaluation Report, was based on the average amount of service fees and percentage of property tax allocated to the County for each Study Area, and that the analysis was based on projected buildout. Several aspects of the analysis were discussed – fiscal impact, project economic viability, and revenue-generating potential. Then the relationship between those portions of the analysis was discussed. DC&E and its economic subconsultant, BAE, made an effort to link market viability with probable fiscal impact.

The Alternatives Evaluation Report represents the best professional judgment of the General Plan consultant team. Other people, including landowners and landowner consultants, will come to different conclusions than those reached by DC&E, or may have access to additional, more detailed information. It is the job of the CAC to consider all input and make a decision. The Alternatives Evaluation Report is one source of information to inform that decision, and will not be revised or re-published.

The evaluation of wastewater service was based on traditional septic tank technologies and current practices and regulations in effect in the County. The CAC could consider suggesting new policies or regulations for septic tanks that would reflect newer technologies, if desired.

If an alternative includes 100 homes on 100 acres, DC&E did assume that those homes would be spread out evenly over the 100 acres, assuming the residential designation in the alternative was Low Density Residential. However, if the alternative explicitly includes higher-density residential development, as noted in the description of that alternative, DC&E considered that the development would be clustered. The alternatives evaluation did not artificially assume clustering in cases where the alternative would allow low-density residential development.

The evaluation of water service assumed that proximity to an existing provider correlates to easier access to water service.

DC&E contacted each school district in the County to inquire about capacity and expansion plans, as described on page B-50 in Appendix B of the Alternatives Evaluation Report.

Public Comment Period

The agenda included 30 minutes for comments from the public. Approximately 35 members of the public were present, and 16 people offered comments. Comments were limited to 2 minutes each in order to afford time for all to speak. The following is a summary of the public comments received:

General Comments

- More work needs to be done on economics. Commercial and retail is the only type of growth that will bring economic benefits to the county, but that development will require additional infrastructure to support it.
- No growth means no economic growth. People should say more about what they do want to see, and less about what they don't want to see.
- Several commenters stated that it is important to protect open space in the County, citing the need to preserve the County's scenic resources, recreational opportunities, and wildlife corridors. Portland, Oregon is a good example of using high density development to preserve open space.
- The County should have an oak preservation policy.
- The CAC should use common sense when coming up with alternatives for each area and not be distracted by buzzwords with negative connotations.
- There are a number of important Native American sites in the Yankee Hill area.
- Alternative 3 is not wildlife friendly. It encourages sprawl and fragmentation. Wildlife corridors should be comprehensive and connected. Alternative 2 and 1 combined could have the most beneficial potential for wildlife.

Study Area 5 Magalia/Paradise Pines

- Paradise should stay the way it is now, but that is not realistic. Alternative 2 should be seriously considered, as it is the best alternative for accommodating growth through high density development while preserving open space.

Skyway

- Several commenters stated that the Skyway is an important scenic resource and should be preserved as such, not only for Paradise residents but for the County as a whole. One member of the public held up a copy of the Skyway Land Use and Scenic Highway Study, completed in May 2000 by students in the Department of Geography and Planning at CSU Chico. This report is available online at http://www.buttegeneralplan.net/reports/skyway_scenic_stds.pdf.
- The entire Skyway should be considered, not only the identified Study Areas along the Skyway. Traffic safety is a major issue along the Skyway.

Study Area 10 Skyway/Neal Road

- Tuscan Ridge Golf Course is an important community asset and should be supported. In addition to serving members, it provides a course for golf teams from CSU Chico, Butte College, and a number of County high schools to practice on, as well as a hosting a

number of student tournaments and fundraisers each year. Allowing housing on the course is the only way to maintain its financial viability so the course will remain open and operating. The CAC should select Alternative 3 in Study Area 10 in order to allow this residential development.

- Any residential development at the golf course will add traffic to the Skyway and cause more accidents. Alternative 3 may not be the best alternative for this Study Area.
- Jim Stevens of Northstar Engineering, representing a major property owner in Study Area 10, stated that the geography of Study Area 10 presents access issues that make industrial development in this Study Area infeasible. The only buildable land in the Study Area is around the golf course, where residential development is appropriate. The market analysis in the Alternatives Evaluation Report said the industrial component of Alternative 3 would not be viable. However, residential development around the golf course would be very viable. The CAC should select Alternative 3 in Study Area 10, but without the industrial component.

Study Area 13 South Paradise/Pentz Road

- Study Area 13 is unique. The existing land uses are ag and open space and there is desire to add housing. The current general plan designates the area for housing already, and the Lago Vista subdivision has already been approved and built. The landowner has done extensive studies on the site over the past few years. The CAC should select Alternative 3, which allows lower-density development that still leaves room for open space and wildlife. Testing is underway now to determine appropriate wastewater treatment, but it will be treated by an onsite system.
- Residents near Study Area 13 are very concerned about water quality, water supply, fire protection and impacts to deer, particularly if homes are allowed in the wooded part of Study Area 13.

Study Area 20 Highway 191 (Clark Road)/Durham Pentz

- In Study Area 20, the CAC should support a new alternative that combines some of Alternative 2 and some of Alternative 3.

Large Group Discussion: Principles for a Preferred Alternative

The agenda included 25 minutes for CAC members to share with one another their thoughts and suggestions for principles that should guide the CAC's decision-making for a preferred land use alternative in each study area. The following is a summary of CAC comments during this period.

Helene Ginter asked whether land use designations can be changed in the future. David Early explained that the law allows jurisdictions to amend each, mandatory element of their General Plans four times each year.

Bill Kienzle asked about how many acres of grazing land is needed to be economically viable. Brian Hamman stated that this depends on many variables, such as whether the land is irrigated, what the terrain is like, and whether or not feed is available. Todd Hall stated that he has basically disregarded impacts to grazing land since Butte County is not a heavy livestock area, and economic impacts of losing grazing land would be minimal. Other CAC members argued

that grazing land is important not only as grazing land, but also adds value as open space. The current County General Plan designation is Grazing/Open Land.

Jeff Carter asked his fellow CAC members “what is our vision for the County in 2030?” Like Fresno County? Or like Butte County? He said the CAC should be mindful of the Guiding Principles and the importance people here place on streams, open space, and foothills.

Bruce McClintock stated that the County should not allow development that would not generate enough revenue to pay for the community services it would require.

Doug Smith stated that, based on the Guiding Principles, he can find a reason to oppose new development in almost every study area.

Jason Bougie asked how the County can or should consider areas next to Cities with regard to the Housing Element of the General Plan. Mr. Early explained that this process is very complicated, but the County has a number of options, ranging from locating housing outside of areas that are likely to annexed to negotiating agreements with Cities to accept some of the County’s regional housing needs allocation.

John Anderson stated that fiscal impacts need to be considered in light of the way the world really works. Some impacts, like impacts to recharge areas, can’t be mitigated. Other impacts, like creating a need for new deputies, can be mitigated.

Bill Kienzle stated that he would not favor new development in Concow, since it is a remote rural area.

Tovey Giezentanner asked what the County has done to get input from the Town of Paradise. Tim Snellings explained that the County has had one-on-one meetings with Town staff and elected officials. Mr. Giezentanner expressed a desire to hear feedback from the Cities on what they want to see happen in study areas near them.

Mr. Giezentanner also asked how the Alternatives Evaluation Report considered sustainability, and stated that Alternative 3 is not sustainable. Mr. Early explained that “sustainability” has many components, and means different things depending on which issue is being considered. The concept of fiscal and economic sustainability was a factor in the evaluation and grading of economic impacts; the concept of sustaining plant and animal communities was a factor in the evaluation of biological impact; the concept of sustainable transportation systems like transit and bicycling was a factor in the evaluation of circulation impacts.

Large Group Discussion: Creating A Preferred Alternative for Study Areas 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 20

The final three hours of the meeting were devoted to CAC discussion of each of the Study Areas listed above, facilitated by David Early. The goal of the discussion was to determine the CAC's recommendation for a preferred alternative for each area. In general, discussions of each Study area began with a proposal by one CAC member for a specific alternative that should be supported. In some cases, this was one of the three land use alternatives developed during Meeting Series #2/3. In other cases, CAC members proposed new alternatives. CAC members then deliberated on the pros and cons of the alternatives. Mr. Early would then take a straw poll to gauge CAC input.

The following summarizes the outcomes of the large group discussion:

Study Area 5 Magalia/Paradise Pines

CAC members expressed concerns about fire danger, lack of access, and lack of water supply.

Sixteen (16) supported Alternative 3, which would designate a majority of the study area as Rural Residential, allowing approximately 400 new homes. This alternative also maintains the Medium Density Residential and Public designations from the existing General Plan.

Five (5) supported Alternative 2, which would designate the majority of the study area for Agriculture and Resource Conservation, but maintain the Medium Density Residential and Public designations from the existing General Plan. Because the majority of the area designated for Medium Density Residential is already developed, this alternative would not allow a significant amount of new homes.

All members agreed that constraints need to be addressed first (e.g. fire, evacuation, water). All agreed that existing General Plan retail designations, as shown in Alternative 1, should remain.

Study Area 7 Concow

The discussion of Study Area 7 focused on how wastewater treatment would be provided. Several believed that additional development in this Study Area would be inconsistent with the Guiding Principles.

21 CAC members supported Alternative 2, which calls for almost the entire area to be designated Resource Conservation, but maintains the 5 acres of Retail from the existing General Plan.

2 opposed Alternative 2, supporting either Alternative 1 or Alternative 3 instead. Alternative 1 designates portions as Rural Residential and Medium Density Residential, allowing approximately 500 new homes. Alternative 3 is similar but would allow only approximately 200 new homes.

Study Area 10 Skyway/Neal Road

Discussion about Study Area 10 focused on whether or not new housing at the Tuscan Ridge Golf Course would be appropriate. Some CAC members supported housing to keep the golf course economically viable. However, many CAC members expressed concern about the visual

and traffic impacts new homes would have, and viewed new housing in Study Area 10 as sprawl. After extensive discussion, the straw poll concluded that:

9 supported Alternative 1 in Study Area 10, which would designate the majority of this study area for Agriculture and Resource Conservation. Alternative 1 also includes about 360 acres of Rural Residential adjacent to the Paradise town limits, allowing approximately 20 new homes. Alternative 1 would not allow any new housing along the Golf Course.

6 supported the developer proposal for housing at the golf course, which would allow approximately 165 units to be developed on about 35 acres around the course.

6 supported allowing about 50 new homes around the golf course, but felt that 165 units would be too many.

It should be noted that although 9 members said they would not allow housing around the golf course, a total of 12 members did support some amount of new housing there, although they did not agree on the appropriate amount.

All CAC members agreed that any new development would need to mitigate both visual and traffic impacts along the Skyway.

Study Area 11 Paradise Urban Reserve

A number of CAC members said they wanted to respect the wishes of the Town of Paradise in this Study Area and others immediately adjoining the Town.

18 CAC members supported Alternative 1. Alternative 1 designates this entire study area as an Urban Reserve, which allows rural residential development on parcels not less than 20 acres until they are needed for development and adequate services are available. This alternative would allow approximately 100 new homes.

The remaining CAC members abstained from stating a preference.

Study Area 12 Southeast Paradise Specific Plan

As with Study Area 11, the CAC was virtually unanimous in its recommendation to defer to the Town and wait to see the results of the Town's Specific Plan for this area. Tovey Giezentanner pointed out that the Guiding Principles urge cooperative planning with the incorporated communities.

Study Area 13 South Paradise/Pentz Road

CAC member Sue Seropian, who is a Paradise resident and is very familiar with this Study Area, shared a number of concerns about high fire danger, lack of water supply, lack of wastewater infrastructure, impacts to wildlife, and impacts to prehistoric sites that may occur if new development is allowed in this area. Several other CAC members voiced agreement with these concerns, citing the "D" grade that Alternatives 2 and 3 received for fire safety in the Alternatives Evaluation Report.

15 CAC members supported no further development in this Study Area, as expressed in Alternative 1. Alternative 1 designates the entire study area as Resource Conservation.

4 supported a new alternative that would allow Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) development on non-constrained land in the Study Area, up to about 150 units, with the requirement that access, water supply, wastewater treatment and fire protection would have to be addressed first.

Study Area 20 Highway-191 (Clark Road)/Durham Pentz

All CAC members supported a new alternative: a combination of Alternative 1, which designates the majority of the study area for agricultural purposes and allows about 20 acres of Retail at the southeast corner of Highway 191 and Durham-Pentz Road; with the retail designations in Alternative 2, approximately 10 additional acres in the southwest and northeast corners of the intersection. This alternative is consistent with the recent General Plan Amendment for this area passed by the Board of Supervisors.

Meeting Conclusion

The meeting concluded with a reminder by Tim Snellings of several upcoming meetings:

- April 14: a public meeting to discuss water resources, optional elements, and the potential format of the General Plan.
- April 17: a second CAC meeting to discuss Study Areas 8, 21, 23, 25, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, and 34. This meeting will be held from 5:00 to 10:00 PM at Checkers Restaurant, 109 Table Mountain Boulevard, in Oroville.
- April 24: the third and final CAC meeting in Meeting Series #4, to discuss Study Areas 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. This meeting will be held from 5:00 to 10:00 PM at Little Chico Creek Elementary School, 2090 Amanda Way, in Chico.
- May 9: a Planning Commission meeting to consider CAC recommendations for the Preferred Land Use Alternative in all Study Areas.
- June 5: a CAC meeting to discuss optional elements and the organization of the General Plan document.
- July 29: a Board of Supervisors meeting to review and approve the Preferred Land Use Alternative.