

**Butte County General Plan 2030  
Open Public Meeting:  
Water Resources, Optional Elements, and the Format of the General Plan**

April 14, 2008  
Chico City Council Conference Room 1

**Facilitator Flipchart Notes**

**Comments and Questions before the Roundtable Discussion**

- The County needs to make choices.
- Threats: Lack of information on groundwater
- What other means are available to address water through CEQA? (Staff responded that mitigation is consistent with state law.)
- Non-experts use the General Plan; it should be written to make sense to them.

**Roundtable Discussion**

**Speaker 1**

The General Plan process needs to be transparent.  
The public has good information to share.  
The development of the General Plan is public business.

**Speaker 2**

Transparency is a concern.  
This speaker is glad that water has been added as a Guiding Principle for the General Plan update.  
Now need to move forward with a Water Element.  
A Water Element would assist with getting the resources to manage water.

**Speaker 3**

The City of Chico has a Sustainability Element, and needs a Water Element.  
With climate change, modeling shows that the historical data on water is not as helpful for planning purposes.  
AB 32 (Global Warming) requires that sprawl be addressed.  
The County needs a Sustainability Element.

**Speaker 4**

Are we data rich or are we lacking information?  
We lack the right information, i.e. the data needed for modeling.  
We need more information on outside threats; i.e., draws on County water.  
Conjunctive water use and external pumping are issues.  
We need mechanisms to get people off groundwater – more than Chapter 33 of the County Code.

**Speaker 5**

The County policy is to protect County water resources, for example by Basin Management Objectives (BMOs) and modeling updates.

Speaker 6

Youth Development – Butte County is a model in California, the speaker wants to include a Youth Development Model in the General Plan.

Paradise, Gridley, Chico, and Butte County now have models for this.

The speaker provided written information on at-risk youth.

Youth are a resource.

Policies related to the County's Youth should be included in the General Plan; this would help the County get resources.

Youth are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population demographic in the County.

Speaker 7

The County makes significant investments in managing and protecting water – for example, the Board invests over \$440,000 from the General Fund in the Department of Water and Resource Conservation.

Speaker 8

A Water Element is a primary way that the importance of water is recognized.

Water supply and threats to it have raised concerns.

The General Plan should include principles for good stewardship.

A Water Element is not a threat to General Plan internal consistency.

Clear, concise policies should be included in a Water Element.

Speaker 9

A separate Water Element offers more “pros” than “cons”.

Speaker 10

A Water Element is needed.

Even if an ordinance addresses water, the County still needs overarching policies to respond to changing circumstances.

The June 5 CAC meeting should address both the “pros” and the “cons” of a Water Element.

The speaker would like more information on the June 5 speakers and topics.

Speaker 11

Water connects across the County.

The County is doing good work to get data, but still needs policies.

The County's approach thus far has been fragmented in regard to water supply.

Several speakers have been suggested for June 5. The speaker will provide written suggestions for others to Butte County DDS staff.

Speaker 12

Water Elements in other areas of California may not address water production, which is important in Butte County.

Speaker 13

Is there data on water? Yes, but it is continually updated.

Is there science on water? Not as much.

Site-specific data is still key – environmental review at the site level.

Policies to protect County water are there. The water service providers have this information.

Regarding global warming, information indicating other trends is available.

#### Speaker 14

Geologic hazards are important to recognize.

Water supply vs. purveyors is an issue.

Water volume has not been addressed by the General Plan update process – information in the GP 2030 Setting and Trends report is inconsistent.

A Water Element is key to our economic future.

Quantitative data on water is needed.

#### Speaker 15

The General Plan needs a Water Element with “shall” language.

The General Plan needs to define and protect recharge areas.

Wastewater could be used for recharge.

Water needs to be used economically to benefit the County.

#### Speaker 16

At-risk youth are being affected by budget cuts. They need to be a high priority.

The General Plan needs a Youth Element to support youth.

#### Speaker 17

Youth is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population in Butte County.

40% of youth have few assets.

Youth issues touch many policies shown among the preliminary policy alternatives.

The speaker wants the General Plan to incorporate youth in some way.

Youth does not need to be a specific element in the General Plan, but statements or policies addressing youth need to be included.

Youth are defined as persons 0-24 years (per United Nations definition).

Look at other local jurisdictions’ plans for youth.

The County needs to determine essential programs, because further budget cuts are coming.

There is no state funding for at-risk youth in the K-12 years.

At-risk youth is a critical issue.

#### Speaker 18

Youth policies include changes to the physical environment, as well as programs.

The General Plan will span 20 years, it needs to include the youth who will be in the position of the people at this meeting in 20 years.

#### Speaker 19

Youth issues and policies include those that may be mapped in the physical environment.

#### Speaker 20

The speaker had a question about planning for the 27,500 acre-feet of water originating in Oroville. (Staff responded that the County is working with the City of Chico and the State of California on this issue.)

#### Speaker 21

A Water Element would not contradict other issues.  
Why not have a Water Element? It's progressive and futuristic.

Speaker 22

The speaker clarified that her previous comments on youth were addressed to all youth, not just at-risk youth. Policies for all youth are needed in the General Plan.

**Comments and Questions after the Roundtable Discussion**

- Why are outside experts needed for the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting? (Staff responded that real-world experience with addressing specific issues, policies, and elements in the General Plan is what is sought.)
- It is hard to support a Water Element if we don't know the policies that would be included yet.
- Is an Agricultural Element to be addressed? (Staff responded that there have been no decisions made yet regarding what policies and elements will or will not be included in the General Plan. The goal is simply to develop the best General Plan in California.)
- Marin County is a good model for General Plan format. (Staff also suggested Shasta County, and will put these links on the website.)
- Can we transmit a vote on a Water Element to the Board? (Participants supporting a Water Element showed hands, with 23 people supporting a Water Element. The meeting sign-in sheet showed 36 people including several staff members. Several other attendees did not sign in.)