

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

**Butte County General Plan 2030
Goals and Policies Development (Meeting Series #5)
CAC Meetings: October 2, 9, 16, and 23, 2008**

This document summarizes the public input that was provided at the four CAC meetings that were held in October 2008 as part of Meeting Series #5. This supplements the public input that was received during the Public Workshop that was held on September 8, 2008, to begin Meeting Series #5. The public input is compiled separately for each meeting.

Meeting #5-2a – October 2, 2008

The topics covered at this meeting included the following:

- ◆ Urban Growth Boundaries and Community Separators
- ◆ County Character, New Development and Housing
- ◆ Regional and Local Coordination
- ◆ Cultural Resources and Tribal Coordination
- ◆ Community Health and Safety
- ◆ Noise

One member of the public provided input on the topic of urban growth boundaries, as reported below.

Urban Growth Boundaries and Community Separators

- ◆ There should be further discussion of potential modifications to the Chico Area Greenline, including at the CAC level. The Board of Supervisors should be informed with recommendations from the CAC and public about potential modifications to the Greenline. This would be consistent with the existing Greenline policy to review it every five years. Also, the Greenline was established in 1983 and needs revision.
- ◆ The Board's direction during Meeting Series #4 to revise the Greenline location to follow Bell and Muir Roads doesn't make sense. The Board indicated that the reason for locating it along the roads and not along the edge of the Bell Muir Study Area was because of 5-acre lots north of Bell and Muir Roads that could act as a transition area. However, there are more 5-acre lots to the north of the study area. The Greenline location should be moved to the northwest boundary of the Bell Muir Study Area.

Meeting #5-2b – October 9, 2008

The topics covered at this meeting included the following:

- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Agriculture

In addition, the topic of Water Resources was planned to be discussed during this meeting, although due to time constraints, CAC discussion was delayed until the 10/16 meeting.

Members of the public provided input on these topics, as well as topics not covered at this meeting, as reported below.

Economic Development

- ◆ The greatest opportunity is in research and business parks.
- ◆ It is important to designate land for economic development.

Agriculture

- ◆ Soil is a valuable resource, and Butte County has some of the greatest soil in the world for agriculture. Once it is paved over, we can't get it back. We should learn from other cities and counties that have already lost much of their agricultural land.
- ◆ Larger lot sizes are beneficial to agriculture; 5-acre lots are not productive.
- ◆ The County's Right to Farm Ordinance and buffer policies is strong and provides protection to farmers from conflicting uses.
- ◆ Support "farmgate sales," in which people buy products directly at the farm, in order to help small/niche farms.
- ◆ Allow on-farm processing of farm products. For example, current regulations allow poultry to be raised, but not slaughtered on-site.
- ◆ Support a "Butte Grown" label to help people eat locally.
- ◆ Protecting farmland is important because it is our food source.
- ◆ Niche farms require a variety of lot sizes. For example, 160 acres is almost not enough for raising lambs.
- ◆ The differences between valley and foothill agriculture should be recognized. Five-acre farms are viable in the foothills. The Oroville foothill agriculture has been productive for a long time and has an established water supply; these lands should not be developed.
- ◆ Not all parts of Butte County have valuable agricultural soils, such as in the Oroville foothills. Large lots should be reserved for Class I soils.
- ◆ The existing Agriculture Residential zoning is appropriate to maintain for existing and small-scale agriculture. In addition, downzoning may bring litigation against the County. Ranchettes are not bad.
- ◆ The agriculture buffer should be dynamic and vary depending on the size of the farm.
- ◆ The "viability" of a farm is not based only on acreage but also on the crops grown. One commenter reported that he farms about 600 acres, which is a little too small to financially support the equipment that is required.

- ◆ Federal law dictates that a 300-foot buffer must be provided around a pesticide application for most applications. This is part of the reasoning for the 300-foot agriculture buffer policy in Butte County. The Board of Supervisors cannot violate the federal law regarding the buffer distance for pesticides. The buffer must be provided on the urban side because otherwise, the farmer loses land.
- ◆ The 300-foot agriculture buffer is sensible as long as there is appropriate review. For instance, if a property is only 300 feet wide, and located in an area where there are existing houses within only 100 feet of an adjacent orchard, the buffer should be reconsidered/refined.
- ◆ Transition zoning needs provisions that are specific to the needs of each zone. Density should be established to allow flexibility to use land in these zones.
- ◆ Urbanized land is worth more than agricultural land, so placing the buffer on the agriculture side would create a huge funding source.

Water Resources

- ◆ Tony St. Amant reviewed his recommended changes to the policies under Question 17 (water supply) [see written recommendations from Mr. St. Amant dated October 9, 2008]. These changes include: word revisions to strengthen the policies; preserving recharge at historic levels; adding specificity to policies F and I; deleting policies G and J; and adding a policy regarding mandatory corrective or mitigation measures when groundwater depletes.
- ◆ The County should strengthen its provisions to protect groundwater for agricultural use. Adequate resources should be provided to the Butte County Department of Water and Resources Conservation in order to map groundwater. No parcel should be allowed to develop unless there is adequate water supply.
- ◆ Concern about Policy G under question 17 [“Require metering of non-domestic wells to allow the County to fund aquifer recharge programs”]: this policy gives the impression that groundwater is currently free for farming and that farmers should be “taxed” to fund an aquifer recharge program. But in fact, there are programs that are being considered that are predicated on the notion that there is surplus water, such as tapping the shared aquifer below Butte and Glenn Counties. The burden of metering water should be directed to those programs rather than taxing farmers.
- ◆ Urban water management plans should only be required on developments of 500 units or more, rather than 100 units.
- ◆ The County should explore retrofit programs, such as one in which the County assists with replacing old toilets with low flow toilets.
- ◆ Encourage comprehensive master plans that include green infrastructure, such as bioswales.
- ◆ Consider following the Ahwahnee Principles.

Urban Growth Boundaries and Community Separators

- ◆ Gridley and Biggs should decide what will occur within the Area of Concern.

- ◆ Urban growth boundary decisions don't necessarily need to be approved by a citizen vote.
- ◆ Urban growth boundaries should truly differentiate between urban and agriculture uses.

County Character, New Development and Housing

- ◆ Comprehensive design guidelines that fit the characteristics of the area where they are applied can be a useful tool, especially where there are specific plan.

Regional and Local Coordination

- ◆ It is important to work with the communities in Butte County, but the Board of Supervisors shouldn't make every decision for them.

Meeting #5-2c – October 16, 2008

The topics covered at this meeting included the following:

- ◆ Water Resources
- ◆ Transportation, Circulation and Scenic Highways

In addition, the topic of Utilities, Services and Airports was planned to be discussed during this meeting, although due to time constraints, CAC discussion was delayed until the 10/23 meeting.

Members of the public provided input on water resources, as reported below.

Water Resources

- ◆ Barbara Hennigan reviewed her recommended changes to the policies under Question 18 (water quality) [see written recommendations from Ms. Hennigan dated October 16, 2008]. These changes include: expanding policy C to cover more than just agricultural uses; replace the education policy with one that is to develop educational material; establishing watershed programs for each watershed that are tailored to the needs of that watershed; and adding a program to address pharmaceutical pollutants.
- ◆ The County should mandate that well monitoring be completed. The data from well monitoring is essential to protect our aquifers, so the monitoring and tests must be completed.
- ◆ Maria Phillips reviewed Tony St. Amant's recommended changes to the policies under Question 17 (water supply) [see public input from 10/9 meeting and written recommendations from Mr. St. Amant dated October 9, 2008]. Ms. Phillips also expressed support for a water element.

Meeting #5-2d – October 23, 2008

The topics covered at this meeting included the following:

- ◆ Utilities, Services and Airports
- ◆ Parks, Recreation and Trails
- ◆ Natural Resources and Habitat
- ◆ Green Building, Greenhouse Gases and Energy

Members of the public provided input on these topics, as reported below.

Utilities, Services and Airports

- ◆ Multimillion dollar infrastructure projects cannot be built before the developer has confirmation that the development is approved. Therefore, policies to require that infrastructure is in place prior to approving new development will not work.

Natural Resources and Habitat

- ◆ The Resource Conservation District has the ability to hold conservation easements; this is a tool that can be used in land planning.
- ◆ Suggestion for a program in which the County keeps oak removal mitigation dollars (which currently are sent to the State Wildlife Board). These funds could be used for projects in Butte County.

Green Building, Greenhouse Gases and Energy

- ◆ The County should be bold and creative in addressing greenhouse gases and climate change. It doesn't have to cost a lot; incentives can also be used.
- ◆ As a taxpayer, I hope that the County complies with AB 32 so that we don't get sued and have to redo the General Plan.
- ◆ There will likely be a lawsuit against the County regardless of whether it complies with AB 32. The County should have sound policy that makes sense and does not encumber development.