

## Review of draft General Plan under way

By ROGER H. AYLWORTH-Staff Writer

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OROVILLE — In a painstaking, deliberative process on Tuesday, the Butte County Board of Supervisors began what is supposed to be the final review of the draft General Plan 2030.

After hearing comments from the public on the proposed Butte County General Plan 2030, the supervisors and county planning commissioners conducted a chapter-by-chapter review of the 322-page draft that's nearly four years in the making.

Tuesday's was the first of two meetings this week. The second will begin at 9 a.m. Thursday in the Supervisors Chambers. The two meetings are supposed to finalize and tentatively approve all aspects of the draft.

Since work on the General Plan revision began in April of 2006, there have been 100 different workshops and meetings, as well as 67 individual update reports to the supervisors and 17 to the Planning Commission.

David Early, who heads Berkeley-based Design Community and Environment, the county's chief consultants in the General Plan process, told the supervisors they legally could not make a final vote to approve the document until the environmental impact review is completed. That is expected to happen later this year, with the goal of getting the total plan approved by September.

"This is a very important day in the history of the General Plan 2030, and in the history of Butte County," said Tim Snellings, director of the county

Department of Development Services, who is the county lead in the project.

A general plan designates areas where certain kinds of development can and cannot be made. Among other things, it also protects particular segments of the county economy. For example, the supervisors have already made clear their intention to protect and encourage agriculture and related business in the county by land use designations and zoning.

Concern about specialty agriculture was very much on the minds of half-a-dozen individuals who spoke to the board. Months ago the board decided to create a "special agriculture" overlay zone that would protect small orchards, vineyards and similar operations in the foothills immediately east of Oroville.

Others asked the board to consider approving other special uses.

Chico developer Mo West told the board that in the future drinking water will be one of the most important issues in residential or commercial growth.

He said 80 percent of the water used in a community ends up going into the sewer system, but there are technologies that can purify that water and make it drinkable again.

West said the draft plan makes no reference to using this sort of technology and asked the board to add it in to the final document.

Others asked about possible changes in land use designations for various properties.

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Oroville Supervisor Bill Connelly, who chairs the board, said all of these requests will be voted on during Thursday's meeting.

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