

**General Plan 2020
Interest Group Committee Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2002**

Interest Group Committee:

Al Stehly	Farm Bureau
Allison Rolfe	SD Audubon
Bonnie Gendron	Back Country Coalition
Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Carolyn Chase	Coalition for Transportation Choices
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitats League
Dave Shibley	Save Our Land Values
David Younkman	National Wildlife Federation
Diane Coombs	Citizen Coordinate for Century 3
Eric Bowlby	Sierra Club
Greg Lambron	Helix Land Company
Jim Whalen	Alliance for Habitat Conservation
Karen Messer	Buena Vista Audubon Society
Liz Higgins	SD Association of Realtors
Matt Adams	Building Industry Association
Richard Nowicki	American Institute of Architects
Terry Barker	American Society of Landscape Architects

Public at Large:

Brent McDonald	Caltrans
Carol Leone	
Chris Anderson	SDAR
Chris Morrow	Latitude 33
D. Pallinger	Ramona
Devore Smith	Sierra Club
Dutch Van Dierendonck	Ramona CPG
Jan Van Dierendonck	Ramona
Jeanne Pagett	
Joe Perring	
Lynne Baker	EHL
Mary Allison	USDRIC
Reid Ennis	
Ron Pennock	ECCC
Scott Thomas	AIA

County Staff:

Karen Scarborough (DPLU, group facilitator)
Ivan Holler (DPLU)
LeAnn Carmichael (DPLU)
Aaron Barling (DPLU)
Michelle Yip (DPLU)
Tom Harron (County Counsel)

Agenda Item I: Logistics –

- c) Update on Interest Group Membership
 - Scarborough introduced Richard Nowicki, the new member representing AIA, and Dave Shibley, the new alternate for SOLV.
 - The following member replacements were approved: Richard Nowicki (AIA) and David Younkman (NWF).
 - The following alternate replacements were approved: Scott Thomas (AIA), Mike Thometz (Back Country Coalition), Lynne Baker (Buena Vista Audubon Society), Constance Clover (Helix Land Company), Chris Anderson (SDAR), and Dave Shibley (SOLV).
 - Tabb stated that his alternate was not listed correctly.
 - Scarborough asked the group about proxies. Proxies will be allowed for unique circumstances (if both member and alternate are ill or out of town) but members must contact either Scarborough or Holler in advance to notify them of the proxy.

- a) Minutes for August 5, 2002
 - Bowlby corrected Silver's (pp. 2, 4th bullet under Agenda Item II) and Chase's (pp. 5, 3rd bullet) comments. Believed Silver and Chase were referring to the preliminary distribution map's population estimate and should read 670,000 and not 660,000. Silver and Chase approved the change.
 - **Motion:** Messer moved to approve. Bowlby seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- b) Minutes for September 10, 2002
 - **Motion:** Bowlby moved to approve. Messer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- d) Non-agenda Item
 - Scarborough stated that the group needs to venture in the realm of talking with Steering Committee members in order to expedite a map. Holler mentioned that there are some discrepancies between the communities and the Interest Group and a subgroup may be needed to resolve those.
 - There was a variation in comments ranging from the desire to have a joint meeting with both committees as a whole, in order to allow everyone at the table to understand what is happening, to supporting a subgroup due to the lack of ease in the consensus building process.
 - Scarborough and Holler agreed there is consensus in about 20 of the communities and perhaps six communities that needs some work. Whalen commented that if we can demonstrate that we have the majority of the backcountry and a number of the front, then we have one map. Bowlby commented that this group still has not reconciled their own differences.
 - The joint meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22nd at 4 pm at DPLU. Members of the subgroup (3 – development interests, 3 – environmental interests, 1 – Farm Bureau, and 1 – professional organizations) will identify themselves via email prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item II: Standards –

- a) Steep Slopes
 - Holler explained the handout – the first column is the existing County standards today, then options 1, 2, and 3 are different proposals that are to be considered. The yield reductions on the existing and options 1 and 2 are the same; option 3 has different yield reductions so where these things are applied then differs. Under the existing General Plan, they apply to densities from 1 du/ac to 1 du/4 ac; option 1 is applied to higher densities up to 7.3 du/ac; option 2 would apply to the semi-rural (the one most like today's standards); and option 3, even though it does not have yield reductions, would be applied only to semi-rural. BMO only applies to MSCP areas and RPO applies to all other areas of the county. The existing standard for RPO requires 80% - 90% preservation on each lot (if you propose a subdivision) if you have slopes greater than 25% and this would be similar in option 1. Option 2 is similar but the whole project was used instead of making an application to each lot. BMO modifies the RPO in that more encroachment into steep slope areas are allowed in order to preserve habitat corridors. So options 1 and 2 are similar in many respects to what exists today.
 - Adams asked why we have RPO and BMO and whether areas that the yield reduction does not apply to will be subject to RPO and BMO. Holler responded that today, RPO has density reduction formulas in it that are a little different from the density reduction formulas in the General Plan. RPO

has a separate formula in it that speaks to preservation of steep slope lands, not to density. The reason that RPO and BMO are both in effect, BMO was put in place for MSCP and only applies to those lands. Carmichael stated that RPO and BMO areas do overlap but the BMO supercedes it if there are habitat issues.

- Coombs stated that it would be helpful to get a restatement of the goals and policies since the standards must be consistent. Carmichael replied the two main policies that deal with steep slopes from the Interest Group is: *Maintain significant viewsheds and ridge lines* (Land Use Goal I, Policy A) and *Development should be in harmony with existing topography* (Land Use Goal I, Policy B). Adams asked for all policies pertaining to steep slopes be written – *Clustering should be encouraged* (Land Use Goal I, Policy I); *Scenic landscapes should be preserved* (Open Space, Policy A).
- Silver stated that we can take the approach of looking at the major categories: village core and village as one category, semi-rural as a category, and rural as a category. In rural, no density yield but maintain, for visual and aesthetic purposes, the protection of slope encroachment on ridge lines. In village and village core is where we have collectively decided to try to accommodate the population numbers so we do not want yield reductions in those areas. There may be some significant ridge lines in village and village core but you may want to ease off on encroachment and have some grading restrictions. Stated design solution in semi-rural is clustering and suggested that whatever is done to semi-rural is built around the concept of clustering.
- Chase asked what the current standard is for the yield reduction. Carmichael replied that it is currently applied to 1 du/ac, 1 du/2 ac, and 1 du/4 ac. Chase asked why the mass grading restriction was not applied to option 1 and 2. Holler replied that in option 1 and 2, there are density reduction formulas and other criteria that really would not apply in option 3. Carmichael replied that since you have reduced the units, you probably would not be in a mass graded situation.
- Whalen stated that he agrees the top of ridge lines should be left alone but does not know about 80% preservation of slope working if you use the other rules.
- Messer stated that in rural, it all depends on whether there is clustering. Thinks we need preservation of slopes and viewsheds in our rural areas. In semi-rural, stated we have a population we need to address. With regards to grading standards, it depends on what you are clearing off while grading. Added that issues of avoidance and clustering and these design standards when speaking of grading are intimately connected and we cannot leave the avoidance issue to the end.
- Shibley stated that if we are going to do density based zoning, there is no reason to have any yield reductions in any of these areas because density based zoning means you are avoiding the steep slopes; you may have some cuts in the hillsides but you save the ridge lines.
- Barker stated that having standards is a good way to force clustering so option 3 is pretty good.
- Holler stated the focus of this discussion ought to be where the footprint of development goes and having requirements or incentives to focus that footprint down into a specific area where you are avoiding steep slopes wherever possible.
- Adams asked for the County's definition of mass grading. Holler replied that we have one today; it is in the Methane Ordinance – paraphrased as: essentially where the lots end up being created through the grading process, that is grading that is adjacent and contiguous, and the land form is significantly altered, as opposed to a lot grading scenario where you may not be disturbing the entire lot. Adams stated that mass grading is an essential tool for development, especially when putting in a significant amount of units, so modification or elimination of it should not be considered. Holler replied that no one has suggested the elimination of mass grading; the recommendation is to disallow it for slopes greater than 25%.
- Silver thinks that a requirement to cluster should be considered, even outside the village and village core. Proposed:
 - Rural – no yield reduction; encroachment limits on slope, whether on a legal lot or clustered project; no mass grading
 - Village/village core – no yield reduction; no encroachment limits; mass/contour grading with restrictions
 - Semi-rural – yield reductions; encroachment limits; allow grading as long as mandatory clustering requirement is met
- Lambron stated that MSCP has not been addressed fully enough to understand the full ramifications of it. Densities and the ability to place the densities are minimal, giving up 60% to 70% of the property to then be subjected to a yield reduction and no mass grading. Feels that the yield reduction formula is inappropriate.

- Adams asked how we go about defining what is the least environmental section of a site, does not know where the number 25% came from and thinks it is arbitrary, is uncomfortable with mandatory clustering because it is not creating incentives.
- Shibley stated that there should not be mandatory clustering because the footprint is already defined by zoning.
- Gendron stated that we have to remember the visual impact that mass grading is going to have on community character.
- Rolfe stated there probably needs to be some yield reduction in the semi-rural because it is difficult enough to contain the sprawl there and reiterated a suggestion made by Pryde, to consider a yield reduction for 15% to 25%.
- Bowlby stated he is supportive of looking at incentives for clustered projects that protect sensitive areas. Wanted to know how removing yield reductions to these different locations will impact the totals on the distribution map and suggested working something out in the semi-rural that will balance out the 660,000 number. Stated that if staff does bring something back for them and shows them a little bit about what the factor is and what it does to the population target, perhaps it will help us improve the picture in the semi-rural.
- Coombs wanted to see something applied to the rural category since 90% of our significant viewsheds and ridge lines are in the rural areas, so something that would encourage the siting to be consistent with our policies.
- Messer asked staff to bring back another proposal that includes rural lands.
- Adams stated that we are going to struggle with the community character issue because it is going to change in some fashion or another, so we have to weigh the desires of this group and community character. Clustering is not community character right now and large lots are.

Agenda Item IV: Public Comments –

- Reid Ennis – Asked how many committee members own rural or semi-rural land and how they would like it if people were telling them what they can and cannot do with their land. Does not think a group like this should be telling people what to do.
- Lynne Baker – Stated that there is some advantage to the transparency of not having a yield reduction but that would require us going into the map and reducing the density there.
- Joe Perring – Likes the idea of focusing on incentives but became discouraged when Silver attempted to make a footprint in the abstract.
- Ron Pennock – Stated that clustering sounds like a good incentive but asked what you do about the sewer so that really needs to be looked at, as well as, pipelining in the process.