



**DATE:** April 16, 2010

**TO:** Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD  
NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND  
CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL

**SUMMARY:**

**Overview**

The General Plan Update is a comprehensive update of the San Diego County General Plan, establishing the future growth and development patterns and policies for the unincorporated areas of the County. The purpose of this hearing is to receive final recommendations from the Planning Commission regarding the draft General Plan text, land use maps, road network, community plans, implementation plan and Conservation Subdivision Program. This is the culmination of a hearing that has occurred over six days starting November 6, 2009. Subsequent days of the hearing included November 19 and 20, and December 4, 2009, and February 19 and March 12, 2010. April 16<sup>th</sup> is expected to be the last day of these hearings prior to advancing these components of the project to the Board of Supervisors. A summary of relevant General Plan Update previous actions from advisory groups, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors is provided as Attachment A.

**Recommendation(s)**

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & LAND USE

That the Planning Commission:

1. Find that they have reviewed and considered the information contained in the draft Environmental Impact Report dated July 1, 2009, and associated documentation on file with the Department of Planning and Land Use as Environmental Review Number 02-ZA-001 prior to making its recommendation on the project.
2. Adopt the Resolution (Attachment B) recommending Board of Supervisor approach of the County of San Diego-initiated comprehensive update of the General Plan, with revisions identified in Attachments C through F, of:
  - a. New Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation and Open Space, Safety

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

and Noise Elements replacing the current Land Use, Circulation, Public Facilities, Housing, Noise, Public Safety, Seismic Safety, Conservation, Open Space, Recreation, Scenic Highway and Energy Elements;

- b. Amendments to the Land Use Map;
  - c. Amendments to the Circulation Element (renamed Mobility Element) Map;
  - d. Comprehensive updates of the Bonsall, Borrego Springs, Boulevard, Crest/Dehesa, Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove, Fallbrook, Pine Valley, Potrero, Rainbow, Ramona, Spring Valley, and Valle de Oro Community Plans; and
  - e. Amendments to the Alpine, Central Mountain, Desert, Jamul/Dulzura, Julian, Lakeside, Mountain Empire, North County Metro, North Mountain, Otay, Pala/Pauma, San Dieguito, Sweetwater, and Valley Center Community and Subregional Plans.
3. Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the General Plan Update Implementation Plan released July 1, 2009 as revised according to Attachment G of this report.
4. Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Form of Ordinance (Attachment I) implementing the Conservation Subdivision Program.

“AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE TO AMEND TITLE 6, DIVISION 7; TITLE 8, DIVISION 1 AND DIVISION 6; AND AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE RELATING TO CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS”

Should the Planning Commission wish to recommend that a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program be included with the General Plan Update, DPLU recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1. Recommend that staff develop a conceptual TDR program over the upcoming months and present it along with the General Plan Update to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in the Fall of 2010.
- 2. Recommend that the following criteria guide staff’s development of the conceptual program:
  - a. The TDR program is made mandatory based on the General Plan Update density designations.
  - b. Sending sites should be limited to properties that were impacted the greatest by the General Plan Update. One approach would be to limit sending sites to those properties that were designated with densities of Semi-Rural 10 or less and received at least a 50% reduction in potential unit yield.

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL

- c. Receiving sites should include all properties that were upzoned by the General Plan Update and any future General Plan Amendments that add density above the General Plan Update.
- d. Transferable rights should be based on a formula that factors in site constraints as well as a general review of property specifics.
- e. Transfers from areas outside the CWA to within the CWA should be allowed but a limit could be imposed to ensure that a certain number of transfers are directed to areas outside the CWA.
- f. The program should include an expiration date (such as 20 years from inception) that provides sufficient time for the transfers to be realized and the program to be reevaluated for its effectiveness.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Implementation of the General Plan Update will be supported by a number of existing programs and staff, many of which support implementation of the existing General Plan. However, additional staffing and funding will be recommended as individual implementation programs are undertaken. Those programs that are anticipated to require additional resources are identified in the draft Implementation Plan. The DPLU-led programs identified in the draft Implementation Plan are projected to occur over a 10-year period after adoption of the General Plan Update and are estimated to require approximately \$6.4 million in additional funding. This funding and staffing is not included in the current adopted County Operational Plan.

### **Business Impact Statement**

The General Plan Update will assist the business community by providing a reliable blueprint for how growth will be accommodated; for siting commercial, industrial, and other land uses to meet projected needs; and by ensuring that adequate public services and sufficient, safe and appropriately located circulation routes are available for residential, commercial, and industrial development. The General Plan Update will also impact some businesses with possible changes to allowed uses on certain properties, modifications to development requirements, and revised right-of-way standards.

### **Advisory Board Statement**

The General Plan Update is served by two advisory committees: the Steering Committee and the Interest Group. Multiple meetings have been held with both committees and meeting minutes are available on the Department of Planning and Land Use General Plan Update website:

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/committees.html>.

### **Involved Parties**

The County of San Diego is the project proponent. The General Plan Update will apply to all lands that are under the land use jurisdiction of the County of San Diego.

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL

**BACKGROUND:**

Numerous project documents are referenced within this report, but were not included in an effort to reduce paper use and cost of reproduction and distribution. All referenced documents are available on the project website (<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/>) or from the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). To view or request a copy of any document, call 619-615-8289, email [gpupdate.DPLU@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:gpupdate.DPLU@sdcounty.ca.gov), or visit the DPLU Project Processing Counter, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, California 92123 (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday).

**Overview**

The General Plan Update is a comprehensive update of the San Diego County General Plan, establishing future growth and development policies for the unincorporated areas of the County. The plan update is intended to balance projected population growth with housing, employment, infrastructure, and resource protection needs. Once adopted, the General Plan will establish the amount, intensity, and location of future development. It will also identify the classification and location of the road infrastructure needed to support future development, as well as contain other policies that govern physical development within the unincorporated County.

The purpose of this hearing is to receive final recommendations from the Planning Commission on major components of the General Plan Update including the draft General Plan text, land use maps, road network, community plans, implementation plan and Conservation Subdivision Program. Preparation of these components has occurred over numerous years, with significant input and direction from stakeholders, advisory groups (the Steering Committee and the Interest Group), the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors. The history of the project is well documented in advisory group minutes, Planning Commission reports, and Board of Supervisors reports. These documents are all available on the project website: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/>. A summary of those documents is provided in Attachment A.

The major components of the General Plan Update that will be discussed at the hearing are summarized below and in most cases more detailed descriptions are in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or past hearing reports, all of which are available on the project website.

**Draft General Plan**

The General Plan for the unincorporated County has not been comprehensively updated since 1979 and has been the subject of substantial modification over the past 30 years. During this period, considerable growth and change has taken place, leading to the incorporation of a number of cities and annexation of lands on the periphery of the unincorporated area. Numerous new laws and regulations that relate specifically to General Plans or more generally to development and natural resources have also been enacted. The General Plan Update will allow

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

for these issues to be comprehensively and consistently addressed in the County's General Plan and associated regulations.

The draft updated General Plan consists of six elements – Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation and Open Space, Safety, and Noise. The elements are preceded by an Introduction and a chapter on Vision and Guiding Principles. Generally, each element begins with an introduction that states the purpose and scope of the element, guiding principles for the element, and how the element relates to the other General Plan elements. Next, the framework or background information for development of the element is described. The goals and policies are organized into topics. The context of each topic is described, and then the goals and policies that address this issue are listed. The goals and policies were prepared in consideration of the guiding principles, discussed in Chapter 2 of the plan. Community plans, discussed further below, are part of the General Plan but are separately bound.

The updated General Plan was prepared with the intent of consolidating and simplifying the General Plan to aid in its usability and also to avoid excessive data that can quickly become outdated and obsolete. For example, the 12 elements that are contained in the existing General Plan are consolidated to 6 elements; implementation actions are moved to a separate implementation plan; and background discussions and data are kept simple with more detailed information contained in background reports, the County's Geographical Information System (GIS) and other databases.

The draft updated General Plan was prepared based on guidance from the advisory groups, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. Internal and external technical review groups were established and used for the preparation of each element. An initial draft of the updated General Plan was distributed for agency and public review from November 14, 2008 through January 30, 2009. Comments received on the draft General Plan were reviewed and responded to by DPLU and revisions were made to the document where appropriate. The revised draft was made available for public review from July 1, 2009 to August 31, 2009, along with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and several other documents.

The draft General Plan and draft EIR can both be found on the project website and revisions to the 2008 draft are shown in ~~strikeout~~/underline. Comments on the 2008 draft and DPLU's responses to those comments are available on the website. Comments on the 2009 draft are included under draft EIR comments. Those comments, draft responses, and staff recommended revisions are also available on the website. Staff recommended revisions to the 2009 draft General Plan text are provided in Attachment C.

### **Land Use Maps**

The County's General Plan includes maps that identify the type and intensity of allowed uses on all property within the unincorporated County. The General Plan Update will replace the existing maps and land use designations with a land use framework. Mapping the distribution of

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

residential land uses in the unincorporated County was a complex process that considered a variety of land use planning and legal factors. DPLU obtained information from maps depicting steep slopes, environmental sensitivity, roads, floodplains, existing parcel size and dwelling units, active agriculture, and existing General Plan regulations when preparing its land use recommendations. Some of the factors considered during the mapping process included the following:

- Proximity to existing infrastructure and services
- Physical suitability of the site
- Vehicular access
- Potential environmental impacts
- Compatibility with surrounding uses
- Existing level of development
- Landowner requests
- Community and advisory group preferences

Draft maps were presented to the Board of Supervisors as early as 2001. Subsequently, staff returned several times with various options and received guidance that facilitated the preparation of the maps. The Board of Supervisors ultimately endorsed two land use maps (the “Referral Map” and “Draft Land Use Map”) for the EIR analysis. Because the Board specifically directed creation of the Referral Map and it is more intensive than the Draft Land Use Map, the Referral Map is the Proposed Project in the EIR and the Draft Land Use Map is an EIR alternative. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a range of alternatives be evaluated in the EIR; therefore, additional alternatives were necessary. The Hybrid Map and Environmentally Superior Map were developed to serve as the additional alternatives evaluated in the EIR. These four maps are described briefly below:

- **Referral Map (Proposed Project)** - The Referral Map is the map the Board of Supervisors recommended for study during the land use mapping phase of the project which incorporated a number of referrals on specific properties that are not included in the Draft Land Use Map. Changes to the Referral Map were generally made only when directed by the Board; therefore, the Referral Map does not contain many of the continued refinements that were made to the Draft Land Use Map discussed below.
- **Draft Land Use Map** - The Draft Land Use Map is the other map endorsed by the Board of Supervisors during the land use mapping phase. It is also the map for which the Board directed continued refinements relating to meeting the Housing Element allocation and for which additional modifications were made to achieve a more balanced road network. The Housing Element refinements resulted in increases in density on some select sites. Changes to the map relating to the road network were mainly decreases in density or intensity of use and were primarily in Valley Center and Alpine as staff continued work with the Planning Groups for these areas.
- **Hybrid Map** - The Hybrid Map strikes a balance between the Referral Map and the Draft Land Use Map. It includes the continued refinements that were made to the Draft Land Use

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD  
NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND  
CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

Map, as described above. It also incorporates the Referral Map changes that best meet the project objectives and reflect the policy direction of the draft plan.

- **Environmentally Superior Map** - To complete a reasonable range of alternatives for the Draft EIR, an Environmentally Superior Map has been developed. This map reflects a more stringent application of the draft policies that restrict growth in areas with sensitive resources.

The four maps are available on the project website. Detailed descriptions of the differences between the maps are available on the website and environmental analysis of those differences is provided in Chapter 4 and Appendix L of the Draft EIR.

Based on the analysis in the Draft EIR and comments received, DPLU prepared a preliminary recommendation for the land use map that was presented to the Planning Commission at hearings on November 6, 19 and 20 and December 4, 2009. Specific notices were sent to property owners where the staff recommendation applied the Environmentally Superior Map designation or varied from the four land use maps. Based on staff's recommendations and public input provided at those hearings, the Planning Commission provided tentative recommendations on the land use map. Each tentative recommendation is generally consistent with one of the four draft EIR land use alternatives with some minor exceptions. Maps showing the Planning Commission tentative recommendations are available on the project website.

At the December 4, 2009 hearing, several individual mapping issues were also identified as requiring resolution over the remaining hearings. A few of those issues were addressed on February 19 and March 12, 2010, and have been included in the Planning Commission tentative recommendations. Attachment D provides the community specific mapping issues that remain to be addressed at the April 16, 2010 hearing. The items are listed by community; however, there are no issues identified for many communities. Staff recommended changes to the Planning Commission tentative land use map recommendations are also included. These recommended changes are mainly the result of further coordination with the community representatives, or further analysis of the issues that were raised at the November 6, 2009 through March 12, 2010 Planning Commission hearings.

### **Mobility Element Road Network**

The General Plan includes a description of the County's transportation network, which guides the preservation or acquisition of future right-of-way and future road improvements. The draft updated Mobility Element road network depicts in map and matrix format, the location of road network components, number of lanes, design criteria, and right-of-way width. The road network includes major County roads and State highways that form the regional backbone of a network providing vehicular movement within and between communities, along with important local road connections where it is necessary to preserve right-of-way. Much of the network currently exists and the remainder would be developed as needed and when funding becomes available. When

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

applicable, the Mobility Element road network has been coordinated with adjacent cities to ensure consistency.

The Mobility Element road network was developed with consideration of a combination of physical and environmental conditions, community input, and SANDAG traffic model forecasts based on full build-out of the General Plan land use map. An important objective of the General Plan Update road network planning effort was to develop a road network that is efficiently and adequately correlated with the planned land uses on the proposed land use map. When physical and other constraints precluded constructing roads to the number of lanes required to accommodate traffic with a level of service (LOS) of D or better, exceptions are made to accept a road forecast to operate at LOS E and F. This approach avoids excessive road construction or unnecessary restrictions on community development.

Draft road networks were developed for the Referral Map and Draft Land Use Map and a network was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in 2006. This network was evaluated in the Draft EIR. Staff has considered all comments received during public reviews of the project and has recommended changes to the 2006 Board-endorsed road network. These changes are shown in Attachment E and are based on those comments, additional input from community groups, and the Planning Commission tentative land use map recommendations.

### **Community Plans**

Community plans, including subregional plans, are included as an integral part of the County's General Plan to provide policies that specifically address the issues, characteristics, and visions of an individual community. The General Plan Update includes amendments to existing community plans for consistency with the updated General Plan. Revisions to the community plans also include elimination or modification of outdated information and inclusion of new information and policies requested by the community. County staff has developed guidelines to assist the community planning groups in updating their community plans as well as a template that will ultimately be used to standardize the organization and format of the plans. However, at this time, the draft updated community plans are in various forms. Some are simple consistency updates, others are complete replacements, and others lie somewhere in between. Following the adoption of the General Plan Update, all remaining community plans will be comprehensively updated over the ensuing years.

The current draft Community Plan updates were made available for public review in July/August 2009 along with the other project documents and remaining revisions to those documents, based on public review, are available on the project website. Many of the draft plans had been subject to prior public review initiated by the planning groups and/or had been discussed at planning group meetings. Numerous comments were received on the draft community plan updates, some aimed at individual plans and others more general on how the plans are written, their role, and what types of policies they should include. In some cases, the draft community plan updates contain community recommendations for policies that differ from the draft text. The

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

recommendations were provided for informational purposes because they differ from staff's recommendation and unless otherwise indicated, will be removed from the final versions of the plan.

Staff recommended revisions to the draft plans are listed in Attachment F.

### **Implementation Plan**

The General Plan Update will consolidate implementation actions necessary to achieve the goals and policies set forth in the updated General Plan in a separate Implementation Plan. The programs included in the Implementation Plan are a combination of existing County activities, processes, reports, assessments, and plans, as well as new programs that would be initiated upon adoption of the General Plan Update. As a freestanding document that is directly linked and cross-referenced to the General Plan, the County maintains the flexibility to regularly update the Implementation Plan without the necessity of amending the General Plan. This flexibility is important to the County as a means to address the changes that occur over time and that may affect the County's vision, the availability of funding for programs, and future tools and technology that would be used to implement the General Plan.

The Implementation Plan is designed to be a key resource for County staff in assuring that the goals and policies of the General Plan are reflected in day-to-day County operations and services including preparing plans and programs, reviewing development proposals, and maintaining infrastructure. As mandated by State law, the Implementation Plan addresses specific actions required of the County, including, but not limited to, the following key activities:

- Preparation of an annual report on the status of the General Plan and progress of its implementation, as well as its progress in meeting its regional housing needs allocation.
- Preparation of an annual capital improvement program for scheduling and financing major public works projects consistent with the General Plan.
- Preparation of an updated zoning code to achieve consistency of the zoning and development standards with the updated General Plan's land use designations and policies.

In addition to these key State-mandated actions, the programs and activities presented in the draft Implementation Plan address the major areas of planning and service delivery for future growth and development within the County, as outlined in the General Plan Update elements. The draft Implementation Plan also includes all feasible mitigation measures that were identified by the Draft EIR.

The draft Implementation Plan was made available for public review in July/August 2009 along with the other project documents. Few comments specific to the draft Implementation Plan were received; however, revisions to policies in the General Plan or mitigation measures in the Draft EIR that may result from comments have the potential to affect the draft Implementation Plan.

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

Revisions made to the July 1, 2009 version of the draft Implementation Plan are included as Attachment G and the complete plan is available on the project website.

### **Conservation Subdivision Program**

The Conservation Subdivision Program is a collection of regulatory amendments included with the General Plan Update that when combined with the updated General Plan, will facilitate preservation of sensitive environmental resources through strengthened preservation criteria and added subdivision design flexibility while maintaining protections for existing communities. The Conservation Subdivision Program includes amendments to the County's Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, Resource Protection Ordinance, and Groundwater Ordinance, as well as design guidelines for rural subdivisions. Key components of the program include:

- Broadened use of subdivision ordinance regulation waivers.
- Mandatory avoidance percentages for sensitive resources in subdivisions on rural lands – those designated Semi-rural 10 (1 dwelling unit per 10 acres) and all Rural Lands designations (1 dwelling unit per 20 acres and greater).
- Project and open space design requirements for all subdivisions on rural lands.
- Increased allowances for steep slope encroachment when necessary to avoid other sensitive environmental resources.
- Continued allowances for certain reductions in Groundwater Ordinance lot size minimums when supported by studies.
- Expanded applicability of lot area averaging and planned residential developments.
- Required findings of community compatibility with any decreases in lot size.

The Conservation Subdivision Program was developed through extensive input from the Steering Committee and Interest Group; however, consensus between the two groups could never be achieved. The draft Program represents staff's attempt to balance both sides of the issues. All draft ordinance amendments and the draft design guidelines were made available for public review in July/August 2009. Several general comments were received on the program mostly along the lines of the positions of the Steering Committee (supporting restrictions in certain communities) and the Interest Group (opposing community restrictions and supporting additional assurances of reduced lot sizes and project approval).

At the December 4, 2009 hearing the Planning Commission decided to address the issues of the Conservation Subdivision Program more comprehensively through a workshop, which was held on February 5, 2010, prior to making final recommendations. At the February 19, 2010 hearing the Planning Commission supported the program and recommended the following revisions which staff has since incorporated:

- Revise draft General Plan Land Use Policy LU-14.4, Sewer Facilities, to allow sewer facilities to be provided when within existing sewer district boundaries and where

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

specifically allowed in the Community Plan. These changes are intended to facilitate the provision of Conservation Subdivisions with smaller lot sizes, where appropriate.

- Add a sidebar to Policy LU-6.3, Conservation-Oriented Project Design, clarifying that approval of conservation subdivision projects is not guaranteed by-right but shall be allowed to process if consistent with applicable minimum lot sizes, design guidelines and regulations.
- Revise the draft Implementation Plan to place greater emphasis and priority on Community Design Guidelines.

In addition, the Planning Commission directed staff to research possible options for involving a third party or other assurances with open space easements and report back prior to dedication of any easements under the Conservation Subdivision Program. Finally, the Planning Commission directed staff to follow their approach to developing recommended minimum lot size standards on a community-by-community basis, except with greater emphasis on Groundwater Ordinance limits for groundwater dependent areas. Minimum lot size recommendations for all communities, along with any differences in community preference, are identified in Attachment F. The draft Conservation Subdivision Program, as revised as a result of public review and the recent Planning Commission hearings, is available on the project website.

The draft Conservation Subdivision Program Ordinance, both a clean copy and a copy showing the proposed changes to the Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, Resource Protection Ordinance, and Groundwater Ordinance, is included as Attachments H and I.

### **Equity Mechanisms**

“Equity mechanisms” is a term that has been used as part of the General Plan Update to generally refer to means of reducing negative impacts to property owners that may result from the General Plan Update. Since the initiation of the General Plan Update, a key element has been a substantial reduction in planned densities in certain areas of the unincorporated County. Concerns over the economic impacts of downzoning include loss of property tax revenue and land owner equity. It was acknowledged that these reductions would have both a real and perceived impact to property owners and agricultural operations.

Therefore, equity mechanisms have been discussed as part of the General Plan Update since early in the process, with the Interest Group and Steering Committee stakeholder groups, as well as discussion by the Planning Commission and endorsement by the Board of Supervisors. Most recently the issue has been raised at the Planning Commission hearings for the General Plan Update that have occurred from November 6, 2009 through March 12, 2010. The Planning Commission directed that this issue be addressed at the April 16, 2010 hearing. An updated Fact Sheet on equity mechanisms is provided as Attachment J.

### **Other Project Components**

- **Zoning Ordinance Consistency Update** – The General Plan Update will include an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for consistency with the new land use maps and the

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

updated General Plan goals and policies. DPLU intends to prepare this amendment so it can be adopted concurrent with the updated General Plan; however, the amendment requires further coordination with community planning and sponsor groups and public review. The Zoning Ordinance Consistency Update is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission for a recommendation in July of this year.

- **Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easements (PACE) Program** – One of the implementation programs for the General Plan Update is an equity mechanism referred to as the PACE Program. This program, considered a Purchase of Development Rights program, is a voluntary farmland protection technique that compensates agricultural landowners for voluntarily limiting future development on their land. Landowners retain many property rights according to the provisions specified in the easement and the right to farm. An easement restricts certain land use rights, primarily development as nonagricultural land. PACE programs enable landowners to sell development rights on their land to a government agency or qualified nongovernmental organization, such as a land trust, while retaining full ownership. The program is further described in the County’s Farming Program Plan. The County’s PACE program is currently under development on a separate but parallel track to the General Plan Update.
- **Other Implementation Programs** – There are numerous other components to the General Plan Update that are important to its implementation and detailed in the draft Implementation Plan. The approximate timing of these components is also identified in the draft Implementation Plan.

**PROJECT ISSUES:**

Numerous issues, concerns, and opposing views and positions have been presented by General Plan Update stakeholders. These are evident in the comments received during the July/August 2009 public review, in past project documents, and during the Planning Commission hearings for the General Plan Update conducted from November 6, 2009 through March 12, 2010. Some of the more common issues raised by stakeholders, along with the recommendations of the Planning Commission, include:

- *Ability of the plan to accommodate sufficient population growth and definition of the County’s reasonable share* — At the February 19, 2010 hearing, staff demonstrated that the General Plan Update contains sufficient capacity to accommodate both 2030 and 2050 SANDAG-forecasted growth. As a result, the Planning Commission determined that the General Plan Update is consistent with SANDAG forecasts and contains a reasonable share of the growth for the region.
- *The draft General Plan is inflexible and lacks adaptability, such as:*
  - *General plan amendments are too restricted* — At the February 19, 2010 hearing, the Planning Commission tentatively supported staff’s recommendation to support draft Policies LU 1.2, Regional Category Map Amendments, and LU-1.3, Initiation of Plan

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

Amendments, as proposed, and direct staff to return to discuss possible revisions to Board Policy I-63, General Plan Amendment and Zoning Guidelines, at the time that the amendments are initiated.

- *Policy language is too prescriptive* — At the March 12, 2010 hearing, staff contended that the policies are drafted to provide clarity as to their intent, while avoiding debate at time of implementation. County Counsel has reviewed the policy language and is supportive of this approach, which retains flexibility on how the General Plan policies are interpreted and implemented. The Planning Commission tentatively supported staff's recommended approach to the policy language for the General Plan Update.
- *The Mixed Use designation, which allows a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.3 and a residential density of Village Residential 30, allows for development which is too intense* — At the March 12, 2010 hearing, the Planning Commission tentatively supported staff's recommendation to change the FAR for the Mixed-Use designation in Table LU-1 of the draft Land Use Element from 1.3 to 0.7 and add a note that the FAR could be increase to 1.3 only if off-site parking is provided in conjunction with the proposed development.
- *Redesignation of Forest Conservation Initiative (FCI) lands should be considered as part of the General Plan Update* — At the March 12, 2010 hearing, the Planning Commission tentatively supported staff's recommendation to continue with the remapping on a track separate from the General Plan Update but with the goal of completing the remapping by early 2011.

**WAIVERS AND EXCEPTIONS:**

N/A

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:**

A Program Environmental Impact Report has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the General Plan Update and its various components. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) soliciting input on the scope of the EIR was issued first in 2002 and again more recently from April 28, 2008 to May 28, 2008. The Draft EIR was made available for public review from July 1, 2009 to August 31, 2009.

During the 60-day public review period which commenced on July 1, 2009, the County received numerous letters that pertained to the following draft documents: the Environmental Impact Report, the General Plan Text including community and subregional plans, the Implementation Plan, and the Conservation Subdivision Program. From the 132 letters received during the review period, County staff noted 2,232 comments and prepared draft responses. An additional 23 letters containing 474 comments were received after the public review period but prior to any Planning Commission hearings. The comment letters and draft staff responses to comments are available on the website.

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL

Common issues/concerns raised in the comment letters include:

- Concern over the economic impacts of downzoning
- Conservation subdivisions' effects on community character
- Population estimates and the best ways to accommodate growth
- Community and subregional plan policies' effects on General Plan policies
- Mandatory versus permissive language in the General Plan
- Wildland fire hazards
- Climate change analysis and mitigation

The Draft EIR has been revised pursuant to public comments. Both versions of draft EIR can be found on the project website with revisions shown in strikeout/underline. This includes the July 2009 draft EIR and revisions to the 2009 draft. The revisions to the draft EIR provide clarifying text but do not identify any new significant environmental impacts or any increase in the severity of previously identified project impacts. Therefore, these revisions do not trigger recirculation of the DEIR per Section 15088.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**PREVIOUS ACTIONS:**

See Attachment A.

**ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT APPROPRIATE PERMITS:**

N/A

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

The General Plan Update has included an extensive community outreach process involving the Interest Group, the Steering Committee, community planning/sponsor groups, affected and interested agencies and tribes, individual landowners, interested organizations, and members of the public. There have been over 40 public hearings with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors; 681 community planning/sponsor group meetings, workshops, sub-committee meetings, open houses; and 133 meetings with the advisory groups. Other efforts include a county-wide mailer, consistently providing current project information on the General Plan Update website; issuing monthly e-newsletters and other notices to an extensive interested parties list; newspaper notices; meeting informally with groups and individuals upon request; and informing local media.

Public input is recorded in hearing proceedings and meeting minutes. Comment letters have also been received throughout the process and are on file with DPLU. Comment letters received on the General Plan Update EIR Notices of Preparations, the 2008 initial draft General Plan, and the July/August 2009 public review are available on the project website.

**DEPARTMENT REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD  
NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND  
CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL**

1. The proposed project is the product of years of public input and agency coordination where all efforts have been made to resolve issues and achieve consensus.
2. The proposed project fulfills the Guiding Principles (Project Objectives) that are detailed in the Guiding Principles, Chapter 2 of the draft update to the General Plan.
3. The proposed project supports the County's Strategic Plan Initiatives for Kids, the Environment, and Safe and Livable Communities.
4. The proposed project complies with State law by providing a consistent, comprehensive, long term general plan that covers the County's entire planning area and addresses the broad range of issues associated with the County's development.
5. The project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State and County CEQA Guidelines because a Draft EIR dated July 1, 2009 and on file with the Department of Planning and Land Use has been prepared, was advertised for public review commencing on July 1, 2009, and is being considered by the Planning Commission.

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT TEXT, LAND USE MAPS, ROAD  
NETWORK, COMMUNITY PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND  
CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM; DISTRICT: ALL

cc: All Community Planning/Sponsor Groups  
Interested Parties (via email)

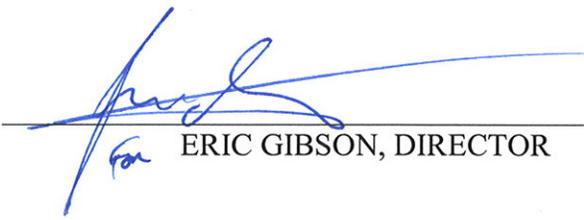
**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A – Previous Actions
- Attachment B – Resolution of the Planning Commission Concerning the General Plan Update
- Attachment C – Draft General Plan Recommended Revisions
- Attachment D – Community Issues / Mapping Report
- Attachment E – 2006 Board-Endorsed Mobility Element Network — Recommended Revisions
- Attachment F – Community Plan Updates — Status and Recommendations
- Attachment G – Draft Implementation Plan — Recommended Revisions
- Attachment H – Draft Ordinance – Strikeout/Underline: Conservation Subdivision Program
- Attachment I – Form of Ordinance: Conservation Subdivision Program
- Attachment J – Fact Sheet: Equity Mechanisms

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Devon Muto	_____
Name	_____
858-694-3016	_____
Phone	_____
858-694-2485	_____
Fax	_____
O650	_____
Mail Station	_____
devon.muto@sdcounty.ca.gov	_____
E-mail	_____

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:**

  
ERIC GIBSON, DIRECTOR