

General Plan Update
Interest Group Meeting
January 30, 2009

Interest Group Committee:

George Courser	Back Country Coalition
Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Eric Larson	Farm Bureau
Dan Wery	American Planning Association
Liz Higgins	San Diego Association of Realtors
Dave Shibley	Save our Land Values
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitat League
Jim Whalen	Alliance for Habitat Conservation
Diane Coombs	Citizens Coordinate for Century 3
Carolyn Chase	San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices
Tracy Morgan Hollingworth	American Society of Landscape Architects

Public at Large:

Henry Palmer
Jimmie Kohler
Tony Eason
Joan Van Higen
Charlene Ayers
Michael McIntire
BJ McIntire
Dan Malles
Don Smith
Travis Cleveland
Scott Strellecki
Angela Morrow
Rikki Schroeder
Ron White
Ron Wooten
Richard Adams
Brice Bossler
Martin Muschinske

County Staff:

Devon Muto (DPLU)
Bob Citrano(DPLU)
Jimmy Wong (DPLU)
Eric Lardy (DPLU)
Claudia Anzures (County Counsel)

Agenda Item I: Introductions

Mr. Muto began the meeting with introductions of DPLU staff and Interest Group members. Mr. Muto explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide a forum for Interest Group members to discuss and comment on the Draft General Plan. He then provided the following brief progress report on the General Plan update project to the group:

- o The public comment period on the Draft General Plan has concluded, and staff has received approximately 60 comment letters. The comments received will be available for public viewing on the GP Update website.

- o Staff has continued to make progress on the Conservation Subdivision program, and a draft will be available to the group for discussion in the near future.
- o Staff has made significant progress on updating the Community Plans, and will be in contact with the individual communities to go over comments and revisions.

Mr. Whalen asked when the EIR would be released for public review. Mr. Muto stated that he anticipated that the EIR would be ready for public review in Fall 2009.

Mr. Courser asked if it would be possible that a revised version of the Draft General Plan could be released prior to the EIR due to the large volume of information being reviewed by the group at one time. Mr. Muto stated that a revised Draft GP would be ready around the same time of the completion of the Draft EIR, and releasing the documents for public review together is appropriate.

Agenda Item II: Action Item, Interest Group Meeting Minutes from 10/27/2008

Mr. Muto asked for comments or edits on the minutes from the previous Interest Group meeting on 10/27/2008

Mr. Shibley commented on Page 6, first paragraph, and asked for an update on allowing the communities to opt out of conservation subdivision program in the community plans. Mr. Muto noted the topic for discussion later in the meeting.

Mr. Shibley motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Tabb seconded the motion. The Interest Group voted to approve the Meeting Minutes from 10/27/2008 (10-0-2).

Agenda Item III: Discussion of Draft General Plan

Mr. Muto returned to Mr. Shibley's question, and stated that the communities have the option to opt out of the conservation subdivision programs unless the County mandates the program across the region. Mr. Muto further explained that only two communities have requested specific restrictions on the program, and staff will be working with the communities to address any concerns in an attempt to gain overall consensus.

Mr. Shibley stated that he is opposed to allowing the communities the option to opt out of the conservation subdivision program.

Ms. Higgins asked if there were major revisions proposed to the conservation subdivision program. Mr. Muto stated that the major fundamental concepts will remain, and no major revisions were planned at this time.

Mr. Shibley commented on Pg. 1-13, and stated that the plan needs the flexibility and ability to be amended, and he also stated that transfer of development rights needs to be addressed in the General Plan update.

Mr. Muto stated that staff has received comment letters which point out the need to address transfer of development rights (TDR), and that currently there is one community interested in developing a TDR program with the County.

Mr. Whalen asked if Staff had explored the idea of implementing a TDR program similar to the City of Carlsbad. He explained that when the City of Carlsbad is acquiring open space it places the density in a “bank”, so it does not lose the density it needs to meet state housing requirements. Mr. Muto stated that staff had explored the idea in the early stages of the program development, and have chosen to pursue a PDR program which focuses on Agricultural operations.

Mr. Silver had the following comments:

- o The language in the General Plan is too weak in many cases, where policies use language such as “encourage, or promote”.
- o The General Plan should only be updated every ten years.
- o The Regional categories are too broad, within one regional category you can go from one dwelling unit per acre to one dwelling unit per ten acres.
- o The Community Plans appear to trump the General Plan, he recommends replacing the term “consistent” with “compatible” because the State already mandates that all the documents be consistent.
- o He would like to see a previous policy returned to the document (LU-6.3).

Mr. Larson stated that the Farm Bureau is concerned with two topics; the Conservation Subdivision program and equity mechanisms. He followed up by asking if LU-7.2 and LU-6.4 would be implemented by the conservation subdivision and equity mechanism programs. Mr. Muto stated that the policies are general and flexible enough to provide for the ability to implement these planning tools.

Mr. Courser stated that his overall problem with the existing General Plan is how easily it is to modify, he explained that the County needed a plan that is not easily manipulated.

Ms. Higgins stated that she supports clustering design in appropriate unincorporated areas, and asked how the County was going to address the issue of communities opting out of Conservation Subdivision design. Mr. Muto explained that staff will work with the communities who have issue with the proposed program, and if staff cannot resolve the issues then ultimately the Board of Supervisors will make the final decision.

Ms. Higgins followed up by asking if compromises would be made to the conservation subdivision program. Mr. Muto stated that staff is open to working with the individual communities to address any concerns.

Ms. Chase asked how the general plan update was addressing SB375, and also if there would be a land use mapping alternative that specifically addressed climate change.

Mr. Muto stated that the General Plan update is a major improvement in the reduction of green house gases (GHG) over the existing General Plan. Mr. Muto explained that the unincorporated County is challenged with reducing GHG due to the lack of an extensive public transportation system, so staff will be looking at methods in reducing GHG but will also rely, to an extent, on the surrounding cities. Mr. Muto further explained that SB375 is a regional planning issue with SANDAG taking the lead. Mr. Muto also thought it was premature to cast judgment on what the County will need to do to account for SB 375. Mr. Muto said that the County will continue to monitor the situation closely and will relay any new developments to the group.

Ms. Coombs stated that she would like to see a presentation to the group on how each element of the General Plan update addresses GHG.

Mr. Shibley stated that with the General Plan update the County will be losing 33,000 units, and asked staff to provide data on how many lots of the 33,000 units actually have agricultural zoning.

Ms. Higgins asked if staff could provide the total number of acres and properties down zoned in the County under the new General Plan. Mr. Muto explained that the numbers are not currently available but the task has been assigned to the County GIS support group and he will make the information available to the IG when it becomes available.

Mr. Silver asked for clarification on the release date of the EIR. Mr. Muto stated that the EIR is scheduled to be released for public review in the Fall of 2009 but staff is aiming for an earlier target date.

Mr. Muto opened up the meeting for public comment.

Agenda Item IV: Public Comment

A public member urged staff to look at new innovative ways to develop areas with sensitive habitat and yet still avoid the sites most important resources. He directed members to visit lowimpactdesigntripod.com where the public can learn new innovative techniques in developing sensitive areas.

Ms. Hollingworth asked if it was time to have a joint meeting between the Steering Committee and Interest Group members to discuss issues regarding the Conservation Subdivision program. Mr. Muto stated that when a draft is available staff will formulate a best method for review.

Ms. Coombs supported Ms. Hollingworth's suggestion of a joint meeting because the program is not only important to protect the County's sensitive habitats but also is

important when it comes to fire safety. She explained that the program has its obvious advantages when it comes to fire protection.

Mr. Shibley agreed also that a joint meeting could be a good way to discuss issues that both groups have with the proposed program. He also stated that the program makes fire fighting much more effective.

Ms. Higgins stated that she had attended a Steering Committee and believes that the group would not support a joint meeting to discuss the draft program.

A public member commented on equity mechanisms and the shifting of value when densities are moved from one place to another, he also recommended that staff look into inclusionary housing techniques.

Ms. Ayers asked for an update on the status of the Housing Element. Mr. Muto stated that the draft element has been sent to State HCD, and staff is anticipating comments shortly after which there will be another round of revisions.

Agenda Item VIII: Next Steps

Mr. Muto concluded the meeting by stating that the next Interest Group meeting is being planned for March and explained that staff will send out official notices to confirm the meeting time and place.