

General Plan Update
Interest Group Meeting
June 27, 2008

Interest Group Committee:

George Courser	Back Country Coalition
Chris Duggan	SD Regional Economic Development Corporation
Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Wallace Tucker	SD Coalition for Transportation Choices
Matt Adams	Building Industry Association
Scott Thomas	American Institute of Architects
Al Stehly	Farm Bureau
Brooke Peterson	American Planning Association
Diane Coombs	Citizen Coordinate for Century 3
Liz Higgins	San Diego Association of Realtors
Dave Shibley	Save our Land Values
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitat League
Jim Whalen	Alliance for Habitat Conservation
Karen Messer	Buena Vista Audubon Society
Greg Lambron	Helix Land Company
Tracy Morgan Hollingworth	American Society of Landscape Architects

Public at Large:

Tony Eason
Henry Palmer
Ron Wootlen
Brice Bossler
Charlene Ayer
Carolyn Dorroh
Chris Anderson
Janelle Riella
Tom Weber
Lael Montgomery
Lynn Baker
Parke Troutman
Hank Rupp
Greg Moorad

County Staff:

Devon Muto (DPLU)
Bob Citrano(DPLU)
Jimmy Wong (DPLU)
Rachel Bramstedt (DPLU)
Dante Carlesimo (DPLU)
Christine Wang (DPLU)

Agenda Item I: Introductions

Mr. Muto began the meeting with introductions of DPLU staff and Interest Group members. Mr. Muto explained that the meeting had two major topics to be discussed, the draft land use element and the proposed conservation subdivision program.

Agenda Item II: Action Item, Interest Group Meeting Minutes from 4/25/2008

Mr. Shibley motioned for approval, Ms. Higgins second the motion. The Interest Group voted to approve the meeting minutes from 4/25/2008.

Agenda Item III: Announcements/ Project Updates

Mr. Muto stated that a number of accomplishments have occurred since the previous meeting. Mr. Muto commented that the environmental impact report, notice of preparation has completed review and has been issued. Mr. Muto explained that the County received 33 comments on the notice of preparation, and that the comments are available for viewing on the web.

Mr. Muto stated that in May staff presented a progress report on the GP update to the Planning Commission. Mr. Muto stated that at the Planning Commission hearing staff provided a status on the project and identified key issues of the project. Mr. Muto states that there would be a similar presentation given to the Board of Supervisors on July 23, 2008.

Mr. Muto stated that substantially progress has been made on the General Plan elements. Mr. Muto explained that all draft versions of the elements are complete and are undergoing some form of technical review.

Mr. Muto commented that a major milestone in the environmental impact report has been reached. Mr. Muto explained that draft existing condition sections have been completed and staff will be moving into the analysis phase of the data.

Mr. Muto announced that LeAnn Carmichael who was an integral part of the General Plan Update effort has changed her duties within the department of planning and land use, and will now be assisting in the MSCP effort. Mr. Muto clarified that Mrs. Carmichael would still be available as a resource to staff if necessary.

Agenda Item IV: Presentation of Community Plan Template and Process

Mr. Muto explained that one of the key issues identified in the project is how to bring the community plans forward with the General Plan Update. Mr. Muto stated that as the General Plan Update moves forward this could potentially create inconsistencies with the community plans.

Mr. Muto stated that staff has developed three options for updating the community plans. Mr. Muto stated that the first option is to have DPLU staff review the community plans strictly for consistency, and revise the plans as necessary. The second option according to Mr. Muto is similar to the first, but would allow a sections in the community plans to be

revised at the communities discretion. Mr. Muto further explained that any revised sections from the second option would need to be provided by the individual communities.

Mr. Muto stated the third option for community plans would be a comprehensive update, and would need to be community driven due to a lack of staff resources. Mr. Muto commented that staff would still be available for technical assistance during this process, but emphasized that the third option would require the communities to lead the effort. Mr. Muto stated that to assist communities interested in the comprehensive update a community plan template has been developed by PBS&J.

Mr. Muto expressed his preference for communities to select option 1 or 2 in the community plan strategy due to the limited amount of staff resources and short time frame. Mr. Muto stated that he believed option 3 would be difficult with the proposed aggressive schedule, and he explained that there will be a phase 2 of the community plan update which will occur shortly after the adoption of the proposed General Plan.

Mr. Whalen asked if staff what work had been prepared already for the community plans. Mr. Muto stated that a lot of work has been done to the community plans in the past but still will require additional work. Mr. Whalen followed up by asking if the County was planning on batching the CEQA review. Mr. Muto answered yes, but there is more details to be discussed.

Mr. Shibley commented that if the communities updated their plans now instead of waiting for the General Plan to be adopted, it would be difficult to gain consistency because the goal and policies are still changing. Mr. Shibley asked if the community plans need to be consistent with the General Plan why do the community plans need to undergo individual EIRs?

Mr. Muto agreed with Mr. Shibley that comprehensively updating the community plans now would be difficult due to changing goals and policies in the General Plan. Mr. Muto furthermore explained that staff wanted to provide an option for communities who felt strongly about having a comprehensive update to their community plans. Mr. Muto stated that staff will review each of the community plans and determine the level of CEQA review necessary.

Mr. Muto stated that PBSJ would like comments on the community Template from both the interest group and steering committee. Mr. Muto explained that PBS&J will create a template binder and will be attending community plan workshops to educate community representatives how to use the template. Mr. Muto stated that the community plan template follows the format of the GP update to stay consistent. Mr. Muto commented that staff would like to stay away from strict standards in the community plans, because standards are better handled in the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Whalen stated that some of the community plans directly conflict with clustering, and asked if those were the kind of inconsistencies that staff would be looking for.

Mr. Muto answered yes, and also anything specific, such as lot sizes will be removed out of community plans.

Mr. Muto stated that any comments on the community plan template will be needed by the end of the month.

Agenda Item V: Conservation Subdivision Program

Mr. Muto stated that the last draft of the conservation subdivision program was written in 2006, and that he is unsure as to the extent of the distribution of the document. Mr. Muto stated that the last version of the program seemed to have general support from the Interest Group. Mr. Muto commented that the Steering committee did not support the program.

Mr. Muto stated that DPLU staff has reviewed the program and is concerned with the implementation of the proposed program. Mr. Muto explained that staff wanted to take a step back in hopes of finding a better way to achieve the programs objectives. Mr. Muto further explained that the County has a lot of existing regulations that require the conservation of resources, but the problem occurs when developers and applicants run into competing regulations.

Mr. Muto stated that staff attempted to improve the subdivision process by embracing existing regulations that already support resource conservation and sensitive subdivision, and remove competing regulations.

Mr. Shibley stated that he was pleased to have received a draft copy prior to this meeting and that the program was encouraging clustering design and added that he supported the program.

Mr. Silver stated that the purpose of conservation subdivision from his perspective is to preserve the County's back country areas. Mr. Silver commented that he believed the new version of the conservation subdivision does not provide as much certainty in the future. Mr. Silver followed up by stating that if the proposed program is trumped by the community plans then program is pointless.

Mr. Muto answered that staff's intention is not to have the community plans trump the General Plan, but staff has no control of what the Board of Supervisors ultimately decides. Mr. Muto commented that he believe the proposed conservation program is a good approach.

Mr. Tabb asked if language about the conservation subdivision taking precedent over the community plans could be inserted into the document. Mr. Muto answered that it is possible to insert that kind of language, but he felt that it is important consider community character, and community design.

Mr. Tabb stated that communities will not be happy with removing minimum lot sizes from their community plans.

Mr. Whalen commented on the usage of should vs. shall in the document and that the language the shift to using shall will leave many property owners out of compliance. Mr. Whalen asked how staff chose the target minimum lot sizes.

Mr. Muto answered that the target minimum lot sizes were based on past meeting notes and also looking at the existing minimum lot sizes. Mr. Muto stated that he believed that the program provided the flexibility that we need for existing residential design to resolve the conflict between competing regulations.

Mr. Muto stated that the proposed draft is not much different from the original draft in 2006. Mr. Muto explained that staff is proposing to remove the detailed site plans out of the ordinance to allow for more flexibility in design for developers and applicants.

Mr. Adams stated that current General Plan is based on a forecast of 770,000 people and the new one is based on 660,000 or less which translates into reduction of approximately 30,000 units. This reduction in population was due to the City of San Diego performing a analysis on what the region could accommodate. Mr. Adams stated that one of the primary goals of the conservation subdivision was to prevent a loss of unit yield as a consequence of steep slopes. Mr. Adams asked if a list distributed previously identifying uses was still available for discussion, and if the program provided the necessary flexibility in the lot sizes to prevent loss of unit yield. Mr. Adams also stated that he would like to see a statement saying that the purpose of the program is also to provide for appropriate opportunities to accommodate the future population forecast. Mr. Adams recommended a pilot program so the communities can familiarize themselves with the program.

Mr. Muto answered that the list of uses will need to be refined more, but staffs rationale was that conservation areas are created to protect a resource. Mr. Muto explained that land uses allowed would have to be compatible with the specific natural resource. Mr. Muto also stated that he believes the proposed program allows enough design flexibility for applicants and developers. Mr. Muto stated that staff will look into adding language regarding the population forecast.

Mr. Shibley stated that he agrees with Mr. Adams and that the target minimum lot size table in the document needs to be revised.

Ms. Higgins expressed her concerns with the need to specifically define special resources.

Mr. Lambron asked how do PRDs relate to SPAs and are they in conflict with each other.

Mr. Muto answered that SPAs are intended to allow for a specific plan, and PRDs typically occur where there is not a pre designated SPA. Mr. Muto explained that PRDs

do not require approval from the Board of Supervisors, and are initiated via major use permit. Mr. Muto stated that SPAs will remain a mechanism for flexible subdivision design.

Mr. Wallace stated that community plans are important because communities have a better idea of what the community character. Mr. Wallace asked for clarification on how the proposed program would work.

Mr. Muto answered that in the program the actual unit yield stays the same, but the area where you can build changes depending on the sensitive resource present.

Ms. Messer commented that she was pleased to see that the GP Update project is moving forward. Ms. Messer also expressed her concerns with the lack of language regarding appropriate building footprints. Ms. Messer stated that in residents in the back country under this program will see more development, but it will be planned development with designated open space. Ms. Messer further stated that she believes that this kind of clustering development also provides the County with a better fire protection advantage.

Mr. Stehly stated that he was frustrated to see the possibility of this program being trumped due to the conflict with the community character and the general plan. Mr. Stehly stated that the term community character is over used, and needs to be defined by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Muto stated that community compatibility is important, and is achieved not only through mirroring lot sizes but can be achieved through setbacks, and architectural designs.

Mr. Stehly agreed with Mr. Muto regarding community compatibility. Mr. Stehly also stated that communities keeping clustering

Mr. Thomas stated that the American Institute of Architects would likely support further reduction in lot sizes.

Mr. Shibley wanted to clarify the misconception that the proposed program would increase the allowed density. Mr. Shibley stated that the proposed program gives developers more flexibility in design when clustering is allowed.

Mr. Whalen stated that unless the County addresses the issue with large lot sizes the attorney general will likely sue the County for non compliance with new global warming policies.

Ms. Peterson commented that there is an ambiguity that needs to be clarified in regards to the proposed program and unit yield.

Mr. Silver stated that staff has tried to bridge the gap between the community group and the interest group. Mr. Silver commented that the real burden lays with the steering

committee and that if they reject the conservation program it will be a battle in front of the Board of Supervisors.

Agenda Item VI: Draft Land Use Element

Mr. Muto stated that the last agenda item was to review comments received on the draft land use element. Mr. Muto explained that staff will review and incorporate the comments received on the land use element, and staff will return in fall with a compiled General Plan document including all the elements for the Interest Group to review.

Mr. Shibley stated that he was concerned that there is no mention of clustering in the land use element. Mr. Shibley also recommended that there be more discussion on the topic of purchase and development rights.

Mr. Whalen stated that global climate change still needs to be addressed in this document. Mr. Muto answered that he believes that staff is addressing global climate change through the land use plans, but staff will look to incorporate more way to reduce green house gas emissions.

Mr. Adams asked when the interest group would get to see the rest of the general plan elements. Mr. Muto answered that staff plans to have a compiled draft general plan by fall 2008.

Mr. Shibley asked when the group would be seeing the revised version of the land use element? Mr. Muto stated that in fall the group will see the compiled draft general plan.

Mr. Shibley followed by stating that he would like to see the document sooner. Mr. Shibley motioned to see another compiled version of the Draft Land Use element after the revisions, Ms. Higgins seconded the motion. The Interest group voted to approve the motion.

Mr. Silver asked what the staff's perspective on the 3A issue in Valley Center.

Mr. Muto gave a brief overview on the road segment named 3A and its relation to a specific plan area in Valley Center. Mr. Muto stated that the road segment 3A and specific plan area have been placed on the referral map at the direction of the board of supervisors.

Agenda Item VII: Public Comment

Ms. Ayers asked for clarification on whether SPAs will be allowed under the GP update. Mr. Muto answered that SPAs are allowed by state law and will continue to be used by staff as a planning tool.

Ms. Montgomery stated that she was present to talk bout valley center and asked for the support of the group.

Ms. Baker stated that the conservation subdivision program is important to good fire planning, and that it can also reduce infrastructure costs.