

Summary of Comments and Concerns During the General Plan Update Focus Group Session #12 Urban Policy Area Expansion Possibilities

On Thursday, February 22, 2006 the General Plan Update Team held the twelfth Focus Group Session to receive public input and participation in the Update process. This session was convened to focus on Urban Policy Area (UPA) expansion possibilities, to accommodate SACOG's Blueprint growth allocation for Sacramento County.

Staff began the workshop with a brief summary of the past 13 workshops and focus groups, followed by a recap of the 13th Board workshop and associated discussion. Once staff's review was complete, focus group participants raised a series of questions relating to UPA expansion possibilities. The following summarizes these questions and captures general group discussion.

URBAN POLICY AREA EXPANSION SITES

1. *The Weaver property is proximal to urban services, and adjacent to existing infrastructure boundaries, so it should be included in the USB and UPA.*
2. *Will the Ose property be included in the Natomas Joint Vision Process?*

Response: Although the Weaver property is located near an urbanized area, it is outside of the County's Urban Services Boundary (USB) and the County has not planned to provide urban services to this area. Both the Weaver and Ose properties are located within the Natomas Joint Vision project area. On December 10, 2002 the County Board of Supervisors and the Sacramento City Council each approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlined a joint vision for land use and revenue sharing principles for Natomas. The MOU recognized the City as the agent of development and the County as the agent of permanent open space protection, including farmlands and habitat. As such, staff maintains that the most appropriate venue for addressing such requests would be through (and in the context of) the Natomas Joint Vision process.

URBAN POLICY AREA EXPANSION

1. *Have the Board's insights into holding capacity influenced staff opinion on which UPA expansion sites have most potential?*
2. *Denying UPA expansion proposals that are next to existing infrastructure is "incongruous," except for sites that are environmentally sensitive.*

Response: The Board of Supervisors has requested that staff provide more information on the proposed UPA expansion sites during the March 15th workshop. More specifically, staff was asked to report back on environmental, water,

sewer and traffic issues in the Jackson Highway and East County areas. Staff is recommending Jackson Highway West and South as the best areas to explore for UPA expansion. While not all areas adjacent to existing development may be appropriate for UPA expansion and urbanization during the 2005-2030 timeframe, much of the area between the UPA and USB will most likely be developed to some extent in the future.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

1. *Will UPA expansions be included in the General Plan Update Process?*
2. *Will the Board of Supervisors make the decision on where to expand the UPA, or will the community make the decision?*
3. *What is the status of the Mixed Use Corridor Planning process?*

Response: UPA expansion is one of four growth management strategies for the General Plan Update proposed by staff to accommodate growth over the next 25 years. Staff has held numerous public workshops and focus groups to solicit input from community members regarding UPA expansion. Eventually, the Board may decide to make a preliminary determination on UPA expansion for the draft General Plan which will be analyzed during the enhanced outreach process.

The Mixed Use Corridor Planning project has been assigned a Principal Planner to oversee its implementation and is just now getting off the ground. The Board has directed staff to begin planning for the redevelopment and revitalization of three corridors simultaneously. While the Mixed Use Corridor Planning project is being conducted separately from the General Plan Update, there is much coordination between staff assigned to these projects.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

1. *Sacramento County did not adopt the East County Open Space Plan, despite intensive citizen involvement. The County must “get serious” about stewardship.*
2. *To ensure that agricultural lands remain agricultural, Sacramento County should create economic conditions that make farming feasible, so that farmers are not overburdened with taxes, and can make a profit. The County must also include farmers in decision making on agricultural preservation.*

Response: Sacramento County is updating the Agricultural Element as part of the General Plan Update process. As part of this, County Planning staff will work with Economic Development staff to create policies that make farming more economically feasible.

USE OF EXISTING RAIL LINES

1. *Existing rail lines should be used for light rail or other transit.*
2. *The Jackson Corridor is ideal for rail line re-use, because it is proximal to development and services.*
3. *Existing railroad rights of way should be protected.*
4. *The General Plan Update is a chance to “get it right,” by using existing rail lines for inter-city transit, for example, between Stockton and Sacramento.*
5. *Wilton residents may resist maintaining existing railroad rights of way.*
6. *East County rail lines hold high possibility for “tourist commercial” uses.*

Response: Staff is working with the Sacramento County Department of Transportation and Sacramento Regional Transit to promote the most effective possible transit strategies for the unincorporated area, including new growth areas. These strategies include light rail, bus rapid transit, and other means of utilizing existing rail corridors. Additionally, the Blueprint land use principles, which Sacramento County is trying to promote in its discussion of UPA expansion, are intended to promote good transit service.