

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

Control No.: 20020105
Type: GPB

TO: COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - ADOPTION HEARINGS

CONTACT: *Dave Defanti, Senior Planner, 874-6155*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The first General Plan adoption hearing was held with the Planning Commission on June 8, 2009. Staff gave an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the County's efforts to meet state mandates related to climate change, and made recommendations on a number of outstanding issues. Approximately 15 members of the public testified. The County Planning Commission asked staff to report back on a number of issues raised during the hearing. This staff report provides a report back on: issues related to leapfrog development, policies related to agricultural mitigation and protection, specific landowner requests for changes to the General Plan, and the potential fiscal impact of General Plan policies. In addition, this report provides additional information and recommendations regarding Mather Airport noise contour methodology and various transportation-related issues.

Recommendations

1. Receive public testimony and make recommendations on the following outstanding issues:
 - a. Growth Management
 - b. Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Designation
 - c. Policy AG-5
 - d. Alternative Public Facilities Element Parks Section
 - e. Alternative Conservation Element Water Section
 - f. Mather Noise Contour Methodology
 - g. New Airport section in the Land Use Element
 - h. Roadway Downgrade Alternatives

2. On July 13, 2009 at Adoption Hearing #3:
 - a. Close the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report
 - b. Determine that the environmental analysis is adequate and complete and that the Draft Environmental Impact Report is appropriate
 - c. Direct staff to prepare the Final Environmental Impact Report

3. Forward recommendations on the Draft 2030 General Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

Measures/Evaluation

The 2030 General Plan promotes the County’s vision to be the most livable community with the highest-quality public service by guiding growth and development within the County through the year 2030.

Fiscal Impact

The 2030 General Plan sets policy for a wide variety of County activities and initiatives which collectively seek to improve the long-term fiscal sustainability of the County. In the near-term, adoption of the General Plan update will conclude a 7-year effort to meet State mandates and comply with requirements to maintain the General Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The first General Plan adoption hearing was held with the Planning Commission on June 8, 2009. Staff gave an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the County’s efforts to meet state mandates related to climate change, and made recommendations on outstanding issues. Public testimony was heard on a range of issues. This staff report provides information on several issues raised during the hearings where additional information was requested by the County Planning Commission and includes additional information related to the outstanding issues identified by staff.

1. Extension of Public Comment Period for General Plan Draft EIR

At the June 8 public adoption hearing, public testimony was given suggesting that there has not been adequate time to review the Draft 2030 General Plan (Draft Plan) and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The Draft Plan was released over 2.5 years ago in November 2006. However, the DEIR was released in May 2009 and the public was given 45 days per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to review and comment on the adequacy of the document. Although consistent with state law, staff concurs that a 45 day review period is quite brief for a document of this magnitude and importance. As such, staff recommends that the public comment period be extended to July 13 and that the County Planning Commission close the public comment period at the third public adoption hearing scheduled on that date.

2. Methodology to Use to Determine Mather Airfield 60 CNEL Noise Contour

Aircraft Noise Exposure Contours

An Aircraft Noise Exposure Contour is a line on a map that represents the geographic extent of a level of noise generated by airplanes approaching and departing an airport. In California, the noise level represented by the noise contour is expressed by a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). Per County policy, the 60 CNEL noise contour defines the area around an airport in which residential uses are prohibited. As such, 60 CNEL noise contours play two key roles in regards to land use planning: 1) they protect the airport from encroachment of incompatible uses, and; 2) they protect sensitive land uses from noise associated with airport operations.

Determining 60 CNEL for Mather Airfield

The 60 CNEL noise contour for Mather Airfield currently shown on the County's 1993 General Plan is based on Mather operating as an Air Force facility. As an Air Force facility, the type of airplanes, the approach and departure paths and altitudes, and the frequency of flights resulted in a significant amount of noise, and consequently, a very large 60 CNEL noise contour. Since this facility no longer functions as an Air Force base, its function as a civilian facility has resulted in significant changes to airport operations and resulting noise. The General Plan needs to be updated to reflect this changed noise environment, but a question remains as to which methodology to use to determine Mather's 60 CNEL noise contour to be used for planning purposes.

Board of Supervisors Direction

During workshops held in March and April 2006 regarding Airport land use planning initiatives for Sacramento International, Mather and McClellan Airports, the Board of Supervisors requested that the Draft General Plan EIR study both the Theoretic Capacity and Master Plan Forecast methodologies for determining the 60 CNEL noise contour for Mather. Employing either methodology would result in a much smaller 60 CNEL noise contour than what is currently shown on the 1993 General Plan Land Use Diagram, and as a result, could open up a significant amount of land for potential residential development. However, the 60 CNEL noise contour based on the Theoretic Capacity methodology is larger (i.e. encompasses more area) than the noise contour based on the Master Plan Forecast.

Master Plan Forecast

The Master Plan Forecast methodology is based on aircraft activity and development per the Airport Master Plan, a document that details the long-term development of an airport. As defined by federal guidance, the planning horizon of an Airport Master Plan is 20 years. An Airport Master Plan determines a plan for future development designed to meet projected needs given community, environmental, and political considerations. It is also a tool to ensure that aviation planning is coordinated among federal, state, regional and local agencies. The County is currently updating the Mather Airport Master Plan, which has a planning horizon of 2025. The draft Master Plan is presently undergoing environmental review, and a Draft EIR is anticipated to be released at the end of this calendar year.

Theoretic Capacity

The Theoretic Capacity noise exposure contour is based on the maximum aircraft activity that can be accommodated at the ultimate ("theoretic") buildout of the landside facilities (terminal facilities, air cargo facilities and other building and ground areas). This approach allows consideration beyond a typical 20-year Master Plan planning horizon because it is not tied to any forecast market condition. The State of California guidance on preparing Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans directs those plans to use a planning horizon greater than 20 years and clearly states that 20 years is insufficient for planning purposes. The Theoretic Capacity methodology was used for the preparation of the McClellan Airport noise exposure contour that was used in the McClellan Reuse Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and was also approved by the Board in May 2005 for the purpose of the SACOG update of the McClellan ALUP.

Staff's Recommendation

Staff recommends the County take a prudent approach to reducing the existing, larger noise contour by using the Theoretic Capacity noise exposure contour. As aircraft operations increase over time, the noise contours for County Airport System airports can be expected to increase in size. The Theoretic Capacity noise contour would ensure that future residential development does not occur on property where noise contour expansion is likely. While this approach would reduce to some extent the County's ability to provide residential and mixed use development near the County's urban core (a key tenet of the General Plan and SACOGs Blueprint Vision), many retail, commercial or industrial uses would still be allowed. The Theoretic Capacity methodology is the approach most consistent with state guidance regarding the need to look beyond the typical 20 year planning horizon. It allows for future growth at Mather beyond the 20-year timeframe of the Mather Airport Master Plan while providing greater protection to both the airport and sensitive nearby uses.

3. Transportation

The DEIR considers the environmental impacts of various project alternatives and CEQA alternatives. These alternatives vary in the designation of the proposed land uses, both in location and density, and the supporting transportation network. Since there is a direct correlation between land use and transportation, each alternative land use scenario results in differing impacts on the proposed transportation network. To help understand this relationship and the associated impacts on mobility and the transportation network, the table in Attachment A summarizes the land use and transportation assumptions for each project alternative and the generalized impacts to transportation.

Staff's Recommendation

The DEIR transportation and circulation analysis of the proposed project and the project alternatives has provided a wealth of data on the systematic capacity and operation of the proposed transportation network given each land use scenario. From this data, the County's Department of Transportation (DOT) is able to fine tune and align the circulation network to the proposed land uses. DOT recommends modifications to the Transportation Plan of the Circulation Element as illustrated in Table 1 on the following page. Please note that DOT's recommendation includes downgrading both Dry Creek Road and Eagles Nest Road, which is consistent with public testimony given during the first General Plan adoption hearing. In addition to these modifications, DOT also recommends expanding the intent and use of the Continuous Right-Turn Lane to include use by transit vehicles.

Table 1

DOT's Recommended Modifications to the Transportation Plan of the Circulation Element

Roadway	Limits	Draft GPU Designation	Recommended GPU Designation
U Street	W. 6 th St – 28th St	4-lane Arterial	2-lane Collector
Calvine Road	Vineyard Rd – Grant Line Rd	6-lane Thoroughfare	Post 2030 6-lane Thoroughfare
Dry Creek Rd	U St – Sac City limits	4-lane Arterial	2-lane Collector
Eagles Nest Rd	Jackson Rd – Grant Line Rd	4-lane Arterial	2-lane Collector
Elder Creek Rd	So. Watt Ave – Excelsior Rd	6-lane Thoroughfare	Post 2030 6-lane Thoroughfare
Excelsior Rd	Jackson Rd – Gerber Rd	4-lane Arterial	6-lane Thoroughfare
Florin Rd	Excelsior Rd – Sunrise Blvd	6-lane Thoroughfare	Post 2030 6-lane Thoroughfare
Grant Line Rd	White Rock Rd – Sunrise Blvd	6-lane Thoroughfare	Limited Access , 6-lane Thoroughfare
Hazel Ave	Placer Co Line – Easton Valley Pkwy	6-lane Thoroughfare	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT mixed use lanes
Jackson Rd	So Watt Ave – Grant Line Rd	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT mixed use lanes	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT exclusive lanes
Jackson Rd	Stonehouse Rd – Murieta Pkwy	Rural Collector	4-lane Arterial
Metro Air Park Blvd	Elverta Rd – Elkhorn Blvd	6-lane Thoroughfare	Post 2030 6-lane Thoroughfare
Power Inn Rd	Folsom Blvd – Stockton Blvd	4-lane Arterial	4-lane Arterial, BRT mixed use lanes
Power Inn Rd	Stockton Blvd – Calvine Rd	6-lane Thoroughfare	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT mixed use lanes
So Watt Ave	US 50 – Jackson Rd	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT mixed use lanes	6-lane Thoroughfare, BRT exclusive lanes
Scott Rd	US 50 – Easton Valley Pkwy	6-lane Thoroughfare	Limited Access , 6-lane Thoroughfare
Stockton Blvd	65 th Ave – Florin Rd	4-lane Arterial	6-lane Thoroughfare
White Rock Rd	Grant Line Rd – Scott Rd	4-lane Arterial	Limited Access , 6-lane Thoroughfare

4. *Landowner Requests*

Numerous landowner requests were made during the scoping of the Draft Plan between 2004 and 2007. These requests ranged from changing General Plan designations for specific properties to expanding the USB and/or the UPA to accommodate specific tracts of land. Staff routinely tracked these requests and presented them to the Board during the 26 workshops. Some of these landowner requests were consistent with the Board's direction related to growth management strategy, while many were intentionally not included in the Draft Plan nor analyzed in the DEIR.

Staff anticipates that such requests will continue to be made throughout the public adoption hearings. For instance, on May 6, 2009, the Planning Department received a letter from The Schaber Company, requesting a General Plan land use diagram designation change for a property located between Grant Line Road and the Cosumnes River, just east of the City of Elk Grove. Granting such landowner requests at this time poses numerous complications to the Draft Plan and the DEIR. Most notably, such requests have not been scoped in the Draft Plan and thus have not undergone environmental review pursuant to CEQA. Regardless of the merits of these requests, to approve them would require potentially significant amendments to the DEIR, necessitating additional staff time and funding to process. Potential consequences include additional expenditure of public funds to re-scope the Draft Plan and DEIR, potential re-circulation of the DEIR that would delay the preparation of the Final EIR, and extending the General Plan adoption process.

Given these potential complications, staff recommends that such landowner requests be submitted as applications to the Planning Department if/when they are consistent with General Plan policy. This would allow for full cost recovery of processing the applications and allowing for a thorough review of the request so that the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors can make an informed decision.

5. *Policies Related to Agricultural Mitigation and Protection*

In-County Mitigation

Existing general plan policy requires mitigation for the loss of prime farmland with protection of in-kind, nearby farmland. The Draft Plan evaluates a policy change to such require mitigation to remain within Sacramento County. The purpose of this change is to ensure that the rewards of agricultural land preservation remain in the County for the economic, social and quality of life benefit of our residents. Those benefits include maintenance of agricultural productivity and associated jobs and revenues. This position is supported by the Sacramento County Farm Bureau and the County Agricultural Commissioner.

Types of Farmland Subject to Mitigation

Several existing General Plan policies are informed by the Important Farmland Map Categories soil classification system from the State Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. The system is applied to other important soil conservation applications, including Williamson Act and state-wide farmland conversion statistics. The classifications are:

2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - ADOPTION HEARINGS

- Prime Farmland - Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Statewide Importance - Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Unique Farmland - Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Local Importance - Lands which do not qualify as Prime, Statewide, or Unique designation but are currently irrigated crops or pasture or non-irrigated crops; lands that would be Prime or Statewide designation and have been improved for irrigation but are now idle; and lands which currently support confined livestock, poultry operations, and aquaculture.
- Grazing Land - Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- Urban and Built-up Land - Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel.
- Other Land - Land not included in any other mapping category. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

The 1993 General Plan only requires mitigation for Prime Farmland. It does not acknowledge the value of Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance.

The Important Farmland mapping and classification system combines technical soil ratings with current land use to classify farmland. Staff believes that basing the mitigation requirement on a classification system that relies heavily on the temporary agricultural land uses is inappropriate and does not provide for adequate mitigation for the permanent loss of inherently valuable farmland.

Land classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance must possess certain physical attributes and it must have been used for irrigated agriculture anytime within four years of state mapping. Unique farmland includes lesser quality soils, but these lands are often used to produce the State's leading agricultural crops such as vineyards and orchards. Lands that meet the physical standards of the three aforementioned classes but are idle are classified as Farmland of Local Importance. In fact, the definition for Sacramento County Farmland of Local Importance includes "land that would be Prime or Statewide designation and have been improved for irrigation but are now idle."

If mitigation is not required for Farmland of Local Importance, then highly productive farmland could be permanently lost without mitigation simply as a result of being temporarily taken out production and halting irrigation for four years. This loss of highly productive farmland would be contrary to the intent of General Plan policies to maintain productive agriculture in Sacramento County. Therefore, staff recommends changing certain Agricultural Element and Conservation Element policies such that all four categories, Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance, are subject to mitigation to ensure protection of farmland Sacramento County.

6. *Leapfrog Development*

Leapfrog development generally means developing lands in a manner that requires the extension of public facilities and services from their existing terminal point through intervening undeveloped areas that are scheduled for development at a later time. Essentially, it is “leaping over” an undeveloped area to urbanize land that is not adjacent to planned or existing development, thereby leaving undeveloped land in the intervening area. Policy LU-13 of the Draft Plan addresses this issue:

LU-13. The County will promote new urban developments within identified growth areas and prohibit land use projects which are for noncontiguous development, specifically proposals outside of the Urban Policy Area (i.e. leapfrog development).

The intent of LU-13 is to prevent leapfrog development at the macro (master plan) scale rather than at the micro (parcel-level) scale. This policy does not prevent a property owner from developing their property consistent with an approved plan and/or existing zoning if there are vacant parcels between the property and existing urban development. Rather, LU-13’s purpose is to discourage master plan developments that are not contiguous to existing planned communities or master plan areas to ensure that infrastructure and services are extended in an efficient fashion. The following are the reasons why leapfrog development at the macro/master plan level should be discouraged.

- Increased Cost to Provide Infrastructure and Public/Municipal Services: In the staff report for the first adoption hearing, it was noted that the location and timing of new development can impact (positively or negatively) the County’s ability to provide excellent municipal services to these areas. The staff report pointed out that in outlying metropolitan areas, dispersed development patterns can inflate the costs of new infrastructure by 20 to 40 percent, some of which may be subsidized by local government. The resulting higher costs are passed on to homeowners in new developments and/or existing ratepayers. The following are more details about the increased development and public services costs that leapfrog development requires.
 - Higher Development Exactions: The higher cost of providing infrastructure to a dispersed development pattern is reflected in exactions on new development. For instance, development fees for a single-family residence in Carmichael are \$25,000±, whereas development fees for a single-family residence in North Vineyard Station and Elverta (which are not adjacent to existing urban areas) are \$87,000± and \$79,000± respectively. Extending infrastructure and services through undeveloped land to serve a leapfrog development is inherently expensive; that expense is either borne by the developer through higher development fees, the homeowner through

higher home prices, and/or the County by subsidizing the cost of infrastructure and services. Staff believes that phasing growth in new growth areas to efficiently extend infrastructure and services can help reduce the cost of providing infrastructure and services, thereby lowering development fees and housing costs.

- Increased Costs for Public Safety and Emergency Services: More fire and police stations per capita are required in dispersed communities than those in more compactly developed areas. Generally, no more than 6 minutes should elapse between the emergency call and the arrival of firefighters. Leapfrog development patterns create a situation where additional dispatch points (sheriff stations, fire stations, etc.) and the personnel to staff them are required or more residents will have to accept the risk that accompanies decreased quality of service (HOK, 2005, p. 2).¹ The result is that dispersed communities often require more fire and police stations per capita than those in existing urbanized areas (Ridlington Heavner, 2003, p. 10).²
- Higher Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT): Because of a dispersed development pattern, residents in leapfrog developments have to drive further for both work and non-work trips, releasing more emissions into the region's air shed. The Sacramento metropolitan area is currently designated as a non-attainment area for both federal and state ozone and particulate matter air quality standards, and is one of the top ten worst air quality areas in the nation. In addition, a greater portion of a residents income must be devoted to transportation-related expenses, as the automobile may be the only viable mode of transportation.
- Increased Transportation Costs: The staff report prepared for the first General Plan adoption hearing (Attachment B) articulated much of the background for a strategy that emphasizes commercial corridor revitalization and accommodating growth nearer to existing urbanized areas. The SACOG Blueprint project was initiated in part because of the exorbitant costs associated with serving a sprawling regional development pattern with an adequate transportation system. Some of the cost is reflected in the higher proportion of income being spent on transportation for households in leapfrog developments. This is due to the higher levels of auto dependency that was documented earlier in this paper. The staff report also stated that besides placing an additional economic burden upon households, dispersed development patterns could negatively affect the County's ability to attain funding for certain transportation projects.

7. *Fiscal Impact of General Plan Policies*

The purpose of the General Plan is to guide decisions that affect Sacramento County. As such, policies in the General Plan may result in positive or negative fiscal impacts, including helping to generate income and/or resulting in a net saving or cost to the County, residents, developers, homebuilders, homebuyers, etc. However, the majority of these policies are general in nature; therefore, it is difficult if not impossible to quantify the potential savings or costs related to these policies. In addition, some policies may lead to both additional costs as well as a net savings. For instance, policies that call for greater energy efficiency of homes may lead to an increased initial cost to homebuyers, but would likely result in a net savings to

¹ HOK (2005), *Public Costs by Development Type*, Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth.

² Ridlington, Elizabeth and Heavner, Brad (2003), *Accounting for Sprawl's Costs*, MaryPIRG Foundation.

that homebuyer over time since the home would use less energy. Furthermore, many policies are written with words like *encourage, explore, may*, etc., again leading to difficulties related to quantifying savings or costs, as they are not proscriptive in nature nor require that specific, measurable standards be met. One example of such a policy is PF-125 from the alternative Public Facilities Element Parks section (emphasis added):

PF-125 To help assure that local recreation and park district Master Plan standards for levels of service may be achieved and maintained, the County *may* require new development to dedicate land, pay in-lieu fees, development impact fees, or otherwise contribute a fair share to the acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities. For development in infill areas where land dedication may not be practical, the County in cooperation with the affected park district *may explore creative alternatives* for providing park and recreation facilities.

This language offers a variety of options to meet the intent of the policy, which is to adequately establish, operate and maintain public parks. Since this policy and many others like it offer options rather than require that specific standards be met, it is difficult to quantify the potential fiscal implications of its implementation.

Although quantifying the fiscal impacts of many General Plan policies is difficult, the County has engaged in a concerted effort to reduce development impact fees in a manner that will not negatively affect the quality of new communities. One method proposed by County staff to accomplish this is to phase the master planning of new growth areas. The purpose of this is to ensure efficient extension of infrastructure and services, thereby lowering the cost to the County related to provision of municipal services, as well as to reduce public and private money spent on building necessary infrastructure. Extending infrastructure in a logical and efficient manner can lead to significant savings to the County, the developer and homebuilder (in terms of lower development impact fees), and ultimately the homeowner.

8. *Sustainable Streets language*

The DEIR recommends a number of mitigation measures to reduce the General Plan's impacts to roadway level of service, including TC-3:

- TC-3.** The County shall adopt a smart-growth program that will facilitate the expansion of walkways, bikeways, and transit services and decreases in vehicle miles traveled. This requirement may be met by adopting the **proposed Smart Growth Streets program** described in this chapter, or by including a policy within the General Plan requiring adoption of a smart-growth program consisting of the following minimum elements:
- A. A policy focusing on overall mobility to supplement the existing vehicular mobility standards.
 - B. A policy or set of policies that allow enhancements to non-auto travel modes as mitigation pursuant to the policy described in TC-3.A.
 - C. Replacement or alteration of the minimum parking standards with standards that reflect and accommodate average use for the region, or other method that results in overall reductions in per-project parking requirements.

2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - ADOPTION HEARINGS

Attachment C includes the proposed Smart Growth Streets program. Staff recommends including this language in the Draft Plan per TC-3 to mitigate LOS impacts and to enable safe and efficient mobility and access for all users of smart growth streets while positively contributing to the adjacent corridor, surrounding community and natural environment.

CONCLUSION

During the first General Plan adoption hearing on June 8, the Planning Commission directed staff to return with responses to questions and comments made by the Commissioners and the public. This report provides answers to those questions, and also gives a more detailed discussion on a few outstanding issues briefly discussed at the first adoption hearing, including transportation issues and the methodologies for determining the noise contour for Mather Airfield.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary of Land Use and Transportation Assumptions for DEIR Project Alternative and their Generalized Impacts to Transportation
- B. Staff Report from Planning Commission General Plan Adoption Hearing #1 held on June 8, 2009
- C. Smart Growth Streets Language

This report was prepared on June 16, 2009.

**Summary of Land Use and Transportation Assumptions for DEIR Project
Alternative and their Generalized Impacts to Transportation**

Alternative	Land Use Assumptions	Transportation Network Assumptions	Impacts to Transportation Network
No Project Alternative	1993 land uses + Cordova Hills Project 8,340 DU 5,670 jobs	1993 transportation network	
Proposed General Plan	This alternative has the greatest amount of growth that is spread throughout the County. Includes: Grant Line East Jackson Corridor West of Watt Commercial Corridors Additional 72,740 DU, 45,820 jobs over No Project Alternative	Proposed Transportation network	Since this alternative includes the greatest amount of growth, there are greater impacts to the transportation network when compared to other alternatives with less growth.
Remove Grant Line East	Omits the growth in the Grant Line East area, including Cordova Hills. Additional 49,770 DU, 24,950 jobs over the No Project Alternative 22,970 fewer DU, 20,870 fewer jobs compared to the proposed General Plan Alternative	Same as Proposed General Plan Alternative	The lower amount of growth results in less overall impacts to the transportation system compared to the Proposed General Plan Alternative. Omission of growth in the Grant Line East area reduces impacts on local roadways in the east county area.

<p>Focused Growth Alternative</p>	<p>Limits the growth in the Jackson Highway Corridor to a smaller footprint, west of Excelsior Rd.</p> <p>Omits the growth in the Grant Line East area, including Cordova Hills.</p> <p>Same growth in DU and jobs as in the Remove Grant Line East Alternative</p>	<p>Same as Proposed General Plan Alternative</p>	<p>The lower amount of growth results in less overall impacts to the transportation system compared to the Proposed General Plan Alternative.</p> <p>Greater density in growth in the urban area results in slightly greater impacts to the transportation system in the urban area.</p> <p>Omission of growth in the east County area reduces impacts on local roadways in the east county area.</p> <p>However, the higher densities help to support greater utilization of transit.</p>
<p>Mixed Use Alternative</p>	<p>Omits the growth in the Grant Line East area, including Cordova Hills, and the Jackson Highway Corridor.</p> <p>All growth would be directed to existing and planned urban areas.</p> <p>Additional 36,250 DU and 920 fewer jobs over No Project Alternative</p> <p>34,860 fewer DU, 46,680 fewer jobs</p>	<p>Same as Proposed General Plan Alternative except that selected major thoroughfares would have 2 of the 6 lanes dedicated to bus rapid transit use only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton Blvd • Jackson Hwy • Sunrise Blvd • Watt Ave • Elk Grove-Florin • Florin Rd 	<p>An even lower amount of growth results in less overall impacts on some segments of the transportation system compared to the Proposed General Plan Alternative.</p> <p>However, other roadway segments have greater impacts due to overall density and the loss of vehicle capacity on some major thoroughfares as a result of the dedicated transit lanes</p>

	compared to the proposed General Plan Alternative		on major thoroughfares. However, the higher densities and dedicated transit service supports greater utilization of transit.
Arterial Downgrade Alternative	Same land use growth as the proposed General Plan Alternative	Same as Proposed General Plan Alternative except that not currently built 4-lane arterials throughout the County would be downgraded to 2-lane roadways.	<p>The arterial roadway downgrades results in an overall loss of roadway capacity on much of the transportation network.</p> <p>The loss of capacity in the downgraded arterials and the resulting rerouting of vehicle trips to other roadways results in higher levels of congestion in many transportation corridors.</p>
Thoroughfare Downgrade Alternative	Same land use growth as the proposed General Plan Alternative	Same as Proposed General Plan Alternative except that not currently built 6-lane thoroughfares throughout the County would be downgraded to 4-lane arterials.	<p>The thoroughfare roadway downgrades results in an overall loss of roadway capacity on much of the transportation network.</p> <p>The loss of capacity in the downgraded thoroughfare and the resulting rerouting of vehicle trips to other roadways results in higher levels of congestion in many transportation corridors.</p>

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

Control No.: 2002-0105
Type: GPB

TO: COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: 2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - ADOPTION HEARINGS
CONTACT: *Dave Defanti, Senior Planner, 874-6155*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

This project proposes adoption of an updated General Plan for the County of Sacramento. The existing General Plan was adopted in 1993 and is approaching the end of its 2010 timeframe. The proposed General Plan will guide growth within the County through the year 2030. Elements with major updates include:

- Land Use Element and Land Use Diagram, including major changes to growth management strategies and a proposal to expand the Urban Policy Area;
- Circulation Element and Transportation Plan, a major rewrite to focus on overall mobility and creation of a multi-modal transportation system;
- Conservation Element, comprehensive update to reflect current regulatory environment and local initiatives including the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan;
- Open Space Element, including new Open Space Vision diagram and policy changes;
- Agricultural Element, including support for agri-tourism and protect important farmland;
- Human Services Element, including support for closer integration with the land use planning process;
- Noise Element, revised to address current noise environment;
- Economic Development Element, a new element; and
- Delta Protection Element, created as a new element from an existing policy document.

Several new growth areas are being considered, including: an area West of Watt Avenue in the North Highlands community plan area; the Jackson Highway Corridor, north and south of Jackson Highway in the Rancho Cordova and Vineyard community plan areas; and the Grant Line East area which is east of the City of Rancho Cordova in the Cosumnes community plan area. The Land Use Element also includes a new Commercial Corridor strategy to revitalize a number of key corridors with strategic improvements and additional development.

Staff provided an introduction and overview of the Draft 2030 General Plan (Draft Plan) to the County Planning Commission during a series of four workshops held in March, April and May. This staff report provides more detail regarding the outstanding issues identified in these workshops and includes staff's recommendation for each issue. Planning staff will give a presentation at the hearing to highlight each issue and ask the Planning Commission for their recommendations. Additionally, DERA staff will give a presentation on the major conclusions of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) prepared for the Draft Plan and suggested mitigation measures (Attachment A).

Recommendations

1. Receive public testimony and make recommendations on the following outstanding issues:
 - a. Growth Management
 - b. Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Designation
 - c. Policy AG-5
 - d. Alternative Public Facilities Element Parks Section
 - e. Alternative Conservation Element Water Section
 - f. Mather Noise Contour Methodology
 - g. New Airport section in the Land Use Element
 - h. Roadway Downgrade Alternatives

2. After June 15th:
 - a. Close the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report
 - b. Determine that the environmental analysis is adequate and complete and that the Draft Environmental Impact Report is appropriate
 - c. Direct staff to prepare the Final Environmental Impact Report

3. Forward recommendations on the Draft 2030 General Plan to the Board of Supervisors

Measures/Evaluation

The 2030 General Plan promotes the County's vision to be the most livable community with the highest-quality public service by guiding growth and development within the County through the year 2030

Fiscal Impact

The 2030 General Plan sets policy for a wide variety of County activities and initiatives which collectively seek to improve the long-term fiscal sustainability of the County. In the near-term, adoption of the General Plan update will conclude a 7-year effort to meet State mandates and comply with requirements to maintain the General Plan.

Introduction

The existing General Plan was written by County staff in the late 1980's and released as a draft in 1990. There was very little outreach to the public and stakeholders prior to the release of the draft. As a result, the public adoption hearings at the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors were very extensive, as they were the first public venues at which interested parties could provide comments and try to shape the plan. As a result, the Draft Plan changed dramatically through the hearing process, so much so that additional environmental analysis was required mid-stream.

When the General Plan Update project was scoped in 2002, the County chose to conduct a more "front-loaded" process where staff would work with the Board of Supervisors, the public, and other stakeholders to collectively develop the Draft General Plan before a draft was created. Accordingly, the Draft Plan was shaped through an extensive public process conducted between 2004 and 2007 that included well-attended public outreach workshops, numerous stakeholder meetings, and 26 public working sessions held by the Board of Supervisors. A benefit to this approach is that the Draft Plan has been shaped and reviewed through the participation of hundreds of individuals, groups, departments, organizations, agencies, etc. As such, this Draft Plan represents a complete and well-vetted document with minimal outstanding issues remaining. Given the amount of time, effort and outreach invested in this project before the Draft Plan was released, staff anticipates an efficient public adoption process that will be focused primarily on the outstanding issues outlined in this staff report.

Outstanding Issues

Staff has identified a few outstanding issues, many of which were introduced to the Planning Commission and discussed in previous workshop staff reports and presentations. The outstanding issues are as follows:

- Growth Management
- Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Designation
- Policy AG-5
- Alternative Public Facilities Element Parks Section
- Alternative Conservation Element Water Section
- Mather Noise Contour Methodology
- New Airport section in the Land Use Element
- Roadway Downgrade Alternatives

This staff report includes a section on each of these issues along with Planning staff's recommendation.

Issue #1: Growth Management**Summary:**

Issue: The Draft 2030 General Plan studies expansion of the UPA by approximately 20,000 acres, resulting in a potential 40% to 100% oversupply beyond current 2030 SACOG growth projections.

Recommendation: Implement a phasing program to guide buildout of new growth areas. This would implement Draft EIR Mitigation Measure LU-1. Adopt the approach outlined in Option #2 below (the “Phased Approach”) to proactively address how and when growth should occur within the Jackson Highway and Grant Line east area, thereby resolving many of the issues outlined in the following section. Additionally, establish criteria to evaluate proposed applications for master planning processes within new growth areas.

Growth Management Basics

The County’s existing General Plan introduced a number of breakthrough growth management strategies, including identification of an Urban Policy Area (UPA), an Urban Services Boundary (USB), and the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD). In addition, the County implemented a program to work with private development interests in the creation of new communities through County-initiated specific plans and developer initiated master plans. This has been an effective strategy in managing new growth over the last 16 years.

The Draft 2030 General Plan (Draft Plan) builds upon this strong foundation of proactive growth management. Many of the workshops held to shape the 2030 Plan were devoted to discussing strategies to accommodate development consistent with SACOG’s Blueprint Vision and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), particularly the commercial corridor strategy and the expansion of the UPA (see Attachment B for background information on the Blueprint and MTP). A positive outcome of this thorough scoping process has been the early implementation of an extensive commercial corridor revitalization program. These efforts have been widely supported by the Board and community. This program achieves a number of the General Plan’s objectives, including revitalization of the County’s “mature” existing communities, efforts to enhance community amenities and retail and employment opportunities, and responsibly accommodating development according to smart growth principles. In addition, while not originally a direct objective of the corridor revitalization program, it will likely be a key approach in the County’s emissions reduction strategy to meet State mandates related to climate change.

A number of the public workshops were specifically devoted to addressing UPA expansion. During those workshops, staff recommended that the UPA be expanded only enough to accommodate growth anticipated by SACOG that could not be accommodated in infill areas,

planned communities and commercial corridors. Staff also recommended that UPA expansion occur in a manner consistent with SACOG's adopted Blueprint Vision and Blueprint Principles. However, the Draft Plan as currently scoped would expand the UPA by more than 20,000 acres, far more than necessary to accommodate growth anticipated by SACOG through a traditional constrained land approach (see Attachment C for more details). Staff considers this disconnect to be an outstanding issue that should be resolved during the General Plan adoption hearings. The discussion that follows summarizes the relationship of the Blueprint and MTP to the County's General Plan, the issue of excess capacity absent a phasing plan, and potential solutions to address this issue.

Relationship of Blueprint/MTP to County's Draft General Plan

In 2004, while Sacramento County was updating the General Plan, the Blueprint Vision process was nearing conclusion. SACOG approached the County regarding the potential to accommodate the Blueprint Vision's growth allocation and principles through the General Plan Update process. During Workshop #9 on October 26, 2005, the Board of Supervisors conceptually endorsed SACOG's Blueprint allocation and directed County Planning staff to develop a method to accommodate the proposed growth consistent with the Blueprint Principles. Staff returned in Workshop #10 on November 9, 2005 with the proposal of the four growth management strategies that were ultimately studied as a part of the Draft Plan.

The proposed growth management strategies were discussed at length during subsequent workshops with the Board of Supervisors. As a result of these discussions, the Draft Plan was scoped to study additional development in commercial corridors, continued buildout of infill parcels per existing zoning, buildout of planned communities per their adopted plans, and expansion of the UPA. The first three strategies are consistent with the Blueprint principles. However, some of the new growth areas identified in the Draft Plan are outside of the urban footprint identified in the Blueprint Vision and the MTP and represent a potential land supply for new growth well above what is necessary to meet assumed demand. Furthermore, the recent decline in the economy has led to a drastic decrease in the annual issuance of building permits to well below the average demand assumed in the Blueprint and MTP.

As part of the MTP project, SACOG reduced its growth allocations to reflect recent market trends, development activity data, individual jurisdictions' growth plans and the best information available regarding issues such as flood control and habitat. Based on the new growth allocations, the unincorporated area of Sacramento County would be expected to accommodate approximately 74,397 additional dwelling units by 2030. This allocation is 25,000 units less than the original Blueprint Vision growth allocation used to scope the County's General Plan. The potential holding capacity of the Draft Plan is approximately 145,000 additional dwelling units, nearly double what is necessary to meet projected demand.

Growth Management: The Issue of Excess Capacity Absent a Phasing Plan

Managing growth in a strategic manner is a legitimate interest of local government. As discussed during the formation of the Draft Plan, the Board is interested in ensuring an adequate and competitive long-term supply of land for business, commerce, employment, homes and community amenities. The four growth management strategies in the Draft Plan were developed

to ensure such a supply is identified and maintained. However, the Draft Plan as scoped by the Board identifies more supply for new growth than would be necessary to accommodate demand. The Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas together are comparable in size to the City of Rancho Cordova. Even if demand materializes to necessitate this amount of new growth, developing an area the size of a city by 2030 requires careful planning and coordination, especially given the increasing importance of providing infrastructure and services in an economically sustainable manner. As such, the County should proactively address this issue by phasing growth in a logical, efficient, and desirable fashion and by making available land for new growth consistent with projected demand. Prematurely committing more land to urbanization than can be absorbed in the market may lead to a number of undesirable outcomes, including:

- Leapfrog development pressure
- An imbalance in focus between revitalizing the existing mature communities and creating and serving new neighborhoods
- Unintended consequences to the partially built-out planned communities if newer areas out-compete for new buyers
- Inefficient extension of infrastructure and public services resulting in higher development fees and/or operating costs
- Pressure to approve uses that provide near term economic benefits to the developer over a long-term economically sustainable mix of land uses
- Impacts to the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan and the Capital Southeast Connector
- Difficulty in meeting recent State mandates related to climate change initiatives

These potential consequences should be considered when making decisions regarding growth management in the context of the General Plan adoption hearings. Details regarding these issues are provided below, followed by staff's recommendation to phase growth in order to reduce or eliminate these potential outcomes.

Leapfrog Development Pressure

Ideally, development of new growth areas would begin closest to the urbanized areas and move outward. Absent a phasing program, the larger an area designated for new growth, the greater the potential that developments will be requested that are disconnected both from each other and from the existing urbanized area. This kind of scattered, leapfrog development makes it difficult to provide adequate transportation choices and walkable neighborhoods and also causes difficulties with master planning, financing, transportation, water, drainage, and other infrastructure components.

An imbalance in focus between revitalizing existing mature communities and creating and serving new neighborhoods

The early focus of the 2030 General Plan Update was shifting resources to focus on the unincorporated area's existing mature communities. Specific actions were taken, including the creation of an Infill Coordinator position and the Corridor Planning program. In fact, the corridor strategy was so well received by the Board and communities that the Board initiated

four corridor planning areas, well in advance of the General Plan adoption. This program recognizes that in many ways, development within existing urban areas is more difficult than development within new growth areas, partly because of the lack of a coordinated master developer. In addition, parcels may be of odd configurations and difficult to develop within existing zoning requirements, infrastructure may be outdated and undersized, and existing communities may resist change, particularly within established residential neighborhoods. Projects in new growth areas have their own sets of challenges, but because initial land costs are likely lower and comprise much larger quantities of developable land, costs can be easier to allocate. Consequently, excessive capacity in new growth areas is likely to draw development away from the more challenging revitalization project areas and infill sites.

Unintended consequences to the partially built-out planned communities if newer areas out-compete for new buyers

Three planned communities exist in the Vineyard area, located south of the Jackson Highway Area: Vineyard Springs (generally built-out), North Vineyard Station (approved but with extensive remaining capacity), and Florin-Vineyard Gap (approval pending). Attention should be paid to ensuring that a reasonable pace of buildout is occurring in these master planned communities. While an extremely fast pace of buildout can cause “growth pains”, an excessively slow pace can be equally problematic. Essential infrastructure (roads, transit) and amenities (parks, schools) rely on development fees. Opening up competing large tracts of land in amounts well above forecasted demand could result those areas “out-competing” development in Vineyard. Not only would there be a delay in building necessary infrastructure, services and amenities, there may also be a change to the character of the planned community to respond to changing market conditions. If these planned communities are unable to compete due to oversaturation of the market, the quality of these communities may be compromised.

Inefficient extension of infrastructure and public services resulting in higher development fees and/or operating costs

1. Provision of Infrastructure and Public/Municipal Services: Sacramento County is the municipal services provider to the unincorporated area. As such, the County should address effective and efficient provision of services and associated infrastructure to both existing and new development when exercising its land use authority. This is particularly pertinent when making decisions regarding new growth areas, as how and when they develop can impact (positively or negatively) the County’s ability to provide excellent municipal services to these areas. For instance, due to economies of scale, costs of providing such services are generally lower in denser areas that are close to urban centers (Burchell and Mukherji, 2003)¹. In contrast, in the outlying metropolitan area, dispersed development patterns can inflate the costs of new infrastructure by 20 to 40 percent, some of which may be subsidized by local government (HOK, 2005, p. 2). In addition, interim infrastructure and facilities may be necessary if development occurs before and/or inconsistent with planned infrastructure improvements. The resulting higher cost of these

¹ Burchell and Mukherji, (2003), Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999.

improvements and/or investments in interim infrastructure may be passed on to homeowners in new developments and/or existing ratepayers. However, development can be planned and timed in a manner that makes provision of infrastructure and services more cost effective and efficient for the County, leading to better service and lower costs to both existing and future customers. This issue is one of the fundamental reasons behind the creation of both the UPA and the USB during the 1993 General Plan Update effort and should be carefully scrutinized during this update process.

2. Transportation Costs: SACOG's Blueprint project was initiated in part because of the anticipated inability to fund a transportation system to serve a sprawling, low intensity region. Developing more compactly and accommodating growth closer to the regional core was determined to be the most effective way to reduce transportation infrastructure costs while improving overall mobility and increasing transportation options. Reducing regional sprawl will also reduce compulsory automobile usage and associated vehicle miles travelled (VMT). A study has shown that "as cities become more dispersed and lower in density toward the edges, the levels of compulsory automobile use rises markedly regardless of income level" (Axelrad, 1998)². This also increases the proportion of household income being spent on transportation. A study conducted in the Houston metropolitan area, an area known for sprawling development patterns, indicated that households spend 22 cents on transportation for every dollar of income, or \$8,840 per year, which is \$2,528 more than the national average (Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, 2000). Planning for development that is inconsistent with the Blueprint, MTP, and/or the principles that these projects were built upon may lead to regional investments in transportation infrastructure in outlying areas that would otherwise be spent in existing communities or new growth areas closer to urbanized areas. It may make necessary transportation system improvements more expensive and/or potentially infeasible, lead to increased regional VMT, and/or reduce overall mobility and mode choice.

Pressure to approve uses that provide near term economic benefits to the developer over a long-term economically sustainable mix of land uses

One issue identified by County fiscal staff at the outset of this General Plan update process was the lack of adequate tax generating land uses within a number of the master plans initiated following adoption of the 1993 General Plan, including: East Antelope, East Elk Grove, East Franklin, Laguna Ridge, Vineyard Springs, North Vineyard Station, Elverta, Sunridge, and Florin Vineyard Gap. County fiscal staff has observed that many of these communities are predominantly low-density residential in nature, lacking an adequate mix of employment and retail uses that generate the local taxes necessary to support important services provided by the County. Furthermore, many of the employment and retail centers originally in the unincorporated County have since been incorporated or annexed into cities, further exacerbating this imbalanced mix of uses in the unincorporated area. Therefore, any growth management strategy should emphasize approval of projects that will include an economically and socially

² Axelrad, Tina (1998), *Measuring and Coping With the Costs of Sprawl*, Clarion Associates. Retrieved May 13, 2008, from <http://www.wulaw.wustl.edu/landuselaw/Articles/axelrad.html>.

sustainable mix of land uses (i.e. “complete communities”) to ensure that revenue generated by development are sufficient to support necessary municipal services.

Impacts to the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan and the Capital Southeast Connector

There are two key County-wide efforts currently underway that may affect or be affected by development in the Grant Line East area and in the Jackson Highway area east of Excelsior Road: the \$800 million Capital Southeast Connector (Connector) project and the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). High-level, multi-jurisdictional discussions are currently underway for both; initiating master planning efforts in these areas before these projects are finalized could affect or be affected by the outcome of these projects.

The SSHCP will require a habitat corridor connecting preserves at Mather to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy area and out to the Cosumnes River. The exact location and extent of this connection is currently unknown but will be defined as part of the ongoing negotiations related to the SSHCP. Additionally, the ultimate alignment and character of the Connector facility has yet to be finalized. Key issues related to the Connector are still being explored, such as location, general access to the facility, spacing between intersections, and the need for grade-separated vs. at-grade intersections. Projects proposing to take access from Grant Line Road (such as those in the Grant Line East area) could influence the alignment or performance of the Connector facility. Approval of projects, especially those proposing development near and/or with direct access to Grant Line Road, could be impacted by noise from traffic along the Connector and complicate efforts to limit access points along the corridor.

Decisions regarding timing of planning and development in any adopted new growth area should ensure that these two important projects reach fruition and can be successfully implemented. As adoption of the SSHCP is not anticipated until 2011 and the timing of the Connector project still unknown, the County should carefully analyze the relationship between the proposed new growth areas and these important projects so as to not impact these critical County-wide efforts.

Difficulty in meeting recent State mandates related to climate change initiatives

1. AB 32: Executive Order S-3-05 was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in June 2005. It established emission reduction targets for the state: reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 2000 levels by 2010, to 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. In September 2006, the Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 32 which requires California GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020, just like Executive Order S-3-05. However, AB 32 is a comprehensive bill that requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt regulations requiring the reporting and verification of statewide greenhouse gas emissions, and establishes a schedule of action measures. AB 32 also requires that a list of emission reduction strategies be published to achieve emissions reduction goals.

In October 2008, CARB published its Scoping Plan to describe what local governments and others must do to comply with AB 32. The document recognized that local

governments play an integral role in achieving the target emission reductions through their discretionary land use and transportation planning authority, as well as in other sectors such as energy, waste reduction and recycling, and water use. This Scoping Plan indicates that local governments must reduce GHG emissions levels 15% by 2020 to comply with AB 32.

In response to these statewide efforts, the State Attorney General (AG) is closely monitoring CEQA compliance with respect to climate change for the County's General Plan Update DEIR. Recently, the AG's office sued San Bernardino County for not adequately addressing climate change in their General Plan and/or associated EIR. As a result, the County was required to measure its contribution to global warming and set targets to begin cutting its greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, the AG settled a lawsuit with the City of Stockton that required the City to identify and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging downtown growth, constructing thousands of new residential units within its current city limits, developing a rapid transit bus system, requiring all new buildings to be energy efficient, and a number of other rigorous and binding measures (see Attachment D for details). This agreement came after the City of Stockton issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report for its General Plan that outlined how the City would manage its growth through 2035. In January 2008, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit to block Stockton's General Plan, claiming that it failed to address the amount of greenhouse gases the plan would emit into an already heavily polluted San Joaquin Valley. Although the settlement reached by the AG, the City, and the Sierra Club would allow new growth to continue at the City's urban fringe, the City agreed to phase it in gradually to ensure that it can provide adequate resources to these new areas, such as fire and police protection. Before approving new development projects, the City will demonstrate that the new development will not undermine downtown Stockton and will complement existing commercial and residential zones.

As a result of this new state legislation and the resultant lawsuits outlined above, addressing the issue of climate change and meeting the emissions reduction targets set forth by state law are a key goal of the Draft Plan and DEIR's analysis and suggested mitigation measures. Although the County's DEIR discusses climate change and offers a number of proactive and feasible mitigation measures (including the creation of a Climate Action Plan), a key question remains as to how the new growth contemplated in the Draft Plan can be timed to ensure that it will not compromise development in commercial corridors, infill areas, and planned communities. Proactively addressing this issue will help to achieve compliance with state law and reduce the likelihood of potential legal challenges to the Draft Plan and associated DEIR. Failing to do so may leave the County open to litigation, as witnessed by the City of Stockton lawsuit and settlement.

2. SB 375: AB 32 gives CARB authority over sources of greenhouse gas emissions, including cars and light trucks. SB 375 directs CARB Board to set regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Aligning these regional plans is intended to help California achieve GHG reduction goals for cars and light trucks under AB 32.

As noted in the attached flier (Attachment E), SB 375 requires each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to include a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (akin to SACOG's Blueprint) in the regional transportation plan (the MTP) that demonstrates how the region will meet its greenhouse gas emission targets. SB 375 requires that decisions relating to the allocation of transportation funding be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). It also provides CEQA streamlining incentives for projects that are consistent with the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (or the Alternative Planning Strategy if one is required.)

Sacramento County benefits from the fact that SACOG has already prepared a Blueprint Vision for the region and has used the results in their MTP process. It is anticipated that the land use scenario used for the MTP (Attachment F) will likely be used to form the SCS as required by state law. Since SB 375 requires that decisions related to the allocation of transportation funding must be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), it is important to note that the County's General Plan as currently scoped is inconsistent with the land use assumptions used in the MTP and therefore may be inconsistent with the future SCS. Potential implications regarding this inconsistency are unknown at this time, although there may be consequences for the County related to transportation funding and ability to take advantage of CEQA streamlining incentives.

It is important to note that the current MTP (and any future MTP/SCS) is based on performance-based decision making. Since transportation funding is a limited resource and needed improvements are essentially limitless, the region must identify transportation improvements that will result in the largest benefit per dollar spent. As such, even if Sacramento County adopts all new growth identified in the Draft 2030 General Plan, there is no guarantee that these areas will be included in the future MTP/SCS if serving the area with an efficient and effective transportation system is found to be financially infeasible or if it is out-competed by other necessary improvements. For example, jurisdictions throughout the region have identified capacity for new growth that is not included in the current MTP. To ensure that the unincorporated County can compete for and efficiently use limited transportation funds, adoption of new growth areas (particularly those with little to no transportation infrastructure like the Grant Line East area) and the strategic planning and buildout of those area should be a key discussion point in the adoption hearings.

Potential Solutions

The Jackson and Grant Line East Visioning Studies touch upon the issue of growth management relative to the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas. The final staff report submitted for the studies include a description of the following potential approaches to growth management in these areas (Attachment G), including:

- A. Constrained land supply approach
- B. Project merit-based approach
- C. Proactive management approach
- D. Market-based approach

In that staff report, staff recommended that the County initiate a proactive approach (Option C) to address strategic planning and buildout of new growth areas to reduce the conflict between excess capacity and the smart growth principles espoused by the Blueprint Vision and the County's Draft General Plan. In addition to staff's initial recommendation, the DEIR also analyzes this issue in great detail and identifies Mitigation Measure LU-1, which calls for a proactive phasing plan. It reads as follows:

LU-1. A phasing plan shall be included in any Specific Plan or other type of master planning proposal for the Jackson Highway Corridor and Grant Line East New Growth Areas. The phases shall be defined by a specific geographic area, with the earliest phases closest in to the existing urban areas, and the later phases farthest outward. Each phase shall represent a geographic area that will accommodate no more than 10 years of growth, based on the latest SACOG projections. Development within the phases shall occur sequentially, and residential or commercial development in each subsequent phase shall be prohibited until the prior phase is developed to at least 50% of holding capacity.

Given the analysis in the DEIR, discussions over the past five years regarding the Draft Plan, information resulting from the Visioning studies, best planning practices, and the potential negative outcomes arising from premature commitment of more land to urbanization than can be absorbed in the market, Planning staff recommends implementation of one of the following three options:

1. Land-Constrained Approach: Target only enough acreage for new growth necessary to accommodate anticipated growth through 2030. This might result in a reduction of the new growth area footprint by approximately 10,000-12,000 acres. Upon adoption of the General Plan, the County would closely monitor the holding capacity of the UPA and expand it as necessary based upon demand. Under this scenario, staff would recommend including the western portion of the Jackson Highway Area (west of Excelsior) within the UPA, whereas the eastern portion of the Jackson Highway and the Grant Line East area would not be included in the UPA but could be considered for urbanization at a future date when demand may necessitate such expansion.
2. Phased Approach: Include the entire Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas within the UPA as identified in the Draft 2030 General Plan. Designations on the Land Use Diagram would indicate near term opportunities and longer-term opportunities. Consistent with mitigation measure LU-1 of the DEIR, the County would identify specific geographic areas that would accommodate up to 10 years of anticipated growth; these areas would be designated as "Urban Development Area" on the Land Use Diagram and would be available for master planning immediately upon adoption of the General Plan. The remaining area within the UPA would be designated as "Urban Reserve" on the Land Use Diagram. The definition for the new Urban Reserve designation to be included in the Land Use Element would be as follows:

- Urban Reserve. *Designates land(s) within the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East new growth areas outside of the first phase of development.* Development within the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East growth areas will be phased. The first phase of new growth is identified as “Urban Development Area” on the Land Use Diagram. The Urban Reserve designation identifies those areas outside of the first phase of development which are appropriate for subsequent phases of growth within the 2030 timeframe of the General Plan. Upon development of 50% of the holding capacity within the first phase, additional lands designated as Urban Reserve may be considered for the next phase of new growth. Each new phase shall be an area of land(s) that will accommodate no more than 10 years of growth, based on the latest SACOG projections. Development in each of the subsequent phase(s) following the first phase shall be prohibited until the prior phase is developed to at least 50% of its holding capacity.
3. Phased and Balanced Growth Approach: New growth would be phased in the same manner as above, although no development within the Jackson Highway Area or Grant Line East Area would be allowed until at least 10,000 additional housing units are built within the five planned communities included in the Draft Plan (Antelope, Elverta, North Vineyard Station, Vineyard Springs, and Florin Vineyard Gap). This approach would allow development within planned communities to make sufficient progress before opening up other new growth areas that would directly compete with them, thereby addressing the issue of new growth areas “out-competing” planned communities, particularly in the Vineyard area.

Each of the three strategies above could result in tremendous benefit and resolve many of the issues identified earlier in this staff report. The first approach would decrease the capacity available for new growth, thereby reducing or eliminating many of the potential negative outcomes discussed in great detail above. The second approach would identify a larger capacity than is necessary within the UPA of the General Plan, but would include measures to ensure that growth is phased. The third approach would ensure that growth is phased and also provide for further progress toward buildout of previously planned communities before developing within new growth areas.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that phasing buildout of new growth areas is the most prudent approach. Option #2 (the “Phased Approach”) will allow the County to proactively address how and when growth should occur within the Jackson Highway and Grant Line east area. This approach will reduce or eliminate the potential negative outcomes resulting from identifying excess capacity for new growth. In addition, this approach will marry the benefits of a strong growth management plan with the potential advantages of excess capacity (i.e. maintaining flexibility, ability to respond to changing market conditions, etc.) It will allow the UPA to be expanded to include the Jackson Highway and Grantline East areas, thereby clearly identifying them as appropriate for urbanization during the General Plan’s 2030 planning period. This provides the County and landowners with flexibility, as additional phases could be identified and initiated swiftly to respond to market demand without the need to move the UPA. Finally, this proactive

approach will provide specific and transparent measures to guide development within new growth areas, thereby providing landowners, service and infrastructure providers, County staff, the public, and others with a level of certainty about how and when growth will occur.

Identifying Near Term vs. Longer Term Opportunities

Implementation of the phased approach entails identification of near term and longer term growth opportunities. Staff recommends that the Jackson Highway Area west of Excelsior Road and north of Elder Creek Road be identified as the first phase and designated as “Urban Development Area” on the Land Use Diagram (see Attachment H for the existing and proposed Land Use Diagrams). The remainder of the Jackson Highway Area and the Grant Line East Area will be designated as “Urban Reserve” and considered for subsequent phases of growth within the 2030 timeframe of the General Plan. Attachment I provides detailed information regarding why the western portion of the Jackson Highway is the logical choice as the first phase.

Process

Applications within adopted new growth area should be predicated upon meeting a minimum set of criteria, such as those proposed by staff in Attachment J. These criteria call for the creation of complete communities that are timed in a manner to allow for efficient provision of infrastructure and services. The criteria will be used by County staff and decision makers to evaluate the merits of requests to initiate master planning processes within a given phase, as well requests related to identifying subsequent phases.

If the phased approach is adopted, private applications for master planning processes within the first phase could be accepted immediately upon adoption of the General Plan. When the first phase has reached 50% buildout of its capacity, additional land designated as Urban Reserve may be considered for the next phase of new growth. Each new phase identified will be an area of land that will accommodate no more than 10 years of growth, based on the latest SACOG projections. Development in each of the subsequent phase(s) following the first phase will be prohibited until the prior phase is developed to at least 50% of its holding capacity. Phasing growth in this manner will prevent premature commitment of more land to urbanization than can be absorbed in the market and will reduce or eliminate the negative outcomes associated with identifying excess capacity for new growth.

Cordova Hills

In May 2008, the Board of Supervisors directed Planning staff to accept an application for a 2,400+ acre development in the Grant Line East area known as “Cordova Hills”. This proposed project would include a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses, as well as a private university (the University of Sacramento) which is of great interest to Sacramento County. Staff is currently working with the applicant team to prepare an application for submittal to the County.

The phased approach and criteria to accept master plan applications discussed above is intended to guide initiation of future master planning efforts. Since a decision has already been made regarding acceptance of an application for Cordova Hills, it falls outside of this discussion. As such, this proposed project is on a separate but parallel track to the General Plan Update project;

it will be processed by staff and heard by the Board of Supervisors and evaluated based upon its individual merits.

Issue #2: Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Designation

Summary:

Issue: Determine which language is most appropriate to describe the Natomas Joint Vision overlay designation on the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

Recommendation: Adopt Alternative #2, which includes a description, a policy and an implementation measure, as it more accurately explains the nature of the Natomas Joint Vision project.

The Natomas Joint Vision is a collaborative planning effort between the City and County of Sacramento and representatives of a landowners' group to develop a vision as anticipated in the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and County. The planning effort seeks to balance future urban growth with the permanent preservation of open space in the unincorporated portion of the Natomas Basin within Sacramento County. During the General Plan Update workshops, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to identify the Natomas Joint Vision area on the Land Use Diagram with an overlay designation. Staff drafted two versions of language to be included in the Land Use Element explaining the nature of this project and associated overlay designation. The first is descriptive in nature and outlines the MOU between the City and County and the objectives of the Vision process, while the second builds upon the first by additionally stating that development is expected to occur in this area in the 2030 timeframe and contains an associated policy and implementation measure. The two alternative statements are as follows:

1. Natomas Joint Vision Area. On December 10, 2002, the City Council and Board of Supervisors adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding principles of land use and revenue sharing between the City and County of Sacramento for the Natomas area, setting the stage for what has come to be known as the "Natomas Joint Vision." The "Natomas Joint Vision Study Area" overlay on the Land Use Diagram indicates the area addressed by this MOU. The MOU identifies the City as the appropriate agent for new growth and the County as the appropriate agent for preserving open space, agricultural and rural land uses in Natomas. Together, the City and County will forge a leadership role on a regional scale for growth management. The cooperative effort addresses land use, economic development, and environmental opportunities and challenges in Natomas. The result will be quality development balanced with permanent open space preservation systems.

Or

2. Natomas Joint Vision Area. On December 10, 2002, the City Council and Board of Supervisors adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding principles of land use and revenue sharing between the City and County of Sacramento for the Natomas area, setting the stage for what has come to be known as the “Natomas Joint Vision.” The “Natomas Joint Vision Study Area” overlay on the Land Use Diagram indicates the area addressed by this MOU. The cooperative effort addresses land use, economic development, and environmental opportunities and challenges in Natomas. The result will be quality development balanced with permanent open space preservation systems. Because of this MOU, the County anticipates development in portions of the Natomas Basin within the timeframe of the General Plan.

New Policy:

It is the policy of Sacramento County that development and open space preservation in the Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Area occur in a responsible and cohesive manner that best addresses land use, economic development and environmental opportunities and challenges in Natomas.

New Implementation Measure:

Pursue comprehensive and collaborative planning in the Natomas Joint Vision Overlay Area; either through the continued participation in the Natomas Joint Vision MOU or, if determined appropriate, with the County serving as the lead agency for development and open space preservation. (MSA - PLANNING, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS)

Much progress has been made on the Natomas Joint Vision process since the Board forwarded the Draft 2030 General Plan and these alternatives to DERA for environmental review in May 2007. On July 23, 2008, the Board directed staff to initiate a collaborative work plan, known as the “Broad Visioning Process”, to prepare a conceptual land use plan that incorporates the fundamental principles of the Natomas Joint Vision Area. This represents step two of the five phases of the Natomas Joint Vision project, which are as follows:

1. The 2002 City-County MOU and the Open Space Program (complete)
2. The Broad Visioning Process (nearing completion)
3. An inclusive public stakeholder process to prepare:
 - a. A conservation strategy and initiate a new or amended habitat conservation plan
 - b. CEQA documents
 - c. City and County General Plan amendments
 - d. A Specific/Master Plan
 - e. Amendment of City’s Sphere of Influence or County’s Urban Services Boundary
4. Annexation or amendment to County’s UPA and completion of a new or amended HCP
5. Implementation of development projects

Given the clear direction that this process is taking as outlined above, staff recommends that the second alternative be adopted, as this alternative clearly states the County’s position that development is expected to occur in this area in the 2030 timeframe of the General Plan. In addition, this option contains an associated policy and implementation measure in support of the

process that articulates the County’s objectives and intentions. Adopting this alternative more accurately reflects the nature of the Natomas Joint Vision project as it stands today and as it is scoped for the future.

Issue #3: Consideration of Agriculture Element Policy AG-5

Summary:

Issue: Require that mitigation for loss of farmland occur within Sacramento County or allow mitigation to potentially occur outside of Sacramento County.

Recommendation: Adopt language currently in the Draft Plan that requires mitigation for the loss of farmland within Sacramento County.

Before the Draft 2030 General Plan was sent to DERA for environmental review, the Board of Supervisors requested a more specific analysis of proposed policy AG-5, specifically regarding the pros and cons of requiring in-County mitigation vs. allowing out-of-County mitigation. The proposed policy specifies that mitigation for loss of farmland must take place within Sacramento County, while the existing policy in the 1993 General Plan only requires mitigation “nearby,” thereby potentially allowing out-of-County mitigation. The Draft 2030 policy and the existing 1993 policy read as follows:

Draft AG-5: Mitigate within Sacramento County the loss of prime, statewide importance, unique and local importance farmlands or lands with intensive agricultural investments through the specific planning process and individual project entitlement requests to provide in-kind protection (must be an equal or higher farmland category), such as easements for agricultural purposes of nearby farmland.

1993 Policy: Mitigate loss of prime farmlands or lands with intensive agricultural investments through CEQA requirements to provide in-kind protection of nearby farmland.

Staff recommends adopting draft policy AG-5 as it is currently written, as the costs of allowing out-of-County mitigation outweigh the benefits. Mitigation is required to reduce or eliminate the impact of an activity or improvement. In this case, mitigation is required to reduce the impact of farmland lost to development activities or other activities/improvements. If out-of-County mitigation is allowed, Sacramento County would be burdened with the impacts (loss of farmland) while adjacent County’s would benefit from the required mitigation (protected farmland).

While out-of-County mitigation allows for more flexibility in regards to how required mitigation is satisfied, it would result in a number of drawbacks. For instance, a key objective of the General Plan is to promote and maintain economic viability of Sacramento County’s local farms.

Out-of-County mitigation would reduce County farmers’ ability to sell conservation easements on their property to generate revenue and help support their operations. Allowing out-of-County mitigation could also lead to significant urban development and loss of farmland within Sacramento County, with the required mitigation taking place outside the County (i.e. in Yolo, Sutter, etc.) Less protected farmland within Sacramento County may fuel land speculation, which drives up land prices and makes farming more difficult, expensive and/or less desirable. Additionally, the draft policy is consistent with the proposed goals and policies of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP), which will also require mitigation within Sacramento County. Finally, significant out-of-County mitigation could reduce County residents’ opportunity to enjoy the cultural and aesthetic value of having open space and farming in a community.

It should be noted that the DEIR includes mitigation measures in relation to policy AG-5 to reduce the significant impacts of developing new growth areas. Suggested mitigation includes requiring 1:1 mitigation of farmland, as well as including a new implementation measure for policy AG-5 that would identify the need to establish a farmland mitigation fund that can be used to acquire, preserve, and maintain farmlands. For this reason and those mentioned above, staff recommends that draft policy AG-5 be adopted as currently written to ensure that as Sacramento loses farmland to urban development, the County, its residents, and its farmers will also benefit from the required mitigation.

Issue #4: Alternative Public Facilities Element Parks Section

Summary:

Issue: County Regional Parks Department and the Administrators of the Recreation and Park Districts (RPDs) recommend that the Parks Section of the Public Facilities Element be updated per their suggestions.

Recommendation: Adopt County Regional Parks’ and the RPDs’ recommended changes.

Due to the limited scope of the General Plan Update project, the Parks section of the Public Facilities Element was not updated. As such, many of the Draft General Plan’s policies pertaining to park definitions, dedication, and maintenance are outdated. The County Regional Parks Department and the Administrators of the of the Recreation and Park Districts (RPDs) have suggested a number of changes to the Parks section (Attachment K) to more accurately reflect the nature of parks today and to advocate for a viable, sustainable park system that relies on collaboration between park districts and the County. The Administrators of the Recreation and Park Districts are in the process of drafting and submitting a letter to Planning staff articulating the need for and their support of the proposed changes.

The proposed changes update the definitions of the many different kinds of parks to more accurately reflect the diversity in park function and size. Additionally, an inventory of the

independent park districts operating in the unincorporated County and their population and service area is included. Most importantly, the tone of the Parks section is changed, moving from merely stating the Quimby Act requirements and referring to County Code for park standard dedications and fees, to one of advocating for coordination between park districts and the County, encouraging more park dedication through development incentives, and supporting the creation of Master Plans by independent park districts. This proactive strategy is aimed at providing more park space for County residents, and ensuring the continued success of those parks by supporting new funding mechanisms for their regular operation and maintenance, including user fees, joint use agreements with school districts, and financing districts for new residential developments.

Planning staff supports County Regional Parks’ and the RPDs’ recommendation to update the Public Facilities Element of the Draft General Plan, as the proposed changes support coordinated efforts undertaken by local park districts and reinforce the ability of all park districts to create and maintain viable recreational opportunities in Sacramento County. The Draft EIR for the General Plan Update recommends adoption of the changes to the Parks section in order to mitigate for the potential affect that increased demand for parks (due to new growth) may have on park districts, particularly if the appropriate mechanisms (land dedication, operation and maintenance financing) needed to maintain the parks are not provided. Staff recommends that the changes proposed by County Regional Parks and the Administrators of the Recreation and Park Districts be adopted as part of the General Plan update project.

Issue #5: Alternative Conservation Element Water Section

Summary:

Issue: County Department of Water Resources recommends that the Water Section of the Conservation Element be updated per their suggestions.

Recommendation: Adopt Water Resource’s recommended changes.

Section I of the Draft 2030 General Plan Conservation Element was updated to reflect changes that have occurred since 1993 (the “Project” version). Rather than completely overhaul this section, staff modified existing language to better reflect current information, policy and regulatory environment. Policies and implementation measures within this section are intended to ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of dependable water supplies, that the sustainable yield groundwater and surface water rights are used to meet projected growth in the unincorporated Sacramento County, and the quality of water resources in the County are further enhanced and protected.

In response to the Notice of Preparation issued for the Draft General Plan EIR, the Sacramento County Department of Water Resources (Water Resources) prepared an alternative version of Section I (the “Alternative”) as shown in Attachment L. Water Resources observed that the Project version, which was an update/expansion of the original 1993 section, contained some

policies and measures which were outdated and, in some cases, obsolete. The Alternative completely revises this section through broader policies written to anticipate conditions and protect its relevance over the life of the update. It more heavily emphasizes the Water Forum Agreement and focuses Implementation Measures on the implementing parties, which include water purveyors throughout the County as well as Water Resources staff functioning as Sacramento County Water Agency staff.

Though the subsections and arrangement of the two versions are different, they deal with the same basic subject matter and advocate for the same basic principles: water supply management through conjunctive use, maintaining sustainable yields, efficient use of water, balancing water needs with ecosystem needs, and protection of ground and surface water quality. Implementing either the Project or Alternative version will result in similar benefits, although the proposed Water Resources policies are more desirable because they address some topics that the Project policies do not, such as climate change. The Environmental Impact Report indicates that the impacts of approving either the Project language or the Alternative language would be less than significant.

Planning staff supports Water Resources' recommendation to adopt the Alternative language. Water Resources staff are the subject matter experts regarding this topic and have written the goal, objectives, and policies mindful that they are responsible for fulfilling them. As a result, the Alternative is clearer, more concise, and will facilitate better understanding and interpretation of its intent. Whereas the Project version is more specific, the Alternative version consolidates the intent of these policies into more general language that will allow for broader application and will remain more relevant through the lifespan of the General Plan. For these reasons, we recommend that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board that the Alternative version be adopted.

Issue #6: Methodology to Use to Determine Mather Airfield 60 CNEL Noise Contour

Summary:

Issue: Two alternative methodologies to determine the 60 CNEL noise contour for Mather Airfield. Adopt one of these alternatives.

Recommendation: Review methodologies and provide comments.

Background on Mather

Mather was established in 1918 as a military base and pilot training school. The base was closed after World War I, but reactivated in 1941 as a training field. In 1958, the Strategic Air Command B-52 wing was assigned to the base. In the 1970s, Mather provided inter-service and international undergraduate navigator training. Base expansion and improvement continued throughout the 1980s, but ceased when the decision to close Mather was announced by the Department of Defense in 1988. In 1993, the Air Force issued a Record of Decision for disposal

of the base and aviation facilities were transitioned to Sacramento County on March 28, 1995. Mather was officially reopened as a civilian airport on May 5, 1995.

Noise Contours

Per County policy, the 60 Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise contour defines the area around an airport in which residential uses are prohibited. As such, 60 CNEL noise contours play two key roles in regards to land use planning: 1) they protect the airport from encroachment of incompatible uses, and; 2) they protect sensitive land uses from noise associated with airport operations. The 60 CNEL noise contour for Mather Airfield currently shown on the County's 1993 General Plan is based on Mather operating as an Air Force facility. As an Air Force facility, the type of airplanes, the approach and departure paths and altitudes, and the frequency flights resulted in a significant amount of noise, and as such, a very large 60 CNEL noise contour. Since this facility no longer functions as an Air Force base, its function as a civilian facility has resulted in significant changes to airport operations and resulting noise. The General Plan needs to be updated to reflect this changed noise environment, but a question remains as to which methodology to use to determine Mather's 60 CNEL noise contour to be used for planning purposes. Two alternative methodologies to determine the 60 CNEL for Mather Airfield were studied during environmental review of the Draft Plan: the "Master Plan Forecast" methodology and the "Theoretic Capacity" methodology. Employing either methodology would result in a much smaller 60 CNEL noise contour than what is currently shown on the 1993 General Plan Land Use Diagram, and as a result, would open up a significant amount of land for potential residential development (see Attachment M).

The Master Plan Forecast methodology is based on aircraft activity and development per the Airport Master Plan, a document that details the long-term development of an airport. As defined by federal guidance, the planning horizon of an Airport Master Plan is 20 years. The County is currently updating the Mather Airport Master Plan, which has a planning horizon of 2025. The draft plan is presently undergoing environmental review, and a Draft EIR is anticipated to be released at the end of the calendar year. The Theoretic Capacity noise exposure contour is based on the maximum aircraft activity that can be accommodated at the ultimate ("theoretic") buildout of the landside facilities (terminal facilities, air cargo facilities and other building and ground areas). This approach allows consideration beyond a typical 20-year Master Plan planning horizon because it is not tied to any forecast market condition. The State of California guidance on preparing Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans directs those plans to use a planning horizon greater than 20 years and clearly states that 20 years is insufficient for planning purposes.

Given that it is impossible to determine at this time whether or not Mather will reach buildout to its theoretic capacity, the fundamental question at hand really is whether to err on the side of either 1) reserving the potential for Mather Airfield to build out to and/or operate at its theoretic capacity by ensuring that no incompatible uses encroach upon it, or; 2) allowing additional capacity for residential development within the proposed Jackson Highway new growth area to achieve smart growth objectives of the County's General Plan and SACOG's Blueprint Vision.

The Theoretic Capacity methodology allows for greater protection of both the airport and sensitive uses adjacent to the airport. However, using this methodology would result in a larger amount of land in the Jackson Highway area being unavailable for residential uses. This would reduce the County's ability to provide residential and mixed use development near the County's urban core, a key tenant of the General Plan and SACOGs Blueprint Vision. Conversely, the proposed Master Plan methodology would allow for more available land in the Jackson Highway area for residential uses, but will provide less protection for Mather Airfield from urban encroachment. While this approach would allow for additional land to develop with residential and mixed uses to achieve the smart growth tenets of the General Plan and Blueprint Vision, it could subject future residential uses to impacts associated with proximity to the airport, such as those related to noise, air quality, and quality of life. This approach may also result in potential future impacts to the airport's ability to operate without the undue burdens of noise or operational restrictions imposed as a result of the newly created incompatible land uses along the Jackson corridor.

This is a complex issue and a number of important tradeoffs must be considered. As such, discussion is still occurring at the staff level regarding the two alternative methodologies. Although staff is not prepared to make a formal recommendation at this time, staff would like to hear the Planning Commission's thoughts and opinions regarding this issue and will forward any comments and/or recommendations the Commission may have to the Board for their consideration. Should staff be prepared to make a formal recommendation during a future General Plan adoption hearing at the Planning Commission, an addendum to this staff report will be prepared.

Issue #7: New Airport Section in Land Use Element

Summary:

Issue: County Airport System staff and Planning staff have identified the need for additional language in the Land Use Element to better address the relationship between the County's airports and nearby land uses.

Recommendation: Direct staff to prepare new language for the Land Use Element to address this issue.

Over the last two years since the Draft 2030 General Plan was sent to DERA for environmental review, the County has engaged in a number of planning processes (particularly the Natomas Joint Vision and Jackson Highway Visioning processes) that have highlighted the need to balance two fundamental goals: 1) protection of the County's airports and associated operations, particularly from encroaching incompatible land uses and hazardous wildlife attractants, and; 2) growth accommodation, achieving development patterns consistent with smart growth principles, and protecting important natural resources, such as habitat and agriculture land. While there are a number of policies throughout the General Plan that address these issues at least in part, there is

currently no single place in the that one can find a comprehensive discussion regarding this matter. Therefore, Planning and Sacramento County Airport System (SCAS) staff recommends that a new section be added to the Land Use Element of the Draft 2030 General Plan to better address the relationship between the County's airports and nearby land uses. This new section would be crafted to draw attention to this important issue, to point to policies found throughout the General Plan pertaining to this subject, and to add pertinent details that may currently be lacking. This new language will likely take a few weeks to draft and, as such, may not be prepared in time for the Planning Commission's full review. However, staff would like the Commission's thoughts on this topic, particularly in regards to how best to address this important balance.

Issue #8: Roadway Downgrade Alternatives

Summary:

Issue: Board requested DEIR to evaluate impacts of downgrading certain four-lane roadways to two-lane roadways, and certain six-lane roadways to four-lane roadways.

Recommendation: Make recommendations regarding the proposed transportation plan and potential downgrades after issues related to the growth management strategies have been discussed or resolved.

DEIR Analysis of Roadway Downgrade Alternatives

During the workshops with the Board of Supervisors, members of the Board requested that certain roadways throughout the County be studied in the environmental review process as two-lane roadways rather than four-lane arterials. This alternative examines the effects of re-designating the following designated, but not built, four-lane arterials to two-lane roadways:

- Dry Creek Road
- West 6th Street
- U Street (from Watt Avenue to 24th Street)
- Removal of Dry Creek crossing of U Street (instead, create a cul-de-sac at 24th & U Streets to the east of Dry Creek)
- All planned 4-lane roadways in Rio Linda/Elverta
- Eagles Nest Road (from Jackson to Grant Line Road)

In addition, the Board requested that the environmental review process examine the effects of re-designating the designated, but not yet built 6-lane thoroughfares to 4-lane arterials. Although the Board requested that these downgrade alternatives be studied in the DEIR, they did not make specific recommendations regarding their support (or lack thereof) of these potential downgrades. Rather, they wanted the DEIR to provide more information regarding the potential

benefits and/or drawbacks of these potential downgrades so that they could make informed decisions during the adoption hearings.

The Draft 2030 General Plan as currently scoped (the Project) and the Arterial Downgrade Alternative both result in significant level of service impacts on many of the same facilities. The Arterial Alternative has fewer impacts than the proposed General Plan Update on several roadways, including Fair Oaks Boulevard, Florin Road, and Hillsdale Boulevard. However, the Arterial Alternative has greater impacts on 16th Street. Likewise, the Project and the Thoroughfare Downgrade Alternative both result in significant level of service impacts on many of the same facilities throughout unincorporated Sacramento County. The Thoroughfare Alternative has fewer impacts than the proposed General Plan Update has on several roadways, including Fair Oaks Boulevard and Hillsdale Boulevard but would greater impacts on Antelope Road, Bradshaw Road, Calvine Road, Del Paso Road, Easton Valley Parkway, Elk Grove-Florin Road, Elkhorn Boulevard, Greenback Lane, Jackson Road, Madison Avenue, Metro Air Park Boulevard, Power Inn Road, Scott Road, Sunrise Boulevard, Vineyard Road, Walerga Road, and White Rock Road. Please refer to Section 9 of the DEIR (particularly pages 9-80 through 9-89) as well as pages 10-32 and 11-115 for more information.

Background and Discussion on Proposed Transportation Plan

County staff worked diligently with community members, landowners, adjacent jurisdictions, and statewide, regional and countywide entities such as Caltrans, SACOG and RT to craft a County-wide transportation plan that would provide for mobility in an efficient and effective fashion. This circulation system was shaped to support the land uses contemplated in the Draft 2030 General Plan, including all potential new growth areas. Should the Draft Plan be adopted as currently scoped, staff believes that the transportation system as proposed would provide an excellent basis for mobility for inter and intra-County travel. However, should the growth management strategies in the General Plan be modified through the adoption hearing process, modifications to the transportation plan would likely be necessary. In addition, should any or all identified new growth areas be adopted, master planning processes would be initiated to comprehensively plan for land uses and transportation to facilitate the creation of complete communities. Through these processes, the County and participants involved would likely need to analyze how best to serve the particular area in question with a transportation system given the proposed land uses and need to integrate this system into the surrounding community. As a result of these processes, modifications to the transportation plan may be necessary, as much more information will be known regarding the land uses in these areas, the density and intensity of development, and the opportunities and challenges offered by the planning area. Given the issues discussed above, staff recommends that the Planning Commission first address growth management strategies and then have a discussion regarding the proposed transportation plan.

Dry Creek Road and Eagles Nest Road

Community members and landowners have actively petitioned County staff and the Board of Supervisors to downgrade both Dry Creek Road and Eagles Nest Road from four lanes to two lanes. They have cited concerns regarding increased traffic, safety and quality of life issues in both instances. In addition, landowners along Eagles Nest Road currently engaged in farming and mining activities (and whom desire to remain in such activities at least through the General

Plan's 2030 planning period) have concerns regarding their ability to continue farming and mining if this rural two-lane road is improved to four lanes. Staff is currently reviewing the DEIR and the General Plan for details regarding the potential benefits and/or drawbacks regarding the potential downgrade of these roadways. Planning and DOT staff will present these findings to the Planning Commission during the adoption hearings.

A Note on Traffic Modeling

While each of these alternatives results in level of service impacts to automobiles, they may potentially result in benefits to other modes of travel, community livability and/or quality of life. It is important to note that traffic modeling at the General Plan level results in relatively gross numbers and general conclusions. More sophisticated traffic modeling software can better take into account the benefits of smart growth principles and mixed use development (such as more trips made by walking, bicycling and transit, and less made by automobile). However, these models require an incredible amount of information and necessitate a level of precision that is infeasible at the General Plan level, especially given that parcel-level detail was unknown for much of the proposed General Plan (new growth areas, commercial corridors, etc.) This level of information can only be ascertained once individual corridor plans and/or master plans for new growth areas are adopted.

As such, the traffic model used for the General Plan Update project was a more traditional model that can operate effectively with more general information. One drawback of the model used is that it is less sensitive to the effects that smart growth/mixed use have on reducing overall VMT. As a result, the output of the traffic model may not effectively capture the benefits of transit, pedestrian and bicycle friendly development patterns. While this model has been used reliably and effectively for many years and its output is generally very well respected, staff thought it was important to note this particular limitation, particularly in regards to the potential benefits and drawbacks of the proposed downgrades.

Conclusion

The County's General Plan Update project was initiated in 2002; it has been scoped and drafted through an extensive public process conducted between 2004 and 2007 that included well-attended public outreach workshops, numerous stakeholder meetings and 26 public working sessions held by the Board of Supervisors. As such, this Draft Plan represents a complete and well-vetted document with only a few outstanding issues remaining. Given the amount of time, effort and outreach invested in this project before the Draft Plan was released, staff anticipates an efficient public adoption process that will be focused primarily on the outstanding issues outlined in this staff report.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive public testimony and make recommendations on the outstanding discussed above at today's hearing. In addition, staff recommends that after June 15th (i.e. at the next General Plan adoption hearing scheduled for June 22nd) the Planning Commission should close the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, determine that the environmental analysis is adequate and complete and that the Draft Environmental Impact Report is appropriate, and direct staff to prepare the Final Environmental Impact Report. Finally, staff recommends that the Planning

Commission forward all recommendations on the Draft 2030 General Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report
- B. Background on Blueprint and MTP Projects
- C. Updated Holding Capacity Study
- D. Summary of Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Stockton and the Attorney General
- E. SB 375 Informational Flyer
- F. SACOG's MTP Land Use Scenario for Sacramento County
- G. Strategic Planning of New Growth Areas
- H. General Plan Land Use Diagram - Existing Draft and Staff's Recommended Alternative
- I. Information on Western Portion of the Jackson Highway Area
- J. Criteria for Accepting Master Plan Applications
- K. Parks Section Alternative Language
- L. Water Section Alternative Language
- M. Noise Contours for Mather Field - Existing and Two New Alternatives

Smart Growth Streets

GOAL: “Smart Growth streets” that enable safe and efficient mobility and access for all users while positively contributing to the adjacent corridor, surrounding community and natural environment.

In years past, the predominant focus of transportation planning was to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular traffic. However, this focused approach often failed to pay equal attention to accommodating other modes of travel, particularly walking and biking. The idea of “complete streets” responds to this inequity by striving to design and operate streets that enable safe and efficient mobility and access for all users. Successfully planned and constructed complete streets allow pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities to safely move along and across the street. Sacramento County is committed to ensuring that all streets are built as complete streets.

The concept of “Smart Growth streets” expands upon the complete streets concept. While both Smart Growth streets and complete streets are pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly, Smart Growth streets take a holistic view of the street, the adjacent corridor, the surrounding community and the natural environment, while allowing for more flexibility in the design of street and corridor improvements. The County intends to apply the Smart Growth streets concept in selected new corridors and previously developed areas, such as commercial corridors, to support and encourage infill development and revitalization efforts. This concept is vital to the County’s goal of implementing SACOG’s adopted Blueprint Vision and concepts related to smart growth and transit-oriented development promoted in the County’s General Plan.

The Smart Growth streets concept will be implemented by designating applicable areas with a “Smart Growth Street” designation on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and the Transportation Plan. This designation requires a focused planning effort to comprehensively plan for highly coordinated and interconnected land uses, transportation infrastructure and public realm amenities.

Objective: Incorporate “green infrastructure” to the greatest extent feasible.

To make streets truly adhere to smart growth principles, , they should be planned, engineered and constructed to not only safely and efficiently accommodate all modes of travel, but also to incorporate “green infrastructure.” Green infrastructure can include a number of strategies, but generally can be described as a physical improvement that reduces environmental impacts and/or results in a net environmental benefit, all while creating a more pleasant environment for users.

SS-1. Incorporate Low Impact Design (LID) techniques to the greatest extent feasible to improve water quality runoff and erosion control, infiltration, groundwater

recharge, visual aesthetics, etc. LID techniques may include but are not limited to:

- Bioretention techniques, such as filtration strips, swales, and tree box filters
- Permeable hardscape
- Green roofs
- Erosion and sediment controls

SS-2. Use recycled and/or recyclable materials whenever feasible.

SS-3. When feasible, incorporate higher albedo materials and surfaces, such as lighter-colored pavements and cool roof technologies, and encourage the creation of tree canopy to reduce the built environment's absorption of heat to reduce the urban "heat island" affect.

Objective: Create and/or improve community identity by coordinating improvements to the streetscape and the surrounding corridor to achieve a consistent look and feel or carry through a specific "theme."

SS-4. Smart Growth street planning efforts shall identify specific, implementable measures to create and/or improve community identity.

SS-5. Incorporate public art into streetscape improvements to the extent feasible.

Objective: Create an "outdoor room" along the street to establish a sense of place and improve the comfort and overall experience of all users, particularly pedestrians and bicyclists.

SS-6. Smart Growth streets shall incorporate features such as shade trees and plantings, well designed benches and other street furniture, trash receptacles, news racks, outdoor dining experiences, entertainment, public art, pedestrian scaled lighting fixtures, wayfinding signage, and other amenities as appropriate.

Objective: Create communities and corridors using a holistic perspective when considering land uses and the design context of street and corridor improvements.

No two streets, nor two communities, are the same. As such, the concept of smart growth and sustainable streets encourages a holistic perspective of considering land uses and the design context of street and corridor improvements to allow them to be "tailored" to the area and the surrounding community. Implementing this concept will entail holistic and innovative corridor analysis techniques to account for increased pedestrian, bicycle and transit usage and regional VMT reductions associated with Smart Growth street improvements. Such an analysis may lead to the conclusion that a reduced LOS for

motor vehicles is acceptable in certain instances provided that the land uses and enhancements to other modes of travel result in an overall positive benefit to mobility and access and may also reduce VMT. The County recognizes that within specific defined corridors that a highly coordinated and interconnected land uses and transportation infrastructure can result in improved walk-ability, bicycle use, transit opportunities and other forms of mobility, which can result in an environmental benefit and enhancements to a community. Where a corridor planning analysis indicates that motor vehicular travel will operate at LOS F, fees may be assessed to improve other modes of travel, such as enhancements to bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and public realm amenities, to encourage and facilitate travel through alternative, non-automobile modes of travel.

The following policies apply to areas and corridors identified as Smart Growth streets on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and the Transportation Plan. Smart Growth streets may include commercial corridors as designated by the County, regional rail, light rail, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors, areas within ½ mile walking distance of a regional rail, light rail or BRT stations, and mixed use-corridors as designated by the County. The intent is that these areas should include frequent transit service, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle systems, a mix of land uses at densities that support transit use and be characterized as quality development.

- SS-7. A Smart Growth street designation requires a focused and holistic corridor planning analysis that considers highly coordinated and interconnected land uses and transportation infrastructure within the corridor while also considering the impacts to surrounding communities and the natural environment.
- SS-8. On a Smart Growth street, the County shall strive to maintain operations and capacity on urban roadways and intersections at LOS E or better, unless maintaining this LOS would, in the County's judgment, be infeasible and conflict with the achievement of other Smart Growth street objectives. Congestion in excess of LOS E may be acceptable provided that provisions are made to improve overall mobility, reduce overall VMT and/or promote non-automobile transportation.
- SS-9. Where a Smart Growth street planning analysis indicates that a roadway improved to its general plan designation is operating at LOS F, mobility impacts fees may be assessed to the properties within the Smart Growth street designation. Such mobility fees shall be fairly apportioned to the properties and shall be sufficient in amount to improve other Smart Growth street objectives such as improvements that would enhance pedestrian, bicycle, transit, other modes of mobility, and public realm amenities.
- SS-10. The County is encouraged to quantify and measure pedestrian, bicycle and transit levels of service in addition to motor vehicle level of service to support and encourage overall mobility through improvement to all modes of travel.

Objective: Encourage the use of shared driveways to reduce the total number of driveways along a Smart Growth street to improve overall mobility and safety for all modes of travel.

An excessive number of driveways increase the amount of turning movements along a roadway, both slowing traffic and increasing potential conflicts between turning vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists. Shared driveways thereby improve traffic flow and reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

SS-11. Smart Growth street planning efforts shall develop a comprehensive strategy to significantly reduce the total number of driveways along the roadway, including specific measures to ensure implementation, such as requiring cross-access and reciprocal parking agreements between adjacent property owners.

Objective: Encourage the use of shared parking facilities and reduced parking requirements.

Redundant and/or excessive parking facilities are not only an inefficient use of land, they are also expensive to build and maintain, are rarely used to their capacity, increase the urban “heat island” affect, and often create environments that are unfriendly to pedestrians. Encouraging adjacent land uses to share parking facilities and/or reducing the parking requirements in certain areas can provide an incentive for infill development by reducing the amount of land and expense that a builder must devote to parking facilities, while also leading to a more efficient use of land and avoiding large expanses of asphalt that can be hot and uninviting. Shared parking also supports the objective of reducing the number of driveways along a Smart Growth street.

SS-12. Smart Growth street planning efforts shall develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce both the total amount of parking and total surface area dedicated to parking facilities. In general, reduced parking requirements, innovate parking solutions, shared parking, structured parking, and on street parking will be strongly encouraged wherever feasible, while large surface parking lots will be strongly discouraged.