



## COUNTY OF SOLANO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

County Administrative Center  
First Floor Multi-Purpose Room  
675 Texas Street, Fairfield

### MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF The Solano County General Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee April 9, 2007

The regular meeting of the Solano County General Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee was held Monday, April 9, 2007, in the Solano County Administration Center, Multi-Purpose Room, 675 Texas St., Fairfield, CA 94533.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Curtola, Ian Anderson, Larry Clement, Michael Fortney, Patricia Gatz, Scott Greenwood-Meinert, Curt Johansen, Eva Laevastu, Jerry LeMasters, Sandy Person, Anthony Russo

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Nicole Byrd, Randy Dawson, Ronald Jones, Carol Landry, Brian West

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mike Yankovich, Planning Manager, Resource Management; Dale Cardwell, Senior Planner, Resource Management; Harry Englebright, Englebright and Associates; Jeff Goldman, EDAW; Paul Tuttle, EDAW; Elizabeth Boyd, EDAW

#### Public Comments on Items on the Agenda

(Limited to 15 Minutes, limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

June Guidotti summarized her letter to the CAC dated April 7, 2007. Regarding Public Facilities and Services Recommendation No. 1 she wanted to be informed when the solid waste management strategy will appear as a CAC agenda item and when and where the solid waste management strategy will be available to the public. Ms. Guidotti requested clarification on whether Potrero Hills Landfill had 7 years of remaining capacity and if Hay Road Landfill has 64 years of permitted capacity. She believed the statement that there are 43 years for Potrero Hills Phase II build-out was misleading. Ms. Guidotti stated that she agreed that the County should pursue the approaches identified for fire districts and that the approach for solid waste issues needs to be clarified and rewritten. She agreed that the General Plan should include a discussion on how to achieve and maintain good air quality. A copy of the April 7, 2007 letter was distributed to the CAC. Staff will provide a written response to her questions.

Maurice Koch spoke on item number three of the agenda. He was concerned about possible groundwater contamination by a package treatment plant (PTP) plant for the waste water that will be generated by the proposed Rockville Trails

development. He submitted two reports from the State of California regarding private wastewater treatment systems.

Paul Herman, speaking on item number three of the agenda, stated that he was not in favor of private on-site waste water treatment plants. Citing the failure of many private systems he believed that waste water treatment plants should be under municipal holdings.

Jerry Gerald also spoke on item three of the agenda. Citing failures of PTPs some of which required government intervention, he stated that package treatment plants are not a good idea for residential development in the unincorporated areas of the county.

George Guynn, speaking on agenda item five, he thought that the air quality of Solano County was an important issue and the county should work with the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. He also believed that emissions from solid waste facilities should also be considered.

1. Review/Approve March 12, 2007 Minutes

The minutes of March 12, 2007 were approved.

2. Update on Board of Supervisors Action Concerning Special Study Areas

Mike Yankovich stated that a list of all the general plan proposals that staff had received from property owners was taken to the Board of Supervisors on March 13, 2007. Due to the number of proposals received and the work involved to process them the Board of Supervisors approved an increase in the general plan budget and stated that staff would be working with Mr. Curtola to implement the study of four distinct areas – Suisun Valley, Collinsville-Montezuma, Cordelia and Green Valley.

Terry Curtola stated that a subcommittee composed of three or four CAC members will be created for each study area. Every member will need to serve on at least one subcommittee. He asked the members to indicate their first, second and third choice of study areas and send their choices to staff. Serving on the subcommittees will require extra meetings, gathering input from the community and making recommendations back to the full CAC. The whole CAC will then make its final recommendations. CAC members will now be paid for attending a maximum of four meetings a month. CAC members can attend all subcommittee meetings but they will only be paid for attending subcommittee meetings on which they have been chosen to serve.

Harry Englebright explained that the public is welcome to participate in workshops for each of the special study areas. The full CAC will be reviewing the findings of the four special study areas.

3. Discussion: Water and Waste Water Standards and Requirements

Terry Schmidtbauer gave a presentation on county policy regarding water and waste water for new development. Water systems can be either public water systems or private on site water systems. A public or municipal system is owned and operated by a municipality or water agency or district. A permit is required from the State. The agency is responsible for providing an adequate

amount of potable drinking water. And the water agency must provide a “will serve” letter stating that they will supply water to all lots within the new development.

With an on site water supply system each private lot has its own water supplied by a well that must provide adequate potable drinking water to the dwelling(s) on the property. The property owner is responsible for its upkeep. A domestic water well must yield a minimum of 3 gallons of water per minute with a 500 gallon storage tank.

The requirement for a demonstration of water quantity depends on which water yield zone the proposed lot is within. The water yield zones are designated A, B, C or D based on the probability of finding water. The zones are based on the USGS Water Bearing Rock Map. Properties in zones A or B require a demonstration of adequate water supply prior to final map approval. Property in zones C or D does not require water well development prior to final map approval.

Requirements for sewage treatment and disposal call for either a community sewer or a septic system which is an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system. General Plan policy currently requires rural development within unincorporated areas to be on a septic system with the exception of the Elmira, Cordelia, Suisun Valley and Vallejo areas. The goal of an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system is to ensure long term, safe treatment and disposal of sewage on the property in a manner that protects public health and the environment. An onsite system is dependent on the site characteristics and the design and use of the system. The property owner is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the system to ensure long term proper sewage treatment and disposal.

Proposals for land division must provide an adequate area for safe treatment and disposal of sewage generated on every proposed lot. One of the ways this is done is requiring a minimum lot size. To dilute the loading of nitrates and other contaminants associated with the use of septic systems into the environment the housing density in rural areas is utilized. The minimum lot size for a lot with a domestic water well is five acres. With municipal water service the minimum lot size is 2.5 acres or 1 acre if the average density for the total development is 2.5 acres/lot (Policy Plan Overlay). Another requirement is that a site evaluation must demonstrate that the area is suitable for a septic system such as topographic features, a soils evaluation and a test of the ability of the soil to accept sewage effluent. Suitable designs for a septic system are conventional (gravity flow) and alternative systems. Alternative systems are considered when the site is not able to pass an evaluation for a conventional system.

A member asked if one acre lots were common in the county. The answer was that they were not common but some examples of Policy Plan Overlay development are Blue Ridge Oaks, Dove Creek and the proposed Rockville

Trails development. The lots are larger than one acre in these developments. Rockville Trails is also asking for a general plan amendment to allow a packet treatment plant which is currently not allowed under the General Plan. Another member asked about the technology of the packet treatment plants. Mr. Schmidtbauer answered that PTPs are feasible but to avoid failure require long term skilled maintenance and financial commitment.

Harry Englebright answered a question regarding lot size requirements by explaining that if development is proposed in an area where private wells provide water there also has to be adequate recharge of the water under the land. The adequacy of the well recharge will help determine the minimum lot size.

Mr. Englebright discussed out of agency service contracts. Out of agency extension of service agreements are agreements that extend service to property lying outside the agency boundaries such as the City of Vallejo supplying water to portions of Green Valley, Cordelia and Suisun Valley. Parcels that currently front on sewer or water lines are considered to be within the existing extended service area. As of January 5, 2006 parcels not connected may make one connection per existing legal parcel. LAFCO has mapped all the frontage parcels can connect to existing lines. If a parcel is not adjacent to a water or sewer line but is within the agency's sphere of influence a connection can be made if the following requirements are met: The property is expected to be annexed into city limits and LAFCo may require the annexation to occur within a specific time period. Out of agency contracts are generally not approved if annexation is feasible. For property outside of an agency's sphere of influence a connection can only be made in response to an existing or impending health and safety threat and the property is not within the sphere of influence of any other agency that could provide services needed.

4. Discussion: Public Facilities and Services Issues and Policies

Jeff Goldman described the Public Facilities and Services portion of the Workbook as a summary of current general plan policies, general plan requirements and a summary of the gaps between current policies, State requirements and the background information and guidance on approaches to address the issues. Mr. Goldman emphasized that the General Plan should be thought of as a broad guidance document. Current General Plan policies draw from the 1980 Land Use and Circulation Element, the 1977 Health and Safety Element, 1995 Solano County Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan-Siting Element, and Resource Conservation and Open Space Plan. In terms of State guidelines and requirements some of things that need to be addressed are location and distribution of land uses such as schools, solid waste, etc... As a land use issue it is something that is addressed in general terms. Public Facility and Services Recommendations included the following: Revisit the solid waste management strategy that is included in the existing General Plan and incorporate current policies and recommendations from the Integrated Waste Management Plan. A member

asked if there was a source to provide information on new technology and approaches for public facilities to be considered by the CAC. Mr. Goldman stated that new technology and approaches for public facilities should be considered as long as they comply with State and/or Federal requirements for public facilities. Another consideration is how the General Plan can over its lifespan set aside land to physically accommodate sites for additional facilities such as waste water treatment plants or solid waste disposal. Another thing to consider is how the General Plan can provide guidance for the generators of waste or land users in terms of the waste that is generated and how it makes its way into the waste stream. However it was not necessary to get into the details of describing the technology in the General Plan. A member suggested having private facilities such as PTPs comply with the same standards as public facilities. It was pointed out that the current General Plan does not allow PTPs. Other members opposed allowing PTPs because it goes against the current city centered growth policy. Mr. Goldman stated that the land use policy determines whether there will be city centered growth or not. The idea of dealing with public facilities and services in the General Plan is to support whatever the land use policies are. Mr. Englebright stated that this was a key policy in the General Plan and at this point staff was asking for direction from the CAC. The CAC will come back and look at recommending servicing policies again. Another member asked if the CAC could consider a change in policy on whether PTPs are allowed countywide if their operating standards were raised to higher levels with the new technology now available. Another member stated that if PTPs were only allowed by a General Plan amendment they should only be approved by demonstrating they could comply with a high level of standard. Mr. Goldman stated that it was not important to understand the details of the technology today but was more important to focus on the technologies that will become available tomorrow. The CAC could consider a change in County policy to allow for some kind of shared treatment system in the future as long as it was able to meet a defined standard based on State and Federal standards. Another member stated that development of rural areas should not be encouraged by policy changes. He believed that if the technology is available and we create a policy that allows or encourages PTPs then development of rural areas will follow and will adversely affect agricultural lands. Mr. Goldman stated that what he was hearing was there is a concern that regulating land use in and of itself isn't necessarily enough to guide a certain development pattern where urban development goes to the cities. There is a concern about opening the door thru technology for development to occur in rural areas. A member stated that the best thing for the CAC to do now is to think about this issue a little bit more and when we get to a point where we are dealing with it from a land use policy perspective that would be a good time to readdress the issue. At this point we really don't have anything in front of us in terms of making a recommendation. He suggested asking staff to come back with a variety of options for the CAC to review. The discussion moved on to the topic of Public Fire Facilities and Services.

Mr. Goldman stated that fire service ratings in Solano County as measured by the International Standards Organization (ISO) raised concerns about the level of fire protection in rural areas. Three out of the five districts serving the unincorporated area had a low rating. Factors that contributed to the low ratings included the distance they must travel, poor road conditions and lack of funding. One member recommended that some language be put into the General Plan that the County study new funding sources for the Fire Districts with low ratings. Another member mentioned a Grand Jury report that revealed a patchwork of fire protection districts that should also be looked at. The proposed approach is to work with the fire districts and LAFCo to improve their ISO ratings to achieve a higher level of fire protection. LAFCo is beginning the process of looking into the consolidation of two fire districts. The updated General Plan can give direction to LAFCo thru policy statements to encourage them to address some of the issues facing the fire districts.

Mr. Goldman stated that current library facilities and equipment are below the County's service standards. There is a Library Facilities Master Plan that identifies what is needed for the library system. The General Plan can have policies that support the library system's attempts to improve services but ultimately a lot depends on the willingness of Solano County residents to support a higher level of library service.

Water Resource policies to be considered include not only determining whether there is an adequate water supply for development but to also look at ways to reduce the per capita consumption of water. The updated General Plan will reference current state water code requirements. The California water code now requires developments over 500 units to identify their source of water. Water management and conservation policies will also be considered for inclusion in the update.

A member stated that there should be aggressive language in the update regarding water conservation. Another member suggested that CAC consider adding the Ahwahnee Water Principles which include landscaping that promotes water conservation and using permeable surfaces. A member wanted to consider language that looks at the watershed as an important element in the effort to sustain and conserve water resources.

Current General Plan policies contain a brief discussion about water service. One recommendation is to coordinate with local water agencies to assess the need for water service in the County and incorporate in policies for the provision of water service in areas that have marginal or inadequate water supplies. A companion issue is assisting the Solano County Water Agency to improve the accuracy of water demand estimates.

Two members suggested finding ways to capture runoff thru a water storage system to help maintain our local water supply. The flood water recharge basins being built in the San Joaquin Valley were cited as an example. These are systems that mimic nature by retaining storm water and allow it sink into

the ground and replenish the ground water as well as filter out pollutants that would otherwise flow into streams and waterways.

A member had an additional comment on Public Facilities. It was suggested that the update have a policy statement on public health medical services where the County would insure access to medical and mental health services for all county residents. It was also suggested that there be a similar policy where all county residents would be insured access to law enforcement services. These issues will also be touched upon in the Health and Safety portion.

5. Discussion: Air Quality Issues and Policies

This item was continued to the April 23, 2007 meeting.

6. Discussion: Noise Issues and Policies

This item was continued to the April 23, 2007 meeting.

7. Chair/Committee Member Comments

Mr. Curtola stated that members will be receiving a letter regarding the Special Study Area subcommittees. Members will be asked to list their preferences.

Public Comments on Item not on the Agenda

John Fadhl felt that since Solano County was mitigating some of the Bay Area waste management issues by accepting their waste Solano County should have policies to encourage better access to composting facilities and provide local farmers compost for free or at reduced prices.

Lesley Emmington thought that technology was driving the goals and policies of the General Plan update. She thought that areas such as the Suisun Marsh, Collinsville and the Jepson Prairie are not understood for the critical resources to the environment that they are. She wanted to encourage the committee to consider goals and policies of conservation and open space.

June Guidotti was concerned that the Committee was not getting feedback from the Air Quality Management Districts, Fish and Game, Us Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies. She also thought the update process was going too fast and that the public was not getting information.

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next regular meeting of the Solano County General Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee will be held on Monday, April 23, 2007 in the Solano County Administration Center, Multi-Purpose Room, 675 Texas St., Fairfield, CA 94533