

General Plan Advisory Committee
June 25, 2008 Meeting Notes (6:30 – 8:30 pm)
Meeting Topic: Land Use Alternatives

GPAC Members Present: All but David Kim and Thomas Murphy

Project Team Present: Holly Keeler, Pam Johns, Don Chase, Steve Peterson, Scott Friend

Meeting Materials: Agenda, Transmittal, Written Work Assignment, Land Use Designations, Current General Plan Map, Land Use Alternative Maps (A, B, and C), Special Planning Area Exhibits

Pam- Kick off at 6:35pm. Quick overview of meeting logistics. Recap of the last meeting results. Guiding principals changes, PC/CC presentation. Goal for tonight is to receive input from the GPAC to improve the viability of the 3 land use alternatives in a manner that meets the City's objectives in a qualitative manner.

Initial Public Comment

Dylan Paul- Jobs are a key issues. Needs to be addressed, green jobs are important. Areas with poverty should be focused on for employment centers. Green color jobs.

Gary Phillips – represents the south-gate property. Input has not been submitted. Alternatives do not represent the land owner's request. Special planning areas are questionable, inside the city properties being lumped with greenline properties.

Pam- Response to the questions raised. The alternatives will change once new information is added.

Closed public comment – 6:55 pm

GPAC Discussion

Question #1 - Which alternative (A, B, or C) do you think is the best alternative and what was the key consideration for you?

Kirk- Without changes at all it would be B, likes B with things pulled from A and C. Needs some changes.

Jim- Likes B with some modifications. Would like to B because its not A and C. Likes the defensible boundary.

Tony- Likes A with some modifications from B. Likes the mixed use areas in B. Likes growth spread out a bit. C is a no growth.

Noel- Likes B. Represents the guiding principals the most. Some special planning areas need to be modified. Too much land designated at this point. Assuming everything will be developed might be too ambitious.

Mike- Likes a B- or a C+. B has areas that wont work. Dose not want to break the greenline. Bad idea. Infrastructure is critical, nance canyon is not a good idea. Butte creek is a critical habitat, difficult to work around. Butte creek is a great defensible boarder. Like development in the southeast area.

Nancy- Difficult to come up with a definitive answer. C would lead to too much congestion, traffic. A extends the greenline too far. Too much taking of orchard areas. Nance canyon is too close to the dump. Should not be residential. Likes the mixed use in all the special planning areas. Likes B.

Sara- Likes B. Like the greenline movement, not too far. Likes live work areas and development along transit corridors.

Dave- Somewhere in the future A makes sense. Not opposed to Bell Muir. Dose not see a broad vision. A is lopsided, North residential, south industrial. Airport has some issues. C is infill mixed use, requires some major changes. Likes B with modifications.

James- C represents the current plan. Needs to know more about transit and traffic impacts. Likes B because of the compromises. Sees A as a 50 or 60 year horizon. Nance canyon is in the county. Likes a blend of A and C.

Kirk- Nance canyon is a bad idea. No defensible boundary, not integrated with the circulation. Problems with the gateway for the same reasons. Estates drive is too low density and car dependent. Would not consider the Shuster area too, auto dependent, not integrated. Add McIntosh estes to alt B, need to connect with Barber yard. Dose not the development of the Mendo forest. Dog park is essential. Why get rid of the park.

Jim- Where did the mendo site come from?

Jim Stevens- Healthy enviro with limited eco footprint, what dose it mean? Everything is constrained.

Holly- reads the principal #2.

Jim- Likes too boil it down. Fell back on "what is or is not sensitive" Defensible boundary is environmentally good. Dose not see alt C working, because of such massive changes. Could shock the economy. May cause development to move to the county. Would not like to see development in the south gate area, opens the door to develop all the way to Durham.

Kirk- Eco footprint, almond trees are not endangered. Low density residential living causes lot of consumption. We need more intense development in order consume less resources.

Jim- Likes the village concept.

Noel- Question is "Is this an appropriate area for the city to grow?" Barber yard is a great mixed use infill opportunity, but it has access issues. McIntosh could be added to improve connectivity. Growth areas should not lay out exactly what should be planned. Likes the urban reserve idea. Dose not like the nance canyon area, too big. Are these alternatives the result of data? Would like a breakdown of housing types, and current housing stock.

Pam- Great question. BAE study will be released soon. We have the numbers, coming to the public soon. Each alternative meets the cities general growth needs.

Nancy- Housing is very complicated. Developers want single family. Need to have data to counter these remarks. Needs, desires, and ideal of why Chico is a good place.

Pam- There is a balance between what people want and what people can afford. The market data will help with the understanding the future needs.

Tony- Seams likes the maps were done without much input. Likes the idea of moving the greenline to natural boundaries. Quality of life is a big issue, will higher density change things? A preserves the lower densities.

Michael- Started with C because it reflects the realities. Thinks that the people in agriculture should have right to keep on farming. We have lots of SFH who are occupied by just one person. Underutilized. Some people don't necessarily want to live in an apartment. People want more housing choices, older people need something in-between SFH and assisted living. We are at a changing point because of limited resources. How people live will change because of high energy prices. Dose not like the Westside growth. Likes C with some additions from B. Redevelopment of fairgrounds could be a great idea.

James- Going to the Westside of the track will require some major roadway changes. Would like to see more live work. Density is at 7% in Chico. Lower density happened when energy was cheap. Higher density when energy is expensive.

Dave Kelly- Would like to beat the county to the punch. Would like to see some regional retail. Need to have some kind of identity, need to consider medical issues, and green jobs. Let enhance what we have. Lets do some strategic vision and identity.

Nancy-clarification regarding opportunity sites and SPAs.

Jim- the market will dictate that SFH on large will lead to less demand.

Kirk- Questions about SPAs, not clear on how serious to take them. Thinks having so many mixed use designations could be problematic. Worries about how the zoning code would implement these regulations.

Pam- People want to know what could be potentially developed. Intentionally established compatible land patterns.

Nancy- there will be a historic element. Conflict on the esplanade of office mixed use and residential.

Sara- Questions about greenline history.

Dave- Have to clear regulations to get mixed use.

Pam- Our goal is to promote flexibility and opportunity. Don't be afraid of mixing the uses.

Michael- Have we had any more information from CSUC? More student housing? College housing areas affect the rental market. Campus expansion has caused single family neighborhoods to change to rental areas. The market may dictate some turn over.

Question #2 – What are the major trade offs associated with your preferred alternative?

Kirk- C is preferable to meet social and public services. But the pressure is to move out. Social tradeoffs. Suburban development has been a disaster.

Tony- Alternative A is preferred. Not as much infill or HDR. Alternative C is great if all you are concerned about is the environment.

Noel- The growth areas are fine as long as there is a health mix of uses. Needs to be done in the right way. Make sure the mixed use actually get built. Socially we need to evaluate how well we implement the plan. Need to consider the equity issues. Need to plan the uses to work well together.

Jim- a lot of this comes down to the implementation and policies. Need to provide opportunities in each neighborhood. Nance canyon needs to be removed. Need to reduce VMT and provide a range of services near by. Need to make complete neighborhoods. Allow flexibility in existing neighborhoods, some neighborhoods may change in the future as the market changes.

Michael- Start with C and borrow what is best from B. Shuster is not a sustainable choice. Nance canyon should be out too. Lots of people moving to the north state do not all have to live in Chico. Economics are a bit out of control of Chico. Need to create green tech jobs, to be a leader. Tradeoffs, agriculture is important to the community, brings in money and create opportunities. Preserve the ag land, someday it will be worth it. Need to better utilize what we have.

Nancy- Likes to work and live close by. CANA is trying to save the neighborhood. Circulation issues will only get worse. At what point dose the congestions get so bad. Thinks the outward growth could help relive pressures in the core of the city.

Sara- People who like A think the city is going to grow bigger. Others who like C want the city to stay the same size.

Dave- B is in the middle because it more balanced. C is best environmentally, the core is good. All the ideas could still happen. We are not restricting C by choosing A or B elements.

James- Likes the idea of keeping things compact. Biggest concern about C is the economic viability. Thinks the lost of industrial land could have major impacts. Like the MUNC, but dose not want to see mini downtowns. Intensification of commercial outside downtown could cause a fear of losing downtown. Circulation needs to be addressed. C is great for less VMT. More roads will cause more VMT. Outside the natural boundaries the infrastructure cost get huge.

Tony- Transportation issues, people versus cars. In 30 years there will still be cars. Complete neighborhoods, being close to services. Having the option to choice is important. Improve the pedestrian environment.

Kirk- Need lots of people to support mixed use.

Noel- People change there views about sites based on the realities of the day. Complete neighborhoods need a model to identify sites where land uses could change to provide needed services. In Sacramento GP element, TOD element, not necessary as an element in Chico, but he model of TOD can still apply. Gives the developers a tool, recipe for success of how to do development in the future.

James- Longfellow as a neighborhood core example, cant do MUNC in strip development. Need visual tools.

Michael- Example of economic Safeway on Nord, layout and design issues. Can be done better, needs an overpass. Functional but needs major improvements. We have everyone but whole foods, we don't need any more large grocery stores. We need the right scale. Marco economics have a big impact, we cant change this.

Questions #4 – Are there new opportunity sites that should be considered, changes to land use maps, and/or corrections to the maps?

Kirk- North esplanade needs to be included. Chico nut is good. North valley plaza needs to be filled with residential. South campus alternatives are a good idea. Alternative B in the wedge is great with the live work units. Include McIntosh from A and include in B. Mixed use with residential is good. Regional commercial makes sense at 20th street.

Jim- Likes the alternative shown in C for Barber yard. Likes the mixed use at the north valley plaza. Dose not nance canyon any way you slice it. Estes triangle needs to be included.

Tony- dose not like the mendo area, likes the southgate.

Noel- Likes the barber yard special planning area, needs to be connected to the west. Nance canyon needs to be taken off the map. Southgate, no uses over the cemetery.

Michael- breaking the greenline is a big deal, dose not think it will happen easily. Like the things in B that don't break the greenline. Industrial development in barber yard would be okay as long as all transport is only done by rail. Need to address the access issues to the site.

Nancy- Lots of details to ponder. South of CSUC neighborhood, need to interface historic preservation with new changes. Esplanade is a key Chico site, and need to be protected and enhanced. Likes the old homes being converted back to original use.

Sara- Take out nance canyon, not necessary. Would like to see more live work areas.

Dave- Is west of the airport area off the table? North Chico specific plan should have some more job opportunities. Mud creek should have higher densities, why not, more self sustaining. Mix up barber yard too. Large sites need to have employment sites.

Pam- Little or no viability due to HCP/NCCP site. Also in FFA control.

James- should not head into the orchards. Lots of constraints, now we have to deal with it. Nance canyon is not a good idea, not appropriate, leapfrogs natural boundaries. Schmidburer should have some jobs with the high densities. Would like to see more life work unit development. Fix the finance community to support mixed use and live work. Need to be concerned about circulation.

Michael- Barber yard is going to cause issues with the neighbors if its developed with office mixed use. Should be commercial and neighborhood serving. Should be primary residential with some industrial right along the tracks.

Dave- Likes mud creek. Should be in the city. Greenline should move to the creek. Helps make that part of the city work.

Jim- adding mud creek adds a link to HW32. Development will pay for the road cost.

Closing Public Comment

Michael Reiley- Lived in the Longfellow neighborhood before. Would like to see the character of neighborhood maintained. City needs to create zoning differently for new versus existing neighborhoods. Need to protect what is already built. Need to think about long term planning. Preserve what is good and currently built.

George Nicolaus- Landowner in the southgate area. Changes in alt A and B would result in residential development on his property. In 1999 there were better circulation plans for connectivity with midway, makes sense. Greenline is move to the midway would create a better more defensive boundary. Connectivity should be planned now.