

**Stakeholder Meeting Notes  
Sustainability Task Force  
February 13, 2008**



**ATTENDANCE**

Five members of the Butte Environmental Council (BEC) attended the meeting to share their ideas and concerns about the project. Attendees included Bob Speer, GeneAnna McMillan, Barbara Vlamis, Mary Watters, and Elizabeth Devreaux.

**WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR CHICO IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS**

- Well defined urban boundary/urban limit lines (which requires coordination with Butte Co).
- How will we deal with traffic? We need to think about getting folks out of our cars.
- Value the agricultural aspects of the community and access to agricultural resources (preservation of agricultural lands).
- Greater regard for habitat – they tried to get it in the last GP, but the teeth were pulled out (“shalls” turned to “shoulds”) – oak valley reference in particular – they will be pretty vigilant about this moving forward. Acknowledge what is in the fabric of the community – Chico has habitat that may not be robust, but needs to be protected.
- Too much discretion that allows political pressure to compromise environmental integrity.
- Open space – last GP was supposed to be a resource based GP and they never really got that. They want to know how the teeth will work.
- Compact design is the cornerstone – should not be dumped, but reconsidered, particularly in light of sustainability.
- New urbanist development (3- to 4-story mixed use). Transportation that comes along with this type of density will be important.
- Issue of climate change is becoming so urgent – critical to think forward about formally getting people out of their cars.
- Thresholds not created in the past GP can definitely be in this GP – air quality and water quality can drive it. They don’t have to have overriding considerations for all of the projects moving forward. State is going to help drive these issues.
- Would like to see a design standard manual (drawn out) to demonstrate the concepts clearly.
- Neighborhood districts – get each area to come together to make decisions collectively. Compliments for the effort has been started – now that same program needs to be carried to other areas of the community.

**WHAT SHOULD NOT CHANGE IN TERMS OF THE GENERAL PLAN?**

- Don’t sell our water and don’t import or export our water (watershed preservation).
- At a minimum, the RMAs and RCAs attention to habitat should remain as a minimum standard. Expanding on this would be taking into the HCP (HRCP) – good effort started, but aborted such that it does not include species outside of special status species.

- Creekside greenways – acquisition and easements for protection in absolute terms.
- Open space corridors that are connected.
- Community Design Element – enhance.
- Park protection.
- Tree protection
- Village Core concept in the last plan – every new development would have a commercial center.
- Esplanade needs to be protected – don't mess with it.
- Need to have a different transportation infrastructure than Anytown USA. Don't want to see four lane roads with no sidewalks, etc.
- Encourage existing situation with limited surface street capacity. This is a good traffic calming solution – let there be traffic. Good to be able to accept lower levels of service – let traffic worsen. Concept is good – implementing has been difficult. City needs to consider different mitigation fees (transit, other air quality mitigation outside of traffic impact fees).

## **GROWTH AREAS?**

- Preserve the Greenline and Goldline.
- Park avenue – ring corridor good for mixed use, new job opportunities, new commercial opportunities, and new homes. If there was public transit in that area, it would improve existing opportunities in that area (e.g., Diamond Mach).
- Growth by the airport may be appropriate if there were limited impacts to resources – but it is not connected so you've created a situation where people have to drive a significant distance.
- Haggin Lane for light industrial.
- Bel Muir area is already agreed upon as a growth area because of current impacts to the agricultural areas. Last GPAC voted on growth areas (CSA1 was first choice, and Bel Muir was second choice).
- Talk about what kind of commercial growth. Regional neighborhood shopping areas – how do we avoid these terrible strip malls? Is there a way to create a conversation that Chico is more unique? Commercial live work. Also supported the concept of the Village Core.
- Need to expand the discussion of mixed use.
- Opportunity to increase the economy/create more high paying jobs. Focus on small entrepreneurial businesses based on agriculture, eco-tourism, etc. Focus on opportunities associated with the university.
- Emphasis on telecommuting – make it easy for people to have high paying jobs that may be based in other areas.
- Intellectual incubator? Capitalize on sustainability e–focus on producing more of what we need here – self-sustaining community.
- More dedicated bike paths.
- We know there are folks with \$ in town – have them establish think tanks for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need help getting ideas and vision. Encourage these in higher education. Mary mentioned that Jack Rollins has done this through a scholarship.
- Exporting our water is not acceptable – global warming will impact the water supply in our watershed. The GP needs to talk about this.
- Tree people have done in LA so that housing is sustainable.

- Housing affordable to different income levels. Needs to be integrated. Needs mixed use – also needs small lots.
- In terms of growth opportunities, the developers blew it by building too much of the same stuff over the last 15 years. Aren't there opportunities to changes those things – to do something different in those areas.
- Infill and second units have huge potential. Diamond Mach would have good opportunities for multi-family mixed use development (e.g., more condos).
- Need to think about educating the community about alternative transportation and energy sources.
- The last GP did identify growth areas and those have been squandered.
- Ways of building to preserve the watershed – there are ways to do this.
- Active and passive solar should be part of the General Plan.

### **WHAT BARRIERS DOES THE CITY FACE FOR SUCCESS? HOW CAN THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- Chico should own their own utilities – this could be a good funding source.
- We don't have examples of the good type of development. There should be examples. We don't have examples of good mixed use and good housing alternatives. Meriam Park.
- Barrier is not having teeth in the GP and not having the willingness to follow through.
- Need to have an ongoing vision – economic prosperity is a good vision, but they need the community to help guide development in the Diamond Mach area that will be reflective of the vision.
- "Unprecedented collaboration to make a vision happen".
- We have several existing areas that are underutilized (North Valley Plaza Mall and area across the street – Liquor Locker).
- BCAG – barrier OR opportunity. We're out of touch as a City. City-County coordination is really important to Chico. We're an island in Butte County, but we are definitely impacted. BCAG is a huge resource – for regional transportation and financing of things to help Chico in the regional context. (e.g., they're missing out on opportunities for grants for alt. transportation).
- Safety needs to be taken into consideration into the design issues.
- Health is a huge consideration in terms of air quality and water quality.
- In the last GP, there was a carrying capacity discussion to say that new development areas would not occur until existing undeveloped areas were developed.

### **OTHER MISCELLANEOUS SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THIS PROCESS:**

- Need ag mitigation fee – considered, but not ever implemented.
- Need open space mitigation fee.
- Thresholds for resources – resource based plan – RCA, RMA – they were going to look at things like air quality and water quality. This is about creating numbers (e.g., storm water – we thought we were good, but if Chico Creek reaches this threshold, then things stop and we figure out what to do).
- Vision Institute.

- Question – how can we address such focused political positions (e.g., affordable housing). Need to think about ways that we can balance issues or consider multiple issues. They are asking to see staff focused on the broader interests and for staff to put forward alternative considerations.
- Discussion about the edges of the community - consider a requirement for clustering with open spaces to allow transition from existing neighborhoods to the natural and agricultural areas. Opportunities for transition have not been significantly explored.
- Passion is the blue oak – need to pay particular attention to blue oaks at the edges of the community. These resources are not adequately protected.
- Foothills are in Chico have 15,000 species of wildflowers, which is more than any other County. There is so much interest in the foothills – to be able to drive by and smell the air in this cooler environment allows residents to escape within their existing community. The viewshed in this area is critical.
- Based on our resource maps, there is a lot of potential for a large completely protected resource area.