

**Stakeholder Interview Notes**  
**Mayor's Business Advisory Council Meeting**  
**March 18, 2009, 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.**  
**Conference Rm. 1, Council Chambers**

**Meeting Issue: Economic Development Policy Discussion for Shovel-Ready Sites, Road Connectivity, and Redevelopment/Reuse**

**GROUP CHARACTERISTICS**

This group included local business owners and utility company representatives from California Water Service Company and PG&E. The Mayor's Business Advisory Council meets regularly with the Mayor and City staff to discuss issues of economic growth and job creation. The Council suggested various policy-level methods and streamlined processes for the City to attract businesses and employers.

Below are the individuals that attended:

Mark Kessler	Brian Pierce	Mike Pembroke	Brendan Vieg
Bob Kruger	Tino Nava	Ann Schwab	Bob Summerville
Robert Leckinger	Matt York	David Burkland	Martha Wescoat-Andes

**Questions for Discussion:**

- 1) **Should the City commit resources to ensure "shovel ready sites" (ready to go land) for business development that leads to jobs, wealth and tax revenue to support public services? If so, how should the City proceed? Should resources include use of public funds? Prioritized infrastructure investments? Other?**
  - Interested companies or developers will often contact City staff first (prior to contacting a realtor), checking for pertinent data such as available infrastructure, zoning, etc. Often, if they do not find that the site is ready to meet their needs, they move on. Chico receives many such calls.
  - The capacity for the City to respond to the availability of sites is somewhat limited regarding if the property is on the market, or if there is a willing seller.
  - General infrastructure (e.g., water) may be available, or within an area for extension. However, specific details, such as Fire Department requirements, are typically not known. And for security reasons (post-9/11), public documents with details of infrastructure cannot be fully disclosed.
  - One suggestion for the City to facilitate investments was to focus on purchasing processes, perhaps to negotiate a pre-purchase contract with

a property owner. Similarly, to facilitate environmental permitting with respective state or federal agencies in order to streamline a purchase or investment.

- The City's Fast-Track process can help enormously.
  - Consider also assembling a task force (a "Tiger Team") with the responsibility for streamlining the investment or purchase process for specific sites and companies.
  - Consider assigning a ranking system for the desired elements of "shovel ready" sites, and to prioritize a site inventory based on this ranking.
  - The streamline process must consider that public utility planners need to know well in advance about upgrading facilities, since PUC regulations require lengthy timelines for permitting.
- 2) Are there any "missing connections" in the City's circulation system that need to be addressed in the General Plan Update? Please identify on the attached circulation map (Attachment B) those locations with a circle and note the connection issue (missing bike or vehicular connection).
- The Otterson Drive extension was noted as an important street connection for commerce in the Hegan Lane area.
- 3) **Given the City's limited redevelopment authority (no eminent domain), what strategies should be available to the business community to incentivize redevelopment and reuse in Chico?**
- The City should interview prospective businesses and identify recurring issues of why specific sites or areas of the City are being passed by. Issues to identify would be size of parcels, infrastructure, and adequate work force.
  - Profiles of companies should be compiled and the City should proactively scan the market, instead of waiting for prospective businesses. If this process does not work, try a new one, including attendance of trade shows.
  - Continue to pursue a new process of reviewing prospective companies from a list provided regularly by the State.
  - A suggestion was made to consider a new approach of assembling not just shovel-ready sites, but "shovel-standby" sites. These sites would include pre-agreements with willing sellers, an investigation of infrastructure needs, work-force availability, etc.