

General Plan hits drawing board

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Residents had a chance to ask questions about the Chico General Plan process and look at maps of planning concepts during a workshop attended by about 70 people at the California Lakeside Pavilion on Tuesday evening.

During the two-hour meeting, people had a chance to check out the maps and talk to consultants about specific areas highlighted for growth, and what types of new growth is being considered for those areas.

Three alternatives have been mapped out for consideration, with the understanding that final decisions may very well be hybrids of each of these plans.

Alternative A includes expansion on the north and south corridors and in the southeast beyond the current Greenline.

This alternative has the largest footprint as far as land space, and includes more parks and open space.

This has the greatest amount of residential land, substantial job growth areas and many mixed use areas. Mixed use means commercial, residential, retail etc., could share space. An example might be retail stores with apartments above or office and light-use industrial in the same areas.

Alternative B has a smaller land area than A, with expansion in the north and south, with less to the east, with more limited growth beyond the Greenline. This alternative has the most mixed-use proposals.

Alternative C considers the least amount of land, with no expansion beyond the Greenline. It assumes significant redevelopment and mixed uses. This is the plan that would have the most dense development and would use significant redevelopment and mixed uses.

The Habitat Conservation Plan also plays into the process, with some areas proposed to be designated as highly sensitive for development.

Other areas have been identified similarly for all three plans, such as residential and commercial mixed use for north Esplanade, commercial mixed use for Mangrove Avenue, and regional commercial for existing shopping such as East 20th Street and Skyway.

Expansion of the Greenline is proposed in Alternatives A and B in the areas of MacIntosh Estes, Southgate and Bel Muir/Mud Creek.

Consultant Kendall Flint said that none of the plans are likely to be perfect for everyone. Rather, the focus of soliciting comments is to hear parts people love and parts people hate, as well as what issues have been overlooked, she said. This part of the General Plan process is about 35 percent complete after six months of community involvement, explained Pam Johns of the consulting firm, PCM.

This has included 400 phone surveys, hundreds of stakeholder interviews and community workshops.

Johns explained that the ideas presented on Tuesday are broad and that more details will develop as the process continues.

"We're talking concepts, ranges and general categories," Johns said.

Assumptions for the plans include a 2-percent

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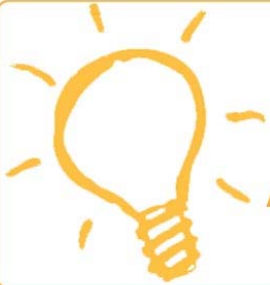
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growth rate, which is consistent with the past 40 years, and a need to accommodate 50,000 new residents and 21,000 new dwelling units by 2030. At the conclusion of the meeting, Johns said the maps would be posted in the City Hall lobby by Thursday. She also encouraged people to send in comments via a Web site at: www.chicogeneralplan.com.

Comments are due by June 18.

A joint Planning Commission, City Council meeting will be July 15 and Sept. 2 the City Council is expected to choose a preferred alternative.

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