

Workshop Summary

Vacaville General Plan Update Community Workshop #2 – Policy Issues August 20, 2011

Community Workshop #2 was focused on policy issues and took place on Saturday, August 20, 2011 at the McBride Senior Center. Approximately 32 people attended the workshop, forming five groups during the small group discussion. The workshop focused on creating policies for the General Plan Update related to four specific topics: the agricultural buffer, traffic Level of Service, parks, and infrastructure planning in policy plan areas. The policy discussion topics were chosen based on public input received at previous workshops and General Plan Steering Committee meetings. Workshop participants were broken up into small groups to discuss these four policy topics. The summary of the discussions below is organized by policy topic.

AGRICULTURAL BUFFER

How wide should the agricultural buffer be?

Most breakout groups agreed that agricultural buffer should be at least 500 feet, and at least one group would consider a buffer larger than 500 feet. For some groups, the use of agricultural pesticides was a big issue to consider when determining the width of the agricultural buffer.

Should a buffer be required adjacent to non-residential urban uses such as stores, offices, or warehouses?

Most groups agreed that the buffer should be required adjacent to non-residential urban uses, although there was not complete consensus on this issue. In addition, one group suggested that the decision to require an agricultural buffer should be based on potential health impacts related to agricultural pesticides.

Where should the agricultural buffer be located?

This question relates to the location of the agricultural buffer in relation to the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and the PG&E easement that is located immediately east of the UGB, which is actively farmed. The groups had varying opinions on this issue. One group reached consensus that the buffer should be located within the UGB so that the City could maintain control over the uses in the buffer, while another group had a four-to-one split in favor of locating the buffer within the UGB. Another group could not reach consensus on this issue, and suggested that the City look to the Solano Irrigation District (SID) for input. One group supported locating the buffer both within and outside of the UGB, using the 385-foot PG&E easement outside the UGB, plus 115 feet inside the UGB.

What uses should be allowed in the agricultural buffer?

Although this question was not included in the list of pre-determined questions, many groups weighed in on this issue based on comments that were raised during the question-and-answer period earlier in the

workshop. Most groups agreed that non-residential, low-intensity uses should be located within the agricultural buffer including detention ponds, alternative energy facilities, walking paths, and open space. Some participants were concerned about the safety of people using the buffer area for park and recreation purposes given the proximity of the PG&E transmission lines.

TRAFFIC LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

What Level of Service (LOS) policy makes the most sense for Vacaville?

Groups generally agreed that a single LOS policy doesn't make sense. Rather, groups supported establishing different LOS standards for different land uses, different parts of town (e.g. lower standards for business parks), and on different roadway types (e.g. lower standards on major roads). In general, the groups supported allowing lower standards in these different scenarios in order to help promote economic and job development, while one group supported lower LOS standards in order to promote walkability. Two groups agreed that LOS C (the City's existing LOS standard) or better should be the standard in residential areas.

PARKS

What are appropriate park standards and requirements for Vacaville?

All the breakout groups agreed that the City should maintain the current park standard requirement of 4.5 park acres per 1,000 residents. Groups also generally agreed that the City's existing ½-mile radius park service standard should be maintained, although one group thought that this standard should be flexible. Another group suggested that residential areas be required to be within 1 mile walking distance of a park.

What tools should the City use to help achieve its park standards and fund maintenance of City parks?

All the breakout groups were in support of implementing a citywide Landscaping Maintenance Assessment District to fund park maintenance as long as it imposes a reasonable fee. Some groups suggested that the City should find revenue to maintain parks from new development and that there should be better management of existing tax revenue.

Should new pocket parks be allowed?

Groups varied in opinion on whether new pocket parks should be allowed. Some groups generally supported pocket parks, but were concerned about the maintenance costs and whether they would result in fewer large parks. One group thought that pocket parks were not as useful as large parks.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING IN POLICY PLAN AREAS

How should the City address infrastructure planning for undeveloped land inside the policy plan areas?

Groups generally agreed that the policy plan areas are important for the City's economic health and for the creation of new jobs in Vacaville. Because of this, some groups supported reducing the traffic standards and all groups supported finding ways to increase the wastewater capacity in the policy plan areas. One group suggested a pay-back plan in which the City funds infrastructure improvements and is paid back by businesses, while several groups suggested that the City study this issue further. In addition, one group indicated that the City should continue to be flexible in what land uses are allowed in order to promote economic development.