



## Technical Advisory Committee #4

Tulare County General Plan Update

MEETING MINUTES

September 28, 2004

1:30 p.m. Conference Rooms A & B, Board of Supervisors Chamber,  
County Civic Center, 2800 West Burrel, Visalia, CA

George Finney opened the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

### 1. Welcome and Introduction

Present: Bruce Race, Rick Rust, Ted Holzem, George Finney, Theresa Szymanis, Mike Olmos, Laurena Johnson, Gary Kunkel, Henry Hash, Roberto Brady, Linda Douglass, Mary Escarsega, Patrick Ford, William Tweed, James Blair, Britt L. Fussel, Julie Allen, Bob Keenan, Dave Harrald, Bob Stocker, Scott Cochran, Al Dias, Brad Dunlap

### 2. Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

### 3. GP Status Update

Theresa Szymanis provided an update of the General Plan 2025 Update, including:

- A discussion of efforts to date on the General Plan;
- A progress report on the Draft Background Report and the process once that report is delivered from the consultant;
- The formation of various TAC Sub Task Groups to review the Draft Background Report;
- A discussion of the growth models identified so far in the process; and
- A review of the upcoming events in the next few months.

### 4. Background Report

#### ***A look at the key findings from the Background Report (existing conditions)***

Rick Rust, of URS Corporation and Bruce Race, of RaceStudio introduced the meeting with a discussion of the Draft Background Report, which was delivered to Technical Advisory Committee members last week.

### 5. Policy Choices

#### ***A look at the key topical issues identified to date and a group discussion of potential policy alternatives that should be assessed.***

Rick Rust outlined three growth models (City Centered Development; Rural Community Development and Proportional Growth) that will be used to stimulate discussion at the public workshops to help develop a preferred growth management model. Bruce Race detailed each of the three models and opened the floor for discussion, asking if the models were complete.

What was missing that needed to be incorporated into the stories? The Technical Advisory Committee identified the following issues needing to be addressed:

- New towns need to be addressed in the Rural Community Development Concept. There are two types of new town possibilities: the incorporation of existing communities and the founding of completely new ones.
- There needs to be cooperation between Tulare County and neighboring counties on the update to ensure that the General Plan and county priorities are known and acknowledged, particularly in terms of transportation (SR 65/ Avenue 416), which were seen as far more important to Tulare County than to Kern or Fresno counties.
- Inter-jurisdictional cooperation on regional environmental impacts must extend to the national parks and national forests, which are important to the county in terms of economy, transportation and “green infrastructure.” In addition, the parks provide riparian habitat and [forest fire] fuel management, that don’t recognize boundaries.
- Cities that abut Tulare County (including Reedley, Delano and Kingsburg) need to be brought into the General Plan Update to ensure compatible uses and growth priorities.
- The transportation/air quality linkage needs to be made on a countywide basis as it will play a factor in the types and amounts of development that can occur and where it can occur. The pattern of transit most suiting to each of the growth patterns needs to be determined. RACM’s (Reasonably Available Control Measures) are required and apply to all three growth scenarios.
- The rural development alternative creates many infrastructure development issues that are difficult to address.
- The EIR in any alternative will need to explain how design relates to air quality impacts, water quality, ground water management, recharge and storage and sanitary sewer service.
- The jobs/housing balance will impact the transportation scenario – if industrial and commercial jobs are not provided at the community level, trip lengths will increase.
- Uncertainties over the future of Hwy. 99 are a huge factor. The highway needs \$8 billion in repairs. It is uncertain whether it will be made a Federal Interstate Highway, and therefore receive assistance with funding of the improvements. Otherwise, existing financing for State infrastructure will determine what happens. This will affect the standards that are applied. Protection of the identity of Hwy. 99 is a focus of Caltrans’ Master Plan for Hwy. 99 and the Scenic 99 Task Group. Tulare County has on of the last stretches of scenic Hwy. 99 in California.
- Airport facilities and growth must be addressed, especially those along Hwy. 99 as community growth in this corridor may preclude airport options. Woodlake airport is currently upgrading. Pixley has an unused facility.
- Community growth along Hwy. 99 would be determined by the development policies in the General Plan. Balanced growth in communities must recognize the basic needs of the existing communities. It takes 10,000 people to support a grocery store, schools, etc. Triggers are reached to gain basic services. In the rural community scenario a strategy of what to do while populations grow is needed, to provide infrastructure, basic services and businesses, as otherwise there will be only housing until the population thresholds are reached to become self serving, complete communities. The market will be a strong force in telling us where the growth will go. There is already interest in Earlimart and Goshen. If developers want to build they can upgrade the infrastructure.

- A strategy is needed to create a transitional “living document”, that can change over time once initial goals are met, to move towards sustainability and respond positively to change.
- Hwy. 65 development could repeat the pattern on Hwy. 99 if new towns or communities spring up. Such rural community development could lead to sprawl, with housing but few jobs.
- It is very difficult to build affordable housing in the cities. The affordable housing is built in the unincorporated communities and their situation is worsened.
- The rural communities are growing but what will they be when they grow up? Will they incorporate and leave the county?
- Tulare County does not have impact fees to pay for growth. There is a lot of pressure for the county to go after sales taxes. The state tax base shift to sales is also influencing push and pull locations. Decision makers must be prepared to respond when the big box giants use their divide and conquer approach. The only way to do proportional growth is to implement revenue sharing between the cities and the county.
- Part of the solution would be for the county to help the cities do infill development. The UGB's have been effective.
- Standards between the city and county are not the same.
- How we can develop along and connect to Hwy. 99 to protect the image of Hwy. 99 if we choose to develop along the corridor? Tulare County's central location in the state is driving growth on the corridor. It is important that the county have a connection to Hwy. 99. If it is an economic engine, there are three scenarios for Hwy. 99:
  - Invest in Hwy. 99;
  - Invest in high speed rail;
  - Have a failed transport corridor.
- But where will the money come from to realize (i) or (ii)? In California, investment or the lack of it can make or break a plan or policies.
- Agricultural preservation policies will need to be strengthened.

Bruce Race then summarized the meeting by noting that we will revisit the alternatives and refine the discussion on policy choices, alternatives and their implications for public review.

## **6. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date was not established.

## **7. Adjournment**