



Technical Advisory Committee #5

Tulare County General Plan Update

MEETING MINUTES

November 29, 2004
Policy Scenarios Workshop

On November 29, 2004, the Tulare County General Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met to review policy scenarios to be used in the community planning process. The agenda included a brief summary of Sub-TAC meetings by participants, a discussion of leading policy issues facing the County, and review of policy scenarios.



Sub TAC Reports

There was a written summary prepared from the Sub TAC meetings. The following notes capture the highlights of verbal presentations.

Water

- The water section is just a start – it relies on basin-wide instead of Tulare County data
- We need to consider the implication of the potential loss of 1 million acre-feet of water due to federal policies and litigation

Environment and Resources

- Air quality– Need more discussion about alternate fuels and public fleets and provisions for “clean air subdivisions”
- Bio-Habitat– Indicate a continuous pattern of open space that is integrated into communities
- Mineral resources– Rail support for mining, identify hard rock resources
- Timber– Not sure where numbers came from (check)

Economic

- Transit– Moving people and products via rail, roads and air
- Infrastructure– Support diversification of economy
- Education– Workforce
- Tourism– Incentives and collaboration for growing visitor industry

Infrastructure

- The data needs to illustrate the amount of deferred maintenance
- Highway 99 interchanges need over \$100M in upgrades
- Need to show sewer and water systems
- Discuss timing for financing infrastructure
- Unique level of service for county roads (similar to other Central Valley counties)
- Show what has happened with State sales tax and how other counties have added financial capacity for county road repair

Critical Policy Decisions

The TAC discussed the most critical policy commitments the County will need to make. These commitments will need to be dealt with in a very deliberate fashion with an emphasis on implementation.

- Making a commitment to being an agricultural county
- Not losing the balance created by existing planning systems and policies between urban and rural uses
- Creating the conditions that make interjurisdictional planning and policy implementation possible
- Paying for infrastructure required for growth and existing underserved areas
- Identify a land use and circulation pattern that acknowledges all these policy commitments (above)

Other policy considerations discussed by the TAC:

- Identifying future growth areas in the county and cities
- Connecting density and transit solutions
- Plan for uncertainty (high speed rail, water, other)
- Paying for growth using impact fees and identifying new sources of funding for deferred maintenance
- Paying for existing services
- Consistency in policies and related standards between jurisdictions
- How to identify “viable” rural communities for expansion or abandonment (size, services, etc.)
- Perceptions of competition between diversification of the economy and preserving agriculture
- Maintaining the character and quality of the county while paying for services
- Making policy choices that reflect health and environmental implications
- Preserving interconnected networks of open space and habitat
- Directing growth in synch with water availability

Policy Scenarios

The TAC discussed potential additions to draft policy scenarios and pros and cons. The scenarios are a qualitative representation of a City Centered, Rural Community and Proportional Growth futures.

1. City Center Scenario

Add:

- Transit systems that reflect compact land use pattern
- Emphasis on jobs-housing balance
- Works within current city policy boundaries (UGB's)
- Cities will need to look at housing alternatives (high rises, etc.)

Pros:

- Support for high-speed rail (regional transit solutions) and an inter-modal future that considers access and parking management
- Distinct image and identity of towns and cities

2. Rural Community Development Scenario

Add:

- "The interstate plan" emphasis on state roads and 99
- Include urban limit lines around rural communities
- Show development patterns extending along cross roads with 99
- Identify what cities might incorporate in the future
- Impact on special districts

Cons:

- Cost for retrofitted and new infrastructure in unincorporated communities
- Capacity of special districts to accept growth
- Phased financing a challenge – a strategy is needed
- Sets pattern for suburban future in which people along 65 and 99 corridors will need to commute to cities for jobs unless jobs are created first. What would this pattern look like 50 years into the future?
- Impacts the best agricultural land along the 99 corridor

3. Proportional Growth Scenario

Add:

- That cities and towns utilize "smart growth" principles for expansion
- Policy needs to be consistent with Regional Housing Needs Assessment