



Technical Advisory Committee #8

June 29, 2005

Present:

George Finney, Theresa Szymanis, Larry Mintier, Bruce Race, Ted Holzem, William Tweed, Dave Harrald, Bell Delain, Julie Allen, Dave Bryant, Bill Hayter, Al Dias, Scott Cochran, Jim Sullins, Brian Blain, Craig Knudson, Bonnie Simoes, Mike Olmos, Shirley Kirkpatrick, John Miller, Patrick Ford, Dan Mienert, Paul Matos, Brian Newton, Kim Loeb, George Mahon.

After a brief introduction, Larry Mintier facilitated the meeting to gather input and direction on the Land Use Concept Alternatives.

General Plan

- The UAB is the ultimate growth boundary.
- The UDB is the 20 year growth boundary.
- 120 land use classifications were reduced to 27 for analytical purposes.
- Rural Residential designations – 5 acre parcels are assumed to be developable if they are inside a UAB. The only rural residential within a UAB is the Kings River Plan.

Constraints – Development Suitability

Discussion centered on how the constraints relate to selective policy choices.

- Environmental/conservation easements should be considered as a constraint.
- Water availability should be considered from several angles: availability, treatment, and distribution. The distribution system can be more of a concern than plant capacity.
- Utilities are not constraints as it is a matter of financing technology.
 - A big question is how much investment can free up how much capacity?
- Riparian corridors should be considered a constraint (i.e., buffer waterways as a constrained area)
 - Need to identify how wide a buffer would be?
 - Are existing policies adequate to protect the riparian corridors?
 - Many have found current plans for foothill riparian ecosystems to be inadequate to protect them.
 - Flooding should be coupled with riparian areas to protect these areas through flood regulations (200 – 250 feet?).
 - Need to make sure setbacks along rivers are adequately addressed in General Plan policy.
- Dairies should be grouped with other confined “animal operations”.
- Current County policies look at the location of urban development constraining dairies vs. the location of dairies constraining urban development.

- Cities view both existing dairies and new dairies that are being built as a constraint to development.
- Industrial or other non-sensitive receptors could be built in these areas.
- Agriculture is 2/3 of the Tulare County economy. The County must decide to what extent it wishes to protect its investment into the dairy industry by preventing urban growth into these areas.
- How much Williamson Act Contract lands exist in the Urban Area Boundaries?
- Williamson Act Contracts:
 - Are a constraint to urban development;
 - Have caused leapfrog development;
 - Need policy/strategy to deal with Williamson Act Contract renewal in areas that are growing or are identified for growth to prevent leapfrog development and urban sprawl.
 - Some form of mitigation would be needed, such as Land Trust easements.
 - A deal might be worked out with Department of Conservation on trading contracts for agricultural conservation easements.
- Farmland Security Zones (FSZ's) are only allowed outside the SOI within 3 miles of a city. How much FSZ land is at less than 3 miles from a UAB?
- Policies must be included to protect agricultural land should the State withdraw Williamson Act subsidies.
- Mineral extraction Zones (MRZ) should be considered a constraint.
- Airport Overflight Zones
 - H or C Zones are not a constraint.
 - What will the County do with closed airports?
 - How much of the constrained airport acreage is designated for residential and how much for industrial?
- Flooding can be a limitation to major development without flood control projects.
- Riparian areas should be protected. A 200 to 300 ft. setback from the centerline can help to protect against flooding too.
- Utility limitations (electricity, gas, etc.) are also a consideration.
- Water:
 - Groundwater supply? What is available and where? Water supply is not yet quantified.
 - What are the limitations of water supply? We need to assume a fixed supply of water – this needs to be addressed.
 - We are now using more water than is available. The lack of water needs to be addressed as a constraint.
 - Is higher density development using more water than agriculture? Need to provide studies to confirm the conversion from ag to urban at different densities.
 - Mike Olmos can provide a copy of the Visalia Groundwater Impact Mitigation Strategy. The County can provide information about the Water Collaborative.

Assumptions

- Available land:
 - Took 10% off the top as a flex factor, except Three Rivers, where 90% was taken off. Is the assumption of 90% absorption of available land too high?

- The rough breakdown is 70/30 city UAB's versus unincorporated population.
- Should single family/rural residential on lots over five acres considered as available land? Maybe not at all or only in certain areas (e.g., only around cities).

Alternatives

- Other counties and their growth assumptions should be reviewed to see how they have fared with their choices:
 - Fast growth counties; and
 - Rural counties.
- What effects have their policy/plan discussion had on growth, land consumption, economic viability, etc.
- What will adding population to the unincorporated county do to ag land, resources, etc...
- All of the unincorporated communities (except Richgrove and Goshen) have enough land to accommodate city centered growth. This is the same for the cities.
- For community oriented growth, at least seven communities do not have enough land.
- In the proportional growth scenario, only Richgrove and Goshen have problems, therefore designated lands are not a constraint for 2030.
- The alternatives need to be judged on the costs of infrastructure, services, impacts on agricultural land, etc.
- Are there more alternatives to analyze?
- Should the proportion of city population growth be increased?
- Proportional growth should be kept to use as a base case, rather than an alternative scenario.
- The big policy questions we need to answer must be kept at the forefront in the evaluation of the alternatives.
- Should we set a rural (non community/city) capacity on growth (e.g., 9% or distribute the rest to the communities and cities)?
 - No, don't want to cap growth.
 - We could identify an assumed amount of growth.
- Private developers need to be directed in what they develop. They should not be allowed to develop as they want; but as the community wants.
- Impact fees need to be incorporated into future growth to ensure adequate services are provided.
- What implications are there to a 99 Centric model?
 - Bedroom communities?
 - Traffic congestion?
- How did Fresno County look at growth?
 - Fresno has 15 cities...not a good comparison for distribution.
- Communities lack basic services (i.e., water, sewer, economic, social services) to accommodate growth. Growth should be focused in those communities and cities where these services exist.
- There are three items/issues that need to be addressed in comparing alternatives
 - Cost to provide infrastructure;
 - Cost to maintain infrastructure;
 - What happens to agricultural land?
- Drop Proportional Growth as an alternative and replace it with a 99 Centric alternative.

- Blend the Focused Community Alternative with a Transportation Corridor Focused Alternative:
 - What criteria would be used?
 - This needs to be a formal discussion, too political.
 - What about critical mass for services as criteria?
 - What about using market forces to decide?
 - Which communities could be chosen?
 - Earlimart
 - Strathmore
 - Goshen
 - Pixley
 - Cutler-Orosi
 - Part of the criteria is a local leadership issue.
 - Need to be careful to look at what communities have already invested in:
 - Supervisors investments in communities;
 - Redevelopment investment/expectations;
 - Citizens have expectations that they have been working towards.
- Establish criteria for building New Towns

Alternatives Direction

The Community Oriented alternative already focuses on communities; this should be the Focused Community Alternative with the modification to direct growth to selected communities.

The Focused Community and the 99 Centric Alternatives should be combined to create a Community Transit Corridor Alternative that looks at communities along 99, 65, and other major transit routes.

The City Centered Alternative should be kept but with an increased share going to cities (e.g., 80% or 85%).

The Proportional Growth Alternative should be kept for reference, but not as an alternative.

The analysis of continued growth rates should be included for reference, but not used as an alternative.