

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 9, 2008

TO: POLICY PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT: WORKSHOP ON THE JACKSON HIGHWAY AND GRANT LINE EAST
VISIONING STUDIES**

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

This workshop will review the preliminary results of the Grant Line East and Jackson Highway Visioning studies. Staff will present background information, including the impetus for the Visioning studies, and a recap of the process to date. Additionally, staff will present outcomes of the studies, including the "Policies for Jackson and Grant Line East Visioning Areas" document and conceptual land use maps created for each area. Finally, staff will engage the Policy Planning Commission in a discussion regarding the Visioning studies, the preliminary results, and next steps.

Recommendations

1. Review the results of the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning studies, as illustrated in Attachments A through N, and provide comments.
2. Accept the results of the Visioning studies and use this information to inform future planning studies in the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas.
3. Forward the results of the Visioning studies and associated comments to the Board of Supervisors.

Measures/Evaluation

Not Applicable.

Fiscal Impact

None.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning studies are companion pieces to the County's General Plan Update process. The Draft 2030 General Plan, currently in environmental review, identifies two large potential new growth areas, the Jackson Highway area and the Grant Line East area, which together encompass 20,000+ acres. If adopted as new growth areas, multiple independent master planning processes would likely be initiated for these areas, with planning and build out occurring over many decades. The Visioning studies were initiated by the Board of Supervisors to create a long-term vision for these areas that will help to guide these individual master planning processes toward a common goal, ensure compatibility between near-term and long-term decision-making, and inform stakeholders and decision-makers with both reliable baseline information and conceptual-level ideas for the future.

Due to the Visioning studies' conceptual-level character, the resulting documents and maps are not intended to be adopted as actual plans for new development, as any detailed plan for development in these areas would be much more comprehensive in nature and be subject to environmental review. Rather, the Board of Supervisors will be asked to accept the results of the Visioning studies and use this information to inform future master planning processes in these areas. These master plans would each include extensive outreach to stakeholders and the public, result in detailed plans for development, and be subject to a full environmental review.

II. BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

A. Background

1. General Plan Update Background

The County is in the process of updating its 1993 County General Plan. This update was originally scoped as a "mini-update" to make relatively modest changes to what the County considers to be a high quality policy framework. In early 2004, analysis by Planning staff found that the holding capacity within the County's existing Urban Policy Area (UPA) was approximately 43,000 residential units, while estimated demand over the next 20 years was approximately 29,900 housing units. As such, the original scope of the General Plan Update project did not envision modifications to the General Plan's growth management strategies since the holding capacity analysis revealed that there was an adequate supply of land to meet the projected demand.

In December 2004, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Board of Directors adopted the Blueprint Vision for the 6-County SACOG region, which includes Sacramento County. This Blueprint Vision was created using smart growth principles and strategies to handle the growth expected to occur in the six-county region by the year 2050. Based on the Blueprint's strategy of concentrating a greater proportion of anticipated future development closer to the region's urban core, the unincorporated portion of the County would be expected to grow by 99,700 housing units by 2030, which is the planning horizon for the County's Draft 2030 General Plan (Draft Plan). This growth assumption was more than triple the growth demand assumed prior to the Blueprint effort.

During a public General Plan Update workshop on December 6, 2005, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors conceptually endorsed SACOG's Blueprint expectation for 99,700 housing units by 2030. As a result of this significant change in anticipated growth over the next 25 years, the General Plan Update project has become much more complex than originally anticipated and the scope of analysis was expanded. Not only did the County need to look at how much it will grow, but more importantly it needed to determine how and where this growth will occur. Growth management was the topic of numerous public General Plan Update workshops with the Board of Supervisors in late 2005 and early 2006, as well as a large community outreach program consisting of 10 community workshops in the fall of 2006.

As a result of these efforts, the Draft 2030 General Plan released in May 2007 contains four overarching strategies that aim to accommodate SACOG's expectation for 99,700 units by 2030: 1) Buildout of vacant and underutilized infill parcels; 2) buildout of previously planned communities; 3) commercial corridor revitalization, and; 4) expansion of the UPA. For more detail on these growth management strategies, please refer to the Land Use Element of the Draft General Plan. As illustrated in the following section, the fourth growth management strategy contemplating expansion of the UPA leads to the need for the Visioning studies.

2. *UPA Expansion Background and Relationship to Visioning Studies*

The Board of Supervisors has devoted a number of General Plan Workshops to address potential expansion of the UPA. As a result of these workshops and direction from the Board, the Draft Plan includes four potential new growth areas: the West of Watt Area, the Easton Planning Area, the Jackson Highway Area, and the Grant Line East Area (see Exhibit 1 for a map of these areas). While plans for the Easton Planning Area are well underway and the West of Watt Area is essentially a small infill area, the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas are both large undeveloped areas (12,000+ acres and 8,000+ acres, respectively) that provide the County with an unparalleled opportunity for creation of new communities.

(a) *Impetus for Jackson Highway Area Vision Process*

While a portion of the greater Jackson Highway Area is within the UPA (12,000+ acres) of the Draft General Plan and may be developed within the current planning period (2030), a large portion of this area remains outside of the UPA and will not be available for development within this planning period (see Exhibit 2 for details). However, since the County anticipates that most of the area between the UPA and the Urban Services Boundary (USB) will eventually be developed for urban uses, the County determined that it was necessary to look not only at the near-term (through the year 2030) planning period of the Draft Plan, but also at the long-term development potential of the area. Therefore, the County began to discuss the need for a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary effort for the greater Jackson Highway Area (approximately 22,000 acres in size) to create a long-term vision for the area that would help to ensure compatibility between near-term and long-term decision-making.

(b) Impetus for Grant Line East Area Vision Process

The Public Review Draft General Plan, released in November 2006, did not identify this area as a potential new growth area. However, during a workshop with the Board of Supervisors held on February 13, 2007, the Board directed staff to modify the Draft Plan to identify this 8,000+ acre area as a potential new growth area. As was the case with Jackson Highway area, the Board recognized the advantages of creating a comprehensive vision to guide future planning and development efforts in this area.

B. Process:

1. Visioning Studies Begin

Based on the need for the Visioning efforts described above, the Land Use Element of the Draft Plan includes a policy and a related implementation measure supporting such an effort. This policy also encourages the creation of new communities that are connected and balanced, while preventing piecemeal and haphazard development that can occur as large new communities emerge over an extended period of time:

LU-3. Support a strategic, comprehensive and multi-disciplinary visioning effort for the greater Jackson Highway area¹, initiated and led by the County, which looks beyond the planning period of the adopted General Plan to ensure that high quality and cohesive development patterns are achieved consistent with regional smart growth objectives.

With this policy framework in mind, the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning studies were launched in the winter of 2007. A consultant team was assembled to assist County staff with this process, including the consulting firms Jacobs (formerly Carter Burgess), Lucy & Company and Bay Area Economics. County staff worked with the consultant team to scope these processes to provide direction on a number of key issues, including:

- Potential land uses and transportation options within these areas;
- Infrastructure planning considerations;
- Economic development and employment opportunities;
- Implementation of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan;
- Protection of the Cosumnes River and its floodplain;
- Planning of the Elk Grove/Rancho Cordova/El Dorado “connector” roadway;
- Providing a logical transition from the urban area to the rural area outside the USB;
- Relationship to other planning and development efforts currently in progress.

The first step in the Visioning studies was to create background materials to form a baseline of information. This effort involved research and data collection, creation of

¹ Since the Grant Line East area had not yet been identified as a potential new growth area at the time the Public Review Draft General Plan was released, it was not specifically included in this policy

five base maps for each area, and creation of a report for each area detailing existing conditions and context. Please refer to Attachments A through D for these materials. The second step in the process was to launch a comprehensive public outreach program to engage residents and stakeholders in the processes.

2. *Outreach*

Staff undertook an extensive outreach process with the help of Jacobs and Lucy & Company. This outreach process included a series of interviews with stakeholders, two community workshops for each Visioning area, and a number of meetings with services providers and public agencies.

- (a) *Stakeholder Interviews*: 26 stakeholder interviews were conducted by Lucy and Company, a Sacramento-based public outreach agency, involving approximately 55 stakeholders. Interviews were held over a two month period during December 2007 and January 2008. Participants were asked their views and opinions regarding constraints and opportunities in the Visioning areas, and discussed their concerns. Participants included representatives from other municipalities, service providers, farmers, developers, the environmental community, the mining community, CPAC representatives, and stakeholders unique to one area or the other, such as the Sacramento Rendering Company, the Carson Creek Boys Ranch, the Off-Road Vehicle Park, and the Kiefer Landfill. A full list of interview participants and summary of the stakeholder interview results can be found in Attachment E.
- (b) *Community Outreach Workshops*: Two workshops were held for each of the Visioning areas, the first two in March 2008 and the second two in April 2008. The Jackson Highway Visioning workshops were held at Rosemont High School, while the Grant Line East workshops were held at Cosumnes Elementary School. Each workshop lasted approximately two hours and garnered the views and opinions of interested community members.

The first workshops (one for each area) included a short PowerPoint presentation of crucial project information, followed by a showcase of interactive stations for participants to view at their leisure. Workbooks were developed to collect participant feedback on the issues of community image, core values, community preference and overall comments for the area. The information provided by the participants identified public perceptions and ideals for the areas which may influence future decisions and outcomes, as well as to help shape the policy document that was to be created. Participant feedback was compiled through the following exercises:

- Community Image Survey: Participants were asked to rank a number of photos representing building and community design based on their visual preferences.
- Core Values: Participants were asked to agree, disagree or modify a series of statements representing basic community values.

- Your Community Preferences: The Visioning areas were broken into geographical neighborhoods and districts and participants were asked to identify what types of land uses they would like to see emphasized in those areas.
- Visioning Votes: Participants were given a number of ‘votes’ to identify which transportation options they would like to see in the Visioning areas.
- Additional Comments: Comment cards were available to those participants who had additional input or ideas that were not captured by the other exercises.

County staff and the consultant team then compiled feedback from these workshops, the stakeholder interviews, previous Board workshops on the General Plan Update, and other sources to create two conceptual vision maps for each area to explore how they may be developed in the future.

The second workshops were focused on these conceptual maps (Attachments F and G). The workshops included a short PowerPoint presentation on the conceptual maps, followed by four stations highlighting elements of the maps for participants to view. The four stations included County staff and consultant team members and focused on transportation choices, agricultural and habitat land preservation, mix of land uses, and design guidelines, in addition to a question and answer station.

Community outreach results from these four workshops can be found in Attachments H through K and on the County’s Visioning web sites at www.planning.saccounty.net/gpupdate/Jackson_Visioning_Project.html and www.planning.saccounty.net/gpupdate/Grant_Line_East_Visioning_Project.html. This information was used to craft both the policy document and the revised conceptual land use maps discussed below.

III.RESULTS OF VISIONING STUDIES

A number of products were developed throughout the Visioning studies, all of which can be found attached to this staff report. Much of the discussion at today’s workshop will focus on two of these products, the policy document and the conceptual maps.

A. Policy Document

If the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas are included in the UPA of the updated General Plan and thus made available for urban development, full build-out of these areas would take many decades to occur. While development of these areas would take place by planning and developing smaller areas via individual master planning processes, it is important to take a holistic look at the entirety of each area in order to ensure that these individual plans work toward a common vision.

The policy document (Attachment L) outlines the objectives, policies and programs to create this common vision to help to shape future development in the Visioning areas and

ensure that individual master plans work toward implementing the broader goal for the area. The contents of this document were greatly influenced by a number of factors and inputs, including: a survey of existing uses and conditions; data collection and analysis; input from the stakeholder interviews, visioning workshops and numerous workshops with the Board of Supervisors during the General Plan Update process; and examples of the best planning and development practices from around the County, the region and the world.

The principles and policies outlined in the policy document strive to create livable communities that are sustainable and of the highest quality. The policy document will form the basis from which all future planning and development in the Visioning areas will build upon. The policy document will serve to guide future development in the Visioning areas similar to how the General Plan guides development on a county-wide basis, although specifically tailored to address the unique opportunities and constraints in these areas. The principles and policies in this document strive to set a new paradigm for planning and development in Sacramento County, including true implementation of cutting-edge concepts related to sustainability, smart growth, complete communities, and energy efficiency and independence.

A portion of the policy document has been devoted to design guidelines, created to promote sustainable and quality living and economic environments for new communities in the Visioning areas. Communities will be built around area ‘nodes’ which will give the overall community or town its identity. Such nodes can take a variety of forms including larger, area nodes serving an entire community, as well as neighborhood nodes that feature a more limited collection of uses to serve a smaller geographic area. Design guidelines have been outlined in more detail for residential areas, commercial, office and industrial, mixed use and public and civic areas, and emphasize the following themes:

- Residential areas: Design guidelines focus on creating residential communities that allow people to interact with their surroundings without the need to be dependent upon one form of transportation.
- Commercial areas: Design emphasizes the close proximity of commercial uses to residential areas, so that residents have the ability to reach some commercial uses by foot or bike.
- Office and Industrial: Policies strive to create sites that are economically viable and achieve self-sustainability, particularly where residential development is either restricted or undesirable, such as within Mather Airfield’s 60 CNEL noise contour and the bufferlands surrounding the Kiefer Landfill and Recycling Facility.
- Mixed use and Transit Oriented Development: Mixed use developments and higher density uses are concentrated near major transportation corridors shown on the draft General Plan 2030 Transportation Diagram.
- Public and Civic: The County of Sacramento will strive to achieve sustainable practices in all public and civic uses.

B. Conceptual Land Use Maps

One of the goals of the Visioning studies is to create visual representations of how the County's visions for these areas could be implemented over time. Initial steps taken to create such potential scenarios included creating a series of basemaps reflecting existing constraints and conditions, planned development in the surrounding areas and neighboring jurisdictions, transportation considerations, environmental constraints, and other opportunities and constraints. The maps of existing conditions and stakeholder feedback were compiled to frame possible approaches to land uses and transportation possibilities while underscoring the need to preserve habitat, open space and agriculture.

County staff and the consultant team also drew upon feedback received at a variety of meetings over the last few years to shape these plans, including: 26 public workshops with the Board of Supervisors, 12 focus group sessions and 10 large public outreach workshops as part of the General Plan Update process; public workshops specific to the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning areas; and a number of meetings with County departments, cities, state, federal and regional entities, service providers, property owners and numerous other stakeholders.

As discussed above, two initial conceptual land use/transportation maps were created for each Visioning area and presented at the second workshops held in April 2008. Ideas shared regarding these maps, as well as general comments and opinions received helped shape the policy document, led to the formation of a single conceptual land use/transportation map for each area (Attachments M and N).

These conceptual maps are a visual representation of one way the County's vision for this area (as outlined in the policy document) may be implemented. They offer ideas and guidance for future planning efforts, while helping to stimulate discussions about the future. It is important to note that these maps are NOT intended to convey parcel-level detail, they are not etched in stone, nor are they "land use plans" that will lead directly to development. While these concepts provide one method to achieve implementation of the objectives, policies and programs within the policy document, there may be other methods which result in an equal level of realization of these same goals.

These conceptual land use plans have been developed based on the following principles:

- Create complete communities that have a mixture of housing, jobs and retail amenities.
- Reduce dependence on cars, support local commercial and employment opportunities and create a balanced ratio of jobs and housing supply.
- Design communities so employment nodes, parks, schools, shopping and other daily needs are within close distance to housing.
- Identify appropriate locations for higher housing density and intensity of uses.
- Provide a range of housing options including semi-rural, traditional single family, condominiums, townhomes, apartments, and mixed use development.
- Provide a variety of close and convenient transportation options, including roads, bike trails, walking paths, and public transportation.

- Recognize the importance of agriculture in the study area, and encourage its continued viability.
- Define an appropriate urban-rural transition inside the Urban Services Boundary.
- Plan for conversion of industrial uses to other beneficial uses during the general plan timeframe.
- Provide a viable location for existing commercial uses that contribute to the economic health of the County.
- Create preserves linked by corridors of sufficient size to allow species to move.
- Preserve, protect and enhance natural open space functions of riparian, stream and river corridors.

IV. NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

This workshop is being held to solicit comments from the Policy Planning Commission and the public on the preliminary results of the Visioning studies. Changes may be made to the policy document, conceptual maps and/or other materials based upon these comments. All comments will be forwarded on to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration at a future workshop on the Visioning studies, which will likely be scheduled for mid-October. At this future workshop with the Board, staff will recommend that the Board review and provide comments on the results of the Visioning studies, and ultimately accept these materials and use them to inform future planning processes in the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East areas.

Information gathered during the Visioning studies has established a strong foundation from which future planning processes can build. This baseline information includes a summary and visual depiction of existing conditions, opportunities and constraints, as well as documentation summarizing the opinions of landowners, stakeholders, and interested members of the public regarding desired land uses and development patterns. Materials created as a result of the study, particularly the policy document, will serve to inform and guide future planning processes in these two areas to help realize their vast potential.

EXHIBITS

1. New Growth Areas Identified in Draft 2030 General Plan
2. Map Illustrating Relationship Between Proposed Jackson Highway New Growth Area and the Jackson Highway Visioning Area

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Jackson Highway Visioning Existing Conditions and Planning Context Report
- B. Grant Line East Visioning Existing Conditions and Planning Context Report
- C. Jackson Highway Visioning Base Maps
- D. Grant Line East Visioning Base Maps
- E. Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning Stakeholder Interview Report
- F. Jackson Highway Visioning Initial Concept Maps
- G. Grant Line East Visioning Initial Concept Maps
- H. Jackson Highway Visioning - March 24th Workshop Feedback
- I. Jackson Highway Visioning - April 28th Workshop Feedback
- J. Grant Line East Visioning - March 27th Workshop Feedback

- K. Grant Line East Visioning - April 30th Workshop Feedback
- L. Policies for Jackson and Grant Line East Visioning Areas Document
- M. Jackson Highway Visioning Draft Final Concept Map
- N. Grant Line East Visioning Draft Final Concept Map

This staff report was prepared on August 26, 2008.