

**Response to Comments on the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning Studies
Board of Supervisors Workshop
November 19, 2008**

On the following pages are responses to comments and questions presented at the November 19, 2008 Board of Supervisors workshop on the Jackson Highway and Grant Line East Visioning Studies workshop. A number of members from the community testified, and the Board requested Staff return with responses to comments from the public and questions presented by members of the Board. Comments recorded by Staff ranged from very supportive of the Visioning Studies to comments expressing concern with the process and/or results of the project, or inquiries for clarification or further information. This document summarizes those questions and comments that necessitate further discussion and corresponding response.

Comment about the use of the Visioning Studies and how the Visioning Study documents will be used in future master plans?

Staff foresees the Visioning Studies setting a baseline of expectations for quality, sustainable and energy efficient development for which the County would like to see in applications for future plans in these areas. The *Policies for the Jackson and Grant Line East Visioning Areas* will likely guide new development to create sustainable, complete communities, achieve the principles outlined in the SACOG Blueprint project, and create new development that meets the standards set forth in new legislation, including a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

It is anticipated that many of the policies and objectives of the Visioning Studies will be formally adopted into future Community, Master and Specific plans as the applicant, planning staff, and the Board of Supervisors see fit. Some policies may also be adopted in the General Plan at a future date, as either individual policies, or as a stand-alone section dedicated to the Visioning areas.

Public comment in opposition to maintaining land within the USB for agricultural purposes. Limited areas of farmland surrounded by urban uses are not viable. Some residents would like to see more flexible policies regarding preservation of agricultural lands in these areas.

The Visioning Policy Document contains a policy that reads as follows:

- VP-16. Work cooperatively with owners of agriculturally zoned lands who wish to remain in agricultural production to secure easements or other forms of permanent protection for their property.

The intent of this policy is to allow property owners the option to continue to farm, when it is economically viable and the property owners' desire to continue to farm. While the County believes much of the land within the USB may eventually urbanize, some property owners of have expressed a strong interest in continuing to farm their lands located within the USB. The County recognizes that some land within the USB may remain agriculturally viable given the fertile nature of the soil, or location where intensive development is less likely to occur. The

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County would like to work with these individuals if they choose to continue to farm, but it is not necessarily the County's intent to seek out the permanent protection of additional farmland within the USB, except for habitat that may be necessary to preserve via the SSHCP.

Fish and Wildlife comment that more emphasis should be placed on the SSHCP. Conservation goals of the SSHCP cannot be achieved as is laid out in the Visioning documents.

Both the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP) and the Visioning Studies represent long term processes that will require many years to fully implement. The preserve strategy presented in the Visioning documents is subject to revisions as currently being negotiated as part of the SSHCP. The preserve strategy illustrated on these maps is conceptual and only represents one of many possible configurations. While the conceptual maps provide one potential method to achieve implementation of the objectives, policies and programs within the policy document, there may be other methods that result in an equal level of realization of these same goals. The adopted SSHCP and related processes and negotiations will be the determinate factor, not the conceptual vision maps resulting for the Vision Studies, regarding what may need to be preserved and what may be developable in these areas.

Public comment that many of the policies are too restrictive and should offer more flexibility in green building, and allow more options for developers, understanding the realities of the market environment and current economic conditions.

The policies of the Visioning Policy Document are intended to serve as guidelines for future development. Because Staff is requesting the Board of Supervisors receive and file the documents of the Visioning Studies, the policies therein will not be formally adopted, and therefore not binding. Rather, the policies should create an overarching illustration of the quality development the County would like to see, and the details of the end product could be achieved in a variety of ways.

Public comment that nothing is shown for lots greater than ¼ acre on the conceptual Visioning maps. Need more diversity in housing and higher quality housing.

The conceptual vision maps illustrate the potential for larger lot development within 'agricultural residential' designated areas, which call for lots of up to 10 acres per dwelling unit. Diversity and quality of housing is a goal of the Visioning Studies. Policies within the document call for a variety of housing developments that address the needs of all citizens, including families, empty nesters, young professionals and low income residents through both single and multi-family housing. Higher quality housing is emphasized through policies that call for more energy efficient structures and development, and creating land use patterns that are conducive to creating communities that are attractive to residents' needs.

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Public comment regarding the large UPA expansion area identified in the County's Draft General Plan. Identifying such a large amount of greenfield development will put the County in a position to be sued by the attorney general on the grounds of non-compliance with AB 32. The City of Sacramento is currently in negotiations with the AG, and the County is exploring a much greater Greenfield development area. Growth at the edge of urbanization should not be allowed when there is still infill left to develop. Water availability needs to be examined, particularly in the Grant Line East Area. SACOGs growth projections should be re-examined, as the changing economy has had an effect on the long term growth predictions for the region.

Please refer to the Staff Report Addendum #2 for more discussion regarding SACOG's growth predictions as they relate to the Visioning areas and Visioning Study documents.

Public comment regarding the need to show care when selecting and preserving agricultural areas within the USB, as it is difficult to farm in urban areas.

See response above regarding preservation of agricultural land.

Public comment that no applications should be accepted east of Excelsior until the SSHCP is approved.

This comment is noted. Please refer to recommendations in the staff report regarding optional approaches to the consideration of private applications.

Public comment regarding three concerns with the Visioning Studies: 1) landowners of 12,000 acres will submit projects a la Cordova Hills. 2) Need to finish the SSHCP. 3) Currently proceeding prematurely financially. Have five recommendations: 1) Receive and file the Visioning Studies. 2) Finish the SSHCP. 3) Work with public for pre-requisites for expanding into new growth areas. 4) Examine the available water supply. 5) Adopt a policy that states that the UPA will not be expanded until the above requirements are met.

Please see the Staff Report Addendum #2 for further discussion regarding strategic buildout of growth areas and expansion of the UPA.