

COMMENT LETTERS
RECEIVED ON ALTERNATIVES
REPORT

SUBMITTED FOR
JOINT STUDY SESSION
APRIL 20, 2010

ON
ALTERNATIVES WORKSHOPS
SUMMARY REPORT

Calaveras County

General Plan Update

ALTERNATIVES REPORT AND WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE

- 3/8 Murphys – District 4
Native Sons Hall
389 Main Street
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 3/12 San Andreas – District 1
Town Hall
24 Churchill Road
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 3/13 Railroad Flat – District 2
Railroad Flat Community Hall
215 N. Railroad Flat
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- 3/15 Mokelumne Hill – District 2
Town Hall
Main Street
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 3/17 Copperopolis – District 5
Armory
695 O'Byrnes Ferry Road
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 3/18 Valley Springs – District 1
Valley Springs School Auditorium
240 Pine Street
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 3/22 Arnold – District 3
Independence Hall
1445 Blagen Road
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- 4/20 Board of Supervisors/Planning
Commission Joint Study Session
Town Hall
24 Churchill Road
San Andreas
9:00 a.m.

The Alternatives Report for the Calaveras County General Plan Update is now available for review and comment. The report explains the purpose and content of three possible land use scenarios for the County land use map.

The alternative scenarios are based upon input received during the community outreach phase of the General Plan Update program, existing and updated community plans, community vision plans, background data identifying community issues and challenges, and direction received from the Board of Supervisors during study sessions on the General Plan. The alternatives represent the starting point for discussing and formulating the desired future land uses for the entire county that will guide development to 2035.

A series of community workshops on the Alternatives Report will be held throughout the County (see schedule to the left). Residents are strongly encouraged to attend a meeting to learn about the alternatives and provide input on this critical phase of the General Plan Update.

After the series of workshops, there will be a joint study session with the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission (BOS/PC). The community is also invited and encouraged to attend the study session as there will be ample opportunity for public comment. The BOS/PC will consider the input gathered during the community workshops, hear additional input from community members, and will then provide direction to staff on a preferred land use alternative.

Hard and digital copies of the report are available for review at the County Planning Department, 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas and at the County Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Road, San Andreas, (209) 754-6510. Copies are also available at each of the satellite County libraries. The report is also posted on the County's website at: <http://www.co.calaveras.ca.us/cc/Departments/PlanningDepartment.aspx>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Calaveras County Planning Department

gpupdate@co.calaveras.ca.us

209-754-6394

March 5, 2010

Mr. George White, Calaveras County Planning Director
Ms. Brenda Gillarde, Calaveras County General Plan Coordinator

RE: General Plan Update – Alternatives Report & the Mokelumne Hill Community Plan

On behalf of the Mokelumne Hill Community Plan Task Force, I want to thank you for considering all of the hard work that went into preparing our update to the Mokelumne Hill Community Plan (MHCP) and for incorporating some of these thoughts and recommendations into the Alternatives Report. I also want to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the County Alternatives Report.

The Mokelumne Hill Community Plan Task Force met to discuss the County's Alternatives Report on February 24th and again on March 3rd. The following is a list of our concerns, issues, and recommended actions for the Mokelumne Hill Community Planning Area and for the county as a whole. Our questions/comments are listed below by subject area. Note: Not listed in order of priority.

1. **Mokelumne Hill Community Plan Boundaries (as shown in Alternatives A,B,C)**

Community Plan Boundaries: Mokelumne Hill's boundary as shown on all of the Alternative maps is an intermittent brown line designating a "draft community vision/plan boundary." Mokelumne Hill has an established Community Plan Boundary and therefore should be shown on the maps as a solid tan line, with the minor exception of the small area along Highway 26 at the bottom left corner of the map that is proposed to be added to the Community Planning boundary (which should be shown as an intermittent tan line). See the attached map for clarification.

2. **Population and Job Projections**

We are concerned that the population projections for Mokelumne Hill are nearly double the projections for the county's other communities. As per the tables provided (beginning with page 25), the percentage increase in DU's projected for Mokelumne Hill ranges from 96% (Alt. A) to 170% (Alt. B) to 242% (Alt. C) for the planning horizon. This compares with 95% to 109% to 116% for San Andreas and 100% to 110% to 131% for Valley Springs.

Mokelumne Hill is committed to accommodating its fair share of population growth but this projection of tripling our number of houses is unreasonable. This is particularly evident when considering that the county projects such dismal job growth for Mokelumne Hill. Considering the narrow roads, steep slopes and the community's desire to maintain its historic and cultural assets and rural flavor, we believe that our existing Community Plan -- which allows for nearly doubling the DUs -- is appropriate for our town and a fair and reasonable guide for the future. We are not, therefore, in favor of any increased density. We are however, in favor of flexible development tools (like mixed use and clustering) that can result in more compact development, more affordable housing and more businesses and jobs.

3. Land Use Designations

- a. **Rural Residential ½ Acre:** We are dismayed by the fact that the county did not list (Alternatives Report page 10) the complete elimination of the RR ½ land use designation from our planning area. This is a very significant change, with tremendous impacts, and should have been noted as a county-initiated change like the other county-initiated changes are listed. Perhaps this contributed to the unrealistic dwelling unit projections noted above by establishing an erroneous baseline?

As shown on the MHCP Land Use Map, and in the County's Baseline Report, there are 298 acres of land designated RR ½ (20,000 sf/parcel). The Alternatives Report (in all scenarios – A,B,C) does not have a RR ½ land use designation and shows all of the lands currently designated RR ½ as Residential – Low Density (1-6/DU/ac), which is a much higher density designation. The RR ½ designation was a hard fought-for land use designation that makes sense for our community. The areas, currently designated RR ½, were established so due to limited infrastructure, steep slopes, and permitting animal husbandry as an allowed use. These lands are not suitable for 1-6 DU's per acre and therefore we respectfully request that the RR ½ (or similar) designation remain.

- b. **Land Use Designation Change Requests:** Some of the requests for a land use change were not accurately captured in the County's Alternative Report and since the draft update of the Community Plan was submitted in December 2008, several new property change requests (mostly for mixed use designation) have been added. In addition, there are several parcels that are currently within the sanitary district that may be suitable for a higher use residential designation. We would like to investigate these areas further with the property owner(s). Please refer to the attached map and legend for the specific requests/corrections.
- c. **Mixed Use Designations:** As you know, the existing MHCP (1983) contains a mixed use land designation and our proposed revisions to the 1983 MHCP as submitted in December 2008 continues to offer a mixed use land designation. We are pleased to see that the Alternatives Report contains three mixed use land use designations. We are excited about the potential these designations hold to support our economic development efforts to increase the number of businesses and jobs in the community.

However, based on the descriptions provided for these classifications it is very difficult to determine which mixed use is more appropriate for which property that has requested or currently has a mixed use designation. This is particularly true for the Community Center Historic and the Community Center Local designations. Prior to final designation of properties that currently have (or have requested) a mixed use designation, we will need to fully understand the intent, intensities and allowable uses for these designations. When do you expect that this information will be available?

- d. **Use of the Word Historic to Describe a Land Use Designation:** In environmental studies for both CEQA and NEPA compliance, the term "historic" is used in reference to cultural resource properties which have been determined eligible to either the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places. To use this term in our General Plan for describing a past-use of a property (an "historic" use) will be potentially confusing, particularly as the General Plan also includes Historic Districts and Designated Historic Buildings. Describing past use as a "traditional use" (or finding some other phrase) would be preferable.

4. Other Questions Pertaining to Mokelumne Hill

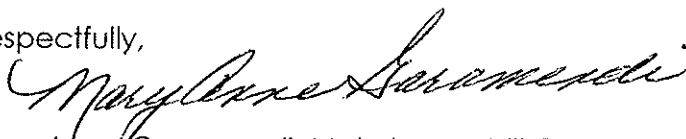
- a. What happens to the rest of the MHCP – the vision, policies, history, and list of historic structures in the GPU?
- b. How will Mokelumne Hill's Design Review Districts (Historic and Gateways) be acknowledged on the land use map and folded into the GPU?
- c. What happens to our "safe routes to school" alignment along designated roads?

5. Questions/Comments Related to the Alternatives Report

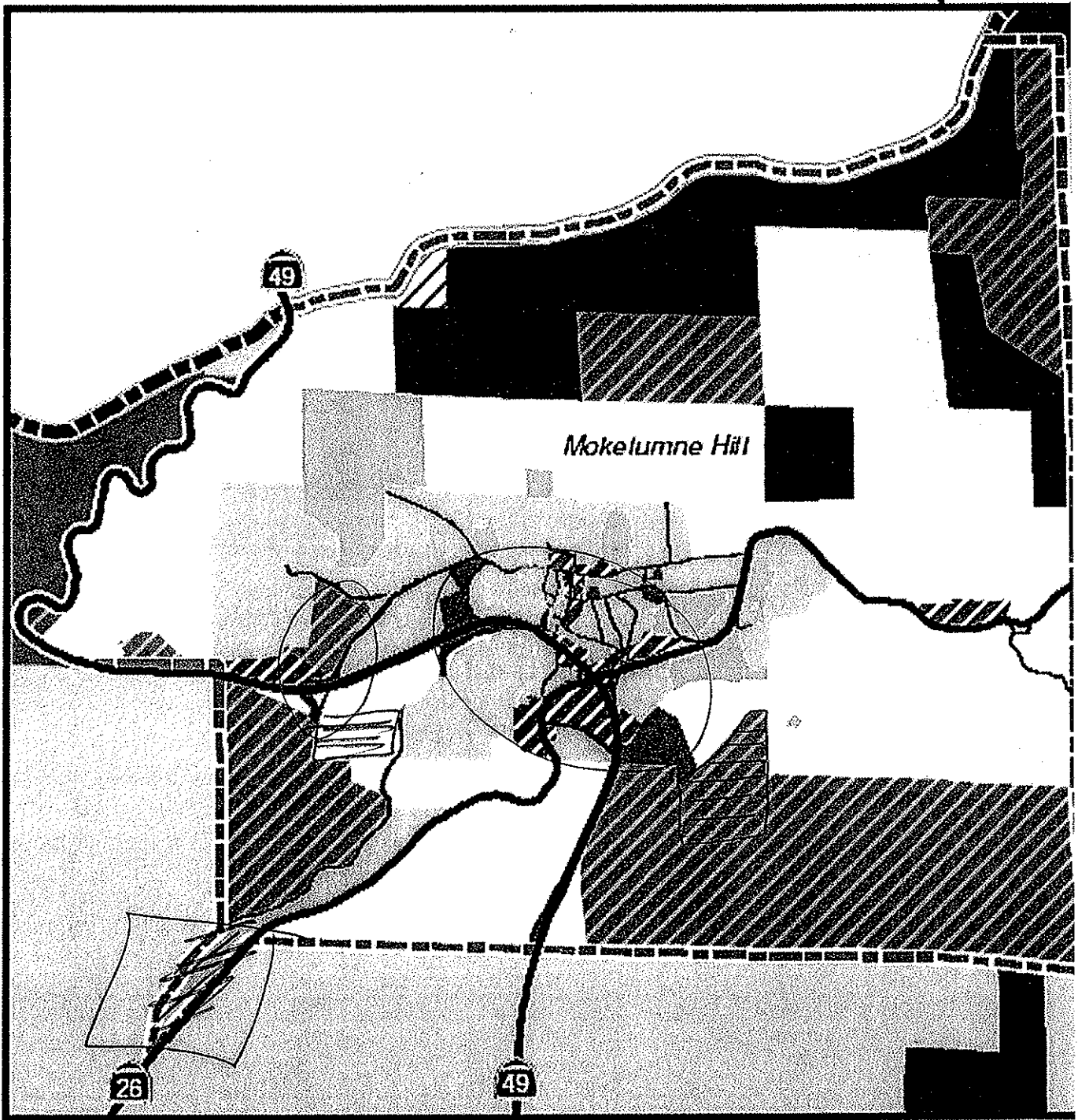
- a. With changing land use designations inherent with the update of the General Plan, how will the county handle existing non-conforming land uses and zoning? Will existing uses be grandfathered in?
- b. How will the existing 20,000 to 32,000 undeveloped parcels (and the attendant population growth) be addressed in this process? How many DUs do these parcels represent and how are they being accounted for in the growth and density scenarios?
- c. How will "clustering" be integrated into the GP update to encourage compact development and retention of open space?
- d. Will there be a land use designation or process to allow residential development on parcels less than 7,000 square feet? Many communities in the county have old parcels of small size that could accommodate a small (affordable) house.
- e. We are concerned that the Mineral Land Use Designation has been removed. What was the intent and how will these resources be identified in the General Plan?

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, or need clarification, please contact me. I would also like to offer the opportunity to meet with you prior to the March 15th meeting to discuss these issues/ideas in further detail and to provide clarification.

Respectfully,



Mary Anne Garamendi, Mokelumne Hill Community Plan Task Force (contact person)
cc: Supervisor Steve Wilensky



LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
 SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 2
 ALTERNATIVES B & C

- EXISTING AND PROPOSED MIXED-USE AREAS
- ▨ EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY PLAN BOUNDARY
- ▨ RESIDENTIAL WITHIN SANITARY DISTRICT

Brenda Gillarde

From: Brenda Gillarde
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2010 10:22 AM
To: Mary Anne Garamendi
Subject: Mokelumne Hill Comment Letter of 3/5/10

Hello Mary Anne,

It was very nice meeting and I look forward to future exchanges! I've provided responses to your questions which are keyed to the numbered items in your letter of 3/5/2010. As was discussed at the workshop last evening after the alternatives phase, staff will conduct 'one-on-one' meetings with community representatives to go over specific questions relative to community boundaries and land use designations within individual community plans. We have not yet set the schedule for those meetings but they will start up sometime after April 20.

BTW in the future if you could submit comments via email it would facilitate preparation of responses.
THANKS Mary Anne!

Responses to Letter from Mary Anne Garamendi, Mokelumne Hill Community Plan Task Force, March 5, 2010

1. Community Plan Boundaries

As the legend indicates the dashed line represents draft or amended community plans. It is well known that Mokelumne Hill has an adopted plan boundary but the plan has been amended with your 2008 submission. We wanted to indicate those communities that are amending their plans so it would be clear to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission (BOS/PC). That is the reasoning behind using the 'dashed brown line.' The amended plan boundary will become formal once the General Plan is adopted. At that point it will appear as a solid line on the new countywide General Plan land use map.

2. Population and Job Projections

The questions you raise about the projections in various areas of the county are good ones and have been raised by others. The answer lies in how the modeling was conducted for the alternatives. In crafting the projections for the alternatives three separate but integrated models were used – one for land use, one for transportation and one for air quality.

The land use model we used is called UPLAN and is based upon attractions and discouragements for development. Areas with favorable attractions are viewed by the model as places where development is most likely to be accommodated; areas with a high number of discouragements are seen as less desirable for development. With respect to your questions regarding the DU projections in Mokelumne Hill versus Valley Springs and San Andreas, Mokelumne Hill is located at the junction of two state highways and has water and sewer service. San Andreas ranked lower as it only has one state highway access and Valley Springs ranked lower because of biological sensitivities.

There are several concepts to remember regarding the modeling. First, it is not a perfect science and every model has its pluses and minuses. But it provides a good countywide estimate of what buildout might look like with each of the three alternatives in the report. Second, the primary purpose of modeling the alternatives was to show relative differences between them for discussion purposes. It was not meant to project the actual buildout in any specific area but rather to project an overall scenario for the county as a whole. The numbers shown for the alternatives are not being carried forward into any subsequent phases of the General Plan Update. Once the Board provides direction on a preferred alternative we will be conducting one more model run for purposes of the EIR analysis. That model will be more finely tuned to local constraints.

3. Land Use Designations

a. Rural Residential ½ Acre

The ½ acre size lot would be allowed in the Residential –Low Density general plan land use category (1-6 du/ac). The underlying zoning will specify which parcels are suitable for this designation based on service availability and community desires.

b. Land Use Designation Change Requests

We incorporated all the changes that we were aware of and reviewed them with Fawn. However if there are changes that still need to be made, and it sounds like you have some since the 2008 submittal, we will accommodate those changes. As you know, we will be coming out to each community to meet with the local representative (s) to discuss these types of issues. If you want to give us a heads up on the ones that are not reflected in the currently configured community plan area let us know so we can be better prepared to address them when we next meet.

c. Mixed Use Designations

We are still in the process of flushing out the definitions for Community Center Historic and Community Center Local land use designations. Zoning will also play a part in how these two categories are applied, but we will not address zoning specifically until after the General Plan is adopted. If you have suggestions for what should be in/out of these two designations, we would welcome the input.

d. Use of the Word Historic

You are correct that the term ‘historic’ has specific meaning in the context of CEQA and NEPA documents. However it is also a term that most people associate with a past use that has cultural or local significance. Most people do not associate the term with the CEQA and NEPA environmental review process. I’m not sure your comment is recommending that the term ‘historic’ not be used in the general plan except in reference to local or state designated historic districts or structures and when related to the environmental review process. If that is the case it will be very difficult to formulate goals and policies. It would also be very difficult to accurately describe many of the features within Mokelumne Hill and other communities that are historic. I note the term ‘historic’ is used extensively throughout the MHCP. How would we deal with that? Let’s discuss this further when we meet with your group on the community plan.

4. Other Questions Pertaining to Mokelumne Hill

a. What Happens to Rest of MHCP?

Each community plan will have a separate section in the General Plan. The community plan land use map, goals, policies, vision statement, list of historic structures and the rest of the MHCP will be part of that section in the General Plan document.

b. How Will Design Review District/Gateways be acknowledged in GPU?

See response to a.

c. What Happens to the Safe Routes?

See response to a.

5. Questions/Comments Related to the Alternatives Report

a. Non-conforming land uses

Existing uses will be grandfathered in to the General Plan. Those uses can continue to exist on the properties unless and until the use is discontinued.

b. Inclusion of undeveloped parcels

Every parcel has been assigned a land use and included in the modeling for the alternatives. Developed parcels were excluded from being able to accept new growth in the model. So the model run that was conducted reflects the potential buildout of currently undeveloped parcels in the county.

c. Clustering

Clustering will likely be handled through general plan policies but we are not yet to that phase of the update process.

d. Allow development on 7,000 sq. ft. parcels?

The 7,000 sq.ft. lot would fall under the Residential Low Density general plan land use category (1-6 du/ac). Zoning and the availability of services will determine how those lots could develop.

e. Mineral Land Use designation

We understand the community's concern regarding how mineral resource lands are designated. Based on the comments received thus far in our workshops we may need to rethink our current approach to mineral resources but in response to your question, let me explain that approach. We can then discuss further.

Our initial thinking was to not call them out as a general plan land use category for several reasons: 1) they are regulated by the state and local jurisdictions have no authority over how or what occurs on those lands; and 2) it is an activity rather than a land use. Under the existing general plan mineral resources could be on parcels as small as 5 acres. This appears to set the potential for inherent conflicts between mineral resource extraction areas and residential areas. The current thinking was to include mineral resources within ag or timber resource areas where the minimum parcel size is 40 acres. We would include a separate map that overlays mineral resource areas on the general plan land use map. Alternatively we could use a dashed line to outline mineral resource areas on the general plan map. However, we are open to other options including adding it back in as a land use.

The existing policies regarding mineral resources and the maps in the current general plan would be updated to reflect current conditions and the law, and eventually inserted into the resource section of the new draft general plan. As mentioned during our presentation, the draft general plan goals and policies will be reviewed and commented on by community members at a another series of public workshops.

