

Coalition questions General Plan Update

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Four representatives of the Calaveras Planning Coalition encouraged the Board of Supervisors to include more information from more communities in the text of the proposed Community Planning Element.

They made their presentations during the public comment portion at Tuesday's board meeting.

The proposed Community Planning element is the part of the General Plan update that contains excerpts from the community plans drafted by the people of Supervisor District 2, and by the people of San Andreas. It also includes excerpts from the Rancho Calaveras Special Plan. It contains no information from community planning efforts in Valley Springs, Copperopolis, and in the communities along the Highway 4 corridor.

"It is absolutely unacceptable and a travesty of justice, that the General Plan update is proposing to abandon both the existing 1974-75 Valley Springs Community Plan, and all the community plan updates submitted to the county in 2010," said coalition representative Colleen Platt.

In 2010, two different plans for Valley Springs were completed by two different planning groups. She recommended adding to the General Plan update the three-page Copperopolis Community Plan completed in 2013, and the 4.5-page Valley Springs Community Plan, that was vetted by Planning Department staff and completed in 2017.

Jack Norton noted that all general plan amendments are required by law to be "in the public interest."

"How is it in the public interest to eliminate from the general plan all the policies from all of the Highway 4 corridor community plans?" he asked. "How is it in the public interest to eliminate the policies from these community plans that maintain community character, provide for safe and efficient traffic circulation; rationally locate residential, commercial, and residential development; identify the need and funding for essential public facilities and services, conserve natural resources, protect historical structures, and provide for the health, safety, and quiet enjoyment of local residents?"

He encouraged the supervisors to include in the General Plan update all the policies in the community plans that contribute to the public interest. He also encouraged the board to include the entire texts of all the community planning efforts in a separate volume of general plan reference documents.

Tom Infusino reminded supervisors that the proposed General Plan update is expected to result in up to 25 significant impacts, and that there are policies in the existing community plans "that have been mitigating impacts in communities for decades." He encouraged supervisors to include these impact-mitigating policies in the General Plan update.

Joyce Techel concluded the presentation by giving the supervisors a history lesson.

"For seven years, from 2007-2013, citizens were assured that their community plans would be part of the General Plan" she said.

"People put hundreds of hours of work into coming to broad consensus on their community plans based upon those assurances. Supervisors, planning commissioners, and county staff participated in these processes alongside local residents. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of public funds were spent. These community efforts were needed to build acceptance for the rest of the general plan."

Techel encouraged supervisors to "rise to the occasion" and to, "give local residents and their communities the consideration they deserve."

This was the fourth such presentation by the CPC to supervisors in as many months. Previous presentations identified the need to fix the General Plan Update Introduction, the Land Use Element, and the environmental impact report.

The Draft Final Environmental Impact Report, with the county's responses to the more than 400-pages of comments, is available for download and review from the Planning Department's General Plan Update page on county's website at <https://planning.calaverasgov.us/GP-Update> .

The Planning Commission is expected to begin public hearings on the General Plan update and the environmental impact report in May, and to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will then hold its own public hearings prior to making a final decision.