

I. Where are we now?

According to the Mintier and Associate's Report, that was reviewed by County Counsel's office for accuracy, the Calaveras County General Plan and Community Plans do not meet current legal standards with regard to the Land Use, Circulation, Noise and Safety Elements. This puts any development project that includes a general plan amendment in legal jeopardy.

The Planning Director, Bob Sellman, has stated in an open session of the Planning Commission, "I Plead Guilty" to not having enough staff to complete cumulative impact analyses for environmental impact reports. This puts any development project that needs an EIR in legal jeopardy.

The Planning Department's current procedures for project approval have no formal process for building a consensus among developers and community members.

Lack of agreed upon the direction for commercial development, and lack of Use Permit protections, hamper private investment in our communities.

Lack of sound planning and financing for infrastructure discourages investment.

II. Where might we want to go?

Perhaps we want a County that can follow the development rules, so that good projects are not in legal jeopardy.

Perhaps we want a County that facilitates agreements between community groups and developers so that concerns are addressed and conflicts reduced.

Perhaps we want a County that allows communities to provide clear direction to investors about what they want in their downtown commercial development.

Perhaps we want a County that does sound planning and financing for infrastructure.

III. What three things could leaders in the business community do to help?

A) First, at the Government Level.

Advocate for a change in the philosophy of the Community Development Department, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors. The current philosophy seems to be, if it is a good project, waive the rules. The philosophy should be, if it is a good project, follow the rules, so that the project cannot be successfully challenged. Following

the rules includes having a valid general plan and community plans, and completing valid environmental reviews. Lets create an approval process that provides security for good projects, not a legal mine field.

B) At the Community Level:

Participate in forums for community consensus on plans and projects. The current project approval process is all zero sum games. It is winner take all. One side wins and the other side loses. Sooner or later, that process is bound to lead to expensive and time consuming confrontation. It is better to come to the people early, and without your preconceived notions about your project etched in stone. Participate in the Community Plan process with everybody else; don't just rely on your ability to get a general plan amendment later. After the Community Plans are updated, and you are coming forward with your project, there is plenty of time in the project proposal and approval process for these sorts of consensus building forums. If you do this, I think you will find that the neighborhood groups around here are not that hard to please.

C) Third, at the Business Level:

Invest in implementation of the general plans and community plans, not in their amendments. Every amendment is a re-opening of the debate on fundamental issues like where, how much, and what kind of growth does a community want. Settle those issues at the plan level, and invest in building what is planned. That is the only way communities will peacefully get where they want to go.

In conclusion, I would like to note that we do not plan for stagnation, we plan for change. We all know change is coming. We need to appreciate that for some people, change can be scary. But this is not the time to lash out from fear, not the time to vilify people with different ideas, and not the time to divide communities against themselves. The courageous response to change is for people to listen to one another (even the people they disagree with), to envision a common brighter future, and to do the hard work to make it happen. That hard work starts with plans. Plans are followed by implementation programs and projects, and by commitment and investment.