

Calaveras Enterprise

Planning Coalition cites issues with General Plan Update

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During the public comment period of the Feb. 12 County Board of Supervisors meeting, members of the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC) recommended changes to the Draft General Plan Update to “improve its consistency, clarity, and comprehensiveness,” according to a CPC press release.

Over the past few meetings, the community-based coalition and “flagship endeavor” of the Community Action Project (CAP) has listed issues with the current General Plan Update with explicit amendment suggestions.

This past week’s focus was on the plan’s Introduction and Land Use Element, with comments from CPC members Tom Griffing, Marti Crane, Joyce Techel and Neil McKeown.

Griffing noted that the stated purpose of the plan was “too narrowly focused on private interests and economic development.” The purpose of the plan should be more comprehensive, Griffing said, and should mention the plan’s public interest aspects including conservation, open space and public safety.

Crane argued that the general plan chart in the land use element should be more clear. The chart indicates which zoning 2 categories would be allowed in which land use designations.

“The objective of a land use element is to set forth a pattern of land use that is coherent and predictable,” Crane said. “It should be detailed enough so that all users of the plan can reach the same conclusion of the appropriate use of any parcel of land.”

Techel suggested that the Public Institution land use designation be split into subcategories so that people purchasing property adjacent to public parcels could determine if they were moving near a future school, government office, sheriff sub-station or solid waste dump.

“These public land uses, while all beneficial, are hardly interchangeable,” Techel told the board.

The last of the CPC members to comment, McKeown expressed concerns that the plan did not comprehensively deal with key local issues, including the “protection of historic structures and development on steep slopes.” He encouraged supervisors to follow local historian Julia Costello’s recommendations regarding historic preservation and the general plan consultant’s prior recommendation to develop standards for safe steep slope development.

This was the third such presentation by the CPC to the Board in the last month, according to CPC Outreach Coordinator Jenny Fuqua.

The board denied the CPC's request for a study session on the General Plan Update in a Jan. 15 meeting, Fuqua said.

In a Jan. 21 email, the group told supervisors that they have more work to do on the (plan) than will fit in "a last minute hearing, at the end of the approval process," Fuqua added.

For more information, contact the coalition at (209) 772-1463 or visit calaverascap.com.