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**Supervisors agree to “stay the course” on General Plan Update Implementation;
But refuse to look ahead to the future.**

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For Immediate Release

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San Andreas. The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors unanimously agreed to “stay the course” for another year on general plan implementation during their meeting on Tuesday, January 26. They refused to look further ahead to securing available state funding and hiring the staff needed to promptly implement the over 100 indefinitely deferred implementation measures in the 2019 General Plan Update.

Soon-to- retire Planning Director Peter Maurer reported on the County’s progress implementing the 12 top priority items selected by the Board in January of last year. He also noted the need to address one additional item: the completion of an open space plan as suggested in written comments by Muriel Zeller, a member of the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). Maurer said he thought Zeller “made a very good point” which is that before creating the Open Space Zone, “we need to look at an overall plan, identify what’s out there.”

However, the Board did not add the open space plan to the list of priorities. The lack of an open space plan could be problematic. Government Code, Section 65567, states that, “No building permit may be issued, no subdivision map approved, and no open-space zoning ordinance adopted, unless the proposed construction, subdivision or ordinance is consistent with the local open-space plan.”

Director Maurer noted that two top priority items were completed last year: adopting the Valley Springs Community Plan, and updating the Traffic Impact Study Guidelines. Also near completion is the farmland mapping project done in conjunction with the California Department of Conservation (DOC), although the 2018 Calaveras County Important Farmland map has not been released yet by the DOC.

In order to accurately map Farmland of Local Importance, the DOC has requested GIS data from Calaveras County for parcels enrolled in the Williamson Act during fiscal year 2018-2019. When the DOC receives the GIS data, the Important Farmland Map will be created. As of January 13, the DOC had not yet received that data.

Director Maurer expects the updated Zoning Map to be completed in March of 2021 and the updated Zoning Ordinance to be completed in spring of 2022. In written comments, Tom Infusino, CPC Facilitator, agreed that these items are important to help applicants demonstrate their project's legally required consistency with the general plan. He wrote, "It is essential for the County to give clear guidance to all on just how to conform their housing, commercial, industrial, and non-profit endeavors" to the 2019 General Plan Update.

Director Maurer anticipates that the Greenhouse Gas Baseline and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, which are being funded by the Calaveras Council of Governments, will be completed in June 2021 and by the end of 2022, respectively.

In his written comments, Infusino encouraged the County to reduce its cost for GHG reduction by selecting from a list of currently funded state programs. These programs offer grants for local governments to reduce climate change through community fire preparedness, wildfire response readiness, fire prevention, forest health efforts, fuel reduction projects, agricultural land conservation, soil management, lighting retrofits, solar panel installation, and clean vehicle fleets. "We hope that the County's upcoming Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan will seek to take advantage of these funding opportunities," Infusino wrote.

Director Maurer indicated that the County should not choose a GHG reduction program based upon the availability of state funding. "Grants are great when they align with the priorities the Board has set," Maurer said but warned against letting the availability of grant funds dictate priorities. This was in sharp contrast to prior assertions by Board members and staff that general plan implementation priorities remain flexible in order to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise.

Director Maurer also indicated that he did not have sufficient staff to administer such grants funds, and that they often have many strings attached. The Board took no action on the CPC's suggestion that it hire sufficient staff.

The Board also took no action on the CPC suggestion that the County develop a long-term flexible implementation schedule to ensure that the bulk of the over 100 indefinitely deferred implementation measures are promptly completed. The CPC provided examples of such plans prepared by the City of Sacramento and Amador County. "The County's inaction or slow action retards the opportunities for the exercise of private property rights and for the advancement of

other County interests in traffic safety, water security, emergency response, and resource conservation,” Infusino wrote.

The CPC letter entreated the Board of Supervisors, “Please adopt some version of an implementation plan and participate in available funding programs so that the people of Calaveras County can reap the traffic safety, water security, emergency response, and resource conservation benefits that the County’s general plan claims it intends to provide. We believe the people of Calaveras County are worthy of these benefits.” The letter concluded that local tax dollars “should come back to Calaveras County to meet serious local needs.”

Other implementation priorities have gotten off to a slower start. Director Maurer announced that the Copperopolis Community Plan effort will be delayed until the pandemic has subsided, so that the County can hold the desirable town hall style public outreach meetings. The Copperopolis community plan effort began back in the 20th century, but has yet to produce a plan acceptable to a Board of Supervisors.

The update of the Road Impact Mitigation fee and the road Benefit Basin fees will begin after a consultant is hired. The County has yet to begin mitigation programs for the conversion of agricultural land and oak woodlands. Nor has the County begun to identify incentives for infill development.

The CPC, which is a federation of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals, promotes public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future.

The County’s lack of commitment to implement measures to reduce the adverse impacts of the general plan was one of the reasons that, on December 9, 2019, the CPC filed a case to challenge the general plan in Calaveras County Superior Court. That petition for writ of mandate convincingly argues that the Supervisors violated state planning law and the California Environmental Quality Act when they adopted the current general plan in November 2019. That petition for writ of mandate can be viewed on the CAP/CPC website: www.calaverascap.com. Under “Planning Documents” select “Testimony, Comments & Opinions.”

The video of the January 26 Board of Supervisors meeting is available at <http://calaverascountycalifornia.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx> .

The CPC comment letter on general plan implementation is available at <http://calaverascap.com/planning-documents/testimony-comments-opinions/> .