

Coalition presses board to fix General Plan Update

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Five representatives of the Calaveras Planning Coalition listed specific changes needed in the Draft General Plan Update to improve the consistency, clarity, and comprehensiveness during the Feb. 12 Board of Supervisors meeting.

The General Plan Update has been in the works for more than a dozen years and has cost taxpayers more than \$2 million to prepare.

The coalition recommended changes to both the introduction and the Land Use Element: the first two parts of the General Plan Update. For each problem the group noted in the Draft General Plan Update, they proposed one or more solutions.

Tom Griffing began noting that the stated purpose of the plan was too narrowly focused on private interests and economic development. He recommended that the purpose of the plan should be more comprehensive, and mention the plan's public interest aspects including conservation, open space, and public safety.

Expressing the virtue of general plan clarity, Marti Crane said, "The objective of a land use element is to set forth a pattern of land use that is coherent and predictable. 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."

She pointed out that the general plan chart indicating which zoning categories would be allowed in which land use designations needed greater clarity to avoid bad consequences and unintended interpretations.

Joyce Techel suggested that the "public institution" land use designation needed to be split into subcategories so 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," she said.

Neil McKeown concluded by expressing his 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 the general plan consultant's prior recommendations to develop standards for the safe development of steep slopes. He also encouraged supervisors to follow local expert Julia Costello's recommendations regarding historic preservation.

This was the third such presentation by the CPC to the board in the past month. On Jan. 15, the board denied the CPC's request for a study session on the General Plan Update. Undaunted, the CPC listed improvements needed in the General Plan Update's environmental impact report during the board's next public comment period on Jan. 22. In an email to the Board of Supervisors on Jan. 21, the CPC indicated supervisors have more work to do on the General Plan Update than will fit in, "A last minute hearing, at the end of the approval process."