

MEMORANDUM

County of Placer Planning Department

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: Planning Department - Frederic K. Yeager
DATE: October 9, 2003
SUBJECT: West Placer County Land Use Issues

SUMMARY:

The Planning Department is bringing forward a discussion about land use issues in West Placer County to seek direction from the Board of Supervisors in light of a wide variety of development issues that will significantly affect the pattern of growth and resource protection in this area.

Two General Plan amendment requests have been submitted: 1) the Placer Ranch project on 2213 acres in the western portion of the Sunset Industrial Area to include a branch campus of CSU Sacramento and residential, commercial and industrial uses and 2) the De La Salle University and Community on 1100 acres located south of Pleasant Grove Creek and west of the proposed West Roseville Specific Plan Area, to include a full scale private university and a residential and commercial community. These two projects have the potential to impact two other on-going projects, the County's Habitat Conservation Plan and conservation strategy, and the Placer Parkway proposal. Other major projects in the West Placer County area that should be considered in this context are the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan project (5200 acres) and the West Roseville Specific Plan and Sphere of Influence Amendment (5500 acres).

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Growth in the west part of the County has made Placer County the fastest growing County in the State. Much of this growth has been within the Cities of Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln. In addition, the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan project, under consideration and study for the last several years, has the potential to urbanize the area to the south of Baseline Road. The West Roseville Specific Plan and the proposed Roseville sphere of influence expansion of the "MOU" area, could result in the urbanization of a large area to the west of Fiddymont Road. Finally, the Phase 1 Habitat Conservation Plan, and the conservation strategy that must accompany it, will identify areas that need to be conserved throughout the western part of the County.

The newly proposed Placer Ranch and De La Salle projects would create substantial new growth beyond that addressed in the existing County General Plan. At the same time the projects are proposing to bring a large public university and a smaller private university to the region. A number of studies have been prepared, some under the County's direction, that have demonstrated the impact of and need for higher education facilities in this region. The desirability of having a university locate in Placer County and the possible desirable primary and secondary impacts of

higher education facilities have been addressed in various studies and is not an issue which is questioned in this report.

Richard Rosan, the president of the Urban Land Institute, in a presentation titled "The Key Role of Universities in Our Nation's Economic Growth and Urban Revitalization" (Exhibit 13) has stated, "Few institutions have more to offer in propelling economic development on both a national and local basis than our nation's colleges and universities. They are the creators and disseminators of knowledge and understanding that can help address urban challenges. As leading institutions in their communities, they are powerful economic drivers, technology centers, employers, developers and investors." In addition to these potential economic benefits, other social and cultural benefits may follow. "The traditional insularity of universities is being superseded by the solidarity of school and community. Urban universities are putting their money and human capital to work in collaboration and cooperation with the local government, and the non-profit and private sector. They are targeting a wide range of issues, including local economic development projects, affordable housing, public health services and environmental protection." There is ".....an increasing emphasis on the university's role as a major civic participant, and on the responsibility of the university faculty and staff to be engaged in community issues that affect the university either directly or indirectly. Certainly, greater involvement in housing and community development is one manifestation of this civic engagement. In addition, universities are expanding their teaching and research focus to include social outreach to youth and families, kindergarten through high school education, information technology and public policy."

DIRECTION REQUESTED:

With all of this activity taking place at one time, and because of the long-term policy implications of these activities, the staff will be asking the Board for consideration in providing policy direction. Such direction will assist the County and landowners in addressing the inevitable issues that arise in the review of major projects such as these. The direction provided by the Board will guide the ongoing development review, environmental review, infrastructure planning, and HCP process and establish a framework for the consideration of changes in General Plan policies, if they are to be considered.

Neither of the proposed development projects would comply with the current policy language found in Part III of the General Plan - "General Standards for the Consideration of Future Amendments to the General Plan". In addition, both proposals would require the modification of numerous General Plan policies including those that address buffers between incompatible uses, agricultural preservation, orderly development and extension of services, and for Placer Ranch, preservation of industrial land/job creation and other policies of the Sunset Industrial Plan. Other issues that affect one or both of the proposals include, availability of services including sewer, water and adequate road capacity, location of the future Placer Parkway, the County/City of Roseville Memorandum of Understanding and the immediate cancellation of a Williamson Act contract. However, both proposals will bring benefits to the County as well, including economic growth and institutions of higher learning that would implement General Plan Policy 4.J.17 which calls for higher education programs and facilities to be available to Placer County residents.

The staff is seeking direction from the Board on a number of specific issues and overall direction on the continued consideration of the four proposals discussed below.

In order to assist the Board in addressing the issues at hand, the four proposals are described first, followed by a discussion of fourteen major topics or issues. Finally, Exhibit 16 (pink pages) contains the nine most important that summarize the discussion topics raised in this report, organizes them to consolidate similar issues, and presents questions and alternative possible responses for the Board's consideration.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:

Following is detailed information about the two newly proposed development projects, the two related infrastructure projects, and a topical discussion of issues that will affect the review, timing, design, or location.

Placer Ranch

The Placer Ranch project is proposed on a 2213 acre site within the Sunset Industrial Area that borders the City of Roseville and is located partially within the City of Roseville sphere of influence. The landfill borders a portion of the site on the north. Fiddymont Road bisects the property and Sunset Blvd. currently terminates near the east end of the site. Although the Placer Parkway alignment has yet to be determined, project plans show it crossing through the northern portion of the site with two interchanges.

Proposal - A formal application has not yet been submitted, but the applicants have given the Planning Department a proposal statement and accompanying site plans. The proposed project has recently been revised to incorporate higher residential densities, pocket parks, a pedestrian orientation and two Village Commercial Centers, one close to the campus and higher density residential uses and the other close to major business centers and higher density residential uses. The proposal includes the following land uses:

- Site area: 2,213.4 +/- acres
- Residential acreage: 507 acres
- Total Residential units: 4794
 - S.F. Residential 4-8 units/acre: 2610
 - Multi-Family 18 units/acre: 1651
 - Mixed Use Residential units: 533
- Commercial Acreage: 194 acres
 - Mixed Use: 43 acres
 - General Commercial: 60 acres
 - Highway Service: 91 acres
- Total Commercial square footage: 1,454,120
- Office and Professional Acreage: 218 acres
- Office and Professional Square footage: 1,905,227
- Industrial Acreage: 548
 - Industrial: 104 acres
 - Industrial Park: 153 acres
 - Business Park: 289 acres
- Total Industrial Square footage: 6,180,607
- CSUS Branch Campus acres: 245 acres
- University enrollment projected: 15,000+

Other schools: 20 acres
Parks/Detention Basin: 90 acres
Open Space: 104 acres
Core Right of Way: 291 acres

Current general plan and zoning designations - The entire site is within the Sunset Industrial Area Plan. Approximately 40% of the site is within the Industrial land use category, with a small node of commercial, and the remaining 60% is designated Agricultural, 80 acre minimum. This Agricultural area of the site is within the Planning Area designated as Agricultural/Fairgrounds Relocation Area, which is considered one of the prime sites for a re-location of the Placer County Fairgrounds currently located in the City of Roseville. Most of the Industrial designated land is zoned Farm - Development Reserve - 160 acre building site, with a small portion zoned Commercial and Industrial Park. The Agricultural area is zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum parcel size.

Entitlements - No formal application has yet been submitted. Applicants are requesting a two-tier environmental document and a consultant has been selected. The evaluation would begin with a Constraints Analysis, with special emphasis on traffic issues early in the process. The information provided in the constraints analysis will be utilized in developing a Specific Plan for the project site. Other initial entitlements sought include General Plan amendments, Sunset Industrial Area Plan amendments and a rezoning. Later entitlements would include subdivisions, use permits, design review, etc.

De La Salle University and Community

The De La Salle/Christian Brothers University project is proposed on 1100 acres of land located south of Pleasant Grove Creek between Brewer Road and the western boundary of the City of Roseville's proposed West Roseville Specific Plan. The site is approximately three miles north of Baseline Road.

Proposal - De La Salle University and Community will be modeled after St. Mary's College in Moraga. The University is planned as a four-year liberal arts residential campus, with a variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees. The entire De La Salle University property is comprised of two parts: the 600 acre campus itself, and the adjoining 500 acres, the De La Salle Community property. The development of the adjoining De La Salle Community is proposed to fund the construction and operation of the De La Salle University campus. The proposal includes concepts like mixed uses with interaction between neighborhoods, shopping and employment opportunities, educational and recreational facilities that promote alternatives to single occupant vehicles including a pedestrian orientation and transit opportunities. The proposed land uses include:

Site area: 1,100 acres
Residential acreage: 365 acres
Total Residential units: 2342
 S.F. Residential 4.5-7 units/acre: 1662
 Multi-family 17 units/acre: 680
Commercial acreage: 73 acres
 Community Commercial: 70 acres
 Neighborhood Commercial: 3 acres
Commercial square footage: 954,000

University campus acreage: 600 acres
University enrollment projected: 6,000
Parks: 31 acres
School: 11 acres
Open Space/Parkway: 20 acres

Current general plan and zoning designations - The General Plan designation is Agriculture/Timber, 80 acre minimum and the zoning is Farm, 80 acre minimum parcel size.

Entitlements - The applicants have applied for a General Plan amendment and rezoning, including creation of a new University zone district. They will also be preparing a Specific Plan for consideration by the County. They are requesting that preparation of an EIR begin as soon as possible. Later entitlements will include subdivisions, use permit, design review, etc.

Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan

In 1998, the Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to initiate the open space conservation program now known as the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program. As a part of this program the Board directed the staff to seek to obtain program-level (i.e., regional) permits for regulatory compliance with the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and for federal Clean Water Act requirements for wetlands. In order to comply with this direction, the staff has initiated the preparation of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan to address state-listed endangered species (NCCP), a Habitat Conservation Plan to address federally listed endangered species (HCP) and a Programmatic General Permit for wetlands. These permits will take the form of our implementation agreement between the County, participating local agencies, and the State & Federal regulatory agencies. Placer County would be responsible for integrating the State/Federal regulatory requirements into the County's development review process. The program is intended to improve our ability to adequately compensate for losses to our biological resources, and also to provide certainty and streamlining of the development process.

The NCCP/HCP effort has been divided into three phases with the first phase encompassing western Placer County (essentially the unincorporated area west of Meadow Vista/Christian Valley). Phase 2 is in the upper foothills of the Sierra Nevada and on the east slope (e.g., Martis Valley) and the third phase is the central portion of the Sierra Nevada range. Priority has been given to completing the Phase 1 area due to the number of species and the potential for growth to affect those species and their habitat. Key habitats include vernal pools, grasslands, riparian areas, oak woodlands, and streams.

Staff has recently released a conservation strategy overview for the Phase 1 area. This overview discusses a number of guiding principles that will provide a foundation for the preparation of the Conservation Plan for the NCCP/HCP. It also provides background information on existing conditions and provides a number of potential or draft implementation alternatives. A number of the conclusions reached in this document are relevant to the discussion before the Board at this time. The important conclusions include the following:

- All of the present biological value, but not necessarily all of the present land acreage, will need to be conserved in order to meet the conservation goals and regulatory requirements of the Conservation Plan.

- The Western Placer of the future has a limited capacity for further urbanization as historically conducted if the conservation goals and objectives of the NCCP/HCP are to be met and Placer County's quality of life is to be preserved. Conservation will thus require modifications to urban growth patterns with conservation emphasis placed outside of the urban areas.
- Conservation of agricultural lands and provision of low intensity public recreation has broad public support in the County and will be included in the Conservation Plan and considered along with conservation of the natural communities themselves.
- The majority, but not all, of the Conservation Plan will have to be put in place through fees or "in-lieu" land dedications with endowments as mitigation for urban/suburban development and other activities that could result in impacts to natural communities, agricultural land, or protected species.
- The large scale of conservation needed cannot be accomplished solely by preserving biological values on the site of future public and private projects.
- Onsite conservation will be considered only when concerns about habitat integrity, fragmentation, isolation, management capability, and land use compatibility are suitably addressed, such as when onsite preservation areas can be attached or linked to larger conservation areas.
- Conservation lands should be located within Placer County. In limited circumstances, out-of-county mitigation may occur where there is a reasonable biological justification such as watershed relationship, species population relationships or opportunities to improve connectivity.
- Mitigation will need to be in place before project impacts occur.
- State and federal permits are expected to run until 2050, but would describe a system of monitoring and adaptive management that would allow the program to run indefinitely.
- The general plans of the County and any participating cities will likely need to be supplemented by policy amendments, specific implementing ordinances, and procedural requirements for development permitting and CEQA compliance.

The above conclusions are based upon the evaluation of the current General Plan of the County and the General Plans of the 5 west Placer cities. The projects being reviewed by the Board of Supervisors would contribute additional impacts and could affect the ability to successfully implement the NCCP/HCP. It is premature to determine the exact impact of these projects on the NCCP/HCP because of the tentative status of the projects. However, it is possible to identify a number of areas of concern.

- The projects, as currently proposed, will displace substantial additional natural communities including vernal pools, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian areas.
- Habitat within the development areas not proposed for direct impact will remain in a highly fragmented condition in an urban setting. Such habitats will have substantially diminished values, be incapable of active management required of the adaptive management component of a conservation plan, and will most likely not have viable connections with surrounding protected communities.
- Onsite avoidance will most likely be less successful than large-scale offsite conservation and restoration unless large habitat acreage can be dedicated to conservation (and assured active management) or small, highly unique, natural communities are located on the property.
- The projects will contribute to cumulative impacts. This cumulative impact is becoming increasingly important due to the limited amount of suitable conservation lands that remain

in the landscape of western Placer County. The western County undeveloped landscape can be viewed in much the same way we consider surface water supplies for urban growth, i.e., there is only so much available without having to revert to alternatives such as groundwater, increased efficiency, etc. Our conservation landscape is a critical component of our community and there is a finite supply that must be conserved. Depletion of open space and agricultural land by near-term development could foreclose critical agricultural and open space opportunities and become a rigid constraint on necessary development in the future.

- If these projects are added to the existing buildout development scenario anticipated in County/City General Plans, it will likely be necessary to conserve substantial portions of the remaining landscape and to conduct costly restoration activities to maintain suitable biological values.

Placer Parkway

Placer Parkway is a planned multi-modal transportation corridor that will connect Hwy 65 to Hwy 99/70 in Sutter County. The current effort underway will result in the establishment of a route alignment in order to preserve the corridor from development pressures. The studies have been started and will cost about \$5 million and take four to five years to complete. The route alignment process must follow federal procedures as federal funds are being used on this project. The federal agencies require that a route be selected that will minimize impacts to the environment. Approval of a land development project along the corridor prior to route selection is problematic. This is because a highway alignment that avoids a newly approved project at the expense of the environment would face serious and possibly fatal obstacles. The later section on Placer Parkway will address this issue in more detail and offer alternatives to reduce the risk to the future establishment of a route.

Other Related Major Development Proposals

West Roseville Specific Plan (WRSP)

The West Roseville Specific Plan comprises 3,161 acres currently zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum and proposed to be annexed to the City of Roseville. This area is outside Roseville's current Sphere of Influence, therefore an amended Sphere is proposed. The City of Roseville is also proposing to add an additional 2,365 acres to their Sphere of Influence. These areas are located to the north and south of the proposed WRSP project.

Project Description: 8,430 residential units of varying densities and 163 acres of commercial and industrial uses.

Status: The West Roseville Specific Plan EIR is being prepared by the City of Roseville. The County has commented on the Administrative Draft documents. The Draft EIR was released in September for public review.

Placer Vineyards Specific Plan (PVSP)

Site and Acreage: 5,158 acres - most is currently zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum and a relatively small amount of the area is zoned Residential Agriculture, 10 acre minimum.

Project Description: Phase 1 is on 2,264 acres - 7,632 residential units and 3,909,510 square feet of non-residential development are proposed. Phases 2 and 3 would be on 961 and 1797 acres respectively. It is anticipated that Phase 2 will accommodate a total of 3,980 residential units and 1,304,562 square feet of non-residential development and that Phase 3 will accommodate a total of 2,520 residential units and 1,470,339 square feet of non-residential development.

Status: In 1994 the Placer County General Plan was amended to allow for this level of development with the preparation and adoption of a Specific Plan, currently in progress. The County has been reviewing the Administrative Draft EIR, but the Draft EIR has not yet been released to the public. This will likely occur within the next few months. The public and interested agencies and organizations will have the opportunity to comment on the EIR. When the Final EIR is released, public hearings to consider the EIR and adoption of the Specific Plan will be scheduled before the Planning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors. Individual project applications (subdivisions, use permits, etc.) will follow adoption of the Specific Plan.

DISCUSSION OF TOPICS

The following is a discussion of topics that are raised by the proposals under discussion. The topics are by no means all inclusive, however they do contain the most important issues that will need to be addressed in proceeding with planning for the western part of Placer County. It is no surprise that the two development projects being discussed, Placer Ranch and De La Salle University and Community, present a challenge in terms of a comparison to the current General Plan policies. The current General Plan did not anticipate such projects and therefore the policies of the Plan will not "fit" the projects in all cases. In many cases the policies are applicable to development generally and may be applicable to these projects as well.

This report has recognized the potential benefits of the university components of the proposed projects. These benefits are real and are likely to be meaningful to the residents of the County. In order to balance those benefits there must be an identification of the potential costs, not only in monetary terms but also in a broader sense. The following section addresses a number of issues that will need to be resolved if the projects are to proceed. In some cases there are alternatives to the projects as proposed that could be made that would minimize potential impacts or changes that would better address some of the issues raised.

The questions contained at the end of each section are intended to stimulate thought and more clearly identify choices that will need to be made at some point. They are not intended to be answered as a part of the Board's discussion. It is Exhibit 16 that contains a summary of the issues and alternative responses that may enable the Board to provide meaningful direction at the conclusion of this workshop.

A. GENERAL STANDARDS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN - Part III of the General Plan discusses the timing, circumstances and standards for consideration of future General Plan amendments (Exhibit 6). The General Plan indicates that the most appropriate location for additional growth, and the area that will be considered first by the County, is the "Future Study Area" in southwest Placer County. It goes on to state that the County will not consider GPAs in the Future Study Area until the West Placer Specific Plan, now known as the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, has been adopted by the County. It is anticipated that the PVSP will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in 2004.

The General Plan goes on to state that at that time, the County will evaluate past development trends, market demand, and other factors to determine if it is appropriate to consider future amendments within this area.

"4. Prior to consideration of such GPAs the following should have occurred or been demonstrated.

a. There is a market demand for additional urban or suburban development within the regional analysis area of the County proposed for such development, following an examination of current growth projections, available land, and existing development."

The De La Salle University site is within the Future Study Area. The Placer Ranch site is not within the Future Study Area.

As part of this consideration it is important to evaluate the current status of General Plan build out and what holding capacity remains in order to accommodate future growth. Because the market demand is not limited to the unincorporated area, as a part of any such evaluation it is important to consider the holding capacity of the incorporated area as well. Most jurisdictions in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area use statistics from SACOG to identify growth trends and population and employment projections. A review of SACOG's data provides good background information when considering the timing of future general plan amendments. The California Department of Finance (DOF) also provides useful information on current population estimates and total County estimates for the year 2040.

Current Population

The DOF estimate for the current County population (2003) is 275,600 which is broken down as follows:

Jurisdiction	Population
Colfax	1,710
Auburn	12,250
Loomis	6,175
Rocklin	43,600
Lincoln	20,550
Roseville	90,700
Unincorporated	100,600
Total	275,600

2040 Population

For 2040, DOF has projected a County population total of 522,214 persons. To staff's knowledge the DOF 2040 population estimate has not been broken down by jurisdiction. The additional growth between now and 2040 is estimated to be 246,614 persons occupying approximately 101,907 households (at a County-wide average of 2.42 persons/dwelling unit).

Holding Capacity

The holding capacity as represented in the following chart is derived from the existing adopted General Plan land use designations. The figures below represent the holding capacity of the County but do not include the holding capacity of the Tahoe Basin. Also, the figures represent the current holding capacity as opposed to the proposed holding capacity associated with the proposed Martis Valley and Foresthill Community Plans, or the West Roseville Specific Plan.

Jurisdiction	Total Remaining Dwelling Unit Holding Capacity	Remaining Population Holding Capacity
Colfax	525	1,271
Auburn	8,135	19,687
Loomis	3,371	8,159
Rocklin	13,585	32,876
Lincoln	15,078	36,489
Roseville	20,136	48,729
Unincorporated	116,177	281,148
Total Available Holding Capacity	177,007	428,359

Buildout

The buildout population is simply based upon the total amount of land devoted to residential land uses and what intensity of residential development has been assigned to those uses. A number of factors can affect the buildout estimate including person/household densities, vacancy rates, variable rates of absorption from one community to the next and percentage of vacation housing. For purposes of this brief assessment, the staff is simply presenting the total residential holding capacity expressed in the various general plans of the County and the Cities multiplied by 2.42 persons/dwelling unit. This estimate presents an "order of magnitude" that could be considerably refined. The data is derived from the SACOG "Blueprint" program.

Jurisdiction	Current Population	Remaining Holding Capacity	Total Buildout Population
Colfax	1,710	1,271	2,981
Auburn	12,250	19,687	31,937
Loomis	6,175	8,159	14,334
Rocklin	43,600	32,876	76,476
Lincoln	20,550	36,489	57,039
Roseville	90,700	48,729	139,429
Unincorporated	100,600	281,148	381,748
Total	275,600	428,359	703,944

Summary

The remaining holding capacity represents an increment of growth of approximately 181,700 persons above the 2040 population estimate of the Department of Finance. With the adjustments

that may result from reductions in holding capacity with the Martis Valley and Foresthill Community Plans, increases from the proposed West Roseville Specific Plan, and an assumed reduction in capacity because of environmental and infrastructure constraints; there is an assumed increment of growth available for at least 40-50 years based on existing General Plans of the Cities and County. The issue at hand will revolve around the demand that exists within smaller areas and whether currently planned growth areas are suitably located to best accommodate new growth.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should the County process the proposed General Plan amendments prior to the adoption of the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan? 2. Is it appropriate to direct each project proposal to fully address and meet the list of standards and requirements outlined in Part III of the General Plan? 4. Should the Placer Ranch project be treated differently since it is not within the Future Study Area?

B. WEST PLACER LAND USE ISSUES FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Preliminary studies provide a framework for further evaluation of the economic and fiscal implications associated with the development of universities. Development of a university would bring broad, although potentially indirect, economic benefit to the community. In addition, university purchasing and consumer spending, along with real estate development stimulated by the university, may promote more direct local economic activity. These potential benefits must be weighed against the loss of property tax that would occur with a tax-exempt institution and the service costs that would be associated with a university and any surrounding development.

With both proposals a tax- exempt institution would replace other land uses. The universities and proposed residential development would replace agricultural land and, in the case of Placer Ranch, some potential revenue generating (property-tax) light industrial uses and business uses in the Sunset Industrial Area that tend to be economically beneficial to the County. Fiscal modeling suggests that these non-residential uses offset more costly uses, primarily residential, that occur in other areas of the County.

Since there would be a loss of property tax and a residential population is introduced, that in part, would replace the land uses planned for employee population; one might expect that the change in land use may generate higher costs, relative to revenues, than would the existing land use scenario. The mix and character of uses both on and off campus, the proximity of ancillary services, the type and amount of retail development on or near the campus, and the extent to which the universities provide their own public services, are material to the fiscal balance of the project(s). Other elements, such as in-lieu property taxes and university provided community amenities could further tip the balance and mitigate potential fiscal impacts.

While there are broad social and economic benefits that may result from construction of higher education facilities in Placer County, the specific impacts to the County must be further evaluated should the Board provide direction for consideration of these proposals. Such evaluation should include fiscal impact studies identifying more specific direct and indirect impacts of the projects, comparisons with existing/proposed land uses (delineation of opportunity costs) and planning of projects in such a way that fiscal impacts are minimized.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: What mix of land uses, on both a project and countywide level, will create an appropriate balance of fiscal, environmental, and social issues?

C. PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND - There are numerous General Plan goals and policies that call for the preservation of agriculturally zoned lands and agricultural uses as well as the preservation of a viable agricultural segment of the economy in Placer County. They include the following policies:

“1.H.1. - The County shall maintain agriculturally-designated areas for agricultural uses and direct urban uses to designated urban growth areas and/or cities.

“1.H.2. - The County shall seek to ensure that new development and public works projects do not encourage expansion of urban uses into designated agricultural areas.”

“Goal 7.A: To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally-designated lands.

7.A.1. - The County shall protect agriculturally-designated areas from conversion to non-agricultural uses.”

The intent of these policies is to support the continued viability of the agricultural economy. In addition, Placer County policies support conservation of agricultural land to serve as wildlife habitat and working visual open space that is integral to the rural quality of life that makes this area a unique and desirable place to live.

Both projects are outside areas designated for urban uses except for a portion of the Placer Ranch site which is designated for future industrial uses. The Placer Ranch site is primarily designated Agricultural and 640 acres are encumbered by a Williamson Act contract. The De La Salle University site is entirely designated for agricultural use and a large portion is currently planted in rice. With the westward expansion of development with the Placer Vineyards, West Roseville Specific Plan, De La Salle and Placer Ranch projects, intervening agricultural lands would also be impacted and likely considered for conversion to urban uses (the City of Roseville's discussion of the balance of the MOU area in the WRSP EIR demonstrates this point). In addition, further westward expansion requests beyond these project sites may be made if there is no clear boundary beyond which urban growth will be prohibited.

As you will read in more detail under item K, four alternative conservation and growth scenarios have been evaluated for the NCCP/HCP. From the land cover analysis prepared, it has been possible to estimate the amount of agricultural land in the West Placer area that will be developed in each of the four scenarios analyzed. The currently undeveloped area of West Placer County encompasses 130,236 acres, of that 103,506 acres are either currently utilized for agriculture or suitable for certain types of agricultural pursuits. The crops include alfalfa, irrigated pasture, rice, row crops, vineyards and seasonal grains. In addition, substantial acreage is identified as annual grassland, oak woodland savannah, Valley Oak woodland and vernal pool complex, all of which are grazed or suitable for grazing for livestock production.

Without amending the General Plan or expanding any City sphere of influence, substantial loss of agricultural land is anticipated as outlined in Alternative 1 as described in the HCP/Conservation strategy. The other three alternatives document additional development scenarios with alternative 3 and 4 adding the proposed Placer Ranch and the De La Salle University and Community developments. The following chart estimates the loss of agricultural land and the economic impacts

that would result from such loss under the four alternatives addressed in the HCP/Conservation strategy (see Exhibit 8 for a memo from the Agricultural Commissioner and a detailed breakdown by crop type).

This loss of the agricultural land base will be in addition to losses documented over the last ten years. The Placer County Agricultural Crop Report for 2002 indicates that between 1991 and 2001, there was a 35% decrease in orchard/vineyard land, 11% decrease in irrigated pasture and an 18% decrease in dry pasture.

	Agricultural acres to be converted	Percentage Loss of Ag land base	Estimated value of Ag Production Loss	Loss of total income generated as a result of Ag production *
Alternative 1 Develop existing spheres of influence and Placer Vineyards	9,225	8%	\$4,410,137.00	\$13,230,411.00
Alternative 2 The above development plus an expanded Roseville sphere including the West Roseville Specific Plan	14,510	14%	\$6,518,461.00	\$19,555,383.00
Alternative 3 The above development plus Placer Ranch, De La Salle, and expanded Lincoln sphere	18,735	18%	\$8,221,368.00	\$24,664,104.00
Alternative 4 The above development plus more expansion of Lincoln sphere and development north and south of the De La Salle site	24,635	23%	\$12,987,060.00	\$38,961,180.00

Impacts on West Placer County Agriculture

* A multiplier of three has been utilized to represent the ripple effects agriculture creates in the local economy in the form of jobs, income, and output. Source: The Measure of California Agriculture 2002, UC Davis, Agricultural Issues Center, and The Friant Unit of the Central Valley (water) project, and the Friant Water Users Authority.

According to the Placer County Agricultural Commissioner, "More losses to the County's agricultural land base would be significant and every option for preserving that land base needs to be considered throughout the decision-making process. Options may include non-approval, relocation of the projects and/or mitigation of the negative impacts such development represents to farmland, habitat, and a rural quality of life. Despite the fact that the County has a Right-to-Farm Ordinance, there is no doubt that farming or ranching adjacent to or near urban development is much more difficult. Urban neighbors are often upset about standard farming and ranching practices and conflicts arise that are hard or impossible to resolve. The conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land uses will obviously continue this trend unless the losses to the land base are mitigated. There are just so many acres left that are suitable for agricultural production and once they are developed, they are gone forever. If the extent of development approaches that

considered in the conservation strategy Alternatives 3 and 4, the future of agriculture in Placer County will be severely threatened. If these two large projects, which convert agricultural land to urban uses, are to move forward through the environmental /development review process, some permanent protection of surrounding lands is essential if agriculture is to continue to be viable in Placer County."

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Given the goals and policies of the General Plan calling for conservation of agriculturally designated land, is it appropriate to consider these two large scale General Plan amendments on agricultural lands? 2. Shall a threshold of minimum agricultural lands be established to ensure the preservation of a viable agricultural segment of the County's economy? 3. What types of protection can be afforded to remaining agricultural lands should these projects proceed?

D. BUFFERS BETWEEN INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES - The General Plan includes many policies that call for appropriate buffers between incompatible land uses, including the following:

"Goal 7.B: To minimize existing and future conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses in agriculturally-designated areas."

"7.B.1. The County shall identify and maintain clear boundaries between urban/suburban and agricultural areas and require land use buffers between such uses where feasible. These buffers shall occur on the parcel for which the development permit is sought and shall favor protection of the maximum amount of farmland."

According to Table I-4 of the PCGP, buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses should be from 100 to 800 feet, depending on the agricultural pursuit and the project-specific characteristics.

"Goal 4.G: To ensure the safe and efficient disposal or recycling of solid waste generated in Placer County."

"4.G.4. The County shall ensure that landfills and transfer stations are buffered from incompatible development."

"4G.11. When considering land use changes in the vicinity of a landfill operation, the County shall consider the landfill as the dominant land use in the area. In order to protect these facilities from incompatible encroachment, new residential land uses shall be separated from the property lines of active and future landfill sites by a buffer of one mile."

In addition to the one-mile buffer for residential uses, Table I-5 of the PCGP shows a minimum buffer between solid waste disposal sites and commercial sites of 1,000 feet and a minimum buffer between solid waste disposal sites and recreation of 500 feet.

The De La Salle University and Placer Ranch sites are located on and surrounded by agriculturally zoned property. Therefore, they will not only convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, they are likely to encroach into the agricultural buffers described in the General Plan as they are currently proposed.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: If the two proposals are to proceed forward through the environmental review process, should the full agricultural buffer requirements as prescribed in the General Plan be applied?