

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Chief Executive Office

BOARD AGENDA # B-10

Urgent

Routine

AGENDA DATE September 30, 2008

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Approval of Recommendations Regarding Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) Blueprint Process

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve and/or modify the "Moderate Change 2050" Conceptual Growth Scenario as the Stanislaus County Preferred Scenario as recommended by StanCOG staff.

Or

2. Approve the development of an Alternative Conceptual Growth Scenario that incorporates a combination of strategies that include incremental increases in housing densities and the use of green technologies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this item. SB375, which has been approved by the State Legislature and is currently on the Governor's desk, would require metropolitan planning organizations to adopt a sustainable communities strategy as part of their regional transportation plan. The purpose of this plan would be to develop strategies for a region to achieve certain goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Future transportation funding could be tied to a region's ability to meet these greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2008-694

On motion of Supervisor Grover, Seconded by Supervisor O'Brien
and approved by the following vote,
Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Grover, Monteith, and Vice-Chairman DeMartini
Noes: Supervisors: None
Excused or Absent: Supervisors: Mayfield
Abstaining: Supervisor: None

- 1) _____ Approved as recommended
- 2) _____ Denied
- 3) X Approved as amended
- 4) _____ Other:

MOTION: Approved Staff Recommendation No. 2 approving the development of an Alternate Conceptual Growth Scenario that incorporates a combination of strategies that include incremental increases in housing densities and the use of green technologies; and, **amended** the Recommendation to work in conjunction with the cities

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The eight San Joaquin Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are currently participating in a Blueprint planning process with a focus on the increased need for cooperation at the regional level in developing strategies to address growth pressures. In recent years, this approach has become manifest in a number of new regional initiatives and committees such as the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and the San Joaquin Valley Policy Council.

The Blueprint process is designed to assist local agencies in planning for future growth out to the year 2050, and encourages incorporating the addition of alternative modes of transportation and land uses that reflect "smart growth." In addition to the development of alternative transportation modes, such as light rail, bus rapid transit and an expanded regional transit network, the process has placed an emphasis on the implementation of higher residential densities and mixed use development in both existing urban centers and prospective new cities.

The Blueprint scenario planning tasks that StanCOG staff has conducted so far offered several options for new housing densities and upgraded transportation networks based on key performance indicators such as carbon dioxide emission levels, population density, and water and energy consumption.

The Blueprint is not intended to override or supersede existing general plans or local agency land use decision-making authority. Since smart growth planning is already being embraced by local agency planning departments, current planning exercises are likely to implement many of the same ideas included in the Blueprint. However, it is important to note that failure to adopt and implement a sustainable communities plan by a local agency may jeopardize future transportation funding.

The first phase of the Blueprint planning process took place in early 2007 as StanCOG staff conducted fourteen (14) Vision and Values workshops in the Stanislaus Region. The workshops gave Stanislaus County residents the opportunity to develop Guiding Principles for the Stanislaus County region as it grows to the year 2050.

A summary of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles developed through these workshops are included in Attachment A. In all, 439 Stanislaus residents participated in the Phase I Community Workshops.

Phase II Community Workshops were conducted in June and July of 2008. Fourteen (14) Blueprint community outreach workshops were again conducted in all nine cities and in the unincorporated areas of Stanislaus County. StanCOG Staff presented four alternative scenarios; Baseline 2050, Some Change 2050, Moderate Change 2050, and

Major Change 2050 (see Attachment B), to the workshop attendees who were then asked to comment on, and vote, for the scenario that most closely reflected their individual 2050 preferred vision for the San Joaquin Valley. The Phase II Final report summarizes voting, with the Moderate Change 2050 Scenario receiving the most votes.

- Priority Ranking of Blueprint Guiding Principles
 - a. Education – 163 votes
 - b. Land Use – 160 votes
 - c. Economy – 148 votes
 - d. Transportation/Communication – 143 votes
 - e. Environment – 136 votes
 - f. Public Safety – 114 votes
 - g. Community – 85 votes
 - h. Government – 58 votes

- Priority Ranking of Conceptual Growth Scenarios
 - a. Moderate Change 2050 – 73 votes
 - b. Major Change 2050 – 60 votes
 - c. Some Change 2050 – 21 votes
 - d. Baseline 2050 – 4 votes
 - e. Other – 4 votes

At their July 9, 2008 meeting, the StanCOG Policy Board directed StanCOG staff to present Blueprint Phase II Community Workshop results, including the alternative growth scenarios, to each City Council and the Board of Supervisors for approval and/or any modifications that they deem necessary. Upon approval and/or modification by each City Council and the Board of Supervisors, the approved/modified Phase II Final Report and city/County approved/modified alternative growth scenarios will be presented to the StanCOG Policy Board for review and consideration at their October 8, 2008 meeting.

The action of “selecting” a preferred scenario for the valley-wide Blueprint does not constitute an adoption of the Blueprint itself. Rather, the selection of a preferred scenario will feed into the larger Valley-wide Blueprint and will be incorporated into a San Joaquin Valley-wide Blueprint, which will include the locally identified scenarios from each of the eight San Joaquin Valley counties. By selecting a preferred scenario for Stanislaus County, each City, Stanislaus County, and the StanCOG Policy Board is indicating to the Valley-wide group what land use densities and transportation options they would like to see included in the Valley-wide Blueprint for the year 2050.

Once all eight San Joaquin Valley counties have selected a preferred conceptual growth scenario, they will be combined to form one of the “valley-wide” scenarios. In addition to each county’s preferred scenario, three additional Valley-wide scenarios will be developed in consultation with the Blueprint project managers from each county, and

the Blueprint Regional Advisory Committee (BRAC). The preferred alternative selected by each County will be the foundation for these three additional growth scenarios.

All Valley-wide growth scenarios will be reviewed and evaluated by the Blueprint project managers, the BRAC, and the Professional Planners Working Group (comprised of city and county Planning Directors throughout the San Joaquin Valley). Upon completion of this evaluation, a Valley-wide preferred growth scenario will be drafted and returned to each County for review and approval. At this point, each City Council and the Board of Supervisors will review and recommend approval and/or modifications to the StanCOG Policy Board.

After local approval, the preferred Valley-wide growth scenario will be the center piece of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Summit tentatively scheduled for January 30, 2009 at the Fresno Convention Center. At the Summit, attendees will be asked to review and comment on the Valley-wide scenario. All comments from the Summit will be summarized and, if appropriate, will be included in the Valley-wide preferred scenario that will be presented to the San Joaquin Valley Policy Council for approval.

Upon approval by the San Joaquin Valley Policy Council, the Valley-wide preferred growth scenario will go to each City Council, Board of Supervisors, and the StanCOG Policy Board for final local approval.

SB375

SB375, by Senator Darrel Steinberg, is a comprehensive bill that would “require the regional transportation plan for regions of the state with a metropolitan planning organization, to adopt a sustainable communities strategy, as part of its regional transportation plan, as specified, designed to achieve certain goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions...”. StanCOG serves as Stanislaus County’s metropolitan planning organization. The bill would require the California State Resources Board, working in consultation with the metropolitan planning organizations, to provide each affected region with greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. SB375 would exempt from CEQA a transit priority project, as defined, that meets certain requirements and that is declared by the legislative body of a local jurisdiction to be a sustainable communities project.

To the extent the sustainable communities strategy is unable to achieve the reduction target, the affected metropolitan planning organization would be required to prepare an alternative planning strategy. Under certain circumstances the bill would “allow a court to compel a local government to complete the rezoning within specified times and to impose sanctions on the local government if the court order or judgment is not carried out, and would provide that in certain cases the local government shall bear the burden of proof relative to actions brought to compel compliance with specified deadlines and requirements.”

SB375 has passed the State Assembly and Senate and is currently on the Governor's desk awaiting his action. The California Association of Counties and California League of Cities have both taken positions of support for the bill. Attached to this item is a letter from the Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, John Moorlach, requesting that the Board of Supervisors ask the Governor to veto this legislation. At the September 23, 2008 Board of Supervisors' Meeting the Chief Executive Officer indicated that he would prepare a letter expressing opposition to this legislation for the Chairman's signature (Attached).

Staff Analysis

Staff from Planning & Community Development, Public Works, County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office have met on several occasions to discuss the Blueprint Planning Process. While staff is generally supportive of the adoption of "smart growth" strategies, we have several concerns regarding the process and proposed "Moderate Change" recommendation, including:

1. Population and growth assumptions were not open to discussion - the Phase II workshops assumed a population of 1,200,000 in the year 2050. This growth assumption was not up for discussion or debate, although members of the public openly expressed the desire to discuss and debate strategies relative to limiting growth.
2. Discussion at the Phase II workshops was limited to four predefined scenarios with no opportunity to develop alternative scenarios. These four scenarios all placed an emphasis on the implementation of higher residential densities and mixed use development in both existing urban centers and prospective new cities. Statistics, however, indicate that Transportation and Industrial uses account for over half of all greenhouse gas emissions, while Residential and Commercial account for less than 10%. Alternative scenarios that include green technologies may lessen the need to place as many burdens on residential densities as was reflected in the four scenarios.
3. Limited public involvement and input – a total of 162 votes were cast relative to the four scenarios, with the "Moderate Change" scenario receiving 73 votes. This is not considered a statistically significant sample size.

Having shared these concerns, it should be noted that the "Moderate Change" scenario has much greater significance to our nine cities than to the County. The passage of Measure E, the 30-Year Land Use Restriction Initiative, in February 2008, requires voter approval for conversion of agricultural or open space designations to residential designations in the unincorporated area. Consequently, it is anticipated that outside of the Salida Community Plan area and other areas already zoned for residential uses, very little residential development will occur in the future in the unincorporated areas of

the County. This will lessen the impact that increased residential densities associated with Blueprint Planning efforts would have on our agency.

Alternatives

- One alternative the Board could consider is the development of a Conceptual Growth Scenario that incorporates a combination of strategies that include incremental increases in housing densities and the increased use of green technologies. For example, the “Moderate Change” scenario represents an 8-9% reduction per house in greenhouse gases and the “Major Change” scenario a 14-15% reduction. While staff is quick to acknowledge a lack of expertise in the computation of greenhouse gases, initial research indicates that incorporating green technologies such as solar energy, reduced power consumption, increased recycling and increased heating/cooling efficiency could easily equate to a 12-16% reduction per house in greenhouse gases.

San Joaquin County is exploring a similar “Incremental Change” scenario that among other things, emphasizes more investment in infill areas, moderate increases in public transit, strategies that promote the best reduction in vehicle miles traveled and carbon dioxide generation, educational attainment and options to support the new employment landscape, and policies that support the best quality jobs to housing balance. Under their plan, “Detached homes remain the prominent choice, but average density levels remain.”

- Another option discussed by StanCOG staff would be that the StanCOG Policy Board could choose to end its participation in the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint process at this time. The Blueprint planning process is voluntary and could be resumed in the future once all of the ramifications of the Blueprint are known. A number of bills affecting the planning, operation and infrastructure regional planning agencies and municipalities are currently under debate in the California legislature, and it may be advantageous to wait and see how they wash out before committing to the Blueprint.

There are significant potential downfalls to this option. First of all, the state has taken an interest in the Blueprint process, and it may reflect badly on Stanislaus County from a state perspective if it is the only county in the San Joaquin Valley to cease participation. Failure to develop a sustainable communities plan could also result in our county losing out on state funding for transportation infrastructure such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

POLICY ISSUES:

The Board of Supervisors is asked to consider whether the participation in the Blueprint process and approval of a Preferred Growth Scenario supports the Board’s goals of a

Well Planned Infrastructure, Strong Local Economy and a Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage.

STAFFING IMPACTS:

There are no staffing impacts associated with this item. Staff from Planning and Community Development, Public Works, County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office have participated to varying degrees in Blueprint Planning efforts.

Attachment A

Stanislaus County Blueprint

Our Vision for the Year 2050

Establishment of a comprehensive innovative planning process that will accomplish our core values, and assure a superior quality of life, prosperity, equality, and economic opportunity for future generations.

Community

Stanislaus County will contain diverse, interesting, and unique social and cultural characteristics that strengthen the bonds within and between our communities, preserve local identity, foster regional pride and enhance quality of life.

Actions

By facilitating the exchange of goods, services, and ideas, the cities and County of Stanislaus will support local and regional cultural, library, recreation, parks and other facilities.

Environment

All public and private improvements and investments will, to the extent feasible, conserve natural resources by maximizing the use of renewable resources while minimizing the rate of consumption on non-renewable resources.

Actions

The cities and County of Stanislaus will protect and enhance the environment by:

1. Restoration of riparian environments and preservation of river corridors for public access and use, including regional park facilities and trail systems.

2. Ensuring that environmental policies affecting the region are developed with the involvement of local governments in Stanislaus County.
3. Protection, conservation and development of water resources for local domestic use and irrigation.
4. Supporting a planning process that is committed to providing clean air to the region.
5. Protection of wildlife from negative impacts associated with growth.

Land Use

We will seek to balance population growth, the need to preserve non-renewable resources, including the best agricultural lands, and promote economic development opportunities. Community identity will be maintained and enhanced through this balance.

Actions

The cities and County of Stanislaus will adopt general plans, policies and agreements that will achieve the following:

1. More compact and clearly defined urban boundaries that avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands
2. Protection of farmland outside the urban boundaries.
3. Expansion of city limits to include urbanized unincorporated areas that are substantially surrounded by a city.
4. Compact urban development which encourages redevelopment or blighted areas, "in fill" development of vacant and underutilized land, and a variety of affordable housing.
5. Urban limit lines, providing for areas of open space, agriculture, very low density, rural development, or green belts in which urban development cannot occur.
6. Tax and revenue policies that will support and encourage good land use decisions.
7. Transportation policies that will support and implement the land use vision.

8. Recognize agriculture/farming as an industry with great economic value in addition to the distinctive landscape/greenscape that it provides Stanislaus County.

Economy

The cities and the County of Stanislaus will mutually support efforts that create a dynamic and diverse economy. We should seek to broaden economic opportunities for our residents.

Actions

1. The cities and County of Stanislaus will foster economic growth and develop a diversified economic base which provides maximum employment opportunities and jobs/housing balance, including:
 - a. Stanislaus County serving as a hub for large-scale business and financial services such as agribusiness and other regional-serving facilities in the northern San Joaquin Valley. The economic strength of Stanislaus County will be enhanced by a strong central city.
 - b. New jobs and training opportunities in a variety of industries at all wage levels.
 - c. An adequate supply of housing in diverse price ranges for all residents of the County.
 - d. A competitive workforce prepared to meet the needs of a world class economy.
 - e. A tourist destination attraction highlighting the region's major products and natural resources.
 - f. Regional retail commercial centers along Highway corridors in urbanized areas
 - g. Expansion of other economic sectors which are compatible with agriculture.
 - h. Development of freeway-oriented industrial and commercial uses in the I-5 corridor at the Westley, Patterson, Crows landing, and Newman interchanges to provide expanded employment centers for residents of Stanislaus County.

- i. Conversion of rural areas into large urban residential communities will be avoided. New residential development will be located within incorporated cities, Salida, Diablo Grande and other existing planned development communities.
2. The cities and County of Stanislaus will develop policies to maintain a strong agricultural economy including:
 - a. Preservation of farming, food processing and agricultural business services.
 - b. Ongoing research and analysis of the agricultural industry in order to sustain it as a major economic engine and source of employment.
3. The cities and County of Stanislaus will adopt policies and practices to take full advantage of advances in communication and technologies including:
 - a. Establishment and maintenance of a state-of-the-art communications network serving all areas of the county.
 - b. Use of technology to engage citizens more actively in public issues and to improve inter-agency communication.
 - c. Establishment of sites and services to attract technology-based business.

Transportation/Communication

We will promote an efficient, integrated, well maintained, progressive multi-modal regional transportation and communication system.

Actions

The cities and County of Stanislaus will develop and maintain a regional transportation system that will include the following:

1. A countywide expressway system with connector roads to provide access to other regions and to enhance mobility within Stanislaus County.

2. An efficient, well coordinated countywide public transportation system. Bicycle and pedestrian trails linking neighborhoods and regional bikeways using existing rights of way.
3. Development of the Crows Landing Airfield, including air cargo facilities to expand the market for Stanislaus County agricultural products.
4. Enhancement of major regional air passenger service at the Modesto Airport.
5. A system of rail passenger services including inter-urban light rail and access to interregional commuter rail services.

Education

We will promote attainable education for everyone and develop opportunities to stimulate to mind, strengthen the body and inspire the spirit.

Actions

All the educational institutions of Stanislaus County will provide:

1. Facilities that will adequately accommodate the growth in student population.
2. Pre-school and childcare facilities that address the needs of both parents and children
3. An education at all levels taught by competent and qualified instructors for the student to achieve academic success or to exercise choice whether it be occupational, vocational, apprentice, or literary training programs as options for career success.
4. A workforce capable of meeting the needs of employers by providing graduates with core skills, a proper work ethic, and the ability to learn new skills.
5. Affordable and accessible continuing education programs for adults.
6. Academically-competitive college/university preparatory students who gain admission to the nation's best schools.
7. A safe environment on all campuses in compliance with existing law.

Government

Elected officials and government employees will be: accessible and responsible; hold public resources and processes in trust; and act as stewards of public and natural resources for present and future residents.

Actions

1. The cities and County of Stanislaus will collaborate in conducting the public's business, including:
 - a. Developing service delivery strategies such as contracting out or consolidating duplicated services in cases where benefits to customer, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability would be realized. These services would be provided in an efficient and reliable manner for all sections of the county, including rural communities.
 - b. Agreement on a countywide framework for implementation of the Land Use and Transportation visions.

2. The cities and the County of Stanislaus will be sustained by reliable funding sources for essential public services, and will collaborate to establish revenue investment agreements among cities, special districts, and the County which:
 - a. Encourage cooperation on economic development projects of benefit to the entire region.
 - b. Encourage land use decisions that support the implementation of the Land Use, Economy, Transportation and Environment visions.
 - c. Address differences in financial capacity while providing sufficient resources to meet basic responsibilities.

3. A broad based regional financing system for regional serving capital projects (transportation, recreation, cultural facilities, and flood control projects).

Public Safety

Law enforcement, fire and life and safety service agencies will provide all residents with the highest quality service possible. Public safety agencies will collaborate to

provide safe, tranquil and secure communities; free from disruptive, illegal, and/or illicit activities through efficient and balance service delivery.

Actions

Law Enforcement

1. Law enforcement will establish minimum standards for entry, retention, development, advancement and education of law enforcement personnel.
2. Law enforcement will adopt a policing strategy focused on the individual needs of communities. There will be an emphasis on solving problems at their root, as opposed to reacting only to the symptoms. Prevention will be as important as reacting to problems and community involvement will be key to long-term change.
3. Interagency radio communications will be coordinated to allow direct contact between working level officers. Initially, radio channels must be coordinated to allow patches via dispatch centers. An integrated radio center must be developed, in the long term, to allow unrestricted communication between all agencies.
4. Information sharing and data management must be in a form that allows full sharing and access by all Stanislaus County agencies.
5. Countywide crime analysis capability will be developed to gain a strategic crime fighting advantage and to improve resource utilization.
6. Agencies will develop formats that will allow for the implementation of task forces and working committees that will address common concerns and public safety issues. Examples are drugs, gangs, financial crimes and other problems that transcend jurisdictional lines.
7. Recruitment and personnel development will be a shared objective for Stanislaus County law enforcement. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the make-up of each agency adequately represents the communities served.
8. Stanislaus County law enforcement agencies will manage for the future, anticipating changes in law, technology, societal attitudes, demographic changes and changing service demands.

Fire and Life Safety

1. Fire districts, cities, county, hospitals and emergency response organizations will adopt integrated, collaborative and multi-disciplinary planning to ensure that all citizens are served in an equitable, efficient, and effective manner.
 - a. Strive for a “seamless” emergency response system regardless of jurisdictional boundary that considers availability, and closest resource.
 - b. Pursue those organizational and jurisdictional changes that make financial and operational sense.
 - c. Establish minimum standards that can be measured against the best practices in the industry.
 - d. Establish a collaborative process for distributing the cost of providing service to the jurisdictions, organizations, and agencies that use the services.

2. Fire districts, cities and county will ensure the safety of its citizens through adoption of fair and reasonable fire and safety codes and ordinances and by embracing the technological advances in fire detection and automatic suppression systems.
 - a. Strive to achieve uniformity in the adoption and application of codes and regulations throughout the districts, cities, and county without regard to jurisdictional boundary lines.
 - b. Continue to emphasize customer service, one-stop assistance, and a reasonable balance between public safety and economic development.
 - c. Work in concert with other regulatory agencies (Building, Planning, and Environmental Resources) to develop a broad-based approach to public safety planning and regulation.
 - d. Embrace the long-term benefits that can be achieved by including automatic fire detection and automatic fire suppression systems in new buildings.

3. Fire districts, cities and county are committed to enhancing their value by becoming “all-risk” emergency service providers.
 - a. Continue to develop specialized capabilities with the public safety area including hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue teams, domestic preparedness planning, incident command teams, and basic and advanced medical first responder programs.

- b. Continue to develop and enhance relationships with public and private agencies and organizations involved in providing public safety services.

Attachment B

Description of Stanislaus County Blueprint Conceptual Growth Scenarios

1. Baseline 2050

The Baseline 2050 scenario projects growth in Stanislaus County out to 2050 based on recent trends in land use, housing densities, and transit options. The densities of new residential developments and intensity of employment uses were kept at the levels of prevailing trends. The Baseline 2050 scenario was developed using current member agency general plans as its foundation.

The selection of the Baseline 2050 scenario represents the opinion that current growth trends in Stanislaus County are desirable and will not adversely affect the quality of life in the county out to the year 2050. This may be an attractive option if Stanislaus County desires to continue participation in the Blueprint process while making no commitments to changing land uses or transportation patterns.

2. Some Change 2050

The Some Change 2050 scenario assumes that the Stanislaus County region desires to implement some aspects of “smart growth” by the year 2050 without radically changing housing densities or transportation mode choices. The demand for different housing types would shift slightly toward higher densities (18% of new development would be medium or high residential housing versus the current 9%). In addition, residential lot would decrease slightly. An enhanced regional transit system based upon the existing transit network is also included in this scenario. Preservation of agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas is given more consideration than in the Baseline 2050 scenario.

The StanCOG Policy Board may conditionally select the Some Change scenario as its preferred scenario if it desires to embrace some of the elements of the Blueprint planning process without diverging completely from recent trends in land use and transportation planning. This option may give StanCOG the opportunity to “test the waters” of the Blueprint, and wait to see if the state of California develops Blueprint requirements before making a greater commitment to the process.

3. Moderate Change 2050

During the Blueprint Phase II Community Outreach Workshops, the Moderate Change 2050 Conceptual Growth Scenario received the highest number of votes (73) from among the four options. The Moderate Change 2050 scenario is designed to fully implement the principles of “smart growth” promoted in the Blueprint planning process while maintaining the unique character of Stanislaus County out to the year 2050.

At present, medium and high density housing options account for 9% of all residential development. Under the mixed use housing options of the Moderate Change 2050 Growth Scenario, future medium and high density housing would increase to 27% of all new residential development. Greater transit opportunities, both local and inter-regional, are also included in this scenario.

The approval of the Moderate Change 2050 Growth Scenario would put Stanislaus County in a positive position regarding the potential passage of SB 375, the pending State legislation that would require each metropolitan planning region to have a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" in place in order to obtain certain regional planning and funding advantages.

The moderate change scenario was designed to fully implement the concepts and "smart growth" prescriptions of the Blueprint planning process and is consistent with other regional planning activities like the Metro Rural Loop Study in Fresno County and the Economic and Transportation scenario of Kings County.

4. Major Change 2050

The major change scenario offers the most significant change in residential housing densities for Stanislaus County out to the year 2050, increasing the percentage of county residents in medium and high density housing from the current 9% to 36%. While future overall housing densities increase, there is a considerable decrease in the percentage of residents living in rural residential and agricultural residential housing. Public transit is further developed throughout the region, with the potential for a light rail system connecting cities and employment centers. The preservation of agricultural land and environmentally sensitive land is given the highest consideration in the major change scenario.

The major change scenario represents a shift in land use planning that goes above and beyond the baseline set by the Blueprint. The selection of this scenario by StanCOG would indicate that Stanislaus County is ready to fully embrace the Blueprint and radically change the way that new development will be planned.



JOHN M.W. MOORLACH, C.P.A.

CHAIRMAN, ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT

ORANGE COUNTY HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
333 W. SANTA ANA BLVD.
10 CIVIC CENTER, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92701
Phone (714) 834-3220 Fax (714) 834-6109
jmm.moorlach@ocgov.com

2008 SEP 22 P 2: 22

MARIO MAINERO
CHIEF OF STAFF

RICK FRANCIS
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF

BRAD ANGLE
POLICY ADVISOR

KATHLEEN MORAN
POLICY ADVISOR

APRIL RUDGE
POLICY ADVISOR

LINDSAY BRENNAN
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

September 19, 2008

The Honorable Thomas W. Mayfield
Chair, Board of Supervisors
Stanislaus County
1010 10th St., Ste. 6500
Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Chair Mayfield:

Each of us is privileged to represent a unique community. The areas that we represent vary in many ways that can only be understood by the individuals who live and work in our neighborhoods. As an elected official, you appreciate that one size does not fit all and that the solutions dreamed up in Sacramento or Washington, D.C. are not necessarily best suited for our local conditions. So it is with SB 375, a land use bill waiting for Governor Schwarzenegger to decide its fate.

You and I were elected to have a strong say over local land use decisions. SB 375 will take that away from you and place the future character of your community in the hands of non-elected officials hundreds of miles away. I believe that this is unacceptable and I ask you to join the Orange County Board of Supervisors in asking the Governor to veto this attack on local control of land use.

The first step in stripping you of your authority has already become law. The Legislature passed AB 32 into law in 2006 in an attempt to address concerns over greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This was a well-motivated bill, but it set the stage for an all out assault on local control of land use. The implementation of the AB 32 GHG emissions goals was put into SB 375; here is how it works. SB 375 would establish the California Air Resources Board (CARB) as the lead agency for the implementation of AB 32. CARB will decide how much GHG reduction is assigned to each region. They will then alert the 17 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) of those goals, and then the MPO must develop a transportation plan and a coordinated land use plan, called a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), to meet these goals. The objective of the SCS is to direct development in the right direction to minimize transportation and GHG emissions impacts. It is important to note that the MPO plan must be submitted to the CARB for their approval and they have absolute authority to reject the plan regardless of local support.

How will this be enforced, you may ask? The enforcement comes through access to transportation funding, even your local transportation dollars are controlled by this process if they are approved after 2009. State and federal transportation dollars will be denied to cities and localities which do not have SCS plans approved by the CARB. So, if you approve developments outside of the areas permitted in the SCS for your region, there will be no transportation dollars to afford taxpayers access to these new homes or businesses.

The Honorable Thomas W. Mayfield
September 19, 2008
Page 2

I have had the honor of meeting many Supervisors from around California. I am confident in saying that the environment and the future of this State is in good hands if you and others like you are permitted to retain the authority to plan your local communities. I reject the basis for SB 375, which is that only central planning can assure a cleaner environment in the future.

There are already plans to build on SB 375 to expand the level of micromanagement of local planning by state agencies. This power grab is just beginning. Many in the Legislature believe that SB 375 is merely the first step in a complete preemption of local decision making over land use.

The voters of your community elect you in order to have a say in how their neighborhoods will look. The people who elect us expect us to help shape their communities according to local values and goals. We cannot abdicate these responsibilities to unelected officials who have never even visited our communities.

Please join me and the many other elected County Supervisors up and down this great state in respectfully asking Governor Schwarzenegger to veto this attack on local land use control. The people of your county have entrusted you with the responsibility to plan their community, and the Governor and the Legislature should respect that vote of confidence and leave land use in local hands.

Your willingness to join us in this important task is appreciated.

Very truly yours,



John M. W. Moorlach

cc: Members, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Thomas G. Mauk, County Executive Officer



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

William O'Brien, 1st District
Thomas W. Mayfield, 2nd District
Jeff Grover, 3rd District
Dick Monteith, 4th District
Jim DeMartini, 5th District

1010 10TH Street, Suite 6500, Modesto, CA 95354
Phone: 209.525.4494 Fax: 209.525.4410

September 23, 2008

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor
State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, Ca 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors urges you to veto SB 375. We oppose SB375 because we feel strongly that local control will be undermined because SB375 places local land use decisions in the hands of regional transportation planning organizations and the California Air Resources Board (CARB), a single purpose regulatory agency with no experience in land use planning or in addressing the many issues communities face. CARB does not have the depth of knowledge or understanding of local issues possessed by locally elected officials.

SB375 will change the decision making authority of local governments and goes counter to the local land use authorities delegated to local jurisdictions, including the development and implementation of individual general plans. The updating and revising of appropriate general plan elements and development standards will cost the County substantial time and require funding that is simply not available during these economically distressed times.

While SB375 does not technically require agencies to change their land use plans to conform to the Sustainable Communities Strategy, it carries a big stick. State and federal transportation monies would be funneled only to those areas that change their land use plans to conform to the Sustainable Communities Strategy, unfairly penalizing those agencies who choose to continue to be responsible for making their own local land use decisions.

The County is committed to cooperate with State agencies on regulatory and administrative issues to the extent that such support does not adversely affect our ability to fulfill our responsibility to ensure the protection and well-being of our citizens. We feel this bill will significantly impact our ability to fulfill the responsibilities we have to our constituency and we respectfully urge your veto of SB 375.

Sincerely,

Jim DeMartini, Vice Chairman
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors