



The County of El Dorado

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: Monday, July 9, 2007

TO: El Dorado County, Board of Supervisors, and Planning Commission

FROM: El Dorado County, Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to the El Dorado County General Plan Regarding Floor Area Ratios

Introduction

After two briefings from Development Services Director Greg Fuz, and staff regarding the proposed changes to the General Plan's commercial FAR, an amendment was added to address the EDAC's concerns regarding inclusion of mitigation measures in this General Plan amendment change.

Recommendation

EDAC supports the proposed General Plan amendment, urging the Board of Supervisors to adopt, increasing floor area ratios from the current level of 0.25 to 0.85 for Commercial and Industrial land use designations and from 0.25 to .0.50 for Research and Development. EDAC also recommends that all mitigation measures proposed to address impact at build-out are applicable only if the County determines, as part of a periodic review of the General Plan, that there is a negative impact occurring at significant levels to warrant triggering of these mitigation measures.

Background Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

FAR is the ratio of permitted floor area of the building in relation to the size of the lot. A FAR of 1.0 means a one story building can cover 100% of the lot and a two story building can cover 50% of the lot. FAR requirements are common in zoning ordinances in other jurisdictions and usually relates to commercial development. While FAR's and therefore the intensity of the land use remain constant an increase a local jurisdiction's FAR can offer developers more flexibility in choosing building configurations. The FAR does not supersedes other standards such as height and setback restrictions or parking ratios.

The proposed FAR will help bring El Dorado County in line with other jurisdictions in the region such as Roseville with commercial and industrial FAR between 0.40-0.50 but still less than Folsom with an FAR of 2.00 making El Dorado County more competitive in attracting new businesses and jobs.

Impact on Development

Approximately 44% of El Dorado County's resident labor force currently commutes out of the County for employment. It is a critical economic development objective to increase the number of quality jobs available in the County. Increasing the FAR will allow for higher densities along transportation corridors which can help reduce single vehicle commuting while providing an opportunity for residents to work closer to home. This development strategy will also help preserve open space, and valuable farm land. In addition, the higher FAR will allow commercial developers more flexibility in designing projects by encouraging more vertical development that would not exceed current height limitations and more mixed use development.