



GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT “INITIATION” POLICY

EL DORADO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

September 30, 2013

Legistar #13-0793

DEVELOPMENT OPPOSITION

- Proposed large General Plan Amendment related residential projects prompted community opposition
- Voiced concerns varied. Common themes include:
 - Traffic
 - Effect on rural lifestyle
- Objections to the proposed projects prompted request to:
 - Stop the review of the projects, or
 - Amend projects to proposed significant lower densities, or
 - Amend the General Plan to eliminate, revise and/or reduce Community Region boundary in areas affected



GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS RAISE POLICY QUESTIONS...

- Do we need additional land designated for higher density residential development?
- Do we have enough land identified for commercial development?
- What is the effect on the County's ability to provide a range of housing for all income levels?
- What is the effect of additional residential units on implementation of the adopted General Plan?
- What might the impacts be on meeting the County's Jobs/Housing balance goals?
- Other...



GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT “INITIATION PROCESS” POLICY SUMMARY

- Applicant would be required to obtain BOS “authorization to initiate” any GPA which increases allowable residential density.
 - Abbreviated application process
 - Hearing at Board within 60 days
- Establishes criteria.
 - Consistent with General Plan goals and objectives
 - Addresses deficiencies identified in 5-year review
- Exemptions for technical changes or smaller projects.
- Draft Policy “sunset date” prior to next General Plan 5-year review cycle in 2016.
- Does not involve review or approval of project; only an authorization to bring forward an application. Any direction by the Board would be exempt from CEQA.



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

- **Concerns identified:**

- Policy is unnecessary, will not improve land-use processing and will likely lead to ill-informed decision making.
- This process would not provide the Board with sufficient information to make an informed decision.
- Concern of the new process on projects that are already under study
- Premature denial of a “concept” could deprive a property owner of an opportunity to fully develop a project proposal.
- Potential to eliminate projects beneficial to the community.



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

- **General support of the draft policy:**
 - Projects that deviate significantly from County land use goals and policies can be rejected up front...save taxpayer dollars.
 - No 'perceived obligation' or pressure to approve a project based on funds expended by the time it reaches the Board of Supervisors.
 - Criteria review should include proximity to Highway 50, projects in or easily served by EID, and consistent with regional planning objectives.



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

- ***Suggested revisions to the draft policy:***

- 25 respondents support suggested revisions made by Shingle Springs Community Alliance, Stop Tilden Park, and No San Stino:
 - Deny amendments for a residential, commercial or industrial urban or suburban type development outside of Community Region Lines or Rural Centers
 - No initial approval unless sufficient existing water and sewer connections available. Exception granted if developer fully funds improvements.
 - Reserve current EID water and sewer capacity for highest priority job growth and commercial sales-tax generating projects.
 - No initial approval unless no LOS F traffic conditions will be created.
 - Includes proposed zoning changes or community region line adjustments.



GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT “INITIATION PROCESS” POLICY CRITERIA

1. The amendment request is consistent with the principal goals and objectives of the general plan, and
2. Public infrastructure, facilities and services appear to be available to serve the proposed project;
3. The proposed amendment meets one or more of the following goals and objectives:
 - A. Increases employment opportunities within El Dorado County;
 - B. Promotes the development of housing affordable to moderate income households;
 - C. Provides additional opportunities to retain retail sales and sales tax revenues within El Dorado County;
 - D. Protects and enhances the agricultural and natural resource industries;
 - E. Is necessary to comply with changes in state or federal law.



POLICY OPTIONS

- 1. Application of Policy.** Should the policy be limited to application proposing an increase in residential density, or to any general plan amendment request?
- 2. Criteria for approval or denial.** Are there revisions to or additional criteria that should be included?
- 3. Exemptions.** Are the exemptions appropriate? Does the Board wish to exempt other types of projects from the procedure? Example may include map corrections, minor amendments or small residential projects
- 4. Specific Plans and Specific Plan Amendments.** Should this policy extend to cover either new Specific Plans or Specific Plan amendments which would have the same effect of increasing allowable residential density?



PENDING GPA APPLICATION OPTIONS

How to address pending General Plan Amendment applications?

- Allow all pending GPA's to complete CEQA review; approve, conditionally approve, or deny the applications at the conclusion of that process.
- Conduct a series of hearings to evaluate each of the proposed amendments; determine if they meet the criteria in adopted Board Policy; allowed the project to continue or terminated.
- Determine that any GPA application proposing an increase in residential density is either not consistent with the principal goals and objectives of the adopted General Plan, or is premature based on the County's 2011 five-year review.
- Suspend CEQA review; conduct a series of workshops with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to provide project further direction.



NEXT STEPS

- Staff recommends the Board discuss the merits of the draft General Plan Amendment Initiation Policy and either:

- Provide specific direction to staff regarding any necessary changes to the draft policy

or

- Determine that the draft policy is not necessary at this time.

