

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Peter N. Maurer, Principal Planner

DATE: September 24, 2009

RE: Mixed Use Development (A08-0001, OR08-0001)

BACKGROUND

On January 8, 2008, the Board of Supervisors approved a revised project description, amending General Plan Policies 2.1.1.3, 2.1.2.5, 2.2.1.2 and Table 2-2 of Policy 2.2.1.3 of the Land Use Element of the General Plan to include mixed-use development to occur horizontally as well as vertically, eliminate the requirement for projects to be predominantly commercial, and increase density to allow for up to 24 dwelling units per acre within Community Regions. The amendment also required the Zoning Ordinance be brought into compliance with the General Plan revision by providing standards for mixed-use development projects.

The Mixed Use Development (MUD) amendment was opened at the Board of Supervisors meeting of March 3, 2009 and was continued to April 21, 2009 at the request of the public to further review the item. Following Board discussion and public input on April 21, 2009, the item was continued to a workshop on May 11, 2009 with an option to adopt the item. Following the workshop, the item was continued three additional times for further review by members of the Board of Supervisors and is currently agendized for October 13, 2009.

DISCUSSION

The passage of Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375 require regions to reduce greenhouse gases by largely mandating higher density, transient oriented types of development within regional growth plans. These new laws will necessitate a change in how local jurisdictions plan for transportation and housing projects. Although the specific outcomes and strategies aligned with AB32 and SB375 are still being deliberated, the subject has created a renewed interest in how the County will meet these objectives, particularly through mixed-use development.

In addition to creating new regional growth plans, the new laws have the potential to significantly rearrange the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process, and may provide significant breaks under the California Environmental Quality Act for certain types of transit-oriented projects.

The primary changes to the amendment and ordinance as discussed at the BOS MUD workshop on May 11, 2009 consisted of requiring a Planned Development application for all MUD projects and striking the language requiring MUD to be on a single parcel. In addition, the Board agreed to allow for some flexibility in meeting the 30% open space requirements under the Planned Development application for Mixed Use projects.

Because one component of this is a General Plan amendment, and the next available opportunity to amend the land use element is scheduled for December, final action cannot be taken at this time.

RECOMMEDATION

Development Services recommends that the Board of Supervisors continue this item to December 8, 2009 and declare its intent to take the following action:

1. Adopt the Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study prepared by staff;
2. Approve Resolution amending General Plan (A08-0001) Policy 2.1.1.3, 2.1.2.5, 2.2.1.2, and 2.2.1.3 Table 2-2 Land Use Densities and Residential Population Ranges, as shown in Attachment 2, based on the findings contained in Attachment 1;
3. Approve OR08-0001 amending Zoning Ordinance Chapter 17.32 to included Mixed-Use Development as a permitted use in Commercial Districts (C), Professional Office Commercial Districts (CPO), and Planned Commercial Districts (CP) with a maximum residential density of 24 dwelling units per acre within Community Regions and a maximum residential density of 4 units per acre in Rural Centers as shown in Attachments 3 thru 5, based on the findings contained in Attachment 1; and
4. Approve regulations for Mixed-Use Development as set forth in 17.14 with the addition of section .220 shown in Attachment 6.

NEXT STEPS

The Board has discussed the concept of a more comprehensive MUD program to be developed subsequent to the adoption of this initial phase. This would be used as a tool to achieve goals established by AB32, SB375 and the General Plan. Should the Board desire further development of MUD, staff would bring back a program of how we would proceed. The analysis would include, but not be limited to, exploring options such as the creation of a land use designation, zone district, or an overlay district for mixed-use. Other options could include establishing design guidelines, special use regulations and development standards for mixed-use within existing zone designations, including residential and research and development. Staff would also include cost estimates and a discussion of CEQA considerations.

An example may include revising standards for Multi Family Residential, where services such as small eateries, small retail stores, and health services or youth centers would enhance the overall neighborhood, while assisting in meeting federal and state funding requirements for development

support. Another option may be the creation of an "Atlas" of different types of mixed-use development forms that would be utilize within specific communities and neighborhoods.

Staff would work with the Economic Development Advisory Committee's Regulatory Reform Taskforce to determine what regulatory changes are needed to ensure successful mixed-use projects in the short and long term. In addition, as part of a final program, staff could work with the public to develop design standards to ensure projects are a good fit within the County's diverse communities and neighborhoods. This process would be best concluded within the next four years so that the program may be incorporated in the 2013-2018 Housing Element update.