

# Bed-use zones Suits mothers

Planning Commission OKs  
an amendment, various other

by some mothers  
and others

The Planning Commission has taken an important step toward creating a more affordable, convenient and safe environment for women and children while residents can still enjoy the benefits of living in the city.

Commissioners recently approved a proposed amendment that would allow apartments to contain children above first

**MIXED USE**

Since most of the resi-

dences in mixed-use proj-

ects would likely be apart-

ments or condominiums

senior planner Shwana

Purvines recommended

to being an admittedly opti-

mistic 24 units per acre

maximum density in

Community Regions, con-

sistent with multi-family

zoning.

Tom Heflin, the California

State

University,

Sacramento professor who

owns Rainbow Orchards in

Camino, was one of several

in attendance at the Nov. 13

Planning Commission meet-

ing who spoke out for lower

densities in rural areas.

"You can do 24 [units per

acre] in El Dorado Hills and

Cameron Park," he said.

But in Camino you can

probably only do four or

five. One size does not fit

all.

Purvines countered that

constraints on development

such as sewer, slope and

infrastructure still apply,

and should filter inappropri-

ate projects from the

process.

Mixed-use projects would

have to survive the full

scrutiny of the county plan-

ning process. Traffic studies

and mitigation would be

required, as would compli-

ance with the full gamut of

development standards,

including height, setbacks,

floor area ratio, parking,

landscaping, architecture,

etc.

The amendment requires

at least 30 percent of each

qualifying project to be

commercial. That, in combi-

al transit options that get

people out of their cars,

reducing traffic, pollution,

global warming, and the

demand for costly roads.

Mixed-use development,

particularly as infill, is good

for the local economy, said

Purvines, because it sup-

ports "more continuous and

sustainable development in

areas where much of the

road and utility infrastruc-

ture is already in place," and

is "less vulnerable to the

boom and bust cycles of tra-

ditional suburban develop-

ment."

The planners, commis-

sioners and board members

who create and approve

General Plan policies face

increased pressures for

denser and more affordable

housing from the state with

its Smart Growth,

Affordable Housing and

anti-global warming initia-

tives that oppose the

"sprawl" development.

In counterpart, residents

have made it clear that they

want to keep their sprawling

country lanes rural. The

developers, in no hurry to

build in the current econom-

ic downturn, have stayed

largely behind the scenes,

waiting for the dust to settle.

The 2004 General Plan

directs higher density resi-

dential development, into

incorporated areas of the

county labeled "Community

Regions" and "Rural

Centers."

Community

Regions

include: El Dorado Hills,

Cameron Park, Shingle

Springs, Camino, Pollock

Pines, Diamond Springs and

El Dorado.

The county's two incorpo-

rated cities, Placerville and

South Lake Tahoe, control

their own land use and are

exempt from the amend-

ment. Planned develop-

ments such as El Dorado

Hills Town Center, Serrano,

Marble Valley and Bass

Lake are also outside the

jurisdiction of the amend-

ment.

Urban planners are quick

to point out that mixed-use,

clustered development is

essential to creating region-

"We've been into the

General Plan and the

Blueprint project long

enough that we should be

getting a feel for what

they're going to make us do

under SB 375 and AB 32,"

he said, referring to the state

global warming initiatives

which dictate "smart

growth" principles, includ-

ing higher density, transit-

oriented communities which

include mixed-use. "It's

time we started talking

about what we're going to

do to comply with those

things."

He went on to suggest that

developers would likely

propose denser mixed-use

projects if the ordinances

supported them. "Twenty-

four units per acre seems

preposterous in some areas,

but I have a feeling that

we'll be looking at some

projects that approach those

densities over the next few

years," he said. "That's kind

of where it's going."

In the end, the commis-

sioners voted 4-1 to recom-

mend approval of the mixed-

use amendment, with the

caveat that all projects go

through the standard design

review process. They rec-

ommended that horizontally

developed mixed-use proj-

ects require the additional

scrutiny of a Planned

Development overlay, and

suggested to the board that a

special use permit be

required for densities

greater than four units per

acre in the Camino, Pollock

Diamond

Springs

Community Regions.

District 2 Commissioner

John MacCready, whose

district includes parts of

Camino, cast the lone

opposing vote, contending

that special use permits,

although very restrictive,

often are approved against

wishes.

MacCready owns Sierra

Vista Vineyards and Winery

east of Placerville.

Art Marinaccio follows

land use in the county close-

ly, and stood up for the

amendment, with full densi-

ty provisions during the

Planning Commission meet-

ing. He suggested that it's

time to respond to the state's

housing demands.

able state and federal fund-

ing.

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