

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
April 22, 2009
Agenda Item No.

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: NATOMAS JOINT VISION PROGRESS REPORT

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Overview

The Natomas Joint Vision is a collaborative planning effort between the City and County of Sacramento and representatives of a landowners' group to develop a vision as anticipated in the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County. The planning effort seeks to balance future urban growth with the permanent preservation of open space in the unincorporated portion of the Natomas Basin within Sacramento County. The Broad Visioning Process included three public workshops held at Inderkum High School to obtain broad public input in the development of "sketches" that visually blend the myriad issues and opportunities of the area. These sketches are now being taken forward to the Planning Commissions of the City and County and to the Sacramento City Council and the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. The purpose of these workshops is to conclude the second phase of the Natomas Joint Vision and receive direction to begin a Phase 3.

Recommendations

1. Direct staff to continue to work cooperatively with City staff, landowner representatives, and associated stakeholder groups in the preparation of a conservation strategy leading to the development of a new or amended habitat conservation plan and apply for any available grant funding
2. Direct staff to continue to work cooperatively with City staff, landowner representatives, and associated stakeholder groups in the application process leading to the submission of an application for a General Plan amendment and Specific Plan for the Natomas Joint Vision Area
3. Continue the item for adoption of an amended funding agreement between the County and Natomas landowners' group and continuation of the City-County Memorandum of Understanding regarding the reimbursement to the City for City staff and consultant costs

Measures/Evaluation

The consideration of new urban uses in the Natomas Joint Vision Area will include the evaluation of the positive tax revenue generated from any new development. The use of funds received from the Natomas Landowners Group allows for reimbursement without negatively impacting the County's General Fund.

Fiscal Impact

Use of funds attained from a financial contribution reduces the financial impact to the County. This request is consistent with element nine of the 11-Point Budget Plan.

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BACKGROUND:

The 2002 Natomas Joint Vision Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of Sacramento established principles for collaborative planning. Key principles include:

- Protecting existing and future airport operations
- Permanent preservation of open space for habitat, agriculture, or other purposes
- Fair distribution of revenue / revenue sharing principles
- Urban development according to smart growth principles

On July 23, 2008, the Board directed staff to initiate a collaborative work plan, known as the Broad Visioning Process, to prepare a conceptual land use plan that incorporates fundamental principles of the Natomas Joint Vision Area. Recognizing the Joint Vision Area is an area of unique importance to the region, City and County staff and representatives of the Natomas Landowners' Group desire that land use planning for the Joint Vision Area proceed in a unified and comprehensive fashion, commencing with a visioning plan.

On September 24, 2008, the Board approved a funding agreement between the County and the Natomas Landowners' Group that formalized a financial contribution from the landowners for the continuation of County staff efforts in the Broad Visioning Process and the retention of consultants to assist in the development of a comprehensive strategy for the Joint Vision Area. The agreement recognizes the City of Sacramento as a participating agency in the collaborative planning process and on November 5, 2008, the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the City of Sacramento regarding the reimbursement of City staff and legal consultant costs.

There are five phases to the Natomas Joint Vision project:

1. The 2002 City-County Memorandum of Understanding and the Open Space Program (complete)
2. The Broad Visioning Process (nearing completion)
3. An inclusive public stakeholder process to prepare:
 - a. A conservation strategy and initiate a new or amended habitat conservation plan (HCP)
 - b. CEQA documents
 - c. City and County General Plan amendments
 - d. A Specific/Master Plan
 - e. Amendment of City's Sphere of Influence or County's Urban Services Boundary
4. Annexation or amendment to County's Urban Policy Area and completion of a new or amended HCP
5. Implementation of development projects

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DISCUSSION:

Broad Visioning Process

Through the Broad Visioning Process, a unique image will be crafted that accentuates the Joint Vision Area's distinctive features and geographic location to balance development and growth with conservation and livability. The intent is to move away from the status quo of planning for individual projects since analytic processes focused just on proposed projects are unlikely to reveal the full economic benefits or environmental costs of development.

The goals of the Broad Visioning Process are to:

- Create a special and unique place
- Assure quality and consistency in development projects
- Capitalize on existing assets – airport, freeways, river, farmland
- Locate and employ exemplary cases of urban design complementing (and enhancing) habitat preservation

As the second of the Natomas Joint Vision's five phases, the Broad Visioning Process is now complete. Since November 2008, City and County staff along with landowner representatives have met regularly to develop a set of planning principles and conceptual sketches for the Joint Vision Area. The County has contracted with the urban design firm of EDAW to assist in conducting public outreach meetings, drafting conceptual sketches, and developing an agriculture/open space/habitat strategy. The County also has contracts with biological experts, Jim Estep and Eric Hansen, to provide background information regarding the habitat needs of the Swainson's hawk and giant garter snake, respectively.

In addition, information was gathered from representatives of: agriculture, The Natomas Basin Conservancy, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency's levee improvement project, Sacramento International Airport, Natomas Central Mutual Water Company, and the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. With this information, planning considerations were identified and planning principles developed. These considerations and principles were vetted with the public through a series of three public workshops (Attachment A):

- November 12, 2008: Workshop #1 introduced the Broad Visioning process and conducted a survey to gauge public preferences and visions for the Joint Vision Area
- January 28, 2009: Workshop #2 identified the main planning considerations for the Joint Vision Area. Broken down into more manageable 'precincts', the Area's many assets, opportunities, and potential conflicts were discussed and incorporated into a matrix. Using the Area's existing conditions, sketches of possible developed and undeveloped areas were displayed and conflict areas (overlaps) were identified
- March 26, 2009: Workshop #3 presented the planning principles utilized in the Broad Visioning Process and two conceptual sketches. The sketches were developed by balancing opportunities that are unique to the Joint Vision Area with the associated set of complex issues. The purpose of the two sketches is to elicit comments and provide preliminary alternatives for study.

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In reaction to public comments made during Workshop #3, a third sketch was prepared that illustrates optional approaches not covered in the initial two sketches.

Presentations to the City and County's Planning Commissions, the City Council, and County Board of Supervisors constitute the fourth and final series of public workshops and the completion of the Broad Visioning Process. The resulting products of the process include:

- A set of fundamental planning principles to address myriad issues and guide subsequent planning efforts (Attachment B)
- Conceptual sketches illustrating possible interactions between the Area's issues and opportunities (Attachment C)
- A Background Report describing the issues related to habitat, agriculture, open space, airport restrictions, and assets and opportunities in the Joint Vision Area. The Revised Natomas Joint Vision Background Report can be found on the County's website (under Workshop Materials) at:

<http://www.planning.saccounty.net/longrange/city-county.html>

Cooperative planning with landowners and stakeholders would continue in Phase 3. The first six to nine months of Phase 3 would involve detailed technical environmental, engineering, and planning studies, as well as an in-depth analysis of the conceptual sketches. A key component of the studies and analysis will be the preparation of a comprehensive conservation strategy which will form the foundation for the development of a habitat conservation plan (HCP). With close cooperation and participation of City and County staff and landowners, Phase 3 will result in a preferred overall project description used to prepare a General Plan Amendment and Master or Specific Plan.

As of the writing of this report, the City and County Planning Commissions and the City Council have heard the progress report on the Natomas Joint Vision. Each body acknowledged the conclusion of the Broad Visioning Process and supported initiation of Phase 3, the Technical Phase, and the associated studies. A significant factor was highlighted by staff of the Sacramento County Airport System regarding hazardous wildlife attractants and overall airport safety. This issue and the effect on land uses (urban, agriculture, and habitat) will play a key role in the next phase. General comments included concern regarding the impact of further development on the existing Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan, existing community residents, and airport operations. The Visioning Team is aware that a synergistic outcome combining many different land use practices in a confined area needs to be very carefully addressed to protect the airport, residents, and endangered species. These issues are the specific topics for analysis in the third Joint Vision phase in order to ensure that no "critical information", regardless of which argument it supports, is left out of the discussion. Additional comments are provided in Attachment D.

Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan

Through meetings with wildlife regulatory agencies, it is evident that a main component of Phase 3 will be the initiation of the process of amending or creating a new habitat conservation plan. The City of Sacramento, Sutter County, and The Natomas Basin Conservancy, in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), prepared the 2003 Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP) to receive

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incidental take permits that allow grading activities within the limits of a 17,500 acre permit area. While Sacramento County was not a signatory to the NBHCP, any grading activities from future developments in the Natomas Basin are subject to regulations of the federal and state Endangered Species Acts.

The Swainson's hawk and giant garter snake are used as 'umbrella' species in the NBHCP, as their combined habitat needs meet those of the 20 other species covered in the plan. Because of the importance of these two species, Swainson's hawk and giant garter snake experts have been employed to provide quantitative data regarding the species' habitat requirements. In order to make the Joint Vision Area stand out from other developments, not only does the urban form need to be high quality, but the habitat must also be significantly improved. A conservation strategy will demonstrate how secured, linked preserve and water systems enhance the habitat above the baseline conditions of the NBHCP. The HCP process entails extensive public input through steering committees and stakeholder groups.

CONCLUSION:

The Natomas Joint Vision Area has significant and important location advantages and extraordinary potential to provide developments, open space, habitat, and amenities of regional importance. Consequently, a commitment to excellence in planning all aspects of the Area is crucial. The Area also has considerable challenges to development such as: wildlife habitat preservation, flood protection, infrastructure financing, airport safety zone considerations, and other environmental and associated regulatory issues. These constraints will need to be addressed, and high quality answers advanced, as part of the Phase 3 process.

With workshops before the City and County Planning Commissions, the City Council, and the County Board of Supervisors, the second phase of the Natomas Joint Vision is completed. Phase 2 consisted of the Broad Visioning Process which produced a set of planning principles and conceptual sketches based on these principles. Staff requests continuance of this item and direction to return with an amended funding agreement with the Natomas Landowners' Group and amended reimbursement Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Sacramento. In addition, staff requests the Board continue to support the cooperative planning effort with the City, landowner representatives, and associated stakeholder groups for Phase 3 and direct staff to initiate the preparation of a conservation strategy and apply for available grant funding.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Summary of Broad Visioning Workshops
- B. Broad Visioning Planning Principles
- C. Conceptual Land Use Sketches
- D. Comments from City Council and Planning Commissions
- E. Natomas Joint Vision Project History

NATOMAS JOINT VISION Broad Vision Public Workshops Summary

Workshop #1, November 12, 2008 – The presentation focused on providing context about assets, opportunities, and challenges to planning for the area. Lessons from other communities were presented and planning principles were introduced. A survey was given to workshop participants and made available online. The survey was very comprehensive, but the key results were as follows:

- The main considerations for planning in the Natomas Joint Vision area were identified as providing for flood protection and protecting habitat.
- Respondents believe that it is best to plan for the Natomas Joint Vision area today, rather than wait.
- The most popular vision for the area is for urban development with emphasis on proximity / linkage to downtown, the airport, and open space. This vision included:
 - Compact, walkable, mixed use development
 - Quality design and materials
 - “Tangible open space” that can be experienced (see, feel, touch etc.)
 - Land Park and midtown (Traditional neighborhood development) were the most popular examples of urban form.
- Workshops #2, January 28, 2009 – Survey results from Workshop #1 were summarized and planning considerations (suitability, land use inter-relationship, incompatible land uses, habitat objectives, etc.) were presented. Several potential land use “scenarios” were presented and analyzed for conflicts. Participants were then given the opportunity to comment on the scenarios.
- Workshop #3, March 26, 2009 – Two conceptual land use “Sketches” were developed from the scenarios of Workshop #2. Planning principles from Workshop #1 were expanded. Sketches were tested against the planning principles. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the Sketches and Planning Principles.
- Workshop #4 (Series) – A series of status reports summarizing the Broad Visioning Process and the results given to City and County Planning Commissions before going to City Council and the Board of Supervisors. Opportunities to comment at all venues.
 - April 9, City Planning Commission
 - April 13, County Planning Commission
 - April 14, City Council
 - April 22, Board of Supervisors

Natomas Joint Vision Key Broad Vision Planning Principles

Urban Form:

Provide a compact development pattern with a mix of land uses and diversity of housing types to meet the needs of citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups.

Create an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of parks, squares and greenways.

Design the community with a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.

Ecology and Landform

Connect wildlife corridors, integrate natural buffers within urbanized areas and protect the natural features, to the maximum extent practicable.

Transportation

Emphasize pedestrian- bike and transit friendly design to discourage auto dependence.

Energy

Utilize design and technology to reduce energy consumption and dependence of fossil fuels.

Water and Wastewater

Reduce water consumption, wastewater generation, and site imperviousness through water sensitive urban design techniques.

Economics

The community should be a financial success for both the public and private sectors.

Health, Safety and Security

Emphasize a quality public realm that promotes social-interaction, a physically active lifestyle and an enhanced sense of security.

Education

Foster a wide range of education programs and facilities with emphasis on public awareness of sustainable life choices among residents and visitors.
















Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Design and build the community to reduce green house gas emissions.

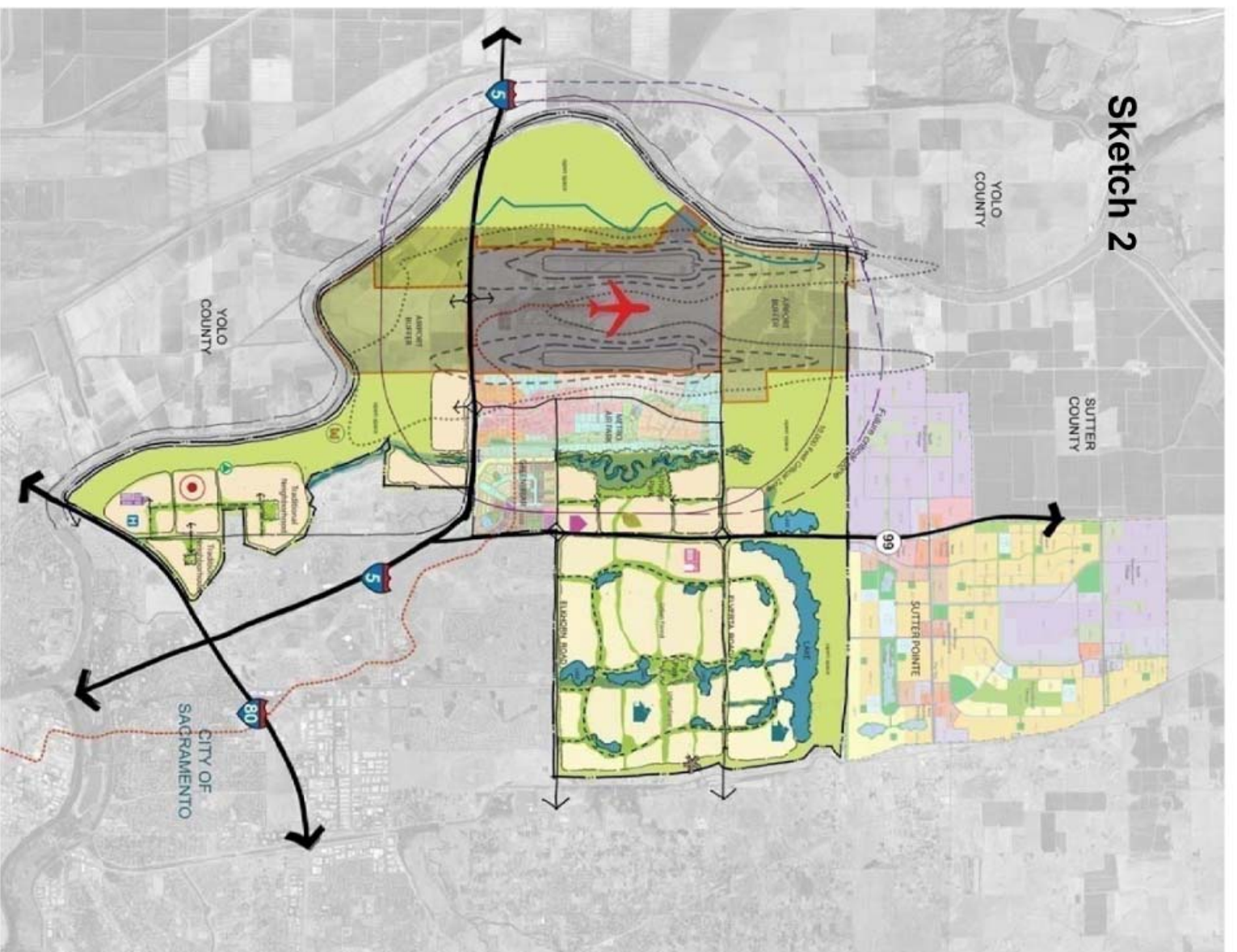
Sketch 1


















LEGEND

-  Sacramento International Airport
 -  University
 -  Interpretive/ Nature Center
 -  Zoo/ Botanical Garden
 -  Medical Campus
 -  Farmer's Market
 -  Equestrian Center
 -  Executive Housing
 -  Corporate Campus
 -  Hotel/ Conference Center
 -  Regional Mall
 -  Proposed DNA line
- Airport Legend**
-  Airport Boundary
 -  Airport Buffer
 -  Airport Land Acquisition Program

Sketch 2
















LEGEND

-  Sacramento International Airport
 -  Sports Training Center
 -  Interpretive/ Nature Center
 -  Zoo/ Botanical Garden
 -  Medical Campus
 -  Farmer's Market
 -  Equestrian Center
 -  Executive Housing
 -  Corporate Campus
 -  Hotel/ Conference Center
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Sketch 3



LEGEND

-  Sacramento International Airport
 -  Interpretive/ Nature Center
 -  Medical Campus
 -  Farmer's Market
 -  Equestrian Center
 -  Executive Housing
 -  Corporate Campus
 -  Hotel/ Conference Center
 -  Regional Mall
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- Airport Legend**
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 -  Airport Land Acquisition Program

City Council Comments

- All 3 conceptual sketches do not adequately represent open space and agricultural land values. If intent is to get as science based as possible, how can the critical foraging area in the one-mile buffer be reduced
- Request the development of a sketch that reflects and enhances the vision of the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan, specifically in the one-mile Swainson's hawk zone. Sketch should identify 600 ft. west of El Centro Road as an agriculture-residential transition zone to buffer habitat from urban uses
- Need to be cognizant of impacts to existing residents. The River Oaks Community Association submitted a letter that sets out community expectations
- There should be a renewed emphasis on agriculture and open space as these were the initial values of the Natomas Joint Vision

Sacramento County Airport System (SCAS) Comments

- Changes in aircraft engine technology have contributed to more bird strikes (FAA literature says birds can't detect approaching aircraft because the planes are so much quieter).
- More flight operations nationally and at SMF and more people traveling
- FAA expectations for airport management of wildlife hazards have grown more stringent
- Agricultural practices in the Natomas Basin, in combination with the creation of habitat preserves and wildlife sanctuaries in the Basin and elsewhere in the Sacramento region, have contributed to avian flight patterns near aircraft movement areas; populations of some bird species most hazardous to aircraft have increased
- FAA restrictions (including grant assurances) on uses of land acquired with FAA grant funding; concern about lakes, stormwater retention basins, and open space near airport; must take airport into consideration when determining how open space will be managed
- SCAS would like to see a planning principle added that includes designing, managing and authorizing land uses in a manner consistent with minimizing hazardous wildlife attractants
- Open space to the west of the airport must be managed to reduce conflict with airport operations

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- Joint Vision needs to consider the 10,000 foot Perimeter B ("critical zone") around the airport perimeter within which hazardous wildlife attractants should be avoided or eliminated, and the 5 mile Perimeter C ("general zone") needed to protect airspace needed required for aircraft approach, departure, and circling; when evaluating and making land use determinations on both public and private projects near the airport the SMF master plan update approved by the Board in August 2007, and FAA policy and regulatory updates must be considered

City Planning Commission Comments

- Should be clear connection between Joint Vision and SACOG Blueprint
- Timing is critical; not convinced that elected leaders dictating Joint Vision have had opportunity to see if Joint Vision is still right approach; decisions are so far in the past are they still relevant today
- Learned so much about impact of development on environment; look again at initial assumptions of Joint Vision; good representation of stakeholders so far; must have right framework and context
- Unsupportive of regional mall; retail already exists in Natomas; corporate campus/housing may be good opportunity, but must be well planned; campus must be near executive housing; must balance needs of attractions; appreciate inclusion of public uses such as farmer's market

Environmental Council of Sacramento/Friends of Swainson's Hawk Comments

- 39% of acres in permit have grading permits; don't know impact of already approved development; airport and SAFCA are making massive changes specifically in Swainson's hawk zone; City should let the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP) work as designed
- Sketches show about 6000 ac as open space; The Natomas Basin Conservancy already owns 1000 ac; SAFCA land is not habitat mitigation; these areas are not shown on sketches
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service letter dated June 2003: approval of NBHCP is based on fact that City would limit development to permitted acreage
- 3200-3300 ac internal 100 yr floodplain not mentioned in staff report; look at County's Environmental Impact Report for USB expansion; no market demand for new development in Natomas/Sacramento area

County Planning Commission Comments

- Concern County is giving away ability to develop and generate revenue; who will take the lead on development; LAFCo process is not conducive to the late 2009 timeframe
- Concern about bird strikes; would out-of-county mitigation be possible to protect airport operations
- Are all the Counties, environmental groups, etc. at the table during the planning
- This is a very ambitious timeframe, is there a chance that the current economy will result in a downsized plan
- Regional mall is very unlikely; do the demographics support this type of high level development; an open air center may be more likely and would fit the open space vision
- Visuals are dangerous as they can be taken out of context; it is important that the vision has regulatory authority to ensure there is follow through on plan
- Will water conservation/consumption be part of final plan
- How will the Joint Vision Area mesh with Sutter County development
- Do not want to see piecemeal projects, but a true comprehensive plan for the area

Natomas Joint Vision Project History

Adoption of the 2002 Natomas Joint Vision Memorandum of Understanding

On December 10, 2002, the County Board of Supervisors and the City Council adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding principles of land use and open space planning, and revenue sharing between the City and County of Sacramento for the Natomas area, setting the stage for what has come to be known as the “Natomas Joint Vision” (Resolution 2002-830). Since that time, City and County staff have been working to implement the MOU.

Key Actions by the Board of Supervisors

The following describes the recent history and current status of the Natomas Joint Vision. There were corresponding City Council workshops are not listed below.

May 26, 2006: The Board of Supervisors directed staff to cooperatively work with the City in an open space program for the Natomas Joint Vision Area. The program scope of work addressed issues related to the implementation of the Joint Vision MOU open space goals.

January 23, 2007: The Board and Council adopted a Memorandum of Understanding with regard to cost sharing between the City and County for the open space program and General Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Report.

September 26, 2007: The Board of Supervisors received a progress report on the Natomas Joint Vision process and the Open Space Program. The staff report included a map that preliminarily identified areas determined most suitable for open space using the Open Space Program consultant’s open space suitability model (Attachment A to report). The report also included a map identifying the study area for the City’s Municipal Services Review (Attachment B to report). Please note these maps did not reflect any recommendations regarding land use.

January 30, 2008: The Board of Supervisors heard a status report on the Natomas Joint Vision. The Open Space Program consultant, The Dangermond Group, presented an overview of the Open Space Program Report and County staff introduced the Broad Visioning Process of the Natomas Joint Vision. The Board endorsed the Broad Visioning process and directed staff to collaborate with the City, major landowners, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan for the Joint Vision Area and obtain a financial contribution from major landowners to expand the scope of County staff efforts and involvement. The Open Space Program Report was received and filed.

May 14, 2008: The Board of Supervisors received and filed the Open Space Program Report and the Muni Financial fiscal analysis of the potential revenue generation from City versus County lead development in the Joint Vision Area. The Board also reaffirmed support for the Broad

Visioning Process and directed staff to obtain financial contributions from the Natomas Landowners' Group to expand the scope of County staff efforts and involvement.

July 23, 2008: The Board of Supervisors directed staff to initiate a collaborative work plan to prepare a conceptual land use plan that incorporates fundamental principles of the Natomas Joint Vision Area and engage biological experts and an urban design specialist to implement the work plan of the Broad Visioning Process.

September 24, 2008: The Board of Supervisors approved a funding agreement between the County and the Natomas Landowners' Group that formalized a financial contribution from the landowners for the continuation of County staff efforts in the Joint Vision project and the retention of consultants to assist in the development of a comprehensive strategy for the Joint Vision Area.

November 5, 2008: The Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 2008-1125 authorizing the County Executive to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Sacramento for reimbursement of the costs for City staff and outside legal consultation efforts in the development of a comprehensive strategy for the Natomas Joint Vision Area.

Open Space Program

The Open Space Program (OSP) was designed to identify open space preservation and funding mechanisms to help guide the implementation of open space goals and policies adopted by the City and County in the December 2002 Natomas Joint Vision MOU. The OSP evaluated the habitat, open space, and agricultural values of the Natomas Joint Vision Area from strictly an open space perspective. It was anticipated that the City's Municipal Services Review would evaluate the potential urban values the Area.

Four public workshops for the OSP were completed between June 2006 and February 2008. Workshop 1 was actually a series of workshops tailored for three different participant groups that focused on data, process, and initial input.

Workshop 2 consisted of a presentation on the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency's (SAFCA) Natomas Levee Improvement Project (NLIP). This presentation focused on the relationship between the NLIP, the OSP, habitat preservation, and the Joint Vision as a whole. SAFCA outlined specific practices to minimize habitat damage and avoid negatively impacting the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP), thereby reducing the amount of land required for mitigation.

Workshop 3 was held on July 12, 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to emphasize the planning constraint and allow for the mingling of differing opinions in regards to open space and development within the Joint Vision Area. The OSP consultant, The Dangermond Group,

provided a review of the amount of acreage within the Basin determined to be ‘uncommitted’ and potentially available for either development or open space preservation. Prior commitments included permitted development in Sutter County, airport owned lands, existing habitat preserves, and an allowance for future preserves to correspond with development permitted but not yet constructed by the City.

The Final Draft Open Space Program Report was presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 20, 2008 and the City Council on February 12, 2008. The final OSP workshop was held on February 19, 2008. The Report included information about open space funding mechanisms, acquisition strategies and a preliminary map of areas best suited for open space preservation, based solely from an open space perspective. The Report was not formally adopted by either the Board or Council, but received and filed. It may be used to provide background information in future decision making processes.

Municipal Services Review

The City intends to prepare a Municipal Services Review (MSR) of the City’s ability to provide municipal services to the Natomas Joint Vision Area. The MSR report is a required element for a complete application to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for a Sphere of Influence Amendment.

The draft Municipal Services Review project framework report was originally scheduled for public release along with the Open Space Program Report, but was delayed pending the development of a more precise project description.

Sphere of Influence Amendment

A Sphere of Influence is defined as a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency, as determine by the LAFCo. In determining the Sphere of Influence, LAFCo considers the following:

- The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands;
- The present and probable need for public facilities in the area;
- The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provide or is authorized to provide; and,
- The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

Sphere of Influence Amendment Environmental Impact Report

Prior to the filing of any annexation application, a Sphere of Influence Amendment and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for use by the City, County, and LAFCo in their evaluation of the effects of the City's Sphere of Influence Amendment. The EIR will be prepared by LAFCo, with the City and County as responsible agencies.

Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan

The Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP) was approved in 1997 and revised in 2003. It is a multi-jurisdictional habitat plan involving the City of Sacramento, Sutter County, and The Natomas Basin Conservancy as permittees. The primary goal of the NBHCP is to create a system of reserves that would support populations of the Giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, and 20 other covered species at least through the life of the 50 year Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) which are required under the federal Endangered Species Act. Development above of the 17,500 acres permitted for urban development by the NBHCP may affect the baseline conditions used in the approval of the City and Sutter County's ITPs and would require the completion of a full effects analysis and amendment to the NBHCP or development of a new habitat conservation plan.

Broad Vision Approach

In the 2002 City-County MOU, County staff was scoped to preserve the County's interests in open space preservation. The Broad Visioning approach involves County Planning staff in a collaborative process to proactively develop solutions that achieve the multiple objectives of airport protection, agricultural and open space preservation, and habitat mitigation, while allowing for quality urban development that benefits the region as a whole.

The Broad Visioning approach emerged from a November 26, 2007 luncheon jointly hosted by the County Executive and City Manager. Representatives from key landowners in the Natomas Joint Vision Area attended to discuss how to move forward with a comprehensive and collaborative planning process for the Joint Vision Area. Attendees included representatives from Natomas Central Mutual Water Company, The Natomas Basin Conservancy, Reclamation District 1000, Natomas landowners, and City and County staff. It was acknowledged by all involved that the Natomas Basin is a complex area with many outstanding issues and interested parties. Given these complexities, both the public and private sectors must be engaged in order to reach a resolution. The luncheon highlighted the City and County's commitment to developing a comprehensive plan for the Joint Vision Area that was inclusive of multiple interests.

Through the Broad Visioning Process, a unique image will be crafted that accentuates the Joint Vision Area's distinctive features and geographic location to balance development and growth

with conservation and livability. The intent is to move away from the status quo of planning for individual projects since analytic processes focused just on proposed projects are unlikely to reveal the full economic impacts or environmental costs of development.

The goals of the Broad Visioning Process are to:

- Create a special and unique place
- Assure quality and consistency in development projects
- Capitalize on existing assets – airport, freeways, river, farmland
- Locate and employ exemplary cases of urban design complementing (and enhancing) habitat preservation

The Broad Visioning process represents Phase 2 of the total five phases of the Natomas Joint Vision. City and County staff and representatives of Natomas landowners will lead the process and coordinate the necessary workshops. Technical consultants will be contracted to assist in conducting public outreach meetings, drafting conceptual land use diagrams, and developing an agriculture/open space/habitat strategy with a preliminary biological assessment.