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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning
REPORT BY: Hillary Gitelman, Director, 253-4805
SUBJECT: General Plan EIR Alternatives

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Conservation, Development and Planning to provide a status report on the General Plan Update and request the Board's concurrence with the alternatives recommended for inclusion in the program Environmental Impact Report by the citizen Steering Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission in October 2005, members of the citizen Steering Committee provided a status report on the General Plan update and staff described a group of seven possible alternatives for inclusion in the related program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Subsequent to that meeting, a formal Notice of (EIR) Preparation was circulated for public and agency review, and three "scoping" meetings were held to gather input on the alternatives and the scope of the EIR analysis. Comments received during the scoping period from October 21 to December 12, 2005 have been included and summarized in a Scoping Summary Report which is now available on the County's Website. (See "General Plan Update" section.)

Based on the comments received from agencies and members of the public, staff has recommended and the Steering Committee has adopted a revised suite of alternatives. Revisions include (a) consolidation of the seven alternatives into five without deleting any of the components of the original alternatives; (b) adding several new components or clarifications suggested by commenters; and (c) prioritizing the three more moderate alternatives (i.e. not the smallest or the largest) for analysis at equal level of detail in the EIR.

On January 11, 2006, the Steering Committee unanimously (with one absent member) adopted the revised group of alternatives as shown in Attachment A. On January 18, 2006, the Planning Commission was asked for their concurrence. The Director of Conservation, Development and Planning requests the Board's concurrence, permitting commencement of the EIR analysis.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Successful development and adoption of an updated General Plan is contingent on successful development of a program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Since Napa County is preparing its updated plan and EIR simultaneously, the EIR must assess a range of alternatives that is sufficiently diverse that it will encompass the updated General Plan in its final form. In the other words, since it's impossible to predict at present exactly what the updated plan will contain, it is necessary to study a range of possible outcomes, hopefully bracketing the final plan that is developed over the course of the next couple of years.

Conveniently, CEQA requires that EIRs assess a "reasonable range" of alternatives that "would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives" of the General Plan but would "avoid or substantially lessen" any significant environmental impacts that might result. As a result, the scope and budget for the General Plan EIR assumes that we will analyze up to three alternatives at equal level of detail, and up to four at a lesser level of detail.

Attachment A contains a list of five alternatives proposed for analysis in the program EIR, including three that would be analyzed at an equal level of detail as anticipated in the consultant scope of work, and two that would be included at lesser level of detail. These five alternatives have been unanimously recommended for inclusion in the EIR by the General Plan Steering Committee not because any one of them represent a finished plan, but because they collectively present a range of ideas that may be considered for inclusion in the plan over the next couple of years. The Steering Committee's recommendation was developed following an all day "charrette" in September 2005, three public "scoping" meetings in December 2005, and review of all public and agency comments received during the period from October 21 to December 12, 2005.

With concurrence from the Board of Supervisors, the proposed alternatives will be forwarded to the County's EIR consultant -- Pacific Municipal Consultants -- to begin their detailed environmental analysis.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . January 11, 2006 Recommended EIR Alternatives

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Andrew Carey