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Napa County Planning Commission
Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Planning Commission

FROM: John McDowell for Hillary Gitelman - Director
            Conservation, Development & Planning

REPORT BY: John McDowell, Deputy Planning Director - 299-1354

SUBJECT: Airport Industrial Area Blue Ribbon Committee Presentation

RECOMMENDATION

PRESENTATION ON THE AIRPORT INDUSTRIAL AREA BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
Request: Presentation and discussion on a report prepared for the Board of Supervisors concerning economic development constraints and opportunities within the Napa County Airport Industrial Area located in the southern portion of Napa Valley.

Staff Recommendation: Information and discussion item. No action proposed.

Staff Contact: John McDowell, 299-1354 or john.mcdowell@countyofnapa.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 24, 2011 the Board of Supervisor considered the recommedations contained in the attached report relating to economic development issues and opportunites within the Airport Industrial Area. The report was prepared by a Board-appointed Blue Ribbon Committee made up of various private industry and local government representatives familiar with development in southern Napa County. Staff will give a brief overview of the committee's recommedations and then solicit Commission comments. This is not a public hearing item, but it is recommended that the Commission receive testimony from any interested persons.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?   No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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

In 1986, Napa County adopted a Specific Plan to address development in the Airport Industrial Area (AIA). The Specific Plan is the primary land use planning and regulatory document that guides development throughout the AIA with established goals, detailed land use requirements for the area, development standards, design guidelines and infrastructure requirements.

In 1998, the County adopted an updated the Specific Plan along with an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The 1998 update would have superseded the 1986 AIA Specific Plan, however, the Courts overturned the County's approval of the 1998 update. Consequently, the 1986 AIA Specific Plan continues to govern development in the airport area.

On May 9, 2011, the Board held its annual strategic planning retreat, in conjunction with all County department heads. At the retreat, the Board updated their three-year goals for the County and added a number of six-month strategic objectives for each of the goals. Under the three-year goal of "Improve Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability," one of the strategic objectives that the Board set was to "Hold a study session for the Board of Supervisors on how to revitalize the County's Aiport Industrial Area." This was in response to a number of issues, including:

1. Slowdown in new development in the AIA;
2. The departure of Japan Airlines (JAL) from the Napa County Airport; and
3. The overall unemployment in the County, which at the time was 9.2% Countywide, and at approximately 14% in the south Napa area.

On September 13, 2011, County staff held a study session for the Board and presented a report on the Economic Development potential of the AIA. At the study session, the Board directed staff to create a Airport Industrial Area Blue Ribbon Committee (Committee), to reserach and solicit ideas for revitalization of the AIA. The following report is the result of the deliberations of the Committee.

The Committee's report outlines a series of recommended actions that may be taken by the County, and in some instances with other jurisdictions, to facilitate development throughout the AIA.

Below is a summary of the Committee's recommended short/long term and airport related actions presented in the report:

- Short Term:
  - Expedite the construction of Devlin Road;
  - Expedite the permitting process and allow staff to approve the following uses without having to go to the Planning Commission: warehouse, office, light manufacturing and distribution;
  - Form a 2x2x2 committee between Napa County and the cities of American Canyon and Napa to discuss ways to incentivize development. The 2x2x2 should discuss access to water and sanitation for the AIA and the cost of these utilities; and
  - Explore the designation of Enterprise and Empowerment zones, as well as Industrial Finance

Districts, and determine ways the County can develop its own tax incentive program.

- Long Term:
  - ○ Explore amendments to the Specific Plan and a Programmatic EIR in order to expand the list of uses that could be permitted with use permits in the AIA;
  - ○ Explore working with a regional economic development corporation marketing entity to work on ways to attract businesses to the AIA, as well as to provide a new marketing strategy for the AIA;
  - ○ Further investigate ways to offer incentives to attract these business types, such as: tax benefits and a reduction in the cost of utilities;
  - ○ Explore solar and wind options for energy supply in the AIA; and
  - ○ Work with the cities of American Canyon and Napa and the Workforce Investment Board on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to identify potential regional economic development approaches and opportunities for the AIA and other south-county industrial parks.
- Airport Related:
  - ○ Reconstruct the airport runway based on current aircraft demands;
  - ○ Investigate the ability to offer limited Commercial Air Service; and
  - ○ Work with the Napa Valley Destination Council to market private jets for wine and resort access.
- Additional Related Item:
  - ○ Work with the Sustainable Napa County and the Napa Chamber of Commerce, as well as other stakeholders on a feasibility study for a business incubator in the former JAL facility.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . AIA Blue Ribbon Committee Report

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: John McDowell