



Notice of Preparation Colusa County 2030 General Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

Date: June 20, 2011

To: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Organizations and Interested Persons

Lead Agency: Colusa County Department of Planning and Building
Steve Hackney, Director of Planning and Building
220 12th Street
Colusa, CA 95932
Phone: 530-458-0480
Email: shackney@countyofcolusa.org

Summary

Colusa County (the County) will serve as Lead Agency in the preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) addressing the comprehensive update to the County's General Plan. This programmatic EIR will address the environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the Colusa County 2030 General Plan. Information regarding the project description, project location, public outreach process and topics to be addressed in the Draft EIR is provided below. Additional information on the Colusa County 2030 General Plan is available at: www.countyofcolusageneralplan.org.

Submitting Comments

Public agencies and interested parties are invited to submit comments in writing as to the scope and content of the EIR. Public agencies submitting comments are encouraged to identify a contact person and any key agency concerns regarding the proposed project. The County needs to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection to the proposed project. Public and agency comments will be received over a 30-day period, ending on July 20, 2011. All

comments must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on July 20, 2011. In the event that no response or request for additional time is received by any Responsible or Trustee Agency by the end of the review period, the Lead Agency may presume that the Responsible Agency has no response to make [CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(2)].

Please send your responses to Steve Hackney, Director of Planning and Building, at the address shown above.

Scoping Meeting

The County will conduct a scoping meeting to receive public input on the scope of the Colusa County 2030 General Plan EIR. At this meeting, individuals, agencies, and organizations are encouraged to provide the County with their input on the topics and analysis for the EIR.

The scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 28, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. at the Colusa County Board Chambers, located at 547 Market Street, Colusa, CA 95932.

Project Characteristics and Background

Project Location and Setting

Colusa County encompasses approximately 1,156 square miles in north central California (see Figure 1). The eastern part of the County is located in the Sacramento Valley, and the western portion is in the Klamath/North Coast Range. Colusa County is bordered by Glenn County to the north, Lake County to the west, Yolo County to the south, and Sutter and Butte Counties to the east.

Existing land uses in Colusa County are primarily agricultural. The land use pattern is typical of rural counties of the Sacramento Valley. A checkerboard of large acreage farms dominates the eastern half of the County, with land ownership and road alignments generally following square mile section lines. The land is generally flat and is covered by fields of rice, orchards, and row crops. Views are expansive, framed only by the rolling foothills of the Coast Range on the west and jagged peaks of the Sutter Buttes on the east.

As one moves west through the County, large farms give way to much larger cattle and sheep ranches, cultivated fields give way to arid rangeland, and the flat terrain transitions into rolling hills and upland valleys. Further west, the land becomes yet more rugged and wild, until finally reaching the summit of Snow Mountain in the wilderness area at 7,000 feet above the valley floor.

There are two incorporated cities in Colusa County: Colusa and Williams. Unincorporated communities include Arbuckle, Maxwell, Princeton, Grimes, Stonyford, Century Ranch, and College City.

Interstate 5 is a major transportation corridor running north-south through the County. State Route 20 is a major roadway running east-west through the County. State Route 45 is a major roadway running north-south through the County. The Sacramento River runs in a general north-south direction along and near the County's eastern boundary.

Project Description

Colusa County is preparing a comprehensive update to their existing General Plan, which was adopted in 1989. The update is expected to be complete in late 2011 or early 2012.

The Colusa County 2030 General Plan will include a comprehensive set of goals, policies and implementation measures, as well as a revised Land Use Map (Figure 2). The State requires that the General Plan contain seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Noise, Safety and Conservation. The Housing Element was completed ahead of the rest of the General Plan Elements, and was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 8, 2011. The Colusa County 2030 General Plan will include all of the State-mandated elements, as well as optional elements, including: Economic Development, Public Services and Facilities, and Community Character.

The overall purpose of the Colusa County 2030 General Plan is to create a policy framework that articulates a vision for the County's long-term physical form and development, while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for Colusa County residents. The key components of the General Plan will include broad goals for the future of Colusa County, objectives for meeting those goals, and specific policies and action items that will help meet the goals and objectives.

General Plan Outreach and Public Input

Visioning Workshops

The County initiated the General Plan Update process in 2009. Between September and November 2009, the General Plan Update team held five public visioning workshops to help kick-off the General Plan Update process. A diverse group of County residents and stakeholders attended workshops in Stonyford, Maxwell, Arbuckle, Colusa and Williams. The workshops provided an opportunity for the public to offer their thoughts on what they like and don't like about their communities and the County and what important issues should be addressed in preparing the General Plan Update.

Each workshop included a presentation by the consultant team that explained the role of the General Plan, an overview of the General Plan Update process, and an opportunity for the workshop participants to ask questions and seek clarification on the process and the role of the community. Workshop participants were asked to

complete three exercises in order to provide information to the General Plan Update team.

Stakeholder Interviews

Between September 2009 and March 2010, the General Plan Consultants conducted interviews and outreach efforts with several key stakeholders in the County. These interviews and outreach efforts helped the General Plan consultants gain perspectives and insights into the issues to be addressed by the General Plan Update. Key stakeholders contacted during these efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Maxwell Public Utilities District
- Arbuckle Public Utilities District
- City of Williams
- City of Colusa
- Colusa County Sheriff's Department
- Colusa County Assessor's Office
- Colusa County Department of Public Works
- Colusa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
- Colusa County Library
- Colusa Rotary Club
- Colusa County Agricultural Commissioner
- Colusa County Department of Behavioral Health
- Colusa County Department of Health and Human Services
- Colusa County Department of Planning and Building
- Colusa County Office of Education
- Housing Authority (contracted through Glenn Co. HRA)
- Arbuckle Family Action Center
- Williams Migrant Camp
- Senior Information Center
- Colusa First 5
- Colusa County One-Stop Center
- Colusa-Glenn-Trinity Community Action Partnership
- Colusa County Chamber of Commerce
- Princeton Joint Unified School District
- Colusa County Farm Bureau
- Arbuckle Family Health Center
- Maxwell Unified School District
- Pierce Joint Unified School District
- Colusa Unified School District
- Stony Creek Joint Unified School District

Land Use Map Change Request Forms

Between November 2009 and March 2010, property owners in Colusa County were given the opportunity to submit General Plan land use designation change requests for their parcels to the Planning Department. Changes in existing General Plan designations were requested for approximately 27 sites throughout the County. These requested changes were all considered by the General Plan Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors during the development of the Draft 2030 General Plan Land Use Map.

General Plan Steering Committee

The Board of Supervisors appointed approximately 20 County residents and local agency representatives to the General Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee worked with staff and the consultant team to develop the goals, objectives, policies and action items to be included in the 2030 General Plan, and also worked to develop and refine the Draft General Plan Land Use Map. The Steering Committee met a total of eight times between September 2010 and February 2011.

Program EIR Analysis

The County, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will prepare a Program Environmental Report for the 2030 General Plan. The County's 2030 General Plan will be comprehensive in scope. The EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA, implementing the CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines), relevant case law, and County procedures. The Colusa County 2030 General Plan is considered a "project" under CEQA, and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later "projects" that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector.

The EIR will analyze potentially significant impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the 2030 General Plan. In particular, the EIR will focus on areas of planned land use changes in the unincorporated County. Figure 2 shows the Draft Land Use Map for the 2030 General Plan.

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. At this time, the County anticipates that EIR sections will be organized in the following manner:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gasses and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities
- Mandatory Findings of Significance



Map date: June 3, 2010

Figure 1. Regional Location Map
Colusa County 2030 General Plan



1:5,500,000



This page left intentionally blank

