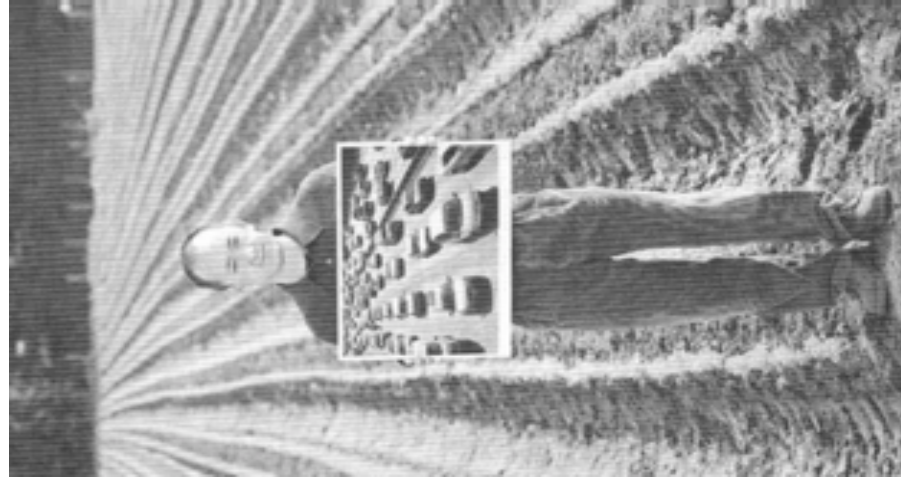




# General Plan Summit

## Land Use and the General Plan

# Introduction



- **Not everyone approaches planning in exactly the same way.**
- **Good land use planning should be based on and reflect the community's choice.**
- **We, as a community, can choose the kind of future we want.**

# Recommended Policy

- **Protect Private Property Rights**
- Assures property owners that their private property rights will be protected.
- Allows elected officials to adopt strong planning policies with confidence.



# Discussion

- What kind of evidence is necessary to constitute taking of property?
- Can such policies be amended to avoid such an unconstitutional taking?
- How can local government officials do what is best without the need to fear long and costly litigation?

# Affordable Housing

- A large and growing percentage of individuals and families cannot obtain affordable housing in their community.
- Lack of affordable housing leads to overcrowded, substandard, and unsafe housing conditions.



# Affordable Housing



- The high cost of housing drains the scarce financial resources of average and below average income families.
- Long commutes, to find lower-cost housing, undermine family and community stability.

# **An Approach to the Problem**

- A General Plan requirement that all new development contribute to addressing the community's affordable housing problem.
- A planning decision to increase the ratio of “medium” and “high” density development, to reduce land cost per unit basis.
- An affirmative requirement to offer new housing first to persons who live and work in the jurisdiction in which the housing is constructed.

# Recommended Policies

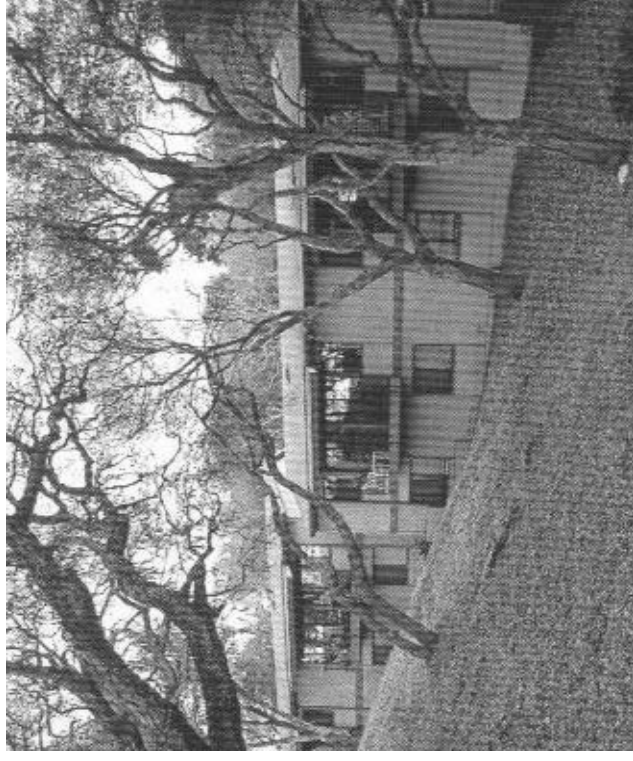


1. A Policy Commitment To Affordable Housing.
2. “Affordable Housing” Defined.
3. An “Inclusionary” Requirement For New Residential Development.
4. New Jobs and Housing Go Together.
5. Establish Minimum Density Requirements.



# Recommended Policies

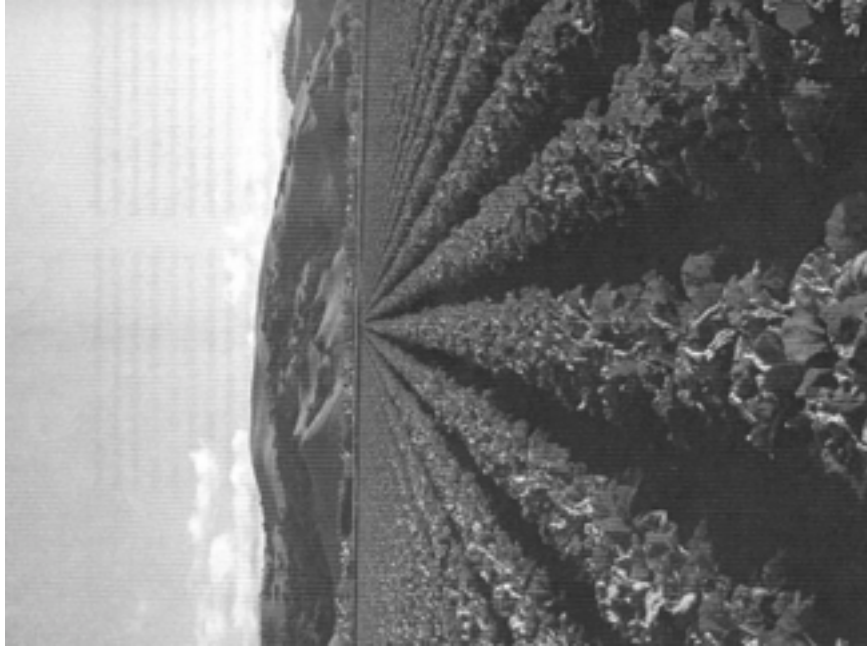
6. More Land For Medium and Higher Density Development.
7. Ensure A Range of Housing Types.
8. “Mixed Use” Developments To Increase Housing Opportunities.
9. Design Housing To Meet Community Needs.
10. First Right To Rent or Purchase.



# Discussion

- Will imposing affordable housing requirements increase the cost of market-rate housing?
- Will the requirements really benefit those who face the most difficult housing situation?
- Can housing be made permanently affordable?
- What are resale restrictions?
- Does high density mean high crime?

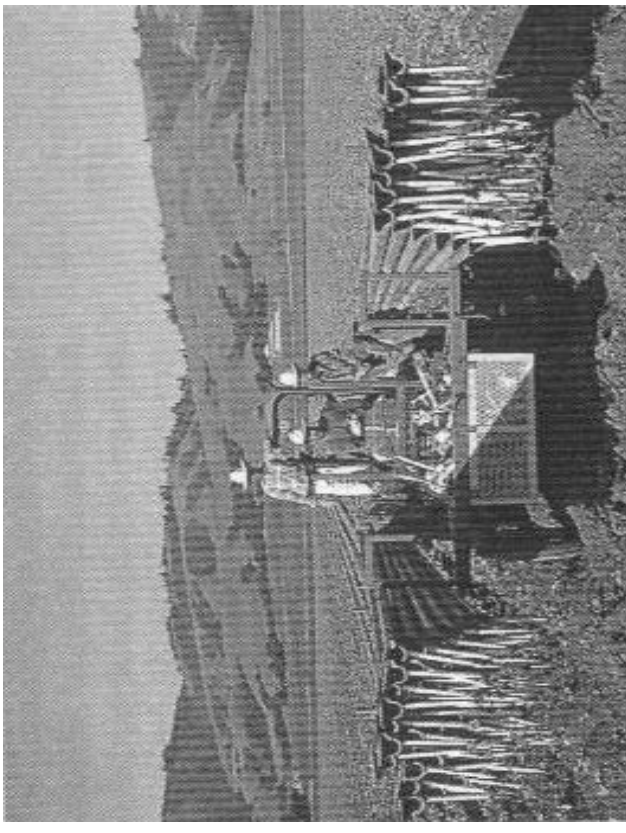
# Preserving Agricultural Land



- Preserving agricultural land is a matter of economics**
- Gross revenues from agricultural production in Monterey County were over \$3 billion dollars in 2001.
  - Each acre of agricultural land in Monterey County produces, on average, more than \$10,000 per year in gross revenue.

# Preserving Agricultural Land

- When agricultural land is converted to urban uses, the jobs and revenues associated with that land disappear, and public costs increase.
- In Monterey County, between 1984 and 2000, 2,363 acres of prime agricultural land were converted to nonagricultural uses.



# Preserving Agricultural Land



- In Salinas, where large amounts of agricultural land have been converted to residential subdivisions, community debt went from zero in 1984 to \$150,000,000 in the year 2000.
- By 2020, the local economy will be foregoing \$217,820,000 in agricultural revenues each year.







# An Approach to the Problem

- Adopt and enforce policies that apply to agricultural lands in unincorporated areas.
- Focus on requirements that maintain the use of agricultural land for agricultural use.
- Prevent development or division of commercially productive agricultural land.



# Recommended Policies



-  Agricultural Land Shall Be Conserved For Agricultural Use.
-  The Subdivision of Agricultural Lands Shall Be Discouraged.
-  Agricultural Buffer Setbacks.
-  Maintaining The Right To Farm.
-  No Utility Extensions Into Agricultural Land.
-  Establish An Agricultural Land Protection Boundary.



# Discussion

- Will strong agricultural land use policies take away a property owner's right to develop such lands?
- If we can't build homes in agricultural land, where will we build?
- What about the growth pressures?
- Will these policies create a “no growth” mentality?





# Stopping Sprawl

Sprawl happens when county governments allow residential, commercial, or industrial developments to take place on an individual and disconnected basis. This kind of rural sprawl is typical in Monterey County and throughout California.



**Pasadera, Monterey County**

# Stopping Sprawl

Most modern urban subdivisions are:

- Anti-pedestrian.
- Auto-dependent.
- Low-density, single-family dwellings separated from all other things that go along with urban life.




**Urban amenities are not really available to the residential neighborhoods, and, the peace, quiet, and beauty that motivates people to move to the suburbs isn't really present, either.**

# An Approach to The Problem




- Counties need to be committed to maintaining rural areas as rural.
- Direct future growth and development to existing cities where services can be provided.
- Adopt Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Infill with mixed-use development to revitalize neighborhoods left behind.

# Recommended Policies

 Counties Will Direct Growth To Cities and Existing Urban Areas.

 Cities Will Establish An Urban Growth Boundary.

 Cities Will Employ “Traditional Neighborhood Design” Principles.



# Discussion

- Should local governments be making these kinds of decisions?
- Are current market-driven development patterns producing unlivable and unaffordable communities?
- Will these policies really help to revitalize and sustain our social and community life?


# Natural Resource Protection

- Growth and development place significant pressures on our natural systems.
- Policies that steer new growth toward existing will protect our natural resources.
- The best policy approach is simply to prevent development or other activities that might injure natural resources.



# Recommended Policies

 Protect Sensitive Habitats.

 Minimize Land Disturbance and Erosion.



**Las Palmas, Monterey County**



# Discussion

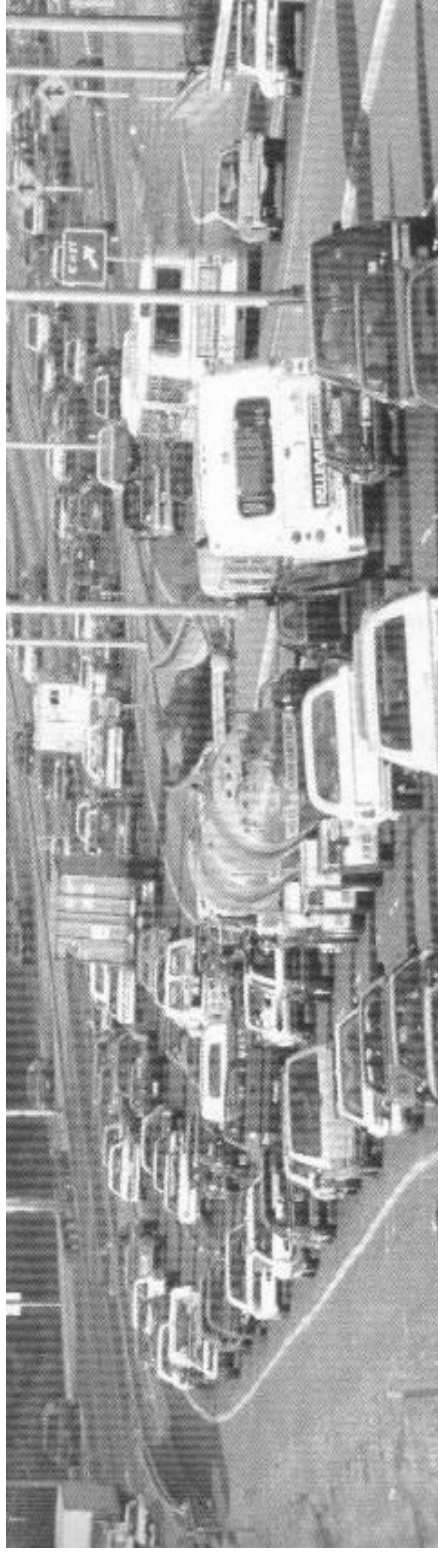
- Will these policies restrict our enjoyment of our natural areas?
- Is the protection of the environment more important than building homes for people?





# Transportation and Transit

- Transportation and traffic problems are epidemic.
- Transportation and traffic problems are associated with the lack of jobs-housing balance.
- When desirable and affordable housing is not available, workers must commute.
- It is not possible to build our way out of our transportation and traffic problems.



# An Approach to the Problem







- Changing land use development patterns is an antidote to our traffic and transportation problems.
- Better land use practices can start making a difference immediately and can provide real and significant change over time.

# **Some Ideas from the San Diego Air Pollution Control District**

- Encourage greater mixing of land uses to reduce vehicle trips.
- Encourage the development of pedestrian-oriented communities.
- Encourage infill and neighborhood revitalization projects within urban residential areas.
- Specify design and roadway features to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to transit.
- Ensure that upgrades to existing roads include bicycle and pedestrian improvements where appropriate.

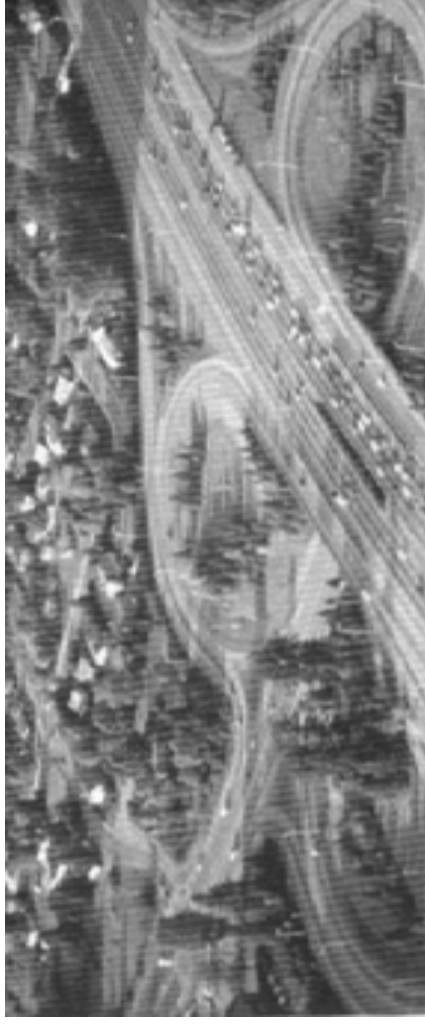
# Recommended Policies

-  The Local Government Shall Compile and Maintain a List of Alternative Transportation Strategies.
-  Recommendations From the Local Transportation and Transit Agency Shall Be Incorporated Into Projects.
-  Require New Residential, Commercial, Industrial, or Office Development to Mitigate Any Transportation Impacts Caused By Development.
-  Require Conservation Easements On Parcels Adjacent to Proposed Transportation Facilities.



# Discussion

- Will these policies really have an affect on our current traffic problems?
- Will people give up the convenience of driving?
- Do the policies promote a “no growth” approach?
- Who is going to pay for it?



# Water and Land Use



- Adequate and sustainable water supplies are not available to serve new development.
- Continued pumping of overdrafted aquifers lowers the water table, increasing pumping costs.
- Approving developments that don't have a sustainable water supply jeopardizes community investments.

# **An Approach to the Problem**

- A simple, but strict, General Plan policy can help address the problem.
- Implement at the local level recently adopted state policy.
- Require new development to demonstrate the availability of a sustainable water supply.
- The overall state of groundwater must be examined whenever development relies upon it.



# Recommended Policies

 Sustainable Water  
Supply Required.

 Prohibition of Hauled  
Water.





# Discussion



- Will these policies restrict development when housing units are so desperately needed?
- Do these requirements prevent developers from being “creative?”
- Will these restrictions apply to all development?

# Permit Process Reform

- The permit process causes significant problems to both developers and public.
- The process is slow and costly.
- The process often provides only the illusion of genuine public participation.






# An Approach to the Problem



- Local governments can decide not to process project applications that are inconsistent with the adopted General Plan.
- Make the need for specialized studies the exception, rather than the rule.
- Involve the public at the beginning of the project.

# Recommended Policies

-  General Plan Amendments Separated From Project Applications.
-  Early Public Involvement Encouraged.
-  General Plan Standards Should Provide Certainty.



# Discussion

- Can property owners request a change to the General Plan after the it has been adopted?
- What does “internally consistent” mean?
- Why not consider every project?

# Conclusion

- The future of our community is shaped by countless individual decisions, added up.
- A local General Plan represents a set of decisions made at a policy level.
- It really *is* possible for a community to shape the future it wants by adopting the right General Plan policies.

Our thanks to the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation for the generous grant that underwrote the research, writing, and publication of our newest “best policies” guidebook, *Land Use and the General Plan*.

Thank you for being here!

If you're not already a member, please join LandWatch today!