

REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT		MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Shasta <i>FORWARD</i> >> Regional Blueprint: Final Three Alternative Growth Scenarios for Modeling		2/24/09	9

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board accept the three alternative growth scenarios as presented and direct staff to proceed with technical modeling phase.

SUMMARY

Three community-driven alternative growth scenarios are proposed for modeling: A) Rural & Peripheral, B) Urban Core & Corridors, and C) Distinct Cities & Towns. Existing input and ongoing consultation with the Shasta*FORWARD*>> Technical Advisory Committee and Shasta*FORWARD*>> Steering Committee will be used to guide development of the various inputs required for alternative scenario modeling.

DISCUSSION

Project Background

The Shasta County RTPA was awarded a grant from the California Regional Blueprint Planning Program in 2006 (\$375,000), 2008 (\$140,000), and again in 2009 (\$200,000). Blueprint grants support regional collaboration and data gathering to effectively accommodate population growth, and meet emerging state and federal requirements. Shasta County's regional blueprint effort, known as Shasta*FORWARD*>>, began in the fall of 2006.

Central to Blueprint Planning is a public engagement process designed around growth modeling and visualization techniques. The intent is to create a more approachable, accessible, and engaging planning process for all citizens on a regional scale. In lieu of technical and sometimes onerous reports, Shasta*FORWARD*>> utilizes maps, animations, and graphical performance measures to help 'tell the story' of Shasta County's future and to better understand the long-term outcomes stemming from current trends, policies, and practices. This future is known as the 'Current Trend' scenario.

Through community-defined alternative scenarios, regions may 'test drive' new ideas and assumptions about growth and development. These alternatives are cross-evaluated and compared against the Current Trend scenario. Performance measures and consistency with local values and priorities are used to rank scenarios and select a preferred regional growth vision.

Each city and the County are involved throughout the visioning process. When completed, the Preferred Regional Growth Vision will be presented for consideration and possible incorporation into respective city, county, and RTPA plans and programs as appropriate.

Shasta*FORWARD*>> adds new data, technical modeling methods, public engagement tools, and a regional forum needed for future generation of a 'Sustainable Communities Strategy' under SB 375. The same capabilities may also be used to assist local agencies in complying with AB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006) and related CEQA requirements. In addition, a regionally adopted blueprint plan is now commonly included as a scoring criterion under various housing and transportation related grants.

The Shasta*FORWARD>>* community visioning process will be completed this summer, prior to the October 2009 RTPA meeting. Key deliverables include the following:

- A final report describing the Shasta*FORWARD>>* planning process and the 'Preferred Regional Growth Vision';
- Scenario modeling outputs, including land use maps and projected progress toward regional goals and performance measures; and
- Regional GIS datasets and digital maps for use by local agencies and the RTPA.

Alternative Growth Scenarios Proposed for Modeling

By design, community input serves as the guiding force behind the development of alternative growth scenarios. During the opening round of public engagement, a diverse cross-section of over 1,700 residents responded. Three core values expressed through fifteen priorities were identified and documented in the 'Community Values & Priorities Assessment Report'.

At community workshops held in the county and three cities, local residents compared established values and priorities to the 'Current Trend' scenario and noted any discrepancies. Working in small groups, workshop participants generated a range of possible alternative growth and development approaches that they believed might better reflect local values and priorities.

Subsequent feedback from the general public, city councils, city planning commissions, city planning staff, and the Shasta*FORWARD>>* Steering Committee was utilized to condense a broad range of possible approaches down to three distinct alternative growth scenarios. An invitation was extended to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors and planning staff soliciting their feedback, but no response was received. Pending Board approval, the following scenarios will be prepared for modeling:

- A) Rural & Peripheral – Traditional rural lifestyles, character, and aesthetics are maintained by preserving existing rural communities and steering new development into undeveloped areas located within existing general plans.
- B) Urban Core & Corridors – A 'hub and spoke' development pattern, featuring a centralized urban core with condensed corridors radiating outward along major arterials and highways in a linear pattern.
- C) Distinct Cities & Towns – 'Complete' cities and rural communities with defined edges, separated by open space and rural uses.

A more detailed narrative of each scenario and a summary of potential modeling inputs are provided via Attachment A and B.

Next Steps

Pending Board approval, modeling inputs and assumptions (see Attachment B) will be developed and refined as needed to best reflect documented community objectives. The Shasta*FORWARD>>* Technical Advisory Committee – including partner agency planning staff – and the Shasta*FORWARD>>* Steering Committee will continue to provide input and direction. A project update will be provided at the April RTPA meeting. Modeling outputs (i.e. mapping and application of performance measurements) will be presented to the public alongside the 'Current Trend' scenario in May, followed by a public review period and selection of a preferred regional growth alternative.

ALTERNATIVES

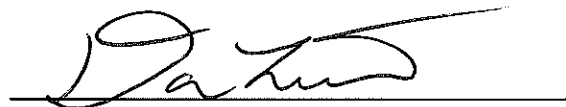
The Board may approve the proposed alternative scenarios for modeling with modification(s). It is recommended that any such changes be tied back to the Community Values & Priorities Assessment Report previously accepted by the Board on October 24, 2008.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Shasta*FORWARD*>> project study area encompasses all of Shasta County and all entities interested in transportation and land use. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provide grant funds.

FINANCING

All Blueprint efforts to date are funded up to 80% through California Regional Blueprint Planning Program grants. In FY 06/07, \$375,000 was awarded to the RTPA. An additional \$140,000 was awarded in FY 07/08 and again in FY 08/09 for \$200,000. The required 20% match funds are budgeted in the Overall Work Program. Grant funds expended to date on Shasta*FORWARD*>> equal approximately \$330,000.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

DSL/DTW/jac

Attachments: A – Alternative Scenario Narratives
B – Draft Alternative Scenario Modeling Inputs

Attachment A: Alternative Scenario Narratives

A) Rural & Peripheral - Proponents of this scenario aim to preserve traditional rural lifestyles, character, and aesthetics. They would gladly give up big city amenities and services for a slower pace of life and some elbow room between neighbors. Growth and development is spread throughout the region rather than confined to urban environments. Land use regulations are utilized to ensure new development is compatible with Shasta County's rural roots, including low-density, low-rise homes and buildings.

General plans allow for some small-scale commercial development around residential areas in order to provide basic needs to rural residents, but the majority of employment and commerce is focused along state highways and key arterials where it is convenient and accessible to drive to.

Transportation investments will go primarily toward safety and congestion improvements on state routes and new rural two-lane roadways. These improvements will open up a wider swath of Shasta County to rural development in order to keep existing rural communities from being over-developed. Basic public transit services will be provided in existing urban areas for those that need it. Where suitable, wells and septic systems will minimize the need for major new water and sewer infrastructure.

B) Urban Core & Corridors – Proponents of this scenario seek urban living options without sacrificing the accessibility and closeness of nature. Conceptually, this scenario resembles a 'hub and spoke' development pattern where employment, commerce, and the most dense residential development are focused in and around the three-city urban core, while medium and some higher density residential development is intermixed with neighborhood commercial along multimodal transportation corridors radiating outward. Corridors are in turn flanked by a network of interconnected open spaces and a regional trails network.

This scenario aims to provide a variety of convenient and viable transportation options feeding into the regional center; accessible open space integral to every day life; and the preservation of environmentally sensitive corridors, natural landscapes, and productive agriculture and natural resource areas.

Public infrastructure, transportation, and services are consolidated along linear corridors to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Rural development is generally located beyond the terminus of populated corridors, thereby having access to basic goods and services without having to travel to the urban core.

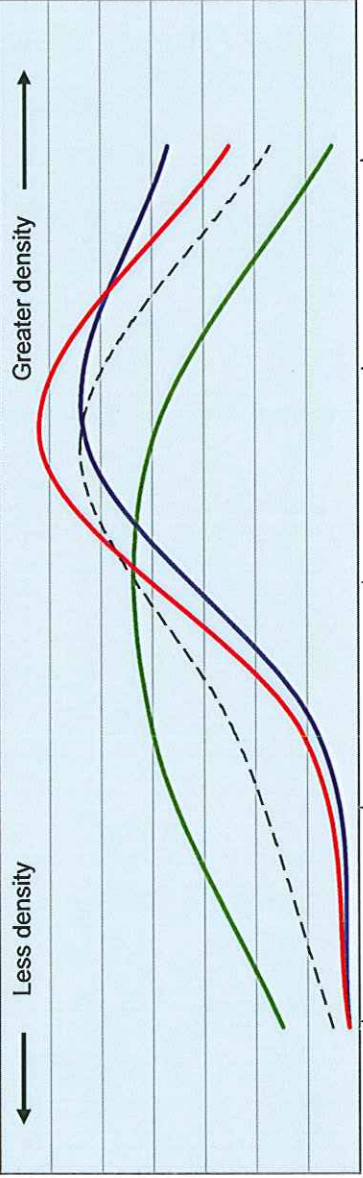
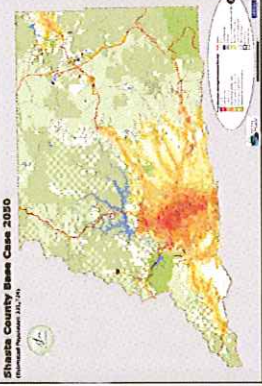
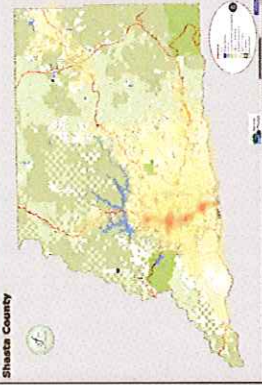
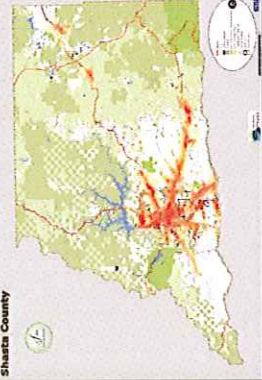
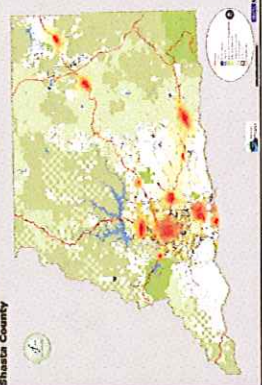
C) Distinct Cities & Towns – Proponents of this scenario identify with their community and the strong sense of place felt there. Rather than see Shasta County's cities and communities grow together into a large metro area, they prefer individual communities with their own unique identity.

Each 'micropolitan' area contains a well-defined, cohesive, and compact city or town built around an appropriately-scaled downtown and community gathering places. Local commercial development is combined with a variety of residential types and price points. Infill and redevelopment are used to knit respective communities together, economize public infrastructure and services, and to make the best use of those lands most suitable for development. A variety of land use strategies are used to conserve open space and agricultural lands as buffers between urban cities and smaller communities.

Regional policies and programs between cities and the County help encourage more 'complete' and economically self-sufficient communities. Rural development is located mostly on the fringe of designated urban villages, clustered or grouped together in order to economize transportation infrastructure and avoid disruption of agriculture, open spaces, and environmentally sensitive areas.



Attachment B Shasta**FORWARD**>> Preliminary Modeling Inputs

Density of New Development Scenario Comparison	 ← Less density → Greater density ↑ # of homes 1 Home/10 Acres 1 Home/4 Acres 1 Home/Acre 6 Homes/Acre 20 Homes/Acre --- Current Trend Scenario — Scenario A: Rural & Peripheral — Scenario B: Urban Core & Corridors — Scenario C: Distinct Cities & Towns				
	Key Modeling Inputs	Scenario B Urban Core & Corridors			Scenario C Distinct Cities & Towns
Scenario Overview	See attached scenario narratives	See attached scenario narratives			See attached scenario narratives
Conceptual Rendering (what scenarios might look like if modeled)					
Notable Land Use Characteristics	15% of land in development's path is left undeveloped/skipped over	General separation/division of residential from non-residential land uses. 'Footprint' of development to extend much further, yet remain within existing County general plan.			High levels of mixed use, infill, and redevelopment. Highest residential densities found in central core. Urbanized corridors are more dense than current trends, but less so than city center. Has the smallest development 'footprint'.
Location of Economic Activity (e.g. employment and commerce)	Redding-centric	Consolidated regional employment and commerce located along regional routes and Interstate 5			Divided among designated city/town centers
Transportation Investment strategy	Incremental improvements as funding allows to accommodate new development. Little consideration of land use policies in transportation investment strategy.	Focus on regional connectivity and extension of rural roadways. Minimal investment in transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities.			Focus on regional connectivity. Also pedestrian and bicycle improvements within designated high-growth cities/towns. Express public transit between cities/towns.
Open Space & Ag Lands Strategy	Private and non-profit preservation efforts with little coordination of local/regional agencies. Williamson Act contracts to preserve ag and open space lands.	Minimum parcel size zoning to ensure viability of key ag lands. Other ag lands restricted to low impact, large parcel parcel homesites.			A portion of new development is steered away from the valley floor's productive ag lands. Rural development clustered in order to group/connect open space.
Notable Attractions for Residential Development	Transportation, water/sewer service, and existing/recent development.	Ground water, level topography, transportation access			Economic activity centers corresponding to cities/towns designated for growth. The 'gravity' of each city/town determined by each community's respective build-out size.
Notable Discouragers for Residential Development	Flood zones, steep slopes, natural resource areas	Flood zones, steep slopes, natural resource areas, and water resources.			Flood zones, steep slopes, natural resource areas, environmentally sensitive areas, productive ag lands, designated open space corridors, and water resources.
Rural Approach	Suburban and commercial growth is directed to loosely-defined community centers. Residential density decreases and natural resource-oriented land uses increase as one moves away from rural centers.	Existing rural areas kept from being overrun by growth by steering new development outward to areas throughout unincorporated Shasta County.			Significant residential, commercial, and job growth is steered to unincorporated areas of the County, but within designated cities/towns. Rural development is grouped in clusters.
Possible Zoning Modifications	No change	No change in boundaries, but general downgrading of allowable densities therein			Intercommunity open space/ag buffers help maintain distinct communities. Incremental expansion of zoning for development around high-growth cities/towns as needed. Rural clustering incentives.