



The *Business Alliance...Update* is a bi-monthly publication of the El Dorado Business Alliance (BA). The BA is made up of the following organizations: El Dorado Builders' Exchange, El Dorado County Association of Realtors (EDCAR), El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, North State Building Industry Association (NSBIA) and Shingle Springs-Cameron Park Chamber of Commerce. Web Address for Subscription Info: KathyeRussell@gmail.com

“Developing Mutual Support on Community-Wide Issues”

NEW BOS INFORMED OF LUPPU PROCESS

With the installment of two new members of the Board of Supervisors, the county is conducting annual presentations from various departments - now called divisions - with the recent reorganization of county government. These are scheduled as public workshops with the El Dorado County (EDC) Board of Supervisors (BOS) and are generally for information only: action items are deferred to a later meeting where they are publically noticed. This provides new supervisors and the public with foundational education on a variety of topics from traffic to land use to county accounting and administration activities. It also helps supervisors and the public to put a face to the names of employees active in managing a variety of county projects and activities.

On Monday, January 28, 2013, an all day workshop was held on local land use planning. This workshop included background information and updates on the Land Use Policy Programmatic Update (LUPPU) process, a session with the Department of Transportation (DOT) on their role in maintenance and planning of EDC's transportation system and information on the current project to update EDC's Travel Demand (transportation) Model capabilities.

The final session involved a slide presentation and discussion of the Economic Development Advisory Committee's (EDAC) and its Regulatory Reform subcommittee's current activities. That process has now evolved to requiring extensive input by volunteers and various volunteer organizations throughout the county, many of whom attended this session. Some were wearing matching shirts to identify their organization and/or affiliation. In general, they expressed widespread support for being involved by their sheer presence, which filled the supervisors' chamber, and for a community-level economic development process.

WHAT'S NEW WITH LUPPU?

At the 9:00 am January 28th session, the CAO's office presented a concise yet comprehensive overview of the entire LUPPU process to date. Although we've reported on LUPPU extensively for over a year (*playing catch-up? 2012 catalog of issues is available*) the overview presented some new and significant information. Below are basic facts worth repeating and some new ones:

- The General Plan (GP) forecasts an estimated 200,000 county population by 2025 for the Unincorporated area of El Dorado County (GP planning timeframe)
- The GP anticipated 32,000 new dwelling units and 42,000 new jobs by 2025
- State legislation (AB 32 and SB 375) requires jurisdictions to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions via reduced miles driven, and requires local Housing Elements (refer to last *BA...Update* issue) to be consistent with the adopted Regional (eg: Sacramento area) Transportation Plan
- The 2010 Census shows the unincorporated area of EDC grew by 17.5% - on target for 2025 projections.
- Local unemployment was up from 5.2% to 12.9% !! (from low to high points)
- Housing starts locally are down from 2,104 annually to 83 permits in 2012 (from high to low point)
- Public jobs are still decreasing and private employers remain slow to re-hire.
- Meaningful growth for the local region was not projected to occur until 2011.
- EDC has only 500 acres (out of 1,100,000 total acres) of currently zoned/vacant commercial land
- EDC is experiencing a loss of \$800 MILLION in economic leakage annually (eg: to areas outside of EDC), thus no sales tax is collected, no multiplier effect exists for local job creation, no income taxes are received on those providing the products or producing them, etc.)
- After 345 acres are allocated as required for below-moderate-income housing needs, EDC has only 78 acres currently zoned/vacant for multi-family residential use
- Five years into the 20-year GP – only 15% of the land planned for non-residential uses has been built

There is another important “fact” missing from the above list: EDC has failed to provide housing for even moderate-income earners. This is an important point as counties are required by state law to provide for all income levels when planning for future growth. Also significant is the fact that in EDC “moderate” income earners for a family of four requires an income of \$75,000 to \$90,000 annually.

Readers are reminded that on 4/4/11 and 11/14/11 the BOS adopted **Resolutions of Intention** in support of the following fundamental objectives for the Targeted General Plan Amendment (TGPA) (*Note: the BOS will make final decisions following the environmental analysis of each action*). The BOS has also cited the need to keep the proposed GP amendments narrowly focused on these objectives to minimize time and costs:

- Increase jobs, sales tax revenue, and moderate housing availability;
- Promote and Protect the EDC’s Agriculture and Natural Resources lands;
- No proposed changes to the current General Plan Land Use Designations except as follows:
 - ⇒ Limited clean-up language as identified through the Zoning Ordinance Update process;
 - ⇒ Consideration of change to Camino/Pollock Pines from Community Region (CR) to Rural Center (RC);
 - ⇒ Agriculture District boundaries adjustments, including adding new areas as previously decided.

The LUPPU process was the result of volunteers who were determined to implement the current General Plan and find ways to reform local planning processes. This goal has grown to include not only staff and policy makers, but the entire community. One clear statement of intention was summed up in the phrase: “**Don’t Waste a Good EIR**”. Since any General Plan and/or land use change, let alone an entire Zoning Ordinance update and revised transportation program/model, all require environmental review, the county leaders (BOS) wisely opted to include as many of these needs as possible into one EIR. Currently consultants are analyzing the proposed changes. The Draft EIR (DEIR) is scheduled to be released early this year; and the Final EIR in Spring of 2013. Following many public workshops and solicitation of public comments, a **Final Decision on the Targeted General Plan Amendments and the Zoning Ordinance Update should be available this summer in 2013!**

“COMMUNITY” ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The final session on January 28th was a presentation by the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). Key points included how EDC can *link the countywide* effort in support of soliciting new business, and the need to support local *existing* businesses throughout the county. The needs of both are not unique and lead us back the adopted BOS Objectives cited above: Both existing and new businesses need access to current infrastructure such as Broadband to be efficient and compete with other areas for business, recreation and tourism; both have asked for reform of our regulatory processes and the removal of unnecessary constraints to it; both require a widespread, inclusive community effort to encourage visitors to come to EDC and stay awhile; both require a range of housing to meet the needs of their work forces; and finally, both may require funding to accomplish their goals.

For example: Broadband (see following article) is a technology that is being established in many areas of the state, from large metropolitan cities to some of California’s most rural counties. There has been a small local group working on this very issue (*and we will provide information on those efforts in our next newsletter*) yet until now there’s been no focused, communitywide effort throughout EDC to fund the effort. So a few EDAC members did some research and discovered some eye-popping facts about potential funding sources and we will cover those facts also in the next issue of this newsletter.

WHAT THE HECK IS “BROADBAND” and WHY DO WE NEED IT?

The term **broadband** refers to the wide signal processing (bandwidth) characteristics of a transmission medium and its ability to transport multiple signals and traffic types *simultaneously*. The medium can be coax, optical fiber, twisted pair or wireless. In contrast, baseband describes a communication system in which information is transported across a single channel. Different criteria for “broad” have been applied in different contexts and at different times. Its origin is in physics, acoustics and radio systems engineering, where it had been used with a meaning similar to wideband. However, the term became popularized through the 1990s as a **vague marketing term for Internet access**.

Prior to the invention of home broadband, dial-up Internet access was the only means by which one could access the Internet and download files such as songs, movies, e-mails, etc. It would take anywhere from 10–30 minutes to download one song (3.5 MB) and over 28 hours to download a movie (700 MB). Dial-up Internet was also considered very inconvenient as it would impair the use of the home telephone line, and users would contemplate whether or not to get a second line, and if doing so was worth the cost.

In 1997, the cable modem was introduced, although the common use of broadband didn’t begin rising until 2001. Having a broadband connection enabled one to download significantly faster than on dial-up. As with many new technologies, most consumers were unable to afford the cost of faster Internet service. However, high costs weren’t a factor for long as by 2004, most average American households considered home broadband service to be affordable. Since its inception, broadband has continually strengthened and available connection speeds continue to rise.

FUTURE ISSUES: A review of the possibilities on **funding economic development goals**, a review of **local efforts to bring Broadband** to El Dorado County, and an update on **how local areas are working within LUPPU process**.