

# Mountain Democrat

PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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### General Plan review OK'd

By [Chris Daley](#) [From page A1](#) | November 09, 2016

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors approved the basics of a five-year review of the county's General Plan at its Oct. 26 meeting. District 2 Supervisor Shiva Frentzen was the lone hold-out in a 4-1 decision on a five-point recommendation from Community Development Agency staff. Shawna Purvines, a CDA principal planner was interim director of the agency the day of the meeting.

As of Nov. 1 the county announced that long-time Sacramento businessman and politician Roger Niello will serve as interim CDA director.

Purvines conducted a slide presentation, noting that the state requires an annual review but not a major five-year review. Upon completion the county is required to submit its report to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. At the same time as the board's approval, staff was directed to begin the next five-year review to be completed and submitted in 2021. Purvines described the current review as having seven wide-ranging assumptions, each with its own chapter. They include the county's population projections, the Auburn Dam, jurisdiction of other government agencies, agriculture and timber, water supply, housing and traffic levels of service.

The Auburn Dam drew no discussion. According to the review documents, the project was "de-authorized by Congress" in the years following adoption of the General Plan in 2004. "It is highly unlikely that such a dam will be built," the item's introduction states.

Using 1999 as "the base year," Purvines described data showing "fewer people per household, so we might need more homes with fewer people in each." She said the goal for the county is to have at least 1.5 jobs per home as an estimated average. She also noted that "housing costs are trending higher." If homes are built at the lowest density, she explained, "We could lose available parcels without a General Plan amendment."

"The county doesn't create jobs, rather land-use decisions and building is what creates jobs," Purvines pointed out. She asked the important question, "Can the General Plan as developed accommodate the estimates regarding job growth?" No solid answer was forthcoming. But Purvines said, "The smaller size of commercial parcels available in the county limits the recruiting of large employers."

Supervisor Frentzen asked if there was some way to increase the number of jobs to two per home, for example. County Chief Administrative Officer Don Ashton replied, "If we build more commercial, we'll have more jobs." However, he added, the county is "attracting more older residents and losing younger ones."

District 4 Supervisor Michael Ranalli backed up Ashton, referring to the rising population demographic as a "silver tsunami." Ranalli also brought up the issue of the General Plan's population estimates relative to water. As Purvines explained, the General Plan anticipates a total county population of 200,000 at some point in the future. She clarified that the plan sets no time frame but noted that the plan has been developed and prepared with that number as a target.

Ranalli suggested the "adequacy of water supplies to accommodate a population of 200,000" needs to be explored as a priority within the next five-year review. The review noted the General Plan's statement regarding water supplies. In short, it states that the county will "cooperate with (and rely upon the information from) responsible service and utility purveyors in ensuring the adequate provision of service."

The four water purveyors highlighted in the report are the El Dorado Irrigation District, Georgetown Divide Public Utility District, Grizzly Flat Community Services District, and the South Tahoe Public Utilities District.

Findings in the documents state, "An adequate supply of water will be available to serve the county's current population."

The next section notes, "Additional water supplies will be developed to support the projected growth." Supplies are expected to be available to provide the projected growth in each water district, however, "GFCS's limited water supplies may be inadequate to support future growth in the service area unless additional water supply capacity can be obtained," the document warns.

The section on water concludes, "Lack of water availability may change the period of time over which this plan remains valid."

Assumption No. 6, housing, is presented in six sub-chapters. The General Plan includes a Housing Element, which, if implemented, should provide "the housing needs for all economic segments (of the population) for the unincorporated portions of the county," the review explains.

The Housing Element update covers an eight-year period, 2013-21, and contains implementation strategies for the housing needs of the county's unincorporated areas. Unlike other General Plan elements, the Housing Element is required to be

“reviewed as frequently as appropriate” to ensure the county is complying with state law to ensure the availability of low-income housing. It does not require the county to build or develop the housing, rather it requires the county to ensure “sufficient land with appropriate zoning to accommodate its fair share of the region’s future housing needs for all income groups.”

“The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every Californian, including farm workers, is a priority of the highest order,” the review quotes state code. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments is responsible for identifying housing needs for each jurisdiction within its six-county region. The agency determined through its Regional Housing Needs Allocation that the county needs 3,948 houses for the planning period. It suggests 24 percent for very-low-income families, 17 percent for low-income, 19 percent for moderate-income and 40 percent for above-moderate income. The review documents include specific housing prices as of 2015.

*A future article will include the General Plan review’s chapters titled “Measure E Potential Regulatory Barriers to Housing and Legal Implications” and “Traffic Levels of Service.”*