

Saving Sierra Places

*An Activist's Toolkit for
Winning Land Use Campaigns*



June 2006



SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

Keeping light in the range

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Sierra Nevada Alliance

The Sierra Nevada Alliance has been protecting and restoring Sierra land, water, wildlife and communities since 1993. The Alliance unites hundreds of individuals and conservation groups to protect Sierra resources. The Alliance is driven by a vision of a Sierra where natural and human communities coexist in harmony; a Sierra where residents and visitors alike understand and value the unique qualities of the range and protect the places they love.

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Introduction

Here in the Sierra, a transformation is underway. Real estate values have created a new gold rush, fueled by retiring baby boomers, second home seekers and those simply looking for a life closer to the land.

Unfortunately, the land use decision-making structures in most Sierra communities are not equipped to deal with this growth. Outdated plans and zoning codes, budget and staffing shortages, and a lack of leadership and understanding all contribute to an atmosphere where growth is profit-driven and reactionary, rather than community-based and deliberate.

Some growth is inevitable, and many Sierra communities desire or need new housing, retail, and jobs. Proactive, community-driven planning can identify these needs and the best places to accommodate them. In the absence of such community-driven planning, however, we leave it to developers and individual landowners to do our planning for us, resulting in development that may or may not be the right thing for our communities.

Leapfrog subdivisions, an overabundance of high-end housing, a shortage of affordable housing, corporate chain stores replacing locally-owned and operated businesses, the fragmentation of working landscapes, pollution, traffic – all of these are the consequences of developer-driven, reactionary growth decisions.

Who has the right to decide how communities grow? Is it developers, private property owners, community members, elected officials, business interests or others? State and federal laws delegate land use decisions to local governments, where democratically-elected officials are entrusted with the duty to safeguard our communities' future.

When it comes to growth, some local governments seem too quick to bend to the wishes of a few influential landowners. However, is it truly democratic to make one landowner happy while other landowners and the rest of the community must deal with the impacts to traffic, schools, the environment and local economy, forever?

There is a better way for growth decisions to happen: by bringing together a truly-representative cross-section of the community to develop and put forth a proactive vision for where and how growth should occur – and where it shouldn't. Some visionary city and county leaders are beginning to make these processes happen on their own. But in most places, it falls to community activists to reframe the discussion and catalyze a new way of thinking about growth.

This guidebook is designed to help you transform how growth decisions are made in your community, to take back the power to control growth and put it where it belongs – in the hands of the community.

How to Use This Guidebook

This guidebook is intended as a broad overview for community activists in the rural Sierra to develop effective campaigns to prevent sprawl and foster better growth. Whether you are contemplating a new land use campaign or deep in a years-long battle, this guidebook is intended to help you organize the most effective campaign and develop new strategies for achieving your goal.

Part One, Understanding How Land Use Decisions Happen in Your Community, gives a basic overview of the laws and equally important political forces that govern land use decisions. It also provides instructions for how to identify the key political players and laws at work in your particular land use campaign. This is by no means a comprehensive legal text; rather, it is geared toward those aspects of the laws and political processes that are most relevant for land use activists.

Part Two, Planning a Successful Land Use Campaign, broadly examines the major strategies available to land use activists, such as lawsuits, ballot initiatives, and grassroots organizing, and the strengths, weaknesses and strategic considerations of each strategy. Part Two also includes detailed instructions for how to develop a campaign plan to implement your chosen strategies. Every land use campaign should have a campaign plan, and this section gives you the tools to do it.

Part Three, Campaign Tactics from A to Z, includes detailed information on tried-and-true tactics for influencing land use decisions, everything from creating a media outreach plan to building a coalition. It provides a menu of tactical options for your land use campaign, with each chapter focused on a different tactic, and includes examples from successful land use campaigns, as well as step-by-step 'recipes' for cooking up each one. These chapters should help you decide which tactics to use, and how to implement them.

Part Four, Trouble-shooting Guide, discusses common problems that land use campaigns often encounter, and it offers some ways to address them. This includes dealing with hostile opposition, keeping meetings productive, and seeking outside help.

The Appendices include many useful resources including:

- A sample fact sheet, news release, campaign plan and other materials;
- More detailed info on CEQA, General Plan, public information laws;
- Instructions for tracking down campaign contribution info;
- Further resources such as attorneys, planners, organizations, websites and books that can help.

Lastly, we ask for your help in making this toolkit as effective, up-to-date, and helpful as possible. Our online version of the toolkit at www.sierranevadaalliance.org will be updated with new strategies, success stories and changes to relevant law. At our website you can download individual chapters as Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files and share your stories, suggestions and additions.

Part One

Understanding How Land Use Decisions Happen

Chapter 1.1

Thinking Like a Politician: Understanding the Power Structure in Your Community

In both California and Nevada, land use decisions are mostly left to local governments, with a few exceptions. Schools, tribal casinos, emergency services and affordable housing are the most common situations where state or federal government have the final say. Otherwise, it is up to the local jurisdictions to decide what gets built where.

In incorporated cities and towns, the City or Town Council governs land use. There are very few incorporated cities and towns in the Sierra however, and all other land use responsibility falls to the County Board of Supervisors, which governs land use on all county lands and the unincorporated communities in their area. In both cities and counties, the Board or Council sits atop a pyramid of decision makers that handle everything from issuing permits to setting the long-term direction for future development. Let's look at each layer of the pyramid separately.



Elected Officials: Boards of Supervisors and City Councils

At the top of the pyramid is the City Council or Board of Supervisors, whose members are elected by their constituents and serve two- to four-year terms. The Board or Council is, hands down, the most important decision-making body when it comes to land use. They have the final say in all major land use decisions, and even minor decisions can be appealed to them.

Ultimately, all land use decisions at the Council or Board come down to a simple vote count. How many in favor, how many against? Figuring out how to get that majority of votes is the key to achieving your goals.

In most of the Sierra, the Mayor or Chair of the Board of Supervisors is not elected but rather appointed by her colleagues, and this position rotates every year. The Mayor or Chair does not officially have any more land use authority than her colleagues, but she does set the agenda for meetings and run the meetings. The Board or Council is required to meet regularly and publicly notice their meetings.

Planning Commission

The next level down the pyramid is the Planning Commission, a body appointed by the Council or Board which has limited decision-making authority, and makes recommendations to the Board on major policy issues. Generally speaking, each Board or Councilmember gets to appoint one commissioner. Like the Board, the Planning Commission also has a chair who runs the meetings and decides what to agendaize and when. The Planning Commission usually also holds regular meetings, which must also be publicly noticed. In California, the Planning Commission makes final decisions on most permits, unless appealed to the council or board. Most land use decisions that require legislative action go first to the Planning Commission, and then to the Council or Board.

Planning Director and Staff

Below the Planning Commission is the Planning Director, sometimes called the Community Development Director or Director of Building and Planning. This is a professional staff position, ostensibly non-political, and often occupied by one person for a long time. The Planning Director reports to the Board and Planning Commission, and it is her job to implement the will of her bosses. In most Sierra Nevada jurisdictions, the Planning Director has at least one or two professional planners that report to him or her.

The power of the Planning Directors varies widely. In some cases they are incredibly powerful and basically set the direction that the elected officials follow, and at the other extreme, some are micromanaged by the elected officials, and must suppress their own professional judgment in order to keep their jobs. Most are somewhere in between.

Planning staff have less power than the Planning Director. They are basically performing duties for the Planning Director, and have very little decision-making authority beyond routine administrative approvals.

The most important role the Planning Director and staff play, from the perspective of your campaign, is that they make recommendations to the decision makers. The Board or Planning Commission can totally ignore that recommendation, but usually they won't do so lightly. For that reason, it can be a huge boost to get the Planning Director on your side.

Planning and Environmental Consultants

Consultants are often hired by the city or county to assist the planning department in conducting various aspects of the planning process. Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), which are discussed in Chapter 1.2, are usually written by consultants. If the EIR is for a specific development proposal, most cities or counties require the developer to pay the cost of the consultant, but the consultant reports to the city or county. Consultants can sometimes be useful sources of technical information, but their political role is usually limited.

Thinking Like a Politician

Who among us hasn't pulled his hair in frustration when trying to understand why an elected official has made a particular decision? Who are these people, and what are they thinking? More to the point, how do we get them to agree with our goals and vision?

As rational beings, our first instinct is to rely upon logical arguments. Isn't that what we learned in our high school civics class? The reasoned exchange of ideas? We write detailed comment letters, we prepare thorough speeches for hearings that delve into the minutiae of planning law and public policy.

This is all well and good, and there are elected officials out there who carefully weigh the facts and make decisions based upon the merits. Many do. But every single elected official – even the most high-minded – has to routinely confront the cold hard reality of the re-election campaign.

Elected officials need to get, well, elected. Many have ambition for higher office, so they are not only looking to maintain their status, they are also looking to raise it.

There are many factors which intertwine to determine who wins and who loses in the world of electoral politics. But for the sake of local land use campaigns, we are concerned with three factors that elected officials are always looking to increase:

- Popular support
- Campaign donations
- Issue leadership

Let's look at each of these closely, and see how we, as advocates, can use them to influence decision makers.

Popular Support: Local officials in rural communities win or lose elections by a handful of votes. On issues that are high profile, where many of their constituents are pressuring them to vote one way, they can't afford to vote the other way. Low-profile issue? They can do whatever they want, because nobody's paying attention. The more voters are paying attention, the more pressure they feel.

This is why community organizing is so important. Hearing detailed policy arguments from one gadfly often means less to many politicians than receiving 20 or 30 simple, unsophisticated letters from their voters.

Campaign Donations: It takes money to get elected, plain and simple. Candidates must pay for mailers, advertisements, lawn signs, and a myriad of other campaign costs. All too often there is a correlation between the candidate who spends the most, and the one who wins.

There are two ways to weight the influence of donors. The obvious way to gauge influence is the size of a donation. But another consideration is who influences donors. We call these folks “power brokers”. Power brokers can be very well-connected people like the president of the local chamber of commerce, the local democratic party chair, the farm bureau, etc. Elected officials treasure these brokers very highly because of their ability to bring in large amounts of money to their campaign.

As advocates, we need to know who are the big donors and who are the power brokers supporting the elected official we are trying to reach. Which organizations endorsed their campaign? Who gave them campaign contributions? Whose agenda are they championing? If you realize that an official received most of their backing from the development community, chances are they’re going to look out for the interests of the developers, unless you make it politically impossible for them to do so. But if their backers are folks who might be sympathetic to you, you need to develop relationships with those people. See Appendix E: Follow the Money, for information on how to research campaign donations.

Issue Leadership: Elected officials often have a particular cause they champion. It could be schools, taxes or traffic. They are always looking for ways to demonstrate their leadership by being perceived as the champion of an issue that’s important to their constituents. Of course they don’t want to get too far out ahead, either. As advocates you need to determine if your issue is an opportunity for a candidate to make a name for herself. Does the candidate already have a large number of other priority issues that she sees competing with our issue? Do our issue solutions match the ideological framework the candidate has built her platform on?

Power Mapping: Who has the power in your community?

The information above hopefully helps you begin to figure out how to get your majority vote. Clearly you need to learn everything you can about how your decision makers make their decisions, such as:

- Who do they already listen to?
- What issues do they care about?
- What do they do for a living?
- What are their political leanings?
- Who endorsed them?
- Are they active in a church or religious community?
- What groups are they active in?
- Who are their friends?

A useful exercise for doing this is called power mapping.

To do a power map, start by doing some basic research on your elected officials.

- Look up their campaign finance records (see Appendix E to find out how),
- Visit their campaign websites if they have them,
- Do a Google search on them,
- Ask your politically-savvy group members or friends to find out and write down everything they know about them.

Then, get everybody into a room and compare notes about each official. It's useful to have some butcher-block paper where you can write down all the names and connections. You are, in essence, "mapping" the power structure of your county.

Once your map is complete and you are starting to understand how the power structure works in your community, you can start thinking about how you can get inside that power structure. As you begin reaching out to key players, you will learn more and more about the power structure, and you can periodically update your power map to reflect new information. Strategies and tactics for working with elected officials are discussed in Chapter 3.6, *Influencing Decision makers*.

Chapter 1.2

CEQA: Getting the Most out of the Process

The California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA (pronounced “seek-wah”), is California’s premiere law requiring disclosure and public involvement in decisions that have the potential to harm the environment. This act allows Californians to actively participate in planning and development issues in their communities by reviewing environmental documents, submitting written comments, and attending hearings. The law also allows concerned community members to file a lawsuit if the law is not being followed. Understanding and working with the CEQA process is an essential component of your land use campaign.

CEQA’s value to the land use activist is two-fold. It is:

- a tool for building political power and framing the debate about growth in your community; and
- an enforcement mechanism for ensuring that local governments are playing by the rules when considering approval of development projects.

This chapter describes how CEQA works in land use issues, and how best to utilize it to get what you want. More detailed information about the CEQA process can be found in Appendix A.

Unfortunately, the state of Nevada does not have an equivalent law, and therefore public input in land use decisions is much more limited. Nevada does have laws to ensure that the public has access to meetings and documents, and many jurisdictions voluntarily create opportunities for public input during land use planning processes. See Appendix D for more information about Nevada’s public participation laws, and start organizing a campaign to pass a “NEQA!”

What is the purpose of CEQA?

The goal of CEQA is to ensure that state and local jurisdictions fully consider and disclose the potential environmental impacts of a project. One of the stated purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is to “[d]evelop and maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future, and take all action necessary to protect, rehabilitate, and enhance the environmental quality of the state.” (Cal. Pub. Res. Code [“PRC”] § 21001)

In practice, CEQA operates by requiring state and local government agencies to thoroughly examine environmental concerns when making decisions, and to make the decision-making process open and accessible to the public. Specifically, before any public agency undertakes or approves a project, that agency must:

- Identify potentially significant environmental effects of the project;
- Choose alternatives that would avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the project, if feasible; and
- Mitigate the significant environmental effects, where feasible. (PRC §§ 21002 & 21002.1)

When is CEQA required?

CEQA is required for almost any development proposal or land use planning process at the local level. The law specifically states that CEQA applies to “discretionary projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies, including, but not limited to, the enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of zoning variances, the issuance of conditional use permits, and the approval of tentative subdivision maps unless the project is exempt from this division.” (PRC § 21080(a))

Who is responsible for implementing CEQA?

The agency that will undertake or approve the project is responsible for complying with CEQA. Known in CEQA jargon as the “lead agency,” in the case of most land use decisions, it is the county, city or town where the proposed project will be built. The lead agency is responsible for holding the required hearings and preparing all the required documents. (Guidelines § 15367) Most counties, cities and towns do not prepare CEQA documents themselves, but hire independent consulting firms that specialize in CEQA compliance to do it for them. Often government is reimbursed by the developers or landowners for the cost of hiring the consultant.

What CEQA can and cannot do

CEQA is focused on process. It lays out a very specific process for making decisions and requires that jurisdictions follow that process. It can help you ensure that the public gets to participate, that potential impacts are fully disclosed, and that appropriate mitigation measures are identified.

CEQA does not mandate a particular outcome. It does not require an agency to reject a development proposal if the impacts are severe enough. If a project will have huge impacts, known as “significant unavoidable impacts,” CEQA merely adds another layer of process that the agency must comply with.

Even if you win a CEQA lawsuit, that does not legally stop the project. It means that the agency which approved the project must go back and redo some or all of the CEQA process.

However, because the CEQA process is expensive, time-consuming and happens in the public eye, when it is used as a political organizing tool, CEQA can give you the power to stop or dramatically alter a proposed project. It is important to recognize this distinction between CEQA’s legal and political roles. In most land use debates, it is CEQA’s political role, not legal role, that gives land use activists the most power to influence the outcome.

CEQA is about people power

Because CEQA is about process, it is really a tool for building people power. Packed hearings, a flood of public comment letters, high-profile lawsuits, articles in the local newspaper describing in detail the numerous horrible consequences of a proposed project, as revealed in the EIR – these are the real ways that CEQA is effective in stopping or shaping development projects or policy. CEQA creates an opportunity to frame the debate about where and how your community should grow.

Ultimately, land use decisions are more political than technical, and made by a Board of five elected officials who often don't read the EIR, let alone detailed comment letters!

So for land use activists, CEQA's role in revealing detailed technical information is often secondary to its role in building political power. The technical details provide the basis for a lawsuit, but it is the big questions that CEQA reveals – how will this growth affect our community's character and quality of life? – that spur your community members to take action. And it is only when your community members take action, when you create a groundswell of public sentiment, that your elected officials will sit up and take notice.

By demonstrating broad community support for your position, you will have built your organization's influence and power, which you can then wield by pressuring the elected officials and developers to do what you want! Whether you want to stop a project altogether, or require more open space or more affordable housing, you can use CEQA to get that outcome, by organizing your community and building your political power.

Getting the most out of CEQA

There are several tried and true strategies that experienced land use activists use to build power through the CEQA process:

- **Stay on top of it.** Keep abreast of current CEQA processes in your community by getting on the planning department's notification list. To ensure you receive Notices of Intent, write a letter to your Planning Director asking him to add you to his CEQA notification list.
- **Pack the hearings.** Getting dozens or even hundreds of people to show up and testify at CEQA hearings invariably has a powerful impact on the decision-making process. See Chapter 3.7 for a detailed discussion of how to boost turnout at hearings.
- **Unleash a flood of comment letters.** By getting as many people as possible to send handwritten letters, postcards or emails in response to the draft EIR, all saying the same basic message, you are demonstrating broad public support for your position. Use the outreach strategies discussed in Chapter 3.5 to generate hundreds or thousands of comment letters.
- **Target the decision makers.** During the period when the draft EIR is circulating, meet individually with the Supervisors to discuss your concerns and ask their opinion of the project. Identify which are sympathetic, which aren't, and which can be swayed. Figure out where your three votes are going to come from. Win them over using the lobbying strategies discussed in Chapter 3.6.
- **Get the media involved.** Make sure the local reporters and newspaper editors are aware of what's going on. Keep them posted on CEQA deadlines, invite them to hearings and sit down with them to explain your concerns. Make sure they have the EIR, and send them your comment letter. Ask to write an op-ed.

- **When all else fails, litigate.** CEQA litigation is the land use activist’s trump card. Litigation is expensive and time-consuming for both sides, but the lawsuit – or even just the threat of it – leverages your power tremendously. You can use this leverage to demand changes to the plan, mitigation, or project alternatives. Just remember that even if you do win your lawsuit, you won’t stop the project, only delay it, so wield your leverage carefully.
- **Don’t cut corners.** You won’t have a strong CEQA lawsuit unless you’ve “exhausted your administrative remedies” – in other words, you’ve submitted comments on the EIR, you’ve testified at the hearings, you’ve tried everything possible to get your concerns addressed, before filing the lawsuit. A lawsuit is no substitute for an organizing campaign. You should still submit comment letters, organize turnout to the hearings, and meet with the decision makers.
- **Hire a lawyer as early as possible.** If you are even considering a lawsuit, you should retain an attorney as early on as you can. You can only raise issues in a lawsuit that you have already raised in your comments on the EIR. In addition to helping you with the administrative remedies requirement, having a lawyer advise you throughout the entire CEQA process will also help you build your case, so that if it comes to litigation, you are well-positioned.
- Once an agency issues a notice of determination under CEQA, interested parties usually have only 30 days to challenge that determination in court. (PRC § 21152(a), 21167(b))

The Art of the Comment Letter

CEQA comment letters come in many shapes and sizes. They can be detailed, 50-page treatises written by attorneys, or they can be pre-printed postcards that are mass-produced (by you) and signed and submitted by community members. They can be handwritten notes or emails, petitions or pontifications.

Your campaign should generate comment letters from both ends of the spectrum. You should create postcards or template letters or some other tool that makes it easy for your non-wonky neighbors to give their input. And you should also generate thoughtful, detailed comments that identify your main concerns and propose changes that would ameliorate those concerns. An outline for a detailed comment letter is included in Appendix A, and a sample postcard is in Appendix G.

In all comment letters, it is important to do several things:

- **Know what you’re asking for. And ask for it. Often.** Technically, the role of the comment letter is to identify flaws in the EIR. Politically, its role is much broader than that. Your comment letter is also your opportunity to tell the decision makers what you want, what you’re trying to accomplish. If your comment letter is merely a laundry list of problems with the EIR, you’re missing an opportunity to advocate for your desired outcome. Put your desired outcome right up front, and at the very end, and everywhere in between.
- **Be consistent.** From the simplest postcard to the most detailed comment letter, make sure all your comment letters are fundamentally consistent in terms of message, concerns and desired outcomes.

See Appendix A for more information on the CEQA process, how to comment, and resources for more information.

Chapter 1.3

The General Plan: A Blueprint For Community Growth

What is a General Plan?

The general plan can be described as the city's or county's "blueprint" for future growth. It represents the big-picture view of where and how future development will occur over the life of the plan, usually ten to fifteen years. It is the single document from which all land use policies and decisions must flow. It is the job of the Board of Supervisors or City Council and planning commission to implement the General Plan, and their decisions must comply with the General Plan. To illustrate its importance, all land use policies and decisions, including subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning codes must be consistent with the general plan. If inconsistent, they cannot be approved. Some California cities, known as charter cities, have land use policies which pre-date California's General Plan. These cities still must comply with the basic tenets of General Plan law, but there is some variation in how their policies are structured. To find out if yours is a charter city, contact your Planning Department.

Why the General Plan is important

Because the General Plan is the ultimate arbiter of future growth, it trumps all other land use plans and processes in terms of importance. Because the plan has a ten to fifteen year lifespan, the policies it sets in place will have implications for years to come.

For example, imagine that a 2,000-unit subdivision is proposed for development on an old cattle ranch in your county. If the General Plan says that the ranch is designated for agricultural uses such as cattle grazing, you have a good shot at stopping that subdivision because it is "inconsistent" with the General Plan. If, however, the General Plan designates that ranch for residential development, it will be much more unlikely that the Board of Supervisors will reject the subdivision.

Many land use activists don't find this out until its too late. They weren't involved in the General Plan Update that happened five or ten years ago, and now they're stuck fighting all these bad developments that are a direct result of that General Plan.

Don't wait until its too late for your community! If your county or city is updating its General Plan, get involved and stay involved. The Sierra Nevada Alliance's "Planning for the Future" campaign is here to help.

What does the General Plan contain?

Most general plans consist of: (1) a written text discussing the community's goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the distribution of land use; and, (2) one or more diagrams or maps illustrating the general location of existing and future land uses.

The written text component of the General Plan is organized into a series of "elements," some of which are required by state law and others which are optional. The following seven elements are mandatory:

- land use,
- circulation,
- housing,
- conservation,
- open space,
- noise,
- and safety (Government Code Sections 65300 et seq.).

Jurisdictions may adopt a wide variety of additional elements covering subjects of particular interest to that jurisdiction such as recreation, urban design, or public facilities. For more detailed information on General Plan elements see Appendix B.

The land use element of the General Plan contains a diagram which graphically illustrates the policies of the land use element. It is not a legal "map" in the sense that it does not need to show the impacts of city or county policies on individual parcels. Rather, it is a tool for broadly illustrating the pattern of future land uses in the community. The land use diagram must identify:

- **Location:** where different uses will be allowed in the community, such as housing, agriculture or commercial development;
- **Density and Intensity** of development, such as the size of buildings and how closely distributed they will be; and
- **Distribution:** how different land uses will be distributed throughout the community. State law requires that the distribution of some uses, such as schools and public buildings, be specific, while the distribution of most uses, such as commercial development and farmland, can be general.

The General Plan must be internally consistent: the map must agree with the policies and the policies must agree with each other. For more on this important concept of internal consistency, see Appendix B.

A note on General Plan Rhetoric

General Plans often contain lots of rosy language in the goals and objectives section, but when the rubber meets the road, they lack the specific, concrete policies to achieve those lofty goals.

Pay close attention to language, especially when it comes to policies. The language used in a general plan's written texts can have a tremendous impact on the outcome and implementation of the plan. An example of this is the difference between the words "shall" and "should."

“Shall,” “will,” and “must” mean the policy is hard and fast, and must be followed in all cases. “Should,” “could,” and “would,” on the other hand, mean there is wiggle room for the policy to be ignored. Don’t settle for should.

When is the General Plan created and/or modified?

The General Plan is comprehensively updated once every ten years – although some Sierra counties have plans that are more than twenty years old! The General Plan Update is a long, expensive process, taking an average of two to four years to complete, although it can and often does stretch out even longer than that. It involves the publication of numerous documents which are available for public comment, to stimulate public discussion and debate about where and how the next ten years’ worth of growth should be allowed. California General Plan law lays out a step-by-step process for General Plan Updates. You can find detailed information about this process in Appendix B.

Ironically, after all that work has been done to adopt a General Plan that the whole community can live with, the General Plan can be amended up to four times a year. In most cases, “General Plan Amendments” are initiated to accommodate development proposals that are inconsistent with the current policies of the General Plan. Some counties “continue” the amendment hearings for a quarter each, so amendments can be considered every week.

Some jurisdictions voluntarily limit General Plan Amendments to once a year or less. This cuts down on the wheeling and dealing development speculation that comes along with having a General Plan that can basically be changed any time.

Unfortunately, California law does not prevent General Plan Amendments from being considered in the midst of a comprehensive General Plan Update. Making amendments to the current plan, while ostensibly in the midst of updating it, is bad planning at its worst, a classic case of “putting the cart before the horse.” Many jurisdictions now voluntarily impose a moratorium on General Plan Amendments while they update their General Plan. This allows the planning process to proceed as intended, and ensures that the staff, community and decision-makers can all focus their energy on the General Plan Update, rather than being sidetracked by piecemeal development proposals.

Opportunities for public participation

State law requires that local governments make copies of their plans available to the public for reference. Copies can be sold to the public for the cost of reproduction.

The process of adopting or amending a general plan requires public participation. Cities and counties must hold public hearings for such proposals. Advance notice of the place and time of the hearing must be published in the newspaper or posted in the vicinity of the site proposed for change. Prior to approval, hearings will be held by the advisory body (usually the planning commission). The general plan must be adopted by resolution of the legislative body of each city or county.

Many jurisdictions now create a citizen advisory committee that meets regularly and plays an active, albeit advisory, role in shaping the General Plan Update process. Encourage your city or county to form such a committee, and get yourself on it!

In recent years, it has also become common practice for larger jurisdictions to hold a series of public workshops, or charrettes, to solicit public input during the various stages of the update process. Again, encourage your jurisdiction to hold these meetings, and get your friends and supporters to attend.

Watchdog the Implementation of your General Plan

The General Plan is only effective if it is followed. Some jurisdictions write great General Plans and then proceed to completely ignore them. Others take advantage of the amendment loophole, which allows the plan to be changed up to four times a year.

There are several things you should do to watchdog your General Plan:

- **Stay informed.** Get on the notification list for General Plan amendment proposals, CEQA notices of intent, and any other major land use decisions, by sending a letter in writing to your planning director.
- **Make sure the development code is up to par.** The development code, discussed below, is the ‘workhorse’ document that implements the General Plan. Make sure the development code is consistent with the General Plan. Jurisdictions should update the development code after completing a General Plan update, but some need a little pressure to do so, and you should watchdog that process to make sure its done right.
- **Lock in good policies at the ballot box.** If you’ve fought long and hard to get a good General Plan adopted, the best way to “protect your investment” is by locking in key provisions through a ballot initiative. If your ballot initiative is successful, the Board of Supervisors or City Council will have to go back to the voters before amending the General Plan.
- **Run for office.** Start rebuilding the political framework in your community until you have a smart growth majority on your Board or Council.

Community Plans and Specific Plans

“Community plans” and “specific plans” are often used by cities and counties to plan the future of a particular area at a finer level of detail than that provided by the general plan.

A community plan is a subset of the general plan which focuses on the issues pertinent to a particular area or community within the city or county. It supplements the policies of the general plan and lays out a broad framework for the types of land uses allowed in the community plan area. Community plans can be good for rural communities where there is a concern about the County imposing development that the community doesn’t want.

A specific plan is similar to a community plan, but it is more, well, specific. It defines allowable land uses, identifies open space, and, perhaps most importantly, details the availability of facilities and financing to make the plan a reality. A specific plan implements but is not technically a part of the general plan. In some jurisdictions, specific plans take the place of zoning. Zoning, subdivision, and public works decisions must be consistent with any applicable specific plan.

Specific plans are often used in cases where the goal is to facilitate development in an area that has complex financial issues, environmental problems, or ownership patterns, such as abandoned mill sites or struggling business districts.

Specific plans can be the land use activist's best friend and worst nightmare. One of the major advantages of a specific plan, from a development perspective, is that it usually is accompanied by CEQA review that is very detailed. Thus, future development that implements the Specific Plan is generally free from extensive CEQA review.

For land use activists looking to revitalize historic downtown districts or encourage the redevelopment of obsolete factories, mill sites or other industrial areas, specific plans are a great tool for fostering smart growth.

But specific plans are also used by sprawl developers who have visions of large, multi-phase development plans. Specific plans allow them to get all their entitlements and CEQA review out of the way in one fell swoop, thus minimizing the amount of time and money they must spend to dealing with those pesky land use activists!

Both community plans and specific plans are a way to bring the General Plan's broad policies closer to home. They often generate more public interest than general plans, since most people are more concerned with their own community than with the larger county or city. And they allow for the fine-tuning of policies to address locally-unique issues.

In recent years, it has become increasingly popular for rural counties to update their General Plans by first creating (or updating) community plans for each of the communities or regions within the County. These community plans become the building blocks for the General Plan.

Development Code: Putting the General Plan into Action

If the role of the General Plan is to articulate a broad vision for a community's future, then it falls to the development code to translate that vision into reality. Where the General Plan is broad, the development code is specific. In recent years the General Plan itself has become increasingly specific and detailed; however, the development code is still the workhorse that local planners and developers use every day to make decisions.

However, the development code must be consistent with the General Plan. If there are inconsistencies between the General Plan and any aspect of the development code, the General Plan trumps.

After a comprehensive General Plan Update, most cities and counties will review and update the development code to ensure that it is consistent with the new General Plan. It is important for land use activists to pay attention to this process, to ensure that the zoning code upholds the principles of the General Plan.

The development code usually consists of several pieces:

- The zoning ordinance;
- Subdivision regulations;
- Design review guidelines; and
- Any other planning or development requirements.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is a tool to implement the General Plan, by translating the goals and principles of the General Plan into regulations that are specific to individual parcels. In many Sierran counties, the zoning ordinance remains the primary tool of land use planning, particularly for small-scale developments, because it lays out the specific rules and regulations that landowners must comply with when deciding what to do with their land. The zoning ordinance and maps must be consistent with the General Plan policies and maps.

The zoning ordinance divides the community into use districts. Each use district has a prescribed type of development that is allowed: agricultural, rural residential, single family homes, etc. Each use district has specific standards for everything from parking to sidewalks to building heights.

State law requires that the zoning ordinance be both comprehensive – it must cover every single parcel in the community – and fair – all parcels within the same use district must be treated equally.

Some proposed developments that comply with the zoning code generally require only administrative approvals – that is, they can be approved by planning staff without any legislative oversight. They also do not fall under CEQA. Generally, these are single-family housing on serviced lots. Most multifamily and all non-residential projects are discretionary projects that go to the Planning Commission. If a landowner wants to build something which doesn't comply with the zoning code, he or she can apply for a zone change, variance, or conditional use permit. These are all different ways of getting around the zoning code, and they each require some level of legislative oversight, usually at the Planning Commission level.

Generally, the zoning density must be the same as, or lower in density, than the General Plan designation for that parcel. It also must be for a similar or lower-intensity land use (Order of intensity: Industry, Light Industry, Commercial, Office, Multifamily Residential, Single-family Residential, Agricultural-Residential). If infill is desired, the Plan can have a policy for infill areas that sets minimum densities. Then, the zoning must be at a similar, or more-intense, density.

General Plan designations and zoning categories can be changed in a General Plan revision to lower-intensity uses and to lower densities. After this is done, the existing parcels are “grandfathered in,” meaning their owners get to build one house, no matter the size of the parcel. This legal rule demonstrates the importance of the subdivision step in planning: Once parcels are created, they can be developed. Thus a critical stage in planning is the subdivision step, where the parcels get created.

Subdivision Regulations

Another important aspect of the development code is the set of rules which govern subdivisions. California's Subdivision Map Act requires that each local government adopt regulations to govern the division of land into smaller parcels. Like the zoning ordinance, these regulations must comply with the General Plan maps and policies.

The Map Act essentially gives local governments the tools to extract concessions like roads, schools and open space in exchange for allowing subdivisions to occur. These negotiations happen while the county or city is considering approval of the subdivision map, also known as the tentative map during

early stages of the approval process. The subdivision map is just what it sounds like – a map showing how the new subdivision will be configured. It shows the size and location of parcels, as well as roads, parks and other infrastructure.

To get a subdivision map approved, the developer files an application with the city or county, and then the city or county must hold public hearings and go through CEQA review. The Subdivision Map Act specifically requires CEQA review for proposed subdivisions, and it also requires that cities or counties reject subdivisions that will cause environmental damage. Taken together, the Subdivision Map Act and CEQA can be a very powerful tool for land use activists to extract environmental concessions.

For example, if the EIR for a proposed subdivision finds that some of the subdivided parcels would impact a sensitive habitat area, the County can use the Subdivision Map Act to require the developer to set aside those areas for preservation.

There are several other aspects of subdivision law which activists should keep in mind.

- Subdivision map approvals are considered quasi-judicial, and therefore they are not subject to initiative or referendum. However, other approvals on the same project – such as General Plan Amendments – ARE referendable. This confusing aspect of land use law underscores the importance of hiring an experienced attorney if you are considering a referendum.
- Second, subdivision maps often grant ‘vested development rights’ to the landowner. Once a project has vested rights, it cannot legally be stopped, even though the developer might need additional approvals (i.e. building permits) before construction can actually begin.
- The Subdivision Map Act has different guidelines for major subdivisions -- defined as a subdivision resulting in five or more parcels – and minor subdivisions resulting in four or less parcels. Generally speaking, minor subdivisions require less review and public oversight than major subdivisions.

Design Review Guidelines and other Planning and Building Regulations

Some cities and counties have other regulations on planning and building which are also included in the development code. Design review guidelines are increasingly popular in communities that want to emphasize a particular architectural style. In the Sierra, some gold rush towns use design review guidelines to make new development architecturally consistent with historic buildings. Other regulations may be developed to deal with local factors that impact the design and location of new development, such as snow or steep slopes.

Nevada Master Plans

In Nevada General Plans are referred to as master Plans or Comprehensive Plans. Nevada also requires Regional Plans for communities of a certain population. Nevada’s plans share many traits with California’s General Plans, albeit with less state-mandated requirements, and many of the same strategies and principles apply.

As in California, Nevada law considers land use planning and zoning to be a local matter. State law dictates very little and the Legislature's role is primarily to enable legislation for local governments. Counties are required to have Master Plans that are comprehensive, long-term general plans for the physical development of the city, county or region. State law does not mandate their contents. Regional Plans are required for counties with populations over 100,000, which includes Washoe County and Clark County (southern Nevada incorporating Las Vegas). State law governing regional plans include requirements for counties with populations over 400,000 and another set of requirements for counties with populations of 100,000 to 400,000.

There are no specific rules governing public participation in the creation of Master Plans or Regional Plans. Nevada state law does requires that all meetings are publicly noticed (see Chapter 17 for more details). In addition, most counties voluntarily incorporate public participation into their planning processes.

See Appendix B for more information on California General Plans and Nevada Master Plans.

Part Two

Planning a Successful Land Use Campaign

Chapter 2.1

Strategic Overview: What are the options?

So you've just heard about a really bad development plan that is wending its way through the approval process in your community. You want to stop or improve it. What are your options?

Almost all land use efforts start with organizing to get the votes from the Board or Council. Some end there, having generated enough public outcry to accomplish their goal, while others proceed to litigation, ballot initiative or referendum. This chapter reviews these four major strategies, and the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Strategy # 1: Organizing to Get the Votes from the Board or Council

As discussed in Part One of this toolkit, the vast majority of land use decisions in the Sierra are made by local government officials. Ultimately, all these decisions come down to a simple majority vote of the governing body – usually a Board of Supervisors or Town Council. Thus, organizing a campaign to get the elected officials' votes is the most direct, effective and cost-efficient way to stop a bad development proposal or get a good general plan enacted. It also lays the foundation for litigation, ballot initiative and referendum strategies.

What is it?

A grassroots campaign to get the board votes is a focused effort to raise public awareness of an issue, mobilize a broad array of community members to take action, and hold the local decision makers accountable to the community vision. It can involve tabling at community events, speaking to groups, knocking on doors, reaching out to other organizations, and getting people to write letters and show up to hearings. It is old-fashioned grassroots democracy at its best.

Strengths

The major strength of a grassroots campaign to get the board votes is that anyone can do it. Grassroots organizing is cheap, requires no advanced degree, and relies primarily on energy, enthusiasm and a willingness to go talk to people. These campaigns complement the land use decision-making

structure, which requires – at least officially – that the decision makers collect and consider input from the public. There is power in numbers, and successful organizing campaigns build community power which can then be used to stop projects, strengthen policies or extract concessions.

Weaknesses

A grassroots campaign to get the board votes is a lot of work, and can be overwhelming for one person. To be truly effective, these campaigns should have many volunteers all pitching in, and one or two coordinators who are very organized and very good at delegating! Another weakness of organizing campaigns is that they are reliant on the decision maker responding to community pressure. While many elected officials can be persuaded by organizing efforts, some very entrenched representatives may be impossible to move.

Timing and Strategic Considerations

Grassroots organizing is important throughout the decision-making process, particularly during periods where public input is solicited, in the form of hearings or written comments. Successful organizing campaigns have clearly-defined goals and message, a solid understanding of the political dynamics within the decision-making body, a willingness to reach out to different viewpoints, and a strong team dynamic.

Strategy # 2: Litigation

What is it?

In California, most land use lawsuits are within the domain of CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act, which is explored in Chapter 1.2. Advocates often file CEQA lawsuits to challenge a project which has recently been approved. Those lawsuits generally challenge the adequacy of the environmental analysis and/or the mitigation measures proposed to ameliorate the predicted impacts of the project. CEQA lawsuits may also challenge the process by which the project was approved.

Other laws also come into play in land use issues, albeit less commonly. These include California's General Plan law, the Endangered Species Act, and water and clean air laws.

Strengths

CEQA litigation can delay a project and, if successful, force the governing body to go back and re-evaluate the project or adopt stronger mitigations. Equally important, it brings all the players to the bargaining table. Construction delays can be very costly for developers. Thus the threat of a protracted legal battle is a powerful leverage point for advocates to get developers to come to the table to negotiate their project. Other kinds of litigation, such as that filed under the Endangered Species Act, can stop a project altogether.

Weaknesses

Current laws don't require smart planning, only good process. For example, a common misperception is that CEQA can kill a project. CEQA is written to ensure that environmental impacts are fully

examined, but it does not mandate a particular approach or outcome. Under CEQA, a county or city can approve a horrible project, as long as it fully examines the impacts and meets other procedural requirements.

Another drawback of litigation is the chilling effect it can have upon relationships with decision makers and community members. Land use lawsuits are filed against the county or city, not the developer, and this can create hostility. Elected officials, city attorneys and the developers may try to frame the lawsuit as unreasonable or frivolous, and advocates must be careful to counter that perception.

Lastly, lawsuits are very expensive. Legal fees pile up very quickly, and most foundations and some donors are unwilling to pay for litigation.

Timing and Strategic Considerations

Most land use litigation happens after a project or plan is approved. The lawsuit is filed immediately after the approval, and the case proceeds from there. For CEQA lawsuits, it is important to have retained an attorney well in advance of project approval, because there are many necessary actions you must take before the project is approved, in order to have a successful lawsuit.

It's important to recognize that litigation is not a substitute for an organizing campaign. Successful litigation efforts almost always have a campaign element to keep the issue in the spotlight and counter negative spin from the other side. Further, CEQA judges look favorably upon cases where it can be demonstrated that the decision makers ignored overwhelming public sentiment.

Strategy # 3: The Ballot Initiative

In California and Nevada, initiatives and referendums allow ordinary citizens to facilitate direct democracy and put land use decisions in the hands of the voters. This is a tremendously powerful tool and one that has grown increasingly popular in the last decade, as communities have grown frustrated with the lack of leadership from elected officials on growth issues.

What is it?

An initiative is a legislative measure that has been placed on the election ballot as a result of voter signatures. At the local level, initiatives usually propose changes or additions to the general plan and zoning ordinance. Or, they can ratify existing plans or policies so that future supervisors or city councils cannot undo those policies without a vote of the people. Initiatives are commonly used to establish long-term urban growth boundaries and lock in zoning for important natural resource areas and agricultural lands.

Strengths

Ballot initiatives are extremely powerful. Once adopted they are virtually bulletproof (unless another initiative comes along), unlike the General Plan or zoning ordinance, which can be changed anytime with a simple majority vote of the Board or Town Council. Also, the public generally favors protect-

ing open space and encourages smart growth, especially in California. Smart growth measures have a high success rate, sometimes even when the proponents are outspent by a wide margin.

The tactics involved in passing a ballot campaign can build a strong base of community support. This can provide an incredible cache for future smart growth efforts.

Weaknesses

Initiatives require more time, money, campaign skills, and volunteers than any other strategy. They also require seasoned political campaigners to at least advise the campaign. Even the best-run campaign can be doomed by a variety of factors beyond your control, such as low voter turnout, other issues on the same ballot, even state and national politics.

Initiatives are by their definition adversarial. There are proponents and opponents and no one in between. It is often hard after so much time and effort has gone into battling one another to come back to the same table and work together in the future.

Another drawback is that ballot initiatives cannot take away vested development rights. Once a project has been approved, you can't make it go away via ballot initiative. Only a referendum can stop an already-approved project.

Timing and Strategic Considerations

Initiatives can be undertaken any time of year, although it is best to decide which election ballot you are shooting for and plan accordingly. You should start preparing at least 15 months before election day.

To garner the necessary 50% plus one vote, successful ballot initiatives are generally modest in scope and backed by a broad range of supporters. Initiatives which are seen as over-reaching or highly controversial will invite opposition and have a hard time at the ballot box. By virtue of necessity, the writers of ballot initiatives must carefully weigh the benefit of a controversial provision versus the amount of opposition those provisions will generate. There is no substitute for seasoned political wisdom in making these judgment calls.

Another consideration is that you'll need lots of volunteer manpower to gather signatures, run the campaign and get out the vote, as well as donors to fund the campaign. If you organized a grassroots campaign before embarking on an initiative, you will already have a base of volunteers and donors to call upon.

Strategy # 4: The Referendum

What is it?

A referendum (plural referenda) is a ballot measure challenging a legislative action by the city council or county board of supervisors. If sufficient voter signatures are filed within 30 days after a decision, the council or board must either set aside its action or call an election on the matter.

Strengths

A referendum is the only legislative means to stop a project or policy after it has been approved. If the voters approve the referendum at the ballot box, the board or city council decision is overturned, and they are forbidden from taking a similar action for a period of one year. Even after that year has expired, very few elected officials are foolish enough to approve a policy or project that was successfully referended.

Similar to running a ballot initiative, the tactics involved in passing a referendum campaign can build a strong base of community support. This can provide an incredible cache for future smart growth efforts.

Weaknesses

Referenda cost just as much as initiatives in terms of time, money and volunteers, but they accomplish a lot less. A referendum can stop a development proposal on the edge of town, but it can't create an urban growth boundary to prevent similar projects in the future. Those contemplating an initiative or referendum must decide whether a project is horrible enough to referend, or if you are better off spending that time and money on an initiative that reaches further.

Timing and Strategic Considerations

Timing is extremely tight on referenda. Signatures must be submitted within 30 days after the project or policy was approved. Thus it is critically important to begin preparation for a referendum well ahead of the project approval.

Referendum law is very tricky, and not all decisions are subject to the referendum process. Use permits, variances, and subdivision maps, for example, cannot be challenged by referendum. If you are even considering a referendum, consult an attorney who is experienced in initiative law to research what is or is not "referendable" in your particular case. Many hastily-written referenda have been thrown out by courts long after the advocates have invested significant time and money into the effort.

Conclusion

The four major tools of land use campaigns provide the means for you to influence the direction of future growth in your community. Organizing to get the votes of the Board or Council allows you to influence the decision makers who make most land use decisions, while litigation, ballot initiatives and referenda are ways to challenge or circumvent the decisionmakers.

While these latter three are important, it is community organizing which forms the foundation of most successful land use efforts. It is tempting to look to ballot initiatives or lawsuits as a way to circumvent the hard work and political bent of influencing a board or council vote. But there is no shortcut – successful lawsuits and ballot initiatives rarely take place without a complementary grassroots organizing campaign – and so that is the subject we explore through most of this guidebook.

Chapter 2.2

Get Organized! Campaign Plans are the Key to Winning

Most grassroots environmental campaigns form in reaction to someone else's bad idea – a developer's land use proposal, a Forest Service timber sale, or a local government's economic development plan. As these decision-making processes move forward, we as grassroots activists continue to react within the framework set by someone else. There's a hearing, we attend and testify. There's an EIR released, we read and comment upon it. A bad choice is made, and we litigate.

These are necessary and vital components of grassroots campaigns, and reading EIRs and attending hearings will always be important. But to be truly effective as activists, we must move beyond reacting and instead develop our own internal campaigns to build community support, reach out to potential allies and hold decision makers accountable to the community vision.

This section introduces a framework for planning your campaign around a clearly-defined goal and a series of strategies to achieve that goal. The following are tips to help you create a doable, winnable, and fun plan.

Tips on Creating a Campaign Plan

Just Do It.

If you're already neck-deep in a land use campaign, it may seem like a waste of time to sit down and talk about goals and strategies, when there are many other pressing things to get done. But without a campaign plan, you are simply in reaction mode, and you may miss opportunities or think of good ideas when there isn't enough time to implement them. Doing a campaign plan will save you time and effort in the long run, and make your campaign exponentially more effective. Seriously. Do it.

Be Inclusive.

Like the old saying goes, two minds are better than one, and three are better than two. Developing a strong campaign plan will require many kinds of know-how: political, legal, public relations and fundraising, to name just a few. As you go through the process of developing your campaign plan, don't do it alone. Later sections of this book talk about building and maintaining a coalition of like-minded individuals and groups. Your coalition partners should develop the campaign plan together. Not only will you benefit from others' bright ideas, but those who have participated in developing the plan will feel invested in making sure it happens.

Give yourself time to do it right.

Developing a good campaign plan takes time. You don't need to do it all in one sitting. Two or three planning sessions over the course of several meetings is more reasonable, and it will give everyone time to reflect on previous conversations and reassess. You'll also need to build in time before and after each meeting to accomplish the necessary legwork.

Should litigation be a part of my campaign plan?

Litigation should be a last resort, not a given. Usually, litigation on land use decisions happens after the decision has been made. If you're trying to stop a project or policy that has already been approved, litigation may be your only option. However, this section on campaign planning, and indeed this guidebook as a whole, assumes that you are organizing to stop a project or policy which has not yet been approved, and thus litigation will hopefully not be necessary. If you anticipate that you may eventually need to litigate, you should note that in your campaign plan and talk to a land use attorney to make sure you're covering the legal bases to lay the groundwork for a lawsuit. However, the bulk of your campaign plan should be dedicated to strategies which can put in place smart plans and policies that don't require litigation—grassroots organizing, lobbying, coalition building and the like.

Get help if you need it.

Consider bringing in an experienced campaign planner/facilitator to help you develop your campaign plan. Sierra Nevada Alliance staff can help guide you through the campaign planning process, as well as provide advice and feedback on your draft plan. Other organizations and professionals may also be available to help. See Appendix J for a list of these.

Step by Step Guide to Creating a Campaign Plan

Step 1: Assemble your “Lay of the Land”

In order to make a realistic and workable campaign plan, you need to gather some basic information about the project or policy being proposed, the decision-making process, and the people in charge of making that decision. This information will help you examine all of your strategic options and decide which will be the most effective.

This information falls into four categories:

- **Policy:** It is important to understand what exactly is being proposed. In the case of the WalMart proposal, this may be pretty straightforward. However, there are many kinds of local plans that are bigger than just one project. General Plans, for example, govern land use for entire counties or cities, while specific plans or community plans may cover a neighborhood, a rural community or proposed new town location. Chapter 1.3 of this guidebook provides information about the various kinds of local plans, and you can get more information about your community's particular plans and projects from your Planning Department. Read the available documents, and ask questions, until you understand exactly what is being proposed.
- **Procedural:** What is the process by which this land-use decision will be made? What is the expected timeline? If there will be public hearings, when will they be? When can the public

give written comments? What kind of documents will be available and when? Who will make the final decision? Can that decision be appealed? If so, to whom? Are there other agencies or decision makers (such as local water agencies, or state or federal regulatory agencies) which must issue permits or give approval to certain pieces of the project? Find out where these leverage points are. The best way to get this information is to sit down with the staff planner who is in charge of the project.

- **Political:** Who are the decision makers, both elected and appointed? What do we know about them? What interest groups and individuals wield influence with them? If they were elected, who donated to their campaigns? If they were appointed, who appointed them? What is their record on land use issues? More information about how to research, target and work with land use decision makers is in Chapter 3.6. The best way to really understand the political landscape in your town or county is to find a trusted advisor (or several) who is politically savvy and willing to share her knowledge with you.
- **Resources:** What resources does your coalition have to implement this campaign? Create a checklist of resources. Include everything you have—from funding to political connections to staffing and volunteers. What are your strengths and weaknesses? If there are additional resources you don't have, but think you will need, how will you go about getting them?

If you've been working on land use issues for a while, you may have all this information in your head, or scattered about in various documents. Put it all together into one succinct document, organized according to the headings above. Call this document the "Lay of the Land."

Step 2: Prepare for first strategic planning session

Set aside 1-2 hours at your next meeting, or call a special session, to begin the strategic planning process. A week or so before the planning session, distribute an agenda and the "Lay of the Land" document. The agenda should include:

- Discuss and agree upon campaign goal (see step 3)
- Discuss Lay of the Land. Include the lay of the land document with the agenda, and ask your group members to read it and make note of any additional information that is relevant to the campaign. They should come to the meeting prepared to share their comments and new information.

In the days before the planning session, make sure you have everything you need for a successful meeting – food, drinks, flipcharts for brainstorming, background materials etc.

Step 3: Identify Your Goal

At your first planning session, the first thing your group should discuss is the goal of the campaign. If you're reading this manual, the chances are you've already chosen a **mission**, whether it is written or not. Your mission may be as broad as preserving the rural character of your county, or it may be as specific as preventing a WalMart from moving in on the edge of town. This is an inspiring and necessary step, but when it comes time to organize a land use campaign, it is also important to distill that mission into a tangible **goal**.

While your goal may seem intuitive, it is important to articulate that goal, particularly when you are getting your campaign organized. During this phase it is critically important to ensure that everyone understands and agrees to work toward the same goal.

Your goal should be:

- Easy to understand.
- Specific.
- Inspiring.
- Outcome-focused, rather than process-focused.
- Realistic.

A good question to ask your group is: how will we, and the rest of our community, know when our goal is accomplished?

Using the example above, a good goal would be “Stop the WalMart proposal in Ponderosa Meadow.”

Some bad examples of goals would be “preserve open space,” which is too broad, or “tell the City Council to reject the WalMart EIR” which is too process-focused. This latter example is really a strategy, discussed below.

Brainstorm your goal with your coalition partners. It may be a thirty-second conversation, or it may take an hour. Either way, you will have learned more about each others’ perspectives, and you will have reaffirmed and clarified what you’re all working for.

Step 4: Lay of the Land Discussion

The next step is to review the Lay of the Land with your group and incorporate any new information. Go through each of the categories one at a time, review the information you’ve collected, and take note of any additional information that your group members have. If there is conflicting or contradictory information, talk it out or assign somebody to track down the correct information.

When discussing the political landscape with your group, it is helpful to do an exercise called power mapping, which is discussed in Chapter 2.1, Thinking Like a Politician. This exercise helps you identify the influential groups and individuals in your town or county who wield power with the decision makers.

Step 5: Wrap Up First Planning Session and Prepare for Second

After your lay of the land discussion, your brain and those of your group members will be swimming with information. This is a good time to call it a night, or move on to other group business.

In the days after the meeting, write up your campaign goal and revise the Lay of the Land to incorporate all the new information you received. Distribute these to the group, along with the date and agenda for the second planning session.

The agenda for the second planning session should include:

- Briefly review Lay of the Land
- Discuss possible strategies (see Step 6).

Step 6: Decide on Strategies and Tactics to Achieve Your Goal

Once you have agreed upon a goal and gathered the necessary information, the next step is to break that goal down into workable objectives, known as strategies.

In Chapter 2.1, we discuss four options to influence land use decisions – organizing a campaign to get the board votes, litigation, ballot initiative and referendum. Review these four as a group and choose one. Then decide upon **tactics** to implement that strategy.

Each tactic is really a miniature goal, and as such it should be specific, realistic and achievable. Your tactics will vary depending upon the particulars of your situation, but most land use campaign plans should include some tactics along the following lines:

- **Message and Materials:** Develop an effective and compelling message and literature piece for use in all aspects of the campaign. More information in Chapters 3.3 and 3.4.
- **Grassroots Outreach:** Conduct community outreach to raise awareness and recruit XX new supporters. Specifics on how to do that are in Chapter 3.5.
- **Media Outreach:** Get your message out through your local media. See Chapter 3.8 for more details
- **Coalition Building:** Build a coalition of X respected community members and X local organizations, including (for example) President of the local Lions' Club, famous local writer, representatives from agriculture, local business, churches, service organizations and areas throughout the county or town. Specifics on how to do that are in Chapter 3.2.
- **Direct Lobbying:** Get decision makers Smith, Wong and Santiago to support your position. More information on working with decision makers is in Chapter 3.6.
- **Fundraising:** Raise XX dollars to fund our campaign. Combine fundraising with community outreach events, when appropriate. More information on fundraising is in Chapter 3.9.

In the days before the second campaign planning session, read through the chapters listed above and think about which strategies and tactics you would recommend to your group. Also talk to other experienced land use activists about successful campaigns they've been involved with in the past. You and others in your group will undoubtedly have some tactics of your own. As you read through this manual and gather information from other sources, think creatively about how you can best achieve your goal.

At your second planning session, briefly review your Lay of the Land and then lead your group in a discussion of the possible tactics you could use to achieve your strategy and goal. Organize your discussion according to the categories above – grassroots outreach, coalition building, etc – and use a piece of butcher paper to record all the ideas for each category.

For example, in talking about grassroots outreach, some of the ideas might include: tabling at the local farmers' market or community festival, organizing a town hall meeting or social function, leading hikes or bike tours of the area, etc.

Record every idea on the butcher paper, no matter how far-fetched or ambitious. Hang the pieces of paper around the room, where everyone can see them.

Step 7: Assess Resources and Prioritize Tactics

After your tactics brainstorming session is over, it is time to get focused. Take a short break, and then go back and talk about your resources. How much time does everyone have to give? How much money can the group realistically raise? Looking at the county or town timeline for making a decision, how much time do you have to accomplish your tactics?

In a perfect world, your group would have the time, money and volunteers to do all the tactics you've envisioned. But since that is rarely the case, you've got to decide what you can do, and what you can't.

Some important questions to ask when assessing strategies:

- Is it realistic, given our resources?
- How will it lead us closer to our stated goal?
- Does the tactic provide multiple benefits (ie organizing an event that can both recruit supporters and raise money)?
- If the tactic is only partially successful, is it still beneficial?
- Who have the abilities and expertise to implement the tactic? If no one in your group does, can you get help to do it?

Go back through your list of tactics and eliminate (or temporarily shelve) those which don't pass the reality test. If you need to narrow it further, or there is debate about competing tactics, the sticker exercise is a good way to go: Give each person 3 or 4 or 5 stickers (circular dot stickers are cheap and available at any stationary store, although flowers or ponies or any other kind of sticker will work just as well! Even pens where people write stars works), and ask them to walk around the room and put their stickers next to the strategies they think the group should focus on. If someone really likes a particular tactic, they can put all their stickers by it. Or they can spread them around. When everyone is finished, count the stickers and see which tactics come out on top.

Ensuring that each of your members has a say in choosing tactics will help keep your group energized and focused throughout the months – or even years – it will take to win a successful land use campaign.

Step 8: Assign Responsibilities

Once your group has agreed upon strategies, try to get one person to be responsible for overseeing each tactic. This doesn't mean that one person has to do all the work themselves – rather, she is the point person that keeps track of all the different tasks associated with that tactic, and makes sure they are getting done.

If you're not successful in getting someone to take responsibility for each tactic, don't fret. Once you actually start implementing the plan, people will begin to gravitate toward certain strategies, and hopefully will take on greater responsibility as time progresses.

Step 9: Put everything into a timeline

By the end of the second planning session, you should have a list of the strategies your group has agreed to work on. The next step is to take those butcher paper ideas home, and translate them into

tangible tasks that you can get your arms around.

Using an Excel spreadsheet, Outlook calendar or plain old word processing document, write out a timeline that includes key dates in the official decision-making process (study sessions; hearings; deadlines for submitting comments, etc).

Then take each of the strategies you've agreed upon, and break it down into the tasks that will be necessary to achieve it. If a member of your group has agreed to take responsibility for a particular tactic, ask them to help you with this part. As you break down the tactic, write the deadlines and tasks into the calendar. Working backwards from the final deadline is a good idea.

For example, if you plan to organize a town hall meeting at the local senior center, work backwards from the date you want to hold the event, putting key deadlines into the calendar, i.e.:

May 6 – day of event
May 4 – run ads in local paper
May 3 – send reminder email to supporters
April 6 – send mailed invitations
March 15 – recruit speakers

Don't forget to include your regular group meetings in your plan. Decide in advance how often you need to meet. Group meetings are important, but remember every minute spent in a meeting is a minute that your group members could be working on implementing your campaign plan!

Creating a timeline will allow you to once again reassess how realistic your campaign is, and give you benchmarks to assess your progress as you move forward. Be sure you have enough time to employ the necessary strategies to reach your goal. Recognize that exact dates will change, so be flexible and realistic. You can go back and reassess later.

Step 10: Write It Down!

“If it ain't written, it doesn't exist,” says Joan Clayburgh of the Sierra Nevada Alliance.

By simply deciding upon your goal, you have begun the process of starting a grassroots campaign; refining and realistically assessing that goal has brought the development of strategies. For all intents and purposes, you have developed a campaign! Yet, as many seasoned campaigners note, **if your ideas are not written down then you have no plan!**

Finalize a written document that summarizes your campaign strategy and tactics; including:

- Your campaign goal
- Lay of the Land The strategy you chose to use
- The tactics you have chosen to use, and who is responsible for each
- Timeline/calendar

Distribute the campaign plan to all members of your group, and give them an opportunity to edit or add any new information. You might also ask trusted advisors outside the group to review the plan and make any suggestions. Once everyone has had a chance to review and give feedback, finalize the plan.

Step 11: Follow Your Plan!

Remember that your plan is a living document – it should not sit on a shelf. Make sure everyone has a copy, and that they bring it to meetings. Use it to set your agenda for each meeting, and be sure that all of your members and volunteers are aware of upcoming events and deadlines.

If your plan is looking a little obsolete, don't use that as an excuse to shelve it. Unless you have a crystal ball, there's no way you got the plan exactly right the first time around. Update it! Make a habit of revisiting the plan periodically throughout your campaign. Stacked up against other priorities, it might not always feel like the best use of your time. But in the long run, it will save you countless hours because it will allow everyone in your group to get on the same page, and focus your energies on the most important tasks at hand.

Part Three

Campaign Tactics from A to Z

Chapter 3.1

You Can't Do It Alone: Building a Successful Campaign Team

If you're starting a new land use campaign from scratch, or looking to strengthen and diversify an existing group, recruiting and sustaining a core group of committed, active volunteers is critical to your success. This chapter talks about how to build – and keep – an effective campaign team.

How Can I Build a Team?

You know your land use campaign is important, but how do you find other groups and individuals in your community that share your values, and are willing to put time and energy into building a campaign team? How do you find people who are willing to go beyond signing petitions, and become leaders in your campaign?

There are two kinds of supporters: core volunteers and campaign supporters.

Campaign supporters are the people that sign petitions, write letters of support, make small donations, and/or attend hearings or events on occasion. These people may spend five minutes or two hours on your effort throughout the campaign. Chapter 3.5 talks about strategies to recruit campaign supporters through community outreach.

Core volunteers are people who repeatedly volunteer in your effort. Many of your core volunteers will start out as campaign supporters, and you should always keep an eye out for supporters that might be willing to ramp up their commitment. But you also need a separate tactic to recruit core volunteers, and that's what this chapter is about.

Who Am I Looking For?

Before you start asking people to join your campaign, think about what – and who – you want. The most successful land use campaigns have leadership with diverse interests and backgrounds, but who share the same basic commitment to an overall goal. The ideal group has people with expertise and interest in land use policy, local politics, fundraising, marketing and communication, community outreach, and volunteer management. On top of all this, you need people who actually have the time to commit to your campaign!

It's important to recognize each core volunteer does not need to have all these qualities. One or more volunteers may be politically-connected types or super-knowledgeable on land use issues but too busy to gather petition signatures or help with a fundraising mailing. Other volunteers may have lots of time and energy to help with mailings, put up posters and assist with other critical ground work, but little or no political savvy or land use expertise. It is when working as a team that a group exhibits the breadth of skills and knowledge that is most effective.

It is a useful exercise to write out what are your own interests, skills and areas of expertise, and those of your existing members. What's missing? Once you have identified your needs, then go out and start recruiting!

Where Do I Find Them?

Here are some strategies for recruiting core volunteers. Also refer to Chapter 3.5 for suggestions on broader community outreach efforts that could also yield core volunteers.

- **Start with who you know.** Your network of friends, neighbors and acquaintances is the best place to begin recruiting core volunteers. Start with your immediate circle, and branch outward to friends of friends, other neighbors and acquaintances. Ask mutual friends to introduce you, when necessary.
- **Approach like-minded groups.** What groups already exist in your community? Look for the local chapters of big environmental organizations, such as Sierra Club or Audubon, as well as local watershed groups, friends of local parks, political clubs and hiking or cycling groups. Think even broader: Rotary clubs, neighborhood or town associations, religious groups, the local League of Women Voters, chambers of commerce or merchants' associations. There are many gathering places for civic-minded, community-active individuals, some of whom may be sympathetic to your cause. Ask to make a presentation at their regular meeting, or even just show up and listen to what issues they're talking about, and start talking to people during the break. Follow up with sympathetic individuals.
- **Go to land use hearings.** Just showing up at hearings or local government meetings where land use or growth issues are on the agenda may help you recruit supporters. Put a stack of flyers on a table near the door, and see who takes one. Notice who gets up to testify on the land use issue of the day. Don't be afraid to go up and introduce yourself.
- **Ask like-minded elected officials.** Meet with local elected officials, current and former, that share your values. Ask for their help in recruiting supporters. Politicians are networkers by virtue of necessity, and if they are sympathetic to your cause they may be willing to connect you with their friends and supporters who are also allies.
- **When making a presentation to a group, make the pitch and pass out and COLLECT BACK supporter cards.** A supporter card makes it that much easier for you to get in touch with your new supporters. This asks for all their info such as name, email, home phone, work phone, and address. This supporter card should include check boxes for how they'd like to help. The key however is not expecting the supporters to take the card and later mail it back – but to give them 2 minutes to fill it out while you're there and pass it back to you. Then you can follow up with a phone call to invite them to help out.

How do I get people to join?

People get involved in efforts for a variety of reasons. The first one is of course agreeing with your goals. So in asking them to join you, precisely lay out the problem, solution, your campaign's goals, and what your group is doing.

Some other reasons people get involved are:

- They have a skill they like to use that you need
- They enjoy spending time with like-minded people
- They want to learn a new skill or how to campaign
- They want to make a difference in their community/world

Whenever you meet a potential supporter, always come prepared with a handout that explains what your new campaign is about, and a pitch for what you'd like the person to do. So think about the points above and weave these into your pitch.

“Hi Juanita, I'm working with a group of folks to keep Mariyuba County rural. As you know our latest general plan proposal by the county allows sprawling development. This is eating up our historic ranchlands and destroying our main street communities. I'm involved with a group campaigning for town-centered development and saving ag lands. We are preparing an alternative development proposal for the county board of supervisors to consider.

I've always admired that you are a great political strategist who really understands how our county board of supervisors works. Would you have time to join us for a planning meeting to advise us on strategies to get a smarter county plan?”

Don't ask for too much all at once. Start with something reasonable, like asking the person to attend one meeting, or asking for their help designing a flyer.

Now That I've Got Them, How Do I Keep Them?

Recruiting a great team for your campaign is immensely rewarding. One of the challenges is keeping their enthusiasm through the day-in, day-out work. People stay involved for different reasons than why they initially join. These include:

- Their skills are well utilized.
- Their input matters.
- They can see the campaign's progress.
- They enjoy working with the group.
- They are learning.
- They don't feel overwhelmed - their campaign role is manageable in their life.
- They feel appreciated by others in the group.

So knowing this, below are tips for creating an effort that retains your core volunteers.

- **Know your group.** Whether you are a group of three neighbors or a countywide coalition, keep tabs on your members. Know their capabilities and restraints, as well as their interests and commitment level. Know when their situation changes and they may need more time at home or at work.
- **Keep everyone informed.** Be sure that every individual in your group knows the plan, knows the benchmarks that indicate progress, knows when meetings and other activities will be happening. Even when someone is involved in only one element – such as helping get mailings out – they are participating because they are interested in the overall campaign. You can keep folks informed by reviewing at your meetings key recent accomplishments, through written email news updates, and sometimes phone calls. Keeping everyone up to date requires staying current with group members' phone numbers and email addresses.
- **Include the larger group in major decisions.** Ensure that lots of group members are part of making big decisions. As a group, decide what your decision-making process will be. Determine what key decisions you want the larger group to help make. Figure out what day-to-day decisions need quick turn around and a smaller decision-making subgroup can make. Whatever those processes are, be sure everyone knows and follows them. If the group is only one to three people making all the decisions and everyone else is just a worker bee, you will lose many of your members.
- **Delegate, delegate, delegate.** Too often, one or two leaders wind up doing all the work. Sometimes this is unavoidable, but often a little persistence and effort can transform a group dynamic so that everyone is an active participant, not just in meetings, but in the day-to-day responsibilities of the campaign. This requires thinking through strategies and dividing them up into tasks and subtasks. Don't be afraid to ask! The first meeting is not too early to have various members of your group volunteer to take on different tasks. At the end of each meeting, everyone should walk away with a to-do list.
- **Make it easy to help.** When assigning tasks, be clear with roles and expectations. Make sure that people know what they need to do, when they need to do it, and who to ask for help.
- **There is a role for everyone.** Ensure that the task and the volunteer are well-matched. If certain members of your group aren't raising their hands to volunteer for tasks, or they're not completing the tasks they've promised to do, chances are they don't have the right tasks. Talk to them one-on-one outside the meeting about what their interests and talents are, as well as how much time they can commit. Then, try to match up people with tasks that might interest them and fit into their skills and schedules.
- **Build leadership.** Grassroots organizing is a great way to help people develop new skills and cultivate their leadership potential, as well as accomplish campaign goals. Even Cesar Chavez started out as a campaign volunteer, recruited by a community organizer named Fred Ross who saw his potential. Recognize the talents of your group members (as well as your own!) and help cultivate those talents by giving them increasing amounts of responsibility. Doing so will help your campaign, and help your community as a whole. Plus, having different people in charge of different aspects of your campaign makes it run smoothly. Have one or two people in charge of coordinating everything related to a particular tactic, whether its putting on an event or tabling at

the farmer's market. This way volunteers know who to report to and tasks don't get lost, replicated, or confused.

- **Be thankful.** Remember, these are volunteers with an outside life; thank members for their contributions and efforts. Thank them verbally, acknowledge good work in meetings, and give out awards at key times in your campaign. Nothing burns someone out faster than feeling like no one appreciates their effort.
- **Have Fun!** It can be easy for volunteers to get burned out on whirlwind campaigns, or any campaign for that matter. Meetings are the cornerstone activity of any citizen group – and these can incorporate fun. Bring food to your meetings, piggy back fun activities when time allows, and encourage humor and laughter. Also make time for having ONLY fun. Hikes, BBQs, guest speakers and parties are a great way to energize your committed members, as well as recruit new supporters.
- **Celebrate and Acknowledge Accomplishments.** The key to making progress is to take time to acknowledge you are making progress as you go. Otherwise you may lose everyone (even when you are winning) simply because the effort feels overwhelming and the ultimate victory far away. So when crafting your campaign set up benchmarks along the way that signify progress to your goals. Do not use the last step of the campaign as the only gauge of success. So when you submit a number of petitions signatures or postcards – acknowledge this achievement. When the first of three required votes commits to your goals, celebrate with some sparkling cider at your meeting. When you get a good article in a newspaper – break open the M&Ms at the meeting.

Chapter 3.2

Building a Coalition

Why Build a Coalition?

Help strengthen your group's influence in the community by joining together with organizations that have access to different constituencies and, in many cases, different decision makers. A true partnership between diverse community organizations can make or break land use campaigns in rural, conservative communities, where many residents don't consider themselves environmentalists but share the same values of wanting to preserve community character and manage growth. A non-environmental organization, such as the local League of Women Voters or Merchants' Association, can carry your campaign's message to those who wouldn't otherwise be sympathetic to you.

You will also learn a lot from your coalition partners, who have their own concerns about growth, their own expertise, and their own methods of political organizing. Just as the environmental movement has its own distinct culture, other kinds of organizations have unique cultures and ways of doing things, and cross-pollination can be extremely beneficial for everyone involved.

Not every group or leader you might hope would agree with your goals will. However, it is always beneficial to go out and develop relationships with your community's leaders, even if the end result is that you politely agree to disagree. At a very minimum, these experiences will help you to more fully understand the dynamics of power in your community, which will allow you to run a more effective campaign.

Different Kinds of Coalitions

Coalitions built around land use campaigns vary widely, from loose-knit networks for information sharing to close partnerships where organizations pool their resources, work in lockstep, and share decision-making authority. In the latter case, the coalition essentially becomes the campaign.

- **Sign-on specific action:** This is where you issue a letter or petition where different groups agree on the message and text of the vehicle and for this one action, join on. The partnership in this case is short term and very specific.
- **Loose Network:** This is where the groups do not publicly identify they are working together, but share information and occasionally strategize together. The purpose of this is to loosely coor-

dinate efforts. However, all members are open to take different positions and the list of groups working together is never used to influence someone.

- **Loose Coalition:** This is like a network, but the list of groups working together creates a name and publicizes who is sharing information. However, the coalition never formally signs on or takes a position as a coalition. All advocacy is still done independently.
- **Tight Coalition:** This is where the coalition creates a shared set of goals and develops a campaign plan together. A formal coalition list is drawn up, a formal decision making process is put in place, and the coalition publicly advocates together for a unified outcome. Individual groups can take action independently but work to ensure their efforts are symbiotic and not in conflict with a shared set of goals.
- **Coalition Campaign:** This is similar to the effort above, but all groups in the coalition agree not to act independently on the topic at hand and all decisions about the campaign are made as a coalition. This could include agreeing not to fundraise independently on the campaign but only as a coalition. This type of coalition requires a high degree of structure, trust, and excellent facilitation.

There are pros and cons to all these approaches. Tight Coalitions and Coalition Campaigns can be quite powerful, particularly when the members are considered strange bedfellows that cross-cut issues and constituencies. In addition, pooling resources and coordinating efforts means that all partners get the most bang for their buck, and ensures that efforts are additive, not duplicative.

However, Tight Coalitions and Coalition Campaigns mean that every coalition partner must relinquish some level of control. This is not easy for anyone to do, and it can also be very problematic if there are fundamental disagreements about goals and strategies, or the partners don't trust each other. Think carefully about whether you are willing to share power with your coalition partners, and read the section below on "tips for working with your coalition."

Ultimately, your coalition or network will be a reflection of the unique organizations and individual leaders in your community. You might start out simply sharing information as a network, but as relationships deepen over time, your coalition could evolve into another model.

How to Identify Potential Coalition Partners

Your first instinct may be to approach other organizations that are closest in nature to your own: other environmental groups. There are many good reasons to do so, and such partnerships are only natural. Indeed, it is important to have the local environmental community in agreement and working together.

However, it is important to look beyond the environmental community for coalition partners. Here are some categories of non-traditional allies, and reasons they might have for getting involved in your land use campaign:

Local Business Associations/Small Business Owners: Sprawl development, particularly the strip malls and big-box stores that accompany new subdivisions, is bad for local businesses and historic business districts. As development sprawls outward, customers are drawn further and further away from the downtown area. By contrast, new infill development, both residential and commercial, can revitalize these older districts and sustain local businesses by drawing residents inward, rather than outward.

Schools/PTAs: School districts are required by law to serve all school-age children in their district, but new development often doesn't pay the full cost of expanding school facilities to meet the needs of new residents. As a result, schools become overcrowded, and resources are drawn away from existing schools to accommodate new development.

Farmers and Ranchers: Farmers and ranchers are the stewards of many of our beloved Sierra landscapes. Their livelihood depends upon the land and, as such, they have an interest in preserving ranching and farming as viable industries. Sprawl development causes many problems for agriculturalists. As new neighbors move in, they complain about smells, dust and noise, and traffic on roads can disrupt farm operations. As more and more agricultural land is converted to urban development, the community begins to lose the infrastructure necessary to support the agricultural economy (such as processing facilities and supply warehouses), and thus it becomes even harder for the remaining ranchers and farmers to stay in business.

Civic Institutions: Organizations like the League of Women Voters, Rotary Clubs, and other community-minded institutions are proponents of democracy and public participation in the political process. Thus these organizations may not endorse a particular position, but they will facilitate public education and help raise awareness of local land use decision-making processes. These groups will sponsor forums and public meetings where you can reach new audiences. In some instances, local LWV or Rotary chapters may actually endorse your campaign.

Partisan Clubs: Both the Democratic and Republican parties maintain an infrastructure of County committees and local clubs. In some counties, these clubs are only active during state and national races. Many, however, get involved in local races and take positions on local issues. Many Republicans are concerned about the environment generally, and local growth issues specifically, so don't discount your local Republican Club without doing some research. The Democratic party, on the other hand, is more of a natural ally, as environmental protection is a basic component of the Democratic agenda.

Affordable housing advocates: In much of California – and increasingly in the Sierra – affordable housing has become an issue of concern. New groups are springing up in the foothills and resort towns alike to lobby for housing that is affordable to locals. Sprawl development is a major contributing factor to this affordable housing crisis, as new developments are often sprawling, high-end homes that are targeted to wealthy retirees or second homebuyers and are unaffordable to local residents. Infill development, by contrast, tends to create smaller homes that are more reasonably-priced and closer to jobs, schools and all the services that local residents need.

Neighborhood or Community Associations: Neighborhood groups and rural community associations are geographically-based groups that organize to improve and protect the place they care about. In many cases they are well-organized and have close working relationships with the County Supervisor or Town Councilmember who represents their district. These groups are often staunch supporters of protecting open space adjacent to their town or neighborhood.

Transportation Advocates: Land use and transportation are inextricably linked. Sprawling development increases traffic by forcing people to drive to work, school and errands, while infill development allows people to walk, bike or take mass transit to accomplish their daily lives. The average person may not pay attention to land use planning, but they do notice traffic! Traffic is so bad in some places – largely as a result of sprawl development – that traffic watchdog groups have sprung up to monitor local government action on transportation. Some of these groups advocate for building roads; others

want to expand mass transit programs. In either case, land use decisions have a major impact on the success or failure of traffic fixes.

Tribal Organizations: Sprawl development often threatens lands that are culturally significant to California's and Nevada's indigenous people, and many tribal organizations actively participate in local land use planning processes. Under CEQA, before any new development takes place, an assessment of cultural and archaeological resources must be conducted, and the information made publicly available.

Water Advocates and Watershed Groups: New development can have major impacts on water supply and quality. Many of the Sierra's watersheds have local stewardship groups that work to protect and restore local creeks and rivers. These groups have an interest in preserving watershed lands and preventing overdevelopment that will further stretch water supply.

Recreational Clubs: Hikers, cyclists, birders, hunters and fishing enthusiasts might all have a stake in preserving open space that provides wildlife habitat or scenic views. Particularly if the land in question is adjacent to popular parks, hunting areas or creeks used for fishing, these can be large and dedicated constituencies.

How To Approach Potential Coalition Partners

Once you've identified a group that you want to become a coalition partner, develop a tactic for approaching them. In developing your coalition plans, ask yourself (and your group) the following questions:

Who will you approach? Research the group and figure out which individual, or individuals, might be the most sympathetic.

Who will do the approaching? Who should represent your group? Do you have any mutual friends that should make the initial contact, and/or come to the first meeting?

How will you approach them? If possible, try to meet with a sympathetic member or two, before going to the full group. This will give you an opportunity to gauge their level of interest, and cultivate a relationship with that individual, who can advocate to the rest of the group on your behalf.

What will you ask them to do? Think carefully about what you want the organization to do. With a familiar group, you might be ready to ask for their full commitment to the campaign. But if there is no previous relationship, you should start by asking for a smaller commitment. Here are some things you can ask for:

- Can you make a presentation at their regular meeting?
- Will the organization endorse your position?
- Will they put an article about the campaign in their newsletter?
- Can you send an informational mail piece or email to their members?
- Would they co-host a town hall meeting, community forum, or guest lecture about the topic?
- If they're not willing to co-host, will they at least help to publicize an event by distributing information to their members?

- Will they send a representative to testify at an upcoming hearing, or meet with a key decision maker?
- Will they make a contribution to the campaign?
- Will they send a representative to attend network meetings to share information on the effort?

If you find an organization that is willing to do all, or even half, of these things, you've found yourself a good coalition partner!

Tips on working with your coalition:

- **Assess carefully before you ask.** Make sure you thoroughly understand your potential allies' desired outcomes. They need not necessarily share your core values, but their goals and strategies must be compatible with your own.
- **Listen.** Once a new organization has joined your effort, listen carefully to them and make sure their input is reflected in your goals and strategies. If their interests are not being met through this coalition, they won't invest time and resources into it.
- **Be prepared to share control.** This is one of the hardest things for all activists, newcomers and veterans alike, to do. But it is critical to the success of the coalition. To minimize infighting over major decisions, decide upon your decision-making structure before you have actual decisions to make!
- **Identify areas of disagreement at the starting gate.** Spend time up front to identify areas of potential disagreement, and determine if they are deal-breakers. If they are not deal-breakers, the coalition must adopt certain ground rules for how you will deal with those issues. In our WalMart example, imagine that a potential coalition partner is the local Merchants Association, who oppose the WalMart because it will take business away from their shops, but don't care about the rare plants in the meadow and, in fact, oppose the endangered species act. This may not be a deal-breaking issue (because you might save the meadow without talking about endangered species) but you would need to decide how the coalition will deal with this issue when it comes up.

Example: Strange Bedfellows in Fairfield, CA

When open space activists wanted to enact an Urban Growth Boundary around the city of Fairfield, in Solano County, they knew that voters in this conservative, military town wouldn't pay much attention to environmentalists. They found unexpected allies in a group of retired military veterans who were concerned about urban encroachment on Travis Air Force Base, the hub of the local economy.

And thus a strange partnership was formed, led by a retired Air Force Colonel and a longtime environmental activist. The two had historically been on opposite sides of various disputes, and they would be again, but on this issue they were in agreement: development threatened the future viability of Travis Air Force Base, just as it threatened wildlife and agriculture on the other side of town.

Both groups contributed equal amounts of time, money and volunteers to the campaign, and the group chose patriotic colors and messages to appeal to the overwhelming military presence in the town. Despite well-funded opposition from developers, the Urban Growth Boundary won in a landslide, garnering 63% of the vote.

Chapter 3.3

Talking Growth: Crafting Effective Messages

Land use planning is an inherently complex subject, one that doesn't boil down easily into sound bites. However, the sound bite, or slogan, is the first opportunity for communication. From the bumper sticker to the pin on your lapel to the heading on your poster or lawn sign, your slogan is your "foot in the door" -- it is your first step in communicating your message to the decision makers and the public.

Once you have a slogan, you also want to create a campaign story. The story explains your campaign in a minute or two. It is the news release background, the elevator speech, the petition signing pitch. Once you have communicated your campaign story, you can layer in more information and detail when the setting is appropriate -- when you have more than a page or more than 2 minutes to communicate. But even when you do have more time or space to communicate, the slogan and story are the headlines and theme that effectively package and communicate your campaign.

So there is no excuse for talking like a policy wonk -- it only means that we as land use advocates have a greater challenge to get our point across to the public. One of the main reasons that more people don't get involved in local land use issues is that they don't take the time to understand all the planning jargon.

This chapter talks about

- a) How to craft effective slogans about land use in your community, so that everyday people take notice and know your effort.
- b) How to craft your story about the campaign, so those who don't understand planning law but care deeply about their community can be a part of your campaign.
- c) Choosing your messengers. Who delivers the message is 90% of the effectiveness of the message.

The importance of having ONE lead message and Slogan

There's an old rule in political organizing that you have to repeat the exact same message three times for people to hear it. Three times! And that's not to convince people, that's just to make them listen.

In our advertising-dominated world, we are bombarded by thousands of messages every day. As community organizers, we are competing for people's attention with TV, billboards, radio, newspapers, bumper stickers, fast-food signs, and many other sources of mental clutter.

We have the advantage of being local. Our effort impacts a community member's 'back yard.' Plus, we can knock on people's doors, talk to them in the supermarket, and put up lawn signs.

But nevertheless, it is critically important for your campaign to have a clear, strong slogan that is repeated over and over, in everything that you do, everywhere you go. If it isn't clear, it is hard to repeat. If it isn't repeated, it will never break through the cacophony of our media-saturated lives.

Anatomy of a Winning Campaign Slogan: Keep Tahoe Blue

Here in the Sierra we have a great example of a slogan: Keep Tahoe Blue. Who hasn't seen these ubiquitous blue bumper stickers all over the Sierra and California? Why has this message been so wildly successful?

"Keep Tahoe Blue" obeys all the rules of a good message:

- Values-based.
- Outcome-focused, not process-focused.
- Short and sweet.
- Clear.
- Solution-oriented, not problem-oriented.
- Inclusive.
- Simple visual with consistent colors, easy to identify at a glance.

Just think, would it be so well known if it was Stop Eutrophication in Lake Tahoe? Cease Development and Land Use Impacts Increasing Sediment and Pollutants to Lake Tahoe?

Let's break down each of these rules further, and apply them to land use processes.

Rule # 1: Values-based

In talking about land use, we often start by talking about the problem and the solution. However, all our communications should be based, first and foremost, on values.

Think about why you're organizing this campaign, why you are spending time and energy on this when you could be doing a million other things with your time. It's about your values. You're concerned about your town or county's future. You think development should benefit the community as a whole, not just a handful of developers and land speculators. You believe in the intrinsic value of open space and healthy air and water. You think decisions about growth should be made democratically, not behind closed doors. These are your values, and they are not just yours – most people feel the same way.

When you're developing your slogan, start by thinking what values you want to convey. Think of your values as the common ground that you establish between yourself and your audience. Once

you've established that common ground, your audience is more receptive to hearing your thoughts on the problem and the solution.

Rule # 2: Outcome-Focused, Not Process-Focused

As advocates and planning wonks, we have a tendency to talk about the planning process:
“The Planning Commission wants to upzone these 5,000 acres from 160s to 40s, which doesn't comply with the General Plan land use designation or the agricultural mitigation policy! Isn't that terrible?!”

Well, yes, to you and me that is terrible, because we know what you're talking about. To 99% of the people in your community, that statement is meaningless.

Focus on the outcome, not the process. In the example above, the process is the rezoning, while the outcome is that 5,000 acres of farmland will be lost to development.

Rule # 3: Short and Sweet

Let's face it, we have short attention spans. Your slogan should use as few words as possible, and those words should themselves be short and simple.

Rule # 4: Clear

Avoid jargon. Use words and phrases that ordinary people understand. Your meaning should be clear to anyone and everyone. For example, most people don't know what the word “sprawl” means, but they do understand “poorly-planned growth.” See the box below for suggestions on phrases to use, and those to avoid.

Another aspect of clarity is being specific about place. If the area you're concerned about has a name, use it. Instead of saying Save Ranchland, say Save Bear Creek Valley.

Phrases to Avoid	Phrases to Use
Ecosystems	Natural Areas
Biodiversity	Fish and Wildlife
Regulations & Laws	Safeguards, protections
Riparian	Creeks, rivers and lakes
Watershed	Land around rivers, creeks and lakes
Agricultural land	Farmland or ranchland, working landscapes
Urban sprawl	Poorly-planned growth, out of control growth, over-development
Habitat	Wildlife areas, homes for wildlife
Infill development, smart growth	Compact growth, historic small town growth patterns, downtown revitalization

Rule # 5. Solution-Oriented, Not Problem-Oriented.

Having a positive vision for the future is essential. It's important to explain the problem, but it is more inspiring to explain the solution. Can you imagine bumper stickers that say "Lake Tahoe is Polluted"?

Rule # 6: Inclusive.

Your slogan should appeal to the broadest audience possible. You don't need to live in Tahoe to believe that we should keep it blue. If you've ever driven past Lake Tahoe, or just seen it in photographs, you can understand the importance of protecting its beauty. Similarly, your slogan should appeal to a broad segment of your community, not just birders or cyclists or farmers or planning wonks.

Follow these rules and use your creativity and that of your group members to develop a slogan that will carry your campaign into the hearts of your community.

Tell the Story

Along with a slogan, you also need a story that is consistent, memorable and powerful. All of the rules that apply to slogans also apply to stories.

The basic elements of the story are:

Problem

What is the threat or problem that you are trying to address? Summarize it in one or two sentences. Remember to be specific, clear and outcome-focused.

Example: A proposed growth plan would pave 15,000 acres of forests and ranchlands and dump 3,000 more cars on our already-congested roads every day.

Solution

What should be done to solve the problem? Sometimes the proposed land use project is a no-brainer, like a cyanide heap leach mine or new mega-resort development in an environmentally sensitive area. In those cases, the solution might just be no way, no how, never. But most land use battles are about development our communities need and/or want, such as housing, retail, cell phone towers, tourism attractions, etc. The question is – where, how and how much? In these cases, it's important to articulate a vision for how this growth can be appropriate, rather than just saying no. What is the alternative?

Example: Instead of destroying our forests and ranchlands, the County should direct growth into towns like Oak City or Yuba Valley. This will put housing and jobs closer together, reduce traffic and protect our economy and rural character.

Urgency

Why should your audience worry about this right now, and take action to do something about it? Is the threat about to become a reality? Is there an opportunity to get the solution implemented?

Example: Next month, the County Board of Supervisors will vote on a plan that decides how our County will grow over the next ten years. So it's a really important time for all of us to speak up about how we want our community to grow.

Strategy

What is your strategy for getting the solution to happen? In other words, who are you asking to do what?

Example: Citizens for a Rural Mariyuba is asking the County to adopt an alternative plan that would protect open space, while still allowing needed growth in appropriate places, like downtown Yuba Valley.

Action

What can people do to help? Specifically, what can the person on the other end of this conversation do?

Example: We're trying to get 1,000 people to write a letter to the Board of Supervisors, and 100 people to attend the hearing next month. Your letter or presence at the hearing would really make a difference.

Choose Your Messenger

The messenger is as important as the message itself. This is true for all aspects of a campaign, from written materials to lobbying to working with the media. Your messenger should be someone who is credible, trustworthy and likeable to the particular audience he or she is addressing. Who would the local Sierra Club chapter trust? How about the local farm bureau? How about the average community member that is looking at your campaign literature?

There are very few individuals who would be considered credible and likeable by everyone, so you will need to choose carefully, and recruit/cultivate several different spokespeople to represent your campaign. Your chances of convincing your target audience – be it a potential coalition partner or County Supervisor or ordinary community member – will be much greater if they like your messenger.

Your messenger need not be someone that the audience already knows – although it is great if they do. However, the messenger should be able to establish credibility by talking about who they are and what they value. Think carefully about who will be the most trusted, respected messenger for that particular task.

Having a stable of diverse messengers is yet another reason to build a broad-based coalition: the broader your coalition, the more messengers you have to choose from!

Some Final Thoughts About Message

Know your audience: Your message may vary somewhat depending upon your audience. Are you speaking to elected officials, the media, or a farm bureau meeting? Your core message should remain the same, but your emphasis can and should reflect the interests and priorities of your audience.

When in doubt, poll. Polling is a very useful tool for determining what message (and messenger) resonates most within your particular community or constituency. Polling is expensive, but if you are planning to put a lot of resources into a campaign, it's an upfront investment that will pay off in the long run. If polling is beyond your financial reach, you can still apply the same basic principle by doing mass outreach in your community, whether through a mailed survey, phone banking, tabling at community events, and other kinds of outreach described in Chapter 3.5.

Test your message on somebody “normal.” Remember that as community organizers and planning wonks, we are freaks (you know what we mean). The rest of the world isn't immersed in issues and politics the way we are. For this reason, it is extremely helpful to test your message on someone outside your activist circle. When Land Use Coordinator Autumn Bernstein first started organizing around land use, she was living with her 82-year-old grandmother, who became Autumn's sounding board for messages. Autumn's grandmother didn't know anything about planning, but she loved birds and the huge old oak tree that grew outside her window, and she, like most people, had an inherent sense of fairness and democracy.

Don't just develop a message – deliver it! Crafting a message is a fun and creative process, and it often leads to lively – and lengthy – discussions within your group. But remember that developing the message is only 10% -- the other 90% is getting it out there. Set aside time at one or two meetings to develop your message. If that's not enough time, appoint a subcommittee to finish the job, and move on. The next chapter describes how to create materials such as fact sheets and lawn signs to start getting your message out there.

Chapter 3.4

Materials with Impact

Once you've decided upon a slogan and story, you should develop some materials to communicate that message to your audience. This chapter describes guidelines for developing the most basic and inexpensive materials, as well as sophisticated materials for campaigns with more resources.

Investing in materials will boost your confidence when approaching decision makers, coalition-partners, community members and donors. Good materials convey your message clearly, show that you mean business, and give your audience something to take home. Fun items like lapel buttons and bumper stickers create a sense of community and allow your volunteers to become ambassadors for the cause.

Fact Sheet

A one-page fact sheet, commonly referred to as a “one-pager,” is the staple of any land use campaign. This is your all-purpose information sheet, which you give to anyone and everyone to describe the issue and your campaign. Every volunteer should carry a handful with them at all times.

Your fact sheet should first and foremost convey your message. It should be informative, but it should also be compelling, concise and spur people to take action. This is not the place for in-depth policy analysis. Save the details for your CEQA comment letter, and have a few copies of your comment letter available to anyone who wants more detailed information.

A sample fact sheet is included in Appendix G. Here are the key elements every fact sheet should contain:

- **Your Slogan** (See chapter 3.3)
- **Your Story** (See chapter 3.3)
- **Who are you?** One paragraph describing your organization, along with contact info. This is your opportunity to establish your values, and make a connection with the reader's values. If you're an all-volunteer organization, be sure to say so. If you have a website, include the URL here.

- **How can I help?** One to three short paragraphs describing the ways interested people can help.
 1. Contact the decision makers. Include contact info for the appropriate decision makers, as well as one or two sentences about what they should include in their call or email.
 2. Volunteer. Ask people to donate their time to the campaign, and give contact info for how to get involved.
 3. Make a donation. Remind people that yours is a grassroots effort, supported entirely by donations, and ask for a contribution. Include information about where to send a check, whom to make it out to, and whether or not the donation is tax-deductible.
- **Photograph(s).** Include photos of the scenic local landscape, quaint downtown or natural features, ones that demonstrate your values and what is at stake. Alternatively you can use photos that remind people of the threat, be it a bulldozer or an ugly, unpopular local development, or an aerial photo of sprawl or traffic at a well-known intersection.
- **Readable and visually interesting.** There's a reason they call it a one-pager. If you've got a letter-sized piece of paper covered with 8-point text on both sides, you're cheating. Your slogan and photo should be large and attention getting. Break up the text with bullets and text boxes. In terms of size, some prefer a half-page with text on both sides, to a full-page with text on one side. The half-page size is more visually interesting and easier to hold onto, and it fits in purses and wallets and pockets more easily.

Optional Fact Sheet elements or Additional Sheets:

These are some great things to include, if you can.

- **List of endorsers or coalition partners:** If you have prominent community organizations or noteworthy individuals among your group, list them. If you don't yet have an impressive list of endorsers, skip it for now, and go back and revise when you do!
- **A simple map:** A map depicting the area(s) threatened by potential development is a great visual for people. It makes the threat real. Most counties now have Global Information System (GIS) mapping capability. Ask your planning staff if they have produced a map showing the area in question. If so, it is public information and they should give you a digital version of the image, which you can include on your fact sheet. Alternatively, Green Info Network is a non-profit organization based in San Francisco that produces professional, high-quality maps at a discounted rate for environmental groups. Their contact information is included in Appendix J.
- **Supporter card:** A supporter card makes it that much easier for you to get in touch with your supporters. This asks for all their info such as name, email, home phone, work phone, and address. This supporter card should include check boxes for how they'd like to help. Doing a supporter card as part of a fact sheet that can actually be mailed straight back to you is tricky: it must be printed on card stock, it must meet USPS requirements, and if included in the fact sheet it must have a perforation where it detaches from the main fact sheet. All of these requirements mean you'll probably need the services of a professional printer and/or designer, unless you have an amateur graphic designer and printing whiz in your group. However, reply cards are incred-

ibly effective, and if you can afford it, they are definitely worth doing. Alternatively, you can carry around a separate stack of supporter cards that you hand out with the one-pager.

- **Event information:** When preparing a fact sheet, beware of including time-dependent information (such as dates of upcoming hearings, etc), because these fact sheets will be obsolete when that time passes. However, if you're making a major push to get people to a hearing, you should definitely accompany the fact sheet with a specific sheet on an upcoming event (hearing, meeting, forum etc). Make sure the date of the event and other info is prominently located.

Other Materials:

Website

Websites are not an absolute necessity, but they are a very good idea. Nowadays there are applications and websites which make it simple to build your own website. If you've got a volunteer who is willing to take this on, do it! A basic, bare-bones website can build off of your slogan, story and one pager. You can also create an information clearinghouse with links to relevant info on the County's website, your CEQA comment letters, maps, photos, press releases, sample letters, and information on upcoming hearings. Don't forget information on how to get involved and contact your campaign!

Newsletters and mail pieces

Printed newsletters and mail pieces are a great way to reach a large audience, particularly in rural Sierra counties lacking gathering places like farmer's markets and shopping centers. Names and addresses of registered voters are available from the Registrar of Voters or County Clerk's office, usually for a nominal fee. Between printing and postage, the average mailer costs about \$0.40 - \$0.60 per piece, so think carefully about who you want to send to, and what you'll ask them to do. Newsletters and mail pieces are particularly useful for informing people about upcoming hearings and community meetings, and for soliciting comment letters and donations. If you're thinking about doing a mailer, consider including a tear-off reply card or a return envelope. Mailers are already expensive, so the additional expense might be worth it, for the number of replies you'll receive.

Email news and action alerts

Email is faster and cheaper than postal mail. It is also increasingly the primary form most folks use to communicate.

However, this medium has its drawbacks. Many people's inboxes are saturated with junk mail and action alerts from a range of organizations, big and small. They feel overwhelmed by all the information and requests for action. And there are a number of people who still don't use email regularly.

If you decide to make email your primary source of communication with members, make sure to:

- Keep the subject line simple and to the point.
 - ◇ "Action Alert: Attend hearing to stop county sprawl"
 - ◇ "Campaign Meeting: Monday at 7:00"
- Start the body of your email summarizing the email and what you want. Say it all in two lines – then provide more details below.

- ◇ “Hit reply if you can help design our website.”
 - ◇ “Come attend a campaign meeting on Monday regarding growth in the County.”
- Use html and formatting for quick scanning. So use the bold, color and underline to headline sections so that folks reading fast can scan to what they need.
 - Avoid attachments whenever possible. Attachments can be slow for a number of folks on slower services (a rampant problem throughout the Sierra due to a lack of high speed internet access). Just cut and paste stuff directly into your email.
 - Keep a list of your members who don’t have email, and get in the habit of printing and mailing a hard copy of your newsletter or action alert.
 - Don’t overdo it. Nothing turns off email users more quickly than an overload of email. Don’t cry wolf at every turn in the road, lest your supporters not listen when you need them most. If you find yourself sending out an email every day, move to issuing a once-a-week or monthly email update with news, needs, and actions. Then issue only alerts that can’t possibly wait until your next Campaign update.

PowerPoint and other presentation materials

PowerPoint presentations are a great way to visually convey your verbal message to large and small audiences, at Rotary Club meetings or Planning Commission hearings, even in one-on-one meetings with supervisors. Of course, PowerPoints require a laptop and projector, but some organizations have their own equipment, and you need only bring the CD.

Avoid reading your PowerPoint script and putting more than a short sentence on each slide. PowerPoints are really there for showing great pictures, maps, easy to understand tables/graphs, and reinforcing simple messages. They are not about a lot of text.

If a PowerPoint is unrealistic for you, think about ways you can incorporate visual elements into your presentations. Photos, maps, and selected statistics all make compelling visuals, and these can be blown up to poster size and displayed in the room.

Tabling display

If you’re planning to do outreach at community fairs, farmers’ markets or other events, you should make some display materials to draw people in. The maps, photographs and other materials you made for presentations can all be used here. The next chapter talks in detail about tabling.

Petitions, postcards and other materials for demonstrating community support

Chapter 3.5 talks about strategies to build and demonstrate community support for your campaign, including that old standby, the petition. Like all your materials, petitions should follow the basic rules about message.

Buttons, lapel stickers and t-shirts

Who doesn’t love a good button? Lapel stickers are also gaining in popularity, because you can make them at home with just your printer and some mailing labels. These are great for supporters to wear at hearings and community meetings, and to wear around town. Stickers are an excellent and inexpen-

sive way to increase your visibility. T-shirts are more expensive, but they also create a great impression, especially if they're brightly colored and you get fifty people to show up at a hearing wearing them.

Lawn Signs

Lawn signs are an expensive but very effective way to create visibility, especially in rural areas. They cost an average of \$3 per sign, and the minimum order size is usually 250 or 500 signs. You can also create homemade window signs, but those are less effective in rural areas, and they don't hold up outside as well as professionally made signs.

Chapter 3.5

Building Community Support: How to Raise Public Awareness of Your Issue

It should be the responsibility of local government agencies to simplify and explain land use to the public, and facilitate democratic involvement in land use decisions. Indeed, planning law requires them to do so. But local governments vary widely in their commitment to public participation.

As land use advocates, it falls to us to inform the public and mobilize them to take action on land use. When we do grassroots outreach, we are not only acting as agents of democracy, we are also benefiting our campaigns in many ways:

- We're recruiting new supporters that can be called upon to attend hearings or make a donation,
- we're generating buzz which trickles up to ears in high places,
- we're conducting informal polling to understand what our fellow community members care about, and
- we're developing new skills and leadership abilities within our core group.

In the previous two chapters, we discussed what kinds of messages and materials are effective for talking about land use issues and mobilizing support for your campaign. This chapter discusses some tried and true strategies for putting those messages and materials into action.

Some Basic Rules of Community Outreach

- **Always collect contact info.** If someone expresses even a mild interest in your issue or campaign, ask for their contact information. Have a sign-up sheet or supporter card with a clipboard and pen at the ready. If people question you, be honest and clear about how you will use their information. You're not selling anything, you're helping people stay abreast of issues that are important to them, so don't feel bad about asking! If someone refuses to give their contact info, don't argue or plead, just give them your one-pager with your contact info, and ask them to get in touch if they change their mind.
- **It's all about the lists.** Keep all your supporters' contact info in a database or spreadsheet. A database/spreadsheet helps you print up-to-date lists for calling, creating mailing labels, and pulling emails to distribute alerts and updates. When you gather information, record as much information as possible about where you met them, how they want to help, the best way to reach them, etc. You'll need all this info for the various outreach strategies discussed below.

- **Know your rap ahead of time.** Review your story (the basic campaign pitch reviewed in Chapter 3.3) and what you are asking members of the public to do right there and then to help your cause. This could be signing a petition, committing to attend a hearing, making a donation, or signing up for a volunteer shift. Come prepared with whatever materials you need, and practice your rap ahead of time so you're comfortable with it.
- **Make sure volunteers are up to speed.** If you have lots of volunteers doing outreach, make sure everyone is on the same page, knows the rap of the day, what they're doing, and is comfortable doing it. It's not a bad idea to make a volunteer sheet with your rap and any other instructions or helpful tips for volunteers. Most volunteers don't need it for very long, but it can be helpful and a confidence builder at first. If you've got a lot of volunteers, consider doing a volunteer training, where you demonstrate your outreach technique and give people a chance to role-play.
- **Set numeric goals.** There is no better way to generate excitement in a campaign than to set – and meet – numeric goals for outreach. Say, for example, you're collecting signatures on a petition. Set a goal for how many signatures you'll gather every week, every day, every hour you're actively gathering signatures.

Experienced campaigner typical goals (low number first timers, high # experienced)

Petitioning	15-30 signatures an hour – at supermarkets, post office busy times.
Post cards	15-30 an hour
Phone calls	Dial 33 numbers, talk to 10 people
Door literature	35 an hour (in dense single family home neighborhood – higher in areas with apartment/condos)
Door to door lawn signs	5 an hour

Check your goals against your experience in your area. If, on your first day gathering signatures, you got 30 signatures in 3 hours, then a reasonable goal would be ten per hour. Multiply this by how many volunteers are gathering signatures for how many hours per day, over the course of how many weeks, and set your overall signature-gathering goal accordingly. If you find you're exceeding your goal, share the good news, celebrate, and increase your goal. If you find your goal was unrealistic, don't give up, just revise to make it more accurate.

- **Don't forget to fundraise.** Often times, community groups don't think about fundraising until there's an urgent need to spend the money, on a mailing or attorney fees or another major expense. Don't wait until it's too late! Fundraising should be an integral part of everything you do. Pass the hat at meetings. When tabling or handing out flyers at community events, put a jar on the table. If someone is interested in your campaign but too busy to volunteer, ask them to make a donation. There are a million clever and fun ways to raise money. For more information about fundraising see Chapter 3.9.

With these rules in mind, the following are some tried and true ways to do community outreach around land use issues.

The Petition Drive!

Petitions are one of the oldest – and still very effective – ways to organize community support. Both the public and decision makers know what they are, and what they mean.

The key to petition drives is QUANTITY. Set a numeric goal and figure out a plan to get that many signatures. Most local officials are elected by a margin of hundreds of votes, so it becomes politically difficult for them to ignore a petition signed by several thousand voters.

The petition should have on it:

- To whom it is addressed (county supervisors, one particular supervisor etc)
- Short problem, solution, agency statement
- What action you want the decision maker to take
- For each signature – name, address, city, zip –and include phone number or email if you may want to contact these same folks later to attend a hearing/event.

Decide who should sign them, and collect additional information that reflects your focus. If you want to show broad support, collect signatures from anyone no matter of age, location, voter status etc. If you are trying to show a particular decision maker that their constituency is behind this, you may want to restrict collection to adults living in a particular district – or even voters in a district. Or, if you want to show that small business owners oppose the WalMart proposal, you might want to have each person list the name of her business.

If you want to gather signatures to qualify a ballot measure, you will need to read an entire other guide about writing the ballot measure and getting an official petition started. A list of those guide-books can be found in Appendix C.

Positive of petitions:

- You can get many signatures per one page!
- People are familiar with them and open to signing.

Downside of petitions:

- They make a smaller stack visually, compared to postcards
- It take a lot of signatures to appear significant.

The Postcard Drive!

A modern variation on the petition drive is the postcard campaign, where you ask people to sign pre-printed postcards that are addressed to key decision makers.

The key to post cards is also QUANTITY. Set a numeric goal and figure out a plan to get that many postcards. The advantage of postcards over petitions is that 100 post cards makes a bigger stack than 100 petition signatures (usually about ten pages.) So their advantage is often delivering them all at once to make quite a visual impression of the numbers.

The postcard should have on it everything the petition has above – WITH room for a personal note. The personalization shows the decision maker that it really means something to the signer. An example could be a space that says. “I want you to keep Mariyuba rural because:” and someone could fill in – I have 3 children and I want them to have clean air and no traffic.” Or “I grew up here and I love agriculture.”

Once again, decide who can sign them. See petition above.

Decide how you’ll deliver them:

- **The Drumbeat:** you could put 100 cards in the mail each week so the office feels like the issue is continually on the table
- **The Photo Op:** You could deliver the postcards in big sacks all at once. Choose a container – a sack or old fruit crates or some other container of significance. Then invite the media to come with you at an appointed time to haul all the cards up to the decision maker’s office. Ask to give them to the decision maker directly (and if they are not there – give to the secretary). This makes a great photo event and opportunity for an article.
- **The Event Moment:** You could deliver the postcards at a hearing or other public forum. This will ensure the decision maker is there. See photo op – and do it all the same, but at a public event.

Positive of postcards:

- You get more visual volume for events
- You can personalize them
- They’re unusual – less commonly used than petitions

Downside of postcards:

- If you choose to mail them in – you have the added expense of postage
- If you let individuals mail them in – probably 75% will never actually stick it in the mail (it will become a book mark or fall on the car floor and be found months later – no ill will, but there is enough in our lives without another task on our to-do lists.)

Speaking opportunities

Find opportunities to make presentations about your issue to community organizations such as local Audubon Society chapters, Rotary clubs, neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, church groups, etc. Do some research about the organizations in your area that hold regular meetings, make a list, and start calling!

- Pass out supporter cards at the beginning of your presentation, and collect them back at the end of your speech. Even if you only have 5 minutes – pass out cards so everyone in the audience gets one. Tell them you’ll collect them all back and reuse the blank ones. This is a great way to find volunteers and has the highest volunteer sign up rate compared to passing a clipboard around, tabling, or petitioning.
- Take note of interested or sympathetic audience members, and follow up afterwards one-on-one.

Positive of speaking to groups.

- You can take some time to help folks understand the issue
- You can answer questions
- You can recruit volunteers
- It creates buzz in the community

Downside of speaking to groups:

- It takes time to set up the presentation, confirm and do it.

Tabling at community fairs, festivals, farmers markets

Communities of every shape and size have all kinds of events where community groups can set up a booth and do outreach. These are great opportunities to recruit supporters, gather signatures and raise the profile of your issue. Here are some tips on finding and making the most of tabling opportunities:

- **Do research** to find all the events in your area. Call the organizers to find out whether you can set up a table, how much – if anything – it will cost, and what kind of audience will be there. Is the event geared toward locals, tourists or both?
- **Make a calendar of events** that are a good fit, and incorporate them into your strategic plan.
- **Recruit plenty of help.** For a daylong event, plan on having teams of 2-3 volunteers that work for no more than 3 or 4 hours at a time. Tabling is rewarding but tiring work, so be sure you don't burn out your volunteers.
- **Make it interactive.** Visual displays, activities and give away items like candy, buttons or stickers are a great way to draw people in. See Chapter 3.4 for more tips on tabling displays.

Organize hikes, ranch tours, bike rides and other fun outings.

Guided outings are a great way to recruit new supporters. Make it fun and educational – point out plants and wildlife, and talk about your land use issues. If there's public land or trails in view of the land in question, do your tour there, so you can show people exactly what is at stake. Publicize your outings in the local paper, via email, on bulletin boards, and in your newsletter. Don't forget to do your rap asking for volunteers, donations, and signatures on your petition/postcards at the beginning and end of your event.

More fun events! House parties, BBQs, bowling nights. . .

Social events are another great way to bring in new supporters. These events can be mostly social, with brief presentations about the campaign. For a successful event, each member of your group should personally invite their friends, and follow up to make sure they're coming. Events can double as fundraisers, but be sure you make it totally clear whether – and how much – people should expect to pay. The Sierra Nevada Alliance has a House Party Cookbook which is a how-to for holding one of these events.

Create your own hearing

If your elected officials aren't doing a good job gathering public input, create your own public hearing! Reserve a community center or other space, invite guest speakers who are knowledgeable about the subject, and invite the public to come and voice their concerns about land use, traffic and growth. Advertise your meeting broadly, in the newspaper and the Rotary Club newsletter and local environmental groups' websites. Recognize that people in opposition might attend, and rather than trying to exclude them, structure your agenda appropriately so they can participate, but can't derail the meeting.

Phone Banks

Phone banks are the most under-appreciated organizing technique in land use campaigns. Nothing compares with phone banks for reaching a lot of people in a little amount of time, yet many land use activists shy away from them because they seem unfamiliar or intrusive. Once again, remember that you are not selling anything! You're a volunteer doing a community service. Some people are rude, sure, but for every rude person there is another one who is SO GLAD that you called, and wants to help, and wouldn't have heard about your campaign/event/hearing any other way.

Making one phone call, even if it is just a message left on an answering machine, is 1000 times more effective than sending 1000 emails. Particularly for getting people to show up at hearings or events, there is nothing like a phone bank. And now in the era of cell phones, you don't need to be in an office with ten phone lines, just have everyone bring their cell phone, get a few pizzas delivered, and you're good to go.

Here are some tips on making your phone bank effective, fun and easy:

- **Have everyone in the same place.** Group dynamics are critically important to successful phone banks. Phone bankers need to share our enthusiasm when we've had a good call. We need the positive reinforcement of meeting our numeric goals. Don't send people home alone with a list of fifty people to call – home is full of distractions, it's no fun by yourself, and the calls won't get done.
- **Provide food.** Don't starve your poor hardworking phone bankers. Food = edible morale.
- **Have a script, and practice it.** Scripts make it much easier to do phone calls. Develop a script (based on your slogan and story in Chapter 3.3) for talking to a live person, and a script for the answering machine. Make sure new volunteers get a chance to roleplay, either with another volunteer or by calling a friend, before they start making cold calls. A sample phone script is in Appendix G.
- **Choose your list carefully.** If you have been collecting the phone numbers of your supporters, they should be the people you call first. If you need a bigger list, consider asking the local Audubon and Sierra Club chapters for their lists. You can also get the list of registered voters from the County Clerk's office, and call everyone in the neighborhood of the proposed project.

Door-to-door canvassing

This is another technique to make a direct human connection. In big cities and larger towns, it takes a lot of time and walking to reach a lot of people, but in smaller communities a team of volunteers can cover the whole town in a day! Hand out one-pagers and gather signatures for petitions. If nobody's home, leave a flyer under the doormat.

Chapter 3.6

Influencing Decision Makers: How to Play the Lobby Game

As discussed in Chapter 1.1, land use decisions usually come down to a simple majority vote of your Board of Supervisors or City Council. **It's all about figuring out where you're going to get that majority of votes.** Lobbying is obviously an important aspect of winning those votes.

It's important to remember that your local land use decision makers, particularly the Board of Supervisors or City Council, think differently about land use than the rest of us. In addition to whatever concerns they may share about traffic, sprawl or the local economy, they are also concerned with maintaining or upgrading their status as elected leaders.

If you haven't already, go back and read Chapter 1.1. Then spend some time doing the recommended research on each of your elected officials.

Planning Your Lobby Meeting

For each decision maker whose support you're hoping to gain, you should plan carefully for your meeting with them, and consider the following issues:

- **What is the goal of the meeting?** What are you hoping to accomplish at this meeting? Will you ask the elected official to support your position? Introduce a motion at a hearing? Or do you simply want to explain the campaign and learn more about them? Whatever it is, be sure to clearly identify that goal, and how you will go about getting it accomplished. If you're asking them to do something, how will you ask it? Be sure everyone participating in the meeting knows what the goal is, so you can help each other stay on track.
- **Will they listen – Choose your messenger.** With most electeds, who is saying the message determines whether they are really listening or not. This is perhaps the single most important consideration in planning your lobby meeting. Look at your power map and figure out who among your supporters or coalition partners they are most likely to listen to. If you are one or two degrees away from a very influential person that your elected official respects and listens to, you might want to meet with that person first, win their support, and then have them accompany you to the lobby meeting.

- **What is the message?** When talking with electeds, keep your message simple and straightforward. Rather than approaching them with a laundry list of technical flaws in the EIR, frame the problem in terms of what's at stake for their constituents. Present the solution in the most simple terms possible. Most elected officials don't want the details. Be prepared to provide more detailed information if needed, but really you are selling them on the big picture.
- **Ask for their opinion.** Don't just tell elected officials what you think – find out what they think! What issues are they concerned about? Make a mental note of their concerns – agriculture, fire, private property rights – and afterwards you can strategize about how to address those concerns. If the goal of your meeting is to learn more about them, think up some questions ahead of time that will help you get the information you need.
- **Ask for a commitment.** Never leave a meeting with an elected official without asking for a commitment of some kind. If they seem sympathetic, ask for their commitment to vote your way. If they won't commit, ask what further information they need, and ask for another meeting where you can return with that information.
- **Where will you meet?** This may seem minor, but it can be important. Do you want to meet in their office, or a more casual setting? How about a place that illustrates your main message, or reflects their interests – a mom and pop restaurant in the downtown area that will be hurt by the new sprawl-belt shopping center? A ranch or park in the area of concern?
- **What materials will you give them?** Do you have a letter or one-pager to give them? What about photographs, charts, maps or other visuals to illustrate your points? A stack of signed postcards or news articles to demonstrate community support? Don't overload them – like most people, if you give them too much to read, they won't read anything at all! See chapter 3.4 for more information on materials.
- **Make it good for them.** Think about ways to create win-win situations for elected officials that are supporting your issue. Find opportunities to put them in the limelight. Invite them to speak at your events or your press conferences. This will solidify their support, and it will make the other elected officials realize that supporting your campaign could really benefit their own.

Don't Forget about the Planning Commissioners

Because Planning Commissions make recommendations to the Board on major policy issues, it is very helpful to get them on your side. Getting the support of individual commissioners can also be helpful in influencing the supervisor who appointed them.

The same basic rules for working with elected officials also apply to working with commissioners. Commissioners are sometimes more wonky and detail-oriented than their elected counterparts, but sometimes they are simply aspiring politicians warming up on the sidelines.

Working with Planning Directors and Staff

- **Use them as a resource.** Planning Directors and staff often are happy to meet with you, listen to your concerns, and provide information. If they've been around a while, they know more about your local land use issues than just about anyone. If they are sympathetic to your cause, they may give you some tips, and they may use their influence behind the scenes to sway the decision makers.
- **Beware the Opposition.** Not all planning directors are sympathetic, and some are downright opposed to your campaign. They may be openly hostile, or they may be friendly on the surface but secretly on the side of the developers. If you get the feeling they are more aligned with special interests, be polite but don't give away your strategy.
- **Listen carefully.** Because their jobs are ostensibly non-political, most planners won't openly give you political advice. However, they know the politics of land use very well, and they know who all the players are. Listen carefully and read between the lines, and you might find some very useful information about how the political winds are blowing.
- **Be polite and respect their limits.** Even if planners are sympathetic, don't expect them to openly support your campaign or advocate openly for your position. They can't, unless they're prepared to lose their jobs! Respect their boundaries, be polite, and stay on good terms with them.

Chapter 3.7

People Power!

How to Get People to Show Up at Hearings

As a general rule, the people who show up to land use hearings are those who have a direct economic stake in the outcome – developers, landowners, and investors. Immediate neighbors concerned about view, traffic or property values also sometime attend, along with a few gadflies.

For advocates, these hearings are often trying, frustrating, and ultimately disappointing. A handful of us show up, wait patiently for our item to be heard, get up and speak for three or five minutes, are promptly ignored by the decision makers, and then go home, deflated.

But hearings can also be empowering exercises in direct democracy, when we make the hearings our own, filling the room with an energy, excitement and purpose that are impossible for decision makers to ignore. The keys to a hearing that influences decision makers are numbers, message and messengers.

Numbers: A packed hearing, with dozens of people voicing their concern, creates a particular kind of political pressure that is very difficult for elected officials to ignore. They are, after all, elected officials voted into office. One or two gadflies can be shooed away, but twenty-five or fifty or one hundred angry constituents start to look like the winning – or losing – margin in a re-election campaign!

Having a big turnout at a hearing provides political cover for politicians who want to do the right thing, and political pressure for those who just want to get re-elected. Many well-intentioned elected officials will readily admit that they find it difficult to stand up to the developers and landowners, unless the community turns out in large numbers.

Message: Having a strong, simple, unified message is also important. The message should tell the decision makers what action they should take during that hearing -- and why, e.g.:

“Protect our local businesses and vote NO on WalMart.”

“Support General Plan Alternative # 2 to keep Mariyuba rural.”

Each of your supporters should know what the message is, and when they get up to speak, they should repeat and reaffirm that message. This may seem counter-intuitive – it is tempting to have everyone voice a different concern or argument for why the project or policy is a bad idea. While it is good to have different perspectives and angles, everyone should come back to the same basic message. It is

much harder for elected officials to ignore a unified request than a laundry list of complaints. Read Chapter 3.3, Talking Growth, for more information on developing a winning message.

Messengers: In addition to sheer numbers of people attending the hearing, it is also important to have certain key messengers that can powerfully convey your story – such as a longtime small business owner who will be hurt by the chain store mall on the edge of town, or the 4th generation rancher who doesn't want to see the working landscape buried beneath sprawl. These personal stories can shake a meeting to its core, and validate and affirm what you are asking for.

Steps to get people to a hearing

- 1. Decide What You Want.** What do you want the decision makers to do at this meeting? What is a positive but realistic outcome for this particular hearing? To get the decision makers to act, it is critically important to know exactly what you're asking for, and make sure every person who attends the hearing on your behalf asks for the same thing.
- 2. Choose your messages.** Do you have 5 different angles on why Alternatives A, B and C are bad and 3 on why Alternative E is great? Get a different speaker to address each one, but make sure every speaker ultimately asks for the same thing. A hearing is an opportunity to show the facts on your side. Have each speaker, however, say your slogan so that the unified campaign message rings clear.
- 3. Line up your messengers.** Remember, messengers are as important as message. Have your experts (attorneys, biologists, teachers, etc) with credentials testify, as well as your unusual allies. This is where your broad community outreach and strong coalition building can once again shine through. Know which messengers are heard the clearest by key decision makers. Make sure each coalition member has a speaker testify – even if it is “me too” for a previous speaker's comments – but indicating yet another constituency is with the campaign.
- 4. Make a plan.** As with every tactic, you should start by making a plan, which includes numeric goals for attendance, a timeline and responsibilities. How many people do you want to attend? How will you get those people to show up? Who will be in charge of the phone bank? Who will write and send the action alerts?
- 5. Build your list.** Through your community outreach and coalition-building efforts you should be continually building a list of people who are sympathetic to your issue. If you've got a hearing coming up and you don't have a list yet, start with your own circle of sympathetic friends and neighbors, then expand outward to your friends' friends, then contact other groups such as the local chapters of the Sierra Club and Audubon societies, and see if they would be willing to share their lists with you, or contact their own members on your behalf. Put all the names, contact info, and source into a database or spreadsheet.
- 6. Send out an action alert.** Several weeks before the hearing, send out an action alert to everyone on your list, letting them know the meeting is coming up and they should mark their calendars. Tell people what will happen at the meeting, why its important, the time and the agenda item number, if you know it. Include the address of the hearing, sample testimony and instructions for how to give public testimony. If you want people to send written comments as well, put that in your action alert, along with a sample letter and contact info for where to send it. You can send your action alert as a postcard, email, or both. A sample action alert is included in Appendix G.

7. Follow up with phone calls. If you really need people to show up at the hearing, simply sending an action alert isn't enough. You need to call them. Follow the steps in Chapter 3.5 to organize a phone bank 3-7 days before the hearing. Ask for a commitment – will they or won't they attend? If they can't attend, ask them to send a letter or email. Follow up by personally emailing them a sample letter. While you've got them on the phone, make sure you have all their contact information.

8. Don't forget to remind! A day or two before the hearing, send a personal reminder email to every person who agreed to attend, thanking them for agreeing to attend and once again providing all the necessary information: location and time of the meeting, agenda item number, instructions for giving public comment and sample testimony. While you're at it, send another mass email to anyone you weren't able to reach on the phone.

9. Invite the media. Contact your local media several days before the hearing and encourage them to attend. If you have lots of supporters and media showing up, consider having a press conference half an hour before the hearing begins. Elected officials arriving for the meeting will see the media circus you've created, further increasing the political pressure they feel.

10. Be visible at the hearing. A room full of astro green pins really shows off your numbers. The key to visibility is having ONE color and ONE message on your button/t-shirt/or hand held fans. Get a friendly member of your group to stand near the door wearing your button, t-shirt, or holding a handful of flyers so that people coming in can find and connect with you. Thank every person for coming and have copies of sample testimony on hand in case they didn't prepare their own. Make sure all your supporters are wearing a button or lapel stickers. If your local government requires people to fill out a speakers' card or sign-in with the clerk in order to give public testimony, help them do so. Finally, be sure you have their name and contact info.

11. What happened? Follow up with supporters. Follow-up with decision makers. Follow-up with experts and coalition partners. Regardless of the outcome, follow up with all the key players as soon as possible after the hearing. If you're using email, send an update the next day. If you're using mail, include a synopsis of the hearing in your next newsletter. Thank everyone who came for their support and focus on the things you did well as a group, and next steps.

12. Celebrate. Even if you lose the vote, celebrate what went well: meeting your attendance goal, creating a visual sea of support, having outstanding testimony, and recruiting a breadth of supporters. Don't lose good tactics for the next round on one bad hearing. Acknowledge what you did well – and look at what you could do differently the next round.

For more information on the rules which govern most land use hearings, when hearings are required and what the legal and procedural outcomes are, see Chapter 2.2 on the California Environmental Quality Act.

Chapter 3.8

Use Your Local Media

Using your local media is a powerful way to reach a large audience, recruit new supporters, and put pressure on decision makers. This chapter lists some tried and true methods for getting the media to cover your land use issue, as well as suggestions for finding and working with reporters, and ensuring that news coverage is “on message.”

This chapter provides an introduction to working with media, but there are far more comprehensive media guides for activists, as well as training workshops put on by organizations like the Spin Project and Media Alliance. If you are serious about working with the media, we encourage you to pick up one of these guides or, better yet, attend a training. More information about these resources is available in Appendix H.

What is News?

Media has some general rules about what is news worth covering.

- First and foremost – it must be **new**. So if your coalition has existed for ten months, don’t expect a story in month eleven about your coalition. Upcoming hearings or impending decisions are a good way to make your issue ‘new.’
- They look for **controversy** and adversarial issues – they love to cover a group criticizing the county board of supervisors, and rarely cover the story about everyone agreeing on a plan.
- They also consider displays of **large numbers** news worthy. This is because it is unusual to see large numbers of people doing something together. So one person testifying at hearing won’t get covered, but a hundred people packing the hearing room all on the same side (which everyone wearing pins could visually indicate) will get covered.
- **Unusual allies** are news worthy. For example, if ranchers and environmentalists don’t usually work together, but on this one effort join forces – the media consider that news.
- **Celebrities** – Julia Roberts attending your petition drive would certainly make local headlines – but it also goes for local celebrities such as the mayor or pastor of the local church.
- **Different** – There are people petitioning in front of supermarkets all the time – but if your petitioners are dressed up like farmers to signify concern about losing ag lands – this might make the petition drive different and gain a story.

To summarize, determine what you would like the media to cover and figure out how you will make it new, controversial, different, and/or unique. Often it is doing what you would normally do in your campaign, and simply looking for what makes that moment news. Other times it may mean you add in a visual, crank up more numbers, recruit the big wig to get the media's attention.

The logistics of working with the media

Particularly in small rural communities, getting good media coverage is all about finding the right reporters to cover your story, and cultivating relationships with them. When a reporter knows you and knows your issue, they will come to you when a story breaks, instead of the other way around. To create these relationships, you need a consistent, organized media approach. Here are some suggestions for making that happen.

Have one person spearhead media related issues. Even when you have multiple spokespeople, one person should keep track of all dealings with the media, and should be the reporters' primary contact over the course of the campaign.

Create – and update – a media list. Create a media list that contains the addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and names of contact persons from various news agencies. Be sure to include local papers, wire services, TV and radio stations, national news offices, local magazines, websites and separate organizations who use newsletters or action alerts. The Sierra Nevada Alliance offers its media list to get started to all our member groups and supporters. Keep your local list up to date, and after a successful media hit, note which reporters covered your story. These are your most likely targets for next time.

Find the right contact. If you're not sure who covers your issue at a particular news outlet, do some research to find the right contact. For newspapers, magazines and wire services (such as Associated Press), many have searchable online archives, so this type of research is much easier than it used to be. Search for articles about growth and environmental issues, and for articles about your community, and see who is writing them. Some reporters and editors have a topical beat – they cover a particular issue in your area across the region or state (beats to look for are: environment, local government, growth and development, traffic, recreation) while others cover specific geographical areas (i.e. cities, towns or counties). Very few Sierra communities have papers large enough to have reporters with topical beats, but most of the large regional papers do. If your news outlet doesn't have a searchable archive, call and ask to speak to the managing editor or news editor. Ask him who covers that issue, and who you should send press releases to.

Editors are important. Particularly at smaller newspapers, many reporters don't choose which stories to cover – their editors do. When in doubt, always err on the side of sending your press release to the editor as well as the reporter.

Radio stations may have a news director (usually one person doing all their news) and talk show hosts. Call your local outlets and ask them who the news director is and what talk shows they run and who to contact for these shows.

For television, find out who the news reporters are that might cover your area. For Sierra local areas, you might be beyond any assigned reporters. If this is the case, get used to dealing with the assignment desk as events come up.

Give plenty of notice. Think ahead about when you want an article to appear, and contact the news outlets at the appropriate time. If you just need a reporter to write an article, you can give 1-2 days notice. If, however, you want them to attend a hearing, meeting or press conference, give 3 or 4 days notice, or even more if appropriate. And if you're trying to get an event publicized in the calendar section of the paper, you may need to give several weeks notice.

Always send a news release. Whatever you want the media to write a story on – how the hearing went, the upcoming vote– ALWAYS send a news release. News releases quickly convey how you'd like to see the story appear and for smaller outlets they sometimes run these verbatim. See the section below about news releases.

Follow up with a phone call. After you email or fax your news release to your targeted reporters, call them to follow up. Confirm that they got the news release, and pitch the story to them. Your pitch should be your message, distilled into conversational form. Give them the most compelling arguments and facts from your news release, to get them interested in the topic.

It's okay to not know. If there's a question you can't answer, don't be afraid to say you don't know, and tell the reporter you'll get back to them. Better to not know than have inaccurate information printed. A lie or exaggeration will destroy your credibility with that reporter and those who read the article.

Get to know your reporter. Sit down with reporters that regularly cover your issue, or those who are interested in covering the issue but need some background. Set up a half hour to hour meeting to get to know them, educate them on land use issues, give them reports and information to read. Help them go beyond sound bites and really understand the issues. Find out what issues they're interested in, and what they'd like to know more about. Become a resource for that reporter, someone they can call upon to answer questions or explain laws and processes they might not understand.

Follow up. Follow up and thank reporters if they give you a story you like. If an article was inaccurate or misrepresented your position, follow up and politely express your concerns.

How to get news coverage that is 'on message'

There's nothing worse than doing a ton of work to get your issue in the newspaper, then opening the paper to discover that the article is not at all what you had in mind! Land Use Coordinator Autumn Bernstein once talked to a reporter she thought was doing an article about the land use issue of the day, only to discover, upon picking up the next day's paper, a front-page headline about her "meddling" group and the mischief it was planning to inflict upon the community. The article included quotes from Autumn, taken out of context, that seemed to support the article's ludicrous claims.

How do you make sure this doesn't happen to you?

The most important aspect of a successful media hit is message – the theme or idea that you are trying to convey. Everything in your media strategy, from your news release to your pitch to your props at the news conference – should support and reinforce one central message. Articles are not simply collections of facts or opinions about a particular topic. They are organized around a theme. Your goal is to get the article's theme to reflect your own message as closely as possible.

Reporters may have a different vision for their story. Some particularly hostile ones may even try to trick or trap you into saying things they can use against you. More often, they will just be looking at the story from a slightly different angle. In either case, it is up to you to answer the reporters' questions and sustain their interest, all the while leading them back to the message you want to convey.

Decide your message, stay on message, repeat your message, come back to message

- **Decide on message:** Be sure to crystallize your message before writing a news release or talking with the media. Read Chapter 3.3 on messages to help create a message that is clear, concise, outcome-focused and compelling. If you plan to have multiple spokespersons, be sure everyone knows the message. You might find it helpful to write up a page with your main message points, supporting facts and arguments, and sample Q and A. Make sure all your spokespeople read it ahead of time and have it handy.
- **Stay on message:** Before you pick up the phone to talk to a reporter, review your message points and mentally commit to them. Talking with a reporter is not a normal conversation. Everything you're saying is being recorded, and you have no idea which bits and pieces will make their way into the final story. Therefore, stay on message and don't stray into topics which could be taken out of context.
- **Repeat your message:** Every single answer to every single question should include your message in some way. This will feel redundant and awkward but remember, this is not a normal conversation. Murphy's law of land use advocacy says that if you make one single remark that's off-message, that's the remark that will end up in the article!
- **Come back to message:** You can't ignore the reporter's questions, of course. But you can use bridges and segue ways to answer her question and come back to your main point. Big-league politicians are masters at this one. Watch the Sunday morning talk shows to see how they do it.

Tools for media outreach

The News Release

News releases are a frequently used tool in any media plan. When you write a news release, you are essentially writing the article you hope will appear in the media, and sending it to reporters, news room directors and editors in the hopes that they will bite. If the media contact does not attend the event or interview others, they could still write a story based on the news release.

The news release should be readable, catchy, interesting and informative. It should obey the same rules about message that are covered in Chapter 3.3.

News releases are written in pyramid form. The idea is that the key information is in the first paragraph and if that is all the reader sees, it still makes sense. The second paragraph expands on this – and if cut off there, the story still makes sense. And so on, and so on. Ideally you only have one message in the first few paragraphs and perhaps you can stick in a second message after paragraph four. But no more than two messages per news release

Your audience for a news release should be an eighth grader who has never heard about your group or your issue. It is not extremely technical, it uses clear, concise language, and it has no insider jargon.

News releases should generally include:

- Contact information for your spokespersons at the top
- Attention-grabbing headline and subheader that convey your message.
- Basic, easy to understand information on message
- Quotes from your spokespersons that are also on message.
- Extremely brief background info that supports the key message. Assume that your reporters know nothing about land use planning, and have never heard of your issue.

A sample news release is included in Appendix H. Before you begin work on a news release, be sure to read the section below on message.

News releases should be sent early in the morning (8-9 AM) the day you want them to run the article. Always follow up with a phone call.

News Advisory

A news advisory is an invitation to attend an event. The advisory is to get media to come to something – a news conference, hearing, protest, petition drive etc. The news advisory has what, when, where, who and why. It should not include enough information for them to do a story, just enough to get them interested to come and pick up your news release and talk to you at the event. See Appendix H for a sample.

News Conference

News conferences are staged events where you invite the media to cover a breaking news story. News conferences are ideally where multiple media show up and you can get your story out to them all at once. Releasing a report, announcing a new coalition or campaign, turning in petitions or postcards – these are all good reasons to hold a news conference. News conferences generally include 1-3 speakers that talk for no more than four minutes each, interesting visuals for TV cameras to focus on (such as photos, statistics or maps), and an appropriate setting. With time allotted afterwards for Q and A, most news conferences last no more than 30 minutes in length, with only 10 minutes of presentation.

Materials you should hand out at the news conference are a news release specific to the subject of the news conference, a list of speakers with contact information, your organizational brochure and any campaign literature, and any maps or visuals.

Most news conferences are in the morning, between 9AM and noon. This is because reporters and news crews usually spend the afternoon writing or producing the story for the evening news or the next day's newspaper.

For a successful news conference, send a news advisory 1-2 days in advance and immediately make follow up calls to ensure they get the advisory. Then make another round of calls the morning of the news conference with some new tidbit of information – such as a visual or clarification on location.

Op-eds and letters to editor

The letter to the editor and its beefed-up counterpart, the op-ed, are good ways to reach the narrower audience of insiders, newshounds and political junkies that read the Opinion page. Letters to the editor can be written by anyone and submitted anytime. Check your local papers for length and how to submit.

Op-eds, also known as guest editorials or guest commentaries, are longer than letters to the editor. The editor of the opinion page determine if you can submit an opinion editorial. You can try first calling and pitching them the idea of what you would like to write – or you can submit a written piece for her consideration. Often the editor will suggest changes and offer edits to tighten your piece if interested. Choose your messenger/writer, message and timing carefully when submitting an op-ed. Most papers won't let the same person or group do an op-ed twice in one year.

Editorials

Editorials are written by the editorial writers of the paper. Scoring a favorable editorial from the hometown paper is huge. Preventing an unfavorable editorial can be a victory in and of itself, depending upon the newspaper! If you suspect your newspaper may take a position on your issue, either good or bad, set up a meeting with the editor (or editorial board, depending upon the paper) to discuss the issue and make your case for why they should support your position.

Profile of noteworthy campaign supporter

Many newspapers run profile stories about colorful local characters and leaders. If you have an interesting or charismatic community member whose personal story ties well into your campaign, such as an old-time rancher or business owner, see if you can get a profile done.

These are just a few of the ways to get your issue in the news. There are many clever and creative ways to grab the spotlight, and many media guides and toolkits available for community organizers that want to hone their media skills. For a list of references, see Appendix H.

Some sample opportunities in a land use campaign to invite media coverage

- Formation of a coalition to promote smart growth (unusual allies) – news release, news conference, editorial board meeting
- Packing of a hearing with lots and lots of supporters for smart growth – news conference before hearing
- First day of Petition drive, letter writing drive, postcard drive, or lawn sign effort – news conference
- Delivery of all the petitions, letters, postcards to decision makers – news conference
- The joining of some dignitary to your campaign (the mayor, the head of the Farm Bureau etc.) – opinion editorial by dignitary
- Tour for some dignitaries/celebrities of the area about to be effected by land use decision makers – news advisory to join the tour
- A protest when the decision makers vote the wrong way – news conference, letter to the editor, opinion editorial
- The delivery of a gigantic Thank You card to a decision maker who does the right thing – news conference, letter to the editor, opinion editorial

- Filing of a lawsuit – news release, news conference
- Filing of a ballot initiative or referendum – news conference

Distribute Your Media Coverage – Toot Your Horn!

Finally – distribution of good media coverage increases its impact 100%. Say you successfully get an article in the newspaper, get the opinion editorial printed, get a one minute story on TV, etc. But will your county supervisor or city councilmember see it when it runs? Will funders of your campaign see it? Will your diligent volunteers see it? Maybe not. So to be sure, make copies of the paper coverage, video tapes of the TV, even audio tapes of the radio and distribute them to your campaign targets and allies. This ensures they see it and increases the impact and effectiveness of your work.

Chapter 3.9

Fundraising for Land Use Campaigns

Land use campaigns don't get very far without money. The cost of materials, mailings, meeting expenses and especially staff, consultants and legal fees can add up quickly.

However, many land use campaigns do little or no organized fundraising, and that constrains our options dramatically. If we do fundraising at all, we often keep it separate from everything else we do. We see it as a necessary but unpleasant task, something to be done hurriedly and quietly so we can move on to other things. As such, we tend to go for the fundraising equivalent of the "Hail Mary" pass -- applying for a few big grants and hoping something comes through that can carry us for a year or two, so we can stop thinking about it for a while!

Fundraising should be an integral part of everything you do, not an occasional chore. Big grants do happen sometimes, but successful land use efforts incorporate fundraising into all aspects of their work. Contributions of all sizes and shapes add up to a much more sustainable campaign than one which is funded by one or two big grants. With a little bit of planning and a commitment to make fundraising a part of your ongoing work, you can cultivate a steady stream of income that will allow you to accomplish everything on your "to do" list.

This chapter talks about ways to successfully integrate fundraising strategies into your land use campaign. It does not delve into the specifics of common fundraising strategies, such as membership, major donors and foundations. There are many resources available to help you develop these specific kinds of programs, and some of these resources are listed in Appendix I.

Home is where the bucks are

When it comes to fundraising, local land use campaigns have the unique advantage of being rooted in landscapes that people know and love. The possibility of a new subdivision in a beloved valley is not an abstract concept, but a real and looming threat. Hence, the people who know and love the area you're trying to protect, including residents and visitors, are your best bet for fundraising.

In contrast, large foundations that work across the state or nation may agree with your concept or vision, but they lack that personal connection to the landscape and community. Plus, the big foundations are bombarded by many requests for funding every year and can only fund a small fraction of

those. Your neighbors and community members, on the other hand, are unlikely to get many donation requests from local efforts like yours. They may receive lots of donation requests from national or statewide charities, but chances are you're the only ones talking to them about growth issues in their own community.

State and national foundations should be a part of your overall fundraising plan, but finding and cultivating local donors should be fundraising priority # 1.

Make a budget and a plan

Don't wait until you need money to start raising money – it might be too late! Look at your campaign plan and timeline, and start estimating how much you'll need, and when. This is your budget. Then, make a plan to raise the money for your budget. Set numeric goals for how much money you want to raise from various sources and events. A sample fundraising plan is included in Appendix I, along with some references for further reading and information.

What is your ask?

Once you have identified your fundraising needs, use that information to develop your ask – your fundraising message. Your ask should be specific – what do you want to use the money for? If appropriate, how much do you want to raise? And what dollar amounts do you want people to give? Be creative and compelling with your ask.

Example: We need to raise \$5,000 in the next six weeks to stop the County from approving a plan to pave 10,000 acres of oak woodland. Your donation of \$50, \$100 or \$250 will be used to mail an action alert to neighbors and hire an attorney to review the environmental impact report.

Practice your ask

Asking for money doesn't come naturally to most people, so it helps to practice your ask with others in your group, before you actually go out and do it. Practice until you feel comfortable with your ask – never underestimate the power of role play!

Ask, ask everywhere

Once you know your ask, look for opportunities to use it in everything you do.

- **In your materials:** One-page handouts, newsletters, mail, websites, email updates should all include a pitch for donations, along with info on how to donate. Make it easy! Have separate donation cards or pre-printed envelopes that you hand out along with your one-pager.
- **At your events:** If you are hosting a public meeting, house party or hike, put a donation card on every seat or in every person's hand when they arrive. Make time in the agenda for a special pitch, and pass a hat or have people walking the aisles, handing out pens and collecting donations while you talk about all the great reasons to support your work.

- **While recruiting supporters:** If you're setting up an information table or booth at an event, bring donation cards, put a jar on the table, and make sure your tablers are trained to make the ask for donations (along with signing the petition, volunteering etc) when talking to people who want to help.
- **While making presentations:** When making presentations to local groups like Rotary Clubs or Kiwanis, make your ask as part of the presentation, and include donation cards in the informational packet you give each person.
- **Where else?** What other activities does your campaign have planned, and how can you incorporate fundraising into them? Look at your campaign plan or talk about it at your next meeting.

Consider having one person in your group become the fundraising watchdog, making sure that everyone thinks about fundraising when planning events or activities.

Part Four

Troubleshooting Guide

**Common problems and
how to deal with them**

Chapter 4.1

When Good Meetings Go Bad: How to keep your meetings productive and positive

Campaign meetings are an essential part of any land use campaign. But too many meetings can lead to burnout and frustration. How do you make sure your meetings are productive and energizing, so that members and volunteers come back week after week, month after month? This chapter gives some pointers for running meetings of any size.

It's About Time

- **Have regularly-scheduled meeting time and place.** Set your meetings for the same time, the same day, the same place every week or month. That way, if someone has to miss a meeting, they can attend the next one without having to track down the time and location.
- **Pick a meeting time that works for most people.** Weekday evenings are generally the best meeting time for most people, but poll your members to decide what works best for your group.
- **Start on time, end on time.** Your meeting should have both a start time and end time, and you should stick to it. Marathon meetings that stretch past bedtime are a surefire way to burn out your group. Meetings shouldn't last more than 2 or 3 hours. If you're having trouble ending your meetings on time, the next few pointers are for you!
- **Timed agenda.** One way to keep meetings on track is to have a timed agenda, where you limit the amount of discussion about each item.
- **Assign a timekeeper.** Ask somebody to watch the clock and keep the agenda on track. Give warnings when time is running out for agenda items, and (gently) enforce time limits. If you really need to take more time – decide what agenda item you will postpone until the next meeting.

Good Agenda = Good Meeting

- **Introductions (every meeting):** The key to building a team is constantly getting to know each other. This is also important for new folks to feel welcome and empowered to speak up and participate – starting the meeting with everyone saying their name and basic information levels the playing field.
- **Agenda Review (every meeting):** Review what you are going to do in the meeting. This provides a road map. Someone burning to discuss Item 7 knows they can wait because you are going to get to it. Also, ask if anything critical is missing (and then move something off the agenda to

bring something new on – don't just make the meeting longer). This allows the group to adapt if something new and urgent comes up.

- **Campaign Updates (every meeting):** This should be short, but brings everyone up to speed on the latest in the campaign. This also acknowledges what work folks have been doing – a key to retaining volunteers.
- **Timeline/Campaign Plan Review and Task Delegation (every meeting):** What needs to happen next and who can do it. Every meeting should weave this in.
- **Tactic Planning (optional):** Determine if you have any tactic planning the whole group needs to do together. Remember to identify the outcome you're looking for – a decision between two options, a subcommittee to be appointed, someone to volunteer to take on a task, etc.
- **Task Decisions (optional):** Determine if there are any decisions the whole group needs to make around tasks. The color of a flyer should probably go to a working group – but deciding whether to spend \$1000 on advertisements or lawn signs is a good decision to for the whole group to discuss. The key is being clear about what decisions need to be made. Again, remember to identify the outcome you're looking for.
- **Miscellaneous items (optional- at the END of the meeting):** Announcements, miscellaneous items and political gossip are a part of life at land use meetings. To keep them from derailing your agenda, make time for these items at the end of your meeting, not the beginning.

Good Facilitation Tips for Good Meetings

- **Use butcher block paper.** It helps when brainstorming, planning and making decisions to capture these up where the whole group can see them. This helps keep people on focus and ensures group decisions are accurately reflected later.
- **Keep the conversation outcome-focused.** If the conversation is starting to get off on a tangent, remind everyone what decision you're trying to make and bring the conversation back. If the tangential conversation is something that merits further discussion but isn't relevant to the decision at hand, make time for it at the end of the meeting, or agendaize it for the next meeting.
- **Ensure everyone is participating.** If two or three people are dominating the conversation and others aren't participating, shift the dynamic by going around the room and asking everyone to give their opinion in turn. Or, specifically ask the quiet people what they think.
- **Identify implementation steps and assign people to get them done.** Unless you plan on doing all the work yourself, make sure you have a plan for implementing the decisions you've made. Let the group know you'll be calling them to see how it went.
- **Form committees.** Your entire group may not need to be involved in all the nitty-gritty details. The full group should make big decisions, but then a committee can get the work done and make the detail decisions.
- **Assign a note taker.** Someone should write down the major outcomes of your meeting: decisions, assignments and next steps. These can be brief – no need to transcribe the entire conversation.
- **Beware the falling blood sugar levels.** Snacks and drinks are a must. People need to be hydrated and have fuel to be nice, patient, and brilliant.

You're Not Done Yet: After the Meeting

- **Type up and distribute notes.** Within one or two days, you should distribute the meeting notes via email. Make special note of assignments and next steps, to remind everyone what they need to do. Include the next meeting date, time and location.
- **Follow up on assignments.** In between meetings, follow up with people about their assignments. Use this information to create your agenda for the next meeting. And thus it begins all over again!

Chapter 4.2

Dealing with the Opposition

An interesting fact of life in land use campaigns is this: the more effective you are, the more opposition you will encounter. As your campaign gains visibility and respect, the opposition may try to discredit and undermine your campaign. It can be very stressful to see developer-backed misinformation being spread around your community, particularly if those attacks become personal. How should you respond? This chapter talks about how best to deal with these situations.

Stick to your plan.

When you start encountering major opposition, chances are you're doing something right. Keep doing what you're doing. A very common mistake is to let the opposition derail your plan. They put an attack ad in the paper, so you spend \$500 to publish a rebuttal ad. That's \$500 you were planning to spend on something else, but now you've spent it reacting. If newspapers ads were part of your original plan, that's great. But if not, you've just let the opposition throw your campaign off track.

This is not to say that you shouldn't ever respond to the opposition. There are some instances when you have to respond. But don't let it take significant time and resources away from your campaign plan. **As a general rule, err on the side of not reacting.**

Stay on message.

A closely related problem is that of staying on message. When the other side starts spreading misinformation, it is very tempting to change your message and focus on rebutting all their inaccuracies. This, too, is a trap you should avoid. Most of your community members aren't interested in the "he said - she said" stuff, and the negativity of that exchange turns off potential supporters. Stay focused on your positive, big-picture message in your dealings with the media, decision makers and community members.

If you're concerned about reaching that handful of political junkies who do closely follow political debates, you can publish your rebuttal in a Letter to the Editor of the local paper and put a Q&A on your website.

Be polite.

Your opponents might resort to name-calling and slander, but you shouldn't. Take the moral high ground, and know that being right is enough. In small communities it is often the case that today's enemy might be tomorrow's partner. Ultimately respect and civility win more supporters than negative campaigning and certainly build a better community for the next generation.

Consider meeting with the opposition.

The job of elected officials is to balance opposing interests, and you will curry favor with your elected officials by meeting with the opposition and telling them your concerns face to face. It shows that you are reasonable and respectful. Strategically, you might also find it valuable to let the developers make their pitch to you. You'll learn how they're selling the project, what their message is, and maybe even what their campaign plan is. Just be careful not to reveal too many of your own cards!

And remain open to a win-win opportunity. Perhaps there is a way for a developer to design a smarter development that meets your goals and theirs. You will never know if a win-win option is out there without sincerely talking to your opposition. At the same time, beware of insincere strategies to suck all your time into endless negotiations pulling your resources off of your campaign plan.

If there is a particular elected official who is really pushing you to meet with the opposition, ask him or her to arrange the meeting and facilitate it.

To compromise or not to compromise? That is the question.

There are different schools of thought when it comes to the question of compromising. Some land use activists will fight to the end and accept no compromises, while others will look for the first opportunity to find a reasonable settlement. The problem with the first strategy is that when you ask for all or nothing, usually you get nothing. The problem with the latter strategy is that if you're too quick to settle, you don't get nearly as much as you could.

A good middle ground is to aim high and fight hard for everything you want for as long as possible, but when it comes down to the finish line, recognize what is politically feasible, put on your best poker face, and get down to bargaining.

In order to find yourself in the best possible position at bargaining time, here are some suggestions:

- **Build Your Community power.** The more postcards you collect, the more organizations get behind your campaign, the more media attention you draw, the more power your group has. When you sit down at the bargaining table, all your supporters are an invisible (or sometimes visible!) presence in the room with you.

- **Know your bottom line.** In some cases it is feasible to stop a project altogether, if you've done your work and made it politically impossible for the elected officials to vote in favor of the project. But if you don't have the votes to stop the project, you need to figure out what your compromise will be. Will you reduce the project by half, cluster it into one corner of the property and get the balance of the land permanently protected? Will you get the county to enact a policy restricting further development in the area, or requiring mitigation on future projects? Use your loss to leverage other victories, to protect other places. When it gets close to bargaining time, talk to your group and decide what your bottom line will be.
- **Consider bringing in outside help.** Consider having an expert in land use politics, someone you trust, participate in negotiations. This could be an attorney, a professional planner, or someone from a larger organization like Sierra Nevada Alliance. That person can help you assess the political situation, suggest possible compromises, and help you through the process.

Chapter 4.3

Building on success, or making lemonade out of lemons

So what happens when your campaign is over? Win or lose, your efforts were not in vain. Don't throw in the towel until you've thought through the following suggestions for getting the most out of your campaign.

If you win

- **Celebrate your victory.** The key to keeping a group going is to celebrate your victories. Volunteers, donors, coalition partners, and campaign supporters all put in significant resources and deserve recognition for their role in making something good happen. So put as much energy into a victory celebration as you would a hearing!
- **Secure your victory.** If you just got a good General Plan or other land policy adopted, lock it in through a ballot initiative. See Appendix C for more information on ballot initiative campaigns.
- **Watchdog implementation.** Good policies are only as good as their implementation, and there is no guarantee that your elected officials will uphold the law, unless you force them to. Be vigilant, read all the meeting agendas, and keep tabs on current issues.
- **Run great leaders for office.** A high-profile land use campaign, win or lose, often galvanizes a new energy and a new awareness of local politics, and as a result there are major changes in the makeup of the Board or Town Council. All the political organizing you've done for your campaign has created some great networks, organizing skills, and leadership qualities. Who else would you trust to steward your community?

If you lose

- **Litigation.** Consider filing a CEQA lawsuit to force some concessions. Remember that CEQA rarely stops a project altogether, but it can give you time and leverage to make major improvements. See Chapter 1.2 for more info.
- **Referend it!** You can also referend the decision and let the voters decide. See Appendix C for more information on referenda.
- **Look for other avenues.** There may be other entitlements that are necessary for a project or urban expansion to move forward, such as approval from the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo). See Chapter 4.4 for more info.

- **Get ready for the next one.** Sadly, in today's real estate market there is never a shortage of bad development proposals coming down the pike. Take the lessons from your last experience and charge ahead to the next effort.
- **Throw the bums out!** If you've built broad community support for your campaign and the elected officials have flatly ignored the will of their constituents, its time for a change in leadership. National races aren't the only ones that can start a year early: start cultivating candidates and building your base of support, and keep the issue alive. If you're really in a hurry, there's always the recall option!

Chapter 4.4

When and How to Utilize Outside Help

When it comes to local land use issues, you can sometimes feel like you're one small voice up against a machine of developers, landowners and business interests. In reality, you have a lot of friends to call upon. The expertise, experience and resources of others can give a big boost to your campaign.

But utilizing outside experts can be tricky. Opponents are quick to pounce on outside support as a means to discredit your campaign, saying that "outside interests" are coming in to "tell us what to do with our county."

This chapter talks about the outside resources available to you, and when and how to utilize them.

Political Experts

Current and former elected officials (other than the ones you're trying to influence!) can be great allies. Even retired politicians tend to stay well-connected, and they might have relationships or insight about the officials you're trying to influence. They also make great spokespeople at news conferences and hearings, and they can help with fundraising. Who are your state and congressional representatives? Where do they stand on land use issues?

Agency Experts

Major land use decisions often require approvals from other local, state and federal agencies. Research and identify which approvals are needed, and also research the politics of those agencies. You might not stop your Board of Supervisors from approving a bad project, but you might be able to stop another agency from giving it a needed approval. Some common players in local land use decisions include:

- **LAFCo:** Every County has a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), an appointed body who is empowered by state law to oversee all annexations and expansions of service areas. Thus, any time a town or water district or other local agency wants to expand into a new area, LAFCo must approve it. The LAFCo board is made up of representatives from the County and

the municipalities within it, along with a member from the public. Just like any public oversight body, the meetings are publicly noticed and open to the public. Decisions are made by a simple majority vote. The LAFCo is usually housed within the County Planning Department and is staffed by a part-time planner.

- **Water and Utility Districts:** New development needs water and power. State law requires that new development have a secure water supply before it can be approved. Throughout California, but particularly in rural Sierra counties, water is in short supply and water for new development means less water for existing users. Water and utility districts have elected boards who are charged with securing and allocating water and energy resources, and they must approve the extension of services to new development.
- **CA Dept. of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service:** These agencies enforce the state and federal Endangered Species Acts, respectively. Part of their mission is to review EIRs and identify potential threats to imperiled species. They have the power to stop projects until adequate mitigation measures have been identified. In recent years, the agencies have been shifting away from project-by-project intervention, and towards larger landscape- or species-scale planning in the form of critical habitat designations and Habitat Conservation Plans, or HCPs. Nonetheless, either agency will still get involved with specific projects or plans if the risk to imperiled species is great enough. Both agencies are short-staffed, so if you think a project merits their attention, find the appropriate contact person and call them. Send them your analysis of the EIR, and follow up to see what, if any, action they will take.

Even agencies that don't have any authority over a project may be concerned about its impacts. For example, towns and water districts downstream from a proposed development may be concerned about water quality, supply and flood impacts. Under CEQA, these agencies have the same rights as any other concerned party. They can submit comments, give testimony, and even file a lawsuit if they believe their concerns are not being addressed.

Regional and Statewide Organizations

There are many larger organizations that get involved in local land use issues. These groups have professional staff with expertise in land use campaigns. Larger groups can provide staff support, re-granting of funds, and technical, strategic and legal expertise. Some have relationships with elected officials or community leaders. Many have memberships that you can tap into for building your base of volunteers and donors.

When working with regional or statewide groups, be clear about roles. In most instances, local groups are better spokespeople for the campaign, while larger groups play an important behind-the-scenes role in political strategy, message and materials development, fundraising and capacity-building. In some cases, a “good cop – bad cop” dynamic can be very effective, where the local group takes a more moderate, conciliatory role, and the regional or statewide group takes a hard line and threatens a lawsuit.

For a list of groups that are active on land use issues in the Sierra, along with the services they commonly provide, see Appendix J.

Attorneys and Planning Consultants

If you are contemplating a lawsuit, you need to retain an attorney as early as possible in the approval process. If at all possible, don't wait until after the project has been approved. The attorney will ensure that you have built your administrative record throughout the approval process, which is key to success in a CEQA lawsuit.

In addition, you might consider hiring a planning consultant to analyze the project application and EIR and write detailed comments on your behalf. Planning consultants can also advise you about policy alternatives that will achieve your goals, and help you negotiate a policy compromise during the lawsuit settlement discussions.

For a list of attorneys and planning consultants involved in Sierra land use issues, see Appendix J. For more information about incorporating lawsuits into your strategy, see Chapter 2.2.

Appendices

Appendix A

California Environmental Quality Act: CEQA

This Appendix Includes:

- The CEQA Process
- What must an agency include in an EIR?
- What should I include in my comment letter?
- Resources for additional reading on CEQA

The CEQA Process

Step 1. Preliminary Analysis/Initial Study: When a project subject to CEQA is proposed, the lead agency will usually perform a preliminary analysis to determine whether there is “substantial evidence” that the project may cause a “significant effect” on the environment. (PRC § 21080(c); Guidelines 15063(b)(1)).

To determine whether an effect is potentially “significant,” CEQA provides guidelines and checklists for lead agencies to follow. Agencies are encouraged to produce their own standards for determining when a project will pull the “significant” trigger. Contact your planning department to obtain a copy of their standards, known as “Thresholds of Significance.”

Step 2. Negative Declaration: If the lead agency determines that the project will not have a significant environmental effect the agency will issue a “negative declaration” (sometimes shortened to “neg dec”) or a “mitigated negative declaration.” (PRC § 21080(c) & (f)) A mitigated negative declaration may be issued if mitigation measures will clearly avoid or mitigate any significant environmental effects. (Guidelines § 15369.5) The lead agency should first issue a notice of intent to adopt a negative declaration. This must be posted in the county clerk’s office and sent to any persons who requested notice in writing. (PRC § 15072-73). A period of time is then provided for the submission of comments (usually 20-30 days). The lead agency may choose to revise the negative declaration in light of newly submitted information and may be required to re-circulate the notice if the revisions are substantial. (Guidelines § 15073.5) Alternatively, the lead agency may determine that a full EIR will be necessary.

Note: *A court can reverse an agency’s negative declaration if a challenger can demonstrate, by reference to evidence in the administrative record, “the existence of substantial evidence supporting a fair argument of significant environmental impact.” (PRC § 21080; Gentry v. City of Murrieta, 36 Cal.App.4th 1359, 1379 (1995))*

If the negative declaration stands unchallenged or survives a challenge, no further CEQA review is necessary, although, in the case of a mitigated negative declaration, some mitigation monitoring may be required.

Step 3. Environmental Impact Report: If the agency determines that the project will have a significant environmental effect, it must prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). (PRC § 21080(d)). In general, the preparation of an EIR involves the following phases:

Step 3a. Scoping: The public agency will first issue a notice that it plans to prepare an EIR, known as a “Notice of Intent.” This notice solicits comments from other public agencies (including potentially responsible agencies) and from the general public, about any issues that should be considered in the EIR. Any party may submit written comments within thirty (30) days. In some cases, the agency will also hold scoping meetings to receive verbal comments. (PRC § 21080.4; Guidelines §§ 15082-83)

Step 3b. Publish Draft EIR: After scoping is complete, the agency (or the applicant’s consultant working under the agency’s supervision) will gather data relevant to the proposed project and its environmental impacts and will prepare a draft EIR. The draft EIR must include any information requested by those who responded to the scoping notice. (PRC § 21082.1; Guidelines § 15084) Development of the draft EIR can take anywhere from several weeks to several years, depending upon the size and scope of the project.

Step 3c. Review and Comment: A draft EIR must be made public and must be circulated for review and comment. (The timing provided for review and comment varies but ranges from 30-60 days). During this period, the agency may also choose to hold hearings to take public comment verbally, and many agencies do. After the comment period has closed, the agency must review the comments submitted and must include in the final EIR responses to any significant issues raised. In some cases, the agency must revise the EIR to address the comments. In certain circumstances, the agency must re-circulate the EIR, if significant changes flow from the review and comment period. (PRC §§ 21091-92.1)

Step 3d. Publish Final EIR: Once the agency has reviewed and responded to all the public comments received, they will publish a final EIR. The final EIR must contain the draft EIR, comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR (either verbatim or in summary), the agency’s responses to the significant points raised during the comment period, a list of persons who commented on the EIR, and any other information added by the agency. (Guidelines § 15132)

Step 4. Project approval: After the final EIR is completed, the agency must determine whether to approve the project. According to CEQA, the agency should not approve a project if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures that would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the project unless: (a) mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project or (b) specific economic, social, or other “overriding considerations” make the identified mitigation measures or alternatives infeasible. (PRC § 21081) In practice, most Counties and Cities rely heavily upon this clause and approve a “statement of overriding consideration” to approve projects with little or no mitigation.

Step 5. Mitigation Monitoring: If an EIR or a mitigated negative declaration adopts mitigation measures, the lead agency must also adopt and implement a monitoring and reporting program to ensure that the mitigation measures actually do avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects.

What must an agency include in an EIR?

CEQA is, at its heart, a set of procedural protections designed to facilitate thoughtful, reasoned decision-making. Accordingly, whenever CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR, decision makers must include in the document certain types of information and analysis. If the agency fails to include the required elements, the EIR may be invalid. In general, an EIR must contain the following:

a. Table of contents or index. (Guidelines § 15122)

b. Summary of the EIR. (Guidelines § 15123)

c. Project description. This section should (a) describe the location and boundaries of the proposed project, (b) include a statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project, and (c) generally describe the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics. (Guidelines § 15124)

d. Environmental setting. This section should describe “the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project.” This will “normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant.” (Guidelines § 15125)

e. Significant and non-significant environmental effects. This section should consider all phases of the project, including planning, acquisition, development and operation. (PRC § 21100; Guidelines § 15128) This section should also consider cumulative impacts from “past, present and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.” (PRC 21083(b); Guidelines § 15130)

f. Project alternatives. The EIR must contain a meaningful discussion of alternatives to the proposed project, including a serious discussion of a “no project” alternative. (Guidelines § 15126.6)

g. Mitigation measures. This section must discuss feasible measures designed to avoid or minimize the significant effects of a project. (PRC § 21002.1(a); Guidelines § 15126.4)

h. Potential growth-inducing impacts of the project. (PRC § 21100(b)(5); Guidelines § 15126.2(d))

i. Significant irreversible changes due to the proposed project. (Guidelines § 15126.2(c))

j. Water supply assessment. Required for certain large development projects. (PRC § 21151.9; Water Code §§ 10910-12)

k. An analysis of inconsistencies with applicable general or regional plans. (Guidelines § 15125)

What should I include in my comment letter?

Although there is no set format, written comments often include the following sections:

- a. Intro/Ask:** In 1-2 paragraphs, summarize your major concerns with the proposed project or policy, and what action you want the Board to take (e.g. reject the project, make the following changes, adopt an alternative proposal, etc).
- b. Summary of concerns:** Summarize your concerns and the significance of those concerns for your community and the region.
- c. Analysis of Impacts:** (a) Identify important impacts that were not discussed in the draft EIR; (b) offer data that was not considered and place that data into the record; (c) identify issues that were not analyzed in sufficient depth; and/or (c) correct any errors in the analysis actually included in the draft EIR.
- d. Analysis of Significance:** Even if all the important environmental effects have been sufficiently analyzed, the draft EIR may come to an incorrect conclusion about the significance of the effect. Reference evidence, regulatory standards and the agency's own significance thresholds whenever possible.
- e. Analysis of Alternatives:** The draft EIR must identify a reasonable range of alternatives. If you believe the range of alternatives considered is too narrow, request that the EIR consider other alternatives. If the alternatives analysis does not provide a detailed comparison of the options, request additional analysis. It is also appropriate to propose new alternatives. Take care not to propose alternatives or mitigation measures that are infeasible. Such proposals are extremely easy for agencies to ignore. To avoid this problem, flush out your proposals by looking for other communities in which your alternative or mitigation plan has been adopted, or by consulting with an expert about feasibility.
- f. Mitigation Measures:** Comment on the sufficiency of the mitigation measures discussed in the draft EIR or specifically request the adoption of mitigation measures not previously discussed. Explain in detail how the measures you prefer will reduce impacts and why they are economically and socially feasible.
- g. Conclusion:** Summarize your concerns and conclusions in clear terms, and repeat your request for what action you'd like the Board to take.

Resources for Additional Reading on CEQA:

Bass, Ronald E., Albert I. Herson and Kenneth M. Bogdan, *CEQA Deskbook: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act* (Solano Books, 2001, www.solano.com)

Remy, Michael and Tina Thomas et al, *Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act* (Solano Books, 1999, www.solano.com)

Yeates, William J., ESQ. *Citizens Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act* (Planning and Conservation League Foundation, March 1997)

The California Environmental Quality Act. California resources agency, 1995-2002, <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/index.html>)

Appendix B

The General Plan

This appendix includes:

- **Legal Requirements for the General Plan**
- **Elements of the General Plan**
- **The General Plan Update Process**
- **Resources for Additional Reading on the General Plan**
- **Resources for Additional Reading on Nevada Master Plans**

Legal Requirements for the General Plan

California state law mandates that jurisdictions take certain actions when updating the General Plan. They must:

- allow public participation in the development of a general plan
- prescribe the general plan with long term perspective in mind
- include seven mandatory elements (land use, housing, circulation, open space, conservation, noise, and safety), along with optional elements (see next page)
- ensure consistency among the various elements, and,
- follow the California Environmental Quality Act.

If the jurisdiction does not follow established guidelines and precedents, a general plan can be rendered void.

Citizen Participation

“During the preparation or amendment of the general plan, the planning agency shall provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate” (§65351)

California State law requires that two public hearings must be held before a general plan is adopted. A planning commission shall hold one of these meetings and the Board of Supervisors or Town Council should hold another. Keep in mind that most planners feel public participation should be more involved than two mandatory meetings. Including the public has become part of the normal procedure when developing a general plan.

Furthering the influence members of a community or region have over the development of a general plan is California's legislation requiring Environmental Justice. Environmental Justice is defined as "The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies" (§65040.12). Documents and discussion regarding the general plan should be written and spoken in all the major languages of the community. Such measures help ensure that all members of a community have the ability and the right to issue questions, comments, and concerns regarding general plan development.

The General Plan and Long Term Perspective

"Since the general plan affects the welfare of current and future generations, state law requires that the plan take a long-term perspective." (§65300)

General Plan law states that:

- Plans should take into account future needs and conditions
- Time frames for different elements will vary (i.e. a time table for the land use element may differ from a circulation element's time table)
- Most general plans are updated every ten years, but they often plan for a longer timeframe, as far ahead as twenty years. Keep in mind that such dates are flexible, and an comprehensive update can happen whenever circumstances warrant.

Consistency in the General Plan

General plans must have "an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies..." (§65300.5)

Consistency is an important principle in General Plan law. This makes sense, since a plan that isn't internally consistent would be impossible to implement. There are many aspects of consistency that are mandated under state law:

Equal Status of Elements: Whether it be land use, housing, circulation, open spaces conservation, noise, safety, or approved optional elements, each element of the general plan must exist on an level playing field. This mandate leaves no room for one element taking legal precedence over another. For example, a housing element cannot overshadow a safety element because the board of supervisors feels that one element is more important than another.

Consistency between Elements: Guidelines and requirements of one element must be respected when overlapped with the planning and design of another element. For example, if a general plan's land use element suggests an increase in population while the same plan's circulation element provides no support or solution (i.e., an expanded transit system) for such an increase there is inconsistency.

Consistency within Elements: Individual elements must be consistent in data, findings, research, and design. If a safety element suggest that building adjacent to a hill prone to mudslide is safe in one instance, and then in another instance states such building is unsafe, there is inconsistency.

Area Plan Consistency: There must be consistency between area, community, and specific plans and the general plan. Area, community, and specific plans deal with the planning of defined, smaller geographic areas that lay within the boundaries of the general plan. If a general plan's

conservation element reserves a wetland to remain undeveloped while an area plan allows for business development, there is inconsistency.

Text and Document Consistency: A general plan will almost always include some type of written text as well as diagrams explaining the plans layout, implementation, and development. Text and diagrams must be consistent with one another. If a diagram shows a road running through an area reserved as open space in the plan’s text then, once again, there is inconsistency.

Elements of the General Plan

Mandatory Elements

State law requires that general plans include seven mandatory topics, or elements:

Land Use: Designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses.

Open Space: Details plans and measures for the long-range preservation and conservation of open space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources (including agricultural lands), outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

Conservation: Addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

Noise: Identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for land use distribution.

Safety: Establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.

Housing: A comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. In addition, it embodies policies for providing adequate housing and includes action programs for that purpose. By statute, the housing element must be updated every five years.

Circulation: Identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities. Must be closely correlated with the Land Use element.

		ELEMENT						
		Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety
TOPIC/ISSUE AREA	Agriculture	X			Z	X		
	Air Quality					X		
	Airports	Z	Z			Z	X	
	Density	X		X				
	Education	X						
	Fire					X		X
	Fisheries				Z	X		
	Flooding	X			X	X		X
	Forests/Timber	X			X	X		
	Housing	Z		X				
	Industrial Uses	X					X	
	Land Reclamation				X			
	Land Use	X	X	Z	X	Z	X	Z
	Minerals				X	X		
	Noise Contours	Z					X	
	Public Buildings	X						
	Railways & Yards		Z				X	
	Recreation	X				X		
	Scenic Resources	X				X		
	Seismic Hazards					X		X
	Soil Conservation				X	X		
	Soil Instability							X
	Transportation Routes		X			X ₁	X	X
	Transportation Terminals		X					
	Utilities/Easements		X			X		
	Waste Facilities	X		X ₂				
	Water Quality				X	X		
	Water Supply	Z		X ₂	X	X		X
	Watersheds				X	X		
	Waterways/Water Bodies				X	X		
Wildlife					X	X		

X Indicates a topic identified in statute
X₁ Trail systems
X₂ Factors affecting adequate inventory of sites
Z Indicates a topic closely related to statutory requirements

Optional Elements

California law states that counties or cities may approve “any other elements or address any other subjects, which in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.” Keep in mind that once adopted, these optional elements will hold the same legal validity as the seven mandatory elements.

Some common optional elements include:

Economic Development, urban design, cultural and historical resources, public facilities, and agriculture.

The General Plan Process

There is a guideline that governing bodies should follow when a general plan is being adopted or amended, or when specific elements of a plan are being formulated. This process includes a work program, general goals, the collection and analysis of data, refining goals, an alternative analysis, the adoption of a plan, and, finally, the implementation of the plan.

Step 1. Create the Work Program

The Work Program should define the responsibilities of each department and/or individual, the scope and direction of the work to be performed, the funding mechanisms, the roles of any consultants, community participation, and budget.

Step 2: Formulate Goals

Should outline a community vision as well as addressing futuristic concerns and assumptions such as how natural resources will help build the area’s economy.

Step 3: Collect and Analyze Data

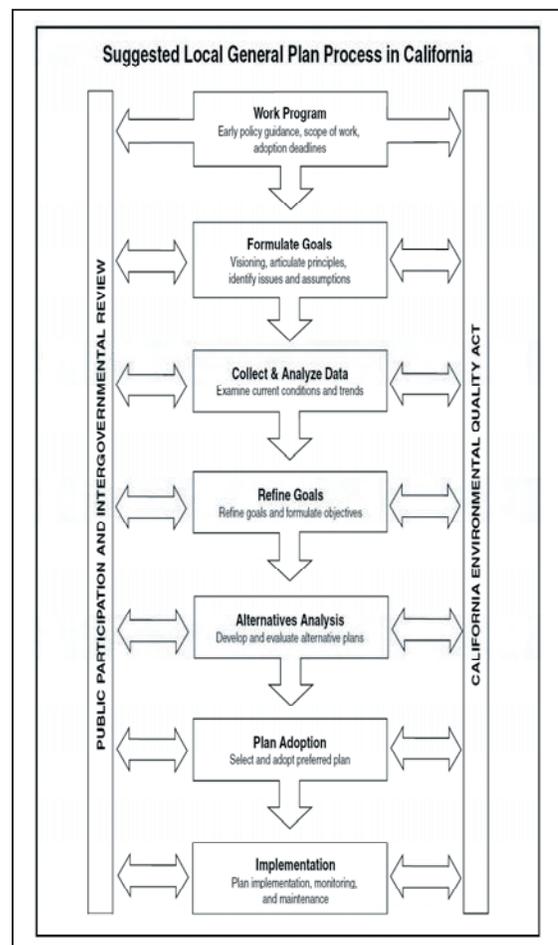
Examines existing physical conditions, regulatory requirements, and plans, including plans of other agencies.

Step 4: Refine Goals

After data has been collected and analyzed, the goals developed early in the planning process may need to be revised. These refined goals should then lead to a set of more specific objectives.

Step 5: Alternatives Analysis

Enables the community to weigh several possible directions. It should be developed with implementation measures in mind.



Step 6: Plan Adoption

Formal public review of the draft plan and the draft EIR should take place together. The entire draft general plan must be considered by the planning commission at a public hearing before it takes formal action. (§65353) After the planning commission has approved the draft plan, the Board of Supervisors or Town Council must give final approval to the plan.

Step 7: Implementation

CEQA requires that general plan policies and the implementation program reflect the mitigation measures identified in the plan's EIR. In addition, the jurisdiction must adopt a mitigation monitoring or reporting program to ensure that mitigation measures are implemented (Public Resources Code §21081.6(b)).

The diagram on page 116 outlines the steps listed above and also includes horizontal steps in the planning process, i.e. citizen involvement and the jurisdiction of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Both citizen involvement and CEQA regulatory procedures can occur at anytime during the general plan development process.

Resources for Additional Reading on the General Plan

State of California General Plan guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2003: http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/PDFs/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf

Curtin, Daniel J. and Cecily Talbert. *Curtin's California Land Use and Planning Law* (Solano Press Books, 2006, www.solano.com)

Deering, Maura K. *Citizen's Guide to the General Plan* (Planning and Conservation League, 2000, www.pcl.org)

Fulton, William. *Guide to California Planning* (Solano Press Books, 1999, www.solano.com).

Resources for Additional Reading on Nevada Master Plans

Nevada Division of State Lands, State Land Use Planning Agency website, <http://www.lands.nv.gov/program/slupa>

Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapters 278.150 & 278.160, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/>

Appendix C

Ballot Initiatives and Referenda

Resources for Additional Reading on Initiatives and Referenda

Successful Citizens' Initiatives: A Guide to Winning Local Land-Use Ballot Measure Campaigns, Greenbelt Alliance, 2002. www.greenbelt.org This excellent guidebook takes you step-by-step through the process of writing, qualifying and campaigning for a land use ballot initiative.

Guide to Growth Control Initiatives, Planning and Conservation League, 2002. www.pcl.org Explores the different kinds of growth control ballot initiatives that have been tried – successfully and unsuccessfully – in California.

How to get Involved In a Ballot Measure Without Risking Your Tax-Exempt Status, Gregory L. Colvin, et al. 1995. A must-read for non-profits contemplating an initiative.

Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California:
http://www.iandrinstute.org/statewide_i&r.htm Good resource for technical and historical information about the initiative process.

California Elections Code:
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=elec&codebody=&hits=20/>

Appendix D

Public Information Laws

This Appendix Includes:

- **The Brown Act, California’s Local Government Open Meeting Law**
- **The Bagley-Keene Act, California’s State Government Open Meeting Law**
- **The California Public Records Act**
- **Nevada’s Open Meeting Law**
- **Access to public records in Nevada**
- **Resources for Additional Reading**

The Brown Act, California’s Local Government Open Meeting Law

What is the Brown Act?

The Brown Act requires all local legislative bodies and agencies (including planning commissions) to conduct business in open, public meetings. (Cal. Gov. Code §§ 54950-63) (State bodies are subject to the substantially similar Bagley-Keene Act described below.) The Brown Act establishes minimum procedural protections; other laws or an agency’s own internal rules may provide even greater procedural rights. (§ 54953.7)

When does the Brown Act apply?

The Brown Act applies any time a local legislative body or agency holds a “meeting,” which is defined by the Act to include “any congregation of a majority of the members of the body at the same time and place to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body or the local agency to which it pertains.” (§ 54952.2) In short, the Act’s requirements apply any time a majority of the legislative body transacts or discusses its business, whether the majority meets together in one place or through a series of communications from which emerges a consensus. (These indirect meetings are sometimes called “serial” meetings.) In addition, the Brown Act also applies to certain types of standing committees and advisory groups. (§ 54952) The Act does not apply to social gatherings, conferences, or retreats, provided members of the body avoid discussions concerning matters under their jurisdiction. (§ 54952.2)

What does the Brown Act require?

- **Notices & Agendas:** An agenda containing a brief description of each item to be discussed and the time and location of the meeting must be posted in a publicly-accessible location 72 hours prior to a regular meeting. (§ 54954.2) Notice of meetings must also be mailed to any person who has filed a written request for notification. (§54954.1)
- **Public Participation:** Members of the public must be afforded an opportunity to address the local body at the open meeting, although reasonable time and subject-matter limitations may be imposed upon the speaker(s). (§ 54954.3)
- **Recordings:** Anyone may make a recording of an open meeting, unless the governing body makes a specific finding that recording would be disruptive. (§ 54953.5)
- **Privacy:** If a sign in sheet is posted at a public meeting, sign-in must be voluntary. (§ 54953.3)
- **Access to Documents:** Copies of documents distributed to the local body at an open meeting must be made available to the public. If those documents were distributed by the local body itself, its consultants, or its members, the documents must be available for public inspection at the meeting; if the materials were prepared and distributed by a third party, the documents must be made available after the meeting. (§ 54957.5)

What should I do if I believe the Brown Act has been violated?

If you believe the Brown Act has been violated or is about to be violated, consider contacting the local body, an attorney representing that body, another body with oversight responsibility over the offending local body, or the district attorney. You may also consider pursuing one of the legal remedies available under the Act. For example, you may file a civil lawsuit seeking to prevent or stop violations of the Act. A court also has the power to declare an action taken in violation of the Act to be null and void.

Before seeking to void an action in court, however, you must demand in writing that the offending local body cure or correct the violation. This demand must be made within 90 days of the allegedly unlawful action (or within 30 days, if the alleged violation concerns the agenda requirements). Attorney's fees may be available to the prevailing party in a Brown Act case, but are available to a prevailing defendant only if the claims brought were "clearly frivolous and totally lacking in merit." (§§ 54960.1 & 60.5)

The Bagley-Keene Act, California's State Government Open Meeting Law

What is the Bagley-Keene Act?

The Bagley-Keene Act is the state-level equivalent to the Brown Act, providing public access to the meetings of state bodies. (Cal. Gov. Code §§ 11120-32) Bagley-Keene applies to various state bodies, including state boards and commissions, as well as certain advisory boards and committees. As with the Brown Act, Bagley-Keene applies whenever a quorum of the body convenes, whether they

meet together in one place or through a series of communications. (§§ 11121, 22 & 22.5) Under certain circumstances, a state body may conduct meetings behind closed doors, such as when it discusses a personnel matter, pending litigation, a security threat, or an ongoing real property transaction. (§ 11125) Closed sessions are nevertheless subject to a number of procedural requirements. (§§ 11126.1 & 26.3)

What does the Bagley-Keene Act require?

- **Notices & Agendas:** State bodies must send notice of its meetings to persons who have requested such notice. The notice must state the time and place of the meeting and provide contact information for a person who can answer questions. The body must also prepare an agenda at least ten days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting. The agenda must contain a brief description of the items to be discussed or acted upon. (§ 11125)
- **Public Participation:** Bagley-Keene's public participation provisions are essentially the same as those contained in the Brown Act. The public is allowed to address the body and no conditions may be placed on attendance. (§§ 11124 & 25.7)
- **Access to Documents:** Any materials provided to a majority of the body before or during the meeting must be made available to the public, unless the materials are protected by a confidentiality privilege. (§ 11125.1)
- **Enforcement:** As with the Brown Act, any interested person may file suit alleging a violation of the Bagley-Keene Act and/or seeking to overturn a decision or action taken in violation of the Act. (§§ 11130 & 30.3) A prevailing plaintiff may recover costs and attorney's fees, while a prevailing defendant may only recover if the plaintiff's suit was clearly frivolous. (§ 11130.5)

The California Public Records Act

What is the California Public Records Act?

The California Public Records Act (CPRA) provides that local government records shall be made available to members of the public, upon request, unless there is a specific, legal reason not to disclose the information.(Cal. Gov. Code §§ 6250-70).Any writings, including many forms of electronic and recorded information, held by a state or local government agency are subject to the CPRA's requirements.

How do I request documents using the CRPA?

You should submit a written request which "reasonably describes" the information sought (i.e., it must be reasonably specific and focused). (§ 6253(b)) If the records are not readily accessible, the agency must be given a reasonable period of time to collect the materials. When an agency receives a request for information, it must determine within ten days whether it will make the information available. (This period may be extended if the records are not readily available.) (§ 6253(c)) If an agency determines that the requested documents are not disclosable, the agency must notify the requester of the reasons for withholding the information. If the request was in writing, the denial must also be in writing. (§ 6255)

Exceptions

Certain categories of documents are not subject to disclosure. These include records: (a) constituting an unwarranted invasion of privacy; (b) relating to ongoing criminal investigations; (c) prepared in connection with pending litigation; (d) covered by the attorney-client privilege or related privileges; (e) containing trade secrets and/or other information submitted by third parties under an assurance of privacy; and (f) created to assist an official's deliberations (e.g., drafts). (§ 6254) In addition, a record may also be withheld if "on the facts of the particular case the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record." (§ 6255)

What should I do if I believe the law has been violated?

If you have requested information from a California agency and you believe the agency is unlawfully withholding documents in violation of the CPRA, you may bring a legal action against the agency to obtain relief. Prevailing plaintiffs may be awarded court costs and attorney's fees. Prevailing defendants may be awarded court costs and attorney fees only if the plaintiff's claim is "clearly frivolous." (§ 6255)

Nevada's Open Meeting Law

What is the Open Meeting Law?

Nevada's Open Meeting Law requires that state and local "public bodies" conduct business in open, public meetings. (Nevada Revised Statutes Ch. 241). The Law applies any time a "public body" holds a "meeting." (§ 241.020)

When does it apply?

The term "public body" refers to "any administrative, advisory, executive, or legislative body of the state or local government, which expends or disburses or is supported in whole or in part by tax revenue or which advises or makes recommendations to any entity which expends or disburses or is supported in whole or in part by tax revenue." (§ 241.015(3)) The Legislature is specifically excluded from coverage by the Open Meeting Law. (§ 241.015(3))

A "meeting" occurs whenever a quorum of the public body is "present to deliberate toward a decision or to take action on any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power." (§ 241.015(2)) A series of gatherings, each attended by fewer than a quorum, can also constitute a "meeting" if: (a) attendance over the course of the series of gathering constitutes a quorum; and (b) the series of gatherings was held with the specific intent of avoiding the provisions of the Open Meeting Law. (§241.015(2)(a)(2)). However, a gathering of a quorum of members at a social function is not a "meeting," nor is a gathering at which members receive advice from an attorney regarding potential or existing litigation. (§ 241.015(2)(b))

What does the Open Meeting Law require?

- **Notice:** Unless there is an emergency, "written notice of all meetings must be given at least three working days before the meeting." The notice must be posted at the principal office of the

public body and in at least three other separate, prominent places within the jurisdiction of the public body. The notice must contain (a) the time, place, and location of the meeting; (b) a list of the locations where the notice has been posted; and (c) an agenda containing a clear and complete statement of the topics to be considered and a list of items on which action may be taken. (§241.020(2))

- **Written Requests for Notice:** Notice must be mailed to any person who has requested such notice. If feasible, the notice should be sent by electronic mail. Warning: A request for notice expires six months after it is made! (§241.020(3)(b)).
- **Special Notice Requirements in Eminent Domain Cases:** A public body may not hold a meeting to acquire real property from a person by eminent domain unless the person has been given written notice. (§ 241.034)
- **Public Participation:** All persons must be permitted to attend any meeting covered by the Law. (§ 241.020(1)) Some period of time must be set aside for public comment during every meeting, although the public body is not required to hear public comment after or during each individual agenda item. (§ 241.020(2)(c)(3))
- **Recordings:** Any member of the public may make a recording of an open meeting, unless the recording interferes with the conduct of the meeting. (§ 241.035(2)(e)(3))
- **Minutes:** For any meeting (open or closed), written minutes must be kept. The minutes must reflect the date, time, and place of the meeting; the names of the members of the public body in attendance; the substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided; and the substance of remarks made by members of the public who request that the minutes reflect their remarks. (§ 241.035)

What should I do if I believe the Open Meeting Law has been violated?

If you believe the Law has been violated or is about to be violated, consider contacting the local body, an attorney representing that body, or the Attorney General's Office. Public bodies are encouraged to cure their own violations. If this does not occur, however, you may also you may file a civil lawsuit seeking to prevent or stop violations of the Law. Such a lawsuit must be brought within 120 days of the allegedly unlawful action. You may also sue to have a court declare an action taken in violation of the Law to be null and void, but this type of claim a suit must be filed within 60 days of the allegedly unlawful action. (§ 241.036-.037)

Access to Public Records in Nevada

Nevada law provides that "all public books and public records of a governmental entity, the contents of which are not otherwise declared by law to be confidential, must be open at all times during office hours to inspection by any person, and may be fully copied..." Covered "government entities" include any elected or appointed officer,, board, commission, or other unit of the State or any political subdivision of the State. (§ 239.010(1))

Resources for Additional Reading on Public Information Laws

Public Notice and Land Use Planning: An Overview of the Statutory Requirements for Public Notice, Circulation and Review, CA Governor's Office of Planning and Research: http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/pub_notice/index.html#contents_anchor

The Brown Act: Open Meetings for Local Legislative Bodies, CA Attorney General's Office: http://caag.state.ca.us/publications/2003_Intro_BrownAct.pdf

A Handy Guide to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, CA Attorney General's Office: <http://caag.state.ca.us/publications/bagleykeene.pdf>

Summary of the California Public Records Act, CA Attorney General's Office: http://caag.state.ca.us/publications/summary_public_records_act.pdf

Nevada Open Meeting Law Manual, Nevada Attorney General's Office: <http://ag.state.nv.us/oml/omlmanual.pdf>

Appendix E

Follow the Money: Researching Campaign Contributions

This Appendix Includes:

- **How to Follow the Money**
- **Resources for additional reading on campaign contributions**

How to Follow the Money

Very few local jurisdictions in California have electronic filing and online disclosure programs. To research local races, therefore, a personal visit to the local elections office is usually required. For city races, go to the city clerk's office. For county races, visit the county clerk or the registrar of voter's office. California Voter Foundation website has a list of all county election offices: <http://calvoter.org/voter/government/ceo.html>

Ask to view the campaign finance disclosure records for the last election cycle in which the supervisor or city council candidate ran. If they have served multiple terms or various offices, you can also look at previous elections. These files will include:

Form 501, Candidate Intention Statement

Form 410, Statement of Organization

Form 460, Recipient Committee Campaign Statement

Form 470, Officeholder and Candidate Campaign Statement Short Form.

Forms 501 and 410 will give you general information on the candidate and or committee. Forms 460 and 470 focus on contributions and expenditures. Form 470 is used if less than \$1000 is raised and spent (or anticipated to be under \$1000).

Form 460 is the most telling document. It is used for campaigns that raise and spend (or will raise and spend) more than \$1000 in a calendar year. For donations totaling \$100 or more, it lists each contribution, who made it, their contact information, and for individuals, their occupation and employer. This form also lists loans, non-monetary contributions, expenditures, payments and accrued expenses.

Form 460 covers various periods of time during the election cycle, so make sure you ask the clerk to explain the reporting requirements for the particular campaign you are researching.

You may also want to look at the campaign finance disclosure records for all the candidates in a race, as well as general purpose committees (PAC's), independent expenditure committees and others who may be spending money to influence a particular race.

If you are viewing paper files, you may need to pay for photocopying. You will be allowed to examine the files in a staff member's presence.

State and Federal Races

You may also want to look up the campaign finance records for your local assembly member, state senator or congressperson. The big money is in these races, and this info will help you more fully understand the dynamics of power and influence in your area.

Luckily, most state and national campaign finance info is available online:

California Legislature: <http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov>

Nevada Legislature: <http://sos.state.nv.us/nvelection/reports/elections.html>

US Congress: www.fec.gov

Resources for Additional Reading on Campaign Contributions

Fair Political Practices Commission: www.fppc.ca.gov

League of Women Voters of California: <http://ca.lwv.org>

The Institute on Money in State Politics: www.followthemoney.org

Appendix F

Campaign Planning

This Appendix Contains:

- **Resources for Additional Reading on Campaign Planning**
- **Sample Campaign Plan**

Sample Campaign Plan

I. Campaign Goals

Goal: 3 votes from board of supervisors in favor of a smart growth general plan

Policy goals for County plan:

- Town-centered growth – 75% of new development is within existing developed areas.
- Desired development rate (5% growth annually—down 2% from past ten years.)
- Conservation element with priority conservation areas identified and large minimum parcel sizes in these areas
- Plan should be specific and include enforcement language

Organizational Goals:

- Build up our group’s reputation and influence
- Expand partnerships and alliances in community—more business and civic groups
- Refine campaign infrastructure – more volunteers taking more leadership roles

II. Lay of the Land

The County is in the midst of a General Plan update that will dictate the distribution and extent of future development. At the early General Plan workshops, citizens were encouraging the County to go toward a “city-centered” growth alternative that is generally favorable from the perspective of

fostering smart growth. However, developers have been pushing the County to allow sprawling “new town” development anywhere and everywhere throughout the County. It is known that the proposed General Plan will include a “new town element” specifically written to accommodate several proposed “new town” developments, thus undermining the goal of city-centered growth. The General Plan Update is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2006.

Who are the decision makers? The General Plan will be decided by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, and the Planning Director and Planning Commission will have substantial influence.

Supervisor Barry Greenberg—Supporter. Has already gone on the record supporting our group’s campaign regarding Mariyuba County General Plan updates. Stay in contact with him and hold him accountable, see if he can pressure undecided Board members.

Supervisor Suzanne Richmond—Undecided. Independent and approachable. She has worked in the county government for nearly ten years (including the Mariyuba County Planning Commission). She is a friend of Bill’s.

Supervisor Sara Thompson—Undecided. Owns Oak Valley Chocolate Company and generally aligns herself with local business leaders and chamber of commerce. She also owns several parcels of land that could one day be developed. Mary and Jan know Sara.

Supervisor Elaina Covington—Undecided. Has voted for what our group considers rapid rural growth in the past and often sides with chamber of commerce. She did, however, support expansion of designated habitat for the Spotted owl.

Supervisor Herb Spencer—Opponent. New to Board of Supervisors. Owns “Herb’s Diner” and was previously the president of Oak Valley Republican Club. Herb seems to have a loose affiliation with the Oak Valley P.T.A.—see how they can influence his vote. Also, find out who else in the community can influence his stance on a smart growth plan.

County Planning Director John Stanton—Frank Patton’s cousin; his stance on smart growth is unknown.

Potential Allies in Community:

- Audubon Society
- Sierra Club Mariyuba group
- Partisan political clubs
- Fly Creek Watershed Organization
- Rotary Club
- Mariyuba County RCD
- Area Ranchers
- Oak Valley Rod and Gun Club
- River College—various student groups
- League of Women Voters
- Oak Valley United School District P.T.A.
- Oak Valley Botanical Gardens
- Prominent Individuals:
 - Barry Greenberg, Mariyuba County Board of Supervisor
 - Dr. Adriane North, Mariyuba State Park Superintendent

- Richard McCullough, owner, Oak Valley Botanical Gardens
- Martha Fowler, President Oak Valley P.T.A.
- Thomas Willcox, editor Oak Valley Gazette

Potential Opponents in Community:

- Mariyuba County Real Estate Board
- Dennis Franklin, attorney
- Frank Patton, developer
- Local construction industry
- Mariyuba County Chamber of Commerce
- Members of the Board of Supervisors
- Area Farmers and Ranchers
- Past Adversaries of our group

Strength/assets from community:

- Love of local environment and its natural history
- Mariyuba state park
- Oak Valley Botanical Garden
- Eco-tourism industry
- Pride in rural character—especially ranching, forests
- Lots of local groups and organization

Weaknesses in Community:

- Apathy toward expanding land preservation
- Some in community believe Mariyuba state park has done enough to protect local land
- Monetary incentive from development and economic expansion
- Isolation—within county and voting districts certain members of community are alienated from local issues and events
- Individualism—right to property concerns; i.e. don't tell me what to do on my land
- Growing influence of pro-development Chamber of Commerce
- Misunderstanding and lack of cooperation between members of business and environmental leaders in community

III. Proposed Tactics for Campaign

Tactic # 1: Develop campaign materials. Tactics include:

- Develop campaign message, slogan and determine best messengers.
- One-pager: Brief, 1-page overview about the coalition, the General Plan, and the impacts of new town development. Should include headline, photo, contact info for coalition, info on how to help, and reply card (if possible).
- Volunteer/donation cards: Should include name, email, work phone, home phone, address and donation amount (if any)
- Power point: Slideshow about why GP is important, what it does, GP update process, possible impacts, about the coalition, how to help.
- Visibility tools: Buttons, bumperstickers or lawn signs
- Website

Tactic # 2: Build a countywide coalition around the General Plan that includes a broad cross-section of community stakeholders (see list of potential coalition partners above). Tasks include:

- Personal contact: Make individual contact with leaders of groups, talk to them about the issue, and invite them to participate in coalition meetings.
- Power point presentations: Ask to make presentations at regular meetings of targeted groups.
- Pass resolution: Ask organizations to pass a resolution supporting our position.
- See media tactic on announcing our coalition

Tactic # 3: Conduct grassroots outreach to raise visibility and recruit new supporters. Tasks include:

- Tabling at Oak Valley trailhead – hand out flyers, gather signatures on petition
- Hold Educational Events:
 - Open space photo contest (see media tactic)
 - Guided hikes in Oak Valley
 - Townhall meetings with guest speakers (see media tactic)
 - BBQ/family event/fundraiser at Oak Valley Botanical Garden (see media tactic)
 - House parties

Tactic # 4: Get strong turnout at key hearings. Tasks include:

- Keep track of supporters. Start a database of supporters.
- Send email alerts. Send to all supporters several weeks before, and again several days before hearing, and ask them to RSVP. Email should include hearing date/time/location; agenda item number; expected start time of agenda item (if known); suggested talking points; where to send a letter (if unable to attend); contact info for coalition.
- Phone bank. Call key supporters, especially those who have RSVP'ed, the night before to personally ask/remind them to come.
- Bring 1-pagers, buttons/stickers, sample talking points to hearing. Get names and contact info of supporters who attend.
- See media tactic.

Tactic # 5: Lobby Supervisors before key hearings. Tasks include:

- Research: Research each Supervisor and determine who can influence them.
- Recruit: Recruit supporters that we know can influence each Supervisor.
- Meet: Set up meetings with Supervisor and influential supporters in the weeks before each important hearing.
- Deliver petitions (see media tactic).

Tactic # 6: Get good media coverage of campaign. Tasks include:

- Send news release and do follow up calls to reporters announcing formation of coalition
- Hold news conference announcing winners of open space photo contest. Have owner of Oak Valley Botanical Gardens be emcee.
- Send news advisory and do follow up calls to invite media to BBQ @ Oak Valley Botanical Gardens.
- Send news release and do follow up calls day before key hearings. Have 3 key coalition partners

be speakers with talking points on most important changes County must make in plan.

- Invite media to petition delivery meeting.
- Meet with editorial board of paper.
- Submit op-ed by PTA president on how Rural Mariyuba is best for children's health, well-being and future.

IV. Timeline

March 2006:

- March 5: Notice of Preparation (NOP) for General Plan EIR released -- 30 day comment period begins
- March 10: Send action alert to supporters about Notice of Preparation and upcoming public hearing AND open space photo contest (Jim)
- Mar 15: Coalition meeting (all)
- March 17: tabling at Oak Valley trailhead (Tammy)
- Mar 25-27: meetings with Supervisors (Connie, Dave, Margaret)

April 2006:

- April 1: Send reminder action alert about public hearing (Jim)
- April 2: Send news release and make follow up calls re: upcoming hearing (Tammy)
- April 3: Public hearing on NOP for General Plan
- April 5: Comments due on NOP for General Plan
- April 6: Send email to supporters to recap hearing (Jim)
- April 15: Coalition meeting (all)
- April 17: Tabling at Oak Valley trailhead (Tammy)
- April 29: House party at Connie's

May 2006:

- May 7: Make presentation to Oak Valley PTA Board (Joan)
- May 15: Coalition meeting (all)
- May 20: Announce winners of open space photo contest at press conference (Tammy)
- May 22: Tabling at Oak Valley trailhead (Tammy)
- May 24: House party at Dave's
- May 25: Make presentation to Rod & Gun Club (Jim)

June 2006:

- June 10: Draft General Plan and EIR released
- June 10-15: Read General Plan and EIR and summarize findings for all (Jim, Connie, Dave)
- June 15: Coalition meeting – decide policy position on draft General Plan (all)
- June 17: Send email alert & sample comment letter to all supporters re: draft General Plan and upcoming hearing (Jim)
- June 23-25: Phone bank to get supporters to attend to DEIR hearing (Jim, Connie, Tammy)
- June 24-25: Meet with Supervisors (Dave, Margaret)

July 2006:

- July 2: Make signs and buttons for upcoming hearing (Connie, Margaret)
- July 4: Tabling at Fourth of July festival (Dave, Ann)
- July 3: Send news release and do follow-up calls on upcoming hearing (Tammy)
- July 5: Public hearing on draft General Plan and DEIR
- July 7: Send email recap of hearing to supporters (Jim)
- July 10: EIR comments due.
- July 15: Coalition meeting (all)
- July 23: Tabling at Oak Valley trailhead (Tammy, Steve)

August 2006:

- August 7: Make presentation to Oak Valley Rotary Club (Joan)
- August 15: Coalition meeting (all)
- August 18: Send news advisory re: BBQ at Botanical Gardens
- August 22: Tabling at Oak Valley trailhead (Jim and Raul)
- August 24: BBQ fundraiser at Botanical Gardens
- August 25: Make presentation to Democratic Club (Connie)

September 2006:

- Sept 15: Coalition meeting
- Sept 20: Final EIR for General Plan released
- Sept 21-24: Read final EIR and report back to group (Jim, Connie)
- Sept 24: Special meeting of coalition to discuss FEIR
- Sept 25: Send email alert to supporters re: FEIR
- Sept 28: Phone bank supporters to attend upcoming hearing
- Sept 29: Send press release and make follow up calls regarding hearing (Tammy)
- Sept 30: Public hearing to certify final EIR for General Plan

Resources for Additional Reading on Campaign Planning

Grassroots Organization Training Manual (Sierra Club, 1999)

Dowie, Mark. *Tools for Grassroots Activists: An Environmental Activists Handbook* (Patagonia, 1995)

Rose, Chris. *How To Win Campaigns: 100 Steps To Success* (Earthscan Publications, 2005).

Appendix G

Sample Outreach Materials

Included in this Appendix:

- Sample postcard
- Sample one-page fact sheet
- Sample phone script
- Sample email action alert

Sample Postcard

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Dear Mariyuba County Supervisors,

Poorly-planned growth is bad for our environment and economy. I urge you to protect our rural quality of life by supporting the town-centered general plan alternative which maintains historic, small-town growth patterns and preserves working landscapes.

I want to keep Mariyuba rural because:

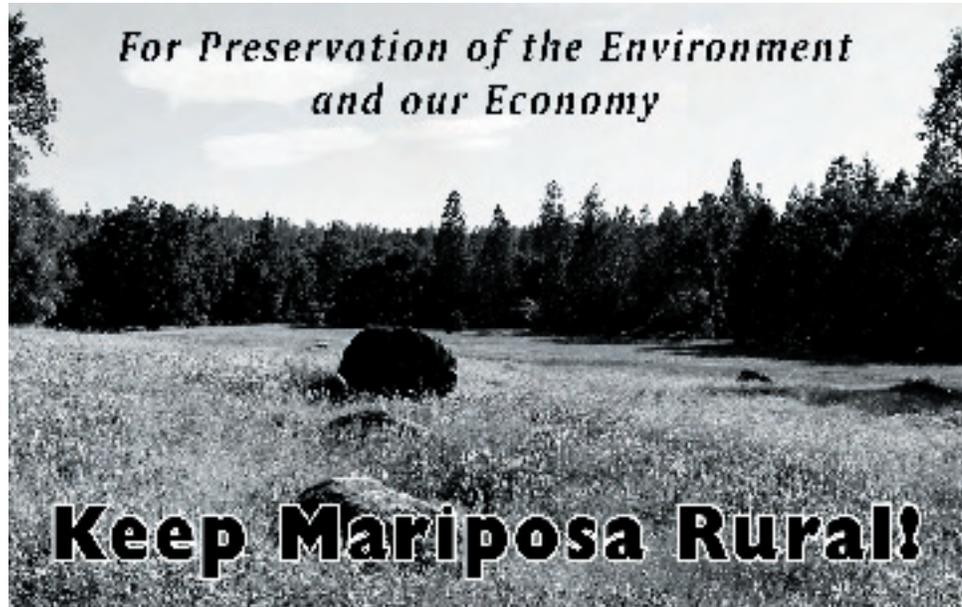
Mariyuba County Board of Supervisors
c/o Keep Mariyuba Rural
PO Box 11223
Mariyuba, CA 91234

place stamp here

Sample One-Page Fact Sheet

(courtesy of Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government)

Mariposa County's recently released draft General Plan -- the "blueprint" for future growth in the County -- states that "Mariposa County residents have witnessed the impact of rural sprawl in surrounding counties and, as a result, have clearly stated a desire to avoid this type of development pattern." Yet the proposed General plan would open up tens of thousands of acres for new development. The result? Tract houses and strip malls, less open space, more traffic congestion.



A Threat to Our Rural Communities: Poorly-planned growth threatens Mariposa County's rural way of life and economy.

Sprawling new development increases traffic, carves up forests and ranchlands, and destroys the historic small-town and rural qualities that make Mariposa a great place for residents and tourists alike.

The Wrong Plan: The proposed General Plan would open 40,000 acres of mountain preserve and agricultural land to low-density residential development, and it would greatly expand the sizes of Mariposa Town, Mt. Bullion and Bear Valley until little or no open space remains between them!

There is a Better Way to Grow: We don't have to let development pave over our County's open space. We can grow wisely by reinvesting in our existing communities and building new development that closely mirrors the historic, rural character of our county and towns.

Support the town-centered growth alternative! One of the plan "alternatives" under consideration would greatly reduce impacts to our environment and economy. "Alternative # 3" would maintain the existing sizes of Mariposa Town, Bear Valley and Mt. Bullion, and maintain protections for mountain preserve and agricultural land.

Make Your Voice Heard: Please return the attached postcard and join Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government (MERG) in asking the Board of Supervisors to Keep Mariposa Rural! MERG a local non-profit organization whose mission is to maintain and improve the quality of life in Mariposa County. For more information or to make a donation, please visit www.merg-mariposa.org.

Contact MERG at PO Box 123, Mariposa, CA 11223. Phone: (530)123-4567 Email: info@merg-mariposa.org

Sample Phone Script

“Hi, I’m a volunteer with the local community group Keep Mariyuba Rural, and I’m calling to let you know about an important hearing coming up next week that will decide the future of Hooey Ranch. Have you heard about the hearing?”

(pause. Wait for answer.)

IF YES: “Great, I’m glad you’ve already heard about the hearing. We’re trying to get 100 people to show up and ask the Board to preserve Hooey Ranch. Can you attend the hearing?”

IF YES: “Great! The meeting starts at 7:00 PM at the Board Chambers in downtown Yubaville. If you need directions or more information, you can go to our website at www.keepmariyubarural.com. Otherwise, we’ll see you there.” (thank them and hang up)

IF NO: “I’m sorry you can’t make it, but would you be able to send a letter instead? I can email you a sample letter, along with the address to send it to.” (get email address, thank them and hang up).

IF UNDECIDED: “I understand. This is a really important hearing and I hope you can join us. You can find more information on our website at www.keepmariyubarural.org, or I can email you some reading material. (get email address) Thank you for your time, and I hope you can join us next week.” (hang up).

IF NO: “At next week’s hearing, the Board of Supervisors will decide whether or not to allow construction of 5,000 houses and a golf course on Hooey Ranch. Local ranchers, tourist businesses, and the Audubon Society are opposed to the project, because it will harm our economy and our environment. We’re trying to get 100 people to attend the hearing and tell the Board to preserve Hooey Ranch. The hearing is on Tuesday at 7 PM at the Board Chambers in Yubaville. Can you attend the hearing?”

IF YES: “Great! The meeting starts at 7:00 PM at the Board Chambers in downtown Yubaville. If you need directions or more information, you can go to our website at www.keepmariyubarural.com. Otherwise, we’ll see you there.” (thank them and hang up)

IF NO: “I’m sorry you can’t make it, but would you be able to send a letter instead? I can email you a sample letter, along with the address to send it to.” (get email address, thank them and hang up).

IF UNDECIDED: “I understand. This is a really important hearing and I hope you can join us. You can find more information on our website at www.keepmariyubarural.org, or I can email you some reading material. (get email address) Thank you for your time, and I hope you can join us next week.” (hang up).

Sample Email Action Alert

Subject Line: Key hearing to protect Hooey Ranch May 6th

Body of Email

ALERT: Your letters and testimony are needed at May 6th hearing to stop development on the 36,000-acre Hooey Ranch!

As you may have heard, Big Bucks Corporation is proposing the creation of a small city and resort community in the historic ranchlands of the Hooey Valley area. The proposal on their 36,000-acre property, which stretches from the Hooey Valley to just above the South Fork of the Kawona River, include upscale housing, golf courses, shopping areas, conference center, rural estates, and a lodge.

The only way to stop this project is get involved in this early phase before it takes on a life of it's own. Get informed. Get involved. Have a say.... NOW!

The best thing we can do right now is to share our concerns with the Board of Supervisors who will be taking action on Tuesday, May 6th. At that meeting, the Board will decide whether or not to initiate a "General Plan Amendment" which will start the process for Big Bucks to develop Hooey Ranch.

You can help in two ways:

1. Attend the meeting and testify in person. Stand and be counted at this important hearing! We are hoping to have 100 people attend and ask the Board to protect Hooey Valley. We will have "Save Hooey Valley" hats and signs, along with sample talking points and instructions for how to testify. The hearing will be on

Tuesday, May 6th at 9 AM
at Mariyuba Supervisors Chambers
2800 West Wiggam, Hooville.

2. Write a letter to the Supervisors. Address your letter to Chairman John Jacob Jingleheimer and the Mariyuba County Board of Supervisors, and tell them you want to see Hooey Valley protected and that new growth should be in downtown Hooville. A sample letter is available on our website at www.hoeycitizensalliance.com. Deliver or mail your letter to the Clerk of the Board, Michelle Moniker by Wednesday, April 30.

The Address is:
Mariyuba County Board of Supervisors
2800 West Wiggam
Hooville, CA 98765

For more information, visit our website at www.hoeycitizensalliance.com or call Marie at 530-123-4567.

Appendix H

Media

This Appendix contains:

- **Information on media trainings for activists**
- **Resources for additional reading on media**
- **Sample news release**

Information on media trainings for activists

There are a number of organizations and PR firms in California that provide media assistance and training for activists and non-profits. The cost of these services vary from free to inexpensive to very expensive.

Sierra Nevada Alliance

PO Box 7989

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158

Phone: 530.542.4546

www.sierranevadaalliance.org

Sierra Nevada Alliance is a network of over seventy grassroots organizations working to preserve and restore the natural resources of the Sierra Nevada while promoting sustainable communities.

The Alliance provides free or low-cost media training and assistance to our member groups. Executive Director Joan Clayburgh has over twenty years experience in media outreach and is the former National Press Secretary for the Sierra Club.

Media Alliance

1904 Franklin Street, Suite 500

Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510.832.9000

www.media-alliance.org

Media Alliance is a 30 year-old media resource and advocacy center for media workers, non-profit organizations, and social justice activists. Their mission is excellence, ethics, diversity, and accountability in all aspects of the media in the interests of peace, justice, and social responsibility.

The SPIN Project

149 Natoma St., 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415.227.4200
www.spinproject.org

The SPIN Project strengthens nonprofit social justice organizations, small and large, to communicate effectively for themselves. The SPIN Project provides accessible and affordable strategic communications consulting, training, coaching, networking opportunities and concrete tools. Their skills and expertise are blended with a commitment to strengthening social justice organizations and helping them engage in communications to achieve their goals.

Resource Media

1127 11th Street, Suite 607
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916.446.1058
resource-media.org

Resource Media is a nonprofit organization that specializes in strategic communications and media outreach designed to improve coverage of environmental and public health issues. Founded in 1998, Resource Media has offices in four Western states serving the conservation community and reporters covering environmental issues.

Fenton Communications

182 Second Street, Fourth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415.901.0111
www.fenton.com

Fenton Communications is the largest public interest communications firm in the country. Since 1982, Fenton has contributed to some of the most defining social change movements of the past quarter century, from the fall of apartheid to the rise of MoveOn.org as a grassroots political force.

Resources for additional reading on media

Bray, Robert. *SPIN Works!: A Media Guidebook for the Rest of Us* (Independent Media Institute, 2000, <http://www.spinproject.org/article.php?id=172>)

Salzman, Jason. *Making the News: A Guide for Activists and Nonprofits* (Perseus Books, 2003)

Wolf, Kristin. *Now Hear This!* (Fenton Communications, 2001) http://www.fenton.com/pages/5_resources/nowhearthis.htm

Sample News Advisory

(courtesy of Sierra Watch and Mountain Meadows Conservancy)

Media Release
July 19, 2005

Contacts: Steve Robinson (530) 256-3982
Tom Mooers, (530) 265- 2849

Would-Be Developer Sued By Own Investors Allegations Cloud Dyer Mountain Proposal

WESTWOOD, CA - Investors have filed a scathing lawsuit against the would-be developer of Dyer Mountain, further clouding the controversial proposal for massive development in the Northern Sierra Nevada.

Dyer Mountain Associates (DMA) proposes to build 4,000 new homes, golf courses, and a ski resort in remote Lassen County. But now the group's investors have sued Bryar Tazuk, the lead developer, alleging "...serious and ongoing financial fraud and mismanagement of the funds and assets of DMA."

"The suit provides more proof of what we knew already," says Steve Robinson of Mountain Meadows Conservancy, a local group working to protect Dyer Mountain and neighboring Mountain Meadows. "The proposal to develop Dyer Mountain is a sham."

Dyer Mountain has become the latest hot spot in a growing debate over growth in the Sierra Nevada. In 2000, Lassen County voters passed an initiative to rezone the land for development. But, ever since, proponents have failed to answer persistent questions about threatened natural resources on the proposed site and the lack of infrastructure in the remote area.

The thirteen-page complaint provides a scathing indictment of Tazuk and raises further questions about the project.

For example, plaintiffs claim Tazuk "...has helped himself to compensation and incurred expenses that are decidedly unreasonable," including spending \$10,000 of DMA on the law firm representing Tazuk in divorce proceedings and securing \$13,000 in cash withdrawals using a company debit card.

The complaint extends beyond direct mismanagement of the Dyer Mountain Project, claiming that Tazuk "...has a long history of financial mismanagement and irresponsibility;" and "...has proved himself incapable of meeting any financial responsibilities, whether business or personal."

According to the complaint, he failed to pay income tax on the commission from a San Francisco real estate deal. And "...between June 1991 and June 1995, at least eight lawsuits were filed against TAZUK in Santa Cruz alone."

The complaint is sure to fuel growing opposition to the project. Lassen County recently collected comment letters on its environmental assessment of the proposed development. Of the 81 letters received, only 15 were written in support of approval.

Nevada City based Sierra Watch, spearheading the effort to protect Tahoe's Martis Valley, calls the proposal "the poster child for misguided development in the Sierra Nevada."

“The lawsuit certainly clouds the prospects of the development proposal,” says Tom Mooers, executive director of Sierra Watch. “Even more important, it reminds us that we can’t leave the future of our Sierra Nevada up to short-term speculative development schemes; we need to work together to ensure responsible planning and a healthy future for the entire region.”

The Mountain Meadows Conservancy’s mission is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and environmental health of the Mountain Meadows watershed; protect its significant Mountain Maidu burial and cultural sites; and provide recreation and public access for generations to come. For more information, visit www.mtmeadows.org.

Sierra Watch is a non-profit organization working to protect the incomparable natural resources and unparalleled quality of life in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. For more information, call (530) 265-2849 or visit www.sierrawatch.org.

###

Appendix I

Fundraising

Included in this Appendix

- **Sample Fundraising Plan**
- **Resources for Additional Reading on Fundraising**

Sample Fundraising Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide the financial resources for the Rural Mariyuba Coalition to implement its campaign plan. We anticipate that the campaign will last approximately three years.

Fundraising Goals

Based on our campaign plan, we have determined that we will need to spend approximately \$72,000 over three years, broken down as follows:

Year 1 (public workshops, scoping for General Plan update): \$14,000 for printing and mailing educational materials; purchasing laptop and projector for making presentations; holding community/coalition meetings.

Year 2 (draft General Plan released; CEQA review begins): \$23,000 to hire planning consultant to review draft General Plan and make recommendations; continue making public presentations, hosting community/coalition meetings and mailing updates/newsletters to supporters. Consider hiring part-time staff and renting office space if additional funds are available.

Year 3 (final stages of CEQA review; possible lawsuit, referendum or initiative): \$33,000 to hire attorney to review EIR and make comments, prepare legal record in case lawsuit, referendum or initiative becomes necessary; continue making public presentations, hosting community/coalition meetings and mailing updates/newsletters to supporters.

Toward the end of year three, we will determine if a lawsuit, referendum or initiative is necessary, and develop a new fundraising plan to make that happen.

Guiding Principles

Diverse income stream

We want to have a diversified stream of income sufficient to fund the strategic plan over the next three years.

Long-term sustainability

We want to build a development base over the next three years sustainable into the future, working within our existing capacity and ramping up over time.

Economy of effort

We need always to keep efficiency in mind, and will group related activities during the year to keep the work simple.

Consistent with our values and skills

We want development activities and sources of funds to remain in keeping with our core values and with the abilities of the Coalition members.

Sources of Funds

The Rural Mariyuba Coalition's fundraising plan identifies and ranks these potential sources of funds in priority order:

1. Individual donors (Friends)
2. Major donors
3. Foundations
4. Board of Directors
5. Events

1. Individual Donors

Lead: Al

Goals:

Combine advocacy and fundraising efforts by getting active volunteers to donate, and vice-versa.
Revenue goals:

05-06	06-07	07-08
2,000	3,500	5,000

Description:

Small donations of \$20 - \$200, with an average annual gift of \$50
Mariyuba residents
Second home owners
Metropolitan dwellers who recreate here

Engagement Strategy:

- Mail annual donation appeal to existing members and prospects
- Mail special appeal letter once a year
- Create a donation card and use it everywhere.
- Incorporate fundraising appeals into newsletter and action alerts.
- Utilize house parties, tabling at local events and community meetings to recruit as many of these new members as possible
- Set a numerical annual member recruitment goal to reach and hold 100 members or # of members needed to generate \$5,000 by year three

2. Major Donors

Lead: Angelina + Yao

Revenue Goals

Develop 20 major donors giving \$5,000 by year three

05-06	06-07	07-08
\$1,250	\$2,500	\$5,000

Description

\$250 or greater annual gift

Identify new major donors

Current supporters who could increase their giving

Second homeowners

Metropolitan dwellers who recreate here

Newer residents

Engagement Strategy

1. Screen our existing member list for major donor prospects
2. Have at least one personal contact per year
3. Keep major donors updated on campaign quarterly
4. Invite major donors to truly special and unique events we organize

3. Foundations

Lead: Puff Daddy

Goals:

\$13,000 by December 2007

Two to four different private foundations contributing annually

Characteristics of foundations most likely to fund us:

- Have an environment or conservation program, particularly smart growth interest
- Community-building focus
- Educational/research component
- Fund in our region

Ideas for Appropriate Uses of Funds

Printing/mailing informational materials

Laptop and projector for making presentations

Fund new part-time staff person, office space

Hire planning consultant to review General Plan

Engagement Strategy

- Grantwriter attends grantwriting workshop/training seminar in San Francisco
- Select top prospects
- Develop/maintain relationships with staff and board of foundation
- Provide updates frequently to educate the foundation officers
- Use Letters of Interest (LOI's) to get to meet/know newer foundation
- Submit 6 grant requests each year

4. Board of Directors

Lead: Margaret

Goals

Show organizational leadership to inspire other donors/foundations

Achieve \$4,000 by year three.

05-06	06-07	07-08
1,000	2,000	4,000

Description

- Board of Directors give a gift that is the highest amount they give to other non-profits.
- They also assist with other fundraising, such as attending foundation or donor meetings, co-hosting events, and recruiting new donors from their circle.

Engagement Strategy

- Board continue to commit each fiscal year to their personal gift amount
- Board commit to which other fundraising events they will do, including:
 - a. Hosting or co-hosting a fundraiser.
 - b. Sending written appeal letter to friends and family
 - c. Doing Major donor meetings.
 - d. Doing Foundation meetings.
 - e. Presenting at other's House Party

5. Events

Lead: Pierce

Goals

\$7,500 net by year three

Events generate income

Events deepen relationships in community

Events educate the public, recruit new supporters

Events generate revenue from charging admission, raffle or auction, passing the hat.

05-06	06-07	07-08
3,000	5,000	7,500

Description

Hold small events (eg house parties, guided hikes) throughout the year that raise small amounts.

1 large annual event - Create attractive venue/theme/activity. Live music, raffle, fun activities.

Engagement Strategy

- Hold 5-7 house parties which generate \$250 - \$500 each. Create fun theme or activity to make it attractive – such as Wine Tasting or party game.
- Host annual Chili Cook-Off/James Bond lookalike contest. Generate \$5,000 by year 3 and will continue to grow over time.

Fundraising Plan: Income Projection Compared to Expense Projection

Income Source	05-06	06-07	07-08
Foundations	7,000	10,000	13,000
Individual Donors	2,000	3,500	5,000
Board of Directors	1,000	2,000	4,000
Major Donors	1,250	2,500	5,000
Events	3,000	5,000	7,500
Total	14,250	23,000	34,500
Expense Projection	14,000	23,000	33,000
Difference	-250	+0	+1,500

Implementation Schedule

June 2006 – May 2008

Task	Due Date	Lead Person
Foundations		
Grantwriter goes to training workshop on writing grants	July 2006	Puff Daddy
Select foundation prospects	August 2006	Puff Daddy + Al
Update foundation officers frequently	Now and continuing	Puff Daddy
Use LOI's to get to new foundations	Fall 2006 and ongoing	Puff Daddy
Major Donors		
Screen our existing list for major donor prospects	June 2006	Angelina
Have at least one personal contact per year	Annually	Angelina

Individual Donors		
Mailed annual appeal to existing members and prospects	October 2006	Al
Set a numerical annual member recruitment goal to reach and hold 100 members by year three	December 2006	Al
Utilize house parties, events and community meetings to recruit as many of these new members as possible	ongoing	Al + Pierce
Board of Directors		
Each board member commits to their gift amount + how they will help with other efforts	Summer 2006 board meeting and once/year thereafter	Margaret
Assist board members with fulfilling their fundraising commitment	Ongoing	Margaret
Events		
Recruit hosts for first round of house parties	June 2006	Pierce
Organize annual Chili Cook Off/James Bond lookalike contest	August 2006	Pierce + Yao + Al
Hold 5-7 house parties annually	Ongoing	Pierce

Fundraising Plan Committee Members

Al Gore
Pierce Brosnan
Margaret Cho
Puff Daddy
Angelina Jolie
Yao Ming

Resources for Additional Reading on Fundraising

Bray, Ilona. *Effective Fundraising for Non-Profits: Real World Strategies that Work* (Berkeley, Ca: Nolo 2005)

Flanagan, Joan. *Successful Fundraising: A Complete Handbook for Volunteers and Professionals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002)

Klein, Kim. *Fundraising for Social Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001)

Appendix J

Getting Help: Land Use Organizations, Attorneys, Planners

Sierra Organizations

Sierra Nevada Alliance

Contact: Autumn Bernstein, Land Use Coordinator

Phone: 530.542.4546

Email: autumn@sierranevadaalliance.org

Website: www.sierranevadaalliance.org

Description: Sierra Nevada Alliance is a network of conservation organizations working to protect, enhance and restore the natural resources of the Sierra Nevada while promoting sustainable communities. The Alliance's Planning for the Future program offers technical and strategic assistance to grassroots efforts to promote smart growth that protects the land, water, wildlife, local economy and rural character of the Sierra.

Sierra Watch

Contact: Tom Mooers, Executive Director

Phone: 530.265.2849

Email: tmooers@sierrawatch.org

Website: www.sierrawatch.org

Description: Sierra Watch is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending the incomparable natural resources and unparalleled quality of life in the Sierra Nevada from irresponsible development.

Sierra Business Council

Contact: Steve Frisch, Vice-President, Programs

Phone: 530.582.4800

Email: sfrisch@sbcouncil.org

Website: www.sbcouncil.org

Description: The Sierra Business Council (SBC) is a nonprofit association of more than five hundred businesses, agencies, and individuals working to secure the social, environmental and financial health of the Sierra Nevada region for this and future generations. SBC is a resource for business leaders, government officials, and other decision makers seeking solutions to local and regional challenges. Our work includes research, policy analysis, public education, leadership development, and collaborative initiatives with local partners.

The Sierra Fund

Contact: Izzy Martin, Executive Director

Phone: 530.265.8454

Email: info@sierrafund.org

Website: www.sierrafund.org

Description: The Sierra Fund is a non-profit community foundation providing philanthropic stewardship and charitable support services to support environmental conservation in the Sierra Nevada region. We partner with private donors and public agencies to increase and organize investment in the land, air, water and human resources of the Sierra Nevada.

California Organizations

Planning and Conservation League and PCL Foundation

Contact: Gary Patton, Executive Director

Phone: 916.313.4520

Email: gapatton@pcl.org

Website: www.pcl.org

Description: The Planning and Conservation League is a statewide, nonprofit lobbying organization, an alliance of individuals and conservation organizations united to protect California's environment through legislative and administrative action. The PCL Foundation is a nonprofit organization which engages in cutting-edge environmental public policy research and educating and empowering local communities to participate in local and state environmental decision making processes.

Local Government Commission

Contact: Paul Zykofsky, Director, Land Use and Transportation Programs

Phone: 916.448.1198

Email: pzykofsky@lgc.org

Website: www.lgc.org

Description: The Local Government Commission (LGC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership organization that provides inspiration, technical assistance, and networking to local elected officials and other dedicated community leaders who are working to create healthy, walkable, and resource-efficient communities.

Greenbelt Alliance

Contact: Tom Steinbach, Executive Director

Phone: 415.543.6771

Email: tsteinbach@greenbelt.org

Website: www.greenbelt.org

Description: Our mission is to make the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area a better place to live by protecting the region's greenbelt and improving the livability of its cities and towns. Since 1958 we have worked in partnership with diverse coalitions on public policy development, advocacy and education.

Transportation and Land Use Coalition

Contact: Stuart Cohen, Executive Director

Phone: 510.740.3150

Email: stuart@transcoalition.org

Website: www.transcoalition.org

Description: TALC is a partnership of over 90 groups working for a sustainable and socially just Bay Area. We envision a region with healthy, vibrant, walkable communities that provide all residents with transportation choices and affordable housing. TALC analyzes county and regional policies, works with community groups to develop alternatives, and coordinates grassroots campaigns.

GreenInfo Network

Contact: Larry Orman, Executive Director

Phone: 415.979.0343

Email: gin@greeninfo.org

Website: www.greeninfo.org

Description: The mission of GreenInfo Network is to bring the power of computer based mapping to non-profits, public agencies and other public interest organizations. We enable these groups to more effectively show the relationships between issues, people and places. We do this by conducting GIS and other projects, providing access to GIS resources, supporting groups who desire their own GIS, and fostering collaboration around data and GIS projects.

Nevada Organizations

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN)

Contact: Bob Fulkerson, State Director

Phone: 775.348.7557

Email: bfulkerson@planevada.org

Website: www.planevada.org

Description: PLAN was formed in 1994 to bring people and organizations together who are committed to making a positive difference. We are the key vehicle in Nevada for building consensus and collective strategies among progressives on a range of issues including state roles in welfare, immigration, taxes, environment, campaign finance reform, economic justice and reproductive choice.

National Organizations

Center for Biological Diversity

Phone: 415.436.9682

Website: www.biologicaldiversity.org

Description: Combining conservation biology with litigation, policy advocacy, and an innovative strategic vision, the Center for Biological Diversity is working to secure a future for animals and plants hovering on the brink of extinction, for the wilderness they need to survive, and by extension for the spiritual welfare of generations to come.

Sierra Club Challenge to Sprawl Campaign

Contact: Tim Frank, Chair

Phone: 415.977.5500

Email: tim.frank@sierraclub.org

Website: www.sierraclub.org/sprawl

Description: Sierra Club's Challenge to Sprawl Campaign works to fight poorly planned runaway development and promotes smart growth communities that increase transportation choices, reduce air and water pollution, and protect our natural places.

Land Use Attorneys Working in the Sierra

(Note: inclusion in this list does not constitute an endorsement by Sierra Nevada Alliance. We encourage you to carefully research and select the attorney best for you)

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Professional Planners working in the Sierra

(Note: inclusion in this list does not constitute an endorsement by Sierra Nevada Alliance. We encourage you to carefully research and select the planner best for you)

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Stevee Duber and Julie Griffith-Flatter

High Sierra Rural Alliance
530.862.1855 or 530.862.1132
stevee@nccn.net

Laurie Oberholtzer, Planning Consultant

310 Nevada St.
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Terry Watt

Terrell Watt Planning Consultants
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San Francisco, CA 94123
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terrywatt@worldnet.att.net

Appendix K

Glossary of Terms

Board of Supervisors – A county’s legislative body. Board members are elected by popular vote and are responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations, and establishing county policy. The board adopts the general plan, zoning, and subdivision regulations. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Draft EIR – As part of CEQA review process, the agency (or consultant working under the agency’s supervision) will gather data relevant to the proposed project and its environmental impacts and will prepare a draft Environmental Impact Report, aka Draft EIR aka DEIR. The public then has 30 days to review the DEIR and submit comments in writing, or verbally if a hearing is held. The draft EIR must include any information requested by those who responded to the scoping notice. (PRC § 21082.1; Guidelines § 15084)

Environment – (in context of CEQA) “the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, [and] objects of historic or aesthetic significance.” (PRC § 21060.5)

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) – A detailed review of a proposed project, its potential adverse impacts upon the environment, measures that may avoid or reduce those impacts, and alternatives to the project. Required under CEQA for projects whose potential impact surpass a threshold of significance. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Environmental Justice – “The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.” (§65040.12)

Final EIR – A final EIR must contain the draft EIR, comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR (either verbatim or in summary), the agency’s responses to the significant points raised during the comment period, a list of persons who commented on the EIR, and any other information added by the agency. (Guidelines § 15132)

General Plan – A statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals, for the future physical development of the city or county. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Initial Study-(also referred to as a preliminary analysis) – Under CEQA, a preliminary analysis prepared by the lead agency to determine whether an EIR or Negative Declaration must be prepared, or to identify the significant environmental effects to be analyzed in an EIR. (Yeates, William J., ESQ. Citizens Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act, Planning and Conservation League Foundation, March 1997)

Initiative – A legislative measure which has been placed on the election ballot as a result of voter signatures. At the local level, initiatives addressing land use usually propose changes or additions to the general plan and zoning ordinance. The right of initiative is guaranteed by the California Constitution. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Lead Agency – Under CEQA, the public agency which has the primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment. The lead agency will decide whether an EIR or negative declaration will be required for the project. (Yeates)

Mitigation Measure – CEQA requires that when an adverse environmental impact or potential impact is identified, measures must be proposed that will eliminate, avoid, rectify, compensate for or reduce those environmental effects. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Negative Declaration – a written statement, prepared by the lead agency to comply with CEQA, which describes the reasons that a proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore does not require the preparation of an EIR. (Yeates)

Notice of Preparation – Under CEQA, a Notice of Preparation is a publicly-distributed document stating that an EIR will be prepared for a particular project. It is the first step in the EIR process. It should contain sufficient information describing the project and the potential environmental effects to allow the Responsible Agencies to make a meaningful response, including: a description of the project; location of the project; and probable environmental affects of the project. (14 California Code of Regulations §15082)

Project – In the context of CEQA, a project is an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment. The term “project” means the whole of an action which is being approved and which may be subject to several discretionary approvals by public agencies. The term “project” does not mean each separate governmental approval. (Yeates)

Project Approval – In CEQA terms, “Project approval” is the irrevocable commitment to proceed with a project. To approve a project, the governing board of the lead agency (usually the board of supervisors or city council) need to make Findings that the project as approved will not have a significant effect on the environment or that the impacts have been eliminated or mitigated to less than significant levels. If there are significant, unavoidable impacts that cannot be mitigated, the agency must issue a “statement of overriding consideration” in order to approve the project. (PRC § 21081)

Responsible Agency – means a public agency, other than the lead agency which has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. (Yeates)

Referendum – A ballot measure challenging a legislative action by the city council or county board of supervisors. When sufficient voter signatures are filed before the council or board action becomes final, the council or board must either set aside its action or call an election on the matter. Use permits, variances, and subdivision maps cannot be challenged by referendum. (http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html#anchor260736)

Scoping – a method of early public agency consultation that helps bring parties together to resolve concerns of affected federal, state and local agencies, the proponent of the project or action, and interested members of the public. The purpose is to identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant environmental effects that need to be analyzed in an EIR, as well as to eliminate those issues found not to be important. (Yeates)

Subdivision Map – a map made for the purpose of showing the design and improvement of a proposed subdivision and the existing conditions in and around it. The map must comply with the Subdivision Map Act and local subdivision ordinances. for a proposed subdivision, and it is the document which the local government approves when approving a subdivision. At various stages in the approval process, the map is known as the “tentative map” and “final map.”

Tentative map – see Subdivision Map.

Zoning Ordinance – the set of rules and regulations which a city or county adopts to govern land use within the jurisdiction. The ordinance divides the area into “zones” and defines the uses and standards which are permitted in each zone.