Report to the Auburn City Council

Action Item
Agenda Item No. 10

City Manager's Approval

To:	Mayor and City Council Members
From:	Reg Murray, Senior Planner RAM
Date:	March 28, 2011
Subject:	Annual SACOG *Blueprint* Project Comparison Report – 2010 Calendar Year

The Issue

Informational item only

Conclusions and Recommendations

No action is required.

Background

In 2007, the Auburn City Council directed that, on an annual basis, the Community Development Department provide the Auburn Planning Commission and the Auburn City Council with a comparison of city land-use plans and implementation of the land use goals as set out in SACOG's (Sacramento Council of Governments) *Blueprint*. The Planning Commission reviewed the *Blueprint* comparison report (below) on March 15, 2011.

The *Blueprint* project employs good growth concepts, widely accepted to encourage more livable communities (see Attachment 1). The *Blueprint* includes seven basic principles, which are:

- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Offer a variety of housing choices and opportunities
- Take advantage of compact development to encourage walking, biking and transit use
- Use existing assets (i.e. infill and redevelopment)
- Mixed land uses to create vital neighborhoods
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, through natural resources conservation
- Encourage distinctive, attractive communities with quality design

In the City of Auburn, it is generally more difficult for projects to meet the principles established with the *Blueprint*. The *Blueprint* principles are best employed with master planned development or with larger projects where they can more effectively be tied into the design of the project. The majority of development projects within the City are typically smaller in size (e.g. 10-15 lots subdivisions), making it tougher to utilize the *Blueprint* principles to their best effect.

Projects which the City processed in 2010 which meet, or will meet, the intent of the *Blueprint* are:

1. **Tuscan Palms Townhomes** – The Tuscan Palms Townhome project is a nine (9) unit townhome development at 133/141 Electric Street. This development is consistent with the *Blueprint* project in that it is an infill development that provides a more affordable housing alternative to the traditional detached single-family home, while providing a well-designed and attractive project. The project was approved by Council in 2010.

2. **Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan (BRSP)** – In 2010, the Community Development Department continued processing the BRSP, a master-planned development in the southwest part of the City. The original proposal submitted in 2007 included several features representative of the *Blueprint*. The proponent modified the scope of the BRSP in early 2009, however, the BRSP continued to include the goals of the *Blueprint* in the draft BRSP that was released in October, 2009. The BRSP includes the following *Blueprint* concepts: Retaining a village core with high-density residential (HDR) units centrally located around a park site; a variety of residential land use densities; several mixed-use parcels; large open space areas; and the provision of bike lanes and a pedestrian/bike trail system. The BRSP and associated EIR were approved by the Planning Commission in November, 2010, with City Council approving the project on February 28, 2011.

3. **Auburn Streetscape Project** – Construction on Phase 1 of the Auburn Streetscape Project started in July, 2009 and ran through January 2010. The Streetscape project reflects several principles of the *Blueprint*, particularly with its investment in Auburn through redevelopment of Downtown (and Old Town in future phases). In addition, the improvements provide distinctive and quality design features which enhance the streetscape, provide an enjoyable walking environment, and foster a sense of community. SACOG has notified the Community Development Department that they will be using the City's Streetscape project as a good example of the *Blueprint* goals and objectives.

4. **Mercy Auburn Senior Apartments** – The Mercy Auburn Senior Project, a 60-unit affordable senior apartment project, was approved by City Council in August 2010. The Mercy Project will provide apartment style housing for elderly residents in a high density infill development. A density bonus of 400% was awarded to the project in line with the city's density ordinance (6/23/08). In October 2010, the City's AUDA committed $400,000.00 to the project.

Alternatives Available; Implications of Alternatives

No action is required

Fiscal Impact

Not applicable

Attachments

1. SACOG Blueprint Information

SACOG Blueprint Project

In order to meet the blueprint objectives, SACOG encourages that future development be concentrated to make better use of transportation systems, reduce vehicle trips, minimize air quality impacts and limit encroachment on agriculture and open space lands in the region. This is achieved by providing higher density/more compact infill and Greenfield development at densities around 15.3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). The vast majority of all existing housing in Placer County (including the cities) is built at densities less than 7 du/ac. If Placer County (including the cities) built out according to the General Plans, over half of the County would be at very low densities with an average density of 1.74 du/ac.

The Blueprint Project found that by changing the way development proceeds in the region in the future would result in substantial tangible benefits. Following is a brief overview of some of the key benefits:

Growth Through Reinvestment
Under the Base Case SACOG found that virtually all new development would be focused on vacant land. The Preferred Scenario suggests that 13 percent of all new housing and ten percent of all new jobs would occur through reinvestment. By providing a component that concentrates on infill/redevelopment, communities can take advantage of existing resources and ensure that existing older areas remain vital.

Reduction in the amount of agricultural or open space conversion
Under the Base Case, new development would need an additional 661 square miles of land by the year 2050. By encouraging compact development, the amount of vacant land would be reduced by more than half to 304 square miles. Of the vacant land needed to accommodate new development in the Base Case, 166 square miles of agricultural land would be potentially converted. However, under the Preferred Scenario, the number of agricultural acres would be reduced by 64 square miles to 102 square miles.

Increase in areas with good or excellent pedestrian features
In the Base Case, 34 percent of people in the region would live in pedestrian friendly neighborhoods. In the Preferred Scenario, the number would jump to 69 percent.

Increase in areas where people live in proximity to jobs
Under the Base Case Scenario, 26 percent of people would live in communities with a good or balanced mix of land uses by 2050. In the Preferred Scenario 53 percent would live in balanced communities.

Reduction in vehicle miles traveled
By designing development to encourage alternative modes of travel (walking, biking, transit), the number of trips taken by car would be reduced by ten percent. The number vehicle miles traveled per day would decrease from 47.2 miles to 34.9 miles. Total time devoted to travel per household per day declines from 81 minutes to 67 minutes.

Reduction in Air Quality Impacts
With the Preferred Scenario there would be 14 percent less per capita of carbon dioxide (greenhouse gas) and particulates (related to asthma) compared to the Base Case.

SACOG Blueprint Project and Auburn's General Plan

Below lists the Blueprint Project growth principles and which items in Auburn's General Plan Implementation Work Program promote the principle.

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Community design can help encourage people to walk, ride bicycles, ride the bus, ride light rail, take the train or car-pool. For example, streets can be designed to include dedicated bike lanes or special lanes for bus rapid transit. Community design can encourage people to make more trips closer to home, making walking or biking easier. As more people walk, bike, or ride the bus, congestion and air pollution are reduced.

1. Develop Transportation Systems Management Program (promote showers in businesses etc.).
2. Develop Trip Reduction Implementation Program. Ordinance adopted March 8, 1993.
3. Prepare Transit Master Plan. Short Range Transit Plan adopted May 23, 2005. Long Range Transit Plan under development.
4. Update Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.
5. Implement the Auburn Park Conservancy Non-Auto Circulation Plan and the Auburn Ravine Trail Master Plan. Bike Master Plan adopted 6/28/04.
6. Coordinate RTP and Congestion Management Plan with Placer County.
7. Adopt the street standards contained in the General Plan. New street standards adopted - 3/13/06.
8. Use Auburn Urban Development Agency for circulation system improvements.
9. Promote establishment of Rail Transit Station. Rail Transit Station completed February, 2004.
10. Create and implement a joint City/County Traffic Mitigation Fee (TMF) Program.

HOUSING CHOICES

Providing a variety of places where people can live – apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and single-family detached homes – creates opportunities for the variety of people who need them – families, singles, seniors, and people with special needs. This issue is of special concern for the very low-, low-, and moderate-income people for whom finding housing, especially housing close to work, is challenging. By providing a diversity of housing options, more people have a choice.

1. Minimum densities. Amend zoning ordinance to insure minimum densities in the R-2 and R-3 zone districts.
2. Pursue available and appropriate State and Federal funding sources for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.
3. Promote second units.
4. Facilitate construction of affordable rental housing for very low- and low-income seniors.
5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential care facilities in the multi-family residential (R-3) and central business district (C-2) zones.

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Creating environments that are more compactly built and use space in an efficient but more aesthetic manner can encourage more walking, biking, and public transit use.

USE EXISTING ASSETS

Focusing development in communities with vacant land or intensifying development of underutilized land can make better use of public infrastructure, including roads. Building on existing assets can also mean refurbishing historic buildings or clustering buildings more densely in suburban office parks.

1. Pursue implementation of Auburn Urban Development Authority Redevelopment Plan.
2. Use Auburn Urban Development Agency for circulation system improvements.
3. Identify areas suitable for redevelopment.
4. Implement the Historic District Development Guidelines and continue implementation of the Auburn Main Street Design Guidelines.

MIXED LAND USES

Building homes together with small businesses or even light industry is called "mixed-use" development, and it has proven to create active, vital neighborhoods. There are many examples of this type of development: a housing project near an employment center; a small shopping center near houses; or a high-rise building with ground-floor retail and apartments or condominiums upstairs. Mixed-use development near transit can boost ridership.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Our quality of life is better when we have clean air to breathe and water to drink, and when we can experience the outdoors – in parks and greenbelts or in natural places. To ensure healthy and attractive natural environments we must preserve and maintain our open spaces and natural places and conserve the most productive farmland. Community design can help accomplish this by encouraging energy-efficient design, water conservation and storm water management, and the planting of shade trees to reduce ground temperatures in the summer.

1. Prepare/adopt Tree Ordinance.
2. Prepare/adopt Open Space Ordinance to zone open space use in perpetuity.
3. Prepare/adopt Stream, Canal and Waterway Protection Ordinance.
4. Prepare/adopt Habitat Management Plan.
5. Maintain Parks Standard of 5 acres/1,000 pop.
6. Provide for recreational opportunities in Baltimore Ravine through the Southwest Specific Plan.

QUALITY DESIGN

How projects are developed, how they are oriented in relationship to the street, how well designed their facades are, if they have setbacks and where their garages are placed, all

contribute to a community's attractiveness. This also influences how much people like to walk or bike and contributes to community pride and sense of ownership.

1. Prepare design guidelines for commercial/industrial development.
2. Pursue implementation of Auburn Urban Development Authority Redevelopment Plan.
3. Identify areas suitable for redevelopment.
4. Implement the Historic District Development Guidelines and continue implementation of the Auburn Main Street Design Guidelines.