



**COUNTY OF SOLANO  
MIDDLE GREEN VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN  
& EIR**

Department of Resource Management  
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**MEMORANDUM:**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

**TO:** Solano County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Matt Walsh, Principal Planner *MW*  
**DATE:** May 7, 2009  
**RE:** Status Report on Middle Green Valley Specific Plan and EIR

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**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive a status report on the Middle Green Valley Specific Plan and EIR.

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**Background**

As the Planning Commission is aware, the adoption of the new General Plan in 2008 identified the Middle Green Valley area (MGV) of Solano County as a Special Study Area. Special Study areas are generally considered to contain unique planning issues, specific to that particular portion of the County.

For MGV, six public workshops were held during the General Plan effort to assist in the development of goals and policies that were eventually adopted into the General Plan. The policies include direction to adopt a specific plan which would implement the policies.

The intent of this specific plan is to provide policy direction on how this area, which has historically been set aside for agricultural use, would continue as agricultural land, while allowing for the development of approximately 400 residential units in a plan that complements the rural character of Green Valley. Land use tools, such

as clustering and transfer of development rights (TDR) will be used to limit the effects of residential development on the rural character of the valley.

In August 2008, the Board of Supervisors approved the establishment of a six person Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to help guide the development of the plan. The CAC meets every three weeks, and consists of three representatives from the Green Valley Landowners Association (GVLA) and three representatives of the property owners within the specific plan area boundary, and two alternates. In January 2009, the County hired Hart Howerton as the planning and design consultants to develop the specific plan, complete the EIR for the project, and facilitate the CAC meetings.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the specific plan is to provide policy direction and guidance on how the Middle Green Valley area will grow, integrating both rural residential land use and agricultural land uses.

As directed by the adopted General Plan, the specific plan will specify the following:

1. Identification of the area covered by the plan;
2. Techniques to ensure development is compatible with the rural character of Middle Green Valley and surrounding areas. Such techniques should include design guidelines and development standards;
3. Guidelines for cluster development, including minimum and maximum lot sizes, development standards, and density bonus credits for clustered development;
4. The details for a transfer of development rights program (with an implementing ordinance), which include: identification of areas where development is preferred, creating appropriate and equitable rezoning, clustering of housing, and determining the ratio of credits to property owners who voluntarily forego development;
5. The number of units/credits, with or without clustering, that will provide incentives for all landowners in the area to participate in a market driven transfer of development rights program, based on 400 units;
6. Location and dimensions of a wildlife corridor;
7. Maximum number of units any property owner can develop (with or without clustering);

8. Techniques to be applied voluntarily by property owners that ensure permanent protection and maintenance of resources/views on lands to remain undeveloped;
9. Details of how development would be served by water and wastewater service. Attempt to secure public water and wastewater service through a cooperative effort of property owners, residents, the County, and the City of Fairfield.

### **Current Status**

To date, five consultant facilitated CAC meetings have been held and the fifth was held on May 4, 2009. During these meetings, the CAC has reviewed the policies in the General Plan relating to Middle Green Valley and has reviewed work being done outside the CAC meeting structure. This work has included developing a Reconnaissance Analysis and a Community Design Workbook. The analysis provides a description of unique issues within the project area and a discussion of opportunities and constraints that are found within the MGV area, such as hydrology, wind, fire hazards, riparian corridors, viewsheds, etc. The Community Design Workbook provides examples and alternatives of potential cluster development, TDR distribution, and development options (briefly summarized below). The Reconnaissance Analysis and Community Design Workbook are attached as Exhibits C and D, and will be reviewed at the Planning Commission meeting. These documents can also be found online at [http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/boardscommissions/middle green valley cac/documents.asp](http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/boardscommissions/middle_green_valley_cac/documents.asp)

### **Specific Plan Summary**

As shown in the Community Design Workbook, the preliminary plan will focus on clustering various lot and housing design types within areas of MGV where constraints are minimal. Housing types range in size and style and include: the Courtyard design (3400-5000sf lots) which is an attached building type; Small Lots (5000-10,000sf), a detached design that serves as the core of the neighborhoods; Large Lots (10,000-40,000sf) which provide estate type living units; Meadow Lots (4,500sf) that are located in the foothills and centered around meadow and oak woodland features; Compound Lots (2 acres) which are intended for larger dwellings and multiple farm style buildings interlinked together as traditional agricultural farmsteads tended to develop in years past.

Form based design concepts are proposed to be utilized to promote traditional rural, agricultural style architecture.

Another key component of this plan is the preservation of 84% of the plan area for agricultural and open space purposes. It is anticipated that the open areas will be put into an agricultural or conservation easement and presided over by a conservancy. The conservancy will be funded, in part, by a transfer tax through the sale of property in the area.

A more detailed overview of the Community Design Workbook will be provided in the presentation on May 7, 2009.

## **Schedule**

The project as a whole is expected to be completed within a 12-13 month time frame. This includes development of the conceptual specific plan, the EIR, and the development standards and ordinance. In order to maintain a twelve month schedule, certain aspects of the process will overlap with one another. Key schedule milestones are as follows:

- May 2009: Notice of Preparation (NOP) released for EIR
- August 2009: Draft EIR circulated for public review
- September 2009: Draft Plan and ordinance completed
- December 2009: Final EIR released with responses to comments
- January 2010: Planning Commission review of Draft Specific Plan and EIR
- February 2010: BOS adoption of Specific Plan and EIR

## Attachments

- Exhibit A: Citizens Advisory Committee Schedule
- Exhibit B: 2008 General Plan Policies for Middle Green Valley
- Exhibit C: Reconnaissance Analysis (hard copy to PC members)
- Exhibit D: Community Design Workbook (hard copy to PC members)

Note: Exhibits C and D can also be found online at:

[http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/boardscommissions/middle\\_green\\_valley\\_cac/documents.asp](http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/boardscommissions/middle_green_valley_cac/documents.asp)

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## 2009 Middle Green Valley CAC Meeting Schedule

The CAC will meet on the following Mondays at 6:15, except as noted.  
The meetings will be held in the County Administration Center, First Floor  
Multi-Purpose Room, 675 Texas Street, Fairfield

January 12, 2009 (January 19<sup>th</sup> is a holiday)  
February 9, 2009  
March 2, 2009  
March 23, 2009  
April 13, 2009  
May 4, 2009  
May 18, 2009 (May 25<sup>th</sup> is Memorial Day)  
June 15, 2009

*The following meeting dates will be used on an as needed basis.*

July 6, 2009  
July 27, 2009  
August 17, 2009  
Wednesday September 9, 2009 (9/7 is Labor Day)  
September 28, 2009  
October 19, 2009  
November 9, 2009  
November 30, 2009  
December 21, 2009

## 2008 General Plan Policies for Middle Green Valley:

- Maintain the rural character of Middle Green Valley while still allowing development to be guided into areas screened from Green Valley Road because of natural contours in the land and woodland vegetation, and/or riparian vegetation. Locate upland development in areas screened by landforms or vegetation.
- Balance the protection of resources in Middle Green Valley (e.g. view sheds, oak woodlands, riparian habitat, sustainable agricultural use) while allowing development to occur.
- Allow for the migration and movement of wildlife.
- Provide a variety of incentives and techniques to encourage property owners to preserve natural and visual resources, in addition to the transfer of development rights.
- Encourage cluster residential development through incentives to property owners in hillside and valley floor areas that can support residential uses with least affect on resources, steep slopes, or very high wildfire hazard areas.
- In accordance with balancing the protection of resources described in these policies, adopt a program that provides residential development credits to property owners who voluntarily forego or limit development on their lands. The transfer of development rights program should focus incentives on land in areas to be preserved.
- Adopt a specific or master plan to implement the policies for Middle Green Valley.
- Create additional methods to assist landowners who choose to continue farming, such as, but not limited to:
  - enforcing the right-to-farm act and educating residents on the act, and;
  - investigating mechanisms for providing farmers with economic assistance to ensure agricultural viability.