



MARIPOSA COUNTY

MEETING: September 24, 2013

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Brian Foucht, Deputy Planning Director on behalf the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee

RE: Progress Report – Midpines Community Plan, Community Conversation

I. RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors receive the report from the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC).

II. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

General Plan Policy 5.3.01.A-I addresses preparation of Town, Community and Special Plans for various areas of the County. Section 5.3.01.B (1) requires adoption of a Community Plan for the Midpines Planning Area. Section 5.3.01.E. requires that the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee prepare the Midpines Community Plan for review by the Planning Commission and adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

III. MPAC PROGRESS REPORT

A. Overview

In February 2013, the MPAC approved the program for preparation of the Midpines Community Plan (**Attachment A**). The program outlines the planning process in several different ways (roles, culture, information, and tools), and references the leadership of the MPAC and its committees in conducting the planning program.

MPAC also identified the 2003 “Midpines Community Plan Cookbook” (**Attachment B**) and other products of this earlier 2003 - 2009 effort (community survey, newsletter, workshops and notices) as useful in guiding the community planning process. The Midpines Community Plan (MPCP) planning process outlined in “Attachment A” involves 9 steps proposed to

occur over a two year period.

- Gather information
- Prepare community “conversation” strategy and prepare report – 3 months (July 2013)
- Issues and options evaluation and prepare report - 3 months (October 2013)
- Select alternative planning scenarios and prepare report - 2 months (January 2014)
- Select preferred plan and prepare report – 2 months (March 2014)
- Committee consideration, refinement and prepare report - 1 month (April 2014)
- Prepare CEQA studies and related notices – 3 months (July 2014)
- Planning Commission hearing - 2 months (September 2014)
- Board of Supervisors hearings and adoption - 2 months (November 2014)

MPAC recognizes that information gathering will be ongoing throughout community engagement and evaluation of issues options phases, and community engagement will be a part of each step. Regular progress reports to the Board of Supervisors are a part of the program, and will occur as steps are completed.

B. Community Engagement

MPAC determined that two methods would be used to engage the community and has completed programming for each:

- Programs, or “modules”, designed for public participation that are “built in” and available for use via the County’s web - based content provider *Civic Plus*; and
- One or more community forums or workshops.

MPAC decided that using both methods together would improve the overall level of community participation. The County’s web service would inform the discussion during the community forums, and the forums would enhance the quality of an ongoing conversation to occur on the County’s web page. MPAC envisions that opportunity for on-line public participation would be available at the same time that advertisements for the forums are published.

MPAC appointed a “Community Engagement Adhoc Committee” to work with staff to develop methodology, content and a schedule for the web page and the forums. The Adhoc committee met several times each month from April - August and each month reported to, and received feedback from MPAC regarding its recommendations.

1. Midpines Community Conversation Web Page

The MPAC first approved a series of five key topics and a corresponding set of carefully worded questions to be presented to the community via the County’s website. Of the two “modules” available for this purpose, MPAC selected the Civic Plus “module” that offered the greatest flexibility of use and ease of administration. MPAC has approved as-yet unpublished web content for these pages contained in “**Attachment C**”. The

Community Conversations web pages will be located on the County's website using the following path Mariposa County Planning Dept/Planning Areas/Midpines/Midpines Community Plan or by cutting and pasting:

<http://ca-mariposacounty.civicplus.com/Blog.aspx?CID=2>.

A link to the Community Plan the Community Conversations web pages will also be placed on the front page of the County's website under "Community Links".

Planning staff will moderate these pages to ensure that published comments are respectful, relevant and informative.

2. Community Forums - Panel and "*Open Space Technology*"

MPAC then approved a scenario for each of two forums including: (1) method (2) themes of each forum; 2) panelists; 3) the outline of general and specific topics; 4) MPAC member participation; and 5) schedule, as follows:

a. Two forums will be held:

- Fire Safety and Open Space Management
- Economic Development, Housing, Culture and History

b. Each forum will be divided into two parts:

- Panel discussions with a short question and answer period; and
- A facilitated discussion of key topics raised by community members in attendance.

c. An introduction to each forum will be provided by a planning staff moderator:

- An overview of the two-part process;
- The purpose and of the forum;
- Panelist introduction; and
- Description of the open meeting process to follow.

d. Each panel will consist of subject-matter experts recommended by MPAC, and a draft list of panelists has been compiled. The purpose of the panel discussion is to inform participants and to stimulate conversation among those attending the forums. MPAC has determined that the theme of each of the forums will be as follows:

Theme for Fire Safety and Open Space Management Forum - *Create a plan that: 1) results in a safe and healthy community within the urban/wild land interface; 2) acknowledges that a healthy forest ecosystem is fire-dependent; and 3) establishes an action plan for the protection, conservation and use of natural resources.*

Theme for Economic Development, Housing, Culture and History Forum - *The matrix of social, cultural and economic relationships that formed the community must be identified, recognized and acknowledged as a foundation from which the present day Midpines community has evolved. Present day and foreseeable economic, institutional, and personal relationships are, nonetheless, much more influential in charting a path toward a desirable future community.*

- e. Following the panel exercise, there will be a recess during which the meeting room will be staged for the “community conversations” portion of the forum. MPAC favors an “open agenda” process for these sessions involving a simple, self-guided, loosely facilitated, annotated exchange of concerns and solutions around key topics identified by those in attendance that day. The following link best describes this process: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-space_technology.

Individual MPAC members will be available to facilitate break-out group discussions and panelists will be available as resources.

C. Public Notice:

Staff has verified that sufficient funds are available in the Planning Department Budget to accommodate the following public notice program:

- Two (2) 1/8 page Gazette advertisements for the forums and the blog and two (2) required 1/8 page notices advertising availability of the draft plan;
- Up to four (4) post card mailings to Midpines property owners, one of which will be a 5x8.5 advertising the blog and the forums;
- Up to three newsletters to the community regarding the Midpines Community Plan (Issues and Options Report, Draft Plan, etc.);
- Posted Flyers and notices

Other avenues will also be used including the blog page, the “notify me” feature on the County’s website, and press releases to local print and electronic news outlets and agency electronic bulletin boards. Staff will use non-governmental organization partners’ websites to publicize events and document availability.

D. Schedule:

- Blog published; community outreach and notice: September 25 – November 2
- Forum One October 26, 2013 Fire Safety and Open Space Management:
- Forum Two: November 2, 2013 Economic Development, Housing, Culture and History