



# Board Agenda Item 11

DATE: July 18, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director  
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Fresno County Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Accept the Department's Fresno County Guidance Document (Guidance Document) for Unincorporated Community Plans, providing, among other things, format and content guidelines for the preparation of updated and new unincorporated community plans by staff with the Department of Public Works and Planning;**
- 2. Approve Prioritization Criteria for Updating Fresno County Unincorporated Community Plans;**
- 3. Approve recommend priority order for future updating of Fresno County Unincorporated Community Plans; and**
- 4. Authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, or designee, to make periodic updates and revisions to the Guidance Document as deemed necessary to remain consistent with the Fresno County General Plan and/or state law provisions.**

Approval of recommended action would accept the Fresno County Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans, which provides guidance for updating existing community plans as well as establishing new community plans and establishes a format for updating unincorporated community plans as well as minimum content requirements for those plans. Also, approval would establish scoring criteria and approve the order in which the County's community plans are to be updated. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may modify and approve or determine not to accept the recommended actions, in which case staff would seek your Board's direction regarding these items.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions for this item. On February 23, 2021, your Board authorized the Department to file a grant application to the 2019-2020 Regional Early Action Planning Grant Program (REAP), which the County was successful in receiving \$292,950 in grant funding. A portion of the awarded REAP funding (approximately \$50,000) has been used to fund consulting services and Department staff time to prepare the Guidance Document and develop the recommended criteria and community plan update priority order. The balance of the REAP grant funding will be used to begin updating the various community plans.

DISCUSSION:

California’s Planning and Zoning Law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning.” A general plan may also include area plans focusing on specific geographic regions or communities. Area plans are part of and carry the same weight as a general plan. The Fresno County General Plan (General Plan) includes area plans for regions, known as regional plans, and area plans for communities, known as community plans. Fresno County has 31 adopted community plans (10 unincorporated community plans, 13 incorporated community plans, and eight Fresno-Clovis area community plans).

Approval of the recommendations is consistent with the County’s General Plan and would assist in implementing the following General Plan policies and programs:

- Policy LU-H.10      The County shall adopt minimum format and content guidelines for the preparation of updated and new regional, community, and specific plans to ensure consistency with the countywide General Plan.
  
- Policy LU-H.11      The County shall periodically update regional, community, and specific plans to ensure consistency with the countywide General Plan.
  
- Program LU-H.C      The County shall prepare and adopt minimum format and content guidelines for the preparation of updated and new regional, community, and specific plans to ensure consistency with the countywide General Plan. (See Policy LU-H.10)
  
- Program H-A.H      The County shall establish a plan, with time frames, for the update of regional and community plans of the Fresno County General Plan with priority given to the update of plans that will address areas with housing production needs as defined in the inventory of residential land resources.

**Fresno County Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans (Attachment A)**

While there have been numerous amendments to various plans over the past several years, the community plans are in need of comprehensive updates in order to ensure they reflect current applicable Federal and state laws, population projections, preservation and development interests, and community input. The Fresno County Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans includes guidance for updating existing community plans and establishing new community plans. The guidance document provides the objectives of community plans, the relationships of the community plans with the General Plan and other planning instruments, the applicability of community plans, the content of community plans, and the actions required for the adoption and amendment of community plans. The document also recommends a format for updating existing and potentially new community plans.

The community plan update process is a multi-year program. County staff intends to initially focus on the top three unincorporated community plans and continue down the list before ranking and initiating the updating of the 13 incorporated community plans and the eight Fresno-Clovis area community plans. Staff has and will continue to seek grant funding to fund the cost of future community plan updates along with requesting funding allocation through the annual Department budget process.

Under SB 1000, the County is required to integrate environmental justice policies and programs into the General Plan. The Department has prepared a draft Environmental Justice Element as part of the ongoing General Plan Review project which is currently undergoing public review. It is anticipated that the new Environmental Justice Element goals and programs will be in effect prior to the updating of the first three Community plans. The County must comply with SB 1000 when updating all future Community Plans.

### **Prioritization Criteria for Updating Fresno County Unincorporated Community Plans (Attachment B)**

The Prioritization Criteria recommended by Department staff is an eleven-question survey intended to identify unincorporated community plans that are in the greatest need for updating. The scoring criteria includes the following categories: General Plan Consistency, Community Interest, Housing Priorities, Service Provision and Investment, Special Districts, and Environmental Justice. The Department focused on factors that have the greatest impact on sustainable growth of the County's unincorporated communities.

All community plans adopted by Fresno County must be consistent with the General Plan. Focusing on Community Interest, and Housing Priorities shows the desire for growth in a community and addresses the County's ability to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirement. Factors pertaining to Service Provision, Investment, and Special Districts is intended to demonstrate the ability for growth in a community. Factoring in Environmental Justice allows the County to focus on improving quality of life issues in the County's environmental justice communities.

### **Priority Order for Future Updating of Fresno County Unincorporated Community Plans (Attachment C)**

Based on the Prioritization Criteria, Department staff scored the ten existing unincorporated community plans and ranked Del Rey, Riverdale, and Biola as first, second, and third. Del Rey and Biola were adopted in 1976, with Riverdale adopted in 1960.

### **Public Participation**

The draft Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans and draft Scoring Criteria were released for a 30-day public comment on August 19, 2022. County Staff hosted a virtual community meeting on September 8, 2022. During the meeting, community members asked for an extension on the comment period, which the County extended until September 30, 2022. The County received comments during the meeting and received three comments letters during the comment period. Department staff worked with the consultant to review the comments and revise Department documents as appropriate. Department staff also added an Environmental Justice scoring criterion following the comment period to help achieve the goals of the County's draft Environmental Justice Element.

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

Department staff has determined that approval of the Recommended Actions is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as there is no possibility that the proposed ordinance will have a significant impact on the environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061, subdivision (b)(3)). Subsequent development of the community plans will nevertheless be reviewed under CEQA as necessary based on the specifics of the project.

### **REFERENCE MATERIAL:**

BAI #33, February 23, 2021

### **ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:**

Attachment A - County of Fresno Implementation Work Plan for Unincorporated Community Plan Updates  
Attachment B - Fresno County Unincorporated Community Plans Scoring Criteria  
Attachment C - Scoring Results for Unincorporated Community Plans

### **CAO ANALYST:**

Salvador Espino