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Attachments: PRIORITY Comments - Growth Management.doc



PRIORITY
Comments - Growth Ma

The Steering Committee is urged to review Working Group Report as the first and most important source of goals, objectives, and actions.

Thus far, this has not happened in the cases of Transportation and Agriculture, where Working Group Reports have been largely ignored in favor of recommendations by the consultant that, in some cases, are diametrically opposed to Working Group recommendations.

Comments:

I. Does "Growth Management" really express what we want to do?

"Growth Management" is re-active to failure of community self-determination.

What is needed: pro-active claim on (Rural Village) community self-determination.

The following recommended changes are essential.

II. PCDP must advance, not impede, food production for home consumption.

Page 4, third paragraph:

Recommended rewording: "There are limited opportunities for commercial agricultural activity in these subdivisions, especially where lots are as little as 8,000 sq ft., because: (1) smaller lots do not allow for economic production of most products; (2) potential for real or perceived nuisance effects on immediate residential neighbors; and (3) higher real estate values, per square foot, for small lots. These small lots offer good opportunities for residents to produce food for their own consumption, as is appropriate for a vision for Puna to maintain a rural character."

III. Agriculture and Economic Development The Draft Plan must clearly reflect the Agriculture Working Group's goals (see below), especially the emphasis on local markets and local livelihood. Changes to wording recommended below are an absolute minimum start at restoring those goals. Thus far, the Draft Plan has minimally reflects the Working Group's work.

Goal #5

Recommended rewording: "Puna agricultural products represent an increasing local market share."

Objectives #6 and #7

Recommended rewording (as one objective): "Form partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions to advance education and training in two sectors: (1) 'green' sector, including agriculture, alternative energy, resource recycling and recovery, and others; and (2) the information technology sector."

Action #7

Recommended rewording: Develop a comprehensive agri-tourism policy, including necessary zoning legislation. Provide county assistance and support for agri-tourism, emphasizing and prioritizing off-farm

(community-centric) agri-tourism opportunities such as farmers markets; special events (e.g., Annual 'Papaya Celebration' or 'Orchid Festival'); restaurant(s) specializing in local food products; fusion of local agricultural products with cultural and arts events in Puna.

As a second priority, agri-tourism policy will promote on-farm opportunities such as roadside stands and Bed-and-Breakfast/'Farm Stay'.

Action #12

Recommended additional wording "...oil crops for the production of biodiesel."

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Goals for Puna Agriculture established by the PCDP Agriculture Working Group:

1. Local livelihood opportunities based on wholly-sustainable agriculture supplying local markets.
2. Rewarding individual agricultural enterprise.
3. Community land stewardship commitment.
4. Enhanced green infrastructure and a clean rural landscape.

Objectives were expressed as policy outcomes from action directed at these policy targets: land, infrastructure, entrepreneurs, and access:

1. Statutory designation of essential agricultural land; with establishment of and rigid adherence to robust standards and criteria regarding changing zoning of any parcel of essential agricultural land.
2. Development of complementary infrastructure: communications, farm-to-market roads, post-harvest handling and processing, and value-adding capacity.
3. Development of human capital through training of skilled and capable agricultural entrepreneurs; and 4. Achievable and equitable access, for skilled and capable agricultural entrepreneurs, to agricultural land and complementary infrastructure.

In addition to the above, additional benefits include agricultural lands serving as open space and providing environmental services.

The Agricultural Working Group Report includes actions that need to be given a far higher level of consideration by the Steering Committee for inclusion in the Plan than has as yet occurred.