

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: March 29, 2006
Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
Agenda Date: April 18, 2006
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 1 Hour on 5/2/06
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael F. Brown
County Executive Officer

STAFF CONTACT: Terri Maus-Nisich, Assistant County Executive Officer
John McInnes, Director of Strategic and Long Range Planning

SUBJECT: 2005 Strategic Scan – Follow up Presentation

Recommendation:

That the Board of Supervisors:

Set a hearing for May 2, 2006 to consider recommendations regarding the 2005 Strategic Scan as follows:

1. Receive follow up information regarding the 2005 Strategic Scan including:
 - a. Recap of major trends and four scenarios
 - b. Identification of most critical issues facing Santa Barbara County in the next 3-5 years
 - c. Comparison of scenarios and their responsiveness to identified critical issues
2. Provide direction to staff regarding critical issues and a preferred scenario for further research and analysis.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The strategic scan process is an integral component of the countywide strategic planning process and is aligned with Goal 3: Organizational Effectiveness – A strong, professionally managed organization.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

1. BACKGROUND

This is the seventh strategic scan prepared for the Board of Supervisors (Board). With the exception of 2004, scans have occurred on an annual basis. The primary purpose of the strategic scan is to provide your

Board with a broad overview of emerging trends and their projected impacts to relevant County policies, programs and projects. In prior years the scan presentations focused on the trends occurring within each of the individual departments, critical issues and the potential implications of the trends on future service delivery.

In 2005, given the rapid rate of change and the ever larger policy level issues to be addressed, an alternative model or approach to the strategic scan was proposed, *scenario planning*. Among the many tools available for fostering strategic thinking and creating a desired future, scenario planning stands out for its ability to capture a wide range of possibilities in rich detail. Through a process to identify emerging trends and uncertainties, scenarios can be constructed that can assist in critical issue identification, decision making and policy setting.

On August 15 and November 8, 2005, the Board was presented with the 2005 Strategic Scan including an overview of trends for key driving forces within the County, the scenario planning tool and four scenarios to help imagine possible futures for Santa Barbara County. On May 2, 2006, staff will present the Board with the most critical issues facing the County in the next 3-5 years and a comparison of how each of the four scenarios responds to these critical issues. The Board will be asked to consider a preferred scenario for further research and analysis moving toward development of a pilot project and eventually of a transition or implementation plan.

2. RECAP OF MAJOR TRENDS

During the previous 2005 Strategic Scan meetings, the Board was given an overview of the key trends and occurrences within nine driving force categories. A recap of these major trends by issue area is provided below:

1. Population
 - Will increase by 70,000-100,000 by 2030
 - Majority of growth in North County
 - Losing middle class
2. Land Use/ Housing/ Agriculture
 - 5,000 – 6,000 new homes built by 2010
 - One of least affordable housing markets in nation
 - Housing affordability index falling
 - 3,200 – 9,000 acres lost to agriculture
 - Faster growth in North County
3. Employment
 - Fastest growth in government and leisure
 - Large percentage nearing retirement
 - Growing mismatch between job requirements and workforce skills
 - Difficult to attract younger workers to public service jobs
4. Transportation
 - Increase in commuters from other counties
 - Increase in drive alone drivers

- Deteriorating roadway conditions (increased delays; decreased safety)
5. Poverty
 - Increasing number of children living in poverty particularly among Hispanic population
 - Increasing number of uninsured
 6. Education
 - Rising drop out rate
 - Increasing cost to education by encouraging growth in agriculture industry
 7. Health
 - Growing deficit in funding
 - Rising methamphetamine use
 8. Crime/Public Safety
 - Jail population increasing
 - Number of inmates sleeping on floor increasing
 9. Economy
 - Large employee population nearing retirement
 - Highest job growth in public sector education
 - Increasing percentage of small businesses with less than 20 employees
 - Median incomes becoming stagnant
 - Median home prices increasing by 25% annually on average

3. IDENTIFICATION OF MOST CRITICAL ISSUES

Based upon the trend data presented at the previous 2005 Strategic Scan meetings and the potential implications of these trends on the state of the County, staff has identified eight of the most critical issues facing the County in the near term (over the next 3-5 years). The critical issues identified by staff are as follows:

- Financial Stability of County
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Highly Efficient Transportation System
- Housing for all Segments of the Population
- Service Delivery (Provide Well Educated Trained Workforce)
- Environmental/Open Space Preservation
- Maximize Health Care & Social Service Delivery
- Accommodate Demographic Changes

4. RECAP OF FOUR SCENARIOS

During the previous 2005 Strategic Scan meetings, the Board was given an overview of the scenarios to begin discussion of possible futures available to the County of Santa Barbara. A recap of the four scenarios is provided below:

1. Status Quo / Incremental
 - Current levels of services/programs
 - Maintain slow growth patterns & reliance on spot zoning
 - Ranchettes in North County
 - Infill in South County
 - Moderate expansion into agricultural areas
2. Resource Preservation/Eco Zones
 - Preserve/restore habitats
 - Restrictions on residential, commercial & agricultural expansions
 - Strict growth boundaries
 - Attempt to maintain socio-economic characteristics
3. Capital Investment
 - Capital intensive programs
 - Transportation nodes
 - Pay to play
 - Promote large home high tax opportunities
4. Village Center / Rural Retreat
 - Village centers with density and services
 - Preservation of agriculture in rural areas
 - Hard urban growth boundary
 - Limited tax increase for service expansion

Each scenario poses a unique and different set of challenges and opportunities and requisite core capabilities. Exploring each of the scenarios provides a greater opportunity for discussion of critical issues and the development of actual decision scenarios.

5. COMPARISON OF SCENARIOS AND THEIR RESPONSIVENESS TO CRITICAL ISSUES

Table 1 below provides a qualitative comparison of the four scenarios and their responsiveness to each critical issue identified in section 3 above. This analysis is not intended to be exhaustive nor is it intended to be used for decision making or policy setting. Rather it is a tool intended to narrow the list of possible futures so that more focused research and development of a pilot project can be performed.

Table 1				
Comparison of Scenarios Responsiveness to Critical Issues				
Does the Scenario Address the Critical Issue (Yes or No)				
Critical Issues	Status Quo/ Incremental	Resource Preservation	Capital Investment	Village Center/ Rural Retreat
Will it support the financial stability of the County?	No	No	No	Yes
Will it support sustainable agriculture?	No	Yes	No	Yes
Will it provide for a highly efficient transportation system?	No	No	Yes	No
Will it provide housing for all segments of the population?	No	No	No	Yes
Will it provide an educated, trained workforce?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Will it support our values of environmental/open space preservation?	No	Yes	No	Yes
Will it maximize the health & human service needs of the population?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Will it accommodate projected demographic changes?	No	No	No	Yes

From this comparison it is clear that the status quo/incremental scenario does little to address the critical issues facing the County. This approach is a muddling through and reactionary approach which does little to improve the status of the County overall. This approach allows for the slow deterioration of our transportation system, service delivery and health and human services. Environmental preservation and sustainable agriculture are threatened as urban expansion potentially spreads to these areas. The struggle to provide needed housing will continue as the increasing trend of resistance to infill development within existing urban areas continues or intensifies.

The resource preservation and capital investment scenarios would be somewhat more successful than the status quo/incremental scenario in addressing critical issues but both are lacking in their ability to create a desired future for the County by providing for an economic force to ensure services and programs are sustained. The resource preservation scenario may help to address the issues of sustainable agriculture and environmental/open space preservation but it falls short in all other areas. With the exception of a highly efficient transportation system, the capital investment scenario does little to address any of the County's emerging critical issues.

The village center/rural retreat scenario stands out as the most promising learning scenario in its responsiveness to almost all critical issues facing the County. This scenario is intended to plan for and design communities from the ground up and therefore provide for the types of services, jobs, housing and infrastructure needed and to locate them so that they do not create conflicts with our values of environmental preservation and sustainable agriculture. This scenario would also allow for construction of needed housing while preserving existing neighborhoods and agriculture.

6. PROCESS TO DATE AND SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

The following is a four step process toward development of decision scenarios that will form the basis for a policy level discussion designed to create and achieve the best possible future for the County of Santa Barbara in light of the trends, uncertainties, constraints and capabilities. Following the April 18 discussion, the Board will have identified a preferred learning scenario, which is a tool for further research and study rather than for decision making. Policy level discussions surrounding development of a Transition or Implementation Plan will follow the next suggested steps of developing and analyzing a pilot project.

1. Data Collection & Dissemination (Completed November 2005)
2. Identify Preferred Learning Scenario for Further Analysis (April 2006)
3. Develop and Analyze Pilot Project (April – September 2006)
4. Develop Transition/Implementation Plan (September 2006 - February 2007)

Mandates and Service Levels:

Strategic Planning is not a mandated County activity. "Continuous Strategic Planning" is one of the County's five management strategies adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The strategic scan provides the information required for decision making and overall policy level direction impacting County plans, budgets, programs and projects.

Special Instructions:

N/A

Concurrence:

N/A