

# New Live Oak general plan

Projections for medium-density residential uses of commercially-zoned property and high-density "cluster districts" next to riparian corridors were features of the Live Oak General Plan draft that drew criticism June 15 during a county planning commission public hearing.

More than sixty persons were present for the informational exchange with county staff and the planning commissioners. County Planning Director Kay Bowden explained that staff is aware further studies are needed before the Live Oak plan is complete.

The draft plan calls for an anticipated population growth in Live Oak to within 13.8 to 15 per cent of the total county population, with a total of about 40,000 people. It is projected that 20,200 of these residents will live on 879 net acres of medium-density residential use — which is designated in the draft as the predominant type of residential development now and in the future.

The plan "encourages the maximum residential development consistent with existing land use patterns and environmental possibilities." Vacant lots and small parcels of less than one acre will be developed at the highest range of surrounding densities, from six units per acre in low density areas to thirty units per acre in urban density areas.

Larger vacant parcels of more than two acres will be reserved for higher density townhouses and two-to-three story condominiums and apartments. Fully developed urban services are called for in higher residential densities.

Planning Commissioner Penny Barkin argued against planning a population of 40,000 as 15 per cent of the total county population. She said this figure will raise the county total beyond the limits of 203,000 advised several years ago by the board of supervisors in the county transportation plan.

Although the 40,000 projection for Live Oak is based on present trends, Miss Barkin urged planners to base projections within the limits of growth management favored by county supervisors.

Densities would be more acceptable at 30,000 persons, she told the group later, which would be 15 per cent of the 203,000 population projection for the entire county. "Live Oak needs a growth management plan," she

said, "With zoning to be based upon it and services to be provided first before development is approved."

Another controversial feature of the plan is its recommendation for cluster development, linked with a system of density bonuses to gain greater numbers of units while preserving more open space.

The plan calls for design controls to permit development of clustered residential areas in conjunction with open space along riparian corridors, a bureaucratic term for creeks and gulches.

"It is anticipated that in this way," the draft states, "These areas will be able to retain many of their natural features, while at the same time affording increased access and use."

Proposed "cluster districts" are an area bordering the regional shopping center at 41st Avenue, on the west side of a proposed loop road to connect Clares Street with Capitola Ave.; in selected spots along both sides of Rodeo Gulch between Soquel Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks; an area west of Seventh Avenue which borders on Arana Gulch; and north of Soquel Drive, next to Rodeo Gulch. Others are proposed near Schwan Lake and in Capitola. Those next to the regional shopping center and next to Arana Gulch are designated "urban high densities," with 17-35 units per acre.

In a land use statement on planning considerations for residential development, the draft proposes that methods be explored for provision of housing for low and moderate income households.

It is expected that by encouraging varied and intensive

development in Live Oak, the plan will help create opportunities where housing for low and moderate income households may be developed," the plan states, "Ways of accomplishing this need to be explored, and may include mixed income and-or scattered site units, in conformity with the county housing element."

Mike Spencer, a member of the Live Oak General Plan Advisory Committee (LOGPAC), was the first to voice opposition to both cluster development and high density, low-income housing during the public portion of the meeting.

Spencer said he thought this plan was so far the best he has seen of the county drafts, and that its faults were technical ones. He objected to a designation of medium-density residential use for the area near the railroad track and 41st Avenue which is backed-up by commercial and industrial uses. "If you want an instant slum," he said, "I think this is the best way."

Spencer said while it is clear to him that county planners consider Live Oak the best place for low-income housing, he feels it is inappropriate. He particularly opposed cluster-design as a "sociological disaster."

Christine Hooper, LOGPAC chairwoman, said preservation of the riparian corridors had been a goal of that organization as well. "But if you sacrifice Live Oak by building a city next to the corridors, how will you preserve them?" she said.

David Bockman, a representative for the Santa Cruz Regional Group, Sierra Club, said the county supervisors have gone on record in support of

preservation of riparian corridors, and it is recognized as an important concern. However, he questioned whether the Live Oak General Plan draft is consistent with recommendations of the county POSCS (Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services) plan for preservation, and listed several other safety conditions he felt were unsound.

Marion Alexander, also a LOGPAC member, said she agreed with the basic idea of cluster development — to maximize available open space — but added that she feels it must be kept well back from the gulches, and that quality design will be an essential factor for high density.

The Live Oak General Plan draft projects that about 6,500 will be employed in the area by 1999. Proposed uses for commercial and industrial activity are based on an assumption that 25 per cent of the Live Oak employed labor force will actually work in Live Oak, and ten per cent of all county workers will work there.

The draft provides for continuance of small manufacturing firms, home businesses, cottage industry and retail and service business in mixed land use areas until the business either moves or has a negative affect on

protested in two key areas