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General Plan workshop looks at Mather

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It was yet another Board of Supervisors meeting on Sacramento County's general plan update last Wednesday, and another chance for those in El Dorado County and Folsom to voice concerns over Mather noise issues.

County meetings involving Mather have received complaints from Folsom officials in the past for being scheduled on the same weeks as city council meetings. Even with no council meeting scheduled last week, however, the only representative from Folsom was resident and outspoken Mather critic Glen Otey. Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger, the law firm the city hired, also did not send a representative.

That may have been due to the routine nature of the meeting, which was the 15th public workshop convened on the proposed expansion of the county's urban policy area.

The final workshop will be May 17, after which the county is expected to hire an outreach consultant to take point on general plan discussions with the public.

"Those discussions definitely helped shape the recommendations that are before your board today," Sacramento County Airport System consultant Steve Alperson told supervisors.

Expanding the urban policy area will allow construction of approximately 24,000 new homes, as well as employment and retail services in the unincorporated areas of the county by 2030.

But the impact on Mather's noise contours and coordinating with other cities' general plan updates remain concerns for the board and others.

"(We must) reiterate our concerns about the noise impacts," El Dorado County pilot services director Peter Mauer told board members. "These are legitimate concerns that our residents have."

Mauer added that he's been encouraged by the county's efforts to mitigate these impacts, but that "more needs to be done."

Otey criticized what he saw as several "myths" regarding plans to expand Mather's cargo operations, including the revenue amount it will contribute to the local economy and the number of new manufacturing jobs that will be provided. He also asked board members to clarify its intent.

"If your intent is not to have a (cargo) hub at Mather, you should very clearly state that," he said.

A representative from the city of Roseville said the city was in support of the county's action.

The board ultimately voted 3-1 in favor of the urban policy area expansion strategy, though supervisors voiced a few concerns.

"I'm concerned about the accuracy or the validity of these numbers on which we're basing this decision," said Board Chair Roberta MacGlashan, whose district includes Folsom. "I would certainly hesitate to adopt a final master plan before a market feasibility study (is submitted). ... And I'm not sure how we can plan without a document like that."

SCAS assistant director Rob Leonard said a financial feasibility study was done on Mather back in the early 1990s,

showing that expectations tied to development possibilities met and/or exceeded expectations.

"Nothing is being prepared to happen right now or in the immediate future," added County Counsel Robert Ryan Jr.

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