



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee / News](#).

County rejects growth change

Tsakopoulos' plea to extend planning boundary is denied.

By Mary Lynne Vellinga - Bee Staff Writer
Published 12:00 am PDT Thursday, March 15, 2007

The Sacramento County supervisors on Wednesday rejected a developer's proposal that they consider opening up 3,400 acres of pasture along the El Dorado County line for development.

The unanimous vote by the five-member board followed more than five hours of testimony from people opposed to the proposal by developer Angelo K. Tsakopoulos to redraw the county's growth boundary to include his property. More than 100 people signed up to speak.

The decision came despite a last-minute offer by Robert Holderness, the lawyer representing Tsakopoulos' AKT Development, to scale back the request to include only the 500 northernmost acres of the eight-mile swath Tsakopoulos had proposed.

Tsakopoulos had argued that expansion north of White Rock Road by Folsom and growth in adjacent El Dorado County made his land ripe for development.

Three supervisors -- Susan Peters, Roberta MacGlashan and Jimmie Yee -- last month said they needed more information before making a decision.

Planning staff members, who opposed the developer's request, returned with an arsenal of maps showing most land across the county line from the Tsakopoulos property remains zoned for agriculture, although the northern portion abuts developments with thousands of homes and a business park.

"Now that we have that information, it's fairly clear that most of what's on the other side of that land is not urban development," MacGlashan said.

Peters said she was concerned that including the area in an environmental study could delay planned improvement of White Rock Road, which borders the property to the north, and jeopardize \$22 million in state-approved funding.

One of the most prominent people to speak against the proposal was former Supervisor Illa Collin, who received cheers as she walked to the podium.

Collin, who recently retired after serving 28 years, explained the rationale behind the growth boundary -- officially known as the urban services boundary -- which was adopted in 1993.

"The county was making a statement that beyond (the line) it would be very expensive and

inefficient to provide services, and the county was making a statement that this (area) was not going to urbanize," she said.

Speakers cited traffic, air quality, global warming, the need for urban revitalization and the loss of open space and habitat for birds of prey as reasons to keep growth within the boundary.

Even without considering the Tsakopoulos proposal, the supervisors already have agreed to look at opening more than 20,000 acres to growth.

One of the youngest speakers was Ciara Wirth, home on spring break from Duke University. "I don't want to see the day when people ask me (what Sacramento is like) and I answer, 'There's nothing special about it, really. It's just a bunch of strip malls and low-density residential development.' "

Other speakers reminded the supervisors of the resounding defeat of Measure O, a 2000 ballot initiative sponsored by developer C.C. Myers that would have moved the growth boundary to allow building of a senior golf course community at Deer Creek Hills. After that measure was defeated, Sacramento Valley Conservancy bought the 4,000-acre Deer Creek Hills property and made it an open space preserve.

Tsakopoulos' land abuts Deer Creek Hills on the east.

Graham Brownstein, executive director of the Environmental Council of Sacramento, asked the supervisors to make it clear that the urban services boundary is permanent.

"Anything else sends the signal to developers that we're open for business," he said.

[Go to: Sacbee / Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000

Copyright © The Sacramento Bee



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee / Politics / Local Government](#).

Rural growth on table

Consideration of 20,000 acres of new development alarms environmentalists.

By Mary Lynne Vellinga - Bee Staff Writer
Published 12:00 am PST Saturday, March 3, 2007

The Board of Supervisors is considering opening vast swaths of land -- more than 20,000 additional acres -- to development in eastern Sacramento County.

Supervisors also are entertaining a request from developer Angelo K. Tsakopoulos to shift the line that now defines the permanently rural portion in the eastern county to include 3,400 acres of pasture that Tsakopoulos and his partners own along the El Dorado County border.

The pro-expansion direction of the county's general plan update has alarmed the environmental community. It also runs contrary to the recommendations of county planners, who have focused on redeveloping existing communities while limiting growth on farmland.

The direction also worries retired Supervisor Illa Collin, who served for 28 years and was a voice for reining in sprawl and revitalizing existing neighborhoods.

"I'm flabbergasted," Collin said Friday, when told of the new land the supervisors are contemplating adding to the plan. "That shows me there's been incredible lobbying. You can't keep directing all that growth farther out and still expect to have a healthy core."

Collin's successor, Supervisor Jimmie Yee, said it makes sense to include large parcels of grazing land along Jackson Road and east of Grant Line Road because they are next to areas already planned for growth.

"We're looking at a plan that's for 25 years, so while it may appear to be a large area, it's for the long term," Yee said.

He said the board needs more information before deciding the Tsakopoulos proposal.

"Looking at a Sacramento County map itself, you'd probably say what ... are we even looking at that for," he said. "But from what I hear, there's a bunch of plans being submitted to the County of El Dorado to develop right along the county border. ... What we're doing on this side should be coordinated with what they're doing."

Environmental groups are trying to rally a big turnout for the next general plan workshop March 14. It's planned to last from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the supervisors' chambers at 700 H

St.

"This is probably the last, best chance that people who are concerned about the county general plan have to put the Board of Supervisors on notice that this is not the direction that the public wants them to go," said Graham Brownstein, executive director of the Environmental Council of Sacramento.

The land the supervisors are contemplating for development is more than double what their planning staff initially recommended for new growth as part of the general plan, which is designed to accommodate 100,000 new housing units. Planners said the amount of land now included is enough to accommodate growth until 2030.

Still, staff members didn't protest when the board decided to study additional lands for inclusion, as long as they were within the urban growth boundary.

But the recent request by Tsakopoulos to move that boundary is another matter.

From the beginning of the general plan process, the planning staff said it would not recommend any changes in the boundary, which was adopted in 1993 to contain growth in the rural east county.

Planner Surinder Singh told the board Feb. 13 that Tsakopoulos' land by the El Dorado County line is "not an appropriate area to be considered for urbanization" and would "result in a leapfrog pattern of development."

"You're being asked to create an island outside the urban (growth) boundary," he said.

Tsakopoulos was out of town and unavailable for comment this week.

His representative, lawyer and former Folsom Mayor Robert Holderness, declined to comment. "I'm really not in a position to talk to the press about it yet," Holderness said Friday.

The eight-mile strip of land Tsakopoulos wants included is open pasture and oak woodlands. It lies to the north and east of Rancho Murieta, and at one point borders the Deer Creek Hills open space preserve owned by the Sacramento Valley Conservancy.

It is traversed by rough gravel roads that frequently flood in winter and is near no major highway. There is little groundwater beneath it.

"Water is an enormous issue. There's no readily available supply of water out there that I know of," said Supervisor Roger Dickinson, who said he doesn't support moving the growth boundary.

In his appearance before the supervisors, Holderness cited development of jobs and housing in adjacent El Dorado County as a reason for Sacramento County to build on its side of the border.

His argument appeared to sway the supervisors, who asked their staff to return March 14 with more information on El Dorado County's plans.

"It's an imaginary line," Supervisor Susan Peters said of the county boundary. "Step one foot

over the other side of the line, and you've got a lot of job growth."

The El Dorado County general plan permits development along part of the county line, but most of the land adjacent to the property Tsakopoulos is now seeking to develop remains zoned for agriculture.

Sacramento County supervisors emphasized they aren't making decisions now on which properties will be developed. They are deciding what to include in the environmental review required for the general plan. This is a crucial first step for developers.

Once the environmental review is complete, the board will make final decisions about what to include in the general plan.

If the supervisors approve Tsakopoulos' request to move the growth boundary, they would run afoul of the Blueprint, a regionwide growth plan adopted by Sacramento County and other members of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

SACOG Executive Director Mike McKeever said Sacramento "has adequate capacity" to absorb new residents without expanding outside the boundary.

For some environmentalists, 2007 now seems like a replay of 1992, when the supervisors added large tracts of land to the general plan at the last minute.

Tsakopoulos played a major role then, as well.

In a dramatic moment, he stepped up to the podium at a supervisors' meeting and drew a new line on a recommended general plan map -- taking in all of a property he owned rather than a third of it.

At the time, he insisted that he was just pointing out an inconsistency between the map and a motion before the board. But for environmentalists, the incident showed how developers have driven planning in the region.

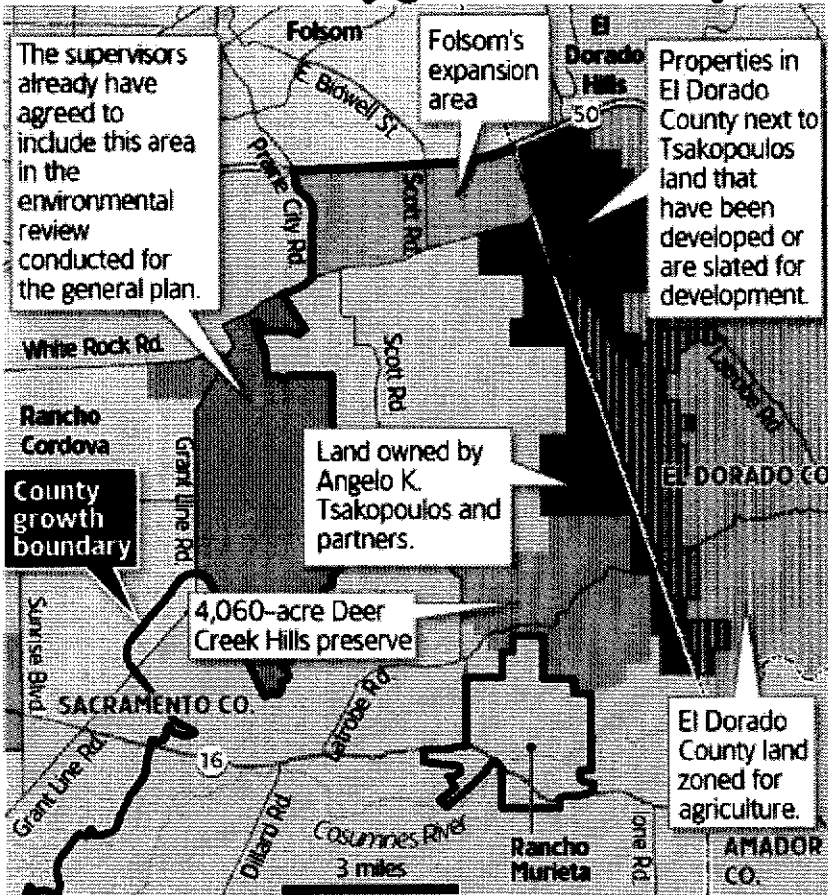
"In 20 years, we'll look back at the mess that is Sacramento and conclude that what we have done has been wrong from the standpoint of global climate issues, wrong from the standpoint of sustainable regional competitiveness, wrong for public health and wrong for the environment," said Mike Eaton, an environmental activist who works for the Nature Conservancy.

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000

Copyright © [The Sacramento Bee](#)

Sacramento County growth boundary



Sources: Sacramento County, El Dorado County; map data: ESRI, TeleAtlas, USGS; AKT Development

Sacramento Bee/Nathaniel Levin