

7-14-20 HEARING Dollar General
Statement by Supervisor Lori Parlin

Thank you to Steve Powell for meeting with the community to come up with the Boardwalk type design for the buildings. The proposed design is an improvement from a typical Dollar General building. Please know that my understanding is that most folks in El Dorado County are not against development, but they want development that blends with their existing community. And the comments received from a large majority of the public indicate that this project does not match the existing community identity.

Community identity is very important to our residents and Goal 2.4 Existing Community Identity of the General Plan reads:

Maintain and enhance the **character** of existing rural and urban communities, emphasizing both the natural setting and built design elements which contribute to the quality of life, economic health, and community pride of County residents.

While residents of El Dorado County have a strong desire to maintain their existing community identity, the County has struggled to formally assist with community planning efforts for each of the many communities in our county.

In 2009, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) brought forward to the Board of Supervisors a framework for implementing General Plan Goal 2.4 Existing Community Identity. The Board of Supervisors postponed implementation of this Goal to Spring 2011 when the General Plan 5-year review was completed.

During the 5-year review, staff found that some communities were interested in developing community plans. As such, on August 16, 2013 the first meeting of the Community Vision and Implementation Plan (CVIP) process was held with representatives from all interested communities.

In the June 24, 2014 Citizen Outreach Summary Report states, "El Dorado County enjoys a diversity of unique places, each with their own passionate citizens looking to the future." The result of the Citizen Outreach was the November 2014 Community Planning Guide. Remember the Candy Land game diagram? Many residents thought that the County was finally going to take action and begin Community Planning to fulfill Goal 2.4 of the General Plan.

That didn't happen. Instead, Cameron Park has been trying for years to get its own visioning process approved by the Board. Shingle Springs unsuccessfully tried to follow the Community Planning Guide and work with the County to create a Community Plan. That effort was downgraded to creating Design Standards and that effort has stalled. And then in 2017 Cool participated in a project that resulted in a report titled, "Cool, California: Ideas for making Cool a "cooler" rural community." While the Cool report is not a community plan that was adopted into

the General Plan, it is the best effort to date toward documenting the community's vision for its identity and should be regarded with proposed projects.

The Cool report is filled with ideas for pedestrian safety and walkability, along with bicycle safety. So the applicant's response #3 in the rebuttal letter to not include a walking path on Highway 49 seems contrary to the vision in the Cool report.

In the Business Opportunities section of the Cool Report it is stated that, "The focus of these responses was on creating a more robust business community in the commercial center of Cool, whether through enhancing and supporting existing businesses or attracting and assisting **desired** new businesses. Many respondents liked the idea of a recreation focus for new business, which could also help with some of the large, annual outdoor recreation events that take place in or near Cool." The proposed Dollar General project does not fulfill any of these concepts.

In the Parking Lot Management section of the Cool Report, it is stated that one strategy for pedestrian activity is to share parking lot spaces instead of having each business control a lot, which coincides with General Plan Policy 2.4.1.4: Strip commercial development shall be precluded in favor of clustered contiguous facilities. "Existing strip commercial areas shall be developed with common and continuous landscaping along the street frontage, shall utilize common driveways, and accommodate parcel-to-parcel internal automobile and non-automobile circulation where possible." With the potential for a Grocery Outlet or some other business on the lot adjacent to the proposed Dollar General, it appears that the opportunity for parcel-to-parcel circulation is being missed.

Lastly, I appreciated that the applicant provided an Economic Analysis for the project. However it relies on several assumptions using words such as probably and could (page 15 of 24, paragraph before Conclusion) and seems to gloss over the fact that retail sales has a slim profit margin and other communities have reported that their local mom and pop stores have suffered when a discount retailer entered their already tight market. The Economic Analysis acknowledges that adding a Dollar General will not stop residents from traveling to Auburn or Placerville for shopping opportunities.

In conclusion, the community is looking for development that will maintain and enhance the **character** of their existing community identity, which is supported by General Plan Goal 2.4 Existing Community Identity and this project does not do that. As such, I support the appellants' appeal to deny the project.