

Delta Community Action Planning Workshop 1, Meeting Summary

Walnut Grove, California
November 3, 2015, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Jean Harvie Community Center

DPC Contact Information

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Meeting Goals

The Delta Community Action Planning (DCAP) process seeks to identify key needs and actions to improve quality of life in Walnut Grove. Initiated by the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), this effort will comprise three workshops in Walnut Grove through which community members and DPC will identify key needs and develop an action plan to address them. The goal of this first workshop was to reach out to the community, and to begin initial identification of feasible actions that the community wants to undertake. Residents identified a number of needs related to community services, community decision-making, supporting the local economy and environment, and traffic, safety, and walkability. Future workshops will focus on developing an action plan to prioritize and address key needs.

Outcomes: Key ideas identified by participants

Residents worked in groups to brainstorm and discuss their ideas for improving quality of life in Walnut Grove. The following are some of the key items that residents felt most strongly about (more detailed notes of the discussion can be found at the end of this summary).

Traffic, safety, and walkability

- Address high traffic and associated pedestrian and cyclist safety concerns
- Improve walkability, sidewalks, boardwalks, and lighting

Services

- Greater law enforcement presence
- Improved emergency response and alert system
- Improved cellular reception
- Access to medical services
- Low income housing accessible by local residents, workers, and families

Community governance

- Community forum or governance mechanism to connect east and west side

Recreation, environment, and balance with local economy

- Gearing local economy to serve both local residents and visitors
- Unique ways to capture Delta feel and tourism opportunities (for example, paddle races)
- Water and electricity at public docks, and amenities/docks for non-motorized boating
- Long-term water hyacinth abatement strategy

Next Steps

- Workshop #2: Tuesday, December 1, Jean Harvie Community Center, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Workshop #3: to be determined, based on outcome of Workshops 1 and 2

Overview of Delta Community Action Planning (DCAP) project

To introduce the meeting, Blake Roberts of DPC overviewed the project, approach, and goals. DCAP was identified in the Delta plan and the DPC's strategic plan. The goal is to undertake an action planning process, consisting of a series of three workshops in which residents identify and prioritize key community needs for enhancing quality of life in Delta communities. The approach is modeled on similar neighborhood action planning efforts undertaken in Sacramento. DPC has been working with Sacramento County on this effort, with support from Supervisor Nottoli.

The end goal is an action plan that identifies shared, desired actions for the community, specific steps to achieve them, and who should be involved in and take the lead on each action. The focus is on feasible actions the community can move forward with. DPC wants community desires to drive this process and is neutral on the content of the action plans. DPC also recognizes that there are many outside forces impacting Delta communities, such as the Delta tunnels, that are outside the scope of this DCAP process. At the same time, articulating what is unique and special about Delta communities, and articulating community desires for the future, may have value for influencing larger discussions.

While there is no funding currently attached for implementation, DPC is prepared to serve as a "broker" in helping the community use the action plan to identify and apply for funding sources such as grants. The action plan will also help DPC identify ways that it can serve as a liaison between Delta communities and other state agencies that will need to be involved to accomplish these actions.

To prepare for this process, DPC and the Center for Collaborative Policy at Sacramento State University interviewed about 20 residents to develop an assessment of community issues. Findings are summarized in Attachment 1. Facilitator Caelan McGee, from the Center for Collaborative Policy, briefly overviewed these findings to kick off the workshop's brainstorming session.

Participant questions and comments about the process

Participants asked a series of questions about the process:

Q: What is the purpose of the December workshop?

A: It will build on this workshop, by identifying priority items and getting more specific about how and who, moving forward. It will also provide an opportunity to hear additional ideas and to hear from people who did not attend the first workshop.

Q: Is DPC a vehicle to bring in state or federal assistance? Is there a concrete pathway for action?

A: DPC's role is like a broker. After developing the action plan, the idea is that a group from the community would work with DPC and the County, to move forward, find additional funding, and help connect to relevant agencies. Some actions may be relatively low cost and time. Others will be more expensive and complex, such as addressing traffic concerns, and will need to involve relevant agencies.

Participants discussed the issue of community growth and how it relates to this process:

- Comment: Zoning for no growth limits the feasibility/achievability of many things that community members might want. Achievability should be a criteria for making the action plan.
- Comment: Expansion of economic opportunity and tourism is in tension with no-growth rules.
- Q: Is growth off the table?
 - Resident response: The Stewardship Council has resisted community growth in its final plan. Zoning boundaries have been drawn around these communities. This means any growth will be re-use and in-fill, working inside those boundaries. The no-growth plan was done in 1983 to protect agriculture.
 - DPC response: There are obstacles to growth, but there may be possibilities too. For example, DPC's land resources and management plan will be updated in next year or

two. If there is shared desire for growth, this is a good forum to articulate that as a community goal. DPC is neutral on growth as a community goal.

Ideas and actions: detailed notes of the discussion

Group 1

- Lighting for the town, especially historic lighting for the streets. (This is an item that rose to the top, is do-able, and would have an immediate impact).
 - Large parking lot in Walnut Grove that is not lit, between Grove and Tyler.
 - Lighting on River Road.
- Address litter problem.
- Sidewalks on River Road to protect the businesses.
- Public bathrooms – there were different views in the room about public bathrooms:
 - A public bathroom is already being designed, with the County. It will be on the Dye street parking lot, off of Market.
 - Concern was expressed that Isleton and Locke public bathrooms attracted drug use and homeless people, and were closed down.
 - Concern was expressed that East Walnut Grove is driving that decision, without input from or knowledge of West Walnut Grove.
 - Public bathrooms work best in well-lighted and well-travelled public areas.
- Better community forum or governance mechanism to connect east and west side (this need was noted during the bathroom discussion).
- Greater law enforcement presence. Sheriff's substation that was here and is closed/limited, which reduces capacity to deal with bathroom misuse and other challenges.
- Bike and pedestrian trails.
- Water and electricity at the public dock has no water or electricity for boaters.
- Boat ramp for non-motorized boats.

Group 2

- Improve walkability, and safety for walkers and families:
 - Safe walking paths from Swing bridge to Locke.
 - Boardwalk – would separate walkers from traffic and connect the community.
 - Could be done on the levee, without structural alteration.
 - Connect parking lots.
- Address high traffic and associated safety issues:
 - Need for stop sign on other side of Hwy 160 bridge.
 - Concern was noted about traffic routing through Walnut Grove when Hwy 12 is closed.
 - Work with Caltrans to add signage for reduced speeds, and with law enforcement to get more patrols.
 - Frustration was expressed about raising of speed limits in some areas.
- Long term solution for water hyacinth problem:
 - Negative impacts on environment and natural beauty.
 - Despite expense, current efforts do not seem to be working.
 - Concern about chemicals used in abatement program.
- Annual dragon boat race would attract visitors. Walnut Grove has perfect environment for it.
 - Treasure Island does this each year, generating high revenues.
 - Protected sloughs also offer good location for scull races.

Group 3

- Improve cell reception. Enlist County to put pressure on cell providers.
- Work with PG&E to fix power problems. We lose power every time it rains.
- Improve emergency alert system and protocols:
 - There is a need for communication during emergency events, such as recent shooting.
 - When fire alarm goes off, need community notice about what is happening.
- Improve law enforcement presence:
 - Problems (theft, vandalism, etc.) are getting more common and hard to report.
 - There is little enforcement of traffic laws.
- Protect low-income housing for workers and others in the community:
 - Concern was expressed that recent HUD housing does not serve the community. HUD residents are not well integrated into the community and lack access to services such as transportation and healthcare.
 - Community members who need it cannot access it. Local families and workers, senior citizens.
- How to better support local stores and businesses:
 - Lighting and sidewalks would help.
 - There is a disconnect between residents and well-being of the town. The town used to support/service residents, but residents now shop at big box areas. The town relies on tourist revenue and is becoming less important to residents.
 - We want to support local businesses but there is pressure to cater to recreation visitors.
- Need for medical services:
 - Participants noted that someone is working on bringing in a clinic.

Additional items contributed on worksheets:

- Better management of existing boat launch facilities. Grants for marinas with facilities
- Public fishing access areas near town centers
- Grants for marinas to make improvements to retain recreation in the Delta
- Reduce extreme regulation
- Rumble strips at Hwy 160 and Steamboat Bridge heading north, for safety
- Community e-waste, recycling center
- Revitalize old buildings
- Utilize old rail beds
- Policing
- Lights at library
- Expand home owner's association

Attendees

Kathleen and Patrick Puckett, Residents
 Jason Puckett, Resident
 Doris and Fred Specht, Residents
 Tom Cappelletti, Resident
 Robin and Rocky Rhodes, Residents
 Douglas Hsia, Resident
 Michaele and Kendall LeCompte, Residents
 Michael and Jill Steinbacher, Residents
 Penelope Hays, Resident
 Dennis Leary, Resident

Judy Castro, Resident
 Gil LaBrie, Resident
 Greg Kann, Resident
 Emily Pappalardo, Resident
 Sally Christie, Resident
 Blake Roberts, Delta Protection Commission
 Mike Winter, Sacramento County Planning
 Department
 Caelan McGee, Center for Collaborative Policy
 Sarah Di Vittorio, Center for Collaborative Policy

Attachment 1

Delta Community Assessment Findings

The Delta Protection Commission is asking you for ideas to protect or enhance the quality of life in Walnut Grove and the Delta. This document summarizes some of the key themes already heard in discussions with Delta residents.

What residents love about life in the Delta

- The Delta! – natural, recreational, and scenic values
- Sense of community, pace of life
- Distinct and unique communities
- Diverse cultural histories

What residents want for the future

- Maintain quality, character, and pace of Delta life
- Expand job and housing opportunities
- Retain younger generations of Delta families
- Resolution on big issues: flood insurance, Delta Tunnels, aquatic invasive species, etc.

Opportunities to build on Delta History

- Rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings
- Tourism related to culture, nature and agriculture
- Established festivals, fairs, and events

Opportunities to facilitate recreation and tourism

- Use rail corridors for bike and pedestrian recreation facilities
- Improve walkability and parking in town centers
- Improve docks and boardwalks to help more boaters use services in Delta towns
- Build more boat ramps and parking for non-motorized boaters (kayaks, canoes, etc.)

Attracting more visitors and revenue

- Expand options for lodging such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, etc.
- Expand electronic infrastructure for computer and telephone coverage
- Enhance the walkability, lighting and character of town centers

Moving in and through Delta Communities

- Increasing commuter and through-traffic is hard on roads and affects safety
- Where highways meet town centers, there are signage, visibility, and safety concerns
- There is adequate parking off main streets, but it isn't visible or well known

On residents' minds

- Recruiting and retaining health care professionals and services
- Continued and expanded clean-up of nuisances (abandoned boats and buildings, dumping)
- Protecting and enhancing winter bird habitat in the Delta
- Emergency responders have big areas of responsibility and limited resources

How Delta communities plan and govern themselves

- Community leaders and organizations lead special projects such as saving and improving libraries, or building boat docks and waterfront infrastructure
- Residents value the efforts of Supervisor Don Nottoli, and also value their autonomy as unincorporated jurisdictions
- There are several well established and productive community organizations and councils; these would be strengthened by new membership
- The Sacramento County Delta Community Area Plan (1983) needs an update

Items and Ideas for Walnut Grove

- How to protect Japantown and Chinatown histories as demographics change
- How to manage the public restroom for safety and use
- Stop signs, signage and speed limits near Highway 160 Bridge
- Improve sidewalks, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities
- Install public utility electricity south of the 160 Bridge for public infrastructure and businesses
- Support and advertise growing arts communities and events
- Seek opportunities to connect East Walnut Grove and West Walnut Grove communities
- Improve safety for Fourth of July
- Address challenges related to drinking water supply: aging infrastructure, different systems, and costs