



**WEEKLY UPDATE
APRIL 24 - 30, 2022**

THIS WEEK

**NO BOS MEETING
NEXT MEETING IS SET FOR MAY 2ND**

**APCD HEARING BOARD POSTPONED
ITEM PERTAINS TO ALLEGED DUNES DUST VIOLATIONS**

PLANNING COMMISSION - LITE

LAST WEEK

BOS

**MAJOR PLAN TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS APPROVED IN CONCEPT
STAFFING CREEP CONTINUES
PROCESSING IMPROVEMENTS FOR AG PRESERVE APPLICATIONS APPROVED**

BROWN ACT VIOLATION

**GIBSON CHASTIZES CITIZENS & ARNOLD FOR QUESTIONING
ELECTION ANOMALIES – PUBLIC OFFICIALS CANNOT FORBID
PUBLIC COMMENT SPEECH WITH WHICH THEY DISAGREE**

LAFCO - LITE MEETING

NO ANNEXATIONS, DETACHMENTS, OR SPHERE CHANGES

CENTRAL COAST ENERGY
ENERGY COSTS BEGINNING TO EXCEED ENERGY REVENUE

EMERGENT ISSUES

COVID LOW FOR NOW
JUDGE ENDS FEDERAL MASK MANDATES FOR NOW
AGAIN WHERE ARE THE THERAPEUTIC PILLS IF YOU CATCH A
BAD CASE?

THE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
PLAN FOR REPLACING DIABLO IS A FAKE
GET READY - BLACKOUTS & IMPORTED COAL FIRED ELECTRICITY

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 20

HOW AMERICA BECAME LA LA LAND
Nothing seems to be working. And no one seems to care.
BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON



SERFING¹ THE FUTURE?

BY JOEL KOTKIN AND WENDELL COX

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, April 26, 2022 (Not Scheduled)

The next scheduled meeting is set for Tuesday, May 2, 2022.

SLO Air Pollution Control District (SLOCOG) Hearing Board Meeting of Tuesday, April 26, 2022 (Continued to June 17, 2022)

Note that this is not the APCD policy Board, but a separate unit that reviews appeals from APCD orders and enforcement proceedings. The next regular APCD Board meeting is set for Wednesday, May 18, 2022. The Hearing Board is meeting was to have met this week to consider violations of the Dunes Dust Order.

Item - Consider modification of the Stipulated Order of Abatement (Case No. 17-01) issued on April 30, 2018 and amended on November 18, 2019, pertaining to continued violations of California Health and Safety Code section 41700 and SLOAPCD Rule 402 – Public Nuisance and continued violation of SLOAPCD Rule 1001 – Coastal Dunes Dust Control Requirements with respect to particulate matter and dust resulting from riding activities at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, operated by the California Department of Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Division. For an unexplained reason, the hearing has been continued to Friday June 17, 2022.

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, April 28, 2022 (Scheduled)

No major items: The meeting agenda is light. It contains only two requests: one for a permit extension and one by a winery to modify its tasting hours. This is the type of opportunity when the Commission could conduct a study session on one of the many issues that relate to long range planning and the future of the County.

For example:

¹ The title is deliberately spelled “Serfing” as it refers to the re-feudalization of our society.

1. What is the feasibility of zoning more land for housing?
2. Is the County's over-arching "smart growth" and resource rationing policy working?
3. How does that over-arching policy contribute to homelessness?
4. Given the impending state energy shortages and the world strategic situation, why doesn't the County promote the development of fossil fuels?
5. What is the status and reality of climate change? – ditto for sea level rise?
6. Why does the County continuously add open space?
7. Why does the County have so many poor people?
8. Is the County's economic development program working?
9. What would be the impact of the proposed so-called "Chumash Heritage" Marine Sanctuary on the County?
10. Should the County promote some 5 Diamond destination resorts?
11. What could be the future of a destination para-mutual horse racing park in the County?
12. What is strategic scanning and how could it help the Commission and County?



Opportunity on the Madonna Inn Property.



Opportunity on the Diablo Property.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, April 19, 2022 (Complete)

Multiple Items - More Mid-Year Staff Creep. The Board approved the staffing increases without comment on the consent calendar. In total, the off-budget additions are the equivalent of 4.5 FTE's. During almost every meeting, new net positions are added the County roster. Over time, this process expands the organization. For example, there are about 26 board meetings per year. If the County adds an average of 5 FTE per meeting, that amounts to 130 per year. All were approved on the consent calendar without question or comment.

Item 12 - Request to: 1) approve a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center (FC) 166-Behavioral Health to add 1.00 FTE Behavioral Health Program Supervisor to lead Spanish-language services, including the Latino Outreach Program, and delete a 0.50 FTE Behavioral Health Clinician and add a 0.75 FTE Behavioral Health Clinician in Prevention and Outreach programs; and 2) approve a corresponding budget

adjustment for Fund Center (FC) 166- Behavioral Health in the amount of \$36,977, by 4/5 vote.

Item 15 - Submittal of a resolution amending the Positions Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center (FC) 427-Golf Courses deleting 1.00 Park Ranger I/II/III position and adding 1.00 FTE Golf Course Supervisor position. This one is a wash. However, the Golf Supervisor position will be more expensive than the Ranger position.

Item 18 - Submittal of a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center 142 – Planning and Building, by adding a 1.00 FTE Planner I/II/III, and a 0.50 FTE Planner I/II/III.

Item 19 - Submittal of a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center 405-Public Works, by deleting 1.00 FTE Program Manager I/II - Limited Term and adding 1.00 FTE Program Manager I/II.

Item 29 - Public Comment for Matters not on the Agenda – Gibson’s Rant on Election Questions. Private citizen Richard Patten, the author of the redistricting plan that was ultimately selected, raised a question on statistical processing anomalies in the vote count for the November 2020 general election. Patten has been conducting a statistical analysis of the votes in terms of their processing (or lack thereof) with respect to the electro-mechanical capacity of the voting system and/or the readers through which the ballots are fed. He pointed out the following:

1. Apparently the ballot scanners are capable of reading a maximum of 200 ballots per minute. It was not clear from the presentation how many ballots the Dominion software can count per minute.
2. During different periods of the count, Patten asserts that the record shows that at some points groups ranging from 400 ballots to 6000 ballots, and on to 11,000 ballots were each read in 1 minute, far beyond the capacity of the electro-mechanical scanners.
3. Supervisor Arnold questioned the current interim Clerk Recorder, Elaina Cano on what she knows about this. She stated on the record that at the time of the November 2020 election, she was still an employee of the Santa Barbara County Clerk Recorder’s office. No one seemed to remember that she was the head Election Deputy in that office and that Santa Barbara County also operates the Dominion voting system. She should be intimately knowledgeable about its capacities.
4. Cano had another manager from her office, who was prepositioned at the other podium, attempt to answer the question. This individual stated that the {anomaly} was due to the fact that when spoiled, bent, or double marked ballots are discovered, they are pulled from the work flow for inspection with the hope that they can be repaired for counting in the system. She then seemed to infer that these are then hand counted, and some sort of summary is fed into the system as one document, thus accounting for more than 200 votes being tabulated in one minute in these instances.
5. No one on the Board seemed to comprehend that it would be impossible for batches of ballots containing 400 to 11,000 errors to actually occur and then be sent to a hand count. No one

questioned the facts or the logic. Can any count observer verify that 11,000 ballots were hand counted and then fed into the system as a batch? Is such a process even possible? The matter was dropped for the moment.

6. The fact that Cano and the other manager were in the room suggests that they or the Board or both had a warning or premonition or some other way of knowing in advance of Patten's question.

Gibson's Tirade:

Notwithstanding that the matter was dropped, at least for the day, Gibson lit into Supervisor Arnold, stating that anyone who is questioning the election is guilty of "baseless insinuations." He further ranted that such questions are "an affront to the Elections Division." He went on to state that "there is no basis to conclude that there are problems with the election or vote count." He even asserted that the questions evince a "classical smear campaign."

Accordingly, Patten is accused in public by a member of the Board, during a meeting, of "making baseless insinuations." Any other citizen who has had questions about the Dominion system or other aspects of the election is guilty by implication.

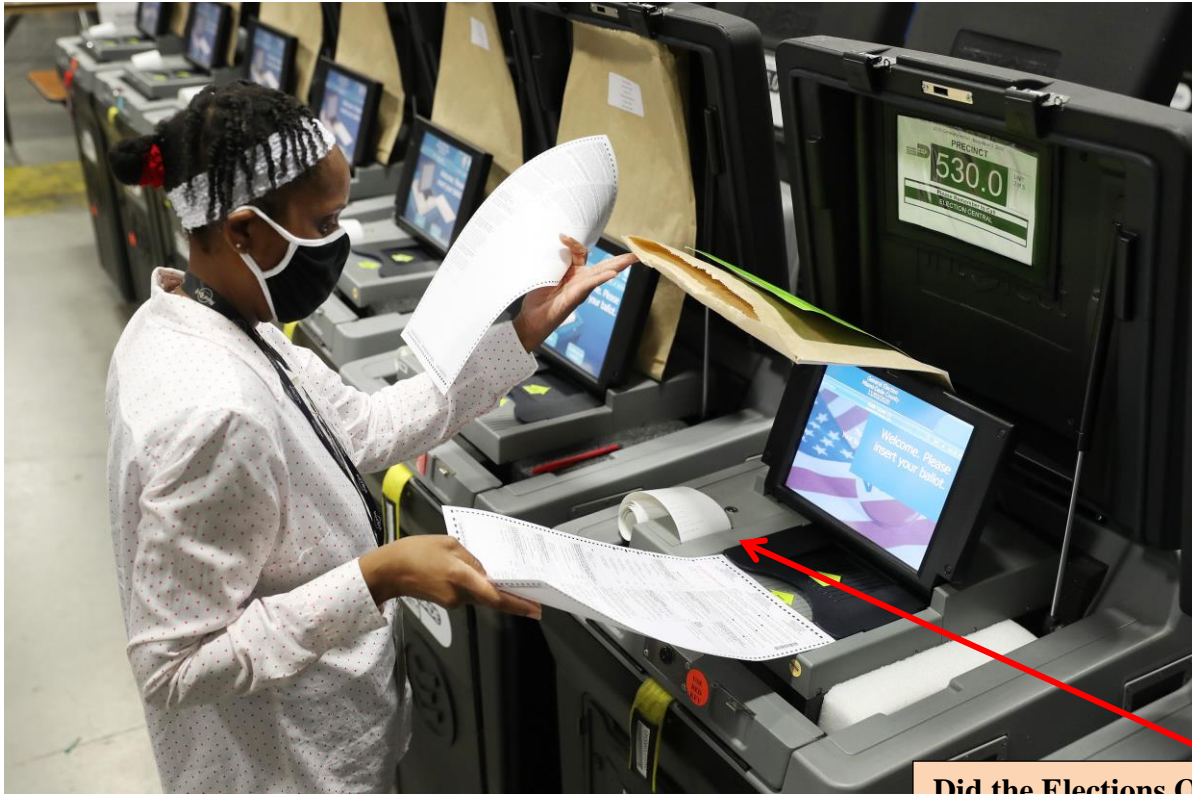
The Board should not allow a member to berate his colleague and the public for presenting data and asking questions.

Brown Act Violation:

Elected public bodies and officials may not forbid or interfere with speech with which they disagree during public comment. In this case, Gibson has signaled that he will attack anyone who questions the 2020 election or the management of the Elections Office. This is clearly a speech chilling violation intended to silence Patten and Supervisor Arnold, while intimidating the public from asking questions or making further comment on the matter.

The Board should:

1. Censor Supervisor Gibson and warn him not to engage in such behavior that exposes the County to liability.
2. Schedule a Board item and hearing to demand an explicit accounting on whether the system did count large numbers of ballots in excess of its 200 per minute capacity. The Board should verify how there could be 11,000 ballots that had mistakes, and if they were counted and how the results were batch fed.
3. If there are gaps or evident problems, the Board should quickly hire appropriate consultants to conduct a thorough forensic investigation of the 2020 election procedures and count.



Did the Elections Office secure these tally tapes? Can staff show how 11,000 were counted in 1 minute?

The District Attorney should investigate these allegations.

Item 33 - Hearing to consider adoption of a resolution amending the Williamson Act to streamline the application process for agricultural preserves and land conservation contracts to 1) no longer require Planning Commission review of agricultural preserve applications and 2) require lienholders to sign application acknowledgements instead of recorded land conservation contracts. In a very positive step, the item was approved unanimously, which reduces processing time and costs for applicants applying for agricultural preserve designations.

The proposed Phase 1 streamlining amendments include two changes:

- *No longer requiring Planning Commission review of agricultural preserve applications; and*
- *Requiring lienholders to sign acknowledgements of applications for land conservation contracts, instead of approvals of recorded land conservation contracts.*

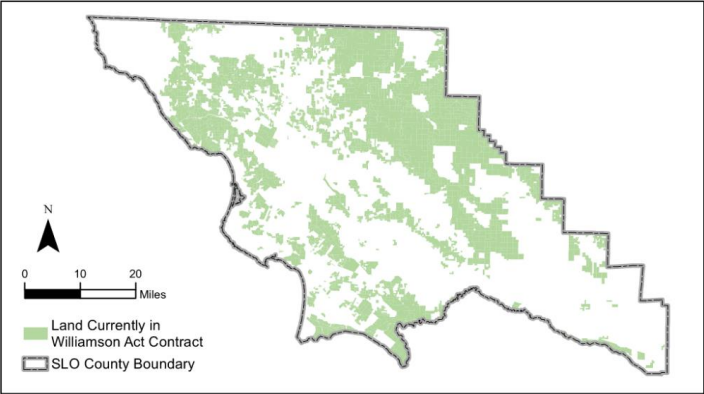


Figure 1: Land Conservation Contracts Countywide

Since there will be less processing by the Planning Department, could the fee be reduced?

Item 35 - Request to: 1) provide direction to staff regarding the update on the August 10, 2021 Spending Plan on Homeless Initiatives; 2) provide direction to staff regarding the draft San Luis Obispo Countywide Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness; 3) provide approval for staff to evaluate development of a County Homeless Operations/Coordination Center; and 4) provide approval for staff to pursue the establishment of a Homeless Division within the Department of Social Services. The Board conceptually liked the Plan and unanimously directed staff to bring forward details, including costs, any refinements, and measures to protect existing programs. The last provision is a sop to all the agencies and not-for-profits that constitute the homeless industry within the County.



At the meeting:

Supervisor Gibson used the occasion to pontificate by questioning his colleagues' real commitment to fighting homelessness and signaled that he will expect them to provide even more funding at budget time. He suggested that other programs will have to be cut.

A large group of homeless advocates and agency providers spoke in support of the Plan. The city managers of the various cities came and also endorsed the Plan. Significantly, they attribute the high level of cooperation to the outreach skills of the County Administrator and his staff. This is an important factor, as most city managers will avoid commitment to social programs, particularly those with large recurring costs. Usually they will suggest that these are County responsibilities. It will be interesting to see exactly how much incremental funding the cities might put into the system.

As predicted, at least one agency executive warned the Board that the one-time American Rescue Plan money, which they have been doling out in the millions, will run out next year in 2023. They want to make sure that the Board keeps funding the program augmentations when the one-time money runs out.

The Board took no visible notice of any of the COLAB cautions or recommendations contained in last week's Update other than the issue of civil rights vs. accountability. As noted in the detail on page 12 below, this is the thorniest issue, as most of the homeless population is not going to stop drinking and/or using drugs simply because they are housed, sheltered, or receiving more coordinated services.

Some hope was proffered in relation to the Governor's proposal for a special court system to deal with homelessness. Supervisor Gibson correctly pointed out that many homeless advocacy and civil rights organizations are fiercely opposed to this concept. He also pointed out that it would be a relatively small-scale effort and would only be limited to the severely mentally ill.

Background

Last week's analysis is repeated here for reference:

As noted in the title, the key issue is part 2, which is yet another attempt to develop and implement a strategy to reduce the number of unsheltered homeless people in the county. There are 4 components to this Board item, per the staff report:

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1. Provide direction to staff regarding the update on the August 10, 2021 Spending Plan on Homeless Initiatives;*
- ✓ *2. Provide direction to staff regarding the draft San Luis Obispo Countywide Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness;*
- 3. Provide approval for staff to evaluate development of a County Homeless Operations/Coordination Center; and*
- 4. Provide approval for staff to pursue the establishment of a Homeless Division within the Department of Social Services.*

[San Luis Obispo Regional Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness \(ca.gov\)](#)

The Proposed 2022 Plan

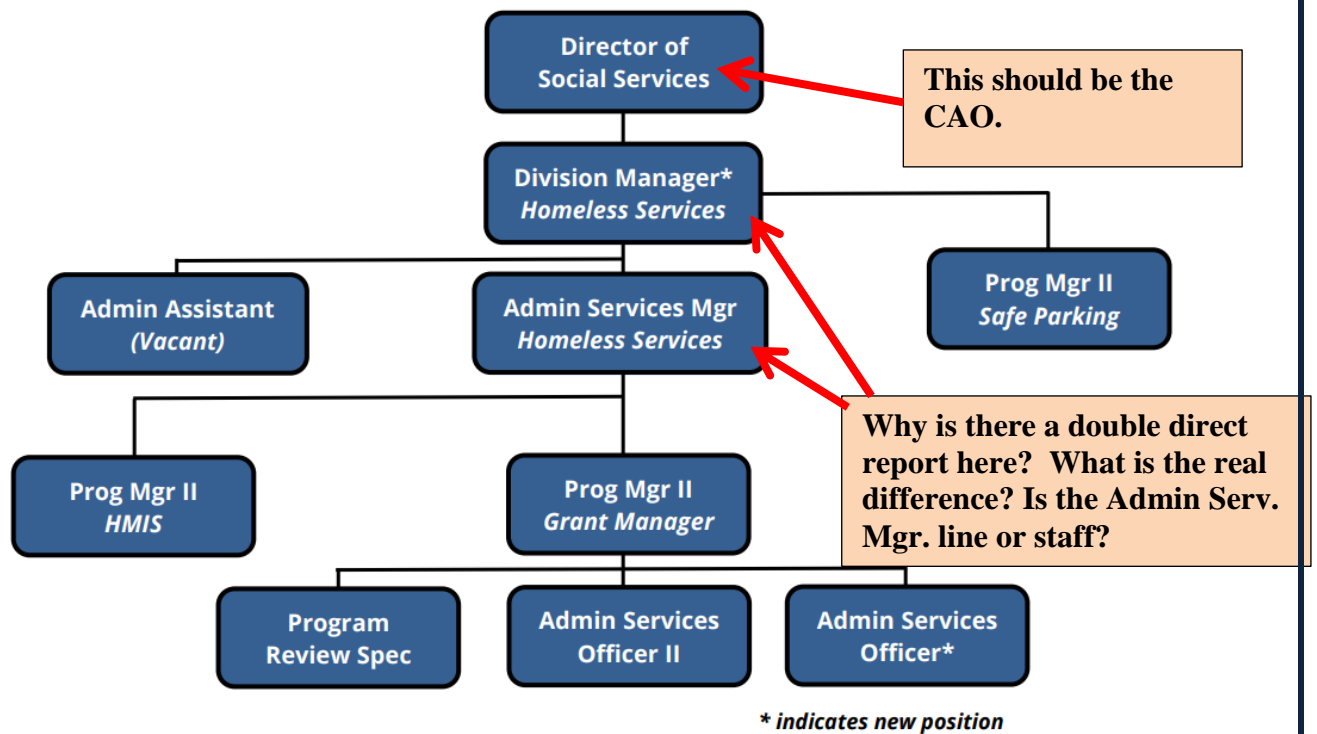
The Plan and the subsidiary requests in this agenda item should be approved by the Board of Supervisors. The CAO has taken a realistic approach by not promising to eliminate homelessness. Instead, the goal is to reduce the incidence by 50% over 5 years. It includes benchmarks and an accountability structure.

This Strategic Plan presented today is being built to identify and achieve 12-month, 3-year and 5-year objectives to reduce the number of homeless persons in the County of San Luis Obispo to 50% of the current level over the five year period following its approval for implementation by this Board.

Our Recommendations

- 1) The Board should approve the overall project scope for the five-year effort, as well as the structural reforms and financing. The Board should approve the new structure in sub-item 4 but should not assign the function to the Department of Social Services.

Figure 3. Possible structure for a Homeless Division to be formalized within the Dept of Social Service:



In Social Services the initiative will immediately become mired in the day-to-day mission of the large line Department, which is processing oriented. The Department's main missions are to determine eligibility for tens of thousands of clients in the safety net programs, protect abused children, and transition people to jobs. These are line functions, and the new effort should not be subordinate to an executive who is responsible for running a large ongoing service operation. The new division should report to the CAO, at least until it is shown to be working and ready to be routinized. The CAO is a proven project manager and can oversee the new Division Manager with ease, as well as judge the progress.

2) Approval should be contingent on the use of formal structured project management. Project charters should be developed for the overall effort, as well as each of the sub-projects as they are established.

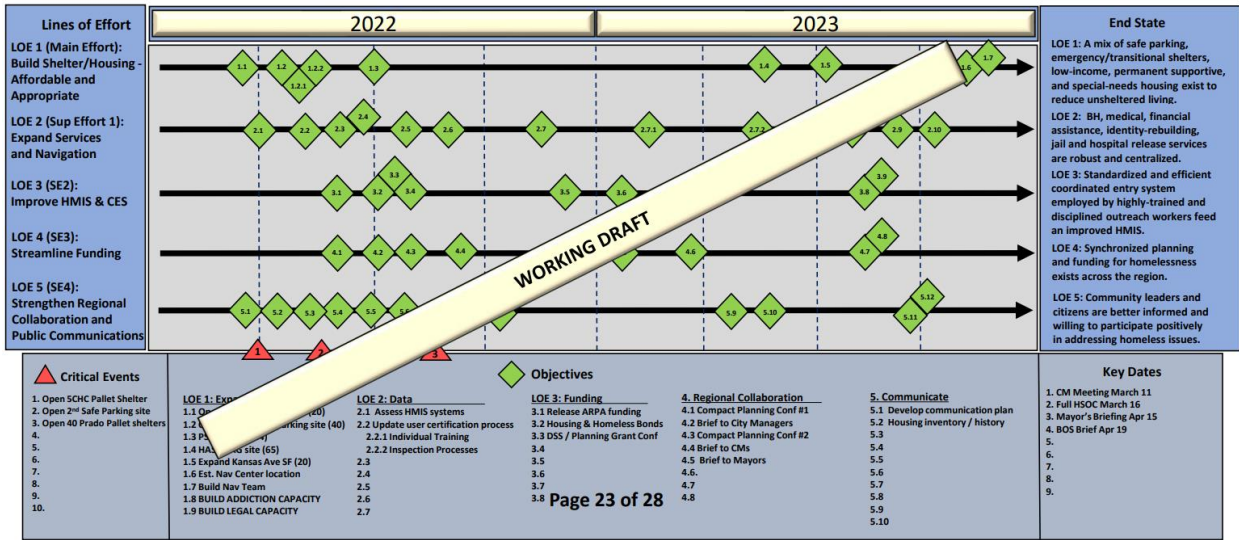
The project charters should conform to accepted project management standards, such as Anton Dekom or other reliable experts. The overall project should be reviewed in a formal session by the CAO and the usual dependencies on a rolling 6-week cadence. Dependencies include the County Counsel, HR Director, Auditor-Controller, Deputy County Administrator, Social Services Director, and Behavioral Health Director, as they all control choke points which could interfere with the project.

3) The project should be housed in a separate space where all the members can interact as a unit and not be bothered with other tasks. The group should come to work each day and interact in person.



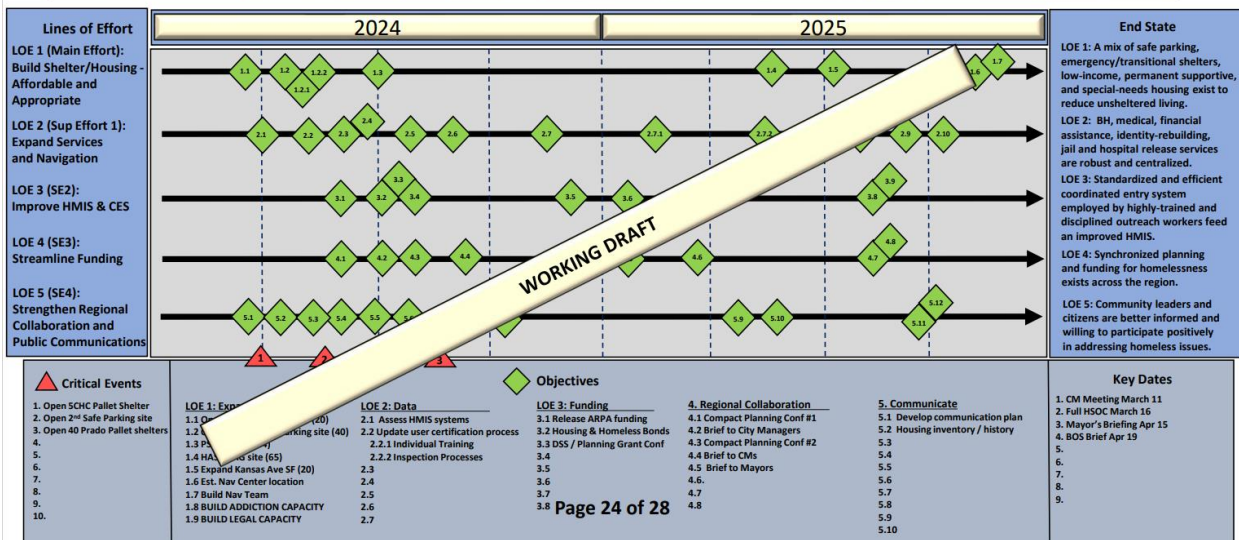
5-Year Operational Approach - Draft

Intent: Develop Countywide Regional Collaboration that: guides rapidly-expanding shelter, service, navigation and housing capacity; improves data and outreach systems; creates, identifies and streamlines funding while generating support from citizens through communication, education and accessible venues of action.



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Needed Project Refinements:

1. Better Definition of the Problem

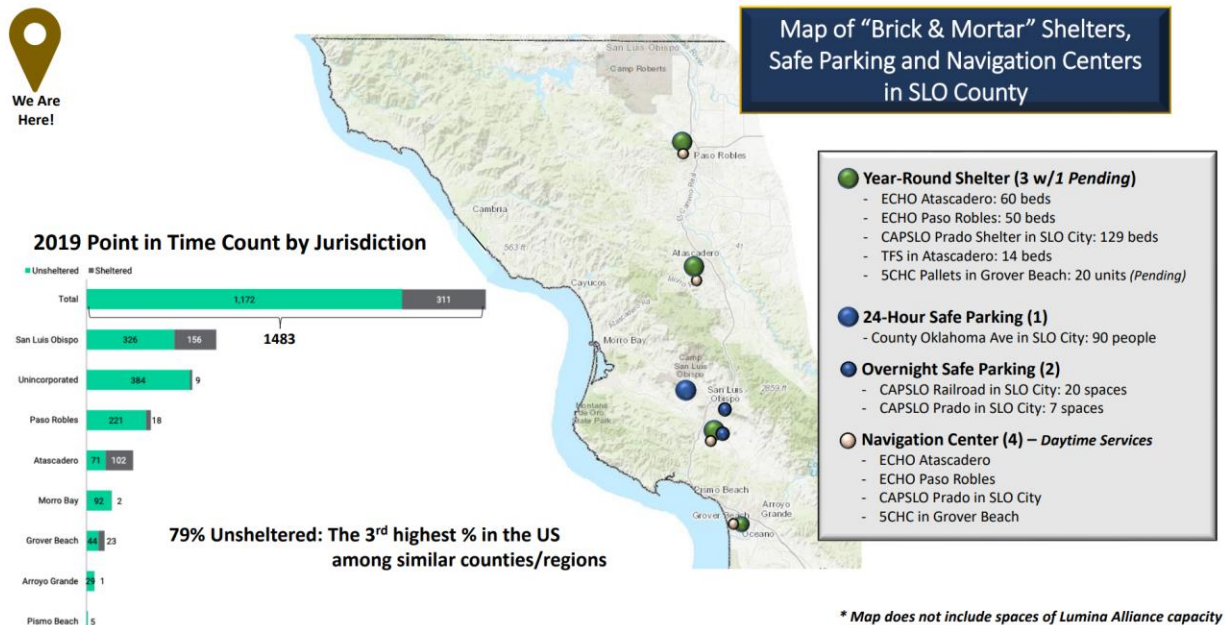
The data indicate that there are about 1500 homeless people in the County at any given time, for which there is sheltering capacity that ranges from 20% to 30%, based on the seasonal availability of shelter beds.

An issue that is not dealt within the project design concerns the elasticity of the occurrence of homelessness. If the County were able to provide for the current 1500, would more arrive either from natural processes within the county or from the outside? In other words, is there any way to anticipate the number of new homeless cases arising from within the County each year? Is there any way to estimate the number of cases arriving from outside each year? For example, would the Social Services Department have data on how many new General Relief cases it experiences each year from these sources? Similarly, would Social Security know how many new homeless SSI cases it receives from these sources each year?

It seems that the situation would not be static and that the Plan must anticipate for additions beyond the current population. Similarly, do any of the cases permanently leave the County over time?

A scenario that might be considered as a separate part of the Plan is: what happens if there is a general economic depression as a result of a combination of inflation and high interest rates on the national debt? What would happen to the Federal Budget if the current 1% became 8%, and energy costs and blackouts decimate employment?

It's like a water basin – instead of acre-feet of water, how many are coming into the “system”, how many are recycles, how many are leaving, and how many are graduating from homelessness?



2. Civil Rights and Accountability

A major practical problem is that under our Constitutional system, an individual is allowed to be drunk, addicted to drugs, and mentally ill, and is allowed to lay about the community as long as he doesn't block public access or interfere with the security or the freedom of others. It is only when he steals, defecates on public or private property, blocks a door, or otherwise violates

particular laws or ordinances that he can be compelled to cooperate. Vagrancy is no longer a crime. This situation has led to a revolving door where the homeless suffer no consequences for their behavior. The State's \$950 dollar free stealing threshold has not helped the situation.

This represents a huge problem for program designers in that even when housing, counseling, psychiatric care, medications, and other services are provided, about 70 % of the individuals resist treatment and continue their underlying behavioral problems.

They are unaccountable. Is there a way to compel them to live in a shelter or housing, take their medications (which can often be complex in dosage and timing), quit drinking, and quit drugs? If not, the entire project could fail just as past efforts have failed.

If governments cannot compel the homeless to remain in shelters or housing and receive treatment, could the County and cities require them to be licensed to sleep outside in the parks, creeks, and other spaces? Could they be required to wear a tracking device?

This issue needs to be dealt with up front in the project design before millions more are spent and resources are diverted from other public priorities. The judges, Public Defender, DA, County Bar, and homeless advocacy lawyers need to be bought in quickly on program design. These were missing from the Steering Committee that advised County staff on development of the program.

Unless a system of accountability is built into the program, it will most likely fail.



San Luis Obispo Countywide Strategy to Address Homelessness

Steering Committee Members

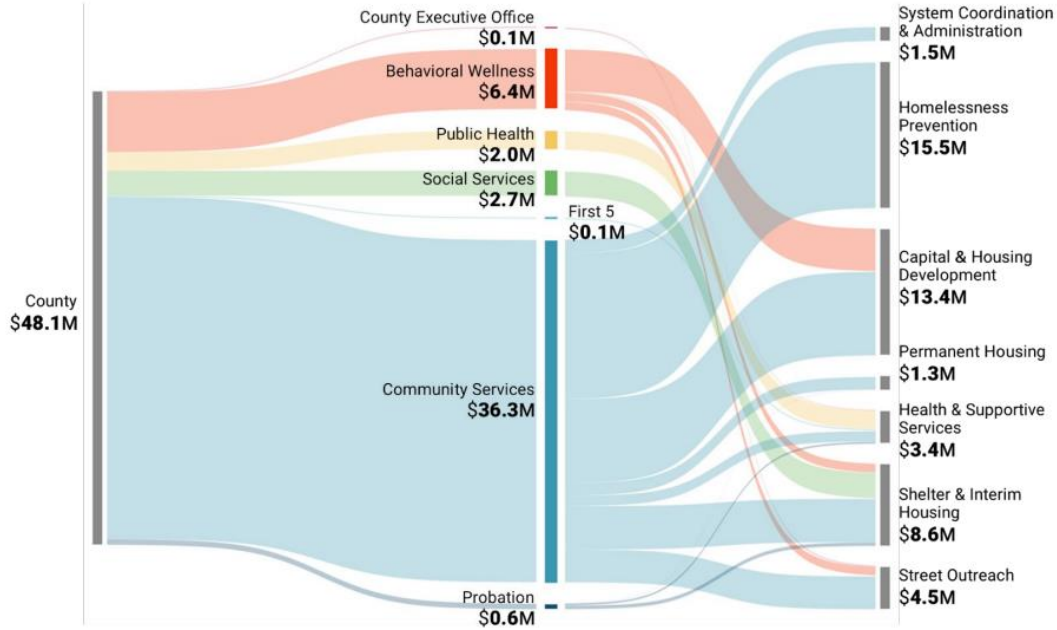
- Elaine Archer
Dir of Housing Management, HASLO
- Janna Nichols
Executive Director, 5 Cities Homeless Coalition
- Brenda Mack
Lived Experience, Atascadero Resident
- Anne Robin
Behavioral Health Administrator
- Kelsey Nocket
Homeless Manager, City of SLO
- John Peters
Police Chief, Grover Beach
- Scott Collins
City Manager, Morro Bay
- Susan Funk
*Council Member, Atascadero
Chair of HSOC*

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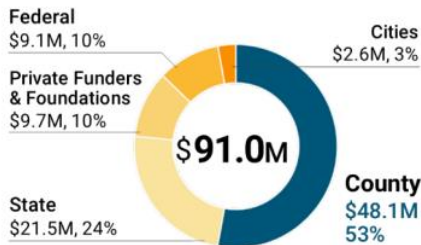
3. What is the 1-year and 5-year funding situation appear to be? (The life of the project). Can the staff generate an analysis such as the sample charts below and then build from them?

How the County's homelessness funding has been distributed

Totals reflect funding dedicated to addressing and preventing homelessness and include both one-time and ongoing sources.

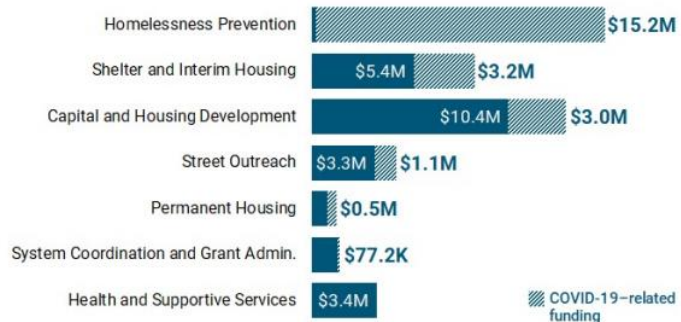


Regional Investment in Homelessness 2020-21



COVID-19 Homelessness Assistance and Prevention Funding

Coronavirus Relief Funds and Emergency Rental Assistance Programs allocated to the County significantly increased financial resources available for homelessness response efforts.



4. Many nations use the barracks format, below, to house refugees. The sample facility, in the foreground, could house about 400 single males. It would be relatively inexpensive, particularly on county land in California Valley. The problem lies in Item 2, above (accountability vs. Constructional rights). Can the government compel people to participate against their will separately from criminal adjudication? If not, will the Courts, DA, and Public Defender agree to a system of adjudication that does not clog up the jail and break the County Budget?



Two of the facilities could house 800 of the County’s homeless people. Counseling, psychiatric care, medications, and other rehab would be provided. There are European and Middle Eastern companies that build so many of these facilities, that they can deliver them as modules and at very good prices due to economies of scale.

A Little History

Since the decade of the 2000’s, it has been trendy for many cities and counties to develop “ten-year plans “to end homelessness.” For example, Santa Barbara County has developed at least 2 and is working on a 3rd, none of which ended or will end homelessness. SLO County adopted a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in June of 2009.

Board of Supervisors	Jun 23, 2009	Agenda	Minutes	Item Documents	Video
Item:	D-1 Request to establish the Homeless Services Oversight Council as a new advisory committee.				
Item:	Motion to the Board establishes the new advisory body named the Homeless Services Oversight Council to guide and provide oversight for the implementation of the 10 Year Plan and approves the attached By-Laws; directs the County Clerk to post a notice inviting applications by persons wishing to become members of the Homeless Oversight Council and return with recommendations for consideration by the Board; and directs staff to prepare and issue a Request for Proposals to identify organizations from which a fiscal agent can be selected. Moved by James R. Patterson, seconded by Adam Hill.				
Document:	6-23-09				

That plan stated as its goals:

The 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The draft Plan represents a collection of strategies and implementing actions that will improve the effectiveness of local programs, even if additional public funding is not available.

The strategies set forth in the Plan can be summarized as follows:

1. Provide interim, transitional, and permanent housing;
2. Prevent persons from becoming homeless through eviction prevention and discharge planning for persons leaving institutions;
3. Provide appropriate support services to those in need, such as case management services; and
4. Exercise comprehensive oversight through a ‘governing body’.

By 2016, the plan was recognized by everyone to be a failure and was essentially abandoned. Even former Supervisor Hill, one its prime sponsors, recognized the failure. As both a policy and management failure, there was no executive assigned to be accountable for its implementation: no project team, no project charter, no project review, and no project structure for its subcomponents. Critical projects need to be reviewed every 6 weeks by top management.

Subsequently and to great fanfare, the County, the City of San Luis Obispo, and the residual war on poverty agency - Community Action Plan of SLO (CAPSLO) developed a \$5 million Homeless Service Center on Prado Lane in the City. It appears that its impact has been negligible. In fact, it now has a chain link fence around it to prevent the homeless from camping on its grounds. Ironically, there is a pop-up homeless camp that appears from time to time across the street. Despite repeated efforts to remove it, a larger camp persists to the east in the creek and park area down the block. Camp fires, open drug use, and trash typify the camp.

A July 2014 agenda item stated:

If approved, the \$500,000 grant will assist CAPSLO in developing a new homeless service center to replace the aging Prado Day Center and Maxine Lewis Memorial Shelter, consistent with the goals outlined in the County's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. As noted previously, the planned new center will have 100 beds with the capacity to accommodate an additional 75 individuals on an emergency basis. The center will also be designed to incorporate services such as a working kitchen with job training opportunities for clients, as well as space to accommodate coordinated activities with partner agencies including but not limited to Veterans Services, the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Probation, Community Health Centers, and Transitions Mental Health Association.

Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Thursday, April 21, 2022 (Completed)

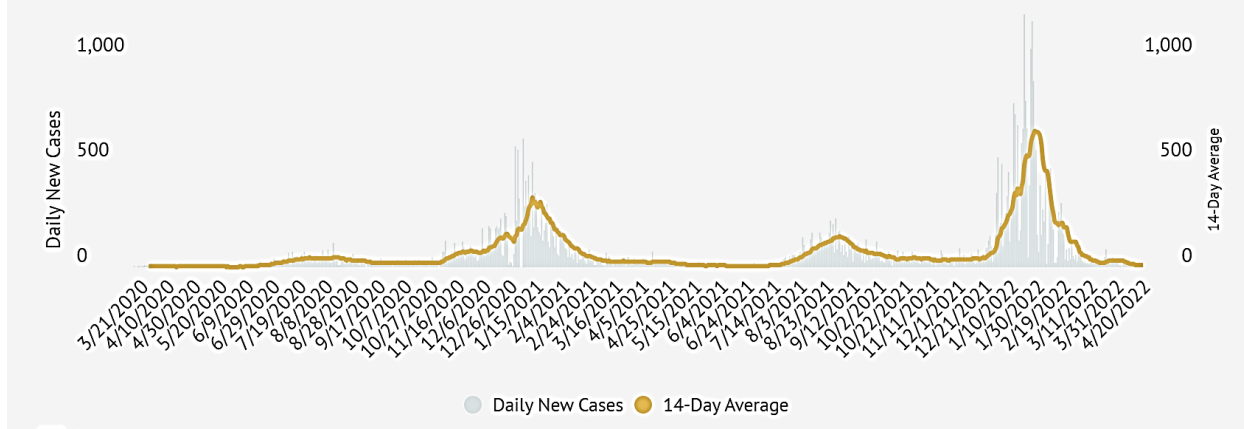
The agenda was limited to administrative matters. There were no applications for annexations, detachments, or other policy matters.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - COVID. Cases and hospitalizations in SLO are still the lowest since the pandemic first arrived in SLO County.

A Federal District Court Judge in Florida ruled that the US Government could not require masks on commercial planes, Amtrak, and transit systems. This sent our left controllers into paroxysms of anger. The Feds are appealing the decision in the Federal Court of Appeals for the South Eastern Region. Meanwhile, people were cheering on airplanes.

Daily New Cases (and 14-Day Average)



3 Hospitalized (0 in ICU)

Item 2 - The California Public Utilities (CPUC) Plan for Replacing Diablo is a Fake. Due to the impending closure of Diablo, closure of natural gas generating plants, and the all-electric mandates, the CPUC has ordered all electric distributors (designated as load serving entities - LSEs) to increase their contractual supplies of energy over the next 5 years. Utilities such as PG&E, community choice energy purveyors such as Central Coast Community Power, and municipal systems are all directed by a CPUC order to up their sources. The additional supply must be from non CO₂ producing sources.

The CPUC “Fact Sheet” below summarizes the directive.

Fact Sheet: Decision Requiring Clean Energy Procurement for Mid-Term Reliability Overview of D.21-06-035 Ordering Historic Levels of Clean Energy Procurement

- *This Decision is part of the CPUC’s Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) proceeding (R.20-05-003). It seeks to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to ensure reliability and to meet the state’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals for the electricity sector in a cost-effective manner.*
- *D.21-06-035 orders the procurement of 11,500 MW of new net qualifying capacity (NQC) to come online in the years 2023-2026; enough to power approximately 2.5 million homes, with all of the resources procured coming from zero-emitting, or otherwise Renewable Portfolio Standard-eligible, sources. This is an unprecedented, but necessary, quantity of clean energy procurement that will ensure reliability in the mid-decade, help California achieve its climate goals, spur the development of the clean firm resources needed for deep decarbonization, and create thousands of green energy jobs in California.*
- *The resources are needed to respond to more extreme weather events and replace electricity generation from more than 3,700 MW of retiring natural gas plants and 2,200 MW from Diablo Canyon Power Plant. (NQC refers to the ability of a power plant to meet the reliability needs of*

the grid, especially at peak times. For some resources like variable renewables without storage, the “nameplate” or “installed” MW capacity will be significantly higher than the NQC value.)

- *Of the 11,500 MW NQC required, 2,000 MW must be from resources with long development lead times. This procurement will increase resource diversity and enhance grid reliability. At least 1,000 MW must be obtained from long duration storage resources (eight hours or greater), and at least 1,000 MW from clean firm resources such as geothermal. (“Firm” means providing power whenever needed, for as long as needed.)*

- *The Decision requires Diablo Canyon be replaced with at least 2,500 MW from zero-emitting generation, generation paired with storage, or demand response resources by 2025. • The Decision requires all of the required 11,500 MW to be fulfilled with non-fossil fueled resources.*

- *The Decision does not allow any fossil generation to qualify for the order, but requires the Commission, in coordination with the California Energy Commission (CEC), to conduct more analysis to determine whether any additional fossil-fueled procurement may be necessary for reliability.*

- *The Decision assigns procurement responsibility to all LSEs based on their share of peak demand. In the event of non-compliance, penalties could be assessed on the non-compliant LSEs and IOUs would procure on their behalf (“backstop procurement”).*

- *The Decision endorses reducing the 2030 GHG target from 46MMT to 38 MMT in the next IRP decision later this year if the portfolios submitted by the LSEs are analyzed to be reliable.*

- *The Decision also notes the planning track of the IRP proceeding will continue to explore coordinated planning for resource buildout and resource retirement to inform an orderly and equitable path to SB 100 goals, optimizing for GHG reductions, reliability, and costs.*

One problem is that this will further exacerbate the already rising electric rates. Another problem is that the CPUC’s own plan is insufficient, as it contains a significant amount of “unspecified imports.” The Commission has no idea if such sources even exist or if the energy is obtainable at any price.

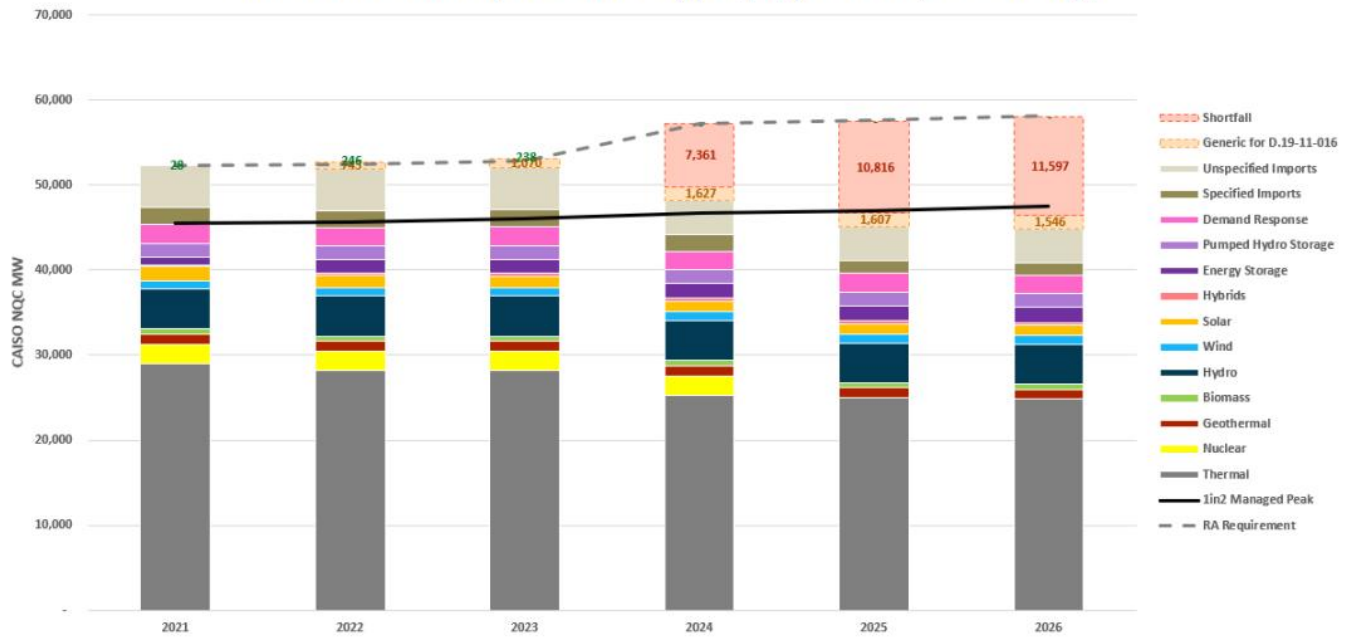
Significantly, specified imports are derived from Arizona, which are generated from nuclear and coal.

Take a squint at the California Independent System Operator chart below, which shows that by 2024 there will be a 9,000 MGW shortfall in 2024 that will grow to over 13,000 by 2026. These shortfalls will occur on the warmest days and/or when other plants break down or are offline for servicing.



The figure below shows the CPUC staff analysis of available electricity resources that led to the procurement required in the Decision.

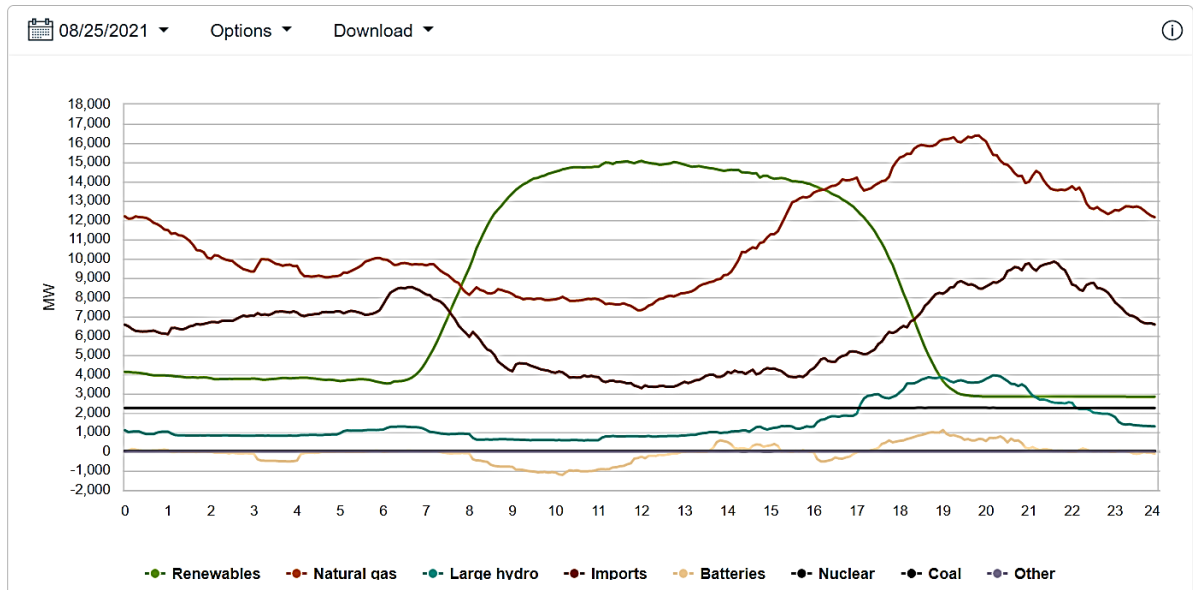
CAISO RA Stack by Resource Type (High Need (2020 IEPR))



2

Supply trend

Energy in megawatts broken down by resource in 5-minute increments.



² CASIO - The California Independent System Operator is a non-profit Independent System Operator serving California. It oversees the operation of California's bulk electric power system, transmission lines, and electricity market generated and transmitted by its member utilities.

Note per the graph, immediately above, that solar only provides significant power from 9:00 AM to around 5:00 PM . This is in summer when the days are longest. The graph is for July 25, 2021, which was a bright warm day. Note that natural gas begins to displace solar just after noon and peaks around 8:00 PM. Natural gas and imports provide most of the energy during the entire night and until 9:00 AM the next morning.

With tens of thousands more electric vehicles coming online and the closure of Diablo and gas-fired power plants, how is this debacle supposed to work out?

COLAB IN DEPTH

IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES

HOW AMERICA BECAME LA LA LAND

Nothing seems to be working. And no one seems to care.

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON



America these last 14 months resembles a dystopia. It is becoming partly the world of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, partly the poet Homer's land of the Lotus-Eaters.

Nothing seems to be working. And no one in control seems to care.

The once secure border of 2020 vanished. Two-million people have crossed the southern border illegally in the last twelve months. Millions more are on the way.

The Biden Administration unilaterally and simply destroyed existing immigration law.

What followed was surreal. The administration claimed COVID was again on the horizon. So it justified forcing American citizens to keep wearing masks in public buildings and transportation. But at the same time, it waived all such requirements for illegal entrants.

Citizens who obeyed our laws had to mask up; foreign nationals who broke them did not need to take such precautions.

Biden blasted as near-criminals mounted border guards who used long reins to steady their horses. When investigations cleared them of wrongdoing, he went mute. This administration apparently sees its own American law enforcement at the border as criminals, and non-Americans who break our laws as their moral superiors.

Biden then concocted the perfect recipe for bringing back the inflation of the 1970s.

Print more money. Run up multitrillion-dollar annual deficits. Borrow trillions on top of a \$30 trillion national debt. Send generous checks to workers for staying home. Shrug at historic disruptions of the supply chain.

When reminded that his deliberate policies are the classic roads to inflation, Biden went fetal and ignored the warnings. Or he lashed out and blamed anyone and anything for his own suicidal agendas.

First, we heard inflation was transitory. Then it was a mere concern of the elite. Then it was only a matter of exercise equipment being in short supply. Then it was solely because of Vladimir Putin. Then, somehow, it was also the result of Donald Trump. Then it was an organic phenomenon that presidents had little power to stop.

America was energy independent until the arrival of the Biden Administration. On the orders of his Green New Deal masters, Biden immediately began canceling federal oil and gas leases. He stopped new pipelines. He jawboned against the private financing of fossil-fuel production.

Biden was hell-bent on his way to fulfilling his campaign promises of eliminating the use of natural gas and oil on his watch.

Then prices soared and the public grew irate. In response, still more incoherence followed.

The Biden Administration would not reverse its destructive energy policies. But as it floundered in desperation, Biden begged American enemies Iran, Russia, and Venezuela to pump more oil on our behalf. In vain, it beseeched Saudi Arabia to produce more of the hated icky stuff that we had in abundance but would not fully produce ourselves.

Biden tapped the strategic petroleum reserve. Yet the existential peril was not war or natural catastrophe but Biden himself and his far more dangerous policies.

Abroad, we looked at the relatively manageable situation in Afghanistan and simply fled. The terrorist Taliban quickly took over and restored its medieval rule.

The administration abandoned a \$1 billion embassy and dumped a \$300 million refitted airbase at Bagram. Over \$70 billion in military supplies and weapons were left for Taliban terrorists.

Thousands of refugees were airlifted, unchecked, into the United States. Meanwhile, hundreds of known translators and helpers of the U.S. military were left behind.

As public outrage grew, in typical Biden fashion, he blamed the Afghanistan debacle on his generals. Then he blamed Trump. Then he denied that he had ever claimed the war was going well.

In the end, the public was told the humiliating flight was a near-perfect logistical evacuation, as if America should be proud of being better at running away than it is at fighting.

What explains an America that suddenly no longer works?

First, all of these problems are self-induced. They did not exist until Biden birthed them for ideological or political reasons. Apparently, his administration wanted a changing, more favorable electorate and demography at any cost.

Perhaps Biden was privately happy that cash-short commuters had to burn less gasoline. Maybe the more he printed money, the more he would be rewarded politically.

Second, Biden has no solutions to these self-created problems because of the ideological restraints the Left has imposed on him.

The administration fears the anger of the hard Left more than the furor of the American people. So it will not change, preferring to be politically correct and a failure than to be ideologically incorrect and successful.

Third, when people object, this administration answers either by blaming others for its self-created mess or by seeking distractions. Now it is faulting gun owners for the crime wave it fostered, supposed “white supremacists” for the racial tensions it fanned, and Putin, whom it appeased.

The common denominator? Biden knows that he inherited a stable, prosperous America and has nearly ruined it.

And he knows the American people know that too.

Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Hanson is also a farmer (growing raisin grapes on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends

related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author most recently of The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, The Case for Trump and the newly released The Dying Citizen. This article first appeared in the American Greatness of April 20, 2022.

SERFING THE FUTURE?

BY JOEL KOTKIN AND WENDELL COX

Land ownership has shaped civilizations from their beginnings, with a constant interplay between great powers—the aristocracy, the state, the Church, the emperor—and those below them. History has oscillated between periods of greater dispersion of ownership, and those that favored greater concentration.

Today, we live in an era of ever-greater consolidation, not from knights in armor, or Communist cadres, but from the forces of big capital and an ever-more intrusive regulatory state. The result has been record-high housing prices, well above the increase in incomes resulting in a systematic decline in the ability of people, particularly the young, to buy their own house as prices rise even in less expensive areas. Supply also faces great constraints, due in part to labor and supply-chain woes and the demand shock of the pandemic and remote work.

Unless reversed, young people will be forced into a lifetime of rental serfdom. The assets that drove middle-class stability, wider social benefit, and subsidized comfortable retirements, will likely not be available to them. Property remains key to financial security: Homeowners have a median net worth more than 40 times that of renters, according to the Census Bureau. Shoving prospective homeowners into the rental market not only depresses their ambitions, but it also forces up rents, which hurts poorer households and even solid minority neighborhoods.

But this impacts far more than just finances. Low affordability and high rents tend to depress the fertility rate, contributing to what is rapidly becoming a demographic implosion in many countries. More important still, dispersed property ownership has long been intimately tied to democracy while concentration tends to characterize autocracies, whether of the state-dominated variety or that of big capital.

How we reverted to a feudalistic state is a complex and infuriating story. Critical to this change has been a planning theology that holds density itself as intrinsically good and that purposely seeks to block housing on the periphery for societal, and environmental reasons. Where implemented, this approach has driven up prices, as evident in places like Sydney, Vancouver, San Francisco, London, and Paris. This has been a boon to speculators and well-heeled developers, but makes middle-class housing unaffordable to the middle class and intensifies the poverty of poorer residents.

The “pack and stack” planning “vision” has been widely adopted, even in land-rich countries like Australia. This ad from the New South Wales government promises an urban paradise of sorts:

This, as many Sydney-siders will tell you, is not exactly what happened. Instead of flocking to the city, research by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Queens University (Canada) estimates that nearly 80 percent of Australia’s metropolitan population lives in automobile-oriented suburbs or exurbs. Further, more than 75 percent of employment growth in Sydney and Melbourne occurred outside the central business districts between the 2011 and 2016 censuses. But due to planning restrictions, taxes, and fees, in the decades since these regulations have been imposed, Sydney has become one of the Anglosphere’s most expensive cities, with prices that have placed most prospective homeowners on the sides. Indeed, under these regulations, house prices have tripled relative to incomes creating conditions where two-thirds of Australians now believe that the next generation will never be able to afford a home.

These trends are distressingly common across the higher income countries. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in *Under Pressure: The Squeezed Middle-Class* that the future of the middle-class is threatened by house prices that have been growing “three times faster than household median income over the last two decades.”

This shift reflects, at least in part, the movement of big capital into housing, including foreign investors. In 2014, French economist Thomas Piketty produced a widely referenced analysis of world inequality. Soon after, Matthew Rognlie of Northwestern University found that virtually all of Piketty’s increased inequality was attributable to increased house values. In the United States over the past decade, the proportion of real-estate wealth held by middle-class and working owners fell substantially while that controlled by the wealthy grew from under 20 percent to over 28 percent.

This trend will be worsened by moves on Wall Street to buy up single family homes, further raising their price, and then rent them out, particularly to priced-out millennials, has reached record proportions. Rather than help middle-class families this supports the rentier class—which Piketty calls the “enemy of democracy”—assuring them of steady profits by collecting rents while the middle class loses its independence.

Some densifiers suggest that forced densification will lower prices. In reality, virtually all the regions of the world with the highest house prices have regulations designed to encourage development in the inner urban rings and discourage or even ban construction on the more affordable peripheries. Former World Bank principal urban planner Alain Bertaud describes the associated consequences, noting that urban growth boundaries and greenbelts put “arbitrary limits on city expansion” and that “the result is predictably higher prices.”

Research in Vancouver, Canada and other locations has shown an association between densification, on one hand, and higher land prices and diminished housing affordability on the other. Research on two decades of densification projects in Brisbane—Australia’s fastest growing city—found that housing costs rose even with little private development interest. In the

US, meanwhile, higher density urban areas have substantially higher housing costs. Around the world, more severe housing and land-use regulation has been associated with losses. Both the OECD and Roglie urged a review of such regulations which has been associated with severe losses in housing affordability.

Planners may not have lowered prices or lured people to cities, but they have managed to stomp on the aspirations of homeowners. Even before the pandemic, this hit the young in particular including in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Perhaps nowhere is this hostility to market demands more intense than in California, where oligarchic finance has allied itself with progressive planning. The general thrust of the state's regulatory regime seeks to limit "sprawl" to reduce greenhouse gasses from cars and make our communities environmentally more sustainable.

The result? Coastal California's housing prices relative to incomes have risen nearly three times the national average, and now the state suffers from the second lowest homeownership rate in the US after New York. Most impacted have been California millennials suffering homeownership rates that are diminishing more quickly than elsewhere in the country.

Nor does densification have any of the purported environmental benefits now being pushed by the permanent DC urban-centric establishment, such as the Brookings Institution and the Biden administration. The pro-density Turner Center projects that if California's cities followed the density guidelines, the impact on emissions would be at best one percent. This at a time when we have better, less disruptive ways to address emissions. For example, promoting at-home and hybrid work reduces greenhouse gas emissions without embracing a density mantra which is widely unpopular in most communities.

Rather than impose a density agenda, it is now imperative to embrace the growing pace of suburbanization. Despite all the talk of "back to the city," suburbs and exurbs account for more than 90 percent of all US major metropolitan growth since 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, the suburbs and exurbs of the major metropolitan areas gained two million net domestic migrants, while the urban core counties lost 2.7 million. Overall, according to a recent MIT study, roughly 80 percent of the nation's metropolitan population lives in auto-oriented suburbs and exurbs, while barely eight percent live in the urban core, and another 13 percent live in traditional transit-oriented suburbs.

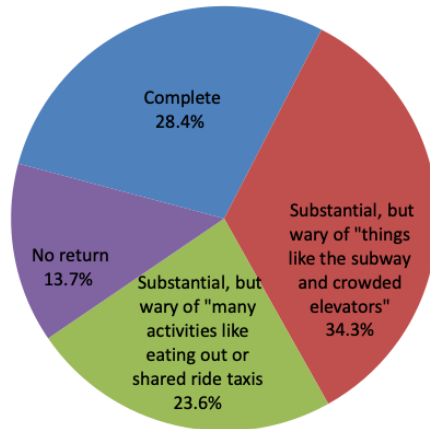
The increased move to the suburbs and smaller cities was evident even before the pandemic, and now it has accelerated. According to Census Bureau data, cited by Brookings' Bill Frey, most large metros are shrinking. Redfin reports that roughly one-in-three moves by their readers was to another region, the highest level ever, and mostly to less expensive, and usually less dense, locales. This clearly makes the current planning religion particularly misplaced.

These trends can only be amplified by the shift to online work and the continued decline in the historic appeal of dense central business districts, which across the West account for roughly 13 percent of all jobs. Early in the pandemic, perhaps 42 percent of the 155 million-strong US labor force was working from home full-time, up from 5.7 percent in 2019, and had exceeded the share

of workers commuting by transit. New research from Jose Maria Barrero, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis suggests that, when the pandemic ends, a “residual fear of proximity” and a preference for shorter commutes (or none at all) will mean that roughly 20 percent or more of all work will be done from home, almost four times the already-growing rate before the pandemic.

Plan to Return Completely to Pre-Covid?

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH PAPER



Derived from Barrero, Bloom & Davis, 2021

Figure 4

This is not an extravagant claim. Studies from the National Bureau of Economic Research and from the University of Chicago suggest this could grow to as much as one-third of the workforce, and as high as 50 percent in Silicon Valley, something reflected in the openness with which most tech firms accept new workstyles. Roughly 40 percent of all California jobs, including 70 percent of higher-paying ones, could be done at home, according to research by the Center of Jobs and the Economy. Moreover, advances in artificial intelligence and virtual reality are likely to improve the popularity and feasibility of remote working.

In the process, central business districts like New York, Chicago, Boston, and Washington have all suffered far more than surrounding suburban or sunbelt business districts, losing both residents and businesses. New York has been disappointing, largely due to a rise in crime, employee reluctance to give up a more home-centered lifestyle, and growing acceptance of at-home or hybrid work among employers.

Even San Francisco, with one of the nation’s strongest central business districts, has suffered rising office vacancies, now three times the pre-pandemic levels. This is enough to fill the Salesforce Tower, the city’s tallest building, 12 times. Things should improve, but most companies there, according to a Bay Area Council survey, expect employees to come to the office three days a week or fewer, with barely one-in-five seeing a return to a “normal” five-day work week.

This shift is likely to be resisted by many managers who want to frogmarch people back to the office. Yet, some 60 percent of US teleworkers, according to Gallup, wish to keep working remotely. Attempts to reverse this situation may prove difficult, due to deep-seated labor shortages. “You see tons of bold statements. Companies saying, ‘No remote work.’ Some

companies are saying, ‘We’re getting rid of all of our offices,’” says Bret Taylor, president and chief operating officer of Salesforce. “There’s like a free market of the future of work, and employees are choosing which path that they want to go on.”

These workplace trends suggest the suburbs and exurbs are the future. Nearly two-thirds of US millennials prefer this kind of location, which is historically tied to single family ownership. Where millennials go has implications for birthrates, which have fallen as housing prices have risen. Families overwhelmingly favor less dense housing and frequently decide to have children once they buy a house. A recent National Bureau of Economic Research study draws this conclusion, seeing a 10 percent increase in home prices leads to a one percent decrease in births among non-homeowners in an average metropolitan area. In China’s Yangtze River Delta (Hangzhou-Shanghai-Nanjing), research shows that fertility rates decline materially as house prices increase, with a similar finding regarding rents.

The prevalence of singledom and the culture of childlessness are often portrayed as matters of choice or even superior environmental enlightenment. But in America, at least, attitudes about family are not significantly different from prior generations, albeit with a greater emphasis on gender equality and later births. Among childless American women aged 40–44, barely six percent are “voluntarily childless.” The vast majority of millennials want to get married and have children.

High prices and density are poison to fecundity. Cities with the most expensive housing and the most density are becoming childless demographic graveyards. Rich Asian cities like Hong Kong, Taipei, Beijing, Shanghai, and Seoul suffer fertility rates often barely half of replacement. This also applies in the West in high-cost cities such as New York, Paris, London, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. In Manhattan, the ultimate high-cost elite urban core, the majority of households are not only childless, but nearly half are single, according to the latest American Community Survey (US Census Bureau) data.

Ultimately, as housing challenges reduce birthrates, we will likely face economic stagnation. In the United States, workforce growth has slowed to about one-third of the level in 1970 and seems destined to fall even more. These figures are even more catastrophic in very low-fertility countries like Japan, Germany, and most importantly, China. China’s working-age population (those between 15 and 64 years old) peaked in 2011 and is now projected to drop 23 percent by 2050, with 60 million fewer people under the age of 15—a loss approximately the size of Italy’s total population. The ratio of retirees to working people is expected to have more than tripled by then, which would be one of the most rapid demographic shifts in history. By 2100, reports the South China Morning Post, the country’s population could be halved.

Perhaps even more critical may be the political and social impacts of unaffordable housing. From its earliest days, democracy depended on a class of small property owners, whether in Greece or Rome, or modern Britain, America, Canada, and Australia. The earliest democracies in Athens and Rome rested on an assertive property-owning middle class. Aristotle warned about the dangers of an oligarchy that would control both the economy and the state; in fact, an ever-greater consolidation of wealth played a role in undermining Greek democracy and the citizen-

led Roman Republic. By the end of the Republic, over 75 percent of all property was owned by roughly three percent of the population, while over four-fifths owned no property at all.

Self-government resurfaced largely where a property-owning middle class emerged to challenge the feudal order—first in Italy and the Low Countries, and later across western and northern Europe, and then in the “new worlds” of North America and Oceania. The idea of dispersed ownership was sharply opposed by aristocracies and later by communist planners who saw the appeal of owning for the masses but preferred to impose “a concrete spatial agenda for Marxism” in small apartments densely built near public transit, with close proximity to the workplace.

These objections to suburbs and homeownership have been picked up by density advocates from the tech-funded YIMBY movement in California. Home ownership, according to progressive mouthpiece *Vox*, “could be turning you into a bad person,” by making you concerned about living near slums and drug dealers. According to a Minnesota City Council Member, those who talk of “neighborhood character” and “historic preservation” may be “participating in structural white supremacy.”

Until recently, such collectivist views were unpopular across the political spectrum. The ideal of broadly dispersed property ownership was promoted by politicians on both the Right and Left in most high-income countries. “A nation of homeowners, of people who own a real share in their land, is unconquerable,” said President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He saw homeownership as critical not only to the economy but to democracy and the very idea of self-government.

Today, this faith in self-determination and the democratization of land ownership is being reversed, despite the wishes of the great majority in the United States, Europe, Australia, and Canada. We can either work to expand our communities, preferably in more sustainable ways, or we can accept that future generations will be ever-more dependent on subsidies or affordable unit set-asides.

An economy where most people, blocked from ownership, rely upon wealth transfers from the lucky few cannot easily coexist with a tradition of individual initiative and self-governance. Addressing the housing crisis is not only about homes and hearth but may determine the nature of our society for decades to come.

Joel Kotkin is the presidential fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University. Wendell Cox is principal of Demographia, a St. Louis MO-IL consulting firm. This article first appeared in the Hoover Institution Daily Update of April 22, 2022. It was sourced from the Quillette Newsletter.



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