

STATE HEARS PUBLIC ON BEALE LAND USE

By Daniel Witter
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Small knots of people gazed between paper handouts and four maps showing the Yuba-Sutter area with Beale Air Force Base at its center.

The maps were coded with a number and letter signifying a potential land-compatibility issue between the base and the surrounding area.

"These are things we may consider (as a land-use issue)," said Rick Rust of The Matrix Group to the assembled citizens during a meeting Monday night to help the public learn more about the Beale Joint Land Use Study. "We're not making a decision if they are good or bad."

Rust is a consultant who is assisting the Governor's Office of Planning and Research with the study.

The study's purpose is to identify potential land-use conflicts between military and civilian jurisdictions, and recommend policies for the different entities to resolve the issues.

The purpose of Monday's meeting, held in the Yuba County Board of Supervisors chambers in Marysville, was to take public input on potential land-use issues not already raised by the study.

But there appeared to be some confusion by the public on what they were supposed to do.

The issues already highlighted in the handouts and displayed on the map did not provide context of why they are considered to be land-compatibility problems to begin with, said John Murphy.

Murphy is a consultant hired by Yuba Highlands developer Gary Gallelli, who wants to build 5,100 homes and an accompanying business park on 2,900 acres northeast of the base.

"Some of them are not issues," Murphy said. He asked which experts were assisting the committees to help the two committees identify real issues.

He also called the study to date "incomplete."

Rust responded that the Beale study's advisory and technical committees are just identifying potential issues at this stage. Rust agreed that not all of the issues raised to date will be addressed in the final report, which will be released in June.

Gallelli expressed unhappiness with the way the committees are conducting the study, pointing out that his development has been singled out as a potential problem to the base, when he said it is not, he said.

He believes his development will enhance Beale's future and is counting on base personnel to be among his customers. He and Murphy supplied documents supporting their statements for state officials to keep.

A draft form of the study will be released in March and will have a 30-day comment period, followed by another public hearing in April, which has not been set. A final draft of the study will be released in June.