



MARIN COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

August 16, 2004

Marin County Planning Commission
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: Summary of Initial Countywide Plan Recommendations and Unresolved Issues

DISCUSSION:

The Planning Commission has completed over twenty public hearings on the draft Countywide Plan in order to assist in further defining the “project description” for environmental review purposes. The following is a brief summary of several key changes recommended by the Planning Commission including a few unresolved issues.

INTRODUCTORY SECTION

Initial Commission Direction #1: Clarify the definition of sustainability and improve how it links together the various components of the Plan.

Response: A clearer definition of the term ‘sustainability’ will draw upon the excellent presentations and input that have been provided linkages with the various components of the Plan will be improved. Staff continues to also recommend that the three E’s icon (environment, economy and equity) be retained in order to address the diverse interests of the community, but agrees that it needs to better correlated with the text, including the “Why Is It Important?” sections.

Initial Commission Direction #2: Improve the Organization of the Plan.

Response: The Planning Commission recommended several ways to improve the readability and organization of the Plan including moving information critical to understanding the framework of the Plan to the Introductory Section and a variety of revisions to the maps and graphics. A discussion also occurred regarding what really is a natural system and whether agriculture and mineral resources should be included in that element. While there was agreement for the time being to retain all of the existing topics and simply rename the element “Resource Management”, after careful consultation staff now recommends renaming the element “Natural and Agricultural Systems”. This would recognize both the distinction and similarities among biological, geo-physical and agricultural systems. Toward that end, staff also recommends that Mineral Resources be moved to the Built Environment in light of its construction related function.

NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS ELEMENT

Initial Commission Direction #3 (Biology):

- a. Include the Baylands Corridor, but before determining the precise boundary north of San Rafael, have the EIR assesses three options, i.e. locating the corridor based on revised information from the San Francisco Estuary Institute, extending the line in several locations to Highway 101, or continuing to use the existing Bayfront Conservation Zone railroad tracks boundary. Also revise the criteria to be consistent throughout the County.
- b. Address the cumulative impacts of development projects on biology, particularly wetlands and habitats. Ensure adequate monitoring and minimum mitigation ratios. Add setbacks for wetlands and clarify how setbacks apply for both Streamside Conservation Areas and wetlands if the lot size is less than .5 acre, or between .5 – 2 acres.
- c. Acknowledge (and apply to proposed regulations) that additional biological impacts of small, already developed lots tend to occur more at their interface with sensitive habitats rather than within existing, fenced yards.

Response: Staff will return with revised corridor boundaries and modified text based on the Commissions initial direction and pending environmental impact analysis.

Initial Commission Direction #4 (Agriculture):

- a. Collection, treatment and reuse of water may be considered along with small-scale, sustainable water development to provide for limited agricultural diversification -as long as it doesn't degrade environmental resources .
- b. Support both organic and/or locally grown agriculture.
- c. Revise draft language limiting the amount of residential and non-agricultural building on agriculturally zoned properties.
- d. Clarify that the recently adopted development code revisions pertaining to agriculture (such as the clustering of non-agricultural buildings) are also carried forward in the Plan.

Response: How best to address nonagricultural building remains unresolved. Staff continues to recommend limiting residential building size in agricultural areas and will attempt to address your Commission's concerns.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT

Initial Commission Direction #5 (Community Development.)

- a. Reword policies to control growth instead of automatically providing services for new development.
- b. Exclude affordable housing from the requirement to pay for the full cost of all services.
- c. Complete a study to determine fair share costs.

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction #6 (Green Building & Energy.)

- a. The green building section will be expanded and certification will be required for new, large residential and non-residential development.
- b. Study whether to require existing residential and non-residential uses to retrofit or use green building techniques during remodeling.

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction #7 (Environmental Hazards.)

- a. Add new programs to promote neighborhood-based disaster planning and preparation.
- b. Add additional fire protection policies and programs including a new wildland fire interface ordinance along with coordination among MMWD, P.G. & E and the County for weed clearance .

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction # 8 (Housing)

- a. Clarify that the existing, state certified Housing Element is incorporated into the Plan.
- b. Add language to another section of the Plan regarding the opportunities for redevelopment and community land trusts to provide affordable housing.

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction # 9 (Transportation)

- a. Add a new scenic roadway program.
- b. Strengthen language requiring that new development must concurrently install transit improvements.
- c. Add rent-a-bike and a borrow-a-bike programs.
- d. Address ongoing Southern Marin visitor transportation planning efforts.
- e. Address use of school and shuttle buses for children, seniors and others.

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction # 10 (Public Facilities)

- a. Clarify and expand text regarding septic and well regulations.
- b. Expand water resource section.

Response: Staff will return with amended language.

Initial Commission Direction # 11 (Planning Areas)

- a. PA#1. Clarify that Baylands Corridor parcels will calculate density at the low-end of the density range. Uses around airport should be airport industry related and the existing mini-storage.
- b. PA#2. Marinwood center should be neighborhood serving and Oakview should include residential only, not office. Add text describing allowable uses if Industrial, Light and Magic’s approved 650,000 sq.ft. expansion off Lucas Road is not developed. Clarify allowable St. Vincent’s/Silvera land uses as it pertains to permitting a primarily affordable senior care facility like “The Redwoods”.
- c. PA#3. Require best management practices at the quarry to address impacts to the neighborhood from the existing use.
- d. PA#4. Add a new policy promoting senior housing on the publicly owned parcel at the Old Ross Hospital site.
- e. PA#5. Summarize the San Quentin Vision Plan but include the background, constraints, goals and land use diagram. Refer to the entire Vision Plan as a reference document and do not include in the appendix.
- f. PA#6. Address Strawberry Center, Marin City Center, LAFCO and Richardson Bay studies, and Southern Marin transportation plan efforts. Recognize Tam Junction as a gateway to Marin County and encourage its redevelopment.

Response: Staff continues to recommend that the entire San Quentin Vision Plan be included in the Appendix.

SOCIOECONOMIC ELEMENT

Initial Commission Direction #12

- a. Economy Clarify that 89% of Marin employers are small businesses with less than 10 employees. Encourage support of locally owned businesses and streamlining the processing of minor projects.
- b. Childcare. Expedite large family daycare permitting processes.
- c. Public Health. Add text regarding second-hand smoke, tobacco use, alcohol use, the need for prenatal care and the health and prescription needs of seniors.
- d. Arts and Culture. Expand to capture Marin’s remarkable arts and culture scene.

What’s Next?

While this summary does not represent an exhaustive list of the recommended revisions, it is intended to focus the discussion at this time. A summary of Commission recommendations will be presented at a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission scheduled for Tuesday, September 28th from 4:00 – 6:30 PM.

Staff will further edit the Plan for environmental review purposes and then return to the Planning Commission with the changes in a strike-thru and underline format as well as the draft

environmental impact report. At that time, the Plan will be reviewed again by the Planning Commission and the public prior to forwarding your recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for their final decision in 2005.

Respectfully Submitted,

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