

SECTION 6: POTENTIAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITES

6.1 Possible Future County Facility Needs

OVERVIEW

The Facilities Master Plan completed by Gensler in April 2002 identified significant overcrowding in the Hall of Justice and Administration Buildings. In addition, the Administration and Hall of Justice Buildings have significant security and public safety issues that are difficult to address without severely impacting the historic structures' architectural character. Other public agencies have also identified facility needs on the Civic Center campus.

This section outlines the possible future facility needs of the County and provides site selection guidelines for possible future development at the Civic Center that will help to reduce adverse environmental effects.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The County has identified a need for additional and updated facilities to house their public safety departments. In concept, a new Public Safety Building could house some combination of the following departments and programs:

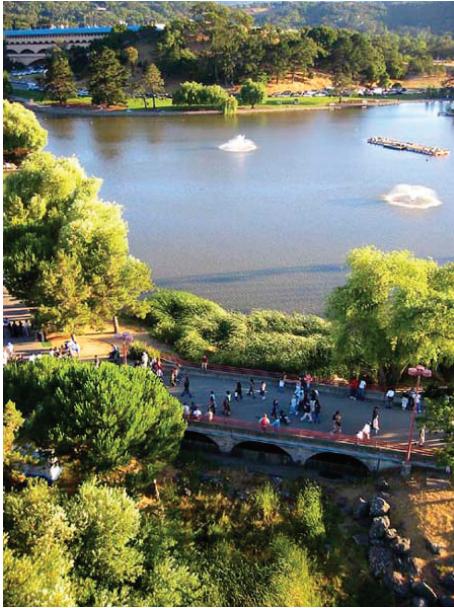
- Office of Emergency Services
- 911 Dispatch/Emergency Operations Center
- Communications Prime Site
- Multi-Purpose Meeting Rooms
- Information Services Data Center
- Coroner's Office
- Marin County Fire Dispatch and Administration
- Childcare Facility

The County hired Beverly Prior Architects in late 2005 to conduct a feasibility study for a new public safety facility. Further program details will be addressed in that study.

SONOMA MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT (SMART)

As described previously in Section 3.3 of this document, the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) project plans to provide passenger train service to Sonoma and Marin County residents along the Northwestern Pacific (NWP) rail corridor that lies next to Highway 101. A transit station is proposed at the northwest corner of the Civic Center campus between Highway 101 and Civic Center Drive.

The Civic Center station design parameters were outlined by Community Design + Architecture (CD + A) in a May 21, 2004 memorandum to the SMART Board of Directors. The current plan



Marin County Fair 2003 -- photo by C. Benton

confines auto access to the station from Civic Center Drive. Although revised ridership estimates are not yet available, the memo states that “the station is forecast to have a limited need for park and ride capacity, with initial ridership numbers predicting a demand for just over 60 spaces.” The concept plan dated May 13, 2004 shows 130 parking stalls which represents the “maximum site potential for park-and-ride use.” Initial reports indicate that the station’s impact on the site in this regard will be minimal if any. The parking study included in this document, section 3.3, gives further analysis on the SMART station’s potential parking and traffic impacts to the Civic Center site.

It should also be noted that visual impacts of the proposed station “will likely be minimal as the station is well below the grade of the freeway” and includes “no vertical features” aside from some landscaping. The proposed station will not adversely impact views to or from the Administration Building and Hall of Justice.

MARIN CENTER RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP

The Marin Center Renaissance Partnership is a public and private partnership formed in 2000 to complete the vision of creating a cultural center complex on the Marin Center site. When complete, the Marin Cultural Center Complex will host social gatherings, cultural and performing events, and commercial activities. The master planning process led by consultants Mark Cavagnero Associates and Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey is now underway for the project. The following program elements are under consideration for the complex:

- County Library
- Conference Center & Meeting Rooms
- New or Improved Exhibit Hall
- Veteran’s Memorial Auditorium Renovations
- Outdoor Amphitheater
- Farmer’s Market Location and Improvements
- New or Improved Mid-Size Theater
- Restaurant

A preferred alternative was chosen by the Renaissance Partnership’s Steering Committee and presented to the Marin County Board of Supervisors in January 2004. The Board approved the broad concept for the master plan, and have now sent it back to the Steering Committee for phasing and financial feasibility analyses.

STATE COURTS MASTER PLAN

As part of the Judicial Council of California’s Statewide Court Facilities Master Planning Project, Mark Cavagnero Associates was retained to develop a 20-year Court Facilities Master Plan for the Superior Court of California, County of Marin in July 2003. The process was overseen by the County of Marin Court Facilities Master Plan Steering Committee.

Due to the extent of the security upgrades needed within the Administration Building and the Hall of Justice, and the extent of

public review needed to implement those upgrades, the steering committee decided that a new courthouse on the Civic Center campus should be constructed.

The Court Facilities Master Plan Steering Committee, working with County staff, identified the site of the existing General Services Building, located between Highway 101 and Peter Behr Drive, as the preferred location for a new courthouse facility. A new building on this site would require extensive public review and voter approval.

6.2 Overview of Site Analysis Report for Civic Center Expansion

REPORT OVERVIEW AND SYNOPSIS

In March 2003 Heller Manus Architects provided the County of Marin with comprehensive analysis of five potential development sites originally identified in the April 2002 Facilities Master Plan by Gensler. This site analysis report was to assist the County in site selection for future development on the Civic Center campus based on the physical limitations of possible sites such as "buildable area versus new and displaced parking, proximity to the main building and sensitivity toward Frank Lloyd Wright's master plan."

The five sites originally identified by Gensler are identified in the Future Development Sites diagram as follows:

- Site 1 - Civic Center Parking "Pit"
- Site 2 - Temporary Dog Park
- Site 3 - East Parking Lot and Armory
- Site 4 - Overflow Parking Lot
- Site 5 - North San Pedro Road

Of these five sites, Heller Manus suggests that sites 2 and 3 would be better suited for future development. The report states that the sites are "currently under-utilized with a more generous size" than the alternative sites and that a new government facility would be easier to accommodate at a lower cost and with greater efficiency on sites 2 and 3. In addition, the report suggests that these sites offer the County "the opportunity to create a pedestrian-oriented government services center along Civic Center Drive." Therefore development on sites 2 and/or 3 would help to improve vehicular and pedestrian connections along Civic Center Drive north to the Marin Center, which is the site of the County fairgrounds.

Heller Manus surmised that sites 1, 4 and 5 would require the addition of a multi-story parking structure in order to accommodate parking needs of existing programs as well as new ones making these sites less desirable for cost reasons. In addition, sites 1 and 4 would require ballot initiative voter approval to construct any structure over 250 square feet. The report recommends that site 1 remain in its current use as surface parking. It recommends that



Temporary Dog Park



East Parking Lot



Overflow Parking Lot

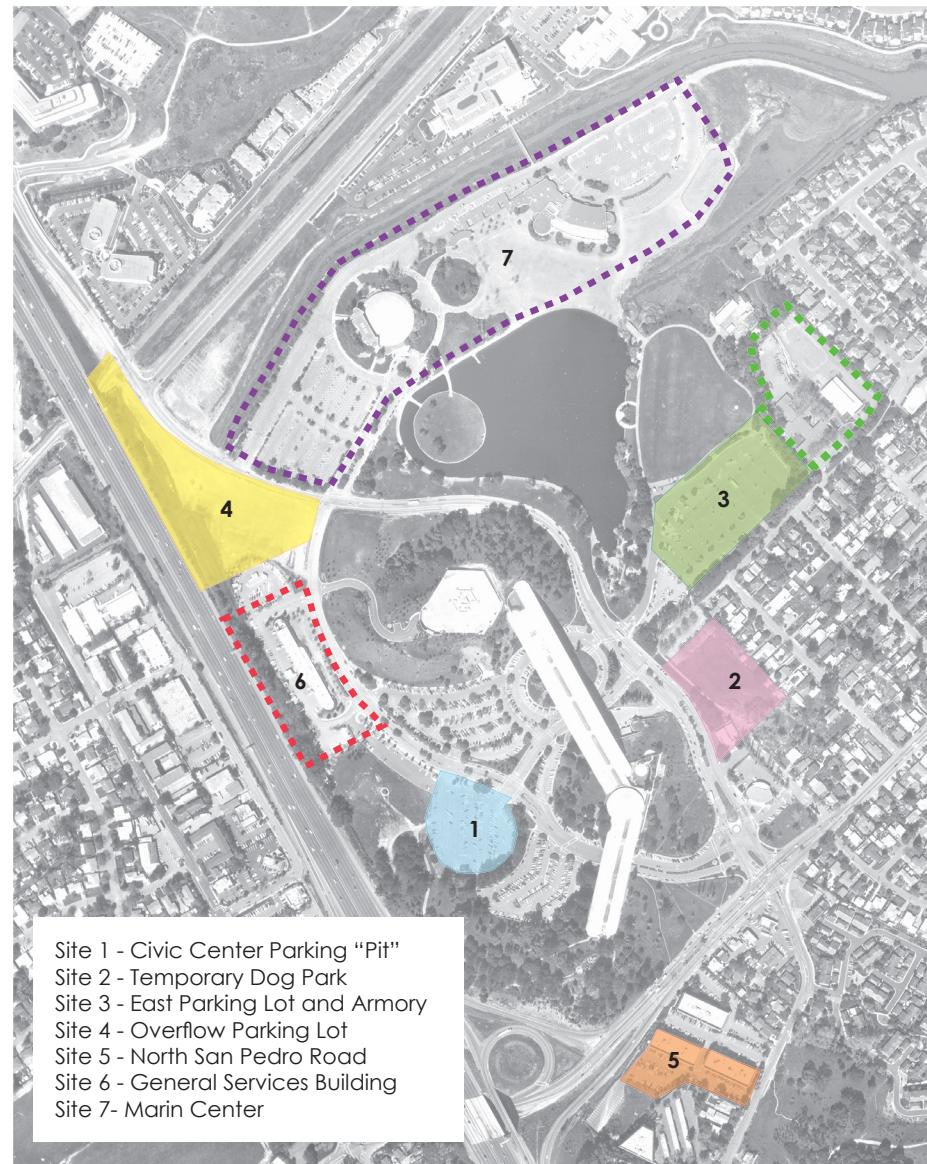
site 4 be studied for future building development as an alternate location for sites 2 and 3. Site 5 is recommended to remain in its current use.

6.3 Additional Analysis and Site Selection Criteria

TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES

As described in section 3.3, Site Circulation and Parking Capacity, and the Appendices, there are two potential traffic and parking impacts associated with future development on the site. The intersection of Civic Center Drive at Peter Behr Road will operate unacceptably with the development of the Marin Center project and the public safety building. The traffic consultant has suggested that the eastbound approach to Civic Center Drive

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITES



on Peter Behr Drive be restriped to include a separate left-turn lane and a through/right-turn lane. The intersection should be signalized with the construction of a new Courts facility on the General Services Building site.

In addition, the parking supply on the campus is inadequate for simultaneous events at all facilities; it is recommended that the County coordinate events appropriately to ensure that the parking supply is not exceeded.

Neither issue outlined above greatly impacts future development on the site, nor does it suggest that one site is more appropriate for development than another.

VISUAL IMPACTS

It is recommended that care be taken to protect view corridors on the Civic Center site. The campus has a strong cultural history and significant natural setting that is central to its identity. New development must be sensitive to protecting the historic heritage and natural beauty of the site from every possible angle.

A multi-story structure on Site 3 could partially impede views from portions of the Marin Center site to the main Civic Center buildings. It could also impact views from the Administration Building and Hall of Justice north and east toward the lagoon and bay. It appears that a structure on Site 3 would have fewer visual impacts on the site, but would be further removed from the other Civic Center structures. Frank Lloyd Wright was a strong proponent of clustering buildings on the campus in order to maximize efficiency and preserve open spaces. The County must weigh these potentially competing concerns carefully when choosing a site for development.

UTILITIES

The existing utilities capacities for the Civic Center campus, including electric power, natural gas, water, telecommunications, and sewer services, must be studied in detail prior to any new development on the site. Because of the possible costs involved, further study is recommended to ascertain which, if any, utilities would need to be upgraded, replaced or re-routed based on possible development.

Initial consultation with the Las Gallinas Sanitary District indicates that the Civic Center has adequate sanitary sewer capacity for a new public safety building. Regarding telecommunications, the County's Information Services and Technology department has requested that all new development projects include the installation of additional telecommunications facilities any time there is an opportunity to do so. More specifically, it is recommended that conduit be installed between all new buildings for data and voice telecommunications where feasible, and that redundancy in systems and networks be built-in. Any new development must also ensure that UPS (Uninterruptable Power Service) and back-up generators are in place and adequately maintained.

The Marin Municipal Water District has indicated that the County is currently exceeding its water entitlements, which means that water service will need to be addressed with the District for any new development project on the Civic Center campus. The District has suggested that redistributing current entitlements may be of benefit to the County. In addition, Pacific Gas & Electric Company has indicated that natural gas and electricity capacity on the site can be increased as necessary for new development.

MARIN CENTER

The County has indicated that additional cultural facilities would best be located at Marin Center to create a cohesive cultural complex for the County of Marin.

6.4 General Recommendations

The 2002 Facilities Master Plan Report and the 2003 Site Analysis Report for Civic Center Expansion provide analysis and recommendations for future development and expansion on the Civic Center site. These serve as a baseline analysis for future development but require further study as future building needs are identified.

As detailed program information for future buildings is developed, plans and program should be evaluated for impacts to traffic, parking, views, utilities and historic character. Without detailed program information, it is difficult to determine the suitability of specific uses for specific sites. It should be noted that sites selected for specific projects will be subject to environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Site 1, the Civic Center parking “pit,” while having inherent drawbacks to development as identified in the Site Analysis Report for Civic Center Expansion, is recommended to be further evaluated for future building use. Issues such as views, access, cost, arrival and voter approval would need to be addressed in the design of the structure. A low building tucked into the hillside at the southern part of the site would probably not significantly impact views from Highway 101 to the Civic Center.

Site 2, the temporary dog park, is currently actively used by the public. Relocation of the temporary dog park and petanque court and the proximity of the site to adjacent neighborhoods may generate significant public comment and will require a public process. However, the McInnis Park Master Plan Revision, approved by the Board of Supervisors in October 2001, provides for a permanent dog park located “between the creek pathway and the soccer fields.” Relocating the temporary dog park to McInnis Park is a viable option for the County that could make Site 2 available for other purposes. The location, flat terrain, opportunities for outdoor space, ease of construction, adjacent open areas and lack of requirement for ballot approval make Site 2

desirable for future building development. It is recommended that this site remain in consideration for future building use.

Site 3, the east parking lot and the Armory, has many of the advantages of Site 2. The Armory is under a long term lease through 2059 and is unlikely to be developed in the near future. It does, however, have many advantages as a building site and should be evaluated for future development. Any buildings located in the east parking lot should consider how future development of the Armory site would integrate with their design. Locating a building on the west side of the parking lot would allow continued use of the rear parking area for the park and Marin Center complex. It could be designed as part of a building complex associated with a new building on Site 2 and provides an opportunity for integration with the Civic Center. Locating a building on the east side of the parking lot allows it to be more isolated from the character of the Civic Center and can be integrated as part of a future complex with the Armory. It is recommended that this site remain in consideration for future building use.

Site 4, the Overflow Parking lot, is used seasonally for Christmas tree sales, but is otherwise used as an overflow parking lot. The site has high visibility from highway 101. A building on the site could significantly impact views to Marin Center and requires voter approval. A portion of the site is also being considered by the Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit program for a transit station and parking area. The site is currently underutilized and could be designed sensitively to accommodate future needs while addressing the visual impacts of development. Uses such as parking, farmers' market and multi-purpose open space should remain in consideration. In addition, should development needs require additional building space, site 4 should be further evaluated for its building potential. It is recommended that this site remain in consideration for future development.

Site 5, North San Pedro Road, is outside the limits of this report.

Site 6, the site of the existing General Services Building, is being considered for development of a courts building as described in the *Court Facilities Master Plan*, July 2003. Although not identified in earlier studies for possible redevelopment, it is an important site as it has significant visual impacts both from the freeway to the Civic Center and from the Civic Center to the surrounding areas. As this process proceeds, it is critical that the design for any building follow strict design guidelines for the campus.

Development of site 7, the Marin Center, is described in detail in section 6.1. The County is committed to the vision of Frank Lloyd Wright in creating a cohesive civic and cultural campus. As such, the Marin Center is a critical to the achievement of this goal.