



M A R I N C O U N T Y
S U P E R V I S O R
K A T E S E A R S

The question of the moment is: Why isn't the Marin County Board of Supervisors putting removal of Strawberry from the PDA on its agenda right now?

The answer is:

- **the PDA designation does not change the zoning of any property and**
- **there is no deadline for action.**

It's worth taking the time to carefully examine what PDAs offer to our transit-connected communities before deciding next steps. We have time to consider how best to proceed based on shared information and a broader community discussion.

Priority Development Areas (PDAs): What they are and what they mean for transportation funding.

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are part of a regional plan to accommodate future expected population growth (known as Plan Bay Area) that is being administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and to a lesser extent the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The regional planning agencies have taken the lead role in community engagement for Plan Bay Area. In the last six months alone, there were five public meetings regarding Plan Bay Area in Marin County. Most of these meetings were well publicized, well attended and broadly covered in the press. On July 18, ABAG and MTC voted to approve Plan Bay Area. Plan Bay Area will be up for renewal and possible revision in 4 years.

A PDA designation does not change the zoning of any property. Similarly, if the PDA were to be removed, the existing zoning and development potential on mixed use sites in Strawberry and the Golden Gate Baptist Seminary property would not change.

The County's PDA designation does make the area designated as a PDA eligible for federal transportation dollars. **Communities along the 101 transportation corridor with a PDA designation have the ability to apply for 50 % more available funding**, creating greater opportunities to achieve safer walkable, bikeable communities with more transit options and less dependence on automobiles. Communities with higher walk/bike/transit scores are increasingly sought after as more desirable places to live.

As I explained at the recent Board of Supervisors meeting which considered the PDA designations for Marinwood and Tam Valley, this funding issue has particular implications for the Strawberry community and plans to improve the Tiburon Boulevard/East Blithedale/101 interchange to ease traffic congestion and enhance bike and pedestrian access, as well as the need to solve bike/ped gaps and improve infrastructure near Strawberry Point school. Without full access to transportation dollars, it is hard to see how these projects could be pursued.

During the two years that I have been on the Board of Supervisors, we have provided comments to ABAG questioning the growth projections in the Plan Bay Area and its prior iterations. And the Board has been assertive in expressing its commitment to retaining local control over future land use decisions. For that reason, the County does not expect to change its general plan and zoning ordinance simply to achieve consistency with the growth projections in the Plan Bay Area. In fact, at the July 18 meeting of ABAG and MTC the plan was revised to specifically state: "Adoption of Plan Bay Area does not mandate any changes to local zoning, general plans, or project review. The region's cities, towns, and counties will maintain control of all decisions to adopt plans and permit or deny development projects."

This means that existing single-family residential neighborhoods located within the boundary of the Urbanized 101 Corridor PDA (within 1/2 mile of Highway 101) will remain single-family residential under the County's existing zoning rules. And any new development proposal will continue to be subject to review and scrutiny by the Strawberry Design Review Board, the County Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.

There is absolutely no plan to rezone traditional single-family neighborhoods to higher density attached housing. In fact, one of the principal strategies of both the Countywide Plan and the Housing Element is to focus most of the relatively small amount of growth Marin is expected to experience in the foreseeable future to mixed use sites and sites with remaining development potential that are already zoned for attached housing. This approach is intended to help preserve not only agricultural and open space lands, but also our existing single-family neighborhoods.

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