

MARIN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES
March 15, 2004
Marin County Civic Center, Room #328 - San Rafael, California

Commissioners Present: Allan Berland, Chairman
Steve Thompson, Vice
Hank Barner
Don Dickenson
Wade Holland
Jo Julin

Commissioners Absent: Ray Buddie

Staff Present: Alex Hinds, Agency Director
Michele Rodriguez, Principal Planner
Dan Dawson, Senior Planner
Alexandra Morales, Planning Commission Secretary

Minutes Approved on: **MAY 24, 2004**

Convened at 5:10 p.m.
Adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

1. MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN UPDATE – THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT

Public workshop focusing on the on the Built Environment Element.

Alex Hinds, Agency Director, noted that this was the last Planning Commission public workshop on the Draft Countywide Plan, but noted that a joint Board of Supervisors/Planning Commission workshop was scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2004. He then proceeded to summarize the key trends and issues of the Community Facilities section, as well as the Plan's strategies. Although no Planning Commission decisions were made or direction provided as part of the workshop, Commissioners expressed individual comments and concerns.

Commissioner Dickenson:

- Map 3-18 – Check the accuracy of the entrance to Shoreline Highway portion of the sphere of influence map.
- Map 3-19 – The Strawberry and Marin City communities should not be part of City Urban Service Areas (USA) because they have their own service providers, nor should they be included within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) based on LAFCO's new definition under State law.
- Map 3-21 – Same as Map 3-19 for the Tam Valley and Almonte communities. Also, the map should differentiate between private and public schools.
- Map 3-23 – Kentfield should be outside the SOI. Also, explain the rationale for having the existing death row section of San Quentin partially in and partially out of the Larkspur's SOI.
- Map 3-24 – St. Vincent's/Silveira property is shown within the City of San Rafael's USA, but the City has requested that it be removed entirely by LAFCO. Also, how should Marinwood and Lucas Valley be in San Rafael's SOI when it is highly unlikely that they will be annexed to the City of San Rafael because of their location and the fact that they are established communities with service providers. Explain why Santa Venetia would not be anticipated to be annexed to the City of San Rafael.
- Map 3-26 – Since access to Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery in San Anselmo is through the City of San Rafael, it should be shown within the City of San Rafael's SOI. Also, six schools are shown on the map in the Sun Valley area, but there is only one (Sun Valley School).
- Map 3-28 – Review for consistency with the Urban Growth Boundary approved by the voters of Novato.
- Language should reflect issues regarding continued availability of water supplies.
- Page 3-182, CF-1.a – Implementation of this program would not result in the development of below market rate units since it requires that all new development pay its fair share contribution for public services and anything other than very expensive housing does not.
- Page 3-182, CF-2.1 – Explain the intent and whether it is per capita or total.
- Page 3-189, CF-5.a – Explain the intent.
- Correct footers.

Commissioner Holland:

- Page 3-189, CF-5.a and CF-5.d – Replace the term "proponent" with "applicant".
- Page 3-189, CF-5.b – Rewrite the section with "structure number" to make sense.
- Page 3-190, third benchmark – Verify the accuracy of amount of waste generated in 2000.

Commissioner Barner:

- Page 3-190, third benchmark – Differentiate between county generated vs. imported waste.
- Page 3-181, Figure 3-39 – Reword title and add time frame.
- Page 3-184, CF-2.j – More emphasis should be given on the use of cisterns for irrigation purposes, i.e. for grazing, golf courses.
- Page 3-185, CF-3.3 – Emphasize the need to investigate alternative solid waste sites.
- Page 3-194 – Language should reflect that the first phase of the Buck Center was completed in 1999, but that there are two remaining phases which have not begun.

Commissioner Thompson:

- Page 3-183, CF-2.b – Encouraging irrigation alternative systems is a good concept.
- Page 1-185, CF-3.3 – Solid waste should be seriously considered.

Members of the audience were invited to comment.

Eleanor Sluis, Novato resident, expressed concern that the Redwood Landfill facility is becoming a regional landfill. Therefore, she asked the possibility of restricting the landfill to county waste only, thereby extending the lifespan of the facility. Additionally, she noted that it was unknown what seismic impacts the continuous compression of the growing waste piles at the landfill will have.

Agency Director Hinds stated that while Ms. Sluis had a valid concern, prohibition of imported waste could raise legal issues.

Margaret Zegart, Mill Valley resident, made the following comments: 1) Maps 2-11.j and 6-3.4 show Redwood Drive in Muir Woods Park as a public trail, but it is only a paper street so it should be identified as land for acquisition for open space; 2) Page 2-84, OS-2.b should include watersheds; 3) Page 4-51, DIV-1.e should use a better term than “tolerance”; 4) Page 4-50 should discuss subsidy for childcare; 5) Page 3-230 should include the Manzanita entryway project in the list; 6) Map 3-8 should include bays to the list; and 7) the Almonte District Improvement Club should be marked as a community facility.

Alex Hinds, Agency Director, summarized the key trends and issues for the Novato and Las Gallinas planning areas, as well as the Plan’s strategies.

Commissioner Barner:

- Page 3-202, SV-1.2 – Define “passive recreation activities”.
- Page 3-203, SV-2.2 – Language conflicts with current proposal for development of 223 housing units on 5% of the land.
- Page 3-204, SV-2.3 – Not realistic based on Goal SV-2.1.

Commissioner Dickenson:

- Page 3-193 – Verify the fact that population in Novato decreased, but the number of employed residents increased.
- Page 3-194, fifth bullet – Include the Bahia project.
- Page 3-194, Figure 3-41 – Verify demographics figures for accuracy and differentiate cities/towns vs. unincorporated here and on all figures throughout.
- Page 3-195, Commercial/Industrial – Explain what the decrease of commercial/industrial space in the unincorporated area between 1990 and 2000 would be attributed to.
- Page 3-196, PA-1.1 – Specifically identify the agricultural properties remaining in Bel Marin Keys
- Page 3-196, PA-1.2 – FARs for properties within the Baylands Corridor should be at the lower end, rather than the higher end.
- Page 3-196, PA-1.3 – There are 200 acres of the St. Vincent’s/Silveira property that have always been within the Novato Planning area with a designation of 1 unit per 60 acres, but is shown on the plan with a 1 unit per 10 acres designation. Also, clarify whether it should be included within the Novato or the Las Gallinas Planning area.
- Page 3-197, second bullet – Verify the data in key trends.
- Page 3-198, Figure 3-42 – Clarify where the projected additional housing units will be located.
- Page 3-200, last paragraph – clarify whether the property is still 1,230 acres, because 130 acres of tidal marsh east of the railroad along the bay were deeded to the State Lands Commission, plus 7 acres across the creek, and a strip easement, thereby reducing the amount of land owned by St. Vincent’s to 750 acres and the total to about 1100 acres.

- Page 3-202, SV-1.2 – Define “low intensity”.
- Page 3-202, SV-1.4 – Language as written indicates that protection of the flood plain creates a constraint larger than 100 feet.
- Page 3-202, SV-1.5 – Encourage protection of “significant” views across the Silveira property to the bay.
- Page 3-203, SV-2.1 – Discouraging urban development, but allowing a bonus of 100 bonus affordable units is in conflict.
- Page 3-203, SV-2.2 – Comprehensive planning of both properties may not be feasible given the difference in opinion between the two property owners.
- Page 3-204, SV-2.3, second paragraph – Revise to indicate that small-scale uses “could” be appropriate rather than “would” be.
- Page 3-205, SV-2.5 – Strengthen language by replacing the word “Consider”.
- Page 3-205, SV-3.3 – Miller Creek should not be envisioned as a recreational amenity.
- Page 3-207, SV-5.1 –Affordable housing should not be encouraged since no community facilities, public transit, or public services are being encouraged.
- Page 3-207, SV-6.4 – Unrealistic.
- Page 3-207, SV-6.5 – Unrealistic.

Commissioner Berland commented on the discrepancy of projected housing units in the Novato, Las Gallinas, and Ross Valley Planning areas stating that affordable housing should be distributed equitably. In his opinion, rather than increasing commercial space, development should be oriented towards residential units.

Commissioner Holland suggested that the figures in these planning areas indicate that the term “maximum buildout potentials” be replaced with “ultimate buildout projections”. Commissioner Berland found the word “potential” unclear.

Members of the audience were invited to comment on these sections.

Dave Coury, interested citizen, supported more specific sites and programs for affordable housing. Additionally, he stated that in his opinion, commercial development is the source of traffic problems, and, therefore additional commercial space should be converted to residential development.

Karen Nygren, Tiburon resident, stated that should the St. Vincent’s/Silveira property be developed with mix commercial/residential, the Level of Service at the interchanges would not be acceptable. She urged the Commission to write up the Plan that is internally consistent in order to meet Goal TR-1.e.

Barbara Salzman, Marin Audubon Society, made the following comments: 1) APN #125-030-08 should be shown as open space on Map 1-3.a, as well as the property located on the southwest quadrant of Olive Avenue on Map 1.2; 3) Page 3-196, PA-1.2 – the proposed density is excessive given the fact that all these properties, with the exception of the airport area, have significant wetlands; 4) density of the St. Vincent/Silveira property should be decreased to protect existing wetlands.

Agency Director Hinds summarized the key trends and issues for the San Rafael Basin, Upper Ross (Sleepy Hollow/Fairfax), and Lower Ross (Greenbrae Boardwalk/San Quentin) planning areas, as well as the Plan’s strategies.

In response to Commissioner Barner, Agency Director Hinds clarified that the draft Countywide Plan did not specifically reflect comments received at the Planning Commission's workshop on the San Quentin Vision Plan because it was conceptual at this stage.

Commissioner Dickenson:

- Page 3-209, Figure 3-43 – The projected increase of housing units in the unincorporated area appears to be excessive given the remaining developable land.
- Page 3-210, PA-3.2 – The EIR should take into consideration the 350 dwelling units identified in the approved Peacock Gap Neighborhood Plan.
- Page 3-210, PA-3.3 – Language should be strengthened to protect existing fresh water wetlands.
- Page 3-215, PA-5.2 – The multi-family designation of 5 to 45 units per acre is excessive.
- Pages 3-220 and 3-221, Policies SQ-5.1, SQ-5.5, SQ-5.6, SQ-5.7 – All these policies indicate a very high (urban) level of development consistent with the envisioned European community design.
- Policies dealing with impacts, i.e., traffic, are very speculative, as so is the future use of the property.
- The vision for the San Quentin property should not be integrated in the body of the document, but as an appendix. The vision should be carefully analyzed by the EIR.

Chairman Berland and Commissioner Thompson supported retaining the vision statement as is.

Members of the audience were invited to comment on these sections.

Kathy Lawrey, concerned citizen, expressed concern that including the number of units (2,100) envisioned at San Quentin will become a fact that the County will have to live up to.

Ms. Nygren suggested that the San Quentin Vision Plan be included as an appendix since the property is still owned by the State, but questioned the appropriateness of addressing the property since its availability is very questionable. Furthermore, she stated that the subject site could only be considered "intermodal" if a rail system is included. However, it is unknown whether a rail system will be supported by the voters. Therefore, the area would become a hub for Sonoma residents commuting to San Francisco or the East Bay.

Ms. Zegart stated that the San Quentin property could become something other than a residential community, i.e., a museum.

Randy Greenberg, Robert Rogers, and Ms. Salzman cautioned against including the level of specificity regarding San Quentin in the Countywide Plan without environmental review. Ms. Salzman noted Map 3.1 stating that the designation of 4-7 units per acre on the areas both north and south of Beach Road was not appropriate. With regards to Map 5.3, she suggested that the area along Lucky Drive be designated as part of the Baylands Corridor.

Commissioner Dickenson noted Page 3-222, SQ-6.5 stating that this policy may be in conflict with the Natural Systems Element's intent to discourage further development of marinas.

Agency Director Hinds summarized the key trends and issues for the Richardson Bay and West Marin planning areas, as well as the Plan's strategies.

Commissioner Dickenson:

- Page 3-232, Figure 3-46 – Explain where the projected additional units would be located.
- Page 3-233, Goal PA-6 – Reference added residential mixed use, i.e., Marin City and Strawberry Shopping Center.
- Page 3-235, Figure 3-47 – Review for completeness.

Commissioner Holland:

- Figures should be renamed as “Tables”
- Page 3-232, Figure 3-46 – Differentiate between Cities and Towns and the unincorporated areas. Check accuracy of numbers and change title.
- Provide at least one map of villages in West Marin.

Commissioner Barner suggested staff look at ways to revitalize the Marin City Shopping Center.

Commissioner Berland noted that the projected growth for West Marin is 50% and asked where the locations were and whether they were legal buildable lots. He noted that the name of “Cowgirl Creamery” should be corrected.

Members of the audience were invited to comment on any other sections of the Plan.

Ms. Zegart expressed concern that the Richardson Bay area was designated as a high density residential area. She also asked that a restriction on second units on hillside areas be explored.

Ms. Nygren made the following comments on the Transportation section.

- Page 3-139, Figure 3-22 – Use current information.
- Page 3-142, first bullet – Include vans and taxis, and add language reflecting other alternatives being considered by the Congestion Management Agency (CMA)
- Page 3-143, second bullet – Add language reflecting that a bicycle path is being planned by both SMART, the CMA, and Caltrans to be located along the railroad right of way or parallel to Highway 101 as part of the gap closure.
- Page 3-145, Figure 3-29 – This figure is conflicting with TR-1.e on Page 1-47.
- Page 3-149, TR-1.k – Carefully consider the modeling system to be used (MTC vs. County)
- Map 3-12b – Clarify where the transit hub will be in southern Marin.
- Page 3-152, TR-2.c – Expand wording to reference Marin City in addition to Manzanita.
- Page 3-152, TR-2.f and Page 3-154, TR-3.2.m – Same as Page 3-143.

The Commission adjourned at 9:30 p.m.