



IN COUNTY  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

May 10, 2004

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

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing on the Draft Marin Countywide Plan, *Built Environment* Element

Dear Planning Commission Members:

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Review the administrative record and conduct a public hearing
2. Continue the public hearing to Monday, May 17, 2004, at 1:45 P.M.

**DISCUSSION**

**Introduction**

This meeting is the first public hearing on the draft Marin Countywide Plan, *Built Environment* Element. Today's hearing will begin with a brief overview of the entire Element, followed by a key issues presentation on the *Community Development* section. Subsequent meetings will continue to progress through the document sequentially with up to five hearings tentatively scheduled for the *Built Environment* Element. As with the *Natural Systems* element, staff will request initial Commission direction on individual sections of the Plan at each hearing in order to return with revisions in late Fall.

Staff recommends continuing the public hearing format as conducted during the Natural Systems Element review, as follows:

1. Staff presentation
2. Commission questions
3. Public comment (typically three minutes per speaker, five minutes for groups)
4. Commission comment and tentative direction.

Subject experts have been invited to attend future meetings to answer questions and be available as a resource (see Attachment 1). Peter Banning, Executive Officer, Marin County LAFCO will be at tonight's meeting to answer questions about LAFCO policies and to make a presentation on their recently completed Southern Marin Service Review. Please let staff know if you have additional suggestions. After receiving public comments and completing your review of the entire Element, staff will provide a summary of initial recommendations for your approval. All letters received from the public will be forwarded to you as received, and staff will return in the late Fall with a response to each letter, the draft EIR and a revised Plan. Mineral Resources section was not discussed in *Natural Resources* and staff recommends discussing this item after reviewing the *Built Environment* Element.

## **Overview of Built Environment Element**

The *Built Environment* Element establishes a direct tie between the timing, amount, type, design, and location of development and the traffic, services and infrastructure demands such activity will generate. The topics covered in this portion of the Countywide Plan include:

- Community Development
- Community Design
- Energy and Green Building
- Environmental Hazards
- Housing
- Transportation
- Noise
- Community Facilities
- Planning Areas

Marin's more recent development pattern has resulted in a mostly auto-dependent suburban community with transportation systems focusing primarily on mobility by private automobile. The construction of low-density and expensive single-family houses for residents has been the primary housing-type built. The vision of the future Marin County is one where residents will be able to live closer to work, shopping, education and recreation and have multi-modal options for getting there. In addition, a wider range of housing alternatives will be available to all income ranges. Housing opportunities will include mixed-use villages in downtowns, above parking lots, in commercial areas near transit.

Limited land is available for development and future development should be targeted to key transit and pedestrian friendly areas, and environmentally lands should be avoided. Future commercial development should be required to provide some housing (in lieu fees), energy conservation and green building as a basic component of new development..

## **Overview of Community Development section**

This section of the Plan addresses coordination of planning, service provision, and growth management with local jurisdictions and regional, state, and federal agencies. It includes land use designations and allowable types, densities, and intensities of development in all unincorporated areas of the county. The policies also provide guidance to the cities and towns of Marin. The Plan recognizes cohesive environmental units called corridors, each with specific geographical and environmental characteristics and boundaries. A list of key Community Development issues will be provided to you at the hearing.

### Buildout Projections

Policies in the draft Countywide Plan have been modeled through the County's land use database to determine the net results of policy implementation. The model contains information about residential units, defined as any self-contained dwelling unit such as a house, townhome, or apartment, and non-residential square footage, which includes retail, office, warehouses, hotels and group quarters. The charts below summarize the net impact of proposed policies in the draft Plan by comparing the theoretical buildout with what exists currently and what is theoretically possible under the 1994 Countywide Plan.

Buildout is not assumed to occur in any given year. Rather, it is what would theoretically exist if the maximum development potential under Countywide Plan policies and implementing zoning were realized. While many site constraints have been accounted for, such as environmental sensitivities, topography, and other regulatory limitations, it is not assumed to be a comprehensive application of every potential constraint. As a result, it is a theoretical maximum.

The buildout projections are based on the mid-range of the current or proposed land use designation except for constrained parcels where the low end of the density range (residential) or FAR (non-residential) was used instead. Constrained parcels are those with known wetlands, tidelands, and surface water; within a Stream Conservation Area, the Baylands Corridor, or a Ridge and Upland Greenbelt; or are on a septic system or individual well.

**Table 1: Housing Units**

| Planning Area   | Location           | Acres          | Existing Units | Current Policy Units | 2004 CWP Theoretical Buildout |
|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1   | Novato Environs    | 36,395         | 2,838          | 3,633                | 3,427                         |
| 2   | Las Gallinas       | 20,488         | 4,233          | 5,848                | 5,585                         |
| 3   | Central San Rafael | 2,810          | 641            | 829                  | 1,178                         |
| 4   | Upper Ross Valley  | 5,150          | 1,358          | 1,624                | 1,612                         |
| 5   | Lower Ross Valley  | 3,424          | 2,819          | 3,721                | 3,705                         |
| 6   | Southern Marin     | 5,859          | 9,585          | 11,568               | 11,881                        |
| 7   | West Marin         | 249,129        | 5,812          | 9,794                | 8,761                         |
| <i>Banked Affordable/Employee Units</i>                 |                    |                |                |                      | 868                           |
| <b>Unincorporated Area Total</b>                        |                    | <b>323,255</b> | <b>27,286</b>  | <b>37,017</b>        | <b>37,017</b>                 |
| Incorporated Cities and Towns                           |                    | 48,720         | 77,163         | 83,346               | 83,346                        |
| <b>Countywide Total</b>                                 |                    | <b>371,975</b> | <b>104,449</b> | <b>120,363</b>       | <b>120,363</b>                |
| <b>Change from Existing (Unincorporated Only)</b>       |                    |                |                | <b>9,731</b>         | <b>9,731</b>                  |
| <b>Change from Current Policy (Unincorporated Only)</b> |                    |                |                |                      | <b>0</b>                      |

Table 1 illustrates that while potential housing units have been reduced in some areas, they have increased in others and a bank of affordable/workforce units has been created which results in no net decrease in potential units over current policy. The increase in units in Southern Marin is primarily due to assumptions that housing will be accommodated at both the Marin City and Strawberry Shopping Centers.

**Table 2: Non-Residential Floor Area (sq.ft.)**

| Planning Area   | Location           | Acres          | Existing SQ FT    | Current Policy SQ FT | 2004 CWP Theoretical Buildout |
|---|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1   | Novato Environs    | 36,395         | 309,320           | 1,180,271            | 514,474                       |
| 2   | Las Gallinas       | 20,488         | 245,848           | 1,041,969            | 1,041,969                     |
| 3   | Central San Rafael | 2,810          | 10,977            | 10,977               | 10,977                        |
| 4   | Upper Ross Valley  | 5,150          | 41,364            | 46,817               | 46,817                        |
| 5   | Lower Ross Valley  | 3,424          | 327,393           | 457,094              | 457,094                       |
| 6   | Southern Marin     | 5,859          | 1,076,130         | 1,299,156            | 1,326,785                     |
| 7   | West Marin         | 249,129        | 1,293,735         | 1,446,165            | 1,435,641                     |
| <b>Unincorporated Area Total</b>                        |                    | <b>323,255</b> | <b>3,304,767</b>  | <b>5,482,449</b>     | <b>4,833,757</b>              |
| Incorporated Cities and Towns                           |                    | 48,720         | 31,648,240        | 39,072,019           | 39,072,019                    |
| <b>Countywide Total</b>                                 |                    | <b>371,975</b> | <b>34,953,007</b> | <b>44,554,468</b>    | <b>43,905,776</b>             |
| <b>Change from Existing (Unincorporated Only)</b>       |                    |                |                   | <b>2,177,682</b>     | <b>1,528,990</b>              |
| <b>Change from Current Policy (Unincorporated Only)</b> |                    |                |                   |                      | <b>-648,692</b>               |

As shown in Table 2, a net reduction of over 648,000 square feet of potential commercial development is projected, primarily occurring from significant reductions around Gness Field. This is both from removing development potential from publicly acquired lands as well as applying lower-end floor area ratio allowances to remaining privately-owned parcels. The increase in Southern Marin is attributable to the expansion of Strawberry Shopping Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex Hinds  
Agency Director

Mihele Rodriguez  
Principal Planner

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Attachment 1: Schedule of Subject Experts

**MARIN COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
**PLANNING DIVISION**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Michele Rodriguez, Principal Planner

**RE:** Attendance of staff and subject experts at Countywide Plan hearings (Built Environment)

**DATE:** May 10, 2004

The following County staff and topical experts regarding the Countywide Plan are tentatively scheduled as indicated below:

**Monday, May 10, 2004 - (PC CWP Hearing 5-9 p.m.)**

Continued public hearing and Planning Commission discussion focusing on the *Built Environment Element*.

- Peter Banning, Executive Officer, Marin County LAFCO

**Monday, May 17, 2004 - (PC CWP Hearing 1:45-9 p.m.)**

Continued public hearing and Planning Commission discussion focusing on the *Built Environment Element*.

- Tim Rosenfeld, Energy section consultant
- Sam Ruark, Asst Planner, Green Building
- Scott Alber, Marin County Fire Marshall

**Monday, May 24, 2004 (Optional) - (PC CWP Hearing 5-9 p.m.)**

Continued public hearing and Planning Commission discussion focusing on the *Built Environment Element*.

- Dean Powell, Principal Transportation Planner

**Monday, June 21, 2004 - (PC CWP Hearing 5-9 p.m.)**

- Eric Steger, Senior Civil Engineer

Please let me know if you have additional suggestions.

**PC ATTACHMENT 1**

