



✓ COUNTY
UNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

June 28, 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 Tuesday, July 6, 2004, at 1:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION

Background

This meeting is the fourteenth public hearing on the draft Marin Countywide Plan, and the seventh for the Built Environment Element. At last Monday's meeting, the Planning Commission agreed to several initial changes to the *Noise* section.

Today's hearing will focus on the *Community Facilities* and *Planning Areas* sections of the Built Environment Element. Additionally, staff will report on the action taken regarding the error on the Trails map 2-11a (Gates/Pozzi properties).

Trails Maps Follow Up

Background

The Marin Countywide Plan adopted in 1973 included a policy to develop a system of bicycle, hiking, and riding trails to connect open space, residential areas, and activity centers. The County adopted a Trails Element in 1984 that identified a network of 533.6 linear miles of trails in the County in a series of policy maps. In 1991, 464 linear miles of the trails network were open to the public, including 26 miles of paved pathways.

Trails in Marin are subject to policies established by the various land management agencies in Marin County, such as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, State Parks, the Marin Municipal Water District, and the Marin County Open Space District.

Generally, proposed trails are extensions of existing trails and many provide access to existing publicly owned open space and parks or provide connections between various parks and open space areas. Many of the trails in Marin County were originally constructed by the Marin County Fire Department and serve as fire protection access roads and fire breaks. These fire protection access roads, or fire roads, pass through public and private lands. In the past they were maintained on an ongoing basis by the Fire Department. Some old logging and ranch roads are also important links in the overall trail network.

In cases where proposed trails pass through private property, particularly agricultural land, the potential for land use conflicts between trail users and property owners increases. When trails easements are secured, the County Open Space District staff works with property owners to determine the ultimate trail alignment taking into consideration site-specific characteristics, and in many cases trails are eventually considered to be an amenity.

California Coastal Trail

The California Coastal Conservancy has developed plans for a multi-use coastal trail running the length of California, which travels along Marin County's coastline (Attachment B). California voters mandated the creation of the Coastal Trail by passing Proposition 20 in 1972, which authorized that "a hiking, bicycle, and equestrian trails system shall be established along or near the coast." The passage of the Coastal Act in 1976 required local jurisdictions to identify an alignment for the California Coastal Trail in their Local Coastal Plans. The California Coastal Trail was designated California's Millennium Legacy Trail in 1999 by then Governor Davis and the White House Millennium Council, encouraging federal agencies to assist in developing it. State legislation in 2001 aimed at a focused effort to complete the Coastal Trail. Assembly Concurrent Resolution 20 (Pavley) declares the Coastal Trail an official state trail and urges the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy to work collaboratively to complete it. Senate Bill 908 (Chesbro) charges the Coastal Conservancy, in cooperation with the Coastal Commission and State Parks Department, to submit to the Legislature a plan that describes how the Coastal Trail may be completed by 2008.

A Working Group has been established to assist the State Coastal Conservancy to determine what is needed to complete the Coastal Trail. The result of this effort was a set of maps that accompanied SB 908, which have been reviewed by the Working Group and Coastwalk volunteers for accuracy. Although these maps show a proposed Coastal Trail alignment, according to Coastal Commission staff, the maps are for planning purposes only and are not intended to serve as the official Coastal Trail alignment or route. The purpose of the maps is to illustrate areas of adequate improvements and those areas where barriers to trail development exist, such as private property, topographic, and safety issues. The Coastal Trail Mapping Workgroup is just now beginning the process of larger scale mapping that will be appropriate to serve as a proposed alignment.

Countywide Plan Trails Maps

The existing 1994 Countywide Trails Plan maps did not show the California Coastal Trail, the Bay Area Ridge Trail, and the San Francisco Bay Trail. These trails have been added to the Trails Plan maps because they help to identify key gaps in the Countywide trail system and contribute to an interconnected regional and State trail system. Map D-3 from the 1994 Plan has been updated to show both the existing and proposed segments of the California Coastal Trail, reflecting the alignment shown on the proposed California Coastal Trail Map. This map is now Marin Countywide Trails Plan Map 2-11a in the draft Marin Countywide Plan.

Corrections

In order to address the concerns raised by property owners in West Marin, staff is be taking the following actions:

1. Correcting the Marin Countywide Trails Plan Map 2-11a to show the trails in question as proposed rather than existing;
2. Mailing out an errata notice along with the corrected map to the concerned property owners;
3. Replacing the existing maps in remaining stocked copies of the draft Marin Countywide Plan with updated versions;
4. Replacing the existing digital map on the www.future-marin.org website with the updated version.

In light of the significance of the California Coastal Trail, staff recommends that the Countywide Plan Trails Maps continue to reflect the California Coastal Trail. The ultimate alignment will be determined through coordination with property owners based on site-specific characteristics.

Overview of the Community Facilities Section

Public services, especially water and sewer, are essential to support existing development and to enable proposed development. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) establishes a sphere of influence (SOI) for each city – its probable ultimate physical boundaries. Within each SOI is an urban service area where development can best be accommodated over the next 5-to-10 years. Community Facility planning in Marin is complicated because of the number of agencies providing services (six community service districts, 16 city or county fire districts, and 11 sanitary districts) and the Federal, and State permitting agencies they coordinate with.

Local government policies and programs can support the effective provision of community facilities by:

- Encouraging long range planning between the agencies.
- Regulating the conservation and reuse of supply.
- Encouraging the use of new technologies.

Key Community Facilities Trends include:

- Islands of unincorporated territory exist in most Marin cities.
- Water providers are anticipating increased demand over the next 20 years.
- Landfill diversion rates are very high, but so is solid waste generation.
- Hazardous materials pose risks countywide.

Key Community Facilities issues include:

- Should the requirement that new development pay for the full cost of all infrastructures apply to below market rate housing?
- Should even more aggressive water conservation measures be passed, such as “zero net impact”?
- Should safe gray water use be evaluated and encouraged?
- Should even more aggressive recycling, resource recovery, and composting strategies be pursued?

Key Community Facilities goals include:

- Adequate public facilities.
- Sustainable water resources.
- Safe processing of wastewater and solid waste.
- Decreased exposure to hazardous materials.
- Minimization of telecommunications facilities and related impacts.

Testimony was provided suggesting additional information should be in the Plan regarding water supply and demand, well yields, precipitation rates, groundwater basins and their recharge. A detailed hydrology background report (see attached) addressed these issues and excerpts can be referenced or added to the Plan if the Planning Commission desires.

Overview of the Planning Areas Section

Drawing upon ridgelines and watersheds as boundary lines, Marin County is divided into the seven separate planning areas. The following geographical areas help to organize and define how the policies and programs of the Countywide Plan will be implemented within individual communities:

- Novato - Planning Area 1
- Las Gallinas - Planning Area 2
- San Rafael Basin - Planning Area 3
- Upper Ross Valley - Planning Area 4
- Lower Ross Valley - Planning Area 5
- Richardson Bay - Planning Area 6
- West Marin - Planning Area 7

Key Planning Area trends include:

- Population, employed residents, and the number of jobs have increased.
- Environmental constraints have reduced commercial/non-residential development potential around the Gness Field airport. Most of the potential commercial square footage is located in the third phase of the approved master plan for the Lucasfilm project or in the incorporated cities.
- Significant amount of land have been protected as permanent open space through public acquisitions around Gness Field, Bel Marin Keys, Big Rock Ridge, Camp Tamarancho, and Marin City.
- Agricultural diversity and viability are improving through the production of value-added products such as cheese-making including Giacomini Ranch, the Strauss Creamery, and Cowboy Creamery.

Additional information regarding the Planning Areas section will be provided at the Planning Commission hearing on Monday, June 28, 2004.

Land Use Map Changes

The Planning Areas section of the Built Environment contains a series of land use policy maps that establish land use designations for the unincorporated parcels in Marin County.

For the most part, the new maps reflect the existing adopted Countywide Plan maps, along with the correction of mapping errors.

The new maps were also updated to reflect the acquisition of lands into the Marin County Open Space District, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, and other local, state, and federal parks. The land use maps have been changed to show these lands as Open Space.

Other changes to the maps are a result of modifications to the descriptions of the land use designations in the Community Development section. For example, the General Commercial land use designation has been expanded to include the Retail Commercial land use designation, which has been deleted from the Plan. The existing Residential Commercial land use designation has been renamed Neighborhood Commercial. An additional land use designation, Planned Community, has also been added to enable the planning of major reuse projects. These and other changes are all reflected on the maps.

Alex Hinds
Agency Director

Michele Rodriguez
Principal Planner

Attachment A: Hydrology and Water Quality Technical Background Report, August 2000.
Attachment B: California Coastal Trail Map.