



MARIN COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

May 17, 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 24, 2004, at 5:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION

Background

This meeting is the second public hearing on the draft Marin Countywide Plan, *Built Environment* Element. At last Monday's meeting, the Planning Commission agreed to several initial changes to the Introduction, Background, and Key Trends sections. The Planning Commission directed staff to return during the *Planning Areas* discussion (likely mid June) with a list of commercial properties, which may be appropriate for a residential land use designation. In addition, staff will also return at the end of the Built Environment Element with a Summary of Initial Planning Commission direction for your review and approval.

Today's hearing will focus on the following key issues in the *Community Development* section:

- Should housing buildout on sensitive lands be reduced?
- Should more affordable and employee housing be targeted to mixed use and transit oriented sites?
- Should there be no net change in potential housing units from the existing CWP?
- Should commercial buildout be further reduced?
- Should commercial zones encourage mixed-use housing?
- What types of job-housing balance are we seeking?
- How do LAFCO studies and policies affect annexations?
- Should the Countywide Planning Agency expand its responsibilities to more fully address inter jurisdictional planning, housing, land use, and monitoring issues?

If additional time is available the Planning Commission will also review the Community Design and Energy and Green Building sections of the Built Environment Element.

Overview of the Community Design Section

This section includes a variety of design strategies recommended to ensure that neighborhoods will be compact and include a range of housing types within easy walking distance of schools, parks, and shops. Careful attention to changes in roadways, streetscapes, building design, and parking configurations can significantly improve pedestrian friendliness. Vital mixed-use centers are intended to create attractive environments that accentuate the compact combination of businesses and medium to higher density housing with distinctive landscaping and lighting, outdoor furnishings, art, and public gathering areas.

Key Community Design Issues

Key Community Design issues include:

- Should new employee and/or affordable residential development be located in or near commercial activity centers?
- Should the mass, scale, and location of new structures respect environmental constraints and neighborhood character?
- Should “traditional neighborhood design” concepts be promoted?
- Should single-family residential guidelines be adopted?
- Should new, gated residential communities be prohibited?
- Should space saving parking arrangements be encouraged?

Key Community Design Goals

Key Community Design goals include:

- **Preservation of Community Character:** Perpetuate the unique character of each community, including the essential design characteristics that make a place attractive and livable.
- **Transit-Oriented Development.** Locate mixed-use, medium to higher density development in appropriate locations along transit corridors.
- **New Development in Built Areas.** New building should occur in a compact form in already developed locations whenever feasible.
- **Protection of Scenic Resources.** Minimize visual impacts of development, and preserve vistas of important natural features.
- **Attractive and Functional Streets and Parking Areas.** Design automobile use areas to fit the character of the community and comfortably accommodate travel by pedestrians and bicycles.

Overview of the Energy and Green Building Section

Energy is essential to every sector of the economy and community, and the design of the built environment determines how much energy is used. Electricity generation from fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Most energy in the county and State are imported fossil fuels. Marin is therefore vulnerable to supply disruptions and price increases.

Local government policies and programs can contribute to a sustainable energy future by:

- increasing energy efficiency and conservation
- prioritizing renewable resources and local production
- promoting green building design and materials.

Key Energy and Green Building Issues

Key Energy and Green Building Issues include:

- Should energy and green building incentives and technical assistance continue to be provided?
- Should energy efficiency, renewable energy, and green building techniques be required—particularly for larger homes and businesses?
- Should the County of Marin lead by example, i.e. meet LEED standards and use renewable energy sources in public buildings?

Key Energy and Green Building Goals

Key Energy and Green Building goals include:

- **Decrease Energy Use.** Reduce energy waste and peak electricity demand through energy efficiency and conservation in homes and businesses
- **Increase Renewable Resource Use.** Utilize local renewable energy resources and shift imported energy to renewable resources

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex Hinds
Agency Director

Michele Rodriguez
Principal Planner

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 Rodriquez, Principal Planner

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

DATE: May 17, 2004

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

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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

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

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

- Scott Alber, Marin County Fire Marshall
- Dean Powell, Principal Transportation Planner

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

- Eric Steger, Senior Civil Engineer (Mineral Resources)

Please let me know if you have additional suggestions.

PC Attachment 1