



M COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

June 21, 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, June 28, 2004, at 1:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION

Background

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

Today's hearing will focus on the *Noise* and *Community Facilities* sections and, time permitting, the *Planning Areas* section.

Overview of the Noise Section

Vehicle noise is the primary source of noise in Marin County, with the highest noise levels occurring along major roadways. Other significant local noise sources include aircraft, mining activity, and constructions. Estimates of future noise along major roadways can be projected based on estimates of future traffic, while changes in noise due to other sources may depend on a range of site-specific factors. Noise will continue to be an important factor in the planning process as most of the future housing is proposed on properties exposed to high noise levels.

Local government policies and programs can contribute to increased protection from excessive noise by:

- Limiting noise from construction activities.
- Designing building and sites to buffer occupants from noise.
- Working with aeronautics agencies to regulate airplane noise over Marin.
- Enforcing noise limits.

Key Noise Trends include:

- Roadway noise levels have not changed significantly since 1987.
- Local aircraft noise is not expected to increase.
- Noise from larger commercial aircraft has become an issue in some areas.
- Heavy equipment produces noise complaints.
- Future passenger rail service could generate significant noise.

Key Noise issues include:

- Should alternatives to sound walls be promoted to reduce noise impacts, along Highway 101?
- Should a noise ordinance be adopted which limits construction activity on holidays and weekends?

Key Noise goal includes:

- Protection from excessive noise.

Overview of the Community Facilities Section

Public services, especially water and sewer, are essential to support existing development and to enable proposed development. Many unincorporated areas of the County could be efficiently served by a city. 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.
- Regulate the conservation and reuse of supply.
- Encourage 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 infrastructure 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.

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 in each planning area 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 incorporated areas.
- A significant amount of lands have been protected as permanent open space through 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.

Alex Hinds
Agency Director

Michele Rodriguez
Principal Planner

