



✓ COUNTY
UNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

August 2, 2004

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

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

Dear Planning Commission Members:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Review the administrative record and conduct a public hearing
2. Continue the public hearing to Monday, August 9, 2004, at 5:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION

Background

This meeting is the nineteenth hearing on the draft Marin Countywide Plan and the first for the Socioeconomic Element in which your Commission is receiving public input and providing staff initial direction to assist in further defining the “project description” of the Plan for environmental review purposes.

Today’s hearing will focus on the Introduction, Key Trends and Issues, Framework, Economy, Childcare, Public Safety and, time permitting, Community Participation, Diversity, Education, and Environmental Justice.

The Socioeconomic Element

The Socioeconomic Element focuses on the interactions of people including economic vitality, social and environmental justice, cultural opportunities, and overall welfare of the residents of Marin. Although not required by State planning law, the topics covered in this Element address the economic, social and cultural issues in Marin County and provide policy direction to address them. Specifically, the sections of this element include:

- Economy
- Childcare
- Public Safety
- Community Participation
- Diversity
- Education

- Environmental Justice
- Public Health
- Arts and Culture
- Historical and Archaeological Resources
- Parks and Recreation

Key Trends and Issues Overview

Economy: Marin County has enjoyed relative prosperity and economic diversity in recent years. However, increasing labor costs, traffic congestion and a shortage of affordable housing have impacted local business viability.

Childcare: Childcare demand continues to outpace supply, and employment trends are likely to further increase the need for childcare, particularly subsidized care.

Public Safety: Marin’s crime rate has been lower than the State’s for many years, and is decreasing. The rate of physical abuse cases, however, has been higher than the statewide rate since 1998.

Community Participation: Levels of community participation are generally high in Marin. However, there is not enough ethnically diverse participation in community decision-making.

Diversity: Ethnic diversity in Marin is low but increasing.

Education: Educational institutions and programs are generally very successful in Marin, but educational inequities exist based on income, geography and race.

Environmental Justice: The disproportionate exposure to toxins by lower income communities is a concern both in the county, and outside of the county where Marin’s products are manufactured and disposed of.

Public Health: Despite the general good public health of county residents, some disturbing trends face the population including high cancer rates, obesity and other targeted health issues.

Arts and Culture: Marin is a culturally rich community and the arts industry is a strong contributor to the local economy and quality of life.

Historical and Archaeological Resources: The county contains 630 recorded archaeological sites including settlements and villages, hunting camps, quarries, rock art and trails associated with Native American habitation of the areas.

Parks and Recreation: Nearly half of the county land is dedicated to parks and recreation use and open space including 500 miles of trails.

The **framework and vision** presented in the Socioeconomic Element is of a diverse and vital economy that is increasingly less dependent on fossil fuels, hazardous chemical, and manufactured substances that accumulate in nature. In addition, affordable choices for housing

and child and elder care would complement high-quality education and services available to people of all ages, cultures and income levels.

Economy

The draft Economic Element was prepared in conjunction with the Marin Economic Commission between 2001 and 2003, and contains four key goals with associated policy and program recommendations:

1. Promote a vibrant, viable, diverse, and sustainable local economy by pursuing policies that balance economic, environmental, and social equity needs of the county.
2. Assure the presence of an institutional framework in Marin County to support economic development.
3. Assure the availability of housing for Marin County's workforce and the availability of employment for Marin County's resident workforce.
4. Provide a transportation system that supports economic vitality by assuring the reliable movement of workers and goods throughout the county.

The policy recommendations for the third and fourth goals, housing and transportation, have been incorporated into the policies of the housing and transportation sections of the Built Environment Element. The entire draft Economic Element will be included as an appendix to the Countywide Plan.

The underlying philosophy of the draft Economic Element centers around the Four Principles of Economic Sustainability, drafted by the Rocky Mountain Institute:

1. *Plug the Leaks.* Where possible, stop the outflow of local dollars by producing goods locally that Marin residents consume, or using the ones we do import more efficiently.
2. *Support Existing Businesses*
3. *Encourage new local enterprise;* e.g. by adding value before exporting, facilitating lending (through special micro-enterprise banks or other arrangements).
4. *Recruit new businesses that are compatible with existing businesses.* In this context, "compatible" means that a new business develops underutilized resources, meets needs unfulfilled by existing businesses, complements existing economic activities, and is consistent with community, social, and environmental values.

The key focus of the economic vitality policies is to determine, given the constraints on development in Marin, what types of businesses can thrive here while having minimal adverse impacts. Additionally, it recommends strategizing on ways to retain businesses that are already here. With the recent completion of the targeted industries study that identified key business clusters, additional analysis will be undertaken to target those types of businesses and strategize on ways to incubate and grow them. The tables on the following page show the relationship to existing business clusters and businesses that are recommending for targeting followed by the criteria used by the study to determine which industries should be targeted.

Existing and Targeted Businesses

Existing Clusters	Targeted Businesses
Real Estate and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Building
Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boutique Consulting • Environmental Technology
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Imaging (Motion Pictures) • Interactive Media & Game Development • Engineering and Design Software
Finance and Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Wealth Management Services • Online Financial Services • Personal Financial Advising
Restaurants and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-Tourism • Outdoor Recreation and Equipment • Arts and Crafts
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Healing and Meditation • Alternative Medicine • Biotech • Emergent Care
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Value-Added (Niche) Agricultural Products • Food Product Manufacturing

Targeted Industries Screening Criteria

Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above-average wages • Emphasis on value-added activities • Primary vs. secondary engine of growth • High productivity • Occupational diversity and upward mobility • Industry diversity
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average firm size • Reduce dependence on inputs from other regions • Employs local residents • Telecommuting or transit-friendly • Allows flex-time • Potential sustainable partner
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative and innovative • Links to aging population • Consistent with County goals and principles

This section also recommends improving review procedures for targeted business clusters, enhancing the physical infrastructure to support those businesses and the community at large,

partnering with the private sector to address economic vitality issues, and working with other agencies such as the Workforce Investment Board to improve education, training, and employment opportunities for the local workforce.

The Economy section also encourages the County to lead by example through implementation of socially responsible business practices, green purchasing, and implementation of a green business program.

Child Care

The demand for childcare in Marin significantly exceeds the supply of licensed providers. Policies and programs in this section center around two key goals:

1. **Additional Childcare Facilities.** Increase the number of childcare facilities countywide.
2. **Enhanced Childcare Options.** Expand the range of available childcare options.

Creating additional childcare facilities would help address the high demand for childcare slots and the related need for space for childcare. Encouraging childcare facilities can also help reduce employee turnover, which impacts both the quantity and quality of available childcare. Enhancing childcare options is important to enable children from a wider range of socioeconomic groups to receive adequate care.

Public Safety

Despite the relatively low rates for most types of crime in Marin, crime prevention related to elder abuse, child abuse and neglect and domestic violence requires more widespread attention. Marin must be prepared for emergencies and their after effects. *Public Safety* in this section is addressed through three key goals:

1. **Safe Neighborhoods.** Ensure that county neighborhoods remain safe places to live.
2. **Decreased Crime.** Reduce rates for all types of crime, including child abuse and neglect, elder and dependent abuse and neglect, domestic violence, juvenile offenses, physical and financial abuse of senior, and hate indicator crimes.
3. **Effective Emergency and Disaster Preparedness.** Provide proper emergency and disaster preparedness services through effective and coordinated emergency management plans and procedures.

Community Participation

Community participation in public decision-making is essential to infusing County governance with the appropriate breadth of perspective. Broad and informed participation creates healthy and just local government and community atmosphere. Ensuring public access to clear, timely and appropriate information is an important first step in encouraging residents to participate in decisions that affect them. Meetings must be accessible to all interested persons. In addition, the composition of local decision-making bodies should be diverse enough to represent the

community they serve. The policies and programs in this section are addressed through the following key goal:

1. **Broad and Diverse Participation.** Incorporate all segments of the community in County planning efforts and local decision-making.

Diversity

Encouraging and celebrating diversity and cultivating a rich community fabric requires supporting populations that have traditionally been underrepresented. Increased ethnic and cultural competence by the staff of public agencies and non-profit organizations can do much to promote self-sufficiency and encourage leadership among minority groups. Cultural and economic vitality needs to be supported in neighborhoods with high proportions of minority residents. Specific needs of the recent-immigrant community, such as English as a Second Language classes and documentation assistance, need to be provided. Policies and programs in this section center through the following key goal:

1. **Celebrating Diversity.** Support and enhance ethnic and cultural diversity.

Education

Although educational institutions and programs are generally very successful in Marin, the Countywide Plan directs attention to policies and programs dealing with identified scholastic weaknesses in the county. In particular, this includes addressing educational inequities based on income, geography and race. The need exists to expand after school, adult, and other community-based educational programs, and to ensure that all students have access to nutritional meals at school. *Education* in this section is addressed through two key goals:

1. **Adequate School Facilities.** Ensure that adequate school facilities are available to determine appropriate locations and layouts for future facilities.
2. **Ample Educational Opportunities.** Ensure that all students in Marin have the best and most diverse educational opportunities available.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of criminal and environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The intent of environmental justice is to ensure that all persons are able to live in a safe and healthy environment. Policies and programs in this section are addressed through the following key goal:

1. **Environmental Justice.** Ensure that all persons in Marin live in a safe and healthy environment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex Hinds
Agency Director

Kristin Drumm
Planner

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