



**SANTA VENETIA COMMUNITY PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Summary Minutes**

Tuesday, November 5, 2013  
7:00-9:00 pm  
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**Members Present**

Jane Brand  
Russ Greenfield  
Mary Hanley  
Roger Heller  
Bonnie Monte  
Gary Robards  
Oscar Segura

**Staff**

Jack Liebster, Planning Manager  
Christine Gimmmler, Senior Planner  
Suzanne Thorsen, Planner

**1. Summary Minutes**

The Advisory Committee accepted the summary minutes from October 1, 2013 as presented and welcomed new committee member Oscar Segura.

Gary Robards reported that he recently attended a meeting of the informal Santa Venetia Traffic Committee (composed of representatives of the San Rafael School District, Brandeis Hillel School, Marin School, City of San Rafael, and the Marin County Department of Public Works) which has been meeting intermittently since early 2013 to address traffic congestion on North San Pedro, particularly during school drop off and pick up times. In an effort to reduce "peak" loads, representatives of Venetia Valley School and the Brandeis School had agreed to shift their school's start times by five minutes each (starting in August) to reduce conflicts between arriving vehicles. Gary indicated that the additional time separation has helped reduce congestion. The traffic committee had also discussed the concept of improving pedestrian access to Venetia Valley School from the Civic Center Jury Parking Lot (via Madison Avenue), which some parents already use as an alternate drop off site to avoid congestion on North San Pedro Road. Since the existing pathway is located primarily on County property, Department of Public Works staff indicated that they would explore the Safe Routes to School program as an option for funding improvements to the pathway that would encourage its use by more parents. It was noted that this pathway could also provide improved access from Santa Venetia to the Civic Center campus and planned SMART station. Gary noted that the traffic committee was tentatively scheduled to meet again in January and he would continue to keep the Advisory Committee informed of progress made.

## 2. Countywide Plan Policy Review - continued

Advisory Committee members continued their discussion of the Countywide Plan and the matrix of policies and programs organized by topic area provided at the October meeting. Staff briefly reviewed the policies and programs related to flood control that were discussed in some detail at the previous meeting. In general, the issue of flood control is thoroughly addressed by existing programs and other agencies or districts and is largely outside the scope of the community plan. However, several issues were suggested that might be appropriate to address in the community plan, including designation of neighborhood evacuation routes and design or height issues related to complying with FEMA requirements.

The Committee moved on to discuss transportation and several land use related issues, which are summarized below.

### Transportation

- The suggestion to provide more bicycle lanes and promote biking and walking is strongly supported by Countywide Plan policies. The community plan should provide more specific information about where such improvements are needed or desired. For bicycle routes, it should be clarified where actual improvements are needed or just directional signage.
- The suggestion that school start times should be better coordinated to reduce traffic congestion is being addressed by on-going cooperative efforts by the San Rafael School District and local private schools. Any Use Permits associated with future school uses or expansion should consider coordinating hours of operation with other uses to reduce congestion.
- Improvements to the North San Pedro Road/Highway 101 interchange are the purview of Caltrans and the City of San Rafael. However, the community plan could express support for modifications that would improve traffic flow.
- Staff will look for available data regarding the frequency of speeding on North San Pedro Road and consult with Traffic Division staff regarding the pros and cons of installing signage or “flashers” to discourage speeding.
- Currently, public transportation in Santa Venetia is limited to an hourly shuttle which runs between Santa Venetia and the San Rafael transit center, but increased transit service may be appropriate in the future once the SMART train is operating.
- New development must maintain “level of service” (LOS) standards for roadways established in the Countywide Plan and must pay its fair share of any improvements needed to do so. However, possible “mitigations” are limited and may not be supported by the community (for example, widening N. San Pedro Road).

## Land Use

- Residents expressed concern about “high rise” development (4-5 stories). However, the County’s zoning limits development in Santa Venetia to 30 feet (or 35 with Design Review).
- The idea of limiting home sizes had been suggested. However, there was general agreement among committee members that this concern is more closely related to the design and siting of homes than their size per se, and applies primarily to hillside areas such as Leona Drive.
- Some community members supported efforts to preserve “dark skies” by limiting light pollution. This issue is addressed by exterior lighting standards in the Single Family Residential Design Guidelines as well as the Planned District development standards.
- The committee expressed concerns about “gated” developments in the community such as the Edgehill subdivision. Countywide Plan policies discourage establishment of gated communities, but this issue could also be addressed in the community plan.
- Some development occurs without permits (for example, conversion of garage area to living space or remodeling to create in law units)

Due to time limitations, the committee agreed to continue review of the policies at the next advisory committee meeting.

### **3. Next Meeting**

Staff noted that the next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and will include continued review and further discussion of existing Countywide Plan policies.

### **4. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.