



MARIN COUNTY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

June 28, 2005

Board of Supervisors
County of Marin
Civic Center
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: Marin County Single-family Residential Design Guidelines

Dear Supervisors:

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

On May 23, 2005, the Planning Commission unanimously voted (6-0) to recommend that your Board approve the proposed Marin County Single-family Residential Design Guidelines.

SUMMARY:

The Marin County Development Code Chapter 22.42 establishes the requirements for Design Review that apply to properties under the Planned District zoning and to developments proposed on conventionally-zoned properties under certain circumstances. The findings that are required to approve a Design Review application, as well as the specific Planned District design and development standards, address a wide range of design, siting, and environmental issues that are related to single-family residential development. However, a number of these findings and standards are general in nature and have been interpreted in different ways over time, creating confusion and frustration for property owners, neighbors, and design professionals. Consequently, with the assistance of consultant, Dan Hillmer and a technical advisory committee, the Community Development Agency prepared the Single-family Residential Design Guidelines ("Design Guidelines").

The intent of the Design Guidelines is to establish clear and comprehensive guidelines for the evaluation of single-family residential projects in the unincorporated areas of the County, particularly those involving larger homes and development in hillside areas. The Design Guidelines document is organized around 26 guidelines relating to site design, building relationships, neighborhood compatibility, and visual bulk factors. Some of the more notable guidelines include requirements to step back the upper floors of residences in older neighborhoods that are comprised of smaller lot sizes, to articulate the roof forms and massing of buildings, especially in a hillside setting, and to incorporate green building and universal design principles into the project design. The guidelines are not intended to alter the historic architectural diversity that can be attributed to many of Marin's neighborhoods, nor should they hinder the continued mixture of architectural styles and design creativity where it reinforces the local context of the natural and built environments. An accompanying Technical Appendices document includes relevant background information that supplement the discussion contained in the Design Guidelines.

In order to ensure that the Development Code requirements reflect the design concepts and techniques from the Design Guidelines, amendments to the Development Code will be proposed for your Board's consideration at a future date. These amendments may include new development standards that refine the thresholds for triggering Design Review based on building size, location, or lot slope. In addition, it is our intent that projects which conform to the Design Guidelines may also qualify for a more streamlined

approval and/or appeal process. Although the Design Guidelines are intended to apply broadly in response to design issues that are prevalent in single-family development, their application will be further enhanced through the preparation of community-based design standards and guidelines that respond to design issues that are unique or especially relevant to the setting or characteristics of particular communities. These community-based standards may be adopted as amendments to community plans and/or implemented through the Development Code as standards for specific communities in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that your Board take the following actions:

1. Review the administrative record;
2. Conduct a public hearing; and
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving the Single-family Residential Design Guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Thomas Lai
Principal Planner

Alex Hinds
Director

Christine Gimmler
Senior Planner

Brian Crawford
Deputy Director

- Attachments:
1. Proposed Resolution Approving the Single-family Residential Design Guidelines
 2. Environmental Document
 3. Marin County Farm Bureau Letter, (5/23/05)

(The following documents have been provided only in the packets for the Board of Supervisors. Copies of the documents are available for review at the Community Development Agency from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.)

4. Marin County Single-family Residential Design Guidelines and Appendices (Second Revised Public Review Draft - June 2005)
5. Community Development Agency Staff Report and Memoranda (9/13/04, 3/28/05, 5/5/05, 5/11/05, 5/23/05)
6. Marin County Planning Commission Minutes (9/13/04, 3/28/05, 5/23/05)