Community Marin 2003

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Preserving the Environmental Quality of Marin

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INTRODUCTION

This report, focused primarily on the eastern part of Marin, presents recommendations of the Marin Conservation League, the Marin Group of the Sierra Club, Marin Audubon Society, and the Environmental Forum of Marin. These recommendations provide an environmentally responsible foundation for land use planning which takes into account the impact of human activities on land, water, air and all living species. Although most of *Community Marin's* recommendations suggest changes in general plan policies of the County and its cities and towns, the document is also addressed to the public at large.

Community Marin does not attempt to address all of the subjects that must be covered in a general plan. Rather it focuses on major concerns which the environmental organizations believe are of countywide importance. In so doing, it speaks to a range of planning issues -- housing, the economy, transportation, community facilities--which are interconnected and which have an impact on the environment. Other issues, notably in West Marin, also deserve attention.

MARIN COUNTY'S FUTURE

Community Marin's vision for the future of Marin County is based on achieving the following goals:

- The natural environment, its resources and biodiversity are protected.
- Natural habitat areas are restored.
- The County's human community is healthy, diverse and equitable.
- Rapid, disruptive or inappropriate growth is discouraged.
- New development occurs in existing developed areas, enhancing the historic community-centered character of Marin while protecting greenbelts and community separators.
- Housing that is affordable to the local work force is promoted.

- A safe, convenient, cost-effective transportation system that serves existing communities is established.

During the past two decades Marin has moved away from pursuing these goals. The increase in jobs in the County has aggravated traffic congestion and many workers commute into Marin from surrounding counties. The County, cities and towns, seeking to replace tax revenues lost after passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, continue to plan for expanded office and commercial development leading to proposals for inappropriate development, particularly in areas along the bayfront in eastern Marin.

Preservation of Marin's open space, environmental quality and natural resources is critical to the County's economic health as well as to its quality of life. A healthy economy cannot be sustained in a deteriorating environment. Unfortunately, excessive commercial development in Marin has not only caused traffic congestion, but it has also degraded the environment and threatened community character. Current general plans project another 47% increase in commercial development over what existed in 1990 - far beyond what can be accommodated without unacceptable environmental damage and degradation of the quality of life.

It is essential that the County, cities and towns agree to reduce the amount of commercial development allowed under their general plans and to focus instead on creative reuse of existing areas, particularly in order to provide affordable housing. If they do not, *Community Marin's* goals cannot be achieved.

In order to achieve the goals listed above it is essential to do the following:

- Make the best use of existing developed areas and focus new development in infill locations, e.g. within already developed areas, close to transit stops and near existing services and facilities.
- Reduce the amount of new development, particularly commercial development, allowed by current plans; don't just mitigate its impacts.
- Plan future growth in accordance with environmental protection standards and goals for enhancement of the County's natural character.
- Consider the fiscal and environmental costs of providing water and sewer services to areas currently not serviced.
- Recognize that reducing development potential in one location does not mean that it should be squeezed in elsewhere.
- Encourage attractive, safe housing that is affordable to Marin's work force in areas that are currently served by public transit and other services.
- Make preservation of the natural environment a priority in all land use planning.

Because Marin has large areas devoted to federal and state parklands, the County should continue to provide recreation, open space and opportunities for environmental appreciation for the people of the Bay Area and the nation. Marin County should also work with other jurisdictions in regional planning efforts.

We encourage the County and its cities and towns, as appropriate, to adopt the recommendations that follow. Furthermore, we acknowledge that all existing or recommended policies depend upon effective implementation and enforcement.

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1. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Background. The 1973 Marin Countywide Plan divided the County into three north/south environmental corridors - City-Centered, Inland Rural and Coastal Recreation - for purposes of land use planning. These corridors still serve as the basis for Marin County's land use policies. The 1973 Plan also set forth policies on growth limitations, agricultural preservation and protection of ridge and greenbelt community separators. The 1982 plan added policies for bayfront and streamside protection, environmental hazards and energy. The 1994 Plan continued the three environmental corridors and also described three resource conservation areas: Stream Conservation Areas, the Coastal Conservation Zone and the Bayfront Conservation Zone. It also identified a series of resource protection issues including air quality, mineral deposits, species protection and timber production. The 1994 Plan improved protections for wetlands, special status species and water quality, identified other natural resources needing protection, i.e. native trees, but deleted the energy section.

Some recommendations contained in the 1994 Plan have been implemented in ensuing years. For example, the Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP) was developed to better protect water quality from non-point source pollutants in surface runoff (See **Streams and Riparian Habitats**, below). The County has also adopted an ordinance restricting use of pesticides on County owned lands.

Other improvements in the 1994 Marin Countywide Plan are not sufficiently comprehensive to ensure protection of Marin's biological diversity, native habitats and species. In order to do this the Plan must address these habitats, their sensitivities and importance, in the body of the Plan, not merely in an appendix. *Community Marin* recommends that the scope of sensitive habitats be expanded to include at a minimum the habitats described in following sections, based on the Vegetation Map of Marin County (February 5, 2002) and developed for general plan purposes. For use in planning, plant communities and wildlife habitats of all Marin County should be mapped to a greater degree of accuracy than is currently available from the State.

HABITATS OF MARIN COUNTY

1.1. BAYLANDS

This ecosystem includes a complex of habitats that exist in geographic proximity to each other and that are interdependent. These habitats include open bay; rocky shoreline; mud flat; salt marsh; diked salt marsh; seasonal, brackish and freshwater wetlands; grasslands/agriculture, and oak woodland. Animals of these habitats are dependent not only upon their own habitat but on neighboring ones as well.

Several of these habitats are so productive (see section on **Salt Marshes**) that they export organic material to the baylands ecosystem as a whole. The open bay and mud flat habitats are rich food sources. They contain organic material produced by microscopic algae on the mud and in the water along with organic material produced in nearby salt

marshes and adjacent upland watersheds covered with grassland/ agriculture and oak woodlands. This material dissolves in the water and settles on the mud flat. Small animals such as snails, clams and worms living in the open bay, rocky shoreline, and mud flats, feed on this organic material, and are in turn fed upon by larger animals and shorebirds. These larger birds and animals are prey for hawks, falcons, owls and foxes that live in the oak woodland and also hunt in the grassland /agriculture and salt marsh. Although similar habitat relationships exist in the Coastal Recreation Corridor, for example along Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon, the focus of the following recommendations is the San Pablo and San Francisco Baylands ecosystem.

Recommendations

1.1.1. Revise the Marin Countywide Plan (CWP) to establish a fourth environmental corridor, as recommended by the environmental organizations in *Proposed Addition of a Baylands Protection Corridor to the Marin Countywide Plan*. This Corridor would comprise all undeveloped diked historic wetlands, seasonal wetlands, streams and adjacent upland habitats, extending from Point San Pedro north to the Marin/Sonoma County line. The purpose of the proposed Baylands Protection Corridor would be to clearly designate these lands primarily for resource conservation, wildlife habitat and other natural resources, agriculture and protection of public health and safety, rather than for development.

1.1.2. Expand the present Bayfront Conservation Zone (BPZ) to form a Baylands Protection Corridor (BPC) that encompasses lands with existing Bay-related wildlife habitat and agricultural values, i.e. lands that historically provided, and continue to provide, habitat for Bay-related wildlife species. To ensure species diversity and a complexity of habitat mosaics in the BPC, adjacent uplands that are necessary to maintain diversity and integrity of habitat systems should also be included. Many species require adjacent uplands and non-tidal wetlands in order to survive. This is particularly true of raptors such as red-tailed hawks and Northern harriers and White tailed kites, and mammalian predators such as foxes and raccoons. Adjacent native oak woodlands and forests, such as occur at St. Vincent's, Bahia and Black Point, and grasslands and streams should also be included. Protection of diked baylands and adjacent upland habitats also secures the visual and cultural resources that these lands provide.

1.1.3. In addition to County adoption of the Baylands Protection Corridor, the cities of San Rafael and Novato should similarly amend their general plans to include the Baylands Protection Corridor and to amend plan maps and policies appropriate to this designation. Policies should call for lower densities than are currently in place, and more restrictive land use designations should be applied to the baylands in order to protect environmental resources and public health and safety. Development should be permitted only on areas that do not contain important natural habitats. Protective land use designations and densities already utilized in the Coastal Recreation and Inland Rural Corridors could be applied.

1.1.4. If landowners choose the option of seeking an amendment to the local general plan for higher densities or land uses than those allowed they should be required to prepare a site-specific constraints analysis for their property. The analysis would address the location of all wetlands, floodplains, unstable soils, agricultural lands, migratory and resident species, watercourses and other resources, and

would examine impacts on water quality. Higher densities could be granted if it were demonstrated that the proposal could be accommodated without damaging resources.

1.1.5. Permit only those agricultural uses that are compatible with wetlands' protection. Conversion of non-agricultural lands to agriculture should be allowed only if wetlands or other important habitats would not be adversely impacted. Where possible, wetlands should be enhanced and restored.

1.1.6. Revise agricultural preserve boundaries to include appropriate lands in the Baylands Protection Corridor currently in agricultural use in order to make them eligible for Williamson Act contracts.

1.1.7. Encourage and support public and private partnerships, such as that demonstrated by Marin Baylands Advocates and Marin Audubon Society (MAS), that are working to acquire baylands. After acquisition, restoration and/or enhancement these properties should be transferred when possible to governmental agencies for long-term ownership and/or management. When this is not feasible, the non-profit agency should retain ownership. A public agency or a protective non-profit organization should own habitats.

1.1.8. Add diked historic salt marsh to the CWP priority list for acquisition with Open Space funds, because diked baylands are resources of regional value and significant habitats, function as open space and community separators, and have other attributes noted above.

1.1.9. Continue to protect diked historic salt marsh remaining in the cities of San Rafael, Corte Madera, Larkspur and Mill Valley, even though not all of these are part of the proposed Baylands Protection Corridor.

1.1.10. Continue to recommend and actively pursue public acquisition of baylands surrounding Bolinas Lagoon, as stated in the current Local Coastal Plan.

1.2. OPEN BAY

Water in the San Pablo and San Francisco Bays is a mixture of marine water from the Pacific Ocean and fresh water coming from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and from the entire Bay watershed. Watersheds contribute sediments and organic compounds to the Bay; approximately 20 percent of both dissolved and suspended organic compounds in the Bay come from watersheds. The sediments contribute to marsh development and the organic compounds are important to the many filter-feeding animals that live in the water and in the mud of the Bay.

These same watersheds may also contribute non-point source pollutants to the Bay in the form of heat, chemicals and suspended solids. In addition San Francisco and San Pablo Bay water quality is affected by point source discharges associated with sewage treatment outfalls in the City-Centered Corridor.

Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon in the Coastal Recreation Corridor are also a mixture of marine water and fresh water coming from upland watersheds in West Marin. These coastal bays are similarly affected by non-point source pollutants produced by upland land uses, primarily agriculture. Tomales Bay has also been declared as impaired for point-source mercury.

Recommendation

1.2.1. Improve, or ensure there are no adverse changes to, the chemistry and biology of streams entering San Pablo and San Francisco Bays or to coastal bays and lagoons, including Bolinas Lagoon and Tomales Bay. Performance standards and maintenance practices detailed in MCSTOPPP's *Action Plan 2005* provide an array of water pollution preven-tion controls (See **Streams and Riparian Habitats**). The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board strictly regulates point sources. However, changes could include new sewage outfalls, increased output from existing outfalls and/or discharges from desalination plants. Such changes would be subject to environmental review.

1.3. ROCKY SHORELINE

In many locations along San Francisco Bay, Tomales Bay and the Pacific Ocean shore the wave action is severe. Sediments are not deposited at these sites and scouring of the rocky headlands occurs. In these locations rich faunas of animals with swimming larvae, such as barnacles, colonize the bare rock. The animal populations are joined by algae, which also colonize and grow. These intertidal communities vary in species composition depending on the amount of tidal water that reaches them. Fish, both marine and freshwater, and bird and mammal species forage for food in these communities; the Pacific Herring lays its eggs on the algae, eelgrass and rocks just below the intertidal zone.

Recommendation

1.3.1. Ensure that actions taken on public or private property along Marin's shorelines, generally aimed at protecting against shoreline erosion, do not result in loss of biodiversity. These actions might include the building of revetments, sea walls and groins. These structures are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Coastal Commission, Marin County and/or the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. However, the Countywide Planning process should take into account the potential for increased requests for such structures due to rising tidal elevations predicated on global warming.

1.4. SALT MARSHES

Tides rise and fall along the Pacific coast and within San Francisco Bay, causing two high tides and two low tides during each 24-hour period. During high tides water-borne sediment from rivers and from mud suspended by wind action is carried toward shore and, on the ebbing tide, settles to the bottom and forms "mud flats." These flats become the habitat of plants adapted to this salty environment that is successively exposed to light and air or covered with water. Common pickleweed predominates, covering the broad, flat, higher portion of tidal marshes in Marin County. California cordgrass forms a band at the lowest elevation of the marshes and grades into the lower mud flats. Measurements have demonstrated that the pickleweed and cordgrass marshes of San Pablo Bay produce and release to the water and mud at least four and one-half tons of organic material per acre each year. Several other native species, e.g. saltgrass, salt marsh gumplant and salt marsh rosemary, are typically found in the highest elevations of natural salt marshes.

In San Francisco Bay the large areas that once supported tidal salt marsh have been greatly reduced in area as they have been diked off for agriculture and developed as

urban areas. California has lost more than 90% of its coastal salt marshes. Those remaining are vastly diminished in size, have restricted tidal action, and are fragmented or isolated.

Mud flats and salt marshes are the habitat of numerous polychaete and spirochaete worms, mollusks such as mussels and clams and arthropods such as crabs, shrimps, and crustaceans. These comprise the primary food for thousands of migratory and resident shorebirds. Open marsh is also home to small rodents such as California voles and the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse, which in turn are preyed upon by raptors such as the Northern harrier and mammalian predators such as non-native red fox and native gray fox. Two other endangered species found only in salt marsh are California clapper rail and the black rail. A very large part of the marsh biomass consists of insects that feed on the plants and spiders that prey on the insects. These animals support insectivores such as song sparrow and omnivores such as raccoon.

Recommendations

1.4.1. Ensure that no changes occur in the sediment load of any stream flowing into bays, lagoons or the ocean through a marsh or, where appropriate, reduce the load. Marshes are dependent on natural fluctuations in sediment load but long-lasting man made perturbations can result in too much sediment being deposited or none at all. Changes in streams might include disturbance to riparian vegetation, agricultural cultivation, erosion and inadequate sediment controls in adjacent construction sites, riprap, sea walls, small boat piers and new dredging or frequent maintenance dredging.

1.4.2. Encourage the County to actively plan salt marsh enhancements and restorations as part of County Parks and Open Space management.

1.5. DIKED HISTORIC SALT MARSH

Because many diked historic salt marsh sites are in the City-Centered Corridor, which is designated primarily for urban development, the Marin Countywide Plan appears to promote their conversion to developed uses. Diked baylands currently used for grazing and oat hay crop, and their associated seasonal wetland/habitat resources, are under intense pressure for development because they are the major remaining level, accessible sites in the County.

After salt marshes were diked and drained for agriculture between 50 and 120 years ago, the sediments gradually lost moisture and organic material to drying and oxidation. As this happened the sediments shrank and the surface of the diked salt marsh fell in elevation. Present diked baylands may be as much as six to nine feet (in extreme cases) below the elevation of the tidal salt marshes outside the levees.

Although diked historic salt marshes have long been valued for their scenic and open space values, their ecological value as seasonal wetlands has only been recognized during the last 25 years. We now understand that they are an integral part of the ecosystem of the San Francisco Estuary, the largest and most important estuary on the West Coast of this continent.

The sediments of diked historic salt marshes contain clay once deposited by bay waters. This clay acts as an impervious layer, allowing water to pond during the winter rainy season, thus retaining wetland characteristics on a seasonal basis and performing many

important functions. Sediments contain a significant amount of salt left on the surface when the rainwater evaporates during spring and summer. They also become acidic when exposed to the air and thus do not create ideal soil conditions for agriculture.

From a biological perspective, these diked baylands are an integral part of the estuary's ecosystem, providing habitat for migrating birds and endangered species, improving water quality and storing runoff, which helps to prevent flooding of neighboring developed lands. Many species of shorebirds depend on shallow seasonal wetlands for roosting and feeding during high tide cycles when the intertidal mud flats, their preferred foraging habitats, are covered with deep water. Waterfowl also choose these protected wetlands during storms and rough waters on the Bay, and some prefer them to the deeper waters of the Bay. From a public safety perspective, the dry sediments of diked historic salt marshes are underlain by deep deposits of highly compressible Bay mud subject to severe ground shaking during earthquake events, thus rendering them seismically unstable and unsuitable for human habitation without special engineering.

Recommendations

1.5.1. Ensure that diked wetlands, unless currently in agriculture, are allowed to remain as seasonal wildlife habitat, with the ultimate goal of restoring them to tidal salt marsh.

1.5.2. Ensure that diked historic salt marsh is not developed, in light of public safety hazards such as location within the flood plain, risk of tsunami, shrink-swell potential of clays in Bay mud, liquefaction and other seismic hazards due to underlying muds.

1.6. SEASONAL, BRACKISH AND FRESHWATER WETLANDS

Seasonal wetlands on diked historic salt marsh and the tidal salt marshes that fringe the North Bay are all that remain of the extensive tidal and seasonal wetland system that once bordered San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. Prior to the diking of tidal marshes, springs and streams at the upper edges of the marsh formed wetlands ranging from freshwater seeps to brackish (somewhat saline) ponds. Some of these wetlands remain, supporting thickets of arroyo willow, cattail, tule, salt marsh bulrush, wild rose and California blackberry. In addition, wetlands throughout Marin County are associated with creeks, streams, ponds or lakes, or occur as isolated fresh water seeps or vernal pools. All wetlands are important wildlife habitat, supplying sources of water and food. Wetland plants are very productive and support a wide variety and large number of animal species.

Recommendations

1.6.1. Adopt the Cowardin definition of wetlands that was developed for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because this definition is more inclusive of all wetland types than the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' definition. This definition follows.

1.6.2. "Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. For purposes of this classification, wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes; the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil (soil formed under saturated conditions); and the substrate is nonsolid and is saturated with

water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year."

1.6.3. Ensure that all wetlands, including those outside the Baylands Protection Corridor (BPC), receive strong Countywide Plan protections and environmental review procedures such as those provided in the BPC. Community general plans should include similar protections.

1.6.4. Protect transition zones where the wetlands contain a mixture of wetland and non-wetland plants. Buffer areas at least 100 feet wide, and preferably 300 feet wide, should protect all wetlands and transition zones. If avoidance is not possible, any wetlands replacement mitigation should be of the same type, accomplished on-site or as close by as possible and replace at least three acres for each acre that is lost.

1.6.5. Require that applicants identify all wetland areas as part of environmental review for applicable projects.

1.6.6. Strictly limit public access to avoid harm to wetlands, sensitive wildlife and their habitat. Other protective measures, such as fencing and plantings or moats, may also be needed.

1.7. STREAMS AND RIPARIAN HABITATS

Streams and associated native streamside vegetation are important habitat for wildlife, contribute to water quality, help stabilize water temperatures for fish and enhance community character. Streams and watersheds are complex systems that include stream banks, associated vegetation and small tributaries that may have water flow only after storms but which are important to maintain the integrity of the streams. Native plant species such as willow, bay, oak buckeye, alder, box elder, blue elderberry and redwood are associated with streams in Marin's Mediterranean climate. Streamside vegetation stabilizes stream banks and prevents erosion and downstream sedimentation. Streams must have adequate stream flow to maintain and enhance the habitat value of watersheds. Native animal species that are listed as endangered or threatened and that depend upon stream habitat include steelhead and coho salmon.

Some streams have sections of banks that are naturally unvegetated, or that have been cleared of vegetation for flood control projects or by property owners or grazing cattle. The maintenance of streamside buffer zones is important even if no riparian vegetation is present because soils, grasses and weedy (ruderal) vegetation also provide habitat and serve as a buffer in the case of a nearby pollutant discharge. Unvegetated stream banks may also present an opportunity to restore riparian vegetation.

Marin County and all 11 cities and towns have adopted stormwater pollution ordinances. The Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP), which all jurisdictions have endorsed, recognizes that retaining streams in a natural state contributes to the maintenance of water quality by absorbing and trapping pollutants. Native vegetation also controls erosion and provides wildlife habitat.

However, there are weaknesses in the ordinances. Only the County ordinance addresses retaining streams above ground. The ordinances fail to adequately address one common cause of pollution, namely the release of sediments from construction sites and temporary access roads during the rainy season. Excessive sediment loads can degrade water quality and cause extensive damage by covering plants and streambed habitats and even

blocking the flow of water. In addition, current efforts to enforce these ordinances are deficient.

Recommendations

1.7.1. Encourage watershed-based planning in Marin County, to include participation by property owners or their representatives, water diverters and dischargers, regulators, commercial users, environmental interests, fisheries, the general public and other interested stakeholders.

1.7.2. Strengthen stream and creek protections, both policies and ordinances, so they cover ephemeral and intermittent streams whether or not they are identified as solid or dashed blue line streams on USGS Quadmaps. Ensure protection for all streams connecting with a bay or lagoon, including those that have been channelized or otherwise altered by human intervention. Provide for protection of 50 to 100-foot buffers along stream banks even where no riparian vegetation exists.

1.7.3. Encourage the County, cities and towns to adopt stream protection policies that require streams to be retained above ground and that provide for adequate buffers as described above. Diversions should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact to stream habitat from reduction of stream flows and that the diversion, however small, would not contribute to adverse cumulative impacts.

1.7.4. Ensure that the County, cities and towns adopt similar stream protection policies and ordinances so Marin streams receive the same level of protection throughout the county. Planning for stream protection and erosion control should occur on a watershed basis and not just along the existing jurisdictional boundaries. (Note: No matter how good policies are, without consistent, developer-funded monitoring by informed staff these policies will fail to protect our streams.)

1.7.5. Revise municipal codes to require applicants to submit preliminary erosion control plans, including temporary access roads, for review as part of EIRs, thereby allowing the public to assess their adequacy.

1.7.6. Add policies to the Countywide Plan that require, not just encourage, the retention of native vegetation and replacement of native streamside vegetation in denuded areas.

1.7.7. Ensure that jurisdictions enforce provisions in stormwater ordinances. This should include requiring bonds to be posted prior to development to cover the cost of mitigation monitoring and correction of infractions of stream and creekside policies or provisions in stormwater ordinances (MCSTOPPP).

1.8. PONDS AND LAGOONS

Ponds are a source of water for insects, birds, amphibians, mammals and reptiles. These feed on fish, crustaceans and insect nymphs and larvae living in the protection of wetland plants such as cattail, rush, spikerush, willow and tule growing on the margins. Ponds and lagoons are habitat for California red-legged frog, a species listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Recommendations

1.8.1. Ensure the integrity of pond or lagoon ecosystems by prohibiting grading changes to the banks of ponds or lagoons.

1.8.2. Ensure the continued survival of animals dependent upon ponds by preventing the removal of vegetation and working with the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito Abatement District on methods of vector control that are not destructive.

1.9 GRASSLANDS/AGRICULTURE

The Coastal Prairie Grassland is a dense grassland mosaic of both turf-forming and bunch grasses. Native perennials such as the blue-eyed grass, iris and buttercup are interspersed with the grasses. This grassland grows on the ocean-facing slopes of the outer and middle coastal ranges, primarily in the northwestern portion of Marin County and on hillsides surrounding San Francisco Bay. These coastal grasslands are very productive with extremely long growing seasons due to the moderate climate and availability of moisture. This is the reason that the Coastal Prairie has been the foundation of grazing agriculture, particularly dairy ranching, in Marin. Because it is such a productive ecosystem many amphibians, reptiles, birds and small mammals thrive here and serve as prey for larger raptors and mammal predators. The perennial native species of grass have been largely replaced by Mediterranean annual grasses, which provide less nutritious grazing.

Recommendations

1.9.1. Emphasize the importance of preserving not only agriculture but also the grassland ecosystem on which pastoral agriculture was originally based.

1.9.2. Encourage grazing methods that increase the cover of native perennial grasses and forbs (herbaceous plants) and discourage those that increase the cover of introduced and annual grasses.

1.9.3. Recognize that grasslands are not "vacant" areas where nothing will be destroyed if development or crop agriculture takes place. Grasslands are among California's most endangered habitats and are critical to effective watershed management.

1.10. SERPENTINE GRASSLAND

This special and rare subset of Coastal Grassland is found mainly on serpentine rock on the Tiburon Peninsula (Ring Mountain). Smaller outcrops of serpentine rock and its resulting soils are found in limited locations on Mount Tamalpais, Carson Ridge and Mount Burdell. The chemical nature of serpentine inhibits most plants from growing on it. Those that are successful are often restricted to serpentine soils and are isolated genetically from others of their species because of the distance between outcrops. Thus a small population on one small outcrop may differentiate into a subspecies or separate species and, by nature, be rare. If anything causes change in the outcrop the population could become endangered. Many of Marin's threatened or endangered plants are serpentine endemics. Three of these are the Tiburon jewelflower, Tiburon Mariposa lily, and the Tiburon Indian paintbrush.

Recommendations

1.10.1. Do not consider serpentine grassland to be "vacant" because of the lack of trees and scarcity of vegetation. Recognize that although it may not be a biologically

productive community it may be habitat for threatened or endangered species and requires a very thorough biological assessment before any change is considered.

1.10.2. Recognize the possible incompetence of the underlying serpentine rock to support structures, and require a thorough geological and soils analysis of any serpentine site proposed for development.

1.11. CHAPARRAL

This community is a dense, often impenetrable cover of evergreen shrubs ranging from three to 10 feet in height with occasional tree species. The shrub species of Marin County typically are manzanita on the ridge tops, chamise on steep slopes and scrub oak in the ravines. The plants are deep-rooted to contend with summer drought but also have surface roots to quickly exploit any available moisture. In the absence of fire for 25 to 60 years, chaparral become overly mature and begin to die (scenescent), and dead material (fuel) accumulates. These species are also woody and oily, thriving on low amounts of winter precipitation on poor, rocky soils. They are highly susceptible to wildfire and adapted to repeated fires, to which many species respond by stump sprouting. The dense cover and large production of fruit makes this an ideal habitat for wildlife. Chaparral is the most extensive habitat in California, covering about five percent of the state and serving the important function of watershed for much of the state.

Serpentine chaparral is found on Mount Tamalpais, Carson Ridge and Mount Burdell on serpentine outcroppings and soils. The community has much the same characteristics as mixed chaparral but is made up of species that can tolerate serpentine chemistry. Ordinary soil is rich in calcium and poor in magnesium; serpentine is the reverse and also contains more metals such as iron, chromium and nickel and very low amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus. A number of species of serpentine chaparral, such as the Tamalpais manzanita, are found on lists of rare, threatened and endangered plants of California.

Recommendations

1.11.1. Recognize in planning policies the importance of chaparral vegetation for both wildlife habitat and watershed protection.

1.11.2. In view of the high potential for wildfire at the urban wildland interface, restrict the introduction of further development into areas of chaparral for the safety of present and future residents.

1.11.3. Ensure that the County and cities, state and federal agencies, and special districts work together on vegetation management planning on both public and private lands. Such plans could include controlled burns, among other techniques, to reduce fuel loads in the chaparral. Water districts and groups such as the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and university researchers already studying the problem should be included in planning sessions.

1.11.4. Promote cooperation between the County, cities, state, special districts and the County's Office of Emergency Services in developing and maintaining a wildland fire evacuation plan for residents. This plan should also recognize the potential for catastrophic landslides in the years following a fire due to soil instability.

1.12. COASTAL SCRUB

The dense shrub community on the steep, coastal slopes above the Pacific and the San Francisco Bay includes species such as coyote brush, lupine, California sagebrush, poison oak and California blackberry. These species are not as woody or flammable as are the chaparral species. Shaped by wind and salt spray, the vegetation stabilizes slopes and provides habitat for many small bird and mammal species and for food plants for many insects including some special status species.

Recommendation

1.12.1. Recognize in planning policies the importance of coastal scrub vegetation for both wildlife habitat and slope stabilization and limit development accordingly.

1.13. REDWOOD FOREST

Redwood forests are moderately dense communities of very tall trees. Because they are so tall and grow so rapidly, they are dependent on adequate soil and atmospheric moisture to enable them to lift enough moisture to the height of their crowns. Root systems are shallow and widely spreading and dependent on oxygen in the soil spaces. The trees have thick, fire-resistant bark and occur on the sandy, alluvial soils of the floor and lower slopes of valleys such as along Redwood Creek in Muir Woods and in many smaller canyons throughout Marin County. Redwoods optimally grow where they can receive 60 inches of annual precipitation, including fog drip. They do not occur on serpentine soils. Most redwoods reproduce vegetatively by sprouts from their base and successfully germinate from seed only where a fire, flood or landslide has exposed the mineral soil. Because of tannins in the wood cells, redwood resists rot and termites and thus is a highly prized building material in California. Most of the redwoods found in Marin County represent second or third growth; virgin trees were felled many years ago, with the primary exception of those in the protected stands in Muir Woods National Monument.

Recommendations

1.13.1. In siting structures or impervious surfaces, avoid compaction of soil near to and, if possible, in areas radiating out from trunks.

1.13.2. Avoid removal of portions of a redwood forest that might expose the remaining trees to wind throw.

1.14. OAK WOODLAND

Coast live oak woodlands occur on the drier slopes of hills in eastern Marin County, where precipitation varies from 22 to 32 inches per year. Tree species also occurring with the coast live oak are California bay, California buckeye, valley oak, madrone and black oak. This community is largely adjacent to and within the urban or City-Centered Corridor of Marin County and thus is particularly subject to removal for development and impacts associated with human activity. In recent years several tree species in the community have been found to be susceptible to a disease called “sudden oak death” and large numbers of these species have died in Marin. Species susceptible to, or acting as hosts for, the disease include coast live oak, black oak, madrone, and California bay. Most of the trees in the community are also very sensitive to changes in the soil elevation, compaction and/or moisture under their canopy.

Valley oaks also occur on flat alluvial valley floors. Broad areas of grassland studded with occasional valley oaks are called oak savannahs, represented on several dairy lands in North Marin. Oak woodland is widely used by a variety of wildlife species, including both narrowly and widely adapted bird species. Acorns supply a major food source for many species of mammals and birds that also browse the foliage, particularly black-tailed deer.

Recommendations

1.14.1. Avoid compaction or changes in depth of soil or excessive water near oak trunks and within the tree dripline. In or near an oak woodland or savannah be aware of the sensitivity of the tree species to physical changes in the soil or groundwater regime. In particular, avoid subjecting coast live oak to typical garden irrigation.

1.14.2. Continue to adequately fund collaborative research efforts aimed at solving questions surrounding sudden oak death, such as vector, preventing infection, treatment of affected trees, prevention of spread, and best methods to prevent wildland fire resulting from the increased fuel load.

1.15. OAK/BAY WOODLAND AND DOUGLAS FIR/REDWOOD FOREST

These two forest and woodland types are mapped separately on the Vegetation Map of Marin County but may also be referred to together as the Broadleaf Evergreen/Conifer Forest. This is an intermediate forest between the moist (mesic) redwood forest and the dry (xeric) oak woodland. In a survey of Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) watershed lands, Parker (1990) determined that 90 percent of the cover is comprised of seven species: tanbark oak, California bay, Douglas fir, coast redwood, madrone, coast live oak and Sargent cypress. However, these species never all occur in the same location. Of these trees tanbark oak, California bay, coast live oak, madrone and coast redwood are subject to or host to"sudden oak death" pathogen.

Recommendations

1.15.1. When planning land use changes or vegetation management in or near this forest type, be aware of the sensitivity of the tree species to both physical changes in the soil and moisture regime and to the introduction of pathogens.

1.15.2. Continue to adequately fund collaborative research efforts aimed at solving questions surrounding "sudden oak death." such as vector, preventing infection, treatment of affected trees, prevention of spread and best methods to prevent wildland fire resulting from the increased fuel load.

1.16. PINE/CYPRESS FOREST

The Sargent cypress stands in the MMWD watershed are mapped along with those of the closed cone Bishop pine. The Sargent cypress, a serpentine endemic, occurs in serpentine chaparral on Mount Tamalpais and in a dense forest on Carson Ridge to the northwest. Both areas are publicly owned lands. Bishop pine occurs on the Inverness Ridge within and adjacent to the Point Reyes National Seashore. It is a relictual species (dating back to the last retreating ice age) that occurs in several maritime locations in California of which Point Reyes Peninsula is the only site in Marin County. Soils in this location are granitic and described as "poor," i.e., low in nutrients. The seeds remain within the closed cones for years. Germination can occur only after a fire that is hot enough to open the cones also enables release of seeds.

1.17. PLANT COMMUNITIES AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Policies addressing protection of special status species and biodiversity were added to the Countywide Plan in 1994. The current CWP update (in process) contains a list of special status species in the appendix but only a very abbreviated list in the CWP text. This discussion should be complete, with all special status species included, in the text.

Plant communities native to Marin County are vital to maintaining diversity of plant and wildlife both for resident and migratory wildlife. Neotropical songbird populations are in decline worldwide due to loss of habitat. Amphibians are suffering declines too, from the perceived impacts of manmade chemicals causing mutations or weakening immune systems. As described above, Marin County is also experiencing the loss of hundreds of coast live oak, tanbark oak, black oak, madrone and apparently other species due to the introduction of a new pathogenic organism, a fungi-like alga.

Recommendations

1.17.1. Establish and implement policies designed to preserve the habitats described above and associated plant and animal species. These policies should include best management practices and accurate mapping of habitats, starting with the most sensitive and most vulnerable. Mapping should include serpentine grassland, needlegrass grassland, coastal prairie grassland, both tidal and diked salt marsh, seasonal wetlands, fresh-water wetlands and the low-lying grasslands and oak savannahs adjacent to salt marshes that are part of the baylands ecosystem.

1.17.2. Adopt Baylands Protection Corridor policies that include and recognize the importance of keeping the baylands ecosystem intact on St. Vincent's/Silveira lands as wildlife habitat and historic/cultural resources.

1.17.3. Encourage cities and towns that have not already done so to adopt tree preservation ordinances to protect native trees, native woodlands, and groves of native trees, regardless of whether they occur in urban or woodland areas.

1.17.4. Adopt and implement policies to ensure preservation of other habitat types, including grasslands, chaparral and rock outcroppings.

1.17.5. Adopt and implement policies that promote removal of invasive exotic plant species.

2. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Marin is fortunate that a major portion of the County is in public ownership. In addition to the federally-owned Muir Woods, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore, three state parks (Angel Island, China Camp, and Olompali) are in East Marin, and four (Mount Tamalpais, Samuel P. Taylor, Tomales Bay and Marconi Historical State Park) are in West Marin. The major county parks are Paradise, McNears Beach, McInnis Park and Stafford Lake. The Marin County Open Space District also owns and manages numerous open space preserves, and two water districts control more than 25,000 acres of watershed lands and reservoirs. These important parks, open space, and watershed lands are valuable community assets. But there are serious problems. Existing overuse and trends toward increased use threaten many sensitive and

popular areas. It is necessary to develop protections to sustain these resources for future generations.

The terms 'parks and open space' are sometimes used interchangeably. Locally, for the County and cities, park refers to protected publicly owned land that usually includes active recreational facilities such as playing fields or swimming pools. These are addressed under the **Community Facilities and Services** section of this document. The term 'open space' refers to protected open land, either private or public, in which the natural resources are preserved without developed facilities other than low impact trails. Marin County Open Space preserves, state and federal park areas, and watershed lands remain primarily in a natural state and are important local and regional assets. The development of county open space and watershed lands for additional recreational uses would change natural habitats and could adversely impact natural biological systems, wildlife and wildlife habitats.

Wilderness areas, as defined by the Marin County Open Space district, are roadless areas that have minimal use and public intrusion in order to maintain and sustain the health of the natural environment.

Recommendations

2.1. Increase funding for the Marin County Open Space District including consideration of an open space impact fee.

2.2. Ensure that policies, funding and other mechanisms are in place to guarantee the addition to and/or maintenance of natural resource lands in County, water district, state, and federal open space and park preserves.

2.3. Advocate that Marin County Open Space District give high priority to the acquisition of remaining large undeveloped wetland and bayland parcels.

2.4. Reduce or eliminate uses on open space, water district or park lands that would have adverse impacts on natural resources or be incompatible with adjacent natural resource areas.

2.5. Consider applying O-A zoning to privately owned parcels that have significant environmental constraints.

2.6. Ensure that planning for and management of parks, watershed lands and open space areas accomplishes at least the following:

- Protection of wildlife habitat areas.
- Enhancement or restoration of degraded habitat.
- Removal of non-native, invasive flora and fauna.
- Removal of feral animals such as cats, turkeys, fallow and axis deer.
- Re-introduction of native plants and wildlife.
- Identification and protection of habitat for threatened or endangered species and other special status species.
- Increased protection of hiking trails from illegal and inappropriate use.
- Compatible signage and placement for use by all parks and open space agencies.
- Education efforts regarding public lands, plants, and wildlife.

- Designation of wilderness areas in County Open Space and watershed lands and management of these areas for long-term protection.
- Research and implementation of ways to protect biotic communities.
- Research and implementation of ways to protect popular areas from overuse.
- A reduction in traffic problems related to recreational use (Refer to the **Transportation** section of this document).
- Interaction among agencies on related environmental issues.

3. AGRICULTURE

"Agriculture. The breeding, raising, pasturing, and grazing of livestock, for the production of food and fiber; the breeding and raising of bees, fish, poultry, and other fowl; and the planting, raising, harvesting and producing of agricultural, aquacultural, horticultural and forestry crops."
-- From Marin County Code Title 22, Development Code

Background. In 1971 most agricultural lands in Central and West Marin were rezoned to A-60, a low density zoning which permits no more than one unit per 60 acres. Two additional agricultural zoning districts, ARP (Agricultural, Residential Planned) and C-APZ (Coastal Agricultural Production Zone) were created in the early 1980s. The C-APZ zoning district imposed the strictest conditions for non-agricultural development. The pre-1971 zoning designation, A-2, a residential zoning district permitting one unit per two acres and allowing agricultural uses, remains in effect on some small parcels in West Marin and most agricultural parcels in the City-Centered Corridor which were not rezoned to ARP or a planned residential zoning district.

Complementing agricultural zoning, the nonprofit Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) was created in 1980, and through 2003 had permanently preserved more than 32,000 acres of West Marin agricultural land by acquiring agricultural conservation easements on these lands.

In 1982 the County created a Bayfront Conservation Zone (BFC), an overlay zone applicable to tidelands and historic bay marshlands along San Francisco and San Pablo Bays in the City-Centered Corridor. Some of the historic bay marshlands had been diked and have been used for agriculture for the past 100 years or so (primarily for growing oat hay or grazing cattle). The purpose of the BFC is to preserve natural habitats and agricultural values of property within the BFC zone. An environmental assessment is required prior to any application for development in this zone.

In the 1994 revision of the Countywide Plan an Agricultural Element was added to emphasize the County's commitment to the preservation of agriculture. The Agricultural Element included a separate section for agricultural lands in the BFC. The County is currently developing recommendations for revising the County's agricultural zoning. These recommendations apply to lands zoned A, ARP and C-APZ. There remains an inherent policy conflict between the purposes of the BFC and development permitted by A-2 zoning.

Agriculture is an important part of Marin's historic community character and economy. Undeveloped parcels near urban development may have an important potential for innovative farming techniques and for providing fresh food for local residents. Existing agricultural uses on parcels zoned for agriculture in both East and West Marin should be preserved unless these parcels contain wetlands, baylands or watercourses. When these natural habitats and their associated uplands are present these areas should be restored and preserved.

Community Marin places a high value on preserving agricultural lands in Marin while establishing land management practices to protect and restore natural habitats on those lands.

Recommendations

3.1. Revise A and ARP zoning districts to include standards and requirements similar to the C-APZ district, including the requirement for agricultural management plans and conservation easements. The intent of this is to assure that any residential development is secondary and subordinate to the primary agricultural use of the sites.

3.2. Eliminate "limited commercial uses" in ARP districts, and restrict "institutional uses" in A districts to those which will protect and enhance agricultural use of a property and which would not conflict with agriculture on nearby properties.

3.3. Consider increasing A-60 zoning to A-120 or A-200 zoning as has been done in other Bay Area counties.

3.4. Adopt and enforce agricultural management policies that prevent soil erosion and protect water quality and existing native woodland and riparian and wetland habitat. Require all new agricultural uses or land conversions to a different type of agriculture to submit management plans that implement these policies.

3.5. Support adequate funding for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on agricultural land by Marin Agricultural Land Trust or other qualified land conservation organizations.

3.6. Rezone large agricultural properties in the City-Centered Corridor to densities consistent with agricultural zoning densities in the Inland Rural Corridor, and incorporate the same standards and requirements as in revised A, ARP and C-APZ zoning.

3.7. Support agricultural practices that are compatible with wetland protection on those lands zoned for agriculture but which have wetland habitat values, and discourage agricultural practices that would be harmful to wetlands and sensitive wildlife habitat on these lands.

3.8. Convert the current Bayfront Conservation Zone to a fourth Countywide Plan corridor, the Baylands Protection Corridor, and extend its boundaries to include agricultural lands adjacent to the current Bayfront Conservation Zone.

3.9. Encourage organic agriculture.

3.10. Support second residential units for workers only where they are ancillary to the primary agricultural use of the property.

3.11. Regulate by use permit commercial campgrounds in agricultural districts.

3.12. On agricultural parcels, allow commercial equestrian facilities that are secondary and subordinate to the agricultural uses and subject to best equestrian management practices. The County should develop appropriate standards for equine facilities.

3.13. Prohibit non-agricultural uses such as libraries, museums and religious places of worship or residential religious retreats, group homes, golf courses and country clubs, schools, off-road vehicle courses, child day-care centers, hospitals, medical clinics and laboratories, and "other service uses" in agricultural districts.

3.14. Establish a maximum size of 4,000 square feet of floor area for residences and their associated non-agricultural accessory structures in agricultural districts.

3.15. Protect viewsheds in agricultural areas by prohibiting roads and structures on ridges.

4. HOUSING

(As revised January 30, 2009 by the Community Marin Group)

Background.

The 2007 Marin Countywide Plan contains housing policies that are consistent with the recommendations of Community Marin--to encourage infill housing at locations where minimal or no adverse environmental impacts would result and where there are services, to provide housing affordable to all segments of Marin's work force, and to retain a diverse population.

Continuing issues are that the number of new jobs created in Marin grows at a greater rate than the number of housing units, and the cost of housing has spiraled so that it is not affordable to many Marin employees. Today Marin's work force increasingly commutes from outside the county. It is time again to evaluate our needs regarding jobs and housing. This will require action by the cities, where most new commercial growth is planned, as well as the County. Another continuing problem is a sprawling development pattern that burdens taxpayers with infrastructure costs and harms the environment.

A major issue not addressed in the new Plan is that of maximum house size, except in agricultural areas, where a maximum of 7,000 square feet is allowed under certain conditions. The desirability of Marin as a place to live, market forces and social values foster construction of large custom homes. County zoning ordinances often allow, and even encourage, new development on large lots outside of urban areas. In addition small older homes in existing neighborhoods are being enlarged – thus decreasing the stock of lower priced housing. Such expansions, together with construction of new large homes, impairs community character.

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The unchecked proliferation of oversized houses has adverse environmental and social effects:

- Large homes have a greater potential to degrade areas rich in natural resources and wildlife habitat. The larger the footprint of the house the more habitat lost, the more trees cut down, the more grasslands and creeks covered.

- Large houses are wasteful of natural resources, including for construction, furnishings, maintenance, water, landscaping, heating and other ongoing energy needs.
- "Green" building ordinances and conservation measures can reduce impacts on resources and water, but the effects of large homes are still much greater than for smaller homes.
- Large impervious surfaces contribute to erosion, polluted run-off and flooding.
- Large homes that are located away from existing infrastructure and transportation tend to increase vehicle miles traveled and the costs of other services.
- Oversized homes in developed areas can impair the character of existing neighborhoods.
- In agricultural zones, the potential for oversize homes jeopardizes the long-term viability of agricultural use, because the financial value of very large homes may cause the property to have more value for estate use than for agricultural use.

We propose that the County, cities and towns, where applicable, take the following actions:

Recommendations

4.1 Establish a maximum house size of 3,500 square feet, unless a lower maximum is specified in adopted community plans. Allow a size larger than the maximum only if the unit exceeds all standards, has no adverse impacts on sensitive habitat, does not exceed the energy use of a 3,500 square foot house, conforms to the average size of houses in the neighborhood, and if the developer makes a compensatory contribution to a housing trust fund. Establish revised, stricter standards for floor area ratio, lot coverage, existing community character, bulk, mass, slope, height, accessory structures, garages, and design review that could limit size to less than the maximum. Make it clear that a maximum is not an entitlement.

4.2 Recognize that Marin is part of a major urban area that is economically interdependent. Look for solutions to housing, employment and transportation issues in a regional context. Work with state and local legislators to explore techniques for developing and retaining below market rate housing. Establish an interjurisdictional planning entity to address countywide planning issues, including the need to change the way the state allocates Regional Housing Needs Allocations, which do not take into account local environmental and infrastructure constraints.

4.3 Prevent sprawl and intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas; wildlife habitat; areas subject to wildfires, flooding, and earthquakes; and areas designated as priorities for conservation and open space, through such means as urban growth boundaries.

4.4 Encourage infill and mixed use of spaces above parking lots, shopping centers and other commercial centers, and reuse of existing buildings for housing.

4.5 Locate housing near transit and other existing services, without impairing natural resources, in order to encourage walking and bicycle use, to discourage the use of the private automobile, and to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

4.6 Assess the environmental, economic and social toll that continued job growth is having on the County. Evaluate parcels currently zoned for commercial use for rezoning to residential or mixed use.

4.7 Retain existing below market rate housing. This may be done through zoning, tax incentives, permitting of second units and technical assistance. Work with the state and with local jurisdictions to establish procedures for retaining below market rate housing.

4.8 Establish procedures for maintaining and increasing the stock of rental housing and encourage second units, subject to environmental protection.

4.9 Explore strategies such as establishing and sustaining a housing trust fund. A possible mechanism for accomplishing this would be the use of the real estate transfer tax.

4.10 Establish and enforce limits on the size of additions to existing residences consistent with protection of and efficient use of environmental resources, including energy and water.

4.11 Increase the percentage requirements for below market rate units, with a minimum requirement of 20 percent, and reduce the project size threshold in inclusionary zoning ordinances. (For example, the County now requires an inclusionary impact fee for any new housing unit of 2,000 square feet or more.) Require provision of below market rate housing on-site rather than allowing in lieu fees, where appropriate. If in lieu fees are permitted, they should be adequate to cover the actual cost of developing affordable units.

4.12 Require developers of commercial properties to provide or fully fund an appropriate amount of below market rate housing within the County. San Rafael, Novato, and the County have jobs/housing linkage fees. Other cities and towns should adopt similar requirements; funds could be deposited into an interjurisdictional housing trust fund.

4.13 Consider increasing density in infill locations to provide less expensive housing.

4.14 Incorporate conservation measures and green siting and building techniques such as those outlined under **Community Development,** recommendation #8, below.

4.15 The County and cities should work cooperatively with other jurisdictions, non-profit housing, environmental and neighborhood groups to implement these programs within the County and should work with state legislators to implement such programs statewide.

5. ECONOMIC VITALITY

Background. Countywide Plans historically have called for increasing the number of jobs in the County to encourage the development of a more self-sufficient, service-oriented local economy and also to reduce the amount of traditional commuting to the job center in San Francisco. Local jurisdictions have promoted commercial (i.e. office, retail, and light industrial) development policies to support and nourish a vital local economy, and also to help compensate for the loss of property taxes resulting from the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. These policies have led to an increase in commercial space and growth in the number of local jobs in excess of the available housing supply for these added workers. County and city governments continue to promote Marin as a job center in the interest of maintaining local economic vitality, and to reduce the out-of-county commuting trips at peak times. Consequently professional, scientific and technical services jobs have become the fastest growing segment of employment.

However, retail trades still provide the largest number of jobs in Marin, and these jobs are often low-wage, which means that many of the service personnel must commute long distances from their homes to work in Marin County.

Commercial developments and accompanying job growth rates in the county continue to exceed the growth in available housing supply. According to Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) projections for the next 20 years, job growth will continue to be twice that of new housing supply.

Commercial development strategies promoting Marin as a job center have also played a significant role in exacerbating traffic congestion on the county's highways, and on arterial and local roadways. Commuter traffic problems persist and have become worse.

Commercial development plans are not coordinated with other planning objectives. Economic Vitality policy objectives have not been sufficiently specific, are often in conflict with other planning objectives, and require better integration with larger planning policy objectives.

Recommendations

5.1. Focus new development in existing community centers through infill and reuse of existing commercial sites on a mixed commercial and residential basis. Balance new development and reuse with traffic demands and transit opportunities. Encourage preservation and enhancement of the existing town centers.

5.2. Reduce the amount of new commercial development authorized in general plans, particularly in Novato and San Rafael, in order to reduce the additional transportation and environmental impacts caused by the additional job growth.

5.3. Reduce the amount of land designated for new commercial development, especially areas isolated from transit systems or that could accommodate housing.

5.4. Encourage retention of businesses that supply the diverse and essential needs of the people who live and work in Marin.

5.5. Support state legislation to reform and stabilize local government revenue sources in order to reduce the incentives of local jurisdictions to plan and zone for dollars.

5.6. Prohibit additional major retail facilities, including regional, sub-regional or Big Box retail centers.

5.7. Expand and enhance the sophistication of Green Business certification programs in order to promote increasing levels of "Green" performance, attract more businesses into the program, and increase funding for associated outreach and recognition. Other local jurisdictions should establish similar programs or participate in the County's Green Business Certification Program.

5.8. Incorporate in countywide economic policies the commitment to, and programs for, the reduction of the ecological footprint of Marin. The ecological footprint is a measure of the total land area required to provide the food, products and services to sustain the humans, plants and animals living here. It includes all lands used to grow food and provide fiber, energy, building materials, waste absorption and habitation for Marin County's population. It has been estimated that our ecological footprint is approximately 13 times the size of our county's land area. This is because we travel long distances to work, we consume many material-intensive products from far-flung locations, we eat foodstuffs shipped long distances to our restaurants and shops and we rely on distant sources for all of our energy and most of our material requirements. Efforts to reduce this footprint could include promoting local food production and purchasing, incentives for more fuel-efficient fleets among governments and major employers, energy-efficient public transit, and increasing local and/or renewable energy production, such as solar and wind power. All these programs would help in reducing the impact of our ecological footprint on the environment outside, as well as inside, our county.

5.9. Reduce the use of synthetic packaging materials that end up as waste. Provide information on ways to reduce overall packaging, and encourage companies that currently exist or plan to locate in Marin to use fully biodegradable packaging materials, such as cornstarch "peanuts."

5.10. Provide continuing information to our business community about current methods of sustainable product design and production, such as "closing the loop" of the product life cycle. Many products today are disposed of after limited use, the result of a traditional linear path "from raw material-to-factory-to-consumer-to-landfill." The new "cradle-to-cradle" product design model focuses on ways to transform waste back into useable resources. Thus, products such as computers can be designed for easy disassembly and reuse in the marketplace. Some companies take back their products for reuse and others reuse components and materials disassembled from the original product. Where reuse is not possible, materials can be recycled. In particular, non-biodegradable materials should be kept in closed production and reuse loops so that humans and the environment are not exposed to such materials and the general public does not have to bear the costs of their storage or disposal. Marin County and cities should encourage companies doing business with them to employ such programs. Current recycling efforts in Marin should be expanded to serve the entire county. The County should also encourage both production and distribution businesses to be ultimately responsible for the entire environmental and social costs of the goods and services provided, including their use, recycling and disposal.

5.11. Examine the net public costs of all new commercial developments, including those of infrastructure, services and affordable workforce housing requirements.

Require that commercial developments fully meet those costs as part of the planning and approval process.

5.12. Require developers of commercial space to provide housing mitigation remedies, with a strong preference for building the needed associated housing on-site or in other approved locations. Regulatory and zoning changes should be enacted concurrently to support the development of housing in appropriate infill locations within the City-Centered corridor. In lieu fees should be allowed only as a last resort and should reflect as closely as possible the true public cost of providing the associated housing needs generated by the new commercial development.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Background. Since 1973 the Countywide Plan has called for the protection and development of community centers characterized by accessibility, mixed use and amenities. These qualities, which are exemplified in the traditional town centers in Marin, are important principles of *Community Marin*.

A number of issues should be addressed. New development has generally been single use, sprawling, accessible only by automobile, surrounded by vast expanses of parking and generally devoid of amenities. Shopping malls, industrial parks and conventional subdivisions are prime examples of development that contradict the design principles of the Countywide Plan. Most new development has also been visually and functionally monotonous, rather than contributing to a diversity of activities and opportunities. Efforts to incorporate energy efficiency, green building and landscaping techniques and materials into new development are entirely lacking or inconsistent at best. Apparent loopholes in zoning ordinances have permitted inappropriate development. For example, Residential, Multi-Family Planned (RMP) zoning allows large scale office development on residentially designated land and the Agricultural Residential Planned (ARP) zoning allows large scale "limited commercial" use on agriculturally designated land.

Recommendations

6.1. Focus new development on existing community centers, through infill and reuse. The design should maintain the existing scale and enhance the historic, community-centered character of Marin.

6.2. Provide for a range of activities and opportunities for interaction within community centers, recognizing the importance of diversity of choice for people at different stages in life. Include housing, shopping, services, cultural facilities, jobs and outdoor public spaces.

6.3. Discourage sprawling development along frontage roads in order to reinforce community identity and separation.

6.4. Consider adding housing and other activities to existing shopping centers, through the use of air rights over parking lots and other means, so that they become more vital community centers.

6.5. Encourage mixed use development, such as housing above stores, at locations with good transportation and other services, and consistent with environmental constraints and desired community character.

6.6. Reduce the total amount of additional growth allowed by current plans; don't just mitigate its impacts. Future growth should be planned in accordance with standards for environmental protection and goals for protection and enhancement of the County's existing character, and should take into account the potential availability of services and resources. It must be recognized that there is an ultimate limit to growth based on these constraints.

6.7. Amend the Countywide Plan and revise the Residential Multiple Planned (RMP) zoning designation to clarify that any office use must be ancillary and subordinate to the primary residential use.

6.8. Require new development, both residential and commercial, to incorporate energy efficiency and other resource conserving measures in all aspects of siting, infrastructure, construction techniques and materials, and landscaping, such as those listed below:

- Encourage compact development patterns that promote efficient use of electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and other fuels.
- Maintain natural landforms and natural habitats by prohibiting massive grading, encroachment into or filling of floodplains and wetlands, and removal of native vegetation.
- Make use of small-scale land forms such as berms, native and introduced landscaping, buildings and pavement, solar orientation, and other layout, siting, and design opportunities that optimize microclimate when siting buildings to reduce building energy demands.
- Minimize conversion of water absorbent ground surfaces to impervious materials.
- Maximize dedication of land for open space, agriculture, and/or habitat protection purposes by clustering development.
- Where feasible, use on site renewable energy technologies, including both active and passive solar, to reduce demands for grid-delivered electricity and natural gas.
- Utilize recycled or renewable materials for roads and structures, including materials from sustainable-certified sources and materials that can be recycled in the future.
- Conserve water use through installation of locally adapted and drought-tolerant landscaping; use recycled (waste) water or graywater wherever possible. Consider codes to encourage the use of graywater in new construction.
- Make recycling facilities readily available to residents/occupants.

- Encourage use of proven resource-conserving materials and construction technologies. In all other respects, use design elements that minimize harm to the external environment and ensure a healthy indoor environment.

7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Background. Although a Community Facilities element is not required under State law, the 1994 Countywide Plan included such an element for the first time. The current revision of the plan includes Community Facilities under the section on the built environment. The element expands generally rather than specifically on the discussion of urban service areas and service availability included in the 1982 Plan. It specifically addresses four services: police, fire, water, and sewer, and, to a lesser degree, schools, child care, telecommunications and waste. Because of the implications for the environment, *Community Marin* addresses water supply, hazardous waste, stormwater runoff, telecommunications, and on-site septic systems. Community parks are also discussed here.

Environmental concerns with respect to community facilities and services are no longer limited to adequacies of supply that might restrict growth. Rather, the emphasis now is on sustainability, that is the effects of service systems on the county's ecological footprint. It is necessary to consider impacts of system expansion on donor sites, as well as on Marin County. For example, a pipeline from the Russian River affects that watershed significantly by reducing flows in the river. Before Marin expands its draw from this donor location, it should consider all impacts and implement measures here, to minimize those impacts that occur elsewhere. It is also necessary to strengthen conservation and recycling of all resources that provide public facilities and services.

The following are some of the issues that need to be addressed:

- The capacity of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District and the Novato Sanitation District in the event that all the development proposed for the area north of Puerto Suello Hill is built.
- The ultimate capacity constraint on sewage discharges to protect water quality of bays.
- An effective countywide hazardous waste program.
- Improved septic regulation and enforcement.
- Environmental impacts of importing water from the Russian River.

Recommendations

7.1. Limit allowable development in accordance with the availability of utilities and other services, particularly if expanding these services would result in adverse environmental impacts.

7.2. Plan service facilities, such as sanitation and water supply, so that they serve desirable land use patterns and defined population levels. The environmental impacts of developing additional service facilities should be carefully evaluated as

part of the planning process. The planning of general purpose governments and service agencies should be coordinated.

7.3. Reduce eastern Marin County's dependence on the importation of water from the Russian River and prohibit additional importation from Lagunitas Creek, in view of the adverse impacts on both watersheds, as well as concerns about long-term reliability and unknown future costs of the Russian River source.

7.4. Implement a stronger household and school hazardous waste collection program. Include a strong educational component. Coordinate with the cities to prevent uses that involve placement of hazardous materials near creeks and sensitive sites such as schools, hospitals, high occupancy buildings, and nursing homes.

7.5. Develop the telecommunications infrastructure in the most environmentally beneficial way, to avoid the impacts of the facilities on humans and wildlife.

7.6. Develop and implement improved septic standards to protect public health and to encourage more widespread compliance, based on a reliable monitoring system and improved technology. Adopt regulations to ensure clean water standards without permitting development that exceeds adopted land use plans.

7.7. Implement the Regional Integrated Waste Management Plan. Encourage the expansion of recycling efforts to include the entire county, and a program for use of minimal resources and recyclable packaging. Implement the policies of the 1982 Source Reduction and Recycling Element. Encourage the use of local renewable resources.

7.8. Implement the measures identified in the 2002 Energy Management Study of County Facilities, which would result in energy savings of 75 percent, and encourage the cities to undertake similar efforts.

7.9. Strengthen programs to divert construction waste from landfills, including on site use of materials.

7.10. Create an energy office, joint powers authority, or regional energy agency that will serve all 11 cities and the county in two key activities:

- Providing energy efficiency analyses, interventions, projects and consulting to government, non-profit organizations and businesses.
- Investing in renewable energy generation facilities, such as solar, wind, wave power and hydroelectric (on existing dams) to reach a renewable generation target of 30 percent by 2020.

7.11. Support and encourage a broad range of water conservation strategies. Encourage the expansion of wastewater reclamation and the use of graywater in residential and commercial development and in parks and recreational facilities.

7.12. Require on site retention of water runoff, through such means as holding ponds and/or vegetated swales, to minimize impacts on water quality and the storm water drainage system. Use measures such as landscaping and the replacement of pavement with permeable surfaces to reduce runoff after construction.

7.13. Encourage the County, cities, schools and other special districts to develop stronger programs to limit use of poisons used to control pests and employ current practices of Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

7.14. Retain school sites for community recreation.

7.15. Provide neighborhood parks for recreational uses.

7.16. Require setting aside land for community parks or public spaces or payment of in lieu park fees as part of new commercial or residential developments.

8. TRANSPORTATION

As revised by Community Marin group August 21, 2009

Background

A major change since the 2003 Community Marin document has been a growing public awareness of the impact of transportation on global warming. Governments now must extend their transportation planning far beyond issues of congestion reduction and mobility and must consider impacts on global warming in all planning activities. State legislation, AB 32, sets reduction standards for all greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). SB 375 establishes procedures for reducing GHG emissions from autos and light trucks. AB 32 finds that improved efficiency of autos and trucks does not provide enough GHG emission reductions to meet goals and concludes that Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) must also be reduced. This reduction would be achieved by constructing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for homes and businesses, a change from the low-density, auto-dependent development patterns common to suburban areas. These new state requirements will affect land use and transportation planning for all local governments. To reduce GHG emissions and thus global warming, all aspects of transportation must be designed, built and operated in a manner that reduces GHG emissions. See Appendix 1 for a summary of the steps being followed for AB 32 and SB 375.

Another change was the 2003 passage of Measure A, a ½ cent transportation sales tax. This revenue was intended to relieve traffic congestion on Highway 101 and 580, repair local roads, improve paratransit and local bus service and reduce congestion around schools.

Available funds have allowed several significant changes in transportation infrastructure to have occurred in recent years:

a. Continuous north and southbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on 101 from Highway 37 to the Richardson Bay Bridge have been completed.

b. The SMART commuter rail system was approved by the voters of Marin and Sonoma. This measure provides a 1/4 cent sales tax over 20 years. Funds were expected to pay for capital and operating costs for service from Larkspur to Cloverdale by 2014.

c. Regional Measure 2 (RM2) has provided funds for reconstruction of the CalPark tunnel for rail and bicycles; a portion of the bicycle/pedestrian Central Marin Ferry Connector project; planning for Highway 101 Greenbrae/ Twin Cities interchange improvements and planning for the 580/101NB merge lanes in San Rafael.

d. The Golden Gate Bridge Highway, and Transportation District has improved ferry service by operating more high speed vessels at the Larkspur and Sausalito Terminals.

e. Marin has received a $25 M federal grant for a pilot project for improved non-motorized transit in the county.

f. The North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA) is repairing trackage, bridges and other operational equipment in order to start freight operations between Willits and the national rail grid. This freight service will go through Novato.

The high level of activity building and widening roadways, pathways and other infrastructures can trigger direct and indirect damage to the natural environment and wildlife if not properly designed. *Marin's environmental organizations must monitor these design activities so as to prevent such damage from occurring.*

Issues To Be Addressed:

CEQA "Streamlining"

One controversial aspect of SB 375 is the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Assistance, or CEQA Streamlining, defined by the legislation. Mixed use projects meeting certain criteria are exempt from some aspects of CEQA. It is not clear how an impact analysis will be conducted for such projects and whether "streamlined" procedures may ignore environmental impacts.

"HOT" Lanes

Another controversial issue is the strong emphasis by MTC in its RTP to build and operate a network of HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes within the Bay Area. This program would allow motorists to pay a toll to use High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, previously reserved for buses, van pools and car pools, during peak hours. A major purpose of the HOT lanes would be to generate revenue for building infrastructure and operating transit systems. The HOT lane system has not been thoroughly studied, but it appears that it contradicts the goals of SB 375 in the reduction of VMT. Other problematic issues relating to HOT lanes are local governance, the realistic estimate of local and regional revenue generated, the impact of design standards on the environment, and the equity to users who have already paid for the HOV lanes.

Further complicating the issue is Caltrans' proposal of a statewide Managed System program for Express Lanes which would preempt the HOT Lanes system considered by MTC. Such a move could increases construction costs and impacts and could alter how revenue would be allocated throughout the state.

Transportation Demand Management

Highway and local roadway expansion will be limited to improving capacity of known choke points and improving safety. Work will begin on the HOV/Express Lane between Novato and Petaluma. No new roadways are anticipated in the current planning period beyond those described above.

These projects will not be effective if not accompanied with a Traffic Demand Management Program. The continuous HOV lanes from Highway 37 to the Richardson Bay Bridge will reduce congestion at peak periods only if more commuters use car pools, vans, and buses. It is not known whether HOT lanes will improve traffic flow in Marin. The SMART train will also reduce the use of the single occupant auto only if the system includes an effective shuttle fleet and adequate terminal parking. Safe-Routes-to-School (SRS) will be effective only if all county school districts convince parents to utilize non-motorized or bus transit to reduce congestion during morning and afternoon school congestion.

To fully utilize these added capacities, all jurisdictions, working with TAM, need to educate and encourage employers to provide incentives to employees to avoid single occupant auto commute travel.

Land Use and Transportation

SB 375 mandates an integrated regional land use and transportation planning approach to reduce GHG emission from automobiles and light trucks principally by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The proposal to achieve the mandated reductions is to conduct extensive regional planning. All Marin jurisdictions must study the ramifications of SB 375 and identify local lands that meet the SB 375 criteria for Transit Oriented Development. Because the ramifications of SB 375 are potentially so great, it will be necessary for environmental organizations, as well as local governments and other Marin groups, to become active stakeholders on this issue. See Appendix 1 for steps to implement SB 375.

Public Transit

Local bus public transit service within the County is under the control of Marin Transit. Local transit systems continue to be under funded, inadequate, and underutilized. Expanded public transit is needed to serve transit-dependent riders. Marin's aging population will likely require additional programs. The transit system must recognize the limits of fixed route operations. Shuttles, shared autos, vans, and taxis should be evaluated. Shuttles with satellite parking lots could be developed in partnership with SMART and national and state park services.

Rail transit service will be provided by SMART. It is essential that SMART operations be fully integrated with local bus and pedestrian systems. This would include blending schedules, merging fares, and making transfers transparent. It is also necessary that adequate parking is available adjacent to multimodal stations.

By providing attractive alternatives to automobile use, these transit improvements would also attract other users, thereby promoting the viability of public transit. These steps should assist in mitigating traffic congestion along the Highway 101 corridor and on the County's east-west arterials.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway, and Transportation District operates intercounty bus service along the 101 corridor through Marin and Sonoma as well as the ferry service from Larkspur and Sausalito. Funding for this service is primarily by the Golden Gate Bridge District from bridge toll revenues. The district has many financial obligations beyond funding this bus and ferry service. The Blue and Gold ferry service operates a commuter/tourist service between Tiburon and San Francisco. This bus and ferry system is a crucial system to insure connectivity to other Bay Area transportation systems.

Energy-efficiency and Pollution

A goal of transportation planning should be to maximize energy efficiency and to minimize pollution. State-wide and federal standards for automobile efficiency and alternative clean fuels are needed, as well as new vehicle technologies and engines that will reduce GHG emissions. Wherever possible, public agencies should utilize low emission, fuel-efficient vehicles so as to encourage the development of new technologies and necessary infrastructure support. Reduction of miles traveled is also necessary.

*Protection of Natural Resources.**

An overriding concern is the protection of open space and habitats, notably in Marin Baylands, that lie close to the Highway 101 and SMART rail corridors. Any potential or proposed transportation projects utilizing the existing rail right-of-way or US 101 corridor between Novato and Petaluma must avoid both direct and indirect harmful effects on wetlands, important habitats, and other natural resources of these areas and would be contingent on prior placement of land use controls. Any other new or expanded facilities, such as satellite or station-area parking must avoid impacts to natural resources. Only those transportation facilities that do not degrade these areas should be considered.
*"Natural resources" as a general term, includes, but is not limited to, all types of wetlands, riparian areas, chaparral, habitats of endangered species, resident and migratory species habitats, native trees and woodlands, hillsides, view sheds, ridgelines, movement corridors for wildlife, and buffer and habitat transition zones.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Demand Management

8.1 Reduce vehicle trips by expanding flextime, ridesharing, telecommuting, compressed work week, traffic information, subsidized bus pass, guaranteed ride and similar transportation demand techniques.

8.2 TAM and local jurisdictions should jointly develop long range transit plans containing funding plans and supported with robust EIR's.

8.3 Institute Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), that will include the following measures: (a) better traffic surveillance and faster removal of disabled vehicles when they are located in a highway or arterial bottleneck; (b) selectively applying ramp metering at on-ramps to enhance freeway traffic flow; and (c) improving real time information about "Next Bus" and travel times to allow people to schedule their travel more efficiently.

8.4 Encourage and provide for "stations" for alternative fueled vehicles, i.e.: electric plugs, battery exchange, hydrogen, etc. Stations to be in urban locations Provide shuttle bus services and satellite parking to serve popular tourist sites such as Sausalito, Fort Baker, Muir Woods, Stinson Beach, and Point Reyes National Seashore. Consider placing tourist-based shuttle bus

service parking lots off Doyle Drive in the Presidio, and other locations such as the Larkspur and Sausalito Ferry Terminals.

8.5 SMART and other transit systems should provide satellite parking and shuttle service to and from its stations.

8.6 Expand the Safe Routes to School Program with the objective of reducing vehicle trips.

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Transportation Projects

8.8 Ensure that proposed new transportation projects are consistent with land use policies, environmental constraints, and desired community character. The direct and indirect impacts of global warming on the natural environment must be considered as part of any transportation project.

8.9 Add Highway 101 HOV lanes through Novato between Highway 37 and Atherton Avenue. Build no more new freeways.

8.10 Operate school buses so as to reduce vehicle trips, especially during periods of peak congestion.

8.11 New soundwall construction along Highway 101 should have space for native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping between the wall and the edge of traffic lanes for aesthetic, air quality, and noise-modulating purposes.

8.12 Encourage construction and use of bicycle and pedestrian pathways in already-developed areas to support non-motorized commuter travel while not negatively impacting natural resources. .

8.13 Ensure that development of the Marin-Sonoma Narrows Project, located primarily within the Inland Rural Corridor, is consistent with that land use designation, so that:

a. The HOV lanes are built within the existing roadway footprint and with design exceptions of lane widths.

b. Apply design exceptions for frontage road lane widths beyond those needed to serve existing rural uses.

c. Frontage roads should not be continuous through the Narrows parallel to 101.

d. No new interchanges or flyovers should be built except where preeminent public safety concerns exist, such as at the Redwood Landfill.

e. Any bikeway constructed should avoid harm to natural resources and should be either class I or class II.

f. The Class I bikeway at San Antonia Creek must not be adjacent to the creek bed.

g. Rural character should be maintained by minimizing cut-and-fill roadway construction, limiting use and size of retaining walls, restricting signage, maintaining views, and preserving and enhancing native vegetation

h. Zoning designations should not be changed at interchange locations or through the Narrows rural corridor

i. Caltrans principles of "Context Sensitive Design" should be incorporated into the final design of the highway features

8.14 Improve traffic flow design of Highway 101 interchanges with the specific purpose of promoting auto, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit safety without impacting sensitive environmental resources.

8.15 Provide well maintained bus stop facilities with safe access to park-and-ride lots and connections to other modes of transit. Landscape interchanges with drought tolerant native plantings for esthetic and air quality purposes.

8.17 Encourage use of "traffic calming" measures to promote public safety in neighborhoods.

8.18 Confine aviation to the existing Gnoss Field (general aviation only), Marin Ranch Airport and the Richardson Bay Heliport and sea plane base.

8.19 Provide transit hubs that offer convenient and timely transfers among all transit modes: auto, bus, bike, pedestrian and rail.

Transit System

8.20 Fully integrate SMART operations with local bus and pedestrian systems. Blend schedules, merge fares, and make transfers transparent. Provide adequate parking adjacent to multimodal stations. Develop shuttles with satellite parking lots in partnership with other agencies, including national and state parks. Establish Quiet Zones in urban areas for both SMART and freight operations.

8.21 Expand intra-county transit. Buses work well on fixed routes; shuttles and vans have flexibility and capability to be reconfigured in response to land use changes and population shifts. Intra-county bus service will be the most likely means of increasing transit capacity of the east-west arterials. These buses must connect with minimum transfer time to north-south routes, SMART rail service and with ferry service.

8.22 All transit vehicles should be of the latest available designs in fuel efficiency and minimum GHG emissions.

8.23 Expand inter-county express bus service to provide convenient service to workers traveling into Marin from Sonoma, San Francisco, and East Bay Counties. Express buses, coupled with continuous HOV lanes, provide long distance commuters with an attractive alternative to auto commute travel.

8.24 Recommend to TAM that HOT lanes should not be implemented until detailed studies of the environmental impacts relating to GHG emissions, land use, quality of life, and economic issues have been completed and made available for public review. The primary goal of HOT lane management should be to maximize reduction of GHG emissions and to support transit operations, not to support additional highway construction.

8.25 Establish and expand bus routes that are responsive to the needs of workers, students, the elderly and other transit-dependent population sectors and/or communities.

8.26 Expand the ability of buses to accommodate bicycles, and encourage employers to provide secure bicycle storage, showers, and financial incentives to non-motorized commuters.

8.27 Expand paratransit services to meet the needs of the served population, such as seniors and the disabled.

8.28 Any study of possible relocation of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal to San Quentin must evaluate environmental impacts, traffic, cost and effectiveness of auto, rail and bus service compared to its current location. Any study of the reuse of the lands currently occupied by San Quentin Prison analysize issues above plus traffic impacts throughout Marin

8.29 A North Bay ferry terminal should not be built adjacent to San Pablo Bay locations north of Point San Pedro. Studies have shown that wetlands and related Bay habitats would be damaged. Sites under consideration are currently undeveloped and lack necessary infrastructure. Terminal operations in these locations would induce growth in sensitive habitat areas.

Land Use and Transportation

8.30 Monitor the implementation of the mixed use projects allowed by SB 375. The jurisdictions must work with ABAG and MTC to prevent SB 375 from being mis-applied to the detriment of the local environment. Development must be constrained in order to prevent the destruction of the local character of Marin's communities. Protection must be provided to ensure local traffic congestion and poor Level of Service (LOS) intersections do not negatively impact local residents

8.31 Locate any new affordable housing and associated services only in and near existing community centers and major transit stops so that people can work, shop, and obtain services without having to drive. This could be accomplished, in part, through redevelopment and mixed use of existing shopping centers. (See Community Development)

8.32 Avoid creating new commercial and residential development in areas that are not well served by transit systems or arterial roads with reserve capacity, or that have adverse effects on environmental resources and community character. (See Community Development)

8.33 Implement the new Marin Countywide Plan's recommendation for a City County Planning Agency to review linkages between local development and its regional impacts on air quality, traffic and land use.

Policies and Funding

8.34 Expand the TAM Strategic Plan so that it not only defines a set of projects that should be funded but also identifies their likely benefits for congestion relief, reduction of VMT, reduction of GHG and the project's potential for adverse environmental impacts. Those projects that maximize GHG reductions should be

given high priority.

8.35 The TAM Strategic Plan and Long Range Transit Plan should ensure that land use policies are in place that will accommodate the requirements of SB 375 and protect sensitive lands, avoid sprawl, limit commercial development to that which offers particular benefits to Marin; provide public funds for acquisition and protection of sensitive lands in perpetuity; and in other respects ensure that projects, in themselves, will not induce growth.

8.36 A mutually beneficial relationship between Golden Gate Transit and Marin Transit should continue so as to encourage greater use of local public transit services.

APPENDIX NO. 1-Implementing New State Legislation

Steps to Implement SB 375

Setting Targets – California Air Resources Board (CARB) will establish reduction targets, working in conjunction with MTC. Public disclosure of modeling techniques, growth forecasts, impacts of regional jobs-housing balance, economic trends and demographic trends is needed. CARB must consider various land use and transportation strategies to describe various targets and how to measure and monitor performance.

Modeling the Relationship between Transportation and Land Use - Critical modeling programs must be developed to facilitate decision making and public understanding about how land-use and transportation can result in reduced GHG. See Appendix 2 for modeling requirements.

Coordination between plans – Coordinate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

CEQA Relief – Grant limited CEQA relief to housing and mixed-use projects which are consistent with the regulations in SB 375 for Transit Priority Projects.

Steps to Implement AB 32

The State of California is implementing programs to reduce Green House Gas emissions (GHG). Reduction standards have been set in AB 32. This bill determined that reduction in emissions caused by automobiles and light trucks could not be achieved only with improved automobile design. It is also necessary to reduce emissions by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The legislation assumes that creating transit oriented land uses will result in reduced VMT which in turn results in reduced GHG emissions. In summary:

- The Air Resources Board (CARB) establishes the GHG emission targets for autos and light trucks.
- Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) establishes population growth targets for sub regional

communities. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) develops a travel demand computer model that is to be used by MTC to study the results of various possible plans to achieve the target GHG emission targets.

- MTC develops a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which is a land use plan that achieves the target GHG emission reduction.

  If the SCS does not meet target reductions, MTC must develop an Alternative Planning Strategy (ATS) which includes elements that are not included in current fiscal planning.

- The SCS is likely to include Transit Priority Projects (TPP) that contributes to emission reductions. TPP is a legislative definition of transit oriented development and other transit demand management (TDM) functions.

TPP meeting specific conditions can proceed with design without consideration of specific CEQA factors. A TPP does not have to evaluate induced growth; the impact of autos and light trucks associated with the project and does not allow density reductions as mitigation.

Planning future Transportation and Land Use designs will require all jurisdictions, TAM and interested parties to become aware of the potential impacts of AB 32 and SB 375 on the planning process.

APPENDIX 2

SB 375 Modeling requirements

The following factors must be incorporated into the modeling needed to create meaningful planning:

- ❑ Relationship among land-use density, automobile ownership, and VMT.
- ❑ Impact of enhanced transit service on vehicle ownership and VMT.
- ❑ Induced travel behavior and land development likely to result from highway or rail expansion.
- ❑ Mode splits between automobile, transit, carpool, bicycle and pedestrian trips.
- ❑ Speed and frequency, days, and hours of transit service operation.

APPENDIX 3

Rail Operations Within Marin County

The North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA) has received approval of funding allowing it to initiate freight rail service between Willits and the Lombard siding in Napa. The freight system will operate in Marin between the Marin/Sonoma county line at San Antonio Creek, going parallel to Highway 101, through Novato and then east parallel to Highway 37. This freight rail system has the potential of hauling heavy freight more efficiently and with fewer GHG emissions than possible by truck. To achieve this goal, the NCRA rail operator must acquire new equipment containing high performance standards and

properly operate and maintain this equipment. It is also necessary for NCRA and the freight operator, NWP Corp, to avoid creating negative impacts during construction and operations and to mitigate impacts where possible.

The NCRA has proposed extending the freight operations through the Eel River Canyon to Humboldt Bay. This project is beyond the scope of Community Marin but deserves the attention of Marin residents. Rail operations in the Eel River Canyon have a history of despoiling the canyon and river waters because of landslides and train derailments. The potential for serious impacts are real.

Freight rail and SMART passenger operations have the potential for creating significant negative noise impacts from horn operations at roadway crossings. It is essential that both systems operate with Quiet Zones in all urban areas.

The rail operations in Marin pass over many creeks and rivers. The Petaluma River is traversed by two drawbridges. The reliability of these old bridges, even if repaired, is unknown. The safety record of the NCRA freight operator has not been established. Emergency responses to spills or train accidents must be established and operational. A hazardous waste spill into the waterways adjacent to Marin would be disastrous.

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8.23.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE

Following are recommendations for major areas of eastern Marin County for which major development or change in land use may be proposed. These recommendations are based on the policies described in preceding sections. In all cases, allowable land uses and densities should be based on environmental constraints, availability of services - in particular transportation - and the protection of community character. This report does not address all areas, which may be proposed for development. There are other major areas of potential change, particularly in West Marin, that also deserve attention.

NORTHERN MARIN

Much of this area is in the proposed Baylands Protection Corridor and should be designated primarily for uses such as habitat conservation (or restoration) and agriculture which protect resources and scenic values and minimize hazards to public safety. Any development should require preparation of a master plan for the entire contiguous ownership, in which uses would be located to maximize protection of resources and minimize conflicts among uses. Any allowable density and uses should be determined based not on the total acreage but rather only on those limited parts of the land that are actually buildable.

9.1. Silveira North/Corda Ranches (unincorporated)

These properties, located along both sides of Highway 101 north of Gnoss Field and Rancho Olompali State Park, are zoned A-60 and are in the Inland Rural Corridor. They

have historically been used as dairies and for grazing. All of the Silveira Ranch property, except for a 200-foot wide strip along the west side of the freeway right-of-way and a 300-foot wide strip along the east side of the freeway right-of-way, is under Agricultural Contract. Both properties provide important seasonal ponded wetland and upland habitats. Interchanges and/or frontage roads being studied as part of the Marin/Sonoma Narrows project on Highway 101 could increase pressure for development in this area. Because of their important natural resource and community separator values, these properties should be permanently protected.

9.2. Burdell Island/Mira Monte Marina (unincorporated)

Burdell Island is a small hill surrounded by tidal and non-tidal marsh and a small marina with water access to the Petaluma River via San Antonio Creek. The property was zoned BFC-RCR (Bayfront Conservation Zone - Resort and Commercial Recreation). However because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys the zoning has reverted to RCR. It is in the Inland Rural Corridor. Although efforts to purchase this land for preservation have failed in the past, the entire site should be permanently protected and previously filled lands restored to tidal action. During the planning for conversion of the Marin/Sonoma Narrows to freeway status, consider public acquisition of this property in order to avoid the costs and adverse environmental impacts of building a new frontage road and/or interchange.

9.3. Gnoss Field Area (unincorporated)

The land surrounding Gnoss Field includes significant wetlands and diked baylands, which is an important part of the Petaluma marsh and the bayfront ecosystem. The area to the northeast of Gnoss Field and the Rush Creek seasonal wetlands east of Highway 101 are now owned by the Department of Fish and Game and are zoned O-A (Open Area). There are no sewers in the area and only a portion of the land to the west of Gnoss Field has been filled. The parcels west and south of Gnoss Field were zoned BFC-M3 (Bayfront Conservation Zone/Industrial) by the County. However because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys, the zoning appears to have reverted to M3 (Industrial).

The area surrounding Black John Slough was zoned BFC-RCR (Bayfront Conservation Zone/Commercial Recreation). However because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys, the area has reverted to RCR (Bayfront Conservation Zone) zoning.

The parcel along Black John Slough east of Gnoss Field, upon which the KCBS radio towers are located, is under Agricultural Contract, is used for grazing and provides seasonal wetland habitat values. This parcel was zoned BFC-A-60 (Bayfront Conservation Zone – Agricultural – 1 unit per 60 acres), however because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys, the zoning appears to have reverted to RCR.

Black John Slough is bordered by tidal marsh that provides endangered species habitat, including the largest population of endangered clapper rails in the North Bay, and should be protected. This entire area is outside the 20 year Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) approved by Novato voters in 1997 and should not be urbanized. Historic tidelands in this area which contain wetlands should not be converted to agriculture nor should services be

extended into undeveloped areas in the Bayfront Conservation Zone. There should be no new or expanded commercial or industrial development or annexation of land in this area to Novato.

9.4. North Leveroni Property (unincorporated)

These two parcels, located east of Gnoss Field and south of Black John Slough, contain 153 and 171 acres. They were zoned BFC-A-60 (Bayfront Conservation Zone – Agricultural – 1 unit per 60 acres), however because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys, the zoning appears to have reverted to M-3 (Industrial). The parcels are both under Agricultural Contract and are currently used for grazing. They contain seasonal wetlands and should be permanently preserved for agriculture or wetlands restoration.

9.5. Downtown Novato (City of Novato)

The City of Novato has developed a Downtown Specific Plan to define strategies to make the downtown serve more as a social, cultural, historical and transit center; to attract people for commerce and community affairs from Novato and the surrounding region; to maintain and enhance its small town feeling and historical characteristics; to define its built environment and the personal services to be provided there; and to be an active gathering place for the community. The area currently contains a number of important service related businesses, which should not be forced out of the community. Downtown Novato also continues to have excellent opportunities for mixed use, infill development - particularly residential units.

9.6. South Leveroni Property (unincorporated)

This Leveroni property is located southeast of the Highway 101/Highway 37 interchange in the Bel Marin Keys area. It was zoned BFC-ARP-10 (Bayfront Conservation/Planned Residential -1 unit per 10 acres) by the County. However, because of a court decision rescinding the entire ordinance that rezoned the undeveloped portion of Bel Marin Keys, the zoning appears to have reverted to A-2 (Agricultural – 1 unit per 2 acres). The area is diked baylands, is being used for agriculture and is subject to flooding. The site has extensive areas of shallow ponding in winter and provides habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife. An area along Bel Marin Keys Boulevard has been filled but continues to pond and, therefore, retains seasonal wetland values. The City of Novato, which includes this property in its Sphere of Influence, has designated the 164 acre site as Conservation (1 unit per 10-60 acres) and the 14 acre site along Hamilton Drive as Light Industrial/Office. This Leveroni property should be permanently preserved for agriculture and resource conservation.

9.7. St. Vincent's/Silveira (unincorporated)

The St. Vincent's/Silveira lands should be designated as part of the proposed Baylands Protection Corridor to protect the scenic, historical, agricultural and natural resource values for future generations and minimize public safety problems such as flooding, seismic hazards and traffic generation. These lands should be acquired for resource conservation, wildlife habitat and agricultural preservation and protection of public health and safety, rather than being designated for development. More appropriate infill and

redevelopment sites exist for new urban development and affordable housing. In the event the sites cannot be purchased and permanently protected, limited development should be permitted only on areas that do not contain important natural and cultural resources. St. Vincent's has modest development/redevelopment potential in the area of the existing historic buildings. If efforts to acquire Silveira Ranch are unsuccessful, transfer of development rights to the area just north of the existing St. Vincent's buildings should be considered.

Any development should be based on a master plan that emphasizes habitat protection, possibly expands agricultural use, and minimizes conflicts among these uses. The master plan should protect all wetlands, floodplains, unstable soils, agricultural lands, migratory and resident species, watercourses and other resources. The master plan should also avoid development on unstable soils and impacts on water quality. Among the values that must be preserved in such a plan are oak woodlands, seasonal and tidal wetlands, vernal pools, oak savanna habitats, views from Highway 101 to the bay, Miller Creek and its riparian corridor, the valley oaks, soils classified as farmlands of local importance, the historic buildings on the St. Vincent's property and important Miwok Indian archeological sites - all of which also function as an important community separator between San Rafael and Novato and provide the last major remnant of early Marin/early California along the now largely urbanized Highway 101 corridor.

Any development should also avoid the need for new infrastructure such as new road construction, expansion of the existing sewage treatment plant, flood protection along Miller Creek and widening of the Marinwood freeway overpass. Mclnnis Parkway should not be extended onto or through the property. Planning for future use of the properties should also be limited by the development constraint caused by existing traffic congestion on local roads and Highway 101 and there should be no transit stop along the railroad right-of-way on the property.

9.8. North San Rafael (City of San Rafael)

The City of San Rafael should re-examine the general plan and zoning for the remainder of the North San Rafael area, and not pursue the construction of McInnis Parkway or other expensive engineering solutions to transportation problems which will clearly have adverse effects on environmental resources and existing neighborhoods. Given the level of development in the area, there is no satisfactory engineering solution to the congestion problems in this area. Northgate Shopping Center and the area adjacent to it is an appropriate location for residential infill or reuse. New development should not result in further deterioration at already critical intersections.

9.9. Marin Ranch Airport (City of San Rafael)

This site consists of a small private airport and tidal and seasonal wetlands. Endangered clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse inhabit the tidal marsh fringes. The Marin Ranch Airport property should either continue in its present use or should be restored to wetland habitat. The City should not remove the existing deed restriction in order to allow development of the property.

9.10. Downtown San Rafael (City of San Rafael)

Downtown San Rafael continues to have excellent opportunities for mixed use, infill development, particularly residential development, to enhance the historic character of the downtown and to create an active, interesting, commercially vigorous, pedestrian oriented environment well served by transit and other essential services. However, traffic congestion continues to constrain development. New development should not result in further deterioration at already critical intersections.

9.11. McNears Point (unincorporated)

In 1982 the County approved a Reclamation Plan for closure of the quarry. At the same time, the property was rezoned to RMPC, which made the quarry operation a non-conforming use. Among the environmental constraints, which must be considered in planning for reuse of the property, are significant wetlands, which must be preserved. The capacity of Point San Pedro Road will also be a severe constraint, since it provides the only means of access. The quarry pit has a potential for conversion to recreational use, such as a marina.

9.12. Canalways (City of San Rafael)

The current San Rafael general plan designation for development of 150,000 square feet of office space and 250 housing units on this 85 acre diked historic marsh is inappropriate and should be eliminated. In view of the area's importance as a seasonal wetland and endangered species habitat, the property should be permanently preserved.

9.13. Canal Area (City of San Rafael)

The remaining undeveloped land should be designated for relatively lower traffic and job intensity light industrial and service uses, rather than office and retail. Additional residential use may only be appropriate in limited areas because of conflicts with existing industrial uses, limited public transportation and community services, and toxics. New development must also take into consideration the severe traffic constraints in the area.

SOUTHERN MARIN

9.14. San Quentin Prison (unincorporated)

This unique bayside site is being considered for potential institutional, housing, transportation and recreation uses should the State of California decide to close San Quentin Prison. Historic buildings and all submerged portions of the site should be preserved. Any redevelopment of the site raises significant traffic and circulation concerns. High-density commercial and residential development of the site would be out of character with Marin and inappropriate. The entire site should be master planned to promote a unified and balanced use of the land and bay frontage. The historic character of the adjacent San Quentin Village neighborhood should be preserved.

9.15. Madera Bay Park (Corte Madera)

Because it is an historic bayland area and because of its proximity to important adjacent wetland and endangered species habitat areas, this property is not appropriate for development and should be permanently preserved as habitat.

9.16. Paradise Drive Area & Martha Company Property (Easton Point) (unincorporated)

Severe environmental constraints and important natural resources exist in this area, particularly on the Martha Company property. These include ancient landslide areas, visually prominent ridgelines and steep slopes with serpentine soils, native oaks, drainageways and seeps, native grasslands plus the presence of the endangered red legged

frog on adjacent downstream ponds. In addition, there is only limited access to the area. The resources in this area should be preserved.

9.17. Tam Junction/Shoreline Highway (unincorporated)

Potential redevelopment and new development in this commercial area should seek to create a resident serving commercial center for the community, consistent with the significant traffic and environmental constraints on development in the area and the proximity to Bothin Marsh and Richardson Bay. This area, particularly along the shoreline, is an inappropriate location for large-scale buildings. In addition the Caltrans right-of-way through Bothin Marsh should be protected and restored to marsh.

10. STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAM

Each of the sections of this revised *Community Marin* report -- Environmental Quality, Parks and Open Space, Agriculture, Housing, Economic Vitality, Community Development, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, and Areas of Potential Change -- provide a basis for advocacy of positions by Marin's environmental organizations when governmental entities are considering related actions. The document also provides a basis for a program of action by the environmental organizations themselves. It is also clear that there are a few key actions, such as public acquisition of baylands that are critical to accomplishing the major goals of this report. Therefore, the report recommends a Strategic Action Program for the next five years, focusing on efforts that will be most effective in producing results.

10.1. Continue to work for incorporation of the recommended policies of the Baylands Protection Corridor in the Marin Countywide Plan and the general plans of the cities.

Protection of baylands is critical to preserve and restore natural resources, advance public health and safety.

10.2. Advocate and secure funding for the acquisition of all diked historic baylands associated with San Pablo/San Francisco Bay to maximize protection and restoration of the Bay ecosystem.

10.3. Because of the countywide significance, of the St. Vincent's/Silveira sites advocate that the Marin County Community Development Agency, with the active participation and guidance of the Countywide Planning Agency, take the lead in planning for these properties. Assure that the planning is based on strong environmental principles.

The future of these bayland properties is critically important to the entire county. Planning for their future should be a countywide responsibility, reviewed by the Countywide Planning Agency.

10.4. Reactivate the Countywide Planning Agency as an effective planning and growth management agency.

There continues to be a need for effective countywide planning in order to achieve coordinated, environmentally sound development of land use, transportation, and community facilities.

10.5. Amend the Countywide Plan and the ARP (Agricultural, Residential Planned) and RMP (Residential, Multiple Planned) zoning districts to strengthen protection for agricultural areas and to prohibit major non-residential developments in areas designated for agricultural and/or residential use.

The County's 1996 approval of the Lucasfilm expansion proposal and the currently pending proposal for 94,000 square feet of office space on the Oakview property between Lucas Valley and Marinwood west of Highway 101 clearly demonstrate the need to clarify land use policies in agricultural and low density residential areas and to prevent inappropriate development.

10.6. Continue to advocate that the County, possibly through the Countywide Planning Agency, establish cooperative planning relationships with Sonoma County and represent Marin in its dealings with regional agencies. Coordinate planning with Sonoma County to preserve natural resources and community separators and prevent urban sprawl.

There continues to be a need for coordination of planning for land use, as well as transportation, particularly with Sonoma County.

10.7. Support appropriate residential infill and mixed use projects as described in the Housing and Community Development sections of this report.

These are key strategies to meet ongoing housing needs.

10.8. Monitor activities and conduct further studies regarding the following subjects, and incorporate appropriate policies into future revisions of this document:

- Development pressures in West Marin due in part to increased recreational activity, conversion of agricultural lands to other uses, intensification of residential and commercial uses and evolving agricultural practices.
- Impact of overuse, increased use and pressures of additional recreation uses on county open space and county, state and federal parks.
- Cooperative and creative opportunities to meet county open space acquisition goals.
- Transportation policies for the use of the former Northwestern Pacific right-of-way and improvements to the Marin/Sonoma Narrows section of Highway 101.
- Annexation policies, Sphere of Influence boundary studies and the potential for other urban growth boundaries (UGBs) or similar measures, particularly with regard to the St. Vincent's/Silveira properties.
- Impact of California's fiscal structure on land use and transportation planning.

10.9. Create, adopt and implement a wetlands protection ordinance similar to the protections included in the Local Coastal Plan.

These are important environmental issues on which further study is needed before the organizations can take informed positions.