

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: October 20, 2017

Muir Woods Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael

Present: Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Kate Powers, Belle Cole, Ed Mainland, Pat Nelson, Nancy Bell, David Kunhardt, Judy Ford, Sarah Loughran, Cheryl Longinotti, Nona Dennis, Doug Cooper, Susan Stompe, Bob Miller, Kiki La Porta, Judy Teichman, Tom Flynn, Wendi Kallins.

Guest Speakers: Mary Sackett, aide to Sup. Damn Connolly; Derek McGill Planning Manager of Transportation Authority of Marin (lead); Molly Graham, TAM Public Outreach Coordinator.

Doug Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:05.

Brief Introductions

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

The September minutes were approved. M/S Pam/Sarah / Passed.

Announcements

The Sustainable Enterprise Conference will be held on October 26, a Thursday. This is the first time in Marin; previously, the conference has been held successfully in Sonoma County. They will have great speakers. It is a good forum for outreach.

The Environmental Forum of Marin will revisit climate change on October 24, in an event held from 6:30 to 8:30 at the Marin Art and Garden Center (come to see EVs at 6:00). The event will address: Things to do to make a difference. See www.cooltheearth.com.

Regional Measure 3 [per SB 595] provides for voters to vote next year on whether to raise Bay Area bridge tolls. If passed, the higher tolls would generate more funding for local transportation projects. There are unfunded projects in Marin.

The annual Bioneers conference is happening now.

The MCL business breakfast on November 3 will discuss NRDC's litigation efforts.

The League of Women Voters will have an event on Saturday from 10:00 to 1:00 at Novato City Hall, concerning Highway 37. This evolved from Vida Flores's Environmental Forum Master Class Project.

There will be a trash summit on November 1, 1:00 to 4:00 in the Friends of Marin Center conference room, Exhibit Hall.

Doug W.: CAWG outreach efforts include identifying people who would like more information about how the group works. Should we form a task force? The climate issue is large and there are several realms of concern that the group needs to follow. These include the countywide effort re adaptation to sea level rise.

Pam: There is also the San Rafael climate change effort. Further, the authority for bus scheduling [a problem noted in previous CAWG meetings] lies with Marin Transit. We should track them. There are openings for public comment.

Kiki: What positions has MCL taken?

Discussion 1: Drawdown, MCAN, Lead on Climate and Marin Countywide efforts to organize for climate action (Mary Sackett)

Mary reported on the next steps contemplated after the County's October 3rd presentation. These include furthering carbon sequestration and examining possible changes in building codes. Mary noted the large number of people who connected with each other at the conference, people who had been working on climate change but not previously interacting with each other.

There were 100 new signups for MCE in the first week in October. Big ideas were launched. Connections were made.

David: Also, the Marin supervisors passed a resolution that morning, in which they outlined action steps that can be taken in five areas. The five "pillars" of action are 100 percent renewable power; transportation; energy efficiency; local food and carbon sequestration; and climate resilient communities. At the same meeting, Health and Human Services announced its own commitment to address climate change. A key issue is what structure will be developed to coordinate efforts and achieve a collective impact. What is the backbone agency? There is a model at Stanford.

Kiki stated that she met with Ann Hancock of the Center for Climate Protection in Sonoma County. Ann is a brilliant organizer who has had extraordinary success. Her organization is going statewide re EVs. She could talk to the group.

Belle: Organizing for Action is conducting a nationwide Climate Day of Action. The local group is meeting on November 12 at the San Rafael Community Center. Issues to be addressed include upholding the Paris Accord pledges and aligning with other cities at the Bonn meeting, and the conjunction of climate change and wildfires. This will open up the discussion and bring groups together. The event will be hosted by OFA Sonoma County, and potential speakers include Ann Hancock and Mike McGuire.

Judy F.: There will be an update of the General Management Plan for the entire GGNRA area. Comments are due by November 15.

[<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=83408>]

Nancy: The Marin League of Women Voters is forming a new committee on climate change. They intend to coordinate with other groups and determine where the gaps are and how LWV can play a role in educating the public re ballot measures and building on the state LWV positions.

Discussion 2: Climate-related transportation issues (Derek McGill Planning Manager of Transportation Authority of Marin (lead); Molly Graham, TAM Public Outreach Coordinator)

Doug W. introduced Derek, noting that transportation is the source of 2/3 of the GHG emissions generated in Marin County. Doug commented further that this discussion is a follow-up of last month's discussions about EVs and the TAM Strategic Vision Plan. The Plan reflects the need to develop priorities in light of funding constraints and the resulting competition for scarce funds. See www.tam.ca.gov.

Derek proceeded with an overview of TAM's problems and trends and what TAM is doing. TAM is a Congestion Management Agency. It is funded by the Sales Tax Authority (2004 Measure A, ~\$25m/yr.) and the Vehicle Registration Fee Authority (2010 Measure B, ~\$2.3m/yr.). It is a Joint Powers Authority governed by a 16 member board consisting of the five County Board of Supervisors and a representative from each of Marin's 11 Cities and Towns, and 12 staff members. Its mission is to make the most of Marin County transportation dollars and create an efficient and effective transportation system that promotes mobility and accessibility by providing a variety of high quality transportation options to all users.

In the Bay Area, transportation accounts for 41% of GHG emissions; 72% of that comes from passenger cars and trucks. TAM's goal is meet legal mandates to reduce GHG emissions. To do this, TAM must address the problem of the county's economic growth, which generates increased traffic because we don't generate enough housing to match job growth. Marin is not meeting its regional housing needs allocation.

David: There were 7,000 structures lost in the fires. A. Most are market-rate units; they are not affordable. There are equity issues. Vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) are affected by housing patterns. VMTs can be reduced by locating things close together.

Ed: Does the TAM plan have a VMT reduction target? A. There is not a direct standard. The governing principle is the target goal to reduce CO₂ emissions by 16% by 2040. Q. Should there be a VMT target? A. That is less relevant than the CO₂ target. Over time, with EVs, there will be less CO₂ emissions.

Derek (cont.) The biggest factor is local traffic.

Belle: Regarding congestion, the conclusion is that most of it comes from within Marin? A. Yes. Supporting data taken at strategic locations show that 71% of trips start and end within Marin.

Doug W./Tom: Trips coming into and leaving the county have a smaller impact, are not key to reductions. A. Transit services are key and would make a difference in VMTs. The Bay Area average VMT is lower. It's a land use issue. People are attracted to economic centers.

Derek (cont.): Concerning forecasts of VMTs, Marin's numbers are currently the third-largest and are on track to becoming the largest. A reduction is forecast in 2030 – 2040. The strategy is to switch to EVs.

There are three revolutions in urban transportation.

- EVs – not key
- Automation – will lead to more cars
- Car-sharing – the best strategy

Marin's internal transit system is inadequate because it is too time-consuming to use it. An improved transit system would lead to lower vehicle ownership. Also important are real-time information re congestion, trip-reduction programs, and road pricing. The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) emphasizes land use and congestion. Locate housing close to transit, implement parking policy, and engage in site enhancement—add bike and pedestrian access.

Cheryl: When free parking is provided, people who don't drive are subsidizing this benefit.

Nona: You can't compare Marin across the board to other areas. It is not walkable. Geography dictates some choices. A. Topography is considered in the Vision Plan. In some communities, there is only one way in and out.

David: There is an analogy to rivers. Horizontal elevators; electric buses.

Kate: Re fee structures for parking, what is the value? San Rafael is providing information to stakeholders. A. In formulating the parking plan for downtown San Rafael, the city is progressive. It is looking at unbundling cars, not subsidizing them. Top-down doesn't work.

Doug C.: Is it feasible to have rapid transit buses running east-west, possibly using traffic light priority? A. There have been studies, looking at express service between Fairfax and San Rafael. We've looked at signal priority, a wireless connection between bus and signal. The work done on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. was really effective in terms of transportation reliability.

Derek (cont.): It's important to look at all factors together, package solutions. Don't deal with HOVs in isolation. Look also at ramp metering, etc. And the approach is multi-modal. The complete street program, which the state has since codified. Major roads funding includes: West Marin, Sir Francis Drake; Central Marin, 4th Street; Southern Marin, Miller Ave.; North Marin, Novato Blvd.; Ross Valley, Dir Francis Drake.

Wendi: It would be helpful for the public to know the repaving schedule in advance, and if you considered commuter input. A. The schedule is dictated by the lead agency. At the beginning of the year, a tentative schedule is released. It's a challenging problem of coordination; utilities also have to be consulted. In the Safe Routes to School program, 2 McAllister is a successful example.

Pam: There are obstacles. Utility coordination, public input, the jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis of projects. They can only encourage contact with the local DPW.

Derek (cont.): The Safe Routes to School program has a large number of participating schools; 58 schools, up from 5 in 2000. Since 2011 and through 2015, it has averaged a 50 percent green trip rate. There have been 140 infrastructure projects built, and a crossing guards program has been instituted in 80+ locations.

Judy F.: The vast majority of in-county trips are family trips. The recent changes in school bussing have been an expensive disaster. School bus use has plummeted. The resulting congestion presents a potential evacuation nightmare. How do you respond to negative feedback? Marin Transit is not listening. A return to the prior system would help.

Kiki: They can't return to the prior system because Golden Gate Transit withdrew. The buses now have to be subsidized; it's expensive. After Prop. 13, the schools have less money. Improvements are hard to implement because there is no funding.

Q. They can't get bus drivers in Ross Valley. There is a problem of storage for buses, start and end times.

Derek (cont.): The Vehicle Registration Fee, Measure B, also funds crossing guards, alternative fuels, green public agency fleets, EV buses. EV buses. There is a 2030 mandate to get EV buses; these are coming soon--they are being built in Palmdale. Also coming is smart EV infrastructure.

Marin is No. 2 in EV ownership: 12 per thousand residents. Demand management is a key concept. We can't build our way out of congestion/double deck freeways. We have to move when there is less traffic. Also critical is promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicles.

TAM's demand management programs include the Emergency Ride Home program, a guaranteed ride home for those who miss the bus home while using commute alternatives to driving alone; the Vanpool Incentive Program; leveraging regional partnerships; the 511 program; providing support for local employers, the MTC employer commute program guidance. A revamp of the program is targeted for early 2018, entailing marketing directly to the public.

SMART has been receiving positive reviews. The trains are full.

Kiki: There is a need for later trains and weekend trains. A high number of bikes are being used.

Wendi: Some students are using the train.

Derek (cont.): We've been approached by Lyft about shuttles. We're looking at patterns in where people are going, locations where shuttles would be useful.

Bob: There's a slide showing various programs and GHG reduction, which would generate advanced estimates of GHG reduction. A. Plan Bay Area guidance incorporates this information.

Bob: Are the numbers applied to Marin? A. Yes, on the more expensive projects. We also coordinate with the cities. Under the Commute Alternatives Program (CAP), the cities take credit. Bob: We need to consider what is important and what is not. Show the numbers and not take the credit. A. There is a pending grant re bike-share with Sonoma.

Belle: What about the nightmare on the Richmond Bridge. Is there a focus on this dominant issue? Who is responsible? A. We are improving access via Sir Francis Drake and Bellam ramps. This is the only bridge in the Bay Area without a direct high-speed connector. The third land going east should be complete by the end of the year. Under the bridge toll program, make sure that the Richmond Bridge needs are considered.

Nona: That does not help the morning westbound commute. A. No. That would require an improvement in the regional plan.

Pam: How is sea level rise accounted for? A. It was considered in San Rafael, raising infrastructure out of the floodplain. The vulnerability assessment reflects agency coordination.

Ed: We should address Route 37 in a future presentation.

Reports

Lead on Climate (Belle)

Lead on Climate is planning another event to be held in 2018. We are talking with the Governor's office and coordinating the event with the Governor's global summit. The title of the event will be "How to Reach Paris without Stopping in Washington." This event will build on the outpouring of public support and will consider what it takes to reach climate goals. Potential speakers include Christiana Figueres, who was Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is currently the convenor of Mission 2020. The Governor is another potential speaker. The facilitator will be Prof. Dan Kammen of UC Berkeley. There will be a panel on What Marin Can Do, including Supervisors Kate Sears and Damon Connolly, Josh Fryday, and possibly a MSEL student. Marin has a story to tell.

Deep Green Campaign (Sarah)

MCE Deep Green signups were up 40% in the March-to-September period. The goal of 5% of the load has already been hit. The campaign intends to continue to work with big users of energy, such as pump stations, businesses, and special districts. The campaign talked to Larry Bragman about background—credit to Roger Roberts. The water districts are already Deep Green.

Kiki: The MMWD director is a stalwart in promoting Deep Green, has a long history of support.

Kate: College of Marin as well as MMWD. As Deep Green enrollment increasingly becomes the norm, it also becomes part of "belonging." You should take the list of Deep Green users with when you talk to people.

Environmental Forum of Marin (David)

The Forum is planning its spring lecture series and would like to coordinate with MCL. They are working with Novato's new Sustainability Director and Marin Art and Garden Center. There will be a climate change event on October 24, and a student event in Novato.

Legislative Update (Pat)

It is important to point out the effect of the sue-and-settle story in the Leg/Reg Update, in which the EPA director attacks the practice of settling environmental lawsuits and specifically excludes recovery of attorney's fees and litigation costs when the EPA is settling with parties. This makes it much more difficult for public interest groups to sue EPA when it fails to take actions required by law, because it will be hard for them to find an attorney to take their case. Many small public interest firms depend on attorney fee awards. [Such suits are resolved on the administrative record, where liability is clear, and fall within court policies promoting settlement.]

Doug: This is relevant to the topic of the MCL environmental breakfast coming up on 11/3.

Sierra Club (Ed)

Ed stated that he has an excellent summary of energy bill outcomes and offered to circulate it to the group. Doug agreed that the summary should be circulated.

San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan Update (Bob)

The committee is meeting monthly. Issues addressed include waste, water, community engagement, and now transportation. They are moving through the issues systematically. The meetings are open to the public, and the speakers are good.

Kiki: This gives the public real-world experience, takes it beyond government and into the community.

Susan: There is an issue in Novato re requiring motels to install EV charging stations and use treated wastewater. San Rafael requires this. However, purple pipe is expensive. The city council rejected the idea of imposing these requirements for a first motel. Susan suggested that others come forward in favor of these requirements when future applications are considered.

Pam: We should take a look at Item #7 on the agenda [forming task forces for specific climate issues]. Doug: Sarah, Helene, and Ed have been pursuing this successfully.

Meeting adjourned 11:10.

The next CAWG meeting will be on Nov. 17.

Minutes: PN.