

**DRAFT DRAFT MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**  
**Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: May 5, 2010**

**Present:** Marge Macris, Chair; Priscilla Bull, David Coury, Nona Dennis, Don Dickinson, Randy Greenberg, Roger Roberts, Phil Richardson, Susan Stompe, Ann Thomas. Met at MCL.

**April 7, 2010 Meeting Notes:** Approved as distributed.

**Community Marin:** The next CM meeting will be at 3:30 on Friday, May 21 and will focus on completing the sections of Park and Open Space, Public Facilities and Services and, possibly, Agriculture. There has been considerable discussion about issues in the Agriculture chapter, notably house size and retail operations in ag zoned areas. Regarding house size, there is a question whether it would be better to have policies that specify square footage, or that are more nuanced. Regarding retail (roadside stands), it was reported that CDA has set up a subcommittee to discuss this issue, e.g. what could be appropriate in ag zoned areas.

**SMART Station Design and Planning.** MCL will monitor planning for stations in north San Rafael and downtown. Don had attended recent meetings on both these and reported as follows:

*North San Rafael.* SMART staff conducted the meeting, one of nine they are holding on station design. The key fact that emerged was that SMART planners have concluded that the location selected for the north San Rafael station, under the freeway and using the Christmas tree lot for parking, was too small, so they may move it to a location east of Civic Center Drive near Autodesk, between the marsh and Las Gallinas Creek. This site also is somewhat constrained and has some other downsides: it would not connect to Northgate, which was one of the City's expectations for the train; the bus stop would be in front of the Veterans' monument, and the circulation pattern seems poorly thought out, e.g. a traveler in a wheelchair would need to go a block and a half from the bus stop to the train station.

*Downtown San Rafael.* This location is the most difficult one to plan and has multiple problems. The EIR assumed a double track through downtown with a platform in the center, but there isn't room for this. The EIR assumed the station would be at the transit center but the transit center block is too short for a train so the station would now be located next to Whistlestop, removing their parking as well as that between the bank and Whistlestop, and cutting off access to the building which would impact their business. Bus pads at the transit center would also be lost, and the projected height of the train platform, about 45 inches above ground level, is problematic.

The committee believes MCL should wait for further studies before commenting.

**Easton Point.** The EIR will not be out until fall.

**Novato General Plan.** Susan said the general plan steering committee is finalizing their recommendations for North Redwood Blvd and, in general, these emphasize a large increase in retail space and more housing than would currently be allowed, but with the emphasis on retail. The SMART station, originally planned for a northerly location at Fireman's Fund may now be proposed for the existing station which is downtown. Merchants are not enthusiastic about this and Susan believes it would make more sense to locate it where the tracks intersect with Olive. She suggested resubmitting the MCL letter asking that the City focus on more housing and less retail at in this planning subarea.

Randy suggested addressing specific language changes as well as supporting broad policies.

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Transportation issues. (Don Wilhelm absent) The Sonoma County Climate Action Committee is planning a conference to include transportation issues. TAM express (toll) lane survey: should we comment before the survey is finished?

Skywalker Properties, Lucas Valley. We are waiting for supplemental CEQA studies. MCL's main concern is the proposed use of well water, as MMWD has informed the owner that MMWD cannot supply water for the project.

Blithedale Terrace, Mill Valley. Project developer and MCL member Phil Richardson was present. An EIR hearing on the project is scheduled for May 10. The proposal is for 20 three-story units (20% affordable) on 1.2 acres currently zoned commercial. Mill Valley's Housing Element designated the site for housing. The General Plan would allow a maximum of 16 units plus a density bonus of 4. Concerns are that the building is out of scale with the neighborhood and would add traffic to an already congested intersection. The committee recommends that MCL not comment, as this is a local issue. Note that we did not comment on the more significant Miller Avenue plan on the grounds that it is a local issue. Recommend that we start to monitor the Miller Ave. Plan.

Kentfield Plan. As the College of Marin is no longer contemplating commercial development on the north side of College Avenue, the "vision" will concern only the already developed south side and will have minimal impact. The "vision" may make recommendations for any future non-college uses on College Ave. Ann to monitor.

WECS (Wind energy) Ordinance. Planning Commission hearing June 14. The proposal is for large WECS to be allowed only in Ag. lands. Questions: should WECS be permitted on Open Space lands? WECS in residential areas have potentially huge impacts (visual, noise) and require public review. Who will be responsible for monitoring the impacts, especially on wildlife, and enforcing restrictions? WECS pose a potential conflict between environmental goals of clean energy vs. land use issues.

US Fish and Wildlife Service SF Bay tidal marsh recovery plan. Barbara Salzman of Marin Audubon recommends adding Richardson Bay and Gallinas Creek to the Plan. Nona believes that Richardson Bay offers limited opportunity for further enhancement. She will talk to Barbara about Gallinas Creek areas, including the Marin Ranch Airport.

Solar project. Olive/Atherton, Novato. Project sponsors propose covering with solar panels the undeveloped area owned by the nursery adjacent to Marin Audubon property. 80% wetlands. Audubon suggests reducing project from 3 megawatts to 2. The consensus was that while we oppose covering wetlands with solar panels, we need more information about this specific project. Rooftops and parking lots are a better option for solar panels.

Lawson's Landing. Coastal Commission hearing July 7-9. Roger to attend.

Next meeting June 2, 2010

Notes: PB