

**Citizen Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
August 22, 2011

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**Present:** All members of the CAC except for those listed below; Library Board alternate representative Don Graff; Planning Commission alternate representative Jeff Stahl.

**Absent:** Cherie Daly, David Esposito, Mike Folk, Jerry Hauser, Joakim Osthus, Jared Polsky, and Robby Ronayne.

**Staff:** Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Senior Planner Neal Toft, and contract planner Julia Capasso.

1. Announcements

Planning Director Kaufman announced the resignation of Alice Anderson and Nancy Spivey from the Committee. She stated Michael Rex, a local architect who had attended several CAC meetings, had emailed staff to share his concern that public comment was only offered at the beginning of meetings. He thought that prevented the public from commenting on items discussed at the meeting. Mr. Sternberg suggested holding public comment at the beginning of the meeting for items not on the agenda, and at the end of the meeting for items discussed at the meeting. The CAC agreed to Mr. Sternberg's suggestion by acclamation.

2. Public Comment.

There was none.

3. Distribution and review of updated General Plan Update Work Plan and CAC work completed to date.

Planning Director Kaufman noted the General Plan Update Work Plan had been updated to reflect the accomplishments of the CAC to date. They have completed review of all updated Elements with the exception of Circulation/Trails and Paths and Community Character, which they will review at their upcoming fall meetings. The intent is to repackage the individual drafts into a final draft, which would then go through environmental review. Staff hopes the CAC will complete their work by December 2011, though it will depend on their progress with the remaining draft elements.

4. Staff report on Station Area Plan progress and CAC recruitment.

Planning Director Kaufman stated the City released a Request for Proposals to consultants to prepare the Station Area Plan and associated environmental impact report, with a September 15 submittal deadline. Consultant interviews will be conducted by a steering committee made up of agencies funding the project, including Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), Marin County, Golden Gate Bridge and Highway Transportation District (GGBHTD), Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART), Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Ms. Leitzell inquired what the Station Area Plan would focus on. Planning Director Kaufman replied it would focus on land use and circulation in the SMART Station Area, which includes a portion of Greenbrae, Larkspur Landing, and the Redwood Highway area. The City has received three applications from residents, business owners, or properties owners in the Station Area to join the CAC for the Station Area Plan, including a resident of Cape Marin, a representative of the Marin

Airporter, and a resident of Larkspur Courts. She asked CAC members to let staff know whether they would continue serving for the Station Area Plan.

Ms. Nakai stated she read an article in the Marin IJ that indicated a referendum would likely be placed on the November ballot to repeal the sales tax that funds SMART. She asked whether this would impact the Station Area Plan. Council member Lundstrom replied that the Station Area Plan is intended to be a long-term plan, whether the train comes to Larkspur in the near future or not. Mr. Moore asked if the CAC would be provided with background information on the Station Area Plan before their study began, and who was funding the Plan. Planning Director Kaufman confirmed there would be extensive background information provided by the project consultants. The Plan is funded with grant money from MTC and ABAG. TAM has provided \$80,000 in matching funds, and SMART, GGBHTD, Marin County, and the City are giving \$10,000 each. The City will also provide in-kind staff time.

#### 5. Distribute and begin discussion of Draft Circulation/Trails and Paths Element.

Planning Director Kaufman stated CAC members Joakim Osthus and Nancy Weninger reviewed the draft Element prior to its distribution, due to their technical expertise (Mr. Osthus is a transportation engineer and Ms. Weninger is a member of the Marin Bicycle Coalition) and frequent use of multi-use paths in the City. Considering the draft Element's focus on "Complete Streets," which differs from the current Circulation Element's focus on vehicular circulation, staff wanted to make sure the document was as complete as possible before distributing it to the CAC and public.

Planning Director Kaufman began reviewing major changes to the draft Element, referring to the comparison chart handout. Ms. Leitzell noted Goal 4 was proposed to be deleted, and asked why, since it seemed to directly address the impacts of the SMART train. Planning Director Kaufman noted she didn't believe SMART was in the picture at the time the Goal was adopted. Ms. Weninger stated that Policy CIR-6.4 in the draft Element addresses the impacts of SMART. Ms. Leitzell noted that Larkspur once opposed SMART, while Policy CIR-6.4 directs the City to cooperate in the SMART process. Council member Lundstrom stated that SMART has been approved.

Planning Director Kaufman stated current Policy C was proposed to be deleted and replaced with a more general statement about minimizing traffic increases on Sir Francis Drake and East Sir Francis Drake (Policy CIR-2.1). Proposed Action Program CIR-2.1.a is the current Policy C with some modifications, including the removal of use changes as triggering the Circulation Assessment Permit, and exempts mixed-use development with a certain percentage of low-income housing from the Circulation Assessment Permit (**NOTE: refer to Resolution 41/04 which amended Policy C of the Circulation Element.**)

Ms. Leitzell stated she disagreed with exempting high density projects regardless of affordability as more traffic would be generated. Mr. Moore asked where low-income housing was proposed in Larkspur. Planning Director Kaufman stated currently no low-income housing was proposed. The Policy allows housing that meets the affordability requirements to be exempt from the Policy, so that changes in use may be allowed to occur. In previous discussions, the CAC was supportive of transit-oriented development. Mr. Moore said that was debatable. Planning Director Kaufman stated the Policy allows projects to be submitted for consideration, while the current policy would not. Projects still have to go through the review process required for all projects.

Ms. Semonian stated draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a would still prevent a commercial property from adding floor area if it generated one more trip. Planning Director Kaufman noted draft Action

Program CIR-2.1.b directs the City to study an alternative policy that would allow for changes in land use or building intensity without triggering the policy. Planner Toft stated the current policy can lock in low-intensity uses like offices versus retail or more community-serving uses which are otherwise allowed in that district. Planning Director Kaufman stated staff suggests deleting current Policy C entirely (draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a) but didn't, as there wasn't a consensus from the CAC as to an alternative, which is why Action Program CIR-2.1.b was proposed. It has been difficult for staff to require applicants to do a traffic study before they can even submit an application, and it limits economic development in Larkspur.

Ms. Semonian stated that in terms of economic development, the City wants successful businesses that generate trips. Mr. Friedrichs suggested that businesses generating non-peak hour traffic be exempted. Ms. Semonian asked if draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a would apply to Larkspur Landing. Planning Director Kaufman confirmed it would since it is north of Corte Madera Creek, but Larkspur Landing also has its own traffic study which made it more flexible.

Ms. Leitzell asked if draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a would change the zoning's residential density. Planning Director Kaufman stated the policy didn't affect the zoning. The percentages of affordable housing required in existing Policy C and draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a wouldn't allow any residential development unless there was an affordable housing component. Ms. Leitzell stated she didn't want to allow increases in density from what's allowed by the zoning. Ms. Nakai suggested revising draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a to state "Possible exemptions from this policy include..." Planning Director Kaufman replied that policies must contain thresholds to measure against, and that all project submittals must go through project review; exempting the project from the policy wouldn't mean the project was approved. Mr. Holmes suggested changing the wording in Action Program CIR-2.1.a to "...exempt from this Action Program policy..."

Mr. Moore stated it seemed existing Policy C was the only restriction on development in the City and asked why anyone would want to change that. Planning Director Kaufman stated current Policy C prevents property owners in Larkspur from changing to a use that would generate just one more PM peak hour trips. Ms. Leitzell stated she agreed that the City should reduce regulations on local businesses, but if high density residential development is allowed it would add considerable peak hour traffic. Planner Toft clarified that draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a isn't changing the zoning at all, and current Policy C is only one type of restriction of development. One of the difficulties in enforcing current Policy C is that high traffic generation is not occurring in Larkspur itself.

Mr. Blum asked if draft Policy CIR-2.1 and draft Action Programs CIR-2.1.a and 2.1.b would preclude a change in use. Planning Director Kaufman confirmed and stated draft Action Program CIR-2.1.b was intended to prompt study of an alternative policy addressing changes in use. Mr. Blum stated he was in favor of deleting draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a and keeping draft Action Program CIR-2.1.b.

Mr. Sternberg stated draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a was very black and white, but draft Action Program CIR-2.1.b doesn't say how the impacts will be evaluated and what threshold would trigger the restriction. How would the City make a decision about a project? Planning Director Kaufman replied it would be the same decision-making process as a project located south of the creek. It would have to go through design review and possibly environmental review (100 or more new trips triggers CEQA traffic analysis). If draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a was deleted, draft Action Program CIR-2.1.b should be amended to "Study ~~an alternative~~ a policy..." and should be expanded to give business and property owners more flexibility. The City would work with an environmental consultant to develop further criteria.

Mr. Holmes stated he was unclear what restrictions currently exist other than Policy C that consider traffic. Planning Director Kaufman stated design review is a discretionary action which triggers CEQA, and would require traffic impact analyses. Mr. Holmes stated draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a was draconian while draft Action Program CIR-2.1.b was too laissez-faire. Planning Director Kaufman stated all main arterials and collectors in the City are congested, including Sir Francis Drake, and asked why Sir Francis Drake requires its own traffic impact policy. Mr. Holmes noted that by capping traffic generation for businesses on Sir Francis Drake, traffic had oozed everywhere else. However, if the CAC elects to delete current Policy C/ draft Action Program CIR-2.1.a, they need to have a better sense of what would replace it.

Mr. Sternberg stated from his experience with projects going through CEQA review, many impacts are studied, including traffic, and mitigation plans are produced to address those impacts. Most projects going through CEQA don't have set standards and are not black and white. Mr. Holmes noted that if CEQA review is performed for projects elsewhere and those projects are generating high levels of traffic, CEQA is an insufficient form of review. Mr. Moore stated current Policy C is the only restriction to development he can see, and if that restriction is removed it doesn't seem there is any other norm to measure by and conditions could worsen. As a Larkspur Landing resident, he has no other choice when moving around the City but to use Sir Francis Drake. Planning Director Kaufman stated the CAC should think more about the issue and discuss it at the next meeting.

Planning Director Kaufman stated staff suggests deleting current Policy I which states "Prevent an increase in the number of cars parked on neighborhood streets." Staff was unclear how this policy would be implemented. Mr. Holmes stated the Policy could be used to support the City's off-street parking requirements. Planning Director Kaufman noted that was more of a land use policy. Ms. Weninger commented that since the Policy had been in place there had been no discernable decrease in parked cars. Council member Lundstrom stated it was an impractical policy, and cited the fact that Marin County has one of the highest vehicle ownership rates in the State. Mr. Sternberg stated he supports the removal of Policy I since there are existing off-street parking requirements.

Planning Director Kaufman referred to draft Policy CIR-2.7 and explained that the City does not want to encourage through traffic on Magnolia Avenue south of Doherty Drive, but wants to maintain the roadway's designation as an arterial. The policy intends generally to prevent through traffic from cutting through local roads. Ms. Semonian asked how the policy would be implemented. Planner Toft stated street design and signage could discourage use of local roads.

Council member Lundstrom referred to draft Policies CIR-6.6 and CIR-6.7 and stated the County has studied the potential for a transit village on the portion of San Quentin Prison property (where a new death row had been proposed) while the prison continued to operate. The County's study indicated that the ferry would be part of that transit village. It would be located farther out toward the Bay, which would require less dredging.

Planning Director Kaufman referred to draft Action Program CIR-3.2.b and explained that unsignalized intersections need to be considered on a case by case basis, so there are no set requirements. Mr. Friedrichs suggested an Action Program or Policy to study areas that might benefit from a traffic light that only operates during peak periods. Planning Director Kaufman stated she would ask the Department of Public Works about this type of traffic control. Council member Lundstrom noted that when the Niven property is developed, traffic improvements to Doherty Drive will be analyzed.

Planning Director Kaufman referred to draft Action Programs CIR-6.1.a and CIR-6.1.b which were added after previous CAC discussion. During review of the draft it was suggested that the two draft Action Programs not be added and instead that Action Program CIR-6.1.c be modified to address its ideas. Ms. Weninger stated draft Action Program CIR-6.1.b implies the City needs to develop a different pedestrian and cyclist network than the one that already exists, which has already been largely implemented. A new hub and spoke system seemed redundant. She finds that schools, shopping centers and major destinations are already linked in to the network. She suggested removing draft Action Program CIR-6.1.b. Mr. Sternberg agreed, but suggested adding more destination points to draft Action Program CIR-6.1.c such as schools.

Planning Director referred to current Policy D of the Trails and Paths Element, which staff split into two Action Programs in the draft element: CIR-6.1.l and CIR-6.1.k. Ms. Nakai suggested adding a program to coordinate paper street mapping with the County. She lives near the fire road providing access to King Mountain, and she often has to help confused motorists who have maps showing the fire road as a paved City road. Planner Toft stated there's a variety of sources of mapping, whether government or commercial. The City is involved with the County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program, and Ms. Nakai's concern may not require a General Plan policy but rather just improved staff communication with the County.

Council member Lundstrom suggested clarifying the definition of "paper streets" since its use in the General Plan is different from what Ms. Nakai is referring to. Ms. Heitkamp stated that paper streets date back to 1887 when a flat grid was placed over the City without regard for the geography. They were used before cars to get to the hillside lots. Ms. Nakai stated the fire access road is listed on maps and GPS units as a paved City street- Citron Avenue. Planning Director Kaufman stated staff would follow up on the issue with the Department of Public Works and the Marin County Open Space District. There is no reason for access roads within open space to be shown on regular maps. Mr. Holmes suggested adding an Action Program to install signs at the improved paper streets such as the Arch Street steps.

Council member Lundstrom stated she wanted to bring Policy CIR-2.6 and Policy CIR-6.5 to the CAC's attention for discussion. Policy CIR-2.6 addresses Marin General Hospital's use of Hal C. Brown Park at Creekside as a heli-stop. She stated the City Council supported that current use for emergencies only. However, the Hospital is interested in a more permanent helipad, which the Kentfield Property Owners Association and the City Council opposed because the Hospital couldn't demonstrate it would be used only for emergencies. It seemed the Hospital was looking at a permanent helipad as a revenue generator rather than just for emergency use. While the Hospital is in the County's jurisdiction, the surrounding area lies in Larkspur.

Mr. Blum asked how often helicopters used the park. Council member Lundstrom replied it was used very infrequently. She wants the CAC to carefully consider this policy. Planning Director Kaufman noted that the existing policy prevents any heli-stops in the Larkspur Planning Area, and the policy was revised to be consistent with the Council's direction on the matter.

Council member Lundstrom referred to Policy CIR-6.5 which refers to supporting the expansion of the SMART train south of the proposed Larkspur station, which was currently planned as the line's terminus. SMART owns the old right-of-way over Corte Madera Creek. Supporting the southward expansion would bring the train over the Creek to east Corte Madera by the Village. She asked the CAC to consider whether this was what they wanted. Mr. Holmes questioned whether the berm where the right-of-way is located would be able to support a train.

Mr. Koepfel stated he read an article in the Marin IJ on the condition of roads in the Bay Area, and Larkspur was found to have one of the worst road systems in the region. He noted there is no

reference in the draft Element to roadway maintenance, and asked that the CAC discuss the issue. Ms. Semonian agreed and stated she recalled the Director of the Public Works Department had recommended a tax to maintain local roads.

Council member Lundstrom stated the review of roadway conditions was conducted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Bay Area's regional transportation planning agency. She noted that almost every city in Marin had a tax or assessment district dedicated to maintaining local roads, except for Larkspur. Larkspur doesn't have the budget to maintain local roadways. The Council recently discussed placing a one cent sales tax on the November 2011 ballot but ultimately decided to table the issue so as not to compete with bond measures for the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District and Tamalpais Union High School District. She noted the City Manager had spearheaded an agreement with the Skylark Apartments to share the cost to improve a city road that largely benefits that one property owner. The City would pursue such agreements in the future. Additionally, some developments such as Creekside had private roads that aren't maintained by the City. When the Niven property is developed, all the internal roadways will be private.

Ms. Leitzell stated agencies should focus available funding on what the public actually needs, like maintaining roads. Some projects have been completed that are lovely, such as maintaining stairways in neighborhoods, but they aren't necessary. People here have been taxed a lot and some can't survive if any more taxes are introduced. Planning Director Kaufman referred to draft Policy CIR-1.4 which addresses the maintenance and improvement of all circulation facilities including roadways and multi-use paths. She suggested adding a new policy that focuses only on maintaining roadways. Mr. Moore stated he encouraged the government to focus on the most important things, and make sure there are no increases in money supply.

6. Review meeting minutes of June 27, 2011.

The CAC approved the minutes of June 27, 2011 as drafted by consensus.

7. Next steps.

Planning Director Kaufman stated the

**Next meeting: September 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

### **Adjournment**

The CAC adjourned at 8:20 p.m.