

**Citizen Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
September 12, 2011

---

**Present:** All members of the CAC except for those listed below.

**Absent:** David Esposito, Mike Folk, Jerry Hauser, Mike Koepfel, Julie Leitzell, and Richard Young.

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

1. Announcements

Planning Director Kaufman announced the resignation of youth representative Robby Ronayne. Staff will begin outreach for a new youth representative. She also announced it would be her last meeting, as Friday is her last day at the City. The City is in the process of hiring an interim planning director. The interim director will handle advance planning projects, including the General Plan Update and the Station Area Plan. The CAC was one of the best committees she had worked with over her career, and she and staff appreciated their work ethic and the respectful way they interacted with each other.

She stated the application period for new CAC members for the expanded General Plan Update/Station Area Plan had closed and they received five applications. Appointment of the new members is tentatively schedule for the City Council's September 21 meeting. The deadline for proposals for the Station Area Plan and Environmental Impact Report for the Station Area Plan is September 15. Interviews of qualified consultants will occur the first week of October.

Councilmember Lundstrom announced it was her last meeting, as she was resigning from the City Council effective October 15. She was proud to have been the first woman elected to the Larkspur City Council. She praised the CAC for their lively discussions and encouraged them to continue participating in civic life. She reported that she, James Holmes, and Senior Planner Toft attended a public workshop on August 30 about the College of Marin's proposed child study center at 1144 Magnolia Avenue. In addition to childcare, the center will offer day and night classes for students. They shared the CAC's concern about the area's economic health, and encouraged the integration of landscaping for aesthetic and noise buffering purposes. They also commented about ingress and egress from Magnolia Avenue and requested a traffic study. She noted the College isn't subject to local zoning or development standards. Planning Director Kaufman stated the project would be subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Mr. Holmes announced a bill sponsored by Assemblyman Jared Huffman to ease State housing element law requirements was largely defeated in the Senate, with the exception of the provision that allows municipalities to count foreclosed homes toward their affordable housing allocations. Planning Director Kaufman announced that a bill intended to standardize parking requirements in areas adjacent to transit hubs was defeated.

2. Public Comment.

There was none.

3. Discuss Draft Circulation/Trails and Paths Element.

Introduction

Mr. Graff suggested various modifications to the first two paragraphs on page 4-1: replace “combined” with “complementary” in the first sentence; add a sentence after the first sentence reading, “It presents a strategy addressing improvements to existing transportation elements and development of new multimodal transportation features.”; add “improve” to the second sentence; and in the second to last sentence of the first paragraph, add “ and the 101 Highway interchanges at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Tamalpais Drive.”

Mr. Friedrichs suggested adding a reference to trails and paths to the “The needs of all system users” bullet. Ms. Semonian referred to the “Future strains on the system” bullet and suggested clarifying the last sentence to refer to vehicle traffic conditions. Mr. Graff referred to the same bullet and suggested adding a statement about the poor condition of the City’s roadways. Mr. Moore asked if stairways are considered paths and trails. Planning Director Kaufman stated hillside stairways are part of the path/trail system, but distinct policies for hillside stairways could be added.

### Goal CIR-1

Mr. Holmes suggested adding “at least” or “not less” to draft Policy CIR-1.5 on the errata sheet. Mr. Friedrichs noted Corte Madera Creek is used as part of the circulation system by some constituents, particularly in getting to and from outdoor activities; this should be mentioned in the draft Element.

Planning Director Kaufman stated staff received several comment letters from members of the public on the draft Element. Dwayne Price suggested adding a policy under Goal CIR-1 to consider all circulation system users when installing traffic control devices and one-way streets. She suggested adding new Policy CIR-1.6, “Consider all circulation system users when installing traffic control devices.”

Mr. Holmes noted that the term “local-serving” in 1990 General Plan Goal 1 was removed from Goal CIR-1. He suggested restoring the term because the circulation system should serve the local people. Planning Director Kaufman explained staff removed the term because of the many regional connections that exist in Larkspur’s circulation system, such as the Cal Park Hill Tunnel which serves people in Larkspur and people coming into Larkspur to shop or take the ferry. Ms. Semonian stated she didn’t want to add the phrase “local serving,” because improving regional multi-modal connections will reduce through traffic and congestion. Mr. Friedrichs suggested the phrase “locally beneficial” instead, which doesn’t exclude people coming in from the outside that are good for commerce. Mr. Osthus liked the wording of the draft Goal, which didn’t preclude serving the local population. Ms. Weninger agreed with Mr. Osthus.

Ms. Nakai supported adding the wording “locally beneficial,” as there is a lot of concern in the community, especially regarding the SMART train, that an overriding regional need is going to be imposed on Larkspur and change the nature of traffic flow in the City. Referring to “local” benefits in the General Plan would address those concerns. Ms. Weninger stated she understood the need to make the Goal beneficial to Larkspur citizens, but as a Larkspur citizen she believes local and regional needs should be balanced. Mr. Moore supported adding “locally beneficial” to the draft Goal. Mr. Sternberg supported the existing wording of the draft Goal, and referred to draft Goals CIR-2 and CIR-3 which make Larkspur’s quality of life the highest priority in circulation planning. Planning Director Kaufman asked for a straw vote which found eight members present in favor of keeping the wording of the Goal as it appears in the draft.

Mr. Holmes referred to draft Policy CIR-1.5 and suggested adding language to maintain public access. Planning Director Kaufman stated the City would only be involved if there was a public access easement. The expense to improve the roadway is shared, but the road remains public. Mr. Friedrichs referred to draft Action Program CIR-1.5.a and suggested adding “and sharing costs with neighboring

communities,” for roads shared with other communities. Councilmember Lundstrom stated that was current practice.

## Goal CIR-2

Planning Director Kaufman referred to draft Policy CIR-2.1 which revises the current Circulation Assessment Permit regulations. In previous discussions, the CAC seemed to agree that the circulation assessment policies were overly burdensome on Larkspur businesses, but wanted the City to have some kind of control. Staff recommended modifying draft Policy CIR-2.1 as noted on the errata sheet, and deleting Action Program CIR-2.1.a and 2.1.b.

Mr. Graff referred to revised Policy CIR-2.1 and asked where the threshold of 15 trips came from. Planning Director Kaufman replied it was from staff's experience in reviewing past circulation assessments. The threshold could be further studied in the environmental impact report (EIR) traffic analysis for the draft General Plan. Currently the threshold is ten trips for properties south of Corte Madera Creek. Mr. Sternberg asked how that trip generation would be calculated if a business wanted to add floor area. Planner Toft explained staff uses trip generation data from the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), which varies by use.

Planning Director Kaufman suggested that the trip threshold not be established in the General Plan but rather in the Zoning Ordinance. She suggested revising the policy to refer to “significant” trip generation, and adding a new action program directing the City to study appropriate trip generation thresholds and adopt them by ordinance.

Mr. Osthus supported Planning Director Kaufman's suggestion. It's important for the City to have leeway to say that a proposed project doesn't fit the ITE standards, as the standards are based on limited data from other parts of the country that may not represent Larkspur very well. Mr. Moore disagreed with Mr. Osthus and stated he would rather see a standard than a variable, which is so subject to interpretation. Planning Director Kaufman asked for a straw vote that found eight members in favor of revising draft Policy CIR-2.1 to read “Require a traffic impact analysis for any project generating ~~15 or more~~ **significant** additional peak hour PM trips to prevent a significant increase in peak hour traffic on City arterials.” Planning Director Kaufman stated staff will continue to work on the policy.

Mr. Graff suggested revising Goal CIR-2 to read “Regard the transportation system as an important factor of the quality of life in Larkspur.” Mr. Holmes replied the idea behind the Goal was to make it clear that quality of life was more important than traffic mobility, when a choice had to be made between the two. Mr. Friedrichs suggested combining Goals CIR-2 and CIR-3 together to address Mr. Graff's concerns. Planning Director Kaufman stated she was hesitant to change the language of Goal CIR-2, as it was a historic concern of the community and has been referred to on major projects. Ms. Heitkamp noted that finding had been made to prevent the installation of traffic signals at Magnolia Avenue and King Street, which would have led to increased traffic through the City. Stop-signs were the preferred option, which controlled the traffic volume through the downtown. Planning Director Kaufman stated all General Plan goals and policies must be taken in balance together.

Ms. Semonian suggested moving Policy CIR-2.1 under Goal CIR-4. Mr. Sternberg asked if “new development” referred to just new construction and if it would apply to changes in use. Planning Director Kaufman suggested modifying Goal CIR-4 to read “Mitigate the traffic and parking impacts of new developments and uses and major redevelopment projects.”

Mr. Holmes suggested adding “and other thoroughfares” to draft Action Program CIR-2.3.b. Planning Director Kaufman noted the action program referred specifically to Sir Francis Drake and East Sir

Francis Drake Boulevards. Mr. Sternberg disagreed with Mr. Holmes and stated each thoroughfare should be planned for separately. He referred to draft Policy CIR-2.5, which discourages making capacity improvements to Magnolia Avenue, and which seemed to conflict with the CAC's north Magnolia Avenue improvement plans. Mr. Polsky stated the CAC intended to add capacity for bicycles on north Magnolia Avenue, not vehicles.

Mr. Sternberg asked whether the group supported the current wording of draft Policy CIR-2.5, or if it should be reworded to be a more general statement about Magnolia Avenue's importance in the circulation system and that it should be planned carefully. Mr. Moore stated that Sir Francis Drake and north Magnolia are very different. He suggested modifying Policy CIR-2.5 to read "Do not make vehicular capacity improvements..." which would make draft Action Program 2.5.a redundant. Planning Director Kaufman noted the City often received comments from the public about maintaining medians. Mr. Holmes suggested creating a general policy to address medians in the City and deleting the action programs addressing specific medians. Planning Director Kaufman agreed and stated staff would make a more general policy.

Planning Director stated Councilmember Lundstrom had suggested to staff that Policy CIR-2.7 be modified to read, "Encourage through traffic to use designated major arterials, except Highway 101 shall be encouraged and improved for through traffic use. ~~rather than Magnolia Avenue south of Doherty Drive.~~" Jean Severinghaus, member of the public, had submitted a suggestion to add a new policy under Goal CIR-2 to consider traffic calming and landscaping as a component of all major roadway improvements.

### Goal CIR-3

Ms. Weninger stated she didn't understand what kind of capacity improvements Policy CIR-3.1 referred to; capacity improvements for all transportation modes including vehicles, or capacity improvements for modes other than vehicles? She didn't think vehicular capacity improvements should be made, or that vehicular capacity ameliorates traffic congestion. She suggested modifying the policy to develop programs to reduce demand from vehicular traffic and increase options for alternative modes of transportation.

Mr. Osthus agreed with Ms. Weninger's suggestion, but thought the policy in the 1990 General Plan intended to prevent pollution in Larkspur due to congestion. Mr. Holmes stated the EIR would identify where capacity improvements may be necessary, and they should not preclude the option to make necessary vehicular capacity improvements. Mr. Graff stated both ideas could be addressed in the policy. Mr. Sternberg noted that higher vehicular capacity on roadways would be acceptable if its negative impacts on Larkspur were ameliorated. Planning Director Kaufman suggested leaving the draft policy as it was worded, and revisiting it after the EIR.

Mr. Graff suggested adding, "Wherever possible," to the beginning of Goal CIR-3, because there may be cases when congestion shouldn't be ameliorated. Planning Director Kaufman stated goals are intended to be the ultimate end point or vision, and should not be couched.

Ms. Daly stated she didn't understand the point of Goal CIR-3. When congestion exists, it motivates people to get out of their cars; it gives an incentive for people to use alternatives. If congestion is ameliorated, there is no incentive for people to get out of their cars. Accidents and pollution should be ameliorated, but if you really want people to not drive, the aim should not be to make cars move faster. Mr. Sternberg stated the Goal doesn't specify what kind of impact should be ameliorated; it could be a good or bad impact. He prefers the current wording. Mr. Holmes stated Ms. Daly's point was a major policy issue and it should be discussed as such. He thinks the majority of Larkspur residents don't subscribe to that idea and he is hesitant to put it in the General Plan.

#### Goal CIR-4

Mr. Osthus stated draft Policy CIR-4.3 on the errata sheet seemed very restrictive. Asking development not to have *any* impact on on-street parking is very difficult. There should be more flexibility to minimum impacts. He suggested modifying the policy to state that no impact is preferred, but if there is impact it is minimized. Planning Director Kaufman suggested replacing “shall” with “should,” which is less legally binding. Ms. Weninger suggested the wording, “Avoid, when possible, or minimize...” Mr. Sternberg suggested, “Development should avoid, if possible, impacts on surrounding on-street parking.” Ms. Semonian asked whether the policy would prevent uses from coming into the Downtown that might cause increased parking in surrounding neighborhoods. Planning Director Kaufman stated the policy wouldn’t change the current Zoning Ordinance, which allows for reduced parking standards in the Downtown. If the suggested modifications are made, the policy would be more flexible. Mr. Blum noted that the policy as worded only refers to development, not use.

Mr. Osthus suggested adding an action program to give incentives to developers to design their projects in a way that minimizes the impact on traffic, such as monetary incentives or expedited review or permit processing. Planning Director Kaufman noted that the City’s budget is directly impacted if fees are reduced, and that permits and review are conducted in a timely fashion. Mr. Holmes suggested adding a policy stating “The intensity and density of development should realistically reflect road conditions.” This would tie circulation and land use planning together. Mr. Moore stated that considering the traffic impacts of development is encompassed in Goal CIR-4. Planning Director Kaufman agreed.

#### Goal CIR-5

Ms. Nakai suggested adding a new action program under draft Policy CIR-5.1 stating, “Maintain access points for the public safety of users.” Many of the access points are badly rutted and aren’t maintained, and parking areas aren’t striped regularly so cars are parked in inappropriate areas. Planning Director Kaufman stated staff may add a policy regarding general maintenance of trailheads.

Mr. Holmes suggested adding “and cyclists” to draft Action Program CIR-5.4.c as that group may also conflict with other users, just like equestrians. Planning Director Kaufman noted it would be difficult for any kind of gate to completely prevent either horses or cyclists from accessing a trail and suggested modifying the action program to remove the reference to equestrians. In reference to Planning Director Kaufman’s modification, Mr. Polsky suggested moving the draft Action Program CIR-5.4.c under draft Policy CIR-5.2 as it is addressing access. Mr. Holmes suggested if the action program is moved under Policy CIR-5.2, that “equestrians and cyclists” be added back. Mr. Sternberg further suggested modifying the action program to read, “At trail entrances, provide appropriate **signage**, gates, **and access**...” Planning Director Kaufman stated an action program should be retained under draft Policy CIR-5.4 that addresses precluding entry by vehicles.

Mr. Holmes suggested adding a reference to law enforcement attention to draft Action Program CIR-5.3.a.

#### 4. Public comment on CAC discussion.

Matt Guthrie asked what the schedule was for completing the draft General Plan and how the Station Area Plan would be integrated into that process.

Planning Director Kaufman replied that the Station Area Plan process will take about 18 months. The bulk of the General Plan work will be completed by the time the Station Area Plan is completed. The two EIR's would build off each other. The General Plan will not be adopted until the Station Area Plan is completed.

Jean Severinghaus, Greenbrae Boardwalk resident, said it was an impressive circulation plan for bicyclists and pedestrians. She has been working on circulation system improvements in the Redwood Highway area for the past eight years. She thought the Element should make it more explicit that Larkspur is strung between different areas and pedestrians and bicyclist have to go through different communities to get to different parts of Larkspur. She would like to see policies that direct the City to work with neighboring cities, such as Corte Madera, to improve pedestrian circulation.

Planning Director Kaufman noted that Goal CIR-7 and its policies address improving connections between Larkspur, neighboring communities, and the region. She asked Ms. Severinghaus to provide her with specific examples of connections that need improvement. Ms. Severinghaus stated she would compile them in an email.

5. Review meeting minutes of August 22, 2011.

The meeting minutes of August 22, 2011 were approved as drafted by acclamation.

6. Next steps.

Planning Director Kaufman stated staff anticipates wrapping up the CAC's work on the draft General Plan at end of the year or early 2012, and start the Station Area Plan work in late 2011/early 2012. Once the CAC finishes their work with the individual draft elements, staff will compile them into a complete draft document and ask for the CAC's final recommendation. The document will then be presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council for public comment. These won't be the official public hearings, but are intended to vet the document and get public comment to inform the Environmental Impact Report. The CAC may want to elect spokespeople to attend the public hearings on the draft document so the public can see who they are.

Once the new CAC members are appointed, they will likely attend a CAC meeting in October, and will begin meeting in November.

**Next meeting: September 26, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

### **Adjournment**

The CAC adjourned at 8:25 p.m.