

SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941

September 5, 2012

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive. Suite 329
San Rafael, CA
Re: Marin Countywide Plan Amendment, Exhibit A

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors,

First of all, we, the Sustainable TamAlmonte Executive Committee, oppose any amendment to the 2007 Countywide Plan. The County spent much time, money, and resources going through the 2007 Countywide Plan Update process. Many groups representing a wide variety of interests also spent tremendous time, money and resources to research and make comments & recommendations during the 2007 Countywide Plan Update. It is doubtful that all the parties that were previously involved in the 2007 Countywide Plan Update would be able to perform the same diligence at this time. Therefore, any amendment would most likely result in an inferior plan and should be prohibited.

However, if, the County proceeds to amend the 2007 Countywide Plan despite our objection, then we have the following recommendations regarding the proposed amendment:

Regarding Exhibit A, Item 4 – Relationship to Community Plans

We approve of Item 4 except for the last sentence; “Where there are differences in the level of specificity between a policy in the Community Plan and a policy in the Countywide Plan, the document with the more specific provision shall prevail.”

Recommendation:

Change the last sentence to the version originally submitted by staff to the Planning Commission; “If conflicts occur between the policies of the community plan or the Countywide Plan the most restrictive provision shall apply.”

Regarding Exhibit A, Items #7, #8 And #9 - Policy CD-1.3, Program CD-1.c, and Program CD-5.e - Reduce Potential Impacts

Affordable housing should **not** be exempt from complying with the restriction of maximum residential density for properties that have sensitive habitat or within the Ridge and Upland Greenbelt or the Baylands Corridor and properties that

lack public water or sewer systems in accordance with Countywide policies and programs (Policy CD-1.3, Program CD-1.c, Program CD-5.e)

To exempt any housing from such constraints is completely irresponsible and to exempt affordable housing is even more so. Such an exemption would hurt sensitive habitats, rather than protect them as the above referenced policies and programs were meant to do. Furthermore, the exemption would constitute environmental injustice, as it would exacerbate the disparities between high-income households and low to moderate income households and place these lower income households at greater risk of harm. For example, the Baylands Corridor parcels on the East side of Shoreline Hwy are laden with hazardous conditions that would increase residents' risk of incurring injury or illness.

Moreover, historic wetlands located East of Shoreline Hwy are or soon will be (after completion of the CWP mapping and analysis of historic wetlands) in the Baylands Corridor. Restoration of the East side of Shoreline Highway back to marsh has been advocated by Tam Valley and Almonte residents for decades. Such restored wetlands would not only provide critical habitat but would also serve to protect residents from the surge of increased flooding and future sea level rise.

Were increased development allowed on this land, any chance of restoring it back to marshland would be significantly impaired. Land value would increase, making it more difficult to fund the purchase of the land for restoration. This would potentially cause irreversible impacts, of developing land that was once part of the marsh and that could be restored.

Recommendation: In each of the above referenced policies and programs, DELETE the sentence that states; "*This requirement shall not apply to development of housing exclusively affordable to very low or low income residents.*"

Thank you for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sharon Rushton, Ann Spake, Gene Spake, Camille Johnson, Sandy Glading, Adrian Gordon, and Lynn Reid