

**SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

July 7, 2013

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Resolution of the Marin County Board of Supervisors Modification to PDA

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors,

We wish to express our strong support for the “Resolution of the Marin County Board of Supervisors Modification to Priority Development Area” and urge you to vote for its adoption.

At your July 9th public hearing, we will present you with over 1200 signatures in support of removal of Tam Valley and Almonte from the Hwy 101 Corridor Priority Development Area. Adopting the above referenced resolution would be in sync with the will and best interests of the Tam Valley and Almonte community.

To encourage your adoption of the resolution we wish to remind you why the commercial lowlands of Tam Valley, Almonte, and Manzanita are inappropriate for high density development, especially high density housing, and thus why these areas are inappropriate for the “Priority Development Area” designation.

Constraints to Development

In the Tam Valley and Almonte lowlands, where the Hwy 101 Corridor PDA is located, there are multitudinous constraints to development. These constraints include hazardous conditions, a lack of infrastructure and basic services, and proximity to natural habitat:

- Severe Traffic Congestion (LOS “F”)
- Excessive Flooding (100 year floodplain)
- Projected Sea Level Rise
- High Air Pollution (Toxic Air Contaminants)
- High Seismic Activity
- High Liquefaction, Subsidence & Mud Displacement
- Insufficient Infrastructure
- Inadequate Public Services (Overcrowded Schools)
- Lack of Retail & Professional Services
- Poor Public Transit
- Proximity to Vulnerable Natural Habitat & Endangered Species

Encouraging new high-density mixed-use or residential development in these lowlands would increase the risk of undue harm to the environment and jeopardize public health and safety.

Analysis and Mapping of Historic Wetlands and Baylands Corridor:

“Goal Bio-5 Baylands Conservation” in the 2007 Marin Countywide Plan mandates analysis and mapping of historic wetlands in Richardson Bay and the Bothin Marsh area (including all parcels East of Shoreline Hwy) to determine if the parcels should be included in the Baylands Corridor. The Hwy 101 Corridor PDA includes parcels East of Shoreline Hwy. It is expected that once the analysis and mapping are completed that all parcels East of Shoreline Hwy will be added to the Baylands Corridor and will then be subject to Baylands Corridor regulations.

The purpose of the Baylands Corridor is to give greater protections to wetlands, including reducing development. Therefore, the PDA designation is inappropriate for parcels located in or soon to be located in the Baylands Corridor.

Historic Marshland That Could Be Restored:

All sites East of Shoreline Hwy are historic marshland. Restoration of all lands East of Shoreline Highway, back to the marsh has been advocated by Tam Valley and Almonte residents for decades and is strongly supported by the Tamalpais Area Community Plan. 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 these sites, any chance of restoring them back to marshland would be significantly impaired. Land values would increase, making it more difficult to fund the purchase of the land for restoration. Also, development may cause irreversible impacts to the marsh and preclude its restoration.

High Density Development Does Not Coincide With the Traditional Character Of The Local Semi-Rural Communities:

The “Priority Development Area” Designation is incompatible with existing development in the commercial areas and in the adjacent neighborhoods based on scale and appearance, FAR, height and setbacks. The PDA designation conflicts with the design guidelines of the Tamalpais Area Community Plan, which limit the size and scale of development to that which is compatible to the community’s semi-rural character and the natural beauty of its setting. Urban development and overdevelopment by private developers has consistently been considered both inappropriate and unsustainable and has therefore been opposed by the community for decades.

In conclusion, we strongly support removal of Tam Valley, Almonte and Manzanita from the Hwy 101 Corridor Priority Development Area. Removal from the “PDA” designation would acknowledge the hazards and developmental constraints in the area and better protect the environment and public health and safety. Moreover, removal from the PDA designation would reflect the longstanding character, values, and goals of the Tam Valley & Almonte community.

We urge you to adopt the “Resolution of the Marin County Board of Supervisors Modification to Priority Development Area”.

Moreover, we urge you to expand the Bothin Marsh “Priority Conservation Area” to include all the parcels East of Shoreline Hwy. This would be consistent with the many decades long community goal of marsh restoration, the Tamalpais Area Community Plan and “Goal Bio-5 Baylands Conservation” of the Countywide Plan.

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton

Chairperson

Sustainable TamAlmonte