

Presentation to the Planning Commission
at the May 7th Draft Countywide Plan Public Hearing

Good Morning, I am Sharon Rushton, President of the Almonte District Improvement Club.

Based on the Draft Countywide Plan, Marin County Planning is out of touch with the vast majority of Marin residents.

Please ask yourselves, why is Marin County so special? I believe it is because previously, rather than following the development pattern of the majority of California's counties, Marin County chose a unique path. Previous Marin County Planners chose no growth and low growth. Our predecessors chose "Quality over Quantity".

I believe that this concept, "Quality over Quantity" is still one of the prevailing values that Marin Residents treasure. Unfortunately, the Draft Countywide Plan, as it stands now, promotes the exact opposite. The plan's regulations seem to be guided by the principle that the Quantity of residents and a population surge is more important than maintaining and improving the Quality of Life for Marin residents. Moreover, the plan actually encourages Marin residents to be placed in harms way.

We don't understand why you are encouraging people to live in the hazardous conditions that exist in the Tamalpais Valley lowlands. Why do you wish to encourage hundreds of more people to live in an area that is prevalent with flooding, hazardous soil conditions, unsafe and polluting traffic congestion, inadequate and unsafe infrastructure, insufficient services, and in areas under threat of sea level rise? Why are you placing more people in harm's way?

Why are you encouraging high density development next to treasured Bothin Marsh & Coyote Creek and endangering these vulnerable habitats? Why do you feel it is acceptable to lower the quality of life for existing Marin residents?

Hundreds of Tam Valley and Almonte Residents voiced their concerns to you expressing that high density housing was unsafe, inappropriate, and unsustainable in our communities. Your commission indicated that you had heard and understood our concerns. In fact, at one Public Hearing you said you didn't want to listen to any more Tam Valley and Almonte residents regarding the HOD because you had supposedly gotten the message. Many of our residents left that day, never having their voices heard. Yet, the proposed plan promotes exactly what our communities do not want.

High density residential development, whether it is called HOD or Mixed Use, is unacceptable in the Tamalpais Community Plan Area.

Please make the appropriate changes to the Countywide Plan in order to meet our Communities' needs. The letter from the Almonte District Improvement Club makes specific recommendations as to how this can be accomplished. We hope you read it thoroughly.

Thank you.