

February 12, 2007

Marin County Planning Commission  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 308  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
Re: Marin County Wide Plan DEIR

Dear Marin County Planning Commissioners,

The Almonte District Improvement Club would like to make the following recommendations regarding the Marin County Wide Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report.

**Impact of Cumulative Growth and Concentration of Population Caused by the Draft CWP Update:**

Impact – The Draft 2005 CWP Update would induce growth or concentration of population above existing conditions. This would be a significant project impact and would make a cumulatively significant contribution to a cumulative growth and concentration of population impact.

**Mitigation 4.1-2**

We strongly approve of the DEIR Mitigation 4.1-2 which is a Mitigation Measure to reduce impacts associated with cumulative growth and concentration of population. In general, it states that adequate infrastructure capacity must be in place before any development may occur. We urge you to recommend adoption of DEIR Mitigation 4.1-2 and then strictly adhere to its requirements.

**Impact 4.2-3**

According to Impact 4.2-3, "Land uses and development consistent with Draft 2005 CWP Update would result in traffic that contributes to unacceptable LOS (LOS F) on State Route 1 between US 101 and Almonte Boulevard. This would be a significant project and cumulative impact."

**Impact 4.2-24 Tam Valley/Almonte**

"Development in the Tam Valley/Almonte area consistent with the Draft 2005 CWP Update would result in significant project and cumulative traffic impact."

To help mitigate the LOS "F" on Hwy 1, the Draft 2005 CWP Update suggests replacing the Coyote Creek Bridge (i.e. improvement #20 in Exhibit 4.2-15). Implementation of this mitigation is unfeasible. There is no plan and no funding in place for this improvement. Furthermore, it would require cooperation with Cal Trans. Cal Trans, having already been approached regarding this improvement, indicated that it has no intention of repairing or reconfiguring Coyote Creek Bridge because it is seismically and structurally sound.

### Mitigation Measure 4.2-3

To help mitigate the LOS "F" on Hwy 1, Mitigation Measure 4.2-3 of the Draft DEIR suggests widening State Route 1 between US 101 and Almonte from one to two lanes in each direction. Implementation of this mitigation measure is also unfeasible due to a number of reasons:

- a) Shoreline, Hwy 1 and Almonte Blvd. are flanked by a protected and very delicate creek and marshland ecosystem with endangered species which would greatly impede any changes, including widening, to the highway.
- b) The costs of the project would be astronomical. The costs would be especially high due to the geological conditions of the area (a seismic activity zone, a liquefaction zone, and a flood zone). The county simply does not have the money.
- c) A reengineering would require compliance by Cal Trans, which is often at odds with Marin County's agenda. The road system plans for the Fireside Affordable Housing Project is an example of how neither the County nor Cal Trans were willing to provide a proper infrastructure to accommodate the future low income residents and their impact on the existing local residents' commute, particularly in times of flooding. During a flood, the future residents will need to wade across flood water, jay walk across a bustling highway or be confined to their island of a home. Other Examples: I.e. Cal Trans blocked the redesign of Coyote Creek Bridge. I.e. Cal Trans has lacked the will to help the local communities lower the Utility lines that lay in Cal Trans' jurisdiction (Hwy 1 in Tam Junction).
- d) Local residents would most likely fight the widening of Shoreline Blvd., Hwy 1, and Almonte Blvd. Locals want a quiet and safe neighborhood environment. They don't like the current bustle of the major arteries and definitely would not want an even wider, faster paced and thus more dangerous, noisier, and greater polluting road system bordering their communities.

We conclude that the CWP Improvement (#20 in Exhibit 4.2-15) to replace Coyote Creek Bridge and the DEIR Mitigation Measure (4.2-3) to widen Hwy 1 are both unfeasible. We also conclude that even if they could be performed that the result is unacceptable because they only lower the LOS "F" down to an LOS "E" and would not reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the unacceptable LOS on Hwy 1 would remain a significant project and cumulative impact. We further conclude that due to the failure of these afore mentioned mitigations, Mitigation 4.2-1, requiring adequate infrastructure capacity in place before new development can occur, would not be fulfilled. Thus, new development must not take place.

As an alternative mitigation, we suggest that measures should be put in place to reduce future population growth and future development in areas which generate traffic that feeds into Hwy 1. This would include removal of the Housing Overlay Designation from the Almonte and Tam Valley Districts. This would also include finding ways to reduce the number of additional residential units and additional commercial development already allowed by current zoning (1994 CWP) to be built in the Tamalpais Community Plan Area as well as in other jurisdictions where development contributes to Hwy 1 traffic. To accomplish this, we recommend that the residential density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of environmentally sensitive parcels located in the Tamalpais Community Plan Area and in other jurisdictions where development contributes to Hwy 1 traffic, be calculated at the low end of the applicable zoning designation. However, such units removed from environmentally sensitive sites should not then be transferred through a Housing Bank to other areas within the Tamalpais Community Plan Area and jurisdictions that contribute traffic to Hwy1, but instead should simply be removed. We further recommend that the number of residential units and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of "commercial/mixed use" parcels be calculated at the low end of the applicable zoning designation in the Tamalpais Community Plan Area as well as in other jurisdictions where development contributes to Hwy 1 traffic.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sharon Rushton, President, ADIC

Cc: Marin County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Alex Hinds