



MEMO

To: General Plan Steering Committee
From: Brian Millar
cc: Lorraine Weiss
Jay Tashiro
Date: October 24, 2003
Re: Land Use Discussion for October 30, 2003 Meeting

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The primary purpose of the October 30th General Plan Steering Committee meeting is to focus on remaining land use issues. In particular, Committee discussion is needed on certain questions pertaining to site- or area-based land uses.

We anticipate that the October 30th meeting will complete discussions with the Steering Committee for about a two-month period. Following the meeting, PMC and Town staff will complete a summary report for presentation to the Planning Commission. The Commission is tentatively scheduled to consider the item at a special meeting on December 3, 2003. The report will provide the framework for the Draft General Plan, and will outline:

- Summary of public outreach since work began on the General Plan update
- Summary of work tasks completed to date
- Summarize work completed with the Steering Committee
- Presentation of the framework for the Draft General Plan. This will include:
 - Issue statements (summary of primary areas of discussion with the Steering Committee)
 - Outline of the Draft General Plan
 - Outline of Key Issue Preliminary Goals and Policies (per Steering Committee consensus) for the Draft General Plan. This will also include an overview of possible policy approaches (alternatives) considered but rejected during Committee discussions.

This report will be provided to the Steering Committee, Town Council, and made available to the public at the Town offices, Library and on the General Plan Update web page.

In the coming months, the Committee will be used for feedback on specific questions as we prepare the Draft General Plan and the Program Environmental Impact Report.

LAND USES

There are several key sites that require policy and/or Land Use Map review. Some of these sites have been previously discussed, and are listed here in order to address remaining questions. There are also several other properties that require Steering Committee discussion regarding a preferred approach in the land use section of the Draft General Plan, or with respect to land use classifications.

Attached to this memo are color graphics (maps) depicting the below-listed areas within the Town. These maps show existing land uses (per the attached color key), and are provided to facilitate the discussions on October 30th.

[Site 1: Old Corte Madera Square](#)

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Identify planned boundaries for the Old Corte Madera Square Specific Plan. The attached map suggests inclusion of the lots surrounding the Square, plus additional lots along Tamalpais Drive (just past Town Hall). This could be expanded to include other lots in the immediate area, or to include adjoining street segments.
- Policy approach for any land use proposals prior to Town completion of the Specific Plan. Among the options:
 - Require Conditional Use Permits for any new construction in the planned boundaries of the Specific Plan
 - Allow land uses consistent with the current Zoning Ordinance
 - Disallow any new “significant” development activity until completion of the Specific Plan. The latter approach assumes Town prioritization of completion of the Specific Plan relatively soon after adoption of the updated General Plan.

[Site 2: Palm Avenue Area](#)

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Determine if all or a portion of the block bounded by Palm Avenue, Redwood Avenue, Willow Avenue and Baltimore Street should be designated for Multi-Family Residential development. Several multi-family units are located on the block, and there may be interest in creating (acknowledging) the existing units, plus any opportunity to create new multi-family units in the future. The area consists primarily of existing single-family homes. A copy of the 1989 General Plan Land Use Designations is provided for reference:

1989 General Plan Residential Classifications

| Category | Density (units/acre) | Key Provisions |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Open Residential | 0 to .2 | Intended for areas subject to hazardous conditions or with open space value; minimum lot size of 5 acres per residence; applied only to lands near Robin Drive and Corte Madera Avenue (by Chapman Drive). |
| Very Low Residential | .2 to 1.0 | Application to lands similar to Open Residential, but with somewhat less vulnerability; minimum lot size of 1 acre, though smaller, existing lots could be developed with a residence. |
| Low Density Residential | 1.0 to 2.2 | Predominates on higher slopes in Town; minimum lot size of 20,000 sq ft (1/2 acre); associated with low-density residential neighborhoods. |
| Medium Density Residential | 2.2 to 5.8 | Applied to most residential lands in Town; minimum lot size of 7,500 sq ft. |
| Multifamily Residential | 5.8 to 10.9 | Allows for attached one- and two-story townhomes and apartments; density can be increased if for a senior housing development; text recognizes the upper range of density may not “create an interest in building stacked apartments.” |

[Site 3: Christmas Tree Hill and Chapman Hill: Lowlands and Uplands](#)

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Discuss how the Draft General Plan Land Use Map would designate these areas. The attached map suggests an option differentiating between the lowland areas (primarily in a Medium Density Residential designation, with a density range of about 2 to 6 units per acre, and the upland areas (primarily in a Low Density Residential designation, with a density range of about 1 to 2 units per acre). The dividing line between Low and Medium Density Residential would occur primarily along Town streets. The map also identifies lower density designations for those existing larger lots in the uplands areas.

Another option: Blending of the Medium and Low Density Residential designations, and the Very Low Density and Open Residential designations, and using land use constraints/opportunities (prevailing slope, natural vegetation or other key site features, access, character of neighborhood development, etc.) as the ultimate factor in determining underlying density and opportunity for new development. This in effect would work more as a set of performance standards in determining density. There are only about a dozen vacant lots remaining in these hillside areas, plus several large vacant residential lots above Meadowsweet Drive and Hawthorne Lane. Additionally, subdivision potential is limited due to slopes (and the application of the Town’s Hillside Land Capacity

Overlay District, which further reduces residential density). Nonetheless, the issue should be addressed in the General Plan.

Site 4: Fifer Avenue/Tamal Vista Boulevard

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Over the time-span of the General Plan, the Town is likely to see developer interest in new construction on some of these lots. We suggest consideration of a modified land use designation that provides for both commercial (retail) and office uses for this area. Under such an approach, housing can also be considered on those sites away from (east of) the freeway frontage. Current General Plan Commercial and Office designations are listed below:

1989 General Plan Commercial Classifications

| Category | Key Provisions |
|---------------------------|--|
| Local-Serving Commercial | For businesses usually found in neighborhood shopping centers, such as grocery stores, drug stores, barbers, cleaners and banks. Examples: Paradise Shopping Center, Village Square. |
| Region-Serving Commercial | For retail uses attracting customers from a wider geographic area; also allows offices and personal services. Examples: Town Center and The Village. |
| Commercial Services | Uses include auto dealers and services, motels, building materials sales, veterinarians and other uses that typically do not locate in shopping centers. |
| Office | For professional, administrative and medical office uses. |
| Industrial | Provides for distribution, warehousing and light manufacturing; some potential for office uses. |

Site 5: Casa Buena/Meadowsweet Drive Area

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Distinguish between Highway Commercial and Service Commercial types of uses.
- Related issue of future land uses if a SR 101 over-crossing is constructed (connecting Paradise Drive on the east side of the freeway with Casa Buena Drive on the west side of the freeway).

Site 6: Paradise/San Clemente Area

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Identify planned boundaries for the Paradise/San Clemente Specific Plan. The attached map suggests inclusion of the entire block along San Clemente Drive and Paradise Drive, plus the Paradise Point commercial/office development south of Paradise Drive (west of Madera del Presidio). This would maintain the identical boundaries for the 1999 Draft Paradise/San Clemente Commercial Area Specific Plan, making its potential “reactivation” that much simpler.
- Policy approach for any land use proposals prior to Town completion of the Specific Plan. Among the options:
 - Require Conditional Use Permits for any new construction in the planned boundaries of the Specific Plan
 - Allow land uses consistent with the current Zoning Ordinance
 - Disallow any new “significant” development activity until completion of the Specific Plan. The latter approach assumes Town prioritization of completion of the Specific Plan relatively soon after adoption of the updated General Plan.

Site 7: Marshlands

- *Marshlands/Madera Bay Park*

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Clarify that the Madera Bay Park site remains in Wetlands/Habitat Restoration designation, with provisions for housing consistent with the Housing Element
- Possible provision of Madera Bay Park wetlands/restoration study
- The Habitat Site (north of Nordstrom’s) would remain in a Wetlands/Habitat Restoration designation.

- *Paradise Drive Wetlands*

Key Issues for Discussion:

- Brief discussion of the Marin Audubon Society’s Triangular Marsh Restoration Plan
- Retention of Semi-Public designation for Marin Country Day School and Montessori School sites.

Current General Plan wetlands/resource designations are provided below:

1989 General Plan Open Space Classifications

| Category | Key Provisions |
|--|---|
| Waterbodies/Waterways and Related Habitat | For sites that relate or enhance waterbodies or waterways. Examples include San Francisco Bay, Corte Madera and San Clemente Creeks. |
| Wetlands, Unique Marshland, Related Habitat, and Potential Habitat Restoration | For areas enhancing wetlands habitat or available for conversion to more valuable habitat. Can be used as receiving lands for wetlands impact mitigation for development occurring elsewhere in Corte Madera. |

NOTES ABOUT ADOPTED HOUSING ELEMENT POLICIES

The Draft General Plan Land Use Element will include cross-references to the Town's adopted Housing Element. Key issues are summarized below, with citations of pertinent Housing Element policy sections.

- The Land Use Map would reflect the Town's recent change in land use designation for the Wornum Drive Extension to Multi-Family Residential (Per H3.G)
- Per Housing Element section H3.N(m), add the following residential designation category to the General Plan's Land Use Element:

“High Density Multi Unit Residential (from 10.9 to 31.5 units/gross acre). This higher density multi-unit designation is provided to encourage the development of affordable, workforce housing in Corte Madera. This designation is applied to areas where the developer is providing at least one half of the units to be affordable for lower income households. Residentially related uses, such as schools, day care centers, and churches, are allowed in this classification. Lot sizes will range from a minimum of 8,000 square feet to large acreage parcels which lend themselves to planned unit developments. Estimated population density: 25-70 persons /acre.”
- Amend the Residential and Commercial land use designations to ensure recognition of the Affordable Housing Mixed-Use Overlay Zone (Per HE H3.G through H3.N)
- Recognize potential amendments to Floor Area Ratio standards, flexible parking standards and allowance of density bonuses if affordable units are constructed on the San Clemente Drive housing site (Per H3.H)
- Recognize the affordable housing potential for Old Corte Madera Square, including special design concerns and flexibility in development standards (such as building heights, density and parking) (Per H3.I)
- Recognize the affordable housing potential for Madera Bay Park, including special design concerns and flexibility in development standards (such as building heights, density and parking) (Per H3.J)
- Recognize the affordable housing potential for the Town's Corporation Yard, including the potential need to relocate the Corporation Yard to an alternative site, such as shared facilities with the City of Larkspur, Marin Municipal Water District or the Tamalpais High School District (Per H3.K)
- Recognize the affordable housing potential for lands atop Robin Drive, including special design concerns and flexibility in development standards (such as building heights, density and parking). Would include required second residential units (Per H3.I.)
- Recognize density bonus provisions per Housing Element and State law in the Land Use Element (Per H3.13)

- Recognize planned revisions to the second residential unit provisions of the Zoning Ordinance in the Land Use Element (Per H3.Y and H3.AA)
- Consider review of potential multi-family residential sites (Per H3.N).