



STAFF REPORT

To: GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
From: Brian Millar
Date: June 5, 2003
Re: General Plan Outline; and Goals and Policies for Draft General Plan

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Purpose of this Report

This report provides the Steering Committee with several important items:

- An intended outline (table of contents) of the Draft General Plan.
- A summary report of draft goals and policies for the Draft General Plan that reflect those key General Plan issue areas previously discussed by the Steering Committee where a general consensus was reached.
- The report identifies those issue areas where discussion on other specific subject matters is necessary.
- Identifies next steps with the Steering Committee.

General Plan Outline

Steering Committee-member Kunhardt previously provided suggestions on a potential outline for the General Plan. Committee members generally concurred with the approach. PMC in turn has taken the outline and added detail and shifted some of the chapter elements. The outline provides for all seven mandated General Plan elements: land use, circulation, noise, safety, open space, conservation and housing. It also incorporates optional element issues as directed by the Town Council when it approved the General Plan Update work program: flooding and floodplain management, community design, and parks and recreation.

The outline should be considered just that: an illustration of what types of issues will be addressed in the General Plan. The final outline (a table of contents within the Draft General Plan) will provide additional detail in terms of sub-headings and perhaps some additional topic or policy areas. However, the outline provided with the June 5th packet should be sufficient in serving its intended uses for now: to provide the Steering Committee with an understanding of the issue areas to be considered in the Draft General Plan, and how/where the draft goals and policies (attached to this report) will fit into the Draft General Plan.

Goals and Policies: Committee Consensus Items

Attached to this report is a list of goals and policies for those key issue areas where the Steering Committee previously discussed the issue items and where some form of consensus was reached. The items are presented here in somewhat more formal fashion (as goals and policies for the draft General Plan); when previously considered, many of these issues were presented as options or choices among several related issues. We will be seeking general responses from the Committee on these items (e.g., are the concepts adequately captured?) as opposed to trying to work through the precise wording of each item.

Other Issues Requiring Discussion

There are many issues remaining that we would like to discuss with the Steering Committee over the next few meetings. Among them:

- *Land Use Map* (issues of land use designation and map changes compared to the current General Plan).
- *Land Use Classifications* (again, issues of changes compared to the current General Plan).
- Intensity and range of land uses associated with potential *changes/revitalization of existing commercial and office centers*. This would include a discussion of potential traffic and other impacts.
- Focused discussion on *Old Corte Madera Square*. This will pick up where our design discussion left off. The overview will again include issues of design, but will also address land use and traffic/circulation.
- Approaches for responding to *flood control*.
- Additional issues associated with *parks and recreation*, including components of a pending Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be issued by the Town.
- *Financial implications* of the approaches being considered for the Draft General Plan.
- Other issues raised by the Steering Committee.
- Another field trip with the Committee may also be helpful as we further discuss some of these issues.

Next Steps for the Committee

The Committee should, over the June 5th and following three meetings, move toward closure of this phase of the General Plan update, by taking the following actions:

- Discuss and provide feedback on the General Plan Update outline (to be accomplished June 5th)
- Review and provide feedback on the consensus goals and policies presented above (commenced on June 5th and continued to the following Steering Committee meeting).
- Discuss and provide consensus feedback on those issues brought before the Committee by staff and PMC (to be considered at the next three Steering Committee meetings). This will include discussions with key General Plan Update consulting staff/sub-consultants, as well as possible items brought forward by individual members of the Committee.
- Provide recommendation to the Planning Commission on Draft General Plan goals and policies, allowing (with Town Council final concurrence) for preparation of the Draft General Plan.

CORTE MADERA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – DRAFT OUTLINE

Chapter I – Introduction

- Scope and Role of the General Plan
- Legality of the General Plan
- Process Used in Preparing the General Plan
- Defining the use of Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Chapter II – Land Use

- Introduction
- Regulatory Framework
- Setting
- Land Use Designations and Range of Allowable Land Uses
- Land Use Map
- Public Facilities and Services
 - ◆ Town Government
 - Town Services
 - Town Facilities
 - ◆ Relationship to County Government
 - ◆ Relationship to State and Federal Government
 - ◆ Other Service Agencies
 - ◆ Parks and Recreation
 - Master Planning
 - Parks and Park Facilities
 - Recreational and Other Open Spaces
 - Trails
 - Recreation Programming
 - ◆ Water Supply and Conservation
 - ◆ Wastewater Treatment
 - ◆ Storm Water Drainage
 - ◆ Communications

Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Chapter III – Environment

- Introduction
- Regulatory Framework
- Natural Areas and Resource Conservation
 - ◆ Marshes and Tidal Lands
 - ◆ Riparian Corridors and Drainage Areas
 - ◆ Hillside and Ridgelines
 - ◆ Scenic Resources
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Solid Waste Management and Recycling
- Energy Conservation and Design

Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Chapter IV – Residential Development and Design

- Introduction
- Regulatory Framework
- Population, Demographics and Housing
- Residential Design
 - ◆ Guiding Objectives
 - ◆ Town-Wide Design
 - ◆ Neighborhood Design

Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Chapter V – Commercial and Public Facilities Development and Design

- Introduction
- Regulatory Framework
- Commercial
 - ◆ Guiding Objectives
 - ◆ Design
- Office
 - ◆ Guiding Objectives
 - ◆ Design
- Light Industrial
 - ◆ Guiding Objectives
 - ◆ Design
- Public Facilities
 - ◆ Guiding Objectives
 - ◆ Design

Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Chapter VI – Circulation

- Introduction
 - Regulatory Framework
 - Movement through the Community
 - ◆ Vehicular Circulation
 - ◆ Bicycle Circulation
 - ◆ Pedestrian Circulation
 - Modes of Public Transportation
- Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions*

Chapter VII – Public Safety and Hazards

- Introduction
- Regulatory Framework
- Fire
 - ◆ Fire Hazards
 - ◆ Fire Facilities and Services
 - ◆ Emergency Access
- Law Enforcement
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Geology

- Flooding and Floodplain Management
 - ◆ Flooding Conditions
 - ◆ Existing Improvements
 - ◆ Programs

Goals, Policies and Implementation Items

- Glossary
- Appendices

Draft General Plan Goals and Policies – Key Items of Steering Committee Consensus

The following outlines goals and policies that are taken from previous discussions with the Steering Committee where a general consensus was reached. PMC has taken the range of key discussion topics and placed them in a goals and policies format so the Committee can see how these issues will be addressed in the Draft General Plan, using the draft General Plan outline provided in the Committee's June 5th packet. Per Committee direction, these goals and policies do not include any implementation components at this stage. The precise wording and additional details will be completed with the preparation of the Draft General Plan.

The list is not intended to reflect the full range of goal and policy issues that would be included in the Draft General Plan. Many issues still require discussion with the Committee, while other goals and policies may be of a more basic approach that would be completed with the Draft General Plan.

Chapter I – Introduction

No General Plan goals or policies contained in this chapter.

Chapter II – Land Use

The full range of land use goals and policies (including issues of land use map and classification changes) will be addressed in a separate discussion with the Steering Committee.

Parks and Recreation -- Selected Goals and Policies:

Goal II.1: Prioritize exceptional maintenance of existing community parks and facilities.

Intent: Funding should be prioritized for maintaining the range of existing parks and recreation facilities over acquisition and construction of new facilities.

Policy II.1.A: Provide sufficient annual funding to ensure ongoing and exceptional maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities.

Policy II.1.B: Renew long-term contracts with lease-holders of Corte Madera parks.

Policy II.1.C: Where costs are reasonable, consider acquisition of lands by fee title or lease for expansion of the Town's parks and recreation facilities. Costs for carrying out this policy should not detract from funding of existing parks and recreational facilities.

Policy II.1.D: Retain parks and open spaces to ensure provision of five acres of parks and open space for every 1,000 Corte Madera residents.

Goal II.2: Expand the range of recreation programs, ensuring an ability for all Town residents to participate.

Intent: The Town should consider options to expand the range of the recreation programs available to its residents. Limitations in facilities may in turn limit how the Town provides these programs, necessitating alternative approaches.

Policy II.2.A: The Town will provide or make arrangements for a wide range of recreation programs, making them available to residents of all ages and abilities.

Policy II.2.B: Explore opportunities for joint-use of existing recreational facilities and programs available through surrounding jurisdictions.

Policy II.2.C: Seek expanded opportunities for Corte Madera residents to utilize the Redwood High School aquatics center.

Policy II.2.D: Pursue opportunities for Corte Madera residents to use private recreational facilities.

Goal II.3: Enhance the Town's outstanding series of trails and footpaths.

Intent: The hillside areas of Corte Madera are crossed with pedestrian trails and paths that provide convenient means of pedestrian movement. Some of these trails and paths are under public ownership and maintenance, while others are relatively obscure and difficult to access. Enhancing some of the trails and paths would improve neighborhood access and improve connectivity between residential neighborhoods and community centers.

Policy III.3.A: Prioritize and enhance selected trail and pathway segments in the hillside areas of Town.

Chapter III – Environment

Goal III.1: To promote conservation of Corte Madera's diverse natural resources.

Intent: The interrelationship between Corte Madera's natural resources and the built environment establishes this as a desirable and healthful community. Conserving significant natural resource areas and habitats preserves biological diversity, improves recreational opportunities and sustains natural systems.

Policy III.1.A: Identify areas containing special or unique habitat that are not presently identified to help ensure proper use.

Policy III.1.B: Prioritize the use of sensitive site planning and design plans to preserve and enhance ecologically important natural resource areas.

Policy III.1.C: Promote Corte Madera's extensive and unique wetlands and tidal habitat areas for public benefit and enjoyment.

Most issues related to the Environment will be addressed in separate discussions with the Steering Committee.

Chapter IV – Residential Development and Design

Goal IV.1: Utilize design as a tool to create outstanding residential neighborhood character through use of innovative, quality architecture and site planning.

Intent: With Corte Madera's residential neighborhoods already built, the focus in the coming years turns to improving the character of these areas. Where new development is proposed, in the form of development of the few remaining vacant residential lots, reconstruction of existing homes or construction of larger additions, proper design presents opportunities to create or enhance neighborhood character.

Policy IV.1.A: Adopt a set of focused design guidelines, applicable throughout the Town and with potential for focused design applications to specific residential neighborhoods, including Mariners Cove and Christmas Tree Hill.

Policy IV.1.B: The Design Guidelines shall address and incorporate design and site planning approaches that will add design excellence, visual quality and interest to the community, including through use of quality building materials.

Policy IV.1.C: Recognize the value of using customized design approaches in response to particular site constraints and as a means of retaining flexibility in the application of design guidelines. This shall include use of second stories where site conditions and view protection warrants when combined with quality of architectural design.

Policy IV.1.D: The form of new residential construction shall reduce the perception of visual bulk.

Policy IV.1.E: New residential construction, including large additions, shall complement and enhance – not visually dominate – adjacent properties and the project’s general neighborhood.

Policy IV.1.F: View and light preservation shall be considered and clarified as part of the Town’s design review process and within the design guidelines. View and light preservation shall be further managed under modified provisions of the Town’s Tree Ordinance.

Policy IV.1.G: Preservation of a property’s existing views and light shall be balanced with a reasonable right of property owners to construct or expand a residence. Where site conditions allow, designs shall preserve qualifying views on neighboring properties through appropriate building placement and heights.

Policy IV.1.H: New residential construction, including large additions, will be subject to a design review process that is consistent, fair and equitable in its application of the design goals and policies of the General Plan.

Policy IV.1.I: Build flexibility in Zoning Ordinance development standards, consistent with the design guidelines, to better reflect use of innovative site planning and design solutions.

Goal IV.2: Utilize design as a means of building an integrated community, one that encourages human interaction and fosters a strong sense of place.

Intent: Consistent with other General Plan goals related to residential development, concepts of community sustainability help bring these ideas together by stressing how Corte Madera neighborhoods will function over time. Sustainability concepts value human interaction and environmental awareness. For example, we can create a stronger feeling of community through provision of improvements that physically connect residential neighborhoods to one another, to schools, shopping and other community centers. Additionally, design approaches applied to individual residential development projects can add to neighborhood character and creation of a sense of place.

Policy IV.2.A: Require pedestrian-scale improvements for new residential developments and large additions, such as front porches and placement or orientation of the garage away from the street.

Policy IV.2.B: Install pedestrian and bicycle path connections between residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, parks and other key community activity nodes.

Goal IV.3: Emphasize the outstanding natural scenic qualities of Corte Madera when considering residential design, recognizing environmental, aesthetic and social benefits.

Intent: Corte Madera has many unique and visually outstanding scenic attributes, ranging from the hillside areas of Town to the tidal flats by San Francisco Bay. New construction should recognize and value these qualities.

Policy IV.3.A: Let design plans in ridgeline and hillside areas follow and integrate natural slope configurations and landforms, drainage courses, stands of mature trees, and other significant site features.

Policy IV.3.B: Development adjacent to creeks or wetlands shall respect the natural integrity of such areas, including in construction of flood control measures.

Policy IV. 3.C: Use residential building materials that capture and incorporate natural visual elements of the particular environment of the project.

Chapter V – Commercial and Public Facilities Development and Design

Goal V.1: To enhance Corte Madera's standing as a strong, vibrant commercial and office center of Marin County.

Intent: A healthy Corte Madera in part is derived from having a vibrant, wide range of businesses within our commercial centers. Such uses are also recognized not only for their contributions to the character of the community, but also for their positive financial contributions to the Town's economy. These objectives can be achieved, in part, through revitalization of existing commercial centers and a focused, sustained effort toward economic development.

Policy V.1.A: Encourage revitalization of the Town's older commercial and office centers, including Park Madera and within the Casa Buena Drive area, through use of appropriate development incentives.

Policy V.1.B: Develop Zoning Ordinance standards that provide for dual or multiple land uses and shared parking that will complement commercial center activities.

Policy V.1.C: Enact an economic development program that furthers the Town's goals of expanding economic development opportunities.

Policy V.1.D: Streamline the development application review process for desirable commercial and office uses.

Policy V.1.E: Aggressively market and pursue desired commercial tenants to assist in meeting broader Town objectives relative to land use and community character.

Policy V.1.F: Build gateway entry features by public gathering locations and along key street segments that celebrate the community of Corte Madera.

Goal V.2: Seek innovative commercial and office designs that incorporate appropriate size and scale of development.

Intent: While most of Corte Madera's commercial and office properties are already developed, potential remains for reconstruction of underutilized sites or for new construction when changes in land use are proposed. Adoption and application of design guidelines and other actions noted herein can ensure quality design solutions.

Policy V.2.A: Adopt a set of design guidelines that addresses commercial, office, light industrial and public facility land uses.

Policy V.2.B: The Design Guidelines shall address and incorporate design and site planning approaches that will add design excellence, visual quality and interest to the community, including through use of quality building materials. Corporate design themes will be permitted where they add to the quality of the design and support Corte Madera's design objectives.

Policy V.2.C: Allow for use of a floor-area ratio (FAR) that exceeds the historical Town limit of 34 percent (.34). Upper limits of the FAR shall be dictated by size and location of the subject property, freeway visibility of the proposed building(s), building placement on a lot, architectural design (including proposed building heights), and resultant traffic impacts of the proposed use.

Policy V.2.D: New construction, including large additions, will be subject to a design review process that is consistent, fair and equitable in its application of the design goals and policies of the General Plan.

Policy V.2.E: Build flexibility in Zoning Ordinance development standards, consistent with the design guidelines, to better reflect use of innovative site planning and design solutions.

Goal V.3: Encourage commercial and office development site planning and designs that emphasize pedestrian activity and provision of community gathering locations.

Intent: In keeping with the General Plan intent to build a strengthened sense of community and implement concepts of sustainability, this goal and its accompanying policies seek ways to make commercial and office locations pedestrian-friendly and more than just places to shop or work. Each place can be special while adding to the quality of the built environment.

Policy V.3.A: Encourage building designs that feature outdoor plazas, seating or gathering areas.

Policy V.3.B: Require new development or redevelopment of existing shopping centers and office complexes to provide pedestrian pathways from parking areas to storefronts and buildings, and provide connections to adjoining residential neighborhoods and public facilities. Building placement shall also emphasize or allow for creation of pedestrian areas.

Goal V.4: Develop Specific Plans that address the desired range of land use activities and physical improvements in and around Old Corte Madera Square and the Paradise/San Clemente center.

Intent: Old Corte Madera Square and the Paradise/San Clemente center represent two of the more important land areas in the Town with respect to how the General Plan can be used to achieve desired character. Old Corte Madera Square has an established range of land uses located around Menke Park; it is perhaps the defining "place" for the Town of Corte Madera. The Paradise/San Clemente center, while nearly fully built-out, has potential for redevelopment over time. Each site can be addressed in greater detail through provisions of a Specific Plan, helping the Town achieve broader community objectives for each location.

Policy V.4.1: Prepare a Specific Plan that encompasses lands on and around Old Corte Madera Square, intended to achieve the following objectives:

- ◆ Improve traffic safety and flow around the Square.
- ◆ Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in and around the Square.
- ◆ Improve upon the collective traffic, bicycle and pedestrian environment at the intersection of Redwood and Corte Madera Avenues.
- ◆ Enhance the passive recreational value of Menke Park as a quiet, scenic resource.

- ◆ Create an environment to enhance business success around the Square.
- ◆ Explore opportunities for mixed land uses around the Square.
- ◆ Recognize the integrity of historic architecture around the Square when considering new development.

Policy V.4.2: Prepare a Specific Plan that encompasses lands in the San Clemente Drive/Paradise Drive area, intended to achieve the following objectives:

- ◆ Improve vehicular access to the area by limiting direct encroachments onto San Clemente Drive and by extending through-access routes leading to Paradise Drive.
- ◆ Encourage new development of land uses that are in keeping with underlying General Plan objectives for commercial and office use.
- ◆ Provide for improved bicycle access through a connection to the bicycle lane across San Clemente Drive.
- ◆ Create outstanding designs through application of the design guidelines and through excellence in architecture and site planning.

Chapter VI – Circulation

Goal VI.1: Maintain a desirable level of traffic flow on Tamalpais Drive, Paradise Drive and other key Town streets while also managing vehicular access to and from Highway 101.

Intent: As growth occurs in and primarily around Corte Madera in the coming years, proactive measures can stabilize or even improve traffic conditions and safety on Town streets.

Policy VI.1.A: Ensure current levels of service on Tamalpais Drive, Paradise Drive and other key Town streets is maintained when considering new development within Corte Madera.

Policy VI.1.B: Work cooperatively with surrounding jurisdictions to effectively address concerns of through-traffic on Town streets, seeking innovative traffic solutions to issues related to peak-hour commute patterns and practices.

Policy VI.1.C: Emphasize traffic safety and reduce travel-related impacts to residential neighborhoods and the local street system when evaluating development proposals.

Policy VI.1.D: Expand the number of transit locations within Corte Madera.

Policy VI.1.E: Support investment in regional transit and transportation plans that provide alternatives to automobile-intensive transportation programs.

Policy VI.1.F: Apply Transportation Demand Management systems when considering new development and employment centers as a means of reducing vehicle trips on local streets and Highway 101.

Policy VI.1.G: Work constructively with Caltrans and the Marin County Congestion Management Agency on plans for improvement of Highway 101 interchanges in the Corte Madera and Larkspur areas. Support those plans that may result in positive changes to local street system circulation patterns and benefit local businesses.

Policy VI.1.H: Evaluate options for improving traffic flow and vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian safety at the Redwood Avenue/Corte Madera Avenue intersection.

Policy VI.1.I: Enforce local speed limits.

Goal VI.2: Increase opportunities for the use of bicycle and pedestrian paths as viable alternatives to vehicular transportation, and to interconnect neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, parks and other key activity centers.

Intent: A major component to achieving improved community sustainability and interaction is through emphasis on improving and constructing bicycle and pedestrian paths. Opportunities for interconnecting neighborhoods, schools and other community centers links and thereby supports an expanded social fabric within the Town.

Policy VI.2.A: Consider placement of bicycle or pedestrian pathways through cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets where land may be available to do so.

Policy VI.2.B: Explore opportunities to install bicycle and pedestrian paths that provide connections to surrounding communities and regional open spaces. This shall include determining feasibility of reopening the Alto Tunnel (or equivalent options) as a regional bicycle and pedestrian path connecting Corte Madera and Mill Valley.

Policy VI.2.C: Prioritize construction of a Class I bicycle path along Paradise Drive from San Clemente Drive to the southern terminus of the Town at the Tiburon border.

Policy VI.2.D: Develop flexible street standards that encourage construction of sidewalks and bicycle paths where they presently do not exist.

Policy VI.2.E: Prioritize and implement improvement plans of the Town's 2001 "Bicycle Transportation Plan."

Policy VI.2.F: Coordinate and maintain a local bicycle safety awareness program.

Goal VI.3: Develop a circulation system that safely and effectively links the east and west sides of Corte Madera.

Intent: The barrier presented by Highway 101 is formidable. It physically separates the east and west sides of the Town, limiting movement of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The General Plan seeks ways to minimize this barrier effect.

Policy VI.3.A: Evaluate and prioritize options for improving bicycle and pedestrian access across Highway 101, with emphasis placed on the Tamalpais Drive/Highway 101 overcrossing or a free-standing pedestrian and bicycle bridge in the vicinity of the Tamalpais Drive overcrossing.

Policy VI.3.B: Explore options for the reconstruction of the Tamalpais Drive/Highway 101 interchange to improve vehicle flow and safety.

Policy VI.3.C: Work with regional transportation agencies to provide increased transit services to the east area of Corte Madera.

Chapter VII – Public Safety and Hazards

Will be addressed in separate discussion with the Steering Committee.