

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: February 2, 2011

Present: Marge Macris, Chair; Betsy Bikle, Priscilla Bull, David Coury, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Randy Greenberg, Karen Nygren, Jim Schmidt, Susan Stompe, Ann Thomas, Don Wilhelm. Met at MCL, 8 to 10:15 AM.

January 5, 2011 Meeting Notes: OK as distributed.

SB 375 Update. Michelle Passero (via telephone) briefed the committee on the implementation of SB 375. Originally drafted to address Land Use and Transportation issues, SB 375 has become more focused on transportation. Its targets are greenhouse gas reduction and meeting adequate housing goals. ABAG and MTC staffs are working together to develop performance targets for sustainable communities. A report detailing more specific targets, an “initial vision scenario,” is due by March 11, 2011. Marge will distribute the report to MCL. After a local government and public review period, a “preferred scenario” will be adopted in December 2011, leading to final adoption of a “Sustainable Communities Strategies” by 2013. The Nature Conservancy is urging a stronger emphasis on conservation, so-called “green prints,” to fit in with the “vision blue print.” Planning grants to local governments should include preparation of “green prints.” Michelle emphasized the need for input into this process PRIOR to the publication of the “vision scenario.” Committee members expressed concern that local governments in Marin have shown little interest in this process. To date, only the City of San Rafael is developing criteria for the “vision.” Michelle added that the ABAG planner (Kirkey) is receptive to the concerns of smaller communities and environmental issues. MCL should take an active role in urging local cities and towns to participate in the SB 375 planning process. (Notes for this section: PB)

Community Marin/CWP Issues: The Community Marin group meets next on February 18.

Transportation. Don Wilhelm and Karen gave updates on several transportation-related issues.

Sir Francis Drake/Samuel Taylor Rehab Project FEIR. Comments are due February 7 on the final EIR for this project to repair about 5.2 miles of deteriorated roadway west of Lagunitas, between Shafter Bridge and Platform Bridge Road. The EIR appears to have sufficient information to enable an informed decision. Major concern with the project is the loss of nine trees, including eight sizable redwoods, that would result under option A, and questions about whether runoff into Lagunitas Creek would be neutralized sufficiently to assure that water quality would not be compromised. Nona will work on a letter of comment.

Marin-Sonoma Narrows. A program on the current state of the project was held January 31 in Novato. Don believes that many of the concerns raised by MCL and other environmental groups have been address though some details, e.g. access to the Mira Monte Marina and fill that will go into San Antonio Creek, are less than satisfactory. Don believes that reducing the number of planned interchanges was an accomplishment. Karen noted that Caltrans plans to convert the current northbound freeway lanes into a frontage road and add new freeway lanes; however, the highway from the county line to Petaluma would remain at two lanes.

SMART (Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit) Civic Center Station. The SMART real estate committee was to meet later today to select a location for this station and they are proposing a platform underneath 101 with parking in the Civic Center Auditorium parking lot. Bus drop-off and taxi areas are not addressed.

SMART Long Term Planning. Jim Schmidt, who along with Don W and Karen, has attended many of SMART's board and committee meetings, relayed frustration that the SMART board has no financing or capital plan, has under-estimated costs of extending the line to downtown San Rafael and failed in its fiduciary responsibility to the public. He estimates that SMART will be able to accomplish no more than half of what was described in the 2008 ballot measure. The minimal line that the MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) will accept for SMART to be able to qualify for regional funding, is Santa Rosa to downtown San Rafael. However, in order to stretch funds to get to downtown San Rafael SMART has proposed eliminating two stations, which would reduce ridership. He does not believe that SMART, because of low ridership in comparison to other projects across the nation, would be eligible for FTA's Small Starts Program money. So far SMART has spent about \$26 million on planning, including staff and consultants.

Jim suggested that there should be an evaluation of productivity and costs of SMART's different segments and a comparison with bus transit for the same segments to determine which parts of the train line should have priority for construction. For example, the costs of the extension to Cloverdale may not be justified. He also suggested that, given the interest in knowing what the public would get for the funds invested in train project, that MCL write or speak to encourage greater transparency and due diligence from the SMART board. Randy suggested that MCL ask for the sale of bonds to be deferred until there is more information on which to base financial decisions.

A motion was made (Thomas/Stompe) and approved to recommend that MCL write a letter to the SMART board requesting that they defer additional funding commitments, including sale of bonds, until the following is accomplished: a financial plan that specifies what could be built, and a segment productivity study examining ridership and costs of segments from Larkspur to Cloverdale.

Bay Plan Revision. Betsy has drafted a comment letter in support of proposed amendments to the Bay Plan to address rising sea elevation and this will be sent.

Housing Program. The program on housing, tentatively to be co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters and others, is now tentatively scheduled for March 30 in the San Rafael Community Center. Panelists are being selected.

Easton Point. The draft EIR continues to be imminent.

Alto Robles. Nona and Randy attended the Tiburon Planning Commission hearing on this proposal for 13 estate residences south of Trestle Glen along Paradise Drive. It does not appear the Commission is ready to make substantial changes.

Next meeting March 2, 2011

(Notes for second section of meeting: AT)