

# Marin County – Community-Based Focus Group

Host Community-Based Organization: **Grassroots Leadership Network of Marin**

Date: January 26, 2012

Attendance: 14

(Note: Not all who attended participated in all voting segments.)

## Part A – Transportation Tradeoffs Transportation Investment Priorities

Participants were given ten options for investing future transportation funding and asked to select their top five priorities. One option was “other” to allow participants to write priorities not already listed on comment cards.

Rank	Priority	%
1	Increase public transit service for low-income residents who do not have access to a car	12.6%
2	Maintain highways and local roads, including fixing potholes	12.1%
3	Provide more frequent bus service	11.2%
3	Provide financial incentives to cities to build more multi-unit housing near public transit	11.2%
4	Expand bicycle and pedestrian routes	10.7%
5	Increase number of freeway lanes for carpools and buses	10.5%
6	Fund traffic congestion relief projects	9.2%
7	Extend commuter rail lines, such as BART and Caltrain	8.7%
8	Invest in improving speed and reliability in major bus or light-rail corridors	7.6%
9	Other	6.3%

- Need shuttle services to connect people to public transportation, especially for youth and seniors, and especially in Marin City
- Need housing for low-income families
- Mobility needs to be provided for all residents, not just commuters
- Use housing elements and transportation funding to break down local segregation of low-income residents and workers who would otherwise commute
- Fund only those communities who promote desegregation
- Carpool lanes are not well used, so why add more

## Policies to Reduce Driving and Emissions

Participants were given ten options for policies to reduce driving and greenhouse gas emissions and asked to select their top five priorities. One option was “other” to allow participants to write priorities not already on the list.

Rank	Priority	%
1	Increase telecommuting	17%
2	Expand the Safe Routes to Schools/ pedestrian network	14.4%
3	Encourage “smart” driving	12.8%
4	Develop commuter benefit ordinances	11.8%
4	Increase vanpool incentives	11.8%
5	Complete the regional bicycle network	11.6%
6	Expand electric vehicle strategies	7.3%
7	Change freeway speed limit to 55 mph	6.9%
8	Other	4.3%
9	Institute parking surcharge	2%

### A Sampling of Comments

- Would like to see an increase in ridesharing
- Need SMART train to reduce 101 congestion, but it is also sprawl-inducing – not best alternative for Marin
- Bus service is most important for low-income residents (west Marin, Mill Valley, San Rafael, Tiburon)

### A Sampling of Comments

- Start educating young people (in schools) about Smart driving

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- Limit access to cars with more than four cylinders (and “muscle” cars)
- Launch an auto industry campaign that is focused on urban health needs
- As long as cost of electric vehicles is high, people won’t consider them a viable option

### Policies Regarding Public Transit

Participants were given nine options for policies regarding public transit and asked to select their top four priorities. One option was “other” to allow participants to write priorities not already on the list.

Rank	Priority	%
1	Better-timed connections	18%
2	More real-time information	16.3%
3	Cleaner/new vehicles and cleaner stations	16%
4	Standard fare policies across the region	15.8%
5	Fixed-price monthly pass valid on all systems	11.1%
6	More frequent and faster transit service	8.3%
7	Better on-time performance	6.6%
8	More customer amenities, like WiFi	6.2%
9	Other	1.9%

### A Sampling of Comments

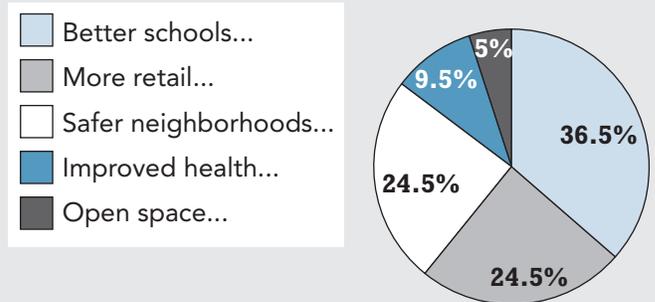
- Better on-time performance
- Amenities such as safety, cleanliness, shelters, and Wi-Fi would encourage ridership
- Provide multi-language programs/services

### Part B – Quality of Complete Communities

Participants were given five benefits of complete communities and asked to select their top two priorities.

Rank	Priority	%
1	Better schools through communities that attract residents with a mix of incomes; school impact fees; and shared use of city/school facilities	36.5%
2	More retail and access to food due to the larger population and pedestrian support for retail	24.5%
2	Safer neighborhoods from lighting, infrastructure improvements and more eyes on the streets	24.5%
3	Improved health through better infrastructure for walking and biking	9.5%
4	Increased open space and parks through planning and development impact fees	5%

### Complete Communities



### A Sampling of Comments

- Access to health care and good food is important
- New development and transportation investments should maximize benefits for workers, not just residents
- In Marin County, zoning and city participation is necessary to create complete communities – need to convince people that all deserve complete communities

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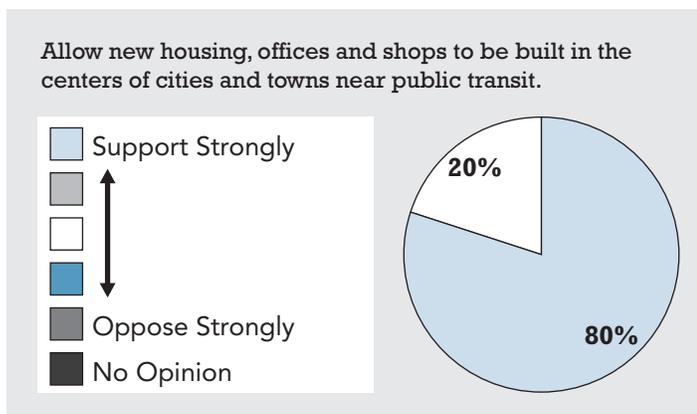
- Need to package “community” well-being as a basic safety net feature needed for personal well-being (housing, income, health, education, access and political structure)
- In Marin, the housing is for high-income residents, while a majority of the jobs are low-income jobs; therefore, 60% of the workers in Marin cannot afford to live in Marin
- Use state and regional funds to support only those communities that provide flexible zoning to develop housing that is affordable to very and extremely low-income households.
- Housing, education, health, income, and access are all needed to create complete communities

### Part C – The San Francisco Bay Area 2040

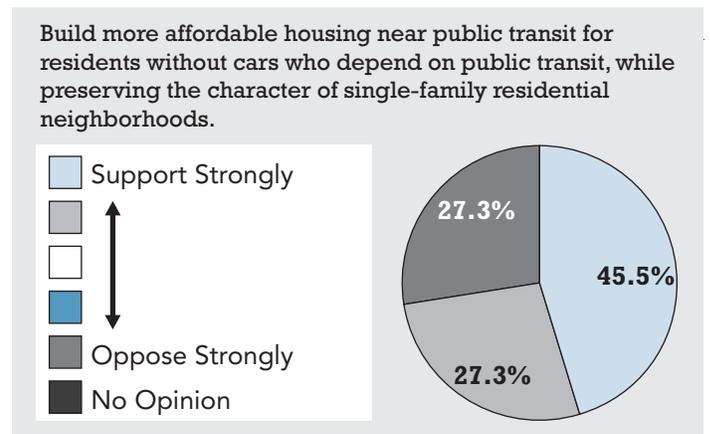
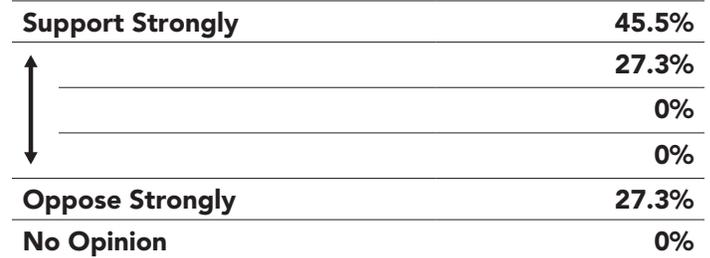
#### Discussion and Questions

Participants were asked to indicate their level of support for three options for accommodating projected growth.

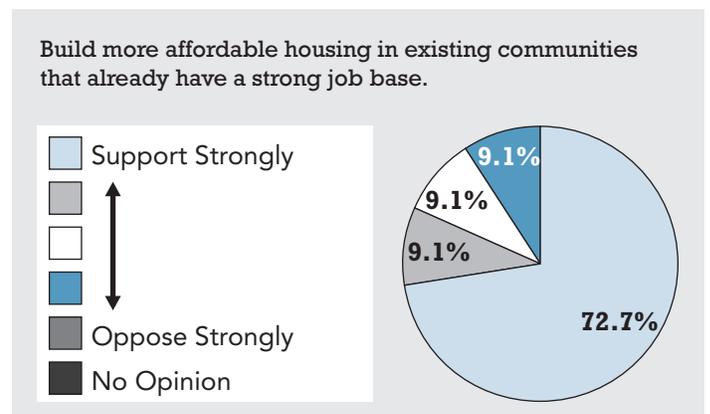
**Option A:** Allow new housing, offices and shops to be built in the centers of cities and towns near public transit.



**Option B:** Build more affordable housing near public transit for residents without cars who depend on public transit, while preserving the character of single-family residential neighborhoods.



**Option C:** Build more affordable housing in existing communities that already have a strong job base.



If participants opposed the three growth patterns listed above, they were invited to suggest a fourth alternative for accommodating growth.

## **A Sampling of Comments**

- Need more discussion about preventing gentrification
- Create a community land trust with accessible exportation corridors
- Ensure that at-risk communities have a strong social safety net
- Community character = institutional segregation
- Efficient land use requires preserving quality open space and using infill efficiently and equitably to house a full range of workers
- Some of these plans are possible, but need to be explored further and updated regularly