



Black Point Community Plan
Community Meeting #1 - August 28, 2013
Summary of Public Comments

The following is a summary of the input received from the brainstorming session at the August 28, 2013 Black Point community meeting. Feedback that was submitted via email, letter, or on Open Marin from those unable to attend the meeting in person has also been included in the summary. This summary does not represent the opinions of County staff, but rather public opinion based on feedback received.

Valued Attributes of the Black Point / Green Point Community

The community significantly values the rural character of the area, which is largely attributed to the natural scenic beauty, country feel, privacy provided by spacious separation between properties, quiet and peaceful atmosphere, as well as the abundance of and proximity to wildlife, natural vegetation, open space and water. Further complementing this setting is the presence of minimal outdoor lighting, low traffic volume, minimal fencing, low population and housing density, and a feeling of safety provided by the low crime rate. Residents also appreciate the freedom to keep, raise, and recreate with their animals outdoors.

The ability to live in a rural setting within close proximity to daily conveniences is considered a major benefit to those who live in the area. Residents enjoy easy access to outdoor recreation opportunities, including walking, hiking, bicycling, fishing, boating, picnicking, and horseback riding. They also appreciate having access to outdoor destinations such as Day Island, Deer Island, Petaluma River and the Black Point Boat Launch.

There is a strong sense of community created by the unity among neighbors, and a shared sense of ownership for preserving the existing character of the area. Residents appreciate that the community has remained unincorporated and separate from the City of Novato. There is an abundance of single-family homes, each with a unique character representing a diverse variety of home designs.

Important Issues That the Black Point Community Plan Should Address

Community Name and Boundaries

There is some interest among community members to clearly establish the Black Point Community boundaries for the Black Point Community Plan (BPCP), and the issue has been raised of whether "Black Point" is the most appropriate name for the community since it also encompasses Green Point and other surrounding neighborhoods.

Maintain Rural Character

A primary community concern is to maintain the rural character of the area by protecting wildlife, preventing light and noise pollution, and by preserving open space and the unique environmental characteristics of the community. Community members have suggested wildlife-friendly fencing and minimal outdoor lighting to preserve wildlife corridors and movement.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Community safety is a concern as it relates to traffic and road hazards (see "Road Improvements and Maintenance"), crime, and emergency preparedness for fire, flooding, and earthquakes. Residents would like to establish improved emergency evacuation plans including better evacuation routes, perhaps including use of existing fire roads, and have regular evacuation drills facilitated by the local fire department. There is concern about maintenance of defensible space and clearing of hazardous vegetation for fire prevention, and residents would like to mandate seasonal clean-up of hazardous debris.

While some residents feel that the community is safe and has relatively little crime, others have reported recent property crime in parts of the community such as burglaries. It has been suggested to consider installing security cameras for sheriff surveillance throughout the community.

Sudden Oak Death (S.O.D.)

Some residents expressed concern about Sudden Oak Death in the area. They would like property owners to be required to remove affected trees. If property owners with affected trees have a financial hardship preventing this, then they'd like to have a County assistance program in place to help them do so.

Road Improvements and Maintenance

Community members are concerned about maintenance of roads, both public and private. They would like the County to improve and better maintain their roads, and find a way to encourage property owners to maintain private roads. There is community support to keep Grandview Ave as the main thoroughfare through the community, retain existing road easements and keep paper streets closed.

There are concerns of dangers to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists on many roads in the area due to speeding, narrow roadways, lack of adequate bike/pedestrian lanes or shoulders, and lack of visibility around sharp corners. It has been suggested that speed limits be lowered on dangerous roads, shoulders be widened, and traffic calming improvements such as speed bumps added where appropriate. Much of the community would like to have bike/pedestrian lanes with proper signage along designated routes, in particular for designated Bike Route 50 along Harbor Drive.

Residential Development

Several residents would like to have guidelines for residential development to ensure that the size, design and location of new development does not conflict with the surrounding character of the neighborhood. They appreciate much of the diverse housing design found throughout the community, but would like to evolve to a more consistent look and feel among homes. Regarding existing homes, they would like to see improved maintenance of older degraded homes in the area. It was also suggested that there should be specific restrictions for development on hillsides and the Bay Plain marshland, related to concerns of geologic stability. Community members further expressed interest in maintaining the rural zoning and existing density of housing and population as much as feasible, and in finding a way to minimize future growth and development.

Parks and Recreation

There is interest in developing a new community park and further development of the Black Point Boat Launch, specifically with the addition of a playground. Some residents would like to see more off-road pedestrian paths for recreation and improved pedestrian access to open space areas. Along Bay Canyon Road, it was suggested to add signage to indicate the pedestrian route, and to improve access at the gate connecting to Grandview Ave.

Sewer Connection

There is community concern about the possibility of connecting to the public sewer system and being annexed into the City of Novato jurisdiction. Several community members expressed opposition to this and would like to remain an unincorporated community and unconnected from the sewer.

Commercial Development

Community members expressed interest in limiting future commercial development to the Village Center Area along Harbor Drive. They would like future businesses to be more functional for local residents, but remain small-scale, community-oriented, local-serving, and designed for consistency with the character of the surrounding area. Suggestions for new businesses include an independent café or bakery.

Renewable Energy

Many community members would like to establish appropriate zoning and design guidelines for development of renewable energy facilities and structures, and expressed opposition to large-scale commercial renewable energy, such as "solar farms."

Changes to Existing Plan

Several community members commented that they would like the language regarding "seek regular transit" and "minimize road improvements" removed from the existing BPCP.