



MARIN BAYLANDS ADVOCATES



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MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 94942

July 12, 2021

Mayor and Councilmembers  
1400 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Room 403  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
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Mayor and Members of the Council:

Re: General Plan 2040, Baylands Protection Corridor

Marin Baylands Advocates (MBA) urges you to adopt a Baylands Protection Corridor (BPC) for San Rafael's historic marshland as a program in the Conservation and Climate Change Element of the 2040 General Plan, along with requirements similar to those in the Marin Countywide Plan.

The Marin County BPC, adopted in the 2007 Countywide Plan, runs along the shoreline of San Francisco and San Pablo bays and includes lands within incorporated cities, although policies and implementation measures apply only to portions of the corridor in the unincorporated county. Extending the corridor to include wetlands and related habitats within San Rafael city limits would be compatible with adjacent county lands, and establish connectivity in protections for this complex ecosystem of aquatic and upland habitats, benefitting both jurisdictions. The existing wetlands overlay is insufficient for the level of protection and regulation needed for these habitats.

Lands designated in a San Rafael Baylands Protection Corridor would largely be located in Southeast San Rafael along the Canal area bayshore, mostly just inside the Bay levee. It would be anchored by Canalways, a property largely several feet below sea level behind a failing levee that is expected to be overtopped by high tides within the near future.

Virtually the entire Canal neighborhood and east San Rafael residential and commercial areas including Spinnaker Point, Kerner Boulevard, and Andersen Drive, are in FEMA flood plains. Development here brings associated costs to maintain public infrastructure and protect the public from natural hazards. It would be in the City's interest to unburden itself from this possibility by designating its highest use for habitat and sea level rise protection.

While the initial impetus for the Baylands Protection Corridor was protection of environmental resources, these properties are now being incorporated into nature-based solutions that shield communities from high tides and storm surge. The County-led Bay Wave vulnerability assessment earmarked southeast San Rafael as one of the county's most at-risk areas due to rising waters, presenting an opportunity to use its wetland areas in efforts to combat sea level rise.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment

Yours truly,

Ann Thomas