

# *Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development*

**July 30, 1998; 8:30 a.m. - noon**

**Dominican College  
50 Acacia Ave, San Rafael**

## **MINUTES**

**I.** After **introductory remarks** by Dick Clarke, CEO-Retired of PG&E, and self-introductions (attendance list attached), Marin County Supervisor Harry Moore welcomed the Alliance to Marin on behalf of both Sustainable North Bay and Marin County. In his welcoming remarks Dominican College President Joseph Fisk indicated that sustainable development is being integrated into the curricula of several programs at the College. Tom Roth welcomed the attendees on behalf of Congresswoman Woolsey and briefly described the congressional sustainable development caucus. It consists of 24 Congress members and is co-chaired by Congressman Wayne Gilcrest (IN) and Congresswoman Elizabeth Ferst (OR). The goal of this bipartisan group, started last year, is to educate congressional members and their staffs on sustainable development and to alert them to sustainable development efforts around the country. Topics discussed during the regular meetings of the caucus include urban sprawl, Brownfields, tax and fiscal policy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, etc. Roth also cited some of the sustainable development challenges faced in the North Bay, e.g., where to build housing, the strained transportation system, the revitalization of disaster-struck towns, how to handle success (the North Bay is one most desirable places to live in the world), and how to preserve what we have.

**II. Elements of Sustainability:** Carl Anthony facilitated a panel discussion of practitioners of elements of sustainable development in North Bay.

**Amber Evans** of the Bay Area Defense Conversion Action Team (BADCAT) discussed reuse opportunities as military bases in the Bay Area are converted to non-military purposes. Hamilton Air Force Base is at the forefront of the military base conversion and is dealing with brownfield clean-up, homeless housing, historical preservation, wetlands, de-construction, and mixed-use. Conversion of the bases is an alternative to further greenfield development and urban sprawl and provides a significant opportunity for low income housing by simultaneously addressing all three e's (environment, economy, and equity). In aggregate the military bases in the Bay Area have over 11,000 acres of dry land and include self-contained, village-like systems. Over 8500 housing units exist on the bases including multi-unit developments, mansions, single-family housing, etc.

An environmental needs assessment has been conducted for Hamilton AFB. The highest priorities identified in the assessment were groundwater monitoring and sedimentation. Hamilton AFB has 3000 acres "environmentally prepared for transfer." About \$1.6 billion will be necessary for environmental clean up of all the military bases in the Bay Area. About 10 percent of the jobs lost due to closure of the military bases have been "recovered" for the conversion/reconstruction of the bases. Base conversion provides both opportunities and challenges, e.g., the bases were designed for isolation and they now need to be integrated into the vibrant fabric of the Bay Area.

Evans provided a handout – “ San Francisco Bay Former Military Bases: Facts” – which is attached.

**Todd Wright**, project manager of the New Hamilton Partnership, discussed the redevelopment of Hamilton AFB from the perspective of a developer. New Hamilton Partnership is the developer of the first three parcels at Hamilton AFB. He began his presentation by describing what these military bases are and are not. They are lands that have been developed -- lands with a collection of buildings (most of which are out of compliance) and infrastructure (which is virtually useless). In the case of Hamilton AFB all the infrastructure -- sewer, electric, gas and telephone --has been or will be removed as well as 100 of the 114 buildings on the base. However the 100 buildings to be demolished or de-constructed total about 700,000 square feet while the 14 buildings to be saved total 500,000 square feet. Of the 400 acres that comprise Hamilton AFB, 150 acres are to be developed, 1,000 homes are to be built and 2,000 jobs will reside on the base. Hamilton AFB is "clean" by military standards after more than \$100 million has been spent on cleanup.

Wright also pointed out that any developer of converted military bases is dealing with the “land seller from hell,” i.e., the federal government/Department of Defense. The New Hamilton Partnership has received less than 50 percent of the land it expected by this time. The hope is that the remainder of the land will be transferred by March 1999.

Positive points of military base redevelopment include the fact that the land is vacant and therefore condemnation is not required. Additionally, most bases already have many of the attributes of a community, including a town center and commercial areas. He believes that Hamilton is a good model overall.

Wright cautions that while de-construction may be preferable from environmental and historical preservation perspectives, it is possible only if time permits, i.e., contractual time constraints may limit its practicality. At Hamilton 120,000 tons of concrete has been recycled into road-base on the site. Wood waste, some of which has lead-based paint, has been crushed and is being kept in an open space area on site.

He summed up by identifying the biggest challenges to base redevelopment as “simply time and money.” He expects 10 years to lapse from when development started to completion with total construction costs of approximately \$300 million (infrastructure itself was \$40 million).

**Pat Dwire**, of the City of Novato, discussed workforce housing in the context of a redeveloped Hamilton AFB. He suggested that housing the area’s workforce is central to the integration of the three e’s as suggested by the concept of sustainable development.

Affordable housing has changed from a moral issue in the past to a "hard ball factor" of economic development today. If employees can't afford housing the result is continued upward pressure on wages, a factor which makes an area less competitive for new jobs. Affordable housing is also a transportation issue. Marin County today "imports" many of its low-wage workers from other counties, exacerbating the gridlock that exists due to intra-County automobile transportation.

Subsidies for affordable housing from the federal and State governments have essentially dried up. The City of Novato is committed to implementing its redevelopment plan that will include 600 units

of affordable housing. The City has reached agreement to buy an area of Hamilton AFB that currently has 700 housing units on it. A "housing team" will rehabilitate these units as part of the redevelopment plan. In three years there will be a significant number of affordable housing units available in the City of Novato. This will truly be "an asset for the entire County of Marin."

**Steve Goldbeck** of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) discussed habitat/wetlands and cited open space as an integral part of the high quality of life in the Bay Area. BCDC is working with the Coastal Conservancy to restore approximately 900 acres of lands that had been used for runways and an antenna field at Hamilton AFB. The lands will be restored to a mixture of wetland and upland habitat. Eighty percent of the wetland habitat will be tidal and 20 percent will be seasonal. More than 10 million cubic yards of dredge material will be used in the restoration of this land. This project is one of most significant wetland restoration projects on the West Coast. Its importance is illustrated by the fact that San Francisco Bay Area has lost more than 90 percent of its historic wetlands. The wetlands will be integrated into the community, allowing people to enjoy the beauty of the natural wetlands. The site improvements alone will cost about \$20 million.

John Wise of EPA suggested that the Alliance, in a compendium of sustainability successes, capture this success story.

**III. Workgroup Progress Reports:** Michelle Perrault facilitated the panel discussion of the Working Group leaders reporting on the progress of their working groups. She began the discussion with a brief update on the activities of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. She also reminded the attendees that all work of the Alliance is a follow-up on the five questions identified by the Alliance earlier:

- 1) how can the concept of region be made a value in the Bay Area?
- 2) how can the concept of sustainable development made a value in the Bay Area?
- 3) how can the housing and job growth areas be linked, either by geography, mobility, or affordability?
- 4) how can a regional program of infill development combined with urban growth boundaries be provided in equitable and fiscally responsible manner?
- 5) how can more value be obtained from existing transportation dollars to ensure efficient and equitable service?

**Donna Liu** said that the **Indicators Working Group** has met three times and identified approximately 20 candidate indicators (attached) to be used for the broader measure of sustainability. These broad indicators are intended to be "headline-able" and help indicate where the Bay Area is on the path to sustainability. The process used by the Working Group was to identify potential indicators for each of the three e's and try to focus on those that overlap at least two and ideally all three e's.

**Rich Morrison** reported that the **Environmental Quality and Biodiversity Working Group** has developed a workplan which calls for:

1. Establishing overarching objectives for how we want our natural systems to function in the future;
2. Developing a set of generalized rules or principles that should govern proposed development in order to achieve the objectives.

3. Developing the strategies necessary to get the rules or principles in place.

Morrison noted that it is essential for the working groups to work together, citing the clear interaction between the Environmental Quality and Biodiversity Working Group and:

- the Housing/Jobs and Access Working Group i.e., it's not a question of open space vs. housing – both must be accommodated;
- the Indicators Working Group, i.e., the need for a measurement system reflecting the Working Group's objectives; and
- the Public Education/Media Strategy Working Group, i.e., the clear need for public education to foster better public understanding of natural systems and how they support people.

The preliminary objectives identified by the Working Group are:

1. Environmental quality: achieve attainment under State/federal air quality regulations --- comply with state/federal Clean water regulations;
2. Wetlands and riparian corridors: achieve net gains in Bay/Delta wetlands ---- restore key riparian habitats;
3. Open space: preserve lands presently designated for protection in the general plans of the Bay Area's nine counties;
4. Natural systems: to the extent practical, allow natural systems to function naturally as a means of achieving human objectives such as clean water and flood control.

**Rachel Peterson** characterized the **Jobs/Housing/Access Working Group** as analogous to a baby tiger -- "it's very attractive but it can flare up anytime." The Working Group has agreed on several things including:

- the process by which they will proceed,
- a definition of 19 terms related to jobs, housing and access, and
- an initial list of transportation strategies to reduce the Bay Area's dependence on cars.

The Working Group has not yet agreed on:

- the appropriate design, location, and pricing range of housing and
- the appropriate ratio of jobs to economic growth in the Bay Area.

Using poetic license **James Nixon** emphasized the importance of the media to the Alliance by suggesting "we're covered by the media, therefore we exist." The **Public Education and Media Strategies Working Group** is focusing on four primary areas:

- 1) Working with traditional media and press;
- 2) Working with civic leaders and decision-makers;
- 3) Encouraging the formal education system to integrate sustainable development into programs as appropriate; and
- 4) Marketing the Alliance.

The Working Group intends to use a multimedia approach which will include newsletters, electronic communications, briefings, etc.. The objective of the Working Group is to build a media/education infrastructure that will build support and interest in sustainable development as a "current event" in the Bay Area.

The **Best Practices Working Group** was an area of particular focus for this meeting. **Michael Closson** led an in-depth discussion on the activities of the Working Group. During its three meetings the Working Group has developed and is proceeding to refine its work plan. It has also been conducting significant preliminary research on best practices in use throughout the nation and the world (attachment – Resources for Best Practices for Sustainable Community Development). The Working Group has adopted a working definition of best practices as "good ideas that have been successfully implemented at the local level and lead toward sustainable development."

The Working Group hopes to highlight the best practices and Bay Area success stories through the Public Education/Media Strategy Working Group.

**IV. Compact for Regional Sustainability Preparation Timeline.** **Gary Binger** reported on the proposed timeline (attached) for the development of the Regional Compact for Sustainability. The compact will be comprised of recommended actions to move the Bay Area region toward sustainability. Key points on the timeline are:

- the working groups' presenting their preliminary recommendations at the next Alliance meeting, after which discussion, compromise and debate will occur, and
- the adoption of the compact by the Alliance at its meeting on April 29, 1999.

**V. Andrew Michael**, from the Bay Area Council, described the link between the Alliance's Regional Compact for Sustainability and the National Town Meeting on Sustainability hosted by the President's Council on Sustainable Development. He suggested that the timing of the National Town Meeting (May 2-5, 1999) provides the opportunity for both celebration of the accomplishments of the Alliance at that time and acceleration of the Alliance's efforts between now and then. At the time of the National Town Meeting the Alliance hopes to:

- unveil its draft Regional Compact for Sustainability;
- provide a base level for Bay Area sustainable development indicators, i.e. a preliminary "report card;"
- link/network with the National Town Meeting on specific issues in common;
- broaden the base of Alliance participants and supporters;
- have in place a Bay Area group of speakers to advocate the pursuit of sustainability.

**VI. James Nixon** and **Linda Bagneschi** reported on the draft preamble for the Regional Compact for Sustainability with the intent of getting some reaction from the meeting attendees. Some other comments provided were:

- there seems to be excessive "feel good" material in the preamble;
- ensure that we address meeting all three e's simultaneously rather than benefiting one e at the expense of the others;
- this draft preamble might be more appropriately characterized as a draft statement of intent for the Alliance
- use Agenda 21, developed in Rio, in 1992 as a model;
- de-emphasize what people and jurisdictions cannot do and rather identify and emphasize what people and jurisdictions can do.

**VI.** The next meeting of the Alliance will be on October 29, 1998 in room 300 of the PG&E headquarters building at 77 Beale Street in San Francisco.

**VII. Attachments:**

1. Attendance List
2. SF Bay Area Former Military Bases "Facts"
3. Draft Sustainable Development Indicators
4. Resources for Best Practices for Sustainable Community Development
5. Alliance Timeline
6. Sustainable Development – Urban Habitat Program