

Melissa Madrid

From: Susan Kirks [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 12:02 PM
To: Melissa Madrid
Subject: Agenda Item 3 - June 11 Planning Commission Meeting - Comment
Attachments: Paula Lane Wildlife Inventory Update submitted.doc

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Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I provided this comment to the Climate Action Commission, the Music, Parks & Recreation Commission, and a Work Group for the GPAC..

There is an opportunity to ensure substantive information is included in the Natural Environment section of the General Plan Update, but someone needs to request and require this. The consultants, with information provided to them thus far, are not able to create the important Natural Environment portion of the General Plan.

I remain very concerned about paucity of information related to Natural Environment, one of two identified cornerstones of the General Plan Update process. The other is Equity.

The GPAC's approach to our Environment has not been holistic or comprehensive, but a compilation of a lot of information combined with consultants who appear to have searched the internet to try and formulate information about Petaluma's Natural Environment.

I've endeavored to contribute to almost every CAC meeting from the beginning on the area of our Environment, Habitat Protection, Species who rely on our habitat areas, and wildlife corridors - my areas of specialty from 24 years of direct involvement in environmental life here in Petaluma. As the General Plan is updated, the climate crisis is specifically related to our next several years of community life and planning for our future.

Following is my input::

May 15, 2024 - Staff Report - "Natural Resources"

Existing Conditions - Natural Resprices

Why isn't this section entitled Natural Environment or

Natural Environment - Parks, Parks with Habitat, Open Space

Parks with active recreational amenities would not be included in this assessment. Parks with habitat and species would be included in this description. Total # of acreage as well as locations within Petaluma, south, east, west or north, could be included.

Description of the wetland ecosystems fails to mention habitat for birds - which is critically important and needs expansion.

The description, once again, of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor leaves me shaking my head. The Sonoma Land Trust has no expertise related to the Petaluma environment, species or species movement. The Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor is a small corridor (which has received quite a bit of attention related to grant funding and reporting) that serves the Sonoma Valley.

Is the Sonoma Valley the Petaluma Valley? I hope the response to that is obvious.

The Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor serves a small area of southeast Sonoma County and has the potential to connect to the eastern area of Sonoma County moving northward to the Mayacamas Mountains.

In Petaluma Valley, we have six identified and documented wildlife corridors. My wildlife corridor 3-part series documents these corridors, and Petaluma Valley is, in fact, geographically located to facilitate connections to Marin County, to southeast Sonoma County, to West Sonoma County, to north Sonoma County, and to the Sonoma County coast via West Petaluma.

I have offered to share and explain this information with the consultants and staff, but it's my impression, because of the City's terrible actions and situation with the Paula Lane open space land, they do not want to acknowledge or engage with my depth of expertise, accrued through direct observations and network reporting over 24 years. The understanding of our Petaluma Valley habitat areas and natural movement patterns of wildlife, including American Badger and Mountain Lion, over these years have resulted in the ability to document wildlife corridors.

In addition, the Petaluma Valley wildlife corridors, not the Sonoma Valley wildlife corridor, connects to the larger Blue Ridge-Marin segment of the macro mapping Critical Linkages regional wildlife movement mapping.

If your Commission believes the Petaluma Valley Wildlife Corridors should be included in the General Plan Update - Natural Environment section, I encourage you to request that.

The Sonoma County and Marin County wildlife corridors mapping project is one of the 30x30 projects listed on the Together Bay Area (regional open space coalition) website for Sonoma County projects, seeking grant funding. The Petaluma Valley corridors portion, part 1 of the 3-part series, is complete in rough form.

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If we are to evaluate and share in the General Plan Update a holistic view of our Natural Environment, with an ability to understand natural areas of Petaluma and the ability for members of the public to appreciate our Natural Environment and help to protect it, the approach to this part of the General Plan Update **must be different**.

ENV-3.3: Support green infrastructure in the built environment.

ENV-4: Water Resources, Health and Conservation

ENV-4.1: Support bank stabilization of river and creeks, prevent erosion and runoff

ENV-4.2: Protect water quality and health of river and creeks.

ENV-4.3: Prevent pollution and pollutant discharge.

ENV-4.4: Support sustainable development and conservation.

ENV-4.5: Enact and maintain green infrastructure throughout Petaluma.

ENV-5: Community Support of Nature

ENV-5.1: Encourage and support community involvement in neighborhood and area natural restoration and enhancement.

ENV-5.2: Support community groups and nonprofit organizations in stewardship and care for natural areas.

ENV-5.3: Seek conservation expertise and integrate into ongoing restoration and enhancement of natural areas, open and green spaces, and habitat/species protections.

I hope this input is useful for your Commission's deliberation. I applied to serve on the GPAC, and one elected official stated I knew more about our Petaluma Environment than anyone. Yet, I did not receive an appointment. When the work group for Natural Environment and Open Space was formed within the GPAC, I offered to lead the work group, with the interest of helping to create the basis for the GP Update to provide to the consultants. I, like several members of the public, was only able to attend Zoom meetings and give input to those meetings. It was a very unsatisfactory process and the outcome is now what we have.

Susan Kirks
Naturalist, Paula Lane Action Network
President, Madrone Audubon, Sonoma County



WILDLIFE INVENTORY/PAULA LANE OPEN SPACE

From California Wildlife Action Plan: "Wildlife at Risk"

Among wildlife species, those with limited distributions and those that are restricted to particular habitat types face formidable challenges if the habitats or resources upon which they depend are lost or degraded. Wide-ranging and migratory species also face unique threats because they are vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and because it can be difficult for conservation managers to secure the protection of widely separated habitat areas...

Following is a partial listing of identified wildlife species, compiled by Paula Lane Action Network volunteers from 2001 to present.

An asterisk "*" = Special Animal List of the California Natural Diversity Database, Department of Fish and Game.

In process for reporting for listing in the DFG CNDDDB are Allen's hummingbird; rufous hummingbird; sharp-shinned hawk; white-tailed kite; Cooper's hawk; oak titmouse; red-breasted sapsucker; Long-billed curlew; Great Egret; Great Blue Heron; Black-crowned night heron; Nuttall's woodpecker.

14 Special Status Species currently identified.

Mammals:

*American Badger (California Species of Concern)

Deer

Gray Fox

Skunk

Raccoon

Opossum

Mountain Lion (under consideration for ESA)

Gray Squirrel

Pocket Gophers

Mice

Red Fox

Meadow Vole

Avian:

Turkey Vultures

Red-tailed Hawk

Barn Owls

Screech Owl

American Crow

Hummingbirds

- *Allen's (nesting, G5S?, Federal Species of Concern; Fish & Wildlife Service, Migratory NonGame Birds of Management Concern; US Bird Conservation Watch List; Audubon Watch List)

- Anna

- *Rufous (nesting, G5,S1,S2, Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern; US Bird Conservation Watch List; Audubon Watch List)

- Calliope

Hutton's Vireo

Steller's Jay

Western Scrub Jay

Common Raven

Horned Lark

Western Bluebird

American Robin

Northern Mockingbird

European Starling

Song Sparrow

House Sparrow

Savannah Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

Golden-crowned Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrow

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Brewer's Blackbird

Red-winged Blackbird

Wild Turkey

Ring-necked Pheasant

House Finch

Purple Finch

American Goldfinch

Lesser Goldfinch

Black-headed Grosbeak

*Sharp-Shinned Hawk (nesting, G5,S3, Dept. of Fish & Game Special Concern Species)

Red-shouldered Hawk

*White-tailed Kite (nesting, G5,S3, Federal Species of Concern; Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory NonGame Birds of Management Concern; Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Fully Protected)

American Kestrel (falcon)

*Cooper's Hawk (nesting, G5, S3, Dept. of Fish & Game Special Concern Species)

Plain Titmouse

Oregon Junco
Dark-eyed Junco
Brown Towhee (California Towhee)
Rufous Towhee
Spotted Towhee
Northern Flicker
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Mourning Dove
Rock Dove
Belted Kingfisher
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
*Nuttalls Woodpecker (G5SNR, ABC:GL)
Downy Woodpecker
Acorn Woodpecker
Nuthatches
Bullock's Oriole
Common Red-Shafted Flicker
Hooded Orioles
Cedar Waxwing (seasonal)
Brown-headed Cowbird
Black Phoebe
Say's Phoebe
California Quail
Western Kingbird
*Oak Titmouse (G5,S?, (FSC), Birds of Concern Watch List, Audubon
Watch List, Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Species of Special Concern)
Bushtit
Western Tanager
Ash-throated flycatcher
Pacific-slope Flycatcher
Hermit Thrush
American "Water" Pipit
Wood Duck
Great-horned Owl
Bewick's Wren
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
*Redbreasted Sapsucker (nesting, G5S?, Federal Species of Concern, Fish
& Wildlife Service Migratory NonGame Birds of Management Concern)

- *Snowy Egret (rookery, G5,S4, Federal Species of Concern; US Bird Conservation Watch List)
- *Great Egret (rookery, G5,S4, Calif. Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection Sensitive)
- *Great Blue Heron (rookery, G5,S4, Calif. Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection Sensitive)
- *Black-Crowned Night Heron (G5, S3, Bureau of Land Management Sensitive)
- *Long-Billed Curlew (G5, S2, Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Species of Special Concern, Forest & Wildlife Svc. BCC, Birds of Management Concern Watch List, Audubon Watch List)
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Common Snipe
- Western Meadowlark
- Lazuli Bunting

Reptiles:

- Pacific Gopher snake (two recently found 5 feet in length)
- Garter snake
- Southern Alligator Lizard
- Western Fence Lizard
- Western Skink

Amphibians:

- Frogs - specific to be ID'd (in seasonal wetlands/vernal pools late winter and during spring)
- Toads - specific to be ID'd
- California Slender Salamander
- Arboreal Salamander

Insects:

- Meadow Grasshopper
- Crickets (Tree, Ground, Field)
- Gypsy Moth
- Hook-tip Moth
- Butterflies:
 - Comma Butterflies
 - Viceroy Butterflies
 - West Coast Lady Butterflies
- Bumble Bee
- Ground Spider
- Daddy Long Legs Spider

Centipede
Millipede
Carpenter Ant
Field Ant
Ground Beetle
Soft-winged Flower Beetle
Wood boring Beetle
Ladybird Beetle
Boxelder Bug
Four-lined Plant Elder Bug
Flies (Deer, Horse, House)
Paper Wasp
Spider Wasp
Thread-Waisted Wasp
Yellow Jacket