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Candidate, Mill Valley City Council 2007
Sustainable Mill Valley Survey

1. Affordable Housing:

I believe that we are a stronger community when we are a more diverse community-economically and culturally. The greater diversity we can bring to our community, the wider our range of skills and experiences we have to draw upon, and the richer is the fabric of our community. I support the underpinnings of the California Housing Element Law which is designed to ensure that every city in the State steps up to plan for the housing needs across the income spectrum across the community. This planning is particularly important in the coastal communities of California, including Mill Valley, where land prices have skyrocketed, driving affordable housing farther east into the state; adding to the traffic burden while decreasing the quality of life of all those who must spend hours a day commuting.

In preparing for this election, I have talked with a number of experts who have designed, financed, and completed affordable housing projects in the Bay Area. From those discussions, I have a greater appreciation of how difficult the challenge is to meaningfully increase the affordable housing stock in a city which is largely built-out and where the median housing price is approaching \$1 million.

Implementing a tangible, realistic and progressive affordable housing vision for Mill Valley will require us to employ new ways of thinking about the roles of developers, the City, non profit organizations, the financial community, and the citizens of Mill Valley. If we want affordable housing, we need to look beyond inclusionary zoning, in which developers set aside a certain percentage of units as affordable in new multi unit developments. We will also want to consider a wider array of affordable housing options including: smaller senior units; work-live studio lofts; and co-housing and single room occupancy housing where there are shared kitchen and dining facilities.

2. Local Business

My father worked for a family business that his father started in the 1920's, and I grew up aware of how hard they worked to keep the business going through the mid 1980's when the industry changed and consolidated, making it difficult for small family owned businesses to survive. They placed a premium on knowing their customers and giving them the best possible service. I know this is what a great many of our long time businesses have been doing, and why they are so well regarded by our residents.

As I have spent time talking to local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce, it has become apparent that the City again needs to bring focus to retaining local businesses by needs to re assembling the MV Business Task Force. In 1991 Dennis Fisco chaired the first MV Business Task Force which identified the goods and services that residents

wanted and the role of local serving businesses in meeting those needs and desires. This needs to be done again. This committee should be comprised of community members who represent:

- local businesses
- professionals in marketing for Bay Area retail and service businesses,
- sustainable and green economies
- the MV Chamber of Commerce
- local land lords
- commercial real estate,

This combined expertise will give us the ability to understand current big picture in retail and service businesses and will enable Mill Valley to identify the specific opportunities to promote local businesses. We must take also advantage of a marvelous opportunity to reduce traffic and green house gases while supporting local businesses: by encouraging residents to patronize local serving businesses in Mill Valley. We can measure greenhouse gas savings of shopping locally. This is good for local businesses and good for the environment.

Finally, we need to put together an Action Plan, including a marketing plan, with goals and measurable objectives to retain local serving businesses, recruit new businesses, including green businesses. We need a Directory of Local Mill Valley Goods and Services for residents to refer to. We need to promote all businesses throughout the year and work to bring cultural events to the downtown and to Miller Ave. to draw shoppers to these shopping districts. Working together we can make our local shopping districts thrive.

3. Traffic Congestion and Safety

One of my top priorities as a candidate is to “Foster a greener town that is less congested and friendlier to pedestrians and bicycles.” I am a founding member of the Mill Valley Safe Routes to School Task Force, which works to promote students walking, biking, and carpooling to Mill Valley’s eleven public and private schools. This effort is sponsored by the Transportation Agency of Marin, and fully integrated into regional transit planning efforts. We know that school traffic accounts for 20 % of the morning commute traffic, and therefore, gains we make through Safe Routes will be a great benefit for the students and for the whole town!

As member for seven years, and chair for the past two years, I can attest that we are making great strides in working with the schools to reduce traffic! On October 3 we celebrated International Walk to School Day, and on that day 2/3 of our students walked, biked or carpoled to school! Imagine if that happened every day! Safe Routes is working with the City, the County, the neighborhoods and the School District to develop a network of safe routes on side walks, steps and paths, and bike lanes so that it *can happen* everyday. Within 5 years, I predict that people of all ages will leave their cars at home for many of their daily trips in Mill Valley!

Additionally, we are looking at the following opportunities to reduce traffic:

- Explore a “Bicycle Boulevard” concept with neighbors in the Sycamore to allow students to ride and walk to the Middle School and Tam High by limiting auto traffic on the Boulevard during school commute hours.
- Fund the Steps, Lanes and Paths initiative to restore and promote our town’s original pedestrian access routes.
- Pilot-test ways to reduce “cut-through” traffic in our neighborhoods, including neighborhood traffic calming strategies.
- Pilot-test an intra-Mill Valley shuttle and incent the use of existing public transit to get people out of their cars.

4. Water Supply and Conservation:

Water conservation was instilled in me as a child growing up in Southern California where my father constantly checked for dripping faucets (and lights left shining) and called us on the carpet for these wasteful offenses! You never get over that kind of early training, and now, my family is on a “conservation program” as well. Our water usage consistently falls within the lowest tier of MMWD usage charts. We are careful with our water usage inside the home and outside and we have looked into grey water recycling for the garden and rainwater collection systems. I know that efficient water use is the result of many small decisions made each day that add up to big savings and I am committed to doing this every day.

Working with Marin Municipal Water District, the City must model the behavior it wishes to see in its citizenry with regard to the conservation of water and all resources. The City must look for ways to make it easy and desirable for citizens to increase water conservation in their homes. I have spoken with MMWD Board President Cynthia Kohler and have pledged to work with her and the Board to implement water conservation strategies in the City and to incent citizens to do the same. I also intend to work with MMWD and the Outdoor Art Club to promote water efficient, draught tolerant, and fire safe gardens at future OAC Garden Tours.

5. Ecological Footprint

In calculating my own ecological footprint, I came up with 16 acres, relative to the 24 acre US national average footprint. As one who has an education in the biological sciences and environmental policy, and who has worked in environmental protection and restoration for nearly 25 years, I am acutely aware of the choices I make and the need to continue to work to reduce my own impact on the planet. Here is what I have done to reduce my footprint over the past 10 -15 years:

Mobility:

I traded my old car in for a Prius, a car which is a complete joy to drive and can carry just about anything I want to put in it including my middle school son's bicycle! So much for needing a big car to haul the family's gear. We do own a station wagon, and leave it in the garage most of the time except for family road trips & school field trips!

Our family wants to see Mill Valley become a more pedestrian and bike friendly town. Besides chairing the Safe Routes program that I mentioned previously, I helped with some of the field work for the wonderful MV Steps and Paths map, and I am actively involved with community groups to restore and maintain these historic treasures which are having a renaissance. My husband and I have taught our sons to ride their bikes safely and responsibly to school, and at the ages of 10 and 12 they now provide their own transit to Old Mill and Mill Valley Middle School. I am in the process of retrofitting my mountain bike with panniers to make it my "town cruiser".

Shelter:

In our home, we have put in double pane windows and have turned down the thermostat in our house. We like Jimmy Carter's idea of putting on a sweater and other warm clothes when the weather turns cold. We have many fluorescent bulbs in our home and I must admit I look forward to a time when warmer colored, attractive and longer lasting fluorescent bulbs are widely available. We use our appliances sparingly and replace them with energy star models when they break. We have looked into solar photo voltaics, but our electric load is generally so small, that it doesn't really "pencil out" at the moment.

Goods and Services:

An advocate of voluntary simplicity, I think about my purchases, combine errands to save fuel, and often as not, "do without" or "make do" or "reuse" and eliminate a shopping trip altogether. Some of my "campaign wardrobe" was given to me by a friend who no longer needed her work clothes – lucky for me, her slacks and jackets fit! I do buy locally both to support our local merchants and because I know it is more efficient than driving ten miles or more using gas & creating greenhouse gases to "save" a few dollars.

Food:

We buy in bulk to reduce packaging materials, although with children, I must admit that we are not entirely immune to the convenience of packaged goods. I'd like to see a Farmer's Market here in Mill Valley, particularly one that features locally grown Marin Organic produce. I own 10 canvas shopping bags and several wonderful net produce bags, so I am generally "plastic free" at the check out stand. And now, following Carol Misseldine's lead, I bring my own plastic containers to the deli to be filled with prepared foods when I don't want to cook! We recycle everything we can and we have had a compost pile for a decade or more.

There is always room for improvement, but I am happy for the steps I have taken to date.

6. Cities for Climate Protection Campaign

I strongly support a CO2 measurement and reduction program and would not wait for AB 32 regulations to get this effort going. There is no reason why every aspect of the City of Mill Valley's operations should not be subjected to close scrutiny to determine where and how energy reduction and conservation targets can find the greatest reductions in CO2.

There is a wide range of things that need to be done to reduce our carbon footprint, and the place to start is with the areas that generate the most impact – transportation and the built environment. It starts with taking an inventory of the operations that are having the impact, in this case, the ones that are producing carbon emissions, and follows a defined process including developing measurements, setting targets, developing and implementing the plan, measuring results, modifying the plan and continuing the effort to reach targets.

Mill Valley, through a collaborative effort with the County, has already completed the first step of this program by establishing our Green House Gas (GHG) baseline inventory. The next steps are to set an aggressive GHG reduction target, develop and implement a GHG reduction plan, and monitor and report results. If elected, I will do my best to ensure that Mill Valley follows through with the next steps expeditiously.

In my estimation, there are three areas where the City will see the most opportunity to reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions: 1) energy efficiency improvements (heat and lighting) in older city owned facilities including City Hall, the Golf Clubhouse, the Repair Shops and Automotive Maintenance Facility at the Corporation Yard; 2) fuel efficiency in the City's automotive fleet, 3) increased efficiency in the motors for the storm water discharge pumps on Corte Madera del Presidio Creek at Sycamore Park and the pumps at the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM), on Sycamore Ave.

The "change process" required to reduce carbon emissions in city owned facilities and in private homes and businesses is much like the environmental "change process" I managed in my professional career at PG&E. In the early 80's, federal and state laws were passed to regulate the use, storage and disposal of toxic substances. Many changes to the facilities and the operating procedures were required to comply with the new standards. The change process was as much an effort to find ways to *reach people* with the message that *things needed to change* and to *motivate change* of many long held individual behaviors, as it was an effort to engineer new solutions and institute changes to long established policies and procedures. I successfully helped PG&E navigate that change process and I am confident that I can help the City and the residents of Mill Valley make the changes needed to reduce our carbon foot print.

7. Community Choice Aggregation

CCA provides local communities the opportunity to secure power on behalf of their citizens who have not chosen to rely on PG&E for that role. To the extent that the initial consultant studies indicate that a Marin CCA may be able to provide a higher percentage of power from renewable resources than might otherwise be reflected in the PG&E mix, and at a rate competitive with PG&E, the CCA concept deserves further consideration and analysis.

The recently released draft business plan for the Marin CCA provides further detail on important issues which would need to be addressed satisfactorily before a decision can be made about proceeding. I support Mill Valley continuing to participate in evaluating the merits, commitments and risks associated with any decision to join the Marin CCA JPA.

I believe that it is essential that both the City and the residents and businesses of Mill Valley adopt a commitment to first do everything they can to reduce the amount of power they consume and to employ energy conservation technology to use power as efficiently as possible. I also support the use of renewable and low CO2 emitting sources of power in preference to use of natural gas or other carbon-based fuels.

Mill Valley should actively support the use of (and itself deploy) solar technologies to satisfy some of the power requirements in the city.

Mill Valley should anticipate and be prepared to utilize vehicle-to-grid plug-in hybrid technologies to integrate transportation and energy use in a way that allows the two sectors to be mutually supportive and to reduce aggregate power demands.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Moulton-Peters
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