
BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION - VOLUME 17 NUMBER TWO-JUNE, 1994



AN ANTIDOTE TO BENNETT VALLEY'S FEARS OF ANNEXATIONS

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES

An Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is an official, long-term fixed line that divides the city from the country - the urban from the rural. It is a clear boundary that defines where new development will go and where it cannot go. UGBs are unique in land use and environmental planning because they effectively serve four vital functions.

*They contain a community's outward sprawl into prime farmlands that produce foods or into ecologically sensitive lands that guard our health.

*Communities are stopped from merging into one another (a la LA) giving us distinct communities with clear identities. Moreover, they help preserve the overall identity of the surrounding landscape (which in Sonoma County is no small matter).

*By focusing our attention inward, UGB's enable a community to constantly revitalize itself by investing in new infill development.

*UGBs provide a community with a sense of stability and certainty. Everyone from land speculators to environmentalists will know where development can or cannot go.

UGBs in Sonoma County: Are they needed?

In spite of a good general plan and an open space district, recent Press Democrat surveys have shown that the public is uneasy about future outward growth, and believes that the spread of urbanization should be slowed. This public uneasiness is well founded, as it has been documented by the Greenbelt Alliance and UC Berkeley that 110,000 acres of Sonoma County's greenbelt are at risk of development in the next 30 years. Clearly, Sonoma County would benefit by establishing UGBs around all nine cities as well as the unincorporated areas.

The Sonoma County Greenbelt Campaign

In late 1992, the Greenbelt Alliance, a Bay Area wide citizen land conservation organization, assisted Sonoma County supporters in launching a major UGB campaign that has gathered enthusiastic support from leaders in labor, education, business, and yes, even some in the development community. The Greenbelt Alliance research has shown that establishing UGBs will protect Sonoma's superior farmlands without crimping the county's ability to provide housing. In fact, even with these boundaries, the county can build 9,000 units more than are projected as needed over the next 20 years by the Association of Bay Area Governments.

The Sonoma Campaign has already had a significant impact. Supervisors' Mike Cale and Ernie Carpenter have pledged their cooperation. Sebastopol's City Council has written a 20 year urban growth boundary into its general plan. Other cities, in various stages of updating their general plans, are giving strong consideration to including UGBs. Santa Rosa, which has an especially strong and active Campaign committee, is looking favorably at extending the lifetime of its current five year boundary.

The success of this campaign will have very positive implications for Bennett Valley. With boundaries around Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park, our fears of annexation would be alleviated and we could live in harmony with our city neighbors. For further information, call Dee Swanhuyser at 823-3236.

A more in depth discussion of UGBs can be found in the Jan/Feb issue of the "Environmental Impact Reporter," P.O. Box 1834, Sebastopol, Ca 95473.



BENNETT VALLEY DESIGN REVIEW

A Continuation

The last issue gave an overview of reasons for Design Review and the committee's primary responsibilities. This issue continues with some specific requirements.

It is in the best interest of both the applicant and the community to have the land owner or potential land owner check with the Design Review Committee at the earliest possible stage in a project. This provides an opportunity to determine if the project is feasible under the Plan from a siting and design standpoint, and to give general directions and requirements to the applicant. When checking with County Planning, be sure to indicate that the property is in Bennett Valley since general over-the-counter information does not provide the specific rules governing development within Bennett Valley.

Design Review reviews the siting and design of all structures including subdivisions, agricultural structures over 200 sq. ft., additions, and single family dwellings. For all projects, Design Review must determine that:

- * the site is adequate for proposed use
- * streets and driveways are properly designed and visual impact is minimized
- * there will be no significant adverse impact on neighbors.
- * proposed use is consistent with the Bennett Valley Area Plan and the General Plan.
- * minimum requirements are met regarding:
 1. visual/scenic corridor, riparian corridor, scenic landscape unit, critical habitat and unique biotic area standards.
 2. height and location of any fences or walls.
 3. controlling erosion and screening structures with landscaping.
 4. other conditions to insure conformity with the intent and purpose of the Bennett Valley Area Plan.

The *Standards*, which are spelled out in the plan, are to be applied to each project to the maximum extent feasible. They are:

- * To preserve the natural state of the land and vegetation.
- * Structures shall blend with the existing landscape and vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.
- * Site plans to be presented include:
 - an existing topographic map
 - an existing vegetation plan
 - photographs of site from 4 directions
 - proposed grading plan, if applicable
 - a proposed landscape plan
 - a plan showing siting, bulk, design, color,

and materials of structures

- * Approval of plans for new structures shall consider the relationships of the site.
- * All new structures shall be sited so they harmonize with natural surroundings, including but not limited to topography and vegetation; specifically:
 - roof lines shall follow established lines of land and/or tree forms.
 - existing vegetation and land forms shall be utilized to screen structures from public view.
 - * New structures should be sited to take advantage of solar energy where not in conflict with public view.
 - * Structures shall utilize color, texture and materials that blend harmoniously with surrounding landscape:
 - materials: natural wood siding or shingles and natural stone
 - colors: earth tone
 - roofing: fire resistant, dark toned
 - roofline: considered in relationship to the total composition of structure w/ landscape
 - * Utilities shall be placed underground from source point, unless masked by existing vegetation.

Additionally, two other standards address (1) the desirability of having existing structures meet the guidelines for new structures whenever they undergo maintenance or renovation, and (2) the desirability of screening existing buildings from view by planting materials near the structure in natural groupings. These last two are very important as they compliment the work of Design Review and help meet the community goal of preserving and protecting the natural state and the visual integrity of Bennett Valley.

P.L.U.M.B.

The following items have come before the BVHA for input: From the city of Santa Rosa-

1. Miles, Hornsby, Scott development plan-part of the previously noted Fable Annexation. The development plan was approved by the Planning Commission and must go before the City Council for approval. Tentative maps have been submitted only by Miles and Hornsby (4580-4600 Bennett Valley Rd.) as they wish to develop now (File #94-0098-00 and #94-0099-00) Lot sizes average around 1 acre. Input has been solicited on these maps each of which contains 4 lots.

continued on back page

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

We welcome the new homeowners who became members during our annual membership drive, and we thank the many loyal renewed members who have continually and faithfully supported our work. For those of you who may have overlooked or misplaced your renewal form, another form is enclosed for your convenience.

The ongoing dialogue that we have had with Supervisor Mike Cale and Planner Nick Chase has come to fruition. A Resolution, to be signed by the Board of Supervisors, formally recognizes the B.V.H.A. as an Advisory Body to the County of Sonoma. Yeah.

We are pleased to be working with our Fire Department on expanding the festivities of the fun and vital fund raiser the "Bennett Valley Community Day" (see details on back page). This year there will be representatives from the various organizations in the Valley: The Grange, The 4-H Club, The Boy and Girl Scouts, the B.V. Education Foundation, the B.V. Design Review Committee, and the B.V. Homeowners' Association. Also included will be Valley artisans and craftspersons who will demonstrate their unusual and broad talents. In between the delicious lunch and the hilarious auction, you can stroll around the beautiful grounds of the winery, and become acquainted with the interesting people and happenings in your community.

Be sure to mark your calendars on Sunday, August 28th for a memorable day of celebrating the bounties of Bennett Valley while supporting our revered Fire Department.

BOARD TRANSITIONS

Indeed there are more than "a few good men" in the Valley. We recently lost, by resignation, two good men (Michael Bates and Phil Sevier), but we did not have to search long for fine replacements. We are delighted to have Jerry Toso and Bill Sullivan accept appointment to the two unexpired terms. Both men are retired from successful business careers and have served on various community boards, therefore bringing valuable experience and wisdom to our Board. Let's hear it for "Elderhood."

The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. at the Fire Station. Your attendance and participation are always welcome. We would love to hear from you. If you have questions or suggestions on how to improve your community, please call Sam Dakin at his office #526-3577.



VALLEY VIEWS

A new column of info tidbits and bits

Township Update

After almost a year of meetings and research into the feasibility of incorporating our area into a new city, the majority of the original group (BVTAC) has voted to dissolve.

Some members of the committee who disagreed with the dissolution, have since formed the Bennett Valley Township Incorporation Committee (BVTIC). They are continuing to pursue incorporation and have made two mailings to the community. BVTIC will continue to communicate to you of their efforts.

Drawing Group

A life drawing group is forming at a Bennett Ridge studio. Call Donna at 544-2153 for information.

The Golf Course Update

Since our last report to you, we have met several times with our contact, Chuck Rust, Director of Santa Rosa Parks and Recreation Dept. He reports that the planning process is sitting on the "backburner" awaiting resolution of the appraisal value of the golf course property.

Property Tax Transfer

Bad news---Good news

The bad news is that you are empty nesters. The kids have all grown and left you with the house in Bennett Valley that is too large. You're considering a move into a smaller home in town, but the thought of those property taxes increasing to more than you are currently paying makes you sick, especially since the new house has a value that is half as much as your current home.

Now the good news. If either one of you is 55 years or older, you can transfer the taxable value from your current home to your new home in town. In other words, your property taxes will not change much. There are of course certain conditions, so if a move is in your future, give the county assessor's office a call at #527-1855 and ask for information on Proposition 60, the Replacement Residence Exclusion.

Norm and Eve Boling
 2769 Rollo Road
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY
 Sunday, August 28
 Matanzas Creek Winery

BULK RATE
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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 1994 12:00-5:00 P.M.



MATANZAS CREEK WINERY

Bring the whole family to Bennett Valley's biggest social event of the season. Have a wonderful time wine tasting, indulge in a sumptuous lunch, visit your neighbors, and learn about the many different talents and organizations in the Valley. All proceeds go support our Volunteer Fire Department, and this is our opportunity to thank them for their dedicated service to us.

P.L.U.M.B. *continued from page two*

2. *Fable's Country Estates* -part of the Fable Annexation, (4520 Bennett Valley Rd., File #94-0129-00). This is a development plan plus a tentative map. Average lot size is around 3/4 acre. Total acreage is 10 1/4 acres. Input is being solicited on these two phases. This project still must go before both the Planning Commission and City Council.

The planners are: S. Binnendyck (543_3183) for Miles, Hornsby, and Mark Wolfe (543)3186) for Fable. If you wish to have input on any of the above, or desire more information, please contact the appropriate planner.

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