Planning Commission Hearing
November 9, 2017
Exhibit A – Public Comments
Draft Vision & Guiding Principles

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<td>Kimberly Rivers, CFROG</td>
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November 2, 2017

Mr. W. Stephen Onstot, Chair
Ventura County Planning Commission
Ventura County Planning Department
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003

Re: General Plan Update: Vision & Guiding Principles

Dear Chair Onstot and all Commissioners,

CFROG has thanked planning staff for including most of our requested changes in the Revised Background Report and we note that a few changes not made should be included in analysis done as part of the upcoming Environmental Impact Report phase of the GenPlan Update.

But, we have yet to see any response to our comments regarding the Vision & Guiding Principles. CFROG submitted these comments to the county at two hearings (both letters attached): 1) the public hearing before your commission on June 8 and 2) the public workshop in Oak View on July 17 (also submitted oral comments at that time).

To reiterate our requests, we are asking the commission to direct staff to:

1) Include strong Climate Action language in the Vision & Guiding Principles document.
2) Include a specific Environmental Justice Guiding Principle.

Here is sample language for each:
Sample Vision Statement that includes language supporting strong climate action and equitable land use policy:

Ventura County is a remarkable place to live, with clean water and air for all residents and visitors. Our exceptional quality of life and economic vibrancy are rooted in regenerative, inclusive, non-toxic stewardship of all aspects of the place we call home. The protection and conservation of our soil, air, water, cultural

PO Box 114 • Ojai, CA 93024 • 805-727-1393 • ed@cfrog.org • www.cfrog.org

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heritage, natural resources, open spaces, human spirit and creativity are foundations of local policy and governance and together create the framework required for healthy people and a healthy economy.

In the vein of true stewardship, the Ventura County General Plan reflects the county’s ongoing commitment to doing our part within a global society facing the impacts of Climate Change, by continually collaborating with local residents, businesses, agencies, organizations and cities to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and draw down the overall amount of carbon in the atmosphere.

Sample language for Guiding Principles –

Climate Action Guiding Principle:
Ventura County will: Assess, acknowledge and reduce with all due haste the county’s contributions to Climate Change to meet the strictest, applicable emissions targets.

Environmental Justice Guiding Principle:
Ventura County will: Seek to ensure the protection of residents in disadvantaged communities from disproportionate burdens related to pollution, noxious industries, and risks of environmental hazards.

The public health (Healthy Communities) principle should incorporate environmental justice concerns by being revised as follows:
Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by encouraging walking and biking; ensuring equitable access to clean water and air, parks, public transit, and healthy foods; and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kimberly Rivers
Executive Director

cc. Kim Prillhart, Shelley Sussman, Clay Downing, Susan Curtis

List of attachments: 1. CFROG letter to Planning Commission on June 8, 2017
2. CFROG letter to OV MAC on July 17, and verbal input to county at public hearing on July 17
3. Marin County Guiding Principles as example of what is possible.
June 8, 2017

Mr. Stephen Onstot, Chair
And all Commissioners
Ventura County Planning Commission
800 Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003

Re: Work Session: Background Report/Vision & Guiding Principles for GenPlan Update

Dear Chair Onstot and Commissioners,

In addition to our Background Comment letter dated April 14, 2017 we are submitting this letter with additional comments.

CFROG is recommending a critical change to the County’s Guiding Principles related to the General Plan Update. As the County is no doubt aware, the California legislature passed SB1000 in 2016, which contains an extensive requirement for General Plans related to Environmental Justice. We do not believe that this important element is adequately addressed in the current set of guiding principles, and recommend the following:

1) An Environmental Justice principle must be added to the list of Guiding principles which states that the County seeks to ensure the protection of residents in disadvantaged communities from disproportionate burdens related to pollution, noxious industries, and risks of environmental hazards, (Health and Safety).

2) The public health principle should incorporate environmental justice concerns by being revised as follows: Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by encouraging walking and biking; ensuring equitable access to parks, public transit, and healthy foods; and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment. (Healthy Communities)
CFROG is particularly concerned that low income communities, already impacted by pollution from pesticides and heavy truck traffic, will have those impacts compounded by expanding oil and gas projects. Science is showing that negative health impacts from small amounts of pollution are amplified for people who are already overburdened by exposure to pollution.

Impact studies are critically important, as is the County’s commitment to address the inequality and injustice in these situations. Part of that commitment is accurately identifying “Disadvantaged Communities,” in the Background Report, a definition broadened by SB1000. All communities meeting that definition should be included, and staff must use the most up-to-date data in making those identifications.

In this regard, expanding oil and gas operations in the mountains behind Piru are impacting air quality, and increasing potential for impacts. The full extent of current impacts from these, and all sources must be stated in the Background Report. In Somis, residents are concerned about aging pipelines. Natural gas and oil pipelines found running under an elementary school playground have prompted the school district to move the school. A report estimated that from half to all of the people on campus would be killed by an explosion. Compatibility between schools and residential communities, and oil and gas infrastructure is of particular concern in disadvantaged communities.

Note, however, that the current language in the Background Report on fracking anywhere in the County is misleading. First, no permits have been approved and executed since 2014. New technology and advances in fracking make today’s fracking unlike the process decades ago. If fracking is going to be mentioned in the report it should be fact based, and not appear, as the current language does, to be taken in large part from the Western States Petroleum Association website. Note also that any mention of fracking nationwide must be balanced to also include information about fracking bans, induced earthquakes, water contamination and issues related to injection of fracking waste. Finally, and contrary to current language, fracking will not lead to economic benefit for Ventura County. The industry has stated that fracking is not lucrative in Ventura, because the process had not yet unlocked the Monterey Shale.

These changes to the Background Report, and the inclusion of Environmental Justice language in the guiding principles are important first steps toward developing policy that protects the health of our most at risk populations, and the County as a whole.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Rivers
Executive Director
July 17, 2017

Ojai Valley Municipal Advisory Council
Via Hand Delivery

Re: VC General Plan Update – Draft “Vision & Guiding Principles”

Dear Member of the Ojai Valley Municipal Advisory Council,

The county is working to provide many opportunities for public input during the General Plan Update process. But for this meeting, the residents of the Ojai Valley were only given the one-week minimum required notice of this meeting.

CFROG suggests the OVMAC listen at tonight’s meeting, review the written comments submitted, gather information, and plan to submit your formal written comments on the Vision & Guiding Principles following your next meeting. This path would provide your council with ample time to review, understand, gather more information (if needed) and create thoughtful comment to the county on this important stage in the process.

NOTE: The county released information about these countywide meetings all at the same time. Meetings in other parts of the county are set for August and September. Those communities have over 30-days notice.

What is possible in a General Plan?

“For the purpose of the Countywide Plan, sustainability is defined as aligning our built environment and socioeconomic activities with the natural systems that support life. In the long run, sustainability means adapting human activities to the constraints and opportunities of nature. Central to this definition is meeting the needs of both the present and the future.” From the Marin County General Plan, adopted 2007.

Ventura County can craft a vision statement and guiding principles that look past the current status quo planning language, to the potential of a vision for the county that includes a clean, unpolluted environment, which is vital for a stable economy and healthy communities.
Climate Change/Climate Action Plan – Ventura County can create land use policy that recognizes and addresses how land use decisions in the county contribute to Climate Change and how the county can pro-actively work at the policy level to reduce those contributions, not simply mitigate them. This starts with Guiding Principles that are concise about their intention.

- Sample language for a Climate Change guiding principle:

  Assess, acknowledge and reduce with all due haste the county’s contributions to Climate Change to meet the strictest, applicable emissions targets.

Environmental Justice – This is another area of land use policy that is wholly lacking from the draft Guiding Principles.

- An Environmental Justice principle must be added to the list of Guiding principles which states the County will:

  Seek to ensure the protection of residents in disadvantaged communities from disproportionate burdens related to pollution, noxious industries, and risks of environmental hazards.

- The public health (Healthy Communities) principle should incorporate environmental justice concerns by being revised as follows:

  Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by encouraging walking and biking; ensuring equitable access to clean water and air, parks, public transit, and healthy foods; and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.

Equity between Industries: The renewable energy sector is creating more jobs across the nation than the fossil fuel industry. Ongoing oil and gas operations are not creating NEW jobs for the people of Ventura County. Technology in the renewable energy sector is ever changing, who knows the changes that we will see in coming decades. Ventura County can work to foster equity, and ensure that businesses bringing green technologies to the county are treated equitably in terms of land use and planning. A possible sample guiding principle for Economic Vitality:

  “Cultivate a vibrant and diverse economy by fostering innovative businesses that strengthen the local economy, benefit public health and social welfare, and promote environmental sustainability.”

Sincerely,

Kimberly Rivers,
CFROG, Executive Director
Framework: Planning Sustainable Communities

*Guiding Principles*

To begin the current Countywide Plan update process, a working group of local residents was convened to help prepare guiding principles. The efforts of this group resulted in the formation of the principles listed below. To show the linkage between these principles and the goals throughout the Countywide Plan, a figure is included at the end of each section.

**Planning Sustainable Communities** is the overarching theme of the Marin Countywide Plan. Marin County government is committed to lead by example, promote public participation, and work in community partnerships to protect the natural systems that support life and improve our quality of life.

To design a sustainable future, we* will strive to accomplish the following:

1. **Link equity, economy, and the environment locally, regionally, and globally.**
   - We will improve the vitality of our community, economy, and environment. We will seek innovations that provide multiple benefits.

2. **Minimize the use of finite resources, and use all resources efficiently and effectively.**
   - We will reduce overall and individual consumption, and reuse and recycle resources. We will reduce waste by optimizing the full life cycle of products and processes.

3. **Reduce the use and minimize the release of hazardous materials.**
   - We will continue to make progress toward eliminating the release of substances that cause damage to natural systems. We will use a precautionary approach to prevent environmentally caused diseases.

4. **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.**
   - We will join other communities addressing climate change by lowering our greenhouse gas emissions. We will increase the use of renewable resources which do not have a negative impact on the earth's climate.

5. **Preserve our natural assets.**
   - We will continue to protect and restore open space, wilderness, and damaged ecosystems, and enhance habitats for biodiversity.

*"We" refers to the larger Marin community, including County government, other governmental bodies, local residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.*
6. **Protect our agricultural assets.**

   We will protect agricultural lands and work to maintain our agricultural heritage. We will support the production and marketing of healthy, fresh, locally grown food.

7. **Provide efficient and effective transportation.**

   We will expand our public transportation system to better connect jobs, housing, schools, shopping, and recreational facilities. We will provide affordable and convenient transportation alternatives that reduce our dependence on single occupancy vehicles, conserve resources, improve air quality, and reduce traffic congestion.

8. **Supply housing affordable to the full range of our members of the workforce and diverse community.**

   We will provide and maintain well-designed, energy efficient, diverse housing close to job centers, shopping, and transportation links. We will pursue innovative opportunities to finance senior, workforce, and special needs housing, promote infill development, and reuse and redevelop underused sites.

9. **Foster businesses that create economic, environmental, and social benefits.**

   We will support locally owned businesses and retain, expand, and attract a diversity of businesses that meet the needs of our residents and strengthen our economic base. We will partner with local employers to address transportation and housing needs.

10. **Educate and prepare our workforce and residents.**

    We will make high-quality education, workforce preparation, and lifelong learning opportunities available to all sectors of our community. We will help all children succeed in schools, participate in civic affairs, acquire and retain meaningful employment, and achieve economic independence.

11. **Cultivate ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity.**

    We will honor our past, celebrate our cultural diversity, and respect human dignity. We will build vibrant communities, and foster programs to maintain, share, and appreciate our cultural differences and similarities.

12. **Support public health, safety, and social justice.**

    We will live in healthy, safe communities and provide equal access to amenities and services. We will particularly protect and nurture our children, our elders, and the more vulnerable members of our community.