

# Dear Strawberry,

The next 5 minutes of your time could determine the next 50 years of your community.



Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera

Here in Strawberry, we have seen our future, and it’s off 101 in Corte Madera.

You’ve probably seen it, too. It’s the huge 180-unit housing development shown in the photo above. And, unfortunately, something similar could be coming to our neighborhood soon. Along with the overcrowding and traffic congestion that it’s certain to bring with it.

How could this ever happen in this special piece of Marin that we’re all so fond of?

It started when Marin’s Board of Supervisors designated Strawberry, along with a few other unincorporated areas of Marin, as a PDA, or Priority Development Area. PDAs are land use designations that encourage high density growth, in effect giving developers an invitation to build and access to government funds to finance large scale projects. The 2013 Plan Bay Area forecasts that about 80% of all new housing units expected to be built between now and 2040 will be located in areas designated as PDAs.

Get the picture? It gets worse.

The reality is that there is no state or federal law that requires any area of Marin to become a PDA. It’s 100% voluntary. Which raises a question:

Who in their right mind would volunteer our already-dense Strawberry as one of the few places in Marin that’s ripe for greater development, i.e. hundreds of units of 3-5 story tall, high density, multifamily and mixed use structures, including perhaps the kind of overwhelming structure above?

Who? That would be our Marin County Board of Supervisors. And in particular, our District 3 Supervisor, Kate Sears.

Of course, none of these supervisors, including Supervisor Sears, live in Strawberry, so they won’t be subject to the consequences of putting a giant square peg in a small round hamlet.

But you will.

Over the past months, Supervisor Sears has attended a series of meetings in which concerned members of Strawberry’s community have very reasonably asked the question, “Why us?”

Strawberry is already one of the highest density areas in Marin. We have among the highest multifamily developments per capita in the county. We are economically and ethnically diverse.

Despite all of this, the Marin County Board of Supervisors, including Supervisor Sears, has no answers, and has refused to consider our arguments for being removed from the list of Marin County PDAs. At the same time, these supervisors have released other areas of Marin from their PDA designations after strong public protest, including Marinwood and Manzanita/Tam Valley/Almonte.

The members of those communities didn’t volunteer their neighborhoods for development over which they would have no say, and they made it clear that they weren’t going to stand for it.

Now it’s our turn. Your turn.

To date, over 700 people have signed a petition requesting removal of Strawberry’s PDA designation, including alumni leaders with over 160 years experience on our local Strawberry Design Review Board and Strawberry Recreation Board. But that’s clearly not enough for our supervisors.

If we don’t all stand up and stand together as a community to let Kate Sears and the rest of Marin’s Board of Supervisors know that we are not going to tolerate involuntary growth at the expense of our neighborhoods, our schools, our roads, our environment, and a great many other things that attracted us to live here in the first place, the Strawberry we know today will not be the Strawberry of the future.

We have become the place we are because over the years Strawberry residents have cared enough to plan wisely for a community that’s as balanced as it is beautiful.

Don’t let Marin County’s Board of Supervisors destroy that. Don’t let them decide what’s best for us without listening to us. Don’t let politics trample practicality.

Strawberry needs your help. Strawberry needs your voice. Please, take another few minutes to email the supervisors below and tell them what you think.

Kate Sears	ksears@marincounty.org
Susan Adams	sadams@marincounty.org
Katie Rice	krice@marincounty.org
Steve Kinsey	skinsey@marincounty.org
Judy Arnold	jarnold@marincounty.org

Find out more at [www.StrawberryCA.org](http://www.StrawberryCA.org). And if you can, join us at 7pm tonight, 1/12/14, for an important community meeting at the Strawberry Rec Center Gym.

Thank you.

*This ad paid for by the Strawberry Community Association.  
StrawberryCA.org*