

Friends of Mill Valley

Friends of Mill Valley works to add the voice of the community to the City's decision-making process about growth, planning and other issues of significant public interest, and to promote greater public participation in shaping successful solutions.

Let's get it right!

How it all started

In February of 2007 a small group of Mill Valley citizens began meeting to discuss the future of our City. In response to the City's Miller Avenue Precise Plan (MAPP), we were concerned that decisions about planning and growth

were being marketed to the public instead of being based on our shared community



values. The goal of the group was to offer alternatives based on citizen education and engagement.

The group called themselves Friends of Mill Valley (FoMV), adopted a mission statement (above) and coined the motto, "Let's get it right!"

Current focus of Friends of Mill Valley

1. *Inform the community about projects with significant public impact.*

2. *Educate the public about the upcoming decisions in the General Plan,*



Housing and Circulation elements and devise meaningful ways to engage them in decision making.

3. *Promote local self-sufficiency by relying on community expertise, volunteers, Neighborhood Associations, and citizen task forces for*

Activities & Achievements

Since its inception, many people have stepped forward and donated their time, talents and financial support to advance our mission. Here are some of those accomplishments.

Collected information to assess community values and opinions.

- Initiated Internet polling of community values. The results showed that the number one concern, by a 2 to 1 margin, was the "Need to preserve Mill Valley's small town character and quality of life." The 2nd ranked concern was "Need to control rapid growth and over development" and the 3rd was for "solving traffic problems."
- Distributed community-wide petitions regarding proposed development projects to gauge public opinion.
- Worked continuously with neighborhood associations, business colleagues, and friends to educate as many people as possible about pressing issues and City affairs.

Shared information to encourage greater public participation.

- Established the Friends of Mill Valley website and blog where anyone can sign up, read, and comment on issues of general community concern.



Full house at the Throckmorton Theater for Friends of Mill Valley City Council Candidates Debate Night, October 2007.

- Established a web-enabled email list with over 1,000 residents currently receiving action alerts.

- Published periodic FoMV Newsletters to keep the community informed.
- Hosted a series of four Town Hall meetings about key issues and upcoming decisions at City Hall, attended by hundreds of Mill Valley residents.
- Encouraged citizens to share their views at City Council and Planning Commission hearings, and to write letters to the editors of local newspapers. Today, journalists continue to look to FoMV to get the community's pulse on the issues.
- Hosted the first-ever community-based Candidates' Night for City Council elections in 2007, and another in 2009. Both events were moderated by former Mill Valley Mayor and Marin IJ columnist Dick Spotswood.
- Presented the City with a total of more than 1,000 signatures in response to a variety of development projects and initiatives.

Promoted better public process to improve policy and decisions.

- Stressed the importance of an open public process that focuses on clearly identifying a problem, framing goals, weighing options against criteria, and having measurable outcomes for public policy initiatives.

Activities & Achievements, continued

- Led the community in requesting improvements in the City's communications including:
 - Easier access and more timely information, such as City Council and Planning Commission agendas and reports.
 - Upgrading its email alerts.
 - Note that all of these recommendations were later reiterated by a special study by John Goss of Ralph Andersen & Associates.

Embraced Mill Valley's unique small-town character.

- Led the community in opposing the City's high-density, multi-story vision for high-density development on Miller Avenue under MAPP.
- Initiated and promoted the concept of splitting Miller development planning and

Streetscape improvements using Measure A funds.

- Led the community in rejecting ill-conceived development projects on Miller Avenue such as the Von der Werth project at 500 Miller, resulting in a scaled back proposal still under discussion.
- Led the challenge to the Jonathan Parker project at La Goma Avenue and Miller. First to demand an EIR that resulted in the discovery of toxic waste that will require mitigation, and a scaled back project size to mitigate traffic and parking impacts.
- Led the community in calling attention to the potential dangers of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) from antennae placed on centrally located sites, leading to the defeat of a proposal to add new antennae in downtown Mill Valley.

- Led the community in building awareness of the potentially negative impacts of the proposed 76 Station at 630 E. Blithedale,

resulting in reduced size and a rejection by the Planning Commission (later overturned by the City Council).



Friends of Mill Valley Town Hall Meeting.

Thank you

Friends of Mill Valley is a strictly volunteer effort of many people. Its accomplishments are the result of that collective commitment to a common vision of preserving Mill Valley's small-town character and quality of life.

Ways to Get Involved

There are many issues and lots of room at the table. We invite you to:

1. **Donate.** Checks should be made payable to Friends of Mill Valley.
2. **Join the FoMV email list.** Stay informed about issues of concern to the community. Email us at info@friendsofmillvalley.org to join the list.
3. **Attend public meetings and make your voice heard.** Friends of Mill Valley will keep you informed of important City Council and Planning Commission meetings where critical decisions are being made.
4. **Attend the next FoMV Town Hall Meeting.** We'll focus on increasing the citizen role in important City matters.
5. **Sign the FoMV Parking petition.** Download from our website at www.friendsofmillvalley.org
6. **Stay engaged.** Talk to your neighbors. Help create the community you want to live in.
7. **Visit our site.** We're open 24 hours a day at www.friendsofmillvalley.org.

Friends of Mill Valley

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Members Emeritus

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1,000+

Friends of Mill Valley subscribers. Thank you for your support!

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