



Summer 2013

This summer has been a busy one with a broad range of issues--local and regional--coming before the Board of Supervisors. Many generated strong viewpoints reflecting the range of opinions out in the community. Among those issues engendering the most vocal and passionate public discourse: the Greenbrae/101 Corridor Improvement Project, the Green Point Solar Farm, the Stream Conservation Area Ordinance, and issues related to the regional, long-range planning effort, Plan Bay Area. Please find in this E-News, updates on these issues and information on other relevant happenings in Marin County.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at: 415-473-7825 or email to krice@marincounty.org. You can connect with me at www.facebook.com/D2KatieRice by "liking" my Facebook page.

In This Issue:

- Green Point Solar Project
- Stream Conservation Area Ordinance Update
- Greenbrae/101 Corridor Improvement Project Update
- Plan Bay Area Update
- Ross Valley Watershed Community Meeting
- Free Larkspur Ferry Shuttle - the Wave!
- Neighborhood Crime Tracking Tool
- Marin County Road and Trail Management Plan Update
- Sewer Lateral Replacement Grant Program
- Help Restore the American Legion Log Cabin
- Upcoming Local Events

Green Point Solar Project

In June of this year, a proposal for the County's first ground-mounted commercial solar facility was considered by the Planning Commission. The proposal was for a 663 kilowatt photovoltaic solar farm with a one-acre footprint to be located on the Green Point Nursery property in Novato in the Black Point Community planning area. The Planning Commission voted 4-3 to approve the project. Subsequently, an appeal of that decision was filed by the Marin Audubon Society, Black Point Improvement Club and the Olive Ridge Home Owners' Association – on various grounds including insufficient environmental review, inconsistency with the existing county code and local community

plan, and lack of county code to guide the regulation and placement of commercial solar facilities.

In August, the appeal came before the Board of Supervisors. I voted to uphold the appeal and deny the project. It was the most difficult vote I have cast so far as Supervisor. It was difficult because I believe strongly that we need to be doing everything we can to combat climate change, to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and to walk the talk at the local level per that commitment. While many in the community came down on the same side of this issue as I did, many did not. I provide the following to help explain my position and vote on this project.

The Green Point Solar Project site has many challenges. While the project location was described as “marginal” agricultural lands by staff, the same area is also deemed “sensitive” by the Black Point Community Plan as part of the “Novato Bay Plain.” The site is former marshland, filled in decades past, lies within the Bay Lands Corridor, is adjacent to restored and preserved active wetlands, and is subject to flooding.

I would have expected any new commercial development proposal with a footprint the size of this project, at the location proposed, to be subject to The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This project, however, was given a categorical exemption. An Initial Study (as would have been required by CEQA) may very well have shown no significant impacts and resulted in a Negative Declaration, allowing the project to move forward without mitigations. This important step in the environmental process would have provided the assurance I sought per environmental review.

There were other issues with regards to this project that weakened the case for it in my opinion. Among them, inconsistency with the local community plan and lack of specific language in our development code and land use zoning definitions specific to siting commercial solar. This lack of regulatory support, combined with site challenges and environmental review concerns drove my decision on this project.

We should be doing everything we can to address climate change at the local and global level. But I also believe that development, regardless of purpose, needs to conform to code and be appropriately vetted through our established environmental review process. Communities throughout California are modifying their building codes, and adopting ordinances to provide guidance and rules per the placement of commercial solar. Marin County needs to do the same. *An added note: on September 17, the Board of Supervisors approved a 462 kilowatt roof-mounted facility at the County’s Emergency Operations Facility in San Rafael.*

Stream Conservation Area Ordinance Update

On June 18, the Board of Supervisors was presented with a revised Stream Conservation Area (SCA) Ordinance and fee schedule for adoption and application for all areas of unincorporated Marin County. The revised ordinance provided a tiered approach for regulating development within stream conservation areas, under a significantly reduced permit fee structure. However, I along with several other board

members continue to have concerns with several specific elements of the ordinance including: size and application of setbacks as applied by the ordinance, protected stream definitions and mapping, the permit process, and a desire to see any stream protection ordinance be supported by a strong incentive as well as compliance program.

As such, the board deferred adoption of the Stream Conservation Area Ordinance as proposed in order for a subcommittee of the Board (comprised of Supervisors Sears and Kinsey) to explore and make recommendations on the issues raised by board members. Many of these issues are tied directly to specific and prescriptive language contained in the Countywide Plan (CWP), and cannot be changed without modification to the CWP. With the concurrence of the full board, President Judy Arnold, tasked the subcommittee with the following:

- 1) Develop a framework for an interim ordinance (consistent with current CWP language) which would lift the existing building permit moratorium in the San Geronimo Valley;
- 2) Identify the scope of potential targeted amendments to the CWP specific to prescribed setback standards, permit processes, and applicability;
- 3) Determine work plan, budget and timeline for a limited scope CWP amendment process and schedule to develop a revised SCA ordinance.

The subcommittee will bring recommendations to the Board on October 1.

Adopting and implementing a Stream Conservation Area Ordinance is essential to carrying forward this County's commitment to protecting our creeks and streams for both their natural resource value and hydraulic function. Taking a bit more time to get the ordinance right, so that it ensures adequate creek, stream and watershed protections and property owner compliance, is essential to the ordinance's overall success and our ability to move the dial forward with regards to watershed health.

For more information, and to receive updates on the SCA ordinance as they become available, [subscribe to the SCA webpage](#).

Greenbrae/101 Corridor Improvement Project Update

Back in March, in response to strong opposition voiced by community members and various stakeholder groups, the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) formed the Greenbrae Corridor Advisory Working Group to take a fresh look at the proposed project and explore alternatives towards addressing the freeway congestion and safety issues in the corridor, as well as improvements for bike/pedestrian and transit infrastructure.

The Working Group spent the past six months reviewing existing conditions, analyzing the proposed project, and a half dozen other proposals brought forward by the public. What was clear, by the end of this process, is that it was easy to agree on

bike/pedestrian improvements, but not so easy to agree on how to address the freeway safety and congestion issues.

The corridor is fraught with challenges and constraints. Environmental challenges associated with any improvements impacting the Corte Madera Creek or adjacent wetlands, the desire of local communities to maintain all existing on-ramps and off-ramps throughout the corridor, the desire to maintain the existing pedestrian overcrossing between Industrial Drive and Lucky/Fifer at all costs, combined to preclude any freeway improvements that would address safety and congestion issues and make for significant and long term positive impact.

That said, the Working Group did make recommendations for some discreet improvements which may provide some incremental congestion relief, and a host of recommendations to improve bike and pedestrian facilities.

While I am 100% supportive of improving bike and pedestrian and transit connectivity in the Greenbrae/101 area, I am also equally as sensitive to the cost to our communities of not resolving highway congestion and safety issues. Residents of Corte Madera and Larkspur, Strawberry and Mill Valley feel the pressure daily of freeway jumpers negotiating local surface streets in order to avoid the freeway traffic jam. Ross Valley and North Marin residents are stalled in the Twin Cities corridor day after day. The negative impact, both per quality of life and the increased greenhouse gas emissions associated with traffic jams that the current corridor construct creates, is wearing on our community.

Later this month the full TAM Board will consider the Working Group's recommendations towards presenting a revised project to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) which ultimately holds the funding allocated for corridor improvements. I will continue to advocate for bike, pedestrian and transit connectivity improvements as well as improvements to address the safety, congestion and quality of life conditions posed by the current infrastructure configuration.

For more information and background on the project and Working group, please see the [Marin IJ Article](#), my recent [Marin Voice](#), or the [TAM website](#).

Plan Bay Area Update

As the County's representative on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)--appointed by the Board of Supervisors in January of this year--I had the responsibility of casting a vote on the regional transportation and land use planning document, Plan Bay Area. I voted to approve the Plan. Here's why:

Plan Bay Area is the Bay Area Metropolitan Region's first effort to comply with state legislation SB 375, also called the Sustainable Communities Strategy. SB 375 was adopted in 2008 and requires that the two regional planning bodies – ABAG and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – integrate their respective state mandated planning responsibilities: transportation planning and investment on the MTC

side, and planning for future housing needs on the ABAG side. MTC and ABAG have been carrying out their individual planning responsibilities for decades, but never in an integrated fashion. SB 375 requires that they do so in an effort to link future population and job growth with transportation so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.

Contrary to much speculation and frequent assertion as fact, Plan Bay Area is not a mandate to build or grow – or a dictate for how fast or slow, or where a community grows. What it does do is encourage communities when they do grow, to do so in ways that reduce automobile use by steering the creation of new housing and jobs to areas within existing community boundaries, near services and transit, and simultaneously preventing sprawl, protecting open space and agricultural lands.

This concept of integrated land use and transportation planning is not new to Marin County. Our General Plan since the 1970's has been all about protecting agricultural lands and open space, and recognizing that coordinated transportation and land use planning are key to reducing dependence on automobiles, and combatting traffic congestion and air pollution.

While Plan Bay Area encourages this type of infill vs. sprawl pattern of development, it does not mandate such development, and does not diminish or usurp in any way local control over land use, zoning, future development, or local decision-making authority regarding the environmental review process. Bottom line, Plan Bay Area does not and cannot change or require changes to any county's or any city or town's general plan. Local land use and development decisions remain local, with or without Plan Bay Area.

I voted to approve Plan Bay Area because its goals align with the values that this County has embraced for decades. I believe that Marin County and the entire Bay Area stand to benefit from planning that seeks to encourage all jurisdictions to plan for future growth with foresight that reduces sprawl, protects our agricultural and open space lands, and links future job growth with housing and transit.

For more information on Plan Bay Area, please go to www.onebayarea.org or read my [Marin Voice article](#).

Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program Community Meeting

On June 13, the County hosted a community meeting at Drake High School to provide an update on the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program. Close to one hundred Ross Valley community members attended this meeting, designed to be informational/educational and provide the opportunity to ask questions. The presentation included an overview of the program with a focus on the role and function of detention basins - how they work, what they look like, their dual use function and the critical role they will play in helping us achieve flood protection for the entire Ross Valley.

You can [view the June 13 meeting online](#) and [click here](#) for more information generally on the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program and to download an annual report.

Free Larkspur Ferry Shuttle- the Wave!

Residents along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. from Fairfax to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal can catch the new FREE Larkspur Ferry Shuttle - the Wave! Each weekday, the Wave serves Larkspur Ferry departures between 6:35 and 8:20am. The shuttle returns to Fairfax from the Larkspur Terminal for the afternoon commute arrivals between 4:05 to 6:55pm. The Wave Larkspur Ferry Shuttle is FREE for Larkspur Ferry customers. All other passengers are subject to local fares.

The Wave shuttle (designated as Route 25 in the Golden Gate Transit Guide) is being implemented as a demonstration project for a nine-month trial basis through June 2014 and is an effort to assist in alleviating the congestion at the Larkspur Terminal parking lot which reaches capacity by 8:30am on weekday mornings. Visit [Golden Gate Transit](#) for more information and [click here](#) for the complete shuttle schedule.

Neighborhood Crime Tracking Tool

Communication is key towards addressing neighborhood crime. It is crucial that residents report any suspicious activity so that our law enforcement agencies have the most accurate information possible. And, it's important that residents know about crimes in their neighborhood. To that end, the Sheriff's office has now implemented a new online tool called CrimeReports™ aimed at improving communications with the community, and lowering crime. Residents living within the unincorporated area of Marin County can now view local crime data in near real-time status by visiting the Sheriff's Office website www.marinsheriff.org and clicking on the CrimeReports link (under the "Resources" tab), or by visiting www.CrimeReports.com directly.

CrimeReports is an online platform that integrates with existing Sheriff's Office computer systems to allow publication of local crime data, improve information flow and transparency, and create more two-way dialogue between the Marin County Sheriff's Office and residents. You will now be able to: view near real-time online reports of crime occurring with a particular region of the County, set-up daily, weekly, or monthly automated reports on a variety of different crime types, and send anonymous crime tips to the Marin County Sheriff's Office.

Please review the [press release](#) for more information about this new service and to learn about other developments coming soon. The Sheriff's Office phone number for non-emergency communications is 415-479-2311. For emergencies, as always call 911.

Marin County Road and Trail Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) is developing its first comprehensive Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to

direct future use and management of roads and trails on MCOSD's 34 preserves. The RTMP/EIR will employ extensive public involvement, and will incorporate MCOSD's mission, community preferences, natural resources goals, and the best available science in decision making. Land managers from sister agencies in Marin County also will be engaged to maximize opportunities to serve the Marin County citizens, and to coordinate protection of Marin's natural lands and important habitats.

A special joint meeting of the Marin County Open Space District Board of Directors and the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission on the Draft Road and Trail Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be on Tuesday, October 1 at 5pm. The meeting will be held in the Board of Supervisors Chambers (Room 330) and will be webcast live. The Draft Road and Trail Management Plan and the Draft EIR will be available on September 26.

[Click here](#) for more information and to review the Preliminary Draft Road and Trail Management Plan.

Sewer Lateral Replacement Grant Program

The Ross Valley Sanitary District Board has allocated \$350,000 of their Capital Budget for the Lateral Replacement Grant program. Property owners with leaking and damaged laterals may be eligible for reimbursement up to \$2,500 for replacing their private lateral.

If you experience chronic problems, such as backups and overflows that require ongoing professional plumbing maintenance, you probably have a lateral in need of repair. For information on the grant program and how to apply, call the Ross Valley Sanitary District offices at 415-259-2949, or visit the website at www.rvsd.org.

Help Restore the American Legion Log Cabin

Consider helping with the restoration of one of San Anselmo's best-known community assets. American Legion Post 179 and the Women's Auxiliary Unit 179 are holding a fundraiser on Oct. 12 from 6-10pm to make much-needed repairs on the American Legion Log Cabin. The event will feature live music, food, silent auction and a screening of a film showing the building of this historical structure.

The Log Cabin is truly a local landmark. It has been used by various organizations and individuals for classes, meetings, fundraisers, weddings and social events. And, importantly, it serves as a safe harbor for returning veterans and provides them with a place to relax in the Dugout Bar with a welcoming and supportive community.

Tickets are \$35 per person and can be purchased online at Eventbrite / Log Cabin Fundraiser <https://logcabinfundraiser.eventbrite.com/>. Donations can be made and also tickets purchased by mailing a check made payable to: American Legion Post 179, PO Box 125, San Anselmo, CA 94979. For more information, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/logcabin.anselmo> or contact Ellen Boesner at 415-453-1434.

Upcoming Local Events

California Coastal Cleanup Day at Hal Brown Park

Saturday, September 21, 9am – noon

Hal Brown Park at Creekside, Greenbrae

Marin County Parks will be cleaning litter and recyclables from Hal Brown Park, Corte Madera Creek Multi-Use Pathway, and the surrounding area. No prior experience is necessary. Gloves and bags for debris collection will be provided. All ages are welcome; anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a supervising adult. Dress in layers you can get dirty: long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and a hat or visor. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Please bring gloves (if you have them). We will provide snacks. There will be a post-cleanup barbeque for volunteers at the Bay Model Visitors Center in Sausalito from 12pm to 3pm. Questions: Contact Volunteer Coordinator Kirk Schroeder at 415- 473-2823 or kschroeder@marincounty.org. [Click here](#) for a full list of California Coastal Cleanup Day opportunities.

A Garden for All Seasons – Edibles

Saturday, September 28, 9am-4pm

Marin Art & Garden Center, Ross

Learn about edibles at this one day event featuring speakers, demonstrations and a marketplace, sponsored by Marin Master Gardeners, Marin Art & Garden Center, and the Garden Conservancy. Keynote speakers will be Leslie Bennett and Stefani Bittner of Star Apple Edible & Fine Gardening in Berkeley, author Clair Splan and canning queen Merrilee Olson. All day pass is \$10 (includes Merrilee Olson)/all day pass including keynote speakers is \$25.00. For more information, visit ucanr.org or contact kathrynsgardens@gmail.com.

Meet Your Marin County Fire Department Firefighters

Sunday, October 6, 1-3pm

Station Locations: Woodacre, Hicks Valley, Marin City, Pt. Reyes, Throckmorton, Tomales

Marin County Fire Department is hosting an Open House at each station to meet firefighters and tour a station, learn what Marin County Fire does to support the community, receive fun/useful fire prevention tools, tips and materials. [Click here](#) for more information.

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